

Sewer to design: Products made from reclaimed toilet paper

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180,000 trees worth of toilet paper is flushed down the toilets in the Netherlands each year. But what if that raw material was reclaimed and turned into useful products? The designers at Delft-based Studio Nienke Hoogvliet have created the gutter-to-gold range Watershatten to show that something from the sewer can be beautiful.



Studio Nienke Hoogvliet makes products from old toilet paper.

Here's how the project came about: The Dutch Water Authorities are working on recovering valuable energy and raw materials from wastewater and one of those raw materials is used toilet paper. Recently the Water Authorities [Aa & Maas](#) and [Hoogheemraadschap Hollands Noorderkwartier](#) installed fine sieves with which they can reclaim used toilet paper (cellulose). To celebrate the recovery of this material, they invited Studio Nienke Hoogvliet to design a range of products. Hundreds of tons of toilet paper is flushed down the toilets of the Netherlands every day and before the installation of the fine sieves, this material was burned. Using this cellulose again means that fewer trees are cut down and reduces the amount of energy required in the water cleaning process.

[Studio Nienke Hoogvliet](#) made a collection of objects consisting of a large table, lighting, and decorative bowls to show how this material can be integrated into our homes. The goal of the project is to create a positive association with this material. The cleaned pulp was made into unique, handmade products and combined with brass to show the great potential value in something from the sewers.

The collection was exhibited during Dutch Design Week 2016. Besides cellulose, the Water Authorities can also reclaim energy, phosphates and other materials from wastewater. To show all the possibilities, the table created by Studio Nienke Hoogvliet consists of eight drawers, with every drawer highlighting a material for the visitors.

Studio Nienke Hoogvliet is a textile, product and concept design studio based in Delft, the Netherlands. Founder Nienke Hoogvliet tries to raise awareness for certain issues through her designs. Most of her projects have something to do with vulnerability: in human, society or nature. She has a special interest in natural materials and production processes. [Hoogvliet's previous project SEA ME](#), in which she created yarn from sea algae, was exhibited alongside the Watershatten.

