

Unit 3: Studio 3 Projections²

(WIP)

How does design contribute to the marginalisation of feminist ideologies in Vogue?

(WIP Questions)

- Feminist ideologies - too vast (tutor)
- 'Marginalisation' assumes something
- Feminism is a term I struggle with - turns off many people, has negative associations, alienates certain audiences. I'm not really well read on it. Feminism to me is equality
- Is it more about social construction / contexts
- How can I reword this to be more open and equal and to look at all sides and to be more positive

Questions:

- Am I concentrating on text analysis?
- Question if design has a role in marginalisation of feminist ideologies as design is the container the content is poured into.
- Question too big.
- Am I investigating language used (linguistics), language content (content) or structure (design)?
- Analysing content at a masterplan level - themes, percentage of beauty, fashion, feminist, diverse, climate - over ALL Vogues.
- Is it covers? And the text used on covers?
- Is it images or text or headlines or standfirst?
- In defense of the good content. Ref in defence of the poor image Hito Steryl.
- Draw into comparison with a feminist title - eg Spare Rib, how is structure different?

Answers:

- No.
- Not sure I agree from what I have done so far, maybe I am not communicating clearly to date.
- Agree.
- I was analysing structure (design), but seems to meet with resistance I'm sure for good reason, but don't understand?
- Like this, but the number of issues is vast. How can I create a justified set to analyse?
- Feel covers have been done. It's more about the unseen/contexts.
- Good question - will investigate further.
- I like this and it's a thought that emerged earlier in my work. Editorial teams are not as made out to be in my experience.
- Get it, but feel this is widening not narrowing?

Tutor Crits Response

UNIT 3: STUDIO 3
PROJECTIONS²

I will:

- Attempt to categorise an issue of content, as discussed with tutor
- Revisit focus. Is it about feminism or is it about making the marginalised content loud? Is it about social constructs rather than feminism?
- Why? To counter peoples perception of Vogue? Find good in the gloss? Stand up for the editorial teams?
- What are people's perception of Vogue - do a survey, find references from academics and practices, what is the zero?
- How do I want to challenge this and why?
- Who cares? Audience?
- How can I do that adds value?

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Vogue mission statement

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“Vogue **empowers** and embraces **creativity** and craftsmanship; celebrates fashion, and shines a light on the **critical issues** of the time. Vogue has long been a symbol for **creativity** and **optimism**. We are committed to practices that **celebrate cultures** and **preserve our planet** for future generations. Now—more than ever—we must stand up for what we believe in, listen openly to as **many views** as possible, shine a light on **critical issues**, **empower** those that inspire us, and lead by example by creating **positive change** in the world.”

Anna Wintour

Global Editorial Director; Chief Content Officer, Condé Nast

Vogue US Media Kit, 2024, Condé Nast

“British Vogue is the authority on **fashion, beauty** and **lifestyle**, and is a destination for women to **learn**, be **challenged, inspired** and **empowered**. Under Edward Enninful’s unmatched global editorial status, British Vogue has become the undisputed Fashion Bible in the United Kingdom and is leading the cultural zeitgeist worldwide, **powered by purpose**.”

Vogue British Media Kit, 2022, Condé Nast

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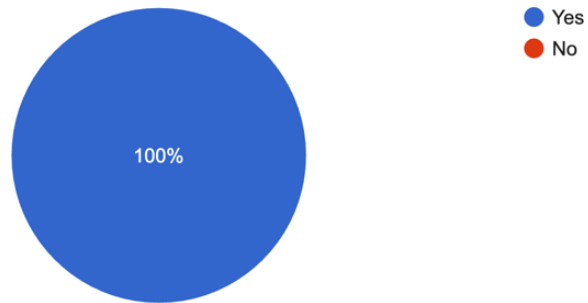
Survey to establish perception

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PROJECTIONS²

I created a mini survey to gauge audience perceptions of Vogue using their mission statement as content for questions.

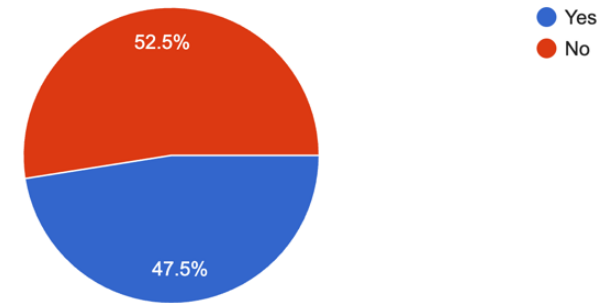
Have you heard of Vogue magazine?

