

THE GOLDEN BLUEPRINT

An Exploration of the Winning Qualities Shared
Among Kiwi Olympic Greats

By Joshua McCarthy

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Olympic Greats

By Joshua McCarthy

This research is submitted to Auckland University of Technology as
partial fulfilment of the Master of Design degree.

Joshua McCarthy

6th May, 2025



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ABSTRACT

The research draws on visual storytelling, assemblage, media representations of Olympic athletes, and growth and winning mindsets. The research explores how five shared winning qualities of multiple Kiwi Olympians can form a blueprint to inspire young adults in New Zealand to pursue their own goals.

A practice-led methodology within an artistic research paradigm guided the project, supporting an iterative, reflexive, and hands-on design process. The work unfolded in three phases: Research (establishing the conceptual foundation), Ideation (developing the core concepts), and Design (realising the final visual outcomes). The study shows how editorial design and assemblage can effectively communicate values-based messages to counter the negative effects of social media by presenting the stories of Kiwi Olympians, intertwined by shared qualities, to encourage the pursuit of sporting goals.

KEYWORDS

Assemblage; New Zealand Olympians; Practice-led research; Visual narrative; Winning Mindset

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I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly quoted) nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other paper or other institution of higher learning.

Joshua McCarthy

6th May 2025



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Joshua McCarthy

6th May 2025



ETHICS APPROVAL AND CONSENT

AUTEC approval for this project was not required because it does not deal with people or animals.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

RESEARCH QUESTION

New Zealand has a long sporting culture, where sports participation is often seen as a cultural expectation. Beyond participation, the prevalence of televised sports, replays, and highlight reels has further embedded sports into New Zealand's culture. This steady rise of sports in New Zealand, alongside months of reflection aiding a shoulder operation, has led me to examine the fundamental winning qualities that contribute to the success of Kiwi Olympians.

The research question that this study asks is:

How might editorial design and assemblage communicate the shared winning qualities of multiple Kiwi Olympians to encourage young adults from New Zealand to pursue their sporting goals?

RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The increased presence of social media and digital technologies in daily life has contributed to rising levels of anxiety and mental health challenges, particularly among younger generations. These platforms often target young people with content that promotes unrealistic expectations and places pressure on identity, achievement, and appearance.

This research investigates using editorial design to communicate the shared values and personal qualities demonstrated by Kiwi Olympians. The study focuses on how visual narratives can be developed to convey attributes such as discipline, resilience, and perseverance—qualities associated with the long-term practice of sport.

The project aims to design an editorial that presents these values in a format that is relevant and accessible to younger audiences. It encourages interest in sports and physical activity by highlighting their personal and social benefits.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study contributes to understanding how editorial design and assemblage can be used to construct visual narratives that communicate Olympic athletes' shared values and personal attributes. The project contributes to design research by demonstrating how editorial strategies can be applied to structure and communicate values-based content. It examines the relationship between design, narrative, and audience engagement and how these elements can support the promotion of sport-related messages.

The study also contributes to broader discussions in visual communication and education by exploring how design practice can support cultural messaging around well-being, motivation, and community participation. Through a practice-led methodology, the research offers a model for applying editorial design to content grounded in social relevance and public interest.

KEY TERMS

Winning Mindset

A Winning Mindset is a mindset that prioritises competition, self-belief, and the ability to persist in high-pressure environments. Individuals with a winning mindset are more likely to persist through adversity, particularly in sports, business, and leadership roles.

Winning Qualities

The Winning Qualities are the qualities shared by the selected Kiwi Olympians. These winning qualities are inspiration, guidance, pioneership, tenacity and heroism.

Kiwi

A Kiwi is a person from New Zealand.

Hall of Fame

The Hall of Fame is an institution, building or committee that honours the achievements of individuals in a particular activity or field.

Olympian

An Olympian is a competitor of the Olympic Games, past or present.

Superheroism

Superheroism is a personal winning quality that is portrayed when an athlete achieves something extraordinary; it elevates them beyond sport, transforming them into larger-than-life figures. It is the moment their actions, character, and impact go beyond medals, becoming an icon, a role model and an inspiration to others. The use of the superlative super is intentional, drawing on the cultural identity of superheroes as popularised through comics and franchises such as Marvel, to enhance the project's resonance with younger generations.

THE NATURE OF THE PRACTICE

This project is showcased as a visual storytelling editorial, measuring 27 centimetres in length and height to symbolise the square shape of the Olympic Podium. The visual narrative comprises collages that portray the winning qualities shared among five of New Zealand's top Olympians, specially selected for this project.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE EXEGESIS

This exegesis consists of six chapters. The first chapter introduces the research question, examines the project's rationale and significance, defines specific terms, and describes the research practice. The second chapter positions the researcher in the project and explains the rationale behind selecting a sports-related study. Chapter Three examines the contextualised knowledge relating to the research, such as discourses on visual narrative, assemblage, the benefits of sports, and a survey of practitioners and practices. Chapter Four describes the research design, including its iterative processes and methods. The fifth chapter gives a critical comment on the inquiry's creative outcomes. The final section summarises the project and discusses its contribution and prospects.

**CHAPTER TWO:
POSITIONING THE RESEARCHER & THE RESEARCH**

SPORTS IN NEW ZEALAND: EXPECTATIONS & SOCIAL PRESSURE

Sports hold a significant place in New Zealand culture; they are not merely a pastime but something that is expected. Children are encouraged from a young age to participate in sports due to national pride being so profoundly tied to athletic success. Kiwi's view sport as a way to develop resilience and uphold the legacy of past sporting greats. Elite Kiwi athletes become role models who inspire younger generations, reinforcing that sport is a pathway for developing a growth and winning mindset.

I was born and raised in Aotearoa, New Zealand, with a mix of Kiwi and English heritage from my Father and Mother. My upbringing was shaped by Western cultural values that, in my case, emphasised discipline, striving for personal achievement, and competing in sports was encouraged. Growing up, I competed in team and solo sports, developing teamwork and self-driven competition. While team sports fostered a sense of belonging to a group and began many friendships I still hold dearly, I found my greatest strengths through individual sports. My passion for sports was fuelled by my father, whose love for sports trickled down to my liking, and sporting figures such as Lionel Messi, Rafael Nadal and Tiger Woods, all whose sporting successes I admired and idolised growing up.

At 17, I dislocated my shoulder while skateboarding, an injury that caused ongoing complications over the years. These limitations frustrated me because I missed the physicality I had become accustomed to. The doctors suggested undergoing surgery, and I agreed; however, this decision was bittersweet as it meant stepping away from the activities

that had shaped so much of my identity. The initial recovery phase was marked by complete rest, followed by five months of a dedicated rehabilitation programme, beginning with mobility exercises and gradually progressing to light resistance training. Although the process was long and arduous, my desire to return to sports constantly motivated me. Each step in my recovery evidenced that rebuilding strength was as much about developing the mind as it was about training the body. This link between simultaneous mental and physical development cultivated my interest in physical and psychological growth.

WINNING MINDSET AND QUALITIES

During this period, I reflected on these sporting figures I had looked up to and how they all had experienced injuries in their careers far worse than I had. Rafael Nadal suffered from tendonitis for years, Lionel Messi suffered torn muscles plus a metatarsal fracture, and Tiger Woods underwent microdiscectomy surgery twice. All of them had to take time off to rehabilitate and, upon returning, continued to dominate their sports. I began to view high-performance athletes in a different light; they were more than just champions; they were human. They all experienced setbacks just like anybody else; however, how they approach them sets them apart. Although to a lesser degree, my experience with perseverance through recovery paralleled the journeys of these athletes. This realisation prompted me to investigate the specific qualities that enable individuals to repeatedly succeed, even in the face of adversity.

The idea of shared winning qualities became the foundation of my Master's project, specifically focusing on New Zealand Olympians and how their shared qualities allowed them to excel on the world stage consistently.

Through my research, I identified five qualities shared by high-performing Kiwi Olympians, referred to in this project as winning qualities. These five winning qualities are: inspiration, guidance, pioneership, tenacity and heroism. These qualities define their sporting achievements while also having the potential to offer a blueprint for anyone aspiring to reach their full potential.

WHY ENCOURAGE KIWI YOUTH TO PURSUE SPORTING GOALS?

Setting goals is crucial in sports and life. People who set ambitious goals produce higher results because they are dissatisfied with less. These ambitious goals mean the bar is set higher to achieve satisfaction, motivating them to work harder. Commonly, many practical and psychological outcomes will come from setting and achieving ambitious goals (Locke & Latham, 2002).

Participating in sports is often seen as a cultural expectation. However, this should not come as a surprise considering its physical and psychological health benefits. Sports participation can improve fitness, physical self-esteem (Bowker, 2006) and mental health while reducing ill-being such as anxiety, depression and stress (Eather et al., 2023). Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that encouraging Kiwi kids to set and pursue goals within a sporting context will likely increase their physical fitness and self-esteem.

CHAPTER THREE: REVIEW OF CONTEXTUAL KNOWLEDGE

This chapter explores how visual storytelling, assemblage, media representation of Olympic athletes, and psychological mindsets contribute to shaping the portrayal of Olympic excellence. It examines how narrative structure influences meaning-making and engagement, while assemblage techniques enhance storytelling through layered composition and materiality. The study of Olympic athlete representation in global and New Zealand media highlights the role of communication design in shaping public perception, national identity, and inclusivity. Finally, discussing growth and winning mindsets provides a psychological perspective on the qualities that drive elite athletes. Together, these areas inform how visual storytelling can effectively convey and promote the key qualities shared by New Zealand's greatest Olympians, inspiring future generations to pursue excellence.

1. VISUAL STORYTELLING

This section explores the distinction between story and narrative, the influence of the Hero's Journey, and the role of multiple perspectives in shaping meaning in narrative. Key theories on multimodal design, materiality, and practice-led research are discussed to highlight how design choices impact storytelling and reader engagement.

1.1. Story and Narrative: Conceptual Distinctions

The distinction between story and narrative is central to storytelling, visual communication, and editorial design studies. While a story can be broadly understood as a sequence of events with a beginning, middle, and end (Abbott, 2008), narrative refers to the structure and means through which a story is conveyed (Bal, 2017). This differentiation is crucial in visual storytelling, where graphic and editorial design mediate meaning through typography, layout, and material form.

Tzvetan Todorov's (1971) equilibrium model offers insight into how visual and editorial narratives can be structured to communicate transformation and achievement by describing how narratives progress through stages of stability, disruption, and resolution. Gérard Genette's (1980) narrative discourse theory provides a framework for analysing the construction and representation of stories in design. His distinction between *histoire* (the chronological sequence of events), *récit* (the structured representation of those events), and *narration* (the act of telling the story) applies to editorial and publication design, where design decisions influence rhythm and interpretation (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006).

