

## The rising British star whose pared-back designs speak of a dedication to craft and materiality

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Tell us about your background... I trained in fine cabinetmaking first in Devon, then at Robinson House Studio, near Brighton in East Sussex, where I was lucky enough to work with some of the best cabinetmakers in the world. At Robinson House they apply very traditional techniques to contemporary furniture and I discovered a huge amount about making, attention to detail, quality and patience. By learning how to make something you begin to understand why a piece is designed the way it is and what limitations the material or design has – this forces you to think creatively.

What has inspired you throughout your career so far? I am definitely still on a creative journey, but my style has developed over time. My first love was art nouveau architecture, but you might not expect this looking at my recent work. As I learned more about different materials, I began to appreciate the restraint of modernist design. I realised that there can be a lot of beautiful, intricate detail in a sim-

ple piece that has a good initial concept and is well made with high-quality materials.

What does 'good design' mean to you? There's so much to say on this, but something on my mind at the moment is how much time people are spending at home and how the functionality of their furniture is more important than ever. It's essential that design is functional, original and can tie in easily with other parts of people's homes. I try and achieve this in my work with clean lines, by paring back the materials and the colour palette so that pieces aren't obtrusive, and by offering a level of customisation. Tell us about the materials you use – your recent collection is predominantly metal... My traditional background puts my roots in timber and veneer, but I spend a lot of my time researching and playing with new materials. For instance, I've recently experimented with using cork in different ways and I'm always on the lookout for other sustainable materials that people haven't seen before. I think that metal is undervalued both technically and aesthetically – when used well it can stand beautifully on its own, or it can be used as a building block for other materials. It's strength means that it can be minimal; it can have thin strong curves or straight lines; it can be dynamic and impactful. Where are your products made? Everything we make is handmade in the UK by



'Wandle' desk, £2,400;  
'Timperly' chair, £1,020;  
'Eltringham' mirror, £1,200; and  
(below left) 'Severus' lounge,  
£3,000 (christian-watson.com)

'Wandle' desk, £2,400; 'Timperly' chair, £1,020; 'Eltringham' mirror, £1,200; and (below left) 'Severus' lounge, £3,000 (christian-watson.com)

myself and my trusted craftspeople. I love being hands-on and will never stop making. The UK has such a rich history of design and engineering, as well as talented artists and artisans, which means we can provide the highest degree of quality with the best materials, on time, for every project. Tell us about the bespoke element of your

business... We do commissions of all sizes but recently we've been working on a 16-seater boardroom table. We're also partnering with a ceramicist to create a beautiful 1.5-metre-high lamp for a client. Our 'Tailored' service allows clients to customise an item from our core collection, making it unique to them. As each piece is

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made to order, we can offer a range of options, including a choice of materials, new colours, sizes and configurations. [christian-watson.com](http://christian-watson.com)

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