

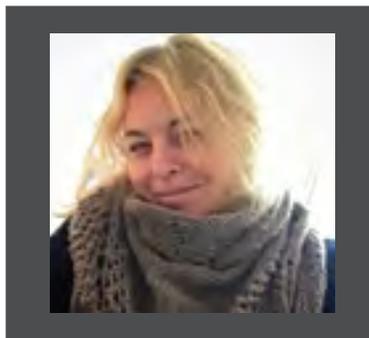
tiny**Studio**
Creative Life



Suzy Brown

Creative Studio design for fiber artists, in which simplicity, mindfulness, and a thoughtful collection of tools and materials leads to greater levels of creative freedom and inspiration.

SUZY BROWN 2018



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tinyStudio Creative Life

tinyStudio is a concept and a guide, one that you can use to develop your own personal tinyStudio and simplify your fiber life, freeing you to be even more creative. By refining your fiber life to just the essentials you will learn not only exactly what you need to create the things you want, you will also learn more about what it is in your fiber art practice that you really love the most.

Simplicity can bring clarity and inspiration.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

First we will identify your needs as a fiber artist. Once you have taken the 'Whats your tinyStudio Personality quiz', on www.fiberygoodness.com/tinystudio - skip though to the relevant chapter section of this books to read about ways you can make different kinds of tinyStudio spaces to suit your fiber focus and interests. I have worked out what you need to keep your studio pared down to the essentials, and yet still be able to create anything you want. I will share what I see as the fundamental 'must have' tools and items for your own personal tinyStudio, as well as ways you can become more mindful in your practice and a master of your craft.

Once you have begun your own journey to a simpler, freer way to be creative, subscribe to the FiberyGoodness tinyStudio magazine to get your regular creativity boost, learn about other fiber artists and how they structure their environments, work with their materials to enhance mindfulness, and free their creative selves. Our zine will include artist articles, projects, fibery eye candy, and regular features exploring the concepts of tinyStudio Creative Life!

Read more on www.fiberygoodness.com

tinyStudio

tinyStudio

simplicity

focus

ritual



I have always felt that spinning is the art of letting go, letting go of the fiber in just the right way, at the right speed, and in the right amount to achieve the yarn I want to make. Also letting go of things like stress and worry, letting go of overriding thoughts and distractions, while holding on to the pleasure of creating, and being in the moment, in tune with my materials and tools.

tinyStudio is my way of focussing my fiber art practice into the 'slow' philosophy, using mindfulness, focus, ritual, and simplicity to develop the feeling of freedom I need to truly reach my creative potential.

tinyStudio began as an idea born of necessity, confined to smaller spaces to practice my fiber arts. I soon realised that the organisation and limitations this required actually gave me a greater sense of lightness and freedom along with a more innovative approach to design problem solving. tinyStudio has morphed into a complete philosophy that guides my fiber practice and that I believe can help others to also reach towards their own creative potentials.



What is
tinyStudio?

**YOU CAN'T USE UP
CREATIVITY. THE MORE
YOU USE, THE MORE
YOU HAVE**
MAYA ANGELOU

What is tinyStudio?

This is the beginning of your journey into simplicity, creativity, and mindfulness in your fiber life.

I strongly believe that to reach our creative potential we need to be aware of our own requirements, drives, and inspiration sources. We need to have a deep understanding of not only our materials and tools and the things we can create through them, but also of our own motivations and the conditions we need to achieve our full creative flow.

I would like you to consider your fiber craft work as part of the 'slow movement', in which not only mindfulness and being 'in the moment' as you work your craft is important, but also the idea that giving care and gently focussed attention to your creativity builds mastery over time, the goal is not just to finish a project, but to savour the process and develop a deeper, richer knowledge of your craft at every step.



SIMPLE



Order and simplification are the first steps toward the mastery of a subject.

THOMAS MANN

Your tinyStudio is more than a collection of tools and equipment essential to you, more than a refined stash of only the necessary fibres and dyes, it is also a **lifestyle**. By simplifying our fiber lives we remove the clutter that can sometimes hold us back, we take away the mild sense of guilt at having stash fibres hidden away at the bottom of the pile that we have not seen for the last two years, we can feel confident that we are only using what we need, as we need it, and we simplify our creative environment in a way that frees us to experiment, design, and mindfully practice our fiber arts.

A tinyStudio creative life is not about finding out how little you can live with in your creativity, it is about finding and celebrating the exact things that you can not create without!

tinyStudio Is Two Things.

Firstly it is your complete Fiber Studio organised in a box, or at least in a relatively small and defined space! Rather than having an entire room full of (potentially) overwhelming tools and equipment, your tinyStudio contains everything you need for the yarns or projects you want to make. Using only what we need when we need it helps use to simplify our lives.

Downsizing is a careful focus on just what we really need in order to find balance and a sense of contentment and clarity. Your tinyStudio is a collection of: the tools you need, the threads, add ins, and fibres you need, the colours and textures that you love, all perfectly matched to your creative requirements. The tinyStudio Creative Life Box you will assemble also contains the things that inspire you as you work, perhaps a scented candle, a special tea blend, maybe a small picture in a frame. These things are contained together in your tinyStudio Box, easy to store without taking over your house, easy to take out and instantly create your own inspiring crafting corner, and easy to travel with. It can come on vacation, spinning events,

shows, and local guild meetings - pick up and go and you know you have everything you need!

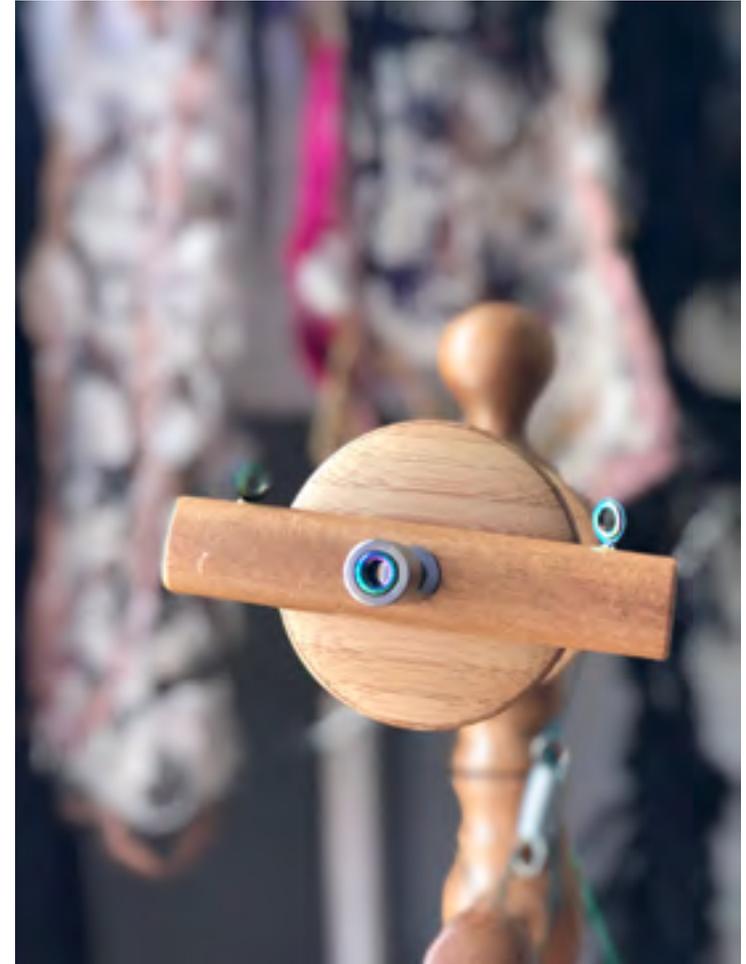
Secondly, your TinyStudio is a lifestyle. As our worlds become filled with busy-ness, activity, stress, and demands, our creativity often suffers first. Sometimes we feel too weighed down with responsibilities to be truly creative. Sometimes even the thought of having to rustle through our stash just to find that 'one thing' we need for a project is enough to hold us back and prevent us even starting. If you are struggling with small spaces and a crowded house, you too will know the frustration of searching for that small yet elusive bag of special hoarded black Alpaca, but hunting through the multiple and unorganised stash spaces around the house and garage takes longer than it would have done to spin it!! A tinyStudio lifestyle offers you a way to find focus and balance.

As well as focussing on stash and tool organisation, tinyStudio also takes a mindful approach that is not about minimalist perfectionism or over-complicated attention to detail, it is all about being fully in the moment, whether that moment is chaotic joyful abandon, careful controlled precision, or peaceful relaxation. The goal is to allow yourself the space, time, and freedom to create, and fully engage in the process.

In the tinyStudio we use rituals to create our own magical place to work from, to centre and focus our minds and separate ourselves from the things that slow the flow. We make space for being creative and take the time to thoroughly enjoy the feel of the fiber in our hands and the connection to our inner energy, harmonising hands and heart.



MINDFULL



simplicity lets your imagination soar

It is all about being fully in the moment, whether that moment is chaotic joyful abandon, careful controlled precision, or peaceful relaxation.



tinyStudio
Types



tinyStudio Types

Studio - Personality Matching

Are you wondering how to refine your Studio down to everything you need so you can be without the clutter and overwhelming selection of materials? Later we will look at some of the ways you can do this while still feeling that you have everything you need. For now, think about setting yourself some limitations on materials, your preparation tools, or the techniques you choose to use. Setting limitations can actually lead to a greater level of innovation and a more in-depth understanding of the materials and techniques that you DO choose to use. You can achieve a deep mastery of any single technique by fully exploring it, with all the variations you can dream up, and by playing with non-traditional fibers or preparations. This is a much more focussed and deliberate practice than skipping around between multiple techniques, or from being stuck in a rut with a 'go to' yarn that you continue to spin the same!

