

Beyond Words:
Visualising Change through Graphic Design and Feminist Magazines
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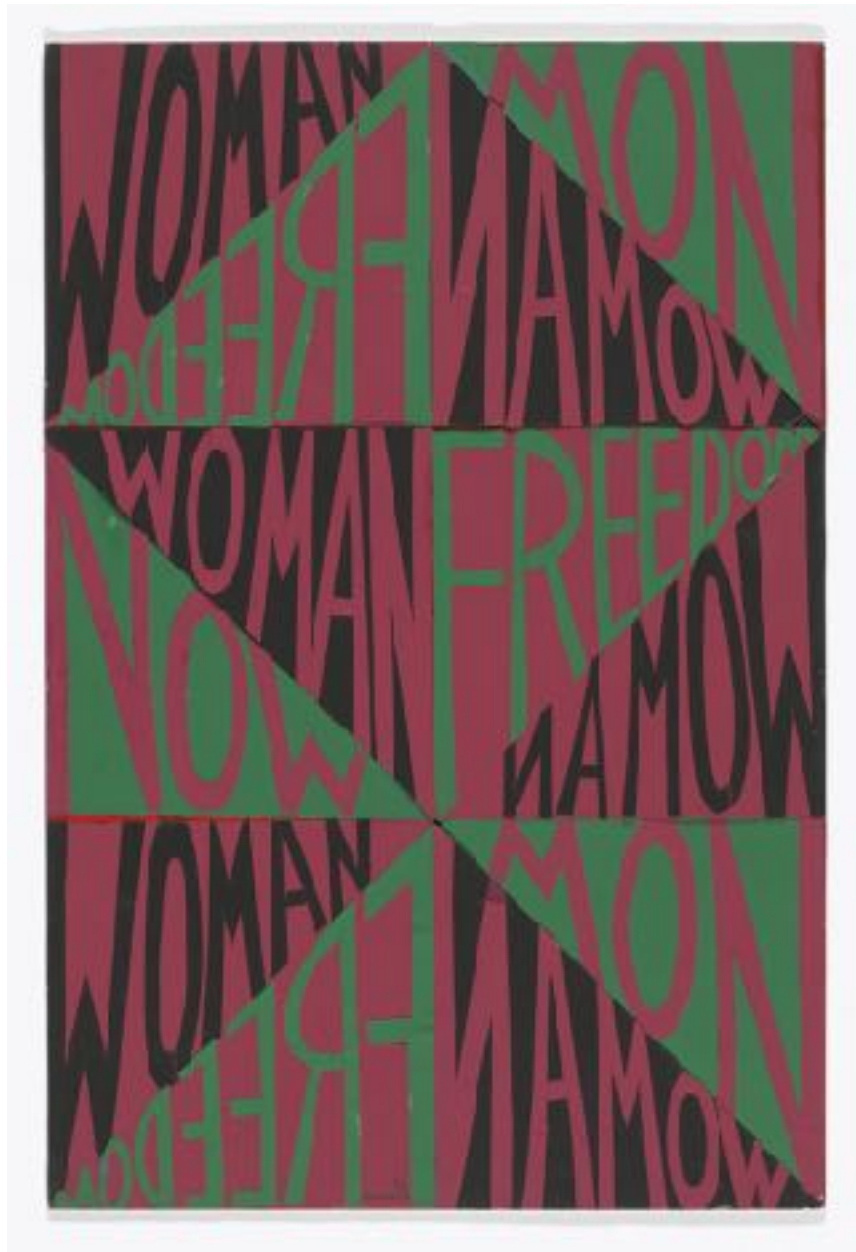


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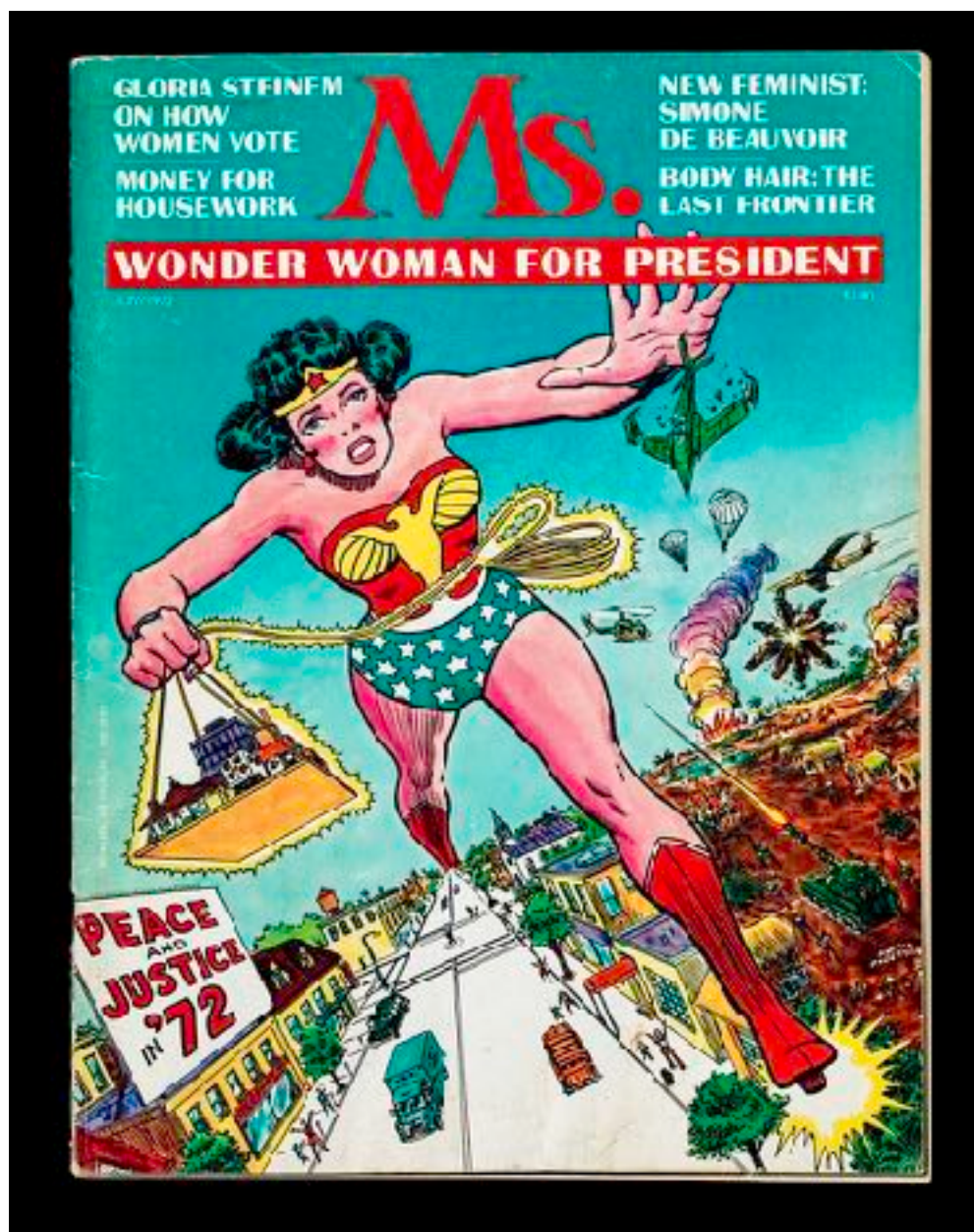


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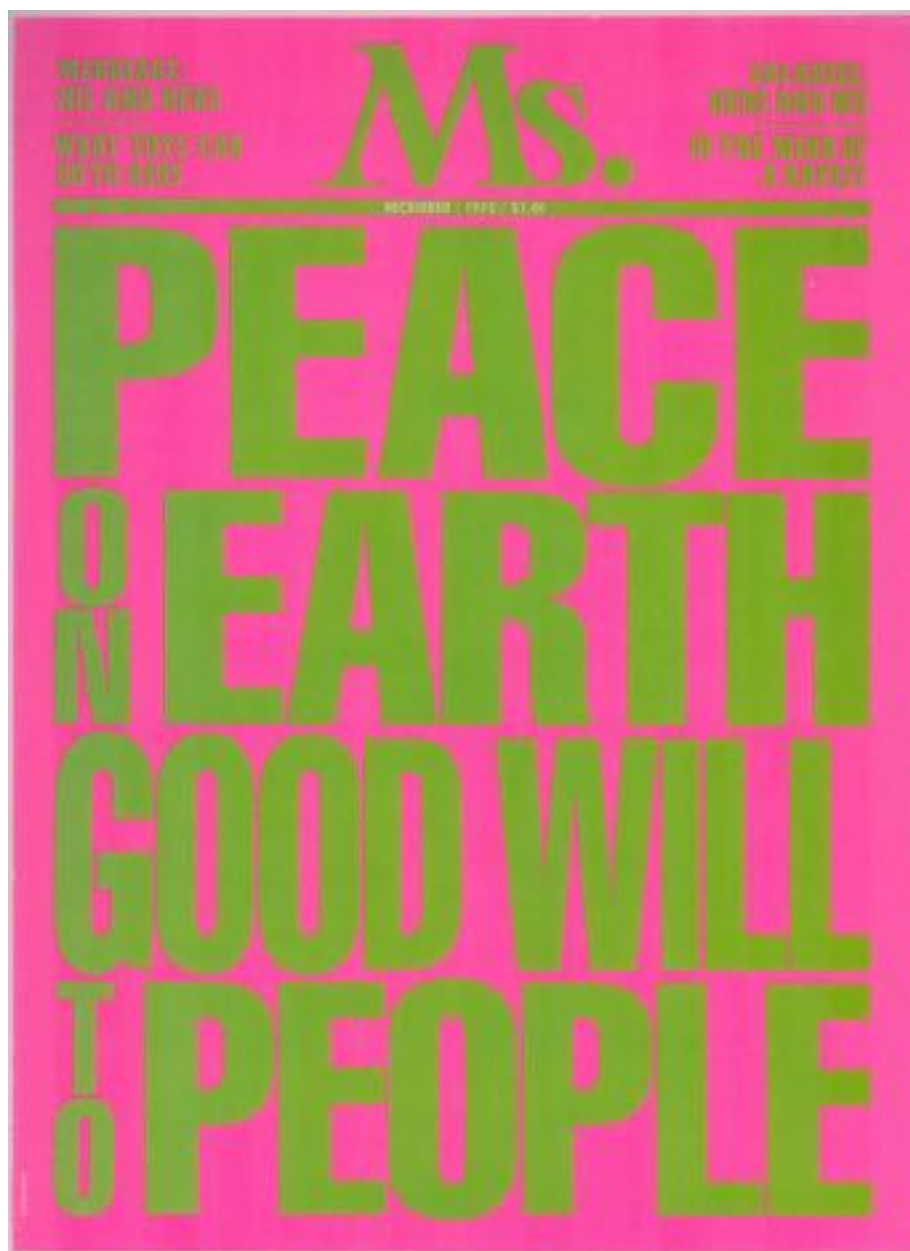


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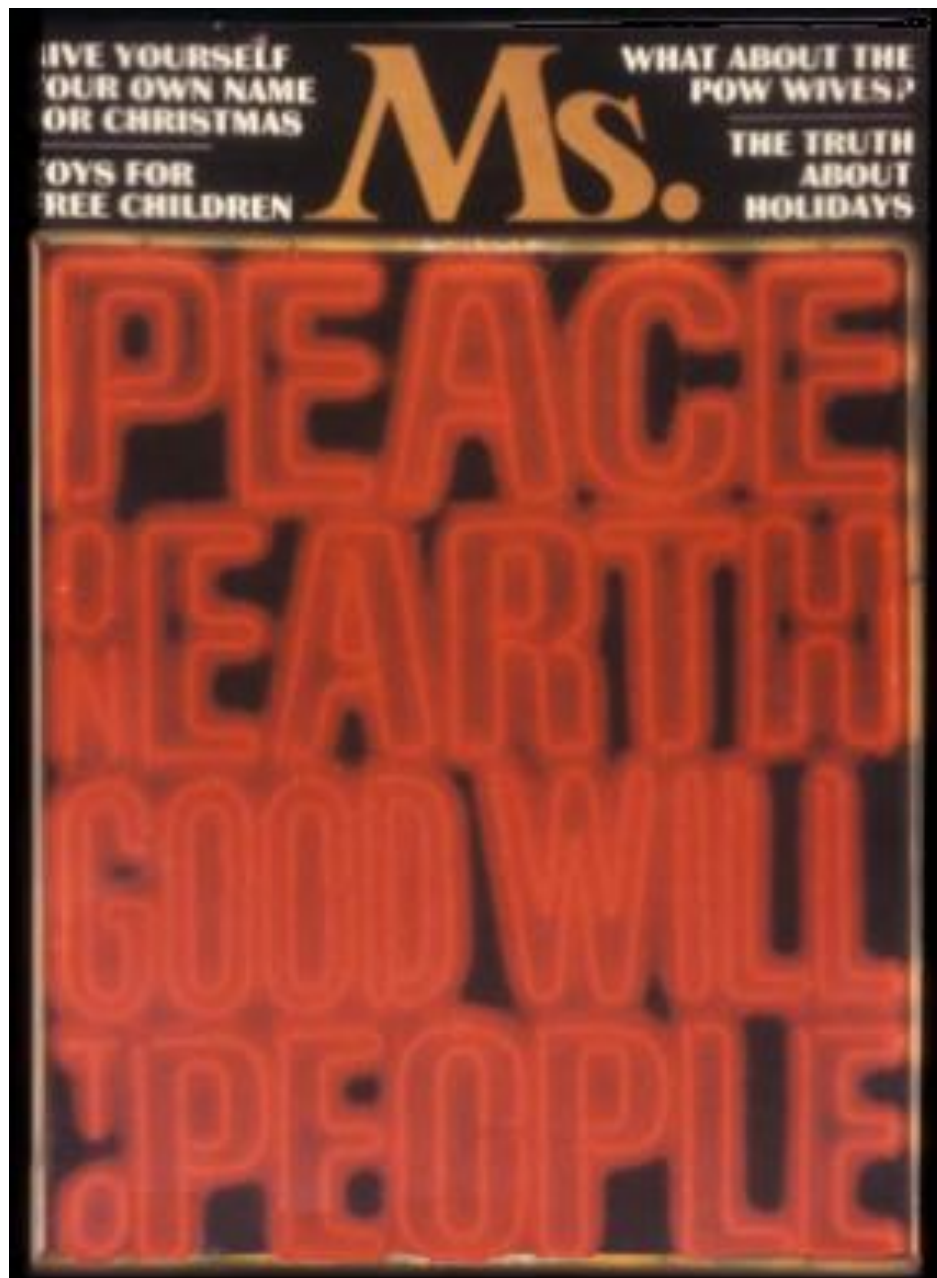


