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SOBRE DESENHO E IMAGEM  
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DRAWING AND ECOLOGY

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*Tree as markings, 2022.*

Carvão, tinta-da-china e giz sobre tela de algodão (lona), 56x75,5cm

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In this issue of *PSIAX: Studies and Reflections on Drawing*, dedicated to the theme “Drawing and Ecology”, we aim to explore some of the possible intersections between drawing and ecology. Reflecting on drawing, as well as its diverse practices and forms of expression, plays a key role in our attempts to understand and make sense of its many uses. Whether as an artistic process of experimentation and invention or as a means of acquiring knowledge, drawing has, since its origins, carried a pre-linguistic impulse, manifesting itself in the elemental gesture of designating and representing.

Ecology, as a field of study concerned with the relationship between living beings and their environment, finds in drawing a powerful tool for understanding, translating, and even imagining complex natural systems and their connections. The act of drawing—its ability to translate the real into forms and images—enables this interaction with the natural world, allowing the observer to approach nature not only with the aim of representing it but also to establish a dialogue with it, reflecting on its vulnerability, complexity, and beauty.

In this edition, we present five articles and nine projects that demonstrate how drawing can serve as a means of ecological awareness, offering not only an aesthetic platform but also a space for political action and reflection on the environmental challenges we currently face. Through the exploration of various techniques—from ink drawing to botanical prints—the featured artists and researchers show how drawing can be a form of activism, a means of preserving, protecting, and understanding the ecosystem in which we are immersed.

In a world increasingly marked by intense environmental crises, drawing, more than an artistic practice, becomes an act of resistance—a conscious gesture that keeps alive the dialogue between humans and the planet. Drawing not only documents but also provokes, warns, and transforms, fostering a new, more integrated perception of the natural world, attuned to the complex interactions that sustain it.

This issue of *PSIAX* thus reflects the relevance of drawing not merely as an aesthetic language, but as a medium for deeper ecological engagement and activism, demonstrating how drawing can contribute to building a more harmonious and conscious relationship with nature.

In their text “The desert begins behind the hill”, Andrea Iten and Max Spielmann question whether drawing is ecological and whether it can be understood as an appeal or medium capable of influencing environmentally responsible behaviour. The authors explore the universe of drawing, addressing the rela-

tionship between body, paper, charcoal, and space, and argue that drawing, as a medium of connection and interaction, becomes essential for ecological action.

In “Dibujo y Juego. Sensibilidades colectivas en la crisis ecológica”, Camilo García Martínez reflects on the relationship between art, design, and the multiple socio-environmental crises we face. He proposes drawing as a way to reconnect humanity with deep-seated memories, restoring the perception of interdependent relationships which, through mutual responsibility, encourage the intertwining of natural cycles. His critique of anthropocentrism and the separation between humans and nature—as well as the emphasis on economics—reveals how art can contribute to a renewed understanding of our connection with the planet and other living beings.

In “Beyond the needle - Re-imagining firebugs through artistic exploration”, Charlotte Dorn examines the limitations of traditional scientific representations of firebugs, advocating for an artistic approach that reveals their vitality and ecology. She suggests that, instead of the static and decontextualised images often used in science, drawing can more dynamically express these insects’ relationships with their ecosystems, fostering a more empathetic and holistic understanding.

Orlando Vieira Francisco’s article “Tracing the Mountains: reflexões gráficas no contexto da Crítica Infraestrutural e crise climática” explores the interconnection between infrastructure, extractivism, and the climate crisis through artistic research developed in the project “From the Top of the Mountains We Can See Invisible Monuments”. The author analyses tensions between technological advancement and community resilience, using metaphors and imagery, such as the “negative mountain”, to propose new ways of inhabiting and living within landscapes. The text addresses the complexity of environmental issues, inviting reflection on environmental justice, capitalism, and colonialism.

“Entre os cientistas e os artistas - O Impacto do projeto ‘As Potencialidades dos Insetos nos Ecossistemas’ na atuação de um professor inovador” is an interdisciplinary project developed at Francisco Franco Secondary School. It stems from collaboration among the Social Sciences and Humanities, Visual Arts, and Science and Technology, and explores the role of insects in ecosystems. The initiative led to the production of a natural pigment, extracted from the *Dactylopius coccus* insect, which was used in artistic practices, enhancing the relationship between science and art as a means of promoting democratic and creative citizenship among students.

The first project in this issue, “AMOR LOVE

AMOUR AMORE LIEBE 爱 ЛЮБОВЬ אה אגאפּײַ” by Ana Pérez-Quiroga, treats drawing as a practice and reflection of the constant search for self-knowledge, functioning as a critical tool of self-awareness. By combining thought, observation, and critique, drawing emerges as an expanded field, where action and concept intersect, leading to deep reflection on the human relationship with the environment and with others. The drawing series is proposed as a manifesto of affective citizenship, highlighting love and care as fundamental forces in the relationship between humans and the Earth, in its universal and planetary dimension.

In “Abismar-se do Vivido”, a collaborative project by artists Graça Magalhães and Eliane Beytrison, drawing is used to recover and document the memory of a village almost destroyed by the 2017 wildfires, reflecting on how art can act as a force of resistance and reinterpretation of the landscape. Through memory, drawing serves as an “echo” of lived experience, preserving it from being lost to time and oblivion.

