

FRIEDMAN BENDA
515 W 26TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001

UNDER PRESENT CONDITIONS
MAY 2 – JUN 15 2024



Estúdio Campana, *Verde*, 1993



Studio Raw Material, *Khokar Seat*, 2023



Joris Laarman, *Ply Loop Chair*, 2024

Opening Reception: Thursday, May 2nd, 6 – 8 pm

New York – Friedman Benda is pleased to present *Under Present Conditions*, a survey of responses to the urgencies of our time by leading contemporary designers. Central to the exhibition is the exploration of materials, as opposed to mass processes of industrialization and extraction. With concerns such as overconsumption, the overexploitation of resources, and the search for sustainability, the works presented are personal expressions of and, in some cases, poetic responses to the conditions that we live under.

The exhibition includes both long-established and emerging practices which approach this topic from different angles. Recycling, upcycling, and reimagining the life cycle of materials are crucial themes here. **Hamed Ouattara**, from Burkina Faso, questions the idea of disposability by repurposing discarded materials, such as oil drums, and addresses the sociopolitical realities of unidirectional global consumption. The eminent Brazilian **Estúdio Campana** transforms and recontextualizes the materials of their surroundings through craftsmanship and the triumph of simple solutions. Made entirely out of recycled cardboard from his studio, the work of British designer **Max Lamb** embodies new histories of craft by pushing the material's structural capabilities and giving value to what is often seen as secondary. **Studio Raw Material's** work represents an ongoing exploration of geology in terms of material and processes. Their practice, based in the desert plains of western India, responds to various local materials like salt, marble, clay, and plant-based resins. Mexican designer **Fernando Laposse** interrogates the complicated history of the avocado industry and its social and environmental ramifications by reusing a material that would otherwise be considered waste.

Another conceptual pillar is contemporary design's engagement with technology in search of hidden values and properties. The work of British designer **Paul Cockshedge** is underpinned by extensive research into the possibilities of making processes, questioning, among other things, our relationship with and dependence on fossil fuels. Further exploring the role of cutting-edge technology is Dutch designer **Joris Laarman**, who traverses the boundaries of design and science by using computational techniques to make forms inspired by nature. Similarly, the approach of the studio **gt2P** synthesizes a parametric methodology with a sensibility rooted in the Chilean landscape and its materials.

For other studios, intervening in natural processes and landscapes can dictate the design and form of the object. The UK-based studio **Full Grown** employs photosynthesis as the main process in their manufacture, reconsidering the way we produce our everyday objects; they literally grow rather than manufacture their objects, achieving a novel hybrid of design and horticulture. Another long-term research project in the show, undertaken by Israeli designer **Erez Nevi Pana**, focuses on salt from the Dead Sea, which in his hands becomes a register of devastating environmental imbalances caused by industrialization and mineral extraction. Dutch designer **Christien Meindertsma** delves into the life cycles of the raw materials she employs. By exploring agricultural landscapes in the Netherlands, she challenges the commodification of flax and creates pieces that mirror the topography of the fields where the material originates. Also employing natural and often overlooked materials, such as silkworm's cocoon fibers and honeybee bio resin, French-born **Marlène Huissoud** creates quasi-functional pieces that also mount an ethical challenge: should humans not be designing for all life on earth, rather than just ourselves?

Collectively, these practices represent the field's panoply of reflections on the circumstances we all share. By seeing how leading designers, consciously or not, approach these themes, we see how material itself tells the story of its own surroundings.

The exhibition is accompanied by a digital catalogue with essays and entries contributed by Glenn Adamson and Renata Del Riego.

About Friedman Benda

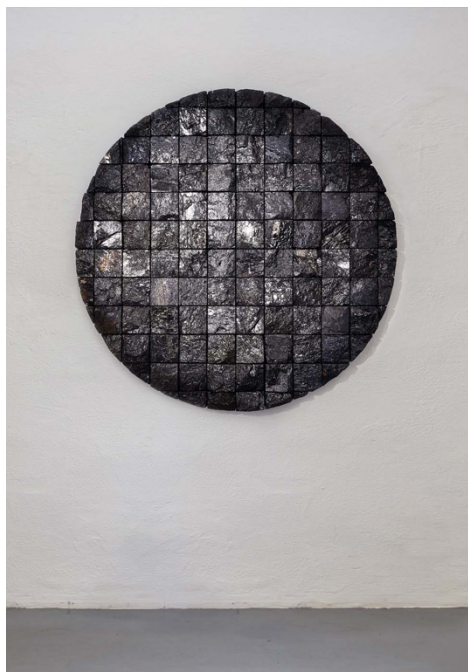
Friedman Benda identifies and advances key narratives that intersect contemporary design, craft, architecture, fine art, and cutting-edge technological research. The gallery promotes synthesis between leading creative thinkers and makers by creating opportunities to advance new connections within the 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 five 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 and YouTube channel @FriedmanBenda.

