

FRIEDMAN BENDA  
515 W 26TH STREET  
NEW YORK NY 10001

A NEW REALISM  
CURATED BY GLENN ADAMSON  
JUN 3 – JUL 2 2021

New York, NY – Friedman Benda is pleased to present *A New Realism*, curated by Glenn Adamson.

It's time to get real.

*A New Realism* presents eight practitioners whose work meets the present head-on, direct and immediate. They are “realists” in at least two senses: first, in a diverse art historical context; and second, as individualistic pragmatists.

We are interested in the range of historic resonances that the concept of ‘realism’ has for contemporary practice. In some cases, it is a form of social engagement – a position that can be traced all the way back to the “realism” of mid-19<sup>th</sup> century French painting (artists like Courbet), but has important connections to the polyphonic voices of contemporary activism. Realism can also be expressed in a less politicized way, through material indexicality that recalls the work of Rauschenberg; or by exploring the overlaps and divergences between representation and abstraction as means of responding to the real, with a sophistication that recalls historic African sculpture, or constructed textiles.

Underpinning all of these complex concerns is a fundamental personal capability. The makers in *A New Realism* are just that – makers – who draw on deep wells of artisanal skill. This affords them a certain autonomy, a carved-out space of self-reliance. Their works, often realized through invented means, are thoroughly considered, from their base materiality to their eloquent surfaces. Yet they remain free of medium-specific narrowness. Indeed, all of these makers have experienced some disciplinary shift and flexibility over the course of their careers. Having trained in industrial design or fine art, they have found their way to craft for its generative possibilities.

Together, these two aspects of realism are a potent combination: on the one hand, a registration of the times; on the other, an investment in embodied creativity. The works that inhabit this junction, where social awareness and interiority meet, are aesthetic and ethical guideposts. At a time when reality itself has come to seem worryingly malleable, they give us something to hold on to.

Artists included:



Tanya Aguiñiga  
[American, b. 1978]



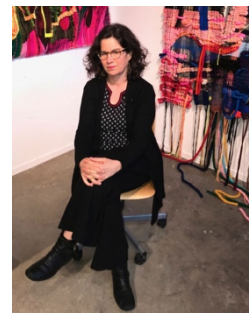
Ferréol Babin  
[French, b. 1987]



Ebitenyefa Baralaye  
[American, b. 1984]



Paul S. Briggs  
[American, b. 1963]



Terri Friedman  
[American, b. 1962]



Carl Emil Jacobsen  
[Danish, b. 1987]



Fernando Laposse  
[Mexican, b. 1988]



Mattias Sellden  
[Swedish, b. 1986]



Thaddeus Wolfe  
[American, b. 1979]

## **About Friedman Benda**

Friedman Benda identifies and advances key narratives that intersect contemporary design, craft, architecture, fine art, and cutting-edge technological research. The gallery promotes synthesis between leading creative thinkers and makers by creating opportunities to advance new connections within the global design community. Friedman Benda is committed to a critical view of design history. We aim to expand the design dialogue from its established sources, exploring perspectives that have previously been marginalized. Spanning five continents and four generations, Friedman Benda represents a roster of seminal established and emerging designers, as well as historically significant estates. Since 2007, the gallery's exhibitions, publications and collaborations with institutions have played a vital role in the development of the contemporary design market and scholarship. Dedicated to archiving the pioneering voices in our field, the gallery hosts Design in Dialogue, a weekly series of online interviews with leading architects, designers, curators, and critics. For further information please visit [www.friedmanbenda.com](http://www.friedmanbenda.com) and the gallery's Instagram [@friedman\\_benda](https://www.instagram.com/friedman_benda) and [YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...).

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