



Interview with Sarah Cosentino and Felicity Slattery

PHOTOGRAPHY Tom Blachford

- Sean Fennessy
- Tatjana Plitt
- Sharyn Cairns

DESIGNERS, INTERVIEWS

We chat with Studio Esteta's co-directors Sarah Cosentino and Felicity Slattery about appreciating beauty in all forms and their broader mission to promote the value of quality design.

Melbourne-based architecture and interior design firm Studio Esteta take their name from the Italian translation of 'Aesthete'; a person who is appreciative of and sensitive to beauty. Studio Esteta co-directors Sarah Cosentino and Felicity Slattery have stayed true to this idea since the firm's inception, along with design's ability to transform people and their experience within a space.

Sarah and Felicity's shared design values and friendship forged during their time at Clare Cousins Architects led them to opening their own studio in 2015. In the years since, their collection of work has fast attracted recognition which includes their well deserved award of *Emerging Interior Design Stars* at 2018 Belle Coco Republic Interior Design Awards and wider industry appreciation with a multitude of AIDA and INDE Awards nominations.



PREVIOUS ↑

NEXT FEATURE ↓



Sarah Cosentino and Felicity Slattery

Studio Esteta's name first crossed our desks through their sensitive restoration projects, crafted by an attention to each and every subtle detail. Be it their relaxed Portsea beach house or a top-to-toe restoration of a Merricks guesthouse, they know how to realise a home's potential to create a tailored haven within. Not only have their residential design projects turned heads, but their retail and hospitality work including the polished Sensory Lab and Sydney's first Mexican eatery Fonda located in Bondi.

We caught up with Sarah and Felicity to discuss balancing the demands of their business, foregoing trends and the best career advice they've been given. We also took the opportunity to see what's on the horizon for this successful studio.



Brunswick House by Studio Esteta



Brunswick House by Studio Esteta

Could you please share your design background and why you decided to start your studio together?

Sarah Cosentino: As individual designers, we both aspired to one-day start our own studio. We've both always had a strong and broad passion for architecture and design and hoped to put our names to the hard work and dedication we've had for our profession.

Prior to forming Studio Esteta, I completed an Honours degree of a Bachelor of Interior Architecture at Monash University. I worked for larger architecture firms that offered exposure to varied scales and sectors including hospitality, commercial and some residential design. I always hoped to work for a smaller studio with a predominant focus on

Felicity Slattery: I completed a Master's Degree of Architecture at Sydney University. I worked for a couple of small, predominantly residential-focused studios in Sydney before moving to Melbourne where I also started working for Clare Cousins Architects. While working for Clare Cousins Architects I completed my architectural registration. Our studio is now registered to practice in both Victoria and NSW.

Sarah and I formed a strong friendship and working relationship while at Clare Cousins Architects. With many shared values, both on a personal and professional level, and a design aesthetic that aligned, our skillsets were and remain complimentary.

residential design and this became reality when I commenced working for Clare Cousins Architects, which is where I met Felicity.

It was at a later stage in our careers, that our paths crossed and the opportunity arose for us to join forces to establish Studio Esteta in 2015. Forming a partnership and building a small practice has had its challenges, but being on this journey together has made it feel anything but daunting. Furthermore, being women who aspire to juggle both our professions and a young family, forming a partnership made sense to us.