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Paul Cocksedge, *20 Trees*, 2023



Full Grown, *The Goodall Chair*, 2021



Erez Nevi Pana, *Bleached (BB.2021.SEP.2)*, 2021

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Under Present Conditions

Friedman Benda, New York, NY
May 2 – June 15, 2024



Fernando and Humberto Campana [Brazilian, 1961-2022, b. 1953]

Cone Chair (Prototype), 1997
Polycarbonate, stainless steel
33 x 30 x 24 1/2 inches
83.8 x 76.2 x 62.2 cm



Fernando and Humberto Campana [Brazilian, 1961-2022, b. 1953]

Verde, 1993
Stainless steel, cotton rope
35 x 18 3/4 x 23 3/4 inches
88.9 x 47.6 x 60.3 cm



Paul Cockshedge [British, b. 1978]

20 Trees, 2023
Anthracite
47 1/4 x 47 1/4 inch
120 x 120 cm



Paul Cockshedge [British, b. 1978]

Styrene, 2002
Polystyrene
27 1/2 x 27 1/2 x 27 1/2 inches
70 x 70 x 70 cm



Full Grown

The Goodall Chair, 2021
Salix viminalis (Willow)
39 1/4 x 21 3/4 x 21 3/4 inches
100 x 55 x 55 cm



gt2P (Great Things to People) [Chilean, est. 2009]

Remolten N1: Shelf/ Screen 10, 2 Components, Mahuanco, Llaima Volcano, January 19th, 2020
Stoneware structure, volcanic lava
63 x 19 x 15 inches
160 x 48 x 38 cm

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Remolten N1: Monolita Low Chair 15, Mahuanco, Osorno Volcano, January 31st, 2020
Stoneware structure, volcanic lava
31 x 18 1/2 x 24 1/2 inches
78.75 x 47 x 62.25 cm



Marlène Huissoud [French, b. 1990]
Cocoon Cabinet #2, 2017
Silkworm's cocoons, honeybee bio resin, wood
28 1/4 x 13 3/4 x 20 1/4 inches
72 x 35 x 51 cm



Joris Laarman [Dutch, b. 1979]
Ply Loop Chair, 2024
Oak, walnut veneer, thermoset bio-resin
27 1/2 x 33 1/2 x 32 inches
70 x 85 x 81 cm
Edition of 8



Joris Laarman [Dutch, b. 1979]
Symbio Bench, 2024
Recycled cast concrete
21 1/4 x 107 3/4 x 55 inches
54 x 274 x 140 cm



Max Lamb [British, b. 1980]
(4) BOX Chair, 2023
Cardboard, Wheat Paste
34 1/4 x 21 x 21 inches
87 x 53.5 x 53.5 cm



Fernando Laposse [Mexican, b. 1988]
Avocado Skin Cabinet, 2024
Avocado skin marquetry, solid walnut, brass and steel hardware
41 1/2 x 64 1/2 x 17 inches
105 x 164 x 43 cm
Edition of 8



Christien Meindertsma [Dutch, b. 1980]
Flax field, 2019
Robot tufted linen yarn
78 3/4 x 118 inches
200 x 300 cm
Edition of 10

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Erez Nevi Pana [Israeli, b. 1983]
Bleached (BB2021.MAR.1), 2021
Salt crystallized loofah, wood and aluminum structure
35 1/2 x 19 3/4 x 18 1/2 inches
90 x 50 x 47 cm



Erez Nevi Pana [Israeli, b. 1983]
Bleached (BB.2021.SEP.2), 2021
Salt crystallized loofah, wood and aluminum structure
35 1/2 x 19 3/4 x 19 3/4 inches
90 x 50 x 50 cm



Erez Nevi Pana [Israeli, b. 1983]
Bleached (BB.2022.SEP.3), 2022
Salt crystallized loofah, wood and aluminum structure
24 x 19 x 18 1/2 inches
61 x 48 x 47 cm



Hamed Ouattara [Burkinabé, b. 1971]
Tombouctou II (Timbuktu 2), 2022
Engine oil drums, sheet metal
67 x 35 1/2 x 15 3/4 inches
170 x 90 x 40 cm
Edition of 8



Studio Raw Material [Indian, est. 2016]
Khokhar Seat, 2023
Dune yellow marble
54 x 56 x 23 1/2 inches
137 x 142 x 60 cm

UNDER PRESENT CONDITIONS

FRIEDMAN BENDA 515 WEST 26TH STREET NEW YORK NY 10011

The Reality of our Surroundings

by Glenn Adamson

Optimism: design can't do without it. It is the very nature of the enterprise to put new forms, new ideas out into the world. In Friedman Benda's new exhibition *Under Present Conditions*, you will see just this kind of positive energy on every side. The typologies are familiar - chairs, screens, shelving, and the like – yet they are recast in entirely novel ways, serving as vehicles for personal expression. Each, in its own way, is a talisman of hope.

This optimism, however, is anything but blind. Crisis: that is the word heard on all sides, these days, especially in relation to climate change. True, for many people, in 2024, life doesn't *feel* like it is in crisis; not on a daily basis. Environmental degradation may be planetary in scale, but it is so incremental that it almost recedes into the background, until the latest hurricane or forest fire sounds the alarm. It's all but impossible to be unaware of these existential threats; also, all but impossible to grasp their enormity, and hold them constantly in the mind. Designers experience that oscillation just like everyone does – maybe more so, as their work as object-makers stands in inherent confrontation with the reality of an over-full world.

