

# A Force of Nature: Studio Formafantasma Transforms Volcanic Rocks into Design Objects

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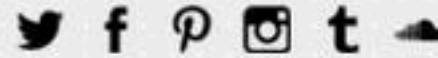
Lipari, 2014 (detail)

Occhio-di-piemonte basalt, lava rocks, brass, textile.

H35 x W35 cm

The Nature Fossilium by studio Formafantasma.

Photo by Luisa Zanoni. Courtesy of Gallery Libby Sefton.



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**Lipari, 2014 (detail)**

Occhio di pernice basalt, lava rocks, brass, textile.

H35 x W35 cm

'De Natura Fossilium' by studio Formafantasma.

Photo by Luisa Zanzani. Courtesy of Gallery Libby Sellers.

We never cease to be amazed by the work of **Andrea Trimarchi** and **Simone Farresin**, the design duo known as **Studio Formafantasma**. Based in Eindhoven, The Netherlands, the two Italians really know how to produce perfectly-finished objects of superior craftsmanship that also possess a sophisticated conceptual framework. In what could be their most intriguing collection to date, **Formafantasma's** new body of work titled '**De Natura Fossilium**' is an exploration of the relationship between Sicily's volcanoes and the communities surrounding their trembling and often fiery slopes. Following its unveiling during Milan Design Week last month, **the collection is currently on display at Gallery Libby Sellers in London (41-42 Berners street, London W1T 3NB) , and will be open until 12 June 2014.** The exhibition is accompanied by a photography series by Formafantasma's long-time collaborator **Luisa Zanzani**.



**Valle del Bove, 2014**

Mouth blown lava, lava rock, Murano glass.

H35 x W35 x D25 cm

'De Natura Fossilium' by studio Formafantasma.

Photo by Luisa Zanzani. Courtesy of Gallery Libby Sellers.





**Small Pillar, 2014 (detail)**

Basalt, Occhio di pernice basalt, brass, textile.

H50 x W35 x D35 cm

'De Natura Fossilium' by studio Formafantasma.

Photo by Luisa Zanzani. Courtesy of Gallery Libby Sellers.

Consisting of various objects for the home such as bowls, decorative boxes, a stool and small tables, '**De Natura Fossilium**' features almost otherworldly materials like basalt, lava rocks and obsidian glass, either carved into geometric forms or used unaltered, bound together with brass or textile strings. The collection borrows its title from a 16th-century treatise on minerals and rocks by **Georgius Agricola** which constitutes one of the earliest scientific attempts in the field of **mineralogy**. Just as **Agricola** was a pioneer in his science, namely through, naming and classifying the earth's rocks and minerals for the very first time, **Studio Formafantasma** has also, in turn, attempted to approach the use of volcanic stones and minerals anew, both through a study of traditional arts and crafts relating to the rocks found on **Etna** and **Stromboli**, as well as through a rigorous research process on contemporary manufacturing techniques that push these volcanic materials to new, exciting extremes.

Apart from the volcanic rocks, natural glass and metals that have been used, **Trimarchi** and **Farresin** have also deployed the use of **lava-stone thread** which was developed as a more sustainable alternative to carbon fibre. The designers have utilised this thread in the weaving of two **tapestries** depicting the ancient deities of the Sicilian volcanoes, **Hephaestus** and **Athena** (Vulcan and Minerva for the Romans). The heat and force of the volcano was also symbolically harvested during the project in the production of mouth-blown glass using lava stones, a process that reverses the natural behaviour of the volcano by re-melting the solidified lava stones into pitch-black glass.



**Athena, 2014**

Basalt fibre, cotton.

H190 x W120 cm

'De Natura Fossilium' by studio Formafantasma.

Photo by Luisa Zanzani. Courtesy of Gallery Libby Sellers.





**Efesto, 2014**

Basalt fibre, cotton.

H190 x W120 cm

'De Natura Fossilium' by studio Formafantasma.

Photo by Luisa Zanzani. Courtesy of Gallery Libby Sellers.

