

FRIEDMAN BENDA  
515 W 26TH STREET  
NEW YORK NY 10001

JONATHAN TRAYTE  
MelonMelonTangerine  
FEB 15 – MAR 13 2021



*Kula Sour (Day Bed), 2020*

**New York, NY (October 28, 2020)** – Friedman Benda is pleased to present *MelonMelonTangerine*, British artist Jonathan Trayte’s second solo exhibition at the gallery. Informed by Trayte’s recent 2000-mile road trip through the Western United States, *MelonMelonTangerine* offers an outsider’s perspective on the American landscape. As an avid observer, Trayte poignantly examines the ways in which we perceive and utilize natural resources through his signature tongue-in-cheek sensibility.

With a keen perception and eye for the obscure, Trayte finds the surreal in our everyday surroundings and within the fabric of daily life. Realized while in isolation amidst the current pandemic, he recalls hazy visions of sedimentary rock formations, Joshua trees, lichens, silver cholla cacti and prickly pear fruits to inform this new body of work. A visual raconteur, Trayte reimagines natural forms while appropriating highly stylized motifs from product packaging and advertising ephemera as a nuanced commentary on the universal language of consumerism. Embracing contradictions between the organic and the artificial, he uses the American archetype of the Wild West to examine the rampant excess and waste inherent in today’s society.

“Color is so important as a means of persuasion, persuading people to consume in particular kinds of ways, or in appealing to specific social groups. I create synthetic painted veneers and compositions of materials that either reflect or distort this language; they’re like skins of paint or textures that create a kind of chameleon appearance,” says Trayte.

As a nod to Pop art, Trayte subverts the still-life genre, probing tensions between familiarity and displacement. Aimed to transport the viewer to an otherworldly botanical garden, the exhibition debuts his most ambitious work to date including a large palm-like swing seat and a fantastical illuminated cantilever bench rendered on a massive scale. Using vivid hues and innovative processes, the result is an imaginary dreamscape – a surreal collage of color, materials, forms and textures.

### **About Jonathan Trayte**

Jonathan Trayte was born in 1980 in Huddersfield, UK. Trayte received a Bachelor of Fine Art degree from University of the Creative Arts Canterbury in 2004 and a postgraduate degree in Fine Art from Royal Academy Schools in 2010. Trayte has also had broad experience in other fields—including as a chef and foundry metal worker—both of which inform his approach. Trayte’s work has been included in numerous international exhibitions, including *The Spectacle*, Sculpture in the City, London (2019-2020); *Psychotropics*, The New Art Centre, Wiltshire, UK (2020), *New Sculptural Presence*, Nilufar, Milan (2019); *Fruiting Habits*, Friedman Benda, New York (2018); *The London Open*, Whitechapel Gallery, London (2018); *Dream Works*, Kate MacGarry, London (2018); *SCHUSSBOOMER*, Castor Projects, London (2017-18); *Tropicana*, Christies, London (2017), *Identify your Limitations*, Vitrine Basel, Switzerland (2017); *Milk*, Christies, London (2016), *Polyculture*, The Tetley, Leeds, UK (2016); *Experiments in Consuming*, The Kings School, Canterbury, UK (2016); *The Shoppers Guide*, Royal Academy of Arts, London (2015).

### **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. Since 2007, the gallery’s exhibitions, publications and collaborations with institutions have played a vital role in the development of the contemporary design market and scholarship. 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](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...).

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