

CRITICAL JOURNAL : JD SPORTS BRIEF



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Brief and Introduction



JD Sports, founded in 1981, opened a single store in Bury, Manchester. Now, The JD Group have over 3,300 stores in 29 territories which includes over 890 JD stores; they are continuing to expand, with their first US flagship store opening in Times Square New York in 2020. As JD now is at their prime for athleisure wear and streetwear, they have incorporated other brands such as Nike, Adidas and North Face. (JD Groups, 2021).

My brief is to produce an advertising concept for instore and social media targeting the 18-30 age range. The advertising concept can be used on any platform and can be in any format. As this critical journal will show, the route of this project has taken some sharp turns due to aspects out of my control. The theme of this project is based on diversity and lifestyle which will relate to the overall trend of 'Athleisure'. This advertising concept will be to empower individuals within sporting lifestyles, incorporating culture and female empowerment.

Athleisure - "It describes a category of clothing that is meant to look athletic, but with no inherent function" (Wilson, C. 2018, n.p).



Figure 2: Sky Sports, 2019

Initial Project Introduction



To attract participants for my campaign, I sent this letter along with initial moodboards to charities, campaign societies at Leeds Beckett University and sports teams at Leeds Beckett University.

Dear...

My name is Isabella Nicholson and I'm completing my final year at Leeds Beckett University School of Arts, on a Fashion Marketing course. My Visual Communications Project brief for this year was to create a campaign for JD Sports on anything from sustainability, diversity and high-tech materials. From researching, I have noticed they have a diverse set of models based on race and gender, however, lacks diversity in body shapes and representing disabilities. This is where the starting point for my initial research started.

My aim is to contribute to the celebration of the human form and override the diversity concerns within the sporting clothing industry. When completing my initial research into sporting brands like JD Sport, there are very limited models who have an obvious disability and represent all shapes and sizes. I would love to share stories of individuals who have experienced either difficulties or success within the sporting industry, either in performance or accessing the equipment to partake. Above all, I want to contribute to the awareness of diversity in the fashion industry.

I would love to hear and share your stories and experiences in the sporting industry. Hoping to inspire and create role models and create conversations surrounding this topic.

I was wondering if this is something you would be interested or know anyone who would be interested in taking part? This will consist of photoshoots and video shoots.

Please contact me on my University email:
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JD Brand Research



JD have a defining colour palette of yellow, white and black, used for their online presence and social media presence. These will be used within my colour palette along with reds, and contrasting on the colour wheel, green which will also be a vibrant colour used in the aesthetic of this culture and empowerment advertising campaign. The colours used in their designing of clothes is full of range which attracts all genders and ages.

After looking into the colour palette, I decided to look into the prints that have been used in recent campaigns and on the materials used by JD Sports. This will inspire the type of vibrant prints I use for backdrops and borders of my images; inspired by the contemporary Moroccan artist Hassan Hajjaj, who is best known for his printed fabrics and photography.

“While colour is only one element in a branding toolkit, which also encompasses typography, photography and iconography as equally important members, we recognize its powerful ability to communicate a brands persona and would like to explore this value further.” (Tia, N et al, 2017)



Figure 3,4 and 5- Screenshots of Instagram and Online website from my personal phone, showcasing the black, white and yellow branding.

Brands JD Sports Work With



The brands JD Sports work with range from Lifestyle to Athleisure to Sporting equipment. Some of the top well-known brands JD Sports sell products from are North Face, Nike, Adidas, Puma and Under Armour. When researching into these brands, I found the following evidence that shows their inclusivity and representation for disabled models and athletes.

One of the brands that I found were the most representative in their business values and celebrations was The North Face. The communities section shows how the company have contributed to adaptive sporting activities. With a sponsorship with Paradox Sports, their belief is climbing shouldn't be limited by physical ability. I believe this to be true for all sports. Every individual should have the access and the potential to excel in any sport, not to be limited by societies choice to not adapt. This movement has spread across climbing gyms in the U.S. This offers the individual the ability to climb indoors and outdoors with innovative adaptive systems, equipment and an open-ended mindset.

