

**Hi, I'm Virginia, and yep, that's me. You're probably wondering what led to my series of epic mental breakdowns. Well, buckle up and let me explain.**

During the methods of iterating project, I challenged myself to learn a new tool: screen printing. Inspired by Robert Rauschenberg's chaotic and captivating artworks, I decided to integrate screen printing with painting.

I started screen printing personal photographs in a random manner. I immediately notice, after a while, how all very mechanical the action of screen-printing was.

In order to hijack my tool, I conducted research on its original, industrial use. Screen printing was historically used for rapid, large-scale production, especially during the industrial revolution. This method's focus on speed made me reflect on how the pace of production affects the quality and message of imagery.

Inspired by icons like Andy Warhol and classical paintings, I started comparing the quality and uniqueness of artworks. To challenge the tool, I decided to "mass-produce" a unique portrait, using Vermeer's "Girl with a Pearl Earring" as my base.

Despite having some technical difficulties, I managed to iterate many different portraits with this method. During the process I felt like a robot, drained by the continuing action of painting and printing. Place the paper, start painting, remember to remove the reference canvas, screen print, wash, dry the screen, change the ink and repeat, and again, and again, and again again...

Positions through iterating led me to a shift of my perspective on my work. During the final feedback session of the previous brief, I decided to show not only my final iterations but also the artworks I had excluded because I considered them funny. This sparked a discussion with my peers about the conception of beauty.

What I deemed "ugly" in my work was perceived differently by others. In fact, some of the pieces I had discarded were considered beautiful, even fascinating. That made me reflect a lot.

For this brief, I decided to delve deeper into that snippet of discussion.

In the first week I created a book where I graphically explored the perception of colour and movement in my iterations. I also attempted to give my personal interpretation of beauty standards by editing my portraits according to some unspoken rules of what I found aesthetically pleasing.

(I was eager to engage in conversations with my peers and hear their interpretations of my work. What began as a simple exercise in iteration transformed into a journey of discovery.)

It was a journey where the boundaries of beauty and ugliness blurred and where each discarded piece held the potential to be a hidden gem.

I worked with 3d techniques and worked digitally with my portraits. In the final week....

I transformed my screen printings into digital artworks, seeking a fresh perspective on the creative process. I experimented with 3d techniques, which turned out to be the most fascinating approach. In the second and final week, I decided to compile all my work into a flip book. This flip book became a canvas where my iterations danced and evolved, showcasing the fluidity of shapes, the vibrancy of colors, and the myriad possibilities of identities. Though I

chose not to return to the screen printing lab, I think that the flip book echoed the mechanical rhythm of screen printing. This juxtaposition of methods led me to reflect on how graphic communication shifted and transformed through different mediums. Each technique offered its own unique narrative, conveying distinct messages and emotions.

Positions through contextualising was a tough journey for me.

I felt discomfort about my work, but I chose to embrace it and to delve deeper into it. During these briefs I began reading "On Ugliness" by Umberto Eco. The book inspired a change in my perspective on beauty standards and opened my mind to different points of view. The author discusses ugliness in a provocative tone and not only does he analyse people's perceptions, but he also includes illustrations to evoke emotions about what is considered ugly. The book shifted my views on beauty standards, fostering openness to diverse perspectives. Through provocative analysis and illustrations, the author explores perceptions of ugliness, evoking emotional responses.

Reflecting on my iterations, I also noticed that my object of study primarily focused on women and how they have been perceived by male artists throughout history. This led me to contemplate my own concept of beauty, both in my work and in myself.

How could I redefine beauty through my own experience and my work? How can graphic communication design help me in achieving this? Is the "aesthetically pleasing" essential in what we produce as graphic designers?

To answer these questions, I realised that the struggle I've faced with my projects on this course comes from an educational background very different from my current experience. My previous education taught me to be critical, but in way that often led to unproductive self-judgement. Everything in my work had to be neat and clean. This approach reflects also on my idea of beauty and aesthetics.

To answer these questions, I realised that the struggle I've faced with my projects on this course comes from My previous educational background that encouraged critical thinking but often resulted in unproductive self-criticism. It emphasized neatness and cleanliness, shaping my concept of beauty and aesthetics.

I've researched beauty standards in the past, exploring their origins and how they have evolved to the present day. Historically, women have been central figures in paintings and sculptures, and their beauty was perceived by mostly male artists as all-encompassing, hypnotic and venerated. Yet meant to be feared and ultimately controlled. Women's bodies were represented according to the beauty standards of their time. Despite being glorified for their beauty, women were considered incapable of controlling their own lives and lacked autonomy over their decisions.

"I've delved into the historical evolution of beauty standards, particularly focusing on women's portrayal. Traditionally, women were depicted as mesmerizing yet feared objects, subject to male control despite their glorification for beauty.

Embracing discomfort prompted me to reflect on my body and explore how my own experiences could challenge conventional beauty standards.

**Hi, I'm Virginia and I hate my nose.  
I think it's ugly,  
disproportionate,  
I hate the hump on it.  
I hate my profile.**

My work has literally gone through a journey of change that brought me back to screen printing. Returning to the origins of this tool, I was inspired by the method Marinetti, USED in his Manifesto, to create a repetition of frames of my nose. The hammering, the continuous repetition of the image created discomfort in me but it was almost hypnotic and alienating. At the end I even started to like it.

One of the references that influenced my work was the zine titled "Fat Boy Belly Booklet" by Chet Bugter. This zine employs selfies as a medium to disrupt the constant flow of curated bodies often seen on social media platforms.

This journey, both professional and emotional, has certainly brought me face to face with challenges along the way, but it has also helped me understand many things about myself and the power of visual communication.

**Now that my mental breakdowns are over, thank you for watching!**