1.2. The Hero's Journey and the Olympic Narrative

Joseph Campbell's (1949) monomyth, or Hero's Journey, suggests that heroic stories follow a universal structure, beginning with a call to adventure, followed by trials, transformation, and triumph. While initially applied to mythology, Campbell's framework is relevant to Olympic athletes' stories, which often follow a trajectory of challenge, perseverance, and eventual mastery. In the context of this project, visual storytelling reinterprets these stages, moving beyond a linear retelling of achievements to explore the physical and psychological dimensions of elite performance.

1.3. Dialogic Storytelling and Multiple Perspectives

Mikhail Bakhtin's (1981) concept of dialogism suggests that narratives are not singular or fixed but emerge from multiple voices and interpretations. In the project context, stories of Olympic excellence should be visually represented to convey the complexity of the athletes' winning qualities.

1.4. Visual Storytelling in Editorial Design

In editorial storytelling, the choice of typography, page structure, and print finishes influence the reader's engagement with the narrative as much as the written content itself (Tenen, 2017). These elements contribute to the publication's rhythm, tone, and material experience, shaping how information is absorbed and interpreted. Typography can suggest mood or emphasis, page layout can guide pacing, and tactile finishes can reinforce the emotional or conceptual weight of the content. Together, these design decisions function as narrative devices that extend meaning beyond text, allowing the editorial form to participate actively in the construction of knowledge.

1.5. Materiality as a Narrative Device

Johanna Drucker (2009) argues that the physical properties of a publication, such as paper stock, binding, and format, are integral to how narratives are formed. These elements influence the reader's pacing, sequencing, and engagement, shaping how a narrative unfolds through material interactions. Borsuk (2018) describes the book's material form as an active participant in meaning construction, shaping how the reader interacts with the content. Additionally, McCarthy and Wright (2004) examine interaction's aesthetic and emotional dimensions, noting that material engagement contributes to an embodied reading process.

1.6. Editorial Design as Research

Within the framework of practice-led research, editorial design functions as both the subject and the method of investigation. Vaughan (2017) discusses the role of the designer-practitioner-researcher, emphasising the integration of making, theorising, and reflecting as core components of creative inquiry. This triadic approach positions design as a means through which knowledge is generated and examined. In this project, the integration of storytelling strategies—through visual composition, narrative sequencing, and material choices—contributes to the broader discourse on how editorial design can operate as a mode of knowledge production, offering insights that emerge through the act of making itself.

2. ASSEMBLAGE

This section investigates the development of assemblage in art history, assemblage in editorial design and typographic assemblage in visual communication. Key movements such as Cubism, Synthetic Cubism, Neo-Dada and Abstract Expressionist practices are studied to understand the historical context. Whereas binding methods, book insertions and transparent typography are discussed to explain how assemblage may be used to further visual storytelling in visual and editorial design.

2.1. Historical Development of Assemblage in Art

Assemblage is broadly understood as the composition of meaning through the juxtaposition of diverse elements and is often associated with collage, fragmentation and transformation (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987).

The later phase of Cubism, Synthetic Cubism, introduced the collage technique, integrating physical materials such as newspaper, fabric, and wallpaper to create hybrid compositions (Taylor, 2006). Artists like Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque challenged representation by shifting from illusionistic painting to a more tactile and material-based approach (Hopkins, 2004). Picasso's *Still Life with Chair Caning* (1912), as seen in Figure 3.1, incorporates a printed oilcloth and rope frame, which exemplifies this shift, demonstrating how real-world textures and surfaces contribute to an artwork's meaning (Krauss, 1985).



FIGURE 3.1

This piece is widely considered to be one of the first examples of collage in modern art from Pablo Picasso, *Still Life with Chair Caning*, by Smarthistory, n.d. (<https://smarthistory.org/picasso-still-life-with-chair-caning>) CC BY-NC-SA 4.0

Expanding on these ideas, Dadaist artists like Kurt Schwitters and Hannah Höch explored photomontage and object-based assemblage. Schwitters' Merz works as seen in Figure 3.2, assembles discarded materials, questions authorship and artistic value, reinforcing the process-oriented nature of assemblage (Lavin, 1993). As shown in Figure 3.3, Höch's *Cut with the Kitchen Knife* (1919) juxtaposed mass media imagery to critique social and political structures, demonstrating how assemblage could function as a tool for cultural commentary (Ades, 1986).

By the mid-twentieth century, assemblage had become central to Neo-Dada and Abstract Expressionist practices. As seen in Figure 3.4, Robert Rauschenberg's *Combines* (1954–64) blurred the boundaries between painting and sculpture by incorporating found materials and everyday objects, subverting the traditional distinction between high and low culture (Seitz, 1961). Similarly, Joseph Cornell's boxed assemblages, as seen in Figure 3.5, constructed poetic and nostalgic narratives, layering objects to evoke memory and spatial storytelling (Sawelson-Gorse, 1998).



FIGURE 3.2

From Kurt Schwitters - Merz 50 (Composition), by Get Archive, n.d. (<https://itoldya420.getarchive.net/amp/media/kurt-schwitters-merz-50-composition-google-art-project-cec787>)



FIGURE 3.3

From Kurt Schwitters - Merz 50 (Composition), by Get Archive, n.d. (<https://itoldya420.getarchive.net/amp/media/kurt-schwitters-merz-50-composition-google-art-project-cec787>)



FIGURE 3.4

From *Corpus Delicti*. Robert Rauschenberg (1925-2008) - Canyon (1954-1959), by Flickr, 2012.
(<https://www.flickr.com/photos/boscdanjou/18771214002/in/photostream>)
CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.



FIGURE 3.5

From Joseph Cornell. *The Trajectory of Ursa Major*, 1966. Mixed media. (1903-1972), by Flickr, 2011.
(<https://www.flickr.com/photos/rocor/5401308211>) CC BY-NC 4.0

By the 1960s and 1970s, assemblage emerged as a key strategy in Conceptual and Postmodern art, reflecting concerns with identity, materiality, and socio-political critique. Artists such as Louise Nevelson created wooden assemblages, as seen in Figure 3.6, that functioned as immersive environments, while Ed & Nancy Kienholz constructed installations (see Figure 3.7) critiquing power structures through lifelike arrangements of discarded materials (Bishop, 2012). These developments broadened the application of assemblage, influencing contemporary visual communication and editorial design.



FIGURE 3.6

From *An American Tribute to the British People*, a 1960s painted wood sculpture by Louise Nevelson, at the Tate Modern, by Flickr, 2017. (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/joeshlabotnik/33142785524>) CC BY-NC-SA 4.0



FIGURE 3.7

From Ed & Nancy Kienholz, *The Last Buffalo*, 1986. Installation view of the 7th Biennale of Sydney (1988) at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, by Flickr, 2011. (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/biennalesydney/6479797381>) CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

2.2. Material Assemblage in Editorial Design

Drucker (2009) argues that design is inherently an assemblage-based practice, requiring the orchestration of diverse visual, textual, and material elements into a cohesive communicative structure. Similarly, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) propose the multimodal discourse theory, and they argue that meaning is constructed through the interrelation of visual, material, and spatial elements. Examples of material assemblage in editorial design include:

- Structural and spatial interventions such as gatefolds, inserts, and cut-outs introduce non-linear narrative sequencing, allowing the reader to interact physically with the publication (Carrión, 2013).
- Tactile engagement through spot varnishes, embossing, and letterpress printing enhances haptic interaction, reinforcing the sensory dimension of editorial storytelling (McCarthy & Wright, 2004).

2.3. Typographic Assemblage in Visual Communication

Typography functions as an integral component of assemblage in visual communication design, influencing how meaning is shaped through spatial organisation, layering, and distortion (Figure 3.8). Layered typography integrates overlapping text elements that create simultaneous readings, where meaning shifts based on the reader's focus and perspective (Tenen, 2017). Opacity and transparency in typography allow for gradual content reveals, reinforcing depth and interpretative complexity in design narratives (McCarthy & Wright, 2004). In typographic assemblage, text is utilised as a visual and material entity contributing to the composition's structure and rhythm.

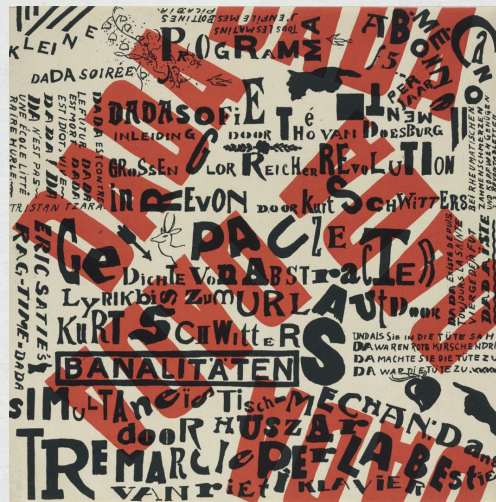


FIGURE 3.8

From Theo van Doesburg with Kurt Schwitters. Klein Dada Soirée. 1922. From MoMA, n.d. (https://www.moma.org/collection/works/5533?sov_referrer=art_term&art_term_slug=dada). CC-BY-NC-ND 4.0.

3. GLOBAL MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF OLYMPIC ATHLETES

This section examines how portraying Olympic athletes in communication design shapes public perception, national identity, and cultural narratives. Insights into heroic framing and visual and national identity are sought to understand how design choices enhance athletes' representation and status. Additionally, examining gender and racial representation highlights ongoing biases, allowing the project to form a more nuanced approach when portraying athletes.

3.1. Heroic Framing

Athletes who represent their nation often face significant societal pressure, as their performance can lead to either public celebration or criticism. They are frequently portrayed as national heroes or, conversely, scrutinised for their actions or perceived failures. These portrayals, shaped largely by media narratives, can influence how the public responds to them and even affect national morale (Whannel, 2013). In this context, athletes carry more than personal expectations — they become symbols through which broader ideas of identity, success, and pride are negotiated

3.2. Visual Identity and National Representation

Designs often incorporate national symbols, colours, and motifs to emphasise athletes' roles as representatives of their countries, fostering a sense of national pride and unity. The International Olympic Committee's brand guidelines encourage using national elements to enhance visual storytelling (International Olympic Committee, 2021).

3.3. Olympics Gender Representation in Media

A systematic review of media representation of women athletes at the Olympic Games revealed ongoing biases in coverage (Salido-Fernández & Muñoz-Muñoz, 2021). For instance, female athletes are more likely to be portrayed in their personal lives or appearances, whereas male athletes are predominantly depicted concerning their sporting achievements (Cooky et al., 2013a; Cooky et al., 2013b).

