

Drawing and the importance of expressive thinking

Abstract

In this text, we argue to what extent drawings always transform the objectivity of form into subjective expression, in the sense that this expression sensitizes the rational representation of thought. We will explain, on the one hand, how the inherently empirical nature of drawing may enable and enhance this potential; and on the other hand, to what extent empirical drawing, as an expressive and therefore sensitive means of representing thought, can be a privileged means of converging toward this metamorphosis of the ethereal energy of sensitivity into formal sensitive thinking. In this context, we will converge on the idea that the expressive representation of drawing presupposes a wider range of sensitivities in the process of thinking, communicating, and awareness. It will also be important to understand why objective forms, when subjectivized, in the case of drawing, in a wide range of sensitivities, guide the author toward the subjective phenomenon of his consciousness, even though the main experience is pre-conscious and sub-conscious. Moreover, this phenomenon is not merely the cumulative addition of knowledge but rather the capacity to understand the external world as the inner world is transformed by its sensitive representation. We also argue that the creative process provides a complementarity and dialectic between rational and sensitive variables, allowing greater awareness of both interiority and exteriority. If the exteriorization of what is or was interiorized occurs through a rebalancing of rationality and sensitivity, we will improve the relationship between our inner world and the external world, thereby better understanding both. And so, we become freer human beings, since we unify our two faces: rationality and irrationality, subjectivity and objectivity. Based on a rational and sensitive union, the metamorphosis from a less enlightened way of seeing the world to a more clairvoyant one will result in an awareness of the expansion of the substance of being.

Keywords: thinking, expression, drawing, art, awareness

Volume 8 Issue 2 - 2026

Luís Filipe Salgado Pereira Rodrigues

Professor in the School of Architecture, University of Lisbon, Portugal

Correspondence: Luís Filipe Salgado Pereira Rodrigues, Professor in the School of Architecture, University of Lisbon, Portugal

Received: June 16, 2026 | **Published:** July 14, 2026

Introduction

In the context of consciousness, subjective knowledge becomes objective through the representation of objectified thinking. By contrast, in art, objectification is sensitized by expressing a (subliminal) idea. That is, what is objective becomes subjective, or, in other words, representations of shapes gain expressive, subjective, and personal meaning.¹ Moreover, in art, because it is possible to immerse oneself in the unconscious, consciousness is also amplified, enhancing both human sensitivity/subjectivity and knowledge/objectivity.

Since awareness requires a dialogue among the subject, the object of knowledge, consciousness, the unconscious, and external reality, and since reason and emotion are inherent in the subject, and as art works through profound sensitivity, it is a particular means of stimulating that awareness. Note that through art creation, one creates an object born of sensitivity and experiential knowledge and puts emotion and reason in dialogue. If it is true that in art, we can't ignore the link between rationality and sensibility/sensitivity, the same is true of scientific knowledge. Even though this is a rational field, it is strongly influenced by sensibility when humans drive it and when it is part of their (self) consciousness.

In this context, we shall aim to distinguish what increases awareness of objective knowledge and how subjective self-awareness arises. In the first situation, subjectivity must be objectified through "Subjectivity means that something relates to the subject, to the psychism, or to what is internal, in a dialectical relationship with objectivity, which is related to what is external. It means both a process and a result, something that is a range and constitutes a singularity for each person" (Silva, 2009, p. 170).

cognitive mechanisms that establish a relationship between it and concrete, factual, physical, and rational reality. The second situation involves an objective approach that becomes sensitive and human, i.e., adjusted to the subject's needs; it has to be idiosyncratic. This is the field of art. The art is subliminally driven by sensibility, heightening consciousness and ensuring that this inner experience is attuned to the artist's unconscious, autobiography, and, more broadly, the psychology of both, thereby achieving compatibility between his internal reality and the surrounding external reality (i.e., what can be known as objects of consciousness).

Regarding the drawing – whether it is artistic or not – we speak of the body, its strength, its movement, and its sensibility. Drawing as art allows one to bring together bodily sensibility, formal thinking, aesthetics, and the order of reasoning, and, so, express our deep, sensitive thoughts. Although we focus on artistic drawing, we must emphasize that all drawings share a dialectic among mind, perception, body/movement, different sensitivities, and intuitive shape thinking; that's why all empirical drawings have the potential to make thinking more expressive. However, since the drawing may be more or less expressive, it is crucial to distinguish among types of representation, such as the following: more descriptive or interpretive; more literal or poetic; more objective or subjective. Based on these trends, we will consider the situations in which the drawing allows us to manage the tacit content in a form that may lean toward objectivity or subjectivity, depending on the following circumstances: under the (intentionality) goal of aesthetic sensibility or under the rational intentionality; aiming at expression or at literal intelligibility; by the need to explore the validity, the special interest, and the pertinence of the drawing – in its literal / objective / manifest / iconological meaning; in the case we need to achieve a mimetic-analogical representation; or if it is imposed a logical-geometric shape; or, finally, if we wish to explore

the metaphorical / subjective /subliminal / symbolic or iconoclastic sense.

