

Student Name: Imogen Edwards

Student Number: 2404867

Programme of Study: BA Illustration Hons

Module: Research in Practice ADAD5004/C

Tutor Name: Delyth Lloyd Evans

Word Count: 2,355

Proposed Essay Question:

Pests, Prints, and Positivity. How can positive illustrations for children help with fear and development?

Introduction

In this Proposal I will explore the three words; Printmaking, Insects and Infographics in the context of advertising and creating learning materials about insects, for children.

Using these words as a guide, will help me examine how audiences interact and interoperate certain layouts of infographics, especially how images and illustrations can help make an infographic more interesting to viewers, by referencing Amy Balliett and her research. I will also be looking at how insects are depicted in different art forms, why people are afraid of them and how media like movies and tv can help desensitize younger audiences as well as intensify the fear, and using Albert Durer as a reference, as well as looking at the visual appeal of lino printing and why it's one of the most commonly used forms of printmaking.

Insects

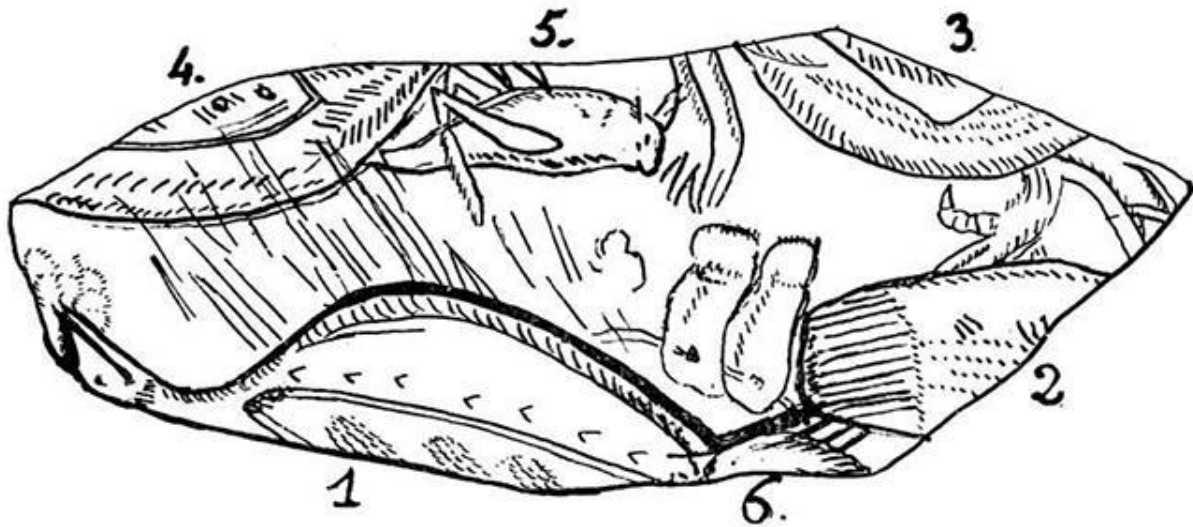


Fig. 1, Begouen, 1929, p.197-199

Insects are in every corner of culture and art-history, from the Japanese Edo period to 14000-year-old cave carvings, shown above in figure 1 which includes a simply drawn cricket etching, labelled under the 5th point. Bugs are a strong theme in art across the world, having strong meanings, metaphorical iconography and usually strong cultural importance. Occasionally, they also have strong religious messaging. In early Egyptian culture scarabs were seen as messengers of the morning sun god, Khepri, as their rolling of dung was paralleled with the actions the god was said to take, and mimicking the movement of the sun. Because of this semiotic, they were seen as an icon for rebirth and luck so were used in many rituals and important events, “stone scarabs were often placed in Egyptian tombs... might be sewn onto the wrappings of the dead, particularly over the

heart” (Artsmia.org, 2021). This shows that insects were coveted in certain civilisations, and suggests the importance of their portrayals, but also cultural differences and changes throughout the ages.



Fig 2, Mignon, 1670

This cultural and historical change can be examined through the work of Abraham Mignon, a Germanic artist who painted the figure above, *Still life with rotting fruit and nuts on a stone ledge*. This painting shows a group of insects and mould devouring a beautiful collection of fruits and vegetation, showing the process of decay and death, alongside the way of nature. It's described as a metaphor for Earthly temptations, the circle of life and the Christian teaching of sin (The Fitzwilliam Museum, 2019). This shows a clear divide between the earlier depictions and Mignon's work, one showing the bugs as prophetic creatures that are worshiped across the ages, and the other showing the physical representation of death, decay, temptation and sin.

