

Worksheets and information on organizing your studio or work area.

Controlling Creative Clutter: Organizing the Artist's Studio

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Artist-How-To

# Controlling Creative Clutter

Organizing the Artist's Studio



by Diane Dobson-Barton

**Second Edition**

# **Controlling Creative Clutter**

**Diane Dobson-Barton**

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## **Part One**

### **Let's Get Started**

## Supplies You Will Need to Begin Organizing

- ❖ Labels and/or label maker – get a high quality label maker as you can afford. You do not want to go to all the trouble of labeling everything to have your labels fall off or become unreadable.
- ❖ Index Cards – whatever size you prefer. I personally prefer unlined.
- ❖ Dividers - tab dividers for index cards, notebooks and file folders.
- ❖ Pens/Pencils – such as sharpies and ballpoint pens
- ❖ Cleaning Supplies – try to keep workspace-cleaning supplies separate from household, if possible. It will help prevent you from having to search for them when they are needed
- ❖ Large Strong Trash Bags – the one with handles make it much easier.
- ❖ At Least Eight Strong Sturdy Boxes – go to your local grocer and you usually can get these free. Alternatively, go to your local moving/shipping company.
- ❖ Folders to File Paperwork – get the same size / color / shape, and use labels to differentiate subject matter.

## Why Do You Want To Be Organized?

***“People are always blaming their circumstances for what they are. I don’t believe in circumstances. The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for circumstances they want, and if they can’t find them, make them.” - George Bernard Shaw***

It is your life, and you are the boss, nobody can motivate you to be organized. You need to figure out why you need to be organized. If you cannot think of why you need to do this, then perhaps this is not the time in your life when you need to try to make this change.

In the space provided below, write the reasons you want to be better organized. It is important you put serious thought into this question.

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❖ First, you have to **sort** it all out. You need to look at all the things you currently own. One of the main reasons people are not organized is that they have more than they really need. However, we will cover that in more detail later.

❖ Then how will you **store** it? You will need to find a way that will keep things where you need them, when you need them. In addition, to keep things that you do not need on a regular basis out of the way.

❖ Last, you need a way to **maintain** it all. If you have done the first two to fit your needs, then this will not be too tough. After all no one wants to spend all their time keeping their space up, the point is to be able to use it.

## **CLEAR**

**C** – Command- Decide you will keep things under control. Take note of any particular problem areas

**L** – Learn – Learn what you have on hand as far as art and storage supplies.

**E** – Eliminate – Get rid of items you do not need.

**A** – Arrange – Do a floor plan and arrange where everything needs to go. Decide on a spot for everything you keep.

**R** – Rejuvenated – by doing all of the above you will find your creativity rejuvenated and your create time being more productive.

## **What IS Under That Pile???**

*“Creative clutter is better than idle tidiness” – unknown*

As an artist, you are a creative individual that is probably a visual learner. With your workspace, this mean you like to have everything out where you can see it. By seeing your items, you find it inspires you and helps feed your creative spirit. The problem is when you have a lot of ‘stuff’ and not enough space. All that extra ‘stuff’ is why most people cannot get and/or stay organized. Therefore, you inevitably wind up with piles everywhere and all that clutter cannot only cost you space, but also energy.

**First we need to figure out what art supplies you have. Begin by making a list. If you have five different types of soft pastels, just write ‘soft pastels’. This does not have to be in minute detail. If you need more space, use a separate sheet of paper.**

**List below what you currently have on hand.**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.
- 15.
- 16.
- 17.
- 18.
- 19.
- 20.

❖ If nothing else convinces you that you are better off having an organized workspace, perhaps the effect it has on your finances will; according to a study by Day-Timer the higher a person's income the more likely they are to have a scheduled to-do list and items prioritize on that list. In order to make that affective, your work area should be ready for you to do what whatever you need to do.

**Once you have the list, and see everything that you have. Trick yourself by telling yourself that next week you HAVE to move to a new location and begin considering what you would take with you. On your list of the items, highlight or mark the things that you think you want to keep in your space.**

**Now give yourself time to examine your work area, make a list for yourself of what you LIKE in the space, and another of what you do NOT like.**

**Take note of any special problem areas, such as piles in corners etc...**

What do you currently like in your space?

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What Do You Currently Not Like In Your Space?

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**What Are You Goals?**

*“We’re lost but were making good time” Yogi Berra*

- ❖ **Set Simple Attainable Goals**
- ❖ **Schedule Time to Work on Those Goals**

I have met many artists that believe part of an artistic personality is to seem disorderly. That to have an organized space of any kind was only for those that wore pocket protectors and carried

a calculator with them everywhere.

What I have found though is without some sort of order; it is not possible to move forward. When you cannot find necessary equipment and supplies, it cost you time and energy. I do not know about you but I am not getting any younger and I cannot afford to waste a great deal of energy on doing something nonproductive

Perhaps you are an all or nothing type person and you are asking yourself, “If you are not going to have everything perfect, than why even bother? Why organize your work area at all?” But remember there needs to be a balance, no one wants to be so concerned about organizing that they focus on that at the cost of ever working on your art.

When you are done with that self-defeating thought process, ask your self the following questions.

1. Does your work area reflect you and your work?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Some do / Some Don't \_\_\_\_\_

2. Look objectively, would you see it belonged to someone that is in the process of a project, or is it just a complete mess?

Project \_\_\_\_\_ Mess \_\_\_\_\_

3. Does the way you have your studio currently work with any of your goals?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

4. Briefly tell how you think it would benefit your business or work time to be more organized?

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5. Would you save time for more creative activities?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Organizing and moving forward always works best if you have a clear goal of where you want

to go, and what you need to get there. Before beginning to organize your working materials, ask yourself what are your creative goals? What mediums do you plan to use in the next 6 months? In the next month?

*If you only work with one medium this section is not intended for you and you may skip on to the next...*

Ask yourself; what areas of art currently interest you the most? Is it painting? Drawing portraits? Perhaps mixed media? What do you want to do with these materials? In the space provided below write your answer.

**Goal(s) for using your creativity;**

Example: “I want to create realistic art dolls with a creative flair. I want them to come to life and create a sense of whimsy for the viewer.”

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**\*TIP** *Make a sign out of your goal. Post it where you can see it as you work through the remainder of this information. Decorate it, alter it and make it fun!*

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name

HAS SET THE GOAL TO:

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Goal To Be Completed By

**Briefly list the materials you will need to do this;**

Example: “Polymer Clay – Super Sculpey, Sculpting Tools, Toaster Oven, Fabric for clothing, Sewing Machine, Sewing Threads and Needles, Scissors, Sketching Items – Smaller Sketch Pads, A safe place to set items when I am not working on them- where they will not be bothered by pets.”

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