

« **Man Machine** » Konstantin Grcic

Exhibition:
from February 13th
Until May 17th 2014
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Opening reception :
Thursday 13th February 2014
from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Open Tuesday to Saturday
from 11a.m. to 7p.m.
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- Courtesy Galerie kreo

Clearly, Konstantin Grcic is a designer who thrives on challenges whatever the technical constraints or time required for a project to unfold. For his new furniture collection *Man Machine* taken from the name of the 1978 album by legendary group Kraftwerk he has worked exclusively in glass, a common enough material and yet one rarely seen in the field of contemporary design. Examples are few and far between in the discipline, with the exception of Shiro Kuramata's *Glass Chair* (1976) and a handful of designs by Fontana Arte. All the odds are that *Man Machine* will write a new chapter of its own, so singular is the collection and so imposing in its purity.

In collaboration with a workshop established in Frankfurt in 1829, Konstantin Grcic has developed an ingenious collection of glass furniture made from industrial float glass identical to that used in architecture. Each piece round table, bookshelves, chair, side table, large table, single and double chests, vertical cabinet is operated by a simple mechanism that not only meets contemporary design's demand for scalability but also that truly performs its function. By means of pistons, hinges, cranks and knobs, and through the use of black silicone that allows plates of glass to move whilst highlighting their design, each piece is dynamic and lends itself to human movements and mechanical strength a reminder of the designer's penchant for the world of automobiles, already manifest in his *Champions* collection exhibited at Galerie kreo in 2011. Nonetheless, there is nothing cold, distant or "electronic" about this association of the transparent and the mechanical. Although *Man Machine* is firmly bedded in the industrial design approach characteristic of Konstantin Grcic's work, here the glass like Kraftwerk's electronic music takes on sensual and porous notes. Yet, in 2008, with his *Karbon* chaise-longue, the designer was examining the tension between reality and appearance: for this piece between the lightness of a design and the sturdiness of a structure.

Exploring the relationships between exterior and interior, fragile appearance and real practicality, potentialities and tautology, human mechanics and the power of air, the *Man Machine* collection, stripped of all artifice, also seems to toy with the current questionings of design, elaborating on the issues addressed by the Light & Space movement in 1960s America and Larry Bell, in particular or those raised by Jeff Koons with his cabinets in the early 1980s. Once again, Konstantin Grcic pushes back the boundaries of the domestic stage by creating a radical collection poised between hi-fi aesthetics, a fascination with transparency and a reflection on his own practice.

– Clément Dirié

Konstantin Grcic, born 1965, founded Konstantin Grcic Industrial Design (KGID) in Munich in 1991. He has worked with Galerie kreo since 2004. He is the winner of two Compasso d'Oro awards, one for his *Mayday* lamp (Flos) in 2001 and another for his *Myto* chair (Plank) in 2011. The Vitra Design Museum is to stage a retrospective exhibition of his work, entitled *Panorama*, from March to September 2014, which will travel to the Z33 in Belgium from February to March 2015.