

Drawing Humanity at Sea: The Interior Yacht Design as an Expression of a New Humanism

By Mariateresa Campolongo* & Luca Parodi[‡]

*In an era dominated by the digitalization of design processes and the automation of representational techniques, interior yacht design offers a privileged ground for reflecting on the return of the “handmade” as an expression of a new humanism. Through drawing, the interiors of yachts reveal the centrality of human sensitivity within acts of creation and representation. This paper explores how craftsmanship, customization, and the tactile dimension of making are redefining the notion of luxury, shifting it from ostentation toward authenticity. In this context, drawing operates as a mediating act between technology and the hand, between idea and material, reaffirming the ethical and aesthetic significance of the design process. Drawing on Da Empoli’s *Contro gli specialisti* (“Against the Specialists”), which calls for a revival of humanistic thinking, the research interprets design as a space of resistance to excessive specialization and the loss of meaning in creative work. The nautical field thus emerges as a contemporary laboratory of new humanism: a way of “drawing the sea” that restores centrality to the hand, to memory, and to beauty understood as a form of knowledge.*

Introduction

In recent years, architectural and design discourse has increasingly emphasized the need to reconsider the relationship between humans, technology, and the environment within contemporary creative practices. The accelerated digitalization of design processes, together with the emergence of artificial intelligence and algorithmic representation, has profoundly transformed the role of drawing, materiality, and sensory experience in architectural culture. While computational tools have expanded the possibilities of visualization and production, they have simultaneously generated concerns regarding the loss of corporeality, manual engagement, and reflective thinking within design practice.

Within this context, several scholars have highlighted the necessity of recovering embodied and relational forms of knowledge. Juhani Pallasmaa argues that the hand is not merely an instrument of execution but a cognitive device capable of connecting sensory perception and thought.¹ Similarly, Alberto Pérez-Gómez interprets drawing as an act of attunement between body, mind, and environment, restoring representation to its original poetic and existential dimension.² Tim Ingold

*Researcher CEAR-08/D - Design, University of Genoa, Italy.

[‡]Research Fellow, University of Genoa, Italy.

1. J. Pallasmaa, *The thinking hand: Existential and embodied wisdom in architecture* (Hoboken: Wiley, 2009).

2. A. Pérez-Gómez, *Attunement: Architectural Meaning After the Crisis of Modern Science* (London: MIT Press, 2016).

further emphasizes that making itself constitutes a form of thinking developed through correspondence with materials and contexts, while Richard Sennett identifies craftsmanship as a reflective and ethical process rather than a purely technical operation.³

These reflections resonate with the broader discourse surrounding a new humanism in contemporary design. Giuliano Da Empoli⁴ criticizes the fragmentation of specialized knowledge characteristic of technologically advanced societies and advocates for a renewed integration between technical expertise, culture, and human sensitivity. Likewise, Ezio Manzini proposes a design culture grounded in cooperation, sustainability, and social intelligence, while Andrea Bassi underlines how contemporary design increasingly derives value not solely from technological innovation but from its ability to construct meaning and relational experiences.⁵

Within this theoretical framework, interior yacht design emerges as a particularly significant field of investigation. Traditionally associated with luxury, engineering innovation, and customization, contemporary yacht design increasingly demonstrates a hybrid condition in which artisanal knowledge and digital technologies coexist within highly complex design workflows. The nautical sector therefore offers a unique opportunity to investigate how post-digital design culture may recover forms of embodied intelligence and material sensitivity without rejecting technological advancement.

This study proposes that interior yacht design functions as a contemporary laboratory of post-digital humanism, where drawing operates as a mediating act between manual gesture and computational logic, between imagination and construction, between sensory experience and technological precision. In this perspective, the yacht is interpreted not merely as a luxury object but as a mobile and relational environment in which aesthetics, ethics, and representation converge. The paper specifically aims to:

1. Examine drawing as a cognitive and relational practice within contemporary post-digital design culture.
2. Investigate interior yacht design as a field where manual and digital processes coexist through integrated representational workflows.
3. Analyze how craftsmanship, customization, and material experience contribute to redefining contemporary luxury beyond mere ostentation.
4. Explore the symbolic and environmental dimension of nautical representation as an expression of a renewed humanism in design.

3. T. Ingold, *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture* (London: Routledge, 2013); R. Sennett, *The craftsman* (London: Yale University Press, 2008).

4. In *Against the Specialists: The Revenge of Humanism* (2013), Giuliano Da Empoli criticizes the fragmentation of knowledge and advocates for a new humanism capable of reestablishing the connections between technology and culture, thereby restoring a critical, integrated, and human dimension to design. For a more detailed, see G. Da Empoli, *Contro gli specialisti. La rivincita dell'umanesimo* (Venezia: Marsilio, 2013), 18-19.

5. E. Manzini, *Design, when everybody designs: An introduction to design for social innovation* (London: MIT Press, 2015); A. Bassi, *Design contemporaneo. Istruzioni per l'uso* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2017).

To address these objectives, the paper adopts a qualitative multiple-case-study approach combining theoretical reflection with comparative analysis of selected yacht design practices. Through the examination of sketches, renderings, spatial strategies, material choices, and representational processes, the research investigates how drawing and representation contribute to constructing embodied and relational forms of knowledge in contemporary yacht design.

