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Tracking Trends in Illustration:
What They Are and Why They Matter

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**Tracking Trends in Illustration:
What They Are and Why They Matter**

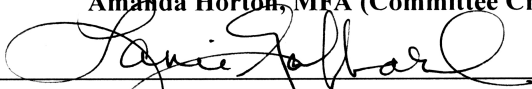
A THESIS

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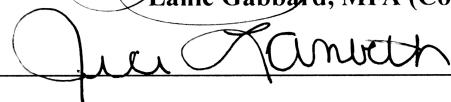
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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	6
Abstract	7
Definitions of Terms	9
List of Figures	12
List of Tables	13
Introduction	14
The Current Field	15
The Present Study	16
Types	17
The Process	18
Thesis Statement	19
Literature Review	19
Literature Review Breakdown	20
Justification for Visual Illustration Trend Research	21
The Current State of the Field	21
Arguments For and Against more Research	22
A General Look at Trends and How they are Studied in Illustration, Graphic Design, and Fashion Design.	26
The Importance of the Society of Illustrators	28
Trends in Graphic Design and their Relation to Illustration	29
Trends in Fashion Design and their Relation to Illustration	30

Causes for Trends Across the Spectrum	31
Technological Advancement	32
“Whaling”	33
Cycles	33
Categorization and Types	34
How Illustrations are Currently Categorized	35
Degree of Categorization	36
The Types of Illustration	38
Line-based Type	39
Value-based Type	42
Shape-based Type	45
The Fourth Type: Harmony	47
Conclusion	48
Methodology	49
Population and Sample	49
Population	49
Sample	49
Justification for Sample	49
Sampling Method: Convenience	50
Adapted Quantitative and Qualitative Methods	50
Correlational Aspect	50
Content Analysis Aspect	51

Instruments	51
Data Collection Instruments	51
Qualification Tests	51
Procedures	54
Annual Procurement	54
Reviewing the Annuals	55
Compiling the Data	56
Results	58
Individual Annuals	58
Combined Annuals in Table and Graph Form	59
Observations and Conclusions	60
Epochs and Decades	63
Trajectory of Line-based Types in the Annuals	64
Trajectory of Value-based Types in the Annuals	65
Trajectory of Shape-based Types in the Annuals	66
Trajectory of Harmony Types in the Annuals	67
General Conclusions Drawn from the Analysis:	
Proving or Disproving of Thesis	68
Discussion	69
Major Takeaways	69
Limitations	70
Possible Causes for Changes in Type Popularity	72

Cycles	72
Whales	72
Technological Changes	73
Overall Aesthetic Changes in the Design Field	75
The Future	77
Conclusion	77
Appendix A	79
Bibliography	86

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Abstract

Navigating a career in illustration can be very difficult, due to a lack of structure and traditional academic writing in the field. This is especially true for visual trends. While a plethora of histories are available, traditional data is limited. The thesis for this study seeks to address this issue: Identifying and categorizing illustration trends by defined visual characteristics will provide data for classroom instruction and guidance for professionals while strengthening a burgeoning field of research in illustration and developing an ongoing tool for understanding the industry.

The study begins with a review of literature that examines the current field of illustration research, then compares it to similar fields. Next it looks at possible causes for trends in general, and finally how illustration is categorized across the field.

The methodology applied to the study is a mixed-methods approach using a developed set of tools that categorize thousands of images published over several decades in the Society of Illustrator Annuals into visually different types of illustration.

The study lays down markers for future research and adds data to what was previously seen in an observational sense. This opens up the way for future research aimed at replicating this study or examining other illustration data points going further back in time.

Results discussed in the paper include distinct, substantial periods of time of popularity for the different types of illustration found in the study, with minor exceptions. This mostly confirms the thesis, with the modification that long-term cycles could not be proven by the data, leaving hard conclusions somewhat open-ended for now.

Definitions of Terms

Annual: refers to one of the fifty-eight Society of Illustrators Annuals covered by this study.

Each annual consists of images that are awarded inclusion by a jury of judges specific to that year.

Breakdown: Analysis of a data set specifically broken down into tables or figures.

Epoch: A distinct period of time in the history of something.

Line-Based Type: A broad-based style category for images that are predominantly built with line work, and having edge definitions characterized by lines.

Harmony Type: A broad-based style category which houses images that strike a balance between the three prime categories of line-based type, shape-based type and value-based type.

Illustration: An artwork, typically presented in a flattened format, produced by an illustrator for purposes excluding simply creation. Typically done for means of communication, such as advertising, editorial work, or picture books. Includes any piece of representational graphic art that communicates a story for a specific client or audience

Image: refers to an illustration found in the annuals which is part of that year's juried selection of new illustration deemed worthy of inclusion.

Shape-Based Type: A broad-based style category for images that are predominantly abstract in nature and based around flat color (or positive and negative value) presentations with little gradation.

Society of Illustrators: Professional organisation based out of New York City that has served as a meeting place, trend-setter, gallery, and general focal point and sign of acceptance into the illustration community.

SI: Acronym for Society of Illustrators, used to aid in referring to an annual in combination with the edition covered. I.e.: SI42 refers to the Society of Illustrators 42nd Annual.

Type: refers to a broad style of illustration based, in this study, on visual aesthetics like shape, value, and line, and their balance within an image.

Value-Based type: A broad-based style category for images that consist of gradations in value, representational imagery, and a general appearance of rendering mediums like paint, graphite, charcoal, photography and sculpture.

Whaling: Term used to refer to the action of large groups of illustrators mimicking the styles of one particularly popular illustrator, who functions as the ‘whale’ creating an undertow others get trapped in.

List of Figures

Figure 1	Example of the Line-Based Type of Illustration	39
Figure 2	Example of the Value-Based Type of Illustration	42
Figure 3	Example of the Shape-Based Type of Illustration	45
Figure 4	Example of the Harmony Type of Illustration	47
Figure 5	Visual Representation of the Types and How They Relate to Each Other	52
Figure 6	Qualification Tests	54
Figure 7	Sample Image of Breakdowns	56
Figure 8	Split Image of Google Sheets Document	57
Figure 9	Visual Representation of Data from Table 1	60
Figure 10	Visual Representation of First Major Type Shift	62
Figure 11	Visual Representation of Data with 2002-2016 Highlighted	63
Figure 12	Trajectory of the Line-based Type	65
Figure 13	Trajectory of the Value-based Type	66
Figure 14	Trajectory of the Shape-based Type	67
Figure 15	Trajectory of the Harmony Type	68
Figure 16	Trajectory of the Types with Adobe's Rise Highlighted	74
Figure 17	Trajectory of the Types with Rise of Comics Highlighted	76

List of Tables

Table 1	Results of the Annual Breakdowns in Chronological Order	59
Table 2	Sample breakdowns for SI01	80

Introduction

The modern illustrator faces a daunting challenge when peering out of her or his studio and reviewing the greater landscape of their field. There is a great deal of importance placed on carving out one's niche in the business, but thanks to the explosion of imagery on the web and plethora of different practitioners in the world, getting a solid sense of where the greater industry is at can prove difficult. This is especially a problem for those just breaking into the field and transitioning from being students to professionals. This study aims to alleviate this problem by opening up a conversation on long term trends and how to study them in the field.

In order to better understand the landscape of illustration, this study reaches back in time to review every Society of Illustrators Annual covering 1959 to 2016. The annuals are analyzed due to the prestige they represent in the illustration field. Each annual receives an examination, with the relevant images broken into five distinct types (e.g. broad styles) of illustration: line-based, value-based, shape-based, harmony, and missing (to account for printing and numbering errors in the annuals). The popularity of these types is tabulated through the years and then presented in chart form. The study supplements this Methodology with a look at the larger issue of a lack of traditional research the way trends in illustration are studied in general.

Additional space is given after the Methodology to discussing possible reasons why the data behaves the way it does. Ultimately, this relates back to the study's thesis: Identifying and categorizing illustration trends by defined visual characteristics will provide data for classroom instruction and guidance for professionals while strengthening a burgeoning field of research in illustration and developing an ongoing tool for understanding the industry.

The Current Field

In comparison to its graphic design and fashion design cousins, illustration research is still quite young and underdeveloped. A great deal of literature does exist on the subject, but most of this consists of collected volumes, biographies of famous illustrators and overviews of specific movements in the field. Traditional academic research lags behind, with only a handful of scholarly journals on the subject. Researchers and writers like Richard Poyner have pointed out this gap in the field and called for its filling (2010). While we have a great deal of imagery and process (how the images are made) information available, we lack a concrete look at data-driven information to show students or professionals looking to get a larger picture of where the market has been or might be going. Of course, many argue that a preoccupation with style (a component of this research) is a dead end into itself, since it hampers a practitioner's efforts to produce good work. Although a fair point, this study argues that even if one encourages the devaluation of looking at style, it is still important to have a general idea of what is going on, so that such information can be provided to those who ask for it.

Graphic design and fashion design have a variety of scholarly and popular journals devoted to their study. This includes qualitative and quantitative work. For example, A. B. Young's "Recurring Cycles of Fashion 1760-1937" (1966) presents a robust case for the cycling of trends in the fashion industry over the years. Graphic design has a deep bench of continually published magazines and journals, especially in comparison to illustration. While illustration has a great deal of writing devoted to it in the form of books on specific topics and essentially yearly catalogs of popular images in the form of the Society of Illustrators, Communication Arts, American Illustration, etc. annuals, there is very little scholarly research being done in

comparison to the related fields. Both graphic design and fashion design are closely related enough to illustration (the three interact daily) that one can use the templates for studying the others and adapt it to itself. This study's Literature Review covers this relationship in greater detail.

Another aspect of studying possible illustration trends is how the current field categorizes different kinds of illustration in terms of specificity and degree. This study's Literature Review takes an account of such terms, with specificity being categorized in terms of theme, medium (of publication), style and time period. In terms of degree, this study's examination of categories goes from narrow to broad, starting with a worm's eye view and going up to a bird's eye view, the most appropriate perspective for this study. By understanding how illustration is currently being categorized, we can better define the parameters for this study, which, combined with an understanding of the current debate and related fields helps set the stage for this study's Methodology.

The Present Study

This present study takes a broad-based approach to a small part of the illustration world by examining a small but deep section of it. The Society of Illustrators Annual has been an ongoing barometer for the illustration industry since the first modern annual came out in 1959. Acceptance into an annual carries great prestige, and is determined by a jury of distinguished practitioners including illustrators, art directors and other prominent members of the field. The process and prestige are equivalent to winning an award or grant in the art world, or being accepted for publication in the research world. Getting accepted is typically looked at as being "accepted" by the community; in the same way that an actor or director can expect more work

after winning an Oscar, an illustrator's career benefits greatly by being accepted into an annual. By examining all of the available annuals covering work from 1959 to 2016, one can determine if there are patterns that can be picked up on. The annuals are a great resource for this, owing to two primary factors: the longevity of the annuals and the high reputation earned by the Society. An ongoing institution in the illustration field, the Society's Annual is considered an honor to get into and a source for information on what's popular in the field from year to year. Ergo, it makes good sense to use the annuals as a research population. How one reviews these annuals is the crux of the study.

Types.

This study involves researching trends, but when dealing with all of illustration and its varied styles, this can get tricky. In order to get the most functional data, very broad definitions of style are needed. This is where the illustration "type" comes into play. A type, in this study, refers to a very broad category of visual style, based on general aesthetics of the image. Specifically, this study breaks types into five distinct sets in order to classify images through visual observation.

Line-based type encompasses images made up primarily of linework as the chief visual aesthetic. Examples of this include comic art, most cartoons, many caricatures, and woodcuts. Practitioners well known for working in this type include illustrators like Al Hirschfeld and Jack Kirby and cartoonists like Chuck Schulz. The value-based type covers illustrations that primarily consist of visual gradations from light to dark as the primary visual aesthetic. To better grasp this, imagine a Norman Rockwell painting or images typical of traditional academic art or drawing. Such images, including most realistically rendered images, fit nicely into the

value-based type. Shape-based type covers images made up primarily of shape. This is best personified by vector based images and traditional, flat poster illustrations. The work of Ed Emberley and Charley Harper serves as a good visual example of this type. The fourth type, harmony, essentially serves as a weigh station between the other types. If the elements of the other three types are present, without one or the other taking precedent, or with two or more in equal representation, or working in “harmony”, then the image fits into the harmony category. The “missing” type’s name says all one needs to know about that category. Images lumped into this category are missing from the annuals due to printing error. Since many of the annuals are numbered, this category is included under the assumption that images were meant to be published in these spots. All of these types are useful guidelines for studying trends in illustration, as they set up broad areas of data that can be used to get a general idea of the field and pinpoint specific areas to look at in further research.

The process.

For this study, the first objective involves locating the population to study (the annuals). This starts as a convenience sample, as many are available at the researcher’s institutional library; the Max Chambers Library at the University of Central Oklahoma. Missing annuals are located through Interlibrary loan program and a sojourn to the Society’s physical location in New York. Once obtained, the annuals are analyzed using a process that combines qualification tests developed for the different types and a simple hash marking system used in spreadsheet programs to produce an analysis for each annual. These analyses are then combined into another spreadsheet and converted into a chart for visual analysis of the year to year trends in type

usages, leading to the results of the overall study. A more thorough examination of this process is covered in the Methodology section of this study.

This study aims to lay down rudimentary guideposts for future research while providing future students and researchers a general outline of how visual trends have progressed in the Society of Illustrator Annuals. Hopefully, this leads to further research and analysis while pushing the train of illustration research a little further down the track. The tools and research developed should be expanded upon as time goes on, and in the fullness of time we can better understand the behavior of our industry.

Thesis Statement

Identifying and categorizing illustration trends by defined visual characteristics will provide data for classroom instruction and guidance for professionals while strengthening a burgeoning field of research in illustration and developing an ongoing tool for understanding the industry.

Literature Review

When examining the field of illustration from an investigatory viewpoint, a few things become obvious. Number one: while there is a great amount of writing and research devoted to individual illustrators or genres of illustration, there is a lack of research devoted to “deep diving” into illustration trends over time. Number two: this lack of information results in a lack of guidance and preparation for practitioners, instructors and students involved in the field. By means of comparison, consider fields like medicine or economics, or, more closely related, advertising or design. These fields have a plethora of ongoing popular magazines and

peer-reviewed publications, along with books and other efforts, all designed to better aid the student or practitioner and expand the subject's base of knowledge. Unlike these other disciplines, there is a lack of research available to the illustration community in regards to market forecasting or the nature of trends over time. Contrast this with the graphic design and the fashion design fields, where research on trends is ongoing and standard practice. Indeed, it is considered necessary to keep practitioners in those fields dynamic and forward-facing, stopping them from growing stale or stagnant.

This Literature Review sets the table for the rest of the study by examining how trends are studied in illustration and related fields and how gaps in this work can be addressed in one way through this study. The ultimate point of this research is to uncover trends in the use of different types (here the term describes broad styles), of illustration through the examination of the Society of Illustrators Annuals. This study's main objective is to determine whether there will be a discernible trend in the popularity of line-based, value-based, shape-based and harmony illustration types as observed by checking the number of times such illustrations appear in each selected/available annual of the Society of Illustrators Annuals covering the years from 1959 to 2016.

