

# an academic year 2025-2026 marked by a focus on creation and openness

On 22 September, almost 400 students began a new academic year at Ésad Saint-Étienne. As a major player in the world of creation and research in art and design, the School is reasserting its priorities: learning through practice and experimentation, an international outlook and a focus on the transition into the professional world. The School is bolstering its position in industrial design and its sandwich training and workshop offer. This dynamic approach is accompanied by a brand new master's art course and a host of international projects, in Europe and Brazil. At the heart of the Cité du design quarter, it trains designers and artists connected to the major issues facing the contemporary world.



La(ma) boîte à outils workshop © S.Binoux

# a dynamic and ambitious new year begins

This new academic year confirms Ésad Saint-Étienne's dynamism and appeal, as it welcomes 371 students on art and design courses ranging from preparatory class to post-master's. With a growing international contingent (51 international students) and numerous innovative educational projects, the School is asserting its commitment to training creatives capable of navigating a world on the move, thanks to an open, interdisciplinary learning environment in tune with current developments in the world. To help its students prepare to embark on their professional career, Ésad Saint-Étienne has strengthened its partnerships with numerous key operators in the professional world such as CETIM, CERIBOIS, Tôlerie Forézienne, Saint-Étienne university hospital, Art Entreprise, Cybèle Production-Jazz à Vienne, the Le Corbusier site... These collaborations are central to many educational projects and offer students the chance to study and explore the real world.



Kinnarps© workshop, Ésad Saint-Étienne



Local Tools post-master students, 2025 © Nathan Cussol

## Focus on sandwich training and industrial design

The 2025-2026 academic year marks an important milestone with the arrival of five sandwich students on the Design-Objects master's course. They are joining prestigious firms like Chanel, Schneider and Papiers de Paris, confirming the growing interest of industrial and cultural operators in the profiles trained at Ésad Saint-Étienne. The increasing popularity of work-study training reflects the School's desire to give its courses a more vocational focus and anchor its design training in contemporary industrial and economic realities.

In addition, this year the young professionals on the **Local Tools** post-master's course launched in September 2024 will be unveiling, for the first time, the results of the applied research work done during their time in companies, with an exhibition and a publication. Rondino and Sculpteo are the two partner companies of this first post-master's year group supervised by Jean-François Dingjian, designer and teacher at Ésad Saint-Étienne.



# new this year

## Master's in Art, option XP

Among the new courses offered this year is a new addition to the options open to art students, the Art-XP master's. Designed around the notion of the exhibition as form, format and workspace, the course invites the student to position themselves as the author and designer of artistic projects anchored in the contemporary world. This Art-XP master's - XP for **Xposition (exhibition), XPerimentation, Xperience** - questions the ways in which art is disseminated whilst also including critical, curatorial and anthropological dimensions.



## Interdisciplinary integration workshop

This year's freshers attended a brand new interdisciplinary integration workshop from 22 to 26 September. A real rite of passage, it allows new students meet and bond from the very first days of their course and lay the foundations of a collective dynamic.



New academic year 2025-26 © Ésad Saint-Étienne

## A common room and new common areas

This year the School is inaugurating a major new feature in student life, a brand new student common room. Sponsored and funded by Saint-Étienne Métropole, with support from the State, as part of the redevelopment of the Cité du design, this project is the fruit of a co-design project involving third year design students and three companies, Basa Architecture, Hytt Architecture-Paysagisme and Tôlerie Forézienne. Convivial and open to all, this will be a space for students extend their interactions beyond their classes and for those on different courses to mix. It will be completed in 2026 with the redevelopment of the courtyard outside. Further proof of the School's wish to make its premises a true laboratory for sociability and creativity.



New student common room © @agenceBASA

# A school that innovates and forges lasting ties

## An even more international outlook

The start of this academic year tied in with the **2025 France-Brazil Cross-cultural Season** sponsored by the **Institut français**, which enabled four students (selected from a list of 24 candidates) to take part in September's Kuya Design Festival in Fortaleza, combining a workshop and an exhibition.

