

A PROPENSITY FOR DESIGN — SIMONE HAAG

Words by Tiffany Jade • Photography by Fi Storey and Derek Swalwell

Design is a discipline that requires the dedicated discovery, cataloguing and banking of findings, synthesising these to produce spaces and objects of acclaim through the process of giving. For Simone Haag, it is this process that lies at the heart of all work and the basis on which she has forged an interior decorating mecca that radiates with her own lived experiences, lending resonance to the environments she realises.





Simone's talent lies in designing a space that perfectly fulfils the schematic, aesthetic, functional and narrative qualities of a project.

Working to the brief, Simone aims to create a comfortable and inviting place for the homeowners to lean into.

Simone came to the vocation of interior decorating through a natural domino effect – an alchemy of opportunism and the pursuit of joie de vivre that inspired an intrepid early adulthood distinguished by the kinship between people and design. A natural affinity for leaning into jobs that leveraged her innate skills combined with an intrinsic knack for navigating the complexities of people's whims informed an early career path of globetrotting, hedonistic, 'can't-make-this-stuff-up' roles that are only ever the result of faithful free-falls. Later, an administrative role in a prominent Australian design studio coaxed her affinity for unveiling objects that perfectly mediated the schematic, aesthetic, functional and narrative qualities of a built project, setting a trajectory that eventually realised her namesake studio in 2014.

Depositing impressions and drawing deeply from the well of collected knowledge, Simone has been able to steer client desires and expectations,

enriching and reconciling them with pragmatic reality to cultivate interiors filled with sensorial ambience. Often working in close collaboration with architects, the studio differentiates between those projects where "there is a band of comfort around [the architect] and their aesthetic" as opposed to those that are "ready for the lines to blur and are inviting of that," she explains. This dynamism between the two interconnected disciplines is what garners layered spaces mindful of the complexities of the patterns of living that take place within them while also inspiring beauty. "My hope is that our spaces create a sense of place for the homeowners and that they lean into the spaces we create for them," she affirms.

From her Melbourne-based atelier, Simone heads a small team of independent yet like-minded women who each contribute a different perspective to a lexicon of residential projects. Navigating the shared thresholds between furniture, art and object curation – with furniture the corner-

stone on which the studio finds its focus – Simone employs a process that is part intuition and part long-established skill to unveil the minutiae and essentials of each project that unify style, liveability and relevance. "We look at budget, internal relationships, whether or not ideas align with other people who will share the space, who the key decision maker is, what their clothes are like, what the existing architecture is like, where they get those quirky glasses!" she says.

Circling back to the early sparks that drew her to the design industry, the deep satisfaction in finding those elusive pieces that harness a capacity to quietly pull an entire space together while revealing its story, Simone is soon to host a design tour of Los Angeles. In its second iteration, the October trip is part treasure hunt, part tour – a loosely scheduled week-long immersion in the cultural milieu of the iconic city and a chance for Simone to forage, filling a mental and physical depository on which to

draw on for the giving element that fills the receptacle of the studio's client briefs. For Simone, the trip is "a very personal experience, a curation of my favourite shopping, art and design hotspots peppered with some inspirational surprises."

In an industry that thrives on exclusivity, Simone's knowledge cache and rich life experiences, with their genesis free of any preconceived connections to her professional identity today, have come to forge an enduring and covetable design language. Her studio encapsulates Antipodean aesthetics, favouring careful curation over rigid linear commitments to periods of time or trend to instead listen, engage and propose creative outcomes that highlight the filaments stretching between the fundamental principles of art and design and the resonant joy of storytelling.