

**ASPECTS OF THE VISUAL ARTS IN ADVERTISING WITH  
PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO SOUTH AFRICA**

**by**

**IAN GILBERT SUTHERLAND**

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submitted in fulfilment of the academic requirements for the degree of

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in

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University of Natal

Supervisor: Ms J. C. Leeb-du Toit

1998



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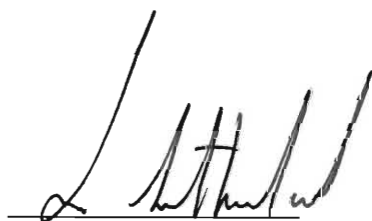


## **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to my father James Sutherland who when cancer had cruelly robbed him of sight in the one eye cast his remaining eye over most of this text before he died. This he did with the discipline of the ex-headmaster that he was in order to ensure that the punctuation and syntax is in order. In addition this text is also dedicated to all the children who are challenged by learning disabilities as proof that with a supportive family and a good computer dyslexia can be overcome.

## Declaration

I declare that this research project is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Gilbert Sutherland', written over a horizontal line.

Ian Gilbert Sutherland

Signed at DURBAN this 14<sup>th</sup> day of December, 1998.

## Acknowledgements

The financial assistance of the Centre for Science Development towards this research is hereby acknowledged. Opinions expressed in this thesis and conclusions arrived at, are not necessarily to be attributed to the Centre for Science Development.

In addition I would like to thank the following: My supervisor Juliette Leeb-du Toit for insisting on the academic rigour that this project required and deserved. Lindy Blignaut, Kay Smart and my father, James Sutherland for proof reading. Graham Stewart for the design of the master document in Wordperfect® and Anthony Russell for helping with the scanning of the images into Photoshop®. Anne Levisohn for many of the examples of art in advertising included in this text. The librarians of the Durban Municipal Library, the Don Africana Library, the Killie Campbell Africana Library, the University of Natal, Technikon Natal and the M. L. Sultan Technikon. My thanks also go to the librarians of the National Archives of South Africa at Cape Town and Pietermaritzburg.

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Finally, I would like to thank my wife, Beverley and my two sons, Andrew and David for the encouragement and support that they gave me and for the number of weekends and holidays they had to take on their own.

### **Note on Referencing**

For both primary and secondary texts this thesis uses the Harvard system of referencing, in which the relevant subject matter or quotation is followed in the text by the author's surname, the date and where appropriate, the page number (for example, SUTHERLAND 1998: 1). In all cases the date used is that of the edition to hand.

### **Technical note**

The text in this document was prepared in Wordperfect 8 ® and typeset in Times New Roman, 12 point. The illustrations were scanned on an Agfa® scanner into Photoshop® 4.0 to be laid out in Macromedia Freehand 8.0. Thereafter the final draft was printed with a Tektronics Phaser 340 on 80gm Rotatrim Bond paper.

## **Abstract**

This investigation accepts that art is a term of western culture and that advertising is a creation of an historical and social process firmly linked to the economies of western industrialised nations. A cultural niche theory of the visual arts is employed to define the various visual art forms and it is in this context that the development of the notion of fine art, which had its origins during the Renaissance, is investigated with a view to how this led to the commodification of art. The phenomenon of art as a commodity accelerated throughout the nineteenth century and was moulded by the same political, cultural, social, economic and technological forces that gave rise to advertising when, during the second half of the century, the capitalist system of production became geared towards mass production of products for consumption. This was also the period of significant European colonial expansion in southern Africa and consequently the development of both art and advertising in the region was cast in a colonial, European mould, the effects of which are investigated throughout this research project.

This body of research also seeks to explain how the meaning and the value of the art object and its reproduced image, changed and became exchangeable as technology developed. Significantly this occurred at a time when the needs of advertising shifted from a simple system of proclamation and announcement on the periphery of the national economy during the nineteenth century to become a sophisticated system of communication which acts as an influential social institution at the end of this millennium. That this appears to have occurred at a time when the influence of fine art began to decline as a cultural force is significant as it is in this context that advertising has become a primary carrier of meaning in society.

This research project works within this paradigm to investigate the history and motives of business support for the arts, particularly the visual arts, in the form of sponsorship with particular reference to a culturally diverse and politically dynamic South Africa. In addition, specific rhetorical devices that advertising employs, as a strategic tool of marketing, to appropriate and (ex)change meaning from the value laden visual art object is investigated with reference to contemporary advertising in South Africa.

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## Preface

The evolution of the title of this dissertation from “Art in Advertising in South Africa” to “Aspects of the Visual Arts in Advertising with particular reference to South Africa” is instructive in that it explains the process and content of this body of research. Soon after commencing the research project in 1995 it became clear that, because of its colonial history, a study of advertising and art in South Africa could not take place without reference to the historical and colonial context in which both disciplines evolved and functioned. This was particularly true of the origins and evolution of advertising and advertising design in Europe and the United States because it has had, and continues to have, an impact upon practice in South Africa. Thus a sub-text of this thesis reveals how advertising in South Africa was at first framed within a British colonial mould, during the latter part of the nineteenth and the early part of the twentieth centuries, then influenced by international (largely American) trends after the First World War (c.1920) until the current bombardment by varied global influences at the end of the millennium.

In order to understand fully the impact of this history it is instructive to consider what Edward Said has explained in his text on *Orientalism* when he observed that the West in its engagement with the Orient had a way of fashioning a representation of the “other” in its own image (1995: 5). In a later text, *Covering Islam* he explains how this essentially colonial approach still continues in the Western dominated mass media today (1997: 3). It could be argued that the same is true of Western representations of Africa. This is particularly true of the image created of the continent by colonialist inspired literature e.g. Rider Haggard (1856-1925), painters such as Thomas Baines (1820-1875) and more recently the modern mass media (Hollywood cinema and global television networks).

Importantly, Said goes on to make the point that the West not only framed the representation of the “other” but also distributed capitalist production methods and commodities to communities in the colonies (1995: 41). It is in this respect that Bush (1997) considers graphic design in the West to have aided such distribution. She observes that “as visual Orientalists, Western graphic designers have determined the global standard for good

communication and, in so doing, have reinforced the perceived dominance of the West through visual communication” (1997: 19). This investigation seeks to demonstrate how Bush’s assertion in respect of graphic and advertising design in South Africa maintains. Thus the change of the title to include the phrase “with particular reference to South Africa.”

As this research project progressed it became equally clear that the power of the West to fashion a representation of the “other” in its own terms also informs any discussion of the term art and the practice of art production outside Europe. This is particularly true of how the Western colonialists viewed the cultural products of the indigenous peoples of the territories that they controlled. At best indigenous art was referred to as “Primitive Art,” a term that one observes is still in use in Parisienne galleries today (*figure 1*). Thus in countries such as South Africa, a hierarchy between arts and traditional crafts with considerable shades of grey in between makes a simple definition of the term Art difficult, if not impossible.

As this text will demonstrate, to complicate matters, art production and appreciation can also be viewed in terms of social class with yet another hierarchy between high art on the one end and mass produced “popular” art on the other. Many have argued that advertising itself is an important “popular” art form of the twentieth century (Josephson 1996: 5). It must also be recognised that design also has a complex relationship with art which stretches from the term “applied arts” during the nineteenth century to “commercial art” by the mid-twentieth century to current notions of design art. In advertising design, the graphic artist, illustrator, graphic designer and the photographer are still regarded as “artists” working within the creative department under an art director.

It is clear that throughout the twentieth century cross-references and transformations between traditional craft and art, art and design, high and low art have taken place. Indeed crossover and cross-reference are characteristics of Post-Modernism. Thus I deemed it wise to use the term “visual arts” in the title to avoid the restrictions and misunderstandings that the term art might imply.

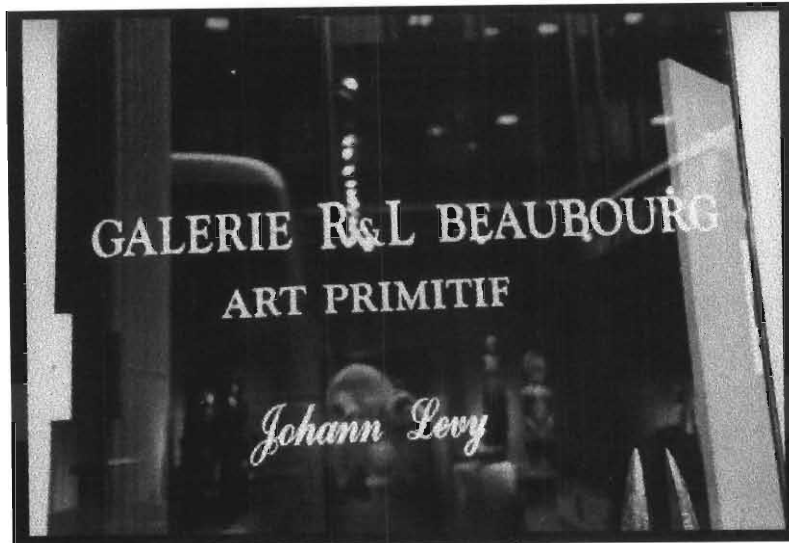


figure 1

August, 1940 South African Advertising and Selling

## WOMEN WILL CHAT!

*An axiom becomes a prophecy*

The way to a man's heart is through his stomach. The way to a woman's purse is—Chat! Chat about anything that interests her. Chat about her home and her clothes. Chat about her health and her cosmetics. Chat about her luxuries and her bargains, about her necessities and her economies. Chat about her books and her cinema shows. Chat about her family and her neighbour's family.

The new monthly magazine "Chat" talks to its readers about just such homely but vitally interesting topics. And it talks to them in a bright gossipy way that will appeal to South African women of all money groups, not merely the "upper class". It has 100 per cent. feminine appeal, including in its features a short story, a social column, fashions and a mail-bag page. Profusely illustrated, and with a modern layout, "Chat" is a national magazine, with a guaranteed minimum distribution of 15,000 copies. It has been de-



signed, edited and published to interest the women of South Africa, and to serve the alert advertisers who recognize in "Chat" a medium that *contacts* the women of South Africa—a rich, consistent and money-spending market.

## CHAT

**The surest way to interest  
South African women**

When you apply for further particulars about this powerful new medium, write to The Manager, P.O. Box 8463, Johannesburg. Advertisement tariff is available from that address.

figure 2

It must be recognised that not all promotion is advertising. Some have argued that we live in a promotional age, self promotion being but one form. Significantly during the twentieth century many artists (Pablo Picasso [1881-1973], Salvador Dali [1904-1988] and Andy Warhol [1930-1989] to name but a few) have chosen to promote themselves, albeit in different ways, ultimately in order to sell their product (art). Here the cultural market, active with art producers, publishers, museum curators and gallery owners, has a vested interest in the promotion of art and artists. One aspect of this promotion that is common to both artist and designer is the power of the creator's signature as a promotional device. One could go further and argue that the reputation and the style of an artist or designer is often regarded as being as valuable as the signature in the market place. As this text aims to demonstrate, the use of style often leads to parody and pastiche, if not to a dangerous infringement of copyright. Hence this text investigates the importance of the signature and style as marketing tools.

### **Relevance of research**

This text has been prepared with South African graphic design students in mind. As such it is situated within the curriculum requirements of the current National Diploma in Graphic Design and the newly introduced Bachelor of Technology Degree in Graphic Design to be offered as a course of study (1999) at the M. L. Sultan Technikon in Durban where I teach the History and Theory of Design. My twenty years of experience in this capacity have made me aware of the difficulty that many students have in understanding the relationship between art and design. While much has been written, internationally, about the impact of advertising upon art, very little has been written, either nationally or internationally, about the impact that art has had on advertising. In this sense this text aims to make an original contribution to the development of a relevant design history in South Africa.

In addition it is important to note that the transformation of South African education requires more texts to be written from a South African perspective. All of the works that Margolin (1994) lists as having gained "widespread recognition" in graphic design history are from countries in the northern hemisphere and these texts are currently widely used in South African graphic design courses.<sup>1</sup> An important function of this text therefore is to

define what is meant by the terms advertising, advertising and graphic design and to investigate how they function within what is known as the “marketing mix” within the South African context.

In addition to this, it is evident that a multi-cultural student body often experiences difficulty in understanding how culture, more specifically, their own culture and sense of identity can be an important and dynamic part of the marketing process. Once again, this is particularly true of South African students who have no locally produced texts to which they can refer. To that end, over the past two years (1997/1998), students have already benefited from various sections contained in this project which have been used as discussion papers which have replaced inappropriate, imported material.

The training of graphic designers in South Africa demands that the history and theory aspects of their course should not only be culturally relevant, but also compatible with the applied nature of the discipline. Hence there is a need to encourage an integration between history, theory and practice. Thus this text aims not only to be understandable to a group of culturally diverse students, the majority of whom are English second language speakers, but also understandable in both theoretical and practical terms. This divide is not an easy one to bridge as Sean Brierley notes in his recently published *Advertising Handbook* in which he protests the “ghettoisation” of academic life from real life practices. He observes that universities and colleges generally teach advertising from two perspectives:

“for those on business courses wishing to go into advertising and marketing, and those on arts and humanities courses who seek to examine advertising in its widest cultural context. Ironically, many students on arts and humanities courses also end up in the advertising industry and find that much of the social or semiotic analysis they performed at college bears little or no relation to everyday practice. It is tempting to suggest that the very real uses of social and semiotic analysis are often rejected or mis-appropriated by those in the industry.” (Brierley 1995: 2)

Advertising is an important industry in South Africa and is one of the few that can be described as being truly, globally competitive. <sup>2</sup> (*figure 3*) My purpose therefore is not to construct a theoretical critique of advertising nor the profession within which many design students aspire to make a livelihood. Instead I seek to apply the issues raised by various theorists, practitioners and critics in a manner that is accessible and allows the (student) reader to draw their own conclusions. As Middlesex University academic Judith Williamson points out there is a pressing need for the education system to encourage self confidence amongst students particularly in any work that may theorise about advertising. To this end she notes that most advertisements “*intend* to make us feel we are lacking and [therefore] it would be terrible if ‘theoretical’ books *about* advertisements had the same effect” (1992: 8).

Another divide that this text takes cognisance of is that which exists between art and design. While it is clear that the division between art and design is not unique to South Africa, as an art/design historian I am aware of a form of segregation that exists in South Africa between artists and designers, art and design educationists, art historians and design historians which tends to polarise each to his/her respective disciplines. In a very modest way I hope that this research project will also facilitate the break down of the artificial and unnecessary barriers that exist, not only between the fine arts and design, but also between academics and the practitioners of advertising design in a manner that will do justice to them all.

It is inevitable that in attempting to discuss design practice and how it relates to the production of art, certain challenges and contradictions will arise. In nature and intention, art and design are different. This not only affects the practice but also the product of the creative process in both disciplines. It could be said that within the Western paradigm, since the beginning of the Renaissance until quite recently, individual authorship has been an important feature of art. Design by contrast tends towards being an anonymous, collaborative effort. Similarly, within the Western notion of fine art, communication has tended to express the view and/or the feelings of the creator. A number of critiques have gone so far as to define this view as a male dominated one in which there is an assumed

R350M SAA SELL-OFF THREAT / MINING SECTOR'S PENSION TIME BOMB

May 9 1997

R6.50 including Vat

# Financial Mail

## Taking on the world

**Our advertising agencies rank among the best anywhere. Can the industry survive its own successes?**

John Hunt & Reg Lascaris  
of TBWA Hunt Lascaris, SA's  
first international agency



**OFFSHORE FUNDS REV UP FOR THE SA MARKET**  
*But locals will face a whole new set of tricky investment decisions*

figure 3



male audience (Chadwick 1990: 10).

By way of contrast, the designer is expected to communicate ideas and feelings that are appropriate to a “targeted” audience. Unlike the audience of most fine art, often the target market requires that the designer address children and significantly, in advertising, the audience is also often assumed to be female (Schudson 1993: 61). This view was explicitly advanced by early South African trade texts promoting a new women’s magazine *Chat* (1940) which is described as being “designed, edited and published to interest the women of South Africa, and to serve the alert advertisers who recognize in *Chat* a medium that *contacts* the women of South Africa - a rich, consistent and money spending market” (Anon.1940: 8) (*figure 2*).

It should also be noted that the terms art and artist have, historically, had different meanings within the design paradigm. Significantly the title, “commercial artist” was still used in South Africa until end of the 1960's. The term commercial artist is revealing in that it implies that the work of an artist has been put to commercial use. This body of research suggests that, initially this was true, as will be seen in the advertisements produced by Henri Toulouse-Lautrec (1864-1901) and his contemporaries during the later part of the nineteenth century. As the needs of advertising changed from announcement to inducement during the first half of the twentieth century, the demands upon an artist working within the commercial domain changed dramatically. This often led to conflict which has clouded a clear understanding of the terms art and artist within the commercial domain. Inevitably the Western notion of “high” art and culture would accord an inferior status upon the work of a “commercial” artist whose work was produced to function within the “low” cultural domain of mass consumption. It is not surprising that conflicts should arise.

### **Design History**

Currently there are no design history courses available at any South African University or Technikon at either the Honours or Masters level, hence a body of work such as this that aims to make a contribution to the establishment of an appropriate South African design history and theory has to be produced under the auspices of established disciplines. In doing

so it needs to be said that there are dangers in any interdisciplinary work in that one is vulnerable to criticism from either of the pure disciplines regarding insufficient depth in either field.

Another difficulty that has to be recognised is that the history of art is a well established discipline and, although it may currently be experiencing radical ideological and philosophical revision (this is particularly true of art in South Africa), it still has a wealth (if not a weight) of literature and tradition behind it. Conversely, design history has not been defined and there is a danger in a work such as this to consider it as an extension of art history which it is not. To make things even more difficult, “the question of what design history is about has never been thoroughly addressed or debated, which has resulted in considerable confusion in the field” (Margolin 1994: 235).

Even within design practice and what little theory surrounds it, there is much that still needs to be done to define the various design disciplines. This is particularly true of the relationship between graphic design and advertising. While all graphic design may not be concerned with advertising, it is an essential part in the creation of all advertisements, especially print advertising, packaging, promotional material and corporate identities. This is particularly true of the complex and sophisticated advertisements which employ the artistic talents of advertising agencies and which are the focus of this project.

Hence the debate contained in this project is prepared, largely, within uncharted territory. As such, this work does not pretend to be definitive. On the contrary, my intention in venturing in this direction is to begin what I believe will be an on-going exploration, which few people in South Africa have ventured into. Those who have done so have often approached the subject as part of another discipline such as women’s studies (Myers 1983), cultural studies (Tomaselli 1993), marketing, communications (Green and Lascaris 1990), sociology (Baudrillard 1985) and, in a few notable cases, art history itself (Buntman 1996). This observation however, gives one a hint as to the nature of design and its history: it is inter-disciplinary and, as such, this body of research does not always conform to the strict confines of any one discipline.

This research is therefore placed within a complex social, political, technological, geographic, economic and cultural matrix and, as such, is not intended as a stylistic investigation. While this investigation will make particular reference to advertising in South Africa, the country's colonial history makes it important to investigate, in appropriate depth, advertising design in the United States and Europe since it has affected practice in a culturally complex country such as South Africa. Consequently this dissertation has two distinct strands in that it represents an attempt to tell an essentially simple and didactic story about the development of advertising in South Africa while, at the same time, explaining (in understandable terms) some theoretical issues that are pertinent. In part this explains the extra-ordinary length and breadth of the research which is also reflected in the diversity of images that are used to illustrate the text. Further, it is also intended that the large number of illustrations be allowed to communicate visually and to tell a story of their own thereby acknowledging the role of the visual in academic discourse.

### **Methodology**

As the bibliography shows, this body of research has necessitated extensive reading in the fields of visual arts, design, art and design history, sociology, marketing and advertising. The insights gained from these readings have been applied by working with primary sources such as newspapers, magazines, posters and other items associated with advertising and promotional campaigns in order to gain new insights. This survey has taken place within the archives of various libraries and many less formal venues where advertising and promotional items can be found. Interviews and discussions have taken place with a number of working designers, artists and cultural workers to gain insight into the context in which their artistic and design products function.

### **Primary Sources**

It must be recognised that most design, by its very nature, is transient and ephemeral and this is particularly true of advertisements which are designed for the promotion of products and services to a particular audience in a specific period in time. Consequently a great deal of research time has been spent working with primary sources to collect relevant examples to validate the text. In the gathering of these examples a body of knowledge that has already

been established by others, primarily in Europe and the United States of America (USA), has been applied to the South African context with my own insights. In this process, it is hoped that a unique understanding of how the visual arts is used for advertising and promotion purposes has been created.

### **Secondary Sources**

As mentioned earlier, this interdisciplinary study has been based on a wide reading of texts in the fields of advertising, design and art, and beyond. However this dissertation has been influenced by specific texts. Because an important part of this research project concerns itself with matters that pertain to the issue of consumption it is (almost) inevitable that translated texts by French writers such as Barthes, Baudrillard, Bourdieu and to a lesser extent, Foucault and Lyotard have had either a direct or indirect influence upon much of the material. This is particularly true of Baudrillard's work which informs much of the content of Chapter Three "Commodities: Objects of Desire." This chapter applies the theories contained in his essays "The System of Objects" as reproduced in Thackara's *Design After Modernism* and an expanded version "Subjective Discourse or The Non-Functional System of Objects" published in his own text *Revenge of the Crystal - selected writings on the Modern Object and its Destiny, 1968-1983*. These ideas are particularly relevant in the South African context with respect to Ester Mahlangu's hand crafted BMW (1991) produced for the "Art Car" series which transforms a mass-produced 5 Series vehicle into a unique 'model' not intended for usage on the road as part of an image building exercise for the manufacturer.

Baudrillard's later essay "The Ecstasy of Communication" is linked to McAllister's text *The Commercialization of American Culture* in that they both explain how, in the media age, the boundaries between the private and public space have collapsed. As such both texts have had an important impact upon my understanding of contemporary events and consequently the contents of this dissertation.

Central to the subject of art and art history and how it relates to the mass media is John Berger's *Ways of Seeing* (1974). In this text Berger argued that modern publicity derives

its system of pictorial rhetoric from the European easel painting tradition. Although Berger tends to downplay the metaphysical power of art, his views on the effect of the mechanical reproduction of art on our “ways of seeing” has informed this body of research on the subject of how the printed image has influenced the ways in which art functions in both “high” and “low” cultural domains. On this subject Berger draws strongly upon an earlier text by Walter Benjamin *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1936). In spite of the fact that he wrote about the reproduced image before the advent of the microprocessor and the advent of the digital image Benjamin’s ideas are particularly relevant decades after they were conceived. The current revolution in high powered computers ensures that images are not only stored but are received and transmitted on a global network.

It was Benjamin’s ideas that informed André Malraux’s 1954 publication, *The Voices of Silence*, and his subsequent text *Museum Without Walls* (1965), which has also influenced aspects of this dissertation. Malraux maintains that the existence of museums has irrevocably altered the way in which art is experienced and that the millions of art reproductions constitute a *musée imaginaire*, a museum of the imagination and of images, a museum without walls. Malraux explains how, by mechanically reproduced means, the imaginary museum extends the process set in motion by the physical museum and makes art available to the private individual. This text suggests that Malraux’s ideas apply to the visual arts of different eras and cultures but occurs at the cost of de-contextualization and of providing substitutes for originals. This dissertation contends that it is within this context that advertising not only “substitutes the original” but also uses the de-contextualization of the art object to create new meanings.

John A. Walker’s *Art in the age of Mass Media* (1983) was intended to extend the debate begun by Berger to examine what Walker called “contemporary *fine* art practice and the ways it interconnects with the mass media” (1983: 9). However, for a different set of reasons his chapter “Mass Culture Uses Art” precipitated a train of thought that informs this text. In this chapter Walker refers to the BMW Art Car campaign in which artists such as Andy Warhol (1928-1987), Alexander Calder (1898-1976) and Roy Lichtenstein (1923-

1997) were invited to “decorate” a BMW car (c.1978). Subsequent to this publication, as mentioned above the South African painter Ester Mahlangu (b.1936) was commissioned to become a part of the BMW Art Car series and this event (1991) and Walker's views on the BMW advertising campaign inspired me to consider the implications of the transformation and de-contextualization of South African art in advertising.

Another important text, written in the tradition of both Berger and Malraux, is *Believing Is Seeing: Creating the Culture of Art* (1995) by Mary Anne Staniszewski. This text places emphasis upon contemporary cultural developments and attempts to indicate how “ideologies appear to be natural or the way things should be” (1995: 33). Central to her argument is the ideology of the “culture of art” that “came into being in the late eighteenth century when the authority of the European monarchies began to dissolve” (op. cit.102). This dissertation seeks to create an understanding of art, culture and the culture of art and as such is greatly informed by Staniszewski’s argument. However where the challenge lies in any discussion of art in South Africa is that the ideology that often defines our “lived relation to the real” has been strongly influenced by colonialism and even more devastatingly, by the segregationist policies that permeated the country.

