



9. Looking and making visible

Gisela Bengtsson

Abstract Drawing has been seen as the most intellectual in character among the forms of art, and croquis drawing has been taught within an academic and scientific framework, as theoretical knowledge about the human body was considered necessary to become a master of depiction. Knowledge of this kind may nevertheless become a hindrance when trying to capture the appearance of a model in a drawing: to be able to rely on eye and hand, suppressing knowledge may be required. I discuss this paradox with regard to croquis drawing and the conception of *seeing* in Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*.

Keywords mimesis | croquis | human body | knowledge | Wittgenstein

1. INTRODUCTION

A thin line is used in drawing to bring out form, volume, and movement when the aim is to depict the human body. Color is used in the art of painting to communicate a sense of liveliness, skin, and volume when the human body is depicted, and a sculpture has form and volume in itself. The line that marks the contours of a body seems almost like the negation of a body, it has been suggested, but may nevertheless succeed in making the living body, which is seen by the artist, visible in a sketch. For reasons of this kind, drawing has been conceived as primarily directed at the intellect and as spiritual in character, in contrast to painting and sculpture that have been described as directed at our senses.¹ Further light is shed on this difference if we consider the central place that the depiction of the human body has had in the education of artists at the art academies in Europe since the Middle Ages up until the late twentieth century. Theoretical education in anatomy,

1 Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, Bd. 5, *Gesammelte Schriften / Akademieausgabe* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1963), § 14; Jacques Darrilat, "Kant et l'esthétique du dessin," *Revue philosophique de la France et de l'étranger*, 132, no. 2 (2007); Roland Barthes, "Cy Twombly ou 'Non multa sed multum,'" in *Catalogue raisonné des oeuvres sur papier de Cy Twombly Vol. 6 1973–1976*, ed. Yvon Lambert (Milan: Ed. Multhipla, 1979); see also Plato on the art of painting in Plato, *The Republic: II, Books VI–X*, the Loeb Classical Library, vol. 276 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), bk. X.

the proportions of the human body, light, surfaces, shadows, movement, etc., were central elements of the artist's training towards mastering depiction. Practicing drawing by way of life studies was at the core of the art student's training that took place within an academic and scientific framework.² When we consider the surrounding of life drawing it seems to support the conception of this art form as intellectual in character. However, it is interesting to observe that knowledge of the human body also may represent a hindrance for the draftsman when she aims to depict a model. Her knowledge may function like a veil that hinders grasping the appearance of the model, as an obstacle that she wants to avoid for the sake of looking. A paradox seems to arise from the fact that knowledge about the human body is required to master depiction, but this knowledge creates difficulties when we try to make visible in a drawing that which we know well and are thoroughly familiar with – the human body.

In the following, I will try to shed light on this paradox by focusing on the practice of croquis drawing, seen in relation to a philosophical investigation, and move towards dissolving it. I will use my perspective as a person who engages in croquis drawing and my perspective as a philosopher to bring out different aspects of this practice. More specifically, I will discuss the character of the task in croquis drawing in connection with two different conceptions of *mimesis*: one that places emphasis on depiction as copying or registration of what is seen and another that highlights depiction as representation. What is brought to the fore in these sections will be closely related to two different elements in the process of croquis drawing that will be discussed in Section 4. My focus will then be on a remark by Wittgenstein where he puts forth the instruction: "Don't think, but look!"³ I suggest an interpretation of the conception of *seeing* in this remark and make a comparison between a philosophical investigation and the difficulties that adhere to looking and seeing in the case of croquis drawing. With reference to parallels and distinctions that have been brought out in the previous sections, I aim to dissolve the appearance of paradox formulated above. In the final section, reconnecting with questions that concern the aim in croquis drawing, I discuss what it means to capture the essential in a drawing. In doing this, I will also consider two different conceptions of *personal expression*.

2 Lena Holger, ed. *Kroppen: konst och vetenskap* (Stockholm: Nationalmuseum, 2005).

3 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations / Philosophische Untersuchungen*, ed. Peter M. S. Hacker and Joachim Schulte, rev. 4th ed. (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009).

2. THE PRACTICE OF CROQUIS DRAWING

I started taking courses in croquis drawing in high school and have continued to do so since then. Being able to capture, in a drawing, the lines that are formed when someone is sitting down, walking, or holding a certain position has for me always stood out as something worth striving for. The beauty of the angles formed when arms are crossed or when a cheek rests in the palm of a hand took me to croquis: I wanted to make what I see visible in drawings. The basic structure of a course in croquis drawing is optimal for the pursuit of this goal: a master of drawing guides and instructs both students and a model at a croquis session. Surrounded by students who stand at their easels, the model changes his or her pose at certain intervals. In the first part of the session, the change of pose comes after two to three minutes, according to the teacher's guidance. Towards the end, the model will hold a pose for five minutes or longer. The length of the poses varies in different contexts: A long pose may last for seven minutes or two hours (with breaks), but at art academies in the nineteenth century, for example, a long pose could last for up to three weeks (with breaks), allowing students to perfect their drawings.⁴ The word "croquis," however, is commonly used when speaking of sketches that are made very quickly as there are frequent shifts of poses, and it is primarily in this sense that I will use the word here.

