

1.

Positions Through Iterating

This project explores how fashion magazines construct and circulate consumer desires through visual systems, and how physical intervention through weaving can reveal and disrupt these mechanisms. I investigate how advertising imagery, centred on bodies and luxury goods, is assembled into polished narratives that encourage consumption, and how interrupting the material structure of the magazine as a printed medium can resist the consumer system's extraction of desire. Drawing on critical perspectives on visual culture and consumer society, I intervene by weaving across the magazine's pages, creating physical barriers that slow reading, fragment images, and disturb the smooth visual logic of advertising. Through this method, I aim to shift the act of reading from passive observation – or passive reception of visual messages – to active engagement, encouraging viewers to notice the broader systems of desire and control that operate through visual symbols and sustain mass consumerism.

1. (from the reading list)

Benzon, P. (2016) 'On Publishing: Fugitive Materiality and the Future of the Anthropocene Book', in *Publishing as Artistic Practice*. Berlin: Sternberg Press, pp. 282–294.

'However, the infinite reproducibility and accessibility made possible by such an origin ultimately constitutes a kind of material null set, leading through the constraints of the project back to singularity, absence, and fugitivity.' (Benzon, 2021, p.289)

Benzon discusses how the ease of reproducing digital material can paradoxically lead to a sense of emptiness and disappearance, rather than permanence. This idea helps me think about my own intervention into a printed fashion magazine. Instead of treating the magazine as a finished, stable product, I weave across its pages to interrupt the way it is usually read and handled. In doing so, I am not trying to erase the magazine, but to change how it circulates and how it is experienced. My weaving slows down the normal act of looking and page-turning, making the reader more aware of the magazine's physical form and the images it carries. Benzon's reflection on fugitivity supports my aim of creating a different kind of encounter, where the magazine feels less like a disposable paper object and more like something uncertain, unstable, and open to re-interpretation.

2. (from the reading list)

Mitchell, W.J.T. (2005) 'What do pictures really want?', in *What Do Pictures Want: The Lives and Loves of Images*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 28–56

'These sorts of direct expressions of pictorial desire are, of course, generally associated with "vulgar" modes of imaging – commercial advertising, and political or religious propaganda. The picture as subaltern makes an appeal or issues a command whose precise effect and power emerge in an intersubjective encounter compounded of signs of positive desire and traces of lack or impotence.' (Mitchell, 2005, p. 39)

Mitchell points out that, especially in contexts such as advertising and propaganda, images often adopt a posture of "pleading" or "commanding", trying to attract and direct the viewer's attention. However, this influence is never absolute; it relies on the audience's response, where both desire and resistance are present. This has led me to reconsider the images in fashion magazines – product photographs, celebrity portraits, and advertisements – not simply as glamorous displays, but as subtle appeals. By weaving across magazine spreads, I deliberately disrupt this naturalised process of viewing. Through the act of obstructing the action of page-turning, I hope to make visible how these polished images are constantly "asking to be seen", and how the visual guidance we usually accept without question can in fact be resisted and critically interrupted.

3. (topic)

Kruger, B. (1989) *Untitled (Your Body is a Battleground)*. [Photomontage]

Available at: <https://www.thebroad.org/art/barbara-kruger/untitled-your-body-battleground>

(Accessed: 28 April 2025).



Kruger's intervention overlays a powerful textual statement onto a photographic image, directly interrupting the viewer's consumption of visual culture and exposing the polished surfaces of media imagery as sites of ideological struggle. Similarly, my weaving intervention into ELLE magazine acts as a material form of interruption, disrupting the smooth flow of glossy images that construct and promote idealised bodies and luxury products. Rather than allowing the pages to be turned easily and the visuals to be consumed passively, I create points of resistance across the magazine's spreads, slowing the reader's engagement and revealing the mechanics behind the construction of desire. In both cases, the act of disruption serves as a form of critical reminder, forcing viewers to confront the power structures embedded within the polished aesthetics of advertising. Kruger's strategy reinforces my project's aim of questioning how consumer culture produces and controls meaning through seductive imagery, and of encouraging a more critical, materially aware encounter with media that is usually designed to conceal its own ideological work.

4. (medium or method)

Roth, D. (1961) *Literaturwurst*. [Sculpture] Available at: <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/141853> (Accessed: 28 April 2025).



This work transforms printed materials into literal sausages, using physical alteration to undermine the perceived authority and permanence of books and newspapers. By mixing textual material with organic matter that is prone to decay, Roth makes the fragility and temporality of information tangible, not just metaphorical. This direct material change forces viewers to recognise that printed media are not sacred carriers of meaning, but objects that can break down, be consumed, or lose their original purpose. In my project, I also intervene physically in a printed object – a fashion magazine – by weaving across its pages and making it difficult to turn and read. Instead of encountering smooth, desirable images, the reader meets blockages, tangles, and unexpected connections between elements. Roth's work helps me see how changing the physical structure of a medium can interrupt its intended way of being used and reveal the assumptions behind it: that magazines are supposed to be easily consumed, quickly processed, and then forgotten. And my weaving similarly resists this logic, encouraging a slower, more critical engagement with the magazine as a physical and cultural object to be consumed.

5. (a critical position in context)

Baudrillard, J. (1998) 'Mass Media, Sex and Leisure', in *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures*. London: Sage Publications, pp.99–128.

'It is in the form that everything has changed: a neo-reality has everywhere been substituted for reality, a neo-reality entirely produced by combining elements of the code.' (Baudrillard, 1998, p.126)

The description of a 'neo-reality' produced by the combination of coded elements offers a critical perspective that strongly informs my project. Baudrillard highlights how reality is no longer experienced directly, but replaced by a system of signs that simulates and manipulates perceptions. In working with a fashion magazine, I encounter a visual world where products and bodies are not simply presented but manufactured as desirable realities through carefully structured images. By weaving across the magazine's pages, I aim to disrupt this seamless construction and reveal the artificiality behind it. Baudrillard's notion that it is now the form, rather than the substance, which defines reality – and that consumers increasingly consume not objects themselves but the signs and symbolic values attached to them – is crucial to my approach. My intervention interrupts the polished surfaces that invite easy consumption, encouraging viewers to recognise how visual culture manufactures desire through codes rather than material needs, and to encounter the magazine's materiality in a slower, more critical way.

6. (wild card)

Neto, E. (2009) Anthropodino. [Installation] Available at: <https://www.tanyabonakdargallery.com/exhibitions/228-ernesto-neto-anthropodino-park-avenue-armory/> (Accessed: 28 April 2025).



This project uses large-scale, hand-stitched textiles to create an immersive environment where visitors are invited to move through, touch, and experience the work physically. His approach shows how material interventions can alter spatial perception and slow down bodily movement, encouraging a deeper awareness of one's presence within a space. In my project, I similarly intervene in a printed medium by weaving across its pages and introducing moments of physical resistance. Rather than consuming images rapidly and effortlessly, the reader is slowed down, becoming more aware of the material nature of the magazine and the constructed flow of its content. Soft materials in Neto's work suggest flexibility and an openness to interaction, which resonates with the delicate but disruptive effect that weaving introduces into the magazine. Through these interruptions, the reading experience shifts from passive observation towards an active encounter with the magazine as a made and manipulated object.