

Unit 2: Week 2

Positions Through Iterating

Position

UNIT 2: WEEK 2 POSITIONS THROUGH ITERATING

I chose iteration 100 from my 100 (104) page publication, which was the mobile phone iteration of the analogue print magazine cover.

I chose six references (listed on the right) to develop my iterations and to take them in a new direction.

From my references, my iterations will focus on hybridisation of print and digital. I will iterate questioning how principles of each discipline work together, in isolation, or not at all, in creating a magazine cover in a hybrid world. I will do this through the lens of female representation and commercialisation.

Reading List

McLuhan, M. and Fiore, Q. (1967). *The Medium is the Message*. New York : Bantam Books.

Jencks, C.A. and Silver, N. (2013). *Adhocism : the case for improvisation*. London [Etc.] The Mit Press.

Own References

Criado Perez, C. (2019). *Invisible Women: Data Bias in a World Designed for Men*. S.L.: Harry N Abrams.

Ludovico, A. (2018). *Post-digital print : the mutation of publishing since 1894*. Eindhoven: Onomatopee.

Projects

Knoth , C. and Renner, K. (2022). *You Can't Trust Music*. [online] yctm.e-flux.com. Available at: <https://yctm.e-flux.com/> [Accessed 18 Apr. 2024].

Condé Nast (2024). *Glamour UK Magazine Archive*. [online] Glamour UK. Available at: <https://www.glamourmagazine.co.uk/magazine> (Accessed: 18th Apr. 2024)

Position

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POSITIONS THROUGH ITERATING



<https://23042320.myblog.arts.ac.uk/2024/04/23/01-02-02-positions-through-iterating-2/>

50 Iterations

Key Points

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00.00 Static

Why doesn't it move?

At least it fits the screen its on.



02.06 Reverse Image

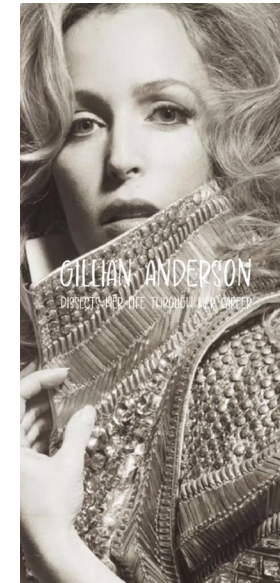
Reversing the image to end up in the finishing position worked better and formed a traditional cover from movement utilising digital movement and engagement with the traditional print cover.

Although the traditional print cover in this case has already been adjusted to fit the format. Two columns of cover lines doesn't work on the narrow measure and I used an unusual crop for a cover, which creates design opportunity within the frame to be more experimental with cover line placement, image, representation and pushing a digital cover to be less hegemonic whilst remaining commercial?



02.20 Effects

Putting animation effects on the text is too far. Gimicky and hard to read and makes all the varied fonts confusing.



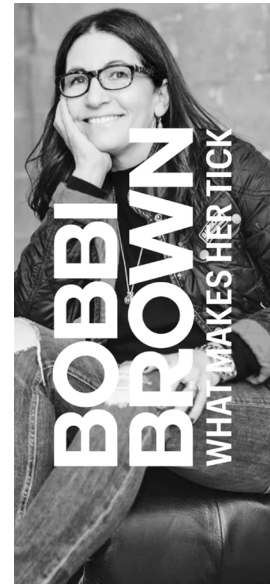
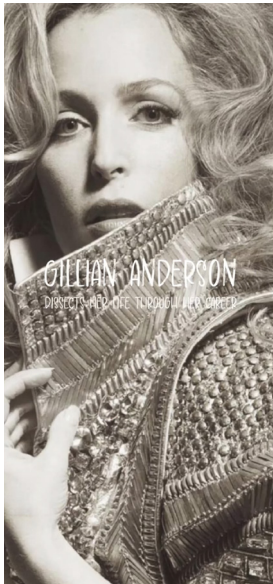
03.45 Change format

Cover lines slide in from the sides individually breaking the traditional cover format being more inline with what digital does well.

