

CHURNING OUT CREATIVITY

Jon Banthorpe scours Barcelona to find five creatives who are defining the city.

ILLUSTRATIONS Jon Banthorpe.



JAIME HAYON

Designer

Jaime Hayon, designer extra-ordinaire, has his star firmly in ascendance right now, continually clocking up a series of head-turning and thought-provoking projects over the last three years, with no signs of abating.

A true character among designers, Hayon's projects and persona are the product of an unsurprisingly eclectic background. In his early years, Jaime poured his obvious energy into Madrid's burgeoning skateboarding scene. Following the sponsorship offer of an American label, he promptly moved to San Diego. Skateboarding, designing decks, and silk-screening T-shirts, he describes his year and a half in America as the beginning of his design sensibilities.

Returning to Madrid to embark on a course at the Istituto Europeo di Design, Hayon learned to develop further his unorthodox approach, albeit at odds with the traditional teachings of the school. Later offered the chance to attend Fabbrica – Oliviero Toscani's renowned institute

and think tank in Treviso, Italy – Jaime quickly rose to become head of the design department. The period until his departure is described, by the designer, as not wholly an unhappy one, but more of a managerial position that became uncomfortable. In 2004, he left for Barcelona.

In a series of career-defining exhibitions, Hayon laid down the physical embodiment of his unique approach, fusing his artwork with ceramic sculptures and wall drawings at Mediterranean Digital Baroque in 2003, and Mon Cirque in 2005, both at the David Gill art gallery in London.

In the past two years Hayon has fired three distinct salvos across the bow of conventional design practice. Firstly, his bathroom collection for Artquitect in 2005 – a series of distinct, separate bathroom elements characterised by their slender legs, use of luxury finishes, and notions of bespoke and totally personal use.

Secondly comes the completion of his Showtime collection for Spanish manufacturer Bd Ediciones in 2006. This series of furniture gave form to the designer's unique approach toward materials, combining leather with ceramics, and plastic. While the pieces convince you that there is something familiar in their form, they are at once beguiling in their strangeness.

Thirdly, but by no means lastly, there is our favourite stand of this year's Milan Salone, Hayon's installation for Bisazza – a wonderland of ceramic cactuses presided over by a giant, bejewelled Pinocchio figure. Fantastic.

More recently the designer has finished a number of stores for the design-conscious Camper shoe company, and embarked on a move to London. So, while strictly speaking he may no longer be a Barcelona resident there is something of a legacy to speak of. And besides, we don't need much of an excuse to talk about our favourite designer.

ABOVE: Hayon's bathroom collection for Artquitect.
OPPOSITE, TOP: one of Miss Van's poupées on the streets of Barcelona, photo by Christopher Fagan;
BOTTOM: the Vinçon store housed at the Passeig de Gracia building in Barcelona.

