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Dianne Bernhard  
in her National  
Arts Club studio.

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# Studios

**COVER**

Dianne Bernhard  
in her National  
Arts Club studio.

Photo: Nathan  
Kraxberger



18



44

## CONTENTS

- 4 Editor's Note
- 6 **Studio Vignettes**  
BY M. STEPHEN DOHERTY  
Step inside these private studios, and see how the artists organize and furnish their creative work environments.
- 8 **Russell and Cynthia Gordon: Sharing Space With a Spouse, Family, and Pets**
- 12 **Stacey Peterson: Setting the Right Mood**
- 14 **Will Wilson: Enough Space for Work, Storage, and Relaxation**
- 16 **Woodstock: Historic Studios in an Artists' Community**
- 18 **Dianne B. and A. Van H. Bernhard: Dream Studios, Practical Function**
- 26 **Robert Gamblin and Catherine Kumlin: Shared Industrial Space**
- 28 **Sheila Delimont: Combining a Studio and a Gallery**
- 29 **Margaret E. Millard: Stretching the Budget for Furniture**
- 30 **Jeff Allen: Building Your Own Dream Space**
- 32 **Dava Dahlgran: Making Room for Drawing and Teaching**
- 33 **Veronica Winters: Storing Reference Material in a Small Studio**
- 34 **Richard Oversmith: Painting Walls to Match Paul Cézanne's Studio**
- 35 **Lydia Piper: Moving a Studio From Room to Room**
- 36 **Susan Blackwood and Howard Friedland: Easy on the Knees, Warm on the Feet, Ideal for Creating Paintings**

#### 44 Domestic Conversions

BY JOHN A. PARKS

The perfect studio may already be available in your home.

##### 44 Daniel Pinkham: A Major Conversion

##### 52 Dennis Doheny: A Simple Garage Makeover

##### 54 Kathy Caudill: Using a "Bonus" Room

##### 56 Gail Descouers: Insulating a Garage

##### 58 Amy Mann: Using Living Space

#### 60 6 Historic Studios You Can Visit

BY STEPHEN MAY

Dozens of artists' studios have been preserved, so you can study the working methods, local inspirations, and personal habits of artists such as Grant Wood, Georgia O'Keeffe, Thomas Hart Benton, Frederic Remington, Charles Demuth, and J. Alden Weir.

#### 74 Keeping You and Your Studio Safe

BY MOLLY SIPLE

A variety of safety equipment can help artists reduce the risks present when working with hazardous materials.

#### 84 Getting the Right Light in Your Studio

BY BOB BAHR

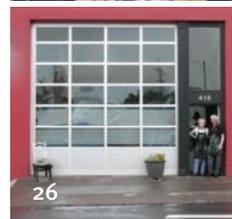
Most artists agree that diffused natural light is the best light in which to paint, but sometimes artificial light is unavoidable. Here's what you should consider when designing the lighting in your studio.

#### 90 A Studio Worthy of Rockwell

BY AUSTIN R. WILLIAMS

When building his studio, Christopher Pierce looked nearby for inspiration from an American master.

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Studios: **Vignettes**

# Studio Vignettes

Step inside these private studios, and see how the artists organize and furnish their creative work environments.

There is something endlessly fascinating about an artist's studio, whether it is a cluttered basement or a beautifully appointed loft. As we look around the space at the art supplies, skylight, easel, props, unfinished canvases, drawings, and collected objects we gain a better understanding of the artist's personality and creative process.

Here is your chance to peek inside the studios of artists in various regions of the country and learn something about the occupants while you identify things you might want to have in your own studio. We've asked the artists how they designed and organized their spaces, how they handled the lighting and heating, what paints and brushes they are working with, whether they share the space with another artist or with workshop students, and what they wish they could do to make the studio better.

---

by **M. Stephen Doherty**

**OPPOSITE PAGE**

Cynthia Gordon and her husband, artist Russell Gordon, share a spacious studio on the lower level of their home in Cambridge, New York.

## Vignettes: Bernhard



Dianne Bernhard's studio in the historic National Arts Club on Gramercy Park, in New York City. Note the full-length portrait of Bernhard by Everett Raymond Kinstler.



# Dream Studios, Practical Function

by M. Stephen Doherty  
photos by Nathan Kraxberger

## Vignettes: Bernhard

**D**ianne B. and A. Van H. Bernhard have the luxury of being able to work in several studios, but each environment has been carefully designed and furnished to meet the needs of an active power couple. The Bernhards are patrons, businesspeople, collectors, environmentalists, and professional artists, and each of their workspaces is set up so that they can keep up with the demands of their life in New York and Connecticut.

The center of the Bernhards' life is a home along the Long Island Sound in Westport, Connecticut. Dianne's studio is a multi-level space with room for office work, interior-design projects, and pastel painting. Because she and her husband have recently been studying portrait painting with Wende Caporale, the Westport studio is set up for that work.

