

NEL is a platform for experimentation formed by an evolving collective of Mexican designers. The collective serves as a channel to create and exhibit projects that focus on the conceptual and playful side of design. The organic nature of the collective allows for an ever changing pool of designers, which in turn generates a wide variety of projects that range from political statements to playful storytelling or aesthetic explorations.

The collective was formed in 2004 in Mexico City and in 2005 exhibited its first project, *Stitch kit* at the Salone Satellite during the Salone del Mobile in Milan. The project comprises different pieces, such as chairs, tables or rocking chairs, which start with two flat iconic representations of these objects, and gain their three-dimensional character through a series of elastic strings.

The following year NEL exhibited the project *Fill in the cat*, also at the Salone Satellite, and later that year a variation on the same manufacturing process with its *Olas* project, shown at the Galería Mexicana de Diseño. These pieces in expanded polystyrene feature three characters that are hollowed out from large, solid white blocks, and their absence suddenly makes them important. The resulting emptiness is filled with the user's belongings and through this action the silhouettes' meaning shifts. The pieces suggest a continuous play-off between interaction and representation, where daily use generates a continuously changing story: a cat that reads Italo Calvino, a book filled with coins, or a living room where birds come to eat cake crumbs.

In 2007, NEL exhibited three different projects at the Salone. First, a series of multifunctional pieces based roughly on the shape of a dog, in different sizes and positions. These characters, named after famous Mexican wrestlers, work as side tables, stools, benches, bookshelves, magazine racks, newspaper holders, bookends, etc.

The second piece of this year's *Pack of things* collection is the *Irak* rug. The rug, in the shape of the map of Iraq, features soldiers advancing from many directions into Baghdad. Through newspapers and television, the image of Iraq is continuously depicted with graphics similar to board games and action figures, giving it a game-like dimension which somehow changes the nature of the war. The rug, with cute little felt soldiers walking on a soft, warm surface, denounces symbolises this confusion, and the way in which the tragic reality of war is somehow diluted by using the use of these images.

The last piece on show was *Quetza*, a bookshelf that roughly resembles the Aztec god Quetzalcoatl, who was shaped like a feathered snake.

In 2008, NEL once again releases a new collection, *Ciudad Satélite*, during the Salone del Mobile in Milan. This time the exhibition takes place *fuori salone* at Vicanto Gallery. The collection is made up of four projects (*Torres de Satélite*, *Tinacos*, *Trepadoras* and *SCT*) that explore the ideological limits of taste and usage, through a variety of utilitarian shapes.

In the first project, NEL incarnate the Torres de Satélite (Mexico City's 'Satellite Towers') as five trapezoidal bookshelves of the same name. The pieces in birch and walnut plywood feature

a coloured side surface that references the ones chosen by artists Mathias Goeritz and Chucho Reyes for the original towers. In *Tinacos* project Nel transposes onto the scale and shape of a ceramic vase the monumentality and identity of a water tank. The pieces are intervened in the same manner as real-life buildings, making each of them unique, with scaled-down cracks, graffiti, tags and stencils, as well as political campaigns and music concert advertising.

On a slightly apocalyptic note, the decay of urban infrastructure and the reclaiming of cities by nature is symbolised by *Trepadoras* [Creepers], a series of pots which imitate neon signs and electricity pylons being slowly devoured by climbing plants. Finally in *SCT, Secretaría de Comunicaciones y Transportes* [Ministry of Communications and Transport], a cluster of telecommunications towers is transformed into wooden sculptures.

NEL has grown to be a much bigger project that was originally intended, and the collective is involved in both experimental projects, such as the ones exhibited at the Salone, as well as commercial and institutional projects.

The current members of NEL are:

Ricardo Casas (Mexico City, 1979)
Alejandro Castro (Mexico City, 1982)
Héctor Esrawe (Mexico City, 1968)
Emiliano Godoy (Mexico City, 1974)
Cecilia León de la Barra (Mexico City, 1975)

For press inquiries or more information about NEL please contact:

Antonio Gurrola
antonio@nel.com.mx
www.nel.com.mx
+52 (55) 5207 2777

Please visit us at www.nel.com.mx, where you can see images, news and other projects.

NEL colectivo

Alfonso Reyes #58-local
CONDESA, 06140 DF
Mexico City
MEXICO
+52 (55) 5553 9611
info@nel.com.mx