VINTAGE COMMERCIAL ART

……it is the use of art to sell a product or service using a combination of text and imagery in communicative slogans, songs, and visuals of what is being sold in an appeal sense to the public. Art and advertising, since I was young, have been synonymous with products, television shows, retail chains, and even programs such as the YMCA.

Mass Production and Mass Consumption

Commercial artistry in our community's has always driven people to buy goods, visit places, and join in some focus that aid our need(s). Though traditionally art share in the cultural evolution just as literature and music having its own statements of beauty, critique, satire, expressions. But, it has been the foundation of marketing agency's and businesses across borders and globally reflective of societal trends, product selection, and a source for promoting racial equality among other things. Though consumer power in purchasing is what are economies rely upon, artist, journalist, and musicians alike have grown to use their senses of creativity, and of work as multipurpose platforms.

The expanse of commercial artistry inclusive of graphics, branding, logos, illustration production, advertising campaigns, printmaking, typography, posters, etc….it is the ability to organization vital information for promotion and or repeated sales.

Print work has repeatedly been utilized, under the protected use of copyrights, as print advertising in varied industries. It is often framed and hung in places easily observed by the public, replicated in magazines, and even cropped for mailers. Mailers or posters with artistic impressions are sourced to sale magazines, get your ‘‘vote’, for home sales and merchant biscuit mix. For example, the portrait of Mona Lisa is historically one of the many replicated art works. Leonardo Da Vinci's famous piece has earned income for others [artist, retailers, galleries, etc.] as a reproduced oil painting, in catalogues as digital print art, as modified images in humor, movie traditional poster ads, and widely used in media advertised art sales ads.

Pop Art

The insurgence of Pop Art during the 1960's used the imagery of popular culture for advertising, manufactured objects, and media. Artist identified foods, in-home products, haircare goods, make-up and a host of other items to steer consumers toward retail, magazine, book, potato chips and other product sales. Catchy images and songs penetrate the mind and trigger or provoke the desire, the want to own things and too fulfill our needs. This art form proved to me powerful, manipulative as it too improved societal and corporate prosperity. It

helped to build our economy's. It became one means of sustaining a country's sense of wealth and as it grasped hold in the United Kingdom, and U.S. in the mid to late 50's it was not officially adopted as 'Pop Art' until 1962 in the U.S.. This became a movement seeking to withstand traditional standards lauding 'Fine Art.' As a movement, Pop Art became a strategic item that would affect 'whole patterns of life' inspiring change, broadening horizons, and opening windows on the country a world around us. Comic books boomed into market as indicated with the "Drowning Girl" a 1963 artwork by Roy Lichtenstein. He was amongst other popular Pop Artist such as Andy Warhol and Jasper Johns. This art forms primary tools were use of 'irony', artistry, creativity, monetary investment, and mass media.

Ideas in Art

Equally noteworthy is the conceptualization of some to promote education, slogans of goodwill, support social norms, and send reminders of what is good and what was bad publically. It is unfair to converse about how art has serviced industry and not how the 'artist' have used their talent as expressions of personal interest or internal desires. In fact, I believe scholars are encouraged to define and develop a concept, a niche for their work. Create an identity.

Perhaps you've understood the wonderment of sexuality while polluting the masses with visual of our bodies, biological shapes and forms, capturing the sensuality in a kiss, showing symptoms of class, race, and culture are deep seeded ideas. The internal fancy with cities verses farms, dark matters, or animal life are also typical forms of an artist environment. Yet, some dig deeper into mathematics and the sciences having focused upon our minds, psychology, or sleep as with Salvador Dali. His venture onto commercial art for the recognized Chupa Chups lollipop ads is just as historically popular but not as fascinating as The Persistence of Memory and The knight of Death. The first is his focus upon the 'hypnagogic clock and the decomposition of bodies.'

Or there was Edvard Munchs' The Scream and Anxiety which also provoke thoughts into the ability to generate emotion and make a statements that create conversation. And we all are aware of the fragile state of mind Jackson Pollock was in during the duration of his artistic career. He is known as an Abstract Expressionist, capturing a moment or mood with versatility of coloration in a frenetic dance style. Though he suffered from alcoholism was reclusive and volatile in life he developed the splash, drip technique. Someone once suggested as critique, that these such offerings were that of 'frozen nightmares.'

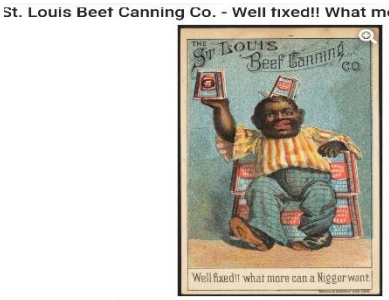
The summation is not just buried within the historical savoring of each of these and the many other artists but also in the modern age use of these creative minds onto the commercialization of their art work as copy cat items but well into product retail marketing schematics we've bought into for decades.

Racism and Commercial Artistry

Faces and themes have become recognized a liken the State Farm guy Jake or the What's Up commercial from the 90's. This plot to sale has been beneficial to both the corporations, artist, and hired actors having established a proven economic sustainability since the 1900's. As we became familiar with media, marketing and sang the television jingles we learned to identify items for sale we were told to buy.

Despite the over-indulgent use of commercial art for sales of goods and services, it hasn't







progressed without the struggle of sexism, cultural division, racism, and societal criticism. Documented from the early days of commercial art at work, pre-Dali and Einstein genius, were those filled with the artistic exhibition of stereotypes of African Americans as Sambos, mammies, minstrels, blackface and coons. These realities were even mimicked in silent movies. The artistic value was toward company sales, political rhetoric, social issues and that of staying in their place of servitude.

