

editorial

Think Illustration

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editorial

Think Illustration

workshop

Where the print media industry is rapidly shifting towards the online environment, the role the visual, be it photographic, moving or illustrated is being re-evaluated. If editorial illustration is to remain a significant contributor within the new media formats, its ask for a deeper understanding. Beyond the pretty picture, what are the qualities that make an editorial illustration; in print and online?

With a series of proposed 'founding qualities' this workshop will focus on the nature of editorial illustration. Participants, coming from their own practice and experience, will challenge and build upon these starting points and play with the ideas that can lead towards new online illustration formats.

This workshop aims to create a deeper insight into editorial illustration as a medium, through exploration of its potential in existing and developing media contexts; in print and online.

Illustration will be the subject, but also the debating tool, to stimulate an outcome in words and images, there will be plenty of pencils and paper, do bring your own laptop if you wish...

The main outcomes will be collected for a small publication, which after the event, will be sent to all participants.

Open to: illustration researchers, practicing illustrators, illustration and visual communication s, MA students with interest in editorial illustration, art directors, graphic- and interface designers, e.a.

Max group size: 4x5

Duration: 2 hours

Date: Friday 18th November: 2.30-4.30-

Costs: £ 5,00

Location: Royal College of Art, London

for more information and to apply
please contact Nanette Hoogslag

info@hoogslag.co.uk

Think Editorial Illustration

Workshop

My family can't remember what I do, but they know its not pictures. -Andy Baker

Editorial illustration, illustration accompanying articles in magazines and newspapers is a distinctive visual tradition that came into being at the end of the 19th century. It has become a *fundamental aspect of the job of illustration, and it is often bread-and-butter work for most professional illustrators* (Zeegen, 2005). But the editorial publishing industry is in flux, until recently it was the printed edition that determined the production processes, but recently through economical necessity, digitisation and consequent developments of the field of communication plus the changed appreciation of the consumer, the online edition has become the dominant driver (Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2010). It is forcing a different model of the editorial medium to come forward and questions the suitability of existing formats of visual representation. How does this impact the principle conditions for editorial illustration, such as the bond between image and text, the illustration as the singular still image and the production process and values? Are the demands and possibilities of the online domain forging a new kind of visualisation or do we see a progression of an established tradition? A tradition based on founding qualities that set editorial illustration apart from any other visualising medium and makes it a fundamental part of the editorial domain.

Four qualities

Through my research into early editorial illustration (Beegan, 2008; Benjamin 1936; Hutt, 1973, Reed, 1997; Ruskin 1872; Sinnema, 1998), qualities specific and structural to the handmade image came to the forefront. Though by no means conclusive, it felt important to present four of these qualities to expert-practitioners in the field and test their potential validity, for ultimately it is with their understanding of the present day practice that the progression of illustration is shaped. The qualities were, *to translate*, *to materialise*, *to reflect* and *to engage* and presented in the workshop with the following definitions:

To translate: the ability to bring the essence of the story, its concept, but also values and intent, all beyond the text, into pictures that the reader can understand.

To reflect: the ability for the audience to see their values, their codes reflected in the image in their magazine, and at the same the illustration as a reflection of the ideas of the illustrator and publisher.

To materialise: the ability to use material and style to give meaning and presence, not just within the picture, but by using and exploiting the technologies that are dictated by the carrier, be it newsprint or pixels.

To engage: to ability of impact, to get the reader involved, into the story, the idea, the publication, starting with the image itself.

Workshop

On Friday the 18th of November 2011, as part of the Royal College of Art conference *The Edge of our Thinking* participants from the field of editorial illustration, illustrators, commissioners, educator and postgraduate students from the Royal College of Art and M.A.Camberwell, were asked to critically reflect on these four founding qualities. In the workshop *Think-editorial-Illustration*, through a guided process of critical questions and interaction, four groups focussed each on one quality. With this particular quality in mind they questioned the specific position illustration has within editorial publishing and present developments.

A summary

To translate: Language and potential¹

The discussion around illustration as the vehicle of visual translation soon became a discussion based on a shared strong belief in the power of the illustration bridging cultures and spoken languages. The ability to *project the lateral (SG)* and *work according to rules not determined by logic but emotion and association (JA)* all supported this belief. But the frustration felt over the diminishing possibilities for illustrators was summarised in one sentence *The art director knows the language, but not the potential (JD)*. It was agreed that it has become increasingly difficult to create exciting and quality illustrations within what appears to be an ailing and disengaged editorial market.

At the moment it seems a new generation of illustrators no longer seek these commissions as a format. They have retreated into their own private interests and into aesthetics, *back to the surface...*(RL) But perhaps the surface is not all just aesthetics, it is where the entire publication comes together and this is where it can convey it's idea. The illustrator is there to translate the ideas to its dedicated audience, not just through content but through form and style. As one of the participants pointed out: a young generation in China recognises the language of illustration as part of their voice (FW).

Online media brings new possibilities, perhaps not yet as a creative platform, but as a network and distribution systems to create small, low cost, authorial publications that is able to reach new audiences.

To reflect: Shared space²

In the discussion around the role of reflection centred around two thoughts. On the one hand how the illustration on the page mirrors the values of those who *present*; the illustrator, art director and the publisher and/ or those who *behold*, the spectator. On the other hand there is the idea of the illustration as a contemplative space, which slows down and holds the reader to deeper explore the content of both illustration and text. In the printed environment these reflective functions are understood, but is the illustration still able to be reflective in the data driven and fast moving space of the online interface?

The diversity of interpretations around reflection as a concept possibly signified the duality of the role of illustration itself. Some saw the illustration reflecting the illustrators ideas, with the communication brief only a startingpoint and the art director overseeing the production. Here the personal process is the focus, the position of the illustrator more autonomous and the outcome, the published image, an opportunity to step back and reflect. But others acknowledges the deep influence of the art director, where the collaboration, the constraints and creativity are all tools to create a mediating visual. But what became clear is that reflective qualities of the illustration are tied to the relationship it has with its context, the artefact and its moment in time. When this bond gets broken, as is easily done in online publishing, the illustration becomes something else, it becomes just another picture.

