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**NEW WORK BY WENDELL CASTLE AT BARRY FRIEDMAN LTD.**  
***A Mature Synthesis of Materials and Forms Mark Castle's Most Creative Work to Date***  
**May 1 – June 21, 2008**

**NEW YORK** – Barry Friedman Ltd. will present an exhibition of new limited edition and unique works by the celebrated American designer Wendell Castle from May 1 through June 21, 2008. The new designs are perhaps the most exceptional of his career. The exhibition will open with a reception for the artist on May 1 from 5:00-8:00 pm at Barry Friedman Ltd., 515 West 26th Street, NYC. A fully illustrated book, published by Barry Friedman Ltd and Friedman Benda will accompany the exhibition.

A long record of critical acclaim, scholarship, and steady acquisition by public institutions gives American artist Wendell Castle's work indelible historic importance. His groundbreaking unification of sculpture and furniture galvanized a generation of artists and designers and contributed to the acceptance of design as an art form in its own right.

Castle's work is recognized for its wry wit and uniquely sculptural use of materials, including his signatures: stack-laminated wood and fiberglass. His new body of work pushes these materials further, while also applying his distinctive exploration of volume to bronze, steel, and aluminum.

*Night on Earth*, a biomorphic stainless steel chaise, is layered and textural; its curvy shell pierced and permeable. Created by welding together "amoeba-like" metal forms, the final piece is warm and vital, burnished to achieve a smooth surface with a high polish. Considering the metal forms as cells rather than amoebae, this sculpture becomes a kind of living organism. Light is integral to several of Castle's new works; in *Night on Earth*, for example, light shines through the interstices between the metal shapes, creating a star-like pattern on the floor.

With this exhibition, Castle is presenting new works in fiberglass. Unlike his earlier designs (including his celebrated Molar Group), which employed relatively simple techniques and straightforward zoomorphic and anthropomorphic forms, his new fiberglass works fully embrace the material, resulting in sensuous, fully actualized volumes with luminous finishes.

His *Nirvana Chair* is comprised of design elements that evince both celerity and repose. A broad rounded seat rests atop three stylized legs—a device common to several of Castle’s new fiberglass designs—that can be read as references to organic forms or to bullets. A leg pierces one armrest, forming a knob, while the other armrest is attenuated into a horizontal fin that serves as a tabletop. The piece is finished with multiple coatings of automobile-grade “metal-flake” urethane. The paint—a favorite, Castle points out, among hot-rod restorers—is iridescent, and appears to change colors—from blue to purple to aubergine—depending on the angle at which light strikes the surface.

The organic, curvilinear forms of this new work link it to Castle’s past masterworks, but the bold experimentation with materials, surfaces, and finishing techniques push his oeuvre very close to its magnum opus. These pieces represent a mature synthesis of all that Castle has learned throughout his career, combined with his indefatigable curiosity and excitement in exploration and discovery.

### **About Wendell Castle**

Wendell Castle has been the subject of and participated in numerous exhibitions at museums and galleries throughout the world. His work can be found in the permanent collections of over 40 museums and cultural institutions, including: the Metropolitan Museum of Art; Museum of Modern Art (New York); Art Institute of Chicago; Smithsonian American Art Museum; Musée des Arts Decoratifs de Montreal; Cooper Hewitt National Design Museum (New York); The Museum of Art and Design (New York); Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Nordenfieldske Kunstindustrimuseet (Oslo, Norway); Philadelphia Museum of Art; and The White House (Washington, DC), to name only a few.

His private patrons are as various as Philippe de Montebello, Martin Margulies, and Thomas Armstrong, while his work can be found in the corporate collections of American Express, Bausch & Lomb, DuPont, Forbes Company, Johnson Wax, Steinway Company, and the Wolfsonian Foundation, among others.

He has been the recipient of many honors and awards, including four National Endowment for the Arts grants, three honorary degrees, a Visionaries of the American Craft Movement award from the American Craft Museum (1994), the American Craft Council Gold Medal (1997), Master of the Medium award from The James Renwick Alliance of National Museum of American Art, D.C (1999), and a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Brooklyn Museum of Art (2007).

Born in Kansas in 1932, Wendell Castle received a B.F.A. from the University of Kansas in Industrial Design in 1958 and an M.F.A. in sculpture, graduating in 1961. He moved to Rochester, New York to teach at the School of American Craftsmen and established a permanent studio in the area, which is still operating today.

Of his work as a whole, he has written, “The significant thing about my work is not what it is made of but what it is. I would like always to be free to explore all aspects of the useful objects we refer to as ‘furniture.’”

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