

Hi, it's Bob Burridge and time for another Online President's Message! I would like to thank those of you who have emailed me and commented on my previous messages. It tells me you actually read these things! Thank you. You can write to me directly at rburridge@RobertBurridge.com

In the past, I have said so many times that I am one of the fortunate artists out there who goes and paints in my studio everyday. Hard to believe for eighteen years I have painted almost everyday in some sort of a studio space. I recall throughout those times I've painted in a variety of "studio" spaces... a closet, a garage corner, a porch, under an oak tree (rain or shine), a laundry room and for six years now, my beloved studio space is a 20' x 20' haybarn in the middle of our farm field. And just this year I've finally gotten around to adding 300 square feet -- and electricity! The point here is I had a place to go to do my work. I have learned that to do significant work, you go to a work place--- away from daily distractions like phones, refrigerators, television, noisy (and nose) neighbors, i.e. interruptions!

While I travel the world teaching workshops, I have been hearing so many painters who bemoan the fact that they can't paint until they get their studio in perfect condition: the right easel, color balanced lights or that special brush to paint tree branches or wicker basket weave... really!

This is all nonsense of course. If you are truly a painter, one who needs to create (not duplicate), you'll go to your place and make stuff. Nothing can stop you from painting and doing what you just have to do. A studio space is an essential ingredient for doing good work. Wherever you paint, call that place "your studio." Say it out loud... "My studio." It's affirming and also sends a clear message to others that you are an artist and this is what you do. You paint.

If you paint in your garage, call that place your studio. ("I park my car in my studio.") If you paint in that extra bedroom, call it your studio and make it your studio by removing all bedroom furniture --- and cover or remove that rug! One artist I know in this situation, covered the rug with sheets of plywood.

If you paint in a kitchen corner or enclosed porch, call it your studio. And when company comes, do not clean, straighten up or remove your studio stuff. This is where you do your work. It's not supposed to be a stage set where you only "act" like a painter.

Besides, and believe me, as a painter, you are a curiosity to your friends. They really want to see where you do what you do--- “open studios” are very popular right now for this reason! And your friends feel extra special because they have a friend who is an artist. So enjoy your life as an artist. Heck, flaunt it!

Never apologize for your imperfect studio. For me, my perfect studio is, indeed, not perfect. My roof leaks, the windows have no glass, birds nest in the ceiling rafters, farm animals wander thru and the cement floor slants crooked. Perfect! It’s here I can splash paint everywhere, scribble on the walls, pour paint on high canvases and make lots of experimental messes. There is no fear of ruining a thing. I love the energy, the freedom and a place to go to! And finally, more to the point--- even when you don’t feel inspired to paint, go to your studio anyway. Like a “real job,” you show up--- even if all you do is sit there and look at your work, read your art books or write your morning papers.

Not feeling the creative energy yet? Just go and sit in your studio space. Within minutes, something will pull you towards your next masterpiece. To summarize, have a place to create, call it your studio and show up.

And finally, a friendly reminder about membership dues... Last year at the 2005 Board Meeting it was decided that all dues are due January 1st. Dues are considered delinquent on March 31st. So that said, send in your dues on time or you may run the risk of not having your ISAP Membership current and in good standing for your next ISAP Exhibit.

Thanks everyone! Now go and paint!

Love, Peace and Friendship,

Bob Burr ridge

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