

Navigating the creative gear shift at Nexus Designs

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by [Heidi Dokulil](#)



The True Blue Terrace designed in collaboration with architect Pleysier Perkins involved meticulously resolved interiors that were strong in colour and pattern and made the most out of every space. Photography © James Geer.



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Nexus is an Australian design firm with provenance. Founded in 1967 by the late Janne Faulkner AM, Nexus Designs launched into interior design first before diversifying, with graphic design and product development natural additions to the firm's design offering.

Like the Italian studio model that fosters local invention across a diversity of design disciplines, from the start Nexus has supported Australian furniture makers and designers, collaborated with local contemporary artists, and developed a design language that is confidently Australian. Today, interior, product and graphic designers all weave between projects, working with clients in Australia and overseas on everything from developing a corporate identity with Rolls-Royce in the UK, collaborating with Bluescope Steel on their colour palette collection, and designing the interior of the Bluff House on the Mornington Peninsula in Victoria.

more space recently caught up with Nexus Associate and Senior Interior Designer Lucy Marczyk, to talk about curiosity, design collaboration and diversity, and the creative gear shift required to work in a dynamic design studio.

more space: Lucy, tell me a little about yourself. What path did you take to get to where you are today?

Lucy Marczyk: I have always been creative. When I was younger I was involved in performing arts for about a decade, then woodwork classes in senior school took me into furniture design and then interior design. While I was studying at RMIT I met a diamond dealer who asked me to design his jewellery store in the Royal Arcade in Melbourne. I think that job cemented my idea for pursuing interior design. He had conservative clientele and was worried about modern design, but I managed to convince him to completely change his look and operation. I brought in friends to design custom light fittings and I detailed a magnetically fitted hidden security system within the joinery which was a first of its kind. The project was a huge success resulting in a new demographic. I think it was an important project for me because I enjoyed how I could influence a business through design and that made me really excited about interiors.



What does a day in your life at Nexus Designs look like and how do you balance the breadth of projects?

The balance is tricky when you have project diversity. The contrast of work could include working on big picture concepts for a multi-residential project and working with a craftsperson to design a one-off bespoke door handle. So there can be a dramatic gear shift during the day. I also work on various projects within Australia and overseas.

What do you enjoy about that creative gear shift?

I enjoy being fast-paced and also detail focused. I think it is important as a designer to know where and when to focus on details. Understanding the balance of things is intuitive. Sometimes a project requires a big picture design approach due



The Bluff House on the Mornington Peninsula in Victoria has views to the vineyards and the ocean and required an interior that responded to those views without detracting from them. Photography © Mark Roper.



The Bluff House project was a collaboration between Inarc who designed the building, and Nexus Designs who was commissioned to design the interiors. Photography © Mark Roper.

to budget, other times you need something incredibly detailed because you interact with it closely through touch and feel.

Working across retail, workplace design and residential, what shifts do you read between them?

They each hone in on three very different emotions which is what I enjoy. I like the investigation and briefing shifts and the diversity of client agendas. I think with diversity there is always a new challenge: who is the client, what do they want to achieve, what is the goal and, above all, understanding the client's values.

Now everyone wants their office to be homely and they want their home to be more like a hotel. Workplace clients also want to offer more flexibility to their staff. People are more agile than ever before because of the shifts and advancements in technology. Cafés are now places where people work which feeds into the flexible lifestyle that employers like to offer, so there is no longer a typical workplace brief.

Residential design is also interesting as it can be extremely personal and intense. I enjoy exploring behaviours in detail and that research feeds into our workplace design. In order to make the office more homely, we look at the key behaviours in the home. So they play off one another and that is the beauty of working across different areas.

Can you describe your design philosophy and your work process, what are some of the fundamental rules that shape the way you do things?

Getting to know a client and understanding their values is fundamental. We respond to the brief and design an outcome that is personalised. If it is a home, how do they like to enjoy their family time together, and if it's a workplace, what kind of experience does the client want for their employees. For retail it is more about brand values.

For me personally, environmental and design ethics are very important. I am always conscious about how we can be more sustainable. I look for products that have recyclable values, companies that ethically and sustainably source their materials, or look to use traditional craftspeople to make things and, by doing that, keep those skills alive. If you are buying good quality design it is made to last and there is value in that as well. For the Sorrento Ferry project we looked at chairs that had a large component of recycled materials and we built that into the narrative for the fitout.



The brief for the Bluff House interiors included curating the client's art collection, furniture and objects, resulting in a detailed exploration of how the client's live and use the house. Photography © Mark Roper.



Who are the people who have had the most impact on you and your work, and how have they helped you develop as a designer?