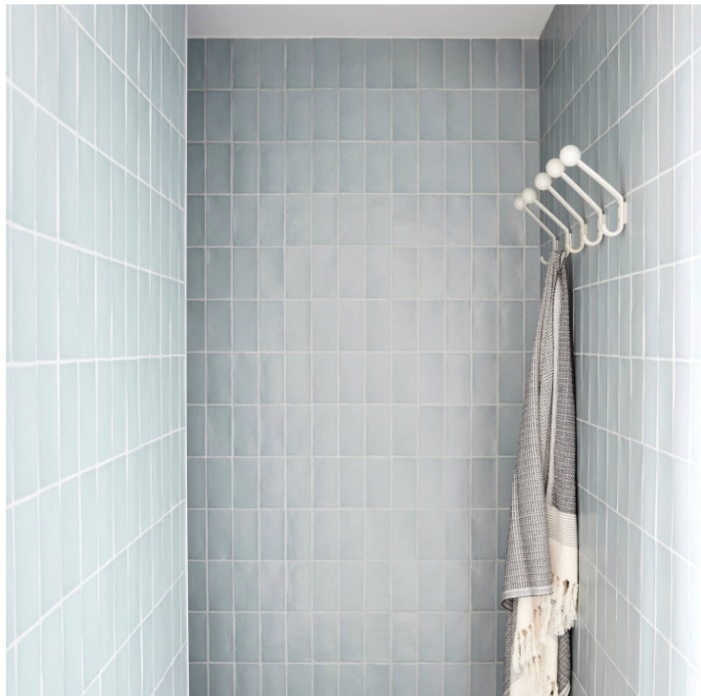
MAXALTO
-
CARATOS CHAIR

SPACE



Portsea House by Studio Esteta

The name 'Esteta' is derived from the Italian translation of the word Aesthete – a person who is appreciative of and sensitive to beauty.





Portsea House by Studio Esteta

What is the meaning behind the name 'Studio Esteta'?

The name 'Esteta' is derived from the Italian translation of the word Aesthete – a person who is appreciative of and sensitive to beauty.

We believe there is beauty in the detail and strive to always interpret spaces, materials and project briefs with a worldly outlook, foregoing trends in favour of a more considered, directional and entirely tailored approach.

We believe in the many facets of beauty – often raw and unpredictable. These can be found in the subtle, bespoke details that elevate a design, set it apart and work in harmony to evoke a sense of surprise and delight. This idea, along with the ephemeral and physical qualities and context of a site informs our design approach.

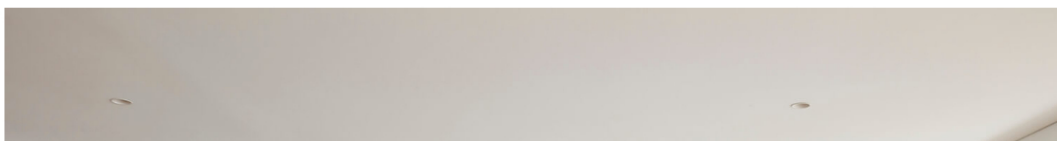
We love what we do and believe in the power of good design to transform people and their experience within spaces. We're dedicated to pushing our profession forward, making good design accessible and communicating the importance of design in a wider social context.



Portsea House by Studio Esteta



Portsea House by Studio Esteta





Portsea House by Studio Esteta

Could you please tell us a bit about your team?

We are currently a small team of architects and interior designers. When we expand further, we envisage growing our team to be an equal balance of both architects and designers. Being a small practice, the fluidity between the creative disciplines is of high significance to us. We encourage a collaborative approach across all stages of our projects to foster broader learning.

All of our work, including the administrative and marketing side of the business is managed in house, which keeps our weeks extremely busy, but constantly varied, exciting and inspiring. As Directors in a partnership, we have equally delegated the administrative and marketing tasks that are critical for a small business, including business development, forecasting, resourcing and marketing. This assists us to both equally be across and prioritise the creative and administrative side of our projects.



What do you find most rewarding and the most challenging aspects of designing in Melbourne?

Melbourne is such a creative city across all disciplines; architecture, design, visual and performing arts, so we're fortunate to have so much creativity accessible to us and present on a day-to-day basis.

We're privileged to have lots of talented peers who inspire us in Melbourne (and Australia) and a close-knit local design community, which for us has felt supportive as opposed to competitive. The work that is being produced in Melbourne and Australia is now recognised at a global scale, which is a testament to the hard work and collective desire to continue to push the value of good design forward.



