

# Studio Style

Grade level: 6th – 12th

Created by Claire Caffery  
2017 – 2018 Teaching Artist in Residence

*Tina Freeman: Artist Spaces* | September 8th, 2017 – May 5th, 2018

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## Studio Style Lesson Plan

Teacher/Creator: Claire Caffery

Grade Level: 6-12th Grade

### Lesson Description:

Artists have to manage materials and tools as well as ideas when they work in their studios. Each artist has personal preferences as to what makes an inspiring and productive workspace. Teaching artist Claire Caffery will lead students through the exhibition *Tina Freeman: Artist Spaces* on display at the Hilliard University Art Museum from September 8, 2017 to May 5, 2018, which features photographs of New Orleans artists' studio spaces. Students will get a rare glimpse into the relationship between form and function in an artist's space and the artwork that emerges from that space. This lesson plan includes a pre-visit activity that will introduce students to concepts of form and function as they examine their personal preferences of the design of simple tools: the pencil and pencil holder. At the museum, students will engage with the exhibited artwork by sketching, discussing, and analyzing quotations from the artists about their personal studio style. In the museum classroom, students will transform an everyday object into a pencil holder that reflects the essentials of their own studio style. This art activity will focus on process and connecting with their discoveries in the gallery. In the post-visit activity, students will reflect on their experience with art tools and materials and explain their design choices. If your class is unable to visit the museum, you can use the attached images and Tina Freeman's book *Artist Spaces, New Orleans* to explore some of the same ideas in your classroom.

**Overarching Theme/Universal Concept:** Personal Space and Identity

### Essential Questions:

- What are the different types of ideas and inspiration that artists explore in their studios?
- How do form and function influence in the design and use of space?
- How do personal spaces define and reflect identity?
- What is my personal style, and how do I express it?



## Objectives and Focus Questions:

- What tools and materials are used in an artist's studio?
- How do form and function influence an artist's studio style?
- How is this style reflected in the work that the artist produces?
- What style of space do I need to have a productive work environment?
- Which materials and design choices facilitate this style?
- How do I observe and discuss artworks with others?
- Can I clearly explain my design choices to others using appropriate art vocabulary and organizational structure?

## Lesson Plan Materials:

- Pre-visit Activity Handout
- Studio Style Graphic Organizer
- Post-visit Postcard Handout
- Assessment Rubric
- Images



## Standards

### ELA Standards

**Anchor Standard SL 1:** Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

**Anchor Standard W 2:** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

### Art Standards

**(6-8) VA-AP-M4** Demonstrate awareness of various new ideas, possibilities, options, and situations pertaining to the art world.

**(6-8) VA-AP-M1** Use elements and principles of design and expanded art vocabulary for responding to the aesthetic qualities of various work.

**(6-8) VA-CE-M3** Use the elements and principles of art vocabulary to visually express and describe individual ideas.

**(9-12) VA-AP-H4** Compare and contrast multiple possibilities and options available for artistic expression.

**(9-12) VA-AP-H1** Use advanced art/design vocabulary for responding to the aesthetic qualities of various works.

**(9-12) VA-CE-H3** Use the elements and principles of design for individual expression while exploring compositional problems.



## Pre-visit Activity in the Classroom

**Discuss:** What is your style?

As a class, discuss the different ways **form** (design) and **function** (purpose) influence one's personal style and productivity. The teacher can also choose to have students discuss in groups or pair/share.

How does your backpack, notebook, locker or desk reflect your personal style preferences? Are they designed to express your character, keep you productive, or both? How much control do you have in choosing and arranging these tools and materials? Does personal command of these tools, materials and space influence the product of your studying and work?

**Research and Discuss:** Use Pre-visit Handout

**Consider the pencil**, a simple yet powerful tool. Research the basic history of the pencil to learn more about its form and function.

<http://www.popularmechanics.com/technology/a21567/history-of-the-pencil/>

- What is a pencil made of and why?

A pencil has a core made of a mixture of graphite and clay. A casing of shard-resistant wood surrounds it to protect the users' hand from smudges. Today, alternatives to wood casing include metal, plastic, and recycled paper. Graphite leaves a clear, dark mark, but can also be erased or redrawn on top with ink, can write on many types of surfaces, and doesn't spill like ink. Graphite is fully contained as opposed to separate quill and ink, and graphite is easy to mine and shape into writing instruments.

