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By Ben Dreith

Lucifer Lighting puts recycled ocean-plastic lights into mass production

Texas lighting company Lucifer Lighting has integrated ocean plastic into its Atomos downlighting, melting down millions of feet of fishing lines and nets into its injection moulding processes.

The family-run company has announced that all plastic elements of its Atomos series will utilise the salvaged ocean plastic, with the company rebranding the lights as Atomos Renew.

It represents the first architectural lighting company to commit to using such lighting in mass production. The ocean plastic will be used for lights built for both one and two-inch apertures.

Lucifer Lighting has shifted the production of its Atomos lights to use only salvaged ocean plastics

"To our knowledge, this is the first version of an American architectural downlight to be made of a repurposed fisherman's net material," Lucifer Lighting chief of staff Roselyn Mathews told Dezeen.

These lights are typically understated but used in countless architectural projects, from residential to larger projects.

While many studios have experimented with recycled materials, manufacturers often face problems while trying to bring these recycling solutions to scale.

The company said the move reduced revenues but aligned with overall sustainability goals

"Lucifer Lighting will make slightly less selling Atomos Renew using the repurposed plastic net from the ocean, but we felt that the environmental impact and pride in doing good outweighed the loss in revenue," said Matthews.

The challenges in putting it into production included sourcing and quality matching. Matthews noted that, surprisingly, some of the early iterations of the light actually smelled like fish.
"It was kind of funny looking back, but a big challenge at the time," recalled Matthews.

"Virgin material is easy to produce and manage, and very tightly controlled from a tolerance standpoint. Taking discarded waste and then recycling it is very difficult. It is not as easy as melting down fishing nets and then using that compound in injection mold machines," she continued.

Ultimately, the firm was able to maintain its production line, integrating the material directly into the production process. The brand said it looked for years for a workable source, and did not note who is supplying the ocean plastic, citing proprietary reasons.

Lucifer Lighting anticipates that 1,085 pounds of discarded fishing nets or 2.7 million feet of fishing line will be diverted from the ocean in the first 12 months of production.

The lights themselves have adjustable beams and are dimmable.

Ocean plastics have become a widely used material for prototypes, and examples of their use in mass production may be encouraging for other firms that are hesitant to commit resources to the practice.

The lights come in two sizes and feature dimmable LEDs

According to UK non-profit Surfers Against Sewage, approximately 11 million tonnes of plastic enter the ocean each year, leeching microscopic particles into the water and trapping marine life in discarded nets. Once salvaged, it has a range of uses.

In Portugal, architecture studio Atelier Backlar recently wrapped the facade of a home in the material, as did studio Space Available in Indonesia.

Products from sex toys to apparel and task chairs have also been produced with the material.

The photography is courtesy of Lucifer Lighting.