

ON A WHIMSY

Off-centre designer Jaime Hayon has no creative limits – and he wouldn't have it any other way. Giovanna Dunmall follows his eclectic path to worldwide success.

SPANISH-BORN JAIME Hayon keeps good company. As one of the world's most successful designers, he has collaborated with big names in the design industry, from Bisazza, Swarovski, Camper and Moroso to Moooi, Ceccotti, Fritz Hansen and Baccarat.

Despite his meteoric rise, Hayon has been able to carve out his own personal space. He has a long-term partner (and now wife), Dutch photographer Nienke Klunder "she inspires me totally" and "has lots of ideas and contradicts a lot of mine which makes me think." Klunder and Hayon have a young son and the family currently calls Valencia in Spain home. "When there is time to spend with family it should be quality time," he says. "That's why I'm based here. It's simple and easy and there's the sea and beautiful weather." However, he is toying with the idea of moving to Holland.

These days Hayon is as prolific as ever. Several projects of his include a restaurant in Paris (a revamp of a classic bistrot called Sergent Recruteur in the neighbourhood of St Louis), a new store for Spanish porcelain company Lladró and a house for a Russian couple in Ekaterinburg. He is also working

on several interior projects including a jewellery store in Delhi, a bakery concept in Paris, and a "collaboration in Thailand" which he can't say much about. At the same time he is preparing the "new Milan"; new pieces for design heavyweights Fritz Hansen and &tradition, and a romantic garden collection for BD Barcelona that he will show at next year's furniture fair.

Hayon may be a global design star but he has a simple philosophy about when to take on a project or not. "If a potential client is not a positive person, not someone I have a good energy with, then I won't look at the project," he says. "I feel the challenge comes when you meet someone you like, and when the project becomes something that makes you think differently."

At this year's Salone del Mobile in Milan, Hayon showed two tech products, a departure for him and a detour he relished. One is a watch that is soon to launch, the other a smartphone concept (with an integrated analog clock) that is still being finalised. Hayon thinks that iPhones and many of the other big smartphone manufacturers have missed a trick. "They make





phones that are too serious and not easy to personalise," he says. "In Asia, for instance, there is an incredible use of lucky charms: things to decorate and personalise the phone." So Hayon put a hole in his smartphone so people could attach things to it. He also surrounded it with rubber, which means it doesn't need a cover. About the small little clock on the front he says, "it is not just decorative but also functional because you save the battery by not starting the phone every time you want to look at the watch. It's a gesture that makes you think about technology, the past, the future; it's like a question mark. Plus it gives a glimpse of humour, which is a part of my design philosophy."

Hayon has offices or studios in Italy, Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia, two partners in Japan and a home in London. "Even though I have all these offices I still end up in the bar drinking wine and doing my work there," Hayon laughs. He travels extensively to Hong Kong and China to check on prototypes and projects. "At the beginning of my career, Hong Kong was really important because I met people who had an international vision." He speaks highly of the inspirational techniques and crafts you can still find in mainland China and their incredible industry, but is worried that valuable culture will be lost as a result of the rapid pace of change. "Sometimes I think things are going too quickly in that part of the world," he adds. "It is important to look at the delicacy of the past, to look at what's been achieved and then see what can be achieved in the future. Looking at it in a slower way might be better."

If this sounds pessimistic it isn't, because that's not what Hayon is about. Hayon's outlook - like his designs - is colourful, seductive, a little off-centre, even enigmatic, and always full of promise. 



CANINE CABINETS

Jaime Hayon this year collaborated with one of China's biggest contemporary artists, Zhou Chunya, to stage "ALIVE", a show based on Zhou's "Green Dog" series at the MOT art gallery in Taipei. Thirty green dog models represent Zhou's paintings that illustrate man's libido and ego through the medium of Zhou's beloved German shepherd - depicted in green. Hayon created two sensual and playful cabinets, inspired by a beetle's shiny armour, to house the array of models. One cabinet (above) was lacquered "piano style" in white; the other "a more luxurious limited edition made entirely in mahogany," says Hayon. The cabinets were handmade by Italian craftsmen and use a smooth, silent and concealed system of pistons to open; they are for sale as a unit through the gallery. "I had long discussions with the curator and with the artist to see how we could make something that was different," says Hayon. "Something that would combine our abilities to create forms and make the cabinets come alive." Hayon thinks the art scene in China is "challenging" and "very special". Aside from the dogs, Hayon cites Chen Wenling's overfed bronze pigs and Yue Minjun's smiling faces. "I love that their work is colourful and politically oriented." motstyle.com.tw



La Terraza del Casino, Madrid (2007)
The interior of this Michelin-starred restaurant seems restrained considering what Hayon is capable of – perhaps intentional so as not to detract from the culinary experience. Hayon explores the balance of an aesthetic link between past and future embossing his personal style throughout the restaurant, including some pieces from his collections.

Crystal Candy Set for Baccarat (2009)
First presented at the Baccarat Salle de Bal in Paris, the collection is a fusion of crystal and ceramic. A stylistic undertaking with fruity inspirations, Hayon has mixed coloured cut crystal and gold engravings, with metallic ceramics. Guided by the search for colour and material combinations, Hayon's fanciful style is evident through use of textures, ceramics, and diverse crystal-cutting techniques.



VARIETY SHOW

Hayon's prolific body of fantastical work includes furniture, art, interiors, shoes, ceramics and installations. Here we highlight a selection of his collaborations...



Showtime Collection for BD (2007)
For the Showtime Collection for BD Ediciones de Diseño, Hayon was inspired by classical MGM musicals. The home furniture collection features a lounge with a hood and leather-padded interior, and optional foot rest. The collection includes tables, a two-seater, and various accessories all emphasising Hayon's trademark sleek curves and glossy surfaces. Hayon incorporated some pieces from this collection for the interior of La Terraza del Casino.



Orolog (2012)
Established by Hayon and Ian Lowe to design and manufacture timepieces, Orolog's first collection comprises three simple functions and three chronographs using multiple materials within a clean and simple design. Hayon's design signature is conspicuous across the Swiss-made Orolog range: an organically shaped case, typographic details for numerals, quilted texture dial face, complemented by coloured leather straps from Hermès.