

A place for everything . . . by Anna Davison

I recently took the opportunity to clean and tidy my studio. In and of itself . . . not a big deal. Why would I take the time from my busy life to do such a mundane chore? you ask. Several reasons motivated me.

- Our guild was planning a program on member's sewing spaces and I wanted mine to look efficient and organized;
- I had been working on a number of art quilts this past year, and had not 'put away' the fabric, embellishments, batting etc from one project before starting another;
- and my daughter had moved home with her family and was needing space to set up her machine so I could teach her the fine art of quilting.

The cleaning part was easy. A long-handled brush to sweep away the cobwebs, and dust in the back of deep shelves. A damp cloth to wipe off the surfaces not covered with fabric, clean windowsills and baseboards, light fixtures and the stereo. The vacuum took care of the carpet and wood floor.

Where to put it all?

Tidying the studio was the challenge. What do you do with four long shelves filled with overflowing fabric bins and saved quilts; a cupboard spilling over with books, workshop quilts, patterns, project jewellery, and unfinished quilts; a drawing board covered with the remains of past projects, piles of paper, photographs, writing implements and quilting tools; a sewing table with two machines, an assortment of scraps, spools of thread, instruction books, and three or four piles of soon-to-be-done quilt projects; and a corner piled high with mending, magazines, baskets of batting and boxes of Catch of the Day bags and fat quarters?

I knew this was going to be a multi-event job. I tackled it like you would tackle eating an elephant – one bite at a time. Those bins overflowing with fabric – I sorted through each colour and kept the pieces I was most likely to use, put the rest in a large plastic bag and gave them to a new quilter who was just getting started on her "stash." The saved quilts are organized in storage bags.

Donations, packing, sorting

I've donated fabric, patterns I bought and never made, and books to our Guild's annual auction; the [Womens Work Project](#) quilts and jewellery are packed in their own suitcase for easy transport; and my patterns are sorted – the printed/for sale ones in dresser drawers, and the sketched ideas/original designs are in bins under their own titles i.e. Christmas, family quilts, commissions and quilt shows.

Baskets, hooks & nails

A set of attractive baskets keep the bottom of the drawing board tidy while I've had to be firm with myself in clearing off the top and putting things away when a project is completed. Two posts nearby have hooks and nails to hold an assortment of rulers and gadgets. In other areas of our home I always put things away after using them, but my studio is a different territory . . . I guess we all have a slob side!

The answer to the sewing table clutter was investing in a stack of drawers which fit neatly under the table and at hands' reach with all my needles, pins, instruction books, quilting gadgets and small threads. A new rack holds the larger spools of thread within easy reach.

The mending is in its own basket, and the boxes will have to stay there until April, when I hand them over to the local Quilt Canada Halifax organizers for their conference in May. Will my studio ever look completely clean and tidy all the time? I doubt it! But at least I now have “a place for everything” . . . I just need to train myself to put “everything in its place.”

The unfinished quilts and other UFOs now reside in their own set of shelves with a list attached. My goal is to have them all FINISHED by the end of the year. I'll keep you posted!

*'til next time, Anna M Davison,
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