- What does H, B, and #2 indicate about a pencil? Why are #2 pencils used for standardized tests?

Systems of lettering and numbers describe the ratio of clay to graphite in a pencil. H is the hardness, or how much clay is present. The higher the number, the lighter the mark. B means blackness. The higher the number, the softer the graphite and darker the mark. #2 is the same as HB, a balance between hardness and blackness. Dark enough to show up on a Scantron, but hard enough not to smudge as it's run through the grading machine.



- Why were pencils painted yellow? How is the yellow pencil viewed today?

One manufacturer painted their pencils yellow to publicize the fact that their rich graphite was obtained from China, where yellow is symbolic of royalty and respect. Now, the yellow pencil is often viewed as common.

- How does the design of golf pencils and carpenter pencils differ from the norm?

Golf pencils are short due in part because of their short life span. Golfers typically throw them away after one round of golf. They can also easily fit into a pocket or golf bag much like tees. A carpenter pencil has a wider, flat casing to prevent it from rolling away while also making it easier to grip. The non-round core allows thin lines to be drawn for precision markings, and thick lines to mark on rough surfaces. The pencil is strong enough to survive in a construction environment, for example, when placed in a bag together with heavy tools.

- How are typical American pencils different from those used elsewhere in the world? Do you think this says anything about American style?

American pencils typically have an eraser attached.

**Reflect:** Use Pre-visit Handout

**Build awareness of personal style** through the following class activity:

Hold your own pencil and notice design details. Teacher may have students share in small groups or write a journal entry.

- What is its shape? Round, hexagonal, or maybe triangular? What are the purposes of either design choice? (ex: hexagonal provides grip, won't roll off table, stack easily in a box, less waste of wood in production)
- What is the hardness (H) and blackness (B)? Was this a deliberate choice or just chance? What H or B would you most like to use if you could?



- What color is your pencil? Does it have a pattern, image, or word? Is there anything symbolic or personally meaningful in its surface decoration?
- What is the texture? Smooth, bite-marks, added grip, metallic, color-change, etc.? Is it a wooden or a mechanical pencil?
- How did you acquire this pencil? Chosen from and purchased at a store; won or earned as a prize; given; found; borrowed; a souvenir from a trip or experience? Does it hold any memories for you?
- Do you have a pencil at all? Do you prefer to use a pen? What are the pros and cons of each tool?
- Describe what makes a great pencil to you. What type of pencil helps you to be productive and inspired as you study and work? How do you need it to function? What design qualities should it have?
- Where do you keep your pencil? Why? Search online to see the variety of pencil holders available. Which ones reflect your personal style and needs for your study or workspace?

### Examples:



Image accessed from <https://www.amazon.com/Block-Sketch-Desk-Tidy-Grey/dp/BooLUVd9Lo> on 15 Nov. 2017.

Image accessed from <https://www.thefutureperfect.com/pen-tray.html> on 15 Nov. 2017.

Image accessed from <https://www.amazon.com/Trina-Pencil-Holder-by-Alessi/dp/Boo17OSHZI> on 15 Nov. 2017



## Studio Style Pre-visit Activity

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Research the history of the pencil, and learn more about its **form** (design) and **function** (purpose). One website to investigate is:

<http://www.popularmechanics.com/technology/a21567/history-of-the-pencil/>

2. Look at your own pencil and notice its design details. Describe its shape, color, and writing qualities. How did you acquire this pencil? Does this pencil give any clues to your personal style or work habits?

3. Describe your perfect pencil.

4. Look at examples of pencil holders online and in your everyday life. Which ones best reflect your personal style and work habits? Draw or write a description of the pencil holder you think best fits your style.





## Prepare and Practice

Explain to students that they will be taking a trip to the art museum to investigate how artists' studio spaces relate to the work artists create. Students will see various tools and materials, studio styles, and representative artworks. Discuss how to act respectfully in the museum, especially in light of viewing the personal spaces of others. How would you act if going into someone's home or work place?