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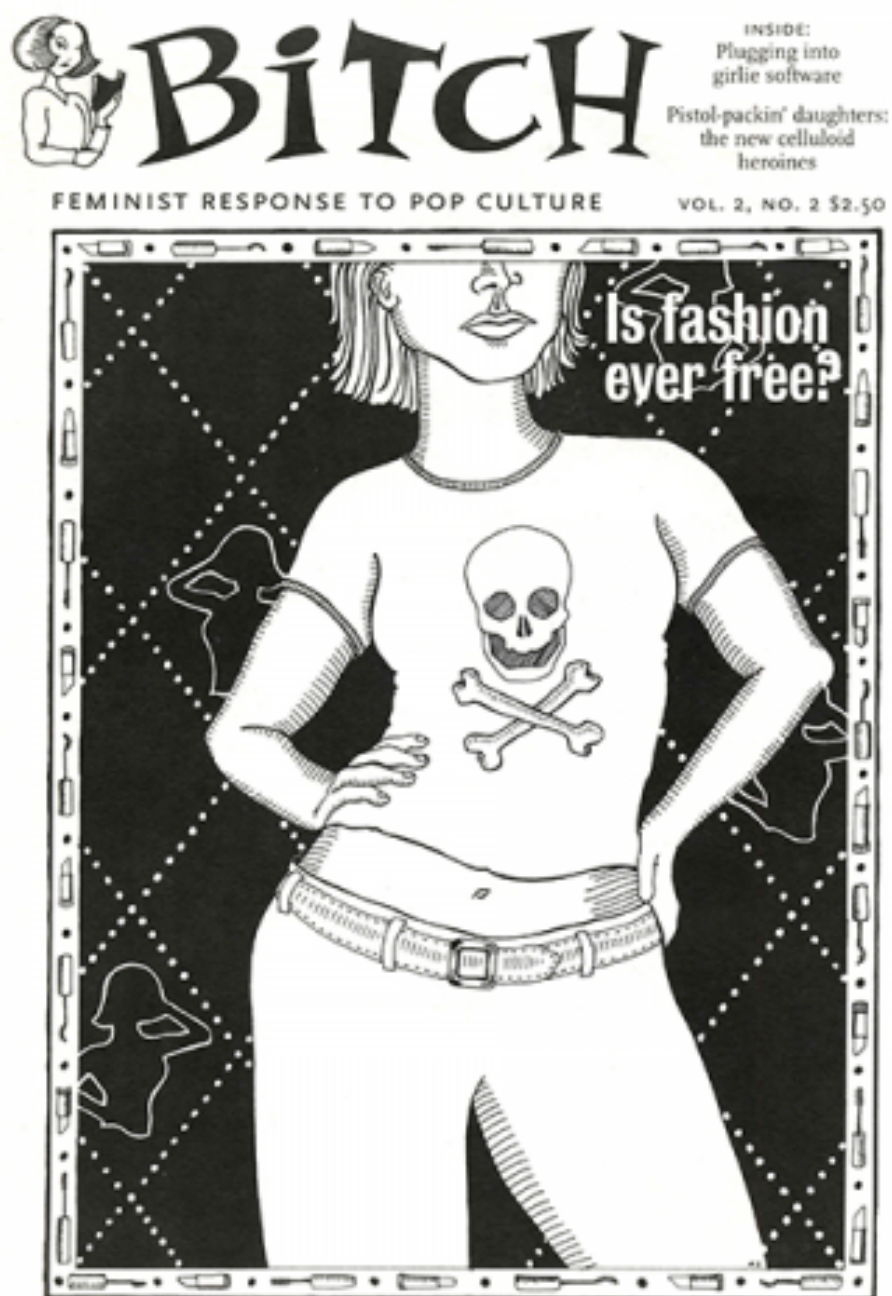


figure 6. *Bitch*, issue 5 “The Fashion Issue”, 1997, proof

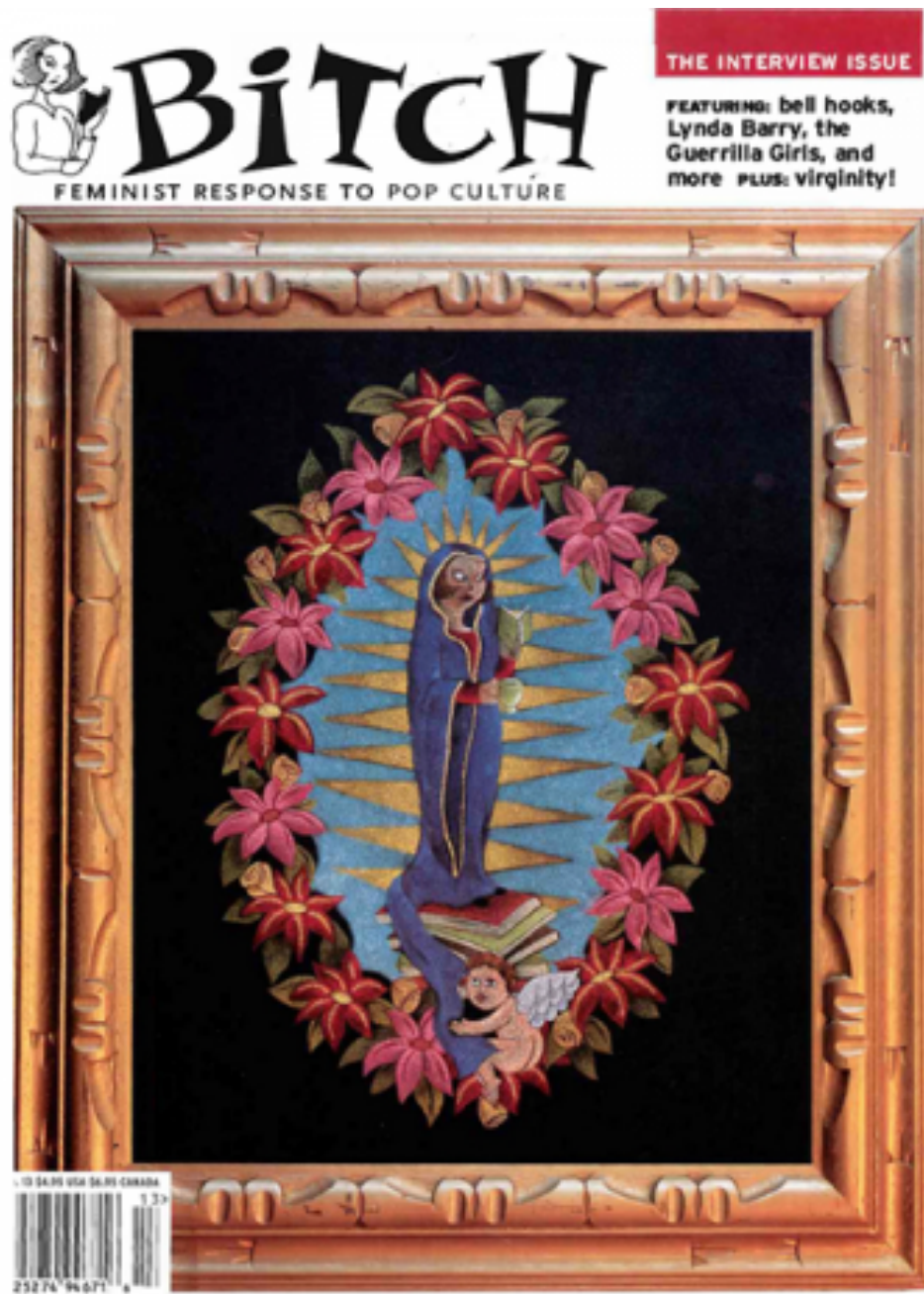


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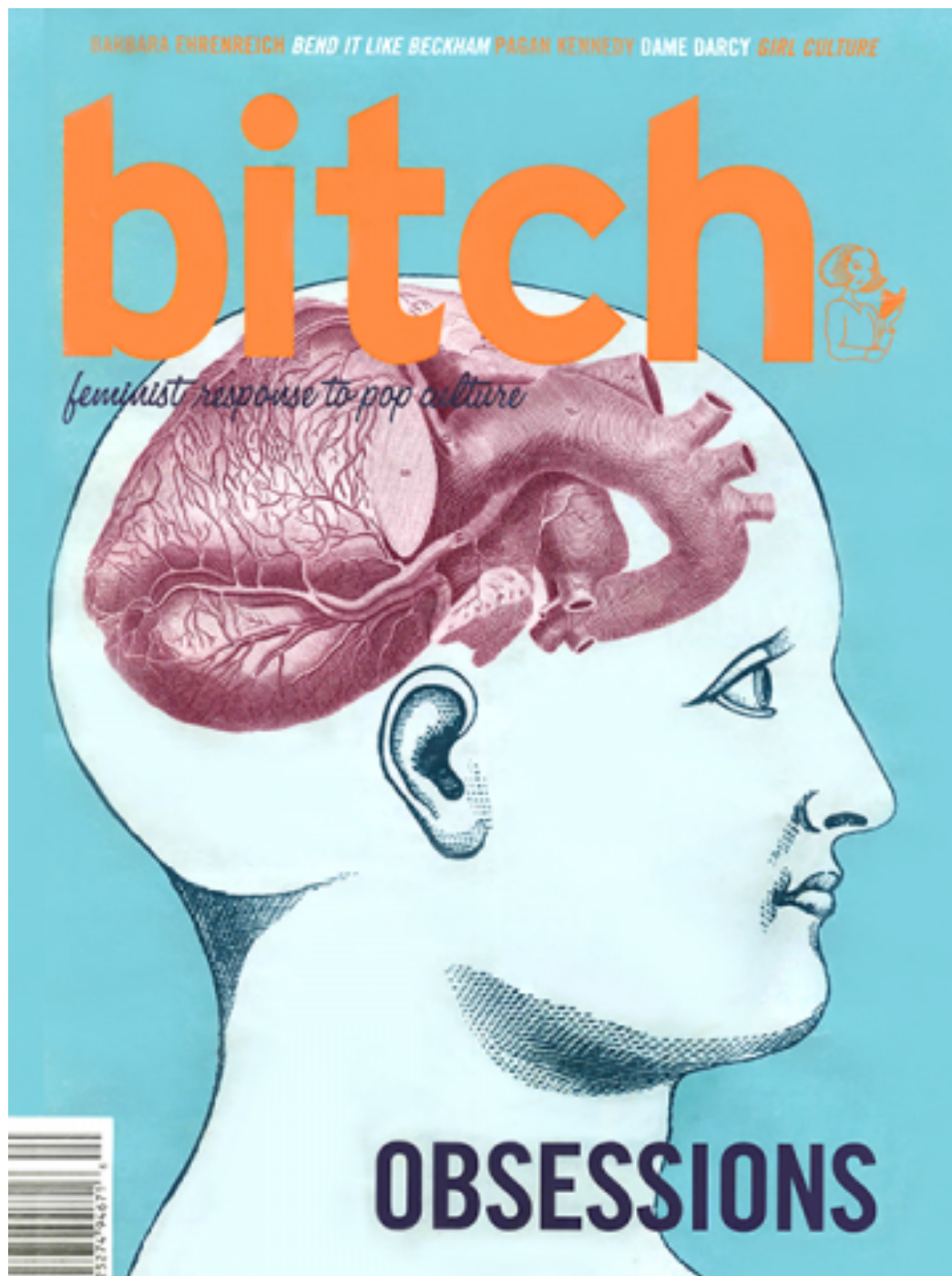


figure 8. *Bitch*, issue #20, "The Obsessions Issue", 2003, proof

Abstract

“Beyond Words: Visualising Change through Graphic Design and Feminist Magazines” is a dissertation that delves into the transformative potential of visual culture within social movements. Through three chapters, this study explores the ever-changing field of graphic design within feminist magazines. The first chapter seeks to understand feminist magazines through the covers of *Ms. Magazine*. This chapter reveals how textual content and visual design synergistically present and amplify the messages of the feminist movement. In the second chapter, the role of the art director is explored through a curatorial lens. Art director as curator connects art direction to curatorial theory. Tying the two together, art direction can be transformed into a form of curatorial activism all exemplified through the example of *Heresies: a Feminist Publication on Arts and Politics*. By examining curatorial choices and themes, the chapter underscores the art director’s influential role in shaping the magazine’s aesthetic identity and empowering the role of the collective. The final chapter takes a forward-facing approach by examining the impact of emerging technologies on graphic design and feminist discourse within *Bitch Media*. It focuses on how technological advancements have transformed graphic design practices, offering new resources and avenues for visual expression. It addresses how these advancements have complicated the spread of messages for the feminist movement, and reshaped the ways in which feminism is communicated and engaged with in the digital age. Through archival research, critical analysis, and a fresh perspective, “Beyond Words” is an exploration of the intricate relationship between feminist magazines, graphic design, and the visualisation of social change. This dissertation urges you to reconsider the power of visuals in shaping narratives and driving societal progress.

