



## **Assessing the self-employment possibilities for book illustrators in Ghana today**

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### **ABSTRACT**

It is possible for book illustrators to employ themselves, but it takes hard work, dedication, skill and professionalism on the part of the employees. This research basically aims at finding the ways and means by which illustrators can gain themselves a decent living from the profession in Ghana today.

The opportunities are enormous and one can work hard to win awards.

A profile of some selected illustrators can serve as an example to prospective self-employed illustrators. Response got. From discussions with certain publishing houses is relevant source of material for book illustrators in Ghana today.

Upon consulting Art Directors it should be possible to secure employment if one is a good artist. Illustrators should be able to identify the media normally required by fishers and the type of books that need to be illustrated, how their works sell the rate at which they are commissioned, why Ghanaian books need and what they should do in order to gain employment.

The earliest forms of illustration were prehistoric cave paintings. Before the invention of the printing press, illuminated manuscripts were hand illustrated.

During the 15<sup>th</sup> century, books illustrated with woodcut illustrations became available. The main processes used for reproduction of illustrations during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries were engraving and etching. Traditionally, engravers created darker areas by having thin lines intersect each other at high density, known as cross-hatching.

One can specialize as book illustrator, fashion illustrator, freelance illustrator, medical illustrator, and map illustrator.

**Keywords:** Illustrators, self-employability, book, watercolor, graphic

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Wikipedia encyclopedia defines an illustrator as a graphic artist who specializes in enhancing written text by providing a Visual representation that corresponds to the content of the associated text. The illustration may be intended to clarify complicated concepts or objects that are difficult to describe textually or the illustration may be intended for entertainment, as in greeting cards, or cover art or interior art for books and magazines, or for advertisement, as on posters. Since the ancient times a text was most frequently illustrated work. Illustrations were used instead of text in making statements and in explaining statement. Traditional illustration techniques are still popular, particularly in the field of book illustration. Watercoluor, oil painting, pastel and pen and ink are some of the techniques used by book illustrators.

In Ghana there are many book illustrators who come into the industry from different institutions and from different backgrounds. Some of the illustrators come from the university, polytechnics, other art institutions and some are also self-taught. Most of the



illustrators are self-employed as full time or part time. Some of these illustrators write and illustrate their own books.

According to a text written on the history of art Illustration services have been available to businesses since industry and exchange of money began.

In the early days illustrators taught themselves how to illustrate with the aim of developing their skills. Some of the earliest printing methods have advanced and illustration is as popular today as it has ever been for reinforcing marketing messages.

As such illustration services are widely available from a range of providers across the globe, all with different styles, levels of skills, experience and pricing. In addition illustration service providers can often specialize in different areas or industries such as fashion illustration, technical illustration, medical illustration and editorial illustration.

### **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

According to some professional illustrators, the illustration industry is robust but it takes the very skilled illustrators to be commissioned. On the 30th of October 2006 a discussion with some illustrators showed that occasionally publishers from different countries come to look at the works of illustrators in Ghana but never return to commission them.

Fifteen years ago the National News Paper (Daily Graphic) on the Thursday October 27,2005 reported a case involving the Ghana Book Publishers Association and the a number of supplementary readers which was supposed to be published by the Ghana Book Publishers Association since they hold the copyright to it was rather signed with the Unimax Macmillan. According to the Daily Graphic newspaper, the publishing company called Unimax Macmillan in the United Kingdom was awarded the contract. The government blames the Ghanaian publishing industry including the illustrators for poor quality of work.

Mrs. Sutherland, a renowned author in a forum dubbed 'Time with the Masters', also complained of bad illustrations in the country's children's books. She categorically stated that some Ghanaian illustrators in illustrating end up depicting adults in an attempt to draw children and vice versa. Illustrations in books for very young readers need to be carefully crafted to match the story and give the child a clear "picture" of what the story is telling. Illustration is an important part of the book to a child who is too young to read. Creating illustrations that a child can relate to, that are fun and entertaining will hold their attention and make the book a favorite for reading time. Working as an illustrator is extremely rewarding and fulfilling. It is a goal one has to pursue with diligence and enthusiasm. In a discussion with an illustration student, it was noted that graduate illustrators are not readily employed.

Someone may ask, are there job opportunities for book illustrators in Ghana? This is the critical issue that this research is investigating. From the above statement one will realize that it takes the more highly skilled illustrators from among the majority of illustrators in Ghana to be able to meet the demands of the market.

### **OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of this research is;

1. To find out what possibilities there for book illustrators to succeed as self-employed professionals.
2. To investigate the capabilities of illustrators in gaining employment in the job market in Ghana.
3. To find out why most illustration students abandon their profession as illustrators after school.
4. Inform and highlight the importance and contributions of book illustration to society in Ghana today



5. To realize the problems book illustrators go through in the process of finding jobs and propose solutions.

### **SIGNIFICANCE**

1. One will find it as a source of good material and information for those who want to go into the field of illustration as a career.
2. Student illustrators who want to be employed will be informed to work harder in order to meet the demands of their clients.

### **SCOPE**

Once the researcher is finding employment possibilities based on existing opportunities in Ghana, there are diverse areas that the researcher can exploit. The opportunities are enormous in Ghana, some even winning international awards. Such example is Mr. Steve Amarquaye Adom a professional illustrator.

### **TYPE OF STUDY**

Qualitative method will be used to study the data. We will focus on group discussions, case studies and observation.

### **OPERATIONALIZATION OF TERMS**

**Skill:** A knowledge or ability achieved through constant practice that enables you to do something well.

**Publisher:** A person or company that disseminates information through printing, writing or the electronic media for public consumption.

**Association:** An official group of people who have the same occupation of illustration, aims and interest.

**Illustrator:** An artist who specializes in enhancing written text by providing visual representation that corresponds to its content.

**Self-employment:** The use of a particular skill to work independently to generate income for oneself and not for an employer.

