

In his forthcoming book, artist Danny Gregory features the personal sketchbooks of 50 creatives. Here, we offer a sneak peek inside 7 of those treasure troves—and the minds who created them—that'll inspire you to get back to your artistic roots. **BY DANNY GREGORY**

Consider the sketchbook. It's the closest one can get to being inside an artist's head, to feeling the raw creativity flow. A book bulging with drawings and scrawled captions, some pages experimental, others carefully observed. The pages are buckled from layers of watercolor, the margins are filled with shopping lists and phone numbers, the cover is battered from traveling about stuffed in a bag or a pocket and being yanked out in the rain or thrown down in the grass.

This isn't an art form that can be easily displayed in a gallery or museum, and throngs of viewers can't flock to see it hanging in a golden frame. No, this is an objet d'art that must be experienced as it was created, just as you're doing now, your head bent over the pages, absorbing each one, then flipping to the next. With each turn, a fresh surprise, a new juxtaposition. The pages read like a story, a journey, a life. Each of the books is a slender slice of a life, a slice that could be weeks or months or years long, depending on the habits of the artist and the thickness of the volume.

As you turn the pages, you feel time pass. You see moments being recorded in sequence. You see ideas unfold and deepen. You see risks, mistakes, regrets, thoughts, lessons, dreams, all set down in ink for posterity, for an audience of one.



Bryce Wymer

Bryce VJymer grew up in West Palm Beach, FL, and currently lives in Brooklyn, NY. He studied illustration and design at Ringling College of Art and Design in Sarasota, FL, and now does illustration and design for the broadcast/motion design industry, www.brycewymer.com

Of all of my many works, my visual journals have the strongest purpose and are the truest form of art. They're one of the few places where my thoughts are expressed solely for my own expectations, a vehicle for self-exploration, not polluted by commercialism and monetary gain. When I look through a finished journal, I can remember exactly the state of mind I was in during that period.

Generally, I fill a 100-page Moleskine in a little under three months. My books go absolutely everywhere with me, so occasionally they do get misplaced, but oddly enough, every single book since 1997 has made it back to my warm embrace.

I like it when other people look through my books. I like the fact that they never ask, "What was this designed for?" or "Who was this done for?" It's like they know they're looking through something that's entirely mine. I also feel that books are a format that people tend to be comfortable with. They're familiar. The only thing foreign to them is that my books are one of a kind. And if they don't like a certain image, all they have to do is turn the page and see something different. I think this creates a level of intimate comfort with individuals. My advice to journal-keepers: Don't feel ashamed of the mistakes. Live with them a while and they will liberate you.



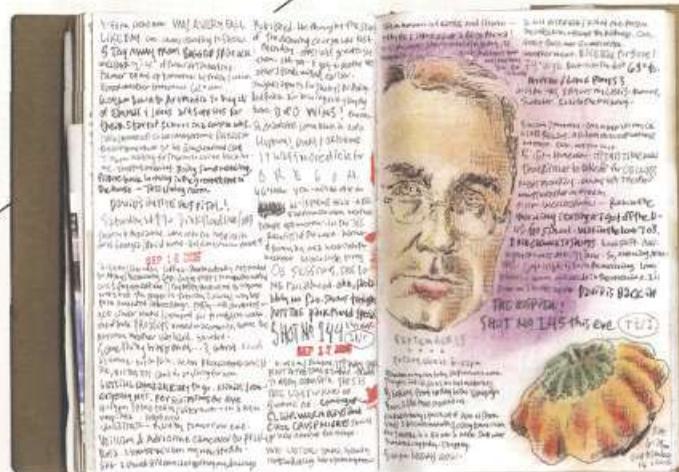
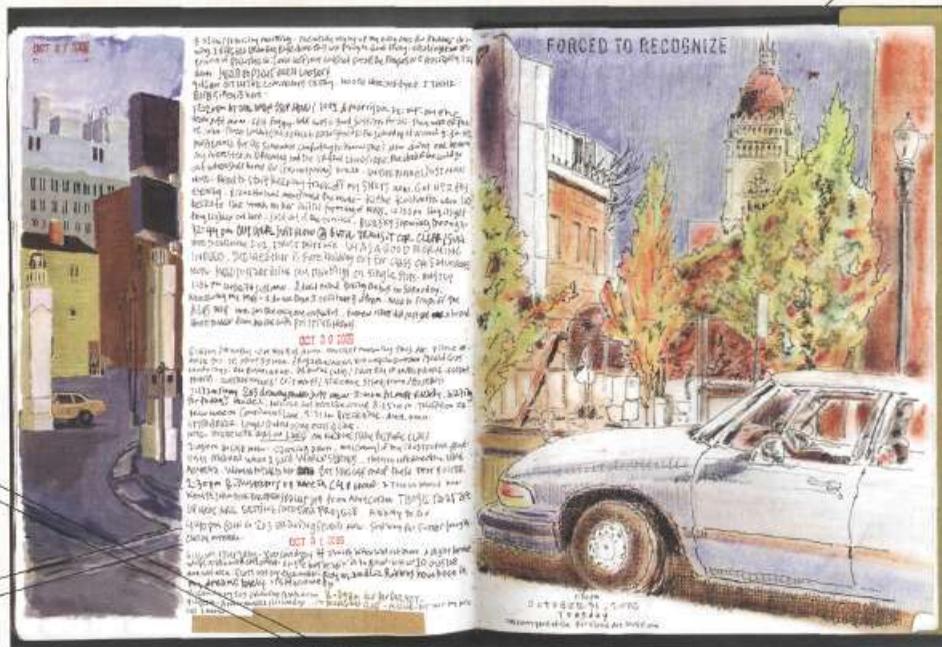
Cindy Woods

