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ETHNOGRAPHIC DRAWING: ELEVEN BENEFITS OF USING A SKETCHBOOK FOR FIELDWORK

ABSTRACT

This article seeks to valorise and understand the potential of ethnographic drawings for anthropological fieldwork, exploring their relations to ways of making records and visual research. I argue that drawing contributes positively to anthropological research and vice-versa: researching anthropologically contributes to drawing the world about us. After a brief review of the literature, I present eleven benefits of using sketchbooks and drawings in ethnography, discussing topics related to the methodological challenges of fieldwork, such as accessibility, memory, temporality, spatiality, visual perception, forms of recording, dialogue with informants, participatory methods and the sharing of results.

KEYWORDS

anthropology, drawing, ethnography, methodology, visual anthropology, graphics, imagery.

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IMAGE 1 - DRAWINGS BY LUISA MACHADO AND TOMÁS MEIRELES, BOTH ANTHROPOLOGY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS, FOR AN ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH PROJECT ON SKILLED WORKERS RESPONSIBLE FOR LAYING AND REPAIRING RIO DE JANEIRO'S PORTUGUESE STONE PAVEMENTS (2014).

This article seeks to valorise and understand the potential of ethnographic drawings for anthropological fieldwork, exploring their relations to ways of making records and visual research. My argument is that drawing contributes positively to anthropological research and vice-versa: researching anthropologically contributes to drawing the world about us. Both anthropology and drawing are *ways of seeing* and also *ways of knowing* the world. Placing these two universes in dialogue helps shed light on some of the important issues faced by anthropological practice today, such as the need to express both the “inner and outer worlds” that intersect in our research (Taussig 2011: xi).¹ After a brief review of the literature, I present eleven benefits of using sketchbooks and drawings in ethnography, discussing topics related to the methodological challenges posed by fieldwork, such as accessibility, memory, temporality, spatiality, visual perception, ways of recording, dialogue with informants, participatory methods and results sharing.²

This reflection started out from the realization that the visual record of drawing is not just a graphical documentation, but also a way of doing research and obtaining knowledge (Kuschnir 2011, 2012, 2014). John Berger (2005) is a core author in this approach. As Michael Taussig put it, citing Berger, a “line drawn is important not for what it records so much as what it leads you on to see” (Taussig 2011, Berger 2005:3). Moreover, for Berger a drawing’s meaning is indissociable from the conditions in which it was made, a crucial topic in the contemporary social anthropological debate on the authorship of the ethnography-ethnographer. According to Berger, the drawing of a tree does not show a tree but a “tree-being-looked-at” (p. 71). It is an “autobiographical record of one’s discovery of an event – seen, remembered, or imagined” (p. 3). Berger also takes the act of drawing to be a process of looking in which the gesture is more important than the final outcome. As Taussig underlines, Berger sees a drawing as a conversation with the thing being drawn, one likely to involve prolonged and complete immersion. As a process, it encompasses time, while a photograph freezes it (Berger 2005:70).³

This conception of drawing as an experience has close parallels with the ethnographic enterprise, particularly in the form perceived by social anthropologists influenced by Malinowski’s model of intensive and immersive fieldwork. It can also be

¹ I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the two anonymous reviewers whose comments were insightful and illuminating. I hope to have solved at least some of the issues they found in the previous version of the article.

² I would like to thank all the students who participated in the research, who accepted the challenge to include observational drawings in their fieldwork sketchbooks and gave me permission to show their drawings here.

³ I had already written this paper when the article by Grimshaw & Ravetz (2015) came out, meaning I have been unable to incorporate their work here despite its relevance.

linked to the anthropological understanding that the symbolic meaning of an object is a product of social relationships and can never be taken for granted. As Roland Barthes (1990) put it, we read images in terms of the mentally associated images we already know.

Many authors from both the art world and the field of anthropology have persuaded me that a bridge can be built between fieldwork and observational sketching. On the art side, the books by Salavisa (2008), Gregory (2003) and Campanario (2011) were crucial in terms of defining a pathway for contemporary urban drawing. As I wrote in 2011, the drawings of these urban sketchers are not simply drawings: they are ‘informed-shaped’ by a particular ‘worldview.’ In many respects, a worldview similar to the anthropological one: the emphasis on drawing ‘on location,’ the use of direct observation, the search for a narrative, the providing of a context and the moral basis (to be truthful).⁴

The sketchbook is a common object both for the urban sketcher and for the anthropologist in the field. We know that it comprises a historical tool popularized in the fifteenth century, with Leonardo Da Vinci (1452-1519) being one of its most famous users. “Without a drawing, one cannot express or clarify one’s idea,” wrote Francesco di Giorgio Martini (1481-1484), one of the authors who inspired Da Vinci to produce some 30,000 pages of notes and sketches. The concept of the “explanatory power of images” became consolidated during Da Vinci’s lifetime, leading to the use of drawing as a scientific research tool. Indeed it is Da Vinci himself who wrote next to one of his famous studies of anatomy: “Which words, O writer, will you use to describe with similar perfection the entire configuration that this drawing here provides?”⁵ In Massironi’s definition (2010: 17), the design becomes more and more a ‘simple’ instrument but, at the same time, ‘complex’ enough to describe or explain a wide range of phenomena.

The production of visual and graphic records is also part of anthropology’s history. In the pioneering volume *Notes and Queries on Anthropology* (1951 [1870]), clear mention is made of it in the ‘Methods’ chapter, included among the four “Essential Types of Documentation”: “1) Descriptive notes and records of investigation; 2) Maps, plans, diagrams, *drawings* and photographs; 3) Texts, etc.; 4) Genealogical and census-data.” From today’s perspective we know that virtually all concepts associated with the words of this list have been transformed.

In the ethnographic enterprise, however, the concept of drawing seems to have been little questioned within the discipline’s literature. Its formal roots are embedded in the eighteenth century when the Encyclopaedists systematized knowledge in thousands of articles and illustrations that eventually became sedimented as a model for the production of technical visual information (cf. Bloom 2004 and Gombrich 2000).⁶ In the plates published in the Encyclopaedia, parts, materials and tools are presented in detail, with their variations and modes of

⁴ On the many topics related to observational drawing, see Kuschnir (2011, 2012) and Côrte-Real (2014).

⁵ The source of the Martini citation and other quotes is Lester (2014), p. 26, p. 166 and p. 239, respectively. Richard Sennet (209:111) also reminds us that drawing has long provided solutions to the problem of the limits of verbal language.

⁶ All the images included in this text’s first section can be seen at desenhosetnograficos.wordpress.com/

use. The drawings document the world, but also teach, ‘civilize’ and spread the knowledge of a once elite group. The graphic record adheres to Renaissance notions of perspective and a taxonomically accurate representation of the volumes, textures and sizes of objects. The main features of this visual model are its use of the frontal plane, an absence of background, the adoption of a fixed point of view and the apportioning of an ‘ideal model’ in parts and detailed plates (Massironi 2010:59). This was the graphic language employed by the publications and encyclopaedias of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the areas of anatomy, zoology and botany, from where many plates in the Encyclopaedia were directly copied (Pinault-Sørensen 1992). Eriksen and Nielsen (2007) show that it was revolutionary for the encyclopaedists to be interested in the material and professional culture of ‘ordinary people,’ such as craftsmen, technicians and farmers. They built the foundations of an academic environment interested in everyday life, in the world of labour relations and production, and in the possibilities for comparing different cultures and societies.

