

# Who's Who in Illustration: Roles in Commercial Art



JILLIAN TAMAKI, *SELF-PORTRAIT*

Firstly there is you, the ***illustrator or the visual problem-solver.***

Your job is to provide unique content and concepts for the next role, the client, solving their problem through visual media, in the time frame they require.



KIRK WALLACE FOR PLANET NUTSHELL

The **client** is the person, publication, or company, that has the need or problem that the illustration will be created to answer.

*They commission the illustration and will ultimately be paying for it.*



Most of the time, the person charged with establishing the look of a particular publication, event, film, advertisement, or game, is the **Art Director**.

The art director is typically the person the illustrator has the most direct interaction with. It is the collaboration of art director and illustrator that ultimately shapes the final illustration.

For the purposes of this course, when working on an assignment, you can think of your Professor in the role of your Art Director.



FRANÇOISE MOULY, ART DIRECTOR, *THE NEW YORKER*, SURROUNDED BY COVERS SHE'S COMMISSIONED

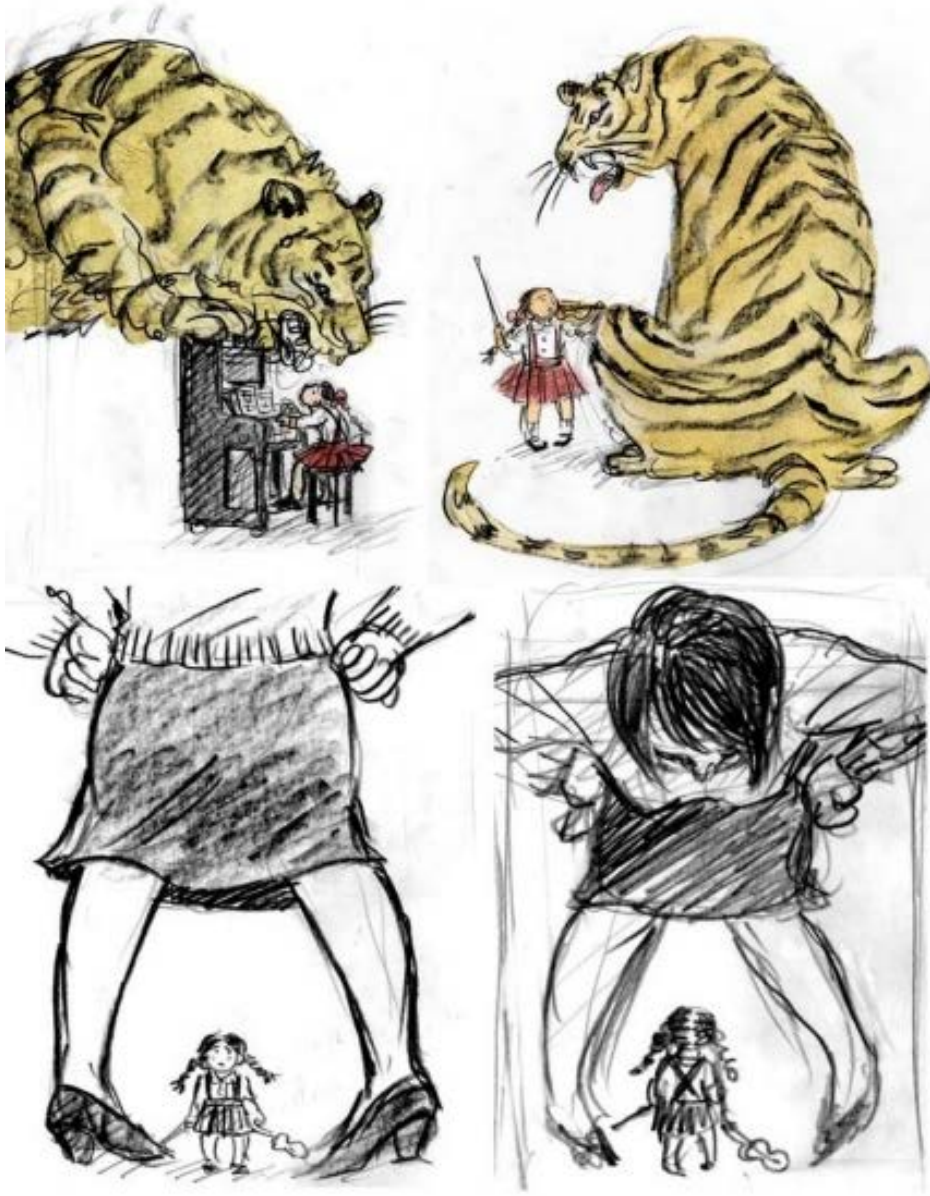
The Art Director shapes the overall look of their particular publication, or whatever creative project they are working on, by choosing which illustrator they feel is best suited for creating the kind of image that the client is looking for.

