

ILLUSTRATION

ILLUSTRATION CAREER HANDBOOK

Unlock Your Creative Journey:
A Guide to Launching Your Illustration Career

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From the Author

"Unlock Your Creative Journey: A Guide to Launching Your Illustration Career" is an indispensable resource for budding artists seeking to transform their passion into a thriving profession. This empowering guide goes beyond traditional tutorials, offering a unique blend of artist interviews, expert advice, and valuable resources to provide students with a holistic understanding of the illustration industry. Immerse yourself in the wisdom of accomplished illustrators as they share their personal journeys, challenges, and invaluable insights.

From practical tips on building a standout portfolio to navigating the nuances of freelancing, this book equips you with the tools and knowledge needed to carve out a successful career. With a curated list of essential resources and actionable advice, this handook is your roadmap to turning artistic aspirations into a fulfilling and sustainable profession. Embark on your illustration journey with confidence and let this guide be your companion in achieving your creative dreams.



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Lora Lee is a dynamic multi-media artist known for her exceptional ability to deliver innovative and multi-dimensional creative solutions. With a rich expertise encompassing graphic design, illustration, digital imaging, and animation, Lora has collaborated with an impressive array of clients, such as Mattel, Scholastic, Penguin Random House, Within Ad Agency, First Bank of Berne, and Steel Dynamics.

Her versatile portfolio extends across diverse industries, including advertising, publishing, gaming and entertainment, education, and public art. As a seasoned professional, Professor Lee holds an MFA in Illustration and an MBA from the University of Hartford, CT, blending artistic mastery with business acumen. Lora's commitment to excellence and her innovative contributions to multimedia art make her a respected figure in both academic and professional spheres.

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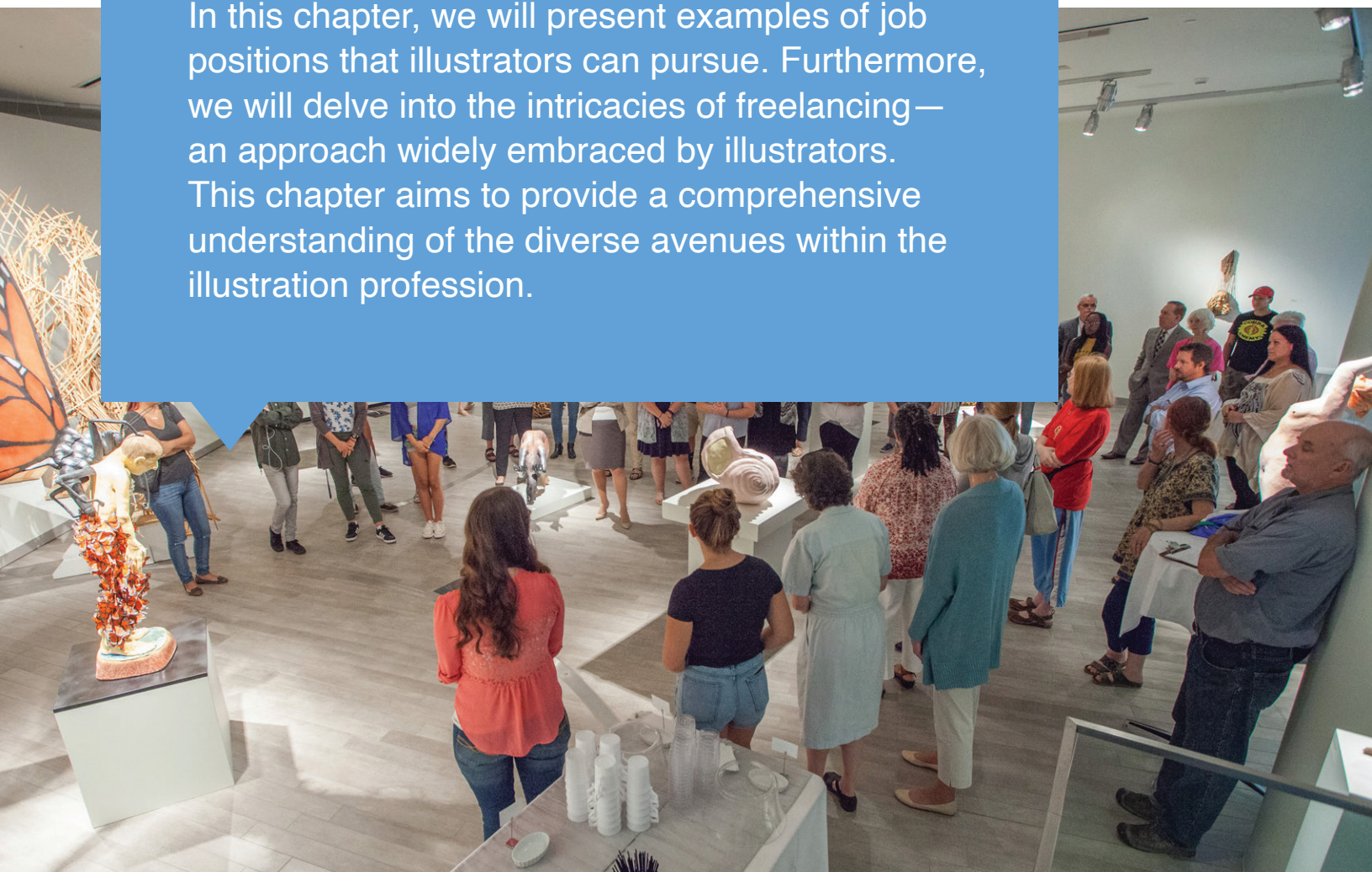
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CAREER PROSPECTS

Illustrators can explore a variety of job positions across diverse industries. The versatility of illustration skills enables adaptation to various industries and job roles. Additionally, many illustrators may choose to combine different roles or specialize further within a niche area.

In this chapter, we will present examples of job positions that illustrators can pursue. Furthermore, we will delve into the intricacies of freelancing—an approach widely embraced by illustrators. This chapter aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the diverse avenues within the illustration profession.



JOB POSITION EXAMPLES

Illustrators possess a skill set that transcends industry boundaries, providing them with the opportunity to explore diverse job positions across various sectors. The versatility inherent in illustration skills enables professionals to adapt to different industries and assume a multitude of job roles. The positions listed below represent only a selection of common job positions for illustrators, showcasing the diverse opportunities available across various industries. Furthermore, many illustrators choose to blend different responsibilities or delve deeper into a specific niche, allowing them to carve out a unique and specialized career path.



Freelance Illustrator

As independent contractors, freelancers create illustrations for various clients, providing flexibility in both projects and schedules. This represents the most common approach for illustrators, typically engaging in part-time, contract-based, and project-based work, given the limited availability of full-time positions in the field. *Skills Required: Strong illustration skills, time management, communication, self-promotion.*



Graphic Designer

Designing visuals for both print and digital media, leveraging illustration skills, is a valuable asset. The synergy between graphic design and illustration is highly advantageous, with many projects integrating both components. Employers value individuals who can seamlessly navigate both realms, appreciating the efficiency and versatility of a dual skill set. *Skills Required: Graphic design software proficiency, creativity, attention to detail.*



Children's Book Illustrator

Crafting visually captivating illustrations for children's books is a rewarding pursuit. Some illustrators take on the dual role of both author and illustrator. Traditionally, illustrators connect with publishers by submitting directly to publishing houses or through their agents. However, an increasing number find success through self-publishing. *Skills Required: Storytelling, understanding of child psychology, drawing skills.*



Comic Book Artist

Crafting characters and scenes for comic books or graphic novels is an exciting pursuit, especially for illustrators with a passion for storytelling through the comic book format. To thrive in this path, it's crucial to acquaint yourself with the comic book industry, explore different genres, and understand the diverse art styles prevalent in comics. *Skills Required: Comic book storytelling, character design, anatomy.*



Storyboard Artist

Tasked with crafting visual sequences that illustrate the pivotal scenes and actions in films, animations, commercials, and other visual productions, storyboard artists assume a crucial role in the initial phases of visual storytelling. They serve as a bridge between the script and final production, guiding the overall visual direction and ensuring a cohesive and compelling narrative. *Skills Required: Visual storytelling, film understanding, collaboration.*



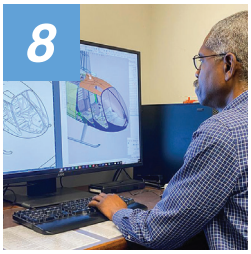
Concept Artist

Engaged in the visualization and design of characters, environments, and props for gaming and entertainment, visual development roles pose a challenging pursuit. These positions demand not only rapid execution but also exceptional skills and a keen sense of color. Such jobs are frequently located on the west coast, where the film and entertainment industry thrives abundantly. *Skills Required: Concept art, digital illustration, creativity.*



Editorial Illustrator

Creating visual content for newspapers, magazines, and online publications, the role of an editorial illustrator is to enhance the reader's experience by providing visuals that evoke emotions, stimulate deep thinking, or simply set the mood. This position demands a rapid turnaround, requiring illustrators to thrive in a fast-paced environment. *Skills Required: Interpretation of written content, storytelling, deadline management.*



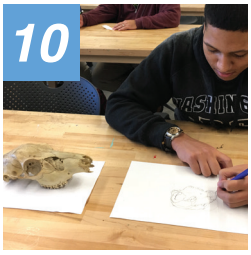
Technical Illustrator

Technical illustrators specialize in transforming complex technical information into clear and comprehensible visuals, employing drawings, diagrams, and schematics. Collaborating closely with engineers, they are adept at utilizing specialized software such as AutoCAD and 3D modeling programs to ensure precision and clarity in their visual representations. *Skills Required: Technical understanding, accuracy, attention to detail.*



Fashion Illustrator

A fashion illustrator specializes in visually expressing and capturing the essence of fashion designs through detailed and artistic illustrations by working closely with fashion designers, brands, or publications. Fashion illustrators use various techniques, including drawing, painting, or digital tools, to convey the textures, fabrics, and unique elements of garments. *Skills Required: Fashion knowledge, drawing skills, trend awareness.*



Scientific/Medical Illustrator

A scientific or medical illustrator specializes in creating detailed and accurate visual representations of complex scientific or medical concepts. These professionals collaborate with scientists, researchers, educators, and healthcare professionals to produce illustrations that communicate scientific information effectively. *Skills Required: Medical knowledge, accuracy, attention to detail.*



Advertising Illustrator

An advertising illustrator is responsible for crafting visually compelling and persuasive illustrations to enhance advertising campaigns and promotional materials. Working closely with art directors, copywriters, and marketing teams, these illustrators use their creativity and artistic skills to communicate messages effectively. *Skills Required: Marketing understanding, creativity, collaboration.*



Surface Pattern Designer

A surface pattern illustrator specializes in creating intricate and repeatable designs that can be applied to various surfaces, such as textiles, wallpapers, ceramics, or packaging. Their work is often inspired by nature, geometry, or cultural motifs. They design patterns that seamlessly repeat across surfaces, considering factors like scale, color harmony, and overall visual impact. *Skills Required: Pattern design, knowledge of materials, creativity.*



Animation Illustrator

An animation illustrator specializes in creating visual elements for animated content, contributing to the overall aesthetic and storytelling of animated projects. Working closely with animators, directors, and production teams, these illustrators design characters, backgrounds, and key frames that bring the animated world to life by using traditional hand-drawn animation to digital techniques. *Skills Required: Animation knowledge, storytelling, collaboration.*



Game Illustrator

A game illustrator specializes in creating visual assets for video games, contributing to the overall aesthetic and immersive experience of the gaming environment. Collaborating closely with game designers and developers, these illustrators design characters, landscapes, objects, and other elements that populate the game world. *Skills Required: Game design understanding, digital illustration, creativity.*



Book Cover/Interior Illustrator

Collaborating with authors, publishers, and art directors, book illustrators design captivating and genre-appropriate cover artwork that communicates the essence of the book. Their work contribute to the visual identity of a book, aiming to attract readers, convey the narrative tone, and complement the storytelling within the pages. *Skills Required: Visual storytelling, market awareness, creativity.*



Packaging Illustrator

A packaging illustrator specializes in designing visual elements for product packaging, creating eye-catching and informative graphics that enhance the product's shelf appeal. They consider factors such as color, composition, and visual hierarchy to create packaging artwork that stands out on retail shelves and effectively communicates with consumers. *Skills Required: Brand understanding, visual communication, creativity.*



Educational Illustrator

Collaborating with educators, publishers, and instructional designers, educational illustrators design graphics, diagrams, and illustrations that aid in conveying complex concepts and enhancing the learning experience. They strive to make educational content visually engaging and accessible, helping students grasp and retain information more effectively. *Skills Required: Educational understanding, clarity, creativity.*



Event Illustrator

Event illustrators capture live events through on-the-spot drawings or illustrations at events such as weddings, conferences, or trade shows. They create visual records of the occasion, often focusing on key moments, attendees, and the overall atmosphere, offering clients and attendees a memorable and immediate representation of the event. *Skills Required: Fast illustration, adaptability, creativity.*



Social Media Illustrator

A social media illustrator specializes in creating visual content for various social media platforms. Working closely with digital marketers and content creators, they play a vital role in designing eye-catching graphics, illustrations, and animations that align with brand aesthetics and engage the target audience. *Skills Required: Social media understanding, digital illustration, creativity.*



Virtual Reality (VR) Illustrator

A VR illustrator specializes in creating immersive visual experiences for virtual reality environments by crafting 3D models, environments, and visual elements that users can interact with in virtual space. They create captivating and realistic visuals, considering factors such as scale, depth, and user experience to enhance the sense of presence within the virtual world. *Skills Required: VR technology knowledge, 3D illustration, adaptability.*

While there are many possibilities for illustrators, it's important to choose niche areas that align with your strengths and personal interests and develop your portfolio accordingly. Many successful illustrators often start in one area, then gradually expand into different roles. Developing a high-quality portfolio is essential for landing positions and projects, so you should begin strategic planning early and target the areas you want to break into. Next, we will discuss the strategies for choosing your niche.