The fear of insects is a very common condition in the modern era, for lots of people just the appearance of certain insects can send them running, and for others it can be the complete opposite, many theorists believe there's a reason for this, and it stems from a mix of evolutionary instincts, with mosquitoes and fleas carrying diseases, or an individual's past personal experiences, be it getting bitten, stung or swarmed; that make them seem threatening or repulsive.

Our ancestors weren't just casually swatting flies; they were constantly navigating a world rife with venomous spiders, disease-carrying mosquitoes, and swarming locusts. This constant threat led to an *innate wariness* of insects and other arthropods, a survival mechanism etched into our DNA.

(Gale, 2025)

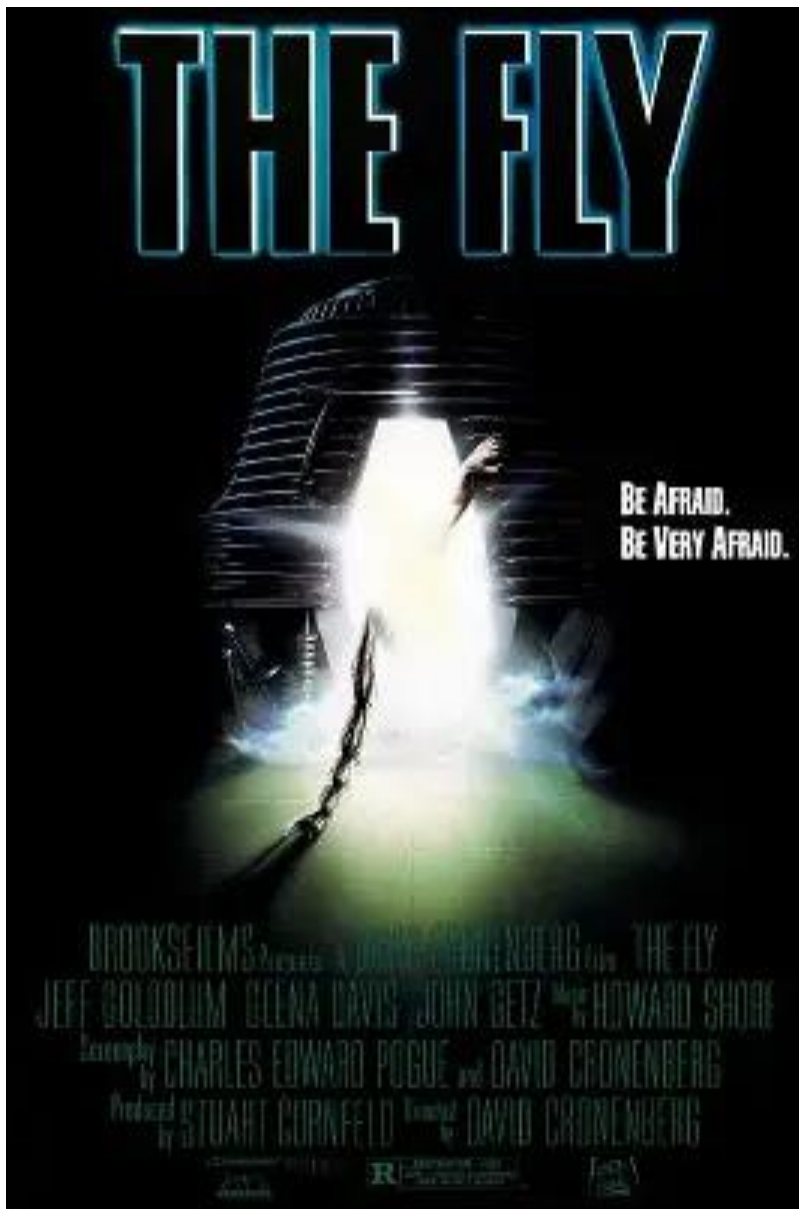


Fig 3, Mahon, 1986

As well as survival instincts playing a role in many peoples fear of bugs, Movies, TV and Media play the biggest role of them all. One of the most influential insect horror media is the movie *The Fly* by David Cronenberg. The film features a scientist and his

teleportation device, after some testing he decides to use the device on himself, but accidentally merges his DNA with a fly, slowly turning him into a grotesque amalgamation of human flesh and insect parts. From an outside perspective the movie seems like just another campy horror movie created just for the scare factor, however there is a deeper meaning to it “Cronenberg forces the audience to confront the fragility of the human body, the terror of disease and decay, and the heartbreak of losing someone you love to transformation” (Emir, 2025). This is something that seems universal between art and cinema, the fear of disease, decay and death.