Literature Review Breakdown

In order to justify this research, the following Literature Review will be broken down into four sections: 1. The justification for visual illustration trend research. 2. A general look at how trends (promoted by technology and other forces) influence creative design fields and how they are studied. 3. An examination of different techniques used to categorize illustrations, informing the final selection and categorization of the illustrations in the annuals by visual types consisting

of line-based, value-based and shape-based images, along with a fourth category representing the concept of “harmony”, or a visual balance between the categories. For the purposes of this study, illustration will be the designation for any piece of representational graphic art that communicates a story for a specific client or audience. More practically, image will be the designation for any accepted illustration projects in the Society of Illustrators Annuals that are not in a student section, in a hall of fame section, or otherwise not part of the official competition. By examining these different facets, this Literature Review will clarify the research and “set the table” for the study.

Justification for Visual Illustration Trend Research

The current state of the field.

Illustration is a tricky subject for researchers and writers in the field. The vast majority of writing on the subject consists of summary reviews of work from a singular illustrator or a broad range of illustrators working in the same time period or similar subject matter. Further, it does not help that research in design as a broader topic is still in its relative infancy compared to other fields. Sato notes that research in design itself has been around “no longer than fifty years” (2004, p. 219) in *Perspectives of Design Research: In design: Collective views for formatting the foundation of design research*. This creates a vacuum, one which extends into illustration research. For this study, standard examples of research are represented by *The Illustrator in America 1880-1980: A Century of Illustration* by Walt Reed and his son Roger Reed (1984) along with its follow up by the elder Reed, *The Illustrator in America: 1860-2000* (2001), and *Illustration: A Visual History* by Heller and Chwast (2008). The Reed family presents images and information in a chronological format, broken down by the decade and not stylistically in

any way (2008). Dozens upon dozens of illustrators are given brief summaries and gallery space within the book, with general observations about the specific decade in illustration included for each section as well. While this format works well in a historical context, it opens up an avenue for research based on style. Indeed, Heller and Chwast's work in this regard picks up where the Reeds left off and categorizes illustrations based on a large selection of styles and form, or in their words, they "have consistently tried to show recurring methods, manners, and techniques rather than slavishly adhering to dates." (2008, p. 6). This provides a good starting point in considering how to categorize images in this study, but the wide selection of categories Heller and Chwast (2008) utilize (over two dozen for style, just over a dozen for form) are too expansive for a study of this size. As such, a hole exists that allows for more research to be pursued.

In addition to these textbook-style examples of research in illustration, there is a small area of work being done both in traditional academic method circles such as journals and newer circles like blogs and magazines. Trailblazers like the VAROOM Lab Journal are devoting themselves to illustration research while popular publications like 3x3, and Communication Arts focus more on specific illustrators or current projects and trends without the benefit of peer-review. While these popular publications (like trade magazines) are not peer-reviewed like traditional academic journals, they provide a great deal of information and conversation on illustration.

Arguments for and against more research.

The gap in illustration research is further expressed by the seminal essay by Poynor (2010) "The Missing Critical History of Illustration", wherein he notes that books on the subject

“have appeared, but they are invariably how-to guides or visual surveys that merely aim to show what is going on”. While interest is growing, more research in the field is needed. Referring back to Sato, the design research industry itself adds to this problem, as “output remains inaccessible and underutilized because of the lack of a commonly understood categorization scheme, established dissemination media and archival compilation” (2004, p. 235). While this is a problem too big for any one study to fix, the fact that the situation exists shows the need for more research across the design field to address specific areas, including illustration.

Considering the state of research, Meredith Davis argues in her article “Why do we need doctoral study in design?” (2008) that the field of design has become extremely complex, and that the traditional “object-centered” paradigm of producing something that solves a singular problem (the bedrock of most design teaching and professional day-to-day research) is no longer adequate for tackling the current environment. She argues this point, along with the need for more resources and research, while acknowledging that “the greatest skepticism about expanding design research programs seems to reside within the discipline itself, where there is ongoing debate about what constitutes design knowledge” (2008, p. 71). This “wild-west” atmosphere of competing theories and lack of resources further bolster the argument for research to be done, especially in areas like illustration types, where arguments are fierce. As such, this study will serve as an additional tool and resource that other researchers, practitioners or students can utilize and build upon in the future. Since there are calls for more research in design, it is worth pausing here to briefly examine the importance of design research (especially graphic design) to the field of illustration research.

Graphic design shares fundamental roots and connections with illustration in that they both involve the creation of new forms through a process of brainstorming, drafting and execution involving skill and/or talent. Graphic design, like illustration, busies itself with conveying a message to an audience through visual means. Both disciplines involve the manipulation of forms, be it by use of the pencil for drafting, or the computer program for pushing pixels and warping vectors. They share space in the university system, often times residing in the same department or school such as the combination seen in the undergraduate major offerings at the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA), where graphic design, illustration, and photography students are housed in the same system, as shown on MICA's breakdown of majors on its website ("Undergraduate Programs", 2018). Illustration mixes with graphic design naturally as an asset (such as functioning as an image for a designed page in a magazine) or utilizer (such as hand-drawn lettering). Thus, the world of graphic design research and standard design research, which is lush with examples like *Meggs' History of Graphic Design*, *Communication Arts*, the *International Journal of Design*, and others serve as great resources in discussing illustration research. When considering a subject, it makes sense to compare and contrast related fields in the pursuit of gaining more knowledge.

Because there is such fierce debate about research in general in the field of design, it would inhibit this analysis to ignore voices splashing water on the need for research in illustration, especially as it relates to types and trends. Much of this conversation takes place outside traditional academic venues. Indeed, the strongest arguments are found on personal blogs maintained by professional illustrators and art directors currently engaged in the field. Art director Giuseppe Castellano, in his blog post 'Forget 'Style'', makes no secret about his disdain

for “style” as a concept to be considered in the work of an aspiring illustrator. In this case, style, as he refers to it, covers the same ground as type, just in a more refined manner. He calls the concept of having a style “a distraction- a syphon of energy and time better spent creating, failing, leaning, building, evolving, discovering, and developing what you really should be focusing on: finding your *voice*” (2017). Essentially, he argues that time in the field would be better spent by practitioners broadly developing their ideas, concepting abilities, and image-making skills. One illustrator can have many styles and be successful if they are good enough to sell, so focusing on what “style” they should pursue is a moot point, as it is a natural byproduct of being a good illustrator who is constantly evolving. Similar sentiments are shared by other illustrators as well.

An extremely successful current illustrator by the name of Kyle T. Webster has similarly argued that focusing on honing a singular “style” for one’s work need not be the norm. His own belief is that if one is competent and comfortable in multiple styles, they should pursue a course that follows such a path. He believes that his own “illustration business thrives on offering clients a range of visual styles in which [he] can work confidently” (2016) and the current approach of sticking to one style, as advocated in most illustration programs, is misguided. Indeed, presented alongside Castellano’s thoughts on the subject, the burgeoning war over type and its place in the study of illustration comes into clearer view.

It is important to take these factors into consideration, along with the limited academic journal work on the subject. While the vast majority of sources found for this thesis argued for more research across the board, they are also keen to note that some argue against the same. Barbara de la Harpe and J. Fiona Peterson point out that there is already some work being

completed in the field, with Design and Architecture scholarly journal articles sharing “a focus on the industry/education nexus in their top five” (2008, p. 137) focuses for study. As such, in a broad sense, work is being done and conversation is being had. While some work is being done, and conversations are being had, there needs to be a metaphorical stake laid in the ground for more robust research in illustration type categorization and the understanding of trends. With this understanding, the need for an academic, ongoing tool for measuring and categorizing trends comes into focus.

A General Look at Trends and How they are Studied in Illustration, Graphic Design, and Fashion Design.

When it comes to following trends in illustration, there are several different avenues in which to look, at least in the short term. These include popular magazines, contests, and general publications.

In determining how to study illustration trends for this thesis, the researcher inspected a variety of sources, including peer-reviewed essays and articles from professional magazines. Each cited example covers different aspects of why trends are important, how they are studied, how they occur and why, *inter alia*.

Some of the methods used for tracking trends in illustration are fairly generic. There are broad reviews of important illustrators and styles in narrative form from the recent and distant past, like the article “Looking Back to Look Forward: Illustration Styles of the Past 30 Years” by Terry Hemphill (2017). Near the end of the year, there are inevitably articles about “Trends to follow in Coming Year”, such as the work by May in the article “11 Huge Illustration Trends for 2017” for Creativebloq (2017). Such articles present what new styles or trends are gaining steam

in the market and might be worth following. Importantly, little citation, outside of the images themselves, is typically found in such articles. As such, the reader is forced to rely on the author's reputation or word instead of peer-reviewed data. This is frustrating, but fortunately many of these authors are qualified and provide important voices to the discussion, including observations on what causes trends in illustration. Further, trends in illustration can often be attributed to simple market forces. Gavin (2010), in "Art Inspired Illustration; The F Word", states that folk art is a newer trend in illustration which has produced more business for illustrators who utilize it, filling a market demand. This explains some of the market motivation for following trends. While this is all well and good, the causes and duration of these trends require more inspection.

Writers and practitioners like Pam Grossman and the School Library Journal determine that there are a number of factors involved in the creation of trends in illustration. Specifically, the School Library Journal cites advances in technology (ie: computers and graphics software) and illustration competition results in the short article "Where Trends Come From" (1996) as important influences on trends, while Grossman, in "Insights: Predicting Visual Trends", focuses on the importance of both technological advancements and cultural changes in how trends develop in the stock image (in this case, including photos) market (2016). These explorations provide some context for understanding why trends happen.

The allure of new technology makes sense, as no illustrator wants to be left behind when the digital revolution in media delivery occurs. Likewise, failure to adapt to cultural changes can also prove to be stunting for an illustrator's career. Interestingly, the School Library Journal's

mention of awards results is particularly suited to this thesis. The Society of Illustrators Annual is, by design, the result of a contest, and thus fits in well as a “trendsetter”.

The importance of the Society of Illustrators.

The society’s long-running annual competition provides the sample for this study and has great influence on the illustration field. Operating since the early 1900’s, as Carol Kino notes, the Society has served as a community for illustrators, a club for members in New York City, and eventually as a museum for illustration (2013). The Society’s brick and mortar location is considered an important site in general, and a premier destination for illustrators to visit. The club and its awards are also held in high esteem, so much so that they are highlighted by institutions whose members win them. An example of this is presented by Norrena in an announcement noting that California College of the Arts faculty member Robert Hunt had won the 2015 Hamilton King Award presented by the Society (2015).

The recurring annual show and publication started in 1960 (covering the year 1959), and has run continuously since then. Appearing in the annual is considered an honor, and is often included in resumes and CVs. One can take a look at websites for practitioners like John Hendrix to see the annuals and the implied recognition from the Society’s inclusion listed as honors (Hendrix, 2018). Appearances in the annual are determined by competition, where a large pool of entries are judged by a panel of respected professionals in the field (illustrators, art directors, etc.) and winners are selected for inclusion in that year’s annual. This process creates the impression that the selected winners are the best of the best that year, making such work influential in the field.

All of these elements combine to elevate the Society to the point that it can be considered a good barometer of popularity and trends.

Trends in graphic design and their relation to illustration.

Following trends in Graphic Design is not quite as difficult as in illustration, and since the two disciplines are strongly intertwined (with illustration being used in graphic design daily and both using the same design building blocks of composition, etc.), briefly examining some of the ways trends and styles are examined in the graphic design field will prove useful.

To begin with, research and academic study of graphic design has a chronological advantage on research in illustration. Textbooks such as *Megg's History of Graphic Design* and the various works of Steven Heller have been produced since the 1980s, and provide extensive looks at the field and trends over the course of decades.

Efforts like those pursued by Heller and Meggs are buffeted by ongoing magazines like *Communication Arts* and journals like the *International Journal of Design*. These resources provide robust tools for designers to access, and they have a heritage going back years. Indeed, Sarah Helmer Poggenpohl, a noted design educator and writer and second editor of *Visible Language*, reviews several and notes that they are extensive and span decades of publication history, with some lasting, and some not, as time goes on (2016). With such vigilant and present custodians in the field, designers have resources that illustrators do not. Such guardians help determine what style and trends break down into.

An example of this can be found in the work of Steven Heller. Heller has worked on style breakdowns for both illustration (to be covered later on in this writing) and design, with his work with Fili, *Stylepedia*, being an excellent example of breaking down design styles based on what

they refer to as “sometimes the look, but more often than not the content, the mechanism by which concepts are communicated and ideas are expressed” (2006, p. 8). Essentially, they dissect style as a component of visual characteristics and cultural influences. This kind of work eases the burden of the designer or researcher trying to categorize on their own.

Trends in fashion design and their relation to illustration.

Alongside graphic design and illustration, fashion design offers plenty of opportunities for tracking styles and trends. Indeed, the researcher has found that fashion design offers substantial reference material for use in crafting models to follow trends in illustration. Further, there is an argument to be made as to why fashion design would relate to illustration in a research context. While the relationship may not be as self-evident as that between graphic design and illustration, it is nevertheless there. Illustration and fashion are built off of the same basic building blocks- art schools house them both under the same umbrella, fashion illustration is a critical segment of both fields, and the general design process of sketches, roughs, and image manipulation runs strong amongst the disciplines. Trends in fashion are particularly cyclical, which provides a distinct basis to consider when looking at trends in the popularity of illustration types.

There are a number of researchers and commentators who have examined the cyclical nature of fashion style trends. Pearman (2001), in a jovial look back on the trends in fashion, in “Keeping Track of Cycles”, provides a loose look at the timing of these trends. Specifically, Pearman breaks fashion trend cycles into long (centuries), medium (30 years) and short (three to five years) cycles, giving the reader a rough approximation in which to view these matters. Ultimately, these time categories are useful and provide a helpful benchmark that is expanded

upon in the scholarly article “Old News? Understanding Retro Trends in the 21st Century Fashion” by Maria MacKinney-Valentin (2010). This case study examines the different aspects of “Retro” and “Vintage” in the fashion industry, pointing out how such developments occur, and some of the timing of when fashions go in and out of style seemingly built into fashion cycles. Essentially, it backs up the idea of cycles and repeating trends over time.

Understanding some of the visual characteristics of these cycles is important, and one of the cornerstone studies of fashion trends illuminates these aspects. Completed in the 1930s, Young’s *Recurring Cycles of Fashion* serves as an excellent example of tracking stylistic trends in fashion design over the long-term based on visual characteristics. This is accomplished through the examination of “a continuous annual series of illustrations of the most fully typical costumes worn during the 178 years from 1760 through 1937” (1966, p. 1). When examining these illustrations, Young finds that one distinct visual feature of dress fashion (the skirt) changed consistently and in a specific order every thirty to forty years. After reviewing the evidence, Young finds that the three styles of skirt, back-fullness, tubular and bell-shaped, alternate in that order over time (1966, pp. 14-16). Young does two critical things in this study: she identifies and defines distinct skirt styles and determines solid cyclical trends. This provides a strong basis for establishing trends through visual characteristics, something which could translate very successfully to illustration studies. Indeed, fashion design provides a great template for studying the other two forms as well.

