Design and Somatic Experience: An Empirical Approach to Drawing Through Experiential Anatomy

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1. ABSTRACT
We can activate different parts of the brain to stimulate creativity in drawing and design. While most pedagogy has focused on right brain-left brain differences, we stimulated different levels of the brain — cortical and sub-cortical. “Experiential anatomy,” “somatics,” and neuroscience provide the theoretical framework. This quasi-experimental research compares and contrasts 136 sets of drawings of handles and lamps produced in 7 trials after stimulating the neo-cortex with those produced after stimulating sub-cortical parts of the brain. The two different cognitive states produced predicted design differences: straight, small, two-dimensional drawings morphed into curvilinear, large, and three-dimensional drawings of the same objects. Implications for design pedagogy and the history of “organic architecture” are discussed.

Keywords: design pedagogy, architectural pedagogy, somatics, drawing, organic design, quasi-experimental research in design.

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