3. THE TASK AND GOAL OF CROQUIS DRAWING

If we look at the etymology of the word croquis to elucidate the relation between this practice and others, we soon find that "croquer" is an onomatopoeic word, that reflects a dry and cracking noise, such as when a pen is used on paper.⁵ The *Petit Robert* tells us that "croquer" means painting, sketching, or drawing speedily, using a few lines to capture something *spot on* (a place, a personality), and adds "from analogy; to take note of, indicate quickly, the essentials. To sketch a personality in a book."⁶ The entry ends by pointing to a use of "croquer" in the sense of making a caricature drawing and to an idiom used to express that someone lends herself to croquis drawing. A Swedish source makes frequent use of the words "ethereal" and "speedily" in explanations of the verb "krokera" and adds that in

4 Torsten Weimarck, *Akademi och anatomi* (Stockholm: Brutus Östling, 1996).

5 Nicolas Le Roux, *La langue française*, s. v. "croquer," last modified October 3, 2022, <https://www.lalanguefrancaise.com/dictionnaire/definition/croquer>.

6 Paul Robert, Alain Rey, and Josette Rey-Debove, *Le petit Robert 1: dictionnaire alphabétique et analogique de la langue française*, nouv. éd. rev., corr. et mise à jour en 1990 (Paris: Le Robert, 1990), s. v. "croquer."

the nineteenth century, the word “kroki” was used to speak of sketches of landscapes made hastily in the field – in a manner similar to how we take snapshots of the places we visit. A remark from 1795 by the poet, painter, writer, and architect Ehrensvärd indicates a use of the word within different forms of art, as he expresses a wish to write in the same way as one draws in croquis.⁷ The emphasis on speed in the Swedish dictionary is to the point since the brief time given for each sketch in a croquis session with short poses places different demands on the draftsman than those that hold during a long pose. When the time given for each sketch is very brief (say two minutes), the use of an eraser to make changes and improvements is not only meaningless because of the lack of time, but represents a conflict with the very nature of the task: It is to LOOK and to CAPTURE what is seen swiftly and unhesitatingly – using for example a soft pen or a piece of charcoal on paper. This requires certainty in movements and an immediate cooperation between eye and hand. The task could also be described by saying that I must depict what I see, exactly the way it appears before my eyes, at that moment. Interpreting what is seen within a specific genre of drawing or painting or expressing the atmosphere in the studio in a drawing is not part of the task in croquis.

Now, art is often understood as an area for personal expression, but one could say that the space for personal expression is limited in the practice of croquis in the following sense: If I deviate in what I draw from how the task is generally understood, one will no longer say that I engage in croquis drawing. So, one might want to say that croquis drawing stands out from many other art forms in that there is a specific, delimited aim, and those who engage in the practice strive towards it. Could we then simply conclude that it is at the core of the practice of croquis that depictions of the model are to be produced in the form of drawings? Well, let's look at the different ways of describing the task and the goal strived for in croquis drawing:

1. To look and to capture what is seen swiftly and unhesitatingly using a pen on paper and to rely on the cooperation between hand and eye.
2. To depict, i.e., to imitate or copy, what is seen exactly the way it appears to me (to register, record, or reproduce what I see in a drawing).
3. To make a drawing which is a reflection of what I see when looking at the model – to transfer my visual impression onto the paper, so that the form of my drawing corresponds with the shape of the model, as I see it.
4. To make a representation of the model in the form of a drawing.

7 Svenska Akademiens ordbok, Spalt K 2877 band 15, 1938, s. v. “kroki” (Stockholm: Svenska akademien, 2022), <https://www.saob.se/artikel/?seek=kroki&pz=1>.

5. To capture the model as a representative of the human form in a drawing.
6. To capture the being, form, or essence of the person who holds a certain pose before my eyes.

In the first description, the emphasis is on using a focused and trained form of seeing – in combination with reliance on the cooperation of hand and eye. The second and third descriptions agree with the first, but in the latter ones, depiction becomes a matter of copying the visual impression in the form of a drawing, of reproducing or recording the visual impression, so to speak. These ways of describing the practice of croquis bring Plato's conception of *mimesis* to mind, i.e., depiction in art seen as an imitation of a copy of what is real (and a conception of *reality* as something we come to know by way of reason, not the senses). Looking at croquis drawing in this manner stresses the limited space for personal expression. This conception of *croquis drawing* also places perception at the center and portrays the process of drawing as an almost slave-like form of copying rather than as an artistic effort. The fourth and fifth descriptions of the task presented to a draftsman in a croquis session rather correspond to the Aristotelian conception of *mimesis*; depiction of the model becomes representation, it is directed at making a form visible in the drawing, namely, the model as a representative of the human form. According to this way of looking at it, the artist is not merely to copy what is seen but to capture what is representative of the human form in the drawing. The fourth and fifth descriptions are slightly different expressions of the same conception of *representational art*. In the sixth description, the task is seen as making a representation of the unique form of the person who stands before the artist. This is an interpretation of the task which is compatible with the Aristotelian conception of *mimesis*, but it need not be tied to that conception. If we enquire about the status of croquis as an art form, it seems that the descriptions point in different directions. Bearing the different understandings of the task in mind, we will now take a closer look at how the process of drawing moves forward during a croquis session.

