

# Bubbling over: Sunbrella and Charles Pétillon's inflatable collaboration

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Sunbrella and Charles Pétillon's inflatable structures were transported and photographed in various different indoor and outdoor locations. *Photography courtesy of Charles Pétillon*

**O**f the many great installations in Milan during Salone del Mobile, a collaboration between US fabric maker Sunbrella and French artist Charles Pétillon is not to be missed. Pétillon, who is based in Paris, has shot campaigns for Sunbrella that has a factory in Lille, for many years, so when the 50-year-old company approached him to present its new collection, he turned to balloons for inspiration.

The result is a series of inflatable sculptures made from spheres that are fused together and covered in the latest Sunbrella fabrics. Pétillon also photographed the structures in various indoor and outdoor locations across northern France and Belgium. 'I wanted to show the collection in various contexts and to highlight the contrast between location and fabric,' he says. He then filmed a behind-the-scenes documentary of the process.



*The installation measures over 4.20 m tall and is made up of 10 majestic balloons*

After a career as a still life photographer working with luxury brands from Louis Vuitton to Cartier, in 2009, Pétillon turned to more artistic pursuits. He began creating complex sculptures made from balloons that he would place in incongruous settings - forests, beaches, football pitches and disused buildings - and then photograph. In 2015, he famously created a cloud of 10,000 balloons at 54 m long, that floated inside London's Covent Garden. Last year, '33 Kilometres', a stream of balloons on 'stilts' graced the beaches of Northern France and Britain.

Balloon sculptures are for Pétillon, 'a nod to the objects, buildings, and structures we often pass by without noticing.' Sunbrella, which started in the 1960s making awning canvas for boats and today specialises in shade structures and indoor upholstery and marine fabric, will certainly not go unnoticed this Salone.

#### INFORMATION

'Connexions' is at Fuorisalone until 9 April. For more information, visit the Sunbrella website, and the Charles Pétillon website

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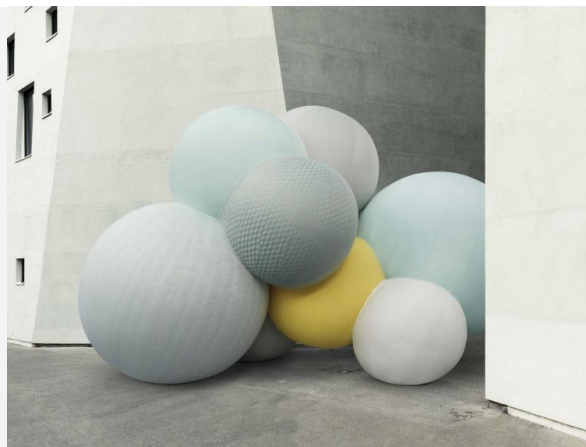


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Pétillon creates connections between the reality and virtuality of images, offering the viewer a new experience of Sunbrella's textiles

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The giant structures were photographed in France and Belgium