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## Meet the founder of Paul Cockledge Studio testing lines between art and function

Presenting everything you need to know about the  
London-based architectural designer presenting at this  
month's London Design Festival

By Poppy Malby  
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Paul Cockledge is a London-based designer working with architecture in a way that blurs the lines between art and function. As the founder of Paul Cockledge Studio, over the past ten years we have seen him collaborate with high-end brands such as Swarovski and Hermès and he has also been commissioned by Moma and Art Basel Hong Kong. Cockledge's projects are forever unique; his work never fails to make passers-by stop in

their tracks. You can get a glimpse of his enchanting installations at this month's London Design Festival as his next project, "Please Be Seated", questions the rhythm of evolving communities. Using scaffolding planks, Paul Cocksedge will reimagine and reuse the building wood to create a design that incorporates form and function. Not only is this integral to our eco-conscious society right now, but it also acts as a symbol for interaction and growth. The installation features curves for people to sit on and walk under, further enhancing London's largest pedestrianised neighbourhood. Read on to find out more about Cocksedge and his inspiration below...



© Please Be Seated by Paul Cocksedge

### **1. Where were you born?**

I have Greek and Welsh blood, but I was born in North London. I really identify as a Londoner, so a lot of inspiration for my work comes from things I see here, the people I meet and the energy of the city.

### **2. What did you want to be when you were growing up?**

When I was really young I wanted to be a pilot, but that changed over time. My school wasn't very art-focused and neither was my family, so my journey to creativity came from other experiences. My first girlfriend had very creative parents and they exposed me to

that way of thinking about things and a different rhythm of life that doesn't mean the usual nine to five.

**3. What is the best piece of advice you have ever received? What is the worst?**

The best advice is what I say to myself: keep it light. I remember the good advice and forget the bad, as this can hold me back.

**4. Who is the one person, dead or alive, that you would like to have dinner with and why?**

Roald Dahl. Of all the books I've read, his are the ones I remember the most.

**5. Where is your favourite place on this planet?**

Hackney Marshes. It's wild and people have found their own way of using the landscape, which is amazing. There are kids running through meadows, people walking dogs, families having picnics... no one's telling people how to use the space. It's free.

**6. What is your phone screensaver at the moment?**

An unfocused picture of the sun I took in [Crete](#), sending out 360 degrees of glowing energy.



© Styrene by Paul Cocksedge for the Stepney Green Design Collection

**7. What is currently on your playlist?**

Opera.

**8. What are your last three Google searches?**

“Margate Clifton Baths”, “Meaning of emoji purple devil face”, “Why do people cry to classical music”.

**9. What gives you inspiration?**

It’s a cocktail of things. For me, it’s about not overthinking, because that takes out the magic. It’s about the randomness of everything and being open to it all. I also like walking around London, waiting for an idea to pounce.

**10. We all love a movie night, so what is your favourite film of all time?**

Me and my brother watch *The Dark Knight* together every year. I can’t really tell you why, but each time there’s a new discovery.

**11. What is your favourite art gallery in the world and why?**

Fondation Beyeler in Switzerland. It’s set in beautiful grounds, so you’ve got nature, outdoor sculpture and an incredible building. Water surrounds it and light reflections come into the exhibitions. The whole building is filled with light.

**12. If you could collaborate with anyone, who would it be and why?**

Collaborating with Ingo Maurer would be fantastic. He’s so knowledgeable, but he’s also kept that sense of freedom. I had a glimpse of working with him when I graduated and experiencing his creative energy again would be such an honour and would challenge me. At the other end of the spectrum, I’d love to step outside the design world and work with governments and local communities to see what design could do in this context.

**13. What is your favourite sandwich filling?**

Cheese and pickle.





© Unbound by Paul Cockledge at the Norman Central Library

**14. If you could visit any artist's studio, whose would you visit and why?**

There's something seductive about a major artist such as Anish Kapoor or Olafur Eliasson, who have big teams and huge resources. But equally there's a wholesomeness about talking to one person making something. I'd like to discover an individual working solo on their own creativity and talk about the materiality and intimacy of ideas. I can relate to this because my studio is small, personal and hands-on – and that's how we like it.

**15. What was the last thing you bought?**

A juice from Organico on Broadway Market in Hackney, London. I have it every morning and I've even got my own recipe on the board, under my name.

