



Resonance

the instinctive designs of Brodie Neill

24th November - 19th February 2023

Design Tasmania

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In this retrospective exhibition, Brodie Neill returns home to present *Resonance*, an exhibition that celebrates two decades of his career-defining milestones for one of Tasmania's most innovative and inspiring designers. Through materials like mirror-polished stainless steel, sand-cast recycled aluminium, bent plywood, charred and salvaged timbers, coiled Hydrowood veneers, and terrazzo made from ocean plastic, Neill's works reimagine raw or discarded sources into mesmerising and sophisticated forms that echo the beauty of his island home. Known for his layered concepts, material mastery, and fearless ability to blend organic form with digital processes, these works speak to the creative ingenuity that has led Neill to become one of Australia's most influential designers.

Resonance presents eleven works, beginning with Neill's 2002 graduate project from the University of Tasmania, and spanning through to representing Australia on the world stage in the present. Design Tasmania is honoured to welcome internationally acclaimed Neill from London for his first homecoming exhibition, in reflection and celebration of our commitment to further design in Tasmania.

This exhibition features significant works held in Tasmanian collections, including the celebrated *ReCoil*, a centrepiece table of meticulously coiled Tasmanian reclaimed timber, inspired by the rugged beauty of the Pieman River Valley. A partnership with Hydrowood, the table is the first successful outcome of a series of projects with Design Tasmania that explore opportunities and partnerships between design, manufacturing, and Tasmanian-based materials.

The exhibition also features the critically acclaimed *Gyro* table, made from 'ocean terrazzo' Neill's ingenious recycled ocean plastic composite. Conceived for the *London Design Biennale* representing Australia in 2016, the table offers an environmental call to action told through refined aesthetic beauty. By pioneering contemporary design as a powerful medium for important global issues, this work led Neill to become an interdisciplinary voice for design as a force for positive change, presenting at the European Union and United Nations Ocean Conference, amongst others.

Other innovations on display include the *Cowrie* chair and *Alpha* chair from the *Design Tasmania Wood Collection*; the award-winning *Supernova*; the *@Chair* and *E-Turn*, both featured in *Time Magazine's Design 100*; and the now iconic *Remix* chaise longue, *Curve* and *Wishbone*.



@Chair

Limited edition 5/8

2008

Circling back on a significant design, the @Chair in mirror-polished stainless steel reflects my early explorations into form and function as a seamless mobius-strip like entity. The idea was to encompass the entire configuration of a chair within a single gesture. The chair set a new precedent for the time, and was included in *Time Magazine's Design 100* in 2018.

“When I first had the idea for @Chair, I had a company call me wanting to CNC router out the chair from a massive solid block of aluminium, but I thought why would you do that with the amount of waste it would create? So we waited many years before the technology became available to do it less wastefully, with the hard hours put in to shape it.”

Dimensions. 1000 L | 650 W | 700 H mm

Materials. Stainless Steel

Collection. Private Collection



Alpha

Production by Made in Ratio

2015

The Alpha chair is a solid wood, all-purpose stackable chair produced using the latest production technologies for shaped timber furniture. The name 'Alpha' came from the strong architectural gesture that gives the chair its inherent strength: the A-shaped structure of the back legs and backrest that are organically and sensually moulded into one.



“As an innovator, you're always pushing the boundaries - there is often no recipe or precedent, and things have to be created from the ground up.”

Dimensions. 530 L | 440 W | 810 H mm

Materials. Walnut

Collection. Design Tasmania Wood Collection

Cowrie

Production by Made in Ratio

2013

The Cowrie chair is inspired by the concave lines of sea shells. The curvilinear forms come from an extensive research and innovation process to bridge the handmade with the digital. Sweeping lines are displayed in a gentle, single surface monocoque fold. The all-in-one structure is formed in bent plywood with an ebonised ash veneer.

“I’m interested equally in the mathematics of life as I am the poetry of it.”

Dimensions. 750 L | 740 W | 640 H mm

Materials. Ebonised Ash Veneer

Collection. Courtesy of the designer



Curve

Production by Riva 1920

2012

The Curve bench is cut from a single block of cedar wood and features a sinuous, wave-like form under the seat itself, highlighting the colour and grain of natural cedarwood with the gentlest of touches. Digitally conceived, the bench has a timeless simplicity that has stood the test of time. Launched at *Salon del Mobile* in 2012, this year is Curve’s 10 year anniversary and its timeless simplicity still sees it remain in high production today.

