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## Flocking technique and the 'House of Technique'

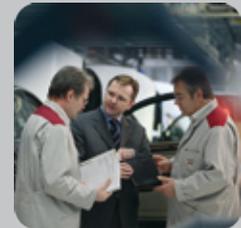
On the **21st of November, 2007**, in Essen, Germany, the **2<sup>nd</sup> seminary on flocking technique for precious and functional surfaces** takes place. Even though at the first seminary, the number of participants was relatively small, all participants were more than satisfied with the result. Long after the official end of this seminary, one sat together, did some experimenting and had a lively discussion. Mr. Hofmann/Swiss-Flock Germany, is the seminary leader.

For 60 years, the 'House of Technique' as an outsourced institute belongs to the RWTH Aachen (Rhine-Westphalia Technical University), Germany, and is Germany's oldest institution for

the professional further education of engineers. Each year, much more than 2000 seminars and conferences are in the program of the HDT - even on an international level.

Especially the automotive sector is one of the main topics.

The flock seminary mainly is targeted to this industrial branch but also to all other branches. Flocking may be used for technical as well as for esthetical purposes. Therefore the application possibilities of the flocking technique with its advantages are detailed explained. And for newcomers, the technical basics and the entire process of flocking is also explained. For more experienced applicators there will be technical details and subtleties to be informed of.



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The individual topics are as follows:

- Where can the flocking technique be used?  
Characteristics of a flocked surface  
Advantages of flocking  
Flocked articles
- Flocking process  
Principles of the electrostatic flocking  
Electrostatic-pneumatic flocking

- Material science, substrate
- Material recognition, pre-treatment
- Adhesives  
Which kind, their features and their application
- Flock  
Which kind, features, selecting criteria
- Flocking machines  
Which kind of, areas of application

- Testing technique  
Flock, adhesives, flocked product
  - Demonstration  
Practical demonstration with manual equipment
- OT red.

## Designers and developers are interested in flock at the Materialica

This year as well, the Association of the Flock Industry Europe (reg.), together with its member companies **Hella Priem Beflockungs GmbH/Peiting, Germany, and Maag Flockmaschinen GmbH/Gomaringen, Germany**, could welcome numerous designers and developers at the „*Flock Competence Centre*“. It was good that many names, previously only known from the phone, finally became a face.

Especially this year showed that the circle of persons dealing with the possibilities of a flocked surface becomes larger and larger. Apart from those products already known by the insiders, resp. the readers of our FLOCK-News, the visitors had the chance to view several novelties. Remarkable on the first day was the fact that information on flocked textiles of all kinds were requested. Be it flocking of modern garments, of seat covers or of elaborate wall covers; for all this there were interested designers, who wanted to convert their ideas with the help of flocking.

Especially interior designers were looking for inspirations for new creations. And once the interest is there, it is almost always followed the sometimes insistent path for the realisation, to which all participants of the „*Flock Competence Centre*“ willingly gave their support.

Jewellery designers received competent information the same as the management from R & D - departments of well-known companies.



Studies both reliable and new being presented at the „Flock Competence Centre“.

The health chair “muv.man”, flocked and receiving an award (see separate report), made by Messrs. Hella Priem Beflockungs GmbH, certainly received special attention, but also the smart idea by xxxd.de – a flocked storage dish for the cell phone during battery charging at the wall socket – was always good for a surprised smile at the info point of Messrs. Hella Priem Beflockungs GmbH.



Storage dish for cell phones and charging station directly at the wall socket

Another surprise offered Maag Flockmaschinen GmbH, for the visitors. Apart from economic opportunities to realise first visions of flocked products by designers and developers, certainly the entire program of this popular manufacturer of flocking machinery was presented.

However, the numerous samples produced with the LextraMax-process called special interest by the visitors. This is a technology, developed and patented by Messrs. Fiberlok Inc., based on the well-known Lextra process and allows for an In-Mold-decoration.

When producing this foil, a thin carrier foil is coated with a removable adhesive, into which now in a continuous process all requested designs

are mirror-inverted flocked into. Afterwards a cleaning takes place, the actual anchoring into the form foil and also several drying phases.



Opportunities of the LextraMax-process (Illustr: Maag Flockmaschinen GmbH)

\* \* \* \* \*



Finally, the carrier foil with the removable adhesive and all loose flock fibres is being removed. Now the form-foil may be punched, embossed, vacuum-deep drawn and sprayed from the back. The adherence of the flock fibres on the form-foil as well as the abrasion

fastness leave nothing to be desired.