Theoretical Framework: Drawing, Embodiment, and Post-Digital Humanism

Throughout the history of architecture and design, drawing has represented far more than a technical instrument of visualization. As Robin Evans argues, drawing constitutes a form of thought capable of mediating between imagination and construction.⁶ Since the Renaissance, drawing has functioned as a humanistic device integrating conception and execution, mind and hand, theory and practice. Giulio Carlo Argan identifies *disegno* as the foundational principle of artistic and architectural culture precisely because it establishes continuity between intellectual vision and material realization.⁷ This epistemological dimension of drawing remained central even during the transformations introduced by industrial modernity. While technological rationalization and standardization progressively separated design ideation from manual execution, several authors continued to interpret drawing as an embodied and exploratory practice. Paul Klee, for instance, understood drawing as a dynamic movement of thought capable of discovering and generating form through gesture.⁸

In contemporary digital culture, however, representational practices have undergone radical transformation. Mario Carpo describes the current condition as a “second digital turn,” in which design increasingly relies on computational processes, simulations, and algorithmic systems.⁹ Although these technologies have expanded creative possibilities, they have also contributed to forms of dematerialization that risk distancing designers from tactile engagement and sensory perception. In response to this condition, several contemporary theorists have emphasized the need to recover embodied forms of knowledge. Pallasmaa criticizes the excessive ocularcentrism of digital culture and highlights the importance of tactile, multisensory, and phenomenological dimensions within architectural experience.¹⁰ Pérez-Gómez similarly interprets drawing as an act of attunement through which representation reconnects humans with existential and environmental experience.¹¹ In this perspective, drawing is not neutral documentation but a poetic and relational practice. This discourse intersects with broader reflections concerning contemporary humanism. Da Empoli argues that contemporary societies suffer from excessive specialization and fragmentation of knowledge, advocating for the rediscovery of integrated cultural and cognitive

6. R. Evans, *The Projective Cast: Architecture and Its Three Geometries* (London: MIT Press, 1995).

7. G. Argan, C. *Il significato delle arti del disegno* (Torino: Einaudi, 1962).

8. P. Klee, *Pedagogical Sketchbook* (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1953).

9. M. Carpo, *The Second Digital Turn: Design Beyond Intelligence* (London: MIT Press, 2017).

10. J. Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin* (Hoboken: Wiley, 2012).

11. Pérez-Gómez, *Attunement: Architectural Meaning After the Crisis of Modern Science*, 2016.

frameworks.¹² In design theory, this position resonates with Manzini's understanding of design as a cooperative and relational practice capable of generating social and environmental value.¹³ Likewise, Ingold proposes that making itself constitutes a form of knowledge developed through continuous interaction with materials and contexts.¹⁴ Knowledge, therefore, is not abstract but embodied and situated. Similar considerations emerge in the works of Peter Zumthor, who emphasizes atmosphere and sensory perception, and Donald Norman, who underlines the emotional and affective dimensions of design experience.¹⁵

Recent design theory further reinforces this perspective. Andrea Bassi interprets contemporary design as a hybrid field in which symbolic meaning becomes as important as technical innovation, while Renato De Fusco describes aesthetic sensibility as historically and culturally constructed.¹⁶ H el ene Frichot redefines drawing as a situated and ecological form of thinking capable of integrating material and immaterial dimensions, whereas Branko Kolarevic and Ali Malkawi analyze how digital technologies have transformed representational and productive processes within architecture.¹⁷

Within this framework, the notion of post-digital humanism emerges not as a rejection of technology but as an attempt to restore relational, ethical, and sensory dimensions within technologically mediated design cultures. Contemporary drawing therefore becomes a field of mediation between body and algorithm, intuition and calculation, materiality and simulation.

This perspective is particularly relevant in interior yacht design, where technological complexity coexists with craftsmanship, customization, and multisensory spatial experience. The yacht interior represents a liminal environment suspended between engineering precision and emotional perception, industrial production and artisanal detail. In this context, representation becomes both a technical and cognitive process capable of translating movement, environmental conditions, and sensory atmospheres into inhabitable spatial forms. The concept of "drawing the sea" introduced in this paper should therefore not be understood merely as a metaphorical expression but as a representational and environmental strategy. The sea constitutes a fluid and unstable environment requiring designers to negotiate continuously between movement and balance, openness and protection, technical control and sensory adaptation. Nautical drawing consequently becomes a practice of environmental mediation through which spatial experience, material perception, and mobility are translated into architectural language.

12. Da Empoli, *Contro gli specialisti. La rivincita dell'umanesimo*, 2013.

13. Manzini, *Design, when everybody designs: An introduction to design for social innovation*, 2015.

14. Ingold, *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture*, 2013.

15. P. Zumthor, *Atmospheres: Architectural Environments - Surrounding Objects* (Basilea: Birkh user Architecture, 2006); D. A. Norman, *Emotional Design* (Milano: Apogeo Education, 2004).

16. Bassi, *Design contemporaneo. Istruzioni per l'uso*, 2017; R. De Fusco, *Il gusto come convenzione storica in arte, architettura e design* (Firenze: Altralinea, 2016).

17. Frichot, *Creative Ecologies: Theorizing the Practice of Architecture*, 2018; B. Kolarevic, and A. Malkawi, *Performative Architecture: Beyond Instrumentality* (London: Routledge, 2004).

Interior Yacht Design Between Craftsmanship, Luxury, and Post-Digital Culture

Although yacht design is frequently associated with technological innovation and luxury consumption, contemporary interior yacht design increasingly reveals a more complex cultural and epistemological condition. Beyond its commercial dimension, the nautical sector constitutes a privileged environment for observing how advanced technologies, artisanal knowledge, customization (Figures 1-2), and representational practices interact within contemporary design culture. In this sense, yacht design should not be interpreted solely as a niche industrial field, but as a significant laboratory for investigating broader transformations within post-digital design culture.



Figure 1. *Benetti Oasis 40m Kahala, Owner's Cabin, Interior Yacht Design: Bonetti/Kozerski Architecture (The project demonstrates how advanced technologies, artisanal expertise, and customization can successfully coexist within a yacht.)*
Source: Courtesy of Benetti.



