

MEDIA/PUBLISHING

## W magazine enhances print's fixed plane via September issue AR activation

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*Katy Perry was photographed by Steven Klein for W magazine, September 2017. Image courtesy of W magazine*

By JEN KING

Conde Nast-owned W magazine is demonstrating the potential augmented reality has for the print industry with a September cover that speaks to the reader.

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W magazine's September edition, featuring singer Katy Perry, is brought to life through an augmented reality effort that enhances the reader's experience via interactive features. The fashion and beauty sector, as well as the retail, travel and automotive industries, have all benefitted from applying augmented reality to campaigns as a way to heighten the effect of an initiative, thus increasing the chances of making an impression on today's consumer.

"We are thrilled to unveil a very special and collectible September issue, blending the printed page with the virtual realm" said Stefano Tonchi, editor in chief of **W magazine**, New York.

"This augmented reality experience embodies everything that W stands for – it's bold, provocative and offers a truly immersive escape, across print and digital platforms," he said.

More than a page-turner

A collector's issue, the September edition of W magazine is brought to life by a number of activations.

The cover image of Ms. Perry, for example, is a three-dimensional "talking" cover, powered by augmented reality. Additional interactive touchpoints include a series of short films and augmented reality-enhanced fashion editorials.

W's augmented reality content was produced with The Mill, a creative technology and VFX studio.

As for the content itself, photographer Steven Klein conceptualized and shot the efforts fronted by Ms. Perry. The September issue of W magazine was Mr. Klein's first project in augmented reality and virtual reality filmmaking.



*Singer Katy Perry is on the cover of W magazine's AR-enabled cover for September 2017. Image courtesy of W magazine, photo by Steven Klein*

"We perceive magazines as flat planes of expression," said Steven Klein, photographer, in a statement. "Photographic and print materials as static, firmly held in place by the laws of time and space.

"But now, through new technology, we have broken those laws and can render a picture as a living entity, as in the case of my W magazine cover story with musical artist Katy Perry," he said.

"Like Alice looking through the looking glass, you are invited, through the use of an app, to step into the wonderland we have created with the technical assistance of The Mill."

The September cover and four of the magazine's features and portfolios can be activated by W's Beyond the Page mobile application. Developed by The Mill, the free app, available for [iOS](#) and [Android](#) devices, launched Aug. 10.



*Example of W magazine's Beyond the Page app interacting with the September 2017 issue. Image credit: W magazine*

When the Beyond the Page app recognizes the W magazine cover, the augmented reality experience begins and a video of Ms. Kerry plays along with an audio message from the singer.

Photographed by Mr. Klein and styled by British Vogue's Edward Enninful, Ms. Perry was captured in a surreal, futuristic setting. Mr. Klein worked with The Mill to create 3D scans of Ms. Perry for a series of virtual portraits.

Doing so creates a seamless experience between the reader's screen and the printed page. Mr. Klein's vision for the shoot is matched through computer-generated renderings and was then applied across the issue's augmented reality components.

As for the audio aspect of the augmented reality experience, Ms. Perry reads a declaration of freedom, described by W magazine as being Albert Camus-esque.

To ensure the experience is intuitive, when readers interact with different parts of Ms. Perry's face, new pieces of content are unlocked.

#### *Inside W's augmented reality September 2017 issue*

Inside the issue, scanning images and different pages marked with a "W" icon unlock additional augmented reality-activated content such as multi-dimensional visuals, films and a panoramic 360-degree view of the set.

W magazine's augmented reality content was extended to a collaborative piece of fiction with artist Alex Israel, a fall fashion editorial by photographers Mert Alas and Marcus Piggott and a portfolio of artist Collier Schorr's work. The latter piece examines fashion's "obsession" with gender fluidity.

As a total package, W magazine's September issue continues the publication's strategy to "enhance the print product, make it collectible and deliver a special experience around key issues."

W magazine's September edition will hit newsstands Aug. 14. A special-edition, with two additional covers, will be sold exclusively in the New York and Los Angeles markets.

Print lives on in digital

Conde Nast-owned titles have put stock into new technologies to ensure the continued relevancy of their publications.

For example, British Vogue showed the pervasiveness of chatbots on Facebook Messenger, with the launch of its artificial intelligence-enabled Messenger bot to personalize fashion news for fans.

Through the British Vogue official Facebook and Facebook Messenger account, users can interact with the bot to receive up-to-date information regarding fashion. The new chatbot hopes to make a more impactful impression on readers, as publishing becomes excessively overcrowded and consumers' attention spans get shorter ([see story](#)).

Also, Conde Nast-owned British Vogue was the latest of the Vogue-branded magazines to launch on Snapchat Discover as publishers look to amplify their digital efforts.

Vogue is currently pushing a Snapchat Discover strategy across the markets where its publications are present to take its editorial voice from print pages to the mobile content space. Vogue's publisher has invested heavily in digital recently to ensure its titles stay modern and are fluid in an evolving print landscape ([see story](#)).

As with artificial intelligence and live video platforms, augmented reality is a natural fit for print's storyteller role.

"With this collaboration with W magazine, we wanted to push the boundaries of what's possible in print, while unlocking a new kind of viewing experience through augmented reality," said Angus Kneale, chief creative officer at [The Mill](#), New York.

"This is an incredibly exciting time to be at the forefront of emerging technology and digital storytelling, and we're looking forward to further exploring how it can complement and expand the print medium," he said.

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