



## Formafantasma – De Natura Fossilium April – June 2014

Gallery Libby Sellers is pleased to present Formafantasma's 'De Natura Fossilium' – a new body of work that investigates the culture of lava in the Mount Etna and Stromboli regions of Sicily, two of the last active volcanoes in Europe.

Historically craftsmen would mould molten lava erupting from small craters into celebrated and elaborate forms. This time-honoured craft has effectively been rendered worthless as now only inexpensive souvenirs are produced. Formafantasma's investigations and the resulting objects will challenge this situation and realise the full potential of the lava as a source material for exquisite and collectible objects. As both their earlier Moulding Tradition (2009) and Botanica (2011) collections highlight, this re-evaluation of lost processes and materials is a constant theme in their work, as is their questioning of the relationship between tradition and local culture and the relationship between objects and the idea of cultural heritage.

Studio Formafantasma was established by Simone Farresin (b.1980) and Andrea Trimarchi (b.1983), two Italian-born designers who have since settled in the Netherlands following their graduation from the IM Master's degree at the Design Academy Eindhoven in 2009. They have worked with a wide variety of industry partners including Fendi, Nodus, Droog and Booo. They have presented works during the International Salone del Mobile and Dutch Design Week, the International Contemporary Furniture Fair in New York and London's annual Design Festival. Museums such as the Stedelijk Den Bosch, London's Victoria & Albert, the Vitra Design Museum, the Chicago Art Institute and the Mint Museum of Craft and Design in North Carolina have all acquired Formafantasma's designs for their permanent collections. While design critic Alice Rawsthorn, and Paola Antonelli, senior design curator at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, have listed Formafantasma as one of twenty studios that will influence design in the next decade.

As designers Formafantasma are interested in reinvigorating threatened craft techniques, using natural resources and exploring the concept of locality and craft in contemporary production. The term 'craft' tends to evoke nostalgia for lost values and traditions, and in specific cases has come to symbolize national identity. Considering this connection between craft practices and cultural locality, 'De Natura Fossilium' represents a continued step in their development, maintaining elements that have characterized their work to date. While still in development, the collection is centred on the expressive possibilities and technical potential of rhyolite, a type of volcanic rock rich in silica (the main component of glass). Formafantasma will explore the unique qualities of this under-researched natural resource. From kiln re-melting to glassblowing, the material will be investigated in its full potential in order to create original products.

For further information, please contact the gallery on the details below. Please note that the project is still in development so images of finished works are not available.