On the subject of authority dissolving, Marshall Berman’s *All That is Solid Melts Into Air* provides the framework for my understanding of how modernism developed in three phases. According to Berman the first phase began “roughly from the start of the sixteenth century to the end of the eighteenth [when] people were just beginning to experience modern life” (1982: 16). For the purposes of this dissertation this was a particularly important phase in that it was during this period that the notion of the fine artist was first proposed. Subsequently, during the second phase which, according to Berman begins with the great revolutionary wave of the 1790's when “[with] the French Revolution and its reverberations a great modern public abruptly and dramatically comes to life” (op. cit. 17). This was the modern public that was to be the audience for the earliest forms of advertising.

In the third and final phase, the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the process of modernisation expands to take in virtually the whole world, and according to Berman “the developing world culture of

modernism achieves spectacular triumphs in art and thought” (ibid.). This dissertation tracks the parallel development of advertising through the internationalisation of modernism that Berman describes, to the globalized culture and economy that postmodernist writers such as Jameson defines in his text *Postmodernism or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*.

While a wide variety of sources were used to define advertising a clear and simple definition of art proved to be predicably difficult. As the title of this dissertation changed to encompass the visual arts Susan Josephson’s *From Idolatry To Advertising - Visual Art and Contemporary Culture* proved to be invaluable. Josephson’s notion of the cultural niche for each of the visual arts from fine art to design art has provided an essential framework within which my discussion of the visual arts and advertising takes place. On the subject of art and advertising, Margolin’s text, “Product Appeal and the Aura of Art” (1992) proved particularly helpful in that he identifies specific rhetorical devices that advertisers in the United States use in appropriating art images in their advertising. In the same essay Margolin also deals with the subject of how business in the United States became involved in sponsorship of the arts during the 1960’s. Serendipity played a part when, during the course of my research, a similar initiative for business sponsorship of the arts, Business Arts South Africa (BASA) was launched in South Africa during 1997. Margolin’s insights and explanation of the circumstances in the United States during the 1960’s enabled me to understand the implications of such an initiative in South Africa over three decades later.

Robert Hewison has remarked that we live in an age of “commercial consumption and rapid redundancy of ideas” (1990: 20). However, this body of research maintains that the ideas of artists such as Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968) about the de-contextualisation of the object/image, Malraux’s *museum without walls* concept and Berger’s critique of the art of publicity are not redundant but have a fresh currency at the end of the millennium. Once again this is particularly true in view of the fact that the *global village* that Marshal McLuhan defined during the 1960’s (quoted in Stearn 1967: 164) has become a *virtual* reality thirty years later. Computers and the global information networks such as the Internet and global television have realised his ideas and as such they have a new currency.



Larry Allyson, the CEO of the computer software company, Oracle, in a BBC World television interview described the current information revolution as “a cultural revolution” (Allyson on *Hard Talk* BBC, 13<sup>th</sup> December, 1997). The fact that one is able to quote information which has been broadcast globally by satellite television, substantiates the contention that information retrieval has made the globe comparable to a village in the sense that McLuhan intended it: “shrunk in the wash with speeded-up information movement from all directions” (quoted in Stearn 1967: 167). Hence various global radio and television broadcasts are also used as an important secondary source for material for this project.

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## Notes

1. Margolin lists Philip Meggs’ *History of Graphic Design* (1983, revised and expanded 1992), Richard Hollis *Graphic Design: A Concise History* (1994), and supplementary works such as *Thirty Centuries of Graphic Design: An Illustrated Survey* by James Craig and Bruce Barton (1987) and *The Thames and Hudson Encyclopaedia of Graphic Design + Designers* (1992) by Alan and Isabella Livingston. All these texts are, currently, widely used in South African graphic design courses.

2. In 1997 the South African advertising industry was estimated to be worth R15 billion (*Finance*, 3<sup>rd</sup> August, 1997: 2). TBWA Hunt Lascaris and Ogilvy & Mather, Rightford, Searle-Tripp and Makin were named by the prestigious US trade magazine, *Advertising Age* as the International Agency of the Year in 1993 and 1996 respectively.

## Chapter 1: Advertising : Definitions and Terms

While many texts on advertising take opposing ideological positions most, if not all, agree on its importance to contemporary society and culture. Critics of advertising such as Judith Williamson goes so far as to maintain that “advertisements are one of the most important cultural factors moulding and reflecting our life today” (1992 : 11 ). While others, such as Gillian Dyer, maintain that “in a sense [advertising] is the “official art” of the advanced industrial nations of the west” (1992: 1). Given the rhetoric that surrounds the subject perhaps a background of the etymology and a strict definition of the term advertising and its practice may be useful and informative.

### Advertising : etymology

The word “advertising” comes from the Latin *adverto* and *advertere* in which *ad* means “to” and *vertere* means “to turn.” Hence, according to Barnard the word advertising “includes the idea of turning one’s attention to something, of drawing or calling attention to something” (1995: 26). Originally the word developed to give the sense of “giving notice” or “telling someone about something.” Barnard maintains that all the posted advertisements that appeared at the end of the fifteenth century conform to this sense of the word.<sup>1</sup> However, the use of the word “advertisement” in everyday language and the popular press only occurred around the middle of the seventeenth century when notices were posted by commercial concerns such as publishers informing the public of “An Advertisement of Books Newly Published” (op. cit. 28). It is curious how even at this early stage, the newly established print media were amongst the first to use advertising to promote their products.

According to Dyer it was during the second half of the nineteenth century that the term “advertising” began to acquire its modern meaning in which the sense of “informing” becomes subordinate to that of “persuasion.” Dyer ascribes this shift to the Great Depression of c.1875-95 which caused manufacturers to pay more attention to advertising their goods (1992: 41). Barnard agrees with this view when he asserts that during this period the qualitative meaning of the term “advertising” changed “from an informative, conditional innocent and naive sense to a persuasive, imperative, knowing and sophisticated

sense” (1995: 30). It is in this context that the modern meaning of the term advertising needs to be defined.

### **Advertising : a definition**

In its simplest form, advertising is a system of communication which has advertisements as its end-products. According to strict dictionary definition, in accordance with the etymology of the term, the Oxford English Dictionary describes the verb to advertise as “to notify, warn, inform, make generally known or to ask for by public notice” (1950: 20). However, the Concise Oxford Dictionary defines it within its modern, commercial sense and describes it as: “to draw attention to or describe favourably (goods or services) in a public medium to promote sales” (1990: 60).

The generally accepted definition of advertising in most textbooks on the subject is that written by Jeremy Bullmore, the London chairman of a leading advertising agency, J. Walter Thompson who defines advertising as “Any paid-for communication intended to inform and/or influence one or more people” (quoted in Douglas 1984: 10). Generally the type of communication that takes place in advertising is non-personal in nature. However, recent developments in technology such as the Internet and the deployment of satellite communication systems are challenging notions, not only about traditional media, but also about the nature of the non-personal communications that they carry. For example radio has changed to become a “talk back” medium with stations such as the Gauteng based 702 described in its advertising as “Talk Radio.” Interactive television is not far off and nor is the more widespread, interactive use of the Internet (Fletcher 1994: 101). According to Fletcher, these developments will not only redefine the nature and practice of advertising by allowing for interactive marketing, but also indicate the emergence of new forms of paid-for communication which will challenge old practices (ibid.).

According to Brierley, an all embracing definition of advertising needs to take these developments into account and should include all paid-for publicity (1995: 3). Paid-for publicity is a growing trend that should not be confused with free publicity. By free publicity Brierley means: a television interview or an article in a newspaper which is not, by

definition, advertising, even though it promotes an idea or product and may lead to an increase in sales. An example of how the lines have become blurred can be observed in the strategy that British Airways (BA) used to launch the new livery on their aircraft during 1997. This example is of relevance to South Africa in that the work of South African artists was not only an integral part of the new BA design identity but a small local airline, Comair was bought by BA at the time of the re-launch as an internal carrier on the South African route. In order to publicise these changes aircraft were flown, at great cost, to major centres, such as Johannesburg International Airport, to launch the new design. Consequently publicity followed in articles that were targeted in the popular press such as the *Sun* newspaper in England and *Fairlady* magazine in South Africa (*figure 1.1 & 1.2*). Significant to later discussion on advertising and identity, the British *Sun* newspaper article (29 September, 1997: 3) focussed on the issue of national identity that would concern the British reader, while the *Fairlady* (July, 1997: 17) insert emphasized the role played by three South African women artists in the tail designs of two aircraft. In this way the communication is tailored to capture the interests of a specific national market in order to publicise what is being launched as a global product.

## **Media**

Central to any overview of advertising and how it functions in contemporary society, is an understanding of its relationship to the media. By strict definition what is referred to as “media” in current parlance usually forms part of what is known as the *mass media*. Although many historians date the invention of the printing press as the beginning of the age of mass media, it is rather, according to Walker, “a uniquely twentieth century phenomenon (in that the expression) denotes certain modern systems of communication and distribution which ‘mediate’ between relatively small, specialized groups of cultural producers and very large groups of cultural consumers” (1983: 19). In this sense advertising, itself, is regarded as an important part of the mass media.

According to Fletcher the most important forms of mass media are the press, television, photography, cinema, video, CD Rom, radio, magazines, paperback publishing, recorded music (compact discs, tapes, records) and the Internet (1994: 98). Having established what

# Fins are on the up

## WE'RE FLYING HIGH AGAIN SAYS BRITISH AIRWAYS BOSS

THE world's favourite airline was anything but that when a strike disrupted British Airways flights during the peak holiday period in July. A management plan to save £42million by selling off in-flight catering services sparked off a dispute with cabin crew which cost BA £125million through cancelled flights and lost bookings. But now the dispute has been settled and the company is flying high once again.

Here BA boss BOB AYLING tells The Sun's Chris Roycroft-Davis why his company's success is so important to Britain.



figure 1.1

A black and white photograph of a British Airways aircraft tail fin. The tail fin is decorated with a large, intricate piece of indigenous art. The art depicts seven jackals resting under trees, a traditional motif of the San people. The tail fin is shown in profile, flying towards the right. The words "BRITISH AIRWAYS" are visible on the fuselage of the aircraft.

### Up, up and away

Two examples of southern Africa's wonderfully colourful indigenous art will soon be taking to the skies as British Airways transform themselves for the millennium. The airline has chosen 50 images from around the world to be painted on to the tails of some 308 aircraft to celebrate and unite the global village that BA serves.

Above is a tail sporting the work of Cgoise (Cg'ose Ntcox'o, above left) of the Ncōakhoe tribe of the San. It depicts seven jackals resting under trees and draws on the San's prehistoric memories and mythology. Cgoise is one of a group of a dozen or so artists who work at the Kuru Development Trust, an organisation for the self-development of the region's San people. At the trust they have been introduced to various techniques to keep alive their artistic culture.

The bold geometric patterns of Ndebele artists Emmly and Martha Masanabo (centre left), twin sisters from Wolwekraal in Mpumalanga, graces another tail (bottom left), shown here with the designs of artists from Hong Kong, the Netherlands, the USA and Ireland. These three women's art is right up there with the best from around the world, and the intensity of colours used – especially compared with some of the other work – is a brilliant reflection of the culturally rich African village we live in. Those of you with access to the Internet can view some of the other countries' images on the BA site: [www.british-airways.com](http://www.british-airways.com)

figure 1.2

is meant by the term mass media, it is important to note the way in which the media function and to recognise that they are currently in the process of radical change. Inevitably these changes have an impact upon the messages they communicate especially in advertising. McAllister maintains that this is particularly true since the 1980s and early 1990s which “had a spilt personality for the advertising industry, reflecting both the reduction of advertising’s control [of media] in some sectors and the freedom from previous restrictions in others” (1996: 17). According to McAllister, in the electronic media, the video tape recorder with a fast forward facility enabled viewers to “zip” through advertisements while, at the same time the infrared control button allowed television viewers to “zap” from channel to channel during advertising spots. “During this time, advertising as an institution felt an increasing lack of control over media viewing behaviour, audience demographics and mediated environment of ads” (op. cit. 18).

These technological developments have not only prompted advertisers to seek out less conventional means of advertising which, as will be discussed, have proved to be invasive of both the public and private space but, they also indicate a rapid trend towards what is referred to as the *de-massification* of media. According to Fletcher the *de-massed* market enables smaller *niche* markets to develop with significant implications for advertising in the future (1994: 111). A rapidly developing example of a de-massed audience is to be found on the Internet which enables small groups of people to form a network which in turn creates a sub-group that has its own set of interests and identifies with a particular mode of address. While indications are that fine artists have been slow to utilise this new medium and, while this is possibly due to the inadequacy of current soft and hardware to “carry” and download images with the necessary speed and clarity, marketing interests have been quick to recognise its potential.

### **The advertising debate**

In spite of what future developments in media may hold the contemporary urban experience is saturated by all forms of advertising. This fact is of great significance to our cultural and economic life and explains why advertising is often the focus of heated debate in both cultural and economic terms. However, as in art history, there is much to be gleaned from

both the practitioner and the critic, tempered by observations of how the practice functions within society as a whole.

Much of the literature published about advertising tends to fall into two distinct groupings. Firstly, there are the “how to advertise” guides that are published by renowned practitioners such as David Ogilvy’s *Ogilvy on Advertising* (1983) or Winston Fletcher’s *How To Capture the Advertising High Ground* (1994). Often these books not only attempt to give practical advice but also contain spirited defences of what advertising can, and should do for the client and/or society. Equally spirited are the many critiques that not only contest the efficacy of advertising (Schudson 1993), but are critical from an ideological point of view (e.g. Berger 1974, Williamson 1992).

The debate on advertising occurs in a number of different contexts: political, economic, social, cultural and artistic. Those who defend advertising do so from a capitalist inspired point of view on the grounds that it is not only economically necessary but has raised people’s standard of living by encouraging the sales of mass-produced goods which in turn stimulates production that creates employment and prosperity. This argument is of particular significance in encouraging growth in a developing economy such as South Africa. Equally important for a young democracy, such as South Africa, is the argument that advertising plays a democratic role by providing a freedom of choice within a “free” economy and in the “free world” (*figure 1.3*).

However, academics such as Gui Bonsiepe have expressed concern about the viability and sustainability of “a lifestyle and society centred on stimulation of sales and promotion of merchandises” (1993: 5). The notion of linking consumer choice with democratic choice has also been contested by a number of anti-capitalist critics who maintain that the choice of what and what not to consume is a substitute for *real* political choice. Stewart Ewen has gone so far as to maintain that advertising is “a cultural apparatus aimed at defusing and neutralizing potential unrest” (1974: 12).

To counter this type of criticism, there was an advertisement called “Your Right To



Choose” for the American Advertising Association broadcast on the global television broadcaster Cable Network News (CNN) throughout 1997, in which the viewer is asked to imagine a world without advertising. The scene is a sports event. First the billboards around the stadium disappear then the crowds disappear, then the stands, the field, the team and finally the lights go out. The point is made that, without sponsorship and advertising revenue, such events would not be televised and thus, might not take place at all.

Central to this argument is the perception that advertising is not only benign but essential to a capitalist economy. This defence is to be expected from an industry which depends entirely on advertising for its livelihood. However the reluctance of advertisers to sponsor events or support television programmes, newspapers and magazines that might be deemed to be controversial gives one a hint of the dangers of media being too dependent upon advertising for its existence. This was borne out by the demise of *The Rand Daily Mail* which lost significant advertising support when it took a stronger anti-apartheid stance during the 1970's (Mervis 1989: 477). Marilyn Martin, the Director of the South African National Gallery, noted, with reference to commercial sponsorship of national exhibitions, that “sponsorship money is nervous money” (personal interview with Martin, 1996). Sponsorship of the arts is the subject of Chapter Six.

Dyer makes a significant point when she observes that while advertising was originally used by newspaper owners as a necessary and manageable support cost, “today it suffuses the whole system of mass communication and some economists argue that the media are in fact not just part of the economy but its servants. The media convert audiences into markets, and because they exist through “selling” audiences to “advertisers” (1992: 9-10). Hence it is ironic that the very power that advertising has over the media can also make advertisers themselves vulnerable to various pressure groups which can promote consumer boycotts. Programmes sponsored by a single company can become particularly vulnerable e.g. television programmes such as “Technics Heart of the Beat,” “Gillette Super Sport,” or “Shell Road To Fame.” In the United States the “nervousness” that Martin describes as a factor in arts sponsorship has induced many commercial television programmes to avoid contentious issues and thus constitutes a form of self-censorship that is the anthesis of “the



right to choose.”<sup>2</sup> It is thus not difficult to imagine the consequence of corporate sponsorship of the arts and how the threat of consumer pressure can adversely affect the notion of freedom of expression and can subtly influence the content of exhibitions and even the work of artists themselves.

On the other hand, it is important to note that, internationally, the power of the consumer was used to force international companies to disassociate themselves from the Apartheid regime and led to the disinvestment of many companies from South Africa e.g. Kodak and IBM. Throughout the 1980's and early 1990's consumer power was wielded by (black) South African workers against specific companies and service providers as a political weapon to meet their demands for better working and living conditions. Eventually these disinvestment and consumer boycotts were essential tactics of the anti-Apartheid movement's drive to make South Africa ungovernable (c.1985-1993).

Having hinted at the ideological implications of advertising in general terms it is important to be specific in defining the various forms of advertising practice in order to understand how pervasive the mediating influence of advertising can be. A definition and discussion of the terms is also required in order to provide a framework within which subsequent discussion on how the visual arts are used in advertising can take place. Firstly, it needs be said that while advertising can be described as a strategic tool of marketing it is also a communications medium that does not always confine itself to the selling of products. Hence the first distinction to be made is that between non-commercial and commercial advertising.

### **Non-Commercial Advertising**

Strictly defined, non-commercial advertising refers to notices and appeals from charities, religious groups, political parties, associations and government agencies. According to Dyer this form of advertising is usually non-profit making but often uses the same persuasive techniques associated with commercial advertising (1992: 5). The democratisation process in South Africa has been characterised by a number of government advertising/information campaigns for health, voter education and calls for public involvement in the constitution-

making process. It is important to note that this form of social advertising often tries to change not only peoples' opinions but also their behaviour e.g anti-smoking, and safe-sex Aids awareness campaigns (ibid.).

While the debate about social responsibility and advertising is beyond the scope of this study it is interesting to note that the political transformation of South Africa has been characterised, however, by a large growth in the number of interest groups that have used non-commercial advertising to promote notions of post-apartheid nation building. This is particularly evident in the various "Peace" campaigns during the early part of this decade (1990-1995) and more recently, anti-crime advertising campaigns launched by various non-governmental organizations (NGO's) and business concerns (*figure 1.4*). As early as 1991 President F.W. de Klerk placed full-page advertisements in newspapers urging blacks and whites to "listen to the dreams of others" and to build a united post-apartheid South Africa. The advertisements featured the symbol of the dove of peace with the slogan, "Politicians can work out a new South Africa, but they can't make it work - only you can do that" (*The Independent*, 4th February 1991).

While the "Peace" campaigns prior to the first democratic elections in 1994 continued to use the universal symbol of the dove, the period 1990-1998 has been characterised by the quest for images and symbols that create a specific South African identity. Significantly in this quest the visual arts have proved to be a particularly rich source of material. Amongst them is a recent example of a series of notices published by Anglo American Corporation of South Africa in the national press during July, 1998. These non-commercial advertisements, designed by the Johannesburg based advertising agency O<sub>2</sub> use quotations from the Chairman's Statement 1998 as a headline. Hence, "South Africans should put aside a widespread cynicism and become active citizens helping meet the challenges facing the country" is merged with a drawn image of a "traditional" artefact such as a ceremonial stick decorated with a beaded South African flag at the top to create a visual sense of national identity (*Mail and Guardian*, July 17 - 23 1998: 7) (*figure 1.5*). This example and that offered by the de Klerk advertisements re-enforces the necessity for all advertising to be considered in terms of the audience and the circumstances in which the advertisement

# Don't let the 20th Century kill the 21st

**If you think pollution problems are only for lanaises, think again**

It's time to take a hard look at the environmental problems of the 20th century. The problems are not just in the air, water, and soil, but in the way we live. The problems are not just in the cities, but in the suburbs and the countryside. The problems are not just in the developed world, but in the developing world. The problems are not just in the present, but in the future. The problems are not just in the world, but in our lives.

**The global perspective**

The global perspective is the key to understanding the environmental problems of the 20th century. The global perspective is the key to understanding the environmental problems of the 21st century. The global perspective is the key to understanding the environmental problems of the future.

**The last decade: our best chance**

The last decade has been a time of great change. The last decade has been a time of great opportunity. The last decade has been a time of great challenge. The last decade has been a time of great hope. The last decade has been a time of great faith. The last decade has been a time of great love. The last decade has been a time of great peace. The last decade has been a time of great joy. The last decade has been a time of great life. The last decade has been a time of great hope for the future.

**Working together for a healthier planet**

Working together for a healthier planet is the key to solving the environmental problems of the 20th century. Working together for a healthier planet is the key to solving the environmental problems of the 21st century. Working together for a healthier planet is the key to solving the environmental problems of the future.

**14 MAJOR ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES BEING TAKEN UP BY PICK 'N' PAY**

PICK 'N' PAY is committed to providing the following information to help you understand the environmental issues that are being taken up by PICK 'N' PAY. The following information is provided for your information only. It is not intended to be a substitute for professional advice. PICK 'N' PAY is not responsible for any errors or omissions in this information.

1. Air Quality: PICK 'N' PAY is committed to reducing air pollution by using energy-efficient lighting and appliances.
2. Global Warming: PICK 'N' PAY is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by using energy-efficient lighting and appliances.
3. Acid Rain: PICK 'N' PAY is committed to reducing acid rain by using energy-efficient lighting and appliances.
4. Ozone Depletion: PICK 'N' PAY is committed to reducing ozone depletion by using energy-efficient lighting and appliances.
5. Hazardous Waste: PICK 'N' PAY is committed to reducing hazardous waste by using energy-efficient lighting and appliances.
6. Land Use: PICK 'N' PAY is committed to reducing land use by using energy-efficient lighting and appliances.
7. Noise: PICK 'N' PAY is committed to reducing noise by using energy-efficient lighting and appliances.
8. Radiation: PICK 'N' PAY is committed to reducing radiation by using energy-efficient lighting and appliances.
9. Resource Depletion: PICK 'N' PAY is committed to reducing resource depletion by using energy-efficient lighting and appliances.
10. Soil Degradation: PICK 'N' PAY is committed to reducing soil degradation by using energy-efficient lighting and appliances.
11. Water Pollution: PICK 'N' PAY is committed to reducing water pollution by using energy-efficient lighting and appliances.
12. Air Pollution: PICK 'N' PAY is committed to reducing air pollution by using energy-efficient lighting and appliances.
13. Global Warming: PICK 'N' PAY is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by using energy-efficient lighting and appliances.
14. Acid Rain: PICK 'N' PAY is committed to reducing acid rain by using energy-efficient lighting and appliances.

**Three interlinked problems: Ozone depletion, Greenhouse Effect and Acid rain**

Ozone depletion, Greenhouse Effect and Acid rain are three interlinked environmental problems. Ozone depletion is caused by the release of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) into the atmosphere. Greenhouse Effect is caused by the release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Acid rain is caused by the release of sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides into the atmosphere. These three problems are interlinked because they all contribute to global warming and climate change.


**Pick 'N' Pay**

Working together for a healthier planet

figure 1.6

# They needed your help - and you gave it!

Some people feel good when they help a child, especially an underprivileged one. Thanks to your loyal patronage of our Kentucky Fried Chicken store, we have been able to make a donation to READ which will give lots of children many happy hours to read, learn and grow. Thank you.



**READ** is a professional organization that helps children with books, stories and the joy of reading and learning. We just don't do a full meal, we do a full life.

**Kentucky Fried Chicken**

figure 1.7

appears. To this end, the Anglo American advertisements appeared at the end of a week which saw the South African currency lose much of its value on international financial markets. Hence the use of traditional objects, beadwork and the national flag as a visual signifier of a South African identity can be seen, subliminally, as representing a different set of values that are required to help “meet the challenges facing the country” (ibid.).

The number of commercial concerns that have, like the Anglo American advertisements, successfully managed to merge non-commercial messages with strictly commercial concerns to produce a hybrid form of advertising is particularly significant. For example, the supermarket chain-store Pick 'n Pay, used slogans such as “Together we can make it better” (c.1988/9) as a headline juxtaposed with images of a multi-racial shopping environment in which contented purchasers and smiling shop attendants created a sense of well being during a period of racial tension and politically uncertain times. Subsequently the same chain-store has used eco-political slogans such as “Don't let the 20<sup>th</sup> Century kill the 21st” (*figure 1.6*) illustrated by the sentimental type of drawing normally associated with popular realism as produced by the American artist Norman Rockwell (1894-1978). Similar campaigns by Kentucky Fried Chicken used both the sentimental image and a multi-racial group of children to promote a literacy campaign “READ” at the same time as marketing fried chicken products to create goodwill for their company (*figure 1.7*).

