

## Unit 3: Week 5: Project Proposal Projections<sup>1</sup>

# Project Proposal

## Line of Enquiry

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UNIT 3: WEEK 5  
PROJECTIONS<sup>1</sup>

### **Vogue and The Emperor's New Clothes**

Seeing the Unseen: Reconstructing the past for a more creative and responsible present

# Project Proposal

## Introduction

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### Introduction

I love magazines. I've loved magazines since I was a teenager and made a whole one for my A Level Media Studies project on an electric typewriter and photocopier. I went to University and studied design and photography and made a magazine on InDesign and Photoshop. I worked for free for a year to get a job in magazines and then I made real magazines for real magazine companies. I worked my way up over 12 years, in publishing in London, culminating in seven years as Deputy Art Editor at the Radio Times. I am going to interrogate magazines with a specific interest in mainstream, commercial, newsstand magazines and mass ideologies.

Magazines are at a challenging intersection with technology and culture as print is in decline and digital on the rise. As magazines desperately try to be everything to everyone, through multiple iterations of themselves, editorial teams and budgets are getting smaller and the workload is getting larger. Print designers are conflicted with digital processes and there is an urgency to be faster, immediate and, just, well, more.

Having had the privilege of working in magazines, I come to this project from the position of the designer, interested in the intersection of print and digital both as a product (a magazine), as well as the teams that design it.

# Project Proposal Context

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## Context

In my previous work I found layers of unconscious meaning woven into magazines, which as a magazine designer I was unaware of. I learnt that I am part of a lifelong co-evolution whereby my education, location and geographical location created bias and privilege in myself and my work and that through magazines I played a part in maintaining the status quo, the capitalist and patriarchal systems structures magazines, and I, are part of.

I also found dualities. Commercial v independent magazines, conflicts of print v digital, contradictions of exterior v interior, marginalised voices of women v capitalism and patriarchy.

To deepen and further this enquiry I am going to challenge this perspective through new materialism, a branch of philosophy that rejects dualism. New materialists reject the boundary of subject/object, nature/culture and human/non human arguing they are one and the same.

# Project Proposal Enquiry

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## Enquiry

I am going to interrogate magazine design, specifically Vogue, as I can access 100 years' worth online to work with.

I will deconstruct Vogue with the intention to see the unseen, the hidden, unconscious or invisible meaning that lies within the designed pages with an intention to share this with others.

I will use the Vogue Archive as my material and will use print and digital together to interrogate systematically and rigorously. I will use print in the form of physical printed pages, and a printed output, and digital to manipulate and create, as well as an output. I will use InDesign with Plug Ins Mosaic and or Collage and or Spark for process printing, and a web platform of some sort.

The output needs to communicate in a visual and textural language that engages the audience. The deeply academic processes and contexts will be graphically communicated in accessible ways, with a fine balance of familiar and unfamiliar to simultaneously ground the output and communication and challenge the audience.

# Project Proposal

## Audience

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### Audience

Through my work to date I wonder if other magazine designers are aware of the invisible constraints of magazines (as I wasn't), if they care (as I do), and if this can lead to more responsible design (as I've learnt) in the challenging, contradictory and complex space that is mainstream magazine design.

I will engage with my audience by creating an output that is a result of my findings that can be interacted with in some way, with the intention to highlight and challenge their thinking of what they see and don't see in magazine design.

The audience of editorial designers is a challenging one. They are busy people and my gut feeling is they are not interested in anything new or challenging, as it takes all their efforts just to get through what they have. I will need to create something that visually attracts and is engaging, that has high production values and that is quick and easy to understand and digest. I have contacts at Immediate Media (Radio

Times) and Hearst (Take a Break), and can ask the art desks there to engage with the output.

A possible broader audience that may be interested in this project is magazine readers. Specifically Vogue readers. The audience of magazine readers is a challenging one. They are so ingrained in magazines as expected and accepted, it will be difficult to offer anything that challenges this and expect it to be accepted at all. I do have a selection of female friends who are the Vogue target audience and I can certainly get the output in front of them, but I need to research further a wider reach of this audience.

Do I need some way of assessing what they think?!

# Project Proposal

## Impact

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### Impact

I hope that the work I create embodies and enacts my graphic communication design practice and that it provokes editorial designers and readers to see Vogue magazine from a different perspective and reflect on our social and cultural landscape. I hope it would inspire others to look beyond the surface of what they are presented with, not only within magazines, but within the wider world, as I have learnt to do.

A wider ambition is to change the way editorial designers approach magazine design, with a hope that a more responsible, accountable and thoughtful approach be taken, that in return is more rewarding and fulfilling to the designer, that would in turn be transferred to the audience through the object of magazine.

An even bigger ambition would be to take the methods and practices I have learnt from this course and project and implement them in industry, to even further explore magazine design through graphic communication design research. I would hope to challenge the static magazine design landscape, inspire designers, share knowledge and practice more widely within the community, that quietly challenges patriarchy, capitalism and cultural notions of magazine design. And who knows, this process may enlighten magazines to new ways of finding funding that isn't reliant on such systems and that they may be even more successful, responsible, diverse, entertaining, visually stimulating and fun.

## **Unit 3: Week 1: Projections¹: Project Proposal End**