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Brodie Neill's new Alpha chair

Catherine Sidwell



Ahead of [Salone del mobile 2015](#), Catherine Sidwell viewed [Brodie Neill's](#) Alpha chair prototype just after it was delivered to his [Made in Ratio](#) London studio.

While the Tasmanian designer continues to work on private commissions and limited edition pieces for international clients the elegant Alpha chair is the latest of Neill's designs for his furniture and lighting brand [Made in Ratio](#), which he founded in 2013. Iconic production pieces include seating, lighting and storage and are characterised by organic sculptural shapes, inspired by natural forms.



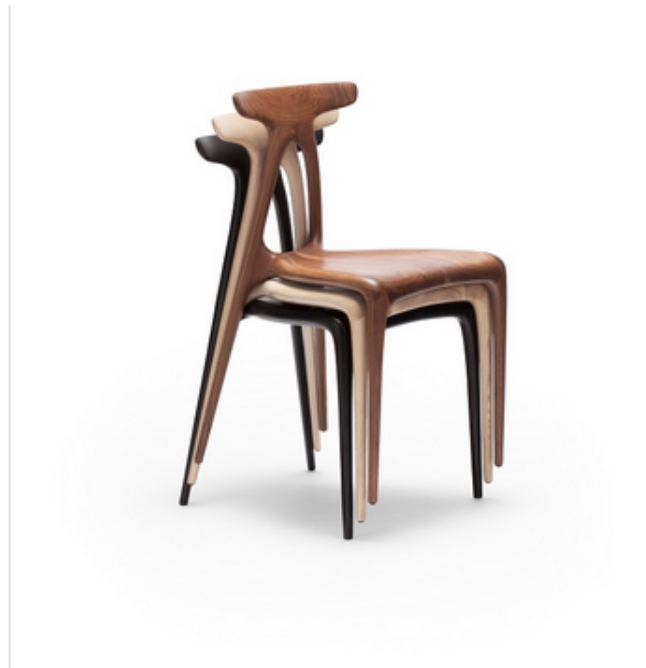
— Alpha Chair, Made in Ratio, 2015

Brodie Neill pushes contemporary digital technology using 3D scanning, CAD (computer-aided design) and animation software to create innovative forms while using traditional materials and honouring craft skills.

With an aesthetic reminiscent of a wishbone or vertebrae, the Alpha chair appears seamless, almost plastic yet it is made of solid wood. Neill described the design and his approach;

"It's got a strong 'A' frame backrest. It kind of merges two fields I am very much interested in, craft but also technology. There's a lot of digital design, robotic manufacturing and shaping. It's almost a chair that you would usually see injection moulded, a fluid piece, but we were able to dissect it digitally and create the components used."

"It started with the need for a chair for the brand, and there have been advancements in technology. Some people are making traditional chairs in this technique but not really celebrating it. It's got the wood craftsmanship and the organic biomorphic form and shape. We are really happy with it."



Neill illustrated on-screen how the chairs neatly stack on top of one another. The Alpha chair looks set to be a new twenty-first century design classic. This is the third year that Made in Ratio has shown in Milan and he is pleased to be launching the Alpha chair as part of [Fuorisalone](#).

Milan has played a key role in Brodie's career "I was always fascinated by the Italian and European model of design and manufacture. So I pursued that quite quickly after graduation by taking a select number of pieces to the young designers platform in Milan and I was fortunate enough to have a couple of designs picked up by manufacturers." This has led to on-going relationships. For instance his Clover light, made by the Italian brand Kundaliniis, is soon to be re-released in an LED version.



— Living Edge launch, Sydney. Architects: Woods Bagot

Earlier this year Neill travelled to Sydney for the launch of the new **Living Edge furniture** showroom where his Made in Ratio range is now available for the first time in Australia. International designers and CEO's of leading furniture brands around the globe flew in to attend the opening at The Woolstores in Alexandria. Woods Bagot created the sensational spacious interior for this 1,900 square metre flagship design store.

Neill's limited edition pieces have been shown alongside architect and designers Zaha Hadid, Ross Lovegrove and Tom Dixon during Superdesign and London Design Festival events. Made in Ratio pieces will now be under the same roof as international brands Herman Miller, Walter Knoll and Vitra as well as Stellar Works and UK based Buster and Punch, Established and Sons and Marc Newson.



— In Ratio Showroom

The first Made in Ratio design to become available in the southern hemisphere is the Supernova table. Inspired by the spontaneous moment of energy as a star is born. The table legs can be used in a vertical orientation as a desk as well as horizontally as a low coffee table. The Cowrie chair, inspired by mid-century-modern Scandinavian moulded plywood furniture by Eames, Saarinen and Jacobsen takes its form from the cowrie shell.

In early March 2015, Neill took part in a panel discussion with Italian architect and designer [Monica Armani](#) and the American furniture designer [Dakota Jackson](#) at the Design Centre, London. Presentations and debate centred on how to reconcile the drive for innovation with local and cultural influences.



— Supernova table

Describing the Tasmanian coast Neill began, "It's a raw and pure place with a lot of untouched wilderness." He explained much of his work stems from his Tasmanian upbringing inspired by forms found in nature even though he has not lived there for 15 years. Fascinated by materials, the design process and new technology he showed a selection of projects, which typically feature one form, one material, and one process.



— Made in Ratio studio, London

As the Alpha chair is launched in Milan we can only wonder what's next for this young Australian designer. Neill says his work is now taking him full circle. Made in Ratio production pieces may just have become available in Australia through Living Edge, however 2015 will see the realisation of further projects with his homeland, including his hometown of Hobart.