**16. What is your favourite piece of clothing you own?**

A jacket that [Issey Miyake](#) gave to me. It has zips that you can open to fill with insulation – newspapers, for example.

**17. What is hanging on your walls at home?**

I've just got into making picture frames, so at the moment there are a lot of empty frames. There's also a piece I made by heating up metal, which releases iridescent colours.

**18. What is one staple item all men should own?**

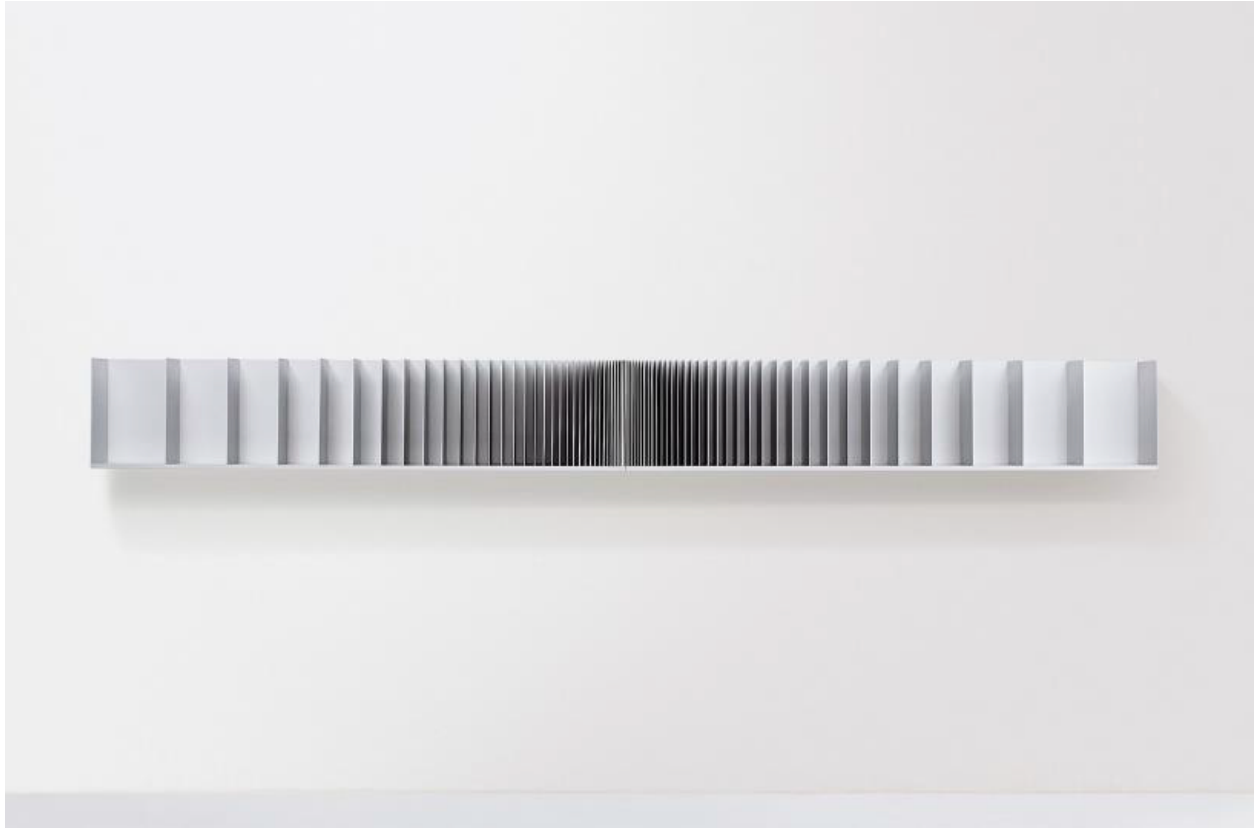
[Anti-ageing cream.](#)

**19. What is your favourite cartoon and why?**

*Scooby-Doo*, because it's a classic.

**20. So, what is next for Paul Cocksedge?**

I'm doing a lot of trips to the US. There's also LDF coming up, of course, and later this year we're launching a very special project inspired by the next chapter of my life.



© Rhythm Shelf by Paul Cocksedge

**See landmark project 'Please Be Seated' by Paul Cocksedge at Finsbury Avenue Square, Broadgate, commissioned by British Land for [London Design Festival](#), from 14-22 September.**