

A Story a Week ...

... from woodblock printmaker David Bull

An Inside Job

Nearly eight years have passed since I purchased my home in Ome. I wrote in an earlier 'A Story A Week' episode (#22) about the change from living in the previous small 3DK apartment to this much larger building, and about how the much larger space available didn't seem to make much difference in how 'crowded' it was in my home!

The dream that I would finally have clean open rooms, with the business material separated from the personal living space, didn't actually happen; there was just too much 'stuff' - too many woodblocks, too many packages of prints, and too many necessary items for the business. My rooms now seem pretty much just as crowded as they were in the small apartment.

But one thing *has* dramatically changed; I now have a dedicated workshop/studio space. Back in the apartment, I did my printmaking in the same small room in which I slept, but here, the print work has its own special room. Or perhaps I should more accurately say - it *will* have its own special room! For I have to admit - not without some embarrassment - that after nearly eight years here, construction of the workroom is still far from complete.

I began the work eight years ago with an excess of enthusiasm. After many years of waiting, this was an opportunity to create a completely personalized workspace, and I really wanted to make the best of it, and build a 'perfect' studio. I had a bare 'shell', and inside that space, had complete freedom to build as I wished. From the perspective of many of my Canadian friends, a construction job like this is not really anything 'special'. Most boys of my generation have some experience with part time construction jobs here and there, and may have even had school classes on the basic of woodwork and electrical wiring.

The early stages went well, and fairly quickly. I built a new front wall for the room, with specially imported high-insulation windows, and laid down a new floor with insulated sub-floor beneath it. Snatching time from my printmaking schedule whenever I could, I pressed ahead in fits and starts. Sometimes a few months would go by with nothing done at all, and then I would get another major section finished.

Around four years ago though, things sort of came to a bit of a halt. In the summer of 2004 I got most of the walls insulated, and was looking forward to finally spending a warm winter in the room ... just as soon as I could get the ceiling also insulated. But I wasn't able to get that job started before winter came, nor before the next one ... or the next ... or the next! Plenty of printmaking work was getting done of course, but I just couldn't seem to get started on the ceiling job. What was the problem?

The problem, in a nutshell, was that old phrase - 'the perfect is the enemy of the good.'

I *really* want to do a good job on this room, as I will be working here for many years to come, but just couldn't decide on the 'best way' to do the ceiling. I considered this method and that method; looked at these materials and those materials, and in the end, just kept postponing it.

Finally though, around the middle of last month, I had a 'free' week at the end of one print project before the summer trip to visit my family, and this was what pushed me into action. I decided which insulation system to use, bought some supplies, and got to work. I wasn't able to finish the entire job within that week before the trip, but 'broke the back' of the job, and the rest should now be easy. It looks like I might actually have a warm room to work in for this coming winter!

You would think that by my age - I'm now 56 - I would have learned that lesson: that one can spend so much time looking for the 'best' choice that you never get anything done. It seems though, that this might be one of those lessons that needs to be repeated again and again!

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