

# MAXIMIZING SPACE

By Jack Johnston

Here's a look at how one doll artist designed and organized her small studio to maximize space.



Deborah Napper of Hernando, Miss., works on a doll in her well-designed and organized studio.

In Deborah Napper's amazingly well-designed and planned doll-making studio, everything has a place.

A longtime doll maker and collector, Napper used to keep her dolls around her house on shelves as decoration, but they were not organized. The same was the case for the sewing machine, fabrics, costumes and craft supplies she had amassed. She was no different than many artists, but she decided to do something about it: She

planned an organized workroom.

Her studio is a spare room approximately 12 feet by 15 feet with a 9-foot ceiling, two doors and a window—not a huge room, but Napper designed every inch to maximize the space and put her dolls and supplies where she could find them.

Napper first made an inventory of dolls, costumes, fabrics, sewing materials, sculpting and art supplies, and related craft items. Realizing there was

value in everything she had, she knew the items needed to be stored in a proper place or they would become lost and eventually discarded.

A special desk was created to house her sewing machine, with drawers below for related items. Spools of thread, sorted by color and size, sit on the desk in a holder Napper created by drilling strips of wood and inserting dowels spaced far enough apart to hold the spools. Shelves above the sewing

machine store bolts of fabric, pattern books and accessories for her costumes.

Another desk in the room houses her computer, music system and telephone. The shelves above the computer serve as space for her printer, paper and office supplies. A used file cabinet was placed beside the office-related items to store her records.

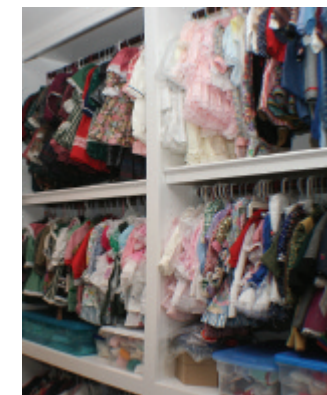
A closet was designed from floor to ceiling on one wall and has different levels of racks on which to hang costumes by size and color. Larger costumes go on a rack made just for their size. Smaller costumes have their own rack, ensuring every inch of the well-designed closet is used.

Shelves were added above, below and to the sides of a window on another wall. Small shelves hold small wig boxes and plastic boxes full of buttons, paints and scores of craft items—all labeled for easy access. Larger shelves are used as storage for additional dolls. Another wall in the room features shelves that store dolls and doll parts based on their size and shape. The shorter shelves hold doll heads, limbs and torsos while the taller shelves hold tall dolls.

A center table, with shelves and room underneath for a stool, encompasses the middle of the room. The tabletop serves as a space for sculpting, cutting fabric or working on large crafts. A large slab of granite was used for the countertop, as the granite surface won't be harmed when cutting on it with an X-Acto knife or scissors, or when working with hot crafts or other tools.

**Careful planning and organization will make your studio easier to use.**

Napper has clearly made the most of her small studio and has shown how, with effective organization, a small space can work just as well as a large studio. Whatever the size, careful planning and organization will make your studio easier to use. →



down to business

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