Figure 2. *Benetti Oasis 40m Kahala, Owner's Cabin, Interior Yacht Design: Bonetti/Kozerski Architecture (The project demonstrates how advanced technologies, artisanal expertise, and customization can successfully coexist within a yacht.)*
Source: Courtesy of Benetti.

Yacht interiors require the integration of multiple disciplinary fields, including naval engineering, interior architecture, ergonomics, material research, lighting design, environmental perception, and multisensory spatial design. Unlike many standardized industrial products, contemporary yachts often involve highly customized workflows where designers, engineers, artisans, and clients collaborate continuously throughout the development process. The design of a yacht interior therefore demands not only technical precision but also relational intelligence, aesthetic mediation, and the capacity to negotiate between industrial constraints and experiential qualities.

This condition reflects what Glenn Adamson describes as the contemporary continuity between craft and industry.¹⁸ According to Adamson, craftsmanship in contemporary culture no longer represents the opposite of technological production but rather a complementary mode of intelligence capable of generating symbolic and cultural value through material sensitivity and embodied expertise. Within yacht design, technological complexity and manual sensitivity coexist in a constantly negotiated balance: constructing a yacht requires multisensory knowledge of materials, precision skills, and the ability to mediate between industrial standards and extreme customization.¹⁹

The relationship between hand intelligence and machine intelligence is therefore not dichotomous but cooperative. As Adamson further suggests, contemporary design increasingly operates through hybrid systems in which digital technologies amplify rather than eliminate manual expertise. Yacht design fully embodies this condition. Shipyards and design studios such as Riva, Benetti, Baglietto, Zuccon International Project, Winch Design, and Lobanov Design combine digital modeling technologies, advanced engineering systems, artisanal production techniques, and highly specialized representational workflows. Hand sketches, material boards, mock-ups, photorealistic renderings (Figures 3-4), computational simulations, and physical prototyping coexist as complementary representational tools.

18. G. Adamson, *The Invention of Craft* (London: Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2019).

19. In his book, Adamson explores the relationship between craftsmanship and industry, emphasizing how the distinction between the two realms constitutes a continuum in which manual skills and technological competencies cooperate to generate cultural value and knowledge. For a detailed analysis of the mechanisms of this interaction, see Adamson, *The Invention of Craft*, 2013, 45-49.



Figure 3. *Benetti Oasis 42m, Photorealistic Rendering of the Yacht's Main Deck, Interior Yacht Design: Bonetti/Kozerski Architecture*
Source: Courtesy of Benetti.



Figure 4. *Benetti Oasis 42m, Photorealistic Rendering of the Yacht's Main Salon, Interior Yacht Design: Bonetti/Kozerski Architecture*
Source: Courtesy of Benetti.

This coexistence reveals how drawing continues to maintain an epistemological role even within highly technologized design environments. Representation is not merely a predictive or technical instrument but a cognitive and symbolic process connecting imagination, material experimentation, and construction. In this regard, Polanyi's concept of tacit knowledge becomes particularly relevant.²⁰ Much of the knowledge involved in yacht design remains embodied in gestures, material sensitivity, bodily rhythms, and experiential expertise that cannot be entirely translated into algorithmic systems. Drawing therefore operates as a relational and interpretative device capable of preserving continuity between conceptual vision

20. M. Polanyi, *The tacit dimension* (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1966).

and making. Within the nautical sector, representational practices acquire particular significance because of the complexity of maritime environments themselves. Unlike static architectural spaces, yacht interiors must continuously negotiate movement, instability, reflection, weight distribution, ergonomics, and changing environmental conditions. Drawing thus becomes a mediating practice capable of translating fluidity and environmental perception into inhabitable spatial systems. In this perspective, the notion of “drawing the sea” introduced in this paper should not be interpreted solely as a poetic metaphor but as a representational strategy aimed at mediating between environmental dynamics and spatial construction.

According to Pallasmaa, the hand constitutes a cognitive instrument through which humans shape and understand sensory experience. Pérez-Gómez interprets representation as a form of attunement capable of reconnecting body, imagination, and environment, while Ingold conceives making itself as a process of “correspondence” with the world. These theoretical positions become particularly meaningful in interior yacht design, where designers must constantly mediate between technical systems and environmental perception, between engineering precision and multisensory experience.

Within this context, drawing acquires both symbolic and operational value. It functions simultaneously as a technical language, a cognitive process, and a reflective practice capable of integrating different dimensions of design experience. As Musio-Sale suggests, representation in yacht design may be understood as an “epistemological machine” capable of guiding the transition from concept to construction while preserving the sensory and narrative dimensions of the project.²¹

This condition also transforms the meaning of luxury within contemporary yacht interiors. Rather than functioning exclusively as displays of technological excess or economic power, many contemporary yacht projects increasingly emphasize sensory quality, atmosphere, personalization, craftsmanship, and experiential value. As Russo (2021) observes in his reflection on vanity and sociality within contemporary design culture, design objects simultaneously operate as devices of representation and social identity.²² Yacht interiors therefore embody a tension between exclusivity and relational experience, spectacle and intimacy, visibility and emotional attachment.

This tension introduces important ethical questions. The yacht industry undeniably belongs to the broader economy of luxury consumption and is frequently associated with social inequality, environmental impact, and symbolic excess. However, reducing yacht design exclusively to ostentation risks overlooking its role as a laboratory for experimentation in craftsmanship, representational practices, and multisensory spatial design. The critical challenge is therefore not to idealize the nautical sector but to analyze how forms of embodied knowledge and material intelligence persist within highly technologized and economically complex environments.

