

FRIEDMAN BENDA
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designboom

Daniel Arsham discusses the dissolution of architecture + time for Friedman Benda's "Design in Dialogue"

By Nina Azzarello
August 11, 2020



on april 1, 2020, new york gallery friedman benda initiated a series of online interviews aimed at connecting individuals across the world with leading voices in the creative field. *design in dialogue* is a conversational program hosted alternately by curator and historian **glenn adamson** and designer **stephen burks** that engages with designers, makers, critics, and curators as they reflect on their careers and creative processes. against the backdrop of COVID-19 and global lockdowns, the conversations are held virtually on zoom for 1 hour for anyone in the world to tune in to, and include a participatory Q&A with the audience in attendance. friedman benda has since presented more than 40 episodes, and will continue with a lineup of future guests, each offering unparalleled insight into the sensibilities, musings, and memories of today's creative protagonists. **see our recent feature of iris van herpen's discussion on her manifold creative collaborations, and patricia urquiola's conversation about her prolific and powerful oeuvre.**

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on july 29, *design in dialogue* welcomed new york-based artist daniel arsham, whose multidisciplinary practice traverses painting, sculpture, installation, film and object design. in a conversation with glenn adamson, arsham spoke about his investigations of the built form, which often introduces temporal narratives of transience, the dissolution of time, and the notion of making architecture 'do things it's not supposed to do.'

watch the full video interview at the top of the page and stay tuned as designboom continues to share *design in dialogue* features. see all past episodes — and RSVP for upcoming ones — [here](#).



arsham adapted his long island home into an immersive installation for friedman benda at design miami/ 2019. image by daniel kukla, courtesy of friedman benda and daniel arsham. [read more on designboom here](#)

arsham began by delving into his exploration of erosion, excavation, and history — themes that have informed his vast ‘fictional archaeology’ series. *‘this whole series came out of an experience in easter island — a south pacific island where there is still a dispute about among archeologists about the origin of the famous moai statues. after I returned from there, I started thinking about the way we think about history and archeology, which is very definitive. we look at egyptian, or greek or roman, and we accept the narrative there — but inherently, it’s impossible to know exactly what happened. I started*

