GETTING ILLUSTRATION CLIENTS

JO DAVIES &
DEREK BRAZELL

BLOOMSBURY

GETTING ILLUSTRATION CLIENTS

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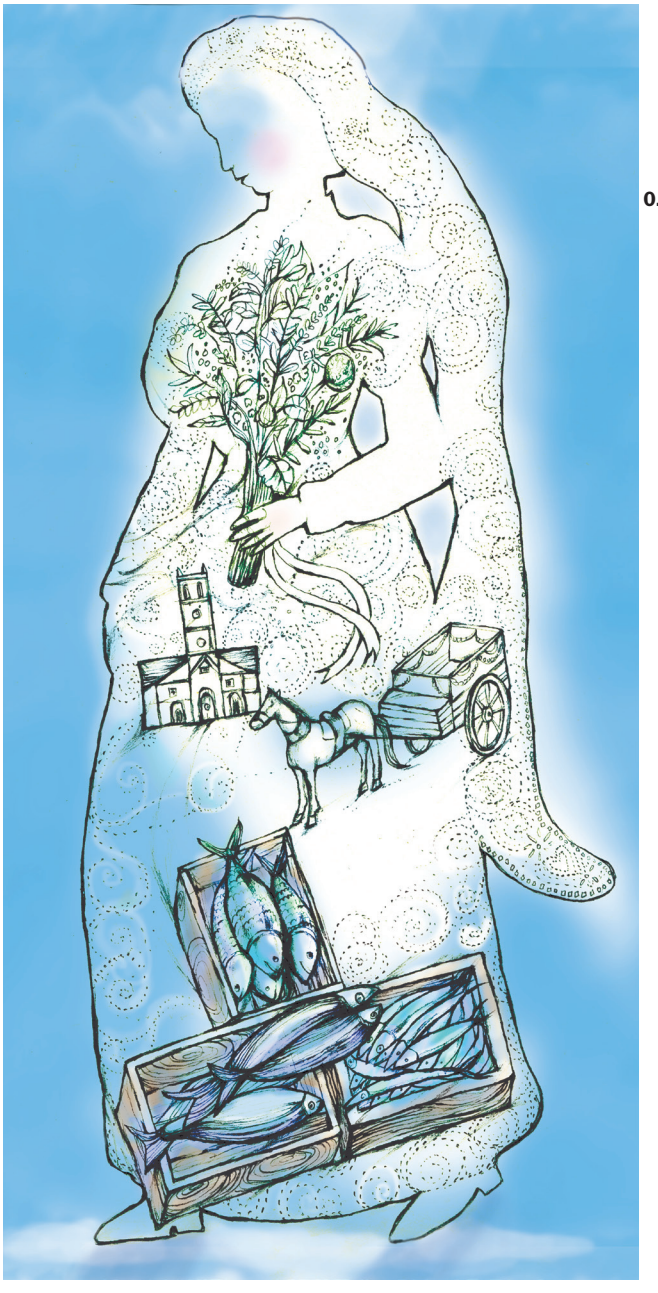
Dedication

Derek Brazell would like to dedicate the book to all the illustrators working hard to find their new clients.

Jo Davies would like to dedicate this book to Marion Griffith, her late Mum.



0.0A

0.0A–B
Artist: Jo Davies.
Commissioner:
Ballure Press.
Commission: To Produce a series of illustrations to illustrate the text for *Story from Stone* by Vicky Lloyd West and Kim Kneen.
Balliure Press.
Project supported by Culture Vannin and Isle of Man Arts Council.

0.0B

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INTRODUCTION

0.1A

‘Many see it as a mysterious world – there’s a lot of talent out there but it can be hard to enter the circle.’

Mélissa Charland, associate creative director, Publicis, Canada

0.1A
Artist: Delphine Dussoubs aka Dalkhafine.
Commission: One from a series of posters for the Concours Musical International de Montréal (CMIM) 2021 edition.

What is illustration and who is this book for?

What you will gain from this book is an understanding that the process of finding clients and getting commissioned by them, or finding avenues for selling your illustrative products, is vital if you are planning to capitalize on your skills as an illustrator. The ambiguity of the title *Getting Illustration Clients* also reflects its aim to provide authoritative insight by drawing directly on first-hand research and interviews with commissioners. There are no promises, but if you understand clients, what they do, what they want and how they work, you will have more confidence in approaching and working with them to pursue illustration as a commercial enterprise.

The word 'illustration' encompasses areas of creative practice that span many media and conceptual approaches. *Getting Illustration Clients* acknowledges this diversity of working approaches and assumes your goal is to achieve commercial success and make money from your artwork, whether through being commissioned by clients independently or via an agent, promoting yourself for projects, working collaboratively or in a more entrepreneurial capacity by generating artwork to sell.

This book works on the presumption that you have a folio of artwork that is of an appropriate industry standard, with content that is suitable for working in the area of illustrative practice that you are aiming towards. It doesn't feature content about the aesthetics of illustration, media or technique, or any of the formal aspects of producing imagery. Instead, it suggests how to objectively evaluate the content of your folio, based on what clients and buyers of illustrated products are looking for, so that you can tailor it to target those clients most likely to consider you for their commissions.

0.1B

0.1B
Illustration by founder of AppleCheeks, Tiffany Tan. Tiffany is a Taiwanese–American illustration entrepreneur and vlogger who has made huge sales of stickers and stationery products on Etsy. She has amassed great numbers of followers on Instagram and YouTube, where she shows behind the scenes of her work. She also runs a successful Patreon.

0.2A

0.2A
Artist: Patric Sandri.
Image kindly provided
by Ella Lupo, agent at
Purple Rain Illustrators.

HOW DO I KNOW THE ADVICE IN THIS BOOK IS USEFUL?

You will find the internet awash with blog posts, advice columns, YouTube videos and articles about finding clients and getting work as an illustrator. Lots of them are from working illustrators at various stages of their careers and many offer sound and credible advice. If you filter out the best of them you will find content that you may find helpful, especially if the practitioners offering advice are themselves at a stage of their career that makes their experience representative of, and appropriate to, your own situation and reflects your own ambitions. What makes this book different from much of this online content is its aim to provide a well-structured, curated and objective perspective across what is an expansive and evolving industry.

The content of this book is informed by years of our own experience of working as practitioners, educators and first-hand advisers for a diversity of illustrators. Unlike anything else you will find online, this text brings our experience together with the best advice from reputable and select sources – from the clients themselves who are commissioning illustration work at this time. Interviewing these commissioning clients, as well as agents and illustrators, face to face and via questionnaires, has been a fact-checking exercise for us, guaranteeing the most up-to-date perspective and representing the professional views of clients from around the world.

There is very little curated information available online – or in any recently published books – that has been through this rigorous process, and few university courses that can claim to have informed their curriculum with such broad professional insight. We genuinely hope that tutors and students, as well as early-career illustrators, will see this as a valuable and unique resource that will offer career-launching advice.

‘Beyond the obvious skill of honing your style and craft, an illustrator’s value is tenfold if you add problem solving, flexibility, agility and patience. I love it when I’m working through an issue – whether it’s how the idea is communicated or how the brand is represented – and the illustrator can offer creative ways to solve it. In agencies, the brief can change or the client can throw you a curveball and it helps for everyone involved in developing the creative problem to be part of the solution. It’s also a huge plus to be nice! Never underestimate the power of a positive personality.’

Shirin Majid, recent deputy executive creative director, VCCP, UK

0.2B

0.2B
Artist: Ruby Taylor. Commissioner: Shirin Majid, VCCP. Commission: One from a series of promotional posters for the the British Red Cross charity, for which several illustrators were commissioned to interpret the same concept in their own visual approach.

0.3

‘Be true to yourself. Truly enjoy what you do. It’s a balance between having the right strategy and being who you are. Doing this and enjoying it will propel you forward in your career in a good and sustainable way.’

Tracy Kuwatani, recent product developer at Airbnb, USA

WHAT IS YOUR INTERPRETATION OF ILLUSTRATION?

There are many shifting definitions of illustration, which in itself can be confusing for those hoping to gain a clearer understanding of this area as a possible career option. It is acknowledged that illustration is a multifaceted activity. In recent years, universities and academics have shown in their work shared through conferences and academic journals that it can be a form of research and conceptual investigation, which in itself can lead to another career or form of self-achievement. In this context, we emphasize that our aim is to focus specifically on illustration as a commercial activity as a means of directly generating income for the creator. We don’t see that being prepared commercially is at odds with being interested in the subject from a research perspective, and neither are we suggesting compromising on your creative vision to achieve professional success.

There is an authorial dimension to many illustrators’ practice, and working on self-generated projects

without the motive of financial gain is a valued aspect of an illustrator's career (that is often coveted by in-demand and time-starved illustrators). The aim of *Getting Illustration Clients* is not to undermine such personally driven practice, but it is tailored unapologetically to cater for those seeking to make it a commercial enterprise. This book is for you if you want to expand your understanding of how to function within transactions in which the client performs a central role or where your practice will flourish if there are others paying for your illustrations as a product.

Through *Getting Illustration Clients* you will understand what clients expect, like and prefer from the artists they commission. We will explore the process of finding avenues for selling illustration work and mapping what you do as a practitioner against potential areas of illustration.

We want also to reveal what clients are really like and explore the vital part they play in the growth, evolution and sustaining of individual practitioners and the industry as a whole. Developing an understanding of how clients and illustrators operate is a step towards success in this exciting creative industry.

Derek Brazell and Jo Davies

0.3
Artist: Clare Celeste.
Commissioner: BASA Studio.
Commission: Mural for Riem Arcaden.
Artist Clare Celeste working on a large-scale mural made from cut paper. Clare's artwork is driven by her strong environmental passion and is commissioned for many illustration contexts.
Courtesy of the artist.

0.4
Artist: Xavier Segers.
Commission: Xavier created a series of experimental images inspired by the constant news coverage of the Covid-19 pandemic during lockdown. He shared them on social media and they were subsequently published in the annual *Future Forecast Report* by The Future Laboratory.

'Illustrators must remember they are providing a service, so you have a responsibility to provide for the clients in your style, to cater for them while still being yourself.'

Xavier Segers, illustrator and designer, UK

0.4

1 HOW DOES ILLUSTRATION COMMISSIONING WORK?

1.0
Cover from the *3x3 International Illustration Annual*.
Provided by: Charles Hively, *3x3*.
Illustration by: Max Loeffler.
This illustration was originally commissioned for an article series by *GQ* magazine called 'A Guide to Psychological Fitness' about being mentally healthier.

1.0

1 HOW DOES ILLUSTRATION COMMISSIONING WORK?

Who and how? Outlining the commissioning process

In which areas can an illustrator get clients?

Who will commission me? Who do I approach?

Chapter summary

Who and how?
Outlining the commissioning process

This chapter outlines the distinctions and similarities between the areas that clients commission within and clarifies the roles of some of the key professionals involved in the commissioning processes. Interspersed with quotes from clients throughout to give an insider perspective, it goes through the steps involved in gaining commissions, setting out key aspects that will be explored throughout the book, and defining and clarifying some key terminology along the way. The spotlights on clients provide a more in-depth insight into practices within particular areas of the industry.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS?

Getting Illustration Clients works with the premise that the meaning of illustration is not in itself absolute. It can appear to be ever evolving, and a 'job' whose definition is open to debate and interpretation. Illustrators refer to themselves in a myriad of ways, which is often dependent on the context they are in, with terms such as 'creative', 'visual communicator', 'artist' and 'image maker' commonly used to describe those in the profession.

'The joy of being able to commission an illustrator is in finding someone unique who can achieve what you are after far better than you or anyone else could. You are hoping to commission the best person for the job in order to achieve the best results.'

Steve Panton, book designer, Little, Brown Book Group, UK

1.1

1.1
Illustration:
Mercedes deBallard, Folio Art.
Design:
Steve Panton.
Commission:
The Five Wounds.

‘My career in illustration relies on maintaining multiple income streams, which more often than not feed each other. For example, a print I designed for my online shop is licensed by a brand for a T-shirt, or some client work that was great but didn’t have my ‘perfect outcome’ can inspire a silk screen print for my shop; it’s a cyclical creative process; my online shop is an extension of my portfolio and a place for play and creativity! I’d say go for it, start small and build up over time learning from your sales and replicating successes.’

Jacqueline Colley, decorative illustrator and pattern designer who has a successful online shop

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1.2
Jacqueline Colley’s workspace.
jacquelinecolley.co.uk

1.2

As a freelance practitioner in illustration, you will generally be working as a sole trader, looking for clients and undertaking commissions that lead to you creating artwork in response to a brief and issuing a licence for use of the work for a negotiated fee.

Other opportunities may involve you working within a short-term or permanent contract, with a specific job description as an illustrator in the creation of artwork for a stipulated wage or fee, or sometimes working 'in-house' – either physically or virtually – for a client as a member of a team. You may also be a commissioner of illustration working in another design role as well as maintaining an illustration practice.

For both of these models it is imperative that you, as the illustrator, 'get' clients. 'Getting' both meaning positioning yourself so that you win a commission or obtain a brief from a client, and also understanding what the client expects and needs from their illustrators.

Many illustrators also work in a more authorial capacity, creating and selling products to customers independently of an identified client. Instead of the traditional commissioning process, you are effectively your own client in this scenario. Although there is no client to 'get' in this situation, this dimension of working as an illustrator will be explored as it continues to grow as an attractive and viable professional option leading to commercial success and personal satisfaction.

The careers of many illustrators are a hybrid of working to briefs alongside generating their own work to publish, produce, distribute and sell in this way. There are also illustrators working in areas such as design, publishing and marketing as directors of – or employees within – companies, where part of their role may be as commissioners, or include liaising directly with the client requiring the illustration and undertaking the brief themselves.

Essentially, whatever your work pattern and whether you are an early-career illustrator or enjoying an established career, being enterprising is pivotal to reaching clients and establishing an audience willing to pay for what you create as a visual product. Developing an entrepreneurial approach is fundamental to transforming the skills of image making to monetize what you create, both establishing and sustaining illustration as a viable

'As an art director, it's brilliant to see new talent and be a small part in helping to grow their folio.'

Laura Hambleton, art director, Hachette, UK

1.3A

1.3B

commercial and career activity. Getting clients and understanding the audience for your visual products is essential to the success of this enterprise. To establish a stable income, many practitioners may also work in totally different employment. For the purpose of this book, it's assumed that you will continue to define yourself as an illustrator with the goal of getting clients, being published or earning money from your practice.

Getting Illustration Clients presumes that you as the illustrator make artwork with a particular visual identity (what is commonly referred to in the industry as a 'style'). This involves working with a particular concept, generating and realizing ideas in a particular visual way.

'I think it's important to acknowledge that your full-time job is not who you are as an artist; your full-time job is just the means by which you make enough money to trade for the cost of living. I tell my students that once they're out of college, they should just find a job that doesn't tax them emotionally or creatively, and gives them the flexibility to create their own work on the side until they feel confident to make it their full-time gig. I started *Girls With Slingshots* while I was working at the local newspaper, a job where the work was exciting and not draining. I had great co-workers and a boss who taught me most of the Photoshop tricks that I use to this day.'

Danielle Corsetto, illustrator and author of *Girls With Slingshots* comics, USA

1.3C

1 HOW DOES ILLUSTRATION COMMISSIONING WORK?

Who and how? Outlining the commissioning process

In which areas can an illustrator get clients?

Who will commission me? Who do I approach?

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1.3A
Artist: Nadja Sarell.
Art director: Laura Hambleton.
Publisher: Wren & Rook, an imprint of Hachette Children's Group.
Commission: Illustration from *An Engineer Like Me* by Dr Shini Somara.

1.3B
Artist: Juan Moore.
Commission: A series of postage stamps for the Isle of Man Post Office to commemorate Herman Melville, the author of *Moby Dick*.
Client: Paul Ford.
Juan works to commission across all areas of the illustration and motion graphics industry. Sequence, characterisation and stylistic consistency are shared skills.

1.3C
Self-published comic by Danielle Corsetto.
patreon.com/dcorsetto

A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO BEING COMMISSIONED AS AN ILLUSTRATOR

For clarity of understanding, this outline describes a typical pattern for illustration transactions.

1 The illustrator produces a selection of artwork: a portfolio

The illustrator markets their portfolio so that it reaches the attention of appropriate potential commissioners or art buyers – for the purpose of this section, we are going to refer to them as 'the client'.

This step will require you to build up an understanding of which types of artwork are being commissioned or bought, by whom and where. There are infinite stylistic approaches, and artwork can be applied to a multitude of contexts through print, on screen or within a physical environment.

Part of this stage involves you understanding how to promote your work so that it reaches possible clients; the artist has to select from and curate their artwork to make sure that it's appropriate, easily available for viewing and in formats that can be seen and readily accessed by possible commissioners or buyers of illustration.

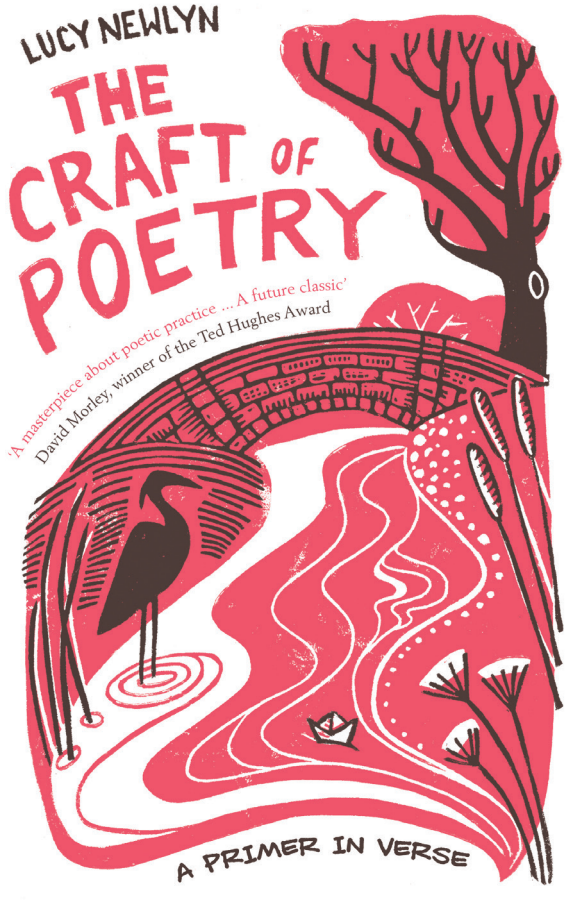
As an illustrator, you will need to know where these possible clients or buyers of your artwork can be located or reached directly, and also where they research for artists to work with. As part of this process, illustrators may make promotional pieces to target prospective clients individually or in a more direct way – through commissioner-focused projects.

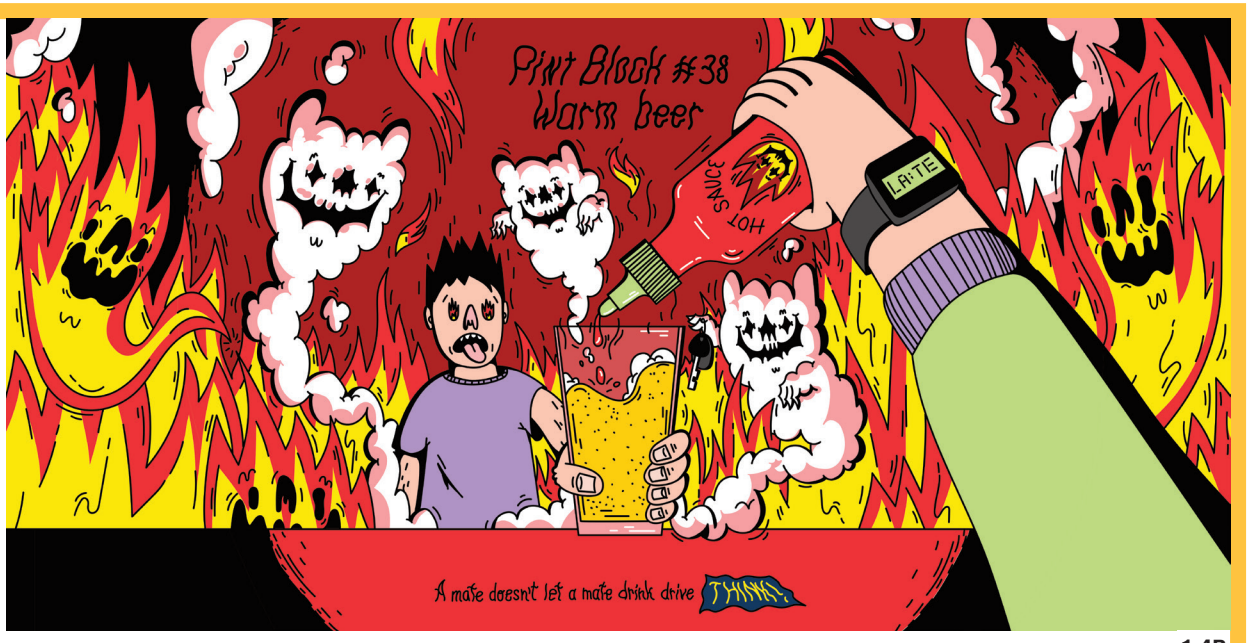
1.4A
Artist: Becca Thorne. Art director: Mark Ecob, Mecob Design Ltd, UK. Commission: *The Craft of Poetry*.

'Do the running and be visible to your potential clients. Keep in touch, but don't hound. Spend a good proportion of time promoting your work and cultivating relationships. You have to go to the work, it won't just materialize. Be ready to be let down, it can be a slog.'

Mark Ecob, art director, Mecob Design Ltd, UK

1.4A





1.4B

2 The client looks for a type or style of imagery to suit a project requiring illustration or has a specific requirement for a piece of artwork

Commissioners globally are constantly on the lookout for imagery that will make their projects distinctive, memorable and impactful. An illustrator needs to establish being on the radar of potential clients that might not even have a suitable project in mind at that specific time. You need to get recognized and you need to have a clear visual identity. You might see developing this as establishing your brand.

‘Above all, have an outstanding portfolio of work showcasing a breadth of styles (if you have them) that makes you stand out from the crowd. I’m always looking for fresh and original talent. Just be careful your work doesn’t replicate or imitate styles already in existence. Or you may find yourself marketing them, rather than yourself.’

Gavin McGrath VMLY&R London, UK

1 HOW DOES ILLUSTRATION COMMISSIONING WORK?

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1.4B
Artist: Inga Ziemele.
Client: Gavin McGrath, Creative Director, VMLY&R.
Commission: An award-winning advertising campaign to stop young men from drink-driving.

1.5A

1.5A
Illustration: Jonny Hannah.
Art director: Jonathan Christie.
Commission: *The Craft Beer Dictionary* by Richard Croasdale.

3 The illustrator is 'found' by the client

If the client sees something in your promotion that draws them to your work, or recognizes something in your work that makes them think you might be the right artist for a particular commission, they will approach you directly. It's usual for the client to approach you with a brief to produce artwork that reflects the stylistic approach that you have shown in your folio, previous published work or promotional pieces. As an illustrator, your job is usually to create specific pieces that interpret the client's brief or satisfy their requirements in your particular method or style.

'It's always best that the work is focused (not too many styles), and it's accessible (a website is best). Show off your range, skills and interests. Don't show things that you wouldn't like to be commissioned on the strength of, and do show things that you are proud of.'

Jonathan Christie, Creative Director, Octopus, UK

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4 The illustrator is approached either directly by the client or via their agent or third-party collaborator

The client may make contact with more than one artist at this point. Although this is not generally like a formal interview, it may be that the client wants to find out more about you and your work before committing to the brief. In the advertising industry, for example, this may be a specific pitch. If you are represented by an agent it may be that they have been asked to make a selection of artists for a particular project.

5 The brief is negotiated

If you are working independently, you will be briefed directly by the client. At this stage you will discuss not only what artwork is required but also the terms of the licence that you will work within. As well as the delivery timeframe and fee, you will negotiate the licence that outlines the usage of the artwork. This negotiation can be an informal process and may entail several correspondences or conversations.

6 The contract is agreed and the project is commissioned

The contract can be a complex document that is provided by the client: many contain standard clauses that cover the terms under which the artwork is commissioned. You may, however, be expected to produce your own licence that summarizes the informal discussions that you had with the client during the negotiating stage. Whichever form the contract takes, when you have agreed the terms it is legally binding. After this stage, you can begin to produce the artwork.

7 The artwork is produced by the illustrator

Mostly it's your responsibility as an illustrator to organize your time and resources to ensure that the artwork is produced in a timely way to a standard that satisfies the expectations of the client. Depending on which area you are working within, you might find that you will be asked into the client's office to discuss work in progress, to be involved with collaborative aspects of the project, or to undertake some aspects of the project in-house. This would have been discussed and agreed at the contract stage. It's generally expected that you will have your own materials to work with and that you have factored any cost of this into your fee.

8 The artwork is supplied to the client

Whatever materials you use when creating your artwork, or the scale or complexity of dimensions, it is standard industry practice that the illustrator delivers their artwork to the client in a digital format. The client may need to have your artwork approved by their boss or their own client, and there may be a request for changes or modifications as a result. You may have to factor this into your own timescale.

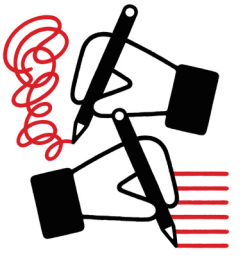
Have a clear understanding of what would be acceptable changes to make at this point. Being able to modify a submission digitally will make the process easier, if changes are required. If a client wishes to purchase a piece of physical artwork (if you have worked in this way), that should be seen as a separate transaction that would incur a separate fee or payment, which would need to be negotiated in addition to the original licence.

1.5B

1.5B
Artist: Carol Bergin.
Client: Anyways Creative.
Commission: one from a series of YouTube Super Stickers.

1.5C
Artist: Miguel Porlan.
Client: *The New York Times*.
Image kindly provided by Ella Lupo, agent at Purple Rain Illustrators.

1.5C



9 The illustrator gets paid

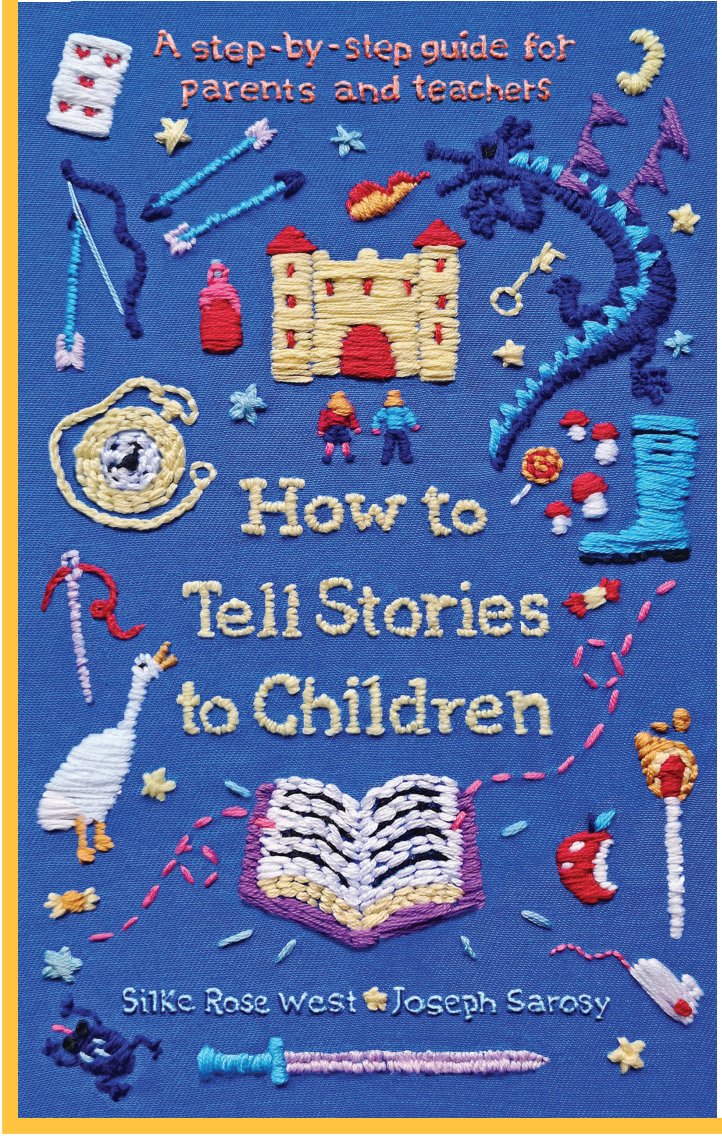
As a freelancer, you will submit an invoice to the accounts department of the company that you were commissioned by. This outlines the work you did and the fee you are expecting as remuneration, according to the terms that were agreed at the briefing stage. Your client may pass your invoice to the accounts department on your behalf but is unlikely to be directly involved in the payment of invoices.

10 The artwork is distributed or published by the client

Your artwork will be published according to the terms of the brief. It's not unusual for the artist not to be allowed to share the artwork or the process of creating it, or sometimes even to mention or discuss the brief prior to publication, unless permission has been granted by the client.

1.6A
Illustration and Design: Ashley Wong.
ashlwong.com
Art director: Steve Panton.
Commission: *How to Tell Stories to Children*.

1.6A



'Does their work have that spark that makes them stand out? I could make a shortlist of illustrators, all with similar styles and expertise, but you are always trying to find that one illustrator who will best achieve what you are after.'

Steve Panton, book designer, Little, Brown Book Group, UK

1.6B

In which areas can an illustrator get clients?

1 HOW DOES ILLUSTRATION COMMISSIONING WORK?

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Chapter summary

These broad creative and commercial areas and contexts cover the types of work that many graduates and early-career practitioners aspire towards. They are not mutually exclusive or fixed as career paths or categories, and throughout a career it isn't unusual for illustrators to seek clients and commissions from across the industry. It's also not unusual for there to be overlaps between these areas. Some successful illustrators will have worked across many areas throughout a long career, while others may have worked almost exclusively in just one.

Whichever area of illustration you're drawn towards, it's important that you research the type of work that potential clients are commissioning at the current time. Aim to become informed about what is contemporary, topical or on trend, and consider how appropriate it would be for you to target the clients who commission the work you enjoy with your own promotional materials.

CHILDREN'S PUBLISHING

Book publishers each have their own processes for submissions, which involve matching an illustrator with an author's text, commissioning an author-illustrated text or packaging an existing book concept.

Books for children are grouped according to reading ages: from toddler books, picture books and early readers to young teens, and the organization of teams and departments may reflect this within publishing houses, with imprints focusing on specific ranges. Large publishers can encompass smaller imprints and may have separate commissioning teams.

Your artwork can be commissioned for digital or print-based contexts and may include aspects of motion. Most publisher's websites have advice and instructions for illustrators submitting a proposal about when submissions should be made and what form they should take. A lot of illustrator-authors working in this area are represented by literary agents who also represent writers.

With the increase in digital publishing platforms and crowdfunding opportunities, individual authors are also increasingly contacting illustrators directly to work on their self-published books.

BOOK ILLUSTRATION

There are very few fiction books that have interior illustrations: it's mostly jacket art that is commissioned in this area, including both pictorial and typographic solutions. Non-fiction publishing is a broad area covering an expansive range of content over many subjects, and this offers numerous opportunities for interior work in both black and white and colour. The diversity of titles includes educational books, instructional titles, history, travel and lifestyle texts such as health and cookery books. Where you are commissioned for interior illustration you may work on specific parts of a text or the whole book. In a similar vein to children's publishing, book publishers each have their own process for submissions that involve matching an illustrator with a text.

1.6B
Artist: Richard Jones.
Commission: *Perdu* published by Simon and Schuster.
This is an author-illustrated picture book.

Spotlight

Working in children's publishing – Jen Keenan, illustrator and art director, Clarion Books

How can I be found by an art editor like Jen in children's publishing?
Jen and her team proactively search for 'undiscovered artists'.

Specific hashtags also assist in reaching particular topics: 'I often use womenwhodraw.com because I'm interested in how artists self-identify.'

They also look at samples sent directly to them, but she's keen to advise: 'Make sure you understand the process of working for picture books. Publishers are all different. See which genres – picture books, middle-grade, young adult, graphic novels – are most appropriate for your style.'

She recommends that artists target the potential clients that are most fitting for their folio. 'Make sure that the work that you do is actually suitable for that imprint or publishing house. Make sure that what they do is in line with your style.'

The initial communication should also be relevant, considered and professional. 'Research what each art director does. Send emails with samples attached, but not to a non-work email address. If you're looking to be seen by an art director, I also encourage you to send postcards. Don't just target the art director – editors as well as designers are looking for artists.' She advises personalizing the approach: 'When something is more tailored it can stand out.'

Like many publishers, Jen and her team are active within the illustration community, whether at Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI) conferences, book fairs or other events where other art editors do folio reviews.

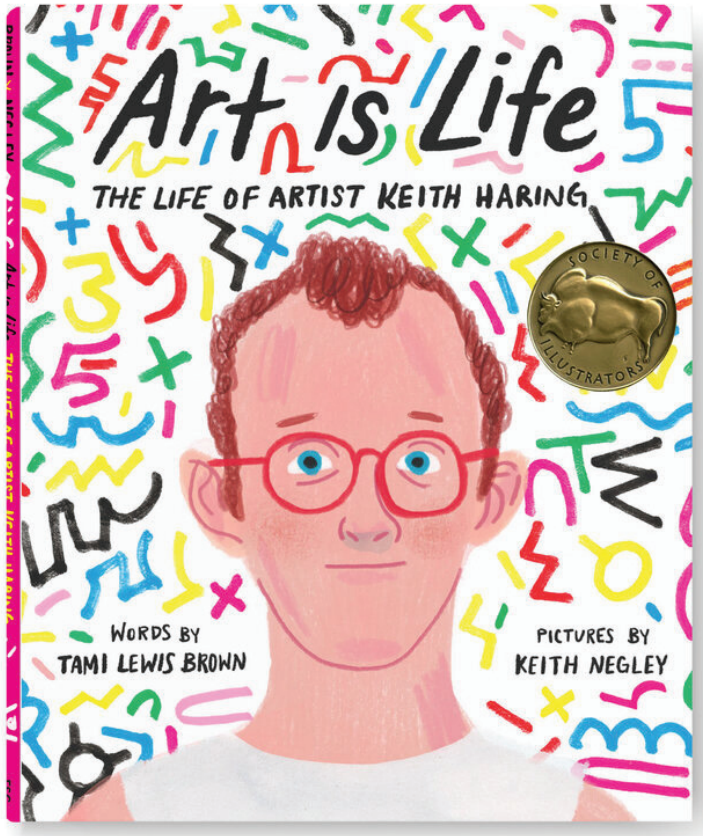
What are art editors looking for in your promotion?
The selection of work you show needs to be backed up by a relevant folio. Jen says, 'We're looking for consistency – can you draw a figure or character in different scenes with a range of emotions?'

She reveals that in children's publishing they have very transparent discussions about diversity, 'because we're creating something for young minds'.

Clarion Books work with a wide range of artists from all backgrounds and this is also factored into the selection process: 'It's important that we diversify the bookshelf to reflect the diverse world we live in.'

What is the process for selecting an artist and developing a book?
'We have to ensure the style is right for the manuscript before the pitch, and then we get the sales team on board. I have to present to sales and marketing, as well as the publisher and author, before approval. A lot of thoughtful work and emotion goes into story making, especially since a book takes such a long time to create. It's important to push boundaries and take risks and make books that matter. At the same time, it is important to the publishing group to make a book that will grab a reader's attention and do well commercially.'

1.7



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Each publisher will have their own process for developing a book. Jen says that there are usually three rounds of sketches, from thumbnails through to final approved sketches. Once sketches are approved, the artist moves to colour finals. Sometimes there is lots of fact checking to ensure the accuracy of historical detail. As Jen says, 'It's a collaborative process as much as possible.'

At the final stage there may be amendments needed and the illustrator should see this as an integral aspect of the methodology. 'The tone has to be: "let's make it a better book".'

When the designs are finally sent to the printer, the artist will also be included in discussions about choice of papers as well as the signing off at the proofing stage. As Jen says, 'It's really important that the artist and author are happy with the end product.'

1.8

Suggestions based on Jen's advice for getting clients in children's publishing

- Use subject-specific rather than generic hashtags when you post your work.
- Research which publishers reflect the artwork in your own folio before sending promotional pieces to clients.
- Look for local SCBWI groups in your town or city.
- Join a writers' or illustrators' group and critique one another's work to refine your craft.
- Keep an eye out for both virtual and in-person publishing events.

1.9

1.7
Artist: Keith Negley.
Art director/designer: Jen Keenan.
Publisher: Macmillan Publishing.
Commission: *Art is Life* by Tami Lewis Brown.

1.8
Artist: Dylan Glynn.
Designer: Monique Sterling.
Art director: Jen Keenan.
Publisher: Macmillan Publishing.
Commission: *Be Amazing* by Desmond Napoles and Dylan Glynn.

1.9
Artist and Art editor: Jen Keenan.
Jen Keenan is an art director by day and an illustrator by night. Her own brand includes cards and prints.

Q&As
Working for a publisher – Sheri Gee, art director, The Folio Society, UK

What are the key skills that an illustrator should possess before seeking work with you as a client?

Illustrators looking to work with us need to demonstrate how they'd approach a commission for adult fiction. That might mean that they need to do a few personal projects to develop their portfolio. I usually tell people to choose a well-known book that they love, that they feel suits their style, and work on a small series of illustrations. They'll need to think about characterization, characters interacting and repeating – it's not all portraits, it's characters in action; compositions that build tension or add variety; period details; following the text descriptions closely.

As much as I need to be convinced that they'd do a great job, before I can commission I have to get approval from the editor, marketing department and often the author or rights holder of the text. The more appropriate samples I can show them, the smoother that process becomes.

How can an illustrator be prepared to be briefed by you?

Our briefs are fairly open, apart from size. I'll often show someone new working with us which pieces of theirs appealed to me for the book, so they know roughly the direction I'm looking for. We then ask the illustrator to read the book and come up with their wish list of scenes they'd like to illustrate, concentrating on major themes and characters, making sure they are well spaced through the book and not all bunched up in one place. The cover brief is a little more restrictive, as there might be technical issues we have to make them aware of, but largely we're looking for their ideas and inspiration.

What makes an illustrator stand out to you when they are working on a brief?

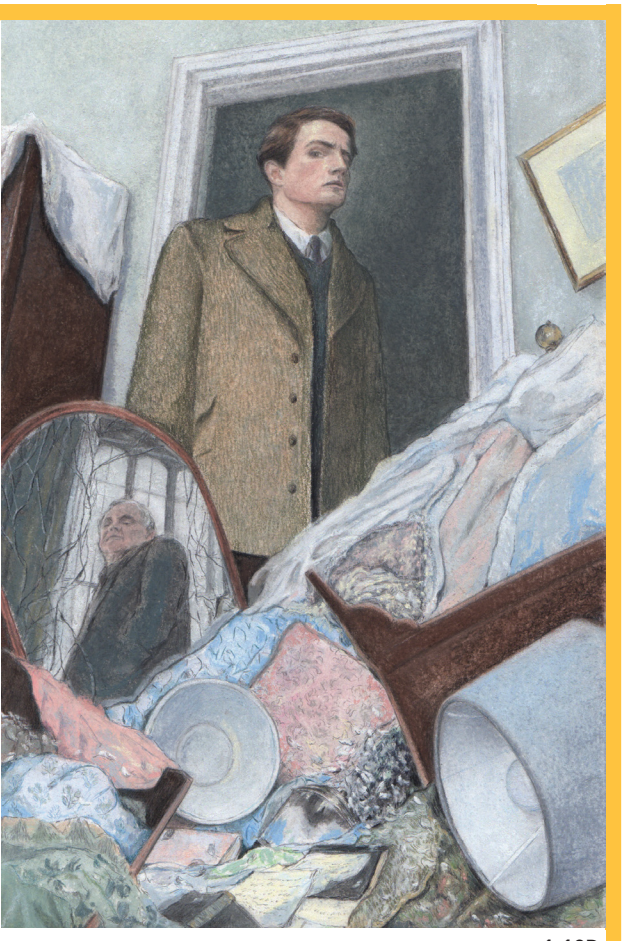
Illustrators that I work with often astound me with their concepts and compositions. Rather than designing all illustrations from the same viewpoint, those that creatively compose each piece, especially if it adds something to the atmosphere, stand out. It's about remembering that your first idea, your first set of thumbnails, might not be the most interesting and to keep on exploring angles before settling. I feel it's about pretending you're a film director, choosing where to shoot a scene from.

What advice would you give to aspiring illustrators looking to get work at The Folio Society?

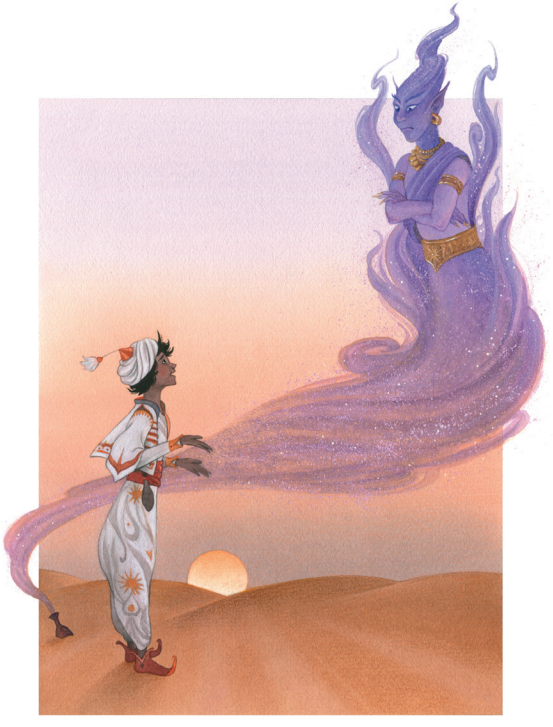
We commission for perhaps thirty fiction titles a year, so be patient, it can take years for the appropriate book to come up. I'd advise them to draw as much as possible, to hone their skills – especially figure drawing as that's the mainstay of our commissions. And lastly, to really concentrate on having appropriate pieces to show us, to work on genres that you are passionate about and develop self-led pieces.

1.10A

1.10B



1.10C



1.10D

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1.10A
Artist: Jonathan Burton.
Art director: Sheri Gee.
Commission: *A Clash of Kings* by George R.R. Martin, The Folio Society.

1.10B
Artist: Sally Dunne.
Art director: Sheri Gee.
Commission: *Crooked House* by Agatha Christie, The Folio Society.

1.10C
Artist: Marie-Alice Harel.
Art director: Sheri Gee.
Commission: *Castle in the Air* by Diana Wynne Jones, The Folio Society.

1.10D
Artist: Edward Kinsella.
Art director: Sheri Gee.
Commission: *Misery* by Stephen King, The Folio Society.

1.11

1.11
Ophelia is one of Frannerd's full-length graphic novels. This image is a painting from it that was also available to buy as a print through her online outlets.

‘There are two big benefits of having a Patreon account. The first one is to connect deeper with a smaller group of people, having a community who share your same values, are all joined by wanting to connect and do art, and plus there’s no algorithm! And the second one is the ability to work on long-term projects; when there’s a somewhat financial stability comes certainty and the chance to plan ahead of time.’

Fran Meneses (also known as Frannerd), USA-based Chilean-born illustrator

COMIC BOOKS AND GRAPHIC NOVELS

In common with other areas of book publishing, comic books and graphic novels can include illustrator authors as well as illustrator submissions. These publications are heavily illustrated with little text content. There is a largely authorial dimension to this practice and it’s usual for practitioners to generate ideas independently of commissioners and pitch projects through dummy books in a similar way to areas of children’s publishing, animation or digital formats such as apps or games. Many practitioners also self-publish their work through both digital and print-based formats, sometimes working collaboratively with other artists, writers or designers.

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EDITORIALS AND MAGAZINES

Magazines and newspapers cover every conceivable subject in print and digital platforms and continue to use illustration – static and motion-based – within a vast range of diverse publications. This includes in-house as well as mass-produced newsstand publications. The turnaround in this area of practice is fast and there are usually short timescales between commission and publication. Because of the volume of work commissioned globally and the spectrum of topics covered, many early-career illustrators see this as an entry point to the profession.

ADVERTISING AND MARKETING

The boundaries between advertising and marketing have become blurred with the prevalence of social media as an integral component of advertising campaigns and brand focus. The work commissioned in these areas covers products, services and ideas that can have local or international impact. Every format and type of imagery can be used in campaigns, whether the static or motion-based adverts we encounter on social media, billboards, brochures, branding, press-based or site-based formats. At the top end, where high-profile campaigns can equate with high fees, this is a highly competitive area to work within.

1.12
Artist: Hanna Barczyk. Art directors: Tova Diamond and J Armus. Commission: From a series of illustrations commissioned for an 'Oprah Daily' video that subsequently appeared in the *O Quarterly* magazine. The theme of the commission was 'A post-pandemic guide to your emotions'.

'In illustration, ideas take shape and form, and carry meaning. It can elicit empathy, and can make people act, feel sadness or joy, feel connected and present conversations. Illustrators are part of constructing visual culture, and I feel a strong sense of responsibility to be able to raise our cultural ethos by creating art that empowers women, ignites imagination and reflects diversity, generating more understanding for a better world.'

Hanna Barczyk, a German-born freelance conceptual illustrator

1.12

Spotlight

Working in advertising and branding – Mélissa Charland, associate creative director, Publicis, Montréal

Mélissa Charland has worked on campaigns for brands and non-profit organizations such as McDonalds, Mira, the YMCA and Nissan.

How are creatives recruited and what are their roles?
The creative director performs a vital role within an advertising agency: bringing together and co-ordinating a team of creatives. This responsibility is, as Mélissa describes, akin to 'coaching; bringing out the best of their talent to find the best business solutions for clients'. To achieve this, Mélissa is involved in the recruitment of staff across the agency, assembling teams that work collaboratively. She describes this approach as, 'staying in the shadows to allow them to shine'.

Creatives are selected to work together on each individual project, mixing and matching depending on the nature and requirements of the brief. What Mélissa describes reveals a sense of fluidity in the creatives' roles, with new connections and dynamics constantly being generated. This attitude towards innovation and creativity leads to distinctive solutions and innovative approaches that are unique for each client or campaign. This means the agency are always searching for new illustrators to commission.

How are illustrators chosen?
Mélissa reveals that the art directors on the front line of commissioning are always searching for new talent. She often looks to Behance and Instagram to find potential illustrators. She believes it is the quality of the work and the appropriateness of the visual language that will get you noticed, whether you're represented by an agency or working independently, inexperienced or not. She advises demonstrating interesting collaborations in your folio. 'Go outside of what is typical illustration to catch the eye of the creative. Mock-up artwork into textiles, or products, at an unexpected scale or as animations.'

1.13A

1.13A–C.
A series of promotional posters for the Idéa Award Show, the most prestigious advertising and communication award show in Quebec, Canada.
Artist: Audrey Malo. [1.13A]
Artist: Laurianne Poirier. [1.13B]
Artist: Melissa Mathieson. [1.13C]

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What does an art director look for? Advertising is an area where the illustrator can typically have less creative freedom. Mélissa explains why: 'Art directors have their own vision, and they want someone to contribute to that.'

She reminds us that advertising is a commercial activity. 'Establishing creative constraints often elevates the creative product and its intelligence! Ultimately we are resolving business problems with creativity. Illustrators are chosen if they want to work with *their* vision in a way that respects the big idea sold to the client.' Mélissa adds, 'My creative teams like to work with great people who are open-minded and open to collaboration. We don't like big egos!'

There are technical basics that are prerequisite. 'We're looking for a high level of consistency of craft.' It's a given that illustrators provide artwork that is fit for purpose, whatever its format or scale.

1.13B

1.13C

What is the process of working as an illustrator in advertising?
Overseen by the creative director, the creative team brainstorm in their search for the 'big idea'. Generally around three of these ideas are mocked up and presented to the client as a proof of concept. The art directors commission the visual approach following their client's selection, to realize the campaign and best interpret the agreed idea. As Mélissa explains, 'We need to respect the concept approved by the client; there shouldn't be too much deviation from it.'

For the selected illustrator, success comes from having a clear understanding of what their role entails and clarity of communication around, 'the problem we are solving'. This doesn't mean the illustrator is subservient. 'The art director is happy for the creative vision to evolve. The illustrator is welcome to share their thoughts and reflections to improve the approved concept, as long as they don't deviate from the big idea.'

What should an illustrator expect when being briefed for a commission in advertising?
Following the brief, the illustrator is offered the contract and asked to propose a fee. Mélissa says that many illustrators are 'bad at negotiating'. She strongly urges, 'You shouldn't be shy about asking about the terms of contract.'

She describes a reticence that is perhaps due to the nature of the industry. 'People working in illustration are probably more isolated than other creative areas. In film and photography there are usually day rates and there seems to be much more communication between practitioners in these areas of the creative industry.'

International campaigns for big brands can lead to lucrative deals and big fees for illustrators. However, pitching is common practice within advertising. This means that an illustrator is often asked to do a sample for which they may receive no remuneration. Mélissa considers this to be a disrespectful practice. Having a stylistically consistent folio where every image is of quality is imperative to win the trust of a client, and as Mélissa assures, 'should be enough to convince an art director to hire you'.

Suggestions based on Mélissa's advice for getting clients in the advertising and marketing industry

- If you haven't had a lot of published commissions, think about the diversity of formats and contexts you can art direct yourself within to test and demonstrate your range and potential.
- Check that your promotion gives a strong impression of your stylistic and conceptual approach.
- Research any potential client in advertising before sending sample images, and only send images that are directly relevant to the work they do. Create a bespoke piece of work for a campaign or client that the agency currently works with: propose your ideas and images as a possible project for them to submit proactively to their clients.
- The posters, brochures, websites, film trailers, infographics, exhibition and site-based displays, brands, packaging, motion graphics, corporate reports and materials with their multitude of content and functions provide a myriad of opportunities for illustration, both for print, screen and site-based formats. Whether commissioned by design groups and specialist agencies or by in-house teams, every type of subject matter is covered, with illustration opportunities for small-scale, local-based clients, as well as large international corporate clients.

1.14

‘Illustrators should be able to bring a fresh approach to develop interesting visual ideas for the given project. They should be able to deliver work on time that is consistent in quality with their samples. Depending on the project, I might suggest different strategies, but leave specifics to the illustrators. I typically will point out a few samples by the illustrator that demonstrate what I’m looking for … but I never want to lock anyone in so much that they’re copying from themselves. Curiosity and enthusiasm are important. I like to see a wide range of thinking when it comes to sketches. Make your work distinctive and smart.’

David Plunket, founder, Spur

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1.14
Artist: David Plunkert, Spur.
Commission: Opera poster for The Johns Hopkins Peabody Conservatory.

Spotlight

Working in design – Gail Marowitz, creative director, The Visual Strategist

The Visual Strategist, a New York-based design studio that specializes in music packaging and print, working with a roster of musicians that include Aimee Mann, Ted Leo, Panic! At The Disco, Jim White, Mary Gauthier and Jonathan Coulton.

Gail is an undisputed champion of the power of illustration in this area of design. With an impressive career, formally as art director of Columbia Records, her agency focuses on a relatively small number of projects each year, and the innovation and quality of her endeavours is reflected in the accolades she has garnered as a multi-Grammy-award nominee and winner.

Why are illustrators used in this design context?

In a visual culture in which imagery can be perceived as ephemeral and ubiquitous, album art can result in iconic and enduring designs which can define the musical artist and assign international recognition on the visual creator. For illustrators working in this context, there can be huge kudos and prestige assigned from association with musical artists of calibre on such high-profile projects.

The attraction of choosing illustrators instead of photographers is common across the creative industry, not solely because of the aesthetic and conceptual properties in their work. Compared to the constraints and cost implication of working with photographers, where photoshoots can run over time and budgets can be prohibitive, illustrators have a certain allure. As Gail says, 'With illustrators I don't have to worry about the weather or the budget.'

1.15A

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Although she reveals that all designers have horror stories, when referring to the illustrators she's worked with, she says, 'I've never chucked an illustrator because of a fault with them. Never! No! Working with illustrators is a controllable environment – there aren't a lot of surprises.'

What are art directors looking for in the illustrators that they work with in design?
Gail is driven by the alchemic fusion between music and design; 'As long as someone gives me a record, I'll be doing it.' This is something she effuses about when describing the illustrators who have collaborated with her; they bring an individual magic to the commission. Although difficult to articulate, it's a quality that will be prerequisite if you're aspiring to get clients in this area.

Many of the insights Gail provides about the singular process of designing for this rarefied area of the industry have direct relevance to other areas of the creative industry in which illustrators are engaged. Their focus isn't entirely on the aesthetic. There is often a conceptual dimension to the work that The Visual Strategist produces, in particular in responding visually to encapsulate the distinct qualities of the collection the musical artist has created. This is evident in the profiles of the illustrators that Gail is drawn to working with. She gravitates towards what she describes as 'problem solving', explaining, 'I look for a certain flexibility in their mindset as well as not being afraid to speak up and improve the work if they feel there is something to add to the creative brief.'

With a genuine interest in illustration, Gail is happy for illustrators to 'reach out' to share links to their work and is happy to commission an illustrator at whatever stage they are in their career. However, she reveals that – in common with many other areas of the design industry – she is not solely responsible for selecting the visual artist: the musical artists themselves are often involved. They are what Gail describes as 'the lynchpin' to the commission, and they sometimes personally research and source illustrators they have an affinity with.

1.15B

1.15A
Artist: Emil Ferris. Commission: Insert and CD cover for the Ted Leo self-released album. The artist Emil Ferris is recognized for her award-winning comic books.

1.15B
Artist: Andrea Dezsö. Commission: Insert and CD cover for American performer Aimee Mann, published by SuperEgo Records.

1.15C

1.15C
Artist: Owen Smith.
Commission: Insert and CD cover for American performer Aimee Mann. The variety of artefacts combine to create a distinctive visual narrative and identity that is associated with both the music and the artist. Published by SuperEgo Records.

As a designer, Gail operates collaboratively with both the musical and visual artist working towards a shared objective to 'capture the audience'. In this regard, illustrating for the music industry is not dissimilar to illustrating for products or brands – there is a common goal to promote, express or communicate a quality or idea that connects and resonates on an individual level.

Having a strong visual language and distinctive imagery is a must in this context. It's also worth remembering that notably successful album designs marry text and imagery. As Gail reflects, 'My art director self is much more present when the illustrator doesn't do type.' Whether as an illustrator you include illustrative typography within your repertoire or whether you are confident creating the hybrid that is words and imagery, this aptitude is valuable.

'Find your voice in your illustration, the voice that is uniquely your own.'

Gail Marowitz, The Visual Strategist, USA

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What is the process for working in design?
Gail reveals that the illustrator is trusted with a fair degree of creative freedom because, 'I've done all the hard work to be confident that the illustrator is the right person for the gig'. For the chosen visual artist, the briefing leads to a methodology that typifies many areas of design commissioning. As Gail reflects, 'There's no preparation necessary except an open mind.'

The visual artists firstly share a range of pencil sketches and then the next stage of developmental visuals. 'I love an enthusiastic illustrator who goes the extra mile in their comps.'

Most clients in design seek to commission an illustrator who will bring a unique perspective and interpretation to a brief, and this context is no exception where a climate of trust and collaboration is fostered. The musical artists are sometimes also involved with the development of the imagery. 'We always respect the musician's opinions and try to manifest their vision, but if they have an idea we feel is better executed in a different way, we will offer other solutions. We usually hit the nail on the head as regards to the "feeling" the musician wants to bring forth. We never lose sight that it's their name on the front of that album jacket, not ours.'

What advice does The Visual Strategist give for breaking into work within the music industry?
Gail describes the music industry as an ecosystem. Becoming part of the network and evolving within it is a way to both gain exposure and evolve an understanding of the way that promotion functions within the formats and contexts of this specialist genre. She outlines a clear system for getting involved, seeking out opportunities at any level, with the caveat, 'Don't expect to get rich but suck it up.'

She describes a proactive approach to becoming involved. 'Go to live shows. Get to talk to the front person. They're usually the band member who talks to the press – the charmer. Then find the art guy who makes the flyers. Tell them, "I like your band, I think I can help you."'

Suggestions based on Gail's advice for getting clients in the music industry

- Do art for music.
- Don't think of the profile of the musical artists you illustrate for – the names might get bigger, but don't make it about that.
- Be enthusiastic – be prepared to go the extra mile on commissions.
- Do projects of interest to you and aim to capture your audience.

1.16

1.16
Artist: Emma Carpenter. Commission: Whimsical enamel pin from the Teapot product range, available via emmacarpenterart.com

1.17
Fantasy Fruit labels – a set of merchandise from Jacqueline Colley.

1.18A–C
Artist: Jose Flores. Commission: Images from a website that explains the environmental aspect of cluttered websites. Client: Anyways Creative. Images provided by creative director Ellen Turnhill.

SURFACE PATTERN, DECORATIVE LICENCES AND GREETINGS CARDS

This area is very broad in its definition. It can involve creating one-offs or original pieces of artwork as a designer-maker and developing work for self-identified contexts or merchandise and overseeing this process from development of artwork through to distribution of the final products. As well as this authorial and entrepreneurial dimension, where the illustrator becomes their own client, they may also undertake similar types of artwork to commission with clients for greetings cards, surface pattern or producing designs for stationery, textiles, products and site-based work such as decals or murals.

Often the illustrator initiates designs for a range of products and submits them to companies for consideration. These can be agencies that license designs on behalf of larger companies and charities or standalone publishers. The designs may be licensed as a collection or the illustrator may be commissioned on the basis of the submission to generate extra or alternative designs and products. Increasingly, greetings cards formats are also screen-based and can include aspects of motion.

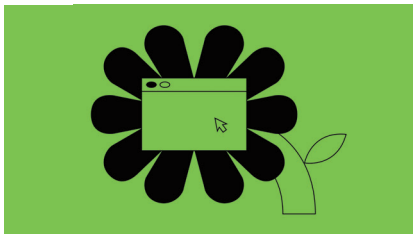
MOTION, INTERACTIVITY AND USER INTERFACES

In this area, the illustrator is either working with a designer to create assets that move or exist within screen-based designs or using their style to realize concepts through particular software, including augmented reality. Mobile apps, websites and gifs are areas where motion-based imagery exists to enhance the user experience. This can include character-based work, mascots and infographics, as well as some of the usual aspects of illustrative practice. Increasingly, this is a really useful skill for illustrators to have – even to a fairly simple level.

Animation is being commissioned a lot for advertising, social media advertising and informational items for councils or cultural organizations of all scales. The animation and film industries also employ illustrators within various roles for specific areas of the production process, such as storyboarding, visualizing, and creating special effects and props.

