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Embodied Drawing with the Forest

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Abstract
This article investigates how drawing, as a sensory and embodied practice, emerges through exploratory engagement with materials and the forest, and how temporal and environmental forces become part of both experience and process. Over 1.5 years, the artist repeatedly returned to a specific forest site to create large-scale charcoal drawings in dialogue with snow, wind, rain, and warm summer days. The practice evolved from a desire for connection and a response to digital fatigue—a longing to engage hands, body, and materials. Situated within an arts-based research methodology, the study draws on ideas from sensory ethnography and employs thick description, video and photographic documentation, and 25 large-scale drawings. Drawing on theories of embodiment, the article advances an understanding of the "knowing body" as deeply interwoven with materials, environments, and the materiality of the world. The findings are discussed through three themes: (1) creating connections through drawing; (2) temporality and rhythm; and (3) the poetic and multisensory dimensions of drawing with the forest. Through the material flow of charcoal, the fragility of paper, and the forest's textures, rhythms, and changing conditions, drawing becomes a way of forming situated, meaningful connections with the surroundings and of experiencing the world differently. Each drawing expresses traces of these encounters and offers a poetic, embodied response to the forest's rhythms, fragility, and impermanence, pointing toward a way of knowing grounded in slowness, attentiveness, and the making of connections with one's surroundings through drawing.

Keywords
drawing practice; embodied practice, materiality; tactile engagement; co-creation; sensory awareness

1. Introduction

As *I move into the snow-covered landscape on the first day, the forest appears pure and untouched, like a blank sheet of white paper. The forest lies wrapped in light, feather-soft snow; the cold bites, far below zero. My backpack is filled with charcoal and camera equipment. Snow crunches sharply beneath my boots, icy air stings my cheeks, and a tingling anticipation runs through my body. The drawing has already begun before the first line touches the paper. I feel that something momentous is about to happen.*
By the river, I come upon a small clearing. I fasten the large white sheet between two tall spruce trees. The cold allows no time for hesitation. I begin to draw. With wide sweeps of my arm, my whole body engaged, I lay down the first charcoal lines on the paper.

(Description of the beginning of drawing with the forest. See Figure 1)



Figure 1. Into the forest on the first day of the drawing project.

In January 2022, I began returning to the same site in the forest near my home in Kongsberg, in Southeast Norway, to create large-scale charcoal drawings on paper. The project emerged after a long drought in my own drawing practice. For many years, I had been guiding university students in exploratory drawing, a deeply fulfilling part of my work, yet I longed to re-engage with my own artistic practice. At the same time, I had spent countless hours in front of a screen, writing about embodiment and the meaning of material interaction (Søyland, 2021). A state of digital fatigue had set in. It felt as though something dormant had been building within me, and large-scale drawing outdoors became an imperative. I wanted to draw, to engage my whole body, and to search for meaning in this particular forest context.

To draw can be "to assert presence, to mark connection; to make marks that hold something of ourselves and the world we inhabit" (Courage & McKeown, 2026, p. xix). Traditionally, drawing has served as a means of representation and a tool for communication, tied to practical human needs with a history that stretches back at least 73,000 years (Bjerkan, 2019). However, over the past 50–70 years a performative and exploratory approach to drawing has emerged, where open-ended encounter between body, materials and space take centre stage (Foá et al., 2020). This open, process-oriented practice transcends traditional boundaries of form and format in drawing. At its core is exploration: a dynamic interaction between body and materials where making takes precedence over the finished result, foregrounding curiosity, meaning-making, and physical engagement with the world (Foá et al., 2020). In this article, I situate my practice within this expanded field of drawing, and within a specific, recurrent encounter between body and forest.