Innovation occurs when you are required to use just what you have on hand to create with, rather than purchasing specific items to do something. In this way you require yourself to find alternative ways to do things. In my mind, the the act of designing is the act of problem solving.

Using tinyStudio principles of simplicity and mindfulness you can focus your creativity by limiting your choices to using (as much as possible) just what you have on hand in your tinyStudio to create with.

This does not mean you have to have the most minimal studio ever created! You should instead fill it (only) with the things you love, the tools you absolutely need and know you will use over and over, and the fibers and colours that bring you inspiration, love, and the passion to create. Or you may want to challenge yourself, for example to use only natural coloured fiber, or only unprocessed washed fleece, or to use up all your multicoloured braids.. We will come back to this later and look at each individual Tiny Studio personality type and customise your tinyStudio to suit the kind of fiber artists you are.

What we will be doing in this guidebook is identifying your tinyStudio style and requirements, assembling your tinyStudio and then developing the rituals and the approach that will help you express your creativity.

If you would love to continue to enrich your fibery creativity, subscribe to our regular Magazine for tinyStudio oriented articles, projects, and tinyStudio ideas!

Lets start now with working out what kind of tinyStudio, or combination of different tinyStudios are going to best suit your fiber creativity and style. We want to narrow down your interests and really focus on just the things you enjoy and need to include in your tinyStudio.

Take our tinyStudio Quiz (you will need to have a Facebook account for this) and see which tlnyStudio could be your 'primary' personality. This quiz is designed to help you focus on your main fiber loves, so we can start designing the tinyStudio that suits your main requirements. You can of course add a secondary tinyStudio, for example you may be a 'tinyStudio Experimenter' but also want to add the tinyDyeStudio to your profile. Keeping your studio organised into 'boxes' or collections will still keep you focussed on the essentials for your creativity in each area, separating each aspect of your creative life into its own 'box' or area will help you feel organised and better able to access what you need when you need it.

The **'Find your Tiny Studio Personality' quiz** can help you define your direction and guide your choices in how to set

up your Tiny Studio box. Answer all the questions to complete the quiz, if there are some questions where two answers could fit, choose the one you feel is slightly closer to 'you' than the other.

<http://fiberygoodness.com/your-tiny-studio-personality-quiz/>

You should now have identified your primary tinyStudio style! This is your main area of interest and we will begin by focussing on this aspect of your fiber artist practice.

The following chapter gives an overview of each tinyStudio personality, along with my suggestions for the kinds of tools, materials, and rituals you may enjoy including in your own tinyStudio box and practice. **Skip through to find your own 'tS Personality!'** Later we will also look at ideas, rituals, and tinyStudio practices that are more general and can be useful no matter which kind of tinyStudio Personality you have.

Once you have identified your tinyStudio personality and started refining your tools and material needs, move on the Chapter Four to read about how to create your tinyStudio Creative Life Box or space in your house.





tinyStudio Personality

The following is a description of each of the different kinds of Tiny Studio Personalities from the tinyStudio Personality Quiz. You may find that one of these fits you and your fiber artist requirements perfectly, but most likely you will find something in each one that speaks to you. When it comes to selecting exactly what you will include in your tinyStudio you might want to start with the one that you consider to be your 'primary' personality and work outwards from there, focusing on the essentials first.

The 'rituals' for each Tiny Studio personality are suggestions for things you can do as a ritual activity prior to your Tiny Studio time to put you in the right frame of mind for being creative. Setting yourself up with a few simple rituals can trigger your creativity, help you move away from any cluttered thoughts or stresses and help you become more in the moment with your tools, your fibers, and your creative process.

Throughout this text you will be encouraged to find the activities that speak to you, that can become your own set of creativity rituals to spark your creative flow.

tinyStudio Spindler



YOUR SPINDLES ARE
TREASURES, YOU LOVE THE
BEAUTY AND GRACE OF THEM,
AND YOU HAVE A MINDFUL
APPROACH TO MAKING
GORGEOUS YARN.

Your tinyStudio Personality is well suited to the Spindlers tinyStudio setup! This is ideal as a complete 'box', in which you can safely contain all your current studio needs; portable, safe, and organised!

As a spinner you take a great deal of pleasure in creating directly with your hands, feeling the twist, watching the fibers as the spindle turns, and shaping your yarn at a pace that lets you enjoy every inch of its creation.

You love the process of winding your yarn onto the spindle and find satisfaction in the beauty of your cop or yarn turtle. You love to have a range of spindles of different weights and makes, and collecting them is as much fun as using them.

Tools

Your spindle collection holds a special place in this box, make sure you have room to store and add more (you know you will!) You need a long enough compartment to hold the length of the spindles, so you can separate them into their own spaces and categories. You may even like to have a box inside your box as your spindle storage, removable and expandable.

If you don't already have some, you might love a set of hand combs, which will give you the most beautiful smooth fibers for the very lovely spindle spun yarns you enjoy. Hand combed fiber is easy to draft for spindle spinning and you can create any colour or blend you like with them, which is a great way of using up extras in your stash! The art of combing can be quite a meditative process, and you will love gathering up your beautifully prepared fiber 'nests' into a basket to spin from.



You might also like a tool that works wonderfully for colour management in your yarns, you will find that a Hackle fits easily into your Tiny Studio box. The Hackle and Diz continues the theme of smooth fiber preparations, it keeps your fibers aligned and even, but gives you the opportunity to place them in exactly the way you want, you can create short colour changes in your yarns, stripes the length of your top, gradients, or combinations of these. Just like the combs, the fiber that comes off your hackle will draft like butter and be a pleasure to spindle spin. I always think of the fibers prepared on hackle and combs as 'magical fairy fibers' because they are such light and airy preparations, yet smooth and beautiful to look at too.

If you are wanting to branch out into textured yarns on your spindles then all you need add is a Flick Carder, open up the cut ends of locks to make

them easier to spin, the rest you can do with your fingers as you create your textured singles, you need only a minimum of fiber prep to make a textured yarn.

Stash Items

Your stash could include some small quantities of luxury fibers to blend with your usual fibers, you may wish to always have on hand a little (100gm (4oz) of a few luxury fibers like Mulberry Silk, Yak, Angora, Alpaca, or Cashmere, these all give you great choices for blending to create gorgeous yarn for a larger project, or to keep and spin on its own.

You may also like to have a kilo or so (2 pounds) of commercial combed top in your stash too, this is great for a quick and easy spin, or for blending with your own washed fibers, or luxury fibers.

Some Polwarth and Merino locks in both natural and dyed colours, or other fine fibers which are suitable for spindle spinning finer yarns are also great to have on hand, either for blending with your luxury fibers or to spin on their own. A kilo (2 pounds) of these fibers will last you quite a long time.

Colours:

You should have a range of at least three different colours, you may really enjoy purchasing a few hand painted commercial or indie dyed braids which you can then use in a variety of ways. You can spin them as they are, keeping the colours the same as in the braid, and then NPly them. Or you may like to split them and fractal spin, or you could strip out each individual colour to spin separately before plying together.

Hand Painted Braids are a great colour addition to a spindle spinners tinyStudio because of versatility in colour organisation and are really fun to re-blend in multiple ways on a hackle. You can also use your combs to blend some of the colours together into something new! If you love colour you will also love the variety you get from spinning multicoloured top on your spindle, and if you use a Turkish spindle the colour changes will look amazing on your 'turtle'.

Rituals

One of your creativity rituals could be the simple act of taking your spindle from the box, there is a reverence in the way we handle a spindle that in itself is inspirational! We can admire the quality of the craftsmanship that has gone into making this beautifully balanced spindle, the smoothness of the wood, the beauty of it as it spins. Perhaps you have a special spindle made of stone or glass, or even laser engraved, whatever kind of spindle you have, it is very likely it was at least partially handmade, and this is something you can certainly appreciate as you continue the creative process in the life of your spindle.

You may also consider setting up your spinning space. You could begin by laying down a special cloth to place your tools on. This cloth sets your tinyStudio apart in its own space in the room, even if you are sharing the room with other activities. It **defines the space** and creates a delightful area to get creative in. Use a cloth that inspires you! It may be a simple natural linen, or a decorative print, it could be a weaving you have made yourself, or a table cloth that belonged to your grandma, so long as it brings you a sense of peace, or love, or joy, or inspiration.

You may also take a moment to connect your movements and tools with all the people who have come before you to spin in this way, unchanged over millennia, hands, fiber, twist. you make essentially the same movements as those made by your forebears. This appreciation adds value to the activity you are about to undertake. Taking a moment to pause and remember that you are part of a global and ancient group of specialists, to feel your connection and your part in maintaining this wonderful craft, will help to centre your creativity and renew your awareness of the skill you possess.

For more creativity enhancing rituals, see Chapter 5 for ways you can set up your tinyStudio and for more ideas for special Tiny Studio items that can boost your creativity!

Further learning for tinyStudio Spindlers

If playing with colour and combed fiber is calling to you then our Fibery-goodness tinyStudio 'Dynamic Colour Blending: Combs and Hackles' course is a great place to learn all about blending and combing amazing rich fiber blends that you will adore! I bring you several hours of instructional videos, including exercises, and inspiration for creating fiber preparations you will love to spin! You may also love Evanita Montalvo's amazing 'Spinning with Turkish Spindles' course, where you learn everything from how to set your leader right through to plying, and of course how to wind your 'turtles' to perfection! Go to www.fiberygoodness.com/courses for more information.



