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THE REPORT

The Campana Brothers Turn Sadness Into Art in a New Show at Friedman Benda

A broad array of materials and silhouettes are at once eerie and captivating

TEXT BY HANNAH MARTIN



Photo: Dan Kukla / Courtesy of Friedman Benda and Estudio Campana

“It’s about all the things that make me sad,” Humberto Campana says plainly, standing amid “Hybridism,” a collection of new works designed by him and his brother, Fernando, on display at New York’s Friedman Benda

Martin, Hannah. “The Campana Brothers Turn Sadness Into Art in a New Show at Friedman Benda,” *AD.com*, September 7, 2017.

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through October 14. “The Amazon devastation, the political situation in Brazil and the rest of the world. My brother and I tried to express our feelings in a beautiful way. It was a sort of catharsis.”

The results are eerie and totally captivating. Found sticks and tree bark (Humberto collects them on his morning jogs) were cast into the bases of two sculptural sofas, their seats made from thick strips of Kvadrat fabric woven into earthen-looking mounds. A siren-shaped sofa is upholstered in the scaly hide of a giant Amazonian fish. And perhaps most memorably, in *Noah*, a series of vases, candlesticks, and tables, the plush critters that the brothers once stitched together into their iconic stuffed-animal chairs are assembled into squirming stacks and cast in recycled aluminum and bronze.



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“Everyone knows the stuffed-animal chair, but here it is more perverse,” Humberto explains. “There’s more anger. It’s about the desire for rescue.” It’s a sensation that Humberto experienced firsthand this year when he was diagnosed with cancer (from which he has since recovered), one he feels is particularly apparent in the *Noah* bench, where cast-aluminum dogs and a Brazilian panther appear to be exploding from a mossy green sofa.



Photo: Dan Kukla / Courtesy of Friedman Benda and Estudio Campana

“We try to put soul in our objects,” he explains. “They are not calm. They speak loudly, but with soul.”

As with most of their work, the Campana Brothers worked closely with craftspeople in their native Brazil to create the pieces, working to preserve the country's traditions and also to use found and recycled materials that are environmentally friendly. “I like to see beauty when hidden in the banalities,” says Humberto. “Things that people normally don’t see. The artist needs to have an eye to discover these situations.”

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