1.17

1.18A



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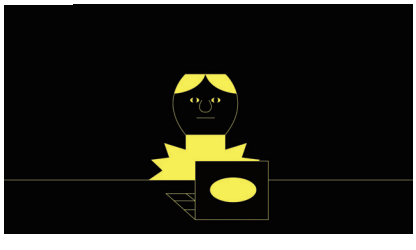

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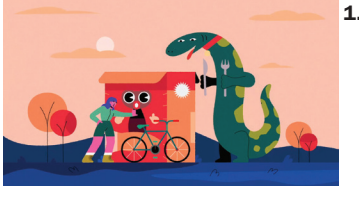

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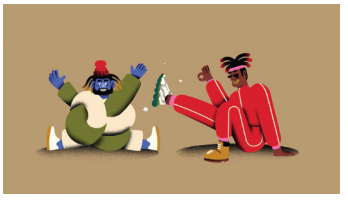

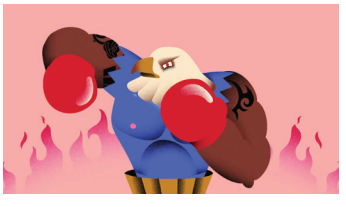

‘First and foremost the illustrator needs work that inspires me and usually makes me smile. Then I prefer someone to have a strong point of view and clear singular vision for the project and how their work and style will enhance it. Obviously collaboration is important but I want them to know the line and communicate back at the point where they feel quality has been compromised.’

Noah Regan, head of art/creative partner, DDB Sydney

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1.19
Merchandise from Carolyn Gavin. The clear visual identity and stylistic approach in her work creates a strong brand that can be recognized in product collections. carolyngavin.com

1.20
Client: Noah Regan, DDB Sydney. Frames from the Westpac 3% animation campaign, to be viewed on social media. Creators: The creative agency, Buck – Australia.

Spotlight

Working in augmented reality – Jon Meggitt, chief executive officer (CEO), Arcade

The project: *A Vixen's Tale*

What is augmented reality?

The forms of augmented reality (AR) are now part of everyday life for most users of social media and games. You, as the viewer or participant, are presented with digital content, such as characters and objects, which combine with the real world that you occupy. Although you may associate AR with cutting-edge technology, in reality it is mostly accessed through apps on a mobile phone – think of the fun filters you find on social media.

In comparison, virtual reality (VR) allows you, as the participant, to have a more immersive experience, usually accessed via a headset. This is more akin to being a voyeur or visitor inhabiting another world, such as going back in time or to a fantasy kingdom.

Arcade, as a client specializing in both forms of immersive technologies, describes itself as, 'A new type of digital practice founded by architects, tech pioneers, game developers and creative strategists.' They are experts in creating three-dimensional spatial realities that the viewer or audience can participate within: creative AR and VR experiences that constitute new forms of entertainment or education.

How can illustration feature in this context?

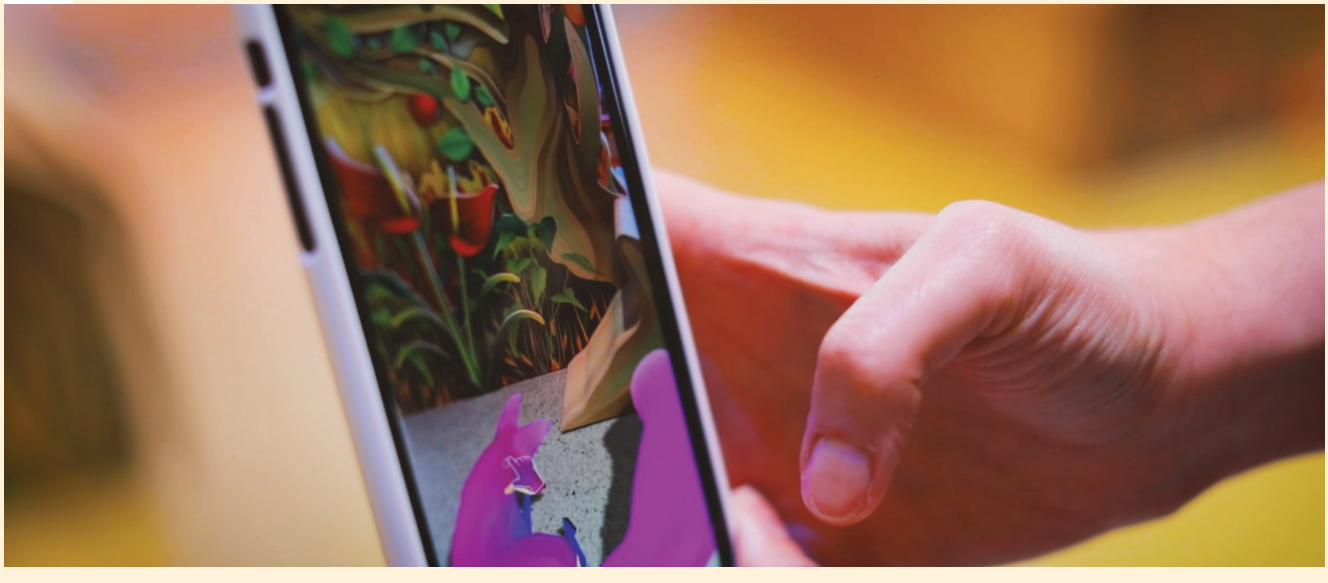
As Jon Meggitt, CEO of Arcade, reveals, 'Immersive technology is a hot market. Being part of a real-world 3D experience is fundamentally exciting and scary!' Commissioned by the Welsh National Opera (WNO) and launched at Wales Millennium Centre, *The Vixen's Tale* is an award-winning project, overseen by Jon, which epitomizes excellent commissioning of illustration in the area of AR.

Illustrator Xavier Segers was a cornerstone in this innovative experience, which has been described as 'an unexpected face for opera'. The accolades *The Vixen's Tale* has achieved from a host of prestigious organizations, including winning gold prize from the World Illustration Awards, also reveal AR to be an unexpected face for illustration.

The Vixen's Tale is a hybrid fusion of a real physical environment and digital content that results in an immersive storytelling experience. It incorporates a myriad of features of AR to create an interactive space that marries the audio of the WNO with visuals – a character that leads through what the creators describe as, 'a series of gamified vignettes, each of them unlocking part of the narrative'.

With its highly illustrated wooden arches, an animated, illustrated vixen that magically materializes through a mobile phone screen, and music pulsing throughout, it is a project that represents the collaborative expertise of designers, craftsmen and animators. It reveals the power of AR to metamorphose illustrations into an enchanting 3D world: what Jon describes as, 'the translation of 2D design to time and space'.

1.21A



1.21B

1 HOW DOES ILLUSTRATION COMMISSIONING WORK?

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How do illustrators get to work in augmented reality?
The increased prevalence of AR on social media, its mainstream use on platforms such as Google, and the evolution of advertising and its migration to digital formats means that clients across many areas of the industry have become more conscious of its potential to impact on the realization of their concepts. This is a potential growth area for illustrators: another form of illustration coming alive and engaging its audience in a unique form of interactivity.

Although this is a relatively niche area to work within, and Arcade rarely uses freelance illustrators, Jon enthusiastically points out that this is just the beginning of the spatial web and AR. 'It's going to be huge. The implications of AR and VR are massive.'

Jon points to a greater number of high-profile art-based installations and describes the attraction of AR to clients in heritage and cultural sectors, such as museums and visitor attractions. He also points towards the retail sector, which is also expanding its application of AR: 'They are no longer confined to two degrees of freedom.'

1.21A–B
Artist: Xavier Segers. Commission: *A Vixen's Tale* for the Welsh National Opera. Animations of the vixen and other characters can be accessed via mobile devices. The public interact with the artwork by physically moving through the large-scale installation, additionally accessing a range of visual and audible content.

1.21C

How did the Arcade team find an illustrator for *The Vixen's Tale*? Jon says there are many avenues that Arcade use to search for talent: 'If you showcase yourself well, we will find you!' Arcade have a very talented and versatile in-house illustrator who is used for many aspects of the work they undertake, but as Jon says, 'We don't have world-class illustrators in-house.' If there is a potential that projects require a particular visual aesthetic identity, they search externally.

In the case of *The Vixen's Tale*, Arcade wanted a specific type of imagery and, consequently, their production manager went to social media. This search was very much topic-orientated, focused on nature-inspired imagery. Although the artists' previous experience was also considered, they had to demonstrate a credible and consistent visual language; and, perhaps surprisingly, not having worked in the AR environment didn't impact on their final choice of artist.

1.21D

1 HOW DOES ILLUSTRATION COMMISSIONING WORK?

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What are important attributes for an illustrator hoping to work in this area?

Although having experience of working in AR is not a prerequisite to working in this sector, as Jon explains, 'We will hold your hand through the new dimension', you must be a team player – even if it's a virtual experience while working from home. Jon emphatically describes the process of working on *The Vixen's Tale* as being collaborative, saying of the success of project: 'One of the most important things is the people.'

This diverse collection of creatives, which included the illustrator, came together from the concept stage through to post-production, with them all celebrating its launch together at the physical installation. Xavier Seger met with Jon via Zoom as part of the selection process for *The Vixen's Tale*. The human affinity and mutual respect that developed between client and illustrator were evident and, describing Xavier's input, Jon was effusive: 'He just went over and beyond.'

Suggestions based on Jon's advice for getting clients in augmented reality

- This is a growing area of creative practice. Finding out more about it, becoming part of the communities that make and are interested in it, and exploring the technologies and software that are available could equip you to be part of its expansion as an illustrator.
- Having a clear and consistent identity and distinctive labelling of the content of your work are important to catch potential clients who are searching for specific visual content.
- Being comfortable with working in a team and being adaptable and confident about bringing ideas to the table are important attributes.
- Be prepared to exceed the brief and to work with the client to create the best solution.

1.21C–D
Artist: Xavier Segers. Commission: *A Vixen's Tale* for the Welsh National Opera. Animations of the vixen and other characters can be accessed via mobile devices. The public interact with the artwork by physically moving through the large-scale installation, additionally accessing a range of visual and audible content.

1.22

CONCEPT ART AND VISUALIZATION

Although concept art tends to be used in a generic way to specifically describe the work undertaken by freelancers in animation studios, video production companies and games designers, this is a broad area. Concept artists can be commissioned and employed in many contexts that require visualization or artwork as part of a proof of concept, such as when an idea for an app, animation or product is mocked up to present to a potential client, patron or manufacturer to provide a convincing representation of how it would be realized.

Illustrators working in this area may visualize an idea, character, user interface, app, environment or narrative before the product it relates to has been created. They might be part of a team that includes other illustrators who may translate their concept art into another style, media or format. This could include storyboarding, character and environmental design. Concept artists are employed in contexts such as advertising and design companies, games, web design, architecture and comic books.

‘There are different paths into the game industry you can take, depending on your own interest and who you are as a person. You have to find your own way in that regard. I have some friends who are more generalists who do character and environments and user interface (UI) design and thrive on having several areas where they know how to work. Other friends only do illustrations of a very specific thing. They equally have very fruitful accomplished careers.’

Natalia Patkiewicz, game artist at Wooga games development company in Germany

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AUTHORIAL ILLUSTRATION

In this area, you, as the illustrator and creator, cut out the client. The role entails you either creating imagery and/or applying it to products within formats and contexts that you will market and distribute independently of an external commissioner.

It can also involve you working in a proactive way to pitch a concept directly to a commissioner. This may include: greetings cards, prints, stationery, textiles, books and zines, pieces of artwork, motion pieces, animation, character design, and proof of concepts for animations, games and apps. Publishing and production outlets associated with an authorial approach include: crowdfunding platforms, Patreon, grant-awarding bodies and e-commerce websites, such as Etsy and Society 6.

Stock illustration

Some artists produce and license imagery to stock companies who provide off-the-shelf artwork to be used in all of the contexts listed above. As the payment structure of stock can be seen as undermining the commercial structure and integrity of the industry, this area of work is not condoned or covered in *Getting Illustration Clients*.

1.23

1.22
Artist: Natalia Patkiewicz.
Commission: From a series of developmental images depicting night.

1.23
Artist: Fernando Cobelo, represented by Purple Rain Illustrators.
Commission: Artworks for Samsung's new line of refrigerators called Bespok. Fernando Cobelo is an award-winning illustrator, born in Venezuela and based in Italy. His conceptual work is applicable in many formats for a diversity of clients across the industry.

Spotlight

Working in public and site-based art – Catsou Roberts, director of Vital Arts, Barts Health NHS Trust, UK

Vital Arts is a charityfunded organization that creates and implements award-winning art projects across five London hospitals.

What is art strategy in hospitals?
Increasingly, hospitals are including art strategy in conjunction with new or refurbished buildings. The resultant site-specific artworks are intended to improve and enhance the clinical experience of patients, their visitors and the staff working in the hospital environment.

What is the process of commissioning in this area?
Many projects commissioned by Vital Arts emanate from requests generated by clinical staff, typically following the new construction or refurbishment of a space. Each project begins with site visits by Vital Arts, alongside discussions to determine the demographic of the 'service users' and the purpose and nature of the space.

Catsou explains, 'We learn from our clinical colleagues about conditions being treated and psychological possibilities of patients accessing the area. Any artwork that we commission should resonate with patients, be sensitive to the circumstances, and support well-being. We also evaluate the practicalities of how to best integrate an artwork in background to the space.'

Commissions extend beyond uplifting hospital environments; pivotal to Catsou's curatorial role is generating and contributing to culture. She describes her 'secret agenda' as 'offering opportunities to engage with exceptional artwork to those who might not otherwise access contemporary culture'. Epitomizing her role is the drive to 'enable the production of great public art'.

How are artists chosen for public and site-based art?
Catsou reveals that key to Vital Arts' originality is finding artists who've never before made works for hospitals, asking, 'how would such determined and complex context as a hospital inspire a prospective artist? Will the experience expand their practice and occasion innovation?' Consequently, the Vital Arts team is constantly researching artists and seeking a good fit for each project, with what Catsou describes as, 'an ever-widening horizon of new projects, each requiring artists'.

She continues to commission a diversity of contemporary visual artists working across an eclectic material spectrum, which sometimes includes practitioners that fall outside of traditional fine art such as jewellery makers, children's book illustrators, theatre set designers, cartoonists and ceramicists.

In selecting who to commission, Catsou is highly conscious of the artist's previous work and how their visual approach might contribute to the problem-solving nucleus of the project. Although the stylistic or conceptual direction or theme of the commission will be directed by the commissioned artist, an important dimension of the Vital Arts selection process is 'trying to imagine the natural extension of what the artist has already done'.

What is the brief?
In building the brief, it is the purpose of the artwork that is imperative rather than an interpretation of a particular theme. As Catsou explains, 'The brief guides artists towards a suitable approach: it might require a work that is calming within a stressful accident and emergency department, or upbeat and vibrant in a paediatric ward.'

She is interested in trying to push the artists' perspective beyond their

1.24A

practice, whether this is usually working authorially with narrative or with very thorough commercial briefs. Taking a two-dimensional practice and transforming it into three-dimensional art can involve a change of scale or adapted methodologies and demand a new visual approach. The ambition is always for innovative and idea-driven solutions, as Catsou explains, 'Vital Arts is not interested in formulaic art that can be found elsewhere.'

What is the process?

Developing a scheme of work is what Catsou describes as an iterative process: 'Usually, it involves building layers of what becomes the final proposal.' The artist might visit the space many times to "measure up" and gain a clearer understanding of what is required in the physical environment. Whether the artist hand-draws their ideas or uses Photoshop, clear visualization is imperative to enable easy consultation with hospital staff who may be less familiar with the visual arts.

Optimizing the potential of texture and scale within the space results in a diversity of material outcomes including freestanding or relief forms, paintings, vinyl, rugs, prints, perspex layers and animation. However, creativity is tempered by the pragmatism of making artwork that will function safely within such a specific public space. 'We have to imagine how a proposal would look in three dimensions, but we also consider all the constituent elements and material details. We have to know how it will be affixed to the wall.' Catsou adds, 'As you can imagine there are all sorts of issues around health and safety, infection control. We also speak to the fire team. There are very strict parameters, which we have to hammer out before we sign off any proposal.'

The artist's fee includes production costs, and artists are responsible for sourcing materials and paying for fabrication, but Vital Arts can often advise. Fulfilling these requirements can be challenging, although Catsou suggests that 'illustrators are usually adept at working within constraints'.

Each commission is unique, but the commissioning process is defined by a gold-standard philosophy. As Catsou reflects, 'A good commissioner selects the right artist for the project, develops a good brief and prudently guides each artist down the path. Hopefully that path leads the artist, and the work, to the perfect destination— with very little interference. That's the best outcome.'

Suggestions based on Catsou's advice for getting clients in site-based contexts

- Be prepared for the many practical considerations involved with working in public spaces.
- Be prepared to show rough work collaboratively as you develop your ideas with the clients who understand the space your artwork will be situated within.
- Show that your work is adaptable to different scales and surfaces.

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1.24B

1.24A
Artist: Chris Haughton. Photography: Jess Bonham. Commission: Decal mural designed specifically for the Paediatric Assessment Short Stay Unit, Royal London Hospital, UK.

1.24B
Artist: Jaques Nimki. Commission: Decal mural designed specifically for the Paediatric A & E Service, Royal London Hospital, UK.

Who will commission me? Who do I approach?

THE BLACK BOOK: APPROACHING AND MAKING CONTACT WITH THE RIGHT PERSON

Working out which person in a company is best to approach, initiating contact with them and making them aware of your work is the first of the major steps on the road to being commissioned.

The titles of the people you are looking for in the creative industries are fluid. Their roles can vary depending on which sector of the industry they are operating within, the scale of the company and its internal organization of personnel. Because of this fluidity within job titles, it's important to be aware of the distinctive (as well as generic) roles that the person commissioning you is responsible for, what their authority and responsibility is and who else might be involved in deciding on whether you are the right illustrator for the job.

Don't take it for granted that job descriptions accurately sum up the role or position of the specific person who will commission you. The scale, locality, structure and nature of each company will influence this. The research and dialogue you will have throughout the briefing and commissioning process should make this clearer.

When referring to commissioners, the term 'the creative' is often used generically to refer to the person spearheading the job. Being part of a team, there is usually one contact who works with the illustrator throughout the process – sometimes as the direct conduit to the client.

These are some of the ways in which your client will be referred to or described, along with some of the titles you will encounter in your search for potential clients.

The senior designer

The senior designer's job might entail working directly with the client in a design group or agency, or within other departments in a larger organization. Editorially, and in book publishing, the senior designer may also be known as the art editor.

They are often instrumental in the direction of the design and in choosing what imagery will be used as part of this and what budget is available for illustrators (or other external specialists). They might invite the illustrator to be involved in discussions about where their imagery will be used in the layout and design at appropriate stages of the process.

The art editor

The art editor relates mostly to editorial contexts and book publishing. Usually from a design background, the art editor works within a team that includes both in-house and freelance creatives. They may have a senior role overseeing or co-ordinating other designers, bringing them together or working collaboratively with them on projects. They may also be responsible for mediating with editors and other departments in the company, such as marketing and accounts, on behalf of the team. They won't have always read the text they are working with (it might not have been fully written at the time they are commissioning the illustrator).

Although a commissioned illustrator may have been briefed by one of the designers in the team and be liaising directly with them, the art editor might have the ultimate say on a project. Equally, the designers and illustrators they supervise may be subject to further approval within the publishing house before the job is signed off for publication.

The art buyer

The art buyer liaises with teams of creatives in advertising agencies. They source external creative content for the campaigns to realize their concepts. This might be illustrators, photographers, animators or film-makers who will be specifically briefed to contribute a particular dimension leading to the execution of the campaign.

Sometimes the art buyer will work only with agents and reps, but others prefer to brief illustrators directly. It will often be through the art buyer that an illustrator is commissioned or invited to pitch for an advertising campaign or brief.

The creative director

The creative director is generally the creative lead of a team of designers, who liaises with – or is a mediator for – other departments in a company. This could be within a design group or agency, games company, animation agency, marketing department or design department of a non-creative company.

1.25

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In common with an art editor, they usually work to galvanize and steer a team of other creatives. You may be commissioned directly by a creative director, although it's usual in larger companies to be commissioned by an art director or designer in their team or department. They may have the ultimate say in a project, whether you have had direct communication with them or not.

The art director

The art director is usually a member of the creative director's team. In larger agencies and companies, it's likely that they will be brought in to develop concepts for a campaign and could be on the front line as the client, commissioning freelancers to contribute to visual solutions.

'The skill of an editor/art director is to gain an understanding of how someone works and chime with that. The truly difficult thing about working with an illustrator is the time imbalance. They have to spend months creating their work, and then I spend days giving feedback – somehow that doesn't seem fair.'

Libby Hamilton, editorial director, picture books, Andersen Press, UK

1.25
Artist: Graham Carter. Commission: Illustrations from *The Story Thief* by Graham Carter, published by Andersen Press.

The illustration agent

The role for most agents or reps is to act as a mediator between you as an illustrator and the commissioner or client. Essentially, if you are represented, you're unlikely to have much direct liaison with your clients. The agent will market your work, take the brief and negotiate the contract on your behalf, so minimizing the contact you will have with the commissioner. For this service, they will take a percentage of every fee you earn.

A number of illustration agents will also do more than solely representing their illustrators, offering a project managing or consultancy aspect to clients as a more inclusive package.

It's unlikely that you will have much luck approaching an agent for representation if you are still building up your client base. Generally, you will approach them (and sometimes an agent might approach you directly) when you have shown potential for commercial success by working as a freelancer and you have already been commissioned directly by clients. This goes for most specialist agencies who focus on particular areas of image-based work, such as animation, concept art, visualization, 3D imagery, etc. Most agencies will detail how illustrator's submissions should be sent to them on their websites.

The literary agent

A literary agent represents illustrators seeking to work in children's publishing as an author, illustrator, or undertaking both roles. In a similar vein to the illustration agent, literary agents are the conduit between the publisher and the artist. They can also perform more of a mentoring role, advising illustrators on story ideas and being involved in the development and honing of manuscripts and dummy books, as well as pitching them to potential publishers and ultimately negotiating contracts.

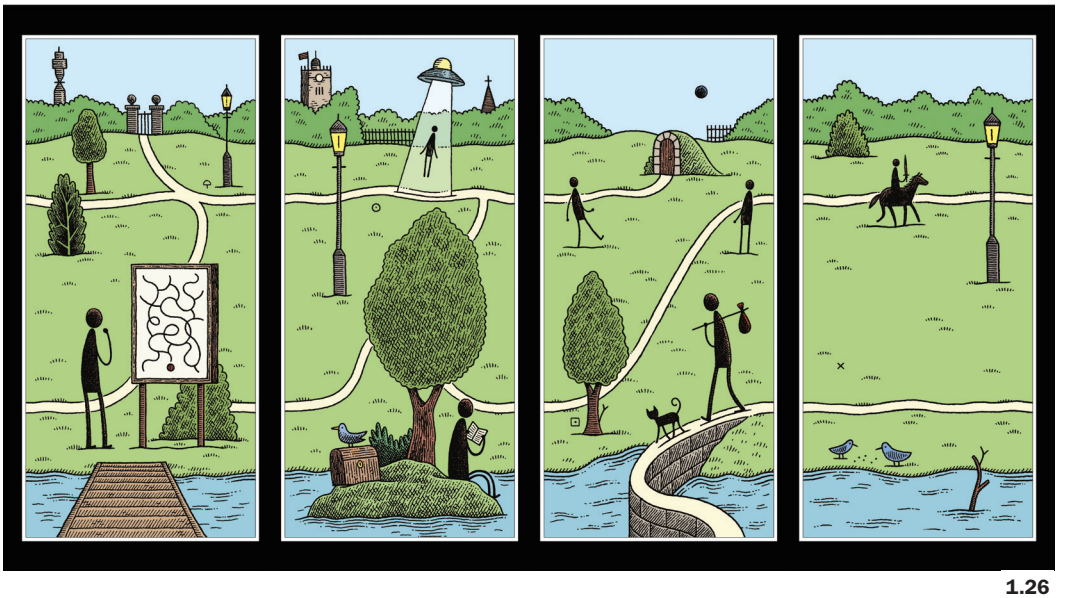
Literary agents may also represent their children's book illustrators for licensing and other commissioning areas.

TABLE 1.1
A SUMMARY OF ROLES

Type of publishing	Commissioner	Company
Children's publishing	Art editor	Publishing house, book packager, independent author
Book illustration	Art editor	Publishing house, book packager, independent commissioner
Editorial and magazines	Art editor/art director	Magazine, in-house design department, design agency
Advertising	Creative director/art director/art buyer	Advertising agency, marketing company, in-house department
Design and branding	Art director/creative director	Design agency, branding agency, in-house department
Greetings cards and decorative licences	Art director/creative director/art buyer	Cards, homeware, product, textiles, surface pattern
Film and animation	Art director	Game designer, post-production house, design studio, architect
Comic books and graphic novels	Art editor/art director	Publisher, independent author
Motion, interactive and UI	Art director/creative director	Agency, pre- or post-production house
Authorial illustration	Illustrator directs themselves	Company online store, high street retailer, fairs and conventions

Chapter summary

- There are many different specialist yet overlapping areas that illustrators operate in commercially.
- There are often similarities between what clients in the same commercial area are looking for and how they approach finding and working with illustrators, but each commission will have its own requirements that are discussed with the illustrator.
- To operate successfully as a professional illustrator, it pays to be confident at each of the stages involved with getting a client and doing a commission.
- Clients in each area of the industry generally work in teams. Although they might work directly with the illustrator, they may not have come up with the brief or have control over it.
- Not all illustrators work to commission for external clients.



1.26

‘A good commissioner selects the right artist for the project, develops a good brief and prudently guides each artist down the path. Hopefully that path leads the artist, and the work, to the perfect destination, with very little interference. That’s the best outcome.’

Catsou Roberts, director of Vital Arts for Barts Health NHS Trust

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1.26
Artist: Tom Gauld. Commission: A series of wall panels designed and in situ at the Cystic Fibrosis Unit, Barts Hospital, UK.

2 WHAT DO CLIENTS WANT?

2.0
Artist: Sol Cotti
Commission: *The New York Times* book review.
Image kindly provided by Ella Lupo, agent at Purple Rain Illustrators.

2.0

2 WHAT DO CLIENTS WANT?

What kind of work should I be putting in my folio?

Children's publishing

Publishing: jacket and interior illustration – fiction

Jacket and interior illustration: educational and non-fiction publishing

Graphic novels, comics and independent publishing

Independent mass-produced publishing

Editorial – magazines and newspapers

Advertising and design

Screen-based – concept art for games, animation and illustration-led animation

Surface pattern, decorative licences and greetings cards

Chapter summary

What kind of work should I be putting in my folio?

2.1
Artist: Gary Taxali.
Commissioner: Gail Marowitz, The Visual Strategist.
Commission: Insert and CD cover for American performer, Aimee Mann. The variety of artefacts combine to create a distinctive visual narrative and identity that is associated with both the music and the artist. Published by SuperEgo Records.

This chapter outlines common practices in the broad areas already discussed in Chapter 1, focusing on what clients are generally looking for in each of these areas. This includes suggesting the kind of visual content that can typically attract clients' attention within specific contexts including subjects, characters, stylistic approaches and concepts. It outlines the skills required for both image making and being a practitioner that clients will want to work with. The ultimate aim is to find your own visual language – a way of working that you truly feel to be your own – but also to be aware of how to apply that when you are aiming towards commercial success.

SELECTING THE RIGHT WORK

Based on direct research with clients and analysis of the work of illustrators working commercially at all levels internationally, for clients large and small, these sections provide a useful compendium that can be referred to as you prepare to develop a range of work to equip you to enter into, and expand upon, commercial practice.

Each section in the requirements and evidence tables should be seen as a useful – but not exclusive – checklist for you to refer to as you appraise your own folio of artwork and gauge its appropriateness for the areas in which you hope to get clients.

2.1

2 WHAT DO CLIENTS WANT?

What kind of work should I be putting in my folio?

Children's publishing

Publishing: jacket and interior illustration – fiction

Jacket and interior illustration: educational and non-fiction publishing

Graphic novels, comics and independent publishing

Independent mass-produced publishing

Editorial – magazines and newspapers

Advertising and design

Screen-based – concept art for games, animation and illustration-led animation

Surface pattern, decorative licences and greetings cards

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There will be exceptions to what is outlined here, but the lists are aimed to provide a clear focus, alongside other client and market research that you undertake, as you prepare to approach potential clients and develop a more mature sense of what is required in the industry.

BECOMING VISUALLY LITERATE

If you have studied some area of art and design within a higher education programme, you are probably familiar with the notion of visual literacy – the skill of reading images and understanding how they communicate and transfer meaning. Just as there is no absolute way of measuring how an image will express an idea, convey a message or evoke an emotional response, there is no certainty in predicting which images will attract clients' attention. It can depend on many factors, such as what visual language they are looking for, the brief they have in mind, what aesthetic their own client has suggested, as well as the timeframe of the project.

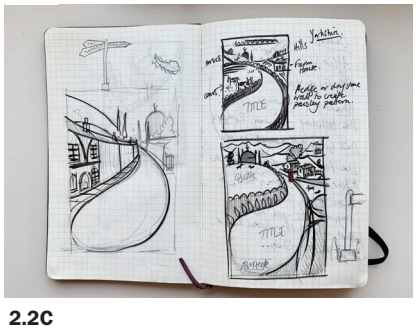
Being informed about the kinds of illustration that are being used now, and why and how they were commissioned, will help you to evaluate the appropriateness of your own work as you move towards positioning yourself in the industry. Illustration is a trend-based form of commercial activity – it reflects the cultural influences of its creators, commissioners and their clients at a specific moment in time. They're both influenced by, and shapers of, what is topical. Factors that contribute to these trends might include new software and technology, attitudes towards characterization and representation, broader fashion trends and cultural, social and political events. The life experiences, aesthetic and conceptual preferences of these stakeholders, as well as the broader contexts in which they operate, will inform the choices they make and the directions they take at any particular time and contribute to the evolving nature of illustrative practice.

It's within this context that you can benefit from looking at contemporary illustrators operating professionally within the commercial realm you are drawn towards. Although developing a sense of particular stylistic approaches, visual trends or recurrent topics – or ideas that seem to be prevalent within particular contexts or for particular audiences – can only provide a snapshot in time, this can give you a useful yardstick against which to consider the appropriateness of your own work. Being skillful with particular media or software, or specializing in rendering a specific subject, does not automatically mean that you will be chosen for a particular brief above another illustrator.

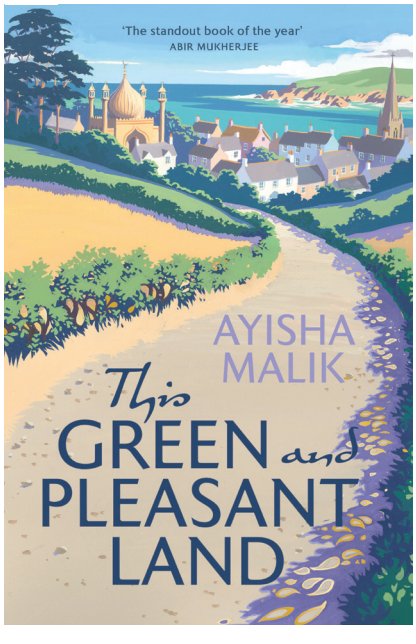
By developing an analytical approach towards the work of practitioners who are successfully getting clients, and deconstructing their images, you will be able to recognize the traits that are typical within them. This isn't necessarily about comparing yourself or thinking they are 'better' than you – that is very difficult to quantify anyway. It's also *not* about plagiarizing them or copying what they do. It's about covering as many bases as possible without losing a sense of who you are; creating work that you're happy with, which shows you're equipped to work within the industry and has the potential to catch the clients' eyes at the right time.

2.2A

2.2B



2.2C



2.2A–C
Artist: Andrew Davidson.
Commissioner: Nick Stearn, art director, fiction, Bonnier Books.
Commission: *This Green and Pleasant Land* by Ayisha Malik, published by Bonnier Books. Selected sketches showing the process for the jacket illustration.

WHAT DO CLIENTS EXPECT FROM ILLUSTRATORS?

It's important that your work has a clear visual identity or style. Potential clients looking for illustrators could be searching through many illustrators' websites or social media feeds in a short time – skimming and scrolling quickly. How will you make a strong and lasting visual impression that makes the art director stop at your page? How can the potential client be persuaded to save a link to your site or to delve deeper and spend more time looking at your artwork?

BEING CONSISTENT

The visual language that illustrators work within is generally referred to as their style – this is essentially the aesthetic property in your artwork. Stylistically, this is a culmination of how you create images; using media, colour, texture, characters and composition to communicate an idea, express an emotion or meaning, describe or decorate and create a visual impact. Features in your work that contribute to this may include the way that you stylize figures or a particular approach to using colour or types of colour palette: how you build a visual world and populate it.

The content of the imagery that you translate into your style is also a key to how you are identified, and could influence how your visual language is defined. For some illustrators, there are specific features that are repeatedly incorporated into their artwork, whether a particular subject matter, such as buildings and locations, fashion or characters; using particular decorative features; or dealing with particular types of concepts or topics. Demonstrating both consistency and diversity of content is common in most successful folios.

It's unlikely that the client is looking for one single illustrator who can work in many styles. Instead they will need to be convinced that, if you are commissioned by them, they can reasonably expect the artwork to be produced in the style of your promotional pieces.

Work towards establishing a clear style or visual language. Establish where your work may be best placed. You might discover that the market is saturated with other practitioners creating work like yours and that by changing some aspect of your visual approach, such as your colour palettes or medium, you will offer something more distinctive and appealing. As an illustrator, you might equally discover that what you offer is quite radical and difficult to place. If this is the case, you may need to look for clients that are more likely to take a risk with something that is less tested.

'Be bold, be different, stand out from the crowd, have your own style. The creative industry is awash with talent, so it's harder than ever to stand out in that crowd.'

Nick Stearn, art director, fiction, Bonnier Books, UK

‘When you are starting out, don’t settle for any style. The clients will want you to work with that forever. It took me a long time to find my style. It’s good to experiment.’

Audrey Malo works mostly for clients in Canada and the USA, including editorial and design contexts and for packaging and publishing, in both screen- and print-based formats

2.3

2 WHAT DO CLIENTS WANT?

What kind of work should I be putting in my folio?

Children’s publishing

Publishing: jacket and interior illustration – fiction

Jacket and interior illustration: educational and non-fiction publishing

Graphic novels, comics and independent publishing

Independent mass-produced publishing

Editorial – magazines and newspapers

Advertising and design

Screen-based – concept art for games, animation and illustration-led animation

Surface pattern, decorative licences and greetings cards

Chapter summary

2.3
Artist: Audrey Malo. Art director: Deanna Donegan. Client: *The New York Times*. Commission: The article examined the fact that pandemic conditions were at cross-currents with normal adolescent development.

Children's publishing

Don't have preconceptions about the type of work that this area of illustration encompasses based on the fact that you were once a child. If your understanding is based on the books you knew during your own childhood, it will be outdated. Although internationally there are undisputed classics of children's illustration that have endured the fickle trends of time, and some megastars that are loved the world over, children's publishing is an evolving visual area. In common with all other areas of practice, it is often also culturally distinct, reflecting the specific visual trends of the countries or regions that it was created within.

Whether you are aspiring to be an illustrator of picture books, an author-illustrator, or working for teen fiction or non-fiction, it's important that you are realistic about how equipped you are to get clients. By analysing across different publishers, age ranges and genres, you will more objectively see where your work could best fit. One step towards this is to be objective and research into the many publications that currently exist. Use libraries, bookshops and online searches to develop an understanding of the differences between genres and age ranges and to confidently identify the type of content that characterizes each publisher. You will find that most picture books have characters, are full colour and contain a certain number of pages, but also that some will have more experimental and contemporary imagery, while others are more traditional.

Find the publication dates of books that seem most relevant to your practice – especially checking how recent they are. Some books are classics and some illustrators are well established and enduring as children's book illustrators, but that doesn't mean that a client commissioning today would consider a less-established illustrator working with a similar illustrative approach, or that there is a gap in the market for it nowadays.

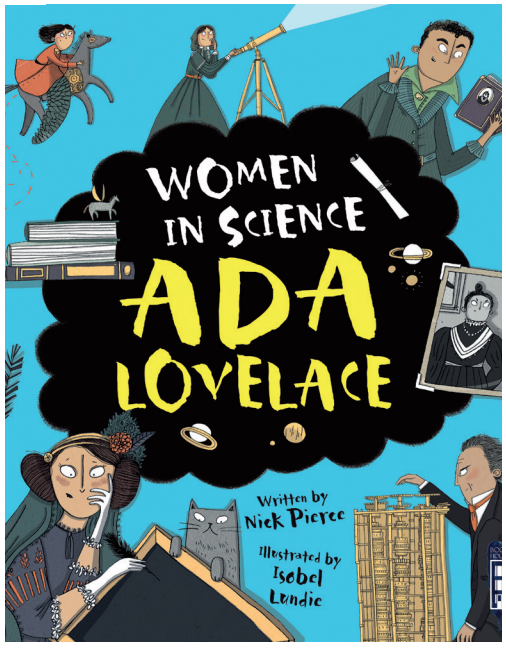
You will find that stylistic trends are varied across the world, and often across age ranges, and that many publishers have their own identities. What one client might choose to publish might be rejected by a host of other publishers because it doesn't suit their list or brand. Cross-reference your research from the books that are current to find the illustrators who you identify as those successfully getting clients. What is the typical content of the imagery within their marketing and social media? What defines their stylistic approach? What makes them distinctive?

Use your broadened knowledge of what is commissioned and where, at this time, in terms of content and visual approach, as you develop and curate the content of your own folio to springboard towards the clients and publishers that you want to target.

'Illustrators should be highly skilled but willing to be flexible in balancing text with illustration on a page. They must know the purpose of the illustration, to define the text, interpret the text or synergize with the text so that the two produce more than the sum of each in expressing the intent of the author. Many books stretch an illustrator's abilities in drawing authentic multiracial faces and not being tokenistic. Others require research of the situation.'

Robene Dutta, art editor, Mantra Lingua, UK

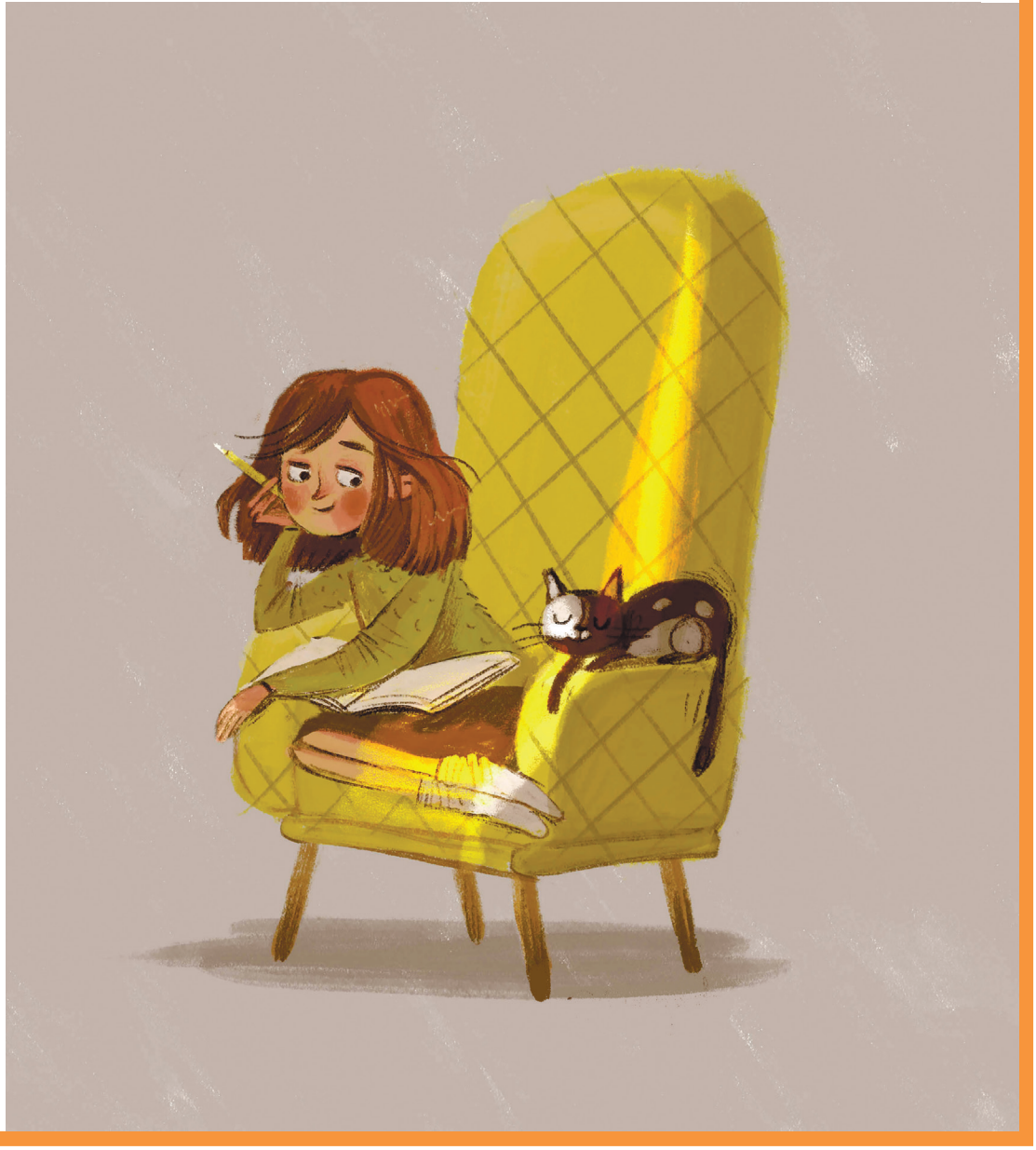
2.4



‘As our sector is predominantly the children’s market, it is rather important to us that the illustrator demonstrates an ability to know their characters well, to be able to illustrate the narrative and successfully place their characters in different scenes and scenarios. It sounds obvious, but you would be surprised by the volume of submissions we receive where there is little or no evidence of examples of the same character. It’s a shame for the artist, this might potentially delay them being signed to the agency and consequently being commissioned.’

Mark Mills, founder and agent, The Plum Agency, UK

2.5



2 WHAT DO CLIENTS WANT?

What kind of work should I be putting in my folio?

Children’s publishing

Publishing: jacket and interior illustration – fiction

Jacket and interior illustration: educational and non-fiction publishing

Graphic novels, comics and independent publishing

Independent mass-produced publishing

Editorial – magazines and newspapers

Advertising and design

Screen-based – concept art for games, animation and illustration-led animation

Surface pattern, decorative licences and greetings cards

Chapter summary

2.4
Artist: Isobel Lundie. Publisher: Franklin Watts. Image kindly provided by Mark Mills, agent at The Plum Agency.

2.5
Artist: Irina Avgustinovich, represented by The Plum Agency. Irina works on a diverse range of picture books for children.

TABLE 2.1
WHAT CLIENTS WILL CONSIDER IMPORTANT WHEN YOU ARE ASPIRING TO WORK IN CHILDREN'S PUBLISHING

Some typical requirements	Evidence in your folio
Breaking down a story	Images that work in sequence Images showing a character in various dramatic scenes involving some aspect of action and interaction with other characters, in an environment
Strong characterization and figure work	A range of characters, reflecting diversity One consistent character demonstrating various emotions and involved in various activities
Depicting diversity	Sensitive characterization of people of different physicality, gender, ethnic types Exploration of non-gender-specific roles in characters
Stylistic consistency	A set of images that are connected by visual language
Comfortable around words/ interpretation of words	Images that work alongside type – mock-ups of double-page spread for a book including your images Images that show a range of narratives in sequence, showing change of action or a story unfolding
Coming up with ideas independently	Dummy book Story ideas Character development
Being able to work closely with an editor or editorial team	Pleasant and organized in correspondence or communication
Understanding the technical requirements of illustration in a book format	Double-page spreads for a book, demonstrating that you understand how imagery works when it's at the gutter, margins and how to do a bleed
Being able to construct visuals and dummy books	Spreads Dummy or digital flick book
Being able to come up with ideas in an authorial capacity	Spreads Dummy or digital flick book A range of story texts or plot ideas
Undertaking visual research	Images that are accurate in detail (historical, architectural, geography, objective, etc.)

Other skills:

- ability to understand and negotiate a publishing contract
- ability to self-fund and exist on a potentially limited advance sum while working on a book commission
- ability to commit to sustain enthusiasm for a project that might last for a year or more

2.6

2.6
Artist: Anna Suessbauer. Image kindly provided by Mark Mills at The Plum Agency.

2.7

‘I always look for world building. Even if their work seems simple or sparse, a few well thought-out details make the world come alive. What the character is wearing; objects in their room; the way they treat, for example, a toy they are playing with. All these things will never be in the text, but it shows me that the illustrator has thought through the motivation of their character and the logic of the world they live in.

When I meet an illustrator for the first time, I’m often gauging how they respond to feedback and work collaboratively – I don’t want someone to say “yes, yes” to everything, but I also don’t want someone who rejects all suggestions out of hand. Those who ask questions to get a full understanding of why I’m asking for a change, and then come up with their own solution to the problem, are usually the illustrators who reach the best finished result.’

Libby Hamilton, editorial director, picture books, Andersen Press, UK

2 WHAT DO CLIENTS WANT?

What kind of work should I be putting in my folio?

Children’s publishing

Publishing: jacket and interior illustration – fiction

Jacket and interior illustration: educational and non-fiction publishing

Graphic novels, comics and independent publishing

Independent mass-produced publishing

Editorial – magazines and newspapers

Advertising and design

Screen-based – concept art for games, animation and illustration-led animation

Surface pattern, decorative licences and greetings cards

Chapter summary

2.7
Artist: Fiona Lumbers. Commission: *Luna Loves Dance* picture book by Joseph Coelho, published by Andersen Press. The illustrator has worked across the series of books and her images create a powerful visual identity.

Publishing: jacket and interior illustration – fiction

Whether online or in a bricks-and-mortar shop, fiction books tend to be categorized according to genres that reflect a specific audience or type of content, and not defined by age or demographic in the way that children's books are. Although online bookstores and publishers' own websites allow quick and easy access to entire catalogues, a trip to any bookshop will allow you to immediately gauge the trends in publishing at any time.

There can be identifiable visual tropes or approaches within these categories that are to note and become familiar with if you are aspiring to work within publishing. For example, 'chick lit' will have typographic and illustrative approaches that are unlike other genres such as romance, sci-fi and fantasy, mystery, thriller and crime, inspirational, horror, historical fiction, crime, biography, drama and poetry.

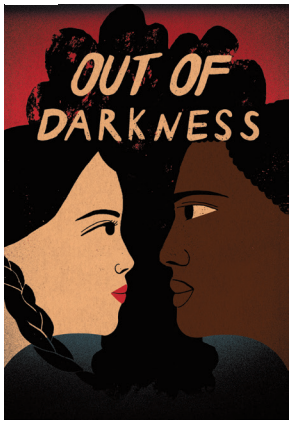
You will also see from your research that there are few opportunities for interior illustration for fiction titles intended for an adult audience, that photography features on the covers of many books, that some books have had the same jacket design and illustration over several editions and that the same author is often illustrated by the same artist to create a distinct identity.

It's likely you will find that illustrators working in this area are commissioned across the wide range of commercial contexts of illustration. The ability to interpret texts, generate a range of visual ideas and have a strong visual language is valued across the industry. Although some illustrators are prolific in this area, it's not realistic to think of this as potentially being a sole income stream.

Remember

Look for independent and niche as well as mainstream publishers (who are more likely to be inundated with approaches from aspiring illustrators).

2.8A



2.8B

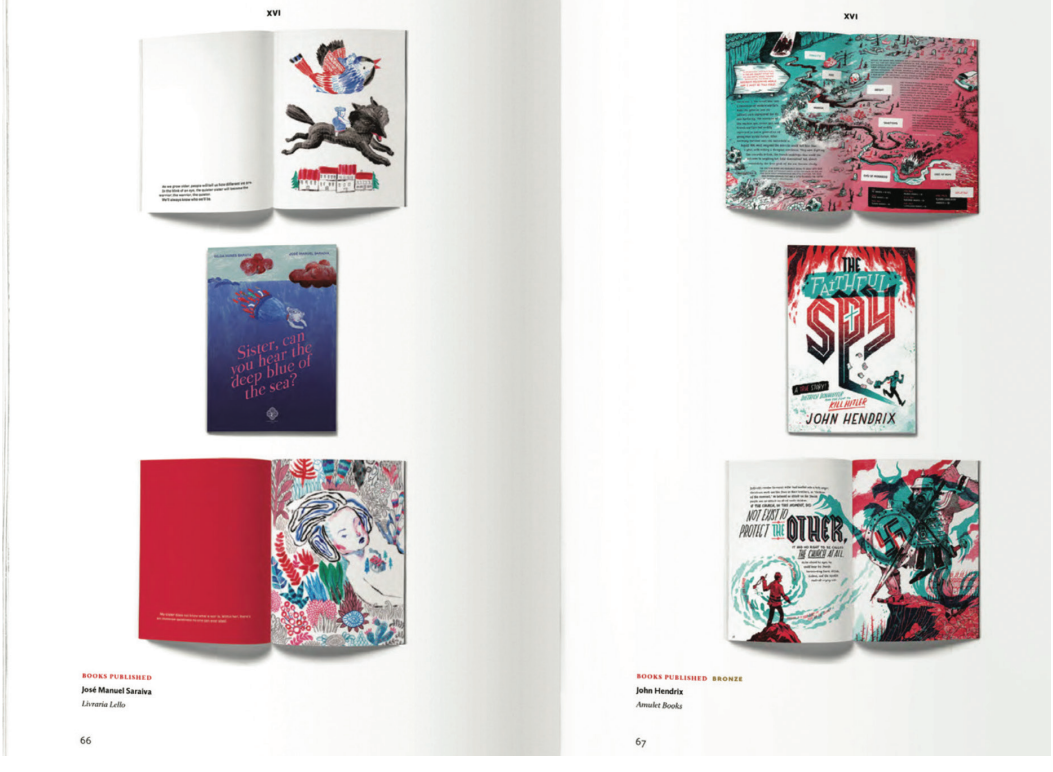


TABLE 2.2
WHAT CLIENTS WILL CONSIDER IMPORTANT IF YOU ARE ASPIRING TO WORK IN PUBLISHING: JACKET AND INTERIOR ILLUSTRATION – FICTION

Some typical requirements	Evidence in your folio
Ability to create imagery that exists alongside typography or text	Mock-up of book jackets Double-page spread of image with typography
Illustrative typography	Hand-drawn type for a single cover, or a series of books for the same series
Understanding the way that images and text work together to tell a story or convey information	Images that show narrative – a range of moods, types of drama A series of images that work in sequence
Being stylistically consistent	A series of jacket images for the same author Images for a range of content in narrative formats
Working in a limited colour range or black and white, as well as full colour	Images using various colour palettes including monochrome
Being able to convey a range of moods and emotions	Images that show narrative – a range of moods, types of drama A series of images that show a development of action
Being able to deal with a range of content	Narrative images with: • historically accurate detail or costume • recognizable buildings or locations • environments and interiors • objects
Knowing which genres suit your work best	Reflect the genres that you aspire towards in a series of covers for at least one author
Understanding the technical requirements of illustration in a book format	Double-page spreads for a book, demonstrating that you understand how imagery works when it's at the gutter and margins

Other skills:

- ability to generate a number of ideas for each cover or interior artwork
- ability to undertake accurate research and work with reference material

2 WHAT DO CLIENTS WANT?

What kind of work should I be putting in my folio?

Children's publishing

Publishing: jacket and interior illustration – fiction

Jacket and interior illustration: educational and non-fiction publishing

Graphic novels, comics and independent publishing

Independent mass-produced publishing

Editorial – magazines and newspapers

Advertising and design

Screen-based – concept art for games, animation and illustration-led animation

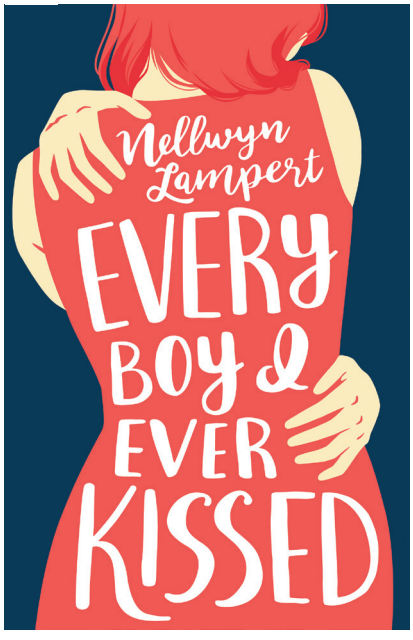
Surface pattern, decorative licences and greetings cards

Chapter summary

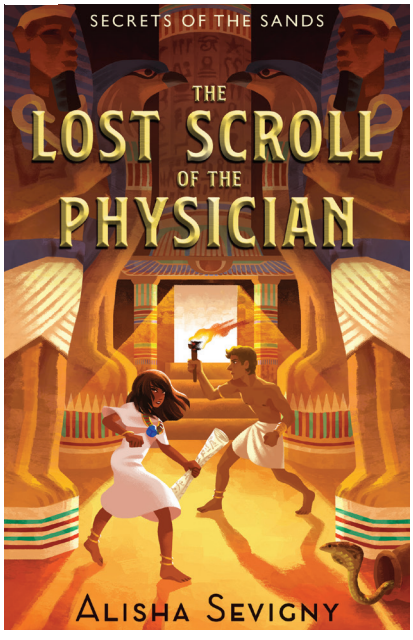
2.8A
Artist: Hanna Barczyk. Commission: *Out of Darkness*, a historical, young adult novel by Ashley Hope Pérez. Client: Holiday House, reprint edition.

2.8B
Examples of illustrated published books selected by *3x3* Annual Awards. Images kindly provided by Charles Hively, *3x3*

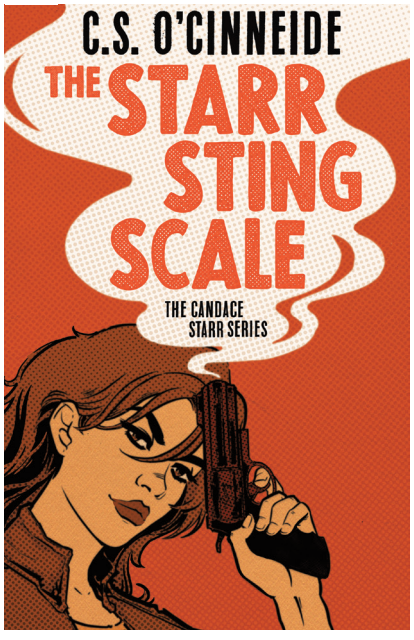
2.9A



2.9B



2.9C



'When illustrating for books, adaptability (both in style and temperament) is essential. There will most likely be revisions required to the work, since the illustration needs to meet several objectives:

1 It often needs to reference elements as described within the book, and fit the energy and mood of the book.
2 It has to have the desired aesthetic for its intended audience (the target market).
3 It sometimes needs be approved by several parties: the internal team, the external sales reps and the author.

'This is not to say that the process is always complex or drawn out, but that these aspects can make the process a little less straightforward. My job, along with keeping the project on track, is partly to weed through the feedback from these various parties and to determine which comments are worth considering. Having worked on both sides, I am very empathetic to the demands upon the freelancer and I try to avoid certain bad habits employers can bring to the table.'

Laura Boyle, art editor, Dundurn Press, Canada

2 WHAT DO CLIENTS WANT?

What kind of work should I be putting in my folio?

Children's publishing

Publishing: jacket and interior illustration – fiction

Jacket and interior illustration: educational and non-fiction publishing

Graphic novels, comics and independent publishing

Independent mass-produced publishing

Editorial – magazines and newspapers

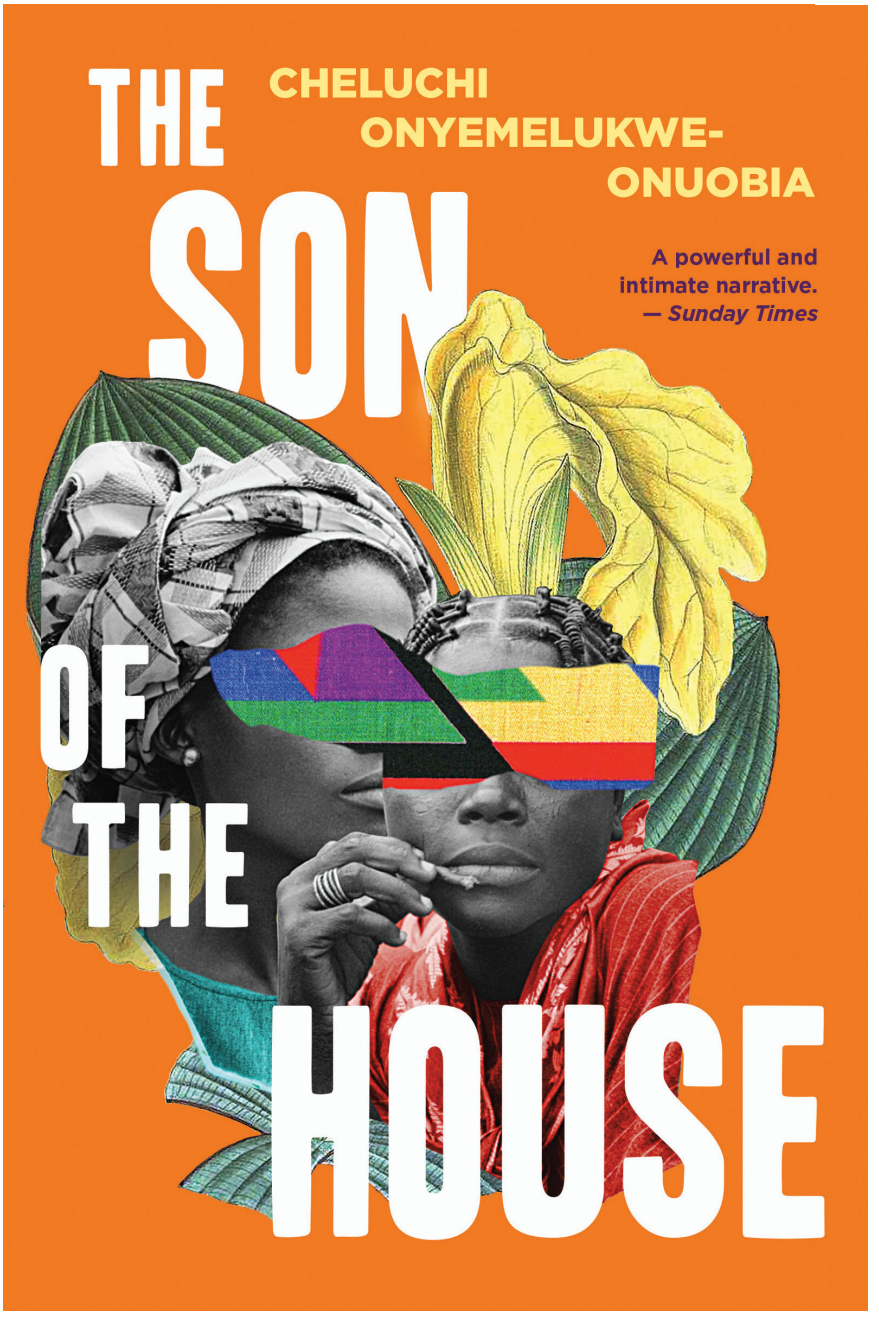
Advertising and design

Screen-based – concept art for games, animation and illustration-led animation

Surface pattern, decorative licences and greetings cards

Chapter summary

2.10



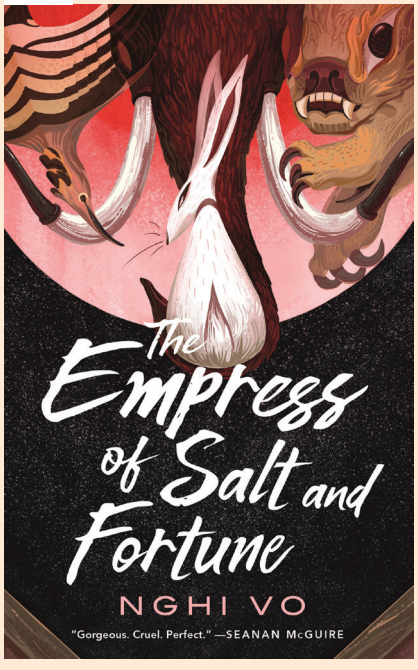
2.9A–C
Covers for Dundurn Press, Canada, that demonstrate how the style chosen reflects the genre and audiuence of the text.