1.1 The knowing body in drawing

I draw on an epistemological perspective that understands the mind as embodied (Gallagher, 2017) and emphasizes the "knowing body" as deeply entangled with materials, environments, and the materiality of the world. Embodied cognition theory in cognitive science (Gallagher, 2017) is grounded in Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception (1962/2005) and places the knowing body at the centre. Our primary access to the world occurs through sensation, movement, and bodily orientation rather than through theory or reflection. In this view, the body is always in relation to its natural, cultural, and social surroundings, and experience is situated, sensory, and embodied (Merleau-Ponty, 1962/2005), and drawing can be understood as an exploratory encounter with place, process, and materials that unfold through embodied engagement. The significance of the body itself can easily be overlooked in a culture where the visual and the digital dominate, and perhaps especially the sense of touch, even though touch is crucial and deeply interwoven with our broader sensory perception and cannot be separated from other senses, materials, or the surrounding environment (Paterson, 2009, p. 129). I carry this perspective forward in the article.

Drawing tools can be seen as extensions of the body, closely tied to our movements and perception. Merleau-Ponty (1962/2005) describes tools as integral to bodily understanding, likening a blind person's cane to an extension of the body that enables experience of the world. Similarly, drawing tools are incorporated into our action intentionalities as experientially transparent extensions of the body, mediating and extending perception as we engage in the world (Gallagher, 2017, p. 10). In this study, I approach whole-body drawing in the forest as such embodied, tool-mediated perception in action.

1.2 Time, place, and materiality in situated drawing

Experience is always shaped by what has already been lived and by the anticipation of what is still unfolding. Henri Bergson's notion of durée refers to this lived time: a continuous stream in which moments blend and past and present intertwine in consciousness (Kolstad, 1998, pp. 5–17). Bergson argues that such lived time cannot be fully captured by chronological, clock-based time; rather, duration links memory, past, present, and future into a unified, qualitative experience (Kolstad, 1998, p. 15). Intuition is central in this perspective (Kolstad, 1998, p. 119). In the following, I use this perspective to explore how memories of previous sessions, bodily habits, and emerging impressions may fold into each new encounter with the forest, and how such temporal layering is experienced in the act of drawing.

We come to know the properties and potentials of materials through action, in ways closely connected to the body. Drawing on perspectives on materiality, I understand materiality as both process and time. Anthropologist Tim Ingold describes how materials "flow" with time, suggesting that materials are simultaneously temporal and processual (Ingold, 2007, p. 14). The forest site in this study, and its materials, is imbued with meaning and is constantly changing within a Norwegian climate that shifts from 20 degrees below zero to over 30 degrees above. Snow, ice, mud, insects, wind, and heat shape the conditions under which drawing takes place. In this study, I approach the forest as an active, situated condition that may co-shape the practice, see Figure 2. I build on an understanding that a place can carry meaning, memories, and cultural identities; it is constantly alive and temporally inflected (Woolham & Journeaux, 2026, pp. 1–2).

Researcher and artist Anette Højlund argues that "we draw to see, understand, grasp, and make sense of things, but we also draw to encounter what we cannot understand" (Højlund, 2019, p. 3). In a previous study, I similarly found that drawing was most successful when I responded to situational affordances and engaged openly with the materials, underscoring the central role of openness and embodied knowledge (Søyland, 2024). See Figure 2. Drawing is often described as immediate, spontaneous, and direct—an authentic practice that is always relational, emerging between body, senses, attention, and materials (Fjørtoft, 2024, p. 9). In this article, I further explore this immediacy and the relational interweaving of bodily movement, materials, reflection, and phenomena in the forest.



Figure 2. At my place, drawing with the forest.

2. Research question and implementation of the study

This article examines the following research question: How does exploratory whole-body drawing in the forest unfold, and what emerges through this embodied, sensory encounter between body, materials, place, and time?

2.1 Data collection

To investigate explorative whole-body drawing, I draw on ideas from sensory ethnography (Pink, 2015), which I understand as part of an arts-based research (ABR) methodology (Barone & Eisner, 2012). Sensory ethnography builds on the understanding that our senses are interconnected (Pink, 2015, p. 123) and offers an embodied form of ethnography that moves beyond text and visual representation to engage with the sensory, the non-verbal, and experiential knowledge (Pink, 2015, p. 160). This is in line with Merleau-Ponty's (1962/2005) phenomenological emphasis on sensation as the core of perception.