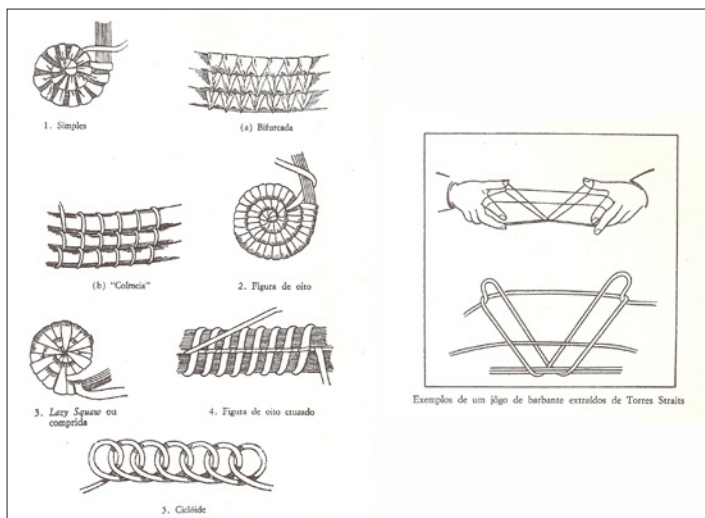
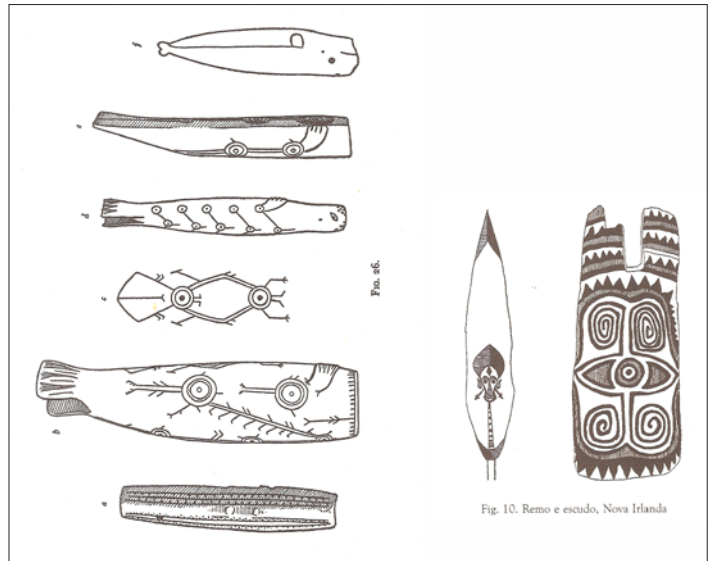


IMAGE 2 - "SPECIMENS OF EVERY KIND OF BASKET AND MATS SHOULD BE OBTAINED; IN VARIOUS STAGES OF PREPARATION ETC." (LEFT) "EXAMPLE OF A STRING TRICK FROM THE TORRES STRAITS" (RIGHT). DRAWINGS INCLUDED IN NOTES AND QUERIES ON ANTHROPOLOGY, P. 275 AND 338.

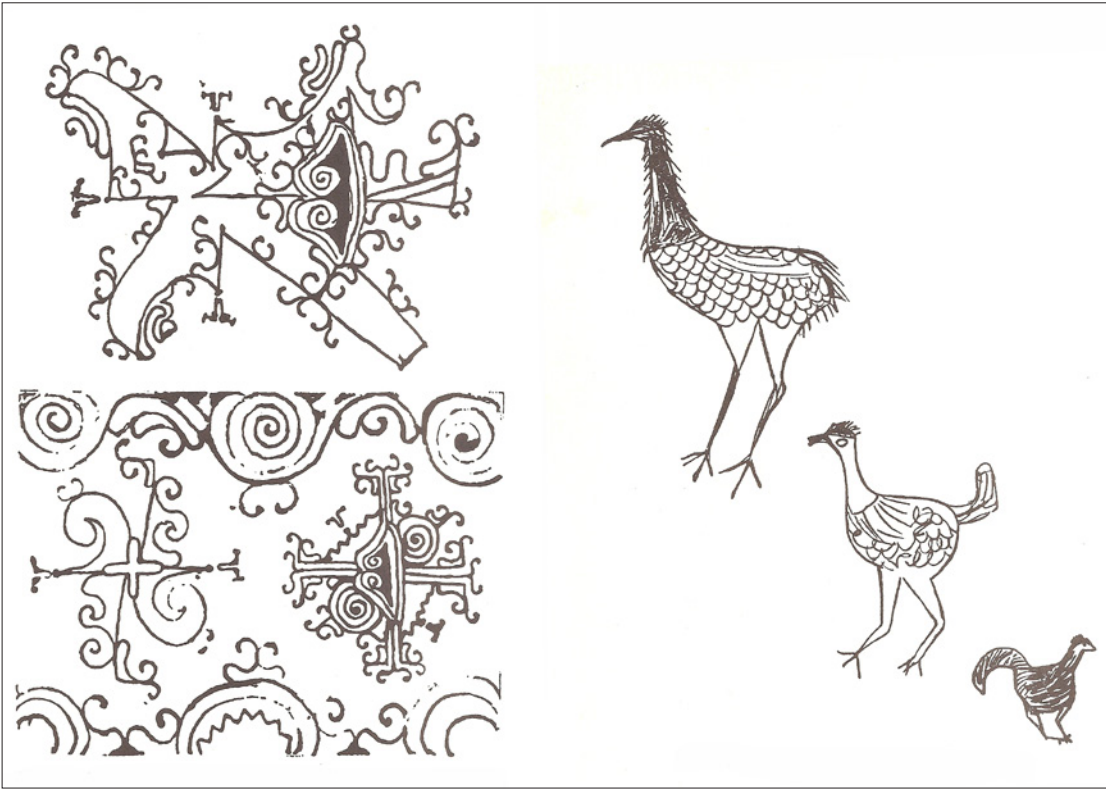
However, for now I wish to turn back to the drawings in the context of the nineteenth century when anthropology was born as an academic discipline. The first edition of the aforementioned *Notes and Queries on Anthropology* dates from 1870. According to Urry (1972: 51), the 1909 edition underwent considerable changes at the hands of William R. Rivers. Among other additions, Rivers revised the ‘Methods’ chapter, replacing the proposed lengthy questionnaires with the emphasis on learning the native language, collecting material, writing notes, and making drawings, plans and diagrams. Some plates added to the volume probably date from this edition (or later) since they include examples from the Torres Straits Expedition. The pictures above have been extracted from the ‘Material culture’ section of the book.

These plates follow the same visual grammar of the Encyclopaedia. This setting of form and design is present in anthropological publications throughout the first half of the twentieth century. It comprises the same visual format reproduced by Malinowski (1978: 90) in his drawings on the principles of stability and conservation of canoes in *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. In fact, this still remains the hegemonic model in the discipline today. Its importance and usage increase as the researcher's interest turns to aspects of art and material culture. The work of Franz Boas, for example, contains hundreds of pages filled with illustrations from this genre, as we will see below.

IMAGE 3 - STUDY OF NEEDLE CASES FROM ALASKA (LEFT); OAR AND SHIELD FROM NEW IRELAND (RIGHT). DRAWINGS INCLUDED IN BOAS, RACE, LANGUAGE AND CULTURE, P. 587 (LEFT) AND IN PRIMITIVE ART [ARTE PRIMITIVA], P. 17 (RIGHT).



A few decades later, in 1955, the illustration of the penis sheath sets included by Levi-Strauss in *Tristes Tropiques* (2000:211) follows the same graphic style. However, this book also contains drawings that pointed in new aesthetic and symbolic directions. The first novelty is the appearance of the anthropologist's own graphic gesture, though his name does not appear next to the image. The second innovation is that this authorship is expressly amateurish, not done by a professional illustrator. Thus there is little concern with making a clean, precise and symmetrical line of the kind seen in the encyclopaedia visual model. The emphasis is on the experience, on the "I have been there," in the field, interacting with those who produced the original designs (as shown in the Caduveo face-paintings, below on the left). A third element in the graphical syntax of the illustrations is the inclusion of drawings produced by the natives themselves, again bringing the question of authorship to the foreground of the image's representation. Here, though, it is a 'native' authorship, neither amateur nor professional in the common acceptance of these terms (as shown in the captions to the image on the right, below).



This ‘combined authorship’ of illustrations is relatively frequent in contemporary publications in the anthropology of art, such as Vidal (1992). It is important to note that native drawings are not necessarily taken to be ‘just drawings,’ in the generic sense attributed to these terms, like illustrations of a set of baskets, for example. A whole range of theoretical problems and concepts – including those concerning the agency of art works – is raised in this anthropological field, as explored by Vidal (1992), Gell (2010) and Lagrou (2007) among others.

Returning to the universe of ethnographic drawings, some anthropologists stand out for their willingness and ability to draw systematically in their fieldwork diaries. Such material is seldom published or otherwise accessible. An exception are the notebooks of Monica Freeman (2009) recording her research among the Iban of Borneo (Malaysia). The anthropologist produced hundreds of illustrations in situ and from photographs, using both the encyclopaedic-scientific model and life-drawing scenes of native life, employing a variety of illustrative styles in ink and watercolour. The following are two examples from the published volume containing her ethnographic diaries.

Another key author in this setting is Alfred Gell (1993, 2006 and 2010) whose work, shaped by his personal history and a strong interest in the anthropology of art, is full of drawings within the visual frameworks we have seen thus far. In the in-

IMAGE 4 - CADUVEO FACE-DRAWINGS MADE BY THE ANTHROPOLOGIST WITH THE HELP OF A NATIVE WOMAN (LEFT) AND “DRAWINGS BY A CADUVEO LITTLE BOY” (RIGHT). DRAWINGS INCLUDED IN *TRISTES TRÓPICOS*, P. 176 (LEFT) AND P. 174 (RIGHT).

