



WE CALL ON ILLUSTRATORS late at night, in the early morning and on deadline. The subjects are complex: #MeToo, the immigration debate, climate change. We ask them to address these topics with sensitivity, wit and feeling — to add fresh perspective and avoid cliché. Also, “Can you send a sketch in a few hours?”

We call on them because, at a time when the news cycle can feel relentless and overwhelming, these images make a different kind of impact: conveying emotion, creating space for thought, adding depth to subjects that may feel at once both too complex and overly familiar.

From the thousands of illustrations that appeared in print and online in The New York Times this year, here are some of the most notable: the ones that surprised us, that made us feel something, that made us laugh — the ones that made us pause a moment longer than we might have on a busy day in 2018.