4. TWO ASPECTS OF THE PROCESS OF DRAWING

One aspect of croquis drawing is to focus on what is seen and to rely on the cooperation between hand and eye to capture what is seen onto the paper, but another, equally important aspect is the following: during the croquis session, I must take a step back to look at my drawing as a whole and ask: does this look like a human being – a person? Do human beings stand or sit like that? Does it look right? This element of the process of drawing has the form of a comparison with a standard

of some sort – I consult my knowledge of human beings, of human anatomy, and my knowledge qua human being with a human body. Croquis drawing involves the two elements that I have described. The first means reliance on seeing, in combination with trust in the cooperation between hand and eye. The second element means reflection and evaluation of whether the drawing as a whole is right.⁸ Switching between them comes naturally (if there is time to do so). When it comes to the descriptions of the task in croquis that we have looked at, it could be said that the descriptions agreeing with Plato's conception of *mimesis*⁹ correspond to the first element of the process of drawing, while the descriptions expressing an Aristotelian conception of *mimesis*¹⁰ rather correspond to the second element of the process of drawing.

5. LOOKING WITHOUT THINKING

When I try to capture the stance of the model in a croquis drawing, the teacher will sometimes present criticism of my drawing, and I see that something is not right. The effort required to improve the drawing may be described as aiming to transfer what I see with my eyes, via the arm to the hand onto the paper – bypassing the brain, so to speak. Another way of putting it would be to say that I must turn off thoughts, or turn away from certain kinds of knowledge, to be able to rely exclusively on eye and hand. It is difficult to find an object of comparison for this experience, but certain techniques are used for the purpose of putting that which may hinder seeing and depicting out of play. The teacher may suggest, for instance, that those who are right-handed use the left hand when drawing. Drawings made with the non-dominant hand often have a certain bold and spontaneous character.

8 It is interesting to observe that in Wittgenstein's discussions of aesthetic judgements, he writes: "It is remarkable that in real life, when aesthetic judgments are made, aesthetic adjectives such as 'beautiful', 'fine', etc. play hardly any role at all. ... The words you use are more akin to 'right' and 'correct' (as these words are used in ordinary speech) than to 'beautiful' and 'lovely'." Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief*, ed. Cyril Barrett (Oxford: Blackwell, 1966), 3, § 8. See also *ibid.*, 13 ff. It should be noted that Wittgenstein does not focus on or discuss examples of depiction in art in these lectures.

9 See, e.g., Plato, *Sophist*, Loeb Classical Library, vol. 123 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 235c–236d, 267b–e; *Gorgias*, Loeb Classical Library, vol. 166 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), 463a–465a; Republic, bk. IX.

10 Aristotle, *Poetics*, Loeb Classical Library, vol. 199 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), ix, 1451b.

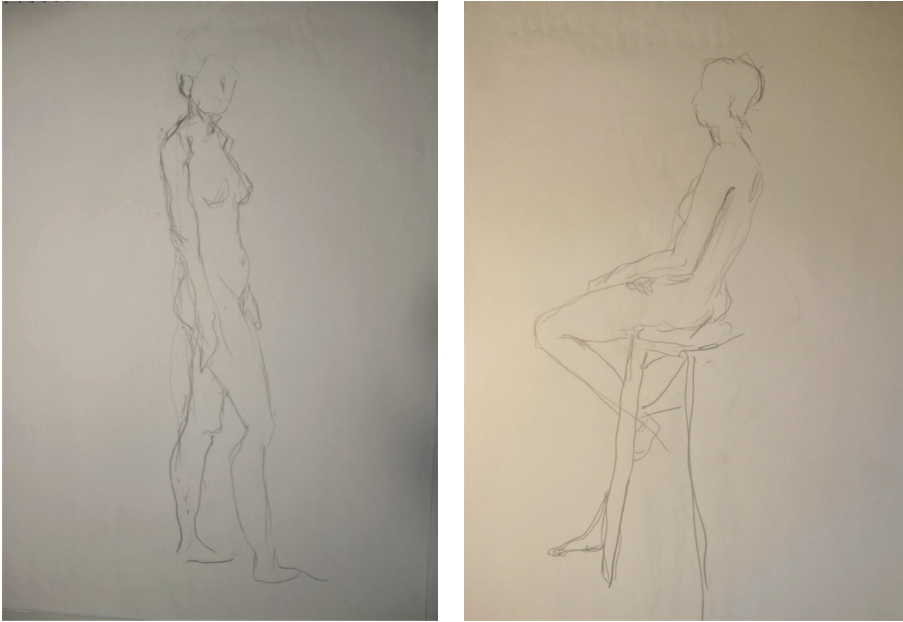


Figure 9.1. and Figure 9.2: Examples of croquis sketches drawn using the non-dominant hand, by author.

