

Designing Your Dream Home Studio

by Christine Wilson

Like many individuals who start out in the glass industry, I began utilizing part of my garage as my workspace. It didn't take long to add worktables, kilns, glass supplies, and tools. By then I could barely open my car door, since space was so tight! I needed a change and definitely more room to work.

Discovering the Ins and Outs of a Designing a Home Studio

I moved to a live/work community where I had far too much space and no air conditioning— just swamp coolers. Living in Las Vegas, Nevada, my work area was too hot in the summer and far too cold in the winter. The lighting was also poor, and there were skylights that made it difficult to see due to the reflection on the glass on my worktables. I learned a great deal about what works and what doesn't work in having my own workspace. In theory, the live/work concept sounded great but in reality, not so much.

I relocated to a small commercial storefront space that had very little natural light, and the fluorescent lights were tough on my eyes. The space was pretty dreary, which had a big impact on my creativity. Again, I learned even more about the elements that are key to having the right combination for the ideal studio environment for me. This was when I decided to design my own dream home studio with the help of my husband, who fortunately for me happens to be an architect. Based on the aspects that I have determined to be the most important in designing a home studio, I have broken them down into three categories— layout, lighting, and environment.



Framing of the studio roof



Stained concrete flooring

Layout

There are quite a few things to be considered in the layout or design—the way in which the parts of something are arranged or laid out—of your own dream studio. Ultimately you want to achieve the maximum and most effective use of space, with ease of movement, safety, and comfort accounted for in your plan. The organization of your worktables, equipment, tools, and glass supplies must all be considered in designing the most efficient use of the area where you plan to build or repurpose an existing space for your studio. Knowing all of the contents that will be going into the new work space is key in designing the right space.

My husband and I made the maximum use of the area we had to build a studio, which is attached but still separate from the house. Before moving forward with the process of submitting the completed architectural plans to the Homeowners Association for approval, I wanted a vision of how everything could be arranged in the studio design. I came up with an equipment list, then an equipment plan with the dimensions of the worktables, workbenches, kilns, and furniture for placement in the interior space. That was critical to assuring that everything would fit properly while keeping in mind ease of movement, my traffic pattern, safety, comfort, shelving, and storage cabinets for glass supplies.

I also wanted a bathroom, since the studio is separate from the house and is an office as a part of the overall design. In coming up with the exterior and interior design, we also considered future uses for the 968-square-foot space if the time came that it no longer served as a studio. A bathroom with a shower, office, and kitchenette were included for future uses such as an Airbnb rental, a mother's quarters, or a recreational/entertainment area, to name a few possibilities.



Christine Wilson



Outward view from the studio



Studio Kitchenette



Studio Office

Lighting

The equipment in a home, workspace, or studio for producing light includes natural light and artificial sources. As part of the lighting element, I am including natural light from windows and doors and placement of the windows in the studio to provide maximum light, taking into account the studio's exposure to the sun. For my psyche and my eyes, natural light is the best source, since I primarily do most of my work during the day. As the days get shorter, however, artificial light is important, and the placement of the light sources to achieve the greatest amount of light with the least amount of reflection on the glass is ideal.

Since I knew the equipment list layout, I could plan for where the light fixtures, recessed lighting, and electrical outlets should be placed for maximum benefit, best illumination, safety, and ease of use in the studio. Placement of outlets and a knowledge of the voltage required, especially if you have large kilns, is important to plan effectively for ease of use and safety. Ceiling fans are nice to have as well to provide air circulation in your work area. All of these aspects of lighting were addressed by coming up with a Reflected Ceiling Plan and Electrical Plan for the studio.

It is a good idea to be able to control the studio's lighting, so I have dimmers on my ceiling fixtures and recessed lighting. Almost all of my lighting sources are LED, which provides lighting that is as close to natural light as possible and is less costly, both on the electrical bill and life of the light bulbs. Putting time and energy into coming up with the best lighting/electrical plan will provide many years of productivity, and your eyes will so appreciate it!

