

1. (1 – 6)
Positions Through Iterating

2. (7 – 14)
*Positions Through
Contextualising*

Positions Through Contextualising Statement

In *Positions through Iterating*, my project initially focused on advertising images within fashion magazines – especially how they use visual language to shape consumer desire. But as the research progressed, I realised these ads don't just “display” women – they construct an imagined female viewer. This led me to shift focus from surface imagery to how media structurally discipline and position women as consumers.

Therefore, my project now uses the fashion magazine as a visual medium to intervene in the phenomenon of women being defaulted as “consumers” and “women as consumed” in household consumption, thereby revealing how this visual structure also discipline women in non-fashion fields.·

1.Women as Consumers: I used AI-generated imagery to replace high-end fashion products with household goods, then re-designed these pages in the style of *Harper's Bazaar*. In doing so, I highlighted how everyday domestic consumption – ranging from nappies to washing-up liquid, kitchen appliances to family finance – is socially coded as “female consumption”. This coding naturalises women's role as default household decision-makers and obscures the invisible labour embedded in this role.

2.Women as Consumed: In this part, I used grey geometric blocks to cover the bodies of women in existing household advertisements and labelled them “replaceable”. This quiet intervention questions the default use of female bodies as product display tools, suggesting that their presence is neither essential nor neutral – only assumed.

I used fashion magazine aesthetics because they clearly represent both “women as consumers” and “women as consumed”. In household fields, this dynamic is more subtle: women appear to have agency, but in fact perform unpaid labour. By inserting domestic ads into fashion layouts, I expose how the visual system continues to assign women the dual role of consumer and commodity – even in non-fashion domains. This linkage masks unequal gendered labour and sustains the commodification of the female body.

7. (from the reading list)

Drucker, J. (2014) 'Designing graphic interpretation', in *Graphesis: Visual Forms of Knowledge Production*. Graphesis: Visual Forms of Knowledge Production, pp. 180–192.

Drucker argues that graphic interpretation is not simply a method for reading images, but a process of actively constructing meaning. Interpretation is always situated and contextual; visual meaning is not “read out” from an image but is instead arranged and organised through form. This chapter emphasises that design is never neutral – it continuously interprets the world through layout, rhythm, and structure.

My project is not simply a critique of advertising images, but rather a subjective reinterpretation using the visual language of magazines. This understanding plays out across the two narrative lines of my work.

On the left pages – women as consumers – I reframe household products using the style of *Harper's Bazaar*. Although the products are domestic, they are presented with a fashion aesthetic, reinforcing ideas about what counts as “female” consumption. This mismatch of image and meaning – without relying on textual explanation – questions the naturalisation of gendered consumption. The act of redesign itself becomes the interpretive gesture, echoing Drucker's notion of visual form as interpretative practice.

On the right pages – women as consumed – I use grey blocks and the consistent label “replaceable” to establish a rhythm of visual interruption. This design strategy does not explain, but instead guides the viewer to gradually recognise that the female body has always been present in these advertisements – normalised and embedded. As Drucker describes, meaning is shaped through material and structural choices. This text deepened my awareness that my design practice is itself a contextual, critical form of interpretation – one that invites the viewer to reconsider how femininity is visually constructed.

8. (text – topic)

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

'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)

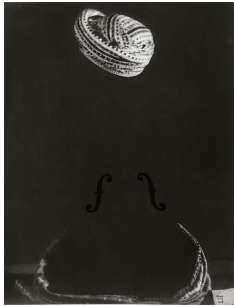
Wolf argues that beauty ideals are socially constructed to serve capitalist and patriarchal interests. It clarified a key point for my project: that the exploitation of women under consumerism operates on multiple levels. This chapter helped me connect beauty standards to wider visual systems of control. Women are disciplined not only as consumers across different domains, but also as commodities themselves.

She uses recognisable cultural sites – magazines, fashion ads, music videos – to expose how visual ideals are constructed and weaponised. This approach shaped my project decisions: rather than avoiding commercial fashion media, I deliberately borrow its visual language, then substitute its content with overlooked domestic consumption. Inspired by her argument, I use the aesthetic structure of fashion magazines to visualise gendered bias in domestic consumption. Through techniques such as image replacement, layout control, and visual interruption, I aim to point directly at the constructed role of women within systems of visual consumption.

9. (project – topic and method)

Grove, K. (1990–1992) *The Other Series (After Man Ray)* [Photograph]. Available at: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/294330>

(Accessed: 5 May 2025).



The Other Series (After Man Ray), Kathy Grove, 1990–1992



Le Violon d'Ingres, Man Ray, 1924

Grove's *The Other Series (After Man Ray)* demonstrates a feminist intervention into canonical photographic imagery by completely erasing the female body. Through this removal, Grove disrupts the male gaze and reveals the dependency of such artworks on the objectification of women. Rather than creating new images, she engages directly with the visual language of art history, using absence as a method of critique.

