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MA Contemporary Dialogues - Advertising

(ADAA7002) Confirmative Praxis Report

Submission date - 11th January 2023

Word Count - 4,746

Contents

List of Illustrations.....	3
1. Abstract	5
2. Introduction	5
3. Research & Practical Development	6
3.1. Advertising, Consumerism & The Planet.....	6
3.2. Bill Posters	8
3.3. Reuse/Recycle Initiatives	10
3.4. Target Audience & Project Problem	11
3.5. Previous Campaigns.....	13
3.6. Subversion & Intrinsic Motivation	17
4. Concluding Body of Work	21
Bibliography	28

List of Illustrations

Figure 1: Posters, B (2018) *Waste World Billboard*. [Photograph of installation] Available: <https://billposters.ch/waste-world-a-blackfriday-project/>

Figure 2: Posters, B (2018) *Waste World Pretty Little Thing Installation*. [Photograph of installation] Available: <https://billposters.ch/waste-world-a-blackfriday-project/>

Figure 3: Posters, B (2018) *Waste World Pretty Little Thing*. [Digital Poster] Available: <https://billposters.ch/waste-world-a-blackfriday-project/>

Figure 4: CWM Environmental (2023) *Canolfan Eto*. [Photograph] Available: <https://www.walesonline.co.uk/special-features/hidden-wonders-nantycaws-recycling-centre-27400696>

Figure 5: Recycle Now (2022) *Let's Get Real About Recycling*. [Photograph] Available: <https://www.recyclenow.com/news-and-campaigns/lets-get-real-about-recycling>

Figure 6: LADBible (2022) *Trash Isles*. [Digital illustration] Available: <https://www.ladbiblegroup.com/casestudy/trash-isles/>

Figure 7: Cutts, S (2012) *MAN*. [Video Still] Available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WfGMYdalCLU&list=PLs0-ZbGy0Mt6RLrN74GYCeN1Ey_2M9H5b&index=6

Figure 8: Dumb Ways To Die (Unknown) *Platform*. [Digital illustration] Available: <https://www.dumbwaystodie.com/psa>

Figure 9: Douglas, N (2021) *Shell Brighton*. [Photograph of installation] Available: <http://brandalism.ch/projects/ad-agencies/>

Figure 10: Tylicki, M (2021) *Bristol Poster*. [Photograph of installation] Available: <http://brandalism.ch/projects/ad-agencies/>

Figure 11: Grime, L (2023) *Toyota Brandalism*. [Photograph of installation] Available:
<http://brandalism.ch/projects/toyota-bmw-greenwash/>

Figure 12: Illinois Council Against Handgun Violence (2018) *Teddy Gun*.
<https://www.dandad.org/awards/professional/2018/pr/26610/teddy-gun/>

Figure 13: Sullivan, E (2023), *Lids On, Films Off* [Video Still]

Figure 14: Sullivan, E (2023), *Lids On, Films Off Poster* [Digital Poster]

Figure 15: Sprague, R (Unknown) *Retro Rider*. [Digital Illustration] Available:
<https://dribbble.com/shots/7431254-Retro-Rider>

Figure 16: Kotra, E (2020) *Various Posters*. [Digital Posters] Available:
<https://www.behance.net/gallery/95085791/Various-posters-2020>

Figure 17: ‘chuck 123456’, (Unknown), *SB-129 059*. Available at:
https://spongebob.fandom.com/wiki/List_of_time_cards?file=SB-129_059.png

Figure 18: Pancini, (Unknown), *DoubleBass*. [Adobe font family] Available:
<https://fonts.adobe.com/fonts/doublebass#fonts-section>

Figure 19: Dineen, A (2023) *Exhibition Image 1*. [Photograph]

Figure 20: Dineen, A (2023) *Exhibition Image 2*. [Photograph]

1. Abstract

My praxis broadly explores the impacts of a consumer society on the planet and ecological support systems. Research revealed that young adults are the least knowledgeable when it comes to the technicalities and practicality of recycling. My campaign aims to intrinsically motivate young adults to recognise the importance of recycling and their role in our future whilst educating them on the easiest and most effective ways of recycling.

2. Introduction

My previous research and practical work explored ways of advertising something typically perceived as boring. A focus on paper led me to paper brand G.F Smith and I was particularly drawn to their 'Extract' paper because of its environmental considerations. Extract paper is inspired by the environment, taking disposable paper coffee cups designed for landfill and transforming them into a new product - paper. In 2017, fewer than 1 in 400 cups were recycled due to the plastic coating needing a special, expensive process to be separated. G.F Smith are using 95% of the waste from each cup to create paper and using the remaining 5% for energy recovery during production. (*G.F Smith, Unknown*)

I decided on developing this project further while moving away from the subject of paper as I felt it lacked the potential to become an extensive body of work.

