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Uruguay returns to the London Festival for a fourth consecutive year with a showcase of homegrown creative talent, telling the story of one of its cultural icons, poet Juana de Ibarbourou

*Curated by Matteo Fogale at the London Design Fair  
19 - 22 September 2019*

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This September Uruguay will return to the London Design Festival with another celebration of its national design talent, curated by London-based Uruguayan designer, Matteo Fogale.

***'Poetic Forms: The work of Uruguayan poet Juana de Ibarbourou'*** will see eleven Uruguayan design studios and creatives distill the work of Ibarbourou into furniture, accessories and textiles in a celebration of one of Uruguay's most-renowned creatives by a roster of Uruguay's emerging design talent.

Juana de Ibarbourou is a literary icon of Uruguayan culture. Recognised in South America as one of the greatest poets, earning her the name 'Juana de América'. The new works are inspired by the

100-year anniversary of 'Las Lenguas de Diamante', a book that catapulted Juana de Ibarbourou instantaneous success both nationally and internationally upon its publication in 1919. This emblematic book had a huge impact on the Spanish-speaking world and is still as relevant today.

'Las Lenguas de Diamante' features a series of poems which celebrate the body and its relationship with nature, and each of the creatives has taken one or multiple poems as the starting point for their designs.

**Estudio Claro**, a multidisciplinary collective who design products and spaces, have selected *El Dulce Milagro* as their inspiration. In this poem, Ibarbourou creates an enchanted world that is dynamic, feminine, warm and visceral, featuring references to blooming flowers and the stars as part of a powerful love.

Estudio Claro will present a series of objects that guide visitors through the stages of the poem including vases and vessels featuring sprouting flowers referencing joy and a mirror to symbolise the reflection of reality and the gaze of others. The series will culminate with a seat, representing the end of the poem, which reaches a moment of contemplation and quietness. Claro will work in ceramic, natural fibres and glass to create the piece.

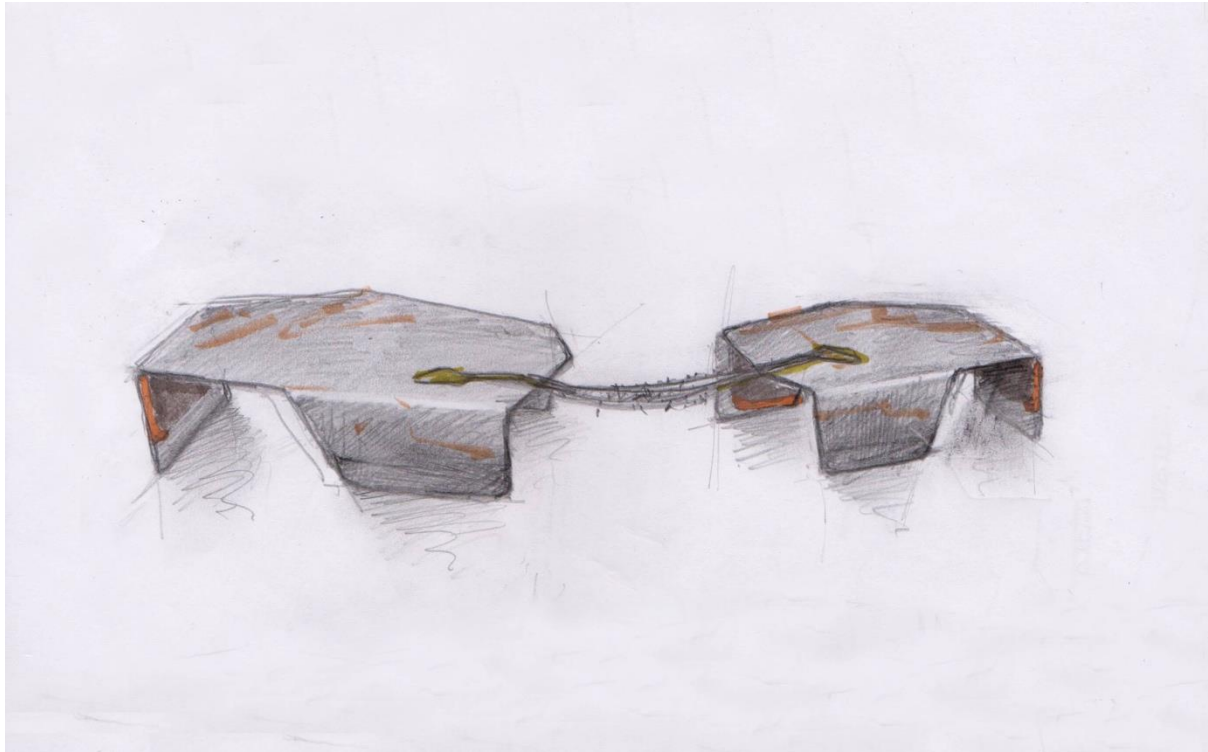
**Estudio Diario**, an industrial design studio based in Montevideo, has selected *Salvaje*, a poem that figuratively describes the typical Uruguayan countryside, guiding the reader through pastures and a stream. As the character moves through this landscape he slowly becomes part of it, surrendering to nature. As the poem progresses, the reader becomes part of this process, sensing the aromas, textures, colours and sounds highlighting the beauty of the wild.



