

FRIEDMAN BENDA  
515 W 26TH STREET  
NEW YORK NY 10001

MATTIAS SELLDEN | THADDEUS WOLFE  
JOINT SOLO EXHIBITION  
JUL 14 – AUG 12 2022



Mattias Sellden



Thaddeus Wolfe

**New York** – Friedman Benda is pleased to present a joint solo exhibition of work from Mattias Sellden and Thaddeus Wolfe, two artists whose practices converge at the intersection of art, craft, and design. Working with ancient materials, Sellden and Wolfe each pair traditional process methods and radical, out-of-the-box approaches to create one-of-a-kind, angular, geometric forms that defy easy categorization. Embracing the happenstance irregularities of their chosen mediums – emphasized by an explorative and playful application of color that is layered and contrasted to either highlight or occlude form -- both artists elevate their respective material beyond preconceived ideas of what form they should take. With no formal urgency to be pushed into any typological category, both artists' work presents an opportunity to renegotiate value systems in the field.

Working in wood – which Sellden describes as having its own agency – the Swedish designer's materially-led, technique-driven and completely hands-on process sees pieces of (mostly) Birch intuitively arranged into compositions that maintain the planks' natural topology and features, with each form fixed using relatively simple joinery. Applying variously opaque or transparent paints, instinctively guided by what feels right, the resultant abstract compositions are imbued with Sellden's humanizing sensibility.

Seeing linearity as a problem to be overcome, and wishing to redefine a homogenized conception of functionality, in producing the works for the exhibition Sellden has increasingly leaned into Andrea Branzi's postulations about objecthood post electronic revolution; "Alongside the perfect electronic devices for working and gathering information we will find small precious works of architecture." - Andrea Branzi, *Domestic Animals*, 1985. At once seemingly ancient and alien, the resultant works from Sellden's stable straddle sculpture and perhaps storage. Sellden himself states that he "makes dysfunctional furniture that easily could be mistaken for sculpture. Or maybe it's the other way around? Very capable sculpture that could be confused with a coatrack if you were in a hurry".

Thaddeus Wolfe's signature mold-blowing process was born of his dissatisfaction with glass he was capable of blowing freehand. Wolfe's desire to create geometries with hard edges and deep textures that lacked glossiness was in direct opposition to molten glass's typically undulous nature. However, by creating his own, one-time use molds, Wolfe manipulates the material into enigmatic objects akin to imagined abstract constructions, composed from rough piles of intersecting forms combined with carved surface relief. The resultant objects are constructed in a process similar to collage, alluding to geologic formations, architectural forms, and even Brooklyn streetscapes. The coloration of each piece references the idea of painting – the buildup and erasure of color – with the final palette spontaneously decided, similar to Sellden's approach.

Working iteratively, Wolfe builds from the development or failures of the previous body of work, with his sculptures taking the form of the vessel, the platform on which he has chosen to experiment. Wolfe purposefully disregards the form's functional capacity, instead focusing on its sculptural potential.

**About Mattias Sellden**

Mattias Sellden, born in Uppsala, Sweden in 1986, received his B.A in design at Konstfack, University of Arts, Crafts and Design in 2013, and later earned his M.A in design at Konstfack, University of Arts, Crafts and Design in Stockholm. Very practical in his process, Sellden was perhaps more true to the natural shapes, but as his process developed, he realized that his ideas are as important as the material itself. He works with different kinds of wood, as they all have different qualities and are suitable for different things and uses different kinds of surface treatments. Sellden currently lives and works in Stockholm, Sweden.

**About Thaddeus Wolfe**

Born in Toledo in 1979, Brooklyn-based Thaddeus Wolfe received his B.A. from the Cleveland Institute of Art in 2002. Originally intending to study painting, Wolfe decided to pursue glassmaking after taking an elective during his second year. Upon graduation, Wolfe moved to New York where he started working for Jeff Zimmerman and Josiah McElheny until establishing his own studio practice in 2009. Wolfe takes inspiration from multiple sources including the visual complexity in simple repeated structures from minerals, plants, and other natural phenomena as well as art and architectural movements of the early 20th century. Wolfe has held residencies at Creative Glass Center of America Millville, NJ; Museum of Glass, Tacoma, WA; and Pilchuck Glass School, Stanwood, WA. Wolfe's work is in the permanent collections of the Corning Museum of Glass, NY (where he was awarded the 2016 Rakow Commission); Indianapolis Museum of Art, IN; Musée de Arts Décoratifs de Montreal, Canada; Museum of Fine Arts Houston, Houston, TX; Rhode Island School of Design Museum, Providence, RI; Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, OH; and Yale University Art Gallery, CT. Wolfe lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

**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](http://www.friedmanbenda.com) and the gallery's Instagram [@friedman\\_benda](https://www.instagram.com/friedman_benda) and YouTube channel.

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