CHOOSING YOUR NICHE

Having a niche in illustration is a crucial decision that can significantly impact your career. choosing a niche involves a thoughtful assessment of your skills, interests, and market demand. It is important because it helps you differentiate yourself, target the right audience, and build a successful and fulfilling career in illustration.

Importance of Having a Niche

- **Market Differentiation**

  Having a niche helps you stand out in a crowded market. It allows you to showcase a unique style or expertise, making it easier for clients to remember and recognize your work.

- **Targeted Marketing**

  A niche allows for more focused and targeted marketing efforts. You can tailor your promotional materials and outreach to cater specifically to the audience interested in your chosen niche.

- **Becoming an Expert**

  Specializing in a niche enables you to become an expert in that area. As you gain more experience and knowledge, you become a go-to professional, increasing your credibility.

- **Building a Strong Portfolio**

  A focused portfolio in a specific niche demonstrates consistency and depth in your work. This is particularly attractive to clients looking for specialists in a particular style or subject matter.

- **Attracting the Right Clients**

  Clients often seek illustrators who understand their industry and specific needs. Having a niche makes you more appealing to clients looking for expertise in a particular area.

- **Career Longevity**

  Specializing in a niche can contribute to long-term success. As you establish yourself as an authority in your chosen area, you may benefit from repeat business and client referrals.

- **Increased Job Satisfaction**

  Working within a niche that aligns with your interests and passions can lead to greater job satisfaction. You're more likely to enjoy your work, leading to a more fulfilling and sustainable career.

Strategies for Choosing a Niche

Assess Your Interests and Passions

Identify what subjects or themes genuinely interest and excite you. Choose a niche that aligns with your passions to ensure sustained motivation and satisfaction in your work.

Evaluate Your Skills

Assess your strengths and skills within illustration. Consider areas where you excel and can deliver exceptional work. Your expertise in a specific niche will set you apart.

Research Market Demand

Investigate the demand for different illustration niches in the market. Analyze trends and identify areas where there is a need for skilled illustrators.

Explore Diverse Styles

Experiment with various illustration styles to discover what resonates with you and your potential audience. Your style can become a defining factor within your chosen niche.

Consider Industry Compatibility

Think about the industries you are drawn to or have experience in. Different sectors, such as publishing, gaming, advertising, or education, may require different illustration styles.

Seek Feedback

Share your work with peers, mentors, or potential clients and gather feedback. External perspectives can provide insights into the marketability of your chosen niche.

Look at Successful Examples

Study successful illustrators within different niches. Analyze their career paths, the type of work they produce, and the industries they serve.

It might take a while before you find your niche, but don't worry – it's completely normal. It's good to explore as early as possible and find where your passion aligns with your goals. Sometimes, opportunities might unexpectedly come up as well, making you fall in love with a new area. Many illustrators I know, including myself, started as jack-of-all-trade illustrators, taking on whatever projects we could get our hands on, including some pretty odd jobs! Be patient and curious, and you'll get there!

MAKING A LIVING

Many people wonder about the financial viability of an illustrator's career. Indeed, it's entirely possible for illustrators to achieve a substantial income through a diverse array of revenue streams, including freelance projects, contracts, licensing, and other avenues. Like many illustrators, I myself have cultivated multiple revenue streams from various sources. In this section, we will explore common methods by which illustrators can generate income, shedding light on unique approaches like royalties, licensing, and crowdfunding. The possibilities are extensive, and you might even discover new and innovative ways to sustain your career!



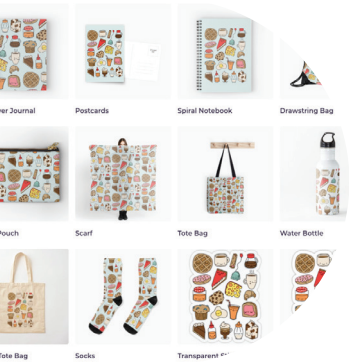
Full-Time Positions

While full-time employment is relatively rare in the illustration industry, such positions do exist, especially within sectors that demand continuous and consistent illustration work. While freelance and independent contracting are prevalent in the field, opportunities for illustrators to secure full-time positions can be found in various settings. Examples include publishing houses, game development/animation studios, graphic design studios, corporate in-house positions, educational institutions, museums, cultural institutions, and technology and software companies.



Part-Time/Contract Positions & Comissions

Illustrators can discover part-time positions, contract-based projects, and commissions through diverse channels. Many companies list such opportunities on popular job-searching sites like Indeed, Glassdoor, and LinkedIn. Other platforms like Freelancer and Upwork cater to individuals and smaller organizations seeking contract or project-based work. Illustrators can also secure commissions from repeat clients and through word-of-mouth referrals. Opportunities can be unpredictable, with some months inundated with work and others quieter. It's crucial to consider this variability and plan finances accordingly, ensuring stability during lean periods.



Sell Your Work Through Online Marketplace

As an emerging young illustrator, you may not have substantial funds to invest in an online store or physical products. Fortunately, numerous platforms enable you to sell your artwork on a diverse range of products like mugs, prints, textiles, and home decor with minimal effort. All you need to do is create an account and upload your art. Well-known marketplace sites such as Redbubble, Society6, and Zazzle operate on a percentage-of-sale model, eliminating the need for upfront payment. Additionally, you can monetize your art by selling design assets on stock platforms like Adobe, DesignCuts, and CreativeMarket.

Sell Your Work Through Your Shop



Beyond the previously mentioned online marketplaces, you can establish your own online shop and explore local, physical avenues like trade shows and events. Platforms such as Shopify and Etsy empower you to create and manage your shop, offering tools for business growth and scalability. Some portfolio-building sites, including Squarespace, Wix, and Weebly, also incorporate shop features. Many illustrators find success in selling handcrafted items like tie-dye shirts, clothing, art prints, and home decor. Participating in local and regional trade shows presents excellent opportunities to showcase and sell your work, where you can secure a table or space.

Royalties and Licensing



Royalties for illustrators encompass earning a percentage of revenue whenever their artwork is sold or utilized in products, particularly prevalent in book publishing. Rates are typically negotiated, taking factors such as retail prices into account. Licensing involves granting specific usage permissions detailed in a licensing agreement, and compensation may involve upfront fees, ongoing royalties, or a combination. Clarity in contracts is paramount, delineating terms, usage restrictions, and compensation structures. Negotiation is a standard practice, with factors like exclusivity, territory, and renewal options crucial in defining the artwork's scope of use.

Representation by An Agency



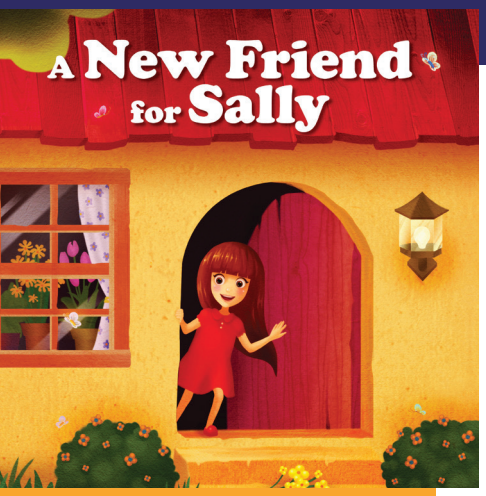
Illustration agencies represent and promote illustrators' work to potential clients, handle negotiations, fees, and administrative tasks, enabling artists to concentrate on their creative pursuits. They offer a platform for heightened visibility, networking, and opportunities to engage in diverse projects across sectors like publishing, advertising, and design. To seek representation, submitting your portfolio to agencies of interest is essential. After joining an agency, securing assignments may take time as they work to showcase you to potential clients. Agencies typically deduct a percentage, ranging from 20% to 35%, from each commission as part of their services.

Crowdfunding



Crowdfunding proves to be a valuable avenue for securing the capital required to undertake creative projects, like self-publishing a book. Prominent platforms, such as Kickstarter, GoFundMe, Indiegogo, and Patreon, facilitate this funding approach. Achieving success in crowdfunding often hinges on cultivating a supportive fan base, potentially through a substantial following on social media. A well-crafted campaign strategy, complete with appealing funding goals, is essential for a fruitful crowdfunding endeavor. Running a campaign demands considerable time and effort, involving the creation of a compelling narrative and extensive outreach to engage potential backers.

SUCCESS STORIES



Lora Lee's Crowdfunding Project

In 2014, I embarked on the journey of self-publishing my children's book, "A New Friend for Sally," utilizing crowdfunding as the means to bring the project to life. Collaborating with the author, we launched a fundraising campaign on Kickstarter, successfully raising over $4,000. This financial support enabled us to print and publish the books, fulfilling our commitment to send them out to all the backers. The experience was both thrilling and labor-intensive, requiring dedicated effort. As part of our promotional strategy, I even crafted a short animation to showcase and advertise our project!



Carol Schwartz's Children's Books

Carol Schwartz's illustrations are resplendent with color and texture in detailed, accurate scenes showing wildlife and ecosystems rendered for children. She specializes in science and nature books which she carefully researches, then uses skillful composition to create compelling scenes. Carol is an award winning illustrator and has illustrated over sixty picture books! She has spoken at hundreds of schools and libraries and is currently a professor at University of Hartford. She previously taught illustration at many instututions, including Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design, RISD, and Eastern!



Neiko Ng's Illustration Career

I met Neiko at an Animation Expo in California, where we both participated in a portfolio workshop. Neiko is known for crafting charming and imaginative illustrations, and she has achieved notable success with her distinctive style. She is currently represented by the B&A Agency and manages her own freelancing business, in addition to operating an Etsy shop. Her work has been featured in books and licensing projects like greeting cards, stationery, stickers, textiles, and more. Neiko serves as an excellent example of how illustrators can establish a thriving career by diversifying their income streams and exploring opportunities in multiple creative avenues.

CHAPTER 2

FREELANCE 101

Freelancing as an illustrator provides a dynamic and flexible career, empowering artists to determine their schedules, select diverse projects, and work from any location. Nevertheless, freelancers encounter challenges including income variability, self-marketing duties, and the lack of job security and benefits. Achieving success in freelance illustration demands adept self-promotion, robust time management skills, and financial planning to navigate uncertainties, all while relishing the creative freedom and global reach inherent in freelancing. This chapter delves into the fundamentals of freelancing, offering insights into what to expect and providing tried-and-true advice for aspiring freelancers.



PROS & CONS OF FREELANCING

If you ask any illustrator about freelancing, they'll likely describe it as both the best and the most challenging experience simultaneously. Freelancing extends beyond showcasing exceptional technical skills; it encompasses various facets unrelated to painting and drawing. Skills such as time management, effective communication, and even accounting are integral to a freelancer's success. While freelancing can be exhausting, unpredictable, and occasionally frustrating, it also brings numerous rewards. Let's delve into the pros and cons of the freelancing journey!

PROS

- **Flexibility**: Freelancers have the freedom to set their own working hours, accommodating personal preferences and achieving a better work-life balance.
- **Diverse Projects**: Freelancing exposes illustrators to a broad range of projects, allowing for continuous skill development and creativity exploration.
- **Independence**: Freelancers act as their own bosses, making decisions about the type of work they take on, their clients, and their overall career direction.
- **Global Reach**: The digital nature of freelancing enables illustrators to collaborate with clients from around the world, expanding their professional network and opportunities.
- **Varied Income Sources**: Freelancers can diversify their income by taking on different projects, working with various clients, and exploring different revenue models.
- **Portfolio Enhancement**: The variety of projects freelancers engage in contributes to a rich and diverse portfolio, showcasing their versatility and attracting a wider client base.
- **Entrepreneurial Growth**: Freelancers have the opportunity to develop entrepreneurial skills, from marketing and client relations to project management, fostering a well-rounded professional profile.

CONS

- **Income Variability:** Freelancers may experience irregular income, with busy periods and slow seasons affecting financial stability.
- **Self-Promotion:** Actively marketing oneself is essential for securing projects, requiring time and effort that may distract from actual illustration work.
- **Administrative Tasks:** Freelancers must manage administrative responsibilities, including contracts, invoicing, and accounting, which can be time-consuming.
- **Isolation:** Working independently may lead to feelings of isolation, as freelancers miss out on the camaraderie found in traditional workplace environments.
- **Uncertain Benefits:** Freelancers lack traditional employment benefits such as healthcare, retirement plans, and paid leave, placing the onus on them to manage these aspects.
- **Client Dependence:** Success in freelancing is often tied to client relationships, and a loss of key clients can impact income and stability.
- **Work-Life Boundaries:** Without a clear boundary between work and personal life, freelancers may find it challenging to disconnect from work responsibilities.