So that is one thing – the expansive, yet strangely elusive, nature of the predicament in which we find ourselves. Another was pointed out by Ulrich Beck, in his prescient 1986 book *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*.¹ What he described was the emergence of a new form of power, directed toward the management of risk. Each company, each nation-state, tries to shield itself as much as possible from exposure to hazards like pollution, economic instability, military conflict, and political unrest. Their effects are shifted on to other people, and other places, whenever possible. Those who do live in centers of wealth and power (like New York City, where Friedman Benda happens to be located) are relatively protected, making it all too easy to put aside the sense of urgency – at least, for now.

In these gaps of temporality and consciousness, there is a role for design: this is the argument of *Under Present Conditions*. The designers included here choose not to turn away from contemporary challenges, leaving them for others to deal with; each, in their own way, carries a sense of great responsibility into their practice. Having said this, the show is not – let's get this clear right away – a project about problem-solving. There may be a role for design in slowing the rate of climate change and ameliorating its long-term effects, but that requires huge scale and massive capitalization; looking to individual, studio-based designers for such solutions makes little sense. It imposes unreasonable expectations which are all too often met by inadequate virtue signaling – the latest chair that's made of recycled plastic, but actually has a much higher carbon footprint than one from IKEA.

This is not to say that the designers included in *Under Present Conditions* are uninterested in the ecological dimensions of their practices. On the contrary, there are numerous investigations in the show that have been motivated by an impetus toward sustainability: biodegradable plywood, recycled oil drums, reclaimed agricultural waste, even a chair grown like a tree. Designers are constantly looking for new frontiers – this is what their optimism means, in practice – and the need for innovative material solutions is one of them. The works in the show are effectively materialized hypotheses, experiments in substance that yield unexpected formal outcomes. Again, none of these are necessarily proposed as mass-market solutions. Rather, they do what great design has always done: materialize sensibility into the mental furniture of the now.²

Design combines aspects of human experience in a way that no other discipline can. It is at once functional and aesthetic, technical and expressive, inherently familiar and provocatively futuristic. It is by resolving all these oppositions into new form that it achieves significance. This dialectical quality gives design unusual relevance, under present conditions. For it is precisely in bridging the gap between everyday life and the conceptual plane

1 Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*, trans. Mark Ritter (London: Sage Publications, 1992 [orig. pub. 1986]).

2 I borrow this phrase from the designer Dan Friedman. See Mark Matchak, "Mental Furniture: The Gray Zone Between Functional Sculpture and Nonfunctional Design," *Pin-Up 24* (Spring/Summer 2018).

– the very separation which is so characteristic of our current crisis – that design can operate. Currently, this means embodying the two seemingly incompatible ideas of normalcy and emergency.

Another dichotomy that design synthesizes is that between the collective and the individual. It serves basic, and virtually unchanging, human needs (sitting, storage, illumination and the like) but is animated by creative vision, constantly building on past precedents. This dynamic seems especially important in *Under Present Conditions*, which includes twelve studios from almost as many different countries, each working in response to local circumstances, and in many cases, with locally resonant materials (flax, lava, coal, marble). Yet the exhibition has an undeniable unity, grounded in a certain resourcefulness – a sense that, though action from the top is absolutely essential, agency is also possible from the ground up.

The cumulative effect is poetic, a bit on the rough side, without the calibrated contours that typify modernist product design. Also absent are the slyly satirical, self-consciously superficial, and sometimes acidic notes associated with 1980s and '90s postmodernism. The works in *Under Present Conditions* tend, instead, to the earnest, the honest, the emotive. If they can be taken as representative – and I think they can, though design's cultural-alchemical processing power – then we are undergoing a time of unusual directness. This, perhaps, is the clearest sign that they were created at a moment of emergency: a certain specific gravity, indexing the great weight of concern that impinges on us all, if not necessarily equally.

Another thing that design can do, when freed from narrowing commercial imperatives, is to point the way ahead. If Beck was right in his prognosis, and the “risk society” is real, then futurity is more and more a site of contestation. How tomorrow's world is predicted, how we invest in it, how it is prototyped: these all have a critical impact on the present day. If industrial-scale design tends to tell the same predictable stories again and again, then the designers here, operating in their independent studios, make a contribution that is analogous to science fiction's, as described by theorist Adrienne Maree Brown in her influential book *Emergent Strategy*: “a way to practice the future together.”¹ Avant-garde design is like science fiction, too, in that it is not necessarily inhibited by rational calculation. As Brown also writes, “Perhaps the most egregious thing we are taught is that we should just be really good at what's already possible, to leave the impossible alone.”

In this exhibition, we do get the tenor of our precarious time, a set of deeply felt, thoughtful responses to the reality of our surroundings. There's also something else, though: an imaginary turn; an appeal to intuition; not just vague hope, but an active defiance of the pessimism that the very concept of crisis implies. Will any of these designers save the world? Perhaps not; but they are part of why it's worth saving in the first place.

1 Adrienne Maree Brown, *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds* (Chico, CA: AK Press, 2017).

Co-founded by brothers Fernando (1961-2022) and Humberto (b. 1953) Campana, the world of Estúdio Campana is a place of vital storytelling. Deeply rooted in Brazilian culture and traditions, the studio's groundbreaking work bridges the natural and the synthetic, reflecting the textural nuances of Brazil: a vibrant blend of contrasting elements, volumes, shapes, colors, all drawn from both urban and rural ecosystems. The Campanas' innovative methodology centers on the transformation of everyday materials, which they often salvage from the waste stream, bringing them back to life and giving them a new visual vocabulary within a language of pluralism and hybridization. With reverence and excitement, Estúdio Campana allows their chosen materials to dictate their own form, patiently awaiting the revelation of their special potential.