Despite its experimental character, the collection is extremely refined and balanced. Dedicated to Italian designer **Ettore Sottsass** – the master's influence in the modular designs, linear forms and quasi-haphazard compositions of the '**De Natura Fossilium**' collection are in fact easily detectable. The sleek glass and basalt volumes are juxtaposed with natural lava stones in a gesture that refers to the traditional lava sculptures of Sicilian artisans traditionally carved only on one side (giving the sculpture a double face, one carved by man, the other carved by nature). The collection also includes a conceptual clock, a rather meditative piece that can also be read as a Zen art installation: three basalt bowls, indicating the hours, minutes and seconds, contain volcanic sand from three different ages, gently being pushed around by a brass clock hand. With symbolic elements such as rotating earth and moving time, this could indeed be one of the most poetic pieces of design we have seen in quite a while.

**'De Natura Fossilium' collection credits:**

*Concept, Design: Andrea Trimarchi, Simone Farresin*

*Development: Francesco Zorzi, Nicola Lorini, Emile Kirsch, Bettina Bohm, Luisa Zanzani, Francesco Pace*

*Production: Ingv/Catania (Rosanna Corsaro, Lucia Miraglia) Carl Aubock/Vienna, Berengo Studio, Leerdam Glass Museum, Textiel Museum Tilburg, Sergio Grasso, Teun Vinken*

*Photo Credit: Luisa Zanzani*

*Special thanks to: P-S, Michela Pelizzari, Federica Sala*



**Stromboli, 2014**

Occhio di pernice basalt, lava rock, brass.

H30 x W40 cm

'De Natura Fossilium' by studio Formafantasma.

Photo by Luisa Zanzani. Courtesy of Gallery Libby Sellers.





**Monti Silvestri, 2014**

Basalt, brass, electrical components, lava sand.

Each piece: H35 x D35 cm

'De Natura Fossilium' by studio Formafantasma.

Photo by Luisa Zanzani. Courtesy of Gallery Libby Sellers.





**Iddu, 2014**

Obsidian mirror, lava rock, brass.

H150 x W40 cm

'De Natura Fossilium' by studio Formafantasma.

Photo by Luisa Zanzani. Courtesy of Gallery Libby Sellers.



**Iddu, 2014 (detail)**

Obsidian mirror, lava rock, brass.

H150 x W40 cm

'De Natura Fossilium' by studio Formafantasma.

Photo by Luisa Zanzani. Courtesy of Gallery Libby Sellers.



left: **1892 Stool, 2014**

Occhio di pernice basalt, brass, textile.

H60 x W30 x D30 cm

right: **1614 Stool, 2014**

Basalt, brass, textile.

H60 x W30 x D30 cm

'De Natura Fossilium' by studio Formafantasma.

Photo by Luisa Zanzani. Courtesy of Gallery Libby Sellers.





Etna Photo Collection, 2014 by Luisa Zanzani.

Various dimensions

'De Natura Fossilium' by studio Formafantasma.

Photo by Luisa Zanzani. Courtesy of Gallery Libby Sellers.





**Linguglossa, 2014**

Mouth blown lava, lava rock, Murano glass.

H35 x W25 x D25 cm

'De Natura Fossilium' by studio Formafantasma.

Photo by Luisa Zanzani. Courtesy of Gallery Libby Sellers.



**Alicudi, 2014**

Mouth blown lava, lava rock, Murano glass.

H35 x W35 x D25 cm

'De Natura Fossilium' by studio Formafantasma.

Photo by Luisa Zanzani. Courtesy of Gallery Libby Sellers.





left: **Small Pillar, 2014 (detail)**

Basalt, Occhio di pernice basalt, brass, textile.

H50 x W35 x D35 cm

right: **Big Pillar, 2014**

Basalt, Occhio di pernice basalt, brass, textile.

H90 x W35 x D35 cm

'De Natura Fossilium' by studio Formafantasma.

Photo by Luisa Zanzani. Courtesy of Gallery Libby Sellers.



**Small Pillar, 2014**

Basalt, Ochio di pernice basalt, brass, textile.

H50 x W35 x D35 cm

'De Natura Fossillum' by studio Formafantasma.

Photo by Luisa Zanzani. Courtesy of Gallery Libby Sellers.





Etna Photo Collection, 2014 by Luisa Zanzani.

Various dimensions

'De Natura Fossillum' by studio Formafantasma.

Photo by Luisa Zanzani. Courtesy of Gallery Libby Sellers.

sources:

[studio Formafantasma](#)