3.4. Olympics Racial Representation in Media

Studies have shown that media narratives have historically perpetuated stereotypes about black athletes, often attributing their success to innate physical abilities rather than skill and strategy (Carrington, 2010). A study revealed that commentators directed 62.6% of praise for intelligence toward players with lighter skin tones, while they aimed 63.3% of negative comments at players with darker skin tones. Additionally, they gave 60.4% of praise for their work ethic to players with lighter skin tones (McLoughlin, 2023).

4. MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF NEW ZEALAND'S OLYMPIC ATHLETES

This section explores how media and communication design have shaped the representation of New Zealand's Olympic athletes across recent Games. By examining media coverage from Rio 2016, Tokyo 2020, and Paris 2024, this session presents shifts in gender representation, national identity narratives, and the growing influence of sponsorship and branding. This section also reflects the progress and challenges in evolving media portrayals of women, Māori and Pasifika athletes. Understanding these dynamics provides insight into how design choices influence public perception and contribute to a more inclusive portrayal of New Zealand's sporting achievements.

4.1. Rio 2016 Olympic Games

At the Rio 2016 Olympics, New Zealand sent a delegation of 199 athletes, 100 women and 99 men, which marked the first time in the country's Olympic history that female athletes slightly outnumbered male athletes in team composition (New Zealand Olympic Committee, 2016). The delegation won 18 medals: four gold, nine silver, and five bronze. Female athletes accounted for 61.1% of the total medals.

A study by Sport New Zealand and Isentia (2017) examined nearly 30,000 athlete mentions in media coverage and found that female athletes or teams accounted for 48.4% of mentions, compared to 49.7% for male athletes, with 1.9% allocated to mixed-gender teams. This study indicates a near balance but does not fully reflect the dominance of female athletes in medal success (Sport New Zealand & Isentia, 2017).

4.2. Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games

At the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, New Zealand recorded its highest-ever medal count, securing 20 medals: seven gold, six silver, and seven bronze. The team comprised 222 athletes—116 men and 106 women—finishing 12th in the medal table, an improvement from 19th place in Rio 2016 (New Zealand Herald, 2021). The Games also marked a milestone as the women's rugby sevens team secured the country's 50th Olympic gold medal, further solidifying the increasing prominence of female athletes (New Zealand Herald, 2021).

A report by Sport New Zealand (2021) highlighted that coverage of women's events had grown to nearly equal that of men's. This shift was attributed to the increased visibility of high-performing female athletes and broader public engagement in women's sports (Sport New Zealand, 2021).

4.3. Paris 2024 Olympic Games

The Paris 2024 Olympics saw New Zealand athletes achieve another historic performance, equalling their Tokyo 2020 medal total with 20 medals, including 10 gold, seven silver, and three bronze (Olympic.org.nz, 2024), surpassing the record for gold medals set at the 1984 Los

Angeles Olympics. Female athletes won eight of the ten gold medals, with the women's rugby sevens team defending their Olympic title and Lisa Carrington becoming New Zealand's most decorated Olympian (Le Monde, 2024).

A study by Sport New Zealand and Isentia (2024) indicated that 54% of Olympic coverage focused on female athletes, a 3% increase from the Tokyo Olympics, suggesting progress in equitable media representation (Sport New Zealand, 2024).

4.4. Narratives of National Identity and Cultural Values

New Zealand's media portrayal of Olympic athletes is closely tied to national identity and cultural values. Sporting achievements are frequently framed within resilient, perseverance, and humility narratives, particularly in endurance-based sports such as rowing and long-distance running (Jackson & Hokowhitu, 2002). Athletes who exhibit these traits are often depicted as embodying New Zealand's sporting ethos, reinforcing broader narratives of national character (Bruce, 2016). Boyle & Haynes (2009) posit that due to sports' focus on symbols, competition, winning, avid fanbase, it is used as an indicator of national characteristics and, by extension, can be a representative of national identity.

4.5. Sponsorship and Athlete Branding

Commercial sponsorships are key to athlete representation in New Zealand's media landscape. Successful Olympic athletes often become central figures in brand campaigns, with corporations aligning their image with values of perseverance and excellence. This phenomenon has

been amplified recently as digital and social media platforms give athletes greater control over their public image (Eagleman, 2020).

Research into sports sponsorship suggests that consumers associate athletes with the qualities they demonstrate in competition, making Olympic champions particularly valuable for marketing partnerships (Cortsen, 2019). In New Zealand, sponsorship trends frequently align with national interests, with brands focused on outdoor activities, health, and wellness engaging in high-profile endorsements of Olympic athletes. The growing role of athlete-driven content, particularly through personal social media accounts, has further influenced New Zealand's Olympians' branding and commercial positioning (Sport New Zealand, 2024).

4.6. Challenges in Representation

Despite improvements in gender representation, disparities remain in portraying New Zealand's Olympic athletes, particularly in the visibility of Māori and Pasifika athletes. Research indicates that Indigenous athletes have contributed significantly to New Zealand's Olympic success, but their representation in mainstream sports media remains limited (McConnell, 2020). Coverage tends to focus on a few high-profile Māori and Pasifika athletes rather than providing broader visibility to a diverse range of competitors (McConnell, 2020).

Further, while quantitative gender representation in sports media has improved, qualitative differences persist. Studies show that male athletes are often framed in terms of physical dominance and competitiveness, while female athletes receive greater emphasis on personal background and appearance (Bruce, 2021). Furthermore, gender imbalances shown in studies are “persistently rejected as irrelevant” and the results “often

ignored or trivialised” by the media (Fountain & McGregor, 1999, p. 113). These persistent distinctions expose ongoing challenges in achieving equitable sports media representation.

The representation of New Zealand’s Olympic athletes in media and communication design has evolved over the recent Olympic Games, reflecting a shift toward greater gender balance and broader narratives of national identity. Female athletes’ increasing success has contributed to improved visibility, with media coverage becoming more equitable. Sponsorship trends have adapted to these changes, with athletes playing a more active role in shaping their public image. However, challenges remain, particularly in ensuring the representation of Māori and Pasifika athletes and addressing the qualitative aspects of gendered sports narratives. Continued research and media analysis are essential to fostering an inclusive and accurate portrayal of New Zealand’s sporting achievements.

5. GROWTH MINDSET AND WINNING MINDSET

This section examines both the winning and growth mindsets' roles in achieving success, particularly in high-performance environments. Combining these two mindsets offers insight into how elite athletes and professionals maintain motivation, overcome adversity, and achieve peak performance. Additionally, the discussion highlights the challenges associated with each mindset, underscoring the need for balance to avoid burnout or a lack of competitive edge.

5.1. Growth Mindset

The growth mindset proposes that intelligence, skills, and abilities are not fixed but can be developed through effort and persistence (Dweck, 2006). Research has demonstrated that individuals with a growth mindset approach challenge as opportunities for growth rather than threats to their self-worth (Dweck, 2016; Top Hat, 2024). Studies on students and professionals indicate that those with a growth mindset consistently achieve higher success and adaptability than those with a fixed mindset (Dweck, 2015). A fixed mindset suggests that skills, abilities and intelligence are fixed and cannot be developed (Dweck, 2006).

5.2. Winning Mindset

A winning mindset is associated with mental toughness, goal orientation, and resilience in pursuing success (O'Connor, 2024; Psychology Spot, 2024). Unlike a growth mindset, which focuses on self-improvement, a winning mindset prioritises competition, self-belief, and the ability to persist in high-pressure environments (Investors Business Daily, 2024). Research suggests that individuals with a winning mindset are more likely to persist through adversity, particularly in sports, business, and leadership roles (Dweck, 2015; New York Post, 2024).

5.3. Growth Mindset and Winning Mindset Working in Parallel

Although distinct, growth and winning mindsets are interconnected. The growth mindset provides the psychological foundation for a winning mindset by fostering adaptability, resilience, and perseverance (Dweck, 2016; Top Hat, 2024). Athletes and professionals who cultivate a growth mindset are more likely to develop the confidence and mental

fortitude required for a winning mindset (Dweck, 2006; New Zealand Olympic Committee, 2024).

For example, elite athletes who view failure as a learning opportunity rather than a setback are more likely to remain motivated and achieve long-term success (PopSugar, 2024; Investors Business Daily, 2024). A study on Olympic athletes found that those who engaged in mindset training and mental conditioning were likelier to succeed in high-stakes competitions (Sport New Zealand, 2024). These findings align with growth mindset research, which indicates that individuals who embrace challenges and setbacks as learning experiences demonstrate higher levels of perseverance and motivation (Dweck, 2015; Psychology Spot, 2024).

5.4. Psychological Studies and Further Impact

Studies in sports psychology have revealed that elite athletes who train their mental resilience through mindset coaching and psychological conditioning achieve greater performance consistency (PopSugar, 2024; New Zealand Olympic Committee, 2024). A large-scale study of 1,500 participants aged 13 to 77 demonstrated that individuals with a growth mindset were more likely to achieve their goals and sustain motivation over time (New York Post, 2024).

In high-performance sports, research indicates that mindset training contributes to improved focus, mental resilience, and overall performance (Investors Business Daily, 2024). For example, Mark Allen, a six-time Ironman World Champion, attributed his success to mindset adjustments, which allowed him to maintain confidence and endurance during the competition (Investors Business Daily, 2024).

Furthermore, research into sports sponsorship and athlete branding suggests that individuals with a winning mindset are highly marketable due to their association with success and resilience (Cortsen, 2019; New Zealand Olympic Committee, 2024). Companies frequently align with athletes who embody determination, perseverance, and excellence, reinforcing the commercial appeal of a winning mindset (Eagleman, 2020).

5.5. Challenges and Considerations

Despite their benefits, growth and winning mindsets present unique challenges. Studies indicate that individuals who develop a winning mindset without integrating aspects of a growth mindset may experience burnout, performance anxiety, and excessive self-pressure (Dweck, 2016; New York Post, 2024). Conversely, individuals focusing solely on a learning mindset may lack the competitive drive necessary for high-performance success (Psychology Spot, 2024).

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH DESIGN

Overview

This chapter outlines the research design, detailing the methodological framework that supports the project. The research is structured within a practice-led methodology and follows a three-phase iterative approach: warm-up (research), training (ideation), and game day (design). Each phase introduces specific methods to guide the research, allowing for exploration, refinement, and practical engagement with the subject matter.