Luckily, it's not all bad for these tiny creatures as there are also many positive representations of insects in media, some examples of these would be Pixar's *Bug Life*, the character Jiminy Cricket from *Pinocchio*, the game *Hollow Knight* and even something as simple as the insect collection mechanic in the game *Animal Crossing* which stands out for its educational facts and information about the bugs you collect. But by far one of the most positive depictions of insects in media, especially for children is the game and TV series *Pokémon*.

Research has shown that positively portrayed insect characters like Jiminy Cricket, the ants from “A Bug’s Life,” or certain Pokémon can help reduce entomophobia (fear of insects) particularly among children, fostering greater appreciation for these often-maligned creatures.

(Sharif, 2025)

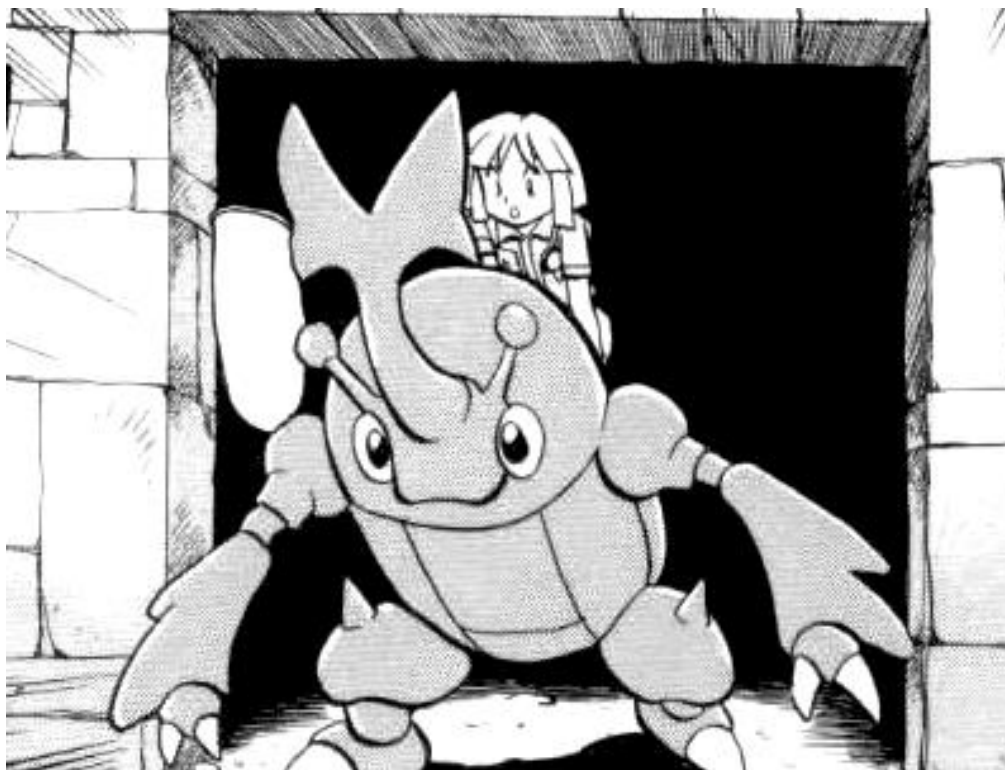


Fig 4, Kusaka, 2011, Chapter 5, Vol.11

The image above is from the Pokémon manga series *Pokémon Adventures*, illustrated by Satoshi Yamamoto; it shows the character Bugsy riding on his Heracross to traverse a site of ancient ruins. Heracross is one of the many ‘bug type’ Pokémon in the series, and its species is meant to resemble a Japanese rhinoceros beetle with its most discernible feature being the giant horn on its head. The positive example of insects has an extraordinary effect on children, even leading into adulthood. Research and theory indicate that the development of younger minds need positive examples of natural fears that humans have, such as insects. If not for these positive experiences, children would never grow out of these fears and would keep a deep-rooted fear into adulthood (Muris et al., 2002). Yamamoto’s art in figure 4 is an excellent example of a positive experience that

would allow children to grow a deeper appreciation for otherwise scary creatures, as not only is the way Heracross is drawn soft and cute, but actively poses as a helping hand in the chapter it's shown in. The research of Professor Hiroshi Nittono and earlier works of Konrad Lorenz and the theory of Kindchenschema indicate that “cuter” art styles and iconography cause “more general, positive emotion related to sociality and approach motivation”, which in turn causes a stronger positive emotion from the viewer (iafor, 2019). Heracross’ rounded design and large, adorable eyes prove this theory.