"Spindles" Photography Evanita Montalvo (Tutor: Turkish Spindles at Fiberygoodness.com)

tinyStudio

Experimenter



You are the one who loves to follow the paths your curiosity takes you down. You really enjoy playing with colours, textures, and different fibers, because you want to know what happens 'if'.. you will happily put things together in odd or unusual ways and you aren't too worried about pre-planning everything you do in fiber, sometimes the excitement is simply in seeing the unexpected results of your creativity!

You love to experiment with both textures and colours and you are always curious to find out about new sheep breeds and fleeces, as well as new techniques for fiber prep and spinning.

You bravely try out anything that might spark your imagination, you are happy to make one-offs and single skeins of art yarn as you will try anything at least once, and you don't mind taking a few creative risks in your processes. You may not be sure about what your Experimenters tinyStudio should contain because it seems as though you couldn't possibly fit in everything you need! However I have some ideas for you that will help you focus your abundance of creative energy AND your tools and materials in a way that will add to your creativity not take away from it!

Tools

As an Experimenter you are probably keen on having ALL THE TOOLS! You may find that your tool collection will take up much of your tinyStudio! If you are using a box, we recommend getting a good sized one with layers and compartments to keep your tools from swishing around loose, you can even custom make dividers to keep your tools safe.

If you work at it you can also get away with a bit less than 'everything' and still be able to play with a wide range of fiber preparations. In fact if you think about it, working with a minimum of equipment can sometimes be all the challenge you need to get you really thinking outside of the box and innovating completely new ways to do things without the tools! However having said that, I think you still need at least the basics.

A Drum Carder is a cool thing to have. If you are working in a tinyStudio space in your house as well as compiling a tinyStudio Experimenters Box, you could consider some of the smaller Drum Carders on the market, essentially half the width of the standard ones, however knowing that you love to experiment and this often requires the ability to make larger quantities of prepared fiber to try spinning in different ways, you may want to own at least a standard size carder.

If you don't have the space for a Drum Carder in your tinyStudio, then a great alternative to a Drum Carder is a flick carder and your bare hands, between them you can open up and combine all your fibers into spinable quantities. You could also swap the Flick Carder for a set of Hand cards to really open up and smoosh together all kinds of fibers into mini batts or rolags.

A Hackle is another wonderful experimentation device, allowing you to create combed top with unlimited ways to arrange your colours. The Hackle fits nicely into a box, it packs quite flat and needs only clamps and a Diz See our Fiberygoodness tinyStudio course 'Dynamic Colour: Combs and Hackle' for more on how to use the Hackle for mindful and creative fiber experimentation at www.fiberygoodness.com/courses

If you are determined enough to reduce your tool stash to an amount that you can easily make portable but still give you a range of ways to experiment, I recommend the minimum to be: Hackle, Hand Cards, and a Flick Carder. With these tools you can take any washed fibers and process them into carded or combed preparations, as well as play endlessly with colours and combinations of colours.

Stash Items

Your stash items are probably varied and random! It would be a good option for you to start by **pulling it all out and organising it** into fiber types and colours. Once you can see it all better and exactly what you have then you will find the chaos in your mind about your stash will clear and you are already freer to be creative and make better use of what you have. All the odds and ends can be combined into something larger and more useable!

You will want to have a good variety of fibers in your stash to choose from, a range of locks and fiber types is essential as you can immediately access what you need as you dream up new things to do! You will also want a core supply of add ins; bling, silks, and exotic and unusual fibers in smaller quantities. Your stash should also contain a useful range of suitable threads for corespinning, plying, and autowrapping.

Colours

Yes you're right! ALL the colours! You need to have a wide range of colours



in your stash to choose from, you want to know that whatever you happen to dream up, you will have something on hand that you can use straight away and get experimenting with, why wait?! With this in mind, It would be really useful for you to do your own dyeing if you are not already, so having a second tinyStudio set up for dyeing could be a great option, check out the Tiny Dye Studio personality next!

If you are not dyeing your own fibers then it would be really useful for you to be purchasing things like handpainted or multicoloured top/braids, so you will have a range of colours to play with, either as they are or split up into separate colour strips. You could also look at purchasing things like the World of Wool 'Botany Lap Waste' bags or similar, (<https://www.worldofwool.co.uk>) which are bags of random pieces of fiber, its cheaper to purchase this way and gives you an instant 'stash' of colours to select from within a manageable quantity of fiber. Other fiber companies in your area may also have these available.

Rituals

It can be hard to imagine having any kind of 'ritual' to carry out before you can get stuck into creating your ideas, but I have a few suggestions for you, especially important if you are living in a smaller house with no dedicated studio space, or if you are regularly moving your fibery activities to different venues for teaching or spin groups. These rituals can help you centre your creativity in the moment, and springboard you into your craft as a conditioned creative 'trigger'.

Settling myself into a routine for sorting my fiber gives me the opportunity to re-assess quantities, list anything I need to replace or order, and make plans for using anything I still have plenty of. I would love to keep an inventory of stash materials but it can be really hard to track when you are an experimenter and tend to take handfuls of this and that at different times! So don't worry too much about that, I have found that simply assessing what I have visually, and planning replacement orders works well. Find yourself a journal you love and a pen that brings you joy and start each spin session with an inventory review!

Add to it further with a section on dye experiments, another with blending experiments, and then one for spin experiments. You can keep samples and notes on each one to refer back to later, for inspiration or to replicate an earlier experiment result.

You probably also find you need creative 'time out'. As an experimenter your brain is often pinging around with ideas, it can get busy in there! Find

opportunities to take a breather. This may be simply sitting at your wheel and spinning something traditional that you don't need to concentrate on, maybe watch a movie or your current TV series as you spin. Make it relaxation time with no (internal) pressures to be innovative or even especially creative. Rest times can feed your energy and revitalise the tinyStudio Experimenter, ready to tackle new ideas. If you find an inspiration pops into your head during your 'time out' just write it down in your journal for later, and you won't need to worry that you might forget it!

Further learning for Tiny Studio Experimenters - you might just love our Fiberygoodness courses: S3 (Sketch Spin Scribe) or our Journey to the Golden Fleece Creativity Certificate. Please check for enrolment opening dates on our website! www.fiberygoodness.com/courses. You may also love the Dynamic Colour classes where you can really get stuck into experimenting with fiber preparation and colour management! If you want a ready made record journal you might also like to check out my book 'For the Love of Fiber', available on Amazon.com



tinyDye Studio Colourist



Your fiber art usually starts with undyed fleece and yarns and grows from there, for you there's nothing better than dyeing your own fiber, playing with all the colours and exploring the richness and satisfaction of creating your own palettes and colourways. You are not afraid to try new and unusual combinations of colours, and you love to see how different fibers take up colour in different ways.

You have a stash of dyes as well as a fiber stash, and you have probably tried out a number of different dye brands as well as colour ranges. You may find yourself gravitating to the same colours each time you dye but you counter this by looking for inspiration in photos and artworks, in nature around you, and you may regularly challenge yourself to dye outside of your

comfort zone just to see how it turns out! Colour is one of the most wonderful things to play with and it is often your main draw when you're out fiber shopping, its hard to resist all the pretties!

If this is you, Tiny Dye Studio will help you refine and focus your dye practice, it will also help you take it on the road to teach, demonstrate, or share with others! Your Tiny Dye Studio is going to be portable, organised, contain all the essentials, and give you a system of tracking your dye use for re-ordering before you run out of your favourite colours! It will also be a way of keeping your dyes safe and secure away from small hands or pets, and contained in one dedicated space.

It may be that you have limited space to make a mess in, or have the use only of the family kitchen, or you are apartment living and this restricts your ability to get free with your dyeing. Tiny Dye Studio is your answer!

Tools

Often, dyeing is considered an equipment heavy task, and one that you need a dedicated space for and a lot of equipment to dye successfully, however we will be focussing on collecting only what YOU need to in order to dye for your own projects, you will be amazed how little space this can take and how simple your tools and equipment need be.

Your Tiny Dye Studio will require some basic essentials, my own best thing is a **layered steamer**! My one has three layers allowing me to do three separate dye batches with my special bagged method of steaming. The one I use is a 'Michael Foreman' steamer that I found second hand, the layers can be put inside the largest so it ends up quite compact when not in use,

You will also need to add a funnel, some plastic bottles to mix your dye into, a small spoon, some cleaning rags, sealable plastic bags, plastic cling wrap, latex gloves and a respirator mask. I often use a dedicated oven tray for oven dye techniques. You will also need a large pot for kettle dyeing, and a supply of either vinegar or acetic acid. You may have other requirements depending on the methods you use to dye.

Colours

You should have a range of all your favourite dye colours, ones you know you can mix together to create new colours, for example I always have a quantity of Dharma Lemon Yellow as I can use it to mix into other colours, such as Sapphire Blue, to create really vibrant grass green, or with Fuschia to create a stunningly hot orange. You can actually get away with as few as half a dozen dye colours if you are confident in your colour mixing to make new colours and variations on those. Of course you can also alter the amount of water you add to your dye mix to vary the intensity of colour and to create soft pastels.

My own 'essentials' are: Dharma's Turquoise, Fuschia, Lemon Yellow, Sapphire Blue, and Teddy Bear Brown. Additionally I like to add some 'specials' such as Landscapes 'Sage' 'SaltMarsh', and 'Kingfisher'.

Stash

Your fiber stash will probably largely consist of undyed fiber, top, washed locks, and speciality fibers such as silks. You may have a larger quantity of your 'go to' fibers, the ones that you know how they dye and the methods you can use to get the colour exactly as you want, but you might enjoy collecting smaller quantities of 'experiment' fibers, wool breeds you havent tried dyeing before. You may also have some undyed yarns in your stash too, these are really fun to dye and there are so many different techniques you can use to create different effects on the yarn.

