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REVIEW

Visual arts and drawings to communicate and explore authentic life situations, a data collection method in caring science – a hermeneutic perspective

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Abstract

This methodological article aims to describe three methodological strategies for using drawings as a part of qualitative data collection methods in caring research based on hermeneutics. In some research interview situations, participants may have difficulties to express their experiences and feelings in words. The consequences may be that the descriptions in research reports will become superficial and not authentic, meaning, "telling it as it is". Drawn pictures may facilitate and support reflection related to the deepening of experiences and thoughts, and communicate and express more than words can do. It may also reveal thoughts and feelings the person drawing the picture was not aware of. Three methodological strategies are described: (1) Drawing a picture as an introduction or starting point for an interview, (2) During an ongoing interview, encouraging the participant to draw a picture when further explanation or description is needed for deepening the communication and (3) Drawing something in a pre-existing picture. The theoretical foundation of Gadamer's hermeneutic philosophy is discussed in relation to what a drawing is representing and presents. The interpretation of the drawn picture depends primarily on the creator of the picture, but at the same time the interpretation and understanding is a movement between the interviewer's and the participant's horizons, and thus is open for preunderstanding and new understanding. In contrast to an ordinary interview between two parties, an interview involving a drawing adds something specific to the conversation as it becomes a "dialogue" and not only a dialog. The drawn picture stands on its own. Using the participant's drawing can, therefore, be understood as an ongoing process with three parties involved: (1) the participant, (2) the researcher and (3) the drawing.

KEYWORDS

drawing, hermeneutics, picture, research method, visual art

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INTRODUCTION

In this article, the focus is on artwork related to visual arts, such as drawing a picture of authentic situations to be used for communication, exploration and understanding in caring science. According to Picard [1], communication between humans is much more than only using words. Some experiences, stories and suffering may be difficult to express in words, and thus patients' difficulties to find their voice, and for expressing suffering [2]. Expressing suffering and to be authentic requires being true to oneself and to others [3]. In a study by Lepp [4] both students and faculty found that reflection, as a pedagogical tool, can be used effectively and meaningfully, as transitions to authenticity are forged. When the words are not enough, the complexity of thoughts and feelings may be hidden and other human beings' understanding risks to be superficial. Such superficial understanding may not contribute to knowing and real understanding of the participants' world.

Therefore, it can be discussed if drawings, produced by the participant, which include a personal and intimate nature of artistic inquiry [5] can contribute to a communication that catches and grasps the complexity of experiences, thoughts and feelings in relation to caring, health, disease and suffering.

Artwork relates to artistic media, such as drama, music, movement, visual arts, poetry, dance, performance, drawing and so on [6, 7] (Table 1). Visual arts cover three main sub-fields (see Table 1): (1) fine art (painting, drawing, graphics, sculpture, architecture), (2) decorative art (tapestry, ceramics, mosaic art, glass art, jewellery art) and (3) contemporary art (artistic photography, art print, video art, animation, graffiti art). Artwork is, thus, concerned with visual arts and the sub-field fine art, such as drawing. To respond to artwork that one creates or that is created by others is very acceptable in art-based research. Using art as research provides a natural educational pace for those who do not see necessary borders between artists, researcher and educator in and through the production of art [6] that is understood as a co-creation. Artwork and

the various media offer the researcher expressive interpretations. In addition, they move beyond the limits of written narratives of analysis, which have traditionally been the particular method of doing research [6]. Nursing is by Nåden [8] understood as an art including the following categories: "invitation and confirmation, actualisation of values, the moral art – the acts of good will and aesthetic communication". Also Eriksson [9] means that the "true reality" can appear and the beauty and good can be visible. Drawings might broaden what is studied and make the thing visible and experienced in a new light [10].

BACKGROUND

Artwork and research

Several creative methods, such as video recordings, photos, photovoice and drawings, have been used in research. The purpose has been to encourage people to reflect, discuss and describe their experiences of caring and treatment in connection with illness and health or in the education of healthcare professionals [11–16]. In social science and pedagogics, Doverborg and Pramling Samuelsson [17] encouraged children to draw a picture as they wanted to understand children's thoughts. Artwork has also been used in nursing education researching empathy. Students were more engaged in learning about empathy after having participated in visual arts dialogs, and there has been discussion on whether artwork can be used as a complement to teaching and learning about theoretical knowledge in caring [18, 19].

