

From Vinyl to 'Cloud Technology': Highlighting the Visual Aspects of Music in a Digital Age

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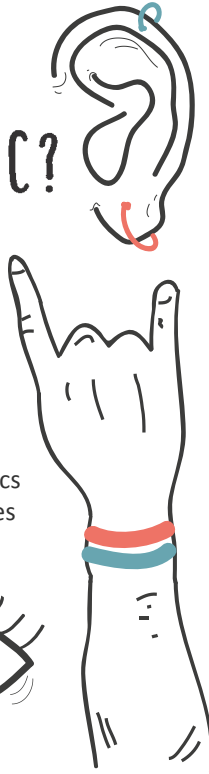
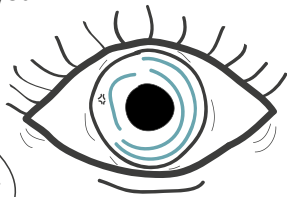
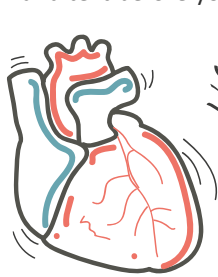
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HOW DO YOU EXPERIENCE MUSIC?

When we talk about music, we tend to focus on sound, but my research stems from the idea that music is **multi-sensory**.

Think about when you go to a concert and physically feel the vibrations of the music, or when you thumb through lyrics books and feast your eyes on the images and text before you.



FINDINGS

Participants embraced the opportunity to discuss the role cover art plays in their experience, indicating that this is worth discussing. Findings support the idea that cover art is more than packaging or marketing. These visuals are inextricably bound to the sound of the music.

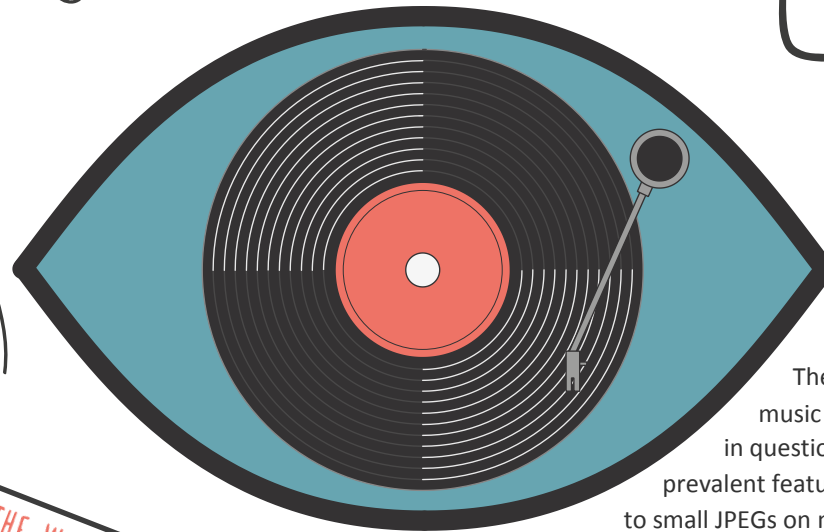
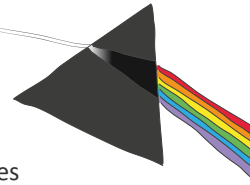
Based on my data, I argue that cover art is an **aspect** of music, not an **accompaniment**.

RESEARCH AIM

To foreground the **visual** aspects of music. I focus on cover art, rather than including merchandise, music magazines or the style within the scene.



Think Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon* or The Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper* album. These covers have become art pieces in their own right.



METHODS

I have been interviewing and observing musicians, fans and promoters outside of the commercial music industry. They make very little profit, and have a strong "**Do It Yourself**" ethos, seen through handmade record sleeves, music magazines and cakes!

Within this scene, cassettes and records never died. They innovate ahead of mainstream trends, making it an ideal site for exploring attitudes towards visuals.



IMPACT

The uncertainty brought about by the **digitization** of music makes this timely research. The fate of cover art is in question, and many music fans fear that what was once a prevalent feature of the physical product will be forever confined to small JPEGs on media libraries such as iTunes.

While this research is rooted in marketing and consumption, it draws on disciplines such as music, media, art and sociology. It brings together fields which do not normally "speak" to one another, and in doing so makes a number of contributions. This knowledge could be of interest to anyone with a passion for music, marketers, designers and scholars alike.

Ultimately, I hope to change the way we think about such a familiar experience.