Rituals

Rituals for the Tiny Dye Studio dyer are just as important as for any other creative process. In order to enjoy the freedom to explore colours, combinations of colours, and all types of pallettes, it is important for you also to remove distractions, make time and space to just play, and allow your inspiration to flow. You tend to be a very visual person so removing clutter is important, create a

space in your house where you can hide away from the housework, make your own little ritual in setting up your dye area and look on it mindfully as an important part of the process rather than a tedious necessity in order to dye!

Take time to play with some paints and experiment with the colours. As you do this you will find that new ideas for colourways will come to you, and you will have also given yourself some peaceful time to marvel at the colours as they blend together, mix and play with proportions, and simply experience the joy of colour. Creating a pre-dyeing painting ritual is a great way to stay inspired!

There are also other things you can do to stay inspired. Keeping a Dye Log is a great way to record your experiments and keep samples, this can be super useful when you are looking to see how specific fibers take dyes and the effects you can create with them. Post-dye journaling and record keeping can also become a wonderful ritual, completing each dye session with a cup of tea, some relaxation, calming music and your dye record book to stick in samples and record your session.

Further Learning for Tiny Studio Dyers: If you are interested in learning more about the Tiny Dye Studio approach to dyeing, in which the main focus is working with smaller (non-commercial) quantities of fiber and yarns, project by project, using simple, no mess no fuss techniques to achieve deep and vibrant colours, come on over to www.fiberygoodness.com and subscribe to the tinyStudio Creative Life Magazine! We will be running regular TinyDyeStudio tutorials with step by step instructions so you can get amazing rich and dynamic colours using techniques suitable for your home kitchen or small dye studio space.



fiber dyed by Lyn Walsh of Fibre2go (NZ) as a 'pre-batt' Spun by Suzy

tinyStudio Maker



Your spinning is project oriented! You love to create yarns and textures that will look amazing in your weavings, your knit projects, or your crochet patterns. You often spin with a project in mind, and you enjoy the technical aspect of creating the yarn that will be just right for your pattern or idea.

You also enjoy making use of ALL the yarns you have, including any art yarns or textured yarns spun with or without a project plan, these are great to add into your weavings or to create highlights in your projects that otherwise use your more traditional yarns. You are very interested in the process of spinning, the twist, grist, and handle of your yarns, and you love the gadgets and tools that help you take these measurements as you spin.

Making samples and swatches is a good thing and you enjoy building a record of yarns spun and projects created. We will help you set up your tinyStudio suited to your requirements as a 'Maker', one that contains all your project requirements in a thoughtful and deliberate way, and that gives you the freedom from clutter and chaos that can sometimes go hand in hand with your creativity but can also be overwhelming at times too.

Tools

Your Tiny Studio personality requires lots of tools, weaving equipment, knitting needles and crochet hooks, measuring devices for both spinning and making, plus a way to store and organise patterns. Also, as a 'Maker' you probably have a range of projects on the go all at once. You need a way to store your WIP's and keep track of your progress in each. The tinyStudio journal is an ideal place to keep your project info and notes, to track where you are up to with each project as you go, so when you return it is easy to pick up where you left off. You will love the mindful approach to your making that helps you feel organised and free's you to be more creative.

The first thing you need is a Project notebook or journal! Choose one you will love to use, one that feels wonderful in your hands, that you can put in your project bag and take on adventures with you, one that you can stick things into and scribble notes in. Your journal can also contain pages for swatches and samples so you can record your trials and note what you used, where you sourced your materials from. If you do a lot of making you will find having a place to store your notes along with pattern info and samples will develop into a wonderful resource.

You will also need something awesome to keep your needles and hooks organised in, a cloth roll or a folder with spaces for each set will work well. You might even want to have a go at making your own needle rolls and crochet hook organisers!

Your tinyStudio will need compartments for you to add yarns as well as the makings of new yarns. You will not only be spinning but also likely to be using everything you spin, so for example, if you also weave your tinyStudio should contain some weaving essentials such as a sample loom, for which you could use a circular loom or a small frame loom, and spare bobbins. Also a basket for bits and pieces of leftover yarns to use in your sampling.

Stash

Your stash is likely to be wide and varied, with a range of items needed for making projects that span across several mediums. You are probably interested in many different crafts and enjoy combining them. You could have a stash of cotton threads, buttons, and cloth, as well as a wide range of fibers for your spinning projects. You like to have a quantity of 'just in case' items in your stash, things that you have no immediate need for but like to hang on to just in case you have a spur of the moment inspiration and find that is the one item you must have!

Downsizing is not a concept you feel terribly friendly towards for that reason. My suggestion is that you don't get rid of stash items, instead simply do not go out buying more and more. Your stash will naturally destash itself in this way and your creativity will increase as you are challenged to think outside the box to solve your project problems using what is on hand.

For future stash enhancement you may want to take a 'project first' approach, planning your project and then purchasing what you need for it, this will help you remain uncluttered while still knowing you have just what you require to complete your project, you could even do this for several projects in advance, so you have self made kits of fibers that all go together well.

Rituals

As a maker you will have certain processes you follow, starting with your initial inspiration or project, or triggered by a visual of something that catches your eye and sparks ideas. You tend to be a very practical person, and as such 'rituals' that feed your creativity are going to be hands on and focussed towards the act of making.

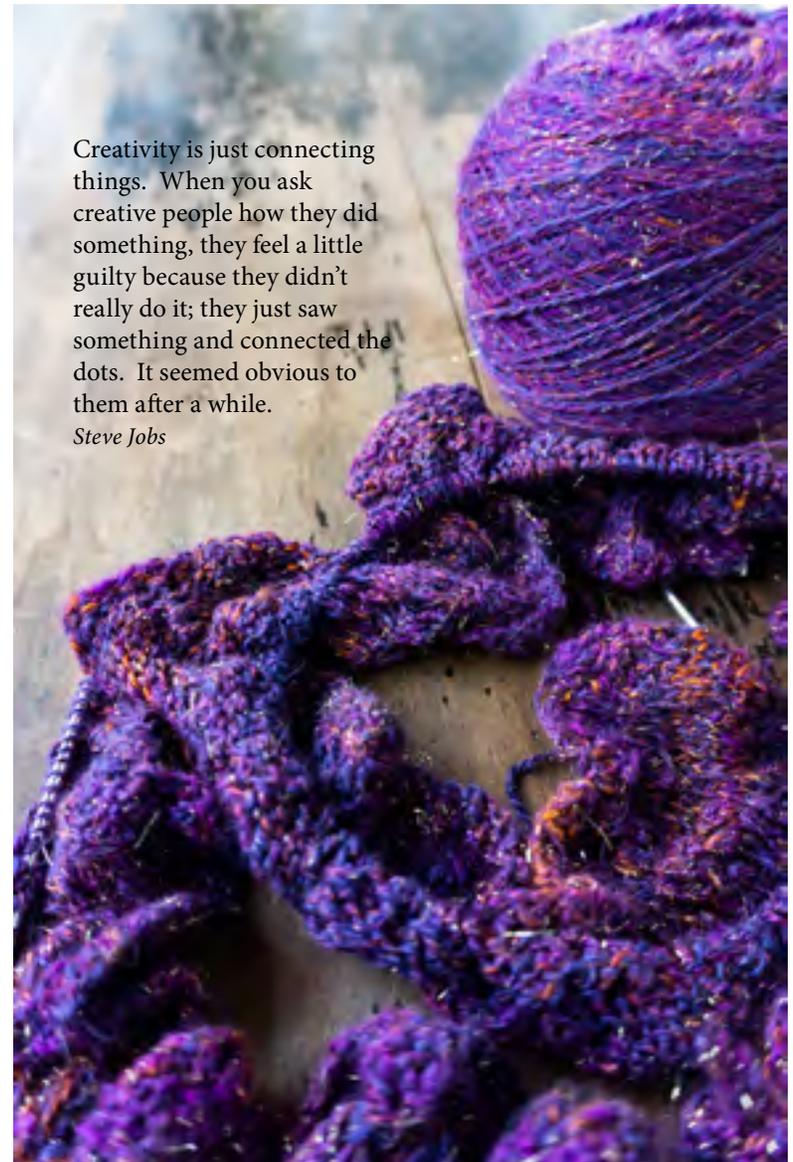
"Creativity is just connecting things. When you ask creative people how they did something, they feel a little guilty because they didn't really do it; they just saw something and connected the dots. It seemed obvious to them after a while." Steve Jobs

Your 'rituals' then are procedural steps rather than introspective processing. Once you have your idea you like to get started 'connecting the dots' and making your idea a reality. The best way you can approach this is to have a very **well organised studio**, the less time you spend hunting through piles of random bits and pieces to find the one thread you need, the freer you are to just create!. One of your regular rituals could include a mindful gathering up of scraps, tools, and left overs from your last project, finding places for them among your studio and stash storage. With each item you place, make a mental note of what it is and where it is going, it may become a future 'dot' in another project.

Keeping your Tiny Studio organised is an ongoing activity, and one that you can use as 'slow down' time. Put on some great music, arrange to have uninterrupted time, make this a regular activity with a mindful series of actions in which you label, sort, and categorise stash and craft items, and carry out tool maintenance as needed too. At the end of your organising session you will feel re-vitalised and ready to start the next project in a creative space that is free of clutter or chaos.

As you work, use your hands-on rituals as mini creativity triggers. Each time you pick up a tool, take just a small moment to re-appreciate its beauty and function, not only what the tool can do for you, but what that tool 'makes' you: it makes you a creator, a skilled craftsperson, a manager of fiber and a person who is able to take an idea and make it a reality. Take a moment to appreciate your relationship with this tool.