Visual arts – drawing a picture

By using visual arts, for example, by drawing a picture of authentic situations, feelings, experiences or a certain phenomenon can be verbalised and perhaps more easily understood both by the owner of the drawing and by others. Moreover, when drawing a picture, the picture

TABLE 1 Artwork related to visual arts and the three sub-fields that visual arts covers; Fine art, Decorative art and Contemporary art (4, 5). Focus in this study is on drawing which belongs to 'Fine art'

Artwork	Visual arts	1. Fine art	2. Decorative art	3. Contemporary art
Drama	1. Fine art	Painting	Tapestry	Artistic Photography
Music	2. Decorative art	Drawing	Ceramics	Art print
Movement	3. Contemporary art	Graphics	Mosaic art	Video art
Visual arts		Sculpture	Glass art	Animation
Poetry		Architecture	Jewellery art	Graffiti art
Dance				
Performance				
Drawing				

can communicate something such as a feeling, an intuition or insight that may be difficult to express in words [10], and it can also make an effective beginning in the process of understanding a situation or occasion and make the reality visible [20]. Guillemin [21] suggests drawings as a research method in social science when there is an ambition to try to explore how persons' understand their illness. Phillips et al. [22] used a questionnaire which included encouragement to draw a picture concerning patients' experiences of chronic pain from a psychological perspective. Visual arts has been used in gestalt therapy as a strategy before interviews [23]. Pictures can increase associations with a phenomenon and with a reflective awareness that differ from expressions using words. Using pictures also allows the person to decide how much or little they want to say about the picture and their related thoughts and feelings. An assumption is that using these approaches as elements of data collection may deepen the researcher's understanding of people's experiences of the subject of interest in nursing and caring sciences and thus of their unique "inner" world.

THE USE OF VISUAL ARTS AND PREVIOUS RESEARCH IN CARING

Helin [24] used visual arts, such as paintings, as a starting point for conversations concerning patients' experiences of existential and spiritual suffering. In her study, the data collection procedure started with patients in a hospice being encouraged to select a painting (work of art) that they liked. Then, after a few days they filled in a semi-structured questionnaire. After the researcher had read the patients answers, an interview concerning patients' choice of painting was carried out. The answers in the questionnaires were used as an introduction and preparation for the interview so that both patient and researcher were aware of what they were going to talk about. Moreover, art and paintings can also be used in a conversation or interview without an introductory use of a questionnaire, but the "thing", that is, what is in focus, has to be articulated and agreed upon by both parties.

People who are suffering due to existential issues may have difficulties in finding words that describe their suffering, and therefore use metaphors and symbolic statements [24]. The encounter with visual arts may be a way out of suffering, as the metaphorical language often mediates authentic and deep experiences. Also, Wikström [25] found that communicating with hospitalised children via expressive art at a play therapy unit provided opportunities for the children to express themselves, their deep feelings and thoughts.

In addition, Helin [24] found that visual arts in the context of caring had the potential for existential healing and restored health and experiences of being part of a greater whole. Visual arts could make the invisible visible and open up secret rooms in the depths of the heart and thereby lead to the alleviation of suffering. Wikström [26] reported similar findings in a study where health professionals and senior persons at a nursing home used paintings as tools for facilitating their communication and conversations. Using paintings as a starting point for conversation allowed each person to bring his/her unique experiences, memories and world to the encounter. This resulted in a deeper understanding of the persons' situation, but it also contributed to a more interesting working climate for the health professionals and improved their care of the persons living in the nursing home. These types of conversations stimulated their memories and narratives, and thus contributed to rich and meaningful experiences. It is also assumed that the action of "drawing a picture" can stimulate and "put words" to experiences and feelings.

The use of pictures and drawing a picture

In this study, the term 'picture' is used and understood as: (1) a pre-existing picture that the participant apprehends, experiences, discusses and/or completes by further drawing, and (2) a drawing which is produced by the participant and discussed in a dialog with the researcher in relation to the subject of interest.