40 responses



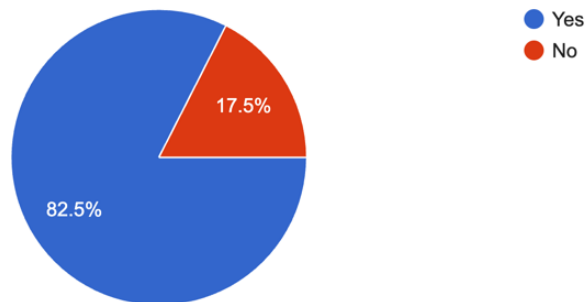
Have you ever bought Vogue magazine?

40 responses



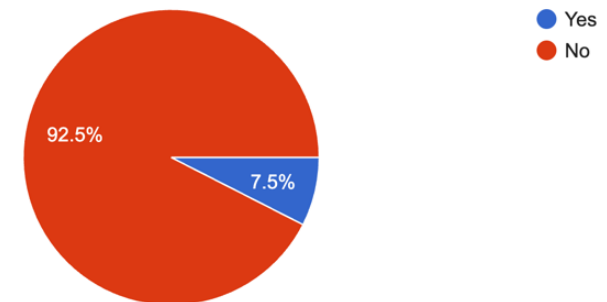
Have you ever read / looked at Vogue magazine?

40 responses



Do you regularly buy or read Vogue magazine?

40 responses



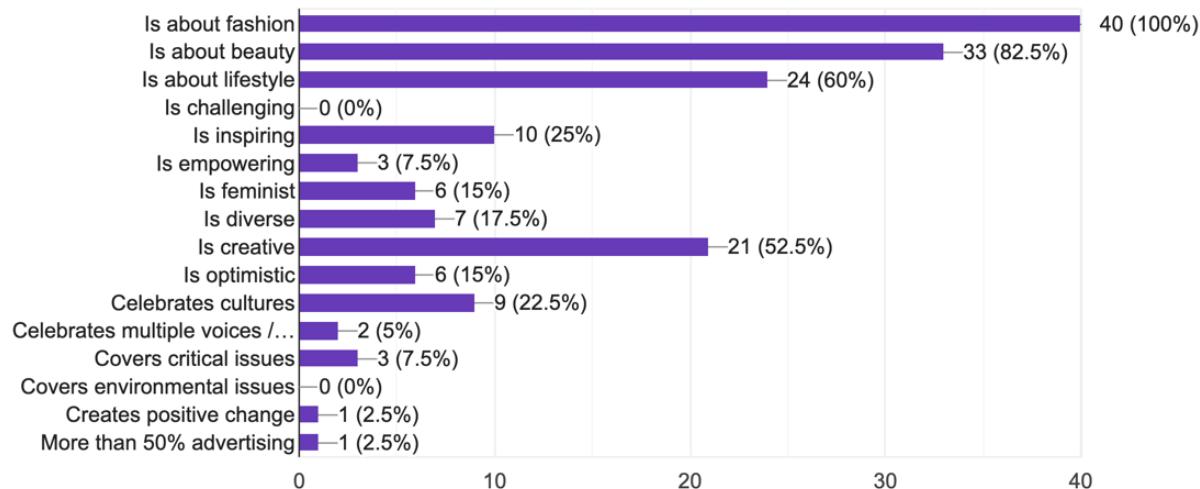
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Survey summary

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PROJECTIONS²

Do you think Vogue... (tick as many as you like)

40 responses



100% knew of Vogue, even though half had never bought one

100% thought it was fashion based

83% thought it was beauty based

54% thought it was lifestyle based

80%-100% view it as appearance based (fashion, beauty)

Only half thought it was lifestyle based

0% view it as environmental or challenging

10%-20% view it as feminist or diverse

One person contributed

'More than 50% advertising' - this relates strongly to findings in Unit 2 where women were put off by advertising

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Academic women's magazines positions

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PROJECTIONS²

Naomi Wolf, *The Beauty Myth*, 1991/2010

Argues women's magazines create 'feminie ideals' that are defined by men through capitalism. Stipulates beauty is used as a tool to control women that is culturally constructed that undermines women's empowerment creating a cycle of consumerism.

Ellen McCracken, *Decoding Women's Magazines*, 1993

Argues women's magazines are grounded in consumerism through contradictory seimotic analysis of advertising and covert advertising through editorial.

Cath Caldwell, *Editorial Design*, 2024

A practical guide to magazine editorial design, delivered as 'professional' and therefore the 'right way' with 'good' examples. Why is the 'right way'? Is this assumption not similar to patirarchy and capitalism?

Summary

Women's magazines are a social construct motivated by consumption, primarily of fashion and beauty.

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Practice women's magazines positions

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Esther Hunziker, Vogue Cover Creatures, 2022

"Combines images from fashion magazine covers with short sequences depicting aliens, monsters and humanoids in horror or science fiction movies. In a humorous manner, they question and subvert the mechanics of seduction of the fashion and of the entertainment industry."