- Observe and be attentive.
- Gather information by asking questions and recording information.
- Protect the space and work for others to enjoy.
- Walk slowly and move carefully when exploring the galleries.
- Be respectful of the design and work space choices of others.

The class can also research online about the museum to preview the exhibit and gallery spaces.

<http://www.hilliardmuseum.org/>



## At the Museum

Before entering the gallery, students will look at several images from *Home* by Carson Ellis and discuss the tools, materials and sources of inspiration that might be found in an artist's studio. They will notice differences in style in how personal spaces are designed. They will review how to act in someone's personal work space and consider how to act when visiting the gallery. Students will be given a graphic organizer and a pencil before entering the gallery.

### Gallery Tour

In the gallery students will investigate and discuss artworks in *Tina Freeman: Artists Spaces* exhibit. Students will identify the artists' studio styles and analyze the artists' design choices using art and design terms. Students will work in small groups to sketch works by the artists quoted in the graphic organizer and choose an artist whose style they most identify with.

### Art Making Activity

In the museum classroom, students will transform a cardboard tube into a "mini studio" that both reflects their personal style (form) and securely holds at least one pencil (function). Students will sketch out their design choices and choose appropriate words to describe their style and artwork. There will be an assortment of materials and art tools that students can select and explore when creating their artwork.

#### **Art Materials List:**

- Cardboard tubes
- Cardboard base (rectangular shape roughly 4"x 4")
- Glue
- Tape
- Staplers
- Scissors
- Hole punchers
- Markers
- Water color paints
- Stickers
- Assorted fabric and paper samples
- Beads, feathers, and other decorative items



## Post-visit Activity in the Classroom

After their visit to the museum, students will complete a postcard activity. On one side of the postcard will be the design sketch that students made at the museum of their pencil holder. On the other side, students will write a postcard to the artist in the exhibit with whom they most identify. Students will be expected to use art terms to compare and contrast their own style with that of the artist. Students will be asked to write a clear topic sentence and three supporting details.

## Further Resources

Ellis, Carson. *Home*. Candlewick, 2005.

Freeman, Tina. Text by Morgan Malthrop. *Artist Spaces, New Orleans*. University of Louisiana at Lafayette Press, 2014.

*The Write Stuff: How the Humble Pencil Conquered the World*, Popular Mechanics.com  
<http://www.popularmechanics.com/technology/a21567/history-of-the-pencil/>



## Exploring Artist Spaces Rubric Grades 6 – 12

### Pre-visit Discussion

Student listened, contributed, and collaborated with others in discussing form and function of pencils and other common student tools and materials.

Not at all	Once or Twice	Multiple Times
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### Museum Tour and Art Making Activity

Student listened, contributed, and collaborated with others in discussing artworks.

Not at all	Once or Twice	Multiple Times
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Student used appropriate art terms to describe their own artwork or the artwork of others.

Not at all	Once or Twice	Multiple Times
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Student used the elements and principles of design for individual expression while exploring compositional problems of pencil holder.

Did not make a mini studio	Student made a mini studio featuring art elements such as color, shape, and texture. Mini studio was unable to securely hold a pencil	Student made a mini studio featuring art elements such as color, shape, and texture. Mini studio securely holds at least once pencil.
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## Postcard Writing Activity

In their writing sample, student explained the design choices they made in creating their work.

Not at all	Explained one design choice	Explained two or more design choices
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The student used appropriate art vocabulary for describing materials, tools, and techniques.

Not at all	Once or Twice	Multiple Times
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Student compared and contrasted multiple possibilities and options available for artistic expression.

Not at all	Once or Twice	Multiple Times
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Student displayed appropriate organizational structure. Including a clear topic sentence and three supporting sentences about their creative choices and artwork

Not at all	Student had a topic sentence and one or two supporting sentences	Student had a topic sentence and three supporting sentences
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**Comments:**



## Resource Images



Amy Weiskopf. *Still Life with Cabbage and Shell*, 2014. Oil on canvas







Lin Emery. *Anole*, 2016. Polished aluminum





Willie Birch. *Connected*, 2013. Charcoal and acrylic on paper



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Elizabeth Shannon. *Oyster Crusher, Berwick Bay*, 2010. Wood base, moss, oyster shells, wood mallet

