

For Immediate Release

Wendell Castle: Embracing Upheaval

June 22 – August 11, 2017

Opening reception: Thursday, June 22, 6-8 PM



Left: *Within*. Right: *Big Easy*. Photo: courtesy of Friedman Benda/Wendell Castle

New York, NY – Friedman Benda will present Wendell Castle, America's most influential and iconic living designer, in his 5th solo exhibition at the gallery, opening June 22nd, 2017.

Embracing Upheaval is a fearless exploration, encompassing two groups: *Block* and *Free Form*. Each can be seen alone or as elements of a larger story, both familiar and a departure. Lyrical and unexpected, the new series continue Castle's life-long interest in pushing the boundaries of furniture making, and represent Castle's latest formal exploration into the convergence of sculpture and design.

Free Form series, inspired and informed by the music that has accompanied Wendell throughout his career, recall an abstract line drawn in space. The connection is evident in titles referencing cities known for music, including, *Big Easy*, *Motown* and *Gotham*.

With the *Block* series, chairs and tables emanate from solid slab-like constructions, forms born of wood, Castle's predominant material throughout his career. With these, Castle suggests metamorphosis with an allusion to classical literature and sculpture.

The Memorial Art Gallery, Rochester, will host a second enlarged iteration of the Museum of Art + Design's 2015/16 exhibition, *Wendell Castle: Remastered*, opening October 17 –December 31, 2017. This exhibition will include the addition of new vintage and contemporary works, in particular the early seminal work *Walnut Sculpture*, 1958-59, and the organically formed tri-surface *Twist Table* from 1972. In June 2018, The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri and the Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, Overland Park, Kansas, Castle's home state, will present concurrent solo exhibitions.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

In a career spanning more than 6 decades, with a long record of acclaim, steady acquisitions, and continuous exhibitions by public institutions, Castle's work is of indelible historic importance. He is an artist-maker who continuously mines his imagination and hones new skills, to create innovative vocabularies and forms.

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 where he still works today.

Wendell Castle's work can be found in the permanent collections of more than 50 museums and cultural institutions worldwide, including: Art Institute of Chicago, (IL); Los Angeles County Museum of Art, (CA); the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, NY); Museum of Modern Art (New York, NY); Minneapolis Institute of Arts, (MN); Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal (Quebec, Canada); Museum of Arts and Design (New York, NY); Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, (MA); Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (TX); Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, (KS); Philadelphia Museum of Art (PA); Renwick Gallery, Smithsonian Institution; (Washington, DC); the Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

Castle has been the recipient of many honors and awards, including four National Endowment for the Arts grants, four 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, (1999), and a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Brooklyn Museum of Art (2007).

About Friedman Benda

Friedman Benda is a gallery dedicated to presenting established and emerging designers who create historically significant work and are at the forefront of their practice. Founded in 2007, the gallery's exhibitions and publications have played a vital role in the development of the contemporary design market and education, and take a comprehensive approach to work that intersects the fields of design, craft and art. Friedman Benda represents an international roster of designers spanning five continents and multiple generations.

For further information please visit www.friedmanbenda.com

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