

# Creating a Green Artroom

Recently, I came across the Green Artroom on the Web and decided right then that I had to invite the author, Zach Stoller, to write this guest column about his site. I'm pleased he agreed to do so.

—Craig Roland

**Zach Stoller**

It is extremely important to teach students that being green is critical to the health of our planet. Students must learn that being wasteful is simply not an option anymore. Teaching green lessons to young children is the best way to help future generations live in an environmentally responsible manner. I decided that the process of maintaining an environmentally friendly artroom should be the topic of my master's thesis.

**The Green Artroom**

[www.greenartroom.com](http://www.greenartroom.com)

While my thesis research was incredibly helpful, I decided that a thesis document sitting in a dusty university library was not going to do anybody any good. Therefore, part of my thesis consisted of creating a website that I call the Green Artroom, which provides easily accessible information on environmentally friendly materials and practices to art educators. It is full of a multitude of suggestions for small changes that can be made, often inexpensively, within any artroom to make it environmentally friendly. The site is broken into several sections including Discussion, Classroom Practices, Research, Artists, Resources, and Links.

I am most excited about the "Discussion" part of my site. Even though I have researched the topic of being green in the artroom, I certainly am not the only knowledgeable person on the subject. My classroom practices are the culmination of my educa-

the green art classroom



**Welcome.**

The purpose of this site is to inform art educators of available solutions designed to enable the educator to build and maintain an environmentally friendly art classroom. I feel it is critical that environmental concerns be brought to the attention of students.

This site includes a variety of tools to use in order to help make an art classroom environmentally friendly. Information found here focuses on smaller changes that can be made, often inexpensively, within a classroom in order to create an environmentally friendly setting in which to learn and teach. The practices described on this site are geared to power the classroom environment as well as the students. It is my belief that future generations must be taught from a young age that our planet is a place that must be treated with respect rather than be viewed for commercial profit.

research | classroom practices | artists | discussion | resources | links

the green art classroom | artists

**Michelle Stitzlein**

Another artist of environmental consequence is Michelle Stitzlein. Stitzlein is an Ohio artist of particular interest because of her use of recycled materials in her work. Stitzlein's work is relevant to any art educator interested in environmentally conscious art, but her work is especially applicable in my situation because she is a local artist.

Stitzlein is a graduate of Columbus College of Art & Design. She focuses on the use of recycled materials in her work. The main focus of her work is mixed media wall-hung sculpture. Stitzlein creates large butterflies, some over ten feet wide, out of materials found in junk and scrap yards.



**Sulphur Blue Smeek** © 2005 Michelle Stitzlein  
Wall hung sculpture, mixed media, 52" H x 24" W x 11" D

The piece *Sulphur Blue Smeek* is representative of much of Stitzlein's work. A wide piece of metal in various states of corrosion forms the structure of the butterfly. The piece is symmetrical and is a realistic representation of a butterfly. The interior of the wings contain a wide assortment of materials reclaimed from junkyards. Piano keys are evident in the lower wings. Materials such as broken plates, wire, and rusted metal parts from multiple sources are found elsewhere in the wings. The main body is even capped off with antennae made from the handlebars of a bicycle.



- Andy Goldsworthy
- Joshua Allen Harris
- Mel Chin
- Michelle Stitzlein

tion, research, and, most importantly, input from other art educators. I want to provide a place for art teachers to actively exchange ideas, lessons, and tips about being green in the classroom. To facilitate this dialogue, I set up the Green Art Classroom Network on ning.com ([greenartroom.ning.com](http://greenartroom.ning.com)). There, art educators can post information, questions, images, and videos about what they are doing to be green in their schools. I hope to

eventually have the site serve as a meeting place for all art teachers who care about making their classrooms more environmentally friendly.

The "Classroom Practices" section of the site describes many easy, day-to-day changes that will encourage your students to become more environmentally friendly. I focus on ideas that are easily applicable to almost any classroom situation. Prior to incorporating many of the changes that are described on the site, I was sad to see rampant waste of paper and the lack of student knowledge about why it is important to be green. Through the changes that I have made, I have not only been able to drastically decrease the amount of waste that comes from my room, but students are now beginning to understand why it is important to be environmentally conscious in all aspects of their lives.

The rest of the site includes information about everything ranging from details of my research, to green artists, to specific brands of art supplies that are considered to be green. Being green in the artroom is more than just having a recycling bin—it should encompass multiple aspects of environmentalism that allow students to be green in and out of the artroom. ☺

*Zach Stoller is an elementary art teacher at Griffith Thomas Elementary School in Dublin, Ohio. He has a BFA from Columbus College of Art & Design and a Master of the Arts in art education from Ohio State University.*