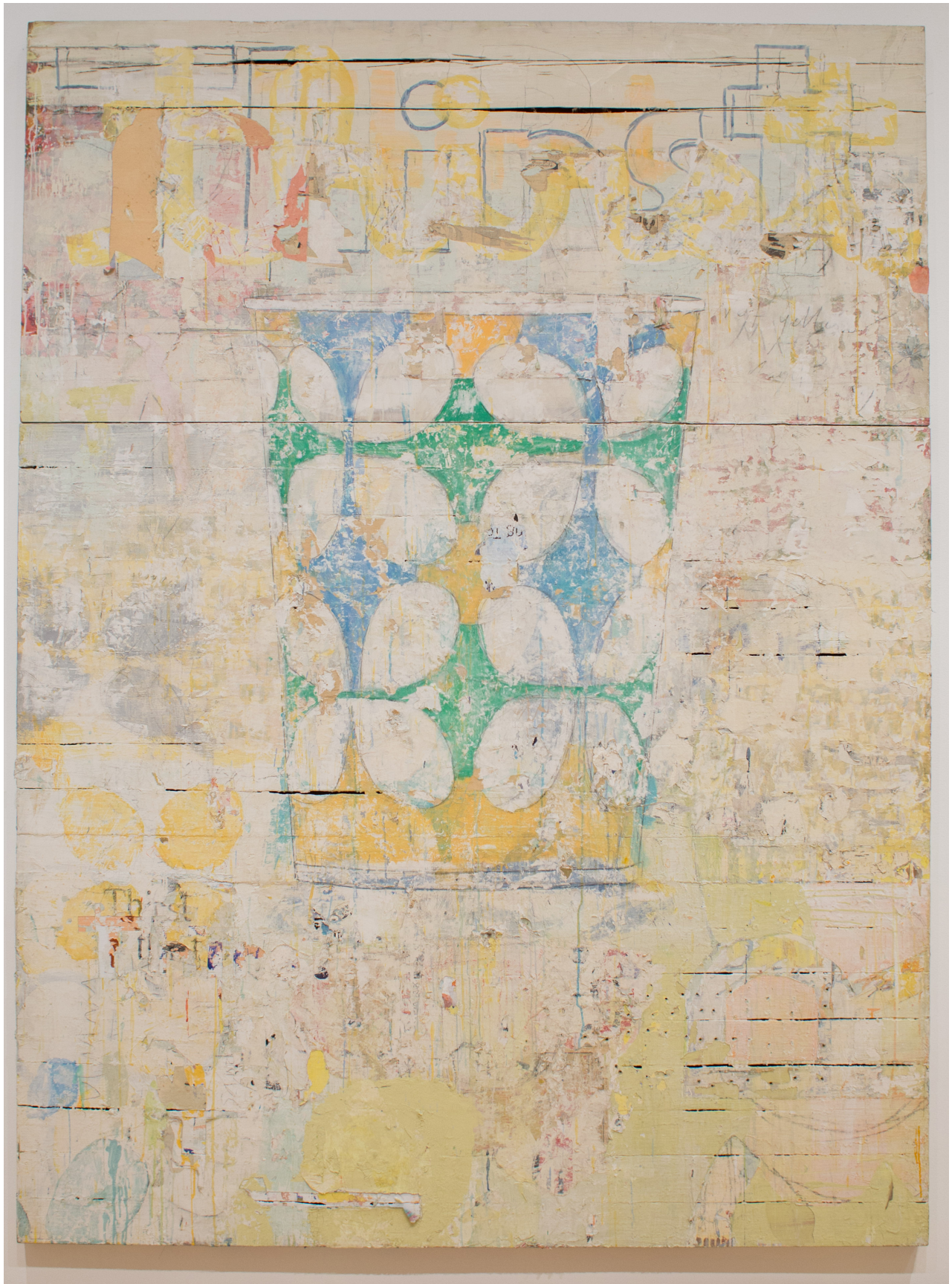




Keith Duncan. *King of New Orleans*, 2013. Acrylic on fabric







Nicole Charbonnet. *Thirst*, 1999. Mixed media on board; collaged paper, oil, gesso



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