From January 2022 to August 2023, I created 25 large-scale drawings in the forest. During this period, I returned to the same place at regular intervals and worked with charcoal and large sheets of paper (2×1.5 meter). Sensory ethnography is particularly valuable for studying a body-based drawing practice, as it provides an inside perspective and supports deep, reflective engagement with subjective experience and its broader implications. The study is supported by audiovisual documentation: video recordings, photographs, and written notes. Notes were made immediately after each drawing session, describing what appeared through the drawing experience.

2.2 Analysis

In the analysis, I reviewed the video recordings to examine my movements and the sounds generated by me, the materials, and the environment during the drawing process. Watching the video reactivated my memory of the process. I also studied my written reflections and my photographs. In line with Pink's (2015, p. 142) view of audiovisual material as intertwined with memory and embodied experience, these materials formed the basis for reflection. I developed thick descriptions of selected drawing processes to unpack reflections, movements, and associations arising from the explorations, to capture what stood out as central. Drawing on an ABR methodology (Barone & Eisner, 2012), I used a poetic language. The photographs were also examined to focus on what revealed itself as particularly interesting, that is, what captured my attention. This process of selection and editing of the visual material is also part of the analysis. The drawings themselves contribute to answering the research question by including intuitive, felt forms of knowledge that emerge from ethnographic materials and experience.

The analysis is thus shaped by the expressive qualities of the drawings that captured my attention during the drawing process. I have not conducted formal image analysis, but I have participated in three exhibitions featuring the drawings and discussed the works with experts in the field; these dialogues influenced my perception of the drawings and my selection of examples.

In qualitative and arts-based research, concepts such as trustworthiness and credibility are central. The aim of qualitative findings is not generalizability; rather, it is to offer a meaningful contribution to the understanding of human experience (Stake, 2010, pp. 56–58). Even if the findings cannot be directly transferred to other contexts, they may still be useful and relevant in related situations.



Figure 3. The finished drawing #1 is hanging in the forest.

3. Thick descriptions and Photos from the Drawing Processes

Below are selected thick descriptions and photos from drawing sessions conducted between, highlighting the sensory, temporal, and the dimensions of drawing with the forest.

3.1 Making Connections with the Forest

#1: It is bitterly cold, several degrees below freezing. A large sheet of paper is fastened between two trees, and I begin drawing. With broad, sweeping charcoal movements, I let the paper respond to my energy. I work with the body's axes – movements where the entire length of my arm sweeps in an arc from the top of the sheet to its lower edge. I fall into a rhythm; I draw and allow myself to become immersed in the process, see Figure 3.

I shift fluidly between expressive lines and brief pauses to observe, bringing the drawing to life. My senses are heightened. The lines are dynamic and powerful, carrying a surprisingly strong expression. The pulse of nature – the sheet yielding slightly because it is not fixed to a wall, giving way beneath my hand, and the sound of the river moving in the background – becomes part of the rhythm.



Figure 4. The drawing #2 in the snow-covered landscape.

#2: *No one has walked the path toward the river since the last snowfall. When I arrive, I feel deep inner calm and joy. It still feels like a getting-to-know-you phase with this place. My movements are deliberate yet intense; my body, the paper, and the forest seem in harmony. I work fast, stepping back briefly to assess the composition and decide instinctively where to draw next. The process is physically demanding; I work for almost two hours without a break, pulse racing.*
I move my arm in wide arcs from the upper middle edge of the sheet down to the bottom, repeating large, rhythmic movements. Curved counter-forms appear. When the charcoal does not leave the marks I imagine, I shift to quick, sharp, rhythmic lines. I work with large forms, crossing curved lines with angular strokes that create planes, maintaining a steady rhythm of material and place, body and paper, see Figure 4. Now and then I step back, look, and quickly decide how to proceed. I am completely absorbed; the work becomes almost like a workout, and the expression turns into something very different from what I had envisioned. Something new emerges in the lines and planes. I feel one with the paper and the forest, leaving rhythmic traces of a body in motion.