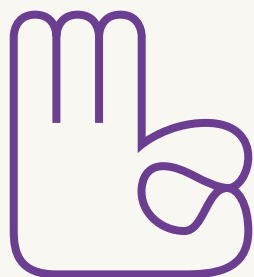
An interactive map of Ésad's partnerships will soon be available online, showing the full extent of the School's international network. These initiatives confirm Ésad Saint-Étienne's commitment to training artists and designers capable of operating in a globalised, intercultural world.



Kuya Design Festival © marieaurorestikermetal

## From School to working life: the Alumni network

Ésad Saint-Étienne cultivates strong links with its former students now working as creatives, designers, artists and cultural players in France and abroad. The Alumni network constitutes a **precious resource for students as they move into the professional world**: it facilitates collaborations, offers placement and job opportunities and extends the spirit of solidarity specific to the School. The network, which is currently undergoing an overhaul, will be strengthened in the coming year to better support our graduates and increase the visibility of the inspiring career paths open to Ésad Saint-Étienne graduates.



At Ésad Saint-Étienne, creation is never static: it is a living thing, to be shared and passed on. Anchored in a design quarter that is the only one of its kind in France and originator of the Biennale Internationale Design Saint-Étienne, the School engages in structural projects that aim to tackle contemporary issues. It is supporting an emerging generation of artists and designers who are already inventing tomorrow's world."

**Éric Jourdan**

Executive Director of the EPCC Cité du design-Ésad Saint-Étienne

## Research-creation driving innovation

Research plays a central role at Ésad Saint-Étienne. Grouped within the Art and Design Research Group (GRAD), it is structured in three main areas: **Creation & Artificial Intelligence**, **Creation & Production Methods** and **Creation & Fiction**. It involves students, teachers and researchers working in an interdisciplinary, experimental approach in touch with technological and societal changes. The School is also developing post-master's courses and doctorates in partnership with, among others, Jean Monnet University, to confirm its pioneering role in the field of research-creation.



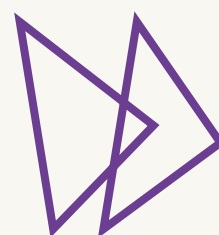
Modernity Experimentation Lab (LEM) /GRAD Esadse © Louis Chevalier

## Foundational perspectives for the future

In 2025-2026 Ésad Saint-Étienne and Jean Monnet University are consolidating their links by preparing to sign a cooperation agreement with a view to eventually forming an **Experimental Public Institution (EPE)**. This project aims to enhance agility and multi-disciplinarity in the training offered, combining art, design, science and technology. It paves the way for new educational and scientific synergies that will make for a School more connected to contemporary issues. Ésad Saint-Étienne is also taking an active part in the national dynamics shaping the future of design training and careers, by participating in a call for expressions of interest on Skills and Careers of the Future (**Compétences et métiers d'avenir**) launched as part of the France 2030 Plan. Ésad Saint-Étienne is one of the partners in a consortium led by ENSCI-Les Ateliers.