Van recently built a new library/office/studio space on the second floor of the couple's home that is quickly replacing the crowded

**Each of their workspaces is set up so that they can keep up with the demands of their life in New York and Connecticut.**

workspace he previously carved out of his business office in Southport, Connecticut. The new studio has a distinctive masculine feeling with solid wood beams across the open ceiling, custom-made wooden cabinets and bookcases, a large desk, a fireplace, and leather chairs. "Most of the cabinetry is movable, so I can change things around when I need more workspace," he explains. "Right now I am working on portraits, so I have a model platform set up near

my easel. My pastels are stored in various boxes so that I can select the correct hardness, hue, and value."

When Dianne wants to develop larger oil or pastel paintings of flowers, she drives a few miles from her home to a building in Southport that houses Van's business operation, the offices of the Art Spirit Foundation, an apartment, and a studio that opens onto

### BELOW

Dianne Bernhard separates her pastels into sterling-silver dishes and keeps her oil-painting brushes in silver urns.

### RIGHT

Although Dianne Bernhard is best known as a pastel painter and patron of pastel artists, she began her career as an oil painter and she continues to work with oil colors.

a private patio. "I like painting large arrangements of cut flowers with either oils or pastels, and I have sticks of pastel organized by color in separate containers that rest on a rotating, circular table," she explains. "The Southport studio has lots of natural light and plenty of space for laying out the pastels, oils, and drafting supplies. I can also stand back from the large





**LEFT**  
After working with sticks of pastel, Dianne Bernhard drops them into a silver punch bowl filled with rice in order to clean them before putting the pastels back in separate dishes.

**ABOVE**  
The shelf and table below the two-story, north-facing window in the National Arts Club studio are filled with art books and painting supplies.

Vignettes: **Bernhard**

**Van Bernhard's Connecticut Studio**



Sidebar Photos: M. Stephen Doherty



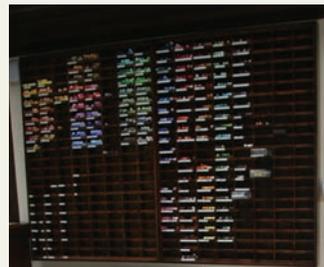
**TOP LEFT**  
Van Bernhard's easel and worktable in the studio he recently built in his Westport, Connecticut, home.

**MIDDLE LEFT**  
A. Van H. Bernhard, artist, businessman, environmentalist, and arts patron.

**BELOW**  
Van Bernhard arranges his pastels by brand in a rack on the wall of his studio.

**BOTTOM**  
Most of the furniture in Van Bernhard's studio can be easily moved.

**OPPOSITE PAGE**  
Van Bernhard's new studio that opens out to a deck overlooking Long Island Sound.



A detail photograph of some of Dianne Bernhard's pastel sticks in sterling-silver dishes.

paintings to judge their progress, something that I can't do in the smaller Westport studio."

Dianne Bernhard spends at least one day a week in New York City, where she is the executive vice president of the National Arts Club, a board member of Pastel Society of America, and an active member of both Pastel Society of America and the Salmagundi Club. Because of those commitments, she maintains an apartment and studio at the National Arts Club on Gramercy Park. "I took courses in interior design because I wanted to design the space at the club," she says. "I host salon-style gatherings of people in the arts, and I use the apartment as a studio when I need to be in the city."

Dianne was a professional artist in Texas before she moved to New York to study with Herman Margulies. Her paintings have been included in major group and solo exhibitions, and they have been selected for awards. She married Van, another

## Vignettes: Bernhard

### Dianne Bernhard's Connecticut Studio



**TOP LEFT**

Dianne Bernhard's spacious studio in Southport, Connecticut, allows her to create large pastel paintings near the French doors leading to the patio.

**TOP RIGHT**

The artist designed a circular table that easily rotates so she can grab the pastels she needs without walking away from her easel.

**FAR LEFT**

Dianne Bernhard does most of her pastel-portrait painting in the studio she maintains in her Westport, Connecticut, home.

**LEFT**

A display of Da Vinci paints in Dianne Bernhard's Southport studio, including Da Vinci fluid acrylics and Da Vinci watercolors.



**ABOVE**  
A detail photograph of Dianne Bernhard's oil painting palette.

Margulies student, and together they established the Art Spirit Foundation, which supports artists and art organizations, as well as The Dianne B. Bernhard Award for Excellence that is given to pastel artists through juried art competitions.

Van Bernhard has been involved in a number of businesses, including an investment-advisory service, a printing-services business, and a hydroponic tomato farm in Maryland. He was an analyst, vice president of production, and later became the owner-operator of a chemical compound company in

Texas. He currently supports research in the field of biology, his major at Colby College. He studied pastel painting with Herman Margulies and presented a major exhibition of his work at the Newington-Cropsey Foundation, in Hastings, New York, in 2006. In September, 2010, the Bernhards will present the first husband-and-wife exhibition at the Butler Institute of American Art, in Youngstown, Ohio.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT THE WEBSITE FOR THE ART SPIRIT FOUNDATION AT [WWW.ARTSPIRITFOUNDATION.ORG](http://WWW.ARTSPIRITFOUNDATION.ORG).**

Sidebar Photos: M. Stephen Doherty