The North Face also upload YouTube videos of interviews of athletes performing their sports and their opinions on hot topics surrounding their sport and disabilities. This could be an option for one of my submissions if the model would feel comfortable talking to me.

Nike have released a shoe line called Fly Ease. This technology is sold as a tool that expands access and makes shoes easier to put on and take off. However, on JD Sports there is no sign of being able to purchase this product from them. This shoe is specifically designed for disabled people, meant to solve a need in the market. However, where is the ease for the customer to purchase these items.

JD Sports has a blog, I believe this should be utilised to showcase what their brands offer and to spread awareness of the need for more publicity and technology to create easier equipment for individuals to play and wear sports athleisure more. A blog post on my behalf as part of this diversity campaign along with a photoshoot and a potential interview would accompany them well.

Change of Course



After coming to a halt due to difficulties finding models for my celebration of disability within sport campaign for JD Sports, I decided to alter the campaign slightly. The campaign will still have the focus of empowerment and celebration of inclusivity within sport but with a culture point of view. I am fortunate to be friends with two athletes who represent their country, Gibraltar, in the sport of netball. This will allow me to explore and contrast the different cultures within Gibraltar, both British and Spanish, and explore the empowerment of women within sport. I want to represent this Juxtaposition of cultures within my photography and editing, whilst the two athletes are posed, both in action shots of them playing, and being styled with the streetwear and sportswear brands that JD Sports work with. I will look into stylists and photographers who use culture for inspiration on how to lay out my work and generate ideas.

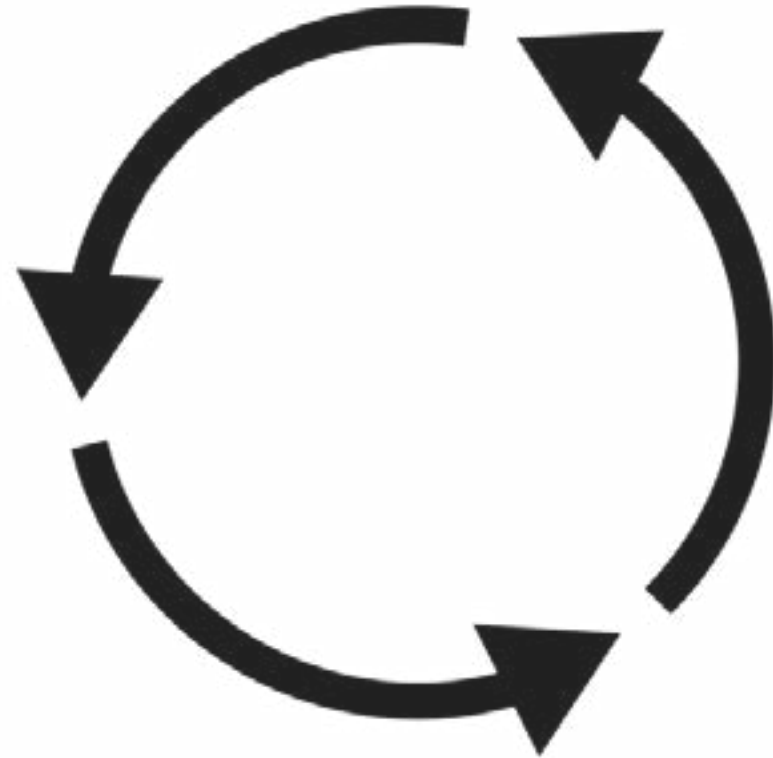


Figure 6: Pinterest

History of Gibraltar for Context



Gibraltar, a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society, is rich with both British and Spanish history and heritage. Their citizens identify themselves as having a common culture based on a common history and territoriality, intermarriage, mutual tolerance and their status as British Colonial subjects. This 6.8km² country is home to over 30,000 individuals, who live alongside the most powerful symbol, the Rock. The Rock possesses symbolic meaning in British imperial iconography and is linked to the fortress mentality of Gibraltarians. Like the Rock, the apes of Gibraltar are symbols of British permanence and solidarity.

Thinking about colour schemes for this project, one colour which will have a stronger presence will be red. Red is used by the Spanish culture as a representation of themselves. The Gibraltar flag is red and white, with a red castle on top and when thinking about traditional Spanish women, they are often depicted in a red dress. Red is also prominent within modern British culture with our red telephone boxes and red double decker buses. This colour will be used throughout my project both with the backgrounds and the props used on set.



