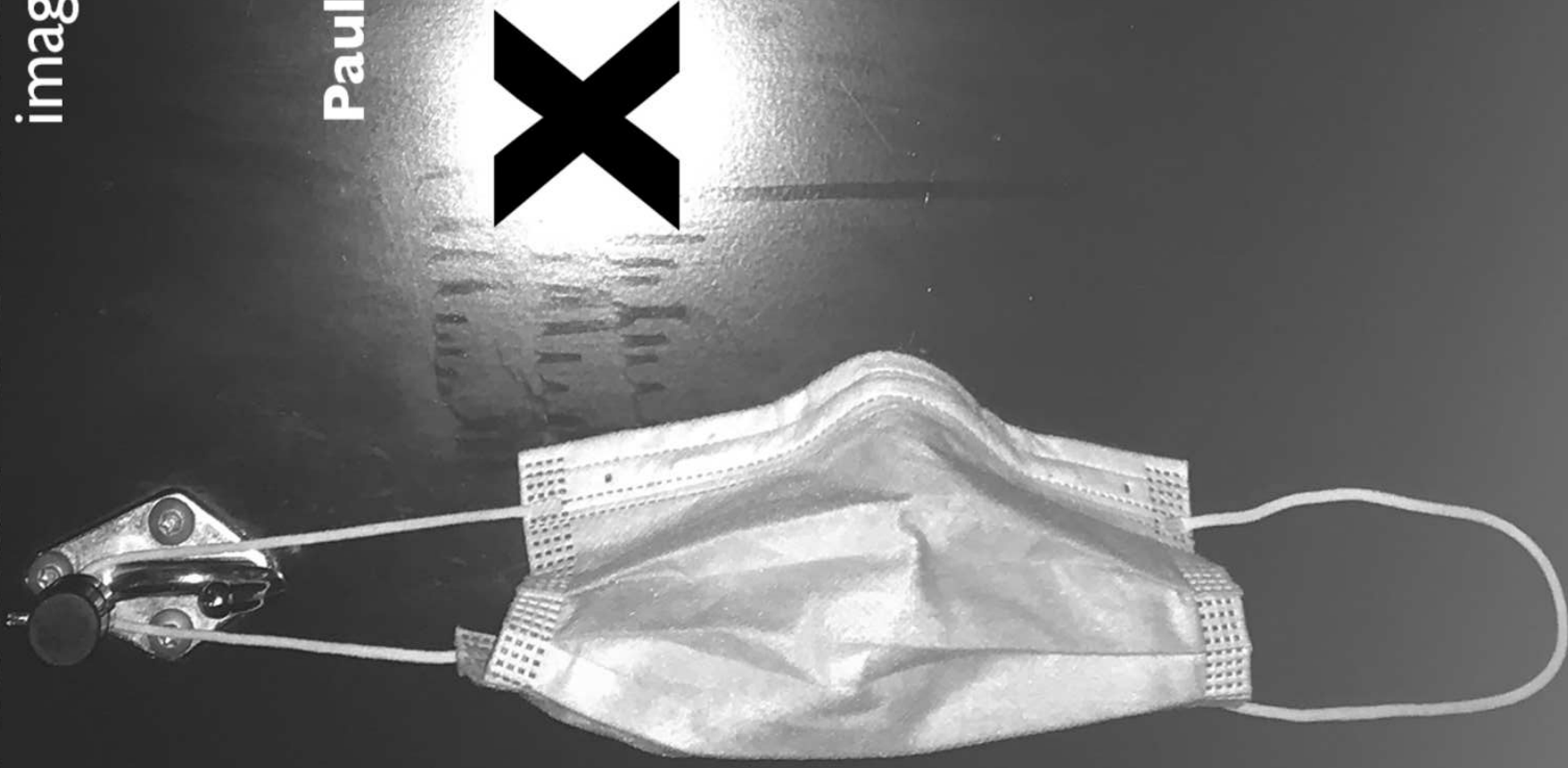


Visual Communication

images with messages

Paul Martin Lester



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Wherever you live on this planet and whatever language you choose to use, this book contains a narrative that links each one of us. Visual communication teaches that when messages are respectful, thoughtful, and interactive, they are universal.

Acknowledgements

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Lex Publishing

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Paul Martin Lester

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Preface

There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you.

Maya Angelou, 1928 – 2014

AUTHOR, POET, & CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST



Figure 0.1
The eyes of a 9-year-old boy see more words and images than anyone his age from a previous generation.

Courtesy of Paul Martin Lester

Where did the idea come that words communicate better than pictures? Since they were first invented to communicate complex thoughts, words and pictures have been locked in a struggle for dominance, with words throughout history being the clear-cut leader.