In this context, we adopt a distinction between artistic drawing and other types of drawing, such as those used to create architectural or design elements. On the one hand, artistic drawing aims to be subjective and connotative. In this type of drawing, objectivity metamorphoses into a sensible object, and although it is objective in nature because it is formal, the most important thing is the subjectivity of the feeling with which it was developed, or that underlies the implicit metaphorical and connotative meaning of the form. On the other hand, we will have the drawing of architecture and design, in which (even if it depends on aesthetic subjectivity), objectivity prevails over personal motivations. Although sensitivity (inherent in the process of aesthetic creation) improves the metamorphosis of imagination into a concrete object, it plays a secondary role if it compromises functionality.

Premises

In this analysis, we will assume a distinction between descriptive or metaphorical content and its corresponding possibilities for objective reading or subjective interpretation. These approaches are based, respectively, on a specific objective and rational understanding of what is explicit or becomes explicit, and on a particular subjective and intuitive understanding of what is subliminal, inaccessible, or accessible only through symbolic means or metaphorical expression. Our premise is that the first possibility is grounded in scientific knowledge of different rationalities and facts (or collective and societal rationalities and facts), and the second is rooted in subjective feelings and personal experiences. In another view, the first concerns the embodiment of cognitive and intentional objective ideas/thoughts/information and their reproduction, application, and development (by logical deduction); the second concerns intuitive (and cognitive) interiorization, the sensible perceptions, aesthetic sensitivity, sensitive maturation experiences, and self-awareness – that are influenced by the memories of self-biography (from both unconscious and conscious sources); by individual values; by one's own world vision; by fears, will, affections; in a word, by what drives our lives, that is close to our self, identity, personality.ⁱⁱ

In the drawing, given the idea that it refers, more or less directly, to an analogy with forms with which one has had (or has) a knowable, perceptible, and affective experience, it is not considered that artistic drawing falls within the scope of a possible informal expressionist chaos (disconnected from reason), nor within the rationality of geometry or the hyperrealism of form. It was not framed in a rational, objective, or chaotic extreme but rather in a re-equilibrium among rationality, objectivity, abstraction, sensitivity, subjectivity, and analogy. That is a means of expressive thinking. Moreover, on the one hand, it is worth noting that the artistic value of a drawing lies not in the virtuosity of the literal representation of the objectivity of what one observes, remembers, or wishes to materialize, but rather in the ability to let oneself be sensitized by the experience of the expressive, sensitive, and subjective metamorphosis of mental objectivities into formal objectivities. On the other hand, we argue that drawing allows us to have experiences that extend beyond the application of cognition

ⁱⁱ Regarding this, we suggest remembering what Elkins (1997, p. 201) said: "In particular, vision helps us know what we are like: we watch versions of ourselves in people and objects, and by attending to them, we adjust our sense of what we are. (...) Hence, when we look around a room that we have made our own, we have a sense of who we are and where we have come from because we can take a mental check on the symbols within our field of vision, i.e., useful and harmless."

in problem-solving processes, or rather, beyond the objective problem and its rational reproduction and resolution. With its wide range of possibilities, it allows for expressive formal thinking and, so, a more complete way of consciousness.

When we represent something in a drawing, we must distinguish whether the meaning is explicit/objective/literal or implicit/subjective/symbolic. In the first case, rationality relates to realism and to the literal, formal description, whether this drives materiality or rationality; in the second, sensitivity relates to the symbol and imagery (where appropriation of realism is also accepted, even if it may appear distorted or decontextualized) – in this situation, more than the reality of the surrounding world, it is the self-biography, the introspective, the expressive, and sensitive reality that looks meaningful.

As we have remarked, it is important to recognize that creation requires sensitivity, affection, and emotion, not only in art but also in architecture and design – because reasoning, especially reasoning through aesthetic shapes, requires a balance between the objective and the subjective, as well as between reason and emotion. To create and innovate in those fields, given the sensitive nature of the need, we shall intentionally and repeatedly place ourselves in emotionally uncomfortable situations to regain comfort with sensitive reasoning and discover a new order. This re-ordination and re-balance occur when subjective reality manifests itself through objective reality, for the author's benefit, or rather, when the author appropriates concrete reality to explore his inner reality of idiosyncrasies through the expressive representation and thinking of external reality.

So, depending on the representation's trends more objective or more subjective, we can explore a drawing that moves far from the first or the second, choosing the following goals: realistic (with a real object of direct observation, of the memory, or as a projection into future existence); mimetic (only by direct observation, by establishing a literal correspondence); analogic (which includes both – direct observation or memory), which may be expressive (or expressionist) or unexpressive (when mimetic); unrealistic; abstract (with absence of objects and figures, being expressionist or geometric).