**Possibilities:** Something that may happen or may be true.

**Career:** A job or profession that you have been trained for and intend to do for several years.

**Material:** Information or ideas used in books.

**Contribution:** Something that you give or do in order to help something be successful.

**Avenue:** A possible way of achieving something.

**Employable:** Having the skills and qualifications that will make a printing firm, a publishing house or a company want to employ you.

**Vigilance:** Very careful to notice any signs of danger or trouble.

**Professional:** Having a job that needs special training and a high level of education.

**Robust:** An organization strong and not likely to fail or become weak.

**Judgment:** The ability to make sensible decisions after carefully considering the best things to do.

**Printing:** The act of manufacturing books, magazines and other reading materials through impression on paper (or other suitable substrates) by means of types, plates or blocks; to produce or reproduce by such means.

**Enhance:** Increase or further improving the quality of value or status of book illustration.

**Investigate:** To find out information and facts about a situation, a subject or problem by study or research.

### **SOURCES OF DATA COLLECTION**

The primary source of data for this particular research was from book and other reading materials, the internet (yahoo, Wikipedia, AOL-Association of illustration, Google etc.), personal experience, discussions and the Encarta encyclopedia. Direct interview also served a source of secondary data.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A book illustrator is a graphic artist who specializes in enhancing written text in a book by providing a visual representation that corresponds to the associated text in the book. The illustration may be intended to clarify complicated concepts or objects that are difficult to describe textually, or the illustration may be intended for entertainment, as in greeting cards, or cover art or interior art for books and magazines, or for advertisement, as on posters.

Traditionally, engravers created darker areas by having thin lines intersect each other at high density, known as cross-hatching. Claude Mellan is well-known for his technique of using parallel lines of varying thickness. One notable example is his *Sudarium of Saint Veronica* (1649), an engraving of the face of Jesus from a single spiraling line that starts at the tip of Jesus' nose.



Claude Mellan



Aubrey Beardsley

At the end of the 18th century, lithography allowed even better illustrations to be reproduced. The American "golden age of illustration" lasted from the 1880s until shortly after World War I (although the active career of several later "golden age" illustrators went on for another few decades).



Kate Greenaway

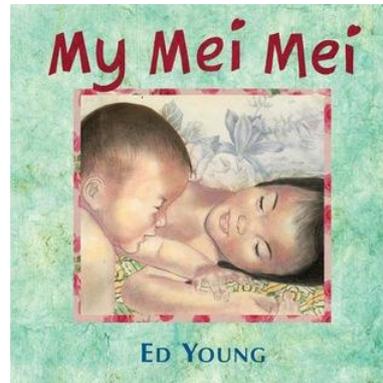


John Tenniel



Jessie Wilcox

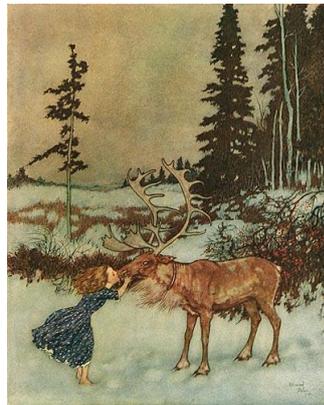
This was a time when newspapers, mass market magazines, and illustrated books were the most dominant media available. Improvements in printing technology freed illustrators to experiment with colour and new rendering techniques. A small group of illustrators such as Ed Young, Edmund Dulac, and Arthur Rackham in this time became rich and famous. The imagery they created was a portrait of American aspirations of the time.



In Europe, golden age artists were influenced by the Pre-Raphaelites and by such design-oriented movements as the Arts and Crafts Movement, Art Nouveau, and Les Nabis. Leading artists included Walter Crane, Edmund Dulac, Aubrey Beardsley, Arthur Rackham and Kay Nielsen.



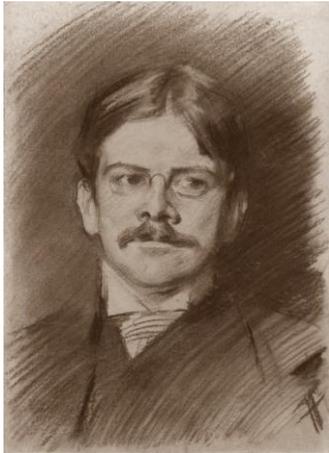
Arthur Rackham



Edmund Dulac



Walter Crane



Edwin Austin Abbey



Howard Pyle



Norman Rockwell

American illustration of this period was anchored by the Brandywine Valley tradition, begun by Howard Pyle and carried on by his students, who included Norman Rockwell, Haddon Sundblom, N.C. Wyeth, Maxfield Parrish, Frank Schoonover and Edwin Austin Abbey.

Starting in the 1990s, traditional illustrators confronted a challenge from that using computer software such as Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop, and CorelDraw. Most of the new generations of illustrators are trained at colleges directly in front of the screen.

Today, there is a growing interest in collecting and admiring original artwork that was used as illustrations in books, magazines, posters, etc. Various museum exhibitions, magazines and art galleries have devoted space to the illustrators of the past.

Among the first picture books produced in the West and intended for children is Comenius's *Orbis Pictus*, a primer like text written in Latin about 1657 or 1658. Earlier works meant for adults but suitable for children include the Japanese *Scroll of Animals* (12th cent.) with animated sketches by Toba Soja and the first English edition of *Aesop's Fables*, printed by William Caxton in 1484 and illustrated with woodcuts. John Newbery included woodcuts in *The Renowned History of Little Goody Two Shoes* (1765). The earliest illustrators of children's books were usually anonymous, but with the appearance of Thomas Bewick's art for *Pretty Book of Pictures for Little Masters and Misses*; or, *Tommy Trip's History of Beasts and Birds* (1799), well-known artists began to receive credit for their work in this field.

William Blake printed, engraved, and hand colored his own *Songs of Innocence* (1789). *The Butterfly's Ball* (1807), by William Roscoe, was illustrated by William Mulready, and illustrations for the first English version of Grimm's *Fairy Tales* (1824) were created by George Cruickshank. John Tenniel's remarkable drawings for Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) remain unsurpassed. His art creates a visual framework through which the characters of the story come to life.

