

Research in practice proposal

Student name: Sophie Haggett

Student number: 2100386

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Tutors name: Delyth Lloyd-Evans

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This proposal will be analysing the work of advertising illustrators and the works of companies that use illustrated advertisements that show any representation of women and girls. In this proposal, it will be exploring three key words: advertising, representations and, sexism. This proposal will explore these key words and how they are represented in illustration. In researching these key words, it would be beneficial to look at the purpose of illustrated advertisements to see how they fit under the terms used. Illustrations will be shown from the past, but it will be mainly focus on works from now. In *Modern illustration*, J. Pennell once stated that

For an illustration is the recording, by means of artistic medium, either of something seen by the artist which he wishes to convey

(J. Pennell, 1895, p.46)

On the other hand, K. Pomeroy and S. Heller believe that 'illustration is not simply a narrative art' (Pomeroy and Heller, 1990, p.6) which is a vastly different view on what illustration means and how artists should create their illustrations. Through this exploration I hope to be able to get to my practice- based project.

Advertising

Advertising is something that most of the time companies use, for a product of theirs to sell but also for a lot of people to see which will hopefully boost their sales.

Thomas describes advertising as:

'One definition is that advertising is any form of public announcement that is designed to promote the sale of particular goods or services'

(Thomas, 1999: p.6)

Bossert goes onto to say that:

Illustrators are artists who have chosen the printed pages as their vehicle for making pictures, allowing their work to be seen by millions of people.

(Bossert, 1997: p.4)

This suggests that many illustrators that we see today include their work in a public forum use advertising to branch out for a significant amount of people to see their work and potentially receive more commissioned work from companies which would be very beneficial to them. Advertising can be used for products, places, events etc. However, the main type of advertising this essay will be exploring is illustrated advertising that includes any representation of women. Wow how studio goes on to explain that 'illustrations can be used to visualize advertising campaigns, adding artistic distinction, and style to adverts' (Bob 2018) this tells us that by doing illustrated advertisements they give a sense of individuality to whoever creates the work but also presenting an artistic side which differs to advertisements that people normally see. Wow How also goes onto to say that humour is a key part of being an illustrator by stating that

One of the key features of illustration is that they connect well with consumers' emotions, especially their humorous side.

(Bob,2018)

This suggests that creating a sense of humour within your advertising illustrations is vitally important when it comes to what the consumers want to see and if the product you are advertising will do well in sales depending on if you have this aspect throughout your work.



Fig one. Escada, Miami Blossom, Yordanka Poleganova, 2019

Yordanka Poleganova is an illustrator based in Berlin. Poleganova states that 'My main theme is femininity' (Poleganova,2023) which can be seen throughout her work that she has included on her extensive portfolio. In figure one, it shows the advertising that Yordanka had created for the company *Escada* and their perfume

range Miami blossom which had come out in 2019. Going back to what Poleganova said about produce work in relation to 'femininity' (Poleganova, 2023) it is clearly shown in the advertisement as it shows a woman on what looks to be a holiday in Miami. She is also wearing a pink dress which is a colour closely associated. Colour psychology meaning also agrees

The colour pink in the western world is obviously associated with the female gender and femininity.

(Colour psychology meaning, 2017)

All the colours used in this piece of work by Poleganova contrast each other well as they make the main image of the women in the front stand out from the background which is Miami. In Poleganova's work portfolio you can see that she takes time on what colours to choose to include on them. Most of the colours used in her work are purples, blues and pinks, as these are the main colours, she uses her works comes across as having a limited colour palette. Throughout her work she uses different tones of the same colour. Cat Coq goes onto say that

Utilizing different values of the same colour can give your limited colour palette a little more visual interest.

(Cat Coq, 2022)



Fig two. Berliner Kindl advert, Yordanka Poleganova, 2020



Fig three. Berliner Kindl advert, Yordanka poleganova, 2020



Fig.four, *Berliner Kindl* advert, Yordanka Poleganova, 2020

Some examples that include a limited colour palette are shown in figure one and figure two. However, in fig one and two these advertisements also include women that surrounded by men, as you can see from figure one it shows a woman holding up the drink for her 'man' to drink from. In fig two it displays the woman looking at the man from below but also seductively. In the background it shows a man and a woman embracing each other. Different from the first two however, the advert shown in figure four shows an image of a woman dressed in a bikini which is a type of swimsuit that comes in two pieces. A lot of the advertisements that we see today do include images of women in bikinis, but what differs in this advertisement however is that she has quite a few tattoos which has become more popular now than it has in the past. However, men do still hold beauty standards over women with tattoos. Psychology today explains that

One study shows men judge women with tattoos as less motivated, honest, generous, religious, intelligent, and artistic than those who don't.

(Psychology today, 2013).

