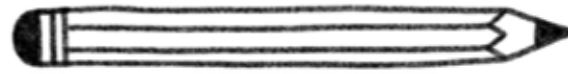
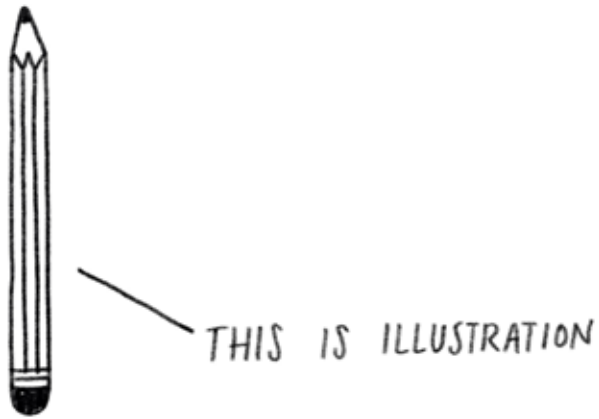


CULTURE AS CLASSROOM



ILLUSTRATION'S CAPACITY—
THE ILLUSTRATOR'S CAPABILITY

CLEMENTE BOTELHO & MARCO CIBOLA
SHERIDAN COLLEGE



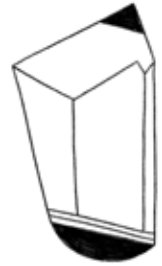
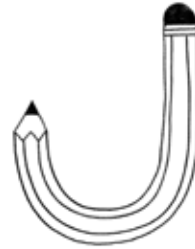
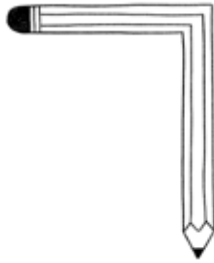
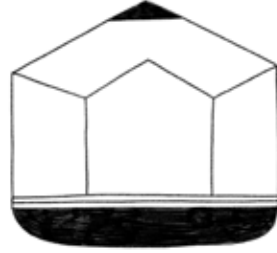
IT'S MALLEABLE... AND
IT'S CHANGING.

ABSTRACT

Although the incredible malleability of illustration is one of its core strengths, it also veils the extent of illustration's communicative power in visual culture. Within the past decade, we have seen the rhetorical application of an illustrative language increasingly migrate to practitioners not broadly identified as illustrators. As partners with future illustrators, how might we lift the veil, so to speak, to help forge an expanded understanding of illustration practice and its potential to drive culture?

We propose an expanded understanding of the "traditional" role of the illustrator—one that acknowledges that the contemporary illustrator is a visual thinker, content generator, and entrepreneur who utilizes the immediacy of technological interaction with broader audiences. In defining this empowering role within our classrooms, we embrace the fluidity of illustration practice, seeing illustration as a communicative matter that, from the street to the screen, negotiates diverse platforms across visual culture.

The best in illustration education attracts an incredibly diverse and multi-tooled student, and prepares that student not only to develop a conceptual response, but also to have the capability to manifest potent ideas through many platforms. Our premise is to propel the ambition of illustration education by engaging students in negotiating broader and deeper connections to all aspects of cultural investigation, embracing the role of visual author, and considering illustration as *the* contemporary medium delivering cultural transformation.



1. ILLUSTRATION'S MALLEABILITY:



TRADITIONAL PRACTICE
& CONTEMPORARY TRAJECTORIES

HOW CAN WE ENGAGE STUDENTS
IN PRACTICES THAT CONTRIBUTE
TO THE CONTEMPORARY EVOLUTION OF
ILLUSTRATION AND ITS POTENTIAL
TO DRIVE CULTURE ?

Although the incredible malleability of illustration is one of its core strengths, it also veils the extent of illustration's communicative power in visual culture. Within the past decade, we have seen the rhetorical application of an illustrative language increasingly migrate to practitioners not broadly identified as illustrators. As partners with future illustrators, how might we lift the veil, so to speak, to help forge an expanded understanding of illustration practice and its potential to drive culture?

Illustration functions as a translation of and conduit for content—the written and spoken word, research and data, music and performance—into visual communication that can inform, entertain, and persuade. As such, the practice of illustration has always existed within the intersection of ideas and information. It is a ubiquitous art that permeates all aspects of culture, and is informed by these disparate sources.

Acknowledging the breadth of illustration practice has been challenging for its practitioners, audience, and partners alike. Given the network of connections between illustration and related disciplines, such as graphic design, fine art, media arts, textiles and surface design, among others, one might ask: where does the function of illustration begin and end? Within the past decade, the shifts in illustration practice provide opportunity to realize illustration as a fluid force in visual culture, a mutable and moving structure that integrates many forms of communicative matter, and in turn affects an understanding of the ideas shaping the current zeitgeist. This malleability is a core strength and indeed an identifier of illustration practice. However, it also functions as a kind of disguise, inhibiting our ability to recognize the extent of illustration's role and reach in visual culture.

Arguably, the parameters of a “traditional” illustration practice remained reasonably fixed throughout much of the twentieth century. Of course, illustrators have always been and continue to be informed by aesthetic and technological shifts, but for decades the central function of



content



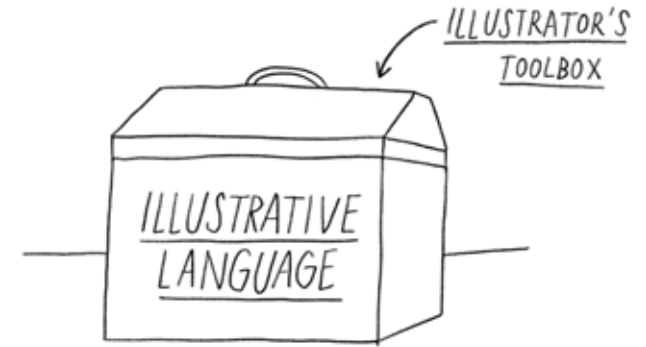
illustration operated within a more confined zone of culture. Illustration—born out of industrial mass reproduction and distribution—relied on the parameters of the printed page. The illustrative needs of magazines and books, products, and advertising defined the role of the illustrator.