In this sense, contemporary yacht interiors may be interpreted as post-digital spaces in which human sensibility is renegotiated rather than erased. Drawing, material experimentation, artisanal detailing, and sensory materiality become forms of resistance against complete automation and standardization. As Alessi (2014) and Vercelloni (2021) observe regarding contemporary Italian design culture, the return

21. M. Musio-Sale, *Yacht design: dal concept alla rappresentazione* (Milano: Tecniche Nuove, 2009).

22. D. Russo, *Vanità e socialità nel design* (Milano: Mimesis, 2021).

to manual skill and tactile perception represents a broader cultural reaction against the abstraction of hyper-digitalized production systems. This orientation does not imply a rejection of technology but rather its humanization: digital tools are reinterpreted as extensions of hand and mind, mediatory instruments rather than substitutes.

In yacht design, this attitude assumes both symbolic and operational significance. Each project becomes an exercise in balancing industrial standards with poetic attention to detail, algorithmic control with freedom of gesture, engineering performance with emotional atmosphere. Interior yacht design consequently constitutes a privileged field for experimenting with the integration of engineering, ergonomics, perception, representation, and craftsmanship. The yacht itself therefore becomes more than a technical object. Drawing on Peter Sloterdijk's notion of spheres, the yacht may be interpreted as a mobile inhabitable microcosm in which protection, movement, identity, and environmental interaction converge.²³ Simultaneously machine and dwelling,²⁴ refuge and interface, the yacht interior represents a complex relational environment where technological precision and embodied perception coexist. Beyond metaphor, the "nautical sphere" also operates as an epistemological laboratory where design becomes a form of knowledge about the world and about human experience itself.

In this perspective, interior yacht design reveals how contemporary representation continues to function as an embodied and relational practice. Drawing does not merely visualize form but activates reflective processes through which designers negotiate relationships between technology, materiality, perception, and environment. The nautical project therefore becomes a cultural and humanistic act capable of reconnecting technical innovation with sensory intelligence and existential meaning.

Methodology

This research adopts a qualitative, theoretical, and phenomenological approach aimed at investigating the relationship between drawing, representation, craftsmanship, and embodied knowledge within contemporary interior yacht design. The objective of the study is not the quantitative measurement of design performance, but rather the interpretation of the cognitive, sensory, cultural, and relational dimensions connecting manual gesture, digital technologies, and spatial construction in post-digital design culture. The methodological framework is grounded in design-based inquiry and interpretative analysis. In this perspective, the project is understood not merely as a technical procedure but as a cultural and epistemological practice through which designers negotiate relationships between body, environment, materials, and technological systems. Drawing is therefore interpreted as a cognitive and relational act capable of mediating between imagination and construction, perception and representation, concept and material realization. The research methodology combines four complementary dimensions:

23. P. Sloterdijk, *Sfere II* (Milano: Raffaello Cortina, 2014).

24. In *non-Lieux. Introduction à une anthropologie de la surmodernité* (1992), Marc Augé redefines the concept of dwelling, associating it with notions such as mobility and threshold. For a more detailed analysis, see M. Augé, *Non-Lieux. Introduction à une anthropologie de la surmodernité* (Paris: Seuil, 1992), 92-95.

1. Critical literature review.
2. Comparative case-study analysis.
3. Interpretation of representational practices.
4. Visual and phenomenological analysis of interior yacht design projects.

According to Sennett manual skill constitutes a form of reflective intelligence through which making becomes an act of thinking and continuous learning.²⁵ Ingold similarly describes making as a process of “correspondence” with the world, where thought and action continuously interact through material engagement.²⁶ Pallasmaa identifies the hand as a cognitive and poetic instrument capable of shaping sensory experience, while Pérez-Gómez interprets representation as a process of attunement reconnecting imagination, body, and environment.²⁷ These perspectives are particularly relevant within contemporary yacht design, where the project develops through the continuous interaction between technological systems, environmental constraints, multisensory perception, and artisanal expertise. In this context, drawing and representation are analyzed not merely as tools for visualization or technical communication but as embodied knowledge practices through which designers interpret and transform reality.

The methodological approach also incorporates Frichot’s conception of drawing as ecological thinking and Manzini’s reflection on cooperation between manual, cognitive, and social forms of knowledge within contemporary design culture.²⁸ These theoretical contributions support the interpretation of interior yacht design as a hybrid field where digital technologies and manual intelligence coexist within integrated representational workflows.

25. Sennett, *The craftsman*, 2008.

26. Ingold, *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture*, 2013.

27. Pallasmaa, *The thinking hand: Existential and embodied wisdom in architecture*, 2009; Pérez-Gómez, *Attunement: Architectural Meaning After the Crisis of Modern Science*, 2016.

28. H. Frichot, *Creative Ecologies: Theorizing the Practice of Architecture* (London: Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2018); Manzini, *Design, when everybody designs: An introduction to design for social innovation*, 2015.

Research Design and Case Selection

The empirical component of the research is based on the comparative analysis of selected yacht design practices, including Riva, Benetti, Baglietto, Zuccon International Project, Winch Design, and Lobanov Design. These cases were selected according to four principal criteria:

1. Relevance within the contemporary yacht design sector.
2. Integration of advanced digital technologies with artisanal and representational practices.
3. Availability of public visual documentation, project narratives, and design materials.
4. Diversity of spatial, material, and representational approaches.

The selected studios and shipyards represent different scales, aesthetic identities, and design methodologies within the nautical sector. Rather than attempting an exhaustive overview of yacht production, the study focuses on paradigmatic examples capable of illustrating how contemporary yacht interiors negotiate relationships between craftsmanship, customization, engineering precision, and sensory experience. This methodological choice responds directly to the need to investigate interior yacht design not as a homogeneous category but as a heterogeneous design culture characterized by multiple operational and representational strategies.