These feelings can bring strong levels of satisfaction and excitement about the creative possibilities ahead of you and keep you motivated and mindfully working on your projects. This approach will also help you develop that special mastery over your work and techniques as your sense of awareness of each step, each stitch, each draft of fiber helps you shape it into the best it can be.



Creativity is just connecting things. When you ask creative people how they did something, they feel a little guilty because they didn't really do it; they just saw something and connected the dots. It seemed obvious to them after a while.

Steve Jobs

Suzy Brown Yarn: Hand combed and hackled blend of Polwarth, Cria Alpaca, Silk, and Angelina, spun on a Majacraft Little Gem. Lace knit pattern from Lara Nettle.

tinyStudio Traditionalist

You are someone who loves to create perfection, you enjoy the drape and feel of traditional yarns. You love fine fleece, low micron fibers, and the way they spin and feel in your hands. You are just as happy to prepare your own fibers as to spin from a lovely soft commercial top, and you most likely have a mix of both in your stash.

Although it doesn't always happen that way you also love to see your bobbins fill evenly, and the sight of a perfectly filled bobbin gives you a great feeling of satisfaction. Medium or coarser fibers can also play a role in your spinning if you have a project that calls for them and you often gravitate to natural colours in your stash enhancements.

Even though you may branch out into more experimental spinning from time to time, your true love is traditional spinning and the feeling of joy you get from spinning the 'perfect' yarn. You enjoy tools that are made with obvious craftsmanship, and you like to know you have the right tool for the job. You already bring a mindful approach to your spinning. tinyStudio can help you identify



exactly the areas you would like to focus your attention on, and to refine your equipment and stash into a 'pick up and go' box of gorgeousness, along with developing some creativity 'rituals' that will help you get into the 'spinning zone flow'.

Tools

As a traditionalist you will most likely enjoy using tools in traditional ways, hand combs can be your best friends, allowing you to carefully load your newly washed locks, cut ends to the comb, tips together, and feel the thrill of seeing those locks organise into a beautifully airy 'nest' of spinnable fluff.

You may also appreciate a great set of hand cards to prepare your own rolags ready for a lovely light woolen spin. Hand cards are an ancient tool that have been largely unchanged for centuries, the process of using them can be meditative and rewarding, and it is surprising how much fiber you can prepare with these tools in a relatively short time.

You may also find that you are perfectly happy with almost no tools at all, perhaps a simple flick carder is all you need to open up the ends of your locks to spin beautiful worsted yarns straight from your already perfect fleece.

As a relatively technical spinner you may like to make use of things like twist measurement tools, something that allows you to measure the angle of your twist for consistency, and WPI measurement tools to count the number of 'wraps per inch' to gauge the thickness of your yarns.

Your tinyStudio can be uncomplicated, uncluttered and organised. You should feel at peace with your studio equipment and storage, everything having its own place, easily accessible, giving you a sense of the beauty in simplicity. You may like to add some special pieces that could become part of your pre-spinning rituals, things that help you get into the frame of mind in which you feel calm and free and ready to spin. Such as a small, finely made cloth on which to lay out your equipment and fibers. Perhaps a small tea pot of beautiful bone china and a special cup to go with it, with hot tea prepared and ready for you as you sit to spin. You can include little treasures like these in your tinyStudio, to enhance your creativity and enjoyment of your dedicated fiber time.

Stash

Your stash could consist of anything from raw in the grease spinnable wool to smooth well processed commercial top. As a traditional spinner you may love the process of taking wool right off the sheep and processing it yourself, so you could have an amount of raw wool waiting to be washed. You should also make sure you have a supply of your favourite blend, and also your favourite base fibers ready for you to make your own blends. You might really enjoy our Fiberygoodness courses on colour blending with fiber; you can comb, card or hackle blend your own colours, making some wonderful traditional yarns while staying in control of your colours and placements.

Include a range of primary colours in your stash, blues, yellows, and reds (for example sea blue, turquoise, lemon yellow, gold, fuschia, and red) will give you the ability to create almost any colour you wish in whatever preparation you want to spin, without requiring you to have a very large stash of all the colours.

Rituals

As a traditional spinner you tend to approach your craft very consciously and mindfully already. You are interested in spinning techniques that require a directed approach to your fiber and equipment, and you make deliberate yarns from which you gain much pleasure in the smooth, even drafting, rhythmic treadling and spinning, and production of beautifully balanced, skillful yarns.

With this in mind, you may find that creating some simple rituals or activities as you set up your spinning area will help you develop a pattern that will actually trigger your sense of creativity as you begin each spin session. Little rituals can place you firmly 'in the moment', ready and open to fully experience and enjoy the creative process. Activities like spreading out your beautiful spinning table cloth, placing your tools upon it while reflecting on the feel of them in your hands and the weight of them as you place them, pouring your tea and enjoying the scent and the sound, perhaps lighting a candle to release a beautiful aroma that transports your senses. These are the kinds of 'rituals' that you can repeat each time you begin your spinning, they give you the space and time to remove yourself from everyday worries, busy thoughts, and stress, and your moment to 'breathe' prepares you for immersion into your craft and freedom from distractions.

tinyStudio Art Yarnist



You love to think and work out of the box, textures and colours and complex yarns speak to you! Nothing is more exciting than facing yourself with a random pile of fibers and colours and making something unique out of them.

Experimenting doesn't phase you and you love to examine other peoples yarns and work out your own way of making variations on them. Sometimes you need a bit of a creative boost to get you going, an image to work from, a new fiber to try out, a challenge given!

Sometimes inspiration can be unpredictable, and you are someone who needs to feel the inspiration to spin. Occasionally you might also find yourself in something of a spinning rut and you find your yarns start to look the same, while what you really love are variety and diversity.

You get most excited when you have a flash of inspiration and can get straight to work on your ideas! You are not daunted by the idea of plying your yarns multiple times to get the textures and shapes you want in them,,and you are always up for a challenge! The tinyStudio Art Yarn set up could be what you need to inspire the next part of your fiber journey.

Tools

What can I say. ALL THE TOOLS! Yes we want them all! How can you create everything you imagine without them?! So maybe that is a little extreme, yet you know already, fiber prep is everything! You can purchase art batts, roving, top, locks in all states of being, you are not 'stuck' if you have no tools, the only real problem with this is having to wait for fiber to arrive while that idea is burning in your head.

Doing it yourself is always a great option, and you CAN do this without having every tool, so long as you have a couple of basic things. Firstly I would say if you are going to keep it to one tool for all your experiments, invest in a drum carder first. It is fast, efficient, you can combine any fibers, any colours, and custom make your preparation exactly how you want it. As a art yarnist your most accessible and useable prep is going to be carded, you 'can' spin it pretty smooth if you want to, with a little bit of dizzing first (you need that diz!) and a short forward 'worsted' draft, but you can also get masses of texture in your carded fiber too as well as play with different ways of carding (seriously endless!). The drum carder is going to be your best fibery friend. It also has the advantage of letting you prepare large quantities of fiber really efficiently, so when you are going to make a big yarn, you get a big batt to work from, much more efficient than using hand cards, and a more versatile prep than combed top.

If you wanted to go beyond the drum carder, you will probably also love a set of combs. Firstly because, lets face it, they are pretty badass. but also because they give you the possibility of expanding on what you can do with the drum carder in terms of colour management and blending. The combs will give you a smoother and very well blended fiber mix, and you can also use them to prepare locks for spinning or even to open them up to card afterwards. The combs give you the possibility to make your own combed top for the times you will need it. Your diz will also come in handy with it!

Beyond this, another tool that is very handy is a 2 yard niddy noddy - the standard is often 1.5 yards but I have always found that the 2 yard ones display bulkier yarns much better, allowing them to drape as

they should. Also of course a really good Lazy Kate with the ability to hold at least three bobbins at once is essential as you may often find yourself needing to ply a bunch of yarns together! They can also come in handy for holding your cones and threads while plying or autowrapping too.

Stash

Your stash could and should be unashamedly eclectic and varied! You never know what you will need, so include locks of different breeds, lengths, and fineness, as well as a nice variety of combed tops in various shades. Speciality fibers are great for making varied textures too, and of course bling and random items such as strips of cloth that could be upcycled or recycled into a new yarn. The trick in keeping this 'tinyStudio' is to stay organised with your stash, know what you have and where it is at all time. This will prevent both the 'I am halfway through the fleece already I am going to run out, help buy more fleece! syndrome, and also the 'oooh I need that Polwarth!' only to find out when you get home that you actually already had two Polwarth fleeces in your stash!

Keeping organised means you can run an inventory, you should be able to see at a glance how much you have of all your favourite fiber types, and each time you use some, update that inventory, leave yourself a note when you are getting close to 'order more' time. This way you keep only what you need in your studio for the next few months of fiber work and can be confident in your quantities without over consuming or ending up with lost and lonely items in the bottom of your stash . Just knowing what you have and where it is can be a big boost to your creativity, it frees you up from stash stress and puts you into an 'innovate with what I have at hand' frame of mind. Stash storage then is also important, we will come back to this in a later chapter with ideas for keeping organised!

Rituals

These simple and repeated activities are what can set you up ready to dive into your creative flow, letting go of any mental clutter and the demands of daily life. For you, inspiration is very important. You are creating artistic yarns that take more than a standard approach to the techniques of spinning, you like to combine techniques with different or unusual fibers, you enjoy adding layers to your yarns, and the process of spinning and plying while being in control of your twist is a fun challenge that you often need to think your way through before you dive in.

