

Fiera.



Discovering new talent at the world's design fairs

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Novocastrian was founded by a metalworker (Dean Almond), a designer (Mark McCormick) and an architect (Richy Almond). Part of a generation of designers pulled into the capital and then drawn home again, they are now based in Newcastle where they grew up together. Their work is inspired by and made in the North East of England. Fiera caught up with Mark and Richy after the Northern Design Festival to find out more...

What's the most important thing to know about you?

MARK MCCORMICK: Our craft is born of industry, of the manufacturing heritage of the North East of England. Our creations are elemental, humble and hopefully timeless. We believe in the honest beauty of raw, modest materials. Metal is our obsession, the backbone of our work. Each and every one of our pieces is hand-crafted with passion and integrity by hardy northern souls.

Novocastrian comprises a designer, an architect and a metalworker - how did you meet and how does the dynamic work between the three of you?

RICHY ALMOND: Mark and I grew up together before he relocated to London to work in infographic design. I followed after completing the first part of my architectural training and we immediately started discussing how we could collaborate. In 2013 the initial concept of Novocastrian was born. Having grown up around a family business in industrial metal fabrication, but having chosen to study architecture,



I'd spent much time deliberating over whether the two were compatible. In the end, the solution was blindingly obvious: we'd simply make things with metal. Although we had a good understanding of the fabrication process, neither Mark nor I had much hands-on experience, so we brought my brother Dean on board. As a metalworker, Dean offers a practical influence during the design phases, which allows us to work very efficiently.

What's so inspiring about Newcastle and why is it important to you to reference your local area so heavily in your work?

MMcC: The North East is an area steeped in industrial heritage. It has mined coal, built ships, and invented steam trains. There is an unrelenting creative force that we find inspiring. The city punches above its weight in almost everything it does. It has a grit, a resilience to continuously reinvent itself despite adversity. Central to this is the people, their modesty, their honesty and their earthiness. We've spent a lot of time away from our home town, and we appreciate it more every day.

Tell me a bit about the products you were showing at Northern Design Festival.

MMcC: The Slate Binate coffee table comprises a steel frame, blackened using an ancient technique of applying a burnt mixture of wax and oil; a slab of honed Cumbrian slate quarried only 75 miles from our workshop; and hand-brushed brass trims. The Loft Binate version is an occasional table with a patinated brass top. While the Staiths shelving unit was inspired by the Dunston Staiths, which

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Novocastrian