### **A Great Tradition**

Illustrations for children's books usually enhanced or explained the text, but in the latter quarter of the 19th cent. Three artistic giants, Walter Crane, Kate Greenaway, and Randolph Caldecott, gave a new dimension to illustration. They produced the picture storybook in which interdependent text and illustration are given equal emphasis. Crane's nursery-song prints in *Baby's Bouquet* (1908) combine soft colors with bold composition. Greenaway's *Under the Window* (1878) is enhanced by delicate garden colors. In the 1870s and 80s Caldecott nursery books displayed harmonious linear composition and warm color.



The exquisite watercolors in Beatrix Potter's Peter Rabbit books reveal her careful observation of small wild animals. The grandeur and dignity of Howard Pyle's portraits intensify the heroic adventures of Robin Hood (1883) and Men of Iron (1890). Two of Pyle's students were Jessie Wilcox, who illustrated Robert Louis Stevenson's *Child's Garden of Verses* (1905) and N. C. Wyeth, whose dramatization of individuals and landscape enriched *Treasure Island* (1917), *Robinson Crusoe* (1920), and many other works. The master illustrator Arthur Rackham produced a host of magnificent books beginning in 1900 with *The Fairy Tales of Grimm*. His work is noted for brilliant use of color and dramatic, detailed composition. Ernest Shepard's drawings for A. A. Milne's *Winnie-the-Pooh* (1926) and for an edition of Kenneth Graham's *Wind in the Willows* (1931) are warm and humorous.

### **The Golden Age of Illustration**

After a decline during the early 1920s, the golden age of the picture book began with the publication of Wanda Gag's *Millions of Cats* (1928). In 1938 the American Library Association instituted the Caldecott Medal for the most distinctive American picture book for children. The first recipient was Dorothy Lathrop for *Animals of the Bible* (1937). A number of major illustrators whose works are still popular emerged in the 1930s. Kurt Wiese illustrated Kipling's *Mowgli Stories* (1936). Helen Sewell employed a realistic style for *The First Bible* (1934). Maud and Miska Petersham's *The Christ Child* (1931) and Jean de Brunhoff's broadly drawn, delightful *Story of Babar, the Little Elephant* (1931) were among the outstanding books of the 30s. Robert Lawson's *Ben and Me* (1939) was the first of many witty books that he wrote and illustrated, including *Rabbit Hill* (1944) and *The Fabulous Flight* (1949). Dr. Seuss's popular; cleverly drawn books for young children began with "Think that I Saw It on Mulberry Street" (1937). Boris Artzybasheff illustrated Aesop and *The Seven Simeons* (both 1937) with bold woodcuts. In the next decade Robert McCloskey produced superb illustrations for *Make Way for Ducklings* (1941). Garth Williams's realistic, expressive drawings brought to life E. B. White's *Stuart Little* (1945) and *Charlotte's Web* (1952). The painter Maxfield Parrish created a series of glowing and colorful illustrations for a children's version of *The Arabian Nights* (1947). Wesley Dennis created powerful watercolors for many horse books by Marguerite Henry. The first book in the charming *Madeleine* series, written and illustrated in a broad, painterly style by Ludwig Bemelmans, appeared in 1939; his *Parsley* (1953), the story of a stag, incorporates a colorful catalog of wildflowers. Marcia Brown's *Puss in Boots* (1952) is light and fanciful.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **QUESTIONNAIRES AND INTERVIEWS**

The researchers set out to gather information from twenty publishing houses but questionnaires were successfully retrieved from only twelve companies which are listed below. The publishing houses comprise:

- (i) Woeli Publications
- (ii) Afram Publications
- (iii) Acampo Publishers
- (iv) Approachers Series
- (v) A. K. Publications
- (vi) Adwinsa Publications Ghana Limited
- (vii) Sam Woode Limited
- (viii) Step Publishers
- (ix) Pearl Publishers
- (x) Sedco Publications
- (xi) Unimax Macmillan
- (xii) Yetran Publications

The questionnaires were sent to either the C.E.O.s, illustrators, publishers, general managers of the various publishing houses. Some questionnaires were sent personally. Others were sent through the post and people.



Apart from questionnaires there were numerous interviews which were on one to one with certain professional illustrators. There were other discussions concerning the research that helped so much in eliciting relevant information for the research. The respondents were giving two weeks in filling the questionnaires. The questionnaires responses from the publishing houses were critically studied and information gathered was used in writing most of the report.

### **TYPES OF ILLUSTRATORS**

Medical illustrators  
Map/Charts and Graphic illustrators  
Fashion illustrators  
Book illustrators

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Medical illustrators  
Map /Charts and Graphic illustrators  
Fashion illustrators  
Book illustrators  
Technical illustrators  
Fiction Nonfiction illustrators  
Historical illustrators

There are a lot of freelance illustrators who advertise in the newspapers, radio magazines, bill boards, sign posts and even on the television.

Some of these freelance illustrators even make hand bills and post them into various boxes to create employment for themselves. A client who may be interested will call them and their finished work can be sent either through the mail box, internet, by hand delivery or any other convenient way.

Other freelance illustrators also take active part in book illustration competitions organized by the Ghana Education Service, the Ministry of Education, Unimax Macmillan, the National Commission on Culture in order to win awards and also be recognized by clients such as authors and publishing houses.

Illustrators can even approach certain publishing houses and ask for manuscripts which they want to illustrate so as to gain contracts for themselves.

Gaining employment as a professional illustrator, one has to have more than one manuscript to illustrate. This is partly because the market is competitive. Publishing houses and illustrators are always looking for the Education, Unimax Macmillan, the National Commission on Culture in order to win awards and also be recognized by clients such as authors and publishing houses.

