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**MELBOURNE
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22-23
2014
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ISSUE 58. 2014

AUSTRALIA \$16.50 NEW ZEALAND \$17.50
SINGAPORE \$12.95 USA \$21.99



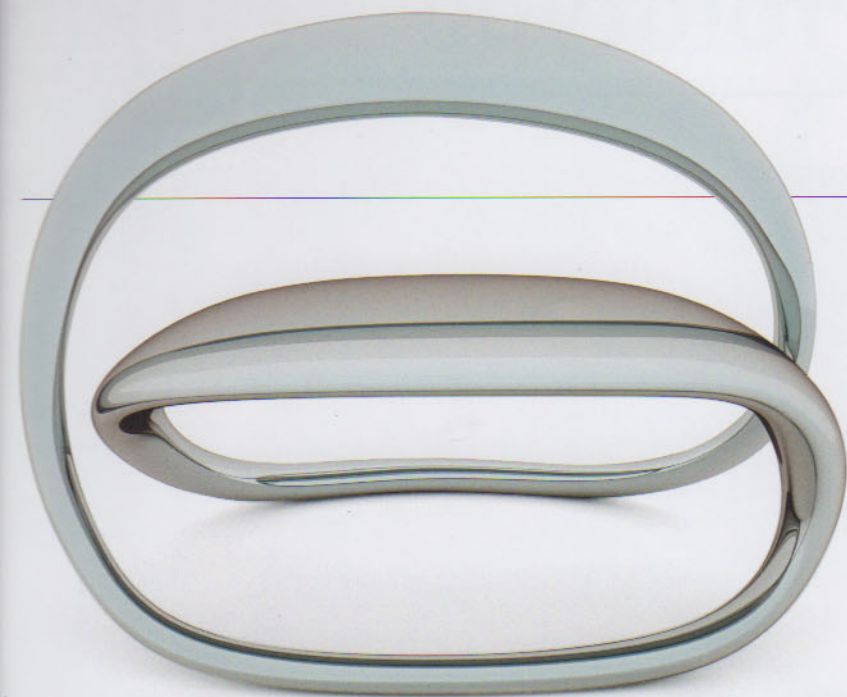
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Brodie Neill has made a long journey from Tasmania to launching his own brand in London via New York.

When Brodie Neill launched a new brand, Made in Ratio, during Milan's Design Week in 2013, it was the culmination of over a decade of education, travel and development – all of which began in Tasmania, where the now-London-based designer was born in 1979.

"A lot of the inspiration in my work comes from growing up in Tasmania," says Neill. "I was surrounded by the wilderness, and a lot of maritime influences."

From a young age, these influences were translated into furniture design – by 14, Neill was making furniture and sculpture in the family shed. "It's all still at my mum's house," he says. "I think they're pretty hideous, but she loves them. And, all the furniture is still in one piece, which is the mark of a good craftsman. There is a heritage of that kind of thing in Tasmania."

Following his interests, Neill studied furniture design at the University of Tasmania.

Here, he learned to be a designer-maker – perhaps one of the most fundamental aspects of his practice. "You learn a lot about design by being involved in that making process," he says. "Still today, a lot of the Made in Ratio pieces are on the cusp of what is possible. That comes from knowing the material and understanding the process."

While studying, he also realised that design could be an international career that could take him around the world – to an 18-year-old from Tasmania, that realisation was quite strong – and he knew he had found his calling.

On graduating, Neill took the plunge and immediately moved to New York, where he received a fellowship to study at the Rhode Island School of Design, where he refined another key aspect of his work – CAD. "At Rhode Island, I married digital design to the handmade and started to push things," says Neill.

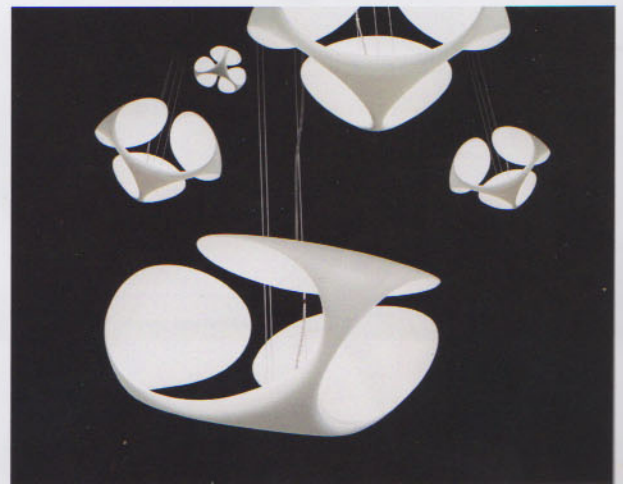
Most of Neill's best-known works – from 'Clover' and the 'E-Turn' bench for Kundalini to his limited edition pieces for London's Apartment Gallery – stem from this period.

Following a brief stint as a packaging designer for L'Oréal in New York, Neill took a collection comprising of pieces he designed at the Rhode Island School of Design, and exhibited at Salone Satellite in Milan 2005. It proved to be an experience that would mark the start of his professional career, with interest from numerous brands – most notably, Kundalini.

At the end of the year Neill moved to London – "I found the city an absolute eye-opener," he says. "I felt more of a gravitational pull to be here than in New York." – and in 2006, he launched the 'Morphie' light with Kundalini. Success came quickly, and in 2007 Neill's '@' chair was named one of *Time* magazine's top 100 designs of the year. The production pieces were followed by a series of limited edition pieces, such as 'Remix', which indulged Neill's love of high concept, technologically driven design that pushed materials to their limit.

Throughout this period, however, Neill felt increasingly disconnected from the manufacturing process, and it became inevitable that he would start his own brand. "I wanted to see a product from conception through to completion," he says.

WORDS MANDI KEIGHRAN



TOP E-Turn Seat, 2007
FAR LEFT Reverb, 2009
ABOVE Clover, 2011
NEXT PAGE Storage Unit, 2014 (Made in Ratio) Seat

"I wanted to see a product from conception through to completion."

BRODIE NEILL

"There's nothing worse than putting your heart and soul into something and then handing it over to someone else." He was also keen to use the processes employed for the limited edition pieces to make something more affordable, and make use of the myriad manufacturing connections he had built up over the years.

Made in Ratio was first conceived in 2011 and launched at Milan 2013, with the production-ready first collection showcased at Design Junction during London Design Festival in September of the same year. "The name," says Neill, "comes from the idea of something made in balance – function, quality and craftsmanship."

It's a sentiment that is reflected in both collections (Collection 2 was recently launched at Milan), each drawing on experimental processes and European craft traditions. 'Cumulus', for example, is a mouth-blown lamp formed by Italian master glassblowers with mirror polished details that provide a high-tech counterpoint to the traditional technique. 'Supernova' is a table with a sculptural base cast from aluminium recycled from old window frames; and the 'Cowrie' chair and rocker are made from dynamically moulded plywood.

While each piece is an exploration of European manufacturing processes, the organic forms and sympathetic use of materials clearly harks back to Neill's Antipodean roots, where he learnt the art of making.

Mandi Keighran is Editor-at-large for Indesign, based in London.



BRODIE NEILL

WHO Brodie Neill

BORN Tasmania, Australia

LIVES London, UK

WORKS Made in Ratio

BACKGROUND University of Tasmania, Rhode Island School of Design

madeinratio.com