



Getting Warmer

A place to gather with family and friends — sitting on a floating, silky-smooth surface to warm themselves by the fire.

- Eric Pottle, Surface Works



A complete change of space was created when Eric Pottle of Arizona-based Surface Works replaced a traditional, unimaginative fireplace with this floating concrete hearth. The before and after photos of this project are proof that concrete has the ability to not only transform itself, but also to transform an entire living space.



BEFORE



AFTER

Far Left: The “before” photo shows the previous fireplace with its traditional styling and vertical emphasis.

Left: The “after” photo shows the new concrete hearth with its horizontal lines that complement the contemporary sofa and wide coffee table. The room becomes simultaneously modern and warm with the hearth’s clean lines and earthy sand color. The furniture suddenly now seems perfect for the space.



Far Left: The vertical edge of the hearth was intentionally left with unfilled voids for a more organic feel, offering subtle contrast with the smoother, creamier finish.

Left: In the recessed area under the hearth, the outlet boxes are cast into the concrete for a flush mount outlet. The torn edge detail was placed where the pieces interlock as a subtle feature only discovered upon closer inspection. Interlocking the pieces allowed the hearth to be cast in 3 pieces for easier transport and installation. This practical necessity was then used as a design element to show a sense of joinery and the change of elevation also emphasizes the division between the fireplace and wall tile.



Designer Notes

*Eric Pottle
Surface Works*

Specifications Concrete Fireplace Hearth + Surround

Total Retail Price: \$35,000

Volume: 9 cubic feet of concrete

Weight: 1,000 lbs

Dimensions: 16' x 18" x 18"

Concrete Mix: CHENG Pro-Formula Sand, Sakrete 5000

Fireplace: Montigo

Tile: Split-faced Granite

Architect: Steve Judge of Robert/Jones Associates

Why concrete?

This was the clients' first experience with concrete in their home. They wanted a warm, earthy, and organic feel, instead of the cold manufactured look of the existing fireplace.

Client Desire

The architect and client wanted a contemporary look with clean lines. They were a bit apprehensive about concrete, thinking that their fireplace would look like a sidewalk was poured under it. Even after working with them on design concepts and colors they still weren't completely sure what the overall look would be.

Client Reaction

When the hearth was installed, the owners were out of town. When they returned to see the hearth completed, they were overwhelmed. They loved the warm comfortable feeling that the concrete gave the room, even though concrete is thought to be a cold, hard material. Now they are drawn to the hearth as a place to gather with family and friends, sitting on a silky-smooth surface to warm themselves by the fire.

Timing + Expertise

The project took approximately 4 weeks. The architect had some concept drawings, the original concept was to pour in place an 16'x18"x18" one piece. The flooring (travertine tiles) was not being replaced so anchoring the forms to the floor was not an option. The extensive work needed to build forms and pour on site, (concrete truck, concrete pump etc.) made the project over budget. Many options were discussed including GFRC (Glass Fiber Reinforced Concrete.) We were able to come up with an alternative method of precasting the piece in our shop. By enhancing the design, with elevation changes and design elements that also worked as seams, we made the install much easier. And we were able to save money on the construction of the hearth and help bring the project in on budget. Construction consisted of a lumber framed base of 2x4s and plywood anchored to the floor and wall. The hearth was poured with concrete 2" thick, reinforced with rebar and wire re-mesh. The hearth was glued to the framed based with adhesive.





Best Fireplace

surfaceworksaz.com

Our love for concrete all started over 15 years ago with Waterworks AZ LLC. We clean and install decorative and industrial concrete coatings. Then our love for concrete turned into a passion for concrete fabrication. With the training of Fu-Tung Cheng and Buddy Rhodes we decided to expand with a branch called Surfaceworks Az, which turns ordinary concrete into useful and beautiful Counter Tops, Sinks, and Tables. These individuals shared the same passion as we did for molding and shaping concrete into wonderful and creative things.

Surfaceworks AZ

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