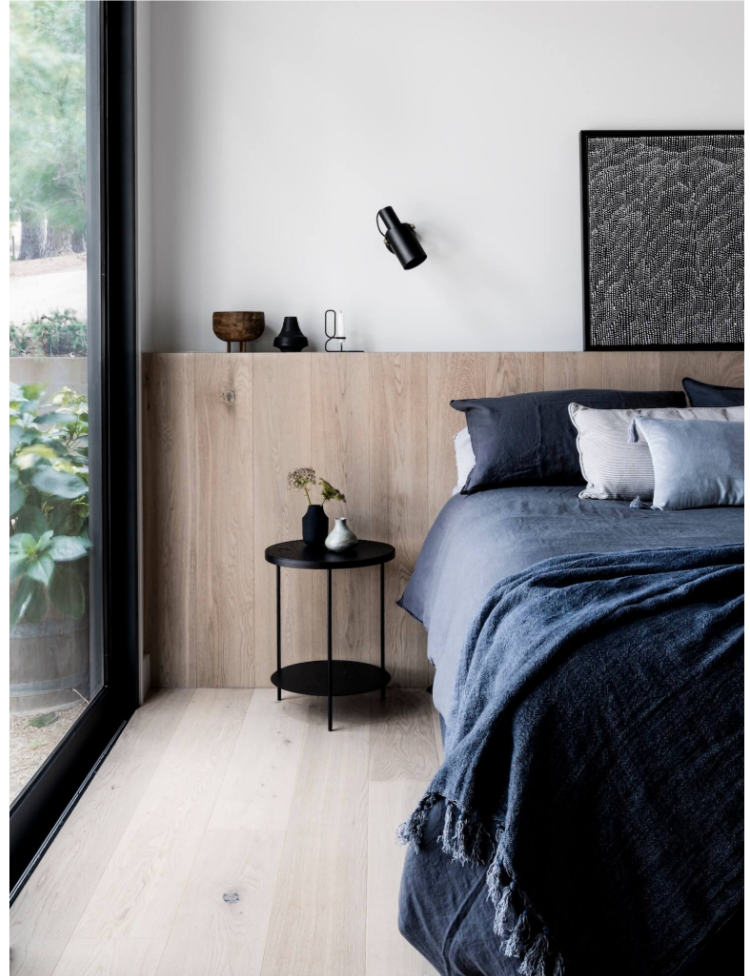
Merrick's Guesthouse by Studio Esteta



Merrick's Guesthouse by Studio Esteta



Merrick's Guesthouse by Studio Esteta



Merrick's Guesthouse by Studio Esteta

How do you find working on residential projects compared with hospitality and commercial projects?

We find residential projects tend to be more personable and often move at a steadier pace compared with hospitality and commercial projects that can be fast paced due to business objectives and commercial lease terms.

We also find the regulatory conditions of our residential projects can provide for interesting challenges that encourage us to push boundaries with clever solutions. We are however, equally passionate about hospitality, retail and workplace sectors and do enjoy the contrasting pace and opportunity to delve into the unique identity of the brands and businesses we work alongside.

We strive for an equal balance of both residential and commercial projects at any one time as we find the broad mix keeps our days varied, exciting and the office ticking over.

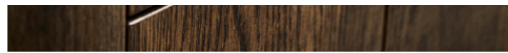


Sensory Lab by Studio Esteta





Sensory Lab by Studio Esteta



Sensory Lab by Studio Esteta

How do you stay inspired to create original design?

Exposure to a variety of creative disciplines – architecture, art and design in all its forms – keeps us inspired. To be in new surrounds, unfamiliar territory and immersed in a different culture is always inspiring and often when all the senses are heightened; you can be in the moment. It is from these exciting observations that our design ideas often come to light.

When travel isn't an option, blogs and magazines both local and international, bring so much talent and unique design to our fingertips, which constantly keeps us inspired and up-to-date.

Industry events, whether it a lecture, a showroom party or awards night provides the opportunity to get out of the office and be inspired and educated amongst other creatives. Our peers, clients and collaborators undeniably drive our creativity and together we seek to push the boundaries and strive for unique design solutions. We also find working on a variety of sectors and scales with interesting clients keeps us on our toes, fully engaged and inspired.



Axton Finance by Studio Esteta



Axton Finance by Studio Esteta

What is your favourite material and why?

It's hard to pin-point one material; we have a lot of favourites and love materials that are evocative, sensory and textured.

We believe in honesty, transparency and unpretentiousness as key components of our methodology and look to these attributes to guide our vision and approach to materiality. Finishes can evoke many different feelings and emotions and give a space its identity. Their tactile quality helps to create a multi-sensory experience of space. Through honest materiality, a layering of ideas and a considered approach we seek to tell stories through our designs.