Resourced externally, an illustrator's work was "assigned" as a specific problem to resolve, a fixed topic to convey, a defined subject to portray. Within this framework, the goal of the illustrator was to translate a predetermined concept or narrative into visual language. To a certain degree, this is, of course, a generalization, but with the exception of children's literature and other selected narrative forms, illustrators were not often presented opportunities to develop content and were not considered authors.

Over time, illustrative work—both in terms of needs and output—evolved to embrace emerging shifts in visual culture and the particular (and often pointed) sensibility of the individual artist transitioned into part and parcel of the illustrator's production.

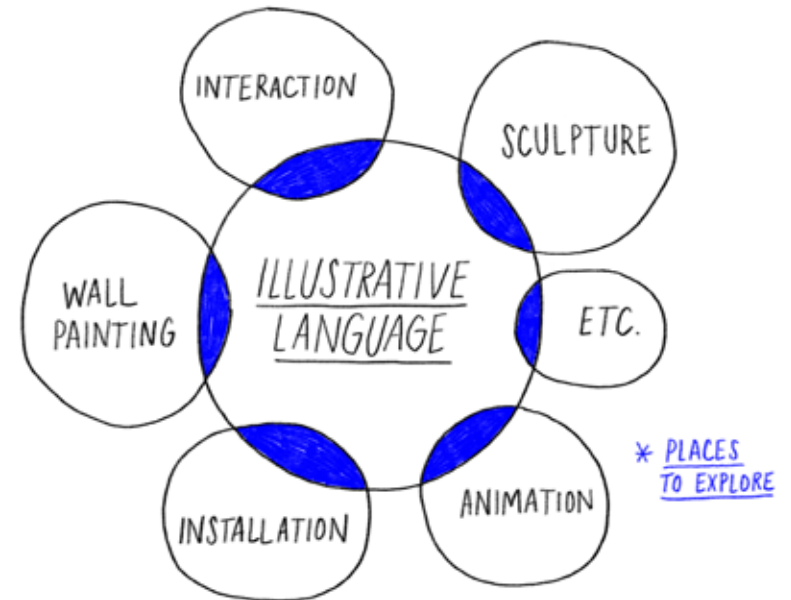
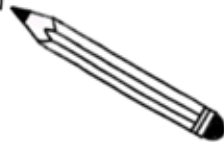
The trajectories of varied contemporary illustration practices reveal the evolution of illustrative language—one that includes the application of rhetorical devices and formal nuance and declares a unique form of visual communication. Illustration is housed within the broader expanse of art and design culture, but it also pronounces an autonomous form within these creative expressions. Illustration at its best reflects fine arts and popular culture, and often circulates within graphic design and advertising spheres, but it can also link moments of cultural investigation in a more precise and immediate way. The language of illustration is both determinable and fluid. Recognizing this duality shapes the nucleus of its expressive form.

ILLUSTRATIVE LANGUAGE

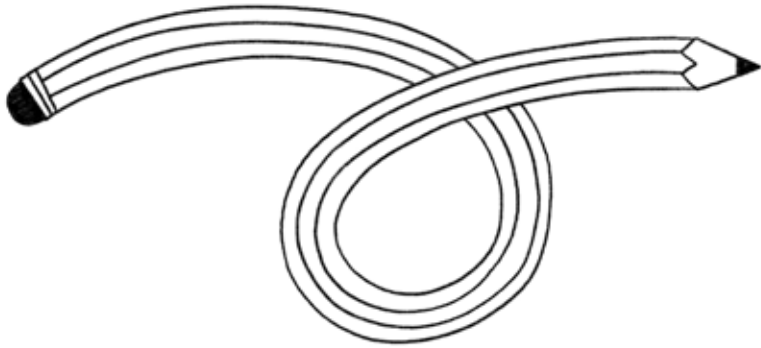


ILLUSTRATIVE LANGUAGE

→ ONE THAT INCLUDES THE APPLICATION OF RHETORICAL DEVICES AND FORMAL NUANCE AND DECLARES A UNIQUE FORM OF VISUAL COMMUNICATION



2. THE EDUCATION OF AN ILLUSTRATOR



The education of an illustrator has often been structured as a survey that explores different modes of visual language. Students are tasked with investigating principle art and design fundamentals as an ideation process through the vernacular. Within this process, the goal has been to help students develop a conceptual and material toolbox, leading to an array of visual strategies. The traditional classroom has devised opportunities to practice these strategies in ways that mimic the standard professional platforms of illustration, such as editorial, book publishing, and advertising. As such, the professional zones of the discipline frequently inform how students are meant to research, explore, and apply an illustrative language.

To facilitate an understanding of visual rhetoric and its application, it is logical to offer constraints and, again, mirroring specific professional practices helps to establish and define parameters. The rewards of these constraints are plenty; often a narrowed scope of exploration clarifies a specific challenge for the student, defining borders to push and pull against in asserting a response. After all, against the most fixed margins, if one cannot shift laterally, the creative instinct is to dig ever deeper.

