

02 Positions Through Contextualising

week 1

1) Fashion magazine comparison

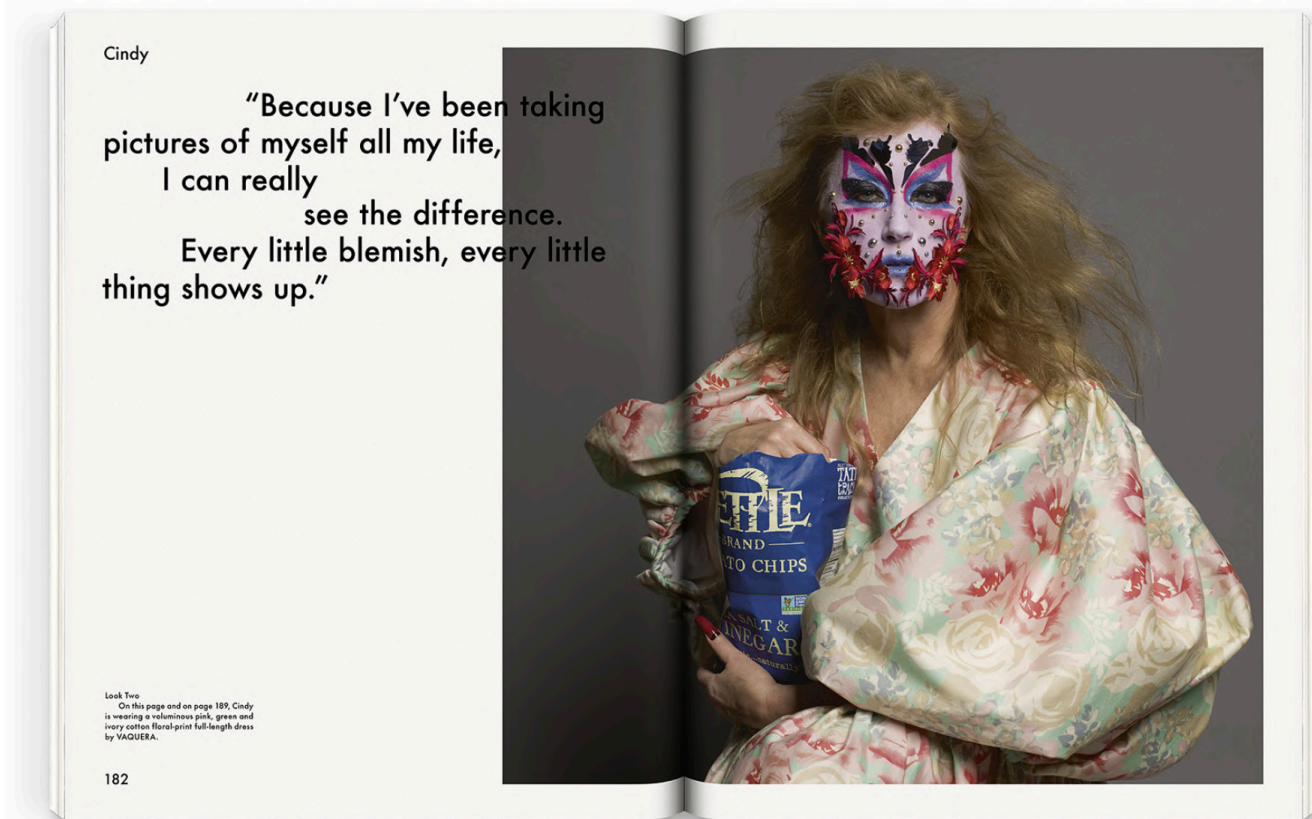


Mainstream fashion magazine

vs



Independent fashion magazines



In general, *Bazaar* tends to be bold, busy, and visually overwhelming – as if it’s trying to capture all of the reader’s attention.

The Gentlewoman feels much more mild visually, even though its content might be more rebellious or critical.

2) Background

‘When I talked to audiences about the epidemic of eating disorders, for instance, or about the dangers of silicone breast implants, I was often given a response straight out of Plato’s Symposium, the famous dialogue about eternal and unchanging ideals: something like, “Women have always suffered for beauty.” In short, it was not commonly understood at that time that ideals didn’t simply descend from heaven, that they actually came from somewhere and that they served a purpose. That purpose, as I would then explain, was often a financial one, namely to increase the profits of those advertisers whose ad dollars actually drove the media that, in turn, created the ideals. The ideal, I argued, also served a political end. The stronger women were becoming politically, the heavier the ideals of beauty would bear down upon them, mostly in order to distract their energy and undermine their progress.’ (Wolf, 2002, p. 3)