With the previous premises in mind, we will focus on the idea that artistic drawing is neither the objective reproduction of a formal thought nor an absolute unreality, but rather its metamorphosis into a subjective reality, because it relates to the truth of feelings and sensitivity. We may affirm that, in this way, the preexisting reality embodied by consciousness becomes a sensitized reality, i.e., a thought that includes not only reason but also emotion, when reason is attached to sensitivity.ⁱⁱⁱ But this is not an exclusively internal process; rather, it has a place in the exteriorization of what we have interiorized, since we express a thought, and better if the thinking is creative.¹

Literal and objective drawing and subliminal and subjective drawing

This initial approach aims to clarify a more or less evident boundary that marks the divergence between the descriptive, denotative, and literal senses and the metaphorical, connotative, and poetical senses. We assume that there are remarkable differences among the following types of drawing, even though all of them carry some (sensitive)

ⁱⁱⁱ The object to be known is mapped as an image. So is the organism, although its images are spatial. As for the knowledge that constitutes a self-state and permits the emergence of subjectivity, it too is made of images. The entire fabric of a conscious mind is created from the same cloth of images generated by the brain's mapping abilities" (Damásio, 2010, p. 188).

expressive^{iv} energy: to draw to achieve an analogical objective correspondence – the descriptive representation; to draw to express subliminal, subjective senses – the metaphorical representation; to draw to communicate or develop information that must be objective without any doubt (such as the perspectives produced using the process of descriptive geometry) – that is, the representation that describes the object as it is, or, better, that allows an objective understanding by another person; and to draw in an expressive way (but also objectively), as a stimulant tool for the operational creation of functional things (such as the sketch of an architect or a designer). In this last case, the resulting representation must be descriptive and objective, but the process may be expressive and therefore subjective, owing to the sensory experience of its manual process – that is to say, stimulating our body (its sensibility), which will stimulate our thinking energy, yet the rational one.

Drawing based on direct observation (which may be a means of mimesis) – whose principle of analogy is grounded in perceptual phenomena directly related to the space that surrounds us – requires a sensitive and rational experience under the influence of the realistic imperative. However, if the author of the drawings goes against bodily sensibility and aesthetic sensitivity and obeys external orders (such as analogical, formal, logical, functional, or building conditions), the result will be a restriction on subjectivity, in contrast to objectivity – the object imposes on the subject. The direction will be literal, grounded in objective judgments (real/unreal, right/wrong, functional/dysfunctional, etc.). In a word, it is a convergent, deductive, logical, formal, and structured way of thinking. Regarding the literal/objective character of thinking, we may affirm, in a universal and unequivocal way, “This is.” In this representation, the relationship between meanings is univocal (as when we use descriptive geometry) or univocal (as when we aim to achieve mimesis), resulting in a consensual, decipherable, and objective meaning – but with the risk of failing to communicate affections, emotions, or feelings.

Across different fields of art, artistic drawing yields polysemous representations that reflect the subjective and connotative meanings evoked by the internal world. In contrast to the objective situation, this approach aims to explore what is personal, ambiguous, subliminal, and subjective, and we would say: “This seems...” or “This makes me feel.” In this type of representation, it is customary to apply subjective, metaphorical, and symbolic senses. A metaphor is a figure of speech that compares things that have no direct, literal relationship.

Metaphors and symbols may be used by comparing aspects that, under the logic and deductive rules, are incorrect but, in the field of poetry, have all the legitimacy. That means that an ambiguous reality becomes (or does not become) intelligible as information arising from the process of imagination and constituting itself as reality. That ambiguity makes the creative process easier and improves the search for new senses and more idiosyncratic forms, rather than for forms whose meanings are defined by preexisting reality. These new meanings are merely metaphors for a previous (ir) reality that, even if entirely new, has its pre-existing habitat in the subjective (ir) reality of the imagery, whose sources are the unconscious, the self-biography, and the artist's sensitivity. With a freer meaning linking objective realities, without rational or moral explanations or judgments, and

without symbolic prior meanings, we will be closer to our hidden self, the unconscious one. With these mechanisms, the process of to mean may become dynamic or contingent. Moreover, the true meaning we seek through art needs to accommodate subjectivities such as idiosyncrasies, one's self-biography, and motivational feelings in a particular context. But it is important to be aware that, even though art belongs to the subjective field, it also communicates tacit objective meanings and, in doing so, may be even more efficient than the rational way – because it turns objectivity into something complemented by self-sensitivity, it makes the hidden true become susceptible to being conscious or, at least, to being fixed.