Given that the environmental considerations and recyclability of the paper was what interested me the most, I shifted my focus to the reuse and recycle culture of our nation and the negative effect of consumerism. Research revealed that 16 to 24 year olds are the least knowledgeable when it comes to recycling and therefore are least likely to recycle.

This report will explore how the younger generation are the crucial target for communication to change the outlook on recycling for our future. Part of my research is loosely based around answering; *"Where can we find the airtime to create new stories for*

our cities, stories that champion positive social and environmental ideas rather than more purchases?” (Adblock Bristol, 2019). My practice results in a research-led digital campaign that targets the 16 to 24 year old digital native demographic with the aim of educating and changing their recycling habits. My concluding campaign is a series of videos accompanied by relevant posters that intrinsically motivate change.

3. Research & Practical Development

My praxis outcome has been entirely led by my research exploring advertising and consumerism, current recycling initiatives, previous campaigns, target audience, subversion, and intrinsic motivation. My project ideas and practical experimentation developed in line with research results.

3.1. Advertising, Consumerism & The Planet

“I think that I shall never see,

A billboard lovely as a tree.

Perhaps, unless the billboards fall,

I’ll never see a tree at all.”

(Nash, 1932:18, “Song of the Open Road”)

It is being recognised that consumerism is negatively impacting environment and corporate advertising has continually fed into over consumption. We are exploiting resources and destroying our planet for our own greed of internal fulfilment. *(Adblock Bristol, 2019)*

Our recycling levels are unable to keep up with the demand that over consumption has caused, leading to the dumping of products into our environment (Adblock Bristol, 2019). It has been estimated that by 2050, there will be more plastic than fish in our oceans (WEF, 2016:7). Advertising hasn't really responded to issues relating to climate change, instead, their message is to "carry on consuming" (Adblock Bristol, 2019). "The advertising industry wants to offer us more consumer choice; but this choice is meaningless in the face of social inequality and climate breakdown" (Adblock Bristol, 2019). We are depleting the Earth and its natural resources,

"If Earth's history is compared to a calendar year, modern human life has existed for 37 minutes and we have used one third of Earth's natural resources in the last 0.2 seconds." (The World Counts, Unknown)

In 2002, *The Guardian* released an article titled "Earth 'will expire by 2050" (Townsend, Burke, 2002) where they detailed results from a study by the *World Wildlife Fund* warning of how the planet was running out of space and resources due to the modern consumer and, at the time, we would be forced to colonise two planets within the next 50 years - this was 21 years ago, we are now fast approaching Earth's expiry date. As finding an alternative planet is extremely unlikely, the report warned that consumption needed to be cut immediately.

21 years following the initial article, *The Guardian* released a new article discussing how "the climate crisis, invasive species, overexploitation of resources and pollution could break down crucial ecosystems" (Greenfield, Weston, Niranjana, 2023) and how the issues could be solved. It was repeated that "By 2050, if humanity does not follow through on commitments to tackle the five main drivers of nature loss critical natural systems could break down" (Greenfield, Weston, Niranjana, 2023), in a separate article, these five main drivers were summarised from a report by the *Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services* (Diaz, Settele, Brondizio, et al., 2019), as being

changes in land and sea use, direct exploitation of natural resources, the climate crisis, pollution & invasive species (Greenfield & Weston, 2021).

Advertising itself needs to use its platform to promote change for the betterment of our planet and future generations, not overconsumption.

3.2. Bill Posters

Bill Posters is the pseudonym for author, artist and disinformation-researcher *Barnaby Francis*. “Poster’s works often interrogate disinformation, persuasion architectures and power relations that exist in public space and online” (Posters, 2023).