Clearly the dividing line between this type of advertising and formal propaganda is very close. During times of war, governments are involved in propaganda campaigns to change attitudes and modes of behaviour. Posters such as Alfred Leete's “Britons Kitchener Wants You” (1915) (*figure 1.8*) have become classic examples of effective government advertising to create a sense of patriotism and to encourage enlistment. This is particularly true of propaganda aimed at the hearts and minds of South Africans produced during the struggle against apartheid, not only by the Nationalist government but also by the liberation movements, unions and other anti-apartheid groupings (*figures 1.9 a & b*).

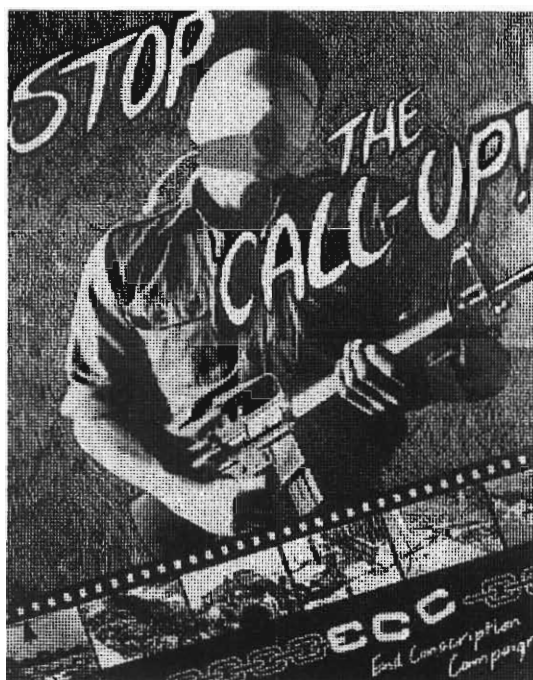
A recent development has been the involvement of established advertising agencies in the promotion of the main political parties in South Africa since 1990. The Nationalist party



*figure 1.8*



*figure 1.9a*



*figure 1.9b*

employed Klerck & Barrett, Saatchi & Saatchi as early as the 1992 referendum, to plan the “YES” campaign that addressed the white electorate. The white electorate had been asked during the referendum whether or not they supported the proposals for a negotiated settlement that eventually led to a Government of National Unity with the holding of South Africa’s first democratic elections in 1994. This example offers a powerful display of how the visual art of journalistic photography can be used in advertising. The image plays on liberal fears of a right-wing uprising at the time in the poster, “You Can Stop This Man” (1992) (*figure 1.10*), in which a photograph of a balaclava covered Ystergaarde (Iron Guard) member which appeared in newspaper reports about the training of right-wing militia. This poster also represents an example of the powerful “message” advertising that had characterized the London based Saatchi and Saatchi’s 1979 election poster campaign for the British Conservative Party in the United Kingdom. This example also uses a powerful, topical photograph - one of workers on the dole - which is merged with the slogan, “Labour Isn't Working” (*figure 1.11*).<sup>3</sup>

### **Commercial advertising**

According to Dyer, commercial advertising is perhaps the most visual kind of advertising in western society. She points out that unlike non-commercial advertising, commercial work tends to employ more expenditure, space and professional skill and is usually directed towards a mass audience (*ibid.*). Besides consumer advertising, Dyer divides commercial advertising into four types: (i) corporate (ii) trade and technical (iii) classified and (iv) government and charity (1992: 4-6). An explanation of corporate advertising and a related activity, sponsorship, is pertinent to later discussion of these topics elsewhere in this dissertation.

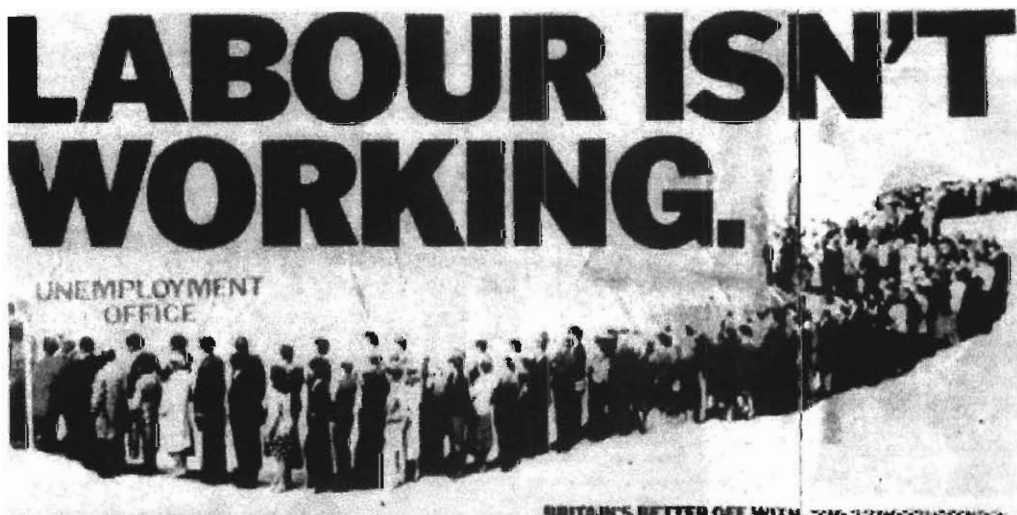
### **Corporate advertising ( prestige, goodwill, business and financial)**

According to Dyer a company’s advertising that is not designed specifically to sell products, but rather to create long-term goodwill is referred to as prestige or goodwill advertising (*op. cit.* 5). The Anglo American, Kentucky Fried Chicken and Pick ‘n Pay examples discussed above can be regarded as part of this category. As can be observed in these examples the advertising is aimed at different target audiences, customers, shareholders, government,





*figure 1.10*



*figure 1.11*

pressure groups while in the process a sense of goodwill is created. According to Vestergaard and Schröder goodwill advertising is designed to promote public confidence and create favourable business images rather than an immediate increase in sales (1985: 1).

A relevant and explicit example of this is an advertisement produced for Richards Bay Minerals at a time when the company was subject to an environmentalist campaign to halt the expansion of the company's dune mining operations at St. Lucia (*Flying Springbok*, December, 1994: 92-93) (*figure 1.12*). It is important to note that this advertisement was placed in an upmarket publication that was only available on South African Airways (SAA) flights. The assumption is, therefore, that the audience will, in all probability, be educated opinion makers. The photograph of the sand on the left hand page makes an obvious reference to late modernist abstraction while the white of the page becomes a minimalist white wall. Subliminal recognition of either this source or an even more subtle reference to earth art will flatter the passenger/reader and creates a communications environment in which other meanings can be made. This approach to corporate advertising is an example of what Williamson maintains is the ability of advertising, and, all ideologies, to "incorporate anything, even re-absorb criticism of themselves, because they refer to it, devoid of content" (1992: 167).

### **Sponsorship**

An important aspect of promotion and publicity that is not easy to categorise as pure advertising is sponsorship. According to McAllister sponsorship is a "corporate activity that stresses both the philanthropic goals of corporate giving and its promotional goals" (1996: 178). He notes that within the act of "corporate giving" companies are able to "capitalize on the philanthropic ethos of patronage as well as the promotional functions of advertising" hence "the dualistic nature of sponsorship explains why the word often has multiple meanings" (*ibid.*). In practical terms sponsorship takes many forms, but at its most basic it involves the sponsoring company paying to be associated with a particular event, usually in the field of sports or the arts. In the sponsorship of sporting events, the company may well get the sole advertising rights so that the company becomes synonymous with the event. For example, the annual horserace the Rothman's July Handicap or the internationally



*Which billion dollar industry  
has built a global reputation  
upon these grains of sand?*



**Richards Bay Minerals (RBM) is a world leader in the mining and rehabilitation of coastal sand dunes which contain vital minerals in demand throughout the world.**



Occurring in the sand are ilmenite, rutile and zircon, the heavy minerals from which come the vital ingredients for an impressive array of products and applications which are essential to our high-tech world.

In addition to supplying all of South Africa's needs, RBM's penetration of the world market is extraordinary. It supplies one quarter of the world's sources essential for the production of white pigments used in paints, plastics and paper and a quarter of the high quality ductile iron for the automobile industry. RBM also supplies a quarter of the world's zircon demand for the manufacture of tiles and ceramics and one third of the rutile used in welding rods.

Through foreign exchange earnings of over R1 billion every year, and its ripple effect in the local and regional economies, tens of thousands of jobs are created throughout South Africa. Over 80% of the pre-tax profit remain in the country.

Many thousands of people living in the rural areas near RBM's mining operations in northern Zululand benefit from the company's social investment programme which provides education, health care, job creation and rural development.



*And once the coastal dunes have yielded these minerals so vital to South Africa and our modern lifestyle, RBM's acclaimed rehabilitation programme ensures that the miracle of nature returns the dunes to a natural state.*



CREATING A BALANCE

figure 1.12

SOUTH AFRICAN ADVERTISING May 1996

**4 out of every 5 are non-Europeans**

TO-DAY non-Europeans buy goods formerly considered as only desirable to the European. The papers they read prove this statement. Through the papers in which they have full confidence they will become your customers, purchasers of your goods.

Ask your agent or write direct for tariff and particulars of the adequate coverage and exceptionally reasonable rates per inch.

WE have a paper in each Province, and each paper is the ONLY official medium of the Province for the publication of Government Notices and Proclamations affecting the Native Races of South Africa.

<p><b>"THE BANTU WORLD"</b> Printed and Published Weekly JOHANNESBURG TRANSVAAL</p>	<p><b>"ILANGA LASE NATAL"</b> Printed and Published Weekly PHOENIX NATAL</p>
<p><b>"MOCHOKHONONO"</b> Printed and Published Weekly MASERU BASUTOLAND</p>	<p><b>"IMVO ZABANTSUNDU"</b> Printed and Published Weekly KINGWILLIAMSTOWN Cape Province</p>

**BANTU PRESS [PTY.] LTD.**  
P.O. BOX 6443 JOHANNESBURG

figure 1.13

recognised professional surfing competition, the Gunston 500. This principle ensures a high profile for the company, particularly if the event is to be televised (Douglas 1984: 103). As McAllister points out sponsorship of live events that are televised is less obtrusive than traditional advertising in that “the company can promote its name without obvious 30-second spot commercials” (1996: 179).

This is particularly important for tobacco companies which are prohibited by law from advertising their products on television. The Rothman’s July Handicap and the Gunston 500 are both examples (and there are many more) that involve the sponsorship of sport by tobacco companies. As will be noted Anton Rupert’s Rembrandt tobacco group was an important sponsor of high profile art exhibitions and competitions in South Africa. Alcohol is another product that does not enjoy unfettered advertising rights in South Africa and is likely to come under increasing pressure from government in the near future. Hence the moves by various alcoholic beverage companies such as Smirnoff and Absolut Vodka as well as Pernod Riccard into the promotion of fashion and cultural events can be viewed as a significant part of their advertising strategy and not as a series of philanthropic acts. As will be discussed later, this provides a hint of the complex motives that may induce a company to become a sponsor of the visual arts in South Africa.

Within the cultural and visual arts domain in South Africa sponsorship takes two forms: contributions or sponsored events and/or products. While some contributions may be viewed as primarily philanthropic (e.g. the establishment of the Nedbank Arts Trust), sponsorship proper such as the Standard Bank sponsorship of the Grahamstown National Arts Festival is, as will be discussed in Chapter Six, a promotional initiative in exchange for publicity or advertising. As McAllister notes “Anonymous giving is not an option in sponsorship (1996: 179). According to Colbert “companies that sponsor artistic and cultural events are looking for prestige advertising vehicles. Their hope is that the popularity of the group sponsored and the public’s affection for that group will be transferred to the sponsor” (1993: 57).

According to McAllister there are many factors that have led to a significant increase in

sponsorship in the United States since the 1980's most notably the rising cost of traditional advertising in a media saturated environment (1996: 181). Hence in the United States “promoters view the sponsorship of large and small events as a way to stretch the traditional advertising dollar, especially through free publicity” (ibid.). Given the rapid de-regularisation of the media in South Africa by the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) with new “free to air” television stations such as ETV and the proliferation of independent and community radio stations one can anticipate an acceleration of the trend that has already begun in South Africa.

### **Graphic Design**

No definition of advertising would be complete without defining the creative process that is an integral part of its production viz. graphic design. In its simplest terms graphic design is a “generic term for the activity of combining typography, illustration, photography and printing for purposes of persuasion, information or instruction” (Livingston and Livingston 1992: 90). According to Livingston and Livingston the title “graphic designer” was first used in 1922 by William Addison Dwiggins (ibid.). However, this term did not gain currency until after the second world war (WW2). In South Africa, National Diploma courses in Graphic Design were introduced as late as 1966. Prior to that designers were trained as “commercial artists” within the National Diploma in Art and Craft (personal interview with Andrews, 1997).

By definition, graphic design has been closely linked with a particular technology, i.e. printing. According to Bonsiepe within this domain the graphic designer acts mainly as “a visualizer who organizes visual components that are reproduced with the help of printing technology” (1993: 3). As such, the graphic designer has traditionally been concerned with design for the printing of typography, corporate identity, logotypes, stationary, layout of books, magazines and newspapers, posters, package design and labels, point of sale displays, signage, information design e.g. official forms, questionnaires, brochures and pamphlets, advertisements and advertising campaigns (ibid.).

However, because of technological innovation and invention, it is clear that, like the fine

arts, the contemporary practice of graphic design has gone beyond its “traditional” printed domain to a multi-media environment that includes computers, digital design and television. Because of this and different social needs, academics such as Bonsiepe believe there is a need to re-define graphic design to recognise its role as “information and its organization” (ibid.). Bonsiepe proposes that in these terms graphic design could be defined as the organisation of “information for effective communication in the most diverse domains, from education to entertainment” (ibid.).

It must, however, be said that the creative aspect of producing an advertisement is not the sole responsibility of a graphic designer. Contemporary printed advertisements usually contain a number of elements (not necessarily all at once) viz. illustrations (drawings, paintings or photographs) which are usually accompanied by (i) a headline (ii) body copy (iii) a logo and (iv) slogan. In South Africa, until the early 1960's, the headline, body copy and slogan were developed by a copy writer who often came from a literary background. A “commercial artist” was then required to create an appropriate logo or suitable illustration to fit the copy produced by the copywriter (personal interview with Raff, 1996).

According to Raff, during the 1960's the separation between the artist and copywriter began to break down and over the past three decades copy writers and graphic designers have tended to work closer together on both concepts for advertisements and the campaigns. This collaboration has expanded to the point where other specialists from marketing, research etc. are included to form “creative teams” (ibid.).

However, although the conceptual process of the advertisement and the advertising campaign may be a product of the collaboration between advertising executives, media specialists, copy writers, researchers and artists working in teams, the actual production of the artwork and the visualization of the advertisement is still the preserve of the graphic designer. This does not mean however, that the work of a graphic designer is solely concerned with the production of advertisements. Increasingly a graphic designer is being viewed as a visual communications specialist in the widest sense of the word (Buchanan in Frascara 1997).

### **The South African Market**

History has left a legacy that has created a complex society in South Africa, hence the equally complex nature of the market. Inevitably, in a society in which low levels of literacy and education, multi-lingualism and a variety of different cultural backgrounds are a feature, communication is bound to be difficult. Cognisance of these facts needs to be taken into account in any discussion of communication based activities such as art and advertising.

The official count of South Africa's population in 1998 was 40,5 million people (Cresswell 1998: 13) and because of the historical factors already outlined, there is currently still a large disparity in the spending power of the various groups within the South African market. A recent study released by the Central Statistical Services (CSS) reveals that although black South Africans constituted 76% of the population in 1995, their average household income, per month, was less than R2, 000 while white households (13% of the population) on average earn a household income of R8000 monthly (*Personal Finance*, 1997: 1).

Advertising in South Africa, until the 1980's, as a purely commercial activity can be said to have focussed on the white minority sector of the market. This is in spite of trade advertisements published as early as 1936 that drew advertisers attention to the size of the "non-European market" (*figure 1.13*). Initially advertising was also more focussed on the English speaking audience with strong cultural ties with Britain. However, also during the 1930's the rise of the purchasing power of Afrikaans speaking people became a focus of debate. "Would you neglect 60% of your market?" (1931) draws the attention of advertisers to the potential of advertising to the Afrikaans speaking audience (*figure 1.14*). Tellingly, the black majority of South Africans were not included in the statistic and this notice provides evidence of how dominant white English speaking interests were until the 1930's and 1940's. The September, 1940 edition of the advertising trade journal, *South African Advertising and Selling* (*figure 1.15*) blatantly drew advertisers' attention to the fact that: "A war is on.... production especially in gold mining and its subsidiary industries, is at high pressure, labour is in great demand and because of all this activity the "Bantu people" are "in the money" (*South African Advertising and Selling*, September, 1940). However, eight years later the newly elected Nationalist government policy of apartheid had a fundamental

Would you neglect  
60% of your  
market  
?

APPROXIMATELY 60% of our population are Afrikaans speaking. If you are not appealing to these people through the medium of their own language your advertising is only 40% efficient.

ADVERTISERS, AGENTS, COPY-WRITERS, SERVICE-MEN—anyone who is interested in getting the greatest returns for themselves or their clients—should investigate the possibilities of such journals as

*Die VOLKSBLAD*

*Die BURGER*

*Die Huisgenoot*

*Die Landbouweekblad*

*Die Huisgesin*

NATIONALE PERS BEPERK  
CAPETOWN AND BLOEMFONTEIN

figure 1.14



Means EXTRA Money for the Bantu  
People—EXTRA Sales for YOU!



Tarif from any Advertising Agent or from the Business Manager . . .

A war is on . . . production especially in gold mining and its subsidiary industries, is at high pressure, labour is in great demand and because of all this activity the Bantu people are "in the money."

This was the position during 1914-1918 and there is no sound reason why history should not repeat itself.

Now is your opportunity to get to grips with the Native Market. The channel through which you reach the Bantu people—*Umteteli wa Bantu*—is even more valuable to you because its readers are no less interested than the average European in International Affairs, and *Umteteli*, which is politically independent, offers them an excellent and reliable news service as well as other items of interest such as Sport Reviews, Women's Pages and a Children's Supplement.

Use *Umteteli wa Bantu* to extend your native market.

The Union Native Affairs Department includes *Umteteli wa Bantu* in their list of media for the dissemination of news amongst the Bantu Peoples.

**UMTETELI wa BANTU**

P.O. BOX 4525, JOHANNESBURG

figure 1.15



effect in undermining the potential of “Bantu people” to be “in the money” with the introduction of job reservation. Similarly, the policy of Bantu education was to create a gross disparity of education levels to the extent that South Africa currently experiences high levels of illiteracy.

These political policies not only promoted the financial interest of the white minority but had the effect of consolidating the cultural dominance of the group. Hence the market (audience) in South Africa prior to 1990 was viewed by advertisers as primarily a white one. As Green and Lascaris (1990) put it:

“You marketed to whites because they had the money and you tacked blacks on at the end of your marketing plan (if you bothered at all) because they were secondary to your company’s main marketing thrust. They just did not have the spending power to push their way further up the agenda..... By the end of the 60's that was short sighted. By the end of the ‘70's it was short on logic too.” (1990: 35-36)

However, according to Green and Lascaris, it was not until “the 1980's (that) the wage gap (between black and white South Africans) began to close and the trade union and the anti-apartheid movements were quick to recognise the potential of using black consumer boycotts to prove the point. Clearly the market was signalling that things must change.” (ibid.) William Kirsh the CEO of the Primedia Group (the second largest media group after Nasionale Pers - owners of M-Net, Radio 702 and Ster-Kinekor) agrees and maintains that the South African advertising industry was moribund before the “new” South Africa and that “opportunities [only] opened with the passing of the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) Act, the internationalisation of South Africa and a new focus on emerging consumers” (1997: 109).

These observations re-enforce the view expressed earlier that South Africa has a multi-cultural, yet strongly Western consumer- orientated audience. This presents a number of challenges to advertising agencies, who are charged with advising clients how to communicate with their market and where their money is best spent in this endeavour. In

1990 Green and Lascaris cautioned against interpreting the South African market in racial terms. The preferred market segmentation criteria they proposed was one in which education and occupation are paramount as “these criteria put the emphasis upon the things that joined us rather than the things that kept us apart” (1990: 35-36).

While it could be argued that much of the advertising that has taken place during the period 1990-1998 is characterised by a search for commonality and a quest for a sense of a common identity it remains true, as they mentioned in an earlier text, *Third World Destiny* (1988) that South Africa has a “parallel market” with “one foot in the First World and one in the Third” (1988: 38). Hence it must be noted that while the developed sector of the market can be seen in terms of living broadly within Western standards, the underdeveloped sector is still characterised as living within standards that are typical of other underdeveloped and developing economies, more specifically those associated with Africa. This complexity is also reflected in the nature of media in South Africa. Whereas, in the rest of the world television is the main advertising medium in South Africa print media and to a lesser extent radio are still dominant.

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## Notes

1. According to Barnard:

“At the end of the fifteenth century, the first posted advertisements began to appear. These were handwritten announcements and they were posted on church and cathedral doors by clergymen, looking for work. Lecturers and teachers were, perhaps surprisingly, quick to use this medium to advertise their services. These advertisements were known as “*siquis*” as they took an “If anyone .....then.....” form. Indeed, the first advert printed from moveable type, by Caxton around 1480, was a *siquis*” (1995:28).

2. A case in point is when Candice Bergman’s character in the “Murphy Brown” television series fell pregnant. The subject of Hollywood promoting single motherhood as a desirable role model was made a “family values” issue by the then Vice-President, Dan Quayle, in the

1991 election campaign. Threats of boycotts were made to advertisers by right wing Christian groups unless they withdrew from sponsoring the show.

3. The employment of an advertising agency to promote the National Party is not the only example. Equally fascinating has been the transformation of the African National Congress (ANC) from a liberation movement to a bona-fide political party promoted by one of South Africa's largest advertising agencies, Hunt Lascaris, who also have, BMW amongst their clients.

**Art** (āit), *sb.* ME. [a. OF. :—L. *artem*, prob. f. *ar-* to fit. The OF. *ars*, nom. (sing. and pl.), was also used.] · I. Skill. Sing. *art*; no pl. 1. *gen.* Skill as the result of knowledge and practice. 2. Human skill (opp. to *nature*) ME. 3. The learning of the schools; see II. 1. †a. *spec.* The *trivium*, or any of its subjects —1573. b. *gen.* Learning, science (*arch.*) 1588. †4. *spec.* Technical or professional skill —1677. 5. The application of skill to subjects of taste, as poetry, music, etc.; *esp.* in mod. use: Perfection of workmanship or execution as an object in itself 1620. 6. Skill applied to the arts of imitation and design, *Painting, Architecture*, etc.; the cultivation of these in its principles, practice, and results. (The most usual mod. sense of *art* when used simply.) 1668.

figure 2.1

## Chapter 2: Towards An Understanding of Art, the “Cultural Niche” and the Culture of Art

“Art is a term of Western culture but a very inexact one. The threshold between what may be judged a work of visual art and another kind of man-made object is often a matter of dispute.” (Vansina 1984: 1-2)

While Chapter One defined advertising in as full a sense of the word as it was possible to do, the above quotation by Jan Vansina from his text *Art History in Africa* gives an indication of how problematic a definition of art in the South African context would be. Even in Western cultural terms, a definition of “art” is problematic in that art is a word that has many meanings. To complicate matters one has to take cognisance of the fact that there is an important subjective element at play in that an understanding of what is, and what is not, art, in that it changes from generation to generation as it is dependant upon shifting values - hence the current plethora of post-modern texts that aim to (re)define art in terms that go beyond the constricted confines of modernism (*figure 2.1*).

### Etymology

It could be said that much of the confusion begins with the basic term “art” as opposed to the “arts.” Munro maintains that the full extent of their ambiguity is not commonly realised. “In the first place, the word ‘art’ is applied to certain kinds of skill or technique, and also to the products of these skills - works of art” (1992: 17). It is in this sense that the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the noun “art” both as “a human skill or its application” and as “work exhibiting this” (1990: 60). The term the “art of” is defined as “a skill, aptitude or knack.” An artist is therefore defined as “a person who practices any of the arts” or “a person who works with dedication and attributes associated with an artist” (ibid.).

*Roget’s Thesaurus* links “art” with two other words: skill and stratagem (1970: 415). Interestingly, the dictionary definition of a stratagem is “a cunning plan or scheme especially for deceiving an enemy. The other meaning is trickery” (1990: 1252 ). Given the negative ideological criticism levelled at advertising in the previous chapter, some would have little

hesitation in accepting that this term aptly defines the practice of the “art of advertising” in as much as it is often regarded as the “art of persuasion.”

As previously mentioned, within the Western hierarchy of a “high” and “low” culture the status of art and artist is reserved for *fine* art and the *fine* artist. Within this paradigm many terms are used to classify the arts into various groups, such as “fine and useful arts,” “major and minor arts,” “decorative arts,” and “arts of design” are also very differently understood. Thus, according to Munro “our present nomenclature of the arts, though adequate for casual use, is far from being precise or standardised for technical discussion” (1992: 17).