2023 Workshop © Ésad Saint-Étienne







## A new graphic identity for the Cité du design and Ésad

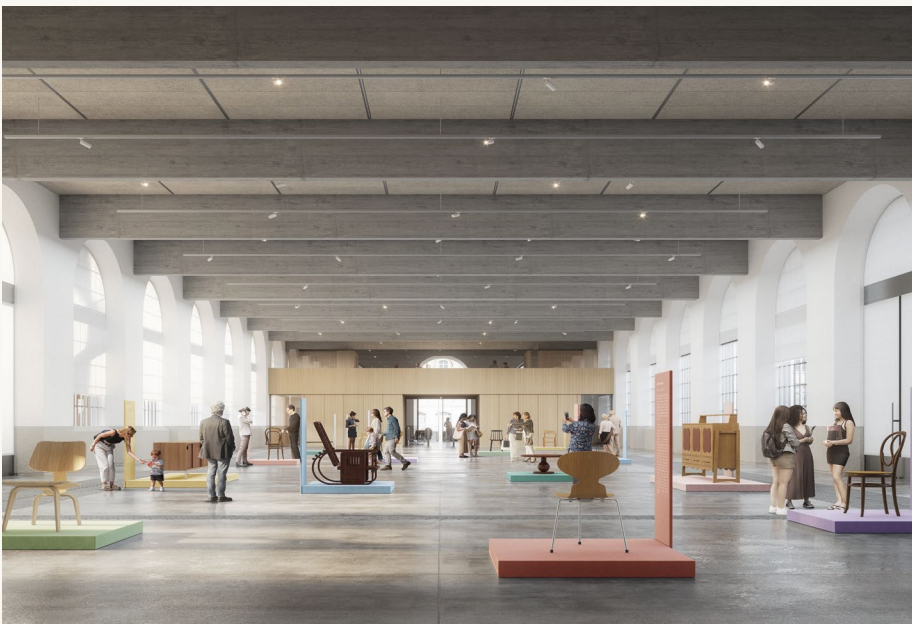
To accompany these changes, a brand new visual identity, designed by studio vu-huu, was unveiled in May 2025 during the Biennale Internationale Design Saint-Étienne, for the Cité du design quarter and its components. Ésad Saint-Étienne is therefore starting the 2025-2026 academic year with a new graphic and visual vocabulary that reflect the creativity and diversity that characterise the design quarter. Inspired by the practice of design, it comprises a font – BVH Stef – in which each letter has several variants and a library of pictograms that share the same features.



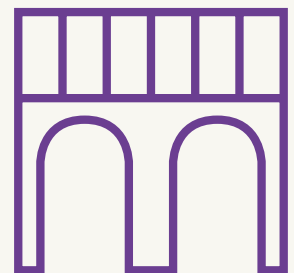
La(ma) boîte à outils workshop © S.Binoux

## Anchored in the local territory: a design quarter in a class of its own in France

Located in the heart of the only French city that is a member of the UNESCO Creative Design Cities networks, Ésad Saint-Étienne benefits from an exceptional environment. As one of the key players in the Cité du design quarter, it is playing an active role in its ongoing transformation. The urban transformation project driven by Saint-Étienne Métropole's that is currently being implemented on this site aims to make the Cité du design France's leading design quarter. From 2026 it will be home to the **Galerie Nationale du Design**. A joint initiative of the EPCC Cité du design-Ésad Saint-Étienne and the Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain de Saint-Étienne Métropole (MAMC+), this brand new cultural venue will put on a major exhibition of works from the great national design collections every year.



Galerie Nationale du Design © Saint-Étienne Métropole, SILT architectes, Piotr Banak



# events...

Ésad Saint-Étienne organises and participates in events for the general public and professionals throughout the year.

→ **Fairs:** SFMA artistic training and careers fair, Paris (Ministry of Culture stand, 4-5 October 2025), *Salon de l'Étudiant* student fairs in Saint-Étienne (22-23 November 2025) and Lyon (9-11 January 2026).

→ **Open days :** Friday 30 January (2 to 6 pm) and Saturday 31 January 2026 (10 am to 6 pm).

→ **Talks** (in the Ésad auditorium): matali crasset (19 November 2025, in partnership with the Le Corbusier-Firminy site), Louna Kyung (27 November 2025, in partnership with Hanasso).

→ **Exhibitions:**

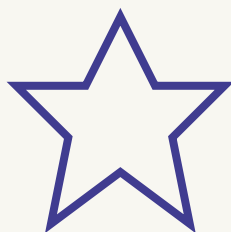
**Bibliothérapies.** 14 artists and designers who are ACDC\_Spaces master's graduates present a piece (24 October 2025 - 27 February 2026, Ésad Saint-Étienne library).

**Presentation of Romane Pinault's final course project** for her 2025 Design-Graphics and Images diploma (7 November 2025 - 1 March 2026 at La Platine-La Bulle),

**2025 Graduates' Exhibition** at La Platine-Cité du design and **Art-XP master's exhibition** at the Salle des Cimaies in Saint-Étienne.

So many opportunities to discover the vitality of a School that is humming with the buzz of creation, where research, invention and openness are cultivating a shared vision of the future.

An art and design school (*École de création*) under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture, Ésad Saint-Étienne is France's leading regional public institution of its type and one of the five best public art and design schools in France.



371 students

60 teachers and teaching assistants

2 research units

5 research laboratories

59 partner schools throughout the world.

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