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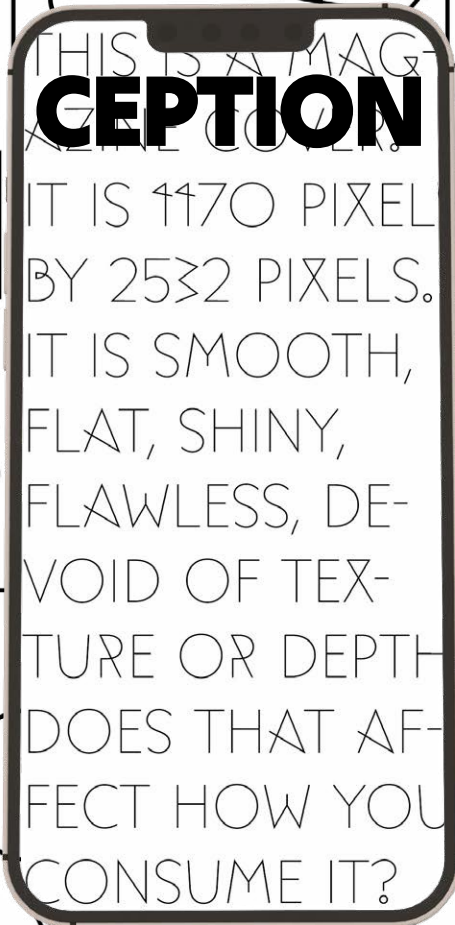
TOUCH. FLAT, SHINY,

AND CO. VOID OF TEX-

BACK, RELAX AND

ENJOY READING

THE MAGAZINE.



ISSUE NO.

NOVEMBER 2024

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ESTHER HUNZIKER VOGUE COVER CREATURES (2009), UNSPLASH



EDITOR'S LETTER

DE-CON-STRUCT-ING magazines. In this issue we use design tools of disrupting and subverting, to iterate, mutate and deviate to communicate, what exactly magazines are saying.

If you read the magazine from the front to the back, you will follow an iterative, subversive process of magazine communication design that starts with parody and convention with a focus on the technical, that journeys through fiction and narrative, and ends with experimentation. Each iteration tells its own story, has its own focus, that when combined creates a deep and structured exploration of the hidden, or unconscious (as I don't believe it's malicious*), meaning within magazine design. Alternatively, read this as a magazine is meant to be read, from the back, the middle, or anywhere in between, and enjoy the moment. But don't forget to question what you are looking at.

The exploration explores contemporary cultural and social climates, marginalisation - particularly through feminism, deep rooted patriarchal and capitalist systems, and very present challenges of self in a commercial, consumerist led society. With contributions from many; Perez, McLuhan, Hunziker, Poggenpohl, Ludovico, Albers, Khandwala, to name but a few. A constant tension of interior / exterior, print / digital, skin / flesh, commercial / independent, conflict / clarity weaves its way throughout.

As a whole, it is merely one iteration, of an ongoing process, as each article warrants further exploration and asks deeper questions... Enjoy!

Hazel Graham

VIDEO DIGITAL KILLED THE RADIO PRINT STAR?

How can print and digital come together to create a new generation of publishing? Six perspectives explored through 150 iterations of print and digital...



LETS GET DIGITAL

“Let’s get digital. Digital...” Olivia Newton John once sang. Oh wait, that was physical, the counter of digital. We are living in a digital age, a period of “great technological and culture transition” (McLuhan, 1967) and with that comes revolution, change, experimentation, success, failures, urgency and finding the right fit. And that takes time. We start by trying to do “today’s job with yesterday’s tools – with yesterday’s concepts” (McLuhan, 1967). Commercial magazine covers in the digital space are the wrong fit. It’s a size 12 dress on a size 8 interface. They are lazy. Exact replicas. Mannequins of print utilising the tools and rules of their analogue twin, ripped from their context and shoehorned onto a screen. Can we challenge this concept and do today’s job with today’s tools?

Left: Iteration 00 of 100 iterations. A translation of the film *Moulin Rouge* into a *Grazia* cover, raising questions of female representation and patriarchy.

Right: Iteration 67 of 100 iterations, exposing the surface level values that dominate the cover, hidden behind stereotypical coverlines.

Next page: All 100 iterations.

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.



MASH UP

A good mash up takes two opposing entities and juxtaposes them to create a new, greater iteration. Think Britney and Madonna. Jencks and Silver take this a step further and promote pluralism as a means of development, or progress, of design in culture and society: “Perhaps the oldest and simplest method of creation consists of combining readily available subsystems ad hoc, since it’s always easier to work with what is familiar and at hand” (Jencks and Silver, 2013). Combining the subsystem of print magazines (Madonna) and the subsystem of digital (Britney), with what technology is readily available, to progress a new hybridised form. This is evident in the world already with most titles on the newsstand (*Glamour* and *Wallpaper* are notable examples); but are these just websites (duets?) rather than magazines? Are they just print masquerading as digital? How can I use what is to hand to explore this further?



G-L-A-M-O-U-R-O-U-S

Click, consume, like, repeat... *Glamour* UK was the first commercial women's magazine to go all digital. At the BSME event 'How to design an impactful cover - across every platform' (2022), Deborah Joseph, European editorial director at *Glamour*, noted "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." Joseph is immersed in data and the speed of the medium. This challenges me personally. My heart is in print magazines. Designing for a medium whose values are based in speed and data feels vacuous. Joseph provokes questions about 'time' in the digital space. Both physical and metaphorical. Paradoxly Knoth and Renner explore the polar opposite of this approach in *You Can't Trust the Music* (2024).



CONDÉ NAST (2024). GLAMOUR UK MAGAZINE ARCHIVE. [ONLINE] GLAMOUR UK AVAILABLE AT: <https://www.glamourmagazine.co.uk/magazine> (ACCESSED: 18TH APR. 2024). BSME. (2022). HOW TO DESIGN AN IMPACTFUL COVER - ACROSS EVERY PLATFORM. [ONLINE] AVAILABLE AT: <https://www.bsme.com/past-events/blog/2022/05/17/98b8dd75p5q7hymk3wkl8oakd0ich3mpactful-cover> (ACCESSED 23 APR. 2024).



KNOTH, C. AND RENNER, K. (2022). YOU CAN'T TRUST MUSIC [ONLINE] YCTIME-FLUX.COM. AVAILABLE AT: <https://yctime-flux.com/> (ACCESSED 18 APR. 2024).

