

DESIGN LIFE NOW

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Podcast Transcript: Abinand Lath

My name is Abinand Lath, and I am, at present, a material designer.

Sensitile is essentially a surfacing material that is active, so it's a living surface that responds to movement; it responds to changes in light, and it does these things without gadgetry, so it does it in a passive and, I believe, a more poetic sense, so it's a responsive material.

In the simplest scenario, it works through shadows, so it's activated by contrast or changes in light, and, usually, that means a shadow. The shadow, actually, is remapped on that surface as it moves along it, and bits and pieces of that shadow go to where they're not supposed to go, usually you get very used to your own shadow or you get used to the shadows of objects, and you fail to register them.

But by breaking them up into elements into little pixels or little components, you can make them into something new.

The technology behind fiber optics is called total internal reflection, which is the idea of very little loss of light, and the conduction of light in the same way that electricity's conducted. So that is the idea being used. We often say light fiber optics because fiber optics is something that's permeated in a general culture, and people are aware of it, but it's the same principle of allowing light to be conducted with very little loss within any transparent material.

It doesn't require a light source in the sense of fiber optics. It does require some light because it is, of course, light reactive, so it requires light, but that can be ambient light or it can be the light in a room, which already exists, so it is taking elements around it and reconfiguring them to create what we think is essentially a new aesthetic phenomenon.

Design comes from transformation. You take something and you filter it through your senses, and you make it into a newer element.