

Pincourt entrepreneurs open Canada's first three-dimensional print shop

John Jantak

Your Local Journal

Three-dimensional (3-D) printing may still sound like a foreign concept to the average person, but to the owners and operators of MatterThings, Canada's first 3-D print shop, the process is quickly gaining popularity and is already revolutionizing how products are manufactured.

Pincourt residents and entrepreneurs José Luis Hoyo and Claudia Schmidt became interested in the concept while working within the aviation industry and spending a lot of time with engineers.

"We had heard about the technology some time ago so we got one at home and spent time playing around with it," said Schmidt.

"It sounded really neat and we enjoy building stuff in general," Schmidt added. "We started putting our cre-

ations on-line and then we started getting orders from people with prototypes and different projects and we realized there could be a business potential."

As their simple and unexpected home-based business began to grow, Schmidt and Hoya decided to set

up shop in Pincourt's Le Faubourg de L'Île shopping plaza under the store banner name MatterThings late last September.

In less than four short months, walk-in traffic has steadily increased from people who were curious to learn about the technology to custom-

ers who are heading to MatterThings to have their 3-D objects printed out on site.

"People have been coming in with broken parts to see if they can be replicated, otherwise they would have to throw out an entire device," said

"I definitely see more shops like this opening up everywhere because it will give people the opportunity to manufacture stuff locally. In a sense, people will have access to their own factory."

-José Luis Hoyo



PHOTO BY JOHN JANTAK

Pincourt entrepreneurs José Luis Hoyo and Claudia Schmidt stand alongside three-dimensional printers at their store MatterThings at Le Faubourg de L'Île shopping plaza in Pincourt, Canada's first retail store dedicated exclusively to 3-D printing.

Schmidt. "A gentleman recently came in with a broken knob from his washing machine and we made a functional replica of it. He was thrilled because he can continue to use his washing machine."

Hoyo said 3-D printing is already revolutionizing the fields of dentistry

and medicine. Fillings, crowns and dentures are already being manufactured using 3-D printing technology and prosthetics are also being created for amputees.

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A photograph of a young boy with dark hair, smiling and holding a large blue and white globe. He is in a classroom setting with books and papers in the background. A white dove is flying above the globe.

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Print shop

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"You go to the dentist, they'll clean your teeth and if you have a cavity, they'll scan the hole, put the information into a computer and the 3-D printer will make the part," said Hoyo.

Schmidt proudly displays a hand with individual flexible fingers and thumbs that was printed at MatterThings and said the entire field of prosthetics is currently undergoing a major revolution.

"This is the beauty of what 3-D printing can do now, especially for children who have to change their prosthetics very often," said Schmidt. "Instead of spending \$40,000 for a prosthetic, they can get a \$50 to \$300 prosthetic made from a 3-D printer. All the joints are made from flexible filaments. That's what gives the prosthetic its flexibility. It's wonderful."

The most common filament used to

create 3-D objects at MatterThings is made from corn starch, a very durable, biodegradable product that can withstand temperatures of up to 60°C. And unlike standard oil-based plastics, the filaments made from corn starch allow solvents such as acetone to be applied without degrading the finished product.

As 3-D printing continues to evolve, more diverse materials are being used to manufacture products, including bamboo, brass, bronze and copper. Highly specialized printers are even being used for construction purposes and a complete house can be built using a cement extrusion process. "There is really no limitation to what you can do with these machines," said Schmidt.

As the cost of 3-D printers becomes more affordable, Hoya and Schmidt predict they will become a common fixture in many homes within the next five years. In the interim, they anticipate that more 3-D shops will open up throughout Canada that will allow customers to walk in and print out their

unique designs, just as Internet cafes quickly gained in popularity with the advent of the Internet.

"The printers are a bit more specialized because you have to calibrate the machines and you have to know how to build a 3-D item, but I definitely see more shops like this opening up everywhere because it will give people the opportunity to manufacture stuff locally. In a sense, people will have access to their own factory," said Hoya.

"When you think about companies that manufacture smart phone cases, for example, you need to manufacture one million cases, distribute them to 100 stores and hopefully sell two of them. In this case, you just download the file and build it in the colour you want," Hoya added. "For the owners of the design, it makes a lot more sense because you only manufacture what is



PHOTO BY JOHN JANTAK
An array of products that have been manufactured using 3-D printing technology including a prosthetic hand with fully flexible fingers and thumb are showcased at the store that opened last September.

needed so there's less waste. It's a win-win situation for everybody."

For more information about 3-D printing and the services offered by MatterThings, visit their website at www.matterthings.com.

Veterans salute all those who made this past Christmas one to remember



PHOTO COURTESY OF LINDA EAMES

Veterans from all over Canada residing at Ste. Anne's Hospital in Ste. Anne de Bellevue were overjoyed to receive the much appreciated gifts thanks to the generosity of so many throughout our region who supported the Christmas Gift Drive spearheaded by the Royal Canadian Legion's Hudson Branch #115. Shown above are The Legion's John Dalgarino, Johanne Grenier and Luce Piché of the Hospital's Volunteer Services, and Katherine Lamb of the Arts and Crafts Department.

JONES, Jean Ethel (nee Graham)

December 21, 1925 - January 5, 2015

Passed away peacefully at Le Foyer de Rigaud in Rigaud, QC. Wife of the late Ronald George Jones. She leaves to mourn her sister Elizabeth (Bessie), daughter Linda (Philippe), sons Ian, Greg (Heidi), Allan and David. Cherished grandmother to Ronald, Bradley, Jasper and Eddy. She will be lovingly remembered by many cousins, nieces, nephews and friends. Predeceased by her son Stephen Ross Jones, six sisters and two brothers. The family would like to thank the staff of Le Foyer de Rigaud for their care and compassion for the past two years. The family will hold a private service and Celebration of Life will take place at a later date to be announced.

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