Introduction

Woman Freedom Now (1971) (fig. 1) by Faith Ringgold currently hangs at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. Writer and activist, Amiri Baraka, constitutes this piece as a “modern classic,” as one of the first works of graphic design that endorsed feminism in the context of black liberation. *Woman Freedom Now* was one of Ringgold’s advocacy placards that she called *The Political Posters Series*, which addressed several grievances against government-sanctioned oppression, including women’s liberation.¹ The poster is set up in a diamond-shaped variation of the Bakuba chevron theme derived from Kongo textile designs, which adamantly states “Woman Freedom Now.” The words are inscribed in mirroring images and in reverse to create a kaleidoscope of black, red, and green, the black nationalist colours.² The words are set within triangles that cave and grow from the center, here they chant in a way that visually indicates amplification and demands freedom. These shouts are meant to be heard by the viewer. The poster is mesmerising and transfixes the viewer in a way that exemplifies the intersectionality between woman’s liberation and black power.

Social movements flourish in a variety of ways from organising protests to the production of zines, counter culture finds a way of voicing their concerns. In this dissertation, I will be evaluating the way in which social movements present themselves through visual culture, specifically through graphic design in feminist magazines. In reference to *Woman Freedom Now*, Ringgold utilises early iterations of graphic design techniques to protest the injustices faced by women, more specifically black women just as she uses the other work in her *Political Posters Series* to bring attention to the political violence perpetuated on African, Asian, and Native American women.³ *Woman Freedom Now* is revered for its momentous contribution to not only graphic design history but as a preliminary foray into the emerging feminist art movement. Through this piece, she uses graphic design to further her political agenda and ideology, making it an excellent example of how visual culture is utilised within social movements.

¹ Lisa E. Farrington and Faith Ringgold, *Faith Ringgold* (Pomegranate, 2004). 36

² Farrington and Ringgold, *Faith Ringgold*, 36

³ Farrington and Ringgold, *Faith Ringgold*, 36

Although *Woman Freedom Now* is a revered piece of feminist art, graphic design is used in several applications employed by the women's movement including magazines.

Claire Pajackowska begins her essay 'Issues in feminist visual culture' with the bold statement, "All cultures have a visual aspect."⁴ She goes on to establish that most people understand the visual aspects of culture to be some of the most powerful components of the complex systems of communication that are essential and basic part of the culture. What is perceived at face value can have an "underlying and unseen system of meaning."⁵ To bear witness to visual culture is to produce a new account fashioned of our own experience and own unconscious.⁶ Although traditional forms of political participation, such as political party membership in the United States, have declined, nontraditional ways of expressing political voice have emerged through the use of visual culture.⁷ Visual culture and communication are key components to facilitating social movements and protest throughout history. Often by using tropes found in popular culture, social movements employ artistic forms that emulate a creative quality from those in the margins of society.⁸ It has an immediate impact and the power of image has long been recognised as an effective means of communication.⁹

A prevalent aspect of visual culture is graphic design, something that is ubiquitous and inherent to the modern visual landscape. Since the emergence of this discipline, questions surrounding its motives have always circulated. Design is often seen as an enterprise in service of capitalism which perpetuates the dominion of the rich and powerful to exploit labor and resources, but through the concept of visual culture and its effect on social movements, it can

⁴ Fiona Carson and Claire Pajackowska, *Feminist Visual Culture* (Edinburgh University Press, 2000). 1

⁵ Carson and Pajackowska, *Feminist Visual Culture*, 2

⁶ Nicholas Mirzoeff, *The Visual Culture Reader* (Psychology Press, 2002). 26

⁷ Aidan McGarry et al., eds., *The Aesthetics of Global Protest: Visual Culture and Communication* (Amsterdam University Press, 2019), 20, <https://doi.org/10.5117/9789463724913>.

⁸ McGarry et al., *The Aesthetics of Global Protest*, 20

⁹ Carson and Pajackowska, *Feminist Visual Culture*, 2

have a legitimate impact.¹⁰ Both men and women have contributed to defining visual culture, however, the contributions of women have remained largely unacknowledged.¹¹ According to Inkbot Design's "25 Most Famous Graphic Designers of All Time," only five out of the total twenty-five are women.¹² Female designers are rarely ever recorded for their efforts and contributions to graphic design history. According to Martha Scotford, for a graphic design history with female representation to be discovered, we must understand the different experiences, choices, and roles within a patriarchal and capitalist framework that women are subject to.¹³ One way in which women have forged a niche within graphic design history is through feminist magazines. Within the past few decades, there has been an active pursuit to formulate a more comprehensive look into what a feminist graphic design history looks like, one that counters the traditional white-male-centric narrative that plagues all history textbooks.¹⁴ Within the last decades, the number of women working in graphic design has drastically increased; however, women continued to be underrepresented.¹⁵

Although graphic design has many applications in a variety of different fields, this dissertation narrows its scope to magazines. Magazines serve as an important part of our culture and play a valuable role as informers and educators. They have become a powerful apparatus of culture that perpetuates as well as reflects the aims, successes, and flaws of society. Magazines have been heavily criticised for their effect on setting up a beauty standard and normalising

¹⁰ Alison Place, "Design as a Practice of Care: Feminist Perspectives on Preventing Harm and Promoting Healing through Design," *DRS Biennial Conference Series*, June 25, 2022, <https://dl.designresearchsociety.org/drs-conference-papers/drs2022/researchpapers/268>.

¹¹ Teal Triggs, "Graphic Design," in *Feminist Visual Culture* (Edinburgh University Press, 2000).

¹² Inkbot Design, "The 25 Most Famous Graphic Designers Of All Time - 2023," March 5, 2023, <https://inkbotdesign.com/famous-graphic-designers/>.

¹³ Martha Scotford, "Messy History vs. Neat History: Toward an Expanded View of Women in Graphic Design," *Visible Language* 28, no. 4 (Fall 1994): 367–87.

¹⁴ Dina Benbrahim, "What Does a Feminist Graphic Design History in the United States Look Like?," November 9, 2012, <https://www.alphabettes.org/what-does-a-feminist-graphic-design-history-in-the-united-states-look-like/>.

¹⁵ Triggs, "Graphic Design"

overconsumption.¹⁶ They are highly variable and can be launched by major corporations or by a group of kids with the tenacity to try. Magazines are a way of sharing information and creativity. Through this research I evaluate three prominent feminist magazines in the United States: *Ms. Magazine*, *Heresies: A Feminist Publication on Art and Politics*, and *Bitch: Feminist Response to Pop Culture*. Through these publications, I discuss the way in which the women's movement utilised graphic design as a component of visual culture. I discuss the differences between art directors and designers and their roles in the visualisation of the women's movement.

Care is often viewed through the context of women and the feminist movement because the largest forms of care, caring for the elderly and children, have often fallen onto the shoulders of women. Care can be sacrificial, political, personal, and privileged. Politically care work is under-appreciated and devalued. However, care is more than its political standing, and is more than any single action. Care is habitual and must be refined over time. Allison Place describes the relationship between care and design in her paper *Design as a Practice of Care: Feminist Perspectives on preventing harm and promoting healing through Design*. In this text, she describes how care in our methods, cultural impact, and craft can create a space where a feminist perspective can thrive.¹⁷ Design has traditionally aligned itself under capitalism, bolstering the dominion of wealth and the exploitation of resources.¹⁸ A diversity of perspectives and voices must continue to approach design through a lens of care. In addition, through gendered forms design arbitrates the collective understanding of gender. This commodification of gender can dictate the way that it is consumed and discussed.¹⁹ Although this capability has been used to perpetuate gender hierarchy and norms, it can also be utilised in dismantling them. Care will be further discussed in chapter two.

¹⁶ Tim Holmes, "Mapping the Magazine," *Journalism Studies* 8, no. 4 (August 1, 2007): 510–21, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616700701411714>.

¹⁷ Place, "Design as a Practice of Care," 15

¹⁸ Place, "Design as a Practice of Care," 2

¹⁹ Leigh Paterson, "Designer Pussy: The Role of Graphic Design as an Arbiter of Gender Representation," in *Orienting Feminism: Media, Activism and Cultural Representation*, ed. Catherine Dale and Rosemary Overell (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018), 43–67, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-70660-3_4.

The first chapter evaluates the contributions of *Ms. Magazine*, a feminist magazine that has shaped a generation of feminists and continues to contribute to the feminist narrative. This chapter will specifically focus on the work of acclaimed art director Bea Feitler, who established herself in a male-dominated field. Although the role of the art director encapsulates all visual aspects of the magazine, this chapter narrows its lens on the covers of the magazine and its effect on wider audiences. Covers are an integral part of magazine production and are often the only aspect of the magazine audiences see. I use this notion to discuss the ideals that traditional women's magazine covers have instilled in the minds of women everywhere and the repercussions of these ideals on society. Additionally, I evaluate various revered covers during the magazine's early days that have left an impression on women's graphic design history and the history of the women's movement in America. This chapter looks at the visualisation of feminism and the accessibility that *Ms.* created to the average woman who may have been intimidated or put off by feminist ideals. As the only magazine in this dissertation that is still in operation, I evaluate its continued success through the foundation it laid in its early days. This chapter attempts to answer the question 'How do covers impact audiences and how has this power been utilised by the women's movement?'

The next chapter delves into the concept of art directors as curators seen through the lens of the feminist magazine *Heresies: A Feminist Publication on Art and Politics*. In this chapter, I define and differentiate art directors and designers. Additionally, this chapter delves into the idea of a collective. Because *Heresies* explored not only politics but art, I use it to understand how art direction can be a form of curating. Launched in 1977, *Heresies* was a catalyst of radical political feminism that exemplified an underrepresented vibrant group in the art world. The work showcased in the magazine ranged from music, essays, poetry, and artworks, both reproduced and original. *Heresies* issued their magazines thematically and used material from an open call.²⁰ The *Heresies* collective became one of the most relevant social initiatives of the time and influenced a generation of artists.²¹ The collective puts this chapter in a unique position to

²⁰ Amy Tobin, "Heresies' Heresies: Collaboration and Dispute in a Feminist Publication on Art and Politics," *Women: A Cultural Review* 30, no. 3 (July 3, 2019): 280–96, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09574042.2019.1653118>.

²¹ Balasz Takac, "The Art and Politics of The Heresies Collective | Widewalls," Widewalls, January 12, 2021, <https://www.widewalls.ch/magazine/heresies-collective-publication>.

discuss the magazine's art direction in terms of curating. The chapter discusses the work and role of an art director in terms of curatorial theory and ties this theory to a process of curatorial care and activism. The collective explored a new art paradigm that was centred around different aspects of feminism, politics, and art all of which were reflected in the magazine that they created.²² By connecting art direction and curating I position graphic design as a form of production for visual culture.

Lastly, the final chapter attempts to understand the contribution of technology in the expansion of the graphic design field in the 1990s and 2000s through *Bitch: Feminist Response to Pop Culture*. The field has widely adapted to the changes of the twenty-first century and is vastly different from what it was in the 1970s, where this dissertation begins. *Bitch* exemplifies this transition from their first issues to the ones published in its final quarter. The emergence of new technologies drastically reshaped the fields of graphic design and magazine production. This chapter discusses the problems of third-wave feminists and how working with an electronic domain has simultaneously complicated and eased the movement. The digitalisation of society shaped the style and look of feminism, which I demonstrate through the evolution of *Bitch*'s branding. I evaluate how the development of new technology shape graphic design and feminist magazines for the next generation. Technology continues to progress and the fields of graphic design and magazine publishing have to be willing and able to adapt. *Bitch* was founded and created in a digital world and this chapter explores their struggles and accomplishments throughout their twenty-six-year run.

