I have looked at the representation of women on the front covers of women's fashion magazines. In particular I have noticed that women are represented as being beautiful, perfect, sexy. There is also a message being sent that it is important to be seen in this way and that to be beautiful is also to be youthful looking. ①

One ways these representations are created are by the choice of models on the front cover. Often the people who are on the covers are either 'supermodels' or celebrities. For example in Harper's Bazaar the person on the front cover was Rosie Huntington-Whiteley who is a very famous British model. She is about 28 years of age. She is presented on the front cover wearing a very expensive bathing suit – (it doesn't really look like the sort you would swim in)and it is cut very low in the front to reveal a lot of cleavage. Underneath the picture of her ② are the words 'Rosie Huntington-Whiteley – Body, beauty and the brand'.   These words focus the viewer as how the magazine would like us to see her: she has a fabulous body, she is presented as being their idea of 'beauty' and is helping to sell clothing that we should desire.   Next to her is a headline for an article in the magazine " Shape up for Spring' – ② reminding the readers that if we want to look like Rosie then if we look in the magazine we can get her body.

On the front cover of Elle Magazine Australian actress Margo Robbie is presented next to the headline "The Wolf of Wall Street's Margo Robbie on Fame, Fashion". She is looking directly at the reader – she has her hand by her neck and her hair is loose around her face. She is pouting slightly. Like the front cover of Harper's Bazaar the reader's are asked to associate the model on the front cover of the magazine with the content – that is she is surrounded by headlines such as "Beauty Breakthroughs in Skin and Nails" and "608 new ways to update your looks". The message is being conveyed that we should aspire to be like this woman who has fame, youth and beauty. Magazines such as these ask us to value dressing ③ fashionably, looking beautiful and worrying about how we appear to others.   This was seen in a range of magazine covers: Brazillian supermodel Gisele was on the front cover of Vogue Australia in January 2015; Keira Knightly on the cover of Vogue and Marie Claire…

What all of these magazines have in common is using the front cover to sell the magazine and its message. These magazines encourage women to try to be better versions of themselves: you should be aiming to be beautiful like the models and celebrities on the front cover and in order to do this there are articles and advice as to what you can do to look like them: what clothes to wear, what exercises to do to get to the perfect body, and how to use makeup to cover up what you have. All of the women on the front cover appear to have been 'photoshopped' in that they are free from the spots, wrinkles and marks that most women have. Their faces all look very perfect and this has been done on purpose to make them look perfect.

One magazine cover that seemed to buck this trend a bit was British Vogue who had as their July Issue the "Ageless style issue". On the front cover was Helena Bonham-Carter who is a British actress. She is actually in her late 40s which is different to the likes of Keira, Giselle, Rosie and Margo Robbie. Next to her were the words "A style original" which seems to link to the fact that she is well known for dressing quite alternatively and having 'her own style'. On the front cover she has been heavily made up: she has bright red lipstick on and is wearing what looks like quite a sophisticated dress. She is revealing a lot of cleavage. The focus of this issue was "Ageless style" and the headlines around the magazine cover include:

Taking stock: Does my wardrobe show my age" and "Facing the years: A fashion genius goes in search of a beauty solution."

On the one hand this issue did appear to be going against what other magazine covers do: focus on young models and celebrity's on their cover and instead focus on the fact that women can be beautiful at any age. However when I look more closely it seems that this is still similar to those other covers and still sends the message that in order to be considered beautiful you need to be young and fashionable: despite the fact Bonham-carter is 48 she looks as if she has been heavily airbrushed – there are no signs of wrinkles or anything like that. And again the titles suggest that getting older is something to fight: the 'ageless issue' is actually about how to avoid aging as opposed to saying this is how old I am. Ageless kind of means that you still need to be youthful even if you aren't.