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Apparatu

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PROFILING THE LIFE AND WORK OF CREATORS AROUND THE GLOBE

Catalan workshop,
APPARATU is pushing
the boundaries of what
we traditionally think
of ceramics

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OPPOSITE Inspired by the revolving disco ball, Xavi Mañosa and Mashallah design the Scotch Club collection for Marset, 2013
ABOVE The studio recently collaborated with Belen to create a carafe collection for Dutch Design Week
BELOW The timeless pieces from the Joan Basic range



**WORDS ALICIA SCIBERRAS
 PHOTOGRAPHY JARA VARELA**

Equipped with a production line of casting facilities, wheels and two kilns, the Apparatu studio was a fully functioning ceramics studio from day one. The studio promotes a strong sense of experimentation and ‘getting your hands dirty’ and is dedicated to preserving a strong connection to the tradition of conventional clay throwing.

The Apparatu team was keen to preserve the methods and techniques embraced by Xavier’s father and uncle. A master potter, Joan, has passed on all his knowledge of clay throwing, glazing techniques and firing to Xavier and the two still work side-by-side in the studio today. This generational knowledge transfer is sensitively illustrated in ‘Lesson’, a video where Joan effortlessly throws the form of a vase and his son Xavier attempts to replicate the form over numerous tries. An ode to their past, the Apparatu studio still produces the Joan Basics collection which is tableware hand-thrown by Joan himself.

Xavier Mañosa grew up in the ceramics studio of his father and uncle in a mountain village 30 minutes outside of Barcelona. Deeply rooted in Catalan identity, the then-Ceramica Art-Foc already had artisanal expertise. After decades of hand-throwing functional ceramics, Xavier’s father Joan was looking to rejuvenate the somewhat outdated style of his work and make it desirable again. “We all embrace the prospect of starting something new,” says Xavier, perhaps also referring to his approach when a pot that does not turn out in the kiln or a bowl turns out wonky. “Ceramicists never complain when something is over.” So, the Mañosa family said goodbye to Ceramica Art-Foc seven years ago and decided to re-direct their creative minds and talented hands to embrace a new era of the business under the creative direction of Xavier. The change inspired a new name – Apparatu, which comes from a mixture of badly written Catalan and badly spoken German.

“Real things, ugly things, nude things, and any hardware shop round” – all inspire Xavier, an industrial designer by training. He drives a playful and quirky approach to the Apparatu aesthetic, one which straddles the world of craft, design and fine art. Continually developing new techniques for clay casting and experimenting with prototypes and digital technology, Xavier sees no boundaries with the clay medium. “Right now,” he explains, “I am working on a lamp that is still not ready even after six months, six moulds and fifty prototypes”. But this is the nature of ceramics – there are so many variables from clay type, to glaze to firing temperatures.

Embedded in the Apparatu identity is a strong desire to create quality design pieces and the studio continues to collaborate with high-end brands such as Marset, Kettal, Cultivating Culture and Mashallah. The studio recently collaborated with Dutch design studio, Belen, for a water carafe set for which they developed a special tool to make

the loose punctures in the clay and exhibited at Dutch Design week . It is these quirks that really set the studio apart from any other.

For what is traditionally craft, Xavier's ceramic designs push the boundaries to make craft celebrated. Even after reading Richard Sennett's book, *The Craftsman*, Xavier explains for him, the lines between craft and high end design remain very blurred and what matters is "finding balance between the function and the aesthetic where the material feels comfortable".

The future is bright for Apparatu and with the same open mind for change they had seven years ago, they are soon to embark on the next big step that is a very special moment when they move to their new workshop. With more space, the studio is excitedly anticipating what will come out of it. "We are really happy to extend ourselves and follow what comes of it," says Xavier.

Alicia Sciberras is Assistant Editor of InDesign.



XAVIER MAÑOSA

WHO Xavier Mañosa
BORN Born in Barcelona, Spain
LIVES Barcelona
WORKS Founded Apparatu
BACKGROUND Studied design in Berlin and Barcelona

apparatu.com



ABOVE Designed by Xavi Mañosa for Kettal, the 'Pussel' began as a game between Xavi and his Father
THIS IMAGE The wall lamp is the latest addition to the Scotch Club collection