In the McGill Pain Questionnaire, a preprinted figure of the human body is presented where the participant is encouraged to mark where the pain appeared [27]. The marked areas in the figure make it easier for the physician to understand patient's experienced pain and where it is located in the body. In the international DRAMA and CONflict (DRACON) project, the research group from Malaysia used visual arts, asking adolescent school students to draw a self-portrait of their full body, and mark where the conflict and feeling appeared on the body in order to explore the effects of individual conflicts [7].

In conducting research with children, the technique of drawing a picture has been used by Knutsson et al. [28] and Knutsson and Bergbom [29]. In another study by Modh et al. [30], the technique of drawing a picture as a starting point in order to gain greater depth in interviews with first time pregnant women was used. In this study, 12 women were invited to draw a picture that reflected their experience of being pregnant in regard to their mental and bodily feelings and conceptions. The researcher then asked about the picture, and what the woman could say about it. The conversation about the picture was finished

when the woman did not have anything more to say about the drawing and her feelings of being pregnant.

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

Using and encouraging participants to use visual arts, such as drawing a picture of their experiences or presenting a situation or a self-portrait as methods of data collection may offer participants the ability to control what will be communicated – but there might also be surprises concerning what comes up. The interrelated use of art forms, such as drama, music, movement and visual arts provides space for a more deeply integrated examination of the participants' conflicts, with the safety of distance provided by symbols [7]. This creative process allows personally satisfying meanings to be constructed through deconstruction and reinterpretation of experiences drawn from reality. Those meanings may then be brought back into transactions, interactions and negotiations in the real world [7]. This approach will enable people to present their life circumstances, and their world in relation to caring, suffering and health. In caring science research, it is important to use methods that can contribute to uncovering and interpreting deeper spiritual and existential dimensions of experiences [31]. According to Gadamer [10], artwork represents something "behind", where this behind becomes the present in time. The artwork is not only the artist's individual mental expression, it is also something existing or manifest, mediating knowledge about the world and the person. Artwork has, thus, an ontological strength where it provides a great variety of meanings and can, thus, have many different interpretations [24].

Visual arts are forms of art that focus on creating pieces of work that primarily make use of the visual environment, while trying to convey messages on ideas, emotions or information. According to Waern et al. [12], pictures can from the observer's view be seen from three perspectives:

1. A psychological perspective.
2. An aesthetic perspective.
3. A semiotic perspective.

The first is a perception of a psychological perspective, which concerns how people apprehend lines on a paper as a picture, and the second is the aesthetic perspective, which concerns how people are touched by a picture. The third perspective is semiotic, concerning how people interpret pictures and understand pictures as signs of something. In this context, we claim that another perspective could be used, that is a caring perspective that reflect the world of patient's and caring.

AIM

The aim of this study was to describe three methodological strategies for using drawings as a part of qualitative data collection methods in caring research based on hermeneutics.

DRAWING A PICTURE AS A DATA COLLECTION METHOD IN CARING SCIENCE

Our standpoint is that in interviews, the communication or parts of it is characterised by a dialog between the participant and researcher. In the following, the term 'interviews' is used. Based on previous research where drawings have been used [24–26, 28–30], we will suggest and describe three different methodological strategies of how to conduct the data collection by encouraging the participants to draw a picture:

1. The participant is encouraged to illustrate something specific (e.g. a tumour in the body) in an existing picture previously drawn by the researcher, for example, a picture of a human body or stomach, during the interview.
2. Encourage the participant to draw a picture as a starting point for the interview.
3. Start with the interview. After a while the participant is asked to illustrate and elucidate what they feel, mean or experience by drawing a picture or if anything remains unclear or needs to be further explored.

Drawing a picture on a pre-existing picture

In this methodological strategy, the participant is encouraged to draw on an existing picture, for example, a picture that shows a human body, either as an introduction to the interview or during an ongoing interview. Then, the researcher asks about the drawn picture and what it represents, depending on the subject matter. Usually this strategy is used when patients describe their perceptions or thoughts about what has changed in the body, for example, as a result of a surgical procedure, or where in the body pain appears.