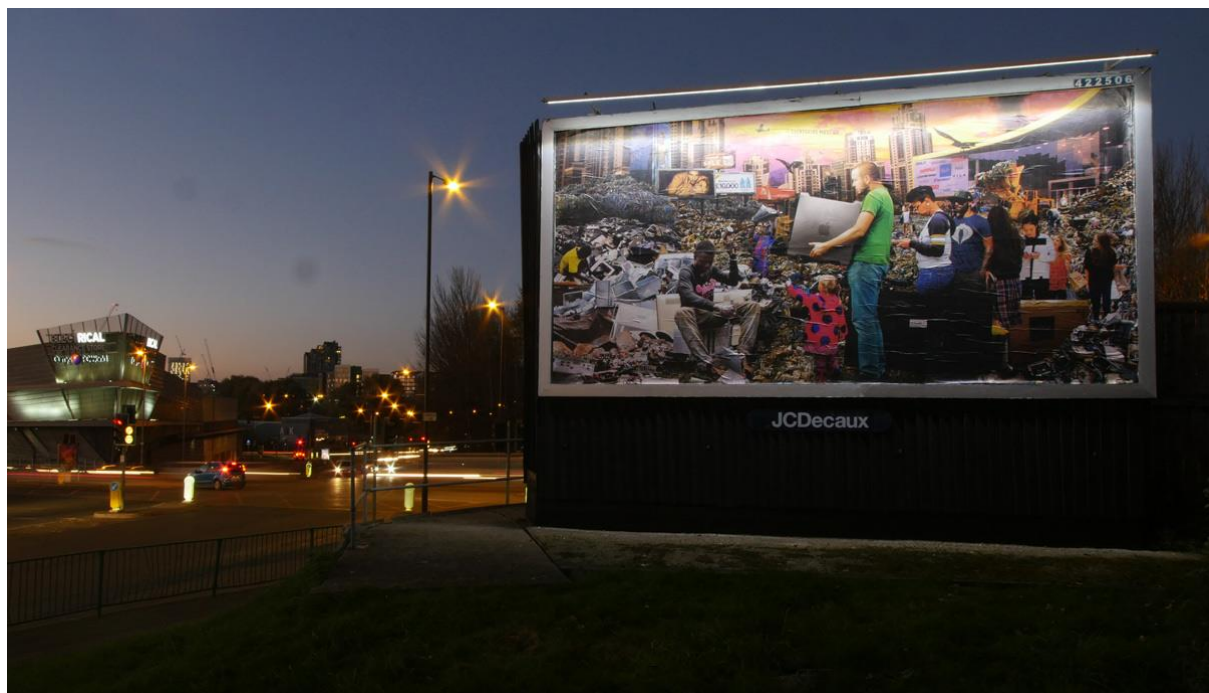


Figure 1: Posters, (2018), *Waste World Billboard*

Upon looking at Poster’s works and projects, I was primarily drawn to his ‘*Waste World*’ project launched for Black Friday in 2018. The project was centred around targeting the Fast Fashion trend and consumer waste by replacing genuine ads with his own installations. His subversive posters highlight the impact our rubbish is having on the world, utilising advertising spaces to create a viewing lens of the social and environmental

impacts of consumerism and waste that we typically aren't shown. His installations feature brands including Nike, Pretty Little Thing, Apple and Gucci. He highlights how a lot of our waste is sold to low-income countries due to the inability of Western countries to process the entirety of the waste they produce. (*Posters, 2018*)



Figure 2: Posters, (2018), *Waste World Pretty Little Thing Installation*

Figure 3: Posters, (2018), *Waste World Pretty Little Thing*

Poster is publicly challenging corporations. Suitably situated in busy shopping areas, the posters would make passersby take a second look and draw their attention to the core issues of consumer waste and the impact it has on those who are less privileged.

3.3. Reuse/Recycle Initiatives

One of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals aims to foster sustainable and environmentally responsible consumption. With this, there are many initiatives all around the world aiming to improve recycling practices (BBVA, 2023).

My exploration began with the reuse and recycling opportunities in my local area which revealed individual council initiatives to promote reuse through their recycling centres. Both Carmarthenshire and Swansea councils have opened reuse shops with the aim of giving a second life to items that would otherwise end up in landfill.



Figure 4: CWM Environmental, (2023) *Canolfan Eto*

'ETO' is the initiative that has been developed by Carmarthenshire Council's CWM Environmental, it consists of a reuse village serving to divert items from being destroyed or left at landfill by carrying out repairs at the onsite reuse workshop. The shop has offerings from general second-hand items to garden supplies and re-blended paint. The centre is also offering educational classes encouraging children to learn new skills and

develop an understanding of the importance of sustainability (*Brazendale, 2023*). The project hopes to create a circular economy, helping to reduce carbon footprints and the demand for the production of new products. Items can be donated throughout the county at donation stations situated in recycling centres where they accept a myriad of products (*Carmarthenshire County Council, 2023*). The recycling centre has several additional sustainability initiatives from bee hives to renewable energy (*Sidat, 2023*).

Swansea Council are also making efforts to divert waste from landfill with their Tip Treasures Reuse Shop. The shop sells items otherwise going to landfill to help reduce waste and support local people who will benefit from low-cost items. Donations are accepted at their shops and recycling centres with income going back into funding the project (*Swansea Council, Unknown*). There are also Climate Shops based in Carmarthen and Lampeter who are thriving to sell items that draw down carbon impact rather than release it (*Climate Shop, Unknown*).