Cindy Woods was born in Richmond, VA, graduated from Virginia Commonwealth University with a BFA in Illustration, and lives and works as a part-time receptionist at The Virginia Home, a nursing home for disabled people. www.learndaily.blogspot.com

It was moving into a nursing home full of people willing to be drawn that finally got me started. There was a chess club that met with the residents here on a weekly basis, and, because they were so focused on their game, it provided a safe way to observe people without them taking much notice of me. I gained confidence in drawing this way and started to ask folks to pose for me. These introductions through drawing are how I came to know many of the people here. Since I've lived here more than 30 years, most of these folks are deceased now, making these early drawings all the more precious to me.

I've come a long way, but I still have periods of fear—of messing up the pages—that will keep me from working in my books. Because I have a disability, I also have a hard time holding some sketchbooks. I don't want to lose this momentum I've gained, so in addition to a sketchbook, I always make sure I've got a cheap pad of paper from the drugstore with me so at least I have something I can switch to for when I'm feeling less confident about using my book.

I'm also still finding and am constantly inspired to try new things by the examples I find on the web. I'm curious what keeping a set time and place for sketching would feel like. Or drawing a whole book just out of my imagination. I want to try collage. Work more on composition and lettering. If I could remember them, an illustrated dream journal might be neat. I've been slow in starting and developing this sketchbook habit but now I can't imagine stopping.



Kurt Hollomon

Kurt Hollomon grew up in Portland, OR, attended the Burnley School in Seattle, and is now an illustrator who teaches drawing and illustration at Pacific Northwest College of Art in Portland. He has illustrated many books, including "On Foot," "In gear" and "The Adventure Journal." www.kurtdhollomon.com

I go for more of the finished look in my books rather than the quick sketch. I tend to design my pages, more or less. In my personal journal, I write in two vertical columns and write around the drawings as I make them—just like inset book illustrations. I usually make my drawings intentional. Like they were meant to be there. I have never just randomly doodled.

Occasionally, I will give myself assignments. Recently, I picked a topic like hand tools, done in different types of line. Then I painted them, affecting the ground plane in different ways. Then I moved onto various compositions using my old climbing gear. This process is my newest obsession and it has been very satisfying. Many of these experiments make their way onto my website and have led to commissioned assignments.

Drawing is my art. It's the bedrock of art. I teach drawing and I practice my drawing—it is my lifetime pursuit. After all the years I've been drawing, it's just something I have to do. It's that simple.



Roz Stendahl

Roz Stendahl was born in Manila, Philippines, and spent her childhood in the U.S. and Australia. She attended the University of Missouri for undergraduate and the University of Minnesota for graduate school. She's a graphic designer, illustrator and book artist, and she teaches bookbinding and journaling classes, www.rozworks.com; www.projectartfornature.org

I love blank pages. They scream possibilities to me. They clamor for attention. They call to me from across the room while I'm trying to do other work. When I get to the final signature in a journal, I go to the shelf of books I've made and take a couple down, one at a time, turn them around in my hands, open them and look at the type of paper I've used, and decide if this is the type of paper I want to work on for the next four or five weeks. It's a very happy moment. Sometimes I put all the books back and decide to think about it a little longer and decide the next day. But I think that's just an excuse to look at all the books again! When I open them, I see all the fun I'm going to have filling them.

An absolute rule with me is that I never remove a page; all pages, no matter how awful, how poorly

executed, remain. It's all part of the learning process for me, and if they aren't there, I'm not documenting my entire journey. That's very important to me. I learn the most from failed experiments.

My journal has always been for me. Other people might look at my journals and enjoy them, but bottom line, I keep it for me and only me and put in it what appeals to (or appalls) me, what interests me, without thought to what someone else might think, because at the end of the day there is just me and my journal. **HOW**

Danny Gregory is the author of five books, including "The Creative License" and an illustrated memoir, "Everyday Matters." He has created illustrations for numerous books and publications and is the creative director of several award-winning global advertising campaigns. Gregory lives in Greenwich Village with his wife and son. www.dannygregory.com

EDITOR'S NOTE "An Illustrated Life" will be published in December by HOW Books. Visit www.dannygregory.com to download podcasts featuring half-hour interviews with the book's contributors.