

FRIEDMAN BENDA
8260 MARMONT LANE
LOS ANGELES CA 90069

HAMED OUATTARA
BOLIBANA
SEPT 13 – DEC 21 2023



Dioulassoba (Dioula's Town), 2022

Opening Reception: Wednesday, September 13th, 6 – 9pm

Los Angeles – Friedman Benda presents its first solo exhibition of Burkinabé multidisciplinary artist and designer Hamed Ouattara, one of the most prominent voices in the world of contemporary African design. *Bolibana* marks his American debut by unveiling a new body of work and featuring a continuation of his characteristic modes of making. In the Bamana language of West Africa, 'Bolibana' refers to the unusual end of a journey, a transformation. Known for upcycling discarded materials, such as his signature oil drums, into distinctively colorful works, Ouattara engages with industrial debris to tell an unusual end to the story of waste and global trade.

Interested in the traces that tools leave on objects, Ouattara combines artisanal and industrial sensibilities into a series that is as culturally significant as it is visually striking. Due to limited supply and access to resources, all hinges, nails, and tools necessary to fabricate these works are crafted in the studio. A synthesis of his work to date, *Bolibana* delineates two approaches to making—one concerned with reusing waste from increasingly industrialized Burkina Faso, and the other with re-engaging the craft and knowledge that has been lost due to these changes. The latter, drawing inspiration from Sudano-Sahelian architecture of mythic cities such as Timbuktu, Djenne, and Bobo Dioulasso, marks an exploration into new territory for Ouattara. Hammered, shaped, and repurposed entirely by hand, the pieces in this exhibition are made using indigenous and ancestral metalworking techniques.

Founded in 2002 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso's capital, Studio Hamed Ouattara uses materials that document the patterns of trade and reflect the state of local development and economy. The lack of fossil fuel production in the region has led to increasing oil imports and an overwhelming amount of discarded barrels. Collaborating with artisans from various locations in Burkina Faso, the studio adapts its production and distribution methods to the local sociopolitical climate, whether in terms of equipment, energy supply, or access to materials.

Intrinsically addressing concerns in the field, such as overconsumption, use of resources, the environment, and sustainability, *Bolibana* is a celebration of traditional techniques and craft. Each work's unique patina tells a story of its former life, questioning the very idea of disposability while reimagining the possibilities of material and design.

About Hamed Ouattara

Born in 1971, Hamed Ouattara is a multidisciplinary artist and designer based in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. Established as one of the most prominent voices in the world of contemporary African design, he is known for using local raw materials of upcycled barrels and cans, in direct response to his immediate environment.

After studying accounting, Ouattara moved to design and visual arts, receiving training at the Olorun Foundation. In 2002, he founded Studio Hamed Ouattara (SHO), before graduating from the Ecole Nationale Supérieure de Création Industrielle (ENSCI) in Paris, in 2003. During the last two decades, Hamed Ouattara has regularly exhibited across the world. He joined the highly dynamic DNA (Design Network Africa) supported by the Danish Center for Culture and Development.

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, Los Angeles and Paris, 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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Afrikya (Africa), 2022



Dugu (Country), 2022