Other techniques, used for the same purpose, are not to aim at drawing the model, but instead the spaces in between parts of the model's body (between an arm and the torso, for example) or the spaces between the body of the model and an object in the room, such as a chair or an easel. Using techniques of this kind involves a distinct element of forcing oneself to disregard what one knows (or *knows that one sees*), to avoid habitual movements of the hand. These techniques bring out a different way of looking at the model which is transferred to the drawing. So, success in improving a sketch may require turning off certain kinds of knowledge and certain skills that have become second nature.

I would like to look at the effort of trying to improve a sketch in light of a remark in Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*, namely the often-quoted instruction, "Denk nicht, sondern schau!" in § 66. The remark comes at a point in this work when a series of examples of how language is used have been presented. A critical voice points out in § 65 that no answer has been given to the question of what is essential to language. In § 66, Wittgenstein responds by directing us to the way we speak of games. He writes:

Betrachte z. B. einmal die Vorgänge, die wir "Spiele" nennen. Ich meine Brettspiele, Kartenspiele, Ballspiele, Kampfspiele, u. s. w. Was ist allen diesen gemeinsam?—Sag nicht: "Es *muß* ihnen etwas gemeinsam sein, sonst hießen

sie nicht ‘Spiele’ – sondern *schau*, ob ihnen allen etwas gemeinsam ist.–Denn, wenn du sie anschaust, wirst du zwar nicht etwas sehen, was allen gemeinsam wäre, aber du wirst Ähnlichkeiten, Verwandtschaften, sehen, und zwar eine ganze Reihe. Wie gesagt: denk nicht, sondern schau! – Schau z. B. die Brettspiele an, mit ihren mannigfachen Verwandtschaften. Nun geh zu den Kartenspielen über: hier findest du viele Entsprechungen mit jener ersten Klasse, aber viele gemeinsame Züge verschwinden, andere treten auf. ... Schau, welche Rolle Geschick und Glück spielen. Und wie verschieden ist Geschick im Schachspiel und Geschick im Tennisspiel. Denk nun an die Reigenspiele ... Und so können wir durch die vielen, vielen anderen Gruppen von Spielen gehen. Ähnlichkeiten auftauchen und verschwinden sehen.

Und das Ergebnis dieser Betrachtung lautet nun: Wir sehen ein kompliziertes Netz von Ähnlichkeiten, die einander übergreifen und kreuzen. Ähnlichkeiten im Großen und Kleinen. [My underlining]

The English translation of the remark makes frequent use of the words “see” and “look” but blocks us from clearly perceiving how Wittgenstein puts different forms of seeing, looking, and thinking side by side. When we turn to the remark in German, we see, for instance, that § 66 begins with the invitation to look, “Betrachte,” soon followed by the imperative “Sag nicht ... sondern schau,” followed by the use of “anschauen,” “sehen,” and then the instruction “denk nicht, sondern schau!”¹¹ We see how different forms of seeing and looking are placed next to thinking. One might say that they all are part of “schauen” – a word that may not be translated as simply “looking” in general by rather as “looking closely” or perhaps “checking by way of looking” how things are. Towards the end, we find that our “Betrachtung” yields “sehen” as a result.¹²

The advice in § 66 is commonly understood as central to the anti-essentialism that takes different forms in the *Philosophical Investigations*. The opposition between thinking and looking, suggested by the words Wittgenstein uses, is often understood as prevailing between being guided by preconceptions and

11 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, § 66, shows us the complexity of our concept of *seeing* in relation to our concepts of *thinking* and *saying*. Wittgenstein also pursues this theme as part of his discussion of aspect seeing, and he speaks here of “half visual impression, half thought.” Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, PPF § 140.

12 Cf. Wittgenstein’s use of “schauen” here and von Wright’s reference to the ancient Greek conception of *theoria* when he uses the Swedish verb “skåda” to speak of a kind of looking which is guided by a wish to further understand and get an overview of phenomena in the world. See Georg Henrik von Wright, *Att förstå sin samtid: tanke och förkunnelse och andra försök: 1945–1994* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1994), 44.

dogmas in a philosophical investigation, as opposed to reminding ourselves of examples of our use of words in comparison with those doctrines. “Look” in the advice from § 66 is then understood as “examining,” “comparing,” and “reflecting on” the examples of our use of language in relation to something else (philosophical preconceptions and doctrines). Looking as in “look with your eyes,” i.e., as in perception, is suppressed or ignored in interpretations of this kind and the contrast between “thinking” and “looking,” implied in the advice from § 66, becomes indistinct and vague.¹³ It is also interesting to notice that reflecting, comparing, and examining something in relation to a norm or standard corresponds with the second element of croquis drawing: taking a step back to look at the drawing as whole, to see whether “it is right” while making use of (theoretical) knowledge.