Drawing a picture as an introduction to an interview

In this methodological strategy, the participant is encouraged to draw a picture which is the starting point

for the researcher's interview about the subject matter that the researcher and the participant have agreed upon to illustrate and talk about. For example, how the participant experiences something concerning their body in connection with illness, pregnancy [30], surgical interventions or injuries and pain [22]. In this latter study, the patient was encouraged to draw a picture as a start for answering a questionnaire. Depending on the circumstances, the practical arrangement could be 5–10 min for drawing a picture, with utensils available, such as paper, pencils in different colours, crayons, paint box and eraser. In step 1, after welcoming the participant and giving instructions about the drawing, the researcher, namely, the interviewer, usually leaves the participant alone during the drawing activity. It is vital that the interviewer and the participant have agreed what they are going “to talk about”, that is, the subject matter or the “thing”. When the drawing is finished, the communication concerning the drawn picture starts, which is step 2. The interviewer starts the interview (usually audio-taped) by asking the participant about the drawn picture, for example: “Tell me about the picture you have drawn?” Further questions are asked, for example, concerning the colours that are used. The questions asked could be thematic, open, semi-structured or closed or a mixture, depending on the interview situation.

Drawing a picture as part of an ongoing interview

Drawing a picture could also be used during an ongoing interview or conversation about the subject or the “thing” of interest. The researcher can, whenever during the conversation, encourage the participants to illustrate what they mean, feel or experience by drawing a picture or further exploring the picture. This procedure is usually used when participants' statements are not understood by the researcher or when elucidation is needed, so that misunderstandings are avoided, but also when there is a need for deepening participants' descriptions or explanations. This strategy has, for example, been used in Knutsson et al.'s study [28]. The process of drawing the picture may also extend over several occasions during conversation and may not occur just on one occasion.

If the conversation is audio-taped, it is important that the researcher verbally documents into the tape recorder when in the process the participant is drawing the picture. The drawing often leads to new questions and further need of elucidation about what the participant describes, means or expresses. The conversation and the ongoing creation of the drawing can be seen as an interplay and a

merging of horizons. The conversation in this procedure is a movement among interpretation, preunderstanding, new understanding and preunderstanding.

THE PROCESS OF INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE TAPE-RECORDED INTERVIEWS RELATED TO THE DRAWN PICTURES

It is the verbatim transcription of the audio-taped conversation related to the drawn pictures that is interpreted and analysed. There are different procedures for interpreting and “analysing” the verbatim transcription text and the drawing [32, 21]. The interpretation method has to be selected based upon the researcher's assessment of what may be the best way for reaching a new or deeper understanding. We suggest that the researcher listens to the audio-taped conversation (sometimes several times) as this gives opportunities for questions and a sense of what is communicated, and an introductory understanding that has to be questioned. We recommended that the researcher at the same time also looks at the participant's drawn picture. Thereafter, it is recommended that the transcribed text is read several times, and then questions about the text have to be asked as well as about the drawn picture, especially parts that are difficult to understand. Parts that are understood must also be questioned, as we have to be suspicious when we think that we have understood [10, 33]. Different ways of analysing or treating the transcribed text have to be selected based on the researcher's assessment of the quality of the text; if the text contains statements that are rich and nuanced. Moreover, after reading the text, there must be an assessment of whether meaning units that describe the substance of the “thing” can be identified and described. If there is a more coherent introductory telling about the drawn picture by the participant, meaning units and themes identified in the following interview text can be compared to the introductory telling about the drawn picture. A main thread or main theme gathering the content of the “thing” is usually possible to identify both in the participant's introductory telling and in the interview text. In cases where the participants' statements and introductory telling about the drawn picture are scantily worded, the conversation/interview/dialog text is the main source of information for identifying meaning units and themes or “reading phases”. As said before, there are different ways of analysing the interview text and the participants telling about a picture or drawing. For example, Helin [24] said that the process of interpretation of art work consisted of four steps and a movement among the art work, the text of patients' descriptions of their experiences of the

art and the researcher's preunderstanding. This process of interpretation ended up in an abductive pattern [24].

