

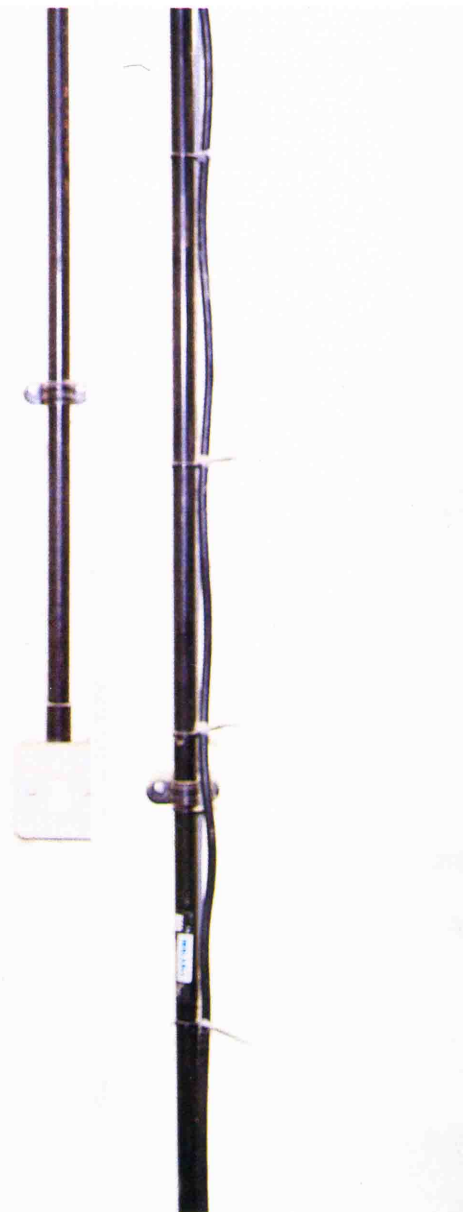
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# Great Scot





**Name** Afroditi Krassa

**What** Industrial designer

**They say** 'Afroditi's designs translate intellectually sophisticated and socially responsible ideas into direct, down-to-earth forms' **Konstantin Grcic**  
industrial designer (for SCP and Magis, etc)

**We say** Her witty yet practical products challenge the boy's-own ethos of industrial design

**Afroditi Krassa is inordinately proud of being an industrial designer** – a label many designers perceive as unsexy, with its emphasis on the functional and workaday. (Even Krassa admits industrial design is 'a very male-orientated, nerdy world'.) But not only does this London-based Greek designer feel there's no reason why women shouldn't excel in this field, but her tactile designs challenge the conventional perception of industrial design as techy and anonymous.

Krassa was initiated into 'hardcore industrial design' when she did a BA in product design at Central Saint Martins – for her degree show in 1996, she created a curvaceous air-conditioning unit. She was soon snapped up by high-profile product-design firm Seymour Powell. 'I was the first woman they'd employed,' she recalls. The company produced a Channel 4 TV series, *Designs on Your...* (followed by either *Bra*, *Car* or *Loo*). As the only female employee, Krassa was involved in the design of the Bioform bra, sold at M&S, whose revolutionary plastic and rubber armature offered an alternative to metal-underwired straps.

Later designs, many conceived at the Royal College of Art, where she gained a place in 1999,

have made playful, experimental use of materials or been socially responsible (although never dowdily so). One – 'the lightest lamp ever' – is made of a silver helium balloon illuminated by an uplighter under it, and anchored by a spool at floor level around which its cable is wound. Then came a mirror cut into a silhouette of a woman, suspended at different heights. Gravity and anti-gravity appear to be a constant in her work. 'I'd never noticed until someone pointed it out,' she says. 'I ought to make that my signature style.'

She has also created silver rings topped with a rubber stamp bearing different words. 'You can shake someone's hand and leave an imprint of your name and phone number on it.'

'I hate design conceived as purely luxury items,' she says. 'Ideally, I'd like to make what designers call "mass-customised" objects – pieces made in large numbers yet tailored to individual tastes, using cheap mass-production technologies, like laser-cutting. I'll never be a craftsman making things in a workshop. I don't want to forget my industrial-design background.' **OM**

Afroditi Krassa's work can be seen at Stand A112, 100% Design, Earl's Court 2, London SW5 (0870 420 4919) on 28 September