¹ To translate- a discussion between Judith Asher (JA), Yves Francois (YF) Sophie Gibson (SG) Rachel Lille (RL) Danai Tsouloufa (DT), Fei Wang (FW), moderated by Jo Davies (JD).

² To reflect- a discussion between Andy Baker (AB), Chris Draper (CD), David Garcia (DG), Fuchsia Macaree (FM) and Sophie Westerlind(SW) moderated by Dan Fern (DF).

To materialise: The material experience³

Illustration that is a strong idea, it exists on another level than the material thing itself. (GB) You would think that with this statement agreed upon, the discussion around the material aspect of illustration would be short. But though the importance of material as the carrier of meaning is criticized, it plays a huge role in the identity of the illustrator and the creation process. Depending on who speaks online publishing is threatening a way of making and thinking or is an open invitation to work and think with an interpretation of the material.

As part given, part personal choice, the material leads the illustrator in the physical act of making and the creative mental journey. Beyond the finished artwork, the material quality of the reproduced result is what makes the experience of its creation complete. Though digitization has profoundly infiltrated the landscape of the editorial illustrator and the editorial media are moving towards online editions, which has a limiting effect on the creative opportunities for the illustrator the process and mindset of illustration is still towards the printed artifact. To create for screen would demand a very different approach, which is yet to become apparent in commissions and education, but also in the preferred approach of most illustrators. *There isn't really anything beyond print at the moment, just another version...* (CA) Yet there is also the acknowledgment that online might be where the illustrator could claim back some lost inspiration and lost personal space.

To engage: Protest and print⁴

Engagement, the ability to grab the audience and deliver something thought provoking, whether through a personal socio-politically statement or through formal impact is understood as a core quality of the editorial illustration. Engagement brings the readers in and keeps them close. But in the discussion there was a certain despondency about the lack of engagement. The editorial illustration field seemed to be dominated by the desire to make charming decorative pictures and material play, rather than impactful messages driven by heartfelt ideas. Is it perhaps the love of the aesthetics that hold illustrators from speaking out? Or is there no demand for more thought provoking illustrations and must illustrators create their own editorial opportunities?

The spaces that allow for thought provoking work with visual impact seemed to have vanished from the editorial publication, but editorial illustration is tied to the context of publication, after all it can only exist when commissioned (GG). Magazines have become more bland, risk averse (PBo). Editorial publishing has to survive in a harsh economic reality and is cutting back and with a lack of expertise and experience with new digital illustration formats there is little opportunity in the emerging formats. It is up to the illustrators to make and find new possibilities, which at the moment are mainly in the area of graphic novels and children's picture books (FH). Where in the street illustration is gaining as the language of protest, illustrators are looking towards authorial areas for the expressions and publication of their ideas. Perhaps its time for the illustrator to start protesting.

³To materialise- a discussion between Gillian Blease (GB), Lee Ford (LF), Andrew Foster (AF), Jasmin Fung (JF), Ronit Mirsky (RM) and Babette Wagenvoort (BW), moderated by Catherine Anyango (CA).

⁴ To engage-a discussion between Peter Brawne (PB), Paul Bowman (PBo), Joseph Pieli-chaty (JP), and Frazer Hudson (FH), moderated by Geoff Granfield (GG).

Conclusion

All is not well with the present discipline of editorial illustration and this feeling was shared at all tables. Each group, from their own perspective, seem to point to two perhaps related, issues; the publishing industry going through a time of decline and young illustrators that turn their back on editorial illustration. The facts are clear, publication industry is shifting and the readers are moving elsewhere, online or perhaps no longer interested. Specially made content is expensive and commissioned illustrations are dropped in favour of the use of stock images. Whatever commission is left is suffering from reduced production values and tightened deadlines. Coming from the 1980-ies, a time that gave rise to experimental and outspoken publications, with illustration very much part of its voice (SG, JD), today this is not particularly an inviting industry.

At the same time the rise of the authorial illustration, where the illustrator is both author and creator, proves that there is still a great desire for the language of illustration and print as its format, but no longer on the terms set by the industry. There was however a clear critique describing many of the publications as self indulgent and too highly aestheticized. Perhaps the collaboration with the art director, and his or her specific demands within the commission is more important than realised. At it's very best, their direction, a thought provoking subject and set boundaries can nudge the illustrator outside the personal preoccupations and use these to push the responsive and the associative visual language into the unexpected. New technologies and digital media can make publishing reach niche audiences without a forced profit-based model. Authorial illustration engaged with courant themes can make meaningful alignments with (online) platforms, formats and audiences and can prove to be the springboard for both online and print experiments. It can be the surface through which the voice of protest and youthful rebellion can present impact and resonance.

This workshop, presenting thoughts and ideas coming from practice strengthened my notion around the group of core qualities I presented. It will fuel the continuation of research into the deeper the necessity of the bond between image and text, the position of the art director and the dictating boundaries set by the publishing format. They seem to be essential conditions for the qualities to drive the editorial illustration. An absence of these conditions or an imbalance between the qualities can turn a potential meaningful contribution into just a picture. And picture-makers we're not.

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Researcher and editorial illustrator.



