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Issue #55

THE FACES OF DESIGN

NAMES TO WATCH IN 2025

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Architects + Interiors Designers

2025

10

The esteemed 10 recognises influential voices in the architecture and design community in 2025. Criterion is based on approach, notable achievements and completed and anticipated projects.

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Studio Bright

Founder Mel Bright

Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Country/Melbourne, Australia

"Generous, Delightful, Rigorous"

My design work is best summed up in the phrase:

Responsive architecture for people and places.

What aspect of your work are people most curious about?

How do we design? What is our process? Sometimes, people think design is a light bulb moment, but for us, it takes many hands, tests and iterations to get the right thing. There are always so many ideas that go in the bin on the way to the right answer.

I'm also often asked about our studio culture—the place we have created for our team. We have daily shared lunches and personal training sessions twice a week. I hope the studio is a place that nurtures and cares for our team.

What has recently challenged the way you think about design?

Moving into projects of different scales, particularly doing more social housing, has shifted how we think about design. Often, design is excessive in ego and resources, so we've been excited to challenge ourselves to use restraint and focus design in places where it makes a difference. It's about finding the right balance, doing more with less, and seeing value in what already exists or might often be overlooked.

What person, building, product or art piece has had a lasting impact on your work?

It's difficult to reduce it to just one thing. Each project is a combination of so many influences. For me, design is never singular; it's layered and multifaceted. Rather than any one thing in isolation, it's a mash-up of art, context, practicalities, and human comfort, among many other things, synthesised to make a more holistic and unique design outcome.

The three words I would most like people to attribute to my work are:

Generous, delightful, rigorous.

What is the one piece of advice you would share with an emerging designer?

Be patient; architecture takes time. Every good project is the stepping stone to the next great commission. Be generous and share what you learn.

Where do you go to appreciate exceptional design?

Travelling anywhere is inspiring to me. A recent trip to India was hugely inspiring. I went with a group of incredible Australian architects, and we saw favourite buildings by Louis Kahn, Le Corbusier, and Doshi. It was a really special trip that will stay with me for a long time.

Something you want to see more of in 2025? And less of?

More restraint, less excess. I'd love to see fewer planning setbacks.

