

**Reduce, Reuse, Recycle:
An Office of Found Art**



architects

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Steve Kleineman, AIA, is the president of SKD Architects, Inc. in Plymouth, Minnesota. That's his lengthy title.

In short, he's a tinkerer.

Steve "takes ordinary materials and uses them in creative ways." He designs, he invents, he envisions...and he assembles on the fly. Though he has been an architect for over 30 years, his interests are not limited to structures and spaces...if you have ever wondered, the proverbial "better mousetrap" has been built. By Steve.

Anything that could—and should—be a harmonious whole comprised of form and function is likely to pique his interest, from enormous laboratories to candy dishes.

His own office space is no exception.





Before the concept of “green building” hit the collective consciousness of the building industry, Steve was already putting the principles “reduce, reuse, and recycle” to work for him.

Perhaps it was a way to camouflage his tendency to hang on to random items (“How long do you think hot dogs stay good in the refrigerator?”).

Or, it may have been that he was (yet again) on the cutting edge of a trend.

However it transpired, he made for himself a gem of an office...portable, economical, attractive, accessible, and—above all—architectural.

Enjoy the following tour through the office of SKD Architects. Take a few notes, look in your own garage or garbage, and get to work on making some of your own “found art.”

Steve designed and built his offices to reflect a contemporary look applied to a traditional theme.

In the center of the space is a house, the rooms of which are used as conference and presentation spaces.

Surrounding the house are work stations made of colorfully painted plywood, steel angles, and semitransparent plastic dividers. Also within the public areas are a resource library, a copy center, two restrooms, and a Kitchen.





At the periphery (lined playfully with black and white 12" x 12" vinyl composite tiles usually used as flooring) are private offices with doors made of Kalwall translucent window panels.

Upon entering the office, the company name is announced on an arch made floor joists and scraps of stone common to the residential construction industry.



Easily mistaken for pricey designer light fixtures, Steve took microphone goosenecks and outfitted them with sockets for versatile, bendable lighting throughout the spaces.

The Reference Library and interior design work table are directly lit with standard, bare fluorescent bulb utility fixtures with reused conduits as arms.





Sliding glass doors made of translucent window panels, barn track hardware, pipe conduit, and miscellaneous screws and washers.



The large “house” conference room is a flexible space...able to be separated by pulling down a garage door built of wood and standard hardware.





Scraps of wood were used to trim doorways.

Common manufactured windows that “came out of a box” allow light to travel between the walled offices and the public areas and were also used as end panels for the separate work stations throughout the office.

Accessibility bars were assembled of common materials—very necessary fixtures made of formerly necessary nuts and bolts.





Corrugated metal cladding was used both inside and outside. It serves as a backsplash in the Kitchen, a vanity component in the bathroom, roofing on the house, an “overhang” in the hallway, and as a modesty panel for the Reception Desk.



Last but not least, the magazine table in the Reception Area is a particular treasure. Made of scrap wood, the tabletop rests on legs gleaned from a dumpster diving expedition. The shiny aluminum plating that had been used to make trophies must have caught Steve's eye as he decided to salvage it and use it to cover plastic tubes that make the attractive legs of this fine piece of furniture.