FREELANCING ESSENTIALS

Below are useful tips to better prepare for freelancing. While the freelancing path may not be easy, many illustrators can achieve success with consistent and dedicated effort. It's entirely normal to encounter challenges or feel frustrated at times. Every illustrator goes through similar experiences. Remember, you are not alone in your journey!



Develop a Professional Online Presence

Establishing a robust online presence is crucial for securing illustration jobs. Remember to exhibit a diverse array of your finest work to captivate potential clients and emphasize your unique style and versatility to showcase your capabilities effectively. There are various avenues for maintaining an online presence, and having at least one is imperative.

- **Personal Website**: Consider building your own website with a distinct domain to enhance your branding. Platforms like Squarespace, Wix, Weebly, WordPress, and GoDaddy offer this service. While some may require a subscription ranging from $100 to $300 per year, others provide free trials or limited free subscriptions with partial personalized domains and advertisements on your site.
- **Network Websites**: For those on a budget seeking to broaden their online presence, network websites such as Behance, ArtStation, Tumblr, and Dribbble are excellent options. Create a free account to showcase your work, network with professionals, and explore job opportunities.
- **Social Media**: Leveraging social media for self-promotion can be a highly effective strategy to build a following, expand your network, and uncover new opportunities. Many employers assess applicants' social media accounts, with some even scouting for fresh talent through these platforms. Successfully managing a social media account involves consistently posting high-quality content and engaging with followers. While it requires effort to sustain, the rewards can be significant.
- **Email Address**: Contemplate establishing a professional email address with a personalized domain, or at the very least, utilize an email address from platforms like Gmail or Yahoo that exudes professionalism. Ensure the email aligns seamlessly with your personal branding, steering clear of random numbers and phrases to present a polished and cohesive image.



Set Clear Business Goals

Embarking on freelancing can indeed be overwhelming and confusing, leaving you with a myriad of tasks and uncertainties about where to begin. It's completely normal to experience anxiety in such situations, but grounding yourself becomes achievable by setting clear business goals and crafting a detailed plan.

- **Set Your Goals**: Define both short-term and long-term goals, considering both creative and financial aspects. Seek feedback from mentors, friends, and family to ensure the practicality of your goals. Be open to adjusting and pivoting your goals as needed based on insights and changing circumstances.
- **Create a Realistic Business Plan**: Establish a pragmatic business plan that outlines the steps to achieve your goals. Set specific timelines for actionable items, such as completing your online portfolio, determining the number of job applications per week, and scheduling attendance at networking events. This structured approach provides clarity and direction in the midst of freelancing uncertainties.



Understand Pricing and Contracts

Engaging with a new client inquiry as an illustrator is undeniably thrilling—I vividly recall the excitement of receiving messages from potential clients. Yet, it becomes challenging when faced with questions like "How much do you charge for this project?" or "Our budget is XXX, does that work for you?" Balancing fair compensation without scaring away clients and addressing concerns about payment reliability can be daunting. Here are strategies to navigate these situations:

- **Setting a Price You Feel Good About**: Never compromise on working for free; seek compensation that reflects your skills. Research industry rates online, consult industry peers, and refer to books like "The Graphic Artists Guild Handbook: Pricing & Ethical Guidelines" for guidance. Starting with lower rates is common for new illustrators, but as your experience grows, be selective and charge higher rates.
- **Sign a Contract**: Regardless of the project's size, signing a contract is essential. It not only establishes trust but also clarifies job details, preventing future disputes. Many online resources offer customizable contract templates, and "The Graphic Artists Guild Handbook" provides useful examples.
- **Consider Asking for Upfront Payment**: Requesting upfront or installment payments ensures a reliable client. Ask for 25%-50% upfront or establish an installment plan, especially for larger projects, with payments at specific project stages. Don't hesitate to discuss this with clients, as many are willing to comply. Including payment terms in the contract formalizes the agreement and safeguards both parties.



Network and Build Relationships

Networking and cultivating relationships with peers and mentors are crucial for building a career in illustration. Numerous organizations offer support, guidance, and resources across various aspects of the industry. Attend industry events, join online forums, and connect with fellow illustrators and potential clients, as word of mouth and networking can lead to valuable opportunities.

- **Consider Joining a Professional Organization**: Several professional organizations, such as the Society of Illustrators, Association of Illustrators, Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, and The Graphic Artists Guild, provide valuable resources. While memberships are not free, many offer discounted rates for students. Member benefits often include exclusive webinars, one-on-one support, legal advice, regional conferences, networking events, and more. A list of selected organizations will be provided in the Resources chapter.
- **Connect with Your Peers**: Expand your network and stay in touch with peers to seek support and exchange ideas and experiences. Being inspired by each other and growing together as a cohort is an amazing experience. I can't emphasize enough how many times I've gained valuable insight from my fellow illustrator friends and how their support helped me through tough times.



Continuous Learning

It's crucial for illustrators to remain abreast of industry trends, software updates, and evolving techniques, given the rapid pace of change in the field. Dedicate time to continuous learning to not only enhance your technical skills but also to stay competitive. Beyond honing your craft, mastering essential skills like time management, stress management, financial planning, and tax preparation is equally vital.

- **Stay Informed and Keep Learning:** Keep a close eye on job postings, even when not actively job hunting, as they often contain valuable information. Sign up for job alerts on platforms like Indeed or Glassdoor to receive notifications about industry developments. For instance, job postings may introduce new software platforms, such as Canva, Hubspot, or Klayvio, which are becoming industry standards. Familiarize yourself with these platforms proactively to stay ahead in your field. Leverage free resources available on professional organization websites and consider platforms like SkillShare and LinkedIn Learning for acquiring new skills.
- **Handle Criticism and Sustain Motivation**: Acknowledge that as an illustrator, you're hired to fulfill the client's objectives, which may involve facing rejections and criticism. This is a normal part of the process experienced by illustrators at all levels. Improve

communication with clients and embrace constructive criticism as an opportunity for personal and professional growth. Stay motivated by setting milestones, celebrating achievements, and nurturing a continued passion for your craft.

- **Time Management and Financial Planning**: Cultivate robust time management skills to meet deadlines and effectively juggle multiple projects. Leverage tools such as calendars and project management apps to maintain organizational efficiency. Prepare for income variability by saving during prosperous periods, and as a freelancer, create a comprehensive plan for tax obligations. Implement a systematic approach to invoicing and meticulous expense tracking to ensure financial stability.



Remember, freelancing is a journey that involves both creative and business aspects. Being well-prepared and adaptable will contribute to a successful and fulfilling career as a freelance illustrator.

ILLUSTRATION AGENCIES

Many freelance illustrators aspire to secure representation by illustration agencies, as they can lead to better compensation, exposure to prominent clients, and offer a safety net for negotiations. Seeking representation by illustration agencies requires a strategic approach to effectively showcase your work.

How To Be Represented By An Agency

Build a Strong Portfolio:
- Curate a portfolio that showcases your best and most diverse work.
- Highlight your unique style and versatility to demonstrate your capabilities.

Research Agencies:
- Identify illustration agencies that align with your artistic style and the type of work you want to pursue.
- Research each agency's submission guidelines and requirements.

Prepare Submission Materials:
- Follow the agency's guidelines for submitting materials. This may include a portfolio, resume, and a well-crafted cover letter.
- Tailor your submission to each agency, emphasizing aspects of your work that align with their focus.

Craft a Professional Cover Letter:
- Write a concise and compelling cover letter introducing yourself.
- Highlight your artistic background, achievements, and why you are interested in being represented by that specific agency.

Online Presence:
- Ensure your online presence is professional and up-to-date. Many agencies check artists' websites, social media, and online portfolios.
- Include links to your online portfolio in your submission.

Submit Your Work:
- Follow the agency's submission process carefully. Some agencies may prefer digital submissions, while others may require physical portfolios.
- Be prepared for a waiting period, as agencies often take time to review submissions.

Follow Up:
- After submitting your work, consider following up with a polite email expressing your continued interest.
- Be patient, as agencies may take time to review submissions and respond.

Be Open to Feedback:
- If an agency provides feedback, take it constructively. Use the feedback to improve your portfolio and presentation.

Consider Multiple Agencies:

- Don't limit yourself to a single agency. Consider submitting to multiple agencies to increase your chances of representation.

Remember, the process may vary between agencies, so carefully review and adhere to their specific submission guidelines. Persistence and professionalism are key when seeking representation.

Before Signing the Contract

If an agency offers to represent you, the next step would be to sign a contract of representation, highlighting the terms of their representation. Before signing the contract, consider the following:

Types of Representation

- **Exclusive Representation**: Under this term, you can only accept work through the illustration agency. While this term can be strict, agencies requiring it often invest a lot of time and energy in getting their illustrators enough work to earn a sustainable living under this term. Some agencies, however, allow you to take on self-sourced projects, such as working with clients who contact you directly through your website, repeat clients, and positions obtained directly from job applications. Terms may vary at each agency, so read the contract carefully.
- Nonexclusive Representation: This term is more generous, allowing you to be represented by another agency simultaneously. However, this is rare, as other agencies agreeing to represent you must also have nonexclusive terms to allow you to have more than one agency representation.

Scale of Representation

- Consider how many illustrators they represent compared to their staff size. Some agencies sign too many illustrators, making it challenging for them to advocate for any particular illustrator or possibly favoring more established illustrators. Being ignored by your agency defeats the purpose of seeking representation. I used to be represented by an agency who initially got me several great jobs with reknowned clients, but over a few years they signed on over 100 new illustrators while only having 5 staff members. They started offering paid promotion opportunities and only favored and protized those who paid. I didn't participate in the promotion program and I ended up being ignored, which led me to leaving the agency. Check if there's a list of artists they represent, and see if there's anyone you know and can contact for more insider information.

Commission

- Illustration agencies typically take a commission from the fees earned by their represented illustrators. The commission percentage varies among agencies but commonly falls within the range of 20% to 35%. This means that if an illustrator secures a project through the agency and earns $1,000, the agency might take a commission of $200 to $350, leaving the illustrator with the remaining amount. The specific commission rate is usually outlined in the contract between the illustrator and the agency. It's important for illustrators to carefully review and understand the terms of the agreement before entering into a partnership with an illustration agency.

FREELANCING Q & A

What's it like to be a graphic designer or illustrator in the real world? The following will address your questions about some "sticky" situations. Keep in mind that challenges are inevitable, as in any other profession. Mental preparedness is crucial, and establishing a protocol or strategy in advance is advisable. Above all, strive to protect your rights and maintain fairness both to yourself and your client.

Q: How do I set my illustration rates as a freelancer?

Consider factors like your skill level, experience, project complexity, and the client's budget. Research industry standards and be transparent with clients about your pricing structure. Most importantly, never work for free!

Q: What should be included in my illustration contract?

Contracts should clearly outline the name and contact information for parties involved, project scope, deadlines, payment terms, revisions policy, and usage rights. Define expectations to avoid misunderstandings.

Q: Should I specialize in a specific illustration style or be versatile?

Your approach should align with your objectives. While specializing can enhance your uniqueness, being versatile may appeal to a wider clientele. Strike a balance that aligns with your interests and the prevailing market demands. If your aim is to secure representation from a desired illustration agency or to attract a significant client, conduct thorough research on the preferred styles of the agency or client. Consider crafting pieces in those specific styles to augment your portfolio and increase your chances of making a favorable impression.

Q: How do I handle revisions and feedback from clients?

Set clear expectations in your contract regarding the number of revisions. Be open to constructive feedback, ask for specific details, and communicate effectively to ensure client satisfaction while maintaining project scope.

Q: How can I manage my time effectively as a freelance illustrator?

Time management is an imporant skill, as you would often be given tight deadlines or have to handle multiple projects at the same time. Use project management tools to organize tasks and deadlines. Establish a routine, set realistic goals, and prioritize work based on deadlines and client needs.

Q: How can I protect my intellectual property as a freelancer?

Clearly define ownership and usage rights in your contract. Consider licensing instead of selling full rights. Use watermarks during the approval process and, if necessary, register your copyright.

Q: How do I handle difficult clients or disputes?

Encountering a challenging client with whom you may not resonate is a common aspect of freelance work. Even highly skilled and respected illustrators have navigated similar situations. It is important to maintain professionalism, address concerns promptly, and seek compromise. Include dispute resolution procedures in your contract to provide clarity in case issues arise.

Q: How can I effectively market myself as a freelance illustrator?

A personal website is essential as it serves as a centralized portfolio and professional hub, offering potential clients easy access to your work and contact information. To maximize its effectiveness, develop a robust online presence, craft a compelling portfolio, and actively engage with your target audience. Consistency in branding and self-promotion is crucial for establishing a cohesive and memorable online identity.

Q: How do I handle taxes and finances as a freelance illustrator?

Maintain accurate records of your income and expenses. Set aside funds for taxes, contemplate working with an accountant, and stay informed about tax regulations in your area. Depending on your tax entity and income level, you might need to file quarterly taxes. Consider that taking classes in business and taxation can help alleviate stress and anxiety. Additionally, having the knowledge to complete your own taxes can lead to potential cost savings.

CHAPTER 3

RESUME & PORTFOLIO

Creating a compelling resume and a strong portfolio as a student illustrator may seem challenging, but with the right approach, you can effectively showcase your talents and potential. By following the guidelines outlined in this chapter, you will be well on your way to making a positive impression on potential employers and advancing your career in illustration.



