Grown from Root by Zena Holloway

Crafting sustainable fashion, wearables and sculpture from grass root.
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Hosted by: YKSI Expo - Embassie of Rethinking Plastic

Project Information (EN)

Biodesign & Craft

By collaborating with nature, Zena Holloway grows grass root into wearable art and asks the question: What if we could grow our clothes from seed? Winner of the Green Concept Fashion Award 2022, her creations with root explore the promising possibility of root grown textiles and imagine a future where fashion is sustainable, home-grown and compostable. Roots are the invisible building blocks for our natural world - the foundations for life. Harnessing this living material to craft sculpture and wearables has physical and metaphorical implications that reach beyond the artefact itself. The pieces strive to embody the dream of organic design, to increase awareness of materials and to inspire a more thoughtfully crafted, sustainable world.

Grown not Made

Wheatgrass seed is cultivated in templates carved from beeswax. Over 12 days the shoots grow to 20cm while the roots bind below to form a naturally woven structure. Sustainability is at the heart of the process, where all the ingredients are organic and locally sourced. Water is reused from run off and any left-over shoot, seed or root is eaten as animal fodder. Each growing cycle produces a different result, so no two pieces ever grow the same. The challenge is to sew, cut, tease, join, pluck, set and reset until the root has found the optimal form. Root is an exciting and versatile material where the most honest results are achieved by working with the natural flows of the fibre. It can be grown into large flexible structures or set and moulded to form sturdy vessels.

Ocean Conservation

Zena has been diving since she was a child and travelled widely, working as a commercial underwater photographer. She has witnessed some of the most wondrous marine environments but increasingly this view is becoming rarer as the tsunami of underwater pollution, human impact and coral bleaching increases and depletes marine life. As a result, her interest in sustainability, materiality, and bio-design has grown exponentially. Curiosity led her to grow artefacts with mycelium before discovering the binding properties of root and taught herself how to wield it. The ocean and life underwater are her references, so she coaxes the root into the textures and patterns that emulate coral. In doing so, she strives to highlight the devastation of coral reef bleaching caused by global warming. Just as roots underpin the natural world that exists above ground, so too coral is the foundation for the ecosystems of our oceans.

Projectinformatie (NL)

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Image List

Filename	Caption	Credit
collar-white-1_1658643431.jpg	Grass root collar piece, 2021.	photo: Zena Holloway
dress-root-reef-long-1_1658643505.jpg	Root dress, bio-designed from wheatgrass root 2022	photo: Zena Holloway, model: Veronika Saunders
dress-root-reef-short-5_1658933712.jpg	Root dress, bio-designed from wheatgrass root 2022	photo: Zena Holloway, model: Olivia Collette
sponge-2_1658643714.jpg	Wheatgrass root, 2021	photo: Zena Holloway
vessel-5b_1658643832.jpg	Root Vessel - 28 x 25 x 18cm	

The images above are included in the ZIP under `/images`.