Figure 7&8 : Pinterest

Artist Inspiration



Hassan Hajjaj is a contemporary Moroccan artist who is best known for his photography, printed fabrics and films. He aims to “seduce the viewer whilst confronting culture-specific beliefs and values”. He fuses traditional and contemporary North African culture with familiar western imagery and iconography through appropriation and adaption.

He is best known for his colourful portraits which are going to have a great influence on the way I lay out my look book. I’ll be incorporating rich bright colours from a mixed Spanish and British influenced colour scheme. The styling of the athletes, with action shots of netball, will be in black kit. This will contrast with the colourful backgrounds and borders. However, other shots will include athleisurewear and streetwear styles to showcase the brands JD Sports sell.

PRADA presents another source of inspiration for incorporating the idea of culture and creating contemporary pieces with aspects of traditional and sometimes stereotypical aspects of the culture. “CASTELLO CAV-ALCANTI” by Wes Anderson is a short film as seen on YouTube. Here, the Italian richness and well-known aspects of Italy are showcased as Jason Schwartzman crashes his racing car into Jesus Christ.

Finally, Nikes ‘We Believe in The Power Of Love’ showcases a short film presenting individuality and questioning identity amongst a group with a range of ages. Here this has inspired the culture aspect of my campaign with the juxtaposed individual’s cultural identity of British vs Spanish. The aspects I love in this short film is the glitch filter, maybe implying the individual is questioning their identity. Could they have more than one?

Concept Development



After completing the research shown so far, gathering the aesthetic of the JD Group, in particular JD Sports and their competitors, I have decided to create an empowering and culturally driven concept which will include both sports based and streetwear-based content. This will be in the form of social media posts and photography in the format of a look-book. The reason for incorporating both sportswear and streetwear styling is due to the fact that streetwear originates from British culture; with the Gibraltar netball athletes as my models, I think that this would be a great juxtaposition of culture.

After deciding upon this concept, I gathered research into stylists and brands that have produced a similar aesthetic.



Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11

Pattern Inspiration



Colour Palette



Red - a prominent colour in both British and Spanish culture.

Green - Opposite Red on the colour wheel so will be used to contrast this vibrant colour.

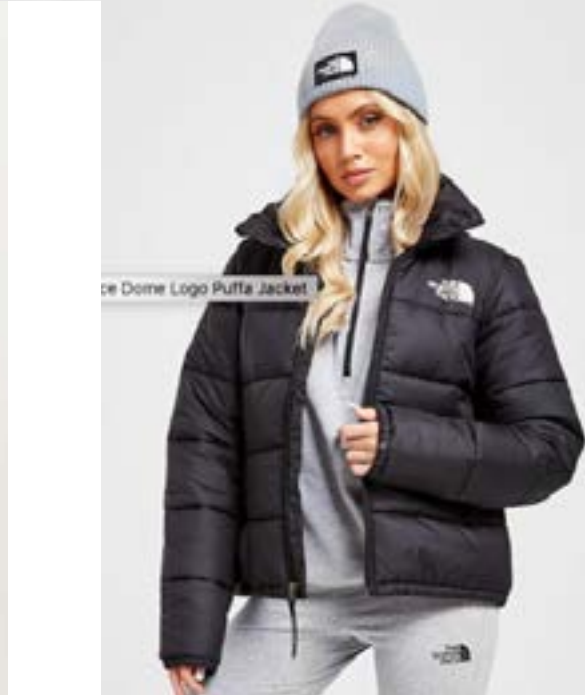
Yellow - JD Sports branding colour.

White - Along with being a part of the JD Sports logo, white will be a valued colour throughout the design of the images.

Black - again, along with being a part of the JD Sports logo, black will be used to outline patterns and also be a part of many logos used.

