

Bénédicte Laurent and Martin Gonzalez Godoy win the 2021 FORM Student Innovation Competition

Second year Industrial Design students at Université de Montréal

Bénédicte Laurent and Martin Gonzalez Godoy, second-year students in Université de Montréal's Bachelor of Industrial Design program and 20 and 22 years old respectively, were awarded the top prize in the 2021 FORM Student Innovation Competition.

Toboom, their design, stood out from the nearly 250 entries submitted by students across Canada and the United States, the most entries received since the competition was launched. How do they explain their success? "It's hard to explain. We're having a hard time realizing it's real. We worked very hard on this multifunctional piece of furniture to make it as relevant as possible on the aesthetic, ergonomic and technical viability fronts," said Bénédicte Laurent and Martin Gonzalez Godoy.

Bénédicte Laurent

Originally from France, Bénédicte wanted to study abroad. After visiting many student fairs to meet with international schools and learn more about their design programs, she was seduced by Université de Montréal's Industrial Design program and the renowned hospitality of the institution and Quebec.



Passionate about design, art, architecture, knitting, music, dance, literature and film, Bénédicte was looking for a program that would allow her to design projects in collaboration with engineers and specialists, while drawing on her artistic sense and versatility; industrial design seemed like the perfect fit. "My passion for industrial design stems from my interest in all artistic fields and manual work, as well as from my philanthropic vision; I think that, as a designer, I want to help improve the human condition and drive progress in a way that respects individuals and their environment."

Inspired by nature, her own experience and surroundings, the music she plays or things she has read or heard, Bénédicte plans to complete her bachelor's degree in Industrial Design, before pursuing a master's degree to perfect her skills. Eventually, she wants to open a versatile design office internationally.

Martin Gonzalez Godoy



Born in Bogota, Colombia, Martin studied at a German school with a strong focus on science and languages. As he moved on with his studies, he was looking to combine his scientific and technological side with his artistic side; the versatile field of design was the ideal choice to leverage both these strengths.

Université de Montréal's broad and comprehensive Faculty of Design curriculum and the university's reputation convinced him to pursue his studies there, first in Arts and Science, for one year, and then in his current program, Industrial Design.

His passion for industrial design stems from his great interest in materials and their physicality, computer graphics and graphic design, and his concern for aesthetics and details. Martin is a young man with many interests, including art, design, interior design, graphic design, pottery, fashion, music, video games, nature, ecology, gardening and travel. "My inspirations come mainly from the research I do around the context and the user for whom I am designing a product, but also from my heritage and passions. I also derive inspiration from new technologies and materials that are innovative and environmentally responsible.

After completing his bachelor's degree in Industrial Design at Université de Montréal, Martin wants to pursue a master's degree to specialize in this field before entering the job market to gain hands-on experience in design and eventually open his own design office or studio.

***Toboom*, a multifunctional piece of furniture for the child of tomorrow**

Toboom is a multifunctional piece of furniture designed to provide a child with a space to play, study, store items and relax. The piece was created as part of a university course during a two-month, three-phase process: (1) research and contextualization, (2) brainstorming, and (3) concept development and optimization. *Toboom* was designed with the user's – that is, the child's – needs in mind.



Toboom is derived from the word *toboggan*, which connotes a dynamism reflected in the piece's colours and design

The piece's design flows thanks to dynamic curves, and the absence of angular corners makes it easy to clean and keeps users safe. The curved upper surface has a wave that invites a child to slide down it. The child can climb up on this piece of furniture from the two easy-to-handle modular chairs. In the upright position, the chairs offer a seat with a backrest to maintain good posture. The adjacent table has a writable surface that allows children to unleash their creativity. The piece also has built-in storage compartments for books and toys. In the centre of the structure, two large circular openings create a tunnel play area or a cozy corner to relax.

The Formica laminates used to create the piece add a modern and harmonious touch, and their characteristics contribute to the overall functionality. The Infiniti laminates (Enamel and Solar Orange) are antimicrobial and fingerprint and cleaning product resistant, which makes them ideal for children's furniture. The interactive marker board used is smooth and allows children to slide easily. Finally, Buff Elm woodgrain laminate has a natural touch that complements any decor.

Bénédicte and Martin agree that the FORM Student Innovation Competition was an extremely formative experience. "It allowed us to work with various constraints, push our creativity to the limit and have our work evaluated by experts in the design industry. It also led us to discover and use new materials within the context of their possibilities and constraints.

Bénédicte and Martin were motivated to participate in the competition not only to gain experience but also for the chance of having their design made and exhibited at NeoCon in Chicago. They are eager to participate in this important design event and meet professionals from across the United States and Canada.