

FRIEDMAN BENDA  
515 W 26TH STREET  
NEW YORK NY 10001

INI ARCHIBONG  
HIEROPHANY  
OCT 7 – NOV 2 2021

*HIEROPHANY (from Greek hiero-, "sacred," and phainein, "to show") is a physical manifestation of the sacred or the spiritual.*

*"An object should communicate an idea to the people coming in contact with it. It's a three-dimensional standing piece of poetry."*

- Ini Archibong

Friedman Benda is pleased to present, *Hierophany*, Designer Ini Archibong's first solo gallery exhibition. *Hierophany* marks the culmination of an ongoing four-year collaboration with the gallery and the first time this comprehensive body of work by Archibong will be on public view. Combining his lifelong interests in global cultures, mathematics, philosophy, mythology and world religions with a passion for his own Nigerian ancestry, Archibong views each object as a reflection of his life experiences.

*Hierophany* demonstrates the dualities inherent to Archibong's practice: past and future, personal and collective, opacity and transparency, opposition and reconciliation, local and global, intangible and physical. For Archibong, the coexistence of these oppositional forces is in itself "hierophanous." Through his philosophical approach to design, Archibong's practice is rooted in the expression of spirituality and as a result every design is a physicalization of an unseen force and energy. Communicating through light, color, sound and form to reinterpret traditional archetypes for the 21st century, his works are intended to invite participation and provoke a multisensorial experience from the user. Serving as an entry point for further exploration, Archibong states, "my goal with each piece is to exalt a single universal and spiritually powerful concept, which can stand as a microcosmic example of the entirety of the universe's spiritual essence."

*Hierophany* highlights four distinctive bodies of work, *Vernus*, *Manna*, *Shade* and *Obelisk*, each representing a different ethos and signaling a new line of inquiry for Archibong. Further establishing his personal design vocabulary, this exhibition represents a continuation from Archibong's groundbreaking *Theoracle*, commissioned by the Dallas Museum of Art and High Museum in Atlanta and made its debut in *Speechless: different by design* in 2019. Pushing the boundaries of what his chosen material can accomplish, his process can be characterized by a strong dedication to craftsmanship and to the integrity of his chosen materials such as hand blown glass, obsidian, marble. "I'm pleasantly surprised when I see a new material or a material used in a new way that makes me feel something that I've been trying to capture. The stories are already there latent in the back of my mind, but then there are the poignant moments of those stories that I'm on the lookout to illustrate. A new material means being able to tell a story I haven't told before," says Archibong.

Concurrently with this exhibition, the Metropolitan Museum of Art will debut their recent acquisition of Archibong's work in the exhibition *Before Yesterday We Could Fly: An Afrofuturist Period Room*, opening on Nov 5, 2021, and curated by Ian Alteveer, Hannah Beachler, Michelle Commander, and Sarah Lawrence.

#### **About Ini Archibong**

Archibong was born in 1983 in Pasadena, California. Originally trained in industrial design, Archibong graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Design from the Art Center College of Design. Upon graduation, he moved to Singapore to work alongside Tim Kobe, who developed the Apple store concept. He then relocated to Switzerland where he received a Master of Arts in Luxury Design and Craftsmanship from L'École cantonale d'art de Lausanne (ECAL). Since establishing his own studio in 2010, Archibong has gone on to collaborate on numerous high-profile projects including with Hermès and Knoll. His works have been exhibited at museums and public institutions worldwide and most recently in the exhibition *Speechless: different by design* (2019), co-organized by the Dallas Museum of Art, TX and the High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA, and *Connected* (2020) at the Design Museum in London.

This past year Archibong unveiled plans for his most ambitious project to date, the *Pavilion of the African Diaspora*, which will be installed in June 2021 as part of the London Design Biennale. Conceived as a trio of sculptural structures to be installed on the River Terrace at Somerset House then travelling to New York and Miami later this year, PoAD will serve as a platform for reflection on the past, present and future of the African diaspora.

Archibong lives and works in Switzerland.

#### **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. 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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#### **Media Contacts:**

Blue Medium, Inc.

Michelle DiLello

[michelle@bluemedium.com](mailto:michelle@bluemedium.com)

T: +1 (212) 675-1800

Friedman Benda

Carole Hochman

[carole@friedmanbenda.com](mailto:carole@friedmanbenda.com)

T: +1 (212) 239-8700