Not only is Heracross’s appearance cute as well as being somewhat scientifically accurate, but the way the Pokémon behaves in-game and its fighting style is all inspired by rhinoceros beetles for example, “It can use its horn to throw opponents or to compete for food, and can lift and throw objects 100 times its own weight” (Pokemon.com, 2023). This is something that’s accurate to real life rhinoceros beetles as some species can lift 30 times their own body weight, meanwhile other species can lift 100 or 850 times their own body weight, however their movement gets reduced significantly (Biology Insights, 2025). Because of this, Pokémon is a great example of insects being shown in a positive light, as well as it being education for younger audiences.

Printmaking

The definition of the print, like that of any other art medium, is in a constant state of evolution. It can be molded to the social and aesthetic needs of a given society and to the individual expression of a particular artist.

(Saff and Deli Sacilotto, 1978, p.3)

Printmaking is an artform brought around very early on in human culture and history; first documented 2000 years ago during China's Han Dynasty, using large wooden blocks to print on silk. Printing has evolved countless times, from the 15th century printing of the Gutenberg Bibles with its beautiful gothic prints, to the 19th century invention of the large-scale printing machine (Tribeca Printworks, 2023). Artists such as Max Ernst, a well-regarded pioneer of the surrealist movement, was wildly successful with this medium, creating 500 lithographs, screenprints and etchings throughout his lifetime. He would use printers proof, photomechanical processes and all manner of rubbings and etchings in numerous galleries and works (Waldman and Guggenheim, 1975, p.26).

During the 20th century, a method of cutting into linoleum sheets was developed; cheap, efficient and reusable. The process was simple, traditionally you would carve into a linoleum sheet after heating it up to allow it to soften, although easier versions of the material was developed later, although less reusable (Rothenstein, 1962, p.22-23). A famous example of this medium is the renown works of Pablo Picasso. He was prompted to explore new mediums other than paint, and thus created a 147 piece library of original linoleum cuts, which went on to inspire countless artists in the 1940's and onwards (Picasso et al., 1985, p.9-11).



Fig.5, Picasso et al., 1985, p.92

The image above is a piece titled *Still life by lamp light*, created in 1962 using a single lino sheet and coloured ink. His artistic flare isn't lost from painting to print and has a beautiful tonal range considering the limited colour palette. Printworks challenge the singularity of painted and traditional art forms, which in turn allow there to possibly be multiple of one piece. Considering that ink can be inconsistent, this point can be argued

that every single individual print is also unique. This theory paired with the popularity of Picasso's individual traditional works creates a paradox, where the intrinsic artistic value is just as important as his painted work, with just as much emotion, and is equally worth more due to its repeatability and ability to be shared (Harvard Museum, 2026). This statement shows how important printworks and lino are in the art industry, bringing a shared appreciation for a piece that can be shared as many times as it can be printed.

Infographics

Infographics are meant to make information easier to digest. While there are many factors that go into creating a successful infographic, the foundation of a good infographic should at least start with great information, include original design, and avoid becoming a reading assignment.

(Balliett, 2014)

Infographics are best described as “a powerful way of communicating ideas in a visual form” (Express, 2023). As well as, being widely known throughout the graphic design industry as a relatively easy way to store and visualise data. Most infographics often include different types of charts such as, pie charts, graphs and bar graphs, usually with minimal text to give an easy overview of a topic (Nediger, 2023). These are known as Statistical Infographics and they focus on data and visualising things like survey results, through charts and sometimes icons (McGuire, 2026). However, they're not the most interesting to look at, as said by Rod van Uchelen that,

“Pictures communicate rapidly. Anyone can see that a picture communicates an idea more directly than do words, that a picture can communicate in its own universal language, or that a picture can communicate an abstract idea metaphorically by symbolizing the idea, with words used to cue the metaphor.

