



R & Company to Open Exhibition of Iconic and Rarely Seen Works From the Exceptional Dennis Freedman Collection

On View April 20 – August 11, 2023



Alessandro Mendini, *Celidonia Armchair*, designed in 1978, this example 1984–87, wood, cotton, and paint. Made by Zabro/Zanotta for Studio Alchimia, Nova Milanese, Italy. Photo courtesy R & Company.

On April 20, R & Company will open an exhibition of more than 50 highlights from the Dennis Freedman Collection, recognized as one of the most diverse and significant collections of post-war experimental design in the world. Over the course of his illustrious career, Freedman has left an indelible mark on the worlds of fashion and design. His collection reflects his critical eye, adventurous spirit, and appreciation of the avant-garde, featuring a vast selection of Italian, French, Dutch, Scandinavian, Brazilian, Japanese, and British masterworks, from pioneers of early 20th century modernism to 21st century contemporary design. The forthcoming exhibition at R & Company, titled *The Dennis Freedman Collection*, presents rare examples of European surrealist furniture; iconic designs of the last 20 years by Joris Laarman and the Campana Brothers, among others; and classic chairs, from Gerrit Rietveld to Shiro Kuramata. *The Dennis Freedman Collection* will remain on view at the gallery's 64 White Street

location through August 11, 2023. The exhibition will be accompanied by a catalogue, published by the gallery that will include new scholarship on the collection.

The Dennis Freedman Collection is curated by Evan Snyderman, Co-Founder and Principal of R & Company, and James Zemaitis, the gallery's Director of Museum Relations. Among the exhibition highlights is the most famous chair of 21st century design: Joris Laarman's aluminum "Bone chair" (2006), from the edition of twelve and acquired directly from the designer by Freedman in 2007. The presentation also includes Alessandro Mendini's "Monumentino da Casa" (1974), one of the three surviving examples of the famous "Non Chair" of Italian radical design; a rare and original "Locus Solus" pool lounge (1964) by Gae Aulenti; the very first example of the "Sushi Sofa" by Fernando and Humberto Campana, acquired directly from the designers; and a unique suite of table and chairs sculpted in resin by Martine Boileau (1960), which was exhibited at the Musee des Arts Decoratifs in 1962 and then purchased from the private collection of Elie de Rothschild.

In addition to the exhibition at 64 White Street, the centerpiece of R & Company’s forthcoming presentation at TEFAF New York in May 2023 will be from the Dennis Freedman Collection: *a Bonheur du Jour*, designed by Pierre Paulin and produced by the Mobilier National in Paris in 1982. This extremely rare masterwork, which was introduced at the Musee des Arts Decoratifs, in 1983, was from an edition produced by the finest cabinet makers working in the French court tradition.

“In recent years, Dennis’s collection has received considerable attention because of the traveling exhibition *Radical: 1965-1985, The Dennis Freedman Collection*, curated by Cindy Strauss of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston,” said Zemaitis. “Approximately two thirds of his Italian radical collection was acquired by the MFA Houston, and we are thrilled to be presenting the remaining masterpieces in this exhibition. Moreover, our goal is to present a much deeper dive into Dennis’s global connoisseurship of modern and contemporary design.”



Fernando and Humberto Campana, *Sushi Sofa*, 2002, carpet, rubber, ethylene vinyl acetate (EVA), fabric, wood, and stainless steel. Made by Estudio Campana, São Paulo, Brazil, First artist’s proof from an edition of 6 + 2 artist’s proofs + 3 prototypes. Photo courtesy R & Company.

Freedman, who was the founding creative director of *W Magazine* and later creative director of Barneys New York, began visiting auction houses and furniture dealers during his work travels to Europe. He formally began collecting in 1998, when he purchased a first edition Capitello lounge chair (1972), designed by Studio 65 and produced by the Italian firm Gufam, at an auction organized by Simon Andrews, who would serve as a collecting mentor and advisor. Freedman was immediately drawn to Italian Radical design of the late ‘60s and early ‘70’s largely because it prioritized political and social concerns over function. He also journeyed to Sao Paulo to meet with Fernando and Humberto Campana after seeing their work exhibited at MoMA. It was at that time that he purchased many of their first prototypes. In the early 2000s, he noticed the work of young Dutch designers, including Joris Laarman and Jeroen Verhoeven, and acquired their work before they were represented by galleries. His frequent visits to Paris resulted in a friendship with the late gallerist Yves Gastou and a passion for French design of the ‘60s and ‘70s. He was particularly interested in the surrealist furniture made by overlooked women artists, including Martine Boileau and Marie-Claude de Fouquieres—two of their masterworks, featured in the exhibition, will be shown in the U.S. for the first time.

Over the past 25 years, Freedman has built a collection of seminal design pieces that stands outside the mainstream, including prototypes, models, and works composed of nontraditional materials. It embraces global cultures to reveal a nuanced and complex history of post-war design through iconic, rarely seen, and underappreciated objects. “I am not usually one for superlatives, but the collection of Dennis

Freedman is without doubt the most interesting and important grouping of avant-garde design objects I have ever encountered,” said Glenn Adamson, scholar, curator, and former director of the Museum of Arts and Design.

“Dennis has been a kindred spirit of our gallery for many years,” added Snyderman. His commitment to preserving and presenting design history dovetails with R & Company’s own dedication to capturing significant moments, movements, and evolutions in design through exhibitions and publications as well as in our archives. The forthcoming exhibition is an exciting opportunity to bring our visions together and to engage scholars, collectors, and the public with the depth and range of Dennis’s collection and in turn the rich history of postwar design and innovations into the present.”

About R & Company

For over 20 years, R & Company has championed collectible design, advancing the contemporary marketplace and actively growing a global collector base and clientele. Its founders, Zesty Meyers and Evan Snyderman, are widely recognized for identifying rising talent, deepening scholarship about collectible design, and developing new avenues for growth in the industry. R & Company maintains two dynamic spaces in New York: its expansive, inaugural space at 82 Franklin Street features a rotating display of interior environments highlighting gallery designers, while 64 White Street offers an active roster of solo and group exhibitions and includes a Library and Archive of more than 4,000 books, journals, and other materials. The gallery is committed to nurturing and sustaining the markets and careers of both emerging and established designers, as well as to maintaining and expanding commercial and academic interest in historic design. Its roster of international designers includes Wendell Castle, Rogan Gregory, the Estate of Greta Grossman, Serban Ionescu, Hun-Chung Lee, Joyce Lin, Roberto Lugo, Jolie Ngo, Katie Stout, Johnny Swing, Studio Job, Joaquim Tenreiro, and Jeff Zimmerman, among many others. With its vision, passion, and expertise, R & Company serves as a critical platform for experiencing 20th and 21st-century objects and discovering innovative, rare, and significant design.

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