jo davies

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joseph pielichaty

Student M.A. Visual Communication Royal College of Art



sophie gibson

art director, graphic/editorial designer



judith asher

illustrator, lecturer Bezalel Academy of Art & Design, Jerusalem



rachel lillie

Student M.A. Visual Communication Royal College of Art



danaï tsouloufa

Student M.A. Illustration Camberwell College of Art



fei wang

Student M.A. Illustration Camberwell College of Art

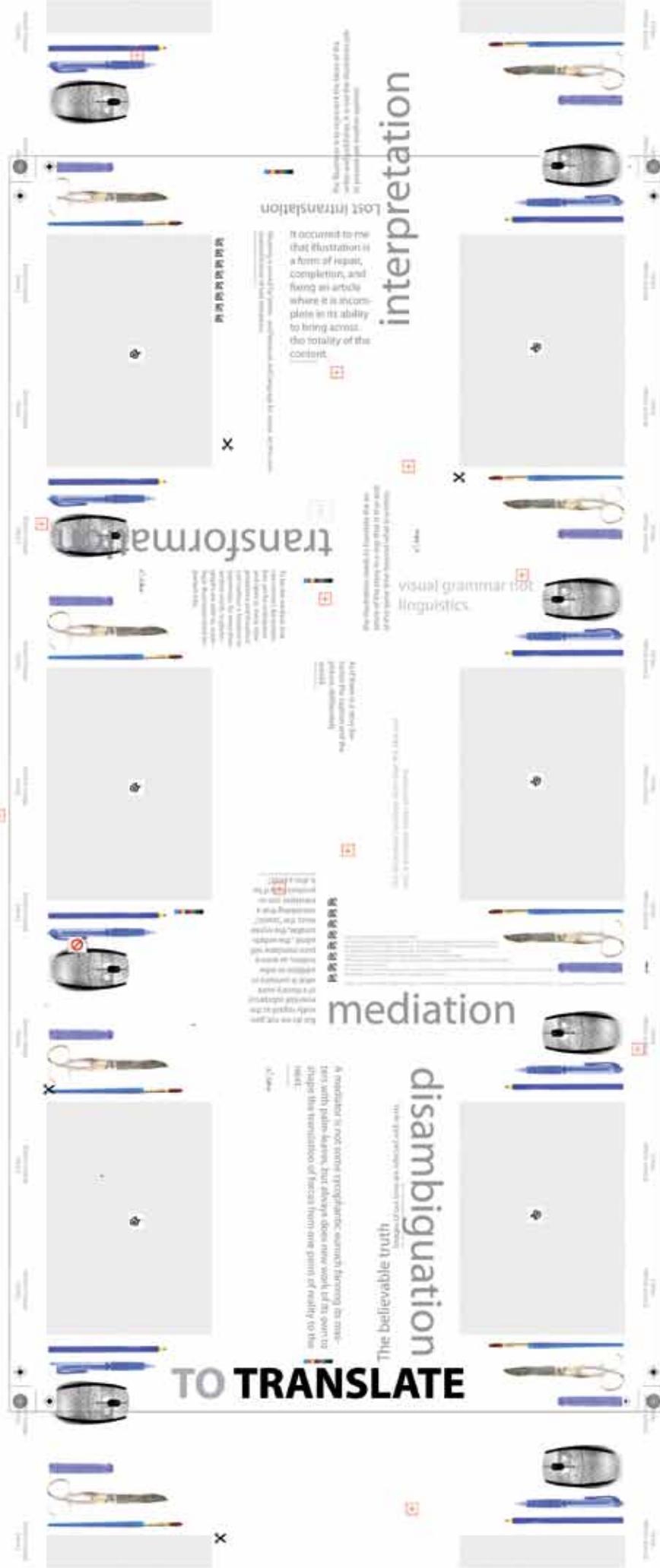
TO TRANSLATE

Language and potential

The relationship between illustration and idea, illustration and word and also idea and audience are based on translation as quality, within the role of editorial illustration in visual communication. The illustrator takes on role of the translator, by translating *what the text contains in addition to information* into the illustration. If it would visualise only the information, it would be superfluous. It needs to translate the essence of the story in a way that is true and at the same time beyond what is written. Illustration and text both are translations of the same source, the text from idea into written words adhering to the laws of linguistics, the illustration into images, adhering to the laws of visual language. Though in the editorial environment words drive the content, the illustration is seen before the text is read, therefore the intelligence of the image determines the success of the entire communication. In order to translate the illustration needs to *speak the same visual language* as the reader, understand their codes and signs and is constrained by the visual literacy of its audiences.

Lastly within the commercial and ideological editorial, the values and intent of the publisher are also there to be translated, perhaps less overt, but the reader needs to be able to rely on the communication environment he or she is relating to. This overriding ideology of the publication sets the terms for all content and form within.

The online environment is global, yet stratified into many niche interests, with their own codes and signs. The complexities of the diversity of global cultures and their identities, clash with the need for visuals which are easily understood by many. Does this lead to a simplification in visual language? Online content can be separated from context and broken up into singular parts and be published independently and continuously. Where illustration is product of the relationship between context, idea most often in the form of written text and image, this type of republishing created entire new conditions for the illustration, how does this affect the role of illustration? Is illustration suitable for the online global environment?



Language and potential

To translate

A discussion between Judith Asher, Sophie Gibson, Fei Wang, Danaï Tsouloufa, Rachel Lille, Yves Francois and moderated by Jo Davies.

The discussion around illustration as the vehicle of visual translation explored the illustration as a medium crossing cultural boundaries. But the potential held within the image and abilities of image maker were clashing with the frustration of declining possibilities for satisfactory commissions and output, within what appears to be a shrinking and disengaged editorial market. In the 1980's there were many opportunities for the illustrators voice to be part of the editorial and there seemed to be more respect for what illustration stood for. What has changed and what opportunities and territories are there at the moment for illustrators to fully exploit the power of the image?

