

FRIEDMAN BENDA
515 W 26TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001

PAUL COCKSEGE
PERFORMANCE
MAR 24 – APR 17 2021



Performance Excavation, 2020, concrete, glass, LED



Performance Rearranged, 2020, steel, glass, LED

New York, NY (October 27, 2020) – Friedman Benda is pleased to present British designer Paul Cockledge's fourth solo show with the gallery entitled *Performance*. The exhibition explores the processes of craft with three bodies of work that capture and express their theatricality in material form: *Performance*, *Push* and *Excavation*. Examining the relationship between maker and audience, and the idea of the outsider watching the craftsman at work, each series is a vehicle for storytelling, drawing inspiration from and abstracting the physical process of making.

The *Performance* series follows the centuries-old technique of glassblowing, one that Cockledge has been interested in for over a decade. For this series, Cockledge synthesized the finished blown glass objects and the tools and materials used in this process to create his final works. Cherry wood molds have been shaped and finished using CNC-cutting, and molten glass blown into them to create a singular glass object. Rather than discarding the blackened and burnt wood after use, it has been rotated, moved, twisted, cut up and reassembled like a puzzle, and transformed into a piece of furniture that sits beneath the suspended glass object. For one table, Cockledge sliced metal to create infinite possible variations similar to a digital code, with the result reminiscent of a canvas filled with lines and forms, that the viewer is left to decode.

The *Push* series brings giant blocks of concrete together with sheets of metal, curled up like large paper quills and inserted into the blocks where they unfurl and lock into place. These large-scale sculptural seating works explore the tension between the two materials through the cantilever and the drastic contrast between the two materials.

This exhibition also presents *Excavation*, the follow-up to Cockledge's acclaimed *Excavation: Evicted* series, which saw him turn concrete cores mined from beneath his studio into pieces of furniture. For *Excavation*, the designer collected cores drilled from around the country by essential workers during lockdown, which were used to blow glass to create a suspended lighting fixture to accompany the piece. As such, the process is a kind of record of the pandemic, capturing a moment in time. "They're not just any random block of concrete, they're part of a moment in time when the world felt upside down," says Cockledge.

About Paul Cocksedge

Born in London in 1978, Paul Cocksedge received an MA in Product Design from the Royal College of Art while studying under Ron Arad. Cocksedge founded Paul Cocksedge Studio with Joana Pinho in 2003, and went on to explore the limits of contemporary design practices and processes through a diverse design practice. Cocksedge has been exhibited worldwide, and was included in the 2018 Beazley Designs of the Year exhibition at the Design Museum in London for his series *Excavation: Evicted*. His works are included in the permanent collections of major museums around the world, such as the British Council, London; Victoria & Albert Museum, London; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Cocksedge is known for his public installations and large-scale projects, which include *A Gust of Wind*, a light sculpture for the Eskenazi Museum of Art at the Indiana University, USA, and an upcoming 105 feet long canopy for the Oman Botanic Garden, which will be one of the largest gardens of its kind in the world. This past year, Cocksedge debuted *Please Be Seated*, a large-scale sculptural pavilion that offered the community seating without obstructing the circulation of the street in Broadgate, London, and Exploded View Bridge, a permanent bridge construction in Cape Town made of sustainable cross laminated timber.

About Friedman Benda

Friedman Benda identifies and advances key narratives in postwar and contemporary design with a commitment to a critical view of design history. We aim to expand the dialogue in the field from its established sources, exploring perspectives that have previously been marginalized. Spanning five continents and four generations, Friedman Benda represents a roster of seminal established and emerging designers, as well as historically significant estates. Since 2007, the gallery's exhibitions, publications and collaborations with institutions have played a vital role in the development of the contemporary design market and scholarship. Dedicated to archiving the pioneering voices in our field, the gallery hosts Design in Dialogue, a weekly series of online interviews with leading architects, designers, curators, and critics. For further information please visit www.friedmanbenda.com and the gallery's Instagram [@friedman_benda](https://www.instagram.com/friedman_benda) and [YouTube channel](#).

Artist Statement

I've spent years watching glassblowers, and feeling like an observer seeing a performer. I wanted to express the relationship between maker and audience with this body of work, and close the distance between the two. It's about capturing the physicality of the making - the heat, the marks, the smell and the burning. Usually, the pristine end product is the focus, but I wanted to bring the rawness of the actual process to the forefront.

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