This tells us that even though tattoos are primarily seen on men that is when women have them it is frowned upon, and they continue to be heavily judged for when they are displayed with them.

This exploration of the key word advertisement raises some questions. These being do illustrators take inspiration from what they think women are all about? If that's the case how and where these assumptions coming from? Also, as colour palettes are important to think about, is it important to decide whether it is appropriate to use only minimal colour or as many as you want depending on what work you are making. If Poleganova has used some images of a man and women in ways that could come across as potentially stereotypical, does she think that some elements of illustrated advertisements should still include these stereotypes for women.

Representations

Representations of women in advertising has changed significantly through time no matter what the product companies are trying to sell. Gill suggests that representations do matter (Gill,2007: p,6) this not just being women and girls. However, this will just focus on the representations of women.



Fig 5, *Boochcraft* can art, Livley Scout, 2020



Fig 6, *Boochcraft* can, Livley Scout, 2020

In figure five and six they display the work for a company called *Boochcraft*, which is a company that makes organic kombucha, based in Chula Vista, California. Figure five shows a more focused look on the design that is shown on the can in figure six, this design comes from the artist Livley Scout who designed this for the brands '*liquid art lab*' which *Boochcraft* states is their innovation playground (Boochcraft, 2020). Scout whose real name is Katie is an Australian-based artist who tends to look at mother nature, music and nostalgia (Livley Scout, 2023) for inspiration for her work. From her work she uses minimal colour palettes, that being different palettes for her different works. Most of her works include women as the main image surrounded by flowers or different parts of nature which they have already stated that is where they take the inspiration from. Susan Griffin states in *Woman and nature: roaring inside her*

that woman speaks with nature (Griffin, 1984, p.24). This suggests that women are of great importance when it comes to the close association between themselves and nature. Das also agrees that women and nature share a powerful and moral connection (Das, 2020). As you can see from Scouts work below, she embodies these theories from Griffin and Das well in her work from making women and different parts of nature the prominent main images.



Figure seven, *Thinking silhouette*, Livley Scout, 2023



Figure eight, Metamorphosis, Livley scout, 2023

Baeher goes on to express that

For feminists working in the media this means fighting to develop alternative forms of organisation, production, distribution, and consumption which are opposed to present conditions and dominant representations

(Baeher, 1980: p.8)

This suggests that women who work for companies in the media and can see that the productions they make have certain representations that they want to shy away from, they will do everything they can to work on different solutions around what seems to be 'out-of-date' representations for women in media which is very beneficial and it shows how things can change.



Figure nine, *Evian* advert, Conny Jude, date 1985

In figure three it shows an illustrated advertisement for the company *Evian*. This artwork for the company was created by the freelance artist, Conny Jude. Ward goes onto to say about the advert that

The same woman is a little older and has a child but is still extremely active: she drinks the product not only to keep in shape but because she likes it.

(Ward, 1988: p.58)

However, for this advertisement the original art director name John Knight wanted another artist named Allen Jones to illustrate the *Evian* campaign, but it was stated in Dave dye that the client worried the imagery may be too erotic (Dave dye, 2013) so they decided to go with Jude. Also, in illustration for advertising, John knight is quoted as saying that this type of advertising was

An adventurous approach, using a free and confident watercolour style
(Knight quoted in Ward, 1988: p,58)

From this illustration we can identify the type of consumer that they are trying to reach out to. This being people who lead a healthy and active lifestyle but also for the people who enjoy the taste of the spring water that *Evian* has to offer them. Knight also goes onto to say in the text that it made sense for them to use pink and blue, the colours on the label (knight quoted in Ward, 1988: p, 58) which worked effectively in the outcome that Jude had created. Baehler also goes onto state that girls should be aware of the contribution which the media makes to the construction of femininity (Baehler, 1980: p,56) However Gill goes onto say that

Feminist analysis of the media have been animated by the desire to understand how images and cultural constructions are connected to the inequality

(Gill, 2007: p,6)

Both theories differ from each other but suggest that a substantial amount of the media that shows representations of women somewhat can construct what feminism is and how it is presented.



Fig.ten, advertisement for the *Telegraph*, Ruth Palmer, date NA

In figure ten, Ruth Palmer created this work for the telegraph during the Covid-19 pandemic which shows an image of a nurse wearing the type of mask that was acceptable for people to wear during the pandemic but also her displaying the red cross symbol. A lot of front-line workers around the world were praised for their efforts during the pandemic especially nurses and doctors. BBC new goes onto say A nationwide clap to thank the NHS will take place on 5 July, in what is intended to become an annual tradition (BBC news 2020).

This part of the exploration delves deeper into the representations of women throughout advertising but more specifically illustrated advertising, which have included different theories on the connection between women and nature. This exploration has a raised a question on how important it is to think about these representations and how should illustrators show them in advertising.

