Tomas L. Ortiz Ferrer

Professional Journey.

Design Narratives

Product & solutions by Tomas L. Ortiz Ferrer

Tomas Professional Journey.

So, this is my journey, told through various phases and experiences.

Phase 1: Cordoba, 1997

In 1997, I was working in Cordoba with several companies, designing washing machines and computer accessories. During this time, I discovered Pro/ENGINEER, a CAD parametric tool, which radically changed my way of working. I transitioned from being a hands-on designer who loved to feel the form with my hands to understanding how that form would be perceived. The parametric CAD software allowed me to delve into more detailed levels of proportion, enabling me to interact with not just one shape but the entire parts, elements, and features of the product. This was a significant leap for me, and I started referring to this approach as a "parametric culture of design."

Another milestone during this period was my first attempt at co-creation. We were designing a nebulizer and decided to invite end-users to our office to design with us. Although it wasn't as sophisticated as the co-creation methods we use today, it was our first attempt to gather feedback on every single idea and involve people in the creation process. I later learned that while people cannot create directly on projects, they provide valuable feedback on the use case and features being designed.

Phase 2: Italy

The second phase of my journey began when I moved to Italy and started working with George Sowden, a member of the Memphis movement in the 70s. The first lesson I learned from him was about beauty and how to create it by leveraging the right proportions of each design element. We treated 3D products as if they were patterns, where every millimeter, shape, and curve modification counted. This experience taught me how to shape the perception of beauty and communicate the right language through design.

During this time, I also learned about identity programs, which we called design identities. We designed nine products for Moulinex, a French company, and discovered the synergy that a product range or family could have by consistently applying design signatures. This revelation highlighted the strategic value of design. We later applied this approach to projects for Tefal and Pyrex.

Phase 3: Milan

The third phase began when I left Sowden and opened my own agency in Milan. Two key experiences shaped my career during this time. First, I conducted a deep research project on visual styles for the sport industry, which I later realized was visual trend analysis. This project helped us capture a client and design snowboarding goggles for Arnet, an Italian company. It was the first time I understood that the language of a product could be conceptualized and strategic.

Second, I joined Philips Design, which I consider the best design university in the world. With 500 talents working together towards one target, I learned that every area of design could be combined in every project to deliver the best solutions for business. This experience taught me the importance of top-notch information and the role of design in creating strategic value.

Phase 4: Asia Pacific

Another significant phase was when I became the Asia Pacific design lead for lighting at Philips. I was involved in strategic thinking and supporting the business with dedicated solutions for different brands. For example, we co-created a design approach for Gucci, where design enabled the business by collaborating with Gucci's design team.

During my time at Philips, I also learned how to integrate innovation into the business process. We supported business cases by researching concepts and visualizing strategies, helping businesses quickly identify opportunities. I worked on several identity programs for Philips, including LED bulbs, domestic appliances, and a Chinese range of lighting called CLC. These projects taught me that design could drive strategic decisions and create key elements of business strategy.

Phase 5: Sound Art Works

After Philips, I founded Sound Art Works, a startup focused on delivering high-fidelity home audio devices. We aimed to add pure design value to differentiate our products in a competitive market. We used luxury crafting and digital technology to create unique sound experiences, using reclaimed materials and handcrafting techniques. Although we faced challenges with technology, this experience taught me that design insights could drive a business.

Phase 6: Design Narratives and Jeeping

In my current phase, I founded Design Narratives and Jeeping, where I apply everything I've learned. We use a five-step design thinking process to deliver strategic platforms, facelifts, and maintenance projects. Our co-creation system allows people to become creative with us, building key elements and unique selling points for products. This process has been recognized and awarded twice.

We also ventured into service design, with a notable project for Lumileds Philips, where we designed the lighting experience for garages. We defined the brand's story, product features, and overall experience, creating a transformative identity program.

Future Goals: 2025 and Beyond

Looking ahead to 2025, we aim to shape the future of OEM manufacturing in China, moving from random design ideas to targeted opportunities. We plan to help Chinese manufacturers build innovation with intention, focusing on user needs and commercial brand logic. We also aim to enhance product design and facelifts, improving design quality and aligning with different brands.

Sustainability is another key focus for us. We believe in creating value through circular design and aim to develop five levels of sustainable experiences. Our goal is to make sustainability understandable and valuable for people, helping clients transition from linear to circular production.

Lastly, we plan to explore digital manufacturing technologies through a design narrative lab, testing if these technologies are ready for market. This exploration will help us learn and innovate, pushing the boundaries of design and manufacturing.