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Sometimes these authors and publishing houses employ more than two book illustrators at a time and compare their works secretly before they commission the best. This therefore calls for high level performance on the part of professional or freelance illustrators.



As far as assessing the possibilities for self-employment for book illustrators are concerned the illustrator should be able to specialize in at least one field of illustration so this calls for much work and constant practice.

Art works such as cartoons, an amusing drawing in a newspaper or magazine especially one about politics or events in the news are works done by illustrators. It has come to also mean any humorous, satirical, or opinionated drawing. Graphic Design, connected with drawing and design, especially in the production of books, magazines, films, usually a series of moving pictures recorded with sound that tells a story, shown on television or at the cinema or movie theatre, employ the work of illustrators. The producers of such programmes go out in search of these illustrators.

## **PROFILE OF SOME ILLUSTRATORS**

### **MESHACK ASARE**

#### **BIOGRAPHY**

Meshack Asare is a Ghanaian children's author who has had a long and successful career in both writing and illustration. He has won prestigious prizes such as the Noma Award in 1982 and the 1999 UNESCO First prize for Children's and Young People's Literature in the Service of Tolerance for *Sosu's Call*, which is also named as one of the top twelve books amongst the 100 Best Books from Africa List. This year he was also a jury member for the prestigious Macmillan African Writers Award 2002.

Meshack Asare, born 1945 in Ghana, studied Fine Arts at the College of Art in Kumasi and taught in Ghana for 12 years between 1967 and 1979. During that period, he took an extension course in Educational Psychology at the University of Wisconsin. His first published works were *Ghana Welcomes You* (VALCO: 1968), *I am Kofi* (1968) and *Mansa helps at home* (1969). This was followed by other picture books including *Tawia Goes to Sea* (GPC: 1970) which has been translated into several foreign languages, including Japanese and some of the Scandinavian languages. It also received an UNESCO citation as 'Best picture book from Africa'. After a lapse of ten years during which he could not publish any work, Asare published *The Brassman's Secret* (EDUPRESS: 1981), which won the prestigious Noma Award in 1982 as the best book published in Africa in the preceding year. This was followed by *The Canoe Story* in 1982. In 1984, Asare published *Chipo and the bird on the Hill* in Zimbabwe. In the same year he published *Cat in Search of a Friend* (Jungbrunnen: 1984) in Austria, which won the Austrian National Prize (1985) and a BIB Golden Plaque at the Bratislava Biennale (1985).

He studied for a M.A. in Social Anthropology at University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies He has been living and working in London since 1983. In 1990, *Children of the Omumborombonga Tree*, was published by Lamuv in co-operation with the German-Namibia Project at the occasion of the independence of Namibia. His first juvenile story, *Halima*, was published in 1992. For a period of 15 years, *Seeing the World* (1989) was the only book by Asare that was published in Ghana. In the 1990's, however, he has published two new books in Ghana: *Sosu's Call* and *The Magic Goat* (Sub-Saharan Publishers 1997). *The Brassman's Secret* (EDUPRESS: 1981) (Sub-Saharan Publishers, Ghana. 2001) *Meliga's Day* (Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2000) *Nana's Son* (Sub-Saharan Publishers, Ghana. 2000) *Cat in Search of a Friend* (Jungbrunnen. 1984) (Sub-Saharan Publishers, Ghana. 2000) *Sosu's Call* (Sub-Saharan Publishers, Ghana. 1997) *The Magic Goat* (Sub-Saharan Publishers, 1997)

*Halima* (1992) *Children of the Omumborombonga Tree* (Lamuv, 1990) *Seeing the World* (1989) *Chipo and the bird on the hill* (Zimbabwe. 1984) *The Canoe Story* (1982) *Tawia Goes to Sea* (GPC. 1970) *Mansa helps at home* (1969) *Ghana Welcomes You* (VALCO. 1968) *I am Kofi* (1968).



## **MR. ERIC ANANE ANTWI BIOGRAPHY**

Born on the 21 of April 1964 in Kumasi, Mr. Anane first attended Queen Elizabeth Day Care for his nursery education, State Experimental and Opoku Ware School where he had both his primary and secondary education. Ghana Technical Institute now Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology Kumasi is where he had his first degree in Art in 1992 and studied drawing, illustration and graphic design. Mr. Anne wanted to become an Architect after his secondary education. He then continued with his Master's degree in the Academy of Fine Arts, school of Architecture Denmark in 1994. Mr. Eric Anane Antwi had his national service at the civil Engineering Department Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology Kumasi. After his Masters degree he worked with Trend Group for two years. He later started his own company called Visual Images Company in 1999. He specialised in graphic design. Mr. Anane wanted to become an Architect after his secondary education. He then continued with his masters' degree in the Academy of Fine Arts, school of Architecture Denmark in 1994. Mr. Eric Anane Antwi had his national service at the civil Engineering Department Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology Kumasi. After his Masters degree he worked with Trend Group for two years. He later started his own company Visual Images Company in 1999. He came to classroom in 2001 to teach design and illustration in the Publishing Studies Department. The best designer for a workshop conducted by a Non-formal education division NFED and contributor to development in design and a DANIDA scholarship to study a master's degree program in Denmark.