The research is situated within an artistic research paradigm, positioning artistic practice as a means of generating knowledge. The methodology integrates analytical and practice-based approaches, ensuring that conceptual inquiry and material experimentation develop in parallel. The iterative nature of the process allows for continuous reflection, with findings from earlier phases informing later stages of the project.

The research structure is metaphorically aligned with the stages of athletic preparation and competition, associating it with the thematic focus of the study. The warm-up phase corresponds to the preparatory stage of an athlete's journey. In this phase, I gathered foundational knowledge and established strategic direction. The training phase correlates to the behind-the-scenes work of an athlete's journey. In this phase, I conceptualised ideas, tested approaches, and worked towards the final body of work. The game-day phase represents the culmination of an athlete's preparation, where they put their training to the test in a high-stakes environment. In this phase, I transformed brainstorming and conceptual development into design outcomes, reflecting and refining the work to achieve a cohesive result.

The chapter is divided into three main sections. The first section discusses the research paradigm, considering the theoretical foundations that shape the study. The second section examines the methodological approach, describing how practice-led research informs the investigation. The third section details the research methods, explaining how each phase and underlying methods contribute to the overall progression of the project.

Research Paradigm

A paradigm is a framework of beliefs, values, and assumptions that shape how knowledge is constructed and understood within a discipline (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). It establishes the methodological and philosophical foundations that guide research design and practice. This project follows an artistic research paradigm, which reflects Klein's (2010) view that creative practice is an essential component of the research process, positioning artistic experience as a key method of aesthetic and sensory inquiry. As Klein states, "art without research is lacking an essential foundation" (2010, p. 2). Artistic practice contributed to the research by developing knowledge through creative exploration and critical reflection.

Research Methodology

This project employs a practice-led methodology, recognising artistic practice as a central mode of inquiry. Candy (2006) describes practice-led research as an "original investigation undertaken to gain new knowledge partly by means of practice and the outcomes of that practice" (p. 1). Gray (1996) emphasises that this research is initiated and conducted through practice, positioning creative engagement as

generating knowledge. Steagall and Ings (2018) further explain that practice serves as a means of reforming, critiquing, and advancing the research question. Practice-led inquiry drives this research process by generating new insights through iterative making, experimentation, and critical evaluation.

Research Methods

This section outlines the three iterative phases (Figure 4.1) of the research process, each incorporating specific methods to develop the research. These phases and subsequent methods are:

- Phase One: Warm-up (Research) – This phase focuses on preparing and exploring data, employing athlete selection, establishing winning qualities, and gathering visual material as methods.
- Phase Two: Training (Ideation) – This phase centres on conceptual development and applies mood boarding, brainstorming, and digital collage experimentation as methods.
- Phase Three: Game Day (Design) – This phase involves refining and executing the final design work and utilises poster design, editorial design, and prototyping as methods.

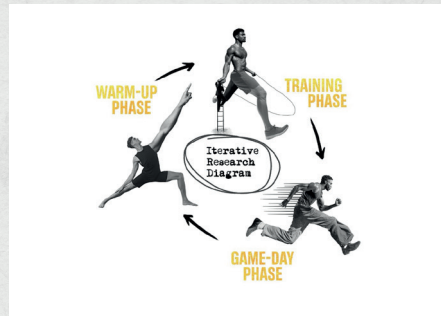


FIGURE 4.1

The iterative Research Diagram. A threefold iterative approach was designed to conceptually develop ideas and creative work and then translate the research and conceptual experimentation into final visual outputs. After completing all three phases, I will conduct critique sessions with supervisors and peers to create a continuous refinement and critical engagement.

Workspace

I have two workspaces I share my time between, my at-home studio (See Figure 4.2) and the AUT post-graduate studio (See Figure 4.3). I split my time between the two depending on the work I am conducting.

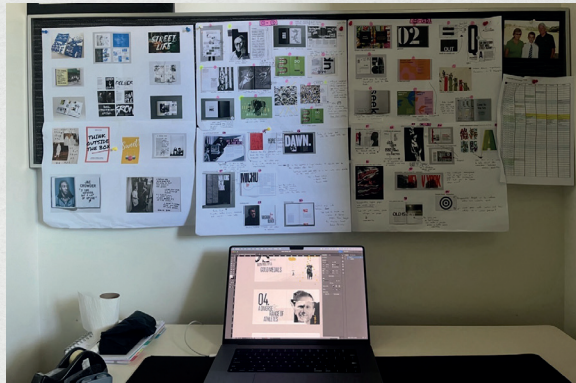


FIGURE 4.2

Home Workspace. Here, at my home workspace, when working on specific aspects of my project, I pin up the corresponding mood boards, of which I have annotated how I intend to utilise each element. I do most of my design and writing at home, working best alone and undistracted.



FIGURE 4.3

Studio Workspace. In my studio space, I am next to a whiteboard where I conduct many brainstorming sessions. I come into the studio when printing, binding, having meetings or wanting to interact and collaborate with my peers.

Phase One: Warm-Up (Research)

This phase focused on establishing foundational context, establishing winning qualities, and gathering visual material. Three methods guide this process: athlete selection, establishing winning qualities, and image gathering.

Step 1: Athlete Selection and Establishing Winning Qualities

This step involves establishing prerequisites, data collection and a qualitative analysis.

Establishing a set of prerequisites

I established a set of prerequisites to determine which Olympians I would research further. I opted for this over my initial consideration of choosing the highest-ranking medallists to ensure a purposeful selection aligned with the project's objectives.

The four prerequisites were as follows:

1. Athletes must be born in and represent New Zealand at the Olympic Games – I intend for the project to target Kiwi young adults; therefore, featuring New Zealand athletes enhances the narrative's relatability.
2. Athletes must have won multiple gold medals. Consistent victory suggests a degree of strategic and methodological reliability that can inform the research.
3. Athletes must have competed in recent Olympic history. Sufficient documentation and media coverage are necessary to support a comprehensive analysis of their career and achievements.

4. Selection of a broad range of athletes – The selected athletes must represent a range of sports, cultural backgrounds, and genders to ensure inclusivity for the intended audience.

A preliminary list of ten candidates (Figure 4.4) was compiled and assessed against these criteria, with an extensive amount of research required to ensure sufficient documentation and media coverage were available.



FIGURE 4.4

Athlete Shortlist. I compiled all Kiwi Olympians in recent history with multiple gold medals; upon doing so, I decided to push for further inclusivity by selecting a Paralympic athlete. I chose Sophie Pascoe as she adheres to the prerequisites while also being New Zealand's most successful Paralympian.

Sources and Data Collection

I examined a range of written, audio and visual sources to build a comprehensive understanding of each athlete's experiences. These sources included:

- Newspaper articles, books, and blogs
- Radio Interviews and podcasts
- Documentaries and YouTube videos

Upon an iterative process of the ongoing collection, analysis and refining of over 50,000+ words of data, five athletes best met the requirements. Of those, I brought forward to the next step of phase one. These athletes were:

- Lisa Carrington
- Peter Snell
- Sophie Pascoe
- Valerie Adams
- Hamish Bond

Qualitative Analysis

A qualitative approach was applied to examine patterns and recurring themes in the research on the athletes' lived experiences.

I identified 11 key qualities that repeatedly emerged among athletes:

1. Mentorship – The presence of a coach or mentor
2. Inspiration – A defining influence that shaped their motivation.
3. Discipline – Commitment to their sport.
4. Sacrifice – The ability to forgo other opportunities in pursuit of sporting excellence.
5. Pioneers – The first or best to do something in their field.
6. Winner's Mentality – A strong belief in their ability to succeed.
7. Overcoming Negativity – The capacity to navigate and respond to adversity, setbacks, or criticism.
8. Support System – Networks of people who played a key role in their development.
9. Good Character – Contributions beyond their sport, such as community engagement or mentoring.
10. Inspiring Others – Their influence on others.
11. Motivation – A reason behind their athletic career.

Distilling the athletes' narratives into shared qualities creates a framework that highlights their key attributes, providing young athletes with a potential blueprint for sports practice.

Refining the Framework

I distilled the 11 qualities into the five winning qualities—inspiration, guidance, tenacity and pioneership. Initially, I had just the four listed. However, something was missing, and after some brainstorming, superheroism was decided upon (Figure 4.5). I created a five-by-five grid (Figure 4.6) that kept the base information in one place, aligning each athlete with the corresponding qualities.

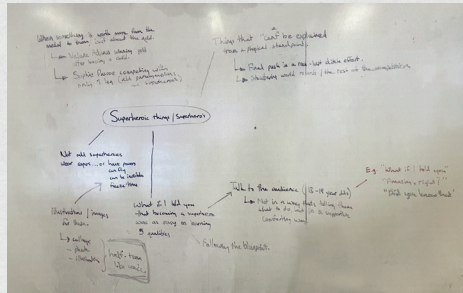


FIGURE 4.5
Deciding on Superheroism as a Winning Quality. This feedback loop helped decide the last winning quality in the project. I decided on superheroism to communicate to young adults when athletes have done something that elevated them to a larger-than-life status.

| | Lisa Carrington | Peter Snell | Valerie Adams | Sophie Pascoe | Hamish Bond |
|--------------|---|--|--|--|---|
| Inspiration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -older brothers - Erin Taylor (2008) - Ian Ferguson training camp - Ocean and land connection from Maori culture | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fathers passing - Quote from Arthur Lydiard about him having potential - Roger Farnister - Jack Lovelock | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Losing her mother while in the hospital with her - Her children in the recent Olympics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Her mum is her best friend - Roly Chrichon Granddad asked her what she wanted to be when she grew up | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Setting attainable and actionable goals - Competition to fight for spots in the rowing team in Cambridge |
| Guidance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gordan Walker - Family, partner, support crew - NZ canoe racing Federation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Arthur Lydiard who also coached Halburg and popularised jogging | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kirsten Heller, who was like a second mother - Jean-Pierre Egger - Dale Stevenson - Physio-family and friends | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Roly Chrichon was her coach of 10 years, who was also an Olympian - Team Pascoe - during her mental struggles | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cambridge rowing program - Tom Strachan during school - Noel Donaldson at the Olympics |
| Tenacity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Negative thoughts, pressure and comments - No missed training in 13 years - Wanting children + not seeing friends | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 100 miles per week - Running every morning and night - Sacrificed family, work, time + money - Overcame negative comments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 trainings per day - Took time away from family @ Tokyo - 8 surgeries throughout career - bullied + negativity - Media comments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 26 hours a week of swimming - Lost her leg at 2 years old - Fighting through period of depression | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gave up the typical uni experience all his friends were doing at the time. - Absolute determination toward his sport |
| Pioneers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1st Kiwi to win sprint champs - 1st Maori woman to win gold - 1st NZ woman to win 3 golds at 1 Olympics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NZ Athlete of the century - No defeats in major races - 6 world records - sportsman of the year in 1960-1964 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Halburg sportswoman of the year 7x - Unbeaten from 2006-2014 - Youngest dame in 2017 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NZ most decorated Paralympian - Bronze medal at 13 years old - won 3 golds at 15 years old at Paralympic Games | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - World record holder - Unbeaten for 69 races straight |
| Superheroism | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Most golds athlete in NZ history - Inspiration to women - Her longevity in the sport - Giving back | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Propelling NZ athletics to the world stage - His post-career studies on the sport | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Having 2 C-section babies and winning a bronze medal @ Olympics - All of her injuries make her a bionic woman | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Getting run over by a lawnmower and not letting that define her, winning 20 medals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Freak of nature to switch between 3 sports and compete at the highest level at each of them |

FIGURE 4.6
Five-by-Five Grid. This five-by-five grid aligns each athlete with the corresponding qualities. The X-axis lists the five athletes, while the Y-axis presents the five winning qualities. The intersecting cells highlight the athlete's qualities.