The drawing that aims to establish the analogy between objectivities

An empirical analogical drawing that aims at realistic representation is an objectifying translation of what we capture about concrete forms and can't avoid the influence of different sensitivities, such as the body's sensitivity, sensations, emotions, affections, and the aesthetic. It is a process of metamorphosing sensible data into their objectification through shapes, so that representation establishes a biunivocal relationship between objectivities – that is, the information of sensible perception and its corresponding sensible representation. Its success will be objectively proven according to a dichotomous rational right/wrong cleavage at the level of the degree of analogy: representation/referent of representation. Focusing on cases of literal, monosemic, realistic, denotative, or logical-deductive drawing, we can include the following: the mimicry of a drawing from sight; the logical-deductive reasoning in a drawing in descriptive geometry; the sketch of an architect or drawer; a scientific illustration, etc. These cases will be as good as the degree of efficiency in communicating an objective thought. This, provided that an objective and manifest reading is guaranteed, with which the right/wrong dichotomy can be assessed in a universal scope. That is, the rigor of the information's objectivity, with as little subjective influence as possible. It should be noted that this is why the efficiency of the metamorphosis of a latent thought depends on its concrete implementation, on becoming it “a real object” – that's why it must be objective.

The objective of an analogical drawing points to the denotative character of the Theory of Similarity, since the purpose of this image is to identify itself with a referent. Here, the competence of representation presupposes that something literally recognizable is evident, in which everything has an (inherent) rationally intelligible order and from which there should be no deviations; otherwise, the representation will cease to be recognizable or certain. This approach emphasizes objective thinking, where emotions take a back seat.^v In it, greater importance is given to deliberate thought, from the perspective of a mimicry of representation, evaluated by the right/wrong dichotomy regarding the relationship to objectivity. In this situation, one includes drawing based on direct observation, which requires learning that connects the skills of analog representation to denotative thinking ordered by a rational process. But we must underline that this type of drawing, although it depends on objective validation, is based on an empirical intuition (supported by the subjectivism of perception and sensibility) and on an intuitive rationality (in the processes of cognition, guaranteeing a specific objective logical-deductive order). In sum, this drawing is based on an empirical intuition, grounded

“Often, it is not the intellectual understanding of a new idea that hits us, but the emotional power of the relationship we have with it. Mapping, whether in concepts, people, or places, always has value attached, and a new location on our map may prove exciting and unsettling before we even begin to appreciate its significance” (Thomson, 2021, p. 77).

^{iv} “It is possible that drawing a face or a figure is an acceptable way to overcome shyness about conveying emotions – a piece of graphic ‘face work’ in a double sense. Drawing under circumstances becomes an ‘off-record’ method of communication (Brown and Levinson, 1978), a way of expressing something the receiver can choose to accept or ignore, and the drawer can discount, if necessary, a sort of graphic ‘throw-away line’” (Sommers, 1984, p. 243).

in direct experience of the outside, and is related to a rational intuition, whose goal is the establishment of relations of similarity, causality, etc. But in any circumstances, the objective representation procedural success is enhanced by the influence of subjectivity, with expressive development – since it is a mental representation; occurs in an abstractive experience of (visual) language; but it is always exteriorized depending on the body and its sensibilities.

Regarding the abstract issue, geometric drawings (for instance, in descriptive geometry) establish an analogy between the representation of a form and its “a priori” geometric ratios. Although this type of drawing is determined by rationalism and rigorous logical relations, it also depends on intuitive reasoning because of its inherently visual nature, not on expressive intuition. Nevertheless, unlike empirical drawing (which relies on perceptual measurement), it is indelibly linked to reasoning and to tool-driven geometric traces. Geometric drawing, therefore, presupposes a possible “rational intuition,” or rather, the metamorphosis of the rationality of an intuitive thought into a scientific validation – conducted by procedural thought (also of an intuitive nature, because it is immanently both practical and visual) of geometric traces, supported by artificial tools. In addition, this type of drawing – since the procedural thought of geometric traces is also intuitive (because it is immanently both practical and visual) – is developed through the special ability to “skillfully handle long chains of reasoning”.² It has a significant influence on intuition, because “sometimes intuition comes first and then one must really make efforts to work out the details and the solution; other times, the careful execution of the steps really suggests the solution; less often, intuition and discipline arrive at the same time or work together”.² In this case, it is essential to bear in mind that a rational intuition, at the level of reasoning ability, in addition to the ability to memorize the stages of a reasoning chain referred to by Henri Poincaré,² requires, according to the same author, the ability to recognize the nature of the connections between propositions that allow it. In addition, it produces creative and intuitive reasoning: the intuitive metamorphosis of reasoning into forms. So, it does not align with the subjective influence of body sensibility and perception at the level of empiricism of representation, as those factors would undermine its logical-deductive validity.