In order to avoid confusion, and for practical purposes, this body of research accepts that the word ‘art’ is laden with a number of meanings but suggests that the term “visual arts” can, more easily, be used to reflect the diversity of different kinds of art in contemporary culture. The term “visual arts” has the other advantage of accepting, that from time to time, there are permeable borders between the different categories of art. In order to describe the term “visual arts” this body of research adopts the cultural niche model proposed by Susan G. Josephson in her 1996 text *From Idolatry To Advertising - Visual Art and Contemporary Culture*.

### **Cultural Niche**

Josephson raises the cultural niche theory of art as a functionalist theory that defines art by its cultural setting. She explains that, “what carries the constitutive essence of art is not the individual objects dubbed art, but the institutions that do the dubbing” (1996: 15). Josephson divides the term “visual arts” into four main categories to include Fine Art, Popular Art, Folk Art and Design Art, of which graphic and advertising design are themselves, important components. Clearly there is room for many more sub-divisions such as Religious or Worship Art, Community Art etc. but, as already mentioned, the development of a definitive model is not the aim of this chapter. The aim is rather to create a framework within which the subject of how and why the visual arts are used in advertising can be investigated.

It is interesting to note however that, in response to the changes in media outlined in the previous chapter current trends in marketing also emphasise the need to recognise the “niche” in order effectively to communicate with a diverse audience. According to McAllister this audience is a part of the contemporary “fragmented society” which can no longer be conceived of as a mass but rather as a “conglomerate of demographic and psychographic [sic] groupings (1996: 21). It is to be expected that in such a society the various forms of the visual arts will, inevitably, have a variety of different meanings, values and uses.

As was mentioned in the Preface, and will be amplified further in this chapter, it must be appreciated that as technology changes, so too do the lifestyles and values of societies change. In part, this explains why fine art can be viewed as providing a smaller part of the total cultural value of art in contemporary society than in the past. Josephson maintains that these new values are carried by the “art” broadcast to us “over the mass media and on the products we buy to the point where the visual arts play a large part in shaping our values, fantasies and lifestyles” (1996: 2).

Josephson bases her model upon the writings of the Marxist academic Arnold Hauser who maintained that the visual arts are differentiated by the different social classes that they serve. He wrote that “there are as many different art trends running parallel to each other in any given historical period as there are cultural strata in society” (1996: 3). According to Josephson, Hauser’s concept of differentiating between the visual arts on the basis of the different class interests that it serves is limited in that other factors are at play in contemporary society and in order to understand these factors, cognisance needs to be taken of the different institutions, ideologies and distribution systems that impinge upon the visual arts today (op.cit. 4). This is particularly true of contemporary South Africa where not only class but multi-culturalism, race and conflicting nationalisms are at play.

It should be noted that both Hauser and the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu are in agreement that lifestyle and levels of education are important determinants of the cultural values to which each stratum subscribes. As Bourdieu notes in his text *Distinction*, “art and

cultural consumption are predisposed” to “fulfil a social function of legitimating social differences” (1994: 7). Given the history of South Africa the “legitimating [of] social differences” has been compounded and inextricably linked to this is the issue of taste which will be discussed later. Suffice to note, as Jones does, that in Western society, “the dominant group today consists of, not only those with what Bourdieu called economic capital, but with those who possess “cultural capital” - artists, academics and others from the curator-professions” (1994: 195).

In part, this explains why the term “art” defies simple definition, because of the multiplicity of values placed upon it. However a “cultural niche” model that accepts a number of different arts existing simultaneously enables one to identify differing values and enables one to compare works of art cross-culturally and across time which is the paradigm within which advertising often uses art.

### **Fine Art**

In South Africa, as elsewhere in the world, fine art is the art that, until recently, is displayed primarily within the museum and gallery system. Hence, in its present form, fine art is produced outside of the mass-media and mass-marketing systems for no other purpose than to be appreciated as art. However it must be said that this definition does not invalidate the capacity of fine art to be used as a force for cultural change. For example the anti-apartheid movement’s call for art to act as “an instrument of struggle.” However, even one of the strongest proponents of this call, Albie Sachs, significantly commented that “it [art as cultural weapon] results in an impoverishment of our art” (1989 :10). In his paper “Preparing Ourselves For Freedom” Sachs lauded the metaphysical powers of art to “express our humanity in all its forms” (op. cit.11).<sup>1</sup>

As will be noted throughout this dissertation fine art has a special significance in Western culture. The importance attributed to it is a focus of this research project in that advertising draws upon a number of the values that Western culture places upon fine art in order to promote products and services. However, in order to gain an understanding of the precise nature of these values and their significance, one needs to recognise that they are inseparable



from a unique historical development spearheaded by the institutions that supported and promoted it. In contemporary society this means the museums, the gallery system and its attendant market as well as current educational practice.

Walker points out there is nothing intrinsically special about the practices, materials and media that a fine artist uses in order to distinguish it from any other forms “but rather the way in which materials and tools are habitually used (the different formal conventions), and the social institutions within which works are produced, distributed, consumed and categorized” (1983: 9). The institutions of support will be discussed in more depth in this and the following chapter. However it is important, at this juncture, to note that, for strategic reasons, it is also in the interests of business to support the notion of a fine art which has developed since the Renaissance in Europe.

### **The origins of fine art**

Notwithstanding what has been said above about the right of each of the cultural niche categories to be recognised as art-forms in their own right, it is a fact that fine art has been used, in Western culture, as the standard against which all other art forms are judged. In order to understand the importance of this cultural viewpoint an investigation of the history of fine art may be useful and instructive in that it has a direct bearing on how advertising uses all the visual arts.

The case for a *fine* art was first advanced by Leonardo da Vinci who argued that painting was a liberal art because a painter needed geometry and depended upon sight, which had been acknowledged by Plato and Aristotle as the noblest of the senses (Brolin 1985: 43). However, Brolin contends that even Renaissance artists such as Leonardo da Vinci, who enjoyed the luxury of liberal-minded patronage, still had to work within the confines of art as a tool of propaganda as it had been since the ancient times of Plato and Aristotle (op. cit. 50). He goes on to argue that this is particularly true of Michelangelo who was often forced by papal decree to execute work. Michelangelo’s Sistine Chapel frescos (1508-12) is one such work.<sup>2</sup>

Staniszewski maintains that what is referred to as art in the modern sense “did not exist before the modern era” (1995: 111) and asserts that this era began when the authority of the European monarchies began to dissolve (op. cit. 102). While this dissolution was heralded by the American and French revolutions (1776 and 1789 respectively), equally important was a parallel development: the birth of the industrial revolution in Britain and its consequence, mass production. As has already been mentioned, it is essential to recognise that both fine art and advertising are fields of representation that are unique to modernity and that they both developed within the establishment of the modern capitalist state during the latter part of the 18th century.

According to Brolin fine art in the sense of an art concerned primarily with beauty, as in art for art’s sake, only evolved during the second half of the 18th Century when Immanuel Kant’s *Critique of Judgement* (1790) provided a full-fledged philosophical underpinning for fine arts (1985: 73). The aesthetics of pure beauty and the new concept of genius put forth in *Critique of Judgement*, were not only to have a profound effect on the practice of fine art but changed significantly the relationship between fine artists and what was to be known as applied artists, designers and craftspeople, thus creating a hierarchy that persists today.

Equally significant was Kant’s emphasis on originality and, by implication, innovation and unconventionality - significant not only by laying the foundation of modernism, but also in providing a platform for the creation of a concept of “high” art as part of what was perceived as “high” culture, as opposed to the “low” culture of mass production that developed throughout the nineteenth century. Hence the fine art /popular art divide. It was within this mass production culture that both fine art and modern advertising evolved. Technological progress during the Industrial Revolution improved production and not only paved the way for mass production of goods and services, but the means of reproducing images of them. Producers had to find new consumer markets and expand existing ones to maintain profits and keep control over prices. The role that visual images played in this process was enormous.

However, for the debate about fine art as opposed to design art, it is significant that it was

in this economic environment that Theophile Gautier published his formulation of *l'Art pour l'Art* in the preface to his novel *Mademoiselle de Maupin* (1835). “Nothing is really beautiful unless it is useless; everything useful is ugly, for it expresses a need, and needs of man are ignoble and disgusting, like his poor weak nature” (op. cit. 72). It is in this context that the distinction between the fine arts and the applied arts has come to be explained in terms of the non-utilitarian/utilitarian opposition.

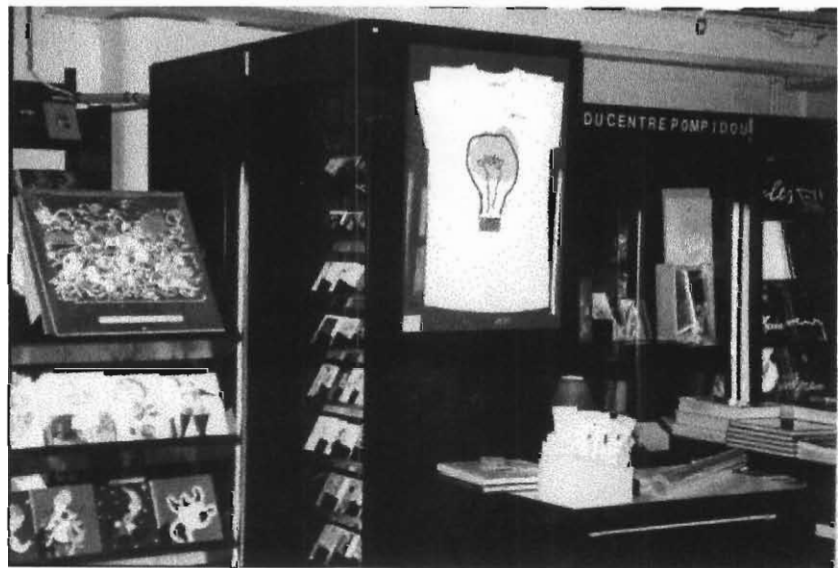
### **Popular Art**

Popular art is essentially art that is produced for popular taste. Instead of being situated in museums and galleries recognised by those whom Jones describes as “possessing cultural capital” (1991: 195), popular art is to be found in “popular” galleries, even on the side of the road and at flea-markets. Admittedly many amateur artists produce this type of popular art, however, a significant proportion is produced by professional artists whose sole earnings are derived from such sales. In South Africa this is in stark contrast to the large number of fine artists who have to work as academics at one time or another in order to make a living. Hence the term of a “Sunday painter” to denote an amateur or non-professional artist is not always a fair description.

The main site of display for popular art, however, is in the mass media and this is the art that the American art critic, Clement Greenberg, attacked on the grounds that it represented a diluted, substitute culture called *kitsch*. According to Greenberg kitsch is “mechanical and operates by formulas. Kitsch is a vicarious experience and faked emotions” (1961: 10). The subject of what may or may not constitute kitsch, especially in the multi-cultural South African context is too complex to be entered into here. Suffice to say that Greenberg’s views re-iterate the importance of the different value systems that are imposed by different individuals in determining what is and what is not considered to be significant art. Significantly Greenberg visited South Africa as a judge of the 1975 Art South Africa Today Competition and provoked a great deal of controversy by choosing the work of a “Sunday painter,” Christopher Haw, as worthy of the coveted award, the Oppenheimer Memorial Trust Award.<sup>3</sup>



*figure 2.2a*



*figure 2.2b*

A great deal of talent and skill goes into the production of popular art and in many cases it has a very important role to play in society. Defined interest groups, for example, institutions such as the Natal Parks Board (NPB), often commission professional “wildlife” artists to paint animals with fidelity so that the various rangers are able to recognise specific animals in their reserve. These original paintings are often displayed in public places such as NPB headquarters at Queen Elizabeth Park in Pietermaritzburg or in the foyer of the various reserves. In some cases the painting is sold or prints are made as an essential part of fund raising.

Josephson maintains that this type of art is made for “a whole spectrum of class tastes and not just the middle class” (1996: 5). The mass media form of this art is often the work of graphic designers and illustrators and seen in books and magazines, on greetings cards and calendars, compact discs (CDs) and posters. Having said that, it is interesting to note how permeable the borders between fine art and popular art can become. Not only has advertising entered the museum as in Pop Art imagery but professional designers such as Barbara Kruger (b.1945) have become recognised gallery and museum artists (*figures 2.5 & 8.5*). However it is in the marketing of art as a commodity that significant shifts in the meaning of art have come about. A visit to any major museum or gallery in Paris, London or New York reveals how the “fine art” on display is marketed in a variety of books, postcards, T- shirts and posters (*figures 2.2 a & b*). According to Garth Walker of Orange Juice Design (OJD) who designed the promotional material for the Durban Art Gallery (DAG) (*figure 2.3*) local galleries are slow to realise the commercial and financial possibilities of selling their product as a popular art form “especially to overseas visitors who want to take something (cultural) from Africa that is light and portable back with them” (personal interview with Walker, 1998).

### **Folk art (craft)**

In the Western context both Hauser and Josephson use the term folk art to describe the craft objects of the peasant classes (1996: 5). As such this title has a slightly different meaning in the South African context where one requires a term that encompasses not only European related crafts but also the traditional arts, crafts and objects of the material culture of the

The Durban Art Gallery ~ we're on Top ...  
Find us on The 2nd floor of The City Hall

amuze News 34  
DURBAN MUSEUMS NEWSLETTER • MAY 1997 • NO. 34 • R5.00



*durban art gallery*  
2nd Floor • City Hall • Smith Street • Durban

figure 2.3

indigenous peoples of the region. In the main, these types of objects have been replaced in Western Europe and North America by mass-market goods. However, in the developing countries of Eastern Europe, Asia and much of the Southern Hemisphere, one is still able to find “traditional” arts and crafts that are still manufactured within the communities that consume them although they are disappearing rapidly. This is particularly true of South Africa which has been affected by industrialization since the end of the nineteenth century. The mining industry in particular has contributed greatly to the breakdown of “traditional” community structures with the migrant labour system. Rapid urbanization in South Africa has also adversely affected the social structure of rural communities in which traditional crafts once thrived.

Significantly, in many developing countries, traditional arts and crafts are often revived in order to meet the demands of a new market - tourism. However it needs to be said that the culture that tourism draws upon is not necessarily the “true” culture of any given country. It must be recognised that within the production of “goods” for tourism, mass production has become a process that occurs outside of the communities it is meant to represent. It is often modified to meet foreign tastes and ease of transportability (Preston-Whyte and Thorpe 1989: 123-124) (*figure 2.4*). Sadly, it has been alleged that many pieces of indigenous beadwork sold in hotels, airports, holiday resorts, flea-markets and in galleries are in fact manufactured in Taiwan where factories have been established to create American Indian beadwork for export into the United States market and Zulu beadwork for the South African etc. (personal interview with Guille, 1997). All of these factors mitigate against the development of a sustainable revival of traditional skills in South Africa as a source of employment which is currently the focus of many agencies in the region. In KwaZulu-Natal this effort is a long standing one that began with Jo Thorpe’s cultural brokerage at the African Art Centre during the early 1960s.

In South Africa, the presumed, racial and cultural superiority of colonialism accorded an inferior status to indigenous material culture. The latter had (and in a limited sense, continues to have) a very different purpose and meaning to fine art in Western culture. In common with many pre-industrial societies, continuity and repetition were considered to be

# Moeti e tla ka hae re je ka wena.

It pays to make tourists feel at home.



Increased tourism means more business opportunities for all South Africans. And you don't have to work in big business to profit from these opportunities.

Every tourist likes to take home at least



one souvenir. To visitors most of the handicrafts we take for granted are worth paying highly for. So the more tourists that we welcome, the more customers



there will be eager to buy unique South

African products. In the words of the South Sotho saying: Moeti e tla ka hae re je ka wena. Let us make a tourist feel at home and share in the rewards of increased tourism.



**TOURISM.  
SHARE THE  
REWARDS**

BATES SOUTH AFRICA BETHLEHEM

figure 2.4



a stabilising force within society in that it showed respect for ancestors and the past. However, a great strength of craft, possibly because of the circumstances of its manufacture, is that it encapsulates a very powerful sense of identity. As Aynsley notes, “many of the circumstances which determine whether a design is considered national or international lie beyond the individual object, in the structures which help it to be bought or to be used by different groups” (1993: 31). As will be discussed in Chapter Five, the capacity of “craft” to embody a strong sense of identity has made it a particularly important art form for advertisers in their quest for signifiers of an African identity.

However, in South Africa there is a pressing need for a balanced debate before the status and potential role of craft in contemporary society can be resolved. One of the negative consequences of the art/craft divide is to be seen in the lack of traditional art and crafts in the vast majority of collections of the various museums in South Africa. As Brendan Bell puts it, the “debates around issues of whether indigenous ceramics should be considered art or craft, ethnographic, anthropological, or material culture, have served to highlight one glaring omission - museums in this province do not have enough representative examples” (1998: 1). Significantly South African academics and galleries have begun to recognise the cultural wealth within the crafts that have previously been ignored. Hence a comprehensive exhibition of regional ceramics at both the Tatham Gallery (24 March - 26 April 1998) and The Durban Art Gallery (6 May - 26 June 1998) is significant.

In part, the intention of the exhibition *Ubumba - aspects of indigenous ceramics in KwaZulu-Natal* was, according to Bell in the Foreword of the exhibition catalogue, “to enhance attempts to preserve a common heritage” (1998: 1). In this endeavour, the exhibition not only traced the history of pottery in the region from c.500 AD - thereby confronting the colonial fiction that the region was essentially a vacant land to be occupied by European and migrating Nguni <sup>4</sup> speaking settlers at the same time - but it also represented a body of work that had previously been denied the status of art in a South African gallery prior to 1988.

At the height of apartheid in 1965 an exhibition of work, produced by a similar group of

artists and crafts-persons from the Evangelical Lutheran Church Arts and Crafts Centre at Rorke's Drift in Kwa Zulu-Natal, was only deemed to be fit enough to be displayed in the foyer of the Durban Municipal Library on the ground floor of the same building that houses the DAG. Early recognition from overseas buyers was noted in a newspaper article of the time which reported that the "hand-spun blankets which are the work of 73 African men and women at the mission are exported to Europe where they are eagerly sought after because of their lasting quality and fine workmanship" (*Natal Mercury*, April 14, 1965: 3).<sup>5</sup>

By contrast the Ubumba display gives recognition to a group of artists, designers and craft persons who are known mainly within the communities for whom they manufacture traditional products.<sup>6</sup> It must be borne in mind that Western notions of art, especially from a modernist perspective, values individualist originality and consequently community - based, repetitive, decorative work that characterises much of the art of Africa is accorded little value. Marion Arnold has argued that there is a gender dimension to this divide as

"in many traditional communities women have been responsible for working in clay, cloth and beads to make functional objects which both embody social-cum-ritual meaning and manifest a delight in visual structure, not only have such forms been designated as craft, possibly because the forms are repeated rather than being unique, but the visual sensibility they manifest is accorded little recognition." (1991: 2)

The inclusion of contemporary work in exhibitions such as this is important as one of the dangers in mounting traditional exhibits is that, implicitly, they deny the innovation and dynamism of culture. This is particularly true of exhibitions of African art which is often deemed to be either traditional or transitional, both terms which tend to categorise such work and fail to recognise variants. Collectors have also had an influence upon the values placed on either traditional or transitional pieces. The quest for "authenticity" has led collectors to place value on older pieces. Bell comments on this when he notes that "there is no lack of people plundering the rural regions of Kwa Zulu-Natal for prize pieces the majority of which end up in foreign collections, selling for prices that our museums simply cannot afford" (1998: 1).

The importance of a museum in according status to objects will be discussed in detail later, however it is pertinent to mention at this point that the three decades that separates the Rorke's Drift display and the Ubumba exhibition and the institutional support (or lack of it) is an indication of the influence that different sets of cultural values and political ideologies have had in South Africa on what is considered worthy of both academic research and official display. In her essay "Collections, Exhibitions and Histories: Constructing a New South African Art History" Nettleton notes that "the way in which art-historical discourse in South Africa has been shaped by exhibitions and acquisitions of collections and catalogues of both, has been part of a process of staking claim to, and exercising power over the construction of a national art history" (1997: 1).

Clearly the definition of the nature of fine art and craft in South Africa is a part of a broader struggle to define the visual arts and their history in something other than Western terms. However this remains a long way off and consequently this body of research has to work within the current state of flux. The same can be said of business support for the visual arts, although it needs to be recognised that business, for a different set of strategic and ideological reasons, is not always a passive element.<sup>7</sup> However, as will be observed in the chapter on business sponsorship of the arts (Chapter Six) the capacity of the "neglected" traditions in South Africa to provide the distinct sense of "a common heritage" described by Bell has also been used for differing ideological and commercial purposes by sponsors.

### **Design Art**

Josephson maintains that the design arts are essentially new forms of art created by the Industrial Revolution (1996: 6). However it should be noted that the history of design is more complex and it cannot be said to have its sole origins during the nineteenth century. Having said that, it needs to be recognised that throughout the Industrial Revolution technological innovation not only transformed society but defined the nature of craft (folk art) as opposed to mass manufactured products (design art). Thus for the sake of clarity this body of research accepts the term "design art" to mean all forms of industrially, mass-produced goods. Hence the design arts include fashion design, package design, industrial design, interior design, graphic and advertising design (1996: 6-7).

The relationship between design, art and industry is a complex one. At one extreme, design can be created for industrial purposes while at the other it can be closely aligned to art. Graphically the relationship between art, design and industry can be represented as follows:

ART < \_\_\_\_\_ DESIGN \_\_\_\_\_ >INDUSTRY

In terms of the above illustration it is important to note that design functions on a sliding scale between the two extremes - art and industry. Hence certain design forms (product design) are closely aligned with industrial applications with, often, no apparent reference to aesthetics, while others, most notably graphic design are invariably closely aligned to the fine arts. Chapter Four will explore the “crossover” from the fine arts to design during the late nineteenth century but it must be recognised that the reorientation of art to use industrial production as its medium was recognised by a number of fine artists during the early part of the twentieth century, most notably at the Bauhaus in Germany. The Constructivists in Russia also set about using “productivist” ideas in building a bridge between art and industry for the benefit of the masses (Anikst 1987: 15). In doing so these artists and designers (both in Russia and Germany) did a great deal to develop what is recognised as “high” design art today.

According to Burkhardt, “design implies a commitment to mass production, within an industrial logic” (1988: 146). Hence the profession of the designer is a relatively young one and is inextricably linked to the phenomenon of industrial expansion (op. cit. 145). It is in this context that Bonsiepe’s definition of graphic design in the previous chapter needs to be considered. The technology that provided for the mass production of images and text which is central to the profession of the graphic designer also provided the impetus for the

Renaissance in Europe. Consequently the invention of the printing press and movable type was to have an equally profound effect upon the development of fine art.

### **Medium Cool**

Lévi-Strauss maintains that there are two types of societies: “hot” and “cold.” One definition he offers for a “cold” society is that they are without writing. He likens them to clocks in that they aim to maintain themselves in a state of equilibrium, minimizing friction. In this respect they are more egalitarian than “hot” societies which depend for their functioning on the existence of internal differences i.e. social hierarchies. Lévi-Strauss argues that the emergence of these hierarchies is intimately related to the invention of writing, which he maintained was an instrument of power that came to be used by one class for controlling another (quoted in Wiseman and Groves 1997: 98-99).

McLuhan agrees with Lévi-Strauss but maintains that it was the invention of the moveable typeface by Gutenberg that heralded the “hot” society of the Renaissance by exploding “the world of tribal man, creating via print the open society, modern individualism, privacy, specialisation and mechanical-repeatable techniques” (quoted in Stearn 1967: 251). Even at this early stage mass production of information was to transform society and in *The Medium is the Massage* McLuhan maintains that printing

“provided the first uniformly repeatable ‘commodity,’ the first assembly line - mass production. It created the portable book, which men could read in privacy and in isolation from others. Man could now aspire - and conspire. Like easel painting, the printed book added much to the new cult of individualism. The private fixed point of view became possible and literacy conferred the power of detached, non-involvement.” (1967: 50)

McLuhan identifies two important points that have a direct impact on this dissertation. Firstly, the invention of the printing press laid the foundation for the modern media and secondly, the fact that the notion of possessing commodities, either books or works of art for private enjoyment became a major cultural force at a time that the first wave of European exploration was about to begin. Here the desire to invest in and possess objects



figure 2.5

# CLEAR SIGHT<sup>®</sup> NON-REFLECTIVE GLASS. NOW THAT IT COSTS FAR LESS, YOUR CHOICE IS CLEARER THAN EVER.

Recent advancements in Pilkington technology have resulted in ClearSight non-reflective glass costing considerably less. In fact, it now costs practically the same as ordinary clear glass. And if you add the unsurpassed protection and the freedom from reflection that ClearSight offers, you'll see why it's a crystal-clear choice for all your picture framing requirements. Most on ClearSight non-reflective glass because it's that there's price parity, you can afford improved clarity. Recommended by and available at leading picture art galleries nationwide.