“Creatures of the Deep”, a project by artist Justin Carter, explores the Scottish landscape and its relationship with the military complex of the Coulport naval base. The artist uses symbolic elements of the site, such as rust and oak branches, to create a series of drawings that explore the coexistence between nature and culture. The project proposes a new perspective on the relationship between humans and the natural environment, challenging binary notions of nature and culture.

Lídia Cruz and Afonso Portela, in collaboration with NABU-Berlin in the project “Species Protection in Buildings”, contribute to a similar reflection, using drawing to raise awareness and educate on the importance of integrating urban species into building practices, ensuring that urban areas respect and preserve local fauna.

In the project “9 cores, 3 geografias”, Marta Leite explores the relationship between drawing, ecology, and territory by mapping the flora of three regions—Berlin, Bío-Bío (Chile), and Covilhã (Portugal)—with the aim of using their biodiversity to create natural pigments. This project offers a new way of perceiving and reinterpreting the landscape, where textile art intertwines with sustainable and environmentally conscious practices.

“Ruines Alpines”, a project initiated in August 2024 by artist Peter Schreuder, documents disused winter sports facilities in the Swiss Alps. As global warming and climate change intensify, many of these infrastructures have become ruins, the result of diminishing snowfall in ski resorts located between 1,000 and 2,000 metres altitude. By combining contemporary photography with archival materials—old resort maps

and images from the golden age of Alpine tourism—Ruines Alpines seeks to reveal the traces of an era that significantly shaped the landscape, questioning the future of these geographies shaped by tourism.

Based on the distinction made by Deleuze and Guattari between tracing and mapping—the latter being an act of experimentation in direct contact with reality—Sofia Perry proposes the project “Mapear o Verde: Reinterpretando o Plano Diretor Municipal de Braga”. In architecture, drawing is more than a tool of expression; it is a way of thinking and representing space—an invitation to observe attentively the places we inhabit. In the textile realm, the technique of botanical printing also provides a way of drawing, using natural pigments extracted from plants to create lasting impressions on fabric.

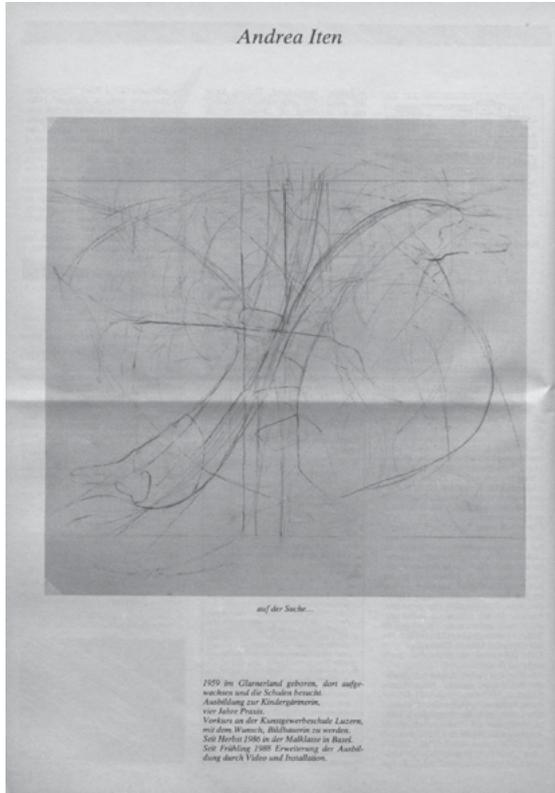
In the final project presented, “All That Is of Value Is Defenceless”, Stefaan van Biesen starts from the premise that the way we represent nature shapes our collective perception of the environment. Before photography and technical reproducibility, drawing and painting were the primary means of constructing and transmitting the image of the landscape. If, in the past, art sought to mirror nature, it eventually came to be shaped by the image created by art itself. In his works, van Biesen proposes drawing as a silent, empathetic, and attentive gesture—a form of listening and relating to the natural environment. His actions, performances, and interdisciplinary interventions reveal tensions between nature and culture, pointing to the vulnerability of ecosystems and the ethical responsibility we hold as cultural agents.

In all these articles and projects, drawing is revealed as a fundamental practice, not only for representation but also as a catalyst for social and environmental transformation. They invite us to rethink our relationships with the environment and reflect on the urgent need to act on matters concerning biodiversity preservation and ecological balance. Beyond visual testimonies, aesthetic operations, or expressions of ethical and political stances, these are above all calls for attention and action, urging us to care for the Earth.

Special thanks to Leonor Neves for the drawing that illustrates the cover of this issue. The editors also extend their gratitude to all those who submitted their proposals to our call for papers and visual projects. Finally, a heartfelt thank you to all reviewers for their generous contribution in evaluating the submitted works.

A final note: once again, we have chosen to publish the texts in the original language in which they were written. Articles and other texts follow or do not follow the orthographic agreement, in accordance with the preference of each author.

Fig. 1 *Auf der Suche nach der Mitte*, charcoal drawing on paper, 1988.  
© Andrea Iten.



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