Ways you can trigger inspiration can be found in carrying out small rituals or practices that you come to associate with your creative time. You may find that certain places in your house, studio, or garden bring you a sense of revitalisation and relaxation, it is important to spend time in those places, take your journal there with you if you can, give yourself a little time to relax and let your thoughts take you to your stash and your wheel, write down the things you are feeling strongly about this day, this moment, ideas that you could express through your spinning and your creative hands.

Even if you do not go directly to your wheel that's ok, inspiration gained now and written down in your journal will also be there later when you have time to spin! Sometimes just getting these thoughts down reduces the clutter in our creative heads and you can relax knowing that now you have written your idea down (or sketched it) you can even forget it if you want and come back to it later, you don't need to keep juggling it around in your head to remember it.

You may also like to have a little set of items that you love, perhaps fiber tools or related items, or a set of pencils, or knitting needles, precious yarns, or previous projects. Put these out in a prominent place in your work area, you will feel a little lift every time your eyes brush over them.

Before you start your spinning time you might also like to find a way to separate yourself from other life demands, maybe you put on some specific music that makes you feel happy or inspired, play that as you make your cup of tea or coffee, give your mind time to settle and relax, feel yourself become free with the music and able to focus on your creative feelings. Once your mind is free you can think about your yarn or project planning, working your way mentally through the process, what you want to achieve and visualising your hoped for outcome. This is when your creative flow begins! Later in chapter 5 we will come back to look at other 'rituals' for getting into your creative flow.

Probably one of the most important things is to make sure you have enough time, and that you PRIOTISE it for your spinning, do not let yourself feel rushed or that you are just snatching a moment to spin, at least for your most creative spinning projects. You need to give yourself time to experiment with your spinning, which means time to make mistakes and fail yarns, on the way to creating the one you love!





Simplifying your Studio

Does the idea of downsizing your stash fill you with dread? Or does the notion of having a smaller yet perfectly organised fiber supply give you an immediate sense of peace when you think about it? You may be a person who has a giant stash, it may already be wonderfully organised and you know what you have and where to find it when you need it, or you may be a person with a LOT of fluff and its an adventure to dive into it to find treasures. You may already have just a small quantity of fiber but the concern underlying this is that you might not have the 'right' fiber when you need it.

In this chapter we are going to look at ways to manage and organise your fluff and associated equipment, and also ways to set up your studio to optimise it for creativity enhancement.

Simplifying your Studio

One of the most important things I have learned is that you are not what you own, and what you own does not define you. I have learned this by reducing my possessions down to almost nothing on several occasions. At these times I have also found that wherever you are, there you are! Simplifying my possessions down to what I could carry showed me that the key to happiness and creativity is always there inside me, independent of what I have or don't have, and 'I' am always with me, where ever I am! Happiness gives me the freedom and motivation to be creative. A simple and uncluttered life allows me time to enjoy that.

Over the past couple of decades I have shifted many times, packing up houses and moving on. Each time I did this I would remove some of the clutter, consciously working on keeping only the things that gave me joy. However the 'big' realisation came when I moved further away, across the globe to the opposite side! It just wasn't realistic to take everything I owned with me. In fact, the weight of my belongings could have been heavy enough to prevent me going at all. I took a deep breath and had a huge garage sale, anything that didn't sell I sent to the auction and then the thrift stores. I had a couple of boxes of 'treasures' that I left behind with family, and made my move to the other side of the world with very little more than a couple of suitcases. I was convinced I would miss my books, my art, my ceramic collection.. A year later I realised I actually missed nothing! It was a revelation.

Of course by this time I was also re-accumulating things such as art equipment, a remarkable amount of books, and new treasures found on my travels around Europe. I also developed an impressive stash of fiber, raw fleeces, washed fleeces, dyed locks, batts, quantities of Merino top (I was buying 10 kilo bumps at a time) along with various quantities of other commercial tops such as BLF, Corriedale. I had to have it all! And then.. there were the dyes.. and dye equipment, the tools (ALL of them) several looms including a lovely Saori loom, and

eventually a bunch of large storage boxes stacked up in the garage for fleece AND spun yarns. I lost things in the stash, doubled up on things I already had because I forgot I had them, felt guilt at the number of unwashed fleeces I owned, and the reality was that I mostly only ever worked from one 'on the go' box of my favourites that I would simply replenish as needed.

It came time to return to New Zealand, half a world away. Initially it was a temporary move, time with increasingly elderly family members, then an intended return to the Netherlands, so we travelled again with just a few suitcases. I had pre-shipped a box of stuff including my most precious fiber books, my dyes (expensive to replace), and a few special yarns, as I planned to run some workshops while in NZ.

When it became clear I was not going to leave again, I had to think of the things I had left behind. I will admit that this time, I did miss a few things; my Saori Loom, a lovely and unusual tea set I had purchased in Bayeux France, some books, and my fiber tools - hackle, combs, and especially my customised 'One Wheel' my Majacraft Aura.

This experience made it very clear which things I actually would prefer not to do without. Of course you can 'survive' without many things, but to be and feel creative, at home, and happy in your creativity, sometimes you really do need to have some precious items. Imagining how you would get by without them is a great way to identify which ones are the most important and the most vital to your particular form of self expression, because self expression IS your creativity. This is WHY we create, it is what drives us, it is to feel the passion that our craft brings out in us, and which we then express through our hands when we create something.

Now we will make a start at refining tools and materials into an amount and order that you feel relaxed and happy with as the first step towards a more mindful fiber art practice and the creation of your own unique 'tinyStudio' space.

De-Clutter First

Selecting exactly which tools and what 'kind' of stash you need in order to feel inspired and creative is vital to successfully managing your studio space and creative environment. This also means **letting go** of the things that are 'extra' to that. So if you have hand cards that you never use, or bags of fiber that were given to you but you never felt inspired to wash and spin, either find ways you can use them, or move them on to someone else who might have a different experience with them. **De-cluttering** your space helps you to find the beauty in the things you have, creating space around them and simplifying your environment. This can offer you peace and balance, both of which help bring about the creative freedom you need to express yourself.

So let us begin with your tools. Refer back to your tinyStudio 'personality' and review the ideas and suggestions there as to which tools may best suit your style. My Great Aunt, a clever embroiderer and hand-maker herself, used to say that if you haven't used something in two years, it is time to let it go, so take out all your tools, spread them in front of you. Take some quiet moments to review them. Make a list of the fiber tools you have. Give each one a mark out of ten for how often you use it, ten being in every project, around 5 and 6 being for about half the things you make, and 0 being never. Then ask yourself these questions:

- When was the last time I used this tool?
- Did I love the fiber I prepared with it?
- Have I learned enough about this tool or do I still need to know more about it to use it well?
- Does owning and using this tool give me pleasure?
- Could I manage easily without it?

Use your answers to these questions, along with the tinyStudio Personality suggestions, as your guide in deciding if you should keep each tool. Select the ones that you know you will use over and over again, and from which you produce fiber preparations you love to spin. The other tools can be safely moved on or, if you have even a small doubt, can be put in storage.

Our goal is to create a tinyStudio space, you could start off with a box for it, a magical box that contains all your tools and a carefully selected fiber stash, a box that has a small footprint in your house, is portable, and contains everything you need to be creative.

Lets call this your tinyStudio Creative Life Box!

In Chapter 5 we will begin assembling your tinyStudio Creative Life Box. When you start to think about a box to create your tinyStudio in, you will want to select something with the right size and number of compartments to store your tools (if you have a drum carder among them that will stay separate from the box!). Having a tinyStudio box will give you some clear limitations on what you will be using currently and in the near future. It will help you stay organised, tidy, focussed, and free of clutter, and it will give you everything you need in one place, which you can even pick up and go anywhere with, you will always have everything you need in it!

And now the stash!

Organise

What are are doing with the stash is not so much stripping it down to a bare minimum, as taking a thoughtful approach to using what you have before getting too enthusiastic about buying more fiber. The goal is to first, itemise what you have (so no fiber is left behind!) and then work on ways to organise it into useful amounts. I like to organise by colour, but you can also organise by fiber type, lock structure, or micron count. If you want to feel super organised you could find some large plastic boxes with lids to store your yarn in, stackable ones are awesome. Add labels to them to detail what is in them and adjust this inventory note every time you add or remove anything from the box, a white board pen is great for this as you can erase and re-write many times.

Create your own kits:

You can also organise by project quantities, matching up a range of fibers and colours that you can use together into a single project. These can have their own labelled boxes, so effectively you are making your own 'kit' ready to use! You can add a project note or pattern to your box of fiber in advance or just wait until you have an inspiration for those fibers. This can be an excellent way to rationalise your fiber stash as you can assign most of your fiber to specific projects, not only will you have a plan for future projects but you will also know you already have the right amount of fiber for it. If you are a bit short of the right fibers you can either purchase what you need to add to the 'kit' or wait till you have new 'bits and pieces' that will match up that you can add.

Refresh your Colours

Enhance your stash without buying new stuff! Don't be afraid to overdyed the colours in your stash that you don't love and turn them into colours you do love! Check out fiberygoodness.com for more information and courses on dyeing to learn more about doing this.

If you have lighter colours or bright colours that you really don't feel any great affinity to, rather than purchasing new colours for your next spinning activities, or burying them at the bottom of the stash in a box labelled 'Urgh why did I ever buy or dye these' take out your big dye pot and drop them into a nice hot bath of ultramarine or magenta, you will be amazed at the result, and really, what have you got to lose here!?

Overdyeing can produce some truly beautiful results, it gives you rich colours and tonal variations and will transform your blotchy, too bright, or pastel fiber into something with a lovely depth.

Another advantage of this is you can take fibers of different colours that you could not use together easily, and turn them into a batch of fiber that you can spin into a yarn of semi solid colour, effectively making your box of diverse bits and pieces into a box of fiber you can combine into a project together.