In view of the different forms of looking and seeing that are presented in § 66 as part of “schauen,” which is said to result in “sehen,” one might perhaps take the opposition implied in the advice to be between reasoning and looking with the eyes.¹⁴ Wittgenstein is urging us, it seems, to forgo reasoning (thinking) and rely on perception, in that we are asked to notice that which is in front of us, namely, our use of language in different contexts. We are hence to rely on perception in that sense, but *seeing* in another sense is also in play here: In the *Philosophical Investigations* Wittgenstein, when offering different examples of language use, uses a mode of presentation than can be compared to the use of an internal perspective in literary figuration.¹⁵ The reader is placed inside a scene of the story, so to speak, and Wittgenstein gives us an internal perspective on, for instance, the language game in § 2 of this work. It is easy for us to see how the calls “slab,” “beam,” etc., are used by the builders A and B since the mode of presentation allows us to gain an overview of what goes on, and we almost want to lend B a hand, when A calls out for a stone. The language game is expanded in § 8 by “a,” “b,” “c,” etc., that function as number words. We immediately see that their use is different from the calls

13 See, for instance, Gordon P. Baker and Peter M. S. Hacker, *An Analytical Commentary on Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations*, Vol. 1 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983); and Robert J. Fogelin, *Taking Wittgenstein at His Word: A Textual Study* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), 47.

14 Cf. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, § 144. Here Wittgenstein discusses putting pictures in front of someone with the suggestion or order: “Look at this!” in connection with proofs in mathematics.

15 Cf. Beth Savickey, *Wittgenstein's Investigations: Awakening the Imagination* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2017), who suggests that Wittgenstein uses a dramatic form in the *Philosophical Investigations*, in line with for instance Plato in his dialogues or Sartre in his plays.

“slab” and “beam,” and their function within the context of the language game is transparent to us.¹⁶ Another way of putting this is to say that we are able to imagine the builders and see their activities with our inner eye, as the author is showing us the language game.¹⁷ *Seeing* in this sense does not involve reasoning in the form of reflection or comparing in relation to established standards or norms but lies close to looking at something immediately in front of one’s eyes, taking notice of how it appears. In this interpretation, there is a clear distinction between the opposing approaches in the advice “Denk nicht, sondern schau!” from § 66. To engage in *thinking* or reasoning involves being guided by doctrines and preconceptions in a philosophical investigation, as opposed to *seeing*, i.e., checking by way of looking what goes on, trying to get a grip on how something in fact appears. This means relying on perception but also turning away from paradigmatic pictures and conceptions to be able to sharpen the ability to look with an attentive eye at that which is familiar and well-known: our use of language.

6. DRAWING WITHOUT THINKING

In the previous section, Wittgenstein’s advice in § 66 was discussed in relation to philosophical investigations, and we noticed that difficulties must be overcome for the one who wishes to follow the approach recommended in the remark. Let us now turn to the practice of croquis drawing in the light of the same guideline. We noticed in the introduction that drawing has been conceived of as more intellectual in character than other art forms and as directed at the intellect rather than to the senses. Croquis and life drawing was at the core of the education at art academies in Europe, and practicing drawing ran parallel with acquiring abundant knowledge of human anatomy, of light and shadows, etc. It is fair to say that the study of the depiction of the human body was closely connected with reliance on knowledge and the use of a scientific approach.¹⁸ Now, while a philosopher is to enquire about language use, according to the advice in § 66, the draftsman is to ask: How does this human being in front of my eyes appear to me right now?

16 In this section, I have benefitted from discussions with Pär Segerdahl on Wittgenstein’s conception of *seeing* and his suggestions to an understanding of the difference between “reasoning” and “looking and seeing” in Wittgenstein’s later philosophy.

17 Cf. how Wittgenstein often begins a remark with the words “Denk dir...” or “Wir können uns vorstellen...” (“Imagine this...”) in the *Philosophical Investigations* and elsewhere.

18 See, for instance, Weimarck, *Akademi och anatomi*.

The difficulty is to be able to look at the model with a gaze which lets me see the shape and form of that which is in front of me – but is otherwise not seen – and make this visible in the drawing. I possess knowledge of the human body, know what arms, hands, and feet look like, how they move, bend, and how they, so to speak, ought to be drawn. But this hinders me when I aim to capture the model's appearance in the croquis sketch. Interpreting the advice from § 66 as an instruction for the draftsman to rely only on her eyes is therefore appropriate in the case of croquis. To achieve the goal set in the croquis session, it is sometimes necessary to use the techniques we looked at earlier, to prevent habituated ways of looking from guiding the process of drawing that block accustomed movements of the hand, and it is necessary to force oneself to shut off thinking and reasoning that hinder the cooperation and immediate connection between eye and hand. Letting the hand do the drawing after the guidance of the eye, without intermediate links, is strived for when I want to make what I see visible in the drawing. In a similar manner as when we are asked to turn away from preconceptions and to suppress internalized ways of approaching questions that have become second nature in a philosophical investigation, it is necessary to turn a blind eye to knowing when trying to improve the sketch. The difficulty of doing this in philosophy corresponds to the force which is needed when looking and making visible what is before one's eyes during the croquis session.