Particularly with the widespread use of Johannes Gutenberg's commercial printing press, words became more important than pictures to convey complex thought. Images were relegated to an occasional medical diagram, a "pretty" border decoration, or a sensational eye-catching picture. Reading and writing became curriculum requirements, but visual literacy wasn't considered a necessary component of an individual's education.

However, with the inventions of photography, motion pictures, television, and the computer with the ubiquitous spread of the web, these media have dramatically changed the role of visual messages in communication. Nowhere on Earth can a person avoid being confronted with some sort of visual message (Figure 0.1).

The purposes of this edition are the same as all the previous editions. This work is an appreciation that visual messages that are remembered have the greatest power to inform, educate, and persuade. This two-part book is an exploration into why some images are remembered but most are forgotten. Hopefully at the end of the last chapter, your conclusion will be that:

The most powerful, meaningful, and culturally important messages are those that combine words and pictures equally and respectfully.

The first step toward understanding visual communication is to be educated about the many ways that information is produced and consumed in a modern, media-rich society. In *Book Two*, typographic, graphic, data visualization, cartoon, still, moving, televised, and computer, web, and immersive images are analyzed within a framework of personal, historical, technical, ethical, cultural, and critical perspectives to appreci-

ate how words and pictures work together.

For hundreds of years technology has kept writers and visual artists separate and unequal. Before Johannes Gutenberg's invention, less than 30 percent of Europeans could read. Seventy years after his printing press became commonplace that percentage increased to 80. Seventy years after the introduction of the daguerreotype, cameras and photographs were common. And yet, educators never developed a visual grammar for photographs in the same way that a verbal grammar was developed for words.

We Live in a Visually Intensive Society

Think of all the ways visual messages are displayed—billboards, cell phones, computer monitors, digital cameras, glasses and headsets, magazines, movie screens, newspapers, packaging, personal digital assistants, photo albums, refrigerator doors, storefronts, T-shirts, tattooed skin, television sets, and wall spaces. Bombarded daily with a steady, unrelenting stream of visual stimulation from all manner of media, we need to understand pictures. We see mediated images more than we read words. Some experts warn that if the trend continues, civilization will regress to illiteracy and lawlessness. But more optimistic researchers predict that technological advances will merge words and pictures in new ways to create innovative educational possibilities.

In this convergent era, you cannot afford to know only how to write, to know only how to make an image, or to know only how to make print or web designs. Today, you should be interested in all the ways words and pictures are used—advertising, animation, business communications, computer production, entertainment, games, graphic design, immersive presentations, journalism, motion pictures, photojournalism, public relations, research, television, and the web. The artificial walls between various media imposed by tradition and outdated technology are crumbling.

This book can help you enter the brave new (visual) world on the other side.

Elements of this Textbook

This tenth edition of *Visual Communication: Images with Messages* has 17 chapters.

Section One introduces the underlying concept of this textbook.

Chapter 1: Visual Communication introduces you to the joy of discovery when you really look at pictures and of the philosophy of the author Aldous Huxley, who inspired this book.

Section Two comprises five chapters that introduce seeing, selecting, and perceiving and details the connection between the brain and the mind in looking and evaluating visual messages.

Chapter 2: Visual Cues explains the four visual cues of color, form, depth, and movement and how they can be employed to grab a viewer's attention.

Chapter 3: Visual Theories details the sensory theory of gestalt and the perceptual theories of semiotics and cognition to show how designs and meaning can be improved through a knowledge of these significant theories.

Chapter 4: Visual Persuasion teaches how visual messages are employed to convince others to buy a product, adopt a service, or advocate a point of view.

Chapter 5: Visual Stereotypes gives a history of "images that injure" as portrayed in all the media, with special emphasis on six cultural groups—Native Americans, African Americans, Arabs, Asians, Latinx, women,

and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer persons. A section at the end highlights positive examples or “images that heal.”

Chapter 6: Visual Analysis takes one, ordinary photograph used for a public relations purpose of former president Donald J. Trump sitting in the Oval Office giving support to various food products to make the point that through six perspectives for analysis, any single image is more interesting and memorable if looked at closely.

Section Three contains ten chapters that concentrate on the ways we see visual messages displayed in various media plus the conclusion. Each chapter in this section is introduced with a detailed description of a significant example from the medium being discussed, followed by a general discussion of the medium from personal, historical, technical, ethical, cultural, and critical perspectives. Each chapter ends with a “Trends to Watch” section.

Chapter 7: Typography is a discussion of Johannes Gutenberg’s printing press improvements that revolutionized mass communication, a section on the history of writing dating from cave paintings to modern uses, the varying moods, and styles of the six typeface families, the use of typography as artwork, Twitter messages, and digital book publishing.

Chapter 8: Graphic Design features the work of Saul Bass and his influences on logo designs, motion picture advertisements, and opening title credits, sections on how technology added to a graphic designer’s palette, how design considerations are often driven by audience needs, the work of Shepard Fairey within an ethical discussion about appropriation, and how several free-form and grid artistic movements inspired graphic designers and illustrators with an appreciation of aesthetically pleasing word and picture displays.