2.10
Artist: Aaron Marin.
Commission: Front cover of *The Son of the House*, the award-winning novel by Cheluchi Onyemelukwe-Onuobia, illustrated by Aaron Marin aka NeuTokyo (Instagram: neutokyo). The New York-based artist has worked for clients editorially and in publishing.

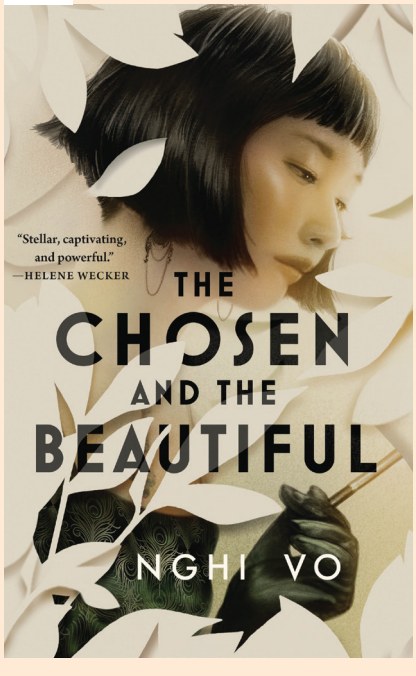
Spotlight

Working in publishing – Christine Foltzer, associate art director, Tor.com

2.11A



2.11B



Since the launch of the imprint, Christine's job has involved overseeing the development of their jackets. She art directs around forty covers each year. Christine was nominated for the Chesley Award as Best Art Director.

How can an illustrator get seen by an art director in this area?
Although looking for 'what's right for the book', Christine clearly champions commissioning artwork and 'leans heavily on illustration'. Her genuine passion results in image-based covers that connect symbiotically with the text in 'a million ways through establishing a tone or emotion and communicating about the book'.

Although Tor.com is a sci-fi and fantasy imprint, it attracts a diversity of visual languages and approaches. Many illustrators hoping to be commissioned by Christine contact her directly with emails containing links to their folios and postcards; she enjoys researching artists for pleasure as well as being in search of both ideas and inspiration as a client. 'I love art. I always want to know who does something I'm drawn to.'

Christine enjoys participating in the sci-fi fantasy community, acknowledging the professional benefits for both artists and commissioners of networking at conferences such as Dragon Con, Comicon and Illuxcon. Such events provide an opportunity to participate in a culture that is 'constantly evolving and expanding'. As Christine says, 'In some other areas of illustration it's competitive but in sci-fi everyone wants someone to achieve, supporting and helping each other out. It feels good to be a part of those things. Put yourself out there.'

Through participating at professional events and fairs, artists can gain valuable exposure and connect to relevant specialist audiences. This engagement can lead to opportunities for self-promotion.

What will draw Christine to your work?
Having stylistic and conceptual impact in your artwork and a capacity for working with narrative are key to being considered as an illustrator for book jackets. Christine has an inclusive attitude towards working with artists globally – veterans as well as early-career illustrators. She also looks for consistency and quality in an artist's folio and explains that, 'It's not that you can't work in different genres but too much variety is scary for an art director. I need to know what I am going to get.'

Christine seeks creative and individual outcomes, looking for the right illustrator for each book in the knowledge that the brand and imagery of a jacket can contribute to the cultural and commercial success of a title.

2.11A
Artist: Alyssa Winans.
Commission: Jacket illustration for *The Empress of Salt and Fortune* by Nghi Vo. The artist's surreal and sci-fi images have been commissioned for clothing, publishing and posters. She has also worked as a concept artist in the games industry.

2.11B
Artist: Greg Ruth.
Commission: Jacket illustration for *The Chosen and the Beautiful* by Nghi Vo. Greg Ruth is a *New York Times* bestselling author with a long track record as an artist, creating comics, music videos and working in publishing.

What does the commissioning process entail for a publisher?
After devising a shortlist of potential illustrators and considering several possible directions for the cover, Christine selects and commits to one, 'aiming to get it right first time'. As she explains, 'The budget for commissioning is limited. We are putting money on the line. The wrong cover can sink the book.'

'Making it right' is often a collaborative endeavour that can involve consultation with her boss, the author and marketing team, whose input can also influence the direction the illustrator takes throughout the process: 'Decisions go through a lot of people.'

Amendments may be required to the artwork and consequently the illustrator needs to be adaptable and open. Christine explains, 'If I ask for a correction, it's never just me saying this. Obviously there's a limit, but as long as I don't want astronomical changes, you need to be able to accommodate that.' This works both ways, and communication is important, 'If you reach out and tell me if you need a couple of extra days, I'll do my best. Being adaptable is a skill I've had to learn at my end too.'

Developing a positive relationship with the art director is inherent in being professional. 'My favourite projects are where I can go back and forth with the artists a little bit. Are you pleasant to work with? I'll only know that when I've worked with you a few times.' As she explains, in such a competitive and demanding industry, 'it can be difficult working with artists who have an attitude'.

How does an illustrator know if their work is appropriate for book publishing?
Christine advises doing research before approaching an art director with samples, to 'make sure the mailer is appropriate'. She suggests appraising your work to make sure it's relevant stylistically and conceptually for the area you aspire to work in. 'Be honest with yourself, and if you can't do that, have someone else be honest for you.'

Christine keeps her finger on the pulse through social media and across diverse cultural avenues including annuals, artists and artists reps' websites, exhibitions and blogs. 'Illustration is constantly changing. There are new avenues and new fields opening up. People who aren't flexible, who say the industry is dying, are wrong, but if you're not flexible you tend not to survive.'

Suggestions based on Christine's advice on getting clients in publishing

- Intelligent tagging of the subjects and approach of your work on social media, rather than generic tags, is more likely to get you noticed by clients.
- Engage in communities that reflect the content and direction of your work and aspirations.
- Have a good reputation – if you have a good experience with an art director, they could champion you to other possible clients.

2.11C

2 WHAT DO CLIENTS WANT?

What kind of work should I be putting in my folio?

Children's publishing

Publishing: jacket and interior illustration – fiction

Jacket and interior illustration: educational and non-fiction publishing

Graphic novels, comics and independent publishing

Independent mass-produced publishing

Editorial – magazines and newspapers

Advertising and design

Screen-based – concept art for games, animation and illustration-led animation

Surface pattern, decorative licences and greetings cards

Chapter summary

2.11C
Artist: Rovina Cai.
Commission: Jacket illustration for *Spear* by Nicola Griffith.
Rovina Cai is a Melbourne-based illustrator who is acclaimed for her fantasy-based imagery.

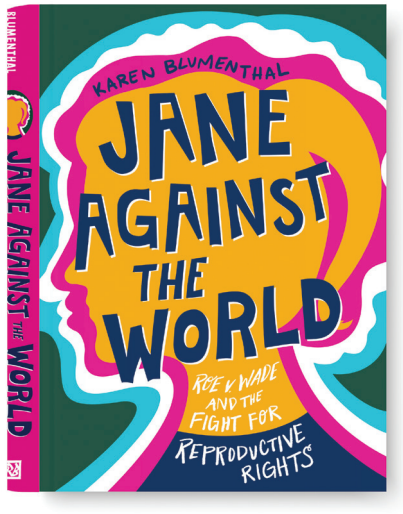
Jacket and interior illustration – educational and non-fiction publishing

Textbooks and non-fiction books are likely to have evolved since you were at school. There has been a resurgence of interest in this area and there are many diverse and exciting aesthetic approaches. Developments in publishing have led to an increase in non-fiction picture books, readers and gift books, interactive books and educational board games. There has also been an increase in commissioning for screen-based, non-fiction content, including motion work for apps, websites and games.

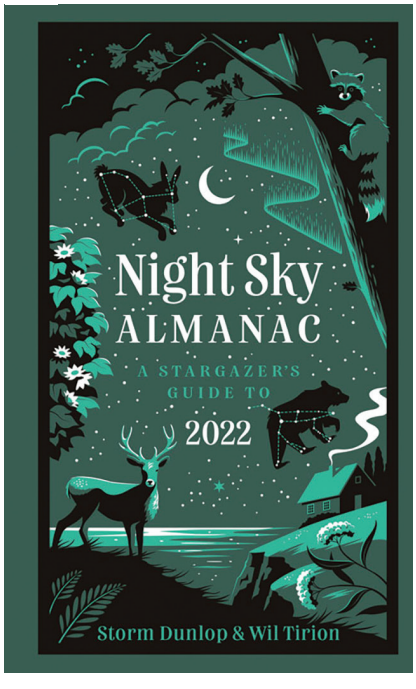
There can be more opportunities to work in this area of publishing for both physical and online texts and educational resources, partly because the curriculum is regularly updated in schools and partly because publishers are looking for fresh ways of attracting new readers across a range of subjects such as anatomy, history, culture, geography and science, animals and habitats, and maths. Because these books tend to include factual content and present information accurately, you need to be confident with visual research and conveying complex scenes, specific subjects or depicting people and events in interesting ways.

It might be that you're commissioned to illustrate a section of a book or an entire volume and create a series of spots that go over several pages, or produce maps, infographics, process diagrams, cut-aways and charts. The timescales for completion are likely to be quicker than with picture books and you might be given the text layout to work within or asked to create content with some aspect of motion for use on an app or website. Museums and heritage agencies can also commission in this area, alongside information-based campaigns.

2.12



2.13



'The advice I would give to aspiring illustrators is to be adaptable. Care about the projects. Set realistic expectations around financial rewards … If a good first impression is made and together we create a great product … you'll be invited back … The key skills that an illustrator should possess before seeking work with me as a client are a willingness/desire to leave any ego at the door. Focus on being part of a team trying to produce the best "thing" that we can … together … everybody benefits.'

Kevin Robbins, senior designer, HarperCollins Publishers, UK

TABLE 2.3
WHAT CLIENTS WILL CONSIDER IMPORTANT IF YOU ARE ASPIRING TO WORK IN JACKET AND INTERIOR ILLUSTRATION – EDUCATIONAL AND NON-FICTION PUBLISHING

Some typical requirements	Evidence in your folio
Illustrative typography	Several book titles that you have interpreted through your own visual language Hand-drawn text within infographics or diagrams
Ability to create imagery that exists alongside typography or text	Mock-ups of your imagery into existing book jacket designs or handling the design and illustration across a series of book jackets Maps Scenes that refer specifically to facts or narrative Infographics or diagrams
Understanding the way that images and text work together to tell a story or convey information	Images that show narrative – a range of moods, types of drama A series of images that work in sequence Infographics Screen-based content that incorporates imagery, including motion, to communicate a fact or idea or to depict information
Being stylistically consistent	A series of jacket images for the same topic or title Images for a range of content in the same style, including black-and-white and full-colour pieces
Strong characterization and figure work	A range of characters demonstrating various emotional stages in everyday situations
Being adaptable and responding to subject matter that may be complex	Narrative-based images that relate to: • historically accurate detail, costume and people • recognizable buildings or locations • environments and interiors • objects, transport, space or machinery • subjects from natural history: flora and fauna, animals, palaeontology
Focus on a younger market	Depiction of young people including diversity Work may have humour Work may reflect the current visual fashions and trends of a younger audience

What kind of work should I be putting in my folio?
Children's publishing
Publishing: jacket and interior illustration – fiction
Jacket and interior illustration: educational and non-fiction publishing
Graphic novels, comics and independent publishing
Independent mass-produced publishing
Editorial – magazines and newspapers
Advertising and design
Screen-based – concept art for games, animation and illustration-led animation
Surface pattern, decorative licences and greetings cards
Chapter summary

2.12
Artist: Jen Keenan.
Commission: *Jane Against the World: Roe v. Wade and the Fight for Reproductive Rights* by Karen Blumenthal, published by Roaring Brook Press.

2.13
Artist: CLIM.
Commission: *Night Sky Almanac: A Stargazer's Guide to 2022* by Storm Dunlop and Wil Tirion, published by HarperCollins Publishers.
The illustrator has created an identity that reflects the theme of the text.

Graphic novels, comics and independent publishing

2.14
Artist: Jamie Barker.
Commission: 'Trans Women are Women' illustration for Fake Gamer Comics, a webcomic about trans stuff, video games and depression.
The artist is a non-binary trans woman artist, musician and games developer.
patreon.com/m/fakegamercomics

'I launched the Patreon for my comics in 2018, a few months after starting my comics and seeing they had *some* reach on social media. I make a variety of work including comics, games, and music. The financial benefit has been amazing. I still work day jobs, but Patreon allows me to pay bills. I assume I'm an outlier, because I do not generally do commissions. I used to do more, but I found it hard to be happy with the commissions since they were not my ideas.'

Jamie Barker, illustrator, Fake Gamer Comics, USA

Finding your own voice, developing your own aesthetic and language, and generating your own ideas and content is a prerequisite to operating in the field of comics and graphic novels.

There is a strong community – as well as commercial – ethos within this area of illustration. This is evidenced by the number of comic conventions and book fairs held annually on both a large and local scale. Such events provide dynamic opportunities for illustrators to sell their own zines and comics independently, attend presentations and workshops, meet other creatives or meet potential clients and publishers.

Self-publishing is typical in this area, whether through making limited editions of handmade comics or zines to sell, printing an edition of a graphic novel and distributing this in a similar way, or using digital platforms such as online comic blogs to share downloadable content. This entrepreneurial approach demands a particular set of marketing, branding and business skills, alongside your creative and technical abilities. This might entail producing other merchandise, such as prints, T-shirts, stickers and stationery, which will require financial outlay.

Self-generating a body of individual work and building a presence within the comic and graphic novel community, and a wider consumer audience, can lead to commercial deals. The work and following you gain from building a profile in this world can also make illustrators operating within it attractive to clients across the illustration industry in areas outside of publishing.

2.14

Independent mass-produced publishing

The availability of online and print-on-demand publishing, and being able to market and distribute independently, means that traditional publishers are no longer the only option for authors and illustrators. There are many examples of practitioners whose success through self-publishing has demonstrated that gaining a book contract is not the only viable route to commercial success. This has created new avenues for work generated by writers looking for collaboration, as well as taking on the whole process of creating a graphic novel or comic themselves.

Without some of the quality processes, expertise and infrastructure that come with traditional publishing, the opportunities that such independent deals provide should be considered on a case-by-case basis. Generally, it pays to treat these transactions in the same professional way that you would if approached by an art director from a traditional publishing house. In terms of your skills, knowledge and understanding, you may find that you will need to take the lead in formulating the brief; be clear about the extent and specific requirements of your role, outline the process of undertaking the work, agree the financial aspects of a project and back this up with a robust contract.

2.15

2 WHAT DO CLIENTS WANT?

What kind of work should I be putting in my folio?

Children's publishing

Publishing: jacket and interior illustration – fiction

Jacket and interior illustration: educational and non-fiction publishing

Graphic novels, comics and independent publishing

Independent mass-produced publishing

Editorial – magazines and newspapers

Advertising and design

Screen-based – concept art for games, animation and illustration-led animation

Surface pattern, decorative licences and greetings cards

Chapter summary

2.15
Artist: Jim Rugg. Commission: Poster to advertise one of the Street Angel comic-book limited series by Jim Rugg and Brian Maruca.

TABLE 2.4
WHAT CLIENTS WILL CONSIDER IMPORTANT IF YOU ARE ASPIRING TO WORK IN GRAPHIC NOVELS, COMICS AND INDEPENDENT PUBLISHING

Some typical requirements	Evidence in your folio
Ability to tell a story	Panels for spreads consisting of multiple panels demonstrating action over a sequence of a narrative An entire short story told through a graphic novel or zine format Mini-comics or zines containing one or more stories
Ideas for stories	Dummy books, comics and zines A range of sample spreads Narrative and character-based merchandise, such as prints, T-shirts, badges, stickers and stationery
Online and print-based	Examples of stories, zines or comics that are available to share or download online, including motion elements, if appropriate to your comic Zines, comics, posters
Brand appeal	Having a strong, recognizable brand with attractive and collectable promotional items such as stickers, badges, T-shirts, prints and recognizable characters, themes or concepts
Production skills	Quality photos of well-made zine mock-ups, mini-comics, dummy books or printed examples

Other skills:

- entrepreneurial skills: the ability to network and sell work independently
- confidence with the public and willingness to attend fairs and conventions
- ability to finance production of self-published material
- ability to market and distribute self-published items
- tenacity – projects with publishers can take many years to progress from the initial idea through to print and publication

‘I’ve tried for many years to create a sense for the magazine that combines the literary and the aesthetic. Both the written piece and the illustration should speak to each other in a beautiful and interesting way.’

Daniela Silva Studio, design & art direction, Granta Publications, UK

2.16

Editorial – magazines and newspapers

Magazines and newspapers internationally – for both print and digital platforms, static and motion-based – reflect a vast spectrum of subject matter. Daily newspapers focus more on topical news, culture and lifestyle, and issues; while specialist publications – both in-house as well as mass newsstand titles – reflect their subject content visually. The visual approaches seen across this array of topics and publications reflect the audiences they appeal to. The satirical, metaphorical, concept-led imagery that features in news, cultural, commercial and financial sector editions is less common in lifestyle, fashion or food publications, where the approach might be more decorative. Whatever the specific content, illustrators working within this area must be confident in responding to a text with an understanding of the publication it will feature in and the audience that will read it.

Because general editorial categories include politics and current affairs, finance and business, health and lifestyle, food and drink, culture, fashion and beauty, relationship and life issues, travel and place, homes and interiors, astrology and short stories, it pays to create sample artwork that demonstrates your own visual interpretation of some of these typical topics and features. Be proactive – creating imagery for self-initiated topics that pre-empt the content that clients might be looking for is one way to get noticed.

'Flexibility is key: the ability to think conceptually as well as literally. Be willing to make last-minute alterations, if necessary – within reason, of course. If the deadline is fairly tight then speed and accuracy are also key skills. An illustrator that is prepared to take on board feedback to their original ideas and adapt them to suit the client's needs is worth their weight in gold! Each experience is different, but if illustrators who are less experienced are willing to give progress updates between the first rough ideas and the final piece, it is beneficial to both sides. It also prevents having to make major changes at the end.'

Yvey Bailey, art editor, *Bulletin* magazine, UK

2 WHAT DO CLIENTS WANT?

What kind of work should I be putting in my folio?

Children's publishing

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Jacket and interior illustration: educational and non-fiction publishing

Graphic novels, comics and independent publishing

Independent mass-produced publishing

Editorial – magazines and newspapers

Advertising and design

Screen-based – concept art for games, animation and illustration-led animation

Surface pattern, decorative licences and greetings cards

Chapter summary

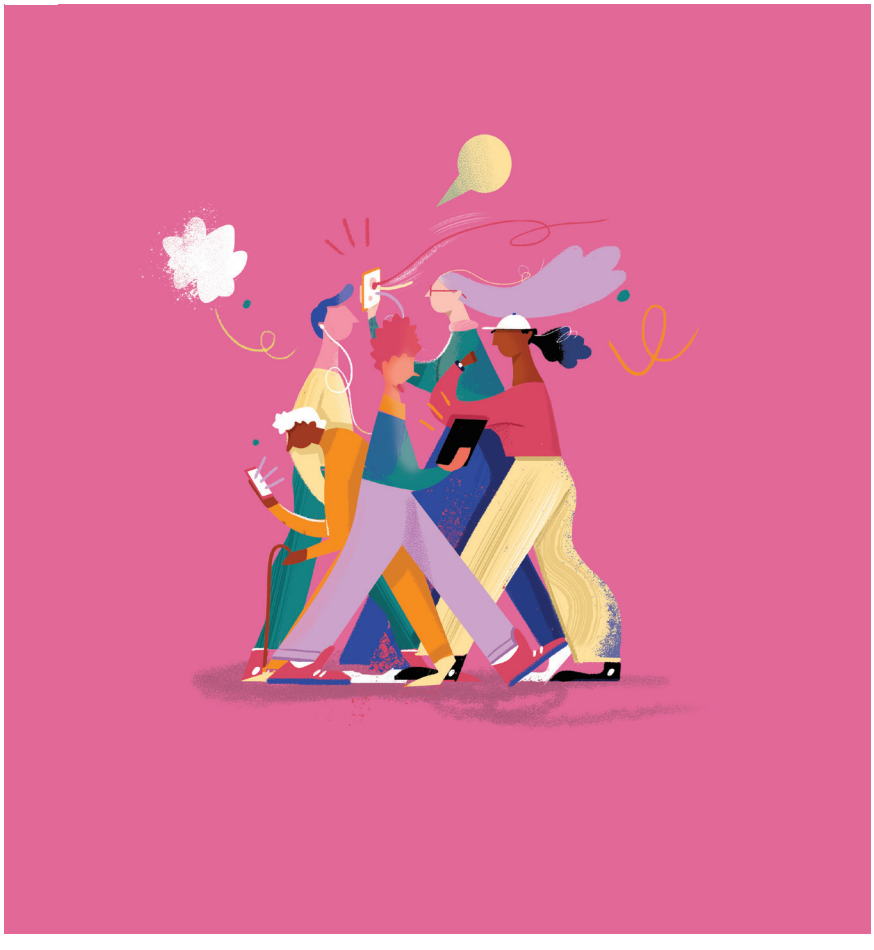
2.16
Artist: Sol Cotti.
Commission: Image for the *Guardian Weekend* magazine.
Art director: Jessica Ballard.
Sol Cotti, who is represented by Purple Rain Illustrators, is from Buenos Aires. She works across many contexts of illustration, with clients including Adidas, Kiehl's, Spotify, Sephora and Instagram.

Clients might commission an artist for the same slot over several issues or a one-off commission for a series of illustrations. The short timescales between commission and publication require that illustrators are confident in generating ideas quickly, sometimes in response to unfamiliar or topical subject matter. Keeping your finger on the pulse of what's happening culturally, socially and politically, which topics are trending and what the public mood is, and testing your own interpretation of them visually through regular thumbnails and self-initiated pieces, will equip you for this area.

Be aware how your artwork will suit being reproduced and how well it will sit within a typographic grid alongside other design elements such as adverts and photos. Whether half-page, full bleed, spots, vignettes or images that fit long thin columns, be conscious of typical formats as you produce self-initiated work, including, if you are able, creating gifs.

Because the turnaround in editorial practice can be fast and the shelf life of publications is short, art editors are more likely to take more risks with early-career illustrators, so invest time in finding publications that you're compatible with. Responding positively to critical input and delivering on time is vital, so seek out smaller publications to build up confidence in these professional areas.

2.17



2.17
Artist: Freya Lowy Clark.
Commission: Summer edition of *Bulletin* magazine.
Art editor: Yvey Bailey.
As well as editorial images such as this, Freya Lowy Clark designs and makes jewellery.

TABLE 2.5
WHAT CLIENTS WILL CONSIDER IMPORTANT IF YOU ARE ASPIRING TO WORK IN EDITORIAL – MAGAZINES AND NEWSPAPERS

Some typical requirements	Evidence in your folio
Convey that you are able to work to short deadlines in self-promotional communications to publications such as daily news platforms	Lots of images
Research visual information, especially if the commission requires specific and accurate content	Examples in your folio of imagery that has distinctive visual detail. What does a particular virus look like? The current US president? A particular building that has featured in a news event? The newest fashion garments?
Be able to come up with a range of ideas and concepts	Several images for the same topic or article that show different approaches to the same content – this could be a cover idea and several inside spreads, including full-page and spot illustrations
Be adaptable to a range of subject matter	Images with a diversity of content that relate, depending on your own interest, to topics for business and finance, lifestyle, food and drink, health, politics, social issues, short stories, horoscopes, travel and places Make any of your own specialisms or particular traits of your own approach, or expertise around subject matter or conceptual or visual approach, evident within your folio
For current affairs and topical publications, have an up-to-date understanding of current issues, key figures and ideas	Illustrations dealing with topical subjects and depictions of contemporary cultural and political figures or reflecting specific topical locations or icons
Motion graphics	Editorial gifs

2 WHAT DO CLIENTS WANT?

What kind of work should I be putting in my folio?

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Independent mass-produced publishing

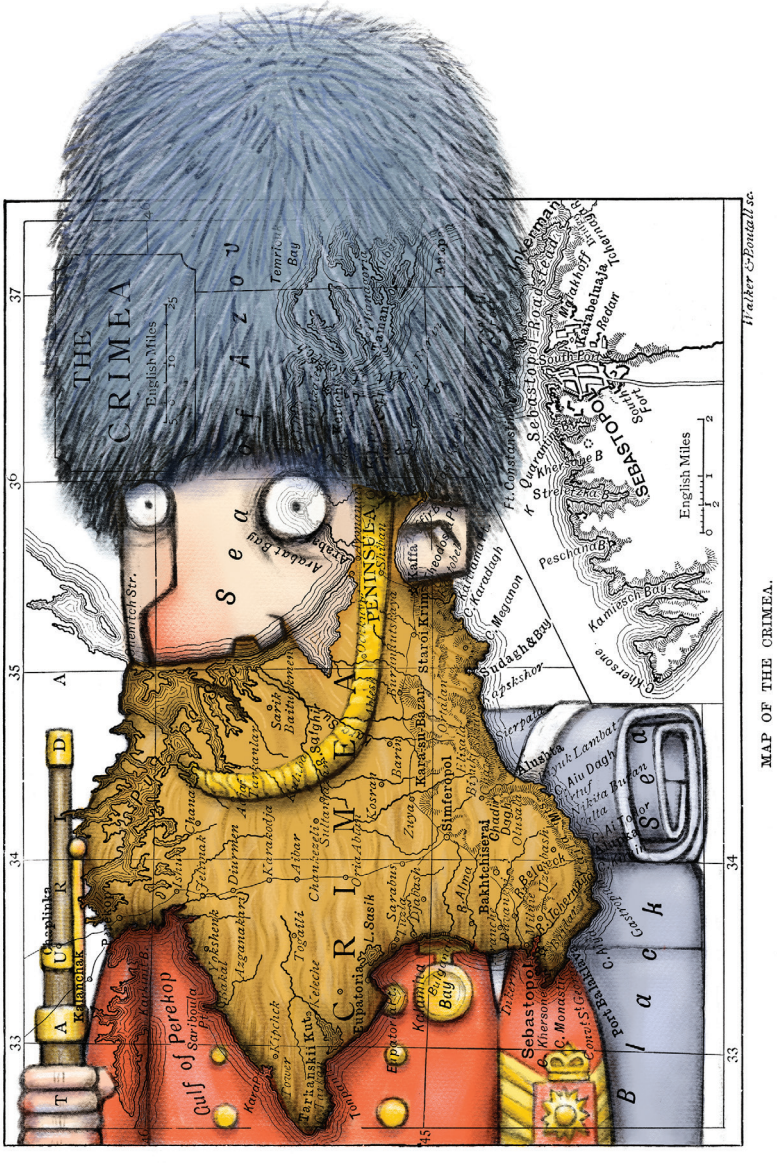
Editorial – magazines and newspapers

Advertising and design

Screen-based – concept art for games, animation and illustration-led animation

Surface pattern, decorative licences and greetings cards

Chapter summary



2.18
Artist: Glen McBeth.
Commissioner: Susanne Frank.
Commission: An illustration from 'How did the Crimean War make an impact on British beards?', *BBC History Magazine*.

2.18

'An illustrator should possess a willingness to engage in-depth with any given subject and to do meticulous research. Look at our magazine and get familiar with the tone and visual language. Have a creative approach, undertake thorough research and beautiful execution. Ensure good communication by email throughout the process and be flexible enough to make changes if required!'

Susanne Frank, art editor, *BBC History Magazine*, UK

Advertising and design

Advertising and design is a broad area, encapsulating a multitude of clients and formats, therefore the suggestions here are particularly broad and generalized. Creating packaging artwork for a niche design group will be a completely different experience from working on a large poster campaign for an international advertising agency or marketing company.

This diversity makes it an area that provides a vast array of opportunities for illustrators, although competitive to get clients within. Understanding the demands and practices within the spheres of advertising and design requires research from you as an illustrator into the companies and agencies operating within them and the types of products, services or concepts they deal with.

A broad approach to attract clients in this area requires that your work strongly demonstrates your individual take on the world, reflects the world in which we live and is aimed at clear target audiences. To cover a lot of bases, be aware of the broad generic areas that are commissioned across design and advertising, such as beauty and fashion, food and drink, leisure and travel, health and well-being, home and family, animals and nature, corporate business and finance.

In a focused way, be aware that clients may search for potential illustrators using specific social media hashtags, depending on their client and brief. If you love, and are brilliant at, making images around particular content or ideas, or work in a very distinctive way, make sure you tag your own work logically so that you will be in the spotlight when these opportunities arise.

If you've not yet worked with a lot of clients, show that your work suits specific applications and audiences. Creating images that demonstrate problem solving applied to a range of formats, both screen and print-based at various scales, as well as images around particular subjects, is going to make it easier for potential clients to envisage how you would respond to a commission. The contexts below reflect some of the types of work commissioned in this area, to provide some direction around what to evidence if you are making mock-ups in your folio, or to show in your promotional materials.

'Have a distinctive, idiosyncratic style. In other words, do not be like anyone else or any trends of the moment. Create images that feel personal, even when they're for commercial purposes. Personally I like images that are simple, graphic and easy to get (I'm in advertising).'

Dave Dye, CCO and founder of Love or Fear, owner of THINGY Creative Consultancy, UK

2.19

2.19
Artist: Paul Bower. Art director/ copywriter: Dave Dye. Agency: THINGY Creative Consultancy. Commission: Billboard advertisement and packaging for Fentimans drinks, establishing a strong brand identity.

2 WHAT DO CLIENTS WANT?

What kind of work should I be putting in my folio?

Children's publishing

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Advertising and design

Screen-based – concept art for games, animation and illustration-led animation

Surface pattern, decorative licences and greetings cards

Chapter summary

2.20

2.20
Artist: Simon Bournel.
Art director: Olivier Mularski, TBWA Paris.
Commission: Le Chocolat des Français. One of a range of packaging designs that rely on illustration to establish a brand identity for the product.

'When you do advertising you're not making art. So never impose your ideas. Be open-minded. Working for a commissioned work is a collaboration. If you don't feel comfortable with the idea, please refuse the brief. The best work is based on the connection between the art director and the illustrator. Every idea has to be shared and everyone has to feel excited about working on the project.'

Olivier Mularski, art director, TBWA Paris, France

TABLE 2.6
WHAT CLIENTS WILL CONSIDER IMPORTANT IF YOU ARE ASPIRING TO WORK IN ADVERTISING AND DESIGN

Some typical requirements	Evidence in your folio
Examples of packaging	Mock-ups that show that you understand how your work operates across a 3D form at a smallish scale, including some typography Reflect some product areas and audiences for packaging: food and drink, health and beauty, fashion and accessories, music and leisure, home and interiors
Print-based brochures	Page layouts that show images that are consistent in stye – covering a range in content and working within a grid format
Work for a campaign	Tailored work reflecting the type of campaigns or projects undertaken specifically by the companies you are hoping to work for or approach Images that relate to each other but are varied across formats and scales, e.g. a photo mock-up of a large-scale poster as well as a gif and press ad
Branding	Examples of an illustrative logo or branding image shown across a range of formats, such as small-scale business cards alongside a large-scale wall decal in situ
Motion graphics	Examples of work that has some element of motion – this could be gifs, infographics, animatics, etc.

Other skills:

- ability to work independently
- strong communication skills
- being prepared to follow a tight brief
- willingness to have less creative input in the ideas development stage
- confidence when asked to make revisions
- being able to cope with fast turnarounds

2.21

2 WHAT DO CLIENTS WANT?

What kind of work should I be putting in my folio?

Children's publishing

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Graphic novels, comics and independent publishing

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Editorial – magazines and newspapers

Advertising and design

Screen-based – concept art for games, animation and illustration-led animation

Surface pattern, decorative licences and greetings cards

Chapter summary

2.21
Illustration on packaging can create a brand identity. Illustration and design by Alma.

Screen-based – concept art for games, animation and illustration-led animation

Most animation studios will likely be working on a broad range of animations, both in content and style. Being a versatile illustrator gives you the ability to bring value to every project, reinventing your style each time to create fresh and relevant work for any given brief. On the other hand, having a consistent style also has its benefits. An animation studio is more likely to approach you if you have a consistent style that they can picture bringing to life.

Motion in illustration has become commonplace thanks to the wide availability of software and apps, leading to opportunities within companies and contexts across all areas of illustration for a wide range of audiences. For illustrators usually making static images, introducing motion into their folio as simple gifs or producing motion graphics is now very achievable.

This kind of work will usually be commissioned remotely and you will work on freelance contracts as part of your commercial practice. Similar to working editorially or in publishing, advertising and design, you might be either responsible for generating and developing your own ideas within a range of problem-solving contexts or translating a specific idea that had been visualized by an art director.

The film, media, games and animation industry is expansive, providing specific roles for freelance and contracted artists as well as in-house opportunities, such as within production houses where they contribute to big projects within larger teams. Such roles might entail providing drawing key frames that lead the stylistic direction of a project, creating storyboards, developing concept art, animating digitally or working as a CGI illustrator.

Being a concept artist is a role that, although associated with film, games and VR, is also associated with other traditional areas of illustration such as visualization in advertising, design, environmental and architectural projects. As a concept artist for film and entertainment design, such as video games, you might work in-house, generating characters, props, environments and creatures.

Working in pre-production for film and animation, your role might be full time, ranging from making model or expression sheets, line-up sheets, backgrounds, concept art, character development and storyboarding through to making animatics. This could be one broad role in which versatility is necessary for a particular project, or focused on one or more aspects of the process. You could equally be freelance, undertaking just one or all of these roles, hired to work on a specific project or to contribute particular skills to a team.

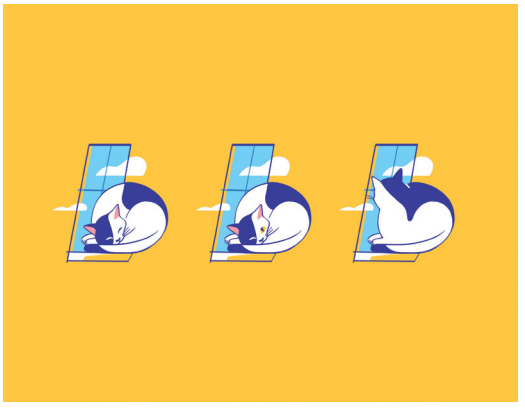
For these roles it's usually less about you having a particular style and more about having stylistic versatility. As a concept artist your work will often go forward to be interpreted by another illustrator or translated into another visual language. Your 2D images will sometimes be modelled into 3D, and if you're designing fantasy buildings, props or pieces of machinery, making detailed spec sheets might be part of your brief.

This area of practice requires a particular skill set that combines a strong and fast drawing ability with a facility to generate imaginative and detailed renditions, often in a realistic way. The types of skills that you need to cultivate and demonstrate will be dictated by wherever you aim to position yourself. There are skills common to this area – technically you must understand how to make something move and have a handle on relevant software that suits your approach. Storytelling, direction and composition are also pivotal.

2.22

2.22
Artist: Juan Moore.
Commission: Animation concept art.

2.23



‘As an animator, I love when you can already feel movement in the static illustrations, when the motion is very intuitive and obvious. This could be a certain character pose or a stylistic detail that feels alive – things that help the animation on its journey before it’s begun – and this often comes when the illustrator sees themselves as part of the bigger journey.’

Michael Lester, animator, designer and illustrator, Beginners, UK

2 WHAT DO CLIENTS WANT?

What kind of work should I be putting in my folio?

Children’s publishing

Publishing: jacket and interior illustration – fiction

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Graphic novels, comics and independent publishing

Independent mass-produced publishing

Editorial – magazines and newspapers

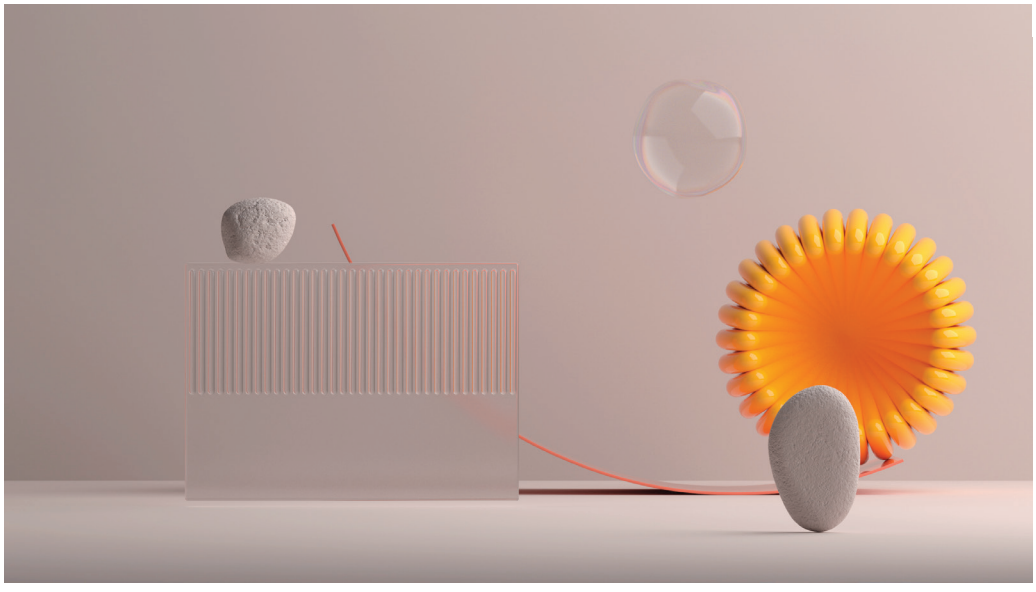
Advertising and design

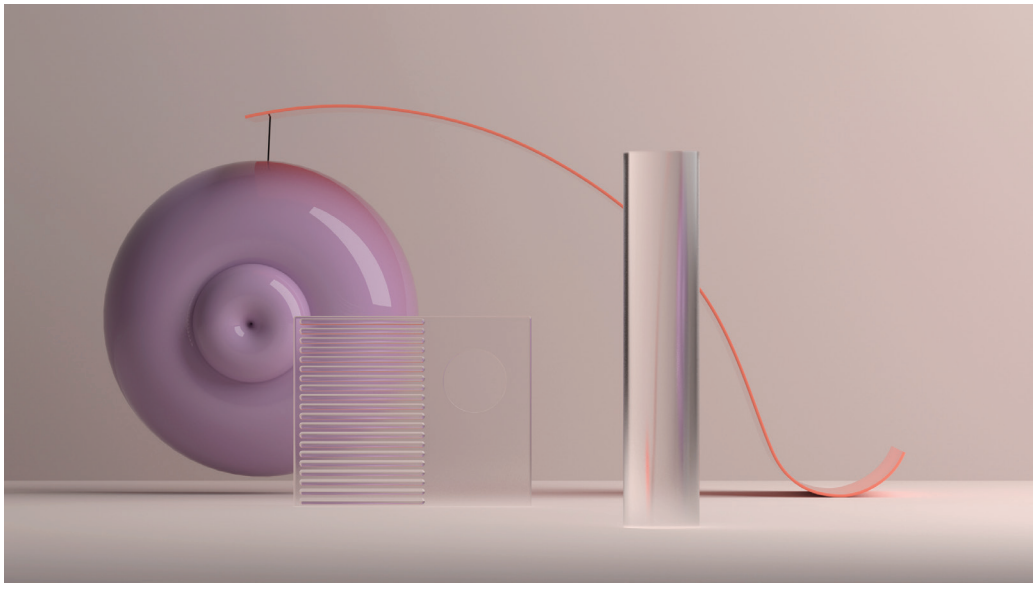
Screen-based – concept art for games, animation and illustration-led animation

Surface pattern, decorative licences and greetings cards

Chapter summary

2.23
Illustrator: Gica Tam. Animation: Michael Lester and Emma Ehrling. Commission: These frames are taken from an animation that was created to announce Beginners’ membership of 1% for the Planet.





2.24

With tight turnaround times, this is a fast-paced and challenging professional environment, and teamwork is demanded by most roles. Being both individually creative and receptive to feedback to ensure the best outcome for the entire project is essential.

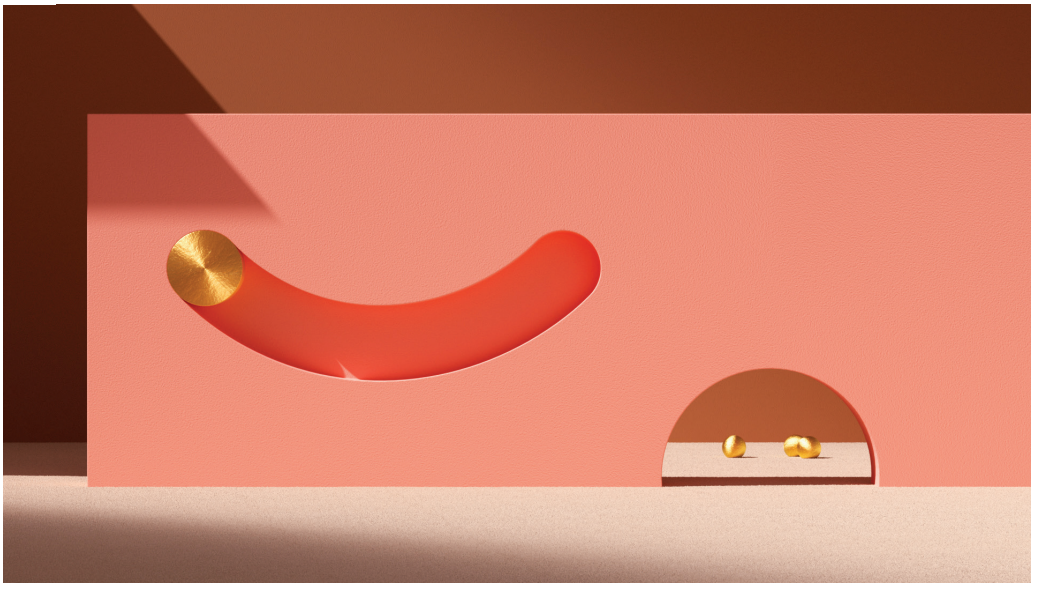
The usual way into positions within agencies is at an entry level as a runner and through working your way up into a role that best suits your evolving abilities. The best way to achieve this is by checking the company's websites directly and sending your curriculum vitae (CV) to their human resources department.

By belonging to animation and concept art communities and attending conventions and festivals, you will also be in a good position to meet other possible collaborators and gain an understanding of where to look for opportunities when they arise. Through networking you may learn of possible projects or contracts to pitch for or be on the radar for other creatives who are looking for collaborators.

'Great visual metaphors are the key to get my attention. It depends so much on the project and the needs of the specific work that is required. Strong ideas are always the most important. I would also say: purpose and intention. I like seeing work that has been made through solid and consistent decisions.'

Clim, founder and creative director, Studio Clim, Spain

2.24



2 WHAT DO CLIENTS WANT?

What kind of work should I be putting in my folio?

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Surface pattern, decorative licences and greetings cards

Chapter summary

2.24
Artist: Clim.
Commission: Frames from a series of animations created as part of a sequence of abstract loops commissioned for Artgrid, the stock footage platform.

TABLE 2.7
WHAT CLIENTS WILL CONSIDER IMPORTANT IF YOU ARE ASPIRING TO WORK IN SCREEN-BASED – CONCEPT ART FOR GAMES, ANIMATION AND ILLUSTRATION-LED ANIMATION

Some typical requirements	Evidence in your folio
Strong characterization and figure work	A range of characters Character sheet demonstrating various emotional states Understanding human anatomy Figures in motion: a walk cycle, a fight, a figure jumping or pushing to show weight distribution
Understanding of narrative	Storyboard Animatic or key frames showing characters in various dramatic scenes involving some aspect of action and interaction with other characters in different environments Images that show various light directions and weather conditions
Stylistic consistency	A series of key frames handled in the same technique or media
Sensitivity to timing	Storyboard Animatics Gifs Showreel
Solid understanding of movement	A section of film showing the transition of a figure or object within an environment
Skills competence in industry software: • After Effects • Flash for simple line drawings • Cinema 4D/Photoshop • Maya, Painter and Print-up	Show reel: • Motion graphics including text, image and sound • Animated line drawings • Images showing more advanced effects such as fire, explosion or disappearance
Ability to interpret creative trends and other stylistic approaches and techniques	Several versions of one image or topic translated through different stylistic approaches and/or using line, tone or one-colour handling
Handling texture	Examples of various surface qualities, such as: • skin • hair • water • wood
Understanding the formal elements	Images that show strong understanding of light, perspective, form, colour-theory and composition
Functionality	Content that shows how things work, machinery, objects that make sense in 3D drawn from various angles and including specs

Other skills:

- patience – there's often a lot of repetition and tedious tasks involved
- attention to detail
- good presentation of work to clients
- strong time management
- ability to work quickly under pressure
- ability to cost a project and put together a bid proposal
- being able to collaborate and work with others in a team
- ability to understand and negotiate a contract
- commitment to sustain enthusiasm for a project that might last for a year or more
- being able to take criticism and cope with changes made to your work

'As a director, the biggest turn-off is attitude. You may be less experienced, but you need to be open to teamwork and feedback, passionate and committed. In illustration you can be more of a diva, but the motion industry is very fast so you have to put your ego to one side. It's about doing the right thing for the project.'

Bee Grandinetti, director, animator and illustrator, Sweden

2.25

2.25
Artist: Bee Grandinetti.
Bee is a Brazilian director, animator and illustrator. The Hive is an example of a range of character designs created by the illustrator.

2 WHAT DO CLIENTS WANT?

What kind of work should I be putting in my folio?

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Chapter summary

Spotlight

Working in concept art for games design – Natalia Patkiewicz, games artist at the studio Wooga, Germany

What is Natalia's current role in games art?
Natalia handles the environmental dimension of the development. This entails producing concept art, which is then developed into final background art. In addition to providing concepts, the role also involves supervising and outsourcing pipelines, overseeing them being turned into three dimensions and being overpainted.

What is the route into a job as a concept artist in the games industry?
There are many roles and specialisms involved in concept art for the games or animation industries. Natalia emphasizes the importance of presenting a focused direction when starting out and being critically reflective of your skills, strengths and aspirations. She recalls, 'Characters and props were always something that I had a very particular idea about. I liked a very certain type of character that I was praised for. That was my comfort zone.'

The feedback received during folio reviews at conferences focused not only on her technical skills but also identified that her portfolio did not suggest any sort of specialization. This led to a realization that a potential recruiter would find it challenging to best place her in a company. 'It took me quite a while to actually figure out that environment concept art is what I want to specialize in.'

She reflects, 'With characters, I was always disappointed whenever my friends told me to experiment more, because I just liked the vision that I had.' She adds, 'If I wanted to make a career in illustration, I think that would have been absolutely fine, but with concept art, the iteration and idea generation, problem solving is the core of my job.'

What were the most important skills to reach the point you're at now?
When working in concept art, vital learning occurs during the commissions themselves as well as through self-generated tasks, involvement in communities and undertaking specialist courses. As Natalia reflects on her own early-career experiences, 'Every single assignment since I graduated was tied to a certain set of skills I was trying to develop. It was always something integral to what I was doing. I never felt that a new skill wasn't transferable.'

Developing a mobile game for a theatre company, working as a board game renderer and as a layout artist in an animation studio were key to her evolution. Whether doing environment design, layouts or keyframes, she was improving. 'All my work was in the same genre, even if the output was different.'

2.26A

2 WHAT DO CLIENTS WANT?

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Chapter summary

Focused self-development has been integral to Natalia achieving her current position. Since graduating, she has combined daily speed paintings (thirty-minute colour studies) with more theoretical knowledge gained from online courses about the fundamentals of colour and light, 'taking that knowledge and then applying it onto different subject matter'.

She describes adopting a balanced approach towards achieving her goals: 'Being focused on what you want to achieve but also being open to try new things and taking other suggestions.' She reflects, 'Since graduation, people have offered so many different suggestions about how to approach new work. If I wasn't willing to try new things and take their advice, I wouldn't have made the progress or improved.'

What is needed to get into the big company in the games industry?

Natalia empathizes with artists who feel they may never break into the competitive area of games design. 'Everyone tells you you just need more time, "you'll get better", but sometimes you feel like you grind and grind and nothing comes out of it. It can be hard not to believe you're not just spinning in circles.'

On the other hand, she recounts having to resist 'self-doubt about whether I should give up and switch careers'. She recalls, 'I felt that wouldn't have been productive: I knew what I wanted to do.' She was 'super impatient': 'the temptation to jump ship and just find a job can be very strong – sometimes it's hard to wait.'

Within the gaming industry, it helps to be adaptable, and having an international perspective widens the pool of what you can choose from. Natalia has already worked in three different countries and describes her office as 'a cultural melting pot' – something that is characteristic of many of the larger companies in the industry.

2.26B

2.26A–B
Artist: Natalia Patkiewicz.
Commission: Colour keyes from a personal project exploring set design and designs of interiors. Although working within a studio, Natalia continues to explore and develop independently as a creative.
artstation.com/artwork/2xPBkv

2.26C

2.26D

Three years of working on projects is a good time to build up the knowledge and network conducive to getting a full-time studio job. This might be experience gained by working in a small indie studio formed by people whom you may have met at university. Natalia is keen to point out that developing a career in concept art is a nonlinear journey. 'It's not just once you break into the industry. I had a client and network, I thought I'd made it.' She recalls being approached by a recruiter for her current employer. Despite two interviews, she was rejected. She recalls, 'The main issue they recognized was my painting ability. They thought the environments I had in my portfolio weren't designed very well, because I was very new to the industry. Because the portfolio didn't really show that much skill, they weren't sure if I could handle having to perform constantly under pressure.'

Natalia undertook several very specialized courses to specifically target the problem areas that had been identified in her portfolio, recalling that 'The Fundamentals of Architecture Design course at CGMA helped me tremendously.' She also took advice from other professionals, spending 'a year taking more mentorships'.

Natalia recognizes the need to keep up within such a fast-moving industry and to demonstrate skills that appeal to employers. She reveals, 'My brain had a lot of resistance to learning new software, but VR bridged the gap for me. I first saw it showcased in one of the conferences and the seamlessness and immersiveness really appealed to me. When I had an opportunity to upgrade my workstation and buy the headset, I did, and I've been experimenting with it for three years.'

She believes that her being finally recruited at Woogar was because of her work in VR. 'It caught the attention of the art director I'm working with. He was excited about it and now I do it as a part of my job.'

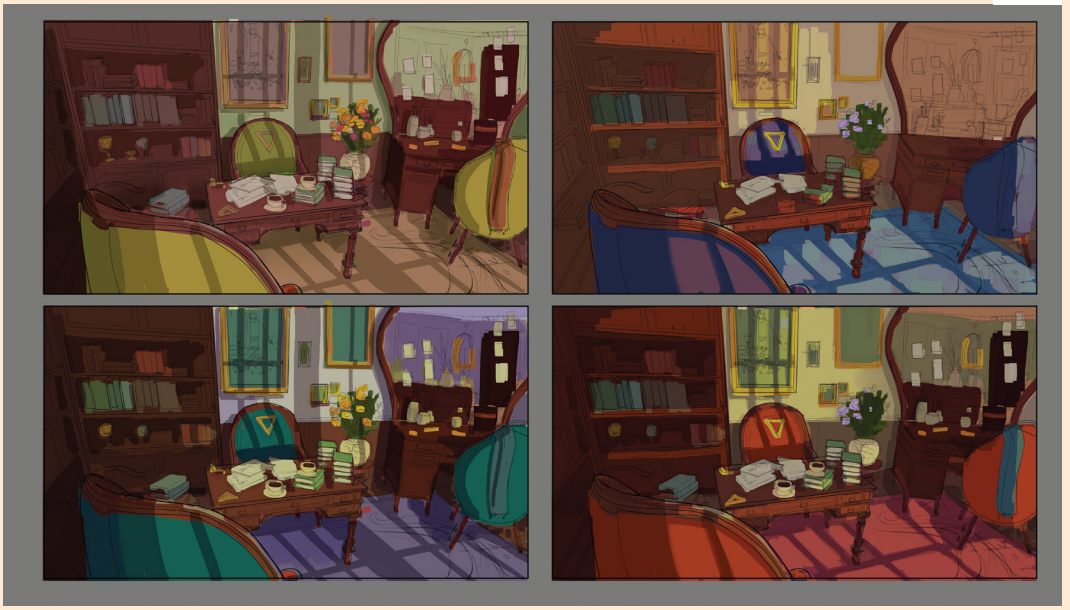
Should I work as a freelancer or in a studio?

The day rate for concept artists can be very high, meaning freelancers earn more than people working in-house. Many artists quit their in-house jobs to go freelance, but their ability to flourish is commensurate with their technical skills and range of contacts in the industry. It is not an option available for early-career artists.

Some suggestions based on Natalia's experience

- Join communities and be active in networks.
- Get portfolio reviews at conferences and feedback from industry experts and mentors.
- Continue skilling up. Don't be afraid to go back to basics and develop strong skills in colour, tone, composition and adaptability in drawing.

2.26E



2.26F

2 WHAT DO CLIENTS WANT?

What kind of work should I be putting in my folio?

Children's publishing

Publishing: jacket and interior illustration – fiction

Jacket and interior illustration: educational and non-fiction publishing

Graphic novels, comics and independent publishing

Independent mass-produced publishing

Editorial – magazines and newspapers

Advertising and design

Screen-based – concept art for games, animation and illustration-led animation

Surface pattern, decorative licences and greetings cards

Chapter summary

2.26C–F
Artist: Natalia Patkiewicz.
Commission: Colour keyes from a personal project exploring set design and designs of interiors. Although working within a studio, Natalia continues to explore and develop independently as a creative.
artstation.com/artwork/2xPBkv

Spotlight
Working in film and TV – Lynda Reiss, prop master and director, USA/UK

Background
Lynda Reiss is a prop master and director based and working in LA, California. Her company also has a base in the Isle of Man providing props for American films made in the UK. She is known for her work on *True Detectives* and *Stranger Things* and has been accepted by BAFTA, the British Academy of Film and Television Arts, 'in recognition of her impressive contribution to our industries.'

What is her role as client?
Prop masters source and supply the props that are included in films and television programmes. Whether posters on the wall of a Victorian melodrama or an oil painting on the wall of a stately home, this imagery has to be sourced and often requires bespoke commissioning of artwork by clients such as Lynda.

Film studios often approach artists for permission to use existing pieces of art and design but there can be caveats to use. Lynda explains, 'A lot of times when I get illustrators in it's to make a version of something that already exists, so we don't have to go through the legal process of clearance.' She adds, 'Often studios don't want to be told how to use the things they want to use so we create our own.'

Lynda commissioned the artist Juan Moore (featured Spotlight on page 212) to create book jackets for *True Detective*. She describes the brief. 'I needed some Dungeons and Dragons covers for books as there were specific scripted descriptions of the imagery. I'd seen some of Juan's work in an exhibition. It was a very short turn around, working under film timelines which are "needed it two days ago".'

How to get work for film and TV
Lynda connects with most of the artists that she commissions through referrals or contacts shared by other professionals in the industry. As she says, 'I don't generally go to data bases or agencies. I don't hire someone cold. I can't afford to not know what I'm going to get.'

The artists Lynda sources always have a clear stylistic approach or identity to their work. She explains, 'If I need an old masters, I have someone who will paint one for me.'

Being on the client's radar is key to being selected. 'One of the things I always tell people is have Instagram and Facebook accounts.' Lynda files relevant images she receives via email. She advises, 'The easiest thing is to have your work visible, so people see it. Put it out there all the time. Don't hide it."

2.27A

2.27B

How does the props industry work?
The in-house graphics people working in the art departments of film and production studios, and increasingly prop departments themselves, provide opportunities for artists to work in this area. Lynda might contact graphic design agencies in LA and London for illustrations such as comic book covers or children's drawings. She points out that most in-house graphics work is digitally generated whereas the illustrators she commissions independently work across all media. An example of this would be Juan, whose book jackets for *True Detective* were acrylic paintings.

How do illustrators get work as story boarders for film and TV?
Story boarders are still in demand in the film and television industry, 'because film is a visual medium, studio people like pictures to look at rather than words to read', especially for visualising action sequences. Increasingly, digital and animated versions are the norm.

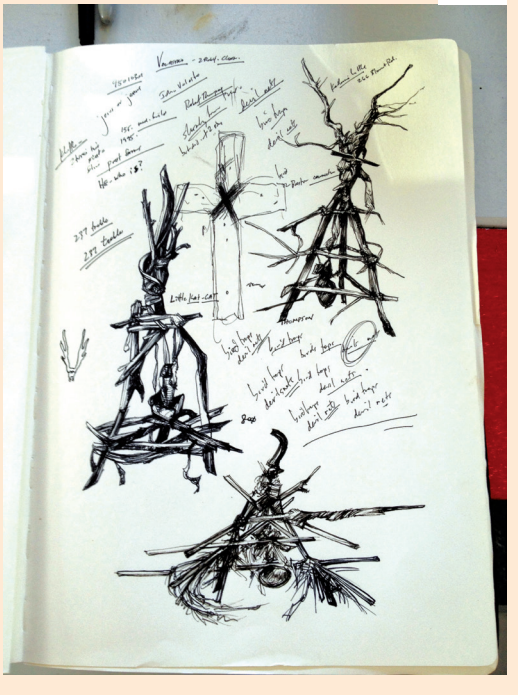
Lynda advises that there are lots of places for skilful illustrators to find work in this area and advises becoming known by the "pre-vis" companies that specialize in storyboarding. She explains. 'The story boarding artists tend to work on short contracts: maybe a week or three weeks. When I worked on *Stranger Things*, they had their own in-house pre-vis because there were so many visual effects.'