Library Stack, 2022



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Academic marginalised content and 'encoders'

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PROJECTIONS²

Ellen McCracken, Decoding Women's Magazines, 1993

"An editorial mix of intelligent, progressive articles with offensive photographic representations is likely to reach many more women that would either all positive or all negative views of women."

"In addition, printing one or two of the responses from feminists gives the magazine the image of a fair, evenhanded treatment of the issues, as well as the appearance of the incorporation of pro-feminism into its editorial pages. The publishers perhaps hope that both feminists and no-feminists will find something to their liking on the pages of Vogue."

Ellen McCracken, Decoding Women's Magazines, 1993

"Indeed, commodified desire is an important semiotic tool whereby the encoders of magazine texts strive to anchor a preferred social accenting in the grand tale that they construct about reality."

Summary

McCracken challenges the perception of women's magazines by acknowledging the intelligent and progressive articles I found traces of in Unit 2. I saw this as surprising and positive, she sees it as further construction. I asked what has changed since 1993 that I (and my audience in Unit 2) find this surprising. Has the perception of Vogue altered in the last 20 years that makes this surprising? Is that a reflection of society and culture and the time we live in where we don't ask questions or look beyond the surface anymore?

McCracken calls editorial teams "encoders... constructing (a) reality". My experience of working in magazines is not this at all. From my work in Unit 1 and Unit 2 to me the construction takes place at a higher level of capitalist/patriarchal systems and structures.

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Academic counter argument

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PROJECTIONS²

Lipstick Feminism, 2020

“Lipstick feminism is a third wave feminist movement that supports the idea of accepting and embracing femininity to help women’s empowerment. Quite literally, lipstick feminists believe that wearing makeup and sexy clothes does not make you less of a feminist, on the contrary, it means taking control of society’s beauty standards and reclaiming what belongs to women. The underlining idea of lipstick feminism is that traditional feminism is entrenched in a negative attitude towards femininity and discourages women to pursue what is traditionally seen as female. This self-imposed deprivation is seen as yet another form of oppression towards women and as an obstacle to their liberation.”

Lipstick Feminism, Neoliberalism and the undoing of Feminism, Arianna Marchetti, Young Feminist Europe, 2020

Response

Challenging the content of Vogue as inherently feminist by being fashion and beauty dominated.

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Practice marginalised content

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PROJECTIONS²



A Teenager with Promise / Olympic Threat, Alexandra Bell, 2017

Bell takes *New York Times* newspaper articles and challenges the “deliberate choices made in the newsroom” through graphic communication design. She uses redaction or mark up to highlight bias and racism in the copy and redesigns the feature to tell the story



of the marginalised voice. She retains the original layout and places the two side by side to demonstrate “a clear false equivalency”. Posted in unexpected places on unexpected surfaces at unexpected scale, Bell creates place based publishing that challenges the form and function of the original.

Archive Investigations

132 years of American Vogue

1584 issues of American Vogue in the archive

158,400 pages (estimate)

That is a lot of content!

How am I going to decide on which content to look at?

How am I going to look at that content?

Why am I looking at that content?

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Archive Investigations

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PROJECTIONS²

Searching Archive by Keyword

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Keyword

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PROJECTIONS²

I searched the archive for articles based on keywords to get some gauge of content from the 132 years:

"Fashion"	95,533
"Beauty"	63,327
"Lifestyle"	1,062
"Feminism"	323
"Diversity"	891
"Patriarchy"	28
"Capitalism"	121
"Environment"	3,692

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Keyword

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PROJECTIONS²

Flaws:		What it does say:
Fashion	can also be fashionable, fashionista	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It gives a very basic overview• Highlights the content is complex• Marginalised views are hidden beneath the depths, or are very few• Even this most basic search of terms, there are at least traces of counter content to the perceived
Beauty	can also be product names, treatments, a beauty (as in beautiful) etc.	
Lifestyle	can mean aspirational or real	
Feminism	can be feminist, can be used positive or derogative	
Diversity	can be diverse within fashion items not people or culture	
Patriarchy	can be patriarchal, can be written in other words	
Capitalism	can be capitalist, can be inferred through other language	
Environment	can be a toxic environment not in terms of sustainability or preseving the planet	

Projections² Studio³

Keyword 'feminism' sample articles

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influences for that only you know

Simone de Beauvoir

Simone de Beauvoir was a French philosopher, writer, and feminist. She is best known for her work *The Second Sex*, which is a foundational text in feminist theory. She was also a novelist, memoirist, and political activist.

BECOMING YOURSELF

Simone de Beauvoir's philosophy is rooted in existentialism. She believed that individuals create their own meaning and identity through their choices and actions. In her book *The Second Sex*, she argues that women are often treated as "the Other" by men, which limits their freedom and ability to become themselves. She advocates for women to embrace their individuality and seek equality with men.

