

Artnet : 'Have Art, Will Travel? Alex Israel Designed Custom Color-Graded Suitcases With Luxury Luggage Brand RIMOWA', March 2019

Have Art, Will Travel? Alex Israel Designed Custom Color-Graded Suitcases With Luxury Luggage Brand RIMOWA

The artist brings the colors of the Los Angeles sky to the German company's signature aluminum suitcases.

artnet News, March 5, 2019



The launch event for RIMOWA x Alex Israel in Los Angeles, 2019. Courtesy of RIMOWA.

Alex Israel travels a lot for his art. In the past two years, the Los Angeles-based artist has exhibited in Austria, Hong Kong, London, New York, and San Francisco—and those are just his solo shows.

Now he'll be able to travel with his art.



Suitcases from the limited-edition RIMOWA x Alex Israel series. Courtesy of RIMOWA.

Last month, Israel partnered with RIMOWA, a high-end German luggage company known for its stout aluminum luggage cases, to release a series of custom-designed suitcases. The limited-edition cases are decked out in Israel's watercolor-like hues (which draw inspiration from the west coast sky) and feature matching wheels and luggage tags.

RIMOWA was founded in Cologne in 1898. It has been producing aluminum cases since the 1930s, when, according to company lore, the firm's factory burned down, leaving only the metal behind.

"I imagined these suitcases by answering a simple question: What's the suitcase I'd want to look at and wheel through LAX?" Israel said in a [statement](#). "And the answer, for me, so often comes back to the sky over Los Angeles—it's just my favorite thing to look at."



Alex Israel and RIMOWA CEO Alexandre Arnault. Courtesy of RIMOWA.

In typical Israel fashion, the luggage has a sleek look. However, the process behind the design wasn't as easygoing as the final product might suggest. It took the artist more than a year to translate his initial sketches into actual designs.

"It was very educational for me," Israel tells artnet News about the process. "I visited and re-visited the factory, worked closely with RIMOWA's production team, absorbed a lot of very specific information about suitcases and working with metal, and more general information about luxury consumer product design."

RIMOWA timed the release of the series with Frieze Los Angeles last month, staging a pop-up release party with a Hollywood flair—and a 20-foot-tall neon-hued suitcase. Guests were invited to climb in the giant piece of luggage and preview Israel's designs.



Suitcases from the limited-edition RIMOWA x Alex Israel series. Courtesy of RIMOWA.