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Formafantasma experiment with lava to create furniture collection

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Alicudi vase, Linguaglossa box and Zafferana box

Milan 2014: objects made out of lava from Mount Etna in Sicily will be presented by design duo Formafantasma in Milan next week (+ slideshow).



Small Pillar table

Sicilian-born Simone Farresin and Andrea Trimarchi of *Formafantasma* experimented with cooled lava from the volcano's eruption last year to create the *De Natura Fossilium* collection, made in collaboration with Gallery Libby Sellers.

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Small Pillar table

"When Mount Etna erupted on 20 November 2013, the dramatic event was broadcast by a haunting noise of rumbling stones and a vast plume of dark smoke that completely obscured the sun," said the designers.



Small Pillar and Big Pillar tables

"Mount Etna is a mine without miners – it is excavating itself to expose its raw materials."



Big Pillar table

After the eruption, the lava cooled and solidified into dark grey basalt rock. Formafantasma collected samples of the rock from Etna and nearby Stromboli, which they melted and blew to create glass, wove into fibres for textiles and milled into various shapes.



Big Pillar table

"When we experimented with the melting, mouth blowing and casting of lava, the research and tests took a really long time," Trimarchi told Dezeen. "The difficult part was to understand the right cooling time of the material. We had thousands of tests made that just cracked during the cooling time."



Stools from De Natura Fossilium collection

The pieces were used to create stools, coffee tables and a clock with linear forms that reference the work of Postmodern designer Ettore Sottsass.



1614 stool

Paired with brass elements, the rock has been cut to reveal strata and textures formed as it cooled quickly.

A crater of powdered stone forms the base of a circular clock, which has brass hands that turn inside the depression.



Monti Silvestri clocks

Sections of the tables and stools patterned by the air holes formed in the rock are held in place with brass plates and secured with threads.



Monti Silvestri clock

The glass was mouth-blown into vessels or moulded into boxes shaped like the dwellings at the foot of the volcano.



Monti Silvestri clock

A black mirror suspended on a string over a brass frame is balanced using a chunk of rock.



Formafantasma's collection will be shown at Palazzo Clerici in Milan city centre from 8 to 13 April.



Stromboli bowl