THE DUTY OF CREATIVITY

“At birth, we sign a contract with our family, with our community, with our civilization and with our animal species. We – Humans are, as far as we know, the only animals that have taken control of the speed and the quality of its mutation thanks to our intelligence and creativity which allow us to create intelligence and creativity. No one needs to be a genius, but everyone needs to participate.
Creativity should not be constrained to the arts, design or literature. A plumber, a teacher, a firefighter should and could equally be creative.
As for me, my contract is to serve, to try to help us to have a better life. With this weak tool called design.
The first question we must ask ourselves, truly and honestly, is whether the idea or the project to be developed will serve us, whether there is real benefit for the people who will live in it or with it. For designers who produce materiality in a world that can no longer endure consumption it is an even more vital question.
There are a few rules to follow. Absolute honesty, with oneself and with everyone. That is, always ensuring that one is at the centre of the subject; to always get to the bone, to the heart, to the truth of the thing. Thus, you can begin to create something from it and above all, be able to ensure that it will be, perhaps, timeless, and perhaps, the dream of lasting forever. For this, it must be done with the minimum amount of energy and the minimum amount of matter, with a concern for intelligence, longevity, and transmission.
To me, creativity is something that comes to you out of nowhere, from a magma we carry somewhere in our heads and that, at a certain moment, delivers visions and intuitions. The more diagonal these intuitions and deliveries are, the stronger they are. After that comes a great deal of rigor and of work. As for me, an idea—whatever it may be—takes between five and forty years to mature. I am only the printer of the ideas I have visualized in my brain. That is what creative work means to me. It is a challenge we face every day with ourselves.”

Philippe Starck, creator

“STARCK by Philippe Starck”

In this exhibition, Philippe Starck is both curator and scenographer of his work, revealing the philosophy behind creations that have redefined how we understand design and encouraged us to reflect on contemporary society and material culture.
The pieces selected, the installation of videos in which Starck shares his view of the world and of design, and the slideshow about his prolific work allow us to understand how his activity is driven by creativity and by his desire to revolutionise everyday gestures, on varied scales, with an output ranging from iconic domestic objects, such as the Juicy Salif juicer for Alessi, the Fluocaril toothbrushes, and the Louis Ghost chair for Kartell, to projects on a monumental scale, such as the Axiom Space Station's crew quarter habitation module that will be attached to the ISS, as well as motor vehicles and interior spaces. In this ecosystem, the detail on a piece of cutlery takes on the same relevance as the structure of a spacecraft, proving his understanding of design as an all-encompassing exercise in creativity that is a catalyst for technology and project development.
For Starck, designing an object also means conceptualizing a new way of living. Through this selection of pieces, the author takes us from the historical symbolism of the stylised Olympic Flame to the versatile and lightweight Kartell A.I. Chair, where artificial intelligence is applied to optimise resources and reduce environmental impact. This focus on innovation extends to Rise Delta Q with Starck, developed in partnership with the Portuguese Delta coffee brand, that reverses the logic of coffee extraction and subverts our understanding of coffee machines. Starck also stresses that technical efficiency does not preclude aesthetics, whether in the Valor.S lamp, which combines industrial precision with sophisticated ceramic finishes, or in the sculptural profile of the WW Stool, whose biomorphic design challenges traditional stool ergonomics.
This exhibition is, therefore, a forward-looking reflection that shows how Philippe Starck has always set his gaze on what is yet to come.

Bárbara Coutinho
Diretor of MUDE – Museu do Design

Organização | Organization
Universidade Católica Portuguesa
Programação Cultura @ Católica 2026

Conceção e projeto expositivo
Exhibition concept and design
Philippe Starck

Produção executiva | Executive producer
Creative Industries Programmes by SC – Sara Cavaco

Textos | Texts
Philippe Starck e Bárbara Coutinho

Design gráfico | Graphic design
Filipe Gill

Montagem | Installation
Maria Torrada

Produção gráfica | Graphic production
Duplix

Entidades Emprestadoras | Loan organizations
Céline Abecassis-Moedas
Kartell
Município de Lisboa | MUDE - Museu do Design
STARCK NETWORK

Seguros | Insurance
InnovaRisk

Galeria Fundação Amélia de Mello
Direção | Director: **Paulo Campos Pinto**
Assistente | Assistant: **Benjamim Lucas Pires**

Universidade Católica Portuguesa | Edifício da Biblioteca Universitária João Paulo II, Palma de Cima, 1649-023, Lisboa