Under Present Conditions presents two early and important works from the Campanas' body of work, underlining their preeminence in exploration of the exhibition's key themes. The *Verde* chair was born out of a tangle of thick rope purchased at a São Paulo street market. Hand-knotted into a web-like pattern, the ubiquitous found cord is transmuted into artisanal sculpture. Similarly, the *Cone Chair* is fashioned from a single sheet of clear polycarbonate and communicates its humble origins without pretense. Assembled in delicate origami-like folds, the simple shape relies on the manipulation of a resilient, flexible material, making the chair a material metaphor for Estúdio Campana's own *modus operandi*. Both pieces, like much of their subsequent work, manifest a radical yet simple transparency. A celebration of the processes by which the mundane becomes extraordinary, the two chairs stand as testaments to the importance of poetic resourcefulness and ad-hoc thinking in precarious times.

ESTÚDIO CAMPANA

Brazilian, 1961-2022, b. 1953



Fernando and Humberto Campana [Brazilian, 1961-2022, b. 1953]

Cone Chair (Prototype), 1997

Polycarbonate, stainless steel

33 x 30 x 24 1/2 inches

83.8 x 76.2 x 62.2 cm





Fernando and Humberto Campana [Brazilian, 1961-2022, b. 1953]

Verde, 1993

Stainless steel, cotton rope

35 x 18 3/4 x 23 3/4 inches

88.9 x 47.6 x 60.3 cm



The climate crisis compels us to question nearly everything about our built environment. It's a challenge that many find overwhelming, but for British designer Paul Cockshedge (b. 1978), it is a defining *raison d'être*. He is widely recognized for his unconventional approach to materials across public art, sculpture, and architectural installations, often probing the pressing topics of our time such as social connectivity and especially our reliance on extractive industries. In *Styrene*, a disarmingly simple arrangement of styrofoam cups, he transforms disposable materials into enduring form, reminding us, perhaps, of the permanence of the materials we mindlessly consume. What was soft and apparently expendable becomes solid, even monumental. Up close, the material exudes a gravity and permanence that contrast with its supposed disposability.

Alongside this ethereal early work is *20 Trees*, in which a gridded circle of anthracite blocks, excavated from Britain's last operative coal mine, subtly convey a message about ecological balance. If this mirror-like object were to be burned as fuel, it would take 20 trees a whole year to offset the carbon emissions produced. The work was conceived alongside *Coalescence*, a ceiling-hung sculpture consisting of 2500 chunks of coal and a single light bulb – again representing an equivalent amount of annual energy consumption. That work, which has been shown in dramatic surround Liverpool Cathedral and the Painted Hall in Greenwich, seems to expand outward potentially to infinity. *20 Trees* defines an opposite dynamic, seeming to compress into itself, much as coal itself is formed underground and under pressure. Brooding and weighty, yet glinting with possibility, the work is a perfect emblem for our present conditions.

PAUL COCKSEGE

British, b. 1978



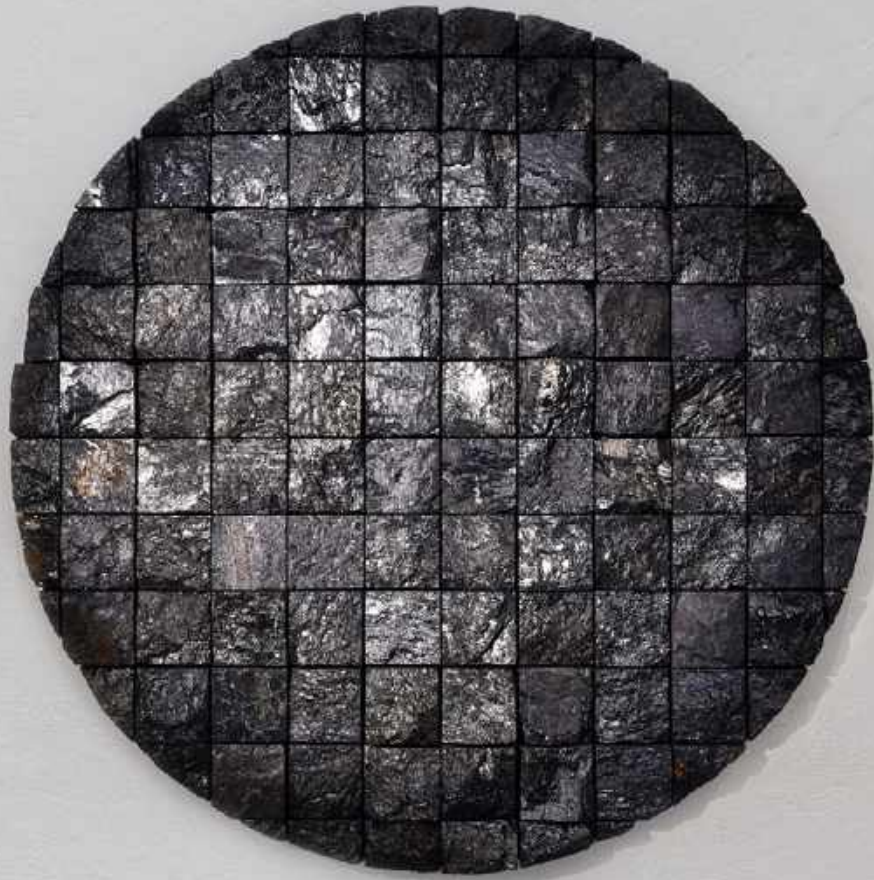
Paul Cocksedge [British, b. 1978]

