

Unit 3: Studio 4 Projections²

Need to do more making, which is freer, taking it in different directions

What emerges then?

If it looks like Vogue from the outside (a physical context), inside needs to surprise, distort, challenge what's expected?

If the physical context is different does the content need to be recognisably Vogue?

If the physical context is different and the content isn't recognisable as Vogue - what is that?

Development¹

UNIT 3: STUDIO 4
PROJECTIONS²

Challenging external contexts

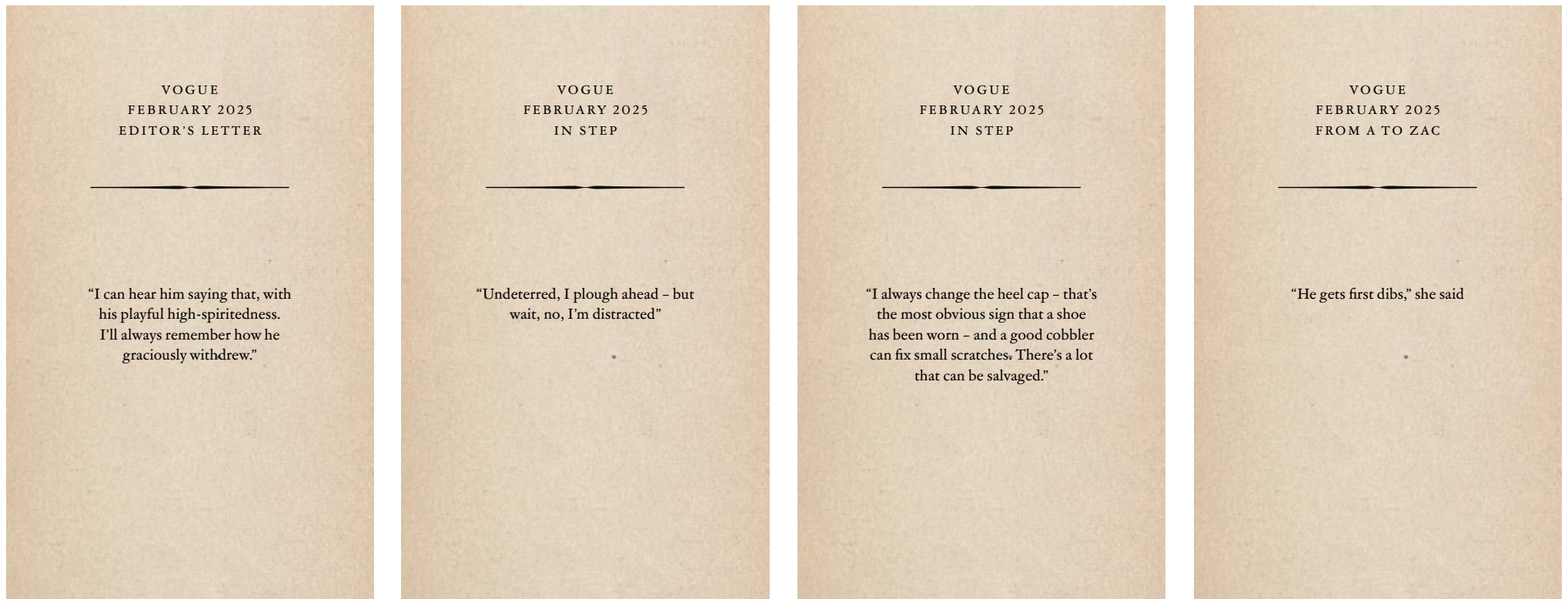
I recontextualised snippets of texts from the February issue of Vogue, 2025.

I took snippets of texts from Vogue and placed them in different contexts that communicated the tone, language and feel of the text.

Challenging external contexts

UNIT 3: STUDIO 4
PROJECTIONS²

Pocket book of quotes from the early 20th Century



These words when extracted sounded like fiction from the early twentieth century, part Enid Blyton, part Victorian. Can I take these snippets and create a fictional story to challenge context further?

Challenging external contexts

UNIT 3: STUDIO 4
PROJECTIONS²

BBC News X Post

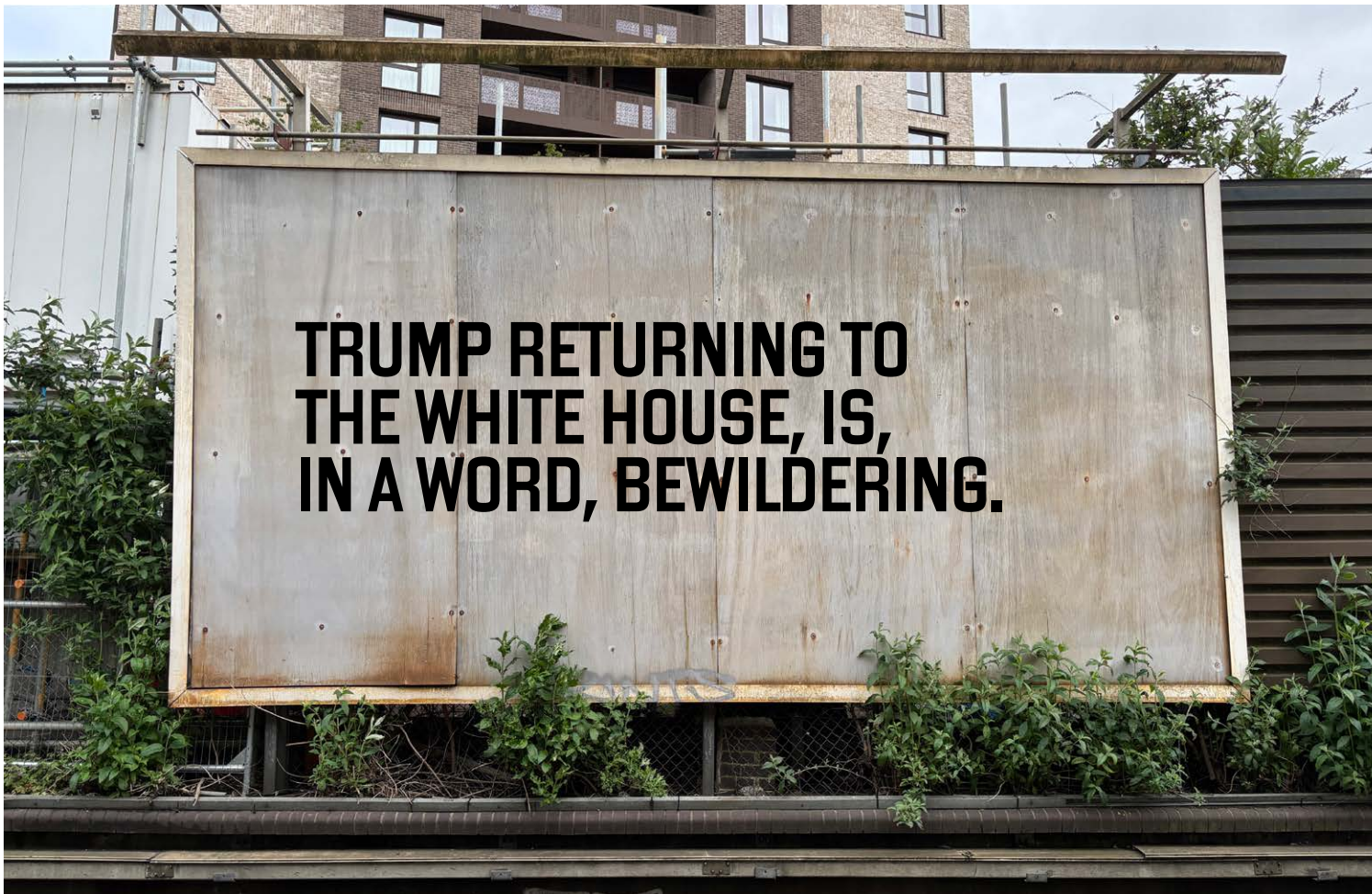


This sentence was very news worthy, serious and 'factual'.
A complete contrast to the previous set.

