

A few thoughts about studios.

Studios come in all guises. Flights of studios will take over warehouses, perhaps chosen for their abundance of natural light or large open spaces. For a very few artists, hundreds of assistants are employed, each contributing a specialised skill in the creation of a body of work. These establishments resemble the studio/workshop of the Renaissance, a place of industry and teaching. There are artists who set up street studios, inviting the general public to become their subject, or perhaps collaborators. The physical space of the studio has the potential to influence aspects of the works created. Large scale paintings cannot be created in a small studio, and not all materials are suitable for all spaces. In all their forms, studios are potentially social, as well as private, spaces. Artists working side-by-side are able to share ideas, materials and lunch. Some studios embrace this shared community, fostered through monthly dinners and initiating programs to support their occupants. In others, curators, gallerists, writers and collectors are invited in to view works. Each studio is unique, formed by the artist or artists who work there, and the space in which they are constructed.

For me, and many others, the studio is not just a physical space but also a psychological one. The act of leaving one location, a home perhaps, to travel to another is enough to create the mindset for work. The journey supports and enables focus. The studio becomes a site for work, and contemplation, divorced from the distractions of home. Home is reinforced as a place to relax, and cease thinking about work. This simple shift in thinking does not require a long journey, just moving from the living room to the home studio can be enough.

Studios provide a unique context in which to view an artist's practice. In the studio, we are able to sit amongst past work, experiments, off cuts, and raw materials. Visitors can see what has come before, and perhaps get a glimpse of what is yet to be made. This allows us to situate the works as part of a continuum of the artists' practice. The studio space gives each object a context, and history. When an artwork leaves the studio for a gallery, a public thoroughfare, perhaps a home, artworks are viewed as part of a larger conversation, in a new context. Audience members bring with them preconceived ideas that can influence the interpretation of the work.

The works in *Small Spaces/Big Ideas* are also now taken from their studios and placed in the gallery. They are in conversation with each other, rather than with the other works in the artist's space. They have not been created around a central idea, but are the product of thoughts already central to each artist's practice. Their connection lies in the praxis studio space itself. Here is a snap shot of what is happening next door.. They are sentences, each complete and telling us something about the individual artist and their practice. But they are also part of a larger book, the story of the

artists' practice as a whole. The story will continue to be written in the studio. For now, we are invited to come in, have a look and get a glimpse of what is currently being created by these artists, before they are returned next door and work continues.

- Eleanor Scicchitano