



Thesis Defense

FLAIR MAGAZINE

BRANDON ROBERTS

FLAIR

Exploring The Relationship Between Sports & Creativity

THE CROSS CULTURES OF BASKETBALL

ED. 01

BRANDON ROBERTS

Brandon Roberts

ARTIST STATEMENT

THE MIND BEHIND FLAIR

Artist Statement

Brandon Roberts is a Graphic Designer who creates works of art and design that revolve around or correlate to urban/contemporary culture, sports and music. His personal style is one that has evolved beyond just singular representation, but instead into a multifaceted style that exists through the conceptual ideas and ties between connected cultures.

If he's not grinding hard at work, he's out on the blacktop playing basketball with his local community. His passions extend beyond design to sports, art, music, sneakers, technology, and fashion.

Brandon enjoys collaborating with creative individuals to design the right solution. He continuously strives himself to be hardworking, accountable, communicative, and supportive.

All with the goal to develop timeless pieces that stand the test of time.

The Original

THESIS PROPOSAL

WHERE IT ALL STARTED

Thesis Proposal

For my thesis I will be creating a branded lifestyle magazine where I will explore the relationship between sports and creativity through the eyes of an athlete and as a designer. Through a combination of visual imagery, layout, type, articles, and materials derived from urban culture and inspired by a rural-raised point of view, I will embrace the underlying themes of environment and style that exists in sports culture reflective of my own personal upbringing/exposure as an athlete, and how it influences my daily life beyond the game.

Sports have always been a part of my life. Growing up playing sports I learned about competition, resilience, courage, hard work, and teamwork. All great lessons to learn as a child, but perhaps the biggest lesson of all was creativity. Creativity and decision making in sports is something that influenced me greatly. Being able to create a solution in order to solve a problem and come out on top is a mindset that translates beyond sports even into the field of design. It changed the way I looked at things in life as well as my environment growing up. Coming from a small logging town on the outskirts of King County, Washington, there weren't many opportunities to explore creative expression beyond sports. The communal mentality was to keep your head down and keep working. In an environment filled with some of the best endless outdoor activities (ex. hiking, climbing, fishing, hunting, skiing, etc.), there weren't a lot of people who desired to be an artist or designer nor was it encouraged. I've always had love for art and athletics in a town where athletics was always put before art. The lack of encouragement for artistic expression was often filled by my infatuation with the visual language/style of sports culture represented in media, commercial services, and products. This led to a love for sports related design from an early age. Which is why this idea really spoke to me, because I feel it encompasses my two biggest passions in life sports and art.

I want the magazine to focus on how design relates back to sports and how design plays a big role in how sports are perceived in culture. I want the design and layout of the pages to echo the content that's being talked about on that specific page. For example if the section and article is about snowboarding, the design would have more of a punk and grunge aesthetic to it. And if it was about basketball it would have more visual ties to hip hop and urban culture. It's important for me that the culture behind these sports is represented in the design of the magazine and the design inspiration would fluctuate depending on the topic of the article/section. I want the

changes in design inspiration relative to sport to be underlined by clean and professional and contemporary design throughout. I aim to achieve this by maintaining certain design principles so that it remains cohesive, such as sticking to one clean typeface for all of the articles and bodies of text, using imagery that has similarities in colors and textures, and using consistent headers and page numbers. Everything will be kerned and layed out precisely, and every design decision I make will be done with a purpose. The magazine would also consist of sections purely showing off images and layout with small descriptions of each piece underneath. This would break up the articles and act as a gallery for digital images. Each piece would be a piece of art not only reflective of sports design, but also artwork reflective of sports culture.

I will only be creating one edition of this magazine serving as my personal exploration. The length of the magazine will be determined by the amount of content itself, ranging anywhere from 32 to 96 pages as long as the page count is divisible by 8 or 4. In order to create and curate this magazine I will have to do a lot of research as it will play heavily in this project, a lot will have to do with image searching, historical information on selected culture, materials, resources, etc. Researching concepts and culture, finding new ways to visually represent culture/audience/subject. For the magazine I will also create a system of layouts, rules, and parameters shaping the design, size, and feel of itself with the readers hands. These rules I will create will also be translated into the physical attributes of the paper itself at a production value, as I will be selecting attributes of paper- finish, weight, opacity, caliper, and smoothness. This will elevate the physical quality of the magazine supporting the content and design. At completion, I will print the magazine presenting the artifact as itself allowing for the viewer to have an experience. Upon my Oral defense this work will be presented through a passed around physical copy of the magazine as well as a digital slide. The digital slide would be highlighting the magazine itself, the brand, the system, and content.

