

FRIEDMAN BENDA
515 W 26TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001

ACCIDENTS WILL HAPPEN
CREATIVE SALVAGE, 1981-1991
JAN 13 – FEB 12 2022



Tom Dixon, Regal Chair (detail), c. 1985, welded sheet steel and scrap metal

New York – Friedman Benda is pleased to present its eighth annual guest-curated exhibition, *Accidents Will Happen: Creative Salvage, 1981-1991*. Curated by Gareth Williams, who co-authored *Cut & Shut: The History of Creative Salvage* with Nick Wright, the exhibition showcases key works from an often overlooked but highly influential period of British design that exploded out of 1980s London.

The exhibition, the first international presentation dedicated to Creative Salvage furniture, showcases early and important works from key figures, many of whom have gone on to become leading household names. Featuring works by Ron Arad, Mark Brazier-Jones, Tom Dixon, André Dubreuil, Danny Lane, Jon Mills and Deborah Thomas, *Accidents Will Happen: Creative Salvage, 1981-1991* captures a critical moment in the course of recent design history and charts its exciting narrative through a wealth of contemporary archival material.

Against the backdrop of a country under duress – one suffering from mass unemployment, political polarization, the Miner's Strikes and the Brixton, Birmingham and Liverpool riots, this group of entrepreneurial and anarchic creatives forged ahead making furniture using the most rudimentary of materials and equipment.

In their hands, scrap metal and industrial bricolage met their perfect match. Wrought with an intuitive, devil-may-care attitude, salvaged rebar was rearticulated into Rococo-inspired forms, clad with bicycle inner tubes that served as the most basic form of upholstery. Redundant tools, rusting scaffolding clamps and dumbbells became the structural support on chairs, a reclaimed marble façade and parquet flooring bricks were repurposed as tabletops, chandeliers were formed from broken glass bottles, whilst sheet steel and concrete were pressed into volumetric forms. The results were as audacious as they were striking.

A critical material, music ran centrally – from playing in bands to holding infamous illegal warehouse party/exhibition hybrids – and permeated physical production, as encapsulated by Arad's iconic *Concrete Stereo*. Heady and hedonistic, living in the eternal now, their punk sensibility liberated design, leaving a tangible legacy for subsequent studio production.

About The Curator Gareth Williams

Gareth Williams is a UK based private art advisor with over 25 years' experience of the international art market, having previously headed up the Post-War & Contemporary Art and Design Departments at a leading auction house. As well as being instrumental in establishing the auction market

for Banksy, Gareth launched the world's first Street Art auction, which was listed by the Observer magazine as one of the 15 defining moments of 2008. He also co-authored *Cut & Shut: The History of Creative Salvage* with Nick Wright, which documents the exciting narrative behind some of the most important British design ever produced. No stranger to curating, Gareth has previously organized an exhibition on the Colony Room, London's legendary libertarian member's club, which was frequented by many of Britain's leading creative talents including Francis Bacon, Lucian Freud, Frank Auerbach and Dylan Thomas, and later Damien Hirst and the Young British Artists (YBA's).

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. With locations in New York and Los Angeles, the gallery's exhibitions, publications and collaborations with institutions have played a vital role in the development of the contemporary design market and scholarship since 2007. For further information please visit www.friedmanbenda.com and the gallery's Instagram [@friedman_benda](https://www.instagram.com/friedman_benda) and YouTube channel.

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