20 Trees, 2023

Anthracite

47 1/4 x 47 1/4 inch

120 x 120 cm





Paul Cockledge [British, b. 1978]

Styrene, 2002

Polystyrene

27 1/2 x 27 1/2 x 27 1/2 inches

70 x 70 x 70 cm



Must we work at odds with nature, or can we adopt its methods? This provoking question is gracefully explored by UK-based studio Full Grown, who propose a unique fusion of design and horticulture. Harnessing photosynthesis as the primary process in their production, they merge artistry with science, urging us to reconsider not just the way objects come to be, but also the speed at which they are created. Describing themselves, aptly, as 'botanical craftsmen', co-founders Alice and Gavin Munro employ ancient techniques to cultivate their tree-chairs, guiding each branch's direction of propagation through bespoke frames. The result is both functional furniture and carbon sink sculpture, a lesson in patience and serenity that merges craftsmanship and cultivation, the exertion of control and the act of witness.

Full Grown's furniture also constitutes a unique union of ethics and aesthetics. The implication of their work is that if we were to embrace a more organic and collaborative relationship with nature, instead of imposing our will upon it, we would arrive at a more accepting understanding of form in general. No two of their chairs are alike, after all; they are as beautiful and gestural as the groves in which they grow. This unpredictability, common to biological processes, is repressed in standardized manufacturing, where precision and uniformity are paramount. Full Grown operates from an alternative set of expectations. Their objects lie entirely beyond perfection and imperfection, in the domain of what simply *is*.

FULL GROWN

British, est. 2006



Full Grown

The Goodall Chair, 2021

Salix viminalis (Willow)

39 1/4 x 21 3/4 x 21 3/4 inches

100 x 55 x 55 cm



Cultural conditions are, in essence, a set of parameters: factors that structure experience on an ongoing basis. Chilean studio gt2P (Great Things to People), based in Santiago, explore and expand this prevailing reality. They meld parametric methodologies with Andean sensibilities, in projects spanning architecture, art, and design. One of their signature materials is lava, which they treat in a manner akin to a ceramic glaze, melting it along carefully planned heating curves. It is a plentiful and overlooked resource in Chile: the country has approximately 2,000 volcanoes (the second largest chain in the world), of which 500 are active. Though geologically ancient, this landscape is always brand new, with each eruption reshaping the surrounding areas, obliterating pre-existing features and creating new ones, the landscape constantly shifting its own parameters.

The *Remolten* series is born out of the studio's conceptual interest in this literally seismic process. In the studio, they revert lava to its original state under high heat, then adhere the volcanic material to stoneware surfaces at varying slopes, preserving the object's shape even as it is covered. The result is an abstract reflection on the evolving landscape, its process of formation, destruction, and rebuilding. This magma, originating from the distant reaches of Chile (often referred to as 'the end of the world'), prompts contemplation on the creation of new realities, and hopefully, the survival of this one.

GT2P (GREAT THINGS TO PEOPLE)

Chilean, est. 2009







gt2P (Great Things to People) [Chilean, est. 2009]

Remolten N1: Shelf/ Screen 10, 2 Components, Mahuanco, Llaima Volcano, January 19th, 2020

Stoneware structure, volcanic lava

63 x 19 x 15 inches

160 x 48 x 38 cm





gt2P (Great Things to People) [Chilean, est. 2009]

*Remolten N1: Monolita Low Chair 15, Mahuanco, Osorno Volcano,
January 31st, 2020*

Stoneware structure, volcanic lava

31 x 18 1/2 x 24 1/2 inches

78.75 x 47 x 62.25 cm



To French-born experimental designer Marlène Huissoud (b. 1990), the life cycle of a design is akin to that of a living organism – it is a form of cultivation rather than manufacture. This key principle is especially evident in her *Cocoon* series, amorphous furniture designs made with natural silkworm fibers, sealed with a thin layer of natural honeybee bio-resin. These works challenge the way we think about resource utilization, working in concert with the entomological world through deliberate, time-intensive craftsmanship. Beyond the specific colonies of insects that serve as Huissoud's co-protagonists, her objects also tacitly advocate for a slower, more mindful approach to design in general: a gradual transformation that echoes the process of metamorphosis itself, from cocoon to butterfly.

Huissoud's deep complicity with the natural world extends to finding innovative methods of using cocoons without harming the worms, which are typically sacrificed in silk production; this is a symbiotic, rather than extractive, approach. For humans, too, can undergo remarkable transmutations.