Step 2: Image Gathering

I collected and analysed visual materials related to the athletes, their sports, and broader cultural and symbolic representations. This research aimed to construct a visual framework that informed the project's design approach and conceptual development.

Generic Image Gathering and Thematic Categorisation

I created folders for each athlete, compiling all available images of the athletes I could find. Then, I conducted image searches for each winning quality. Each image search was named and grouped into four thematic categories (Figure 4.7) to collect a broader scope of visual material. The four thematic categories were cultural and Māori heritage, flora and fauna, tools of the trade and art and architecture; this meant conducting 20 separate thematic searches in this step.

INSPIRATION - TOOLS OF THE TRADE/ICONS

Motivation

Stopwatch: Represents time management and the push for continuous improvement, motivating athletes, professionals, **Gym Weights:** Motivate physical strength, endurance, and self-improvement through regular practice and training.



Creativity

Paintbrush: Represents artistic expression and the ability to create something new, symbolizing the endless potential of creativity.



Aspiration

Blueprint: Represents aspiration in architecture and planning, symbolizing the creation and realization of future visions.

Compass: Symbolizes aspiration in navigation and exploration, guiding people toward their desired goals or destinations.

Telescope: Reflects the aspiration to explore the unknown and reach beyond current boundaries in science and knowledge.



Encouragement

Medal: Represents honor and accomplishment, encouraging individuals to perform at their best in competitions and challenges.



Influence

Pen: Symbolizes the influence of writing, literature, and communication, showcasing the power of words in shaping culture and opinions.

Flag: Represents national identity and pride, influencing patriotism and unity among citizens.

Joshua McCarthy 2024

Presentation

5 Traits Word & Mind Mapping

FIGURE 4.7

Inspiration: Thematic Image Gathering. This example shows a thematic board for the winning quality inspiration. I explored alternative interpretations of Inspiration, conducting searches across Google, Pinterest, and Pexels. After completing all 20 thematic searches, I annotated images with their conceptual design value. This initial thematic search uncovered the concept of forming a blueprint.

Phase Two: Training (Ideation)

This phase focused on the conceptual development of the project, creating and refining ideas through an iterative and exploratory approach. I implemented visual and conceptual research methods to generate, organise, and evaluate design possibilities—three key methods guided this process: mood boarding, brainstorming, and digital collage experiments.

Step 1: Mood boarding

Mood boarding was used to define the aesthetic direction of the project. The annotations and iterations of mood boarding served as a foundation for the design phase, as by analysing relevant design work, a visual language was established that aligned with the project's narrative and thematic focus. This method involved the creation of three types of digital mood boards: collage, poster and editorial mood boarding.

Collage Mood boarding

Collage mood boards contributed to shaping the project's collage style. I developed these mood boards using two key sources:

- Selected artists – Work from Nazario Graziano, Kurt Schwitters and Hannah Höch (see Figure 4.8). I selected these artists as they are all dedicated collage designers from whom I knew I could gain insight conceptually.
- Selected works – Constantly referring to my five-by-five grid, I scoured Pinterest to find collage works that I could alter and cater to my project's narrative (see Figure 4.9). This mood board directly influenced one of Sophie Pascoe's collages (see Figure 4.10).



FIGURE 4.8

Selected Artist Mood Board. Kurt Schwitters' torn edges and mixed paper stocks influenced my collage approach, while Nazario Graziano's ripped edges and cut-out text shaped my editorial headings and collage approach. His monotone imagery with selective colour inspired me to represent each winning quality through a single colour. From Hannah Höch, I learned the value of simplicity in collage, reinforcing a less is more approach in my work



FIGURE 4.9

Selected Work Mood Board. When on Pinterest, I kept my explorations vague, letting ideas come naturally. Whenever I identified a collage with relatability toward an athlete, concept or winning quality, I added it to the mood board. Then, I annotated exactly what elements I wanted to use and how to employ them.



FIGURE 4.10

Sophie Pascoe Tenacity Collage For example, I annotated this collage, knowing I wanted to use this system for Sophie Pascoe's 'tenacity' collage portraying her struggles with mental health. I experimented with her swimming up the streams, but this distracted me from the purpose of the collage.

Editorial Mood boarding

As seen in Figure 4.11, editorial mood boards focused on elements that would influence the book's design, including format, typography and layout. These references, which I found on Pinterest, ensured each editorial section had a sufficient concept to convey the narrative visually. Figure 4.12 is an example of the inspiration I gained from this mood board used in Peter Snell's tenacity collage.

Step 2: Brainstorming

I used brainstorming to explore and refine the project's conceptual structure, design system, and stylistic approach. This process involved selecting the medium, defining the poster series and editorial design and motif inspiration. Physical brainstorming was prioritised over digital methods, as working on paper provided a more flexible way to explore ideas without software constraints.

Determining the Medium

Brainstorming further potential options and collage became central to the project due to its ability to combine fragmented elements into a cohesive whole.

Defining the Poster Series

With collage established as the primary medium, I conducted a digital brainstorming session to map out the content of the poster series (Figure 4.13). I then conducted further brainstorming, focusing on the composition of the posters. This process ensured each poster series remained visually distinct while maintaining a cohesive connection.

| Inspiration | Guidance | Tenacity | Pioneership | Super heroism |
|--|--|--|---|---|
| <p>Main focus is on their inspiration e.g. their parent or a quote about them as opposed to the athlete themselves.</p> <p>Stars Constellations Space Clouds Reaching up Climbing up Ladders Fireworks</p> | <p>Main focus is on whoever guided them through their journey to becoming so successful in their sporting field. E.g. a coach or a mentor or support system. This could even be a parent or friend if necessary.</p> <p>Maps Compass Blueprints Staircases Walkways/Pathways Signage</p> | <p>Athlete as the main focus. This section is all about them, how they sacrificed, how they were disciplined and how they persevered through tough times in order to succeed.</p> <p>Aray Soldiers Lightening Negative comments Grumpy</p> | <p>Their trophies and accolades are their main focus. This could be displayed as a collaged trophy wall perhaps?</p> <p>Trophies Medals World Records Photos of them Dates, times, places of all their awards</p> | <p>Athlete as the focal point once again, but this time portraying them as a larger-than-life figure // superheroic figure.</p> <p>E.g. in a half tone comic book style painting them out as a superhero. Or in a newspaper, like how you would see superheroes in newspapers, once again painted out as the hero</p> <p>Comic book effects Funchy language Half tone</p> |

FIGURE 4.13

Poster Content Brainstorming. I assigned sections for each winning qualities poster series, outlining key details for each: the thematic focus and intended message, visual components and how the poster's narrative relates to the project's overarching theme.

Editorial Development

I sketched to establish the editorial structure, content and page layouts before continuing with digitising elements (Figure 4.14)

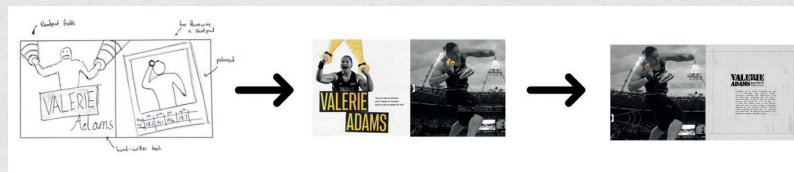


FIGURE 4.14

Digitised Valerie Adams Title Page. I formed the basis of the athlete cover page from this initial sketch. Even though the final digitised version shows little resemblance to the sketch, without it, the final version wouldn't have been possible.

Step 3: Digital Collage Experiments

This step focused on experimenting with digital collage-making to explore composition, media choices, and the overall visual direction of the project.

The process combined previously gathered imagery with newly sourced textures to test different approaches to layering, juxtaposition, and visual storytelling. These experiments are intended to help understand how collage as a visual approach could represent the athletes' narratives and winning qualities.

I created Photoshop collages to explore athletes' winning qualities. While the open-ended process felt counterintuitive, it required more instinctive, flexible design, leading to unexpected, conceptually rich outcomes that informed later design decisions (Figure 4.15). This phase helped refine the project's visual language and understand how collage could function as a tool for storytelling within the broader research framework. Figure 4.16 looks at how I developed the simple Arthur Lydiard collage I created during this process into a double-page spread on Arthur Lydiard's guidance and impact on Peter Snell's.



FIGURE 4.15

Collection of Collages. All 24 collages here represent narratives discovered through previous research, mood boarding and annotating. My intention with these collages was to visually portray the winning qualities through the athletes' stories. I broke down each story, focusing on which elements I could combine to illustrate the narrative. I used many of these designs in my posters and editorial designs later.



FIGURE 4.16

Peter Snell & Arthur Lydiard Guidance Spread. I converted this collage into a double-page spread highlighting the importance and profound impact that Arthur Lydiard had on Peter Snell's running career.

Phase Three: Game-Day (Design)

The Game Day phase marked the transition from conceptual development to producing final visual outputs while maintaining coherence between conceptual research and visual execution. Three key methods were employed: poster design, editorial design, and prototyping.

Step 1: Poster Design

In this phase, I created 25 posters, assisted by the five-by-five grid, mood boards, and previous collage experiments. The aim was to develop visual compositions and narratives that capture the athletes' identities and winning qualities.

Posters provided a flexible medium to experiment with composition, imagery, and narrative. I chose an A1 format to allow for larger, more detailed collage compositions, which enabled a visual statement that resonates with the scale of Olympic achievement and the overarching Hall of Fame theme. I employed an AI-upscaling tool called PixelCut on smaller, lower-resolution images from public databases to improve their quality,

I chose to work exclusively in black and white (Figure 4.17) to focus on composition and structure while evoking an archival style that complements the Hall of Fame theme. I employed an agile approach and limited the completion time of each initial poster to four hours, discouraging over-refinement. While I left some compositions feeling unfinished, the limited time allowed for a focus on raw ideation and fast progression through this step.