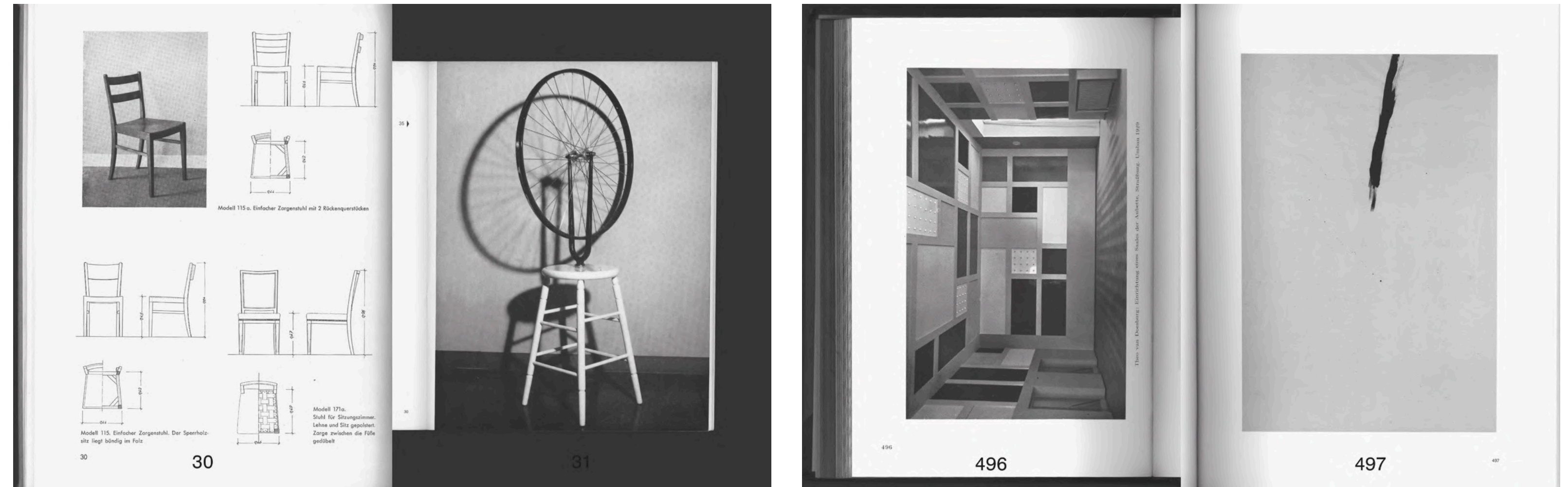
Wolf, N. (2002) ‘Introduction’, *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty Are Used Against Women*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, pp. 1–8.

These magazines, in effect, guide women to unconsciously follow the “rules” of consumerism which is created to benefit capitalism. This connects closely to Naomi Wolf’s argument in *The Beauty Myth*.

Wolf argues that beauty ideals are not natural or timeless – they’re constructed to serve commercial and political interests. As women become more empowered, these ideals intensify, working to distract and undermine them.

Using these 2 references above, a clearer theme has emerged for me: **the dual roles of “women as consumers” and “women as consumed” in the context of fashion magazines.**

3) The selected reference



In Order of Pages, 2013, by Veronika Spierenburg

In this project, the designer scanned 450 pages from various books in a library, based on her personal interest, and re-bound them into a new book. Each page kept its original page number, but the sequence completely disrupted the meaning and context of the originals. The result was a new kind of order – one that reflected personal experience, rather than institutional structure.

Inspired by that, I also wanted to bring unrelated or non-commercial content into a fashion magazine, to disrupt its original meaning and strip away the commodity properties of the images.

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4) Experiments – 4 Covering Strategies

Use plain text from later pages of the same magazine; cut into geometric shapes and placed in corresponding positions.



a. Internal Text:

Use plain text from later pages of the same magazine; cut into geometric shapes and placed in corresponding positions.



b. Male Media:

Use content from a men’s magazine, matching the same page number and position;
keep geometric form and preserve page numbers.



c. Book Text:

Use text from a book,
matching the same page
number and position;
keep geometric form and
preserve page numbers.

