Artists of all types have often kept notebooks. I am asking you this semester to start one (if you haven’t already). This is a place to jot down ideas, questions, musings, and inspirations. In a way, the notebook should be an extension of your creative mind. Your notebooks will also serve as a place for idea/content generation. To this end I will ask you to develop several different sections in your artist notebook: **Notes, Ideas, Responses.**

**1st.**

**NOTES**

Often when you are working you will get into a "groove" (some athletes call this the “zone”) where intuition and intellect are working synchronistically. At this point, you will lose self-awareness and ideas/insights will flow. Unfortunately, this state doesn’t last forever. Life, teachers!, (curfews) often interrupt these creative flows. Your notebook should be used to jot down any ideas, thoughts, insights you had **before you forget them!** It is critical, then to keep your notebook with you in the studio.

So, after every painting session, I want you to jot down a few notes as to what you need to do next on your work and jot down any insights or ideas that may have sprung into your mind. You may think you will remember these things between painting sessions, but they are often like memories of dreams—very clear at first, but difficult to retrieve later.

Please follow the following format:
Identify date and finishing time as a heading. Underneath, identify painting followed by colon followed by ideas separated by period punctuation. For example, (from my own notes)-

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NOTES
8/29 12 noon:
small table and chairs painting: Need large light green brush to come in from right side. Figure out how to emphasize little paintings. Bring white into chairs.
red painting: should have left underpainting much lighter. Need to preserve light longer so that darks can be selected at a later date in order that color and value changes for the darks are not locked in too early. May help to have darks come about as a result of the washes.
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These notes will help you pick up right from where you left off last time you painted. Also helps hone your analytical abilities with regards to your paintings.

**IDEAS**

**2nd.** Get in the habit of carrying your notebook around with you. You never know when an idea or an image will strike you, and you need to record it immediately. Please separate these ideas/musings from your daily painting notes either by drawing a line between sections or by having a separate section in your notebook.
RESPONSES

3rd: You will be doing some readings throughout the semester. I want you to write 3 responses to each reading. These responses should be distillations, not lengthy essays (unless you are so moved). These responses should be thoughtful and coherent. If I call on you to read your responses, they should generate response and discussion amongst your classmates. Please write the artist’s name that the article was about and follow with your three responses labeled 1-3.

An example courtesy of Dorothy Jackson:

Francis Bacon

- I loved Bacon’s comment about not wanting his subjects in the room while he paints them. I think that this illustrates an important dynamic that is rarely discussed, that being the interaction between artist and audience. It is difficult not to paint with one’s audience at least somewhat in mind. I believe that I can say that there are few pieces and few people capable of creating an entirely un-self-conscious work. Portraits are particularly difficult because while there is a certain impulse to be honest and representational there is another drive to be somewhat complimentary especially if one is painting a friend or loved one.

- I loved Bacon’s comment that “art is an obsession with life” and that “as human beings our greatest obsession is with ourselves”. I don’t necessarily agree with this quotation. I would say something more along the lines of, art is something representative of being engaged in the activity of life, or an attempt to capture something of the essence or experience of life (which in and of itself requires a certain degree of awareness and involved thinking). I don’t believe that art itself is an obsession unless it is the artist’s obsession with his or her artistic expression. The concept however is an interesting one, as is the suggestion that self-obsession is an inherent human trait. It makes sense, the suggestion the in order to survive one must be self-consciously aware and therefore irreconcilably self-obsessed but I had never before considered it from an artistic standpoint.

- Bacon seems almost pseudo-masochistic in his desire for truthful representation and dialogue within and about his work. He seems so wedded to the ideal of a factual rather than an aesthetically pleasing version of reality that he is unwittingly (or perhaps consciously) alienating other members of the art world (and from his descriptions of his interactions with the subjects of his paintings, possibly other friends and acquaintances as well).