Patrons

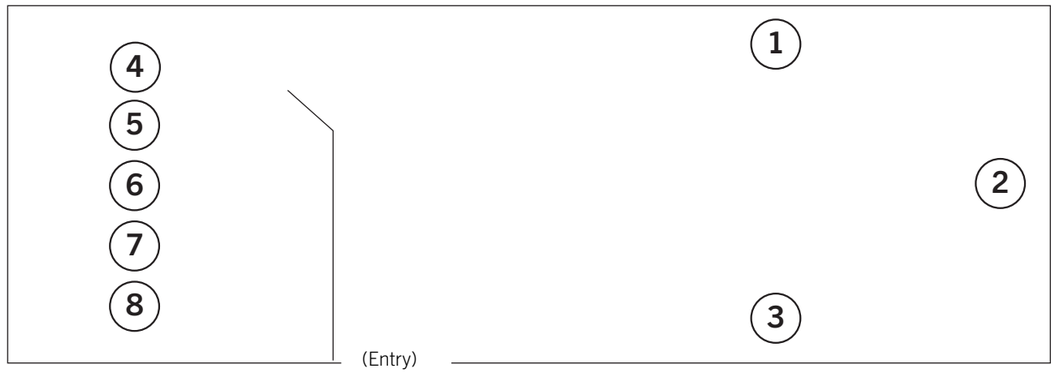
Sponsored by

UNIVERSIDADE CATOLICA PORTUGUESA

PROGRAMAÇÃO CULTURA @CATOLICA

PHILIPPE STARCK, THE DUTY OF CREATIVITY

February – March 2026
Amélia de Mello Foundation Gallery



1, 3 – Video Interviews selection of Philippe Starck
2007 – 2026
Philippe Starck vision on the duty of creativity
Production : UBIK / Starck Network.

2 – Flipbook of a selection of Philippe Starck's creations
Production : UBIK / Starck Network
Music : 24 Hours : The STARCK mix produced by Stephan Crasneanski

4 – OLYMPIC FLAME, 1990
Prototype of the Olympic Flame for the Olympic Winter Games in Albertville in 1992
Manufacturer: Uginox (France)
Color: silver
Brushed stainless steel sheet metal
45 x 8 cm (flame), 13 x 13,5 x 30 cm (base)
Provenance: STARCK NETWORK

In 1990, Jean-Claude Killy, alpine skier and co-president of the 1992 Albertville Winter Olympic Games, invited Philippe Starck to design the Olympic Flame.
Philippe Starck suggested a simple concept: to preserve the flame, so as to preserve passion, while eliminating the object itself, stripped with many superfluous elements, in order to create a 'non-object', that would be the continuation of the forearm, the continuation of the body, so the object would completely disappear and only the flame would remain.
Those who held it and later shared their experience felt in harmony with the non-object': there was no barrier, no relay between them and the flame. They did not carry the flame - they were the flame. They embodied passion. They embodied the spirit of sport.

"Energy and passion were the primary drivers behind my creation of the Olympic flame. Added to this was my personal work on dematerialization. Designing a torch as an object does not interest me, however, talking about energy and flame certainly does. My goal was to create a natural and fluid extension of human energy, symbolized by this flame. I found the extension of the limb that transforms into fire, into flame. It is a gas flame, but the passion, the idea, was immediate and obvious. Then there was a long process of highlighting the lines. This object has a soul." **Ph. S**

5 – VALOR.S, 2021
Table lamp
Manufacturer: Cassina (Italy)
Color: gold and amber
Hand painted, ceramic, aluminium, PMMA
39 x 35 x 19 cm
Provenance: Private collection

Phillipe Starck elaborates this approach with a contemporary and timeless design made from hand-painted, enamelled ceramic. The Valor.S table lamp particularly stand out for its smooth and organic form and bright colours.

"VALOR.S is a rebirth of a creative golden age, strange and organic forms with deep and vibrant colors." **Ph.S**

6 – RISE DELTA Q with Starck, 2020
Coffee machine
Manufacturer: Delta Q (Portugal)
Color: white
Thermoplastic polymer (ABS)
19,5 x 28,5 cm
Provenance: Céline Abecassis-Moedas collection

RISE Delta Q with Starck is a coffee machine that features a patented revolutionary inverted coffee extraction system conceived by Delta. The entire coffee extraction system has been redesigned and rebuilt, unique in the coffee industry with more than 20 international patents. Through the innovative RISE system, the coffee is injected from bottom to top, through the base of the cup, which intensifies the taste and natural aromas of the coffee and brings out a persistent cream, maintaining the ideal temperature.
For the first time, the cup - also designed by Starck - is an active and critical element in the extraction of the beverage. Created in perfect harmony with the development of the RISE Delta Q with Starck machine, the cup takes precedence in the creation of a drink that enhances all the organoleptic and sensory characteristics of coffee, for a superlative experience.