If you plan to build an addition to an existing home and you live in a master plan community, there is a high probability that approval from the Homeowners Association by the architectural committee will be required before you can move forward. Once approved, the plans will also need to be submitted for approval from the county or city in which you reside. This can be a lengthy process and can take several months for plans to go through the permit process. When all of the required approvals are completed, it is best to find a reputable general contractor to build your studio and be responsible for their subcontractors.

In regard to the actual building process, it is Murphy's Law: Anything that can go wrong will go wrong. It can be an arduous and frustrating process. It will inevitably take longer than initially projected, so you may want to consider keeping a temporary place to work during this period. Ultimately when your dream home studio is finished, it will be so worth the trials and tribulations that you went through to make it happen!



Completed studio

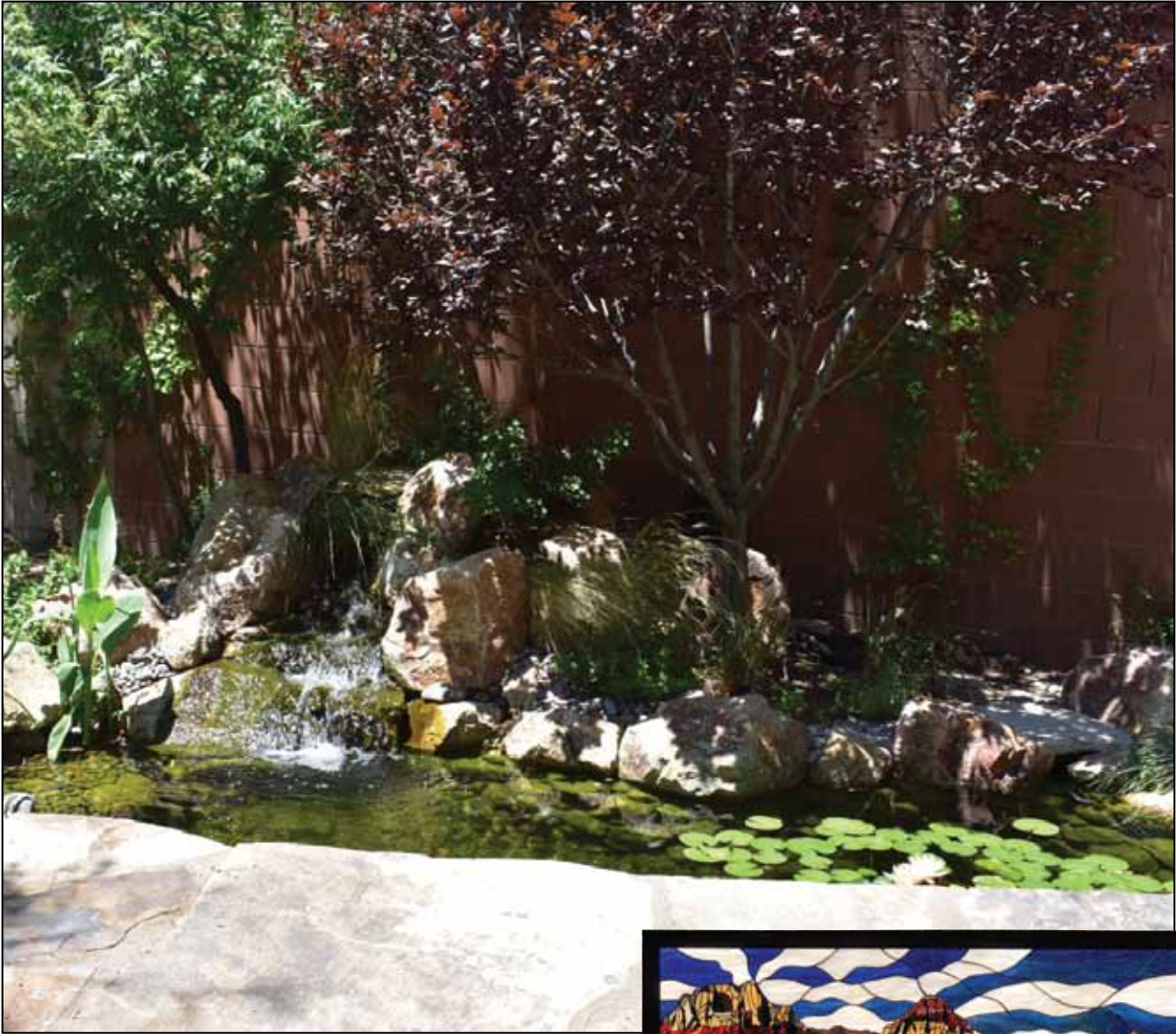
Environment

The setting or conditions in which a particular activity is carried out or in which a person operates make up the environment of the studio. The feeling of the studio is primary in providing a peaceful, inviting, and inspirational place to allow that creative flow to come naturally. From my other work environment experiences, it became clear to me how meaningful this is for my own creativity.

