

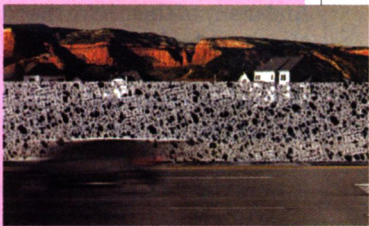
POLLUTION CONTROL

Concrete That Clears the Air

Concrete is about to start helping in the fight against air pollution, thanks to a new recipe spiked with titanium dioxide, a compound that becomes chemically active in sunlight. Originally concocted by Italy's Italcementi for its bright white, self-cleaning features, the product, called TX Active cement, also neutralizes air pollutants such as benzene, carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxide, and others.

In the U.S., where the mix is distributed by Essroc Italcementi Group, the first application may be to improve air quality

at schools near highways. Working with school districts in Los Angeles and elsewhere, architectural firm Fieldoffice has designed exotic-looking barriers to keep road smog and noise away from areas where kids live, study, and play. To maximize the walls' surface area and thus their pollution-eating potential, the designers plan to use concrete-forming gear that employs ink jet printing technology to create Swiss cheese-like patterns in the walls. —Adam Aston



A rendering of a pollution-eating concrete wall