

ADPRO

***Apartamento's* Cofounder Curated a Show All About Comfort**

Omar Sosa's exhibition at Friedman Benda takes a critical look at what we expect from our furniture

By Hannah Martin
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In *Comfort*, a show at Friedman Benda in New York, Nicola L's Canapé Homme Geant joins works by Simone Fattal, George Condo, and Nancy Grossman. Photo: Daniel Kukla / Courtesy of Friedman Benda

"I never want to be trapped in a comfort zone," says Omar Sosa, a creative director and cofounder of *Apartamento* magazine, who moved to New York in 2016 when he began to fear just that. Life in his native Barcelona was easy, if predictable, and, he says to AD PRO, "I wanted a challenge. If you're too comfortable you never do anything new."

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It's four years later and he's standing amid an egg-yolk yellow gallery at New York's [Friedman Benda](#), doing something very new, indeed: installing Comfort, his curatorial debut. For the gallery's sixth annual guest-curated show, which opened last night, Sosa contemplated the very idea that brought him to this side of the Atlantic. And with his nuanced selection of furniture, sculptures, paintings, photographs, and objects, he asks: What is comfort, really? And when have we had too much?



Linear Sequence #2, components for living by Andrea Zittel, join ceramic works by Takuro Kuwata, a bookshelf by Ettore Sottsass and a Blanket for Two by Nathalie du Pasquier. The exhibition opened yesterday and will be on view through February 15. Photo: Daniel Kukla / Courtesy of Friedman Benda

They're questions he began asking during his friendship with the late design world legend [Jim Walrod](#). Before meeting him, Sosa explains, "my goal was to wake up and see things I think are beautiful—to be at ease." But after spending time in the great collector's home, filled with [famously difficult things](#)—[Robert Venturi's](#) garish Queen Anne chair, [Gaetano Pesce's](#) radical resin—Sosa explains, "I want to live with things where you say, 'I'm not sure that object likes me, but we have to learn to get along.'"

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Past BLESS's pillow hammock, Max Lamb's Tonalite Boulder Chair is in conversation with a Wolfgang Tillmans depicting the pixel patterns of TV static. At left is Richard Artschwager's Chair 4 and at right is Marijn van der Poll's Do Hit Chair for Droog Design. Photo: Daniel Kukla / Courtesy of Friedman Benda

A few of the works in Comfort are inviting at a glance—a pile of pillows strung into a hammock by BLESS, John Chamberlain's carved-foam, parachute-covered Couch, the almost-sweet slipcovered Pigiama Armchair by **Andrea Branzi**—but most are more of a challenge. **Isamu Noguchi's** Pierced Seat and Table in galvanized steel and Marijn van der Poll's steel Do Hit Chair for Droog (accompanied by a hammer) seem a bit too brutal for a Saturday afternoon by the fire. **Max Lamb's** Tonalite Boulder Chair has a cozy plumpness, but it is, unsurprisingly, made of stone. And while Laila Gohar and Sam Stewart's La-Z-Boy-esque chair looks to be the most lounge-worthy of them all, sit with care: It's made of bread. (It was half-eaten by the end of the opening, giving the loaves a look of old, worn-in leather.)

The art is equally confrontational. "I mean, look at that face," Sosa says of Nancy Grossman's Snarl. "I love it and I hate it at the same time." The same could be said of **George Condo's** unnerving Smiling Young Woman and Simone Fattal's small, almost ghostlike ceramic figures.

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Omar Sosa gets comfortable atop John Chamberlain's carved-foam *Couch.* Behind him is Will Cotton's painting, Cotton Candy Cloud Study (Mona).

"I wish we could just leave it like this," Sosa said, looking at the half-installed exhibition. Moving blankets were strewn here and there. Stuff was covered in plastic. And works gathered in casual, nonhierarchical groupings—Pesce's molded-resin *Golgotha* next to Takuo Kuwata's gloopy ceramics and a small chair by Adaptive Design Association, made for children with disabilities. There was an intimacy—a comfort, even—in that unfinished-ness. The experience was not unlike reading *Apartamento*, where one might glimpse a messy pile of sheet music on top of Michael Nyman's black toilet or Ingo Maurer's half-empty bottle of Pellegrino. Before things were "installed" it felt okay to really interact with the works: to run a hand along the vinyl torso of Nicola L's *Canapé Homme Geant* or to pick up the zipped-up patent leather *Snarl* by Grossman and look it in the eyes. Sosa lounged on Chamberlain's carved-foam Couch, admitting: "It's really punk." And when he noticed Nathalie du Pasquier's *Blanket for Two*, folded on the floor, he wrapped the work around his shoulders. "It's like a painting that you can cover yourself with."

Of course, he admits, not everyone would be comfortable with the idea of a half-installed show. And that's the thing about comfort—we don't all find it in the same place.

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That, Sosa says, is sort of the point. "I want everyone to get a different idea of what it's about." Still, one idea pervades the yellow room: Don't get too comfortable. Especially in our tumultuous times. "If we only seek comfort, we won't get away from trouble," he explains. "We have to rethink what we're doing and how we're doing it. And sometimes, looking at something you hate, that's what moves things around inside."

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