## Illustration, typical workflow:

- The art director or client reaches out to the illustrator with an assignment and sets a timeline for delivery.
- The illustrator brainstorms multiple ways to successfully solve the visual problem.
- Through multiple thumbnail drawings the illustrator refines a great number of loose ideas into a few of their best ideas, sketched out clearly to share with their art director.
- The illustrator shares their best ideas with their art director.
- The art director gives the illustrator feedback.
- Integrating feedback, the illustrator creates a more detailed drawing of the agreed upon idea for their art director.
- This drawing is shared once more and the art director and illustrator then agree on a drawing to finalize.
- The illustrator creates the final art piece.
- The illustrator delivers final art to the art director according to the timeline they agreed upon in the beginning.
- The illustration is printed, published, or somehow sent out into the world, brought to life through use in its intended context.
- The illustrator finally rests.



YUKO SHIMIZU, "SAVE THE TIGER" COLLECTION FOR LIBERO DIAPERS, 2009



The importance of multiple solutions

Yuko Shimizu for Time Magazine



Photo-Illustration by Jim Naughten for TIME





Yuko Shimizu

## What is a Thumbnail?



- Thumbnails are small sketches that illustrators do to *plan* their work.
- They are a vital part of the process, helping us to get both the concept and composition down *before* we begin the final artwork.
- Fun fact: the word "thumbnail" alludes to the small size of the image or picture, comparable to the size of the human thumbnail.



Jamie Hogan, thumbnail sketches for Luna Press' *Tiger Boy*

- A key concept here is *small*.
- A second key concept to thumbnails is *speed*. They should be drawn quickly.
- Some people use a pen so that they can't erase and thus draw more freely. Some people use copy paper, so they don't feel the drawings are precious.
- The point is to do them, and do **a lot of them**.
- Lastly, be sure they are clear enough to be able to communicate what is going on in them to another person.

## Case Study: Thumbnails and Illustrator Gregory Manchess



*"When I was where you are, I didn't want to do thumbnails," he said to the students, grinning. "I hated them. All I wanted to do was get to the painting. But I'll tell ya, if you aren't doing thumbnails, you need to."*

- Gregory Manchess, speaking to art students at Kendall College of Art and Design



