

SOFT WALL
 Rolls of honeycomb tissue paper are shown, being opened up into soft walls. A one-foot high, barrel can expand to be a wall that is over twenty feet long! The Soft Wall is being developed as a product in a non-woven fabric version as well as the paper type shown here.



THE SOFT HOUSE

Like many innovative ideas, Stephanie Forsythe and Todd MacAllen's Soft House began with one intention and arrived at another place altogether. While experimenting with crinkled paper - with the idea of creating stereo speakers - the architect-designers stumbled onto a great space-making concept. "Even before we knew for sure what we were doing with it," Forsythe says, "we were playing around with it as a material-looking at different shapes and things it could make."

At the same time their firm - Forsythe + MacAllen Design, in Vancouver - was developing a 200-unit housing scheme in Japan. "We were exploring ways to make living space flexible," Forsythe says, "particularly in how bedrooms could be closed up and literally put away when not in use."

Thus their free-form material experimentation led to Soft House, an accretion-like structure the designers believe possesses a multitude of functions, including emergency shelter, room divider and temporary wall. In developing the structure and looking for materials more durable than paper, Forsythe + MacAllen are receiving research assistance from Soudis a fibre manufacturer, and Freudenberg, a German textile maker. "After working with them," Forsythe says, "we realized that we could actually engineer our material from the fiber on up."

Soft House was a semifinalist in Metropolis magazine's Next Generation prize and one of five winners of the 2003 First Step competition, sponsored by Common Ground, a New York City organization seeking innovative solutions to homelessness. The designers hope to complete a single room occupancy prototype for Common Ground using the Soft House concept next year.

www.metropolismag.com

Everybody's watching the Atelier van Lieshout, but no one



60

SOFT SPACE

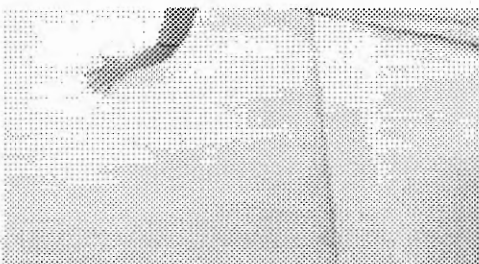
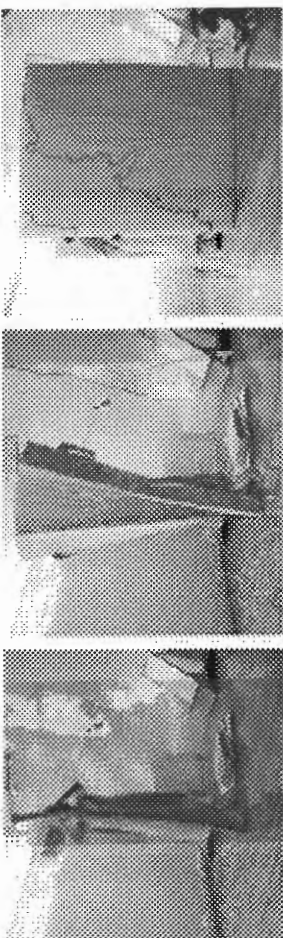
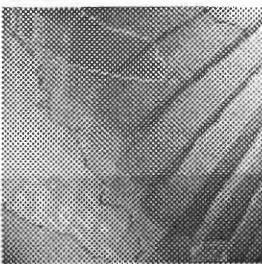
This plan view of models shows the different space configurations possible using softwalls. The main idea is to provide a flexible relationship between private rooms for sleep, study, and play and the shared living areas. "The idea is to create a sense of abstract sculptural quality to the soft system, which can transform a home environment into a place of work, or become a world of pure imagination in the hands of a child."

60

SOFT LIGHT

Because the multilayered, 12-inch thick honeycomb walls absorb and contain light within their layers, they give off a luminous shimmer similar to a block of ice or snow. "The effect is ephemeral and temporal, space with a shimmering quality that changes with both lightness and mood," Forsythe says.

can say if their anybody's watching the Atelier watching the Atelier



© 2003 by Stephanie Forsythe + Todd MacAllen
 Soft House is a trademark of the firm. For more information, visit the firm's website at www.forsythemacallen.com.