RESUME BASICS

As a student who may not have a lot of professional experience, selling yourself can be a daunting task. In this topic, we will cover the basics of writing a well-structured, clearly outlined, and easy-to-read resume, along with essential dos and don'ts.

Understanding ATS

An Applicant Tracking System (ATS), also known as resume filtering bots, is a software application that assists organizations in managing their recruitment process. It automates the collection, sorting, and tracking of job applications, streamlining the process for employers to find and evaluate candidates. Many mid-to-large-sized companies utilize ATS to help recruiters identify the right candidates swiftly, and ATS has proven to be an excellent tool for enhancing recruitment efficiency. However, this presents a challenge for job seekers, who must know how to format their resumes correctly to ensure they pass through the ATS filters.

Plain Resume or Designed Resume

- As a creative individual, you might feel inclined to make your resume "fancy" to showcase your artistic talents. You may have learned to design your resume using InDesign or other Adobe programs to incorporate graphic elements. However, it's crucial to be cautious about when to use a plain or designed resume. In many cases, less is more. The primary purpose of a resume is to present information clearly and concisely to help you secure an interview. Ensuring your resume is easy to read and ATS-friendly will maximize your chances of catching the attention of recruiters and hiring managers.



Plain / ATS-Friendly Resume

- ATS Compatibility: The one-column format reduces the likelihood of information getting scrambled when processed by ATS software, ensuring your resume is properly parsed and evaluated.
- Readability: A well-structured resume with a consistent font and layout makes it easy for recruiters to quickly scan and understand your qualifications without being distracted by irrelevant graphic elements.
- Ease of Modification: This format is simpler to update and modify as needed, compared to a more complex, designed format.
- Print-Friendly: Due to its simplicity, this format prints well, maintaining clarity and legibility when presented in hard copy.



Designed Resume

- Never use a heavily designed format unless you are certain it will be reviewed by a human. Even then, a plain resume might still be the better choice. Here are some key considerations:
- ATS Compatibility: A multi-column format will almost certainly scramble your information when processed by an ATS. If you wonder why you haven't received any interview calls after sending numerous applications, this could be the reason—your resume might be discarded in the very first round.
- Readability: Colors and graphic elements can make your resume difficult for recruiters to read quickly and efficiently.
- Ease of Modification: Designed formats are more challenging to modify and update, making it harder to tailor your resume for different job applications.
- Print-Friendly: Heavily designed resumes might not print well, depending on the printer, potentially making your information unreadable.
- There are additional issues with this resume example, which will be addressed in later sections.

2026 Resume Statistics

- **71% of U.S. hiring managers use Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) to manage and screen job applications.** Among Fortune 500 companies, the figure reaches 97.4%. (Resume Genius, 2026; Jobscan, 2026)
- **37% of hiring managers report that ATS software screens out applications based on preset criteria.** Missing required skills and poor alignment with the job description are common reasons. (Resume Genius, 2026)
- **Your resume needs to make a strong first impression.** 60% of hiring managers say ATS software helps them review applications faster, making clear organization and readability essential. (Resume Genius, 2026)
- **Keywords matter!** 28% of hiring managers identify a lack of relevant keywords as a reason resumes are rejected. Match your resume to the job description. (Resume Genius, 2026)
- **Job seekers submitted an average of 62.6 applications** and received approximately 4.76 interviews during their job search. (United Way NCA, 2026)
- **Only 13% of hiring managers say ATS software** is compatible with resumes featuring images or heavy design elements. Keep your application resume simple and easy to read. (Resume Genius, 2026)
- **94.3% of surveyed job seekers reported never hearing back** from employers after submitting applications. (United Way NCA, 2026)
- **Tailored resumes had a 5.8% conversion rate,** compared with 3.73% for resumes that were not customized. (Huntr, 2025)

Tips for Writing an ATS-Friendly Resume

Keep It Simple

- Use a clean, simple layout without excessive graphics, images, or unusual fonts. ATS may struggle to read complex formatting. There are many free ATS-friendly resume templates that you can download for free.

Use Keywords

- Carefully read the job description and incorporate relevant keywords and phrases into your resume. These might include specific skills, software proficiencies, certifications, or industry terms. Tailoring your resume to the specific jobs you are applying for can significantly increase your chances of being noticed by employers.

Use Standard Headings

- Use standard headings like “Work Experience,” “Education,” “Skills,” and “Contact Information” to make it easier for the ATS to parse your resume.

Avoid Abbreviations

- Spell out acronyms and abbreviations. For example, write “Bachelor of Science” instead of “B.S.”

Save in the Right Format

- Ensure you review the job requirements to ensure your resume is submitted in a format that ATS can easily read, such as a Word document (.doc or .docx) or a plain text file (.txt). PDFs can occasionally lead to parsing issues.



Resume Writing

DOS

- **Include a Professional Summary:** Start with a brief, compelling summary that highlights your experience, skills, and career objectives as an illustrator.
- **Showcase Your Portfolio**: Include a link to your online portfolio or website where potential employers can view your work. Make sure the portfolio is well-organized and showcases your best pieces.
- **Highlight Relevant Experience**:Relevant experience should be given prime real estate on your resume. Use bullet points to list your experiences in order of importance, with the most relevant (and recent) at the top and other experiences toward the bottom. You can include projects completed during class or work done for family and friends. The key is to showcase your abilities, regardless of whether you were paid for the work.
- **Detail Your Skills with Keywords**: List specific technical skills and any other relevant abilities specifically required for the job. Use industry-specific keywords and phrases to help your resume get noticed by applicant tracking systems (ATS) and hiring managers.
- **Provide Metrics**: Metrics quantify your achievements and increase your hireabiltiy. They enable you to write accomplishment-driven bullet points which tell managers you have proven success in your role.
- **Keep It Clean and Professional**: Use a clean, professional design with readable fonts and appropriate headings. Ensure there are no spelling or grammar errors.
- **Use the Right Length:** The ideal length of a resume is between 475 and 600 words. Stick to a one-page resume, unless you have 10 years of experience or more.
- **Customize Your Resume**: Tailor your resume for each job application, emphasizing the skills and experiences. most relevant to the specific role.

DON'TS

- **Don't Include Irrelevant Experience:** Avoid listing jobs or experiences that do not relate to illustration unless they provide transferable skills that are relevant to the position.
- **Don't Make It Too Lengthy:** Keep your resume concise and to the point. Use no more than three bullet points to describe each experience.
- **Don't Use an Unprofessional Email Address:** Use a professional email address that includes your name (or business name) rather than a nickname, numbers, or random string of characters.
- **Don't Include Your Full Address or Social Security Numbers:** Protect your privacy by withholding non-essential personal information during the early stages of job searching.
- **Don't Forget Contact Information:** Make sure to include your full name, phone number, professional email address, and a link to your portfolio.
- **Don't Use Jargon or Overly Complex Language:** Use clear and simple language. Always proofread your resume multiple times and consider having someone else review it to catch any errors you might have missed.
- **Don't Neglect Social Media Profiles:** Many recruiters say they will check the candidate's social media pages. Make sure your social media pages look up-to-date and professional should you choose to include links to them.
- **Don't Overlook Formatting:** Ensure consistent formatting throughout your resume. Align headings, use bullet points for lists, and maintain consistent font sizes and styles.
- **Don't Include Your Photo:** Photos can distract the hiring manager from what's most important: your skills and experience.

RESUME CRITIQUE

Here are some samples to provide specific guidance. Consider these examples as you create your own resume.

Sample Job Posting

In-House Illustrator (Entry-Level)

Company: Eastern Entertainment
Type: Full-time
Location: Willimantic, CT

Qualifications

- Strong background in digital art and proficiency in Adobe Illustrator for creating stunning illustrations.
- Skills in making designs using Canva.
- Solid understanding of digital design principles and layout design.
- Knowledge of photography and the ability to capture high-quality images is a plus.
- Excellent communication and collaboration skills, with the ability to work effectively with designers, project managers, and other stakeholders.
- Strong problem-solving skills, with a creative approach to developing innovative design solutions.
- 1-3 years of relevant experience required.
- Bachelor's degree in graphic design, fine arts, or a related field.

Responsibilities

- Design visual elements such as logos, illustrations, 2D animations, and graphics for a variety of projects using Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop.
- Collaborate with designers and project managers to conceptualize and develop visual elements for various projects in Canva.
- Develop and implement layout designs, incorporating typography to create visually appealing content.
- Utilize photography skills to capture images that enhance the team's designs.
- Stay current with the latest design trends and tools, contributing to the development of new design styles and techniques.

To increase your chances of getting an interview, consider creating a tailored resume for each job you apply to. While it requires more time and effort, the payoff can be substantial. Here's how to customize your resume effectively:

Carefully Review the Job Posting

- Examine the job posting closely and identify important keywords, skills, and qualifications. Make sure to include these in your resume to demonstrate that you match the job requirements.

Review the sample job posting and highlight the keywords you believe are important and should be included in your tailored resume.

For example, terms like "digital art," "Adobe Illustrator," and "layout design" are required skills that the company's ATS might be set up to scan for, and therefore should be prominently reflected on your resume.

Highlight Relevant Skills and Experience

- Tailor your resume by emphasizing the skills and experiences most relevant to the specific job. This makes your resume more appealing to recruiters and applicant tracking systems (ATS).

What are the technical and soft skills required for this job?

Ensure you include these keywords in your resume by integrating them into both your experience section and your skills section.

Research Unfamiliar Tools and Software

- If you come across software or tools you're unfamiliar with, take the initiative to research and learn about them. Many platforms are user-friendly and can be learned quickly.
- Familiarize yourself with these tools and consider listing them on your resume if you can acquire a basic understanding. This not only enhances your skill set but also makes you a more competitive candidate.

Are there any tools and software you are unfamilir with?

For instance, Canva is a popular online design platform being adopted by many businesses. If you haven't used it yet, try it for free to acquire the necessary skills and make yourself a stronger candidate. Many platforms are relatively easy to learn, especially for those with basic design skills. Similarly, take the initiative to study and familiarize yourself with other programs you come across during your job search. This proactive approach will enhance your skill set and improve your employability.

Sample Resume

Ann Annson

AnnAnnsonArt.com

annannsonart@gmail.com | 860-123-4567 | Hartford, CT

Professional Summary: Graduating student with strong digital illustration and graphic design skills. Proficient in Adobe Illustrator and Canva. Skilled in creating visually compelling designs and animations, with a keen eye for detail. Proven ability to collaborate effectively and contribute innovative ideas. Seeking an entry-level position to apply creative talents in a dynamic environment.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Freelance Illustrator & Designer
2021 - present

- Created 3 pet illustrations for a private collector in Connecticut (2024).
- Created a canned beer packaging design for Manchester Brewery in Connecticut (2023).
- Created wedding invitations for a private client in Ohio (2022).
- Designed five posters and three flyers to advertise a local coffee shop, Ben's Beans (2021).

Graphic Design Intern | Eastern Designs LLC | Milford, CT
Summer 2024

- Assisted in the creation of over 50 digital and print marketing materials, including brochures, flyers, and social media graphics.
- Utilized Adobe Creative Suite (Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign) to produce high-quality designs, completing projects 10% ahead of deadlines.
- Prepared and delivered final design files for production with 100% accuracy, ensuring adherence to specifications.

Student Illustrator & Designer | Eastern Connecticut State University, CT
2021 - 2023

- Wrote and illustrated a full-color, 36-page children's book titled "Alice's Friend" during Picture Book Illustration class. The book is available in digital PDF and printed format (2023).
- Created a logo, branding design, and a tri-fold advertising brochure for "Maya's Table," a fictional business during Graphic Design III class (2022).
- Designed 10 Christmas-themed stamp designs using Adobe Illustrator during Digital Illustration class (2021).

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts | Eastern Connecticut State University, CT
Art Major, Illustration Concentration
Expected Graduation: Spring 2025

- Relevant Coursework: Traditional Illustration, Digital Illustration, Picture Book Illustration, 2D Animation, Digital Imaging and Online Media, Graphic Design (I, II, & III)

TECHNICAL & SOFT SKILLS

- Adobe Photoshop
- Procreate for iPad
- Microsoft Office
- Traditional Illustration
- Communication
- Adaptability
- Adobe Illustrator
- Adobe Animate
- Canva
- Digital Illustration
- Collaboration
- Attention to Detail
- Adobe InDesign
- Adobe After Effects
- Autodesk Maya
- Graphic Design
- Problem-Solving
- Time Management

Ann Annson is a senior student at Eastern, set to graduate in Spring 2025. Upon seeing the job listing, she crafted a tailored resume using a free ATS-friendly template she found online, ensuring it aligns with the specific requirements of the position. This resume serves as a reference example. Since your situation may differ, be sure to evaluate your own circumstances and consider consulting other professionals to create a resume that best suits your needs.

Styling

- The one-column, ATS-friendly format ensures that your information remains intact when processed by ATS software. Consistent font, size, and spacing throughout the resume enhance readability, while concise bullet points make it easy for recruiters to quickly scan and absorb the content. Everyting fit nicely into one page.

Header

- The portfolio link and contact information is prominently placed, ensuring easy access for recruiters to review Ann's work. For privacy reasons, Ann has smartly included only her town and state.
- The concise Professional Summary effectively outlines Ann's background and objectives, incorporating relevant keywords from the job listing that highlight both technical and soft skills.