When it comes to influences for this project I have none that directly relate to the style of this project. Instead what informs my overall creative vision is the multitude of projects and artwork created by many contemporary artists I see in pop culture, and their honed disciplines. An

Thesis Proposal

example of this is Spiral Journal - Issue 1: Tribalism designed by Forth+Back Studios. This first issue aims to both celebrate and challenge the diverse world of football by highlighting the game's storied yet troublesome history, observing the many relics and traditions shared by fans, discussing the players and 'superfans' who have rose to mythic proportions, along with speaking to an array of creatives, athletes, and individuals who are all pushing football forward. Each issue of Spiral explores a theme that connects the culture surrounding the game through the worlds of sport, art, design, music and fashion. These types of publications along with artists and photographers, such as Bradley Ward and David Boraley, indirectly fuel my creative vision for the Magazine through the tonality, style, and imagery consistent in their work relating to sports and creativity.

The Magazine will act as the highlighting piece of my portfolio. I will be using all of my design skills and abilities as an artist and student to truly create a solid piece in my portfolio's evolution. Most of my design and the work I have created revolves around or correlates to urban/contemporary culture, sports and music: this has shaped my personal style into one that has evolved beyond just singular representation, but instead into a multifaceted style that exists through the conceptual ideas and ties between connected cultures. In the past at pnca I've designed a book on graphic design, created a after school basketball program visually inspired street art, created 50 graphic images that represent snowboarding as a subculture and made up an idea for a sneaker expo that was inspired by sports and streetwear culture. I feel that my work I have created so far in my time as a design student has all led up to this project. It will bring together all of my styles of design and is the perfect platform for me to shine by highlighting how all the styles I've cultivated connect under the mediatization of sports.

Flair Magazine

ABSTRACT

WHAT IS IT?

Abstract

Flair Ed.01 is an image based magazine that explores the relationship between sports and creativity through the cross cultures of basketball. Created and curated from the eyes of an athlete and a designer, Flair was designed with the goal to stimulate athletes, creatives, and other individuals' own personal connections with sports, creativity, and its surrounding cultures through the visual aesthetics and products of creative expression.

Defending Flair

ORAL PRESENTATION

THE SPEECH

Oral Presentation

Hi everybody! My name is Brandon Roberts. I'm a graphic designer and for my thesis I created Flair Magazine.

Flair Ed.01 is an image based magazine that explores the relationship between sports and creativity through the cross cultures of basketball. Created and curated from the eyes of an athlete and a designer, Flair was designed with the goal to stimulate athletes, creatives, and other individuals' own personal connections with sports, creativity, and its surrounding cultures through the visual aesthetics and products of creative expression.

Flair Magazine was originally inspired by my own rural upbringing and personal relationship with sports and creativity.

Sports have always been a part of my life.

Growing up playing sports I learned about competition, resilience, courage, hard work, and teamwork. All great lessons to learn as a child, but perhaps the biggest lesson of all was creativity. Creativity and decision making in sports is something that influenced me greatly. Being able to create a solution in order to solve a problem and come out on top is a mindset that translates beyond sports even into the field of design. It changed the way I looked at things in life as well as my environment growing up.

Coming from a small logging town on the outskirts of King County, Washington, there weren't many opportunities to explore creative expression beyond sports. The communal mentality was to keep your head down and keep working.

In an environment filled with some of the best endless outdoor activities (ex. hiking, climbing, fishing, hunting, skiing, etc.), there weren't a lot of people who desired to be an artist or designer nor was it encouraged.

I've always had love for art and athletics in a town where athletics was always put before art. The lack of encouragement for artistic expression was often filled by my infatuation with the visual

language/style of sports culture represented in media, commercial services, and products. A lot of this exposure was brought on through our lone single outlet mall. The products available were all the products that didn't sell in top priority stores in urban locations. We got all the "cool stuff" last. But it was all we had available locally.

Alongside these products was the advertisements as well. They infatuated me at a young age, I remember grabbing the sports illustration magazines from the libraries with my buddies in elementary school flipping to the back and seeing the Got Milk ad then we'd drink our milk at lunch, have the little milk stache and ask each other "got milk" its sounds stupid now, but those were the kind of things we did as kids when we saw these ads/graphics, to us it made these athletes look cool, making us want to be like them. It was the things like this that led to my love for sports related design from an early age. Which is why this idea really spoke to me, because I feel it encompasses my two biggest passions in life: sports and art.

Once I moved out of North Bend and into Portland, I found myself picking up the basketball again, playing rec games at the local park or gym, and becoming submerged in a culture that I could call my own, this is why it only felt right to have the first edition of Flair Magazine to focus around the cross cultures of basketball.

