

Ian David Marsden

ILLUSTRATOR, CARTOONIST & CREATIVE DIRECTOR

marsdenillustration.com

PRODUCTION OVERVIEW · FOR COMMUNICATION, LEARNING AND MARKETING TEAMS

Hand-Drawn Explainer Videos & Whiteboard Animation

I create original hand-drawn explainer videos, whiteboard animations and illustrated learning films for companies, institutions, educators and organizations that need to explain products, services, processes or complex ideas clearly. I draw and animate every character, scene and diagram myself, from the first script to the final delivery: no AI-generated artwork, no templates, no stock characters.

HAND-DRAWN	HAND-ANIMATED	NO AI-GENERATED ARTWORK	NO TEMPLATES OR STOCK CHARACTERS	PRODUCED PERSONALLY

Hand-drawn explainer videos

Original illustration and animation that explains products, services, processes and complex ideas.

Illustrated learning films

E-learning, microlearning, training and onboarding, produced as series with one consistent visual language.

Whiteboard animation

Drawings that appear progressively as the narration develops.

STUDIO

Marsden Creative
Near Montpellier, France · Remote worldwide

LANGUAGES

English · Français · Deutsch

FEE MODEL

Fixed project fee, agreed usage rights included

CONTACT

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01 — WHY HAND-DRAWN

Drawn for your subject. By a person.

There is a difference between animation that imitates a hand-drawn look and a film whose visual language is actually designed around the subject. That matters most for technical, scientific, educational or abstract topics, where the drawing has to do real explanatory work rather than simply decorate a voice-over.

01

Drawn

I draw characters, environments, diagrams, objects and visual metaphors specifically for your project, in an illustration style developed for the content and the audience.

02

Animated

I animate the artwork myself, with drawing reveals, movement, transitions and pacing suited to the narration.

03

Produced personally

I stay directly involved through the complete visual production, rather than handing the project from account manager to storyboard artist to illustrator to animator. Drawing, pacing and storytelling stay consistent from the first sketch to the finished film.

WHAT YOU WILL NOT GET

No stock character libraries. No prebuilt illustration packs. No template scenes. No AI-generated imagery used as a substitute for commissioned drawing.

Every character, scene and diagram in your film is drawn by me, a human artist you can speak to directly, from the first sketch to the final frame.

10+ years
of hand-drawn explainer and learning-film production

5 countries
clients in the US, UK, Switzerland, Germany and France

3 languages
English, German and French, worked in directly

35+ years
of professional illustration and editorial cartooning

Where illustrated explainers work well

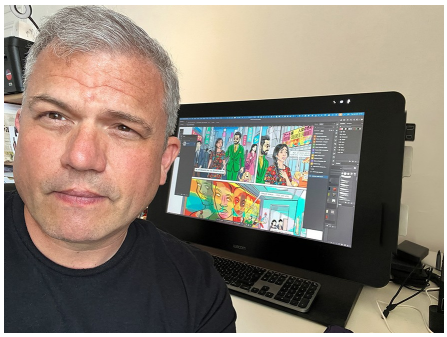
Training and onboarding · E-learning and microlearning · Product and service explanation · Software and technical communication · Scientific and medical communication · Internal communication and change · Public-information campaigns · Charities and education

The drawings can leave the film too: agreed illustrations are supplied as high-resolution assets for presentations, websites, training materials and print, within the usage rights agreed for the project.

02 — WHO I AM

An editorial illustrator and cartoonist who draws explainer films

I'm Ian David Marsden: an illustrator, cartoonist and creative director, drawing from my studio near Montpellier, France, for clients in Europe and the United States.



Ian David Marsden · Marsden Creative, near Montpellier

I sold my first cartoon to Nebelspalter at fifteen and saw it published at sixteen. I have worked as a professional illustrator and editorial cartoonist for more than 35 years. My work has appeared in Nebelspalter and NZZ am Sonntag in Switzerland, and in The New Yorker and MAD. I'm a member of Cartooning for Peace, the international network of editorial cartoonists.