“The inspiration was to start with a blank canvas, a sculptor’s block. Leaving the top and the sides completely utilitarian, and to relieve this single gesture, with almost the fluidity of a brushstroke from the underside of the bench.”

Dimensions. 1800 L | 370 W | 450 H mm

Materials. Flamed Cedar (shou sugi ban)

Collection. Private Collection



E-Turn

Production by Kundalini

2006

The result of exploring the possibilities of a singular line in 3D space, the E-Turn is a continuously morphing ribbon that twists and turns from seat to structure before overlapping and returning again in the configuration of a bench. The endless E-Turn refers to eternity; the idea was to transcend width and dimension as it wraps into its mobius-like form.

“@Chair and E-Turn were approached and sculpted completely three-dimensionally, something I learnt from Kevin Perkins at the University of Tasmania, was to see this way.”

Dimensions. 1850 L | 560 W | 420 H mm

Materials. Lacquered Fibreglass

Collection. Private Collection



Nautilus

1999

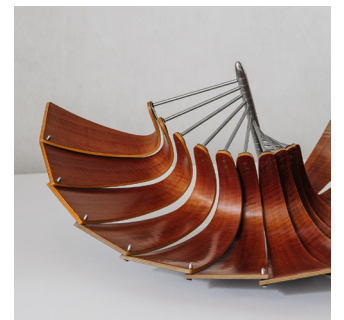
When briefed in his final year of university to design flatpack storage, Neill responded with his instinctive sculptural form language paired with his poetic sense of engineering. Hinging from a central stainless-steel spine, an array of incrementally laminated hulls pivots in an almost peacock-like display, creating a 210-degree vessel. By mimicking the evolutionary design of nature, Nautilus takes on the multifaceted spiral shape of its namesake, the nautilus seashell.

Dimensions.

Materials. Myrtle, Stainless Steel

Collection. Courtesy of the designer

“There was an exhibition and UTAS was going to take a collection of student’s work to St Etienne in France and I was like ‘my work is gonna be on that plane!’ The response to the work was all the things that are now my signature - ‘sculptural, expressive, engineered’.”



Remix

Limited edition 3/12

2008

The multicoloured Remix is an organically shaped, low chaise longue carved from reclaimed and sourced materials including a mixture of plastics and woods. The randomly selected mix of materials is laminated into a block, which is then contoured by a five-axis CNC cutter, ensuring a single smooth organic surface with bold lines.

“I looked at all the surplus material in industry, and thought how could this material become the building block for something new?”

Dimensions. 2000 L | 750 W | 430 H mm

Materials. Recycled Plastics, Plywood

Collection. *Detached*



Wishbone

Made to order

2015

With a long, undulating three-way symmetry the organic Wishbone bench seat references sacred geometry and mathematics. This sculptural piece is made from fibreglass with a durable and opaquely reflective surface, designed to sit alone or in clusters. The aim was to combine practicality, materiality and a refined, aerodynamic form. It's like a whale vertebrae sitting on the beach, bleached by the sun.

“I don't make things that have a pre-paved path, so everything is a technical feat, without precedence or recipe, it really is just trial and error.”

Dimensions. 2400 L | 2100 W | 450 H mm

Materials. Lacquered Fibreglass

Collection. *Brooke Street Pier*



Gyro

Limited Edition 1/5

2016

A contemporary rendition of a 19th Century specimen table top, Gyro substitutes marble, timber and ivory with ocean terrazzo, an innovative material produced from fragments of ocean plastic waste. The composite is inlaid in a kaleidoscopic diagram in varying hues of blue and green to depict the Earth's longitudinal and latitudinal lines. Conceived on Tasmania's Bruny Island, Gyro was a call to action. The plastic fragments of the terrazzo, with hand-sorted colours have been collected from every major ocean of the world, creating a global atlas of ocean plastic encased within a round table form that literally brought the environmental issue to the round table of an international design forum, representing Australia at the London Design Biennale at Somerset House.

I was on a Design Camp on John Wardle's property on Bruny Island, organised through Design Tasmania and NGV. We were meant to be working on a brief: to scavenge materials from the sheep farms, woods, and beaches to use in the creation of objects that celebrate communal eating rituals.

The purpose of the camp was to have those who identified as craftspeople collaborate with those who identified as designers to uncover where the boundaries of each overlap and diverge as means of fostering community.