LOSE YOURSELF TO DIGITAL

Knoth and Renner explore digital time and space through their project *You Can't Trust the Music* (Knoth and Renner, 2024). A digital offering that reads like a book with the added benefit of an accompanying soundtrack, that visitors are "encouraged to listen to... in their entirety and can navigate through as the project develops" (Knoth and Renner, 2024). The antithesis to *Glamour*, the use of formatting, and music, slowed my mind and user habits. It became a space where I wanted spend time. The hybridisation of print practices iterated in a digital space, in a digital format, by digital tools (who'd of thunk it McLuhan?!). This thoughtful space encourages me to think more deeply around what hybrid design is and what it can be on a more experiential level. It gives me hope it's not all Harder, Better, Stronger, Faster...

SPACE

CONSUMERISM
CULTURAL
APPEARANCE
CONVENEINCE

APPEARANCE

APPEARANCE

POLITICS

FEMALE VOICE

FEMALE VOICE

CULTURE

SOCIAL

0

GRETA

AYO



BRYONY



SKIN



AKSHATA
BOBBI
DANIELLE
BRIDGET

YARA
BRYONN
POLLY

Left: Cover 59 of 100 iterations highlighting the underlying values of the stereotypical and derogative coverlines.

MTV

Just as MTV burst onto our screens in the 80s, combining audio and video to create the music video, Alessandro Ludovico argues digital magazines become “a hybrid object: not a completely new medium, but rather an expanded one” (Ludovico, 2018), echoing Jencks and Silver. Noting the need for familiarity in the new, as “habits are then quickly and easily formed, leading to rapid acceptance of the hybrid” (Ludovico, 2018). This places the audience at the centre of the argument of hybridisation and inspires an iterating process. I speculate how the sophistication of hybrid editorial design can grow and develop, as language, music and print have, over time. Where are we presently in our understanding of digital language and forms (what’s familiar), how far can we push the boundaries of digital magazine cover design (before it becomes unfamiliar)?

50 iterations of a mobile formatted digital magazine cover, exploring “today’s tool” (After Effects) for “today’s job” (a digital magazine cover formatted for a mobile phone). Not beautiful, but raised valid questions of what a magazine cover is and questions of female representation...

IT'S A MANS WORLD

Caroline Criado Perez states in *Invisible Women, Exposing Data Bias in a World Designed for Men*: “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” (Perez, 2019).

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. How can I better represent women in magazines? How can I do justice to these woman through a woman's eyes (not a woman's man's eyes)?

ECONOMY

WORK

DESIRE

ECONOMY

SOCIAL

CRICARDI PEREZ, C. (2019). *INVISIBLE WOMEN: DATA BIAS IN A WORLD DESIGNED FOR MEN*. S.L.: HARRY N ABRAMS.

ENCKS, C.A. AND SILVER, N. (2013). *ADHOCISM : THE CASE FOR IMPROVISATION*. LONDON [ETC.] THE MIT PRESS.

**TO ME,
TO YOU**

YOU DANCIN'? YOU ASKIN'?

Applying the theory to editorial design, I couldn't initially see how the environment worked on us, so challenged myself to explore this concept further.

VOGUE & ADBSUTERS

Esther Hunziker, a Swiss artist, uses graphic communication design to comment on the magazine industry's preoccupation with beauty and elegance through digital audiovisual collages. Hunziker's project *Vogue Cover*

Both of these projects directly inspire me to explore subversion and satire in my own work, which starts to visually challenge the affordance of magazines.

VOGUE

BY
ESTHER HUNZIKER

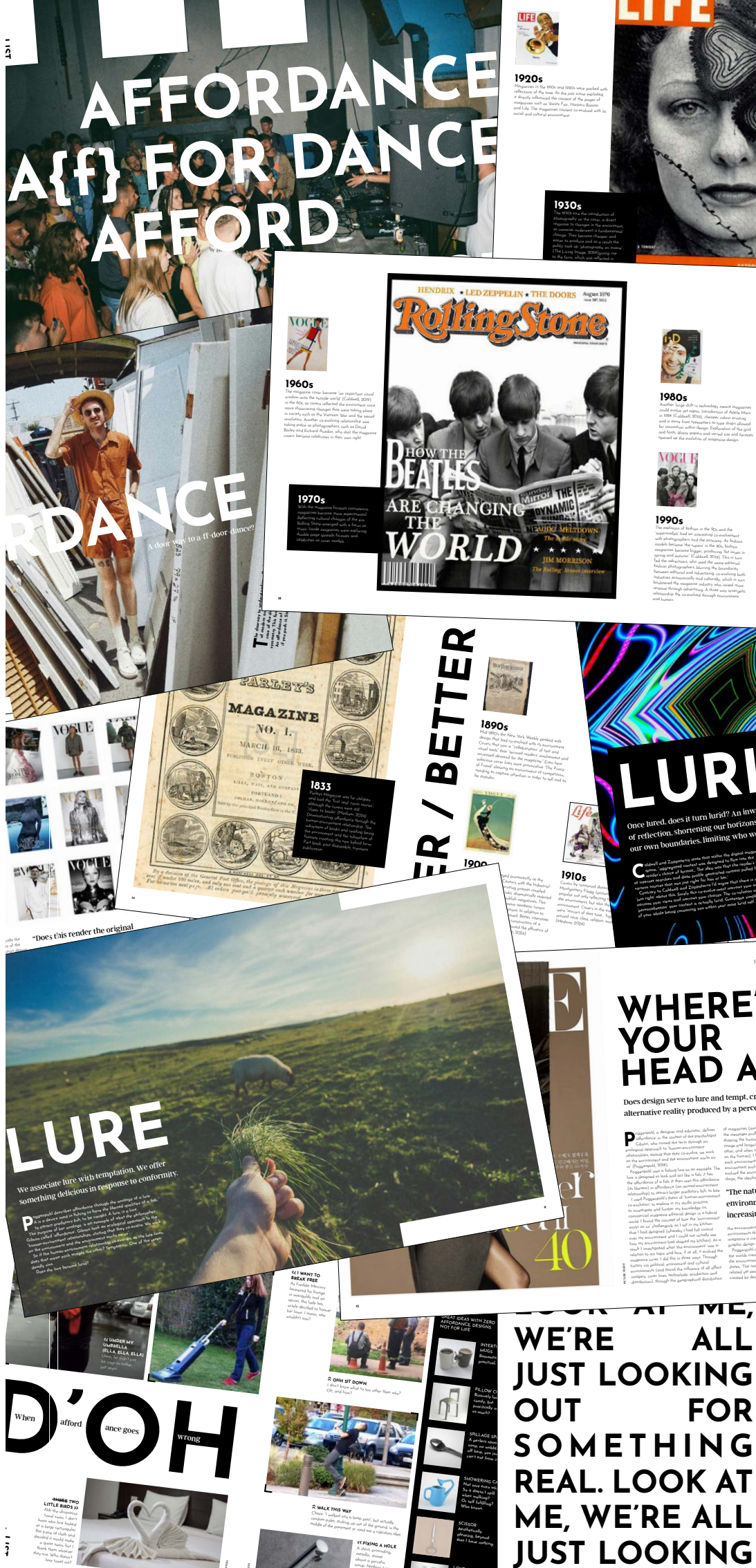
Bluestars

N° 28

ROMANEOCTOILING **DESIRE**

Barcode

Right: An iterative series of articles, that co-evolved, through methods of definition, association and subversion on the theory of affordance.