Causes for Trends Across the Spectrum

Having examined how illustration, graphic design and fashion design have categorized styles and studied/identified trends, it is worth stepping back and clarifying what causes trend

changes over time. Three major causes for trend changes include advancements in technology, “whaling” (the chasing of a particularly popular type or style of presentation), and cycles (the repetition of popular types or styles over time). A fuller understanding of trends can be obtained by examining these various facets.

Technological advancement.

Technological advancement over time is one of the primary agitators of changing trends and in the development of new styles. One needs only examine some of the previously cited materials, such as *Meggs' History of Graphic Design* and Heller and Fili's *Stylepedia*, for evidence. In the case of Meggs, overarching trends can be seen in the wake of profound technology changes like chromolithography, which leads to genre bending styles like those of the Victorian era (2012, pp/ 161-162). Further, Heller and Fili note drastic changes in trends wrought by technology by examining everything from chromolithography to screen based, “kinetic” imaging, pointing out the oversized effect of these developments along the way (2006). These technological changes of the status quo affect all types of design, with illustration being profoundly altered by them.

When looking at illustration on a decade by decade basis, most historians are sure to note the effect technology plays on the field. Zeegan and Roberts, in their decade-dividing writeup *Fifty Years of Illustration* reliably point out the effect that computer programs like Photoshop and Illustrator (2014) have had. Obviously when new tools become available, there are early and late adopters who take the mediums for a spin, and practitioners who find great success lead to adoption of the new medium and the creation of trends until the next big innovation comes along. Sometimes this even leads to what this researcher referred to above as “whaling”.

“Whaling”.

Sometimes a particularly successful style or practitioner comes along that shifts trends one way or another. Consider the work based around a folk style noted by Gavin (2010) earlier in this review. A fancy new aesthetic or illustrator pops out of the woodwork, and, after seeing the success it generates, several others follow the style like Ahab hunting the White Whale in *Moby Dick*. This researcher refers to these trends as “whaling” as a result, with the trend or illustrator being the “whale”. Such “whales” are chronicled by the Reeds in the *The Illustrator in America*, including teachers like Pyle and extremely successful illustrators that have broken through to the mainstream like Charles Dana Gibson, who has inspired countless other illustrators (1984).

Whales and the trends motivated by them are very likely to be noticed by popular magazines. This includes write ups such as those by Lucas in the Creative Review that discuss the resurgence of the postmodernism style reminiscent of the Memphis Group, which he describes as having been all over the place (2014). However, these strong trendsetters are not entirely positive forces. A large part of the aforementioned debate over style is a reaction to these trends and arguments that such practices damage the field. McNab makes a point that chasing trends will dilute a designer’s brand over time (2016). Despite the controversy, whales are an aspect of trendsetting that are important to consider in studying trends in illustration.

Cycles.

Referring back to the previous research by Young, the concept of “cycles” is an important cause for trend changes that should be considered. Heller and Chwast write about six “Neo” styles in their review of styles in *Illustration: A Visual History* (2008), lending credibility to the idea that some styles reemerge over time. Understanding that there is a general consensus

that trends have been found to be cyclical in the fashion industry, and that market forces and cultural changes affect it and the graphic design industry, one can draw parallels between the related fields. As such, it is justifiable to examine whether there are any discernible trends in illustration that might be cyclical or otherwise. Following the Young model, one can start organizing raw visual data by specific styles to determine whether or not such cycles exist in illustration.

Categorization and Types

While the previous sections have focused on justifying this study and examining the study of trends in general, the “nuts and bolts” of this study requires the justification for how illustrations should be categorized in reviewing the annuals. This section will examine categorization, which in this study means breaking images into four types (with a fifth category for “missing”): the line-based type, value-based type, shape-based type, and the harmony type. “Type” in this study refers to a broad style, one that encompasses many similar forms of image making. There seems to be no previously set standard for this, but the literature does provide some larger points for consideration. To begin with, Levesley and Bosward (2013), in “Illustrated Worlds” note the need to develop an individual style for a successful career. They note that an individual style helps identify the illustrator to other illustrators and art directors, aiding in the development of a career (p. 92).

With this mindset in place, the need for categorizing types becomes apparent, as understanding such categories helps a practitioner find their niche. The blog post “Illustration Style: Categorization” by the educator Arday covers various aspects of what style means and how it is categorized (2013). Importantly, for this thesis, his thoughts about “form” relate

strongly to this study, as it covers “the form and structure of compositional arrangements” (2013), helping to justify the use of styles intended for our purposes here. Basic elements of drawing are present to varying degrees and space in every illustration, setting up the building blocks for a broad style, referred to here as a type.

How illustrations are currently categorized.

Today, there exists a vast variety of ways to categorize illustration besides visual type. Understanding this variety and how it relates to categorizing by visual type is an important step in clarifying how categorization works for this thesis and how this thesis can provide an important point of view in relation to how the field categorizes illustrations.

Most researchers, editors, writers, etc. categorize illustrations according to theme. Theme is essentially the subject matter of the illustration. A great deal of literature has been produced (especially in the oh-so memorable coffee-table book genre) on specific themes, with books like *The Art of Horror: An Illustrated History*, edited by Stephen Jones (2015) and Jim Lapetino’s *Art of Atari* (2016) serving as examples. Indeed, a good metaphor to consider in regards to this is the “book store” setup, with publications broken up by subject matter.

When moving into the professional sphere, the medium, or type of client who utilizes the illustration, begins to take on a greater prominence. This breaks down into to categories like “advertising”, “editorial”, “publishing”, and so on. This method makes sense when applied to things like professional competitions, as it allows for distinct clientele, such as editorial art directors or advertising industry art buyers, to peruse the best work in each field year to year. *The Society of Illustrators Annual*, a primary part of this study, fits into this pattern, as do other annual competition publications like *Communication Arts*, *American Illustration*, and *3x3*. All of

these are considered important barometers of the illustration field, built off of the contest model started by the Society of Illustrators. While these publications are occasionally perused by the public at large, their position as pseudo-gatekeepers in the industry grant them specific prestige amongst potential clients.

Finally, aside from some additional efforts at categorization by style (see again, Heller and Chwast's *Illustration: A Visual History*) that are similar to this thesis, categorization by time period of production is a popular way of examining illustration. Examples of this abound, from individual books to gigantic retrospectives like Reed's *The Illustrator in America: 1860-2000* (2001) and Zeegan and Roberts' *Fifty Years of Illustration* (2014). These books break down illustrations, or more specifically, illustrators, by the decade of their prominence. This form of categorization is efficient for data collection, and, at a base level, provides general ideas of what style is popular during a specific time period. Having examined how illustration is categorized in ways besides style, one can begin to articulate the degree to which style will be categorized in this thesis.

Degree of categorization.

This study is concerned with distinct yet extensive categories of illustration type. The best way to consider this is to move from a worm's-eye view, to a human's-eye view, and finally to a bird's eye view of categorization. Ultimately, this thesis will involve the bird's-eye view, for ease of use in going through the hundreds of images that make up the annuals. To get to this point, establishing the other two views is helpful.

The worm's-eye view is espoused by Aygun and Abaci (2014) in the peer reviewed study "Examination of illustrated story books published between the years 2004-2013 for 4-8 age

group children in terms of illustration”. This study categorizes illustrated books based upon extremely specific criteria, such as whether the illustrations are realistic, deformed, cover two pages, etc. (2014). Such categorization allows for distinct and fine point data collection, and while too comprehensive for this study, which involves analyzing thousands of images in a relatively short time, it provides a good starting point for the coding scheme that will be expanded upon in the methodology section.

The aforementioned *Illustration: A Visual History* by Heller and Chwast (2008) provides the next level up for categorization, e.g. the human eye view, illustrations categorized based on similar design elements and themes. Heller and Chwast break down illustration into visual styles and forms with categories such as Victorian, Art Deco, Punk, Satiric and Absurdist (p. 5). Again, this level up logically leads into the bird’s-eye view. Ultimately, all of these resources provide a framework with which to work off, and, with some expansion, will be a strong bedrock on which to base the study.

The goal of this part of the study is to develop a framework for identifying line-based, value-based, shape-based and harmony illustration types in contrast to each other. This will establish a bird’s-eye view of the categorization of illustration types. The final step in approaching this is to provide background and characteristics for what each type represents. In general, these types take the categories set up by researchers like Heller and Chwast and expand them beyond the bounds of theme and constricted styles. The problem is that with so many images being reviewed, the types need to be as broad as possible to make the study feasible. Thus, it makes sense to categorize based on the most basic forms and aesthetics used in image making, the elements of line, value, and shape. Since all of these elements are in use in any

image, categorizing based on which one is the dominant seems to be the most logical approach to make the categories as broad yet distinct as possible.

The types of illustration.

Before diving in, a solid definition of type as it relates to this study is in order. For practical purposes, type herein refers to the predominant visual characteristic/aesthetic of an image, essentially the broad style the image inhabits. Of important note, in relation to the four categories: Color cannot work as a determinative factor/category in this study due to printing constraints in earlier editions of the annuals, and the fact that it can be infused into the other three primary types so easily. For example, it vanishes in “value” as different hues represent different values.

In order to categorize illustrations according to types, an examination and explanation of each type is necessary. To begin with, the line-based type will be examined.



Figure 1. An example of the line-based type of illustration. Image by Samuel Washburn (2018).

Line-based type.

Line-based illustration seems, initially, to be far too encompassing a type. Indeed, along with value and color, it is such a necessary aspect of visual art that one can apply it to practically any image making. For the purposes of this study, “line-based” will refer to images that are predominantly built with line work, and having edge definitions characterized by lines. A brief explanation of what that means follows.

What exactly is line in relation to the graphic arts? Hofman (1965), in the *Graphic Design Manual*, writes that “the line is the visible trace of a moving dot; it presupposes the dot as its own basic element” (p. 15). It certainly does not get more basic than that.

Of course, one starts to get a clearer picture of how line relates to illustration when examining the meaning of it presented by Purser in his 1976 publication *The Drawing Handbook: Approaches to Drawing*. Purser insists that line, along with “value, texture, color, form and space” (p. 15), is one the main elements of art. For his purposes (and the purposes of this study) he states that he wants to “put the emphasis upon the use of line as a graphic statement to express the student’s feelings and emotions” (p.17). Essentially, this understanding of line relates to the idea of line being the predominant driving force and aesthetic in a drawing (or, in this case, illustration). In the line-based type, line is the dominant visual element. Illustrations vary between scratchy lines, flowing lines, rigid lines, etc., while the other building blocks of image making are secondary. For the purposes of this study, a line-based type of illustration can be observed in Figure 1 above.

Essentially, when considering the usage of line in the line-based type, the visual aesthetic is similar across various illustrators. Art Chantry spends a little bit of time discussing this, noting that line-art drawing is like an image “before you add the color areas like a coloring book” (2015, p. 185). This, along with Chantry’s noting of the fact that such images are derived from Japanese ink drawings, (2015, p. 186) make a generational connection for what a line-based type is. In these images, lines dominate the other two foundations for style (value and shape) in visual terms. Some specific illustrator examples will illuminate this concept.

For decades, line-based styling was the bread and butter of the career of cartoonists and illustrators like Al Hirschfeld. Hirschfeld's caricatures and satirical work rely almost exclusively on lines of varying lengths and thicknesses. Of special note in the case of Hirschfeld is the utter lack of color and limited use of value or flat shape, particularly in the creation of faces. Instead of relying on built-up volume, distinct lines determine the breakdown of the area in Hirschfeld's work, as presented in collections like *Hirschfeld by Hirschfeld* (1979). While some of his illustrations do contain shapes, they are always subordinate to the lines. Indeed, without the lines, the image would fail to function entirely.

More contemporary examples of line-based illustration style can be found in the work of Brian Rea and John Hendrix. Both are good examples of the other two primary type elements (shape and volume) being subservient to line, primarily due to line's function as the definitive visual of edge relationships in the illustrations. Once again, the illustrations do not function without lines. Aesthetically, it helps to think of these images as finely tuned pen and ink or pencil drawings, though technology has updated this somewhat with tools that accurately mimic the traditional idea of line as the domain of pens and pencils. Hendrix is well known for his illustrated books, such as *John Brown: His Fight for Freedom* (2009). Rea is known for editorial and book design, and his work can be viewed via his web site, www.brianrea.com (2018). Having covered the definition of line-based type for illustration, one turns to the other types.

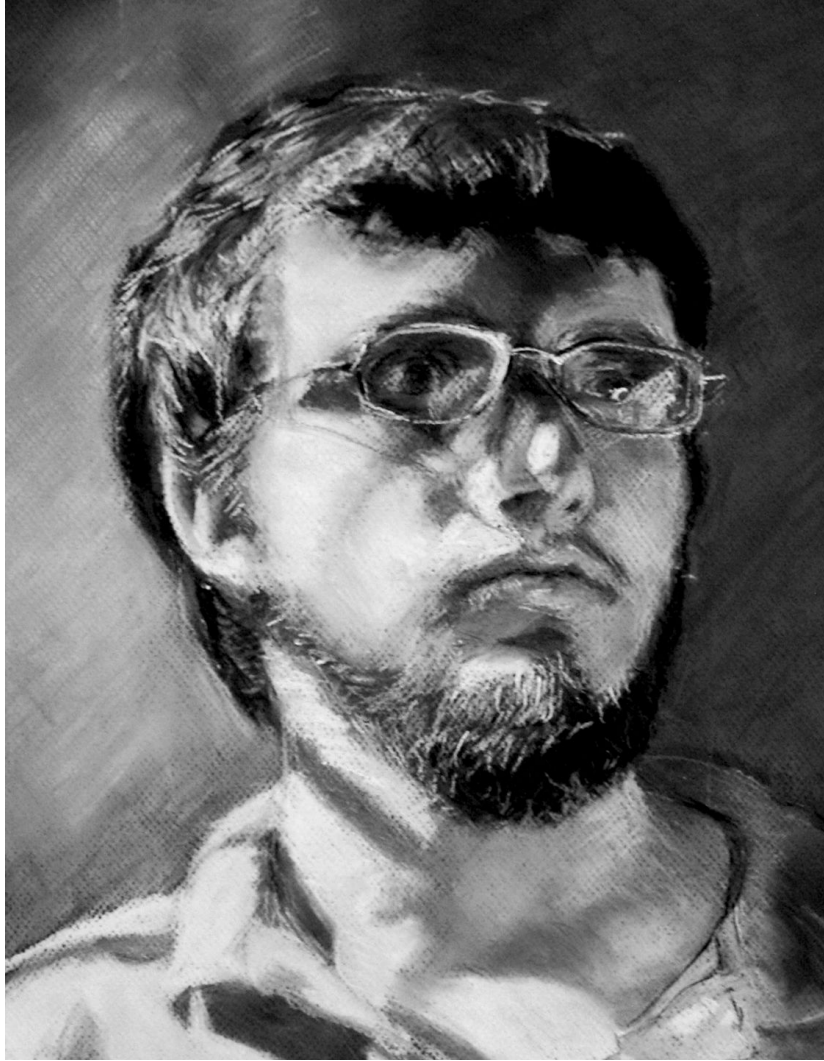


Figure 2. An example of the value-based type of illustration. Image by Samuel Washburn (2018).

