

## The professor taking up the gauntlet of designing future designers



A young Mexican designer is tackling a challenge he has been preparing himself for without realizing it since he was 10 years old: designing the designers of the future.

05/10/2022

Courtesy of Jorge Diego Etienne

It's the most important design event in the world: [Salone del Mobile](#), in Milan 2016. Young Mexican **Jorge Diego Etienne** has been selected to display his work at the showcase for **promising new designers**.

It was an intercontinental challenge. He had to **transport his entire collection** of mirrors, chairs, and lamps in primary colors from **Mexico to Italy**.

Etienne holds a degree in **Industrial Design** from [Tec de Monterrey](#) and participated in this event three times between 2016 and 2018, **a milestone for any designer his age**.

After exhibiting at the most important design fairs around the world, Etienne is now tackling a **different challenge** in 2022.

*“After graduating, it took me 4 years to exhibit in New York, and 10 to get a place at Milan. **My challenge** is to provide my students with the **opportunities and benefits** I didn’t have,” he says.*



Jorge Diego Etienne wants to replace “Made in Mexico” with “Designed in Mexico.”

## **“I want to design designers”**

classes on Furniture Design and International Design Projects at the Monterrey campus.

He got his passion for sharing knowledge from **his parents**.

*"They both made **cultural magazines**, processing information so that people could **understand and use it**. That part has always stuck with me. I have letters I wrote from a very young age," he says.*

From the age of 10, he started drawing on the computer and quickly **learned how to design web pages**.

*"At 14, I started a business. I sold my services as a website builder."*

However, when he finished his professional training, he promised himself never to design web pages again.

*"It was kind of a comfort zone and I forced myself to work on what I'd studied."*

It took Jorge 4 years to **exhibit his creations in New York** and 10 to get a place in **Milan**, the most important place for design in the world.

*"I want to design designers,"* says Jorge, 38.

## **From the classroom to the best design fairs in the world**

Etienne has taken his students to exhibitions on and off campus. They've been to present their collections in New York.

*"I like my students to gain **a real perspective of the professional world**. We teach them how this industry works and how much rigor, precision, and quality is needed."*

*"Halfway through their degrees, my students get to **experience something that took me 4 years**. That's really satisfying because I can help them take advantage of something I didn't have."*

This semester's Furniture Design class are working on a project to be presented at [\*\*New York Design Week\*\*](#) in 2023.

***“It’s not the first time** we’ve done it. Before I joined as director I had already participated **twice in New York** with students,”* he says.

***“If we have the ability to produce and manufacture incredible things (in Mexico), why not design them?”***

Now that he is the director, he wants to give continuity to the **Tec’s international presence.**

He is currently working on an international design project that will enable students to present in Milan, the capital of industrial design.

***“José de la O**, Regional Director of Design, **Ramiro Estrada**, Dean of the National School of Architecture, Art, and Design, and myself have begun to formulate **a national platform** where we can have the best students from various campuses working together to create a project.”*

There are 30 outstanding and high-performing students from 6 different campuses **designing the spaces of the future.**

***“This program is very intensive.** We meet face-to-face, there are simultaneous classes via Zoom, and we’ve made a series of visits that complement what we’re seeing in this class.”*

The collection born from this group will be the one presented in **Milan in 2023.**

***“We could say that the goal is to go from fairs to museums and exhibitions to **raise awareness through them,****”* he says.

## **From Made in Mexico to Designed in Mexico**

***“Design is not an end in itself. It’s a way in which we can inject value into our society and culture,”*** says Jorge.

He explains that **manufacturing** has been the industry in Mexico. Companies from all over the world come to manufacture products in our country.

*“But if we have the ability to produce and manufacture incredible things (in Mexico), why not design them?”*

That’s why the designer is involved in various national exhibitions and festivals promoting things designed in Mexico.

*“In Monterrey, there wasn’t a big event for the **creative industries**, so several colleagues and I decided to create one. It’s a space where design, art, and architecture coexist, all in partnership with the Santa Lucía festival.”*

The space is called **Cuadrante**. It will be held from October 13 to 23 and will include the participation of **Tec de Monterrey**.

What’s more, Etienne is also involved in **Horizontes**, a Tec de Monterrey event to display the best pieces from Monterrey and Mexico City students.

*“We hope that more campuses will join in bit by bit,”* he says.

Jorge Diego is also the curator of **Zona Maco Emergente**, an event that Etienne says has a very strong presence.

*“This space is beautiful because we give a small exhibition space to a group of outstanding students, at the center of this event.”*

Thanks to this effort, **Genki Matsumura** and **Sebastián Zorrilla**, two of the designer’s students, made a splash and got their first opportunity as professionals.

*“They made a chair inspired by **Mexican wrought iron garden furniture** as part of their final project, then I invited them to put it in Zona Maco Emergente.”*

According to Etienne, **Ago Projects**, one of the most important design galleries in Mexico, liked it. They placed a large order with the students for an interior design project and then **offered them a show in their gallery**.

Etienne is very proud of this.

*“Firstly, because they were my students, and secondly, because something similar happened to me. I gave everything I had to a school project. It was the first product I designed, and **it continues to be sold to this day**,”* he shares.

## 5 tips every designer needs to know

*“These are the most important tips for any designer,”* he stresses:

### 1. Don't settle

*“You aren't competing with your class or your generation, or with the city. You're **competing with the world**. You have to look for further ways to enrich your education or to stand out,”* he says.

### 2. Create your own opportunities

*“No one is waiting for you to graduate to give you the keys to a business. You have to knock on doors, meet new people, and go to exhibitions and contests to **create your own opportunities**.”*

### 3. Invest money and time in your ideas

*“One of the biggest flaws of designers is that ideas excite us and fill us with energy, but when it comes to making them come true, the enthusiasm fades. In the end, what counts are ideas made real. For that to happen, we have to invest time, effort, and money.”*

### 4. Share your passion

*“The best way to establish a connection is with the design community.”* Create your own network of fans, he advises.

### 5. Always give 200%

In design, 100% is not enough, says Etienne.

*"I don't believe in inspiration. I believe in information. There are no excuses for not delivering on time and to spec," he concludes.*

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