



Unit 2: Positions through iterating
 Dellana N. / Written Response
 20036676

PART 1

- 1 reference from the reading list: Roland Barthes – Death of Author
- 1 reference from the reading list: Sara Ahmed – Living a Feminist Life
- 1 from your own research: Technopoly – Neil Postman
- 1 from your own research: Media Images of The Poor – Heather E. Bullock, Karen Fraser Wyche, Wendy R. Williams
- 1 practice or project: SCUMB Manifesto
- 1 practice or project: Emotional or Extra-Rational Responses to Objects workshop by Judy Willcock at CSM Museum

Accompanied by short statement 100-200 words, explaining how the reference enhances or challenges your understanding of your specific area of interest

PART 2

*A short statement 100-200 words that articulates your line of enquiry. What are you researching, and how?

On the first week, we made a hundred iterations. I chose to start with newspaper as a topic and collage as a method without knowing what can I do later. I did the collage making by slicing images from one newspaper headlines to see if there is any possibility to create a hundred out of the same page again and again. After making a hundred iterations, we discussed and got time to reflect on our projects. The visualization of my collage works are made of the response of highlight events in Indonesia for a decade (2012-2022), I made twenty of them and the rests are just formal expressions with no deep meaning. Then I tried to bind them in order of visual elements similarities, thus they are gradually changing from a certain shape into another shape.



In *Technopoly* (1993), Neil Postman stated that by the end of the nineteenth century, advertisers and newspapermen had discovered that a picture was worth not only a thousand words but, in terms of sales, many thousand of dollars while a thousand pictures might be worth nothing at all. This makes me reflect to the time I made the collages, I was sick of it. Since after twenty pieces, the rests are not having any meaning at all. I was sick of seeing the

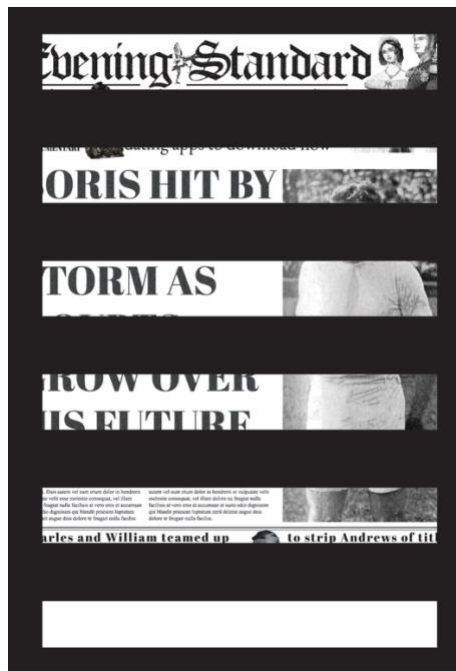
same images and recreating something all over again while hoping something changed, such as the story, the perspective, the positioning. I also think that is how media works, they force-feed you with some stories you—might be—do not really care about until you eventually ‘care’ enough to read and digest stories that—might be—unbeneficial at all.

*I always like how newspaper is being made since twentieth century, until now, where they are shifting in a paperless world but people still having them printed, and you can even have them for free in change of being fed with hundreds of advertisements. I also like the elements of a newspaper where the designers have to put many informations in a limited space and grid system. Then, I focused on rethinking how they show story they want *you* to read rather than focusing on the objectivity, how this media framing the news to *play* with readers interpretation. I move forward with this premise: Using digital newspaper collage as the methods to reconfigure the visual elements to play with readers expectation. As I tried to think this key idea further, I ended up with some experiments which might work or not: Different ways to read a newspaper.

TO START WITH

I analyze the visual hierarchy of the free newspaper headlines, I focused on Evening Standard and found a pattern in how they use the grid. The interesting points are:

- They *always* use unrelated images and headline texts. This is quite interesting because I usually read headline texts match with the image as illustration. This, however, can build different interpretations depends on how reader digest the headlines in a speed reading.
- The use of Prince William photograph as the thumbnail of his sexual abuse case is also interesting, where usually I see the victim’s photograph on the headline, rather than the suspect. From what I usually read, media also use passive words for news that reporting a crime case done by men and sometime they add some words with the intention to smoothly ‘justify’ the crime done by them. (i.e, *A Woman Raped by Twelve Men while Walking Alone at Night* rather than just using *Twelve Men Raped a Woman* as a headline). Media, dominated by white men (or generally, men) they often use image of women as an objectification, this supported by an article released by The Guardian, where it said photography is a male-dominated medium and its monopoly on meaning and value. On the same article, Kurland also said that the history of photography is filled with women, and there is no excuse or justification for their exclusion.
- They use unrelated image and text on the headlines, it is interesting to know what is the decision behind which image as the highlight, which text used as headlines. I see it as an attempt to do the framing. As stated by Entman (1995) framing refers to “selecting and highlighting some elements of reality and suppressing others, in a way that constructs a story about a social problem, its causes, its moral nature and its possible remedies” (p. 142)



