

From Image to Insight: Introducing Visual Connections

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Cite as: Ng-He C. From Image to Insight: Introducing Visual Connections. *Hypothesis*. 2026;38(1). doi:10.18060/29737



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Why visual matters

We are living in an increasingly visually driven world. People design, communicate, and expect information through images, icons, and other forms of visualization to inform, inspire, and prompt action. Visual imagery has long served as a means of creative expression and a way of interpreting one's state of mind and emotions¹. Visuals are also used practically to illustrate scientific findings and facts that impact health and wellness², and strategically in education to build empathy while strengthening both humanistic and analytic competencies³⁻⁵. In other words, visuals connect people and disciplines. The fundamental role of visual media—and, more broadly, the arts and humanities—is critical in medical education⁶. For health information professionals, the value of visuals in storytelling and the development of visual literacy warrants further discussion and attention in our ever-changing information landscape⁷.

The Visual Connections submission category allows authors to highlight the ways in which health sciences, arts, and humanities intersect. By encouraging interdisciplinary dialogue, health information professionals are encouraged to experiment with and reflect on how visuals tell stories, convey concepts, and enhance research results.

What is in Visual Connections

Visual Connections showcases two-dimensional works that draw on historical, archival, or imaginative sources to inform and inspire discussion. Submissions may include drawings, paintings, collages, comics, zines, photography, digital renderings, and images of

three-dimensional works such as sculpture, textiles, 3D scans, or other visual representations of narratives.

The category could also feature illustrations that combine scholarship with visual communication, posters featuring digitized or born-digital special collections, infographics, and research studies that are best communicated visually.

When submitting, authors should include a short narrative (300–500 words) contextualizing the visual content, methods, and relevance to health information professionals along with the image. Additional guidelines can be found on *Hypothesis* website⁸. Peer reviewers of this category will consider the five main criteria outlined below:

1. *Originality*: Does the visual work contain an original perspective toward topics that reflect the health information professional community?
2. *Relevance*: Does the visual work represent timely and forward-looking content that reflects emerging trends and current needs of the profession and/or the communities we serve?
3. *Intellectual Engagement*: Does the visual work potentially and adequately inform or inspire intellectual discussion?
4. *Disgn Quality*: Are the graphics and visual elements used effectively and appropriate to the content presented?
5. *Overall Presentation*: Is the work clear, concise, accessible, and readable? Is it well organized?

Visual Connections contributes to the growing scholarship in the field of health humanities by celebrating and advocating for transdisciplinary research, which examines the intricate relationship between the human condition and health⁹. Prospective authors, who are looking for ideas, are encouraged to explore *Ars Medica: A Journal of Medicine*¹⁰, *The Arts, and Humanities*, *Intima: A Journal of Narrative Medicine*¹¹, and *Research and Humanities in Medical Education*¹².

In this issue

I am pleased to begin this inaugural issue with a study of the modern artist Edvard Munch's *The Sick Child I* (1896). This piece examines the artist's approach to portraying remembrance, grief, and the search for solace in the persistent presence of illness and death.

Individuals who are health sciences librarians, artists, professionals from other disciplines, or at any stage of their careers are invited to join this journey of engaging with stories, challenges, and experiences through creative visual narratives.

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