Editorial cartooning trains one skill above all: grasping a subject quickly, separating what matters from what doesn't, and finding the one image that explains it. That is exactly what an explainer film needs, so I read every script as an editor first and as an illustrator second.

For more than a decade I have applied that to hand-drawn explainer and learning films for clients in the United States, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Germany and France. I also teach illustration, visual arts and image analysis (semiotics) in the 3D Animation and VFX Masters Program at ESMA Montpellier, a French higher education institution specializing in animation, 3D and visual effects.

In brief

EDITORIAL	Nebelspalter · NZZ am Sonntag · The New Yorker · MAD
CARTOONING	Member of Cartooning for Peace
EXPERIENCE	More than 35 years of professional illustration, editorial cartooning, character design and visual communication
EXPLAINER FILMS	More than a decade of hand-drawn explainer and learning films for clients in the US, UK, Switzerland, Germany and France
TEACHING	ESMA Montpellier: illustration, visual arts and image analysis (semiotics)
LANGUAGES	English, German (Hochdeutsch and Schwiizerdütsch) and French

03 — SELECTED PRODUCTIONS

A learning film and an ongoing series

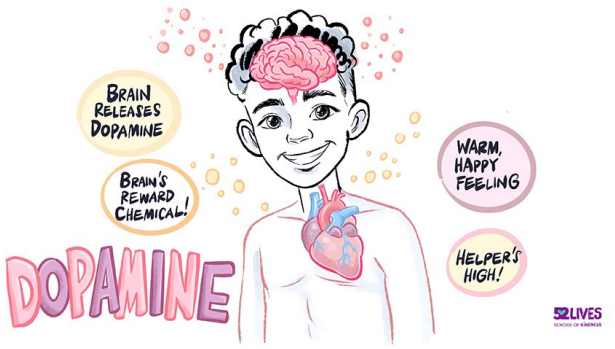
UNITED KINGDOM · LEARNING FILM

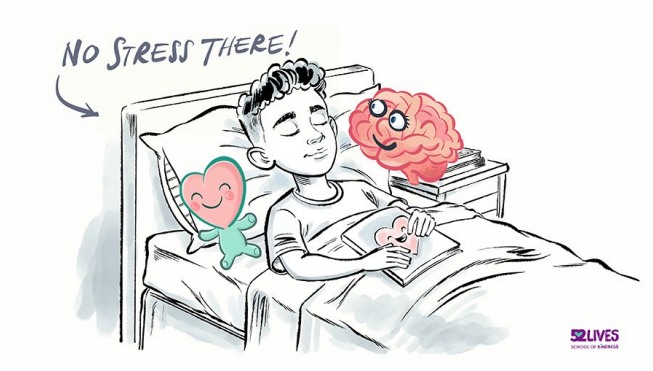
The Science of Kindness

Created for UK charity 52 Lives and The School of Kindness, this three-minute film explains neuroscience, empathy and emotional wellbeing to younger audiences through characters, diagrams and visual metaphor. The story of a boy named Sam shows how kind actions quietly change the world around him. The film has been used in many UK schools.

My role: concept development, storyboard, character design, illustration, animation, editing and final 4K UHD delivery.

