

The artistic process – creating thumbnail sketches

Step 1

Thumbnail sketches are small, roughly drawn images quickly committed to paper. Drawn effortlessly and in rapid succession, they appear as nothing more than doodles to untrained eyes. Thumbnail sketches are, in fact, the most efficient means of illustrative brainstorming and a source of potentially rich fodder for subsequent imagery.

Use thumbnail sketches to develop the most effective layout, balance, tone, shading and color palettes. Working out image tonal areas, color and shadings before committing yourself to finished media saves time and materials.

Create both vertical and horizontal thumbnails.

Step 2

Next rework the thumbnail sketch into a small-scale version of your idea:

Take your most successful thumbnail sketch and rework it into a small scale drawing in your sketchbook.

This drawing should be about 4" x 6" or 5"x7" at the most. No bigger.

This is not a finished drawing it just acts as a color and compositional study.

The drawing will most likely be crude and ruff. That is okay

Now add color to this sketch. Please don't spend hours on this maybe 20-30 minutes.

Step 3

Self-evaluation.

Look at your work and make an honest evaluation of it at this point. It's better to do it now rather than on the good paper. Write your responses out in your sketchbook. Ask yourself the following questions:

What am I trying to say? Am I saying it?

What's the focal point or center of interest?

Content- what is it and why have I chosen it?

Is this cliché' or the simple, easy response to the problem?

What mood have I established? How can you tell? Do I need to establish a mood?

What is the viewpoint? Why did you choose that viewpoint? Is it doing anything for the work? Should it be from a different angle or vantage point?

Have I established depth and or movement?

The list goes on, but I think you get the point. Just keep questioning yourself and why you do what you do? The questions and answers will hopefully establish a deeper work of art.

