



Farah and Adela  
*Architects*

**FARAH AZIZAN AND Adela Askander** met while studying architecture in the United Kingdom. Years later, the duo returned home to Kuala Lumpur and started Studio Bikin. According to Azizan: "We saw an opportunity to build and realise our projects and not to be stuck in an office in the UK being paper architects and never building anything."

Since Studio Bikin began in 2012, it has gone from strength to strength in a short time: they now have seven staff members and a variety of small-to-medium projects under their belts.

Farah and Adela recommend:

- *Research and eat street food all over Kuala Lumpur.*
- *Catch a show or a drink or three at the jazz club No Black Tie.*
- *Take a morning run in the Lake Gardens (Perdana Botanical Garden).*

The pair has designed interior fit-outs, their own houses, a neighbour's house, and a gymnasium for Jotomi Fitness. The gym project expanded to include not just the architecture but a design for its corporate identity as well. Askander explains that "the philosophy for the identity has gone into the interior – it set the tone, materials and colours. We delivered it in eight weeks and that kind of timeframe whips you into shape immediately. We learnt a great deal, then we were able to grow from there."

Studio Bikin's latest design – its largest commercial project to date – is The Row, which they describe as a new concept for Malaysian architecture.

"We enjoy pushing the boundaries," says Azizan. The Row offers transparency and circulation between cafés, a bar and offices that wrap around a central event space, Slate. Affectionately described by the duo as 'the mothership', it is perfect for free-flowing parties and exhibitions.

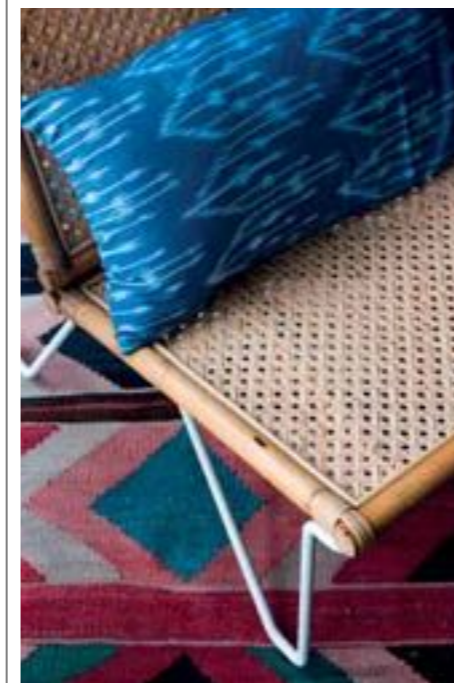
Azizan and Askander really enjoy this type of public-facing architecture that helps to regenerate rundown areas. Azizan explains: "It is good that there are developers who are doing low-density revitalisation in KL when it's so easy to just raze those areas and build towers."

The pair is also working on a pilot programme for Think City, which seeks to help regenerate inner-city problem areas with innovative pocket parks. "We like the idea of giving a little bit of the city block back to people so they feel a sense of belonging," states Askander. Studio Bikin's design includes a giant treehouse structure which creates a plaza in the middle of the park.

Studio Bikin has more recently added a furniture and homeware accessories line, Kedai Bikin, to their business. Their affordable modern designs frequently use rattan and string methods of manufacture. "We're interested in how to contemporarise traditional techniques," says Azizan, and "revitalising dying local crafts" in the process. As she suggests, their philosophy is about "architecture that is generated from some kind of need – from a ground-up approach."



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**Facing page.** Farah Azizan and Adela Askander, founders of Studio Bikin and Kedai Bikin.

**This page, clockwise from top left.** Design prototypes for cast-concrete knobs inspired by traditional Malaysian patterns; the firm's studio in the Bangsar district; bathroom design in a former printing building; a rattan chair and cushion from Kedai Bikin's new furniture range.