Sexism

This part of the essay will explore sexism in illustrated advertising, it will also be looking at adverts throughout time. Sexism now is not quite what it used to be, especially in advertising. However, Harris believes that

Many of today's advertisements include images of young, attractive women in sexually suggestive positions or women happily doing housework. These images Objectify women as either sex objects or submissive housewives. (Harris, 2018: p.20)

This suggests that even though sexism did occur a significant amount in the past it still does happen to be around now which does not show much progression in terms of how companies view women and what they think their target audiences would like to see on a day-to-day basis.



Fig. eleven, *Van Heusen* tie advert, 1951

In figure twelve, it illustrates an image of a women serving what looks to be her husband serving him breakfast in bed. It also has the tag line 'show her it's a man's world' which was a very common thought in the 1950s when women were seen that nothing more as a housewife who is expected to look after the man of the house and potentially any children. This is explained by Biggs and Downe

Women in western societies have been led by media representations, family pressure or religious doctrine to believe that in order to be publicly recognized and valued, they "need" an intimate relationship with a man. (Biggs, Downe, 2005: p.130)

Which suggests that in order to be seen the only thing in life that women should want, and need is a man and that this part of them would be shown through a lot of media like advertisements which at the time there were a lot of them that displayed the same sort of them which were the women's whole lives were revolved around men and women accommodating to their needs and there needs only. Cortese goes onto say that human females are also drawn toward masculine power (Cortese, 2004: p.26)



Fig. twelve, *Alcoa aluminium*, 1953

In figure thirteen, it shows the illustrated advert for bottle caps using the tag line 'You mean a woman can open it' with the word woman underlined which suggests that women are normally weak but with this brand of cap they can easily open it without the helping hand of a man. Which is then confirmed they do not need them by the text included on the ad which says, 'or even a husband'. Vintage news daily goes onto that the ad itself is frequently cited as emblematic of the *Mad Men era* (Vintage news daily,2022) this means that this ad in particular is seen as the most recognisable for this part of the advertising timeline. The *Mad Men era* had just started in the 1950s they were successful, but conservative: they relied on illustration, a lot of copy and direct sales pitches (Edwards, 2015)



Fig. thirteen, *Budweiser*, 1956

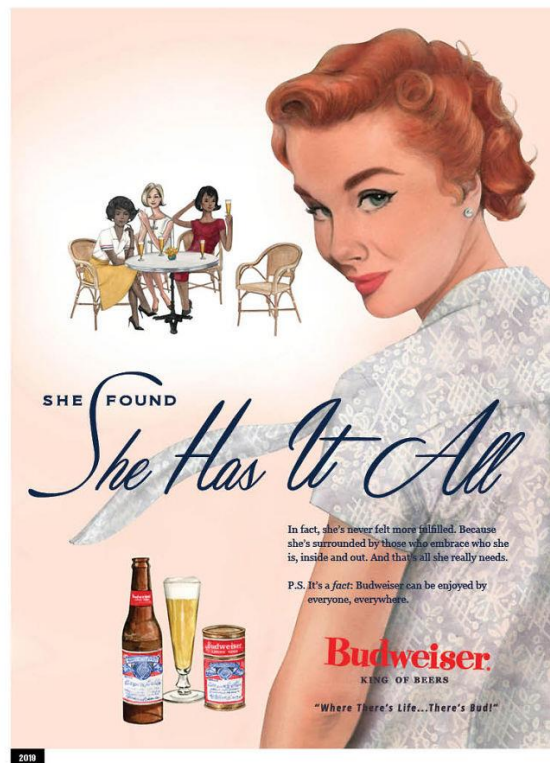


Fig. Fourteen, *Budweiser*, 2019

In figure 14 it shows an ad from 1956 from the company *Budweiser*. It suggests that the woman on the ad has found her second husband; this being *Budweiser*. Which again makes a man an integral part of a woman's life. The ad also suggests that by drinking *Budweiser* it will bring out your 'inner man'. However, in 2019 on National Women's Day Budweiser came out with reinventions of a few of their sexist ads from the past. Figure Fifteen shows this newer version. Budweiser is also quoted as saying that they want their advertising to represent 'men and women equally and help eliminate gender bias' (*Budweiser* quoted in deMilked 2019).

Conducting research into three key words has helped me gather more information on what I can develop for next year's project. From this, I can gather that times have changed in terms of how women have been represented through time especially from the very sexist ads that were made in the 1950s.

So, my final question is How women have been represented in illustrated advertisements? and what has changed? And, how I can change the stereotypical conventions of women using my practice-based project, this goes onto to what my proposed practice-based project is to create a set of packaging for gin bottles for a company that display different types of women but creating them using silhouettes.

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