By discussing the contributions of female graphic designers within feminist magazines this dissertation addresses their contributions to graphic design history. The art direction of feminist magazines can reveal the nuances within social movements and its creative nature is a tool that attracts attention. This research explores these nuances and the way that they are harnessed for the women's movement. I examine the interaction between graphic design in feminism through magazines in the United States. This dissertation undertakes extensive research into established theory on visual culture and social movements, as well as visual

²² Takac, "The Art and Politics of The Heresies Collective"

analysis of the various publications, archival research, and a first-hand interview with a former art director of *Bitch*. The research in this dissertation is a plethora of sources that range from online articles and blogs to accredited journals and books. Through each of the three chapters, I dive into the utilisation of the covers, tie art direction to curatorial theory, and evaluate the effects of new technology on the fields of graphic design and magazine production. Additionally, there continues to be more research into the field of visual culture that address the work of women. A reoccurring feature of Western women's movements is the documentation and the restoration of women's history as a tool to nourish and understand an activist's imagination, which I intended to do in this dissertation.²³

²³ Red Chidgey, "Reassess Your Weapons: The Making of Feminist Memory in Young Women's Zines," *Women's History Review* 22, no. 4 (2013): 658–72, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09612025.2012.751773#2013>.

Ms. Makes Magazines

Often the only thing you see from a magazine is the cover. It is what entices you to keep reading and explore the contents within. In this chapter, I will be evaluating covers and the way that they interact with the viewer. Iconic covers can be a main topic of discussion, from John Lennon and Yoko Ono's memorable embrace on the cover of *Rolling Stone* to the ominous illustration of the twin towers on *The New Yorker* just days after the events of September 11, 2001. Magazine covers affect their viewers; they utilise the skills of designers to portray something memorable enough to pick up and explore more. Print has traditionally been one of the most effective ways of sharing information with the masses.²⁴ The functionality of a cover is to attract viewers and tell the main message of the magazine at first glance. Magazines develop their own distinct feel and aesthetic through standards of design principles which they use to sustain readership. Covers are crucial to the market value of print media and are a necessary component of 'kiosk culture' which is fundamental to our every-day-life.²⁵ This influence can come at a cost and may not always be for the best. However, as it pertains to feminist magazines, covers were imperative to intrigue those who were wary of feminist ideas.

Magazines are in constant competition with each other. If the cover fails to attract a viewer, likely, they will never know what is inside.²⁶ Additionally covers serve the purpose of informing customers of the themes of the current issue while ensuring them that what they are about to read is not the same thing as the previous issue. The cover creates a serious challenge for those producing the magazine. A good cover can have a legitimate impact on the number of issues sold and vice versa for a failed cover.²⁷ The composition of a cover can be quite formulaic.

²⁴ Ali Jahanian, "Automatic Magazine Cover Design" (M.S.E.C.E., United States -- Indiana, Purdue University: 2011), 2 <https://www.proquest.com/docview/1842752113/abstract/1A23ADBA5D0C4280PQ/1>.

²⁵ Gudrun Held, "Magazine Covers – A Multimodal Pretext-Genre" 39, no. 1–2 (June 23, 2005): 173–96, <https://doi.org/10.1515/flin.2005.39.1-2.173>.

²⁶ Jahanian, "Automatic Magazine Cover Design," 2

²⁷ Jahanian, "Automatic Magazine Cover Design," 2

A magazine must have a masthead or nameplate, which is the title of the magazine established in a branded font that is consistent throughout every issue. There are some exceptions for special issues when the masthead is altered to serve a purpose, this can be a very effective design decision if used sparingly. The other elements you can usually find on a magazine cover are cover images, cover lines, price, and date.²⁸ Within modern times, a barcode is also usually present on the front. A designer is responsible for assembling all of these elements in an enthralling and different way each time a magazine issue is published.

In this chapter, I will explore how feminist magazines have integrated themselves into popular culture through the use of stunning visual elements. By utilising graphic design not only throughout the entirety of the magazine but especially on the cover, feminist magazines found their way into the hands of curious women intrigued enough to learn more. I am evaluating this idea through the study of *Ms. Magazine*, and the work of Bea Feitler. Through research into the effectiveness of graphic design on the viewer, and visual analysis of some of the most famous covers *Ms.* has ever had, I seek to understand the relationship that graphic design has on the visualisation of feminism. In addition, I evaluate the harm that magazine covers can perpetuate on women. By placing different visuals catering to women, *Ms.* changes the expectation that women have for themselves by empowering them.

Ms. is a feminist magazine that was originally launched as a ‘one-shot’ sample insert in *New York Magazine* in late 1971. It has since become an institution that expresses and supports feminist rhetoric and women’s rights, as well as serves as a model for American journalism. Most magazines of the time were limited to information about pleasing your husband, rearing children, and how to look more beautiful, but *Ms.* debuted their preview issue with articles about ‘de-sexing’ the English language, abortion, and a realistic perspective of what it means to be a housewife.²⁹ Through their work, women continue to receive content made for them by them, gain access to feminist rhetoric, and create a forum for which women’s voices can

²⁸ Chris Foges, *Magazine Design* (RotoVision SA, 1999). 1-159

²⁹ “About Ms.,” *Ms. Magazine* (blog), accessed May 17, 2023, <https://msmagazine.com/about/>.

be heard. The magazine is still in print and continues to be a beacon of knowledge for feminist ideology. Instead of rejecting the format of the magazine, *Ms.* decided to lean into it and created a magazine for the ‘new woman.’³⁰ It was a way for women to ease into feminist ideals and aimed to weaken women’s resistance to feminism by making them rethink stereotypical images that were prevalent in mass media. *Ms.* wanted to work within the system to disrupt the hegemony from the inside. It was both a new kind of woman’s magazine as well as a resource for the feminist movement, where it indoctrinated women into a mass network of feminism. For their covers they had to think carefully, editors of the magazine said that they were ‘gut level’ decisions.³¹ They state that they never tried to consciously shape a certain type of feminism on the cover.³² The covers of *Ms.* exemplified the political and economic concerns that shaped the magazine. The covers were meant to challenge the hegemonic power of other women’s magazines, creating an alternative that redefined what journalism for women meant.

Since their emergence, *Ms.* has a very distinct sense of style and aesthetic very much due to their first art director Bea Feitler, who established herself in a field dominated by men. Through this magazine, she utilised her talents and keen eye to create captivating covers and layouts. Feitler was a Brazilian graphic designer who worked for various magazines including *Harper’s Bazaar*, *Ms.*, *Rolling Stone*, and *Vanity Fair*. She was one of the first female art directors at *Harper’s Bazaar* and pioneered *Ms.* magazine with the founder Gloria Steinem. Steinem believed that Feitler could use her skills to activate the more challenging content *Ms.* was bringing to the table.³³ She made controversial messages more powerful through her visual skill and helped get feminist ideas into the mainstream. She cemented herself as an icon in the graphic design field rubbing elbows with artists like Andy Warhol.

³⁰ Amy Erdman Farrell, *Yours in Sisterhood: Ms. Magazine and the Promise of Popular Feminism* (Univ of North Carolina Press, 1998). 15

³¹ Farrel, *Yours in Sisterhood*, 53

³² Farrel, *Yours in Sisterhood*, 53

³³ Madeleine Morley, “Bea Feitler,” *Riposte*, <https://www.ripostemagazine.com/bea-feitler>.

The Effect of Magazine Covers on Women

To further my point on the effect of magazine covers on a social movement like feminism, I evaluate how they impact women as individuals. It is well established that women's magazines have created unrealistically high beauty standards for women.³⁴ Traditionally magazines have not depicted accurate representations of them; by modern standards magazines are often scrutinised for airbrushing and tweaking the appearance of models and celebrities on the covers and throughout the magazine. Feminist researchers have continuously critiqued mass media for creating the standards for the 'ideal beauty.'³⁵ Mass media portrays beautiful people as more desirable and credible and there is significant research found on the influence that mass media has on appearance norms, which suggests that increased exposure to the idealised beauty can cause internalised fantasising by women.³⁶ This has led to the production of various industries which includes cosmetics and weight loss, whose campaigns focus on alleviating women of their natural flaws and imperfections. These messages are quite different for women and men.

Amy R. Malkin, Kimberlie Wornian, and Joan C. Chrisler discuss these gendered messages in their report 'Women and Weight: Gendered Messages on Magazine Covers' they sample twenty-one magazines to examine gendered messages regarding weight and bodily appearance presented on the covers of magazines. *Ms.* was one of the magazines evaluated in this report. The results showed that 94% of women's magazines showed someone categorised as the ideal beauty on the cover, whereas only 3% of men's magazines showed a man on the cover.³⁷ Women were more often on the cover of male magazines than men were. Women of the

³⁴ Yan Yan and Kim Bissell, "The Globalization of Beauty: How Is Ideal Beauty Influenced by Globally Published Fashion and Beauty Magazines?," *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research* 43, no. 3 (July 3, 2014): 194–214, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17475759.2014.917432>.

³⁵ Amy R. Malkin, Kimberlie Wornian, and Joan C. Chrisler, "Women and Weight: Gendered Messages on Magazine Covers," *Sex Roles* 40, no. 7 (April 1, 1999): 647–55, <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1018848332464>.

³⁶ Yan and Bissell, "The Globalization of Beauty," 648

³⁷ Malkin et al, "Woman and Weight," 653

ideal beauty standard are portrayed on both men's and women's magazine covers. Additionally, weight loss messages were also evaluated in this study and they found that through visual hierarchy and word choice, these messages imply that changing your physical appearance can lead to a better life. Where men's magazines are focused on improving one's life through gaining knowledge, hobbies, and entertainment, women's magazines focus on improving your life through changing your appearance. The study concluded by addressing the serious implications these coded messages have on the psychological and physical well-being of women.

Through this study, the impact of magazine covers on audiences is evident. The media psychology and journalism fields are well aware of this impact and have reacted by continually improving standards and practices to benefit from it commercially.³⁸ The verbal elements of the text in accordance with the visuals complete the cover to create something presentable and recreational. The main goal of this is to capture your attention. In doing so, magazines have profited from the insecurities of women by implementing and bolstering said insecurities. Magazines have created an idea of what womanhood is by visualising it and presenting it front and centre. Magazines both reflect and create societal standards. Utilising this sentiment, feminist magazines like *Ms.* use the power of their covers to represent and uplift women.

Creating a Feminist Icon

On July 1, 1972, the inaugural issue of *Ms.* hit the stands, featuring DC Comics' Wonder Woman on the cover (fig. 2), with a bold "Wonder Woman for president" bannered underneath the masthead. The larger-than-life Amazonian is racing towards the viewer with chaos at her heels. On her left is an active war zone equipped with tanks, helicopters, and fighter jets, and on her right is a pedestrian street with a highlighted sign that says "Peace and Justice in '72" the irony of it seeping off the page. In her hand shines her golden lasso with an ensemble of small buildings balancing on a single weighing pan. The star-spangled superhero reaches her hand out toward the viewer as she stares in distress. The featured cover lines include an exposé on Simone

³⁸ Held, "Magazine Covers – A Multimodal Pretext-Genre" 173

De Beauvoir, an article about body hair, a note from Gloria Steinem on women's voting, and a piece about money for housework. The colorful cover, designed by Feitler, is intriguing and playful more akin to the cover of a comic book than to a women's magazine. Various institutions have this issue within their collections including the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the Smithsonian.

To put the cover into context, Wonder Woman is a comic book character created by psychologist William Moulton Marston and artist Harry G. Peters in 1941. She is an Amazonian princess with immense strength and power and is equipped with magical tools she uses to fight evil-doers. She is one of the most famous female superheroes to have ever existed and is still a culturally relevant character with a significant and flourishing franchise.³⁹ The character was an instant hit with readers during her emergence and many related to her thrilling adventures of female empowerment. She is the hero; when so many other female characters in comics are being saved, she is the one doing the saving. Steinem chose Wonder Woman as a response to DC Comics' decision to have the hero lose her powers.⁴⁰ Inside the first issue of *Ms.* was an article discussing the role that Wonder Woman has played in inspiring feminism. Wonder Woman later regained her powers, in part due to the efforts of this article and the magazine's emphasis on her influence.⁴¹ Wonder Woman is an easily recognisable figure and has become a symbol of feminist thinking around the world. Although *Ms.* did not create the character they laid her within the framework of feminism and connected her to the movement, where she continues to empower women even today.

Feitler and Steinem chose Wonder Woman because she was already an influential figure to readers.⁴² What separates this cover from any other comic book is the messaging hidden within the visuals. Although the visuals are captivating, the superhero is often in dangerous

³⁹ Smithsonian Institution, "Ms. Vol 1, No. 1," Smithsonian Institution, https://www.si.edu/object/ms-vol-1-no-1%3Anmah_1803345.

⁴⁰ Smithsonian Institution, "Ms. Vol 1, No. 1"

⁴¹ Smithsonian Institution, "Ms. Vol 1., No. 1"

⁴² Smithsonian Institution, "Ms. Vol 1, No. 1,"

situations, so being placed in this setting does not emphasise the message of the cover. However, the inclusion of the text makes the visuals something to think about. Placing “Peace and Justice in ’72” alongside a raging war creates a visual irony. This pairing forces the reader to think more deeply about what the cover is presenting and points you in a more critical direction. In the cover story, Steinem rewrote the powerful patriotic hero to be a pacifist, more focused on peace rather than persistent war.⁴³ This is why they preach “Wonder Woman for President.” As a fictional character, Wonder Woman can never be president in the real world, but the movement at the time drew upon national rhetoric of democracy, equality, and freedom. Through this rhetoric, women assumed their power within local, state, and national offices to be their route to success and achieved status. By presenting the character in her red, white, and blue stupor she represented the democratic ideals of women activists in 1972 America. Not only was the magazine released during an election year, but during July, which holds American Independence Day. Women across the nation were reclaiming the histories of strong women to spearhead images of their resistance.⁴⁴

Images alone can hold multiple meanings to a variety of people with the inclusion of text the purpose of the message can be defined. However, the messages of both the visuals and the text are not necessarily dependent on each other but work symbiotically neither opposed nor conflated.⁴⁵ Designers can utilise both these elements to share their message. The magazine cover was a success; it pleased staff, audiences, and investors alike. The cover was balancing among the political and commercial pressures of the magazine which were often tangled and difficult to define.⁴⁶ However, this plays into a wider concern in how commercial motives shape political interests. For two unlike forms of communication text and image, visual organisation and message-making are two problems that need to be solved. In the twentieth century, it is more

⁴³ Farrell, *Yours in Sisterhood*, 55

⁴⁴ Farrell, *Yours In Sisterhood*, 54

⁴⁵ Azam Behshad and Saeed Ghaniabadi, “Visual Analysis of Magazine Covers,” *International Journal of Linguistics* 7 (October 19, 2015): 20, <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijl.v7i5.8445>.