Light, openness, color, comfort, and flow are all important components in creating the perfect atmosphere in which to work. Not only is my studio my dream work setting, but it is my sanctuary as well. The colors and materials that I chose for the interior of my studio are the tones that are soothing to my senses. The hues of green, amber, and burgundy are pleasing to my soul, reduce tension, and encourage my creativity. The colors you choose should be pleasing to your own psyche.

Flooring is an aspect of the studio environment that is practical and adds to the beauty of the interior. Stained concrete was my choice for its unique aesthetics and its ease of cleanup. Natural light and openness are essential elements to my overall well-being and creativity as well. Organization of supplies and equipment is also a must, since clutter tends to cramp inspiration and artistry.

Doors that open up to the outside add to the openness of the studio, and the sound of the waterfall pond is tranquil to my senses. Not only is the design layout of the windows important for the layout and electrical/lighting plan, but they are also a major part of the beauty of the studio and should be complementary to showcasing your artwork.



Studio Pond

Displaying the beauty of your artwork properly with natural and artificial light makes a studio atmosphere come alive! The advantage of having a home studio work environment separate from your home space is that it provides less distractions from your daily details, which tend to take time away from productive creativity. When I walk out of my home and into my studio, I automatically make the shift to focus on my artwork. It is truly my sanctuary and dream come true. What will my studio environment help inspire me to create next?

