

What Place does the Practice of Advertising and Marketing have within the Art World and How have Artists and Activists Responded to or used Advertising and Marketing Practices?

'In our urban world, in the streets where we walk, in the busses we take, in the magazines we read, on walls, on screens; we are surrounded by images of an alternative way of life. We may remember or forget these images, but briefly we take them in and for a moment they stimulate our imagination, either by way of memory or anticipation. But where is this other way of life? It's a language of words and images which calls out to us where ever we go, what ever we read, where ever we are. Where do they exist these fabulous rewards and objects and people? Where do they belong to? Here, there, or nowhere? They come with us everywhere, we take them away in our minds, we see them in our dreams.'

(John Berger; 1972)

Advertising is first and foremost a form of communication, it is used to encourage or persuade it's audience to take up some form of conduct or action, or to continue doing so. Most commonly advertising has the aim to drive consumer behaviour in a commercial aspect, however political and ideological messages are also commonly advertised. As Berger states; advertising surrounds us within the Western World, and he says 'it is a language of words and images' he implies the communication of advertising is strong, and works on a psychological level, effecting us even when we are detached from the adverts. Through the development of capitalism and the commercial world we live in today advertisements are more and more commonplace, where they lay more in the realm of ideology and political measures in the past, advertising has become an extreme money making machine of its own and in 2006 there has been estimated to be a total of over \$450 Billion, with that number estimated to steadily rise (ZenithOptimedia). Advertising; be it implied

or accidental, marketing, social communication, journalism and general human curiosity ensures everything is publicised in one way or another. Advertising is a multi-billion dollar industry, with ever changing tactics and found across more and more platforms and mediums, advertising has become so powerful that many laws and regulatory bodies have been established to control and censor it, such as The Federal Trade Commission in America and the Advertising Standards Authority in the UK. Advertising is seen in different lights, by different people, it can be seen, by some, as a cancer; plaguing every aspect of the Western World and a driver of all the worst aspects of capitalism, or, by others, as a way of deploying and fueling the free world, giving access to many a free market, of things paid for and funded through advertising.

Advertising is an incredibly complex entity, and is being developed further every day; it is ever unfinished, as, with many other areas, it must follow, or start, trends popular to the general public, and therefore evolves over time. Advertising could be seen as a product of the modern commercial and capitalist age, however when looking into the past of advertising, it can be seen throughout history, it can be seen in the governments and ideologies pushing their ideals, however it can also be seen in a modern 'commercial' sense. Fletcher explains a long history of advertising (Fletcher, 1999, pg 11 - 30) in which he investigates and states that commercial advertising can be traced as far back as Ancient Greece, saying that 'the Athenians can probably lay claim to the invention of commercial advertising' he goes on to show examples of advertising through other civilisations such as Rome, his examples include Posters for entertainment, small ads for businesses and prostitutes, merchants using town criers, and paying for events, much like sponsoring is used in the modern day. He draws parallels with these techniques, and states that many modern sales techniques are 'hardly any more sophisticated' than that of the past.

Advertising, along with most other technologies and ideals, waned after the fall of the Roman empire and advertising itself did not bloom much further until the invention of the Printing Press. The first recorded advertisement printed from this medium; 'The Pyes of Salisbury', an ecclesiastical announcement, is believed to have been produced in 1477 by William Caxton, bringer of the printing press to England, himself. With this, and with each technology invented, advertising generally found its way through each and every technology as the world as we know it today developed and it was with the development of mass media advertising became what we think of it now. As Fletcher states it has not necessarily changed in principal from the past, one of his examples includes a catchy almost jingle-like song for women's cosmetic products sang by a town cryer in Ancient Greece, much like the stereotypical jingles seen on TV and radio adverts in the past century. It can also be seen that Edward Bernays, the nephew of Sigmund Freud, who established the first Public Relations office, can be seen as the 'father of PR' and had a massive effect on today's advertising world. Adam Curtis talks about how Bernays is the first person to begin linking human psychology to advertising, (Curtis, 2002) he goes on to state that; Bernays is the first person to link commercial objects to celebrities, the first to use product placements, and the first to link cars to male sexuality, fundamentals that are common place in today's marketing techniques, and to be used throughout the history of advertising ever since their inception.