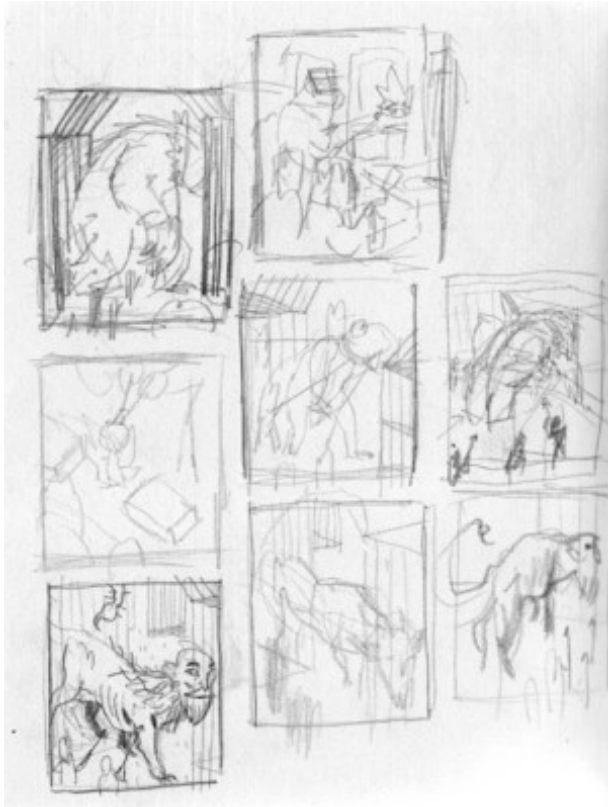
Gregory Manchess, thumbnail sketches.

*"Book covers, posters, National Geographic illustrations—they all started as thumbnails. Sometimes I have to show an art director as many as 20 before we settle on a concept. Then they change it."*



Gregory Manchess, Illustration in process.

