

Re-Cognition Intuition as knowledge

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Abstract

This conceptual paper proposes a formal incorporation of intuition in the creative process equation (the methodology applied to execute a task) in design education. It also understands intuition as a powerful and trustable tool, seen as a system that is built with foundations in assimilated knowledge from distinctive educational origins. Stemming from the field of graphic design, the discussion attempts to broaden into other fields of learning, for instance art and communication. Definitions of the word 'intuition' are briefly presented in order to clarify the approach taken here, as well as shield other depreciatory significances. This study also presents the great contrast, the absence of intuition in the curriculum of formal education. To illustrate the benefits of this incorporation, I start from my own academic and professional experience, along with investigations and studies from academic literature. Additionally, I expatiate into art movements, in the search of features that could resemble the beliefs, as an attempt of outspreading the sphere where it could be implement. Altogether, with the aim of bringing to light this vast field often neglected. Having its origin, first as a personal perception and distress, and second as a result of several analyses also exploration of the matter. It was found reasonably recurrent, therefore a subject worth tackled and discussed.

Through perceptions of intuition found in definitions and studies, this paper proposes the formal incorporation of intuition into the creative methodologies taught in the curricula of design education. As an attempt to understand the path of work production as a graphic designer, intuition came as a potential and important tool for improved results. What I refer to as creative methodologies (or process) and will exemplify further, should be understood as the steps taken to accomplish a creative task or job. I highlight the absence of intuition as a tool in those steps with an example, as well as pinpointing qualities of it with the intent of justifying its implementation.

The possibilities of improvement in results by acquiring this awareness worked as one of the motivations to start. And its relevance is also assured by its presence in the contemporary discussion, shown through sources and references quoted here. Across distinct information available from previous studies, I have researched their common intersections with the aim of shaping my perception. Notably Asta Raami, was an essential author for self-reliance in starting this text.

Before framing this process I'm mentioning, it is important to clarify meanings the word intuition can carry. The purpose of this explanation is tracking a definition for the word, that will be more likable, and meaningful for the field. It carries multiple interpretations, and a share of those, can be quite deprecating while used in a professional orbit. The first definitions given by dictionaries are still quite open for interpretation: Inspection, contemplation, consideration, [1]. I will approach two further extreme meanings, with the intention of being clear through countless different uses of the word. That is to say, I will not be approaching here intuition as, "the spiritual perception...ascribed to angelic and spiritual beings..." [1].

The viewpoint of the word in perspective here can be found in its definition as: Recognition [1]. For instance, splitting the prefix from it, we bring to light, its meaning of 're-', with the general sense of 'back' or 'again' [1]. Which would make the association where intuition works with something previous, in this case the knowledge, and not from a spiritual perception. Furthermore, it is crucial to discern intuition, from inspiration "infusion of some idea, purpose, etc. into the mind; the suggestion..." [1]. Where inspiration comes from searching and gathering those references that will be infused, in contrast with intuition that would be the awareness of deeply reading it.

As an interpretation of the word intuition, Raami establishes it as a system that is built up with foundations on knowledge gathered from distinctive educational origins [2]. To give an illustration of the frame, and the viewpoint of them, not as clairvoyance but as, and I come back to the word, recognition. That is the meaning I would like to debate.

Going back to the methodology and the creative process, I chose one source in the graphic design field that is relevant and often quoted to illustrate this matter. But overall, it is still quite rarely found, considering its great relevance. As an example, the following excerpt comes from a high praised and very much known book in the field. Furthermore, it is an important source for myself. Even though it

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describes itself as a “practical and inspirational user’s guide for designers”, when it comes to describing the equation of creative process, it lacks intuition in its core.

risk + discomfort + sweat (+/-inspiration) = creativity (Shaughnessy 2010, 112) [3].

There is no tackling an intuition approach whatsoever. Giving it a closer look, I would risk saying, the presence of inspiration is nearly deprecating, instead of broadening the possibilities, and its significances. As consequence, and quite dangerous one, this fairly open interpretation can direct to a misleading path of meanings, as I commented a moment ago. I use this case to illustrate a bigger canvas of this intermittent case where the formal education spotlight lies in the broadening of reasoning capacity, leaving the intuition in the shadow [2].

Furthermore, throughout the discussion about this process, Shaughnessy, unfolds some meanings for inspiration and in those it is possible to distinguish resemblances to what we have been defining here as intuition. And not only that, along with his words, he defines it as an unreliable source. He takes point out that angle instead of something with potential of improvement and development. Mentioning examples as the action of ‘waiting for inspiration’ in a negative and unhelpful way. Even though affirming;

...inspiration exists, and when it hits, its appearance is always somewhat miraculous; this is why I say that we can add or subtract inspiration on the creative process, but we can’t rely on it alone;... (Shaughnessy 2010, 113) [3]

In a dubious statement where it is hard to understand if intuition was identified in a misleading way being called as inspiration, or if it was completely left outside. In any of the cases, it is noticeable the deprecating tone for the concept and the word, when it is stated as something that can’t be reliable alone. Firstly, thinking in that direction it is always risky to rely on one factor, isolated to achieve success. From that it is possible to notice that we are looking at a quite radical remark on the subject. Coupled with the complete omission of the potentiality that could be reached with the enhancement of such a concept. A real case is drawn from beginning to end on how it becomes underestimated again and again.

Currently, intuition has such a cultural stigma that it is not possible to include it as an equal thinking component alongside conscious reasoning. (Raami 2015, 22) [2].