3.4. Target Audience & Project Problem

Each year, thousands of UK adults bin household items rather than reusing, recycling or donating (*BHF Press Office, 2019*) and a whopping 60% of Britons are uninterested in recycling (*Woodford Recycling, 2020*). Research so far allowed me to identify that the overarching problem is that;

PEOPLE DO NOT RECYCLE!

I realised that although I understood that people didn't favour reusing or recycling, I needed to know why and therefore who I needed to target with my campaign. This research revealed that there are several reasons why people don't recycle. The main reasons or excuses being that they have no time and therefore it's an inconvenience, there's no incentive, they don't see the difference it makes (*Watts, 2017*), they have no interest, there's a lack of knowledge, the bin gets too full, there's too much residue left

on recyclables, it's easier to put everything in one bag and some claim they "already do enough recycling" (*Statista, 2017*).

Demographically, over 55s are less likely to dispose of items while a fifth of 16 to 24 year olds admit that they 'don't know how' to recycle (*BHF Press Office, 2019*). One in ten young people claim to not care about the environment or recycling at all (*Woodford Recycling, 2020*).

I concluded that my campaign needed to be targeted towards 16 to 24 year olds but to successfully target the age group, I need to be able to understand them. I, myself am within this age bracket so would be taking my own views into consideration when developing my campaign, however, I would need to understand what the majority of the age group are interested in.

At this young age, they are beginning to develop their own identity and care about what others think of them. During this period called the '*social brain*', their ideas and decision-making abilities are impacted by their peer group (*Weiss et al, 2018*), they follow what others are doing. They have grown up with the internet and digital technology, this way of life is all they know, and they learn from social media (*Weiss et al, 2018*) platforms like YouTube and TikTok and almost half of them don't read at all (*Reading Agency, Unknown*). They show an interest in Activism and rebellion, but they are heavily influenced by the opinions of others, particularly on social media (*Weiss et al, 2018*). 18 to 24 year olds make up 42% of TikTok's users and with 50 million daily users (*McLachlan, 2023*), I would find a large portion of my targeted audience here.

The younger age group are the influential generation of the future, and they seem to know the least when it comes to recycling. Influence needs to begin at the start, I cannot simply make everyone reuse and recycle correctly. By targeting the younger generation, they will be able to pass on their knowledge and routines to future generations eventually resulting in an entire population understanding the need and best methods of recycling.

My campaign needs to exist in the social media sphere to reach the younger generation. From my own experiments conducted on videos posted to a company social media account, I have noticed that the attention span of social media users is very short - typically 12 seconds on the videos mentioned. The videos for my campaign would need to be as short and concise as possible to ensure they're viewed in their entirety whilst also conveying the correct message.

3.5. Previous Campaigns

To make an impact, my campaign would need to be fresh and unique. To ensure I achieve this, I searched for similar campaigns and those that are using the digital sphere as their main platform.