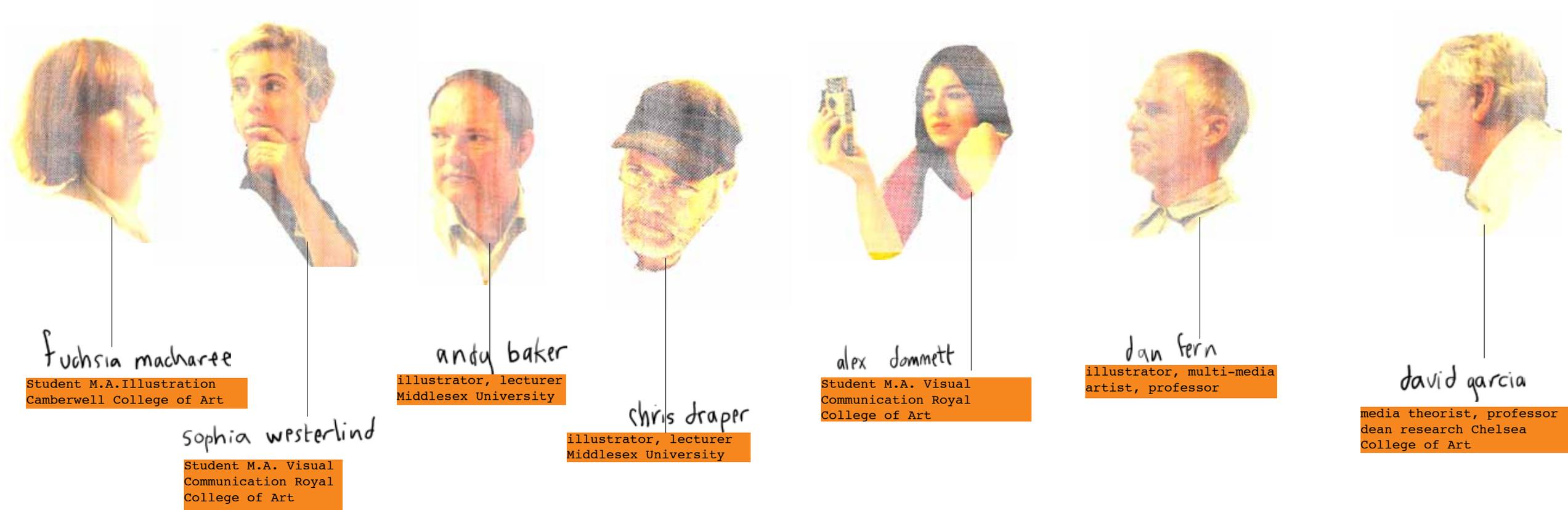
The power of the illustration

At this table there is no doubt about the power and potential of the illustration. Sophie Gibson: *Illustration can 'say it' without being explicit, bring in more ideas and enhance appreciation or it can be purely illustrative. I'm more interested in its ability to project the lateral, the subtext.* Fei Wang: *Across cultural divides, illustration is a universal language, with the ability to be inclusive.* Judith Asher points out that a strong image can translate between cultures, being able to touch a side that is not based on logic or the verbal.

Judith: *Translation is about communicating ideas, more than just something beautiful, it is about translating an issue to an audience.* Yves Francois does add a question mark: *Is it a tool of translation or interpretation, when the illustration adds another level?* Whether editorial illustration is translation or interpretation was not further addressed. In practice this distinction is placed in the hands of the art director, whose decisions are determined by the format of the publication. But between the illustrators there is skepticism whether they fully understand this difference and further whether at the moment they are able to apply the illustration to its fullest benefit. Jo Davies: *The art director does not recognize the qualities of the illustrators. He knows the language, but not the potential.*

Where the *eighties* feel like a particular golden era for illustration, over the last years, practical conditions such as the reduced time and payment for illustrators have made the creation of meaningful images more difficult. Besides the magazine concepts have become more *vacuous* (Sophie), based on formulaic design and using stock photography as image sources. Some major newspapers have moved already largely to stock image (Jo). Judith: *In economic harder times, illustration is cut, it is seen as fluff. When there is more budget it will come back, but in harder times illustration goes to the street, editors can use that energy.* Strongly worded, but capturing the sentiment, Jo Davies concluded: *The death of illustration might be a new opening.*

The changed collaboration between illustrator and art director was discussed as a further reason for the decline of the editorial illustration. The working relationship had become virtual, no longer is there a physical meeting as part of the commissioning process, but most briefs would be communicated through email. This reduced the possibility to establish a deeper understanding between two partners, kept dialogue to a minimum and less inquisitive. Dialogue is seen as an important element within the working process, the physical meeting- *the human connection* (Jo)- is seen as an almost necessary condition. Sophie: *Previous you had to go*



Within editorial illustration, reflection as a quality points to two opposite, but not necessarily opposing roles. Firstly reflection relates to the audience and how they see themselves represented within the visual, and secondly how the illustrator sees himself reflected within his or her creation. Then of course the idea of reflection as the ability to pause and deepen thought.

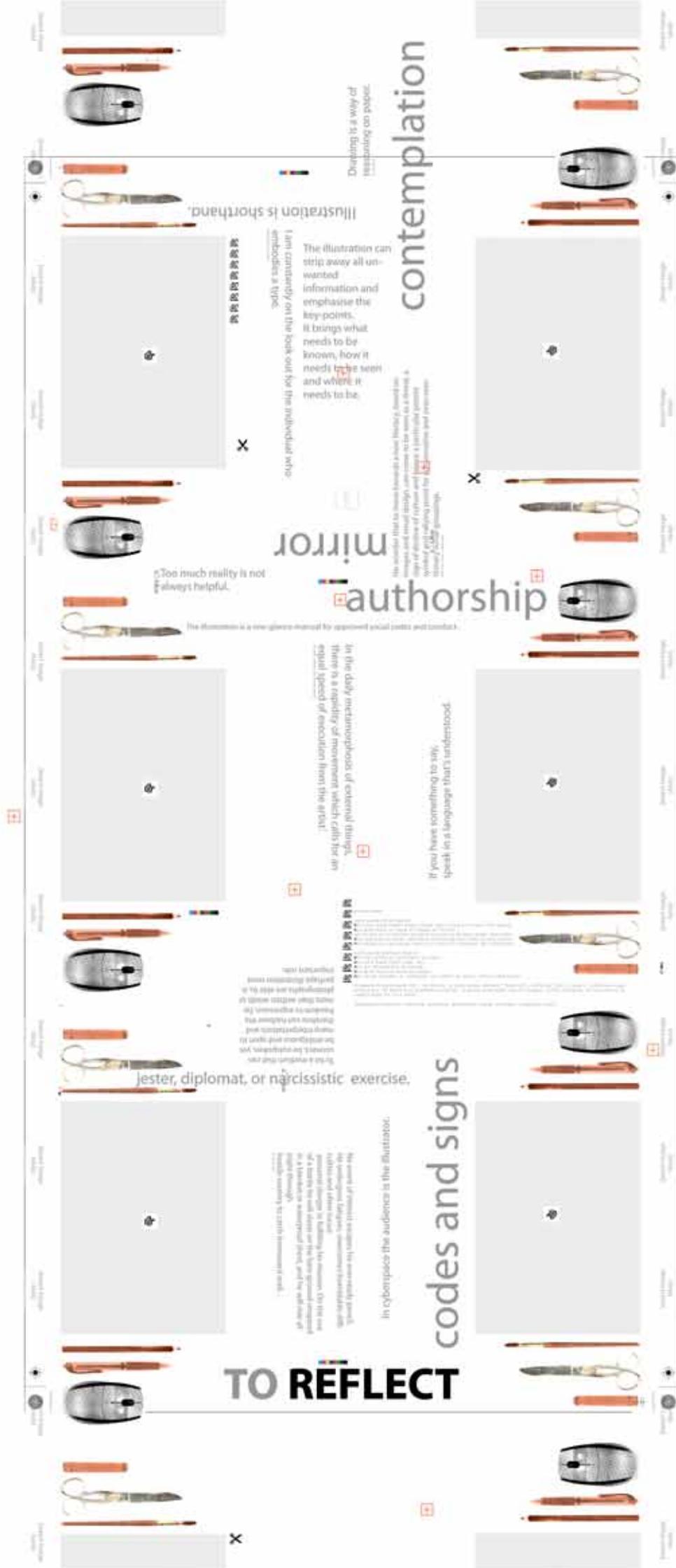
The illustration is part of an editorial product, a mass medium, which contains information that informs or entertains, in a form and style that appeals to certain people. As the magazine is a commercial communication product it will aim to accommodate these demands. If the public doesn't find themselves reflected in the magazine, they will not buy it.