Read the case study →





ONGOING SERIES · SELF-LEADERSHIP

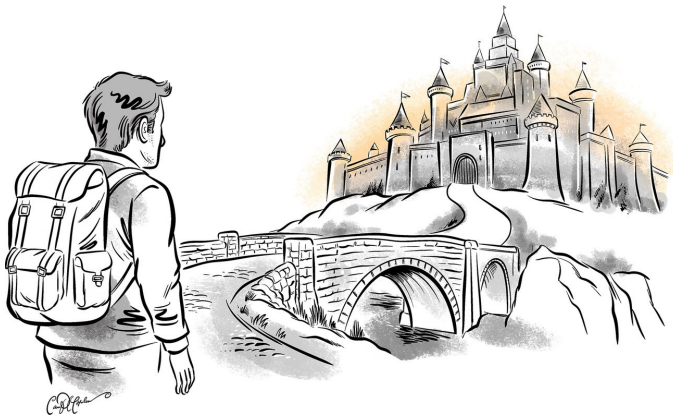
Men Harvesting Wisdom

An illustrated film translating a substantial self-leadership framework into a coherent visual narrative about identity, purpose, values, change and personal transition. The approved narration was developed into characters, landscapes, maps, symbolic imagery and recurring visual metaphors that give abstract ideas a consistent visual structure.

My role: creative direction, visual development, storyboarding, illustration, character design, animation, editing and final 4K delivery. The film belongs to an ongoing series for which I handle illustration and video production.

Watch the film →





04 — SELECTED PRODUCTIONS · SERIES

Series in several languages

GERMANY · 2018 · GERMAN, ENGLISH, FRENCH

Mycotrition: six films on how medicinal mushroom products are made

Six illustrated films follow the process from cultivation through powder and extract to quality management and the finished products. I adapted the supplied texts into storyboards, painted every scene as a digital watercolor-style illustration, animated the films as motion graphics and supervised the narration recordings in person. The technical stages are shown in process slides based on photographs of the actual manufacture and the manufacturer's own diagrams.

My role: text adaptation, storyboard, illustration, motion graphics, voice-over direction.

Read the case study →





GERMANY · 2021 · TECHNICAL & SCIENTIFIC

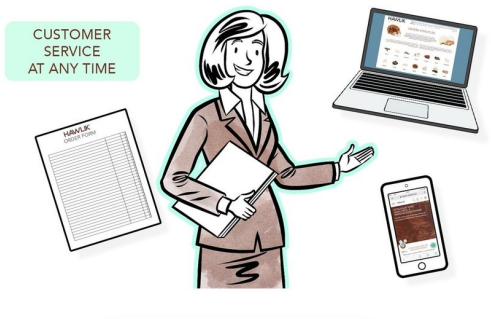
Hawlik: ten illustrated explainer films

Ten short films cover cultivation, laboratory analysis, residue monitoring, product composition, sustainability and commercial communication. I developed the visual system, storyboarded the films and handled production and animation. For the English versions I translated the scripts and recorded the narration myself.

My role: visual development, storyboard, illustration, production and animation, English translation and narration.

Read the case study →





Series projects share one drawing system, one storyboard logic and one production workflow across all films, so the whole set stays consistent from the first film to the last.

05 — SELECTED PRODUCTIONS · INTEGRATED WORK

One visual language, from print to motion

PARIS · IN TALENT WE TRUST · 2024–2025

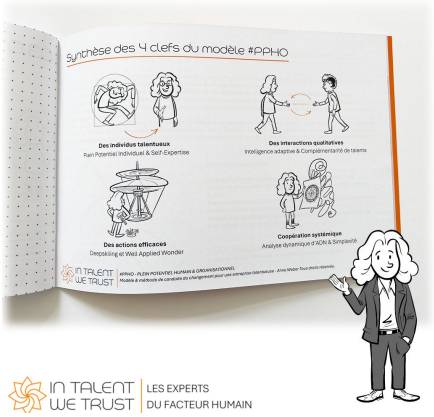
PPHO: the same illustrated world in print and on screen

For the Paris consultancy IN TALENT WE TRUST I developed illustrations for the PPHO methodology created by Anne Weber: the recurring character Léonard, explanatory diagrams, printed learning materials, digital assets and campaign illustration. A hand-drawn, Uncle Sam-inspired campaign image was also developed into a short drawing animation. It was a campaign animation, not a full scripted explainer film, but it shows how motion can belong naturally to a wider illustration assignment.