FIGURE 4.17

Black and White Posters. All posters portray the narratives uncovered throughout the research phase. Valerie Adams's superheroism poster (left) describes her as a superhero on the front cover of a newspaper for competing at the Olympics after giving birth to two children. Hamish Bond's pioneership poster (middle) showcases all of his career trophies, achievements and photos in a trophy wall format, commemorating his lucrative rowing career. Lisa Carrington's inspiration poster (right) shows her next to all the people and things that inspired her along her journey to Olympic success, such as Ian Ferguson, Erin Taylor and her older brothers.

Step 2: Editorial Design

The transition from poster design to an editorial format introduced an editorial structure. While the posters functioned as standalone compositions, the book incorporated sequential flow, narrative and readability. To begin designing the editorial, I had to extract, adapt and restructure elements from the poster series to create a narrative-driven format. This step focused on forming a cohesive visual and textual experience, integrating the research and visual identity developed in earlier stages. I began by selecting elements from the posters to develop and bring forward into the editorial (Figure 4.18). Developing a continuous reading experience meant testing and integrating new written and designed content to allow the narrative to flow better (Figure 4.19). I tested layouts, sequencing and content iterations to ensure that each design choice was purposeful and reinforced the project's themes. The editorial design process remained fluid and responsive, allowing the book to develop through a cyclical feedback loop with supervisors.

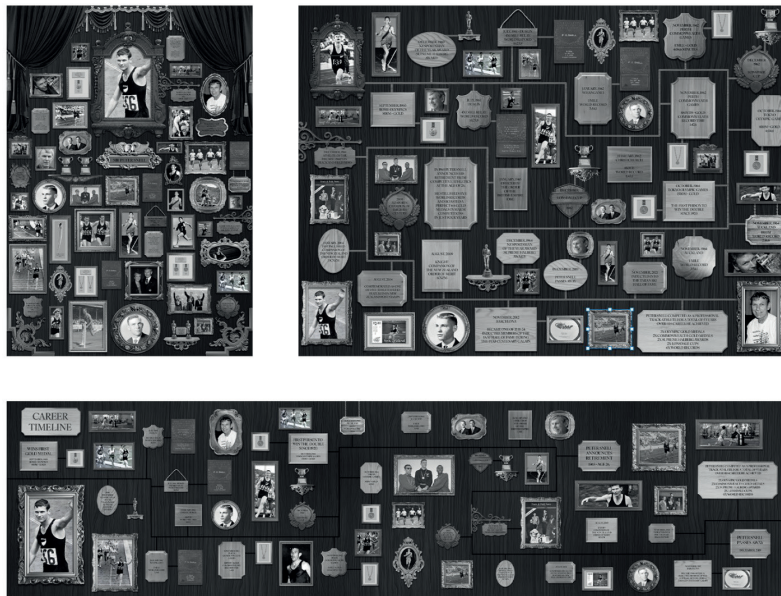


FIGURE 4.18

Converting Peter Snell Pioneer's Poster into Editorial Timeline. To display the pioneering qualities of the athletes best, I converted the original pioneer's poster (top left) into a chronological narrative of the athlete's achievements and career (top right). Eventually, the timeline developed into a 4-page gatefold (bottom).

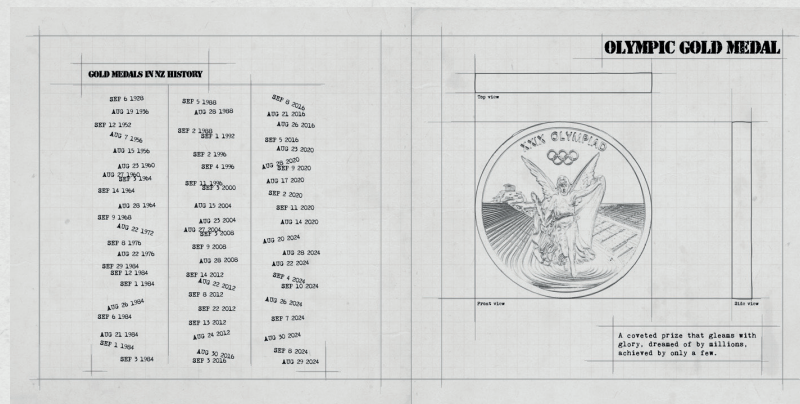


FIGURE 4.19

Blueprint Editorial Elements. I incorporated blueprint-like visual elements in the editorial design to metaphorically reflect the idea of building a pathway, or blueprint to greatness. By employing a gridded background and altering images in Photoshop to appear sketched, the publication evokes the aesthetic of a blueprint. Just as a blueprint offers structure, guidance, and vision for creating something purposeful, these visual cues reinforce the idea that success is carefully built through dedication and intent.

Prototyping

I prototyped the book's binding techniques, interactive page components, book covers and material selection. This stage was necessary to assess the practical feasibility of various design decisions. Each iteration of prototyping provided insights that informed adjustments to improve the book's readability, structural integrity, and handling.

Binding Methods

I tested perfect binding (Figure 4.20) and Coptic stitch (Figure 4.21) to determine how the techniques affected page flexibility and opening range. I ultimately moved forward with perfect binding due to the

nature of binding single pages rather than spreads. I could not find a professional printer that would do A2 double-sided printing; therefore, printing onto pages, as opposed to spreads, meant I could keep my publication at the desired 27x27cm format when getting the publication printed professionally.

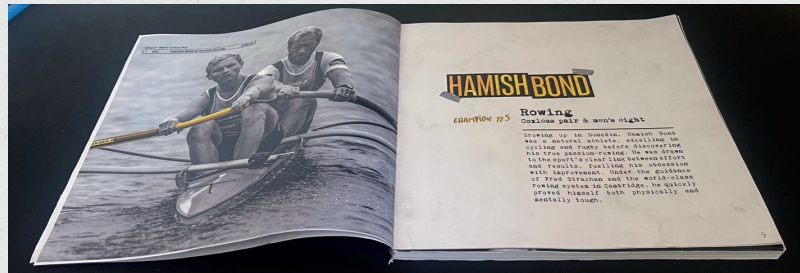


FIGURE 4.20

Perfect Binding. This figure was from an initial prototyping session when I was choosing between binding techniques. Perfect binding produced a clean finish but restricted how flat the book could open. I viewed legibility as a top priority; therefore, at this stage in the project, I thought perfect binding was out of the question.

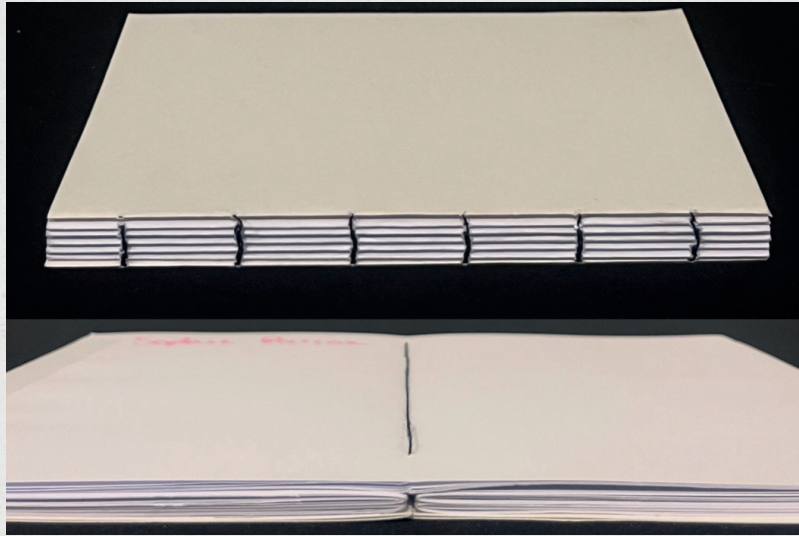


FIGURE 4.21

Interactive Page Components

I tested gatefolds for the pioneership timelines, and this extended page space allowed for more prominent visuals (Figure 4.22).



FIGURE 4.22

The gatefold allows for a cover page (top) to describe the pioneering qualities of the athlete before unveiling the complete extended chronological timeline beneath (bottom).

Book Cover

Considering practical functionality and symbolic meaning, I explored a soft cover (Figure 4.23) and a hard cover (Figure 4.24) for the publication. I opted for the hardcover book as I believe it symbolises the external perception of an athlete's accomplishments as rigid and unattainable, with the inside contents revealing their journey's underlying vulnerability and openness. Additionally, the hard cover assists in the publication's durability, which, as an archival artefact, is an essential concept.



FIGURE 4.23

Softcover Book. The binding process is scheduled to be completed after the submission of the exegesis. Therefore, a mock-up of the softcover book has been supplied for now.



FIGURE 4.24

Hardcover Book. The binding process is scheduled to be completed after the submission of the exegesis. Therefore, a mock-up of the hardcover book has been supplied for now.

Material Selection

I experimented with different paper stocks, weights, and finishes that influenced the book's presentation. I decided on Sovereign Offset Digital 150 gsm, a matte finish that aligns with the raw and archival quality narrative, with a timeless and tactile feel, reinforcing the Hall of Fame concept.

Conclusion

This chapter outlined the methodologies and methods that shaped the project, demonstrating how a practice-led approach within an artistic research paradigm enabled an iterative and reflective design process. The three-phase iterative research system facilitated analytical research, conceptual exploration and design refinement to develop the research. The iterative nature of the process supported continuous evaluation, ensuring that research findings informed later stages. The following chapter will present a critical commentary, examining how the contextual and methodological approaches shaped the outcomes.

CHAPTER FIVE: CRITICAL COMMENTARY

This chapter examines the media language, design format, and narrative structure that shaped this project. It reflects on how the design decisions, narrative strategies, and representational choices communicate the athletes' journeys and promote an equitable portrayal of sporting greatness.

1. Media Language & Design Format

This section introduces how media language and format shape the project's visual and narrative approach. It explains that superheroism was chosen over heroism as a winning quality to better engage younger audiences due to the familiar cultural reference, furthermore, it outlines the adoption of the newspaper format to frame athletes as iconic historical figures and explores how design principles like legibility and impact enhance communication. Finally, it discusses how the project avoids mainstream media biases by representing gender and ethnicity and focusing on athlete achievement over stereotypes.

