

Last term, I had a dialogue with Mio Kojima, a German-Japanese design educator and editor/publisher focused on knowledge politics and social justice in and through design. This conversation made me realise that many of my earlier conclusions were not as clear as I thought. The key idea of “women as consumers/consumed” may need to be reconsidered.

## Intersectionality & the concept of “woman”

Before this dialogue, my work mainly focused on how women are disciplined in consumer society: how they are targeted as consumers and how they are visually objectified. However, in the discussion I suddenly realised that the term “woman” itself is also socially constructed and limited. In advertisements and fashion media, the women shown are almost always young, white, long-haired, able-bodied, and cisgender. This not only shows who is seen as the consumer, but also suggests who qualifies to be seen as a woman. Black women, older women, or disabled women are often excluded from this category. This hidden logic must be linked with history, although I have not researched it in detail yet.

For me, this is an important addition. It reminded me that my project cannot stay only at the level of how women are consumed. It also needs to ask: whose images are constantly consumed, and who is excluded? In other words, visual discipline not only builds the “consuming woman” but also constructs “who counts as a woman.” In the future, I may add a new section in my magazine, for example titled *Who is Woman?*. After readers already follow the first two sections, this sudden new question could push them to reflect more deeply. This structural change could create a *delayed awareness*, making the audience feel interrupted and challenged. It would also make the project more interactive and critical.

## Trained visual habits

Another strong point from the dialogue was about visual habits. In my project, I covered the female bodies in advertisements with grey geometric blocks and added the word replaceable. At first, I only wanted to erase the necessity of the female model, showing that women do not need to naturally take this role. But Mio made me see that the more important issue is the audience’s viewing habit. Even when the body is hidden, we still imagine a specific type of woman in that space. This *automatic completion* shows that viewers have already been trained to accept a very narrow visual logic.

This made me realise that my project is not only criticising how advertising uses female bodies, but also showing how viewers themselves are disciplined. The problem is not only in the production of advertisements, but also in the reception. These habits are not natural; they have been built through long histories of politics, economics, and power. Over decades, advertisements repeat images of the *ideal woman* through race, class, and gender norms, so that now, even if the body is hidden, people imagine the same kind of woman.

This gave me a new direction for future research: to explore how these visual habits were slowly formed, and how they still work today. This means that my enquiry is not only a superficial critique of images, but could also expand into what I would call a *visual genealogy*: tracing how visual habits are built up historically and how they still discipline audiences.

Overall, the value of this dialogue is that it pushed me to look beyond women’s roles in advertisements. On one side, I now think more about woman as a constructed concept that excludes diverse identities. On the other side, I see that audience habits are not neutral but trained, and this training continues to shape how women are seen today. These two insights showed me that my project still has space to grow, and they also open up new possibilities for both research and practice in the future.