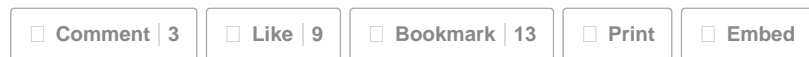


More Rooms

Creatives at Home: Dr Terri Brooks in Her Backyard Shed

A Melbourne artist uses her backyard shed as a space for liberated creativity with room for mess

Louise Lakier 29 September 2016
Houzz Australian Contributor: I am a photographer and a writer with a background... [More](#)



A brief stroll away from her worker's cottage, Dr. Terri Brooks finds herself in her backyard shed where she dedicates her time to painting. The studio was built for economical reasons to eliminate the added costs of renting a separate space to work in. Brooks wanted a space where she could make a mess, flick paint at the canvas, and work on large pieces. She streamlined the design to create a multi-functional room where furniture and easels can be moved and built-in tables and shelving can collapse to allow for maximum flexibility. In the sixteen years since she built it, the studio has paid for itself.

Creative Space at a Glance

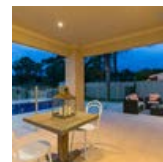
Name: [Terri Brooks](#)

Occupation: Fine Artist

Location: Northcote, Victoria

What's made here: Paintings

What are you working on?



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Brooks' favourite feature of the studio is the double-hung wood windows. She saw them displayed in front of a renovating warehouse down the road and had to have them. The shed design began with the placement of the windows. The canopy over the door was salvaged from a local house and also bought at the same store.



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Brooks loves her studio because she “can make a mess, shut the door and forget about it,” she says. She designed a wood-framed screen door as the only door for the studio to allow fumes to escape and fresh air to flow.

The four pieces on the floor are constructed from recycled boxes, painted with black paint, and covered with wax. The starting point was of an image of rough seas expressing her feelings and perceptions on current events in the world.



Another essential element of the design was providing plenty of pallet space. Her studio pallet is made out of an original door from the house. Because Brooks is left-handed the placement along the left wall was important.



Blinds were installed for privacy and to control harsh light. An open-plan design and high ceilings support good ventilation and fluidity while Brooks paints. In the summer when fumes are strong, she opens all the windows and the door, and turns on a fan near an open window for fume extraction.

“The light notably changes twice a year over a few weeks into and out of winter. At these times I need to adjust to changing reflections,” says Brooks.



Brooks works in oil paints and usually works in the afternoon, opening up the studio an hour before coming in to make sure it is well ventilated.

Friends are always giving her rags, and jars, and milo tins for brush and paint storage.

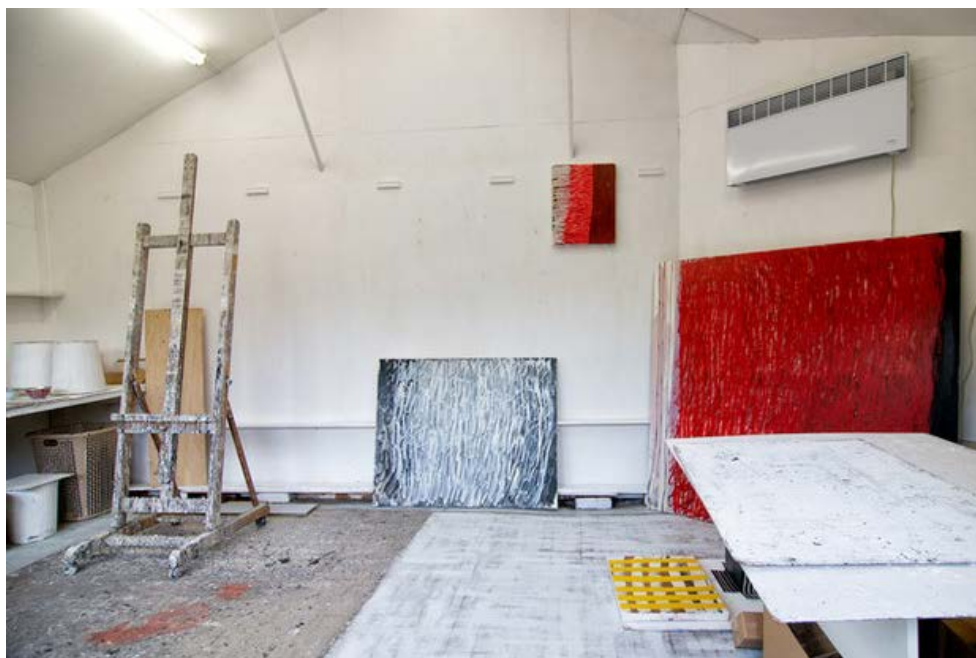


Brooks' paintings are typically black and white, but lately she has been experimenting with colour bursts. She is working on a solo exhibition for Flinders Lane Gallery in December titled *Principia*, after Sir Isaac Newton's *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*. Her work explores the layers of the environment that come from weathering and eroding, renewing and rebuilding. She has always been fascinated by the detail, repetition and patterning in nature.



The pallet table was designed to disappear; by removing the plastic bin supports, the table can swing down via hinges fastened to the wall.

A built-in cabinet houses oil paint tins and tubes, pencils, sharpeners, and tools for stretching canvases.



Due to the adjacency to the laneway and privacy issues, windows on the back wall were not an option. If she could do anything to change the space, Brooks would add skylights for more natural light.

A removable shelf ledge runs the length of the back wall, so Brooks can prop up a larger piece and step back for scrutinising, or remove the rail to accommodate taller paintings.



Wooden hanging strips were installed along the back wall at the recommendation of her handyman. The spacing and placement allows flexibility for hanging small or large pieces.

TELL US

What do you like best about this backyard art studio? Let us know in the

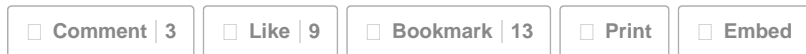
Comments section.

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Comments (3)



Gabrielle Jones Art

PRO

It looks like a fabulous haven from the world, a place to escape and build your own world! Those hanging strips - pure genius! Great to know Terri has allowed for fume extraction and good ventilation - important OH&S consideration for painters. Loved seeing inside this space!

1 Like

on Sunday at 11:49AM



Amanda Gils

Lovely studio. Thanks for sharing where your wonderful work is made.

Like

on Sunday at 11:54AM



jpfox

Heaven!! Construction has just started for my backyard studio. I want it to have that same wonderful feel.

Like

on Sunday at 12:56PM

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