My role: character design, illustration, information graphics, print and digital applications, short drawing animation.

Read the case study →
Download the PDF case study →







ONE DEFINED SCOPE. ONE FIXED PROJECT FEE. AGREED USAGE RIGHTS INCLUDED.

For a multi-format project, we define the animation, illustrations and required applications together at the briefing stage. A single fixed-fee quote can then cover the agreed production work and the specified usage rights, rather than leaving the client to commission each application separately. Printing, fabrication, professional voice-over and licensed music are third-party services: they are shown separately or invoiced directly by the provider.

More productions

dfreeeze (Germany & Switzerland): whiteboard film and illustrated comic campaign for digades, with character design and retail comic booklets.

LAP-Vorbereitung / Blocklearning.ch (Zürich): short learning nuggets for Swiss vocational education; concept and direction by André Schelter, Solid Steel GmbH.

Dräger (healthcare, international): illustrated communication on Infection Prevention and Control and patient safety.

Federal Acquisition Institute (United States): concept art, storyboards and animation-ready vector scenes for a multi-part federal training initiative, commissioned through Coley & Associates.

All Stars Project (New York): a hand-illustrated whiteboard film translating an abstract human-development philosophy into sequential visual explanation.

All case studies and the full explainer video gallery: marsdenillustration.com/hand-drawn-explainer-videos

06 — STYLE SAMPLES

The range of my drawing styles

Each film gets a visual language developed for its subject and audience. These samples show the range, from satirical ink to watercolor and clean explanatory line. All of it is drawn by me.

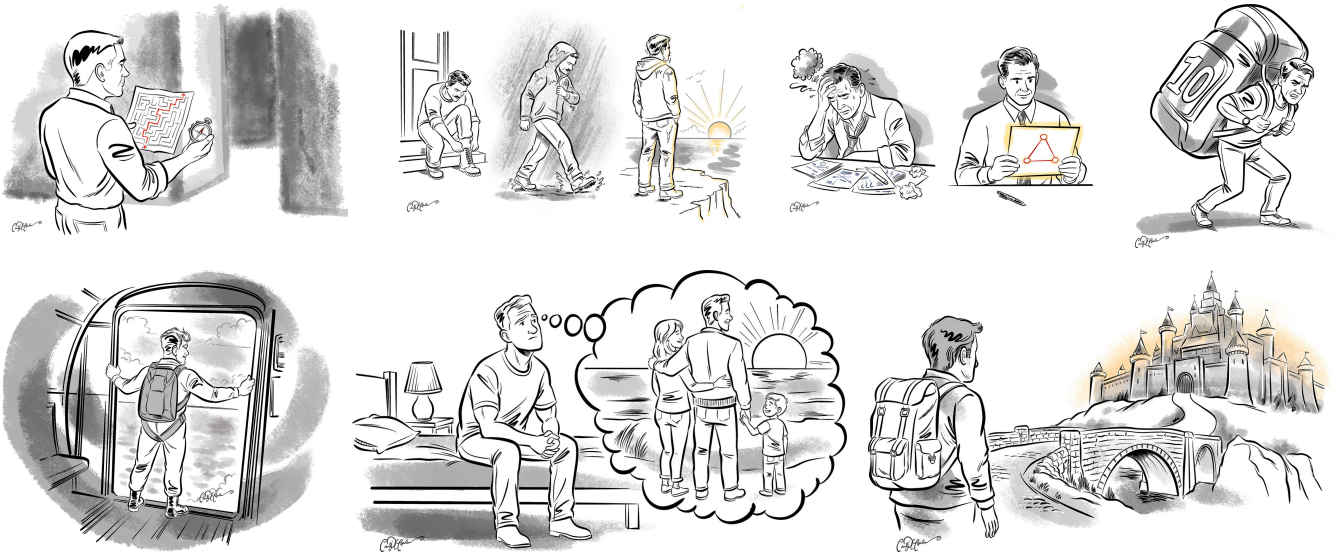
1 · Editorial ink & wash

Satirical and editorial: strong line, expressive characters, visual puns and metaphor.