Then, our focus is on empirical drawing because it allows the author to take a nearly holistic approach, even when it is used to create functional forms (with a raised hand), and even to think about and through geometric forms. Moreover, in the empirical approach, the hierarchy of external rules can, albeit with limits, be permeable and transformed by the sense of a specific internal hierarchy, that is, the criteria of aesthetic judgment, or even poetry, of the architect or designer, i.e., the expressive way of thinking, i.e., a sensitive means of representing our thoughts. This possibility arises if the manifestation or expression of operative visual thinking (based on external variables) is influenced by the author’s internal variables of subjectivity – such as sensory sensibility and aesthetic sensitivity – that provide both a human experience in the creation of functionality and construction, and a range of consciousness and self-consciousness.

Analog expressive drawing through the balance between subjectivity and objectivity

Analog representation is the effect of thought in which one seeks to describe an existing element (that is not witnessed at a given moment or in front of us). It is a denotative and objective process. Denotative and objective drawings explicitly correspond to information about the object of reference, respectively, in terms of meaning and shape.

Regarding objectivity, a drawing can be more or less realistic, imaginative, literal, expressive, figurative, or abstract, depending on

its degree. It presupposes an intention to clarify the shapes of univocal and biunivocal correspondence, as well as the intelligibility of the analogical relationship between the representation and its referent. Regarding denotation, in contrast to the connotations of poetics and interpretation, it is associated with the intention to establish a univocal or biunivocal correspondence of meaning. In an analogical drawing, the author aims to achieve a denotative correspondence between his representation and a certain reference.

In an analogical representation, the author, since he must obey the exterior referent (even if it is in the form of memory), needs to be more rational, as happens, for instance, in a scientific illustration. Such an orientation tends to distance the author from what particularizes his own way of feeling, that is, from his subjectivity in approaching the process of representation and his free expression. However, as it is an empirical experience, the author is free to be sensitized by the affections the expression arouses, if he is able to sensitize the rational representation of his formal thinking. That freedom requires some distance from extreme mimicry (i.e., from the external power of the objective world, the external reality) and some permeability to the subjectivity of sensibility (i.e., to the internal power of the internal world, the internal reality). Yet we must also be aware that a drawing intended to be (objectively) faithful to reality (as it is or was directly perceived) can be linked to a hidden, subjective motivation – for instance, when the author preserves realism, but changes the original context, thereby conferring a connotative meaning on the element he has represented.

Therefore, expressive thinking through drawing activates a dialogue between internal and external worlds by sensitively exploring the metamorphosis from objective reality to a subjectivized new reality, and may awaken connotative meanings, those that reflect our inner affections, desires, will, and fears. This nourishment, arising from the affections and the internal rebalancing of subjective needs, occurs not only in symbolic (or the reinvention of forms with connotative meanings) or aesthetic thinking (about shapes), but also in the graphic process, when rationality is combined with sensitivity, that is, when formal thinking develops through expressive analogical drawing.

From another perspective, in the phenomenon of the exteriorization of drawing, the rationality of thought metamorphoses into a process of sensitive thought and knowledge. That’s why, rather than emphasizing the opposition between realistic and unrealistic drawing concepts, it will be useful to attend to drawings that are hybrids in an objective-subjective symbiosis: expressive drawings, which allow us to express our thoughts and have greater legitimacy in the arts but also utility in architecture and design studies.

In the specific case of study drawings for something that will serve a function in concrete reality, the process of objective ordering requires that a mental idea be metamorphosed into form, so that representation cannot be subordinated to subjective disorder, yet it cannot be absolutely separated from it. Thus, “expressive analog drawing” is a means by which we seek a balance between objectivity and subjectivity to improve thinking, which is nourished by feelings. It should be noted that in the specific case of architecture (or other fields of functional and aesthetic forms creation), as Ana Leonor Madeira Rodrigues,³ says, “when carrying out the various drawings that will participate in the construction of the future architectural work [...] it orders, disorders and reorders, to the extent that it feels and understands necessary, regardless of any hierarchies.” Those steps where disorder occurs mean that we allow subjective feelings to play a crucial role in the process, disrupting the stable order so

that it is possible to restart the search for a new order. Our power of thinking will be increased if, in that reordering, we join sensitivity and reasoning, i.e., we develop expressive thinking that is both affective, emotional, and aesthetic. However, the drawing, as a means of creating architecture or design, must have denotative evidence, under penalty of, depending on the degree of connotation, preventing the pursuit of the idealized form or interfering with the efficiency of its function. That's to say, in the production of drawings that aim to objectify forms with a specific functionality, aesthetic expression is at the mercy of thought as a mechanism for solving rational, logical-deductive problems. In such situations, in the face of the emergence of emotions, the need for a balance between form and function arises, thereby conditioning the total freedom of expression.

