

GRAPHIC AND ADVERTISING Resource Box

NOTES FOR TEACHERS



These notes are intended primarily for Art and Design (KS3+). The notes are divided into three sections focusing on pre-visit preparation, using the resources in the Museum, and post-visit follow-up in the classroom.

BEFORE YOUR VISIT

As a preparatory task to viewing the Graphics and Advertising Resource Box, ask students to select a magazine advertisement which they like or think is particularly effective. Ask each student to explain their choice by saying a little about why the design appeals to them. Display this selection of advertisements in the classroom for future discussion and reference.

From this display ask each student to select the two advertisements which they think are the most successful. Give each student a gold and silver star (or something similar) to stick next to their choices: the advertisements with the most gold or silver stars will be the winners. Some preliminary discussion, before the judging, about criteria for assessing a piece of advertising will help students develop a critical eye. An agreed class list of criteria can be used by students to help them develop their own designs, and to evaluate what they see at the V&A.

AT THE MUSEUM

Ten students is the maximum number allowed for each Print Room session.

There are ten examples of advertising and design in the Graphics and Advertising Resource Box so each student could investigate one piece at a time, or students could work in pairs, spending some time looking at each piece individually. The box includes examples of advertising and design from each decade from the 1950s onwards. It could be useful to arrange the material in rough chronological order: this is the order used on the box contents list. The arrangement of the material in chronological order could be posed as a challenge for your students. The box contents are selective and not representative of each decade but they can still be used to explore some issues related to the changing nature of advertising and design over the last fifty years.

You could ask students to make a list of those points which they feel make each piece successful or unsuccessful in achieving its purpose. For example, does the advertisement have a powerful slogan, or use colour effectively? It might be helpful to look at one or two pieces as a group first.

Key questions

These are some key questions which you could pose for your students to help focus their thoughts when looking at the designs:

- What is the purpose or aim of the design?

- How has the designer tried to achieve this aim?

- How successful do you think they have been?
- How does the design capture the viewer's attention?
- What techniques have been used to produce the original artwork for the design?
- How could you replicate this technique or design?
- Does the design incorporate a logo?
- What purpose does the logo serve?
- Does the design rely entirely on visuals?
- What role does language play in the design?
- If the design incorporates written language, would it make sense without it?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of using language in advertising?
- What appeals does the design make to the viewer? Does it rely on sex appeal or humour? Does it stimulate curiosity? Does the design attempt to shock the viewer?
- Has the design dated? If so how could it be given a more contemporary feel?

You could ask students to decide which of the pieces included in the box they think is the most successful if you haven't done this previously. If they had to choose one design from this selection for a Gold or Silver Pencil award (the highest and second highest awards given by D&AD), which would they choose? Are the most successful advertisements and pieces of design always those created with the most difficult or complex techniques?

BACK AT SCHOOL

There are numerous possibilities for following up the work undertaken at the Museum, and begun at school. For example, possible projects could relate to:

- Producing an advertisement for a specific product.
- Redesigning the brand or corporate image of an organisation.
- Designing a poster that carries a political message or an appeal from a charitable organisation such as the NSPCC.
- Items 2, 3 & 10 in the Resource Box relate to packaging for albums. Students could be asked to design innovative prototype packaging for a CD which could be mass produced, but which still uses unusual materials or concepts.

Discussion Points

Advertising and controversy have never been far apart. This offers opportunities for some stimulating discussion and debate about the ethics of advertising.

Newspaper articles can be used as a starting point for discussion. Debates could cover:

➤ **Provocative images.** Some advertisements deliberately attempt to shock or provoke the viewer. The 'Act Up' advert (Item 7 in the Resource Box) refers to a Benetton advert which featured David Kirby (an AIDS activist) on his death bed. Act Up argue that such images shouldn't be used to sell clothing or to generate profit for a company like Benetton. Is it right to use shocking or emotive images to make profit? Is it any more acceptable for charitable organisations to use such images?

➤ **Tobacco advertising.** Is it right that millions of pounds is spent on advertising products which shorten lives and cause both heart disease and lung cancer? Cigarette advertising is heavily regulated by government, but should it be banned altogether?

➤ **Representation of women and men in advertising.** A 1950s advertisement for American cars is included in the box: it uses a representation of a woman to help sell the product. The depiction of women in advertising has often been controversial. Is advertising sexist, and does it promote unfavourable stereotypes? The Diesel advertisement features two men kissing and there has recently been an increase in the number of men complaining about sexist adverts. Are prejudice, stereotyping and sexism in advertising things of the past? Or is it just the gender of the target that has changed?

FUTHER INFORMATION

www.asa.org.uk

The website of the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA). The ASA is the independent, self-regulatory body for non-broadcast advertisements in the UK.

www.dandad.org

The website of British Design and Art Direction.

'A Teacher's Guide to Using the Print Room' (ISBN 1 85177 155 7)

This publication shows teachers how to use the Print Room at the V&A. It is available from the V&A Shop or by mail order at £5.95 (plus £1.45 p&p). Please refer to the V&A website for further details.

www.vam.ac.uk