50 Iterations

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03.50 Change Images

Utilising digital and removing the restrictions of an analogue cover by placing an image to go with each cover line to better visually display the magazines content and cover lines.

But this rendered the multiple typefaces irrelevant as the images and typefaces were all different there wasn't enough cohesion, it was a mish mash. So made all the cover lines in a consistent 'neutral' font.

05.15 Text Design

Experimental cover lines design is emerging as the images have become more consistent through making them all black and white. The Masthead is back on all pages. Does this help identify brand and context or is it an unneeded overhang from traditional covers. What Marketing would want, but are we more sophisticated than this now?

05.40 Pushing

Introducing 'Skin' in a mash of text styles to represent the varied women, the images then have heavily typographical cover lines, where the image is secondary to the words.

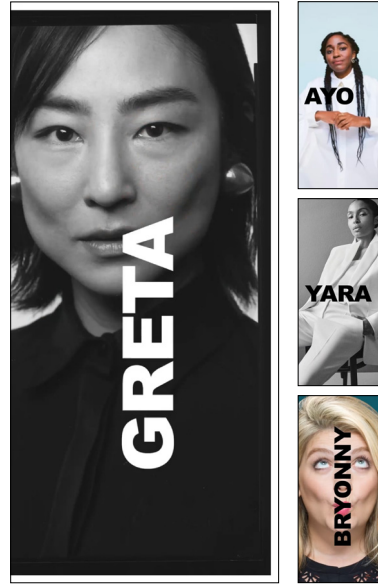
05.50 Music

Bringing in music changes everything. Editing to the beat increases the overall length required and the number of images increases, I had a hole so filled it with the keywords, finishing with the constructed cover. It's impactful but there are three stories being told here which makes it confusing and wrong.

50 Iterations

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06.53 Simplify

Simplifying all the fonts, the overall style and placing the Masthead in the centre starts to feel more cohesive and digital working to its strengths. It's now quite far removed from an analogue cover. Is it too like everything else on the internet? Have I been swayed by what I see a LOT. Hegemony of another space.

The keywords instead of cover lines don't make it very exciting or intriguing or alluring? Gone full circle as to why cover lines appear in the first instance?

Is it too far removed from a traditional magazine cover to articulate its a magazine cover in the digital space? Not enough of the original as per references?

06.59 Names

Changing each image to actual images from the magazine show much better the breath and depth and diversity of content the magazine has when you compare it to the original print cover. Giving women names not generic cover lines and that being enough is starting to represent women in a more strong, independent and individual way hopefully away from patriarchal ideals. The images were purposely chosen to not be sexual or the object of the male gaze. But this is a massive area of complexity. Women feel they are 'owning' themselves by being sexy, but who are they really being sexy for? Not for me. For themselves? Why? Really for men? Is it all a competition for nature and nurture?

07.01 +

So much more to explore. I feel I have only just got started. It's interesting that the project started as a challenging cover design that has gone almost back to traditional design in terms of font use and use of language. But it is utilising what digital does best, its finding its place with how much primitive ethos to use, but is no where near a conclusion.

The use of imagery and language is stripping the female representation that was stereotypical, patriarchal and demeaning to women in and reading the magazine.