She explains that becoming known can lead to longer contracts. 'Some directors use the same story board artists every single time and for a big action show they might be there all the time. It tends to be fast moving and many more heads together over the table.'

While the advances of new technology might impact on the ongoing nature of pre-vis for large budget productions, Lynda says there is a lot of work commissioned at all levels and that story boarders will still be invaluable for pitching projects.

How can illustrators work in this industry?
Lynda believes it's possible to make a good living in roles that require illustration for film and television and recommends that illustrators with relevant technical skills and stylistic approach hoping to get clients in this area reach out to graphic companies that specialize in work for the industry. She says their contact information is easily sourced from the credits of movies and shows that feature a lot of artworks or via the online film database IMDb. She advises, 'Find a name and go to Instagram or Facebook to reach out. Say you saw their work and show them what you do. Success is not just from being incredibly talented, that's in the DNA. You also need to be business minded.'

2.27C



2 WHAT DO CLIENTS WANT?

What kind of work should I be putting in my folio?

Children's publishing

Publishing: jacket and interior illustration – fiction

Jacket and interior illustration: educational and non-fiction publishing

Graphic novels, comics and independent publishing

Independent mass-produced publishing

Editorial – magazines and newspapers

Advertising and design

Screen-based – concept art for games, animation and illustration-led animation

Surface pattern, decorative licences and greetings cards

Chapter summary

2.27A
Artist: Josh Walsh.
Commission: Dungeons and Dragons commissioned art work.
From: Netflix – *Stranger Things* Season One.

2.27B
Artist: Kendall Brew.
Commission: Identity sketch.
From: HBO – *True Detective* Season One.

2.27C
Artist: Kendal Brew.
Commission: Sketches of twig sculptures.
From: HBO – *True Detective* Season One.

Surface pattern, decorative licences and greetings cards

This area is very broad in its definition. As an entrepreneur, you may create one-off pieces of original artwork or products to sell through your own shop online, or commercial outlets and galleries. These may be images to be framed; designs printed onto household products such as wallpaper, textiles such as cushions, tote bags, ceramics or lampshades; or maybe for use on fashion garments such as T-shirts; as well as cards, stationery and wrapping paper. The images created for these applications can also be potentially acquired by clients for licensing, through a licensing agency, design group or company that will pay a fee for each design to reproduce them and distribute them en masse.

This is a very broad and trend-based area. If you're seeking clients, you will need to be conscious of the obvious seasonal nature of the industry, paying attention to future forecasting and reflecting those trends within the content and type of designs or products that you create. While it pays to know what's in fashion now, you will need to also look towards what might be published or bought in a year, or longer down the line, and consider how this knowledge might shape the direction of your work or products accordingly.

Unlike many areas of illustration, this continues to be a sector where your client may buy your finished designs as they are, possibly extending the range and commissioning additional images to build sets of designs to supply a particular client or brand. This means that you need to be stylistically consistent across a range, perhaps creating a collection and demonstrating alternative variations of your designs, such as more than one colourway, as well as showing them applied to various products. This can be achieved by making virtual mock-ups, using software such as Photoshop, as well as taking product photos to include within your promotional materials.

Within this area, the surface that the designs are applied onto and the production qualities of the final product can be integral to the design. If you are designing for print-based paper products, you may choose to consider the way that effects such as cut outs, foil and embossing might enhance your designs. For textiles, you may need to demonstrate how the colour or detail of your designs will respond to the surface of the fabrics they could be applied to. Increasingly, greetings cards can be translated into screen-based formats and include aspects of motion. If this is something that falls within your skill set, consider researching what is current in this area and reflecting that in your own promotional materials and portfolio.

2.28A

2.28B

‘After six years working in textile design, I went freelance to explore more of my own ideas and projects, which led me into my illustration career. Launching an online shop was a natural side to that as I was always making my own lampshades or tea towels, which cost money and would have been an expensive hobby if I hadn’t gotten tactical and started selling my products. I also think that years spent designing commercial products for high street stores meant that I was attuned to that way of thinking. It was never so much a conscious decision to launch a business as a path followed in order to freely express my ideas.’

Jacqueline Colley, illustrator and pattern designer, UK

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Surface pattern, decorative licences and greetings cards

Chapter summary

2.28A–B
Artist: Jacqueline Colley.
Merchandise from the artist’s shop. The colour range creates a distinctive collection that becomes identifiable with the artist’s brand.
jacquelinecolley.co.uk

TABLE 2.8
WHAT CLIENTS WILL CONSIDER IMPORTANT IF YOU ARE ASPIRING TO WORK IN, SURFACE PATTERN, DECORATIVE LICENCES AND GREETINGS CARDS

Some typical requirements	Evidence in your folio
Visual consistency	Make a set of designs that connect visually – they have the same stylistic approach and are recognizable as a set
Understanding appropriate themes	Reflecting key celebrations, festivals and seasons
Designs that can work across formats	Mock-ups of your designs in appropriate formats such as a range of stationery, household items, fashion items, gift wrap, etc.
Contemporary images	Images that reflect trends within the worlds of interiors, fashion, surface pattern and textiles
Connected designs	Sets showing the same imagery applied over several formats, such as greetings cards, wrapping papers and gift tags, or cushions, curtains, decals, rugs, etc.
Understanding of processes	Designs that might include die cut, embossing, gloss, foiling or fold outs
Illustrative typography	A set of seasonally appropriate messages in an illustrative style of lettering that appears hand rendered

2.29A–B
Decorative merchandise by Carolyn Gavin available as prints and applied onto product ranges.

2.29A

2.29B

2.30

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Chapter summary

2.30
Artist: Carolyn Gavin. Merchandise from Carolyn Gavin. The clear visual identity and stylistic approach in her work creates a strong brand that can be recognized in product collections such as this range of wrapping papers. carolyngavin.com

Spotlight

Working in surface pattern for the fashion industry – the communication manager for iBlues, Italy

iBlues is a global fashion brand that is part of the Marella S.r.l, with a main part of the business based in Italy and the other in Asia. The client describes the company as serving what she refers to as 'a bridge market', explaining that in comparison with luxury brands, 'it's more commercial'.

How does illustrating for fashion differ from other illustration work?
Illustrating for fashion is different from many other commercial areas because it is dictated by the seasons that are the infrastructure of the industry. 'What we are looking for in our spring/summer collection may be different than what we are looking for in fall/winter. Each season is better than the last!'

This brand commissions one illustrator for each collection, searching for distinctive and innovative imagery to create a global impact visually across the range of garments. Their communication manager explains, 'The market is really fast, especially in China and the Far East. They are always looking for something new. They are not following trends – they are conscious to change the background in each season.'

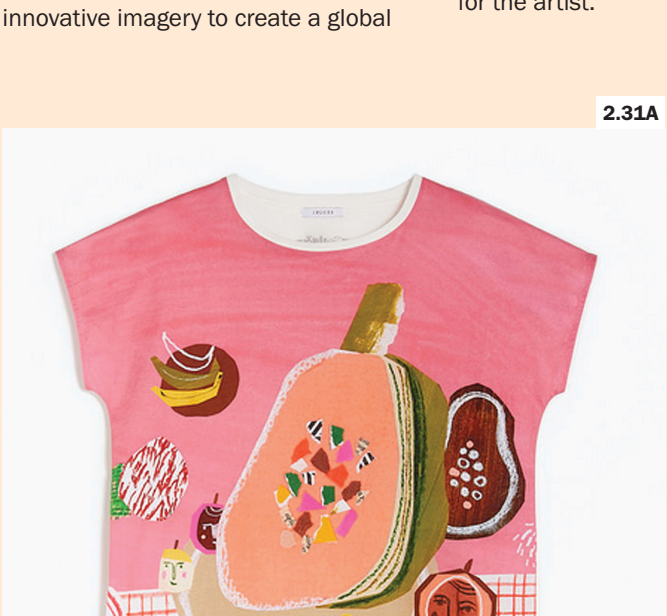
Creating such a new range is an expansive project that takes between six and nine months from beginning to end. The brief is to create five different illustrations for application over a range of formats in the contexts of fashion textiles, editorially and within the retail environment. Pivotal to the brief is the application of the imagery onto fabric that is styled and transformed into illustrated garments. The result is a substantial body of illustration work: an exciting commission that can be challenging and demanding as well as rewarding for the artist.

How does a client for this brand commission an illustrator for a new surface pattern range?
The communication manager within iBlues describes a conceptual approach to commissioning that leads to, and is fuelled by, wide research, largely undertaken online. She explains, 'There are so many illustrators and artists to choose from. I look everywhere – websites, Instagram and Saatchi Gallery – to cross-reference talent, based on our ideas for themes. We start from their work and select what is suitable or interesting in it that relates to our topic, theme or idea.'

The profile and appeal of any artist she selects must be well established. She explains, 'We look for artists with a large number of followers – if the talent is well known by the public it's easier for us to promote our products.'

iBlues have commissioned talents from across the creative arts, including street artists, collagists, painters and video artists, and although the images they were commissioned to create are applied to fabric, the brand have never commissioned a textile artist. They are open to considering newly graduated artists or those with less experience of working with clients commercially, but there are high expectations. 'We expect them to work in collaboration with us. It can be difficult, but we are always open.' This means that she prefers to approach artists directly, rather than through an agent, and values the opportunity of building a strong working relationship with them over the duration of the project.

2.31A



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Surface pattern, decorative licences and greetings cards

Chapter summary

2.31A–B
Artist: Andrea D'Aquino.
Commission: Textile designs for iBlues.
Some of the garments created as part of the successful clothing range in which the artist's designs are printed onto various fabrics.

As the client says of the relationship, 'We are always willing to do something really special. We need to find the most perfect material according to our needs – to do this we need to find a way of keeping the illustrations as the talent sees them, but if they need to be reworked, we need the artist to trust us.' Because the images are created for such various applications there are different deadlines within the same project, and as the client says, 'These dictate the amount of discussion and communication we have with the art talent, whether during development or production.'

How do you negotiate a brief in this area?

The brand acknowledges that often the art talents they work with lack confidence about discussing the terms and fees for the licence. 'We always start with the standard contract and may adjust it. We will always try to find a balance and agree.' The work on this project isn't absolutely quantifiable – it's a commission requiring a multiple-use licence and the client anticipates flexibility. She reveals, 'We are looking for a collaborator who works with empathy. We like enthusiasm – it's about the collaboration and kindness.'

Increasingly, marketing is also integral to the brief and it's anticipated that artists will use their own social media channels to complement this process. As the client says, they 'are attracted to artists with a good visibility, who can promote themselves. There is lots of material to promote as part of the commission'.

Other skills:

- ability to generate a range of alternative ideas
- openness and adaptability to evolve and develop your visual ideas based on technical and practical requirements, such as the demands of a particular fabric or the limitations in colour palettes used
- a distinctive visual approach that will relate to seasonal content
- openness to working within a team

2.32

2.32
These images are textile designs that were commissioned for use within a range of garments for the international clothing brand, iBlues. Andrea is known for working across all areas of commercial illustration.

2.33A

2.33B

2.33A–B
Artist: Andrea D'Aquino.
Commission: Textile designs for iBlues. Some of the garments created as part of the successful clothing range in which the artist's designs are printed onto various fabrics.

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What kind of work should I be putting in my folio?

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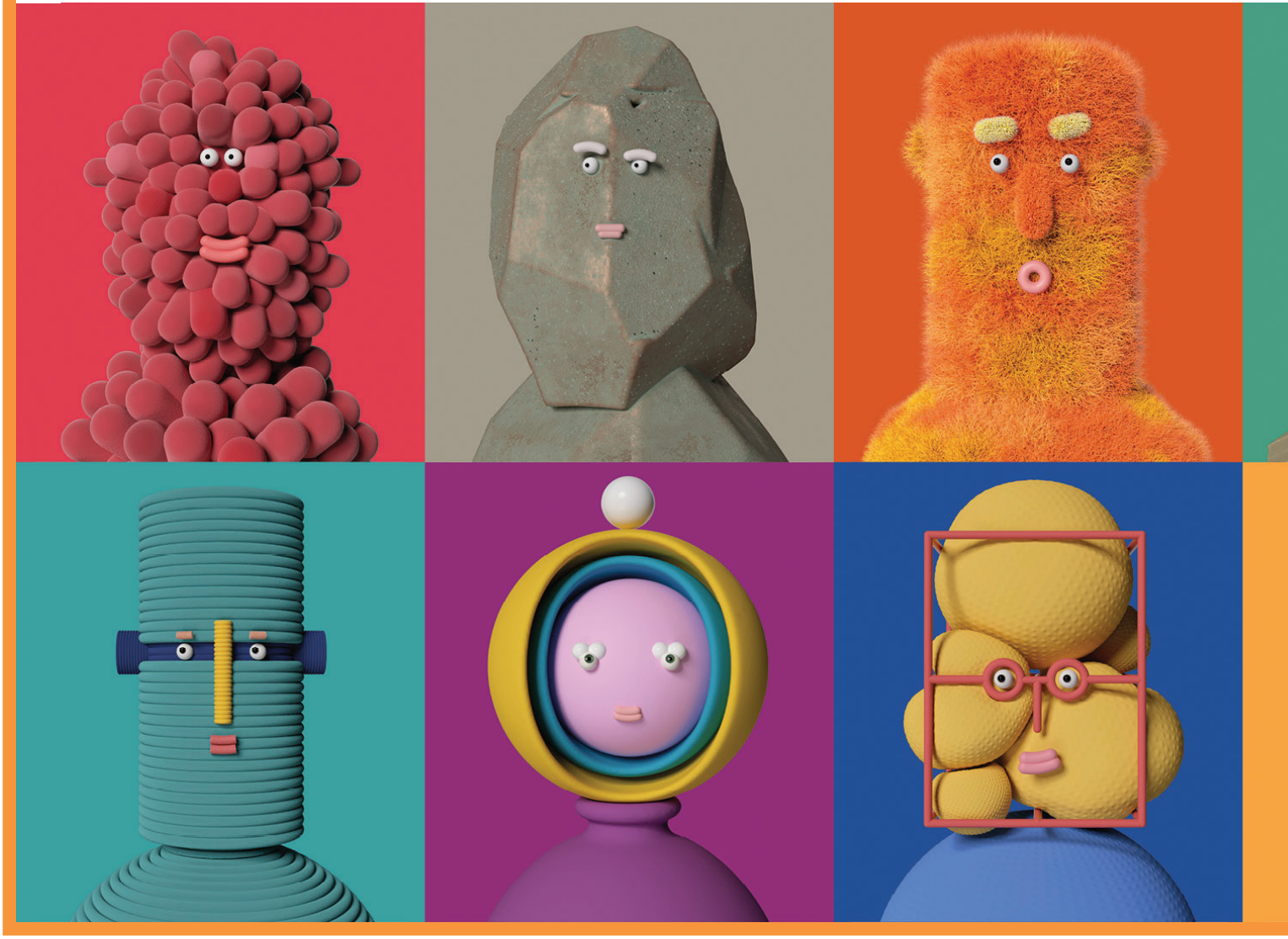
Chapter summary

Chapter summary

To gain commercial success as an illustrator, you should:

- make work that you are excited by and believe in
- skill up
- understand the market
- get yourself out there
- be easy to find
- become part of the community
- collaborate
- be nice to your clients
- be confident, but don't have a big ego
- be patient
- be adaptable

2.34



‘Above all, I would say be yourself and that will come through in the work. It’s so exciting when we work with, or stumble upon, an illustrator whose work feels like it is truly them, and an extension of their creative minds. We love work that isn’t focused on trends, but brings something new to the world, that expresses how that particular artist sees it in their own unique way! We are always looking for an illustrator who can best bring the brief to life – and our briefs are often very varied – so there is never really one size fits all within the projects that we do. We look for a unique and distinct point of view within your work – how does this feel uniquely you? As a team we also get excited about different perspectives and artists that bring something new that we haven’t perhaps seen before!’

Ellen Turnill Montoya, creative director, Anyways Creative, UK

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Chapter summary

2.34
Artist: Anton Hjertstedt.
Client: Adobe Create.
Creative director: Ellen Turnill Montoya, Anyways Creative, UK.
Commission: Creative Types.
Character illustrations linked to a test for users and developed by Adobe Create. Based on psychology research, the animated characters ‘depict’ the eight creative types.
#mycreativetype

3 HOW TO GET YOURSELF SEEN?

3.0
Artist: Hanna Barczyk.
Commission: Advertising for Vancover Opera.
Image kindly provided by Ella Lupo, agent at Purple Rain Illustrators.

3.0

3 HOW TO GET YOURSELF SEEN

How to promote yourself?

Finding contacts: how to build a targeted contact list

Allowing clients to find you – your digital brand

Other ways to be seen

Chapter summary

How to promote yourself

‘Put work out there – don’t be precious – it’s like chemistry; if all the elements stayed in the box there would be no reaction.’

Xavier Seger, illustrator and designer, UK

This chapter draws upon research into each of the main areas of practice, gained from client and commissioner interviews and questionnaires, asking how and where they source their artists. It considers the function of online folios, websites and social media in promotion – asking clients what they think are the best ways that illustrators can find and be found by them, what attracts their attention and what leads to commissions. It provides clear direction so that you can build a strategy for your own promotion.

The aim is two-fold – firstly to help you as an illustrator to build a list of clients, to keep this up to date and find new commissioners to approach, and secondly to be firmly on the radar of clients when they are sourcing work for commissions.

THE PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGN: BEING PREPARED TO GET CLIENTS

As you embark upon the process of promoting your work to get more clients, it’s worthwhile to remember that success for most artists builds over time. The steps you need to take to establish or expand a potential client base are part of your business and will require an investment of time and possibly financial outlay.

Any promotional strategy will only succeed if it both contains, and then leads the client to, brilliant artwork. Before embarking on any promotional campaign, you should objectively review and build your folio to ensure that it contains quality pieces that potential clients will see as viable. If you’re aiming for commercial work, it should reflect your style and visual approach as an artist, but also resonate with what the client is looking for or will find suitable for their possible products, services or communication needs.

If a potential client doesn’t love your work, it doesn’t matter what you say, they won’t commission you. If they do love your work, they might contact you immediately, bookmark you or put you on a list, or pin your sample onto a wall until something suitable comes up. Sometimes this can involve a long wait for you. Getting clients takes time and the more of them that like what you do, the more probable it is that you will get commissions.

3.1

3.1
Artist: Xavier Segers. Commission: Another of Xavier Segers’ experimental images inspired by the constant news coverage of Covid-19 during lockdown. xaviersegers.com

3 HOW TO GET YOURSELF SEEN

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PRESENTING YOURSELF TO CLIENTS AS A PROFESSIONAL: CREATING A BRAND IMAGE

You are a creative individual with your own way of working, and creating an impression of this succinctly while leaving a memorable impact will be your objective. Having a clear strategy to market what you do is vital. Throughout your promotion, you should adopt a professional approach, consistently presenting yourself as a business and communicating a clear brand identity. This should be evident both in the work you create – the creative product that will get you clients – and also in the way you communicate about that product; it is the aesthetic and conceptual qualities of your work and the way you market it through promotional pieces. This means thinking about the fonts you use on your website, your choice of imagery for your profile pictures, the tone you write in, the colourways you use on your promotional cards and how you package any physical promotional items that you send off. These assets all influence the way in which your work is perceived and reflect the nature of what you do.

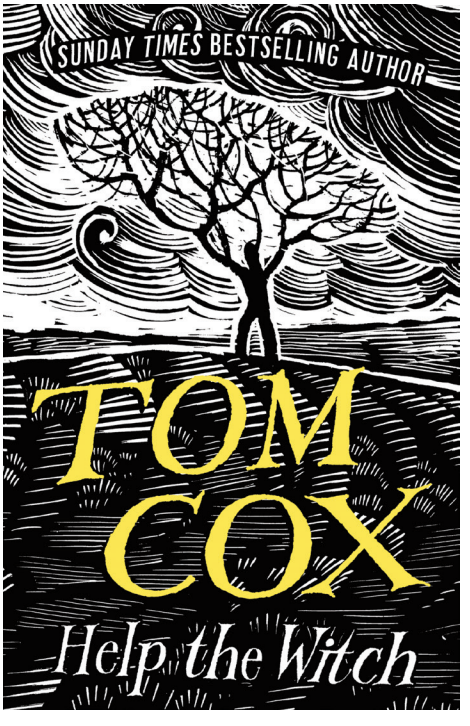
‘Find your style and perfect it; once you have, your confidence and passion will shine through.’

Jonathan Holden, creative director, Concept 22, UK

Being co-ordinated so that the various dimensions of your promotional materials contribute to communicate the same message across all strands of your marketing is imperative. Understanding the specific aim of each aspect of your promotion and how it cumulatively takes you towards getting clients will enable you to evaluate and assess its success in the whole process. Reflecting on this as you develop new speculative work, and exposing it through your promotional materials, will allow you to constantly revise what you offer to reflect your evolving professional understanding and direction and ensure you focus your time and resources appropriately.

Your aim is to reach a tipping point where getting clients is self-perpetuating, where you achieve regular and repeat commissions and a choice of projects: where you have established a position in the industry.

3.2



3.2
Artist: Joe Mclaren. Art director: Mark Ecob, Mecob Design Ltd, UK. Commission: Book jacket image and hand-drawn type for *Help the Witch* by Tom Cox, published by Unbound.

‘I love looking for illustrators who are doing something a bit different or have an interesting take on a subject. At *Bloom* we are always on the lookout for diverse and interesting illustrators from around the world to help tell stories, and so when I come across something fresh, I am immediately drawn to it. As a team we often look for a sense of fun and playfulness.’

Sarah Pyke, art director,
Bloom magazine, UK

WHAT TO PUT IN YOUR PORTFOLIO

The folio is your definitive collection – your best and most commercially relevant work. You’re aiming for impact, consistency and coherency: to give a clear sense of the visual identity and language of your work. You might not need a portfolio as a physical object containing images. Instead it makes sense to see your folio as a body of artwork, that you will select from and curate to present a coherent and clear sense of what you offer.

It may be that you curate more than one folio to reflect different facets or specialisms, tailoring each into selected subsets of imagery to target particular clients, reflecting what you understand about their requirements and the nature and types of assignments that they undertake.

Selected content from this collection, your folio, will form the core content of your website and some of it will feature on social media and within any physical promotional pieces you produce.

3.3A

Relevancy, impact, consistency, quality

There are no absolute rules about what your folio should be and do, but work on the basis that potential commissioners have limited time: they want to be able to find you easily, for you to leave a clear impression of what you do and for them to be able to contact you easily.

When working out what to include in your folio, analyse the websites of successful practitioners in the areas you are aspiring towards. They are your competition, so what you present as a product should equate in terms of quality and professionalism. Ask yourself whether the briefs they have handled are the kinds of work you see yourself doing and whether your folio reflects this. If not, what is missing? Do you need to do some more simulated briefs that demonstrate you’re right for this area of work? Reflecting an understanding of the market through your folio doesn’t mean in any way sacrificing your own individuality or what makes you stand out. These things can be heightened by showing your particular take on a subject.

As well as checking out the content of other illustrators’ imagery, take note of how many images you actually need to look at to get a clear impression of their work. Although you, as an illustrator, might be impressed by a website containing a large number of diverse commissioned illustrations, a website containing a coherent set of fewer self-negotiated images may actually make more immediate impact to an art director who is looking for specific content and a particular stylistic approach. Tabs to collections of works or focused on subject matter work well. Be efficient.

3 HOW TO GET YOURSELF SEEN

How to promote yourself?

Finding contacts: how to build a targeted contact list

Allowing clients to find you – your digital brand

Other ways to be seen

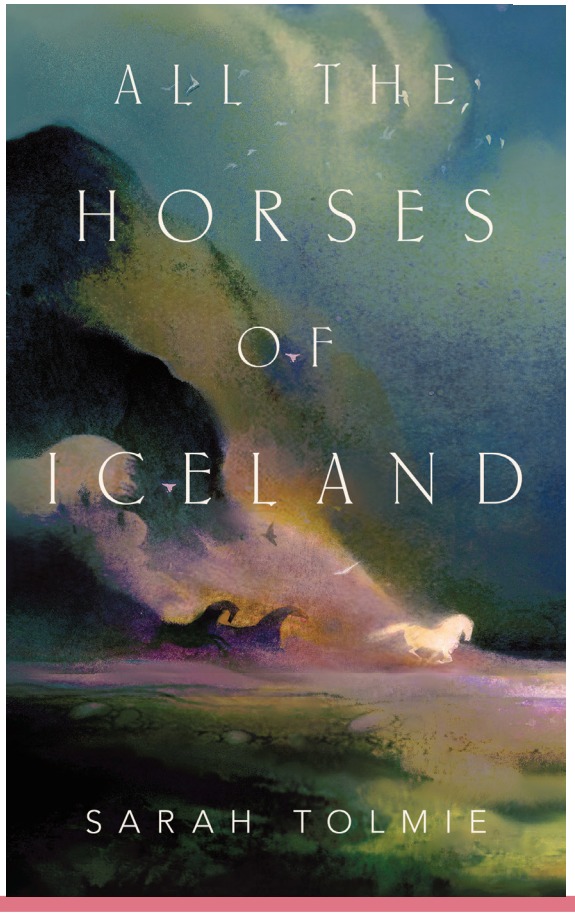
Chapter summary

Being selective is key. If you're aiming for concept art or visualizing, it's okay to include life drawing as part of the overall content, but for most folios you aren't presenting your artistic skills but showing images that reveal to a client what they might expect if they commission you.

It's most likely that a digital PDF folio of a few selected low-res images that you attach to an email will be the most appropriate format to show your work to a potential client. If they're interested, they will follow a link to your website. You probably won't be asked to show your physical folio, although it might be called in at an advertising agency or by local clients if you're invited to the office.

Because being objective about your own work – judging both its quality and appropriateness for the commercial world – can be difficult, having a reliable external perspective can provide valuable direction. You should aim to get constructive criticism or endorsement to help you hone your folio to an appropriate standard and to check that you are including the right kinds of imagery to attract clients. Finding a mentor or connecting with other artists through social media or via Patreon can lead to feedback. If you find it difficult to source impartial and authoritative input, you can pay a reputable folio consultant to steer you in the right direction or sign up for folio review opportunities at conferences, workshops and trade fairs.

3.3B



'There is not *one* way of working for jacket illustration. There are a million ways to explain the book through the cover, its tone, emotion.'

Christine Foltzer, associate art director, Tor.com Publishing

3.3A
Artist: Hollie Fuller. Commissioner: Sarah Pyke/*Bloom*. Commission: Illustrations to sit alongside a feature about retraining or studying a new trade in horticulture, providing tips, inspiration and helpful information on getting involved.

3.3B
Artist: Erin Vest. Commission: Jacket illustration for *All the Horses of Iceland* by Sarah Tolmie. Erin Vest is a fantasy-based illustrator based in Virginia, USA.

3.4A
Artist: Beatrix de Gevigney. Commissioner: Art director, Olivier Mularski, TBWA Paris. Commission: Le Chocolat des Français. Another of the range of packaging designs that rely on illustration to establish a brand identity for the product.

‘Before seeking work with me as a client, the illustrator needs to have a generous portfolio with a lot of different projects. It’s important for an art director to understand the universe of the illustrator. What are their colours, are they good with landscapes, people, cars, etc.? The more you see as an art director, the more you know what you can expect from an illustrator.’

Olivier Mularski, art director, TBWA Paris, France

As you organize a selection of your work to create a clear visual impact, you may decide you need subsets that target a particular industry context. An example might be having a website that is aimed towards children’s publishing, narrative and illustration for the children’s industry generally but with a subset focused on surface pattern and greetings cards, with tabs in your website to reach this easily. These two areas are not incompatible. If you work on hard-hitting political editorials alongside picture books for toddlers, it would be sensible to separate these two areas and have separate promotion for them while you are building your client list.

More established artists may branch into areas that they are not generally recognized for, but at the early stages you are aiming for consistency and impact. Some illustrators work under more than one name, essentially building a brand for each stylistic approach, but this approach will be demanding if you have limited time and resources.

SELF-INITIATED WORK

Keeping your website and promotional work up to date, evolving and fresh can be a challenge if you haven’t had any client briefs. Losing heart is not unusual in an industry that is fast moving, where trends and illustrators come and go, where large numbers of graduates enter the market each year. Keeping passionate about what you do, being driven by the urge to explore and create, will give you inner resilience.

Whether your love is communicating and problem solving visually, exploring particular themes or concepts, or making things, being motivated and keeping momentum are key to continuing to being perceived as an available illustrator. Many illustrators post on social media to share new self-initiated work, whether to gauge a response to it or to consciously show that they are still active. Some of this will be experimental and daring; other pieces might be self-art directed to fill gaps in their folios.

3.4A

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Many illustrators see the generation of new artwork as part of an entrepreneurial approach, selling illustrated pieces within their own shops as prints, artworks or applied to products. Whatever your motivation, self-initiated work is an important aspect of commercial practice.

BREAKING THE CYCLE: GETTING EXPERIENCE

If you haven't got many examples of commissioned work, or evidence that you can work to briefs or that your imagery is fit for its intended purpose – whether problem solving, applied to products or alongside typography – you could consider approaching small-scale or not-for-profit organizations that wouldn't normally commission an illustrator. The local amateur dramatic society might benefit from you creating a poster campaign for their next production, a new band might want an album design, a local book festival might be happy for you to create an illustrated marketing campaign. Ideally you would get a fee for this work, but in this situation where you have offered your services, they may have no budget at all, although you might be able to barter for something in exchange of doing artwork.

It's important not to work for free if you are approached by clients, or to undercut professionals – doing either of these things will contribute to a suppression of fees across the industry. Instead, if you have genuine reasons for taking the project on, offer your services pro bono to show that what you provide has monetary value and to be clear about the real value of the commission. By then discounting the invoice to zero-fee, you make a financial basis for work you create, and if you receive work from the client in the future you can refer to this fee for comparison.

Conscious of this proviso, the relationships you could build by searching out opportunities for yourself, the exposure you can generate, the experience of having a lot of creative freedom, and liaising with others outside of your normal sphere can add a valuable boost to your folio, your network and your confidence.

3.4B
Artist: Liliana Perez. Commission: Illustrations for a children's book. Commissioner: Collaborate Agency. Spanish illustrator Liliana Perez focuses on creating illustration for children's publishing.

'An artist's portfolio is at its strongest when they have demonstrated a consistency in their style. It can be difficult to make a decision about an artist if their portfolio contains lots of different styles and techniques. If an artist has two or three very strong and distinctive styles, which are all commercially viable, it may be worth considering being repped for each style, or work under a pseudonym for each of your styles.'

Dave Moxey, creative director, Collaborate Agency, UK

3.4B

3.5

3.5
Artist: Mark Smith. Jacket illustration: *Half Built Garden* by Ruthanna Emrys. Art director: Christine Foltzer, Tor Books. Mark is acclaimed for his conceptual illustrations and this commission demonstrates that not all artists working for specialist sci-fi publishers need to be recognized specifically for this genre.

‘If you want to work for Tor or any other publisher, ask a mentor what they think – ask “where do you see my work fitting?” Be honest with yourself. It’s ok to shoot for somewhere closer before you get to the moon.’

Christine Foltzer, art editor, Tor.com, USA

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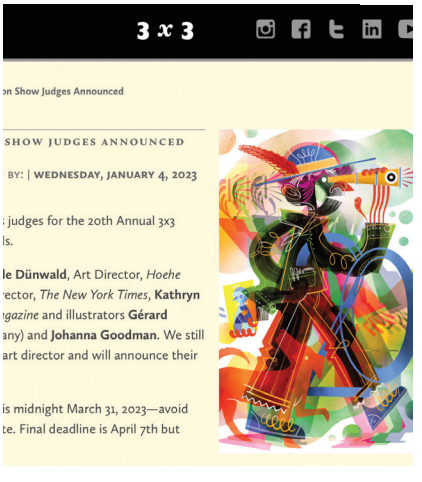
COMPETITIONS

With their restrictions and deadlines, competitions can provide a real-world experience for illustrators looking for a simulated brief. Each competition will have its own requirements, whether submitting work you have already created or working towards a targeted brief. Many of the bigger annual competitions become a snapshot of the best of contemporary practice from around the world. Entries will be judged by industry professionals and if you're selected there is usually publication in some format – sometimes also an exhibition and a monetary prize. The exposure of being longlisted or shortlisted and the prestige and credibility of being in a published annual exhibition or featured on the competition's social media can add to your profile and make you a more attractive proposition to potential clients.

Whatever the scale or scope of the competition, it's advised that you always read the small print – it might be buried in the terms and conditions that you are handing over the copyright for the artwork, effectively working for free. It also pays to do the maths. Weigh up the uncertain investment of an entry fee against investing in other forms of well-targeted promotion. Equally, if there is a requirement that you pay towards any publishing or hanging costs if your work wins or is selected, make sure the budget for this is proportionate to what you could expect to get from the exposure.

3.6A

3.6B



3.6C

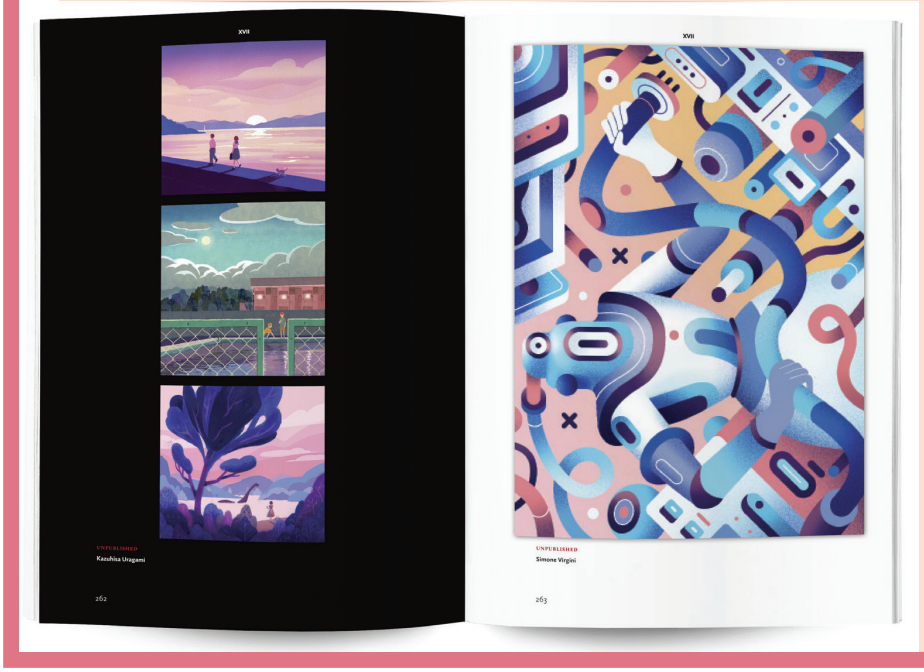
3.6A–C
Keeping a list of competitions, judges and winners will give you an overview of the best work commissioned within the industry and who is commissioning it.

Spotlight

Working in competitions, directories and more – Charles Hively, founder of *3x3* magazine, USA

3.7

3.8



What is *3x3*?
Success for all illustrators is dependent on the flourishing of the creative industry and the commercial opportunities it creates. Through their annuals, magazine and curated directory, *3x3* accomplish their mission to 'promote in every way possible the importance, viability and uniqueness of using illustration in advertising, publishing, corporate, institutional, books and animation.'

Charles Hively, its founder, is attuned to illustration. *3x3* magazine, which originated in 2003, was forged from experience accrued during his roles as an art director in advertising 'before the explosion of social media', when printed illustration annuals, featuring artists selected from juried competitions, celebrated the best of global practice and would be referred to by commissioners as well as pored over by aspiring practitioners. As Charles reflects, 'This was the only way to see the best in the universe of illustration as well as what the next trend was.'

Charles describes *3x3* magazine as the polar opposite to what is commonly seen online today. He explains, 'Unfortunately, social media isn't curated, there's a wide variety of images but not always the best images are presented. By providing a more exclusive format, we're able to showcase some of the best work being done today globally.'

What is the benefit of entering the *3x3* competition or directory?
Entering a prestigious illustration competition can provide a focal point for making self-initiated work, as well as an opportunity to be endorsed for a commission that resulted in excellent artwork. The annual *3x3* competition aims to be inclusive with more categories than other shows, consequently attracting entries from over fifty-six countries. Because it is judged by art directors and distinguished professional illustrators from around the world, submitting an entry means that your artwork is appraised by respected industry specialists. Being chosen by this jury is an accolade, an achievement to add to your profile and a positive affirmation of the quality of what you create. This leads to promotional opportunities and guaranteed exposure in the commercial sphere.

The *3x3* annual is distributed on newsstands worldwide and an eBook version is sent to leading art directors and art buyers – a select list that are known commissioners of illustration. This clearly puts your work in the spotlight for potential clients.

There is some contention in the illustration community about the fees incurred through entry to competitions. Mindful of this, *3x3* tries to keep these and subsequent publication costs affordable. As Charles explains, 'Entering shows should be a part of every illustrator's promotional budget. Shows are a source of third-party endorsement, which helps gain more visibility for those just entering the field as well as those already in the field. Unlike social media, juried competitions showcase the best in the field, thereby giving art directors and art buyers a valued resource.'

For early-career illustrators, entry fees for a competition may seem like a gamble of limited financial resources. Winners in the *3x3* annual are invited to participate in the curated *3x3 Illustration Directory*. This is a designed and curated compendium, and as *3x3* is a respected brand that signifies quality within the illustration community, investing in it as part of your promotional strategy could become a milestone in your career.

How can emerging illustrators gain from *3x3*?
In creating avenues for exposure of individual illustrators, *3x3* magazine, annual and directory promote the industry as a whole as well as providing a legacy for future generations, creating a contemporary archive and resource that can be referred back to.

Charles is aware of the challenges that emerging talent face to accomplish sustained careers. As he recognizes, 'Developing an entrepreneurial attitude is key to a successful career. Ignoring basic business practices can lead to disaster. Young illustrators must realize that *they* are in charge of their careers; no one is there to help them get clients, no one is there to help them negotiate fees or collect the fees once the job is complete. They're in business for themselves.'

In addition to the publications celebrating the illustration community, *3x3* also provides webinars that include 'some do's and don'ts for those entering the field', covering topics such as self-promotion and working with art directors. They also offer monthly portfolio reviews. For a fee, illustrators submit a representative selection of their work that is reviewed, and are provided with a detailed critique and, if relevant, recommendations of short courses to upskill. Charles describes the feedback as being, 'Not sugar-coated, not personal – it's all about the work.' Folio sessions such as this can be empowering and the clear impartial and constructive feedback from an authoritative external can provide clear professional direction that can ultimately set a career on the right course.

Suggestions based on *3x3*'s advice on getting clients

- Look for third-party endorsement of what you do.
- See competitions as part of your strategy for self-promotion.
- Be enterprising and entrepreneurial.

3.7 & 3.8
Artists: Brian Lutz (3.7), Kazuhisa Origami (3.8 left) and Simone Virgini (3.8 right).
Commission: Covers and spreads from the *3x3 International Illustration Annual*, *3x3 Illustration Directory* and the recent issues of *3x3*, the magazine of contemporary illustration.
Brian Lutz's image (3.7) was awarded a merit for unpublished professional work by *3x3*.
The image was also selected for inclusion in *American Illustration Annual* and online archive.

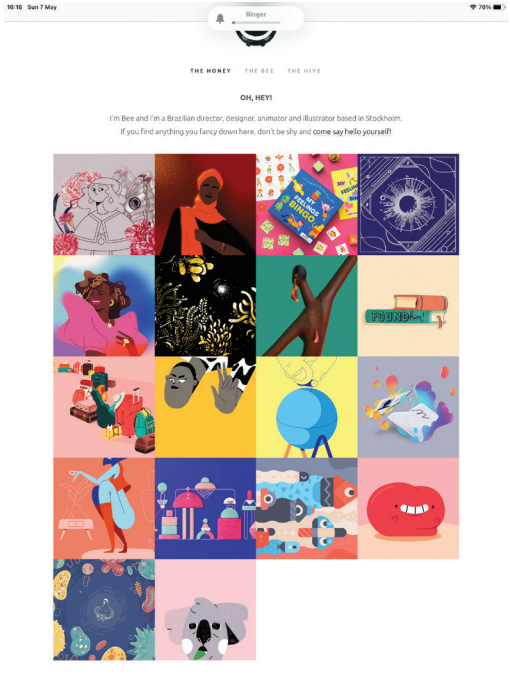
YOUR FOLIO: TECHNICAL GUIDELINES

If you have a well-constructed and considered PDF folio or website, the artwork you present will probably speak for itself in terms of what ideas you are communicating, what types of briefs you are best at handling and how you respond to them consistently. You may also include labels that give an indication of specific context, if that's not evident from the image itself. You don't need to describe the images or outline the media you created it in, but could add a one-line summary of the brief, or name the client if it's a commissioned piece.

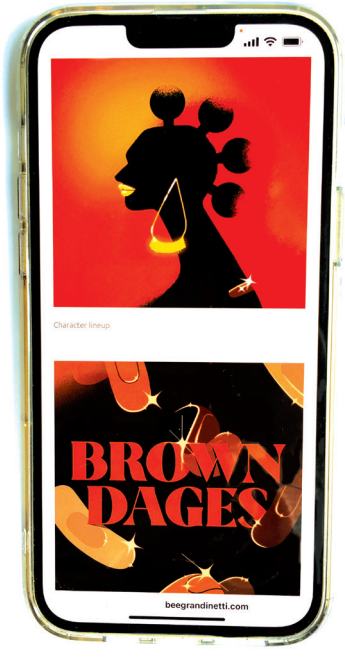
These guidelines will steer you as you put together your professional folio or website. Your folio should:

- include ten to twenty image examples tailored for specific professional areas
- have examples of well-put-together mock-ups showing artwork in context, where relevant
- have visual cohesion: it should have a clear visual identity or style or reflect the area you aspire to operate within, as outlined in Chapter 2
- be at a low resolution, with each image crisp when viewed
- have print outs (if it's a physical folio) that are the right resolution and representative of the colour you would see if printed or on screen
- have clarity – don't mix different projects and jobs on the same page
- lend itself to being edited or curated to reflect each client that you contact
- have links to your website and social media handles
- have QR codes or links that take you to motion work, if relevant, e.g. Vimeo, YouTube
- have your name and contact details clearly on each page for a PDF
- only contain work that you're pleased with
- have no work that you want to apologize for
- only include labels that clarify context
- have your name and email address as the PDF file name

3.9A



3.9B



3.9A–B
Keeping a list of competitions, judges and winners will give you an overview of the best work commissioned within the industry and who is commissioning it.

Finding contacts: how to build a targeted contact list

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Building a professional network is a vital dimension of getting clients as a freelancer. After creating a brilliant folio of work, the next step to getting clients is to make yourself known to them. Each appropriate connection that you establish could lead you towards a potential commission. Your aim is to grow a long list of names that may lead to a door that could open for you in the professional sphere.

Be open to every potential client or opportunity to be commissioned. If you are aiming for big brands, agencies and publishers, you are facing stiff competition, so also search locally or for smaller-scale design groups and agencies, charities, independents, organizations such as libraries, or startup companies. Clients with commissioning roles, such as art directors, creative directors and art buyers, are going to be important people to approach, but most commissioners work within teams so more junior designers, editors and creative assistants may also be involved in the commissioning process.

Finding possible commissioners and outlets for your work is vital as you build up your promotional and marketing campaigns. As an illustrator working in the age of social media and digital communications, you are fortunate to have access to expansive creative networks. Finding contact details for the commissioners of illustration within companies just needs some focused detective work on your part. In general terms, you need to do some investigation to find out the name of the client who commissions the types of illustration that you are aspiring towards. Being immersed in the industry and active in the community can reap rewards, so you need to be on constant high alert for where relevant names are mentioned. Work on the basis that you may need to contact a high number of people to get just one commission. Be open and cast your net wide.

Start your research with the illustrators and practitioners that you admire and are inspired by and the companies and publications that you would like to work for. Look for published work that you would consider to be the dream commission, or something you could excel at if you were selected for the brief. Who was the art editor? The art director? The art buyer? The designer?

3.10
Artist: Dan Funderburgh. Commission: Elysian Fields is a dense, intricate floral that utilizes carnivorous plants and bats instead of roses and robins. It's classic Funderburgh x Flavor Paper fun with unexpected elements within the classic stylings of the pattern work. flavorpaper.com

3.10

'Review the company's website to gain an understanding of the variety of styles and techniques we have worked within. Gather some examples of your work that show how you can expand and contribute to our creative cannon. Don't try to show work that is similar to what we have already done, unless it pushes the concept further. Stick to what makes you unique and how you can add value to the brand and uniquely fill a void in the existing designs.'

Jon Sherman, founder and creative director, Flavor Paper, USA

AVENUES TO INVESTIGATE AND RESEARCH NAMES OF POSSIBLE CLIENTS

Social media platforms

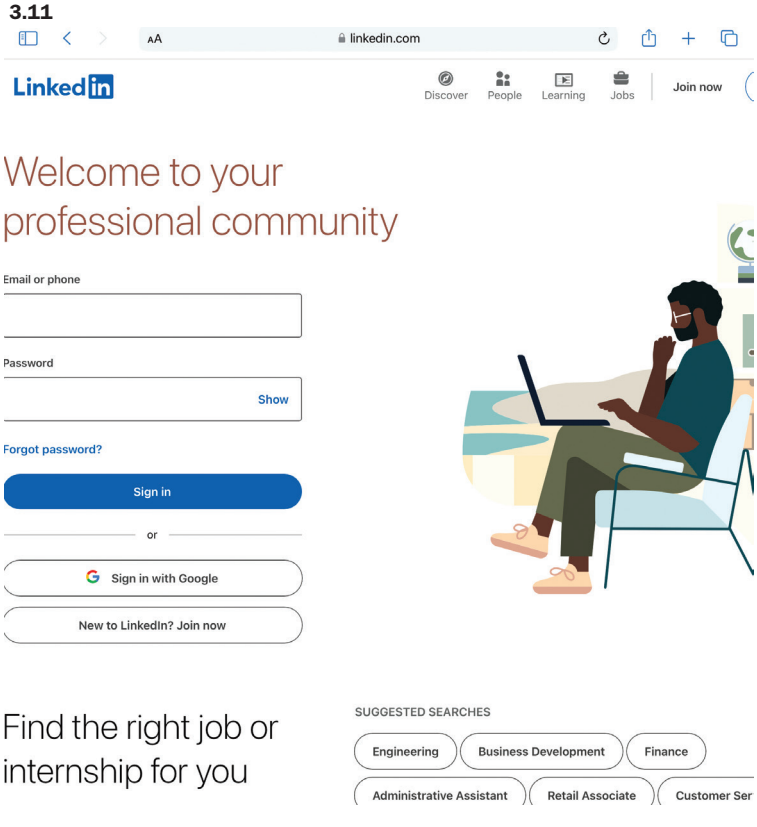
These are accessible research tools providing direct access to the work of both your competitors and potential clients. You can easily find illustrators working in areas that you relate to or aspire towards. They may acknowledge their commissioner by name or tag them in captions in their social media posts. If you can't find the contact by these means, you can always approach the artist directly to ask who commissioned them. Professionally orientated social media sites, such as LinkedIn and The Dots, provide extensive opportunities to find clients and message them directly, once connected with the individual.

There can be a lot of moving around in the creative industries, both within the same company and shifting to other studios, so don't presume that the information you garner from any sources will be up to date. Finding that a potential commissioner has moved on isn't necessarily a disadvantage. If they're in a new position in a new company, find out if they are still commissioning illustration, who took over their previous role and what kind of work is now being commissioned by that studio. Research the kind of projects they are currently involved with and what types of clients they work for. This is all valuable information that will contribute to building your understanding of the potential audience for your work.

Magazines

For editorial contacts, you will usually find the art editor or design team are credited in the staff listings in magazines and publications. Take note and keep revisiting the publications to monitor any changes in the commissioning teams.

3.11
Professional social media sites provide access to creative networks.



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Specialist websites and blogs

If you undertake online searches you will find many interviews, articles and podcasts with practitioners and clients, which will refer to specific briefs or recent projects they have undertaken. As well as keeping abreast with what's happening in the industry, this can be a way of establishing who is commissioning the type of work most related to your own visual approach.

Competitions

Check out the names and profiles of judges for exhibition panels, illustration and design competitions. Who are the art directors who commissioned the winning work or competition entries? Trace back to their companies to see what types of projects they work on and the types of illustration they or their company have commissioned in the past.

Events

Trade fairs have been traditionally associated with areas such as greetings cards and surface pattern, children's publishing, textiles, animation, craft, concept art and comics, where there are many frequent and well-established events held internationally. Exhibitors' stands, workshops and presentations have traditionally offered a chance to meet clients directly as well as facilitating networking with other artists and learning more about the creative or professional area.

The digital revolution has impacted on the scale of some of these events but simultaneously led to an increasing number of online webinars, subject-specific conferences and symposia.

3.12

3.12
Fairs and conferences often provide opportunities for illustrators to meet with clients directly. Photo of Bologna Children's Book Fair: Ashley Potter, Programme Lead in Illustration at University of Plymouth.

Some have made a total migration online. This breaking down of the limitations of location and geographic barriers has in some areas of illustration made clients, art directors, editors and agents more visible.

Whether you sign up live to hear clients discussing industry topics, pay to enter the Bologna Children's Book Fair and display work on the illustrator's wall, or catch up with recorded versions of events, a level of participation in activities that are relevant to your work or area of interest can keep you informed and engaged in contemporary practice. Many specialist trade fairs post listings of previous exhibitors on their websites and these too can provide useful contacts to investigate as potential clients.

Subject forums, groups and social media sites

If you are active on subject forums or social media sites, are a member of particular illustration groups, are part of a university or college alumni or a member of a subject association, you will already be connected to others whose experience, interests and contacts may be of direct relevance to what you do. As you develop relationships or a presence in these networks, you will find opportunities to share information or approach other members directly.

Take advantage of the many groups where experienced practitioners in the creative industries respond freely to requests for advice. Finding a mentor or like-minded peer could also lead to ongoing professional support and advice and possibly lead to further introductions to their own clients and contacts.

Be prepared

If you live somewhere where there is a density of designers, publishers or a good art and design scene, private views, bars and pubs can be informal venues where you can build a network with professionals. It can pay to be prepared for any chance encounter, wherever that may be. Even everyday activities like walking the dog or waiting for a bus can lead to profitable conversations, so being prepared means having an illustrated business/promotional card at the ready that leads to your folio of work.

IN-HOUSE POSITIONS

There are very few in-house positions for full-time illustrators. If you are looking for an in-house role, such as working as a concept artist, joining an animation team, in pre- or post-production, or for some surface design agencies, the process is usually more akin to applying to other positions where a human resource (HR) department will be involved with the recruitment and selection of employees. Junior and entry-level roles such as runner or intern will usually be advertised, or there will be annual schemes where the application process is publicized and outlined and recruitment requirements made available on the company website or via social media.

If you are looking for in-house roles, research into as many companies you aspire to work in as possible, being realistic as well as aspirational; look at smaller-sized studios that are closer to your reach as well as big-named studios.

Analyse any positions that have been advertised in the past and what their requirements were. Use person specifications and job descriptions to define a realistic – although generic – profile for positions that appeal to you. Use this to create a tick list for self-assessment and set yourself clear goals to fill any gaps in your own skill set. Your aim is to become as equipped as possible to apply for positions when they are next advertised. This will include building a relevant folio of artwork in which a range of media, technical and drawing skills are reflected, but may include developing more generic skills such as competence with software or media, and 'soft skills' such as team working and organization.

3.13
Fairs provide an opportunity to see what is current in the industry as well as meeting other professionals.
Photo of Bologna Children's Book Fair: Ashley Potter, Programme Lead in Illustration at University of Plymouth.

3.13

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Having a CV or resumé may be required if you plan to apply to such positions. There are many online templates and sites providing advice for putting one together, but importantly for art and design roles, bear in mind that it should:

- be succinct – no more than two pages long
- include a focused statement that reflects your understanding of what the position requires
- not contain images, but should include clear links to your website and social media
- reflect the areas on your tick list of skills required in similar posts or specifically tailor it to the job specification for the position you're applying for
- include the content of relevant units or modules you undertook at college or university in lieu of work experience (to make your specialist knowledge and skills explicit)
- include relevant infographics to show your competence in key software or skills at a glance
- include key words that reflect the role you're applying for

Each company or studio will have its own processes for recruiting for in-house positions; some may be very informal. You may be interviewed, asked to bring a physical folio of work or expected to prepare a visual presentation. Being confident enough to answer questions about working in the area you are applying within, talking about your own work and aspirations, and being prepared to reflect honestly on key skills, your working methodology and where you see yourself fitting into the company, are standard practices for applying for such positions.

'Send me an email with some images or a link to your site. Know something about the people or companies you are emailing, like what work they do or have done. Be polite, be human, nobody responds to impersonal, automated emails that say "Hey there, check out my new site".'

Dave Dye, CCO and founder of Love or Fear, owner of THINGY Creative Consultancy, UK

3.14

3.14
Artist: Paul Davis.
Art director: Dave Dye.
Copywriter: Sean Doyle.
Client: Merrydown.
Agency: Campbell Doyle Dye.
Commission: Although several years old, this poster from a series from the high-impact Merrydown cider advertising campaign was award winning.

‘I receive a lot of newsletters. To get my attention you should personalize the communication. Research the agency and the art director and send something more concrete that relates to the art director, the campaigns they actually work on.’

Mélissa Charland, associate creative director, Publicis, Canada

3.15
Artist: Delphine Dessoubs aka Dalkhafine.
Commission: One from a series of posters for the CMIM 2021 edition.

3.15

BUYING MARKETING EXPERTISE

If you want other people to market your work for you, there are many individuals and companies that offer specialist services tailored to freelancers working in the creative industries. Some of these businesses offer a range of packages that might include listing you in a directory, developing a brand approach, monitoring the efficacy of your social media, expanding your reach and multiplying your industry contacts.

As an example, for an annual fee, Bikini Lists provide access to a database of aggregated information such as client contacts in publishing, design, advertising and editorials internationally. This information is up to date, accurate, constantly revised and expanding. They also supply email templates to showcase your imagery, providing analytics and data that enable you to track responses to your promotions.

If you have a fair-sized budget for promotion, you could consider organizations such as Agency Access and the Directory of Illustration, who provide a variety of promotional opportunities such as contacts and direct marketing tools. Rocketreach is also a database of contact details. These services can be pricey, so need to be costed into a promotional campaign, but most offer a trial that will give you an opportunity to sample what is available and decide its usefulness to you at whatever stage you are at within your career.

If you have limited time, having easy access to such information can help you target, and ultimately ease the task of reaching the clients potentially relevant to your folio and ambitions.

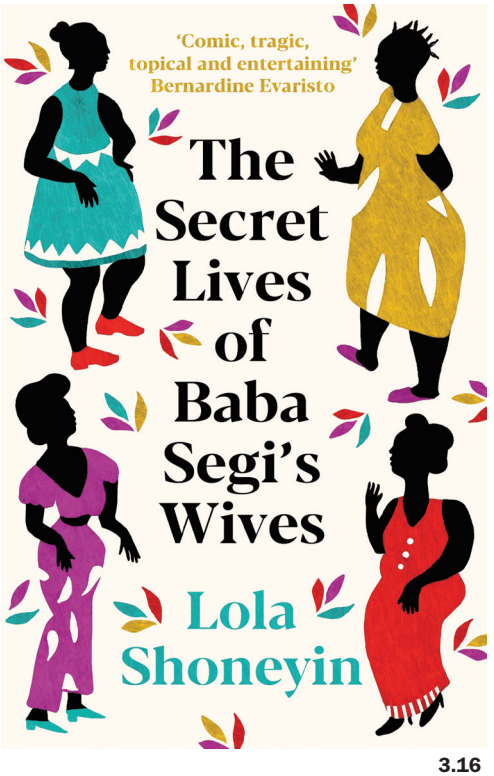
However, it would be unwise to mass email everyone on any lists you invest in, and your own research will still be needed to decide which contacts are of actual relevance to your individual folio.

For illustrators with a smaller budget there are several one-off publications such as the AOI Directories for editorial and advertising and design contacts, and the *Artists and Writers' Yearbooks* for children's and general publishing, which are compendiums of publishing houses. Updated yearly, these publications provide a solid core to supplement your individual research for getting clients.

PROMOTIONAL PIECES

Although digital-based promotion may be the dominant form, many practitioners believe that physical forms of promotion make a more memorable impact on clients. These could be postcards, print outs, dummy books, badges and stickers, and zines.

As with all of your marketing, sending promotional pieces will only succeed if they are tailored to the client, if they represent what you do and are of quality. The cost implication of producing and mailing physical items should reflect in who the recipients will be and the impact the promotional piece will make on them. Remember that these items should connect to your brand in terms of their aesthetic and design – from the positioning of your contact details to the fonts and colourways you select, the images that you include should make an impact, an impression and be relevant.



3.16

‘As much as I want to work with certain illustrators, if we don’t have a suitable project for them we can’t work with them. My advice to people seeking work is never give up, an art director or designer might love your work but is just waiting for the right project, or they may even be pitching you for projects but you don’t make it past the shortlist. Basically there is always a lot going on behind the scenes, so please don’t lose heart.’

Steve Panton, book designer, Little Brown Book Company, UK

EMAIL PROMOTION

Communication is evolving: the protocol and practice for how and when we contact our friends and families, as well as business associates, is constantly in flux. Although you may feel apprehensive about making direct contact with a potential client, art director or a creative lead in a studio you’d like to work for, being confident in communicating and introducing your work is a vital dimension of developing a businesslike attitude towards selling your services. Email continues to be a popular and professional way to reach potential clients, but you need to have all options open to you, depending on what contact information you’ve gained from your research.

Don’t presume that because you found a client’s details on a specific social media channel that it is appropriate to make direct contact with them via that stream. You should appraise each client individually and reflect what you understand about them, based on what you’ve observed about their communication trends within various channels. Before embarking upon any form of communication, you should also follow specific submission guidelines outlined on company websites. If you are aspiring to work in some areas, such as games, animation and post-production, you may be directed towards an HR department or towards a more formal application process.

