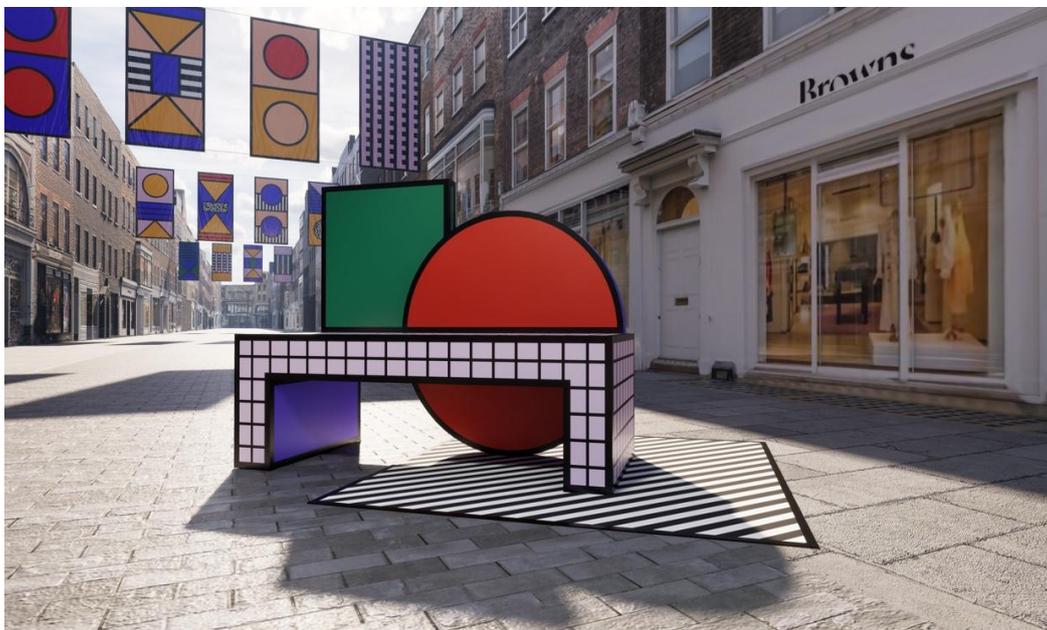


## Welcome to Walala Lounge

### Camille Walala transforms South Molton Street into an open-air living room for London Design Festival

Back for 2019 with her second major public installation for London Design Festival, artist and designer Camille Walala is preparing to unveil Walala Lounge – an entire Mayfair street transformed into an urban living room.



Commissioned by Grosvenor Britain & Ireland to energise South Molton Street in Mayfair, Camille decided to make a positive and practical contribution to the streetscape, addressing its lack of places to sit, rest and socialise. A few steps from the madcap bustle of Oxford Street, South Molton is fully pedestrianised and lined with boutiques and cafés. However, despite being a sunny thoroughfare popular among both Londoners and visitors, the 200m street has not – until now – offered the public a place to pause.

A long-standing advocate of urban design's capacity to inspire joy, Camille and her studio team, headed by creative producer Julia Jomaa, set out to create a family of street furniture that would both solve a practical problem and spark of joy in the people passing through. The result is Walala Lounge, a set of 10 sculptural benches,

accompanied by planters (some freestanding and some integrated into the structure of the benches), and a series of oversized flags that will be strung, bunting-style, from shopfront to shopfront, completing the conversion of South Molton Street into an immersive corridor of colour.



Designed to feel like an open-air urban living room, Walala Lounge will provide a place for people to come together, chat and relax. From 14 September onwards, the thousands of people who pass through the street everyday will have something unexpected to look at – and to sit on. Camille’s goal is to bring pleasure to public spaces while also meeting a site-specific functional need.

*“I wanted to push myself by creating another style of public art to make people smile again. This time I have designed public benches, where people can feel at home, surrounded by plants and rugs. I want to create a place where people can gather, appreciate their surroundings and enjoy the city. I love the idea of bringing an element of fun to the street, weaving colour and joy into a city which is sometimes lacking in both.”*

– Camille Walala

Driven by a mission to inject colour and playfulness into cityscapes, Walala Lounge is the latest project in a growing portfolio of work in the public realm. Through this

ongoing series of urban interventions, Camille Walala seeks to offer a counterbalance to the dreary and hectic momentum of city life, using art to give people a reason to smile, and as an incentive to find moments of interaction and connection.



The designs are the result of an exploratory creative process whereby Walala selects a family of geometric shapes, defines a colour palette and creates a series of collages, experimenting with different compositions until she settles on a particular combination. By merging these patterns with furniture forms found in the home, Walala's studio developed a unique but effective method of designing sculptural street furniture.

Composed of an array of cuboids, cylinders and arches made from brushed steel and Tricoya® MDF, the 10 benches will translate the geometric patterns and block shapes familiar from Walala's distinctive murals into three-dimensional form.

The Walala Lounge marks a new stage in Camille's evolving mission to transform urban spaces and create unexpected sparks of joy and pleasure in the everyday lives of city dwellers – a process begun in 2015 when she transformed an Old Street façade into the Dream Come True Building. Since then, she has embarked on a series of increasingly ambitious projects, and expanded from flat surfaces to 3D forms and architectural structures – including the LDF 2017 Landmark Project Villa Walala – her playful castle installation constructed from soft vinyl building blocks –



and, in 2018, developing the complete creative vision for the new hotel concept SALT of Palmar in Mauritius.

Unlike many LDF installations, the Walala Lounge will stay in place long after the end of the festival, becoming a semi-permanent addition to Mayfair, and a lasting injection of colour and irrepressible joy into the commercial heart of Central London.



## Notes to editors

For more information, images of Walala Lounge and interviews with Camille Walala, please contact Grace Ridley-Smith at [grace@zetteler.co.uk](mailto:grace@zetteler.co.uk) or on +44 (0)20 3735 5855.

### **About Camille Walala**

A graduate in textile design from the University of Brighton, Camille Walala established her studio and brand in East London in 2009, and has since evolved from textile-based work to art direction, interior design and large-scale civic art and installation projects. Drawing on influences including the Memphis Movement, the Ndebele tribe and Victor Vasarely, Walala has an irrepressible enthusiasm for playful, graphic patterns that invoke a smile. Her dedication to positivity, optimistic typography and bold use of pattern and colour have seen her transform urban landscapes across the world, design everything from floor rugs to entire hotels, and secure clients ranging from Converse and Armani to Nintendo and Facebook.

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