(Uchelen, 1979, p.5)



Fig. 6, Payman Taei, 2017

The image above is a famous infographic made by Hans Rosling, titled *Roslings Gapminder*, circulated in 2013. The graphic is designed to show the life expectancy of most countries compared to the average income per person. The visual is incredibly powerful, showing the issues of capitalism and poverty globally, yet is easy to read and extremely digestible for anyone, regardless of type and written information. This follows the Gestalt principle and philosophy of perception, which states that the human brain group's imaged data, such as the coloured balls that indicate the pattern groups in the Rosling infographic, which allows the brain to collate necessary data and keeps continuity with the narrative flow of information (Wagemans et al., 2012). This point furthers the previous quote from Uchelen, stating that "Pictures communicate rapidly. Anyone can see that a picture communicates an idea more directly than do words" (Uchelen, 1979, p.5).

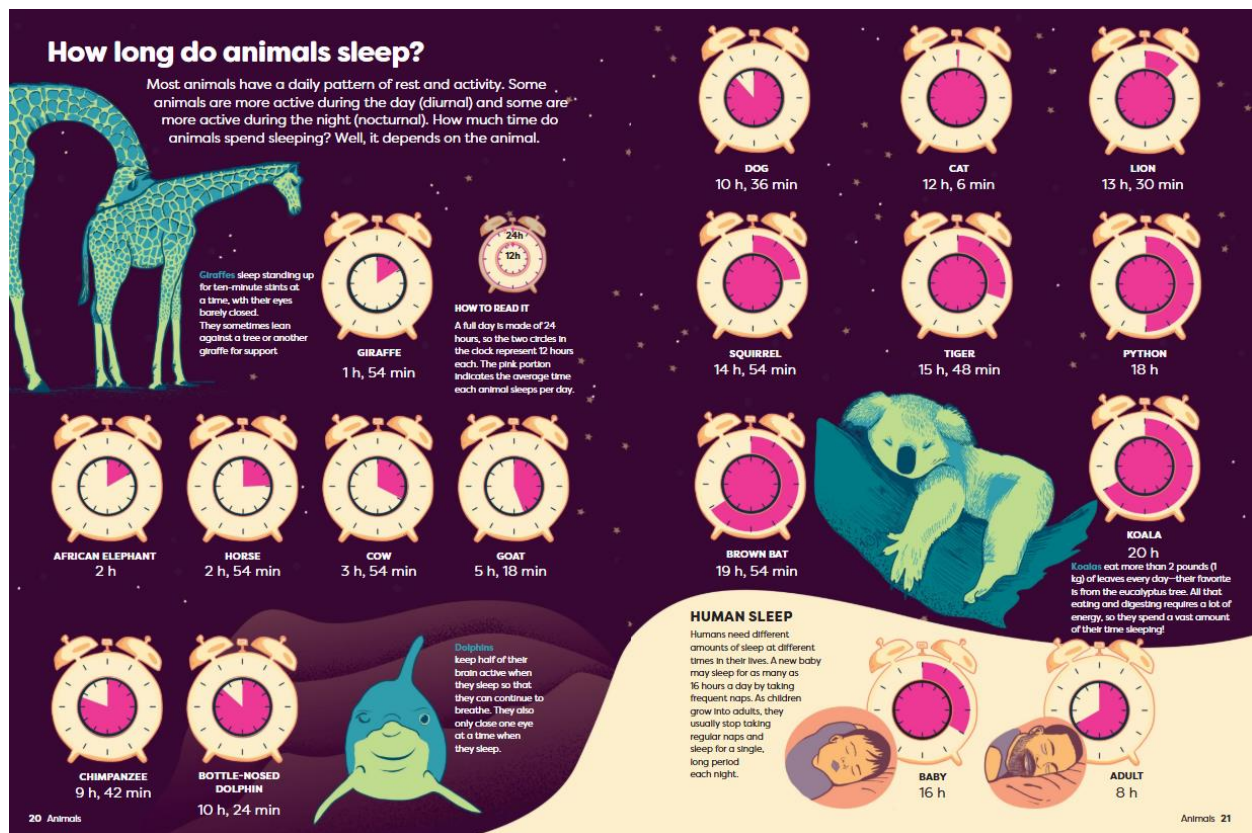


Fig. 7, D'Efilippo, Pettie and Quilty-Harper, 2023, p.20-21

Children's infographics have a similar philosophy, which allow the next generation to very quickly digest information that would likewise take a lot longer to digest. Figure 7 shows an extract from the *Encyclopedia Britannica Infographica*, which demonstrates the length different animal's sleep. According to a study from the Indiana University, “Illustrations serve as visual cues children use to understand and interpret text. They provide context, clarify complex concepts, and introduce new vocabulary” (Hallma, 2025). To expand on this, the use of illustration in informational graphics are a key tool in creating universal understanding of data and knowledge, often transcending language itself,

