



How can communication design educate and elucidate active social media users on the lasting effects of violent desensitisation?

THE EARTH IS NOT A SOLID KIND OF MATERIAL HAS A VIOLENT AND DANGEROUS SIDE



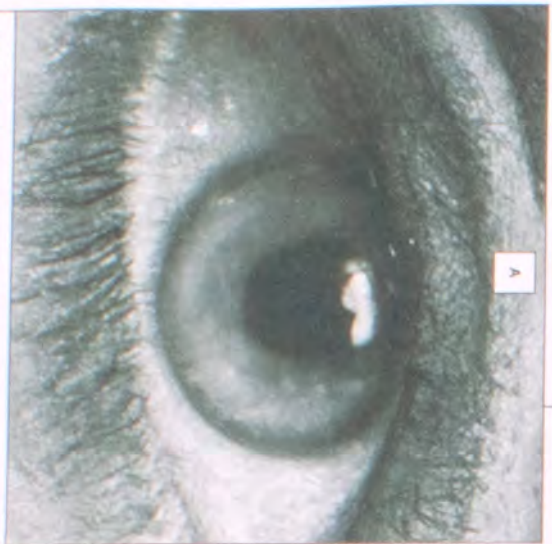
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Staying Literate

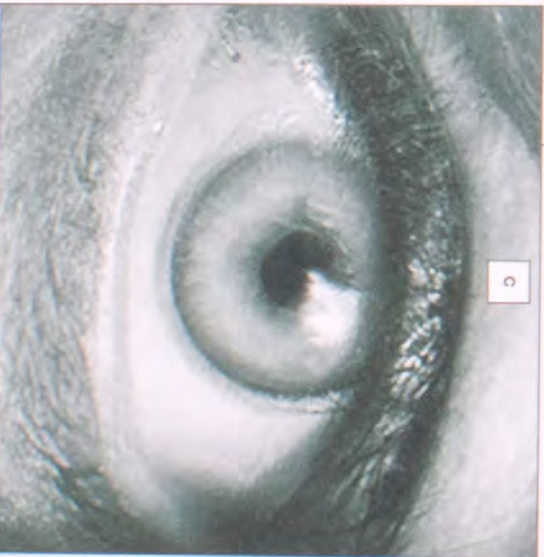
It's become so hard to gauge intention. Is the media being shown to me only here to spark my morbid curiosity, to harvest data from my prolonged digital interactions, to politically influence me? Who posted this, why did they post this, and were they paid? AI question: Is it posted by a multinational news corporation or by my mate Steve. Now that we all have the instant Apple-enabled power to be journalists, designers and pundits, we too can (and do) contribute toward the media clutter of the world. We can be the next big thing in a more journalistic environment, social media liberates us from the shackles of an editor, a fact-checker, an unbiased third party. We can like, repost and favorite misinformation just as easily as we can cool hard stuff — and with AI's spirit and our horns, it's getting ever-harder to tell what's even real.

The technology improves daily, but the strange waxy glare remains. My peers and I can usually spot the difference between real and artificial eyes, but the difference is more apparent to those more media-literate generations. The difference between reality and artificially blurred. In the early stages of this project (when I was still deciding which aspect of media literacy to tackle) I presented my parents, my friends, parents, and some of my peers with a series of images generated by the two AI models. I quickly observed that those ranging from 20-35 years old could successfully decipher the real photo from the two AI generated images within about 15 seconds. Subjects aged from 40-60 years old were more likely to be fooled by the AI generated images. Out of the 15 or 60+ participants, two successfully spotted the real image. This side 1 necessarily surprised me, but their reaction to the test did. The older the participants got, the less aware they were that AI was even advanced enough to produce such realistic imagery. I was surprised that the older participants were able to tell the medium to lie to them. Although the final FACETS campaign departed from some of these initial explorations, the experiment taught me something about the wider state of media literacy. Those least informed within a medium and those least educated by the lowest-quality media said medium can offer.



WHICH IS REAL?
No AI Test

One of two images below is a photograph, the other two are AI generated. Can you spot the difference? How long did it take?



MADE WITH MIDJOURNEY AI
December 2022

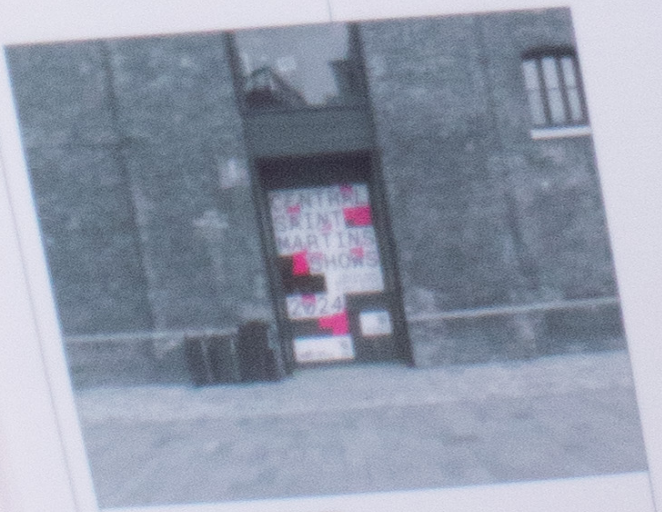
Shallon on '20.



COLLABORATE AND CONQUER
Bate, Lichen Books, 2023

From a book comprised of 32 pull-out A2 posters — this one hangs above my door. It motivates me.

My final project would not be the same without my family. My mother's history and my father's practice have always deeply influenced my work. And, having no siblings, I've had to learn to share my space and my time. We all contribute to the life of our project. We share insights, experiences and learned critiques. We wouldn't be as open without family. My work wouldn't be as honest without George. My passion for design wouldn't be as strong without my father. I could go on. Constantly sharing my work with people whose eyes I trust, who I look up to as creative role models, has made me a more polished professional and a more caring person. I want to communicate my work for everyone, regardless of their background, and I want to be a more caring person. I want to communicate my work for everyone, regardless of their background, and I want to be a more caring person.



CENTRAL SAINT MARTIN'S SHOWS 2024
Designed identity by Rati, Tim and Lucie, February – May 2024

Watching our identity evolve from a really simple idea into a whole design system, and now, seeing it up around the university, it all feels too good to be true.



YOU'VE SEEN TOO MUCH!

How to avoid sensationalist news: A quick guide to media literacy

News media turns murders into profit-margins. It's always been the way. But the appearance of a laptop on every desk and a phone in every pocket has led traditional, once-blocky, type-based publications to rely on fearmongering, graphic imagery and sensationalist headlines to tease their audience. Now the headline is what's trending, what gets most likes, whatever the algorithm wants you to see.

HOW TO SPOT SENSATIONALISM IN MEDIA

1. VIOLENT IMAGERY
2. LACK OF SOURCES
3. CONFIRMATION BIAS
4. MISLEADING STATISTICS
5. CLICKBAIT HEADLINES
6. FEAR APPEALS
7. OVERUSE OF BREAKING NEWS ALERTS
8. LACK OF FACT-CHECKING
9. EMOTIONAL LANGUAGE
10. ABSENCE OF SOLUTIONS

1. Pay attention to the images or videos accompanying news stories. Sensationalist news often uses dramatic or graphic visual elements to create an emotional response without providing necessary context.

2. Reliable news stories typically include quotes, data, or information from credible sources, or at least a sense of where the information is coming from. Sensationalist news often lacks this context.

3. Sensationalist news stories often use emotional language to manipulate your feelings. Look for words like 'shocking', 'horrifying', 'disgusting', 'outrageous', etc.

4. Sensationalist news stories often use fear to get your attention. Look for headlines that promise to reveal secrets or warn of danger.

5. Sensationalist news stories often use confirmation bias to make you feel like you're part of an exclusive group. Look for headlines that say 'You won't believe what I just found out'.

6. Sensationalist news stories often use misleading statistics to make their claims seem more credible. Look for headlines that use large numbers or percentages without context.

