

PRODUCT NEWS

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A PARADE OF INNOVATIONS, IN PERSON OR IN PRINT

Outside of the pages of *Product News Tabloid*, the next best place for brand-new building products this summer was surely the AIA Convention in Los Angeles. The breadth and depth of the offerings were staggering, touching on every design and specification need one could imagine.

At the risk of leaving out 99 percent of the innovations we saw, here are a few noteworthy materials, systems and finishes that debuted in downtown L.A.:

Code killers. A number of new products help architects exceed codes with maximum creative flair. For Miami/Dade's stringent hurricane rules, for example, Alcoa enhanced Reynobond with Kevlar. Dietrich presented light-gauge steel framing with better limiting heights, load capacities and fire resistance. To eke more usable space from lobbies with standard fire-rated elevator doors, the Smoke Guard system provides advantages over typical code-compliant designs. And the decorative art glass launched by Safti proves that fire ratings and beauty need not be mutually exclusive.

Modern classics. We don't expect much from certain basic products, so it was refreshing to learn about AccuColorXT grout from Tec, which beats ANSI specs without any additives, and the new liquid concrete pigments from Grace Construction Products. Even the ivory-hued handle on Sloan's aptly named "Royal Classic" recalls a simpler time before hands-free washrooms, yet it contains up-to-the-minute technology.

Shining light. In outdoor lighting, Lumec introduced its uniquely shaped Oval series. Kim Lighting presented "Wall Commander," an unusual wall-mounted fixture offering a range of up- and down-lighting combinations from a single light source. Plus the solar envelope is getting more energy efficient. Edgetech's Super Spacer brings a structural foam to insulating glass units, whereas Kalwall+ Nanogel makes translucent panels also highly insulating, without much weight.

And then there were scores of exhibitors intent on making it easier to design and spec projects in the first place. The Green Globes system from Green Building Initiative, for example, provides an "interactive green management tool" for building project teams. New outsourcing solutions made it to Los Angeles, like Satellier, based in Chicago and India. And many software companies unveiled the latest versions of their flagship products, like AutoDesSys's form-Z release 6.0, sporting object-centric animation, model morphing and full-color 3-D printing.

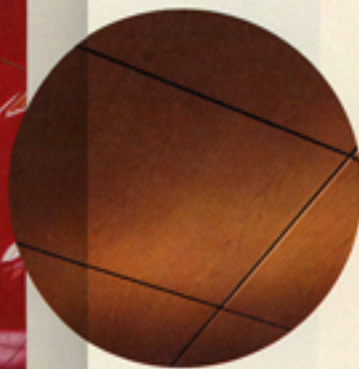
Indeed, the AIA Convention was a great place to see the leading edge of architecture. Couldn't make it? No problem. With *Product News Tabloid*, every issue is like visiting a trade show—minus the sore feet.



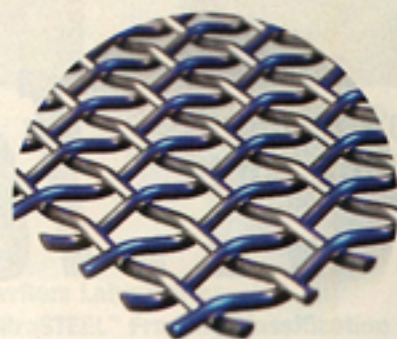
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ARCHITECTS' CORNER

Zoka Zola, AIA, RIBA

Principal, Zoka Zola - Architecture + Urban Design, Chicago, IL

Zola established her award-winning studio in London in 1990, and in 1997 moved to Chicago.

Favored material: I like precast concrete's potential. For example, some manufacturers are developing a new generation of insulated structural precast concrete panels. Other industry leaders are pursuing more sustainable components: replacing cement, aggregate and reinforcement materials with recycled materials; improving the strength of concrete to reduce the volume needed; and increasing concrete's durability.



"I like precast concrete's potential."

New building materials: Aerogel—I've been following it for a few years now, waiting for it to be fully transparent and inexpensive.

Why she became an architect: I was inspired by people contagiously passionate about architecture. Throughout my childhood in Croatia I thought I'd be a physicist working in some laboratory in Arizona. Now, I'm happy to be an architect.

Dream client: They are pioneers. Their projects have a strong reason to be developed and constructed.

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