Analytical Framework

The analytical framework examines the selected projects through the observation and interpretation of representational processes, material strategies, and spatial configurations. The analysis specifically focuses on:

- The role of hand sketching during conceptual development.
- The interaction between manual drawing and digital modelling.
- The use of renderings, mock-ups, and material boards.
- Customization processes and artisanal detailing.
- Multisensory and atmospheric qualities of interior spaces.
- Relationships between technical constraints and spatial perception.
- Continuity between conceptual representation and construction.

Attention is given to the representational workflow connecting conceptual sketches, computational simulations, material experimentation, and final spatial realization. Drawings, renderings, diagrams, and visual materials are therefore interpreted not merely as technical outputs but as cognitive artifacts capable of revealing how designers negotiate relationships between technology, environment, and embodied experience. In this regard, Polanyi's concept of tacit knowledge becomes fundamental.²⁹ Much of the knowledge involved in interior yacht design remains implicit, embodied in gestures, sensory evaluations, bodily rhythms, and

29. Polanyi, *The tacit dimension*, 1966.

material expertise that cannot be entirely codified within algorithmic systems. Representation therefore functions as a mediating practice through which experiential and technical knowledge become communicable and operational.

The methodological framework also draws on Musio-Sale's interpretation of yacht representation as an "epistemological machine" capable of guiding the transition from concept to construction while preserving continuity between imagination and making.³⁰ This perspective is particularly relevant in the nautical sector, where spatial complexity, environmental instability, and technological integration require constant dialogue between analytical precision and perceptual sensitivity.

Phenomenological and Interpretative Perspective

The study adopts a phenomenological and interpretative perspective according to which knowledge emerges through situated interaction with materials, representations, and environments. This approach opposes purely deterministic or exclusively algorithmic interpretations of design practice, privileging instead embodied and relational forms of intelligence. Designers are therefore considered not detached observers but active participants within processes of exploration, interpretation, and material negotiation. Within this perspective, drawing does not merely visualize a predefined solution but activates reflective processes through which designers understand and transform reality. Representation becomes a resonance field between body and environment, inside and outside, imagination and construction.

The methodology consequently understands interior yacht design as a cultural text through which broader transformations in contemporary design culture become visible. The yacht interior is interpreted simultaneously as a technical object, sensory environment, symbolic device, and relational microcosm. As noted by Alessi and Vercelloni, the renewed interest in manual skill and sensory materiality within contemporary design culture may be interpreted as a critical response to hyper-digitalization and standardization.³¹ This orientation does not imply the rejection of technology but rather its reinterpretation as an extension of human sensibility and embodied intelligence.

In yacht design, this condition becomes particularly evident. The complexity of construction techniques, combined with the need to optimize space, ergonomics, materials, and environmental interaction, transforms drawing into a synthesis tool capable of integrating apparently contradictory dimensions: calculation and emotion, precision and atmosphere, engineering and narrative. Drawing on Sloterdijk's notion of spheres, the yacht may therefore be interpreted as a mobile inhabitable ecosystem where aesthetics, ethics, technology, and environmental perception converge.³² Beyond metaphor, the nautical project becomes an epistemological laboratory in which representation operates as a form of knowledge about both the world and human experience.

30. Musio-Sale, *Yacht design: dal concept alla rappresentazione*, 2009.

31. C. Alessi, *Dopo gli anni Zero. Il nuovo design italiano* (Roma: Laterza, 2014); M. Vercelloni, *Sguardi sul design contemporaneo. Interviste di Matteo Vercelloni* (New York: Libri Scheiwiller, 2021).

32. P. Sloterdijk, *Sfere II* (Milano: Raffaello Cortina, 2014).

Ultimately, the adopted methodology aims to restore the humanistic dimension of design practice by recognizing drawing as an embodied and interpretative process through which designers negotiate relationships between technology, perception, materiality, and meaning. Through representation, the designer does not simply describe reality but actively participates in its cultural and spatial construction.

Results and Case Analysis

The analysis of the selected cases reveals recurring patterns characterizing the relationship between craftsmanship, digital technologies, and representation within contemporary interior yacht design. The observed practices confirm that the nautical sector constitutes a significant laboratory for investigating post-digital humanism in contemporary design.

Drawing as Cognitive and Generative Practice

Across all analyzed cases, hand drawing maintains a central role during the conceptual phases of design. Initial sketches are not limited to technical visualization but function as exploratory and cognitive tools through which designers investigate proportions, spatial sequences, environmental atmospheres, and material relationships. In projects developed by Zuccon International Project and Winch Design, conceptual sketches frequently establish the emotional and narrative identity of interiors before digital modeling begins. The graphic gesture allows designers to translate environmental perceptions associated with maritime space – light reflections, movement, openness, and fluidity – into spatial concepts. This process reflects Pérez-Gómez's interpretation of drawing as attunement and Pallasmaa's conception of the hand as an instrument of embodied intelligence.³³ The analyzed practices demonstrate that manual drawing remains essential precisely because it enables ambiguity, interpretation, and sensory exploration, qualities often reduced within purely computational environments.

Digital Technologies as Extensions of Human Sensibility

At the same time, advanced digital technologies play a fundamental role throughout all analyzed workflows. Three-dimensional modeling, immersive renderings, computational simulations, and digital prototyping allow designers to coordinate highly complex technical systems while anticipating ergonomic, structural, and material constraints. However, the observed cases reveal that digital technologies rarely replace artisanal or conceptual processes. In Benetti and Baglietto projects, for example, digital tools operate as extensions of manual and creative intelligence rather than autonomous design systems. Renderings (Figures 5-6) and simulations are continuously adjusted through tactile evaluations, material samples, and physical mock-ups. This coexistence confirms Carpo's interpretation of post-digital culture as a condition in which computational systems amplify rather

33. Pallasmaa, *The thinking hand: Existential and embodied wisdom in architecture*, 2009; Pérez-Gómez, *Attunement: Architectural Meaning After the Crisis of Modern Science*, 2016.

than eliminate human agency.³⁴ The relationship between hand intelligence and machine intelligence therefore emerges not as opposition but as operational continuity.



