

Drawing offers a framework for thinking about and representing lived experience that doesn't presuppose a logical conclusion or fixed resolution.

Psychologists say that language is necessary for thinking, and that it is a kind of inner speech – verbal or visual, and often in the form of a condensed inner dialogue – which allows us to integrate the different things that our brains do. Drawing gives me a glimpse into this process, and over time, this kind of reflection has changed the shape and structure of the knowledge systems within my brain. When I draw, I make a mark and then make other marks that change the shape and feeling of the first mark, even if that first mark remains untouched. Some kind of new logic emerges through this process, but it's not really a new logic, since it is something I recognize. Maybe it is a picture of the logic in my brain. I can tell when it is right, and then I can continue to nudge it into surprising places, and those surprises tell me something about mutability.

Drawing is the source and the attitude behind all the work I make, regardless of medium. I often build an image using one kind of logic and then throw something else in - a color, a shape, a series of marks - something that doesn't belong within the logic I've established up until that point. This opens the work up again and gives me a new problem to contend with. I stop working on something not because it has reached its logical conclusion, but because it is at a compelling freeze-frame moment that holds an interplay of growth, decay, structure, collapse – a moment that feels open – like there are multiple possible directions it could go.

- Jen P. Harris, 2025