Very recently, however, there has seen to be a fairly new development in advertising as we know it, the development of guerrilla and viral advertising;

'If we continue to define ourselves as being in 'advertising', my belief is we're pretty much doomed. The advertising business - the business of interrupting what people are interested in with a commercial message about something they are not interested in - is a business that is already in decline.'

(G. Lucas; 2011, pg 10-11)

Within this book Lucas explores the decline of the old and extremely expensive advertising model, and how the general public have become so acclimatised to this overused form of advertising. He looks at some of the most influential guerrilla advertisements; a 'guerrilla advertisement' being, usually, of generally low cost and very unconventional means. These forms of advertisements, much like viral ads, pass through word of mouth and generally work on shock aspect or humour, such as 'Scratches on Your Car' by agency Novocortex (G. Lucas; 2011, pg 28-29) a campaign which placed easily removed stickers of deep looking scratches on car doors all round Amsterdam, within the scratches was an advertisement for a car insurance company. The reactions of drivers were filmed secretly and then created into a viral ad online which spread the message even further through comedy spread across social media, which can be seen as a huge scale word-of-mouth advertising. The development of guerrilla and viral advertisements into a commercial means can be seen following a similar path as other advertising mediums, following the guise of ideological and political means of advertising. As guerrilla advertising is a low cost means of getting a message out, it started with more political agendas, through the means of graffiti, sticker bombing and flash mobs. However this has been picked up by the commercial world and is now seen in PR stunts that regularly occur, and through the social networking public spread out their message more effectively than past techniques.

'Almost everyone thinks advertising manipulates the public, and the public loses out. That is wrong. If advertising were of no benefit to the public - to consumers - it would long ago have become, like the quill a communications dodo.'

(Fletcher, 1999)

Fletcher, an extremely prominent person in British advertising, defends heavily the practice of advertising in this book, and explains well the prejudices many people have against advertising and looks into many aspects of it including its history and

prevalence within our society, however as a high up man in advertising, he can be biased towards the issues that surround it, but makes a good analysis of the positive aspects of advertising.

Advertising can be found within much of the 'art world', be this; art and art shows being marketed to gain wealth and fame or acclaim and notability, or within the creation of an advert itself, and this development of how advertising is being seen inspires the ever pressing argument of whether the practice of advertising can be seen as an art form in its own right it is an issue worth exploring especially within a more digital and disposable age, where the line of what art is, is being tested and explored more and more. Advertising can also be found within some artists own work, be this Warhol, who started his career as a commercial illustrator, using an advertising imagery by turning a Campell's soup can into art, or activists responding to the world of advertising through protest campaigns and projects such as AdBusters. The journey into if advertising can be seen as a brilliant and powerful art form of its own or if it is entirely a capitalist and corporate cash cow, has opposing views from both sides, like the activists who wish to rid the world of advertising, or the pioneers creating new and unique methods to advertise, but it is undoubtably an issue that will not be disappearing any time soon as the corporate Western World develops more and more mass produce and reaches further out into the rest of the world and as corporations and brands selling luxuries commercially gain more renown, power and money than many governments, world leaders or companies supplying necessities; as on August 9th 2011, when Apple overtook Exxon, the largest oil trading company, as the most profitable company in the world (Dominic Rushe; 2011), and Apple being a company built upon powerful advertising; creating an almost physical need and requirement in some for their products from their fans.

Advertising creates a fierce debate around itself, with huge differences of opinion ranging from the view of some that it is an evil practice and its sole purpose being that of generating money, or that it can be seen as an art form of its own, and should take place within the 'art world' being found within art galleries and admired for its creation as well as its message.

