



The compact shape and simple seat of Konstantin Grcic's 260° chair—or is it a stool?—make it impossible to sit on while keeping still.



Decisions, Decisions
Konstantin Grcic's first major U.S. exhibition is a case study in bold design thinking.

Konstantin Grcic's first major exhibition in a U.S. museum, "Konstantin Grcic: Decisive Design" at the Art Institute of Chicago, is a testament to the range of the Munich-born-and-based designer's vision. It's packed with everything from a laundry basket to jewelry, a ballpoint pen to a library ladder, and a series of chairs whose arresting visual forms resound like blue notes in the design world.

The show pairs mass-produced products with exploratory objects, all displayed in a studiolike environment with dense layers of drawings, sketches, prototypes, 1:1 scale models made from paper, cardboard, and found materials that demonstrate the designer's signature mix of digital and hands-on processes. Trained in carpentry, cabinetmaking, and later industrial design at London's Royal College of Art before a stint in Jasper Morrison's office, Grcic experiments with form, materials, and production techniques—startling users into reengaging with familiar objects they've come to take for granted. "What interests me," says curator Zoë Ryan, "is Konstantin's adherence to mass production without forfeiting creative expression

and the quality of materials and craftsmanship."

In the center, seating, stacked tires, and Mayday lights—produced by Flos as a translation of autoshop lighting into the domestic realm—ring a miniature racetrack (a longtime inspiration for Grcic). There, visitors can lounge in Grcic designs like the cantilevered Myto chair for Plank, shaped from a painstakingly engineered polymer and elegant mesh surfaces, or the 360° chair for Magis, whose unique silhouette revises the dryly technical task chair. The looping track provides an ideal setting for engaging with the twists and tricks of Grcic's design decisions. Through January 24. www.artinstituteofchicago.org
 —SHONQUIS MORENO