

FRIEDMAN BENDA
515 W 26TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001

designboom

Patricia Urquiola on her prolific and powerful oeuvre for Friedman Benda's 'Design in Dialogue'

By Nina Azzarello
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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 conversation, where she delves into her manifold creative collaborations, [here](#).**

on july 31, *design in dialogue* welcomed **patricia urquiola**, one of the most successful and influential designers. since 2001, from her base in milan at **studio urquiola**, she leads an international team of creatives that collectively work across architecture, interior, and product design in the luxury lifestyle sector. in 2015, urquiola became the art director of the historic and contemporary furniture brand **cassina**,

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where she generates creative strategies for the long-established italian company. in urquiola's *design in dialogue* hosted by stephen burks, she intimately discussed her inspiration, long-time collaborations, and joyful capacity for generating such a powerfully-creative and diverse body of work.

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](#).



the sonar collection by patricia urquiola for LAUFEN is shaped like sound-waves in water. see more on designboom [here](#)

urquiola cites her early interest in architecture as an entirely natural one — one influenced by her family, childhood environment, and innate attraction to new opportunities. *‘it’s always so difficult to explain, because my mind now is so far away from the things that were moving me when I was young,’* she tells burks about the origins of her creative thinking. *‘but when I was 13 years old, I remember crossing a park in my city — oviedo, in the north of spain — and I think I said — I’m going to be an architect. there are a lot of things I remember that are associated with a place, and at a very young*

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age. I think I wanted to be architect for many different reasons, but never a designer, because a designer didn't exist. there weren't any architecture [studies] in oviedo, which was another reason to do it — I need to move, and I needed to move away. I went to madrid, and I was convinced.'



sanlorenzo's SD96 yacht features interiors designed by urquiola.
see more on designboom [here](#)

urquiola also went on to discuss the early influences on her career after finishing her studies, specifically her first working relationship with the legendary maddalena de padova and vico magistretti. she describes the connection between the two of them as 'essential', and spoke about the importance of an ongoing dialogue throughout all stages of the creative process. *'she was editing the things they were thinking about together,'* urquiola says of de padova and magistretti's dynamic. *'he was the main designer, but she was the editor, and she was breaking the rules many times. so I understood that even if you have a strong idea and you have a strong career, it's not all in your hands. you have to be open to dialogue with someone who has ideas too — and then they break your ideas and you go back and home and think — my idea was a disaster! (laughs). I think that dialogue is good, to go through that process and have that relationship. I learned a lot about them through this, because they were really discussing everything. it was very beautiful to see them working.'*



the 'visioni' rug collection by urquiola for cc-tapis blends age-old techniques and abstract graphics

finally, urquiola reflected on the impact of the pandemic and noted a silver lining to the difficulties faced worldwide. *'I think it's a period of learning, and I like that a lot...we all are thinking in other ways and trying to understand new ways to do everything — and that's not bad in some ways.'*

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the 550 beam sofa system by urquiola for cassina

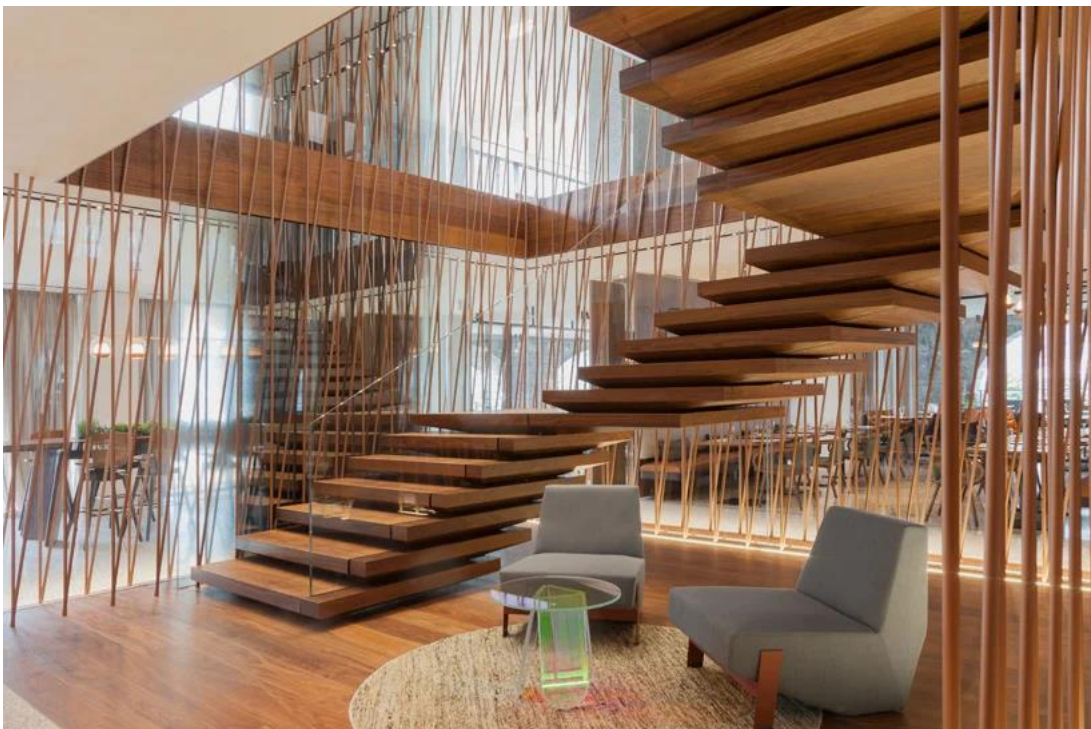


patricia urquiola and federica sala curated a monographic exhibition on achille castiglioni at la triennale di milano. image © designboom | see more on designboom [here](#)

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this playful rendition of a modern daybed recalls the soul and style of a sneaker
a project by urquiola for milan design week 2019, curated by rossana orlandi



a look inside the patricia urquiola-designed il sereno hotel
on lake como. see more on [designboom](#) [here](#)

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video of the lud'o lounge chair designed for cappellini, which recreates the softness of a feather-padded jacket



a table from the 'shimmer' collection for glas italia
see more on designboom [here](#)

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the hotel giulia designed by urquiola embodies milanese flair
 image © ricardo labougle see more on designboom [here](#)



a quote by milton glaser adapted by patricia urquiola with a personal image
 for her presentation with friedman benda | image courtesy of patricia urquiola
 and friedman benda

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portrait of patricia urquiola. image courtesy of friedman benda

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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