Same Difference

Repeat and vary

Based on: The ABCs of Form 02 – Shape · 08 – Reshaping

Part 3 of the Picture Conversations is about likeness and difference.

When elements repeat in a picture, we recognise a connection between them. But how similar do things have to be for us to perceive them as a repetition?

And how do the relationships between the elements change when you pick up certain lines and shapes, repeat them and change them slightly or strongly as you do so?

You will need: A4 or A3 sheets of paper and a soft pencil, for example 2B or 4B.

Time: about 20–30 minutes.

1 **Make a shape.**

Draw a simple, irregular shape and fill it in dark. Then pause.

2 **… and repeat it.**

Draw a very similar shape on the sheet. Then look.

What has the second shape changed? Do you still see both as separate shapes? How does their connection feel – closely related or distant?

3 **Repeat it – but strongly changed.**

Draw the shape a third time. This time, change one property, for example:

Make it larger or smaller, lighter or darker, turn it, or give it a hard or fading contour.

Pay attention to how the shapes are inwardly connected to one another.

4 **A family emerges.**

Add more variations. Change more and more, and try out how far you can move away from your first shape without the new shapes becoming “strangers”.

If the sheet gets too crowded, take a new one and keep exploring ways of finding differences and similarities.

5 **Two strangers.**

On a new sheet, draw two shapes that don’t go together at all for you.

- *How do the two affect you side by side?*
- *Is there still something that connects them?*
- *What would you most like to change about one of them?*

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Does the order matter?

Take two new sheets. In the end, both will have three shapes on them: two similar ones and a different one. Only the order in which they appear is different.

First sheet: Draw a shape. Then one that hardly resembles it. Finally, another one that is similar to the first.

Second sheet: Draw two similar shapes. Then one of a different kind.

- *Did something change on the first sheet when the third shape was added?*
- *Do the two finished sheets feel the same to you – or different?*
- *Looking at them, can you still sense the order in which the shapes appeared?*

If you get stuck … Repeat the shape as exactly as you can. You can then strengthen the difference that appears anyway. More questions that help: Picture Conversation 12.

Finally, a question for yourself:
How far could you change your shape before it no longer felt as if it belonged?

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

Repetition can connect shapes with one another. Not everything has to be the same. When something returns and changes at the same time, likeness and difference can exist side by side.

When you don't know how to go on while you're working, you can pick up an event that is already there: **pick up – repeat – change.** *That way you don't have to invent something completely new every time.*

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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