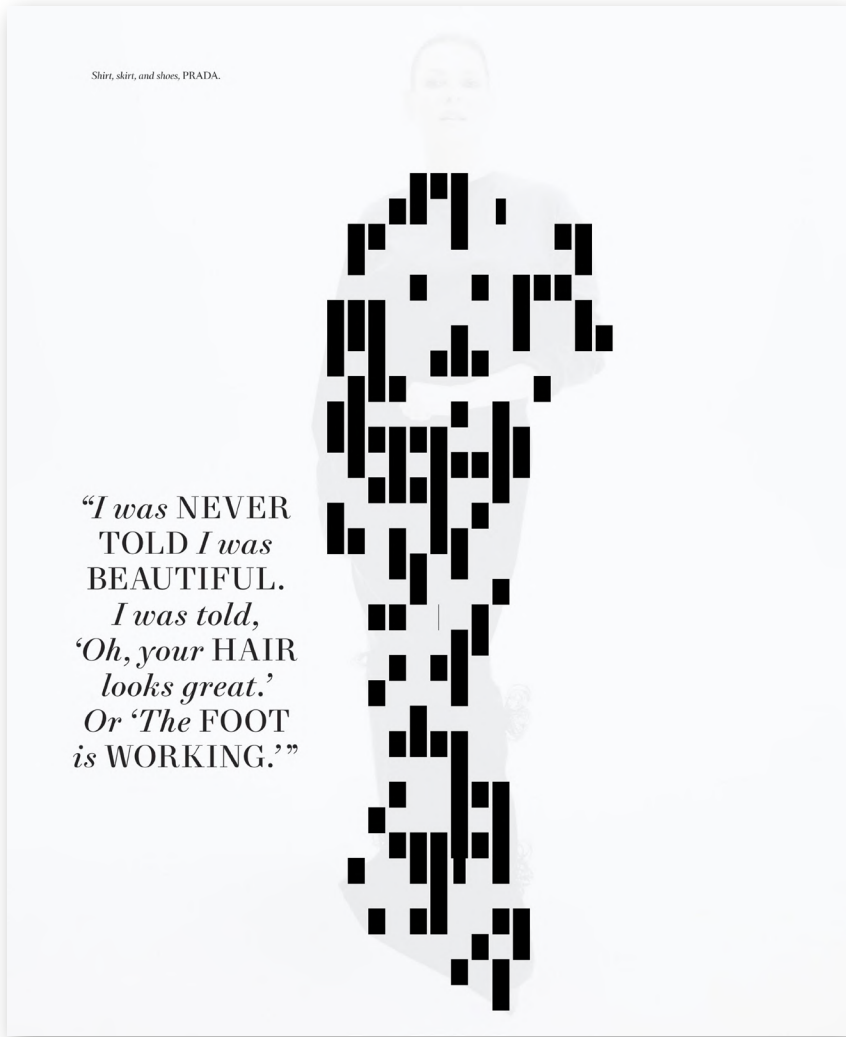
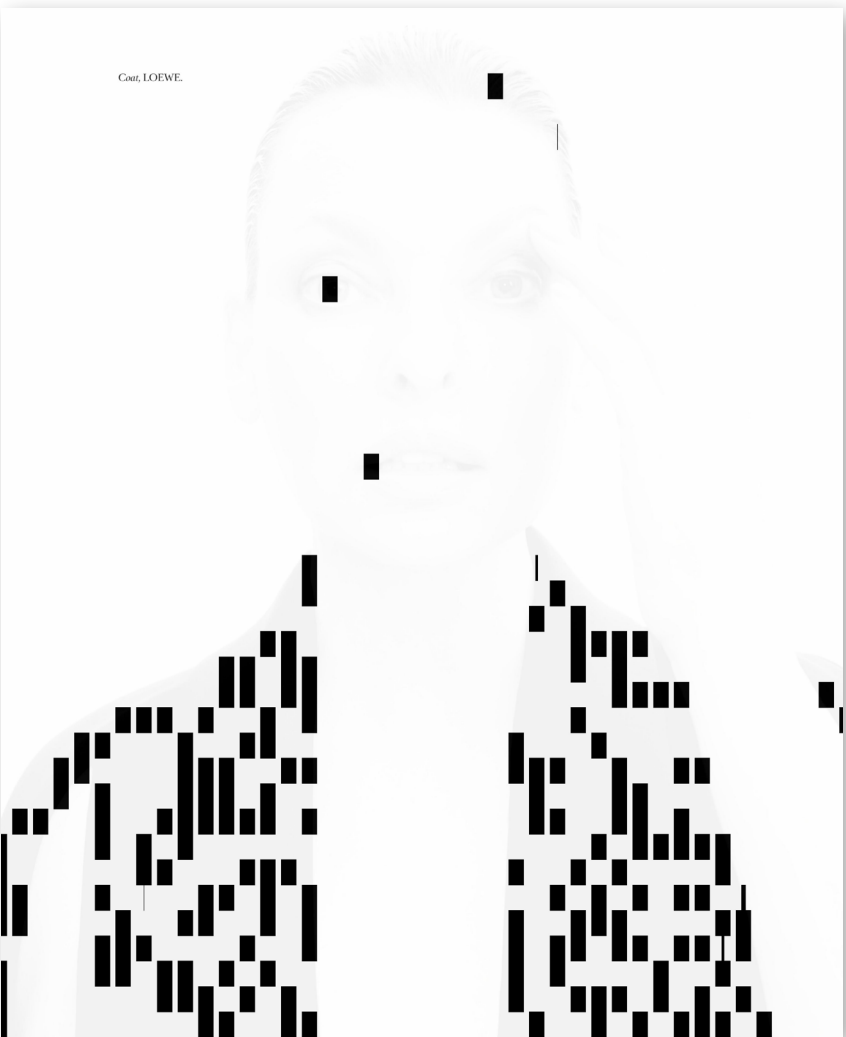
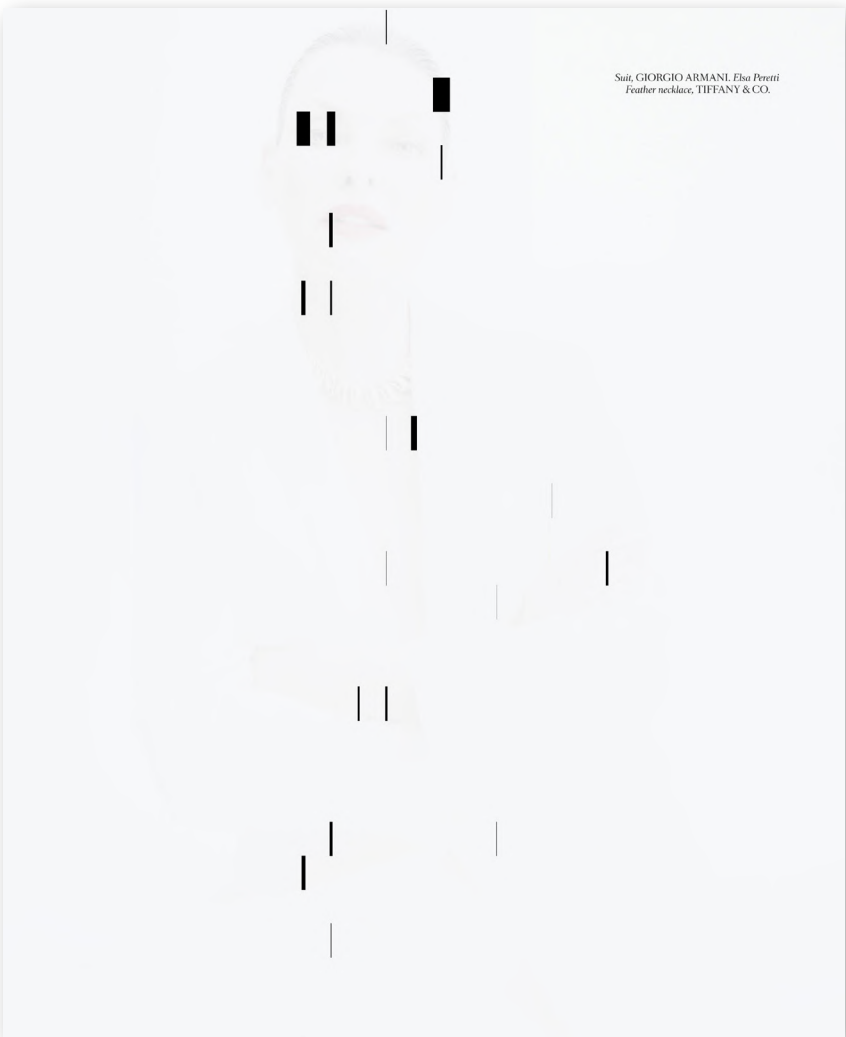
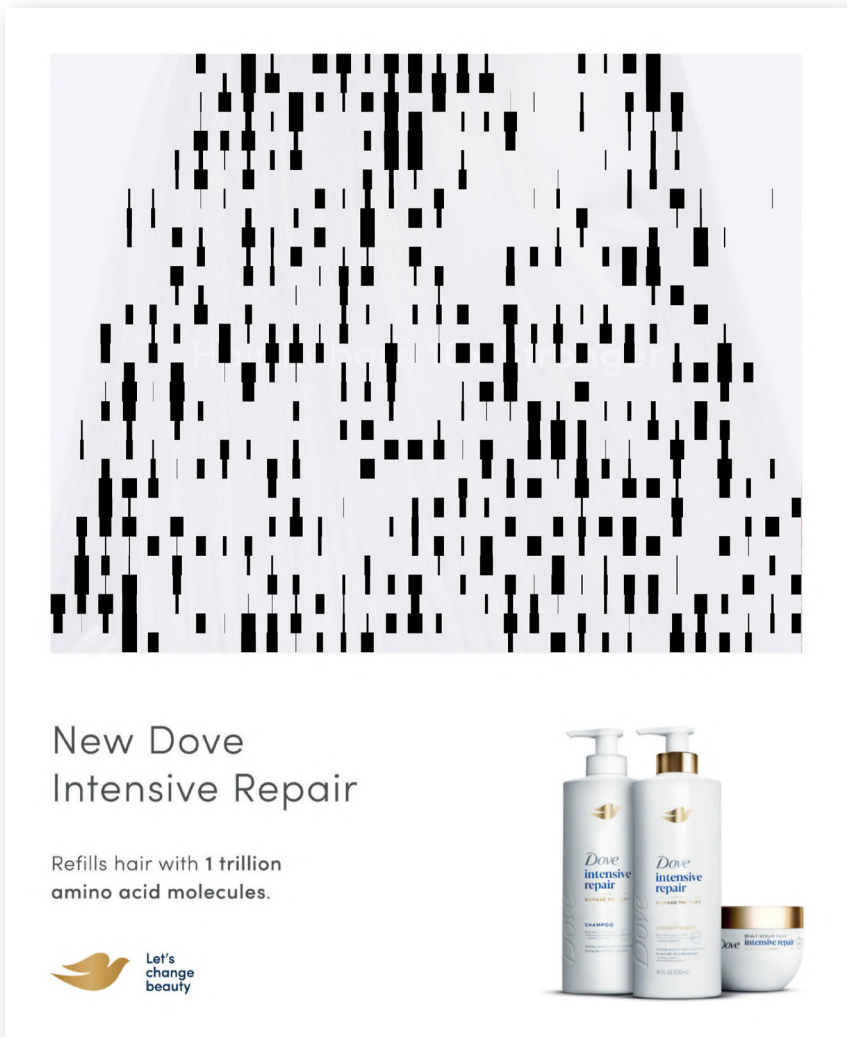