I was struck by the amount of plastic that had been washed up on the beach. I knew there was an issue with ocean plastics, but you don't think it's going to be on Bruny Island, such a sparsely populated place. I was picking up coke bottle lids, McDonalds straws, an old toothbrush, which I kept photo of, and I thought, here's a material that's designed to be indestructible, but used for milliseconds, and thoughtlessly discarded. It finds its way into the environment easily - finds its way into the waterway, the Derwent River and eventually could find its way into the Pacific, and then stay right there in the middle with all the other plastics. Here's a fossil-fuel material that's taken millenia to form, and has just been discarded. Surely you could re-challenge those ideas into something. It was a call to action.

When NGV and the Australian High Commission in London approached me about putting together a proposal for the London Design Biennale - I thought how better literally for Australia - the world's largest island, to bring the ocean to the roundtable of this International Design Forum.

The design of Gyro itself - a mosaic 36 lines around, 36 tiles across, lines of longitude and latitude of the world - it is literally a map of global ocean plastic. We put a call out to social media for people around the world to send in plastic and we got plastic from all major oceans of the world, including from North West Tasmania. Stinky bags of plastic arrived in the studio, we worked with material specialists, and tapping into my own knowledge of working with plastics and composites (from foundational training at UTAS) and lateral thinking across industries.

With lots of trial and error, and we finally were able to make this beautiful ocean terrazzo material. The conception of Gyro was broadcast over BBC World Service TV, news channels, we had diplomats dropping in to the studio and were invited to present our research in Brussels at the European Union and the United Nations Ocean Conference in the United States.

Everyone was drawn in by this galactic, beautiful, mesmerising thing, coming to realise as they got closer, that it had this more sinister underbelly. The Gyro on loan for Resonance, is the original piece of plastic from around the world (edition 1/5).

More about the Design Camp:
<https://www.pamono.com/stories/into-the-wild/>



Dimensions. 1800 D | 770 H mm
Materials. Ocean Plastic
Collection. University of Tasmania

ReCoil

Limited edition 1/8

2021

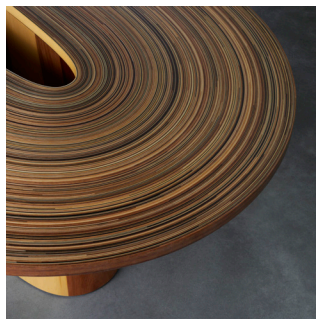
ReCoil is an elliptical table made from an array of reclaimed Tasmanian Hydrowood timbers. By celebrating the spectrum of rich timber tones indigenous to the island of Tasmania, ReCoil intends to re-contextualise our relationship with materials and our role in the natural world. I coiled three kilometres of reclaimed Tasmanian Hydrowood veneer by hand in homage to the annual growth ring formations of Tasmania's old growth trees, an intensive process that suggests layering and recurrence.

Dimensions. 2200 L | 1400 W | 780 H mm

Materials. Reclaimed Tasmanian Hydrowood

Huon pine, Tasmanian Oak, Celery Top Pine, Sassafras, Myrtle + Blackwood

Collection. *Courtesy of designer*



ReCoil is made entirely of precious reclaimed Hydrowood timber veneer offcuts from six native Tasmanian tree species. Featured are Huon Pine, Tasmanian Oak, Celery Top Pine, Sassafras, Myrtle and Blackwood. The veneers are meticulously coiled by hand in outward spirals, referencing the trees' annual growth rings (the finished table comprises of over 3km of veneer).

The spectrum of wood tones vary from honey to burnt umber. Huon Pine, the rarest and more treasured of Tasmanian timbers is the light honey-coloured wood, and the burnt umber is Tasmanian Oak. The actual colour combinations and sequence of the veneers is randomised into a blueprint consisting of all the species and their many lengths of scraps. The resulting combinations of the veneers mesmerise and demanding attention. The tabletop has been CNC trimmed smooth and flush cut, then surface is polished and finished with resin. The table stem is made of larger pieces of veneer.

Hydrowood reclaims trees that were lost underwater when a forest in the Pieman River Valley, on Tasmania's rugged West Coast, were submerged for a hydroelectricity scheme in the 1980s. The age of the trees used range from 100-200 years old Tasmanian Oak through to 2000 year old Huon Pine. While the trees are underwater, they are slowly breaking down releasing the greenhouse gases methane and carbon dioxide. Methane is 20-30x worse for our environment than carbon dioxide. By removing the trees from the water, stabilising, and using the timber, Hydrowood is halting this release of carbon dioxide. Once veneered, the offcuts used in ReCoil were sent to Reliance Veneers in Stamford Hill, London, to be cut.