MARLÈNE HUISSOUD

French, b. 1990



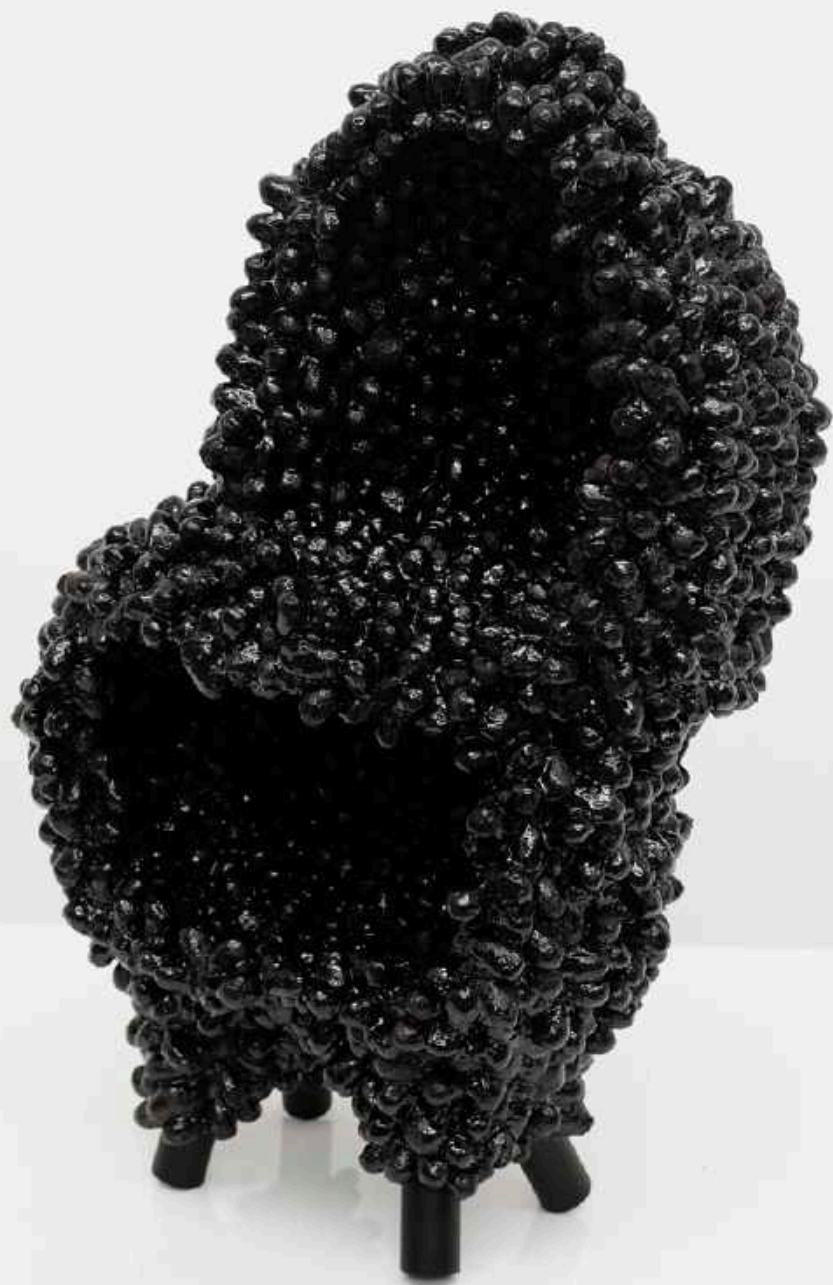
Marlène Huissoud [French, b. 1990]

Cocoon Cabinet #2, 2017

Silkworm's cocoons, honeybee bio resin, wood

28 1/4 x 13 3/4 x 20 1/4 inches

72 x 35 x 51 cm



Those familiar with the previous work of Joris Laarman Lab, from the breakthrough *Bone* furniture series through successive experiments in additive technology (including the ultimate in freeform fabrication technologies, MX3D), won't be surprised by the incredible dynamism of the new *Ply Loop Chair*. In its overall construction, it resembles Laarman's (b. 1979) earlier *Maker* series, which similarly hits a sweet spot between the functional and the sculptural. What is a surprise is this: the chair is fully biodegradable. Typically, plywood is extremely ecologically unfriendly to the environment, not because of the wood, but rather the glues that hold the sandwich of veneers together. While there have been attempts to ameliorate its ecological impact (by eliminating formaldehyde from the adhesive formula, for example), the goal of a biodegradable plywood has been elusive.

Until now. The seemingly magic ingredient of the *Ply Loop Chair* is Plantics, developed by a company in Arnhem, in the Netherlands. This new glue is not only biodegradable but also completely non-toxic ("I tasted it," Laarman notes), and what's more, is compounded of materials from the waste stream of the regional sugar beet industry, so it provides ecological benefit from the get-go. Unlike a standard PLA, which simply hardens as it dries, the sticky, sugary substance of Plantics must be heat-cured to fix it. This adds a step in the making process but also means that it is "tunable," as Laarman puts it. It can be worked over a long period at varying degrees of stiffness, a quality fully exploited in the *Ply Loop Chair*, which is so complex that it takes a long time to assemble by hand. Patented just this month, Plantics has the potential to revolutionize not just furniture, but the construction industry more broadly. Given its elaborate form and labor-intensive construction, the *Ply Loop* chair is obviously not intended as a prototype for mass production. Laarman's intention, rather, is to introduce this exciting new solution to the world, and immediately explore its potential for new form-giving.