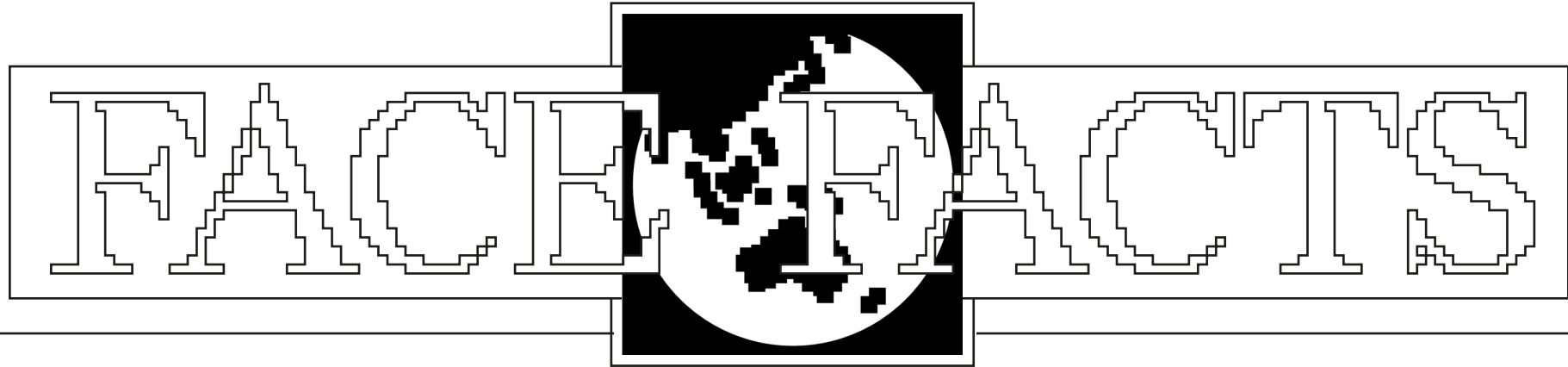
7. Sensationalist news stories often use clickbait headlines to get your attention. Look for headlines that use phrases like 'You won't believe what I just found out'.

8. Sensationalist news stories often use fear appeals to get your attention. Look for headlines that promise to reveal secrets or warn of danger.

9. Sensationalist news stories often use overuse of breaking news alerts to get your attention. Look for headlines that say 'Breaking: ...'.

10. Sensationalist news stories often use lack of fact-checking to get your attention. Look for headlines that use phrases like 'Sources say' or 'Reports claim' without providing any evidence.

YOU CAN...



*How can communication
design educate and elucidate
active social media users on
the lasting effects of violent
desensitisation?*

VIOLENT MEDIA HAS AN IMPACT ON YOU



FACETS is a multimedia campaign shedding light on social media's role in causing widespread emotional desensitisation to violent imagery.

FACE FACTS is a digital and physical publication, a branch of the wider FACETS campaign. The research conducted for this report forms the basis of FACE FACTS, and was invaluable towards the project's development.

This report explores Graphic Design's role in the spreading of violent graphic imagery – and in turn puts my own practice into question.



Fearmongering is on the up. There's more sensationalism than ever. Promoting mental well-being, critical thinking and careful awareness is just not enough. We are not all media literate; therefore, we are not empowered. We consume too much and know too little.

Violent imagery is now shared instantaneously and globally. We choose to view it. Has this democratisation of news dissemination also led to the spread of violent sensationalism, misinformation and emotionally charged content? If so, what part does design play in this?

This publication contains themes which some readers may find upsetting.

Discretion is advised.

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Introduction

It's easier to swipe, sigh and roll yer eyes, than to stop and take the time to feel. We've all seen a lot of death recently, and social media has fast become the place to find both victims and perpetrators gliding digitally beside each other, their bubbles colliding daily.

The web's a space for all, be it neo-nazis or war-torn teens — they can post, comment, and access all kinds of media. The uploaded images and videos can be calls for compassion, or calls to arms. This same content can appear laughably detached or emotionally earth-shattering, depending on the eyes of the beholder.

I grew up with social media as an eager playmate. As with the over-consumption of anything at a young age, it's impossible to be sure what effect it will have on your mind until later years. School-boy messaging groups can be vile places. Before the age of 15 I'd seen my fair share of animal abuse, graphic sex and unimaginable violence. I felt profoundly desensitised. No media scared or scarred me, and the experiences of mortality that I've faced in the real world are yet to phase me. I wanted to know if other people felt the same way, and if there was any way I could reverse, or counteract the feeling. If I could somehow resensitise myself.



THE ATOMIC BOMBING OF NAGASAKI (Blurred)
Nagasaki, Japan, August 9, 1945

When, if ever, is it acceptable to use images like this for purely aesthetic purposes?

Graphic designers have long been willing contributors to the spread of misinformation and propaganda. We need to work, but we don't always fully consider the effects of the graphic imagery we use in our designs. I like producing honest, sometimes harsh projects, and have sprinkled a corpse throughout my designs on occasion. But it's easy to forget the trauma that an image can evoke for some.

No two people have the same lived experience, and no two people consume media the same way. If we all stopped consuming gore for self-pleasure, and began only viewing it through an analytical, honest lens — to educate ourselves on what evils to avoid — then surely the world (or at least Britain), would be a far more righteous, honest place. I wanted to develop a project that challenged my own approach towards my work and ethics. I wanted to learn if the general population is as desensitised as I feared, and to somehow resensitise them... and myself in the process. I think I'm succeeding in the latter.





Sensitive Content

THIS PAGE MAY CONTAIN GRAPHIC OR VIOLENT CONTENT.



EYE ON PALESTINE ACCOUNT
Instagram, 2024

Reliable, truthful news no longer comes from traditional sources. We must look elsewhere.

I recently saw a dead Palestinian child on my Instagram feed (@eye.on.palestine, 2024) — one of many recent kids-made-martyrs. I saw the sensitive content button and clicked anyway. I saw a child's corpse, and yet was still able to swipe onto the next post and continue consuming my algorithm-tailored brain rot.

This disgusted me. It made me feel ashamed, and embarrassed. Why would I watch this content? It also made me question why I was so unphased by the post — so accustomed to violence that seeing a deceased infant's body barely surprised me. War has always been around — as has outrage towards it — but ours is the first generation able to witness it in 4K on a lazy Sunday afternoon. And so, the outrage is greater, and rightfully so. But we can become informed and passionate and protest without seeing all this violence. Truthful, harsh words should be enough. Some things are better left to the imagination.

Sensitive Content

ASK YOURSELF WHY YOU CHOOSE TO VIEW GRAPHIC OR VIOLENT CONTENT.

The Line

For a long-time people believed that if the horror could be made, vivid enough, most people would finally take in the outrageousness, the insanity of war.

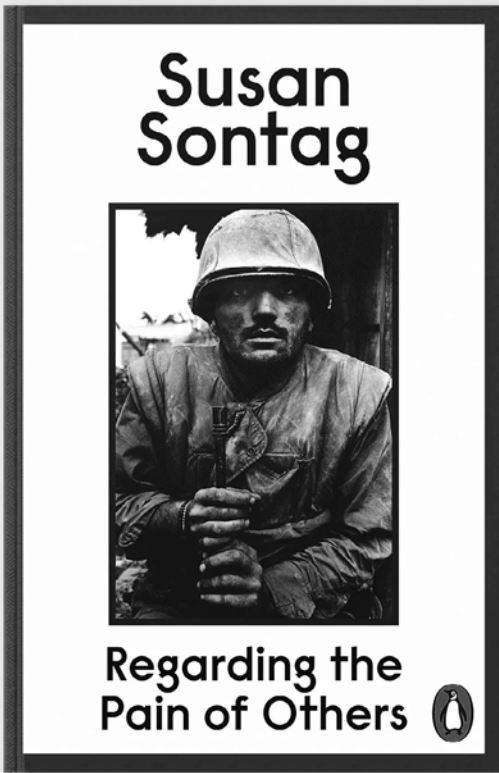
SUSAN SONTAG, 2003

REGARDING THE PAIN OF OTHERS

“For a long-time people believed that if the horror could be made, vivid enough, most people would finally take in the outrageousness, the insanity of war.” (Sontag, 2003) — I’m 21 and I really feel I’ve seen too much already — Through overexposure to social media, to news and to TV culture, I’ve witnessed genocide, corruption and global chaos all from the comfort and stability of my sturdy Ikea sofa. Something feels deeply wrong about this type of media consumption. Whenever I see a corpse I feel the victim is a little more violated. When does displaying death become pornography? If this media is publicly spread, without the victims’ consent, then when do media companies begin being held accountable for the violations they are committing? The line between public interest and corporate perversion has been completely blurred. I find myself wanting to stay updated and informed by the news. So, I can stay honest, so I can sleep at night. But all this violence has me losing sleep anyway. And I no longer understand (nor trust) the mediums bombarding me.