⁴⁶ Farrell, *Yours In Sisterhood*, 55

often seen that text is utilised as a supporting message used to relate and sharpen the image.⁴⁷ Text can be utilised sufficiently to alter the meaning of an image and shape it into an alternate message.

Making Text Visual

Later the same year, *Ms.* unveiled their first-holiday issue. The cover (fig. 3), designed by Feitler, adamantly proclaimed, “PEACE ON EARTH, GOOD WILL TO PEOPLE” as a compelling use of typography and colour. The vibrant use of hot pink and fluorescent green are tributes to the traditional colours of the season, red and green. Feitler repurposes the Christian phrase in the King James Bible (Luke 2:14) to redefine it within a feminist framework. The magazine managed to push its secular feminist perspective whilst maintaining respect for the traditional religious tones of the season. The selection of the quote and the tweaking of the traditional colours were statements. They were meant to share a respect for traditions whilst simultaneously forging their feminist beliefs of pacificity. By co-opting the phrase they reflect the pacifist views of early feminists who spoke the phrase post-World War I.⁴⁸ All-type covers were rare and usually advised against as potential disasters at the newsstand; however, the magazine sold out in December of 1972 and released a poster of the cover a year later.

Typography is a powerful tool within a graphic designer's arsenal. Daily, we are conditioned to respond to visual cues, from traffic signs to headlines. Type, image, colour, and hue can make quite a difference in how the message is perceived. Although the look of the cover is very important, it is ultimately the message that matters. Design takes skills like typography and visual hierarchy to form a creative depiction of the message assigned. Steven Heller proclaims in his book *Stop, Think, Go, Do: How Typography and Graphic Design Influence Behavior*, “When design is operating best, the audience is less aware of the design tropes than

⁴⁷ Philip B. Meggs, *Type & Image: The Language of Graphic Design* (Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1992).

⁴⁸ Ana Stevenson, “‘Peace on Earth Good Will to People’: Holiday Reflections on *Ms.* Magazine,” *Australian Women’s History Network* (blog), December 18, 2016, <http://www.auswhn.org.au/blog/peace-earth-good-will-people/>.

how the design functions.”⁴⁹ There is always a degree of playfulness in successful designs, something that makes the audience think and react. He states that there are seven topics in which behavioural design functions: inform, advocate, play, caution, entertain, express, and transform. There are many similarities between each topic, but the overarching commonality is that they all attempt to elicit a behavioural response. To inform is the single most important job of a graphic designer.⁵⁰ Design gives this information authority, whether it deserves it or not. Additionally, advocating is particularly important for a social movement like feminism. Advocacy in design strives to engage and rouse support for a cause, mission, issue, or event. There needs to be a balance of good design and appropriate design to activate the conscience and spark a flame. Graphic designers are charged with bringing resonance to their work. Borrowed from music, resonance translates into reverberation. Phillip B. Meggs explains the importance of graphic resonance in his book *Type & Image: The Language of Graphic Design*, “Graphic designers bring a resonance to visual communications through the interaction of the connotative qualities of type and images and the expressive power of the visual vocabulary, that is, colour, shape, texture, and the interrelations between forms in space.”⁵¹ He continues his thought by stating that the aesthetics of messages determine their effectiveness because it creates an openness in an audience fatigued from the overstimulation of messages in modern society. Every decision a designer makes contributes to the overall resonance of the design.

In terms of *Ms.* these ideas remain true. By creating something visually interesting with the use of an altered colour scheme and bold lettering whilst appropriating a Christian phrase and staying true to the season, Feitler created something that ignited audiences. She utilised both topics to inform and advocate, which is proven through the evidentiary support of the magazine selling out and the production of a poster a year later. The cover was so effective that the same text and form were used the next year for the December issue of the magazine (fig. 4). The

⁴⁹ Steven Heller and Mirko Ilic, *Stop, Think, Go, Do: How Typography and Graphic Design Influence Behavior* (Rockport Publishers, 2012). 11

⁵⁰ Heller and Ilic, *Stop, Think, Go, Do*, 11

⁵¹ Meggs, *Type & Image: The Language of Graphic Design*

design was altered to a red neon type, where the type becomes the design as well as the message. These two covers although almost identical share different contexts and messages. By presenting the red neon cover a year after the original, the message changes compared to what it may have had if it was presented to the public first. Each cover created its graphic resonance and captured the attention of audiences through strategic design. As a magazine on the market, *Ms.* struggled with trying to keep investors and audiences happy whilst formulating and pushing feminist rhetoric. One way that they achieved and continue to achieve this is through the aesthetics of the magazine. They managed to walk the line between commercial and political by creating a space for women who were hesitant to get involved.

Discussion

Visuals play a key role in capturing one's attention; magazine covers enforce this idea. The relationship between the cover and the viewer is tenuous. A cover draws and keeps attention by using the skills and principles of graphic design. An effective well-designed cover gives you a sample of what you will find inside. Magazine covers influence society, as a main source of media they assisted in creating the egregious beauty standard. *Ms.* used their covers to attract the average woman, someone who was wary of feminist ideas. Using the effective design work of Bea Feitler, the magazine debuted as a success and continued to present visually interesting covers. The first issue of the magazine cemented a beloved superhero as a feminist icon. Through text and visual interplay, Feitler created an enthralling cover that teased feminist ideas into the mainstream. Even without the use of explicit visuals, the design of the magazine still proved to be effective with the release of the magazine's first December issue. The holiday issue made its way into books and graphic design history.⁵² The design was so popular it was repurposed for the following year and reprinted as a poster. Magazines were a key way for audiences to get information, and *Ms.* constantly made sure that they were seen.

⁵² Meggs, *Type & Image: The Language of Graphic Design* has an evaluation of fig. 4

As commercial businesses, magazines are constantly in competition, *Ms.* was no exception. The magazine faced some criticism from feminist theorists because of the commercial model it was based on.⁵³ *Ms.* prioritised profits and marketability which threatened the magazine's virtues and revolutionary possibilities. At the time, many feminist groups sought to make their alternative periodicals in opposition to the mainstream. Feminists like these believed in working outside of the system was necessary for liberation. *Ms.* on the other hand, worked to disrupt the patriarchal hegemony from the inside. Their efforts to remain marketable contributed greatly to the quality of design. As you will note in the next chapter which discusses *Heresies: A Feminist Publication on Art and Politics*, feminist publications come in different forms. Although the design of all these magazines has its place in history, a more commercially catered magazine like *Ms.* is more easily found in graphic design textbooks.⁵⁴ All of the covers mentioned in this chapter can be found in the catalogues of large cultural institutions such as the Smithsonian. They stay in these collections as an example of the effect that visual culture has within a social movement, and specifically how the role of graphic design aided feminist forces in advocating and informing.

⁵³ Farrell, *Yours In Sisterhood*, 16

⁵⁴ Wendy R Blair, "Type Image and the Art of Protest." (East Tennessee State University, 2004).

Curating *Heresies*

In 1977, the *Heresies* Collective began production of their feminist periodical. The launch of *Heresies: A Feminist Publication on Art and Politics* was an example of the “radical political challenge” feminism presented to the art world and culture at large.⁵⁵ *Heresies* continues to be an excellent example of how visual culture interacts with social movements. In addition, it introduces the concept of the art director as curator. Art direction is a vital part of the production of print magazines as the role oversees the visual representation of the work and facilitates the conversation about the aesthetics and the content. The title of art director is broad and holds positions in various creative fields. The concept of a collective is rooted within feminist ideology and is a structure that does not rely on traditional hierarchical power schemes rooted in the idea of care.⁵⁶ Additionally, the notion of having a collective as an art director provides an opportunity for a deeper analysis of the idea of co-curating and the involvement of multiple individuals in creating a narrative through visual culture.

The unique nature of the *Heresies* collective allows for art director as curator to be established within a formal curatorial context and framed within a feminist curatorial perspective. Through the ideas of arrangement and selection, mediation and interpretation, and conversation and facilitation, I argue that an art direction is a form of curation, especially within a magazine dedicated to art and run under a feminist collective. In this chapter, I pursue my two arguments, art director as curator and the further rooted concept of curatorial activism. As Douglas Rosenberg states in his article ‘Curating the practice/the practice of curating,’ “Curating creates a foundation for criticality as it frames and groups individual works around issues of content, form, or myriad other concerns.”⁵⁷ He emphasises that the possibility of critical dialogue is strengthened through curatorial activism and that curating is intrinsically linked to criticality making it a key contributor to discussion. Hence, by establishing the art director as curator, I

⁵⁵ Amy Tobin, “Heresies’ Heresies: Collaboration and Dispute in a Feminist Publication on Art and Politics,” *Women: A Cultural Review* 30, no. 3 (July 3, 2019): 280–96, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09574042.2019.1653118>.

⁵⁶ Gillian Dalley, *Ideologies of Caring: Rethinking Community and Collectivism* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 1996).

⁵⁷ Douglas Rosenberg, “Curating the Practice/the Practice of Curating,” *International Journal of Performance Arts and Digital Media* 5, no. 2 & 3 (2009): 75–87, <https://doi.org/0.1386/padm.5.2&3.75/1>.

establish the position as a coordinator of culture especially as it pertains to activism.

In order to further my argument, we must first establish the ethos of the *Heresies* collective. The collective was established in 1976 and was comprised of women artists, writers, and activists all in the pursuit to advocate feminist socialism. The founding members formed the Mother Collective. They worked as the main editors of the publication and decided the overarching themes of each issue.⁵⁸ Although it was at the forefront, the publication was not the sole priority of the collective, many of the Heretics were involved in other art and political movements around New York. They were focused on the exploration of the many facets of feminism, politics, and their relationship with art. They wanted to create a forum where new interpretations of history can be discussed through the lens of alternative narratives that included different sexual, racial, and socioeconomic perspectives. *Heresies* was a space meant to empower feminist art and reject the capitalist patriarchal structure of the art world. The collective took seriously the feminist critique of nonhierarchical organisational systems and experimented with an editorial structure that required participants to face the partisanship within the feminist community.⁵⁹ The publication itself ran from 1977 to 1993.

Art Director as Curator

Janet Froelich is most notably known for her work with *The New York Times* but before working for one of the best-designed magazines in the world, she began her career within the *Heresies* collective.⁶⁰ She joined the collective on the fourth issue and stayed with the publication for two years. Froelich says she “came to graphic design through feminism,” by building on the foundation of fine art she found the “perfect marriage of the visual arts and collective problem solving.”⁶¹ She is credited for designing the first of my examples in this analysis, issue four *Women’s Traditions — The Politics of Aesthetics*.

⁵⁸ Balasz Takac, “The Art and Politics of The Heresies Collective | Widewalls,” Widewalls, January 12, 2021, <https://www.widewalls.ch/magazine/heresies-collective-publication>.

⁵⁹ Michelle Meagher, ““Difficult, Messy, Nasty, and Sensational,”” *Feminist Media Studies* 14, no. 4 (July 4, 2014): 578–92, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2013.826707>.

⁶⁰ Patrick Mitchell, “Episode 07: Janet Froelich, Designer, The New York Times Magazine, T, Real Simple,” The Society of Publication Designers, December 25, 2022, <https://www.spd.org/print-is-dead-long-live-print/janet-froelich>.

⁶¹ Karen Mathieu, “Running a Man’s World Like Janet Froelich” (Museum für Kunst & Gewerbe Steintorplatz: 2020) 4.

Although designers play a key role in the visual representation of the magazine, they are only a single component in what can be seen as the art director of *Heresies*. Since the magazine is run as a collective, the role of an art director is assumed by all editors and participants of the magazine. All the covers for *Heresies* were a group decision, but the designers took on the role of bringing those visions to life.

To proceed, there needs to be a clarification of what it means to be a designer and an art director within the periodical publishing vocation. A designer oversees the execution, while the art director serves as a supervisory designer and is in charge of the conceptual outcome of the visuals.⁶² The art director usually works with a variety of creatives to fulfil their projects. Proficiency in graphic design is usually expected to hold an art director position, but not required. Because it was based on a non-hierarchical structure, no one person could be named art director within *Heresies*, just as no one person was editor-in-chief. The collective had creative control of the magazine and made it a point to decide on the aesthetic as a group. Art directors oversee the presentation and mediation of the work within their publications, they are not in charge of the production of such artworks but are facilitators of said work to spark discussion and opinion. Art magazines like *Heresies* focus on creating a forum for presenting artworks by marginalised groups to be observed and discussed.