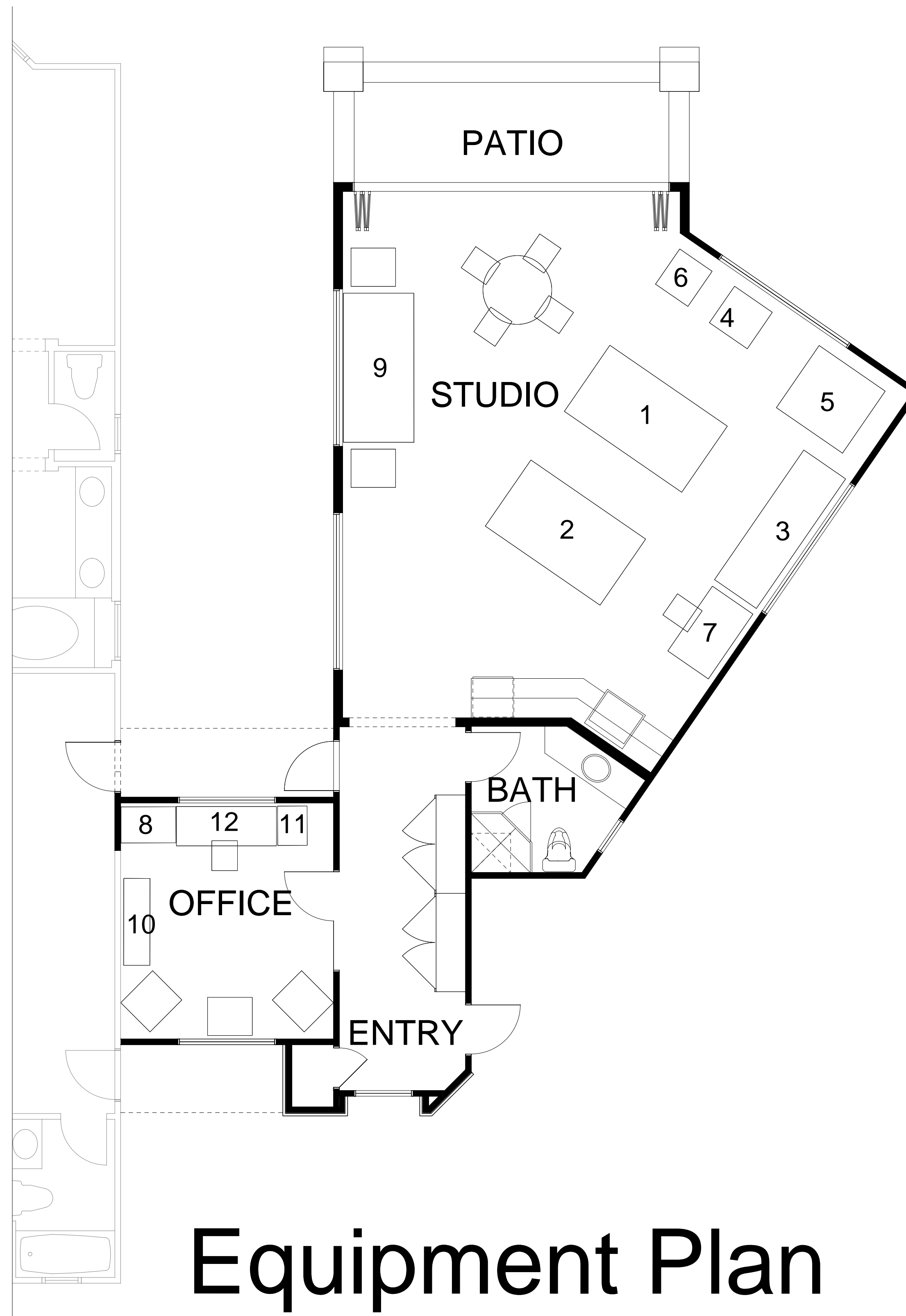
In designing my home studio, the categories of layout, lighting, and environment were fundamental to creating my ideal space. I hope they will ignite your creative process in making your own dream home studio come true for you too.

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Christine Curtis Wilson has been a local artist in Las Vegas, Nevada, for over eighteen years. An award winning stained glass artist, she utilizes several specialized techniques in creating her vibrant glass art pieces, where her love of nature and animals has been a focal point of her work.

