

Embargo until February 28, 2019

Najla El Zein: Transition
February 28 - April 13, 2019
Opening reception: Thursday, February 28, 2019, 6–8pm



Friedman Benda is pleased to announce *Transition*, Beirut-based designer Najla El Zein's first solo exhibition. Developed over the course of two years, this marks the debut presentation of three series: *Distortion*, *Fragmented Pillar* and *Seduction*. Organic and gestural, these objects act as varied embodiments of El Zein's personal journey.

Alluding to the pregnant form, *Distortion* illustrates various stages of the body's transformation. Demonstrated in a series of concrete benches, this body of work explores how this impact is experienced through material and spatial composition. These highly-contoured silhouettes create a surrealist sense of dislocation, while embracing the sense of femininity and sensuality.

"*Fragmented Pillar* symbolizes the disturbance of one's foundation. Strong, erect and imposing, the pillar is the mother structure of any given entity. A disruption as such, results in the fragility of the pillar's fundamental function, characterized by its revealed fragments," El Zein states. Through a series of interactive sculptures made of plaster and sand, the series explores the physical and emotional disorder through the disturbance of one's foundation.

Lastly, *Seduction* depicts human interaction and connection between figures in varying degrees of proximity. Synthesizing abstraction and representation, these stone-sculpted forms explore a range of states from introversion to desire.

About Najla El Zein

Najla El Zein was born in Beirut in 1983. She graduated from Ecole Camondo, Paris, France in Product Design and Interior Architecture. Her work has been exhibited at numerous public institutions, and most recently at the Dallas Museum of Art's exhibition *Women + Design: New Works* (October 28, 2018 - February 17, 2019). El Zein's pieces have been acquired by museums such as the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and the Dallas Museum of Art for their permanent collections. El Zein currently lives and works in Beirut.

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About Friedman Benda

Friedman Benda is a platform for key narratives that intersect contemporary design, craft, architecture, visual and conceptual art, and cutting-edge technological research. Spanning five continents and four generations, Friedman Benda represents a roster of seminal established and emerging designers, as well as historically significant estates. Since 2007, the gallery's exhibitions, publications and collaborations with institutions have played a vital role in the development of the contemporary design market and scholarship. For further information please visit www.friedmanbenda.com

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