d. Binary Image:
Convert the image into a pattern of black squares based on light and dark areas, similar to binary coding.

questions:

a. The current experiment focuses on visual covering but doesn't yet fully reflect the critical ideas about "women as consumers" and "women as consumed".

b. In what ways can the act of covering be opened up – materially, conceptually, or spatially – to create a more dynamic and critical reading experience, rather than simply blocking visibility?



Across all genders, we are constantly tempted by different kinds of beautiful imagery in the media. However, two key reasons place women in a more vulnerable position under consumerism:

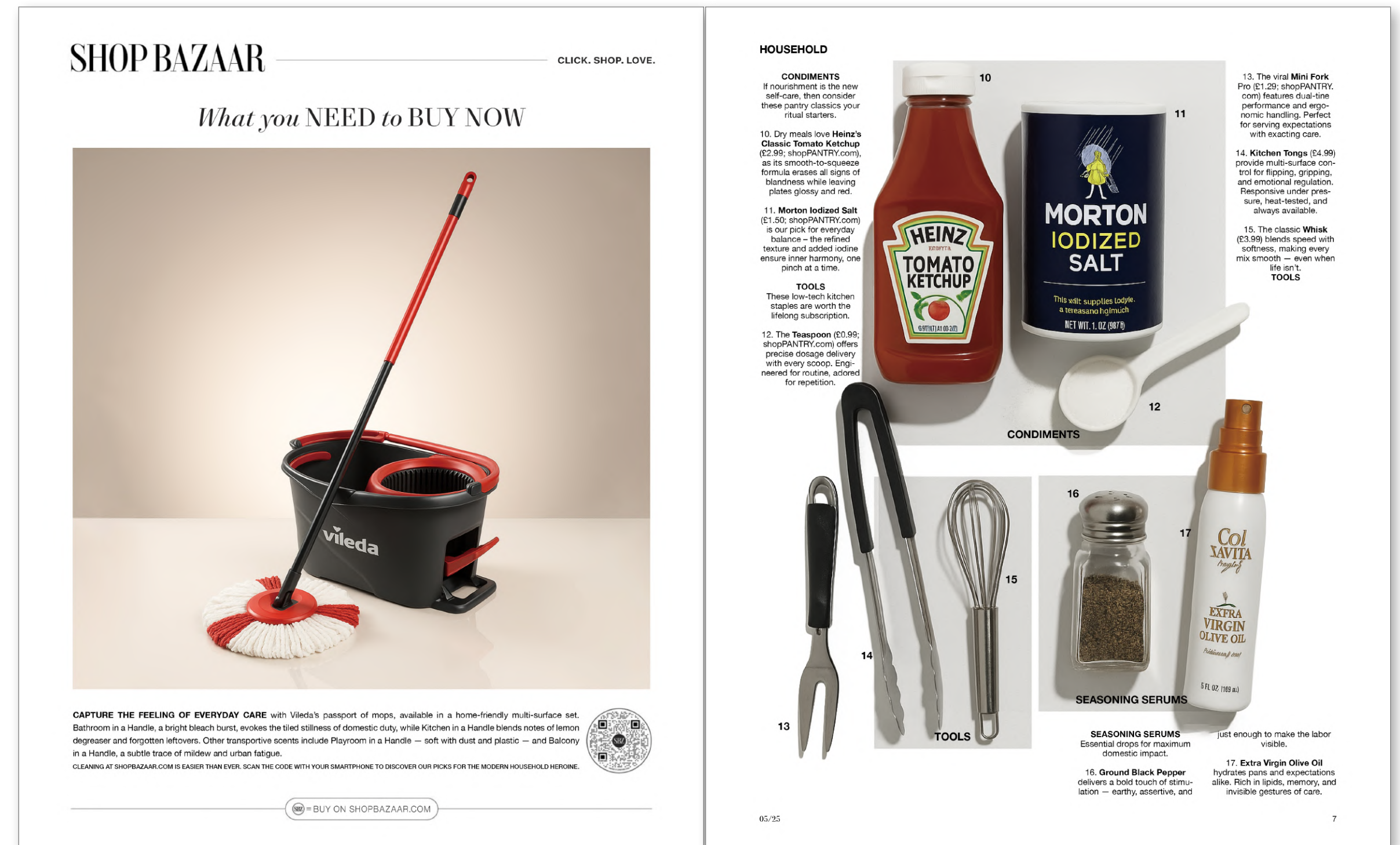
- a. Women are not only represented in product categories aimed at them, but also appear as decorative objects or rewards in advertisements for products targeted at men.
- b. Moreover, it's not only stereotypically 'feminine' categories – like fashion – that are defined as women's consumption; even household spending, which should be a shared responsibility, is often labelled as women's consumption.

