

FRIEDMAN BENDA
515 W 26TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001

EVERYTHING HERE IS VOLCANIC
CURATED BY MARIO BALLESTEROS
JAN 12 – FEB 18 2023



Vernacular Kitchen by Tezontle

"Alles hier ist vulkanisch." – Hannes Meyer

New York – Friedman Benda presents its ninth annual guest-curated exhibition, the first dedicated to contemporary Mexico, entitled *Everything Here Is Volcanic*. Curated by Mario Ballesteros, the exhibition sparks from a statement by the radical Swiss architect Hannes Meyer, who lived in Mexico for over a decade from 1938 to 1949. "Everything here (in Mexico) is volcanic", he wrote, bewitched by an unexpected yet somehow familiar mountainous land, entangled in deep sociopolitical change, in a letter to his friend and fellow architect Hans Schmidt. Meyer was referring to both the unpredictable geological conditions and the surrounding lava landscape, but also to the challenge of introducing an orthodox modernism in Mexico, a supercharged and superposed culture with deep roots and atemporal deviances, where an obsession with the past lingers in the drive for the future.

Everything Here Is Volcanic encapsulates the same eruptive energy in an ultracontemporary survey of rare objects that embody Mexican culture now. Precarious boundaries, unstable categories and stylistic tensions spill into the gallery space, which is transformed into a postdomestic microcosm of unlikely fittings and furnishings.

Featuring new and recent works as well as especially commissioned installations by both established and emerging Mexican artists, designers, architects and makers – many of whom are debuting in New York City – *Everything Here Is Volcanic* captures the explosive energy of contemporary production in Mexico.

The exhibition's touchstone works include a peculiar take on a traditional vernacular Mexican kitchen by the art/architecture studio Tezontle; a delicate bead chair by Frida Escobedo; a floor lamp by Fernando Laposse made with cactus deadwood and spines; a pair of leather bucket-stools by the breakthrough fashion designer and artist Bárbara Sánchez Kane; a trio of large-scale ceramic and stone neo-prehispanic sculptures by SANGREE; an intricate fiber and ceramic bead sculptural curtain by Lorena Ancona; a hand-chiseled leather BDSM riding saddle by designer and artist Aldo Álvarez Tostado; an informally constructed lighting fixture by the research architect Andrés Souto; a sizeable ceremonial mirror by ceramic artist Alejandro García Contreras; a monolithic table by acclaimed artist Pedro Reyes; a hardcore stool and side table in aluminum and concrete by fashion wunderkind Víctor Barragán and a bright, boisterous, cantilevered mosaic bench by the legendary organic architect Javier Senosiain. These functional art pieces are complemented by critical works by young artists Allan Villavicencio, Tony Macarena and Wendy Cabrera Rubio, that provide an additional narrative layer by way of material gloss.

Presented in a spatial array structured around notions of encounter, ritual and dream, the exhibition slides and shifts and solidifies like magma overflowing from a mutant material culture.

About Mario Ballesteros

Mario Ballesteros is an independent design curator, editor and researcher. He is founder of Ballista, a new platform to propel emerging design talent from Mexico, as well as co-founder and curatorial director of Salón COSA, an itinerant, biannual gathering of contemporary objects. For over 15 years he has led projects focused on experimental or critical approaches to material culture in Mexico. In 2019 he was guest curator of the Abierto Mexicano de Diseño, an open-source design festival, where he organized *Pop, Populista, Popular* exhibition in the Museo del Palacio de Bellas Artes, the first design show to take place in the most important cultural venue in Mexico since Clara Porset's 1952 *Art in Daily Life*. He was previously Director and Chief Curator at Archivo Diseño y Arquitectura, Mexico's only space dedicated to collecting, exhibiting and rethinking design, as well as as founding editor in chief for the Mexican edition of *Domus*.

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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Feliz Navidad by Fernando Laposse



Creek Chair by Frida Escobedo