

MAISON ALAÏA

New Bond Street, London

Photography: Agnese Sanvito

**Design: Maison Alaïa and
Aukett Swanke**
Opening date: April 2018
Store size: 560 sq m

French-Tunisian fashion designer Azzedine Alaïa personally finalised plans for the new Maison Alaïa flagship store on London's New Bond Street before his untimely death in 2017. The iconic couturier collaborated with Aukett Swanke on the design of the boutique, which opened in April, just ahead of a major exhibition of the late designer's work at the Design Museum in London.

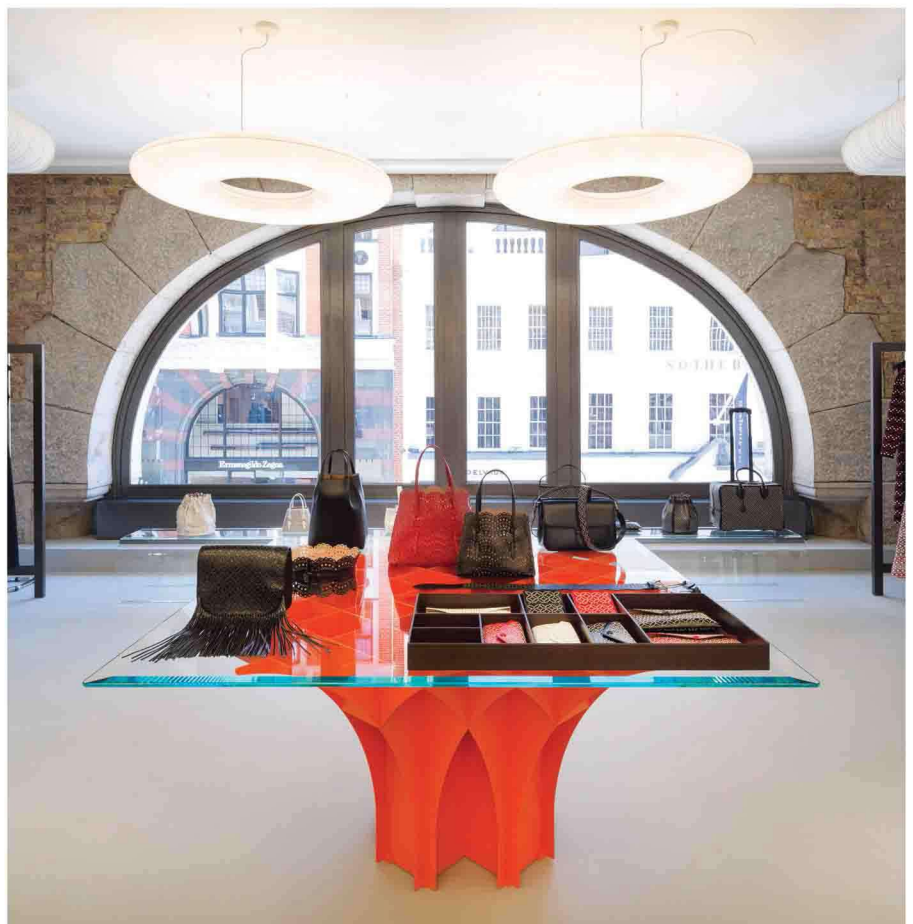
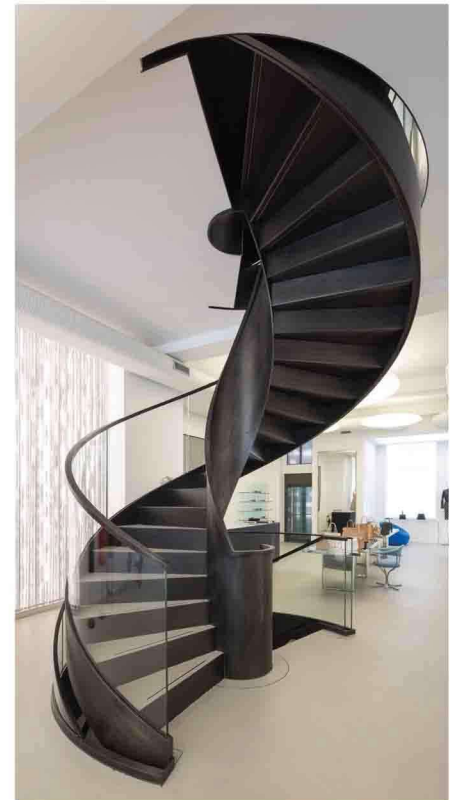
The Maison Alaïa London flagship store is the first to open outside of Paris and houses all of the brand's collections, including ready-to-wear, shoes, bags and accessories.

Spread across three levels, the 560 sq m store draws on the architectural heritage of the existing building, while showcasing furniture and art chosen by Azzedine Alaïa together with close friend Carla Sozzani from around the world.

As you enter the store, the primary visual focus is the dramatic steel spiral staircase with clear glass balustrade, designed by American artist Kris Ruhs and fabricated by Ronchetti. The stairway links all three retail floors, as does a new glazed passenger lift at the rear of the space.

Lighting has been a key consideration throughout the project, with feature and display lighting all carefully considered and integrated, including the lining of the lift shaft and the light metal sculpture, designed by Kris Ruhs, which passes through the three floors. Dramatic sculptural lighting pendants by Marc Newson are also used to illuminate all three levels. Even the furniture and artwork celebrate the refraction of light and transparency.

The lighting design, developed in collaboration with Nulty, creates an environment that supports Azzedine Alaïa's idea that there is beauty in simplicity. 'The attention to detail within the project is second to none and adds to the uniqueness and identity of the store,' says Rebecca Hodge, intermediate lighting designer at Nulty. 'From the lighting design in the lift, to the bespoke lightboxes in the changing room, every element has been beautifully considered.' >



Meanwhile, the interior finishes palette is restrained to provide a neutral backdrop to the furniture, sculptural displays and the merchandise.

Commenting on the project, Suzette Vela Burkett, managing director at Aukett Swanke, says: 'We are delighted to have worked with Richemont and the Alaïa team on this elegant flagship store. The project has unveiled a new face on 139 New Bond Street and enabled close working with artisans and the designers at Alaïa and to provide a fitting tribute to the brand.'

Azzedine Alaïa: The Couturier is the first fashion exhibition for the new Design Museum in Holland Park and runs until 7 October 2018. **RF**