This approach has inspired my own. In my project, I intervene in existing images from *Harper's Bazaar* to question how the female body is routinely positioned as a default visual element (on the right pages). Much like Grove, I cover rather than remove; where she leaves the violin f-holes as a marker, I apply the label “replaceable.” I believe both projects rely on visual strategies that de-gender the body and introduce a sense of visual rupture.

While Grove's work critiques historical representation in art photography, her method of erasure has directly influenced my own strategy for addressing contemporary consumer media. It clearly shows how feminist visual practice can operate through subtraction rather than addition – creating a space for reflection through deliberate absence.

10. (project – medium or method)

Karleson, V.P. (2007) *XYX28: Encrypted Feminist Magazine* [Installation].

Available at: <https://grafeo.com/xyx28-encrypted-feminist-magazine/>

(Accessed: 5 May 2025).



This project adopts the familiar structure of a fashion magazine, but subverts its purpose. She does not dismantle its form – instead, she reuses and distorts it by replacing traditional content with encrypted patterns and unreadable visuals. This creates aesthetic distance while rejecting the magazine's original function as a tool of visual clarity and consumption. This approach strongly aligns with my own. I also work within the formal language of fashion magazines, but replace their content with household products and disrupt their visual logic. Karleson's work confirmed that preserving a recognisable format makes subversion more powerful – the disruption is felt precisely because the surface remains familiar. We both use visual strategies that introduce rupture and strip the female body of its gendered visual role.

She also challenges the act of publishing itself. Publishing does not have to communicate – it can also resist communication. In the same way, I chose not to provide clear explanations for each page, but instead used seemingly disjointed images and non-corresponding text to intervene in and challenge the consumption logic hidden beneath fashion magazine aesthetics.

11. (project – a critical position in context)

Jonkers, G. and van Bennekom, J. (eds.) (2019) *The Gentlewoman*, Issue n° 19.
London.



The Gentlewoman provides a valuable contrast to commercial fashion magazines like *Harper's Bazaar*. While both target female audiences, *The Gentlewoman* refuses to treat women as objects of visual consumption or use flashy tactics to sell products. It doesn't focus on traditional ideals of beauty or purchasing power, but instead shows women as thoughtful, complex individuals – active subjects rather than passive figures.

Issue 19's cover features artist Cindy Sherman with a beard, challenging conventional ideas of female beauty. This inspired my project's core idea: fashion can be a tool for reflection, not just discipline. One image shows Sherman in a dramatic look, glamorising a simple bag of crisps, which became a key reference. I place everyday household items into a Harper's Bazaar-style context (on the left pages), giving them a fashionable look to question why all women's products must be so heavily polished and consumed visually.

The Gentlewoman shows that fashion aesthetics can critique consumer culture rather than only support it. It demonstrates how satire, beauty, and resistance can exist together, encouraging me to see fashion magazine visuals as tools for critical thinking, not just traps of consumerism and patriarchy.

12. (project – medium or method)

Spierenburg, V. (2013) *In Order of Pages*. Baden: Kodoji Press.

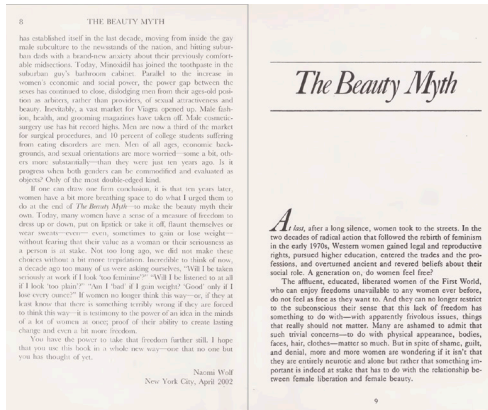


This work reassembles 450 scanned pages from different books, removing them from their original contexts and reordering them by page number. While this disrupts the books' original narratives, the consistent black-and-white format and a new page numbering system construct a pseudo-linear rhythm. The result is a reading experience shaped not by logic or clarity, but by movement and interruption. This directly informed the structure of my magazine, particularly the right "women as consumed" pages. Like Spierenburg, I intervene in existing visual material – not by replacing it, but by masking parts of it, stripping away identity to reveal a deeper system at work. At the same time, the left pages retain the commercial aesthetic of *Harper's Bazaar*, while the right pages feature household advertisements that have no original connection to fashion imagery – and whose contexts have been deliberately disrupted. Together, these two visual threads operate within a newly constructed reading rhythm, prompting reinterpretation within an unfamiliar context.

Spierenburg's project also challenged traditional ideas of graphic communication design. By fragmenting existing works, she removes the original authors' authority – highlighting how meaning can be rearranged through visual strategy. This idea helped me question the authority of fashion media itself, and to see design not just as communication, but as critical intervention through sequencing, erasure, and reinterpretation

13. (critical analysis)

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



Naomi Wolf argues that beauty, as an ideal, is not natural, but socially constructed. It is part of a larger system that creates anxiety, emphasises difference, and drives consumption – what she calls a 'disciplinary mechanism of images'. Media platforms like magazines and advertising are at the core of this system, constantly presenting idealised female figures aimed at female consumers. Although this book was written more than two decades ago, its arguments are still highly relevant today – perhaps even more so – as long as consumerism and patriarchal values continue to dominate social structures, the position of women remains caught in the same cycle.

