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PM40048073 R09064
OCTOBER 2008





Brodie Neill

Neill's E-turn bench, one continuous loop of fibreglass, debuted at the Milan Furniture Fair in 2007.



Name
Brodie Neill

Age
29

Occupation
Furniture designer

Location
London, England

Hometown
Hobart, Tasmania

Education
BA with honours, furniture design, University of Tasmania, Australia; master of fine arts, furniture design, Rhode Island School of Design

Selected exhibitions

Solo show at the Gallery in Redchurch Street, London Design Festival, 2007

Solo shows at Rubin Chapelle, New York, International Contemporary Furniture Fair, 2005, 2007, 2008

E-turn release by Kundalini, Milan Furniture Fair, 2007

Group show, Conversations of Things New – Ten Top Australian Designers, Confederation Square, Melbourne, and Object Gallery, Sydney, 2006

Selected clients
Kundalini, Italy
Swarovski, Austria

The Pop table, the latest iteration in Neill's continuous-loop theme, launches this month at a gallery event in Covent Garden, London.



Early influences

I'm multi-skilled in a niche way. I started making furniture in high school, so I had craft skills first. My interest in professional design came from textbooks at university; it was really an evolution, but not inspired by any particular designer. In Europe and America, industrial design is about products in stores. My fine arts background in Tasmania was different. Our platform was galleries – there weren't other possibilities. I moved to London in 2005. There's no reason I couldn't work from Tasmania, but I'm interested in the European industrial design tradition, and to study that you really need to be near industry.

First coup

A big break was having my thesis work shown in the Salone Satellite at the 2005 Milan Furniture Fair. I had two lounges, a chaise lounge, a café table and chair, and a lighting installation featured, and I used a variety of materials, including plastic, upholstery, wood, metal and carbon fibre. There was a lot of interest in my

pieces at the fair, and it immediately led to ongoing work with the Italian manufacturer Kundalini. Then I participated in New York exhibitions that fused design with fashion and art. There was a lot to learn, and quickly. The inclusion of my @chair in *Time* magazine's Design 100 this year was a real honour, but being in Taschen's *Design Now!* has made a greater impact on my career.

A model man

When I start to design something, there is a very brief pencil and paper stage. I use digital modelling for everything, because it's the only way to get a real representation of my ideas. I studied animation, and I still use those skills today, which is an advantage, because I'm used to looking at things from every angle. I work closely with a CAD/CAM studio here in London. As soon as one project is finished, there's always another coming along a week or two later. I use CNC for prototype development, and bring in computer specialists and other freelancers, including model makers.

Sonic boom

The Jet desk was developed very quickly; it was commissioned by Swarovski for a touring exhibition in New York, Paris and London. I was leaving for my sister's wedding in Australia when I was asked to do it. I turned a kitchen into a studio and e-mailed the design to the CAD/CAM people in London. Fabrication had begun by the time I returned.

On being green

In manufacturing, the job of engineers and production managers is to streamline, and designers can learn from them. With the first project, you see how they like to do things, and then you can apply that when you work with them again. Environmentalism is a bigger issue in North America than in some parts of Europe, but as a designer I can make suggestions, and work with manufacturers who do things in an environmentally responsible way. I'm interested in reclaimed materials, and I've sourced a recycled wood waste product I want to use. That would create jobs all the way down the line.

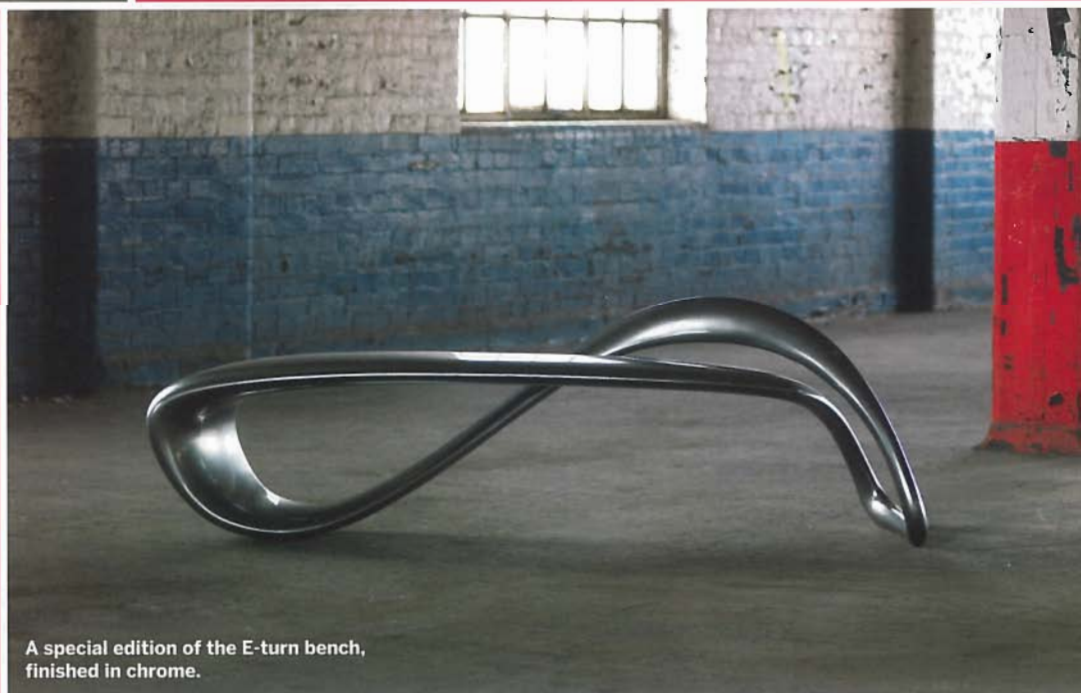
Commissioned by Swarovski, the Jet desk was literally launched from a kitchen table. Carbon fibre curves embedded with crystals form the legs.



Remix, Neill's take on a chaise lounge, rolls out this month in London. It is crafted from a mixture of reclaimed materials, including plastics and fibreboard.



Carbon fibre and chrome were used in the manufacture of the iconic @chair, another continuous-loop concept.



A special edition of the E-turn bench, finished in chrome.

In the loop

The Apartment gallery in London is the client for my new Pop table – the latest evolution of the continuous-loop concept – and the Remix chaise lounge, which is made from a mixture of reclaimed and sourced materials. These include a variety of plastics, plywoods, chipboards and fibreboards, which are processed in a random mix, then formed into a laminated block and shaped in a five-axis CNC metalworking machine. This produces a multicoloured stripe pattern in the piece, and ensures a single, smooth surface with bold contour lines. The Pop and Remix limited editions will be introduced at Covent Garden Super Design, a four-gallery event being held in London in October. I'm also working on production designs for several European manufacturers, with proposed launches in Milan next year. Some of the materials I'm considering include carbon fibre, reclaimed items, glass, and a recycled waste product.

Shout it out

In the near future, I'll be taking the superfluid concept one step further. If I design an interior, it will be all about the furniture. What really interests me is the challenge of doing things in new ways. I want to have something worth shouting about every six months or so. It's an evolution in the studio, but the practice will definitely grow. I'm ready.

Like most of Neill's work, the black gloss Intro chair was designed initially using digital modelling.