You can also organise your colours into **blending** batches for drum carding or combing, selecting colours that you could blend together to darken or lighten them, or to create entirely new shades and tones. You may find you don't have enough of your red (for example) to do anything much with, but if you were to blend it into a blue, or a yellow, you would create a purple or orange, or you could use it to add warmth to your brown fibers, it doesn't need to stay in your stash as a small quantity of unused red!

Set up some storage boxes to hold your blending batches, this is great if you have a later project in mind and want to create some really stunning optical blends, which is what you get when you comb or card colours together. This kind of blend is so dynamic and rich because, unlike dyeing, your fibers do not change colour, but when you blend them together they give the appearance of a new colour, yellow and blue fibers become green! Yet when you look closely you can still see the individual colours yellow and blue contained in that green.

You should take time to really experiment with colour blending, it's a fantastic way to rationalise your stash and use up smaller quantities of fiber to make usable quantities from them, and you can create some very unique and beautiful colours that you will love. Check out the two Dynamic Colour Blending courses ('Combs and Hackled' and 'Carding') on www.Fiberygoodness.com/courses to learn more, these courses take you through a series of video tutorials and contain some great practice exercises and tasks to get you blending colour like a pro. And it's fun!

Keep an Inventory

You can use a passion for stationary (I am sure I am not alone in this one!) to create your own studio inventory system. Find yourself a beautiful journal and create a recording method for tracking tools and stash. Make

your own templates for keeping records of incoming and outgoing fiber, as well as tool information and notes on their use. Alternatively you might consider a purpose built journal such as our Fiberygoodness produced book 'For the Love of Fiber', available on Amazon.com

You can use your Tiny Studio Journal for inventory, noting 'in' and 'out' of storage along with date of acquisition and specific storage placement for easy recall later. While it is not necessary to your creative life to keep a physical inventory of your 'stuff' it can help you create a mindful approach to your stash enhancement, I am sure I am also not the only one who has purchased Mohair locks thinking I had run out and then found I had plenty at the bottom of the stash! This will help you feel in control of what you have in your studio, freeing your mind from swirling thoughts and potential anxiety, and giving you the mindful space to be more creative.

Remember It is really okay to discard, give away, or repurpose things that do not get your hands itching to get creative with it, we have a limited time on this earth, and our creativity is a treasure, so keeping your fiber activities enjoyable will feed your passion and expand your potential creativity,

Organised or Disorganised? Have you read the various memes about how creative people are messy people? The idea that creativity and disorganisation go hand in hand.. do you relate to that? I thought I did. I do admit to rarely having a tidy house, dishes often litter my kitchen bench, my bed is only occasionally 'made', I have a last minute nearly naked approach to getting the laundry done. Does this enhance my creativity though? If I really think about it the answer is NO! It hinders it. I am constantly distracted by the need to tidy up, to remove the dog licks from the glass on the french doors and the ten year old boy litter trail through the house..

I thought this was maybe because I am just busy being creative, that housework takes a back seat to my need to make and create. this much

is true. But I am not messy 'because' I am creative, and I do not need to BE messy in order to be creative! I simply wish all the mess would magically disappear so I can focus properly on what I am inspired to do! What does this mean in our tinyStudio process? I think it means making a space, separating yourself from the chaos that is distracting, Keeping your tinyStudio in a box means you can actually move yourself and your fiber work easily into whatever space is currently the most restful!

Use your 'rituals' to create your space, lay out your beautiful cloth and set up your tools ready to use. I like to take my project to the garden under a tree, so my tinyStudio Creative Life Box comes with me, I know I can relax as I have everything I need right there beside me, and I dont have to sacrifice my focussed creative time to tidy the house first (if I did that, the creative time would never happen!).





Assembling
a tinyStudio
Creative Life
Box.

Here it is! We have narrowed down your tools to the ones that are essential to your fiber creativity, and rationalised your stash into just the fibers that speak to your fibery passions and spark your desire to spin and create. You should now be feeling in complete control, mindful of having everything you need for your creative endeavours and upcoming projects, as well as enough random fiber to supply any 'spur of the moment' spinning that often comes with sudden inspirations.

Now it is time to begin assembling a tinyStudio Creative Life Box!

Why a box? A container has boundaries and limitations, natural constrictions on how much you can fit into them. We often strive for complete freedom to be creative, so does it seem counter intuitive to you to want to place restrictions on our studio space? The answer is that, by providing ourselves with our own chosen set of limitations, we actually can create a space in which we feel **more free** to follow our passions and be creative, away from chaos, daily life demands, and an overload of materials and tools.

According to Orson Welles “The enemy of art is the absence of limitations.”

Our tinyStudio Creative Life Box gives us just enough boundary to push us into becoming more innovative, solving the problem of 'how do I make what is in my head with what I have on hand'. Rather than facing the empty page syndrome of staring at a limitless potential of stash and tools and not knowing where to start, we are actually creating ourselves a solid start point that **self-guides us into a creative process**, one that becomes more familiar and easier to fall into every time. Combined with our own personal rituals this starting point of confidence in tools and materials, and excitement about using them in a mindful way, provides us a solid base for building on creatively. Everyone needs a place to start from.

Another great reason for making your own tinyStudio Creative Life Box is that it is **portable**, and has a small footprint in your home. Many of us now find ourselves living in smaller spaces, we don't 'need' to take up massive amounts of space to live well and comfortably, and from an environmental perspective, our 'footprints' can be smaller and more consciously supportive of the earth we live on and the space we take up in it. If you are wanting to simplify your life, to release the stress of a modern lifestyle and get back to basics in a mindful way, setting yourself up with a tinyStudio box can really help you do that.

It is a wonderful feeling to know your Studio Box contains everything you need, all the beautifully made tools to be treasured and used over and over again, all the most precious fibers for your next project, and it gives you a warm glow when you look at it or think of it. You anticipate the pleasure it will give you to open the lid and unpack your beautiful things to set up your creative corner, or as it is so portable, that you can take it outside with you, under a tree or by a stream, everything you need is right there and ready to use. The peace and simplicity of this is an oasis in our busy lives.

Do not put off making decisions, take action, organise, declutter.

The Right Box For You.

This is a very personal choice, maybe you do not need your box to be portable and you have found a wonderful wooden chest or even set of cupboards that is perfect, or you might have discovered an amazing compartmentalised toolbox in the hardware store! You might want to get super handy and build one yourself, or you may want to do what I have done and find the perfect sized plastic storage box and mix and match inserts to hold your tools and fiber.

tinyStudio Box Contents

To be realistic, we are just never going to fit even our rationalised stash into a tinyStudio Creative Life Box in its entirety! And that's ok, you should have some nicely stacked and inventoried stash boxes already set up, think of them as your 'mothership' of materials from which you source your current project fibers as needed. So your tinyStudio box needs room for your tools, along with a project worth of fiber. If you do not work on specific projects but rather spin first then figure out what to use the yarn for, just keep enough room for at least three or four yarns worth of your current favourite fibers to choose from. I always have at least three braids of combed top, some locks, and a batt, in my tinyStudio box. I am then confident that if I was to go out for a spin day with my tinyStudio, I will always have enough to keep me busy for the day and it's all ready to just pick up and go at any time, and if I am staying home I don't need to eat into my precious spinning time searching for something I feel like spinning!

There are many options for choosing a tinyStudio Box, so begin with the size you need and work from that. Lay out your tools and your current fiber project supplies. These are the minimum you need to contain, so your box needs to be large enough to accommodate height and length. Organise your tools while laid out like this into sizes, put all your long narrow tools together such as Doffer, Niddy Noddy, Spindles etc. Then collect your smaller tools such as flick carder, diz, orifice hooks, what size container do they need? And you will also want at least two bobbins in your Studio Box, along with one on your wheel, what space will they need?

You will probably find that your tinyStudio Box will need to have at least one or two layers. In mine I have a top layer that is an insert that lifts out, it has compartments for different shaped tools.



The top layer of Suzy's tinyStudio Creative Life Box.



The Middle layer of Suzy's tinyStudio Creative Life Box.

At the bottom of the box under the middle layer of tools, I have two smaller containers that sit flat on the base and hold my fiber. I don't use my Blending Board a lot but if I do need to take it with me I have room for that also on top of the fiber boxes. The top (previous page), removable layer, has my small tools, spindles, travel Kate, Niddy Noddy (I have one that comes apart and packs flat), and some random threads and add ins.

I have used a basixx 49 Litre (9-10 Gallon) plastic storage box, it has wheels and a clip on lid with carry handles.



To this I have added the two smaller fiber boxes that fit side by side on the base, and the dark gray insert for the top layer of tools, from a brand made to fit these particular boxes.

You will also need a range of smaller containers to go into your box, I have some glass jars for my Angelina and special fibers such as silks or locks. I can pack a lot into these and I can see instantly what is in them. You might really enjoy searching for just the right containers for storing your 'extras' in.

