

An Analysis of Aesthetic Psychologies Theory

A Case Study of AXE Men's Perfume from Visual Arts Perspective

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Abstract—This AXE is a famous men's toiletries brand. Its bold print advertisement has an amazing theme and the picture closely follows the trend of the times and is of more humor. This poster has won great awards in major international advertising festivals and is great popular among the majority of men consumers. The analysis of Axe's advertisement will mainly focus on the theory of Gestalt which fits men's aesthetic psychological characteristics the best.

Keywords—Aesthetic psychology; AXE; Cannes Advertising Festival

I. THE DEEP-ROOT AXE

AXE is a set of man-special toiletry produced in 1980s by Unilever. This brand has a wide range of products from the original deodorant spray to later products like bath gel and aftershave lotion. The specialty of AXE is the good smell added in its ingredient that has been strongly loved by women. AXE didn't initiate men's toiletries first, it's neither the best nor the most expensive, and however, AEX is definitely of the best popularity. AXE's performance has the same excellence with Vodka both of which reach the goal by elaborately created and excellently decorated print ads. Speaking boldly, the function of advertisement is much more important than the quality of product itself during the marketing activities. AXE never fails at this point, its print advertisement which is designed and made by 4A international well-known ads company has surprising bold themes, more humors and better fits modern times. AXE's print ads have won great awards in international advertising festivals; it has also even got the Golden lion award in the most famous Cannes Lion International Advertising Festival. Because of the outstanding advertising propaganda, the classic words "get a girlfriend" have deeply rooted in young men's minds, stimulated their hormones and made their lives even better.

This paper will analyze the works of Golden Lion Award and Bronze Lion Award in Cannes Advertising Festival, before this I will briefly introduce you the Cannes Advertising Festival, the general information and the value of each award.

II. THE CANNES INTERNATIONAL ADVERTISING FESTIVAL

Cannes International Advertising Festival generates from Cannes Movie Festival and was held the first time in 1954. Before 1977 this festival was held by turns in Cannes and Venice, now it is only held by Cannes. Cannes International

Advertising Festival is usually held at the end of June, a week after the end of Cannes Movie Festival. After so many years' development, Cannes International Advertising Festival has been regarded the most demanding contest among the four international advertising festivals. It also covers a large range of events, for example in 2011, 13 events were included: film and television, prints, outdoor, broadcast, internet, direct lions, media, design, public relationship, promotion, activation, post-radios manufacture, creative effectiveness, etc.

For this reason, this year's advertising festival is changed from the notion of "International Advertising Festival" to the notion of "International Creative Festival" in order to grand more opportunities on gradually increasing designers.

Cannes Advertising Festival Awards were: Award (10 points), the Golden Lion Award (7 points), Silver Lion (5 points), Bronze Lion award (3 points) and selected award (1 point).

III. THE AESTHETIC PSYCHOLOGY

Aesthetic Psychology is a branch of the study and interpretation of the law of human mental activity in appreciation of beauty. This activity mainly refers to the generation and experience of sense of beauty, then how to discover beauty by ourselves and experience it? Mostly we appreciate beauty through eyes. Eyes serve as the window of people's heart; they are also the main channel that leads us to beauty. Why do I say that? Because the author believes few people perceive beauty through other organs, for example by touching.

The appreciation of beauty is a series of activities from which many different theories and standpoints are raised in psychology. These theories and standpoints can not persuade each other but they are mutually admitted and express their viewpoint respectively. After a period of time's development, those different theories and standpoints have been divided into several schools of aesthetic psychology, which are: psychoanalysis, Gestalt, behaviorist school, school counseling theory and humanism school. Among all these schools we believe that viewpoints from Gestalt can best fit men's aesthetic mentality because theirs rely more on visual and inner experiences.

