

Tip #115

A Studio Alternative -- claim and define a space you already have



Last time, in Tip # 114, we talked about building or finding a separate studio, a place of your own to work and be creative – that’s a dream for a lot of us. And for many of us that dream may be far in the future! (Mine waited a very long time...)

In the meantime, let’s get creative about finding a place to create where we *are* – working with what’s available! We don’t really require a separate space, unless we’re welding metal sculptures or doing pottery pieces that require a kiln (or work in oils and have a family member who’s allergic!), it’s just what we’d love...

115-1, Thrift-store cubbies and an old hymnal rack make this little corner very usable!



It's nice to have a place where you don't need to put your stuff away each time you work... you may have an underused room or corner of one you can put to work. Folding screens or curtains can isolate it from traffic areas and hide the lovely chaos of creating.

A basement, particularly a walk-out one with a nice big sliding glass door, may be ideal! Cooler in summer, warmer in winter, and out of the traffic of everyday living.

Do you have a big closet you're not using fully? Some artists make use of these for a tiny studio – the folding doors close the mess away when you're not working and keep little hands out of your stuff if you have children.

115-2, Studio light

Add an artists' balanced lighting fixture and make this a very practical, usable option – you can have plenty of good light without floor to ceiling north-facing windows or a skylight!

This type has both fluorescent and incandescent bulbs to balance warm and cool; others have all-in-one bulbs. I have a couple



like this and find they really do the job for me, day or night – take a peek here (<http://astore.amazon.com/httpcathyjohi-20/detail/B00251GEZC>) to see more on how they work. They're adjustable, too!

Shelves, cubbies, hanging cabinets and even hanging fabric or plastic shoe racks, storage bags or travel pockets, as one of my readers suggested, give you art storage room without taking up extra floor space. That's what I do a lot of in my tiny, 10' x 10' studio, but it works wherever you are. Use your imagination ... I just saw a hanging gift-wrap storage bag that had possibilities! (Google "hanging shoe racks," "hanging accessory bags," or simply "storage bags" and see what I mean ... LOTS of great studio storage possibilities.)

115-3, Work easel

There is of course no end of studio furniture and equipment that you may wish to consider – taborets, easels, and more. One of my favorite finds is a small tabletop easel that I can fold and put away when I need the space. (It works great for acrylics and watercolors...)



115-4, Work corner

You can see it folded out of the way to the right of my chair, in the shed. Shaker pegs, wooden cubbies, mugs for holding pencils and brushes, and even an old magazine rack for sketchbooks makes this tiny corner very workable. (I've done illustrations for magazines here, like the one above!)

My old one even has a drawer to store art supplies or paper in, to save space ... it's similar to this

(<http://astore.amazon.com/httpcathyjohi-20/detail/B002Y6CWCM>).

Under-bed storage bins can hold watercolor paper, matboard, finished paintings ... just don't forget where they are!

115-5, Work space

On a tight budget when it comes to outfitting your “found” studio? A folding TV table can give you a working area you can put away if you need to. I’ve used this one for painting indoors and out, as well as a place to tape my videos! (When not in use, it folds away against the wall.)



A plastic tool box can hold all your paints and brushes – you can find inexpensive ones in discount stores, or even secondhand. The TV tables are inexpensive new, but I’ve also seen them in garage sales and thrift stores for almost nothing. (You may find those hanging shoe racks or storage pockets there too!) A secondhand hanging spice rack holds a lot of art supplies, too, and a magazine rack that hangs on the wall can hold sketchbooks, watercolor blocks, or even canvases.

Mugs, jars, margarine tubs, food storage containers – all these can hold brushes, pens, pencils, or double as water containers in your home made studio. I love the leak-proof plastic freezer containers for paint water ... some even come with a divider inside so you can have clean mixing water as well as brush-rinsing water.

And of course, I keep a backpack studio in my Jeep, containing palette, water container, watercolor block, and brushes ... I can, and do, work anywhere! We’ll talk more about that next time, in Tip #116!

I know you’ve got lots of “studio finding” and outfitting tips of your own – please share! Feedback is always welcome...

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