

New Learning Environments: Cooperation between IED Barcelona and Sedus shows concepts and solutions for the future of learning

Intelligent furniture, immersive gastronomic spaces and futuristic libraries integrated into nature are just some of the proposals put forward by students of interior and product design at Istituto Europeo di Design (IED) in Barcelona, who inspired the team at Sedus at the end of their four-year course. "I am thrilled by the creativity of the ideas and the multi-layered approaches," says Ernst Holzapfel, Head of Marketing at Sedus Stoll AG, who attended the presentation of the projects. "The final year students have developed forward-looking concepts that have not been seen before. The presentations are of a very high quality. It was an enriching experience and a pleasure for Sedus to support this project as a cooperation partner."

The projects from the students of the Bachelor of Arts in Interior and Product Design stem from the need to design not only spaces or products, but also services in line with new learning trends, methods and concepts, taking into account aspects such as atmosphere, light, functionality, colours, shapes and materials. Together with Sedus, they spent five months carrying out various research projects in which they were able to analyse highly topical concepts such as the phygital environment and the paradigm shift in collaborative and individual learning processes through an experimental approach. In addition, the German office furniture manufacturer was present at various stages of the project development process to support and guide the students.

Creative impulses from around the world: Eight projects at a glance

The result is a variety of proposals: Modular furniture solutions for high-traffic areas in schools; spaces that drive a circular gastronomy system; public spaces that raise awareness and educate about biodiversity and food origins; furniture designed for open environments in companies and institutions and manufactured using 3D fabrication; libraries that merge with nature and contain storage systems for physical books and digital data; and work desks designed to integrate virtual and augmented reality resources, to name a few.

The students at IED Barcelona managed to pick up on different trends in their final projects, which was also reflected in the particularly creative concept ideas.

1.) Midori

Daria Gorku, Ukraine, Product Design

Midori is an ergonomic furniture system for the libraries of the future, conceived as sanctuaries of information, designed to promote learning through an atmosphere of calm and peace. To this end, the proposed design is based on organic and rounded shapes, as well as on the use of natural materials that fit perfectly into an environment that is turned towards nature. With a commitment to parametric design, the furniture considers the storage of physical and digital material and incorporates augmented reality technologies to allow it to be consulted.

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2.) Freya

Olivia Wärme, Sweden, Product Design

Freya proposes a modular and multifunctional furniture design to improve leisure and waiting time in the transit areas of academic institutions. Based on a palette of bright colours inspired by nature in Northern Europe, the proposal aims to bring more dynamism and comfort to these spaces where students can socialise, study, or wait, something which is often forgotten in design projects.

3.) Funda Mental

Conrado Scopinaro, Argentina, Product Design

Funda Mental is a seating system made of biodegradable and flexible material that can be adapted to different needs. It is designed for open spaces, both indoors and outdoors, and is 3D printed. It particularly meets the needs of learning nomads who do not require a specific physical environment for their work or study. The product offers various functionalities and makes it possible to create moments of conviviality as well as environments where one can find peace and quiet.

4.) E.V.E.

Iker Borde, Spain, Product Design

E.V.E (Entorno Virtual Educativo, or Virtual Learning Environment) explores the future of education through the integration of augmented and virtual reality. To this end, a VR system is proposed to improve communication and collaboration between male and female students from all over the world. To bridge the gap between the physical and virtual worlds, Borde has designed a link table, adjustable in height, width and shape, that acts as a blank canvas onto which an infinite number of educational experiences can be projected. The design is foldable so that it can be easily stowed away to free up space in the learning area.

5.) Centro para la Educación Agrícola de las Glorias [Centre for Agricultural Education in Glorias].

Adrià Vilar, Spain, Interior Design

With this project, Vilar proposes to create a centre for agricultural education in the park of the Glorias neighbourhood in Barcelona. Under the acronym CEAG, this space will promote theoretical and practical self-study. The design of the different learning spaces follows the four phases of the agricultural process (germination, planting, cultivation and harvesting). It serves as a metaphor for the evolutionary process that users are expected to experience for themselves.

6.) Terracotta

Nicoletta Mantoan, Italy, Interior Design

Terracotta was born out of the need to rethink the production and consumption system of the food industry. Inspired by the culture of monasteries, Mantoan proposes a space where a new, more conscious and responsible gastronomic system should emerge. Inspired by the Santa Mónica monastery, located behind the

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Boquería market in Barcelona, the idea is to create a circular system where food is offered, workshops are held and new bio-materials are explored.

7.) Ephemeral Pavilion

Chloe Groch, France, Interior Design

Based on research into the effects of different environments on the mental health of male and female students, the Ephemeral Pavilion is conceived as a sanctuary in contact with nature, housing classrooms, an exam room and a sensory area. Its location and design aim to break away from routine and associated negative conditions to help students improve their academic performance.

8.) Wupen

Eli Yang, China, Product Design

Wupen is office furniture designed for both indoor and outdoor use to take the user out of their routine environment to promote learning and socialisation. Adaptability to a variety of open or closed spaces gives the product greater flexibility to overcome rigid, hierarchical structures and to encourage collaboration and communication.

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