You should only email potential clients via their emails at their place of work. If you don’t have their professional email address, you can contact them on social media or other platforms they are active on to request an email address (explain briefly why). If they have stipulated in their bios that they don’t want direct messages, do respect this.

Make your own email address professional and easy to connect to your work. See it as a dimension of your brand identity. Having ‘fluffybunny.com’ as your email and website won’t put a client off commissioning you if it reflects your artwork, but it might not add to your credibility if you’re a hard-edged political

3.16
Artist: Diana Ejaita.
Design: Steve Panton.
Commission: *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi’s Wives* by Lola Shoneyin.
Diana Ejaita is an illustrator whose work fluidly crosses boundaries into textile design and fine art.

3.17

3.17
All Association Of Illustration directories.
Artist: Caroline Dowsett.
The compendiums contain the contact details of key commissioners working in each area of the industry.

commentator hoping to make your first break into editorial illustration. Make it easy to be found in a line of emails. As well as your name contributing to you establishing yourself as a brand, a specific email account will allow you to keep records of who you contacted and when, and which examples of work you sent.

Some email etiquette

- Getting the tone of your communication right means being brief, appropriately informal and being clear. When you send your first mail, make the email subject reflect your folio – it might contain your name and why you're making contact. No shouty capitals or exclamation marks are needed.
- Address your email to the named art editor or potential client. Using their forename or full name is suitable. Formal titles such as sir or madam are unnecessary.
- Keep your message brief and informal with good spelling and grammar. Get to the point.
- Make reference to something specific about each client you contact – this could be mentioning a campaign they worked on, a book they published or a recent range of products that your work could have been suitable for.
- Condense your portfolio into one page of content specifically relevant to the client you're addressing and embed a link into the email.
- Have small thumbnails of a few relevant images as your signature. Include links to your website or social media handles.
- Don't send large PDF files that need to be downloaded.
- Some illustrators email regular targeted promotions every two to three months to start building up a relationship with a potential client. Only do this if you have new work and new things to report.
- If you have had work commissioned, and if this is relevant to what they do – it's worthwhile sending a follow-up email to remind them you are still active.

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A brief conversation with the switchboard of a publishing house or magazine can be a way to find an appropriate name and contact. A phone call to a small agency may even lead to you talking to the client directly. It can be difficult to reach potential clients on the phone. Although some art directors are open to working with early-career artists and might welcome a phone call a couple of weeks after an email containing a link to your folio, it is unlikely that the majority will be easy to access.

'Our details always appear in the Association of Illustrators contact directory. Most publishers have an in-house art team. An illustrator should find the correct person to contact within the art team, by contacting the publisher.

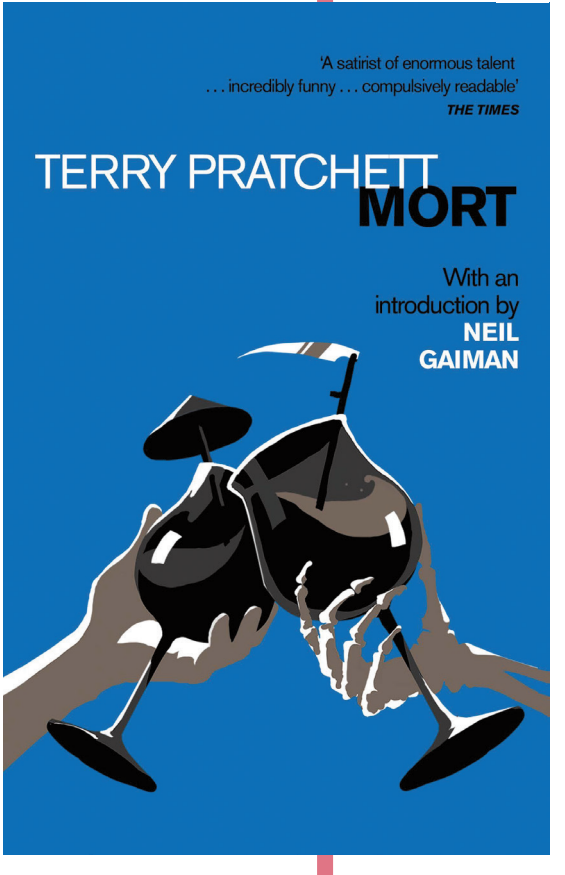
Emails and flyers are all acceptable forms of contact but, contacts like 'Dear Sir or Madam' do not cut through like a direct contact by name … showing some research into relevant or possible commissioners shows a degree of business sense. For instance, an illustrator who specializes in children's illustration is wasting everyone's time sending it to an adult division.

Also, a lack of reply doesn't necessarily mean dislike of the work. A busy designer may get multiple flyers and emails per week. The usual is to file or bookmark an illustrator of interest with a view to contacting when a job of relevance is a possibility. I would advise illustrators to send updates every so often to remind a designer that they are still working and to showcase new work. Maybe six monthly or even yearly.'

Richard Ogle, art director, Transworld Penguin Random House, UK

3.18
Artist: Levente Szabo, Good Illustration Agency. Commissioner: Richard Ogle. Commission: *Mort* by Terry Pratchett. The brief was to produce a look to appeal to new, younger readers who may not be huge fans of fantasy writing, but would appreciate his satire and humour within the genre.

3.18



Allowing clients to find you – your digital brand

YOUR OWN WEBSITE

When you are building exposure to your work as part of your strategy to attract potential clients, it might be tempting to think that posting regularly on social media platforms makes having a website obsolete. Maintaining a well-curated collection of industry-relevant work presents a firm presence alongside your more ephemeral, organically evolving social media accounts. As part of your wider promotional campaign, in marketing yourself as a brand, a bespoke website will add to the external perception of you being a professional, coherently showing your visual approach or style, particular strengths and achievements.

Driving traffic to this curated website from social media means that clients don't have to trawl through your posts – you are controlling the visual environment and providing easy access. For this reason, you need to keep the website up to date, not only with your strongest work but also including client lists and links to publications, awards or other achievements. See it as a visual equivalent to a CV.

While you're building your client list or working in employment other than illustration, operating professionally may be more of an aspiration than a reality, but your website will continue to present a clear message that you are still ready for business.

Building and maintaining your own website is relatively easy and doesn't require coding skills. There are many serviceable template options to choose from that are available for an annual subscription or included in software packages.

This compilation is drawn from client feedback. Use these pointers as general guidelines to build or refer to as you modify your own website.

- Keep your website clean, simple and easy to navigate. A busy client is unlikely to make the effort to click through landing pages and multiple categories.
- Make sure your images are the right resolution and at optimum file size. No one will spend time waiting for images to load.
- A website with all images clearly collected on one page can make more impact than an elaborate website where things can seem buried. Aim for a couple of categories.
- See your social media such as Instagram as a complement and not an alternative to your portfolio.
- Include work in context or show real-world applications of your imagery through mock-ups.
- Avoid including an email form. Provide a link or email address.
- Volume: go for quality and breadth of representation over quantity – aim to have 30 images maximum.
- Check that your website loads easily on a range of devices.
- Keep your 'about' section brief and factual with a clear, short statement, a list of clients you have worked for, achievements or awards, and the areas in which you are looking for work.
- Make sure contact details are clear and easy to find.
- Don't have adverts.
- Include gifs if they are appropriate, but not flashy animations. Provide links to YouTube or video or a showreel.
- Include active links to your social media channels.
- Don't include music.

Avoiding plagiarism

Including a copyright statement on your website won't prevent someone from downloading your work or plagiarizing it. Ensuring your images are not uploaded at print resolution and including a statement that all images are covered by your copyright will serve as a reminder that you treat your work professionally and may deter bad practice.

3.19
Artist: Xavier Segers.
Curated by: Laura Nevill.
Commission: An image from the #LetsDoLondonBetter campaign, screened at Westfield Shopping Centres in London, aimed at generating support across the UK for creative communities to flourish.

‘People don’t stay – the first ten seconds must make an impression – make a clear stamp on them. Without being pigeon-holed, find a niche, a platform that is right for the work that you make. There’s a truth in numbers. Spread yourself out so that clients can find you.’

Xavier Seger, illustrator and designer, UK

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SUBSCRIPTION PORTFOLIO SITES AND DIRECTORIES

Illustrator's folio sites available through subscription to reputable illustration marketing services such as Workbook, Directory of Illustration and *3x3*, or subject association such as the AOI who host them through their websites, are essentially online databases, often including categories for an illustrator to identify their work within. These sites are attractive for clients looking for a more selective and curated range of illustrators working with a particular subject, stylistic or media approach. Illustrators usually upload a limited number of images within a template, include a short bio and descriptions, and then have an individual URL to use as part of their promotion. Folio sites can be a credible and easy-to-maintain alternative for illustrators who don't want to establish a bespoke website from scratch.

The opportunity to include a selection of work on folio sites is sometimes provided as part of deals to buy a page or space in a printed annual or directory. Such publications are usually distributed and promoted to art directors and relevant industry professionals. Although page rates can be high, making this a costly form of promotion, some printed directories are well curated, designed and selective, becoming an attractive physical publication with longevity that clients can return to. Investing in a directory signals a level of professional ambition that could appeal to some potential clients and can send traffic to your websites.

For illustrators who are confident in handling the business aspects of practice, choosing to invest in such marketing and promotional services can be seen as an effective alternative to agent representation.

3.21

3.20
Association Of Illustrators directory. Artist: Caroline Dowsett.
This directory contains the contact details of key commissioners of illustration in publishing, editorial and advertising.

3.21
Paid folio sites, such as this example from the Association Of Illustrators, can provide exposure alongside other forms of promotion.

SOCIAL MEDIA

With half of the world's population using social media, it's clear why this has been adopted by illustrators as a way to connect with potential clients and audiences and to build brand awareness. In these rapidly evolving times, its mass availability and global accessibility has resulted in a tsunami of interpretations of what operating in the subject field of illustration might entail.

Some social media users see their accounts as a way to share their lifestyles, in which creating imagery plays a small part. For others, illustration may be recreational or research based, rather than a commercial activity. If your intention is professionally orientated, your social media posts should align with your other forms of promotion. Treat your professional social media as part of your business, scheduling regular time for updating and researching, focusing on what you want to achieve rather than becoming distracted by elements that are not relevant to your goal for that particular session.

Establish a boundary, your own set of guidelines to underpin what you post and the tone of your posts. For professional illustrators using social media channels primarily to market themselves, or to maintain a presence and share work, posting about their personal lives is unusual. Context is important but generally your family, friends and what you ate or drank in the pub might not have much relevance professionally. There are no rules, but look at what your competitors do. Responding to topics and subjects that you are interested in or have an affinity with will broaden your reach.

The more ephemeral nature of social media makes it a good mechanism to reveal how open you are to new ideas and challenges, to show your work as an evolving entity. Aim for a balance across all of your promotion between demonstrating a distinctive stylistic approach and revealing your creative attitude, challenging boundaries, experimenting with media and ideas, showing how much you love doing what you do.

It's not a productive use of your time to adopt a scattergun strategy with social media. Choosing the best platform for your work is a numbers game, but by focusing on two or three primary channels and investing effort into engaging more fully in those spaces, you are more likely to succeed in creating and building a cohesive and evolving presence on the web. Delete accounts that you're not using but use accounts where clients and other practitioners you admire in your areas of interest are active.

There is lots of advice available online, in books and published by marketing specialists and social media platforms themselves that can help you optimize the potential of social media to reach potential clients. As the web and attitudes to technology are continually evolving, you need to keep pace with where and how relevant members of the creative industry are engaging. This summarizes some of the advice given by clients and illustrators gathered in the research of this book.

3.22

3.22
See social media as a part of your promotional strategy and be easy to find

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‘Make yourself easy to discover. It really does help to build a strong social presence, and when you do so, let your personality shine through and share insights on your work. When I was researching illustrators for our past two British Red Cross artist collaborations (‘Kindness Will Keep Us Together’ and ‘I Have the Power’), I started with Instagram. I was looking for like-minded artists who were aligned with the charity’s values – kindness and compassion – so it helped to see how the artists communicated their artistic vision.’

Shirin Majid, past deputy executive creative director, VCCP Kin, UK

3.23

3.23
Artist: Molly Bland. Commissioned by: Shirin Majid, VCCP. Commission: One from a series of promotional posters for The British Red Cross charity, for which several illustrators were commissioned to interpret the same message graphically.

How to build a following and get to clients

- Join groups and forums that relate to what you do to drive interested members to your website.
- Research other illustrators getting the type of clients you are looking for. Analyse what types of things they post and how often. Who is following them? Who do they tag? Use this understanding to influence what you do on your own social media sites.
- Post the work you most enjoy doing – use the multiple-images feature to show back-up ideas and alternatives to the main post, to give context about who you are and what your interests are.
- Connect to clients' professional accounts, publishers, design groups and agencies, big and small.
- Be an active and thoughtful member of the communities you're aspiring towards. Comment on work you admire or connect to, join in conversations and threads, share interesting posts, talk about what you do, ask questions. Be open about and share your ambitions, and let your interests show through the tags you choose.
- Adding a variety of content can help to build your profile. Post back-up work, developmental drawings and sketchbooks; share videos of you making artwork; if relevant, make short tutorial videos of your process or upload podcasts of you interviewing other illustrators. Alongside regular posting of finished artwork, these can all expand your reach without distracting from the identity of what your brand is about.
- Aim for a balance by including content that reflects your lifestyle and expresses your interests. This can potentially lead you to clients and gaining contacts aligning to those interests.
- Keep posting. Don't get hung up about the number of 'likes' you receive or the followers you have, but act as if they are out there. Ask for opinion on different versions of what you're working on. Think about the comments you make and the tone you use.
- Make your bio appropriate so that it shows who you are and what you do or make in a way that suits the professional area you are aspiring towards.
- Establish a social media calendar that links into the wider world – reflect topical events, festivals and seasonal interests.
- Use analytics to work out who is looking at what you do and to establish the optimum time to post.
- Get endorsements from clients and people you work with and add these to your sites.

'Ultimately success breeds success – once an artist has got a first project out in the world, people who commission work will be able to see it; if I see something that I am impressed by, I will check out the artist – that's part of my job.'

Ben Norland, executive art director, Walker Books, UK

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PUT WORK OUT THERE

There are never any guarantees that more work will result from publication, even from exposure gained through the highest profile commission, but each image you share with an audience is an opportunity for you as an active practitioner to be seen and become identified as an illustrator.

As already mentioned, taking on projects for charities or organizations that may not have great budgets can provide opportunities for exposure, as can proactively engaging within fundraising events for charities and festivals, such as art auctions, art trails and community-based activities like workshops. You can also reach audiences by participating in exhibitions and showing in public spaces such as cafes and libraries. The marketing spin-offs from such opportunities, gained through press and radio coverage, can have a wide reach.

3.24

3.24
Artist: Jo Davies.
Commission: Installation of life-sized silhouette to promote 'Story from Stone', written by Vicky Lloyd-West and Kim Kneen. Published by Balliure Press. Sponsored by Culture Vannin.
Photo: Nell Davies.

Spotlight

Working in surface pattern – Annie Laughrin, art and creative learning project manager, Wild In Art, UK

Wild In Art's mandate states that they 'believe in the power of creativity to be a force for good in society'. This is realized through the creation of large-scale, illustrated sculptures that are installed within highly visible public spaces to create a trail. The decorated sculptures are commissioned internationally in collaboration with community partners, such as a charity or institution, to fundraise, enhance awareness and bring public engagement. As Annie explains, 'They bring joy to a place, bringing the community together and engaging the businesses who sponsor for the trail.'

What is the brief?

There is no one set process for working on charity projects. You could find yourself working directly with a charity, or through an agency or a company such as Wild In Art who co-ordinate the process. Each charity brief will have its own conditions and not all offer a fee. In this instance, the company work on behalf of the charity and clearly 'put the artists at the centre' of what they do. This translates into them advocating that illustrators are paid a fair rate, which currently equates to a fee equivalent to approximately five days' work per sculpture.

For this client, where the brief is essentially a pitch situation, there is no guarantee that applicants will be commissioned. Unlike most illustration jobs, the process begins with an open call for designs that is advertised through social media, the Wild In Art newsletter, their websites and opportunities listings such as the *Artist Newsletter*. Although the commission requires skills in surface pattern and working on a three-dimensional form, understanding narrative can be valuable in interpreting the typically universal themes of the trails.

These calls generally attract emerging and established artists and illustrators as well as community members and schools. Artists use a predefined 2D template to submit their designs, which are selected by a panel assembled by the event partner, charity or community organization, at the centre of the trail. This folio of designs is reviewed by sponsors for the final selection. As Annie explains, 'At this stage it's in the hands of the gods. I'm often surprised by what they select, but it's done in a fair and democratic way.'

What is to be gained from working on charity or community-based projects?

By doing work for charities or within community projects, an illustrator can make a valuable social contribution and such projects can provide excellent marketing collateral. The Wild In Art trails create a community buzz and procure huge media attention.

Sponsors, such as big corporate clients and the financial sector, rarely have the opportunity to work directly with visual artists and these collaborations can also lead to further paid commissions. Some clients use these opportunities as an excuse to barter down the fee. Wild In Art demonstrates that this exposure should be recognized as a bonus of the commission and not in lieu of a fee.

Site-based projects such as this can provide an excellent opportunity to network. For this client, all selected artists have to do is replicate their designs on the 3D model and a communal painting space is provided by the company to undertake this. As Annie reflects, 'This is an opportunity to learn from the guidance of more experienced artists and can lead to further collaborations. Painting spaces are a real melting pot for skill sharing, conversation and on-the-job learning. In some instances, artists come and stay. They may be offered a bursary towards accommodation and lots of artists do sofa surfing, which can be a lovely social bonus.'

If there are practical reasons, or you simply prefer working in your own studio, site-based work may not be something to consider. Many companies – commercial and corporate as well as charities – are conscious of equality, and aim to encourage artists, especially from under-represented groups. Wild In Art recognize the importance of being inclusive, aiming to attract the widest possible group of artists to develop a diverse social network.

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How does an illustrator deal with the business aspects of a commission?
Recognizing your value when working with clients, whether for a charity or in the commercial sphere, is imperative. Wild In Art acknowledge this: 'We rely on the skills of the creative community to help our business grow. Artists are a cornerstone of our company and will be treated as such.'

When undertaking any brief, whether for a charity or commercially, illustrators should establish clear guidelines before commencing the project. As Annie insists, 'We are adamant that our artists are treated fairly.' Consequently, the artists they commission receive a code of conduct, outlining the guiding principles of working on the commission.

Learning to negotiate your rights is vital. As Annie recommends when dealing with clients, 'Entrepreneurialism is required. Some artists can charm the birds off the trees. Be tenacious, believe your own hype.'

Suggestions based on advice from Annie on getting clients in charity-based work projects

- Illustration commissions can sometimes be found in unexpected places.
- 'As an artist you need to distance yourself from your creative work and be an entrepreneur.'
- 'Don't be defeated by rejection. It's part of the challenge of the creative industry.'

3.25A

3.25B

3.25C

3.25A
Artist: MrASingh.
Photograph by: *The Big Sleuth*, Birmingham.
Commission: *The Ink Detective with MrASingh*.
Artist painting directly onto the form of the bear, translating his selected two-dimensional design onto the three-dimensional sculpture from the trail, Wild In Art.

3.25B
Artist: Donna Newman.
Photograph by: © David Oates Photography.
Commission: *Bee in the City Manchester: The Tears of Ra*. An example of a completed commission in situ, from the trail, Wild In Art.

3.25C
Photograph by: Daniel Graves.
The Big Hoot – Birmingham, UK. A selection of owls reveals the scale of the final illustrated sculptures and the variety of designs included within the trail, Wild In Art.

3.26

GETTING AN AGENT

Many illustrators get more commissions or work in specific areas of a creative field because they have an agent who promotes them in a focused way; touting for work, developing relationships with clients, attending specialist trade and licensing fairs, and pitching for jobs on their behalf. In return, they take a percentage of the fees they obtain for their artists. Although agents don't usually take on illustrators who lack experience of commissions, you might be at a stage in your career where you've achieved a breadth of work, maybe attracted a large following and want to get more clients or commissions in a specific area of practice.

Although being taken on by an agent has no guarantee of getting more work, it is attractive to many illustrators. If you're taken on as part of an agent (artist rep) list, they will usually perform a variety of roles, which can include nurturing your practice, promoting your work, liaising with clients, negotiating the brief, handling the project and dealing with contracts and finance. If you're getting commissions but prefer illustrating and creating new work and not dealing with the business side of your career, an agent can act as a filter, ensuring that you can focus on your practice.

Gaining representation is competitive, so if you think you match the criteria for having an agent it's best to research widely and then target an agent best suited to what you do. You will be attractive if you fill a gap on their books, if you offer something distinctive but saleable, if you're consistent or have an excellent track record. It's unlikely they will want to duplicate an artist they already represent with a similar approach stylistically or you may end up competing for the same jobs. Agents clearly outline their submissions guidance on their websites – don't presume they all ask for the same things in the same format. If you think there is more than one agent that you are suitable for, approach each of them individually with a bespoke email that shows you have taken time to research what they do and understand their relevance to your work.

'Aside from the obvious – looking for a style that best fits the text I have – good communication and time management skills are a must. This is hard to gauge from a website or agent, but the industry's so small that often a colleague has either worked with them or knows someone who has. Often you get a vibe from your first interaction with the illustrator, too. I can't recommend getting an agent enough. It's almost like a stamp of approval, and means it's that much easier to find their work (as the internet is such a big place!). I do also find lots of illustrators through Instagram.'

Stephanie Jones, Senior Designer: Picture Books & Partnerships, Penguin Random House Children's Books, UK

Chapter summary

- See your self-promotion as a vital and ongoing part of your work as an illustrator.
- Research clients and the work they commission as an ongoing aspect of your practice.
- Building a network and getting known by clients can take a long time.
- Take note of who you contact and when, and what you send to them.
- Keep making new work and put it out there.
- Get objective feedback and constructive advice.

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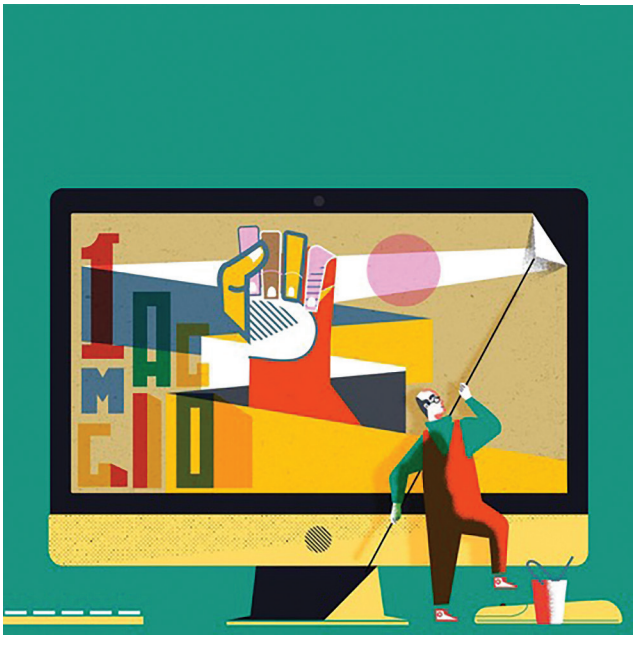
'New illustrators must keep up with their own promotion until they become recognized and then be recognized for being excellent at what they do.'

Ella Lupo, founder and agent at Purple Rain Illustrators, USA

3.27

3.28



3.26
Artist: Alexis Snell. Commission: Artwork from *The Bear in the Stars* by Alexis Snel. Senior designer: Stephanie Jones. Copyright © Penguin Books 2020. Reproduced by permission of Penguin Books Ltd.

3.27
Carrying on making new work and posting is important . Artist: Xavier Segers. Experimental images inspired by the constant news coverage of Covid-19 during lockdown. xaviersegers.com

3.28
Artist: Francesco Zorzi. Represented by: Purple Rain Illustrators. Francesco Zorzi is an award-winning Italian illustrator and visual designer based in New York City and in Tuscany, Italy. Former co-founder and creative director at Alias, and an architect at Studio Sintesi.

4 BEING YOUR OWN CLIENT

4.0
Artist: Fernando Cobelo.
Commission: Advertising for Peuterey.
Image kindly provided by Ella Lupo, agent at Purple Rain Illustrators.

4.0

4 BEING YOUR OWN CLIENT

How can authorial practice replace, complement or lead to commissioned work?

Key questions to ask yourself at each stage of developing your own creative enterprise

Market research

Webshops

Online marketplaces

Selling directly to customers

Manufacture

Advertising, marketing and promotion, supply and distribution, and business skills

Self-publishing

Working within an ethical framework

Applying for grants

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How can authorial practice replace, complement or lead to commissioned work?

This chapter considers ways to bypass clients to connect directly with consumers and an audience. It explores how illustrators can generate products and merchandise; participate in exhibitions, demonstrations, workshops, events and fairs; and create online content that can lead to income and greater levels of creative freedom.

It focuses on working in a more authorial capacity on self-initiated projects, and exploring ideas and subjects with personal resonance and value. It also suggests opportunities to diversify income or self-finance projects through avenues such as crowdfunding and undertaking grant applications.

RUNNING AN ILLUSTRATION ENTERPRISE

For most illustrators, undertaking self-initiated work is an important dimension of their practice. It provides a way to creatively pursue individual interests, explore themes and ideas that they are passionate about and do work that they love. Opportunities to experiment with materials and approaches can rejuvenate, providing new perspectives and leading to creative discoveries that can ultimately also feed commissioned work, keeping it fresh and vibrant.

Within many areas of design and publishing, an authorial approach is already commonplace. This means it's standard practice for illustrators to come up with ideas for books, stories, products and design ranges and submit them for consideration by clients. Entrepreneurs do all of this but cut out the commissioner completely and take on the supply process in its entirety, often including the manufacture, promotion and distribution of their own products.

Self-publishing comics, books or graphic novels and games; selling stationary, greetings cards, textiles, prints and artwork; or developing other merchandise that features illustration are examples of illustration enterprise.

The cheap and easy accessibility of digital printing onto a vast array of surfaces, as well as the availability of software and social media platforms, means that generating, promoting and distributing merchandise has never been easier. Digital media has also opened new possible revenue streams for illustrators to create content, such as offering online classes on skill share and monetizing video sessions on YouTube and Patreon.

If you are passionate about what you do and understand your audience, targeting a market directly with your products can provide greater creative freedom. Getting customers to directly buy what you create through self-publishing and production is an increasingly viable option to supplement the income you make from commissions, or as an alternative to getting client-led commissions.

There are also many illustrators with successful webshops and stalls at fairs, who see illustration as a hobby alongside other employment, rather than their main profession. Knowing that you have a creative outlet alongside other employment can be very fulfilling as well as financially rewarding. Whatever your approach may be, the payoff from being enterprising can be multiplied if the work you generate independently of clients leads to commissions for the type of work you love doing. Some illustrators see this as a win-win situation.

Whatever proportion of your practice you see your shop as being, running it will bring both challenges and bonuses.

4.1

'I would simply say, "get going!". These days, there is no reason to sit back and hope that juicy commissions will come your way. You have an opportunity to earn money directly from your customers and with freelance work being as insecure as always, a second income is never going to be a problem. I also find that work I produce for myself (to sell as prints) has a positive influence on commissioned work and vice versa.'

Jago Silver, award-winning children's book illustrator

‘Years spent designing commercial products for high street stores meant that I was attuned to that way of thinking. It was never so much a conscious decision to launch a business, as this was a path followed in order to freely express my ideas, free from clients or budgets or trends. I have always enjoyed having my online shop as a place to truly be creative and exploratory, within the confines of a sellable product! The rhythms of running an online shop – packing orders and visiting the post office – brings a lot of order to my life, which is a bonus as illustration can be so chaotic and unpredictable. I also enjoy that between illustration jobs I’m not panicking about where the next job will come from.’

Jacqueline Colley, illustrator and pattern designer, UK

4.2

4.3

‘It’s tough to always be creative and coming up with new ideas to stay on top of trends, and the rapid changing movements throughout social media and online platforms. Also, the admin – that sucks!’

Catherine Kay, founder of Katnipp Studios

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4.1
Artist: Jago Silver. Commission: EP cover for folk band Brother Sea. The organic, craft aesthetic created by the artist’s lino print suits the folk identity of the commission.

4.2
Artist: Jacqueline Colley. Commission: A riso print from a set of merchandise available in the artist’s online store, developed as part of the illustrator’s own product range. jacquelinecolley.co.uk

4.3
Artist: Katnipp Studios. The diversity of merchandise available in the Katnipp range includes posters, ceramics, enamel pins and stickers such as these. katnipp.com

TABLE 4.1
THE PROS AND CONS OF RUNNING AN ILLUSTRATION ENTERPRISE

Pros	Cons
Autonomy – you don't have to wait for a commissioner to provide a brief	You need to be proactive, know which ideas are commercially viable and possibly keep up with market trends You may produce work for which there is no viable market Working on client briefs at the same time may result in conflicting workloads
Freedom from the constraints of a brief	Requires self-motivation and organization
Profits from sales all go to you as creator	Requires financial outlay to set up the enterprise You are responsible for covering any losses
Potential to have greater financial control and stability over a longer period	There are possible fallow periods because of seasonal trends or peaks and troughs due to external factors
You are in control of your working conditions	You may need a space to make, store and possibly distribute products and to do product shots and films for media and promotional work
Flexible hours and work practices	You need to commit time to all areas of the production chain, including production, marketing and distribution This can lead to burnout
Products act as pieces of promotion, possibly reaching potential commissioners	Can pigeonhole an illustrator into a particular area of the market Some publishers won't consider licensing a book or product that has already been self-published or distributed
Income can be diversified by combining several ways of revenue generation to increase options for a stable and sustaining income stream	Maintaining several outlets can be time-consuming in disproportion to the financial gains
Opportunities for profit can be brought from your broader skill set, experience, personality and lifestyle	Can blur boundaries of personal and work life, with potential detriment to life balance Can be challenging for certain personality types or during certain phases of your life

What does it take to be an illustration entrepreneur?

Getting customers rather than clients requires you to be an entrepreneur. Running any independent business effectively will be a multilayered role and you will need to be confident across areas that have no creative opportunities. While your love of art and desire for creative fulfilment were probably incentives for becoming an illustrator, becoming a successful entrepreneur needs you to be also driven by the desire to make money in a broader commercial context.

A lot of the commercial experience needed to operate as an illustrator getting commissions will be transferable to the context of generating income through working outside of briefs. Natural dimensions of promoting yourself to potential clients as an illustrator include setting up your brand name, establishing a distinctive brand identity, and understanding markets and how you photograph, tag, categorize and describe your work. These skills are all valuable in getting customers in other commercial areas.

Being an entrepreneur demands a wider folio of practical, media and business skills and acumen. Being confident with aspects of market research, advertising and promotion, the production and distribution of your merchandise, and managing finances and working within a budget are prerequisite.

‘Have vision. Think about what you want to do, where you want to go, define those goals and then work towards them. It’s much easier to achieve something that you define than to stumble accidentally into success. It’s a journey. Knowing the destination that you want to reach will help you make decisions along the way. Vision – look for things that haven’t been done before and do them!’

Jim Rugg, award-winning cartoonist, USA

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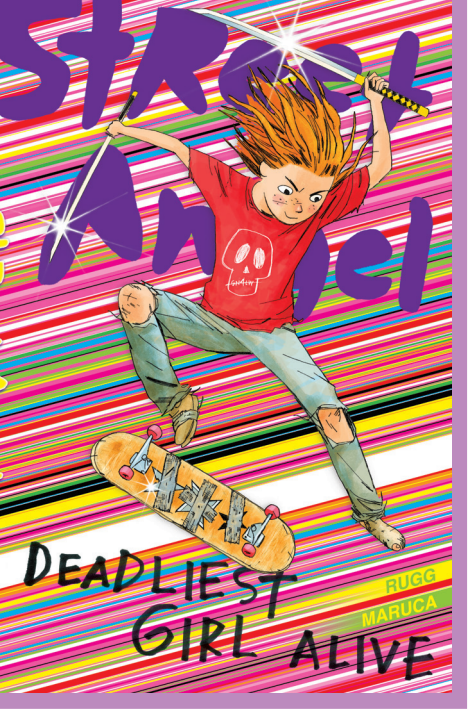

4.4
Artist: Jim Rugg. Commission: Front cover for one of the *Street Angel* comic-book limited series by Jim Rugg and Brian Maruca.

Q&A

Having a webshop alongside getting clients and commissions – Jessica Sharville, artist, UK

What are the main attractions to running a successful online shop?

Having an online shop selling products and ranges of items featuring my illustrations means I get to split my career nicely between commissions and sales. I really enjoy developing my shop and items to sell, but also when I'm busy with commissions it can tick over, even when I have less time to work on it.

The online shop means I can come up with designs and illustrations, which are different and exciting, from briefs I create myself. I also get to connect with my audience through social media and see people wearing my T-shirts and scarves or hanging my prints on their wall. It's a lovely feeling seeing your artwork loved and worn and in people's homes.

What are the greatest challenges of running your own enterprise?

There can be quite a few challenges people don't realize that come with running your own business. Staying organized with your tax and finances is key, but also being organized with your online shop and routine and spending your money wisely on merchandise that will bring you a good revenue without it being too big a risk.

Finding good suppliers for manufacturing can be particularly tricky. This sometimes feels like you are entering into a world you haven't explored before and you need to spend a lot of time researching, calling around and getting samples or reaching out to fellow illustrators to see if they have supplier tips. I always try and share my suppliers with other illustrators to help them out, as it can be a tricky road to find the right ones.

Trying to work out what your customers might want next is often challenging too. I try and communicate a lot through social media, asking my audience what they might want to see next, whether they would prefer a T-shirt or tote bag with that design or what themes they'd like to see me work with.

How do you promote your online shop and enterprise?

I've always really enjoyed social media and feel comfortable sharing a lot of my illustration, process and general life. Instagram has been the main way of promoting my shop and I've linked my shop to my main website so it's easy to find.

It's also really important to have a presence local to where you live. Having stalls at illustration fairs as well as selling through shops, and working with local businesses instead of just focusing on online clients, means that some of my best commissions have come from my local community.

What proportion of your income comes from commissioned work?

My commissioned work is forty-eight per cent of my income and my online shop brings in fifty-two per cent of my total income. It's important to me to keep my commissioned work going so I've always tried to treat it like fifty-fifty. Shop sales can really change month-to-month, so I try not to rely on just one of my two sources of income.

My shop income has a lot of expenses, so even though my turnover is higher from it, my expenses and outgoings are almost entirely for my shop compared to my commissions.

It's something worth considering. I try and use commission finances to fund my shop. If I'm releasing a new item and I need to spend a large amount on manufacturing, I aim to time it so I have income from a commission to fund this.

What advice would you give an early-career illustrator hoping to combine working with clients and running their own shop?

- Use your time wisely and get yourself organized and in a good routine. Use the time in-between commissions to concentrate on building your shop or coming up with new designs and products.
- Start off small by perhaps having things like prints, badges and stickers or low-cost items that you can pay small amounts to get in bulk. Keeping it DIY will keep your costs even lower. Creating things like lino prints or stamp-printed items such as cards, tote bags or T-shirts is a low-cost way of making something handmade for your shop. Try and reinvest money you've made on new items.
- Make sure you don't take on too much at once. I always prioritize my commissions and will delay making something for my shop if a commission runs over. Set yourself goals but also be realistic about what you can achieve on your budget or with your time.
- My last bit of advice is to tell the world about what you make and love, and your business will grow.

4.5A

4.5A
Artist: Jessica Sharville. The artist holding merchandise from her Jessica Sharville shop. Building a following through Instagram and appearing within promotional imagery can connect you directly to the potential market for your products. jessicasharville.com

4.5B

4.5B
Artist: Jessica Sharville. Many artists use their shops to apply imagery over a range of products and surfaces, such as these textile products.

4.5C

4.5C
Artist: Jessica Sharville. Creating prints from images is an easy way to begin developing products and can be especially successful if there is a collection or range that work together visually.

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DO I HAVE THE IDEAS AND SKILLS TO CREATE ONGOING PRODUCTS?

You might simply want to make a one-off book or a range of greetings cards to sell alongside commissioned work, but if you are intent on having a well-stocked shop you will need to develop an evolving range of products to keep your audience interested and wanting to return.

Be honest about how enthusiastic you are about this prospect. You will need the practical and technical skills to make quality items and to sustain the quality of your merchandise for the foreseeable future. Be realistic about how much you depend on briefs to generate ideas and how confident you feel about setting your own goals to make illustrated products that will lead to commercial sales.

WHAT ARE THE DISTINCTIVE QUALITIES OF MY BRAND?

If you have been operating as an illustrator, you will already know that the style of your work must be memorable to create an impact and get clients. The brand for your merchandise needs to perform the same role for your customers, attracting them to what you offer and shaping the perception of its quality and value. Start off with a name that suits what you offer and that your market will connect with.

4.6A
Artist: Danielle Corsetto. Commission: Spread from *Elephant Town*, a comic published online through Patreon by the artist Danielle Corsetto, and available to her subscribers. patreon.com/dcorsetto

4.6A

‘The key to monetizing your art is to make it *easy* for people to monetize it. You can have a Patreon account, but if you never let people know that you have it, or if it’s not listed under a recognizable name, they can’t find it. Being consistent with your branding, such as using the same spelling of your name or comic, is vital to connecting potential patrons to your page. I always say that you need to *let* people pay you; if they want to pay you, you have to make it easy for them to do so.’

Danielle Corsetto, illustrator and author of *Girls With Slingshots* comics, USA

‘My favourite way to promote my shop is in my YouTube videos, because I can show the behind the scenes of running a shop. From creating a new product, to seeing it made for the first time, to packing it for a customer. I can get feedback from my audience, see what colours they like or what they’re excited for. It also feels less “salesy”. I’m sure other artists and creators will relate to that feeling of not wanting to bombard people with something they’re selling over and over again (even though this is necessary too to make sales). But in my YouTube videos it feels natural to share my process, my experiments and where it’s gone wrong. I feel like people can also get to know me as I put in parts of my personality and snippets from my life.’

Emma Carpenter, independent artist

WHAT AM I COMMUNICATING ABOUT THE MERCHANDISE MY BRAND PRODUCES?

Your brand communicates the values and unique selling points of what you offer. It is the identity of your company that encompasses and suggests what you do. Make sure it’s something your target audience can relate to.

This should permeate all your marketing and communication. It’s the image you use as a logo, the choice of colours you apply across your website and marketing, the design of your invoice, the message you put into a package when you wrap a purchase, the tone of your emails and whether you add an emoji.

DO I HAVE ENOUGH SKILLS OR BUDGET TO CREATE A BRAND IDENTITY AND APPLY IT CONSISTENTLY ACROSS MY PROMOTION AND MERCHANDISE?

If you have branded and promoted yourself well as an illustrator, the work has already been done. You can apply this to build on your reputation as an illustrator to promote your illustration products and services.

It’s worth looking at how other successful illustrators and independent producers brand themselves. Reflect on any purchases you have made from other illustration enterprises. How did any communication, the product packaging and tone of emails, as well as the images of service on offer, influence your experience as a consumer? In a world in which feedback matters, these elements of the transaction will add to the perceived value of your product and enhance customer satisfaction.

4.6B

4.6B
‘Deep Sea Reader’ by Emma Carpenter. Emma Carpenter works to commission as well as creating products for her own online shop, emmacarpenterart.com. She uses YouTube to share her process and products.

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WHAT IS THE AUDIENCE AND MARKET FOR THE THINGS I MAKE?

Market research is going to be essential to ensure that there will be sufficient demand for your merchandise before you commit to producing it in bigger quantities. Becoming aware of what's already out there and where your products will fit into the existing marketplace will help gauge the commercial viability of your range. This will also inform many of your key decisions, such as where to target your promotion and pricing what you offer so that your products are competitive and appealing.

WHO WILL BUY THEM? WHEN? FOR HOW MUCH? IN WHAT QUANTITIES?

Use social media platforms to canvas opinion about your products. Questionnaires or asking questions directly are ways of gathering feedback that can inform the development of your range of merchandise.

You can test the market and limit your financial outlay by creating small batches, or making one-offs or limited editions. Through monitoring sales results and establishing which are the most popular of your items, you can work towards building cohesive product ranges that may eventually lead towards mass production or selling wholesale to other retail outlets.

WHERE WILL CUSTOMERS FIND MY PRODUCTS?

There are several options available to sell your wares online. While it might be tempting to try them all, it's worth considering which will best suit your products and lifestyle and weigh up the time required to run each of them against what you will gain.

'I think the main benefits are the freedom and control you get on deciding what you wanna sell, how and when you want to sell it. It's incredibly rewarding to witness the whole process, from the early stages of sketching, through design and testing, and then seeing people using/wearing it. I also like aligning my business with what's important to me; ethical production, recycled/environmentally friendly packaging, repurposing second hand clothes, and supporting other women-owned businesses.'

Fran Meneses (also known as Frannerd), Chilean-born illustrator, USA

Webshops

Many illustrators independently create and launch their own bespoke online shop, usually as a part of their website. This integrated website option provides complete autonomy and control, allowing the illustrator to expand or alter their range at any time and to connect with their consumers.

As well as being responsible for manufacturing the merchandise, with this route you need to attract customers independently, to reach the market for your products and establish consistent traffic to your store. You will also need to deal with orders and customer relations as well as distributing your products to customers.

For illustrators who are well established in appropriate communities, or with a strong online media presence with a large following of potential customers, selling directly to them may ultimately become the most successful way of operating as an independent commercial enterprise.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED TO SET UP A WEBSHOP:

- convincing products that are appropriately priced
- branded web banners and a brand name that relates to the product, is suitable for your market and links to your social media handles
- promotion that reaches customers likely to buy your stock
- a clear 'shop' that shows what is offered in an appealing and easy-to-navigate way
- easy-to-use systems for customers to order the product
- packaging that reflects the brand
- branded labels where appropriate
- excellent communication with customers, pre or post sale
- a system for payment.

4.7

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4.7
Artist: Fran Meneses. Commission: Self-published comic. The Patreon account gives Frannerd the opportunity to pursue her own creative ideas and share her artwork directly with her followers. frannerd.cl

Q&A
Running an online shop – Fran Meneses (Frannerd), illustrator, USA

What are the greatest challenges of running your own online shop?

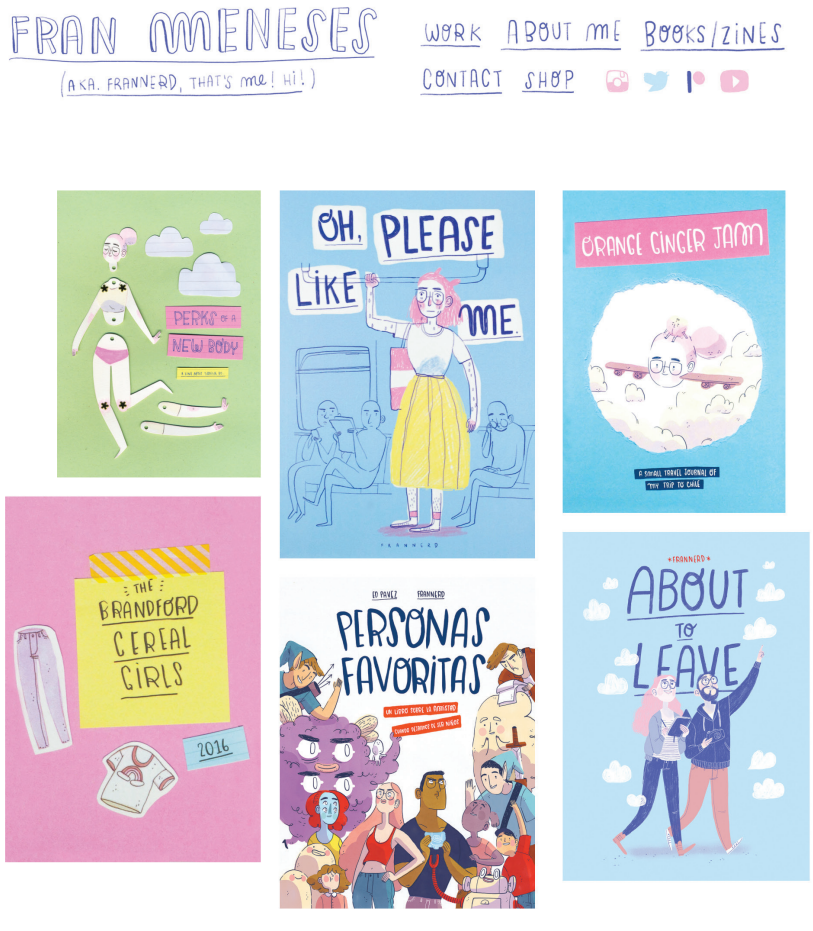
Getting used to timings – I wasn't used to them in the beginning. Creating products from scratch (from sketching to final printing and shipping) takes a long time, so you have to be good at planning ahead and be prepared for delays. Also accept that just like there are good busy months (back to school in September and Christmas sales in November–December), there are also slow/quiet months; in the beginning this used to freak me out, but now I found those months are great for designing and planning.

There's a lot of time that goes into keeping the business running, like customer support, post office runs, social media, accounting; so as a business owner you have to wear a lot of different hats, be willing to learn new things every day (and as you go) and be resilient to always emerging issues and setbacks.

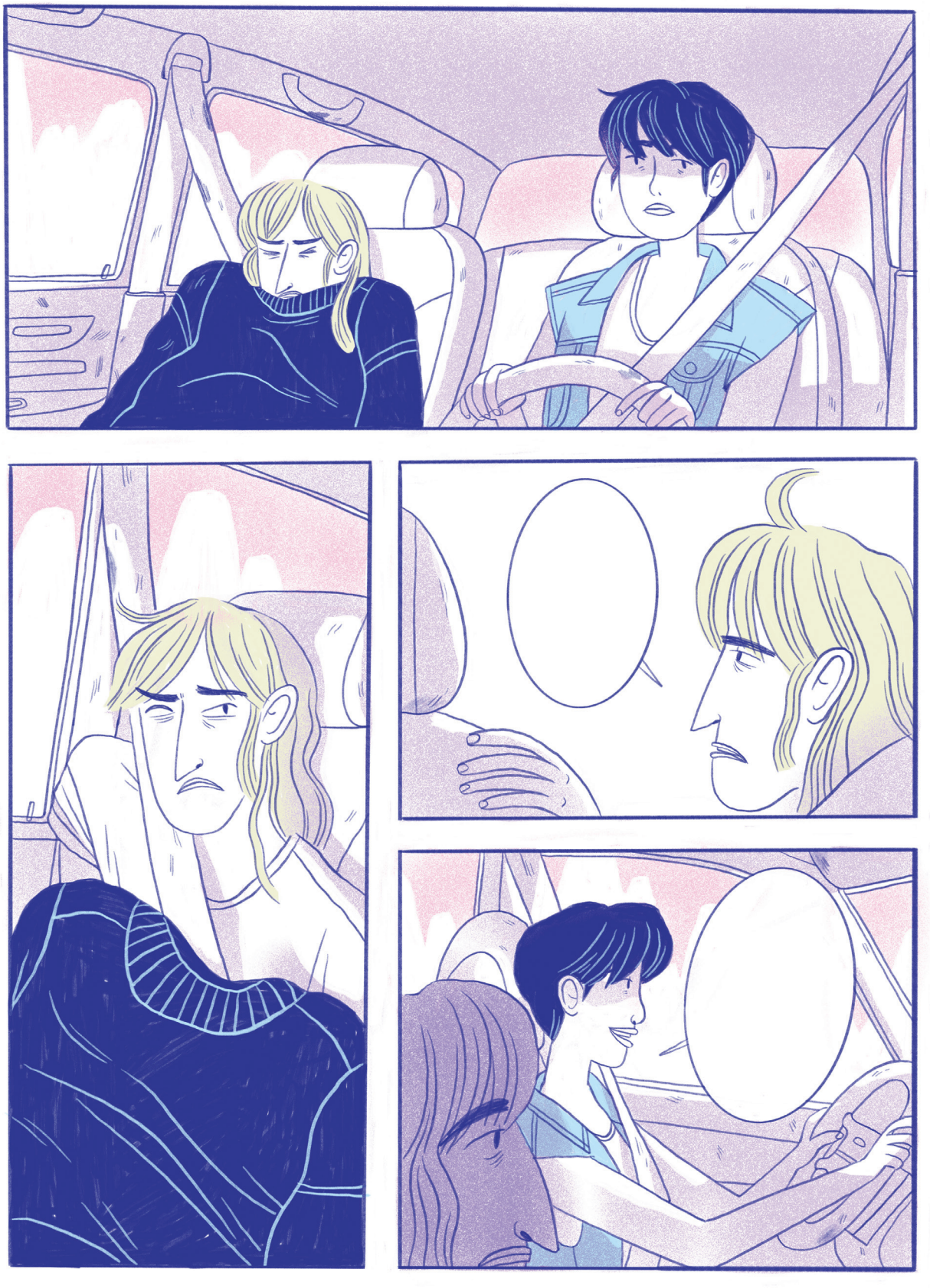
It's okay to keep your store closed most of the year and open it for a limited amount of time. I don't know why, but in the early stages I thought my store *had* to be open all year round, launching new products every month. Also, if you know which ones are your hectic store months, don't schedule commission work during those months.

Finally, in the beginning I was so scared of running out of commissions that I said yes to everything. So between the store and client work, I never had time for myself or for improving my art. It's okay to say no to others, so you can say yes to yourself. As artists, all inspiration and motivation comes from good mental health, so resting is paramount.

4.8



4.8
Artist: Fran Meneses. Commission: Sketchbook exploration can lead directly to commissions and become published as pieces of artwork in their own right.



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4.9
Artist: Fran Meneses. Commission: *Erinyes*, a sci-fi graphic novel written by Ed Pavez, illustrated by Fran Meneses.

Online marketplaces

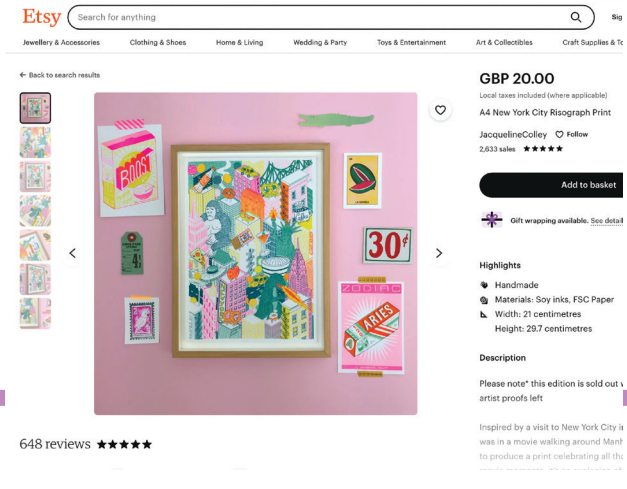
Setting up an outlet via an established online marketplace that specializes in creative merchandise (such as Etsy, Not On The High Street, etc.) is an alternative to having a standalone, branded webshop. With established companies, the illustrator has the security of knowing that their products will be considered by a wider community of people searching for particular products or browsing in a more general way. Attracting the interest of these customers can also lead to greater traffic to your own shop.

Merchants such as Etsy have clear and useful guidelines covering setting up and establishing an online outlet through them, and there is a lot of useful online advice for setting up any online venture. It's worth doing a comparison and determining which platform best suits your product, fits in with your overall goals and will best reach your target audience. Factor the financial aspects into your decision making. Some platforms entail the illustrator paying to list each item and they charge a fee per sale, while others charge a monthly as well as per-sales fee.

Photographing your products in a professional and appealing way is vital. Research online about how to best tag and describe them and how to boost your ranking on listings to make the most of organic searches and maximize the potential of customers viewing them.

MUST DOS FOR SETTING UP IN AN ONLINE MARKETPLACE

- Write compelling and clear product descriptions so that your consumers know what they can expect, in a style that suits your product and brand.
- Make sure you have the right titles, tabs and descriptions to get you found in organic searches.
- Make sure your store name and shopfront are appropriate for your product.
- Be aware of seasons and trends and stock your shop appropriately.
- Make sure your product is clearly photographed and well lit.
- Make sure you list enough items – aim to build a good inventory and keep adding to it.
- Give thought to packaging and shipping to avoid items becoming lost or damaged in transit.
- Add personal touches suitable for your brand, such as adding a freebie to a package.
- Customer follow up is important – check everything was okay with the transaction and aim to build up good reviews.



4.10
Online emporiums such as this can lead to growing a market for your products, testing new ranges and establishing your brand.

PASSIVE INCOME

For certain types of products, being positioned in an online emporium (such as Society 6 and Redbubble), where your items will come up in a search, can lead to sales from customers that might not usually know of your work. These marketplaces typically involve the artist applying their imagery virtually to a range of products such as ceramics, textiles, clothing and prints (or for print-on-demand publishing, such as uploading a book via Amazon). Images and short descriptions are then posted and the product is available to buy.

Because these are print-on-demand services, there is no requirement for the illustrator to incur the financial outlay necessary for setting up a bespoke shop of their own. Most aspects of the supply-chain process will be bypassed by selling merchandise in this way. When there is a sale, the site manufactures and ships the product to customers, so the illustrator doesn't need to handle payments or distribution.

This is a low-risk option, especially for illustrators who aren't well recognized or who want to avoid manufacture costs. The artist is automatically paid a percentage of each sale, usually on a monthly basis, and revenue is relatively lower than would be achieved if selling directly to the public. For most items, you would need a high turnover to make substantial earnings, but this is a good way to test out which items customers are drawn towards.

The analytics available from online emporiums, such as information about which of your competitors are most visited, which of their products are most successful and which are their top reviews, can be valuable in understanding trends and your market.

Selling directly to customers

Whether you lease premises, hold a stall at a weekly market, participate in a specialist fair or do a pop-up shop, a physical retail space can require a higher level of commitment and financial outlay than e-commerce. Although all profits from sales go directly to you, there are usually set-up and running costs involved that need to be costed against your income as well as your own time spent at the event. Before deciding to sell directly to customers, you should research the commercial viability of your product to be confident that it suits the demographic of potential customers in the retail space.

Alongside producing merchandise of consistent quality that has audience appeal, being confident that there will be enough footfall to generate a market and how you deal with the public face to face will contribute to your success in selling directly. This requires a certain type of confidence and personality, and it won't suit everybody. For some illustrators, this social contact is one of the big appeals of selling directly. Being visible in a community can stimulate interest in your products as well as providing an opportunity for you to observe how customers react to your merchandise.

4.11

4.11
Artist: Emma Carlisle. Commission: Photo of merchandise from the artist's online shop. This is an editioned print developed from a location drawing. emmacarlisle.com

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THINGS YOU WILL NEED FOR A PHYSICAL SHOP OR STALL

- A cohesive range of products.
- A practical way of transporting merchandise.
- Good stocks of your items.
- Confidence in displaying your products so that they attract customers without wastage from physical browsing.
- Branded signage that relates to your merchandise.
- Promotional materials that link to your website and social media.
- Retail bags and wrapping that reflect your brand.
- Branded price tags and labels.
- Public liability insurance.
- An appropriate means of taking payment.
- A friendly approach.

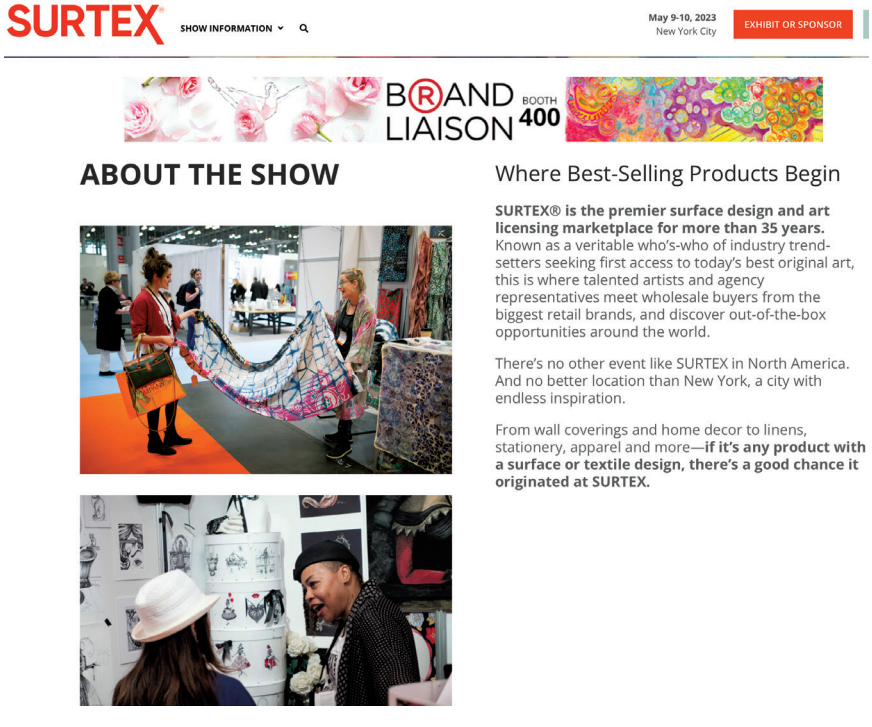
SHOWS, FAIRS AND FESTIVALS

Shows, fairs and festivals also provide opportunities for direct sales and marketing – often to the trade as well as to the general public. The most recognized of these include large-scale international professional venues where the illustrator showcases samples of their products directly to retailers, manufacturers or publishers internationally. The objective of many of these large-scale events is for the illustrator to offer licences of their artwork to manufacturers or publishers, or to set up deals to supply wholesalers or other retailers directly, whereas smaller-scale fairs and festivals tend to involve smaller-scale, direct public sales.

The calendar for high-profile trade fairs and festivals is well established, especially in areas such as greetings cards and surface pattern, children's publishing, textiles, crafts, concept art and comics, where there are many frequent and recognized events held internationally. Be aware that the cost of hiring a booth to participate as an exhibitor in these larger professional shows and festivals can be prohibitive to emerging enterprises.

Attending fairs and festivals that include a density of other creative enterprises provides a rich opportunity for intensive market research. If you think being an exhibitor could expand your business by reaching a broader clientele, it's advised that you firstly attend as a visitor to see how other exhibitors operate, which booths attract most interest and the quality and types of merchandise that are on show. The migration of many events from physical venues to online has meant that trade fairs and festivals are evolving and many offer a hybrid experience, which means that they are increasingly accessible.

4.12



4.12
Research which fairs suit your product and ambition and see them as an opportunity to do first-hand research into what brands are successful, what products are on offer and where you might position yourself in the market.

Manufacture

HOW DO I MAKE THE PRODUCTS TO SELL?