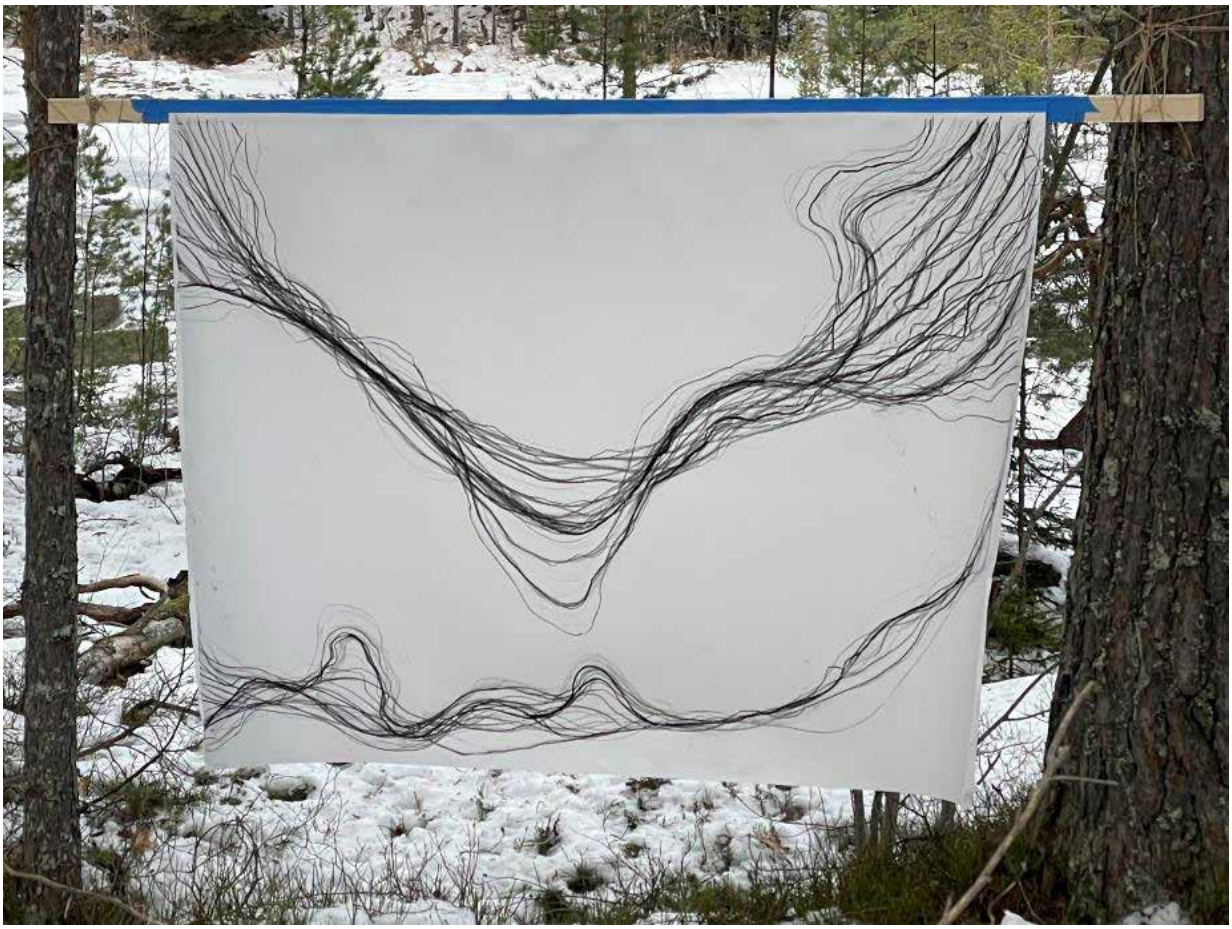


Figure 5. Organic floating lines in drawing #5.

#3: *The weather is milder. A sense of calm fills me as I draw long, flowing lines. My movements are more deliberate, and the lines become softer and more organic. A quiet dialogue between me, the paper, and the surroundings. On days when I cannot draw, I long to return. I feel grounded, as if I am returning to something known, a place of rest. I begin drawing at a steady pace, taking time to step back and look. I feel more in touch with what I am doing, and this balance is visible in the lines.*

I use a harder graphite stick for making marks, twisting my wrist slightly to produce varied, organic and flowing lines, see Figure 5. I work slowly, with an even breath, focused on how planes and forms emerge, and on how the two main shapes play against each other, searching for both dynamism and presence.



