

S P O O N

PHAIDON

# HÉCTOR SERRANO LONDON

Most young Spaniards who set their sights on a career in design dream of training in Barcelona. But not so the Valencians. With its own, distinctive school of design, Valencia has no need to look to Catalonia. And if young Valencian designers want to continue their studies, they usually go to the Royal College of Art in London, where they work under Ron Arad.

Héctor Serrano went to London in 1998 when he was barely 20, and there he stayed. At the Royal College he met his fellow Valencians Alberto and Raky Martínez, with whom he designed the Aiberia table (2000) and the Siesta jug (2000). These two works betray a certain degree of nostalgia for the students' country of origin. La Siesta is a jar that has the look of a plastic water bottle and the characteristics of the traditional Spanish earthenware jug, capable of keeping the water inside it cool even in the middle of August, when it is 40 degrees centigrade in the shade.

Nostalgia disappeared completely from Serrano's work when he fell under the spell of remarkable, modern designers such as Snowcrash and Droog Design. One of his designs, the Superpatata lamp (2000), ultimately ended up in the Droog Design catalogue – something all young designers must dream about. The Superpatata is a simple yet ingenious product. A lamp made of latex and filled with salt, it can also be used as a pillow, providing light, colour and heat.

After this early success, Serrano continued to work with light, designing products such as the Playboy lamp (2001), which can be personalized with its own clothes, or the Top Secret lamp (2001), made from polyester film that has been passed through a document shredder. The fine strips that come out the other end are packed into a net of transparent nylon, like the bags used to pack oranges – a passing reference to Serrano's country of origin.

Manolo is Gonna Have Fun (2002) is a project that Serrano developed with Lola Llorca, another Valencian drawn by the cultural pull of the English capital. Manolo is a middle-aged man, serious and a little boring, the stereotype of the average Spaniard. The project focuses on transforming all the humdrum objects in his and every other house into amusing toys. With a little imagination the coffee table can be turned into an improvised trampoline, the lamp becomes a stupendous ball and a dinner plate makes a great Frisbee. RAMÓN UBEDA

**1** La Siesta, jug, 2000, white terracotta, 32 x ø 10 cm, La Mediterránea, in collaboration with Alberto Martínez and Raky Martínez.

› This hybrid between a plastic water bottle and a traditional earthenware jug has been craft-manufactured from a special white clay.

**2** From Infinity to Beyond, 2001, steel, rubber, foam, fabric, 30 x 120 x 100 cm.

› This table is part of the Manolo is Gonna Have Fun collection which demonstrates how everyday objects can be trans-

formed into fun toys. When not being used as a coffee table, this exhibit can be used as a trampoline.

**3** I like Football on Sunday Afternoon, 2001, silicon, PVC, compact fluorescent light bulb, ø 70 cm.

› Part of the Manolo is Gonna Have Fun collection, this lamp can be played with as though it were a large ball – kicked, thrown or bounced – yet it simultaneously lights up the room.

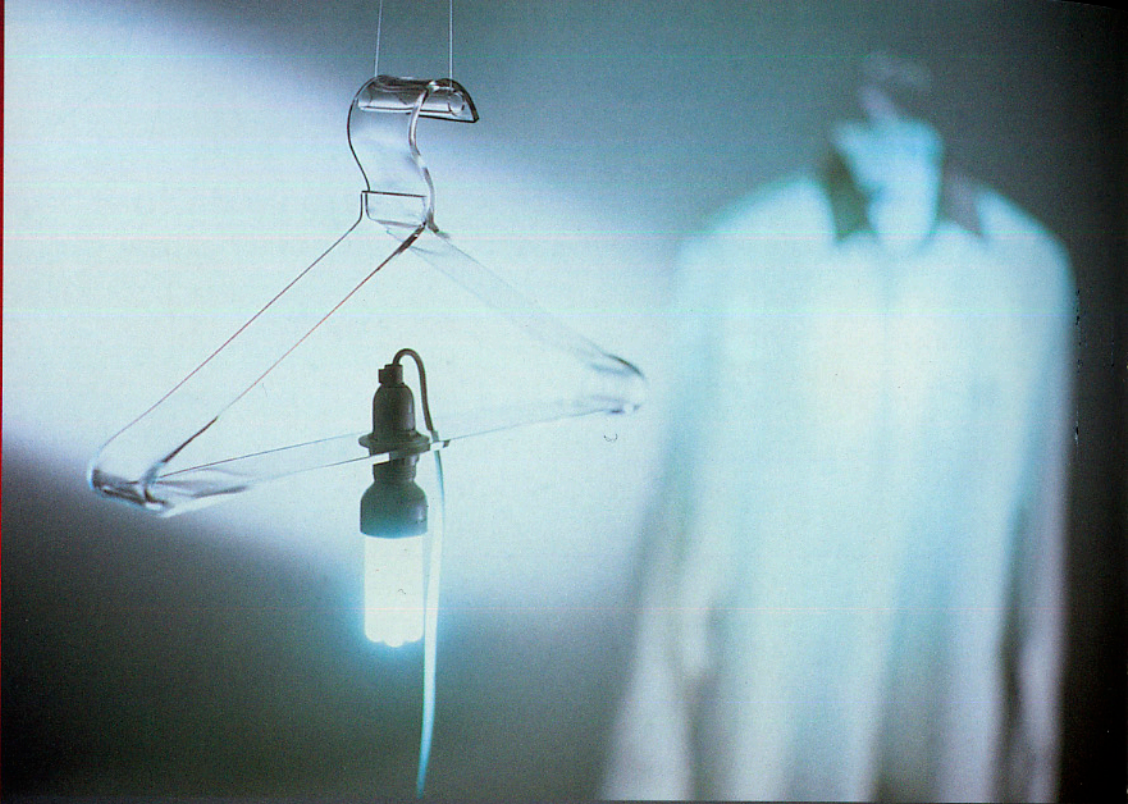
**4** Don't Play With Your Food, 2001, polystyrene, 3 x ø 30 cm.