I got off my high horse and reflected these questions back onto print. Do magazines create homogenised content “just right” for its audience? I’m a designer, do I create desires through magazine design? Do magazines feed off society rather than enrich it? The ugly mirror told me truths I was unaware of and deepened questioning of myself, the industry and my practice.

WHERE'S YOUR HEAD AT?

It's not you, it's me. No, wait, it's you.
No, it's me. Hold on, who's this? Is it them?

I want a divorce. My twenty-five year marriage with Print is over. Turns out it's been cheating on me and I never knew. My co-evolving relationship with Print has flourished over time, but now I need space. It's been cheating on me with Digital. Their co-evolving relationship is virulent and I want out. I've been lured into a false sense of security. Sharon says this is because of affordance*. She told me a fish lure is designed to look and act like a fish, to attract predatory fish, to eat it (/to be caught)*. I asked her did she mean that a magazine cover is designed to look and act like an aspirational human, that attracts other humans to consume it (/be caught by it)? Is the magazine cover a lure?

To lure: To tempt. Temptation: Created by desire. She said I had been blind. Blinded by my co-evolving relationship with commercial editorial magazine design. I thought I created it. She said it creates me just as much. I said "How?" She said make something. So I did. I made some magazine articles exploring my apparently co-evolving relationship with Print. Turns out she was right. It works on me, as much as I work on it^{ab}. I noticed that language and image have a similar co-evolving relationship. Or should I say co-dependent? It's toxic. Each spurs the other on to be a more lurid, alluring, lure. I sought advice from Uncle James. He's a bit softer,

and kind. He said it wasn't unusual to find yourself in this situation and he explained perception^{^b} to me. Turns out perception is sneaky. Far more subtle and nuanced than affordances lurid luring. I said to him it felt normal, expected and accpeted. Maybe that is why it goes unnoticed and unquestioned? I told him I now feel that glossy women's magazine covers masquerade as 'aspirational', 'for women', 'for independent women', 'for independent socially savvy women' 'happy face'. But I realise now that this is a mask, I

“Perception is sneaky. Far more subtle and nuanced than affordances’ lurid, luring”

have uncovered the cover that is covering up what it really is. I asked him if this is a perceived perception of affordance? 'Sad face'. Esther[®] dropped in. She's over from Switzerland and showed me something she had been working on. Some very cool, digital, audiovisual collages. They were funny and made me laugh. Then they made me sad. They reaffirmed my fears. Print had been cheating on me again. Esther had a whole series of *Vogue* covers[™] with

*Sharon Helmer Poggenpohl, a designer and educator, defines 'affordance' in the context of the psychologist Gibson, who coined the term through an ecological approach to "human-environment relationships, stating that they co-evolve; we work on the environment and it works on us" (Poggenpohl, 2018).

^ James J. Gibson situates himself in the field of perception. He acknowledges physics, optics, anatomy and physiology, that describe facts, but challenges them all by looking at objects through illumination, or what he describes as "ambient optic array" (Gibson, 1986). Gibson's notion of perception, how humans perceive things, is a combination of association of the environment, light and affordance, to create a perceived reading.

A (POGGENPOHL, 2018) B (GIBSON, 1986)

AB (HTTPS://23042320.MYBLOG.ARTS.AC.UK/2024/04/30/02.02.03/)

“Esther had taken my beloved form and mutilated it into
adhoc, in-bred, hybrids.”

aleins / monsters / humanoids covering the top half of the model, rendering the elegant and beautiful covers ugly and illusory. Whaaaaaat? She had taken my beloved form and subverted it in rhetoric, medium, production and perception. Mutilating flawless print covers into adhoc¹, in-bred, hybrids.

It dawned on me, as I observed this growing family of oddities, how awfully contrite the traditional cover is. The ugly aleins actually drew my focus to what was left of the model, her exposed breasts, her stick thin legs, her couture clothing. These things that signify luxury, aspiration, body type and beauty. But here they were, in a new environment, a new recontextualised context, exposing them for what they really are. The ‘real’ cover was the ugly and illusory. The illusory was more real than the real.

One spoke to me, can you believe what it said? I’ll tell you, it said “Look at me,” (arrogant...) “we’re all just looking out for something real”. It sent a shiver down my spine. How was this alein speaking more truth than my faithful Print? Esther’s subversion had broken the affordance of the cover and exposed its true self.

Uncle James came to comfort me. He told me about the misinformation of information in affordance, stating “the danger is sometimes hidden.”² How right he was. The affordance of the environment created a perceived misinformation. Hidden in plain sight!

Surely this makes the original cover a deception? Creating a perception-deception paradox? I wondered how I could help Print be less deceitful, more open, more transparent, more honest. So I made more things. Pages of articles, pushing each one further than the one before, looking for answers. I found some, of sorts, in transposing the images and text. Causing a break up of their insufferable relationship by placing the text in the image box and the images in the text box. That upset them alright. Didn’t feel so comfortable and sassy then did they? Showed themselves right up to be exactly who they were. Text wore the trousers in this relationship for sure.

Time passes. Maybe we can just consciously uncouple... I can see where Print was coming from. Digital popped up all young and edgy and cool and current and fast, deliveroo on speed. Anything you want, whenever you want it. Who wants to be a granny, when you can be a toddler. All fearless and fun. Everything now and sod the consequences.

Wise Sharon cast caution, “the natural and artificial environments are related yet people increasingly live in the artificial, created by design to serve human purpose and desire.”³ It seems to me Print is confused. Who would want to be with Digital? The artificial world (or environment) humans create of their online selves; filtered, edited, created, curated; narrated by a series of hashtags or 140 240 characters (both figures a result of affordance, fyi). Another lurid co-evolving relationship? A de-volving relationship?