Initial discussions with my closest friends showed me many of them felt the exact same way. They open their phone and see bodies. And although these bodies may be on display for a reason, they are on display nonetheless. Something about that feels deeply unsettling. I’ve seen how recent global conflicts have affected close friends, be it in Sudan, Palestine, or in the countless other conflicts being misrepresented in the media. Displaced people, forgotten, some dead, countries now needing to be rebuilt (Elfadil, 2024).

But, for those far from home, it’s also hard, seeing the violence occurring from a distance. So, what can we do to help? We can donate, we can use our voices, we can boycott and march. But it can be easy to forget yourself when informing yourself. You need to take a break sometimes, for your own mental health.



REGARDING THE PAIN OF OTHERS
Susan Sontag, Penguin Books, 2003

Regarding the Pain of Others was the first and most vital reading for this project.

The New News



THE PRINCESS' DRIVER WAS DRUNK
The Times, 1997

A Newspaper I picked up in a charity shop.
Little has changed since its publication.

News media turns murders into profit-margins. It's always been the way (The Times, 1997). But the appearance of a laptop on every desk and a phone in every pocket has led traditional, once-blocky, type-based publications to rely on fearmongering, graphic imagery and sensationalist headlines to tease their audience. The feed killed the hierarchy. Everything is seen horizontally. Now the headline is what's trending, what gets most likes, whatever the algorithm wants you to see.

Though this decline in digital content standards acts as a steady, predictable, obvious elixir to an attention-deficit youth, the situation has gotten far more dire over recent years. "By minimising the size of media consumption from the media issue down to the article, the internet detached content from media brands. The transition from the parcelled to the streamed content has impacted the quality of journalism." (Mir, 2020) Andrew Mir eloquently expresses this idea in his publication: *Postjournalism and the Death of Newspapers*, but this idea of "parcelled content" – physical tangible newspapers producing to a higher journalistic standard than "streamed content" really interested me and would go on to influence my approach towards marketing the FACETS campaign.

Mir introduces the concept of 'postjournalism', which describes a recent rapid decline in media practices from traditional journalism to a medium focused on engaging audiences through emotional and ideological content rather than actual, factual objective reporting. This shift was largely driven by the need to sustain financial viability in the face of declining newspaper revenues. So now, more than ever, the trending headline is the most sensational headline. We get shown what we want to see. And it's usually not pretty.

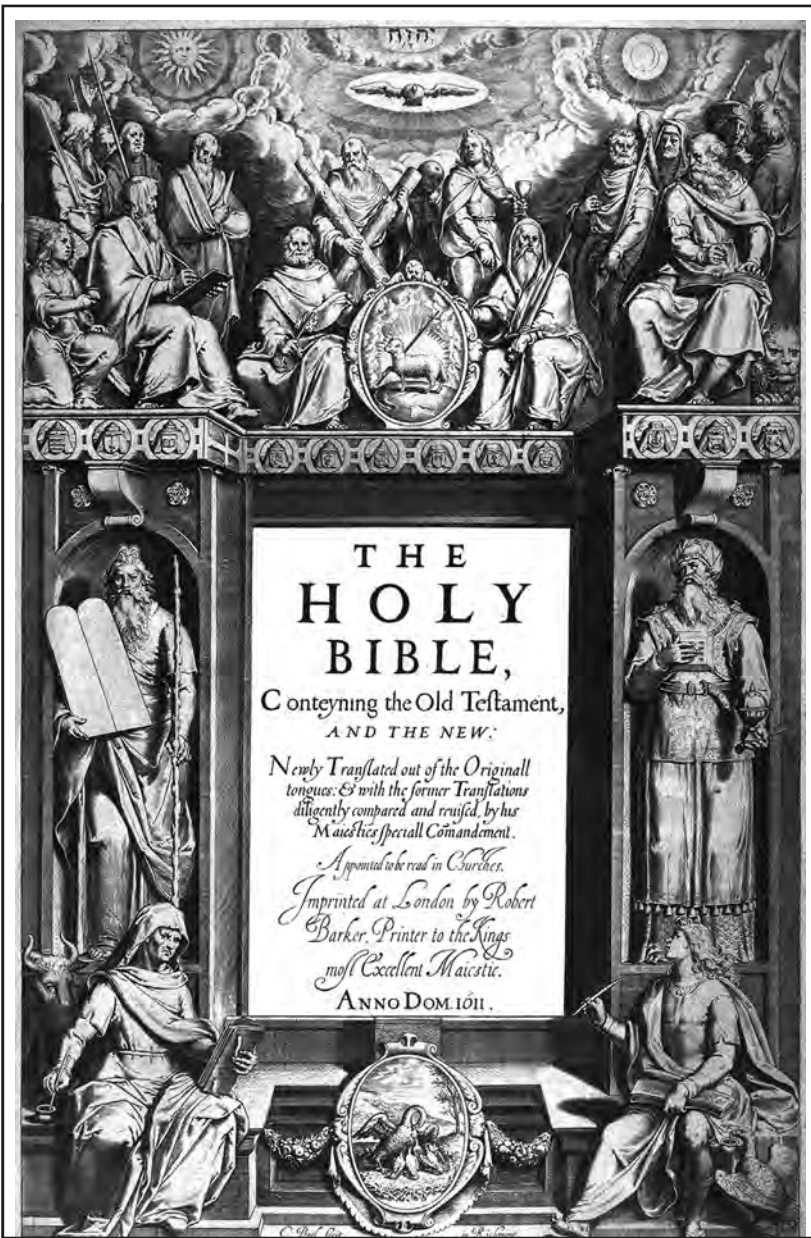


You will never be able to un-see something. Traumatic imagery can linger and lurk around in your brain for years. With social media's widespread use, news outlets and public alike throw graphic scenes at us all day. The only difference being that OfCom has far more regulatory power over what appears on UK television and newsprint media. This leaves platforms like TikTok relatively unfiltered. Although they may be removed after a few hours, posting violent videos there is relatively easy.

These social media apps have become the new news norm. "The changing nature of social media is partly characterised by declining engagement with traditional networks such as Facebook and the rise of TikTok and a range of other video-led networks." (Newman, 2023). Social media platforms make money from our engagement.

We get pleasure by watching violence, much like sex or humour, food, or the infinite products on sale. "Habitual media violence exposure predicted faster accessibility of aggressive cognitions, partly mediated by higher pleasant arousal" (Krahé, 2015). This arousal drives reaction, which drives interaction, which drives profits. We can't look away, so they get paid.

Retracing



THE KING JAMES BIBLE
Cornelis Boel, 1611

An early English translation of the Christian Bible commissioned in 1604 by King James VI and I.

For as long as we've been around, we've been curious. First, we were curious about which berries weren't poisonous, then we were curious about which crusade would happen next, now we're just dying to know about who looks most immobile at the Met gala. News has always been a response to the public's curiosity – the general need-to-know. Where there is necessity, profits can be made. And so, news – not THE news, just news – will exist (and has existed) for as long as we've been shaving.

Back in the dark ages, news dissemination relied on an oral tradition. Town criers and messengers relayed information to their communities and received tips in return. However, the advent of the printing press (attributed to William Caxton in the UK) marked a vital moment in the democratisation of information. Printing presses were initially only accessible to the elite: kings, clergy, scholars, and the affluent; who possessed the literacy skills necessary to engage with printed material. Early newspapers catered to this privileged demographic: disseminating news and advertising primarily in Latin, limiting their accessibility to a select few. This didn't last though. In a bid to quickly convert the whole country to a new religion, 16th Century Protestant Reformists ushered in the *King James Bible*, thus broadening access to literacy. Pamphlets and broadsheets emerged as influential mediums for spreading religious and political beliefs. They therefore also emerged as influential mediums for spreading propaganda and misinformation. Despite these advancements, widespread literacy remained elusive for the general populace, with education largely confined to upper segments of society.

The establishment of the first English newspaper in 1665, the *Oxford Gazette* (and later the *London Gazette*), birthed a new era of regular news delivery. Initially serving as a platform for official government communications, these early newspapers were printed in limited quantities and targeted narrow literate audiences. However, technological innovations such as the steam-powered press in the 18th century revolutionised the newspaper industry, enabling mass-production, distribution and reduced costs.