'Advertising is the greatest art form of the twentieth century'

(Marshall McLuhan; 1951)

What McLuhan is saying is most prevalent within the Western World with Fine Art as we know it playing less of a role than it ever has in this digital and disposable age, however commercialism is growing constantly, and a lot of fine artists are turning to their fundamentals of design and using them to support this movement. An interesting parallel is found between McLuhan and Andy Warhol, art historian Gregory Battcock states:

'Warhol was, during the sixties, a visual Marshall McLuhan. Though more profound than McLuhan and more a person of his time, Warhol correctly foresaw the end of painting and became its executioner.'

(Gregory Battcock; May 1974, pg 347)

It is implied that mass media - magazines, TV, movies - was killing it, but as stated above, advertising is what McLuhan declares is the greatest art form and so possibly the reason for the end of painting. It can be seen that advertising in the 20th century did what religious art did in the 13th century: it used its authority and imagery to create images that encouraged the focus of mass desires and beliefs. Warhol, raised Catholic, and McLuhan, who converted to Roman Catholicism, were both well aware of the fact that the mass culture of the 20th century was supplanting religion. Similarly to this, Berger states, however not that fine art has died and that advertising has taken its place as McLuhan implies, Berger says:

'...glamour is new, society has changed, but the oil painting and the publicity image have much in common and we only fail to see this as we think of one as fine art, and the other as commerce.'

(John Berger; 1972)

He believes that it is not that the practice of Fine Art has been replaced by advertising, but that he believes advertising to be the same, and it is our general opinion that is incorrect, as we see them as two separate entities.

Despite, on the face of things, the conflicting views coming from across sides; generally the people in advertising believe it to be an art, and the artists do not, however the more interesting view points are when a person goes against the norm and contradicts this particular view.

'I do not regard advertising as entertainment or an art form, but as a medium of information. When I write an advertisement, I don't want you to tell me that you find it "creative". I want you to find it so interesting that you *buy the product*'

(David Ogilvy; 1983, pg 7)

David Ogilvy has been described as 'the most sought after advertising wizard' by Time magazine, and 'the Pope of advertising' by Expansion magazine, and despite being a leading figure in the advertising world, he clearly states his views on the intentions of advertising here, and that he feels it is not an art form, going against the general views of most people in the advertising business that it is.

Nevertheless the 'art world' may also not view it as an art form, but this does not stop advertising finding its place in the 'art world' with the majority of art itself being advertised, through art galleries hiring advertising agencies to market their shows, or the art piece itself being seen as a marketable product with a price tag, and people creating a profitable business out of art. This could be simply through the power of desirability, a major artists name alone can cause the marketability of any piece to skyrocket, with great works of art being passed around the market as

commodities, and being bought and sold as fast as stocks on wall street. Other artists gain publicity through sensationalisation, controversy or extravagance, none other can be said to cause such heated discussion than the conceptual artists such as Damien Hirst, with his controversial formaldehyde works, or his extravagant *For The Love Of God*, a diamond encrusted skull supposedly worth £50 million. The fact that these works cause such controversy and debate; is the marketing in itself, and it can be said that Hirst's real art is in fact marketing, that it's not only good enough to create his art, but he has to also get away with it, another thing that McLuhan argues; **'Art is anything you can get away with.'**

(Marshall McLuhan; 1964)

Which though disputed by many, such as the Stuckist art group, founded in 1999, the same year Hirst won the Turner prize, Hirst being one of their first and main targets they said on a Channel 4 documentary:

'In fact, the career of Damien Hirst, its most successful proponent, was launched by advertising mogul Charles Saatchi's invention of YBAs rather as one might launch a new product such as a jar of coffee.'

[...]