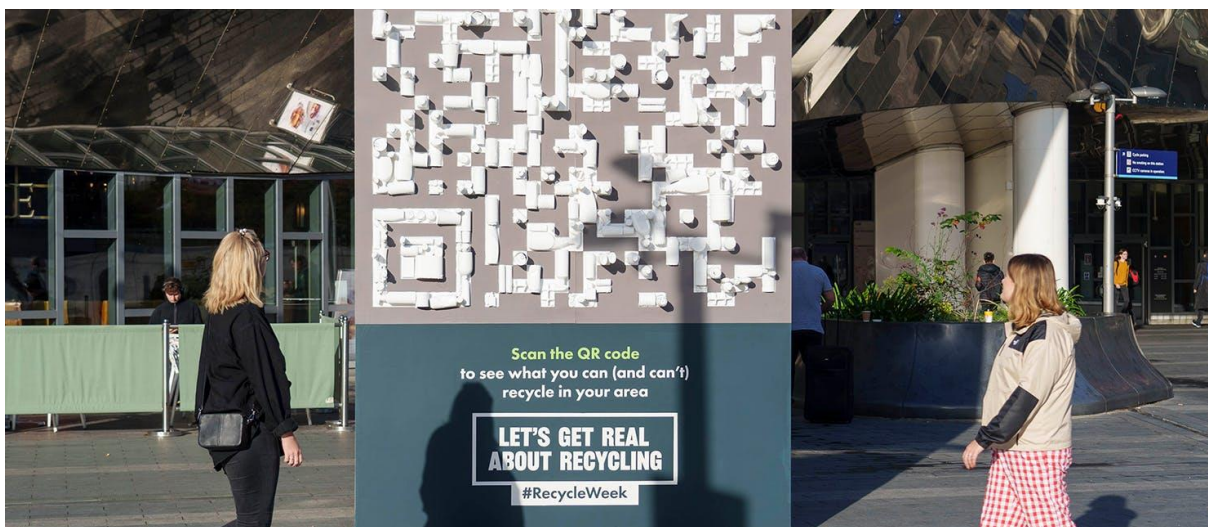


Figure 5: Recycle Now, (2022), *Let's Get Real About Recycling*

In 2022, Recycle Now unveiled a giant QR Code outside Birmingham New Street Station. The installation invited people to scan the code to find out what they can and can't recycle in their area with Recycle Now's Recycling Locator. At a huge 11.8ft the QR Code has been made out of recycled household items that are often mistakenly not recycled (ITV, 2022). The focus of the campaign was to help people recycle efficiently at home (Clayton, S, 2022). The sheer size of the QR Code would have made sure that it didn't go

unnoticed by passersby, being located outside a busy station would mean a high amount of footfall with people busy trying to reach their destinations. By inviting people to scan the QR Code, it means that people could take a minute to scan and continue with their day whilst educating themselves on proper recycling methods.



Figure 6: LADbible, 2022, *Trash Isles*.

The Trash Isles was an online, collaborative campaign from LADbible Group and creative agency AMV BBDO, aiming to “empower young people to lobby the United Nations to acknowledge the plastic in our oceans as a country, in order to force the issue to be addressed” (LADbible, 2022). The campaign was prompted by the landmasses that are emerging from plastic pollution in the Pacific Ocean (LADbible, 2022).

‘The Trash Isles’ were given an official flag and currency with recycled material passports and high-profile celebrities agreeing to become royalty and politicians of the fictional island. The call-to-action from the campaign was to become a citizen by pledging to reduce consumption of single-use plastic. The hugely successful campaign was shared across LADbible social media channels reaching 250 million people within the first 60 days

achieving a 340 million reach overall (LADbible, 2022). The success of this campaign confirms that social media would be a suitable platform for my own campaign.



Figure 7: Cutts, (2012), *MAN*

In 2012, animation artist Steve Cutts created 'MAN', a 3-minute animation that delves into our relationship with the natural world (Cutts, 2012). The video has no dialogue but instead uses dramatic and graphic animations showing the impact our existence has on the planet, its resources and nature. Much of the video shines a light on issues that we don't typically see in our everyday lives and paints the human as a villain of the entire world. The video ends with an impactful scene showing aliens visiting Earth and destroying the 'MAN', reflecting exactly how we have come to Earth and destroyed almost everything in and out of sight.



Figure 8: Dumb Ways To Die, (Unknown), *Platform*

‘Dumb Ways to Die’ is another example of a hugely successful digital campaign that began its life in 2012 as a Public Service Announcement by Metro Trains Melbourne promoting railway safety. They also released two game apps to coincide with the video which have now amassed 340 million downloads with its YouTube music video reaching over 334 million views from across the world (*Dumb Ways to Die, Unknown*). A video released on YouTube with the aim of raising awareness of rail safety has gone viral worldwide due to the impact of social media. The video (*Metro Trains Melbourne, 2012*) is light-hearted with each character raising safety awareness for a different safety issue. The animated nature of the campaign means that the grim reality of the consequences can be shown, alongside a memorable song, the video was sure to be repeating in the heads of all who viewed it.

Each of these examples have utilised and taken advantage of the digital or social media sphere with rewarding results and successful campaigns. Creating a digital, social media-based campaign to promote best recycling practices has the potential to become hugely successful if executed correctly. The use of a QR code could be helpful within the exhibition so that people can scan and continue to walk through the rest of the exhibition whilst also being educated on recycling. The code would need to link to the platform hosting the campaign and utilise Recycle Now’s Recycling Locator to assist them in making the correct recycling decisions for their area.

3.6. Subversion & Intrinsic Motivation

‘Subvertising’ is described as being a campaigning technique where politically motivated advertisements are created to resemble known advertisements with a purpose to stigmatise brands and raise awareness of the corporate strategies behind them (*Oxford Reference, Unknown*). Something that is described as ‘subversive’ “*is intended to weaken or destroy a political system or government*” (*Collins Dictionary, Unknown*). Typically, advertisements of this nature will feature elements of humour and irony.

Subvertising marries art and activism combining elements from Dadaism, agitprop, Situationist art, punk, graffiti and ‘culture jamming’ (Wong, 2020). Modern subvertising is “*a reaction against the outdoor advertising industry and the economic system it serves - capitalism*” (Wong, 2020).