Chapter 9: Data Visualizations starts with the colorful weather map from the national newspaper, *USA Today*, with a discussion about the history of weather graphics for print and screen media, sections that detail the two types of data visualizations—statistical and nonstatistical, the importance of not misrepresenting the visual nature of column charts within an ethical perspective, and the increased use seen in music videos and art photography.

Chapter 10: Cartoons is a detailed discussion of one of the most enduring and longest lasting television series, “The Simpsons,” from the mind of Matt Groening, the history of cartoons from caricatures scribbled on walls to three-dimensional animated motion pictures, a technical discussion that includes five types of animation production—cel, stop-motion, computer-generated, performance capture, live action/ cartoon combinations and virtual.

Chapter 11: Photography features the social significance of Dorothea Lange’s portrait titled “Migrant Mother” with emphasis on the ethical challenges in the making and distribution of the famous image, a history section that charts the medium’s progress from the camera obscura to digital materials, an ethical section that explores the important issues of using violent images, right to privacy of subjects, and picture manipulations, and a discussion on the significance of the still moment.

Chapter 12: Motion Pictures discusses what is considered the greatest movie of all time, *Citizen Kane*, and why it is so admired, a history that took its initial technology from photography and greatly improved upon it, how the industry competed with television through the additions of sound, color, large screens, 3-D projections, and plush seats, and a critical look at the use of stereotypes, the lack of women directors, and the importance of indie productions.

Chapter 13: Television starts with the famous phrase “The tribe has spoken,” well-known to fans of Mark Burnett’s “Survivor” series, and then moves to a discussion on the genre of reality programs, followed by a historical discussion that starts with the first successful electronic television demonstration and leads to television/web collaborations, and ends with innovations in programs and viewing technologies.

Chapter 14: Computers begins with the work of James Cameron in promoting computer-generated images (CGI) in his critically acclaimed and wildly popular motion pictures, a look at the history of CGI in the movies, a history that begins with a calculator used by ancient Greek astronomers and ends with the successes from the Apple Computer Company, a section on popular violent games, and an analysis of the IBM and Apple logos.

Chapter 15: The Web has an opening discussion features the lives and work of Sergey Brin and Larry Page, the two graduate students dropouts who invented the most popular web search engine in the world, Google, a history of how the internet led to the web, and a section on the importance of social media for personal, corporate, and political communications.

Chapter 16: Alternate Realities discusses the much honored work and career of Nonny de la Peña concentrating on virtual reality along with the future promise of augmented reality as a possible replacement for smartphones.

Section Four contains the conclusion, a very fine place to start.

Conclusion: The More You Know; The More You See emphasizes that designs that use both verbal and visual messages in equally respectful ways is the best methodology for maximum communicative effectiveness.

Special Features of this Textbook

An informal writing style that explains detailed information in a thorough, yet easily understandable way.

There are 80 new images and about 200 weblinks for more information in this edition.

There is an instructional website accessed through <http://paulmartinlester.info/10thEdition> that includes a bibliography, glossary, PowerPoint presentations, weblinks, and other goodies.

Many captions not only identify the image and those responsible for it, but often describe the picture in terms explained in the text.

Every chapter has been updated, improved, and in some cases, edited with the most relevant and current images obtained from an international pool of photographers for inclusion within these pages.

A new chapter, “Alternate Realities” acknowledges the popularity and potential of augmented and virtual reality technologies for personal, corporate, and entertainment purposes.

A new collection of quotations from famous individuals introduces each chapter.

Finally, with its text, examples, and graphic design, this book exemplifies the best that words and pictures can provide when they combine to tell a compelling and vital story. Many of the illustrations have been enlarged to achieve bolder graphic design layouts.

Wherever you live on this planet and whatever language you choose to use, this book contains a narrative that links each one of us. Visual communication teaches that when messages are respectful, thoughtful, and interactive, they are universal.

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Section One

The one chapter in this section—the introduction—puts you on a path toward your visual communication journey. From an array of three images printed within this section one could describe them as every day, personal, significant, humorous, they all have one aspect in common—they each possess a secret reason for being included in this book. At first glance, their mysterious messages will probably not be fully understood until they are explained at the end of the chapter. That point—the need for words to add definition, refinement, and meaning to images—is an overriding theme in all the chapters. It is through the careful and

respectful combination of words and pictures that lead to what is the goal of visual literacy as described by the philosopher, author, and teacher, Aldous Huxley. Analysis of visual messages is a reflective process based on words as thoughts, in print, and/or part of an audio-based presentation. We learn to use our eyes more efficiently, our brain more succinctly, and our minds more completely. Consequently, the process of perceiving the meaning of an image makes us curious, interesting, and ready for more.

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