



TOP LEFT: Hayón's sketches form part of his design process. Here, one accompanies an ArtQuitect's AQHayon Collection bath. **LEFT:** the 'Kubo-Kube' cabinet for Pallucco. **RIGHT:** Hayón at work. **BELOW:** the 'Poltrona Single Cover' chair from the Showtime collection. **BELOW RIGHT:** 'Container 7' from AQHayon Collection. Details, last pages.



he reigns in Spain

With his avant-garde attitude and a sketchbook in one hand, Jaime Hayón is taking the design world by storm.

IF EVER THE much-hackneyed phrase 'meteoric rise' was apt, it's for Madrid-born designer Jaime Hayón. At only 32, and already with a couple of major design awards under his belt, he's busy preparing 'Showtime' a retrospective (although he doesn't like the word) for London's Aram Gallery. The show consists of work he has conceived over the past three years, which is about the sum total of his oeuvre since leaving Fabrica, the Benetton-funded arts institute where he was head of design. Today, his Barcelona studio is scattered with magazines, both cult and mainstream, that feature him on the cover. In the shots, he is sometimes dressed as a clown, at other times a sheep (carrying a papier-mâché wolf's head), the result of joint photo sessions with his partner, the visual artist Nienke Klunder.

Clearly 'cool' – in the strictest sense of the word – is not something Hayón aspires to be.

The buzz started in early 2005 with his work for the Barcelonese firm ArtQuitect. At a time when most bathroom collections were entrenched in Japanese austerity or monochrome minimalism, Hayón created something charming and whimsical, drawing on instinct as opposed to market trends. Louis XIV-style sinks and baths,

bathed in gold, yellow and black that can accommodate plants and champagne buckets while curly-edged laser-cut mirrors hang next to pert little towel pegs in the shape of a clown's head. "Every element in this collection can serve another part of the home," explains Hayón. "The hangers could easily be placed in the hall, the mirror in the bedroom or the basin in the kitchen. >



PROFILE



The sketchbook, **BELOW**, Hayón used while working on his designs for the AQHayón Collection for ArtQuitect, **LEFT**. The collection ranges from basic washbasins and elaborate laser-cut mirrors to elegant pieces such as this black cabinet, **RIGHT**, which would look just as at home in a living room as a bathroom. Details, last pages.



RIGHT: a portrait of Hayón taken by his partner Nienke Klunder for the ArtQuitect catalogue. **LEFT:** 'Josephine' lamp for Metalarte. **BELOW:** 'vases' from the Showtime collection for BD Ediciones de Diseño. **BOTTOM:** forget soap dishes, this AQHayón Collection bath even has a space for a pot plant.



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< The idea was also to break down the idea of ceramic as being a 'hygienic' material and create something more decorative."

Luckily, decoration is not something Hayón shies from. Neither are traditional methods. It was towards the end of his time at Fabrica that he became most interested in craftsmanship and started sourcing backyard ateliers for 'Mediterranean Digital Baroque', his first show where his pop-Baroque aesthetic took shape. This journey led him to Bosa, a small ceramic workshop nestled in the Dolomites. Hayón's passion for porcelain was sparked, and he worked along Bosa's craftsmen on the creation of giant pigs, cacti and nesting birds, the elements of the installation (Bosa also executes the pieces for the ArtQuitect collection).

The accumulation of his managerial experience at Fabrica and hands-on knowledge of porcelain has led to his recent consultant appointment to Lladro, the Spanish company whose nostalgia-ridden figurines grace the sideboards of someone's aunt from Madrid to Melbourne. Eager to forge a new direction parallel to their core market, Hayón is in charge of encouraging young creatives to submit

proposals to the firm, as well as instilling his own vision.

"It's a challenge," he says, "but I don't like easy things. What I'm really trying to do there is construct an interest in design along with them, because with the craftsmanship they have, they can make anything."

Although he trained in industrial design (with a background in skateboard culture), Hayón's interest in objects for beauty's sake has long since taken over. Function is not an afterthought, but he is driven by the desire to make functional objects beautiful as well. "Form follows function belongs to the old school," he declares. "In Fabrica all we talked about were concepts. I got sick of that. It was like, concepts are fine but where is the quality?" His work has often been compared to a young Philippe Starck's and already 'Jaime Hayón for...' stamps his corporate projects. He shows me the evolution of a soon-to-be-released ice bucket for Piper Heidsieck; from the inspirational images of Marie Antoinette hairdos to his Picasso-esque sketches and then the prototype, a tastefully over the top plastic receptacle in the brand's logo red. *Continued on page 277. SUZANNE WALES*

