

Concepts:

There are a million different approaches to sketchbooks- find your own.

Overall concept: reveal who you are.

Consider it your brain/personality on paper.

Nurture your voice, your interests, your way of thinking/seeing.

Show process, growth, development over TIME! (ideas/techniques resurfacing)

Work on a unified feeling/consistency to the overall book.

Take it with you everywhere and work in it daily if possible.

Put your name (not address) on inside cover and an “if found” message: call, email....

Generally 1 complete (all pages worked-on) sketchbook per year- minimum.

Seniors often will have more than one- varied sizes/themes/ time frames.

Bonus!: you can take photos of your sketchbook pages for your portfolio.

Keep in mind that your high school sketchbook will be viewed by the public.

You may want to keep a separate, private sketchbook for super-personal stuff.

Techniques:

Bye-bye white paper.

In-depth exploration of ideas/interests/techniques.

Drawing from observation: figures, space, stuff. (40-60% of the book)

Experimentation/risk/ambition/adventure with ideas/materials/techniques.

Purposeful use of materials/non-traditional materials that match your ideas.

(dry mustard or curry, berry stains, soy sauce, coffee, tea, tar, dirt, hair, plastic...)

Include reflective thoughts – what’s working/what isn’t with your other art.

Lecture notes, museum/gallery visit notes/sketches, thoughts.

Research notes: artists/styles, articles, books, theories, thumbnails of influential art.

College notes, portfolio review notes, reminders of suggestions from colleges.

Use both sides of pages/ include double-page spreads.

Go to/off edges of paper.

Make your own book- different sizes/shapes with purpose.

(ex. I am tall, my work is long and tall, so I made a long and tall sketchbook)

Lists, diagrams with arrows, measurements, site-specific notes/sketches.

Make fold-outs/pockets with purpose.

Show/keep mistakes. Write a comment about them- reflection/journal.

Work out an idea that seems impossible to you/try new techniques.

Draw your own sculptures before, during, and after making them.

Rework pages- use washes, unify facing pages, layer, glaze, collage, sew.

Avoid:

Avoid trite stuff: overused, common, cheesy/ “Hallmark card” stuff:

(rainbows, unicorns, eyeballs especially with tears dripping out of them, anime or animation/cartoons from someone other than you, dragons, fairies, roses.....)

Avoid copying photos- especially if they aren’t your own photos.

Avoid white paper everywhere/ unfinished pages/ avoid middle of page syndrome.

Avoid scrap-book or yearbook feeling or all pretty/perfect pages.

Avoid loose stuff that falls out when you pick it up or open it.

Other subjects/approaches we’ve seen too often in 2-D Art:

Girl in tub- or shower.....with blood

Angsty hand over head of girl in crouching position
Self portrait- floating head syndrome
Portraits- parallel to picture plane (try some foreshortening)
Random stuff in back ground of self portraits- colors and swirls—try deep space!
Copies from photos- especially teathy smiles on people

We'd like to see more of in 2D Art:

More dynamic compositions with angles and dramatic points of views
Accuracy with personal voice/vision in drawings/paintings
Quirkiness
Reference to previous famous artists, styles, palettes
References to current events and how the artist sees/feels about them

In photos we see too much of:

Lack of personal voice or vision
Instagram photos/ selfies
Girl in tub- or shower.....with blood
Girl in pool in prom dress/dress/clothing
Photos of friends- not very inspired- on roof, on train track, against a wall
Faux drinking/smoking photos
Flowers.....flowers.....flowers.....
Lizards, turtles, birds, cats, dogs, squirrels
Hands close up- especially elderly
Homeless without much commentary
Bare back girl/model in dramatic lighting plain room – waist up.
Flipping hair
Lying in road, on train tracks
Centered compositions- especially with walkways/roads/train tracks
Skateboard photos
Bodies with paint on them
Hiding in plant photos

We'd like to see more in photos:

“A day in the life of” kind of photos that give us insight in to person taking photo
Dynamic compositions
Dramatic light/Sensitivity to light
Humor
Unique views on world- from photographer's mental and physical point of view
Reason for photo.
Good technique. Clear, strong contrast, details
Capturing a moment photo that means something to the photographer.
What makes you, “you” photos of family/home/traditions/ relationships in family
Something a camera can do that nothing else can- (stop time, confuse space/place, blur, overlap, show time, etc)
References to current events