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## formafantasma reflects on american domestic furniture archetypes at friedman benda NYC

By Kat Barandy

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installation view courtesy Friedman Benda and Formafantasma | photo by Izzy Leung

### ITALIAN STUDIO FORMAFANTASMA ARRIVES TO THE US

Friedman Benda in New York is currently presenting Formation, the first US gallery exhibition by Italian design studio Formafantasma. Opened to the public on June 6th

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and running until August 1st, the show signals an entry into the American gallery landscape for Andrea Trimarchi and Simone Farresin, whose studio has built a reputation for research-driven work grounded in material and cultural investigations.

Comprising tables, chairs, and lighting made primarily from Cherry wood and brushed aluminum, Formation centers on the idea of the archetype, specifically the typical pieces that make up the language of the home. *'One of the words that kept on emerging from our conversation with the gallery was the idea of the archetype,' Farresin explains at the show's opening in New York. 'There is an element in this group of works, which is the plank. That's the most basic archetype where you construct furniture. And that's where the collection originated.'*



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## FORMATION: FRIEDMAN BENDA BECOMES A LIVING SPACE

The works by Formafantasma are composed within Friedman Benda's gallery to recall a living space, though it is intentionally reduced in language. The designers note that Formation makes no attempt at theatricality. Instead, there is an attentiveness to proportion and placement. Each element draws from the familiar forms of chairs,

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shelving, and tables without directly reproducing historical models. *'We wanted to address the domestic environment.'*

The lighting pieces serve as an especially pointed reflection on how archetypes evolve. Made with flat LED panels encased in wood and metal, they mirror the ratio and glow of laptops and mobile devices. *'Instead of the bulb, the new archetype of lighting is actually the panel,' Farresin notes, describing our changing archetypes. 'The iPhone, the laptop. That is the lighting that affects most of our lives.'*



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## MATERIAL CONVERSATIONS AND CULTURAL INHERITANCE

The choice of Cherry wood is central to Formation. Sourced from a lineage of American cabinetmaking, the material speaks to a larger cultural inheritance. Trimarchi and Farresin reference the Shaker tradition, Frank Lloyd Wright, and George Nakashima, not just for their aesthetics but for the clarity of their values and their dedication to material truth. *'The decision to work with Cherry wood is also a reference and an homage to a lot of American designers we love,' he says. 'The work has been informed by the fact that we are here in the United States, showing our work.'*

Against the warmth of the Cherry wood, brushed aluminum appears cool and precise. More than formal, this contrast speaks to Formafantasma's interest in how older materials might coexist with the language of digital culture. The two materials remain distinct, yet they are in constant dialogue across each object.

## TEXTILES IN THE DOMESTIC ENVIRONMENT

Subtle textile elements appear throughout the exhibition as acknowledgements of domestic labor and memory. *'A lot of textile work is often overlooked in the domestic environment,' the designer continues. 'I'm thinking about table linen. And white is very subtle. We thought it was beautiful to include that. It made us think about the work of the many women that informed our life.'*

The inclusion of these textiles introduces a softer, slower register to the space. They draw attention to touch and surface, but also to the social histories embedded in fabric which have long defined the heritage of furniture-making.



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