Simone de Beauvoir's work has had a profound impact on feminist thought. Her ideas about the social construction of gender and the importance of individual freedom have inspired generations of feminists. She is often cited as one of the most influential female philosophers of the 20th century.

Simone de Beauvoir's legacy continues to be felt today. Her work remains a cornerstone of feminist theory, and her ideas continue to inspire people to fight for equality and personal freedom.

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Gail Jones lost 22 pounds

and a lot of essential vitamins and iron.

With the extra iron and vitamins found in **ferriol**, you can lose weight safely and keep your energy up. And **ferriol** has 10 essential vitamins and 10 essential minerals. And the extra iron and vitamins in **ferriol** help you lose weight safely and keep your energy up.

And you can take **ferriol** for as little as 10¢ a day. And you can take **ferriol** for as little as 10¢ a day. And you can take **ferriol** for as little as 10¢ a day.

No nonsense: looking great for less.

There's nothing more to it than looking good for less. It's all about the right combination of style and substance. And that's what **ferriol** is all about. It's the only iron and vitamin supplement that's been clinically proven to help you lose weight safely and keep your energy up. And it's the only iron and vitamin supplement that's been clinically proven to help you lose weight safely and keep your energy up.

And you can take **ferriol** for as little as 10¢ a day. And you can take **ferriol** for as little as 10¢ a day. And you can take **ferriol** for as little as 10¢ a day.

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Talking about books

Photo: Michael O'Connell

BY JAMES HANCOCK
Illustration by
JAMES HANCOCK

Hendel Brodley discovers the world in a word...
Richard Sennett, that the word was food...
David Levitt picks on the boy in the bond...
Marilyn French tenses feminism...
Hunter Ke at Oxford...
Journalists' dim-dim ethics...
Why Jane Wymann stomped *Romance*...

THE *Journalists' Ethics* by **James H. Hancock** (1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158, 2159, 2160, 2161, 2162, 2163, 2164, 2165, 2166, 2167, 2168, 2169, 2170, 2171, 2172, 2173, 2174, 2175, 2176, 2177, 2178, 2179, 2180, 2181, 2182, 2183, 2184, 2185, 2186, 2187, 2188, 2189, 2190, 2191, 2192, 2193, 2194, 2195, 2196, 2197, 2198, 2199, 2200, 2201, 2202, 2203, 2204, 2205, 2206, 2207, 2208, 2209, 2210, 2211, 2212, 2213, 2214, 2215, 2216, 2217, 2218, 2219, 2220, 2221, 2222, 2223, 2224, 2225, 2226, 2227, 2228, 2229, 2230, 2231, 2232, 2233, 2234, 2235, 2236, 2237, 2238, 2239, 2240, 2241, 2242, 2243, 2244, 2245, 2246, 2247, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2253, 2254, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258, 2259, 2260, 2261, 2262, 2263, 2264, 2265, 2266, 2267, 2268, 2269, 2270, 2271, 2272, 2273, 2274, 2275, 2276, 2277, 2278, 2279, 2280, 2281, 2282, 2283, 2284, 2285, 2286, 2287, 2288, 2289, 2290, 2291, 2292, 2293, 2294, 2295, 2296, 2297, 2298, 2299, 2300, 2301, 2302, 2303, 2304, 2305, 2306, 2307, 2308, 2309, 2310, 2311, 2312, 2313, 2314, 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318, 2319, 2320, 2321, 2322, 2323, 2324, 2325, 2326, 2327, 2328, 2329, 2330, 2331, 2332, 2333, 2334, 2335, 2336, 2337, 2338, 2339, 2340, 2341, 2342, 2343, 2344, 2345, 2346, 2347, 2348, 2349, 2350, 2351, 2352, 2353, 2354, 2355, 2356, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2360, 2361, 2362, 2363, 2364, 2365, 2366, 2367, 2368, 2369, 2370, 2371, 2372, 2373, 2374, 2375, 2376, 2377, 2378, 2379, 2380, 2381, 2382, 2383, 2384, 2385, 2386, 2387, 2388, 2389, 2390, 2391, 2392, 2393, 2394, 2395, 2396, 2397, 2398, 2399, 2400, 2401, 2402, 2403, 2404, 2405, 2406, 2407, 2408, 2409, 2410, 2411, 2412, 2413, 2414, 2415, 2416, 2417, 2418, 2419, 2420, 2421, 2422, 2423, 2424, 2425, 2426, 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, 2431, 2432, 2433, 2434, 2435, 2436, 2437, 2438, 2439, 2440, 2441, 2442, 2443, 2444, 2445, 2446, 2447, 2448, 2449, 2450, 2451, 2452, 2453, 2454, 2455, 2456, 2457, 2458, 2459, 2460, 2461, 2462, 2463, 2464, 2465, 2466, 2467, 2468, 2469, 2470, 2471, 2472, 2473, 2474, 2475, 2476, 2477, 2478, 2479, 2480, 2481, 2482, 2483, 2484, 2485, 2486, 2487, 2488, 2489, 2490, 2491, 2492, 2493, 2494, 2495, 2496, 2497, 2498, 2499, 2500, 2501, 2502, 2503, 2504, 2505, 2506, 2507, 2508, 2509, 2510, 2511, 2512, 2513, 2514, 2515, 2516, 2517, 2518, 2519, 2520, 2521, 2522, 2523, 2524, 2525, 2526, 2527, 2528, 2529, 2530, 2531, 2532, 2533, 2534, 2535, 2536, 2537, 2538, 2539, 2540, 2541, 2542, 2543, 2544, 2545, 2546, 2547, 2548, 2549, 2550, 2551, 2552, 2553, 2554, 2555, 2556, 2557, 2558, 2559, 2560, 2561, 2562, 2563, 2564, 2565, 2566, 2567, 2568, 2569, 2570, 2571, 2572, 2573, 2574, 2575, 2576, 2577, 2578, 2579, 2580, 2581, 2582, 2583, 2584, 2585, 2586, 2587, 2588, 2589, 2590, 2591, 2592, 2593, 2594, 2595, 2596, 2597, 2598, 2599, 2600, 2601, 2602, 2