Figure 6. Drawing #8 on the ground, light creates highlights and shadows on the surface, and melting snow mixes with the charcoal.

#4-7: *Not every session flows smoothly. One day, the wind disrupts my work; another, internal restlessness prevents me from fully connecting with the place and the drawing. At one point, I feel so calm that the drawing lacks energy and presence, becoming too careful and static. Such moments are part of the process, revealing its ebb and flow.*

3.2 Shaped by Wind and Materials

#8: As time passes, the initial excitement of the project fades, giving way to a quieter, more reflective engagement. On a windy day, the paper curls at the edges, and I feel frustration creeping in. Despite the calm of being in "my" place in the forest, I struggle to find the same drive. When I begin drawing, the wind catches the paper, pulling it toward me and disrupting my movements. I decided to adapt, working with the forces around me. The wind eventually tears the paper from its place, sending it to the ground. Frustrated but determined, I let go of control and embrace the moment.

I draw directly on the paper as it lies in the snow, feeling the ground's texture through it, see Figure 6. Snow and ice leave their marks, blending with the charcoal to create new textures. The experience becomes a physical and tactile collaboration with the environment. Melting snow alters the materials, softening the paper and mixing it with charcoal. At one point, the paper tears, leaving a hole that I find beautiful.



Figure 7. Drawing #10 on the forest floor.

3.3 On the Forest Floor

#10: Inspired by previous material experiments, I start drawing with the paper placed flat on the ground. I fold the paper, creating organic forms, and draw lines along the creases, see Figure 7. Kneeling on the paper, I work intuitively, letting the folds guide the composition. The process is repetitive yet freeing, alternating between bursts of energy and moments of reflection. I continue until dusk, when the growing darkness forces me to stop.



Figure 8. Drawing #16 hanging in the forest and a detail of the drawing.

3.4 The Body and the Three-Dimensional Drawings

#16: I work directly with my body, shaping the paper with my hands and pressing it against me. This creates an intimate connection between me and the material. The drawing, hung on a line in the forest, moves with the wind, interacting with its surroundings. I move around the drawing as I work, approaching the surfaces in new ways. The drawing interacts with the surroundings; it feels as though I am shaping and weaving it into the landscape itself, see Figure 8.



Figure 9. Drawing #23 moving in the wind

3.5 The Wind That Breathes Life

#23 During a period of strong winds, I became fascinated by their interaction with the drawings. One drawing folds by the wind into a triangular shape, gliding along the line before settling against a tree, gently swaying, see Figure 9.

#25 Another drawing, shaped through multiple processes, has areas where the paper has worn thin. As the wind lifts it, the movement feels alive, like the breathing of a large, aquatic creature. Fragility, impermanence, and transformation become central as the drawing embodies the forces of nature and time.

4. Discussion of findings

This discussion addresses the research question: How does exploratory whole-body drawing in the forest unfold, and what emerges through this embodied, sensory encounter between body, materials, place, and time? The findings are organised into three interrelated themes: (1) Creating connections through drawing; (2) Temporality and rhythm; and (3) The poetic and multisensory dimensions of drawing with the forest.

4.1 Creating Connections Through Drawing: The Forest, Touch, and Materials

In #1, the cold pulls me out of the ordinary and sharpens my attention, heightening awareness of both surroundings and body in the drawing process. In #2, the work becomes more intense and fast-paced; I feel a strong need for something within me to be expressed. The lines register force and intensity, taking on an almost animal quality, as if my body and unconscious respond to a long-latent need.

