

## **DESIGN AND SUSTAINABILITY: HOW TOMORROW'S PRODUCTS WILL LOOK LIKE ACCORDING TO WORTH PARTNERSHIP PROJECT**

29th March 2021 - A signature modular connector made of emerald by-products and recycled metals, a new sustainable terrazzo material combining air-dry porcelain, cellulose fibre and ocean plastic, a five-piece kombucha tsugi-bag collection that showcases the integration of materials based on kombucha, a special fungi normally used for producing sparkling beverage, materials and second-hand textiles, a biannual capsule collection with biogenic dye.

These are just some of the projects selected within the WORTH Partnership Project, the largest creative incubator in Europe, that show how it is possible to innovate products with an eye on sustainability and the future of the planet.

A 2020 study by IBM, [Meet the 2020 consumers driving change](#), shows how consumers shop "for good". Nearly 6 in 10 consumers (57 percent) are willing to change their purchasing habits to help reducing negative impact to the environment, and among those who say sustainability is important for them, this jumps to 77 percent. Moreover, of those who say these traits are very important, over seven in 10 are willing to pay a premium for brands that support recycling, practice sustainability, and/or are environmentally responsible.

"When working on a new idea, today it is more important than ever that designers and companies, in addition to considering aesthetics and functionality, ask themselves: «How can my product contribute to improve people's lives?». Implicit in this question there is an important reference to the psychophysical well-being of people, as well as the environment in which they live, which cannot be separated from a reflection on the sustainability of the entire process, from production to the product itself, right up to the moment in which it has completed its life cycle. The designers and companies that take part in this paradigm shift will be more competitive because they will respond to a demand from the market and consumers who are already prepared to change their buying habits in favour of these products," explains Korinna Molla', coordinator of the WORTH Partnership project.

Funded by COSME, the European Union's program for the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises, WORTH Partnership Project is the largest European incubator in the creative field, with 152 selected projects involving 345 partners from 34 EU-COSME countries - from France to Germany, Spain, UK Italy, not forgetting Holland, Slovenia, Moldova, Estonia, Sweden, Finland, Montenegro, Serbia, etc. This European Commission project is a unique laboratory where European designers can experience the benefits of transnational collaborations and participation in an internal market of over 500 million people.

Below are some of the WORTH projects belonging on different countries and sectors, that worked with the aim to innovate products and materials.

The complete list of projects is available on the WORTH [website](#), and images are available [HERE](#).

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### LiLO

A signature modular connector made of emerald by-products and recycled metals

**Countries involved:** United Kingdom, Italy

**The challenge:** Maximize resource efficiency, minimize overproduction and encourage reusability through a modular format of jewellery. The objective is to enhance chain in its functional context, embrace it as a symbol of connection and reinforce it with material innovation. On average, 10 tonnes of earth are excavated for each carat of emerald recovered. Addressing the need to evolve product and material usability is key to reduce the impact on the environment and deliver greater value to the existing by-products of emerald extraction.



**The solution:** A clasp-link called LiLO (link&lock) made of emerald by-products and recycled metals. LiLO will contribute to jewellery modularity and will work as the bridge to connect, reuse and reimagine chain in different contexts. It may also contribute to reposition social, environmental and value perception of the emerald stone. The concept idea is based on the deconstruction and rearrangement of interchangeable links to form multiple combinations of chains. It is designed to be simplified, amplified and optimized.

The partners of the project:

- **MARÍA JOSÉ ZAMBRANO LÓPEZ (United Kingdom):** a Colombian designer based in London with a fashion design degree from London College of Fashion and a Masters in jewellery design from Central Saint Martins. Her pursuit is to broaden the possibilities of making, wearing and perceiving jewellery in a ethical context.
- **CLIC SRL (Italy):** a leading Italian manufacturer of metal accessories and proud ambassadors of the Made in Italy hallmark. The company is committed to developing high-quality bespoke products according to customer requirements.

### Moseanic

A new sustainable terrazzo material

**Countries involved:** Hungary, Slovenia



**The challenge:** there is a need to produce new sustainable materials, materials that use wastes and particularly the waste that ends up in oceans, offering a wide range of design options that initiate collaboration between designers, crafters, material developers and environmental groups. Moseanic is [a new material concept](#) combining air-dry porcelain, cellulose fibre and ocean plastic, that creates an eco-sustainable-terrazzo that the partnership would like to use as a base material for its products.