7. DISSOLVING THE APPEARANCE OF PARADOX

In the former section, my primary focus was on the first of the two aspects of the process of croquis drawing that were outlined earlier. At this point, the second aspect will be brought in as we return to the question of how to characterize the goal in croquis drawing. How may the task be described? We have seen that the first aspect of the practice of croquis is to strive to let the hand transfer the visual impression on the paper with the pen, sidestepping the brain, i.e., thinking and reasoning. Such a notion of registering or copying of what one sees corresponds with a Platonist conception of *mimesis*, as we observed earlier. The second aspect of the process of drawing, however, involves taking a step back and considering the sketch in relation to established knowledge and norms that concern, for example, the proportions of the human body. This aspect involves actively using knowledge and engaging in reflection. It corresponds, in other words, with an Aristotelian conception of *mimesis*, being directed at capturing what is representative of the human being and involving assessments and choices in relation to standards and established conceptions.

Now, when discussing two different interpretations of Wittgenstein's advice in § 66 of the *Philosophical Investigations*, we saw that his words are often taken to indicate that we should not simply follow doctrines and established norms, but carefully study and examine examples to see if they correspond with those norms and doctrines. The last part of his advice, that urges us to look and see, is then understood as reflection on and assessment of a specific case, guided by the question: Is there correspondence between the example and the standards we use? The interpretation I suggested instead lays out the first part of the advice – “Denk nicht” – as an effort to *turn away from* preconceptions and doctrines. Here the second part of the advice means to approach an example of language while aiming at liberation from demands and expectations to how a specific case must be. It means to look at something familiar in front of one's eyes with a new gaze, to sharpen the ability to notice how it appears – to engage in SEEING. This, as we noted, is very similar to attempting to improve a sketch in croquis by “bypassing the brain.” “Schau!” in this latter sense places emphasis on the use of perception, and on noticing similarities and differences by means of a focused way of looking at what is seen, in order to capture its appearance.

The paradox mentioned in the introduction may be expressed in questions of the following kind: How can it be that knowledge, thinking, and reasoning hinder a philosophical investigation or represent obstacles when we want to depict a human being in a drawing? How can it be that reliance on perception and forsaking of reasoning is required to be able to move ahead and reach desired goals, be it in philosophy or figurative art? An answer to these questions would be that reasoning and thinking with departure in established norms and conceptions hinder SEEING, in the sense of grasping how something appears when it is placed immediately in front of one's eyes, in particular when one is looking at something which is familiar to the degree that we no longer pay attention to differences and similarities in use – to shadows, lines, form, and the relation between surfaces. To be able to SEE, in this particular sense of the word, we need freedom from norms, demands, and expectations, in philosophical investigations as well as when engaged in the practice of croquis.

Due to the short time allotted for each pose in croquis there is not always time for reflecting on the drawing as a whole or for making corrections, but if we ask whether a drawing is true in the sense that it corresponds with what is seen at that moment – an individual model who holds a specific pose – certain problems may arise because one tends to adjust the picture in relation to internalized preconceptions of what a human being looks like or established norms concerning the proportions of the human body. These norms and preconceptions give rise to demands on what the drawing should look like. If the model, for instance, has

slightly short arms or deviates in some other way from what I have learned about the proportions of the human body, it will seem as if something is wrong when I look at the drawing, even if it corresponds with the proportions of the model who is depicted. It may then be difficult to pin-point what is amiss and to know how to improve the sketch. Similar difficulties may arise in philosophy: a philosopher may have become convinced that the notion of a philosophical thesis is incoherent, by way of SEEING in the sense that belongs to the interpretation of “schau!” in § 66 suggested above. She has seen that such a notion cannot be upheld within the activity of a philosophical investigation as she now understands it. Nevertheless, she may go on to communicate what she has come to see in a text that corresponds with standardized norms for academic texts, i.e., a text that begins by defining a problem, followed by a thesis representing a solution to the problem. Then arguments are added – in favor of the thesis and against challenging claims – and a conclusion that the thesis is correct is reached. Here, the conflict between her message and the form of her text is not yet transparent to her – neither does she have a full grasp on the essential features of what she saw, nor has she found a way to make these features visible in her writing. A contrasting example would be a philosopher who actively tries out different ways of writing and approaching philosophical questions for the sake of finding a form of presentation that agrees with what she saw when looking and seeing in the sense recommended in § 66, while succeeding to turn away from paradigmatic pictures and her own preconceptions. What becomes visible in this manner will perhaps not be acknowledged as an example of a philosophical investigation by those working with the same questions in a conventional manner, or it might be rejected as being off track or “not right.”¹⁹

8. MAKING VISIBLE

In the first part of this chapter, I spoke of the demands that are put on the drafts-person when there are frequent shifts of poses. To be able to draw swiftly and unhesitatingly is crucial – once the model changes the pose, the moment is gone. This is similar to how hastily made sketches of landscapes in the nineteenth century served to preserve what was seen in memory – the sketch could be looked at later, like a photograph. Under circumstances like these, only the *essential* makes it into the drawing. A sketch of that kind may look like this:

19 Cf. the criticisms of Wittgenstein’s form of representation in the *Philosophical Investigations*.



Figure 9.3: Croquis drawing, short pose, by author.