56 Iterations

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01	Static	15	Push image futher	29	All connect at one point as a cover but always moving	44	Make cover lines more interesting typographically
02	Cover lines all slide in at the same time	16	Cover lines complete their journey lines off	30	Remove the middle point	45	Intro Skin then remove from each frame and return at the end
03	Logo animates and all slide in at same time	17	Eyeball triggers end movement	31	Cover lines flow through the middle	46	Cover lines bigger
04	Logo animates then cover lines slide in at same time	18	Repeat masthead glitch	32	Cover lines flow through the middle and pause to be read	47	With music
05	Alternative logo animate all slide in at same time	19	Frantic remove gltich	33	Cover lines pause longer as too quick	48	With backgrounds to words
06	Cover lines slide in clockwise one after another DUPE	20	Frantic slow down cover line exits and allow image to rest at end	34	Lose a cover line so can be read	49	With alternative background to words
07	Cover lines slide in clockwise with overlap	21	Slow cover lines exit	35	Lose another cover line so can be read	50	More consistent font with better background
08	Cover lines slide in in hierarchy of size	22	Stagger cover lines exit (as entrance)	36	Change image with each cover line	51	Re-edited to fit
09	Main cover line enlarged	23	Picture reversed so ended in the right place	37	Change font to consistent as images have changed	52	No traditional cover lines just prompt words
10	Cover lines slide in starting with main then in a balanced and engaging way.	24	Picture reversed by ends in right place for street art	38	Place cover lines to fit with image	53	Real content images
11	Cover lines split and follow one another	25	Starts with eye on edge	39	Make images black and white	54	Plus cover lines at the end
12	Repetitive Masthead Animation	26	Extend to 10 seconds so there is time read all cover lines	40	Make images strong black and white	55	Names of each
13	Not repetitive masthead but moving image	27	Random effects on text REPEATED	41	Make cover line Skin	56	Cover lines
14	Push image further	28	Chosen effect on all text NOT THERE	42	Make cover line central		
				43	Make cover line appear on all frames		

Reflection and Development

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What is the cover for?

This iterations project brought up endless questions.

What is the purpose of this cover? A traditional print cover is the “selling point”. It acts as the advert in the wider world, an advert on the newsstand and the start of the ephemeral product.

A digital cover can overcome the restrictions of a print cover in that it can visually tell a greater story of its content through multiple or moving images. But is it an advert, the first ‘page’ of the digital publication or a consumable product. This project raises that these may be different things in the digital world due to the openness of digital technology.

The digital cover as an advert starts to become a film trailer in style. The music wants to be punchy and impactful (I think) to grab attention and to get lots of information in a small timeframe. But the cover the actual product may want to set a more ‘reading’ context and therefore be slower and more relaxing?

Length

How long is too long? How short is too short? Are different lengths needed for different purposes?

How much content is too much content? How much is too little. Do you want to entice readers purely visually - more hybrid with a trailer - or with cover lines - more hybrid with print. The both maybe don't work together?

Convention

As my iterations progressed I started to revert back to traditional cover lines rather than punchy words. I don't know if that is because it's such a deeply ingrained format or because it is a format that works.

Through this process I started to fall foul of stereotypical cover line writing that is engaging but detrimental. There is more work to do here on how and where these cover lines are engaging and enticing, sell what's inside, in a holistic, truthful and fun way that represents humans in a positive and kind way without being boring or patronising.

Balance

Magazines are a form of entertainment and should be accessible and relaxed, but can still be deep, interesting and relevant. They should be social, political, economic, opinionated, but they can definitely better represent women visually and through bias. It's challenging how to do this in a light hearted and witty way without compromising integrity.

Reflection and Development

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Choice

This project certainly highlighted choice. Or lack of it. In trying to find imagery to represent the great mix of women featured in Grazia that wasn't sexual, provocative or the object of the male gaze, was challenging. But they did exist. Unfortunately I can only get small grabs of them off the internet so they are not done justice in the animations which affects the reading of the pieces.

In trying to connect each reference to a song or a piece of music was more challenging. Most of the songs that came to mind immediately were male orientated. And even the female songs were often written in part or fully by men. There was also a contradiction in wanting a mix of music styles to represent women in a complex and varied fashion that weren't stereotypical 'female anthems' that are commercial, over used and predictable. The variety of music I wanted to portray was even harder to find with authentic female voices / production, highlighting the unconscious male bias and patriarchy deeply entrenched in our society.

Me

My inherent background in magazines and years of working in magazines certainly makes it harder for me to experiment beyond what is currently there.

When the experiments veer off I also have in the back of my head, how can this actually work in the commercial magazine world, with my creative director quite simply asking me "what the **** is this Hazel?"

Bibliography Reading List

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Line of enquiry

In exploration of commercial magazine editorial design in a hybrid world, I will interrogate deeply, rigorously and systematically iteration 100, a mobile formatted print magazine cover.