Experience

- This section is the primary focus for recruiters, so Ann wisely placed it at the top of her resume. She listed her most relevant and recent experiences first, maintaining consistent formatting for each position. Ann incorporated quantifiable data and outcomes where possible, presenting them in brief, easy-to-read bullet points. This approach makes it straightforward for recruiters to grasp the significance and impact of her work.
- She also consolidated her freelance roles with small projects into one section. However, if you have done extensive work for a single client, consider listing that position separately to showcase the various aspects of your capabilities. It is perfectly acceptable to include projects done for friends and family as clients.
- If you lack extensive freelance experience, it's perfectly fine to list projects completed during class or as independent studies for entry-level jobs. Many of our courses involve experiential learning, where students work in simulated professional environments, collaborate in groups, and even engage with real-world clients.

Education

- Be sure to list your degree correctly. At Eastern Connecticut State University, our department offers a Bachelor of Arts degree in Art major with four concentrations. If you have a second major, minors, or other accomplishments such as being on the Dean's List or involvement in student clubs, consider listing them as well.
- If you lack professional experience, highlight relevant courses you have taken. This will help ensure your resume includes important keywords and showcases your abilities in those subjects.

Skills

- Ensure your resume includes a skills section to highlight both your technical and soft skills. This not only increases your chances of getting through the ATS but also grabs the attention of human recruiters.

Designed Resume

If you choose to create a designed resume, ensure it has a simple, modern, and sleek look. Avoid using distracting, unnecessary graphics; prioritize readability of the text. Remember, your resume is not an art piece but a tool to convey important information. Many fancy templates online can be misleading and problematic, as illustrated in the example below.

Never use a photo on your resume!

The resume is missing a portfolio website link, which should be prominently displayed in an obvious position.

A large, black background can make text difficult to read and may result in poor print quality.



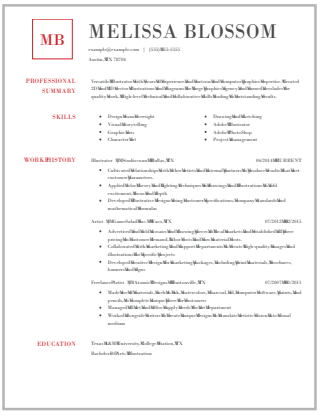
An equal two-column layout doesn't effectively highlight the most important section—Experience. Considering that recruiters spend an average of just 7 seconds reviewing a resume, prioritize the information they want to see to make their job easier!

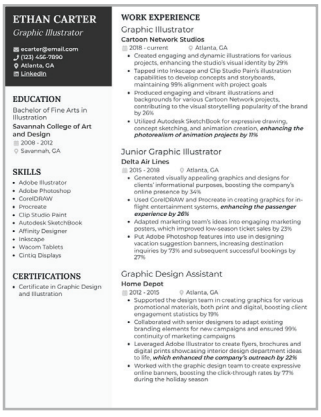
It's unfortunate that so much space is wasted on bar charts in the Skills section instead of highlighting experience. The column width for the Experience section should be wider for easier readability. Narrow columns force readers to frequently shift their eyes and start new lines, slowing down reading speed. Additionally, ensure the font size is large enough to be easily readable.

The Skills section should contain only keywords. Avoid using graphic charts to represent your skills, as they take up valuable space and don't effectively convey your skill level to recruiters. Instead, use bullet points in the Experience section to highlight your skills with proven examples and metrics.

Never list your references on your resume. Provide their information only when requested by the employer.

These examples might offer better formats due to their clean layout and readability. While photos of yourself shouldn't be used, consider incorporating your own logo or illustrations to showcase your creativity.







RESUME CHECKLIST

Contact Information

- [ ] Full Name
- [ ] Professional Email Address
- [ ] Phone Number (get a free Google Voice number if concerned about privacy)
- [ ] Portfolio Website Link (prominently displayed)
- [ ] LinkedIn Profile (optional)
- [ ] Social Media Handles (Instagram, Twitter, etc., if relevant)

Professional Summary

- [ ] Summarize your professional background, key skills, and career goals in a brief overview.
- [ ] Customize it for each job application, highlighting relevant experience.

Experience

- [ ] Clearly state your roles and the organizations you've worked for.
- [ ] Include the month and year of start and end dates.
- [ ] Use bullet points to detail your responsibilities and highlight your accomplishments.
- [ ] Whenever possible, quantify your achievements.

Education

- [ ] List your academic qualifications, prioritizing your terminal degree at the top. Include your degree, major(s), minor(s), and any relevant details.
- [ ] Include the names of the institutions and your (expected) graduation date. Highlight courses that are relevant to the position if desired.

Skills

- [ ] Use industry-specific keywords to highlight relevant technical and soft skills.

Additional Sections (optional)

- [ ] List any relevant awards or recognitions.
- [ ] List any relevant workshops or conferences attended.
- [ ] Include any publications or features in magazines, blogs, etc.
- [ ] Highlight any relevant volunteer work.

Design and Layout

- [ ] Ensure the layout is easy to read and navigate. Keep the design simple and avoid unnecessary graphics.
- [ ] Use consistent fonts, sizes, and spacing. Ensure the text is legible.

Final Touches

- [ ] Check for spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors.
- [ ] Save your resume in a format that is accepted by the employer, typically as word or PDF. Use a professional file name (e.g., "John_Doe_Illustrator_Resume.pdf").
- [ ] Run your resume through an ATS scanner and make necessary adjustments based on the analysis. Numerous free scanners are available online.

PORTFOLIO BASICS

A strong portfolio can be the key to landing your dream job. In the digital age, having your own website or social media is expected by most recruiters and clients. While it requires significant effort, creating an effective portfolio that aligns with your resume and career goals is essential.

Get In The Know

Building a portfolio as an illustrator is essential for showcasing your skills effectively. Your portfolio should highlight your best work, demonstrate your versatility, and showcase your unique artistic style. It serves as a tool for potential clients or employers to quickly assess your suitability for a specific role or project. Consider the viewer's perspective and organize your portfolio to present your work in the best possible light. Here are key tips to keep in mind:

Highlight Your Best Work:

- Be selective! Potential clients and employers are more likely to glance at one or two pieces and make a quick decision. Select a diverse but concise range of pieces that showcase your strongest work. Ensure the overall quality and style are consistent throughout your portfolio.

Organize Effectively:

- Ensure your portfolio is well-organized, with clear navigation and categories that guide viewers through different types of work or projects.

Professional Presentation:

- Create a clean, easy-to-navigate website. Platforms like Behance, ArtStation, or personal websites using Wix or Squarespace are great options. Maintain a professional presence on social media platforms like Instagram, LinkedIn, or Twitter can help grow your audience and foster new opportunities.

Showcase Range and Versatility:

- Display a variety of styles, techniques, and subject matters to illustrate your creative flexibility.

Emphasize Your Unique Style:

- Your portfolio should reflect your individual artistic voice and personality, setting you apart from others.

Consider the Viewer's Perspective:

- Tailor your portfolio to appeal to the preferences and expectations of potential clients or employers.

Provide Context:

- Include brief descriptions or captions for each piece to provide context, such as the purpose of the project, your role, and any specific techniques used. Sometimes showing the process (e.g., sketches, storyboards, rough drafts) can demonstrate your workflow and problem-solving skills.

Get Feedback

- Seek feedback from peers, mentors, or industry professionals to refine your portfolio. Participate in online communities or forums where you can receive constructive criticism.

Include Contact Information

- Ensure your contact information is easily accessible on your portfolio website. Use a professional email address and consider including links to your LinkedIn profile or other relevant social media.

Optimize for ATS and SEO

- Use relevant keywords in your descriptions and titles to improve visibility for both ATS (if submitting digitally) and search engines. For websites, include alt text for images and proper metadata to enhance SEO.

Legal Considerations

- Ensure you have the rights to use and display all the work in your portfolio. If work was done for a client, get their permission before including it in your portfolio, especially for unpublished projects.

Update Regularly:

- Keep your portfolio current with your latest and best work to showcase your evolving skills and style.

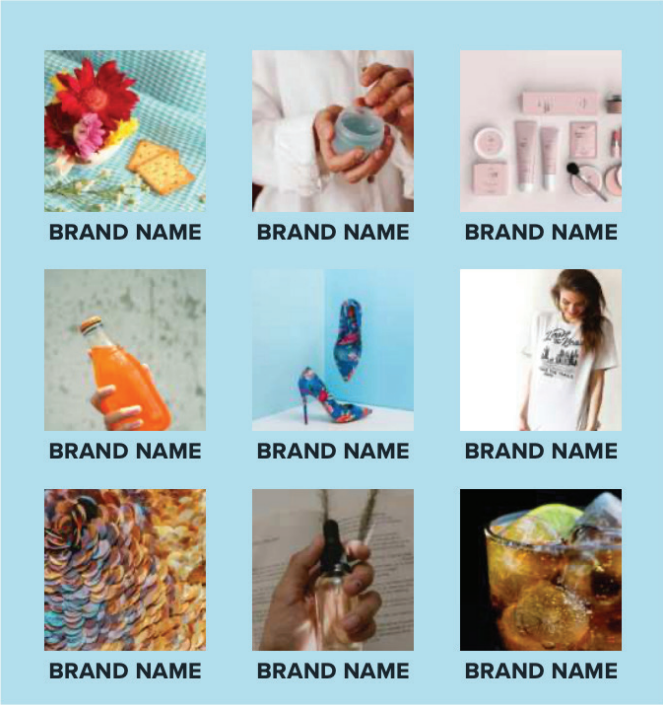
Portfolio organizational styles

Organized by Brand (project):

- This method highlights your career's progression and growth over time, making it ideal for experienced illustrators with ample work under each brand or project.

Organized by Medium:

- This approach showcases your breadth of skills, making it particularly advantageous for artists with a versatile style who have tackled a diverse array of projects.



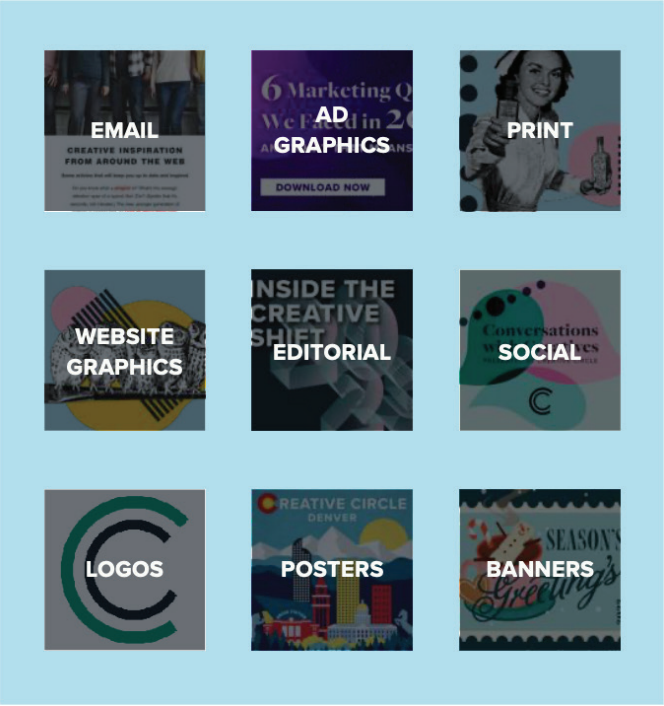


Image credit: Creative Circle

Portfolio

DOS

- **Quality Over Quantity:** Only select pieces that are relevant to the type of work you want to attract, ensuring coherence and professionalism.
- **Use High-quality Images**: For digital images, ensure they are exported in an appropriate size to prevent pixelation and blurriness. For traditional pieces, take photographs in good lighting and use Photoshop to correct colors, distortions, shadows, and other imperfections.
- **Use Mockups:** Utilize mockups to demonstrate how your illustrations and designs appear on printed mediums and products whenever possible. Even for personal pieces, consider placing them in mockups such as framed artwork on a wall. Effective presentation can significantly enhance the appeal and visualization of your work, highlighting its potential in real-world applications.
- **Show Your Process**: Include process sketches and prototypes whenever possible to give clients and employers insight into your creative process. This not only showcases your final product but also reveals how you work, think, organize, and approach projects. Providing this behind-the-scenes look can significantly enhance their understanding and appreciation of your artistic journey.
- **Check The Compatibility:** The best way for someone to view a portfolio is always going to be on a big widescreen monitor, but you can't guarantee that's what will happen. Potential clients and employers will likely be viewing portfolio sites.
- **Have A Backup Plan**: Always brings a digital PDF copy or bring a printed portfolio to your interviews in case Wi-Fi isn't available.
- **Research Before Building**: Don't copy, but allow yourself to be inspired. Check out the portfolios of the creatives you admire, or those with a style you're drawn to.

