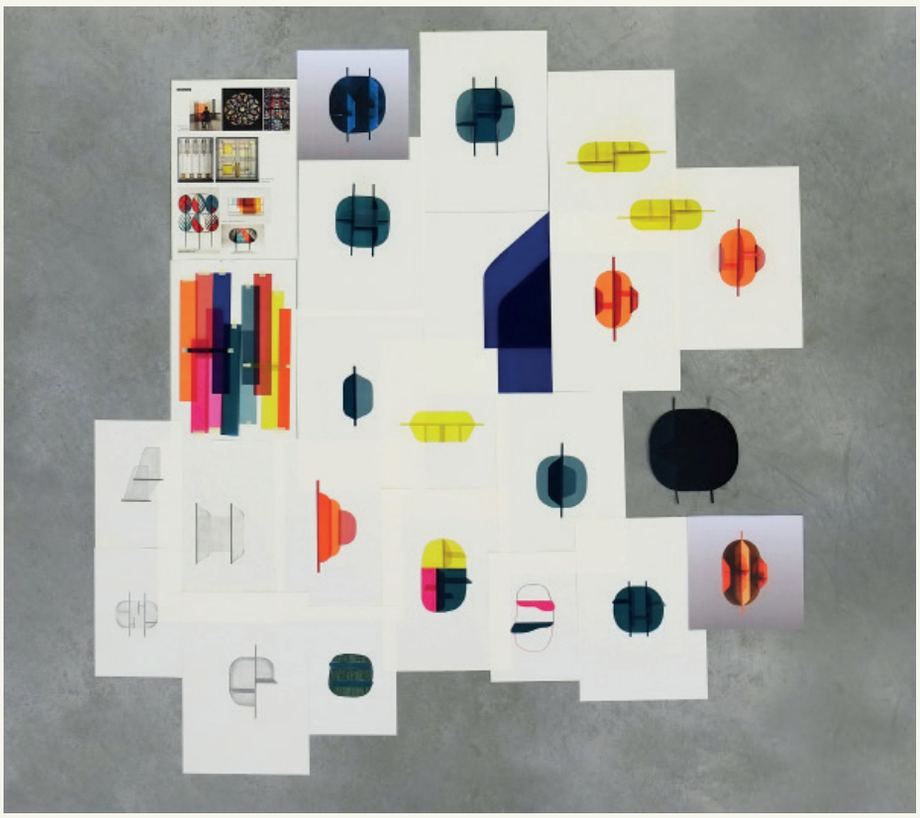
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Saint-Étienne, 20 october 2026

Concours Cinna, de l'idée à l'édition

An exhibition where design, education and industry meet

4.12.26 – 2.5.27



Excerpt from the competition entry, development sketch for the Millefeuille mirror, designed by Jennifer Hardel, 1st Prize, Competition 10 (2017). No longer in production. © Jennifer Hardel

For nearly twenty years, the Cinna Contest has been discovering emerging design talent and offering young designers an opportunity that has become increasingly rare in contemporary design publishing and production: the chance to see their projects evolve from an initial idea into a manufactured product, brought to market and made available to the public. Through the exhibition *Concours Cinna, de l'idée à l'édition* (Cinna Contest: From Idea to Production), the Cité du design invites visitors to discover the human, educational and industrial dimensions of this adventure, exploring the different stages involved in transforming a creative intuition into a product designed to become part of our everyday lives. Bringing together around forty award-winning pieces, the exhibition reflects the diversity of the creations supported by Cinna. Furniture, lighting, decorative objects and accessories are presented alongside sketches, prototypes, samples and audiovisual accounts, offering a unique insight into the processes behind their creation. Some projects are traced from their earliest sketches through to commercial production, while others highlight specific stages in their development. The exhibition also looks back at the history of the competition and its role in fostering the emergence of young designers, while highlighting its close ties with art and design schools, particularly Ésad Saint-Étienne.