Superheroism

This project chose superheroism over heroism as a winning quality because of its connotational distinctions, especially for the younger audience it targets. While heroes and superheroes represent admirable ideals, morals, and achievements, heroes remain grounded in reality. In contrast, superheroes appear larger-than-life, which, due to the popularity of superhero comics and movies, are the kind of figures kids often look up to and dream of becoming. Therefore, this term aims to increase the project's appeal to younger generations by drawing on familiar cultural references. Ingham, Loy and Swetman (1979) argue that for somebody to be considered a sporting hero, they must actively empower those of subordinate groups, suggesting that this is unachievable within sport. This project refers to superheroism in the same sense as Ingham et al. (1979) refer to hero, hence why for the athletes to be deemed superheroic, the exhibition of inspirational qualities must be present. Such qualities deem an outside-the-sports-field impact on followers of the sport and or athlete while resonating with younger audiences.

Adopting the Newspaper Format

The project initially adopted the newspaper format for the Superheroism poster designs developed in the second phase of the threefold iterative approach. Superheroism, the last winning quality, depicts the athletes' influence as exceeding the impact of their gold medals, becoming iconic role models. Similar to the chosen athletes, people who represent ideals and performances that others look up to are commonly associated with appearing on the cover of a newspaper. To be featured on the front page, one must achieve something remarkable and, in doing so, become a subject of public celebration.

Understanding the newspaper format was essential when approaching the posters' design. The New Zealand Herald newspaper was employed as the basis for the project's graphic system, to assist in closely resembling heroic representations. In contrast, The Daily Bugle, a fictional newspaper in the Spider-Man universe, provided a newspaper format based on a fictional world, resembling superheroic representations. The newspaper format marks each athlete's historical place as a larger-than-life icon. Using superheroism's visual language, dramatic headlines, mythic imagery, and front-page layouts, the project elevates their stories as part of a collective, archival memory. Presented with aesthetics that simulate a Hall of Fame style, the publication celebrates the athletes' legacy and preserves it for future generations. The newspaper design system was employed as the visual language in the superheroism posters to convey the project's theme (Figure 5.1).

THE G.O.A.T IN THE BOAT



Portrait by: Ben White, Getty Images; Photo: Paul and Barry Hogg; Rowing with the 22nd World Rowing Cup

LISA CARRINGTON: THE MOST GOLDEN KIWI OF ALL TIME.

No New Zealand athlete has ever claimed the Olympic title quite like Lisa Carrington. With eight Olympic gold medals, she has reached past legends to become the most decorated Kiwi Olympian in history. Her success isn't just about numbers—it's about consistency, resilience, and an unshakable belief in her goal.

While many athletes peak for a single Olympic cycle, Carrington has been unstoppable for over a decade. She hasn't just won; she has dominated, often finishing races with lengths ahead of the competition. Her ability to overcome injury, multiple diseases, and team events has made her a name in government circles.

Lisa Carrington isn't just a champion; she's the embodiment of Kiwi resilience. In a nation that prides itself on pushing through adversity, she has set a new standard, proving that with grit, determination, and an unshakable spirit, anything is possible. Her dominance on the world stage has made her a household name, inspiring young New Zealanders to chase their dreams, no matter the odds.

From Olympic podium to the top of the New Zealand sports hierarchy, Carrington has carried the color flag with pride. She is more than just a medalist; she is a national treasure, and her legacy will be felt for generations, inspiring the future of Kiwi sport. When Lisa Carrington races, she doesn't just compete; she represents the heart, pride, and spirit of New Zealand.



UNPARALLELED DOMINANCE: LISA CARRINGTON'S GOLDEN LEGACY

When it comes to sheer dominance in their sport, no one comes close to Lisa Carrington. With a glittering career that has made her a household name, she has pushed her way to the top, becoming New Zealand's greatest Olympian and one of the sport's all-time legends.

Carrington's Olympic career began in London 2012, when she picked up gold in the K1 200m, cementing herself as a force to be reckoned with. Four years later in Rio 2016, she did it again, defending her crown with a silver in the K1 500m, proving her versatility across distances.

But it was on the 14th of 2020 in Tokyo where Carrington reached the peak of her career, winning a record-breaking five gold medals. In all five events, she performed flawlessly, becoming the first woman to achieve such a feat in Olympic history.

Her dominance was absolute: her stroke left her rivals in the dust. In the time she spent in Tokyo, there was no doubt—Carrington was in a league of her own. She was unstoppable, adding more gold to her tally, further cementing her status as New Zealand's most decorated Olympian. With eight Olympic gold medals to her name, she has set a new benchmark for the world to follow.

Her legacy is not just about the medals she has won; it's about the inspiration she has provided. She has shown that with hard work, resilience, and an unwavering belief in your goal, anything is possible. Lisa Carrington isn't just a champion; she is the G.O.A.T in the boat—and the world is watching.



SHAPED BY SURF, DESTINED FOR GOLD

Lisa Carrington's journey from a young girl in a small town to a world champion was shaped by the waves of the ocean. Her love for surfing led her to the water and inspired her to take on the challenges of the sport, proving her strength and resilience that would shape her future.

Her transition from surfing to rowing was not without its challenges, but she picked up the paddle, her passion became undeniable. Training under the guidance of top coaches, Carrington honed her technique and embraced the physical demands of the sport.

By 2011, she was making waves on the international stage, proving she had the potential to compete with the world's best. It was in London 2012 that she made her debut, and her first Olympic gold medal was just the beginning of a legacy that would inspire a generation.



SO, WHAT'S NEXT?

With a trophy cabinet already overflowing, the question now is: how much further can Lisa Carrington go? At 34, she remains at the peak of her powers, showing no signs of slowing down. If she lines up for Los Angeles 2028, she could exceed her public expectations, surpassing the all-time Olympic canoe sprint medal record and further etching her name in sporting history.

Another Olympic campaign would see her competing against a new wave of challengers, but if Carrington's one thing Carrington has proven over and over again is that she thrives under pressure. With her unmatched work ethic and ability to adapt, she could push her limits even further, setting records that may never be broken.

Beyond the Olympics, her impact will stretch far beyond the water. She has already inspired a new generation of Kiwi paddlers, proving that world dominance is within reach for New Zealand athletes. Whether she continues racing, transitions to coaching, or focuses on philanthropic work, her influence on the sport is undeniable.

If Carrington adds more gold to her case, she won't just be the G.O.A.T in the Boat; she'll be one of the greatest athletes in Olympic history, full stop.

Crossword

Edited by Will Shortz

ACROSS

1. Lisa Carrington's most recent Olympic gold medal (10)

2. The name of the rowing club Carrington trained at in London (10)

3. Carrington's first Olympic medal (10)

4. The name of the rowing club Carrington trained at in London (10)

5. Carrington's most recent Olympic gold medal (10)

6. The name of the rowing club Carrington trained at in London (10)

7. Carrington's most recent Olympic gold medal (10)

8. The name of the rowing club Carrington trained at in London (10)

9. Carrington's most recent Olympic gold medal (10)

10. The name of the rowing club Carrington trained at in London (10)

DOWN

1. Carrington's most recent Olympic gold medal (10)

2. The name of the rowing club Carrington trained at in London (10)

3. Carrington's most recent Olympic gold medal (10)

4. The name of the rowing club Carrington trained at in London (10)

5. Carrington's most recent Olympic gold medal (10)

6. The name of the rowing club Carrington trained at in London (10)

7. Carrington's most recent Olympic gold medal (10)

8. The name of the rowing club Carrington trained at in London (10)

9. Carrington's most recent Olympic gold medal (10)

10. The name of the rowing club Carrington trained at in London (10)

FIGURE 5.1 Newspaper Theme in the Superheroism Poster System. This figure shows Lisa Carrington's superheroism poster, presenting her as New Zealand's canoe sprint greatest of all time on a newspaper cover, using archival and Hall of Fame themes to frame her in a superheroic light.

Newspaper Design as a Tool for Legibility and Impact

The newspaper format carries with it a legacy of trust and authority. Since Europe's first printed newspaper by Johan Carolus in 1605, newspapers have long been a primary source of truth and historical records. This project leverages the cultural trust associated with this medium by framing the athletes' stories within this context. It signals to the reader that what they view is a form of historical documentation. Newspapers are designed to grab attention and offer a gateway into the project's narrative. Designers have been given more authority over newspapers' design decisions in recent history, such as larger type, bolder headlines and more dominant imagery, all of which are collated within more simplified layouts (Barnhurst, 1992). This project mirrors these graphic conventions to lend the publication a legible visual rhythm, making the information more compelling (Figure 5.2).

Black-and-white imagery is tied to archival content and legacy. I aimed to enhance the design's sense of historical weight with black and white imagery, evoking a time when photography was still developing in the mass media. By operating in black-and-white, the designs feel like artefacts from the past, reinforcing the timelessness of these athletes' achievements.



FIGURE 5.2

Mirroring the Newspaper Graphic Conventions. Valerie Adams' superheroism page exemplifies the newspapers' mirrored conventions in this project through its bold headlines, large type, and dominant imagery, presenting her Tokyo Olympic bronze, achieved through motherhood, as a superheroin feat.

Avoiding Biases in Mainstream Media

The project avoids the biases seen in mainstream media's portrayal of athletes, with quantitative and qualitative coverage often inconsistent across gender and race. Previously mentioned studies by Salido-Fernández & Muñoz-Muñoz (2021), Cooky et al. (2013a), and Carrington (2010) highlight these gender and racial biases.

According to the 2023 Census population counts (2024), 3,383,742 people (67.8%) living in New Zealand are of European descent, 887,493 people (17.8%) living in New Zealand are of Māori descent, and 442,632 people (8.9%) living in New Zealand are of Pacific Island descent. Furthermore, females won eight of the ten gold medals at the Paris

Olympic Games (Sport New Zealand, 2024). This project addresses such issues of racial and gender proportional misrepresentation by selecting five athletes who reflect New Zealand's ethnical representation: three women (including one Paralympian) and two men; two athletes of Māori descent, one of Pasifika descent, and two of European descent.

The proportional misrepresentation of athletes is prominent, too, with Cooky et al. (2013b) highlighting that female sports commentators often speak of sexualised gags, fights, scandals and women as wives, girlfriends, and mothers. A specific example of this misrepresentation of athletes has been prevalent on shows such as Sports Cafe, with sexual innuendos and sarcastic jokes often being made about women and common references to male heterosexual prowess (Bruce, 2021). Furthermore, the gender and ethnical misrepresentation of athletes was made by a study conducted by RunRepeat and The Professional Footballers' Association (McLoughlin, 2023). The study revealed a commentary bias toward players with lighter skin tones as opposed to darker skin tones.