DON'TS

- **Don't Use Low-Quality Images:** It's crucial to emphasize this point repeatedly, as many students often overlook it. Ensure that you feature high-quality, high-resolution images in your portfolio.
- **Don't Ignore Context:** Avoid using images without providing context. Always include details about each piece or project to help viewers understand its significance. While you're intimately familiar with your work, remember that your audience may have little to no prior knowledge of you or your projects.
- **Don't Overload:** Avoid including too many pieces. Focus on quality over quantity to keep viewer interest. A portfolio filled with low-quality or unfinished work can quickly lose viewer patience and lead them to pass on you as a potential candidate.
- **Don't Make It Complicated:** Maintain a simple and easy-to-navigate portfolio website. Complex navigation can frustrate viewers and deter them from exploring your work. Minimize the need for excessive clicking by opting for longer pages that allow scrolling, and ensure clear links for intuitive navigation.
- **Don't Be Too Modest:** Enhance your portfolio by including testimonials from clients, colleagues, or previous employers, along with any awards or prizes you've received. These endorsements and achievements help establish credibility and showcase your professional success.
- **Don't Forget To Update:** Start your portfolio early and maintain its freshness by regularly updating it with your latest work. Keep saving and organizing new pieces as you create them. While it requires effort to upkeep, a consistently updated portfolio can lead to significant opportunities.
- **Don't Leave It Out:** Ensure potential clients and employers can easily contact you by providing a professional email address, phone number, or a contact form.

Common Questions

What is the right amount of work to showcase?

- Potential clients and employers don't want to spend a ton of time going through work until they find something they like. They're more likely to glance at one or two pieces and make a quick decision. Be selective! Only showcase your absolute best work and put it front and center.
- Don't have enough projects? Add some designs of your own, label them as "personal projects," and explain the thinking behind them. Real-world commercial work is always preferable, but demonstrating that you can deliver something to a brief, even an imaginary one, is much better than leaving a blank space.

What kind of information should I give to provide context for my work?

- Remember, portfolio visuals should always be supported with context! For example, answer questions such as: How was it created? What were you responsible for? Is this entirely your work, or a collaboration? If it's a collaboration, who else was involved, and what part did you play? What was the brief/strategy? What was the timeline? What successes did the campaign have? Include any metrics!

Is an online website portfolio necessary? I don't have the money to pay for it.

- In the digital age, creatives should always have an online portfolio. While some platforms like Squarespace and Wix incur costs, you can definitely have a portfolio for free. First, consider network sites like Behance and ArtStation, which allow you to have your own profile for free. If you prefer a personal website, try Weebly and other sites that offer a free subscription tier. Check Chapter 4 for additional resources.

Should I have my own logo and branding for my portfolio?

- Yes! It's important to develop a personal brand (logo, theme, color scheme) that represents you and your personality. Once you've settled on something, use it consistently across all touchpoints (resume, portfolio, professional social media channels, etc.). This consistency is extremely important; it shows you understand good design and have strong attention to detail.

What are mockups and why should I use them?

- Mockups are digital representations or simulations that depict how your illustrations and designs would look in real-world contexts or applications. They are typically in Photoshop format and involve placing your artwork onto various products or mediums such as posters, book covers, apparel, or digital screens. Simply Google "mockups," and you'll find numerous free resources available online.
- Use mockups whenever possible as they are valuable tools for enhancing the presentation and marketability of your illustrations and designs, helping you stand out in a competitive creative industry.

What are some portfolio advice for students?

- Since you are fairly new to the game, you might not have an extensive selection of work samples to display, so don't be afraid to highlight anything that demonstrates your technical skills and design aptitude. Include the latest and greatest software certifications and any relevant info. Also, given that you're fairly new and don't have an extensive selection of work samples, it's okay to create some spec pieces for your portfolio to show you've got skills. You can use existing brands or case studies and create something from concept through final design.

Recommended Workflow

Set Goals

Determine your target audience and clarify what you want to achieve with your portfolio. Develop a strategy to effectively meet these goals and decide on the best approach to organize and present your work.

Select Platform(s)

Choose the best platform(s) for your portfolio based on your goals. If your budget allows, invest in a personalized domain for a professional appearance. If not, a simple profile on Behance or similar sites can also be effective.

Organize Your Work

Organize your work files before building your portfolio. Create a folder with selected high-quality images that are ready for use. Take the time to create mockups for your work, touch up any unfinished or flawed pieces you wish to include, and create new pieces if necessary.

Categorize Your Work

Assess your work to identify your strengths and achievements. You might be surprised to find that they don't align with the career you're aiming for. Decide how to categorize your work in your portfolio to best reflect your desired career path.

Research & Inspiration

Study current trends and examples of portfolios from people you admire. Take inspiration from how they set up their websites. Create a logo and branding style for yourself, familiarize yourself with your chosen platform, and finalize your plan for moving forward.

Build Your Portfolio

Utilize templates and tools available on your chosen platform to build your website. With a solid plan and high-quality, ready-to-use images, this step becomes much easier. Continuously improve and update your portfolio!

Questions for Yourself

As you create your portfolio, you'll want to consider which pieces of your work to include and ask yourself these questions for each one...

1. Does this project highlight my best work?
2. Does this project represent my full potential and talent as a creative?
3. Does this project demonstrate my ability to solve creative problems for future clients?
4. Does this project show my range?

(Show only your strongest work, ideally with some variety in styles or genres)

5. Does this project indicate the work I am looking to do in the future?

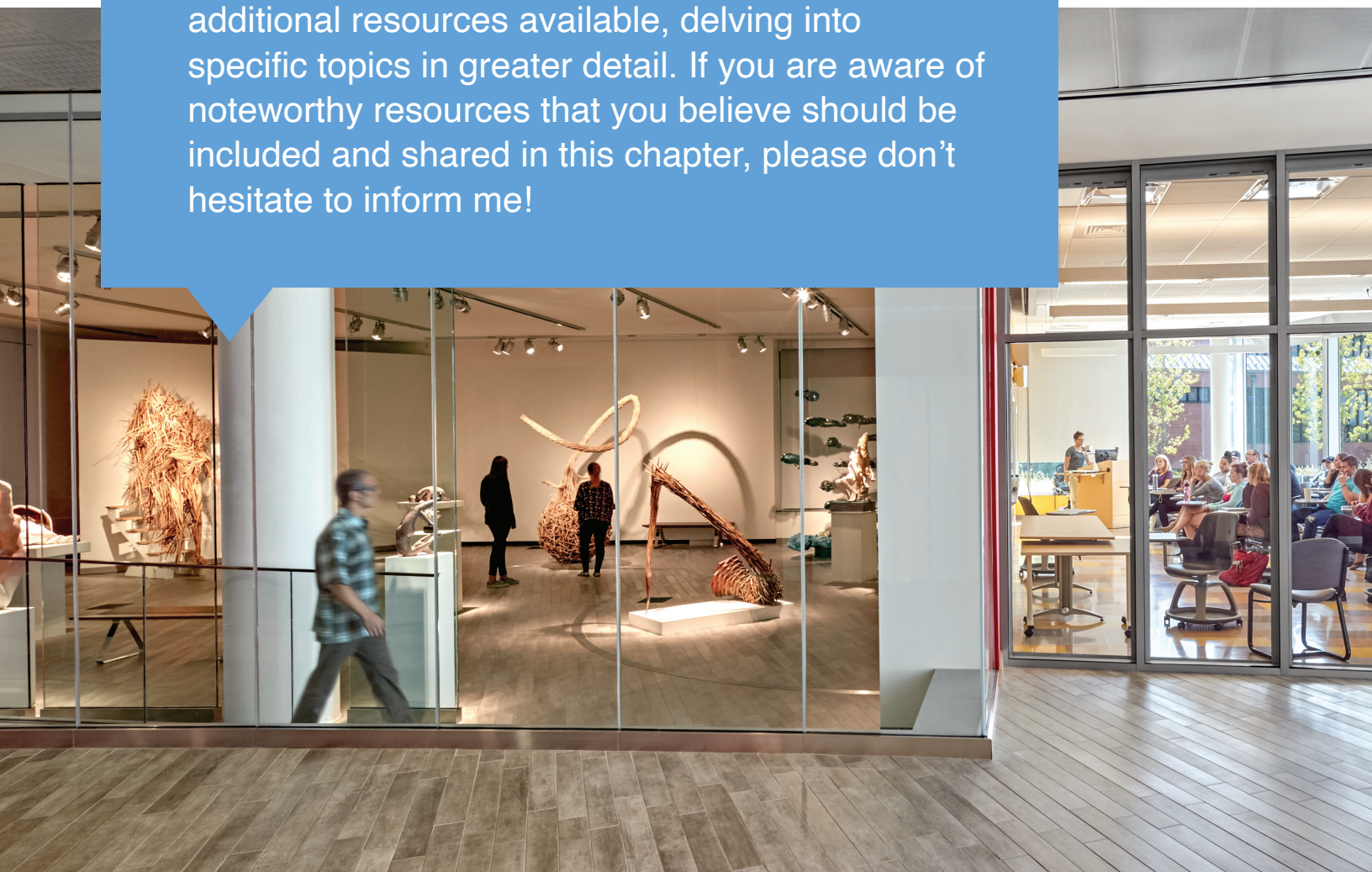
It's crucial to properly save, backup, and organize your classwork, commissioned work, and personal project files. I often hear heartbreaking stories of students losing their files and not having enough pieces for their portfolios!

CHAPTER 4

USEFUL RESOURCES

In this chapter, we will outline a variety of valuable resources that can significantly benefit illustrators. These encompass a compilation of illustration agencies, prominent organizations, recommended books, online tools, and practical insights for career development.

It's important to note that there are numerous additional resources available, delving into specific topics in greater detail. If you are aware of noteworthy resources that you believe should be included and shared in this chapter, please don't hesitate to inform me!



GENERAL ADVICE

A creative career is undeniably fulfilling, with its unique set of advantages and challenges, and it may not be the right fit for everyone. For those who decide to tread this path, I trust that you will find this advice beneficial.

Becoming an illustrator is a unique, exciting, and challenging career path. Obtaining a degree in illustration can unlock numerous opportunities, providing a sense of fulfillment as you witness your creations come to life in the real world. I vividly recall the thrill of seeing the first book I illustrated in print. However, a successful entry into this industry requires thorough preparation. Decisiveness is key, and if you find it challenging to make immediate choices, immerse yourself in diverse experiences.

At Eastern, we offer a comprehensive array of courses spanning art, art history, design, and digital media. These courses empower you to explore various facets of the field, helping you gain insights into the life of an illustrator. It is advisable to make these career-defining decisions early in your academic journey—preferably during your Freshman or Sophomore years—allowing ample time for meticulous preparation.

Document and organize your work. Present the best pieces in your portfolio.

When I request to review students' work, I often observe them navigating through a multitude of folders on their computers, unsure where to begin. They might showcase a piece from one location and then struggle to locate the specific work they intended to share. The crucial first step in building a good portfolio is to properly organize your files. Establish a main folder and use subfolders to categorize and organize your work. Place ready-to-use images in JPEG or PNG formats within these folders for quick accessibility.

On other occasions, traditional pieces are inadequately documented—oil paintings and sketches photographed in suboptimal lighting end up appearing blurry and pixelated when viewed on their phones. Your portfolio is of utmost importance, and its presentation is a critical factor. Ensure that you showcase your work in the best possible way. Consider scanning your original pieces or having them professionally photographed in optimal lighting and high resolution. For digital artwork, contemplate using mockups to demonstrate how the pieces function. For instance, employ a mockup template to place a book cover design on an actual book, a resource easily accessible online. This meticulous approach enhances the overall impact of your portfolio.

Enroll in courses that cover business, accounting, and financial planning topics.

To thrive in the illustration and design industry, possessing business skills is not only beneficial but often essential. Whether employed full-time, part-time, or working as a freelancer, interactions with individuals managing businesses are inevitable. A foundational grasp of business terms and principles facilitates efficient communication with these professionals. For freelancers, knowledge in business and accounting is particularly crucial. In addition to making sound financial plans to navigate the unpredictable nature of freelancing, maintaining meticulous records of income and expenses is vital for tax filing. During your time at Eastern, consider enrolling in business and accounting courses or pursuing a minor in business to enhance your understanding of these critical aspects.

Leverage available resources to their fullest extent.

At Eastern, we provide a wealth of resources to support student success. From dedicated faculty members and the Academic Center to the Art Gallery and various student clubs, there's a diverse range of support available. Attend regular professional events, connect with peers who share similar aspirations, and consider forming a cohort to provide mutual support. While four years may appear substantial, they pass by swiftly, so make the most of the opportunities available to you.

Embarking on real-world work experiences is never too early.

Many students hesitate to explore real-world work or pursue freelance opportunities, fearing they aren't "ready" for it. In my view, true learning occurs when working with actual clients and navigating challenges. It's normal to feel apprehensive, worrying about potential failures, struggling to perform well, and lacking confidence.

Confidence, in my opinion, is akin to a muscle that strengthens with each daunting experience and failure.

During my student years, I faced similar fears. I began taking on freelance work in my junior year, learning invaluable lessons about the real world while still having the support of classmates and faculty. This early exposure made the transition to working as a freelance illustrator after graduation much smoother.

I advise my students to initiate freelance projects while in school, even if they start with small tasks for family and friends. In the following chapters, you'll discover freelance websites where you can explore opportunities. Commence with modest projects, and you may find the experience both rewarding and empowering. In fact, I've witnessed several Eastern students achieve success in freelancing, gaining valuable expertise that paved the way for their careers.

Getting started is often the most challenging part.

Entering any industry can be exceptionally challenging, requiring persistence, grit, and an unwavering passion for your craft. Ask any illustrator, and they can share bittersweet stories about their journey's beginnings. With determination, you'll find your way!