1. In the first step, the result of the readings of the text and looking at the art work meant that groups of art motifs and meaningful entities or themes could be identified.
2. In the second step, the depth of patients' feelings of insight was assessed.
3. In the third step, the themes were organised under the theme "feelings of insight". This theme was interpreted to reflect different forms of symbolic meanings and contents in the participants' existential situation.
4. The interpreted symbolic meaning achieved in step 3 was arranged in three levels of feelings of insight; the picture as art work, the picture as a reflection – as a reflection of time and place and as a story and finally the picture as a window for the eternal. This resulted in a configuration of a tentative or abductive pattern of the caring and healing dimension in relation to depth of insight into a human being's existential suffering [24].

Wikström [25] has also described a strategy for analysis containing four steps. In the first step, each participant's interview text was read through to gain an overview of the content and a first understanding. Secondly, the meaning units for each interview were identified, and thirdly the analysis focused on interview parts that seemed to have a special meaning for the participant. In step 4, the meaning units were synthesised into a synopsis in order to gain a comprehensive understanding. In another study by Wikström [26], health professional used paintings in their caring conversations with older people. Diaries were used for documenting the older persons' thoughts and issues that were communicated in relation to the paintings. The text in the diaries was examined for differences and similarities, and then synthesised into categories and pattern codes. These codes were then grouped into themes and subthemes. In a study by Vázquez- Sánchez et al [34], a deductive analysis where three superordinated categories were used based on Tamm and Granqvist's [35] studies. In the next step, an inductive approach was used, and the drawings were presented together with quotations from the interviews. Examples of drawings are presented in the article by Vázquez-Sánchez et al [34].

The picture itself can be seen as a complement or as an important contribution to understanding during interviews or as an introduction to the interview in order to facilitate communication about "the thing" and the participant's experiences and feelings. The more senses that are involved while drawing a picture that represents the person's experiences the deeper the interview might become. Using the visual senses and then verbalising these

experienced senses might reflect and describe the "true" experiences and feelings and facilitate understanding both for the participant and the researcher. In line with Gadamer's thoughts [10], the participant's statements and descriptions are continually interpreted during the interview by both the researcher and the participant. The interpretation usually results in further questions or telling. Thus, there is a movement between preunderstanding to understanding and new preunderstanding [10].

When presenting the findings, one or several participants' introductory telling about the drawn picture can be quoted if this telling is rich and captures/grasps the "thing". Thereafter, the themes that catch the substance of the "thing" in the conversation text are presented, also including quotations that strengthen the trustworthiness of the interpretation of the text. Other ways to work with the entire text are to conduct several readings until a fusion of horizons appears [36] or to identify themes in different reading phases [37].

DRAWN PICTURES INTERPRETED BY THE RESEARCHER OR "EXTERNAL" RESEARCHERS

Participants' drawings can also be interpreted by one or several researchers not involved in the interview. We suggest that this approach is used when there is a wish or ambition to compare, broaden or evaluate the content in the drawings, as apprehended and interpreted by an external person. However, before interpreting the drawing, this person must be informed about the instructions the participants received and the subject matter or "thing" that was or should be talked about. The interpretation performed by the external person can then be compared to participants' statements and explanation of what the picture represents and presents. In this case, the researcher who performs the interview with the participant can use these previous interpretations to start a conversation with the participant. A similar method is described by Klingemann and Klingemann [38] where the viewer's (researcher's) perspective of the drawing can be analysed by examine or interpret; (1) the use of abstract and figurative symbols, (2) salience and (3) informative values. These findings can be discussed with the participant or described separately. Another approach is that the researcher asks for a drawing and then interprets the drawn picture in relation to the "thing", of interest and then communicates this to the participant and thereafter starts the interview. In this process, the participant is encouraged to revise, reject or confirm the researcher's interpretations, which may vitalise the conversation. The researcher who conducts the conversation with the participant has in this case several possible

ways to conduct the different steps of the procedure. For example, drawings interpreted by a person not involved in the conversation can be delivered before the conversation starts. It is important to emphasise that an interpretation received from this not involved person influences the researcher's preunderstanding, and thus the conversation between the participant and researcher. Therefore, it is important that the researchers are aware of their preunderstanding and, also questions and challenge their interpretation and understanding in the communication with the participant. Another possibility is that the researcher does not read the interpretations performed by the person who is not involved until the interviews have been carried out, and then compares these two interpretations in regard to differences and similarities. Independent of procedure, the trustworthiness has to be assessed where the implementation and procedures in all steps are described and what has been understood by the researchers, supported by quotations [39]. Independent of the chosen and used strategy, the most important is to provide clear arguments in relation to the desirable goal of the research [40].