Having to make a product in its entirety demands a more expansive skill set than working for a client. When you work on a commission, many of the production decisions – such as the kind of paper your images will be printed onto, the selection of any accompanying type and the quality of print – will usually be out of your control. When you are responsible for manufacturing items, you will need to make decisions about their production qualities. Whether designing the layout of a zine, understanding how images are transferred onto fabrics, making editions or simply producing quality prints, your knowledge and decisions will have an impact on the quality of your merchandise and possibly its saleability.

‘I’m primarily an illustrator, and running an online shop is a completely different field where you learn as you go along. Drawing as well as managing all the administrative aspects of a shop can be scary but can be done little by little, and it’s always possible to ask for help from people in the same kind of professional situation. The most important thing is to know how to manage your own time.’

Jenny Lelong, illustrator, France

4.13

4.13
Artist: Jenny Lelong. Commission: Washi tapes ‘Love from Japan’ and ‘Yokoso’. Merchandise from the artist’s shop. jenny-lelong.com

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WHAT QUANTITIES DO I NEED TO PRODUCE, HOW DO I MAKE IT AND DO I HAVE FUNDS TO GENERATE STOCK?

Although when you first start up you might go down the self-made route using your own printer to make items, remember that you are working with a market in mind. Deciding to produce a cheap version of your merchandise might alienate the customers you are hoping to attract in the longer term. Handmade can itself be part of your brand and an attractive quality, but if you are aiming to make larger qualities or have a large product range, having stock made externally might be an option.

4.14
Artist: Emma Carlisle.
Commission: Photo of merchandise from artist's online shop. Emma sells original paintings and drawings alongside prints.
emmacarlisle.com

Because creating stock requires financial investment, doing research, getting samples, and taking advice from the illustration communities you belong to will be key to getting both good samples and high-quality items within your budget. This will take time and should be factored into your schedule so that you are confident of your stock quality and levels if you are aiming to attend fairs or to cater for seasonal demands.

Working out how much profit you could make per item and projecting possible sales over time will be vital to sustaining your enterprise. Working out what to buy in bulk can have a dramatic impact on print costs where it is generally cheaper to buy in larger volumes. Market research and creating small batches or editions can inform these decisions to monitor which of your products are most successful before committing to large print runs. Most printers will have an option for you to buy a proof or sample before you commit to a larger print run and this can be used to both check the quality of the produce and also to use for market research.

If you are supplying stock to other retailers or a wholesaler, you will need to establish a realistic price per item. Although selling your produce through a retailer or to a wholesaler may bring you a high volume of sales, you still need to have a clear profit margin for yourself. If you are simultaneously selling merchandise through your own sites, you also need to define a sale price that doesn't undercut what you offer. This might be a fixed percentage added to the manufacture cost so that you have a clear gain per item. Avoid a sale or return situation and aim to get as many upfront orders as possible to establish a realistic print run (and benefit from bulk print or manufacture costs).

4.14

'I used to try to make as much money as possible by buying things cheaply – such as cheaper packaging, cheaper stickers. What I've had to learn is that sometimes buying the cheapest might not always be the best thing to do. Spending more money can be a form of promotion in itself as people share or show friends who might also spend money if they're impressed by the quality.'

Emma Carlisle, webshop and Patreon host, UK

Advertising, marketing and promotion, supply and distribution, and business skills

HOW DO I REACH THE POSSIBLE AUDIENCES FOR MY PRODUCTS? HAVE I GOT SUFFICIENT SKILLS OR BUDGET TO SUSTAIN MY MARKETING AND PROMOTIONAL NEEDS OVER TIME?

The scale of your enterprise will dictate the approach you take to promoting it. Successful advertising of your products and building brand awareness are vital to growing and sustaining any commercial enterprise. Social media is important to drive traffic to your selling sites. Regular posting and sending email newsletters to past customers about your products, what you're developing and where you're sending your merchandise will keep your brand name out there and can lead to return customers.

GETTING REVIEWS AND MEDIA ATTENTION

Being popular on social media, building a media presence, and the products themselves if they have links to the illustrator's online shops, are all forms of free advertising. The products the illustrator creates must be attractive to this audience and getting positive reviews from them counts a lot in persuading future customers to commit to a purchase. Making the entire customer experience high quality can itself lead to future sales. Inviting customers to provide constructive feedback, adding thank you notes to their purchases or including small freebies can add to making their purchase as pleasant as possible.

Some illustrators find that sending samples to stylists and influencers can lead to exposure such as press or media reviews. If you are approaching retailers and wholesalers, having a well-styled and appropriately branded sample pack – including an example of your product and an inventory of the products you have available with appropriate brand and product information outlining your price list – will set the right impression.

HOW WILL I GET THE PRODUCTS TO THE CONSUMERS?

If you are selling online, the customer will expect to cover the cost of post and packaging but it's your responsibility to ensure the goods arrive undamaged. You will need to develop a secure system for packaging and posting your products that is efficient and cost-effective. If you are selling outside of your own country you need to be conscious of any export regulations and may need to consider parcel tracking to ensure delivery.

BUSINESS SKILLS

Dealing with finances can be a daunting aspect of running an enterprise. Ultimately the goal is to make a profit from your business. The profits you generate will go to you as the creator, but you're also responsible financially for setting the business up and covering any losses if it doesn't go well. There is an array of online advice about setting up a small business and there are accounting tools that can help organize your finances and streamline the process.

- Get advice, do a short course – become confident with the business side of things.
- Do proper costings for your products – research your competitors and don't price yourself out of the market.
- Keep track of everything – expenses and sales.
- Do a business plan – your income will have highs and lows. Aim to work out when these are and budget for new stock and advertising and promotion costs, as well as your own income.

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Working as an entrepreneur illustrator – Carolyn Gavin, illustrator, Toronto, Canada

Carolyn Gavin sells her illustration directly, off the shelf, as paintings, prints or collections of surface pattern work that clients buy under licence.

Why decide to work independently?
There are two main factors to consider before embarking on your own enterprise. Firstly, be confident with your craft and understand how to make work – consistently and of quality. As Carolyn reveals, 'Getting to be the best at what you do is really important.' Secondly, generate artwork and keep motivated, even when business is slow. 'Instagram helps me develop a very disciplined approach, even when I'm not feeling disciplined. Some days I'm not feeling it, but I have to post every day.' Doing promotion, keeping on top of the business aspects of the enterprise and focusing on selling work are imperative.

For some illustrators, such as Carolyn, bypassing clients entirely has evolved over time rather than being a conscious decision from the outset. She reflects about her decision more than twelve years into her practice. 'The enquiries were about my own work. It made me realize I didn't need anybody else. Now I only take on a commission if I'm totally in love and enthralled by the project.'

Whether just starting out or having worked in other contexts, other professional experiences can help an illustrator to acquire valuable skills that lead to developing their own enterprise. Carolyn reveals, 'It's a long process to get to this point; it doesn't happen overnight.'

What does the business entail?
To be confident of the financial viability of running a webshop – whether you're aiming to be autonomous or having an enterprise as one stream of your practice – you need to be sure that what you 'stock' as your 'product' will have market appeal. Carolyn mixes her approach: 'I have a huge body of work – so people come to me directly and licence what I have already. I spread my income by painting commissions and people also purchase my existing work as prints or original artwork.'

Using social media as a testing ground for new work and ideas is a way to gauge the audience and market for it, especially before committing to make a product or larger edition. This approach works for Carolyn, 'Instagram is so handy for that – you can do it in so many ways. Post and ask if people like it. Ask if they would buy it. Do a questionnaire on your story.' Doing test pieces, such as one-off textiles, or ceramics for surface pattern, and building up to larger print runs if the demand exists, also limits financial liability.

One aspect of running an illustration enterprise is to keep track of what will

4.15A

4.15B

4.15A–B
Artist: Carolyn Gavin. Merchandise from Carolyn Gavin – her vibrant imagery is used on a range of textile-based surfaces that she sells online as well as through licensing. carolyngavin.com

bring in the best income: is creating bespoke images such as paintings or prints more profitable than having a small range that sells in bigger quantities or a diverse collection? As Carolyn reflects, in her case, 'The business side of things is woven into what I do. I learned it along the way. It's no fun doing taxes and emailing people and negotiating, but it's a part of it. There's a cliché that artists can't do the business side of things.'

How do you make work that you like while creating a market for it?
Working without a client can be liberating, as Carolyn suggests, 'I'm in complete control of the process. I make the decisions without having to answer to anybody, which I like. It's empowering.' The potential to be open or responsive to the market in the work you create is one of the benefits of not waiting to be commissioned.

Carolyn explains that her own decisions result from experimentation and openness. 'One thing can lead to another – to a bunch of spin-offs.' She generates a lot of work that suits surface pattern and decorative formats. As she suggests, 'Once you've developed a clear style it's not difficult to create a cohesive range of items. You can pull from so many different directions and bring something amazing together into one collection.'

Making sure the products reach the market and are easily available to purchase is pivotal to commercial success. Achieving this exposure need not incur expensive advertising or marketing. Carolyn reflects, 'Instagram for me has been an unbelievable tool. It's instant and vast and has the potential to carry you further than you can imagine. It's a gallery of my latest and best work. You never know who's looking and where it might lead you.'

How should I make the business work day to day?
Being organized is key. Being aware of what time is available to develop an enterprise and translating this into earnings will take time. Establishing routines will optimize the schedule and maximize the hours available to both create and promote until an artist begins to profit from sales of their merchandise.

Good communication with customers is an aspect of any brand success and needs to be factored into the workload. As Carolyn reveals, 'It's organic, but each week I plan what I will share on social media, the titles of the pieces and what I will say in the posts. I tend to answer emails in the mornings. Sometimes it takes the whole day to get the creative process going.'

Posting and packaging work is also part of the service and allocating a set time to do this well is the final aspect of the quality process of the brand experience.

Suggestions based on Carolyn's advice on being your own client:

- It doesn't happen overnight. Keep working at it and doing it every day.
- Get good at what you do. Never stop learning. Have faith that something is going to happen.
- Nobody is waiting for you. *You* have to do the work.

'Now I'm completely on my own it's a really nice feeling being able to do it all myself without having to answer to anyone. It's been a huge amount of work and my life has evolved to take me to where I am today.'

Carolyn Gavin, entrepreneur illustrator, Canada

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WORKING FOR SELF-PUBLISHERS

In addition to illustrators creating their own publications such as children's books, comics, zines, apps and graphic novels, and selling and distributing them through their online shops, crowdfunding or Patreon sites, self-publishing is also a growing area for potential commissions. Rather than being approached by an art director who works for a publisher, design group or agency, the illustrator will work directly with the author or content generator who will also be responsible for financing the project. The author may have decided to bypass the publisher entirely to produce their book independently as an ebook or a physical publication. Other authors want to create a polished dummy or proof of concept to submit to traditional publishers.

Opportunities for this kind of project are often listed on social media sites, writing blogs and within illustrators' and writers' communities and forums. Because each transaction will depend on the scale and ambition of the project, it is wise to judge each opportunity carefully before committing to it.

To consider if you are approached to work on a self-published book, zine, comic or app:

- What expertise does the author have of commissioning illustration?
- What does the author understand about art direction or the part an illustrator plays in interpreting and working with a text?
- What is planned for the editing, design, production, marketing, sales and distribution of the book or product?
- How will your fee be calculated and where will the finances for this come from?
- If royalties are offered, how will sales be determined and what guarantee is there that they will be paid in the future? Would a one-off fee would be more appropriate?
- At what stages of the project will the fee be paid?
- Will the author issue a contract to outline terms? If not, you must produce your own contract.
- What is the timescale for the project and are there clear publication dates?

CROWDFUNDING A PUBLISHING PROJECT

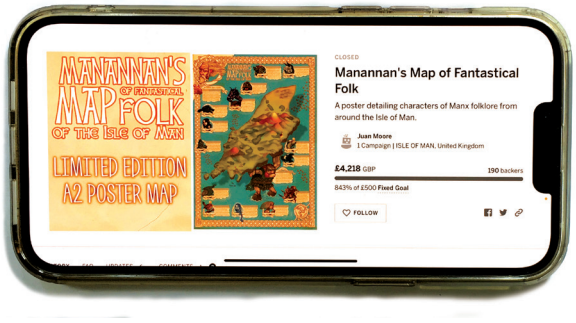
Platforms such as Patreon can facilitate publication of self-authored illustrative works through subscription crowdfunding. In this model, for a specified monthly fee, subscribers gain access to tiers that provide content ongoing each month, whether pieces of artwork or products such as prints, comics, games or books created by the illustrator, often as well as some form of interaction with the illustrator.

On sites such as Kickstarter and Indiegogo, illustrators outline a one-off project with a specified outcome that they will take forward and produce if their financial target is reached. Writing the campaign, deciding what is on offer for different tiers or amounts of sponsorship, and making it affordable and attractive all add to the success of these kind of projects.

Any crowdfunding project is likely to be more successful for illustrators who have already established a large social media community or are confident that they can make an impact with their promotion and direct an audience to their campaigns. This means that there can be a lot of preparation and a long build-up before even launching a crowdfunding project – it isn't a quick, easy or certain revenue stream.

4.16A

4.16B



4.16A–B
Mannannan's map was a successfully crowdfunded illustration self-published by illustrator and animator Juan Moore.

‘I started *Girls With Slingshots* (GWS) with no expectations; I started the comic because I love making comics and I knew I’d only make them if I had people to share them with, and by setting deadlines for myself. I would have kept making GWS twice a week, even if I only had a few hundred readers. I didn’t expect the strip to become my full-time job, but once I had enough readers and had tested out book sales to see if they would do well (they did), I quit taking commissioned work from clients, and started creating GWS comics five times a week and giving the strip my full attention.’

Danielle Corsetto, illustrator and author of *Girls With Slingshots* comics, USA

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Artist: Danielle Corsetto. Commission: Image from *Elephant Town*, a comic published online through Patreon by the artist Danielle Corsetto, and available to her subscribers. patreon.com/dcorsetto

Using crowdfunding

- Make sure you have a market – an audience who will commit and invest money to what you are offering, even if that entails waiting for it to be produced.
- You will need to devise a pitch that is appealing and accessible to your market.
- Being known in communities and networks is going to be vital to the promotion of your project within the specified timeframe. Make sure these connections are established ahead of the campaign.
- Costing your project realistically and understanding the market value of what you offer is essential.
- Be clear about what you plan to produce and be sure you can deliver on what you offer.
- Establish a schedule that is achievable so that you can deliver a quality outcome that honours the pledges.

UTILISING SKILL-SHARING CHANNELS

As well as artwork and image-based products, the demand for skill sharing online through content providers such as YouTube, Skillshare and Patreon, which offer members exclusive access to podcasts or videos, has also created new potential income streams for illustrators.

Successful activities via skill-sharing channels

- Offering tutorials.
- Illustrators talking about the ideas and stories behind their artwork.
- Reviewing materials (this can also get you freebies supplied by companies).
- Professional tips about working in the industry.

These avenues allow illustrators access to markets interested in learning about materials, processes and business, or seeking to connect with other practitioners and to be part of illustration communities. You need to have built a following or be well-recognized to optimize from these benefits.

If you build good numbers of followers, one of the main benefits that content creation sites such as successful Patreon or YouTube channels can provide is as a recurring income stream. Regular income makes it more feasible for illustrators to focus entirely on making the work that they most enjoy without the constraints of commercial briefs, but there will be a long-term commitment to generating content.

The pros and cons of content creation

- You need to have skills, experience or a lifestyle that an audience will be interested in paying to share.
- To make a decent income you need a large audience who will buy into your projects over a sustained period.
- To produce content, you will need technical skills such as being savvy about lighting, sound and editing videos.
- To build up and keep your audience interested, you need to post frequently and regularly and have new things to post about.
- Producing content can be time-consuming with little pay-off at the beginning: it takes the same time to prepare a post for one viewer as for one million.
- When you build numbers, you have opportunities for sponsored content – brands want to work with illustrators with large followings to co-produce content.
- Illustrators with a big audience can earn advertising revenue.
- The exposure gained through such activities is a good way to connect with new clients.
- Illustration is a niche area, so as a small YouTuber you have less opportunity to make a big income as there's a smaller overall potential for views.

‘There are two big benefits of having a Patreon account. The first one is to connect deeper with a smaller group of people, having a community who share your same values, are all joined by wanting to connect and do art, and plus there’s no algorithm! And the second one is the ability to work on long-term projects; when there’s financial stability, comes certainty and the chance to plan ahead of time.’

Fran Meneses (also known as Frannerd), Chilean-born illustrator, USA

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Artist: Fran Meneses. Commission: Image from the artist’s Patreon session. Being a brand can entail sharing aspects of your life and creative process. patreon.com/frannerd

Spotlight

Working with a Patreon channel – Emma Carlisle, illustrator and Patreon host

Emma Carlisle describes her practice as 'having fingers in so many pies', combining lecturing, illustrating picture books, releasing individual artwork for exhibition and running an online shop selling prints.

What does Emma offer on Patreon?
As a Patreon host, Emma provides a range of activities based on her location drawing, suggesting materials and approaches and sharing her passion for the subject and process of creating artwork based on the landscape. 'I'm always happy to talk about all the creative things I'm doing.'

She also sets up activities for her followers to engage with independently of her, a role that she describes as 'establishing a community as well as sharing skills and advice'.

How did she build up a Patreon account?
Emma took the risk of having a year off commercial work to immerse herself in landscape painting and drawing. Although she didn't have the intention of starting a new business venture, this experience was the precursor to establishing her Patreon account. For her, creatively, this provides the freedom to draw and paint at a larger scale, work in sketchbooks and be experimental outside of commercial briefs. It led to a commercial decision: what she describes as 'the realization that I was in charge – I could do whatever I wanted to do'.

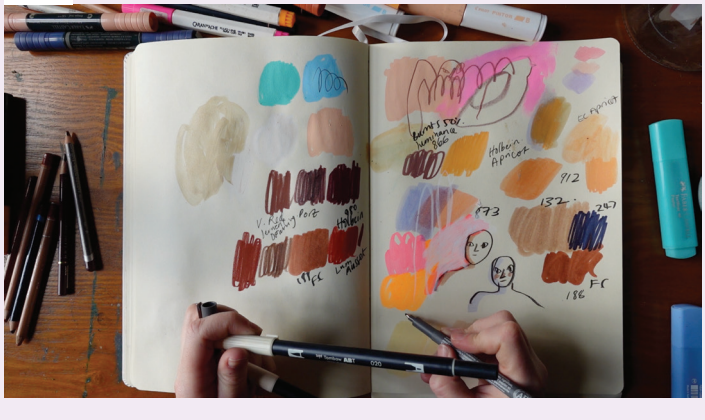
At the time of launching her Patreon channel, Emma had already built a following approaching 30,000 on Instagram and was using the social media platform to share her creative journey, interacting with her audience to build up dialogue. The development of her own Patreon was driven by this experience. 'People messaged me saying they were enjoying following my journey and following the evolution. I wanted to take the idea of a supportive community that I had myself and replicate that onto Patreon.'

Emma's decision to post honestly – showing her vulnerability as well as her successes as an evolving artist – became a model that shaped her Patreon account. As she reflects, 'I'd been prepping for it for years without really realizing. It was very gradual. I didn't say one day, "Here I am, this is me." It felt intuitive.' She was attracting followers whose own journey reflected her own. 'My story was something that resonates with many illustrators emerging from university who have a style but realize they don't necessarily want to keep working in that way.'

How did Emma set up her Patreon?
Emma sees Patreon as a type of Instagram account, a more exclusive, membership-only club that illustrators join for support and to become part of a like-minded community. Around one per cent of her Instagram followers now subscribe to her Patreon account.

She describes the development of her programme of activities as 'organic' to suit the membership, including unguided drawing sessions, live drawing dates, workshops, sketchbook tours and a sketchbook challenge. She undertook market research by joining other Patreon accounts and

4.19A



4.19B

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analysing their activities before recognizing that the key to her own success is being 'authentic'. Her experience of teaching at university level has been invaluable in devising content, structuring workshops and providing positive feedback. As she reflects, 'Understanding the struggles of early-career illustrators allows me to recognize the challenges and to be a step ahead.'

What are the main challenges of running a Patreon account?

Emma's lifestyle seems enviable but the responsibility of running a business lies entirely on her shoulders, whether that's preparing a post, working in her sketchbook, launching new videos or adding more work to her shop. She is transparent about the challenges of maintaining a work–life balance. 'Before, I was posting to many thousands of followers, but now it's a smaller group I can be honest. If I'm not feeling it I take time off. People tell me they're glad to hear me admit to not being creative all of the time.'

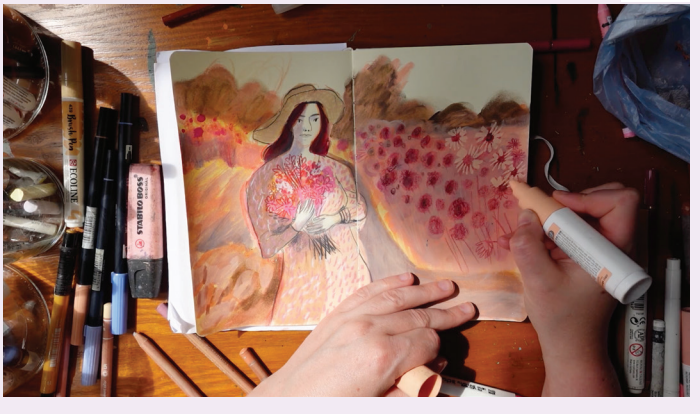
Keeping membership numbers buoyant is a must for all Patreon hosts, but Emma sees it as a fluid situation, acknowledging that although she loses some patrons monthly they are invariably replaced by new members. She clarifies, 'It grows because the patrons promote it for me. When I do live events, they share their work. The patrons themselves are the best form of promotion.'

Suggestions based on Emma's advice for setting up a Patreon account

- The most important thing is you've got to have an audience who can see that you have something that's worth backing.
- 'Knowing I could do it on Instagram first was really valuable – knowing that people want to hear me talking about what I do.' Drip-feed content through your Instagram stories to build up to it.
- Make sure it's sustainable, no matter how many patrons you have. You're making that content if you have one patron or one hundred. Don't promise the world when you start and have only a few patrons. It won't be cost-effective for the time you have to spend.
- Cover your back. Check the tick boxes when you set up. Emma had people who could join without paying for their first month. Lots of people got lots of content for free and then left at the end of the first month.

4.19A–D
Artist: Emma Carlisle.
Commission: Screenshots from Patreon sessions in which Emma shares many aspects of her practice, including her processes, choice of materials and development. Some of the images include a more narrative element. Emma is also published as a children's picture book illustrator.
patreon.com/emmacarlisle

4.19C



4.19D

Q&A

Self-publishing comics and games through a Patreon platform – Jamie Barker, illustrator, Fake Gamer Comics, USA

What are the greatest challenges of running your own business?

For me, it's the mental health challenges of running a community and making content at the same time. Running Patreon, Discord and social media platforms can be pretty taxing. It's definitely more labour for me than making art itself. I'm trying to be better about taking breaks to decompress and rest. Also, you can definitely depend too much on the monetization of art, and I've had to really focus on transparency and committing myself to only working on projects that inspire me, not ones I think will do well. Really, that's the strength of Patreon.

How do you promote your Patreon?

Shamelessly LOL. I make lots of comics and art just promoting Patreon. I post about it a lot.

What advice would you give an early-career illustrator hoping to combine working with clients and running their own business?

Pace yourself. I've seen support for my work grow slowly for three years. Going viral or getting 'viral' support doesn't happen much. You just have to stay committed and show people you can deliver a product regularly. Make sure you have the work ethic before you start. Be transparent. Under-promise and over-deliver.

Lastly, have goals for yourself that are not money related, like having a few goals for yourself about improving your storytelling, art and content, etc. I think that's been the most helpful for my career. Slowly, people notice that and always compliment my style, colours and characters (which was something I definitely didn't have three years ago). Those goals are more important for long-term success and your own engagement.

4.20

4.20
Artist: Jamie Barker.
Commission: *Slime Girl*.
Fake Gamer Comics is a webcomic about trans stuff, video games and depression. The artist is a non-binary trans woman artist, musician and games developer.
patreon.com/m/fakegamercomics

Working within an ethical framework

For some illustrators, creative practice is governed by a personal ideology or ethical code. This drives them forward in the kinds of work they produce or the commissions they accept. Self-publishing and working within an authorial capacity can provide routes away from the negative tropes associated with some aspects of commercial practice, but balancing this with income generation is a challenge.

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Clare Celeste Börsch in her studio. The hanging elements are painstakingly cut from prints and then constructed into large-scale installations. clareceleste.com

Spotlight

Working within an ethical framework – Clare Celeste Börsch, artist and environmentalist, Germany

Coming from a previous career in public policy, with a focus on social and environmental equity, Clare found that her dream of being a full-time illustrator often meant working with clients who actively, or passively, work in inequitable, unethical or unsustainable ways. She reflects, 'Making it as a commercial artist means you have to play by the game of consumer capitalism, and consumer capitalism is completely out of control and spiralling us towards something I don't want to live through: a climate emergency and a sixth mass extinction.'

She now harnesses the power of her installations and commercial illustration to 'draw people in', seeing them as 'points for engagement'. This shift means that her practice is increasingly ethically driven, 'I want to engage audiences not to encourage consumption, but to encourage connection and nature stewardship.'

How did Clare prepare for operating in illustration?

Clare Celeste's lush installations have been commissioned internationally for clients in advertising, design and editorial. Her successful career was founded on a singular vision, evolved from undertaking a business course. She clarifies, 'From the beginning it was, "How do I make money from this? How do I support myself? What are my products? Who is my clientele?"'

She describes building her practice as an illustrator, with a pipeline of commissions – mostly coming from businesses and occasionally selling work in galleries – as 'a steep learning curve'. Reflecting that although making artwork in the studio is 'pure joy', the experience of working with advertising agencies has often been trying. Clare feels that after several years of freelancing, the relationship between client and illustrator is transactional, and she is craving a more relational work experience.

How did she make the shift to ethically motivated practice?

With a background in policy, Clare has an established ethical conscience around sustainability issues. She describes the ethical contradiction of setting up an installation in a shopping mall as 'A venue humming with consumerism, opaque and often unethical supply chains, and requiring unsustainable amounts of CO_2 emissions to operate.' This experience was 'like being in some 1980s zombie movie. It felt apocalyptic – like we were really consuming ourselves off the face of our planet, which we currently quite literally are'.

She had a realization that making artwork was supporting unsustainable consumption: her distinctive and celebratory imagery of the jungle contributing to actions leading to it being burned to the ground. 'I was getting pitches: "Do you want to make art to sell this?" but I was thinking, "No, that's just contributing to the problem." My bank account was full, but I felt sad.'

Reading the essay 'Harnessing Cultural Power' by Faviana Rodrigues in *All We Can Save: Truth, Courage, and Solutions for the Climate Crisis* was also galvanizing – 'I thought "these are my marching orders".'

Fuelled by a decision to shift her practice away from specifically commercial objectives, she has now consciously adopted a more philanthropic approach. As she reflects, 'I want to do what I was doing for commercial work, which was essentially bringing the flowers to the bees. My installations draw people in, not so they shop but so they will connect with themselves and others and do something good for the world.'

Can an illustrator sustain an authentic practice?

Although Clare's motivations have shifted, she's not opposed to working commercially with corporations, so long as they're working ethically and undertaking transparent sustainability work. Surviving financially and translating media success into economic viability is still an objective. As she reflects, 'It's about saying no to some jobs, but I've drawn up a long list of who to reach out to, who I would be open to work with commercially. I vet them a bit more.'

Although she recognizes that the worlds of commercial art and philanthropy don't really overlap, suggesting it's the minority not the majority of clients who are ethical, she is optimistic that as companies respond to activism and shifts in policy, they will be more ethically dynamic.

Clare recalls that when she was working mainly on commercial briefs, she put the energy out and the work came in. Purpose-based work is harder to translate into financial revenue, usually requiring a proactive approach to fundraising. Submitting proposals for public grants and seeking sponsors is a vital but time-consuming process that Clare

describes as, ‘Like hustling. It’s super rough. You’re constantly having to put on every single hat. Frustrating because I really want to spend my time spreading the message that we really should be saving the planet.’

How is working ethically different from being a commercial illustrator?

Working in a more ethical capacity demands a pioneering and authorial approach. Clare sees her ‘perfect solution’ as being part of a network of partners: artists, scientists, community organizers and spiritual leaders, working cross sectionally and collaboratively to create three to four large events yearly that bring the public together in meaningful, transformative experiences.

As Clare says, ‘By aligning my work with my values, I’m creating a space where I’ll find my people, to forge a better world, a more just and equitable world.’ She articulates this: ‘The people I work with light up with optimism and hope for a better future and are willing to be vocal and work hard and in collaboration with others to make this dream a reality.’

Suggestions based on Clare’s advice about adopting a more philanthropic approach

- ‘My advice to anyone, as well as my advice to me, is to figure out who your helpers will be, who your collaborators will be and who your sources of funding will be. Where are they, who are they and what do they need?’
- ‘When you’re interacting with a commercial model, you have to be very careful and set your limits. One of my illustrator friends ended up in the hospital with burnout. Make your practice be kind to you.’

4.22

4.23

How can authorial practice replace, complement or lead to commissioned work?

Key questions to ask yourself at each stage of developing your own creative enterprise

Market research

Webshops

Online marketplaces

Selling directly to customers

Manufacture

Advertising, marketing and promotion, supply and distribution, and business skills

Self-publishing

Working within an ethical framework

Applying for grants

Chapter summary

4.22
Clare Celeste Börsch. Photo of *New York Magazine*, which demonstrates how elements of her large-scale installation work transition into smaller-scale pieces, in this case in an editorial context.
Courtesy of artist.

4.23
Installation for the store Piperita in Berlin.
Photo by Christiane Meyer.

Applying for grants

If you forget the label ‘illustration’ and instead see yourself as a creative, you will find many opportunities to apply for grants and sponsorship funding online. These are usually one-off awards to facilitate an artist to create artwork or undertake a residency. This usually entails a call to apply for a specified sum in open competition by a particular deadline. These can be one-off or annual awards with specific criterion or requirements towards creating artwork within a particular theme or in a particular context. Some funding bodies and councils have broader guidelines, such as applicants being in a particular demographic or geographical group.

Most grants and awards related to art and design require some form of artist statement and evidence of artwork, sometimes accompanied by a CV and references or testimonials. If the award is based on proposing a project, costings may be required both for your time and any resources that will be needed.

It’s likely that there will be a high volume of applicants for most grants and awards, so it’s important that your creative approach and artwork satisfy any outlined criterion before you apply. Your costings need to be realistic, both to compensate you for your input and to convince the panel of the viability of your proposal.

In a similar vein to entering competitions, applying for awards and grants provides an opportunity to have your work appraised by a panel, and this may lead to further exposure or outcomes.

Any potential gains need to be weighed up against the time spent in research and preparation for any application when there’s no guarantee of an award. If appropriate, it’s worthwhile researching past recipients to evaluate the scope of their engagement and what they gained from their awards.

Gaining an award can be rewarding in terms of earning recognition, providing an opportunity to work in new areas or explore directions outside of overtly commercial constraints, as well as offering financial benefits. Be aware that there’s usually some form of small print. This may include stipulations that any sponsor’s brand be applied to any promotion, or a requirement that the artist participates in certain marketing activities. It’s also vital that there are clear terms about ownership of the copyright of any artwork produced because of the award and that this is in your favour as an artist.

4.24

4.24
Artist: Jo Davies. Commission: Jo pitched a proposal to Culture Vannin and Isle of Man Arts Council to illustrate and publish this book. The sponsorship included funding for an exhibition of the artwork and workshops.

Chapter summary

- You don't need to get clients to get income.
- You can successfully work with creative and ethical freedom.
- Establish a market for your merchandise.
- There are many roles you need to fulfil.
- Being savvy with promotion and marketing is a must.
- It will take time to build a successful enterprise.

'Be brave and just do it! It's really hard to get over the initial fear of failure, but just by starting you already are a step higher than before.'

Tiffany Tan, founder of AppleCheeks

4 BEING YOUR OWN CLIENT

How can authorial practice replace, complement or lead to commissioned work?

Key questions to ask yourself at each stage of developing your own creative enterprise

Market research

Webshops

Online marketplaces

Selling directly to customers

Manufacture

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4.25A

4.25A–B
Merchandise from a range of products created by Tiffany Tan. The photo of the artist, taken from her YouTube channel, is a reminder of the many practical tasks involved with running a creative enterprise. tiffanytanart.com

4.25B

5 WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT GETTING THE BRIEF?

5.0
Artist: Franziska Barczyk.
Commission: *Wired*.
Image kindly provided by
Ella Lupo, agent at
Purple Rain Illustrators.

5 WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT GETTING THE BRIEF?

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5.0

What do I need to know when I get a brief?

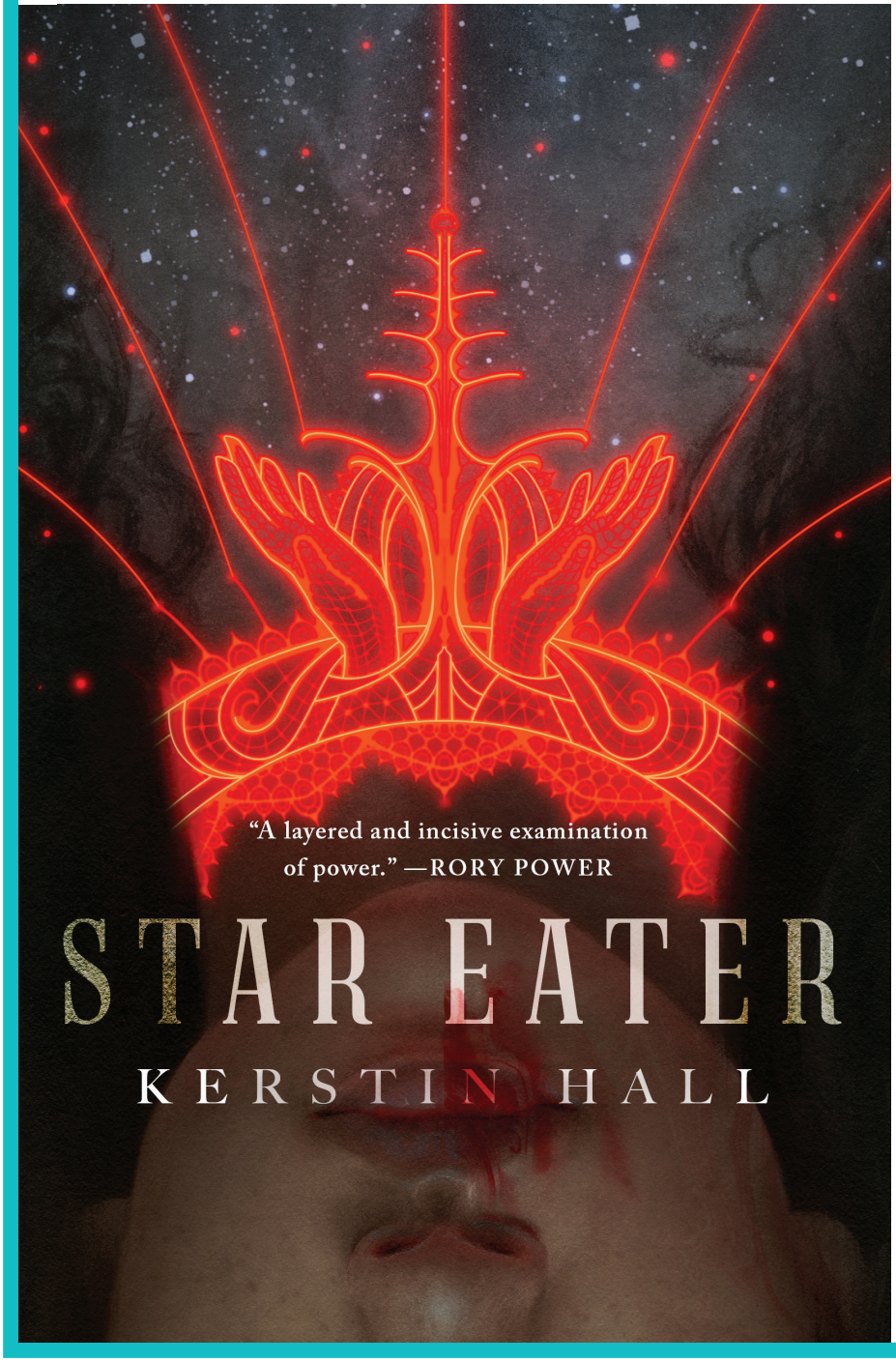
If you have been making great artwork, targeting the right art directors and your promotional materials have been working their magic, you might get a message offering you a commission. Because it always pays to be prepared and to make a speedy reply to a client, especially if the deadline is tight, you will need to be confident enough to make an informed and professional response.

In the excitement of being offered a commission, it's easy to forget that a briefing situation is a two-way process. You have an element of control. The temptation for early-career illustrators, or any illustrator who is offered a high-profile or well-paid job, is to say yes to anything that's offered, sometimes without giving due consideration to the terms of the commission or to weighing up whether the commission is actually right for them.

This can really backfire if any of the terms are unfavourable, such as a low fee, unrealistic deadline or if the client has misinterpreted how you might handle the brief. Understanding how to get the best out of every briefing to ensure the best terms is an essential part of developing a professional as well as commercial attitude. The understanding and skills you develop to negotiate a brief could arguably be as important to your long-term commercial success as your ability to create amazing artwork.

The client will have chosen you to be the illustrator for the job because of qualities in your work that match their creative vision and suit their project. They might have been through several processes to reach the point of contacting you, such as

5.1



5.1
Artist: Sam Weber.
Art Director: Christine Foltzer, Tor Books.
Commission: Jacket illustration for *Star Eater* by Kerstin Hall. Sam is acclaimed for his illustrations and this commission demonstrates that not all artists working for specialist sci-fi publishers need to be recognized specifically for this genre.

pitching you to their client or visualizing how their idea could materialize with you on board. If they're getting in touch to offer you a commission, it's because they think you're right for the job.

Illustrators need to be aware of the important aspects of professional and commercial practice when liaising with their client, especially when they are being offered a commission or brief. Take nothing for granted. Many clients follow a typical process when they're dealing with illustrators but some come from non-visual backgrounds, which means that illustration might not be their area of expertise. Terms and practices can vary across the industry, especially if you're working globally, so it's important to be clear about expectations on both sides.

'What makes an illustrator stand out to me is their interpretation of the story or the brief surpasses the initial image I would have in my head when I was designing and planning out the book. Their enthusiasm for the project and their collaborative communications with me during the process is important – sometimes it's just needing another pair of eyes to stand back and look. There's a shared intention to create the best possible work.'

Nghiem Ta, Walker Books, UK

'I have found that it's good to work with people who think of the book as a collaboration: with a text, with an author, with a publisher, with an art director, with a marketplace, with a production process and so on. There are negotiations to be made and solutions to be found through all of this, and it's great when an illustrator is willing to embrace and work with this.'

Ben Norland, executive art director, Walker Books, UK

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5.2
Artist: David Wyatt.
Commission: *Nine Worlds In Nine Nights*, written by Hiawyn Oram.
An example of the collaborative process involved in working with a client in children's publishing.

5.2

BUSINESS TERMS AT A GLANCE

Advance: An instalment of the overall fee made up front to the artist, usually before starting work on a project. Commonly used as a form of payment in children's publishing and graphic novels where the artist will receive royalties.

All rights: This means that the artist provides all rights for reproduction of the artwork they produce.

Brief: The outline of the project that the illustrator is commissioned to undertake. This will include information such as the client; what the image will be used for and at what scale; any technical specifications such as colourways, image content, composition, mood, etc.; whether there needs to be a bleed; or if there is specific layout that the image will be placed within. Practical specifics such as the process and timescales will also be outlined. Once the brief has been discussed, it forms the basis of the contract.

Credit: The acknowledgement and publication of the illustrator's name.

Invoice: The document the artist sends to the client to request payment following a commission, outlining what work was undertaken, the fee due and the terms of payment.

Kill fee/cancellation fee: Payment made to the artist if the client decides the project will not go ahead after the illustrator has been contracted or at any stage of the production of the artwork.

Non-disclosure agreements: These agreements cover business confidentiality and ensure that the signatory cannot discuss certain elements such as company plans.

Plagiarism: Copying part or the whole of another artist's imagery without crediting the originator.

Right of integrity: A right to protect the artist against changes being made to their work that would be derogatory to their reputation.

Right of paternity – attribution: This is a basic right to be credited as the artist for imagery produced. It is a legal 'moral right' in many countries.

Royalty: A small payment made based on a percentage of the income received by the publisher or producer for sales of the book or product the image was used for.

Samples: It is usual that the artist will receive a number of printed samples or gratis copies of printed publications or matter in which their imagery is used. The number of copies should be agreed at the commissioning stage.

Secondary rights: The right to reuse an image that has already been published elsewhere.

Subsidiary rights: Rights in book publishing agreements, which are in addition to the publisher's right to make the book. They may include translation, dramatization and merchandising rights.

Term: This clause is used in contracts to define the period of time that the licence covers. If the clause is 'in perpetuity' that means the rights are of an indefinite time. Most contracts specify a fixed period of time.

Territory: This clause is used in contracts to define where in the world the rights are granted to use the imagery.

Unlimited rights: The client can use the work across all media for an unlimited time. The artist retains the copyright.

Warranty clause: A clause in a contract stating the artist guarantees that their artwork is original and does not infringe any other artist's copyright.

Work for hire: This is a legal phrase in common currency in the USA used to describe a work situation where the artist's copyright in the work is transferred to the client or organization that commissions them.

5.3A

‘I encourage my team to prepare the briefs that are detailed but without being too prescriptive as we don’t want to stifle the illustrator’s creativity and contribution of ideas. The brief is the first step in establishing a good collaborative process, so openness to it is maybe a key. They should feel they can ask questions and suggest different solutions if they feel strongly about it.’

Malena Stojić, Creative Director: Preschool, Picture Books and Illustrated Non-fiction, Quarto Books

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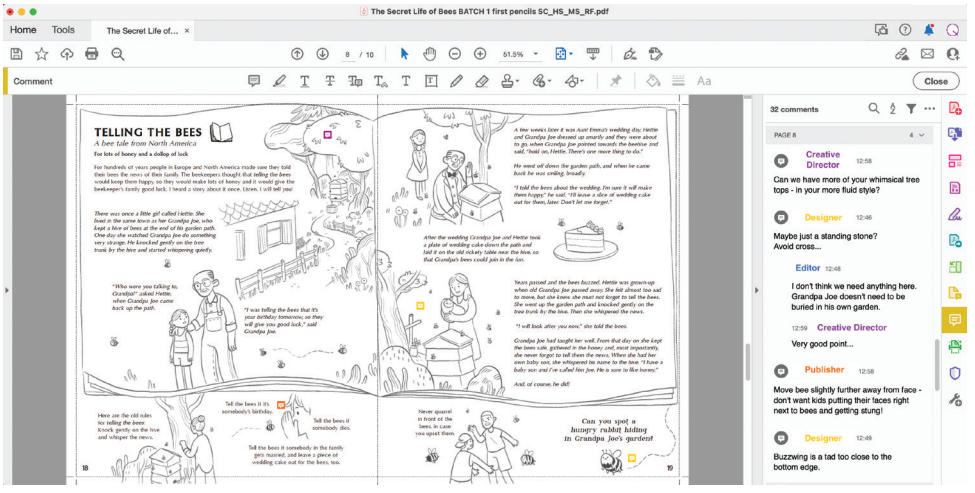
5.3B



5.3C

5.3D

5.3A–D
Artist: Vivian Mineker.
Creative Director: Malena Stojić.
Commission: Illustrations for the book *The Secret Life of Bees* by Moira Butterfield. These double-page spreads show different stages in the art direction and process of illustrative book development. They demonstrate the collaboration between the artist and the in-house creative team.
Courtesy of Happy Yak creative team.

BECOMING PROFESSIONAL AND GETTING READY FOR A BRIEF

Getting clients means understanding the legal aspects of working professionally. This includes being knowledgeable about key aspects of contracts and copyright law to protect your intellectual property and to operate lawfully. Whatever area of illustration your commission comes from, adopting a professional attitude, communicating clearly, negotiating the expectations of a brief and taking advice to make sure you understand the legal and business aspects of the commission should become second nature.

It's important that an illustrator has clear terms of business that are the starting point for negotiation and a safety net if things don't go well with the project. Don't presume that the terms for one client will be standard practice for another. Always clarify what they mean. In some situations, the contracts that illustrators are offered are written for a different purpose altogether and don't suit the illustration commission that has been offered.

Suggesting changes to clauses or alternative terms is common practice. Without being overly assertive or stroppy, it's okay for the illustrator to take the lead to make sure the terms of the commission are discussed and presented clearly. Don't think that challenging aspects of a contract will jeopardize the commission. If there are any issues to be negotiated by the client with other decision-makers, they will benefit from a well-articulated rationale from the illustrator.

It's likely that your initial contact with the client will be via email or messaging. If you are contacted via a social media platform, move any discussion to email straight away to keep the communication professional. Keeping records of whatever you discuss and agree during the briefing (as well as when you share ideas or agree on visuals) is important. Written records are the best way of being clear that both sides have understood everything correctly. These will also be valuable to refer to if there are any issues on any side further down the line. Details of the brief that you discuss and agree can be documented in a friendly, informal email, summarizing the main points of your discussion following a phone call or meeting.

If you have standard terms of agreement, these can be referred to and modified for each commission. You will also be able to email those to the client after any verbal briefing.

'Listen. Ask questions, including dumb ones. Try to understand what role the illustration is playing – is it delivering information, a tone, emotion, showing a product, etc.? Once you know what you are communicating, try to improve the image you've been shown. If you think of a way of changing what was in the layout, float it in early as an option, not a fait accompli.'

Dave Dye, CCO and founder of Love or Fear, owner of THINGY Creative Consultancy, UK

5.4

5.4
Artist: Andrea Love.
Art director/copywriter: Dave Dye.
Client: Elder Home Care.
Agency: Love or Fear.
Commission: This textile-based image demonstrates that there is no stylistic boundary within advertising and that art buyers have the power to select exactly what visual approach suits their vision for their clients.

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Why do copyright and rights matter in your dealings with clients?

From your first commission onwards you'll be arranging the rights the client wants in your artwork, whether to reproduce as a book cover, an app character, an internal office mural, beer-can packaging or a promotional social media post. For your client to be able to do this, they require a licence from you to reproduce the artwork, because even though the client is commissioning the artwork from you, you are still the first owner of copyright in the artwork.

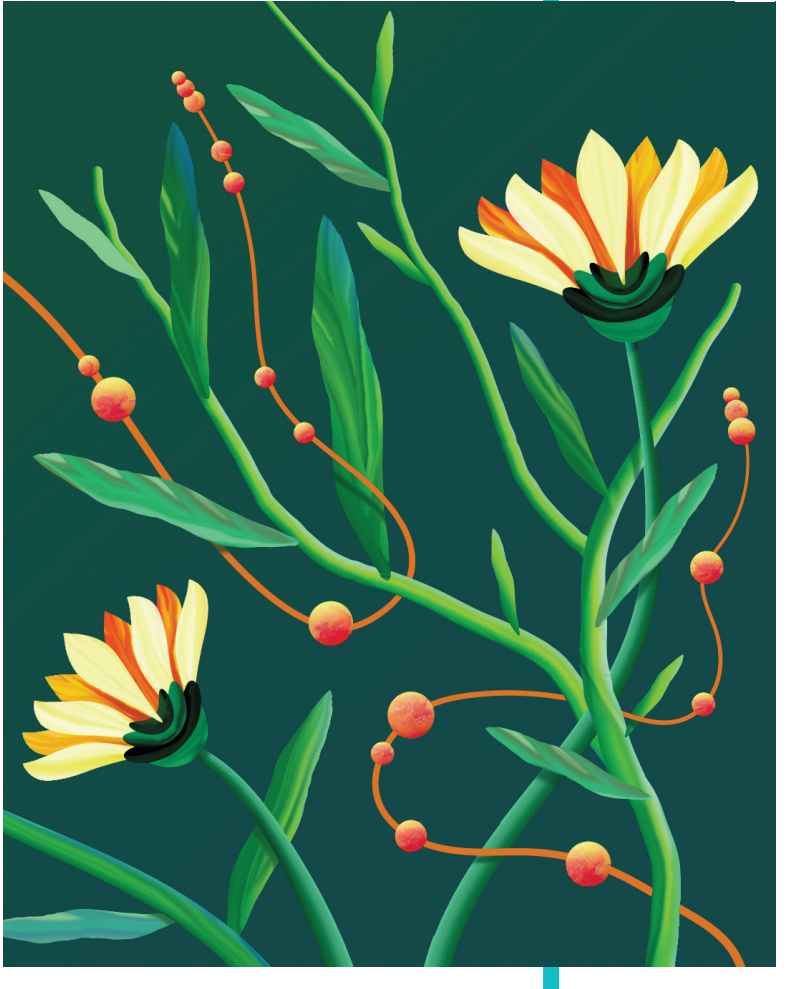
Copyright means 'the right to copy/reproduce', and it comes into effect the moment that you create an original work. As the owner of that right, you will be giving (licensing) the client the right to reproduce the illustration for a specific purpose, for a defined period and in a certain territory: usage, duration of licence and territory.

Commissioning illustration is a commercial activity, and it may be logical for some clients to want all rights in the artwork as they can potentially profit from further uses of the artwork without paying any additional fees. Clients may want to own the copyright so that they have complete control over all the assets that they commission, even if they have no intention of using the artwork in any way apart from the use they have commissioned it for. However, the extensive right that copyright consists of should be reflected in the level of payment given for it – it is valuable.

'Being professional also means dealing with admin and contracts – to protect you and the rights of your work, not only in making the work. Illustration is your child – you have to look after it so that it can flourish and grow.'

Xavier Segers, illustrator and designer, UK

5.5



5.5
Artist: Xavier Segers.
Commission: Xavier Segers is recognized for his detailed and lush floral and botanical illustrations. They have been used symbolically and decoratively on many surfaces for clients that include AR and large-scale interior designs.

Getting a contract

‘Learning to say no is important. Instinctively you want to say yes, but this isn’t always the best strategy. Don’t take on work that isn’t right – by nibbling at your time and efforts, you will miss out on other opportunities that are best for you.’

Xavier Segers, illustrator and designer, UK

The contract is an agreement that covers the terms under which you will deliver the artwork commission. It is a binding document between the illustrator and their client, which consists of the licence and the terms under which the commission is controlled. They can vary, and alongside the rights in the commissioned artwork, may include payment terms, guarantees that the work is original, cancellation and termination clauses, and more.

In larger companies, the creative who reaches out to commission you might have little or no influence in any of the negotiations about rights or fees; they might not even understand your contract if you showed it to them. In reverse of this, if your client is a local company with a smaller profile, you may have more power to negotiate terms of the job but you may also have to accept that their budget could be smaller.

As well as influencing the rights and fee of the commission, you may have an ethical perspective to your practice that influences the decisions you make about the type of clients you decide to work with. Becoming aware of a client’s attitudes towards global perspectives, such as sustainability or diversity, or the topics, ideas, or products that your artwork will be associated with, might be relevant in this case.

CONTRACTS AND LICENCES AT A GLANCE

What is a licence?

A licence is a document that defines how the illustration will be used by the client, in what territories it will be used (UK, USA, worldwide) and for how long the artwork will be used (one year or five years, for example). These details will be written on your own licence to your client or on the client’s licence given to you.

Each usage of an illustration will attract a fee, and if the client wants to reproduce your artwork, for example across their website, on e-newsletters or in printed and digital marketing materials, a fee for each of these different uses will be required.

You need to know from your client exactly in what format they want to use your illustration and at what size. Is it to be used across the whole of a poster on transit shelters (bus stops or train stations), on the top of packaging for a new ready-meal or to be posted across the client’s social media platforms? Every usage of the artwork should be detailed on your licence. This ensures that you and the client understand exactly how the artwork can be used. It also acts as a record of the commission, should you have to refer back to it in the future.

5.6

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POINTS TO WATCH OUT FOR

Cancellation fees: These are payments that will be made to the artist if the client cancels the project (rather than the illustrator being at fault by not delivering the artwork). If there is no cancellation clause, the client can cancel with no payment – not a good situation. Typical percentages for cancellation fees are twenty-five per cent of the fee at rough stage, thirty-three per cent on delivery of the roughs and one hundred per cent on delivery of final artwork.

Competing work: Does the contract say you cannot do any similar work for other clients or produce another book on a similar topic? This can be restricting for future work and should not be agreed to where possible.

Copyright assignment or 'Work made for hire' (USA): This means that the client will own all the reproduction rights in the artwork. If the contract contains these phrases, the client may be asking for an assignment of copyright: all rights, buyout, assignment, standard contract – always ask for these phrases to be clarified.

Edits or amendments: These are made to the artwork by the client – is the client asking for this? It is reasonable for the artist to make a limited number of amendments to artwork, but is it acceptable to you that the client can without your permission?

Indemnities: An indemnity is the back up to your warranty promise (see Warranties) and typically says that you will cover costs the client may incur if there is a breach of the contract.

Irrevocable licence: This is a licence for the artwork that has no defined time period. It will last forever and the rights being licensed will never be returned to the artist.

Moral rights waiver: Moral rights are additional rights to copyright. They protect the integrity of the work alongside the right to be acknowledged (be credited) as creator of the work. Moral rights vary around the world, but generally if you 'waive' (give up) your right to them, it means that the client can change the work (as you no longer have the right to object to adaptations) and is not required to credit you for the artwork.

Payment: It seems obvious that you will be paid for the artwork you will be creating, but the contract should state that you will be paid for the work done. For long-term projects, ensure that the following terms are included: cancellation fees, rejection fees and termination.

Rejection fees: The client may not be satisfied that the work the illustrator produces is up to the standard of their portfolio, or it does not conform with the client's brief. In this situation, as the illustrator will have done the work in good faith, they should receive a rejection payment. This can be twenty-five per cent of the fee at the rough stage and fifty per cent at the final artwork stage.

Royalty percentages: If it is a book or licensing agreement, are the percentages that you will receive on each sale clear (and acceptable to you)?

Termination: Every contract should have a time period that the rights in the illustrator's work last for. This might be one year for use on a product, or the period of copyright for a picture book. For long-term contracts such as for an illustrated book it is important that the rights will revert to the illustrator if the book stops selling, giving them the opportunity to reuse the work if possible, rather than leaving the rights tied up with the publisher but not exploited by them.

Warranties: A warranty is a contractual guarantee that the artist gives to the commissioner, for example, guaranteeing that your work is original, will not infringe the work of anyone else (through copying, for example) and that you own all the rights in the artwork.

5.6
Artwork: Xavier Segers. Image from a series of illustrations concerned with mental health in which parasitic worms symbolize inner negativity.

5.7

5.7
Artist: Robert Sae-Heng.
Commissioner: Sarah Pyke/*Bloom*.
Commission: Illustrations to accompany a story about growing your own fruit and vegetables from pips that you've saved.

'It's very important to ask questions and communicate. Art directors are there to help and guide them, so if they're ever unsure of anything in the brief or need further clarification they should just ask! We also really value an illustrator's own thoughts and ideas, so if they have a great idea about how to approach a brief, then we are always willing to listen and are very open to creative conversations.'

Sarah Pyke, art director, *Bloom* magazine, UK

5.8

5.8
Artist: Scott Bakal.
Image kindly provided by: Charles Hively, publisher and design director at Artisanal Media and *3x3* magazine.
Commission: Cover from *3x3* magazine, no. 25. This issue includes an interview and feature with the illustrator about his work.

Other agreements

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NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENTS

A non-disclosure agreement (NDA) is concerned with business confidentiality. The requirements will vary, but typically it will say that you cannot reveal certain things about the client, their business and sometimes even the project you are being commissioned for. It is reasonable for a company to want to ensure that their business dealings are not made available to competitors, for example. NDAs are becoming more common in the illustration industry.

Should you be asked to not mention that you are the creator of the work, this requirement can potentially be compensated for with an increase in the fee, as you are having the benefit of being able to use the work for self-promotion removed.

An NDA should be taken seriously as it will be legally binding, and you should make sure you understand what is being asked of you. As with any agreement, it is appropriate to ask the client to explain any elements that you do not understand.

NDAs should only be covering confidentiality, and should not include any 'rights' in the illustration. Some NDAs sneak in sections covering rights or an assignment of copyright, and this should be removed before signing an NDA.

'Whether in person or on a call, I cannot stress enough how important note taking (in whatever form) is. You can never take too many notes. Take down absolutely everything you have, every clue possible to hit the expectations of the animation studio and client respectively. Go over those notes thoroughly afterwards, as subtle but important information can sometimes be missed.'

Michael Lester, animator, designer and illustrator, Beginners, UK

QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD ASK THE CLIENT WHEN YOU'RE BEING BRIEFED

1. Where did you see my work and which of my images attracted you to me?
2. Who is the commission for?
3. What are the formats and media the artwork will be published in?
4. Where will the work be published and for how long?
5. What is the fee and when will I be paid?
6. What is the process for sharing ideas and visuals, getting approval and going to final artwork?
7. What is the deadline for visuals and final artwork?

QUESTIONS YOU MUST ASK YOURSELF WHEN YOU'RE BEING BRIEFED

1. Am I clear about what I'm being asked to do?
2. Is this something I can do well?
3. Does the fee compensate me for the time and effort it will take to do the job?
4. Can I fit the job into my schedule of other life and work commitments to meet the deadline?
5. Do the terms offered seem realistic and fair?
6. Will I have access to everything I might need to do the job well (reference materials, equipment, etc.)?
7. Do I feel confident that there will be open communication between me and the client?
8. Is this something I will enjoy?

'Occasionally an illustrator can have progressed a new style since we've signed them up for a book, so I'm expecting one thing and the illustrator has developed a slightly different look. Usually you're able to come to a conclusion that makes everyone happy! I imagine it would be hugely frustrating keeping to the exact same style for an entire career, so it's understandable that an illustrator tries new things out. This is why it's important as a designer to have these conversations at the start of the project, making any expectations really clear.'

