

VISUAL JOURNALS & IMAGE COLLECTION

You will be responsible for keeping a Visual Journal (aka sketchbook) over the course of the year that will be checked periodically. Your VJ will be used for warm-ups, note-taking, brainstorming, sketching, and idea development for projects. Ultimately, the main purpose of the VJ is **A)** for you to have your own space to sketch and creatively reflect on ideas, personal goals, challenges, questions, and overall progress as a developing artist in this course; **B)** to keep what we are learning in here relevant to your world beyond these classroom walls. Remember, this is a **VISUAL** Journal, so you should feel free to be drawing, sketching, writing, pasting, taping, collecting, collaging, etc. in it!!!! Again, this ongoing assignment is intentionally left open-ended, but please remember to always relate everything in there back to your work as an artist in some way.

Additionally, you should get in the habit of collecting images in an envelope or folder (a digital folder and/or a large freezer bag or 9 x 12" clasp envelope with your name on it work well). These images can be collected and used in your VJ, various projects, or simply serve as a source of inspiration to trigger your creativity throughout the year.

Journals are unsung heroes, the working stiffs of creative life. They live in the pockets and shoulder bags of all sorts of people. A birder on a morning walk, a scientist in the field, a film director delayed in a foreign airport, a fashion designer musing over next season's collection, a teenager avoiding schoolwork: all keep journals as trusted confidantes and reliable workhorses...

...In her pitch-perfect essay, "on Keeping a Notebook," Joan Didion says a journal has no use for anyone except its keeper; who else would care about an overheard conversation at a hotel hatchcheck some twenty years earlier? Much of a journal's information is lost even to its author. And yet, Didion argues, it is crucial in the way it helps us to reconnect with our former selves. "I think we are well advised to keep on nodding terms with the people we used to be," she writes. "whether we find them attractive company or not. Otherwise they turn up unannounced and surprise us, come hammering on the mind's door at 4 AM of a bad night and demand to know who deserted them, who betrayed them, who is going to make amends. We forget all too soon the things we thought we could never forget."

... This is the appeal of visual journals to outside viewers—the opportunity to see how a person operates. As one contributor to this book, Thomas Oslund, told me about his own readings of master architects' sketchbooks, "You're looking into somebody's life. It's a lot different than looking at a finished drawing. You can start to see and almost understand how the ideas evolved into the building."

...Observation and reflection are the primary kernels of nearly every visual journal. They are followed by journals of exploration and creation. Journals of exploration may be literal (a record of a trip) or figurative (a playful investigation). Either way, they help an author to look outside his or her usual confines and to revive the senses. Filled with colors and collage, these are often the most vivid journals. By comparison, journals of creation tend to be a tangle of black and white lines hastily drawn in the midst of realizing an idea. Many visual journals can be placed in more than one of these categories. Obviously, we move through stages fluidly.

Taken from: Drawing From Life: The Journal As Art By Jennifer New (2005)