

Sight Unseen

EXCERPT: EXHIBITION

THE CAMPANA BROTHERS AT FRIEDMAN BENDA



If you're a longtime reader of *Sight Unseen*, you know it's rare that we write about a big name designer. In part, it's a question of access – it's far easier to get an RCA grad on the phone than, say, Hella Jongerius. But it's also a question of ubiquity: If you read a bunch of design blogs, you're going to hear about something like Yves Behar's new Smart Lock until your face falls off.

The Campana Brothers – despite being one of the biggest names in design – have somehow always eluded that extreme ubiquity. Perhaps it's because their home base is in Brazil rather than Europe or the States; they remain naturally outside the fray. And despite having popped up in the permanent collection at MoMA more than a decade ago, it took until now for the brothers to be given a solo exhibition in the United States. That exhibition, called *Concepts*, opened this week at the Chelsea gallery Friedman Benda. Its rarity – along with the fact that we've loved the brothers at least since we visited their Sao Paulo studio in 2010, if not before – makes it worth a mention.

And then there's the new work, which deviates in part from what has come before but follows the same thread. The brothers have always worked with recycled materials, but

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here those discards get classed up a bit. If before the Campanas were weaving strips of rattan through abandoned plastic garden chairs, here they've taken remnants from Thonet chair backings and hand stitched them into nylon bases with bent brass frames. Instead of plush stuffed animals, their newest Banquete chair uses lifelike leather stuffed alligators made by an NGO that employs underprivileged women. And their scrap material of choice, gathered from around their native Sao Paulo, isn't bubble wrap or cardboard, but amethysts, studding a series of hanging glass panels.

Campana Brothers: Concepts is on view until July 3.



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