Estudio Diario will present a series of small-scale objects for personal care including a mirror, container and hair brush. Visitors will be encouraged to interact with the objects, with the aim that these too will evoke a similar sensory experience to *Salvaje*. The objects will use contrasting textures, colours and contemporary forms. Estudio Diario will work with raw materials such as wool

and tiento (a material derived from leather) and mix of modern and craft techniques such as woodcarving at braiding of the Tiento.

**Muar** takes inspiration from the title poem 'Las Lenguas de Diamante'. Based on the passion between two lovers, Muar has designed two tables, each representing a lover, which are bound by connected ties that represent union and silent communication. The connection loops allow the tables to be arranged closely together or at an angle from each other.



This work gives continuity to the effort that the Uruguayan design studios together with the country's investment, export and brand promotion agency, Uruguay XXI and the Uruguayan Design Chamber (CDU) have been making since 2016 at the London Design Festival. All activations to date have also been supported by the Embassy of Uruguay to the United Kingdom.

On the collaboration, curator Matteo Fogale comments: *'A poet is a person with special powers of imagination or expression. This year Uruguayan designers were challenged to seek inspiration from feelings and ideas manifested in the words of Uruguayan poet Juana de Ibarbourou, often referred to our relationship with nature and body. Design is a powerful form of expression that can influence the way we behave and interact with our surroundings, it is important we include these emotions amongst those functional aspects of design objects. Showcasing at London Design Fair is a great opportunity for Uruguayan designers to exchange their unique views and their country's values with the rest of the world.'*

Last year, a group of studios together with Matteo Fogale presented two very successful exhibitions at the London Festival: 'Invisible Threads', which based its proposal on the work of the Uruguayan modernist architect Julio Vilamajó and the exhibition 'Uruguay, A Natural Collective', a collection of furniture created exclusively with natural materials and traditional techniques, which explored different perspectives of Uruguayan design.

The Uruguayan furniture and design sector is a young industry that has become a core area of growth for the nation. The hallmarks of furniture designed in Uruguay are simplicity and sophistication with a modern and functional character. With a notable concentration of local design talent and access to plentiful manufacturing, the industry has been able to grow beyond its borders, demonstrating international relevance through a series of awards including the Salão Design Award, in São Paulo Brazil, Design Award (in Italy) and Good Design in United States

**The works of all eleven design studios will be on show at the London Design Fair from 19 – 22 September, as part of the London Design Festival.**

#### **NOTES TO EDITORS**

Uruguay XXI presents

‘Poetic Forms: The work of Uruguayan poet Juana de Ibarbourou’  
at the London Design Fair

Old Truman Brewery  
Shoreditch  
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The full list of studios and selected poems is as follows:

[Muar](#) – Poem: Las Lenguas de Diamante

[Claro](#) – Poem: El Dulce Milagro

[Diario](#) – Poem: Salvaje

[Menini Nicola](#) – Poem: La Espera

[Izzi](#) – Poem: Vida Garfio

[Carolina Palombo](#) – Poem: La Pequeña Llama

[Tosca](#) – Poem: La Hora

[Rafael Antia](#) – Poem: Implacable

[Samago](#) – Poem: La Arboleda Inmóvil

[Manos del Uruguay](#) - Poem: Las Lenguas de Diamante

[Micaela Pita](#) – Poem: Panteísmo

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#### **About Uruguay XXI**

Uruguay XXI is the agency responsible for the promotion of investments, exports and country brand. The institution works to **strengthen** the export capacity and competitiveness of Uruguayan companies, **promote** the country as an attractive destination for productive investments and **promote** the “Uruguay Natural” country brand in the world.

Together with other institutions, Uruguay XXI is part of the National System of Productive Transformation and Competitiveness (*Transforma Uruguay*) that works to promote the productive and innovative economic development of the country, with sustainability, social equity and environmental and territorial balance.

The agency's purpose is to be a reference in export promotion, attraction of productive foreign investments and international positioning of the country, and generate strategic information for decision makers, facilitating the business environment.

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#### **About Matteo Fogale**

Matteo Fogale is a London-based designer specialising in furniture and product design as well as interiors, installations, creative and strategic consultancy. Led by a design approach that considers honest and premium materials, functionality and longevity of the product, Matteo's work is a combination of everyday objects reinterpreted with a strong iconic character.

Matteo was born in Montevideo (Uruguay) and moved to Italy in 2001. He studied first at the Art School Leonardo da Vinci followed by IUAV University of Venice. After graduating he worked on a wide variety of projects, from high-end furniture design, industrial product design and bespoke commission pieces with design studios such as Patricia Urquiola, Nichetto and Partners, Barber & Osgerby and MAP Project Office.

In 2013 he established his own brand brose~fogale in collaboration with designer Joscha Brose, designing, producing and distributing the Camerino Collection. In September 2014 he launched a new collection of furniture and products in collaboration with the designer Laetitia de Allegri during the London Design Festival which was awarded a Wallpaper\* Design Award in 2015.

Since 2018 Matteo has expanded his ever-growing body of work with a series of collaborations including a new collection of furniture pieces designed together with seven Uruguayan design studios and launched at The Aram Gallery in London.

[www.matteofogale.com/](http://www.matteofogale.com/)