

# SURFACE

LETTER FROM MILAN

## My Four Favorite Things From Milan's Design Fair

At this year's Salone del Mobile, our editor-in-chief was taken with projects that thoughtfully tap into tradition.

BY SPENCER BAILEY

April 11, 2017

Of the hundreds of new things I came across during this year's Salone del Mobile design and furniture fair, the one I found the most captivating was a collection produced by the London-based designer Paul Cockledge. Titled "Excavation: Evicted" and presented by New York design gallery Friedman Benda in collaboration with Beatrice Trussardi, the installation comprised six furniture pieces—four dining tables, a coffee table, and a bookcase—made from chunks drilled out of the floor of Cockledge's studio, from which he is being evicted.



SLIDESHOW

Excavation: Evicted

Bailey, Spencer. "My Four Favorite Things from Milan's Design Fair," *Surface*, April 11, 2017.

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After spending 12 years in the space, the designer felt (rightly) attached to it and wanted to take a piece of it with him, a commemoration and manifestation of years spent grinding away and building his career within its walls. (He has also cited Brexit as relevant, suggesting that the project reflects the feelings of upheaval happening right now in London and Great Britain at large, though I feel that's a bit of a conceptual stretch.)

Cocksedge's effort could, on the surface, be compelling as an idea but weak in execution. Thankfully, that's not the case. He skillfully incorporated the concrete flooring, mostly reusing it as supports for the units, and in the case of two tables, he even included a layer of Victorian-era bricks. Aesthetically, the work stands out on its own; paired with the story and process behind it, though, it offers a one-two punch, a combination so potent it left me, well, floored. Dramatically showcased in a cavernous, bunker-like space, the collection is deeply historical yet entirely contemporary.

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