# Visual Storytelling: Putting Data into Context
## Arlene Birt, Background Stories / Minneapolis College of Art and Design

**Sunday November 17**
**1:00 pm – 4:30 pm**
**Offered at $75** *(includes 1 break)*

"*People following directions with illustrations do 323% better than those following text directions alone.*" - Levie, W.H. & Lentz, R. (1982). Effects of Text Illustrations: A Review of Research. Educational Communication and Technology: A Journal of Theory, Research, and Development, 30(4), 195-232.

In our increasingly visually-oriented society, engaging audiences requires understanding best practices in visual communication. This session is an intro to visual communication, where you learn how to apply best practices to your behavior change campaigns and research. We'll explore how to use visuals to connect with an audience, put data into context, and engage non-expert audiences in complex content.

Participants will develop visual stories for their own projects throughout the workshop. A wide variety of examples from socially and environmentally-focused communication, and the research behind visual best practices are included in the workshop.

Topics we'll cover include: When to use what type of graph, an intro to visual storytelling, when to use photos vs. icons/graphics, when to use animation vs. static graphics, and visual tools that exist for you to use.

Data visualization, infographics and visual storytelling can be a powerful way to inform and engage audiences – especially when done with behavior change strategies.

Join us to craft your project's visual story!

Agenda:
- The Value of Visual Communication & Infodesign
- Visual Approaches to Data
- Activity: Visualize numerical data
- Narrative Stories
- Activity: Developing stories from your project
- The Process: Audiences, Tactics & Techniques
- Examples for Inspiration
- Activity: Sketch your project
- Resources & Tools

Key take-aways:
1. Learn tried-and-tested methods for visually communicating sustainability.
2. Sketch a rough draft of your own project's visual story.
3. Understand how to use storytelling and emotional connection in your communications.

## About the instructor:



Arlene Birt is founder and chief visual storyteller of Background Stories (www.backgroundstories.com). Arlene works with environment-focused organizations in the US, EU and UK to translates complex ideas, systems and metrics into clear visuals that help people (especially non-experts) understand sustainability. An expert in information visualization and narrative, visual storytelling for sustainability, Arlene also has experience with social marketing for behavior change and using creative practices for community engagement. Arlene is also a professor at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, teaching courses on infodesign, data visualization and sustainability since 2008. She is a Climate Reality leader and is always on the lookout for opportunities to create participatory, data-focused public artwork.