The design final design of ReCoil allows woods to release their unique oils, particularly of notice is Huon Pine. The complete impact of Recoil comes from its refined, innovative process, and positive message.



TASMANIAN

Design Tasmania would like to thank Hydrowood, the Tasmanian Government, and Lark Distillery for their generous support of this project.

Supernova

Production by Made in Ratio

2013

The Supernova is a dynamic, self-levelling table frame, cast entirely from recycled aluminium with a toughened glass top. The star-shaped structure can be positioned freely to create a dynamic sculptural shape, which makes it simple and versatile to orientate. Three-way symmetry is fascinating to me and one of the key quests in my work.

“Whichever way it lands, it creates a table base, high and low. It has a tennis ball-like joint - it is poetic but highly utilitarian, the whole thing can be created with one tool - flipped and repeated - it is the ultimate in thinking economically.”

Trestle Dimensions. 1800 L | 510 W | 700 H mm

Materials. Recycled Aluminium, Glass

Collection. Private Collection



Brodie Neill

Resonance | the instinctive designs of Brodie Neill

For as long as he can remember, Brodie Neill has been inspired by the twinned beauty of nature and mathematics. Growing up in Tasmania, Brodie was surrounded by the landscape's diverse ecology, leading to a fascination with organic phenomena and an ongoing commitment to respecting raw material. This orientation has coloured every aspect of Brodie's subsequent practice. A University of Tasmania and Rhode Island School of Design alum, he has blended this appreciation of naturalism with advanced technical rigour, digital innovation and poised mathematical precision across sculpture, furniture and art commissions. Acclaim was instantaneous – with *TIME Magazine's Design 100* ranking his debut collection of furniture designs among the number of '100 most influential designs'.

Brodie has worked with an impressive roster of clients, collaborating with international brands including *Microsoft*, *Mercedes-Benz*, *Alexander McQueen* and *Swarovski*. His limited-edition works are included in museums, galleries and private collections across the globe.

Balance, proportion, simplicity and a curvaceous sculptural profile continues to characterise Brodie's comprehensive furniture portfolio and colour all aspects of his Brand's design vernacular – from the microcosm of its logo through to the macrocosm of its design intent.

His capsule collection *Made in Ratio* strives for perfection's eternal simplicity. Inspired by the act of creation – shaping exceptional ideas into physical realities – the brand seeks to find new possibilities for furniture in our current moment. Founded and helmed by Brodie, *Made in Ratio* derives inspiration from centuries of expert craftsmanship while striving to push the boundaries of what can be achieved through experimental production techniques, innovation in process and boldness in embracing evolving technologies.

“It's an honour to return home to Tasmania with such a retrospective exhibition that spans the first years of my career. There is a common thread of creative ingenuity and technical refinement that began in Hobart and has continued ever since. Each of the eleven works mark a steppingstone throughout my development, from UTAS graduation project through to representing Australia on the world stage.”



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Design Tasmania acknowledges the *palawa* people as the traditional owners of this island *lutruwita*.

Image Credit:

1: Brodie Neill, Resonance, photo by Adam Gibson; 3: Brodie Neill, Gyro, photo by Adam Gibson; 4: Brodie Neill, @Chair, photos by Adam Gibson and Angela Moore; 5: Brodie Neill, Alpha, photo by Adam Gibson; 6: Brodie Neill, Cowrie, photos by Adam Gibson and courtesy of the designer; 7: Brodie Neill, Curve, photo by Adam Gibson; Brodie Neill, E-Turn, photo by Adam Gibson; 9: Brodie Neill, Nautilus, photo by Adam Gibson; 10: Brodie Neill, Remiz, photo by Adam Gibson; 11: Brodie Neill, Wishbone, photo by Adam Gibson; 13: Brodie Neill, Gyro, photos by Adam Gibson and courtesy of the designer; 14: Brodie Neill, ReCoil, photos by Adam Gibson and Angela Moore; 16: Brodie Neill, Supernova, photo by Adam Gibson; 17: Brodie Neill, Resonance, photo by Adam Gibson; 19: Brodie Neill, photo by Peter Whyte Photography.

Event Partners



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TASMANIAN



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