This new mass-printing changed the nature of news dissemination and public discourse, much like the new medium of social media has. The press assumed sensationalist, biased roles, and targeted their own specific audiences. Biased reporting clouded the truth, and it still does. The format of the original letterpress newsprint page had individual boxed sections for sale. The more you could afford or the larger your political sway, the larger box you could get. Although much has changed since, we forget that the algorithm we see every day works the exact same way. The larger your following, your controversy, your fame, the more likely you are to be on the app’s front page. And if you like seeing it, if you interact with it, you will be fed more of it. It’s so easy to forget, but despite social media’s vast grasp, it works the same as most previous information-sharing mediums.

THE LONDON GAZETTE.

Published by Authority.

From Monday, Septemb 3, to Monday, Septemp 10, 1666.

Whitethall, Sept. 8.

THE ordinary course of this paper having been interrupted by a sad and lamentable accident of Fire lately happened in the City of London: it hath been thought fit for satisfying the minds of so many of His Majesties good Subjects who must needs be concerned for the Issue of so great an accident, to give this short, but true Account of it. On the second instant, at one of the clock in the Morning, there happened to break out, a sad and deplorable Fire in *Parliament-street*, near *New Fish-street*, which falling out at that hour of the night, and in a quarter of the Town so close built with wooden pitched houses spread itself so far before day, and with such distraction to the inhabitants and Neighbours, that care was not taken for the timely preventing the further diffusion of it, by pulling down houses, as ought to have been; so that this lamentable Fire in a short time became too big to be mastered by any Engines or working near it. It fell out most unhappily too, That a violent Easterly wind fomented it, and kept it burning all that day, and the night following spreading itself up to *Grace-church-street* and downwards from *Cannon-street* to the Water-side, as far as the *Three Granes in the Vinton*.

The people in all parts about it, distracted by the vastness of it, and their particular care to carry away their Goods, many attempts were made to prevent the spreading of it by pulling down Houses, and making great Internals, but all in vain, the Fire seizing upon the Timber and Rubbish, and so continuing it set even through those spaces, and raging in a bright flame all Monday and Tuesday, not withstanding His Majesties own, and His Royal Highness's indefatigable and personal pains to apply all possible remedies to prevent it, calling upon and helping the people with their Guards; and a great number of Nobility and Gentry unwearily assisting therein, for which they were requited with a thousand blessings from the poor distressed people. By the favour of God the Wind slackened a little on Tuesday night & the Flames meeting with brick buildings at the *Temple*, by little and little it was observed to lose its force on that side, so that on Wednesday morning we began to hope well, and His Royal Highness never despairing or slackening his personal care wrought so well that day, assisted in some parts by the Lords of the Council before and behind it that a stop was put to it at the *Temple*.

Church, near *Holborn-bridge*, *Pie-corner*, *Aldersgate*, *Cripplegate*, near the lower end of *Colman-street*, at the end of *Dosin-hall-street* by the *Postern* at the upper end of *Bishopsgate-street* and *London-hall-street*, at the *Standard* in *Cornhill* at the church in *Fenchurch-street*, near *Cloth-workers Hall* in *Aldersgate-lane*, at the middle of *Mark-lane*, and at the *Tower-arch*.

On Thursday by the Blessing of God it was wholly beat down and extinguished. But so as that Evening it unhappily burst out again a fresh at the *Temple*, by the falling of some sparks (as it is supposed) upon a Pile of Wooden buildings; but His Royal Highness who watched there that whole night in Person, by the great labours and diligence used, and especially by applying Powder to blow up the Houses about it, before day most happily mastered it.

Divers Strangers, Dutch and French were, during the fire, apprehended, upon suspicion that they contributed mischievously to it, who are all imprisoned, and Informations prepared to make a severe inquisition here upon by my Lord Chief Justice *Kerling*, assisted by some of the Lords of the Privy Council; and some principal Members of the City, notwithstanding which suspicion, the manner of the burning all along in a Train, and so blown forwards in all its way by strong Winds, make us conclude the whole was an effect of an unhappy chance, or to speak better, the heavy hand of God upon us for our sins, shewing us the terror of his Judgement in thus raising the Fire, and immediately after his miraculous and never to be acknowledged Mercy, in putting a stop to it when we were in the last despair, and that all attempts for quenching it however industriously pursued seemed insufficient. His Majesty then set hourly in Council, and ever since hath continued making rounds about the City in all parts of it where the danger and mischief was greatest, till this morning that he hath sent his Grace the Duke of *Albany*, whom he hath called for to assist him in this great occasion, to put his happy and successful hand to the finishing this memorable deliverance.

About the *Tower* the seasonable orders given for plucking down the Houses to secure the Magazines of Powder was more especially successful, that part being up the Wind, notwithstanding which it came almost to the very Gates of it. So as by this early provision the general Stores of War lodged in the *Tower* were entirely saved: And we have further this intimate cause to give God thanks, that the Fire did not happen where

THE LONDON GAZETTE
London Authority, 1666

The official journals of the Government of the
United Kingdom, the most important among such.

Students of communication should realize that some phenomena in the media are older than is generally recognized. [...] Today’s television serials follow the model of radio serials, which in turn follow the model of the stories serialized in nineteenth-century magazines, from Dickens to Dostoevsky.

BRIGGS, BURKE, 2009

A SOCIAL HISTORY
OF THE MEDIA

Staying Literate

It's become so hard to gauge intention. Is the media being shown to me only here to spark my morbid curiosity, to harvest data from my prolonged digital interactions, to politically influence me? Who posted this, why did they post this, and were they paid? All questions which arise every time social media elicits my reaction... be it posted by a multinational news corporation or by my mate Steve. Now that we all have the instant Apple-enabled power to be journalists, designers and pundits, we too can (and do) contribute towards the moral blurring of the media landscape. However, unlike in most journalistic environments, social media liberates us from the shackles of an editor, a fact-checker, an unbiased third party. We can like, repost and favourite misinformation just as easily as we can cold-hard truths — and with AI's sprint into our homes, it's getting ever-harder to tell what's even real.

The technology improves daily, but the strange waxy glare remains. My peers and I can usually spot the difference between real and A(i)rtificial media, but as soon as AI images are presented to more mature, less tech-literate generations, the difference between reality and artificiality blurs. In the early stages of this project (when I was still deciding which aspect of media literacy to tackle) I presented my parents, my friends' parents, and some of their grandparents with AI generated images, along with real images – all black and white close-up photos of faces.