Challenging external contexts

UNIT 3: STUDIO 4
PROJECTIONS²

Billboard



This sentence was very political, but approachable, which really resonated with me. Again different to the previous two.

I quickly placed it on a billboard to make it loud, but this isn't right. I love this dilapidated billboard how else can I develop a way of working with this?

This board represents time and the passing of time. Maybe I could paste lots of layers of Vogue pages, from 132 years, all on the same topic, ripped as if over time new ones have been pasted up and left to disintegrate, reflective of paper, magazines, time, narratives, society and culture?

Challenging external contexts

Reflection

UNIT 3: STUDIO 4
PROJECTIONS²

- Placing snippets of texts in other contexts removes the initial context of magazine, the multiple contexts of the page that normalise and reinforce it, and allows the text to be seen differently, or for what it is.
- The exercises highlight the varied? / conflicting? / diverse? / confusing? / hidden? tones of voice, underlying values, alternative narratives(?) as well as a wide range of positions / opinions / topics.
- The recontextualisation doesn't connect to Vogue at all so as a communication in isolation so much context is lost the meaning is lost?
- Challenges the perception of Vogue as 'fluffy' 'superficial' 'light' 'all about fashion'.

Challenging internal contexts

I disrupted internal contexts from the February issue of Vogue, 2025.

I took various approaches to disrupting the internal context / language / text / images to challenge the assumed / normalised meaning Vogue creates as a whole, whilst maintaining the external form, materiality, size, shape and use.

Challenging internal contexts

UNIT 3: STUDIO 4
PROJECTIONS²



A FEMALE IN A SUIT
SITS ON A BACK-
WARDS CHAIR, HER
HAND CRADLES HER
FACE, WHICH IS TILT-
ED, HER LEGS APART,
SHE WEARS NO
SOCKS, THE BACK-
GROUND IS MOTTLED,
THE LIGHT MAKES
HER FACE GLOW, SHE
LOOKS DOWN AT ME



A MAN DRESSED IN
TROUSERS, COAT
AND HAT; SHIRT AND
SHOES, ON A BEACH,
WALKING AWAY,
TURNING TO LOOK.
BIT OVERDRESSED
FOR THE BEACH? HE
IS ALONE. ONLY THE
SKIN ON HIS FACE
AND HANDS IS
EXPOSED

A MAN IN A
THREE PIECE
SUIT, ADJUST-
ING HIS TIE, ON
A BEACH, LOOKS
OFF TO THE
RIGHT. HIS LOW-
ER LEGS ARE
MISSING



A FEMALE, SMILING,
FACING ME, LEANING
SLIGHTLY FORWARD,
LEGS APART, ARMS
DOWN, IN A SHORT
SPARKLY DRESS THAT
HAS ONE STRAP OVER
HER SHOULDER, SKY
BEHIND. I LOOK UP TO
HER SLIGHTLY. TONED
LEGS AND COLLAR
BONE GLEAM



A FEMALE, SMILING,
FACING ME, LEANING
SLIGHTLY FORWARD,
LEGS APART, ARMS
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Method: Image as text

Reference: Georges Perec, Species, Space and other Places. Roland Barthes Mythologies.

Process: I tried to describe the images flatly as Perec advises, that then flowed into some semiological and some mythological analysis, and removed all text.

Findings: When describing exactly what you see without using words to contextualise or describe the image, the basic nature of the image emerges which questions its objective sense. It exposes how images crop and position people.

Reflections: This process drew my attention to how much skin the images of men exposed in contrast to the amount of skin women exposed. Men were fully dressed from head to toe, with coats, layers of clothing covering the body. The women on the other hand were more varied in skin exposure and body position. It also highlighted the ridiculous nature of imagey, with a man fully dressed in a three piece suit on a beach, and a woman flashing her legs in a deep dark wood (next page). These spontaneous descriptions cover a few areas (semiology, mythology, alternative readings of the image, other stories) I could choose one to focus on and translate the whole issue.

Development: When writing the text over the image, I then highlighted it all to copy and paste it and in doing so it made the image turn into a negative. Reminiscent of an x-ray. We are all the same skin and bone beneath the exterior we project. This method reduces all the images to being visually equal and removing the commercialised surface of clothing.

Challenging internal contexts

UNIT 3: STUDIO 4
PROJECTIONS²



Advertisements: I treated all the images as equal whether in a feature or in an advert. Merging the two sides of magazine content that contains both implicit and explicit commodification and commercialisation (Wolf, 2010). Every page requires this treatment even when removing all text which reflects the density of messaging through imagery in the magazine as a whole. Using the same type of language exposes the repetitive nature of imagery, body position and ridiculousness of contexts.

A BAG

A WOMAN LEANS AGAINST A TREE, HER YELLOW, SHINY MAC FLAPPING OPEN AT THE KNEE, HER KNEE DELICATELY BENT IN FRONT OF HER OTHER LEG, HER TOE POINTED, DISAPPEARING INTO THE AUTUMNAL LEAVES AT HER FEET, IT'S DARK, HER FACE IS TILTED TO THE LEFT, NON SMILING, WHAT IS SHE DOING?

HALF A MAN SITS, HIS EYES CAST DOWN, HIS HAND BY HIS CHIN, IN PROFILE. THE POSE OF 'THE THINKER' BY AUGUSTE RODIN REPRESENTING DEEP THOUGHT AND CONTEMPLATION. HE WEARS A COAT, BUT IS INSIDE, ONLY THE SKIN ON HIS FACE AND HANDS IS EXPOSED. THERE IS A BLACK SQUARE AROUND HIS HEAD. THE LIGHT FALLS FROM ABOVE, CREATING CONTRAST AND ANGLEICISM SIMULTANEOUSLY

