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ADPRO

Faye Toogood Made Hundreds of Experimental Furniture Pieces for This New Show

For a new exhibition at Friedman Benda,
the designer goes back to (maquette) basics

By Poppie Mphuthing
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A showstopper of a sofa that is included in the show.
Photo: Daniel Kukla / Courtesy of Friedman Benda

British artist and designer Faye Toogood’s new exhibition, “Assemblage 6: Unlearning,” opened this week in New York. Presented by Manhattan art gallery Friedman Benda,

Poppie Mphuthing, “Faye Toogood made hundreds of experimental furniture pieces for this new show,” *Architectural Digest PRO*, September 11, 2020.

Toogood's latest installation is a departure from her usual process, and will be on view through October 17.

"For me, the process of 'unlearning' meant intuitive play rather than 'active design,'" Toogood says to AD PRO. Her normal creative process tends to rely on an initial idea, which is usually then fashioned into a maquette. From there, different iterations are created over and over again in order to fine-tune a final design. But this, Toogood explains, means going through hundreds of versions of the original maquette, with production and materials in mind.

Toogood notes that this process likely stems from a desire for perfection and symmetry, which she sought to unlearn for "Assemblage 6." As she reflects further: "The way to achieve this was to replicate the original maquettes without any refinement."

The designer and her team spent a number of months making hundreds of such models from materials in the studio—clay, paper, tape, canvas, wire, and paint. "We laid them all out around us and I made a selection," says Toogood. "I was keen to find forms and geometries that are truly unique, not referencing any work that I had done before."



Small maquettes of each blown-up piece included in the show are also on display.

Photo: Daniel Kukla / Courtesy of Friedman Benda

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The artist points out too that using ordinary materials gave her a sense of freedom. “We have taken a body of work that is considered poor in terms of material,” she says, “and turned that into permanent pieces cast in bronze, painted canvas, and wrought steel.”

Toogood notes that making the maquettes allowed her to experiment with pieces of different scales. It also enabled a unique approach when it came to the final furniture pieces. These include an armchair that looks like crumpled paper—cast in patinated aluminum—and a sofa formed out of fresh clay.

“There is a feeling of fragility as well as a contrast between the weight and solidity of the final pieces and the lightness of the originals,” Toogood adds. “As a designer, I feel I have exposed myself in this exhibition, revealing my process and sharing work at its earliest point of creation.”