Value-based type.

Value-based illustration type consists of gradations in value, representational imagery, and a general appearance of rendering mediums like paint, graphite, charcoal, photography and sculpture. In many ways, this can be considered the “traditional” illustration type, since it represents the traditional academic way of painting and drawing, along with the traditional forms of illustration dating back from the 1910s to the 1960s. An efficient way of understanding what a

value-based type represents is to consider it an amalgam of several elements of drawing put together- essentially the oil painting as compared to the line-based type's cartoon or the shape-based type's poster print. The main aspects to consider when defining a value-based type come down to Purser's (1976) stark definition of value:

Value in drawing simply refers to the lightness or darkness of an area. Value serves many purposes: it expresses form and volume; it describes surface quality and texture; it depicts a mood; and it designates or qualifies space. (p. 28),

This, along with the incorporation of volume, texture, and depth as Bowers (2008) describes them, with volume concerning the presentation of three-dimensional space, texture referring to the imitation of tactile qualities and depth referring to visual elements used to create the illusion of three-dimensional space (pp. 59, 61, 65). All of these aspects together form the traditional idea of academic "art" and the presentation in illustration of representational images. If the illustration resembles a set with lighting, textured elements, and gradations between light and dark, it fits into the value-based column. This idea of a value-based type corresponds to the example seen in Figure 2.

Like with the line-based type, one can gain better comprehension of the value-based type by examining some illustrators who work in this style. The first, most recognizable example of this is the famous illustrator Norman Rockwell. In examining his work, one notices the various textures, representational imagery and gradation from darkness to light throughout the illustrations. Shape is present, but it is almost entirely rendered out with textures and does not exist as a plastic, flat element. It is subsidiary to value. The same can be said about line. Obviously, Rockwell's work is representational in a way that lends itself to being two shades away from photography. Numerous books have been published by and about the man, with one

of the more famous being *The Norman Rockwell Treasury*, by T.S. Buechner (1979). Still, examining the work of other illustrators will aid in further explaining the concept of value-based illustration.

Moving away from solid realism, the work of Brad Holland and Frank Frazetta provides further explanation of a value-based type. Consider Holland's work- while texture and realism are certainly off, if one is considering the work as representational, the gradients between lightness and darkness, and the illusion of three-dimensional space are still present. This can be seen in the work Holland presents in his online portfolio, www.bradholland.net (2018). The same effect is present in the work of Frank Frazetta, even without the photo-realism seen in Rockwell's work. Shape and line is present, but minimized, and the arch toward the traditional "academic art" epitomized by classic oil painting is obvious. Like Rockwell, Frazetta's work has been immortalized in a series of books, including one edited by the fantasy art experts Cathy and Arnie Fenner, *Frank Frazetta: Icon* (2003). Having examined the line-based and value-based illustration types, it's time to examine the shape-based type.



Figure 3. An example of the shape-based type of illustration. Image by Samuel Washburn (2018)

Shape-based type.

Shape-based illustration type rests aesthetically between the value and line-based illustration styles, and presents imagery that is predominantly abstract in nature and based around flat color presentations with little gradation. A good example of this is some of the early work in the Object Poster style as Heller and Schwast (2008) describe it, consisting of simplified images (p. 39). Another way of understanding shape-based type is to consider the definitions of plane, shape and negative space put forward by Bowers (2008). Specifically, Bowers refers to plane as

the “physical surface of a composition” (p. 59), shape as “the external outline (or contour) of a form” (p. 61) and negative space as “a seemingly empty but active area of a composition” (p. 64). Essentially, all of these elements work together to form the shape-based type, which accomplishes representation of abstract imagery by manipulating the plane of the illustration using primarily shape and negative space to the exclusion of much value or linework. Another way to think of the shape-based type is to imagine illustrations primarily made up of flat colors, resembling cut paper or stamps. An example of this can be seen in Figure 3.

Once again, examining the work of shape-based type illustrators will help explain and clarify of what the type encompasses. The best clarification can be found in the work of Ed Emberly, Mary Blair and Gary Baseman. Emberly’s work is about as shape-based as it gets, with most of it essentially image-making instruction for students with no experience at all, as epitomized in his color-themed drawings books like *Ed Emberley’s Big Orange Drawing Book*. Examples from all of these are highlighted in the book *Ed Emberley*, written by Todd Oldham and Caleb Neelon (2014) . To battle that lack of experience and training, he uses flat shapes and lines. The line is particularly supplemental to shape in these illustrations- it does not define outlines for the most part, and does not function as a vibrant or defining part of the illustration. Value has a similar position in the work of Blair and Baseman. It is certainly present, but the abstract, flat nature of the shapes still supersedes the elements of value (lightness to darkness, rendering of textures, etc.). Blair’s flat, whimsical work was done mostly for the Walt Disney company, but examples can be seen on the tribute website run by her nieces M. Richardson and J. Chamberlain, www.magicofmaryblair.com (2017). Baseman’s cartoony, shape-based aesthetic and work can be seen in many venues, including his website, www.garybaseman.com (2017).

Like the previous types, the element that gets the most play is the element that defines the type position of the image.

The Fourth Type: Harmony



Figure 4. An example of the harmony type of illustration. Image by Samuel Washburn (2018).

By examining these three types together, one can develop a process to categorize illustrations into the three camps. Doing so helps to establish which of the three overall types is dominant from year to year in image making. There is, however, a fourth category to consider in relation to these other three types. This fourth category houses images that strike a balance between the three prime categories. In essence, images of this type express a “harmony” between two, or all three, of the other styles. This category is called harmony after this notion. After all,

every illustration is made up of the three elements outlined in the types to a certain degree, and a strong mixture of shape and line or shape and value, etc. is not impossible. After all, as Chaet notes, a textured effect can “be fabricated from the artist’s use of lines and tonal values” (1983, p. 17). If one has an image that is made of lines, but said lines are so choppy or short that they start functioning as texture and mimicking the value type, the image would fit into the harmony category. There are some illustrators whose work fits into this category as well. This includes artists like André Carrilho, whose work combines the traits of value and line-based type. Examples of this can be seen in Carrilho’s online portfolio, www.andrecarrilho.com (2018). By presenting this fourth category, confusion is lessened for this thesis and future research, which otherwise could be bogged down in these nebulous areas between the types. This in turn would effect reliability and lead to wildly different interpretations of the same images.

Of note: these categories grew to include a fifth type over the course of examining the annuals. This fifth type, labeled “missing”, has no aesthetic components to it and simply serves as a placeholder for images that are missing from the annuals due to printing error or presumably accidental removal. Thankfully, with a few rare exceptions, this category is a extremely small in comparison to the original four.

Conclusion

Having presented a justification for research, a general look at how trends affect creative fields and how they are studied, how illustrations are categorized, and finally a breakdown of the four fundamental types of illustration, the researcher is prepared to move forward into the Methodology, which will examine what tools will be developed for this study and outline the nuts and bolts of the research to be performed.

Methodology

The Methodology used in this thesis shares many similarities with that of a quantitative study, but with some key differences and qualitative elements that categorize it best as a mixed-methods study. As this is somewhat unusual for a study, a brief explanation is in order. This study involves the analysis of massive amounts of visual data and categorizing all of it into breakdowns contained in electronic spreadsheets. These spreadsheets are then used to develop charts which are analyzed in the conclusions section. While this sounds very mathematical and statistical (and it is), it also fits under the qualitative header for one basic reason: visual analysis is in the eye of the beholder. Quite simply, it is subjective. As such, this study should be viewed as a mixed-method starting point for future studies, and as the researcher's eyes and understanding of art is unique, the analysis will be unique.

Population and Sample

Population.

Illustrations produced between the years of 1959 to 2016

Sample.

Images from the Society of Illustrators Annuals numbered 1 through 58, covering the years 1959 through 2016

Justification for sample.

The Society of Illustrators, with their annual show and publication of work, serves as one of the recognized gate-keepers of the illustration profession. As such, the annuals (or rather, the images inside them) serve as a good representation of where the illustration field is at type-wise during each particular year.

An important caveat is noted here. While the annuals include several illustrations for the hall of fame, student sections, and other special sections throughout the years, the only illustrations relevant to this study (and considered to be images) are those included in the juried selection.

Sampling Method: Convenience

The initial inspiration for using the SoI annuals came from the coincidence of having a comparatively large collection of the annuals available at the Chambers Library at the University of Central Oklahoma. It is exceedingly rare to find large collections of the annuals in the wild, and having around thirty-four of the the fifty-eight available right off the bat sparked the initial idea for this study. Using the Interlibrary Loan Program, a partnership that the Max Chambers Library is a part of which connects it to other libraries across the country, all the other annuals were obtained and utilized as well. Finally, a December, 2017 trip to the Society's physical headquarters in New York provided the researcher the opportunity to review the final remaining images that were available but had been torn out or otherwise ripped out of the previously available annuals.

Adapted Quantitative and Qualitative Methods

Correlational aspect.

The basic assumption at the heart of this study's thesis is that a type of illustration's appearances in any given annual corresponds to its popularity that year. Ergo, it's argued here that the number of examples per year has a correlational relationship with the popularity of said type.

Content analysis aspect.

Content Analysis is, quite simply, the process of observing and researching documents and items, as opposed to people. It works perfectly for the review of annuals full of images, and also fits under the qualitative header for the purposes of this study. Again, this is because the researcher will view an image at least slightly differently than anyone else.

Instruments**Data Collection Instruments.**

The data collection process was distributed between several distinct tools/applications:

1. The Apple Pages Numbers Program (equivalent to Microsoft Excel)
2. Hash Marks utilized in in the Numbers Program
3. Google Sheets program (also equivalent to Excel) for combined annual data analysis
4. Percentages determined in Google Sheets program
5. Apple Pages Numbers Program generated graphs for visual analysis
6. The Image types themselves
7. Qualification Tests for the Image types

Qualification tests.

These tests (seen below, in Figure 6) are used in connection with data collection instruments to determine which of the aforementioned type categories the illustrations fit into. The tests break down aspects of each type into three qualifying questions designed to place an image in the right type category.

A brief refresher on the different types is in order here. There are technically five different types examined in the study, but one is labeled “Missing” and serves as a placeholder for images that are deleted from the annuals through various errors. The four prime types consist of line-based, value-based, shape-based and the harmony type. The names of each type outline their characteristics. The line-based type represents images made up mostly of line. The value-based type consists of gradation in value from light to dark. The shape-based type is based around flat positive/negative imagery. The harmony type, the middle-man as it were, covers mixtures of the the other three prime types. All of these types exist on a spectrum, with harmony type existing where the other types overlap. A visual example of this can be seen in figure 5 below.

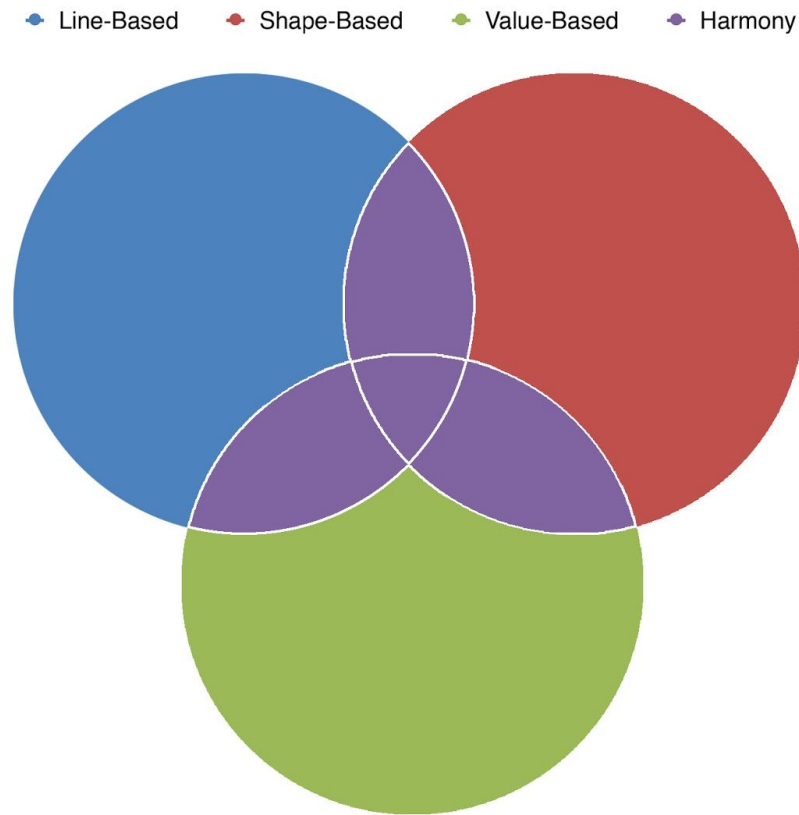


Figure 5. Visual representation of the types and how they relate to each other.

The process with the tests works like this: if an image doesn't obviously fit into one of the categories, the researcher should consult the tests. If the image matches at least two out of three qualifiers in a test and fails to meet as high a threshold in the other tests, then it is designated within that specific type.

The tests are used as tie-breakers. When there is confusion, and an image fails to quickly conform to one type or the other, the researcher uses the tests and goes through each clarifying question one by one to determine which category the image fits into. As this is an initial study, it is hoped that these tests can be refined over time and the efforts of others to replicate the

research.

<p>Line-Based Test</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are the edge relationships in the image defined primarily by line? 2. Is the use of line in the image a primary element of both presentation and function? 3. Is the image not functional/recognizable when linework is removed? <p>Shape-Based Test</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are the edge relationships in the image defined primarily by positive and negative spaces sitting next to each other? 2. Does flat shape make up the primary graphic presentation of the image? 3. Is the image primarily filled with abstract imagery? <p>Value-Based Test</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is the image primarily made up of rendered gradations from dark to light? 2. Does the image use representational imagery that mimics natural three dimensional representation? 3. Are the elements of texture and form present in the image? <p>Harmony Category Test</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Does the image not fit in the other three categories? 2. Is there a balance between types in the image? 3. Is the image not functional in one type when elements of one or both of the other types is removed?
--

Figure 6. Qualification Tests used to aid in determining the type of an image.

Procedures

The procedures of this study are actually fairly simple and straightforward, but they are segmented and take some verbiage to explain.

Annual procurement.

Complete annuals were obtained through three sources. The Max Chambers Library at the University of Central Oklahoma, the Interlibrary Loan System (or ILLiad) and the Society of Illustrators' private library in New York City.

Reviewing the annuals.

