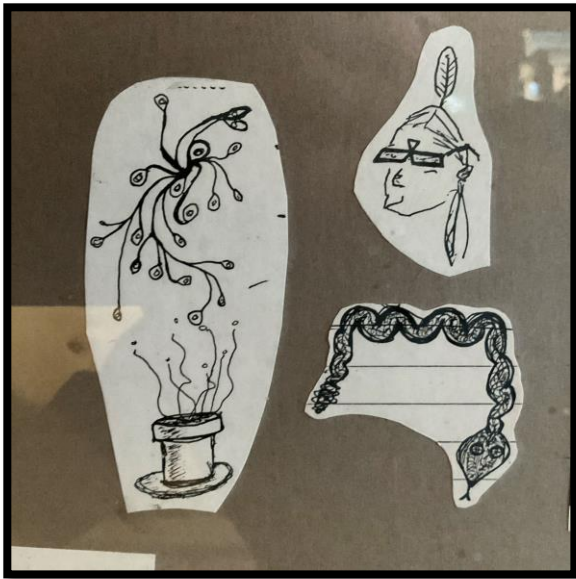


Doodling Died

May 29, 2022

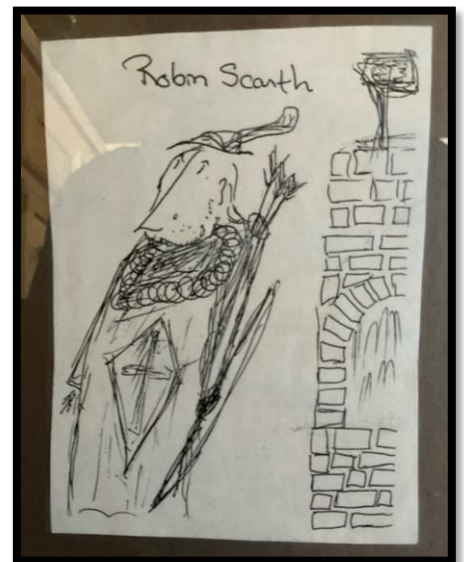
On Hold, in a Meeting

Doodling has become a lost art, and the world is less interesting for it.



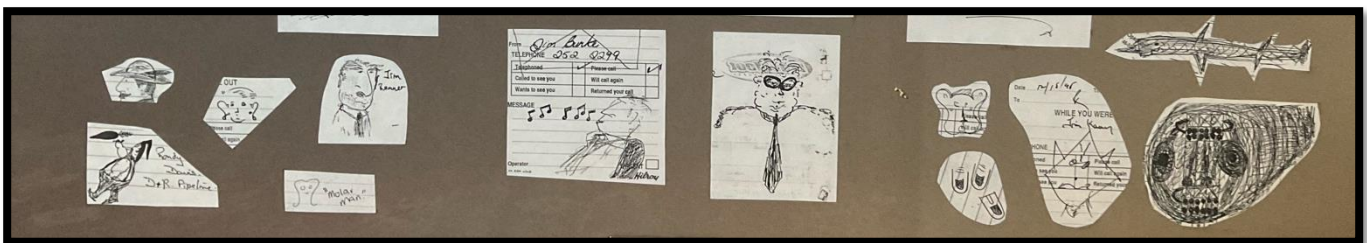
In the days before cell phones, everyone spent tedious hours on a telephone tied to a wall. In business there was plenty of idle telephone time, we might be on hold, or waiting endlessly for return calls. When you did reach your intended party, teleconference meetings could drag on *ad nauseam*.

There was always pen and paper on hand so during those interrupted calls and long meetings, I would fill the time by doodling.



I have no artistic talent, but my absentminded scribbling could be surprisingly realistic, if somewhat bizarre.

I have no desire to exchange my cellular device for a phone plugged into a wall, and *I-pad* is a vast improvement over a *notepad*, but the day the old technology ceased is the day my ...



...doodling died.

Plucking Penises from a Tree

May 29, 1322
Medieval Europe

Absentminded scribbling reached its zenith in Medieval Europe. Fourteenth century scribes would insert hand drawn *doodles* into the margins of their work.

Marginalia became an art form.

Before the printing press, and long before photography, books were handwritten, usually by monks. The clerics would sit in cloisters for days on end, transcribing biblical and other texts.



If you think a tele-connected business meeting is tedious, try spending months, maybe even years, transcribing a single book. The urge to doodle must have been overpowering.



Kaitlin Manning, an associate at *B & L Rootenberg Rare Books and Manuscripts*, and an expert on medieval doodling, wrote this about marginalia:

Manning: *The images vary widely, but they tend to be very strange and even disturbing—overt sexual acts, defecation, monsters, human-monster hybrids, animals acting like humans. There're also examples of clergy behaving very badly, the sort of thing you would not expect to see in the margins of a sacred book....*

Think of it; you are a cleric, cloistered in an all-male environment, expected to sit, and scribe for endless hours. You have no outlet for exuberance, sexual fulfillment, or free thought. The monotony is stifling. The only outlet for personal expression you are granted exists in the narrow margins of the tome you are transcribing.



Not much wonder your thoughts turn to images of rabbits playing the bagpipes, or nuns ...

...plucking penises from a tree.

