



Welcome to my WORKROOM

A can of paint would normally suffice for colour scheming, but GINA AXELL went for a wall of pencils to 'colour in' her studio.

Not only does it look sharp, it proved the cornerstone for rainbow accessories throughout. By Janai Velez

Colour equals happiness for UK designer Gina Axell. "I'm not sure I have a decorative style other than a desire to fill a room with as much colour as possible," she says. And her approach is clearly a winner. Gina's studio is a welcoming and inspiring place that keeps her content and productive during the working week and often on weekends, too, when she retreats there for her special hobbies and interests.

"I am in my workroom pretty much all day from Monday to Friday, but

as most of my hobbies involve sewing or crafting, much of the weekend can be spent in here, too. At busy times, I practically live in here, as days are long and any breaks are few and far between. I think it's the reason that it's so important to have a space you love and find inspiring."

The studio is home to her business, Rosiebull Designs, specialising in handmade fabric accessories: make-up bags, pocket mirrors and cases for glasses, phones and tablets. All her





creations feature appliqué and freehand machine embroidery, often incorporating stitched text. "I particularly like creating personalised products; I think they turn a piece from something ordinary into something hugely sentimental," she says. Gina's tailor mother was the source of knowledge and inspiration for her crafting, teaching her the basics of stitching until she became proficient at making tiny dolls' clothes when young. Today, she's sorry that her mum never got to see how successfully she runs a business and how she chose to honour her when choosing a business name. (Before marrying Gina's father, her mother's name was Rose Bull, and many people called her Rosie.) "Sadly, she never got to see my success, but I know she would have been incredibly proud, particularly to see her name on everything I make."

A spare bedroom on the top floor of Gina's house was the perfect location for her studio, with the showstopper feature wall the starting point of her interior design. "The house was newly built when we bought it and had been a show

home. So much of the decor had been done for us, including the amazing pencil wallpaper in my workroom. I absolutely adore bright colours, so this wallpaper was definitely the inspiration for the rest of the room," Gina says. She added extra pops of colour with accessories to complement the wallpaper, from multicoloured drawers to jars filled with buttons and a giant safety pin to dispense baker's twine. And the colours are all the brighter against the neutral-toned furniture she's chosen – mainly simple, classic Ikea finds. "We bought the furniture in one hurried trip right before we moved house, as I couldn't be without a workspace for very long," Gina says. Her kaleidoscopic studio attracts the curious and like-minded. "Many of my friends and family are keen to see where I work, particularly those who are creative, as they understand the excitement of stacks of fabric and drawers full of ribbon."

The finished room is perfect for Gina's taste and professional requirements. It's a relatively small architectural footprint, but it serves her well, and is ideal for her needs,

A FEW OF MY FAVOURITE THINGS

COTTON REEL DISPLAY – I came across this cotton reel holder in a small shop in Brighton and knew I had to have it. I realised when I got home that it was never going to be big enough for all my cotton reels so I hurried back for another one.

BLACK CHINA BULL – This china bull has been in my family for generations and represents my mum's family surname, 'Bull'. I have no idea where it originally came from but I remember seeing it in my grandmother's house as a child. I love having it in my workroom as a reminder of my mum.

MY MUM'S PINKING SHEARS – My mum's pinking shears are made by Singer, her favourite manufacturer of sewing machines. I still use them today, and the sound of the scissors crunching through the fabric takes me right back to watching my mum use them when I was young.

THIMBLES – I've got a couple of silver thimbles that belonged to my grandmother. Unfortunately, I can't use them as they're too big for me but I've held on to them anyway, as they're pretty special.

GIANT SAFETY PIN – I bought this gorgeous safety pin from notonthehighstreet.com, as I loved the fact that it was so huge and thought it would add a bit of fun to the room. I use it to hang rolls of baker's twine and other pretty threads.



since she generally prefers to work alone and keep this as a sanctuary. Although she loves to work in peace and solitude, sometimes that's just not possible. "When things are really busy, I have to enlist the help of my daughter and sometimes my husband to pack orders. It can get a little bit hectic in the workroom then."

Like crafters the world over, Gina hankers after more storage in her studio. ("Can you ever have enough storage?" she bleats.) But a lack thereof has attractive advantages. "I could probably be cleverer with the way the space is used, but

I kind of enjoy displaying some of the items as decorative features, as opposed to having them stored neatly away."

The house – and fun-filled studio – are located in rural England, just five miles from the sea. "One of our closest towns is a typical British seaside resort with a Victorian pier, lots of seafront hotels and plenty of fish and chips. A few miles along the coast is the city of Brighton, which is full of creative people, small independent shops, lots of great places to eat and a pebbly beach." So there are endless sources

of inspiration for Gina beyond the boundaries of home. "I couldn't imagine living anywhere other than by the sea. A walk along the seafront just can't be beaten, in my opinion." But we suspect she might be equally happy returning to her warm, pencil-walled studio after those bracing ambles along the beach.

Find out more about Gina Axell and her Rosiebull Designs creations by visiting www.etsy.com/uk/shop/rosiebulldesigns and www.notonthehighstreet.com/rosiebulldesigns. Or email her direct at rosiebulldesigns@icloud.com.