

Rob Matthews

My camera and computer are extensions of my sketchbook. Ideas may initially be written down or a rough drawing may be put down on paper but a lot of final compositional choices are made by arranging self-generated, photographic images in Photoshop. This seems like a natural extension of technology in the contemporary art practice. Superior draftsmen like Degas and Eakins capitalized on photography in the medium's infancy. Using the computer, even in such a low tech way, should be expected.

Working from photographs also helps me to take one more step away from my subjects. My concept is usually something that I am emotionally and intellectually attached to. It would be too easy to submit to that and risk making sentimental work. Using a still image as a primary source allows me to focus on the work at hand, that of drawing.

The three portraits in this show are part of an ongoing series documenting friends and family. They depict people- how they dress and what they might cherish. Placed with a particular sitter, an item helps define the subject in a unique way. Gathered in one room, a grouping of portraits can play off of one another. Some, like Self-Portrait with Nosebleed or Rebecca, are direct. Others, like Ann, are more difficult to pin down. Be it straightforward or obtuse, the act of drawing equalizes all of this puts clarity and mystery in the same space.