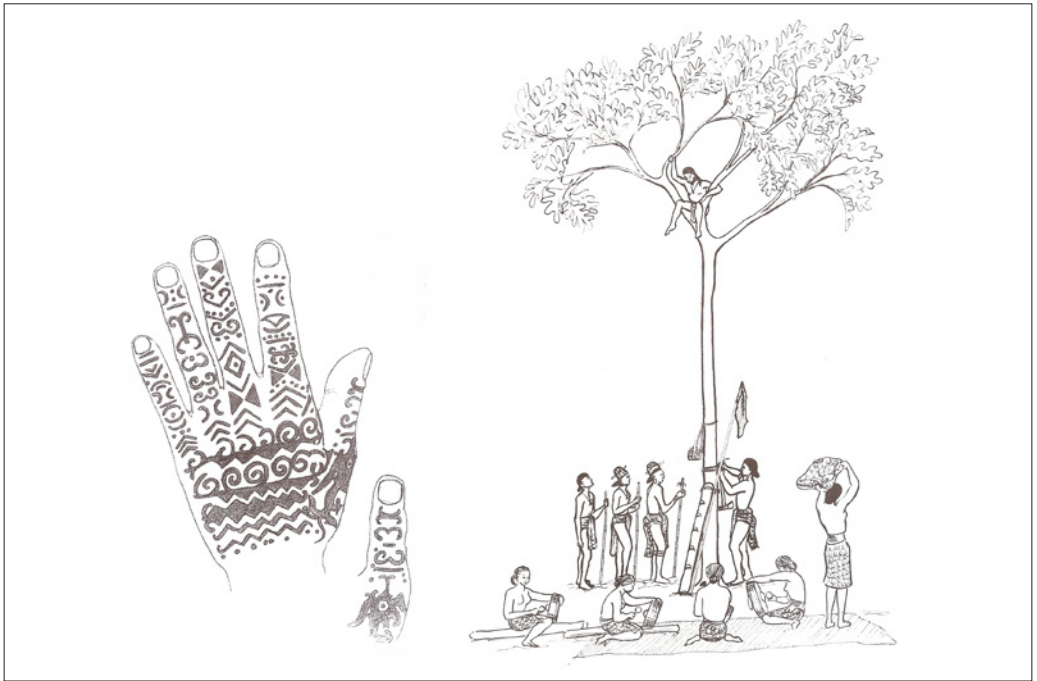


IMAGE 5 - DRAWINGS INCLUDED IN THE IBAN DIARIES OF MONICA FREEMAN, P. 86. (LEFT) AND P. 106 (RIGHT).

roduction to *The Art of Anthropology*, published posthumously, Gell recollects that he always liked to draw and was greatly encouraged by his parents to do so, especially by his mother, who was an illustrator of archaeological expeditions. His relationship to drawing was so strong that he once wrote that all his articles started out from an image (Gell 2006: 11).

In creating his ‘Strathernograms’ – diagrams that graphically translate the anthropological ideas of Marilyn Strathern – Gell undertakes a brief survey of the anthropologists who have resorted to this theoretical visual language, such as Claude Lévi-Strauss, Edmund Leach, Meyer Fortes, Roy Wagner and Pierre Bourdieu, only regretting that the anthropology of the late twentieth century was too verbal and insufficiently graphic (2006: 31).⁷ The idea has also been emphasized by Ingold in *Making* (2013), but I will not engage in a more direct conversation with this work here since I mostly disagree with his ontological definitions of drawing (and anthropology). I prefer, as Gell proposed (2009: 252), to set out from the idea that “nothing can be decided in advance” concerning the nature of objects (and thus of drawings), opting to take each line, image or anthropology itself as a search for meaning in the context of social relations.

Gell not only draws himself but backs the notion that images facilitate the assimilation of ideas. Below I reproduce a small sample of his drawings. On the left, a collection of mask fringes and a drawing of the transformation in mask types (this example has a caption stating: “drawn by A. Gell”). On the right, a scene called “Society and the dance,” produced in a comic-book style for the cover of a publication.

⁷ It is important to note that brief surveys of the literature on the use of drawings have been conducted by other anthropologists too, including Afonso & Ramos (2004), Ramos (2010), Taussig (2011) and Wadle (2012).

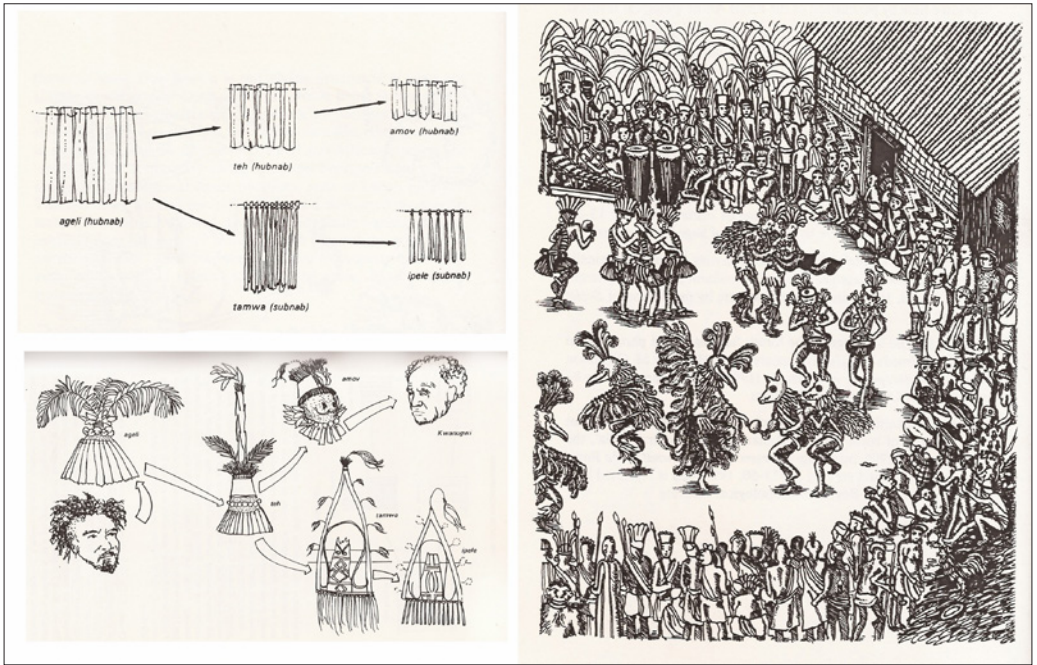


IMAGE 6 – DRAWINGS INCLUDED IN THE ART OF ANTHROPOLOGY: ESSAYS AND DIAGRAMS, P. 14 (TOP LEFT), P. 15 (BOTTOM LEFT) AND P. XVI (RIGHT).

Exploring very similar concerns to those of Gell, Els Lagrou (2007) also has the rare resourcefulness of an anthropologist who draws on her fieldwork notebook, while simultaneously taking designs and native drawings as the subject matter of her anthropological inquiries. One important aspect of this author's work (e.g. Lagrou 2007) is the presence of diagrams showing how the natives' designs are drawn, as well as the indication of the circumstances in which the designs are produced. Lagrou also pays careful attention to the different media on which the drawings are made (such as sketchbooks, loose sheets of paper, or native bodies, for example), building a complex analysis of the relationships between the artwork and Kaxinawa cosmology.

João Leal (2008), in his article "Retratos do povo: etnografia portuguesa e imagem," provides an important clue to understand the meaning of ethnographic drawings produced in the taxonomic style – or what the author calls the 'technical-ethnographic' style. Analysing the work produced by the research group led by Jorge Dias in Portugal, Leal proposes that we associate their visual records with an ethnographic approach grounded in two basic principles (p. 129): a) The documentation and preservation of images (through drawings, photographs and films) of Portuguese rural life "before it disappears"; and b) Focus on the materiality of peasant life, aimed at 'surveying techniques and technical objects' of their lifestyle in order to establish illustrated typologies. The work of Fernando Galhano (1985), an illustrator who produced hundreds of drawings for Dias's group, reflects these principles and also what Leal (2008: 122) considers an 'artistic mode' of ethnographic drawing.

