

# Designs From a Celebrated Brother

## A show of Humberto Campana's work after his sibling's death.

By PILAR VILADAS

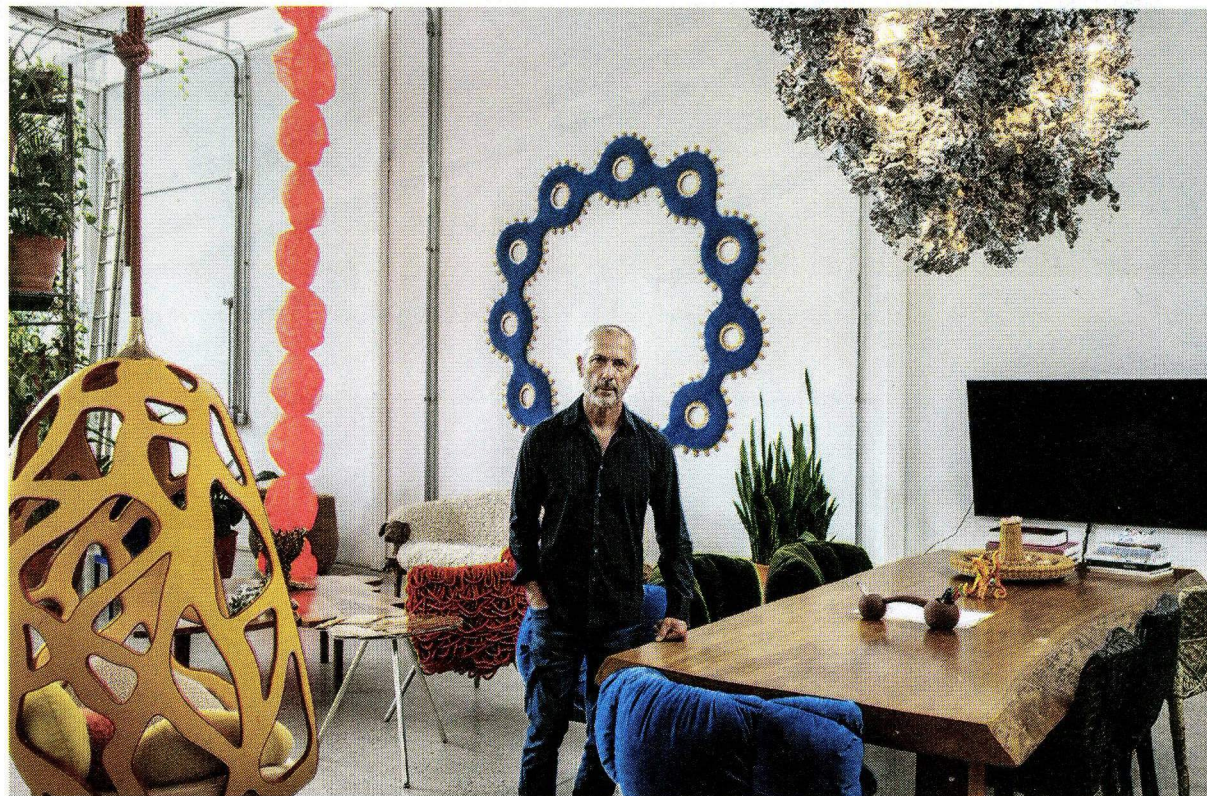
Last Thursday the New York gallery Friedman Benda opened "On the Road," a look at the work of the Campana Studio, which is celebrating its 40th anniversary.

This is the gallery's fifth showcase of the studio, which was founded by the Brazilian brothers Fernando and Humberto Campana in 1984 — before they became a design-world sensation for pieces like an armchair composed of raw wood pieces reminiscent of the cobbled-together houses in Brazilian favelas, and lounge chairs upholstered in stuffed animals. But it is the first since Fernando's unexpected death, at age 61, in November 2022.

This exhibition offers a look at how the studio, under Humberto's direction, is carrying on the brothers' work.

Humberto, 70, called Fernando's passing "a tremendous loss," but one that "has given me a lot of inspiration — in dreams and intuition." He came up with the exhibition's title, he said, "to show where we came from — the southern continent, which is both big and small, rich and poor."

The Campanas were known for using local materials and techniques, and the exhibition will include pieces from the Capim Dourado series, including a wood buffet in which the golden-toned fiber of that name is turned into roundels that elegantly adorn the exterior. Humberto also experimented with aluminum scraps (a material introduced to him by Fernando), which became



VICTOR MORIYAMA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Humberto Campana in his studio in São Paulo, Brazil. Friedman Benda in New York opened "On the Road," the gallery's fifth showcase of the Campana Studio, which is celebrating its 40th anniversary.

mirror frames, light fixtures and benches, their curly texture adding a glamorous, slightly Baroque aura.

The Campana studio, in São Paulo, is a light-filled, expansive space that the brothers moved into not long before Fernando's death. The interiors include a library lined with metallic Ferrero Rocher chocolate-hazelnut candy wrappers. It also houses the Instituto Campana, which the brothers founded to preserve their archives and legacy.

On land given to them by their family in Brotas, Brazil, where they were born, they planted 20,000 trees and numerous plants. "Four years of Bolsonaro's government were very hard," Humberto said of the Brazilian president who allowed extensive destruction of the Amazon rainforest. "And this space became my temple, a place of healing."

These days, Humberto is still very much on the road. He is collaborating with the filmmaker Francesca Molteni on a documentary, as well as revisiting plants used as architecture, like the wall of cactus that separated his childhood home from that of his neighbor.

He said the trauma of losing his brother and closest collaborator had only made him stronger. "I've been very inspired since then," he said. It showed me not to waste my time."

"Estúdio Campana: On the Road" is on view through April 20 at Friedman Benda, 515 West 26th Street; friedmanbenda.com