I will work ad hoc, combining the subsystems of print and digital, using what is available, in this instance After Effects, to explore today's job with today's tools. I will see how far I can push traditional print methodologies of print magazine cover design in this space, to explore the possibilities, limitations and experience of a 'magazine cover'.

But now... is it an advert, the first 'page' of the digital publication or a consumable product?

Do I need to weave this in or does that come in the next iteration?

Bibliography Reading List

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The Medium is the Massage, Marshall McLuhan

McLuhan discusses how in periods of “great technological and cultural transitions” we try to do “today’s job with yesterday’s tools – with yesterday’s concepts” (McLuhan, 1967).

This notion is evident on a macro level with the birth of the internet and the digital cultural revolution that emerged with it, and on a micro level in how commercial magazines create their digital counterpart. Commercial magazine covers in the digital space are replica’s, usually static, at their printed partners ratio’s (not the interfaces ratios they are displayed on). Commercial magazine analogue design principles and format remain in the digital version. The tools and rules of print being utilised in the digital space. I had questioned if digital magazines were generally websites, as opposed to magazines, in terms of editorial design (or lack of it online), but McLuhan’s observations, stretched this thought. How can digital magazine covers (“today’s job”), better utilise the digital space and its tools? “Yesterday’s concepts” of a magazine cover are on average six cover lines and one image. “Yesterday’s tools” are InDesign, one static image and static cover lines, generally in two or three typographic styles. What can magazine covers be when formatted for digital, engaging with the tools of digital, utilising movement, animation and sound?

McLuhan, M. and Fiore, Q. (1967). The Medium is the Massage. New York : Bantam Books.

Bibliography Reading List

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Adhocism, Jencks and Silver

Jencks and Silver promote pluralism as a means of development, or progress, of design in culture and society. Their belief that “everything can always become something else” is inspiring and wholly relevant to this project. They state:

“Perhaps the oldest and simplest method of creation consists of combining readily available subsystems ad hoc, since its always easier to work with what is familiar and at hand... this is a characteristic mode of creation in tribal cultures.”
(Jencks and Silver, 0000)

How can the subsystem of print design and the subsystem of the digital interface, be combined, ad hoc (with what is readily available), to progress a new hybridised form. Of course this is in process in the world already, but Jencks and Silvers premise makes me ask deeper questions. What if I took more of one subsystem than the other? What if I took the best qualities of print and best qualities of digital to combine them? What if I took the worst qualities of each and combined them? The potential combinations of these two subsystems is vast and varied.

Jencks, C.A. and Silver, N. (2013). Adhocism : the case for improvisation. London [Etc.] The Mit Press.

Post Digital Print - The Mutation of Publishing since 1894, Alessandro Ludivico

Ludivico discusses how digital versions of magazines are exploring “the integration of audio and video, and ‘extra’ content in general” whilst using traditional print formatting (the use of columns of text and images as in analogue magazines). He argues the digital magazine then becomes “a hybrid object: not a completely new medium, but rather an expanded one”. Exploiting the ingrained familiarity, understanding and safety of traditional print formatting in the digital iteration mean “new habits are then quickly and easily formed, leading to rapid acceptance of the hybrid.” It interests and enlightens me, that readers need enough of the old to understand the new, to accept the hybridisation. This hybrid can then develop in its sophistication, as print design has over the last century. Taking this into my practice will enable me to push the boundaries of digital magazine cover design, embracing print design principles, but with an awareness of when it has gone too far, as a current temporal totality.

Ludovico, A. (2018). Post-digital print : the mutation of publishing since 1894. Eindhoven: Onomatopée.

Bibliography

Own Reference

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Invisible Women, Caroline Criado Perez

“One of the most important things to say about the gender data gap is that it is generally not malicious, or even deliberate. Quite the opposite. It is simply the product of a way of thinking that has been around for millennia and is therefore a kind of not thinking. A double not thinking, even: men go without saying, and women don’t get said at all. Because when we say human, on the whole, we mean man.”

I love two things about Perez. One: how she uncovers bias in the mundane, things that I would never, ever, have noticed ever in all the world. Two: How she doesn’t blame anyone for this, just observes it’s how it is.