The review of the SoI Annuals is done purposefully out of order whenever possible, with some limited exceptions due to availability and timing issues. This approach is to prevent an unconscious determination of visual trends by the researcher. For example, if the researcher notices that shape-based types are the most popular for two or three years in a row, it might influence the researcher to assume a trend is forming. Ergo, the researcher might unconsciously shift images out of the harmony category into the shape-based category. This would be harmful to the final study.

When reviewing each annual, hash marks and the Apple Numbers program are used. The process is simple enough- each project (some of the images are, in fact, accepted as groups in the annual) is looked at one at a time and is placed into one of the four categories via columns the Numbers document. After the first few reviews, the fifth category of “missing” was added to account for missing images. These are determined by the image’s characteristic of having been torn from pages or faulty numbering in the specific annual.

The Numbers program takes each column and produces a sum of each category. A sample of this is seen in Figure 7. This is done for each of the fifty-eight available annuals. Once this phase is done, the data is further compiled together.

<i>SI01/1959 Breakdowns</i>						
<u>Project/Image Number</u>	<u>Line-based</u>	<u>Shape-based</u>	<u>Value-based</u>	<u>Harmony</u>	<u>Missing</u>	<u>Totals</u>
1				1	Line-based	142
2			1		Shape-based	62
3	1				Value-based	59
4				1	Harmony	52
5		1			Missing	0
2			1			
3	1					
4	1					
5	1					
6	1					
11	1					
12			1			
13	1					
14				1		
15			1			
16		1				
17	1					
18	1					
19	1					
20	1					
21	1					
22			1			
23			1			
24				1		
25				1		
26		1				
27				1		
28		1				
29		1				
30		1				
31	1					
32				1		
33	1					

Figure 7. Sample image of the hash mark breakdowns used when analyzing an annual.

Compiling the data.

The data from the summed columns in each Numbers document is transferred over into a Google Sheets document. One can see a sample of this in Figure 8. Once all the categories for each annual are put in they are summed together in the TOTAL# column. This column is instrumental in determining the ratio for each category in that annual. Using totals and previously listed category numbers, a function is developed within the Sheets document to produce the percentages of each type in each annual, to two decimal points.

YEAR	LINE-BASED #	SHAPE-BASED #	VALUE-BASED #	FOURTH CATEGO	MISSING #	TOTAL #
1959_SI01	142	62	59	52	0	315
1960_SI02	177	76	49	51	1	354
1961_SI03	181	53	39	35	0	308
1962_SI04	140	80	68	56	0	344
1963_SI05	131	77	32	50	0	290
1964_SI06	117	67	38	56	0	278
1965_SI07	160	73	37	51	0	321
1966_SI08	129	80	72	54	0	335
1967_SI09	169	105	109	47	0	430
1968_SI10	167	74	117	83	0	441
1969_SI11	145	99	95	96	8	443
1970_SI12	231	64	122	84	3	504
1971_SI13	153	122	116	93	1	485
1972_SI14	153	111	132	79	0	475

MISSING #	TOTAL #	LINE %	SHAPE %	VALUE %	FOURTH %	MISSING %
0	315	45.08%	19.68%	18.73%	16.51%	0.00%
1	354	50.00%	21.47%	13.84%	14.41%	0.28%
0	308	58.77%	17.21%	12.66%	11.36%	0.00%
0	344	40.70%	23.26%	19.77%	16.28%	0.00%
0	290	45.17%	26.55%	11.03%	17.24%	0.00%
0	278	42.09%	24.10%	13.67%	20.14%	0.00%
0	321	49.84%	22.74%	11.53%	15.89%	0.00%
0	335	38.51%	23.88%	21.49%	16.12%	0.00%
0	430	39.30%	24.42%	25.35%	10.93%	0.00%
0	441	37.87%	16.78%	26.53%	18.82%	0.00%
8	443	32.73%	22.35%	21.44%	21.67%	1.81%
3	504	45.83%	12.70%	24.21%	16.67%	0.60%
1	485	31.55%	25.15%	23.92%	19.18%	0.21%
0	475	32.21%	23.37%	27.79%	16.63%	0.00%
0	466	17.60%	12.66%	51.29%	18.45%	0.00%
0	515	26.41%	18.83%	37.48%	17.28%	0.00%

Figure 8. Split image of the Google Sheets document tabulating the annual breakdowns and converting them into percentages.

Once these percentages are all determined, the data is moved into another Apple Numbers document where the percentage data is used to create a visual graph which is examined in the Results section in Figure 8. This graph is used to help the researcher determine changes over time in the popularity of different types.

Once all of these procedures are completed we are, of course, left with the results and the analysis of said results.

Results

Individual Annuals

The individual annual analyses provide useful information for practitioners and future researchers. Specifically, future researchers can use these individual reviews to compare their own results in similar studies, down to the exact image. This method works better with the older annuals, which retain a number system that was done away with the newer annuals. The individual annual breakdowns are extensive- too extensive, in fact, to be presented in full in this thesis, as they exceed over 500 pages in length. To remedy this, the researcher has presented the table of data for the first annual as Table 2 in the Appendix on page 80. Subsequent tables are available from the researcher. The combination of the data from all the annuals is found in table and graph form below.

Combined Annuals in Table and Graph Form.

Table 1

Totals and Percentages of all Annual Breakdowns

Year/Annual Number	Line-based #	Shape-based #	Value-based #	Harmony #	Missing #	Total #	Line-based %	Shape-based %	Value-based %	Harmony %	Missing %
1959_SI01	142	62	59	52	0	315	45.08%	19.68%	18.73%	16.51%	0.00%
1960_SI02	177	76	49	51	1	354	50.00%	21.47%	13.84%	14.41%	0.28%
1961_SI03	181	53	39	35	0	308	58.77%	17.21%	12.66%	11.36%	0.00%
1962_SI04	140	80	68	56	0	344	40.70%	23.26%	19.77%	16.28%	0.00%
1963_SI05	131	77	32	50	0	290	45.17%	26.55%	11.03%	17.24%	0.00%
1964_SI06	117	67	38	56	0	278	42.09%	24.10%	13.67%	20.14%	0.00%
1965_SI07	160	73	37	51	0	321	49.84%	22.74%	11.53%	15.89%	0.00%
1966_SI08	129	80	72	54	0	335	38.51%	23.88%	21.49%	16.12%	0.00%
1967_SI09	169	105	109	47	0	430	39.30%	24.42%	25.35%	10.93%	0.00%
1968_SI10	167	74	117	83	0	441	37.87%	16.78%	26.53%	18.82%	0.00%
1969_SI11	145	99	95	96	8	443	32.73%	22.35%	21.44%	21.67%	1.81%
1970_SI12	231	64	122	84	3	504	45.83%	12.70%	24.21%	16.67%	0.60%
1971_SI13	153	122	116	93	1	485	31.55%	25.15%	23.92%	19.18%	0.21%
1972_SI14	153	111	132	79	0	475	32.21%	23.37%	27.79%	16.63%	0.00%
1973_SI15	82	59	239	86	0	466	17.60%	12.66%	51.29%	18.45%	0.00%
1974_SI16	136	97	193	89	0	515	26.41%	18.83%	37.48%	17.28%	0.00%
1975_SI17	108	61	259	112	0	540	20.00%	11.30%	47.96%	20.74%	0.00%
1976_SI18	86	49	247	112	4	498	17.27%	9.84%	49.60%	22.49%	0.80%
1977_SI19	82	54	241	146	0	523	15.68%	10.33%	46.08%	27.92%	0.00%
1978_SI20	100	36	230	89	0	455	21.98%	7.91%	50.55%	19.56%	0.00%
1979_SI21	108	50	330	98	0	586	18.43%	8.53%	56.31%	16.72%	0.00%
1980_SI22	91	42	362	137	1	633	14.38%	6.64%	57.19%	21.64%	0.16%
1981_SI23	63	35	402	91	0	591	10.66%	5.92%	68.02%	15.40%	0.00%
1982_SI24	93	48	245	111	0	497	18.71%	9.66%	49.30%	22.33%	0.00%
1983_SI25	77	80	267	102	0	526	14.64%	15.21%	50.76%	19.39%	0.00%
1984_SI26	95	71	294	91	0	551	17.24%	12.89%	53.36%	16.52%	0.00%
1985_SI27	107	89	345	126	0	667	16.04%	13.34%	51.72%	18.89%	0.00%
1986_SI28	78	90	370	101	0	639	12.21%	14.08%	57.90%	15.81%	0.00%
1987_SI29	59	75	353	86	0	573	10.30%	13.09%	61.61%	15.01%	0.00%
1988_SI30	71	80	310	70	0	531	13.37%	15.07%	58.38%	13.18%	0.00%
1989_SI31	62	71	317	81	0	531	11.68%	13.37%	59.70%	15.25%	0.00%
1990_SI32	61	40	282	104	0	487	12.53%	8.21%	57.91%	21.36%	0.00%
1991_SI33	39	52	307	60	0	458	8.52%	11.35%	67.03%	13.10%	0.00%
1992_SI34	57	77	252	70	0	456	12.50%	16.89%	55.26%	15.35%	0.00%
1993_SI35	52	52	307	82	0	493	10.55%	10.55%	62.27%	16.63%	0.00%
1994_SI36	68	64	252	93	1	478	14.23%	13.39%	52.72%	19.46%	0.21%
1995_SI37	53	50	300	90	1	494	10.73%	10.12%	60.73%	18.22%	0.20%
1996_SI38	65	82	332	59	0	538	12.08%	15.24%	61.71%	10.97%	0.00%
1997_SI39	62	74	288	76	0	500	12.40%	14.80%	57.60%	15.20%	0.00%
1998_SI40	49	60	371	76	2	558	8.78%	10.75%	66.49%	13.62%	0.36%
1999_SI41	81	87	304	93	0	565	14.34%	15.40%	53.81%	16.46%	0.00%
2000_SI42	69	73	249	94	0	485	14.23%	15.05%	51.34%	19.38%	0.00%
2001_SI43	103	118	171	69	0	461	22.34%	25.60%	37.09%	14.97%	0.00%
2002_SI44	141	131	160	59	1	492	28.66%	26.63%	32.52%	11.99%	0.20%
2003_SI45	105	106	226	78	0	515	20.39%	20.58%	43.88%	15.15%	0.00%
2004_SI46	107	91	195	96	0	489	21.88%	18.61%	39.88%	19.63%	0.00%
2005_SI47	137	145	147	76	0	505	27.13%	28.71%	29.11%	15.05%	0.00%
2006_SI48	101	87	232	119	0	539	18.74%	16.14%	43.04%	22.08%	0.00%
2007_SI49	141	88	179	70	0	478	29.50%	18.41%	37.45%	14.64%	0.00%
2008_SI50	168	121	112	70	0	471	35.67%	25.69%	23.78%	14.86%	0.00%
2009_SI51	141	127	127	52	0	447	31.54%	28.41%	28.41%	11.63%	0.00%
2010_SI52	121	153	62	81	0	417	29.02%	36.69%	14.87%	19.42%	0.00%
2011_SI53	134	154	120	75	0	483	27.74%	31.88%	24.84%	15.53%	0.00%
2012_SI54	125	133	97	55	0	410	30.49%	32.44%	23.66%	13.41%	0.00%
2013_SI55	99	184	95	105	0	483	20.50%	38.10%	19.67%	21.74%	0.00%
2014_SI56	110	205	59	64	0	438	25.11%	46.80%	13.47%	14.61%	0.00%
2015_SI57	106	242	98	102	0	548	19.34%	44.16%	17.88%	18.61%	0.00%
2016_SI58	61	139	110	82	0	392	15.56%	35.46%	28.06%	20.92%	0.00%

Table 1. The results of the annual breakdowns in chronological order. Table 1 also displays the same information broken down along percentages.

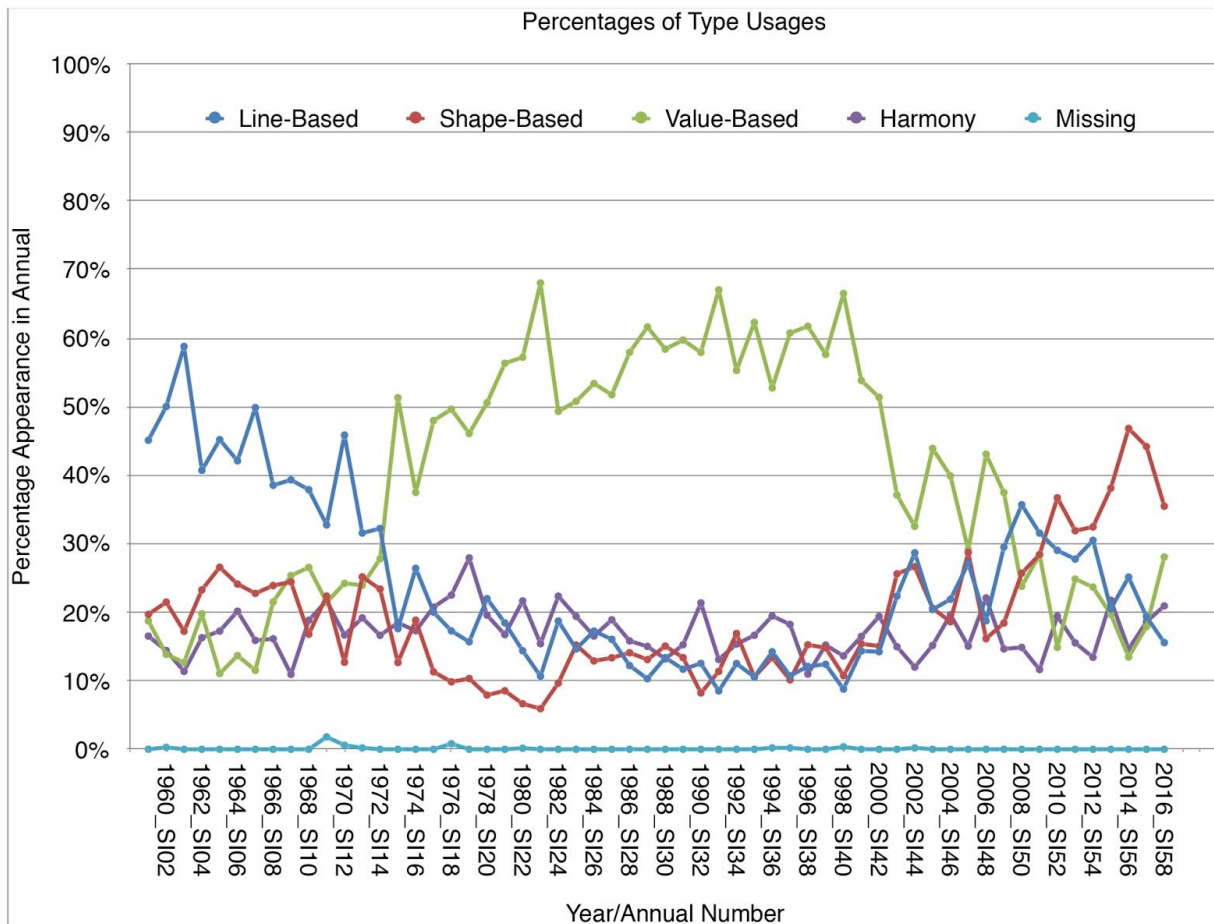


Figure 9. The visual representation of the data from Table 1.

