

Down to brass taps – introducing Studio Ore

The new British design studio reinventing the bathroom

From a workshop in the Ashdown Forest, Sussex, **Studio Ore** is changing the face of the bathroom, one tap at a time. Through its growing range of hand-crafted contemporary bathroom fixtures and industrial-style taps in unlacquered brass, **Studio Ore** is offering a unique, characterful alternative to the polished perfection of the gleaming chrome bathroom.



Photography by Emma Lee.

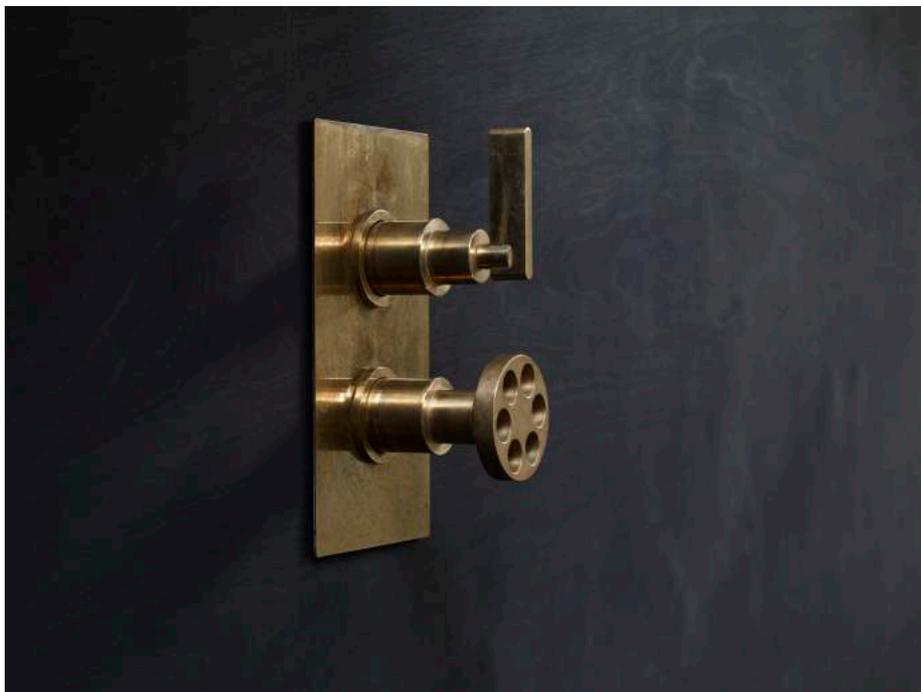
Born in the bathroom, grown in the garage

As a company, **Studio Ore** is something of a happy accident. In 2014, when designing the interiors of his own home in Fulham, **Daniel Lee** – a software entrepreneur with a background in engineering and fluid dynamics – was looking for a simple, mechanical, non-chrome tap with a hint of an industrial look; something with the character and charming imperfection of an old Victorian bath tap. Nothing seemed to fit the bill, so he pulled out a sketchpad, downloaded some CAD software and began to design his own prototypes.

When the refurbishment was complete, and Daniel's labour of love started to be featured on design blogs, the taps piqued people's interest. Enquiries and commissions started trickling in from architects and private

clients both in the UK and abroad. By mid-2015, Daniel was spending so much of his time designing and making bespoke sets in his Sussex garage that he had to expand the premises and bring in **Louise Hutt**, a long-standing colleague, to help him cope with demand. She named their emerging company **Studio Ore**.

Today, with the help of a growing team, the studio makes, and distributes more than 25 distinct products, including taps, mixers, shower roses, wastes and other bathroom fixtures – finished in either polished brass or stove-enamelled matt black. More designs are in the pipeline, and the company is preparing to launch a range in oil-rubbed bronze.



Photography by Emma Lee.

Tapping a trend

The appeal of **Studio Ore**'s products lies in their material and production method. Leaving the brass unlacquered opens the metal up to the possibilities of natural ageing, allowing a patina to develop on the surface. Every twist of the handle or turn of the lever shapes the tap's look, while the bathroom air interacts with the brass to gradually change its colour and pattern. **Studio Ore** taps thus acquire more character over time – left to age gracefully, no two sets will ever look exactly the same. Should the owner wish to return them to their pristine polished glory, a simple rub of Brasso will do the trick, but most **Studio Ore** owners enjoy the 'beauty of imperfection' the taps display – much like the way that signs of wear add 'soul' to a piece of vintage leather.

In this way, Studio Ore could be seen as part of a larger design trend – the movement from perfection to personality, and the appreciation of the signs of authentic human craft over a craving for immaculate, chrome-plated minimalism.

'We have been through more than a decade of house renovations and developments that include white walls, dozens of lights in the ceiling, beige tiles and lots of chrome – the clichéd property-developer look. I think many people are now looking for interior design with more character, something more personal, as a reaction to this. This is combined with a resurgence in craft and hand-made, locally produced products. It's like vinyl versus digital; a beautiful, authentic tile that's been made by hand in Morocco versus one that has come from a factory production line somewhere in China. I think our taps may be one expression of that.'

– Daniel Lee, founder, Studio Ore

Precision-engineering

As well as tying in with the world's evolving design preferences and the renaissance of craft, Studio Ore's products have also set a benchmark for the quality of their engineering. Given Daniel's background in computational fluid dynamics, and his previous professional engineering experience working with Formula 1, it's no surprise that the Studio Ore taps are precision-tooled to the highest quality standards – for the simple reason that, as Daniel puts it, 'ultimately, a tap or a shower isn't just something you look at, like a painting; it is something you use, so it has to actually work.'



Photography by Emma Lee.

As well as selling the product range through its newly launched website studio-ore.com Studio Ore is now working with a select group of architects, distributors and design firms around the world, exporting to eight countries and establishing partnerships with select international outlets. Although the company is expanding rapidly, Studio Ore is determined to maintain its focus on authentic, high-quality products, finished by hand. Like its taps, Studio Ore's business is a precision-engineered balance of form and function, with a distinctive human touch.



Image from House of Grey.

'To make a tap, and actually get emails from people saying how much they love their taps is quite remarkable, and something that still surprises us every day.'

– Daniel Lee, founder, Studio Ore

Website: www.studio-ore.com

Instagram: @studioore

Pinterest: /studioore

*For more information about **Studio Ore**, product images and interviews, please contact Jodi Moss at jodi@zetteler.co.uk, or on +44 (0)7910 705147.*
