

Tip #36

Some helpful books -- an artist's bibliography



It's always fun to see what books have entertained and enthralled and inspired another artist! So, of course, I couldn't resist sharing some of the art-related books that have meant something to ME over the years - this time on sketching and drawing. Perhaps you'll see an old favorite there, or discover something brand new to explore.

A list of my favorite sketching, drawing, and journaling books - in no particular order - would have to start with Hannah Hinchman's wonderful *A Life in Hand; Creating an Illuminated Journal* (Peregrine Smith, 1991, re-issued 1999). Hannah's become a real-life friend since I picked up her first book, above, and I've bought every one of her works that came after, but this one still stands out in my mind-it helped me to integrate my life as an artist with the rest of my life. Now instead of compartmentalizing everything - my sketches here, my grocery list there, minutes in a lined tablet and my nature drawings somewhere else-it all finds its way under one cover. It just feels right!

The Artist's Guide to Sketching, by James Gurney and Thomas Kinkade (Watson-Guption, 1982), was written when the two were just out of college - they grabbed a handful of art tools and hit the road, sketching as they went, and their travels are not only inspiring but just plain FUN. The book also helps break us out of the idea that a sketch has to be rough and almost unrecognizable-some of theirs are quite detailed studies, using a variety of mediums. (It also makes me want to try out some unfamiliar mediums - some of which have become favorites.)

The Natural Way to Draw, A Working Plan for Art Study, by Kimon Nicolaides (Houghton-Mifflin, 1990) is an absolute classic in the field. First published after the author's death in the late 1930s, the book covers techniques that were groundbreaking then-and truly classic now. Nothing about this book seems dated, and that's saying something for a book that's been around so long.

The New Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain, Betty Edwards (Tarcher, 1999)-this classic book first came out some years ago, expanded on some of the classic techniques and went on to break new ground. Many people who have studied Edwards' techniques have discovered they CAN draw, after all, and better than they ever imagined.

Keys to Drawing by Bert Dodson (North Light, 1985) is a very well-done book of ideas and exercises that again is just a lot of fun to look through and be inspired by. I'll admit I've never gone through and done all the exercises, but Dodson makes you feel as though you'd LIKE to!

The Artist's Way, Julia Cameron (Jeremy P. Tarcher, 1992)-this one helps us to break out of ruts and move beyond stereotypes. Very inspiring book! (The wonderful quotes from a wide variety of artists are half the fun...)

The Zen of Seeing/Drawing as Meditation, Frederick Franck-Vintage, 1973. If you love to draw and haven't investigated Franck's many books, do yourself a favor and start! This is a good a place as any!

As I started digging through my library I discovered this only scratched the surface and I could go on page after page. I've run out of room, but perhaps you'll find something here that will provide a key for you - I have!

For more on drawing and sketching, check my North Light and Sierra Club books as well as my online art classes at <http://www.cathyjohnson.info> or go direct to http://groups.yahoo.com/group/drawing_sketching_online/ for further information. (There's also a watercolor course at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/watercolor_online/ - in the future I'll do a booklist of watercolor books that have inspired and delighted me, as well!)

You'll find my artwork on new products in my Cafepress store at http://www.cafepress.com/cathy_johnson and original fine art auctions on eBay at <http://members.ebay.com/aboutme/cathyjohnsonart>.