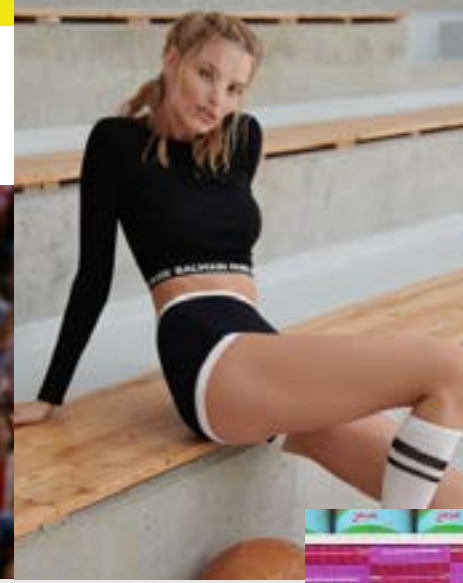
Blue - a common colour seen amongst other campaigns and shoots produced by JD Sports and the brands they work for.

Clothing

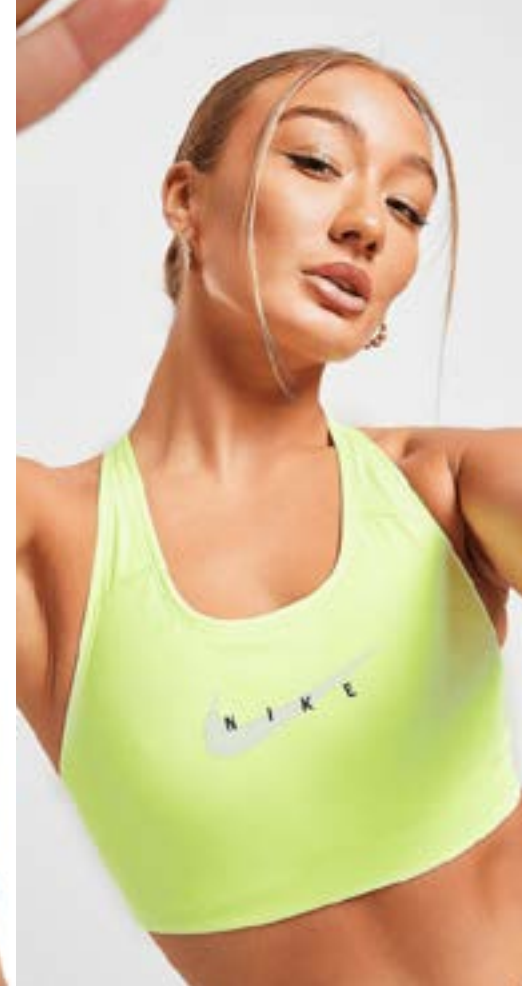
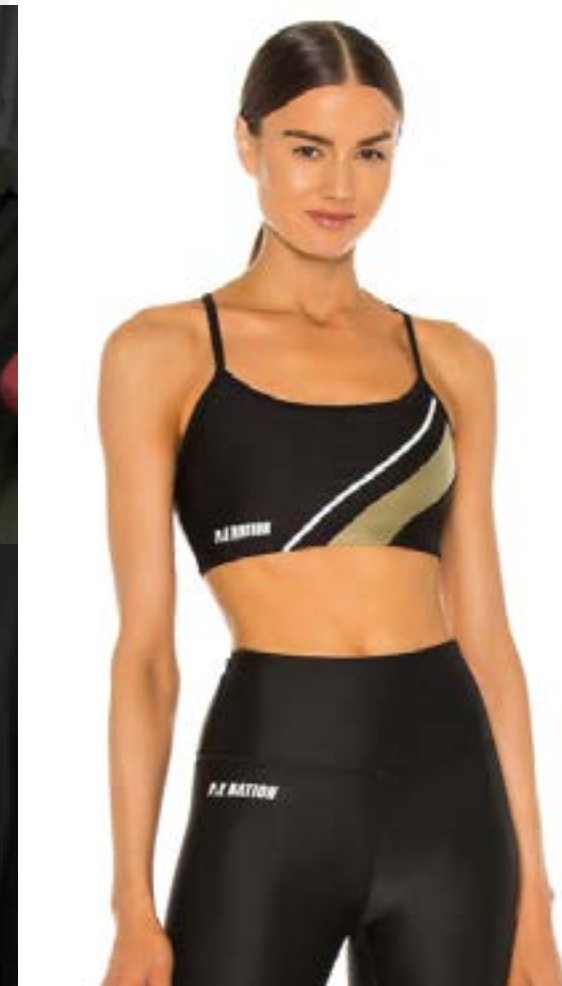


