

FRIEDMAN BENDA
515 W 26TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001

THE NEW FIGURATION
CURATED BY GLENN ADAMSON
MAR 28 – APR 19 2022

“Design is inherently figurative. After all, chairs have arms, legs, a back and seat. Yet this potential has remained largely implicit in modern or contemporary design.”
- Glenn Adamson

New York – Friedman Benda is pleased to present *The New Figuration*, curated by Glenn Adamson. Including works by seven contemporary practitioners, the exhibition considers the current propulsion towards figurative representation in design, and more broadly, probes the mode’s sudden pressing relevance – a phenomenon paralleled in contemporaneous painting and sculpture.

The New Figuration is the second in a series of programmatic explorations of key developments in contemporary design curated by Adamson at Friedman Benda. Following the exhibition *A New Realism* (2021), which considered materially-intensive pragmatism as a working strategy, *The New Figuration* showcases positions whose formal and conceptual concerns are resolved through figural means. Apart from a few forebears, such as Nicola L and Gaetano Pesce, anthropomorphism has been a rare presence in design history, until now.

The exhibition brings together the work of Saelia Aparicio, Carmen D’Apollonio, Yining Fei, Anna Aagaard Jensen, Toomas Toomepuu, Chris Schanck and Barbora Zilinskaite. While each artist in the show has particular reasons for adopting the figurative mode, the works collectively suggest a turn away from the modernist ideal and its characteristically abstract nature, and an embrace of individual subject positions. As Adamson states, “above all, figuration necessarily raises a completely different set of criteria: who an object is meant to represent, as well as what.”

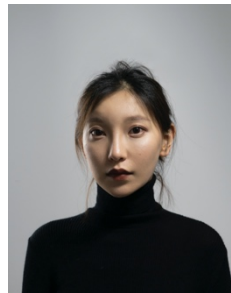
Artists included:



Saelia Aparicio
[Spanish, b. 1982]



Carmen D’Apollonio
[Swiss, b. 1973]



Yining Fei
[Chinese, b. 1990]



Anna Aagaard Jensen
[Danish, b. 1991]



Toomas Toomepuu
[American, b. 1995]



Chris Schanck
[American, b. 1975]



Barbora Zilinskaite
[Lithuanian, b. 1996]

About Glenn Adamson

Glenn Adamson is a curator, writer and historian based in New York. He has previously been Director of the Museum of Arts and Design; Head of Research at the V&A; and Curator at the Chipstone Foundation in Milwaukee. Adamson’s publications include *Thinking Through Craft* (2007); *The Craft Reader* (2010); *Postmodernism: Style and Subversion* (2011, accompanying the exhibition of that title at the V&A, co-curated with Jane Pavitt); *The*

Invention of Craft (2013); *Art in the Making* (2016, co-authored with Julia Bryan-Wilson; and *Fewer Better Things: The Hidden Wisdom of Objects* (2018). His newest book is *Craft: An American History*, published by Bloomsbury.

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. 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](https://www.instagram.com/friedman_benda) and [YouTube channel](#).

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