

# Jungle to People

## J2P

A new material for the 21<sup>st</sup> century

### Key Points

Carmen Hijosa has developed a revolutionary new material that is made from natural fibre extracted from the waste leaves of the pineapple plant.

The new textile will be attractive to the fashion, furniture and interiors industries as it can be produced in a variety of colours, finishes and weights.

The project combines high social, ethical and environmental values. It will produce a natural, sustainable Cradle-to-Cradle material, which will benefit pineapple farmers and protect the environment by replacing textiles and leather that involve chemical and petroleum based treatments.

Samples of the prototypes are available and we are taking opinions from potential customers as to the attributes they would require for the final product.

## Rationale

This new material is the result of Carmen Hijosa's journey from the design and retailing of leather fashion handbags in Dublin (Chesneau) to research into tropical fibres and product design in the Philippines. The early phase of her course was influenced by the considerable damage caused to the environment by the tanning processes in leather production. Currently Carmen is finalising the development and design at the Royal College of Art in London.

Her quest is to add value to products made from natural fibres grown in countries like the Philippines by concentrating on available beneficial environmental qualities, good design and adherence to ethical business values. This approach aims to distribute benefits to developing countries from fashion, and other design driven industries, while at the same time integrating design with social responsibility and sustainability of production. The process will be based on products that avoid harm to the environment: Cradle-to- Cradle<sup>(SM)</sup>

Having researched the qualities of a range of tropical fibres, such as banana leaf and buntal, the fibre from the waste leaves of the pineapple fruit harvest is deemed most appropriate for the architecture of a new material because of its length, strength and ready availability. The main countries in which pineapples are grown are Brazil, Thailand, the Philippines and China as well as some African countries such as Kenya and Nigeria.

The new textile has been developed to the pre-manufacture stage and we have samples which show that it can be produced in a variety of colours, thicknesses and finishes. The latest prototypes are showing a pleasing richness of colour and an agreeable tactile surface distinctive from materials currently available in the market.

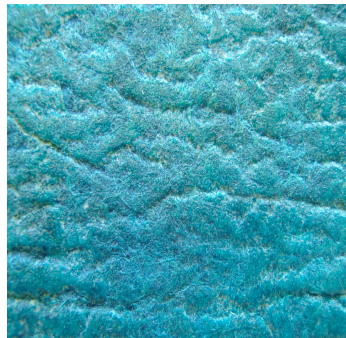
We are researching its potential applications in a number of sectors. It is planned to launch in 2011.

## Carmen Hijosa – background

Carmen Hijosa is a social entrepreneur and designer. In 1977 she co-founded and was designer of 'Chesneau Leather Goods', a manufacturing company of luxury leather goods in Ireland, exporting to key outlets throughout the world such as Harrods and Liberties in London.

Subsequently Carmen worked as a design consultant for the World Bank and the EU in countries such as the Philippines, Bolivia, Thailand, Spain and Germany. This work experience has been the base of the background knowledge, philosophy and design point of view that culminated with the development of new materials using natural fibres and skills from developing countries.

She is currently a research fellow in the Royal College of Art in London finalizing the development and design to this material.



© Carmen Hijosa 2010