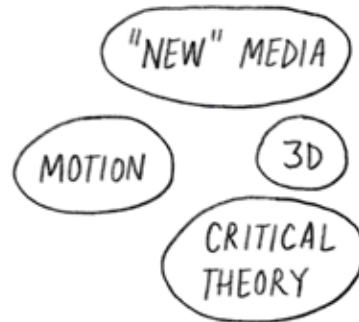
However, faculty and students alike may also feel trapped by such constraints, forced to gauge the effectiveness of a student response against the parameters of the professional case. For example, a proven forum for the exploration of visual metaphor lies within the context of editorial illustration. It is assumed that the process of responding to a written text through the use of efficient visual language provides a fixed path for successful learning. But in achieving a “successful” response, are we assuming prescribed limits of rhetorical application? Is the structure of the case study the *only* forum to communicate via this use of illustrative language?

The twenty-first-century student carries no cultural memory of any parameters that defined art and design practice only a decade or so ago.

TRADITIONAL TOPICS IN ILLUSTRATION EDUCATION



& CONTEMPORARY TOPICS

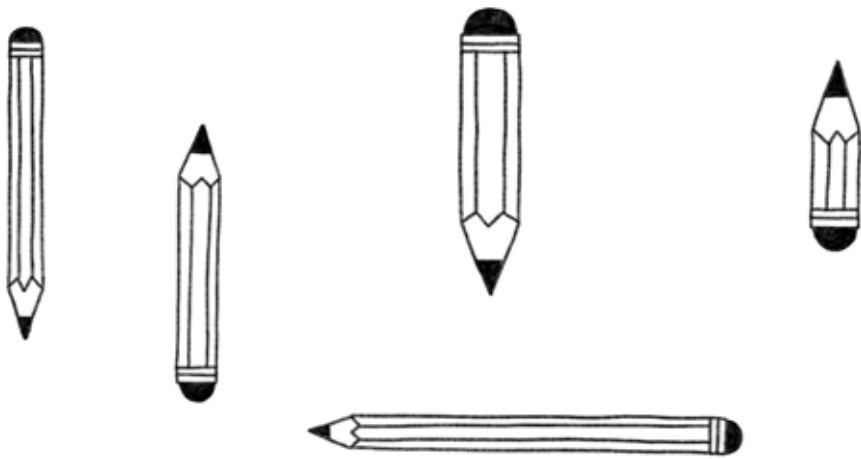


PROJECTS EMULATING "REAL-WORLD"

The social and cultural lexicon of today's youth embraces an inclusivity of forms and expressions, and unbridled, this may have challenging implications. But for our purposes, this liberates the space of illustration practice and unlocks the potential of its rhetorical application.

As partners with future illustrators, we need to be ambitious. We need to push illustration education to further engage students in negotiating broader and deeper connections with all aspects of cultural investigation. Moreover, we need to engage contemporary approaches to interdisciplinary pedagogy. Illustrator and illustration theorist Alan Male's polymath principle proposes ideas for broadening the scope of illustration education. Male asserts that educators need to adopt a holistic and nondiscriminatory overview of the whole discipline, developing a deep understanding and application of all its contexts and cultural applications. He argues for an understanding of interdisciplinary practice *as* authorship. Educators, then, need to activate these principles in order to declare—and extend—the interdisciplinarity of illustration practice and, as such, acknowledge its authorial voice in visual culture.

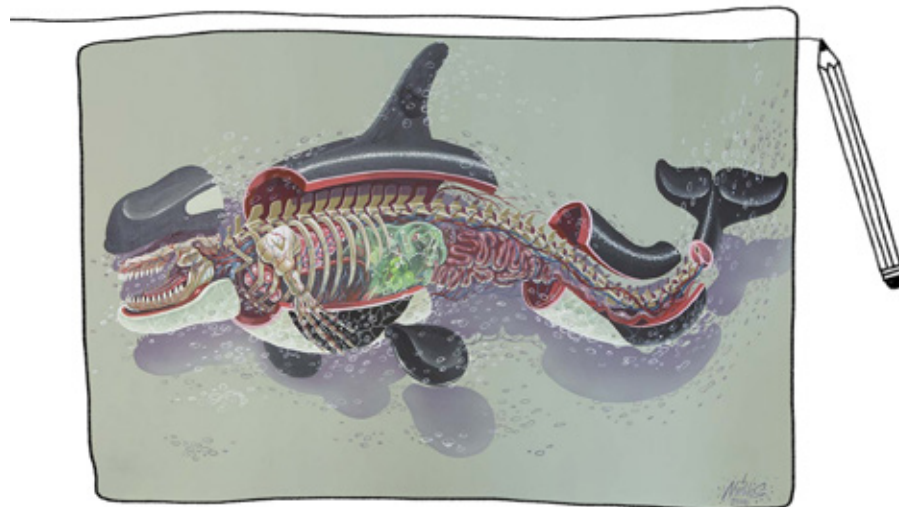
3. CASE STUDIES



This expanded view of illustration practice proposes a broader understanding of the “traditional” role of the illustrator—one that acknowledges that the contemporary illustrator is a visual thinker, content generator, and entrepreneur who utilizes the immediacy of technological interaction with wider audiences. Navigating the broad terrain of illustration practice can be challenging for practitioners. But our creative colleagues, who are active in a diverse range of related practices, have often appropriated an illustrative approach to create impactful works that, from the street to the screen to the design artifact, have influenced culture. As practitioners and educators we need to examine these models, and realize opportunities to declare the resulting forms as illustrative practice.

Adopting the informative languages of technical and scientific illustration, Nychos, a prolific graffiti artist from Austria, creates highly detailed and technically masterful murals. These works offer an alternate and fantastical understanding of cartoon characters, mythical creatures, and specimens from the animal kingdom through illustrated visual dissections, exploded views, and cross-sections. A mashup of cartoons and anatomical illustration, Nychos’s work depicts culture from the inside out. Nychos comes from a family of hunters, which shaped his interest in drawing anatomy. His focus on skeletal structures as a subject was not just a visual curiosity. Rather, it prompted him to ask himself “how does this all work?” (Juxtapoz.com, 2014)

Similarly, medical and anatomical illustration was born out of the need to advance human knowledge and understanding. Long before the invention of photography, illustration was the primary way of describing not only how the invisible parts of our bodies *looked*, but also, how our bodies *functioned*. Anatomical illustration served to record and disseminate scientific advances and explain the inner workings of our physical beings.