JD UNDISPUTED
KING OF TRAINERS

Poses



JD UNDISPUTED
KING OF TRAINERS



Testers



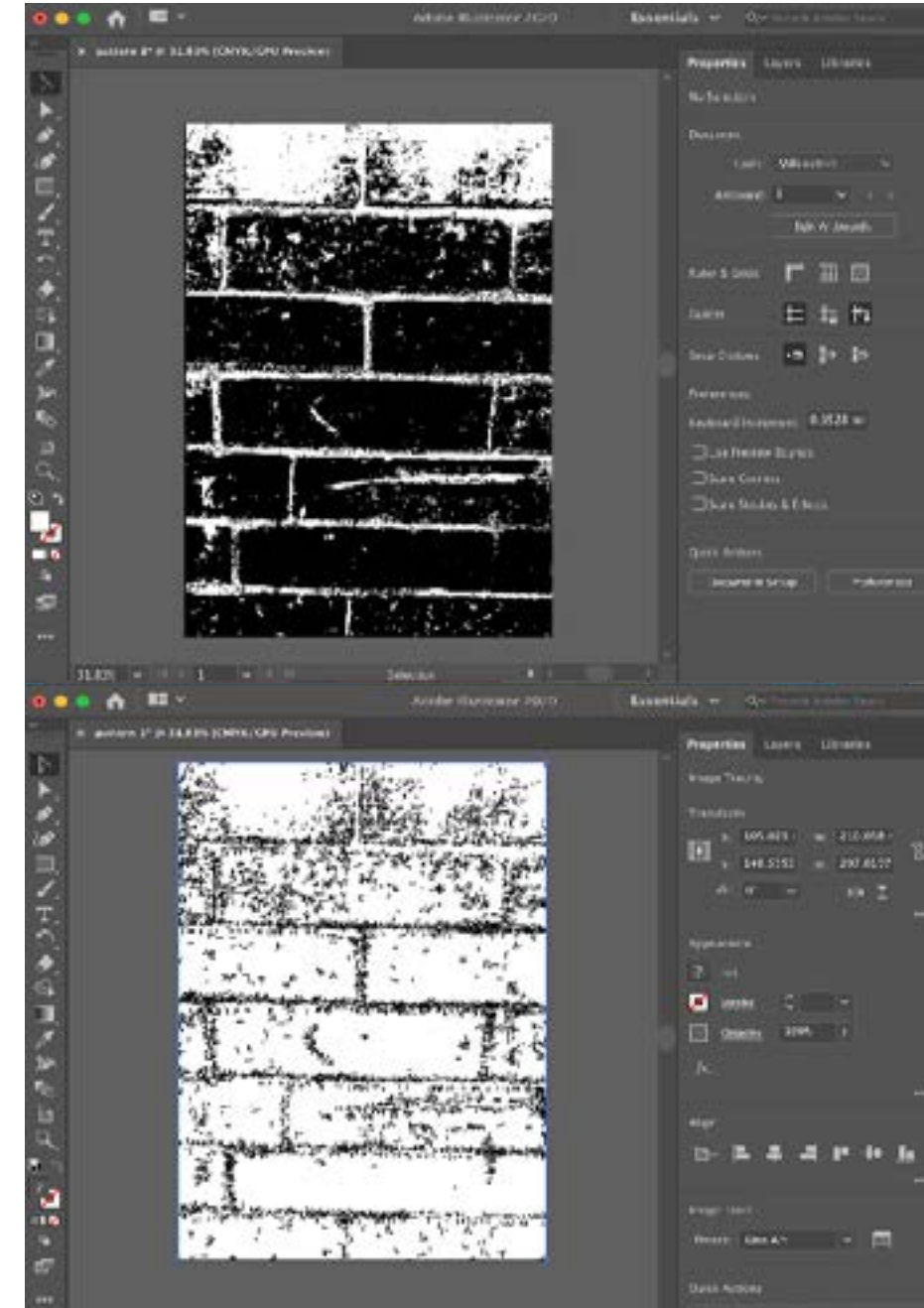
Image 1, the colour hue was altered to create a pink undertone of the image. I'm not a massive fan of how this turned out. I am going to further try and alter the background hue and then place the image of my model in front of the edited background.