REFLECTIONS AND DISCUSSION ON ART WORK – A HERMENEUTIC PERSPECTIVE

How should we understand visual arts, such as drawing a picture? Gadamer [10] describes how a work of art changes the person who is viewing it. An artwork or a picture has its own being and this being is a presentation as it says something about the original, the thing of interest. In line with Gadamer's [10] thoughts, the content of the drawn picture or work of art itself can ontologically be seen as an emanation of "the original" and the "thing" in focus, and that which is told by the participant is also an emanation of the original. Grondin [33], inspired by Gadamer's hermeneutic philosophy, states that every work of art is the expression of lived experience and "every aesthetic experience is consumed in the recreation of the original lived experience" (10, p. 35). Grondin [33] also claims that art allows a person to rediscover the world and search for the work of art's mediation and that the work of art itself retains something of the situation from which it emanates. The truth of art is participation and according to Gadamer [10], a picture belongs to the present, and thus determines itself anew from occasion to occasion. This could be understood to mean that there is a unique relation to the occasion which can never be finally determined. With inspiration from Gadamer's philosophy [10], the drawn picture can be understood as a copy of the original experienced "world" or the presentation of the original, that is, the participant's life world, experiences and feelings.

An example

A pregnant woman was instructed by a midwife to draw a picture of her experiences of being pregnant [30]. Thereby the woman mediates how she experienced her foetus in her body. This picture presented the original lived experience, communicated by this specific woman – communicating "being pregnant and bearing a fetus". Thus, the presentation was tied to the original that was represented in the picture, according to Gadamer's (10) thoughts. Thus, a picture is more than a copy of something, it has its own existence and the picture has its own reality. Thus, the picture represents the original, that is, the "thing" of "being pregnant". In the representation, the picture becomes a presentation. However, the primary intention of a picture that concerns the "thing" is not to differentiate between presentation and what the picture represents; it is at the same time both a presentation of the original and a representation of the original [41]. In the example above, the drawn picture represents a pregnant women and at the same time a presentation of the original – the lived experience of a specific women of the foetus in her body.

Drawing as a triologue

An interesting question is what happens when we draw a picture. One answer could be that by drawing we express something more or different than words can express [1]. Another answer is that by drawing we access our deeper thoughts and feelings, our spiritual beings, and the real and authentic human being where the person presents him/herself as an authentic person. Explaining and talking about the individually drawn picture can also be understood as a conversation with the picture, which in a caring perspective could be understood that the picture in itself bring about "sharing", a sharing of feelings and thoughts and even suffering and joy [42].

Then, the drawn picture becomes present in the conversation as a third party, as it has its own existence. It becomes a triologue in an ongoing process with the parties involved: (1) the participant, (2) the researcher and (3) the drawing. We assume that this triologue may deepen, facilitate or vary both participants' and researchers' understanding of often complex life experiences related to caring, health, disease and suffering. This assumption is supported by McNiff [5] who also claims that the interplay between the participants and the medium, that is, the drawing, involves reflections of the interplay itself.

Inspired by Grondin [33], we also claim that a drawing allows persons to rediscover their world, which might mean that they can become aware of their real (own) feelings or thoughts. Telling and communicating about the

drawing and what it represents can lead to the persons having to face themselves and what and whom they really are, their authentic selves. Thus, in telling what the drawing presents and represents the conversation with somebody might be health promoting and caring. When conducting research where the interest is the patients', that is, the persons' experiences, our understanding is that personal drawings can facilitate communication and reflection. By exploring and direct attention to the "thing", it may offer possibilities to grasp the substance in caring science.