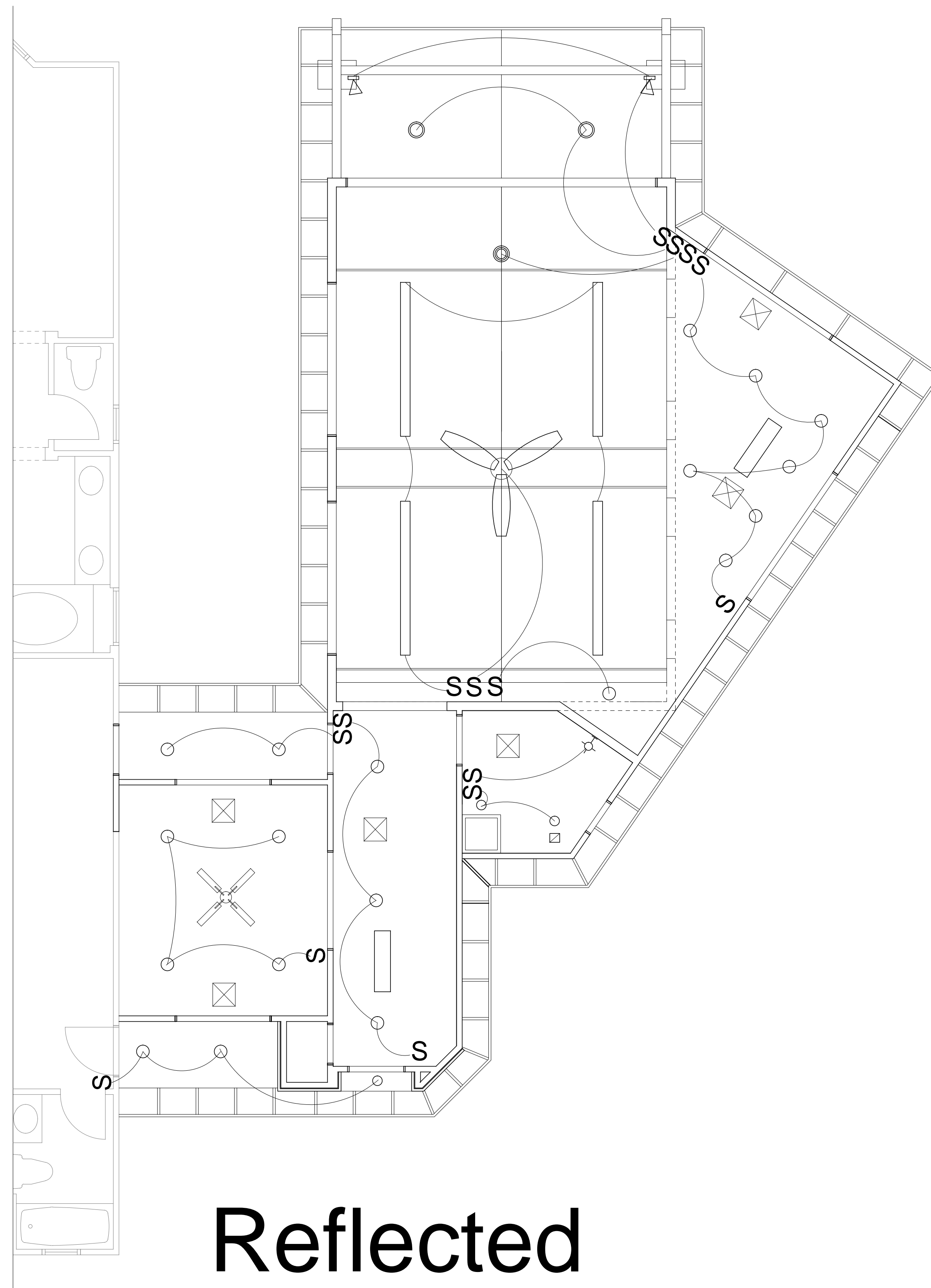
Christine's glass work has been shown in Nevada and California galleries and commissioned throughout the United States. She was recently an artist in residence at the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area (RRCNCA), and her artwork was exhibited at the RRCNCA Visitor Center. Her current award winning stained glass panel, Save Red Rock, was displayed in the Galley of Excellence at the 2018 Glass Craft & Bead Expo in Las Vegas and was chosen to be the artwork image on the 2019 RRCNCA Annual Pass. To learn more about her glass artwork and future exhibits visit www.christinesglass.com.



