

Concrete in a New Light

Concrete jungle, concrete monstrosity... Concrete is one of the world's most ubiquitous building materials, yet its aesthetic reputation has become tarnished.

Challenging such negative perceptions is a young Hungarian architect. Combining artistic inspiration, technical innovation and entrepreneurial flair, Áron Losonczi has created concrete building blocks which transmit light. By arranging thousands of very thin glass fibers in parallel rows, then casting them within the concrete, he enables light to pass through the blocks. The result is a transformation. A solid gray mass becomes a luminous wall, alive with shadows.

"The idea came from a work of art I saw in my hometown, Csongrád," Mr. Losonczi told Associated Press. "It was made of glass and ordinary concrete, and the idea of combining the two struck me. Then I went to Stockholm to do post-graduate work in architecture and devel-

oped it there." He filed a PCT application for his light-transmitting building blocks in 2003.

To market his translucent concrete, Áron Losonczi set up LiTraCon in Csongrád in 2004. It won the Red Dot "Best of the Best" Design Award last year, and is attracting widespread interest from architects, designers and artists. First used in 2004 as a sunscreen in a private house in Budapest, it is now being considered for use in New York's Freedom Tower.

Readers should not expect, however, to see their cityscapes transformed just yet. Production costs and the optic fibre content currently make this a luxury product. But speaking at the "Liquid Stone" exhibition at Washington's National Building Museum in



The play of light and shadow through translucent concrete

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January, Mr. Losonczi looked forward to being able to reduce costs through international licensing deals and large scale production.

For more see: <http://www.litracon.hu>

See also www.wipo.int/pct/en/inventions/ for WIPO's PCT website Gallery of Notable Inventions and Inventors, featuring a selection of other interesting innovations.

Award at the 2004 Asian Innovation Awards, team member Professor Teoh Swee Hin spoke of "a message of hope" for patients undergoing reconstructive surgery for head injuries.

Clinical trials, described in the journal of the Congress of Neurological Surgeons (February 2006), reported new bone growth filling the porous space within 12 months with no complications. Following successful treatment of some 80 patients, Professor Teoh Swee Hin told us, trials have now been extended to eye

socket reconstruction; and to the treatment of young children suffering from craniosyntosis, in which the skull fails to grow normally.

A PCT application for the Bioabsorbable Plug Implants and Method for Bone Tissue Regeneration was filed in 2004 by the National University of Singapore. Osteopore International, set up to commercialize the applications, estimates the potential global market to be worth over US\$300 million.

For more see: <http://www.osteoporeinternational.com/>