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Projections² Studio³

Keyword 'feminism' sample articles

UNIT 3: STUDIO 3
PROJECTIONS²

Flaws:

- Sometimes the word is used derogatively sometimes positively
- Sometimes just in passing
- Sometimes one sentence on a 6 page feature
- Doesn't account for perceptions or contexts of feminism, searches just the word, no nuance

What it does say:

- It gives a quick overview to years and types of feminist content
- It gives quick indication on features versus small amount of text
- Highlights changes in design over the years
- Highlights how design gives prominence to subject matter

Categorising by Contents Page

UNIT 3: STUDIO 3 PROJECTIONS²

1892 the first issue has no contents/index
1895 is the first issue I could find with a contents/index
Missing from contents - 'Like all other objects that interest humanity'
Highlights politics and finance

Contents:

Fashion

4.2 pages

Beauty

Lifestyle

3.5 pages

Culture

6 pages

Feminism

Diversity

1.2 pages

Patriarchy

Capitalism

Environment

[illegible]

Projections² Studio³

Categorising by contents 2025

UNIT 3: STUDIO 3
PROJECTIONS²

February 1, 2025

Doesn't account for Editors Letter or Contributors



Contents:

- Fashion 8 articles
- Beauty 1 articles
- Lifestyle 1 articles
- Culture 2 articles
- Feminism
- Diversity
- Patriarchy
- Capitalism
- Environment

Contents:

- Fashion 48 pages
- Beauty 2 pages
- Lifestyle 6 pages
- Culture 5 pages
- Feminism
- Diversity
- Patriarchy
- Capitalism
- Environment

Projections² Studio³

Categorising by contents

UNIT 3: STUDIO 3
PROJECTIONS²



1895



1900



1906



1910



1915



1920



1925



1930



1935



1940



1945



1950

Projections² Studio³

Categorising by contents

UNIT 3: STUDIO 3

PROJECTIONS²

1955



1960



1965



1970



1975



1980



1985



1990



1995



2000



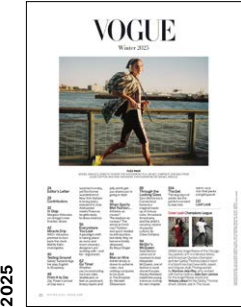
2005



Projections² Studio³

Categorising by contents

UNIT 3: STUDIO 3
PROJECTIONS²



Projections² Studio³

Summary

UNIT 3: STUDIO 3
PROJECTIONS²

Flaws:

- Categories exclude some pages - eg editors letter, contributors, contents
- Number of articles doesn't highlight amount of content by pages
- Titles of articles can be misleading - Philanthropy - The Clothing Bureau. Marked as fashion as is about clothing, but it's a philanthropic endeavour so is that diverse?
- I have analysed the 2025 issue so know there is hidden marginalised content within the 'fashion' categorised content

What it does say:

- Good initial comparison highlighted categories in older Vogue's I didn't even consider in modern Vogue - finance and politics

Projections² Studio³

Archive Investigations

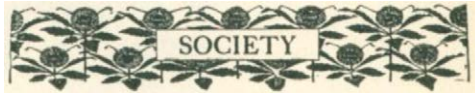
UNIT 3: STUDIO 3
PROJECTIONS²

Categorising by Headline

Projections² Studio³

Categorising by headlines 1895

UNIT 3: STUDIO 3
PROJECTIONS²



THE CARE OF FUNDS
BANK ACCOUNTS



WHIST INSTRUCTION

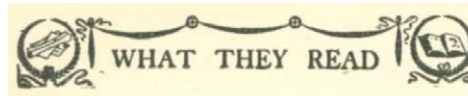
ALIDA CRAIG
CHAPTER II



IN JAPAN
A DINNER WITH THE LADIES OF THE IM-
PERIAL COURT

VOGUE

A "MOONLIGHT SONATA"