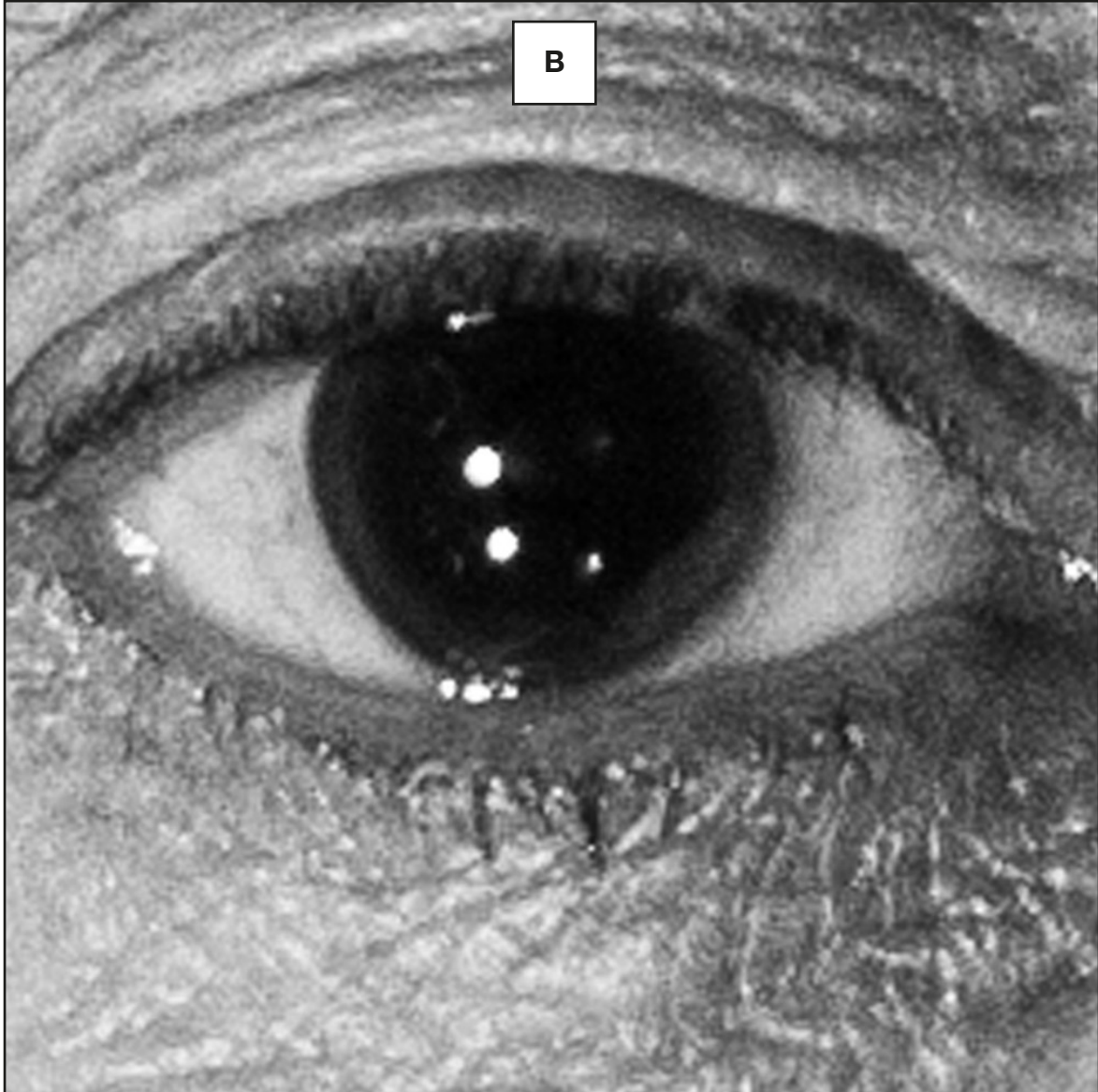
I quickly observed that those ranging from 20-35 years old could successfully decipher the real photo from the two AI generated images within about 15 seconds. Subjects aged from 40-60 would usually get the correct answer within 40 seconds. Out of the four 60+ participants, two successfully spotted the real image. This didn't necessarily surprise me, but their reaction to the test did. The older the participants got, the less aware they were that AI was even advanced enough to produce such realistic imagery, and they never imagined that higher powers could use the medium to lie to them. Although the final FACETS campaign departed from some of these initial explorations, the experiment taught me something about the wider state of media literacy: Those least informed within a medium are the most likely to be fooled by the lowest-quality media said medium can offer.



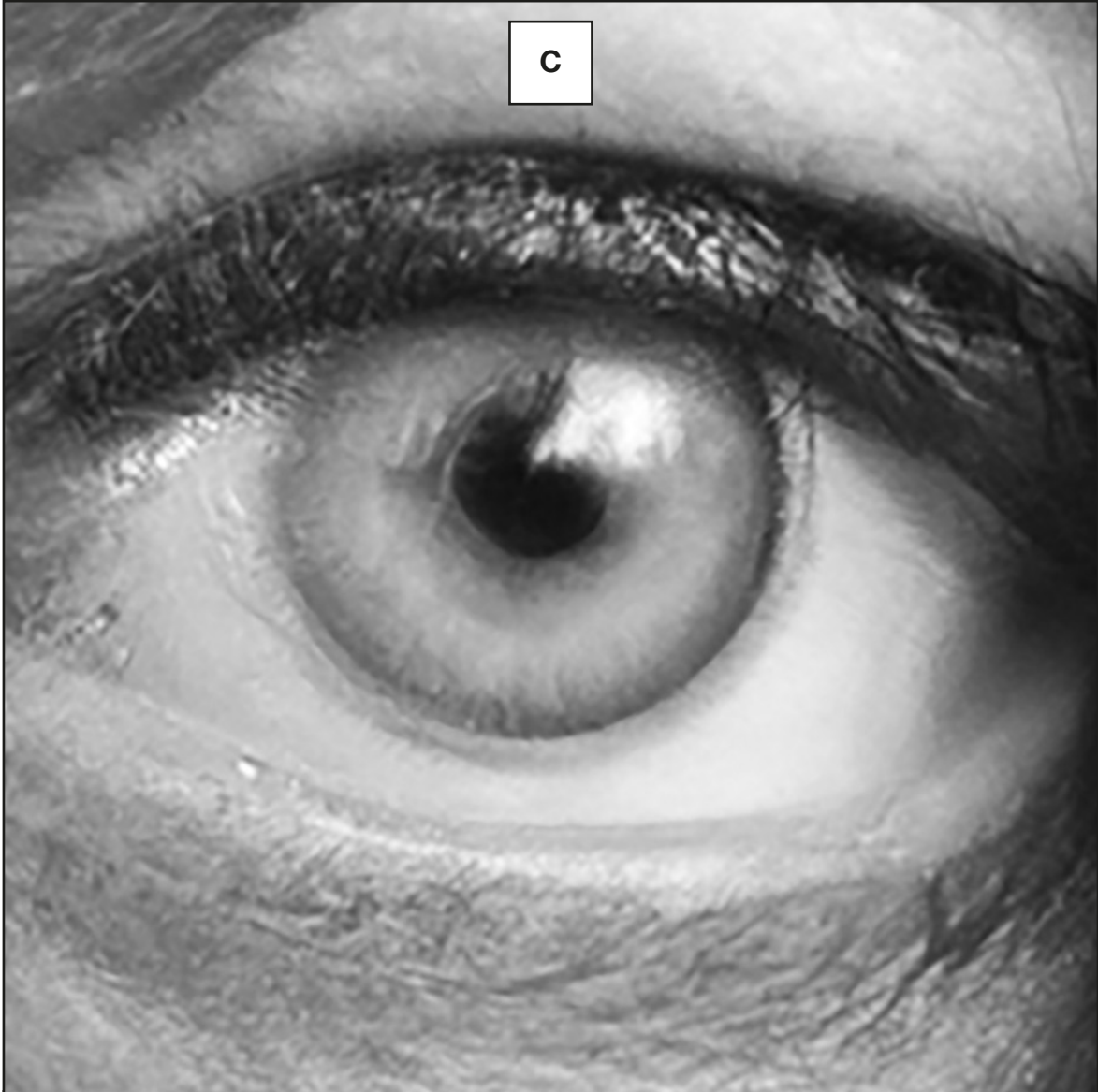
A

WHICH IS REAL
An AI Test

One of the images below is a photograph, the other two are AI generated.
Can you spot the difference? How long did it take?



B



C

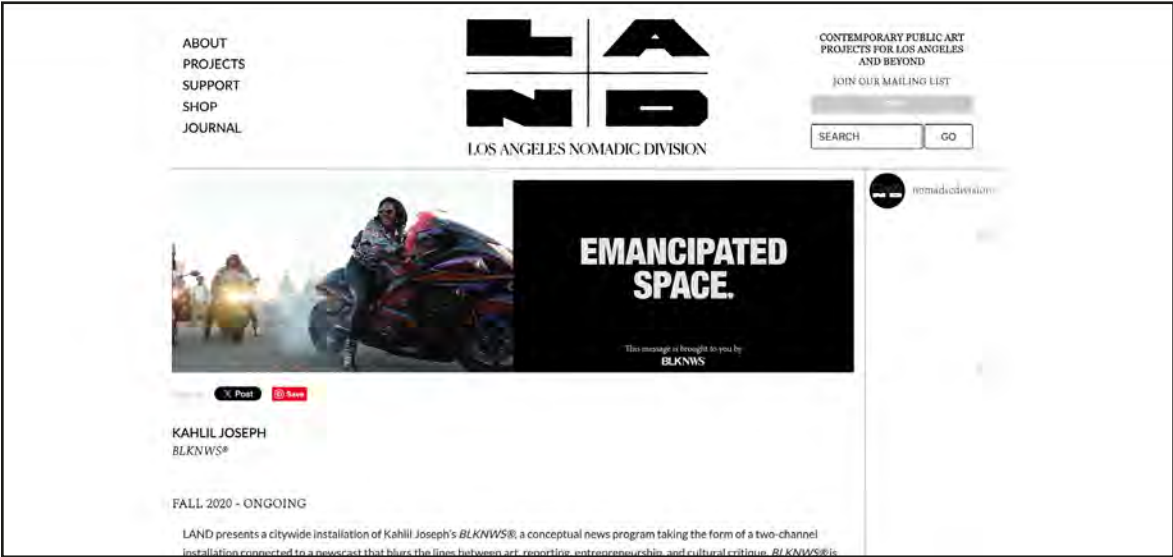
MADE WITH MIDJOURNEY AI
December 2023

Solution on P30.