The goal of *The Women's Traditional Arts* issue was to shine light upon traditional art by women, which is often referred to as domestic art. In the editor's note the collective states that they are "shifting the arena of our political activity from the private to the public."⁶³ This shift is represented through the concrete example of the magazine and the forum that it creates. In this issue's forum, they attempt to discuss the interrelation between art objects and the conditions in which they are produced. Women's traditional arts are usually defined by the home and the needs of the domestic space. Understanding the history of art marking through a women's perspective requires a tolerance of the contradictions that women in a domestic space create. The collective must "negate, affirm, and transcend simultaneously what has been characterised as women's work."⁶⁴ The collective must do all of this while participating in a democratic non-hierarchical group that acknowledges the partisanship of feminist perspectives.

⁶² Joe Lesina, "(16) The Difference between Graphic Designer, Art Director and Creative Director. | LinkedIn," July 6, 2016, <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/difference-between-graphic-designer-art-director-creative-joe-lesina/>.

⁶³ Mother Collective, "From the Editorial Group," *Heresies: A Feminist Publication on Art and Politics*, 1978. 2.

⁶⁴ Mother Collective, "From the Editorial Group." 2.

The spread (fig. 5) is set from a bird's eye point of view. The viewer looks down at a collection of various miscellaneous objects and between those objects are handwritten lists of "saved" items from public submissions by women. In the centre of the spread amongst the collection lies the short article by Muriel Castanis whom the magazine describes as "a woman, a wife, a sculptor and a mother."⁶⁵ The article illustrates the relationship that women have with collecting. Castanis discusses the sentimentality of hoarding objects and the connections that we create between objects and the experiences we have with them. The visuals on the spread hone the reader into the text while simultaneously distracting them from it. This creates a visual clutter that represents the disarray that can come with the accumulation of sentimental objects. The handwritten text adds to this clutter as it is written between the objects and in different directions, filling the gaps instead of organised in a list. The clutter shows the irrationality behind collecting and the way that people collect things that "'touch' them rather than things which display the 'proper touch.'"⁶⁶ The visuals and the article tie together to display an understanding of women's collecting. Through the interaction between the visuals and the content of the article, the reader can connect the beauty of little insignificant objects to the memory and charm they can hold.

One way that curatorial practice is often framed is within the concepts of arrangement and selection. In this sense, a curator is defined by the work they choose to present and the way in which they present it. The art director conceptualises the layouts and presents both the visuals and the text within their exhibition space, the magazine. Curating exhibition spaces can help audiences with aspects of each artwork that may be appreciated more fully.⁶⁷ The arrangement of art works can vary their perceptions, especially as it pertains to comparison. As seen in fig. 5, the miscellaneous objects placed within the margins can be seen as insignificant material, but once placed within the context of the text, the handwritten portion included, the reader can come to a different conclusion. The selection of this work within the overarching theme of women's traditional arts connects the article and spread to those surrounding it placing it within a larger context, the habitual collecting of sentimental objects by women

⁶⁵ Muriel Castanis, "Are You A Closet Collector?," *Heresies: A Feminist Publication on Art and Politics*, 1978. 61.

⁶⁶ Castanis, "Are You A Closet Collector?," 61

⁶⁷ Sue Spaid, "Work and World: On the Philosophy of Curatorial Practice" (Ph.D., United States -- Pennsylvania, Temple University, 2013), pg. 13, <https://www.proquest.com/docview/1447020795/abstract/E0AA8AA5CEE54D22PQ/1>.

as a form of care. Additionally, the placement of this spread in its position within the magazine is also crucial to understanding it.

Art directors oversee the presentation and mediation of the work within their magazine. Sue Spaid describes a curator in her book *The Philosophy of Curatorial Practice: Between Work and World* as “the person(s) responsible for presenting artworks to some public, whose reception plays an equally vital role.”⁶⁸ Spaid also explores the notion of curatorial intent where conflicts arise from the goals of the curator, the presentation of the exhibition, and the eventual impact of the exhibition.⁶⁹ Curatorial intent implies the forethought of context in which artworks are presented. Paul O’Neill states that the role of curator has evolved from a caretaker to “independently motivated practitioner.” Curatorial practice and discourse are entwined, and curating has itself become a creative output and process.⁷⁰ Curators perform a mediation role to contextualise art within their interpretation of it. This mediation is defined by the attempt to convert idiosyncratic value and individual decision into cultural capital.⁷¹ Curators are involved in the creation of cultural experiences. Art direction performs the same way, in that their decisions dictate a readers experience. The magazine is again a model of an exhibition space where the interpretation of the material is then presented to readers through the interplay of visuals and text. Every decision made in the conceptualisation and execution of the spread shown in fig. 5, is arbitrated to connect the reader with the content.

Additionally, it is crucial to examine Elke Krasny’s ‘The Salon Model: The Conversational Complex’ and her theory on the conversational turn of curating. She states that conversations are often neglected by scholarship and written off as a feminine activity and not a form of connecting with an intellectual, political, and artistic practice. Her curatorial model is based on the importance of the conversational complex, which was produced in women-led salons, this is contrary to the exhibitionary complex that was produced through museums.⁷² In contrast to the exhibitionary complex which relies on

⁶⁸ Susan Elizabeth Spaid, *The Philosophy of Curatorial Practice: Between Work and World* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2020).

⁶⁹ Spaid, “Work and World: On the Philosophy of Curatorial Practice” 3.

⁷⁰ Paul O’Neill, *The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Culture(s)* (MIT Press, 2016). 2.

⁷¹ O’Neill, *The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Culture(s)*, 88

Elke Krasny, “The Salon Model: The Conversational Complex,” *Feminism and Art History Now. Radical Critiques of Theory and Practice*, 2017, 147–63.

a hierarchical laying of power which is between the display and the viewer, the conversational complex lays its power horizontally and relationally. This concept is routed in feminist theory in organisational practice, in opposition to the traditional organisational theory that exemplifies hierarchical structures.⁷³ The salonnière in Krasny's argument is both the hostess and a participant, a position she credits as curator. This position provided "material and immaterial support structures and resources," this would involve the space, the food, and the skills to facilitate such conversations. These salons created "conversation as an artwork," yet the feminisation of the salons devalued them.⁷⁴ Conversations as art threw off the position of artist-as-genius, where prominence was placed in isolation for a single individual. This concept was created for the curator-as-author position which places the curator as the narrator of display.

However, Krasny discusses the introduction of curator-as-carer first mentioned by Paul O'Neil. This view of curating provides the environment to promote and aid conversation. The curator must bridge gaps in diversity and build "temporary communities." This model ensures the possibility of horizontality and relationality in art and policy making⁷⁵. In this model, the curator acts as an active participant within the conversation. The Mother Collective embraces the notion of co-curation and through community, submissions allow for the development of diverse content utilised from the competency and prowess of other communities. By facilitating this space, the art director bridges gaps in diversity and so the magazine builds these 'temporary communities.' Additionally, as curator, the art director is both hostess and participant by not only creating the space for conversation, the articles, but applying their input, the interaction between text and visuals. The Mother Collective is a particularly interesting case as it ties in these feminist curating ideologies within their curating process.

Curatorial Activism: Curating as Caring

The conversational complex of curating takes a stake in feminist theorisation of curatorial practice. The Mother Collective roots itself in curatorial theory by their efforts in uplifting the art of marginalised communities. In her book *Curatorial Activism: Towards an Ethics of Curating*, Dr. Maura Reilly defines a curatorial activist as someone who, "dedicated their curatorial endeavours almost

⁷³ Kathleen Iannello, *Decisions Without Hierarchy: Feminist Interventions in Organization Theory and Practice* (Routledge, 2013).

⁷⁴ Krasny, "The Salon Model: The Conversational Complex," 154.

⁷⁵ Krasny, "The Salon Model: The Conversational Complex," 160.

exclusively to visual culture in, of, and from the margins.” This means those who commit to initiatives that level hierarchies, challenge the status quo, counter the dismal of communities, promote the margins, and encourage strategies of resistance.⁷⁶ Referring to the Heretics’ ethos, it is easy to see where these commitments align. In doing so the Heretics disrupt the historical art canon and art discourse. The canon of art history is hegemonic and has only catered to the white heterosexual cis-man institutionally and systematically.⁷⁷ Art history as an area of study has much to do with righting the wrongs of this canon and curatorial strategies of resistance take a stake in this process.

Reilly introduces two strategies of curatorial resistance: revisionism and areas of study. Revisionism, which is the most generic form of counter-hegemonic resistance, is the strategy that pursues the reclamation of history for those who have been forgotten, refused, and hidden from the narrative.⁷⁸ This strategy enables curators to present a more inclusive selection of work from a diversity of artists. Although this strategy is a noble pursuit, it still has its issues. It relies too heavily on the traditional Western art canon and surrounds itself around the naturally given hierarchy, hence the binary is sustained making anyone that is classified as ‘other’ a subordinate.⁷⁹ This means that revising the traditional art canon is impossible yet, the strategy still addresses these critical exclusions and makes room for deeper discussion and understanding of visual culture from a distinct perspective. Areas of study on the other hand, create new canons that focus their attention on marginalised communities, which creates ‘areas’ for those who are not represented in the traditional art canon. Because exhibitions of this type are separate from the canon, they are criticised for ghettoising and segregating these communities.⁸⁰ However, by creating these areas, a curator can bring to light work that has never had the opportunity to be shown before. Areas of study create a space for communities to band together in solidarity and promote a call to action for social and political issues.⁸¹

⁷⁶ Maura Reilly, *Curatorial Activism: Towards an Ethics of Curating* (London, UNITED KINGDOM: Thames & Hudson, Limited, 2018), 22

⁷⁷ Reilly, *Curatorial Activism*, 22

⁷⁸ Reilly, *Curatorial Activism*, 23.

⁷⁹ Reilly, *Curatorial Activism*, 24.

⁸⁰ Reilly, *Curatorial Activism*, 25.

⁸¹ Reilly, *Curatorial Activism*, 29.

Curatorial activism also plays into the notion of curating as caring and through this notion we can find the horizontality and relationality found in the conversational complex. Although curating has been traditionally bound to the idea of caring for objects, a broader approach has been taken by Elke Krasny, Sophie Lingg, and Lina Fritsch. They explain that care must be defined in a much “broader cultural, social, corporeal, emotional, affective, and intellectual sense.”⁸² Care is political and to radicalise it as transformative politics, the curator is responsible for understanding the politics of resources and infrastructures, in addition to employing a sense of ethics to understand the politics of knowledge and emotion all within their curatorial practice. To do so, curating must connect two notions of feminist theorisation of care: social reproduction theory and political theory of care ethics⁸³ Throughout history curating as a practice has been practiced under capitalist and nationalist regime and because of this curating is not innocent through any radical practice today.⁸⁴ Through the radicalisation of care the curator is focused with counter acting these injustices and inequalities of caring through a transformative and liberating change.⁸⁵ Counter to Dr. Reilly’s take on curatorial activism, curating as caring is aware that vulnerability is political and requires commitment for care to be reliable. The art world’s continued exploitation of underpaid, overworked, and predominately female curatorial staff is commandeered by the efforts of said women to dismantle these institutions through radicalising care in a healing way.⁸⁶

Within these frameworks is where I establish the art direction within *Heresies* magazine as a practice of curating through activism. One of the main ways that the Heretics worked within a feminist curatorial complex was through the collective itself. This was particularly challenging as they had to navigate the nuances from and within the movement. Within the magazine, it was important for them to share these partisanships and although issues of class and elitism are present throughout many of the issues these rifts are especially seen within issues three: *Lesbian Art and Artists*, eight: *Third World*

⁸² Elke Krasny et al., eds., *Radicalizing Care: Feminist and Queer Activism in Curating*, Publication Series of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, volume 26 (Berlin) : [Vienna: Sternberg Press ; Akademie der bildenden Künste Wien, 2021). 12.

⁸³ Krasny et al., *Radicalizing Care*, 14.

⁸⁴ Krasny et al., *Radicalizing Care*, 15.

⁸⁵ Krasny et al., *Radicalizing Care*, 18.

⁸⁶ Krasny et al., *Radicalizing Care*, 20

Women, and twelve: *Racism is the Issue*. These rifts reflected those of the larger feminist movement.⁸⁷

Lesbian Art and Artists was an issue that exemplified itself as an area of study. The issue was only open to lesbian artists and was completely assembled by lesbians. The issue was meant to “challenge the secrecy, silence, and isolation which has been a necessity for lesbians who make art.”⁸⁸ Issue three created an area of study for lesbian art, where traditionally space had not been provided. The editorial statement from the collective emphasises the difficulty of working within a “heterosexual feminist journal,” admitting that this may be the only issue that a “substantial amount of lesbian art may appear.”⁸⁹ The collective also addresses the fear of tokenism within the issue, reflecting the criticism about areas of study. This issue was about asserting the presence of lesbians within the wider feminist movement and within a feminist magazine. Although the issue created a space for lesbian artists it was still curated by “white college-educated and mostly middle-class women who live in New York and have a background in the Arts,” which was cause for criticism.⁹⁰

Through issues like these, the Heretics created a forum for feminist thoughts and theories. They participated in the conversation whilst hosting said forum. *Heresies* was constantly scrutinising themselves and displaying their vulnerabilities and short comings. This process aligns with Krasny’s radicalising care approach to curating. The constant conflict within the collective was reflective in the pages of the magazine and was an active study of how the feminist movement and radical Marxist beliefs progress. The concept of the collective was imperative to their alignment with feminist ideals and feminist curatorial theory. Through the collective, they were able to achieve a semblance of the horizontality and relationality discussed in the conversational complex and radicalisation of care. Although they struggled, and sometimes failed with this structure, the Heretics were determined to commit to it.