There is nothing real there. Stuart agrees! He told Sharon, “millenial culture is characterised by how it wants to project itself. How it wants to appear to be rather than just being what it is, and this gap between appearance and actuality is getting bigger.”⁴

Projections, Stuart says. As we all know, projections aren’t real, just merely illusory fragments of time and space, illuminated by ambient light, perceived through a constructed narrative. This projected perfection is a spiralling ever decreasing circle of homogenisation and one dimension. Intensified by the personalisation of information and algorithmic streaming of content (Cath and Yolanda told me that)⁵, reducing our multi-faceted selves to limited content, that is already limited by “large corporations who limit our choice” (Charles and Nathan told me that)!

I reflected, (on the digital perception-deception homogenisation of one dimension idea of projection), back onto Print and asked them outright, is this what you do? Print didn’t reply, but when I look back I find that all the covers, of all the glossies, from the last 100 years, are all the same. Did Print start this devolution?

Why would Print do this? Print blamed me. Print said, that Stuart said “the role of designers has rotated

¹ Esther Hunzkier is a Swiss artist whose interests lie in the “clash between apparent realities and real illusory worlds” (HEK, 2024) explored through surveillance, deconstruction and montages.

² “Vogue Cover Creatures (Hunziker, 2022). subverts a series of printed Vogue covers by inserting a monster / alien / humanoid, over the cover model, and creating digital audiovisual collages, that question and “subvert the mechanics of seduction of the fashion and of the entertainment industry” in a “humorous manner” (Librarystack, 2024).

180° from solving problems to creating desires.”⁴ I’m a designer. Did I subconsciously create desires through editorial design? Do I create subconscious desires through editorial design? This was uncomfortable and forced self-reflection.

Time passes. Maybe it’s just a lovers tiff... I had a moment of enlightenment, literally through Enlightenment. Anoushka had a fancy dress party and everyone had to go as a Way of Seeing⁵. Seems I’m kind of really not seeing. My education, geographical location, my lifelong *environment* (oh, the irony) has been shaped by the Enlightenment of the 17th Century, financed by the British Empire (an army of white men who pushed ‘their way’ as ‘the way’). I am implicitly implicit to this, and I had no idea. Anoushka challenged us to see in other ways, to learn from other cultures, particularly the Global South. She asked “How would a woman design it?”

I liked Anouskhka. Everything she said made sense to me and gives me a whole new view of how to recify my relationship with Print and Digital. A whole new way for us to co-evolve. Through values.



C (GIBSON, 1986) D (POGGENPOHL, 2018) E (CALDWELL AND ZAPPATERRA, 2024)

F (JENCKS AND SILVER, 2013) G (BERTOLOTTI-BAILEY, 2020) H (KHANDWALA, 2024)



“Do I create subconscious desires through editorial design? Uncomfortable...”

To prove to Print I was ready to change, I designed this layout and wrote to fit. Breaking the hierarchy where text always came first. I put the ‘acadmeic bits’ in the picture captions. I put the Harvard referencing where the picture credit sits, used fonts by women⁶ and no implicitly sexualised imagery of females⁷. I reflected the text boxes to create picture boxes on the first spread to subvert editorial design, and exposed my references onto the dilapidated screen image to comment on projections.

I have subverted the layout in a subtle way, so it’s perceived as a commercial editorial design. Anyone who takes the time to read it, will uncover the deception under their nose. Armed with this new knowledge I look forward to rekindling my relationship with Print and Digital, to see how we can co-evolve to be better.

¹ Adhocism; the combination of two subsystems to create a new adhoc form (Jencks and Silver, 2013) .

⁶ Thank you Femke de Vries and Hanka van der Voet (Critical Fashion Publishing, 2024).

⁷ Inspired by the ‘Default Male’ courtesy of Caroline Criado Perez, Invisible Women, Exposing Data Bias in a World Designed for Men (2019).

I SAY, I SAY, I ES-SAY

We sit down with a first timer and ask them how they found creating their first video essay.

How did you feel about creating your first video essay?

I was excited to explore sound and movement, as this was something I initially wanted to investigate, through the hybridisation of commercial editorial magazine design.

Who inspired you?

In *Thinking Through the Video Essay*, Catherine Grant states how she doesn't start with a script and that "the pleasure and importance of [video essays] is precisely that they don't begin with writing."^a This idea appealed to me, as it was in line with the co-evolution of my project to date. I tried this approach, but I found it really hard! I drifted not only through varying ways of presenting the content, but also through varying themes that emerged from my project. There was no clear focus or overall structure. I failed epically, despite having worked this way to date.

I looked to *Goodbye Uncanny Valley* by Alan Warburton^b for inspiration, which was very straight, but strangely compelling. Warburton used a map to navigate his subject that was befitting of his topic, so I thought I could use a contents page to navigate and structure mine. After many iterations, I found I was trying to put too much content in. I was learning a lot of ways of how not to do things!

Did you manage to make anything at all?!

I was running out of time, so I asked myself, "What do

I like?" I like John Smith's *Associations* (1975); Oliver Laric's *Versions* (2010); and Ryan Gander's *Loose Associations* (2024). All of these are simple, framed images, with a commentary that has a twist. I had some good advice to write the script first, something I was trying to avoid, then place visuals with it and focus on *just one thing*.

How did that go?

I created my version of this format, using lots of clean space, only my work, and writing the script first. It isn't co-evolving and it isn't very experimental with audio nor movement. But coincidentally it did reflect my project in terms of rhetoric and iterative narrative.

How did the process progress your project overall?

Grant acknowledges how "thinking about how the video essay enables thinking."^a I found this to be true. In creating the video essay I found greater connections of female representation throughout all of my work. Whereas initially I was looking at hybrid design, what emerged throughout the process was a deception of female representation through patriarchal systems. It feels like it's time to rip up the patriarchal rule books, and look to other cultures to develop and progress editorial design, by women, to better represent women. We seem to be stuck in a cycle that is so ingrained in society we don't question it. Let's ask questions!

Catherine Grant (2022) *Thinking Through the Video Essay*. 1st October 2022. Available at: Vimeo (Accessed: 15th May 2024).