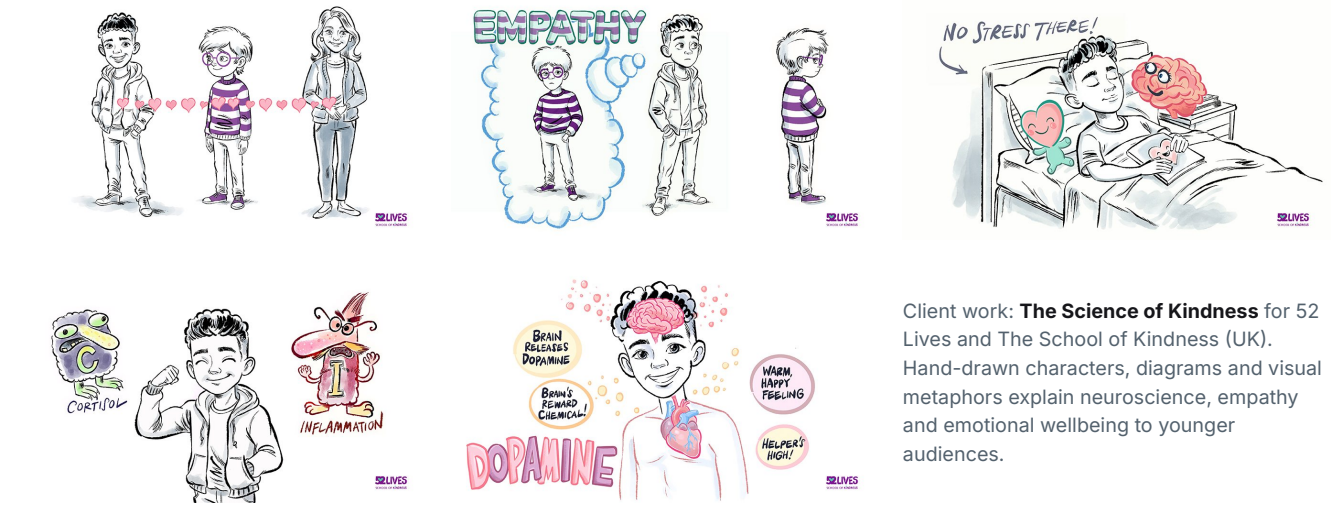
2 · Narrative storytelling

Single-subject scenes and sequences: clean line, a restrained gray wash and one accent color. From the Men Harvesting Wisdom series.



3 · Friendly educational

Warm, character-led explanation with light color, for younger or general audiences. From The Science of Kindness.



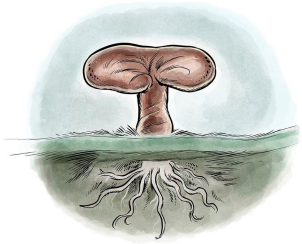
Client work: **The Science of Kindness** for 52 Lives and The School of Kindness (UK). Hand-drawn characters, diagrams and visual metaphors explain neuroscience, empathy and emotional wellbeing to younger audiences.

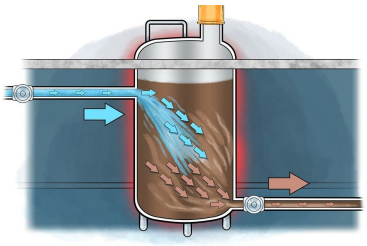
07 — STYLE SAMPLES

...and further styles from the case studies

4 · Watercolor & process illustration

Calm digital watercolor and technical process art for the Mycotrition series: landscapes, flow diagrams and production lines.