SMART FASHIONS FOR LIMITED
INCOMES

THE CLOTHING BUREAU

WOMEN'S CLUBS

THE IMPROVEMENT SOCIETY OF THE ORANGES

VOGUE'S DOMESTIC PET SERIES

LITTLE ECONOMIES

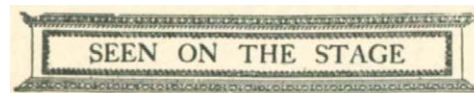
THE ART INTEREST
THE CHRISTMAS MAGAZINES

PARIS
(From Our Own Correspondent.)

BHANG!
BY HARRY SAINT MAUR

NOTES HERE AND THERE

MORNING-ROOM GOSSIP
A SILVER TEA



MUSIC



CARD PARTY NOTES

MATCHING PARTNERS BY MEANS OF FLOWERS
OR BARS OF MUSIC—PHOTOGRAPH
FRAMES AS COUNTERS

ROYAL BABIES IN POLITICS

CURRENT POLITICAL QUES-
TIONS

ASSEMBLING OF CONGRESS—HOW THE STATES
ARE REPRESENTED—POWER OF THE
SPEAKER—THE REED RULES

FITZNOODLE IN AMERICA
HE VISITS THE OPERA

Meeting
the Moment

IN STEP

MIRACLE DRIP

TESTING GROUND

McGIRR'S McQUEEN

MAN ON WIRE

In This Issue

From A to Zac

Through the Looking Glass

Everywhere You Look



WHEN
SPORTS MET
FASHION...

Projections² Studio³

Summary

UNIT 3: STUDIO 3
PROJECTIONS²

1895

- Headlines were consistent and small
- Shows a four column grid
- Contents didn't list all headlines in the issue, nearly all the fashion pages weren't in the 'index' suggesting this wasn't the focus of the magazine
- Equality between all articles by headline
- All centred, all capitalised
- Boardered headlines denote sections, or hierarchy of content?
- Headlines functional - say what the article is about
- The dominating headlines are in boarders and are all based on seeing > appearance "AS SEEN BY HIM" "SEEN ON THE STAGE" "SEEN IN THE SHOPS" "WHAT SHE WEARS" "SOCIETY"

2025

- Headlines varied in font, size, format, background
- Shows varied grid
- Contents listed all headlines in the magazine suggesting a stronger coherence of content and contents
- Hierarchy implied by size of headline - does larger headline implicate more 'important' content?
- Left, right and centred alignment
- Headlines abstract - don't know what some of the articles are from the headlines
- Two headlines based on seeing / looking > appearance
- Headlines have urgency "Go Time!" and shouty "WHEN SPORTS MET FASHION".

Projections² Studio³

Summary

UNIT 3: STUDIO 3
PROJECTIONS²

Flaws:

- There was more headlines in the issue than there was on the contents page
- I don't know if this is a problem, I could make a decision to include all or only from contents page, but both feel like they are excluding something
- The headlines don't give great detail to what the features are about or great insight so its hard to categorise content by headline

What it does say:

- The fashion pages weren't listed in the index (contents) which raises questions of the focus of Vogue in 1895. Was fashion not the main focus and if so where did that shift? Has that shift affected the perception of Vogue and has that perception shifted opinion which results in less sales?
- It is a good way to compare design and analyse how its changed over time and how that affects the reading of the magazine as a whole, as well as in creating an overall perception or social construct

Projections² Studio³

Archive Investigations

UNIT 3: STUDIO 3
PROJECTIONS²

Other ways I could categorise:

- Categorising by Image
- Categorising by Picture Captions
- Categorising by Pull Quote
- Categorising by First Paragraph
- Categorising by Cover Lines

Questions:

- These don't feel right, too exclusive
- Maybe it isn't about feminism it's more about social construction
- Layers of contexts that go unnoticed
- Systems and structures that go unnoticed by audience and editorial teams
- Creating a discursive reality
- Return to Deconstructing by Absence to try and make more specific sense of it

