Less Is More

Interrupting and taking away

Part 4 of the Picture Conversations is about carrying on – and about stopping.

When you draw, it's easy to feel you should keep adding something. But the opposite can be a decision too: not carrying something on, interrupting something or taking something away again. *What happens to a picture when something is missing that could actually go on?*

You will need: an A4 sheet of paper, charcoal or a soft pencil (for example 4B), an eraser and a cloth or your fingers for smudging.

Time: about 20–30 minutes.

1 **Stop where it could go on.**

Draw a line or set a row of small shapes side by side – until you feel: *This could go on now.* Then stop.

- *What happens at the point where you stopped?*
- *Does your eye expect a continuation?*
- *Does something remain open?*
- *Does the empty surface become more important?*
- *Or does it simply feel finished to you?*

2 **Interrupt.**

Somewhere else, draw a long line. Interrupt it on purpose: leave a gap – and then carry on drawing.

Has the connection really disappeared – or does your eye fill in something that isn't drawn at all?

Make the gap bigger. And a bit bigger still.

From what point does your eye stop filling in the connection?

3 **Take something away.**

Choose something that is already clearly present on your sheet. Erase or smudge part of it. It can be a piece of a line, a shape or part of a shape. Not all of it. Traces may remain. Then pause.

What new thing has come about through taking away?

4 **A bit more.**

Take something more away. Pause again and again as you go, and look.

- *Can even more of it disappear?*
- *What changes as a result?*
- *Is there a moment when you miss something that was there before?*

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If you get stuck … Erase a small piece in the middle of a line or area. Is something missing now – or has something been added? More questions that help: Picture Conversation 12.

Finally, a question for yourself:
What was harder for you: not carrying something on – or taking something away again?

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

Not everything that has been begun has to be carried on. A line can end. A sequence can have a gap. Something already drawn can disappear again. That doesn't simply make "less picture". Sometimes it is precisely through what is missing that something becomes visible: an emptiness, a direction or a connection that could hardly be felt before.

Leaving out is a decision, too.

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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