



The Colours of Community

Camille Walala x Standing Voice

'Queen of colour' visits Tanzania to transform the NGO's island HQ



Umoja Training Centre (UTC), photography by Harry Freeland.

The health dangers of albinism – such as visual impairment and high risk of skin cancer – are widely known, but some of its most insidious effects are much less visible. For many people with the condition, social ostracisation, the denial of educational opportunity, access to employment and the threat of superstition-induced murder or mutilation, are a lifelong daily reality.

In 2016, **Standing Voice** completed construction of the **Umoja Training Centre (UTC)** on Ukerewe Island on Lake Victoria in Tanzania. Named with the Swahili word for 'unity', the centre acts as an inclusive space for members of the community – **with and without albinism** – to come together, share and develop skills, overcome prejudices, form positive relationships, understand and embrace differences, establish businesses and **claim a stake in wider African society**.



Standing Voice prints by Camille Walala.

This June, **Camille Walala** is travelling to Tanzania to give the centre a new injection of positivity. Fresh from completing her largest mural yet in Brooklyn this May for **WantedDesign**, the artist and her long-standing collaborator, **Julia Jomaa**, will be painting four key parts of the centre: the main entrance sign; the concrete water tanks that serve the UTC and surrounding villages; the new radio room where the **Ukerewe Young Reporters Group** records and broadcasts; and sections of the new library, which is being fitted with desks and shelving by designer and fabricator **Simon Sawyer**.

Camille and Julia will be filling the spaces with the Walala signature blend of bold colour and eye-catching pattern, helping infuse the UTC with an atmosphere of optimism and energy that reflects its mission and impact on the Ukerewe community.

In preparation for the project, Camille has created two risograph prints depicting her pattern inspiration for the Standing Voice project – **the limited edition will be made available online**, with all proceeds going to support Standing Voice's work. The print run has generously been supported in kind by our friends at **Hato Press**.



Storytelling and performance workshop in 2017. Photography by Harry Freeland.

Summer Skills Workshops

Walala's renovation will coincide with Standing Voice's second Summer Skills Workshop programme on 16–29 June, providing an inspiring backdrop for the following week of inclusive **practical and creative skill-sharing sessions** intended to counteract the 'invisible' limitations that albinism imposes in East Africa.

Over six days, the UTC will play host to a series of workshops from visiting experts and creatives, intended to help the community develop skills and pursue income-generating opportunities and pathways to professional development. Workshop topics include **gardening, tailoring, radio, photography, art, printmaking and storytelling** – each led by a professional in the field.

'What makes the Summer Skills Workshop so unique is its psychosocial impact. By including people with albinism as valued contributors to society, empowering them to train in concrete skills, and to partake in creative expression, these workshops forge a path not only to economic empowerment but also to social inclusion: they strike at the core of ignorance, and place people with albinism at the centre of their own narrative. That is why they are so powerful.'

– Harry Freeland, founder, Standing Voice



Tailoring workshop in 2017. Photography by Harry Freeland.

The programme was inaugurated in 2017, and saw **85 members** of the Ukerewe community take part in workshops. As a direct result, alumni of the programme **set up six income-generating community groups** – all of which still meet and work at the UTC:

- The Upendo Printers** (Printing)
- The Tunajitambua Tailors** (Tailoring)
- The Umoja Photographers** (Photography)
- The Hadithi Group** (Storytelling & Performance)
- The Young Reporters** (Radio)
- The Undaji Club** (Arts & Crafts)

The work these groups created, ranging from **woodcut prints** and **dresses** to **public performances** and **radio shows**, were exhibited at the UTC after the workshops, so the whole Ukerewe community has been able to see the benefits of the programme, and anticipation is now running high for the second edition.

Having run a workshop for 45 adults and children in 2017 and being inspired by the experience, woodblock print artist **Alex Booker** is returning to the centre this year, teaching a new class how to transform Japanese plywood blocks and ink into beautiful artworks capturing their hopes, hardships and identities.



Alex Brooker, running the printmaking workshops in 2017. Photography by Harry Freeland.

Booker and his fellow volunteers (including photographer **Brian Benson**, painter **Annie-Marie Akussah**, sustainable-fashion designer **Kate Uzzell** of Antiform, creative arts instructor **John Sagatti** and reggae performer **Sixmond Mdeka**) will each share their skills with community groups comprising those both with and without albinism, supported and assisted by members of the **Zetteler team**. By encouraging collaboration and breaking down social barriers as well as imparting new skills, their workshops will not only foster an essential sense of inclusivity and mutual support in the Ukerewe community but also nurture the practical skills that can potentially be turned towards creating **sustainable careers** for people that would never otherwise had access to them.

London exhibition

Zetteler and **Standing Voice** are currently arranging a **special exhibition** featuring some of the artworks that will be created in this summer's programme, alongside contributions from a selection of global artists responding to the theme of albinism. These will be made available to **buy at auction**, raising funds for Standing Voice to enable the charity to continue changing lives – **medically, socially, economically and creatively** – for many years to come.



Notes to editors

About Standing Voice

Standing Voice is an international NGO defending the rights of people with albinism in Africa: a deeply marginalised population experiencing extreme marginalisation and violence. Working widely across health, education, advocacy and community, Standing Voice has transformed thousands of lives by establishing clinical networks to treat visual impairment and prevent skin cancer. The organisation has relocated vulnerable children with albinism to inclusive schools and universities, and helped hundreds of adults to rebuild their lives through apprenticeships and training at its state-of-the-art Umoja Centre. Standing Voice was founded by filmmaker Harry Freeland, whose 2012 documentary *In the Shadow of the Sun* exposed the plight of Africans with albinism to international audiences and catalysed a wave of global interest in this issue. Today, Standing Voice continues to amplify the voices of people with albinism, from grassroots community contexts through to the halls of the United Nations.

Web standingvoice.org

Facebook [/standingvoice](https://www.facebook.com/standingvoice)

Instagram [@standingvoiceUK](https://www.instagram.com/standingvoiceUK)

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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, and earned her clients ranging from Converse and Armani to Nintendo and Facebook.

Web camillewalala.com

Instagram [camillewalala](https://www.instagram.com/camillewalala)

To find out more about Standing Voice, Camille Walala and the Summer Skills Workshops, please contact **Dorothy Bourne** at dorothy@zetteler.co.uk or on +44 (0)7939 200519.
