

"The Studio", May 2016

Since leaving university, Kostas has worked hard to carefully manage his work and domestic arrangements in order to allow serious development of this creative line of enquiry. He cannot compete for the dwindling supply of artists' studios in London, or afford the high rents demanded, and his lack of work space and facilities have been the key factors in defining his adventurous experimentation with materials. The artist has converted a 170cm x 150cm windowless cupboard into a makeshift studio. The small scale of the works and the sensations of constriction and compression in the artist's subtle manipulation of his materials reflect his circumstances in London.

Last year, 298 separate studio buildings or sites, for more than 11,500 artists, were recorded to exist in London, according to a study published by the Greater London Authority in September. Within the next five years, nearly a third of these studios will face the risk of losing their lease and rental arrangements as the buildings are redeveloped. London is reported to have the largest population of multimillionaires of any city in the world, bloating its real estate values and the potential value of artists' spaces. The Biscuit Factory in the Clement's Road area of Bermondsey in London was, until the end of last year, providing studios for 390 artists, including artists such as Phyllida Barlow. Once an industrial building, the Biscuit Factory is in one of London's newest, most vibrant creative districts, where White Cube opened a 58,000 square foot gallery in 2011. The building was on a short-term lease to V22, one of several organisations that find studio space for artists. The building is now being converted by a property developer, "to suit media-style businesses seeking a central London location".

Shortage of studio spaces and rising rents are challenges for which serious artists have to find solutions in increasingly inventive ways. These challenges, on the other hand, have created a unique artist in Kostas, with a strength of conviction for which London should be proud. In a previous life Kostas' studio had been used to serve tenants with tea and sandwiches. It has no windows and the smell of resin hits you hard as you open the door and experience the tiny working space of one of today's emerging artists in London.

Joanna Bryant