

JSMAC Sketchbook Collective Prompts

(Updated 10/16/15)

Timely (related to current events, programs, exhibitions)

“Expanding Frontiers” the Jack and Susy Wadsworth Collection of Postwar Japanese Prints, currently displayed at the JSMA, demonstrates a wide range of contemporary print techniques --aquatint, etching, intaglio, lithography, mezzotint, silkscreen, stencils, and woodblock. What textures, marks, lines or forms are you particularly drawn to as you explore the exhibition? Is there a print medium that you are particularly interested in? Explore these art elements in your sketchbook and/or one of the print mediums. You can recreate what you see or draw inspiration from details. If you need a starting point, try repeating a specific visual element.

“Expanding Frontiers” presents a collection of prints exhibiting a great range of subject matter. Find one artwork that speaks to you at that moment. Represent it in your sketchbook (your interpretation) and explain why you chose that specific print and how it relates to your current experience or state of mind.

Visual communication is present all around us, from detailed prints and paintings to the simple brand we might see on our coffee cup. Even the simplest visual representation can hold immense meaning. Print graphics are especially potent because they can be reproduced. Sketch an intriguing graphic, explaining where you saw it, and why it was influential or captivating.

Taking inspiration from Enrique Chagoya’s “Adventures of Modernist Cannibals” (currently exhibiting at the JSMA), explore the intersection of two visual cultures in your sketchbook. Identify two distinct cultural iconographic images and explore ways in which they could visually intersect. How does this change their meaning?

Artwork & Art Process

Sketch something you see every day. How might sketching help you see your familiar environment or experiences differently? (ex: your breakfast, your bike, your keys, the tree or building you walk by on your way to work or class)

How do envision yourself using your sketchbook or journal? Create an imaginative drawing or map presenting how your sketchbook or journal might fit into your life. Supplement this with (or create instead) a list of ways you might utilize your sketchbook.

What are some art techniques, mediums, styles, or artists that you are interested in learning more about? Why? Begin to experiment with one of these in your sketchbook.

Do an art critique or analysis of a work that you are drawn to in the museum. Spend a few minutes just looking. Sketch the artwork. Then write a reflection. Why were you drawn to the artwork? What do you see visually that intrigued you? What meaning can you gather? How do the formal visual elements convey meaning?

Explore mark making in your sketchbook. Try out different mediums and tools, and experiment with different ways of using them. How much diversity in mark making can you get with one medium or art

tool? Push yourself to get outside of your comfort zone, making marks of different sizes, line qualities, energies and densities.

Practice blind contour drawing. Choose a nearby object or person (or yourself). Slowly draw the subject without looking and without picking up your pencil from the paper. Move your pencil as you move your eye, slowly and carefully. Allow yourself to go back over areas of the subject but do not look down and do not pick up your pencil. Don't worry about the end product. The point is not perfect representation, but instead to disconnect your perception of what something SHOULD look like from what it actually looks like. Blind drawing allows us to separate our right and left brain, moving us into a mental state of creativity and flow.

Practice contour drawing. Only draw the contours or outlines of a subject.

Practice contour drawing and negative space. Find a chair in the room and draw only its outlines. Do not draw the line intersections, only the outer lines. Shade only the space outside of the contour lines (the space outside of the chair) to emphasize negative space.

Culture is ordinary, and it is manifested in the things we do and see every day. How can ordinary objects be transformed as art? How can they inspire you? Draw or recreate an ordinary object. How did this make you see it differently? How can journaling help you see your everyday world in a new way?

Write and illustrate a poem. Think back to your childhood days of reading Shel Silverstein...

Record and draw a recent dream. When you wake up in the morning, take a few minutes to actively visualize the dream that you had, remembering specific details and/or feelings to recall and represent in your sketchbook. Write a brief description about the dream, explaining how it made you feel and what significance it might have to you.

Creative Self – What does the word “creative” mean to me? How do I express my creativity in my everyday life, activities and relationships?

What are you struggling with while working in your sketchbook? What do you like or not like? What has surprised you?

Personal Reflection and Experience

What was surprising about an experience that you had today? What was challenging? Create a drawing (or use another medium) representing or illustrating this experience.

Personal Brand – Think about who you are, who you want to be, or how you want to be perceived. What might your personal brand look like? How does it represent qualities with which you identify?

Self Portrait – Practice drawing your self-portrait, either from an image or from the mirror (mirror is always best). How do I see myself? How would I like to see myself? How do I look in reality?

Write down all of the names you've ever been called. Write down your reactions. Create a poem.

How do I feel right now? Consider these sensations and transform them into visual mark-making (doodle, scribble, marks, shapes, texture, shading, images, words).

Inner and Outer Self – Create an image of how you see yourself on the inside and how you see yourself on the outside. What do these versions of yourself look like? How are they similar or different? (This is a great tool for examining personal conflict and gaining perspective.)

Reflect back over your day. What kind of day was it? What were the highlights? Recall significant thoughts, feelings, experiences, events, interactions, people, places, and notable learnings. How did I feel at the time? How do I feel now? (You can also focus on larger blocks of time.)

Create a Timeline – What have been the key events and experiences in your life? Reflect on the most significant events and periods of time. Write or draw out a timeline.

Time Map / Life Map – Imagine your typical day or week, and make a map or diagram to visually represent this in some way. You could even envision this on a larger scale. Are there things you want to change? Leave out? Add?

Key Word – What is the theme of your personal growth at this particular time? What word describes the current challenge or lesson that you are dealing with right now? Can you recreate this word in some way in your sketchbook that visually represents its own meaning?

Current Challenge – What am I struggling with right now? Draw the struggle. Give it a name. Write about it.

Self-Inventory – What do you have to offer? What are your personal assets and strengths?

Self-Aspects – You contain within yourself many qualities or aspects. What are they? Draw a diagram and/or map it out.

What did you want to be when you grew up? Why? Create an illustration of what this alternative future self might have looked like.

Where are you at (in your life right now)? Think about what kind of time this is for you. Was there a particular event or experience that marked the beginning of this period?

Is there someone or something that you have been particularly grateful for lately? Create a visual recognizing them in your sketchbook. Why are you grateful? Why or how have they been significant to you?

Draw an object, place or person that has brought about frustration recently. Write about why you chose the subject. Were there any particular thoughts or feelings that came up during the process?

Learning & Goal Setting

Explore vocabulary that you are hearing and reading. What meanings are coming up? What is their significance to you? Are there words that you don't understand? Words that you are tired of hearing?

Word Map – Stuck in a problem? Need to research an idea or brainstorm a project? Create a word map to brainstorm ideas and explore connections between all of the things you are thinking about.

What are your career goals? What can you do to reach those goals?

Where will you be in five years? Ten years? Create a visual illustration to represent these milestones. Consider both tangible and intangible elements.

Develop learning goals in your sketchbook, and feel free to illustrate or design! These might be goals associated with a particular class, your education, work, personal life or maybe something else.

- What do you hope to gain from this experience? What would you like to learn?
- What skills, abilities or knowledge would you like to improve?
- What interest areas would you like to explore?
- Why? What makes you say this? Why is it important to you? Explain.

Don't forget to take notes, write down questions that may pop up, vocabulary that intrigues you, inspiration, comments, quotes and thoughts....