Rubbing Shoulders

What the distance between two shapes tells

Based on: The ABCs of Form 06 – Orientation

In the part on relationships, we now turn to closeness and distance.

On this worksheet there are just two shapes. At first you change only one thing: the distance. *What changes between two shapes as they come closer?*

Don't try to create a particular arrangement. Slide the shapes back and forth and notice what happens between them. If something strikes you, write it down straight away – there's room on the second page under "Your picture conversation".

You will need: two sheets of A4 paper, two small dark shapes to move around and a soft pencil (for example 4B). If you still have the shapes from Picture Conversation 05 ("Who Goes with Whom?"), take two of them – otherwise cut them from black construction paper, about the size of a coin, roundish or oval.

Time: about 20–30 minutes.

1 **Far apart.**

Put the two shapes on the first sheet, as far apart as the sheet allows. Then look.

Do the two still have anything to do with each other for you? How would you describe their relationship?

2 **Closer.**

Slowly slide one of the two shapes towards the other. Pause again and again.

Is there a moment when you suddenly see the two differently? What has changed?

3 **Very close.**

Slide the shapes so close together that they almost touch. Look especially at the last narrow gap. Then let the two shapes touch.

What changes? Are they still two shapes for you?

4 **On top of each other.**

Slide one shape partly over the other so that they overlap. Try more and less overlap. If you like, use a lighter shape for this – cut from grey paper or toned grey with pencil. Then you can see which one lies on top.

Which one is in front for you? Does it dominate the other – or do the two hold each other in balance? Are they still two shapes, or already a new one?

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5 **Turn.**

If your shapes are oval, turn one of them. Don’t change the distance at first.

Does something change between the two anyway?

Try out different directions. Repeat this at different distances, too.

6 **Capture a relationship.**

Choose an arrangement in which you sense the relationship between the two particularly clearly. Draw the two shapes exactly like that on the second sheet – filled in dark.

Does the drawn relationship feel different from the one you laid out?

> **If you get stuck …** Move the shapes in small steps – and stop where their relationship suddenly feels different. More questions that help: Picture Conversation 12.

> *Finally, a question for yourself:*
> ***At what distance did you sense the relationship between the two most clearly – and what was different there?***

Your picture conversation

Talking about pictures is something you can learn. Write down your answers in your own words – just for you, no one has to read them. Over time you’ll find words for what you see.

Why this exercise

Something can happen between two shapes even though the shapes themselves stay the same. In this exercise you mainly changed their distance – right up to overlapping – and later their direction as well. Perhaps you noticed that closeness, distance and orientation influence how you perceive their relationship.

You don’t need to depict anything for this. Even the relation between two simple shapes can begin to tell a story.

Picture Conversations is a series of 13 exercises – you’ll find the worksheets at ekke-scholz.de/en/picture-conversations.
New exercises and thoughts from the studio: **ekke-scholz.de/en/newsletter**

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