Figure 9: Douglas, (2021), *Shell Brighton*

Brandalism is a collective of artists who are using subvertising as a way to highlight social and environmental issues fueled by capitalism. In 2021, they set out to hijack hundreds of billboards across the UK, Belgium and France in a bid to shine light on advertising agencies accused of greenwashing major polluting companies such as Shell, British Airways and Jaguar. (*Brandalism, 2021*)



Figure 10: Tylicki, (2021), *Bristol Poster*

The posters call out the irony of carbon-intense industries advertising in the context of climate crisis with their greenwashing ads promoting their net-zero pledges that include carbon offsetting- an approach that has been proven to not work. The above artwork by Michelle Tylicki highlights airlines from the top ten emitters of carbon in 2019 and exposes their expansion of operations despite promoting their false solutions for climate change. (*Brandalism, 2021*)



Figure 11: Grime, (2023), *Toyota Brandalism*

Across Europe, Brandalism, Extinction Rebellion and Subvertisers International installed hundreds of billboards targeting Toyota and BMW during the European Motor Show in Brussels. There is call for a ban on advertising environmentally harmful products such as large SUV's, both Toyota and BMW are still invested in the continued sales of these polluting combustion engine vehicles. The action of the subverted posters was at a heightened time for the call for a tobacco-style advertising ban on environmentally damaging products. The above poster of a Toyota Land Cruiser driving through urban streets has been renamed as a Toyota Land Crusher as it is shown pushing pedestrians and children out of its path. (*Brandalism, 2023*)



Figure 12: Illinois Council Against Handgun Violence, (2018), *Teddy Gun*

‘Teddy Gun’ impactfully lists the tragic differences between regulations for the manufacture of teddy bears in comparison to guns in Chicago. Alongside the powerful visual, Illinois Council also created a social tool that calls for governmental officials to reconsider the legislations on guns (D&AD, 2018). The product avoids the strict regulations

on toys by being disguised as a gun, highlighting the shortage of manufacturing regulations for guns. (*The Illinois Council Against Handgun Violence, 2017*)

Each of the researched examples above call for change in a creative, subversive way that would make the viewer think twice when viewing. If subversion is a way to manipulate my campaign, is there also a method of manipulating the audience?

Study findings have proven that there is a connection between intrinsic motivation and conservation behaviour (*De Young, 1985*). Intrinsic motivation is “*the inherent tendency to seek out novelty and challenges, to extend and exercise one’s capacities, to explore, and to learn*” (*Ryan, Deci, 2000*). When intrinsically motivated people tend to engage in something because they find it interesting and satisfying (*Di Domenico, Ryan, 2017*).

This honed my decision to create a reusing and recycling campaign that explores subversion and makes the act of recycling, interesting and satisfying, to entice people to become intrinsically motivated to recycle.

4. Concluding Body of Work

Adblock Bristol (2019) asks “*Where can we find the airtime to create new stories for our cities, stories that champion positive social and environmental ideas rather than more purchases?*”. I believe that the answer to this challenge is within social media platforms, specifically video. The younger generation are our future, and my research has shown that almost half do not read (*Reading Agency, Unknown*), instead, they have grown up in a world with digital technology and social media is where they learn from, taking on the influence of others (*Weiss et al, 2018*). With 18 to 24 year olds making up 42% of TikTok’s users (*McLachlan, 2023*), it was crucial that my campaign existed here.

The campaign itself avoids negativity and instead has a humorous, light-hearted nature with memorable visuals and catchphrases. The aim of the campaign is to educate and change recycling habits, each element effectively provides useful information to persuade

a change in behaviour without patronising the viewers. Being within the 16 to 24 year age group, I was able to observe what others my age were interacting with and sharing on social media. This observational research revealed that the videos viewed by the majority aren't professionally edited with scripted voiceovers or people talking directly to the camera, instead they are using digitally available voiceovers from apps like TikTok with recognisable voices. By utilising the 'Text to Speech' features in TikTok it meant that I could ensure clear communication from my videos with no accent confusion and the spoken text appearing on screen for those with hearing difficulties, thus opening my campaign to an even wider audience. This also meant that the script could be added during the final edit ensuring that it was entirely suitable for the clips.

The creation journey of my concluding campaign involved experimentation with various filming and editing styles and techniques ranging from digital camera recordings to clips recorded with a smartphone. The people featured in my videos are within the targeted age group with the aim of ensuring that the videos are tailored to the right age group. Clothing choices were entirely up to the actors, as they're within the age group, their day-to-day clothing is what the intended viewers would find most relatable and therefore are more likely to engage and learn. The final body of work consists of six TikTok style videos accompanied by corresponding posters intended for distribution in areas of high footfall from the demographic such as universities and public transport.