Figure 5. *Benetti B.Neos, Photorealistic Rendering of the Yacht's Main Deck, Interior Yacht Design: Francesca Muzio (FM Architettura).*
Source: Courtesy of Benetti.



Figure 6. *Benetti B.Neos, Photorealistic Rendering of the Yacht's Main Deck, Interior Yacht Design: Francesca Muzio (FM Architettura).*
Source: Courtesy of Benetti.

Materiality, Craftsmanship, and Sensory Experience

Another recurring aspect concerns the centrality of materiality and artisanal detail within yacht interiors. The studied projects demonstrate a strong emphasis on tactile qualities, multisensory perception, and spatial atmosphere. Riva interiors, for instance, reveal continuity between heritage craftsmanship and contemporary

34. Carpo, *The Second Digital Turn: Design Beyond Intelligence*, 2017.

representational technologies by wood finishes, reflective surfaces, and carefully calibrated spatial proportions. Similarly, Winch Design projects frequently combine advanced engineering solutions with handcrafted detailing and highly customized material palettes. This attention to sensory materiality contributes to redefining luxury beyond simple ostentation. Rather than emphasizing technological excess alone, the analyzed interiors prioritize intimacy, atmosphere, emotional attachment, and experiential quality.

This shift resonates with Russo's interpretation of contemporary design as suspended between vanity and sociality.³⁵ Within yacht interiors, luxury increasingly functions not only as a display of economic exclusivity but also as a symbolic construction of identity, belonging, and relational experience. Customization processes therefore become forms of narrative and emotional mediation through which design constructs social meaning. At the same time, the analysis also reveals the tension between ethical design discourse and luxury consumption. Although yacht interiors frequently promote authenticity, craftsmanship, and sensory quality, they remain embedded within economically exclusive systems of production. This contradiction does not invalidate the humanistic potential of yacht design but rather highlights the complexity of negotiating ethics, representation, and consumption within contemporary design culture.

The Yacht as Relational and Environmental Space

The selected cases further demonstrate that yacht interiors operate as complex relational environments rather than isolated technical objects. Interior spaces are designed to mediate continuously between movement and stability, openness and protection, intimacy and exposure.

In this sense, the yacht may be interpreted as a mobile micro-living sphere. Spatial organization, lighting strategies, material transitions, and visual continuity with the surrounding sea contribute to constructing immersive and emotionally charged environments.

Drawing and representation play a crucial role within this process. Sketches, diagrams, and digital models function as mediating devices capable of translating environmental perception into inhabitable spatial systems. Nautical representation therefore becomes a cognitive process through which designers negotiate relationships between body, movement, technology, and landscape.

Representation as Cultural and Cognitive Mediation

Finally, the analysis demonstrates that drawing within yacht design functions as a cultural and interpretative practice rather than merely a predictive instrument.

Representation enables communication among designers, engineers, artisans, and clients while simultaneously preserving the sensory and narrative dimensions of the project. Through sketches, renderings, and material studies, design intentions become negotiable, shareable, and experientially intelligible. The analyzed cases therefore confirm that interior yacht design constitutes a paradigmatic field in which

35. Russo, *Vanità e socialità nel design*, 2021.

contemporary drawing continues to operate as embodied and relational knowledge. Manual gestures, digital systems, material experimentation, and environmental perception converge within integrated representational workflows capable of reconnecting technical precision with human experience.

Discussion: Drawing the Sea and the Humanistic Dimension of Representation

The findings of this research suggest that contemporary interior yacht design offers a significant framework for reconsidering the role of drawing, representation, and embodied knowledge within post-digital design culture. The analyzed cases demonstrate that yacht interiors are not merely technological or luxury-oriented products, but complex relational environments where sensory perception, material intelligence, engineering precision, and symbolic representation converge.

The discussion emerging from the case studies reveals how contemporary nautical design increasingly operates through hybrid and integrated representational systems in which manual drawing, digital technologies, material experimentation, and environmental perception coexist. This coexistence challenges deterministic interpretations of technological progress that describe digitalization as inevitably leading toward dematerialization and the disappearance of embodied knowledge. Rather than replacing human intelligence, the analyzed representational practices demonstrate how digital systems may amplify and extend sensory and cognitive capacities when integrated with reflective and artisanal processes. In this sense, interior yacht design becomes a paradigmatic field for understanding the transformations of contemporary post-digital culture.

Drawing the Sea: Representation as Environmental Mediation

The concept of “drawing the sea” proposed throughout this paper should therefore be interpreted not simply as a metaphorical or poetic expression, but as an epistemological and representational category. The sea constitutes an unstable and continuously transforming environment characterized by movement, reflection, fluidity, and environmental unpredictability. Designing within this condition requires forms of representation capable of mediating between technical control and perceptual adaptation, between engineering precision and atmospheric sensitivity. Unlike static architectural environments, yacht interiors must continuously negotiate instability and movement while preserving spatial coherence, comfort, orientation, and emotional balance. Drawing consequently becomes an act of environmental mediation through which fluid conditions are translated into inhabitable systems.

