

AT HOME

ADAM LYNCH IS MAKING HIS MARK ON THE
WORLD, WRITES **ANNA KOSMANOVSKI**

INDUSTRY

Like many creative souls who spot their calling at a young age, industrial designer Adam Lynch was no exception. “I always made stuff,” says the former Oberon High student who divides his time between working in Geelong and Melbourne. “I was kinda a real tinkerer and made things when I was at home, and that’s what I did for fun.”

Home spread to high school as the budding designer picked subjects including design and technology, studio arts and “a lot more of the creative subjects” in high school. His creative output was getting bigger and bigger – literally – as he began experimenting with making furniture. “My house is just full of everything,” he says with a grin. “Everything. Tables, chairs, stools.”

But it's not just his home that's full of his work, as the work of Lab de Stu – a design collective where Lynch works – regularly appears in magazines such as *Vogue Living* and *Belle* magazine as well as local spaces such as Ducks Nest, Boom Gallery and Livingetc.

And although when year 12 rolled around the Highton designer admits to having “no real aspirations to go to uni or do further study”, he ended up at RMIT.

An acceptance into a furniture design degree soon took away any time for hesitancy and Lynch found himself planted at RMIT for the next few years, studying furniture design, industrial design and even an honours year at the end.

It was here that Lynch would meet fellow design

Award-winner:
Lab de Stu's Mr Dowel
Jones lamp.

(GEORGIA CHARLOTTE BLOXHAM HITCHISON & CRICKET STUDIO)



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students Dale Hardiman and Andre Hnatöjko. What followed from here was more than just like-minded students getting together for a drink after class; this was the beginnings of their business.

And so Lab de Stu, a design collective featuring the trio, was launched: a platform for the entrepreneurial designers to collaborate, create and showcase their work.

“We just kinda set that up as a mode to expose ourselves to a greater audience,” says Lynch.

“I can show my work to 300 people but if three of us show our work to 300 people we get 900 people.”

The hard-working students soon found success in their new business, even while still studying.

It wasn't long before the awards they were winning turned beyond the student category and into the commercial awards, judged against industry peers in some cases.

In 2013, Lab de Stu took out the green section of the Vivid prize for their Mr Dowel Jones lamp, a collaboration between Lynch and Hardiman.

Made from rubber and Tasmanian oak, this flat-pack product impressed the judges with its flexible dimensions and sustainable approach.

Around this time, design opportunities began to take them to major cities including London, New York and San Francisco, with Lab de Stu products twice on display in furniture fairs in Milan, where their swing stool was also heralded as one of the best seats from Milan Design Week last year.

He is not even at the quarter-century mark and he's done the Milan circuit, has exhibited at the National Gallery of Victoria and even sold the rights to one of his products to a major company.

So what's his secret? “I'm a doer,” he says simply, sipping his cappuccino. “I'm very proactive in my thinking, and maybe I think differently a little bit.”

His positivity is mixed with fearlessness, a propelling combination.

“As far as I'm concerned, if I'm going to be successful

ADAM LYNCH & DALE HARDIMAN



I'm probably also going to go broke three times before that happens,” he says. “So if I just do everything I want to do and that happens, hopefully that happens when I'm 25 rather than 40 with a family.”

Passionate about the region's rich resources in the way of manufacturing, Lynch splits his time between a studio in Melbourne and working in Geelong.

“There are so many manufacturers here that are just the perfect size to be able to do stuff with you, and want to deal with someone who's young and has different ideas.”

He's also excited to work on Newtown's Rutland

Street, also home to one of his favourite local places, Boom Gallery, where he's found a lot of support.

This is something he well understands, having been encouraged by industry peers such as Simone LeAmon, Ash Allen and Scott Lewis.

Take note, aspiring designers: don't underestimate the power of meeting other designers.

As Lynch says: “It's probably more important than the actual product itself, you know.”

What's also of high importance is a pragmatic approach – and this comes through in his designs. “I design really functional products that are often quite utilitarian in design. Like, it's just a chair that's a chair.”

“I guess by doing what I do and making everything so minimal, I think there's more chance that my stuff will have more longevity in it.”

He's also a self-proclaimed minimalist (one, two

“I'M PROACTIVE IN MY THINKING, AND MAYBE I THINK DIFFERENTLY”

at most) when it comes to mixing materials. Instead, he's drawn to the idea that “the same product can be a multitude of colours in different times”.

“I think you can create beautiful products without having too much in them,” he says.

“I just try to strip it all back to what it needs to be rather than what I need to add to it to make it a little nicer.” ●

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