Figure 13: Sullivan, (2023), *Lids On, Films Off*

Figure 14: Sullivan, (2023), *Lids On, Films Off Poster*

By including posters in my campaign, I could increase the audience to people that my videos wouldn't be shown to as part of the social media algorithm. To ensure that the posters were suitable for the campaign and target audience, I needed to continue with the light-hearted, humorous theme seen throughout the short videos. As well as online research, I made observations on what design trends were appearing on social media and within my own age group and decided on creating a series of posters combining nostalgic retro and anti-design trends.



Figure 15: Sprague, (Unknown), *Retro Rider*

Retro design is a timeless trend, taking inspiration from the past and combining it with modern graphics. Elements are drawn predominantly from the 50s, 60s, 70s and 80s utilising the pop culture, typography, colours, and fashion of the time. Retro combines old with new to appeal to current audiences while conveying the nostalgia that brings powerful emotions of a possibly better time, connecting a wide range of generations (Muavia, 2023). “In behavioural economics terms, nostalgia acts as an intrinsic motivator influencing decision making processes” (Bassett, 2023), thus making the retro, nostalgic design trend ideal for my campaign.

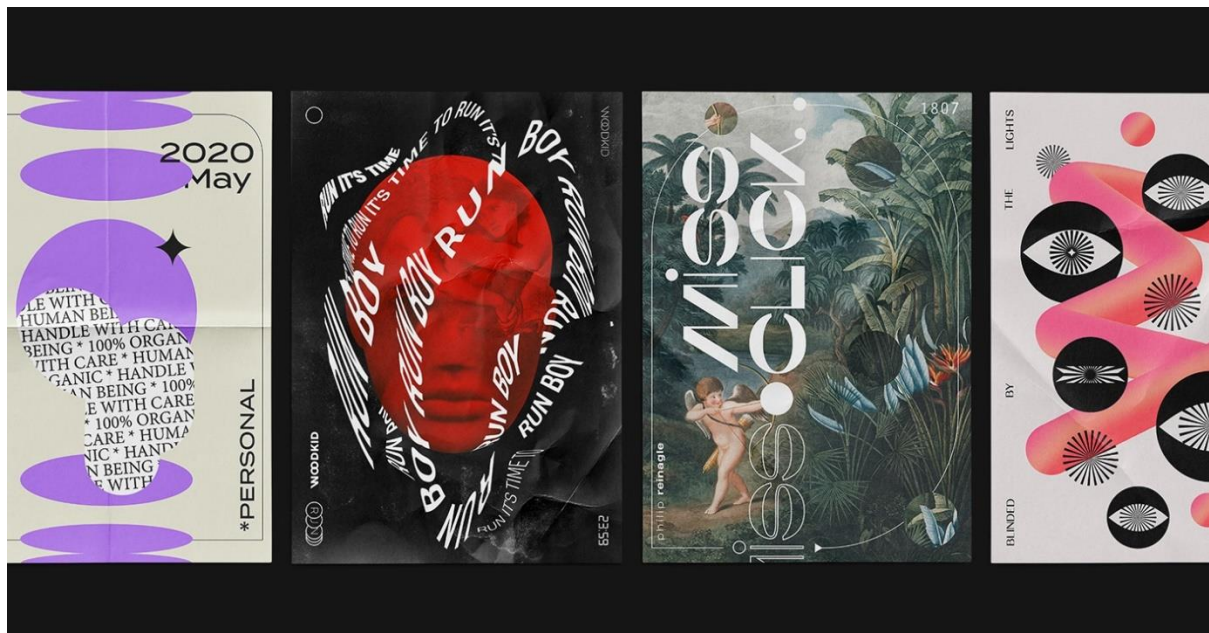


Figure 16: Kotra, (2020), *Various Posters*

I also garnered inspiration from the anti-design trend that intentionally breaks age-old design rules resulting in unique, eye-catching designs (Bicaku, 2023). *“This style rejects the intuitive, grid-like elements of traditional design in favour of challenging, innovative layouts”* (Glover, 2022). As a movement similar to post-modernism that began in the 60s (Kwartin, 2021), anti-design will typically combine typography over multiple lines, overlapping, flashy colours, asymmetry, and intentionally crowded spaces (Glover, 2022), it goes against all traditional design norms. The potential craziness of an anti-design style poster will offer memorable viewing.

Both anti-design and retro style designs are hugely versatile and stand out from the minimal, modern designs we see every day. In keeping with these trends, I used a mix of vibrant hues and pastels for my colour palette and the halftone images are a nod towards the retro styling. I decided on the ‘DoubleBass’ font for the poster design because of its similarities to the typeface used for ‘Spongebob Squarepants’, a series many current 16 to 24 year olds would have grown up watching.



