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Tête-à-tête with Studio Tate

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Article by Jan Henderson

Studio Tate is a collaborative interior design practice that is steadily climbing the ladder of success. Led by two talented women, it is a practice that knows what it wants and has a plan to realise every ambition.

These days all good design practices understand that as much as exceptional creativity is paramount to success, so too is the smooth running of the business to keep the artistry on track. There are many examples of practices that incorporate a lead designer together with a business partner, both working in tandem with the other and each bringing their strength to the collective table.

One such example of this is the interior design practice Studio Tate located in Melbourne. Established in 2014, Studio Tate is celebrating five years of producing fine projects that exceed client briefs and push the boundaries of interior design.

From humble beginnings, the practice now has a swag of commissions in its portfolio that encompass a variety of genre from residential, hospitality and workplace projects. Diversity is a key driver to the success of Studio Tate and this multiplicity of project types helps keep its offering fresh and individual. There are two solid foundations that unify Studio Tate.

The creative design process of the practice is led by Alex Hopkins, who studied at Monash University then honed her craft at many of Australia's leading design studios such as Carr, HASSELL, JCB and Elenberg Fraser.



MaxCap Group. Image by Sean Fennessy

The business is run by Carley Nicholls, whose background includes project and business management coupled with strategic management and consulting. As a partnership Hopkins and Nicholls work hand-in-glove, each with their own areas of expertise, but what makes the relationship gel is an integral understanding of the other's responsibilities.

Not so unusual you may say; however, the two women are also related by marriage, with Nicholls mentoring Hopkins through university and her early career, leading to this unique partnership.

It is testament to the relationship between the two women that together they are a powerful and dynamic team propelling Studio Tate to great success. Nicholls admits that the practice is "as much about business as it is design" and to reflect this an advisory board (to the practice) was established from day one of business.

On the creative side of things Hopkins states that Studio Tate is about "creating intelligent interior architecture that inspires", but also about "constructing an environment where young designers can grow".



The Melburnian. Image by Sharyn Cairns

To this end Hopkins mentors young designers through work experience programs and engages with her community providing pro bono expertise for such organisations as the renowned women's clinic, Jean Hailes. Understanding the value of working closely with each other Hopkins and Nicholls embrace collaboration whether that be with clients, architects, contractors or staff.

Professional integrity is intrinsic to their design process and the foundation of the practice is based on respect, care, collaboration and creativity. At any one time there are 30 projects on the books, with a staff of 12 that includes Hopkins and Nicholls. There are a constant stream of commissions and a large majority of repeat clients.

No project is the same and there is no 'template' design - which is as it should be. Each commission is assessed and designed to be site and client specific. Each narrative is unique and Hopkins reveals that it is more about how a project feels, as opposed to how it looks.



PDG Head Office. Image by Peter Clarke

Perhaps the only continuum throughout Studio Tate's designs is a sense of warmth, materiality and detail within each commission, but there is also a certain touch of femininity, not overt, but enough to add a special generosity within a design. Last year Studio Tate moved into new premises in the inner Melbourne suburb of Richmond, and the interior is textbook Studio Tate of course.

There are expansive interiors with room to move, pastel colours to relax and inspire, and a spatial floor plan that promotes an easy flow. In fact this is an interior that not only looks good, but makes you feel good too.

Studio Tate is moving onward and upward as Hopkins and Nicholls carve out their place within the design community. This is an interior design practice that is making a name for itself through creative expertise and strategic planning coupled with a driving passion to succeed. Hopkins and Nicholls are without a doubt a dynamic duo and Studio Tate is indeed a force within the world of Australian design.

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Events Calendar

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Jul	18	AUSTRALIAN INTERNATIONAL
Aug	18	SÃO PAULO DESIGN WEEKEND

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