

# Gareth Neal

## Main Conference Exhibition: Process, Place, People

Date: 23 September 2013 to 26 October 2013

Venue: The Gallery, Plymouth College of Art



Gareth Neal is perhaps best known for the digitally cut furniture forms he produces, but this show focused upon another dimension of his work that is critical to his identity as a creative producer: his investigations of sustainable practice, including his exploration of the 'bodging' tradition, often working with and responding to (sometimes found) materials within specific locales.

Gareth's furniture design practice was established in 2002 and is currently located in the creative heart of North East London. Gareth specialises in the production of unique pieces, which are designed exclusively for individual clients and companies.

His practice seeks a reconsideration of furniture design and our perceptions of the contemporary by questioning history and processes in relation to people and place. The work is positioned at an

intersecting point between design and craft, evading any simple categorisation into a specific discipline. This innovative approach provides a critical framework for his ideas as the designs develop into new and diverse territory. His work has received critical acclaim and has featured in numerous publications and exhibitions, both in the UK and internationally.

This new exhibition by Gareth Neal brought together a number of existing works to explore and draw out the connections that each piece makes to *process*, *place* and *people*.

The show included Gareth's recent project '*In pursuit of carbon neutral*' - as much a research project as an experimental endeavour. In the winter of 2012 two Ash trees were felled in a woodland in Herefordshire. Gareth cycled to the woodland from London and lived a low-impact carbon lifestyle for several weeks by eating local produce, sleeping outdoors, and not using any electricity; with the aim to explore the potential for carbon negative furniture production in the 21st century.

Also on show, *The Orkney Chair*, (pictured), a collaboration between Gareth and traditional Orkney chair maker Kevin Gauld. The beautifully-crafted chair is the result of a process concerned with sharing and securing unique skills and techniques, celebrating traditions located to a specific place and supporting the growth and potential rebirth of a dying industry.

