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## Touching the Void – new furniture collection gives form to negative space Designed by Note Design Studio for Sancal



Beginning with a conceptual question, Note's latest furniture collection plays with sculptural form.

“What defines an object? The matter itself, or the void that surrounds it?”

This is the question that Swedish design studio Note and Spanish furniture brand Sancal have set out to answer. **Void Matters** is a new collection of Note-designed furniture that takes negative space as its starting point. Although Note and Sancal have a history of collaboration dating back almost a decade to the now, this is the first time the two have worked together on a furniture collection born of a conceptual experiment rather than a design brief.

Entitled Void Matters to reflect Note's aim to give form to empty space, the collection comprises four distinct families – two chairs/sofas, a set of pouffes, and a sculptural table design. Each of these is an exploration of the concept of a void and the relationship between positive and negative space – as well as a beautiful and functional piece of furniture in its own right.

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*"The idea was to put emphasis on nothing. Specifically, on the negative space surrounding physical objects. By acknowledging this emptiness, it becomes a design element just as important as the objects themselves. While positive shapes often are associated with strong, active, qualities, negative space is calm and peaceful and leaves room for interpretation. Our thesis was that the juxtaposition of these two relative spaces would bring something new and thought-provoking to a room."*

– Cristiano Pigazzini, Note Design Studio

The new collection was initially intended to launch in prototype at Sancal's stand for its Museo Collection at Salone in April this year, but was prevented by the pandemic-induced cancellation of Milan Design Week. This obstacle ultimately proved to be an unexpected bonus, however, as it gave Note and Sancal the opportunity to finesse the collection at leisure, without the pressures and constraints usually imposed by the design industry's conventional calendar. Now, on Monday 21 September 2020, they are officially launching the Void Matters range, available to order via Sancal dealers worldwide.

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## Four meditations on emptiness

The collection comprises four distinct furniture families, all available in a variety of sizes and shapes



Core (sofa and armchair) fills the space while Remnant (armchair) describes the negative around it.

The seating designs **Core** and **Remnant** are opposite forms of the same silhouette. Core is the starting point, the positive space, whereas Remnant is the negative that surrounds it – here made tangible.

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Evoking classically inspired furniture and forms, the Core armchair and sofa have a generous comfortable seat and a curving quilted backrest. The constituent elements of the design are harmoniously combined, as through a sculptor has chiselled the seat from a single block of material.

Remnant represents the material that the sculptor might have discarded after creating Core, a different but complementary interpretation of the same form. The linear elegance and visual simplicity of Remnant represent a technically complex feat of engineering on the part of Sancal's production team, who had to develop a means of structurally sustaining the chair with no direct support beneath the seat. Multiple prototypes were created until a solution was found – a triangulated metallic structure inspired by architectural weight-distribution techniques. To then turn this into a comfortable lounge chair presented still further challenges, eventually resolved by seamlessly connecting three different injection-moulded pieces.

For Note and Sancal, the development of Remnant was the reverse of the usual design process. Rather than designing to suit existing production methods, new production methods had to be developed and adapted in order to realise the design concept – a rewarding challenge for the Sancal team, resulting in a beautiful and strikingly unusual product.

Core and Remnant are both available in a wide range of quilted fabrics, both bold and neutral, allowing them to be featured in isolation or arranged together to create engaging formal juxtapositions.

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The Vestige family of tables explores themes of time and erosion with material play.

The **Vestige** family of tables is a meditation on the effects of time and the material traces of the past it leaves behind. The sculptural base is formed from a cuboid block reminiscent of architectural forms from bygone ages, with a cylindrical shape cut from the top, as though eroded over time. The tabletop is made from a champagne-hued disc or rectangle of tempered glass, and sits – apparently precariously – on the fine lines of the base.

The base itself is available in a number of stained-wood versions, or alternatively finished with the iQ surface material developed by French flooring specialist Tarkett. The latter's mottled blue Marino pattern was also designed by Note.

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Using ash wood and many textile options, Dividuals are contemporary-style pouffes with an organic look.

**Dividuals** is a family of contemporary-style pouffes comprising two organic-looking elements that can be combined into a single formal entity or used individually; each fits snugly into and around the other. Set on subtle plinths of ash wood, the body of the pouffe is available in multiple textile options, allowing for the possibility of numerous complementary or contrasting furniture arrangements.

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## Limited-edition sculpture



Made by hand using clay from Totana, Note used sculpture to outline their ideas during the design process.

To explore and demonstrate the foundational concept of Void Matters, Note created a series of abstract ceramic sculptures that brought the relationship with negative space to life. These were made by hand using clay from Totana, a Spanish town famed for the quality of its pottery since the Middle Ages. These are, in effect, physical embodiments of the sketching and digital modelling stages of Note's design process.

To mark the launch of the Void Matters collection, Sanacal will be making a limited number of these sculptures available to order, alongside the main furniture pieces.

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## Making without Milan



Cristiano Pigazzini, co-founder of Note Design Studio, believes we are entering "a new renaissance in design" where designers will produce fewer but better products in terms of form, function and sustainability.

To launch Void Matters and the other products in its wider Museo Collection, Sancal has adapted its Milan stand concept into a video and photography-based online launch programme, demonstrating a potential alternative to the conventional fair-dictated design calendar in the process. For Note, Void Matters might be the first of many collections that launches only when it is ready, rather than when the design-fair calendar dictates it should. Considered in parallel with the recent launch of Note Editions (the studio's online platform that gives consumers the opportunity to cut out the middleman manufacturer and purchase limited-edition versions of Note designs), the launch of Void Matters represents another way in which forward-thinking designers might operate in a world without design fairs.

*"We have always felt that too many decisions are made to meet the demands and timing of the large fairs and that companies are expected to launch new things every year to stay relevant. Perhaps the pandemic has opened up new ways of thinking when it comes to launching products, ways in which a more responsible and holistic approach can be implemented, from both environmental and social sustainability perspectives. I believe we are entering a new renaissance in design – a time where designer and company are enabled to produce fewer but much better products, in terms of quality, innovation and functionality. Products that will be the classics of the future."*  
– Cristiano Pigazzini, Note Design Studio

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Void Matters launched outside the typical design calendar as creative response to cancellations.

## Notes to editors

For images and more information about the Void Matters collection or Note Design Studio, please contact Sabine Zetteler at [sabine@zetteler.co.uk](mailto:sabine@zetteler.co.uk).

### Note Design Studio

Founded in 2008 by Johannes Carlström and Cristiano Pigazzini, Note is a Stockholm-based design studio working across the fields of architecture, interiors, products, graphic design and design strategy. Now comprising a team of 14 designers, Note has grown to become one of the most internationally admired names in Scandinavian design, working with a wide range of international design brands and winning a steady stream of design awards.

[notedesignstudio.se](http://notedesignstudio.se)

[instagram.com/notedesignstudio](https://www.instagram.com/notedesignstudio)

### Sancal

For over 40 years, Sancal has produced colourful and innovative modern furniture from its manufacturing base in Yecla, Spain. Family-owned and run since its

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inception, the company works with a global roster of hand-picked designers to produce seating, tables and home accessories characterised by creativity. Its products are found in homes, hotels, restaurants and offices in more than 90 countries worldwide.

[sancal.com](http://sancal.com)