

# CREATIVE SPACES

A TOUR OF INNOVATIVE WORKPLACES



DAVID WHITTAKER PHOTO

The home base of design and art consultancy Kelly McTernan Lavoie contains works from J.C. Heywood's *The Japan Collé Etchings*, on the left and right, and a Roy Lichtenstein *M-Maybe* poster visible at the end of the hallway. KML principal John Kelly says the office represents clear thinking and clean lines.

## A peek at how the pros do it

Stepping into the KML Studio — the home base of Toronto design and art consultancy Kelly McTernan Lavoie — is like peeking into an interior designer's house. How do the pros do it? In a handsome brick building in north Toronto, the interiors have been lovingly restored to an all-white canvas for a fresh, colour-darted aesthetic.

BY SARAH TRELEAVEN

**What** The collection includes a wide variety of contemporary work — sculptures, paintings, prints and drawings — by Canadian and international artists such as Takao Tanabe, James Lahey, Howard Hodgkin and Antoni Tapies. “[It’s] selected to inspire, challenge, invigorate and provoke,” says KML principal John Kelly. Mixed in with the 50-odd pieces are large, colourful paintings by Mr. Kelly.

**Showpieces** *The Cat*, by Clive Dobson, is a four-foot-tall wooden piece with carefully carved protruding whiskers. It sits at the top of the stairs on the second storey of the

building, peering out onto the street with oversize eyes, and was sculpted from trees cut down by municipal workers. *Brunswick Skid*, by Antonio Ecosta, is a weathered skid gussied up with dabs of soft, bright pink and tangerine paint. Mr. Ecosta found the skid on his way home and decided to paint it as a gift to Mr. Kelly when they were both young artists sharing a house on Brunswick Avenue in Toronto.

**Where** The works are evenly distributed throughout the office, with equal attention on the open-concept workspaces, reception and meeting areas. “Our attitude is that every space counts,” says Mr. Kelly. “That’s a general philosophical point of view for us — that

nothing is second place.”

**How** In addition to the items painted by Mr. Kelly and acquired from friends, the works are purchased in private galleries at home and abroad. Mr. Kelly does most of the buying, but his two partners, Stella McTernan and Claire Lavoie, are active participants. The partners seek out pieces that have enduring qualities. “Nothing would be more frustrating for me than to have a piece of art on the wall you just don’t want around anymore,” says Mr. Kelly.

**Why** In addition to the benefits of creating a pleasant workspace, KML is mindful of their space as a showroom for their capabilities. “It inevitably becomes a reflection of who you are and it gets tied to your brand,” says Mr. Kelly, who says the office represents clear thinking, clean lines and economic and environmental priorities. “It’s a reflection of our core values.”

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