As an athlete and designer when I create pieces of art, I am often creating the work with the intent to appeal to a certain audience or culture. I use the elements and principles of art, to create a visual aesthetic and language that can be easily understood by the respective audience, however there are certain aspects of aesthetics that stay consistent throughout my work: Harmony, composition, movement, contrast, and balance.

These consistencies in my work are influenced by my backgrounds in design and photography, as well as my environment growing up. My work has often been regarded by my peers as clean, poetic, and beautifully intuitive: more-so a style that is commercially romantic. By keeping this consistent style throughout my work I am able to play with other elements and principles at my disposal that are aesthetically representative of my audience's interest and focal subjects, all while keeping a unique style personal to me.

Oral Presentation

In this case, sports is the focal subject of Flair Magazine, so in order to find these similarities It further made sense to narrow down sports to the individual game of basketball for the first edition.

As we begin to identify the elements and principles of art within basketball we already start to see the many similarities between basketball and art, for example in basketball the area inside the key is called the paint, when a player drives to the basket they establish their line, when a perfect pass is executed between players we are able to see the harmony between them. These examples can be endless and almost all elements and principles of art can be reflected back through the actions and athletic expression of athletes.

This informed my research as well as my content for the magazine as it allowed me to use my own personal connection to basketball to inform how I could use different elements and principles to encapsulate the feelings and emotions in sports and culture creating a unique experience through the power of aesthetics. Furthermore, I was able flush out my goal to create a visually appealing magazine for an audience made up of creatives, athletes, artists, or anyone who has a personal connection to sports, art, culture, etc

The heart of Flair magazine is comprised of 20 visual pieces of artwork based around the culture of basketball that acts as a visual memoir of my own personal relationship with sports, creativity, and environment: broken up into four subcategories all relating to the cross cultures of basketball: Music and sound, Rural Environment, Fashion and Icons, and Urban Lifestyle. The style and tone of these images not only reflect that of my own, but the aesthetic language of their respective sub cultures.

My imagemaking is accompanied by a photo series I shot this year called "Home Court Advantage" that brings attention to the relationship between sports and creativity. Each of these basketball courts are used by thousands of hoopers, continue to endure thousands of hours, and still reject thousands of shots: every game, every play, every drop of blood sweat and tears: The court welcomes it all.

No two basketball courts can ever be the same. Each one is defined by the players who share it and call it their own. Every player has to put in hours of work to understand the dynamics and characteristics of each hoop in order to make their shots. They build a relationship between themselves and the court. As this bond grows so does their confidence and skill, they feel comfortable in their environment to where they can act intuitively through instinct: they begin to feel at home.

Each photo highlights the differences and similarities between courts, as well as lists their respective locations around Oregon.

The magazine content is topped off with four gallery showcases, highlighting works of an array of creatives, such as Walter Loose and Matthias Stogaard, that inspire and stimulate my own personal connection with sports, creativity, environment, alongside the cross cultures of basketball.

Flair is a 9x12 inch Magazine consisting of 100 pages, perfect bound, not typical of an average magazine. I chose to make this magazine at 9x12 on ARCH-A paper for two reasons. The first was that having a magazine that is 9x12, a 3: 4 ratio, full bleed images would already be sized for optimal social media ratios. The second was that I based the Flair's framework off an old issue of Arizona Highways from 1995, the magazine just felt right in the hands: it wasn't too big or too small. I went ahead and measured the magazine's size and margins to determine how I would build the framework for Flair.

Once I had my measurements I created an Indesign document and began to create master pages to later allow me to plug and play my content. These master pages consisted of header layouts, modular grids, photo layouts, full bleed spreads, as well as a typography spread where I was able to build a dual typographic scale that consisted of 16 paragraph styles and 3 different font families: Enduro, Big Caslon, and Media Sans Extended. The typographic scale consisted of two chromatic inspired scales - perfect fourth 1.333 for the fonts Enduro and Media Sans Extended, complemented with a golden ratio scale 1.618 for the font Big Calson. These scales were intuitively adjusted optically to look better on the eye.

Oral Presentation

After I set up my document I began to research for images and assets I could use in my artwork, anything I discovered or came across that I liked and I wasn't going to use as assets were saved and curated into my archive on my hard drive. Over the summer prior to starting this magazine I began to curate collections of work relating to different sports and sub cultures in my saved folders on instagram. Anytime I opened the app and I saw something related to my categories and sub cultures I saved it. I could have been waiting for the next squad rotation in a pick up game, or itching my ass at 3: 00am standing in front of the fridge looking for a late night snack, if I was on my phone I was curating. This is actually where I discovered the works of artists like Tyrrell Winston and Victor Solomon. I was able to create a curation of artists to fill the gallery showcase in Flair, killing two birds with one stone.