Image 2, I love black and white images so this will definitely be explored in the final product. The black and white will create intensity of the images of my athletes as well as using a black and white theme for backgrounds to bring out the vibrance of the colours.



Testing out different shapes and patterns on the borders. I hope to create my own patterns in order to arrange around the images before placing them in-situ for the campaign and further creating a lookbook of images at the end.

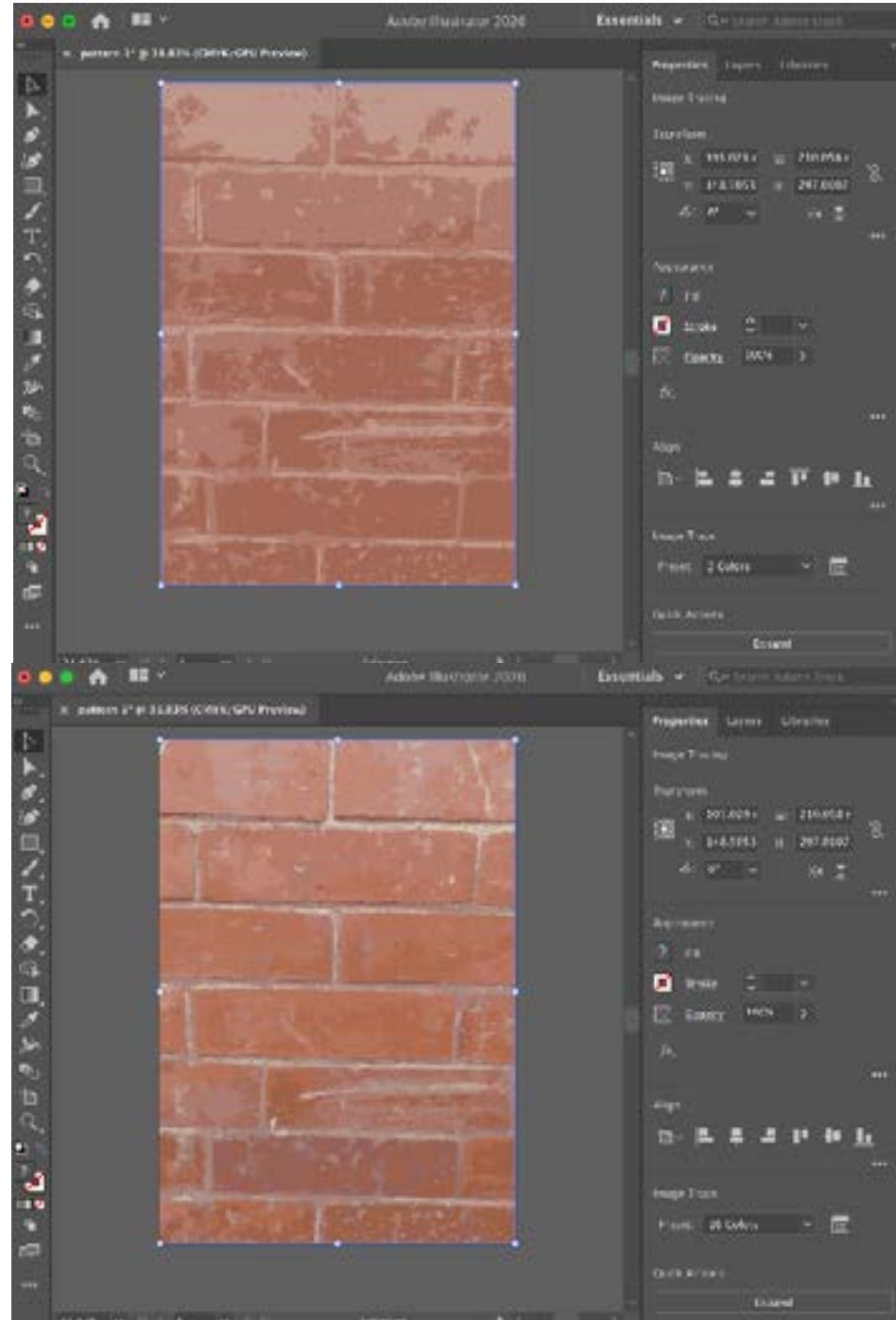
Testers of using secondary images as borders from my moodboards and taking inspiration from the artist researched Hassan Hajjaj for inspiration on the layout of the images and editing of the photography.