Observations and Conclusions

There are no identifiable short term (five to ten year) cyclical trends in the popularity of one type over the others. One of the initial hypotheses of this study, that cycles could be found, remains inconclusive at this stage. This is not to say there are not cycles present over a longer period of time. The present data simply doesn't support that conclusion at this time.

Trends that do appear in the data seemingly correspond to time periods of ten to thirty years. Value-based type images enjoy a massive run of dominance from the early 1970s to the late 2000's, preceded by a dominant decade of the line-based type and followed by a mixed set of years and somewhat dominant performance by the shape-based type.

There are not so much gradual shifts in popularity as there are sudden shifts. One can interpret a general curve made up of peaks and valleys in the usage of distinct types over time, but these transitions are jagged, and in the first major transition, between line-based and value-based types, one sees a major flip. In annual SI15 (Society of Illustrators 15), covering the year 1973, the value-based type vaults ahead of line-based after a few years of line-based sinking in popularity. This is highlighted in Figure 10. There is no year to year back and forth or ascendancy of the harmony type, which one might expect due to its nature as something of a waypoint between the more distinct styles. Harmony never claims the top spot throughout all of the annuals. Instead, in annual SI15, value-based type shoots up to over 50% of the images presented and stays relatively strong for around thirty years.

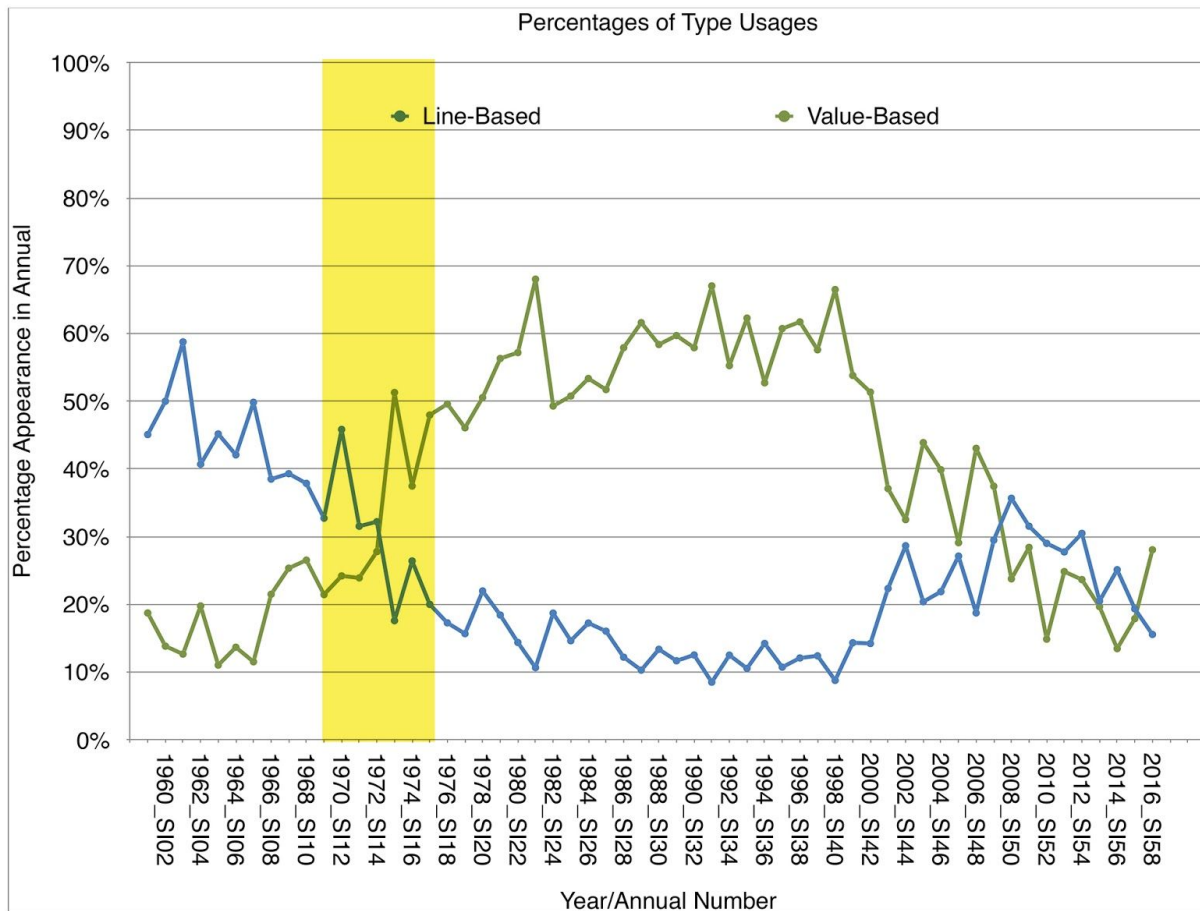


Figure 10. The visual representation of selected data from Figure 9 with the first major type shift highlighted.

Eventually, around annual SI44, covering the year 2002, something closer to a dynamic “fight” starts to take place, with the value-based type getting busted down and the line-based type making a two year comeback in 2008 and 2009 before the shape-based type takes over for the first time in annual SI52, covering 2010 (though at nowhere near the dominance value-based attained). The possible causes for these changes will be examined in the Discussion section but it is important at this point to realize that the data seems to indicate that these shifts happen quickly- over the course of less than ten years, not multiple decades- then one might have

assumed when comparing to other media, like music or fashion. It will be interesting to see where future annuals go, as the pattern of one type dominating has weakened in the past ten to fifteen years, as highlighted in figure 11, leading to a more diversified period in terms of trends.

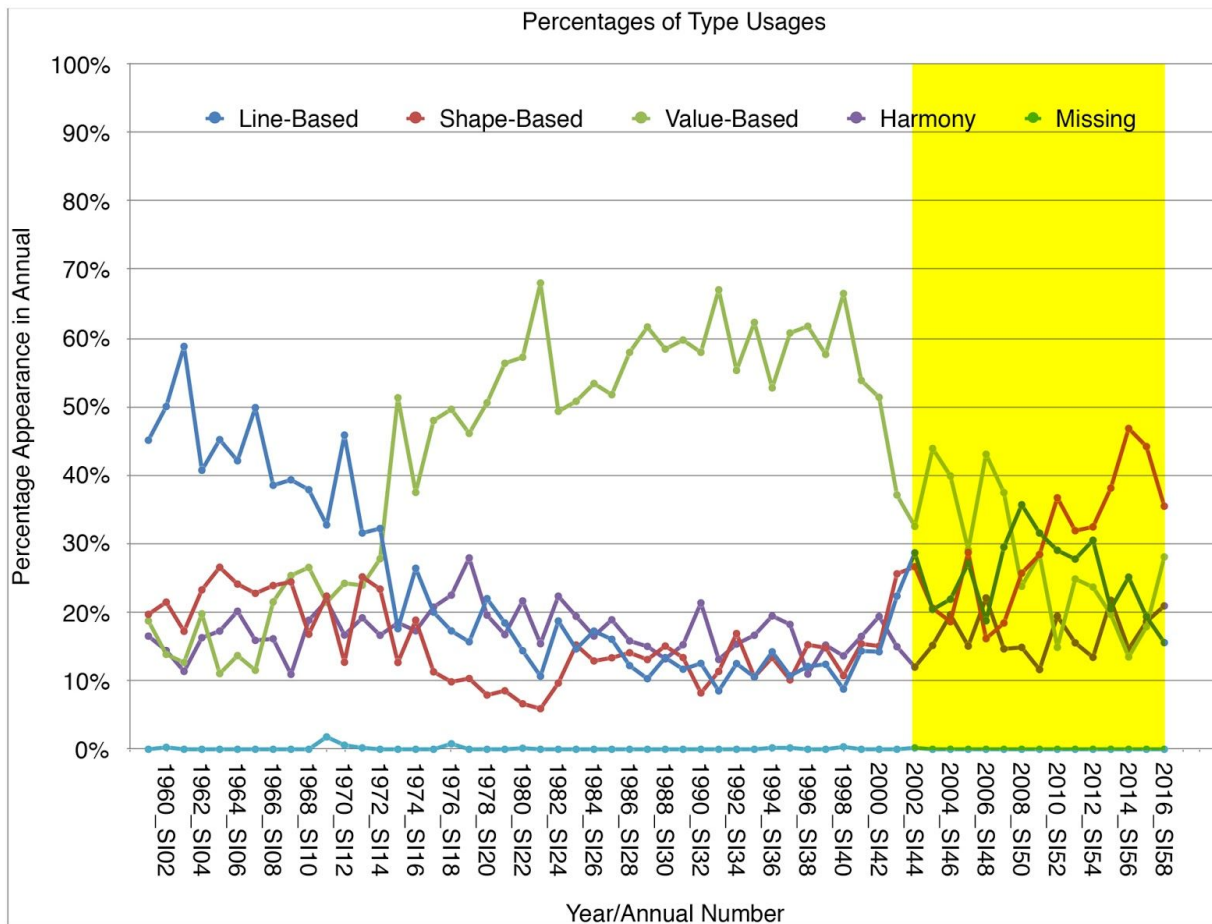


Figure 11. The visual representation of the data from Table 1 with the years 2002 to 2016 highlighted.

Epochs and decades.

Instead of flipping around over the course of five to ten years, something one might expect from a “trend” when compared to other media, the dominant type tends to stay dominant

for decades. So, when discussing the lifespan of these type's popularity, it seems more apt to use the phrase "epoch", referring to distinct periods of time in the historical record.

Trajectory of line-based types in the annuals.

When the annuals begin in 1959 (the first year judged), line-based type illustrations dominate the other types, peaking at 58.77% in annual SI3, covering 1961. Starting in the early 1970s the line-based type quickly starts losing steam before being surpassed by the value-based type. The popularity of line-based type continues to trend downward before leveling out in the 10 to 20% range. This trend continued until the early 2000s in annuals SI44 to SI47 where line-based gained steam again, even topping the pack in annuals SI50 and SI51 before receding again in recent years. These shifts can be better observed in figure 12.

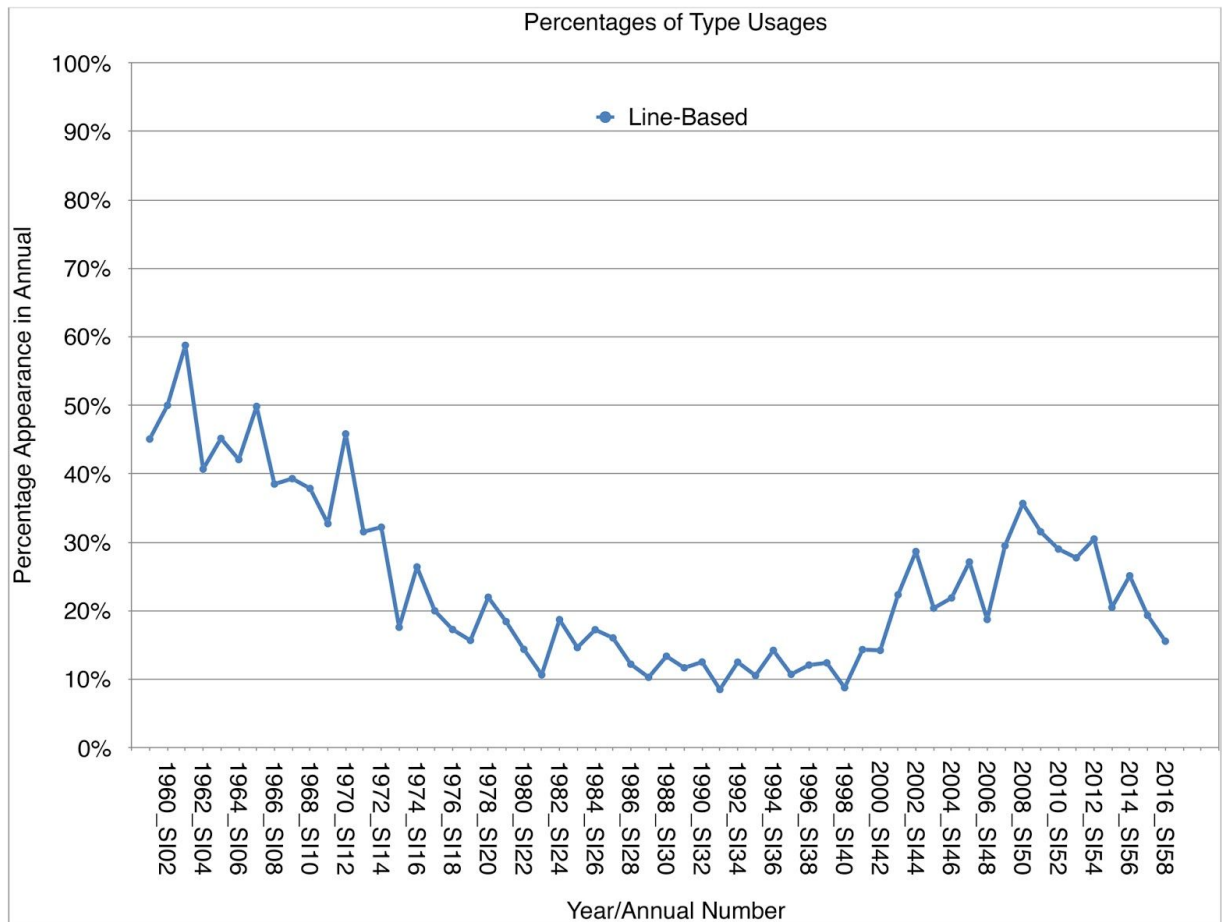


Figure 12. The trajectory of the line-based type's appearances in the annuals.

Trajectory of value-based types in the annuals.

None of the other types of illustration have as dominant a run at the top the heap for as long a period of time as the value-based type. After spending eight years below 25% in appearances, with annual SI15 the value-based type starts gaining traction and hovering around or above 50% (save for annual SI16 covering 1974) for nearly 30 years. No other type achieves such prominence in the period covered in this study. Even after cooling off in the late 2000's, value remains in contention to this day. The rise and fall of the value-based type can be seen in figure 13.