My project uses fashion magazines as a visual medium to intervene in the ways women are framed within domestic consumption – as both consumers and bodies to be consumed – and to reveal how this visual structure continues to discipline women beyond the fashion context.

1) On 'Women as Consumers'



* Images in these pages are generated by AI



* Images in these pages are generated by AI

I replaced fashion products from Harper's Bazaar with everyday household items, and re-edited them using the magazine's original style. Through this, I highlight how domestic consumption – from nappies to dish soap, from kitchen appliances to financial planning –

has been reframed as women's responsibility. This visual strategy critiques the normalisation of women's invisible labour in the household under consumer culture, extending beyond beauty and fashion.

2) On 'Women as Consumed'

HOUSEHOLD

BABY PRODUCTS

Double DUTY

*Effortlessly
COMBINE comfort
and cleanliness by
choosing essentials
that move with you –
from CRADLE
to TUB.
These daily icons
REDEFINE what it
means to be
“put together.”*

Above: Pampers Swaddlers – soft yet secure. At right:
Johnson's Baby Shampoo – mild enough for new-
borns, strong enough for expectations.

Her's BAZAAR

HOUSEHOLD VACUUM CLEANER

UTILITY over EXPRESSION

replacable

HEART, *Redefined*

This update relocates EMOTIONAL LABOUR into DOMESTIC CONTEXTS. Expression is no longer aesthetic but enacted through repeated motion. VISIBILITY REDUCED. IMPACT SUSTAINED.

HOUSEHOLD

In Chew-Bose's *Tristesse*, you feel every glare, every joyful or nervous movement, every toast that is buttered and coupe of wine that is poured. There's a prevailing sense of unease. It's the women who capture the viewers' attention, not just because of their beauty but because of their interiority. It's easy to identify with the youthful nonchalance of Cécile as she's sauntering around the living room with a book in hand, dressed in just her swimsuit and an oversized polo shirt. Because of her father's free-wheeling lifestyle, Cécile lives with no real rules or boundaries, ignoring her schoolwork. She starts a casual sexual relationship with her neighbor, a young man named Cyril (Aloïcha Schneider).

There is both tenderness and fear-someness in the way that Anne adjusts the sleeve of her dress or slips a chunky silver ring on her finger. The film finds sweet moments in discussions around clothes, whether in the scene where Anne gives Cécile that heavenly party dress she designed or when the two are sitting on the couch, discussing some of Anne's most recent sketches.

"Anne, I related to her," Merhej says of Sevigny's character. "She is someone who can come off as a bit cold, but there's actually a lot of depth to her. She's very caring." She adds, "And then her clothes: She likes to always be a bit more put together, a perfectionist, but again there's a lot of depth to her."

Merhej's designs are particularly intriguing to view in the context of this film about women, made by women. (In addition to Chew-Bose's screenplay, Lesley Barber did the score, and Alice Seabury did the casting.) She is a third-generation designer; her great-grandmother Laurieci Srouji established a couture business in Jaffa, Palestine, in the 1920s, and her mother, Laura Merhej, was also a designer, self-taught, who opened her own atelier in Beirut in 1984. Today, Merhej and her mother still work together on Renaissance Renaissance. It's an approach to fashion that's all about duality, with classic tailoring and utilitarian materials that come with something playful like a bubble hem or an oversize covered-button embellishment on a top.

Chew-Bose explains that she loves "handsome women," and when it comes



to Merhej's designs, "there's a real tactility that feels both inviting and like armor. Also, her designs have a sense of humor. They are smiling at you." In *Bonjour Tristesse*, Merhej helped draw out the "strange" romance Chew-Bose was after, alongside Bellizzi's careful consideration of the way clothes speak to the audience from behind the screen. "Miyako's costume design was extremely attentive to how the scene would be shot," Chew-Bose says. "Are they walking? Are they sitting? Are they sitting comfortably? Is this scene tense? Does she like sitting in shorts? Where does she feel most beautiful?" She continues, "Miyako would ask all of those questions and then come up with answers through her designs."