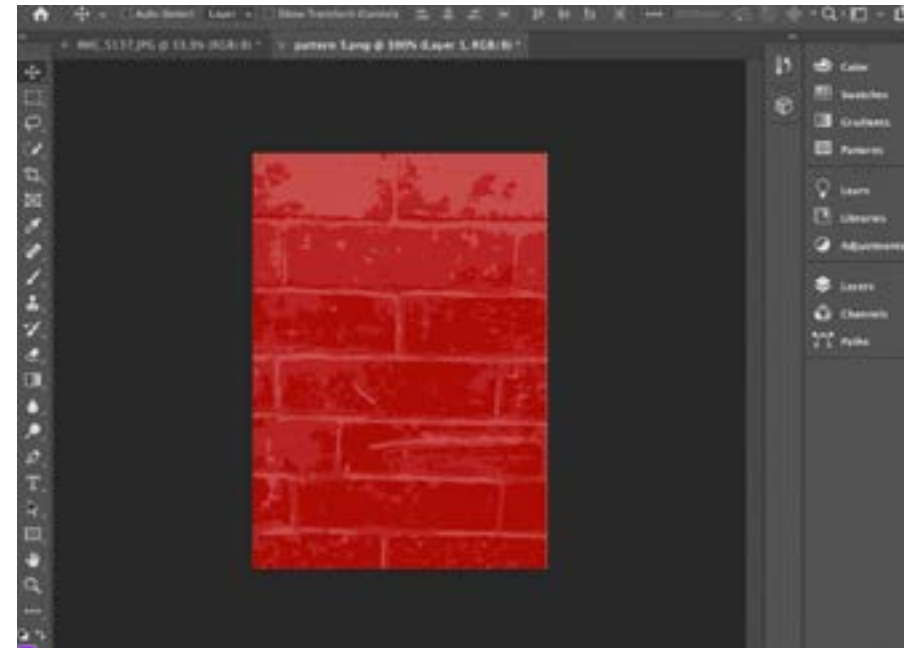
Background testers. Using a primary image took during an initial photoshoot to test the lighting, I have image traced the photograph and altered the presets to create different effects.

The image to the left has a simple black and white preset placed on this. I love how it captures the textures in the brick wall.

The image to the left has a Line art preset placed on top, I love the abstract look this has with the small lines and dots that create the pattern of the background.



The images to the left have been traced and placed with different colour selection presets. The first, a 3 colour preset and the second, a 16 colour preset.



In the image above, the colour hue has been altered towards the colours red and blue and then further the levels have been increased to get a stronger, deeper colour and then further the brightness has been decreased and contrast has been increased. I will now use this to test how i am going to layer images on top and create borders to accompany this.



Image 1, shows the photography of the first model Amy Pozo. This image has had the object select and selection tool used to cut Pozo out of the background. This was then saved with a transparent background. This was crucial in order for the background created in illustrator would be the background of the photograph of Pozo. As you can see, the photograph cuts off Pozo's leg which has left a sharp line that doesn't look aesthetically good. Here is where i would place a boarder around to meet the edge of her leg. This is just the first experiment of seperating backgrounds, editing backgrounds and placing another image on top. As i explore, more ideas will come to me and will develop into the finished products.

Logo Refinement



After taking an initial secondary image of the JD Groups main logo, I decided to alter this to fit the colour scheme and theme of my campaign. First I took the image into illustrator, using the image trace tool I created an outline of the logo which has enabled me to edit the size, shape and colour. I then deleted the white areas of the logo in order for them to be transparent on any plain background, however will be filled white if on a patterned background depending on if this looks 'too much'. I then used the line tool to create a slit through the logo, proceeding onto using the pathfinder to divide the image into two. After this, I wasn't keen on the red on its own so I outlined the logo in black and placed my slogan for the campaign in between the slits.