NON-REFLECTIVE GLASS      CLEAR SIGHT NON-REFLECTIVE GLASS

  
**PILKINGTON**

PHOTO: JAMES HAY

figure 2.6

## INTRODUCING THE SOLUTION TO INTERNATIONAL PHONING PROBLEMS...



The Sprint WorldTraveler FONECARD is for those who want the world's most convenient charge card. Available in Europe.

When you travel internationally with American Express and all Sprint WorldTraveler FONECARDs, you'll have to deal with foreign phone rates, foreign currencies, or physical calling cards that are out. Now your added travel will be even more convenient.

You can make international calls from over 30 countries, including South Africa with the convenience of English-speaking operators. And now, extended service on all 3000 local numbers. For additional convenience, all your calls will be billed as a single charge on your American Express account, so you'll have only one amount to pay. PLUS, you'll also receive a fully detailed Sprint WorldTraveler FONECARD summary for accurate charges after your next month.

The Sprint WorldTraveler FONECARD is adding to the portfolio you expect as an American Express Gold Cardmember.

## BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE MOST ACCEPTED INTERNATIONAL CHARGE CARD...



When you have an American Express Card, you know how to take full advantage of the world's most privileged international member. That's the Sprint WorldTraveler FONECARD and you'll love the world.

Of course you can't have one without the other. So, if you don't yet have an American Express Card and want to enjoy the privilege it affords you - including the convenience and peace of mind of the Sprint WorldTraveler FONECARD - simply fill in the enclosed coupon or provide us with your name and postal address and send it to us in its envelope addressed to: American Express Marketing Department, P.O. Box 65133, Manhattan, NY 10065.

If you're already an American Express Cardmember but don't have a Sprint WorldTraveler FONECARD, simply contact American Express Gold Member Service on 800.338.9828.

The Sprint WorldTraveler FONECARD... yet another symbol of the value you expect. Get an American Express.

 **Cards**  
 The distinct difference

©1994 American Express

figure 2.7

(art or otherwise) for private consumption and enjoyment should not be divorced from the fact that it was during the Renaissance that explorers were sent to “discover” other continents that were to become colonial “possessions.”<sup>8</sup>

### **Investing in the Masterpiece**

Clearly, the issue of patronage and art cannot be separated. As will be discussed in Chapter Six this is particularly true of corporate patronage of the arts in South Africa where an important motivation behind contemporary corporate sponsorship is aimed at associating goods and services with the “status” and value of art. However the status given to the artist and the “masterpiece” is derived from its value within a modern concept: the culture market which enables individuals and companies to associate themselves with the values embodied within the work. Interestingly the designer turned artist Barbra Kruger has commented on this in her work “You invest in the divinity of the masterpiece” (1982) (*figure 2.5*). The “divinity” of Michelangelo’s Sistine Chapel “masterpiece” is used, extensively, in South Africa to sell products as diverse as “Pilkington non-reflective glass” (Preller Sharpe Rice 1994) and services such as “American Express Card” (Ogilvy & Mather Direct 1996) (*figures 2.6 & 2.7*).

According to Alpherson art is also valued “as embodiments of particular qualities of form; as means of exercising the imagination or as carriers of expressive, representational, religious, moral, social, political, or historical meaning and force; as personal or domestic adornment or as emblems of wealth, status, privilege, or sophistication” (1992: 2). It has already been noted that advertising draws a great deal from the notion of the visual arts as valued carriers of meaning or as emblems of wealth, status, privilege and sophistication. To this end advertising has developed a number of rhetorical devices which will be discussed in Chapter Seven. However, at this juncture a pertinent example of the value laden “masterpiece” which is used as an “embodiment of particular qualities of form” is to be found in an advertisement that was used extensively in South African photographic trade magazines to communicate the ability of Agfa products to reproduce quality images. “The Art of Rubens The Technology of Agfa” (*figure 2.8*) (*SA Photo* August/September 1997).

THE ART OF RUBENS  
THE TECHNOLOGY OF AGFA

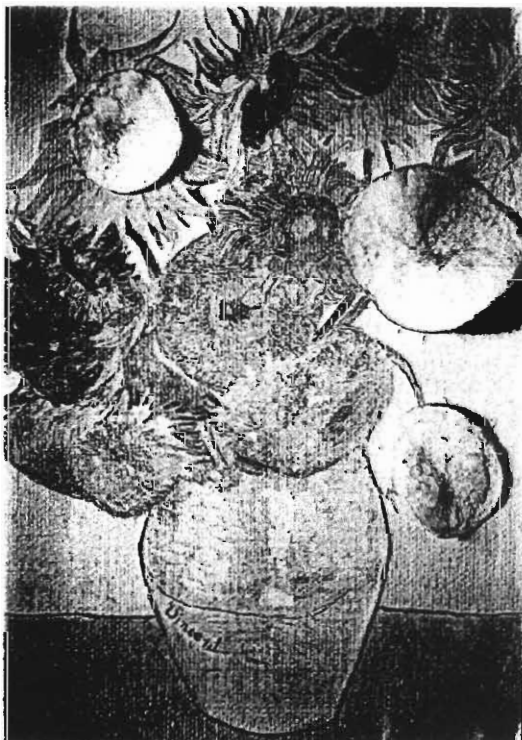
Thanks to imaging technology, art can also be enjoyed outside the museum.

Based upon photographic technologies Agfa has developed complete systems for conventional and digital photography and for the graphic arts industry, but also for medical imaging and non-destructive testing. And with Agfa's state-of-the-art digital imaging products clever image manipulation is a (master)piece of cake.

**AGFA**   
A Bayer company

<http://www.agfa.com>

figure 2.8



*Simba Originals.  
For the more  
sophisticated palette.*



*Chips the way adults like them. Real paints. Painted with the skin. In acquired tastes like  
Rosa Bonf & Mustard, Cagliostro's Red, Tullio & Tullio and Ken's Portuguese Collection.*

figure 2.9



In this example, digital imaging products have enabled the designer convincingly to merge the gold silk garment in the painting with the cloth that extends beyond the picture frame on to the museum floor. The “tongue in cheek” humour is echoed in the copy, “with Agfa’s state-of-the-art digital imaging products clever image manipulation is a (master)piece of cake.” In this gentle irreverent manner the interest of the potential consumer is not only arrested but the status of the Rubens painting remains intact as the text maintains that “Thanks to imaging technology, art can also be enjoyed outside the museum” The implicit message therefore is that “the technology of Agfa” is equal to “the art of Rubens.”

The examples of advertisements referred to above serve to confirm that Renaissance culture and artists, such as Michelangelo, are “popularly” regarded as a high point in the Western history of art. This is perhaps because Western art histories, written since the end of the eighteenth century, have promoted the notion of the great (male) individualist artist during the Renaissance in the mould of a Romantic inspired modernist. Although many feminist and post-modern histories have forcefully challenged this view it can be argued that the perception of the majority of the audience to whom advertising addresses itself is still a conservative one. In part this explains why so many Renaissance inspired images currently abound in South African advertising.

The traditional art historical view has also had a long gestation period. According to Staniszewski, the history of art “as we understand it was invented during the rise of modernism” (1995: 28). She maintains that this occurred in the eighteenth century when in 1764 Johann Joachim Winckelmann published *The History of the Art of Antiquity* in which he wrote about art in terms of style (op. cit.181). This method of writing art history was particularly influential in that it organised the past in terms of growth and decline (op. cit.182). At this juncture it must be said that, until quite recently, this is how texts used as sources in South African schools such as Helen Gardener and H.H. Arnason have presented the subject to matriculants. Perhaps even more influential upon the practice of graphic design in South Africa has been the prescribed text for the National Diploma in Graphic Design in most design schools: Philip Meggs’ linear and chronological, *A History of Graphic Design* (1983) which also tends to concern itself with “great” works produced by

“great” men. Ideologically this approach to history in many South African schools and design schools has served to confirm the hierarchies that exist in both the traditional art and design histories.

As previously mentioned, according to Said these hierarchies, linked to the ideology of racial and cultural superiority have led to the traditional practice of art, design and craft in colonies such as South Africa as not only being neglected, but also devalued and in many cases, destroyed. Sadly, human beings were also subjected to the same degree of objectification cf. Pippa Skotnes’s *Mis-cast: Negotiating the Presence of the Bushman* (South African National Gallery, April, 1996).<sup>9</sup> This historical legacy has emptied indigenous cultures of their original value and meanings which has made them vulnerable to exchange. Emptying culture of its original value and meaning has by no means been restricted to the southern tip of the continent. As Vansina points out, a wide recognition of African arts began in 1905 when European avant-garde artists in France then in Germany recognised them as such. “However this enthusiasm was dominated by an interest in artistic form only. Social content and meaning were irrelevant” (1984: 19). Hence at best, even when African Art was accorded recognition, it was only recognised in Western terms and was regarded as *art trouvé* - a found art to be appropriated by artists such as Picasso and Brancusi in European modernist terms.

It will be argued later that the notion of indigenous material culture in South Africa existing as *art trouvé*, devoid of social content and meaning, to be exploited and appropriated for commercial purposes, is a significant feature of contemporary advertising.

### **Taste**

The ideological role that museums play in South Africa has already been referred to, as has the fact that the same technological innovations that produced products for mass consumption also provided for the mass production of the art images. This technological development had, and continues to have, a curious effect upon the relationship between “high” and “low” culture. In current conventions it is still customary to regard the fine arts as high culture and the popular art of the mass media as low culture to say nothing of the

low cultural status accorded to folk art (crafts). According to Bourdieu, in his chapter on “The Aristocracy of Culture” this distinction is often based upon sociological notions of race, class and taste (1994: 11-96). The issue of taste and art is, once again, related to Kant’s ideas about pure beauty which, he maintained, is only to be found in nature and in art. According to Kant, beauty created by God is nature, and beauty created by man is Art. “To produce Art one must be endowed with genius and to assess Art one has to have taste” (quoted in Brolin 1985: 73).

The issue of how art is used as a signifier of taste in advertising will be dealt with in Chapter Seven. However, it is important to note that the division between high and low culture has already been identified as informed by taste. In all cultural contexts this is a complex issue that is dominated as much by class, educational and economic status, as by cultural background. As Bourdieu explains: “A work of art has meaning and interest only for someone who possesses the cultural competence, that is the code, into which it is encoded” (1994: 7). In this context the consumption of art and culture can act as an important social and political indicator. As Said states “we live of course in a world not only of commodities but also of representation, and representations - their production, circulation, history, and interpretation - are the very element of culture” (1994: 67).

Steiner and Haas point out that most people are unaware of how culture functions and maintain that “most people are as unaware of their own culture as they are of oxygen, evolution or gravity. Culture is our environment; it is the “natural” way to think and to behave, as unquestionable as water to a fish” (1995: 5). According to Staniszewski, this is the basis for an “efficient ideology” in that it is “accepted and unquestioned” (1995: 33). However, culture is also dynamic and in a constant state of change. The chapters that follow will discuss how advertising can be a powerful agent in shaping culture by making certain modes of behaviour appear to be “natural” in the manner that Steiner and Haas suggest.

Duchamp not only recognised the power of the ideology implicit in museum exhibition when he contested the notion of what appeared to be “natural” with his ready-mades but he also recognised the importance of taste in determining the value of art. When Pierre Cabanne

asked him about how he “saw the evolution of art,” Duchamp replied “I don't see it, because I doubt its value deep down. Man invented art. It wouldn't exist without him. All man's creations are not valuable. Art has no biological source. It's addressed to taste” (quoted in Cabanne 1971: 100). When Bourdieu addressed the issue of taste he confirmed its role in creating various cultural hierarchies. He explained that even within the arts there is a “socially recognised hierarchy of the arts, and within each of them, of genres, schools or periods, corresponds a social hierarchy of the consumers. This predisposes tastes to function as markers of ‘class’” (1994: 2).

Significantly, it was Clement Greenberg who expressed his views on kitsch during the period of the crucial merging of high and low culture beginning in the 1950's and then blooming during the 1960's with the celebration of popular culture (Pop Art). Walker has noted that this celebration prompted a number of critics to “argue that modernism was exhausted, that it had become a period style” (1990: 82). Hence, “the term *post-modernism* entered the critical vocabulary” (ibid.). Pop Art in both Britain and the United States blurred, amongst other things, the dividing line between the “commercial” and what was considered “art” and this has a great influence upon the development of the cultural niches of Fine and Popular Art as defined as part of the cultural niche theory. On this subject Sobieszek maintained that one of the failures of modernism has been the illogical separation of what is considered “commercial” from what is considered “art” (1988: 10).

### **High and low culture and the mechanical image**

The merging of high and low art/culture can also be regarded as a consequence of modernism's pre-occupation with modernity and with the technological means of reproducing and transmitting images. However, the blurring of lines between high and low culture that takes place because of changes in technology should not mislead one into believing that technology obliterates the notion of fine art. Malraux discussed how reproductions of art works have created an imaginary museum which we carry within our memories called “a museum without walls” in an essay originally published as *Le Musée Imaginaire* in 1965. For Malraux the development of museums and reproduction techniques has ensured that “for over a century our approach to art has been growing more and more

intellectualised” (1967: 10). Photographic reproduction of images has enabled artworks and artefacts to be used as they are in this dissertation viz. photographed, photostated and scanned into digital form. In the process the images are further removed from their original context, reduced and juxtaposed, with no true indication of their original size, patina, texture or colour, to create new meanings.

Berger, in his text *Ways of Seeing* commented upon this and explained how the uniqueness of every painting was once part of the uniqueness of the place where it resided. “The invention of the camera also changed the way in which men saw paintings painted long before the camera was invented. Originally paintings were an integral part of the building for which they were designed” (1974: 21). As Staniszewski has pointed out, “it is perhaps no coincidence that photography was perfected in 1839, a time when the cult of originality began to develop within modern art” (1995: 78).

But the issue of the reproduction of art and its consequences is even more complex. Particularly important for this investigation is that, as Berger explains, when the camera reproduces a painting, it destroys the uniqueness of its image. “As a result its meaning changes. Or, more exactly, its meaning multiplies and fragments into many meanings” (1974: 21). A significant result of this fragmentation in meaning is that the uniqueness of the original lies in it being the original of a reproduction and the meaning of the original work no longer lies in what it uniquely says but in what it is (*ibid.*).

The implications of this phenomenon in a consumer society is that fine art is often perceived to have a value based upon its rarity. Hence monuments become “priceless” and the value of easel paintings, drawings and sculpture is affirmed and gauged by the price they fetch on the market. At the height of the “art boom” at the end of the late 1980's Van Gogh's “Sunflowers” were sold at an auction for \$39.9 million. It is significant to note how many articles were published on the subject commenting on its status as a high-yield investment, which has taken over whatever other function it had. An example of how the financial value of a fine art piece translates itself in to popular art can be observed in the subsequent popularity of the “Sunflowers” as an image in the marketing of Simba Chips amongst other

things (*figure 2.9*). This process was referred to by Karl Marx when he wrote,

“The process, then, is simply this: The product becomes a commodity, i.e. a moment of exchange. The commodity is transformed into exchange value. In order to equate it with itself as exchange value, it is exchanged for a symbol which represents it as exchange value as such. As such a symbolized exchange value, it can then in turn be exchanged in definite relations for every other commodity. (quoted in Williamson 1992: 11)

By the end of the 1980's the culture market had developed to the point where Robert Hughes in a *Time* magazine story entitled, “Art and Money - Who’s winning and who’s losing as prices go through the roof” observed that:

“the hardest lesson of the past decade is that liquidity, to many people, may be all that art means. The art market has become the faithful cultural reflection of the wider economy in the ’80s, inflated by levered buyouts, massive junk-bond issues and vast infusions of credit. What is a picture worth?” (1989: 48)

To answer his own question Hughes comments on the third highest price ever paid for a work of art at an auction at the time, Picasso’s *Au Lapin Agile* (1905):

“Only \$40.7 million. And was that less or more than the GNP of a minor African state? On the other hand, wouldn’t it buy only the undercart of a B-2, and maybe the crew’s potty? Or a dozen parties for Malcolm Forbes? That a night’s art sale could make a total of \$269.5 million and yet leave its observers feeling slightly flat is perhaps a measure of the odd cultural values of our *fin de siècle*.” (ibid.)

The “odd cultural values” that Hughes refers to above, inform the thesis that the development of the notion of fine art over the past two hundred years has enabled art to be valued and traded as a precious commodity in the manner that Hughes describes. In tandem with this development, the value and meaning of art has also become transferable. This thesis proposes that the notion of art as a “tradable commodity” is most evident in the realm of advertising which, as has been explained, was born of, and developed within, the same

political, cultural, social and economic matrix as art itself.

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## Notes

1. *Preparing Ourselves For Freedom* was written for an ANC in-house seminar on culture held in Stockholm in 1989. The full context for this quotation is as follows:

“Allow me, as someone who has for many years been arguing precisely that art should be seen as an *instrument of struggle*, to explain why suddenly this affirmation seems not only banal and devoid of real content, but wrong and potentially harmful. In the first place, it results in an impoverishment of our art. Instead of getting real criticism, we get solidarity criticism. Our artists are not pushed to improve the quality of their work, it is enough that it be politically correct.” (1989 :10)

2. It is interesting to note that in a sense the working to a brief, framed by the needs of a demanding client, is not dissimilar to the way an advertising designer works today. The Sistine Chapel frescos functioned in a way that was closer to what we understand as Corporate advertising today. Fisher describes the Renaissance artists’ relationship with contemporaries and patrons as “Usually the artist recognised a two fold social mission: the direct one imposed by a city, a corporation, or a social group; and the indirect one arising from an experience which mattered to him, i.e. from his own social consciousness. The two missions did not necessarily coincide” (1964: 47).

3. For example Esmé Berman notes that Greenberg stated that of all the South African painting he had been able to view on his visit the work of Cecil Higgs could be what he described as “of international standard” (Berman 1984: 215). Greenberg was equally insensitive when I witnessed Greenberg, in a public lecture, remonstrate with Paul Stopforth that “you have read all the right books young man” (Greenberg public lecture at University of Natal 1975).

4. The term Nguni is used here in the same sense that Paul Maylam uses it “as a label of convenience” to describe collectively “the Zulu, the Swazi, the Xhosa, the Thembu, the Mfengu, the Mpondo and the Mpondomise” (Maylam 1986 : 21).

5. Also on display were the relief prints of the graphic artist Azaria Mbatha (b.1941) who went into self-imposed exile in Sweden shortly afterwards (1969).

6. Some exhibitors such as Nesta Nala (dates unknown) have already received a degree of recognition. Nala, in 1994 had work selected to represent South Africa at the Cairo international Biennale for ceramics and during the following year was awarded first prize in the FNB Vita Craft Competition. She was also awarded first prize at the National Ceramics Biennale in 1996 (Bell 1998: 48). Bonnie Ntshalintshali (b. 1965) has also been the recipient of many awards. In 1989 she was the joint recipient of a first prize (with Carol Haywood-Fell) of the Corobrick National Ceramic Award and her collaborative work with Fee Halsted-Berning won the Standard Bank Young Artists Award in 1990 (op. cit. 93-96).

7. Nettleton gives details of how the Standard Bank Foundation has dictated the appointment of a selection committee and the purchasing policy of The Standard Bank Foundation Collection of African Art. According to Nettleton the sponsors demanded that the collection be expanded through the acquisition of contemporary art by “named”, urban, black South African artists.

“So from 1990 onwards there has been a concerted effort to create a representative collection of contemporary art by black artists within the larger collection, which thus appears to construct a history of art made by black people in South Africa. This history emerges as a seamless garment, whose ruptures through modernisation are disguised by levelling of all objects to the status of “art” works and the equalisation of their makers through the colour of their skins.” (1997: 3)

8. McEvilly chronicles what he calls “a deep complicity between European so-called high cultural traditions and European colonialist delegations of the rest of the world.”



“In 1442, two years after Donatello’s *David*, while Fra Angelico was working on his *Annunciation*, the first Portugese slave ship raided sub-Saharan Africa. In 1455, as Renaissance perspective was being perfected as a means to objectivity [sic] space for possible penetration into it, Pope Nicholas V granted Portugal exclusive rights to make laws and exact tribute in southern Africa, promising “to all those who shall be engaged in said war complete forgiveness of all their sins”. In 1509 Leonardo was working on *The Virgin and Saint Ann*, the first ship loaded with enslaved Africans moored in the Caribbean. On and on the sad recital goes, reaching a kind of culmination in 1884-85, one decade before the founding of the Venice Biennale, when European nations carved up Africa for their feast at the Berlin Conference.” (1997: 2)

9. The Skotnes exhibition of San material culture graphically shows how San/ Bushman “art” was perceived by the settlers as the work of children akin to graffiti. Because of colonial notions of cultural supremacy, the San/Bushman culture was destroyed and their people hunted for sport and in retaliation for cattle raids. Women’s breasts were used for commodities such as tobacco pouches and body-casts were placed on display in the very museums that mediated the way modern culture was to view art. A Khoisan woman, Saartjie Baartman became an “object” of curiosity and taken to England in 1810 for display. Her skeleton still remains in the Musée de l’Homme in Paris.

### Chapter 3: Commodities - Objects of Desire

Over the past couple of decades a number of academics from a variety of disciplines have shown a burgeoning interest in “material culture.” While economists may have always studied patterns of mass consumption for practical purposes, increasingly, a study of consumption for a broader understanding of society and culture has become the focus of a new field that has been referred to as “social archaeology” (Miller 1987). Not surprisingly, sociologists have been at the forefront of this type of investigation and in this regard the writings of the French sociologists Bourdieu and Baudrillard have been particularly influential. In this relatively new “discipline” material objects are viewed as instruments for the reproduction, representation, and manipulation of culture and, as such, is important in any history/ theory that concerns itself with the interaction of art, design and advertising.

The mass consumption model of modern capitalism requires that products be manufactured and marketed as objects to be desired. The relationship between products and desires is as complex as the history that binds them together and Jhally observes that:

“At the material, concrete and historical level advertising is part of a specific concern with the marketing of goods. It rose to prominence in modern society as a *discourse through and about objects*. It is from this perspective that an analysis of advertising has to unfold. More particularly, this discourse concerns a specific, seemingly universal relationship: that between people and objects.” (1990: 1)

Human beings have always used objects drawn from nature, not only to satisfy what Maslow has termed “real needs” such as food, shelter and tools, but also to fulfill social and self-actualisation needs (quoted in Brierley 1995: 30). As Baudrillard puts it “every object has two functions: one is practical, the other of being possessed (1990:44). While anthropological studies have extensively documented how “primitive” societies used goods as utilitarian objects and/or as social markers, it is curious as Sparke points out, how few people have looked at mass produced artefacts as cultural forms (1995: viii). This chapter seeks to do just that: as central to this investigation is an understanding of how the

**THE ART OF INVESTING IN A PERFORMANCE MOTORCAR.**

Like any work of art, a fine motorcar should satisfy two crucial criteria. It should realize a high investment value. And it should also be a pleasure to own.

The new BMW 7-Series achieves this balance.

Its precise synergy between performance, handling, safety and comfort make it one of the most enjoyable cars on the road to drive. While BMW's progressive engineering and quality ensure an equally measurable return on your investment.

**CONSIDER ITS DYNAMIC BREEDING.**

Many manufacturers claim to have a motor racing heritage. The difference with BMW is that new engine technology is first developed for our production cars and only then applied to the race track. The result of the 1983 Grand Prix World Championship confirms the success of this unique approach.

The Digital Electronic engine management system that refines both performance and efficiency is just one example.

High performance should have its counterpart in improved safety. An Anti-lock braking system (ABS) which infinitely improves driver control in emergency situations, makes the new 7-Series one of the safest cars on the road.

**EXAMINE ITS TECHNOLOGY.**

A crucial aspect of automotive investment is whether it is sufficiently advanced to still be relevant in future years?

The new 7-Series is fitted with BMW's new 5-speed automatic transmission. Incorporating an overdrive 4th gear with converter bypass making it as dynamically efficient as the 5-speed manual overdrive alternative.

The Service Interval Indicator calculates when servicing is required according to your individual driving style.

A Fuel Consumption Indicator measures how efficient that style is.


While an Active Check Control indicates when a key function of the car may require attention.

All of which makes the 7-Series a unique investment.

If you are already driving one, a visit to your BMW dealer to have it valued will confirm that fact.

If not, a test drive will demonstrate how a stable investment can also be a pleasurable experience.

