TORONTO

MOBILE DEVICE

NEED AN OFFICE RIGHT AWAY? HEATHER DUBBELDAM PROPOSES A SNAP-TOGETHER WORKSPACE THAT FITS INSIDE A CONTAINER

BY JOHN BENTLEY MAYS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SHAI GIL

STRIPPED TO ITS BAREST ESSENTIALS, an office is merely a place to power up one's smart phones and tablets, and a surface to work on, says Toronto architect Heather Dubbeldam. But how basic can a workplace become and still be comfortable, welcoming and functional?

Dubbeldam gives us her answer with a kit of parts fashioned from soft maple forklift pallets and scaled to fit inside a standard shipping container. Pop-Up Office provides just about all of the millwork and furniture needed to set up a small business operation quickly and cheaply. Tables, desks, benches, even floors and ceilings and walls, are included in five separately packaged modules measuring just under a metre wide and two metres high, all designed to be mixed and matched.

One module's in-built desk provides an individual workstation; another offers lounge seating with sinuous chaises for informal meetings and conversations; and a third sports a bar at kitchen counter height, ideal for coffee and lunch breaks. The sociable combination of tables and benches meant for collaborative projects comprises the remaining two modules.

The style is rough and ready, much like the discarded cargo pallets themselves. Nothing has been painted or varnished. Where the body comes into contact with the wood, Dubbeldam has sanded down the slats and planks; otherwise, the timbers are as raw as the day she rescued them from a local flooring distributor.

Pop-Up Office was originally designed as a demonstration exhibit at the Interior Design Show in Toronto earlier this year, but Dubbeldam is open to the project becoming a viable product. She foresees several uses for her imaginative scheme. It could serve as a temporary command centre in a disaster zone, the heart of a start-up on a tight budget, or the headquarters for an outdoor festival. Wherever it goes, the architect says, the office will embody adaptability and sustainability – key elements in any workplace tailored to the new ways we work. **AZ** *dubbeldam.ca*

Made from reclaimed shipping pallets, the Pop-Up Office is an inexpensive option for setting up a workstation anywhere, any time. Each of the five modules suits a different function, from a basic desk and bench system to casual seating for face-to-face conversations.