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Shoko Cesar, above, and Calgary-based partner Greg Ball won a "Best of Canada" award for their Hoodoo lamp design.

Hoodoo lamp captures essence of badlands

Albertans' design nabs national prize

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A lamp inspired by a weekend trip to the Drumheller badlands has won a prestigious national design award.

The Hoodoo lamp, created by Edmonton-based industrial designer Shoko Cesar and his Calgary-based partner in design, Greg Ball, has snagged a 2006 Canadian Interiors "Best of Canada" Award.

The lamp, on exhibit at the Design Exchange in Toronto this month, also showed at the 2005 Edmonton THAW exhibit, the 2005 Edmonton Home and Interior Design Show, the 2006 Toronto Interior Design Show and the Smithsonian Folkfest in Washington, D.C., this year.

"I was really pleased," said Cesar, reacting to news of the award before hopping a plane to Toronto this week to receive the prize. "It has been five years we've been working together developing product.

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Award-winning designers share background in art

HOODOO

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"Getting it recognized makes all the work (worth it) and pushes us even more to work harder."

Cesar and Ball have been working together since both were enrolled in the University of Alberta's highly regarded industrial design program.

"We both have a background in art," he said. "It was natural to start experimenting, to find new materials we can work with, design with."

On a quest for inspiration, the two designers went to the badlands for a weekend in 2004. "We both like fishing, we both like camping. We took a lot of pictures," he said. "We tried to get more locally inspired, and we started a project called the Hoodoo series."

There are now two products in the series — the prize-winning lamp and a coat rack — while a third, a bottle opener, is in mid-development.

The designers meet in Red Deer to do their sketches, then return to their respective home studios to perfect the designs on computer. The Hoodoo lamp is made of coroplast (a corrugated plastic material that comes in four-by-eight sheets), cut out by a computer-assisted machine. The lamp, suggestive of a tiered, pinnacle-shaped hoodoo, is four feet high, 12 inches in diameter and lit with blue fluorescent light.

"Why fluorescent? We live in a world where energy is starting to become scarce, and we're also thinking of sustainability," said Cesar. "At the same time, because the lamp is encapsulated, it's a shell, so we needed something that doesn't heat up so much because it's plastic."

The Hoodoo lamp is available at Collectiv, a store in Edmonton's Highlands neighbourhood, and at Block, a design store in Calgary.

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