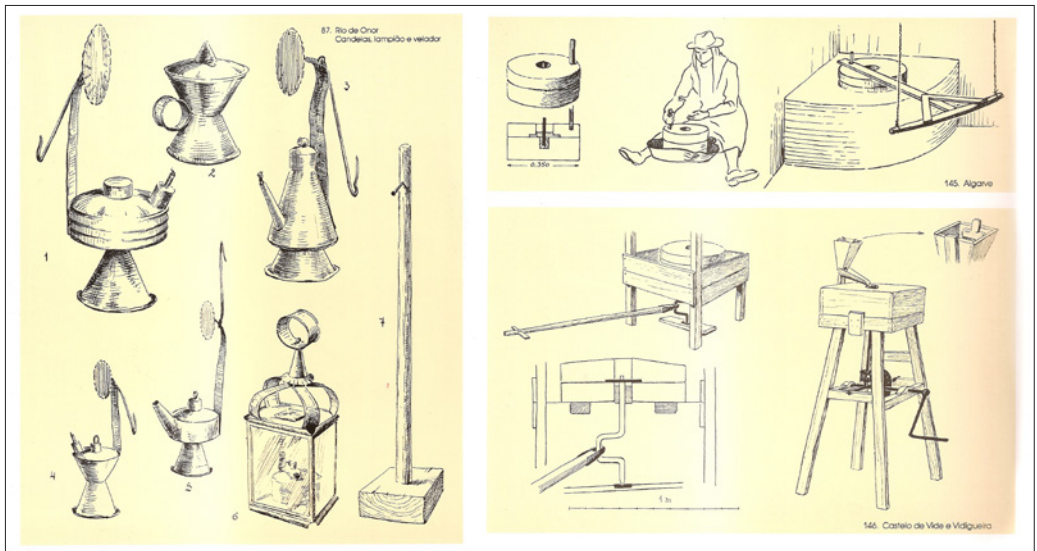


IMAGE 7 - DRAWINGS INCLUDED IN DESENHO ETNOGRÁFICO DE FERNANDO GALHANO, P. 87 (LEFT) AND P. 146 (RIGHT).

From the 1960 onward, however, Leal argues, there was a sharp decline in this kind of production to the point that the anthropological scene has become ‘visually mute’ (Leal 2008: 133). Investigations of objects and techniques gave way to new theoretical subjects like ‘social structure’ and ‘value systems,’ little receptive to visual representation. For Leal, it was only in the 1980s, and especially in the 1990s, that fresh anthropological approaches provided a renewed exploration of the visual in ethnography (Leal 2008). However, the use of drawings was not part of this shift...

Ana Isabel Afonso and Manuel João Ramos (2004) help us understand the continuation of this story in Portuguese anthropology, but also in the European and North American settings. The authors take up Leal’s theme, showing that the decline in the use of drawing as a research tool and as a method of ethnographic documentation occurred in a context involving the rejection of the anthropological principles with which the technique was associated. Drawing seems glued to the idea of craft, a ‘minor’ art. The use of illustration declined not only in the social sciences, but also in scientific fields of various disciplines, from biology to architecture. The Euro-American context after the 1970s is the time when ‘modernization’ entered the scientific laboratories, providing access to computers, photographic cameras and film technologies. And it is only in these media that visual anthropology flourishes (Afonso & Ramos 2004:74).

As well as focusing on these issues, Pink (2004) argues that the anthropological analysis of informants’ sketches and the use of drawings in anthropological monographs are examples “where the collaborative aspect of visual research is drawn out.” For the author, “it is not simply a matter of anthropologists analysing their informants’ drawings but one of learning through their images about how they feel, see and ex-

perience the world” (Pink 2004:9). This is one of the central goals of Afonso’s work in collaboration with Ramos, an artist-anthropologist who made drawings illustrating the narratives of their research interlocutors. The illustrations produced were then discussed again with the informants who, on seeing the images, were able to recover details and other elements from their memories and life trajectories. In seeking an experience that could not be recorded either verbally or photographically, there unfolded a rich collaboration that went “beyond mere illustration.” The drawings were actively redrawn, corrected and complemented by the comments of the interviewees, a process that proved to be a powerful methodological tool, as the authors argue: “it allowed us to deepen informants’ involvement (as sources, checkers and authenticators) and also served as a probe to trigger and explore their social memories, transcending the limits of lineal textual representation” (Afonso & Ramos 2004: 76).

The work of anthropologists Manuel João Ramos (Portugal) and Michael Taussig (USA) stands out in this context since it brings the act of drawing to the centre of their ethnographic investigations with populations in Ethiopia and Colombia, respectively. Ramos argues that drawing is an opportunity for the anthropologist to use “graphic means of recording and interpreting” field experiences “and to use them as a window to intercultural dialogue.” Drawing is not, therefore, “merely a documenting activity but also an important and creative tool for interacting with and relating to human beings, of different cultures and languages.” For Ramos, the act of drawing can be “more than just a pastime or an exercise of visual discipline: being a source of interaction that helps humanize me [the anthropologist-sketcher] in other people’s eyes, it becomes part of the anthropological process of tentatively bringing together observer and observed” (all quotes from Ramos 2004:149). His work covers various preoccupations, from experiments with narratives (Afonso & Ramos 2004 and Ramos 2004) to producing extensive and beautifully illustrated fieldwork and journal diaries (Ramos 2009, 2010). Below, we can see an example of his Ethiopian journal (Ramos, 2010:14-15).

Ramos’s drawing style takes us back to Jean-Baptiste Debret’s sketches of daily life in nineteenth-century Rio de Janeiro, with the cast of urban types drawn not through a realistic approach but rather through an interest in the experiences of both the observer and the observed. It has a symbolic atmosphere, associated less with the Enlightenment’s taxonomic-technical drawings and more with the Romanticism of watercolours (a technique developed precisely within this philosophical context). The focus is much more on the experience and process of drawing than on achieving plastically ‘correct’ results (as per the artistic paradigms of the era). Even when documenting the specific usage or typology of objects, Ramos deploys a visual language closer to comics than to encyclopaedic drawing (Ramos 2009: 18). I return to this author



IMAGE 8 - SKETCHBOOK PAGE FACSIMILES INCLUDED IN HISTÓRIAS ETÍOPES, P. 14-15.

later since his work is fundamental to the core argument of this article.

The emphasis on experience is also crucial in the work of Michael Taussig (2009, 2011), another anthropologist who not only draws on his field notebooks, but also makes this activity and its graphic output a central object of his reflections concerning a theory of the production of anthropological knowledge.⁸ For Taussig, the ‘clinical accuracy’ of the taxonomic-like drawings inserted in many ethnographic texts betray what he deems to be the most important feature of drawing: a process that leads you to see (Taussig 2009: 265). Taussig (2011:34) laments that drawing is viewed by Western culture as a second-rate activity, secondary to writing, even in schools and art schools – it seems like drawing is perceived as a ‘prehistoric stage’ in the individual’s evolution, he writes.

Inspired by Berger (2005), Taussig argues that drawing integrates with writing in ethnographic fieldnotes, like a conversation. Shown below is one of the pages from Taussig’s sketchbook (2011: 2) reproduced in facsimile so as to cover the entire page of the diary, making the word-drawing dialogue visible. The analysis of this and other images is central to his book on ethnographic drawing, published under the provocative title of *I Swear I Saw This*. For the author, showing his field notebooks in *the way they were made* is a means

⁸ In addition to the works cited, see Newman (1998), Garavaglia & Menna (1998), Wettstein (2011), Parisi (2010), Hendrickson (2008, 2010), Geismar (2014) and the review of comic ethnographies by Wadle (2012).

of avoiding the ‘betrayal’ that occurs in anthropological work when fieldwork experiences and dialogues are transformed into a mere pretext for abstract theorization: “This is why the fieldworker’s notebook, with at least one foot in the art of sensuous immediacy, is so valuable as an alternate form of knowledge to what eventually gets into print” (Taussig 2011:49).

Since 2011, when I first proposed a project on anthropology and drawing, I have been running a course called “Anthropology and Drawing Laboratory” with the goal of teaching students to conduct anthropological research while trying to draw during the ‘participant observation’ process. My adventure was both investigative and didactic, and involved a double challenge: (i) to teach drawing techniques that could be used in a very short term by anthropology students and (ii) to encourage them to practice this knowledge in small urban ethnographies that, in turn, would help me to think anthropological and graphically about the city of Rio de Janeiro (Kuschnir 2014).