The conversation and understanding "the thing"

An interesting question is whether using drawing and drawn pictures as a research method can facilitate conversation about the participant's experiences and life circumstances and especially existential issues, and can reveal and capture the core or substance in the "thing" of interest or the subject matter.

According to Gadamer's [10] thoughts about preunderstanding and art, the researcher's questions about what the drawing mediates, are based upon preunderstanding, interpretation of the participant's explanations or telling about the drawing. In this conversation, the participant's and the researcher's preunderstanding lead to a new understanding and this understanding becomes the new preunderstanding in a hermeneutic spiral as described by Gadamer [10]. The researcher's question and the participant's telling will also influence both parties' horizons and preunderstanding. The interpretation of drawings is a co-creation of understanding where both the researcher and the participant communicate their horizons that finally emerge in a common understanding about the "thing". Understanding the "thing" of interest is the representation of the persons' lived experience, the original, if we have correctly understood Gadamer's (10) thoughts and discussion about art and pictures.

Therefore, we argue that the conversation about the drawing may enlighten the participants' actual existential situation from different points of view. Using individual drawings might contribute to a more nuanced, or other and deeper understanding of the "thing" not only by the researcher but also by the participant.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

In all caring science research, the principles of autonomy, integrity, fairness and not harm have to be taken into

consideration as well as informed consent [43]. In line with the declaration of Helsinki [44], the researcher should not force the participants to tell more about the drawn picture than they want to tell, as drawn pictures can mediate feelings or thoughts that the participant was perhaps not aware of. Therefore, the researcher should pay attention to signs that might mean that the issue is "private" or that the drawing evokes bad or strong feelings. As suggested by Cristancho and Helmich [40], the researcher must be prepared to listen and give space for the participant to express their emotions and when appropriate suggest breaks. The researcher should also inform about and provide contacts to professional support and follow-up. Before starting the interview, the researcher is recommended to inform the participant about the possibility that the drawing, depending on the subject matter, may also evoke negative feelings and that such feelings are also "allowed" [40]. The researcher should also inform the participants of the possibility to withdraw at any time during the whole process. However, first of all, the researcher should examine the reasons for choosing a visual method, such as drawings as a data collection method [45].

The drawn picture belongs to the participant, but the researcher needs the picture in the interpretation process. Therefore, the researcher and the participant must agree on how to handle the picture [40]. It is also very important that the researcher and participant agree about what they are going to talk about, as well as the instructions given when encouraging the participant to draw a picture. There is a risk that interpretations will be based mainly on the researchers' wish to see or understand, that is, the researchers' prejudices and wish to make the participants' expressions and explanations fit in an understanding horizon. Another risk is that the researcher may put words into the participant's statements and prefer interpretations that are in line with his/her own perception of the picture, disregarding the participants' descriptions and interpretations. Moreover, it is important to pay attention to questions, answers and body language that may include misunderstandings or if the researcher has not verified what has been understood.

CONCLUSION

The use of artwork, such as visual arts or drawing a picture of authentic situations, can be seen as an important part and additional methodological tool for research in qualitative interviews, where the goal is to acquire a deeper understanding and knowledge of the "thing" in focus. Drawings can offer a possibility to mediate experiences that may be difficult to express in words and thereby facilitating expressions in words. There are several

methodological strategies for using drawings, as well as strategies for analysis. Encouraging participants to draw a picture of authentic situations and to communicate about the picture may also mean a meeting with thoughts and feelings that can bring meaning and understanding to their lives, and may allow the researcher to acquire knowledge about the thing.

Using artwork, such as drawings in caring and nursing research, involving patients', nurses' and or students' experiences may deepen the communication about the subject matter. Drawing as a methodological approach may also facilitate understanding and fusion of horizons and also contribute to meaningful encounters between participants and mediate more than words can offer. In contrast to an ordinary interview between two parties, an interview involving a drawing adds something specific to the conversation as there is a "dialogue" with: (1) the participant, (2) the researcher and (3) the drawing. The picture stands on its own, and the interpretation of the picture can be understood as an ongoing process.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There are no conflicts of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

IB wrote a first draft and then both authors, ML and IB, have contributed to the final text.

ETHICAL STATEMENT

The content in this article is methodological and does not involve any human beings as participants.

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