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### Sail Through Spanish Design With Manuel Estrada at the AIGA Gallery

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Spaniards know how to relish the beautiful things in life – cured bacon, paella, and flamenco are but a few of the fine Iberian exports that have long been popular on North American shores. Now, through October 11, American audiences can also savor the work of **Manuel Estrada**, the reigning king of Spanish graphic design. Curated by Sonia Diaz and Gabriel Martinez, Estrada's first stateside solo exhibition – “Manuel Estrada: Sailing Through Design,” at the **AIGA National Design Center** in New York – explores the impassioned creative process that has made him a leading designer of book covers, brand identities, and editorial spreads in Spain and beyond.



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“Sailing Through Design” explores both [Estrada’s](#) creative process and Spanish culture. The ideas and perceptions that develop in his first sketches are influenced by what he calls the “high visual and pictorial culture” of Spain, citing [Dali](#) and [Picasso](#) among his strongest influences. Their legacy is evident throughout the 534 facsimile sketchbooks that cover an entire wall in the [AIGA gallery](#), bursting with thousands of whimsical drawings that document Estrada’s initial creative impulses. Elsewhere in the exhibition, these first impressions transform into the reductive graphic products and identities for which Estrada is lauded. Logos for some of Spain’s leading corporate institutions hang on banners from the ceiling — the identity of Cajaviva Bank is distilled into three rectangles, while Ole Imports, Spain’s leading wine distributor, is rendered as the outline of two interlocking wine glasses. Estrada’s mastery at condensing complex ideas and identities into essential, basic visual forms is also on display in a section devoted to his book cover designs. The results of Estrada’s collaboration with Spanish publisher Alianza Editorial, these covers span the breadth of both Spanish and international literature with Estrada’s iconic balance between text and image, and thought and emotion.

Estrada tells [ARTINFO](#) that the nautical name of his show harkens to the “idea of the journey that is always renewed and never ends.” This notion is true of his own creative process, of his exhibition — which has already made stops in Helsinki, Berlin, Lisbon, and Miami — and of the future Estrada envisions for Spanish graphic design. As the chairman of the [DIMAD](#) association for Spanish design and the [Ibero-American Design Biennale](#) in Madrid, Estrada is at the helm of a burgeoning renaissance in Spanish design that will be journeying stateside soon.

– Anna Kats

*Image courtesy of Donnelly Marks.*

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