

how to spend it

Ron Arad's game-changing work takes centre stage at Friedman Benda

Seminal pieces from the designer and architect's boundary-pushing body of work offer collectors the chance to own an Arad classic



Horns Armchair (1985) in aluminum and steel with PVC-covered galvanized springs

JUNE 11, 2018 / CHRISTINA OHLY EVANS

He was design's bad boy in the 1980s and 1990s – the hat-wearing maverick constantly pushing the boundaries of creativity, which led to critical acclaim. Now, key designs by Israeli-born artist

Evans, Christina Ohly. "Ron Arad's game-changing work takes centre stage at Friedman Benda," *Financial Times: How To Spend It*, June 11, 2018.

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and architect Ron Arad from this significant period go on show at Friedman Benda in New York (from June 21 through July 27) in his first solo show for the gallery since 2008.



The Italian Fish armchair (1989) in polished and patinated steel, edition of 20

Ron Arad: Fishes & Crows, 1985-1994 charts Arad's early pioneering work in which he favoured handmade techniques over methods of mass production (and seminal works can be purchased, priced up to \$500,000). His Tinker Chair (1988), a hand-hammered steel sculpture that is at once functional and raw is an example of this approach – the seat appears to emerge from a hunk of crude, rugged metal. The piece reflects Arad's intense focus on process – as well as his irreverent sense of humour.



Ron Arad's Two Legs and a Table (1994) in patinated and polished steel, edition of 20

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The Tinker Chair (1988) in hammered steel

Arad's Italian Fish chair (1989) testifies to the artist's evolution toward cleaner, more polished forms, which the designer refined further in Two Legs and a Table (1994) – a patinated and polished low-slung steel table that is signed, numbered and dated and was produced in a limited edition of just 20 pieces. Conversely, the Horns armchair (1985) encases a sinuous seat in sharp, angular aluminium.

From Arad's early Duchampian influences, to his use of discarded Rover car seats, to the complex abstractions that hint at the anarchic British underground punk scene, this show traces a decade of work that would culminate in the high-tech designs and spaces that Arad has created for clients such as Selfridges and Yohji Yamamoto in Tokyo. "Today we see a strong focus on the output of younger generations of designers, something we welcome and support, of course," says Friedman Benda's founding partner Marc Benda. "However, it is time to remind the art and design worlds about the relevance and importance of Arad's ground-breaking early works. I hope the show puts a spotlight on this moment – which was transformative both in Arad's career and in design history."

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