

## Abstract

This project explores what happens inside a woman's mind after being subjected to the male gaze in public through paper folding and printed text. The Line of enquiry is: how can I use personal experiences of being subjected to the male gaze to explore and visualise the shared psychological states that follow these moments?

The project starts from a personal experience and expands through testimonies collected from other women. These accounts show that simply being on the receiving end of that kind of gaze can leave lasting psychological effects. Discomfort. Fear. Self-surveillance. Obsessive replaying. Self-doubt. Intrusive thoughts. Most of these experiences are not considered "serious." There is often no physical violence. No direct verbal harassment. No stalking. From the outside, nothing major seems to have happened. But psychologically, something continues afterwards.

In Projection 1, I explored the male gaze through found footage and flip book structures. Viewers could pause, rewind and re-watch film clips. Through this process, my focus shifted to the act of looking itself. The physical gesture of turning pages. The act of pausing and rewinding. How these actions interrupt and change the original story of the footage. I also became concerned that repeating images of women's bodies risked creating another form of looking. So I abandoned imagery entirely and moved to working through text and publication structure alone.

The project became a series of experimental text publications. Each one explores how a different publication format can carry a different psychological pattern. A book that flips endlessly reflects a looping fear. The fear of returning to that place. The fear of it happening again. There is no way out. It does not stop. A long folded strip carries frustration and repetition. The same words keep coming back. The thoughts move in one direction, forward and forward, until the only want is for everything to stop. An unfolding map reflects confusion and self-doubt. Thoughts keep branching out. Spreading in every direction. There is no clear answer. No fixed point to land on.

This question is relevant to women who have experienced being subjected to the male gaze and the psychological aftermath that followed. It is also relevant to designers and practitioners interested in how publication format and structure can be used as a design method to shape and express interior psychological experience.  
internal experiences.

## Contexts

Laura Mulvey's *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* (1975) is the main theoretical foundation of this project. Mulvey argues that women are positioned as image and men as bearer of the look. The structure of looking is shaped by unequal power. This project started from cinema. But through the process, I did not want women to become objects of looking again within my own work. So one of the core principles of this project is to actively avoid

that. The focus moves away from the visual image of women. Instead it turns towards the psychological impact of being looked at.

Susan Nolen–Hoeksema's theory of rumination (1991) defines rumination as repeatedly and passively focusing on distress and its causes or consequences. This theory helped me understand the testimonies collected in my research. The thoughts women had after these experiences are essentially a process of rumination. Research also shows that women ruminate more than men. This explains why these seemingly small experiences can cause lasting psychological harm.

Kier–La Janisse's *House of Psychotic Women* (2012) combines personal reflection, fragmented narrative and female psychological experience. Janisse uses horror films as a mirror to look back at her own life and understand her own psychological states. This connects to this project. Both use a certain medium or format to process, express and understand the inner psychological experience of women.

Suzanne Lacy's *Rape Is...* (1972) is a feminist artist book. It uses text and design together to explore the experiences of violence and harm that women face. These experiences were ignored by society and the media at the time. The physical form of the book is part of the design. It opens down the middle and is sealed with a sticker. When the reader opens it, they become aware that they are entering a private experience. The structure of the publication is part of the content itself. This connects to this project. Both use the form and structure of a publication to guide the reader into the inner psychological experience of women.



The male gaze is not just a concept in film theory. It happens every day. On the street. On public transport. In daily life. But these experiences are rarely recorded. They are rarely taken seriously. There is not enough language to describe them. And there is almost no design practice that responds to the psychological impact they leave behind. This project tries to fill that gap.

This project sits within the tradition of feminist design practice. Feminist design is not only about how women are represented. It also asks what design itself can do. The form, structure and physical experience of a publication can be a tool for communicating something critical and political.

The experiences this project explores are largely undocumented. They are considered too small to record. This project works against that assumption. Theoretically, it sits at the intersection of feminist theory and psychology. Professionally, it asks what graphic communication design can do beyond presenting visible information. Specifically, whether it can give form to invisible, internal psychological states.

An important decision was to remove all imagery. Earlier work used found footage to explore cinematic ways of looking. But using images of women's bodies to explore the experience of being gazed at felt like reproducing another form of looking. Working only through text, repetition and physical navigation shifts attention away from visually reproducing women as objects. Instead it guides the reader through psychological experience in language and structure.

Each publication format carries a different psychological pattern. An infinite fold structure reflects thoughts that continuously loop back to the beginning. Fear and anxiety repeat without fully stopping. A map-like unfolding structure reflects scattered and expanding thoughts. One emotional question quickly leads to another in different directions. A long folded strip follows a more linear psychological narrative. Repeated phrases and unfolding pages reflect obsessive replaying and emotional repetition over time.

## Projected Contribution

This project contributes to graphic communication design. It explores how publication structure can carry psychological experiences. These experiences are difficult to make visible. Structure is not treated as a neutral container here. Folding, repetition, rhythm, looping and physical navigation become ways of communicating different psychological states. This asks a question relevant to the field: can graphic communication design give form not only to visible information, but also to invisible, internal experience?

This project is about the relationship between psychological structure and publication structure. Can form and structure carry invisible inner experience? This matters to graphic communication design. In practice and in theory. It expands what publication design can do. It moves from presenting content to becoming the content itself.

Beyond the course, this project will change how I think about publication design. I want to continue exploring how structure and material can carry meaning that images cannot. A publication does not have to look like anything to communicate something. It can be something the reader moves through. Physically and psychologically.

## Bibliography

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