Despite what has just been exposed, it should be noted that any empirical drawing, whether expressive or simply susceptible to the kinesthetic effect of its elaboration, inevitably reflects the author's subjectivity and sensibility. Whichever type of empirical drawing (including geometrical shapes) is considered, the object of thought, understanding, and perception results from the communication between self and not-Self, through which we distinguish our identity from others. It is always a subjective experience because it arises from our body, or, better, from our body-mind system, the source of both sensibility and rationality. In this way, expressive thinking gives way to a metamorphosis grounded in a synergistic relationship among memory, sensation, affect, and the shapes of thinking, reasoning, and representation.

The connotation and its subliminal interpretation basis

In the context of art, which is inherently subjective and sensitive (rather than literally objective or rational), we will reflect on drawing, including its possible connotations and its expressive approach. In addition, visual art creation can be driven by a free organization around idea-forms, which carry implicit conceptualization, iconology, symbolism, and metaphor when real things are represented in imaginary scenarios, i.e., in contexts that are different and unreal. We can explore content arising from the informality of subjectivity, irrationality, and unconsciousness – in both the author's and the receiver's experiences. In addition, in art creation, there is the freedom to play with both concrete reality/objectivities and unreality/subjectivities.

So, let us underscore that in artistic creation, the purpose converges not on objective and external validity, but on subjective validity, that is, on the essence of the artist's inner reality, his sensitivity – a sensitive reality through which the subjective phenomenon of consciousness occurs. Hence, for representation to convert the mental (more or less conscious) and subjective (more or less unconscious) into the material (more or less formal) and objective (more or less concrete), the use of subjective (sensible/sensitive) experience is crucial. It allows connecting the denotation of reality (literal form) with the connotation of the unreal (metaphorical content), as well as connecting the external world with the internal world. With this, the artist has the freedom to interpret himself through an ambiguous representation that allows him to adjust inner reality to the external world, and vice versa, in a dialectic. In this way, ambiguous or unknown inner reality metamorphoses into a new external reality, perhaps even more idiosyncratic. Even so, we must note that, to avoid chaos, this associative flow requires a representation to which ideas are linked.

Regarding the oneiric or poetic (and somewhat philosophic) meanings, art relies on tacit and latent meanings and is therefore

susceptible to subliminal interpretations, connotations, and free association of ideas. Although indirectly suggested, latent meanings can be better understood, more conscientious, more elaborated, and more harmonious when they take form in an organic representation, because they gain organization in their relationships. Anyway, art creation arises from both emergence and the self's immersion in the unconscious. To reconcile the impulse of the profound unconscious, rationality, and the flow of consciousness, it will be helpful to free sensitivity, whether through expression or metaphorical and symbolic free association, thereby adjusting exterior reality to interior reality (the unconscious and the conscious).^{vi} In other words, it is expected that literal thoughts become ambiguous thoughts, and then have potential connotations; that is, making them not logically rational is the way to avoid being subjugated to censorship and the critical judgment of reality, and thus to achieve real free creation.

In the exploration of creativity based on poetic imagery – to a deeper connection between consciousness and the unconscious, and between thought and feeling –, the process of creation has to be developed through the free association of ideas, by linking metaphoric and symbolic meanings; that's to say, based on unconscious senses, free from the rational mechanisms of evaluation and censure. Even though this deep communication doesn't need an objective order to be exteriorized, it requires a representation in which free meaning, as Copón says, the "symbolon pretends to reunify what is diffuse, find the unity of what is dispersed through figures".⁴ But, as we are arguing, this union will be eased if the new organization flows in free-associative thinking, in which (our) diffuse and pre-existing reality (the self-biography, the consciousness, and the unconscious) is metamorphosed into new realities, new and sensitive ideas, and an organization that can express our sensitive thinking. In one word, we are speaking about the experience of reunifying what rationality separates through something that is neither absolute subjectivity nor objectivity, but both joined in the metaphor and symbol. These forms are the "places" where the contents of our inner reality find expression in the external reality, with an original organization. Actually, that new reality is a kind of metaphor of our real, profound, and perhaps the part of ourselves that is never absolutely conscious.

Imagery poetry, as an artistic theme (including drawing), is common in exploring metaphors and makes it possible for the unconscious to be transformed into representations – symbolic and metaphorical representations. Informality is converted into tangible forms at the perceptible, sensible, and conscious levels – but its profound and real meaning remains hidden; what emerges is the feeling it carries. When this happens, the faculty of imagination in visual art – in the realm of the imaginary and the unreal – allows for bridges that reconnect external and internal forces. Moreover, we underline that the imaginary is eminently real in its sensible inner sources, and these are crucial to our compatibility with the objectivity of the external reality with which we relate. And the opposite also happens: to increase and improve imagination and the imaginary, we need experience in objective, rational, physical, and material reality. In one word, we need to join subjectivity to objectivity and sensitivity to rationality. Drawing, as another means of visual art representation, allows exploration of poetic and oneiric meanings (or another