As the LextraMax foil can be purchased as finished product, this material may only be placed into the casting mould. With the possibilities to change the form of the foil

prior to processing it, many geometrical specialities can be created. Maag Flockmaschinen GmbH offers their support to all interested in evaluating this procedure. The editors hope to be able to report more in detail about it in their next Flock-News issue. CL gm

## Hella Priem Beflockungs GmbH and Lamera receive the Materialica Design Award

There were already two awards products, realised with the flock technology, received at this years' Materialica at Munich, Germany.

Already for the fifth time, this price was handed out during the Materialica show. The goal of this yearly competition is to show the relevance of materials for the industrially design-oriented application and to bring together material manufacturers, designers and product developer for discussions. Also, to stimulate new paths of combining material and design as well as the successful combination of innovative material, technological precision and a high creative standard with industrial and consumer goods.

From the 81 applications, the jury under the chair person of Christian Labonte/Design Strategy, Audi AG, Germany, choose the winners in the areas material, surface, technology, product and students.



New innovations in the area office furniture „*mov.man*“ with integrated flocked PU-foam.

In the area “*surface*” the prize was given to our member company Hella Priem Beflockungs GmbH, Peiting, Germany, together with the manufacturer, Messrs. Aeris Impulsmöbel GmbH, Haar, Germany. With the design by Gecco Vision, Los Angeles, USA, both com-

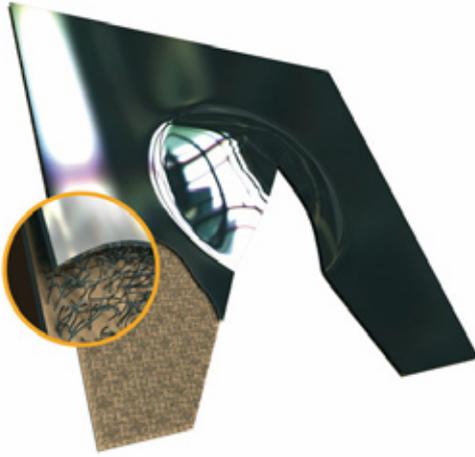


(from left to right) Mr. Glöckl/Aeris Impulsmöbel GmbH, and Mr. Matthias Hauf/Hella Priem Beflockungs GmbH, accepting the award handed over by Mr. Robert Metzger/MunichExpo GmbH and Christian Labonde/Design Strategy, Audi AG.

panies set new, creative accents in the area of flocked surfaces. Christian Labonde, pointing out in his honorific speech, that for the chair “*mov.man*”, flocking was applied to achieve a sturdy, stretchable and colour- and haptically convincing surface on a seat body made of PU-integrated foam.

In the area “*material*”, the Swedish manufacturer, Messrs. Lamera/Goeteborg, Sweden, also won an award for its stainless steel-microsandwich “*Hybrix*”. The participants of this years' 19th International Flock Symposium in Berlin, Germany, already know this innovative material, suitable for numerous new applications.

Because of the unique fibre structure of this material, it is very robust and at the same time rather light-weight with 1.5 to 3.9kg/m<sup>2</sup>. Thus, it weights sometimes more than half less than conventional stainless steel sheets. It may be formed in hydro-formers and in metal presses. And can be bended and shaped, thus opening very new designing space, especially with carry-on consumer goods.



Hybrix – flocked steel fibres create the middle layer of this stainless steel-micro sandwich (source: Lamera/Goeteborg, Sweden).

Both awards stand for the unique possibilities and time and again new innovations to be realised

with the flock technology. And at the same time, they exemplify show how professionally the numerous companies of the trade work together with designers and developers in order to successfully realise collectively new ideas.

*“For me, the MATERIALICA Design + Technology Award inhabits an outstanding position in the landscape of international design prizes.*

*On the one hand, because it is for all those having the potential to create something “new”,*

*from the technician, the designer to the material researcher up to the student. Since 2003, all winning products stand on a high level. On the other hand, because technically basic innovations have increased quantity-wise and they are ready for reasonable applications for the daily use. And exactly at this crossing point, there is the MATERIALICA Design + Technology Award situated and makes it for me as a design strategist in the automotive industry especially attractive“* says Christian Labonte, Design Strategy at AUDI AG.  
CL gm

## **K 2007 Düsseldorf, Germany: Optimistic expectations have been surpassed**

With optimism, the companies of the plastics- and caoutchouc industry came to the world largest exhibition, the K 2007, at Düsseldorf, Germany. The positive economic business conditions of the past months gave justified hope for a good run of this show. And the high expectations were even surpassed during the eight fair days! Ulrich Reifenhäuser, chairman of the

exhibitors advisory board of the K 2007, brought it to the point: *“We return to our homes in an excellent mood! Even during the fair there was a remarkable number of business contracts done, among some in the millions. And we could establish ties with so many interesting customer contacts and received so many precise inquiries for new projects that we quite surely expect a lasting growth for our trade. Our customers are heavily investing in new high-capacity plants and materials, in order to secure a good position for them in the active world-wide competition.“*

This appraisal was shared in all parts of the exhibiting industry and also among the raw material producers, machinery manufacturers and producers of goods. It was right from the first fair day that an excellent mood dominated all 3.130 exhibiting companies at the K 2007. And the active interest of the trade visitors from all over the world and their detectable readiness for investments considerably underlined, that the plastics- and caoutchouc- industry expects a successful future.