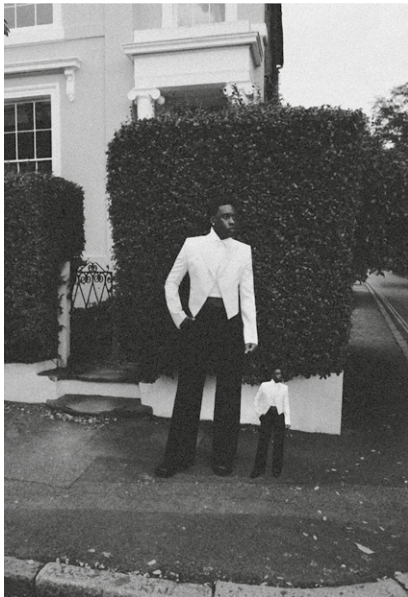
THREE QUARTERS OF A MAN IS FACING ME, BUT LOOKING TO THE RIGHT. THE BUILDING BEHIND HIM SCRUFFY, THE ROAD DIRTY. HE IS PASSING THE CORNER OF THE BUILDING. HE WEARS A COAT, HANDS IN POCKETS, ONLY THE SKIN ON HIS FACE IS EXPOSED. HE IS A BIT GAUNT, SALLOW OF SKIN, THE LIGHT COMES FROM ABOVE HIGHLIGHTING HIS FACE



Development: I could choose an era within Vogue, say 1892-1918 and select articles that felt relevant to today and redesign them as current Vogue. The language would contradict the aesthetic challenging the expected notions of Vogue and asking questions about the true nature of the content and in turn, the representation or social construction of women, in Vogue in the current moment.

Challenging internal contexts

UNIT 3: STUDIO 4
PROJECTIONS²



Tom Thumb: Barnum put Charles Stratton, a 65cm/25 inch tall man, on display as a curiosity in the mid 1800s calling him Tom Thumb. Replicating the model in Vogue and making a second 'Tom Thumb' pokes fun at the male models pose, stance, clothing and context.



In the Victorian era photography was used to remove heads from bodies and place them under the persons arm. Or photographs of disjointed people were displayed as entertainment. Giving Gabby three arms and an extra head challenges the original preferred reading of the image.



Chang and Eng, Siamese twins connected by a ligament below their breastbones were a feature of Barnum's 'curiosities'. Put on display as spectacle and entertainment in the mid 1800s. I cojoined Tiafoe to himself, by his spine and gave him a third leg, another feature of Victorian oddities.

Method: Spectacle as spectacle.

Reference: Barnum's Circus, Victorian Oddities, People's misfortunes as entertainment for the 'mass' and the 'normal'.

Process: I photoshopped images from Vogue to create spectacle. Ironically making spectacle of what is already been made a spectacle, but in a grotesque context.

Findings: Distorting the images mocks them and breaks the invisible context that is created and predefined by the context of the magazine. Vogue's reputation as being aspirational, the epitome of luxury and elegance, is challenged by the people in the images not being what is expected. Grotesquing the images grotesques the original context and meaning.

Reflections: In the future will we look at images from current Vogue and laugh, or be horrified, at their literal meanings? This method exposes the contrite nature of the images, and of Vogue. It suggests Vogue is spectacle and is derogative in its framing of people.

Development: I'm not sure where I would go with this method. I could take an issue of Vogue and distort all the images in this way, but I am not sure what I would do with the text.

Challenging internal contexts

UNIT 3: STUDIO 4
PROJECTIONS²

Further explorations

- Distorting through collage - Cindy Sherman
- Community notice board - post it notes of all the human connections snippets of texts from Vogue
- Call and response - not sure where this is going... something about the contradiction within the same sentenceparagraph/feature in Vogue
- Manipulate type - Willa Wonka's contract text gets smaller and smaller so its illegible, make the commercialised content smaller and the more human content larger
- Vogue as a Fanzine - alter the visual language and see how the text feels in an alternative graphic communication

Challenging internal contexts

Reflection

UNIT 3: STUDIO 4
PROJECTIONS²

- These quick exercises start to explore how to disrupt internally to expose our expectations of the form of a magazine as well as what we expect of Vogue, whilst making comment on the content of Vogue.
- Exposing our surface level perceptions that masquerade as normal and a reality.
- Image as text has a direct connection to Vogue as the images of the issue remain in the same place, space and order. I'd need to think about which lens would be most relevant to write the text through. Lots of explore. I question if there is enough familiar in this version.
- Past as present I need to explore with older articles. Do I select articles from a particular era and fit them to the structure of the modern magazine? Is there a specific theme to the articles about the point I am trying to make - feminism, patriarchy, capitalism, commercialisation. Which is most important to me to show what has or hasn't changed over time?
- Spectacle as spectacle isn't laid out at Vogue 2025, it's just showing the oddity. I'd need to think more deeply about why I am doing this and what happens with the words if I progress this one.

Four Corners Books

UNIT 3: STUDIO 4
PROJECTIONS²



I had a consultation with Four Corners Books, Elinor Jansz and Richard Embray.

I shared my work to date and asked them about their work.

Four Corners Books:

Discussion points

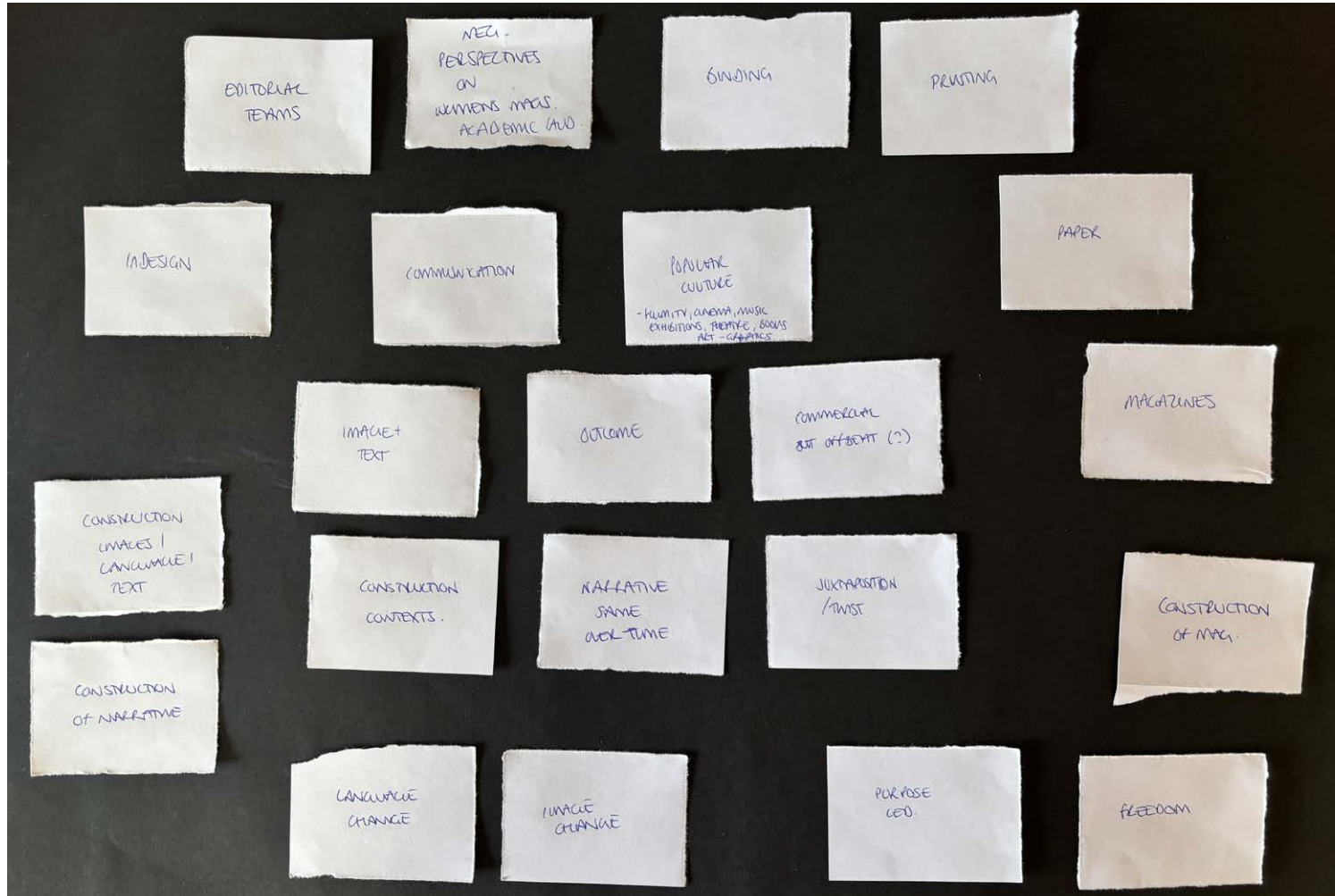
UNIT 3: STUDIO 4
PROJECTIONS²

- Focus on the outcome to help focus project.
- One outcome, or two outcomes, that inform each other?
- I'm looking at graphic structures and content structures.
- I'm looking to **reveal** what the magazine is really saying.
- Two sides of the same thing? Hypocrisy within?
- Magazines are stuck in their own context - what has changed over time - language and imagery, **what hasn't shifted over time** - objectification / simplification of women?
- Language of magazine is coded. Feminist zines of 70s and 80s disrupt it, disrupt images through collage, disrupt fonts.
- What do magazines communicate that books don't? Familiars series, Heart of Darkness, a 19th century story told through a magazine format (based on Vogue) making it here and now.
- Use a clear aesthetic to do something else.
- This is what it looks like it's doing - but this is what it's doing.
- Decide what I see as value and meaning.
- What is it communicating and how do I feel about that?
- Possible approach to outcome - use the magazine as a format of sequence. Starts of as expected but disintegrates as you go through, deconstructs, falls apart, changes the structure, images of billboards etc.
- Familiars process for Four Corners - agreed certain amount had to be recognisable: It had to be readable, had to be what you expect of a novel, no art on cover, artist used to create it as an illustrated novel, push against own rules.
- Use frameworks within as advantages. Physical space, where are magazines found, distributed, encountered, seen. How can what I do work in those spaces? Format recognised there, but in **disguise...**

XY Studio: Labour³

Reading Practice

UNIT 3: STUDIO 4
PROJECTIONS²



Our XY Studio was with Billie Muraben on reading practice.

Through creating solar system diagrams we plotted our work, skills, strengths, values and position within graphic design.

This enabled me to reconnect with my values and reassess my project. I created a solar system diagram for my project to explore myself more.

Four Corners Books/XY Studio

Reflection

UNIT 3: STUDIO 4
PROJECTIONS²

Reflections:

- Throughout all Units I found layers of contexts, often conflicting and/or reinforcing, that construct a reading that goes unquestioned and creates a discursive reality.
- Return to my original reason for exploring magazines: I'm interested in the mass ideologies news stand magazines perpetuate/create/iterate.
- Why?
Because I love magazines as a form and format, dip-in-able, entertaining, interesting, images and text together, light.
- What is the essence for me?
Occasionally find a really good bit and just think why can't it all be this good. A good bit is something that is resonant, intelligent, accessible, light, entertaining, but with value and meaning, portrays women as credible, interesting, alive, humorous, connection, kind and respectful, but is also can be irreverant and relevant.

XY Studio:

- I love commercial, but hate commercialisation.
- I love juxtaposition to provoke thought in a light and amusing way.
- I like to communicate to the mass with an alternative perspective/view/way of seeing, in a way that they connect with.
- I am a feminist, but I hesitate to say it as I am not a well read, serious, academic feminist, I believe in women's rights, am eternally grateful for those who fought for the privilege I have, but am aware the term turns off the very people who should listen.
- I like familiar with enough unfamiliar to challenge, in simple yet effective ways.
- Same is boring, homogenous is dull, stifling and regressive. We don't look beyond the surface.
- People say what they stand for with words, but their actions don't embody it.

Development: Billboard

UNIT 3: STUDIO 4
PROJECTIONS²

The billboard as a physical site is at a busy train station. Lots of everyday people pass it, everyday. It is public to view, but on private property. Someone owns it. You need permission to use it. Money is exchanged. Money is made. Its existence is layers of financial gain for multiple people with an aim to create financial gain to multiple people. What appears on it, could be argued, would be surplus and unnecessary to any person's life.

It's been left to rot. What was once the epitome of advertising (connotations of new, shiny, desirable, materialism, commodification, commerciality, capitalism, the latest, newest, most up to date, modern way of communicating). Next to it is a newer shiner version. The recursive nature of technology, use and disuse, immediacy and fuck the consequences. It's made of wood, a deteriorating material. It changes over time, it 'warps', or is it a shape shifter? Always changing with the environment. It's not flat, shiny, new, reflective. Not now. Not in fashion, but once was. Weeds grow in and around it, nature reclaiming its territory. Reasserting the natural order? Nature fighting to be seen and heard. "Life, uh, finds its way" as Dr. Ian Malcolm said

in Jurassic Park, which I have always misremembered as 'nature finds a way'.

It's beauty exposed in not being covered. Its natural surface lined, rough, textured, traces of rusty tears, yet beautiful. Time etched on and in it. Stories, experiences, a life lived. Like a face of wrinkles and a body of scars...

Trains, navigated by time. Time waiting, time in transition, a journey, physically taking you from one place to another.

Magazines were once bought at train stations for 'the journey'. Sold at newsagents, in multiples, read on trains, discarded on platforms, crunched up in toilets, re-read by others, put in the bin. Ephemeral, passing, in transition, aesthetically of time, frequency of time. An internal journey, taking you to far flung places, aspirational parties with famous friends. Through this vehicle a feeling of belonging, being part of something, whilst simultaneously excluded. How you could look, how you should look. It's not real, but it is a reality. A

Development: Billboard

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PROJECTIONS²

transient reality in a transient physicality.

The page, saturated with ink, colour, technicolour, flawless faces, expensive things, that could all be yours, if you participate. Consume. It becomes a reality. A facade. Visually, textually, contextually. It talks your language, or the language you should talk should you be part of this set. An exterior, suffocating, overwhelming, intoxicating, ridiculous, exciting, different, but the same.

The ink itself, a physical varnish, a gloss, a covering. What lies beneath? Paper. From trees. Natural, plain, versatile, tactile, textured, a chameleon. Nature disguised as capitalism. The beauty of paper, it's depth, dimples, creases, crevices, disintegration with use, fragile, strong, it's curly corners, it's inconsistency, it deterioration over time, it's preservation over time. The root. Nature finds a way.