Therefore, by focusing on the athletes' journeys through the lens of the five winning qualities - rather than media-friendly tropes, such as personal scandals, relationships or stereotyping genetic qualities - the work pushes back against the global trend of reducing athletes to stereotypes. The project's reframing of typical biases positions greatness as something earned, not given, and as something streamlined across all races, aligning closely with fairness, equity, and hard work principles.

2. Narrative Structure

This session explores how narrative structure, the athletes' personal journeys, and visual storytelling devices shape the publication's storytelling strategy. It examines how the project mirrors an athlete's career arc, embraces multivocal narration, and employs editorial design as a reflective practice. It also discusses how personal stories, national identity, symbolic visual elements, and collage-based assemblage techniques create an emotionally engaging, multimodal experience that deepens the reader's connection to the content.

Structure and Narration

The publication's narrative structure is split into three parts, mirroring the overarching arc of an athlete's career. The sections *The Starting Line*, *The Journey*, and *The Finish Line* cue the reader into a reflective framework where they can internalise the athletes' experiences (Figure 5.3). While this echoes Abbott's (2008) concept of a story as a temporal sequence of events, the structure also functions metaphorically, mapping the reader's progression alongside the featured athletes.

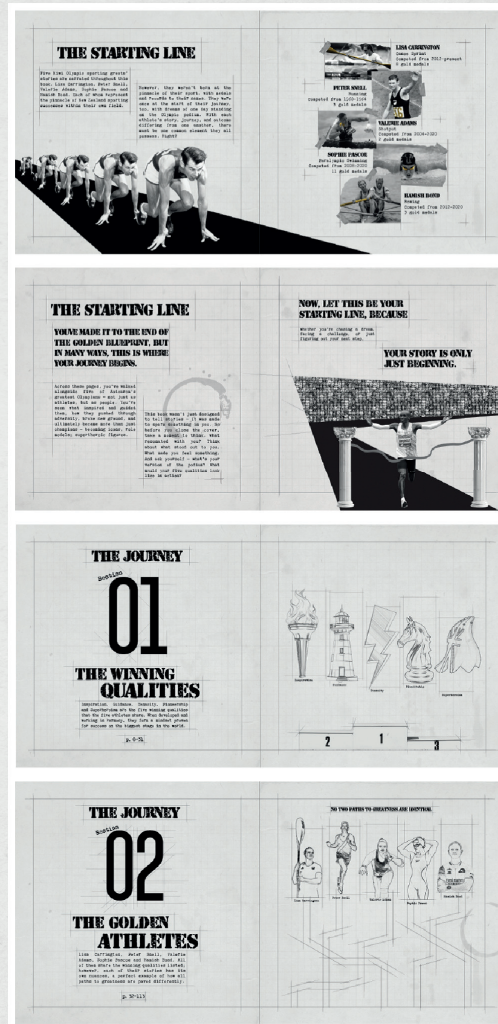


FIGURE 5.3
 Publication Sections. The Starting Line and The Finish Line are one double-page spread each, reflecting a far smaller portion of the book than The Journey, where the selected athletes and corresponding stories within the thematic winning qualities are visually narrated.

Drawing from Bakhtin's (1981) theory of dialogism, the publication embraces multivocal storytelling, with each athlete's narrative constructed through a layered interplay of direct quotations, visual symbolism, and editorial commentary. This method resists a single authoritative voice and considers multiple viewpoints, forming the narrative. Editorial design in the project functioned as media and as a methodological tool in the research process. The transition from collected data to structuring visual content required iterative experimentation, reflecting Schön's (1983) concept of the reflective practitioner. Stories often require reconsideration or reframing once translated into visual form, demanding testing and refining cycles. This reflective cycle aligns with Vaughan's (2017) discussion of editorial design as a mode of knowledge production, where meaning is actively shaped through material, visual, and narrative decisions.

Athletes' Personal Journeys as a Storytelling Device

Central to the project's intent is the representation of five high-performance New Zealand Olympians whose personal experiences exemplify a shared set of winning qualities. These qualities - inspiration, guidance, tenacity, pioneership, and superheroism - function to shape a compelling arc across each athlete's journey by anchoring the publication in these personal, nuanced stories. The project aims to inspire young readers by showcasing the nonlinear pathways toward forging a blueprint for greatness in sports. Progressing through the same five qualities in a consistent narrative order for each athlete ensures structural clarity while allowing space for variation through content and tone. It establishes rhythm and familiarity for the reader, enabling the nuanced content of each athlete's story to emerge without cognitive friction.

Visual Elements as a Storytelling Device

In this project, the use of custom-designed vectors and colours corresponding to one of the five winning qualities serves as a device that structures the reader's journey through the project (Figure 5.4). Using these vectors exemplifies Gérard Genette's (1980) concept of *récit*, wherein narrating the story's structure influences the interpretation. The stamp's colours also function symbolically; for instance, blue was used in the guidance section to evoke trust, loyalty and reliability (Su, Cui, & Walsh, 2019). The vectors, whose embedded meanings are conveyed through colour to form a visual system that aligns with Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) theory of multimodal discourse, where multiple items (in this case, form and colour) collectively contribute to forming meaning.



FIGURE 5.2

Winning Quality Vectors. Left to right, top to bottom are the winning quality vectors as follows: inspiration, guidance, tenacity, pioneership and superheroism. In this project, inspiration is viewed as the initial spark in an athlete's journey, guidance is the helping hand that refines raw talent, and tenacity is the unrelenting force that stops for nothing in pursuit of greatness. Pioneership is paving the way, leading by example and breaking barriers and records, Lastly, superheroism is when your actions are so paramount that you become a role model, an inspiration, and you begin to inspire others.

Collage was selected to be the leading visual language of the project due to its ability to represent complexity and nuanced concepts. Collage forms micro-narratives by working with juxtaposition, layering, and scale. These strategies mirror Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) principles of assemblage, which suggest that meaning emerges from the dynamic arrangement of opposing components. In this project, collage is a tool for visual storytelling and communicating abstract emotions that resist straightforward verbalisation.

Editorial storytelling decisions such as typographic hierarchy, page pacing, and materials extend the narrative through visual and tactile means. Tenen (2017) argues that such design choices shape how readers engage with content. For instance, shifts in typeface size mirror tonal changes in the story, while the intentional use of white space allows emotions to settle. Drucker's (2009) emphasis on materiality as a narrative force is particularly relevant here: with a rougher paper stock, layout and incorporated blemishes affecting the narrative delivery. Ultimately, visual storytelling in this project is both a method and a message. Through strategic use of symbolic devices, collage, and editorial design, the publication offers a multimodal reading experience that engages readers.

This chapter critically examined how design format, media language, and narrative structure shaped the development of the publication. It outlined how editorial and visual decisions, such as the use of a newspaper format, collage techniques, and symbolic design elements, were applied to construct a visual narrative grounded in the athletes' individual experiences. These decisions were guided by the intention to create a publication that communicates values of inclusion, cultural relevance, and historical recognition. The following chapter presents a conclusion on the project, revisiting its aims and significance, summarising key findings, and identifying potential directions for future work.

CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, this practice-led thesis asked:

What is the potential of editorial design and assemblage to communicate the shared attributes of multiple Kiwi Olympians to promote sport among young people?

By employing narrative, editorial design, and visual metaphor, the project has used storytelling to exhibit the winning qualities - inspiration, guidance, tenacity, pioneership and superheroism - that underpin the five selected Kiwi Olympians' successes. Each athlete embodies these qualities in interconnected yet distinct ways, forming a blueprint that young readers can relate to, learn from, and aspire toward. A newspaper aesthetic was adopted to reinforce archival themes of legacy and historical significance, and the consistent gold accents highlight critical moments of each athlete's journey. The publication embraces a cyclical structure consisting of The Starting Line, The Journey and The Finish Line, reflecting personal growth's non-linear, evolving nature. By incorporating symbolic New Zealand motifs, such as the koru and the silver fern, the work grounds the athletes' stories within a distinctly Aotearoa context while inviting universal resonance. Every design choice ensured the project informs and inspires, positioning the designer as a curator of values as much as visuals.

Contributions to the Field

The study offers two contributions to knowledge.

Firstly, the study contributes to understanding how editorial design and assemblage can be used to construct visual narratives that communicate the shared values and personal attributes of Olympic athletes. The project contributes to design research by demonstrating how editorial strategies can be applied to structure and communicate values-based content. It examines the relationship between design, narrative, and audience engagement and how these elements can support the promotion of sport-related messages.

Secondly, the study contributes to broader discussions in visual communication and education by exploring how design practice can support cultural messaging around well-being, motivation, and community participation. Through a practice-led methodology, the research offers a model for applying editorial design to content grounded in social relevance and public interest.

Further Research

This project uses the publication design to encourage the pursuit of sporting goals, which are proven to serve multiple physical and psychological benefits. In the future, I would like to publish this thesis as a journal article and present it at an international conference to present the benefits and findings of this project to a broader audience.

Reflection

This project has been a transformative journey as a designer and a person. At its core, it began with a simple yet ambitious question: What is the potential of editorial design and assemblage to communicate the shared attributes of multiple Kiwi Olympians to promote sport among young people? However, what it evolved into was far greater, a powerful exploration of character, identity and legacy.

Each stage of the process has challenged me to think not only as a designer but as a storyteller, researcher, and cultural observer. In bringing together collage, editorial design, and layered visual narratives, I was constantly confronted with the tension between clarity and complexity. How do you reduce someone's lifelong journey to a few visual pages without flattening their story? How do you honour their grit, sacrifice, and humanity while ensuring their achievements are inspirational tools for a younger audience?

Throughout this journey, I have also had to wrestle with my own sense of ambition, passion, and self-worth. As I explored what drove these Olympians to push through doubt and adversity, I reflected on the moments I have struggled with my own direction and confidence. In doing so, this project became very introspective, finding myself in moments of sacrifice and struggle, writing and designing about the selected athletes' moments of struggle and sacrifice.

Ultimately, this publication strives to do far more than celebrate our country's Olympic greats. This project is far more than a celebration of accomplishments, but rather a celebration of character. It has reminded me of the power that design holds in telling meaningful stories and,

perhaps most importantly, reminding others and myself that greatness often begins with simply taking the first step.

In closing, I am reminded of William Ernest Henley's poem *Invictus* (1875), in which he captures the inner strength required to navigate challenges and the human capacity to endure adversity with unwavering resolve.

Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds and shall find me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.

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CHAPTER EIGHT: APPENDIX



FIGURE 8.1
The Final design sitting on the display shelf in the exhibition room.



FIGURE 8.2

2 more copies sitting on a reading platform underneath the display shelf in the exhibition room.