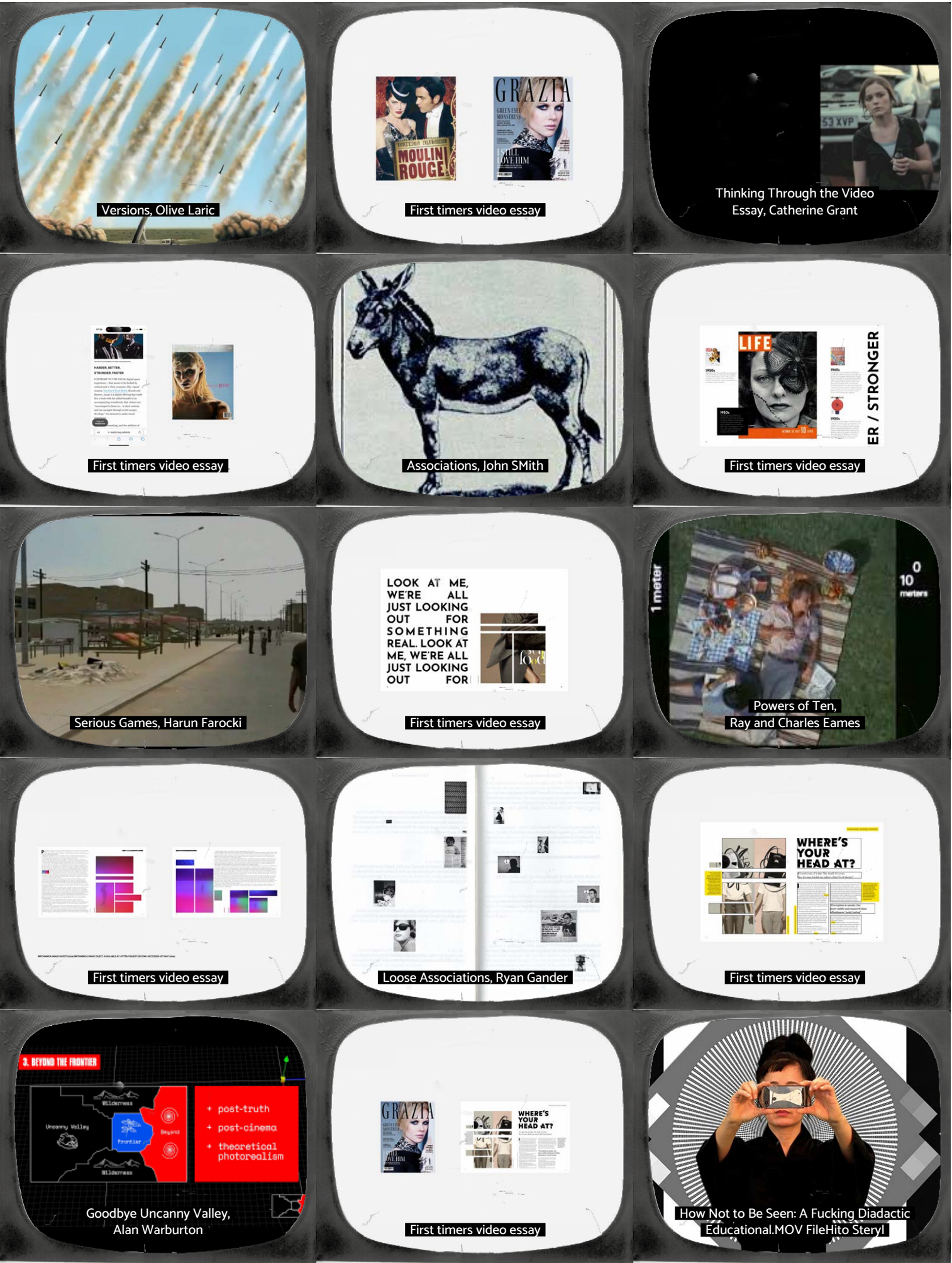
Gander, R. (2024) 'Loose Associations' [Lecture]. Central Saint Martins. 20th May 2024.

John Smith (1975) *Associations*. 2014. Available at: Vimeo (Accessed: 15th May 2024).

Music Art Fashion Forward (2024) *Goodbye Uncanny Valley*. Available at: <https://www.maff.tv/watch/goodbye-uncanny-valley> (Accessed: 15th May 2024).

Oliver Laric (2010) *Versions*. 2021. Available at: Vimeo (Accessed: 15th May 2024).

A GRANT (2022); B WARBURTON (2024)



I SUBMITTED FOG AND CHAOS TO A DISTILLATION

Kae Tempest quotes Czeslaw Milosz when analysing the fallible creative process. By drawing others into dialogue, I found a blurry world, and myself in dialogue with myself.

I reflect on my practice and see things I like and things that jar. I see clarity and progression; conflict and confusion

I spoke with Deshna¹ on values and value led design.

My two dialogues directly reflecting the conflict and challenges I find myself, and my practice, situated in.

On the one hand feminist, value led design, that is responsible, disruptive, challenging and exposing norms.

I am looking at print design.

My two dialogues directly reflecting the conflict and challenges I find myself, and my practice, situated in.

On the one hand, a medium I love and have worked in and with for 25 years.

My position being at the intersection of commercial practice and subverting editorial design to expose hidden meaning.

My position shifting, informed by my involvement with the publication *Unknown Quantities*, where our theme is 'Lost and Found'. Through an exploration and development of writing and design, a discovery of a duality, a conversation, a dialogue, between two contrasting perspectives. Of 'lost' and of 'found'. That both provoke and inform each other, without one needing to be 'right'.

Can my two conflicting subconsciousnesses be in conversation with each other, an open dialogue that can advance and inform one another to progress a deeper criticality of each other?

So, I write in the font Inika to express the value led discussion I had with the lovely Deshna, who asked me what the deeper motivations of my practice were, which brought to the surface an emotional response. A reflection of the digital world and a medium that, to me, on the surface appears to be never fulfilled. Creativity, value, time and care seems to be absent, which raises questions of nothing ever being enough, and the dissemination of that to the self. **Being the 'same' seems more important.** She picked up on the interior/exterior theme of my work and challenged me with familiar/unfamiliar; constant/changing, and coincidence. This lifts my soul and challenges my work moving forward as I continue to explore familiar/unfamiliar within layout (this is the start of an exploration of that) and coincidence.