Also included in *Under Present Conditions* is a recent iteration of Laarman's ongoing *Symbio* series, a "bio-receptive" furniture project intended to accommodate organic life. Each piece has channels cut into them, which are lined with a phosphate-rich cement, or "mosscrete," which encourages growth of mosses and lichens. These organisms slowly but surely populate the surface, but only in its recesses, completing a graphic image that traverses the shape. Rather than keeping nature at a safe distance, as industrial design tends to do, here it is welcomed and nurtured.

JORIS LAARMAN

Dutch, b. 1979



Joris Laarman [Dutch, b. 1979]

Prototype for Ply Loop Chair, 2024

Oak, walnut veneer, thermoset bio-resin

27 1/2 x 33 1/2 x 32 inches

70 x 85 x 81 cm

Edition of 8





Joris Laarman [Dutch, b. 1979]

Symbio Bench, 2024

Recycled cast concrete

21 1/4 x 107 3/4 x 55 inches

54 x 274 x 140 cm







The renowned British designer Max Lamb (b. 1980) continually pushes the boundaries of conventional design by exploring unconventional materials. For his latest body of work, Lamb revisited the age-old premise of single-material construction, a brief often given to students. He chose one of the least prepossessing of materials to work with, though one that lay ready to hand: the surplus of cardboard accumulated in his own studio. The results are revelatory. Though clearly motivated by a commitment to sustainability, this exercise in hyper-localism is also a convincing demonstration of design's power to imbue discarded materials with elevated aesthetic value. The process involved, with its playful DIY improvisation, intricately interweaves artistry with materiality and spontaneity; the skill and ingenuity of the pieces is formidable, yet they also suggest that anyone could do likewise.

The cardboard that Lamb has reused is heterogeneous, ranging from tubes to corrugated sheets and delivery boxes, offering a diverse palette of colors, forms, and textures. No new cardboard was procured for the project. Instead, Lamb meticulously manipulated, cut, scored, crushed, and finally reassembled the found material with various fasteners – bolts, screws, paper gum tape, and a custom wheat-based glue derived from simple ingredients, just flour and water. By carefully composing the resulting volumes together, Lamb creates structures that mimic the natural structural integrity of rock or wood, all the while retaining traces of their original material essence, their “cardboardness.” At the heart of this complex endeavor lies a profound directness of approach: Lamb is not just recycling surplus materials but illuminating their boundless potential.

MAX LAMB

British, b. 1980



Max Lamb [British, b. 1980]

(4) BOX Chair, 2023

Cardboard, Wheat Paste

34 1/4 x 21 x 21 inches

87 x 53.5 x 53.5 cm



Mexican designer Fernando Laposse (b.1988) reimagines the material potential of natural byproducts, and in doing so mounts a powerful challenge to the ethics of various agricultural industries. For several years, he has been conducting a research project on avocados as a 'conflict commodity.' Through this work, he brings to wide awareness the repercussions that collective patterns of trade and consumption have on small farming communities in Mexico. The surge in global demand for avocados, particularly from the US, has significantly altered farming dynamics, leading to environmental crises, loss of biodiversity, community fragmentation, and civil unrest. Laposse focuses especially on Cherán, a self-governing town in the state of Michoacán, and the primary source for avocado cultivation and export. People in this region have exhibited extraordinary resilience to political and environmental adversity. Fiercely defending their land and identity against violence and deforestation, the women of the community led an uprising in 2011, pushing against cartel-controlled loggers who were clearing the forest, contributing (among many other deleterious effects) to the extinction of the monarch butterfly.

All of this volatile history is written into the very skin of Laposse's furniture. For the cabinet included in Under Present Conditions, he uses a faux leather created from the waste skins of avocados from street sellers in Mexico City. A catalyst object, it shows how design can shift the narrative from loss to renewal, offering a poignant reflection on contemporary material culture and our collective responsibility in shaping it.

FERNANDO LAPOSSE

Mexican, b. 1988







Fernando Laposse [Mexican, b. 1988]

Avocado Skin Cabinet, 2024

Avocado skin marquetry, solid walnut, brass and steel hardware

41 1/2 x 64 1/2 x 17 inches

105 x 164 x 43 cm

Edition of 8



Dutch designer Christien Meindertsma (b. 1980) delves into the very foundations of product creation. Through the intensive research path and comprehensive documentation of her various projects, she investigates themes of local production and the exploration of overlooked resources, revealing processes from which we've grown increasingly distant. In 2012, she purchased the entire annual flax harvest – 10,000 kilos of fiber – from a plot in the Netherlands, with the ambition of exploring how products from this material could be cultivated and utilized, merging process and product together into a seamless unity.

Flax fiber is still grown by farmers in the coastal area that runs from Normandy in France, through Belgium and Zeeland, where the climate's humidity and warmth foster ideal flax cultivation conditions. Yet over ninety percent of this European-grown flax is exported to China, where linen yarns and fabric are produced. In her pursuit to capture the intricate landscape, Meindertsma photographed the fields from a small hot air balloon and translated the grid-like images of the Flevopolder region into weavings. Made with the harvest she purchased, *Flax Field* is an homage to the topology of the very field that birthed the material.