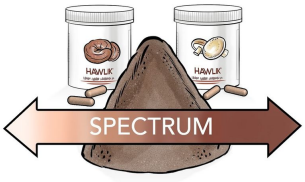


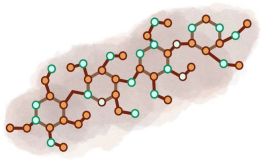


5 · Clean explanatory line

Light, clear scenes and icons for the ten Hawlik films: science, product composition and sustainability.



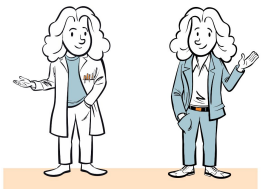
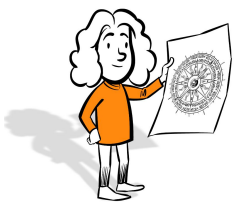
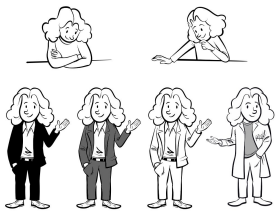
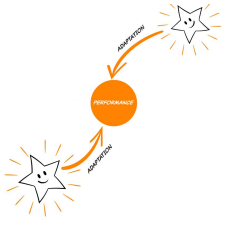








6 · Character system & print

A recurring character built for variation, working in print, on screen and on a campaign poster. From PPHO for IN TALENT WE TRUST.


08 — PROCESS & FEE

How the production works, and what it costs

01 Brief & script
Message, audience, use and scope are defined. Existing material can be edited, developed or written into a complete script.

02 Storyboard
Scenes, visual logic, transitions and timing are resolved before final artwork begins.

03 Illustration
Characters, environments, diagrams, objects and visual metaphors are drawn specifically for the project.

04 Animation & sound
Artwork is animated with drawing reveals, movement, transitions and pacing. Voice and music are coordinated where needed.

05 Review
Agreed review stages keep corrections structured and predictable rather than open-ended.

06 Delivery
Final films, subtitles, language versions and high-resolution illustration assets are supplied as agreed.

Fixed project fee, usage rights included

After a short briefing, I provide a fixed-fee quote based on the actual scope of the project. The agreed scope, revision rounds, deliverables, usage rights and fee are defined before production begins.

Many of the complete films shown in this overview, including productions of three minutes or more, were produced in the approximate €3,000–€6,000 range. Shorter, clearly defined productions can start at around €1,000, for example a compact film with a straightforward script, few scenes and restrained animation; larger or more complex productions can exceed €6,000. Running time is one factor, but the final price depends on the actual scope: script development or adaptation, the number and complexity of scenes, illustration style, animation, language versions, revisions and required deliverables. There is no rigid per-minute formula. Production often takes one to three weeks.

Payment: 50% at the start and 50% on final delivery. For very long projects: 33% at the start, 33% at an agreed milestone and the remainder on final delivery.

Professional voice-over, music licenses and other third-party services may be added where required and are shown separately or invoiced directly by the provider; I can recommend and coordinate them. All prices are in euros, and my invoices do not include VAT.

The project fee can include

- Concept and visual development
- Script development within the agreed scope
- Storyboard
- Original illustration and character design
- Animation and editing
- Agreed review stages
- Final video files
- Agreed usage rights
- High-resolution still-image assets

"You want it done? You want it done right? You want it done on time? Here is somebody that knows his craft inside and out and doesn't cut corners."

Tom Geudens
Graph Database Expert

"I worked with Ian on several projects, such as our illustrated videos for Mycotrition GmbH. We were always very pleased with his work."

Sebastian Schmode-Laybourne
CEO, Mycotrition GmbH

"Ian was my favorite illustrator working on an animation project I directed. He supplied us with many cutting-edge assets in very short deadlines."

Avi Graiver
Animation Director

Have something difficult to explain?

Send me a short outline of the subject, the audience and the intended use. You do not need a finished script, storyboard or visual concept before contacting me.

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