Nychos, Dissection of an Orca



Nychos, *Ronald's Exploding Head*



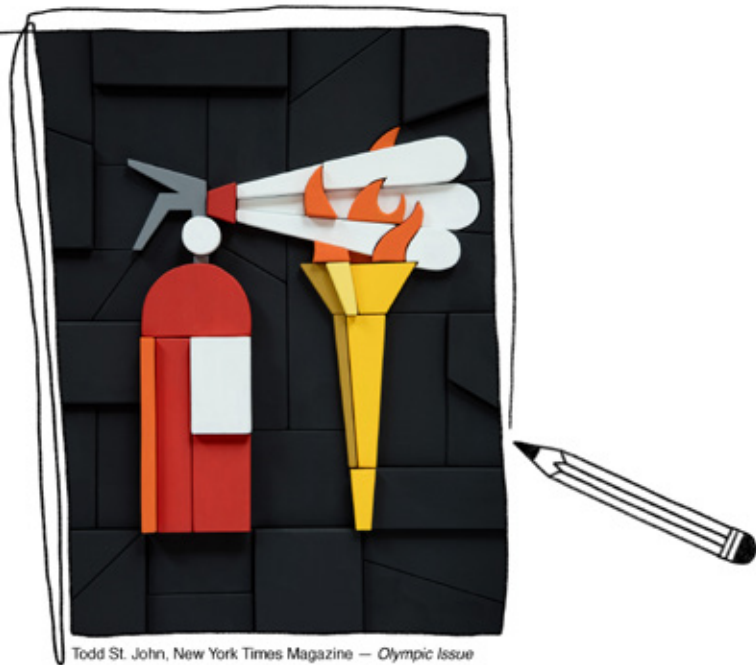
Nychos, *Exploded view of Spongebob Squarepants*

The language of graffiti aims to critique, and at times overturn, societal norms. It takes over public and private space and, in so doing, implies an unfiltered voice drawing a direct line from the author to the audience. Although, Nychos's impressive murals of various animals are mesmerizing to look at, and one can easily appreciate the technical prowess in these works, it is the introduction of iconic cartoon characters and corporate mascots from pop culture that offer an alternate and deeper lens from which one can view his practice.

As the title suggests, in *Ronald's Exploding Head*, the artist depicts a portrait and exploded view of Ronald McDonald's head. Painted in Nychos's signature cartoon-like style, the gruesome depiction—which includes veiny eyeballs popping from their sockets, and streams of blood and slime-like matter spanning the two halves of his exploded cranium—explores the comical and the horrific all at once. A possible metaphor for our guilty pleasure, the image paints the two extremes of a spectrum and leaves the viewer questioning their relationship with the fast-food corporate giant.

In his depiction of Spongebob Squarepants, the central character in the Nickelodeon animated series by the same name, Nychos reveals an imagined view of Spongebob's anatomy. The anthropomorphosis of the sponge is augmented by the artist, heightening the viewer's ability to connect with the character. Square brain notwithstanding, Nychos's Spongebob is more like us than the Nickelodeon original. Nychos employs the scientific language of medical illustration—one that is commonly understood as a pillar of factual information—and pairs it with fantasy, blurring the line between reality and fiction.

Just as Nychos's curiosity for how things *work* led him to his exploded paintings, Todd St. John's curiosity for how things are *made* led him to his interdisciplinary practice. St. John, who often works under his studio name *Hunter Gatherer*, makes things; he works with his hands to make physical objects. At a glance, his practice resembles that of a sculptor or industrial designer rather than an illustrator. However, the dimensional objects that St. John makes are often created with the express purpose of being reproduced in flat, two-dimensional form for use in print, on screen, or as animation. It is difficult to label St. John's practice. It exists at the intersection of



Todd St. John, New York Times Magazine — Olympic Issue

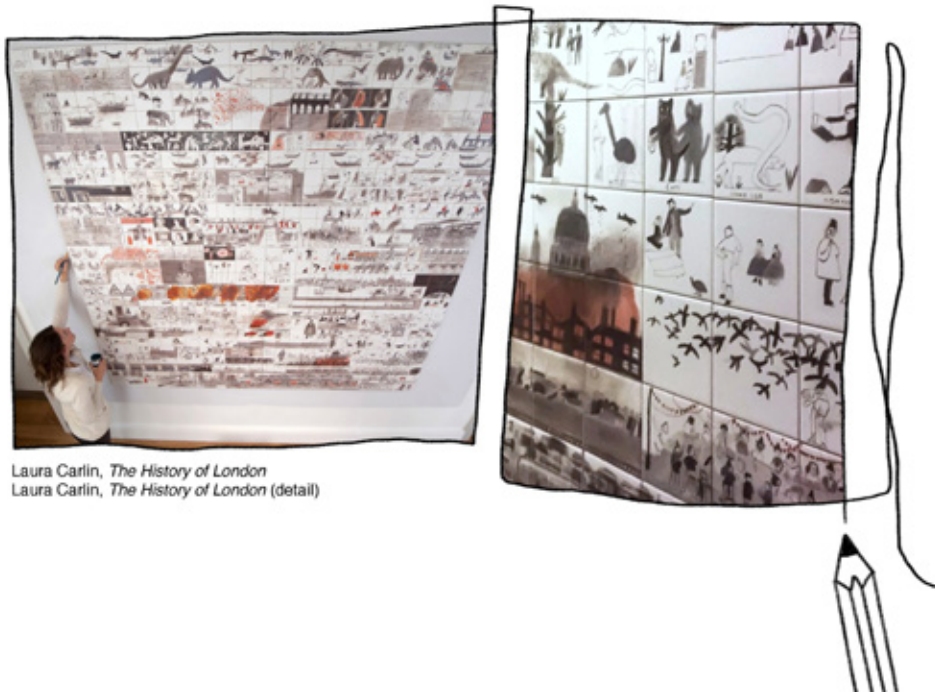
sculpture, photography, illustration, and animation. Additionally, his work also takes shape as products or furniture. Although disciplinarily explorative and diverse, there is a common illustrative thread that runs through all of St. John's endeavors.

