

FRIEDMAN BENDA
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designboom

Iris van Herpen delves into creative collaborations for Friedman Benda's 'Design in Dialogue'

July 28, 2020



on april 1, 2020, new york gallery [friedman benda](#) initiated a series of online interviews aimed at connecting individuals across the world with leading voices in the creative field. *design in dialogue* is a conversational program hosted alternately by curator and historian [glenn adamson](#) and designer [stephen burks](#) that engages with designers, makers, critics, and curators as they reflect on their careers and creative processes. against the backdrop of [COVID-19](#) and global lockdowns, the conversations are held virtually on zoom for 1 hour for anyone in the world to tune in to, and include a participatory Q&A with the audience in attendance. friedman benda has since presented more than 40 episodes, and will continue with a lineup of future guests, each offering unparalleled insight into the sensibilities, musings, and memories of today's creative protagonists.

on july 24, *design in dialogue* welcomed fashion innovator [iris van herpen](#), widely celebrated for her explorations of technology in relation to the body. in a conversation hosted by glenn adamson, van herpen delved into a series of wide-ranging recent collaborations that have pushed the boundaries of her practice — including work

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created with **bentham crouwel architects**, choreographer damien jalet, and the scientists at the large hadron collider at CERN.

watch the full video interview at the top of the page and stay tuned as designboom continues to share *design in dialogue* features. see all past episodes — and RSVP for upcoming ones — [here](#).



iris van herpen collaborated with british fashion photographer tim walker and canadian sculptor david altmejd
all images courtesy of iris van herpen and friedman benda

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collaborations with outside fields and disciplines form a core part of van herpen's creative process. *'I think it's about taking small steps,'* she says, in response to how her collaborations have taken shape over the years. *'the amount of collaborations within different fields that we do today were quite unthinkable within the first years of having my studio. my mind would not have been ready for that at that time, because it's not always super easy to dive into a different world, it takes time. ultimately when I create a collection, I really approach it as a study — I have six months for a collection and I really want to learn something within those six months. I'm not only focussing on creating, I think it's a dialogue between giving and taking.'*



walker photographed van herpen's couture pieces
within the context of altmejd's sculptural work

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van herpen's collaborations have seen her work with advanced technological tools across many of her fashion pieces — an aspect of her innovative thinking and approach that she believes could transform the future of the fashion industry. *'in my work, I'm always looking for dualities within the way I make things, but also obviously in the philosophy behind it,'* she continues. *'there's a beauty when technology and craftsmanship can be merged, and I think that same merge can happen very beautifully within the [fashion] system at large. I really believe that we are going to need some new tools to be able to create custom a large scale. the way couture is made is not necessarily scalable for a lot of people, but I actually believe that technology can be this beautiful bridge between couture and the future of fashion.'*



van herpen's couture pieces engage with altmejd's sculptures through the surreal and high-fashion lens of walker

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the designer also reflected on how the pandemic has affected her practice over the last months, emphasizing the importance of flexibility in helping push projects forward. *'my process is already quite chaotic in its nature, but obviously the last months have been more chaotic than usual,' van herpen said. 'mostly because a lot of the partners we work with, and a lot of the collaborations which are so key to my world and my way of thinking, were quite impossible. a lot of the studios were closed on their end and our own studio couldn't be together. we really had to dance around our usual process and be very flexible in the speed of creation — we are used to doing a new collection each half year, which is pretty full on. I know that in fashion it's very normal, but with our level of experiment and innovation, it's already really tight to create a collection. COVID just challenged that timeframe even more...but, we worked through it, and ultimately there's always a way.'*



in collaboration with choreographer damien jalet, van herpen created costumes for the opera 'pelléas et mélisande'
read more on designboom [here](#)



the vision of the opera was to bring unspoken tensions and complex relationships to the spotlight
read more on designboom [here](#)



van herpen designed white concrete elements as part of a biodiversity institute in the netherlands
read more on designboom [here](#)

image courtesy of [scagliolabrakkee](#) / © neutelings riedijk architectes

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van herpen's panels resemble flowing fabric — a to her innovative dress designs
read more on [designboom here](#)
image courtesy of [scagliolabrakkee](#) / © neutelings riedijk architects



the visits to the research center helped inform some of van herpen's couture designs
image by philip beesley

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portrait of iris van herpen

design in dialogue is a series of online interviews presented by new york-based gallery **friedman benda** that highlights leading voices from the field — designers, makers, critics, and curators — as they discuss their work and ideas. hosted alternately by curator and historian glenn adamson and designer stephen burks, the conversations are held on zoom for 1 hour and include a participatory Q&A.

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iris van herpen's visit to CERN, the european organization for nuclear research



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