Carving out Context

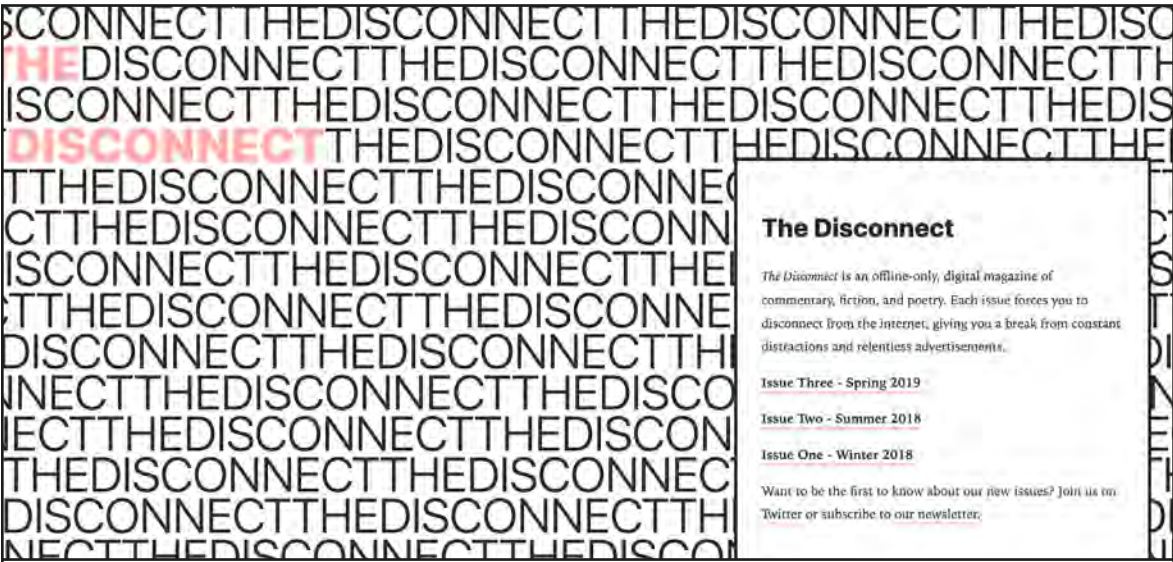
The initial inspiration for the viewpoint I’m attempting to develop in this project was born of Susan Sontag’s writings. Being an author, her work couldn’t influence my design style in the traditional sense, I had to look elsewhere for relevant, modern contextual references. And, thanks to my peers, these presented themselves to me as my project developed. It was through conversation with these same peers that many of the aspects of the wider FACETS campaign also developed. The main inspiration for the FACE FACTS website was *BLKNWS*® – an honest, analytical, artistic take on modern news media that doesn’t rely on social media trends to gain interaction. *BLKNWS*® is a ‘conceptual news program’ that serves as a work of art and as a media entity. It takes the form of a two-channel installation. This installation is connected to a newscast that ‘blurs the lines between art, reporting, entrepreneurship, and cultural critique’ (Joseph, 2020). I was fascinated by this alternative approach to such a traditional medium, and I loved that it had absolutely nothing in common with mainstream news channels.

Another reference, this time presented to me by my tutor, Ben Cain, made me examine how I could deal with issues regarding media literacy (without being so blunt as to show violent media). “*The Disconnect* is an offline-only, digital magazine of commentary, fiction, and poetry. Each issue forces you to disconnect from the internet, giving you a break from constant distractions and relentless advertisements.” (Bolin, 2019). I found this fascinating. The publication is anti-capitalist and, literally, puts its money where its mouth is. I wanted to do the same.



BLKNWS®
Kahlil Joseph, 2019

An installation, a film, a newscast. It’s ‘conceptual journalism’.
Simultaneously a work of art and a media entity



THE DISCONNECT
Chris Bolin, 2019

An offline-only, digital magazine of commentary, fiction, and poetry
forcing readers to disconnect before accessing.



A typeface inspired by *The Redaction* by Titus Kaphar and Reginald Dwayne Betts

NXTIVN / August - September 26

REDACTION
Redaction Type, 2019

A bespoke, open-source, variable, serif typeface reflecting the vast injustice present in the American social system.

Inspiration for this project also came from the typography used within its identity. I was fortunate enough to stumble across ‘*Redaction*’ – an open-source, variable typeface which gradually becomes more pixelated and, therefore, becomes more illegible. The typeface (Redaction, 2019) was commissioned by Titus Kaphar and Reginald Dwayne Betts’ for *The Redaction* exhibition at MoMA. Their exhibit tackles issues regarding the legal system and social justice in America. And the font, in a bid to “make tools accessible to a global audience”, is royalty-free. This embodied the spirit of FACETS, and the typeface would define my design going forward.

Seeing the unusual, engaging ways in which both *BLKNWS*® and Disconnect get their ideology across inspired me to reconsider the initial direction of my campaign. Much of the early FACETS work consisted of making animated assets for a social media campaign. I soon realised this was hypocrisy. The whole point of FACETS is to encourage people to take a break from social media – making a campaign on said medium felt counterproductive. I needed to produce an outcome that engaged with the audience when least expected, that somehow could grasp their attention. It would have to be interactive, educational, and instant. I wanted to get Facets into peoples’ hands and homes. If I couldn’t have social media on my side, I would have to ‘trick’ my audience into physically engaging with it.

Design Approach

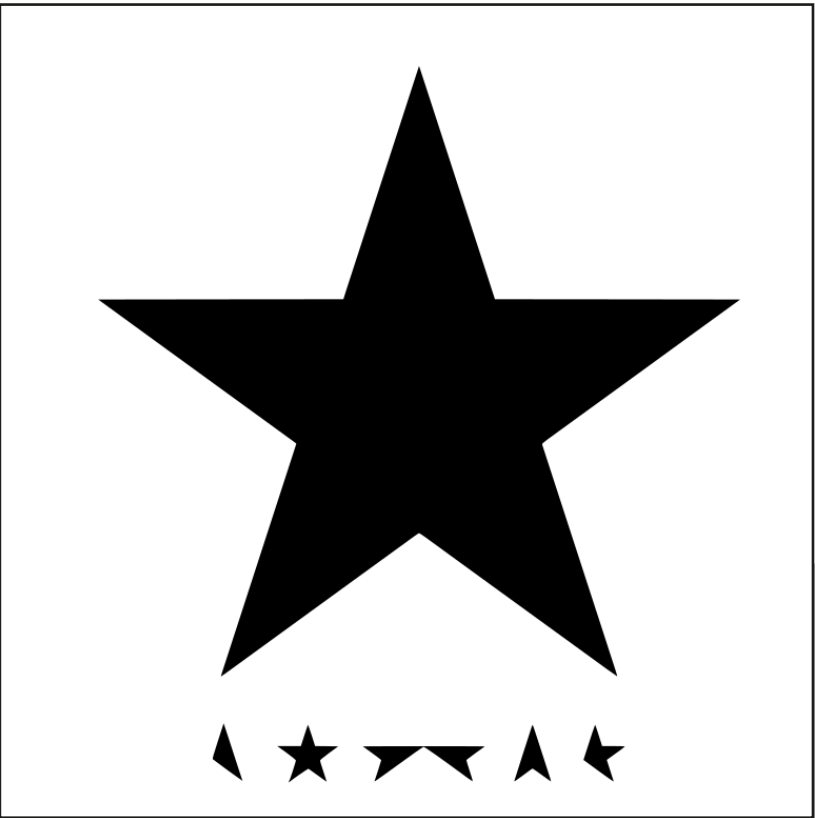


BBC TV
BBC LOGO, 1963

Original BBC spinning globe logo used in the 60s. I've always wanted to create my own version.

