

FRIEDMAN BENDA
515 W 26TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001

**Design/
Miami**

MelonMelonTangerine

**Jonathan Trayte's new dreamscape collection at New
York's Friedman Benda Gallery**

February 2, 2021



*Atomic Double by Jonathan Trayte, 2020. Photo courtesy
of Friedman Benda and Jonathan Trayte*

This month, New York's Friedman Benda opens the gallery's second show dedicated to new work from English artist Jonathan Trayte. Entitled MelonMelonTangerine, the show builds on Trayte's first collection for the gallery a few years back—which was created in the wake of an epic 2000-mile road trip through the Western United States. Like that first show, this one is vibrant, exuberant, and bemusing—but the scale has grown and the attitude is even more unabashedly absurdist.



Sundown Swing by Jonathan Trayte, 2020. Photo courtesy of Friedman Benda and Jonathan Trayte

In the 10ish years since completing postgraduate studies at the Royal Academy in London, Trayte has explored many materials, from bronze to crushed glass and nylon flocking. Yet his forms always appear of a kind as he draws inspiration from the everyday, transforming the familiar into the fantastical.



Kula Sour by Jonathan Trayte, 2020. Photo courtesy of Friedman Benda and Jonathan Trayte

In an interview with *Whitewall* magazine conducted on the occasion of his presentation with Friedman Benda at Design Miami/ 2019, he offered this insight into his output:

“I like making work that has an appeal, an attraction, but it’s also important for there to be a bit of a conflict, as nothing’s ever perfect. There is always a bit of grit somewhere, a fly or a hair or speck of dust. My aim is to have something unsettling in the work set against a delicious texture or material—whether it’s a hairy background, some weird ugly bronze cast, or a sexually suggestive neon shape.”



*Orange Foam Cola Moon 2 and Velvet Solar Star by Jonathan Trayte, 2020.
Photos courtesy of Friedman Benda and Jonathan Trayte*

Taking a more erudite tone, the gallery explains Trayte like this: “Embracing contradictions between the organic and the artificial, he uses the American archetype of the Wild West to examine the rampant excess and waste inherent in today’s society.”



Grass Green Settee by Jonathan Trayte, 2020. Photo courtesy of Friedman Benda and Jonathan Trayte

Trayte's latest collection for Friedman Benda pulls off a cool trick: it displays a clear lineage back to last century's Pop Art movement while at the same time representing just what's most desired from today's diverse collectible design market. One could imagine that MelonMelonTangerine is the result of loading an advanced AI supercomputer with images of today's greatest hits of collectible design and then asking it to create a synthesis. Even so, these dreamscape object-collages are totally original design creations that you can't help but delight in. ♦



*bONZA and Desert Light by Jonathan Trayte, 2020.
Photos courtesy of Friedman Benda and Jonathan Trayte*

Works from the Friedman Benda collection are available through the Design Miami/ Shop [here](#).

Jonathan Trayte: MelonMelonTangerine is on view at Friedman Benda from February 15 to March 13, 2021.