

MY ICON

SAM McNALLY, ECHLIN, REVEALS THE STUDIO'S ICONS

Co-Founded by Mark O'Callaghan and Sam McNally, Echlin is a visionary collective, encompassing forward-thinking architecture, interior design, marketing and branding. This is all combined with development management, financial and strategic expertise to design and develop lifestyle homes.

WHO IS YOUR DESIGN ICON?

As Echlin is a multi-disciplinary studio, we approach everything as a collective. We sat down to discuss our design icons, agreeing on Louis Kahn, Gio Ponti and Dieter Rams.

WHAT ARE THESE DESIGNERS MOST FAMOUS FOR?

These guys are all at the forefront of our minds when it comes to thinking about timeless design, be it architecture, interiors or furniture. Kahn sought a historically rooted approach to modern architecture. His 60's built Salk Institute is arguably one of the world's most distinctive structures, yet it remains simple and functional with Roman inspired construction methodology. Ponti was famed for being at the centre of Italy's cultural renaissance of the 1950's making Milan the World's design capital, designing iconic pieces from furniture to silverware. Dieter Rams was Braun's design stalwart, responsible for much of the 20th century's most iconic product design. He coined the phrase "Weniger, aber besser" which translates as "Less, but better".

HOW WAS THEIR WORK RECEIVED DURING THE HEIGHT OF THEIR CAREER?

Ponti and Rams were very much influencing many of the other design greats during their careers, whilst Kahn was almost 50 years old before setting up his own practice leading a particularly difficult life. It was only after his death that he has been widely recognised as one of the 20th century's greatest architects.

WHY HAVE YOU CHOSEN THESE DESIGNERS AS YOUR 'ICONS'?

Whilst these designers created products and buildings that are undeniable classics, we chose them also because of how they approached their work. When 'ornament was crime' and the modernists were stripping back their designs, Ponti went against the grain and championed decoration. Kahn's ability to tear up the rule book and find new ways of solving old problems is something that we always have in our minds, we're never scared to go back to the drawing board and make improvements. Finally, we had to choose Rams for his ten principles of good design, we have them printed out and framed in our office.

WHICH PROJECTS FROM THE ECHLIN PORTFOLIO DEMONSTRATE A NOD TO THEIR WORK?

All our creations are inspired by the timeless designs of these heroes, who were not only some of the greatest at blending aesthetics with functionality but also at considering their placement to create a pre-conceived environment. With our projects, we carry out all elements of the design package to ensure coherence throughout each project. It's this coherence that makes a space feel welcoming and comfortable. At our recent project Kenure House, a family home in Holland Park, we hope the treatment of natural light, considered decoration and the precise detailing displays an appreciation of the approaches of these three celebrated designers.

IF ECHLIN COULD BE REMEMBERED FOR ONE ELEMENT OF DESIGN, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

Our hope is that the atmosphere we create through our attention to detail, from the envelope architecture, through to the finishes, colours and materiality as well as smells and textures, would be remembered.

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