The conflicting voices start to create a harmony whereby the many strands that have emerged start to work with each other, as opposed to against each other. Positions through Dialogue has initiated a new conversation, that is in conversation with my findings conversation with my practice, and feedback from Midpoint, Deshna and Shem, that which has always felt have provoked an advance in my enquiry that asks conflicting me to investigate how and why commercial magazine editorial design is the way it is; to look at how other

and separate, cultures, and feminists, design; to look at digital and one thing print from a new (reversed?) perspective and to use or the other, these avenues to build on what has already emerged value-led on perception and patriarchy in commercial magazine or commercial, editorial design through magazine editorial design, to when in actual fact this duality is a conversation, further advance my enquiry into commercial editorial a dialogue, magazine design in a hybrid world with the wider whereby each can inform aspects of commercialisation and capitalism emerging. and progress the other.

Then I speak to Anoushka³. She says embrace art school and to forget the commercial world, to progress my work. And everything is blurry again. She challenged me to use capitalism and commercialism to my own means, to use construction and perception to direct the reader to the parts I view as important. This lifts my soul and challenges my work moving forward, even though it is simultaneously oppositional to where I was... Blurry. I think about the word blurry and wonder why it's blurry, and I think it's because she has injected new challenges that are in conflict with where I was. My head is in a spin, and I think about the word spin and why I use it and when things spin things become blurry and it's not blurry afterall, maybe it's just spinning and if I get off the ride things may settle and become clear again, so I go to the cinema and watch *Beetlejuice*. And Tim Burton seems to have created a commercial, capitalist Hollywood film, that makes critical social commentary through an exploration the 'real' world and the 'underworld' (fantasy/unreal/projected?) and at its core is based on the human values of connection. And I wonder if it's a coincidence?

I reflect on my practice and see things I like and things that jar. I see clarity and progression; conflict and confusion

familiar / unfamiliar
constant / changing
disrupt / shift
ways of looking that
question conditioning

DESHNA MEHTA / DIALOGUE #01

KADAK
Sold Out
Print Matters

defamiliarisation
coincidence

all are talking to each other
all are talking at the same
time,
all reflecting my non-linear
processes and practice,
all informing the other,

rhythm
sound
movement
legible

ANOUSHKA KHALADWANA / DIALOGUE #03

Gibson, J.J. (1986). *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*. Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum.
Illouz, E. (2007). *Cold Intimacies: the Making of Emotional Capitalism*. Cambridge: Polity.
Tempest, K. (2022). *Connection*. S.L.: Faber And Faber.
Vries, F. de (2018). *Spineless*. New York, Colorado: Ligature Press.
Beetlejuice (2024) Directed by Tim Burton (Feature film). London: Warner Bros.

Spare Rib
Bad Attitude

commercial?

commodification
experience
economy
situated practice
systemic
moments out
Cold Intimacy,
Eva Illouz
Emotions as
Commodities
Eva Illouz

FEMKE DE VRIES / DIALOGUE #04

Anoushka Khaladwana is a lecturer at Central Saint Martins and a researcher at Decolonising Arts Institute, questioning colonial ways of seeing.

Then I speak to Femke⁴ and I voice the conflict and confusion of my practice and she wisely tells me "you don't have to answer the question, you have to make the question visible." This lifts my soul and challenges my work moving forward. We go on to discuss the progression of commodification over time and she drew my attention to the current climate, and the commodification of emotions. How we are living in a time where we are making 'better' versions of ourselves in an emotional way. She cited Eva Illouz who sees this as a 'cold intimacy' (2007). Great value is being palced on self-help, she emphasised the **self** part. And I wonder if we are connecting with ourselves rather than others? She challenged the magazine as a category of self help literature. Wait a minute... I'm spiralling again... Does that make this a commodiciation of emotion? Is this an indulgence of my emotional SELF? And again I am exposed to my own co-evolving human-environment relationship...

Femke de Vries is a researcher, writer, artist and teacher. She lectures in practice-based research, fashion theory and writing at ArtEZ.

3 Khaladwana, A. (2024) Interview with Anoushka Khaladwana. Interviewed by Hazel Graham, 10th September.

4 De Vries, F. (2024) Interview with Femke De Vries. Interviewed by Hazel Graham, 18th September.

READING IS WEAVING

A deconstruction of magazines and an exploration of weaving led to threads of unconscious meaning woven into magazines.

Magazines have been part of the UK's cultural landscape for over 100 years. Woven into our daily lives they are found in shops, discarded on trains, stacked in waiting rooms, hotel lobbies and homes, offering a contemporary social and cultural commentary of our public and private lives. Through an iterative process of deconstruction, I used tools of graphic communication design to disrupt, expose, uncover, subvert, unravel the hidden or unconscious meaning woven into magazines. Themes like feminism, patriarchy, capitalism and commodification emerged, as did notions of tradition, value and meaning through process, form and medium. The interrogation of *Post Digital Print, The Mutation of Publishing Since 1984*, by Alessandro Ludovico (2012) forces me to reconsider this position of hidden meaning through construction of printed magazines and makes me question if digital is the answer.

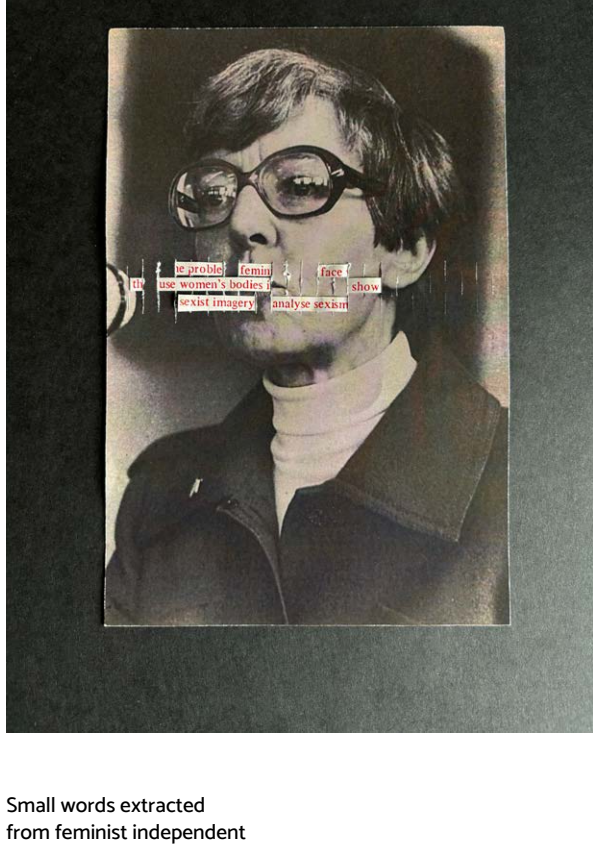
Alessandro Ludovico critiques Marshall McLuhan in *Post Digital Print* examining the premise that with the invention of TV and electric media in the 1960s: "...a fascination with speed and progress was transforming people's perception of time and space, the printed medium seemed simply too slow to allow information to be simultaneously diffused and consumed" (Ludovico, 2012).

