

MASTERING THE ART OF DESIGN

In a candid chat with A+D, Nieves Contreras, Creative Director, Lladró speaks about her innate passion for design and her love for craftsmanship

Interview by: Seema Sreedharan



The simplicity and functionality of the designs drew me in immediately. What struck me most was the movement's vision—how creativity could transform everyday objects into something meaningful yet accessible. Seeing those minimalist pieces of furniture and accessories, I felt a deep connection, as if this balance of form and purpose resonated with something inside me. It was in that moment I realised this world of thoughtful design was where I belonged. I studied Industrial Design at the Polytechnic University of Valencia, specialised in product design, and obtained a Masters Degree in Design Management.

Where did your pursuit of design lead you to?

NC: After finishing my studies, I moved to Paris, where I had the incredible opportunity to work with designers like Pascal Mourgue and Marc Berthier. But most of my career there was spent at eliumstudio, a design studio focused on product and electronic design. For about 10 years, I took the lead on art direction and graphic development, working closely with both big brands and up-and-coming start-ups. On the side, I stayed connected to my roots by freelancing for Spanish brands, especially those tied to craftsmanship. One of my favourite collaborations was with La Cerámica Valenciana, where I helped them launch a new brand, called Sagenceramics, that brought fresh, contemporary pieces to life while honouring their traditional expertise.

What appealed to you about working with Lladró?

NC: The challenge of working with such an international renowned brand, with a heritage that was very present, and bringing it to a new and more modern world was very exciting. Also, the fact that I was moving back to Valencia, and the sun!

What strikes the most about Lladró are the design collaborations. How do your collaborations with artists and designers come about? How do you think these collaborations contribute to the brand positioning?

NC: We look for artists, designers and brands, that share our principal values : a commitment to excellence, attention to detail, a distinctive personal voice and a deep respect for craftsmanship and modernity. Over the years, we have collaborated with some of the best designers in the world, such as Marcel Wanders, Naoto Fukasawa and Luca Nichetto. They have very different approaches to design and a very different language, but all of them are united in these shared values. The same goes for the artists we work with—they have bold, distinctive voices that speak to new generations and tell meaningful stories. These collaborations are essential to shaping our place in the modern design world. And while we've achieved a lot, I believe there's still so much more for us to say and contribute to this ever-evolving landscape.

Nieves Contreras's tryst with design began when she was barely 16. Fascinated by the world of design, she always knew this was her calling. After working with some renowned designers in Paris, her passion for craftsmanship and her penchant for product design eventually led her Lladró. We caught up with Nieves for an interesting conversation on her journey through design. Here's an excerpt...

Tell us about your first encounter with design. When did you realise that design was your calling?

Nieves Contreras (NC): When I was 16, my high school art teacher took us to a Bauhaus exhibition in Valencia, and it was a revelation.



Lladró Guest By Camille Walala



“The Indian market has a deep love for craftsmanship and vibrant colors, which aligns beautifully with our vision and contemporary designs. It’s always a joy to see how Lladró connects with India’s sophisticated and evolving taste.”

What are the collaborations you are looking forward to? Any past collaborations you were particularly impressed with?

NC: For me, the Lladró Art Editions is one of the most exciting projects I've been involved in. This new line focuses on creating highly limited editions of sculptures in collaboration with renowned artists. For the first Art Edition, we partnered with Javier Calleja, one of the most acclaimed contemporary artists, and launched the collection You Choose One. These exclusive pieces are showcased in art galleries and presented at major art fairs, allowing us to connect directly with art collectors and introduce them to our work in a fresh way.

Our next collaboration is with Leandro Erlich, an Argentinian conceptual artist whose work I've admired for years. It's a privilege to work so closely with artists and designers whose creativity and vision I deeply respect, and I feel incredibly grateful to be part of this journey.

How does the brand perceive India? Is Lladró planning any limited edition collections specifically for the Indian Market?

NC: India holds a special place in our hearts, and the feeling is mutual—India has been one of Lladró's most important markets for years. To honor this connection, we created a special collection called Spirit of India, featuring Indian gods in limited-edition pieces. These designs are truly unique, allowing us to showcase the full extent of our craftsmanship and expertise. The rich, intricate imagery of these pieces lets us push our creativity to the highest level.

We approach this work with great care and respect, understanding the deep spiritual significance these pieces have for many people. At the same time, our modern collections are also highly appreciated in India. The Indian market has a deep love for craftsmanship and vibrant colors, which aligns beautifully with our vision and contemporary designs. It's always a joy to see how Lladró connects with India's sophisticated and evolving taste. ✚