THE EXPERIMENTS

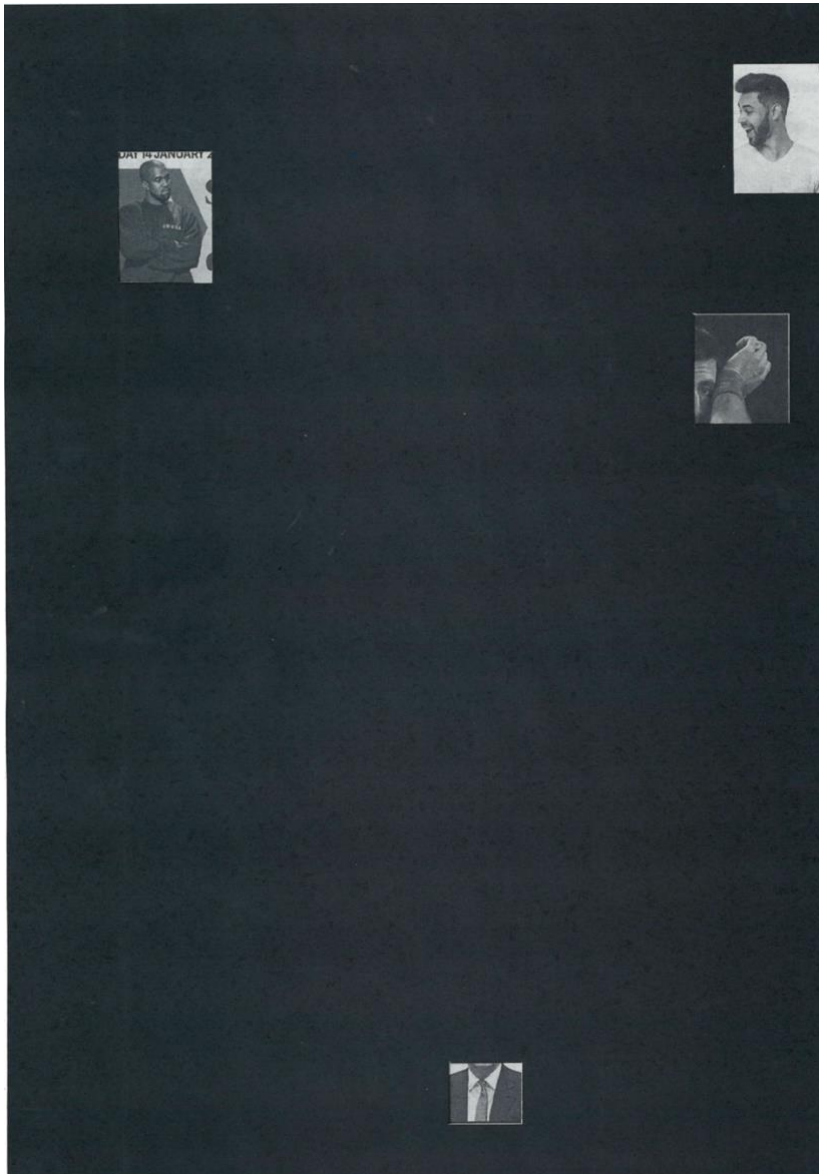
1st attempt: Recreating the newspaper as if it released in the past. I used similar images from vintage newspaper and put them into today's newspaper to see if there is something interesting. I do not find this method is meaningful anyway, just want to see how it ends if I made it this way.

2nd attempt: Cropping the real newspaper and the recreated one, I also blocked some parts to see if there is something to think about, turned out nothing is interesting—at least for me.

3rd attempt: Blocking the pages and showing small fragments out of the newspaper and see if there is any new interpretation if I done that. I think this might work, but I have not made plenty of them yet to see how it ends.