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**The solution:** Moseanic combines positive characteristics (it is strong, solid, translucent and natural). So much for the practical side, but there is also an emotional aspect: that the ocean plastic is visible, making the consumer aware of its reuse and providing a positive experience. The team is planning to design products, like lamps and explore the possibilities of using Moseanic as raw material.

The partners of the project:

- **Ági Göb (Hungary):** a product designer, who leads and takes part in a wide range of design processes: small objects, new types of packaging, outdoor elements for open spaces, founded a start-up for modular furniture for Millennials living in rented accommodation.
- **Lučka Berlot. (Slovenia):** a lamp designer, educator and crafter from Slovenia, currently working in the field of the art lighting, lighting design and film. Developing new sustainable materials and combinations to design within the circular economy.

### **Kombucha TSUGI**

Kombucha Tsugi-bag collection

**Countries involved:** France, The Netherlands

**The challenge:** to introduce Circular Economy models through the implementation of biomaterials that can be cultured and transformed on an industrial scale, developing a hybrid material collection promoting repair and reuse.

**The solution:** to create [a five-piece kombucha tsugi-bag collection](#) that showcases the integration of kombucha-based materials and second-hand textiles. The Project will develop a representative bag collection as a high-end proof-of-concept demonstration of the materials' compatibility and product supply chain, implementing a scalable kombucha fabrication process with replicable standards validating the sustainable sourcing of second-hand textiles in Paris. The Project fosters local industry, circular economy and sustainable consumption developing local communities in urban farming, with the long-term aim of creating a hybrid shop using open-source techniques.



The partners of the project:

- **THR34D5 (France):** an interdisciplinary and international media lab, exploring community empowerment through craft and open-source via accessible materials. thr34d5 won the 2018 Reshape competition, organises workshops & built a bio lab.
- **Louche (The Netherlands):** artist and designer, Wael el Allouche focuses on contexts & places to find quality. Having graduated from the design department of the Gerrit Rietveld Academy, he is interested in the way abstractions, such as Data and Algorithms, shape reality, and viceversa.

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### BioChromatic

A biannual capsule collection with biogenic dye

**Countries involved:** Germany, Austria



**The challenge:** dyes have always been sourced from oil products. Only a tiny proportion of modern dyes are from natural origin: plant or animal-based substances used for thousands of years. Introducing biotech enables biological feedstocks to be converted into competitive dyes. The challenge is to use biogenic dyes, a sustainable dyeing technique that is still in its infancy, aiming towards the future of sustainable textile dyeing. The dyeing process pollutes 20% of industrialised water and creates vast amounts of CO<sub>2</sub>. Dyes can be toxic to our bodies and the fashion industry desperately needs sustainable dyeing innovators as this is one of its biggest polluters.

**The solution:** with this ongoing collaboration, the partnership will create a biannual capsule collection. The team wishes to produce two basic garments for this Project, a coat and a dress, to create [a total sustainable look dyed with bacteria](#), showcasing the potential of this innovative process.

The partners of the project:

- **Loreto Binvinat (Germany):** Anima is an ethical and sustainable fashion brand based in Berlin. They use only locally bought, organic, 100% natural, recycled or deadstock textiles. Colour, sustainable and natural dyes are one of the cornerstones of their brand.
- **Vienna Textile Lab (Austria):** the Vienna Textile Lab is a startup that produces dyes made from bacteria. This is an alternative to synthetic (petrochemical-based) dyes.

#### WORTH Partnership Project

A European Commission initiative that aims to support collaboration between PM and start-ups of designers, producers and technology companies to create new products and implement innovative and disruptive ideas. The initiative is implemented by a consortium across Europe, with the belief that creative industries (SMEs and start-ups) are the main drivers of economic growth in Europe.



The WORTH Partnership Project is funded by COSME, the European Union Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises.

#### Consortium:



AITEX Research Institute. Project Leader - Centre of excellence in applied research and advanced technical services for industry

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