But the illustration is at heart also a creative product, coming from collaboration between the periodical (editor, art director) and the illustrator and where the illustrator is asked for a personal contribution. It is a voluntary creative relationship as well as a business transaction, where authorship and creative ambitions need to be balanced with the need to fulfil a brief.

TO REFLECT

Shared space

The editorial illustration, with its alternative, visual, and subjective perspective but above all its hand-made qualities embodies reflection as contemplation. But this can only happen in relationship to the layout and design. In print, through positioning and placement this mechanism is recognised by the readers, for instance the use of titles integrated in the illustration, the image on covers and the special position of the cartoons. But in the new media environments, this relationship and understanding is yet to be developed; the reading in this environment is still associated with raw data, rather than interpretation and reflection.



Shared space

To reflect

A discussion between Chris Draper, David Garcia, Fuchsia Macaree, Andy Baker Sophie Westerlind and moderated by Dan Fern.

In the discussion around the role of reflection centred around two ideas. On the one hand how the illustration on the page mirrors the values of those that present; the illustrator, art director and the publisher and or those who look, the spectator. On the other hand the idea of the illustration as a contemplative space, which slows down and holds the reader to deeper explore the content of both illustration and text. In the printed environment these reflective functions are understood, but is the illustration still able to be reflective in the user driven and fast moving space of the online interface?

Collaboration

Whose ideas does the illustration reflect? Is it those of the illustrator, the art director, or that of the spectator? By the time an illustration commission reaches the illustrator, many creative decisions have already been made. These choices are made with the reader's interests, culture and knowledge at heart. The art director knows what will go down well with both reader and publisher, he determines the space that will be allocated, selects the illustrator and outlines the brief. In discussing the editorial practice of the illustrator, the role of the art director is pivotal. They find themselves in a strange relationship, hierarchical yet collaborative, where the illustrator needs the commission to be able to make a work and the art director needs to trust the illustrator to come up with something original yet matching expectations. At best this relationship is built on openness and respect, at worst it delivers an unsatisfactory image for both illustrator and art director. Andy Baker, who regularly works for the Times newspaper: *Martin Harrison (art director for the Times) has given his life and soul to the Times, he encapsulates all of their values. He knows what this newspaper stands for and I suppose as he casts his eye around, he will just settle on people that he thinks are right.* Dan Fern: *You're thinking ahead, they're thinking retrospectively. So this kind of teamwork, that clicks in on some point, is their expectation of what you've done and your expectation of what you want to do, where you're going. There is a duality in that relationship.*

Transience

A constant point of return in the discussion is the relationship editorial illustration has with time. Firstly the speed of production, typical for the editorial industry, but it keeps demanding ever-faster turnarounds. The question is how this would remain workable, especially with the online edition constantly updating 24-7. Then there is the short lifespan of the printed newspaper. It's content only needs to be valid for one day. This intrinsic transience is part of the conception of the editorial image and allows for a certain experimental freedom. To see these images archived and revisited outside the particular context of that specific newspaper can be problematic, where it is suddenly judged on qualities it never intended to have.

Chris Draper: *'The editorial illustration, where its nature is ephemeral is different from a book that you want on a shelf; it ends up in the bin. You don't have the same relationship with editorial illustration, as with a beautifully illustrated book, you might want to hang on to.* Dan: *It must hit hard and then disappear.*

But where the bin could be merciful, illustrators are confronted with an eternal and endless after-live of the image stored in obscure online

archives yet search engines keep bringing them to the surface, beyond the control of the maker.

Dan: *The archive tends to decontextualize things. In the print context, one of your illustrations would be in the illustration annual of say 2001 or 1983, people would see it surrounded by other pictures done in the same time. With the web things seem to pop up out of context, and they are not dated nor shown along other pictures from the same time. When David Garcia asked if this was then considered a negative, Dan replied: It's always a negative for me, it goes against my sense of self-preservation.*

Speed

The illustration itself is also an instrument of time, where it is designed to stop the reader's scanning eye. Through an instant image it arrests the reader and asks him or her to reflect. David Garcia: *One thing illustration seems to do is to slow things down. Some of the journals that you think are designed to make you think, like Prospect or the New Yorker, the New Scientist, or the economist are big users of illustration. You encounter that narrative in a slightly different way, it almost subliminally has the effect of slowing you down. How illustration might change in media that have premium on speed, such as the digital readers, the tablets, that's going to be the key to the next phase of illustration. Fuchsia Mackaree: On the Internet you tend to have a shorter attention span. It might need to have a strong more impactful first moment that will make you stop just that bit longer. If you look at your newspaper, there are just one or two things going on. But on your computer you're not having lots of tabs open all the time'.*