'It is inconceivable, on the other hand, that anyone would spend 20 years pickling sheep for the sheer love of it. This is because the primary motivation of such work is not its intrinsic worth but its employment as a commodity and for the celebrity status it brings its manufacturer.' (Against Hirst; 2000)

Despite, or possibly due to, the vast quantity of negativity Hirst could be said to still be 'getting away with it'; his work still sells, and is still found in some of the top galleries. There is, in the UK, many news articles that have had negative articles on Hirst and this in a way could be helping him through negative advertisement, and getting him attention. The Stuckists are not arguing that Hirst's work is art and marketing, but that has no value as art, as it is essentially empty and sensationalist, and constructed by marketing. The end result is that the Stuckists believe his work to

be bad art, created through the advertising. However through the Stuckists, and others, arguing this fact, it creates a very heated debate around Hirst, which helps him in a way, as it creates for him negative advertising, getting his name out there and getting people talking about him. If the aim of art is to inflame, the discussion of whether something *is* art, or does Hirst deserve £50 million for his art; possibly inflames people even more. This leads to him getting more acclaim and notoriety, even if this is infamy, it still benefits Hirst in the long run.

‘... an apt reminder of how so much architecture, art, music and the “public good” have been part of a broader political agenda into persuading the masses of a particular perspective on what is worthwhile, and what is not, much like what we see advertising companies do every day.’

(Joan Gibbons; 2005)

Gibbons talks about how the arts can be seen being used throughout history and before the advent of modernism, to market religion, politics and ideas, alongside consumer goods. There has always been an intimate relationship between art and politics, it can hardly be denied that the Parthenon was meant to glorify the cultural achievements and political hegemony of ancient Greece, and that the Gothic architecture found with cathedrals celebrated the beliefs and power of the Catholic church, and the commissioned portraits and statues of kings and emperors are intended to heroicise their actions and show their authority. This relationship can be seen within such movements as American post war abstract expressionism and political propaganda throughout history, in particular Cold War propaganda as it was set in an age where the power of commercial advertising was just beginning to become prevalent, and so powerful anti, and pro, communism advertising campaigns from many governing bodies, not just the USA and Soviet Union.

Another interesting aspect of advertising being found within the art world is that of being attached to art pieces, for example being found in TV, film and games, product placement is common place, and though some may debate TV, film and games industries do not constitute pieces of art, it can generally be thought that they, at least a small percentage of them, can be seen as art. And with the attachment of advertising to an art work, is another way in which the advertising world filters through to the arts.

Contrary to this there are also people; for example David Lynch, a prominent American film maker with a unique style, who can be considered an artist for his creation of film media, who also worked on a number of commercial advertisements, he says;

(in response to why he creates adverts) **'The money's good, and the added bonus is that I get to use and learn about the latest technology, tools that normally wouldn't be available to me, and then I can use those tools in my feature work.'**

(David Lynch; 1999)

Though he is talking about advertising as a separate entity to his 'feature work' it is undoubtable that his unique art style is seen within his adverts, and so do the adverts themselves then become works of art much like his film work? This is questionable as he is obviously creating adverts to benefit him with money and new technology and a chance to experiment, however they defiantly are creative and it can be argued that they are part of his artistic works.

Advertising surely must take its place within the 'art world' in some ways, despite what people say, be this as an art form itself, or found advertising the works of art or the galleries they are shown in, or even the implication that art is itself an advertisement of some kind or another.

Though advertising can be seen in some forms within the 'art world', there is a large quantity of people some of whom exist within the 'art world', who are in fact