What's the best advice you've been given as a designer?

A combination of advice that we've been given and that we also give: work hard, persevere, be patient, be passionate and most importantly believe in yourself. Trust your instinct, if something doesn't sound right or sit well- it's probably not right. Don't undersell yourself and your services.

Try to take away the positive from every project and employment opportunity. There may be times when projects and jobs aren't as exciting or glamorous as hoped for, but regardless, it's all learning. Be a sponge and soak it all up.





Fonda Sydney



Fonda Sydney

How many projects are you working on currently and what do we have to look forward to?

We currently have 20 active projects in the office, a combination of both residential and hospitality of varied scales and at different stages of the design process.

We are working on several architectural residential projects in both Melbourne and Sydney, some that have been with us since we started, so to see these completed will be a great achievement. One of our hospitality projects 'Via Porta', an Eatery & Deli in Mont Albert, is very close to completion and has been in our office for two years. We've also been busy working on the renovation and rejuvenation of the heritage-listed Eastern Beach House Pavilion in Geelong for our clients, The Mulberry Group.

Moving forward our vision is to be recognised and respected as leaders in Australian architecture and design for our honest, personal and ambitious approach to our clients, our team and the social and environmental context in which we operate.

Design Insider's guide:

Favourite local designers or studios?

Studio McQualter.

Favourite design stores?

For fashion our favourite design stores are Celine, Scanlan & Theodore, A.P.C and ACNE. For local art and design we look to Modern Times, Angelucci, Jordan and Hub Furniture to name a few.

Favourite galleries and spaces?

NGV Melbourne, The Tate, Heidi Museum of Modern Art, MOMA, MONA and The MET Breuer.

Where do you go to look at great design?

London, New York, Palm Springs, Ireland.





Caper Tree Valley Cottage by Studio Esteta



Caper Tree Valley Cottage by Studio Esteta



Caper Tree Valley Cottage by Studio Esteta

MAXALTO
-
CARATOS CHAIR
SPACE





Caper Tree Valley Cottage by Studio Esteta

AUTHOR Sophie Lewis

TAGS advice, Australian Designers, design talk, Designer, Felicity Slattery, Interior Design, Interior Designers, interiors, Interviews, people, Sarah Cosentino

LEAVE A REPLY

Logged in as Sophie Lewis. Log out?

POST COMMENT

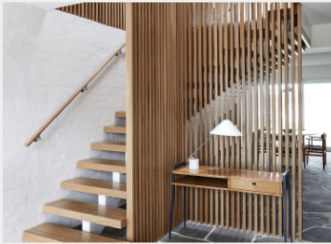
Notify me of follow-up comments by email.

Notify me of new posts by email.

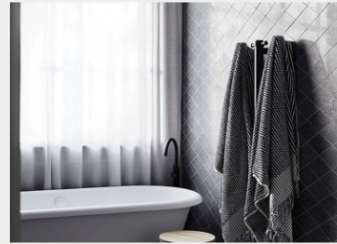
you may also like



Merricks Guest House By Studio Esteta



Portsea Beach House By Studio Esteta



Getting To Know Loom Towels
Founder Mikala James

best of est



Join 50,000 subscribers to receive unforgettable spaces & inspired design delivered weekly.

SEARCH SITE



YOUR EMAIL



Copenhagen: Axel Arigato Store Opening

BY SUPERFUTURE

The Hair Accessory Trends You Need To Try

BY INSPIRED BY THIS

When Sunglasses Speak Louder Than Words

BY MAN REPELLER

powered by PubExchange



Join 50,000 subscribers to receive unforgettable spaces & inspired design delivered weekly.

SEARCH SITE



YOUR EMAIL



INTERIORS

All Interiors
Australian Interiors
Global Interiors
Open House
Travel
Best of est

DESIGNERS

All Designers
Recommended Australian Designers
Recommended International Designers
Interviews

STYLE

All Style
Brands To Know
Art
The Est Edit
Design Covet
Real or Replica

PRODUCTS

Product Library
Accessories
Appliances
Art
Fixtures & Fittings
Flooring

TRAVEL

All Travel

ABOUT

About est
Magazine Archive
Advertise
Contribute
Privacy Policy
FAQ