In this perspective, representation is not limited to visual prediction or technical description. It becomes a process of interpretation and correspondence with environmental conditions. Following Ingold, drawing and making may be understood as forms of engagement with the world through which knowledge emerges relationally rather than abstractly.³⁶ This interpretation resonates with Pérez-Gómez’s understanding

36. Ingold, *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture*, 2013.

of representation as attunement and with Pallasmaa's conception of drawing as embodied perception.³⁷ The analyzed projects reveal how conceptual sketches, material studies, renderings, and spatial diagrams operate not merely as technical documents but as mediatory devices through which designers negotiate relationships between body, movement, environment, and construction. The nautical project therefore becomes a practice of translating environmental experience into spatial form. Light reflections, maritime horizons, tactile materiality, spatial compression, openness toward the sea, and multisensory atmospheres all contribute to defining yacht interiors as dynamic perceptual environments.

In this sense, "drawing the sea" ultimately refers to the capacity of representation to transform instability into inhabitable meaning.

Post-Digital Humanism and Embodied Intelligence

The research further demonstrates that contemporary yacht design provides a significant framework for reconsidering the meaning of post-digital humanism.

As Carpo (2017) observes, contemporary design culture is increasingly shaped by computational systems, algorithmic processes, and advanced digital infrastructures. However, the analyzed cases demonstrate that technological development does not necessarily eliminate manual intelligence, sensory perception, or embodied knowledge.

On the contrary, the coexistence of digital technologies and artisanal practices within yacht design reveals how post-digital culture increasingly depends on hybrid forms of intelligence integrating computational precision with human interpretation. Within the analyzed workflows, hand sketches coexist with digital simulations, computational modeling with material experimentation, and algorithmic optimization with sensory evaluation. Representation therefore becomes a field of negotiation between measurable and immeasurable dimensions of design practice.

This condition confirms Polanyi's (1966) argument concerning tacit knowledge. Much of the expertise involved in interior yacht design remains embodied within gestures, sensory judgments, and experiential forms of intelligence that cannot be entirely translated into data or automated procedures. The role of craftsmanship consequently acquires renewed significance within post-digital culture. As Sennett (2008) argues, craftsmanship is not merely manual execution, but reflective intelligence developed through continuous dialogue between thought and action. Similarly, Adamson (2019) describes contemporary craft as a hybrid condition in which technology and manual expertise operate cooperatively rather than antagonistically.

The analyzed projects demonstrate precisely this continuity between hand intelligence and technological systems. Digital tools function not as substitutes for human creativity but as extensions of cognitive and representational capacities. This perspective also challenges simplistic oppositions between analog and digital practices. The new humanism emerging from contemporary yacht design does not reject technological innovation but seeks to restore the sensory, interpretative, and ethical dimensions of design practice within technologically mediated environments. Drawing

37. Pallasmaa, *The thinking hand: Existential and embodied wisdom in architecture*, 2009; Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin*, 2012; Pérez-Gómez, *Attunement: Architectural Meaning After the Crisis of Modern Science*, 2016.

therefore retains a central role because it reconnects abstraction with perception, calculation with imagination, and technical systems with human experience.

Luxury, Ethics, and Relational Design

One of the most significant aspects emerging from the research concerns the relationship between luxury, ethics, and representation within contemporary yacht culture. The yacht industry undeniably belongs to the broader economy of luxury consumption and remains associated with exclusivity, economic privilege, and symbolic distinction. For this reason, interpreting yacht interiors exclusively through the rhetoric of craftsmanship and sensory authenticity would risk overlooking the critical tensions embedded within the sector. However, the analyzed projects suggest that contemporary yacht interiors increasingly redefine luxury beyond mere ostentation or technological spectacle. Spatial atmosphere, tactile materiality, emotional attachment, multisensory perception, and customization frequently emerge as central design values. In this regard, Russo's reflection on vanity and sociality within contemporary design culture becomes particularly relevant.³⁸ According to Russo, design objects simultaneously function as devices of self-representation and relational mediation. Contemporary luxury therefore operates through a constant tension between visibility and intimacy, symbolic distinction and social belonging.

This duality is particularly evident within yacht interiors. On the one hand, yachts continue to function as symbols of exclusivity and prestige. On the other hand, the analyzed projects reveal increasing attention toward experiential quality, emotional comfort, personalization, and sensory immersion. The yacht interior consequently becomes not only an object of display but also a relational and narrative environment through which identity, memory, and experience are constructed. Customization processes further reinforce this interpretation. Material selections, handcrafted details, spatial atmospheres, lighting strategies, and representational narratives contribute to transforming the yacht into a symbolic microcosm reflecting individual aspirations, cultural values, and emotional imaginaries.

At the same time, the ethical contradictions of luxury-oriented design cannot be ignored. The environmental impact of the nautical industry, the exclusivity of access, and the symbolic dimension of conspicuous consumption remain central critical issues. Rather than attempting to resolve these tensions, the research argues that interior yacht design should be interpreted as a field where broader contradictions of contemporary culture become particularly visible: technology and embodiment, spectacle and intimacy, exclusivity and relationality, industrial production and artisanal authenticity. In this sense, the humanistic dimension of yacht design does not emerge through the denial of luxury but through the critical reinterpretation of how luxury itself is constructed and experienced within post-digital culture.