For selecting the images I was able to use as assets, it depended completely on the image or story I was trying to metaphorically visualize alongside the representations of symbology to the cross cultures of basketball. The subjects also determined which photos I would use as creative assets. If the base image I wanted to use had a good environment and it meant something to me, I would design around the composition of the image. If the image had a good subject or symbol that sparked my relationships I would take that symbol and force it into a new environment related to the subculture, through collage and image treatment. I would work with the base elements and principles of the photo assets and adjust them to how I saw fit, working intuitively with color grading, layering, cropping, photo editing, texture, etc.

This way of how I work is very intuitive and my process of creation has a huge impact from participating in sports. Often when I got stuck on work or creative research I would step away from the computer to find myself back on the basketball court. Through participating in sports or even just shooting around I am able to creatively express myself and discover new ways to achieve my athletic goals. I think of new ways to get past defenders, new crosses and dribbles, discovering new ways in which I can react to my defender that wouldn't be expected, all driven by intuition. If I didn't know the fundamentals of basketball I would be able to apply creativity to my craft, this same idea transcribes through my artwork as well. By knowing how to use the elements and principles of art and design, I am able to work intuitively and create new pieces of work through the application of my own creative expression.

For example I made "King of the Court" after I was stuck on ideas and I decided to go to the gym and play some ball. When I was there I met this chill ass dude named Aiden from Miami, it was just me and him, we had the whole floor to ourselves, so we played a game of King of the Court (I won) but it was back and forth all game and we both had hella fun, traded digits and went our separate ways. I came back to the house and create a visual piece of artwork that represented the emotions you feel when you play "King of the Court" It's one of my favorite games and the feeling you get when your at the top of the spot and it's just you, the defender, and the ball, is unmatched.

All of the images I created were exported as flattened Tiffs to best optimize for print, these images were also all exported as JPEG for web viewing.

For the photo series "Home Court Advantage" I wanted to highlight the unique characteristics of each basketball hoop: backboard size, shape, the wear/tear, net, colors, rims, even to how the lighting interacts with each hoop when compared to each other. These individual characteristics remained strong through creating a set of rules focused on photographic objectivity and visual neutrality that allowed me to harmonize each hoop together to achieve visual neutrality without taking away their identities.

The set of rules I created for myself and executed were quite simple. I took each photo at 1/60, f22, with the ISO being dependent on the brightness of the sky. I stayed between using an iso 100 - 300. I took each photo from underneath the hoop by laying on my back with my feet touching the bottom of the post with the rim framed in the center of the photo. This created a composition that was centered and focused while ensuring the angle of each backboard is the same, which led to seamless transitions between photos. By doing this I also created continuity between backgrounds, as all of them depict the sky. For post editing I straightened out each photo to make sure they were aligned on the same X axis, ruling out any compositional discrepancies. I used texture, sharpening, and clarity (as well as basic adjustments) to bring strong contrast and detail to the photos. This method of photographic stylization, allowed for the photos to further highlight/enhance the natural textures of each backboard, strengthening each subject's own unique characteristics. This elevates each subject's identity when viewed on its own, but also acts as a way to harmonize the subjects with each other when viewed as a whole: embracing visual

Oral Presentation

neutrality. The photos were all color graded with the blue tones of the sky in order to balance out the different shades of white of each backboard as some were clean and pure white while others were covered by dust and dirt.

This was a fun photo series for me that was also challenging. Finding a way to harmonize the hoops and still maintain their identities was a challenge that I had to face as I had to find balance between my photos, context, and conceptual ideas. Home Court Advantage allowed me to grow as a person and creative, by helping me exploring my relationship between sports and creativity, and figure out new means of exploration that allow me to push myself as a designer through evolving my conceptual thinking and problem solving through multiple forms of creativity mediums such as photography and connecting them back to sports.

After I gathered and created my content I went back to my indesign document and put the images into Flair's framework, adjusting order and rhythm to create the best sense of flow for the magazine. The 20 visual pieces of artwork I created were split into 4 single page full bleed images alongside a full spread per cross culture. The Full bleed artwork acted as a way to break up the rhythm of visual memoir in half. Each cross culture is divided by a full bleed spread of one of the photos from "Home Court Advantage" creating a repetition of (1,2,1,2,1). Each repetition of image making and the photo series is followed with a gallery showcase of other artist work, relative to the cross culture before it. The only exception of this is after Rural Environment and HCA 4/7 there is no gallery showcase, it immediately jumps into Fashion and Icons: this was an executive choice made to break up the repetition of the magazine creating balance.