Although materiality defines the surfaces and experiences of St. John's work, it also defines his visual rhetoric. In many of his still images, for instance, the materiality of the work itself offers a playful twist and influences the reading of the image. For example, in a recent illustration for the *New York Times Magazine* that accompanied an article about how cities are rejecting the opportunity to host the Olympic games due to the burden that they pose, St. John depicts a fire extinguisher putting out an Olympic flame. It is a simple yet strong conceptual image that employs a visual language that practically defines editorial illustration. However, the medium used to create it—an assemblage of painted wooden blocks—is unusual, thereby becoming part of the subject. Traditional image-making methods such as drawing, painting, and printmaking do not often explicitly draw attention to the artist's decisions regarding media. However when something out of the norm is done or used to produce images, the medium becomes an active contributor to both the material *and* conceptual success of an illustration in a way that heightens its ability to communicate.

Representing materiality is at the heart of St. John's practice. From the woodshop to the photo studio, he records the playful and ephemeral nature of his methods. This is particularly true of much of his animated works where painted wooden blocks are animated through traditional stop-motion techniques. In one such project, Hunter Gatherer was commissioned by Google Fiber to advertise their expanding network providing high speed internet. St. John's studio was hired to create a series of spots based on a concept to emulate a fictional board game focusing on various locations that the product is offered as they roll out service across the country. Again we see a conceptual illustrative language at the heart of this project. The physicality of the stop motion technique, a perfect match to the concept, highlights the construction and growth aspects of the Google Fiber network due to the innate ability of building blocks, wood, and model making to recall these activities. Materiality here becomes an important propeller for added meaning.



Todd St. John, Google Fiber



Laura Carlin, *The History of London*
 Laura Carlin, *The History of London* (detail)

Another facet of visual communicators working in material and craft forms is the illustrator as manufacturer of design artifacts. Artists as diverse as Olimpia Zagnoli, Whitney Sherman, and Maricor and Maricar Manola seamlessly migrate from image to object, and still to moving visuals. The commonality in their material explorations is a conceptual process that is clearly derived from an illustrative practice. We note this activity not simply as examples of illustration represented on wearables and domestic objects (found across a myriad of retail platforms), but as an independent creative platform and extension of an illustrative voice to express concepts and tell stories.

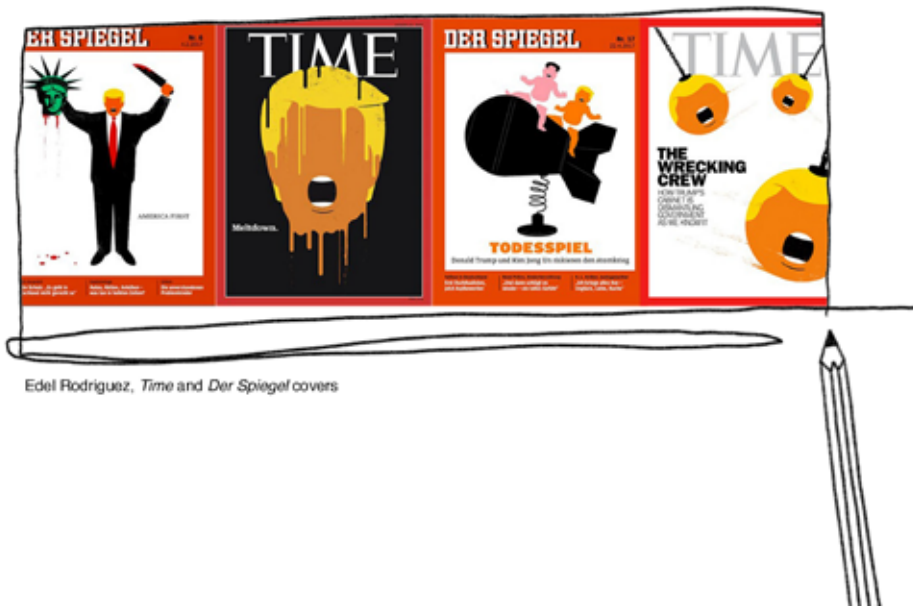
One exemplary model for this is London-based Laura Carlin. Carlin is a prolific book illustrator whose expressive drawings present an array of charming characters and locales forming implicit and poetic narratives. Carlin extends these qualities within a significant body of work in ceramics, with hand painted plates and mugs that draw upon traditions of British decorative and domestic arts. Carlin's recent projects involve unfolding narratives painted on ceramic tiles that are assembled as mosaics where the endearing drawings also subvert the more staid references of the form.

Works such as *The History of London* (created for an exhibition at House of Illustration, London) form a rich tapestry of ideas and events to engage the viewer, and Carlin employs her formidable storytelling talents to navigate between idea, image, and object. The work springs between traditional and innovative forms of illustration. On one hand, the tiles function similar to a small fresco panel painting, creating the potential for sequential reading. Conversely there is an irreverent playfulness in their assemblage, and the stories become fluid as the viewer can shift from the literal viewing order and succumb to the potential for randomness in connecting the imagery. Like St. John, the selected materiality of form infuses the work with a new rhetorical language- in this case narrative illustration is informed by a craft-based platform to suggest new references and meanings for the viewer.