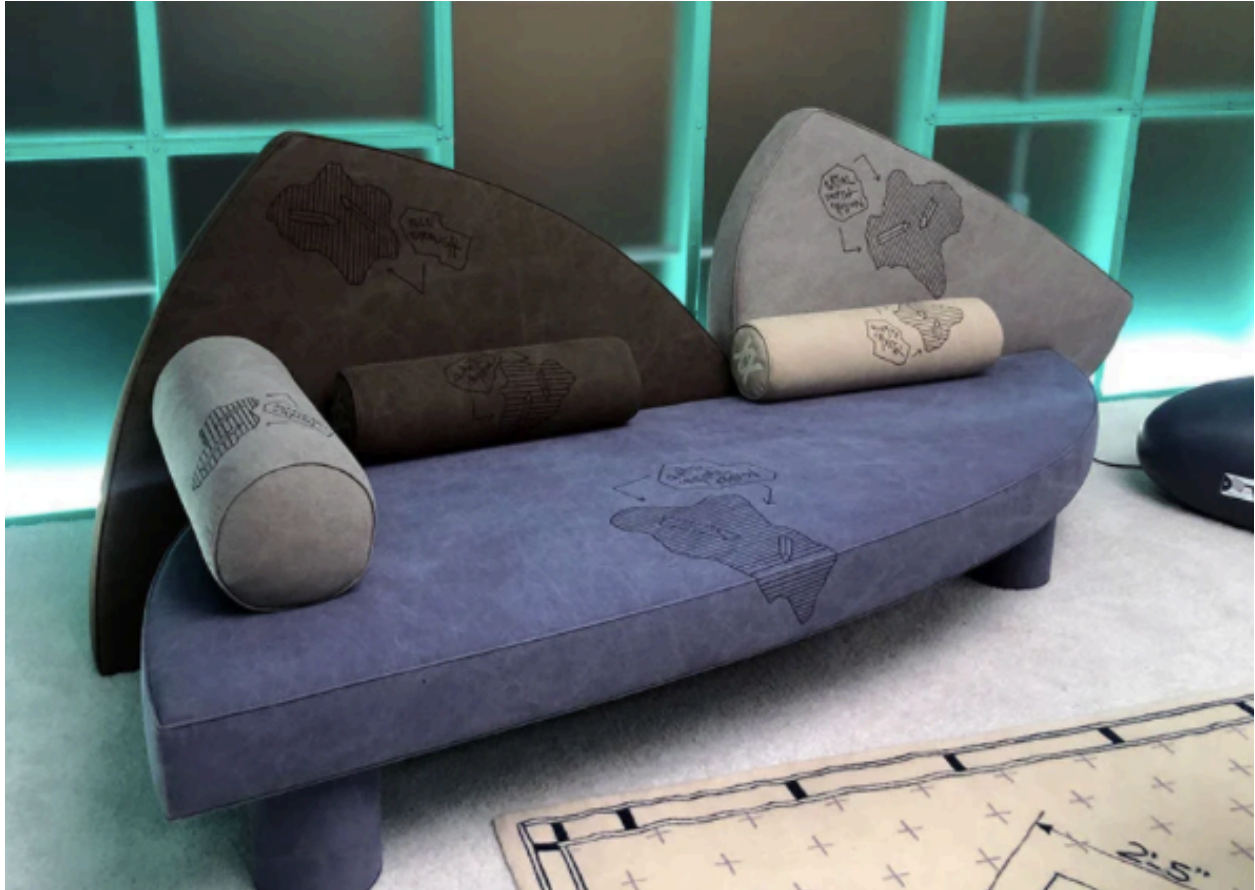
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to think about the malleability of archeology. certainly, archeology as we imagine it is only of the past, but what if I could create an archeology of the future, and project these contemporary objects into a distant future?’



arsham transformed the design miami/ booth into an intimate domestic setting image by daniel kukla, courtesy of friedman benda and daniel arsham. read more on designboom [here](#)

these ideas about the ‘malleability of archeology’ fed into arsham’s ongoing spatial investigations of architecture and the built form. at the 2019 edition of design miami/, arsham collaborated with friedman benda to adapt elements from his long island home into an immersive installation. within the booth’s frosted blue walls, arsham sited a collection of chairs and loungers he designed that embodied his immediately-recognizable, fossilized ‘future’ relic aesthetic. *‘they’re a combination of all the different elements that I enjoy,’* he says about the collection of furniture, which includes illustrated erosions. *‘for some of the sculptural work in the studio, we’ll create a plaster dummy cast, and before we actually cast the final version in crystal, i’ll make drawings on the original so that I can see where I want these erosions generally to be placed. I tested it out, placing it on one of these objects — and they look like notes for something that should happen afterwards. they are all hand drawn on to the canvas of the work.’*



the artist also designed a series of 'eroded' furniture presented within the installation | image © designboom. read more on designboom [here](#)

finally, arsham spoke about navigating the COVID-19 pandemic over the last few months, and reflected on rediscovering his early roots in art as an outlet for creative action in quarantine. *'I've continued painting a lot — what I studied in school was painting, and I hadn't really been doing it very frequently. in fact, the last time that I had paintings in an exhibition was 2012. so, I'm thinking about including some of these new paintings that I've been making over quarantine in an exhibition early next year in new york. a lot of things that I'm known for now are more sculptural...larger objects...things that require space and techniques that I just didn't have when I was younger. painting has always been this thing to go back to that is very inexpensive, simple, and can be done almost anywhere. in some ways, I've kind of gone back to the roots of what brought me to art in general.'*



as the 2019/2020 NBA season approached, arsham designed a bronze casted sculpture of an eroded basketball. read more on designboom [here](#)

