

Design Objects

ARCHITECTS' CHOICE

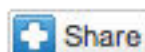
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Design It Yourself

For this quartet of makers, product design can fulfill a personal passion, resolve budgetary constraints, and even expand their clientele.

By Brian Libby

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From left to right: Russ Naylor, design director, Bok Modern; Brad Satterwhite, principal, Kem Studio; Nils Finne, principal, Finne Architects; and Paola Moya, co-founder, InNuevo. *Illustrations by Peter Arkle.*



Architectural metal products by Bok Modern

Architectural Metal Products, Bok Modern

Russ Naylor, AIA, co-founder of San Francisco's NC2 Studio, entered product design to avoid value engineering. After a "beautiful woven-wood railing" on the balcony of a multifamily housing project was slotted for replacement by standard pipe railing, the architect designed a unitized panel that required virtually no fasteners or welding. "We could put this ornamental railing on the project for less than the cost of the pipe rail," Naylor says. The railing helped launch a separate company, Bok Modern, which offers laser-cut, powdercoated steel panels in nearly any pattern. The panels can be used as railing, fencing, or cladding. A forthcoming line called Aigo! will apply the same technology to furniture. Naylor splits his time equally between NC2 and Bok Modern, although his accountant has suggested focusing on the latter full-time, due to its success. "But at heart, we are architects and would never give that up," he says.



Kena Digital Microscope, Kem Studio

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Kem Studio was founded based on the European model of firms that "combine architecture and industrial design in a more meaningful way," co-founder Brad Satterwhite, Assoc. AIA, says. "We all have our hands on everything." Having industrial design in-house has emphasized the role of human behavior and interaction. "Before we start any project, there's a complete understanding of the parameters," he says. "Not just program and budget, but ... in the experience." Kem Studio has designed medical products such as the Cool Stretch foot splint and consumer items such as the Bushnell Voyager binoculars. The Kena

Digital Microscope combines the usability of toy microscopes with the technology of advanced digital microscopes—"less technical and more approachable," Satterwhite says. With knob controls and real-time output on a monitor, the scope can be removed from its base for extra mobility.