⁸⁷ Amy Tobin, “Heresies’ Heresies: Collaboration and Dispute in a Feminist Publication on Art and Politics,” *Women: A Cultural Review* 30, no. 3 (July 3, 2019): 287, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09574042.2019.1653118>.

⁸⁸ Mother Collective, “Editor’s Note,” *Heresies: A Feminist Publication on Art and Politics*, 1977.

⁸⁹ Mother Collective, “Editor’s Note”

⁹⁰ Tobin, “Heresies’ Heresies: Collaboration and Dispute in a Feminist Publication on Art and Politics,” 291

Discussion

Heresies magazine continues to be a valuable source of visual culture as it pertains to feminism. Art director as curator evaluates three forms of curatorial classification: arrangement and selection, mediation and interpretation, and conversation and facilitation. Art direction is partly associated with the magazine's production. This means that the arrangement of visuals to text and the selection of said visuals is within the role of art director. Additionally, the art director mediates this information and interprets it by connecting the visuals and text together through the production process. Lastly, art director as curator addresses the conversational complex by facilitating a forum, the magazine, whilst contributing to the discussion through their creative input. Art director as curator is established through these principles, but through the collective and the form in which the *Heretics* produced the magazine they can also be established through the framework of curatorial activism.

Because curating is intrinsically linked to criticality it is important to establish art direction under this same critique. The role of a curator is proactive; they seek out work that supports a thesis that they intend to introduce.⁹¹ This means a curator's job is meant to interpret meaning from art beyond a single piece of work to deepen the scope of understanding to the spectator. Curators play their own role in activism, so by framing art direction under curation it implies that art direction also plays a role in activism. Visual culture is vital to the ongoing pursuit of social movements. Magazines make this visual culture accessible to the masses whereas traditional forms of exhibition making may be less so. Magazines and art journals are crucial to the circulation of ideas and defining artistic agendas.⁹² Magazines rely on art direction to create their visual identity and by doing so contribute to the circulation of the ideas within. Establishing the art director as curator places the art director in a position of mediation where they can share a social movement's idea to a wider audience.

⁹¹ Rosenberg, "Curating the Practice/the Practice of Curating," 76.

⁹² Gwen Allen, "Magazines as Alternative Sites of Artistic Practice," in *The Handbook of Magazine Studies* (John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2020), 261–77, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119168102.ch20>.

Branding *Bitch*

Whereas my previous examples emerged in the 1970s, *Bitch: Feminist Response to Pop Culture* was founded in 1996, during a technological revolution. Technology is constantly evolving and over the past fifty years the way graphic designers interact with their designs has drastically changed. When *Bitch* opened its doors in the mid-1990s the magazine industry was already mostly digital. The founding art director, Benjamin Shaykin, was designing the layouts on the computer; however, the covers were illustrated. As technology evolved so did the design of the magazine. The covers began to change from full illustration to rendering illustrated elements into the cover digitally. Additionally, the emerging popularity of the internet changed not only the field of graphic design but the entire publishing industry. Feminist magazines are limited by their resources like any other business. So with the ever-evolving developments in technology, these magazines are subject to the same progression and adaptation. When feminist magazines began to emerge in the United States in the 1960s, they were commonly led by groups of women who wanted an alternative to mainstream hegemony. Feminist zine culture was developed through this idea, and with these new technologies becoming more widely available the circulation of homegrown developments can once again thrive.

In this chapter, I relate technological advancements in the graphic design field to the efficiency of spreading feminist ideology through the example of *Bitch*. I argue that both the field of graphic design and the magazine publishing industry must adapt to the changing landscape. The advancements in the field and those that are only now emerging are in turn an opportunity for the next generation of visionaries to take on the issues that need to be addressed in modern society and to build upon the fight of previous generations. The competence in these fields can be utilised in continuing the visualisation of social movements. I discuss how technology changed the design process and the decisions a designer makes in addition to where the field is going. There is a cyclical nature to these creative processes and regardless of the ever-changing environment, there is always a fundamental creativity that emerges from the oppression of communities in their quest to be heard. Through an interview with graphic design professor and former *Bitch* art director, Briar Levit, research into the effect of technology on design and

magazines, and visual analysis of the magazine itself, I formulate this argument.

Founded by Lisa Jervis and Andi Zeisler, *Bitch* magazine aimed to create a public forum to discuss thoughts and theories about feminist issues through the lens of popular culture.⁹³ It was meant to be a more accessible form of literature that critiqued popular culture for its commonplace and subtly dangerous continuation of sexism. The magazine debuted as a ten-page zine that was handed out from the back of a station wagon in the Bay Area.⁹⁴ The magazine then evolved into a non-profit that focused its energy on publishing the magazine quarterly. The main purpose of the magazine was to produce funny, engaging, and piercing articles and content about popular culture through a feminist lens. *Bitch Media* was born and eventually relocated its base to Portland, Oregon in 2007. The company closed its doors in June of 2022.

The 90s was a very optimistic time and brought about third-wave feminism, where my previous examples were born within the second wave. While third-wave feminists do not necessarily have different problems or solutions than previous iterations of feminist pursuits, they take on heavily nuanced discussions that Claire Snyder illustrates in her essay “What Is Third-Wave Feminism? A New Directions Essay.” Here she discusses three important tactical moves that third-wave feminists use to respond to second-wave feminism: the response to the fall of the category of ‘woman,’ the consequences of the rise of post-modernism, and the response to the divisiveness of the “sex wars.”⁹⁵ Ultimately these modern feminists are people who have grown with the idea of feminism within the fabric of their lives and distinguish themselves within the issues of their social context. Third-wave feminist magazines were “sites of negotiation among interrelated groups of editors, readers, distributors, writers, and advertisers

⁹³ “About Us,” Bitch Media, accessed May 18, 2023, <https://www.bitchmedia.org/about-us>.

⁹⁴ April Ehrlich, “Portland-Based Bitch Media Plans to Close Its Doors in June,” OPB, April 17, 2022, <https://www.opb.org/article/2022/04/17/portland-based-bitch-media-closing-doors-june-2022/>.

⁹⁵ R. Claire Snyder, “What Is Third-Wave Feminism? A New Directions Essay,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 34, no. 1 (September 2008): 175–96, <https://doi.org/10.1086/588436>.

about meanings of contemporary feminism.”⁹⁶ They are enigmatic texts that portray varying and even contradictory takes on modern feminist issues.

In addition, the technology that was available to designers in the mid-1990s was very different from what was available to second-wave feminists. The World Wide Web opened for public use in 1991 and the software available to designers was becoming quite advanced from the desktop publishing developments of the 1980s which advanced periodical publishing from the hand-made mechanicals for reproduction.⁹⁷ This time brought a large shift in the design industry from analog to digital. The emergence of personal computers such as PCs and Macs was a game changer for not only how designers worked but the aesthetic of the 1990s.⁹⁸ Designers now had to operate on personal computers where they could browse the internet and access fonts, content, and ideas in minutes. Desktop publishing was the new way in which magazines were being produced and *Bitch* utilised these acquired skills in their design. These advancements came rapidly and even now the technology twenty-seven years later has changed considerably. At that time the Internet was still in its infancy even so it was a monumental development for designers and the public alike. The invention of the internet made it so that computers were used for the composition and production of designs and even how audiences accessed this information. Now, technology has advanced further and created more avenues to access information including the invention of the smartphone.

Design Decisions

One of the biggest changes in graphic design was the shift from tactile efforts to digital ones. Instead of laying out spreads by hand, designers were now capable of doing so completely digitally. Although it is still good practice in the creative process to manage one's elements tactilely and physically, designers' final edits are computerised. Research shows that when

⁹⁶ Elizabeth Groeneveld, *Making Feminist Media: Third-Wave Magazines on the Cusp of the Digital Age* (Wilfrid Laurier Univ. Press, 2016).

⁹⁷ Florence Fu, “From the Collection: Design in the '90s,” Letterform Archive, June 24, 2019, <https://letterformarchive.org/news/design-in-the-90s/>.

⁹⁸ Fu, “From the Collection: Design in the '90s”

designers only use computer-aided design, they modify their design approach, and their creative process changes.⁹⁹ Instead of using the conventional approach of sketching as a concept formulation, designers switched to thinking for concept formulation, the crucial first step in the creative process.¹⁰⁰ Computer-aided design has an impact on the design process through the creation of various tools.¹⁰¹ The more options and tools at a designer's disposal affect the decisions that a designer makes within the process of creating layouts.

Bitch utilised computer design from the very beginning except for their early covers which were illustrated.¹⁰² Computerised design was essential to creating and releasing the magazine. *Bitch's* goal was never to become a glossy commercial magazine but to stick to its independent zine roots.¹⁰³ The designs of the covers eventually changed from illustration to digitally rendered. From fig. 6 to fig. 7, this change is evident. This process was a means of advancing the feel and the aesthetic of the magazine, in a way that progressed with technology. These were new decisions placed on designers and publishers alike. Not only was a working knowledge of graphic design principles required to do this job, but proficiency with computers was now essential.

Not only were designers and publishers dealing with the technology available on the computer, but there were significant advancements in imaging and printing. Digital image processes allowed for two-dimensional data to be utilised as the information source to improve the visual image effect through a technical process of image signals.¹⁰⁴ These images were revolutionary for a variety of fields and their utilisation within graphic design was an inevitable

⁹⁹ R Hanna and T Barber, "An Inquiry into Computers in Design: Attitudes before—Attitudes After," *Design Studies* 22, no. 3 (May 1, 2001): 255–81, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0142-694X\(00\)00029-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0142-694X(00)00029-6).

¹⁰⁰ Hanna and Barber, "An Inquiry into Computers in Design,"

¹⁰¹ Hanna and Barber, "An Inquiry into Computers in Design,"

¹⁰² Briar Levit, Feminist Magazine Interview, Zoom, July 5, 2023.

¹⁰³ Levit, Feminist Magazine Interview

¹⁰⁴ Zhenyu Li, "Application Research of Digital Image Technology in Graphic Design," *Journal of Visual Communication and Image Representation* 65 (December 1, 2019): 102689, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvcir.2019.102689>.

trend.¹⁰⁵ Additionally, the technology for processing complex material into print was also developing. Printers had to keep up with the advancements in digital technologies. Although this led to significant improvement in the quality of image and design that the public received, it created new problems for designers. If the imaging design systems and the printing was not compatible, the results designers found on their computer screens were vastly different from those that were printed on paper. Designing is only the first step in the process of getting visual communication to audiences, and it is important to take a look at the entirety of the workflow through to production.¹⁰⁶ Designers have to prepare their work to be printed and depending on the printers being used this could look very different. Modern technology on most pre-imaging processes is automated in software functions built into the printer drive. This means a lot of the time designers are unaware of how images must be prepared for printing.¹⁰⁷ However, if one did not have the budget to keep up with these emerging technologies, like so many independent magazines, this proved to be difficult.

Zeisler has always been very vocal about the financial issues the magazine faced.¹⁰⁸ The magazine shut its doors in June of 2022 because it found no sustainable path forward. From the beginning, *Bitch* focused their energy on the cause, not the income. They were all ‘pop culture fanatics’ who wanted feminism to be fun and approachable while being an alternative to what was on the newsstands.¹⁰⁹ The goal was not to make money, but to spread feminist opinion on pop culture and this meant there was some sacrifice. Technology can be quite expensive, especially when it first emerges. Levit discusses the conditions of working for an independent magazine by sharing her experience with the need to have a second job and the difficulties in working with nearing obsolete technology. The staff at *Bitch* was also quite small and in the beginning, only totalled three people. Working at an independent feminist magazine means designers have to work with limited resources which often forces them to get creative. One of the

¹⁰⁵ Li, “Application Research of Digital Image Technology in Graphic Design

¹⁰⁶ Wayne Collins et al., *Graphic Design and Print Production Fundamentals*, 2016, 10

¹⁰⁷ Collins et al., *Graphic Design and Print Production Fundamentals*, 123

¹⁰⁸ Ehrlich, “Portland-Based Bitch Media Plans to Close Its Doors in June”

¹⁰⁹ Levit, Feminist Magazine Interview

biggest issues for the art director was the printers. In the beginning, their printer was not PostScript, a laser printing language that was capable of describing text and images on a printed page, this resulted in a disparity between the digital designs and the printed results.¹¹⁰ As previously stated there is quite a bit of difficulty that comes from a disparity like this one. Additionally, the budget restrictions meant that the art director constantly had to figure out their imagery with very few resources. Photography was only allocated for the cover and illustrators for feature articles.¹¹¹ The rest of the design was free images pulled from the web with the hopes that free use, the limited use of copyright material, would suffice. The resolution of monitors was also much lower at the time, so finding public-use images at the right resolution for printing was tricky, and Levit often teetered the edge of these restrictions.¹¹²

The decisions that designers have to make grow more precarious with the addition of technology; decisions that hold weight. In the process of creating a feminist magazine, it is a priority to amplify the voices and the accomplishments of women. *Bitch* decided to change their masthead from the original brute font to a more bold but friendly one. Fig. 8 shows the new masthead of the magazine compared to fig. 6 and 7 which have the original more zine-like typeface. The working art director, Levit, was in charge during the final masthead change for the magazine's brand. She used the font Interstate which was co-created by a woman. Levit states, "I didn't know or have any concept at the time of using a typeface designed by a woman. I was fully a feminist, but I didn't know I could do that. I had never heard of a typeface designed by a woman."¹¹³ The typeface was already being used for the interior design of the magazine. Levit's decision, even if unintentional, elevated the accomplishment of another woman. A designer must understand and anticipate the consequences on politics, health, and society of their designs.¹¹⁴ Although the decisions designers make have diversified with the emergence of new technology,

¹¹⁰ Levit, Feminist Magazine Interview, and Fu, "From the Collection: Design in the '90s"

¹¹¹ Levit, Feminist Magazine Interview

¹¹² Levit, Feminist Magazine Interview

¹¹³ Levit, Feminist Magazine Interview

¹¹⁴ Katrin Bichler and Sofie Beier, "Graphic Design for the Real World? Visual Communication's Potential in Design Activism and Design for Social Change," *Artifact* 3 (July 28, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.14434/artifact.v3i4.12974>.

it is decisions like these that show the role that art directors and designers share in representing marginalised communities. Even though graphic design is often tied to the consumer and the goals and pursuits of capitalist agendas there are still ways in which designers can use their skills for a righteous cause.

