



## Botanical

One day in 1996, Miguel Gomez-Ibanez came upon a show in Boston by furniture makers from the North Bennet Street School. Gomez-Ibanez had been an architect for 20 years, but that day he decided his future lay in furniture. “What intrigued me,” he says, “was to exercise that kind of mastery—and to make something that would outlive me.” Within a year, Gomez-Ibanez had sold his practice and enrolled at the school. Since graduation he’s built furniture in a range of styles, but he gravitates to the 17th and 18th centuries. His desk-on-stand in



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## Letter Box

walnut and ebony is based on furniture of the William and Mary period, but not on any particular piece. He derived the marquetry patterns on the outer doors and drawers from garden designs of the era and executed them in Carpathian elm, oak burl, and mother-of-pearl. The botanical alphabet inside the desk was painted by Joseph Reed. Now that Gomez-Ibanez can exercise the mastery he admired at that furniture show 10 years ago, his path has circled back to North Bennet Street: Last summer, he became executive director of the school.

—Jonathan Binzen