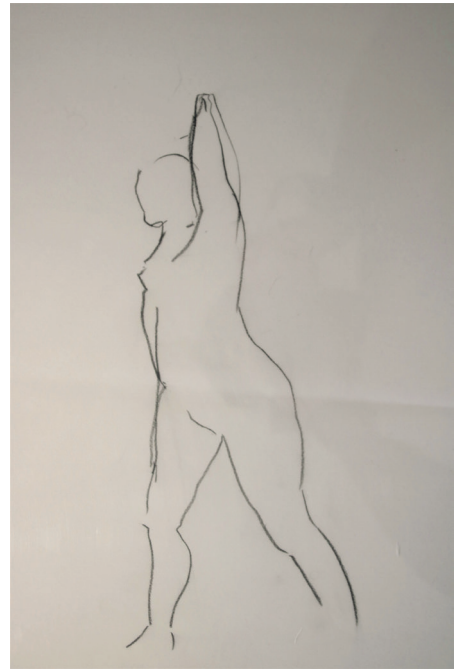


Figure 9.4: Croquis drawing, short pose, by author.

We see that the drawings are different in character: I would say of the first that it is simple, free of unnecessary details; it hints but does not say too much; it is open for discovery and is not necessarily unfinished. The second drawing may instead be described as not unfinished since the whole Gestalt is there, and we could say that it is distinct but does not describe exactly.²⁰ But what does it mean to speak of “the essential” that makes it into the drawing when time is sparse? In which sense do we use this expression within the context of croquis drawing (and depiction in art more generally)? When approaching this question, it will be helpful to return to the two elements of the process of drawing: The first is to focus on what is seen and rely on the cooperation between hand and eye to depict precisely that which is before my eyes. The second aspect takes the form of an assessment: When evaluating a drawing, I do not only use my eyes, but look at my drawing as a whole and ask: does this look like a human being, can a human being sit like that? Does it

20 Here I borrow the words used to characterize the drawings from an essay on art and science by Bengt Molander, “Mellan konst och vetande: att ge verkligheten form och innehåll,” in *Mellan konst och vetande: texter om vetenskap, konst och gestaltning*, ed. Bengt Molander (Göteborg: Daidalos, 1996).

look right? Is the drawing correct? This step involves consulting a standard, a general image of a human being – a template so to speak – to which I compare my drawing when I make an aesthetic judgment. The answer to the questions I pose might be yes – I have made the model, in this pose, visible in my drawing, as I saw her. This judgment is of course also based on the knowledge I have of the human body as a human being. To speak of the “essential” in this sense, then, roughly amounts to having captured what is characteristic of this pose. What is sought after is then something general that holds for human beings or for the human body – the drawing is a representation of a certain way of sitting, standing, or leaning against something that is typical or possible for human beings.

Ordinarily, however, something is not quite right and ought to be adjusted in the drawing – since it is a sketch in the sense of something that is unfinished. This brings the use of the word “utkast” in Swedish and Norwegian to mind, when we speak of a draft that is unfinished and imperfect in its form. The German word is “Entwurf” which translates to “jet” in French, and the verb “jeter” is used to speak of making a sketch.²¹ The French verb is also used in the sense of “throwing,” and in the croquis session one must throw the lines onto the paper with the pen, rapidly, to capture the essence – as something ethereal that easily escapes us (we are now talking about the human body) – the being, the person. In Swedish we use the word “väsén” to speak of a being which is there to be seen and perhaps will be made visible in the drawing, and the German word here is, of course, “Wesen.”²²

According to this way of looking at it, it seems as if our talk about “the essential” refers to the object of sight, the model’s appearance. Now, in the first part of this chapter, I said that croquis is different from many other art forms because the space for personal expression is very limited. But during a session of croquis with short poses, when I do not have the time to make changes to correct my work according to a standard or a preconception of the human form, it could be that the drawing makes something essential about *me* visible. That is, when I must make a sketch under pressure, my way of looking, how I see the model, becomes transparent and distinct. Hesitance, and the possibility to correct, brings me further from, rather than closer to, my personal expression, according to this understanding.²³ Talking about personal expression in this sense does not refer to an intellectual or

21 Cf. Robert, Rey, and Rey-Debove, *Le petit Robert*, s. v. “ébaucher”; and Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 2006), § 30–32.

