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SHORTLIST



# the design listener



Brodie Neill designs beautiful and elegant furniture that is appreciated the world over. From Tasmania to London and beyond, the world of design is Neill's oyster and his products are ours to enjoy.



above—Portrait of Brodie Neill. Photography Jamie Smith. opposite—Part of the Made in Ratio collection for 2015 the Alpha chair is stackable and made of solid wood.

## text\_ Jan Henderson

**A vision is a beautiful thing and when that vision becomes reality it's something to behold. Brodie Neill, furniture designer and maker, is a case in point.** Through his imaginative designs and dogged determination, Neill has achieved what few can only dream of – success in the challenging world of furniture design.

Born in Tasmania, Neill studied at the University of Tasmania and learned his trade, although he had been 'making' since he was a teenager. To further his development and follow the desire to discover the world, he moved to the US to study at the Rhode Island School of Design. From there it was on to London where he set up his studio with the plan to realise his own designs and follow his own aesthetic ideas. There's

nothing unusual in this story except that Neill has actually achieved what he initially set out to accomplish. Over a period of some 12 years, he has worked to realise his passion and now his designs are recognised throughout the world.

The scope of his work is varied – commissioned pieces for such companies as Kundalini and Swarovski, one-off museum quality objects for collectors (his @chair was named by *Time* magazine in the top 10 iconic designs in 2008) and limited edition pieces such as Remix, Glacier, Reverb, Pop and Threefold. What links everything together is the fluidity to each design. It has become a trademark of Neill's work to reinterpret the material he works with. It is as if he listens to the material and finds what

it needs to do and where it needs to go. His designs have a great sense of flow, sensuality and individual beauty. Take Glacier, a chaise created from once-molten glass that is cooled over a period of several months, the finished object resembling a sculptured piece of ice. Or there's the @chair created from one continuous line of steel and Pleat, a bench that is moulded from a single piece of Corian.

For Neill this 'listening to the material' helps him to find inspiration, then form and this is the start of the design process. Once an idea is visualised the next step is technical realisation. Neill has embraced up-to-the-minute technology and process and uses it to great effect in all his designs. Whether the design requires laminating and bending wood, extruding steel and sculpting with glass, Neill

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above—The Reverb chair is hand-formed, mirror polished and made from sheet aluminium.

uses the very latest techniques to achieve his design vision and this is again apparent in his latest and ongoing project, Made in Ratio. The underlying idea was to present a considered and curated group of products that would be available to a broader worldwide audience. The project commenced in 2013 with a core group of five products followed by another five in 2014. Each piece stands alone, but together they form a constellation where each object complements the other. Made in Ratio was first showcased at Salone del Mobile 2013 and since then Neill hasn't looked back. The reception was overwhelming and this collection has been making waves in the design world ever since.

This year Made in Ratio has arrived in Australia. Living Edge has partnered with Neill and these beautiful furniture pieces will be

available in his home country – bringing Neill's design journey full-circle. Not one to forget his roots, Neill is also working in Hobart, Tasmania and has fulfilled a commission to supply 12 Wishbone benches at the new Brooke Street Pier. Later in the year he will install an outdoor sculptural piece, *The Portal*, on the Hobart waterfront. *The Portal*, made from bronze, depicts a falling loop frozen in time and will provide seating for up to 10 people. It will also become a visual gateway from Brooke Street Pier to the Museum of Old and New Art (MONA). In addition to the Tasmanian commissions, Neill has been named a finalist in the Rigg Design Prize from the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne. It's a busy time for Brodie Neill, but his design vision is now a reality and we are all the richer for it. [@](#)