In a world of finger pointing, one upmanship and blame culture, Perez rises effortlessly above it and leads by example. Noticing things. The same things. One repeat. That culminate. Into one big undulating mass of invisible women.

Learning from Perez, I am (lovingly) noticing everyday misjustices that are taking place in my small world. That take places in every woman’s small world, creating one entire world of misjustice. In my project I aim to represent women in a credible, strong and just way. Through the choice of imagery and the choice of words, I will try to design with Perez in mind, and not fall foul of hereditary patriarchy in commercial magazine editorial design.

Criado Perez, C. (2019). Invisible Women: Data Bias in a World Designed for Men. S.L.: Harry N Abrams.

Bibliography

Project 01

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You Can't Trust Music, Knoth and Renner

I am interested in using music to enhance and elevate online editorial content. Knoth and Renner's You Can't Trust Music is a digital offering that consists of long form written content, with music to go with each piece, that visitors are "encouraged to listen to... in their entirety and can navigate through as the project develops."

Contrary to the usual digital space experience – that seems to be fuelled by cortisol and a 'click, consume, like, repeat' mantra – the addition of music slowed my mind and user habits. Initially it was distracting, but then it felt like reading a book or magazine. It became a space where I wanted to spend time. The more imposing musical scores made me feel within my body. Enhancing the reading experience into a more lived experience with heightened emotion. This powerful combination of music and words utilises the best attributes of print and digital.

The interface's structural design was also comforting, reassuring and useful without overwhelming the content. It told you how long the music would last, which gave me an indication of how long I might spend there, which made me physically relax. There were clear, but contained navigation systems so you knew where you were within the site. They utilised marginalia which I always thought of as a purely print proposition.

The graphic design I found more challenging. The gently undulating, morphing, organic lines/shapes, that were the same colour as the text, were no doubt purposeful and held meaning, but as a user experience it was annoying and distracting. Magazines are reader friendly experiences, which leads me to question where is the boundary of pushing the limits of digital experimentation within commercial editorial design?

YCTM is an excellent example of hybridisation of print practices iterated in a digital space in a digital format by digital tools. These examples push me to think more deeply about hybrid design and practices and what can be achieved.

Knoth , C. and Renner, K. (2022). You Can't Trust Music. [online] yctm.e-flux.com. Available at: <https://yctm.e-flux.com/> [Accessed 18 Apr. 2024].

Bibliography

Project 02

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Glamour

Glamour UK was the first commercial women's magazine to go all digital. They describe themselves as 'digital first' and as a result you would think would be at the forefront of digital editorial design.

At a BSME event 'How to design an impactful cover – across every platform' (12th May 2022), Deborah Joseph, European editorial director at Glamour stated "I used to think that coverlines were important – and they are in print, but we use them less and less in digital channels. It's the person and image that are important. We use coverlines less and less, maybe relying on the name of the celebrity. I'm an original magazine editor and I'm shedding lots of what I've learned." Joseph has a strong focus on data and metrics and alludes to the speed of online content, "traditional magazine buyers may ponder a cover for 20 seconds or longer, whereas millennials will spend half that time – and evidence suggests that Generation Z will pause for just 2-3 seconds before deciding whether to engage."

This is an interesting and challenging proposition. I am an 'original magazine' designer and have commercial editorial practices deeply ingrained in me. 'Shedding' these to experiment with digital editorial design will challenge me. In paradox I don't think Glamour utilises digital in a strong or market leading way. I have seen a couple of animated covers but they are lack lustre and frustrating, inspiring and challenging me to explore this further. Glamour covers also continue to pedal heinous patriarchal ideologies about women, but that is another matter.

BSME. (2022). How to design an impactful cover - across every platform. [online] Available at: <https://www.bsme.com/past-events/past-events-blog/2022/05/11> [Accessed 23 Apr. 2024].

Condé Nast (2024). Glamour UK Magazine Archive. [online] Glamour UK. Available at: <https://www.glamourmagazine.co.uk/magazine> (Accessed: 18th Apr. 2024)

Yawn

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Boring

Can I re-write them as magazine articles or a magazine spread and draw on it?

End