

# ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

**STUDIO VISIT**

## Step Inside the Zany World of Furniture Designer Misha Kahn

*AD drops in on the Brooklyn-based designer as he prepares for a scintillating solo show at  
New York's Friedman Benda Gallery*

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Furniture designer Misha Kahn in his Brooklyn studio, dons a pair of wacky finger-shaped boots to pose with his cement stools, resin light fixtures, and chaise longue, lovingly named *Fat Ungrateful Little Piggy*.

Martin, Hannah. "Step Inside the Zany World of Furniture Designer Misha Kahn,"  
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“I need to get pink rope to lace this all together,” says furniture designer Misha Kahn. It’s just three days before the 26-year-old opens his first solo show at New York’s Friedman Benda Gallery and he’s zipping around his studio in Brooklyn’s Bushwick neighborhood, classical radio blasting, as pieces get picked up and carted off to the exhibition space. The chaise longue—a leggy Pepto-pink confection, currently perched on a sawhorse table—still needs to be laced into its latex.

“I wanted to do Memphis as if it was about Memphis, Tennessee,” he says of the piece, likening it to Manet’s Olympia if she got dressed up in Dolly Parton’s lingerie. “Originally I covered it with denim and handkerchiefs, shearling, and brown leather, but the show is so print-heavy I ended up doing it in pink. And the latex was perfect—it pulled everything into place.”

The absurd piece of furniture hardly sticks out from the zany landscape in Kahn’s madcap workshop, where a plastic chandelier inflates with the press of a button, colorful baskets sprout legs, and a cast of furniture seems to have left Nickelodeon Studios in the 1990s and migrated north. It’s that fantastically cartoonish sensibility that garnered the Minnesota-born RISD grad a following that ranges from Dior—which requested a cement table for its London flagship—to an Atlanta collector who commissioned an elaborate climbing tree for her four cats.



Kahn shows off the model for *UFO Chandelier*—a copper chandelier outfitted with colorful glass bulbs that will be lit by fiber optics.

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The chaise—like his popular Saturday Morning resin series, balloon-like cement stools, and log benches composed of candy-color trash—was made start to finish in his studio. “There are always a bunch of ideas in rotation,” he explains of the Technicolor laboratory. “Once something has marinated for about a month and I don’t think it’s garbage, then I’ll start following through on it.” Beginnings, middles, and ends of projects poke their heads out from the paints and drills: a pile of gelatinous sketches that later became a wild tapestry, a remnant of the first resin piece he ever made, 12-inch-tall heeled boots that look a pair of fingers. “I had a fantasy of making a lot of those and doing a ballet,” he says casually.

For “Return of Saturn: Coming of Age in the 21st Century,” which opens February 25, Kahn re-creates his wacky wonderland in a white box. Well, sort of. He’s painted the gallery walls brown, installed linoleum tile floors, and while his plans to line the stairs with carpet were de-railed by the gallery, the intentions were there. “I wanted it to feel like a family friend’s kitchen,” Kahn explains. “With a bohemian aunt vibe.” Add a massive mohair tapestry covered in imagery of jello molds, some copper retro-futuristic light fixtures, and a china cabinet looks like a steampunk Snuffaluffagus, and the space is well on its way.

And while the show is, in part, Kahn’s reflection on the aesthetic whims of his millennial-hood—the cache of jello molds he collected in college and later dumped in the garbage, or the visual intrigue of the TV show, *Pepper Ann*—he’s also looking forward.

“People aren’t thinking that much about what the future’s going to look like,” he says. “I think there needs to be more room for delusional visions of what things could become.”

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