

JACK HADLEY
BY Jamie McLellan

We now live in a world where algorithms serve everyone on the planet the same homogenous idea of what 'design' is. A feedback loop exists where designers chase, consciously or unconsciously, an aesthetic that the algorithms will deem to be worthy of promotion. On top of this, we have the emergence of AI tools, which consume the proliferation of self-referencing design data in order to determine what 'new' designs should look like. Ultimately, they output stuff that is just a synthesis of everything that has gone before. A design echo-chamber.

Among all this design noise, it is not often that something catches my eye in the way that Jack Hadley's work has. The best way I could describe this work would be 'postmodernism meets brutalism', realised through a mix of pragmatic fabrication and digital manufacturing. For a minimal-leaning designer like myself, I find Jack's work challenging and beautiful and energising.

Personal favourites include the LP.LPG SE 3 light (2023) that playfully stacks a mixture of brutal, poppish and classical forms, all 3D printed. The finishing touch is a charmingly crude on/off switch. On paper this might sound impossible, but in reality it is gorgeous. Then there's the CSSS1 (Yellow) stool (2023), which almost looks like its engineering has been turned inside out — somehow, the rawness of this gesture is elegantly resolved. It's a great example of Jack's joyous eye for colour and material. Love the product naming, too.

Jack's creative starting point is less informed by commercial outcomes and more driven by the pursuit of fresh expressions, an obsession with engineering, a beautiful eye for formal composition and a real care for how objects are resolved. I am excited to see where his work goes next. Something tells me that his curiosity and purity of vision will always mean he's a step ahead of the algorithms, keeping his work fresher than AI could ever reproduce.



LP.LPG SE 3 light, 2023, courtesy of the artist and Laree Payne Gallery

