

Lying with illustrations

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We illustrate our publications with so many images. Why, then, are they always less interesting than we hope? Because we fail to use illustrations cleverly. We--editors and designers together -- consider photos as perfect, final, crystallized objects that we may merely clone on the page. Editors think that way because they are awed by images and are afraid to tamper with them. Designers think that way because they see images as artistic expressions of the originator and don't want to spoil them.

Clever publicationmakers whose prime aim is to communicate and inform, however, allow themselves to manipulate their images and exploit their latent capacity for deeper and more meaningful communication that compels the viewer to become involved.

What ultimately matters is how the viewer will interpret the image. What it will mean. Therefore exaggeration and manipulation can be used to make ideas more noticeable. It is the meaning of the story that must dictate how an image is to be treated. The image is merely raw material and how it is used can guide (or misguide) the viewer. The seminar shows how this can be done:

1: Symbiosis of the word with the picture

Verbal meanings coupled with pictures
Images and words combined
Speech in pictures

2: The illusion of the picture as a window

The space beyond and here
The effect of horizons and alignment
The effect of tipped horizons

3: Symbiosis of the picture with the page

Projection from the surface
Overlapping planes
Floating over the paper's surface
Using the paper's third dimension

4: Drawing attention to the focal point

Using unexpected scale
Combining colors
Startling with unexpected juxtapositions

5: Miscellaneous hidden possibilities

Using foreground/background relationships
Creating the illusion of motion

6: Controlling statistics by the way they are presented

Maps
Bar charts
Graphs
Circles and piecharts
Blending statistics with pictures