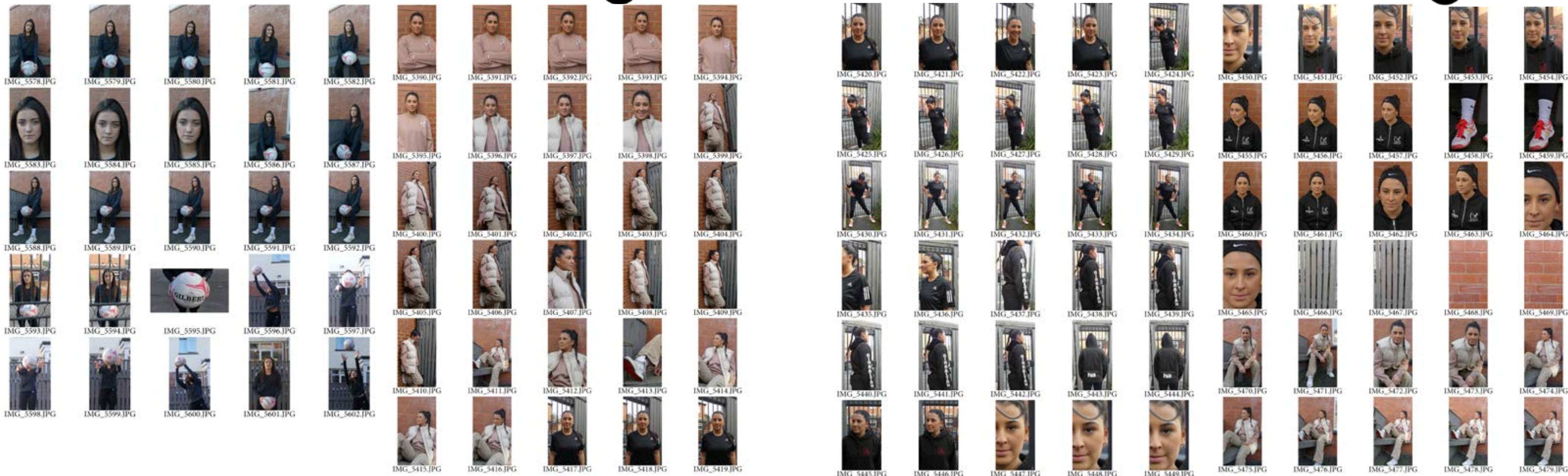
Developing Campaign Work



Development of different ideas surrounding the same campaign poster. Taking inspiration of patterned backgrounds from Hassan Hajaj along with combining the colour scheme of JD Sports brand and the colours that represent both British and Spanish cultures, I created this campaign poster as an introduction to the athletes who are the face of this campaign for JD Sports. This featured the logo and slogan used as well as a phrase emphasising the meaning of this campaign along with an introduction on who the athlete is and an intense headshot. Black and white backgrounds and editing was used in order to get the colours to pop. After this being the first campaign post I created, I didn't end up using this in the final submission as I developed on my ideas and created what I thought were more aesthetically pleasing and relevant to the campaign and ideas behind it.



Final Imagery



Reflection



Due to last minute changes and technology difficulties, this project was quite a stressful one to complete. However, i am pleased with the final outcome of the campaign on empowerment and inspiring individuals through successful athletes. The project has taken a few bendy roads, with starting as a celebration of disabled athletes, to a cultural focus, to an empowering and inspiring focus. The cultural aspects still shine through due to the fact i have used international athletes and using traditional colours within my colour scheme. I decided to focus on four main colours of the colour scheme suggested, leaving aside green and blue as when coming to the aesthetic, this just didn't work. I really love how my campaigning and promotional posters came out and think they are quite eye-catching, which is how i want to draw the audiences attention to the campaign. I feel there is definitely opportunity to improve on my editing skills in the next project i complete, pushing myself more to create more interesting creations, however when looking at JD Sports own campaigns, i feel the finished product match their brand image and accompany their other campaigns well.

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