The tone and language of Ludovico's writing suggests a line of thought that sees print as inferior to the electric dissemination of information that was new, exciting and fast. He goes on to quote McLuhan: "The slow movement of the eye along lines of type, the slow procession of items organised by the mind to fit into these endless horizontal columns - these procedures can't stand up to the pressures of instantaneous coverage of the earth" (Ludovico, 2012).

Ludovico observes McLuhan's derogative notion that reading is slow. Reading is slow, it takes time and mental space. You sit down and read a book on a comfy chair with a cup of tea. You read the newspaper over a leisurely breakfast. You buy a magazine for a long journey. Reading comes with dedicated time. A place to be, to relax and slow down.

Reading is like weaving. Weaving is slow, it takes time and physical space. But with this time and space, value is instilled. The Ecoist observes weaving as feminist practice stating, "women wove everything by hand, creating undeniable value" (Ecoist, 2022). Anni Albers, a textile artist who wove, celebrated and encompassed a "lasting" value in art; "that is what interests me: the lasting things, and not the [quick] passing of things." (Weber, 1999).

"Reading is like weaving. Weaving is slow, it takes time and physical space. But with this time and space value is instilled."



Small words extracted from feminist independent magazine, *Spare Rib* (1977) woven into images from the same issue.



Dat So La Lee, a weaver in Native North America with woven baskets that encompass feminine practice, utility, commerce and artistry.



Anni Albers, Textile Artist, *Ancient Writing*, 1936.



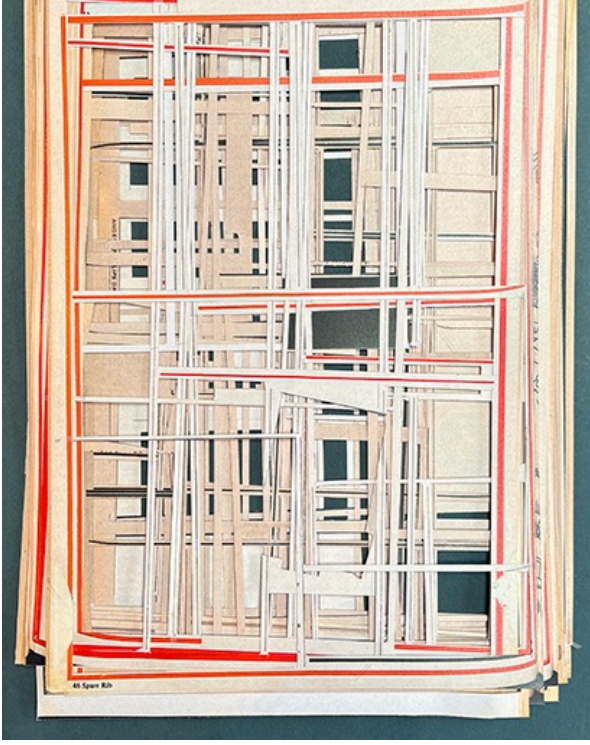
So, I wove. It took time, and space. It was slow, methodical, systematic and meditative. I deconstructed an issue of the feminist independent magazine *Spare Rib* (1977). I dissected and extracted the small words (picture captions, picture credits, single sentences) and wove them into the images of women from the same issue. I undertook a feminist practice of a feminist magazine. What emerged were reconstructions that were materially textual, layered, that felt they had depth and meaning, history and heritage; that had a past, a present and a future. Visual metaphors of women's voices being lost, silenced, censored, overlooked and marginalised. The small words of women reflecting weaving as a practice that has been "overlooked, taken for granted and disregarded throughout much of history for its economic contributions" (Ecoist, 2022).

"The tone when writing about electric is upbeat. Positive. Quick. Exciting. Short. It gets your heartbeat up. Pops some endorphins. Makes you feel 'gd'."

The antithesis to reading and weaving is electric and digital. Ludovico uses the word "speed" with "progress" and "transforming"; "simultaneous" with "diffuse and consume". McLuhan uses the word "instantaneous" with "coverage of the earth". Through dissecting and extracting these small words, the constructions of these sentences are exposed, the combined meaning suggests 'fast' equates to 'better'. They are discussing the television connecting in real time, creating communities and audience participation in the 1960s. They could easily be discussing the digital in the 2020s. The tone when writing about the electric is upbeat. Positive. Quick. Exciting. Short. It gets your heartbeat up. Pops some endorphins. Makes you feel 'gd'. Just as digital does. Ludovico and McLuhan's language reflects the inherent qualities of the medium and how it is consumed. Is this also how it's created? If digital is produced under these conditions there is no long-term fulfilment, creating an unfulfilled society. What seems to be missing is value, time and space. As Albers observed, if it is "quick" is it just passing?

Ludovico describes print as "stable", "archival", "trusted". It sounds old and boring and reliable. Ludovico describes electric as "volatile" (Ludovico, 2012). It sounds exciting and young and fun. If print can be trusted and is the antithesis to digital, does that insinuate that digital can't be trusted? Through a deconstruction of *Spare Rib*, using tools of design I dissected the issue leaving just the skeletons of the page. This exposed unconscious meaning within the construction of the pages. The gleaned skeletons exposed the page as a cage or container. Physical containers of information by women, for women, but simultaneously containing women's voices as marginalised and on the periphery. Confined by the boundaries of the physical page, but also the boundary of the alternative, or independent press, suggesting otherness - not mass ideologies.

I also found unconscious meaning when deconstructing current commercial women's magazine *Elle* (2024). Also "a magazine for women, run by a woman" (Elle Boutique, no date). Through dissecting and extracting the small words and images, and reconstructing them through weaving, it emerged that women's voices had become commodified, with the small words detailing designer labels and price tags. More disturbingly the surface level text was saying 'you are enough' and 'be yourself', but this text was consistently situated within the context of celebrity, appearance and wealth, intertextually weaving a deeper level of subconscious meaning, that you are not enough and never will be.



Skeletons extracted from feminist independent magazine, *Spare Rib* (1977) stacked up, a visual metaphor for women and women's voices being contained or caged, complex and fragile.



Small words from *Spare Rib* (1977) woven into an image from *Elle* (2024), and vice versa, to juxtapose and subvert text and image relationships that go unnoticed in magazines.