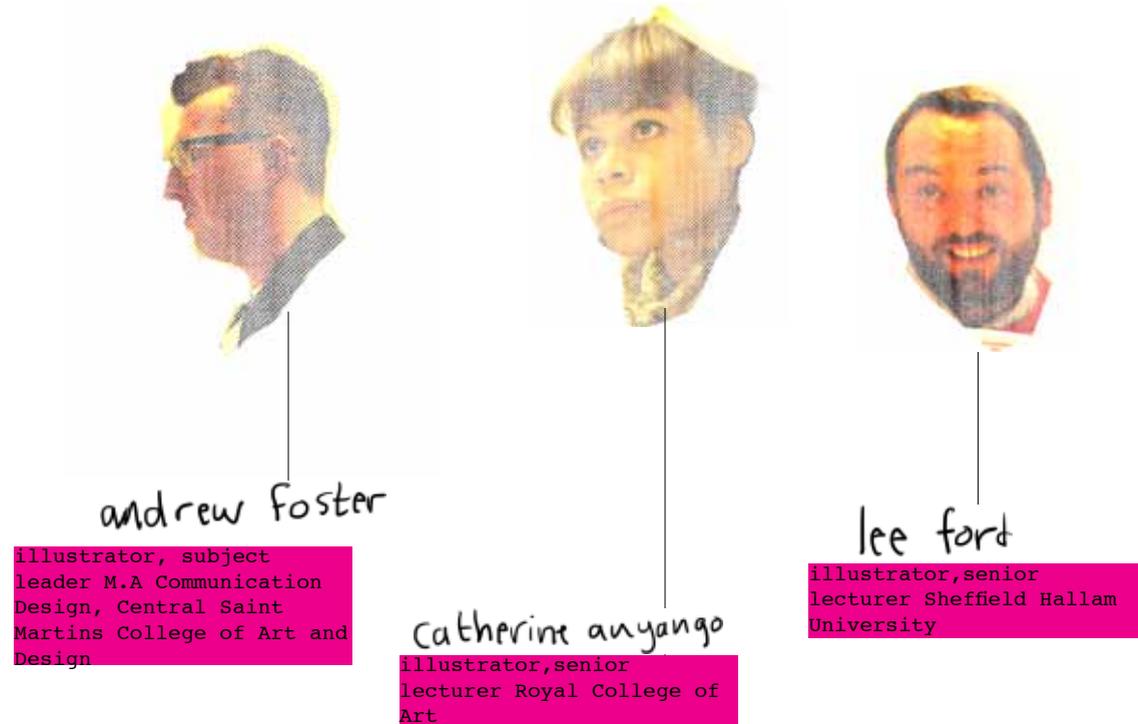
At this table the online interface is not yet embraced as an exciting new format for illustrators. Sophie Westerlind wouldn't mind *things that are human and a little slower* in contract to David Garcia who sees the tablets as a next step forward, as a *tactile intermediary between laptop and paper*. Dan points to similar moments in time when other new media forms entered the illustrators spectrum: Dan: *What graphic artists tend to do is wait till the technology reaches a stage until they can actually engage with it. I think that online publishing is just reaching a point now that I could get interested in using it as a medium. It's been the same all the way through, take for instance the photocopy. It had to reach a certain point, before we went for it.*

In the end the discussion was brought back to the understanding of reflection. A third interpretation of the idea of reflection was introduced, reflection as a personal tool for the illustrator. David: *Do you see reflection as a meaningful category, reflection as one of the things that illustration is suppose to help you do?*

Dan: *Personally I think it's absolutely key. I think it's a key word. For any graphic artist to draw conclusion from what they've done and where it might be heading and find ways of doing that, I think its absolutely key in the way you move forward as an artist.*

The diversity of interpretations around reflection as a concept possibly signified the complexity of the role of illustration itself. In some instances the illustration can be a form of self-expression with the art director left to protect the boundaries. Here the process is important and personal and the outcome, the published image a possibility to step back and reflect. Others can be more interested in the mediating quality as part of the creative process, playing with the art of compromise, using the constraints as a tool. But what became clear is that reflective qualities of the illustration are tied to the relationship it has with its context, the paper and the article. When they are separated the illustration loses its raison d'etre, it becomes something else, just another picture.





TO MATERIALISE

The material experience

Within the role of editorial illustration in visual communication the material as a quality defines illustration above all other media, it is expression and the artifact and the visual communication possibilities between them.

To create an illustration there are two stages of material expression. Firstly the visual created by the illustrator towards reproduction and secondly the reproduction of the artwork, which ultimately determines the effect and reading of the visual. You can say that an illustration only exists when it is printed in a contextualising medium and linked to the accompanying text and idea.

Medium, form, composition and style, next to the signs and symbols used to compose the visual content, within illustration they are key tools for coding a message to enable it to connect with its specified audience.

A newspaper broadsheet, printed on cheap paper, has different demands on the image and aims for its audience with a set presumed political, cultural and intellectual background, different than a cult magazine. When we think of new media, screen size and general usage of the mediating carrier: desktop, ipad or smartphone or even urban screen, again determine through its technology and relationship with the audience how the image content can be perceived, be it close-up and personally directed or as part of a preset programming in a public space.

Where the photograph aims to be a window to the world, in a sense tries to be de-material, the illustration comes from the material itself and expresses its content through the use of this material. Materiality is a core quality to illustration.



The material experience

To materialise

A discussion between Babette Wagenvoort, Andrew Foster, Lee Ford, Ronit Mirsky, Jasmin Fung and Gillian Blease, moderated by Catherine Anyango.

Illustration that is a strong idea, it exists on another level than the material thing itself. (Gillian Blease) You would think that with this statement agreed upon, the discussion around the material aspect of illustration would be short. But though the importance of material as the carrier of meaning is criticized, it plays a huge role in the identity of the illustrator and the creation process. The final translation into published print or pixel appears almost a secondary concern. Depending on who speaks online publishing is threatening a way of making and thinking or is an open invitation to work and think with an interpretation of the material.

