



Keep it simple by painting your timber and cardboard boxes directly with a coat of Resene gloss or semi-gloss waterborne enamel. Allow to dry before applying a second coat as required.



CREATIVE LIVING

Display it

Embracing the clean and subtle shades of neutral.

Words and photography Sarah Heeringa

An easy way to make an open set of shelves look good is to have barely anything on them – just a few carefully curated objects placed within an artful distance of each other. It's a simple styling trick that works well in catalogues and Pinterest Land, but not necessarily in real life. Even less so in your studio or craft space.

One of the advantages of open shelving is that it enables you to keep everything off the floor and within easy reach. It's generally also a more cost-effective option than fitted shelves. The flip side is that in making the most of available storage the tendency is to cram more and more things on the shelves. Most creative activities require the collection of certain materials and those supplies all need to be stored somewhere. Add in some essential tools, a few projects you haven't quite completed, photos to frame, that broken item you're going to glue back together ... and before long you have shelves filled with a distracting jumble of objects. The sight of this is more likely to inspire gloom than creativity in most of us.

You want your studio to be a haven of calm and also visually inspirational. The best colour palette to go for is within the neutral range. Crisp white walls bounce light and allow a room to seem larger, more airy, clean and generally more welcoming of new ideas. I started by painting the wall with a fresh coat of Resene SpaceCote Low Sheen, in Resene Rice Cake – a yellow-based warm white.

As for the shelves, the trick with storing lots of things on open shelving is to minimise the visual clutter. You can do this by grouping similar items together and by clustering items

into boxes. Nothing defines or sharpens a space composed of neutral colours more than black, so I left the shelves in their original dark shade and painted all the boxes I could gather in soft whites and greys.

Grey and very soft blues and pinks are all known to be soothing – there's also the possibility that they can help calm the mind and reduce creative tension. With this in mind I proceeded to choose five more shades of pale from the Resene collection.

Resene Half Dusty Blue is an aged pale grey, bleached and slightly blue in mood. Resene Double House White is also a very subtle and shadowy shade of grey. Resene Quarter White Pointer is another greyed white, this time with hints of taupe.

Resene Black White is an old favourite of mine – chalky with subtle undertones. Finally, for contrast I added in the softly lilac-inspired and ambient Resene Breathless.

Clearing everything from your shelves and starting again is a great opportunity to purge unnecessary items – and rediscover others. Along the way I added labels (using Resene Blackboard Paint and white chalk) for easy identification.

Now with tools sorted, and studio shelves emanating a new aura of calm, I'm ready for inspiration to come wafting back in. **g**

Sarah is a contributing editor for Good and author of Reclaim That: Upcycling your Home with Style.



You will need

- a variety of wooden and stiff cardboard boxes
- selected gloss or semi-gloss waterborne enamels from the Resene collection
- drop cloth and paint brushes



Resene

the paint the professionals use

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