

# THE LOCAL PROJECT



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# IDEATIC ENERGY — CHRISTOPHER BOOTS

Words by Millie Thwaites • Photography by Matt McQuiggan and Guy Lavoipierre

Christopher Boots is constantly conceiving and conceptualising and, much like his renowned crystal-adorned lighting, there is a magnetism to the designer. A veritable ideator, he finds inspiration in the most unassuming of places, his next project always tinkering at the edge of his mind. The studio's highly sculptural lighting – which he fittingly refers to as “jewellery on a different scale, in a slightly different context” – is the most central element of his creative output. However, the designer's continual interest in the experiences surrounding his physical creations yields a much deeper and more dynamic offering.

“People can be real catalysts for things to happen, and I think that's crucial,” Christopher states. “Can you be self-driven? Yeah, to a certain extent, but I think engaging with others is where the real magic happens.” The studio's portfolio is reflective of this; spanning 11 years, it includes commissions for Hermès, Cartier, Galleria Rossana Orlandi and Cassina, among others, and its pieces are housed in private collections throughout Australia as well as in New York, Tokyo and Paris. As Christopher says, “a blank sheet commission is amazing – it's a very rare, unicorn space but I love it because you get to see how far people want to go.” He adds, “we also do a lot of customisations of existing work, which is quite exciting because it's amazing to see someone else's interpretation beyond your own expectations.”

There are collections, too, albeit fluid in their conception and creation. As Christopher says, he is “de-coupling from the rush of trying to get things out.” Adding, “I've really let go of that because good things take time. You can't turn the tap on and make four collections each year – it doesn't work like that. You'll end up with product that's indicative of being forced and, for me, that's sub-par.” In creating new work, Christopher is guided heavily by instinct, necessity and personal interests, and he is accepting of the fact that not all ideas will eventuate – a somewhat liberating thought for a designer.

In many ways, the OURANOS collection released during Milan Design Week as part of TROVE 2.0 – an exhibition presented in collaboration with fellow Melbourne-based lighting practice, Lost Profile Studio – typifies this approach. Crafted from brass and quartz crystal, the mesmerising spheres that define the collection represent a clever evolution of the studio's definitive approach to materiality. As Christopher says, “the arc, as it goes with design, suggests that you can't just rely on one thing. Things have to move, change and be adaptable.” It is in this consideration that Christopher balances logic with aesthetic, resulting in pieces that are informed, yet always reflective of the studio's unmistakable oeuvre.

Of his desire to contribute to larger social outcomes and uncover a deeper level of purpose in his work, Christopher believes “it's an obligation – making continuous collections of good stuff is valid for some people, but for me, I'm searching for what else I can do that's outside of product design and how else I can reinterpret that message.” As such, the studio is working on several exciting collaborative projects with leading Australian designers, centred around “reflection, connection and community”. This is an appealing direction and given Christopher's aptitude for forging thought bubbles into existence, it is likely the studio's output will continue to diversify with meaning.