The difficulty about inserting intuition in a creative methodology begins with uneven background knowledge, or what I rather call one’s “personal-data-base”. That may vary and differ extremely from one individual to another. To that end, there is the persistent neglect around the use of intuition as a formal tool to be taken seriously. But there is something that should be worked with, when you start contrasting those stigmas with what intuition can add to the processes.

I claim that, first as an auto-ethnographical perception and distress. Turning the focus to my personal experience, in a great percentage of creative process I have seen myself, being a student or professional, there was a blurred line between the problem and the solution in those works. It has happened more than once, where after more then ten layouts I have developed, the first one, and the one that by instinct I trusted better, was the best solution. Yet following methods or steps, this blind spot kept consistently presenting as an element amenable to reason, needless to say, unjustified. Provided that a fair portion of this, with the excuse of the exaggeration, ‘outlaw step’ begins to be understood when Raami describes

... Intuition is still commonly considered an untrustworthy type of information... (Raami 2015, 20) [2].

This perception, I believe is the starting point for reasons of the absence of intuition in ‘step-by-step’ or rules in graphic design sphere. However, it disregards one’s ability through pre(vi)ous-knowledge, and that’s where I detect the blind spot. Where, apparently, my personal work was not legitimate for any nature of success given this blurred stage at no time mentioned in the majority of designing process records. Not only absence, but in consequence, exclusion of it belonging in any market or artistic movement. As I mentioned, in my own pathway I detect situations in which intuition was a tool to in creative process with a positive feedback. I ran through others authors, and as consequence reinforced my opinion where intuition can be treated as a mode of knowing. In agreement with the, short but not less important, statement tweeted by Alain De Botton;

Intuition is unconscious accumulated experience informing judgment in real time. (Botton 2013) [4].



Essentially, applying the background experience through the medium of knowledge. By that I aim to make, what was before addressed as a blind spot, more comprehensible. Considering that, the great area containing any creative process rests in knowledge. All humans learn from experience, which is an excellent approach to learning. Many of the

skills and knowledge used by designers benefit from robust professional-based experience – including intuitive processing. (Raami 2015, 56) [2].

Understanding the relevance, and likewise, ensuring the origin, are significant tolls to start developing the topic. These are the major concerns here. As Raami goes deep into the segmentation of categories, I will lightly run through those. Trying to turn attention to the use of the tool of intuition, more than the tool itself.

Nevertheless, briefly I highlight one of the categories that intuition can be subdivided. The one in focus is called “Extraordinary Knowing” it encloses a vast amount of significance. There the target is the description of the source of inspiration. It brings back of what I have been trying to describe so far, and has been a strong companion in my professional development.

One form of knowing that is not often referred to, suggests that information can come from outside a person’s professional expertise (...) Typically, this type of knowing includes large quantities of information coming from outside of one’s experience and learning. (Raami 2015, 83) [2].

This should not be understood as a special feature that requires a great amount of expertise. I do not also consider myself capable of this. The main point is, again, the validation of the origin of the information to be combined in different arrangements and utilized as legitimized form. This reinforces the status of intuition.

With this in mind, I extrapolate into art movements, in the search of features that could resemble the beliefs, as an attempt to expand the sphere where it could be implemented. Features start to bring many resemblances, while post modernism is described. And also when it involves the paradox and the thread to the tradition [5]. As a way of exemplifying these resemblances in this context, that the tradition would be the conventional creative process steps. To that end, introducing a bigger role for intuition in that would confer another method to the practice. And might, more than that, release a discussion about all the steps and the process itself. That could be considered a ‘threat’. Carefully, not edging strictly to the field art, but trying to broaden into the field of learning. Remarking another passage;

...Foucault’s problematization, though never repudiation, of our traditional modes of representation in our discourse of knowledge. (Hutcheon 1989, 30) [5].

The classical approaches are important to be present, even their roles being to confront and stand against. Narrowing the sight, and not going deeper in that matter, from those passages it is understandable how intuition could be established in this sphere. Analysing methods in the graphic area, intuition has this strength to break through those and more than that, making sense in their connections. Justifying its use, through itself. Going through another viewpoint, yes, post modernism is rebuke of tradition, but further it is considered also;

“Postmodernism celebrates a return to earlier ideas of the value of decoration and stylistic-image-making. Rejecting order or discipline in favor of expression and intuition...” (Noble&Bestley 2005, 210) [6].

The quote above is quite ambiguous, and here I draft one way that it can be interpreted. Even though in the quote a spot is given to intuition in the circle of post modernism. It also brings together with the term of decoration. When combined with that, and by the nature of the word decorative, the relevance of the exercise made in order to achieve a result through intuition, seems reduced. Nevertheless, it is assertive claiming the order rejecting and more than that, combining expression and intuition. Those words are linked in the connotation on how you articulate the knowledge. However, those sparks of resemblance are still present. Above all, an association with a movement in its totality or even partially clearly proves the relevance of the matter.

It is possible to speculate a parallel where the incorporation of intuition into the creative processes is this force against a previous system. The process shaped as numbers, formulas and organized



thought with beginning, middle and end, might seem clear. But it has to be understood that outlining a method leaves something outside. And if this methodology doesn't permit the movement of broadening, it suffocates more interpretations and narrows knowledge.

The formulas are indeed important as ways of constructing paths, but what I suggest here is that, it has to be trained to go along with the perception that there is always more that can be spotted. This is where the role of intuition along with awareness and continuous training comes in. This has a high level of relevance when considering that it can give a broader spectrum of solutions and contrasts, not narrowing to a schematic step-by-step process.

References

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