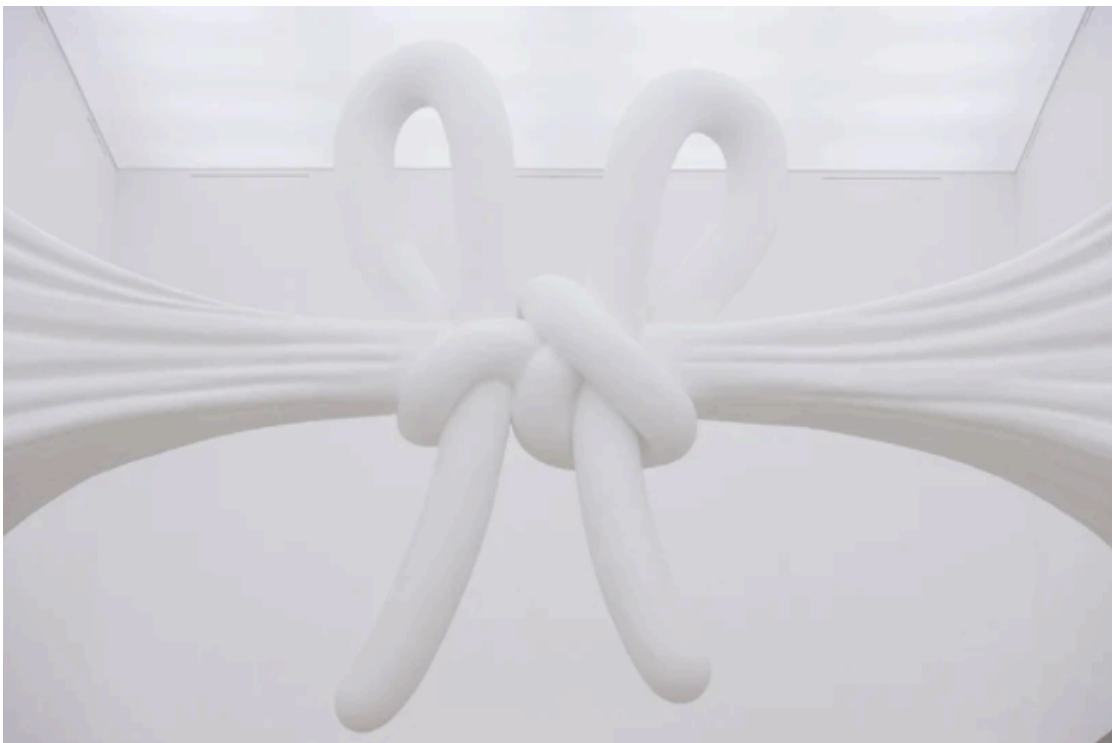


arsham teamed up with RIMOWA to bring a much-loved vintage suitcase back from its archive. read more on designboom [here](#)

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one of arsham's larger-scale works — an eroded 1981 delorean | photo by guillaume zicarelli, courtesy of perrotin. [read more on designboom here](#)



a large-scale installation for arsham's first solo exhibition in russia, 'moving architecture' | image by james law. [read more on designboom here](#)

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in rio de janeiro, arsham assembled an enormous japanese zen garden | image by joana frança. read more on designboom [here](#)



arsham re-interpreted a japanese rock garden with this neon pink 'lunar' landscape. read more on designboom [here](#)



a cavernous colored room and sculptural artifacts | image by guillaume ziccarelli. [read more on designboom here](#)



james franco starred in arsham's film about the future of humanity. [read more on designboom here](#)

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portrait of daniel arsham. image courtesy of friedman benda
and daniel arsham, photo by james law

design in dialogue is a series of online interviews presented by new york-based gallery friedman benda that highlights leading voices from the field — designers, makers, critics, and curators — as they discuss their work and ideas. hosted alternately by curator and historian glenn adamson and designer stephen burks, the conversations are held on zoom for 1 hour and include a participatory Q&A.

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