Stephanie Jones, Senior Designer: Picture Books & Partnerships, Penguin Random House Children's Books, UK



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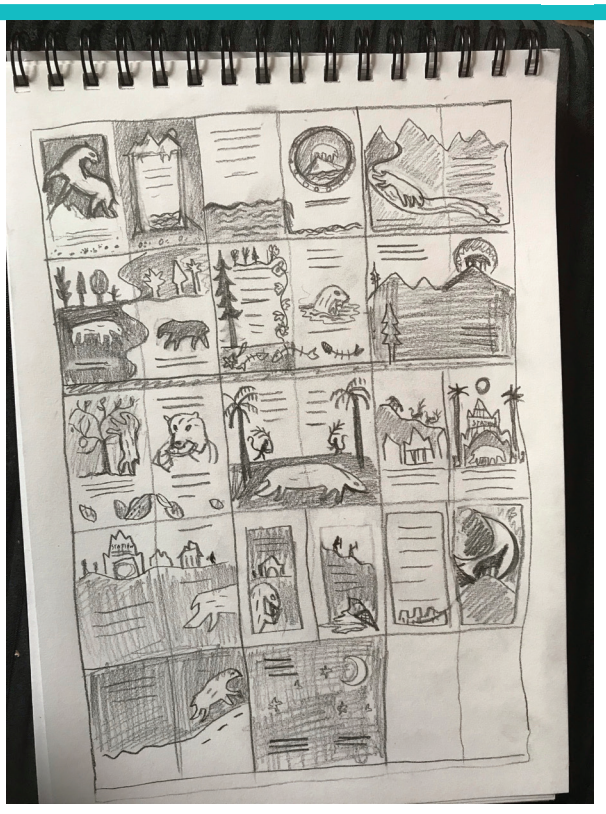
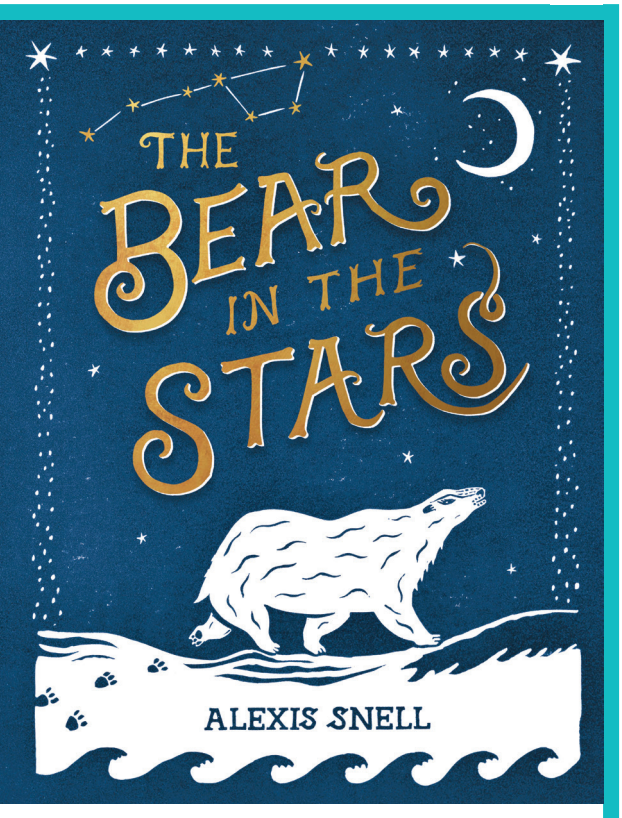
5.9A



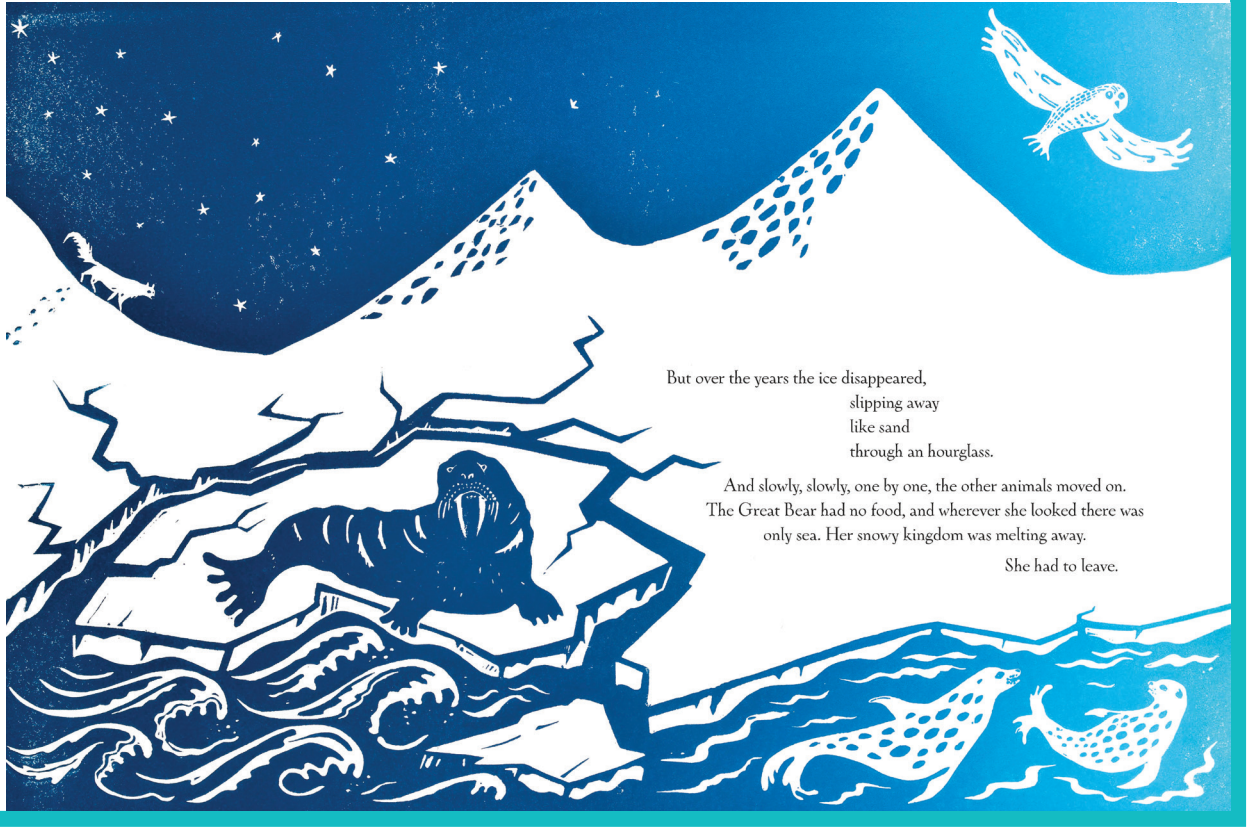
5.9B



5.9A–C
Senior Designer: Stephanie Jones.

Commission: Artwork from *The Bear in the Stars* by Alexis Snell.
There are many steps in the process of producing artwork. Communication between the commissioner and illustrator undertaking the brief is vital throughout and working drawings can be pivotal to the development of the project.

5.9C



QUESTIONS FOR THE CLIENT AT THE BRIEFING STAGE

1 Where did you see my work and which of my images attracted you to me?

Make sure you're clear about why you were chosen for the commission. Ideally the client saw your best work and is offering you a dream job. Only consider a brief if you're certain you will be able to deliver artwork that you'll be pleased with and where you're clear about what you are asked to do.

If you've moved on stylistically from whichever image the client is referring to, or if the brief doesn't fit your stylistic or conceptual approach, it could be that the creative commissioning you recognizes a quality in your artwork that wouldn't lend itself well to their commission.

Be honest with yourself and with the client wherever possible. Some creatives aren't visually trained and might be limited in their ability to realistically visualize an outcome. Ultimately you know your work and what you're capable of better than anyone else.

2 Who is the commission for?

Establishing who, what type and what size of client the work will be for, as well as their profile, will help you to gauge the possible scale or value of the commission and determine the terms of licence that you are happy to accept.

If you're approached by a well-known publisher or a large corporation, it's useful to know that they might offer standard rates and terms for illustrators working for them (these can always be discussed for potential negotiation). For an international design or advertising agency, you may expect a larger fee because their clients are likely to be higher profile and your work could potentially be used on major products or campaigns, even ones that may be distributed globally.

3 What are the formats and media the artwork will be published in?

Asking this question at the briefing stage immediately gives you a chance to find out what the client's intentions are for using your imagery. Their answer will influence how you work out an acceptable fee and will be a factor when you decide whether to accept the commission or not. Many clients wrongly presume that they are commissioning an illustrator to create a piece of artwork, or paying them to use an existing image, and that this gives them automatic rights to use it in whatever format and context that they choose for as long as they like.

4 Where will the work be published and for how long?

Establishing the territory and duration of use will also influence the fee that you are paid. The greater exposure that your artwork will have over a period of time, the more value is attributed to it and the greater the fee you can expect to receive.

5 What is the fee and when will I be paid?

As there are no standardized fee levels for illustration commissions, they can vary according to many factors: the client's budget, the illustrator's confidence in negotiating an improved fee level, whether a commission is domestic or international, if the illustrator is busy and would want an increased fee to fit the commission in, and more. Experienced illustrators will gain an understanding of fee levels, and asking for advice can produce information that assists newer illustrators to work out fee levels to quote to enquiring clients. Even established illustrators who are asked to create artwork for an unfamiliar area sometimes have to seek advice due to their inexperience in advertising or book publishing, for example.

Don't be embarrassed about discussing money with the client. Use your understanding of what the licence will cover to estimate what is reasonable fee-wise. Consider the usage, territory, scale of the client, and duration of use, but also factor in your own workload. Be realistic about how short the deadline is, how appealing the commission is and how much you need the money. Your personal well-being has value as well as the success of your commercial practice.

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Most commissioners know their budget, so try to find out what that is. Sometimes an illustrator will be offered a flat fee and there will genuinely be no room for negotiation. Calculate what you think would be a reasonable or appropriate fee. Some clients have more room for manoeuvre within their budgets and that's where it pays for the illustrator to be prepared.

If you have a clear idea of what is acceptable for the proposed budget, you can use that as a bargaining tool. Understanding fees will come from experience, and in the absence of having experience yourself, join illustrators' communities or pricing forums and ask for advice from practitioners who have quoted or worked on similar commissions. Subject associations will also provide guidelines.

Be assertive and negotiate a fee that you think is appropriate for the work you've been asked to do. Be creative when you're negotiating to try to make things happen, rather than coming across as being obstructive. If the budget is less than you hoped for, you could suggest producing fewer images or extending your deadline so that you can fit in other jobs. Offer solutions wherever you can and do so in a good-natured way.

If you're asked to do work in addition to what you originally agreed, or if there's extra usage of the artwork involved, negotiate an additional or revised fee to reflect those uses.

5.10

5.10
Commission: Shore Leave.
Designed by: Emily Minnie.
Featuring pin-up girl tattoo art, popular in the 1950s, Shore Leave blends traditional nautical motifs into a timeless homage to the sexy sailor look. These elements combine to form a repeat of scallop shapes on the wall.
flavorpaper.com

'When a design director reaches out, they will require execution of the directive at hand. If it is not in your wheelhouse you should explain this. It will save everyone time, money and potential embarrassment, which will endear you to the creative director and lead to future work that is within your aesthetic repertoire.'

Jon Sherman, founder and creative director, Flavor Paper, USA

NEGOTIATING FEES

- Illustrators working to commission don't get paid an hourly rate, but establishing how many hours a commission would take can be one of the factors you take into account when you're considering if a fee you have been offered is realistic. For some commissions, in areas such as advertising, film and TV, the fee offered might well exceed your estimated hourly rate.
- If you work for children's book publishers it's likely you will be offered royalties, which are a percentage of the projected sales, usually based on the cover price of the title. These are paid as an 'advance' on royalties, which is an agreed sum usually paid in instalments with the final payment made on publication.
- Illustrators working in-house – often in animation houses or in aspects of game design – might be contracted for a day rate or a fixed 'salary' for the duration of the contract. For illustrators working in this way, the rights for any work produced under contract belong to the employer. There will usually be no further opportunity to gain additional earnings from licensing of any imagery created throughout the duration of the contract with the employer.
- Illustrators commissioned for motion-based work such as gifs or animations can expect larger fees than for static imagery. If the client requests stills from the film for other print- or screen-based purposes, this should be negotiated as a separate licence.
- Although there isn't a standardization of fees, illustrators often benefit from advice from other practitioners with experience of working on similar types of commissions.
- Avoid fees that are dependent on publication. Not all projects come to fruition, and this could result in legitimate non-payment.
- Remember that if you undersell yourself, you are potentially supressing fees for other illustrators or for yourself in future if the client returns to you.

PITCHING FOR A COMMISSION

A pitch situation entails illustrators being invited to submit work to be considered for a commission. Usually there is a speculative brief that is associated with the actual brief on offer, with the artwork the illustrator produces for it being considered as a test piece or in competition with several other artists who have also been invited to pitch.

Often illustrators aren't paid if they pitch for a commission and, if they aren't selected for the commission, won't receive any financial remuneration. Because pitches have been typically associated with advertising, where the fees are generally higher than publishing or other areas, the financial stakes if you get chosen can be high.

Doing any work for free undermines the value of what you do as a professional to earn a living, but also perpetuates an industry attitude that creative work has less value than other service areas and that it's acceptable to work for free.

'Pitching for free is disrespectful. You are losing money to try to seduce a possible client. You don't go to the dentist and think they will do something for free on your teeth so you can decide if they're good enough to do the work.'

Mélissa Charland, associate creative director, Publicis, Canada

5.11

5.11
Artist: Charles-Étienne Brochu. Commission: One from a series of promotional posters for the Idéa Award Show, the most prestigious advertising and communication award show in Quebec, Canada.

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‘Professionalism and the ability to take direction are key. We’ll tend to already have a big idea for a brand identity – so it’s important the illustrators we work with are able to take our ideas and run with them. We’re all about ideas – so we expect illustrators to be ready with their thinking caps on. We try to keep the brief open to interpretation and not too prescriptive so that illustrators can do their thing.’

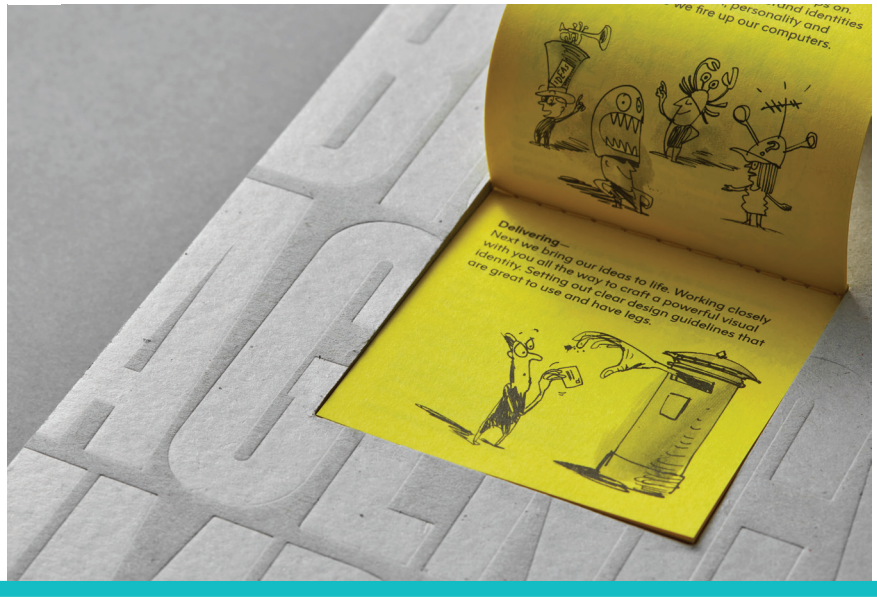
Jamie Ellul, creative director, Supple Studio, UK

6 What is the process for sharing ideas and visuals, getting approval and going to final artwork?

Although there are some common practices in different sectors of the creative industry that illustrators operate in, it is safer to assume that each commission will have particular processes. For some clients, such as – but not only in – advertising, the briefs might be quite prescriptive and the art director might already have a set idea that they want the illustrator to execute and in what way. In other areas, such as publishing or editorial, the illustrator may be given a more open brief with an opportunity to generate and develop individual ideas.

In the creative industry, visuals or roughs are the standard way that visual ideas are communicated between the client and the illustrator, alongside verbal and written communication. For more prescriptive or tight briefs, the illustrator may be given a visual by the client to interpret or execute through their stylistic approach, whereas in looser briefs the illustrator will be expected to come up with visuals and share them with the commissioner. By being clear about what is expected from both parties before you agree to the commission and contract, you will be able to establish whether you will be comfortable and able to create your best work during this process.

5.12



5.12
Artist: Simon Spilsbury. Simon’s imagery has appeared in many advertising campaigns, idents and editorials, winning many international prestigious awards for his illustration work. Commission: *Supple Book* portfolio book was commissioned by Supple Studio to commemorate seven years of their design business.

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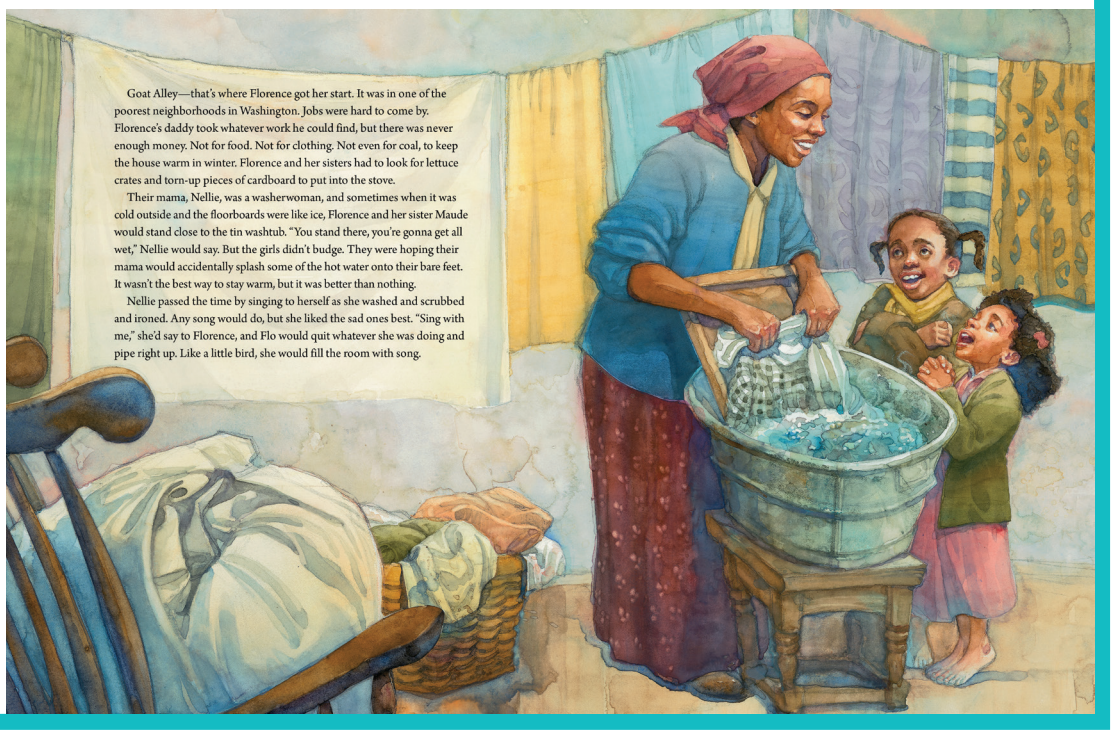
‘Illustrators need to be flexible and understand that there can be lots of back and forth and revision work before they start on the finished art. There also may be correction work after delivering finished art. As an art director, I work closely with the editor before I write my responses to the illustrator at any stage in the process: roughs, tighter sketches and finished art. We all want the best possible book, and we will push an illustrator to work to the highest level. An illustrator who is open to feedback and willing to do what it takes to improve the work will develop a good working relationship and will be kept in mind for future projects. The converse is true.’

Christy Hale, art editor, Lee & Low Books, USA

5.13



5.13
Baby Flo: Florence Mills Lights Up the State. Text copyright © 2012 Alan Schroeder. Illustrations copyright © 2012 by Cornelius Van Wright and Ying-Hwa Hu. Permission arranged with LEE & LOW BOOKS Inc., New York, NY 10016. All rights reserved. Learn more at leeandlow.com

See the briefing process as an opportunity for communication between two parties who share an objective to get the utmost from a brief that will lead to the best possible piece of artwork being produced. Don't be afraid to check some of the basic technical aspects, such as the size of bleeds around the artwork or how much space to leave in an image for text boxes. Don't presume that each client works in the same way.

7 What is the deadline for visuals and final artwork?

Knowing how long the process will take will help you to schedule a commission alongside other work and life commitments. The timeframe needs to be realistic in terms of what is being asked for and whether it can be produced at quality during the suggested time. Because of publication and launch dates, some deadlines aren't negotiable, but this needs to be discussed and established at the briefing stage. Clients are under no obligation to extend deadlines after you have agreed to them. Submission of final artwork will dictate when you can submit your invoice for payment or expect your advance of royalties.

I'VE ASKED MY QUESTIONS, NOW WHAT?

You should only start on your creative process when you've accepted the commission and signed a contract or agreement. There will often be a process of development, sometimes with two or three stages of submitting rough ideas or visuals to the commissioner. The commissioner may share these visuals with other team members who are often invisible to the illustrator, such as an editor, author, sales team or their own client. The illustrator might be asked to edit or modify their visuals as a result of the input of other team members.

This process of ideas and visual development is part of the professional process, and as an illustrator you should be prepared to collaborate while at the same time retaining a sense of your own integrity. Part of your job is to manage your clients' expectations. Be confident at each stage of the process by delivering what is required, being open to input but without losing your own sense of identity in the artwork. Communicate any concerns if you think you are being pushed away from the original brief that you accepted, or if you have any reservations about the direction you are asked to go in.

5.14

'Be honest about your current workload and your ability to meet the proposed deadlines. Our clients hate nothing more than schedules being pushed out, as printing schedules are secured months in advance. Ensure you fully understand the brief from the outset so that there are no surprises or misunderstandings once the project is underway. Ask in advance for the client's image specifications so you know exactly how they would like the final artwork provided in terms of format, sizing, layering, CMYK vs RGB, etc.'

David Moxey, creative director, Collaborate Agency

‘It’s a recurring theme that I’m told that I’m a dream to work with. I wondered what that means. I pinned it down to three things. I reply on the same day, I always hand in work on time, I’m amenable to changes. If that’s what it takes to be a good colleague, I can only presume lots of people must be doing it badly!’

Richard Jones, children’s book illustrator, UK

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5.15

5.14
Artist: Amy Zhing.
Commissioner: Advocate Art.
Illustrator Amy Zhing works primarily on picture books for young children and toddlers.

5.15
Publisher: Simon & Schuster.
Art editor: Jane Buckley.
Commission: *Perdu*, written and illustrated by Richard Jones.
Richard Jones works as both author and illustrator with success internationally for his picture books, which feature distinctive characters.

Making changes

When you have delivered your artwork, you may be asked to make changes resulting from external factors. Sometimes there are revisions to the formats your artwork will be used within or copy may be edited, resulting in modified layouts or changes to colourways.

As an illustrator it is good practice to agree to make reasonable changes to your final artwork, if required. There is no standard expectation of what qualifies as being 'reasonable'. If you work traditionally in a labour-intensive way, changes might be more demanding than if you are working digitally or with layers that can be more easily edited. As your commissioner may not be from a creative background, or be aware of the processes that changes entail, it's important to be open, to discuss what you believe is reasonable and to do this with a positive but assertive mindset.

You also need to be clear about any changes you will permit other creatives, such as designers, to make to your artwork during the process of applying it to the context it is intended to be used in. You have the right to refuse any edits unless you make them yourself. Unless your contract says that you will not, you have the right and should ask to see any that are made before the artwork is published.

If the artwork is rejected because there are perceived quality issues, you should aim to work quickly with the client to make revisions, if time allows, or to resolve the issues. If you have been sharing roughs and working to agreed visuals, it's unlikely that this will happen. Knowing this can be a possibility is a reason to communicate with your clients and show them work in progress.

A job being cancelled when you are working on it can be professionally disappointing. This might be because the project has been pulled, a last-minute change of creative direction or there may be long-term postponement. Providing it was agreed to in your terms, you are still entitled to payment of cancellation fees, which are typically twenty-five per cent of the fee at rough stage, thirty-three per cent on delivery of the roughs and one hundred per cent on delivery of final artwork (check with the client if you are still able to repurpose the artwork or use it as part of your promotion).

'Be flexible (within reason) – as for any other job, last-minute changes can happen, so it's important that we can both work towards a solution to meet the all-important deadlines. Be punctual – missing a delivery deadline, either for a rough or for the final work, can cause all sorts of repercussions which will affect budget and marketing, among other things. Be honest – the relationship we create with an artist can continue for many projects more, so being able to talk frankly about the process is a must.'

Francesca T Barbini, founder and senior editor, Luna Press Publishing, UK

5.16

‘We do like to challenge the idea of an illustrator just filling a box in a magazine, so sometimes our ideas don’t quite come to fruition. I like to believe that all the illustrators we commission do their very best and it’s my job to shoulder the responsibility if it doesn’t work out. By taking this responsibility, I can grow as an art director and make better decisions going forward. It is also important to highlight that working with illustrators in the main is a very joyful experience. There’s nothing better than being surprised at strange and eccentric ideas.’

Phil Wrigglesworth, art editor, *Beneficial Shock!* magazine, UK

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5.16
Artist: Tara Bush.
Art director: Francesca T Barbini.
Commission: Cover image for *Look Where You Are Going, Not Where You Have Been* by Steven J Dines published by Luna Press Publishing.
The illustrator, who has also been nominated by the British Science Fiction Association, is also known for making bespoke portraits and original artwork to commission.

5.17
Artist: Elin Lisbeth.
Commissioner: Phil Wrigglesworth.
Commission: *Beneficial Shock!* is an annual magazine for film lovers and illustration enthusiasts. This image is from a sequence of illustrations commissioned to accompany a text that discusses how two films are misinterpreted by the alternative right as planks for their nasty beliefs.

Getting an agent

If your folio is stunning with a clear visual identity, if you have a range of clients that you've done great work for and a growing reputation as an artist who is reliable and good to work with, you may think that being represented by an agent to take over some of the business or promotional aspects of things will give you more time to focus on doing artwork and help you to expand your client list. It's a misconception that having an agent will guarantee more commissions, a higher profile or bigger fees.

For many artists, the appeal is having a representative who will take over some of the business aspects of their practice, such as negotiation and contracts, and be consistent with promotion and networking. For this, the agent will take a set percentage of each fee and artists may have to also commit a particular amount each year towards promotion.

As well as general illustration agencies, there are specialist agencies that focus on representing illustrators working in particular areas of the industry, such as for children's markets, surface pattern or animation. Some literary agents can represent author-illustrators or illustrators seeking work in children's publishing. There is no one size fits all. Some agencies have many hundreds of artists on their books, others a very select few.

Each agency has their own criteria for signing new artists, and some deliberately scout for less-established talent, but generally you need to fit the profile above. It's unlikely you'll appeal to a potential agent unless there's a gap in their existing stable of artists for an illustrator working in your stylistic approach.

5.18

'I work with both established and new illustrators, helping new and upcoming artists by putting them on the right track to make sure they're successful. Watching them flourish is exciting.'

Ella Lupo, Purple Rain Illustrators agency, USA

GETTING AGENT REPRESENTATION: PAYMENT, EXCLUSIVITY AND TERMINATION

The following points need to be considered and agreed upon *before* signing any contract with an agent.

Payment

What is the agent's commission?
This can range between twenty-five to fifty per cent of any fee. You need to ask what other costs you will be liable for annually (such as contributions towards promotions) and how this will be paid.

How long will it take for me to get paid after the client has been invoiced?
Because the agent will issue invoices to the client on your behalf, payment is usually made directly to them. They will issue your fee after commission has been deducted. This is the same process for publishing, where royalty statements and payments will go directly to the agent. Some illustrators may receive one monthly statement itemizing all the payments made that month and receive a cumulative payment.

Exclusivity

What if I'm approached by clients directly?
Some agents are happy for artists to continue working with existing or returning clients without becoming involved in any of the transactions or taking a percentage of any fees, while others insist that all existing approaches from clients are redirected to them.

An exclusive contract prevents the artist from gaining any new clients independently of the agent. Given the prevalence of social media and the global connectivity facilitated by the web, illustrators with a following and profile need to be conscious of the ramifications of any clauses around exclusivity.

Termination

Why do I need to think about the end of a contract before I start being represented?
No one can see into the future and there are many reasons why you may want to end a contract with an agent. Personal and professional circumstances may change or the illustrator's experience with the agent may not have been as profitable or agreeable as anticipated.

An illustrator needs to be aware of:

- how to formally terminate a contract
- how both parties will operate within the period of termination
- the length of time following termination that they are obliged to continue paying commission to an agent for any long-term projects or jobs gained as a direct result of previous clients to the agency.

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Illustrator: Fernando Cobelo.
Represented by: Purple Rain Illustrators.

Spotlight

Working with an artists' representative – Ella Lupo, Purple Rain Illustrators

The artists' representative: Ella Lupo established Purple Rain Illustrators – a New York-based artists' agency representing a small number of international illustrators – in 2012 and launched it in 2013. Mostly covering advertising, editorial and book jackets, there is a strong conceptual bias in the artists that are represented, resulting in a clear identity within the agency – what Ella refers to as 'smart illustration'.

Ella's original idea was to connect illustrators all around the world with clients in the United States, seeing her agency as 'building the bridge'.

How do agents find new artists?
Ella keeps her finger on the pulse of the contemporary illustration scene and it's likely this will lead her to any of the new illustrators she signs annually. Many illustrators approach her too, seeking representation or in search of advice. The best of these approaches include links to websites, social media channels and relevant examples of published work in context.

With emerging illustrators, Ella seeks assurance that they have chosen the right agent: 'What do you want to do? Who are the dream clients? Where do you want your work to be seen?'

She reflects, 'I need to build a portfolio for specific clients. There's not much point showing artwork intended for children's publishing to newspapers, even if it's amazing imagery.'

What can illustrators represented by Purple Rain agency expect?
When Ella signs a new artist, she sends samples to clients that she works with regularly and sets up meetings with art directors.

Less-established artists are nurtured, as Ella explains, 'Because I have established relationships with art directors, I can work with them to help more emerging illustrators understand the process. As an agent it's not "my way or the highway", but with young and less-experienced artists it's good to build good habits from the beginning. It's very rewarding to see them developing confidence.'

What do her illustrators want from the agency?
Ella suggests that many of the illustrators approaching her lack confidence in some professional areas: 'They are uncertain how to reach out to clients; especially young illustrators straight from college.'

For those who are already getting clients, Ella suggests the biggest challenge is dealing with negotiation, fees, deadlines and asserting their rights. She explains that many illustrators don't survive or get the deals they merit because, 'They don't always understand the language of legal contracts. Many don't understand when they see the phrase "work for hire". They sign contracts blindly. These illustrators want and need an agent to relieve them of these types of responsibilities.'

For working illustrators hoping to expand internationally, an agent based abroad can open more doors. Ella explains, 'A lot of the American clients I work with will only deal with established American companies. It's not just the barrier of language – it's just easier for them.'

As well as the business side of operating globally, Ella reveals that the process of art direction in the USA can be 'quite different and more demanding than in Europe, in terms of expectations'. Specifically she reflects, 'regarding editorial clients, illustrators might be surprised by the number of sketches they need to submit here compared to countries such as Spain', adding that 'illustrators will find that fees vary internationally too'.

Ella sees her agenda to 'grow people' as being aligned to her objective for commercial and economic success. She is determined to earn the best income for both the artists and herself. 'They want to get projects; they want to be recognized and they want to be happy. If they're happy, I'm happy too.'

How does Ella see her role as an agent?
Ella's role is built around a clear process: to promote the illustrator, show their work to potential clients, connect them with the client, make sure their contracts are fair and signed on time, and to 'make sure things go smoothly'.

She believes that one of the biggest demands for illustrators working now is to be recognized by clients and to build and maintain relationships with them. 'There are so many good illustrators. Clients say, "If I wanted to, I could work with a new illustrator on every project."' This is motivating and leads her to 'ensure all my illustrators are professional, that they never miss deadlines, that they maintain a profile, that they make their best work'.

To achieve exposure, Ella encourages networking and entering major illustration competitions where many of her artists have been selected. Importantly, she supports them in their own quest for creative excellence; 'It's a collaboration. We all work together.'

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Advice from Purple Rain on getting clients or agent representation

- Research which agent to approach to make sure they work in the areas you hope to get clients in.
- 'Work on speculative briefs to create artwork for campaigns, articles and publishing projects that the clients you aspire towards have commissioned. By sending them to the art director that commissioned them, they can see how you would have interpreted the brief.'
- 'I would say to every illustrator that an art director needs to see their work at least three times before they recognize and remember it. Build that up through Instagram, sending PDFs, showing a folio and having links to your website.'
- Follow published guidelines before submitting to agents. Each has their own application process.

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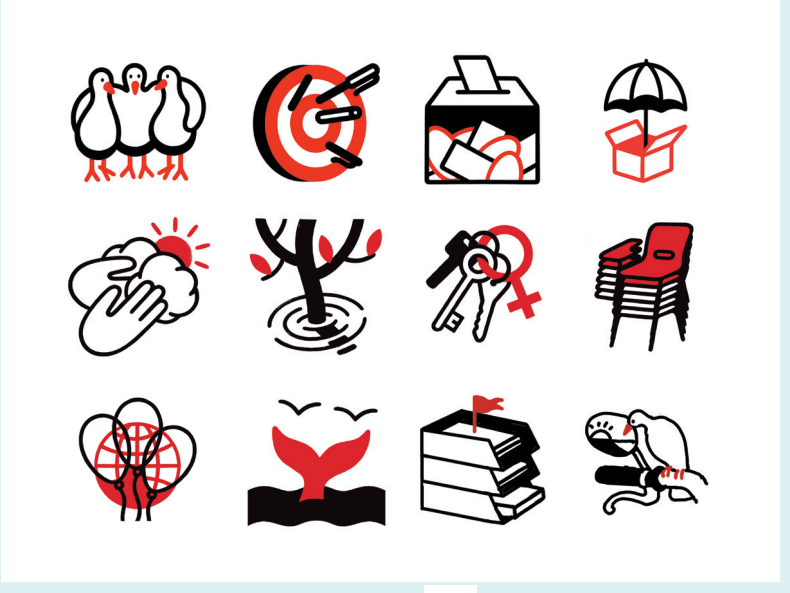

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5.21

5.19
Illustrator: Miguel Porlan. Represented by: Purple Rain Illustrators. Miguel Porlan is an illustrator from Barcelona, whose iconographic work is commissioned editorially for posters and personal projects.

5.20
Illustrator: Franziska Barczyk. Represented by: Purple Rain Illustrators. Toronto-based Franziska Barczyk's folio includes motion graphics, paintings and sculpture, as well as her collage-inspired illustrations.

5.21
Illustrator: Veronica Grech. Represented by: Purple Rain Illustrators. Spanish illustrator Veronica Grech has been recognized internationally for her diverse graphic imagery that is versatile across many areas of commissioned illustration and animation.

Invoicing and other professional stuff

When your artwork has been accepted you will submit an invoice, sometimes via your commissioner, to the accounts department of the organization you have been working directly with. This will outline the job that you did and the payment that was agreed. There are many online template invoices that can be easily modified for this purpose. Invoices also document the income that has been earned and will be referred to for tax purposes.

When you are working on regular commissions, you might find that one of the online billing and accounting software platforms will be a useful way to track and receive payments.

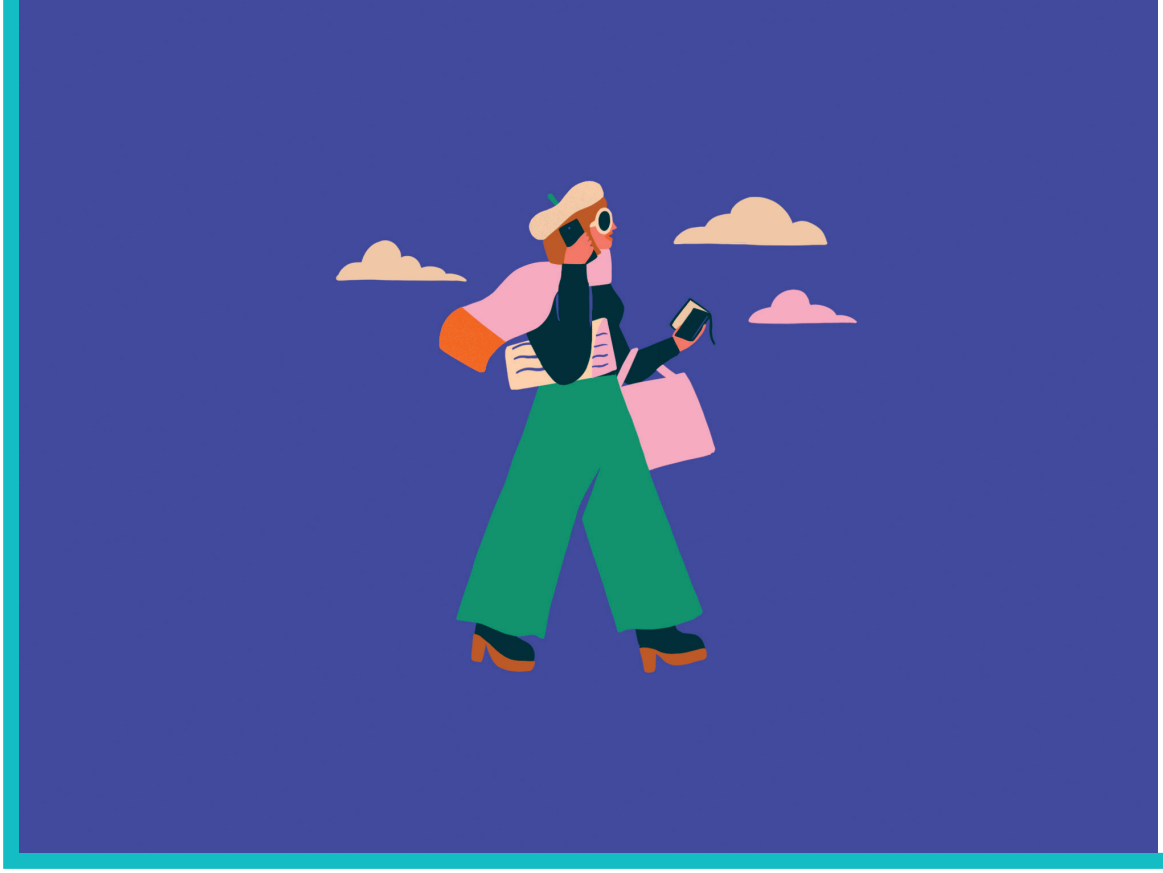
If you are proud of your artwork you might want to share it on social media, but check timings with the client before doing this and ensure you don't contravene any NDA agreements. Most clients will not want the illustration to be made public until they have launched it themselves on whatever product it is used on.

It's good practice to acknowledge and thank your commissioner in any posts. A large proportion of many illustrators' work comes from referrals and repeat commissions, so it can pay to build a good working relationship with your client.

'We are totally open to a dialogue and thankful for the creative exchange.
We are looking forward to input as well as independent thinking from the
illustrator. From our experience, this leads to the best results.'

Marie Dowling and Alice Schaffner, creative directors, Alma, Germany

5.22



5.22
Creative director: Marie Dowling. Agency: Alma. Commission: An illustration from the 'Sister in Wine' series that was part of an illustrated branding campaign and used as wine labels. agentur-alma.de

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- Make sure you are prepared to ask the right questions and negotiate the best terms.
- Understanding your rights is a vital part of your professional skills.
- Because illustrators rarely get paid to work on an hourly rate, negotiating fees is part of the job, and understanding about licences and contracts will help you to do this confidently.
- Although you may be working alone on your artwork, working to a commission is a collaborative process.
- There are often many people involved in decision making at all stages of the process.

‘We have different needs so we like artists to be flexible, to speak to us, to find the solutions to problems, even if they are our problems. We like enthusiasm – it’s about the collaboration and kindness.’

Creative director, iBlues, Italy

5.23

5.23
Artist: Andrea D’Aquino.
Commission: Textile designs for iBlues.
USA-based artist Andrea D’Aquino works across many areas of the illustration industry for international clients.

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6 ILLUSTRATORS ON GETTING CLIENTS

How do other illustrators get clients?

Throughout this book, clients have provided valuable insight into their experience of commissioning illustration, sharing their experiences and points of view and providing tailored information and advice about working in the industry.

This chapter focuses entirely on the experiences of illustrators. To provide a focused and direct link to the clients in the book, the illustrators featured here have been commissioned by or have a connection with the companies represented. Some have worked on a particular brief in a highlighted area of illustration as part of their broad illustration practice, while others are recognized for working in a particular area. Most have experience of working for a diversity of clients across the industry, globally. They are at various stages of their careers; some working full time as illustrators or with experience as clients themselves, while others have transitioned to part-time practice or work autonomously, being their own client.

Although collectively these practitioners represent a wide range of applications of illustration, not every context is directly highlighted in this chapter. Cumulatively, however, the insight and constructive advice they provide, drawn from their specific and embedded experience of getting clients, creates an overview of what it means to operate as a contemporary illustrator.

6.0
Artist: Franziska Barczyk. Commission: *The New York Times* book review. Image kindly provided by Ella Lupo, agent at Purple Rain Illustrators.

6 ILLUSTRATORS ON GETTING CLIENTS

How do other illustrators get clients?

6.0

Spotlight
Getting clients in surface pattern for fashion – Andrea D'Aquino

The illustrator: USA-based Andrea D'Aquino is accomplished in working across a diversity of illustrative environments. She was commissioned by the international fashion brand, iBlues, for a surface pattern design brief. This is a territory that she's not naturally associated with. She reflects, 'Don't worry too much about conformity. It's a fine line, an instinct of what's right, but don't worry about overspecializing. Things are changing in the industry. There's so much overlap between the areas. You can overemphasize the differences and do yourself a disservice. Not everyone can cover all ends of the spectrum. I also have a sense of shifting gears – sometimes it's an effort.'

Client: iBlues, Italy

How does working for fashion and textiles compare to other briefs?
Andrea advises, 'It's important to understand the differences of working for different clients: surface pattern is an absolutely different approach.' Clients in fashion and textiles generally require alternative designs that will cohere to form a collection. Andrea's commission for iBlues, working in 'a hands-on experimental way', resulted in what she describes as 'a shocking amount of work in a short time' that was condensed into three distinct collections.

Andrea describes her briefing experience as being very streamlined, reflecting, 'It was smart on their part to make the communications manager the main spokesperson and my main point of contact.' Interacting with one employee who is your commissioner can be misleading as there are often many stakeholders and departments involved when working for expansive high-profile companies such as iBlues, with decisions often made beyond your immediate contact or client.

For such surface-based fashion commissions, an in-house design team adapts the illustrator's images, formalizing them into repeat patterns and applying them to garments. The artist works with visual freedom, but dialogue and mutual understanding are required during the transformation of their imagery. As Andrea reflects, 'Clearly in the textile and fashion industry there is a balance between having dignity and respect for your own artwork and not being too precious. I can imagine other artists may be surprised by the adaptation of their imagery.'

Having previously been an art director gives her a broad perspective, 'I'm grateful that I've benefitted from being on both sides of the fence. I've experienced the bureaucracy and group dynamics when trying to please the committee, who might not be on the same page. I take things a lot less personally. I'm glad I had that experience.'

Imperative to fashion is considering the brand identity and creating imagery that works on garments. Anticipating her designs being applied onto textiles, Andrea gravitated towards the cut-out shapes that are a strong characteristic of her work. She reveals, 'I have my own taste and vision, but the client pushed me towards a more colourful and drawn solution that was right for their customers. It was unexpected. I know the limit of my expertise. I had to let go and trust them to do what they do best.'

What do briefs for textiles have in common with other areas?
All of the diverse commissions that Andrea undertakes share problem solving at their core. She adapts her approach depending on the context of the brief. She reflects, 'I imagine not just the client but also the end user. I see myself as the consumer and picture the environment the end product will be in. That tells me something about how to approach the brief, whatever that is. Whatever the end product, I feel an obligation to be visually compelling.'

What is important when working in surface pattern within the fashion industry?
This commission for iBlues reveals that working in the fashion and textile industry needn't require an illustrator to be a surface pattern specialist or to adopt a radically modified visual approach. 'If you're not a textile designer you just have to put yourself in another person's shoes. The client is also looking outside of their box or realm. They know they can sometimes be more successful that way.'

Andrea is prolific, constantly making new work that she shares via social media. She suggests this passion for creating will shine through. 'The more you do, the more you'll be rewarded by assignments. Clients will trust you.'

Building a profile can reap benefits as it's also increasingly contingent for the illustrator to be perceived by clients as a recognized brand. Andrea's contract with iBlues required her to promote the final garments and this expectation isn't unique to the fashion and textile industry.

How do you get clients across the illustration industry?

Andrea acknowledges that getting clients can be challenging, whether you're hoping for commissions in surface pattern or elsewhere in the industry. She advises, 'How you find work is a mysterious thing. It's partly to do with basic human interaction. Being agreeable and collaborative is important.'

She suggests, 'There's not much reward for ploughing through when things seem hopeless, but there's a tipping point. The minority who are rewarded find a way to stick with it and don't give up.'

Advice on getting clients in surface pattern

- Use your own promotion to demonstrate that your work will suit surface pattern and textiles. Aim to create a collection of pieces for a particular brand, reflecting their consumer base.
- Although you might have some knowledge or expertise in this area, don't limit your ambition by lack of specific technical understanding of the complexities of repeat patterns, garment design and textiles.

6.1

6.1
These images are textile designs that were commissioned for use within a range of garments for the international clothing brand, iBlues. Andrea is known for working across all areas of commercial illustration.

Q&A

Getting clients editorially – Hanna Barczyk, freelance conceptual illustrator, represented by Purple Rain Illustrators, New York

What are the most important skills you need to work in editorial illustration?

An editorial illustrator provides visual solutions to an editorial assignment in a timely manner.

Assuming a portfolio has been organized with samples of work that show editorial illustration, one needs many skills to work in editorial illustration – business skills, reliability, communication skills and being on time. To be an editorial illustrator one has multiple roles – from being your own administrator, keeping organized, responding to emails, time management to updating social media and web profiles – an illustrator is the CEO of their own company.

What is the best way to get clients in editorial illustration?

In the past, I've spent hours in bookstores and libraries, looking through illustration annuals or magazine mastheads, finding art directors' contacts and sending out postcards. Sometimes I still send out promo cards. But in present times, where technology is moving rapidly, the best way to get clients is to be seen on social media. The access to be seen online has allowed artists to curate a personal presence, share process, personality and to present a portfolio online.

What advice would you give new illustrators hoping to work in editorial illustration?

Great advice that I have received in the past was, 'If you want something to be done, only rely on yourself.' When you continue with drawing and try exploring and staying curious, eventually you will get somewhere. It's a long journey, it's unpredictable, but it's within this process we find the answers. Keep going and show your work.

What do you enjoy about working in editorial illustration?

I absolutely love everything about working as an editorial illustrator. Most of all, I enjoy coming up with ideas and seeing them emerge into life. I'm an avid reader and illustration is the perfect marriage between words and image. As an illustrator I have the chance to read across a variety of topics and themes on socio-economic issues, culture, art, music, politics, health, religion and lifestyle, and it provokes me to build a wider narrative and perspectives through creating images that become part of our cultural milieu.

6.2A

6.2B

6.2C

6.2A
Artist: Hanna Barczyk.
Publication: *The New York Times*.
Commission: Illustration for a review of the memoir 'A Living Remedy' by Nicole Chung.

6.2B
Artist: Hanna Barczyk.
Publication: *Psychology Today* (Germany).
Commission: 'selbstmitgefühl' (self-compassion).

6.2C
Artist: Hanna Barczyk.
Publication: Online news and political commentary publication *The Nation*.
Commission: Article about a cohort of students who fought to stop rape and sexual harrassement on campus in the USA over 45 years ago.

How do other illustrators get clients?

6.3

6.3
Artist: Hanna Barczyk. Art director: Rosie Summer Hayes. Publication: *The Economist.* Commission: A conceptual response to the editorial piece 'Why China's Divorce Law Is So Controversial'.

6.4

6.4
Artist: Hanna Barczyk. A piece of personal work that informs the stylistic and conceptual direction of ongoing commissioned pieces.

Spotlight
Getting clients in animation – Bee Grandinetti

The illustrator: Bee Grandinetti, based in Sweden, is an animator, illustrator and director who works for clients across the industry. How she defines herself might resonate with many illustrators wanting to get clients more broadly within the industry. She clarifies, 'For me it's more about problem solving and adapting my work – form following function than self-expression necessarily. I find a lot of joy in helping people communicate better and I really enjoy the challenge of crafting different solutions for each unique challenge.' She worked on the Airbnb 'Host Recognition' animation series.

What is important when getting work in illustration and animation?
The animation family is important to Bee and she has specifically co-founded an online community for women, trans and non-binary friends working within the animation and motion graphics industry.

She highlights the benefits of becoming an active part of a creative network: 'The first steps in your career can be daunting and I feel that finding community support is vital, especially when you're a minority in an industry that is hugely lacking diversity. Having a safe space where you can share your questions and struggles and get support is invaluable.'

She points out that word of mouth is a driver within the motion industry: 'Friends recommend friends and it can be hard to break that cycle of trust – especially since the industry is still fairly small.' Being open to different roles can help you to get work early in your career. Bee's earliest commissioned work came from friends and 'word of mouth'. An internship led to a book trailer, low budget work that she describes as 'a lovely opportunity with a lot of creative freedom'.

Her first freelance project involved doing the whole job alone from top to tail – writing the script, drawing the storyboard, designing the assets, putting together an animatic, animating the piece and even recording the sound effects. 'It was great fun! I really enjoy having a say in all the bits of the process, even though it can also be quite challenging. It's quite common to wear many hats in smaller and lower budget projects.'

Recognizing the potential gain of each commission and trying to create balance within the projects you take on can go a long way. As Bee suggests, 'I know I make my best work when it resonates with my emotional vocabulary, with my views of the world and when I truly care about the topic. Having room to play and experiment is also fundamental to be able to push boundaries – but this magic combo doesn't always happen. So I try to find balance between working on jobs where I can get more creative freedom (these projects usually come with a lower budget) and projects that have more constraints from the client – and try to make sure these will be financially interesting instead.'

For Bee, this balance also means saying no to some clients that don't align with her ethical perspective. 'I'm not a super-strategic person, but I guess my main goal with work is ultimately to aim for self-fulfilment. I know some types of clients and projects can really kill my soul, so I try to steer away from whatever really doesn't align with what I believe in.'

The potential for illustrators to work in the motion industry is revealed by Bee's experience. 'The demand for animation is only increasing in all formats (screens are everywhere) and where you are based becomes less and less important, the more skilled you get.'

How do you get noticed by clients in animation?
Bee suggests undertaking self-initiated small projects to build your portfolio in the direction you want. 'You might not be getting noticed; you may not be experienced enough yet, there might be too many degrees of separation between you and the people hiring … But smaller personal projects can do wonders: they help you develop your skills, build your portfolio, boost your confidence and also help spreading the word about your work.'

This simple strategy will ensure you're equipped to operate in the industry as well as providing exposure. 'Staffing decisions are often made very quickly so you have to be easy to find and fresh in people's minds. You need to remind people that you're there, that you're still passionate, curious and committed to making good work.'

What does it mean to be professional?
As a director herself, a role she describes as a joy, Bee reveals that her motivation as a client, 'to accomplish something bigger' involves connecting with other artists. 'You can hire people much better than you and that can lift the whole job – it's also a good excuse to approach people you love and admire. You get to have a VIP seat to learn directly by watching how these talented people work. And frankly, I just love being a cheerleader for the team, applauding amazing work and supporting them.' This

reveals the importance of collaboration within animation projects.

In this industry, your approach and attitude matter as much as the quality of the work you create – if not more. As a director, Bee observes, 'Being able to take feedback from your client is vital. I don't want to work with difficult divas – I gravitate towards people with a positive, helpful attitude and no ego. Animation usually implies teamwork – you have to be a good team player.'

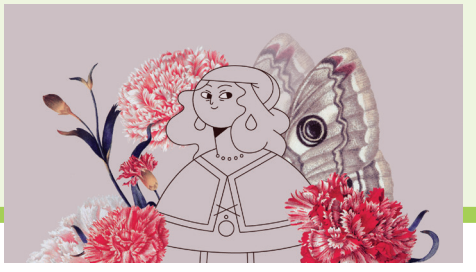
Motion projects are more likely to be based on day rates, so a project budget should be easier to navigate, whereas illustration can be more complicated to price. Be prepared for business aspects of the industry and share advice within your network of practitioners, as Bee suggests, 'Help each other out when negotiating rates. It's good to have an experienced friend close to you so that you're pushed to understand your own worth, especially when people try to take advantage.'

Whatever the scale of the client or commission, Bee recommends, 'Never do half a job. Don't compromise on your commitment and standards. Whatever you put out there, do it one hundred and fifty per cent. If you're not willing to do your best and to be fully dedicated, it's probably because it's not worth it to begin with – so you shouldn't take it on.'

Advice from Bee on getting clients in animation:

- Find your community and engage. That could be through online platforms or by going to events and making connections with people that have a similar mindset and values to you. These people can become your support network and a lot of work can come from those connections.
- Be open to skill up. Being able to wear different hats and assume many roles can bring you smaller, direct-to-client jobs where you can exercise those different muscles and gain valuable experience and exposure.
- Set yourself small projects to develop your skills or experiment with new techniques and share on a regular basis so you're keeping yourself fresh in people's minds.

6.5



6.5
All images: © Bee Grandinetti.
A variety of character designs created by the artist that demonstrate her range to potential commissioners, which can be adapted for various contexts.

Spotlight

Getting clients in advertising and branding and across the creative industry – Audrey Malo

The illustrator: Audrey Malo works mostly for clients in Canada and the USA, including editorial and design contexts and for packaging and publishing used in both screen- and print-based formats, including motion graphics. She was commissioned by Publicis for the Idéa Award Show, the most prestigious advertising and communication award show in Quebec. Audrey is represented by Anna Goodson and based in Montréal, Canada.

What was the process of working on the advertising campaign for Publicis?
The creative director of Publicis follows Audrey on Instagram and her agency's creative team made contact with her to discuss working on the Idéa Award Show campaign. The team had already formulated a clear vision towards the direction of the project and shared their colour visual and concepts with the illustrator. This led to an agreement about the best way to proceed. Audrey submitted some of her own interpretations, ultimately developing their preferred image in line with their input.

Some illustrators find the prescriptive nature of such briefs in advertising to be constraining, but Audrey enjoys the process of collaboration and the closer relationship with the art director that this involves. She reflects, 'I love the creative aspect of being free, but it can also be challenging; I enjoy being given an idea. I can put *their* ideas into *my* drawing.'

What is important to Audrey's success in getting clients?
In a crowded industry, the style and content of an illustrator's work are key to creating impact and attracting clients. It took Audrey several years to evolve stylistically and she recalls consciously taking stock to project a clearer and more coherent visual language. 'When I had trouble getting commercial work, I realized I wasn't drawing enough everyday situations or people. I started doing characters in their homes. That's when I began to get lifestyle projects.'

Many illustrators such as Audrey, working for clients in advertising, are commissioned by clients across the industry, and having a clear visual identity is pivotal to this success. Becoming consistent was key to the development of Audrey's career. Having impact can attract commissions in advertising. She advises, 'I know it's hard to develop a personal style when you're starting out but you don't need to settle on the same one forever. It's good to experiment.'

Her style is quick, allowing her to work on two to three briefs at the same time. She consciously controls her colour palettes, and this makes her confident in tackling a variety of commissions.

What has equipped Audrey for her career?
Being entrepreneurial and diversifying income through becoming your own client can lead towards getting external clients. In the early days, when commissions were more erratic, selling customized portraits through Etsy provided a way for Audrey to gain exposure and led to her building a following that made her attractive to potential clients, as well as keeping a momentum and keeping afloat financially.

As well as getting clients, it's important to keep them. This requires building a reputation so that they will return to you. Audrey explains why this is important: 'Word of mouth is key to getting clients. It's difficult to grasp. You don't know how much they talk about you in the industry but they do. It can have an effect.'

How has Audrey's career evolved to get more clients?
In the quieter patches, Audrey continues to work on her own projects using social media to draw attention to her practice. Talking about a lull in commissioned work during the early stages of Covid, she recalls, 'I posted more often on Insta. This grew my following and improved my audience. It can lead to opportunities too.'

Audrey recalls that a piece of artwork for a small-scale project she had worked on for an indie writer friend led to her being approached by her agent – this after she had already unsuccessfully submitted to them several times in search of representation.

Having an agent has been pivotal to Audrey's commercial success and she acknowledges the impact of being represented on her own confidence and attitude. She was thrilled, 'I was pinching myself. It gives me validation.' She advises that having an agent might not necessarily be for everyone, 'especially if you are a well-known brand yourself or an influencer'. Because she has a strong working relationship with her agent, she willingly directs potential clients who approach her straight to them, 'so that they can deal with the business side of things'.

She acknowledges that her career has moved on to another level since representation and is especially grateful for her agent's 'insights on the contracts', adding 'I'm naturally not confident in dealing with money.'

Although she attracted a range of clients before she was represented, Audrey recognizes that the work was not as steady or sustaining before this time. As she says, 'I just didn't know how much it was worth.'

Advice from Audrey on getting clients in advertising

- If you plan to target potential clients in advertising, test yourself by following the art direction of existing campaigns. Follow a tight brief by translating the existing idea into your own visual language to gauge how comfortable and successful you are in working through a more prescriptive process.
- Develop a clear sense of the subjects that are being commissioned in the areas you want to work with. Make sure your folio includes content to reflect that you can handle similar briefs.
- Accept that there can be quiet patches when you don't get clients, and use your time constructively to make and share new examples of work.

6.6

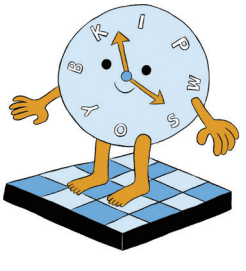
6.6
Client: *Best Health* magazine.
Art director: Nicola Hamilton.
Commission: Illustration for 'What has the pandemic done to my body?' about the ways stress impacted people's posture, periods, hair, skin, digestion, etc.

6.7
Client: *The Globe and Mail.*
Art director: Domenic Macri.
Commission: Commission for *The Globe and Mail* puzzles section. Each illustration is inspired by the names of the games: daisy chain, slide show, ribbon, spymaster, match play and times square.

6.8
Client: *The Washington Post.*
Art director: Andrew Brafort.
Commission: Illustration for 'Live like a cicada. Enter and exit singing', after seventeen years living underground.

6.9
Client: *The Chronicle of Higher Education.*
Art director: Scott Seymour.
Commission: Illustration for 'The New Enrollment Playbook' by Jeffrey J. Selingo.