Bellizzi used a recurring palette of browns and blues for all of the female characters, and Chew-Bose points out that Bellizzi would come to set before they'd begin shooting to hold up different garments in various spaces to make sure they'd capture well depending on the time of day and the light. "Everything was in concert," Chew-Bose says. That was true for not just the costumes and the storytelling but also the three women who visualized Sagan's story for a new and modern era. "I thought the entire process was really beautiful," Bellizzi says. "The director, the costume designers, the producers were all women. I've personally never worked on a film where everyone, even the main characters, are primarily women. It's a rare thing in the film world."

That synergy came through in the performances and the directing, but also in the clothing. In fashion at the moment, many designers are focusing on what women want to wear day to day—clothes that feel true to their full and multifaceted lives. Few designers, though, have been truly able to achieve this; the runway can present only a glimmer of an idea that doesn't fully take shape until it's out in the world. Chew-Bose's *Bonjour Tristesse*, with all of its intense relationships, off-beat interactions, and reflections of womanhood, grounds that fantasy in a reality. "We talked a lot about the characters' inner lives," she notes. "How they are, too, when they're alone in a room. We didn't want a fashion film, so to speak; we wanted a film where the clothes help [the viewer] understand who these characters are." **HB**

From top: Lather effect visualized in a classic Yardley bar-soap placement; Close-up on product interaction: Dove Body Wash, moisture-locking variant; Dove Deep Nourish – standard grip position shown mid-use; Dove Foam Wash – dispersed texture emphasized in active lathering frame; Bar soap (unlabeled) – generic application gesture captured in high-key light

In this section, I obscured the female figures in advertisements with minimalist graphic shapes and used neutral labels such as “replaceable.”

By doing so, I aim to reset the rules of advertising from the advertiser's perspective, revealing that the female body as a default display mechanism for household products is neither necessary nor neutral.

Fashion magazines are already a clearly constructed space for both “women as consumers” and “women as consumed.”

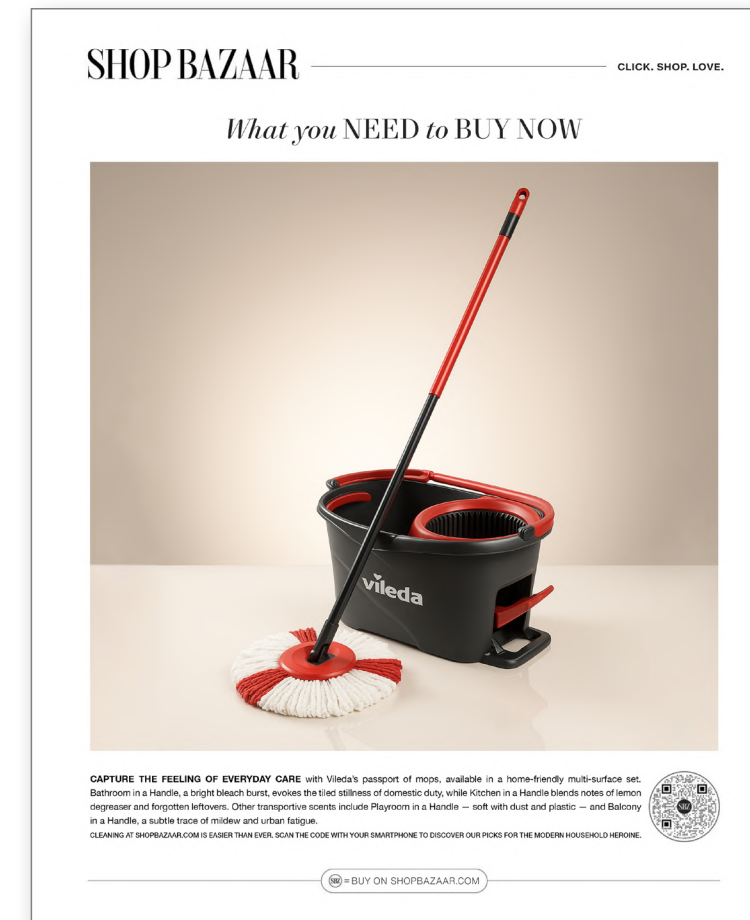
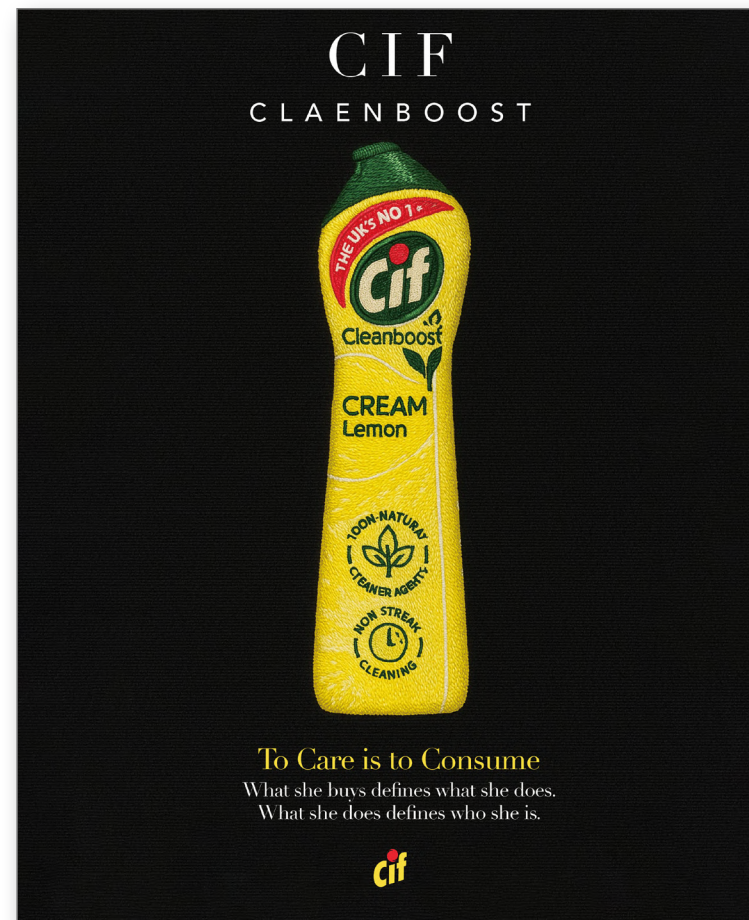
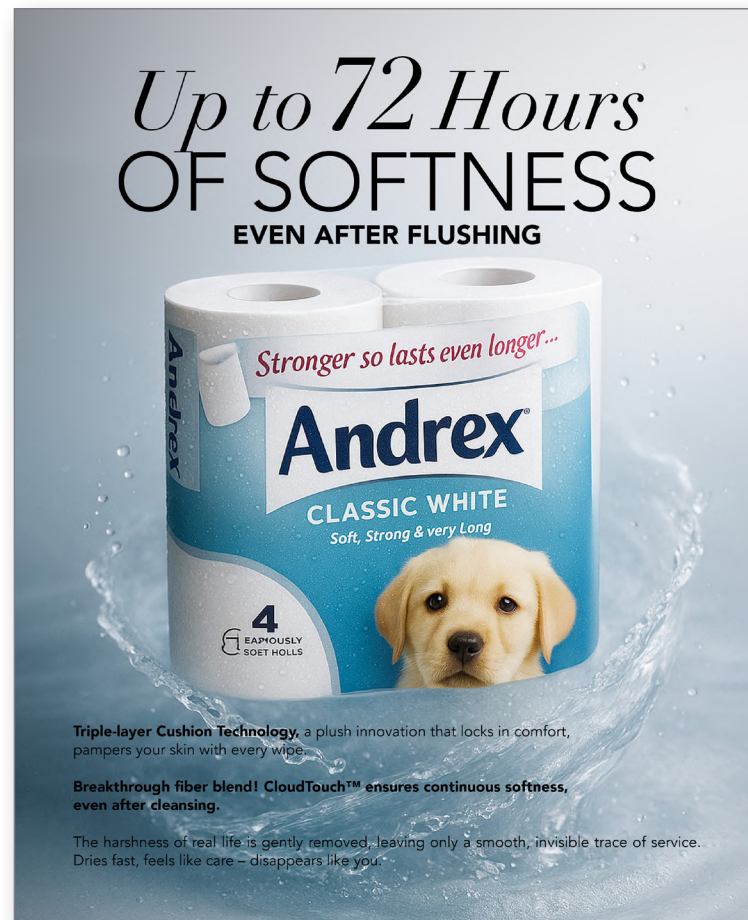
Household consumption, however, is more subtle: while women appear to be in control of consumption, they are in fact taking on more unpaid labour.