CHRISTIEN MEINDERTSMA

Dutch, b. 1980



Christien Meindertsma [Dutch, b. 1980]

Flax field, 2019

Robot tufted linen yarn

78.75 x 118 inches

200 x 300 cm

Edition of 10



The Dead Sea, as its name implies, cannot support life; its hyper-salinity is hostile to organisms. Yet a tragic irony is unfolding there: the water itself struggles to survive, for due to climate change and industrial exploitation, it is slowly but surely evaporating. Israeli designer Erez Nevi Pana's (b. 1983) practice serves as a documentation of this process, and indexes the wider environmental imbalances resulting from industrialization and mineral extraction. Over the course of five years, Nevi Pana delved into the material properties of the Dead Sea's salt. His work envisions a potential constructive response to humanity's impact on nature, emphasizing collaboration between the environment and its elements, with the designer acting merely as a facilitator.

In his series *Bleached*, Nevi Pana submerges wooden structures enveloped in loofah into the Dead Sea, allowing them to crystallize much like coral formations. These quasi-geological artifacts emerge as revelations and manifestations of time, existing in a liminal realm between ancient and futuristic, intentional and unforeseen. The outcome is a harmonious fusion of the organic and the ornate, evoking a sense of poignant fragility and acute awareness. Nevi Pana thus offers not a pragmatic solution, but rather a poetic gesture that encourages contemplation. As if fulfilling a biblical prophecy, his work suggests that the Dead Sea may contain life in its depths, after all.

EREZ NEVI PANA

Israeli, b. 1983





Erez Nevi Pana [Israeli, b. 1983]

Bleached (BB2020.AUG.1), 2020

Salt crystallized loofah, wood and aluminum structure

35 1/2 x 19 3/4 x 18 1/2 inches

90 x 50 x 47 cm



Erez Nevi Pana [Israeli, b. 1983]

Bleached (BB.2021.SEP.2), 2021

Salt crystallized loofah, wood and aluminum structure

35 1/2 x 19 3/4 x 19 3/4 inches

90 x 50 x 50 cm



Erez Nevi Pana [Israeli, b. 1983]

Bleached (BB.2022.SEP.3), 2022

Salt crystallized loofah, wood and aluminum structure

24 x 19 x 18 1/2 inches

61 x 48 x 47 cm



Burkinabé multidisciplinary artist and designer Hamed Ouattara (b. 1971) stands as one of the most prominent voices in the world of contemporary African design. His creative journey unfolds as a collaborative venture with artisans from various regions in Burkina Faso – from Ouagadougou to Bobo-Dioulasso and Sindou – where metalworking techniques such as forging, welding, hammering, bending, and riveting go back a long way. Influenced by Sudano-Sahelian architecture and forms, Ouattara breathes new vitality into discarded oil drums and various surplus materials, which he transmutes into objects of ancestral legacy and futuristic insight.

To Ouattara, the oil barrel is a potent symbol of the effects that international trade has had on this ancient land. These works that he creates with this malign material embody both chance and intentionality, carrying within them an ominous narrative of time, labor, and the relentless march of globalism. Every detail, right down to the hinges, is meticulously crafted at his workshop in Ouagadougou, bearing the unmistakable traces of its creation and material history. The works' weathered patina becomes a multi-layered archaeological vestige, prompting contemplation on waste – what it is, where it is, and crucially, who must contend with it.

HAMED OUATTARA

Burkinabé, b. 1971



Hamed Ouattara [Burkinabé, b. 1971]

Tombouctou II (Timbuktu 2), 2022

Engine oil drums, sheet metal

67 x 35 1/2 x 15 3/4 inches

170 x 90 x 40 cm

Edition of 8



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Founded in 2016 by Dushyant Bansal (b. 1986) and Priyanka Sharma (b. 1985), Studio Raw Material expresses the essence of place through close observation of the landscape around them. Located in the desert plains of western India, their practice is intimately connected with the local environment, drawing inspiration from its material culture, people, and vernacular practices. Among the local sights are piles of offcuts from local marble quarries, which form surreal and precarious assemblages. Formally inspired by this, Bansal and Sharma challenge conventional perceptions of value, mobilizing the detritus into layered forms that suggest both geological and social stratigraphies.

These designs confront the very eroding landscapes from which they came, a setting shaped by rapid industrial activity and the abundance of waste it produces. *Khokhar* borrows its name from a neighboring village in Rajasthan and comes from the word *khokhla* ('hollow,' in Hindi). It is also the name of a classical Indian music composition with varying pitches. An embodiment of this ethos, the work harmonizes these disparate elements into a single frequency. It is also temporal in connotation, appearing to simultaneously puzzle together and unravel, echoing the constant reshaping of the landscape by human activity. Studio Raw Material contributes a symbolic reflection of how local communities perceive and engage with their environment, navigating the forces, material and immaterial, that shape their surroundings.

STUDIO RAW MATERIAL

Indian, est. 2016



Studio Raw Material [Indian, est. 2016]

Khokhar Seat, 2023

Dune yellow marble

54 x 56 x 23 1/2 inches

137 x 142 x 60 cm



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