

WAYS OF THINKING

Product and Furniture Design BSc

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Manifesto & Practice-based Writing incomplete

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Semiotics



Absinthe Robette quickly draws the reader's attention to the woman's head with the high contrast between her hair and the white circular light source behind her. This circle could be perceived as a halo, portraying the woman as a saint. It could also be viewed as a sun or moon. The lack of detail defining the white circle, along with the absence of an environment

in the background does not define a time of day or any specific season. The advert tries not to suggest when or where this should be consumed. The viewer will assume any time is acceptable to have absinthe.

The woman's facial expression is in awe, the observer would then follow her gaze to show her looking at a glass of absinthe. The drink is normally served with a sugar cube held above the drink with water dripped onto the sugar cube until dissolved. In this picture, the lady is still in the process of creating the drink, to the male audience this may appear as the person preparing the drink for them. On the other hand, women may put themselves in the woman's place and she is preparing the drink for herself.

The water that is being poured over the sugar cube is coming from the top corner of the poster. The source of the water is out of frame, but the height denotes it is coming from heaven, reinforcing the angelic/saint-like halo around the woman's head. The shadows and lighting in the scene make it apparent that there is a light source coming from the direction where water is being poured from. This could denote a glowing holy figure, perhaps angel or god pouring the water over the drink.

The swirls in the absinthe are repeated in the background of the poster, giving connotations of a potion, or a euphoric dream. Combined with naked body suggesting that absinthe is an aphrodisiac. Elaborating on this, the woman's features and Grecian style dress appear to draw inspiration from the Greek goddess's, specifically Aphrodite. Gods convey power, immortal life – Aphrodite the Goddess of pleasure and beauty.

The absinthe in this poster is golden yellow. Absinthe tends to be either yellow or green, green being the more common one. By selecting yellow as the colour for the absinthe, the designer was able to link it to the fabric that the woman is wearing, which is also the same golden colour as the drink. By creating a connection between the drink and the garment the observer will interpret that the fabric and the drink correlate with each other. The yellow colour of the drink and dress signifies that they are glowing, underpinned by the lightness of her skin under the garment opposed to the bare skin in the poster.

The fabric, appearing to be silk due to its transparency is a very expensive and luxurious fabric. It is soft, lightweight and comfortable. These are the sensations that are being associated to how absinthe will make you feel. The way the woman wears the garment draped over her is very freeing, she is not restricted by it in any way, very liberating – a powerful contrast to the garments worn by women in the 1800s.

Bibliography

Privat-Livemont, H., 1897. *Absinthe Robette*. [Art] (Brussels International Exposition).

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