I recall the initial hardships I faced. The primary challenge was establishing visibility and acquiring clients, a daunting task when starting with limited funds for advertising, lacking a network of connections, and feeling uncertain about where to begin. It involved a lot of trial and error. I dedicated ample time to refining my portfolio, learning from successful illustrators, updating my resume, and persistently applying lessons learned. Small projects became my focus, as I believed they could lead to more significant opportunities, positive word-of-mouth, and recurring clients. Indeed, my business expanded, and I still collaborate with clients from my early days.

Once I gained solid experience, I invested in a better website, subscribed to professional organizations, and attended conferences. I sought representation from illustration agencies and signed with Lemonade Illustration Agency, which offered exclusive representation while allowing me to take on independent projects. It took eight months to secure my first project through the agency, causing initial frustration and anxiety. Conversations with fellow illustrators reassured me that this timeline was normal, as agencies require time to promote their artists. The agency connected me with renowned clients like Mattel, Scholastic, and other publishing companies. I illustrated several Barbie books, including one tied to a popular Barbie movie,

"Barbie and Her Sisters in the Great Puppy Adventure." The high-profile clients and experiences were exhilarating, and the pay for agency-acquired projects was significantly higher. I highly recommend considering agency representation, although the application process can be competitive. Ensure your portfolio is impressive and conduct thorough research before applying.

Many of my illustrator friends encountered similar experiences. Some had smoother starts, while others faced diverse challenges. However, those determined to become successful illustrators eventually achieved their goals. I even knew someone who left a lucrative engineering job to pursue illustration and made a highly successful transition. If you're grappling with challenges at the beginning, don't be disheartened—perseverance pays off.

Make plans and know what to expect.

Embarking on a career involves a myriad of tasks across different domains, and it's easy to feel overwhelmed by anxiety. Crafting a clear plan and utilizing tools like to-do lists, Excel sheets, and calendars can help you maintain focus and ensure consistent progress.

Entering a new venture can be intimidating, especially without a clear roadmap. Understanding what lies ahead enables you to be mentally and physically prepared for your career journey. Take the time to conduct thorough research and immerse yourself in industry knowledge. This handbook is a valuable resource, but don't stop there—engage with your peers and mentors, explore others' stories, and glean insights from their experiences. Armed with this information, you'll be better equipped to navigate similar situations when they arise.

Conduct thorough research to avoid falling victim to scams.

Unfortunately, the internet is not a safe place, and there are individuals attempting to exploit creative talents seeking their next opportunity. I, along with many of my friends, have encountered such schemes. Scammers may employ various tactics, including emails, job postings, phone calls, or texts. One common scam involves

receiving an email from someone claiming to be a husband looking to commission artwork for an anniversary gift. The sender often alleges finding your information on platforms like ArtStation, raising suspicion, especially if you are not registered on the mentioned site. To verify if it's a scam, copy the entire email and search it on Google to see if there are discussions in online forums. Always conduct due diligence and research the identity of potential clients. Check if the provided name and company have an online presence that validates their claims.

Fake job postings are another risk, even on reputable job-searching sites. I once applied to a job on Upwork, supposedly from a major pharmaceutical company seeking graphic designers. The scammers were meticulous, providing documents with official letterheads and creating seemingly legitimate email addresses. While the company existed, my suspicions grew when they scheduled a Google Hangout interview through chat messages instead of video or audio. When asked for financial information and a deposit, I realized it was a scam, immediately ending the conversation and reporting it on the job search site.

Legitimate-looking emails about job openings with real company names and information are also common. To verify, search the name of the job recruiter listed in the email, as legitimate recruiters often have LinkedIn profiles. However, no single indicator can guarantee the authenticity of an opportunity. Always proceed with caution, watch for red flags, and avoid sharing personal information too quickly. Conduct due diligence, research thoroughly, and don't let scammers take advantage of you, whether they are after your money, identity, or personal information.



HELPFUL BOOKS

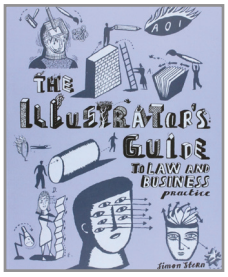
There are many books that aspiring illustrators can find helpful to guide them in their journey. Below are some recommendations:



The Graphic Artists Guild Handbook: Pricing & Ethical Guidelines, 16th Edition

By The Graphic Artists Guild

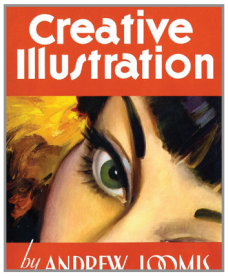
A comprehensive resource designed to assist graphic artists and illustrators in navigating the professional aspects of their careers. This handbook covers essential topics related to pricing, negotiating contracts, and maintaining ethical standards in the industry.



The Illustrator's Guide to Law and Business Practice (Association of Illustrators)

By Association of Illustrators

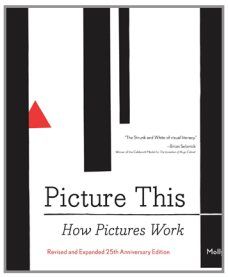
A crucial resource covering legal and business aspects of illustration, including contracts, copyright, and negotiation.



Creative Illustration

By Andrew Loomis

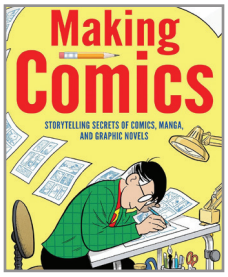
A classic guide that explores fundamental principles of creative illustration, offering insights into composition, perspective, and figure drawing.



Picture This: How Pictures Work

By Molly Bang

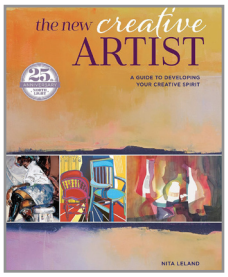
An exploration of visual communication and how pictures convey meaning and emotion, essential for illustrators interested in storytelling through visuals.



Making Comics: Storytelling Secrets of Comics, Manga and Graphic Novels

By Scott McCloud

A comprehensive guide to the art of visual storytelling, focusing on the unique aspects of comics, manga, and graphic novels.



The New Creative Artist: A Guide to Developing Your Creative Spirit

By Nita Leland

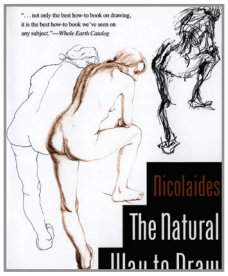
A resource that covers various aspects of the creative process, providing guidance on exploring and expanding artistic abilities.



Illustration School: Let's Draw Plants and Small Creatures

By Sachiko Umoto

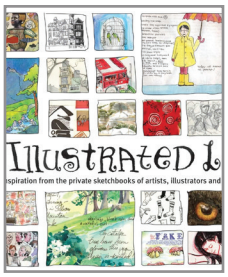
A beginner-friendly book with step-by-step instructions on drawing plants and small creatures, perfect for honing basic illustration skills.



The Natural Way to Draw: A Working Plan for Art Study

By Kimon Nicolaides

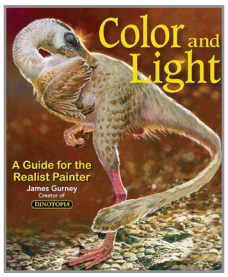
A classic approach to drawing that emphasizes observation and practice, suitable for illustrators looking to enhance their drawing skills.



An Illustrated Life: Drawing Inspiration from the Private Sketchbooks of Artists, Illustrators and Designers

By Danny Gregory

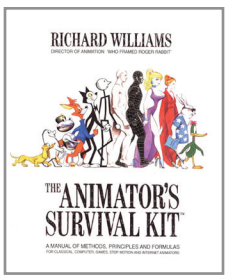
Offers a glimpse into the sketchbooks of various artists and illustrators, providing inspiration and insights into their creative processes.



Color and Light: A Guide for the Realist Painter

By James Gurney

An excellent resource for understanding the principles of color and light, essential for illustrators seeking to create visually compelling and realistic artwork.



The Animator's Survival Kit: A Manual of Methods, Principles and Formulas for Classical, Computer, Games, Stop Motion and Internet Animators

By Richard Williams

Written by an acclaimed animator, the book covers principles, methods, and formulas essential for animators to create compelling and expressive animations.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATION AGENCIES

There are numerous agencies worldwide, and you can be represented by agencies outside of the United States. Here are some agencies you can explore:

Advocate Art
https://www.advocate-art.com/
Advocate Art represents a diverse range of illustrators, providing creative solutions for various projects and clients worldwide.

Art + Commerce
https://www.artandcommerce.com/
Art + Commerce represents top illustrators, photographers, and stylists, playing a key role in shaping the visual landscape of the fashion and luxury industries.

Allied Artists
https://alliedartists.com/
Allied Artists is an agency that represents a diverse group of illustrators, providing creative solutions for advertising, editorial, and publishing projects.

Astound US
https://astound.us/
Astound US specializes in representing children's book illustrators, providing a platform for artists to showcase their work and connect with publishers.

Artistique International
https://www.artistique-int.com/
Artistique International is an illustration agency known for representing a diverse range of artists, providing creative solutions for advertising and editorial projects.

Beehive Illustration
https://www.beehiveillustration.com/
Beehive Illustration represents a collective of talented illustrators, offering creative solutions for publishing, advertising, and design projects.

Bernstein & Andriulli
https://www.ba-reps.com/
B&A is a creative management agency representing illustrators, photographers, and other creative talents across various industries.

The Bright Agency
https://thebrightagency.com/
The Bright Agency is known for representing talented illustrators and creators in the fields of children's books, animation, and more.

Central Illustration Agency
https://centralillustration.com/
Central Illustration Agency represents a curated selection of illustrators known for their unique styles and expertise in various illustration genres.

Colagene
https://www.colagene.com/
Colagene is an illustration agency with a focus on representing artists skilled in visual storytelling for advertising, editorial, and branding projects.

Creative Authors
https://www.creativeauthors.co.uk/
Creative Authors represents illustrators and authors, facilitating collaborations with publishers and media companies across various genres.

Debut Art
https://www.debutart.com/
Debut Art is an illustration agency known for representing a diverse roster of artists and creating impactful visual solutions for clients worldwide.

Dutch Uncle
https://www.dutchuncle.co.uk/
Dutch Uncle represents a group of illustrators, designers, and animators, offering a wide range of creative services for editorial, advertising, and more.

Folio Art
https://folioart.co.uk/
Folio Art is an illustration agency representing a diverse range of artists, providing creative solutions for editorial, advertising, and branding projects.

George Grace Represents
http://georgegracerepresents.com/
George Grace Represents is an agency connecting clients with top illustrators and artists for projects in advertising, editorial, and more.

Handsome Frank
https://www.handsomefrank.com/
Handsome Frank is an illustration agency known for representing a diverse group of artists, providing creative solutions for advertising, design, and editorial projects.

Heart Agency
https://www.heartagency.com/
Heart Agency represents illustrators and animators, connecting them with opportunities in advertising, editorial, publishing, and other creative fields.

Illozoo
https://www.illozoo.com/
Illozoo is an illustration agency showcasing a roster of talented artists known for their unique styles and creative contributions to various industries.

Illustration Division
https://www.illustrationdivision.com/
Illustration Division represents illustrators, animators, and designers, offering creative solutions for projects in advertising, editorial, and branding.

Inkling Illustration Agency
https://www.inklingillustration.com/
Inkling represents a diverse community of talented illustrators from around the world; a creative collective spanning different visual styles to suit any project.

INKY
http://inkyillustration.com/
INK is an illustration agency representing artists with expertise in editorial, advertising, and publishing, offering creative solutions for diverse projects.

Jelly
https://www.jellylondon.com/
Jelly is a creative production agency representing illustrators, animators, and designers, contributing to projects in advertising, branding, and entertainment.

JSR Agency
https://www.jsragency.com/
JSR Agency represents illustrators and photographers, collaborating with clients in advertising, editorial, and design to create visually compelling content.

Lemonade Illustration Agency
https://www.lemonadeillustration.com/
Lemonade Illustration Agency represents a diverse group of illustrators, providing creative solutions for advertising, editorial, and publishing projects.

Liaison Liscensing Agency
https://www.liaisonagency.com/
Licensing Liaison represents artists whose work is appealing to a wide range of consumer groups, offering consistent retail sell-through for the manufacturers we partner with.

Meiklejohn Illustration
https://www.meiklejohn.co.uk/
Meiklejohn Illustration represents a diverse range of illustrators, providing creative solutions for advertising, design, and editorial projects.

MP Arts
https://www.mp-arts.co.uk/
MP Arts is an illustration agency representing artists and photographers, contributing to creative projects in advertising, editorial, and design.

Phosphor Art
https://www.phosphorart.com/
Phosphor Art represents illustrators known for their creativity and expertise, offering solutions for advertising, editorial, and design projects.

Pocko
https://www.pocko.com/
Pocko is an illustration agency that represents artists, designers, and illustrators, contributing to creative projects in advertising, design, and entertainment.

The Plum Agency
https://theplumagency.com/
The Plum Agency represents a group of talented illustrators specializing in children's books, contributing their creative skills to various publishing projects.

Pure Illustration
https://pureillustration.co.uk/
Pure Illustration is an illustration agency representing a diverse range of artists, providing creative solutions for licensing, editorial, and advertising projects.

