

# CHRISTOPHER POLLY

SYDNEY BASED ARCHITECT CHRISTOPHER POLLY INSTINCTIVELY BRINGS ESTABLISHED RESIDENCES INTO THE MODERN WORLD.

The various projects of Sydney-based architect Christopher Polly have a distinctly common thread. At first it is hard to identify the similarities between them, for there is a broad mix of commercial and residential work in Polly's portfolio, in a range that extends from classic Edwardian styles to razor-sharp modernity. Yet on closer inspection, one thing becomes singularly obvious: Polly's work successfully and seamlessly combines elements of new design and structure with existing forms, surroundings and ideas. In this way, Polly distinguishes himself from many in his field, honing the ability to create spaces that respond to their surrounding environment and create a continuous dialogue.

Polly has always had an innate interest in architecture and design, "I was always good at free-hand drawing," he explains, "and that was the main element in my decision to switch to architectural study." It appears to have been a wise move. Upon graduation, Polly was awarded the AIA Chapter Prize and the Frank Fox Memorial Prize for a thesis written on the urban design of Battery Park in New York City, which highlighted the young architect's immense knowledge and sensibility. Such credit earned him employment at the highly acclaimed Tanner Architects under the direction of Howard Tanner and later with Ed Lippmann and then Tzannes Associates, where he stayed for over six years. No mean feat for someone who was set to become a veterinarian after high school.

Polly has been short listed for several Interior Design Awards, Dulux Colour Awards, Australian Timber Design Awards, and, most importantly, selected by the Australian Institute of Architects for the Emerging Young Architects' Houses Tour in 2005, which significantly raised his profile in the industry. The award came at the same time that Polly moved from Tzannes to begin his own practice, "Having my own practice allows me more freedom; in an established practice, the design philosophy is so closely guarded by its directors, and so there isn't much scope to develop design styles of your own." Polly's style resembles a captured bird ready to take flight. "Initially my inspiration comes from the client's comments," explains Polly about his work, "but as well as this, the built and environmental surroundings of the site are as important, and in my mind I get flashes of what the final project might appear like or respond to." In this way, the client might direct specifics like height or boundaries, and Polly is able to envisage in his mind how this could look and then put it to paper. "I guess I am influenced by other architects and designers," noting 50s modernist American architects Richard Neutra, as well as John Lautner and Rudolph Schindler who all use timber in lots of creative ways, which is "definitely what attracts me to their work."

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