Edel Rodriguez, various Trump illustrations

As *the* illustrator of the Trump Age, Edel Rodriguez's work encapsulates the power of illustration to migrate between cultural spaces. Rodriguez's prolific and renowned career previously produced moments of cultural impact well beyond the audience or original platform of selected projects, but we can



Edel Rodriguez, *Time* and *Der Spiegel* covers



Edel Rodriguez, *Trump posters*

survey the visual activism of the past two years as case study revealing the essential malleability of illustration.

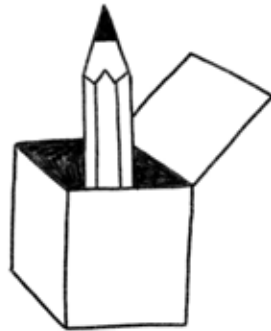
The images created since the Presidential primary season of 2016 are a deeply personal series that have connected to a collective outcry of anxiety, and quest for some semblance of “truth.” The ideas may stem from outrage, but through a mastery of rhetorical play have effectively created a unique contemporary space of political and social discourse: the *Trump* series demonstrates the illustrator as visual thinker. But this activist language lies within the informed library of visual and rhetorical devices that Rodriguez has shaped a career upon—featuring elements he has employed in theatre posters, op-ed pieces, portraits, and various self-initiated projects (such as the beautiful cigar box assemblages).

Rodriguez has successfully employed social media platforms as tools to distribute the works, and we have seen an online posting transferred to a wearable slogan of dissent, or a transgressive signature on the landscape. The content cuts a visceral path where a personal response to the day’s events can resonate with such impact that publications and institutions build their topical campaigns to embrace the images—furthering the work’s reach and extending potential meanings (Teeman, 2018).

This series of ideas conveys the power of illustration—the illustrator as content generator tapping into, and helping to shape a cultural moment—linking an international audience through a myriad of platforms to form ideas not quite articulated through other means.

Rodriguez embodies the role of visual author—the impulse and ambition to express, persuade, and inform. These images were created without a confined space—Rodriguez had no ‘client brief’—but that has proved no buttress to the many material opportunities this series has generated for its creator. A self-initiated cycle of images exploring the relentless tenor this President has on media has clarified a cultural moment in a unique way. In this series of work, we might say Rodriguez has revealed the potency of an illustrative language, the breath of practice, and realized Illustration’s potential to define and shape culture

4. CULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM



"THE FUTURE OF ILLUSTRATION PRACTICE RESIDES IN OUR CLASSROOMS. IF WE EXPLORE ILLUSTRATION AS A FLUID FORCE THEN WE MUST ALSO RECOGNIZE THE FLUCTUATING STATUS OF OUR STUDENTS' EXPERIENCE OF CULTURE."

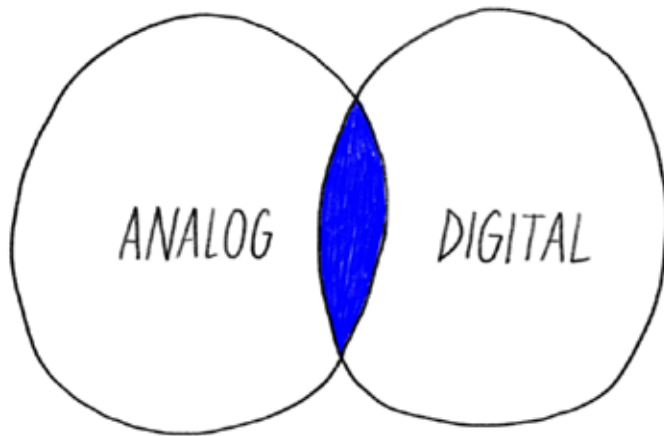
The future of illustration practice resides in our classrooms. If we explore illustration as a fluid force then we must also recognize the fluctuating status of our students' experience of culture. With the relentless evolution and stimulating speed of communication, the 21st century student is adept at processing ideas and images in new and ever changing ways. They carry limited residue of any categorization within cultural expressions. Their relationship to technology can be seen as both cause and effect.

Today's digital platforms release an unlimited array of options to produce, distribute, and explore visual content. As educators, we need to consider the multiplicity of functions the screen offers to our students, but also be receptive to the unique quasi-biological connection our students share with technology. So the educator is challenged to embrace the students' holistic and instinctive relationship with technology, but also introduce a reordering of the screen's potential as a porous interface. Why not reframe the term *Interactivity* to consider the screen's offering as a mutable portal into multiple expressive platforms of visual communication?

We need to ignite a manner in which the students' digital workflow can intersect with external and material interventions — to consider the screen as another "material" to help shape a visual idea and object, and facilitate transitions between static, moving, and user capable imagery.

Within Sheridan's Bachelor of Illustration, we welcome this experimentation and encourage fluidity between analog and digital media. Our aim is to blur the lines between workflows and break down any perceived hierarchies in medium and methodological approach. The relatively recent emergence of digital technologies see the media adopted by artists (and students) previously working in traditional approaches, and the software becomes a tool to explore flexibility and expedite rendering, with the resulting images largely emulating the effects of traditional media.

"WE NEED TO IGNITE A MANNER IN WHICH THE STUDENTS' DIGITAL WORKFLOW CAN INTERSECT WITH EXTERNAL AND MATERIAL INTERVENTIONS – TO CONSIDER THE SCREEN AS ANOTHER "MATERIAL" TO HELP SHAPE A VISUAL IDEA AND OBJECT, AND FACILITATE TRANSITIONS BETWEEN STATIC, MOVING, AND USER-CAPABLE IMAGERY."