I've seen replication of vintage Hispanic female laborer offering a sense of masculine energy using a Caucasian woman in a southern city in the early 2000's. Each Thanksgiving in the 1970's into the 1990's we've experienced visual art reminiscent of the 'great feast' of the pilgrim's and the Indians which suffered from objection as society grew progressive in it's unacceptance of such artistic features. In opposition of racism, people of color have gradually been included, one at a time, into diverse forms of art. Commercial art generated pictorial views of black culture and as POP Art grew, so have use of selected figures for ad campaigns, representative as artistic professionals, and ad agency owners. And still the question prevails, "have global perceptions of people of color changed?"

There are those few, who in this dated period, feel compelled to reflect upon our long-term rejection of racism in commercial expressions by actually reigniting the same stick. They're challenging social standing against racism in visual examples of it all over again using a modern day MO that we have 'out-grown' the 1960's movement of the "American Negro" for a new day expression of community desensitized to racial slurs or words and with newly attached meaning of olden beliefs. This is to render those initial intentions as non-existent. For instance, as a person of color, to be called a "monkey" is not racist, is it? Does it depict one as of African descent or is it a 'fun' term of endearment? This was used for an ad of today and viewed as a racial slur. Is it interpreted in a similar light using a Caucasian girl in such, monkey wear? Instead of saying "go back to Africa" are they acknowledging that one is of that cultures descent and not blasting rejection of him? Believe it or not, the white young woman is further symbolic of the dye cast against women yesteryear as well. Some might suggest such imagery is a test of the state of our minds collectively regarding race, sexism and how we co-relate terminology use globally.

It is documented as historical fact that people of color have been referred to using animalization and called degrading names to distort the natural honorable human biological image granted by God at birth. It is thence a birthright to be 'different' amongst ourselves and not feel representative of something subhuman nor inferior. Black skinned people do not exist to be controlled like caged animals as we are far beyond the 1900's and the days of slavery.

The popularity of commercial art created a public zone and proof of a battle between the sexes! Women, were demoralized deemed stinky, manly, desperate and in need of discipline. As it too has been suggested many times that women were typically abused behind closed doors it is equally true that men felt the need to use verbiage at opportune moment to minimize their egos. A female's progress paralleled the males growing fear of not being cared for in the home and suffering from whatever he considered disrespect out side of it. At the same time, he recognized she too was intelligent and capable of earning an income. It was money needed in a capitalistic economy for progressive lifestyles and for those abandoned in some fashion by man.

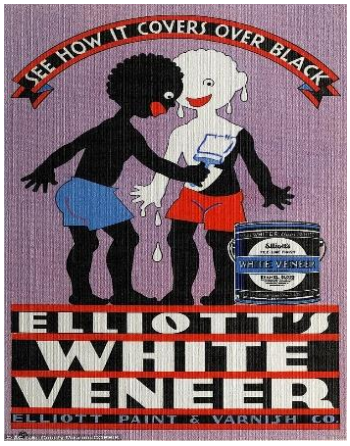






Online slang dictionary references “porch-monkeys” to mean black people who are lazy and the ad depicts the youth, energetic lad as a monkey. Are we to believe it is not racially motivated and must we use caution as the public tends to use such attacks to gather information regarding its customer base and rattle the cage for undisclosed purposes? Just as the historical rebuff of “little black Sambos” was focus placed upon the commercial children’s book cover holding the characterization of a ‘black’ child and relative to his loosing his fine clothing to tigers in the woods did. It is the repulsive image that primarily offended as it spiraled onto many alternative forms of black face public presentation. It was back in the era of the Sambo that our unified education began onto the realities of how commercial artistic imagery impacted the psyche, the mind of







those awake and sensitive to their environmental racial hazard zones within the burden of ending physical and mental slavery.

I cannot begin to believe that any dentist appreciated the advertisement questioning if you are “scared” of the black dentist not just because of his race but it’s overall implication of fear relative to dentistry. Yet, its creator ignored the plausible assumption that it too is really offensive despite it denoting that yes, black men are educated dental professionals in todays’ world. Years before as the public held resistance toward dental care, the industry suffered under the Rocky Horror Shows recapturing the generations of fear and phobias that have existed since the concept of dentistry was marketed in America. Maybe, ethnical professional practice blending is still in a progressive nature abroad and this too may be a factor in the development and intended use of the ad? And we are still forced to agree that it was poor judgment, awkward, and insensitive. It back-fired!

It is thence in-turn safe to suggest that black imagery and the use of women has also helped shaped commercial art industry and established people of color and women as American consumers. The use of modern day racist and sexist advertising or art work to combat the ever pending mindset of others who preclude a person, culture, or race (s) value based upon sex or skin color is not necessarily the viable answer to an ancient old issue. And as it has been said, racial bias, racial misrepresentation, racial mockery, and racial assault all factor into our historical memories as American racism. It is therefore not understanding or acknowledging that racism, racist, sexism and bias exist and can be seen in visual commercial art, but the standards by which we see and judge the message, the energy, the people, and their skin colors rather visually independent or intertwined. Regardless of federal and state law, The Commission for Racial Equality, British Codes, and good intentions of diversifying ethnic groups in advertising, there exist that fine line between what is deemed acceptable and what is not. And, all while knowing society itself can be rather hypocritical in it's take on publicized artistic works from commercial art in advertising, journalistic endeavors and movies. Then we too are prone to question our interpretation(s) of such work (commercial advertisement) using modern day progressive minds or that mind which still denotes the cultural differences against the selective words used to further portray the meaning of the work itself. The mind chooses to either get with it as a racially integrated body or separate the illusion for equal racial value grounded in historical relativity and personal sensitivity. Which approach do you believe is fairplay?

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