The 242.000 trade visitors came from more than 100 countries to the K 2007 at Düsseldorf, Germany. The very high internationalisation and the distinct investment readiness were remarked upon by all of the exhibiting industry. At the booths, there were intensive negotiations with the well prepared visitors, which came with quite concrete project inquiries to Düsseldorf. This indicates a good after-fair-business for the exhibitors, apart from the commercial success already achieved.



Numerous trade discussions were held at the booth of the flock industry.

Also at the booth of the Association of the Flock Industry Europe (reg.), an overwhelming visitors' interest for the flock technology could be registered. A bigger booth, an inviting, open booth concept and the total of 11 member companies from all areas of our trade convinced the interested parties.

The representations of the companies

**CHT R. Beitlich GmbH**  
**Fluor Technik System GmbH**  
**Fratelli Casati s.n.c.**  
**Kissel+Wolf GmbH**  
**Koschaum GmbH**  
**Maag Flockmaschinen GmbH**  
**PFT Flock-Technik GmbH**  
**Schuster Beflockungstechnik GmbH + Co. KG**  
**SwissFlock Inc.**  
**TSM GmbH**  
**Velutex Flock S.A.**

offered a comprehensive accomplishment spectre of the European flock industry. Often, projects could be finally discussed directly at the booth and further steps be agreed upon.

The selected exhibits not only showed the adepts a wide-spread picture of the diversified application possibilities, but also roused interest with newcomers - not the least because of their extraordinary colour schemes.



Lots of parts and a big colour variety awoke the interest of visitors



Spontaneous ideas could immediately be discussed in detail. And not only a lot of member companies and well-known faces visited the booth and used this opportunity for a collegiate exchange of experiences having a cup of coffee. It is therefore no wonder that the exhibitors at the collective booth of the Association of the Flock Industry Europe (reg.), predominantly were very satisfied with the fairs run.

**Rhodia** on their booth with Passorá presented their newest Polyamide 6.6 – fibre, which was especially designed for the use in the car industry. And with numerous flocked samples the unique touch came alive, which will further improve the sensoric but also the acoustic comfort in the interior of a car.



Numerous samples show the application possibilities and also demonstrate the special touch of Passorá



This fibre - among others - is certified according to the ECO-Tex Standard 100, and offers not only a natural feeling touch for the consumer but also a high light fastness and good abrasion resistances. The fibre may be finished with resp. materials in order to imply further characteristics to this product.

A high light at the booth of Messrs. **WMS Flocktechnik GmbH & Co. KG** surely was the flocked Trabbi.



The Flock Trabbi at the booth of Messrs. WMS Flocktechnik GmbH & Co. KG received numerous looks

This, meanwhile second variation of the Cult Car – of the late German Democratic Republic – lured many visitors and lured almost everybody to touch the object at least once. The international visitor groups had fun with it and rather quickly the car became a sought-after photo object. And the daily fair news reported about the Trabbi as well.

And Messrs. **Aigle Machine SRL**, too, presented their complete range of flocking machines at their own booth. Here, an electrostatic-pneumatic flocking unit was being presented to the visitors.



Andrea Levi and Dr. Alberto Sadun on the booth of Messrs. Aigle Machine SRL, were quite satisfied with the course of the fair

An interesting possibility of labelling or coding flocked surfaces presented Messrs. Videojet Technologies GmbH.

The exhibited Ink Jet Systems typically are used for the printing of prime packaging or for the direct printing of the finished product. Often, this is ordered by law and especially with food stuff or pharmaceuticals it may lead to legal disputes because of false labelling. Moreover with many procedures it is required by law to back track the path of

a product with a faultless coding of batches and lots and also secure the quality throughout the entire process.



Flocked and coded polishing disc

For this, the Videojet Technologies GmbH offer several opportunities. Apart from a coding with ink jet systems first tests have shown that under certain assumptions non-destructive laser coding for flocked surfaces are possible.

The next K takes place again at Düsseldorf, Germany, from 27th of October to the 3rd of November 2010.

CL-gm

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