



Textiles & Composites from Tree Bark

BARK CLOTH Europe

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BARK CLOTH® nominated for the 2011 Design Award of the Federal Republic of Germany

**Inimitable wood-free BioMaterial from 100% tree honoured. BARKTEX®_Plus-Latex_059 also
accoladed innovation prizes 'BioMaterial of the Year' and 'Materialica Design + Technology Award'.**

Freiburg i. Br. / Manaus / Kampala, Okt. 2010

Bark cloth is known as the world's most ancient fleece. Designers value the expressive character, unique texture, and sensual tactility. The DLR German Aerospace Centre is testing it as a matrix in fibre composites, which show extraordinary flexibility and punching tenacity for use in planes. In 2008, it was declared a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage.

The Ugandan-German family venture BARK CLOTH® is pioneer of systematic bark cloth development and production and dedicated to the continuing cooperation with small-scale organic farmers from Uganda – since 1999. The former development partnership project with the German government owned development aid organisation GIZ (formerly GTZ) secures now income for hundreds of farmer families and craftswomen.

The technical agroforestry-textile BARKTEX®_Plus-Latex_059 is a 100% tree product, gained without the need of using up any tree. In Oct. 2008 it received a 'Materialica Design + Technology Award', known as the most important prize in material engineering. In Dec. 2008 it was then awarded the '2008 BioMaterial of the Year' innovation prize during the 1st International BioMaterial Congress Raw Material Shift. It was a contribution to the 2009 UN International Year of Fibres and a joint development of the BARK CLOTH® group with the Brazilian rubber-collector co-operative Seringueiro Machado do Oeste and the Rainforest Institute – Institute for applied rainforest protection.

The two components bark-fleece and latex are extremely fast growing, permanently renewable resources, which can be harvested once (bark) to several times (latex) per year. Due to its latex-coated surface, the moldable fleece shows abrasion optimized, water- and stain-resistant characteristics. It is manufactured in a unique, zero-carbon-emitting, 'decentralized' and 'de-materialized' process where partially low-tech, yet intelligent solar technology is used. The substitute for petroleum-based materials has a potential for use as furniture upholstery, in sports/outdoor gear and fashion, for armoured cases and in the automotive sector. It is available in several versions. Since the latex is gained in wild cultivation by a rubber collector cooperative and thus protects the Amazon rainforest and since the deep-rooter *Ficus natalensis* is anyway widely planted to provide shade and nutrition from deep soil areas in mixed coffee- and horticultural farms, their extraction does not compete with agricultural land for food production.

The company continues to push forward the development of ecologically, economically, and socially sustainable fibre materials for use in interiors, for lifestyle and sports gear, and automotive. Furthermore, BARK CLOTH® is co-initiator of the German Foundation for Environment (DBU) financed NIOS (Sustainable Innovations in the Outdoor- and Sports Sectors) research project and co-owner of the International Bark Fibre Research and Training Institute in Kampala, Uganda. The goal is to become a crystallization point for the collocation of knowledge about bark fibre materials in Africa, Latin America and the South Pacific. For its efforts, BARK CLOTH® has been honoured with a number of internationally recognized awards for material engineering, design and (social) innovation.

Information: german-design-council.de/deutscher-designpreis, regenwald-institut.de, barkttx.com

By appointment to H.M. Kabaka Ronald Mwenda Mutebi II, 37th King of the Buganda Kingdom
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