# How Many Thumbnails Is Too Many?

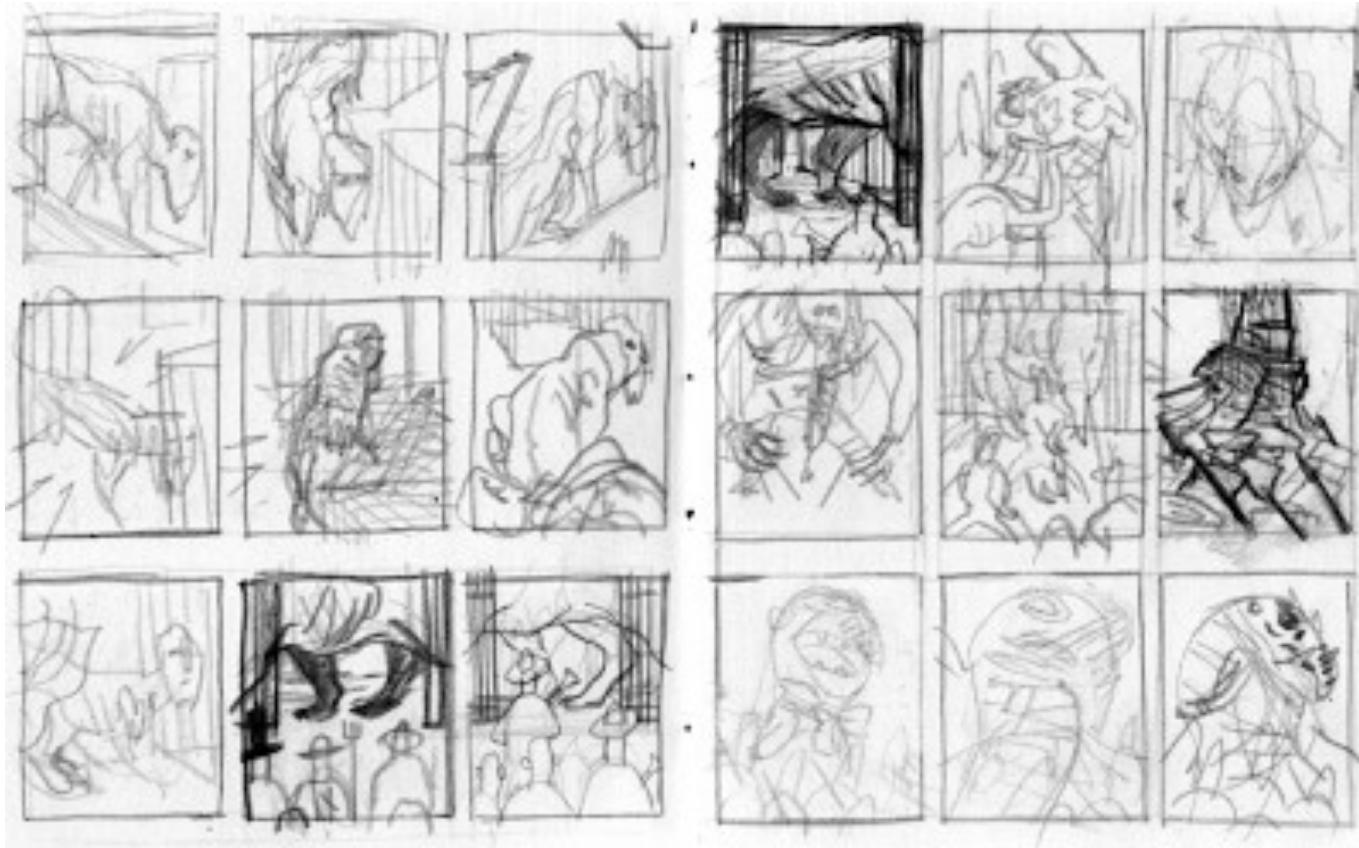


The simple answer here is you can *never have too many*.

*Thumbnails are loose drawings coming directly from the heart.*

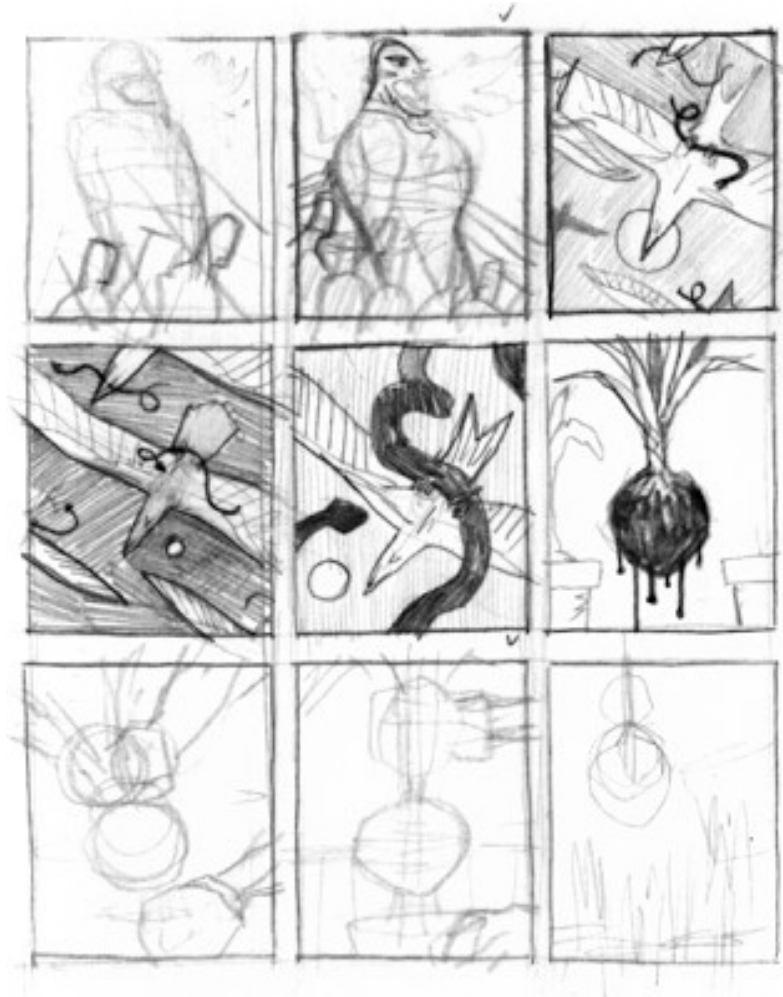
*They are inspiration and creative energy in its most raw form.*

Sam Bosma's thumbnails for **just one illustration** for *Plan Sponsor* magazine.