By using the familiar visual language of fashion magazines and replacing the content with overlooked household advertisements, my work critiques how women continue to be positioned as primary consumers and visual tools even in product areas unrelated to beauty.

This ongoing visual association not only hides the `true gendered division of labour in the home, but also enables the continued commodification of women’s bodies.

1) On ‘Women as Consumers’ – Left Page





Each left page uses AI-generated images that combine the visual style of fashion photography with household products. The sequence starts with products closely linked to fashion, then gradually shifts to items like kitchen tools and cleaning products.

This progression is meant to help the reader realise: it's not just fashion that's framed as "female consumption" – everyday domestic spending, which should be shared by the whole household, has also been quietly pushed onto women.

2) On 'Women as Consumers' – Right Page

HOUSEHOLD

KITCHEN ROLL

Ideal for ALL TASKS

Ideal for GOOD COOKING

replaceable

Regina Paper for people

4 ROLL FAMILY PACK

Regina

XXL ABSORB

EXTRA LARGE SHEETS

+50% MORE ABSORBENT*

Regina

Paper for people

bread the love
ot the

replaceable

replaceable

replaceable

replaceable

antibacterial Everyday
urface Cleaning Wipes

The Best Household Gift for *replaceable*?

She's not selling the product—she is the product.
Every part of her body: all arranged to tell you that hygiene is HER duty.

HOUSEHOLD

THE LAUNDRY CLEANSER

Dettol

replaceable

Dettol Detergent alone doesn't kill bacteria. Dettol laundry cleanser oxidizes **Kills 99.9% of bacteria** WORKS EVEN IN A COLD WASH

SOFTNESS ISN'T JUST A FEELING—IT'S A MARKETING STRATEGY WRAPPED IN PASTEL TONES.

BLE

replaceable

more

replaceable

BEFORE

replaceable

AFTER

WHEN 'TRUST' IS SOLD IN THIS BOTTLE, HER PRESENCE BECOMES THE LABEL

05/25

15

***persil**

WHY DON'T YOU...?

HUSBAND

In this month's column, LYNETTE NYLANDER tests the JOY of a STATEMENT HAT and the virtues of taking YOURSELF out SOLO.

WHY DON'T YOU...EMBRACE the status of teenage housewife? While walking through a quiet street in the hip Arts-and-Crafters district in Park during Fashion Week, I caught by a sniffling housewife on the advice of fashion critic Rachel Tashjian. Inside were a number of signature designs, but what really made me burst sing were the customizable options. Had she a half sister? She can accommodate! Flipping through old Slim Aarons photographs and inspired by the wealthiness of everyone in lazers hair? She's got you. Millions like this vice in all the great newsworthy critics and are well worth a visit. Besides, a great hat is the ultimate marker of sophistication!

WHY DON'T YOU...REPURPOSE your evening attire. We're all here there. This beautiful gown was worn to your cousin's wedding one hang in the back of your closet gathering dust. Fear not! Take your dress to the new generation of countries who specialize in reworking questionable fashions and you will have your friends doing a double take. One from my address book is Mike Clark, fashion, who, on top of his fringing red carpet creations, will give an existing piece a fabulous reinvention!

