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Bywwalid

Transforming vintage treasures into unique, handworked covetable pieces is Walid Damirji's speciality. The British-Iraqi designer is renowned for reimagining and recycling textiles, cut and sewn together into one-of-a-kind pieces, extending beyond the realm of fashion and into the home. The highlights include patchwork combinations, delicate embellishment, Chinese and rococo silks, 18th and 19th-century ecclesiastical embroideries, and 1920s linens. With a focus on modern silhouettes for men and women, cushions, reupholstered antique chairs and sculptural heads also take centre stage.





ABOUT WALID



Swiss-born Walid spent his childhood in England and was offered a place at Saint Martin's School of Art. His parents, however, thought a more traditional degree was better suited.

Some might have seen this as a stumbling block, but Walid mused it provided him with a unique opportunity; "Sometimes not having the guidelines of an artistic education works better. You don't have those restrictions."

Having travelled to the United States to study, he returned to London to explore his true sartorial passions. Securing a Saturday job with the world-famous boutique Pellicano at 63 South Molton Street - the first port of call for Alexander McQueen and Stella McCartney - here, he gained valuable insight into the behind-the-scenes mechanics of luxury fashion. By moving up the ranks and accompanying the dedicated fashion pioneer owners on frequent buying trips, he quickly developed a taste for the world of retail.

Later on, in 2011, the concept for By Walid was born; having loved and collected antique textiles, friends encouraged Walid to show his pieces during Paris Fashion Week. Armed with four jackets made from 19th-century linen, he borrowed an apartment (to show the clothes) and anticipated the possibility of around ten orders; he jumped at the challenge of the 800 that followed. Setting the scene for the development of By Walid.

THE LUXURY OF ZERO WASTE



“Look at this – this really very, very, distressed 19th-century Victorian patchwork. It was really falling apart, so we spent hours re-backing it first of all, then cleaning it, then this, then that – and I think we’ve saved it.” Walid Damirji

Walid describes luxury as the unseen, the vast number of hours that go into making something. His interest lies in creating pieces that last longer than a lifetime, a philosophy of slow fashion.

Whether crafted from 18th Century ecclesiastical fabric or 19th Century Chinese silk, every item has its own story to tell. Each ‘look’ reaches far beyond disposable ready-to-wear.





COUTURE LEVEL SUSTAINABILITY

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By Walid was launched when sustainability was a relatively new concept within the traditional fashion system. From day one, Walid made it his mission to use every last scrap of material. Tucked away in a modest West London mews, the treasure trove of a studio is packed to the brim with antique cloths, heritage fabrics and tapestries waiting to be cut, dyed and upcycled. Each garment and design is re-patched and re-used with any cut-offs developed into the most tactile of tote bags, sneakers and shoes, with the process described as a complete zero waste re-patch.





THE AESTHETIC

A hybrid of part treasured heirloom and contemporary design, Walid Damirji's designs will transport you into another time entirely. Discover chinoiserie shawls, French crochet, linens, rococo Italian opulence, ecclesiastical silks and Victorian table linen, the label poses as a sartorial flick through a historical textbook. At a time when traditional, seasonal fashion demands are cast aside for the new, Damirji's couture offerings improve with age. His bold signature is distinctive and beloved by people of fashion; who he affectionately dubs his 'movers and shakers.'



THE COLLECTIONS



Upcoming pieces draw attention to floral patterns and vivid embroidery with ornate beading adorning garments and footwear in tones reminiscent of dusk. Staples include casual draped trousers, patchwork embroidered jackets and flowing skirts with loosely buttoned shirting, and thick-strapped sandals stitched together with asymmetrical seams. In Damirji's hands, past and present exist in modern silhouettes that eschew fast fashion and disposable trends. From Post Pandemic Tea Party to Eco-Warrior, By Walid's most delicate pieces are showcased, in an explosion of intricacy that overwhelms and soothes the senses. Look out for a strong focus on repurposed, antique Chinese silk, with original 19th century Napoleon III chairs and footstools in ancient Japanese patchwork. Each collection celebrates the beauty of the past, bringing together different eras from around the globe and presenting it to contemporary tastemakers looking for something extraordinary.