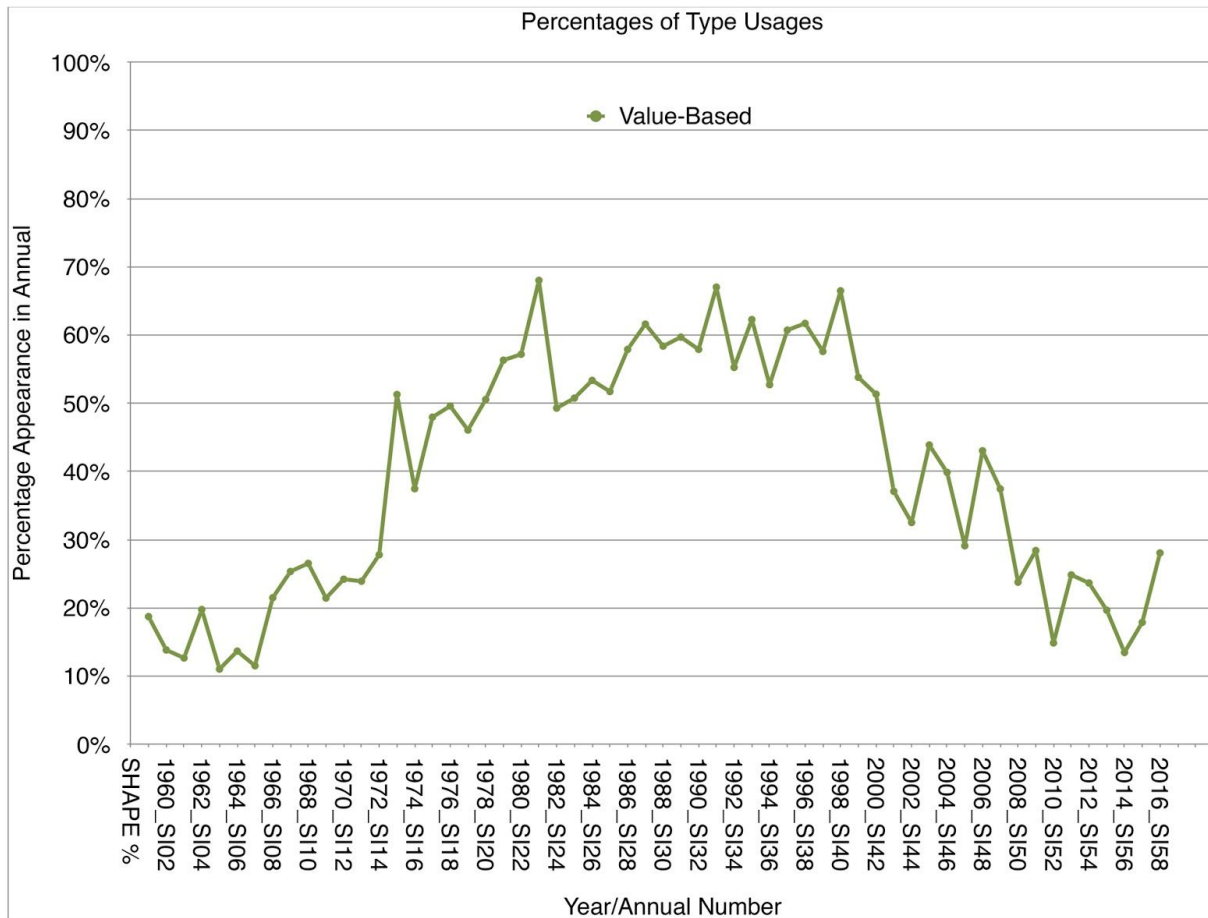


Figure 13. The trajectory of the value-based type's appearances in the annuals.

Trajectory of Shape-based types in the annuals.

The shape-based type plays the long-game in the annuals. Starting in second place, at about 23% of the annual's selections in 1959, the type maintains close to a quarter of the real estate in the annuals until the value-based type starts taking over around annual SI16. From there, the shape-based type settles at or below the 20% mark until 2001, when it starts picking up steam, ultimately coming out on top in annual SI52, covering 2009. It is the current king the hill, but not nearly as strong or dominant as the value-based type in its heyday, still failing to hit 50% to this day. The ups and downs of the Shape-based type can be seen in Figure 14.

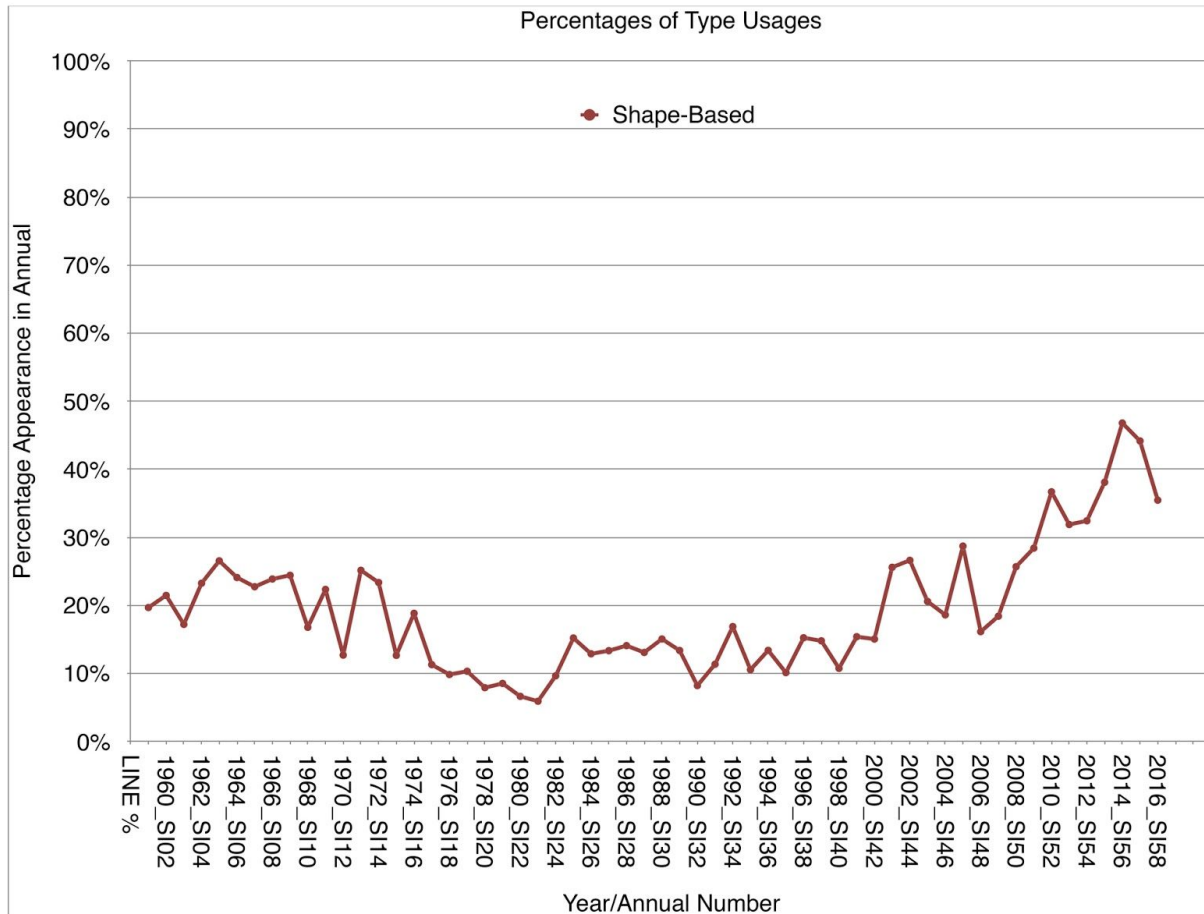


Figure 14. The trajectory of the shape-based type’s appearances in the annuals.

Trajectory of harmony types in the annuals.

Considering the nature of the changes in popularity between the other types, it seems a safe assumption that harmony type illustrations would occupy the top spot at various inflection points. After all, if two types are duking it out in the marketplace, then it would make sense that the transition would find a mix of the two taking over for a bit. That mix would fit in the harmony type. As straightforward as the concept seems, however, the data seems to show otherwise. Harmony is the only type besides “Missing” to never take the top spot. Indeed, it stays the most consistent, only breaking through the 25% mark once, in annual SI19, covering 1977.

Harmony still functions as a weigh station, but apparently that means it maintains a fairly consistent space. The trajectory, such as it is, of the harmony type can be seen in Figure 15.

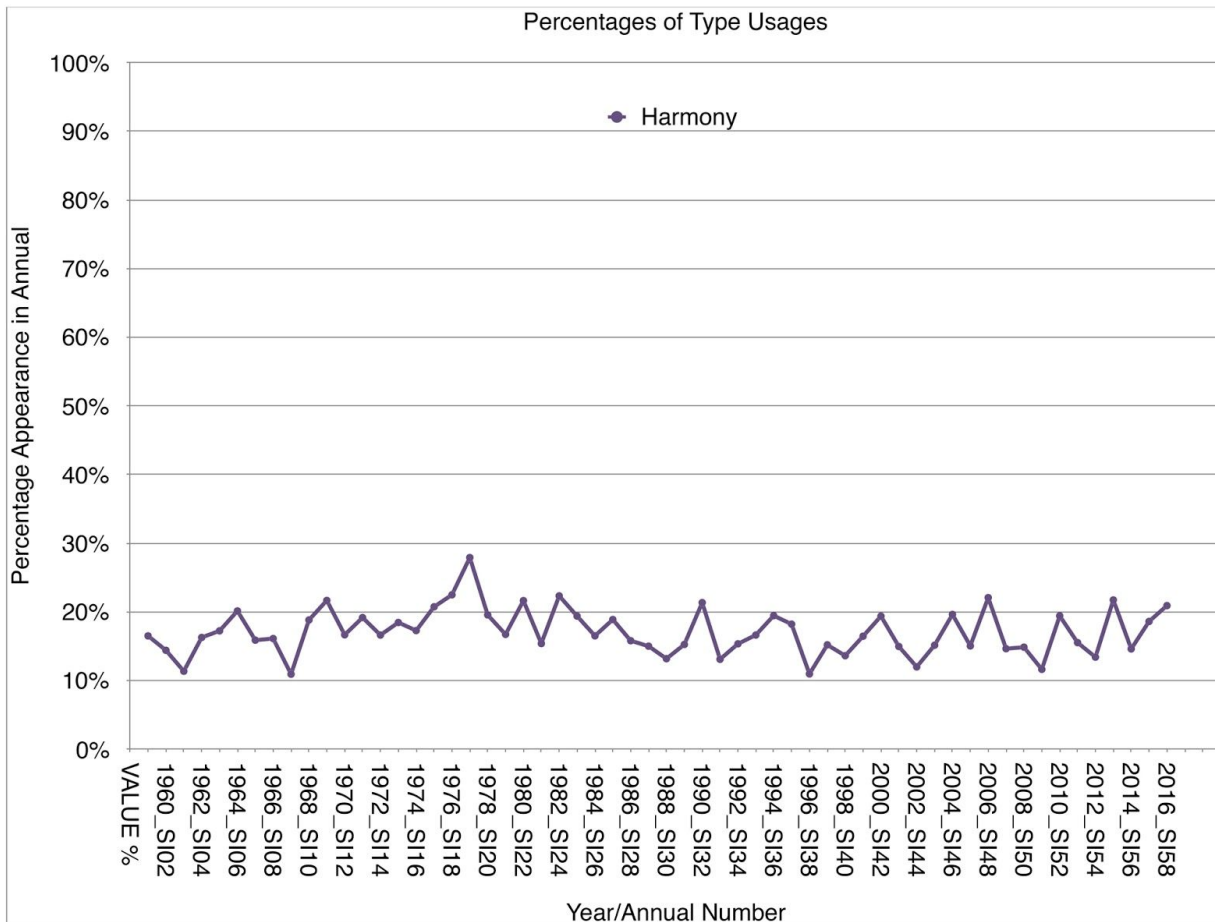


Figure 15. The trajectory of the harmony-based type's appearances in the annuals.

General Conclusions Drawn from the Analysis: Proving or Disproving of Thesis

The study provides important information on where the industry has been. Tracking the trends, one can make assumptions about where the industry has been and could be going, which will be covered in the discussion section. In relation to the thesis itself, the results are slightly mixed. The thesis is proven, but not beyond the range of criticism. It is best to examine this section by section.

First, the study does define trends made up of visual characteristics. These trends show enough consistency to be of use in student instruction, and professional guidance. Replication of the study is needed to further clarify the history, but this study does help develop the conversation, another aspect of the thesis.

Unfortunately, the later years covered in the study present a muddled view of what is popular from year to year. The data is still incredibly useful, but does not provide neon signs pointing at where the industry is going, as one might hope from such a study. There is no concrete repetition, particularly in the later years. Still, it does help clarify the field, and provides a light into a darkened field. Data is provided which will help the field and spawn more research and discussion.

Discussion

There are a number of takeaways that come out of the study, which provide several points for discussion.

Major Takeaways

1. The data makes clear that there are definite epochs of popularity for the different types, with minor exceptions. For periods of at least seven or more years, with the exception of the two annuals covering 2008 and 2009, one type is more popular than its kin.
2. More research is needed. Since design in general and illustration in particular, is subjective, a replication of the study will help clarify the data and guide further research.

3. With limited exception, the annuals do not cycle between the two same types. Essentially, they follow a pattern on A-B-C, not A-B-A, again noting the annuals covering 2008 and 2009, where line-based type beats out shape-based type before the pattern takes hold again. Another sixty years worth of data would be needed to determine if this pattern is cyclical, but data represented visually shows the basic transition from A to B to C.

Limitations

Before delving into the Discussion section further, it is necessary to frankly discuss limitations to the study overall, be it limitations in the design of the study or the annuals that serve as the sample population covered by it. The study itself is very large, with over fifty annuals and thousands of images being covered over a period of several months. Since this is done by one person, and since the viewing and interpretation of images is subjective by its very nature, it is only right that notification be made of any possible discrepancies caused by human error. As such, the researcher has and will continue to promote replication of this study by others, with the hope of comparing several iterations of the study in the future and further clarifying the data.

Referring back to the challenge of covering years and bundles of image data, it is important to consider possible limitations to the annuals themselves. The annuals, particularly earlier editions, may contain printing errors, necessitating the inclusion of the “Missing” category. This has a minimal effect on the study and results, but an effect nonetheless. The study also has no way to account for any duplicates that might occur from annual to annual or within

the same annual. If an illustrator submitted to more than one category in a year, or to multiple years, it is possible that the same image repeats itself in the study. Fortunately, this was not found to be a major problem in reviewing the annuals, and when an image does reappear in different categories, one can assume that the judges deemed it worthy of such an inclusion over other entrants. This keeps the understanding of the annuals as trendsetters and reflections of what is popular in illustration in place.

Finally, one has to acknowledge that the annuals themselves are not designed to be as thorough or vetted as a sample in a typical quantitative study would have to be. The panel of judges for each annual is different, which means that the subjective tastes vary from year to year in a way that may not hold up in laboratory conditions. Additionally, there are other factors that cannot be controlled for, such as who enters the annual. Many illustrators appear in the annuals for decades, while others appear for shorter periods. One can assume that many illustrators do not submit to the annuals at all. Indeed, the Society, being based out of New York, has attracted illustrators from the Northeast United States for decades. Indeed, the field itself was recognized as Northeast centric for years before technology improved to the point where image no longer had to be sent via package delivery or in slide form. Finally, the annuals, in their current iteration, only go back to 1959, which cuts out decades worth of work in the field.

Understanding all of these limitations, the annuals still provide a valuable resource for study. No other illustration competition the researcher has found goes back as far and continues up to the present day. The annuals are still pointed to in schools and considered an honor to be a part of in the field. They still provide a valuable data point to consider when studying the evolution of modern trends in illustration.