As I become more familiar with the place (#3), my movements calm. My breathing slows, my body settles, and I sense a stronger relation between inner bodily sensation and the outer environment. The visual expression becomes barer and more sensitive; I dare to leave large areas of the surface untouched, and a quiet flow emerges, echoing the steady sound of the river. Over time, the drawing shifts from an intense, almost urgent outpouring to a more receptive, listening mode. These shifts suggest that explorative whole-body drawing in the forest unfolds as a gradual deepening of connection, where bodily intensity, affect, and attention are reorganised through repeated encounters with the same place. From a phenomenological perspective (Merleau-Ponty, 1962/2005), the body's embeddedness in the environment becomes palpable in the way perception and expression change together: as I attune to the forest, my bodily experience becomes more open, receptive, and relational, and drawing becomes a way of being with the forest. In this way, the forest becomes both a place and a space that holds meaning and memory and is continually alive in time (Woolham & Journeaux, 2026, pp. 1–2).

In process #8, this mode of connection becomes especially evident. When the wind snatches the drawing paper and throws it to the ground, it jolts me awake and draws me closer to drawing with the forest and its phenomena—pressing the paper against the snow-covered forest floor, where melting snow mixes with charcoal—so that I am drawing not only with the forest in a physical sense, but with my whole embodied being, see Figure 10.

In #10, I work physically on the ground—lying down and pressing my body into the earth. I work with the paper not only by drawing on it, but by folding, crumpling, and pressing it against the forest floor. I listen, I am present and in contact with the place, loosening the hold of more conventional approaches to drawing. I move beyond working only with charcoal lines and surfaces and begin shaping the paper itself—crumpling, folding, and transforming the paper.

The work is shaped by returning, re-entering, and retracing. I follow the same path into the same forest, and my body prepares itself on the way inwards; my senses switch on. While I am in the forest, the world outside recedes. This is my world, here and now. It is the same forest, yet each encounter is new. Through repetition, past experiences are reactivated, and there is a continuous movement back and forth between past and present, as remembering past actions involves making them present again in a pre-reflective, bodily situated way (Gallagher, 2017, p. 10). Nature unlocks something within me: an openness to engage with lines, surfaces, and materials without hesitation. The forest becomes something larger than the drawing itself: a kind of drawing philosophy. The dissolving paper, the vulnerability of the surface, and the charcoal traces of lived life all speak of fragility and of the marks we leave behind. The forest becomes something concrete through which I can seek presence—something I create together with, something I can know that comes into being with, or between, my hands. Nature and materials bear witness to life: human life and the life of matter. The forest and the drawing become a way of holding on to something, to the world—to remain anchored and grounded.



Figure10. The tactility of the surface of drawing #8.

In the drawing process, material properties challenge, resist, invite discovery, or allow for flow, leading to new experiences and expressions. In this context, touch is both affective and emotional (Paterson, 2007, p. 3). Thinking with and through materials involves engaging with their materiality, sensing how they move and respond, and exploring their potential. In Ingold's (2007) terms, this means attending to how materials "flow" (p. 14) and how they participate in the making process. Charcoal has painterly qualities, allowing work with both line and plane, where marks can shift, blur, and flow. Holding charcoal in my hands, with fingertips grazing the paper, I worked the charcoal into the surface. The materials, charcoal of varying hardness and paper in its changing states, affected by temperature and humidity, respond to my movements. Experience fluctuates, at times the process flows effortlessly; at other moments, it produces resistance, frustration, or a sense of imminent discovery. Texture and surface are not only visual but haptic; drawing emerges between body and ground, between hand and paper, between weather and charcoal.

The fragile, transient nature of the materials—paper, charcoal, and even the marks themselves- echoes the impermanence of the forest. Each drawing becomes a trace of a particular moment, shaped by the interplay between touch and the forces of nature. Drawing with the forest can thus be understood as an embodied, phenomenological practice that registers the lived reality of encounter—a way of being in contact with something experienced as authentic, and of expressing this lived experience in ways that feel close to nature.

