

**PRESS NOTICE  
IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **King's Cross Design District: smarin x Super Nature present 'Hemp - Clay - Lime: Urban Seating'**

**A presentation of prototypes for a new, carbon-sequestering, public realm seating scheme by French design studio, smarin**

The King's Cross Design District this year focuses on the future of design, from showcasing the 'material heroes' that could help address our urgent collective need to transition to a circular economy, to providing a platform for the next generation of design graduates.

From **18-26 September, King's Cross Design District** will host a jam-packed schedule of installations and events as the highly anticipated **London Design Festival** returns to the destination for a third year.



*«Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing, there is a field. I'll meet you there» Rumi, 13th century*

King's Cross continues its exploration of Material Heroes with this commission of five prototypes by smarin design studio. 'Hemp - Clay - Lime: Urban Seating' is a presentation of the research and development by smarin and constitutes the initial testing phase for a future large-scale public realm seating scheme.

For smarin 'The spaces created by street furniture become the image of the city and convey its commitments.' Unequivocally, the commitment here is to nature and a tribute to its power.

Hexagon shaped, the modular design mimics the efficiencies found everywhere in nature - honeycomb, fruit skins, dragonfly eyes - to make strong, solid structures that provide infinite options for placement.



Materially, the core is made from hemp shiv, a waste product from the hemp fibre industry, and hydrated lime. The outer layer is a fibrous lime plaster, coloured with clay. Both hemp and lime are incredibly hard-wearing and resilient, naturally derived materials, and both are also considered to be carbon negative as they capture more carbon than it takes to produce and transport them.

These are not new techniques. The Ancient Romans used hydraulic lime and added natural components to ensure the hardening of plaster in wet or cold conditions, many examples of which still exist today. Lime-washed walls abound, often in places exposed to extremely harsh weather conditions. Now, however, the number of qualified tradespeople capable of plastering with lime is not widespread due to the adoption of more industrial products

For more than twenty years, smarin has actively researched and used non-toxic materials. With this new work they are actively keeping ancient knowledge alive, designing and manufacturing sculptural forms to enhance our shared spaces.

Further activity to be announced soon. Stay up to date on the latest LDF news:  
**[www.kingscross.co.uk/london-design-festival](http://www.kingscross.co.uk/london-design-festival)**

*The King's Cross estate continues to operate in line with the latest Covid guidance to enable the public to enjoy the activities safely with social distancing measures in place*

**ENDS**

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## Notes to Editors

### **King's Cross**

King's Cross is home to 67 acres of outstanding architecture, destination restaurants and a vibrant cultural scene. At its heart is the Heatherwick Studio-designed Coal Drops Yard; London's newest shopping district housed in a pair of artfully reimagined industrial Victorian buildings. The area's industrial past has inspired the 50 new and repurposed buildings, which are surrounded by beautifully-designed green spaces and public areas, including Granary Square and its iconic fountains. This bustling creative neighbourhood is a lively place in central London to visit day and night, and has a deserved reputation as a culinary hot spot.

King's Cross is somewhere you can live, work and play – over 20,000 people now work in the area, and it has close to 2,000 homes. This includes landmark development Gasholders London, comprising 145 new canal-side apartments within a triplet of Grade II-listed cast-iron gasholder frames.

[www.kingscross.co.uk](http://www.kingscross.co.uk)  
@Kingscrossn1c

### **Coal Drops Yard**

Coal Drops Yard is a vibrant shopping and restaurant district in London's King's Cross. Coal Drops Yard was originally established in 1850 to handle the eight million tonnes of coal delivered to the capital each year, and was latterly the location of nightclubs Bagley's and The Cross. The area reopened in October 2018, reinvented by the acclaimed Heatherwick Studio, which has interwoven a contemporary design with the surviving structures and rich ironwork of the original Victorian coal drops.

Located within a reimagined set of historic buildings and arches directly adjacent to Granary Square and Regent's Canal, Coal Drops Yard houses over fifty stores from a unique mix of established and emerging brands, along with cafés, bars, top independent restaurants and new public spaces.

[www.coaldropsyard.com](http://www.coaldropsyard.com)  
@coaldropsyard

### **About Super Nature**

Super Nature is a King's Cross initiative in which we explore design, materials and production methods that have a positive impact on people and the planet. The idea is to use art installations and the cultural programme at King's Cross as a way to facilitate conversations and collaborations and most importantly, to bring about change.

When we collaborate with the natural world and each other, we have the potential to improve lives – from the food we eat and the clothes we wear to the houses we live in and the air we breathe. Super Nature is the seed of an idea and a small part of what will be a long and complicated journey for the King's Cross Estate to become 'circular' by 2030.

### **About smarin**

smarin studio design efficient furniture, focusing on flexible spaces designed for all types of users, composed of minimal materials that are removable, storable, and finally recyclable. Founded in 2003, smarin studio has developed furniture design projects, scenographies and interiors for many institutions around the world,

including Centre Pompidou, Palais de Tokyo, Aspen Art Museum and museum of modern and contemporary art, strasbourg.

smarin studio explores different fields of creative research based on the idea that objects should be designed as tools and furniture should be designed as systems. These offer the opportunity for meaningful interventions that offer inclusive spaces for shared experience.

[www.smarin.net](http://www.smarin.net)  
@smarindesign