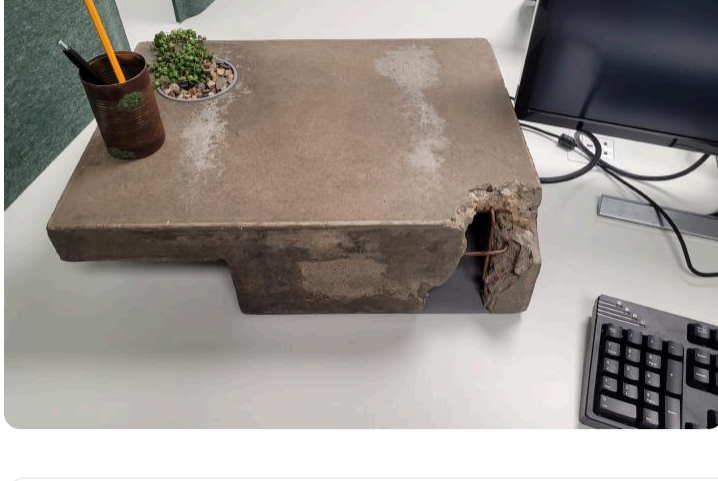


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# Concrete Laptop Stand

I made a laptop stand out of solid concrete, in the style of brutalist architecture, with themes of urbex and urban decay

April 27, 2024 · Sam Burns



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I am a great lover of brutalist architecture. 1960's concrete buildings may not be for everyone, but I love the aesthetic. I've made a laptop stand, to help me hack in true brutalist style. It has the characteristic *beton brut* (raw concrete) surface texture, and is quite possibly the heaviest laptop stand in the world. It also boasts 2 x 2.1 amp USB charge ports, a three-pin plug socket for my laptop, and an integral plant pot. Here are some of its highlights.

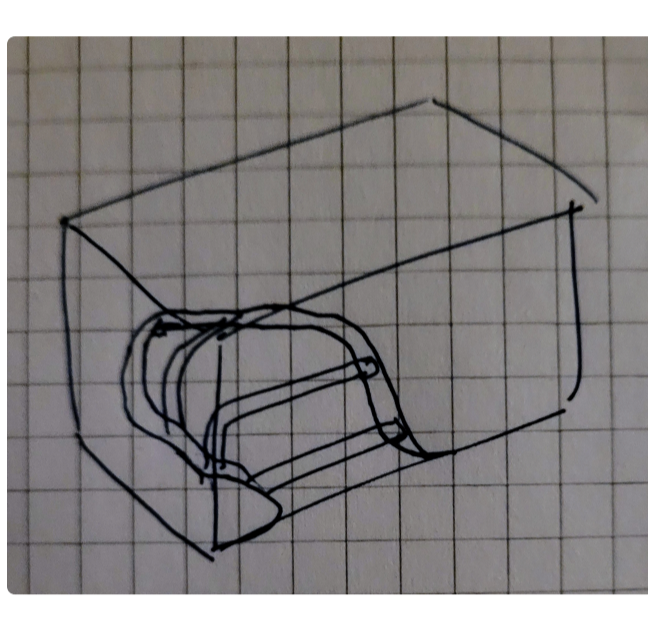


Concrete laptop stand in use

## Key Features

The key features include:

- Brutalist style overhang
- Urban decay aesthetic with a damaged corner and rusted rebar
- 3-pin plug socket
- 2 x USB charge ports
- Exposed rebar rusted
- Exposed copper wire corrosion
- Integral plant pot with string of pearls plant
- Artificially rusted penpot



An early drawing of the laptop stand

## Making the Laptop Stand

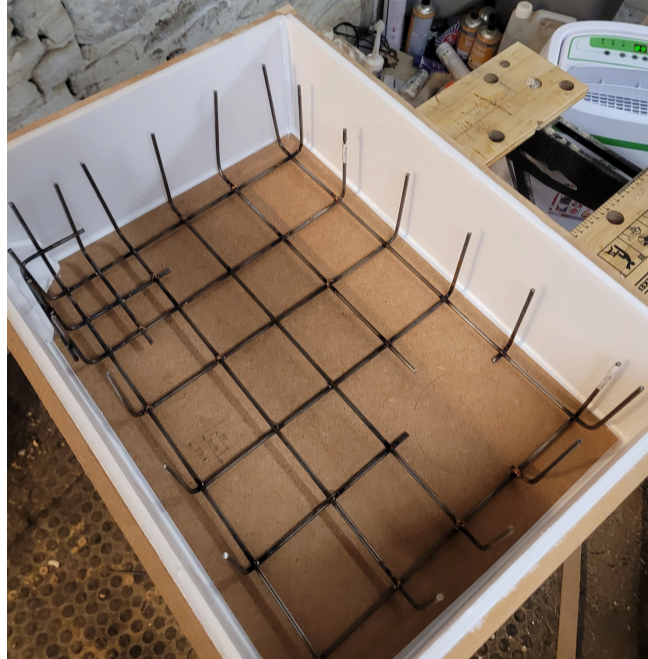
It was a slow process, but here are some action shots of making the laptop stand:

### The Components

#### Concrete

There were two main pours of concrete, to do the base and the side walls. It intentionally wasn't mixed very thoroughly, to produce areas on the surface where there was more sand or more cement. Sanding the sides has also exposed the gravel in the concrete. This help to make it look aged and weathered.

On smaller pieces such as little plant pots or coasters, it is possible to use quick drying cement and get the bubbles out by vibrating the form with an electric toothbrush after the pour. For very large pieces such as a dining table, you need to use slow drying cement, and walk around the tabletop for ages, tapping the form with a rubber mallet to remove any air bubbles. For a medium-sized piece like this, a vibrating dildo is actually the best thing to use. Just think of it like any other power tool.



The rebar cage inside the form, awaiting the first pour

#### Plant Pot



Integral plant pot is a tin set into the concrete

The plant pot is made of a ghee tin. Four bolts were drilled through it and covered in concrete during the first pour to fix it in place. The inner pot is a grey plastic plant pot which fits perfectly in the ghee tin. I've chosen a string of pearls plant, because I liked the effect of a running plant hanging over the edge. It reminds me of the derelict buildings I've seen during urban exploration.

#### Exposed Wire

The exposed wire really adds a sense fo dilapidation and urban decay. This isn't actually the live power cable, but it has been made to look like one. The real cable disappears into the concrete on the right hand side of the laptop stand, and the damaged fake cable comes out of the other side of the wall. The real power lead is strapped to the rebar cage with cable ties, but the overall effect is that it looks like the live cable is badly damaged.

The wire had to be wrapped in kitchen paper and sprayed with ammonia and water, to produce the appropriate corrosion effect. Attempts to lower it into a little pot filled with liquid didn't really work - the copper compounds turned the liquid blue, but it wasn't forming a patina on the wire.

Here's what seems to be happening here:



The exposed rebar was first polished with a wire brush attachment on a Dremel tool, to remove the concrete and expose the metal, then it was rusted with water, salt, and hydrogen peroxide.

#### Penpot

The penpot was similarly rusted with salt water and peroxide, after being scuffed up with some sandpaper. It has also had some moss added to it: acrylic paint cut with sand was added, to produce a realistic texture. Dab, don't wipe.



Rusted penpot being painted with mold

## Summary

I'm delighted with my laptop stand, even if the aesthetic isn't to everyone's taste. The themes of brutalist architecture, urban decay, and dilapidation have worked out really nicely, especially with the deliberate hole and the rusted metal. It has pride of place on a desk it had to be carried to on a trolley because of the sheer weight of the stand, but nothing worthwhile comes easy.

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