Once the magazine was layout I added in the text and type and used them accordingly with my paragraph styles and typographic scales.

The name Flair was actually the last thing I did to finish this project beyond printing. The name Flair was chosen after long thought for it's universal meaning: (1.e) a special or instinctive aptitude or ability for doing something well: (2.e) stylishness and originality. You can apply Flair to anywhere in your life no matter who you are. Sports have flair. Art has flair. Whenever I create something I add my own Flair. It derives from that need to creatively express my own

personal connections with sports and creativity. Flair and Flare also sound the same, and Flare is representational of Fire or Light, and to me this Magazine is Fire. So it works with a double intent.

My influences for this project come from all directions. From my own rural upbringing to my relationship with sports and creativity, I can pull influences from anywhere. Artists such as Matthias Storgaard inspire my romanticized photographic style, Contemporary Artists such as Bang Lee and Victor Solomon inspired my infatuation with product creation representative of basketball culture. Furthermore athletes and basketball players such as Allen Iverson and Michael Jordan inspire me to creatively express myself and add my own Flair to the game just as they successfully did with theirs. This Magazine was inspired by my ever small infatuation with the cultures I resonate with. I can't give credit to one over the other because I believe they all played an equal role at base value, but I will say the overall creative vision of the project can be rooted towards the influence sports and creativity has had on me through my life.

Everyone has their own personal connection with something they adore, whether that be emotional or physical. Overtime we begin to identify ourselves more and more with the things we connect with and love. They become our hobbies, turn into passions, eventually becoming a part of our lives. When that personal connection we have is stimulated through the visual aesthetics and products of creative expression, we are acknowledging the idea that others connect and resonate to the same things we do. This idea creates opportunities to represent cultural ideals and beliefs through visual aesthetics and creative expression. When done successfully these forms of representation become identifiers in themselves, further allowing individuals, communities, and cultures to identify with each other. Photography is one of my favorite forms of creative expression, it's the reason I believe that a picture is worth a thousand words. Photography is a powerful tool that is able to communicate complex ideas, provoke us to experience emotions that move us, and compel us to do things that we otherwise would not even think of, all without using a single word: this allows photography to be an universal art form that possesses everything to be an ideal medium for creative expression.

Breaking It Down

CREATIVE BRIEF

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Creative Brief

Project Vision

Flair being a image based magazine exploring the relationship of sports and creativity through the cross cultures of basketball, In my eyes, achieves the goal I originally set out: Create a visually appealing magazine for an audience made up of creatives, athletes, artists, or anyone who has a personal connection to sports, art, culture, etc, by stimulating individuals' own personal connections with sports, creativity, and its surrounding cultures through the visual aesthetics and products of creative expression. All while exploring my own relationship with sports and creativity.

Audience

Flair magazine was made to be read by creatives, athletes, artists, or anyone who has a personal connection to sports, art, culture, etc.

Methods and Materials

Flair is a 9x12 inch Magazine consisting of 100 pages, perfect bound, not typical of an average magazine. Alongside the magazine I also built a dual typographic scale that consisted of 16 paragraph styles and 3 different font families. Enduro, Big Caslon, and Media Sans Extended. The typographic scale consists of two chromatic inspired scales - perfect fourth 1.333 for the fonts Enduro and Media Sans Extended, complemented with a golden ratio scale 1.618 for the font Big Calson. The heart of Flair magazine is comprised of 20 visual pieces of artwork based around the culture of basketball that acts as a visual memoir of my own personal relationship with sports, creativity, and environment broken up into four subcategories all relating to the cross cultures of basketball - Music and sound, Rural Environment, Fashion and Icons, and Urban Lifestyle. The style and tone of these images not only reflect that of my own, but the aesthetic language of their respective sub cultures. My imagemaking is accompanied by a photo series I shot this year called "Home Court Advantage" that brings attention to the relationship between sports and creativity. The magazine content is topped off with four gallery showcases, highlighting works of an array of creatives, such as Walter Loose and Matthias Stogaard, that inspire and stimulate my own personal connection with sports, creativity, environment, alongside the cross cultures of basketball.

Comparative Media

Flair magazine competitors are other magazine and creative sports platforms such as Franchise and Spaceball Mag. Flair is differentiated in the market because it not only focuses on sports but its an image based magazine exploring the relationship of sports and creativity through the cross cultures of basketball.

Marketplace Application

Flair exists anywhere there is a coffee table, at a barbershop, footlocker, waiting room, or someone's living room, it's meant to serve as an easy read and visual experience that anyone can pick up and enjoy.

