

Category: Student Work

Project: 640 x 640 px: Cover Art in the Age of Streaming

What was the challenge?

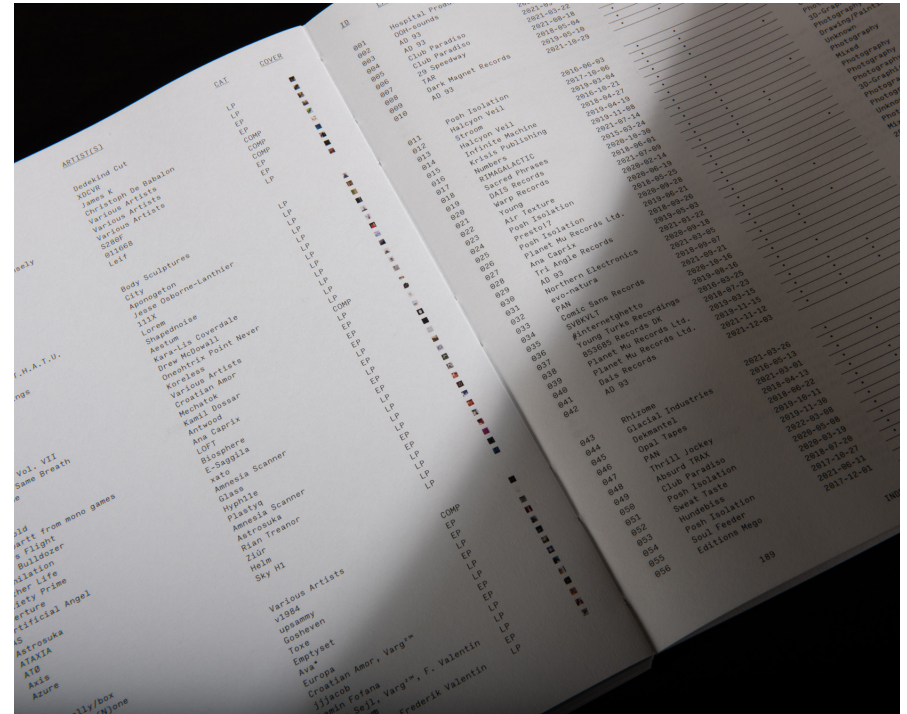
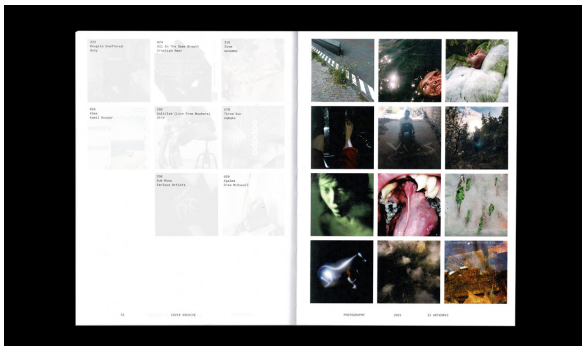
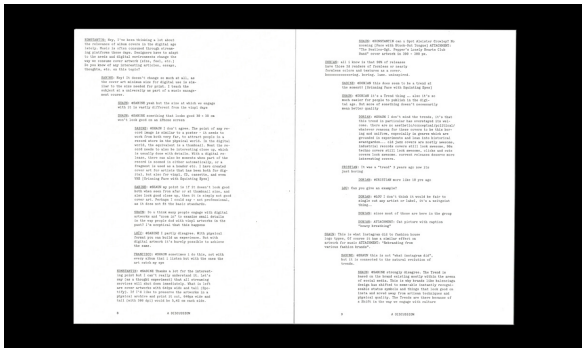
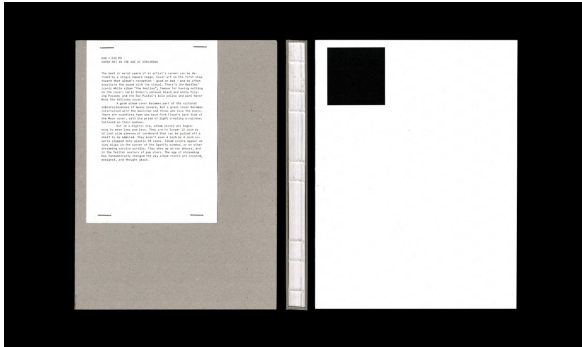
In an era dominated by TikTok videos, social media and streaming services, we often scroll and swipe through playlists and songs to see tiny artworks for split seconds. With the digitisation of the music industry over the last 40 years, the original purpose of an album cover as the packaging of a record is now questionable. In our fast-paced world with easy access to digital music, the meaning, value and our emotional connection to album covers along with tangible, printed formats has long been lost.

What was the solution?

Based on a discussion in a forum for experimental electronic music and a private music collection of 310 albums, EPs and compilations, the bachelor project explores this change. The resolution of 640 x 640 px plays a major role in the project. Streaming services like Spotify currently require this resolution when uploading cover artwork. In order to archive the artwork in a physical collection, the images can be printed at a maximum size of 5,42 cm per side.

The music collection on Spotify forms the core of the project and pictures all printed cover artworks in exactly 5,42 cm big squares. Due to its transparency, the book page serves as an information carrier by showing the ID (sorted from A to Z), the title and the album artist on the back of the respective cover. Since each page represents a year and a category, there are also blank pages if there is no corresponding cover in the collection.

Nine collection items available as physical records further illustrate the size aspect by showing them in their full size. The project is rounded off by a text section in the beginning and additional information such as artist or format to complete the discography in the end.



What was the effect?

In a total of 208 pages, the work explores the changing nature of album covers, which not only affects our consumption of images today, but also influences design and the way visual material is provided. The book also serves as an archive of current cover designs within experimental electronic music.

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