My goal was for the drawings made in the field to be handled as material for analysis and for eventual presentation of the investigation’s findings. In adopting this approach, it is much more important *to learn a new form of seeing the*

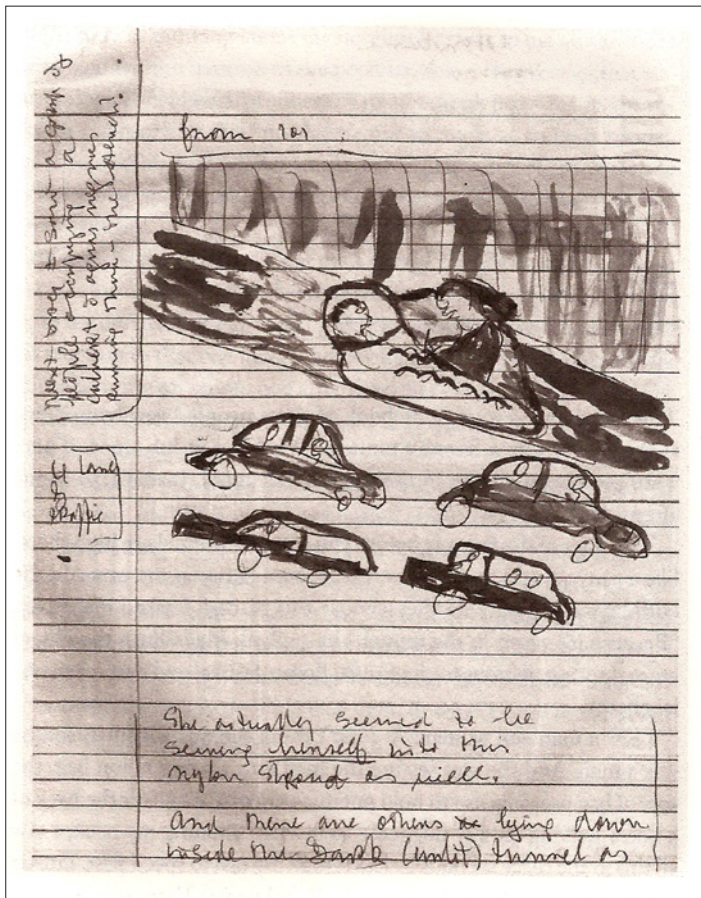


IMAGE 9 - SKETCHBOOK PAGE FACSIMILE INCLUDED IN I SWEAR I SAW THIS: DRAWINGS IN FIELDWORK NOTEBOOKS, NAMELY MY OWN, P. 2.

world than ‘drawing well.’ In fact it is easy to discern the proximity between this objective and the kind anticipated in the teaching of ethnographic methodology. Briefly, the objectives of the Laboratory workshops for students were: a) To be able to draw, while deconstructing the idea of the ‘perfect’ or realistic drawing; b) Learn through drawing: drawing as a way to understand; c) Learn to focus on slow and careful observation of people and places around us; d) Get to know some part of the city and its people; e) Undertake ethnographic research using drawing as way of seeing, registering and apprehending; f) And the final goal: Write an illustrated paper about a specific group and its symbolic narratives.

In our analysis of the final ethnographic works composed of texts and drawings produced during this process, it becomes clear just how much the skills acquired by the student researchers generated positive developments for them (Kuschnir 2014). The experience of drawing in the field and the reflections developed from the existing literature led us to propose a list of eleven potential benefits of the use of drawing in ethnography, as I enumerate below. I am completely aware that the empirical material presented here does not originate from in-depth ethnographic monographs. The sketches and situations that illustrate our arguments were ethnographic exercises that should be viewed as such. Nevertheless, I hope the reader agrees that they prove to be stimulating sources of anthropological insights.

1) DRAWING IN A SKETCHBOOK IS AN ACCESSIBLE, VERY LOW-COST TOOL FOR REGISTERING VISUAL DATA

A first topic to note is the low cost of drawing material compared to photographic and film equipment. Sketching gear is a very handy tool both in terms of actual costs and in terms of the costs involved in training students, given that teaching the necessary skills does not require sophisticated laboratories or expensive machinery. During the course “Anthropology and Drawing Laboratory” we had a three-hour workshop to learn how to make our own notebooks with everyday materials. The sketchbook was made using plain white A4 sheets of paper, an elastic binder and craft paper to make the cover that was later customized by the students (see images 10).

Making your own ‘field notebooks’ is also a way of foregrounding the importance of this documentation tool for ethnographers. Alongside the practical activity, we also discussed the use of sketchbooks in various areas of knowledge, including design, geography, arts, architecture and anthropology. The goal was to view the ethnographer as a ‘visual thinker’ too, as Lester (2014: 193) defined Da Vinci. Thinking along these lines makes it easier to realize that the ability to produce graphic records is accessible to anyone, and that you do not have to be an illustrator (or to get an illustrator to work with you) in order to use drawings in ethnography.



Once immersed in the fieldwork process, the sketchbook becomes more and more marked by its owner and the investigation. Notebooks become stained, dirty, torn or wet with rain, spilled beverages or other liquids. The kind of binding we used made it possible to add or subtract inner sheets depending on the researcher's requirements. The notebook covers were also customized with collaged papers, fabrics and other materials (as pictured in the image 10). All these processes forge an identity that transforms the notebook into a memory object of the ethnographic experience. As emphasized earlier, it becomes a unique tool that mixes not only "images and words" (Ramos 2010) but also "inner and outer worlds" (Taussig 2011).

2) THE SKETCHBOOK AND OTHER DRAWING TOOLS PROVIDE A PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR THE RESEARCHER

To be able to draw can help the anthropologist feel less lonely and uncomfortable in the field, a place where sometimes knowing what to do is difficult. It is very common to think that 'nothing is happening' in front of your eyes while you are undertaking fieldwork. That is how it is supposed to be. However, when engaged in drawing, both students and professional ethnographers report feeling calmer, more patient and productive. At the same time, drawing helps them to become more focused on observing and listening. In one self-reflection, a student reported that drawing made her realize how much she had been unaware of the world around her previously, the scenes and aspects of everyday life that passed unnoticed from haste and lack of attention. As Taussig testifies: "I like drawing, and in a strange way that I do not understand it settles me into my surroundings even though the act of drawing can be unsettling" (2011:30).

To have a sketchbook is also an essential tool when anthropologists need to learn complex processes with multiple steps and tools in the field. This point was more intensely explored in

IMAGE 10 - STUDENTS FROM THE FIRST CLASS OF THE "DRAWING AND ANTHROPOLOGY LABORATORY" AT THE END OF A SKETCHBOOK BINDING WORKSHOP. AFTERWARDS, THE NOTEBOOKS (TOP RIGHT) BECAME A PERSONAL, FOND OBJECT (BOTTOM RIGHT).

the third edition of the course (run in 2014), which focused on artisans and manual labourers, such as road workers, carpenters, locksmiths, chemical workers, taxidermists, wool artisans, garbage collectors, among others. Various of these jobs involve complex procedures that needed to be drawn in order to be better understood. (The image that opens this article shows sketches of the workers who lay or repair the pavement made from Portuguese stones in Rio de Janeiro.)

A crucial aspect of going into the field to draw in a sketchbook is that the researcher is *seen* rather than being just someone who observes. Also the researcher does not look like an ‘investigator-researcher’ in the eyes of the public. As one student put it, he reaches a *sui generis* place as an ‘artist-researcher,’ apparently more empathetic, less invasive or inquisitive, as we discuss later.

3) DRAWING CAN PROVIDE A WAY TO RECORD AND DISCUSS MEMORIES (THOSE OF RESEARCHERS AND THEIR INTERLOCUTORS)

A graphic record also operates as a memory record. On our course, we use this idea to reveal the student’s preconceptions about the field – how they expect it to be. This self-analysis lies at the core of anthropological thinking, as so many authors have pointed out. Each student chose a place to conduct fieldwork and drew something based on their memory of it. Later they would compare these drawings made from memory with the observational sketches produced during fieldwork.

IMAGE 11 - SKETCH BY STUDENT PATRÍCIA DOMINGUES ROCHA PICTURING HER DRAWING HERSELF DURING FIELDWORK AT A HARE KRISHNA TEMPLE. THEY ACCEPTED AND ENCOURAGED HER TO DRAW BECAUSE IMAGE MAKING IS HIGHLY VALUED BY THE GROUP'S CULTURE.



A drawing can also function as a record enabling the visualization of people's memories. This is one of the central contributions of the article by Afonso & Ramos (2004) discussed earlier. Their innovative approach showed that pictorial representation can serve as a 'mnemonic device,' helping render "visible implicit meanings abstracted from the interviews" and having the ability "to open paths to reflexivity" (2004:87-88).