SAM BOSMA'S THUMBNAILS FOR *PLAN SPONSOR MAGAZINE*.



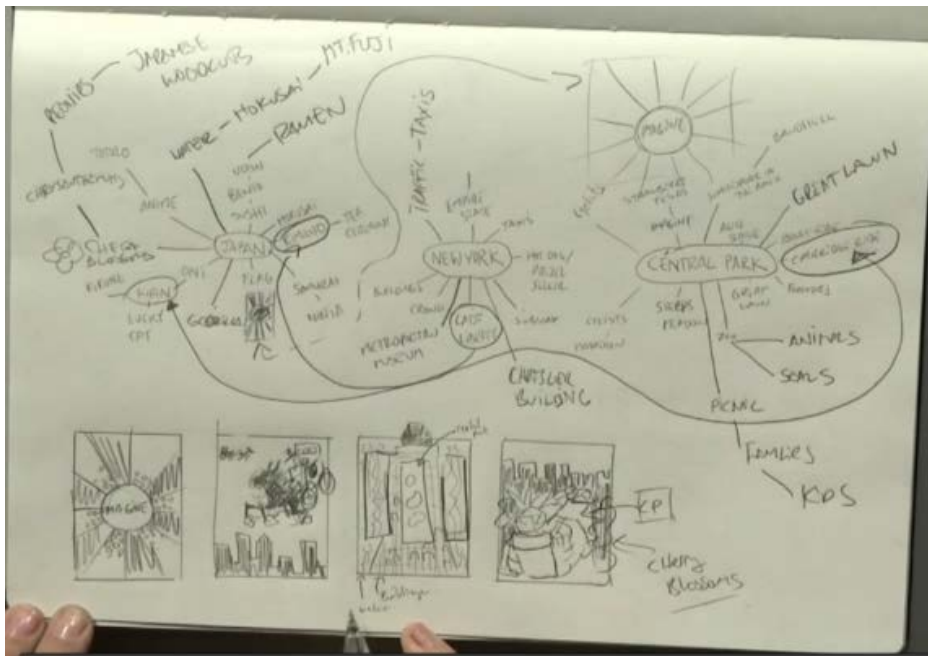
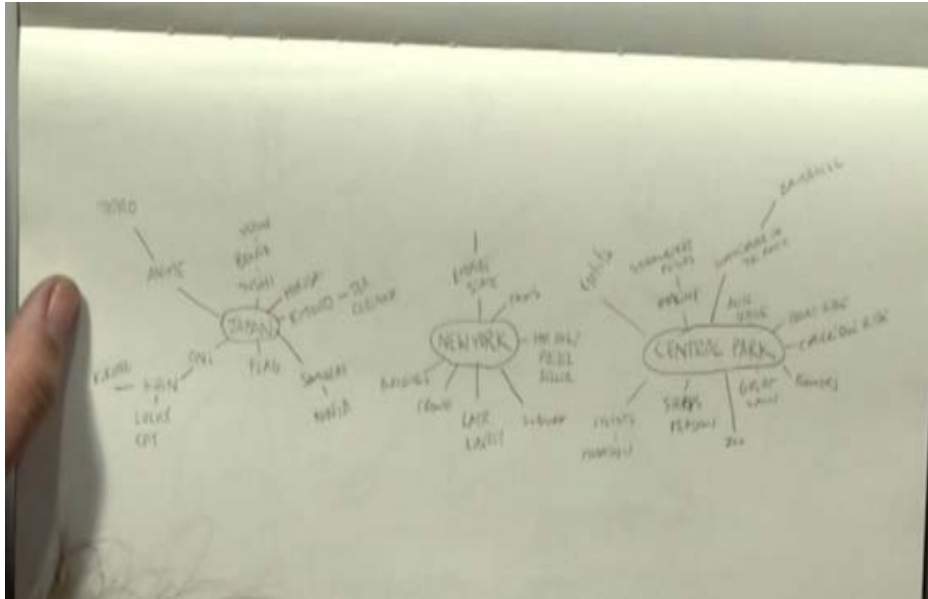


SAM BOSMA'S THUMBNAILS FOR *PLAN SPONSOR MAGAZINE*.

