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Proposed question for Independent Project (Part One in Independent Project in

**Year Three) - “Has branding and advertising altered consumers views on gender and how
has this changed through the rise of new media?”**

In this essay I will be exploring three key words that will include three key images and three visual artists/philosophers. My three key words history, media and culture will investigate topics that will support my independent research document in the third year and help me to form a question I will use for my research. Next year I will be looking into branding and advertising for illustration with support from my key words and topics I choose. For my practise I would like research into music and the packaging/branding side of it. I would like to focus on feminist music and design illustrations for branding such as album covers. I want to incorporate gender into my illustrations and work by using music and packaging to do this. I will be looking into philosophers such as Judith Butler, Marshall McLuhan and Clifford Geertz.

Throughout the years art has had a huge impact on gender and how it is viewed. Gender through history has constantly changed and this has been portrayed through art. Through

how we socialise, art can be interpreted in various ways, depending on how we think and view the topics being interpreted. Judith Butler was a philosopher who believed that gender norms were performative roles that we had learnt from birth and that they were a social construct.

Butler compared gender to a social drama. In her analogy, men and women are the protagonists in the narrative and we are all expected to perform our roles. We learn and interpret our lines through a process known as socialisation.

(An Introduction to Judith Butler's "Gender Trouble" and Performativity, n.d.)

Judith Butler argued that we learn our gender and we cannot just internalise it as it will always remain a performance. Throughout history, gender has been portrayed in art and media as heavily stereotyped and sexist. Branding and advertising such as children's toys and clothes has pushed a one-sided view that we have grown up learning and believing. Sexism in art and advertising has always been the norm and has happened throughout history. Our society through history has grown and adapted new ways of subconsciously depicting this view of sexism such as through social media.



This piece of artwork by John Bull shows what art used to be like in the 1950's. All his work is in this style of the 50's housewife that portrays the woman doing housework and the man going to work. Each piece shows the woman looking happy and enjoying her position in the dynamic whilst the man is getting everything done for him. They also portray a nuclear family most of the time as this is what was seen as the perfect family dynamic. Older generations grew up seeing this type of art which never showed the woman in any other way. In new media, we are still exposed to sexist views of gender in art through publishing and advertising. Women are now more sexualised than ever before, but we have made some progress in showing inclusivity and diversity within gender. The woman has always been the subject of art and has only been there for aesthetic reasons, but in new media women are being shown more through advertising such as for menstrual products.

The term media describes mass communication such as the internet, broadcasting, and publishing. The word media is the plural word for medium which describes any channel of communication. The media plays a huge role in the development of thoughts and ideas in society and how we think. A philosopher named Marshall McLuhan studied media theory and his most famous idea was

“The medium is the message”. By which means that the important thing about media is not the message they carry but the way the medium itself affects human consciousness and society at large.”

(Staunton, 2016)

McLuhan describes how much subconsciously the media ingrains messages into our head for their own benefit without us knowing. People base their views and beliefs on what media is telling them to be true and not how they feel. The media have been a massive role in creating stereotypes of gender, sexism and inequality through advertising and publishing. In recent years, these views have been improving and becoming more inclusive in some forms, such as showing more diversity instead of gender stereotypes and advertising more inclusive topics. However, there is still a long way to go due to media becoming more of an accessible platform to share your views which means more opinions and one-sided views spreading around different platforms. Social media is the main contributor to this as nowadays anyone can post what they want and share their opinions even if it could harm other people. Apps like Instagram where you can comment on people's appearance constantly can cause a lot of problems such as sexism and stereotypes under people's posts.

Media today, from traditional legacy media to online media, still hugely influence our perceptions and ideas about the role of girls and women in society. What we have unfortunately seen until now is that media tend to perpetuate gender inequality. Research shows that from a young age, children are influenced by the gendered stereotypes that media present to them.

(The crucial role of media in achieving gender equality | IMS, 2020)

New media has significantly increased the amount we consume on a daily basis, and this has meant younger children are exposed more than they would have ever before. Children being exposed to gender inequality and stereotypes from an early age will massively affect how they view gender and if that is in a positive way or not. With the rise of social media

and children joining the apps it adds to the mass amount of information they are exposed to. Apps such as Instagram are all based on aesthetics and how you look which can cause a negative effect on how they view gender and themselves. Constantly seeing people being bashed for how they look or seeing media posts stereotyping how different genders should act will alter how they think when they grow up.



Sara Cwynar. Women, 2015. Collection of Jane Oster

This piece by Sara Cwynar called *Women* depicts gender stereotyping within women in society. From my understanding, this piece is showing the sexualisation of women within media and in society, whilst also showing how we are also taught to cover up and showing sexuality can be seen as negative and wrong when it is for yourself. These two opposing

views are also seen together a lot of the time when sexualisation of women is seen as beneficial in media but taboo in everyday life. With media such as pornographic content being so accessible nowadays and to all ages it has drastically altered consumers views to how they think and see gender. Before internet and online media, accessibility to porn and women being sexualised was limited and extremely lower than today. Depending on your views, consumers online can end up in a media bubble and only be exposed to what they want to see. This can be negative for many reasons as you could only be consuming one view which could be negative.

