

## Abstract for Thesis: Drawing as coming to know: how is it that I know I made sense of what I do?

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This thesis is my experiential account as a drawing practitioner of investigating the relationship between drawing and thinking, and what it is that I have come to know *by* drawing but could not previously make explicit to myself or others. By considering thinking as process, my research suggests that experientially engaging in the practice of drawing invokes an inherent reflexive mode of thinking in us, which makes visible to us how we make sense of what we do. This depends on *thinking as doing*, which makes us consider what form knowledge in activity might take.

Prompted by my practitioner's hunch that thinking involving body and mind occurs as drawing takes place, an initial theoretical investigation reveals how the relationship has been accounted for by others and highlights the need to consider *drawing as process*. Inspired by Varela's ideas that emergent thinking arising through complex and recursive patterns between an individual and her environment, and is presentable in action and accessible through experience (Varela et al. 1991), the focus of my investigation becomes the evolution of the practitioner rather than the evolution of the drawing.

Subsequent methodological phases of research investigate enactive thinking (where thinking is the relations and interactions between processes) through studio practice. Although the experiential accounts of other drawing practitioners in texts (Milner 1971 and Franck 1993), and interviews (Talbot and Zwink) provide evidence of enactive thinking, only by investigating issues *by* drawing, have I been able to make visible emergent aspects of thinking as I draw.

The method of *enactive copying* enables me to show what I know about another's drawing because re-enacting a drawing reveals what that artist was *doing* rather than what he was conceptualising. Investigating whether I could inhabit Richard Talbot's thinking process by re-enacting his *Glass* drawing allowed me to identify the processes involved in creating his drawing. Becoming consciously aware of what these entailed, I began to see what it was that I knew in my own work, not from theorising about what I could see, but from understanding what I physically knew. I can now take what I know *as a process* back into my own drawing practice, theorising from my awareness of this, that the experience of making a drawing makes visible what are essentially tacit processes in activity through our ability to make sense of what we do.

Although drawing is the focus of this enquiry, my methodology is an example of how creative thinking can be investigated through activity in a broader context. The development of this might lie in the teaching of drawing as a means of self-reflective discovery in diverse disciplines.