

Loop.pH

environmentally responsive textiles

Just type in Loop.pH in Google or any other search engine and you will be overwhelmed by a flow of information about this British design duo and their projects. Apart from their own, extensive website www.loop.ph, which functions as an open design and research platform, there are a lot of articles praising the work of Rachel Wingfield and Mathias Gmachl, two designers collaborating under the name Loop.pH.

But what exactly is it that makes Loop.pH so successful? What distinguishes them from other product designers and what critical notes could be placed by what they are doing?

The work of Loop.pH focuses on researching surfaces and structures, mostly in textiles. Their projects, such as [Lightsleeper](#), [Weather Patterns](#) and [Blumen Wallpaper](#) consist of surfaces, like wallpaper or bedding, with integrated chips and sensors that respond to external, often environmentally related factors.

To me, this is the strongest part in their work: the way Loop.pH, through their designs, creates an awareness of our natural environment and the way we deal with it. As Mathias Gmachl puts it in an [interview](#) with dutch lifestyle-platform Bright: "Through our work we try to express and improve the connection between people and nature".

Of course this is a rather idealistic view, but the nice thing about Loop.pH, and perhaps also the key to their success, is that they deal with such an actual and serious topic in a light and playful way. For instance: through a wallpaper that will light up according to the amount of energy you are using in your home, to make you aware of how demanding all your electronic appliances can be.

Of course all this sounds very nice, but Loop.pH's objects, often using electronic chips and providing an important role for light, sometimes use a lot of energy as well. Only their latest project; [BioWall](#), works without any wires or electricity.

Another critical note: The [patterns](#) they use in a lot of their designs, although inspired by nature and therefore compatible with Loop.pH ideal of using nature as a source of inspiration, often look purely decorative and somewhat oldfashioned. Therefore I think they sometimes distract from the original intention. Maybe the use of more simple, less decorated forms would draw the attention more towards the idea of communication between people and their environment.

For me, the projects where they didn't use these decorative patterns, like [SonUmbra](#) and [BioWall](#), work a lot better.

But apart from this I think Loop.pH is a very innovative, inspiring duo that combine idealism and design in a very effective and positive way.

Interested? May 5-9th Loop.pH will be doing a workshop together with the Textile Department at the

See some of the works in action:

[Weather Patterns video](#)

[SonUmbra video](#)

[Blumen Wallpaper video](#)