Projections² Studio³

Archive Investigations

UNIT 3: STUDIO 3
PROJECTIONS²

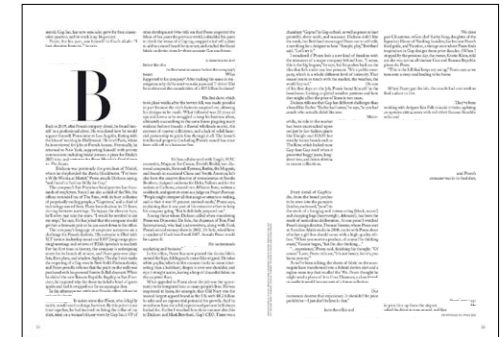
Deconstructing by Absence

Projections² Studio³

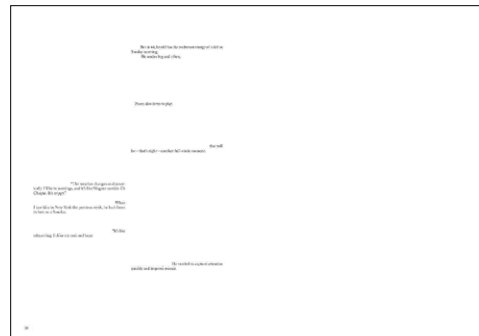
Deconstructing by Absence 2025

UNIT 3: STUDIO 3
PROJECTIONS²

Socially constructed content with layers of contexts and inferences creating a discursive reality



Non-socially constructed content with a honest story of a person



Projections² Studio³

Design analysis

UNIT 3: STUDIO 3
PROJECTIONS²

Socially constructed

- All images are socially constructed as the captions are all designer labels and price tags commodifying the content
- Plus most images of women are sexually suggestive (two contexts layered)
- No one is smiling (but content is supposed to be aspirational)
- Colours are dark and muted (denote luxury and sophistication)
- Drop caps (Up caps?) completely surplus to content, 'Z' works as a graphic to say start here, don't know what the B does
- Main font is a social construct of elegance, Didot. Originating in Paris and the French letterset Francois Ambroise Didot, first true 'Modern Style' typeface (Carter et al, 2018)
- Two column grid dictating how to read content, combined with assumed knowledge of reading columns
- Design goes unquestioned due to formulaic understanding of conventions which is a layer in normalising content and creating a discursive reality through discourse?

Non socially constructed

- Visually clear that the end of the article is less socially constructed than the beginning indicating the socially constructed content comes first and is therefore deemed 'more important'
- Lack of images highlights size and dominance of imagery - because they dominate are images 'more important'
- Draws attention to the imagery that is full bleed, ink saturating paper, the natural paper suffocated and isn't even seen, the ink a varnish or cover, a facade, reflecting the dominant narrative of Vogue, suffocating the non socially constructed content. The overpowering nature of the visuals leaves no space for thought, allowing its socially constructed narrative to dominate unquestioned?
- The space offers alternative reading of the text. You are inclined to zig zag rather than be dictated to by ordered columns (columns - very colonial?)

Projections² Studio³

Summary

UNIT 3: STUDIO 3
PROJECTIONS²

Flaws:

- Is it specific enough? I am looking at content to decipher/ challenge design
- Is the design a valid investigation?
- Is it about layered contexts, language, image, design, writing, relationships between that strengthen the single story
- Am I for or against or showing both sides?

What it does say:

- Deconstructing by absence highlights design decisions and design constructions that go unnoticed that contribute to normalisation of socially constructed content creating a discursive nature of reality
- If I made two copies of the same issue how would the whole feel, what else can it expose about magazine design
- Highlights diverse content in Vogue, that it isn't all commercialised fashion and beauty
- Highlights the systems and structures magazines are made in as the invisible construction of employees and content that becomes culture
- Highlights multiple contexts the content is located in that combine to create a 'single story' (Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, 2009)
- The single story is alienating the very audience Vogue is trying to attract?

Projections²

Line of enquiry shift

UNIT 3: STUDIO 3
PROJECTIONS²

I came across a reference that helped me collate my references, studio practice and articulated my enquiry. The Danger of the Single Story (Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, 2009).

Chimamanda tells the story where as a child in Nigeria growing up she loved to read and read a lot of British and American books, as that was what was available. She then started writing stories and they were of white children, who played in the snow, drank ginger beer and were delighted if it was a sunny day. The stories she read, she wrote as that was the single story of stories to her.

She goes on to cite many more stories that were single stories of her own ignorance and of what is constructed through news, perceptions and others.

I thought about this single story and Vogue and the story it is creating.

