

designboom

Misha Kahn on Combining Technology and Handcraft for Friedman Benda's 'Design in Dialogue'

By Galerie Editors
June 14, 2022



Design in Dialogue: Misha Kahn

On April 1, 2020, New York gallery [Friedman Benda](#) initiated a series of online interviews aimed at connecting individuals across the world with leading voices in the creative field. [Design in Dialogue](#) is a conversational program hosted alternately by curator and historian Glenn Adamson and designer Stephen Burks that engages with designers, makers, critics, and curators as they reflect on their careers and creative processes. Against the backdrop of [COVID-19](#) and global lockdowns, the conversations are held virtually on zoom for 1 hour for anyone in the world to tune in to, and include a participatory Q&A with the audience in attendance. Friedman Benda has since presented more than 90 episodes, each offering unparalleled insight into the sensibilities, musings, and memories of today's creative protagonists. See our recent feature of [Chris Schanck on his otherworldly alufoil creations](#) and [Ortamiklos on 'improvisational design'](#).

"Misha Kahn on Combining Technology and Handcraft for Friedman Benda's 'Design in Dialogue'," *designboom*, June 14, 2022.

On the occasion of Misha Kahn's fourth solo-show at Friedman Benda, 'Style Without Substance', which is on view at the gallery until July 1, 2022, we share the designer's design in dialogue conversation with Glenn Adamson. The conversation focuses on Kahn's creative journey, his process and the inventive thinking behind his richly varied furniture designs, as well as on his earlier exhibition, 'Soft Bodies/Hard Spaces', which was presented at the NY gallery between February 27 and April 4, 2020. Kahn embraces an unorthodox result in his practice, creating pieces with a variety of mediums including metalwork, glass, wood, textiles, ceramic, casting, fiberglass, resin, and cement. Combining technology with handcraft, he employs an entire spectrum from lo-fi and ad hoc techniques—such as improvisational molds and collage—to virtual reality.

Watch the full video interview below, and learn more about the work of Misha Kahn and his ongoing exhibition at Friedman Benda below.



'STYLE WITHOUT SUBSTANCE' EXHIBITION AT FRIEDMAN BENDA

Born in Duluth, Minnesota in 1989, Misha Kahn has emerged as one of the leading creative voices of his generation. The Brooklyn-based artist is known for embracing spontaneity and non-conformity in his creative process, resulting in wildly imaginative pieces that are rich in color and materiality. In his fourth solo-show at Friedman Benda, 'Style Without Substance', Kahn sets out to 'look into the essence of a material and help to style its "thingness" to be apparent to humans.' Set off by a psychedelic vision and followed by a two-year quest, the exhibition brings together a series of recent works that explore ways of making the invisible visible.

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Aside from semiotics and ascribed meanings, Kahn believes that objects and materials have energy, and that if one devises the right circumstances, it can be experienced. Visitors to the 'Style Without Substance' exhibition, which is on view until July 1, 2022, encounter aluminum and glass tondos, which Kahn calls 'portals', a multi-color stretch velvet sofa, and a round dining table rendered in seemingly malleable stainless-steel inset with colored glass gems, among other works on view. Kahn often combines lo-fi and ad hoc techniques, such as improvisational molds and collage, with digital tools, including virtual reality and 3D printing. Many of the pieces in the exhibition are evident of that fluidity between technology and handcraft that defines his practice.



'Misha Kahn: Style Without Substance' installation images, courtesy of Friedman Benda and Misha Kahn. all images by [Timothy Doyon](#) unless stated otherwise



Ogré, 2022

“Misha Kahn on Combining Technology and Handcraft for Friedman Benda’s ‘Design in Dialogue,’”
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Occupying the Margins of the Page, 2022

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Billionaire Space Race, 2022, edition of 5



And the Phone Call Dragged On and On, 2022. image by [Daniel Kukla](#)

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Shaped Potato, Potential, and Actual, 2022. image by Daniel Kukla



Fruit Snacks on the Dash, 2020

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Straw Heart, 2021. image by Daniel Kukla



The Eddy, 2022

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For Those Who Float, 2022



Portal: The Crawl, 2022

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Left: Limax Cinereoniger's House Not Yours, 2022, edition of 4. image by [Sean Davidson](#)
Right: UA1 (Narrow Miss), 2022

project info:

exhibition name: Style Without Substance

designer: Misha Kahn

gallery: [Friedman Benda](#)

exhibition duration: June 2 – July 1, 2022

[Design in Dialogue](#) is a series of online interviews presented by New York-based gallery [Friedman Benda](#) that highlights leading voices from the field — designers, makers, critics, and curators — as they discuss their work and ideas. Hosted alternately by curator and historian Glenn Adamson and designer Stephen Burks, the conversations are held on Zoom for 1 hour and include a participatory Q&A.

Watch the full video interview with Misha Kahn in this article and stay tuned as [designboom](#) continues to share design in dialogue features. see all past episodes [here](#).