^{vi} "Of course, we can never be sure what the unconscious motives are, and whether they are not just another configuration of a given place. Moreover, it should not be assumed that there is one single interpretation. You can look at a place, just like a dream, from many perspectives, each of which will be equally real. However, it is definitely worth not stopping at the conscious layer but looking for unconscious meanings. In this, we shall be guided as always by our feelings and associations" (Tomasz Drzazgowski, in Bielińska & Lipszyc, 2024, p. 170)

approach) and sensitivity to aesthetics; however, as highlighted here, it also encompasses other sensitivities, such as the sensory (and the haptic). Drawing also joins subjectivity and objectivity in a way that rationality manifests intuitively, in both process and meaning, through the subliminal exteriorization of sensitive thoughts. That's why we argue that, since the drawing process encompasses physical, psychic, (probably) significant, and aesthetic aspects of visual representation, it becomes a more holistic experience.^{vii}

Given these assumptions, we would say that the purpose of art may be to convey connotative and subliminal content, to metamorphose objectivities into subjectivities, or both. Nevertheless, it should be noted that in artistic creation there is not necessarily an exclusion of intelligibility, or at least some sort of formal order, insofar as the objectivity of forms can serve as the vehicle for the subjectivity of their meanings through an organized way of thinking. In this view, the meaning of artistic representation grows through the metamorphosis of shapes, in which latent images become explicit, the mental becomes perceptible, and the (rational) objectivity of formal thought takes the form of a sensitization.^{viii}

In a word, the feeling-idea turns its ethereal potential into a shape-idea as it is developed with a free-growing organization into a form. But if it retains the original sensitive influence, the process of expressing a sensitive formal thinking happens.

In conclusion, within a subliminal framework of communication, expression, and interpretation, it is crucial to consider metaphors and symbolic meanings. Therefore, when approaching drawing as expression, we must include poetic imagery alongside conceptual and expressive representations. This is justified by the idea that imagery's unreality is the ideal means of total free thinking, immersing oneself in the unconscious, where ideas flow without restrictions, overcoming reality's limitations, such as rationality, materiality, and facts. Thus, the immaterial internal reality opens the way to new connections among unconscious contents and the consciousness of reality, i.e., the concrete and physical forms. These new connections constitute the connotative meanings through subliminal interpretation. This is particularly fruitful in the artistic domain and, in the nuclear field developed here, in artistic drawing; and since so many parts of our being are awakened by the intrinsic relationship between mind and body, from which all kinds of sensations arise, we would argue that it offers the best conditions for a whole experience: the possibility of feeling thinking as a process of ordering our life in a sensitive way.

Conclusion

^{vii}Since the expressivity and subjectivity become the representation far from the objectivity, we may evoke what Griselda Pollock (in Chorpenning & Fortnum, p. 103), says about Taylor Patten: "Taylor Patten's formal process and its gestures set in motion a phenomenally limitless but directed process of other marks, all bonded in an unpredictable creative relativity that brings forth no fixed form but creates its effect of space, there on the paper or canvas. [...] Drawing is an event that we are invited to witness on paper or canvas, and imaginatively/protectively to enter. What is happening in the drawing is not, therefore, a drawing of something, but drawing as moments, moments in time and moments of becoming as drawing by means of its work with line as the Ur-stroke of art making and not as the beginning of delineation."

^{viii}"But the images that stand for the organism constitute a particular class. They originate in the body's interior and represent aspects of the body in action. They have a special status and a special achievement: they are felt, spontaneously and naturally, from get-go, prior to any other operation involved in the building of consciousness. They are felt images of the body, primordial bodily feelings, the primitives of all other feelings, including feelings of emotions" (Damásio, 2010, p. 188).

In this reflection, we consider that the artist does not submit to pre-existing objective knowledge; the artist experiences this knowledge by metamorphosing it into an unprecedented existence nourished by the sensible phenomenon of (self) representation. In the art creative experience, because of its sublimity, one is not aware of the path – or at least of the reasons for the path – that has been taken, nor of the denotation of the meanings underlying the forms. It is about interpreting the connotative meanings, those that are somewhat unconscious, shaped by our sensitive reality.

Fundamentally, the artist seeks acceptance from himself, establishing a subliminal metamorphosis between his interiority and the exteriority that represents him – so that others can identify with the artist not by what his work denotes, but by what the respective interpretation connotes. It is in this contagion between the author-work and the work-receiver-author that, in a sensitive experience, the subject immerses himself in a metamorphosis of his (self) consciousness. That's why we consider artists to be interpreters of pre-existing reality, leading this interpretation not to derealization but to transubstantiation, that is, to the metamorphosis of the subjective and ethereal substance of the imaginary into the perceptible and conscientious substance of its representation, with some kind of order and organization, such as a metaphorical meaning of a being that gets alive. That transubstantiation means the sensitivity gains a shape, and this gaining is a kind of thought that expresses the originality of its source energy.

