

Artists' Private Thoughts

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"Artists' Sketchbooks I: Philadelphia," the current exhibition at the Philadelphia College of Art, is the first of two shows examining the notebooks, journals, travel diaries and sketchbooks of contemporary artists. This exhibit deals with local artists' visions. The second, "Private Notations: Artists' Sketchbooks," beginning Oct. 22, will deal with works by out-of-town artists.

Some artists don't use sketchbooks at all. Others, as this exhibit documents, use them for a number of reasons:

—As a testing ground of new ideas.

Note Italo Scanga's "This is a book about dark colors."

— As a means of documenting personal experiences. Note Eleanor Hubbard's 1972 Honeymoon book, documenting her voyage, sometimes wittily, aboard the *S.S. France*.

— As a recording of new sights, or places, or fantasies. Note, architect John Lawson's drawings of architectural monuments on a recent Mexican trip.

— As the first or second step in a creative process that may lead to a finished artwork. Note Robin Fredenthal's designs for sculpture.

— As a verbal expression of an artistic problem. Note, Bill Omwake's

exploration verbal foray into the problem of taste.

Usually, a notebook or sketchbook is a private journal, like a diary, not meant for public perusal. The sketchbook is not a finished work, although some books here, like Tom Hatten's "Art on the Moon" project could be considered completed conceptual works.

The appeal of this show is in the preciousness of the sketch — sometimes mini artworks themselves — and in the feeling that one is peering into the private thoughts and designs.

However, it is a show of no surprises. It is exactly what you would think a group show about artists and their sketchbooks a group would be like.