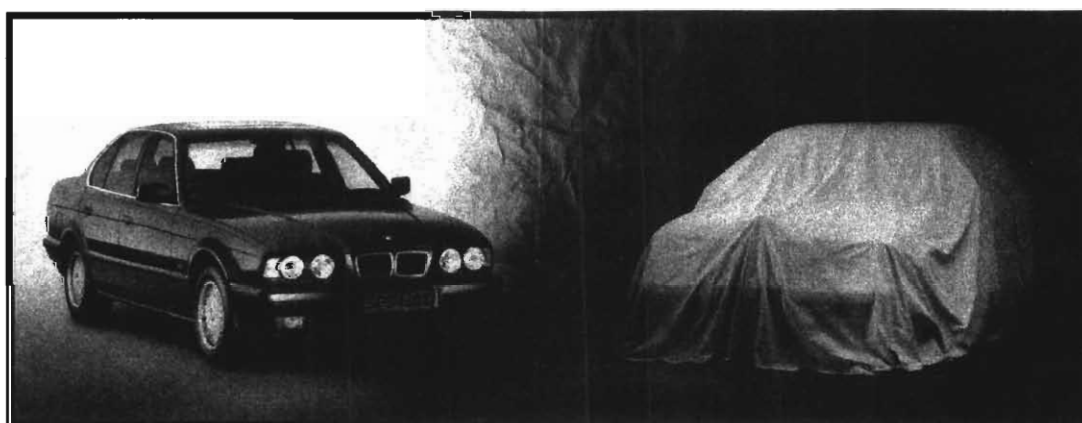
**THE NEW BMW 7-SERIES.**



Sheer driving pleasure.

**728i, 733i, 735i, 745i.**

figure 3.1a



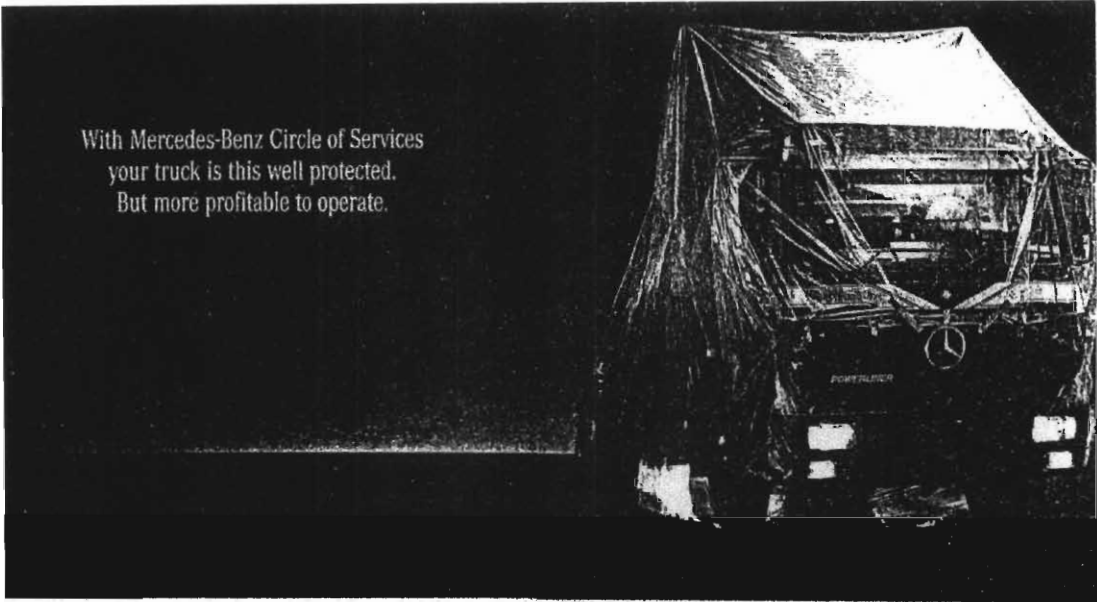
**RULES SAY COMPARATIVE ADVERTISING IS ILLEGAL.  
FACTS SAY IT'S IMPOSSIBLE.**

figure 3.1b

development of fine art has contributed to the “commodification” of both art and artefact and how this has facilitated their exchange of value and meaning within the framework of marketing. To this end an understanding is required not only of the development of art as object, but also of the notion of an *objet d’art* as a signifier of taste. As Sparke puts it “through objects and styles which represent it, taste communicates complex messages about our values, our aspirations, our beliefs and our identities” (1995: 1). Hence the medium of advertising that markets products has inevitably to concern itself with these complex messages as central to the advertising process is the issue of exchange of either information or objects.

According to Wolfe the merging of the art object and information occurred during the first half of the twentieth century in fine art to the point where the work of art ceased to stand on its own merits as an object. Consequently it became necessary for it to be explained in words (1975: 109). In this scenario the ability to decode art inevitably becomes a signifier of what Bourdieu refers to as one’s “cultural competence” (1994: 2). The notion of cultural competence as a signifier of taste has had a significant impact on the marketing of “upper market” goods in South Africa and this is borne out by the number of esoteric references that are used in the marketing of prestige products such as BMW (*figure 3.1*). Interestingly, Hunt Lascaris TBWA, the advertising agency with the BMW account, is also the agency for the Standard Bank which, as it will be discussed in Chapter Six, are high profile sponsors of the arts in South Africa.

Hobsbawn has observed, with reference to the work of the Dadaists and Surrealists, that it is ironic, that radical modernist movements that had remained so isolated from the tastes and concerns of the mass have impinged more upon the public than is generally recognised. In the process, the art of the avant-garde has become “as it were, part of established culture; it became at least partly absorbed into the fabric of everyday life, particularly advertising” (1994: 181). Current trends in advertising reveal that this is true even when art is created with the express purpose of avoiding becoming a commodity e.g. Land or Earth Art. For example television advertising campaigns for British Airways broadcast in South Africa during 1995/96 drew explicitly upon the conceptual art of Christo Javacheff (b.1935)



With Mercedes-Benz Circle of Services  
your truck is this well protected.  
But more profitable to operate.

That a Mercedes-Benz truck or bus is an investment worth preferring is seldom questioned. They're acknowledged as being amongst the finest commercial vehicles in the world. And their reputation for reliability and consistently high resale value has earned the trucking fraternity's respect. And our competitors' envy.

But the practical nature of the transport business breeds realists, and a truck or bus is only worth as much as it can earn. Which is why Mercedes-Benz Circle of Services, our unique back-up and support system, exists. And what explains why it has always been a success with transport operators. From the moment that you walk

**Circle of Services**

*Wide range of quality vehicles • One-stop dealers • Transport consultancy • Technical training • Rapid parts availability • Factory exchange units • Customised financing • Maintenance contracts • 24-hour emergency service • 24-hour training*

into one of our over 90 dedicated dealers, and throughout the life of your truck or bus, our professional service and support is there to look after your best interests. As well as your investment.

Ensuring, in every manner possible, that your vehicle not only stays in premium condition for many years to come, but is also more

efficient and profitable to operate.

So before you invest in a new truck or bus for your business, contact your local Mercedes-Benz Commercial Vehicle Dealer for more information on our Circle of Services. When it comes to taking care of your interests, we've got the situation pretty much wrapped up.



Mercedes-Benz  
Commercial Vehicles  
Committed to your success.

figure 3.2

**HOW WOULD  
VOLVO'S  
GERMAN RIVALS  
STACK UP  
AFTER 20 YEARS?**

Volvo is about to reveal the details over which luxury German saloon has the best resale value. Government statistics in Sweden show that the average lifespan of Volvos (and that's not just one or two representatives) is steadily rising.

In 1985, it was 10.7 years. In 1979, it was 10.7. Today it's 20.7. And that's in an environment which could hardly be more demanding: ice, snow and snow-melting salt on the roads for up to 18 months a year.

Even our worst coastal conditions are a breeze in comparison. The point is, Volvos are not only built to safely stand up to any form of collision. They're built to stand up to old age. This durability naturally fits a Volvo's resale value consistency.

So even if you do choose to bring onto your Volvo until the year 2010, we're confident it'll still compare favourably. Especially to the price of scrap metal.

**VOLVO**  
A CAR YOU CAN SURVIVE IN



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION VISIT OUR WEBSITE: WWW.VOLVOUK.COM. VOLVO IS THE LEADER IN THE MARKET FOR SAFETY AND COMFORT. THE RESALE VALUE OF VOLVO IS THE HIGHEST IN THE MARKET. THE VOLVO IS THE LEADER IN RESALE VALUE AND PERFORMANCE. VOLVO IS THE LEADER IN RESALE VALUE AND PERFORMANCE. VOLVO IS THE LEADER IN RESALE VALUE AND PERFORMANCE.

figure 3.3

featuring a small group of unnamed islands wrapped in coloured fabrics. Hunt Lascaris TBWA drew upon the same source to advertise BMW cars in 1995 and, in a series of “me too” advertisements for Mercedes Benz, DMB&B also drew upon Christo’s rhetorical use of the wrapped object (*figure 3.2*). To the same end, addressing the same audience, Berry Bush placed an Anthony Caro-esque sculpture on the roof of an even more elite product, the imported Volvo (1996) (*figure 3.3*).

I propose that this apparent “allure of the avant-garde” not only appeals to the “cultural competence” of the target market, but the striking images inspired by these art forms serve a practical need for the advertisement to stand out from what is referred to as the “media clutter.” Media clutter is a term that is used in the advertising industry to describe a communications environment that is saturated by words and images. Significantly Fineberg makes the point that grand and bold projects by artists such as Christo “have their most poignant effect during a brief display period” (1995: 355). According to Fineberg, Christo’s projects are not only “empowered by sheer visual beauty” but are designed to “engage the public en masse in a critical debate on values” (op. cit. 350). Importantly, “Christo was the first artist to communicate his aesthetic ideas successfully on a scale that enabled him to *compete* [my italics] with big corporations in shaping the public’s perceptions of events” (ibid.). As in an advertising campaign, Christo “sets all his huge temporary projects in public spaces, [and] no one pays for them” (op. cit. 355).<sup>1</sup> Christo maintains that “I don’t believe any work of art exists outside of its prime time” (ibid.). Hence the grand gesture, designed to “engage the public en masse,” performed for free, in the public space by a company (O<sub>2</sub>) promoting domestic appliances such as “Speed Queen” clearly owes a great debt to the Marxist inspired Christo (*figure 3.4 a & b*).

Interestingly, addressing a different audience, Ogilvy & Mather use the pop artist Claes Oldenburg as a prop in their advertisement for the VW Golf (*figure 3.5*). In Chapter Seven Ogilvy & Mather’s exploitation of de Stijl imagery to promote the Citi Golf during the 1980’s will be discussed in detail, however, during the period 1996/97 Volkswagen’s products were associated with other popular art sources as is observed in their promotion for Citi Chico (*figure 3.6*). It is important to note that Volkswagen was conceived by Hitler

## MADE FOR MOUNTAINS OF WASHING



In today's throw-away world, certain words seem to have become scarcer. Words like craftsmanship, Pride, Finish, And permanence. And to find all these applying to one product? Almost unheard-of.

Unless, of course, you've heard of Speed Queen.

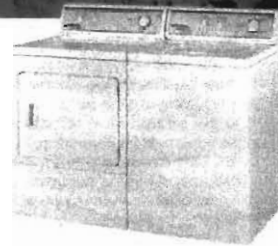
We've been designing and painstakingly building our washing machines and dryers to the same standards of excellence since 1908. Always updating, of course, and constantly improving. But never allowing our quality levels to drop one iota.

Which explains why more than 95% of South Africa's commercial laundries use Speed Queen washing machines and dryers.

Making molehills out of washday mountains.

See the new Speed Queen range at your local stockist. For more information, please call:

(011) 609 0355, (031) 700 4060 or (021) 551 4586,  
(041) 582 5245 (092634) 486 882

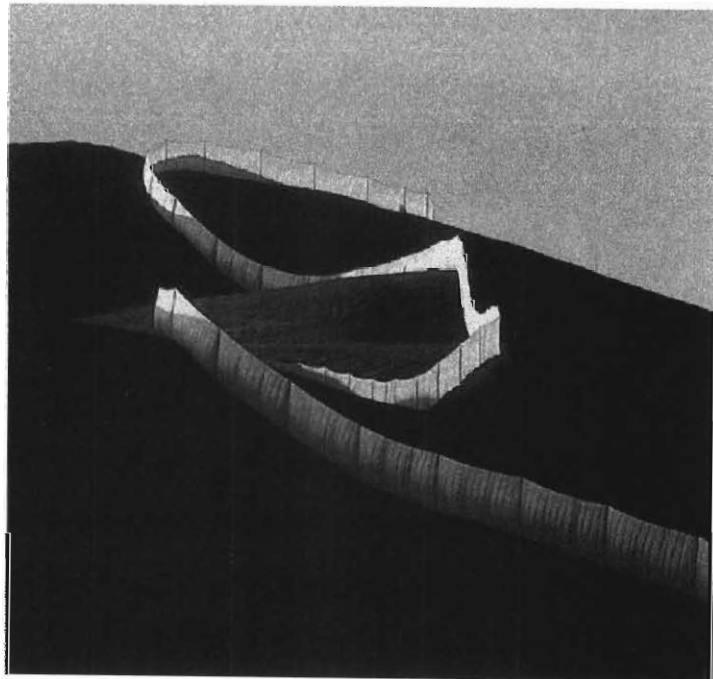


**Speed Queen**

RM 274 / RM 373 WASHING MACHINE (NEW 55 KG AUT. TRIM)	RM 477 TUMBLE DRYER (NEW 6.5 KG AUT. TRIM)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 Year guarantee (RM 373)</li> <li>• Massive 8.2kg drum</li> <li>• Superior steel drum (RM 373)</li> <li>• 3 Wash/Rinse temperatures</li> <li>• Variable water level control</li> <li>• Commercial reliability</li> <li>• Only top moving parts - built for years of use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 Year guarantee</li> <li>• Matching 8.2kg load capacity</li> <li>• 2 Automatic drying cycles</li> <li>• Manual 1/2m cycle adjustment</li> <li>• Adjustable end-of-cycle signal</li> <li>• 3-Position fabric selector</li> <li>• Removable sock/liner 1/2 filter</li> <li>• Reversible door</li> </ul>

0020E

*figure 3.4a*



*figure 3.4b*

as part of a national socialist dream of a “people’s car” hence the German name ‘Volkswagen.’ Thereafter a number of advertising campaigns for this manufacturer were aimed at “the people” and the target market of the entry level Chico is specifically aimed at young people by using popular art images.

South African advertising agencies have clearly absorbed the notion of “cultural competence” as can be observed in advertisements for the subscription television network, M-Net (c.1995) which made use of the Art Povera rhetoric of Michael Heizer (b.1944) to create a series of copy and visual puns that signify a variety of meanings (*figures 3.7 a & b*). The image of a large *M* carved into the landscape is eye catching and slightly humorous. Humour is widely used as an advertising device and when art is used humourously it is used primarily in two ways. Firstly, as a parody such as this M-Net advertisement which mimics a style.<sup>2</sup> In this advertisement the reference to earth art and the grand gesture not only provides the advertiser with an opportunity to catch the potential consumers attention but creates a positive communications environment in which subtle coded messages can be conveyed. Thus, without offending an ignorant party, parody has the effect of complimenting the person who recognises the references. This fact can be used to target audiences in very subtle ways. Hence this M-Net advertisement is in sharp contrast to the populist advertisements of the national broadcaster SABC which makes no such references or allusions.

The other rhetorical device that is used is pastiche which is defined as “a medley. A picture made up from or imitating various sources” (*COD* 1990: 870). As will be observed in later discussion, the various references employed in pastiche can have the same positive communications effect as the one described for parody. A case in point is “Anderson Consulting” (*figure 3.8*). Pastiche in the post-modern sense allows for a liberal “borrowing” of styles which will be discussed later. However, it must be recognised that fine art has become vulnerable to this type of appropriation and exploitation in two ways. Firstly, in the absence of a common social understanding of the meaning of an artwork, different values and meanings than those intended by the artist/ producer can be invented or presumed for marketing purposes. Secondly, as previously explained, the notion of fine art functioning





**If your VW doesn't feel 100% after a full service, it probably isn't.**

It happens with the best intentions. You take your Volkswagen to the corner garage for a service, expecting it to come out full of vroom and raring to go. And it doesn't. In fact, it doesn't feel quite itself.

Chances are that some of its vital and very personal bits have been replaced ... with pirate parts.

Now there is good reason why, when we made your car, we used only 100% genuine Volkswagen parts.

Because each and every VW component is precision-engineered to work perfectly with every other part, to give you optimum performance, safety and reliability.

And if you replace any one of them with an inferior part, you affect the functioning of your entire car.

And over time, you may even erode your Volkswagen's unique character.

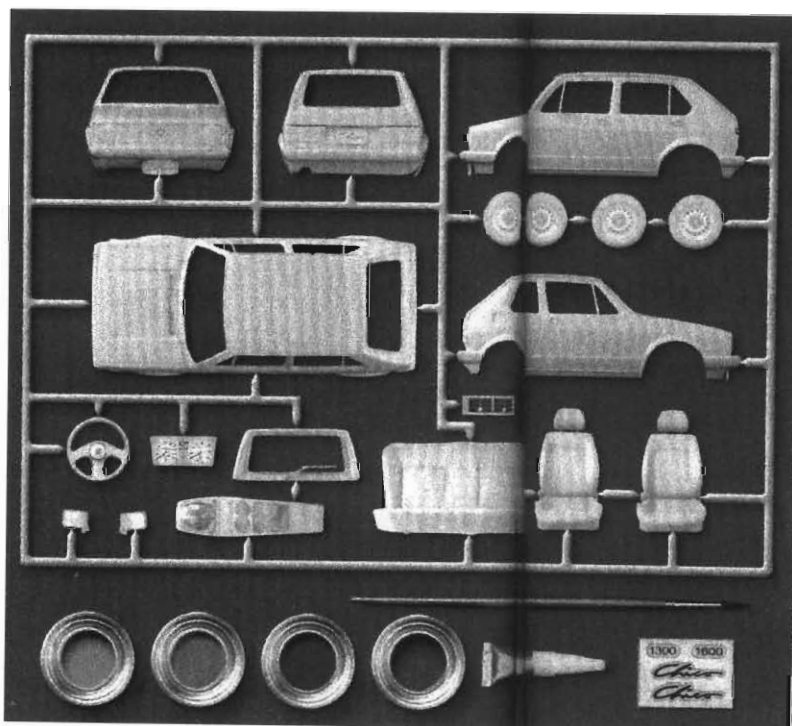
To avoid this kind of thing, insist on genuine Volkswagen parts.

After all, if you didn't want all that under-the-skin German engineering, safety, reliability and genuine people's car personality, you would have bought something else.

**Genuine Volkswagen Parts.**  
Guaranteed for 12 months.



figure 3.5



**Just stick it on the street.**

It goes like this. First you decide to keep your new 1.3i Citi Chico a secret because you don't want someone jacking their quality down on it. You get the 1.3i model because it has got a second gearbox. You'll go back to the new 1.6i model later.

Then you pull over onto the side of the road to have a good look at all the added extras. The doors are wide, the five modes, the new starter, the digital clock, the manually operated rear air, the new trim, the four windowless seats, the 3-spoke steering wheel.

Then of course you roll down your window and tell the person next to you that they could have bought our Chico for the price of their car and their car doesn't even have a seat's worth of Volkswagen.

While they're gawping, you let them gradually know more about cars they know of that come in Monza Red, Aztec White, Apple Green, Ascot Blue, Ruby Red Pearl, Caribbean Blue and Mountain Green. If they're still gawping you quickly add the all about the Luftwaffe German engineering and VW reliability.

Lastly, you give in and tell your best friend to tell him you've just had more fun with your new Citi Chico than you ever thought possible. And he says, 'Isn't that what you'd expect from Volkswagen?'

Now it's his turn to do it. Persuade your partner to let you buy the real one.



The new model 1.3i and 1.6i Citi Chico



figure 3.6

within a “high” cultural domain makes it an important signifier of cultural competence and taste and this brings considerable dividends to anyone wishing to use it as a communications tool in a marketing exercise.

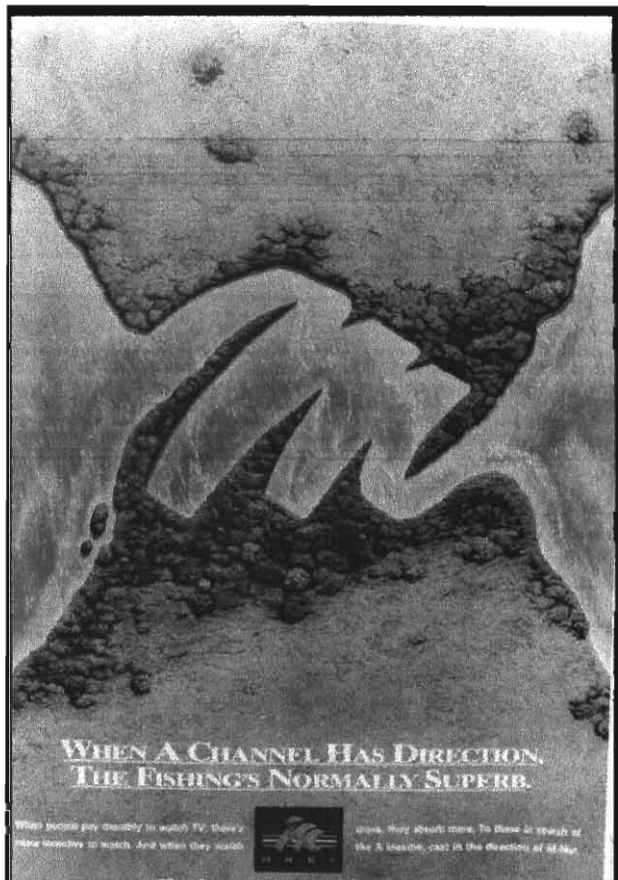
### **The mass produced product and the objet d’art**

In his book, *Captains of Consciousness - Advertising and the Social Roots of the Consumer Culture*, Stuart Ewen discusses the consequences of the separation of the object and the producer in an industrial society. He argues that ever since Henry Ford instituted the line production system for maximum production economy in 1910 not only the nature of work changed but also the austere social values of the nineteenth century - discipline, denial and thrift - became anachronistic. “As the question of expanding old and creating new markets became a function of the massification of industry, foresighted businessmen began to see the necessity of organising their businesses not merely around the production of goods, but around the creation of a buying public” (1974: 25). Thus according to Ewen, mass production began to reflect the needs of industrial capitalism rather than the real needs of consumers and necessitated that “men and women had to be habituated to respond to the demands of the productive machinery” (ibid.). Consequently, the need to create desires in the newly enfranchised consuming public necessitated a shift away from a stress solely on products, to a context where it was the relationship between people and products that was important. It is at this point that Baudrillard’s view that the status of the modern object is dominated by the opposition of the unique object to the mass-produced series is particularly relevant in that it is within this paradigm that the unique object “assumes the meaning of an object of affection” (1990: 45).

It has already been explained how Romantic notions of art ensured a break away from the “archetype” in favour of a unique art object produced by an individual that was given value because of its uniqueness (Walker 1983: 16). Thus the notion of the *objet d’art* during the nineteenth century not only had important implications for subsequent consumption patterns of mass produced commodities that were to be offered on sale in large departmental stores by the end of the century, but also for the development of the popular art niche as defined in the last chapter.



*figure 3.7a*



WHEN A CHANNEL HAS DIRECTION,  
THE FISHING'S NORMALLY SUPERB.

When people pay monthly to watch TV, there's  
more to watch. And when they watch



more, they absorb more. To have in search of  
the A inside, cast in the direction of it.

*figure 3.7b*

Francesca Balladon traces the development of the notion of the *objet d'art* in her paper, "l'Apparition du terme Objet d'art : quelques hypothèses socio-culturelles" which begins with an investigation of the lexical origins of the term *objet d'art* which she maintains was firmly established in the French language by 1847 (1996: 2). She maintains that in cultural terms France, during the nineteenth century, can be described as an important centre of Western culture. Significantly, it was also there that lithography, chromo-lithography, photography and cinema were developed with incalculable consequences for the reproduction of the image and consequently mass culture. Equally important were Kant's philosophical writings by 1770 occurring at about the same time the industrial revolution developed in England.

