



The cloth from trees

**BARK CLOTH Europe**

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## Materialica Design + Technology Award for BARKTEX®\_Plus-Latex\_059

**Extraordinary non-wooden tree material awarded.**

Kampala / Porto Velho / Freiburg / Munich, October 2008

Bark Cloth is known as the world's most ancient fleece. It is valued by designers for its unique texture and sensual character. The DLR German Aerospace Center is testing it as a matrix in fiber composites, which show extraordinary flexibility and punching tenacity for use in airplanes. BARKTEX®\_Plus-Latex\_059 is a robust, textilish material from the sub-bark of *Ficus natalensis*, coated with natural latex of *Hevea brasiliensis*. In 1999, the European-African family venture BARK CLOTH®, pioneer of systematic bark cloth production, started in cooperation with Ugandan small-scale, organic farmers to produce bark textiles in industrially interesting amounts. Meanwhile, the former recipient of a foreign aid project in cooperation with the GTZ (German Technical Cooperation) not only stands on its own two feet, but it also secures incomes for hundreds of small-scale farm families. In 2005, bark cloth production was declared by UNESCO to be a cultural heritage of humanity.

Since 2003, the Materialica Design + Technology Award is internationally renowned as the most important award for material innovations. The awarded technical agroforestry-textile is an 100% tree product, but without need of destroying any tree. Its 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, de-centralized and "de-materialized" process where partially low-tech, yet intelligent solar technology is used. The substitute for petroleum-based fiber materials has a potential for use as furniture upholstery, in sports gear and fashion, for armored cases and in the automobile sector. It is available in several versions.

BARKTEX®\_Plus-Latex\_059 is a joint development of the Ugandan-German BARK CLOTH® company with the Brazilian rubber-collector co-operative Seringuero Machado do Oeste and the Freiburg based Rainforest Institute – Institute for applied rainforest protection.

BARK CLOTH® was already honoured with a 2005 Materialica Award and several other awards for material engineering, innovations and design. The company continues to push forward the development of ecologically, economically, and socially sustainable fiber materials for use in furniture, sports equipment, and outdoor clothing. In addition, 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 CLOTH® Research and Training Institute in Kampala, Uganda. Its goal is to become a crystallization point for the collocation of knowledge about bark fiber materials in Africa, Latin America, and the South Pacific rim.

Information: [materialicadesign.com](http://materialicadesign.com), [regenwald-institut.de](http://regenwald-institut.de), [barktex.com](http://barktex.com)

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