Another interesting topic is the possibility of using photographs taken during fieldwork to produce further drawings. In some situations, due to a lack of time or suitable working conditions, the students took photos for this purpose. This process may afford a more detached view (or an ampler one) of certain aspects of the research. As one student reported, for example, a photograph allowed her to see general patterns on the sidewalks of her research site, a fact that her visual memory failed to register. Drawing from the observation of a photograph can also speed up the epistemological process of producing new knowledge, different from the knowledge that we would possess without these supports (photo and drawing). Some students also made use of collages, mixing photographs and drawings (as mentioned by Wadle 2012). Others decided to draw on the photographed images, a creative resource suggested by one of the course workshops taught by our guest lecturer Andrea Barbosa (2012).

A fourth aspect of the relationship between drawings and memory was pointed out by several students, who agreed with the finding of Ramos concerning his travel diaries. For Ramos, drawing is a means to "fixate the memory and the visions of places and people" (2010:17). But while the production of graphic records may appear to be secondary, on returning from the field (or when writing an academic paper on the research) these drawings become a trigger for remembering the lived experiences. The same is argued by Berger (2005: 68) who recalls how a drawing became the 'immediate locus' of his memories of his father. And also by Taussig (2011:25) for whom "the notebook becomes not just the guardian of experience but its continuous revision as well."



IMAGE 12 - DRAWINGS MADE FROM IMAGINATION BY THE STUDENTS IN ORDER TO SHOW HOW THEY VISUALISE THE DOWNTOWN NEIGHBOURHOOD OF THE CITY WHERE THEY LIVE. THEY INDICATED NOISE, TRAFFIC, CITY LANDMARKS, MARKETS AND THE MULTIPLE COLOURS OF POPULAR STREET CULTURE.

4) DRAWING IN A SKETCHBOOK CAN BE AN INSTRUMENT TO EXTEND FIELDWORK, RECORD THE PASSAGE OF TIME, AND ANALYSE THE MEANING OF TIME

The act of drawing means that the researcher remains longer and more patiently in the field. This extended time can also be revealed through the ethnographic drawings themselves. This is a significant benefit of using a sketchbook, since prolonged time spent in the field forms the basis of anthropological research.

Students reported that drawing during fieldwork altered their perception of the passage of time. On many occasions, they mentioned that after finishing a drawing, they realized that one or two hours had gone by, yet the psychological feeling was that they had been working for much less time in situ. This sensation is reported by sketchers with some frequency. For Taussig, drawings “provide a welcome pause to the writing machine whereby another philosophy of representation and meditation takes over” (2011:30).

On the other hand, some researchers have noticed that the delay involved in the process of drawing may become a stress element during research where social actions take place at an accelerated pace. For example, student Mariana Barcelos, who worked with staff who organized celebrations, reports that her drawings were unable to keep up with the rapidly changing situations taking place before her eyes. So, she says, drawings must be perceived as a collection of overlapping moments, one that selects from field experiences, producing absences or ‘blanks’ in what has been observed. In her account, the drawing process is defined as a quest to abolish ‘disappearance,’ just as Berger sought to do when drawing his dead father (2005: 109). Unsurprisingly, the picture illustrating this topic is a house being demolished.

IMAGE 13 - STUDENT RAQUEL RIBEIRO DREW THESE IMAGES OVER THE COURSE OF THREE MONTHS OF FIELDWORK. SHE WAS INVESTIGATING A NEIGHBOURHOOD UNDERGOING A PROCESS OF URBAN GENTRIFICATION. WHEN SHE NOTICED THE HOUSE BEING DEMOLISHED, SHE KEPT RETURNING TO THE SITE TO DRAW UNTIL A SIGN BY PARADISE CONSTRUCTIONS APPEARED, ADVERTISING A NEW BUILDING TO BE BUILT THERE.



5) DRAWING IS AN ESSENTIAL TOOL FOR DOCUMENTING AND ANALYSING SPATIAL INFORMATION FROM RESEARCH SITES (MAPS, ROUTES, VIEWS AND PANORAMAS)

This is a benefit of sketchbooks that requires little explanation given that maps have never ceased to be integral to the anthropological enterprise. Our experience, however, generated two important lessons. First, by drawing their own maps and panoramic views, ethnographers were able to observe better the space of research and the social relations unfolding. Second, this record can be turned into a source for reflection and presented as one of the ethnographic findings. The students also considered the arrangement of their drawings on the sheet of paper as a way to think about the fieldwork space and how to convey to the reader-viewer's eyes a completed work that can help them picture the observed environment in perspective.

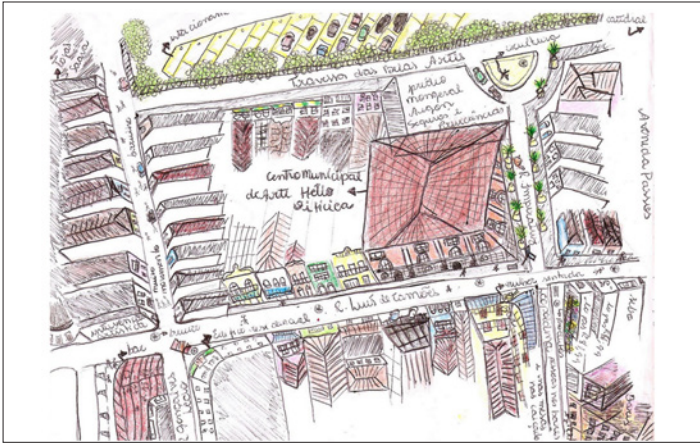


IMAGE 14 - HELIO OITICICA ART CENTRE AREA MAP MADE BY STUDENT LARISSA CARDOSO FOR A RESEARCH PROJECT ON THE GALLERY'S VISITORS DURING WEEKDAYS AND WEEKENDS. THE MAP HELPED HER UNDERSTAND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PEOPLE FROM THE AREA AND THE MUSEUM.

6) DRAWING CAN REFRESH THE OBSERVER'S EYES, GENERATING NEW POINTS OF VIEW TO UNDERSTAND THE 'NATIVES'

In urban research situations, many environments are already known, which makes it difficult to produce a sense of estrangement. Even in biological terms, the eyes are unable to discern everything they see. It is human nature need to select what we look at from the world around us. As Horowitz writes, the culture of researchers restricts what they see on the basis of what they expect to see. Thus, in many situations "we see least the things we see most".⁹ Drawing proved an effective way to 'mess' with this selection, helping the ethnographer transform the familiar into the exotic. When drawing, we can establish a new relationship with people and places, creating renewed understandings of their relationships, thoughts and spatially-oriented experiences. Many students reported that the experience of drawing allowed them to see and discern what was previously 'invisible' to their eyes.¹⁰ Wadle (2012) also calls attention to the ability of drawings to "evoke emotions and worldviews that would have remained unexpressed in oral narrations."

⁹ The quote (page 155) and other complex discussions on the act of 'looking' can be found in Horowitz (2013).

¹⁰ Here I recall the important debate on visibility and invisibility in social research: see Baptista & Nunes (2010).

IMAGE 15 - STUDENT NATHALYA FERNANDES DE SOUZA SKETCHED THE HIGH SCHOOL PREMISES WHERE SHE HAD BEEN CONDUCTING HER FIELDWORK FOR A FEW MONTHS. FOLLOWING OUR DRAWING CLASSES, SHE DECIDED TO DRAW IN THE SCHOOL BACKYARD. THE CHANGE IN POINT OF VIEW ALLOWED HER TO UNDERSTAND THAT MEANINGFUL SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOMS WERE IMPORTANT TO KEEPING STUDENTS MOTIVATED TO ATTEND SCHOOL



7) DRAWING HELPS THE OBSERVER SEE AND HEAR NEW THINGS

As Horowitz (2013:9) puts it: “We see but we do not see [...]. We see the signs, but not their meanings. We are not blinded, but we have blinders.” When drawing, we beat this ‘blindness’ and observe everything more carefully and for longer. This helps us see more details in the world around us, even when our goal is not to make a rigorous or a realistic drawing. As many authors have said, a drawing is made with the eyes, not the hands or the graphic marks that they produce (Edwards, 2001). In the process of seeing and drawing, the researchers indeed reported that new elements ‘emerged’ before them, like people, things and landscapes. In many cases, the collaboration of the research partners was an essential part of ‘showing up’ this new element. It was a process of learning – literally – to see with the eyes of others.