The experience and the material

Material and the physical act of creation, whether like Babette Wagenvoort, digitally on the i-phone with a pixel and finger or 'analogue' as Andrew Foster describes his work, is a large determining factor in the illustrators practice. But it's the physicality of the creation process that seems to be a condition of making, rather than the qualities of the materials themselves.

Digital intervention, crossing the boundary between the analogue and digital is accepted practice, yet the digitisation of entire fine art tradition and the consequential reinterpretation is still seen as a suspicious loss of authenticity. Ronit Mirsky: (about a fellow student) *He doesn't know how to use a brush, he doesn't know how to use the coat...and he just knows how to do it in the computer. Illustrators that have done first the traditional study of how to paint come to the computer and know all the brushes and stuff. It is really strange to me that he doesn't know that you need to wait for the oil paint to dry.*

The confines of the brief and the creative struggle with the material are seen as the essential opportunities and challenges that feed a process. It is described as a journey dependent on unexpected encounters. Catherine Anyango: *You are led by what you are doing and intuitively understand when something happens. You are using that insight to create your image.* The much greater controls given within the digital processes seem appealing, yet eroding this ability to be guided by the unforeseen. Catherine: *with a digital mistake, there is always the opportunity of going back. I now do it in my head automatically, even with a pencil, if I make a mistake, I go Apple-Z.*

Digital processes and applications have given the art director more instant control. The illustration has become raw material, which can be manipulated to fit their design, rather than adapt their design around the conception of an illustration. It can lead to a much more collaborative outcome, but only if the relationship is of equals. Is that possible when the illustrator is not part of an earlier decision making process? Andrew Foster: *I would argue that with a good art director it's a collaboration where you would use each other's strengths and you are aiming for the same direction. But because the illustrator is at the end of the 'food chain' I wonder if it's an equal collaboration.*

Print

The love of the printed artifact is very much alive, for makers at this table the online environment does not seem to have the same pull, it is not seen as the *New Frontier*, but rather an unavoidable yet unknown direction, which might present possibilities, but also loss of certain qualities, possibly loss of identity and even jobs. Lee Ford: *I worry about the transient nature of the illustration being put online and wonder if that cheapens it.* Catherine: *Illustrators are not being asked to produce the content, but animators or new media specialists. There is a lot of content on the web, which I know hasn't gone through an illustrator, but it's using the style of illustration. They are exploring the formats, but they don't need someone creative anymore to fill the whole of the proper content.*

Does the creation of illustration for screen require a different approach, a different journey? At the moment online illustration is mostly a fixed image, which has lost in its traditional dynamic relationship with the text and layout.

Gilliam Blease: *If you go to the homepage of a paper, where all the headlines are laid down, you pick and choose what you are interested in, the illustration can be quite easily ignored. In the printed paper you would browse around: 'Oh that's a nice illustration, I'll read that article'.* Lee Ford points to the difference in speed in information uptake: *The visual information in printed matter is a slower digestion of information in comparison with online...*

Catherine concludes: *We are still thinking of illustration as a thing you are transferring, but if you start with the parameters of that screen in mind, than its no different than making an illustration for a magazine.*

But Babette Wagenvoort points out that younger audiences expect something to happen when they see an image online. They understand visuals as movable, scalable and interactive. Scalability and sequence can become new forms of narrative. The loss of editorial control can give many possibilities for the illustration to expand its authorial existence, to go *viral*, to be redistributed outside its original context. Lee could see potential but with the same the ease the illustration could become part of unintended contexts.

Babette: *In terms of illustration online, I think what should be focused on is what you cannot do on paper.*

Lee: *Historically as an illustrator, reportage illustration was a big area of illustration. The potential to create illustration, as an RSS newsfeed could be really exciting, the anticipation to check, to present a continuous illustrated response...*

The material is hugely important; it is central to the understanding of illustration. As part given, part personal choice, it leads the illustrator in the physical act of making and the creative mental journey. Beyond the finished artwork, the material quality of the reproduced result is what makes the experience of its creation complete. Though digitization has profoundly infiltrated the landscape of the editorial illustrator and the editorial media are moving towards online editions, the process and mindset of illustration is still towards the printed artifact. To create for screen would take a very different approach, which is yet to become apparent in commissions and education. *There isn't really anything beyond print at the moment, just another version*, Catherine concluded. Yet there is also the acknowledgment that online might be where the illustrator could claim back some lost inspiration and lost personal space.





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To engage: to get the reader involved is the role of the editorial illustration. Where the visual is the first port of call, it needs to arrest and bring the viewer to take time to further connect with the content. It needs to sell the article, the magazine and ultimately itself. Using the broad spectrum of visual tools available, the illustration is specifically constructed to get the viewer/reader's attention, expressing through means such as the aesthetic, humor, shock, visual dialogue, flattery and so on.

The printed periodical and newspaper have developed their own ecologies, for instance the paper is read at breakfast or during the commute, the magazine is a moment of relaxation etc. Now that online publication has overtaken the print, how does the audience relate to the new editorial environment and how does this affect the illustration, as there are many new forms for engagement available, such as interaction, movement and sound but also chatting, surfing, buying, contributing etc.

TO ENGAGE

Back to print

Seeing comes before words, John Berger's famous quote. This off course is the prerogative of the illustration. But in the editorial context, words come before seeing when it comes to the production process and value placed by commissioning editors and the readers rational understanding. The consequence is that most often the illustration is commissioned last, stressing its function as gap filler or decoration, rather than considered as the visually dominant part of the relationship.

When strongly felt convictions are what motivates the commission, how much room does this leave for misinterpretation? The political and socially informed subjects are one of the largest groups of commissions for editorial illustration. It takes advantage of the duality between the desire to be explicit, and illustration's quality to be subjective and ambiguous. Illustration can express forbidden ideas, yet claim complete innocence.

and engaged: the authentic authorial voice. Where the quality of his work was a point of discussion, not his ability to reach a mass audience. Can we snub an illustration, when it creates impact and brings the message home to a wide audience? It is not that simple, especially not for educators. Impact and *good* are not the same. Yet what are the criteria, and shouldn't we understand Banksy's work in the context of the fleeting cityscape, rather than as pictures in a magazine?