“Symbols, signs, and diagrams often cross language barriers, making them universally understood” (Foreman, 2024). This leads to the point that infographics are a necessary and incredibly valuable tool in education.

Conclusion

With the information I have collected, I am going to propose that for my project I would like to create children's colouring pages with information and diagrams about bugs, all created through the form of Lino-printing. In doing this, I aim to destigmatize certain insects by educating children about what they do for environments and ecosystems, as well as potentially being used as promotional material for places like ‘Dr Beynon's Bug Farm’ in Pembrokeshire or ‘Magic of Life Butterfly House’ in Aberystwyth. Additionally, the prints I am going to create could be sold as individual artworks, once again to be used as promotional material but also to raise money for the upkeep and possible expansion of these places. I hope to create an educational, visually appealing set of prints that will help build a comfortable future between the next generation and insects, which I aim to accomplish with my undying passion for bugs.

Bibliography

Artsmia.org. (2021). *Insects in Art — Minneapolis Institute of Art*. [online] Available at: <https://new.artsmia.org/programs/teachers-and-students/teaching-the-arts/art-in-context/insects-in-art>.

Balliett, A. (2014). *3 Key Rules for a Successful Infographic*. [online] Search Engine People. Available at: <https://www.searchenginepeople.com/blog/125-good-infographic-design.html> [Accessed 24 Mar. 2026].

Begouen, H. (1929). *Bibliographie scientifique française*. Société Préhistorique Française.

Biology Insights. (2025). *How Much Can a Rhinoceros Beetle Lift?* [online] Available at: <https://biologyinsights.com/how-much-can-a-rhinoceros-beetle-lift/> [Accessed 1 May 2026].

D'Efilippo, V., Pettie, A. and Quilty-Harper, C. (2023). *Britannica's Encyclopedia Infographica*. What on Earth Books Publishing.

Emir (2025). *The Fly (1986) summary & plot - Spoiler Town*. [online] Spoiler Town. Available at: <https://spoilertown.com/the-fly-1986/> [Accessed 30 Apr. 2026].

Express, A. (2023). *What is an Infographic? Examples & Templates | Adobe Express*. [online] www.adobe.com. Available at: <https://www.adobe.com/uk/express/learn/blog/what-is-an-infographic>.

Foreman, D. (2024). *What is the point in Illustration? An essay about illustrations place in the world*. [online] Mightyisland Illustration. Available at: <https://mightyisland.co.uk/opinion/what-is-the-point-of-illustration/>.

Gale, J. (2025). *Why am I so afraid of bugs? - The Institute for Environmental Research and Education*. [online] The Institute for Environmental Research and Education. Available at: <https://iere.org/why-am-i-so-afraid-of-bugs/> [Accessed 30 Apr. 2026].

Hallma (2025). *The Power of Pictures: How Book Illustrations Boost Early Literacy – Literacy from the Start*. [online] Iu.edu. Available at: <https://blogs.iu.edu/earlyliteracy/2025/02/07/the-power-of-pictures-how-book-illustrations-boost-early-literacy/>.

Harvard Museum (2026). *Harvard Art Museums*. [online] Harvardartmuseums.org. Available at: <https://harvardartmuseums.org/tour/63/slide/1170> [Accessed 1 May 2026].

iafor (2019). *Beyond Cuteness: An Emerging Field of the Psychology of 'Kawaii'*. [online] The International Academic Forum (IAFOR). Available at: <https://iafor.org/beyond-cuteness-an-emerging-field-of-the-psychology-of-kawaii/>.

Jennifer Visocky O'grady and Kenneth Visocky O'grady (2008). *The information design handbook*. Cincinnati, Ohio: How Books.

Kusaka, H. (2011). *Pokemon Adventures, Vol. 11*. VIZ Media.

Mahon, R. (1986). *The Fly*.