Capturing Flair

DOCUMENTATION

THE CONTENT

FLAIR

Exploring The Relationship Between Sports & Creativity
THE CROSS CULTURES OF BASKETBALL

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THE CROSS CULTURES OF BASKETBALL

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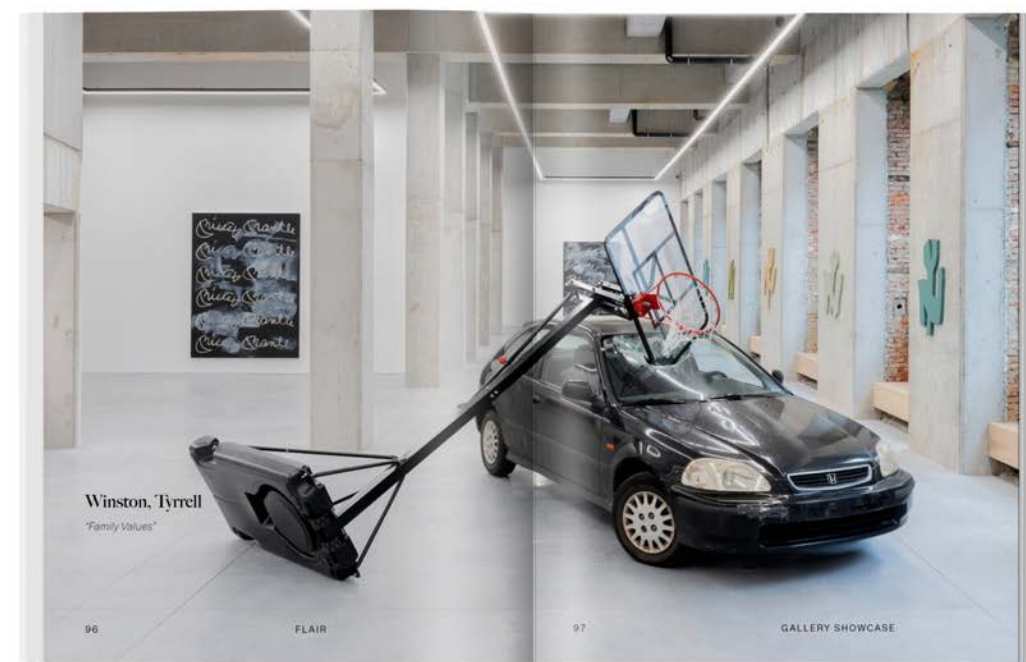
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Exploring The Relationship Between Sports & Creativity
THE CROSS CULTURES OF BASKETBALL

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Documentation



Documentation



Documentation



The Beauty of
PROCESS
RESEARCH & CREATION

Process

03 - Large Page Header

15 - Section Subheader

14 - Section Numbers

10 - MOUSE / META TEXT

11 - Caption Text

01, 12 - Numbered List

13 - Bulleted List

16 - Table of Contents

04 - Heading 1

05 - Heading 2

06 - Heading 3

07 - Heading 4

09 - Light Subheader

01 - Body Text Estrum doluptatis acerbis conerasit, eod conserno in perumquam, que volone placosa cilia aspidem ponesit. oia con nobisat, ad num repudat iniquitatus voluparimus volorporo exerae vesteti. as aut magnient moluptam nisi occosotatis et explam vilio con recidem imolorem seque consequi ut auctu riatat aut pa nonsequito era dem met, officia consequa exerte novitia estissiam eweies ma ped quid quas simus edicit in modis sum ipis quosam apit

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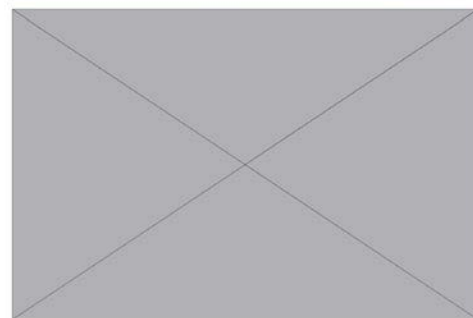
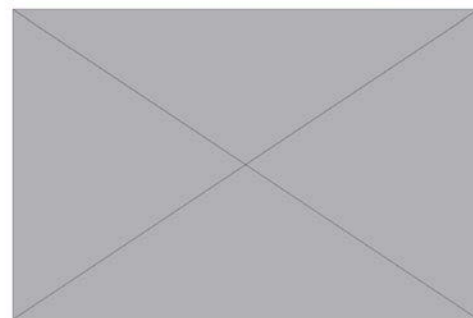
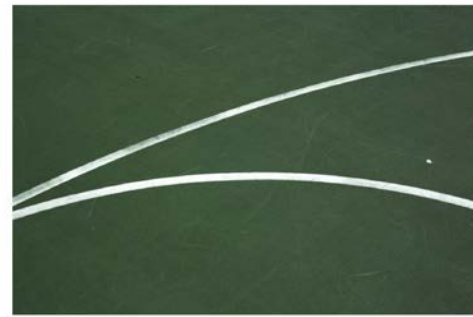
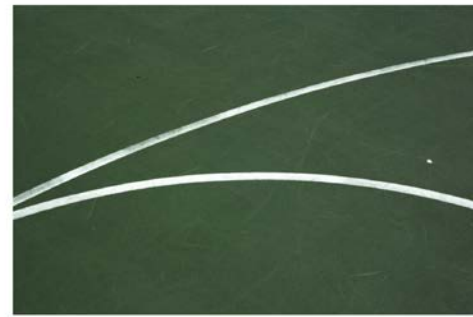
5

