

Silva Mineralis (2025)

sculptural vessels series

Press Release

Introduction

Silva Mineralis is a new series of sculptural vessels developed by COKI through long-term material research. Situated at the intersection of contemporary craft, material investigation, and sculptural practice, the series reflects an ongoing inquiry into how matter evolves over time. Rather than proposing objects defined by function, Silva Mineralis presents forms conceived as presences: material states shaped by slow processes, geological references, and quiet transformation.

Material research and process

At the core of Silva Mineralis lies a composite stone developed through experimentation with Italian mineral aggregates and botanical pigments. The material is entirely cement-free and resin-free, relying instead on traditional mineral balances inspired by ancient Roman and medieval stone practices, informed by the chemical and physical research developed by Coki Barbieri over recent years. The process requires extended drying and curing times, allowing the material to stabilise naturally without mechanical acceleration.

Each vessel incorporates Italian rock salt crystals directly within the stone matrix. These crystalline inclusions are not applied as surface decoration; they are embedded during formation, allowing crystallisation, tonal variation, and subtle shifts in surface quality to emerge from the material itself. Colour arises organically through mineral composition and chemical interaction – ferruginous reds, mineral blues, muted greens – rather than through applied pigments or finishes.

Every piece is shaped, compacted, and refined by hand in Italy. The surfaces undergo successive stages of erosion, smoothing, cleaning, and polishing, revealing textures that remain sensitive to environmental conditions such as humidity and light. The resulting forms hold a quiet tension between stability and transformation.

Conceptual intent

Silva Mineralis explores matter as a temporal condition rather than as a fixed substance. The works draw attention to processes of crystallisation, sedimentation, and slow change – phenomena typically associated with geological time, translated here into human-scale objects. The vessels resist overt symbolism, inviting reflection on the action of time upon materials and on the subtle interaction between matter and its surrounding environment, where salt and atmospheric humidity continuously shape the surface.

Function remains secondary to experience. These works are not conceived as utilitarian design objects, but as objects of presence: forms that inhabit space with restraint, drawing attention through stillness rather than use.

Position within contemporary practice

Through Silva Mineralis, COKI continues a practice rooted in material intelligence, sustainability, and craft as a form of knowledge. The series aligns with contemporary discourses in international craft and material-led art, grounded in ethical and sustainable practices anchored in ancient traditions.

Silva Mineralis affirms a commitment to slow making and material integrity, positioning craft not as heritage, but as an active field of research and quiet cultural relevance.

PRESS IMAGES (HIGH RESOLUTION) AVAILABLE VIA DRIVE: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1696qQa8yyh0wped-2ZKBVXvDh_zSwzRr?usp=sharing