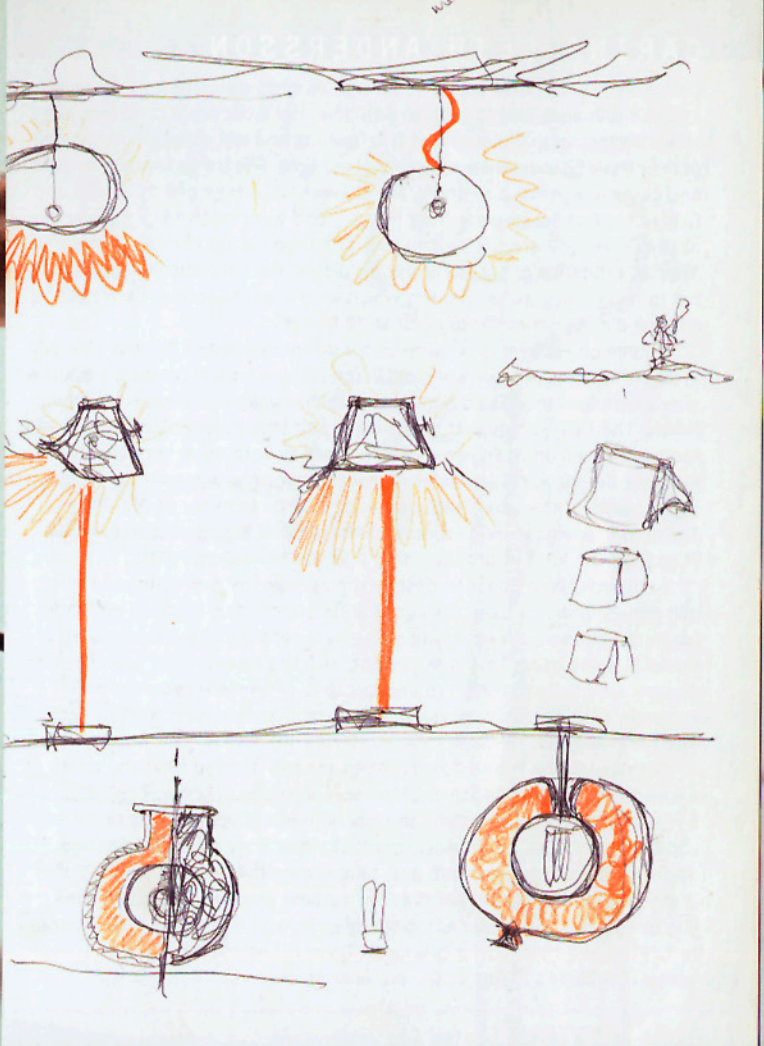
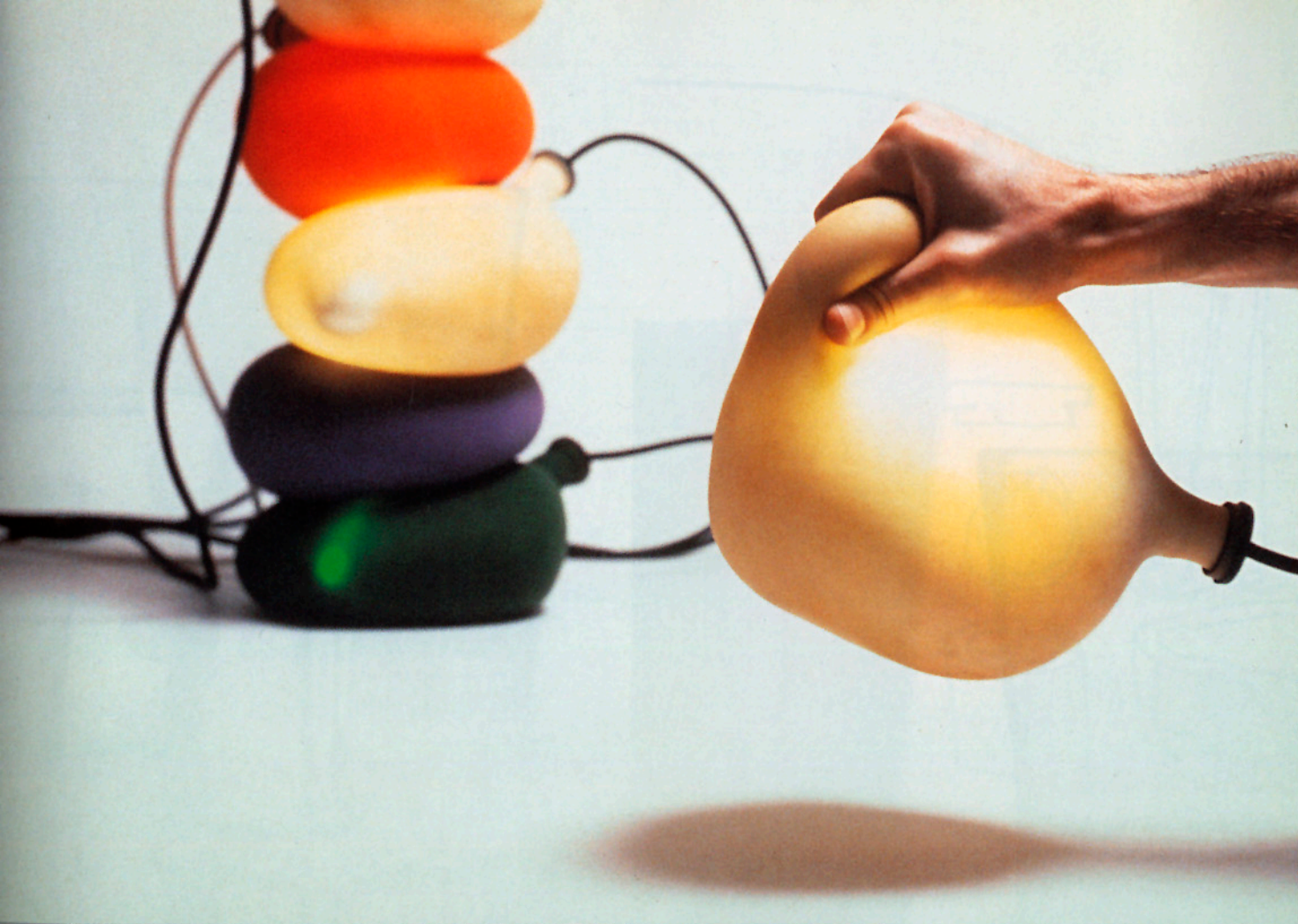
› Part of the Manolo is Gonna Have Fun collection. This photograph catches the moment when a polystyrene plate, with all its contents, is tossed into the air like a Frisbee.



1	2
3	4







**1 Top Secret**, lamp, 2001, polyester film, compact fluorescent light bulb, 50 x 40 cm, prototype.

› These lights are made from a bundle of fine strips of acetate held together with transparent nylon threads. The chaotic manual production process makes their final form as unique as the light they give off.

**2 Playboy**, lamp, 2001, acrylic, compact fluorescent light bulb, 35 x 40 x 6 cm, prototype.

› A lamp of boundless possibilities, Playboy can literally dress for the occasion and the

room's atmosphere can be transformed simply by changing its outfit. Clothes are arranged on a Perspex hanger from which a low-energy fluorescent bulb is also suspended.

**3 Superpatata**, lamp, 2000, natural latex filled with salt, fluorescent light bulb, 20 x 20 cm, prototype.

› This multi-functional lamp is enormously versatile: it can be used as a pillow, a stress releaser or even to warm the bed. Superpatatas are available in a selection of colours and they are stackable, transportable, suspendable and practically unbreakable, making them convenient for almost any occasion.