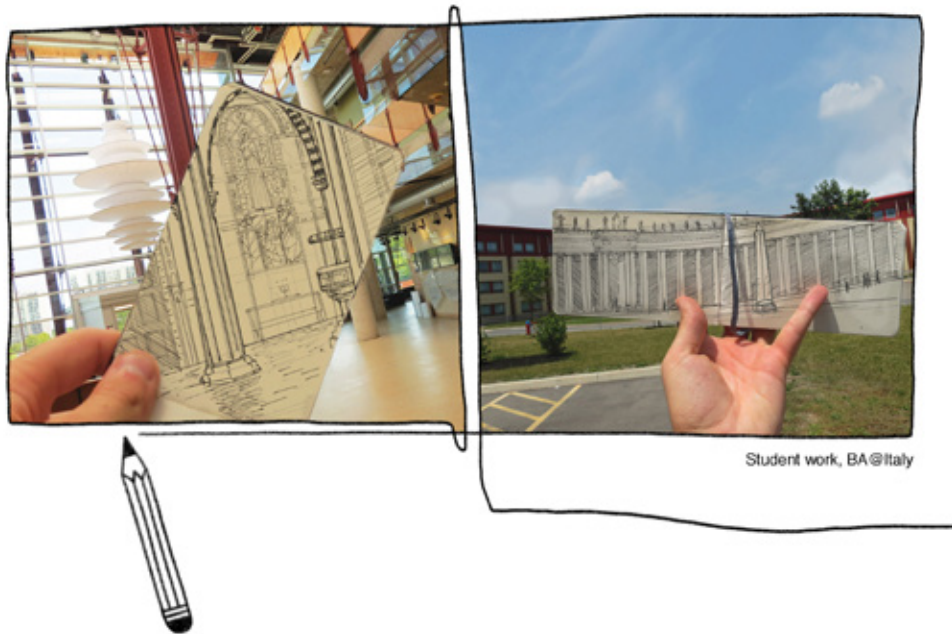


One could argue this remains the dominant approach in contemporary illustration practices, using layering techniques and Photoshop brushes to mimic drawing, painting, lithography, etc. By following this, illustrators are prescribing a limited and narrow use of digital technology while ignoring its aesthetic and conceptual potential.

The Sheridan curriculum aims to introduce varied and emerging uses for digital processes early in the student's experience. We introduce vector, raster, motion, 3D, and rapid prototyping in the 2nd year of study. Rather than instructing step-by-step processes to reach a specific and perhaps predictable end, we encourage students to discover individualistic pathways where unanticipated results and unorthodox methods can be embraced. The aim is to instill a democratized approach to digital media where a mark made with a basic Photoshop brush is not idealistically better or less effective than one made with a traditional brush and paint.

Aligned with encouraging experimentation with techniques for making images, the program also aims to rethink the possibilities for disseminating images that digital media can afford. Of course, the dominant trend is producing for screens, which logically then leads to motion work—an exciting new aspect of our discipline that many of our student are successfully building upon. However, we are also exploring how digital fabrication can be a component of the illustrator as maker of design artifacts. Examples such as the *Bling* project in 2nd year curriculum instigate a porous workflow, placing the computer as an essential tool—but one applied at intervals throughout the project's development. Students conceptualize designs for an exaggerated "necklace" that may represent a personality, personal brand, or emotional state. The ensuing designs are rendered in Adobe Illustrator in a layering process compatible with laser cut specifications for fabrication. Students then assemble the layers, and can augment the cut materials with paint and other media. The resulting artifacts are a playful blend of the technological and handmade—and again emphasize the notion of digital tools as a porous and interactive media.

To support the assured exploration of traditional and digital media, Sheridan's program has always stressed a rigorous training in observational drawing as a core competency in the visual toolbox. From an early stage, we have integrated the act of observational drawing in an experiential context—that is engaging the student in shifting environments within and external to



the classroom—directing engagement with the community at large through on site exercises at various locales and events. The act of drawing changes with the introduction of new stimuli; when the aroma of freshly baked sweets seduces you in the marketplace, the roar of a train mirroring the speed of commuters through a crowded urban station, or the sounds and (not so pleasant) aroma invades from the stalls in a rural barn. These stimuli shift the zone of study - learning as involving the active construction of meanings by the learner. The observational space is also transformed; effectively reducing the conceptual distance between observer and subject- and can instigate a role change for students from observer and witness to potential active participant in the cultural actions and events being recorded.

An extension of these concepts might be found in the curriculum of Sheridan's Ba@Italy study abroad program. Developed by Illustration faculty, the course fosters a interdisciplinary approach with case studies revealing a broad application of illustration practices (illustration students have been the majority among a varied group of participants).

The act of interpreting the student's cultural experience is explored through the lens of artisanal traditions and communicated by narrative, metaphorical and decorative tropes essential to the Illustrator's toolbox. Students are directed through a process to shift the zone of objective observational study, and engage subjects from within an epicenter—equipped with a 360-degree lens to *see* the subject in all its facets and possibilities.

The resulting visual ideas are manifested as illustration exerting its many languages and forms: the concept of *journey* is illustrated by fabricating shoes (Italian leather, of course), that are decorated and built with the remnants of both physical space and artistic heritage. Heritage sites are recorded through embroidered images—demanding the viewer to pause, and experience the artisan's function within these settings. At first built from intense observation, the strange and grand structures are conceptually projected onto modern spaces. And how to channel the relentless beauty... Memory flash cards are developed in effort to contain the intoxicating cycle of objects and spaces—the cards catalogue these sites and ideas to a viewer, and also express the artists' anxious quest to collect more and more experience. Illustration is realigned through these intersections of time and place, assimilating forms into intriguing and persuasive ideas and objects as a recording of culture.