My initial design style came from a recent enjoyment of Jonathan Barnbrook's work. A CSM graduate, his style is structured and bold, simple, and uses lots of geometric shapes. Though my final campaign identity I departed from his direct influence, his thoughts on graphic design as a medium, approach towards colour, brave typographic choices and unique use of symbols all reflected a way of working that I love. The identity I alone didn't need intention, the design needed it too. My colour scheme would have to be clearly defined and striking, it had to con-note danger, emergency, immediate action. Colour is vital towards perception, and if I wanted the campaign to be as effective at resensitising as social media is at desensitising, then I would have to introduce a colour to represent that. I chose a vibrant red – almost an orange, #ff2807 to be precise. Bright on paper, bright on screens – it screams violence, but also exaggerates the design of sensationalist 'red-top' tabloids.

Many of my design choices parodied newspaper conventions: the grid developed within this report and within the guerilla marketing assets pays homage to the broad-sheet layout and dimensions of the Times; the condensed, tightly kerned and sensationalist bold serif headlines of the *Daily Mail*; the spinning-globe logo even pays homage to the BBC's 1960s logo.



DAVID BOWIE – BLACKSTAR
Designed by Jonathan Barnbrook, 2016

Barnbrook's work is vast, varied and impactful. I've always loved this album cover.

#FF2807

#FFFFFF

#000000

added that it might yet prove to be a 'smart gamble'. A source close to the PM acknowledged there was 'no perfect time' to go to the polls. But he

Turn to Page 2

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Turn to Page 2

Collaborate and Conquer



RA SCHOOLS SHOWS
Identity by All Purpose Studio, 2023

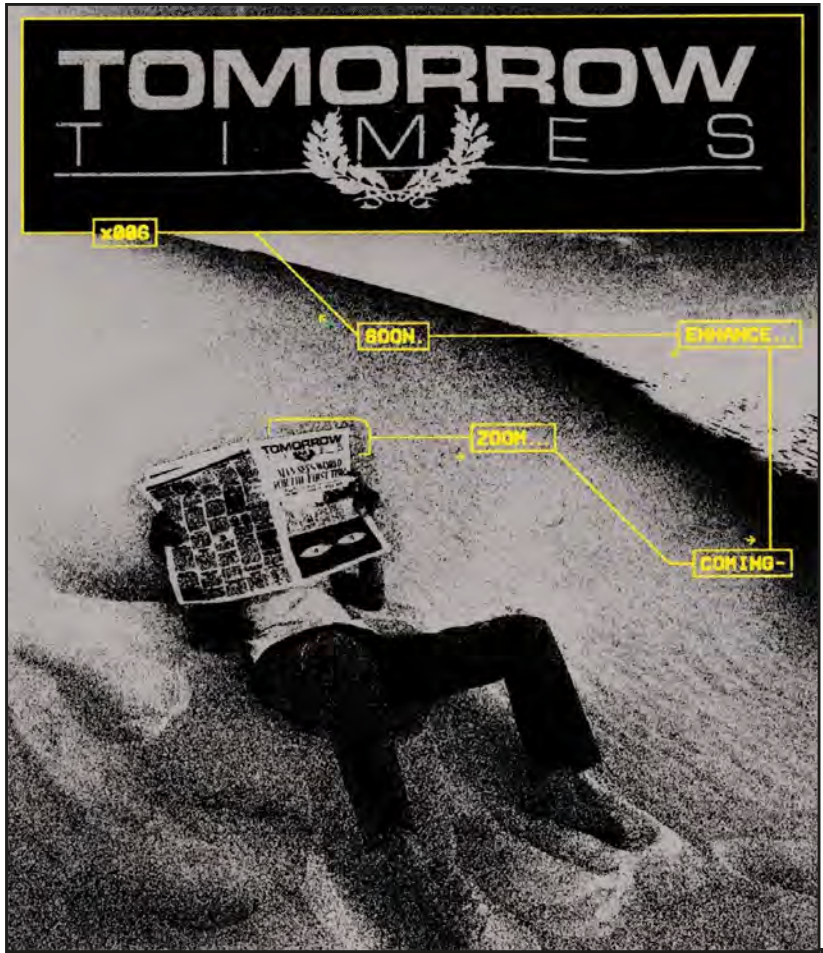
The studio somehow got RA to run with an identity that strives to be ugly. Love it.

The ‘Yesterdays Tomorrow’ talks, hosted at Chelsea College of Arts, have really helped reshape my approach to design, my approach to community, and my hopes for my future. These talks were hosted by my close friends at Chelsea, and had a huge CSM GCD turnout.

Here we were able to learn and hear from studios like Future Figures, All Purpose and Cave – all started by close mates who were passionate about design, and who have built impressive portfolios through collaboration and generosity. And going to the pub with them after was enlightening two. You can learn a lot over a pint or two!

Motion is key when it comes to grabbing the attention of an audience in this, the six-second-snippet generation. After all, one of the reasons we’ve become so desensitised is because of our (relatively new) ability to see violence not only statically, but also in action. All Purpose were some of the first designers to develop the animated, typographic posters that we now see everywhere. They use bold, bright colours, and unconventional forms to produce graphics that you can’t look away from.

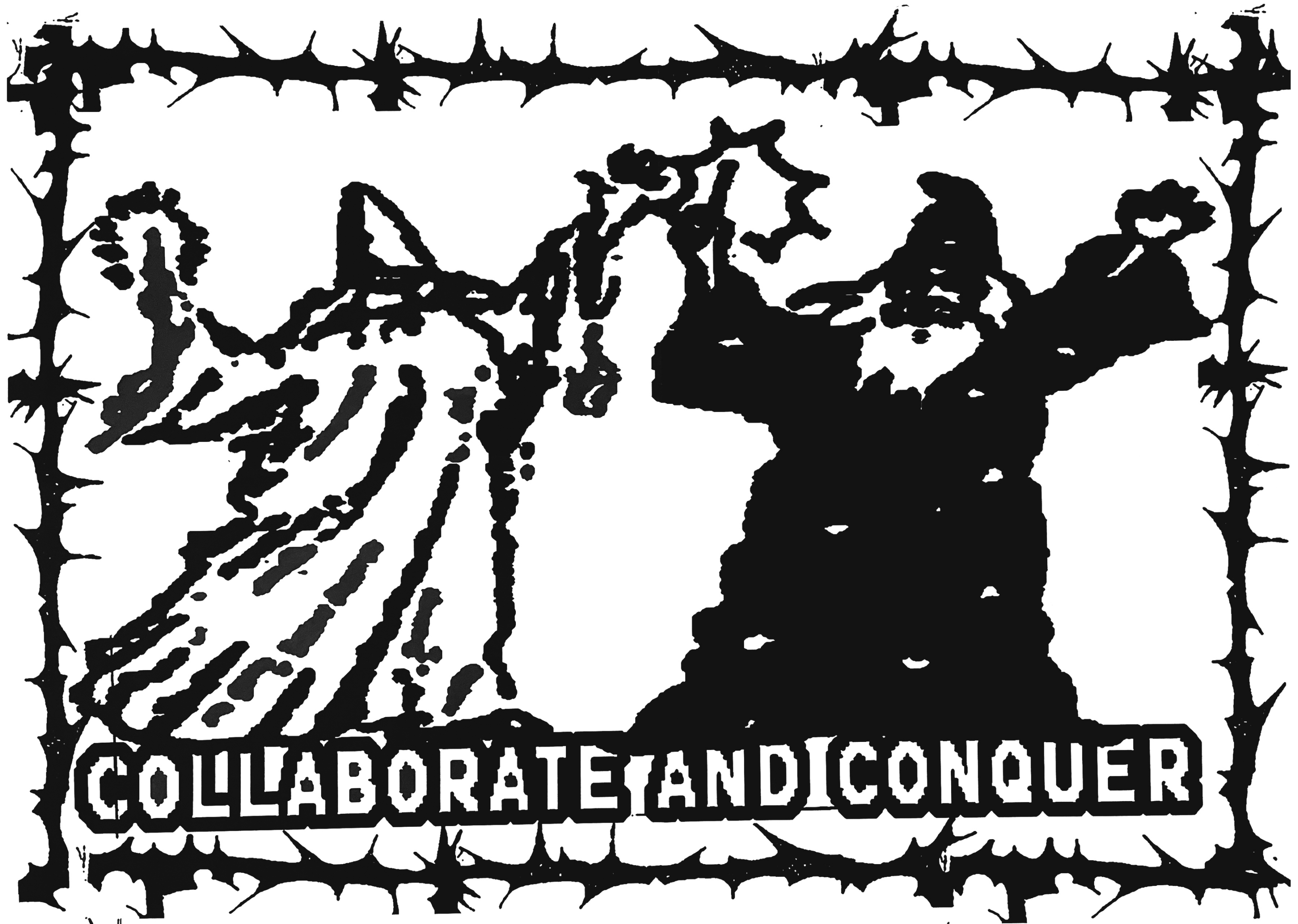
Despite the studio’s very serious clients, their approach seems to remain constantly playful. Their work for the RA Graduate Shows, a traditional British institution, was so far from convention and comfort that even the designers were shocked that it was used. The issue I’m trying to tackle is serious and universally relevant. How can we re-sensitise? I’m tired and I can’t stop thinking about it. I don’t want my design to make people miserable. I can’t keep saying “the media we consume is causing irreversible damage to our perceptions of each other.” I want to re-sensitise not further desensitise. My final project started as a bleak archival endeavour, using as much violent, graphic imagery as I could find. To somehow invoke the opposite effect? Impossible. Seeing this studio’s work, I knew I had to take a break from the monochrome grid I’d gotten so used to. I had to deal with censorship in a less obvious way – I had to acknowledge that images evoke specific emotions based on individual lived experiences. If I really want to design for everyone, then images should not be used in this project at all.



