

Creative Spaces

Whizzing between two desks in her studio, Hayley Mills-Styles loves the serenity and productivity that working from home gives her

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I'm lucky to have a studio in my house; it's a lovely light room overlooking our garden so I can see the birds as I'm sitting at my desk. When we redecorated our house, I was able to make the second bedroom into my own space with pale grey walls and flooring. Originally, this room was bright blue and not great to create in, but I made it work.

I've tried to keep the furniture a great mix of modern and vintage, and although my studio isn't huge, I've made the most of the available space, managing to get two desks and plenty of storage that works for me and my practice.

I have a separate desk for my Pfaff creative embroidery machine; it has a large working area so having space around the machine is important. I often wonder what a time-lapse film of my office would look like, as I move between desks on my office chair!

My studio gets great light in the morning which is my most productive time of the day, I love being able to get up and wander into the studio to start work in my dressing gown. On a typical day, I'm in the studio by 7am, sending emails, planning workshops and making samples. Working at home also allows me to grab studio time before meetings and workshops.

My comfy chair is a fairly new addition to the space. When I started working on more handstitched pieces, I found sitting at my desk for hours on end a bit uncomfortable. This little chair gives me plenty of elbow room for stitching and I can still watch a murder mystery on my laptop.

I love being able to work at home; we moved into our house in 2014 and I knew this space would be my studio. A couple of years ago I tried a studio space local to me in Leeds; it was a large space with great facilities but I found it didn't work for me and my way of working. I've always liked working at home and I'm able to manage my time well and increase my productivity.

My studio isn't as large as I would like, which can impact on the size of the pieces I make. When I have a large project on the go like Archive & Other Stories, I tend to expand my studio to other parts of the house!

Storage space can also be an issue when I'm teaching a lot of workshops and busy with commissions. I keep most of my teaching materials and equipment in the loft which allows me to have a tidy space to create in.

I love the flexibility working from home gives me,



I tend to get a bit distracted in the afternoon and I can pop downstairs to watch telly for an hour or watch the birds in the garden. I live very close to Kirkstall Abbey and lots of other green spaces so I can pop out for a cuppa and get some fresh air easily which perks me up and gives me a new focus.

I'm told that my tidiness is rare for an artist but I like to keep my studio clean and organised. I find I'm more productive when I can easily lay my hands on fabric and thread rather than moving things around and getting in a muddle.

I organise my threads by type; this helps me go to the right place when I'm planning and creating work. I use Madeira Rayon threads for my digital embroidery and I also have a collection of vintage threads that I use for hand stitching and embellishments. Organising threads is one of my de-stressing tasks after a busy day.

I use my vintage filing cabinet to store fabric, organising my stash by colour and type. The majority of my work uses white and cream fabrics so I keep these in one drawer. When I start sampling for a new body of work, I love to browse through my collection of wool, antique linen, and household textiles to find the best fabric for the piece I'm creating.

My shelves are full of haberdashery supplies like buttons, ribbons, and threads. My collection has been growing for many years and I have tins and Tupperware from my childhood home, mixed in with contemporary storage solutions.

I organise my thoughts and ideas on my notice board; it's great to pin up samples and inspiration in one place so I can see how the work is developing. I'm currently exploring an ongoing project inspired by a local textile archive.

I love my picture wall to the right of my desk – it's the main focal point of my studio. The framed pictures, ornaments, and postcards have been collected on my travels or gifted by friends. When I'm feeling stressed or uninspired, it makes me smile and reminds me of places I have visited and pieces I have made.

Size is the only negative about my studio, I did consider moving into a larger room at home but I love the garden view and cosy feel of the space. Every so often I get a bit frustrated and spend the day moving furniture around and reorganising the space, but I always come back to this layout because it works for me and my practice. ☺

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