Wolf (2002) uses rhetorical questions to open many of her reflections, such as 'Is this progress? I doubt it.' and 'So has beauty-myth pluralism taken the day? Not by a long shot.' These questions are not meant to be answered, but instead invite readers to re-examine what is often accepted as normal and to question the deeper systems behind these beliefs.

Moreover, The book's visual design also supports its message. It is set in a traditional serif typeface, giving the text a sense of formality and authority, perhaps reflecting how long-standing and institutionalised the beauty myth

really is. The layout is also orderly and classical, which creates a visual contrast with the emotional and critical content of the writing.

While *The Beauty Myth* focuses on social issues and critiques the content of visual culture – how media images impose narrow ideals of femininity – it helped me to clearly identify the two core themes of my project. In comparison, Johanna Drucker's (2014) chapter on 'Designing Graphic Interpretation' examines the form of graphic communication, and shows that layout, hierarchy and typographic choices are never neutral. They influence how knowledge is shaped and received. Her insights support Wolf's position by revealing why and how visual media can effectively construct and reinforce the beauty myth. In my case, these two references helped me see that both what is shown and how it is shown contribute to the ongoing visual construction of gendered consumer roles.

Wolf writes, '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' (2002). This made me realise that consumerism affects women on multiple levels. It turns them into both the targeted consumers and the object being consumed. Her use of familiar, everyday examples such as fashion magazines, advertising and music videos inspired me to adopt a similar approach in my own work. Rather than rejecting the glossy format of fashion magazines, I chose to use their familiar visual language to embed and critique the hidden patterns of domestic consumption – a space where women are also burdened with expectations and responsibility.

Additionally, I found her tone particularly inspiring. Though clearly critical, her writing is never aggressive. This helped me define my own visual tone for the project – calm and methodical, yet still confronting the issue directly.

Inspired by *The Beauty Myth*, I decided to use the visual format of fashion magazine *Harper's Bazaar* to make visible the hidden gender bias in household consumption. Through masking, re-layout and subtle disruption, my project reveals how women are still positioned, both visually and culturally, within consumer systems.

14. (critical analysis)

Spierenburg, V. (2013) *In Order of Pages*. Baden: Kodoji Press.

Veronika Spierenburg's *In Order of Pages* presents a highly subjective and non-linear visual reading experience by reordering scanned pages from different books according to their page numbers. This action disrupts the original contexts and logical structures of the source materials and replaces them with a new, personal form of narrative and association.

Spierenburg scans selected pages from various books and converts them to black-and-white, creating a uniform visual texture that strips away the individuality and original contexts of each image. The content of the images becomes secondary – they are no longer valued for their original meaning but instead function as part of a new collective of disconnected fragments.

Each page retains its original pagination, and Spierenburg also adds a new, consistent page number at the bottom of each sheet. This dual system emphasises the constructed nature of the new sequence: although the reading flow is artificially restored, the overall structure still feels unstable and disjointed.

There is no catalogue, no chapters, and the reading rhythm is visually inconsistent – occasionally interrupted by blank pages as the book progresses. The authority of the original authors is removed, and the reader becomes a more active, subjective navigator of the book. In doing so, the project suggests that knowledge is never fixed or neutral, but always contingent, fragmented and open to reinterpretation.

In traditional graphic design education and practice, communication is often expected to be clear, direct and efficient – emphasising logic, structure and readability. *In Order of Pages*, however, deliberately challenges these expectations. Here, the experience of interruption, disorientation and randomness is a key part of the reading. It shows that graphic communication does not have to reinforce meaning, but can instead create new relationships between content.

This also suggests a shift in the designer's role – from a neutral 'messenger' of information to a curator, editor or even director who reconfigures systems of knowledge. This position aligns with ideas explored by Queneau (1947) in *Exercises in Style*, though that article is not included in this bibliography. Spierenburg's strong authorial voice is visible in every decision – what to scan, how to reorder, and how to frame a completely new reading experience. Her decision to keep the original page numbers, while adding a second, uniform numbering system, plays with the illusion of order while altering the actual movement through the book. The focus shifts from 'what should I understand?' to 'how am I navigating this?', turning the reader's movement itself into part of the message.

Spierenburg's method can be summarised as: extraction → standardisation → reassembly. I apply a similar logic in my own work by extracting household product advertisements and inserting them into the visual framework of a fashion magazine. In this new structure, I use layout and design to question and disrupt the gendered logic embedded in mainstream consumer media.

In Order of Pages appears, at first glance, to be a normal art book—but once opened, it quickly becomes visually chaotic and unpredictable. My project follows a similar strategy: from the outside, it looks like a typical magazine, but its content has been quietly replaced. Within the familiar structure of a fashion magazine, I embed a completely different set of messages.

Spierenburg's work also encouraged me to avoid relying on heavy-handed visual metaphors or overtly explanatory language. Instead, I use layout, masking, and structural interference to prompt the viewer to find their own critical position within the reading experience.

Positions Through Iterating
Statement

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.