Possible Causes for Changes in Type Popularity

Referring back to the Methodology, there are a number of possible explanations for what causes the changes in trends of type popularity. Now that the data has been collected, it is worth looking back into these possible causes and how they square up with the study.

Cycles.

There is not enough data in the study to support the conclusion that there are repeated cycles in the popularity of specific types of illustration. Since the study involves sixty years, it is possible that longer term cycles are at work stretching back to the 1940's and beyond in epochs like that seen for the value-based type of illustration, but unlike the aforementioned Young study, there is not enough data going far back enough to say. Outside references might enlighten this issue and lead to further study. After all, Heller and Chwast point out “neo” styles in “Illustration: A Visual History” (2008). These could be seen as repeated styles. This allows for the possibility of cycles, but for the purposes of reviewing collected data in this specific study and what it signifies, this is not enough.

Whales.

Proving that “whales” have a strong effect on the popularity of types is difficult. The study does not categorize by names, so pointing out a particularly popular illustrator is not possible using the available data. Further research is needed to determine if there are any singular titans in the illustration field who affect the rest of the work. The one possible exception to this conclusion is the Pushpin Studio. Seddon notes that the studio, famously run by Seymour Chwast and Milton Glaser until 1974, began operation in the 1950s and is synonymous with the re-emergence of illustration being utilized in graphic design (pp. 154-155, 2014). Looking at the

work produced by Pushpin in the 1960s, one sees quite a lot of the line-based types of illustration that are also consistently the most popular in the annuals at this time. Such an iconic practitioner could be seen as a “whale” in this context. It is impossible to determine causality in this case, but the correlation is worth examining in the future.

Technological Changes.

Additional study on the effects of technological advances in the design field could provide further insight on trends in illustration type viewed in the review of the annuals. The rise of the computer and the Adobe family of software in particular seems to have correlated with the diminishment of the value-based type of illustration in popularity and the current state of the field where no particular type dominates over fifty percent of the sample. Reed notes that the computer had a major impact on the field in his coverage of illustration in the 1990s, changing how the design industry functions (p. 425, 2001). Proving causation would take a great deal of study, but when examining the timing of Adobe’s rise and how its programs influence image making creates an interesting theory to examine.

Adobe first introduces Photoshop in the late 1980s, and many review and professional writers start showing how it is influencing the design industry in the 1990s. By the mid to late 1990s, various writers and magazines are writing about Adobe’s products and Photoshop and Illustrator have reached more refined versions. This includes reviews for *How Magazine* like those for the Adobe program and Photoshop addendum *ImageReady* by Weinman (p.122-126, 1998) and *Illustrator* by Paul Mormack (p. 114-119, 1999). More programs and firms start adopting the programs at this time.

The Adobe products open up endless possibilities for image making, allowing for more

illustrators to pursue diverse image making practices outside the dominant value-based type trend that extended to the late 1990s. The Illustrator program particularly lends itself to the shape-based and line-based types as it relies on vectors. Assuming Adobe saturation hits around the year 2000, it makes sense that the value-based type plummets in popularity below 50% in the year 2001, covered by annual SI43, ultimately losing the top spot in 2008, as seen in annual SI50. No other type has broken 50% since, though shape-based has come close. This could, perhaps, coincide with the introduction and rise of Adobe Illustrator. This possible relationship is illustrated in Figure 16.

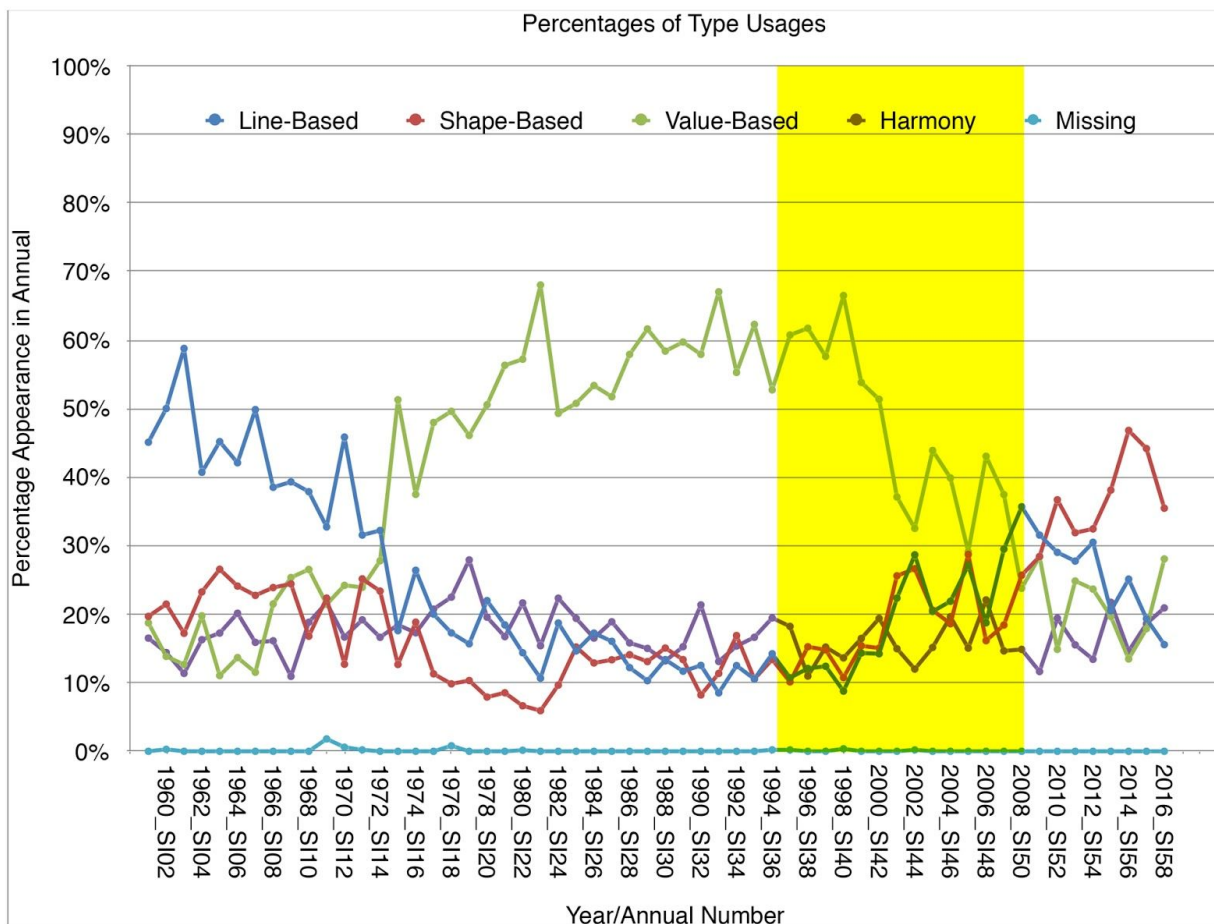


Figure 16. The trajectory of the five types with the timeline rise of Adobe products in prominence and the effects of this highlighted.

As Adobe has become more married to the illustration and design fields, it makes sense that it has influenced trends. The relation appears to be there, but further work needs to be done to confirm it.

Overall Aesthetic Changes in the Design Field.

Illustration does not exist in a vacuum. Illustrators work with and interact with graphic designers, fashion designers, and various advertising professionals and art directors on a daily basis. It makes sense that trends in the larger fields of design and advertising would have an effect on illustration as well. Using Figure 17 as a guide, one can pinpoint possible links to trends in illustration to larger trends in graphic design.

A few examples: Tony Seddon notes that the comic book inspired work of Roy Lichtenstein influenced designers like Jon Goodchild and Virginia Clive-Smith in work from 1968 (p. 163). Indeed, comic books experienced a so called “Silver Age” in the 1960s with the rise of Marvel Comics and the popularity of characters like Spider-Man and the Hulk. This period is chronicled in the aptly titled *Marvel Firsts: the 1960s*, a trade paperback published by the company and edited by Mark D. Beazley (2013). Most of the art in these comics would fit into the line-based type category. This overlaps with the popularity of the line-based type during this time period, as seen in Figure 17.

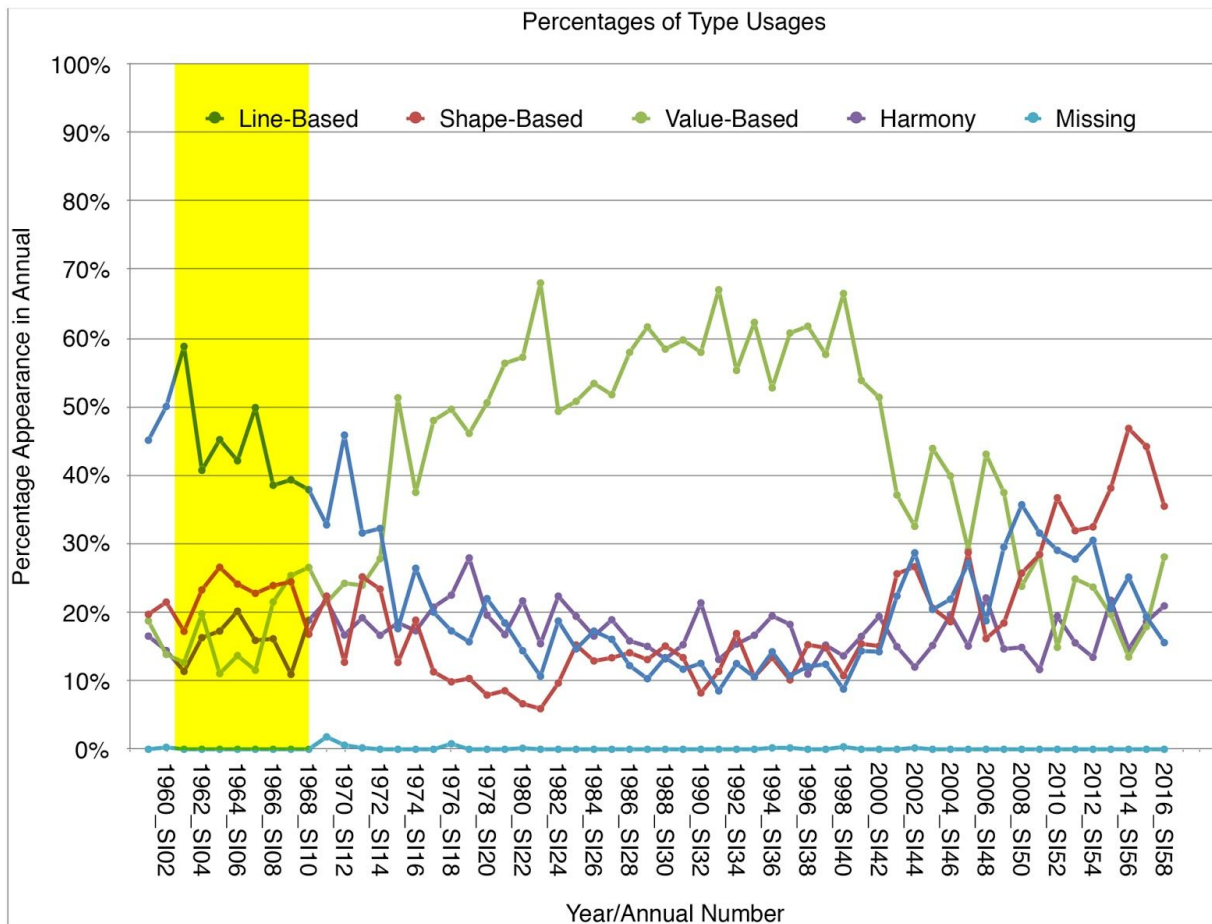


Figure 17. The trajectory of five types with the debut of popular Marvel Comics characters and the date of work by Goodchild and Clive-Smith highlighted.

Similarly, in Seddon’s breakdown of Paula Scher’s 1995 poster design for “Bring in ‘da noise. Bring in ‘da Funk” he remarks on Scher’s use of bold letter forms to “create dynamic relationships between negative and positive space” (p.217). This predates the rise of popularity in illustration in shape-based type category by about fifteen years, but it shows that things were moving in that direction in the design field. It could be that this larger trend was the catalyst for changes in illustration trends. As always, more research is needed, but the outlines of causes and effects do begin to take shape when one checks out what was popular at the time.

The Future

Examining the data presented, one can make a sound guess that the most popular type for the next few years will be the shape-based type. A planned continuation of this study, updating along with new annuals, will determine if this prediction holds up or if the field itself is undergoing radical change, as might be seen when examining the data from recent years and the lack of a truly dominant type. Ultimately, illustration is a complex field that interacts with other complex fields. Though one begins to see patterns and trends emerge, it will take time and diligence on the part of many researchers in the field to ascertain distinct periods of popularity in the types and pinpoint possible causes. The conversation continues with this work, which sheds light on certain pathways, but the work has to and will be carried forward to draw concrete conclusions.

Conclusion

This study serves the same purpose as a lighthouse in an ocean fog or a surveyor working on a vast plain situated in a valley. It's a rough outline of a large area that aims to strengthen research and point out avenues for further research while providing data to students and researchers practicing right now. It furthers the process of making concrete previous and possibly ongoing trends in illustration, adding numbers and analysis to generally accepted assumptions and views on how illustration has developed in the past several decades. It fulfills the thesis statement of this study:

Identifying and categorizing illustration trends by defined visual characteristics will provide data for classroom instruction and guidance for professionals while strengthening a

burgeoning field of research in illustration and developing an ongoing tool for understanding the industry.

A great deal of time is spent in the Literature Review outlining items like the current state of research in illustration, the pros and cons of studying concepts like style, the importance of the Society of Illustrators and its annuals, a general look at how graphic design and fashion design look at trends, possible causes for trends, the degree to which one can categorize them, and the perimeters for the broad type categories. This is expanded upon in the Methodology, which lays out the procedures of the study.

When looking at the data, one can see long term trends in illustration popularity types partnered with sudden shifts in said popularity. The categorization of the types, combined with the march of time, outline trends to further research. It is a hope of the researcher that this study will be replicated and applied to other annuals in the field to add to the conversation and start working toward a consensus in the research. This would be the most beneficial to students and practitioners: several researchers and groups of researchers conveying the best possible data to everyone, de-mystifying the field and allowing us all to benefit from a fuller picture.

Appendix A

Table 2: Sample breakdowns for SI01 covering the year 1959 (on following pages).

Table 2

<i>SI01/1959 Breakdowns</i>						
Project/Image Number	Line-based	Shape-based	Value-based	Harmony	Missing	Totals
1				1		Line-based 142
2			1			Shape-based 62
3	1					Value-based 59
4				1		Harmony 52
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2			1			
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JnNpdGU9ZWwhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#AN=37195362&db=ehh](http://web.b.ebscohost.com.vortex3.uco.edu/ehost/detail/detail?vid=0&sid=ddc0946f-4f59-4d38-afb9-5d61a7437f1f%40sessionmgr102&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWwhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#AN=37195362&db=ehh)

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