

Made in Japan /// Kudamemo



STYLING: KATSUYA KUBOKAWA

A striking facsimile of an Anjou pear or a Fuji apple, Kudamemo is a notepad that looks almost good enough to eat. Close to life size, each curving, 3-D block is composed entirely of paper pages fanning out vertically from its center. Resembling fruit slices, the sheets are edged with red or green and dotted with a brown seed positioned appropriately close to the core. While a convincing, stem-shaped wood stub caps each Kudamemo, a colored clip holding its end sheets together maintains the luscious, fruit-shaped form, even as pages are pulled out and used up.

WORDS NAOMI POLLOCK
PHOTO KAZUHIRO OKUMURA

A cross between the Japanese word for fruit, *kudamono*, and the English word “memo,” the cleverly titled Kudamemo is the brainchild of D-BROS, the product design division of the Tokyo-based advertising agency Draft Co., Ltd. Each year the team creates a themed group of objects that spotlight the company’s expertise in paper and printing technology. Unsurprisingly given its construction, Kudamemo was inspired by the art of bookbinding.

What sparked the team’s interest in books is the way they turn from flat objects into freestanding ones when their front and back covers touch. Though the designers contemplated other ways to use this structure, it was a natural for a notepad. And because the binding is in the middle, the possibilities for shaping the pages’ outer profiles were just about limitless. While various ideas for the overall form were considered, the designers chose fruit because it functioned well, felt good in the hand and looked lovely on a desktop.

Manufactured in Japan, the pages are printed in Tokyo and turned into Kudamemo in Saitama Prefecture, where they are painstakingly glued in place and bound together with cloth tape—just like a bona fide book. Like actual fruit, the paper pads are then tenderly swaddled with Styrofoam net cups.

Tokyo-based American architect Naomi Pollock writes on Japanese design for the Financial Times, Wallpaper and Architectural Record. Her books include Modern Japanese House and Made in Japan: 100 New Products