under the opinion that advertising should not be considered art. Some people believe this with such vigor that their work is based around degrading advertising and want to be free of advertising. Some such organisations like; Adbusters and the Anti-Advertising Agency use art themes such as hacktivism to get their message across with such campaigns as the Anti-Advertising Agency's 'Light Criticism' a project which references their issue; in which they claim that 'Advertising is the vandalism of the Fortune 500' (the 500 most valuable companies), to show this they draw parallels with the city of New York removing and giving fines for 59 illegal banners over a 3 month period in 2006, and then saying that those convicted of spraying graffiti face being 'detained, arrested, beat, fined, tried and given real jail sentences, with not a single corporate toy from any ad firm has had to do any time.' (Anti-Ad; 2007). The project goes on to cover LED screen advertisement banners found above the New York subway staircases, only allowing the advertisement light through their own slogans, such as; 'NYC's True Graffiti Problem' and 'Graffiti = Advertising'. They make a very interesting point, with between 560 and 1,518 adverts whether noticed or not, people exposed to in 1965, (Adams; 1965) and that number reaching up to 3000 in 2007, people have become used to seeing advertisements and rarely complain about it, other than in passing comment. Whereas on the other hand; graffiti is abhorred by a majority of people, looked down upon and seen to be vandalism. If the difference between graffiti and art is permission, then why can it not be said that advertising is as bad as graffiti, the only difference again is permission, most advertising has permission to vandalise the place its in as it is paid for. However not all advertising even has that, some is done plainly illegally as shown above, and is then removed, but also things such as guerrilla advertising and sticker bombing can be said to be just as bad as graffiti as more often than not they do not have the permission to do so, as their main power is

through shock value and being unexpected. This puts advertising agencies on the same level as graffiti artists, other than the fact they are paid extremely high wages.

As discussed previously, the majority of people see advertisements constantly throughout their lives but have become so accustomed to them that they barely even notice the advertisements, there are studies to aid this theory;

(without aid) 'about 9 percent of viewers can name the brand or product category they saw advertised on television immediately before answering the phone call from the market researcher'

(Bogart & Lehman, 1983)

as already discussed, this shows the decline of the old advertising model which has been around for a long period of time, however this does not necessarily stop them from working entirely; they can also work on a subliminal and unconscious level and if we notice something several times unconsciously, when it comes to buying a item in the same category, we may be swayed without our knowledge by the advertisements we have been seeing, or have not been seeing. The 'hacktivist' groups working against advertising work to make people realise these issues, they help people to notice how accustomed we have become to seeing adverts and how they pervade our lives continuously. An example of the power of advertising which these hacktivists fight against, is the link of advertising to psychology, as mentioned by Adam Curtis, one of Bernays early 'experiments' commissioned by head of a cigarette company to find a way to get women to break the taboo and begin smoking in public. To which Bernays encouraged a group of rich debutants to hide cigarettes under their clothes and smoke them in public at an annual rally in New York then told the press that they were suffragettes protesting by lighting 'torches of freedom'. (Curtis, 2002) A view that persists to the present day, empowering women and doubling the cigarette market. He found it possible to persuade people to act irrationally if you linked products to their emotional desires and feelings, using the

power of psychoanalysis, taken from his uncle Freud, who put forward the theory that primitive sexual and aggressive forces hidden inside the mind of all human beings, this theory was then exploited by Bernays to manipulate the masses without their knowing.

Looking at hacktivists and other people against advertising it can be seen that though there are large amounts of people against it, and people who do not consider it art, it is a very powerful force that cannot be damaged easily, however they can get their message across to people and help people understand some of the persuasive methods that advertising uses.

In conclusion the practice of advertising and marketing can be seen in different lights, generally the majority of people in advertising feel that it is a creative process that should be found within the art world, and a large quantity of people, especially from within the art world disagree with this and feel advertising is not a valid art form. However when looking into advertising it must be agreed by all that advertising finds its place in the art world, maybe not as art, but as a pusher of art, and even if this is not wanted by some, such as the hacktivists like Adbusters or the Anti-Advertising Agency, it is true in our commercially orientated world. Hacktivists have responded strongly against advertising, comparing it to the way people see graffiti in disgust, and trying to degrade it, sometimes using its own methods, and influence others to their ways. Despite the hacktivists, there are also the artists that have used the practice of advertising and marketing to great ends to market their own work. To conclude advertising is a very complex entity with a long history, that intertwines the history of art, and though opposed by some, it has a promising future when comparing it to its present day power.

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