

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY

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## Reviews/**Art**

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By **ROBERTA SMITH**

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### **'Artists' Sketchbooks'**

*Matthew Marks*

*1018 Madison Avenue (at 78th Street)*

*Through May 4*

Where there are artists, there are usually sketchbooks, even in this day of image appropriation and factory fabrication. This is the premise borne out by this carefully selected exhibition of two dozen sketchbooks that span 40 years of artists from the Abstract Expressionists forward.

The approaches and purposes contained in these books are as varied as the sensibilities that produced them. Cy Twombly, working in the early 1950's, filled page after page with scratchy hieroglyphs and symbols that seem to have stepped out of a prehistoric cave painting. Louise Bourgeois, working at roughly the same time, opted for simple gestures — concentric circles, for example — put forth in watercolors of a hallucinatory brightness.

The meticulous precision exemplified by the books of Myron Stout, Robert Ryman and Jasper Johns are different again from Julian Schnabel's studied sloppiness. Nonetheless, Mr. Schnabel's small oil-stained notebook from the late 1970's foretells a number of the artist's early works.

Among the other artists represented here are Lucian Freud, Ellsworth Kelly, Brice Marden, Jackson Pollock, Richard Serra, Lawrence Weiner and Terry Winters. Revelations into working methods and thought processes abound, the only drawback being that one can't thumb through the books at liberty.