4.2 Temporality and Rhythm

Bergson's notion of duration points to the continuous flow of time and experience (Kolstad, 1998). Drawing with the forest makes this tangible: time is experienced as fluid, not only smooth and continuous, but at times gentle, like a warm summer breeze, as if time pauses in a deeply affecting moment of touch. At other times it becomes fragmented and arrhythmic; time seems to disappear, and I slip between states of conscious awareness and a more unconscious absorption in the work. Earlier drawing processes and previous contact with the place feed into and energize the ongoing work. Past and present fold into one another; earlier processes are present in my body and consciousness and give this place meaning. Duration opens a space for reflection, wonder, experimentation and ongoing development, underscoring the importance of capturing the depth of experience over time.

I understand temporality here as time unfolding within the drawing process: a series of movements and decisions in which each action builds on the last. I feel it as a flow that emerges as lines on the paper, layer by layer, from beginning to end. The sensory details of the forest—surface underfoot, sound, temperature—heighten my awareness of time and space and help me tune into the forest's tempo, which in turn influences my pace and the gestures I make. The line carries time within it; its trace, and the materials themselves, bear the imprint of a nature that also holds time. Charcoal layered over the surface turns the drawing into a material record of duration—a body in contact with a process unfolding across time.

Surrendering to the moment, "letting go", is central to this. I tune into the time of the materials and the forest's tempo and rhythm. As Gert Biesta (2017) argues, working with materials through our hands can bind us to "the pace set by the world" (pp. 79–80); we enter into dialogue with something that has its own integrity, pace and rhythm. In the forest, changing conditions and material resistance slow my pace and draw me into this dialogue. As I draw, I notice shifts in intensity: sometimes my movements are expressive and dynamic, with high tempo and energy (as in #2); at other times, they slow down, accompanied by calm breathing and stillness (as in #3). Sometimes it feels as though my body is leading the process; at other moments, as if the forest itself is guiding me and I move intuitively, without conscious thought. In such phases, the boundary between myself and the forest seems to dissolve. Here, intuition is understood as a form of knowledge that inhabits movement. Reality is conceived as processes, changes, and tendencies that together constitute a continuous flow of movement (Kolstad, 1998, p. 119). Intuition thus becomes a way of approaching and connecting with the world, allowing responses that are not fully pre-conceived but emerge in situ over time. Temporality in situated drawing is therefore not a neutral backdrop but an active condition through which meaning, connection, and artistic decisions are formed. Goldsworthy's site-specific practice similarly embeds time in place, relying on natural processes such as tides, sunlight or melting ice (Goldsworthy, 2000). Rather than controlling time, the artist participates in it. In my practice, drawing until darkness "chases me out" of the forest means entering temporal conditions I cannot master but must negotiate and let go into. Ingold's (2013) description of materials as "the stuff of time itself" (p. 439) further illuminates how charcoal, paper and forest become co-participants in a temporal process, making drawing a way of inscribing duration into material form and allowing lived time to become visible.

Drawing in the forest is also shaped by rhythm. In many processes, the body enters a rhythm that arises through patterns and repetitions in my movements. I feel it in the physicality of my gestures—the way my hand moves across the paper, sometimes in repetitive strokes (as in #2), at other times in more varied, spontaneous motions. The intensity, speed and direction of these movements shift, creating a flow that feels intuitive and responsive to both materials and forest. Rhythm appears in the way lines and shapes emerge on the paper, sometimes echoing each other, sometimes contrasting. These patterns have a pulse, a sense of movement that mirrors the rhythm of my body as I draw. At times this rhythm feels almost musical or poetic, as if lines and forms move in harmony with my gestures and with the forest's energy (cf. Ingold, 2013). Repetitive or dynamic movements, whether fast and intense or slow and meditative, help me attune to the

forest's pulse and create marks that reflect the tempo of nature itself.

Louise Bourgeois described her drawings as a kind of rocking or stroking, an attempt to find peace—a peaceful rhythm, like rocking a baby to sleep. This points to drawing as bodily, soothing and grounding. At times my own process resonates with this; at others it is more like being shaken. There are moments of flow, but also hesitation, unease, darkness and frustration. The line registers this emotional range: the flow of the surroundings, the sounds of the environment and the frost in the body. Repetitive movements and tactile engagement with materials thus create a sense of grounding and connection, not only to myself but also to the forest and to the moment I am in. Rhythm in drawing is therefore not merely a formal quality but a mode of relating, through which bodily, emotional and environmental forces come into alignment—or tension. Temporality and rhythm are inseparable: temporality structures the unfolding of the work over time, while rhythm articulates the energy and movement of particular moments. Together, they frame explorative whole-body drawing as an event that is at once material, bodily and temporal, situated within the forest's more-than-human rhythms.