Paper connects to wood, paper covers the wood, ink covers the paper, people see the surface. The surface leaves no room for depth, to see beyond, to show it's true nature. What does it matter if it's only

passing...? The recursive nature of paper.

The recursive nature of capitalism. The forests grown, trees cut down and sold to paper manufactures, pulped and processed, packaging and distribution to printers, the reams, fed in, processed, spat out, cut, trimmed, packaged, delivered, put on display, packaged, delivered, sold and bought, used as status, an accessory, an artefact, discarded rubbish, recycled back into paper, to go through the same process again. Money, money, money.

The recursive nature of content. Made for women by women, feminism comes and goes, is it in fashion or not, never really. Quietly laced deep in the body copy, the smallest and densest text. Mixed in amongst celebrity, luxury, fashion and patriarchy. It's context devouring it's value, meaning and impact. The same story over and over again, from 1913 to 2025. What's actually changed, other than it remains in the periphery, on the edges, popping up when in fashion, sidelined when it's not. Whose story are women really telling? Mr Conde Nast(y) himself?

Billboard

UNIT 3: STUDIO 4 PROJECTIONS²



Method: Time and Decay.

Reference: Discussion with Four Corners Books on materiality of a magazine and what a magazine, or a context, stands for and represents in telling the story of the content.

Process: I printed out a series of features from Vogue that emerged from the keyword search of 'feminism' to explore feminism in Vogue over 132 years. I ripped out the most interesting parts that gave a varied and diverse perspective on feminism from time, women, men and diversity within the movement.

Findings: Some decades had no features including the words feminism at all, some had lots. The 1990s had the most at 107 and the 1900s had the least with 0. I found a variety of perspectives on feminism within Vogue over the years. Some sounded dated, some were as relevant today as they were a long time ago.

Reflections: I didn't execute this method well, it looks awful. I wanted the texts to be legible, but in doing so it looks like a child's collage, not a discarded billboard. But I did love the material qualities of the billboard and how it made me think about the material qualities of paper and of a magazine as a vehicle to communicate rather than to deconstruct. Uncomfortably I also find this too feminist. What is this feeling and why do I feel this?

Development: I would love to create this in real life in a better way. Seeing it at this size would offer many more insights and feelings toward the content. How can I better try to achieve this?

[illegible]



Method: Time and Decay.

Process: I placed the layout of layers on the billboard and created a texture to remove parts to look like it had been left to rot, been peeled off, forgotten about.

Findings: This worked better. Seeing more of the old billboard helped, the content felt less oppressive and less like a rant. Being less precious about what was left helped. I did this quickly and could spend much longer on it making it more decaying.

Reflections: I like that the luxury environment of Vogue has been juxtaposed into a delapidated context and been left to rot, decompose, disintegrate. Highlighting the fragility of paper, the limited life span of it, both reflecting the context of the fashion world and fashion as well as the medium, a magazine. It's clear its from a magazine. I need more context of Vogue though, the footer on some pages say VOGUE and gives the date. If I can incorporate that more it places the snippets within the context of Vogue, that is required to communicate clearly with the audience.

Development: I like this context and idea, but I am not sure the content is right. I am also not sure I have the skills to execute this well. I would also want to actually make it life size and put it up but the board is over a working railway line! I could then graffiti 'Feminism' over the top as if someone was accusing it of being feminist to articulate the backlash feminists feel, but also to articulate another persons perspective.

Development: Pandora's Box

UNIT 3: STUDIO 4
PROJECTIONS²

Developing the idea of revealing the constructs and contexts of Vogue through unwrapping.

The idea of wrapping infers you are giving a gift.

Unwrapping reveals what is inside. Reveal the pages placed together by category to visually expose the amount of each type of content in one block. The size of the wrapping reflecting the size of that type of content. It's awkward to open, revealing the expected functionality of what looks like a magazine. The back is watermarked with what the content is really saying. Watermarks are a visual sign of ownership, authority - wider systems that govern the 'gift'.

Each layer is tied in watermarked ribbons that you have to physically remove making the invisible structure and systems tangible. You have to remove them to get inside, you have to interact with them. Untangling the invisible structures.

In pass the parcel each layer makes the whole smaller, a physical infestation of the size of content in one issue of Vogue. The smallest

part is at the centre, the smallest part also the best part - the prize. The prize is small. Size doesn't matter? But quantity here is the focus?

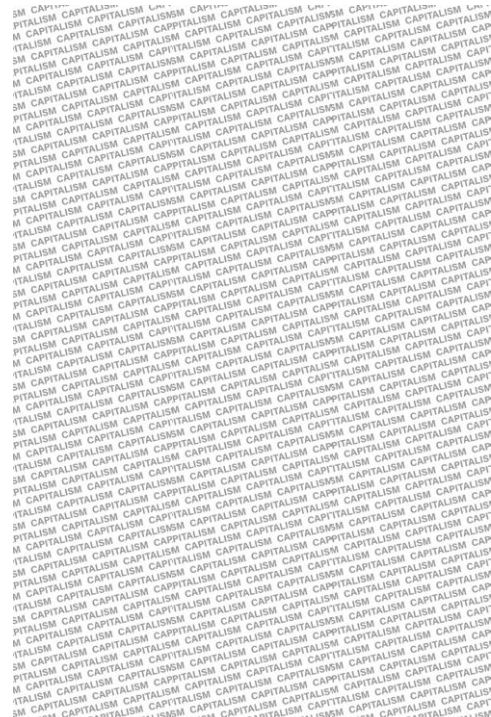
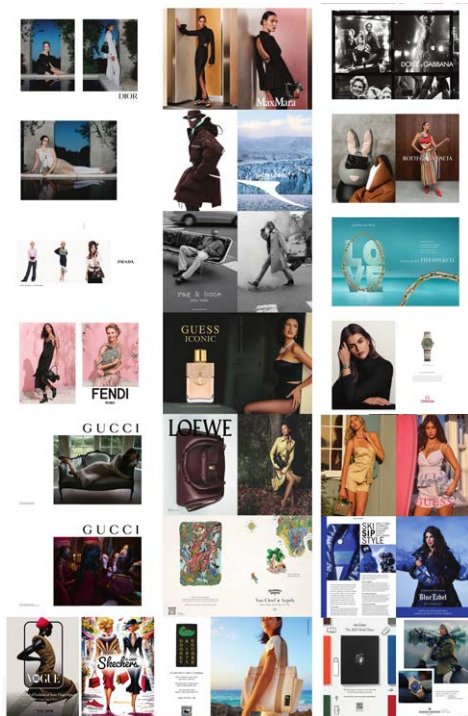
Physically shows what you have to wade through, untangle and demistify to get to the good bit. Physically exposes the assumed format and form of a magazine, how its form normalises its content and forms a discursive reality.

Patriarchy a problem, categorising a bit of a problem, printing a problem.

Could I put a provocative quote in each layer? Functionally, this will get lost or the order would get muddled over time.

Pandora's Box

UNIT 3: STUDIO 4 PROJECTIONS²



Method: Pandora's Box.

Reference: Discussion with Four Corners Books on revealing layers of contexts.