"The RISE Delta Q with Starck is a technological miracle, a revolutionary coffee machine that defies gravity. From down to up, when your morning coffee is no longer subject to gravity, you can start dreaming your life and our future" **Ph.S**

7 – A.I Chair, 2017
Manufacturer: Kartell (Italy), powered by Autodesk (U.S.)
Color: black
Recycled thermoplastic technopolymer with mineral filler and soft-touch treatment
81 x 54 x 53 cm
Provenance: Kartell

Created in 2017, and revealed during the 2019 Salone del Mobile in Milan, the A.I. chair for Kartell by Starck and powered by Autodesk, is the fruit of the collaboration between artificial intelligence and human intelligence, termed by Philippe Starck as «Natural Intelligence». A.I. is made with a 100% recycled thermoplastic technopolymer obtained from pure scrap material that has been set aside and is not contaminated by other materials. The choice is dictated by the possibility, made available only now by technology, to use scrap material that guarantees the aesthetic quality and structural requirements of the product, reducing the emissions necessary for its production.
Thanks to the collaboration between Kartell, Philippe Starck and Autodesk, a leading American company in the production of 3D engineering and entertainment software, a next-generation chair made of 100% recycled material has been created, designed by combining human and artificial intelligences.

"In 2017, I decided to work with A.I. because I was looking to explore new territories, devoid of human, cultural or sentimental influences. I visited the American company Autodesk which provided me a computer and I asked the machine a simple question: "Can you help me rest my body using the minimum of matter and energy?" This implied that the machine only had to understand what a human body was, without knowing anything about my culture, my origin, my desires or my gender. The machine rowed for more than two years until it managed to give birth to the A.I. chair, that Kartell edited. With Kartell we became the first ones to manufacture an industrial furniture product with the help of Artificial Intelligence, while today, artificial intelligence has become a major social issue.
Artificial intelligence, as per its name, is artificial. It doesn't exist; it is speed. Every second, it changes, in terms of power, in terms of speed, in terms of knowledge. In 2017, it took three years to the machine to come up with a chair. Today it would probably take a few seconds. What we can say in the current state of things is that A.I. is a fantastic tool, because it can save time, it can connect the dots. Yet creation is still the prerogative of the human subconscious. A.I. is not the great creator that we are. But tomorrow, who knows." **Ph.S**

8 – W.W. stool (designed for Wim Wenders), 1988
Manufacturer: Vitra (Switzerland)
Color: mint green
Painted cast aluminium
97 x 56 x 53 cm
Provenance: MUDE – Museum of Design (*)

Composed of three organic legs and a thin root-shaped seat, the W.W. Stool is cast from a single block of cast aluminum. It was designed by Philippe Starck following a conversation with renowned German filmmaker Wim Wenders. Fascinated by the vital force of plant growth, Starck imagined a tripod "sit-stand" seat whose slender legs evoke young shoots and the object as a whole, a plant sculpture that brings surprise and magic to the workplace. The precarious comfort of the object stems from a discussion between Philippe Starck and the director of "Wings of Desire" about his way of working.
The stool, like a crutch or a prosthesis, is designed as an element of rest, a momentary support. The simplicity of the lines and the reduction of the material to its bare minimum lighten the object's mass. In 1992, a small number of these pieces were produced by Vitra in sand-cast aluminum and lacquered in a milky green color. Starck added a branch to the front of the original prototype's structure, which serves as a footrest.

"During a conversation with Wim Wenders, I asked him how he worked. He replied that he wanted to work standing up, because when you sit down, you slouch. He wanted a large empty table and simply to stand in front of it, and, from time to time, be able to step back and rest a little. I deciphered exactly what he said and did it. I created this somewhat surprising object, this kind of plant sculpture that brings a little surprise, a little magic, to the workplace." **Ph.S**

(*) The Municipality of Lisbon would like to acknowledge all the collectors, designers and entities who, by donating, selling or depositing their artworks, collections, and personal estates have contributed to the heritage value of The MUDE - Museu do Design Collection. In 2003, the Municipality of Lisbon purchased the 'Francisco Capelo collection' due to the authors represented and the pieces gathered by its collector.