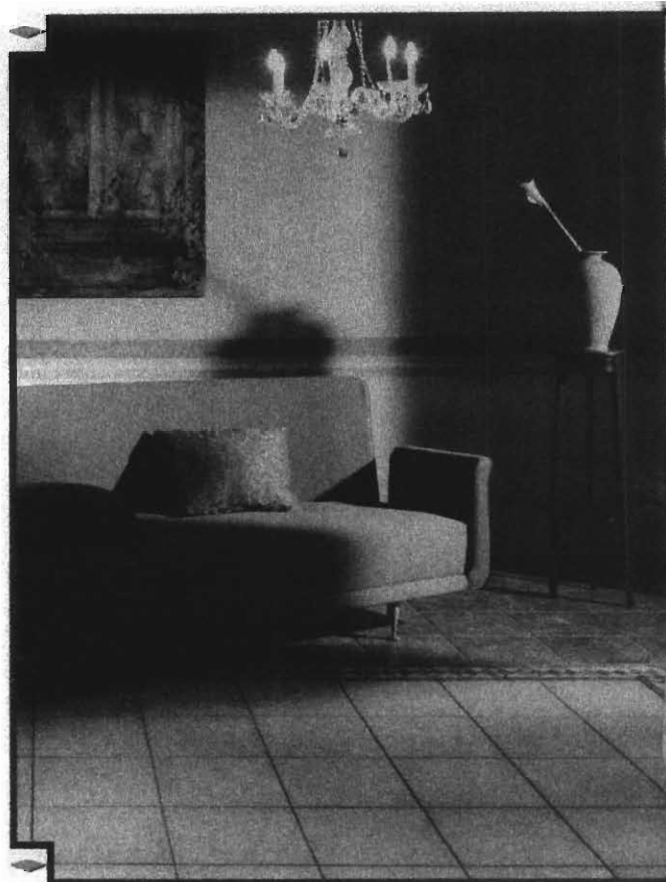
However, as already noted, it was the French Revolution in 1789, that signalled the beginning of the shift in Western culture to the middle class, capitalist state (Staniszewski 1995: 102). According to Balladon, this revolution was, in effect, a decade long (1789-1799), and saw the plunder and pillage of "precious" objects from the overthrown "ancien régime." She explains that the early nineteenth century saw the proliferation of secondhand and antique shops in France run by a new class, the bourgeoisie, who traded in these "precious" objects. These objects were often utilitarian, snuff boxes, fans, porcelain etc. The purchaser was a "collector" and these items were put on display in one's home as an indicator of one's own taste.

In contemporary South African advertising the importance of this notion as a marketing tool is to be observed in "The Italtile Centre" advertisement (1996) (*figure 3.9*). This double page advertisement appeared in *Style* magazine throughout 1996. Television personality Dali Tambo is featured to the right, below a headline that declares "People who come to my home will always see me even when I'm not home." The implicit message therefore is that the individual can be "seen" in the objects and furnishings that one chooses for one's home. Curiously, on the left hand side of the advertisement a "classical" interior features Italian tiles on the floor and a replica of Roman fresco on the wall. The northern hemisphere inspired interior is in contrast to Tambo's image as the arbiter of "African" style on his SABC television programme "People Of The South." Tambo's stylish image is therefore

Are all your talents working in concert?

**A** Andersen Consulting

figure 3.8



*P*

**PEOPLE WHO COME TO MY HOME  
WILL ALWAYS SEE ME.  
EVEN WHEN I'M NOT THERE.**

(DALLI TAMBORO, TV PERSONALITY)

My home tends to be a reflection of me. It's spontaneous, colourful and bright. And it almost every time you'll find the most even make you laugh. But not every inch is bold, some places are neutral shades, even a little unexpected. I like it. Do people of the house, I attempt to share the spirit, not of themselves a little, so far for just a moment we can get a glimpse of who they really are. We have such a rich culture in this country, as unique in its diversity. Let's explore it, by a chance I. When I discovered my home I wanted it to capture my

personality and individuality in some small way, that's why I chose to tile my home with Italtile. At The Italtile Centre there is always such a wide variety of colours, shapes, textures and styles. They are the world's second largest importer of tiles, so they can afford to offer almost every kind of tile imaginable. They stock tiles exclusive to Italtile, so you know that when you tile it'll be in your home you will have a look that's unique to you. My home is uniquely me. Visit sometime, you'll find my footprint everywhere, especially on the tiles.



**The  
ITALTILE  
Centre**

**THE ITALTILE GUARANTEE -  
YOU WON'T FIND IMPORTED TILES OF THIS QUALITY AT BETTER PRICES ANYWHERE IN THE COUNTRY.**

STONY BROOK (917) 997-4461, BIRMINGHAM (205) 333-3334, HANOVER (603) 271-0200-0766/1727, MIAMI (305) 224-0700, OREGON (503) 227-8244, EDWIN (416) 223-2900-6416, GALT TOWNSHIP (416) 460-3438, KENNEDY (416) 223-1810-1840, MISSISSAUGA (905) 276-1000 AND TORONTO (416) 291-1000-1010.

**YOUR FLOOR OURS PLACE.**

figure 3.9

merged with Italian “style” which is encoded in the fresco and, most importantly, in the product being promoted: Italian tiles available at Italtile. Thus Tambo’s image, as the purveyor of style, is used as a commodity that is transferred into the notion of Italian style as signified by the fresco and the tiles on sale.

Another example of this principle is to be observed in a promotional feature in *Cosmopolitan* magazine which features the South African fashion designer Jenni Button surrounded by African masks (from Helen de Leeuw) (*figure 3.10*). The text reads: “Like a perfect accessory, the house showed off her best advantage: it seemed designed to flatter her” (*Cosmopolitan* 1995: 139). Button’s hair is pulled back to emphasise her face which is echoed in the African masks. With reference to the earlier discussion on African arts and crafts, the choice of an African identity for an unashamedly Eurocentric designer such as Button creates an image of her as committed to the notion of an African style. Curiously this is the reverse of the Dali Tambo advertisement in which he, the committed African, is promoting an unashamedly Eurocentric product. It could be argued that in both cases the notion of the African is used as an accessory in the promotion of European products.

The third variation on this theme was published in the *BMW Magazine* (1996) and features a fashion designer well known for his “designer label” of the same name- Daniel Hechter. Once again he is featured “at home” surrounded by “fine” things. He is described as “The Napoleon of fashion and in stature” and an “avid collector of art” (*BMW Magazine* 1996: 3) (*figure 3.11*). Framed by the door Hechter is surrounded by artworks by Malcolm Morley and Andy Warhol. The confidence of his pose expresses power which is confirmed by his possession of significant and valuable works of art. Implicitly the status of the designer (name/label) is equated with the status of the work of these artists.

According to Balladon by the mid-nineteenth century, a “marketplace,” had been created in the streets of Paris and, what was left of the aristocracy became the collectors of valuable and fine things. “This represented a conscious effort on their part to conserve what they believed to be a disappearing heritage” (personal interview with Balladon, 1996). Fine craftsmanship and essential skills were disappearing rapidly in the face of the mass produced

# jenni



Factory houses made by Jenni; chairs, her own. Chair from Inverness, case from Richard's collection, table from Helen de Looze (right) and table art. From the personal collection, is one of two sets in residence. The other chocolate bar (Sofiana) is empty, we discovered early.

Jenni Butts, clothes designer extraordinaire, was un-makeup, casually dressed and effortlessly elegant when we arrived to photograph her. Like a perfect accessory, the house showed her off to her best advantage: it seemed designed to flatter her. When we arrived, she had just begun to set her scene. She apologised for her laziness, made us at home, chatted away, stroked the cats and positioned her objects — all in a blur of movement, all at the same time . . . and then her final design stunned us with its serenity.



figure 3.10

# DANIEL HECHTER

loves spotty cats and spotty clothes. It was through his fashion designs that the Frenchman became world-famous.

BY ERIN STEER AND JEAN-LUC DUBOIS (p. 10)

Paris is elegant, peaceful suburb in the west of Paris. While the centre of the metropolis swelters with activity, here, an air of distinguished calm reigns. Or is it merely serenity? The occupants of the high-walled, deep-set stone property, at any time, seem in no hurry to begin their day. Yet living behind these walls is a very well-known type: Daniel Hechter, 35 years of age and the man whose established sports wear as a fashion concept makes a vast market for him in the west.



French fashion designer Daniel Hechter at home, wearing work by Malcolm Murray (left) and Andy Warhol (right) of Les Trolis. He is an avid collector of contemporary art.

figure 3.11



object characterised by poor aesthetic quality.<sup>3</sup> It is not hard to imagine why, in a newly industrialised society, the past, even the not so distant past, became a “thing” to be preserved. This need for preservation is echoed in the stated intention of the curators of the indigenous ceramics exhibition, ‘Ubumba,’ mentioned in the previous chapter “to enhance attempts to preserve a common heritage” (Bell 1998: 1).

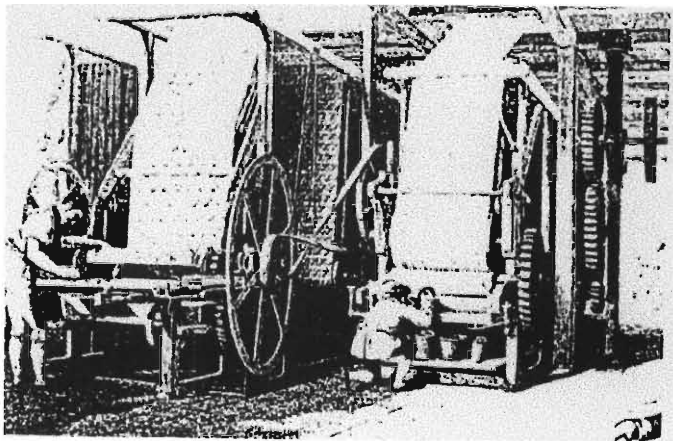
It is significant that, just as in nineteenth century France, where the aristocracy began to seek out what they perceived to be a vanishing heritage, so predominantly white South Africans became “collectors” of what they perceived to be a vanishing legacy. As already pointed out there are significant investment considerations that may motivate collectors to acquire work. Interest in the market potential of ethnic objects followed initiatives within the high cultural domain. In 1987 the South African Association of Art Historians convened a conference at Stellenbosch University that called for the *Re-writing of Art and Architectural History of Southern Africa*.<sup>4</sup> Soon thereafter in 1988 exhibitions such as *The Neglected Tradition - Towards a New History of South African Art (1930 - 1988)* were mounted at the Johannesburg Art Gallery to draw attention to the large body of work that has been produced outside the mainstream of art practice in South Africa. It could be argued that in the process the previously neglected (undesirable in the terms of the collector?) became an *object of desire*.

However, the “discovery” of the “neglected tradition” by academics and collectors and the subsequent quest to preserve it in the form of private collections and museum exhibits was motivated by a complex set of values which will be discussed in due course. Suffice to note that in this context it is inevitable that “status” and meanings of the indigenous crafts become quite different from those intended by the producers. Thus as with any form of art that is “emptied” of the meanings intended by the producer it became vulnerable to appropriation by different institutions, be they the culture market, museums or the advertising industry. This serves to confirm the capacity of craft not only to represent notions of skills and craftsmanship but also to act as a form of nostalgia for what is in effect a romanticised past. Hence it can be argued that the crafted objects from African material culture such as the masks owned by Jenny Button are signifiers of an Africa of the past





*figure 3.12a*



*figure 3.12b*

rather than of the present. This notion of the past is thus implicit in “traditional” crafts and this can, and has been, used as a rhetorical device in advertising to avoid allusions to the dynamic, and thus potentially dangerous, notion of contemporary Africa.

As explained earlier, technology cannot be seen in isolation as it exists in a symbiotic relationship within the society that develops it. It is equally clear that a symbiosis exists between technology and technological innovation and the form and content of artistic expression.<sup>5</sup> The effects of the industrialisation of society, predominately in the Northern Hemisphere, have been well documented and these studies are particularly relevant in the developing world. Alvin Toffler referred to traditional pre-industrial society in his text *The Third Wave* as a “first wave,” society based on an agrarian economy (1980: 4). In pre-industrial societies the relationship between people and things is mediated by old ethnic cultures. In this context objects are given meaning by being integrated within older forms of cultural life based around family, religion and community. In this type of society “objects are embodied with the spirits of the producers” (Jhally 1990: 195) (*figures 3.12 a & b*). He notes that by contrast, a capitalist society creates a separation between object and producer, so little meaning can be derived from this sphere (*ibid.*).

This was the view of the Romantic-inspired Arts and Crafts Movement that looked back to the past for solutions to the problems implicit in industrialization. Hence, an attempt was made by the Arts and Crafts movement to elevate beautifully crafted objects to the status of a fine art. This was a notion that was to be embodied in the influential Bauhaus movement which contributed, in no small measure, to the International Style that spread throughout the Western world, including South Africa, during the twentieth century.<sup>6</sup>

Thus during the nineteenth century, previously utilitarian objects came to be collected by the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie to be placed on display in their homes as objets d’art at the same time that art itself was placed on display in museums as fine art. By 1850 the paradigm had shifted to the point where, to quote Gautier again : “nothing is really beautiful unless it is useless; everything useful is ugly, for it expresses a need, and needs of man are ignoble and disgusting, like his poor weak nature” (quoted in Brolin 1985: 72). This



*figure 3.13*

explains why it was considered tasteful to have interiors of late nineteenth century homes, especially, Victorian homes, “cluttered” with fine but useless objects (*figure 3.13*). According to Sparke, the open display of these objects was a social indicator of one’s class and taste. In her text *As Long As It’s Pink - the sexual politics of taste* she explains that during the nineteenth century while the world of politics and commerce was considered to be the domain of men, the home was that of women.

“Taste - that is, the capacity not to be vulgar - was not simply a means to an end, it was also valued in and for itself, implying that a housewife had enough time on her hands, or servants to help her, to involve herself with activities of an aesthetic, not merely utilitarian, nature. Thus taste made visible became an important social sign. (1995: 30)<sup>7</sup>

As mentioned in the first chapter, it is significant to the subsequent promotion of products that women were considered by early advertisers to be the target of their communication (*figure 2*). Schudson points out that by the 1920's, “it was a cliché among advertisers that women are the ‘purchasing agents’ of their families; the trade journals cited the figure that 85 percent of all consumer spending is done by women. Even shaving cream and safety razors were advertised to wives” (1993: 173).

### **The culture market**

In the interim, during the nineteenth century, the traditional sources of patronage for working artists disappeared. A significant number of creative artists worked and exhibited outside the academies, within what Brolin calls the “culture market” (1985: 58). In addition an equally significant number of artists such as Chéret and Toulouse-Lautrec, created popular art to cater for the “popular taste” in the commercial “marketplace.” Thus in the “culture” marketplace fine art was produced to be sold to “collectors” within the monied class and reproduced popular art images became available to the mass. Ironically, as previously discussed, artwork, based on Kant’s notions of individual subjective response, originality and genius, had the effect of re-enforcing the concept of the “original” as collectable for its investment value (Hughes 1989). Ironically, while the creation of a Romantic avant-garde removed the artist from the clutches of the marketplace - in Kant’s

terms: “one was obliged to disregard conventional taste” (Brolin 1985: 74) - rarity and uniqueness ensured the artwork’s value, along with “objets d’art,” as objects of desire.

### **The status of the signature**

In his essay “Subjective Discourse or The Non-Functional System Of Objects,” Jean Baudrillard discusses uniqueness, rarity and value when he maintains that:

“Value is conferred on a particular object by the simple fact that it once belonged to some famous or powerful person. The fascination with artisanal [sic] objects derives from them having passed through someone’s hands, and whose labour is still inscribed on them: it is the fascination with that which has been *created* (and which is therefore unique, since the *moment* of creation is irreversible). But the search for *the creator’s mark*, from actual impressions to signature, is also the search for filiation and paternal transcendence. (1990: 37)

Hence in the marketing of mass produced products the connection of the ‘series’ with the unique ‘model’ produced by a recognised artist or designer is highly desirable. In clothing and perfume products this manifests itself when the status of haute-couture is conferred on the off-the-peg item which is distinguished by the exclusivity of the designer label. Invariably this indicates the importance of the signature in creating a sense of uniqueness within the mass production model. Interestingly, Staniszewski points out that, during the first two decades of the century, Cubism emphasised the *objective* nature of the painting to the extent where the series work of Picasso and Braque at L’Estaque became inter-changeable to the point where “often the only thing that distinguishes Cubist works was the signature of the ‘artist’” (1995: 207).

Significantly the commercial possibilities of this audacious modernity was exploited by a Parisienne fashion designer, Coco Chanel, a member of the elite group that included Gertrude Stein and Picasso. Charles-Roux notes that it is significant that Chanel’s perfume “Numéro 5” which was launched in 1920 was “presented in a spare, minimal bottle - a flagon as clean as a cube - that stood in stark contrast to the frippery then favoured by



*figure 3.14a*



*figure 3.14b*



*figure 3.15*

perfumers” (1979: 127). The “clean cube” with an anonymous name chosen for a “designer” perfume reflects the aesthetics of Cubism and captures the essence of modernism at the time (*figure 3.14 a & b*). In these terms Chanel’s simple, geometric, black dress can also be seen as the fashion equivalent of monochromatic, analytical cubism or, as Charles-Roux prefers, “the sleek modernism of the Art Déco style” (op. cit. 157).

It could be argued that a glass cube numbered “5” and exploited for its commercial potential is a significant example of art entering the *real* world in a way not anticipated by the artists. In the process “Chanel No. 5” has become a “classic” product and the packaging has remained unchanged since 1920. Significantly the packaging of another exclusive perfume, Jean Paul Gaultier’s “Le Male” reflects the same concern with confronting convention by using avant-garde fine art sources (*figure 3.15*).

With hindsight it is interesting to speculate on Picasso’s self promotion and the way in which this undoubtedly influenced Andy Warhol’s promotion of his life as the object of art.<sup>8</sup> Equally curious is to draw parallels between the commercial value of the artist’s signature and that of the designer label. To that end *figure 3.16* shows the importance of Picasso’s signature as an icon for publicity outside the *Musée National Picasso* in Paris. In commercial advertising in South Africa the significance of the artists’ signature in signifying status can be seen in an advertisement for Telkom screened on television during 1997. The advertisement, “Love Song” by the Agency, is aimed at the new middle class in South Africa. A young man plays a soulful tune over the telephone to his girlfriend and while a conventional signifier of class (and taste), the hi-fi, is unidentified the signature of Picasso is strategically placed in the background (*figure 3.17*). Without detracting from the corporate identity of Telkom Picasso’s signature acts as an additional meaning laden “logo” framed within a white boarder of the reproduction.

As mentioned in the previous chapter in museums in Europe and north America that exhibit “priceless” art works, the signature of the artist is used to “endorse” expensive but, “affordable” products such as scarfs and greetings cards on sale in the museum shops (*figure 2.1 a & b*). Once again it must be mentioned that when Duchamp signed *R. Mutt* on



*figure 3.16*



*figure 3.17*



a urinal, which he titled “Fountain” and exhibited as art in 1917, he did so to emphasise the role of the artist as the giver of the status of art to objects through the power of his signature (*figure 3.18*). As Staniszewski points out, “the signature is the mark of authorship and guarantee of authenticity” (1995: 106).

The art market referred to by Hughes in the previous chapter, trades in these “names.” That Duchamp made this crucial point, at a time when no concept was in place to explain such a transgression, is an indication of how early the avant-garde had identified art as object/object as art as a central issue. So central that, by the end of the century, Gablik in reaction, wrote in *The Re-enchantment Of Art* that “commodity fetishism is the distinguishing mark of our culture, and the artist’s consciousness has been fatally enriched with this knowledge” (1991: 37).

### **Ester Mahlangu’s BMW**

An example of commodity fetishism, with a great deal of relevance to art and advertising in South Africa, is embodied in Ester Mahlangu’s BMW (1991) (*figure 3.19*). Ester Mahlangu (b.1936), a South African painter, well known for her mural design in Ndebele villages, was invited by the German motor car manufacturer BMW along with Alexander Calder (1898 -1976), Roy Lichtenstein (1923-1997), Robert Rauschenburg (b.1925), Andy Warhol (1928 - 1987) and Frank Stella (b.1936) to “decorate” a BMW 5 series.<sup>9</sup> All these cars have become part of a travelling promotion, exhibited as the “BMW Art Car Collection” in “prominent museums, such as the Louvre, the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York” (BMW AG PR 1991: 5) and in less auspicious venues, such as the BMW Show Room in central Durban, South Africa during 1991.

Mahlangu’s BMW 525i was the twelfth car to be included in the “Art Car Collection” and was the first to be created by a woman artist. According to the catalogue “this form of design/painting is undertaken only by the women of the tribe and Mahlangu learnt ‘traditional’ Ndebele design/painting from her mother. Further, in keeping with traditional cultural practice Mahlangu is training her own daughter to carry on the tradition” (*ibid.*).<sup>10</sup>

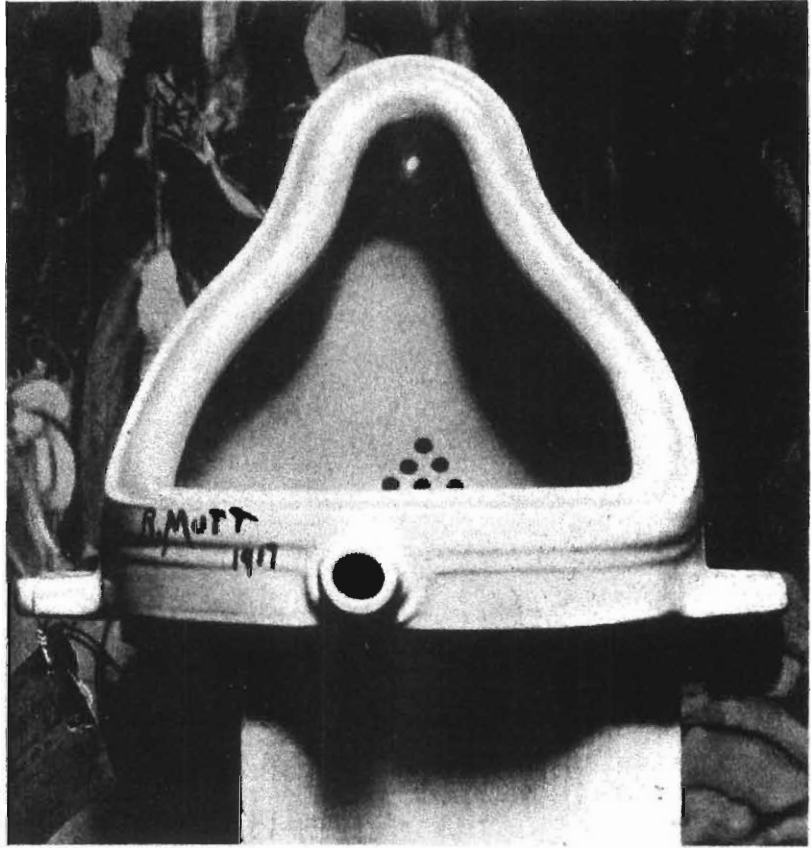


figure 3.18



figure 3.19

Hence, the catalogue notes that “the BMW 525i painted by Ester Mahlangu is a transfer of tribal tradition to the modern idiom of high technology” (ibid.). But according to Walker the “BMW Art Car” does not celebrate “high technology” as much as it celebrates the notion of “high art” in that “what was already a status symbol was given the status of art” (1982: 57). Ironically or strategically BMW chose the prestigious 5-series car to illustrate Baudrillard’s points about the opposition between the series object and the unique model, and the fact that objects have two functions: as utilitarian tools and as possessions that act as social markers (1990: 43-45).

Hence the catalogue notes that “as with the most recent additions to the BMW Art Car Collection, the Mahlangu BMW, while complete in every respect, will remain exclusively a work of art and will never be driven on the road” (BMW AG PR 1991: 53). In the words of Walker “paradoxically, the decorated cars are not for sale: they have become ‘works of art’ and are therefore ‘priceless.’ Thus, the fact that works of art - just as much as cars - are commodities under capitalism is denied” (1983: 57). Significantly in the process, the mass produced work of the industrial designer has been made into a *unique* work of art, hence this promotion and the advertisements that follow the exhibition “attempts to reconcile the irreconcilable: art and industry, individualism and mass production” (ibid.) (*figure 3.20*).

Thus, implicit in this campaign is the fact that no matter how special the status of the mass produced object, such as a BMW, it is unable to attain the status of “high” art on its own. The machine surfaces have to be hand crafted and individually “signed.” All other considerations to one side, Mahlangu’s signature (*figure 3.21*) is an indication of how far the concept of art as commodity has penetrated “traditional” art/design practice in South Africa. The tradition of art/design/craft in Africa that Mahlangu’s work represents has no precedent for the signature of the “artist.” This is a Western concept, intrinsically linked, to the fine art tradition that has evolved, as previously explained, over the past two hundred years. For these reasons, Ester Mahlangu’s BMW embodies an even more interesting exchange of values of art into commodity than the other cars in the “Art Car Collection.”

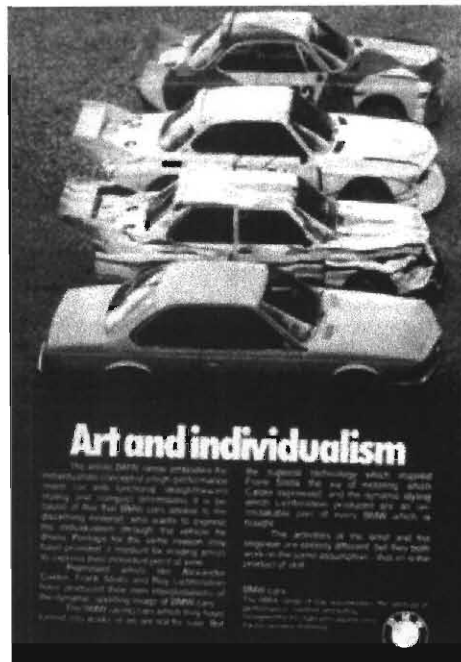


figure 3.20



figure 3.21

## Notes

1. According to Fineberg, Christo accepts neither grants nor sponsorship for his projects. “Instead, he and Jeanne-Claude raise the extraordinary sums required by selling small sculptures and works on paper, and then they spend all the money thus accumulated (and more) to build the work, which they remove after a one -to three week display period” (1995: 355).
  