His future prospects are to become a Senior Lecturer and a Professor. He also seeks to become an Architect in the near future. Mr. Anane said the challenge he faces during illustration is how to get yourself in the mood of to illustrate. He said the mistakes he has made in the illustration industry is when he used to work under pressure in an effort to catch time but in the end come out with something he cannot be proud of. The advice that he would like to give to up and coming illustrators is they should be able to work fast, possess all the participatory tools that is a series of drawings, and be able to combine both illustration and design and trying to be master of both. He also said that one can entirely depend on book illustration for a living. "To be a good illustrator one needs to illustrate everyday". Mr. Ato DeGraft Johnson and Mr. Coby Asmah of Type are his advisors. He explained that Mr. Ato DeGraft Johnson illustrates well and Mr. Coby Asmah led him into entrepreneurship. Mr. Anane Antwi is currently on a project for a friend. He also says he doesn't advertise for jobs and doesn't compete with any illustrator because he has created a lot for links for himself. He has also worked on a lot of national assignments from the Ministry of Education, ministry of works and Housing and the rest from NGOs Development Association and to poems. In all Mr. Asmah led him into entrepreneurship. Mr. Anane Antwi is currently on a project for a friend. He also says he doesn't advertise for jobs and doesn't compete with any illustrator because he has created a lot for links for himself. He has also worked on a lot of national assignments from the Ministry of education, ministry of works and Housing and the rest from NGOs and Development Association. Crocodile tears is the first book he illustrated and to poems. In all Mr. Anane has illustrated about ten books. When asked about the how he assesses the problems of book illustrators in Ghana today, he complained illustrators don't learn to know themselves. He said few illustrators are in the country and more over only few are good. Illustrator don't have any particular style with which they work with, illustrators are not well paid and motivated. As a result there are poor illustrations on the part of the book illustrators. Mr. Anane said the book illustration market is viable.

There are a lot of books to be illustrated but few illustrators available. His advice to the young and upcoming illustrators is that they should work hard and learn well. He describes a competent illustrator as someone who has the skill and ability to deliver on time. He also said that academic work is quite different from work outside school. He explained one needs to survive on the work he does for clients outside school.



Ato Degraft Johnson and Meshack Asare are the illustrators he can recommend because of their capabilities, skill level and better presentation and one can locate book illustrators anywhere not necessarily in schools, colleges and Universities. Money is his main motivator he said but he also sees illustration as an art which he enjoys.

Finally, he said he likes illustrating because he enjoys the challenges that come along with it and when designing he uses illustrations. He is not embarking on full time illustration because he does other designing jobs in addition.

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### **Types of Illustrations**

1. Medical illustration
2. Map illustration/Charts and Graph
3. Fashion illustration
4. Book illustration
5. Technical illustration
6. Fiction /Nonfiction illustration
7. Historical illustration

### **Where to Find Your Client**

Most book illustrators go to publishing houses and search for authors. Others go to bookshops, schools, bookstands, libraries, universities and other governmental agencies to seek for contracts. It is also possible to look out for clients on the internet.

### **How to Contact Client**

This is where the prospective who wants employment goes out in search of publishing firms, printing presses, and authors etc. who may need their services. These are a few steps one can follow in order to meet a client. Get a catalogue of a publishing house which contain full details of various books publish by the publishing house. Send your sample material to a named person. Phone the author. As a professional book illustrator you should have all the tools and materials needed for your professional work.

You should have all the media that is water colors, pencil color, pen and ink, poster color etc. palette, source materials, your Send your sample material to a named person. Phone the author.

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You should have all the media that is water colors, pencil color, pen and ink, poster color etc. palette, source materials, your portfolio with samples of your work with your contact address on it etc.

You can also create a website displaying your sample of works on it. This allows authors and publishers to check out your portfolio before they contact you.

An illustrator can also contact a client through art directors. Development Illustrators should learn new skills. What they learn can go a long way to improve their career. Illustrators should always draw to keep building their skills since the field is always interested in what is new.



### **Executing an Illustration Project**

- Study the project; decide on the appropriate style, technique and medium or media to use.
- Research on the topic by searching through photographs, books, making observations on the environment observe people, animals, plants, buildings and anything related to the project. (Source materials).
- Prepare sketches, layouts and try out different ideas composing elements to create a desirable scene.
- Choose the medium which is most appropriate to the effective execution of the work in the appropriate style. A medium could be charcoal, pen, ink, paint, photograph and computer aided image manipulation using the appropriate software.
- Discuss the project with client or production team as required.

### **Functions of Illustration**

- To illumine the text
- Used to identify characters in a story.
- Used to describe an item in academic text books.
- It provides clear understanding of ideas and activities described in the text in the book.

### **Media and techniques of illustration**

The medium is the means by which the illustration is rendered on the drawing surface or substrate. Most drawing media are either dry (e.g. graphite, charcoal, pastel, conte, silverpoint), or water-based (marker, pen and ink). Water colour pencils can be used dry like ordinary pencil, then moistened with a wet brush to get various painterly effects. Very rarely, artists have drawn with (usually decoded) invisible ink.

For pen and ink work, typing paper is often used for practice drawing, but heavier paper holds up better. Bristol board makes a hard surface that is especially good for ink or for fine detailed graphite drawing. Cold pressed water colour paper is sometimes favoured for ink drawing due to its texture. Tracing vellum is often used for experimenting on top of the pencil drawing, prior to committing to the final stage.

Various tools are routinely used in the process of drawing. These include a pencil sharpener, sandpaper, kneaded eraser, blending stumps, and chamois. Other tools that sometimes prove useful are tracing paper, a circle compass, ruler, film, fixative, and drafting tape. The use of an easel or slanted table reduces the distorting effects of the perspective.

The stroke of the drawing implement can be used to control the appearance of the image. Ink drawings typically use hatching, which consists of groups of parallel lines. Cross-hatching uses hatching in two or more different directions to create a darker tone. Broken hatching, or lines with intermittent breaks, is used to form lighter tones, and by controlling the density of the breaks graduation of tone can be achieved. Finally stippling, or random placement of dots on a page, can also be used to produce a texture or shade.

Sketch drawings use similar techniques, although with pencils and drawing sticks continuous variations in tone can be achieved. For best results the lines in a sketch are typically drawn to follow the contour curves of the surface, thus producing a depth effect. When drawing hair, the lines of the sketch follow the direction of the hair growth.

The random placement of dots on a page can also be used to produce a texture or shade. Sketch drawings use similar techniques, although with pencils and drawing sticks continuous variations in tone can be achieved. For best results the lines in a sketch are typically drawn to follow the contour curves of the surface, thus producing a depth effect. When drawing hair, the lines of the sketch follow the direction of the hair growth.



