Abbey Mays, Art 324-50

ArtXpose: Art Review #1

I attended Jim Croft’s artist talk titled *Tool Making* on November 1st at 3:30pm in Bedford Room 111.

When I first walked in I was stunned as to how much stuff was laid out on the first table. There were various tools, bones, and beautiful handmade books each thing looked as if it had an incredible story. The talk started with a brief intro done by Kerri Cushman. In this she talked about her first encounter with Jim Croft, how they have come to know each other since, and then gave the floor to Croft. The first thing that he did to make sure everyone go some woody stalk that they could fiddle with and make thread. I appreciated this because usually after sitting for a while and listening to a speaker I naturally start to mess with things or doodle, but having this to play with was fun because it also pertained to the talk as well.

Next he started to talk about everything on the table in front of him. He started on the left side of the long table and worked his way to the right. He shared many stories about the historical significance of linen and how he wrote a book about advocating for the correct definition. He also talked about the tools he has made. The most interesting part about this is that he finds his equipment, like old hoses, and repurposes them. The last thing he talks about was his handmade books. From his stories and his work it is easy to tell that he has been influenced by many different cultures, especially European because that is his specialty. At the end of his talk we were able to come up and look at all of his work. This was very interesting to me because you were able to pick up his books. He is hands on and encouraged use to flip through the pages of his beautifully handcrafted books. My favorite book that he has made was the book that he bound twice because he was not happy with the results the first time. That amount of patience is extremely admirable to me. I would have probably left it as it was the first time.

Throughout the talk I was presented with so much knowledge that I had never heard of. Since I am currently in papermaking I was able to understand some of the vocabulary, but I still did not understand the tool making parts as much. The workshopped the following day helped with my understanding. I did not think that one person could know so much about everything and be able to recite it so easily. His intention was to show us a bit about what he does by showing us his tools and work. He was so fun to listen to and you can tell that he loves what he does in life. I went away thinking about living an enjoyable life. Jim Croft was so passionate about what he does and so knowledgeable and I want something like that for myself.