

From the air with flair

 By [Beverley Klein](#)

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Design is all about seeing something ordinary and making it extraordinary, and that's just what the guys at Sky Decor do. They transform old and abandoned aircraft parts and turn them into beautiful furniture displays.

Based in Kenya, Sky Decor is run by owners Samuel Omondi and Khan Key. Both architecture graduates, the pair integrate the freedom of flight into their artworks. Each design is handcrafted and used both metallic and wood-working techniques.



We caught up with Sky Decor to find out more about their unique furniture and designing in Kenya.

▣ *What are the origins of Sky Decor?*

Sky Decor started when Khan and I (Sam) happened upon an abandoned plane in a remote part of northern Kenya. The aesthetic of the aircraft in this setting was beautiful -- or at least we thought so. It really intrigued us. Khan and I began to see a lot of potential in the abandoned plane, and started to envision what it could become if handled creatively and artistically.

▣ *What are the biggest challenges facing design?*

Although our products have created a lot of interest and have received positive acclaim in other nations such as Korea and South Africa, and the international market seems to be open to the unique design that we offer, yet we cannot really ever be stable until we are successful in the local market. But getting in to the Kenyan market is difficult. First, there does not seem to be such a big appreciation for art and design here. Besides that, Western and Chinese imports have tended to dominate the market and the level of trust among consumers is higher for the imported products than for local artisans. The biggest problem facing design in Kenya is having Kenyans develop an appreciation for their own designers and having Kenyans support the local market.

🔸 ***Explain the importance of design and creative innovation in Kenya.***

Design and creative innovation in Kenya is important because Kenya has a rich history of art and design. Yet we are not making full use of that history or of the potential for further advance. We need to have confidence in ourselves so that local artists have hope for a good future. This will open the doors for a whole new industry to bloom and blossom. Artists need to be recognized and appreciated in their our country. But it is hard to set that trend when the attraction is toward mimicry of the foreign products. It is important for a country to use design to express its history and identity. We need to do that more in Kenya.

🔸 ***What would you like to see more of in the design industry?***

As indicated above, I would like to see more local artists becoming recognized and appreciated in the markets here. We need to be empowered. Something that really hinders design, which we are lacking but which we need, is better production tools that can fabricate the specific needs of an artist. We have found that, in Kenya, when we want a specific or customised piece or attachment, we have to make it from scratch. Kenyan manufacturers do not cater for this need, and if they do, the cost is extremely high.

🔸 ***What does design mean to you?***

Design can be interpreted in a lot of ways. To Sky Decor, it is an expression of self. Our works are inspired from our diverse life experiences and our own characters. Through the processes of creation and design we strive to create an aesthetic that is representative of this unique identity.

🔸 ***What are you working on at the moment?***

These are the projects we have right now. We are excited about the possibility of travelling to South Sudan to buy an abandoned airplane. We have several projects going but the most intriguing is 50-meter art installation for a prestigious hotel in Nairobi. We are designing a playground for children, a new middle-range furniture line that is cost-friendly and hopefully will appeal to the local market, and renovating a hotel in Mombasa.

For more on Sky Decor, visit their Facebook page: www.facebook.com/skydecorltd/, Twitter: [@Sky_Dec](https://twitter.com/Sky_Dec) and Instagram: [@KhanKey](https://www.instagram.com/KhanKey).

Keep checking our [Design Month section](#) as we explore everything design throughout February.

ABOUT BEVERLEY KLEIN

Beverley Klein is the editor of the Marketing Media South Africa section on Bizcommunity.com. With a background in journalism and historical studies, she's dived into the world of industry news, curating content, writing and interviewing thought leaders. She's often spotted in a forest on the weekend and rarely seen without a camera. Follow [@BevCPT](#).

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