Projections²

Line of enquiry shift

UNIT 3: STUDIO 3
PROJECTIONS²

The Danger of the Single Story, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, 2009

“...that is how you create a single story, show a people as one thing, as only one thing, over and over again and that is what they become.” 09:17



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9lhs241zeg>

Projections²

Line of enquiry shift

UNIT 3: STUDIO 3
PROJECTIONS²

The Danger of the Single Story, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, 2009

“It is impossible to talk about the single story without talking about power. There is a word, an Igbo word, that I think about whenever I think about the power structures of the world, and it is “nkali”. It is a noun that loosely translates to “to be greater than another.” Like our economic and political worlds, stories too are defined by the principle of nkali: How they are told, who tells them, when they’re told, how many stories are told, are really dependent on power” 09.29



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9lhs241zeg>

Projections² Studio³

Summary

UNIT 3: STUDIO 3
PROJECTIONS²

The Single Story

- Vogue has constructed a single story of itself over 132 years
- That is of fashion, luxury, aspiration and elegance
- Magazines are profitable through selling advertising
- Advertising has amplified the single story
- Abundance of advertising in magazines has turned audience off
- 2025 people are exhausted, every single thing is commodified, urgent and demands immediate reactions
- Traces of an alternative narrative in Vogue
- Remove the gloss / noise / commodified / commercial / socially constructed content and what is left
- Relatable stories with heart and human connection
- How can design amplify the human aspect of Vogue?

Projections² Studio³

Evaluation

UNIT 3: STUDIO 3
PROJECTIONS²

- I returned to my iterations in this practice and applied them to the single story.
- My audience survey highlights a strong single story. 100% knew of Vogue, less than half had ever purchased a copy, 100% thought Vogue was fashion based.
- I re-looked at the contents pages and how design and language had skewed the focus over the years that creates this single story of fashion in Vogue.
- My audience survey from Unit 2 suggests people are turned off by this and exhausted by advertising - the single story is alienating audiences.
- The ever decreasing circulation of Vogue suggests that people want more than the single story?
- Society is saturated with single stories, especially through digital, the same interface telling single stories through medium?
- What if the second story became the first? Would that be more engaging? How would that look? How would that communicate? How would that seep into society? How would that make people feel?

Projections² Studio²

Process

UNIT 3: STUDIO 3
PROJECTIONS²

Reflect

The process of trying to categorise the content highlighted the complexity of categorising the content. It wasn't very successful in categorising the content in a satisfactory way, but it did highlight design developments, and historical shifts that lead to what is currently Vogue.

The categorising didn't feel right, so I didn't pursue it deeply. It did help me reconcile my enquiry and that has shifted to constructed content and the dominant narrative and challenging that, which feels like what I was trying to articulate but couldn't earlier as it reconciles a lot of the questions I had about my WIP line of enquiry.

Project

This process has opened a shifted line of enquiry that although is within the framework of feminism, isn't focused on feminism.

The shift is towards a single narrative and challenging that on multiple levels. From a very focused point of a text; a sentence, and slowly moving out to a paragraph, the page, the issue, the object, multiple of the same object, the system that makes it, the system that distributes it, the places it's found in, all the other multiple objects that say the same thing, that creates a narrative within society.

Projections² Studio² Communication

UNIT 3: STUDIO 3
PROJECTIONS²

Reflect

Having some audience feedback was really helpful in firming up perceptions of Vogue that are from a public not assumed from myself.

Combining these with academic's perspectives of magazines from thorough analysis creates a good framework to explore within.

Thinking about how my findings communicate to a public is still challenging. I am concerned with losing the obvious connection/communication of the source magazine as that was seen as a negative in Unit 2, but feedback seems to suggest I need to explore the medium more widely and purposely break this, just to see what emerges that may progress the project.

Project

I'll put to one side the need to be obviously Vogue and see how the content or parts of content that has emerged communicates when placed in alternative, challenging or unexpected contexts.

Projections² Studio²

Realisation

UNIT 3: STUDIO 3
PROJECTIONS²

Reflect

I am still trying to pin down what my intention is to be able to explore realisation more fully, but feedback from tutor crits was to be more free and more experimental with the material to see what emerges.

We discussed how if the outcome is a magazine through form and format there needs to be a significant surprise inside. We talked about grotesque and distortion.

Project

I am going to explore contexts, mediums and translations of the content I have found without worrying too much about why.

If the context of form is a magazine how can I twist the content?

If the form isn't a magazine how does the content communicate, what can be learned from this?

Projections² Studio³

Development

UNIT 3: STUDIO 3
PROJECTIONS²

How does design contribute to the discursive nature of reality in Vogue?

Take one issue per decade - 13 issues and make two mega Vogues. One of socially constructed copy and one of marginalised voices copy. Use history to analyse design changes over time and impact on discursive realities.

Vogue - Making Feminism Fashionable

Take all articles that feature the word 'feminism' - 323 (is this do-able?) and create a Vogue with just these features (redesign it to look like a 'normal' issue)? Don't feel well read on feminism and find it very s.e.r.i.o.u.s.

Reimagined present - What if Vogue continued to sideline fashion and promote women more wholly?

Take an issue and invert content and hierarchies so headlines, quotes and start of copy is marginalised content? Socially constructed content is lesser.

Vogue's New Clothes - making the invisible visible

Visually communicate in someway the multiple layers of contexts in each feature of an issue of Vogue that create a discursive reality we no longer question.

Unit 3: Studio 3: Projections² End