Red Central
https://redcentral.co.uk/
Red Central is an illustration agency known for representing talented artists in the fields of advertising, design, and editorial, creating visually stunning content.

Salzman International
https://www.salzmanart.com/
Salzman International is an illustration agency known for its global representation of artists, offering creative solutions for advertising, editorial, and design.

Shannon Associates
https://www.shannonassociates.com/
Shannon Associates is an illustration agency representing a diverse group of artists, connecting them with opportunities in publishing, advertising, and design.

The Artworks Illustration Agency
https://www.theartworksinc.com/
The Artworks Illustration Agency represents a curated selection of illustrators, providing creative solutions for advertising, editorial, and branding projects.

The Jacky Winter Group
https://www.jackywinter.com/
The Jacky Winter Group is an illustration agency known for representing a collective of artists with diverse styles, contributing to creative projects worldwide.

The Organisation
https://childrensillustrators.com/
The Organisation is one the world's leading agencies representing illustrators working for the entire field of children's related media.

Traffic Creative Management
https://www.traffic-nyc.com/
Traffic Creative Management is an agency representing illustrators and photographers, contributing to creative projects in advertising, editorial, and design.

The Lindgren Smith Agency
https://lindgrensmith.com/
The Lindgren Smith Agency represents illustrators and designers, offering creative solutions for advertising, editorial, and branding projects.

ONLINE RESOURCES

In this section, we introduce online resources to help you build your portfolio, engage in networking, promote your work, and find freelancing opportunities. With numerous options available, be sure to explore and identify the platform that suits you best.

Portfolio Building Websites

Squarespace

https://www.squarespace.com/

Squarespace is a popular website building and hosting platform that allows individuals, businesses, and creatives to create and manage websites without extensive technical knowledge.

Wix

https://www.wix.com/

Wix is a popular website builder that allows users to create stunning portfolios with a drag-and-drop interface. It offers a range of templates and customization options.

Weebly

https://www.weebly.com/

Weebly is known for its simplicity and ease of use. It provides a straightforward platform for building portfolios and websites with customizable templates.

WordPress

https://wordpress.com/

WordPress.com is a widely used content management system. While there's a self-hosted version (*WordPress.org*), the .com version offers an easy way to create portfolios with its intuitive interface.

Behance (Adobe Portfolio)

https://www.behance.net/onboarding/adobe

Behance, owned by Adobe, also offers Adobe Portfolio. Artists can seamlessly create a portfolio connected to their Behance profile, providing a visually appealing showcase.

Cargo

https://cargo.site/

Cargo is a platform specifically designed for building portfolios. It offers a variety of templates and focuses on simplicity, making it easy for artists to showcase their work.

Format

https://www.format.com/

Format is a portfolio platform tailored for creatives. It provides customizable templates and features such as client proofing, making it suitable for professional portfolios.

Carbonmade
https://carbonmade.com/
Carbonmade is a straightforward portfolio-building platform with a focus on visual appeal. It offers simplicity and an easy-to-use interface for artists to present their work.

*In addition to the platforms mentioned earlier, there are several other excellent options available. Different portfolio sites cater to various needs and preferences, so it's valuable to explore each one to discover the platform that aligns best with your vision for showcasing your illustrations.

Networking & Social Media Websites

Behance
https://www.behance.net/
Behance is a popular platform for showcasing creative work, including illustrations. It's free to create an account, build a portfolio, and connect with a global creative community.

Dribbble
https://dribbble.com/
Dribbble is a platform where designers and illustrators share their work. While it offers a free membership, some features may be limited. It's an excellent place to discover and connect with other creatives.

ArtStation
https://www.artstation.com/
ArtStation is widely used in the entertainment and gaming industries. Artists can create free portfolios, participate in challenges, and connect with professionals.

LinkedIn
https://www.linkedin.com/
LinkedIn is a professional networking platform where illustrators can create profiles, connect with industry professionals, and share their work. The basic features are free.

Tumblr
https://www.tumblr.com/
Tumblr is a microblogging platform with a strong emphasis on visuals. It's free to use and offers a way to share your illustrations with a diverse community.

Instagram
https://www.instagram.com/
Instagram is a visual-centric social media platform. Illustrators can create a free account to share their artwork, engage with followers, and connect with a broader audience.

Facebook
https://www.facebook.com/
Facebook allows artists to create free pages to showcase their work. While primarily a social platform, many artists use it to connect with fans and share their portfolio.

Freelancing Websites

Upwork
https://www.upwork.com/
Upwork is a popular freelancing platform that connects freelancers with clients looking for various services, including illustration. Illustrators can create profiles, bid on projects, and collaborate with clients.

Freelancer
https://www.freelancer.com/
Freelancer is a global freelancing platform where illustrators can find a wide range of projects. It operates similarly to Upwork, allowing freelancers to bid on projects posted by clients.

Fiverr
https://www.fiverr.com/
Fiverr is a platform where freelancers offer services, or "gigs," at various price points, starting at $5. Illustrators can create profiles, showcase their work, and offer custom services to clients.

Toptal
https://www.toptal.com/
Toptal is a platform that connects clients with top freelancers in various fields, including illustration. Toptal has a rigorous screening process to ensure the quality of freelancers on their platform.

99Designs
https://99designs.com/
99designs is a platform where clients can host design contests, and designers, including illustrators, can submit their work. Clients choose the winning design, and the designer is awarded the project.

Hire Illo
https://www.hireillo.com/
Hireillo serves as an independent platform for professional illustrators and other creatives. Membership benefits include a featured portfolio, messaging capabilities, client referrals, pricing and contract advice, and additional perks. Founded in 2005, Hireillo has experienced exponential growth. Given that it is a platform frequented by numerous potential clients seeking illustrators, becoming a member could enhance your ability to reach a broader clientele and diverse markets.

* These platforms offer a range of opportunities for illustrators to find freelance work, from one-off projects to long-term collaborations. Illustrators should carefully review each platform's terms, fees, and community dynamics before getting started.

GRADUATE SCHOOLS

Here are some schools in the U.S. that offer Master's programs with specialized courses and training to prepare students for careers in their respective fields of illustration.

School of Visual Arts (SVA) | NYC

MFA in Illustration as Visual Essay

This program emphasizes the role of the illustrator as a visual storyteller. It combines traditional illustration techniques with contemporary practices, focusing on narrative and personal voice in illustration. Students develop their own projects, often culminating in a book, graphic novel, or series of illustrations.

University of Hartford (UHART) | CT

MFA in Illustration (Low Residency)

The illustration program is designed specifically to meet the needs of practicing illustrators who maintain active, full-time professional careers. You'll be surrounded by fellow students who are, themselves, highly motivated, established illustrators, illustrator/graphic designers, and illustration educators from across the country.

Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) | RI

MFA in Illustration

RISD's MFA in Illustration offers a studio-based program that encourages experimentation and personal artistic development. Students explore various media and techniques, developing a deep understanding of both traditional and digital illustration practices.

Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) | GA

MFA in Illustration

SCAD's program prepares students for professional careers in illustration through a comprehensive curriculum that covers traditional techniques, digital media, and conceptual development. Students have opportunities to work on real-world projects and collaborations.

California College of the Arts (CCA) | CA

MFA in Comics

Though focused on comics, this program emphasizes narrative illustration, allowing students to explore sequential art and storytelling. The curriculum includes workshops, studio work, and critiques, helping students develop their unique voice in the world of comics and illustration.

Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) | NYC

MFA in Illustration

FIT's program offers a focus on advertising and editorial illustration. Students develop skills in visual communication, working on projects that include advertisements, magazines, and digital media. The curriculum includes courses in branding, concept development, and digital illustration.

Academy of Art University | CA

MFA in Advertising

This program focuses on the creative and strategic aspects of advertising, with opportunities for students to specialize in illustration. The curriculum covers concept development, branding, and various media, preparing students for roles in advertising agencies and creative studios.

Syracuse University | NY

MFA in Illustration

Syracuse's program offers a comprehensive curriculum that includes courses on children's book illustration. Students explore narrative development, character design, and visual storytelling, preparing them for careers in children's publishing.

Hollins University | VA

MFA in Children's Book Writing and Illustrating

This unique program combines writing and illustrating for children's books. Students develop skills in both areas, creating manuscripts and illustrations under the guidance of experienced faculty. The program includes workshops, critiques, and opportunities for publication.

Johns Hopkins University | MD

MFA in Medical and Biological Illustration

This program is one of the most prestigious for medical and biological illustration. It combines art with science, training students to create accurate and visually compelling illustrations for medical and scientific purposes. The curriculum includes anatomy, histology, and various illustration techniques.

University of Illinois at Chicago | IL

MS in Biomedical Visualization

UIC's program focuses on the intersection of art, science, and technology. Students learn to create visualizations that aid in medical education, research, and patient care. The curriculum includes courses in anatomy, medical imaging, and 3D modeling.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Here are some professional organizations in the U.S. that can be helpful for illustrators. These organizations offer a range of resources, networking opportunities, and advocacy for illustrators in the U.S.

Society of Illustrators
https://www.societyillustrators.org/
The Society of Illustrators promotes the art of illustration through exhibitions, educational programs, and by fostering a sense of community among illustrators.

Association of Illustrators (AOI)
https://theaoi.com/
AOI is a UK-based organization, but it provides valuable resources and support for illustrators worldwide. It offers portfolio guidance, events, and advocacy for the industry.

Graphic Artists Guild
https://graphicartistsguild.org/
The Graphic Artists Guild advocates for the rights of graphic artists and illustrators. It provides resources on pricing, contracts, and professional development.

American Illustration and American Photography (AI-AP)
http://www.ai-ap.com/
AI-AP celebrates the best in contemporary illustration and photography through annual competitions, publications, and events.

Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI)
https://www.scbwi.org/
SCBWI is dedicated to supporting the creation and publication of children's books. It offers networking opportunities, conferences, and resources for illustrators.

The Illustration Conference (ICON)
https://www.theillustrationconference.org/
ICON brings together illustrators, educators, and industry professionals for conferences and events that explore the world of illustration.

EASTERN'S RESOURCES

In this section, we introduce online resources to help you build your portfolio, engage in networking, promote your work, and find freelancing opportunities. With numerous options available, be sure to explore and identify the platform that suits you best.

Office of Career Success (OCS)

The Office of Career Success is dedicated to guiding and supporting students on their career journey. Their staff encourages active participation in Eastern's programs, networking events, and direct communication to help students develop the essential career readiness skills sought by employers. Their comprehensive services cover various aspects of career readiness and job searching, including the following. Visit the OCS homepage to explore: *https://www.easternct.edu/career/index.html*

Resume & Cover Letter Writing
The OCS can assist you in crafting a tailored resume and cover letter focused on your skills and experiences, which is a great way to capture an employer's attention. You can access online resources via the link below or meet in person with a staff member for a more personalized experience.
https://www.easternct.edu/career/students/resumepage.html

Mockup Interviews
Preparation and practice are vital for interview success. The OCS offers various tools to help students develop interview skills. For more details, visit: *https://www.easternct.edu/career/internship-and-job-search-resources/interview-preparation.html*

Career Closet
Located on the 1st floor of the J. Eugene Smith Library, directly next door to the career studio (Room 134A), the Career Closet provides a wide range of professional clothing options for career fairs, interviews, and internships. Students can visit the Career Closet at any time, as the door is always open. Check the Career Studio and Closet hours and details here: *https://www.easternct.edu/career/career-studio.html*

LinkedIn Profile Setup & Photoshoot
For those considering graduate school, it's essential to conduct thorough research and ensure it aligns with your goals. Resources about graduate schools can be found here: *https://www.easternct.edu/career/_documents/guides/updated-guides/likedinguide---2022-updated.pdf*

Applying to Graduate School
Many students attend graduate school to earn a degree that will allow them to work in a field requiring specialized training, for example: the medical field, business, or higher education. No matter your reason for considering graduate school, it is important to do your research and make sure it's the right choice for you, and the right time. You can find

resources about graduate schools here: *https://www.easternct.edu/career/students/grad-school1.html*

Networking Events
Building a strong network is crucial for success at Eastern, in job searches, and in the professional world. OCS services include Employer Talk Tuesdays, Career Conversations, Internships & Co-Ops Guidance, Career Fairs, and more. Find details on this page: *https://www.easternct.edu/career/students/networking.html*

Online Tools
- ECN: Use ECN to build your brand, search for internships and jobs, upload your resume for review, practice your interviewing, and register for OCS events. Note that your username is what comes before @*my.easternct.edu*.
- Focus2: Use Focus 2 to identify your skills and interests and explore majors and occupations based on your results. Use your Eastern email and the ACCESS CODE: Warrior.
- Candid Career: Explore hundreds of online videos and discover employment opportunities based on your major or industry of choice.

Access these tools and career guides here: *https://www.easternct.edu/career/career-exploration-resources/career-exploration-tools.html*



QUICK LINKS

Department Resources

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STUDIO CLASSROOM RESOURCES

CLASS SCHEDULE

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INSTAGRAM
@ARTATEASTERN

FACEBOOK
@ARTATEASTERN

Campus Resources

CAREER SERVICES	WRITING CENTER	TUTORING CENTER	ADVISING CENTER

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

Email Professor Lora Lee at
libo@easternct.edu

For more information regarding the programs at
the Art and Art History Department,
please call (860) 465-0197 or visit
https://www.easternct.edu/art-and-art-history

Art and Art History
Eastern Connecticut State University