6.7



6.8

6.9

Spotlight
Getting clients in film and animation, across the creative industry – Juan Moore

The illustrator: Juan Moore, based in the Isle of Man, UK, gets clients in many contexts, including the film and animation industry. He was commissioned by Lynda Reiss to create visual props for the HBO series *True Detective* and has worked on large-scale productions such as being a colour artist on Javier Mariscal's Oscar-nominated film, *Chico and Rita*, as well as smaller-scale projects, drawing storyboards for short films and adverts.

What skills are important to get clients in film and animation?
Juan points out that having a broad skill set can be advantageous for working in the film and animation industry. He explains, 'The more skills you have, the more likely you'll get in somewhere. Weirdly in the industry everything is compartmentalized. Nine out of ten times they're looking for a specialist, so you also need to be super-good in at least one area.'

Juan is dextrous across skill sets; confident in planning, coming up with concepts, storyboarding and character design. Underpinning his practice in both illustration and film and animation is his capacity as a draughtsman: adaptable and quick when drawing figures and generating both characters and environments.

Reflecting on the rudiments, he urges, 'Technology is also really important in film and animation, and generally people have a higher level of technical knowledge of digital applications. Don't forget that storytelling and composition are also important in a unique way; understanding where the action is moving to and from.'

How do you get clients in film and animation?
It's a given that you need a showreel and website that are easy to find and contain quality work. The next step is getting potential clients interested. As Juan advises, 'You need to be pretty relentless, to hassle HR departments to make contact with the right people. It can take ages. You need to network, get to know people and get your name out there.'

Breaking into the film and animation business is similar to getting commissioned in other areas of illustration in that coping with rejection, being overlooked and accepting that you won't always get chosen is part of the territory. Take solace in the knowledge that it's not unusual for seasoned practitioners, such as Juan, to pitch for projects and submit bids speculatively without success. As he explains, 'It's hard to get a film and animation project off the ground and sometimes you work on things that don't always materialize.'

What is the difference between illustration and working in the film and animation industries?
Having worked with a spectrum of commissioners, Juan has an informed perspective about the distinctions between clients. 'As an illustrator you are more your own entity. Working in film and animation you have to make sure you're always on the same page as your team.' He explains that illustrators working on contracts in film and animation should be prepared for longer involvement, often working in-house.

Involvement in dailies, a team review process that is standard practice in animation, can seem alien to some illustrators. This requires showing the supervisor or director work in progress to gauge how the project is materializing. As Juan points out, there are actually many similarities across the industry. 'For both illustration and film and animation you need to understand where you fit into the pipeline, to know where your work sits in the grand scheme of things.' He explains, 'You're usually in a team – you need to understand that you're often not reliant on just one person to give you the okay.'

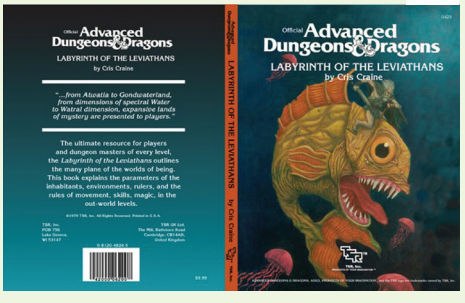
Being mindful that an illustrator creates imagery to be seen by an audience, that serves a purpose, is integral to Juan's work ethic for both illustration and film and animation. He says, 'The golden rule is: always see your work as something that's going to be reproduced. Just make it the best you can. It's going to be out there.'

How do you find success in the business side of working in animation?
There is a myriad of roles and types of commissions for illustrators working in the film and animation industry and this is reflected in the diversity of contracts, terms, practices and clauses to be aware of. As Juan advises, 'Beware! It can be a minefield. Some film clients can be ruthless. If you're hired, everything you create belongs to them, whereas as a contractor you're just hired for one thing under licence. You need to make sure you understand this stuff.'

Advice from Juan on getting clients in the film and animation industry

- Make sure your showreel and folio are strong – you're not going to be able to make a six-figure production on your own, but show that you're aware of the skills that go behind making one.
- If you want to get into storyboarding, be quick and adaptable at drawing.
- Aim to get hands-on experience within a smaller project to gain a practical overview of the various aspects of working on an animation or film.

6.10



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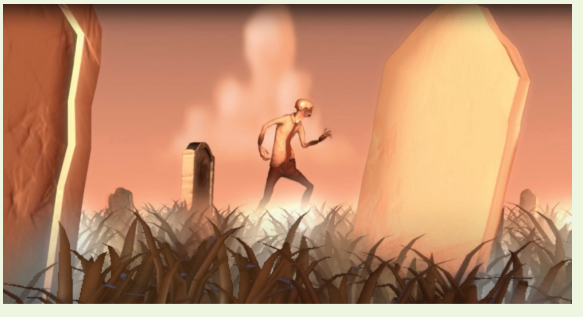
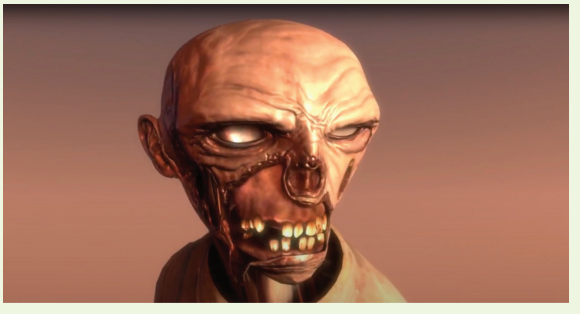
6.11





6.10
Client: HBO.
Commissioner: Lynda Reiss.
Commission: Book jacket used as a prop on the *True Detective* TV series. The book jacket was included in scenes that were set in the 1980s and was styled according to the visual aesthetic of this era.

6.11
Client: Clever Unicorn Games, Light N Games Inc.
Commission: One from a series of thirty-nine illustrated collector cards as part of the *Weird Alchemy* card game, in which alchemists attempt to take over the world by creating new creatures.

6.12
Frames for 'Zombies' a self-funded film directed by the artist that led to work in the animation industry, including working on the Oscar nominated film *Chico and Rita*.

Spotlight
Getting clients in children's publishing – Richard Jones

Illustrator: Since UK-based Richard Jones' first book, *The Snow Lion*, was published by Walker Books in 2016, more than twelve years after he graduated, he has gone on to illustrate more than twenty books, being nominated for a host of impressive awards internationally.

How did Richard start to get clients in children's publishing?
Richard believes it can be tough for illustrators attempting to enter the profession. The confidence and momentum he accrued at university didn't translate into immediate success as a professional illustrator. He explains, 'After graduating I made a few attempts with picture books. I was expecting things to happen, but I realized that academia is a different world – the triumphs you have as a student don't necessarily translate into commercial triumphs.'

For more than a decade he kept 'hammering away', working on book ideas and submitting them to publishers while working part time for the local children's library. He acknowledges, 'It's not the same for everyone – some students come out of the starting blocks flying!' For Richard, the long pause between university and working commercially was, he acknowledges, 'hard to compute – it was sometimes disheartening – I lost morale'. Looking back on this time, he adds, 'but now I realize I wasn't ready'.

Although Richard describes this period as a bleak time, he talks about the positive dichotomy of the situation. 'When I relaxed and took pressure off myself, I found my voice, without the paradigm of the publisher. When I decided I no longer wanted to submit stuff, that's when things started to bloom.'

Working in a related field can sometimes lead directly to useful opportunities. A chance to take over a project at the library where he was working 'reignited' things. He realized that a fundamental and welcome shift had occurred since his earlier attempts to break into the industry. 'Rather than fitting my student's brain into commercial mode, the gap had allowed my brain to reset. All of a sudden, I was alert to the client – using all my powers to convert my ideas towards what they wanted. My role was immediately commercial – I don't like the word *artist,* but I was a commercial artist.'

How did Richard develop the skills needed in the industry?
Working in the junior library provided Richard with a valuable period of direct, hands-on research into which picture books are successful. He became conscious of the two streams of books going out – those chosen by children and those chosen by parents. He recalls, 'I became aware of the sweet spot in the middle – the books that appeal to *both* parents and children.' He describes this as a 'magic formula' and it is what he strives for in his own work.

Richard's visual language has evolved over time, retaining qualities that were evident in his student days, but now embodied within a distinctive stylistic approach that is part of the alchemy leading to his success. Richard elucidates on this development, 'Photoshop gave me a vocabulary and method. It started making sense for me. It wasn't because it was digital – I just didn't have the same worry about making mistakes. I still try to paint as much as possible but there's no lurking worry that it's going to be rubbish at any second.'

How did Richard get attention from clients?
Richard began to post images of self-initiated work, even when he had no followers – constantly sharing new work and gauging the reaction from the growing following to it was influential. He didn't consider approaching publishers directly. He explains, 'I thought I'd blackened my copy book during the miserable time when I was only getting rejections from publishers. I didn't want to put myself through those negative emotions again.'

Richard describes a strategic approach that moved him closer towards getting clients in the industry. When he realized that the three illustrators he most admired were represented by the same agency he decided to approach their agency directly. When he sent them a folio of around ten pictures, they replied immediately, offering representation.

What is the best way to have and build a relationship with the client?
A good agent can be a big driver in the direction of an artist's career, influencing the nature – as well as the volume – of the work that they attract. For represented illustrators such as Richard, getting clients can entail building a three-way relationship with the publisher and the agent, especially when the illustrator is working repeatedly with them.

Although untested as a writer at the beginning of his career, Richard now works as an author as well as an illustrator. 'I didn't think that writing and illustration would be an objective, but the agent is happy to keep moving with this belief in me. I now have more creative freedom.'

Advice from Richard on getting clients in children's publishing

- Be patient. For some illustrators, getting a commission can be more of a slow burn. Some of the gaps of inactivity or rejection could be a valuable part of the process towards reaching the stage when you're ready to take on commercial briefs.
- It's usual for illustrators at all stages of their career to combine part-time work with establishing creative practice. Sometimes this work can feed directly into your practice or provide opportunities for commissions or creative projects.

6.13

6.14

6.15

6.13
Publisher: Simon & Schuster. Art editor: Jane Buckley. *Little Bear*, written and illustrated by Richard Jones.

6.14
Publisher: Simon & Schuster. Art editor: Jane Buckley. Illustration from *Little Bear*, written and illustrated by Richard Jones.

6.15
Publisher: Simon & Schuster. Art editor: Jane Buckley. *The Snow Lion*, written by Jim Helmore and illustrated by Richard Jones.

Q&A

Being a comic artist and self-publishing – Jim Rugg, award-winning cartoonist, USA

What advice would you give an early-career illustrator hoping to combine working with clients and running their own business?

Grow your audience. Every day do something to build your audience. Show your work to everyone, all the time. Be open to feedback. If the response to something spikes, that's a sign – don't ignore it.

Have vision. Think about what you want to do, where you want to go; define those goals and then work towards them. It's much easier to achieve something that you define than to stumble accidentally into success. It's a journey. Knowing the destination that you want to reach will help you make decisions along the way. Vision – look for things that haven't been done before and do them!

What are the main attractions of publishing your comics on Patreon?

It provides a platform to directly connect with fans who like what I do enough that they want to participate. They want to see things first, they want to support my art-making in this specific way.

There are many attractions for me in regards to Patreon. It allows me to build a community with fans and to have a close relationship with those fans. I do a lot of Q&As, and that helps me understand what people find interesting or want to know more about. It allows me to promote what I'm doing.

As an artist, I rely on a lot of different revenue streams – clients, royalties, commissions, art shows (and sales) – and in that way, Patreon has become another reliable addition to my business.

What are the greatest challenges of running your own business?

Managing time. As my business has grown, it has become more and more vital to manage my time productively. Administrative tasks can cut into my creative time. It's an ongoing challenge.

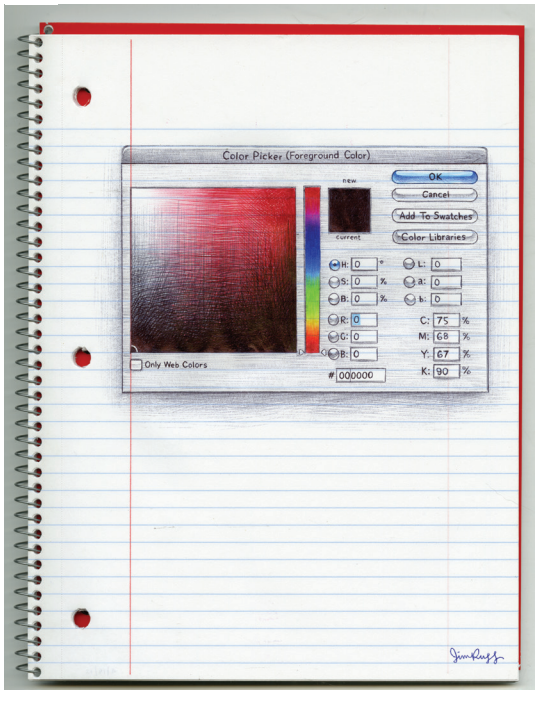
What proportion of your income comes from commissioned work?

It fluctuates quite a bit and it's not always easy to define. When I'm doing a graphic novel commissioned by a publisher, as opposed to a creator-owned comic book or graphic novel, I'm paid an advance against royalties. Ultimately, my payment is based on how many copies are sold. I don't do a ton of commercial art for clients, so maybe twenty per cent of my income comes from traditional commercial illustration/design work.

How do you promote your Patreon?

My YouTube channel about comics is called 'Cartoonist Kayfabe' and I promote my Patreon through those videos. That's about 500,000 views a month. I also maintain various social media accounts (Instagram, Twitter, Facebook) to promote my art, comics and Patreon.

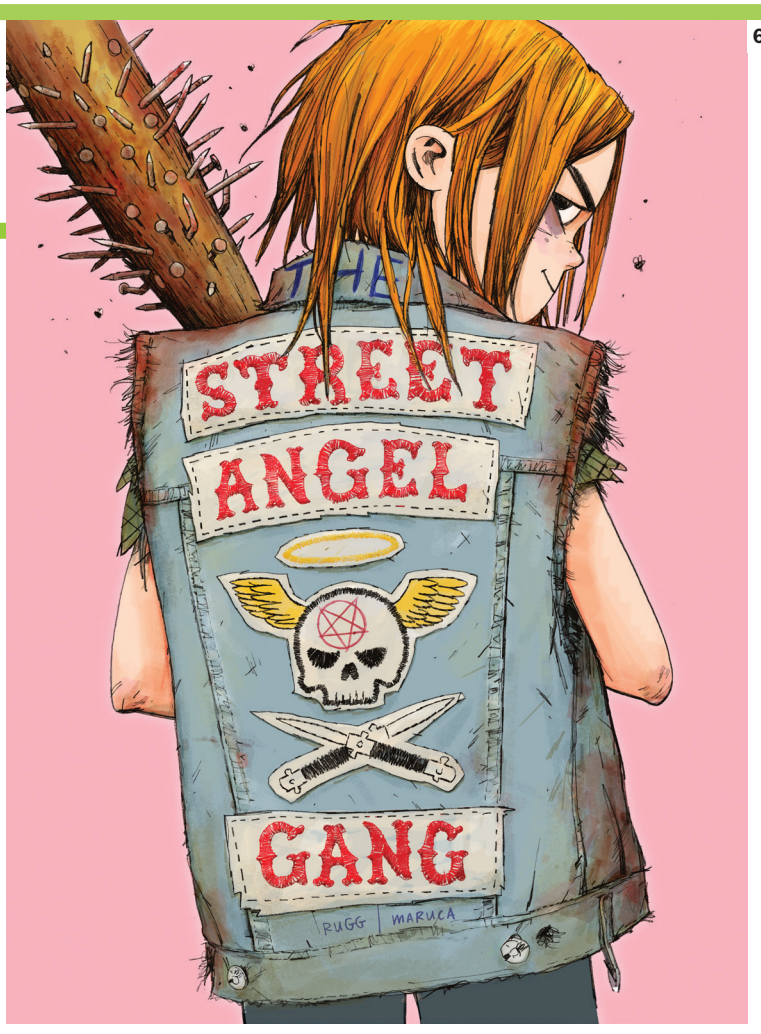
6.16



6.16
Artist: Jim Rugg.
Color Picker. Ballpoint pen on notebook paper. A piece of exploratory drawing which informs the artist's authorial comic narratives.

How do other illustrators get clients?

6.17



6.17
Artist: Jim Rugg.
The Street Angel Gang.
A poster to advertise the *Street Angel* comic-book limited series by Jim Rugg and Brian Maruca.

6.18

6.18
Artist: Jim Rugg.
Commission: *Book Lovers.*
Client: Foxing Journal Piaui magazine *I'd Rather Be Reading* (Chronicle Books).

Spotlight
Getting clients in augmented reality – Xavier Segers

Illustrator: Xavier Segers is an illustrator and designer, based in the UK. The increased prevalence of AR on social media, its use on platforms such as Google, and the evolution of advertising and its migration to digital formats means that clients across many areas of the creative industry have become more conscious of its potential impact in realizing their concepts. This is a potential growth area for illustrators: another form of illustration coming alive and engaging its audience in a unique form of interactivity.

The formats of AR are now part of everyday life for most users of social media and games. *The Vixen's Tale* – a three-dimensional theatrical set incorporating the audio of the Welsh National Opera, which its creators, Arcade, describe as 'a series of gamified vignettes, each of them unlocking part of the narrative' – comprised a myriad of AR features, creating an immersive illustrated experience to be enjoyed by all ages. Xavier Segers, the illustrator commissioned by Arcade to realize this project, is a visual polymath. He works as an art director as well as an illustrator, and was a site-specific category winner of the World Illustration Awards with his innovative interpretation of *The Vixen's Tale*.

How do you get chosen for a brief?
Xavier's specific input on this project was to imagine and visualize the three-dimensional arches and illustrate the visual universe of *The Vixen's Tale*. Lush flora and intense colour are defining characteristics in his portfolio and *The Vixen's Tale* captures this organic essence.

Being aware of the diverse contexts that exist for illustrators, and their potential to open up new avenues, can lead to unexpected and sustaining opportunities for evolution. For many illustrators, AR projects are unchartered territory. Although Xavier has since experimented with software on self-initiated AR projects, he had no prior technical expertise in this area before working on *The Vixen's Tale*. He loves that commissions such as these present new challenges. He reflects, 'I like being shaken up a bit – it keeps me on my toes.'

However, he also suggests that an illustrator needs to be distinctive and memorable and that creating a visual impact is vital to being noticed. He reflects, 'Put work out there: don't be precious but be clear about what you do. Illustrators need to make an impression in the first ten seconds – put a clear stamp on it.'

What has been your experience with getting clients?
Xavier isn't represented by an agent and relies on the exposure generated by his own work to be found by new clients. He suggests that having an agent can lure illustrators into a false sense of security, even if they are successful. He reflects, 'As an illustrator you realize you are independent and need to sustain yourself.' This can be demanding but also empowering, 'It means you can negotiate – you can be in charge.'

Many illustrators combine freelance practice with other employment, both inside and out of the creative industry. Consequently, some feel less confident of their professional status. Xavier's experience normalizes this. He reflects that *The Vixen's Tale* commission and the subsequent accolades led to a recognition that, 'I have infiltrated illustration. Before this award I didn't feel like an illustrator in my guts. Feeling validated helped me grow my confidence and helped to shake off imposter syndrome.'

What is your advice on working with clients?
Xavier suggests, 'The first time you face a client is like a job interview – make them happy. Show a willingness to know more about the project. You have a responsibility to provide for the client in your style to cater for them, but still be yourself.' He says he has experienced two types of commissions: the first based on execution of style, with the client having a set idea of the final outcome; the second where the client is adaptable and guided by the illustrator conceptually.

Xavier doesn't want to be seen as a technician or executioner, and he flourishes with creative projects such as *The Vixen's Tale*. He enthuses, 'The best brief is one that challenges and provides the opportunity to make meaningful work, with the client going with me on that journey.'

In common with many other creative contexts, this commission is evidence of the close collaboration and teamwork required to achieve the best results from an illustration brief. Xavier perceives openness as a prerequisite. 'An illustrator in a client setting needs to ping pong, to

communicate and read between the lines. Don't get defensive. Realize that you are providing a service.'

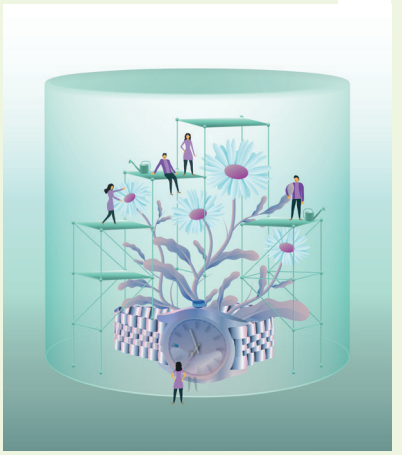
The impact of an exciting brief, maybe in a new area, is encapsulated by Xavier. 'That shakes me up, scares me and introduces me to new ideas and approaches that also can influence my work and become widespread to provide lots of exposure. It doesn't have to be a multinational client, but I want to be able to say, "wow, this is the apex of my career so far".'

Advice from Xavier on getting clients in AR

- Be clear about the visual identity of the work you do and put it out there.
- Be open to new challenges.
- Gain experience of working with a team, sharing ideas and collaborating with other creatives.
- Form meaningful relationships in online and local creative communities.

6.19

6.20



6.21

6.19
Artist: Xavier Segers. This jungle wallpaper was commissioned by Sentec as a backdrop for their booth at the Fespa Global Print Expo in Munich.

6.20
Artist: Xavier Segers. From a series of self-initiated images exploring topical issues.

6.21
Artist: Xavier Segers. Commissioner: Jon Meggitt, co-founder and CEO of Arcade. Commission: *A Vixen's Tale* for Welsh National Opera. An award-winning, immersive and interactive, AR experience in which visitors explore the story via mobile devices using augmented reality.

ACTIVITIES, GLOSSARY & USEFUL LINKS

7.0
Artist: Fernando Cobelo
Client: Advertising for Samsung
Image kindly provided by Ella Lupo, agent at Purple Rain Illustrators

7.0

Activities

ACTIVITY 1
FINDING A CLIENT'S CONTACT DETAILS

Aim
To find contacts in publishing and editorial contexts using *The Writers' and Artists' Yearbook* as a starting point.

Background
This annual yearbook is a comprehensive directory that contains brief summaries outlining the types of work undertaken by a diverse range of book publishers, newspapers and magazines, audio books and book packagers across the UK and Ireland and overseas, including America and Canada. It's a valuable source of information for illustrators looking to build up contacts within these commercial areas. Updated each year, *The Writers' and Artists' Yearbook* provides up-to-date contact details of editors and lists website addresses (alongside short informative editorial pieces, useful for both aspiring and practising writers and artists).

Task

1 Delve into the *Yearbook* and make a long list of publications that could be suitable for the kind of work you do. Deliberately seek out those that you may not be so familiar with – either smaller presses or those that might deal with niche but relevant areas of content.

2 Go to their websites or social media pages, using the listed contact details, to research their use of illustration. Some publishers' sites will feature a few pages – or a 'look inside' section – of latest editions. If not, you will often find that they use social media to promote recent publications. With some detective work you will be able to gain a sense of their recent content and gauge how appropriate they are to your own aspirations. If they don't use illustration, move on and find other possible sources of commissions.

Ask yourself

- Does the publisher's imagery relate, in terms of visual approach, content and purpose, to the type of illustration that you have in your folio?
- For a magazine, how much illustration is commissioned in each issue?
- Does the publisher produce a large number of illustrated books overall?
- What kind of fees do they offer?
- Does the publisher commission a range of styles of artwork?

3 If you find yourself becoming excited about the possibility of working for the publisher, find the names of their commissioners of illustration. This may be the senior designer, art editor, art director or picture researcher. A simple way of searching for the name and contact details is to do an online search using a simple phrase such as: 'Who is the art editor/designer/art director of [add the name of the publication].' Often this will lead you to a social media link platform, such as LinkedIn, Behance, The Dots, Twitter or Instagram.

Try several searches. If you keep drawing a blank, try to find a hardcopy or digital version of the publication they are associated with. If it's a newspaper or magazine, you should find the editorial staff listed somewhere close to the inside cover of an issue. (Look inside magazines every time you are in a newsagent or bookstore to build up your own database of useful contacts).

You may find a career summary of the art director or art editor on LinkedIn. This can also lead to further client names and details via their previous employment history. Search into those companies, asking the same questions about their use of illustration.

4 When you collect the details of commissioners, make note of the relevant images, projects or campaigns that most reflect the work you do. When you have contact details, you are ready to target the commissioner. This will usually involve sending them an email containing links to a selection of your own work that is directly appropriate for their publication.

Personalizing the communication when you contact the commissioner is more likely to get you noticed, rather than a standard email or message with generalized content. Referring to a recent product, they have worked on will emphasize that you have taken the effort to research them properly.

Tip
Keep track of who you contact and when so that you can follow up and avoid duplication. Take note of which images or links you send to build up a promotional campaign of your own, sending a variety of pieces through various forms of communication over a time period. You may end up referring directly to them if you have face-to-face or direct contact in future.

ACTIVITY 2
WORKING TO A TIGHT BRIEF

Aim

This task is designed to lead you through a process of close art direction, to test your skills and prepare you for this kind of brief.

Background

If you work within some areas of illustration, you can expect to be given a tight brief where you might not have a great degree of creative freedom. You might be provided with a resolved visual and be asked to translate this into your own visual language or style, without much (if any) deviation from it. Some illustrators find this restrictive, while others enjoy the process of interpreting someone else's creative idea.

Task

If you can persuade a friend to develop the visual for you (steps 1–3 below), this will offer you a genuine opportunity to simulate the process of working towards a tight brief within an advertising context.

1. Choose an existing image-based advertising campaign that uses photography or illustration as a key asset to communicate the concept of the product or express the brand message.
2. Analyse the image and list or describe the content and flavour of the imagery. Focus on its aesthetic and formal aspects. If there is a specific colour palette, make a visual note of up to five key swatches. How is texture or light used? Describe the image using words – what is the key subject matter, mood and action?
3. Trace the image to create a line drawing of it. This doesn't have to be an exact trace and it's okay to loosely edit as you draw or distil the image into its main shapes and patterns. Capture as much of the detail that you think is needed to leave a sense of the composition and to remind you of the content of the image.
4. Hide the original advertising image. Using the line visual as your brief, including using the colour and descriptive notes to guide you, make your own version of the line drawing. Whatever your stylistic approach, interpret the line 'visual' and make a version in your own language or style. Keep as close as possible to the original composition and colourway and, importantly, do not deviate from the original subject and content.
5. When you have finished your version of the advertising illustration, go back to the original imagery and consider the format it was applied within. If there are typographic or branding elements – such as a logo, a strapline or any infographics that can be easily cut and pasted – apply these to a scanned version of your imagery to make a composite mock-up.
6. Consider whether the original context was print- or screen-based and whether it could be mocked up in a site-based context to demonstrate its scale or purpose. This might entail finding a location shot (such as a poster in a train station or bus stop) or making a mock-up of an editorial spread for a press campaign.

ACTIVITY 3
USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO FIND CLIENTS

Aim
The aim of this exercise is to create a list of contact details from social media.

Background
Social media provides a wealth of opportunities to research the world of contemporary illustration – to see what is being commissioned and by whom. Seeing each time you interact with social media as an opportunity to research what is being commissioned in the areas of practice relevant to your ambitions can lead you towards clients.

Task

1. Use your social media account to find artists whose work you admire and who work in an area of illustration that reflects your own aspirations. To maximize the potential of this exercise, find artists that are currently practising commercially and who post regularly.
2. For each artist, scroll through their posts and read their comments. You are looking for posts where they have credited their clients. This typically starts with what the commission was, the client and the name of the commissioner. Sometimes there will be a tag or link that leads to the client, company or brand.
3. If there are no mentions of clients on the social media platform where you are looking, follow the illustrator's links to reach other sites they are active on, including websites and blogs. If you can't find the names of any recent commissioners, check whether the illustrator has a client list – this might be in the 'bio' or 'about' section of their website. Searching a name and company will mostly bring up a LinkedIn, Twitter or Instagram account, but sometimes finding contact details may need further detective work.
4. It's likely that each of the companies in an illustrator's client list will have a design department. Use a search engine and type in a job title and the company name as a search. Alternatively, go to the company site and check to see who is listed there in the staff section. If you have found a name of a possible client and know the name of the company they work for, try typing those details directly into the search, i.e. 'Artie Type @ Dolphin Books', and see what contact information comes up. You're looking for an email address or a way of messaging the client directly.

Tip
When you have found social media handles or website addresses for the client you are researching, be specific with your search to find information that will help you establish how useful they may be for you.

Ask yourself

- Are there examples of projects they have commissioned?
- What types of tags and links do they use in their own posts?
- Are there links to other artists via any images they have posted or tags they have used?

5. If there are pieces of artwork that you connect to in terms of content or approach, comment on them positively.
6. If you think this client would be relevant to contact to share your own folio, follow them.
7. Check whether their work email address is listed or if there are any links to other work-related social media sites where their email address is listed. Take note of the email address. If there is no work email contact provided on any of the potential client's professional social media sites, message them to ask for an email address to send your folio or sample of work to. If they have a note in their bio not to directly message them via their social media for work-related enquiries, please respect this.
8. To gather a list of potential clients, you need to go through this process of researching to collect names every time you engage with social media. There is no magic trick to getting them to look at what you do. By monitoring the responses you get from the emails you send out, you will gain an understanding of the number of names you need to contact before you get a hit. Aim to contact hundreds of clients in the first instance and keep building the list.

Tip
If you can set up a spreadsheet or make a list, aim to be methodical about documenting the information you have for each client. Taking note of when you emailed them and what you sent will make it easier to keep track and avoid duplicating communication.

ACTIVITY 4
COSTING AN ITEM TO PRODUCE

Aim
This exercise is designed to give you a clearer idea of areas to consider and steps to take to become confident in making decisions about both the production and retail values for items that will be printed or manufactured commercially.

Background
Producing and selling merchandise requires you to make decisions about the quality of your items but also to be conscious of what a suitable cost per item is and the profit you are likely to make from selling it.

There are many sophisticated printers and devices such as die-cutters, and materials such as ceramic and fabric transfer, that can make home printing and production a viable option for some items. Equally, the hand-printed tag may be an integral part of your brand identity and product appeal. However, if you have limited facilities and are aiming for specific production qualities or finishes, a variety of products, or to produce in larger quantities, finding a printer who you can rely upon for quality and advice and who communicates throughout the process will be of real value.

Task
Decide what type of item you are planning to produce.

Possible items to produce

- Twenty-four-page full-colour zine, using the same weight of paper throughout
- Ten designs for greetings cards
- Five giclee prints – A3 size
- Five enamel badge designs
- An A5 softback blank page notebook with a full-colour cover
- A sheet of five designs of stickers
- A full-colour month-per-page calendar
- A ceramic mug with wraparound colour image
- A screenprinted T-shirt

1 Find at least three similar products being sold in similar contexts to where you anticipate selling yours (webshop/Etsy/Not on the High Street/comic convention/craft market, etc). Take note of as much of the product specification as possible.

Ask yourself

- What weight and surface of paper/textiles/materials is the product made from?
- What size is the product/number of pages?
- Is there any hand finishing?
- Is there any mention of where the product was made?

2 Do a search for at least three printers that produce the item you are going to cost. Look locally as well as using a national web search. Ask other artists in illustration communities that you belong to for recommendations. (Some artists are wary of sharing printer information to avoid any possible quality issues that might arise.)

3 Contact each printer to request an appropriate sample pack. Sometimes there is a nominal fee for this. Most sample packs contain a range of papers of various weights and finishes. For more costly items (such as ceramics, wallpapers, giclee prints or fabrics), you may have to pay for a one-off sample print run.

4 Go through the sample pack and choose whichever papers/materials will best suit your item. Be aware of the qualities in the artwork that's going to be reproduced and how well it might print on each of the surfaces or finishes. Refer to the items you sourced. For zines, comics, books and notebooks/calendars, you need to think about the external and interior cover as well as interior pages.

5 You should find that most printers provide standard costings for print runs based on typical paper material types, sizes, page counts and finishes. Most provide a cost scale based on the size of the print run for these standard products, and this can be used to calculate a cost per item.

6 Work out the cost per item based on the smallest quantity you can order (including any additional expenses for tax, import, or postage and packaging). Your final total needs to include any extra costs required in the printing process, such as downloading or managing files, providing a proof, etc.

7 Compare the per-item cost against the items you referred to that were listed by other vendors. Fix a nominal sale price for the item you are planning to produce.

8 The difference between what you would pay to produce the item and the price you could sell it for is the profit margin. Work out the profit margin per item and the cumulative possible profit for each print run.

9 You need to factor your time into the costing. Although your time is an invisible cost, recuperating it is fundamental to your enterprise being financially sustainable. How many items would you need to sell to cover the costs of your time spent in design and creation but also researching its production? If you have a nominal hourly rate, you can estimate its approximate value. You need to deduct this figure from your profits. (Given that the design might also be applied to other merchandise or possibly be available for future licensing, see this as a nominal sum that might be divided over more than one print run.)

Tip

- Undertaking this costing exercise can influence your choice of printer, the specifications for your product, how many pieces you decide to produce in any print run and your retail price.
- Remember that the cheapest option might not always be most appropriate. There is a risk involved in building up any stock, and sales may be sporadic or seasonal.

ACTIVITY 5
COSTING OUT A JOB

Aim

To understand how to quote for a commission. This will make you more confident in a briefing situation and empower you to negotiate the terms of the brief.

Background

Your time as an illustrator is worth money, and it must be economically worthwhile to do a job. When you are briefed, it will pay for you to have a bottom line for what you will accept and to be prepared to stand your ground and negotiate, if needed.

Task

Read the following briefs and answer the question 'which brief will pay more?' with a simple A or B. Add some notes about what factors were important in your decision. Then check to see you whether you were right and if you missed any important factors in making your decision.

Packaging: Brief A

Client: Squiffy Gin.
Use: Label packaging for a new international drinks brand. Client may need to use the image for future advertising, but this isn't specified at the time of briefing.
Duration: Three-year licence.

Packaging: Brief B

Client: *Day of Zombie* game.
Use: Packaging for new video game. Image to be also used for advertising on social media and in specially commissioned press adverts, internationally.
Duration: Three-year licence.

Which brief should pay more?

Answer: you would ask for a greater fee for Brief B. It's likely that a one-off cover for a game would attract a bigger fee than for a drinks label, even if both brands are of equal status and scale within their specialist markets.

In Brief B, the advertising for the game is specified as an additional use. This means that the illustrator would negotiate a multiple-use licence, which would attract a greater fee. This licence would be: worldwide licence, three years, use of illustration for *Day of Zombie* packaging, social media (paid for) advertising and press advertising.

The gin company definitely wanted to commission the label artwork, and did not commit to use the image for advertising purposes. Should they wish to use the illustration for advertising in the future, any reuse can be negotiated at that point as an additional licensing fee. The licence would be: worldwide licence, three years, use of illustration for Squiffy Gin bottle label only.

Animation: Brief A
Client: An independent animation production company pitching to larger production houses that develop content for large corporations such as Sony and Netflix.
Use: To provide twenty key frames for an animatic to be used in a pitch for a new children's animated feature.
Duration: Three-year licence.

Animation: Brief B
Client: A large clothing brand, similar to Nike.
Use: To produce an animated gif that will be used to advertise a new product range on social media platforms.
Duration: Six-month licence.

Which brief should pay more?
Answer: Although mention of mega-sized corporations such as Netflix and Sony may lead an illustrator to think this could be a high-fee commission, the commissioner represents a small-scale production company. If the project pitch were to be successful, the corporation taking on the project might choose to renegotiate directly with the illustrator to become involved with the development of the animation. This would be under new terms. The licence would be: worldwide licence, three years, use of illustrations for key frames for presentation use only.

Brief B, although only a six-month licence and confined to social media, would be the most lucrative of the two. This is because of the global scale of the company and the extent of the reach of the advertising campaign. The licence would be: worldwide licence, six months, use of animated gif for client paid for social media.

Editorial: Brief A
Client: A popular free daily newspaper that circulates widely in the UK.
Use: An interior full-colour half-page illustration.
Duration: Single use.

Editorial: Brief B
Client: A medium-sized retail clothing brand, known in the UK.
Use: An interior quarter-page, full-colour illustration for their consumer magazine.
Duration: UK licence, one month, for print and web article.

Which brief should pay more?
Answer: Both of these briefs would attract a similar fee. Although the size of the image in Brief A is double that of Brief B, the use of the image in both print and web formats for Brief B means that its circulation is likely to be greater.

The licence for Brief A would be: UK licence, single use, use of illustration for internal half-page illustration. The licence for Brief B would be: UK licence, one month, use of illustration for internal quarter page in client magazine and client website.

Glossary

This is not intended as a comprehensive list of industry terminology; it clarifies some of the terms used, but not specifically defined, within the text. Some of the terms are used interchangeably as verbs or to describe roles or objects in the illustration process. Some of the business-related terminology in Chapter 5 is repeated here for reference but explained in more detail within the body of the text. There are many more technical terms essential to digital imagery, such as file types and material qualities related to physical artwork, which are too numerous to cover here.

Authorial: Within illustration, this describes self-initiated work that is created outside of client or commissioned briefs.

Context: This is a similar definition to the format but with a broader interpretation of the use of artwork. As an example, a book jacket is used in a publishing *context.*

Format: This describes the application and use of the artwork, such as an editorial format, greetings card, book jacket, web page, app, etc.

Media: This has two meanings. Increasingly, it defines the types of formats that are screen based. Traditionally, *media* is used as a term to describe the materials used to create an image.

Proof of concept: A pilot or sample that demonstrates whether a project is viable. Often used in the animation and games industries to pitch a project to potential funders.

PROCESS

Dailies: Progress meetings where artwork is shared with the team; usually held on a daily basis in the animation industry.

Deliverables: The content the artist agrees to deliver to the client – a term used in animation and design.

Finished art or final artwork: This is the image that is ready to print or use in the intended context.

Line art: A term sometimes used to describe visuals.

Promotion: Publicizing or advertising – self-promotion refers to the way an artist publicizes their work and availability.

Roughs: Preliminary sketches that show the idea, content and composition.

Scamps: Early-stage visual roughs or ideas (UK).

Thumbnails: Early-stage, small-scale visual roughs.

Visuals: Usually a more resolved sketch.

ROLES NOT ALREADY DEFINED IN THE TEXT

Characterization/character design: Creating and representing characters for use in games, narratives, animations and design contexts.

Illustrator: Creates artwork for a range of subject matter or clients.

Storyboard artist: Visualizes sequences for motion-based media.

Visualizer: Creates sketches and images to describe something that doesn't yet exist. A role that is common within architecture, product design and advertising and can be freelance or in-house.

TECHNICAL TERMS

Above the line: A term used in advertising when the brand or product is marketed to reach the largest audience through mass media such as TV, billboards, social media, newspapers, etc.

Animatic: An animated storyboard that includes sound, if relevant, to visualize a sequence as a visual for a film or piece of motion graphics.

Below the line: A term used in advertising where the campaign targets a smaller audience through formats such as direct mail, brochures, flyers, etc.

Bleed: A 'full bleed' is when an image is printed to the edge of a page. The illustrator extends the image by several millimetres on each side, where the page will be cut during the print process.

Brand identity: The visual components that identify a brand to a consumer.

Campaign: A term used to describe a project and entire range of outcomes within the advertising industry.

CGI: An abbreviation for computer-generated illustration; often used as a term within the film and animation industry.

Crop marks: The lines at the edges of an artwork indicating to the printer where it will be cut.

Decal: A printed transfer of an image that can be applied to a surface.

Edition: When a series of prints or artworks are made and signed by an artist. A limited edition is a batch of prints or sets of artworks with a predetermined number available.

Embossing: Stamping into paper to create a raised or indented surface.

File resolution: This describes numerically how many dots there are in a digitally scanned or created image. The size of the resolution is linked to the quality of the image.

Gutter: The part of the page of a book that connects with the spine. The content of each page needs to be designed to account for the gutter.

Mock-up: A dummy or prototype that demonstrates how a design or concept would be realized.

Mood board: A collection of imagery and visual content that cumulatively conveys the sense of an idea or concept.

Print run: The number of printed items that have been agreed for the batch.

Proof: A one-off final printed version of a design that is seen and checked before the print run goes ahead.

Spot illustration: An image that is a small component within a design, often surrounded by text or other visual elements on a screen or page.

Spread: When two pages open in a printed publication.

Storyboard: Drawings of frames that visualize a sequence for an animation or piece of film. These are sometimes notated to provide further directions.

Trim: The area of an image that remains after it has been cropped.

INDUSTRY AREAS

Book packagers: These undertake all of the processes involved in creating and producing a book on behalf of another publisher, company or organization.

Branding: The visual communication of the identity of an organization, company or product.

Conceptual illustrator: An illustrator whose work is defined by its idea – often referred to within editorial contexts where metaphor is used.

Future forecasting: History and trends are analysed to provide a prediction of what might be on trend in the future. Often associated with, but not limited to, the fashion industry.

Infographics: A design that visually presents information.

Motion graphics: Visual elements such as drawings and typography that have been animated or move within screen-based contexts.

Post-production: Editing work undertaken on a film or animation after it has been created.

Pre-production: A stage of the process, and used to describe artists who specialize in providing work in-house or to commission for advertising, animation, film and television industries. Storyboarding, character development and concept art could come under this category.

Pre-vis: Another term used to describe pre-production or visualization in film and animation.

Surface pattern: Imagery applied decoratively, such as textiles, gift wrap, wallpapers, etc.

Virtual reality: Creation of a digital environment simulating the real world that can be interacted with by an audience.

SPECIALIST FORMATS

Assets: The individual components of an animation, such as a character.

Dummy book: A draft or rough version of a book that contains visuals throughout and is to scale and comprises the number of pages of the intended publication. Usually submitted to a publisher by an illustrator/author pitching a book idea or produced by a designer as a way of communicating the concept of a brochure or publication.

Key frames: A sequence of drawings visualizing the start and main points of action in a film or animation. These often show the stylistic direction that the film will take. In illustration-led animation, this might include character and environment design.

Original artwork: A physical piece of artwork, whether 2D or 3D, which is reproduced or applied within its context.

Point of sale: Positional items for sale on shop.

Press ad: A format for adverts, such as magazines, leaflets and magazines (UK).

Zine: A self-published magazine that is usually produced in a small edition.

LEGAL TERMS

Advance: A sum paid to an artist to cover creation of content proper to royalties made up front to the artist, usually before starting work on a project. Commonly used as a form of payment in children's publishing and graphic novels, where the artist will receive royalties. May be paid in instalments up to publication.

All rights: This means that the artist provides all rights for reproduction of the artwork they produce.

Artwork licence: Illustrations are typically licensed for a specified usage, in a defined territory and for a specified time period. For example: illustration for use on client drink packaging only, USA, three-year licence.

Blanket contract: A contract that a publisher or client will apply to all future commissions.

Cease and desist: This is a document that is sent to order or request that another person stops a particular activity, often plagiarism or unlicensed use of an illustrator's imagery. It would usually outline the specific details of copyright infringement, indicate the aspects of copyright law that have been broken and instruct the perpetrator to cease with immediate effect.

Credit: Acknowledgement and publication of the illustrator's name.

Invoice: The document the artist sends to the client to request payment following a commission outlining what work was undertaken, the fee due and terms of payment.

Kill fee/cancellation fee: Payment made to the artist if the client decides the project will not go ahead after the illustrator has been contracted or at any stage of the production of the artwork.

Non-disclosure agreements: These agreements cover business confidentiality and ensure that the signatory cannot discuss certain elements such as company plans.

One-time use/single use: The artwork is licensed for solely one reproduction, not for use over a time period, for example in a magazine.

Orphan work: An image that cannot be traced to its originator.

Out clause (USA): This allows the named party to terminate the contract without any repercussions or penalty being imposed.

Ownership of artwork: This refers to the owner of the physical or digital artwork for which the artist has provided a licence for use.

Pay rate: The fee offered, usually based on a set amount, sometimes established on a figure per hour or page rate.

Plagiarism: Copying part or the whole of another artist's imagery without crediting the originator.

Public domain: A phrase that indicates that images are freely available to print or use without any copyright restrictions.

Right of integrity: A right to protect the artist against changes being made to their work that would be derogatory to their reputation.

Right of paternity – attribution: A basic right to be credited as the artist for imagery produced. It is a legal 'moral right' in many countries.

Royalty: A fractional payment made based on a percentage of the income received by the publisher or producer for sales of the book or product for which the image was used.

Samples: It is usual that the artist will receive a number of printed samples or gratis copies of printed publications or matter in which their imagery is used. The number of copies should be agreed at the commissioning stage.

Second rights (UK)/reuse (USA): The right to reuse an image that has already been published elsewhere.

Speculative: Work that is undertaken without a guarantee that it will result in a confirmed commission, publication or payment.

Subject association: A membership organization that is focused on a specialist subject area, often providing a range of services such as advice and educational activities.

Subsidiary rights: These are rights in book publishing agreements, which are in addition to the publisher's right to make the book. They may include translation, dramatization and merchandising rights.

Term: This phrase is used in contracts to define the period of time that the licence covers. If the clause is 'in-perpetuity' that means the rights are for an indefinite time. Most contracts specify a fixed period.

Territory: This term is used in contracts to define where in the world the rights are granted to use the imagery.

Unlimited rights: The client can use the work across all media for an unlimited time. The artist retains the copyright.

Warranty clause: The artist guarantees that the work is original and does not infringe any other artist's copyright.

Work for hire: A legal phrase in common currency in the USA, used to describe a work situation where the artist's copyright in the work is transferred to the client or organization that commissions them.

Useful links

This is not a comprehensive list of resources but each of these will lead to other sources of useful information.

BOOKS

Bolles, Richard N with Brooks, Katharine. *What Color Is Your Parachute? Job-Hunter's Workbook*. Revised edn. Berkley Publishing Corporation, US, 2021.

Branagan, Alison. *The Essential Guide to Business for Artists & Designers*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2019.

Brazell, Derek and Davies, Jo. *Becoming a Successful Illustrator*. Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2017.

Children's Writers' & Artists' Yearbook 2023. Bloomsbury Yearbooks, 2022.

Crawford, Tad. *Business and Legal Forms for Illustrators*. Skyhorse Publishing, 2016.

Graphic Artists Guild Handbook: Pricing & Ethical Guidelines. 16th edn. Graphic Artists Guild, 2021.

Kleon, Austin. *Show Your Work!: 10 Ways To Share Your Creativity and Get Discovered*. Illustrated edn. Workman, 2014.

Kleon, Austin. *Steal Like An Artist*: *10 Things Nobody Told You About Being Creative.* Illustrated edn. Workman, 2012.

Jones, Amy. *Children's Writers' & Illustrators' Market*. 33rd edn. Penguin Random House Inc., 2022.

Leland, Caryn R. *Licensing Art and Design: A Professional's Guide to Licensing and Royalty Agreements*. Skyhorse Publishing Company, 1995.

Lilly, Eliott. *The Big Bad World of Concept Art for Video Games: How to Start Your Career as a Concept Artist*. Design Studio Press, 2017.

Salisbury, Martin. *Illustrating Children's Books*. Herbert Press, 2018.

Stern, Simon. *The Illustrator's Guide to Law and Business Practice*. Association of Illustrators, 2008.

The Essential Guide to Publishing for Children. Society of Children's Books Writers and Illustrators (SCWBI), 2023.

Writers' and Artists' Yearbook 2023. Bloomsbury Yearbooks, 2022.

PROMOTION AND CLIENT LISTINGS

Agency Access
agencyaccess.com

Altpick
altpick.com

Association of Illustrators (AOI) client directories
theaoi.com/product-category/directories

Behance
behance.net

Bikini lists
bikinilists.com

Directory of Illustration
directoryofillustration.com

RocketReach
rocketreach.co

The I spot
theispot.com

Workbook
workbook.com

NETWORKS

American Illustration
ai-ap.com

Artstation
artstation.com

CG Society
cgsociety.org

Contagious Live (London)
contagious.com/events

Creative Mornings
creativemornings.com

D&AD
dandad.org

Designers and Geeks
blog.designersandgeeks.com

Dexigner
dexigner.com

Glug
glugevents.com

Ladies, Wine & Design
ladieswinedesign.com

LinkedIn
linkedin.com

Nicer Tuesdays
itsnicethat.com/nicer-tuesdays

She Says
weareshesays.com

The Dots
the-dots.com

The School of Life
theschooloflife.com

Women Who Draw
womenwhodraw.com

INFO: ILLUSTRATION, CULTURE, DESIGN NEWS, ADVICE

3x3: The magazine of contemporary illustration
3x3mag.com

Animation World Network
awn.com

Communication Arts
commarts.com

Concept Art World
conceptartworld.com

Creative Bloq
creativebloq.com

Creative Boom
creativeboom.com

Creative Review
creativereview.co.uk

Discord Comics
discordcomics.com

Folio Magazine
foliomagazine.org

Game Developer magazine
gdcvault.com/gdmag

ICON: The Illustration Conference
theillustrationconference.org

Illustration Age
illustrationage.com

Illustration Research Symposium
illustrationresearch.org

InfoDesigners
infodesigners.eu

International Centre for the Picture Book in Society (GB)
thepicturebookinsociety.org

Its Nice That
itsnicethat.com

Juxtapoz magazine
juxtapoz.com

Print magazine
printmag.com

Quentin Blake Centre for Illustration
qbcentre.org.uk

The Association of Illustrators – UK
theaoi.com

The Journal of Illustration
illustrationresearch.org

Varoom Magazine
theaoi.com/varoom

ORGANIZATIONS

American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA)
aiga.org

American Society of Architectural Illustrators (ASAI)
asai.org

American Society of Aviation Artists
asaa-avart.com

Animation UK
animationuk.org

Association of American Editorial Cartoonists (AAEC)
editorialcartoonists.com

Association of Illustrators (AOI) – UK
theaoi.com

Association of Medical Illustrators
ami.org

Association of Science Fiction and Fantasy Artists (ASFA)
asfa-art.com

Associazione Autori di Immagini (AI) Italy
autoridimmagini.it

Beroepsorganisatie Nederlandse Ontwerpers (BNO)
bno.nl

Concept Art Association (CAA) – USA
conceptartassociation.com

European Illustrators Forum (EIF)
european-illustrators-forum.com

Experts Cluster Illustria – DesignAustria
designaustria.at/en/expertscluster/

FADIP – Spain
fadip.org

Grafia
grafia.fi

Grafill – Norwegian Organisation for Visual Communication – Norway
grafill.no/om-grafill/english

Graphic Artists Guild
graphicartistsguild.org

Greetings Card Association
gca.cards

Greetings Today
greetingstoday.media

Guild of Natural Science Illustrators
gnsi.org

International Council of Design (ICOGRADA)
theicod.org

International Game Developers Association (IGDA)
igda.org

Illustrators-at-Large
artist-at-large.com

Illustrators' Club Romania
clubulilustratorilor.ro

Illustrators Club of Washington DC, MD and VA
illustratorsclub.org

Illustrators Ireland
illustratorsireland.com

Illustratoren Organisation – Germany
illustratoren-organisation.de

Illustrators' Partnership of America
illustratorspartnership.org

Illustrators Platform
illustratorsplatform.net/tr

Kuvittajat – Finnish Illustration Association – Finland
kuvittajat.fi/en

L'Union Nationale des Peintres-Illustrateurs (UNPI) – France
unpi.net

National Cartoonists Society
nationalcartoonists.com

Pittsburgh Society of Illustrators
pittsburghillustrators.org

San Francisco Society of Illustrators (SFSI)
sfillustrators.blogspot.com

Seven Stories: The National Centre for Children's Stories – UK
sevenstories.org.uk

Slovak Illustrators Association (ASIL)
litcentrum.sk/en

Society of Architectural Illustrators (SAI)
sai.org.uk

Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI)
scbwi.org

Society of Illustrators (SI)
societyillustrators.org

Society of Illustrators of Los Angeles
si-la.org

Society of Illustrators San Diego
societyofillustratorssandiego.org

Svenska Tecknare
svenskatecknare.se

Tegnerforbundet – Danish Association of Illustrators – Denmark
tegnerforbundet.dk/in-english

Tegnerforbundet (TF) – Norway
en.tegnerforbundet.no

The Rockwell Center for American Visual Studies – USA
rockwellcenter.org

SKILLS AND EDUCATION

Adobe
adobe.com

CGMA
cgmasteracademy.com

Creative Lives in Progress
creativelivesinprogress.com

D&AD Masterclasses
dandad.org/en/d-ad-masterclass-creative-courses

Domestika
domestika.org/en

It's Nice That
itsnicethat.com

Skillshare
skillshare.com/en

TED talks
ted.com/talks

Udemy
udemy.com

Trade and subject fairs

(Most have submission and exhibition opportunities)

Surface pattern character licensing
Brand Licensing Europe
brandlicensing.eu/en

National Stationery Show – USA
licensinginternational.org/events/national-stationery-show

Progressive Greetings Live – UK
progressivegreetingslive.com

Spring/Autumn Fair – UK
springfair.com
autumnfair.com

Surtex – USA
surtex.com

Top Drawer – UK
topdrawer.co.uk

Animation and games

Animac – Spain
animac.paeria.cat

Animafest Zagreb – Croatia
animafest.hr/en

Animago Conference – Germany
animago.com/en

Annecy International Animated Film Festival – France
annecyfestival.com

FANTOCHE international Animation Festival – Switzerland
fantoche.ch/en

Hiroshima Biennial International Animation Festival
animation.hiroshimafest.org/en

Holland Animation Film Festival – Netherlands
kaboomfestival.nl/en

International Festival of Animated Films (ANIFILM) – Czech Republic
anifilm.cz/en

Lightbox Expo
lightboxexpo.com

Ottawa International Animation Festival – Canada
animationfestival.ca

Pictoplasma – Germany
pictoplasma.com

Stuttgart International Festival of Animated Film (ITFS) – Germany
itfs.de

Vertex – online
vertexconf.com

Book fairs
Beijing International Book Fair (BIBF) – China
bibf.net

Bienal Virtual do Livro de São Paulo – Brazil
bienaldolivrosp.com.br

Bologna Children's Book Fair – Italy (online)
bolognachildrensbookfair.com/en

Feria Internacional del Libro (LIBER) – Spain
ifema.es/liber

Frankfurt Book Fair (Frankfurter Buchmesse, FBM) – Germany
buchmesse.de/en

Gothenburg Book Fair – Sweden
goteborg-bookfair.com

Guadalajara International Book Fair – Mexico
fil.com.mx/ingles

Helsinki Book Fair – Finland
kirjamessut.messukeskus.com

International Book Fair in Krakow – Poland
neventum.com/tradeshows/international-book-fair-krakow

Leipzig Book Fair – Germany
leipziger-buchmesse.de/en

London Book Fair
londonbookfair.co.uk

Nairobi International Book Fair – Nairobi, Kenya
kenyapublishers.org

Nambook Festival – Korea
nambookfestival.com

New York Rights Fair – USA
newyorkrightsfair.com

Riyadh International Book Fair – Saudi Arabia
bookfairs.moc.gov.sa

Salon du Livre de Genève – Geneva, Switzerland
salondulivre.ch

Salon du Livre de Montréal – Canada
salondulivredemontreal.com

Seoul International Book Fair – South Korea
sibf.or.kr/en

Sharjah International Book Fair – Sharjah, UAE
sibf.com/en/home

The International Book Arsenal Festival – Ukraine
artarsenal.in.ua/en/book-arsenal

U.S. Book Show
usbookshow.com

Vienna International Book Fair – Vienna, Austria
buchwien.at

Comics, cartoons and graphic novels

Angoulême International Comics Festival – France
bdangouleme.com

Comica, the London International Comics Festival – UK
comicafestival.com

Comic-Con – USA
comic-con.org

Comic Con – Scotland
comicconventionscotland.co.uk

Comic Con Seoul – South Korea
coexcenter.com/events/comic-con-seoul

Comic World Hong Kong Fair – Hong Kong
cwhk.org/en

Comiket – Japan
comiket.co.jp/info-a/C100/C100EntryTicket2

Heroes Convention – USA
heroesonline.com/heroescon

Keystone Comic Con – USA
facebook.com/keystonecomiccon

Lucca Comics & Games – Italy
archivio.luccacomicsandgames.com/en

MCM London Comic Con – UK
mcmcomiccon.com

MoCCA Arts Festival – USA
moccafest.org

Shanghai Comic Convention – China
comiccon.com.cn/zh-cn

Concept art and games

E3 Expo – USA
e3expo.com

Global Game Development – USA
igda.org

Trojan Horse was a Unicorn – USA
trojan-unicorn.com

Sci Fi Dragoncon – USA
dragoncon.org

Illustration

Bangkok Illustration Fair (BKKIF) – Thailand
bangkokillustrationfair.com

Hong Kong Illustration and Creative Show (HKICS)
illustrationcreativeshow.com/en

ICON – USA
theillustrationconference.org

The London Illustration Fair – UK
thelondonillustrationfair.co.uk

The Northern Festival of Illustration – UK
thefestivalofillustration.com

The Seoul Illustration Fair – South Korea
seoulillustrationfair.co.kr/english

Competitions

2000AD Thought Bubble
thoughtbubblefestival.com/2000ad

3×3 International Awards Show – USA
3x3mag.com/shows

ADC Annual Awards – USA
adcawards.org

American Illustration – American Photography (AI-AP) – USA
ai-ap.com

Animago Award – Germany
animago.com/en

Applied Arts – Canada
appliedartsmag.com

Ashurst Emerging Artist Prize – UK
artprize.co.uk

Communication Arts Illustration Competition – USA
commarts.com/competition/2022-illustration

Creative Quarterly – USA
cqjournal.com

Derwent Art prize – UK
derwent-artprize.com

Golden Pinwheel Young Illustrators Competition – Shanghai
ccbfgoldenpinwheel.com.cn/en

Hiii Illustration – China
idnworld.com

Illustration West (Society of Illustrators LA) – USA
si-la.org

Illustrators (Society of Illustrators New York) – USA
societyillustrators.org

International Animation Festival – Hiroshima, Japan
animation.hiroshimafest.org/en

Italian Annual Awards Competition (Italian artists only)
european-illustrators-forum.com

Japan Media Arts Festival
j-mediaarts.jp/en

Joseph Binder Awards (Australia)
josephbinderaward.com

Lotte Reiniger Promotion Award for Animated Film – Germany
itfs.de/en/professionals/award-winners

Picture This
picturethismusic.com

Silent Book Contest Virtual Exhibition
silentbookcontest.com

The Lumen Prize For Digital Art – UK
lumenprize.com

The Northern Illustration Prize
theaoi.com/northern-illustration-prize-2021

The V+A Illustration Awards – UK
vam.ac.uk/info/va-illustration-awards

VI Tragaluz International Illustration Award – Columbia
graphiccompetitions.com/illustration/vi-tragaluz-international-illustration-award

World Illustration Awards – UK
theaoi.com/world-illustration-awards

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