## From Brainstorm to Thumbnails!

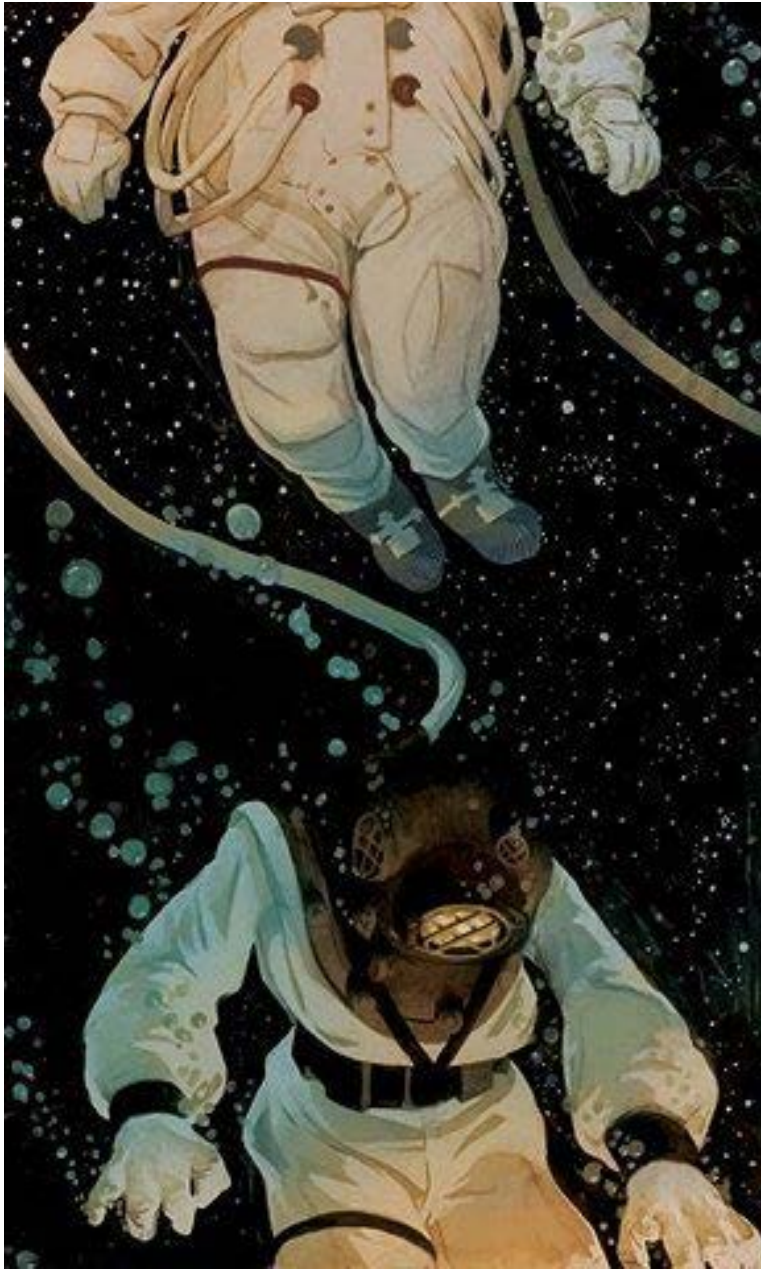
This Brainstorm is for a series of posters commissioned by the Consul General of Japan for an annual cultural festival taking place in New York's Central Park.

Key words: Japan, Central Park, New York.





Sara Woolley Gómez - Illustrations for Japan Day Central Park



IDEATION : Illustrator Sterling Hundley's idea generation process

STERLING HUNDLEY, DIVER DOWN



STERLING HUNDLEY, THE BENDS