

Working the Phones

"Ultimately, my life, my visual life, is being sucked down into my little hand-sized brain." So writes **Rob Pruitt** in *iPruitt*, the catalogue of his "iPhotos," miniature snapshots taken with an iPhone. The photos, which document such details of his daily life as traffic jams and meals, covered the walls of Gavin Brown's enterprise last year.

Pruitt is among a growing number of artists who are using the iPhone as a canvas. **David Hockney** sends portraits and still lifes to friends from his, while the *New Yorker's* June 1 cover showed **Jorge Colombo's** iPhone sketch of nighttime Manhattan.

The iPhone's illuminated screen lets artists sketch in the dark—which is beneficial to both Hockney, who likes to work at dawn, and Colombo, who often creates his New York street scenes at night. "The phone lets you catch the subtleties of dark and light in a very quick and spontaneous way," says **Stéphane Kardos**, a French painter and art director at Disney who

has used his phone to capture the changing shades of the Los Angeles skyline.

Françoise Mouly, art editor of the *New Yorker*, says the iPhone "can revitalize the art of sketching, which tends to be overwhelmed in the age of computer-generated imagery." **Craig Robinson**, a Berlin-based English artist and writer who posts his impressionistic iPhone portraits of people and fantastical creatures online, agrees. "It's a perfect platform," he says, "because it's always in our pockets. I no longer need a book on the subway; I just do some scribbling with Brushes."

Brushes is the iPhone's most popular art-making application. The artist "paints" on the screen with a finger and has access to a wide range of colors and brush-

stroke tools. ICreated, developed by digital artist **David Scott Leibowitz** and software designer **Andrew C. Stone**, acts as an online gallery for iPhone art. It showcases images made with such applications as No.2, which duplicates the style of pencil sketches, and Type-Drawing, with which users create images from words of their choosing. "You see photographers, painters, image manipulators from all over the world," says Leibowitz.

Ethan Ham, a sculptor and installation artist who teaches new media at the City College of New York, made his first iPhone artwork not with an application, but by dropping his phone on the ground. "The glass broke and it made me think of **Duchamp**," he said. "So I Google-imaged *The Large Glass*." In Ham's *The Small Glass (after Duchamp)*, the image of the Duchamp piece is visible under the phone's cracked surface. Ham envisions more elaborate work to come. "It might take a few years, but I think people will eventually go beyond just using it as a sketchbook," he says. "You could do something geographical, using the

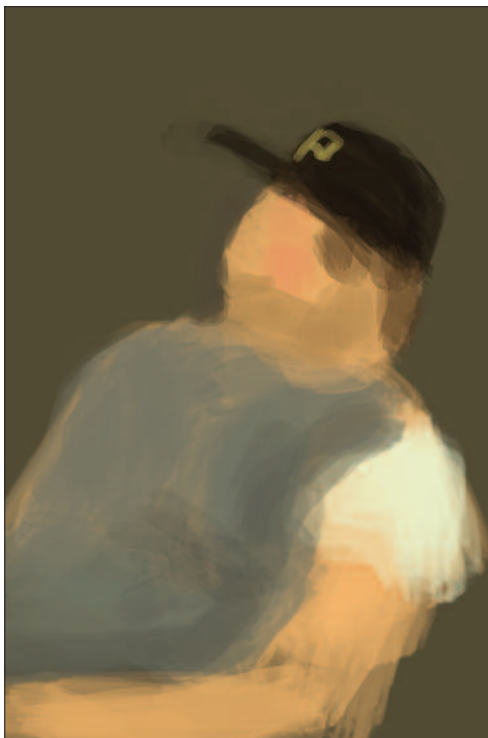


Ethan Ham's *The Small Glass (after Duchamp)*, 2009, uses an image of Duchamp's *The Large Glass*, 1915–23.

maps—though if I knew exactly what, I'd have done it already."

The iPhone could also influence the way art is viewed, as well as the way it's made. **Lawrence Weschler**, who writes about Hockney's iPhone drawings in the catalogue for the artist's show at PaceWildenstein's 57th Street space (running through the 24th of this month), says that "the single best way" to see them is on an iPhone. "It's not like there's an original that has any more information than the one you have in your hand," he adds.

—*Sasha Watson*



Craig Robinson drew *Pirates Fan*, 2009, with the Brushes application.