Process: I wanted to print large sheets of 8 by 8 pages as magazines are printed at the root on these sized sheets then folded and trimmed to its form. I then wanted to fold it as wrapping paper around each layer with the watermark on the upside so that is what you saw first.

Planning: Initial planning of the layers showing scale of content and categories. The ribbon is ribbon you can personalise which I can order and tie each layer up with.

Pandora's Box

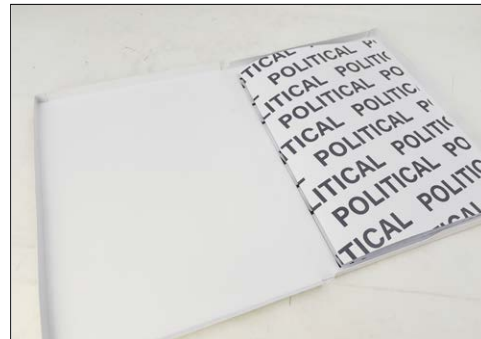
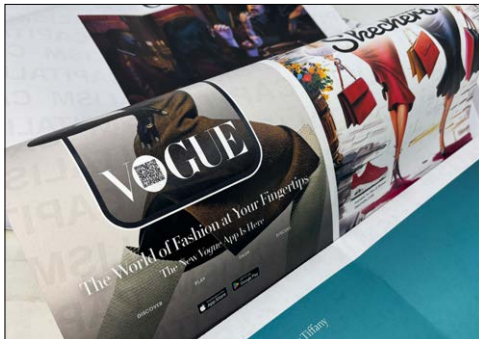
UNIT 3: STUDIO 4 PROJECTIONS²



Method: Pandora's Box.

Reference: Discussion with Four Corners Books on revealing layers of contexts.

Process: I spoke to digital print about printing large sheets double sided but to get the length the width was compromised as there are limited ways to print double sided in these formats. So I redesigned the Capitalism layer to work with the printer. I made a box the same dimensions as Vogue to place it in and put it on the shelf in the library with other Vogues and other magazines so it was hidden in plain sight.



Findings: The physical nature and the difficulty of the size drew attention to what is expected of a magazine. The volume of adverts all together exposed the amount of adverts and their overwhelming visual dominance, through quantity and imagery. The box looked like a magazine on the shelf so was disguised well, with a surprise when you opened it.

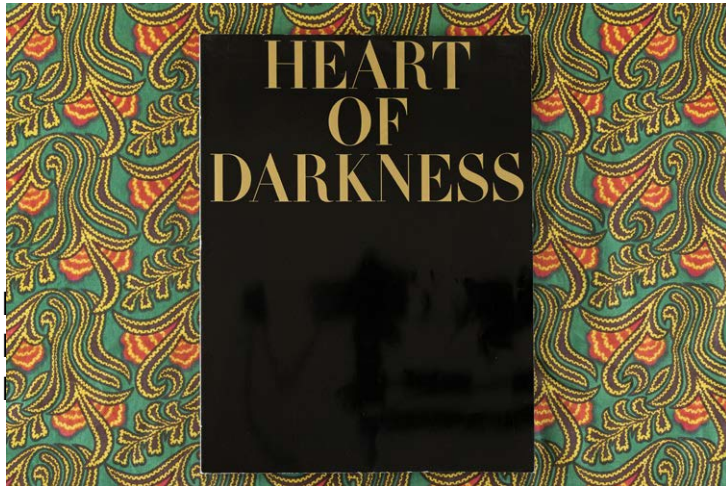
Reflections: I like the physical challenge of this method, but not being able to print it exactly as I wanted let it down a bit. If I used ribbons to tie each layer it would be too thick and bulky to fit in the box so that is not practical. Categorising the content was difficult as many pages were more than one category. It is difficult to print double sided at large scale with the resources I have. I really didn't want to tab it as that ruins the illusion.

Development: I don't think this method is one to develop, it is too literal, not precise enough in its execution and the categorising doesn't stand up. But I liked it disguise element.



Four Corners Books: Heart of Darkness

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PROJECTIONS²



The Heart of Darkness is one book in the Familiars series by Four Corners Books.

A novel from 1899, Heart of Darkness, is set in the Congo and is a story of trade, corruption, and our own conflicts and desires. The text is placed in the context of a glossy magazine. It uses images taken by a conflict photographer who worked in the Congo, who was commissioned to take images in the City of London of "its streets and trading floors, its costume and surrounding strip-clubs" which are used to illustrate the magazine and the stories trade, corruption, conflicts and desires.



A simple and effective use of juxtaposition in an accomplished way.

Development: Familiar/Unfamiliar

UNIT 3: STUDIO 4
PROJECTIONS²

What I love about Four Corners Books Familiars series is the simplicity, beauty of the object and effectiveness of the communication.

Having deconstructed magazines, found conflicts of exterior and interior; conflicts of language to say one thing, but contexts saying another; of images and texts reinforcing commercialised narratives; all combined to create a natural, normal reading of a context that is laden with pre-defined contexts.

Stories from 132 years that haven't changed over time, only the language, imagery and focus has. How can I communicate this in a simple, effective and positive way, that has meaning?

My strengths lie in magazine design, and I can create a convincing magazine in form and production. I have been exploring contexts, social construction and formal properties of magazine design, but keep getting pulled into language and female representation and feminism.

I am uncomfortable with feminism, so I avoid it. Why? I am not well read on feminism, the word alienates the very people who should be engaging with it, I am not a hard core feminist who hates men and protests about inequalities. But I do care, I am totally for women's rights and we have not reached equality. I am indebted to the women who came before me who fought for my privilege to work and to vote. I was moved to tears by the Votes for Women sash I saw at Bishopsgate Archive. I feel strongly about capitalism, commercialism, commodification and the affects this has on women. But I am not good at debating or being loud. I find it contrary.

I find magazines contrary. I grew up on a diet of magazines and was a 90s ladette. I worked hard and partied hard. I kept up with the boys, or I thought I did. I was one of them, or thought I was. It was the 90s, everything was irreverent, popular culture was rife, life was for living, pushing boundaries and being alive. Magazines had a boom in the 90s. Magazines are contrary. The language (my first three experiments), the imagery (commodified by price tags and designer labels), the contexts (human values distorted by contexts of

Development: Familiar/Unfamiliar

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celebrity or the upper classes), the object itself (read, of the moment and discarded is also a time capsule and archive), the material (from nature put through and man made process), printing (a saturation of the natural surface in ink, a varnish, gloss, facade placed on top of something natural, from nature, suffocating it, overwhelming it, a reflection of fashion and the commercialised content in Vogue).

What if that pivotal moment in 1930s where Vogue made a conscious decision to make fashion more visible in the magazine, decided to make women more visible in the magazine. If they had sidelined fashion and upped the varied content on economics, politics and enlightening articles on making the invisible barriers to women visible. What would Vogue look like now?

But these words are not of magazine culture, they are not light, entertaining, provocative, exciting. But have we tired of this format. Print magazines are in decline. Women are disenchanted with women's magazines being the same and regurgitating the same content. I have bought many magazines, they all have a beauty

section, I have read two articles on beauty in my life. One was on mascara and one was on natural products. The rest I never read, but I liked the pictures. Contrary.