However, Gestalt, as an independent school, all of its theories and studies emphasis more on people's mentality and

experience. It believes that deeper understanding of people's mentalities and experiences can result to better study of their appreciation of beauty. Also, Gestalt school advocates that the operation of human brain is holistic which is different from simply addition of each part. For example, we don't perceive the beauty of a flower simply through its shape, color, size or other sensory information .our feelings toward a flower is linked with old experiences and impressions just like a person who has been pricked by rose thorns will never cast her view on the beauty but the thorns of the roses. this smoothly coincides with man's preference over his inner experiences.

AXE is a famous brand of men's Toiletries whose target consumers are men .Because the theories of Gestalt school best fit men's aesthetic psychology, the following analysis of AXE's advertisements will mainly derive from Gestalt's theories.

IV. AN ANALYSIS ON AXE PRINT ADVERTISEMENT

First let's take a look at the follow print advertisement which won the bronze Golden Lion Award in 2006 named "Get A GIRLFRIEND"[Fig. 1]. There are two young men about 20 years old holding a jump-contest for their bullfrogs(judges from their sizes). So, how to get a girlfriend? three simple steps:1, buy a bottle of AXE deodorant spray; 2, use it; 3, get a girlfriend. The second humor appears here which makes you laugh a little. When we are enjoying this work, we have always been lead by our inner aesthetic mentality.

This remands us whether we have been bored now or before like those two people in the picture? We are both bothered by boredom but we kill it in different ways. When "GET A GIRLFRIENG" appears, it reflects the materialization that has been emphasized by Gestalt School.

Young men at their 20s are especially full of hormones and energy, their top choice to get rid of boredom is to get a girlfriend. Each man has his own inner experience of getting a girlfriend; however, this work has offered them the easiest method that has been mentioned above.

AXE's print advertisement is definitely excellent, people are on one hand enjoying its humor and on the other hand admiring the boldness and novelty the idea.



Fig. 1. Get A GIRLFRIEND

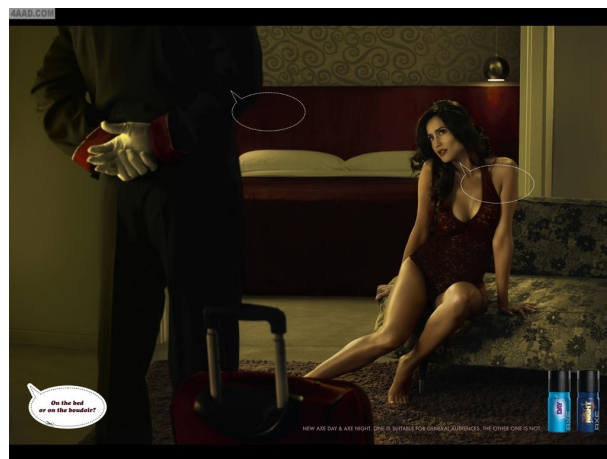


Fig.2.

The next picture is the work that won the Golden Lion Award out of which we can't easily find the theme but a short sentence—One the bed or on the boudoir [Fig.2]? There is a waiter and a half-dressed woman in the room of a restaurant, a travel suitcase lies aside. The picture has worm colors and expresses an ambiguous intimacy.

When a man views this, he has already regarded it as great in beauty because fair ladies always make men delight, as the old saying in ancient China: "A fair lady is a gentleman's good partner". Also, many men are looking forward to meet this situation. According to a survey , men has been more or less subtly expecting to encounter beautiful ladies, which makes men place more joy upon this work.

Let's go on enjoying this work, we can notice that the dialog box is empty, not even a single word or punctuation expect the only sentence at the corner of the picture—"On the bed or on the boudoir?" this sentence is rounded with a circle dotted line which means it can be cut off.

Most people may get puzzled but not any more after they saw several sentences and two bottles of spray at the right corner. These words read as follow: NEW AXE DAY&AXE NIGHT. ONE IS SUITABLE FOR GENERAL AUDIENCES. THE OTHER ONE IS NOT.