Drawing can lead the observer to notice things he or she is not supposed to see or understand. Through drawing, the researchers had the chance to learn about things of which they were previously unaware, such as tools, objects and even the ability to distinguish certain colours in the same way seen by their interlocutors (see Turner 2005). In a work about laying Portuguese stone pavements, for example, the ethnographers had to learn how to discern various shades of grey and to distinguish between a variety of materials such as sand, dust, cement and stone powder. This learning was stimulated by the need to draw, which in turn induced the need to ask and to listen – a process closely linked to collaborative methods of research, as we will discuss later (item 9). In many situations, especially among the group of researchers who worked with artisans, photography was unable to record the details, the minute pieces and the ways in which the craft workers handled their tools. As has been argued apropos scientific illustration, “drawing has the advantage that you can formulate an image much more precise than when doing a photo-

graph.” Moreover, “when consciously composing a drawing you have to be clear about what you want to show, and the visual representation becomes a statement in your line of argumentation.”¹¹

Several students reported that they felt that their auditory perception was enhanced while drawing, allowing them to capture ambient sounds better, as well as phrases and revealing conversations overheard in the observed setting. The practice also encouraged them to ‘listen more’ and to ‘talk less,’ a basic precept of good ethnography. One researcher who did her fieldwork in what was, for her, a very familiar place noticed that only after the observational process with drawings began was she able to hear the sound of birds and other animals in the environment. This sensation was not unanimous, though: for some, the opposite occurred. The task of drawing had to be interrupted when they wished to listen better or when they wanted to hold a conversation with an interlocutor. Some sketchers reported that they felt a kind of suspension of auditory perception, as we noted in item 3 regarding the perception of the passage of time.

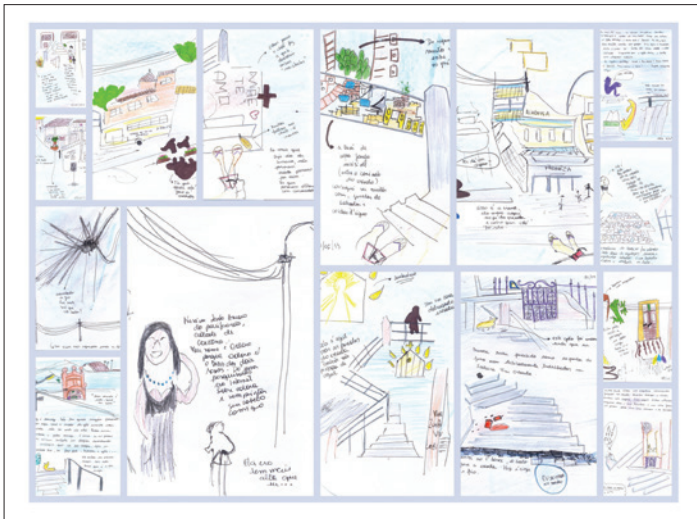


IMAGE 16 - SKETCHES BY STUDENT DIANA MELLO FOR A RESEARCH PROJECT ON A SERIES OF STEPS NEAR HER HOME IN THE SANTA TERESA NEIGHBOURHOOD, RIO DE JANEIRO. WHEN SHE STARTED TO DRAW, SHE BEGAN TO SEE THINGS SHE HAD NEVER SEEN BEFORE. SIGNS THAT SHE THOUGHT WERE SCRIBBLES TURNED OUT TO BE MESSAGES TO PEOPLE LIVING NEARBY. SHE WAS APPROACHED BY A TRANSGESTITE WHO WAS PROUD TO BE DRAWN AND HAPPY TO TELL HER ABOUT HER LIFE AND THAT OF HER NEIGHBOURS.

8) DIFFERENT TYPES OF DRAWING (AND THIS INCLUDES DIAGRAMS) CAN HELP RECORD AND DOCUMENT NOT ONLY OBJECTS AND VISUAL INFORMATION, BUT ALSO ABSTRACT CONCEPTS LIKE EMOTIONS, MOTIVATIONS AND SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

As shown in Leal (2008), most ethnographic drawings are made as a way to document objects, artefacts, and visual information. This reveals the type of research questions and the concepts of drawing that researchers have in mind (what we called the technical-taxonomic or ethnographic-technical style of drawing). The use of diagrams is an exception in this scenario as a design so heavily used in kinship studies – a significant ele-

¹¹ Both quotes are from Wettstein (2011). On the same topic, see Garavaglia & Menna (1998).



IMAGE 17 - WHILE CARRYING OUT FIELDWORK IN A PUBLIC SQUARE, THE STUDENT MAÍRA MAFRA SAW A MAN WHO SLEEPS ON THE FLOOR REGULARLY. SHE INITIALLY FAILED TO NOTICE THAT THE OLD TRASHCAN NEXT TO HIM WAS NOT ACTUALLY A RUBBISH BIN. AS SHE DREW, SHE BECAME AWARE THAT THE BIN WAS IN FACT HIS CUPBOARD, A PLACE WHERE HE CAREFULLY STORES HIS THINGS, DESPITE (OR BECAUSE OF) HIS SITUATION OF LIVING IN THE STREET.

ment in the multiple expressions of 'anthropological graphisms' (Ramos 2010: 21). The use of diagrams to illustrate unseen aspects of society has also been used to represent networks (Mitchell 1969), social connections of various types (Becker 2013) and the aforementioned complex Gell 'Strathernograms' (2006: 29), to name but a few.

Hence, what we call drawing is not necessarily an observational register that seeks verisimilitude with something that can be seen. It may be the other way around. For Taussig, a drawing "acquires its own reality" where "imagination and documentation coexist." After trying to draw a ghost, he argues: "I then tell myself that the result is pitiful but the struggle worth it because I looked at colour and I looked at the night and the river like I never had before and saw what I take so for granted with new eyes. Is there any activity that so rewards failure?" (Taussig 2011:31).

It is an innovation to realize that *observational* drawing can also record abstract dimensions of social life. We can create an image that refers to a relationship, a feeling, a motivation. Subsequently this image may help us gain a better understanding of our fieldwork conundrums. The bottom line is the researcher's stance to avoid seeing from what he knows, and to open up instead to new experiences and meanings. As Paul Valéry writes: "To see is to forget the name of the thing one sees" (cited in Horowitz 2013: 57).

The work of two of the students showed that drawings enable the researcher to see the creativity' of manual workers, who at first glance were just doing their job. Luisa Machado recalls her surprise on realizing that instead of following the line of the sidewalks as they had been instructed, the workers had decided to build a ramp (instead of a curb) due to the shortage of supplies. Creative improvisation is also clearly evident in the image illustrating this topic (below).

9) FIELDWORK DRAWING PROMOTES CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN RESEARCHERS AND THEIR INTERLOCUTORS, GENERATING CLOSENESS AND EMPATHY

It was a unanimous finding in our research group that drawing in the field encourages people to talk to the researcher. All students reported situations in which at least some of



IMAGE 18 - THIS IMAGE SHOWS THE MULTIPLE RESULTS OF A COLLECTIVE RESEARCH PROJECT ON THE CATS LIVING IN THE SAARA NEIGHBOURHOOD OF RIO DE JANEIRO. PEOPLE FOUND THE STUDENTS TRUSTWORTHY BECAUSE THEY COULD SEE THAT THEY WERE REALLY SKETCHING THE CATS. IT PROVED A PLEASANT WAY TO START A CONVERSATION. THE CATS WERE ON THE STREETS, BUT THEY WERE NOT STRAY CATS, AND THEIR STORY HELPED REVEAL THE SOCIAL NETWORKS BEHIND THEM.

his interlocutors expressed curiosity and a receptiveness and interest in talking about their ongoing projects. None of the students experienced an aggressive response from the public they wished to study. As noted above, this was also a key point in Ramos's experience (2010) in Ethiopia, where the author sensed that his sketchbook made him more 'human' in the eyes of the local people. We observed two complementary movements: drawing in a sketchbook can attract people around the sketcher, but can also provide a pretext for starting conversations with people the researcher wishes to talk to. In the experiments reported in the image 18, we took this second route. By asking for permission to draw stray cats, we had the opportunity to talk to the people who take care of these animals.

The question "can I sketch?" elicits a very different response compared to the question "can I take a photograph?" or "can I film?" In various fieldwork situations, we found what other scholars had already discovered: observational drawing is not an invasive or threatening approach. On the contrary, in some situations people specifically asked why the ethnographer did not take photos or film, while the sketchbook was welcomed. Most of the students' fieldwork interactions and dialogues emerged spontaneously from the act of drawing, without the need to formulate lots of questions. Wadle (2012) also appeals to the importance of visual language in establishing dialogues between researcher and interlocutors who do not speak the same language. By means of a sketchbook, they became "engaged in common sessions of drawing" and were able to achieve mutual learning. As we have seen, this theme of communication and collaboration is central too in the work of Ramos (2004, 2010), Afonso & Ramos (2004) and Taussig (2011) and is discussed immediately below (item 10).