I have read so many interesting things on this course, and I have had greater conversations with my friends since being on this course. They ask how it is. I say great. They ask what I'm doing. I tell them a snippet of our current topic. We have a great conversation that is insightful, deep, airs frustrations, we learn from each other, we leave more informed, wider and fuller. Why can't magazines do this? Maybe then women would read them again.

But feminism feels so serious. Does it have to be serious? Feminism to me is women sharing stories that are entertaining, interesting, tell me something new, without preaching or postulating. Like the Ted Talk I watched recently on The Danger of the Single Story. Like bell hooks Quilting. Stories with hearts and souls. Stories that engage. Stories that share knowledge that we can all learn from and be better. Stories that make us feel fulfilled.

Familiar/Unfamiliar

UNIT 3: STUDIO 4
PROJECTIONS²

The Danger of the Single Story

So that is how to create a single story, show a people as one thing, as only one thing, over and over again, and that is what they become.

By Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie



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I

I'm a storyteller. And I would like to tell you a few personal stories about what I like to call 'The Danger of the single story.'

I grew up on an university campus in western Nigeria. My mother says that I started reading at the age of four, although I think I was probably closer to the truth. So I was an early reader, and what I read were British and American children's books.

I was also an early writer, and when I began to write, it was about the age of seven, stories in pencil with crayon illustrations that my poor mother was obliged to read. I wrote exactly the kinds of stories I was reading. All my characters were white and blue-eyed, they played in the snow, they ate apples, and they talked a lot about the weather. Now I think it was that she was had come out.

Now, this despite the fact that I lived in Nigeria, I had never been outside Nigeria. We didn't have snow, we ate oranges, and we never talked about the weather, because there was no need to.

My characters also drank a lot of ginger beer, because the character in the British books I read drank ginger beer. I have noted that I had no idea what ginger beer was until years afterwards. I would have a ginger drink to pass ginger beer. But that is another story.

What the documents, I think, is how imprudent and vulnerable we are in the face of a story, particularly as children. Because all I had read were books in which characters were foreign, I had become convinced that books by these very writers had no foreigners in them and had to be about things with which I could not personally identify.

Now, things changed when I did around thirteen years. Then writers wrote's tales as they to find as the like Chinua Achebe and Cyprian Ekwensi. I went through a mental shift in my perception of literature. I realized that people like me, girls with skin the color of chocolate, whom kids had called out from playgrounds, could also write in literature. I started to write about things I recognized.

Now, I loved those Americans and British books I read. They stirred my imagination. They opened up new worlds for me. But the unintended consequence was that I did not know that people like me could exist in literature. So when the discovery of African writers did for me was that I had found where I had belonged.

I come from a conventional, middle-class Nigerian family. My father was a politician. My mother was a housewife. And as we had, so was the norm. But in domestic life, what would often come from nearby rural villages. So, the year I turned eight, we got a new house boy. His name was Fide. The only thing my mother told us about him was that his family was very poor. My mother sent papers and this, and our old clothes, to his family. And when I didn't finish my dinner, my mother would say, "Finish your food! Don't you know? People like Fide don't eat nothing." So I felt extremely pity for Fide's family.

Then one Saturday, we went to his village to visit, and his mother showed us a beautifully patterned basket made of dried raffia that his brother had made. I was amazed. It had not occurred to me that anybody in the family could actually make something. All I had heard about them was how poor they were, so that it had become impossible for me to see them as anything but her poor.

That journey was my single story of them.

Years later, I thought about this when I left Nigeria to go to university in the United States. I was 19. My American roommate was shocked by the color of her skin. I had learned to speak English so well, and was considered where I had that Nigeria happened to have English as an official language. She said it was the only time to what she called my "black magic," and was consequently very disappointed when I presented my paper of them.

NOTE:
A novel that recently translated, in the greater than a million, many stories in it, we really discussed on pages.



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Method: Familiar/Unfamiliar.

Process: I copied the transcript of the TED Talk, The Danger of the Single Story by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and resourced images of her that had a Vogue like aesthetic, that were not sexualised or derogatory and laid out the talk as a feature.

Findings: The text is spoken. This gives an immediacy and relatable texture to it. It also removes it from being a Vogue interview. Adichie's voice comes through the words, challenging how Vogue articles are written with an authors bias, their own voice (and Vogue's voice) being louder than the one speaking.

Reflections: Interviews are contrary. A one way 'conversation'. Are magazines a one way communication? Interviewees in the public eye are cautious these days, wise to the interviewers techniques and bias. Why can't we just have conversations. Everyone has a story to tell. Everyone is valid to tell their story. The New York Times has an audio version of their big interviews which are refreshing. It is a conversation about things that matter to the interviewee or interviewer. So much more value is in these interviews hearing it from their voice as a conversation than a one way interview taking place to promote a specific commercialised product.

Development: I could find articles, talks, other media that tell brilliant stories by brilliant women. They don't need to say 'I am a feminist'. They work as embodiments of the values they stand for. Similar to how knowledge is passed down in indigenous peoples. Engaging and simple, with depth and connection. Can I get public contributions to make the editing process more diverse and participatory?

THE WITCH

VOGUE/OCTOBER/1982

EVERYTHING MEN FEAR ABOUT THEMSELVES. ABOUT WOMEN - AND WOMEN FEAR BY ERICA JONG.

The Bettmann Archive "Like all primal symbols, the witch partakes of a terrifying duality-in some fairy tales she is young and alluring; in others, hag-like and old. These are the two faces of Mother as children see her."

"Nature has given women so much power that the law wisely gives her little," said Samuel Johnson, unconsciously summing up the male fear of women that has led the female sex to be denounced, despised, and legally disabled throughout the centuries. The witch is an emblem of this disabling of women, the visible symbol of men's fear of what women know, their fear of women's reproductive power, psychic gifts, and their connection with the dark side of the unconscious.

If one views the human race with the detachment of a Martian or Venutian, one wonders whether it was inevitable that the sex that bears the race's young be viewed in this manner. Probably not. If we are guided by logic, there is every reason to believe that women should have been honored for their reproductive powers rather than denounced. In fact, we find much evidence to prove that a much more positive vire of the female prevailed in earlier historical periods. But as men began to seek hegemony over women's reproduction, and to require that the babies born to them belong to them, and be given their names, women's power came to be viewed as dangerous, and women's sexuality as the snare that led the human race into sin.

The witch is our main symbol of the denigration of women that pervades our culture. And the witch is a powerful symbol because she enshrines so many archetypes at once. She expresses the fear of women's youth and ripe sexuality as well as the fear of women's old age. She represents female freedom, female power, female sexuality; but her torture and burning also represent the fierce retribution that women fear will follow immediately upon their exercise of freedom, power, and sexuality. She represents male fantasies of unbridled female passion, but she also represents the ferocious punishment women have generally endured for that passion. In a word where both sexes are taught to fear and despise women's autonomy and assertion, the witch becomes a perfect symbol of female crime and punishment—a symbol that is equally potent for women and men.

