

## What is Thinking with Images?

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Thinking with images (here also “imagistic thinking”, “visual thinking” and “picture thinking”) is here understood as mental capability (traditionally ascribed to imagination) of thinking *in* or *with* images that includes external, most commonly visual representations (e.g., diagrams, symbol arrays, paintings, maps, drawings, visual models) *and/or* internal visual imagery (mental images).

It is remarkable that thinking with (mental) images is one of recognized forms of non-verbal thought in contemporary cognitive psychology. Additionally, it is widely held that imagistic thinking is essential for art practice. One could also argue that the former is basis of a common practical reasoning such as: “If I put this stool on the table like so [image], then by climbing on top of it I shall be able to reach up like that [image]”. Images are also an effective tool in day-to-day communication.

Yet there is a lack of a comprehensive understanding what are images, how do they work, and how do they contribute to knowledge. I argue that studies on the nature of thinking with or in images could help to develop our understanding on the logic of images and indirectly clarify the mechanisms that make images an effective tool of communication.

In the project I will try to answer the question: what is thinking with or in images? In order to do that I will address two main problems of thinking with images: (A) debate on the epistemological nature of imagistic thinking and its contribution to knowledge; (B) philosophy of mind controversy whether and how images could play a role of medium of thought.

I will argue that:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): thinking with images has genuine epistemological value in its own right.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): in order to comprehensively answer to the questions on epistemological value of thinking with images one has to answer the question: What makes images images?

Hypothesis 3 (H3): imagistic thinking enables modal knowledge, in particular, knowledge of or about epistemic possibilities.

Hypothesis 4 (H4): thinking with images does not refer directly to facts but presents *formal* ways of perceiving reality (or constructing representations) and thus refers to facts *indirectly*.

Hypothesis 5 (H5): objections to the idea that images can be a form of thinking arise from the lack of understanding what are concepts and images.