SketchLook: A Collaboration

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SketchLook is an extensive project involving the artists of Stephen F. Austin State University and the many locations to which the show travels. The show itself is comprised entirely of sketchbooks that are handmade and subsequently filled by contributing artists. As a result, this is a continually expanding show that explores the relationship of art between both the book binder and the artist.

“Sketching is the point in which the artist is most purely himself”- William O’Connor

All throughout the history of art, sketching and preliminary study have been integral for artists and how they create their work. Throughout the creative process, many artists create some of their best work in their sketchbooks, even though it is an object that few will ever see. This exhibition aims to take a more intimate look into the object itself. It aims to elevate the sketchbook itself as a significant art form.

The show itself has just returned from the Moffett Library at the Midwestern State University in Wichita, Texas and is set to head off to Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, Texas, Tarrant County College Southeast in Arlington, Texas and the Rochester Public Library in Rochester, New York

Although at first glance the main focus of the show is on the content of the sketchbooks themselves, the way that the books are bound is integral to the composition of the art within. Each book is bound by hand in such a way that the pages of the book are given multiple ways to be presented when opened. It is this flexibility in construction that allows for the abundant variety that is present in the exhibition and truly showcases the individuality of both the artist and book binder. Whether the images are presented in conventional, recognizable ways or folded so that the shapes of the pages tell a story of their own, it is clear that the book binder plays an equally important role as the artist.

Much like real life, each artist featured is individual in the technique they use to execute their art. The sketches in these books range from monochromatic charcoal and graphite, colorful pastels and paints to cut collages and found objects. The diversity in media is representative of the focus and concentration of each artist, and allows them to relax and experiment with different media in an environment that supports exploration of media and method.