I like to use glass or hand made pottery containers because they are renewable resources that have small environmental footprints in their creation and I can continue to reuse them indefinitely. The pleasure

and sense of contentment I gain from finding and using these in my Tiny Studio feeds into my creativity and inspires me a great deal. If I could find a light enough wooden box I would love that too! Something I could personalise and customise the interior. Maybe one day I will find the 'perfect' box, but do not wait until you have that to get started

It is amazing what you can fit into a relatively small space! The bottom layer also has space for a 1 litre thermos and my coffee press

In total this is what I generally have in my tinyStudio box:

1. Three braids of silk merino, some locks, a carded batt
2. Core threads and autowrap threads
3. Scissors
4. A Jar of Silk and a Jar of Angelina
5. Two Sets of Hand combs
6. A set of Hand cards
7. Two Circular looms
8. Two Jumbo Bobbins
9. Spare Flyer with Delta orifice
10. A diz
11. Two Spindles
12. Niddy Noddy
13. Lazy Kate
14. Flick carder
15. Burnishing Brush
16. Doffer
17. Drum Carder brush
18. Scented Candle
19. Small Table Cloth
20. Tiny Vase
21. Minipresso
22. Espresso Cup
23. Space for my 600ml Thermos and a small milk container

These last items are part of my own personalisation, and in the next chapter we will also look at ways you can personalise your Tiny Studio Box to include things that enhance your creativity, with rituals, and the inclusion of special and meaningful items.

Please also checkout the tinyStudio pages on fiberygoodness.com, and subscribe to our tinyStudio Creative Life Magazine for lots of ideas and links to items I think would make great tinyStudio storage. both for portable tiny living box storage and more permanent in-house storage!





RITUALS

Why are rituals a 'thing' in the tinyStudio philosophy? Lets look at a creative ritual this way: think of it as being like a basket that you simply only need to fill in the same way over and over, instead of having to decide which basket you should fill up and how to do that every time. A good, repeatable range of creative rituals provide context for your work so you can spend your energy focusing on the creative problems you are wanting to solve right from the start, rather than struggling to get yourself in the right frame of mind (or filled basket) to begin..

This is also the internal aspect of your creativity, what happens in your mind and heart and how do you inspire inspiration in yourself?!

Did you know that Maya Angelou only wrote in small hotel rooms? And that Stravinsky could not compose unless he was quite sure no one could hear him, and he would do headstands to clear his brain if he got stuck!

These are more extreme examples of rituals that the artists have created to get their creativity going, however all of us can create our own simple rituals that, when repeated regularly at the beginning of our creative time, will work to actually trigger us into a mindset that enhances creativity and promotes our sense of mindfulness, being in the moment with our work. These rituals can get you into your creative flow by creating a separation between you and the pressures of daily life, giving you the space to breathe, to re-center your energy, and to trigger your creative brain into action!

You probably find that your inspiration is often just there, and your creativity flows right from the start, you find it easy at those times to put aside other distractions and focus completely on being in the moment with your fiber and creative activity. Very often however, other things can intrude and distract, not only the clutter that may live in your studio space or the distractions of people, noise, missing tools and the hunt through the stash for that elusive silk you were sure you had. (and we are removing these distractions with the organisation and simplification of your studio!) but also mental noise, such as stress, your daily list of chores swirling around your head, the need to check your Facebook feed or email, or even anxiety about maybe ruining your fiber if you try something new with it. These are also things you need to free yourself of to allow yourself to truly be in the moment with your craft and to savour the process as much as the end result.

Why is it important to be in the moment with your craft? Because when you are completely focused on what you are doing, you are free to fully explore all the possibilities it contains, free to concentrate on technique and developing your skills. Being present with your craft means you can ask yourself questions such as, 'how can I do this better?' 'What happens if I hold my fiber this way instead of that?' 'Shall I take this silk and add it

this way?'. Questions such as these are what leads you to mastery. Your approach becomes conscious, deliberate, and curious. Mindfulness such as this over time will develop your control over fiber, over your design choices, and mastery of your techniques, tools and materials. This Mastery in turn, frees you to truly play with your craft, to innovate, instigate, and invigorate your fiber art practice.

So to be able to become consistently creative during your precious fiber time, it can be really helpful to do something that will 'trigger' you into these creative endeavours and the thought patterns and emotions that lead to this mindful, in the moment approach. This can be done with little rituals that you repeat and connect to your creative time.

There are a few things you need to do to create useful rituals

1. Firstly, create rituals/activities that you only carry out in connection with your fiber crafting, keep these rituals specific to your crafting time so you learn to associate them automatically with being creative. Before too long, this activity will become connected to your creative activities in your brain, like a mental muscle memory.
2. Be consistent, carry out your chosen ritual every time you begin your creative activities, if you do this consistently it will become the trigger for the next step in your process.
3. Create rituals that have emotional meaning for you, that give you strong feelings, these feelings should be positive and uplifting, emotions that make you feel good about yourself and your upcoming fiber crafting. If your rituals have positive emotions embedded in them this will carry forward into your creativity, enhancing the moment and helping separate this time from your other daily activities and cares, freeing you to create

Rituals can help to calm your mind, block out cluttered thoughts and the voice of your inner critic. Rituals can help you let go of your thoughts, your expectations about what you are going to make and how it should look, they can help you let go of external demands and find the freedom to create for the sake of creating.

I have always felt that spinning is the art of letting go, letting go of the fiber in just the right way, at the right speed, and in the right amounts to achieve the yarn we want to make, and also letting go of things like stress and worry, letting go of overriding thoughts and distractions, while holding on to the pleasure of creating, and being in the moment, in tune with materials and tools. You may have noticed that when you are spinning and your inspiration is leading you, time can sometimes fly past, your bobbin fills before you know it, and everything comes together in a very satisfying and exciting way. This is your creative flow. Having your TinyStudio set up and creative rituals in place will really help you to find this flow more often and to be your most creative self!

Here are some ideas to get you started with your own personal rituals.

Setting up your Crafting Space

Whether you have a permanent space for your spinning and crafting, or you set yourself up in temporary spaces around your house or apartment, the act of getting that space ready can become part of your creative ritual!

You may like to keep a series of special items that you only use while you are creating. I have a special Japanese cloth, the colours speak to me and always lift my spirits, and the cloth is fine and feels lovely in my hands. I begin my spinning session by spreading this cloth onto the small circular table that I use for my tools. Laying this cloth is the beginning of my creative ritual and sets up the next steps for me to help me get in my creative flow.

You could also give yourself a tea ceremony, keep a one cup tea pot and cup in your tinyStudio, and if you are working away from your kitchen take a thermos with you! Or you might like a 'Minipresso' like I have, a hand pumped espresso anywhere! Start your creative session with a hot drink that invigorates and refreshes.

You might like to have a special mini vase and a fresh flower to finish off

your tinyStudio table setting, a sprig of mint or lavender to delight all your senses! Remember that scents are an important part of our overall creative triggering, and if you use a flower, a scented candle, or other kind of scent maker, try to use the same one each time as part of your ritual, that scent will quickly become associated in your mind with your fiber art and will definitely help you to get into creative mode!

Meditate

I know, everywhere you look these days we are told that meditation is the way to go, in fact it sometimes seems that while the aim is to get away from the constant inundations of modern life, we are also being constantly inundated with the suggestion that we need to meditate to do that!

But maybe there is something to that idea after all. Meditation is the practice of taking some moments to slow your mind, to take a pause from the over-activity that usually goes on in there, especially if you are a very creative person. You might be someone who is always multitasking, and when you do actually rest you continue to think about all the things you still need to do, if you sometimes feel some fear of failure, of dropping the ball, and the stresses of daily and family life are constant, these are things that can separate you from your inner creativity and yourself as an artist.

The practice of meditation then, in my mind, is the practice of taking a few moments, to let go of all the worries and stresses, and consciously take a deep breath and relax. I personally am not a great 'meditator' as I find I need to be active and the idea of stopping for any longer period of time actually stresses me more, so its kind of counter productive for me, maybe you are the same! But to take a small break, or what I call 'micro meditate' just gives me the boost I need and re-centers me back to feeling calm and open to my creative inner voice.

My best meditation tip is to be conscious of your shoulders, where are they sitting? Invariably when you think about it, you will notice your shoulders are too high. take a pause, a deep breath, and as you let that breath out let your shoulders drop right down to totally relax them. You

will probably be surprised at how much they drop and how much better you suddenly feel from that action. You can do any time and anywhere and definitely at the beginning of your tinyStudio time.

Another thing you can do is use **MUSIC** to either calm or stimulate your mind. I have some particular albums I really love and that always help me feel relaxed and creative, it definitely helps my creative flow to have some music playing, either before or during my spin session. If you find there is a particular kind of music or a specific artist who really helps you feel inspired, start your fibery session off with that music each time, you will quickly start to build a connection between the music and being creative, getting you in just the right frame of mind to find your flow!

Finally, as well as your rituals to get you in the right zone to be free to create, I can't emphasize enough how important practice is! You will find your creative flow comes most naturally once you have mastered your fiber art techniques to the point that much of what you are doing becomes automatic, even down to your fiber choices.

Part of being mindful and in the moment with your fiber activities is to focus on the process, when you are doing this you are striving to make every movement beautiful, to perfect techniques, and to become masterful at each step; make it look easy! When you are not struggling with drafting, or plying, or over or under twist, then it's easier to find your flow, creativity takes over from any underlying anxiety about your technique and you can begin to see what you have in your head take shape in your hands.

To find out more about all kinds of creative rituals, different ways other fiber artists focus their own fiber art practices, organise their creative environments and keep themselves inspired, plus fibery eye candy, projects and tutorials, please subscribe to the tinyStudio Creative Life Magazine at www.fiberygoodness.com/tinyStudio





tinyStudio is my way of focussing my fiber art practice into the 'slow' philosophy, using mindfulness, focus, ritual, and simplicity to develop the feelings of freedom and mastery that I need to truly reach my creative potential.

tinyStudio began as an idea born of necessity, confined to smaller spaces to practice my fiber arts. I soon realised that the organisation and limitations this required actually provided me a greater sense of lightness and freedom, along with a more innovative approach to design and problem solving.

tinyStudio has morphed into a complete philosophy that guides my fiber practice and that I believe can help others to also reach towards their own creative potential.