Typically a drawing will be filled in based on which hand the artist favors. A right-handed artist will want to draw from left to right in order to avoid smearing the image. Sometimes the artist will want to leave a section of the image blank while filling in the remainder of the picture. A frisket can be used for this purpose. The shape of the area to be preserved is cut out of the frisket, and the resulting shape is then applied to the drawing surface. This will protect the surface from receiving any stray marks before it is ready to be filled in.

Another method to preserve a section of the image is to apply a spray-on fixative to the surface. This will hold loose material more firmly to the sheet and prevent it from smearing. However the fixative spray typically uses chemicals that can negatively affect the respiratory system, so it should be employed in a well-ventilated area or outdoors. Shading is the technique of varying the tonal values on the paper to represent the shade of the material as well as the placement of the shadows. Careful attention to reflected light, shadows, and highlights can result in a very realistic rendition of the image. Blending uses an implement to move the drawing material on the paper so as to hide the original drawing strokes. This can only be done when drawing with a material such as graphite or charcoal that is not permanently attached once applied. When shading and blending is needed, the artist can employ a combination of a tortillon blending stump, chamois or soft tissue, and a specialized putty-rubber eraser. The chamois cloth in particular is useful for creating smooth textures, and for removing material to lighten the tone. This can only be done when drawing with a material such as graphite or charcoal that is not permanently attached once applied. When shading and blending is needed, the artist can employ a combination of a tortillon blending stump, chamois or soft tissue, and a specialized putty-rubber eraser. The chamois cloth in particular is useful for creating smooth textures, and for removing material to lighten the tone.

There are a number of methods for producing texture in the picture. In addition to choosing a suitable paper, the type of drawing material and the drawing technique will result in different textures. Texture can be made to appear more realistic when it is drawn next to a contrasting texture. Thus a coarse texture placed next to a smoothly blended area will appear more notable.

A similar effect can be achieved by drawing different tones in close proximity. A light edge next to a dark background will stand out to the eye, and almost appear to float above the surface.

In most drawing media, but especially in ink, realistic renditions of an object or structure avoid outlining the form and features. Otherwise the image may resemble a paint-by-numbers figure from a coloring book.

Instead the shape of the structure is portrayed almost entirely through tones and shading, including contrast with the background. Measuring the dimensions of a subject while blocking in the drawing is an important step in producing a realistic rendition of the actual subject. A straight drawing implement held horizontally or vertically can be used to measure the angles of different sides. These angles can be reproduced on the drawing surface and then rechecked to make sure they are accurate. Another form of measurement is to compare the relative sizes of different parts of the subject with each other. A finger placed at a point along the drawing implement can be used to compare that dimension with other parts of the image. A proportional divider can be used to scale a photograph up or down. A photograph automatically shows a scene with correct perspective for the different sides. These angles can be reproduced on the drawing surface and then rechecked to make sure they are accurate. Another form of measurement is to compare the relative sizes of different parts of the subject with each other. A finger placed at a point along the drawing implement can be used to compare that dimension with other parts of the image.



A photograph automatically shows a scene with correct perspective for the location of the camera. It follows that an artist wishing to paint a picture of the scene with true perspective needs only to draw an accurate copy of the photograph. If his painting is to be of a different size from that of the photograph he must accurately scale it up or down. This may easily be done by using a proportional divider, sometimes called a Variscaler, set to give the scaling ratio which is required to fit the scene on to his painting support. A grid can be used to produce a more accurate portrayal of a photograph. The image is subdivided into equally spaced horizontal and vertical lines. A scaled version of these lines is drawn lightly on the paper, and the outlines of the significant features are copied onto the drawing. A similar approach when using an easel is to mount a small, heavy paper frame through which the artist can view the scene. The image on the paper is then scaled in reference to this frame.

### **What kind of portfolio should the beginning illustrators have to look for jobs?**

There is no magic number of pieces for a beginning portfolio. Generally speaking you should have at least 15 to 20 to start. It is important that this body of work be cohesive, with a similar style, subject matter etcetera uniting the work. It is a popular misconception that the more styles of work you show, the better your chances of getting an assignment. In truth, there should be little left to the art director's imagination as to what an assignment he or she might give you will look like. Art directors, although creative people themselves, will not exercise their creativity with your portfolio. If they don't see what they are looking for, you won't get a job. They may, however, be flexible as to style. They will not be flexible about speaking you should have least 15 to 20 to start. It is important that this body of work be cohesive, with a similar style, subject matter etcetera uniting the work. It is a popular misconception that the more styles of work you show, the better your chances of getting an assignment. In truth, there should be little left to the art director's imagination as to what an assignment he or she might give you will look like. Art directors, although creative people themselves, will not exercise their creativity with your portfolio. If they don't see what they are looking for, you won't get a job.

They may, however, be flexible as to style. They will not be flexible about consistency; if you have one of a kind sample, they may assume you have had a number of creative accidents but will not be reliable. Printed pieces are what separate the beginner from the professional. Advertising budgets are large and expenses high. Art directors would almost always rather someone else take the risk with a newcomer's ability to meet deadlines and deliver reproducible work. The more you can do to project a reliable, hardworking image, without printed pieces in your book, the better your chances of landing the first assignment.

### **How do i find clients?**

For Book and Editorial markets you can use the "Literary Market Place" and the "Magazine Industry Marketplace" which lists all book and magazine publishers and for Advertising you can use the "Standard Directory of Advertising Agencies" which lists all agencies alphabetically with their clients (samples of both included). The publishing market may be more receptive to a beginner's work. Whether you choose book publishers or magazines as your initial target should depend largely on the style of your work.

Many have found that art directors with publishing firms are more willing to provide feedback at interviews which is frequently not the case in the world of magazines or advertising, where deadlines are more pressing. (It is usually best to seek an agent or representative for the advertising market, where they will be likely to have better contacts and a professional track record). You should also have a good promotional piece to leave with art directors that is representative of the type of work you are looking for along with a comfortable pair of shoes and a strong constitution. Once you have a list of art directors, call and make appointments; be polite and direct.