38. Russo, *Vanità e socialità nel design*, 2021.

Representation as Humanistic Practice

Ultimately, the findings of this research reaffirm the centrality of drawing and representation as humanistic practices within contemporary design culture. Throughout the analyzed cases, representation consistently emerges not merely as a technical procedure but as a cognitive and interpretative act capable of connecting different dimensions of experience. Sketches, diagrams, renderings, and material studies function simultaneously as tools of communication, exploration, negotiation, and reflection. This confirms Argan's interpretation of disegno as a foundational cultural act integrating conception and realization, thought and construction.³⁹ Similarly, representation within yacht design continuously mediates between technical systems and existential experience. The designer consequently assumes the role of mediator rather than simple executor of computational procedures. Through drawing, designers negotiate complexity, translate environmental conditions into spatial narratives, and reconnect technological systems with sensory and cultural meaning. This perspective also resonates with Coccia's⁴⁰ reflections on dwelling as a relational process through which humans construct continuity between body, environment, and world.⁴¹ The yacht interior, understood as a mobile inhabitable sphere, intensifies this relational condition because dwelling itself becomes dynamic, unstable, and continuously mediated through representation. Similarly, Sloterdijk's notion of spheres allows the yacht to be interpreted as a temporary ecosystem where protection, identity, perception, and environmental interaction converge.⁴² In this framework, representation acquires ethical and political significance. Drawing becomes a practice through which design resists total abstraction and reaffirms the value of sensory experience, reflective thinking, and embodied intelligence within technologically accelerated societies.

The new humanism emerging from this research is therefore based not on opposition to technology but on reciprocity between artificial intelligence and sensitive intelligence, between computational systems and embodied interpretation, between efficiency and meaning. Contemporary interior yacht design ultimately demonstrates that drawing remains not only a representational technique but also a cultural and epistemological act through which humans negotiate relationships with technology, environment, movement, and imagination.

Conclusions

This research has investigated the relationship between drawing, representation, craftsmanship, and embodied knowledge within contemporary interior yacht design,

39. Argan, *Il significato delle arti del disegno*, 1962.

40. In *Philosophy of the Home: Domestic Space and Happiness* (2021), Emanuele Coccia reflects on living spaces as a vital extension of the human being, a place where continuity between body, environment, and world is manifested. Dwelling is not merely a functional act, but a process of co-creation between subject and space, in which the home becomes an ethical and aesthetic device for relational engagement. For a detailed analysis, see E. Coccia, *Filosofia della casa. Lo spazio domestico e la felicità* (Torino: Einaudi, 2021), 45-52.

41. Coccia, *Filosofia della casa. Lo spazio domestico e la felicità*, 2021.

42. Sloterdijk, *Sfere II*, 2014.

interpreting the nautical project as a privileged field for observing the transformations of post-digital design culture. Through the integration of theoretical reflection, phenomenological interpretation, and comparative case-study analysis, the study has demonstrated how contemporary yacht interiors operate as hybrid environments in which technological systems, artisanal practices, sensory perception, and representational processes continuously interact. The findings suggest that drawing continues to maintain a central epistemological role within contemporary design practice. Far from being reduced to a purely technical or illustrative function, representation emerges as a cognitive, relational, and interpretative process through which designers negotiate relationships between body, environment, materials, and technology. In interior yacht design, this role becomes particularly evident because of the need to mediate between engineering precision, environmental instability, multisensory experience, and customization.

The paper has also argued that contemporary yacht design should not be interpreted exclusively through the categories of luxury consumption or technological spectacle. Although the nautical sector remains deeply connected to economies of exclusivity and symbolic distinction, the analyzed projects reveal how craftsmanship, tactile materiality, atmospheric quality, and embodied intelligence continue to play a decisive role within highly technologized design environments. In this sense, yacht interiors become significant laboratories for understanding how post-digital culture renegotiates the relationship between human sensibility and technological systems.

Attention has been given to the concept of “drawing the sea,” interpreted not merely as a metaphorical expression but as a representational and epistemological practice through which fluid environmental conditions are translated into inhabitable spatial forms. Representation consequently operates as a mediatory process capable of transforming movement, instability, and environmental complexity into meaningful spatial experiences.

The study furthermore contributes to broader debates concerning post-digital humanism, design representation, and embodied cognition by demonstrating how contemporary design practice increasingly depends on hybrid forms of intelligence integrating computational technologies with tacit knowledge, sensory interpretation, and reflective making. The coexistence of digital systems and artisanal practices observed in interior yacht design challenges deterministic narratives of technological dematerialization and reaffirms the continuing relevance of human-centered representational processes. Beyond the nautical sector itself, the research suggests broader implications for contemporary design culture and design education. In an age increasingly shaped by automation, artificial intelligence, and computational abstraction, the persistence of drawing as an embodied and relational practice highlights the enduring necessity of interpretative, sensory, and humanistic forms of knowledge within the design disciplines.

Ultimately, the paper argues that representation remains not only a tool for visualization or control, but a cultural and epistemological act through which designers construct relationships between technology, perception, materiality, and human experience. Contemporary interior yacht design therefore reveals how drawing continues to function as a practice of understanding and inhabiting the world, reaffirming the centrality of embodied intelligence within the emerging

horizon of post-digital humanism. Like the sea, the course is never definitively traced but continuously reshaped by wind, hand, and the desire to go beyond the horizon: a gesture that, through the intertwining of knowledge and freedom, perhaps represents the authentic definition of contemporary humanism.

Acknowledgments

This paper is the result of a collaborative effort by the authors. However, the Introduction, the section “Theoretical Framework: Drawing, Embodiment, and Post-Digital Humanism”, and the subsections “Drawing the Sea: Representation as Environmental Mediation”, “Post-Digital Humanism and Embodied Intelligence”, and “Representation as Humanistic Practice” within the Discussion are attributed to L. Parodi. The section “Interior Yacht Design Between Craftsmanship, Luxury, and Post-Digital Culture”, the sections “Methodology”, “Research Design and Case Selection”, “Analytical Framework”, “Phenomenological and Interpretative Perspective”, “Results and Case Analysis”, the subsection “Luxury, Ethics, and Relational Design” within the Discussion, and the Conclusions are attributed to M. Campolongo.

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