

Restoration Station X Yinka Ilori

An up-cycling collaboration for London Design Festival

16–24 September



Restoration Station x Yinka Ilori. Photography by Dan Weill.

Designer **Yinka Ilori** takes old and abandoned chairs and merges them in inventive ways to tell new stories. Social enterprise **Restoration Station** uses the craft of furniture restoration to help people recovering from addiction find a route back into society and self-worth. In every way, they make the perfect partnership.

For **London Design Festival 2017**, the two are joining forces to create a unique collection of furniture, which will be displayed and available for sale at **Restoration Station's** Shoreditch shop throughout the festival.



PRESS RELEASE, 30 August 2017

Founded in 2014 on the belief that taking part in creative work and learning new skills can play an important role in recovery, Restoration Station is a non-profit initiative of the **Spitalfields Crypt Trust** (SCT), a registered charity that has helped those suffering from addiction and homelessness in East London for over 50 years. Restoration Station receives no government funding, relying solely on grants, help from volunteers and the donation of furniture. All money made from furniture sales goes straight back into funding the programme.



Restoration Station x Yinka Ilori. Photography by Dan Weill.

Known for creating vibrant, contrasting colours and patterns reminiscent of African print designs, the London-based Nigerian **Yinka Ilori** typically turns chairs into expressions of personal stories – akin to using furniture as a form of biography. In the past, his designs have been shaped by (among other things) memories of his own life, the Nigerian parables he was told as a child, and the people he remembers from his youth in Islington.

The pieces in this new collection will reference the lives of **Restoration Station's** team of volunteers – people in long-term recovery who are developing their skills, building their confidence and increasing their prospects of finding meaningful employment in the future.

Ilori will run two workshops with Restoration Station volunteers, helping to unleash their creative skills on a stash of donated furniture (ranging from design classics to kitsch hand-me-downs), teaching them how to express meaning with colour and pattern, and sharing with them the secrets of his own aesthetic approach.

'The volunteers will each select an item of furniture from the donated pieces and the idea is for them to use colour as a catalyst to tell their stories. The workshops won't follow a set format: when volunteers are in my studio I like the making process to be as organic as possible. Any "mistake" that they make in the process could end up being the most powerful part of their narrative.'

– Yinka Ilori, designer



Yinka Ilori workshop at Restoration Station. Photography by Dan Weill.

This marks a significant departure from Restoration Station's customary mode of practice. The workshop's volunteers are used to applying the conventions and techniques of the craft of carpentry to their pieces, returning furniture from all eras to its former glory, but leaving no sign of their involvement in the process. Now, with Ilori's help, they will be broaching new creative territory; not just fixing the broken, but transforming it into something entirely different – using the experimental interplay of colour to channel their own unique personality into each piece.



Yinka Ilori workshop at Restoration Station. Photography by Dan Weill.

The new chairs that emerge from the workshop will be placed on sale at **Restoration Station, 118 Shoreditch High Street**, which is extending its usual three-day-a-week opening hours to 9:30am–5pm for every day of the London Design Festival. Although Yinka Ilori pieces often sell for £1,000 or more, the chairs from this collaboration will be priced in line with Restoration Station's standard affordable prices, making this both an unprecedented opportunity to acquire a Yinka Ilori-guided design for a fraction of the usual cost, and a chance to support the recovery of people whose lives have been affected by addiction.

'London Design Festival holds real clout in the design world. If we can be part of that and showcase work done by people in recovery, it is one step towards patching some of the stigma around addictions and underlining our place on the map of furniture design in Shoreditch.'

– Sheona Alexander, Director of Services, Spitalfields Crypt Trust



Restoration Station x Yinka Ilori. Photography by Dan Weill.

Restoration Station's 118 Shoreditch High Street shop will be open for the duration of London Design Festival, **9:30am to 5pm, 16–24 September**, with a launch event on **Thursday 14 September**.

For more information about **Restoration Station** and **Yinka Ilori**, please contact me (Jodi Moss) at jodi@zetteler.co.uk or on +44 (0)7910 705147.



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Notes for Editors

Collaborators

Art direction - Yinka Ilori

Photographer - Dan Weill

Filmmakers - Andy Dunn + Tim Dufort

Set design, fabrication and installation - Simon Sawyer

Vinyl studio - Dave Gibbons (Puck Studio) + Ioana Lupascu

Installation - Alex Booker

Mural design + direction - Julia Jomaa

Signage - Felix McCormack

Graphics assistance - Anneke Lange

Printing - Hato Press

Party partners - Pizza Pilgrims + MOJU Drinks

London Design Festival

Chairs donated by Committee of Taste, Chase & Sorensen, Alex Cattell Upholstery and the general public.

About Restoration Station

Set up by the Spitalfields Crypt Trust, Restoration Station is a non-profit social initiative that uses design and making as a tool to help people recover from addiction and re-engage with the world of creative work. Participants in the programme are trained in woodworking and the restoration of vintage furniture – much of it donated – at the enterprise's studio at the New Hanbury Project, where they also receive specialist instruction from local craftspeople. Every Thursday, Friday and Sunday, Restoration Station's workshop on Shoreditch High Street opens to sell beautifully restored 20th-century pieces – including antique furniture, tools, ceramics and toys. The workshop is also available for commission – Restoration Station's work can already be found in cafés, restaurants and shops throughout the local area.

sct.org.uk/restoration-station

About Yinka Ilori

Born in Islington to Nigerian parents, Yinka Ilori is a designer and artist based in North-West London. Having studied furniture and product design at London Metropolitan University, Yinka became determined to address the excess waste generated by consumer culture in Europe and West Africa, leading him to specialise in reusing discarded furniture and other found objects in his work. From two or three found pieces of furniture, he creates sculptural hybrid chairs that muddle different design traditions and social histories into something colourful, heart-warming and completely new. His work has been featured in numerous solo and group exhibitions around the world, including Design Undefined at London Design Festival 2017, Do Good Because Of Tomorrow at Milton Keynes Arts Centre, Belong Here Now at Design Miami, If Chairs Could Talk at the Shop at Bluebird and This Is Where It Started at The Whitespace Gallery in Lagos.

yinkailori.com



Yinka Ilori. Photography by Dan Weill.