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contacts and a professional track record). You should also have a good promotional piece to leave with art directors that is representative of the type of work you are looking for along with a comfortable pair of shoes and a strong constitution. Once you have a list of art directors, call and make appointments; be polite and direct. In some instances there may not be any assignments available at the moment, but you may be invited to "drop off your book" for future reference.

Unfortunately "dropping off your book" is becoming a fact of life these days. Sometimes even with a scheduled appointment you may arrive to find the art director embroiled in some crisis and his/her secretary asking if you will leave your book and pick it up later. In these instances keep a cool head and be cooperative. You will encounter many different systems for placing your work before art directors from appointments scheduled on the third Wednesday of every month to portfolio drop offs on particular days. Generally speaking art directors are not out to inconvenience you. Try to remember that with a few exceptions, there is nothing personal involved with being rejected for an assignment. Illustration directors are business people. While an art director may like your work, it may not be right for a particular assignment or there may not be any projects on which he or she is currently working for which your work is suitable. If you feel an art director likes your work put them on a mailing list, send new promotional pieces or reprints of work you do for others and give them a call periodically.

#### **How do i know what fee to charge?**

When dealing with larger businesses there will usually be some sort of fee structure. If not, you can check Pricing and Ethical Guidelines published by the Graphic Artists Guild (available at the Career Services office should be used strictly as a guideline as the prices are a bit high for director likes your work put them on a mailing list, send new promotional pieces or reprints of work you do for others and give them a call periodically.

#### **How do i know what fee to charge?**

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#### **Should i have a rep?**

Artist's Representatives are marvelous creatures, freeing the artist from a lot of the "business" of illustration and working full time showing your work. For this marvelous service, the representative usually charges you 25% to 30% of any work he/she gets for you. This is a very small price to pay to be released from all but the business of doing illustration. Particularly if you are not the best at public relations. (Or as has been said, 75% of something is better than 100% of nothing): Unfortunately, they are not always a good idea for the beginner, both because a thorough, firsthand knowledge of the field is invaluable to the illustrator and also because most established reps are reluctant to take on beginners.

Reps are interested in someone with a track record who will commit themselves full time to illustration. (That is they will want you to take on enough work to make their job financially viable). If you're interested in exploring the possibilities of representation you can contact SPAR, The Society of Photographers and Artists' Representatives, located in Manhattan, which publishes a list, for a nominal fee, of available reps with indications of those who will see beginners. When choosing a rep, you will want to find someone you can work with comfortably and who doesn't represent too many other artists.



## Findings

### Art directors

Art directors supervise the work of artists, graphic designers, photographers, copywriters, and production staff. Together these workers produce artwork for their employer or customer and to the client's satisfaction. The following list of occupational tasks is specific to this career.

- Meet with clients to discuss projects. Confer with clients about budget, background information, and styles.
- Plan project details, such as style and type of font, photographs, graphics, and arrangement of art work.
- Confer with staff to discuss client requirements and coordinate the following list of occupational tasks is specific to this career.
- Meet with clients to discuss projects.
- Confer with clients about budget, background information, and styles.
- Plan project details, such as style and type of font, photographs, graphics, and arrangement of art work.
- Confer with staff to discuss client requirements and coordinate creative activities.
- Review and approve art and source materials developed by staff.
- Review proofs of printed copy.
- Assign and direct staff members to develop design concepts.
- Present final layouts to client for approval.
- Negotiate copyright permission and contract with photo agencies, freelance photographers, or printers.
- May draw custom illustrations or graphics for project.
- Recommend or take personnel actions, such as hiring, training, and firing employees.
- Estimate the costs for time, labor, and outside suppliers. Prepare budgets.

People in this career perform the following list of tasks, but these tasks are common to many other occupations.

- Think creatively
- Use computers.
- Make decisions and solve problems.
- Communicate with supervisors, peers, or subordinates.
- Update and use job-related knowledge.
- Get information needed to do the job.
- Establish and maintain relationships.
- Organize, plan, and prioritize work.
- Explain the meaning of information to others.
- Motivate subordinates.
- Get information needed to do the job.
- Establish and maintain relationships.
- Organize, plan, and prioritize work.
- Explain the meaning of information to others.
- Guide, direct, and motivate subordinates.
- Provide advice and consultation to others.
- Coordinate the work and activities of others.
- Identify objects, actions, and events.
- Communicate with people from outside the organization.
- Judge the value of objects, services, or people.
- Schedule work and activities.
- Develop goals and strategies.
- Estimate sizes, quantities, time, cost, or materials needed.



## **Questionnaire analysis**

### **a. Clarity of illustration in Ghanaian books**

The clarity of illustration will depend on the artist or the illustrator. It also depends on the illustration briefs or summary. The level of training, the experience of the illustrator or artist and the research he or she has done. Publishers say Ghanaian artist and illustrators are quite good in terms of clarity of illustration.

### **b. Media normally required and Publishers**

Most publishers prefer watercolor the techniques of illustrations. A few will prefer pen and ink and water color techniques of illustrations. There are other techniques or media of illustration such as color pencil, gouache, pencil, charcoal, crayon, etc.

Some techniques suit some type of illustrations; others also are suitable for certain age group of children. For example children from age twelve to interested in pen and ink illustration. Two year old to eleven years prefer full color illustrations, but those who are fifteen years and above may not be interested in illustrations at all.

### **c. Level of illustration in the country**

The level of illustration in the country according to the questionnaire analysis showed that most publishers see Ghanaian illustrations as good. Some say they can improve the quality of work they do and only one publishing firm sees Ghanaian illustrations as poor.

The level of illustrations in the country is considered good since it is these same illustrations that sell publication.

### **d. Types of books that need illustrations**

Children text books are those that really need illustrations, apart from this, books for adults are illustrated but such illustrations may be in pen and ink and may be few per book. Educational books need to be illustrated in color in order to teach and therefore every effort should be made to help communicate the message more effectively.