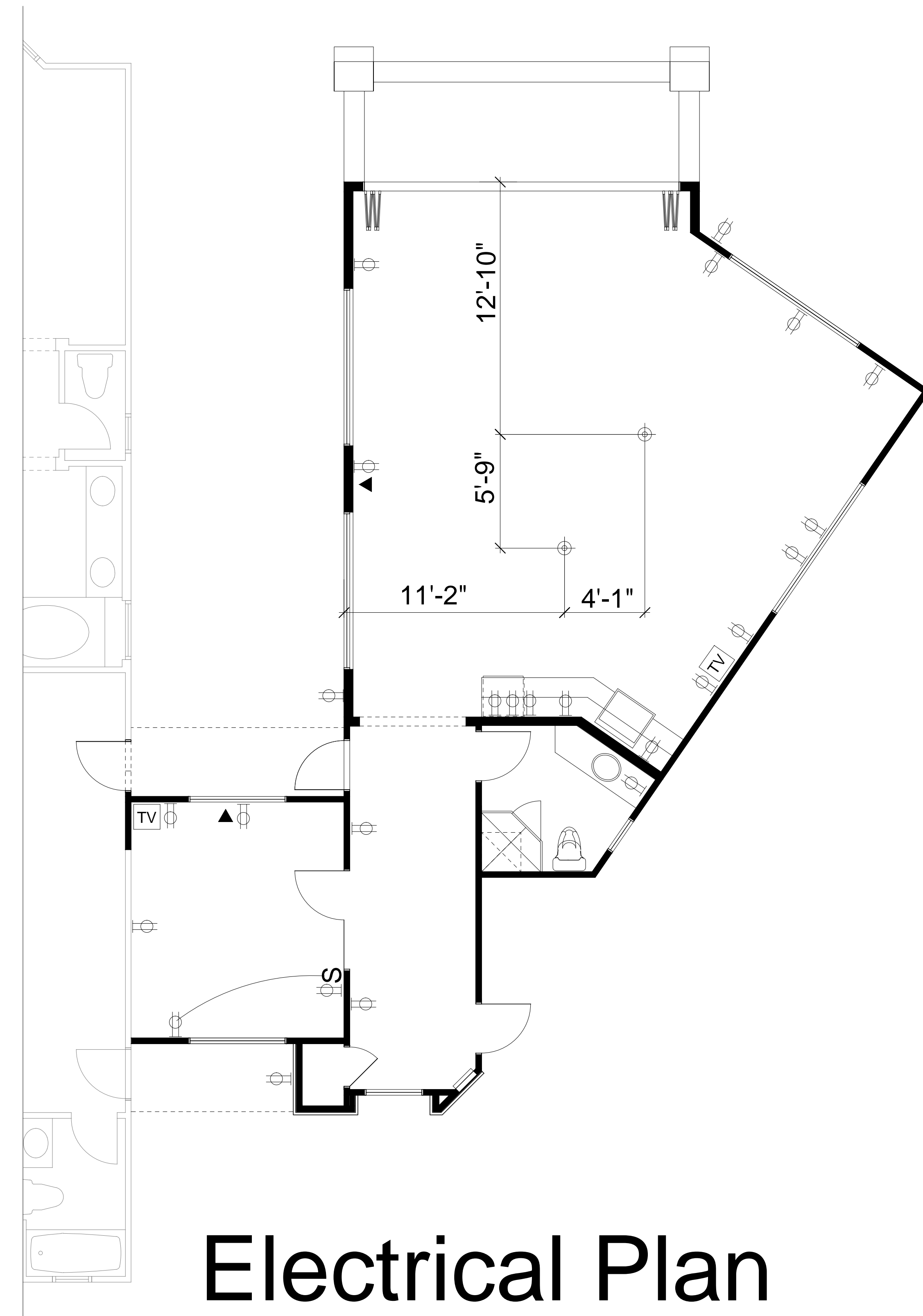
Equipment Plan

Equipment List

1.	WORK TABLE #1	49" X 87"
2.	WORK TABLE #2	49" X 85"
3.	CUTTING BENCH	96" X 31"
4.	KILN #1	28" X 27" (120v - 25A)
5.	KILN #2	46" X 49" (240v - 30A)
6.	KILN #3	24" X 26" (240v - 30A)
7.	LIGHT TABLE	48" X 30
8.	FILE CABINET W/ DESK	33 1/2" X 22"
9.	SOFA	91" X 43"
10.	DISPLAY UNIT & MISC	53" X 16" X 72"
11.	WOOD FILE CABINET	18" X 24"
12.	DESK	61" X 24"



Reflected
Ceiling Plan



Electrical Plan