IMAGE 19 - STUDENT LORAINÉ AMARAL CONDUCTED HER RESEARCH IN A BAR. BECAUSE OF HER SKETCHBOOK, PEOPLE BECAME INTERESTED IN WHAT SHE WAS DOING. TWO CHILDREN THOUGHT SHE WAS NOT A GOOD SKETCHER, SO THEY DECIDED TO DRAW THE WAITER MIGUEL FOR HER. MANY OF THE BAR'S CLIENTS BECAME INVOLVED IN THE RESEARCH, INTERESTED IN WHAT SHE WAS DOING, AND ALSO IN WHAT GRADE SHE HAD OBTAINED FROM THIS WORK.

10) DRAWING OPENLY IN A SKETCHBOOK DURING FIELDWORK CAN GENERATE DIALOGUE AND COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH

An open sketchbook can be a new way to share your research concerns and act as an invitation to talk about them. As stated in the previous section, this dialogue can be made through words but also through drawings and images.

Students who worked more closely with their informants reported strong collaboration generated by the ethnographic drawings as a research methodology. In many cases, the interlocutors were very interested in their sketches. Some participated explicitly, telling the researcher what he or she should draw and also helped in analysing their findings. In some cases, criticisms were made (“that isn’t drawn properly”) not for aesthetic reasons but because the person perceived that the anthropologist had not understood the object or the social setting. (Some researchers, however, did receive aesthetic criticism now and then.) In several studies, people watching the researcher’s work became more directly involved, helping to sort objects to be drawn (during a second field visit) or calling attention to angles, people, or experiences worth documenting in the sketchbook.

Collaborative research is a highlight in Afonso and Ramos (2004), where the memories recollection process involved the production of drawings that were later commented and re-drawn taking into account the respondents feedback. As summarized by Wadle (2012), drawing can help develop a “mutual collaboration, in which the informants were closely involved in controlling the recorded narrative and a representation of their stories, which were visually accessible for them,” as in Atkins’s comic-style ethnography.

In another fieldwork project (illustrated by the image that opens this article), collaboration between researchers and city

hall workers also spawned creative forms of documentation. The students made collages using sand and stone dust in their drawings. Portuguese stone pavement was also 'printed' on carbon paper and onto fabric with printing ink (final image on the right).

In some other cases, the researchers asked their informants to draw. One student recorded in her sketchbook drawings made by residents from the neighbourhood, seeking to document their recollections of the place. In another investigation, an interlocutor refused to draw, claiming he lacked the skill to do so. People's sketches often elicited jokes and fun games trying to recognize the physical characteristics of the person portrayed. In the example below, the student was assisted by two children, both keen to 'improve' her portrait of one of the waiters from the bar where the research took place.

11) DRAWING FIELDNOTES PROVIDES VISUAL DATA FOR SHARING THE RESULTS OF THE ETHNOGRAPHY (AND ALSO PROTECTS INFORMANT ANONYMITY)

As stated earlier, drawings produced during fieldwork make it easier for the audience to comprehend your research goals, developments and final results, allowing the generated data to be tested, reviewed and compared. Graphic visual language may not be 'universal' but it is much more accessible than written texts. Drawings can add considerably to the public dialogue on the topics raised by the ethnography. For Wadle (2012), this accessible language promotes ethnography among a wider public, a "necessary opening process for the anthropological researcher," amplifying its impact. "Instead of excluding informants from academic discourses about their own culture and way of living, anthropology could benefit from their critical readership," Wadle advocates (2012).

Another important aspect is that this material produces visual information from the field capable of preserving informant anonymity, a classic concern of the ethnographic enterprise, and especially relevant in urban anthropology. Wadle (2012) drew my attention to this problem in her review of Atkins's work on sexual encounters, where the latter author mixes landscape photographs with drawn portraits of people in vulnerable situations. For Newman (1998: 18), comic drawings can comprise an "experimentation in visual forms of ethnographic representation," provoking thought about "what counts for truth" and to "whose authority we submit in arriving at our fragile knowledge of the world."

Several of the people participating in the research asked the students to give them copies of the drawings for their own ends. One student, for example, authorized her drawings to be displayed on the website of the company she studied. Her interlocutors found that her images evoked an 'emotional approach' to their work. Another student was invited to present her findings to the entire team of the place where she conducted her fieldwork.

IMAGE 20 - DRAWINGS PRODUCED BY STUDENT ROSA RICHTER DURING A RESEARCH PROJECT ON GONÇALVES LEDO STREET, DOWNTOWN RIO DE JANEIRO. INFORMANTS DID NOT ACCEPT HER USING A FILM CAMERA BUT WERE HAPPY TO TALK WHEN SHE BROUGHT ALONG HER SKETCHBOOK. THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THEM EVOLVED INTO A MUTUAL COLLABORATION THAT HELPED HER COMPLETE HER ETHNOGRAPHY ON THE LOCAL WORKERS AND INHABITANTS.



These examples show the spirit of collaborative work expressed in section 9 above, when the material generated by ethnography is reframed and creatively appropriated by the world under study. The student Mariana Barcellos noted that the act of drawing in the field also gives ‘autonomy to the subjectivity of the researcher,’ questioning the logic of scientific work, which tends to obliterate this authorship while valuing the technical report, producing a ‘cold’ narrative of the results. Several students registered this aspect, feeling happy to be able to express some of their personal style in the material produced for the final work. Their works display, in part, the character of “ethnographic artistic drawing” described by Leal (2008: 123). The aesthetic power of these visual records is also highlighted positively in Afonso & Ramos (2004: 87).

Showing drawings in the way that they were produced in fieldwork is not only a kind of proof of what was observed – as Taussig put it in his book title *I swear I saw this* – but also a way to avoid the fallacy of disguising and distorting the inherent subjectiveness of the ethnographic enterprise (2011:49). It is also with a similar distrust of the discursive games of anthropological writing that Ramos appreciates the testimony of drawings. Limited by the urgency of materials and technology, the sketcher does not intend to ‘describe’ or ‘mimic’ a lived or observed reality. The sketcher becomes an “attendance sheet (been there, seen that)” that “contains in itself, invisible, the testimony of a look, the hypothesis of a memory and a sign of an osmosis of the senses and of *Dasein*, between who drew and who or what was drawn” (Ramos 2010: 19). Through a fascinating story of his research in Ethiopia, Ramos calls our attention to the limits that exist in practice to producing images for intercultural communication (the ‘intercultural *ekphrasis*,’ as he puts it). One must be careful with how these visual productions are “perceived, handled and interpreted” since not all images are possible (Ramos 2004:149).

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The notion of 'ethnographic drawing' contains many meanings and possibilities still to be explored. As we saw at the outset, few books exist on the subject and there is an evident 'invisibility' of this resource in the field of visual anthropology. It is as though a drawing or dealing with drawn images were not an option amid the range of possibilities for documenting ethnographies.

Even when the literature deals directly with the subject of 'fieldnotes,' the theme of drawing is minimal or non-existent. Often we open classic monographs like *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* and simply do not see the drawings there, nor the maps and diagrams included as part of its visual language. Anthropologists and editors contribute to this invisibility of drawings when they fail to indicate their authorship or add captions or comments concerning the materials used or the forms of reproduction.¹² And just as an exercise in thinking comparatively, when we turn to literary, artistic or botanical publications, for example, it seems obvious that drawings are a vital part of the work in which they are embedded. The images are impregnated with meaning: from their authors themselves to the variety of frameworks that affect their appearance, such as tools, techniques, styles, focus of interest, production processes, etc.

In this article I sought to valorise and understand the multiple possibilities of ethnographic drawings, exploring their potential relations to other forms of documentation and research in anthropology. In the process, I worked with a provisional concept of drawing that encompasses the kind of illustrations included here. I am aware, however, of the need to deepen the discussion on diagrams and maps, which by themselves comprise a quite complex graphical universe (cf. Becker 2009, Gell 2006). I also need to make it clear that several of the eleven benefits of drawing summarized here can be achieved, of course, through other types of anthropological record, visual or otherwise.

Although the ethnographic method is very much alive in anthropology and other fields of knowledge, I think we are still afraid to discuss its challenges. We can even say, then, that there exists an eleventh contribution of drawing to the anthropological approach. After all, the meetings between people interested in working towards the study of social life have positive consequences that extend beyond any academic results per se – because this is the kind of encounter that produces a better society, more supportive, collaborative and respectful of social differences.

¹² Even photographs are often taken for granted, as shown in Samain's excellent paper about Malinowski's pictures (1995).

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