

Celebrating rough edges

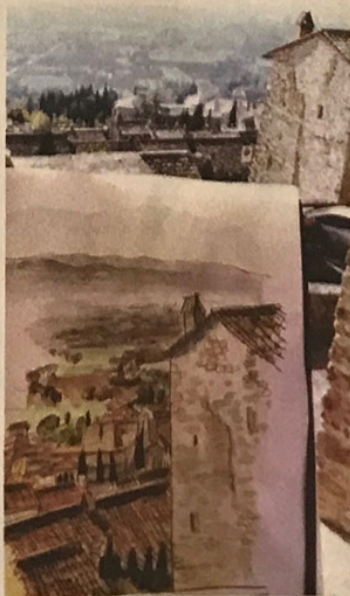
From vivid travelogues to sharp observations on art fairs, these seven artists celebrate and push the limits of the sketchbook

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"SKETCHING is an act of fishing," says Berliner Allen Shaw. "You patiently wait. You may not have a big catch and there are days when you come back empty handed. But, there are those days when you land goldfish," says the artist, who is known to be a master sketchbook keeper. Over the last 20 years, Shaw, originally from Munger, Bihar, has kept over 250 sketchbooks, selections from which will be exhibited in a show titled 'I am the sketchbook' at ARTISANS, Kala Ghoda, from February 23 to 28.

If you want to get into the mind of an artist, chances are that the sketchbook would be the first window. It is where Leonardo da Vinci etched out the drama for *The Last Supper*; where Amrita Sher-Gil drew innumerable nudes of men and women; and, where Bhupen Khakhar recorded his third Kerala trip (on a Natraj Artist Sketch Book, no less). The sketchbook is also the first exercise of art students, a practice that almost equals the riyaz of a musician.

We ask seven artists, including Shaw, on what sketching and treasuring a sketchbook means to them.



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Dhruvi Acharya, Mumbai

If I am in the middle of painting, then I won't be drawing. On the other hand, when I travel or if I just need to clear my mind, I sketch. Once I am done with a sketch, I don't alter it. I may digitally scan sketches to make them a part of my paintings and larger works. My solo at Chemould Prescott last year, *After the Fall*, had about 1,800 sketches, many of these done over the years, become part of an installation. My

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practice of sketching started during college, at the Maryland Institute College of Art, where we were asked to draw every morning as soon as we woke up. I kept charcoal and a drawing book by my bedside.

IN MY SKETCHBOOK: Women, what's on my mind, death, disease, children. I am concerned with the subject of ageing these days.

AN ARTIST'S SKETCHES I LOVE: If Atul Dodiya keeps sketchbooks, I'd love to see them.