TOMORROW TIMES
Cave Studio, 2023

A human-designed, AI imagery generated newspaper satirising recent technological advancement.

At the end of their lecture, the studio gave a few students some zines full of A2 posters. I was lucky enough to get one of these. Everyone kept theirs. I would have kept mine too had Monica not suggested I share it, “Who needs 32 posters?” (Okello, 2024). The act of sharing the posters with my fellow art-starved design students felt so much nicer than receiving the zine in the first place. I kept one poster. It hangs above my door. ‘Collaborate and Conquer’.



COLLABORATE AND CONQUER
Bate, Lichen Books, 2023

From a book comprised of 32 pull out A2 posters — this one hangs above my door. It motivates me.

My final project would not be the same without my family. My mother's history and my father's practice have always hugely influenced my work. And, having no siblings, I'm fortunate enough to choose my brothers and sisters. We all constantly talk about our project. We share insights, experiences and honest critique. My attitude wouldn't be as open without Samy. My work wouldn't be as honest without Georgia. My passion for design wouldn't exist without my father... I could go on. Constantly sharing my work with people whose eye I trust, who I look up to as creatives, has, more than anything, made me a more polished practitioner, and a more caring person. I want to communicate work for everyone, digestible and understandable by all, that remains visually relevant and actually informs.

This attitude drove the design for this year's CSM SHOWS: 2024 graduate showcase – a project just as vital towards my practice as FACE FACTS. I want my work to be at least industry standard. This was a huge opportunity to produce something that will be seen by the industry and was only made possible through collaboration with my dream-team mates – Rafi and Tim. Together we conceptualised, designed and produced Flux. Flux's identity is inspired by the motion seen in split-flap transit display boards – representative of the process of creatively finding ourselves through movement, through expression. The three of us were immensely proud of the outcome.



CENTRAL SAINT MARTINS SHOWS 2024
Designed Identity by Rafi, Tim and Lucas, February – May 2024

Watching our identity evolve from a really simple idea into a whole design system, and now, seeing it up around the University, it all feels too good to be true.

A Portfolio Piece

To introduce a subject as serious as violent media desensitisation, and then sprinkle links to my own personal practice throughout this report seems a little wrong. An onanism. Some self-gratification in the face of a stark problem that likely won't improve. Media is in a downwards spiral. I repeat, all media is in a downwards spiral. But The Brief gets what it wants.

My practice alone will never fix this. The often elitist, polished work we produce within our graphically-designed bubble rarely serves anyone but ourselves or those like us – those who have the time to engage, and those that have relevant contextual and cultural knowledge to digest it. Then again, most media out there is low-quality, propagandistic nothingness made to unify (and divide) masses into target audiences – serving last those who rely on media the most. Brainwashing them instead.

“Graphic design is at the heart of capitalism. It's the heart of encouraging consumption – you are consenting to that as a graphic designer.” (Barnbrook, 2020).

If I want to ‘succeed’ as a designer, not only in my individual practice, but as part of a collective industry, I will likely sometimes find myself producing guideline-led, brand driven clichés, only adding to an already repetitive media landscape. Why? Because this is the avenue to success always presented to me, and I would love to do well. And it's hard to do anything new. But I feel torn. I really enjoyed working on the Graduate Showcase identity despite my misalignment with much of our university's ideology. Truth be, I also enjoyed producing it just for my portfolio. I loved designing the window graphics and bus stop ads in particular – creating outcomes produced at large scale, that get seen and recognised. We had to work to a strict set of guidelines, developing a whole graphic system. It was hard, precise work, and adapting the initial design across dozens of different formats was challenging but interesting and fun. I think I'll probably spend my career trying to find a balance between producing effective commercial work I find cool in scale, and personal work I find conceptually interesting and ethically sound.

Graphic design is at the heart of capitalism. It's the heart of encouraging consumption – you are consenting to that as a graphic designer. [...]

There is satisfaction in communicating to wide audiences with graphic design – that's one of the great things about it.”

BARNBROOK, 2020

**BARNBROOK ON
HOW WE CAN BUILD
A BETTER INDUSTRY**



VIOLENT MEDIA HAS AN IMPACT ON YOU
UV Print on Acrylic, April 2024

Imagining how, in addition to a guerilla campaign, I could attract different audiences. Inspired by BLKNWS® (P18), I began considering how FACETS could be activated in an installation setting.

Seeing practitioners like All Purpose made me really want to have my own studio: a wacky but honest one. Introspective, retrospective, mad respective with a clear directive: Design for everyone. But I do not create in isolation. I need my like-minded peers. I need to learn how a design studio works. I need to watch and work and wisen up. I'm nowhere near the goal yet. But I can still make work I'm passionate about.

FACETS is relevant within my portfolio as it shows my passions: media literacy, typography and free art. I love the idea of giving people something they can appreciate for its aesthetic – an aesthetic that could potentially lead to an interest in the message. FACETS also illustrates my desire to work across multiple mediums, from UV printing on glass to After Effects animation – or maybe it demonstrates how confined I feel when attempting to work in a singular one. I got to experiment extensively, and printing on newsprint was no easy task, but every mistake and resulting edit only contributed to the development of a more well-rounded outcome.

Facets – Face

I feel the first step towards resensitisation is consciously wanting to alter your relationship with violent media. I've resensitised myself as this project has developed. I've altered my media consumption. In the process, I feel I've become a more compassionate, collaborative, caring creative. That being said, I've only achieved this through extensive reading and research. My constant aim throughout my research has therefore been to encourage people to read. Unfortunately, to quote my tutor Tomi, "Nobody wants to read these days, reading isn't sexy" (Adefioye, 2024). I therefore had to develop an engaging (sexy?) design.

The key element in the FACETS guerilla campaign: The FACE FACTS leaflet swiftly slides into unassuming commuter’s Newspapers. When they open the leaflet, they get a healthy dose of designed information, and a poster they can take home reminding them to switch off.

I believe my campaign achieves that. The format of the guerilla leaflets encourages interaction and participation, and those who have tested the campaign site have all dedicated time to reading and exploring. I won’t know if the campaign is successful until I mass produce the leaflets though. Which is what’s happening as soon as this report is printed. More importantly than all of this, I’ve produced an outcome I’m proud of that brings light to a subject that I’m genuinely passionate about.

You can just plant a seed: tell people that consuming violent media is bad, and hope it sprouts and spurts and grows all on its own, hope people engage and opinions change through sheer sparked curiosity; Or you could plant the seed and water it. Give it some love, some time, let its pollen spread. I have my campaign designed and conceptualised; Now I’ve got to get it out there. That’s what’s missing. That’s what’s next.

Fin.

P16 SOLUTION

B IS REAL

WORD COUNT: 5029

It's going to get worse before it gets better.

PRODUCE CONSCIOUS DESIGN
THEN SWITCH OFF.



FACE FACTS
Unit 10 Critical Report publication by Lucas Parfitt

Thank you for taking the time to read and engage, I hope you found this report interesting and insightful. Visit the FACETS site if you would like to learn more!

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YOU CAN LOOK AWAY!

SLEEP

IT'S
NOT
WORTH
THE
THRILL

STOP.

SHIT
OUT

LOG
OUT

SELF
CENSOR

AVERT
YOUR
GAZE

IT'S
NOT
WORTH
THE
THRILL