



The craft-inspired firm *studiomake* bases its work on the premise that everything it creates should be a poetic gesture. Cases in point: kiln-made, slip-cast porcelain cups (above), are produced by omitting registration keys from the mold-making process, and the sit of faith chair (below) is only really a chair when someone is sitting on it.

## work

### studiomake

Careful craft, from objects to architecture



crowded, subtropical Bangkok. The curriculum's focus on drawing, Im says, also introduced her to architecture as a handmade discipline.

When Im met up with David in San Diego in 2003, the two, who have been married since 2005, got crafty together. That year, they realized *onespace*, an intervention in their 426-square-foot apartment in which steel armatures compartmentalize kitchen, storage, and workshop spaces, which David fabricated. Afterward, while learning ceramics at a local Japanese pottery studio, Im noted further parallels between architecture and craft. "It seemed like it could start to raise questions about architecture, and vice versa," she says of her ceramic vessels' surfaces, negative spaces, and interaction with light. When the couple began considering pursuing master's degrees, those commonalities forced a

revelation. Schafer says, "We thought we could use graduate school to explore a totally different aspect of making," to which Im adds, "We didn't want to make models of buildings but make the thing itself."

In 2007, David and Im were accepted into Cranbrook's metalsmithing and ceramics programs. David's work can be classified neatly as architectural: His final project there conceives a universal clamp with which a user may assemble any materials into furniture or small-scale volumes. Im has gone in a slightly different direction. Using slip casting as her primary method, she is producing ceramics such as kiln-made (top left), whose appearance of deconstructed fragility belie their mass-production potential.

The Schafers produce their work under the moniker *studiomake*. This summer, the new graduates will pack their equipment into a shipping container bound for Bangkok, where they plan to build a house on a family plot while looking for residential and interiors commissions. Both say their crafts education will influence output. "Before you can have a great cast-concrete wall, your formwork has to be as beautiful as the form itself," David says of Im's slip casting. As for himself, he notes, "I hope my architecture expresses itself through the joinery. It's that magic point where materials come together."

Crafts expertise will also diversify *studiomake's* business model, as the Schafers plan to manufacture or license designs like those universal clamps. Product royalties should provide the couple with an extra, faster stream of revenue than a new architecture firm alone could generate. "Im and I always assumed we would practice together," David says, "and we saw this as an opportunity to transition into that studio." *David Sokol*