The theme of this picture shows that the move of these words to waiter's side indicates your choice of daylight AXE spray is made out of being the luggage people want to throw away. However, if it is moved to the waitress's side, it is clear that she is sending you an obvious sexual hint and wants some sexual contacts.

Men who notice this usually choose the moonlight ones because they want to be protagonists but not audiences. The appreciation of beauty has now reached a new level.

Freud had once said: the sense of beauty is a replacement of sexual content .men are easily turn on by the half-dress sexy ladies and romantic light of the picture after which they will subconsciously consider themselves as the waiters where comes the sexual content. But some men who want to become general audience are also full of pleasure, they may choose daylight ones to train their personal positioning. Their sexual desires were replaced contently and generate new sense of

beauty. In a sense, this work has truly taken all consumers in to consideration.

After you fully finish enjoying and understanding this work, you will definitely admire the designers' unique ideas, creativity, perfect colors and their expressions.

The last work was nominated at Gannes Pint Advertisement Festival in 2008 [Fig.3], at the right bottom of which is its sample theme: THE EFFECT. It's a simple picture, a bunch of sockets surrounding a plug which stands upright. One simple look of this work can hardly make people especially men feel excited. The colors are bright and lack a sense of intimacy, also there is no elements in this picture from which man can get elated. But it will be wrong and early to define this work as of no visual beauty and no originality.

If you continue to look, you will find a bottle of AXE deodorant spray at the right corner of the picture. Men with sexual experiences view it again as a whole through their inner experiences and consciousness will get sudden surprises and praise loudly.

The core of aesthetic psychology in humanistic psychology is self-actualization theory. According to this theory, self-actualization includes personal potency actualization and feature actualization. The former one serves as people's common potential actualization while the latter one is individual potential actualization.

Maslow believes that self-actualization is human's top motive and is based on physical needs. Human is the higher being that has been developing for hundreds even thousands of years from ordinary animals. That is why human still have animal's trait in their behaviors.

In Animalia, male animals are always accompanied by several female animals both among big animals like wild-lions and small animals like domestic animals. So, men's nature lies in their hopes of possessing several women which can be proofed in polygamy of ancient China, not only in China, but also in western countries.

Although all men are fond of having several ladies in company, not everyone can realize this desire. Those men who can't fulfill their desires will also get pleasure after understanding this advertisement.

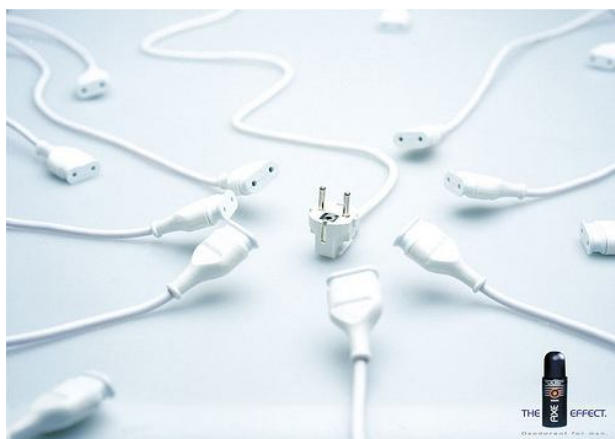


Fig. 3

AXE offers them an easy approach to realize their potentials—by using AXE deodorant spray. Both stimulation and fulfillment of individual potentials can bring people with delight.

So, we can help but praising again the wonder of AXE's original advertisement—a pure male advertisement which brings unparalleled visual excitement to men.

To sum up, I think the success of AXE deodorant spray advertisement results from its catch of men's aesthetic mentalities. Its advertisement offers men both a male humor and plenty of visual pleasure. Advertisement with the combination of visual pleasure and humor will always be a success.

We are those people who are fond of advertisement and unique ideas; we hope there will be more print advertisements with better quality and originality. May there is more visual and mental pleasures for us.