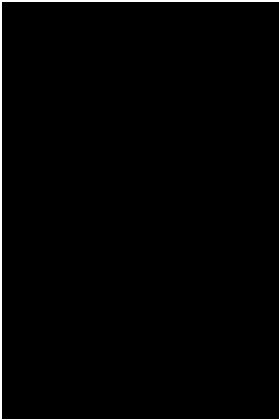




A Red Door Gallery e-book



Establishing Your Creative Space

By Lise Richards

Lise Richards
The Creativity Center, Inc.
190 Clayton Commerce Center
Clayton, NC 27520
Phone: 919-553-8451
www.centerofcreativity.com
Email: director@centerofcreativity.com

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Address all permission requests to:
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The Creativity Center, Inc.
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Phone: 919-553-8451
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Welcome! If you're anything like me, you have been faced with multiple questions on what to do to give your living space a personality through art and accessories. Or maybe you've got a space that has some art on the walls, but something just doesn't feel "right" about it. If that sounds like you, then you're in luck!

In fact, if it does sound like you, email me and let me know! Just put "That sounds just like me" in the subject line and mail it to: director@centerofcreativity.com.

This e-book helps you get started on your vision for your new creative living space. I define a creative living space as a space that is planned using an artistic point of view. It is less about formal interior decorating and design – and more about incorporating special artistic pieces that have meaning to you personally.

A creative living space is a treat for you to inhabit and other people to visit, because you are instantly drawn into the room through all of your senses. It is visually pleasing to the eye from a variety of different viewpoints. It evokes a particular feeling - like serenity, or excitement. A creative living space includes textural things that make you want to touch them with your hands, or walk around in your bare feet. It is a room you can truly live in and not be afraid of the rigors of daily family use. And since a creative living space is one that evolves over time, it is cost-effective.

This assessment was created to help you picture your own space just as it is now, and help you start developing it into your own creative living space. It is different than a traditional interior design plan because those plans are concerned with aesthetics, design and measurements. This can be your start to an artistic and creative lifestyle. When filling out this assessment, get out your pen and notebook and sit down in a quiet area where you will remain undisturbed for about 40 minutes. I suggest you start the assessment with just one room that you would like to transform, so you're not too overwhelmed with the details. If you can sit in that room while doing the assessment, that's even better – but it's not required.

By the way, you are not limited to rooms inside your home. You may also choose an office, cubicle, or outdoor living space such as a deck or balcony – it's completely up to you. If you're ready to start, let's go...

Brainstorming Exercise

Picturing your space, please answer the following questions. Instead of a basic answer, try to answer the question considering your sense of smell, sight, touch and hearing. For example, the first question deals with the things you like about your space right now. If I picture my office I answer the question like this:

“I like the cozy feeling of my office, the color on the wall is a vibrant orange color that keeps me energized while I do my work. I can sometimes hear the birds from my office and it helps keep me relaxed.”

You’ll notice that I tried to concentrate about what I truly like about the space, not the faults of the room. If you’re ready, answer the following questions:

- 1. What appeals to you about the space?**
- 2. When you walk in, what draws your attention immediately? How about when you sit down? If there are multiple places to enter the room or sit – try to answer this question from each location.**
- 3. Does anything in the room make you feel uncomfortable? What would you like to change?**

Now take a look at your answers. If you would like to add any other thoughts that come to mind about this space, now is the time to do so. Next we will look at some areas that may help you as you plan your new space.

Builder-Boring Syndrome

If you have a lot of white or beige walls in your home with nothing that stands out – you may want to introduce some color to your space. A good way to determine what colors you like to live with is to go to look at your wardrobe. I tend to wear very neutral colors, with splashes here and there of a bright accent piece. Surprisingly, my house reflects this same trend. I shy away from floral patterns, in both my wardrobe and my home – unless they’re tone on tone. If you are dealing with a lack of color, a way to introduce it creatively without a major overhaul is to:

- Paint the walls, floors or ceilings. It is an inexpensive way to add instant energy to a room.
- Hang new artwork that doesn't blend, but makes a statement all its own.
- Add some hand-painted tiles or mosaic design to the floor, around a fireplace, or to a table
- Add a floorcloth (which is a hand-painted canvas for your floor) or a rug
- Add a plant in a hand-painted pot
- Create a theme wall with a faux finish or mural design
- Stencil the walls - A neat way to add soft color to a baby's nursery is to stencil a nursery rhyme as a border

The options are as numerous as your imagination.

Focal Point - where's yours?

When you answered question 2, it was alluding to the idea of identifying or creating a focal point. Each room should have at least one focal point. (A creative living space may have more than one) This is an area of the room that stands out. It is where your eye lands when you enter the room, or from where you're sitting. In a living room, a focal point may be the fireplace. In a kitchen area, it might be a backsplash over the stove. In a backyard – a special tree.

Sometimes the focal point is not as obvious because it's not a built-in feature. In that case, I suggest creating your own focal point. For example, one trend in textile art is art quilting. A quilt is typically something you'll find on your bed. But art quilts are altogether different. Art quilters combine fabric, thread, paint and other objects and work it into a piece of very original art. You can picture how it creates instant pizzazz as a tremendous focal point when hung on an empty wall. Many of the ways I described above to add color to your space could also be used to make your space focal point. Still others are to:

- Highlight your existing art with lighting
- Frame a large piece of interesting fabric in a shadow box
- Add bright tile around the fireplace
- In an office, add larger pieces of art to a blank wall
- Make an accent out of the window using hand painted fabrics
- Hang smaller pieces of an art series together vertically or horizontally

On making a change

If you choose to, this can become an ongoing journey. In fact, you will be considered a trailblazer among your peers who have yet to buy or create an original piece of art. While art prints are charming, original art is so much more captivating. Take your time and become an **art collector**. Meet the artists, attend events, and discover something new. If you travel, make a point of visiting an art gallery in that area. See art as something that is accessible to you. Develop a relationship with one gallery and over time, as your tastes evolve, you can expect the gallery owner to provide you with ongoing assistance when choosing your art. They are experts about the art in their specialized areas. As experts they should guide you through the process of selecting, commissioning and buying your art, and will often inform you about things that they know you will want to see.

Conversely you can create your own art for your own walls! I am a huge fan of being creative. Even though I own an art gallery, I would much rather see people creating their own art. Incorporating your art, and art from your family is a totally wonderful experience. It gives your space **instant character** and provides you with the opportunity for many hours of reflection, discussion and enjoyment. It is fun to experiment with and brings most of us back to a time in childhood where we felt free to create and experience it. Free yourself from any critical thoughts you might have and try it.

Reflecting on the possibilities

Art is not just painted canvas. It takes many different forms including sculpture, quilts, tiles, pottery, even old rugs – seeing things as art is all about shifting your own perspective and being open to see new things for a making a creative space. I hope this mini-guide has been helpful in allowing you to think about the possibilities of transforming your own creative space. If I can answer any specific questions on your own personal space including numerous resources and information on emerging art and artists, please contact me. I look forward to hearing about your experiences!

Warmly,

Lise

email: director@centerofcreativity.com