Ideas, social behaviour, and customs of a specific group in society is what culture is described as. Cultural differences between various societies can be dramatic with where you are born, to how you are raised socially. Within big societies there are also subcultures that include a smaller group of people, normally with a strict way of how to act and behave. Culture in art can be a big focal point for artists and is an important topic to make people aware of. Using culture in art can show inclusivity for people and make them feel more seen if there's not much representation out there. Showing different cultures within branding for companies is also crucial and has recently become more popular to do. People in society want to feel included and see different types of people being shown rather than a minority group that only makes a specific type of person feel validated. I think showing how different genders are seen socially in a culture is also important for people to learn about and see in media. "He argued that culture is made up of the meanings people find to make sense of their lives and to guide their actions. Interpretive social science is an attempt to engage those meanings." (Clifford Geertz: Work and Legacy, 2022) Gender in culture changes drastically with each culture being taught different. We emphasize gender so much in

culture and it is such a big part of our lives without realising that it affects us daily in what we do. Our social constructs of gender also change from how you are raised and what culture you were taught. Many cultures recognise that there are more than two genders whilst the UK has traditionally believed in only two. If you grew up being taught in more than two genders, it would change how you view gender and stereotypes when you grow up and see the world differently to someone who hasn't. This could give you a more positive outlook to gender and how you feel within yourself over growing up being taught more outdated views on what gender should look like.



Keay, L., 2012. Lip Service. [spray paints & stencils size].

This piece of art is by an artist called Leon Keay who creates bright, colourful work with meanings behind them. He also makes political art with a punk feel to them and uses graffiti style in most of his pieces. Linking this to the branding side I would like to make striking art with a punk style to them. When creating a brand, you need a distinctive style people recognise which is what Leon Keay has. In my work, I want to include feminism and gender

and how these link to my key words I have chosen. I think Leon Keays artwork I have chosen portrays this well as he is using all the stereotypes woman face in art and being used as the muse constantly whilst adding a political feel to it. He uses his work to add a modern feel to gender and sexuality by not portraying it in a derogatory way but in a positive light. Leon Keay does a good job at diversity by having many pieces of artwork with different genders, religions, and ethnicity. I enjoy looking into artists who know what art they want to produce and have a distinctive style as that is what I want in my work, and it is inspiring to see. "Your brand is what impression you give people; it is a timeless concept. As an artist, your brand essence is a blend of your artwork, your attitude, your story and your goals." (O'Neil, n.d.) Everyone has a personal style without knowing it and showing how you became your brand is essential to clients seeing how you have progressed.

The three key words I have chosen, history, media and culture have helped me decide on a question I will use for my research. In my question, I want to discuss the effects these key words have had on the branding and advertising side. For the word history, I will look at how branding has developed in the past years with the rise of new media, and how this has altered gender is seen in art compared to in the past. For media, I will be looking at the branding and advertising of it and how gender is portrayed in the media. For culture I want to investigate different cultures of people and subcultures to see how this affects them from group to group. I will also look into how gender differentiates in cultures and how this affects people socially. I think these three words cover a good number of topics I can talk about, and they also relate to my practise I want to investigate.

Even without easy tracking and measurability, brand advertising campaigns still add tremendous value. With more consumers aware of your brand, the more they trust and stick with you throughout the buyer's journey. This makes them more likely to take action when they see a performance-based ad (and even become a loyal customer) in the future.

(Mialki, 2021).

Brand advertising through media creates a more accessible way for people to find you compared to when there weren't any social apps. Using my knowledge of the history behind how we have progressed to this multimedia branding you can learn the trends and science behind making a good brand for yourself and product. This helped me find a question I thought fit what I want to look at because I want to look into everything behind branding and what it once was to the present day. Culture comes into this by also acknowledging how branding can differ through different societies, how culture can affect how we perceive certain branding, and how branding can become more inclusive such as advertising on tv for certain products. Throughout history branding on tv through animation or real life has been exclusive to the majority of society and targeted certain groups of people deemed as superior such as men.

My question I have chosen for my independent project extended essay is "Has branding and advertising altered consumers views on gender and how has this changed through the rise of new media?". This question can spark topics such as the history of branding and how it differed before in terms of gender and identity, has media had a negative effect on gender or has it helped with the rise of new media? And I would like to write about how branding is different in cultures and has also changed throughout the decades by also showing gender within cultures. I want to explore different sides of branding and the psychological reasons

people gravitate to certain products compared to others and how branding has turned into a science to get people to buy your product. For my practise of branding an advertising I will be designing artwork for music such as album covers and branding. I enjoy looking at feminism and how this can be used in art, but I have never properly looked into the branding side. I enjoy incorporating gender in my art and I enjoy art being used in the music industry. I would like to use my knowledge I get from researching my key words to help me have a better understanding of gender in different aspects to add to my illustrations. Looking at packaging sounds interesting to me as it's a whole new way of designing work for a client and seeing it on their products. I will research gender within my three key words and link this to my practise of creating art for feminist music.

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