
European culture and visual influences on graphic inspiration!

Identity: belonging in a material world?

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Abstract: Background

In a world that throws up the very need to belong and have an identity there are still areas in the commercial world that remain faceless and the individual behind the powerful images and media we experience fade in to the background. They leave behind a fleeting collection of ideas and a cultural reflection of human activity that cover every aspect of human nature. These visual statements that have been as finely explored as many fine art pieces in an art gallery; interact, inform, seduce, persuade and entertain us as well as anger and irritate. The area of activity is 'Graphic Design' and it takes the form in the professional world as 'Advertising' or 'Design Consultancy.'

This paper seeks to define the identity of the creative designer in the commercial environment. Is it possible to be in a culture and yet above it? Is there such a thing as a European Graphic designer? Much of what we see around us is based on visual elements and fragments of information in print and screen media, which presents an image that we as an audience want to be part of and in some cases to process. Yet the person behind the visual advertisements and ephemeral has been influenced by the culture that they have come from and aspire to go too. So does culture create the visual outpouring of graphic material or can we say that this discipline is creating the culture and therefore the value systems that we aspire too?

By exploring two very different visual promotional campaigns, one currently operating in the UK and Ireland and the other for a large European brand, this paper evaluates visual data to achieve a concept for image making in a given advert. It looks behind the images to identify the possible sources of inspiration while exploring what is deemed to be new, fresh and at cutting edge. Issues such as gender and visual stereotyping, particularly with regard to role-play and value systems which highlight the utopia visions that are promoted in advertising will also feature.

Visual material to expand on the findings will be used throughout paper.