Novels for adults do not necessarily need illustrations but with Christian literature some have illustrations in them.

### **e. How illustrations sell books.**

Good illustrations make ideas, concepts, and messages in books clearer and easier to understand. People buy text books that have clearer well labeled diagrams. The illustrations attract consumers to the books and help them to easily understand the text.

Sometimes children are attracted by the illustrations even before reading the text. Illustrations have the potential to greatly enhance the quality of the book. Consumers will prefer books with illustrations as compared to books without illustrations. Illustrations that are good do sell books.

Children especially are attracted when they come across illustrated books. Effective illustrations clarify written concepts and ideas and enhance the communication of the information the author wants to pass on to the reader. Book cover designs with illustrations are especially attractive to young readership since the cover of the book is the first part of the book the eyes fall on.

### **f. Rate at which illustrators are commissioned.**

From the research findings, one will realize that illustrators are not commissioned frequently. Publishing houses, such as Unimax Macmillan, have a list of illustrators they work with. They organize competitions bi-annually for illustrators and choose the best illustrator and commissioned him or her. One will have to prove one's abilities as an illustrator beyond doubt before he or she can be commissioned.



Some publishing houses also choose freelance illustrators because of the job flow. There is no need to employ an illustrator if there is no new book to be published. Therefore some publishers rely on freelance illustrators when the need arises.

Other publishers constantly need the services of illustrators and make use of illustrators almost every day.

#### **g. How Publishers and Authors are able to read illustrations done by the Ghanaian illustrators they commission.**

Illustrators have to prove their abilities beyond doubt before he or she can be commissioned.

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According to one publisher, most illustrators draw from briefs given to them by the publishers and authors they work with, therefore and it's not possible to have problems with reading what is being illustrated. This makes it easy for most publishers and authors to work with the illustrators they commission.

Some publishers just find it difficult understanding illustrations done by their illustrators. This is because they might have gone in for incompetent illustrators.

#### **h. Why books need illustrators**

Illustrators add explanation to the particular text or book. Not all books have illustration. It has to do with the kind of book. Books with illustrations are usually easier for children to understand. Books that need illustrations also depend on what the book is about. This clarifies the understanding of some sentences at the same time.

#### **i. Current performance of Ghanaian illustrators**

Ghanaian illustrators are described as good in terms of their performance but have more room for improvement if they will work harder. Some authors and publishers believe performance depends on the individual that is the one who is illustrating. Other publishers also believe illustrators' performance depends on constant practicing. If a publisher goes in for the

Not all books have illustration. It has to do with the kind of book. Books with illustrations are usually easier for children to understand. Books that need illustrations also depend on what the book is about. This clarifies the understanding of some sentences at the same time.

#### **j. What self-employed illustrators in Ghana should do in order to gain employment?**

Illustrators are to reach out to authors and publishers and explain to them the essence of illustration and how their work can go a long way to sell their books.

They should always keep their portfolio intact and it should be updated at least every 3 months. Illustrators should personally contact publishers and authors to be commissioned. They should be competent enough in their work since that is what authors and publishers look out for before commissioning an illustrator.

Claude Mellan is well-known for his technique of using parallel lines of varying thickness. One notable example is his *Sudarium of Saint Veronica* (1649), an engraving of the face of Jesus from a single spiraling line that starts at the tip Jesus' nose.



Claude Mellan

### **Conclusion**

The professional book illustrator should be able to locate as many publishing houses and authors in need of book illustrators as possible and should be able to satisfy these needs. He should be able to understand what a publisher or author demands from him or her (book illustrator) and should be able to explain to the publisher or author his or her services that will be beneficial to either the publisher or author. In my opinion Ghanaian book illustrators must source ideas of illustration internationally in order to enhance their way of illustrating and also to compete well even outside the borders of their country.

Most publishers prefer watercolor the techniques of illustrations. A few will prefer pen and ink and water color techniques of illustrations. There are other techniques or media of illustration such as color pencil, gouache, pencil, charcoal, crayon, etc.

Some techniques suit some type of illustrations; others also are suitable for certain age group of children. For example children from age twelve to fifteen are interested in pen and ink illustration. Two year old to eleven years prefer full color illustrations, but those who are fifteen years and above may not be interested in illustrations at all.

One sort of preparation an illustrator can do before approaching a publisher, especially a publisher who is interested in text book publication, is to find some subjects in the JSS or SSS books and illustrate the key points in the text. Illustrators made a lot of contributions to the success of the publishing market in Ghana. Such contributions are helping children to understand subjects even before reading the text. Up and coming illustrators who want to be self-employed should work hard to improve upon or maintain their level of skill.

### **Summary**

Most publishers and authors have been in publishing for many years and therefore know the relevance of illustration to their publications. They prefer black and white illustration technique appropriate for their publications. Publishers also have need for illustrators urgently. They are constantly commissioning illustrators especially when they are about to publish a new title. An illustrator is considered good when he is able to put together lines and shapes in good proportion to form an object or when his presentation fits the caption in the particular publication which is being illustrated. According to publishers whom questionnaires were sent to, they do not find it difficult understanding illustrations from those they commission. They also praise illustrations as selling their books by attracting consumers to the pages of the books and helping them to understand the text easily.



## Recommendations

The research revealed that there are a lot of factors that impede book illustration in Ghana. However these factors can be dealt with only if authors, publishers and for that matter Ghanaians realize the importance of pictures in our publications. Professional book illustrators are also charged to practice hard in order to excel in their various fields of profession. Reaching out to publishers and authors with self-illustrated books will be a very important marketing tool.

## Conclusion

The professional book illustrator should be able to locate as many publishing houses and authors in need of book illustrators as possible and should be able to satisfy these needs. He should be able to understand what a publisher or author demands from him or her (book illustrator) and should be able to explain to the publisher or author his or her services that will be beneficial to either the publisher or author.

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