

Bruno Ninaber van Eyben (1950) is known for many designs, for instance that of the Dutch guilder and the euro coins. In 1979, he was the first to receive the prestigious Kho Liang Ie Prize for industrial design. Many awards have followed. He was co-founder of npk design, and started a new agency in 1997. Studio Ninaber is located in Delft and in Verl, Germany.

**Which of your designs is seen in the photo and why?**

This photo shows a mortar and pestle, commissioned by Randstad, an employment agency, to present to their employees as a gift in 2000. The mortar has a simple, geometric shape and is made of cast iron. The pestle is made of maple wood. The mortar looks like it is floating. It is portable: you can hook your fingers under the edge and take it to the stove. Cast iron is not usually considered a friendly substance but I think this mortar has a quite pleasant look and feel to it.

**How would you describe yourself as a designer?**

I'm a multi-tasker: always busy doing many things at once. The female element in me, I guess. But there is focus! 'Less is not possible, more is not necessary' is one of my mottos. I look for purity in design. I do not hide things behind decoration, but at the same time try to make something that is not merely 'functional': something that is pleasant exudes care and attention to detail and evokes surprise. I have designed a candlestick that functions like a clip that easily grips and releases the candle and that is elegant at the same time. A design should be as beautiful as it is smart.

'Less is not possible,  
more is not necessary'

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Interview: Annemiek van Grondel  
Photography: Daphne Kuilman

**What do you consider the biggest changes in your profession?**

With increasing globalization, the regular industry as we know it is growing tremendously. This creates niches. In terms of distribution, there are great new opportunities. Today it is possible to easily deliver anything without needing stores, by directly selling products to the consumer. By using the Internet and social media – which means such things as crowd funding – you are able to quickly find a spot on an international platform, a real boost for starting designers.

With many new technologies, such as 3D printing, laser cutting, weaving and printing on demand, a product can be made without having to use mass production machines. I think that's wonderful. People don't simply want a standard mass-produced product but rather a designed product they can cherish. They love to have something that tells a story. With all these new techniques a much more personal form of design is possible.

**What advice could you give young designers?**

Design things and make sure that they are available to the general public. Do not stop at the concept. Designing is only 5% of a product until it is sellable.

[www.ninaber.nl](http://www.ninaber.nl)