"Our sophisticated understanding of print conventions leave us merely expecting and accepting them, and the interwoven ideologies they mask, unquestioned."

It seems that the values of the production and medium are reflected in the content and consumption of the media. Commercial magazines are produced within capitalist frameworks, whereas independent or alternative media takes a politically charged non-hierarchical approach, as Weinmayr articulates: "Let us not look at publishing as the end of a process during which consolidated thoughts and enquiries are put into a final brochure, book or leaflet. Let us look at publishing more as a way to initiate a social process, a social space, where meaning is collectively established in the collaborative creation of a publication" (2014). Weinmayr cites many examples of experimental design of independent publishing. See *Red, Workshop 2011 - ongoing*, AND publishing, that challenge the social (patriarchal and eurocentric?) constructs of formatting. What I found in *Spare Rib* was a utilisation of the same construction as commercial magazines and newspapers, which seems to be containing, limiting and censoring women's voices through inherent patriarchal systems of graphic communication design.

This implies print cannot be trusted, as Ludovico had suggested, as language, image and page layout create complex combined meaning, leading to a perceived reading. Our sophisticated understanding of print conventions leave us merely expecting and accepting them, and the interwoven ideologies they mask, unquestioned.

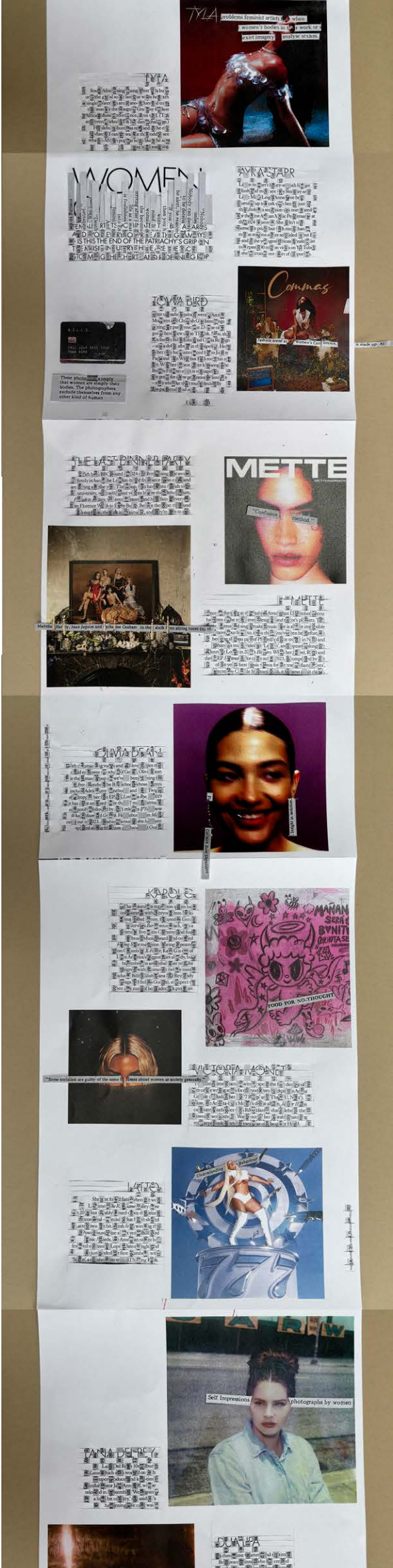
"Does navigating unfamiliar design constructions cause an obstruction in reading the content or an alienating of the hegemonic public?"

Contrary to this then is the challenge of familiar/unfamiliar. Does *Spare Rib* utilise expected and accepted forms of editorial design to be accepted by a public that it may otherwise alienate through unfamiliar design. Does navigating unfamiliar design constructions cause an obstruction in reading the content, or an alienating of the hegemonic public?

Could it be that digital, being in its infancy within time and space, can negate these sophisticated constructions, that leave the reader and writer tangled in hidden meaning? Our understanding of and "reading" of digital has developed greatly in the last 20 years, but there is no industry standard for digital magazine design. At a recent BSME (British Society of Magazine Editors) event 'The Cover is Now!', a panel of seven art directors concluded that the "technology's not there yet" (Lupton, 2024) and from their discussion neither is a set form, system or way of working within digital.

"In a fragmented world can digital offer a reconstruction of construction?"

Ludovico intersects my practice through preconceived assumptions I had of print and digital, and my practice challenges notions of speed and medium raised by Ludovico. Let's use this opportunity to learn from other cultures and look at new ways of presenting narratives, that are value driven. Let's expose them through scale, medium, context and circulation. Can digital magazine design be created within an intention of time, space and value, that challenges the hidden ideologies woven into its printed relative? In a fragmented world can digital offer a reconstruction of construction?



Small words from *Spare Rib* (1977) woven into images in a four page feature from *Elle* (2024). The pages are reformatted to form a tapestry, giving a new way to read the feature: a physical digital page? *Spare Rib* text woven into the *Elle* text, to render the text illegible highlighting the context of the text that gets overlooked.

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THE ~~LAST~~ FIRST WORD

A deconstruction of magazines has exposed a series of unconscious meanings that go unnoticed, creating not the last word, but the first word, let's push things forward...

Deconstructing magazines using design tools to disrupt and subvert, exposed unconscious meaning woven into every layer of construction within magazines. Uncovering the cover as a cover up; subverting the affordance (the qualities of an object that make it clear how it can or should be used) of magazine design to expose the deception of perception and co-evolving relationships; and dissecting and recontextualising magazines exposed the context having paradoxical meaning. Contributors' theories, practice and knowledge, offered inspiration, collaboration and contradiction; pushing, progressing and informing content, that in turn pushed and progressed position.

What started as a technical exploration of editorial design in a hybrid world has concluded as a deconstruction of magazines through subverting to expose unconscious meaning.

This issue has established that in a fast and fragmented world our fluency of reading publishing conventions blinds us to what is right in front of us, rendering us as uncritical readers. The familiar constructions of publishing allow the designer to design quicker and the reader to read quicker, but what is lost in this process?

Our lack of 'time' for anything, and our need to consume, overrides our exploration and questioning of what is happening. Through subverting, disrupting and exposing these conventions we draw the readers' attention to the hidden danger of the context of the text: the continuing marginalisation of women and homogenisation, on the newsstand and online, created through systems of patriarchy and capitalism.

How can we push things forward? Time and space seem to be recurring underlying themes. An exploration of time in production and time in consumption are interesting provocations for our next issue. Can an increase in value at the production stage, reduce deception at the consumption stage? How can we explore magazines through time and space, physically and psychically?