Student work, BA@Italy



Woven Stories, Exterior view

We have strived to implement these principles within curriculum both implicitly and explicitly, and have partnered with various institutions and start-ups to test the role illustrators might have in the process. Advocacy case studies are a useful territory for exploration as students are exposed to relevant contemporary social, political, and environmental issues and linked to constituencies (and potential audiences) formerly beyond their reach. In an ideal scenario, students can experience the mandate of an initiative through immersion with the group—and an opportunity to experience the agency’s work in action with its intended outreach partner. The role of recorder shifts and the act of visually documenting is simultaneously informed by conceptual and experiential stimuli.

One successful project is Sheridan Illustration’s partnership with Share The Road Coalition through the auspices of Toronto International Bike Show where the program worked with the coalition to develop themes around their various activities. Student groups collaborated to devise strategies to visualize the themes, and consider platforms best suited to communicate with the show’s audience. Individually, students developed illustrations as a response to the themes. Over three years, the project immersed students in research and asserted the power of illustration to articulate the ideas and ideals of a design savvy sub-culture.

Another project initiated a partnership between Sheridan Illustration students (with Illustration faculty guidance), and Plant architects (a Toronto-based architectural firm). Working at Sheridan’s Davis campus, the team was tasked with conceiving, designing, sourcing, and overseeing the production of a two-story window installation to act as both an outward reaching piece of visual communication and a solution to excessive heat gain and glare issues negatively affecting the interior spaces. *Woven Stories*, as the final installation is titled, consists of a vinyl graphic window treatment and a series of custom shaped and printed blinds across 112 glass panes spanning a large section of the building’s street-facing façade. The vinyl graphic moving left to right depicts an arrangement of thread being woven into a tight knit pattern—a visual metaphor for the way faculties inside the building work together to serve and help the community. On the inside blinds, photographs taken on campus of students’ and faculties’ hands, are interconnected by threads that weave between various fingers. Despite the large scale of the project, the installation



Woven Stories, Interior view

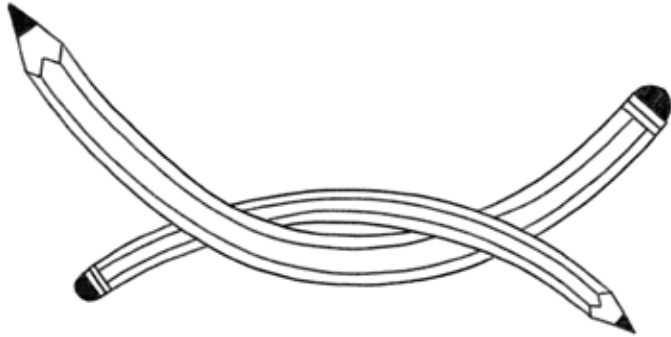


Grad Show Project, New Faces

is easily readable as a whole from a distance on the building's exterior. On the interior, however, one cannot stand back from the 14-18 foot high graphic blinds, resulting in a physically immersive and sequential experience. Lisa Rapoport, one of the architects leading the project, describes the challenges of working on the interior space: "You ... need to think about how you perceive the space, how you walk through, how you respond to all the scale issues. As an architect, we're used to spatial thinking, but it was a new experience for the [Illustration] students." (Unpacking the Value of Public Art and Placemaking, 2016) The project proved to be mutually beneficial for both the architects and the illustrators. Plant were quick to praise (and even adopt) the conceptual processes modeled by our students. And the students, in turn, were challenged to implement their conceptual and technical abilities to applications not typically understood as illustration.

For several years now, we have used our graduate exhibition as a platform to explore both traditional and innovative uses of the illustrative language. In 2014, for instance, we briefed our students to illustrate a portrait based on a specific textual provocation — more specifically, they were asked to work conceptually from a unique personality attribute (ex: patient, brave, curious, etc.). A template was provided that positioned key facial features consistently and strategically within the image area. The resulting portraits, all aligning to the same formal positions, were then sliced up digitally and remixed to create *New Faces*. The curious hybrid portraits, each made up of the work of three students, were used in traditional forms of marketing, like posters and postcards, to great effect. All the puzzle-like facial *parts* were then adapted to create a custom digital application where users could intuitively swipe out each of the three variables to create a practically infinite array of unique and wonderfully strange portraits. Loaded on a tablet and projected on the wall at the graduate exhibition, visitors were invited to manipulate the projected image, creating an evolving participatory art installation that continuously morphed throughout the exhibition's run. The project merged various illustrative approaches, from technical to expressive, conceptual to observational, to push at the perceived boundaries of illustration practice.

5. ILLUSTRATION'S MALLEABILITY — MALLEABILITY OF STUDENTS



As stakeholders, we are fortunate in that the best in illustration education attracts an incredibly diverse and multi-tooled student, and prepares them to not only develop a conceptual response, but have the capability to manifest potent ideas through many platforms. These students must simultaneously be challenged to engage in a knowledge-based development and stake out the broadest possible avenues for creative expression. The Sheridan case studies are simply probes forward into the possibilities existing for illustration pedagogy. Perhaps it is not merely absorbing a comprehensive scope of culture into the classroom, but to ascribe the classroom *as* culture; an incubator of ideas and forms that pollenate and migrate to best articulate the potential of an illustrative language. As such we continually explore a definition of the practice *through* an extensive scope of practice. Our shared ambition should include expanding the parameters of an illustrator's capability- and acknowledge Illustration's capacity as a contemporary visual medium to transform culture.

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