Curator: Maëlle Campagnoli
Exhibition design: Laurène Veyrunes, Violette de Fleurian (Cinna), Cité du design

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Cinna contest, talent revealer

Through twenty years of archives, prototypes and manufactured objects, the exhibition *Concours Cinna, de l'idée à l'édition* traces a unique journey that has enabled young designers to turn their ideas into reality. It offers a behind-the-scenes look at a contest that has become a springboard for contemporary design.

A Leading Design Contest

Created in 2006 to mark the 60th anniversary of Maison Française magazine, the contest was born from a simple ambition: to discover a new generation of designers. To bring this initiative to life, the magazine partnered with Cinna, a French contemporary furniture brand renowned for its commitment to innovation and design.
Under the impetus of Michel Roset, then co-director of the eponymous group, the contest immediately stood out for its unique model: rather than remaining concepts, the winning projects receive support to move towards production. Thanks to the expertise of Groupe Roset, the winning designs are developed, manufactured and then added to the brand's collection.



Poster for the 20th edition of the Cinna Competition.



Poster for the 1st edition of the Cinna Competition.

In 2015, the adventure continued in partnership with Marie Claire Maison magazine, with the introduction of a Public Prize. Renamed Cinna Révélateur de talents, the contest reached a wider audience. Since its launch, it has led to the production of around thirty objects and supported the careers of numerous designers who are now recognised both in France and internationally. Among them is Benjamin Graindorge, winner in 2008 with the *Courtoisie* mirror, who went on to collaborate with the Cité du design, Ligne Roset, Moustache and YMER&MALTA gallery. Pierre Favresse is another of the talents discovered by Cinna: awarded for his *Pharo* lamp, he later became Artistic Director of Habitat before continuing his career with brands such as Lladró, L'Oréal and Christian Dior Parfums.

Turning Ideas into Products

Far more than an ideas competition, the Cinna Contest, Cinna Révélateur de talents, offers its winners an exceptional opportunity: to develop their projects all the way through to production. Each year, nearly 350 entries are reviewed. The selected projects then undergo a development process with the Cinna teams to meet the technical, economic and industrial requirements of production. This immersion in the realities of manufacturing and bringing a product to market provides invaluable experience for young designers at the beginning of their careers. Over the years, the contest has thus become a unique meeting point for creativity, innovation and industrial expertise.



Ondule table lamp, designed by Chape&Mache (2016). In production. © Cinna

Ésad Saint-Étienne, a long-standing partner of the Cinna Contest

Since its earliest editions, the Cinna Contest has maintained close ties with the Saint-Étienne Higher School of Art and Design (Ésad Saint-Étienne). Many of the school's students and graduates have had their projects recognised by the contest, reflecting the vitality of its creative community and the quality of its teaching. This close relationship reflects the importance the school places on experimentation, project development and preparing design students for professional practice. For students, the contest offers a valuable opportunity to test their ideas against the realities of production, manufacturing and the market.



Excerpt from the competition entry, models for the *Ondule* lamp, designed by Aurelie Chapelle and David Machado (Studio Chape&Mache), 1st Prize, Competition 09 (2016). In production. © Aurelie Chapelle and David Machado



Excerpt from the competition entry, development sketches for the Ondule lamp, designed by Aurelie Chapelle and David Machado (Studio Chape&Mache), 1st Prize, Competition 09 (2016). In production. © Aurelie Chapelle and David Machado

from idea to production

From sketch to finished product, the exhibition invites visitors to follow the different stages that transform an initial idea into a tangible object. Sketches, models, prototypes, technical documents and archival material reveal the skills, exchanges and expertise involved throughout the process.