WHY DON'T YOU...BUY yourself flowers. Do like Lee Radzicki and get flowers everywhere. They're a personal invitation, so gift yourself a weekly flower subscription and feel inspired all the time. With springtime finally upon us, indulge in fragrant blossoms to add color and beauty to our living areas. Oh, yes, better care than cardboard.

WHY DON'T YOU...HAVE a date night with yourself. And I don't mean a short skirt and a new episode of Law & Order: I mean an indulgence, no hotel, but at least with yourself in the city. Appear off-kahls at a hotel bar, dinner with no reservations through to follow. Have a look you've bought at Barnes & Noble and see how bad the time goes, and a long, rambling walk home to discover your thoughts, preferably at a woman's edge. There's nothing more fun than being alone!

WHY DON'T YOU...MAKE your best coat yours. Okay, this one is due from the late, great Mrs. Woodward from last year's night "Where the Hell Did You Get That?" at the White House. Given just up the stairs from where I wrote this very column to the tail end of Fashion week, she'd have her personal best form on hand for her visits. After a morning trip or two, she would give it a wash and start her masterpiece. Lately, being given a coat and my own emerald green happens from Chavet instead of using the best coat for the familiar comfort. HB

***replicable**

**TUCHEN
GENTLE ON YOUR HAND**

***replicable**

***replicable**

***replicable**

65-15

13



On the right pages, I used existing advertisements for household products. I covered the female body parts with grey geometric shapes and replaced them with the word “replaceable.” In the first few pages, it’s not always clear whether the model is female. But as the

magazine goes on, even with the grey blocks, we can easily tell – based on visual habits – that these are female bodies. This structure is designed to create a slow moment of realisation: women's bodies are always present, always consumed.

3) Text on the Left Page

HOUSEHOLD

Women as CONSUMERS

Nowadays, not only the target audience of the FASHION industry but are also systematically positioned as the executors of HOUSEHOLD consumption. From washing-up liquid to nappies, kitchen appliances to financial products, many consumer responsibilities that SHOULD BE SHARED have been implicitly assigned to WOMEN. This distribution is not natural – it is constructed through years of MEDIA, ADVERTISING, and COMMERCIAL NARRATIVES.

2

Barry BAZAAR

a woman’s role in housework isn’t voluntary – it’s a default expectation



her consumption behaviour is actually social discipline



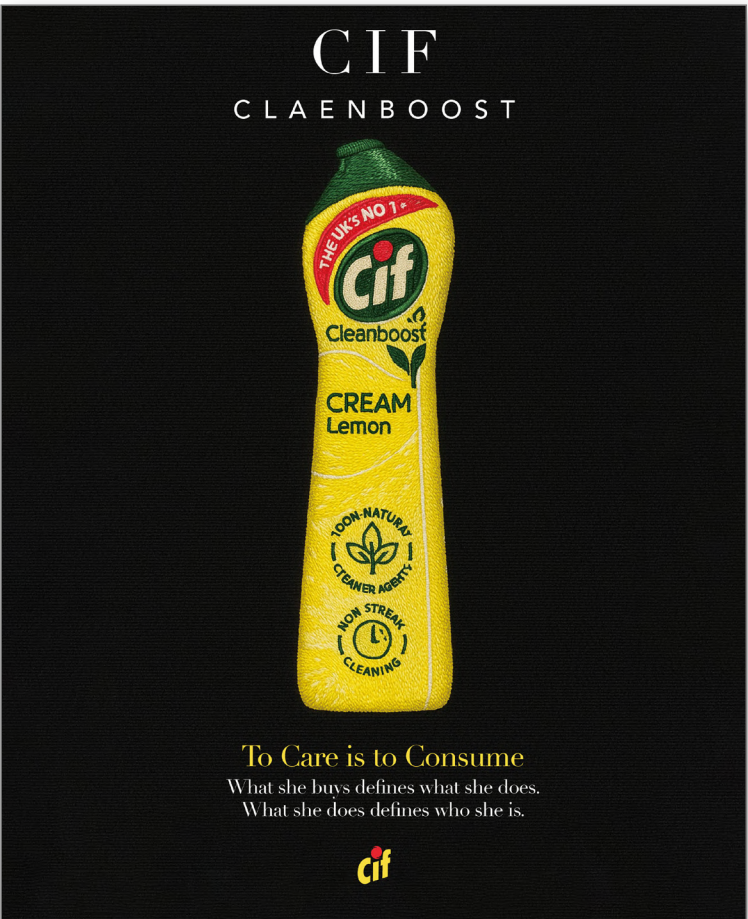
her labour is invisible



the double standard of being both capable and beautiful



consumption is strongly tied to identity, becoming a social trap set for women



4) Text on the Right Page

HOUSEHOLD

Women as

CONSUMED

The female body has never been absent from advertising. Even in campaigns for HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS – products far removed from fashion – women continue to appear as DEFAULT VISUAL CARRIERS. Every part of their bodies is designed to serve its function and becomes part of the product. The IDEAL female figure, constructed by COMMERCIAL media, becomes A COMMODITY IN ITSELF. Women are looked at, and they are CONSUMED.

00/25

the woman is part of the product itself

spread the love
ot the ge

The Best Household Gift for *replaceable*?

She's not selling the product—she is the product. Every part of her body: all arranged to tell you that hygiene is HER duty.

women are “packaged” as symbols of trust, and this visual logic is commercialised

HOUSEHOLD

THE LAUNDRY CLEANSER

00/25

women are trained to believe that their bodies are more “appropriate for the home”

HOUSEHOLD

VACUUM CLEANER

CLEANING CULTURE

00/25

especially in baby product ads, motherhood becomes a fixed part of the advertising language

HOUSEHOLD

BABY MILK

00/25

the female body is merely a channel for consumption – replaceable, and never truly neutral

HOUSEHOLD

BABY PRODUCTS

Multiple DUTY

00/25