

# Yinka Ilori



Nigerian traditions are given enigmatic form in **YINKA ILORI'S** furniture designs. Bright, playful, and eccentric, the chair collections recall his Nigerian roots by integrating oral traditions and textile themes from the country while also offering commentary on throwaway consumer culture.

**F**rom his East London studio, Yinka Ilori refashions discarded furniture and found objects into artworks full of humor and sincerity in equal measure. He was born in the United Kingdom, attended school in northern London, and later studied furniture and product design at the London Metropolitan University.

His Nigerian heritage has played an important role since childhood. Fascinated by the oral traditions his parents invoked and the ornate textiles decorating their home, he now strives to infuse these elements into his furniture design. Likewise, his rejection of

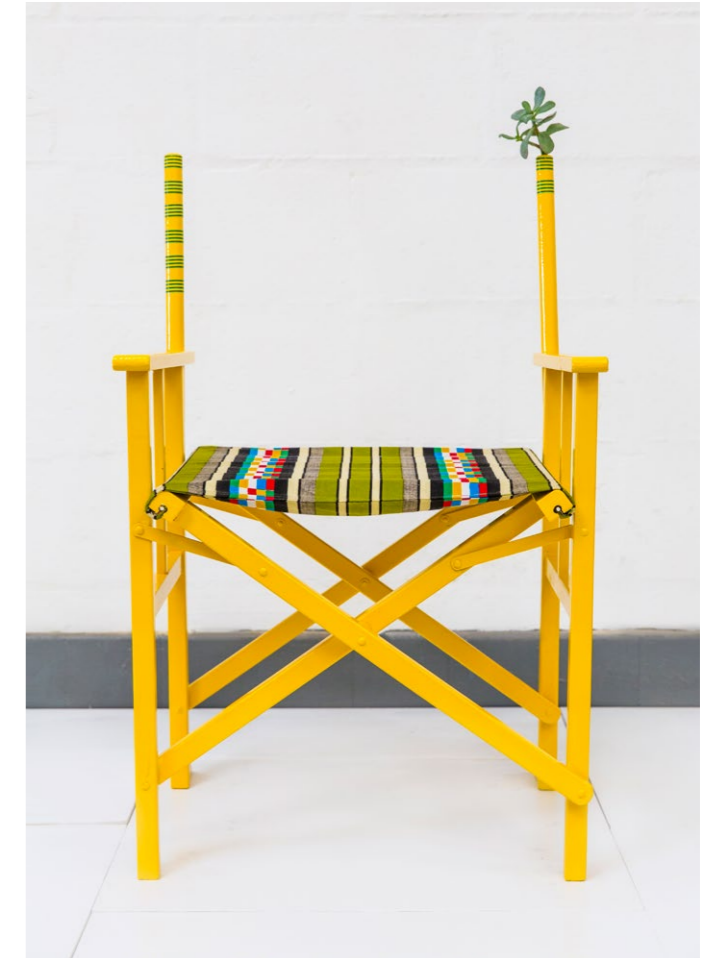


the wastefulness he sees as being a prevalent problem in both Western and African cultures has led him to upcycling, a process of repurposing junked materials to make new products.

Narrative is an important part of Ilori's creative process. For his solo show *If Chairs Could Talk* at the Shop at Bluebird during London Design Week 2015, he exhibited five brightly colored, transfigured chairs with a well-known Yoruba parable tying the series together: "Despite how long the neck of a giraffe is, it can't see the future." The chairs, based on childhood characters and images, are hardly suitable for use as seats. In adopting this childlike naiveté toward form and function, Ilori's work is a paean to the creative imagination that always finds its way around pure utility.

Ilori's fusion of serious design elements with environmental concerns and a playful narrative style has attracted a wide audience to his work. A selection of his extensive international appearances include: *This is Where It Started*, a group show at the Whitespace Gallery, Lagos in 2014; and the *Making Africa* group show at the Vitra Design Museum, Basel in 2015.

These three pieces from *If Chairs Could Talk* highlight Ilori's creative play on function and form.



**"Ilori adopts childlike naiveté toward form and function."**