When we think of the witch, we usually think of the old crone in "Hansel and Gretel": woman as ancient harridan, her sexual magic having festered into spite, her beauty having corroded into wens, warts, and wrinkles. Children love this old witch—who, according to psychologist Bruno Bettelheim, represents the mother who threatens to devour her children. It seems comforting to the young child to have her inmost fears and fantasies embodied in a specific figure. Like the hags of fairy tales, the witch partakes of a terrifying duality—in some fairy tales she is young and alluring (the queen in "Sleeping Beauty") and in others hag-like and terrifying (the witch in "Hansel and Gretel"). These are the two faces of Mother as all children see her.

The history of witchcraft is similarly ambivalent where witches are concerned.

"WOMEN HAVE BEEN BURNED AS WITCHES SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY WERE BEAUTIFUL,"

Simone de Beauvoir

in *The Second Sex*; and indeed, the era of the witch hunts (the so-called witch-craze of the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries) shows us many women burned for no other reason than that they were young and sexually attractive, therefore "bewitching" to men. Other women were burned for being ugly-looking. Others for having the insufferable presumption to be healers. Others simply because they were midwives and dared to take such processes as birth (and abortion) into their own hands.

There has always been a faint suspicion clinging to the midwife, perhaps because she was privy to the mysteries of birth and death. In a world of a world where all things female and feminine came under jaundiced scrutiny, birth and the processes associated with it were seen as suspect. The reversal of the view of the female deity - from whom the witch is clearly descended - that prevailed in the pre-Christian era. There, women's life and healing gifts, were seen as magical in a positive rather than a negative way. For, if we trace the ancestry of the witch back to its roots, it is debased and deformed descendent of the Mother Goddess in the Near East—Isis-Astarte-Ishtar-Inanna-Aphrodite—who was originally mother and lover, the very Queen of Heaven, the major deity in the polytheistic pantheon.

We do not know exactly when this powerful matriarchal figure succumbed to the domination of a male god. But we do know that there was an era when the Queen of Heaven was accompanied by a male consort, a sort of Adonis-figure, and that he gradually came to usurp her powers while she remained the Goddess of Love. Since religion always reflects social structures, we may assume that this transformation mirrored the transformation of society from matriarchal to patriarchal. Yet even under patriarchy, people felt great nostalgia for the myth of the Mother-Goddess—an inevitable nostalgia, since we are creatures who choose to denigrate the powerful Mother or revere her, we cannot be free of the notion of female power even if society dictates that we should be politically in control. The powerful Mother is enshrined in the human unconscious. We may choose to see her as good witch in one historical period, but the underlying assumption of woman's power cannot be changed (until perhaps Huxley's *Brave New World* dawns and we are all *Hatchery, sans mother, sans uterine, sans umbilicus, sans blood*).



Method: Familiar/Unfamiliar.

Process: I took The Witch feature and created a text only version inspired by Fluxest and Victorian Posters. I used Basalte, from the female font foundry. The intention was to create a large scale sheet, this is based on the failed Pandora's Box dimensions, but ideally it would be an 8x8 page sheet that magazines print on before being trimmed. I purposely put the date prominently in the middle to contextualise the context that is completely lost in this environment. The idea is that its awkward to handle but can also be folded to magazine size.

I wanted to put it on Instagram too, using the image grid to recreate the text to subvert the tool.

Findings: I only made up one article but I loved how by splitting the standfirst it created multiple ways to read it, that all made sense and had different meanings or interpretations. I left the pull quote exactly where it lies in the text and made it bigger in place to challenge the role of pull quotes in magazine design.

Reflections: It starts to look a bit like a newspaper which isn't the intention and I have to ask myself why this would be the right aesthetic for the communication. The Instagram part needs much more thought and experimentation. I like the concept though.

Development: I will return to the Instagram idea in the future and do some iterating.

In discussing the project this week the notions of regurgitating old Vogue articles and looking at alternative Vogue content emerged.

I felt I had to take one line to create an output but my tutor challenged me to think about if I could take more than one line and proposed past, present and future, which has been a recurring underlying theme in my work and one that resonates with me.

The past as a reflection on the present, the past being relevant to the present, the past being more honest than the present. The present being what a magazine is, but also isn't. The future of magazines is uncertain, declining readerships, fragmentation of content online, attention spans, materiality.

How can contrary articulate/challenge/expose the homogeneous view of women in Vogue?

My enquiry is shifting slightly.

I have been deconstructing to disrupt and expose formulaic magazine design to comment on the discursive nature of reality constructed in magazines.

Challenged by Four Corners Books, by asking myself deeper questions about my work and having a conversation with my husband about my work to date, my conflicting feelings about feminism and my work, have opened up a new theme of contrary. That on reflection is also a theme of the material, medium and form I am interrogating.

I started off exploring how design contributes to feminist ideologies in Vogue, which I wasn't ever really comfortable with.

I am still exploring how design in mainstream magazines, specifically Vogue, is it more how it contributes to the discursive nature of reality?

Process

UNIT 3: STUDIO 4
PROJECTIONS²

Through exploring scale and material new avenues of contrary have arisen, that reflect the more conceptual aspect of this project, the discursive nature of reality constructed in Vogue. One that is epitomised in luxury, class, celebrity and exclusivity.

I have been really struggling with the written aspect of this Unit. I have so many lines I could follow that every time I write it, it gets larger or changes course. My focus flits from one thing to another. I am finding it most contrary.

Reflecting on the written moments in my studio practice inspired by the materiality of the billboard and the challenge of exploiting the context of a magazine as communication, really is everything I am trying to say, in a stream of consciousness without explicit academic references, but many implicit ones.

I have contrary feelings towards academia. I have learnt on this course about dominating discourses of capitalism, colonisation, patriarchy, race, gender, political, economic and technology and how to challenge them, but I have to do this in a very strict reference led process that is systematic. I find this contrary. I am also not systematic. I am blurry and overlapping. This is very time consuming.

My essay should reflect my practice, so it should be accessible to all, so everyone can understand it whether in academia or not. It should be light, entertaining, but have a rigorous academic core. It should be comprehensive, but have heart and soul and a deeper meaning.

I am going to take my two streams of consciousness and try and work the academic references into them. Thinking of my tutors who will read it and mark it, my friends who are the target audience of Vogue and a public with no academic grounding or interest, my husband whom I want to engage and enjoy it and not alienate because he is a man.

When I think of this audience as the audience for my project I know I want to create something that is easily accessible, easy to understand, but that challenges their pre conceived idea to what the object is.

Through challenging magazines by scale and by exploring more deeply material, it has uncovered new avenues to progress the project. It has allowed me to connect with my confused position within this project and brought clarity to what I am interrogating.

Can I create a Vogue that looks, acts and communicates in all the formulaic and stereotypical ways I have been graphically deconstructing and use them to communicate the second story, the alternative narrative, hidden deep in the archive and deep in the texts and contexts of Vogue?

Using (abusing?) the form of Vogue, its glossy cover, its saturated pages, its surface appearance to attract an audience that when they read the issue are confronted with content that is jarring through language, surprising in content and relatable to in a more meaningful way. Challenging the perception of Vogue and the discursive nature of reality it projects?

Unit 3: Studio 4: Projections² End