

NOT YOUR AVERAGE CUBICLE » BY DAVE MCGINN



The Pop-Up Office went viral on design sites. DUBBELDAM ARCHITECTURE + DESIGN

How do you work? To explore that question, Heather Dubbeldam and her team at DUBBELDAM Architecture + Design in Toronto created a “pop-up” office made of reclaimed wooden shipping pallets for the Interior Design Show in Toronto earlier this year. The office and its wooden modules, divided by concepts – focus, collaborate, lounge and defuel – became a viral hit on design sites after its debut.

Made from about 80 pallets, the office was designed to fit inside a 20 foot by 8 foot shipping container. (The IDS exhibit was sponsored by Steel Space, a container-based event-design company, and the idea of shipping containers inspired the idea of using pallets, Dubbeldam says.)

Dubbeldam says she was partly inspired by the events of Hurricane Sandy to create the concept space, which admittedly is more fitting as a temporary workspace rather than a permanent one. Given the fact that it fits within a shipping container, the Pop-Up

Office could be dropped into disaster areas to assist relief efforts, she says, although there are currently no plans to develop the office further.

The temporary office nabbed the interest of students and faculty at Ryerson, who invited Dubbeldam to feature it this weekend at the university’s school of interior design year-end show.

Beautifully milled and designed with sinuous forms, the office’s material explains much of its popularity, Dubbeldam says. “The choice of that recycled material being wood, and the warmth of that wood – I think wood just appeals to a lot of people in general,” she says.

But the material was secondary to the idea of exploring what work means today.

“We were just really going back to the essentials,” she says. “Mobility, adaptability and flexibility are key elements in the modern office.”

Of course, you can only wish your cubicle looked this good.