4th attempt: Reconfiguring the text and the images into a 'new' newspaper headline to build different context. I found similar project done by Justine Kurland, SCUMB (Society for Cutting Up Men's Books) Manifesto. She is reworking the photography canon by dismembering and reconfiguring images from 150 books by white male photographers and photography canon. Her collage is both challenging the patriarchy and raising issues around authorship and respect. There is similarities in method from what I have done on previous iterations; making a hundred collages out of the same newspaper headlines. What I can reflect from that, is how I can build new meanings—even provocative—out of the same images over and over again.

According to Sara Ahmed in *Living a Feminist Life*, she stated that she began to realize what she already knew: that patriarchal reasoning goes all the way down, to the letter, to the bone. She had to find ways not to reproduce its grammar in what she said, in what she wrote; in what she did, in who she was (p. 4). To use this as one of references, the last attempt is the closest method to what I want to communicate, that how media (in Kurland's work is



photography canon books) make you sick of it, because it is male-dominated, showing a contextualized reality, and how we try to criticize them by reconfiguring it. Media also show you what they *want* you to read and framing the narrative to build a particular interpretation. As an example, I did not read the footnote article on the headlines as I created the collage iterations, I did not expect that the man, who later I found out he is Prince Andrew, has a sexual abuse case twenty years ago. Related to the context, I searched for another image of the case and juxtapose them into unrelated headlines about Fathers Day that I made using the letters from the existing headline. To make it a full page of newspaper headline, I put Queen image next to dating apps

ad text, they are not related, but anyone who follows the royal family story can find it a bit humourous—or offensive?—to put those contents side by side. This invites unconscious bias that influences the objectivity.

This also relates to what I learned from Emotional or Extra-Rational Response to Objects workshop by Judy Willcock few weeks ago, where an object could build different meaning depends on the reader—even if there is no intention from the author at all. There are three themes in responding to an object where a magic moment happens between the people and the object. The first one is Personal Responses which divided into two subthemes: emotional and physical response. In this theme, people can make a single judgement based on their immediate reaction and stimulation of being engaged with the object. The second one is Relationship to Previous Experience which influenced by memories, cultural & social, and habituated responses. This explained that those influence will make people feel or think about the object in different ways. The last one is Empathy for Objects which divided into imagination and feeling & meaning, this can make people imagining and reshaping the perception of a certain object.

The second theme is a practice that strongly happened in this Unit 2 project, where the meaning of our project can be interpreted differently by the readers—our friends, without explanation of the author—us. Somehow, I always have the urge to ask my friend—or explaining to them, what is the meaning behind the work as in Barthes' *the Death of the Author*, the explanation of a work is always sought in the man or woman who produced it. Although, in this digital era, I do not think the author is dead, they are more alive than before. They can like the artworks or good review on social media and reply to the critics to make the reader *understand* their intention in the way they *want* you to understand. In this project, I tried to remake how the media works: showing fragments and framing content to build context. Without explaining what was my intention in creating the artworks, I can see various feedback and different object reading from the readers to expand my perspectives.

In our first week iterations making, where we do not consider any context, we did not think about research, we were only thinking about the form of the outcomes, and spent time in making the outcomes. Muratovski (2015) stated that rather than conducting research, most designers usually focus on investigating form, style, and process of making, without taking into consideration the broader context in which their designs will be used. Only in the second week, we started to think deeper, looking for meaningful outcomes, finding outline between artworks. We also had time to reflect the feedbacks, reflect which project that inspires us, and how is the content in general, and what decision we made while in making process. Highlighting statement by Houman: "It might not work, but it is okay." We can use this opportunity to take the risk.

References

- Ahmed, S. (2017) *Living a feminist life*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Barthes, R. (1977) *Death of the Author*. London: Fontana Press.
- Bullock, H.E., Wyche, K.F., Williams, W.R., (2001) *Media Images of the Poor*. California: Journal of Social Issues. Vol. 57, No. 2, pp. 229-246.
- Muratovski, G. (2015) *Research for Designers a Guide to Methods and Practice*. California: Sage Publications.
- Postman, N. (1993) *Technopoly*. New York: Vintage Books Division of Random House, Inc.
- O'Hagan, S. (23 April 2022) 'Snip it up and start again: the woman who's reworking the photography canon', The Guardian. Available at <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2022/apr/23/justine-kurland-a-new-scumb-manifesto-photography-collage-cut-up> (Accessed: 5 May 2022)