4.3 The Poetic and Multisensory Dimensions of drawing with the Forest

In this project, drawing becomes a way of listening and responding to the world, where marks and movements carry traces of time, presence, and rhythm. Life and the world are shaped in moments of contact with something authentic and present. This mode of engagement contrasts sharply with digital fatigue, where time simply passes, and we can experience our senses, bodies, and minds as switched off, with little memory of what we have been scrolling through. In retrospect, I understand this as part of what Courage and McKeown (2026) describe: how drawing can be vital or engaging with the world, and how it can serve as a response to an age of speed and digital acceleration (p. xix). Drawing in the forest, by contrast, intensifies perception and bodily presence.

By shaping the paper directly with my body—kneeling on the ground, stretching across the surface—I establish a tactile, three-dimensional relationship with the work. In this physical act, the paper becomes more than a surface; certain drawings, such as #16, appear as a body in the forest, almost mirroring my own, as if the drawing has its own presence, a second body sharing the space with me. The forest awakens something primal within me, stirring a raw connection to untamed parts of my being. It is as though the forest calls me back, pulling me into its rhythms and textures and urging me to merge with its essence. Each drawing becomes a trace of this relational and temporal experience, embodying the rhythms, transformations and ephemerality of the forest.

The drawing process is multisensory: my body, the materials and natural forces—such as wind, snow and the textures of the ground—act together. The wind becomes an active agent that both resists and enables, throwing the paper back at me, interrupting the work and forcing me to wake up. Initially this is frustrating, but engaging with these elements requires openness, curiosity and a willingness to adopt a "what-if" attitude (Ingold, 2013). The wind becomes a co-creator, adding unpredictability and movement. At times, as in drawing #25, the work feels alive—breathing and shifting like a living material, see Figure 11. It is experienced as a magical moment where time seems to stand still, while at the same time the sum of all previous experiences is present, as if this is a culmination of many experiences.

The temporal and shifting conditions of the forest infuse the work with fragility and impermanence, resonating with Goldsworthy's (2000) emphasis on time, change and ephemerality in nature-based practice. Drawing feels like a poetic dance with nature, moving between slow, meditative gestures and more dramatic, temporal ones, a tango of collaboration between myself, the materials and the elements.

Through the drawing process, I am given the opportunity to experience the world differently. There is a potential here for drawing to emerge as a temporal, embodied and site-specific practice (cf. Ingold, 2013), in which wind,



Figure 11. Detail from drawing #25 in the forest.

snow and ground textures embed the drawing into the landscape itself and transform it into a three-dimensional object that interacts with its surroundings. The act of drawing thus becomes a way of sensing, a practice of care, empathy and sensitivity. The integration of body, materials and environment creates a poetic and deeply relational connection to the forest, where drawing unfolds as an embodied, multisensory experience that is temporal, transformative and alive.

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

5. Conclusions

Drawing with the forest appears as a deeply human impulse, embedded in and responsive to its surroundings. In relation to the research question, the findings suggest that explorative whole-body drawing in the forest unfolds as a dynamic process of attunement and interweaving between body, materials, place, and time. Such drawing practice offers the potential to experience the world differently. This mode of engagement offers a counterpoint to digital fatigue, where time passes without resonance and sensory experience is dulled. Tactile interaction with paper and charcoal, together with wind, snow, and shifting ground, generates a drawing with the forest process—in which temporality and rhythm emerge gradually, layer by layer. Each drawing may be read as a trace of this encounter, a poetic and embodied response to the forest's rhythms, fragility, and impermanence. In this sense, situated drawing in the forest gestures toward a philosophical reorientation: a way of knowing grounded in slowness, attentiveness, and the making of connections with one's surroundings through drawing.

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