McGuire, S. (2019). *What Are the 9 Types of Infographics? (Infographic Templates)* - Venngage. venngage.com. Available at: <https://venngage.com/blog/9-types-of-infographic-template/>.

Mignon, A. (1670). *Still Life with Rotting Fruit and Nuts on a Stone Ledge*. [Oil on Canvas].

Muris, P., Merckelbach, H., de Jong, P.J. and Ollendick, T.H. (2002). The etiology of specific fears and phobias in children: a critique of the non-associative account. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 40(2), pp.185–195. doi:[https://doi.org/10.1016/s0005-7967\(01\)00051-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0005-7967(01)00051-1).

Nediger, M. (2023). *What Is an Infographic? Infographic Examples, Templates, and Design Tips* - Venngage. [online] Venngage. Available at: <https://venngage.com/blog/what-is-an-infographic/>.

Payman Taei (2017). *12 Groundbreaking Infographics That Changed the World*. [online] Medium. Available at: <https://paymantaei.medium.com/12-groundbreaking-infographics-that-changed-the-world-c4e4f4dd41aa> [Accessed 2 May 2026].

Picasso, P., Lieberman, W.S., L Donald Mcvinney and New, A. (1985). *Picasso linoleum cuts : the Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kramer Collection in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*. New York: Metropolitan Museum Of Art.

Pokemon.com. (2023). *Heracross | Pokédex | More at Pokemon.com*. [online] Available at: <https://www.pokemon.com/us/pokedex/heracross>.

Printmaking: An Overview. (2009). Available at: https://www.uwyo.edu/artmuseumimages/docs/educational%20packet_05_printmaking.pdf.

Rod Van Uchelen (1979). *Say it with pictures : graphic communication with illustration*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold.

Rothenstein, M. (1962). *Linocuts and Woodcuts, and Related Ways of Print-making*. Studio Vista Limited.

Saff, D. and Deli Sacilotto (1978). *Printmaking*. Cengage Learning.

Sharif, M. (2025). *From Pokémon to Pixar How Pop Culture Gets Insects Surprisingly Right and Wrong – Insect Hive*. [online] Insecthive.com. Available at: <https://insecthive.com/from-pokemon-to-pixar-how-pop-culture-gets-insects-surprisingly-right-and-wrong-1-6246/> [Accessed 30 Apr. 2026].

The Fitzwilliam Museum (2019). *Still Life with Rotting Fruit and Nuts on a Stone Ledge*. [online] Feast & Fast. Available at: <https://feast-and-fast.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/labels/fruit-rotting-ledge>.

Tribeca Printworks (2023). *History of Printmaking - Tribeca Printworks*. [online] www.tribecaprintworks.com. Available at: <https://www.tribecaprintworks.com/history-of-printmaking/>.

Wagemans, J., Elder, J.H., Kubovy, M., Palmer, S.E., Peterson, M.A., Singh, M. and von der Heydt, R. (2012). A century of Gestalt psychology in visual perception: I. Perceptual grouping and figure–ground organization. *Psychological Bulletin*, [online] 138(6), pp.1172–1217. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0029333>.

Waldman, D. and Guggenheim, S.R. (1975). *Max Ernst : a retrospective*. New York: Guggenheim Museum (Ny).

List of Figures

Figure 1 - Begouen, H. (1929). *Bibliographie scientifique française*. Société Préhistorique Française.

Figure 2 - Mignon, A. (1670). *Still Life with Rotting Fruit and Nuts on a Stone Ledge*. [Oil on Canvas].

Figure 3 - Mahon, R. (1986). *The Fly*.

Figure 4 - Kusaka, H. (2011). *Pokemon Adventures, Vol. 11*. VIZ Media.

Figure 5 - Picasso, P., Lieberman, W.S., L Donald Mcvinney and New, A. (1985). *Picasso linoleum cuts : the Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kramer Collection in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*. New York: Metropolitan Museum Of Art.

Figure 6 - Payman Taei (2017). *12 Groundbreaking Infographics That Changed the World*. [online] Medium. Available at: <https://paymantaei.medium.com/12-groundbreaking-infographics-that-changed-the-world-c4e4f4dd41aa> [Accessed 2 May 2026].

Figure 7 - D'Efilippo, V., Pettie, A. and Quilty-Harper, C. (2023). *Britannica's Encyclopedia Infographica*. What on Earth Books Publishing.