Excerpt from the competition entry, designed by Rémi Dehaene, 3rd Prize, Contest 17 (2023). In production. © Rémi Dehaene

Top left: prototype lampshade for the *Trèfle de lumière* lamp
Top right: exploded view of the *Trèfle de lumière* lamp
Bottom: prototype of the *Trèfle de lumière* lamp

From Intuition to Design: A Journey in Several Stages

Conceived as a progressive journey, the exhibition takes visitors through the different stages that lead from an initial idea to a finished product. The first section traces the history of the Cinna Contest, its evolution and its influence on emerging contemporary design. Archives, posters, photographs and period documents highlight key moments in this design journey and the ambitions that have shaped it for nearly twenty years. The exhibition then explores the research and design phases. Sketchbooks, preparatory drawings, models and finished products reveal the wide range of approaches explored by the designers. Several emblematic projects from the Cinna Contest, including Studio Chape&Mache's Ondule lamp, awarded in 2016; Robin Thannberger's Kroc portable desk, which won 1st Prize in 2022; and Rémi Dehaene's Trèfle de lumière lamp, awarded in 2023, provide a tangible insight into this process. Through these examples, the exhibition reveals the experimentation, adjustments and questions that gradually transform an initial intuition into a fully developed design.

At the heart of the exhibition, a section dedicated to production illustrates the different stages of development leading to manufacture. It also highlights Cinna's history, its professions and the expertise behind each creation. Technical documents, intermediate prototypes, development archives and audiovisual accounts reveal the continuous dialogue between designers, engineers, craftspeople and production teams. Together, these complementary skills contribute to bringing an object to life, ready to be produced, distributed and used.



Kroc portable desk, designed by Robin Thannberger, 2022. No longer in production. © Cinna

A Collective Response to Contemporary Challenges

The exhibition concludes with a look at the Cinna Contest today and the themes proposed to participants over the years. Housing, mobility, new ways of living, technological innovation and environmental transition all reflect a constant focus on the transformations shaping contemporary society. Through these themes, the contest demonstrates design's ability to observe changes in the world around us, question our ways of life and imagine new responses to emerging needs. By bringing together young designers, manufacturers, technical experts and educational institutions, Cinna Contest: From Idea to Production highlights the fundamentally collaborative nature of the design process. The exhibition celebrates not only the objects created through the contest, but also the collaborations, exchanges and expertise that have made them possible. It reminds us that before entering our homes, every creation is the result of an ongoing dialogue between imagination, research, technical expertise and industrial commitment. It is a process in which an idea truly takes shape through the combined contributions of everyone involved in bringing it to life.



Excerpt from the competition entry, usage scenario sketch for the *Kroc* portable desk, designed by Robin Thannberger, 1st Prize, Contest 16 (2022). No longer in production. © Robin Thannberger



Excerpt from the competition entry, usage scenario sketch for the *Kroc* portable desk, designed by Robin Thannberger, 1st Prize, Contest 16 (2022). No longer in production. © Robin Thannberger

About Cinna

Since 1975, Cinna has been exploring contemporary design with a bold and free-spirited approach. Based in Briord, in the Ain region of France, the French furniture brand creates collections that combine creativity, comfort and character, reflecting changing ways of living and making a home. Shaped by an ongoing dialogue with designers from a wide range of backgrounds, its collections bring together sofas, armchairs, furniture, lighting and decorative accessories. Each creation offers a distinctive vision of the home, where forms, materials and uses interact to create spaces that are both personal and welcoming. Curious and unconventional, Cinna champions a vibrant approach to design, open to individual tastes and lifestyles. A particular vision of the home, where the freedom to shape one's own interior is part of the pleasure of living in it.

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also on view

La Platine

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3, rue Javelin Pagnon
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Pierre Guariche, un éclaireur de la modernité
(Pierre Guariche, a Pioneer of Modernity)
Exhibition from 4 December 2026
to 2 May 2027

Le Crêt de Cerf, Louna Fellot-Biard
(The Deer's Ridge)
Installation from 4 December 2026
to 28 February 2027

Galerie nationale du design

Cité du design
14, esplanade Jacques Bonnaval
42000 Saint-Étienne

Design en main. Du langage à l'objet
(Design in Hand: From Language to Object)
Exhibition from 11 June 2026
to 7 March 2027

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Opening hours

Tuesday to Sunday
10 am–12.30 pm and 1.30–6 pm
Closed on public holidays