MAGAZINE NAME



5

RUNNING HEADER



R

MAGAZINE NAME

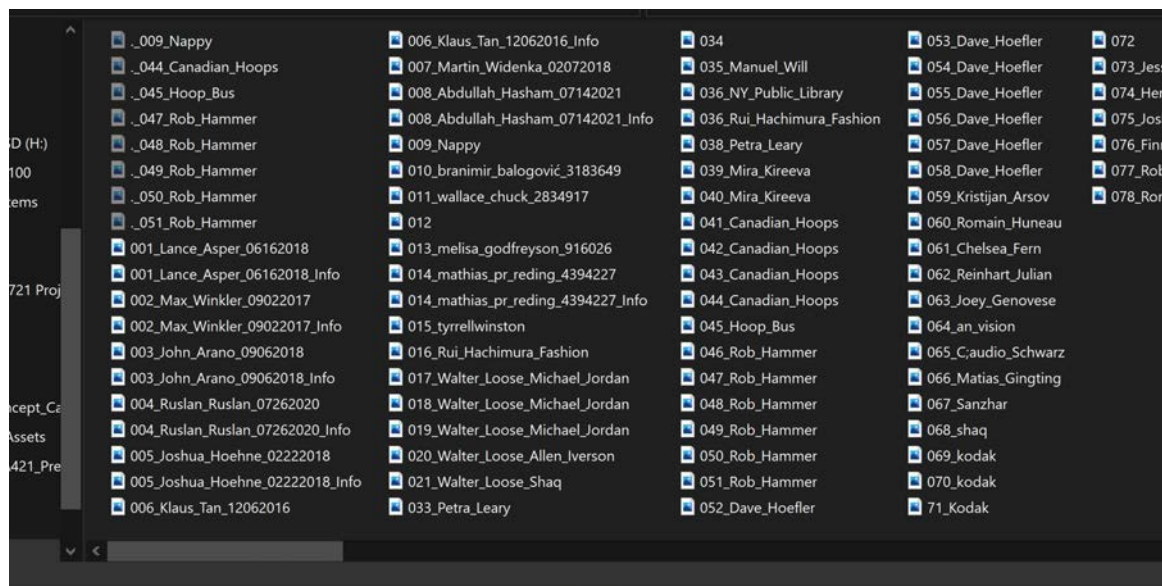
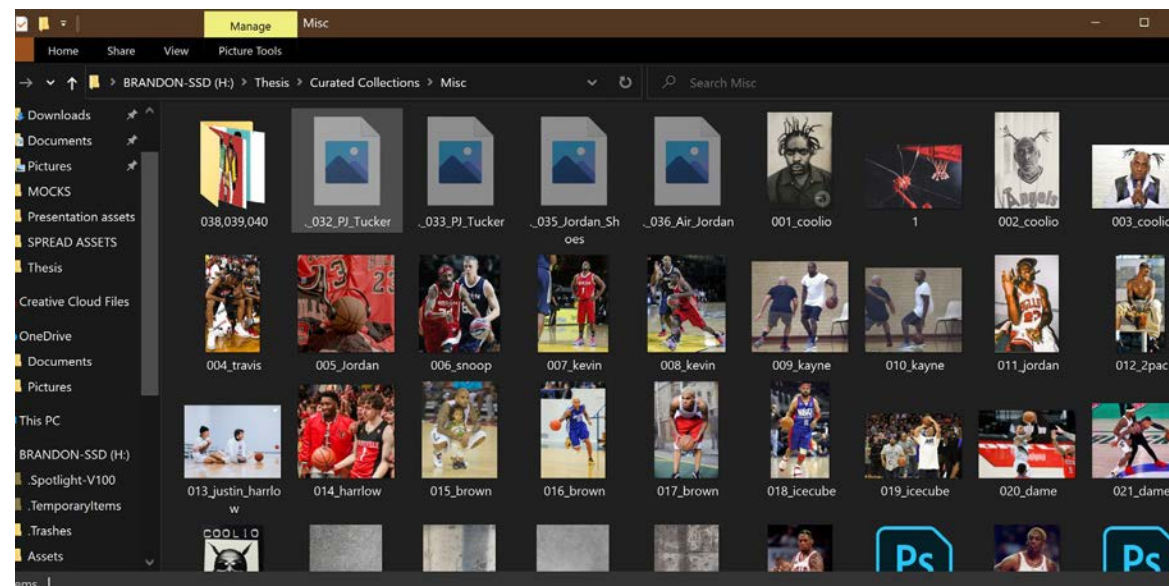
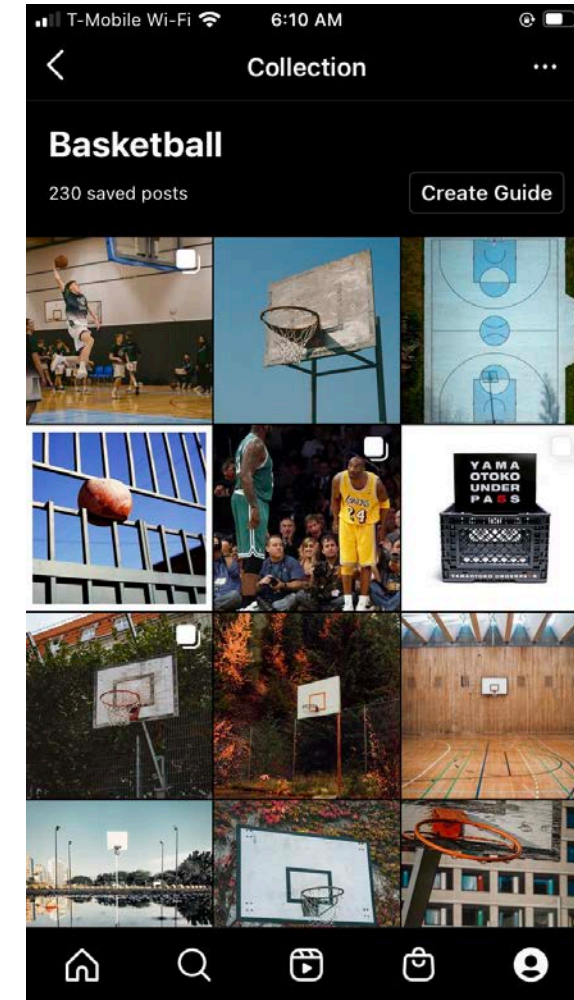
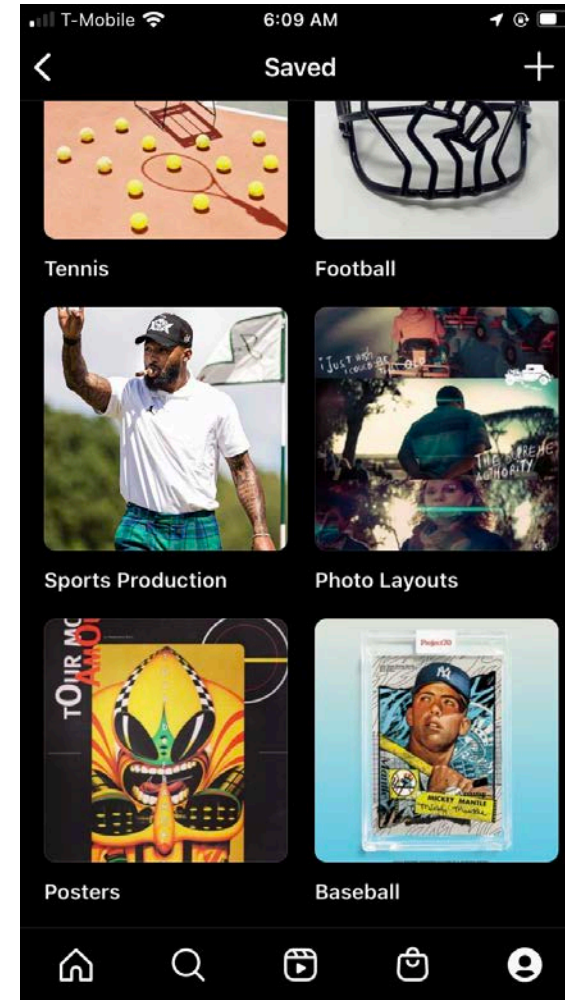
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RUNNING HEADER



MAGAZINE NAME

RUNNING HEADER



F.2

RUNNING HEADER

Paying Homage To Those Before

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CITING SOURCES

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