An empirical drawing, even if it is mimetic – in which there must be an analogy between the objective realities of reference and representation – is an indelible means of thinking, influenced by sensitivity in the exteriorization of energy and by an organization – the form that one wishes to objectify in a representation. In any empirical drawing, the process of elaboration depends on psychomotor skills and an inherent sensitivity that transcends any mechanistic predeterminism, because it expresses a phenomenon of consciousness. Even if the result is not objective, the drawer gains a somewhat broader awareness. In that case, even mimetic drawing, through external-world consciousness work, may allow us to develop our self-awareness by awakening the unconscious's invisibility and the contents attached to the emotions that emerge, and thus knowing the unknown inner parts of ourselves. Thus, it is important to note that even when the goal is greater objectivity or denotation, what matters more is awareness (of external reality, whether of its shape or its meaning); at the same time, we gain a wide self-consciousness.

Thus, above all, artistic drawing, in its condition as subjective experience, should be understood as something beyond the literalness of communication or objective validation, as in the case of hyperrealism or technical virtuosity. That is, it is not a matter of re-presenting a reality, but of sensitizing the presentation by making it original. Nor is it a question of recreating a reality characterized by playful and superficial representation. Art is not about recreation either, as in handicrafts. Art is always an original creation, so that the processes of signification – or, at least, where the senses take shape – are not reproduced but rather serve as a means of seeking immersion in the depths of the essence of the Human Being. That is, not the reproduction of signification, but its ever-new metamorphosis.

In a word, the artist enriches his experience if he is able to cause an uncanny between the knowledge whose denotation is objectified (within a consensual, uniform understanding) and self-knowledge (whose connotation is subjectivized by his own sensitivity). This is possible when a poetic interpretation of the external world is based on the inner (and subjective) world. The consensus about the artistic

result takes place on the subliminal plane of the universality of human sensibility. That's why an artist does not seek the objective validation of what his artwork denotes rationally. And that's why he needn't communicate knowledge; rather, he wishes to express self-knowledge that comes from the dialectic among rationality, objectivity, irrationality, sensibility, sensitivity, and subjectivity. The artist develops his search not as introspection, but rather as an exteriorization of what he had interiorized about how the external world awakens his internal world. That exteriorization, which joins thinking and feeling and puts consciousness and the unconscious in dialogue, is the way to potentiate the experience that contributes to our wide self-consciousness, our true growth as human beings.⁵⁻²²

Acknowledgements

None.

Conflict of interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

Funding

None.

References

1. Tversky B. *Mind in motion: how action shapes thought*. Basic Books; 2019.
2. Gardner H. *Frames of mind: the theory of multiple intelligences*. Artmed; 2002.
3. Rodrigues ALMM. *The drawing: the order of architectonic thinking*. Estampa; 2000.
4. Molina JGG, coord. *The lessons of drawing*. Cátedra; 2003.
5. Bielińska A, Lipszyc A, eds. *Space in psychoanalysis, psychoanalysis in space*. Routledge; 2024.
6. Carroll N. *Philosophy of Art: a contemporary introduction*. Texto & Grafia; 2010.
7. Chorpenning K, Fortnum R, eds. *A companion to contemporary drawing*. John Wiley & Sons; 2020.
8. Damasio A. *Self comes to mind: constructing the conscious brain*. William Heinemann; 2010.
9. Eco U. *Segno*. 70 Press; 1990.
10. Elkins J. *The object stares back: on the nature of seeing*. Harcourt; 1998.
11. Gombrich EH, Hochberg J, Black M. *Art, perception, and reality*. Paidós; 1973.
12. Hernández F. *Visual culture: educative change and project of work*. Artmed; 2000.
13. Jacobson MD, ed. *the self and the object world*. International Universities Press; 1964.
14. Kierkegaard S. *Post-scriptum final non-scientifique aux miettes philosophiques: composition mimico-pathétique-dialectique, apportextis-tentiel, par Johannes Climacus*. Gallimard; 1949.
15. Mumford L. *Art and Technics*. 70 Press; 2001.
16. Pino CC del. *Theory of the Sentiments*. Fim de Século; 2003.
17. Roudinesco E, Plon M. *Dictionary of Psychoanalysis*. Jorge Zahar; 1998.
18. Silva FG da. Subjectivity, individuality, personality, and identity: conceptions from historic and cultural psychology. *Psicologia da Educação*. 2009;28:169-195.
19. van Sommers P. *Drawing and cognition: descriptive and experimental studies of graphic production process*. Cambridge University Press; 2009.
20. Thomson M. *Home: a philosophy of personal space*. Brimstone Press; 2021.
21. Tuan YF. *Space and place: the perspective of experience*. University of Minnesota Press; 1977.
22. Zimmerman DE. *Contemporary vocabulary of psychoanalysis*. Artmed; 2001.