Figure 17: 'chuck 123456', (Unknown), *SB-129 059* (Spongebob typeface)

Figure 18: Pancini, (Unknown), *DoubleBass*

Conveying correct tips and information was crucial to achieving the aim of my campaign. To decide on what tips or information would be most useful for the viewers, I referred to my research on why people don't recycle. Many say that their recycling bins get too full (*Statista, 2017*), my attempt to help with this issue is by reminding the viewer to always 'Tape off, size down & recycle'. This video depicts a 'family' of large boxes who are taking up the space in someone's home due to the lack of recycling. To stop them taking over we are told to remove any tape, fold the box down as small as possible and always remember to put them in the recycling bin. The 16 to 24 year olds in particular are reported to not know how to recycle (*BHF Press Office, 2019*), recycling is made easy by most packaging including the disposal information on the outside. The video attempting to remedy this issue directly asks the viewer if their rubbish is building up because they don't know what to do with it, followed by informing them that most packaging will tell them how to dispose of it whilst showing examples of the recycling labels. Other information used for the creation of the videos came from online sources such as 'Wales Recycles' (*Wales Recycles, Unknown*), Earth Day's 7 tips to recycle better (*Earth Day, 2022*) and *Recycle Now's* website. I also made observations and asked friends and family what they struggle most with when it comes to recycling and being someone who recycles myself, I set out to pay attention to what I was doing to assess what elements could be improved.

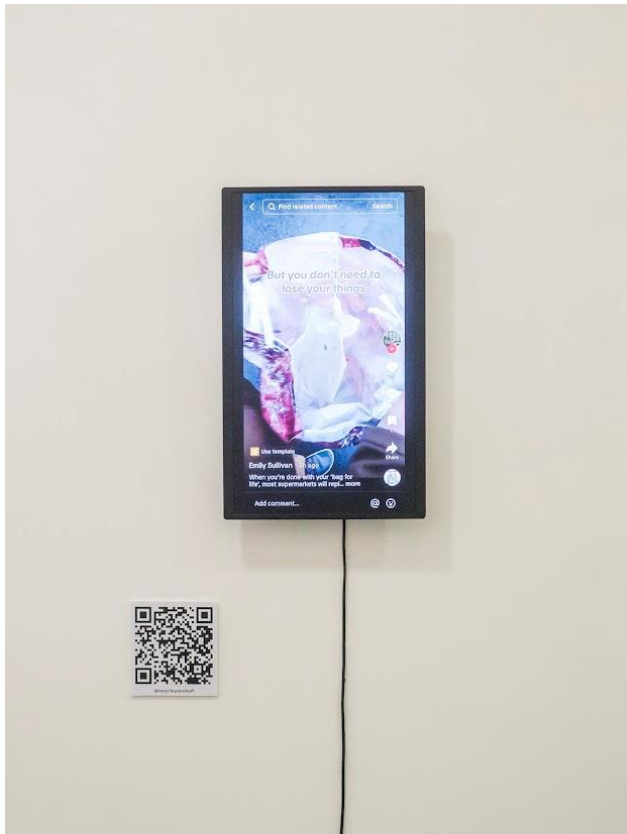


Figure 19: Dineen (2023) *Exhibition Image 1*



Figure 20: Dineen (2023) *Exhibition Image 2*

For exhibition, I made the decision to show all six videos on a loop alongside four of the six posters that corresponded to the videos. This decision was made as the videos are the main feature for the campaign, I wanted to avoid overpowering the videos with posters. The posters were created with the intention of being shown at large scale, each of the four posters were printed at A1 size to reflect this whilst also allowing the viewer to take a step back to view them in the corridor. As the videos were intended for viewing on mobile through TikTok, a small portrait screen was acquired to resemble a smartphone and elements from the TikTok app were added to each video to display them with context. For true viewing, I added a QR code to my exhibiting work that links directly to the TikTok account - [@recycleyourstuff](#) - for viewing each video separately. Additionally, each poster includes the TikTok account handle for viewing the videos and a QR Code leading to

Recycle Now's Recycling Locator, allowing people to find out what can be recycled in their area and how.

Opening night of the exhibition was a success and the placement of my campaign meant that visitors had to interact and acknowledge the work on entry. Feedback received was positive and mostly centred around how the campaign was fun, fresh and relevant for our current social media centred world. I witnessed a visitor above the targeted audience age attempt to interact with the screen as if it were touchscreen, this confirmed to me that the context of the videos was being conveyed successfully and understood by a wider age range. At the time of writing my videos currently have a combined total view of 2,538 and 102 likes with engagement mostly from the targeted audience.

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