

Stephen Friedman Gallery

Tom Friedman

Celebrated for his playful and exacting approach to art making, Tom Friedman embraces everyday life by looking afresh at familiar objects and their assigned function.

Tom Friedman was born in 1965 in Saint Louis, Missouri, USA. He lives and works in Massachusetts.

Fluctuating between the comical and conceptual, Friedman's meticulously rendered drawings and sculptures recreate random elements from his daily life and surroundings. Confounding expectations through startling trompe l'oeil, Friedman's works reveal his remarkable attention to detail and handicraft. What might first appear to be a simple, stable structure is, on closer inspection, intricately constructed from unexpected materials such as Styrofoam, flock, wire or even the artist's own hair.

Inhabiting the boundary between reality and illusion, Friedman's playful works challenge everyday processes of perception and notions of artistic value. He explains, "Art, for me, is a context to slow the viewer's experience from their everyday life in order to think about things they haven't thought about. Or to think in a new way."

Friedman's recent series of animations signify a break in the artist's practice by steering away from his distinctive use of physical materials. Using light as both a rendering tool and ambient backdrop, Friedman uses complex computer technology to toy with perceptions of immateriality and question notions of objecthood. Examples of Friedman's animations were presented in the artist's solo exhibition 'Always the Beginning' at Stephen Friedman Gallery in 2018.

Other notable solo exhibitions include 'Huddle', The Star in Frisco, Dallas Cowboys World Headquarters and Practice Facility, Frisco, Texas (2017); 'Untitled (Foundation)', Mead Art Museum, Amherst, Massachusetts (2016); 'Up in the Air', Magasin 3, Stockholm Konsthalle, Stockholm; touring to FRAC Montpellier, France (2010); 'REAM', Saint Louis Art Museum, Saint Louis, Missouri (2009); 'Pure Invention', Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, Saint Louis, Missouri (2006); 'Tom Friedman', South London Gallery, London, England (2004); 'Stitching', Fondazione Prada, Milan, Italy (2002); 'The Epic in the Everyday' at South-Eastern Centre for Contemporary Art, Winston-Salem, North Carolina; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, Illinois; Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, California; Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, Colorado and New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York (2000).

Friedman has developed an extensive portfolio of public works centred on a series of whimsical stainless-steel sculptures. Cast from maquettes fashioned out of aluminium roasting pans, tin foil and takeaway containers, this body of work captures the artist's alchemic ability to transform the everyday. 'Looking Up', a larger-than-life sculpture of a figure contemplating the sky, was installed at the entrance of Rockefeller Center's Channel Gardens in January 2021. Iterations of the sculpture have also been installed at Park Avenue, New York; South Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois and Tom Hanafan River's Edge Park, Council Bluffs, Iowa. Editions are permanently situated at the Contemporary Austin, Texas and St. Louis Science Center and Planetarium, Missouri. 'Hazmat Love', which portrays two wrestling figures clad in this unusual protective armour, was installed at The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Connecticut in 2019. 'Takeaway', a running figure with a towering stack of aluminium containers balanced atop its head, went on display at Beverly Gardens Park, Los Angeles in 2018. Friedman's 'Circle Dance' was installed in at Brown University Campus in 2012.

His works are included in prominent collections internationally, including Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento, California; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, California; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, California; Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, Colorado; Guggenheim Museum, New York; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Tel Aviv, Israel; Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall, Stockholm, Sweden and Lisser Art Museum (LAM), Lisse, Netherlands.