22 I take “väsén” to be different from “gestalt” in that the first word points to something inner, internal, rather than the external form of a being.

23 It can be interesting to compare this perspective on what a croquis sketch makes visible to Wittgenstein’s suggestion that “[w]ork on philosophy – like work in architecture in many respects – is really more work on oneself. On one’s own conception. On how one sees things.

reflective process in the form choices, intentions, or assessments, or to the way in which an artist may actively aim to make her personal expression visible in a work of art. It may be of interest to compare this understanding of personal expression with a conception of *representation* according to which photography cannot result in representational art since a photograph only shows what someone saw, but not how to see it.²⁴ In the conception of *personal expression* that we have looked at, it is precisely the fact that a sketch shows *what someone saw* that gives it the potential to be perceived as a work of art.²⁵

It is characteristic of the practice of croquis that a series of attempts are made at coming closer and closer to capturing a shape, the form of a person, in a depiction. What the draftsman is looking at is genuinely familiar to her – a human being – and therefore difficult to capture onto the paper with her piece of charcoal. This observation recalls Wittgenstein's approach in the *Philosophical Investigations* and the way he speaks of making sketches of the same point from different directions to give someone else an idea of the landscape. The sketches display his work on philosophical difficulties and show what he saw when looking at the landscape that surrounds us.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aristotle. *Poetics*. Loeb Classical Library, vol. 199. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995.
- Baker, Gordon P., and Peter M. S. Hacker. *An Analytical Commentary on Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations*. Vol. 1. Oxford: Blackwell, 1993.
- Barthes, Roland. "Cy Twombly ou 'Non multa sed multum.'" In *Catalogue raisonné des oeuvres sur papier de Cy Twombly, Vol. 6 1973–1976*, edited by Yvon Lambert, 7–13. Milan: Ed. Multhipla, 1979.
- Darriulat, Jacques. "Kant et l'esthétique du dessin." *Revue philosophique de la France et de l'étranger* 132, no. 2 (2007): 157–175.
- Fogelin, Robert J. *Taking Wittgenstein at His Word: A Textual Study*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009.
- Heidegger, Martin. *Sein und Zeit*, 19. Aufl. Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 2006.
- Holger, Lena, ed. *Kroppen: konst och vetenskap*. Stockholm: Nationalmuseum, 2005.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, Bd. 5, *Gesammelte Schriften / Akademieausgabe*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1963.

(And what one expects of them.)" Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, ed. G. H. von Wright and H. Nyman, rev. ed. by A. Pichler (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 24.

24 Roger Scruton, "Photography and Representation," *Critical Inquiry* 7, no. 8 (Spring 1981), 133.

25 I would like to thank the editors of this publication, Lars Hertzberg, Pär Segerdahl, and Ståle Finke for helpful comments on earlier drafts of this chapter.

- Le Roux, Nicolas. *La langue française*. S. v. “croquer.” Last modified October 3, 2022. <https://www.lalanguefrancaise.com/dictionnaire/definition/croquer>.
- Molander, Bengt. “Mellan konst och vetande: att ge verkligheten form och innehåll.” In *Mellan konst och vetande: texter om vetenskap, konst och gestaltning*, edited by Bengt Molander, 113–138. Göteborg: Daidalos, 1996.
- Plato. *Gorgias*. Loeb Classical Library, vol. 166. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983.
- Plato. *Sophist*. Loeb Classical Library, vol. 123. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987.
- Plato. *The Republic: II, Books VI–X*. The Loeb Classical Library, vol. 276. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987.
- Robert, Paul, Alain Rey, and Josette Rey-Debove. *Le petit Robert 1: dictionnaire alphabétique et analogique de la langue française*. Nouv. éd. rev., corr. et mise à jour en 1990. Paris: Le Robert, 1990.
- Savickey, Beth. *Wittgenstein's Investigations: Awakening the Imagination*. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2017.
- Scruton, Roger. “Photography and Representation.” *Critical Inquiry* 7, no. 8 (Spring 1981): 577–603.
- Svenska Akademiens ordbok*. Spalt K 2877 band 15, 1938. S. V. “kroki.” Stockholm: Svenska Akademien, 2022. <https://www.saob.se/artikel/?seek=kroki&pz=1>.
- Weimarck, Torsten. *Akademi och anatomi*. Stockholm: Brutus Östling, 1996.
- Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief*. Edited by Cyril Barrett. Oxford: Blackwell, 1966.
- Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Culture and Value*. Edited by G. H. von Wright and Heikki Nyman. Rev. ed. by Alois Pichler. Oxford: Blackwell, 1998.
- Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Philosophical Investigations / Philosophische Untersuchungen*. Edited by Peter M. S. Hacker and Joachim Schulte. Rev. 4th ed. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.
- von Wright, Georg Henrik. *Att förstå sin samtid: tanke och förkunnelse och andra försök: 1945–1994*. Stockholm: Bonnier, 1994.