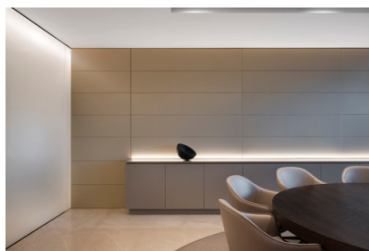
My friend Georgia Beattie had a big influence on me early in my career. She went to Babson College, a prestigious entrepreneur college in the US, and her entrepreneurial thinking rubbed off on me. Her ambition and drive is inspiring and she has introduced me to a fascinating network of friends. The late Janne Faulkner AM, founder of Nexus Designs was a great mentor and she had a business spirit along with an incredible knowledge of design and the arts.

"The Bluff House is a beautiful home on the Mornington Peninsula designed by Inarc. It has a double façade with views over the ocean and the vineyards and we were engaged to design an interior that softened the architecture but didn't distract from those views."

— Lucy Marczyk, Senior Interior Designer, Nexus Designs



Instead of physical decoration to create zones within the Zagame Rolls-Royce Motor Car showroom in Melbourne, Nexus Designs used a balance of artificial and natural light to define each space. Photography © Nicole England.



What skills have you developed that you are most proud of?

I am told I am good at building relationships and trust with clients. I think it's natural to build a bond when you work closely with a client and I genuinely enjoy doing so.

Creatives are intrinsically curious, what are you most curious about right now?

I am interested and curious about everything. My circle of friends varies, from musicians, engineers and artists to financiers, they are all fuel for inspiration and feed back into my work.

I have just finished working on the Rolls-Royce car showroom in Melbourne and it wasn't the high-profile label that interested me. It was the chance to work with an historic brand trying to appeal to a younger audience, collaborating with an international team, and getting involved in unique and changing ideas.

Right now I am curious about a commercial project we have in Bangkok which is challenging due to distance, climate and culture. Cultures always interest me and the differences are fascinating to work through.

Tell me about some of your favourite projects that express your design philosophy.

The Bluff House is a beautiful home on the Mornington Peninsula designed by Inarc. It has a double façade with views over the ocean and the vineyards and we were engaged to design an interior that softened the architecture but didn't distract from those views. The brief included curating the client's art collection, furniture and objects. It was a detailed exploration of how the client's live and use the house.



Another of my favourite projects is the Zagame Automotive Group Headquarters in Melbourne. We used lighting scenes, including artificial and natural light instead of physical decoration, to create zones within the space. The lighting engineers and builders were crucial to the project's success. Keeping design simple is not necessarily simple at all, so collaborating with the best consultants is essential.

"Boat builders are top craftspeople who understand building materials and pay attention to detail. When you work with great builders it opens up design possibilities."

— Lucy Marczyk, Senior Interior Designer, Nexus Designs

Tell me a little about some of the collaborators who have really helped you realise an idea.

Boat builders are top craftspeople who understand building materials and pay attention to detail. When you work with great builders it

Good cameras are top transparent and understand building materials and pay attention to detail. When you work with great cameras it opens up design possibilities. For The Robert Bruce project we wanted to design a drinks caddy for the dining table but it had to have a certain weight to it so that it didn't slip or move. It also had to be strong enough to hold a wine bottle and to withstand the high seas. Without a boat builder's understanding and expertise, I would never go down that path of attempting to design such a thing. The input of collaborators is crucial to the success of everything we do.

What is one thing that you haven't designed but would love to?

An aeroplane interior. It would be super complex. I have already started designing it in my mind, thinking about how I could enhance air travel as an experience again. It has become so utilitarian, just like catching a bus. People once dressed up to travel on a plane.

Thank you Lucy.

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THE CASSINA PERSPECTIVE GOES OUTDOORS

"The Cassina Perspective Goes Outdoors" is the brand's first collection designed for the open air. It was recently launched at Paris Design Week with pieces by Patricia Urquiola, Philippe Starck and Rodolfo Dordoni, along with a selection of novelties that pay homage to design greats Pierre Jeanneret, Le Corbusier and Charlotte Perriand.

Feb 5, 2020



'OH, IT RAINS!', THE LATEST WET-WEATHER COLLECTION FROM B&B ITALIA

B&B Italia has launched a collection of outdoor pieces that blur the line between inside and out, with new developments in water-proof textiles and a sofa by Antonio Citterio that has endless seating combinations.

Feb 3, 2020



MOOOI, BMW AND THE DESIGN OF ICONIC EYES

At Creative Business Week in Munich, Germany, Moooi launched Iconic Eyes their first collaboration with BMW and designer Bernhard Dessecker. Unveiled at the Bavarian National Museum, 11 of the lightning pieces have now joined the museum's permanent collection.

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