Where Is It Going?

As much as there have been advancements within the graphic design field, one of the largest shifts in the field that continues to change the landscape is the internet. The creation of the internet changed the world and the way that individuals communicate with each other. In the modern world, content can now be put online to be seen by thousands if not millions in a matter of seconds. The effects of new digital media on traditional magazine and newspaper publishing have undoubtedly brought significant changes to audiences, publishers, and advertisers.¹¹⁵ The internet has made the supply chain for magazine production more efficient but has not changed the supply chain itself. Magazines still rely on their main supplier groups, freelance journalists, printing houses, paper suppliers, and distributors.¹¹⁶

The internet brought in the era of Postmodernism design, which at first seemed like a hodgepodge of different styles with no unifying elements, a style dismissed for the youth. This era brought about a new way of thinking for designers where they saw themselves as active participants in culture and were in positions to express their political and ideological agendas.¹¹⁷ Additionally, the internet gave designers access to stock images and other resources that they can use in their designs. Although many stock images, textures, and graphics come at a cost and were rare during the 1990s and early 2000s, there are also many free resources available now that are in the public domain.¹¹⁸ *Bitch* was late to upload their content to the web, even when they initially did it was mostly about information on where to send the check. However, the internet

¹¹⁵ Hanna-Kaisa Ellonen, "The Effect of the Internet on the Magazine Publishing Industry," *BUSINESS RESEARCH*, 2006.

¹¹⁶ Ellonen, "The Effect of the Internet on the Magazine Publishing Industry"

¹¹⁷Mr. Keedy, "Graphic Design in the Postmodern Era," *Emigre*, 1998.

¹¹⁸ Levit, Feminist Magazine Interview

was integral to changing the brand from *Bitch Magazine* to *Bitch Media*, which included the magazine, blog, and podcasts.¹¹⁹ Their three-person staff grew to include positions that oversee their new digital platform.

The magazine industry has certainly taken a hit from the internet. With slogans like ‘print is dead’ it often seems like technology has harmed ‘old media.’ However, according to an article written by Hanna-Kaisa Ellonen called ‘The Effect of the Internet on the Magazine Publishing Industry,” the internet does not appear to be a disruptive technology and instead can be seen as an incremental, non-disruptive technology.¹²⁰ This means that the internet has the power to complement magazine publishing not destroy it. However, there is contention about its benefits to subcultures and their forms of resistance. The internet and new technology, simultaneously problematise and support these subcultures. For a long time, alternative cultural subgroups used print media to get their messages across, this was primarily done through zines and magazines like *Bitch*. Now with the internet and the accessibility it provides, the medium of resistance is transformed into a process that interacts with it, in this case online and in print.¹²¹ There are dangers to the internet as well that also need to be addressed with further research, but the effect of the internet on print can seem very negative. The overall circulation of magazines has been declining since 2008.¹²² Print media needs to adapt to the changing digital landscape and embrace the possibilities and challenges that come with the development of new technologies. Although *Bitch Media* closed its doors, it adapted to digital mediums and continued to share its feminist takes on popular culture for twenty-six years.

In addition to going online, *Bitch* also went social. The internet has also brought about the development of social media and social networks. Social media is defined as a networked

¹¹⁹ Levit, Feminist Magazine Interview

¹²⁰ Ellonen, “The Effect of the Internet on the Magazine Publishing Industry”

¹²¹ Jeffrey S. Debies-Carl, “Print Is Dead: The Promise and Peril of Online Media for Subcultural Resistance,” *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 44, no. 6 (December 1, 2015): 679–708, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891241614546553>.

¹²² Parul Jain, Zulfia Zaher, and Enakshi Roy, “Magazines and Social Media Platforms: Strategies for Enhancing User Engagement and Implications for Publishers,” *Journal of Magazine Media* 17, no. 2 (2017), 2 <https://doi.org/10.1353/jmm.2017.0018>.

communication platform that allows users to have personalised profiles that can be viewed by others and discussed while simultaneously discussing and traversing with other users. These networks have become useful tools in advertising and other creative fields, especially with how available they are to individuals through their mobile phones. For businesses, it is a new way to access consumers. Magazines are no exception and have had a significant increase in activity on social media since their rise to popularity.¹²³ Even so, there is still a struggle for magazines to retain readers and create a loyal community. Despite the decline in print readership, there is a rise in digital interaction with magazines.¹²⁴ Magazines can use social media to connect with audiences, however, this requires a slight relinquishment of control to the users. Magazines still stand as a source of information for readers, but they are now competing with social media. By creating and actively participating in socials, magazines can remain a legitimate journalistic source for users.¹²⁵

In terms of feminism, social media can be isolating. Online activism, is often only visible to those who use it and can hide the activities and achievements of women from the wider public and older generations of feminists.¹²⁶ However social media can be a viable space to organise for work in the ‘real world.’ Feminist magazines are in a unique position by being able to utilise old media’s traditional means of communication while connecting with users digitally. In terms of graphic design, designers now have a new medium for visual culture to focus on making their job descriptions more broad. Smartphones and wireless technology have made it so that everyone has access to the internet at all times. Portable technology made it so that designers had to create non-linear work and work with information architects in serving audiences.¹²⁷ There is more to be said on social media and design in feminist magazines, but further research is required.

¹²³ Jain, et al, “Magazines and Social Media Platforms,” 1

¹²⁴ Jain, et al, “Magazines and Social Media Platforms,” 2

¹²⁵ Jain, et al, “Magazines and Social Media Platforms,” 2

¹²⁶ Julia Schuster, “Invisible Feminists? Social Media and Young Women’s Political Participation,” *Political Science* 65, no. 1 (June 1, 2013): 8–24, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0032318713486474>.

¹²⁷ Mahmoud Abushawali, Yan Peng Lim, and Ahmad Radzi Bedu, “The Impact of New Digital Media on Graphic Designer in Jordan,” in *2013 International Conference on Informatics and Creative Multimedia*, 2013, 275, <https://doi.org/10.1109/ICICM.2013.34>.

The digital revolution gave everyday people access to graphic design. Tasks that were reserved for specialists were now available to outsiders. The Graphical User Interface (GUI), which was a digital interface that allowed users to interact with graphic components, allowed designers to directly manipulate images, pixels, and text.¹²⁸ Those who created typefaces began to experiment with their fonts. Technology advancements like GUI gave the public the ability to create. The invention of the personal computer, especially as it appeared in the home, classroom, and office has made it so that everyone has access to the handling of text and images.¹²⁹ Personal computers are now widely accessible although professional programs like Adobe's Creative Suite can still be expensive, there are a variety of free platforms, such as Canva, that allow anyone to create their designs, magazine spreads included. In the 90s, graphic design expanded into the digital realm.¹³⁰ This competency at home resurges the do-it-yourself (DIY) attitudes of previous decades. Zine culture has always been based on these attitudes. Subcultures have taken their thoughts and ideas to wider audiences through the making of their zines. These ephemeral works of cultural expression find their way out into the world, and with technology being so accessible they once again prevail. Despite electronic media's effect on print in general, zines continue to endure.¹³¹

Discussion

The digital revolution changed the world and pushed the industries of graphic design and magazine publishing to adapt to the new environment. The 1990s brought about this revolution in third-wave feminism. It was a time of new creative expression with new priorities and ideals. The arrival of the personal computer and the many software associated has become omnipresent and made access to the internet fast and simple. The World Wide Web modernised the way that people interact and communicate. These new technologies changed the decisions that designers

¹²⁸ Fu, "From the Collection: Design in the '90s"

¹²⁹ Richard Hollis, *Graphic Design: A Concise History* (Thames & Hudson, Limited, 2002).

¹³⁰ Abushawali, et al, "The Impact of New Digital Media on Graphic Designer in Jordan," 275

¹³¹ Alison Piepmeier, "Why Zines Matter: Materiality and the Creation of Embodied Community," *American Periodicals* 18, no. 2 (2008): 214.

had to make. It produced a shift from an analog working style to a digital one and altered the creative process. There is an evident progression *Bitch* underwent alongside technological developments that resulted in various changes to its overall brand and style. It shows how going digital changed the way designers managed their products and influenced an entire era of design history. With the internet connecting people through social media, magazines found a new way to reach audiences. For social causes, the internet became a new channel to organise and inform. The accessibility to these technologies make it possible for subcultures to further prevail and carve out a niche in the modern world.

Bitch, from its zine beginnings to its final days, had to navigate a digital world. Technology has remoulded and shaped both the industries of graphic design and magazine publishing. For a smaller publication like *Bitch* the digitisation of these industries was a tumultuous ride. With these changes becoming more prevalent visual communication should refocus its goals as an informative practice that enables users to solve their problems and allow for new circumstances of interacting with their surroundings.¹³² Design activism within feminist magazines continues to develop within the twenty-first century. *Bitch* exemplifies the modern ideals of third-wave feminism while navigating the fresh shift in technology. They adapted their strategy, but not their cause. Magazines and graphic design could not stay stagnant and with new technology comes new outlets for creativity. Technology changed the field of graphic design and added new forms of visual culture to prevail and adds to existing forms of old media. There is now a new way of reaching individuals and a new way for creators to develop work. Social movements utilise technology to organise and inform the public through the utilisation of visual culture. The exponential development of technology continues to advance and it is crucial to adapt and grow with it.

¹³² Bichler and Beier, "Graphic Design for the Real World?" 11.9

Conclusion

These chapters exemplify the work of numerous feminists who assisted in forming a visual representation of feminism. Magazines are an integral form of journalistic expression and an effective source of information. The women's movement has used this infrastructure to serve the cause. The design of these magazines has added to the culture of feminism and its visual identity. Whether it be through the enigmatic covers of *Ms.*, the chaotic spreads of the Mother Collective, or the rebranding of *Bitch*, feminist magazines and their graphic design are legitimate examples of what feminism looks like. This is cemented through the *Ms.* case study, where I establish the effect magazine covers have on readers and how the magazine utilises this effect in order to promote a feminist agenda by garnering the interest of everyday women. Art direction is defined and tied to curating through *Heresies* and the Mother Collective. This aspect is seen not only through the principles of arrangement and selection, mediation and interpretation, and conversation and facilitation but through the lens of curatorial activism and the radicalisation of care in curating. Tying art direction to curating puts the role of art director under the same critique and responsibility for facilitating visual culture. Lastly, taking a look forward *Bitch*, navigated a world that revolved around technology. Technology reinvented what it means to design and shaped the way in which feminist magazines interact with their readers. It brought about a spoil of choice and influenced the visual culture of not only feminism but the world. This requires a refocussing of goals to not only inform but encourage audiences to shape the world they want to live in.

Through critical art education, the democratisation of society is possible by creating awareness of, acknowledging, and resisting hidden forms of power.¹³³ Art education can be used as a tool of disruption to expose and address oppression in order to encourage social transformation. Visual culture has been utilised throughout time to reveal the discrepancies between fundamental societal values and the actual realities of the status quo.¹³⁴ Graphic design, as a form of visual culture, abides by this notion, especially through its contradicting nature.

¹³³ Mary Savig et al., "What Is Feminist Art?," *Archives of American Art Journal* 60, no. 1 (March 2021): 62–79, <https://doi.org/10.1086/714302>.

¹³⁴ Savig et al., "What Is Feminist Art?"

Although traditionally perceived as a tool for capitalism, social movements co-opt its power for their causes. Through feminist magazines, graphic design is fundamental for the spread of information and the encouragement of audiences. Graphic design in feminist magazines has played a large part in forming an attitude toward feminism. From revered works like Faith Ringgold's *Woman Freedom Now* to the spreads of humble feminist magazines, graphic design is an integral piece in the visualisation of the women's movement.

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