

# THE LUXURY REPORT

ISSUE 10

## COVETABLE CULTURE

The Assouline family takes us inside the publishing house bound by good taste.

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KAY & BURTON



# CRYSTALLINE VISION

INTERVIEW BY  
Hayley Curnow

← Boots inspects a rose quartz crystal in his Fitzroy studio. Image: Guy Lavoipierre.  
01 Detail in an Hermès window display (2014-15).  
02 Crux Mono pendant lights and Crux sconces (2024). Image: Annika Kafcaloudis.

Melbourne lighting designer Christopher Boots shares how an enduring fascination with materials and storytelling shapes his artisanal creations.

**Your lighting is unified by a strong material language. How do the objects in your Fitzroy studio inspire your work and philosophy?**

Objects tend to physicalise a memory for me. I can tell you a story about almost any object in this building because they are like little mementos. Isn't that what we're doing when we buy a shirt or a pair of shoes? What are those choices telling me about you? Then something more permanent, like a lighting piece, tells a story about our human experience. We have a beautiful collection of ceramics [in the studio], and while we don't produce ceramics here, we study them: 'look at the curve on that, look at the patina on this'. Then we might aim for that feel, that emotion, in our own work. We live in a material world. As much as we try to escape it, we still have to turn on the lights and [need] tables to sit at. So, if we're doing that, why don't we do it in a way that is meaningful?

**Quartz crystal is a hallmark of your work. What sparked your interest in this material?**

As a kid, I'd take walks on the beach with my mum, who passed away a few years ago. We were like bowerbirds picking up shells and bits. One day, when I was seven or eight, I found a quartz crystal encrusted on the beach

and I was so intrigued by it. Being an only child who spent a lot of time in nature, I always observed my surroundings, gathered materials and really examined them. I value that analogue childhood and way of engaging with the world.

**Your latest collection, Crux, was unveiled at Milan Design Week and Melbourne Design Week earlier this year. What makes this series unique for the studio?**

We work with a lot of precious materials, following the philosophy that lighting is like jewellery for the home. That still blows me away, even though I'm surrounded by it. We need to dance to that beat but test different ideas too. Crux explores new forms using textured, mouth-blown glass—a recyclable material that responds to the climate crisis and preserves our artisanal approach.

**Your approach emphasises quality that stands the test of time, much like antiques. How do you blend traditional craftsmanship with new technology?**

I used to say 'our driver is to make things I know are going to be sold at Christie's in 250 years'. The way things used to be made was right; they're repairable and just get better with age. [This notion] resonates with me and guides our approach. We use 3D printing for much







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of our prototyping, which has streamlined that process. What once took months can now take hours. I'm dedicated to passing on my skills to keep them alive for the next generation, and we seem to be on the cusp of an interesting time where technology can solve many things at once. As [philosopher Antonio Gramsci said in the 1930s]: 'the old world is dying, and the new world struggles to be born'.

**How do you embed your design ethos across the wider team for the collaborative process of taking lighting concepts from initial idea to final product?**

You have to get your language right, your visual language. I drive the overarching creative direction for the works, the design team develops that and we check in together to rationalise the decisions and refine each piece. Sometimes I'll set something aside for years, letting it marinate, before I revisit and fully develop the idea. Wings Of Pegasus, for example, was made on a whim for the Hermès window project in 2014 [as part of the longstanding Vitrine d'Artiste program at Hermès in Madison Avenue], and we only released it as a product last year. That's nine years from prototype to product. Creatively, it is a privilege to design without the pressure of releasing collections to a particular schedule. I think the spirit of the work is affected when projects are rushed. Writing is also a fundamental part of my process. People might not pick all of it up, but certain messages might stick if I articulate them.

**Your collections are underpinned by narratives from Greek mythology, science and astrology. What draws you to these themes?**

I've been passionate about these subjects for as long as I can remember. I came across a box of things in storage recently and found a 1970s map of the heavens from a *National Geographic* magazine I'd bought as a child; it's always felt true to me. The Greek mythology piece reflects my Greek heritage. What once seemed daggy in my youth, I now deeply appreciate after delving beyond the surface. Books gifted to me by my mum and grandma in the '80s and '90s fostered those interests and left a lasting impression—they're in the studio library to this day. Ultimately, our work seeks to inspire people's curiosity, and I think it's crucial that our stories are told, passed down and remembered. Perhaps that's the common thread in what we do. We're making pieces for future generations. Geometry never goes out of fashion, that is fact. Playing with these enduring ideas is at the core of our philosophy.

**Is it an affirming reminder that the principles driving your work have been a part of you from an early age?**

It's lucky. My interests have guided a weaving, organic career path. I couldn't tell you exactly how I got here; it's a result of exploring ideas since I was a kid and then actively choosing to study industrial design as a stepping stone to my own practice. I don't think a linear path is reflective of our humanness. I'm constantly learning; linguistics, psychology and literature are ongoing sources of interest to me. Perhaps there are traces of that in the work too.

**What's next for Christopher Boots?**

I can never separate the work we do from where we do it. Community is crucial. We're working on a Fitzroy home salon next, which will be a place to get together and have great conversations.

[christopherboots.com](http://christopherboots.com)

03 Ouranos wall sconce (2022). Image: Matt McQuiggin.  
04 Prometheus I + II pendants (2016).  
05 The Stalactite pendant and Petra III light (2019) commissioned by Cartier for its Sydney store. Image: Nic Gossage.



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