The strength of the illustration was felt in its ability to frame, to link and through this create meaning. Perhaps you could say that an illustrator starts with the notion of his or her work locked in relationship, engaged with the article. Geoff: *The illustration must supply synthesis, grab the audience and create engagement. It should create another silent strand of meaning, that wasn't there before. Cartoon is short hand. Illustration is more extended, has more impact, is more like a synopsis. Cartoon is more about using clichés. There is no shortage of cartoonists.*

New media

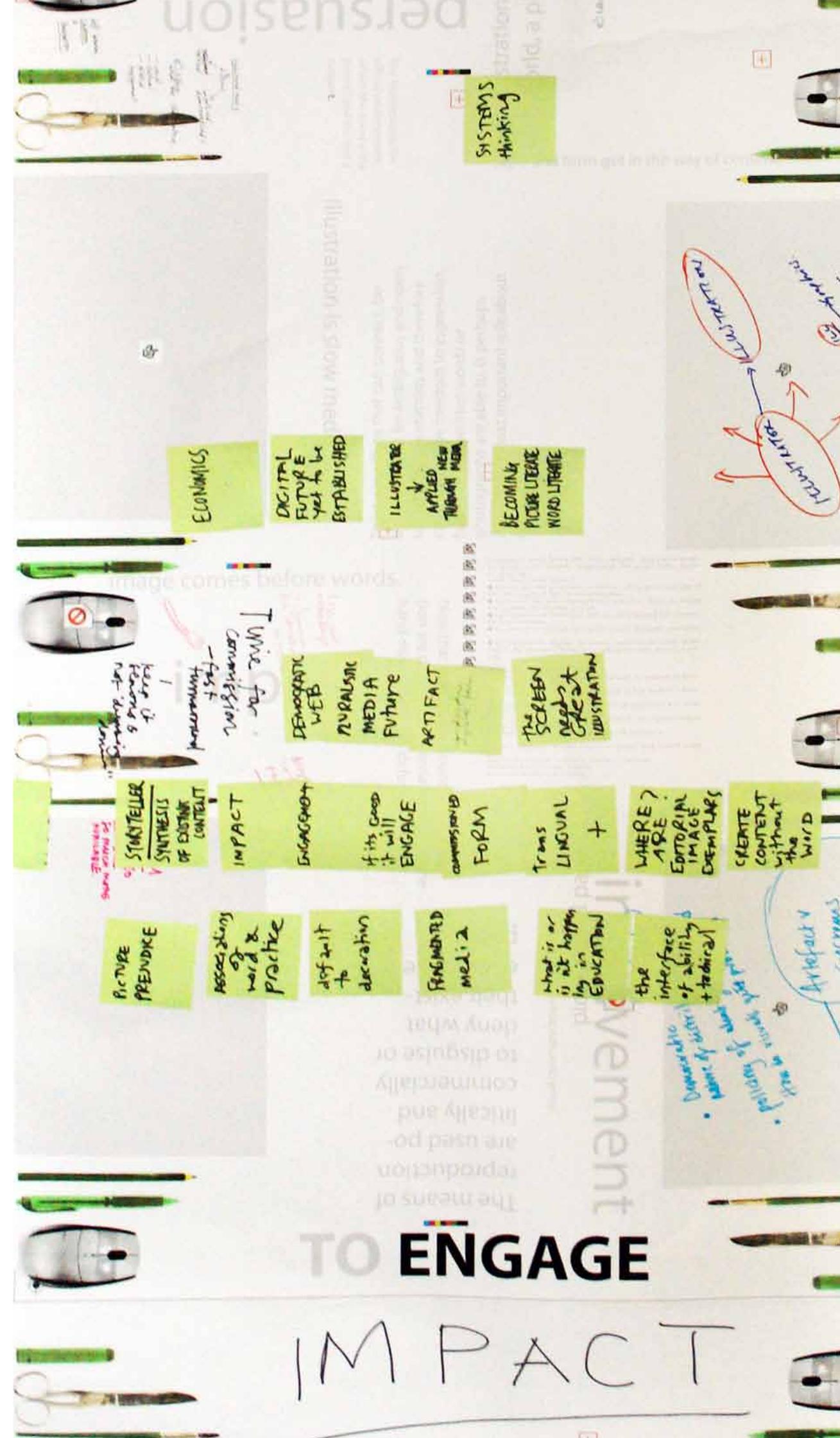
As for the new frontiers, the group described the illustration community as 'wait and see', mildly suspicious, mildly nervous and possibly snobbish about the possibilities of new media. Those that did venture into the new territories soon called themselves interaction designers, animators but no longer illustrators. The understanding what makes an illustration might need to change and other expressive qualities might need to become part of its vocabulary. Paul: *this coder sat me down one day, because I was taking the mickey out of geeks etc. Then he told me he had enough and said 'the code I write, that moves an avatar from there to there is as good as any brush stroke you make. Joseph Pielichaty: maybe the digital future has just not yet been set. What's to come is too open and the potential is too much in the dark. It needs examples and then approval and addition will come.*

But above all how can an illustrator create an editorial illustration, when he/she's not commissioned. After all *editorial illustration is a commission-led field- it is applied. Someone needs to want an image to move and pay for it, otherwise its not going to move.* (Geoff)

Paul Bowman: *I suggest people have to change for something to come out of it, but illustration still views interactivity as a filter in Photoshop. Everyone else, designers, artists are moving into this field. We still are forced to talk about print, because its still the bulk of what we know, whilst everyone else has looked out of the window... We seem to be reduced back to print.*

Engagement comes from the desire to connect to others, to communicate a personally felt belief and the aim to make an impact. But where are the spaces that allow for this type work to be published, can they still be found within the editorial publication? True, the editorial illustration can only exist when commissioned, but at the moment the editorial field has lost its glamour, it is having to survive in a harsh economic reality and with a lack of expertise and experience in online media the art director has little room for manoeuvre, let alone for experiments.

It is up to the illustrators to present new ideas and find new possibilities. Where in the street illustration is gaining as the language of protest, illustrators are looking towards authorial areas for the expressions and publication of their ideas. Perhaps its time for the illustrator to start protesting.





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