2. Parody is defined by the dictionary as a “humorous exaggerated imitation of an author, literary work or style” (*COD* 1990: 866). As will be observed later the visual and graphic nature of certain works with “classic poses” or grand gestures seem to lend themselves to parody.
  
3. According to Naylor, this is evident in the criticism levelled at products produced throughout Europe shown on the Great Exhibition held at the Crystal Place in London in 1851. An article in *The Times* dealt with the issue thus: “The absence of any fixed principles in ornamental design is apparent in the Exhibition, it seems to us that the art manufacturers of the whole of Europe are thoroughly demoralised” (1971: 21).
  
4. With hindsight it appears that the call for the *Re-writing of art history* was already underway and a number of revisionist publications appeared in quick succession. e.g. Matsemela’s *Echoes of African Art* (1987), Younge’s *Art of the South African Townships* (1988), Williamson’s *Resistance Art in South Africa* (1989) and Nettleton and Hammond-Tooke’s *African Art in Southern Africa -From Tradition To Township* (1989) were all published before the end of the decade.
  
5. Consider the influence that the development of the portable metal tube had on art production during the nineteenth century. It enabled artists, like the Impressionists to paint *alla prima* in situ. Similarly, improvements in chemical paint technology also enabled the mass production of a wider range of “clean” colours which undoubtedly broadened the

range of options available to artists.

6. One of the influences that the Arts and Crafts movement was to have upon the Bauhaus was the idea that the beautifully crafted object was worthy of the status of art.

7. Sparke points out that this *feminine* taste was to be attacked, unrelentingly, by *masculine* dominated Modernist taste (cf. Adolf Loos : “Ornament is a crime”) throughout the first half of the twentieth century.

8. Cook mentions that another artist who was well known for self promotion, Salvador Dali wrote and appeared in an advertisement for Lanvin Chocolate in which he “bites into a bar of Lanvin with the words ‘Je suis fou du chocolat Lanvin’ and the ends of his ‘trademark’ moustache vibrate and curl upwards” (1992: 212).

9. The “BMW Art Car Collection” includes cars by:

Alexander Calder (1975), Frank Stella (1976) Roy Lichtenstein (1977), Andy Warhol (1979) Ernst Fuchs (1982), Robert Rauschenberg (1986), Ken Done (1983), Michael Jagamara (1989), Matazo Kayama (1990) César Manrique (1990) A.R. Penck (1991) and Ester Mahlangu (1991) (BMW AG PR (Ed.) 1991).

10. The notion of “traditional” Ndebele painting has been questioned by Elizabeth Ann Schneider. In her essay “Art and Communication: Ndzundza Ndebele Wall Decorations in the Transvaal” she points out that “historical records up to and including the first forty years of this century give no evidence of such decorated homes” (in Nettleton and Hammond-Tooke 1989: 103). Schneider goes on to show how Nationalist government became the patron of a “typical” ethnic Ndebele village with “traditionally” painted homes for the Tourist Bureau by 1953 (op. cit. 111-112).

## Chapter 4: Images for Sale - the early history

The first part of this chapter seeks to investigate the conditions in which the art image was first used in advertising in Europe and thereafter deals with some of the issues raised as they pertain to the relationship between art and advertising in South Africa prior to WW2. Indispensable to this investigation is an understanding of the importance of the media that convey, and often mediate, the image. To this end the views of Marshall McLuhan have already been noted (Chapter Two) when he maintains that the mass-produced movable type enabled the mass production of images, reading matter and subsequent spread of literacy that paved the way for the transformation from the medieval view to that of the Renaissance. Hence it is significant that one of the earliest advertisements uncovered in the course of this research was for a printed book. Equally significant is that in this early example it can be observed how the conventional use of the image during medieval times was transformed in a marketing exercise.

In 1491 a Belgian publisher printed a woodcut advertisement to promote a new translation of *Histoire de la Belle Melusine* by Jean d'Arras (*figure 4.1*). A translation of the text promotes the work as “Lately translated from the French into Flemish and adorned with fine personages and scenes as the text demands. This story, as well as a great number of other new books, can be purchased at the place written hereunder” (Gabor 1974: 26). What is of interest is how the conventions of art at the time are translated into a marketing image. Gabor contends that this poster may be the earliest advertisement in which a woman’s sexuality is used to enhance a product. Although the naked, serpentine-like female figure was not an unusual image in medieval religious art, this image is extraordinary in that this relatively crude poster shows the heroine of the story, Melusine, taking a bath (*op. cit.* 27).

It could be argued that by the end of the fifteenth century wood-block prints were already an established Popular Art form. Crude playing cards, although disapproved of by the clergy, were popular (Meggs 1983 :73). These cards featured printed images that replicated the type of images that the nobility, such as the Duke of Milan, had commissioned by famous artists onto ivory plates. At this juncture it is important to observe that when a new



¶ Een se hoere ghemeyliche es seer vrede hys  
 toite van eenre vrouwe gheheeten Alcyone/  
 es van haer scoemte es gheslachte vā haer  
 woert ghecomen synde es van haer alte won  
 derlike es vrome werck es sepen die sy gedaē  
 es bedruen hebben Ende es nu n pweyge wt  
 den wallche ghetranslatert in dupleke /ende  
 met schoone personagen ende figueren na den  
 epstch der materien verclert Ende mē sake met  
 vele meer andere niese boecken vinden te coo  
 pe ter plaetzen hier onder gheschruen

figure 4.1

Juxta dictū indulgentium de facultatibus suis pie exoga . merito huiusmodi indulgentiis gaudi  
 nium sigillum ad hoc ordinatum presentibus litteris testimonialibus est appensum Datum  
 die uero Oensis

### Forma plenissime absolutionis et remissionis

**Q**uereatur tū r̄ Dñs n̄ ihesus xps p̄ sua sc̄ssimā et piissimā m̄ia; te absoluat Et auct  
 ap̄lor̄ eū ac aucte ap̄lica michi remissa et tibi concessa Ego te absoluo ab om̄ib; peccis tuis etritis sc̄ssis  
 b̄ excessib; criminib; atq; delictis quāvisq; grauib; Sedi ap̄lice reservatis Necnon a quibuscūq; exco  
 aliisq; suis c̄suris et penis eccl̄asticis a Jure vel ab hōie p̄mulgatis si quas incurrisi dando tibi plē  
 gentiā et remissionē Inquātū claves sancte matris eccl̄ie in hac pte se extendūt. In nomine patris et f

### Forma plenarie remissionis in mortis articulo

**Q**uereatur tū r̄ Dñs noster ut supra Ego te absoluo ab om̄ib; peccis tuis etritis sc̄ssis et  
 si fidelium et sac̄ramentis eccl̄ie Remittendo tibi penas purgatorii quas propter culpas et offensas in  
 oim̄ peccatorū tuorū remissionē. Inquātū claves sc̄e matris eccl̄ie in hac parte se extendūt. In noie p̄ris et

figure 4.2



technology is developed initially it uses the forms, if not the content, of the technology it is about to replace. Hence Gutenberg's revolutionary movable typeface initially replicated handwritten script. His "Letters of Indulgence" c.1454 not only replicates script, but is laid-out in the same manner as the illuminated manuscript that the printing press was about to make redundant (*figure 4.2*). In part this is explained by Adrian Forty in his essay "Images of Progress" when he explains that "for all its benefits, progress can be a painful and disturbing experience" (1986: 11).<sup>1</sup> So it was that in printing (which was introduced into Europe from China earlier in the fourteenth century) prints replicated the "art" conventions of painted and sculptured images of the saints in the form of small devotional cards.

Leiss, Klien and Jhally provide an interesting insight when they refer to the "cultural frames for goods" (1988: 277). They make the point that "in earlier societies individuals became acquainted with the meanings carried by objects through culture and customs. In a consumer society 'needs and commodities' must be introduced by some other means. Marketing and advertising become chief matchmakers." Thus they maintain that marketers and advertisers start constructing props (*ibid.*). Hence in these terms the *Histoire de la Belle Melusine* represents a very early example of how an established cultural convention (art) is used as a "prop" to seek the attention of a potential consumer and for the selling of goods. However the "prop" of the woman's nudity to attract attention for the promotion of a product was essentially new but was to become both a fine and popular art convention in itself.

### **The Gaze**

Another fine art convention that is utilised in advertising for its practical value of engaging the potential consumer is the *gaze*. Oil painting was another important technological development that spread during the fifteenth century with consequences for both society and the form and content of Western art. Jan van Eyck (1390-1441) is credited with creating the technique of oil painting; putting down thin glazes of oil paint and slowly building up transparent layers to create a naturalism that was notable for its time (*figure 4.3*). But, according to Panofsky, Van Eyck created a significant innovation that could only have been possible with the new medium, the "glance" or what is referred to in feminist critique as, the "gaze."<sup>2</sup>



figure 4.3

"CROCKETT & JONES ARE LIKE BLUE CHIP SHARES THEY'RE ALWAYS IN STYLE"

"As a stockbroker and former record holding marathon athlete, I'm very demanding. Second best has never been good enough for me, either in terms of my performance on the track or in my business career. Very early on in life, I learned to respect dedication and perfection. Qualities I've come to appreciate in Crockett & Jones' sophisticated and elegantly styled footwear - As the saying goes, they're as good as gold".

*Sydney Marue*  
 Sydney Marue  
 (Corporate Finance Executive  
 Fleming Martin)

**Crockett & Jones**  
 Shoes of Rare Distinction

Trade Enquiries: Gaitberg (031) 709 1412, Kwa Zulu-Natal (031) 303 1907, Eastern Cape (041) 55 1621, Western Cape (021) 461 6262

figure 4.4

In contemporary advertising it would appear that the device of a model in an advertisement addressing a potential consumer has been incorporated from the convention invented by van Eyck over five hundred and fifty years ago. Berger's views on the Renaissance have already been noted but he goes further when he explains that "the surface verisimilitude of oil painting tends to make the viewer assume that he is close - to within touching distance of - any object in the foreground of the picture. If the object is a person such proximity implies a certain intimacy" (1974: 97). The suggestion of intimacy is particularly useful within the mass media context in that advertising requires a communications environment in which an element of intimacy is created in order to address the mass audience in a manner that engages the individual. It could be argued that the invention of photography during the nineteenth century provided advertising designers with the definitive medium whereby both the gaze and the "certain intimacy" that Berger refers to could be incorporated into advertising (*figure 4.4*).

It has already been established by Scharf that during its initial development photography appropriated the visual language of fine art in its quest to be accepted as a legitimate visual art form rather than a popular novelty (1968: 233-254). The subject of photography's complex relationship to fine art is beyond the scope of this dissertation however it is significant to note that fine art conventions were soon deployed into early advertising. However, while feminist critiques have tended to emphasise the role of the "assumed" male spectator who observes women in paintings as objects of desire (Chadwick 1990: 352), Myers makes the point that in advertising women are often the target market "hence the assumed observer is a woman who looks at the woman in the advertisement as an object of personal desire" (1983: 3). As Williamson has said: "they show you a symbol of yourself aimed to attract your desire: they suggest that you can *become* the person in the picture before you" (1992: 65).<sup>3</sup>

Hence it can be seen that fine art conventions undergo subtle but significant changes when translated into either popular or design art depending upon the motives of the user. Historically this transformation can be traced back to the number of fine artists who worked as "commercial" artists beyond the strict confines of the fine art niche. This transformation was to become fundamental during the nineteenth century when the development of more

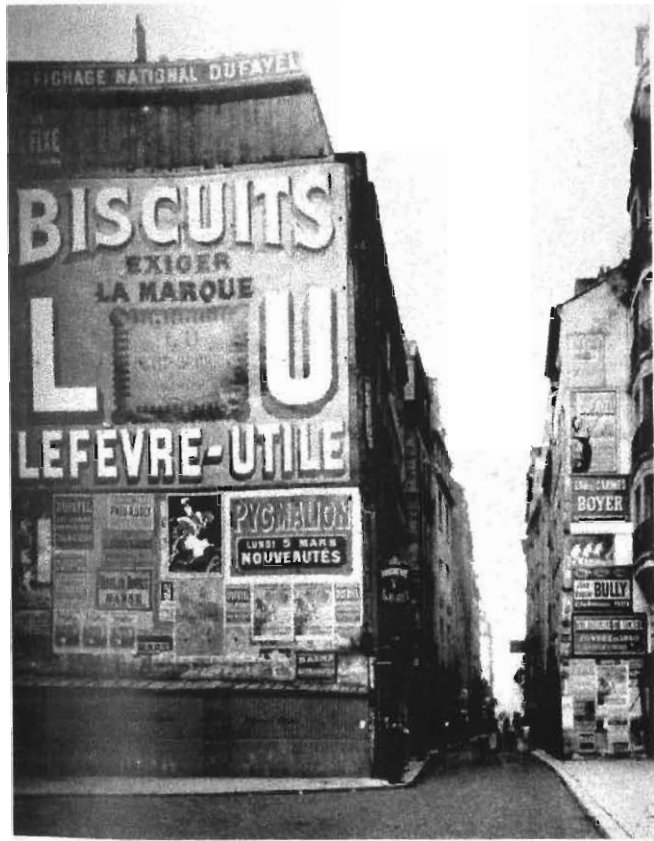
efficient means of reproducing the image became available to both artists and advertisers.

### **Fine Artist to Popular Artist.**

It could be argued that Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528), was one of the first fine artists who also worked as a “commercial” or popular artist when he designed and printed “best seller” block books such as, “The Apocalypse” (1498, reprinted in 1511) and “The Life of the Virgin” (1511). Thereafter, a whole new reproduction industry developed and art works were reproduced by specialist “craft” printers. These “art” prints were an early precedent for a “museum without walls” that would, like contemporary mass media, be able to defy the limits of time and space. Hence artists living in the Netherlands, such as Rembrandt (1606-1669) were able to see, and be influenced by, the works of Caravaggio (1573-1610) without ever going to Italy (Wallace 1971: 30).

However it would not be until the nineteenth century that the artist would, once again, become directly involved in the creation and reproduction of printed Popular Art forms. This was a direct result of a set of technical innovations. In 1783, Firmin Didot (1764-1836) added an iron bed and a copper plate to his printing press making it possible to print large-format sheets. This process, called “stereotyping,” not only enlarged the print size but made longer (print) runs possible (Meggs 1983: 147).<sup>4</sup> Prior to this innovation the hand press, which had remained almost unchanged since Gutenberg’s time, could only produce a maximum of three hundred sheets per day and printing had reached the point where there was only one step missing: a process whereby the text and its illustrations could both be printed at the same time, using the same machine and the same paper” (Jean 1987: 105 - 113).<sup>5</sup>

The discovery in 1796 of lithography by Aloys Senefelder (1771-1834) and of colour lithography soon thereafter provided the answer. According to Meggs, when Senefelder “began experimenting with multicolour lithography, in his 1819 book he predicted that one day this process would be perfected to allow reproductions of paintings” (1983: 182). *Chromolithographie*, as it was called in 1837, enabled the artist to work directly onto the stone thus allowing the original work of the artist to become mass produced. In an environment where traditional patronage had disappeared, it could be argued that this



*figure 4.5*



*figure 4.6*

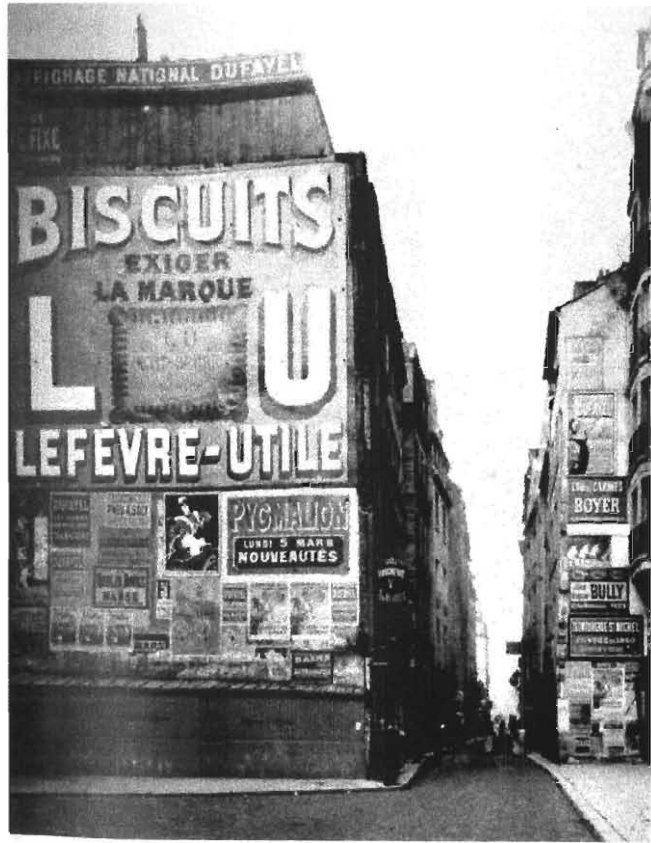
medium facilitated the transformation of fine art forms into the popular art niche and in this paradigm shift a significant “crossover” in the visual arts took place throughout the nineteenth century.

Unprecedented growth in advertising also took place when the next major mass printing breakthrough - the application of steam power to printing - paved the way for the mass production of information in the form of newspapers and popular novels.<sup>6</sup> This was accompanied by higher levels of literacy and increased leisure time among the middle and leisured classes (Dyer 1992: 17). The development of better quality paper by the mid-nineteenth century and the abolition of the advertising tax in England during 1853 resulted in a growth in the volume of advertising and an increase in newspaper circulation (Craig and Barton 1987: 118). Linked to the increase in manufacture and the expansion of trade it was inevitable that these events would affect developments in colonies such as South Africa.

### **The advertising poster**

The period 1848-1898 not only witnessed the triumph of the middle class in Europe but also the expansion of both the economy and colonial power upon which the middle classes depended for their wealth. Gallo maintains that during these fifty years “the map of Europe and the world changed profoundly. Europe became so powerful that it looked beyond its boundaries to new territories and established vast colonial empires” (1989: 26). He explains that “one reason behind the push for new territories was that Europe was bursting with manufactured products for which both raw materials and outlets were needed” (ibid.).

This is the middle class that is to be seen in the paintings of the French Impressionists and Post-Impressionists which invariably, show people at leisure, boating, bathing, walking in the park, at the theatre or reading. However, feminist critic, Linda Nochlin notes in her essay *Morisot's Wet Nurse* that it is men in particular who are shown at leisure as the majority of the women in the paintings are working, either as mothers, nurses, dancers, barmaids or prostitutes (1991: 43). Hence it was within this political, economic and cultural environment that fine art first came to function as a tool of advertising. On this point it is important to note that the triumph of the middle class was coterminous with the establishment of the “avant-garde” when the Impressionists and Post-Impressionist painters



*figure 4.5*



*figure 4.6*

in Paris began to break away from the official salon exhibitions. Significantly this occurred at the same time that new freedom of the press and censorship laws in France allowed posters to be displayed more widely (Varnedoe and Gopnik 1991: 231).

According to Meggs, the new law of 1881 led to a booming industry for poster artists and designers and “the streets became an art gallery for the nation as even the poorest worker saw the environment transformed by images and colour” (1983: 222). When Napoleon III commissioned Baron Haussmann to demolish many of the narrow streets of Paris to create the wide boulevards, the newly exposed walls on the sides of the buildings provided a space which “modernized the business of advertising and set it on a course to intersect with the development of modern painting” (Varnedoe and Gopnik 1991: 233). They explain that the bigger spaces required larger advertisements and “the big ad for a small product was a distinctive sign of the times” (ibid.) (*figure 4.5*).

It should be remembered that the Arts and Crafts movement had, by this stage, created a new respect for the “applied” arts and respected fine art painters had no hesitation in producing advertising posters. e.g. Edouard Manet’s *Champfleury - Les Chats* (1869). Jobling and Crowley make the point that artists who grouped together as the Nabis during the 1880’s, were committed to the ideal that the contemporary artist should be responsible for the creation of objects for everyday use (Jobling and Crowley 1996: 83).<sup>7</sup> In 1894 Toulouse-Lautrec (1864-1901) in an interview went so far as to call for “fewer artists and more good craftsmen” (ibid.). This call was to become the ideal that motivated artists and designers at the Bauhaus and the Russian Constructivists over two decades later.

### **The poster as Art**

In 1866 a painter, Jules Chéret (1836-1933), had started to produce colour lithographic posters from his own press in Paris and by 1884, some of Chéret’s posters were produced in sizes up to seven feet tall by printing the image in sections to be joined on the wall by “afficheurs” (Meggs 1983: 223). The drive to cover the large wall spaces in Paris had a considerable influence upon the nature of the image used by early advertising artists. The sheer size of the space demanded a simplicity that could be read from afar. In this way advertising posters, with clean black lines and a clear dominant patch of colour can also be



linked to the popular Japanese “ukiyo-e” woodcuts which were widely available at the time (Jobling and Cowley 1996: 92). In this creative environment Jobling and Cowley have noted that:

“The number of artists who had been attracted to designing colour lithographic posters by the 1890's had simultaneously upgraded the standards of commercial printing and created a new market for art dealers and collectors. Consequently, the status of posters at this time oscillated between art and commerce - produced in the first instance to promote various products and services, posters in themselves became objects of desire for consumers.” (op. cit. 85)

However, whereas Barnicoat maintains that while the posters of Chéret can be seen as part of the painterly tradition of Tiepolo, the posters of Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec “take(s) the poster further away from the book illustration or the traditional easel painting” (Barnicoat 1975: 25) (*figure 4.6*). Peters goes further and maintains that Toulouse-Lautrec’s advertising work provides a crucial link between *fin-de-siècle* posters and future advertising conventions. Toulouse-Lautrec’s poster for the entertainer, Aristide Bruant (1893) draws upon the Japanese print and his skills as a draughtsman to render a silhouette of Bruant as a simplified caricature (*figure 4.7*). An essential part of the simplification the Bruant image, is achieved not only by means of caricature but by symbolically emphasising the red scarf and large black coat (1988 : BBC, *South Bank Show*). The distinctive scarf and coat became a symbol for Bruant that Lautrec used in all subsequent posters, sheet music, and advertisements that he designed for the performer. In the process Lautrec not only created an early example of a consistent corporate image, but demonstrates an understanding of how a simplified image of a celebrity can be exploited to communicate with the admirers of the “star” (*figure 4.8*). The technique of simplifying the image of an entertainer into an instantly recognisable image in the mass media is as important today as it was a over a hundred years ago.

Whereas these examples of poster advertising reflect the Parisian *fin-de-siècle* concern with representations of pleasure and entertainment, the advertising of mass produced products should not be ignored, especially in respect of how art was employed in the marketing



*figure 4.7*



*figure 4.8*

process. During the nineteenth century, a number of factors contributed to stimulate the growth of product advertising in the West. The most important development was initially in England where a number of industrial companies began mass-producing products thus using economies of scale. This enabled manufacturers to produce massive quantities of goods at low unit price. According to Brierley “between 1740 and 1821 there was a major transformation in the markets for the production and consumption of goods and services. Markets were transformed as new mass-production techniques in cotton, iron, cutlery and pottery enabled goods to be distributed much more widely” (1995: 6). As noted in the previous chapter, in order to maintain mass-production of these products companies needed to create mass-consumption but, as Brierley put it “the consumer market (including those with disposable income to buy goods) was restricted” and significantly “industrialists either exported to new markets outside Britain or attempted to stimulate demand in new ways”(ibid.). This led to the drive to export products to colonies such as South Africa while in Europe it paved the way for the development of mass marketing and the creation of credit facilities.<sup>8</sup>

It is important to note as Brierley does that “it is no accident that the first mass advertisers of the nineteenth century were from industries using cheap colonial labour from the British Empire: Lipton’s (tea), Cadbury, Fry’s and Rowntree (cocoa) Pears and Lever (vegetable and animal fats for soap), Tate and Lyle (sugar)” (ibid.). This was because of the need to keep prices low and it was this combination of mass production and multiple retailing that enabled manufacturers to start “branding” their products. As Forty explains, during the latter half of the nineteenth century companies began to package their products, not to simply protect them and preserve their quality, but also to establish an “identity” by the use of the company’s name. In this process, instead of leaving it to the retailer to determine which company’s products a customer would buy, they began to build their own relationship with the customer (1986: 77). This required an image that the customer could relate to.

The mass production of good quality images went hand in hand with the promotion of these mass produced products. Another important technological development that had a profound impact on both art and advertising, occurred c.1890 when the invention of photo-engraving provided the means whereby art and advertising would become inextricably linked

(Goodrum and Dalrymple 1990: 162). Photo-engraving permitted the reproduction of a gradation of tones of light and dark (halftones) as well as multi-plate colours to produce pictures that looked like paintings rather than drawings only. Particularly important was the fact that photo-engraving was cheaper.<sup>9</sup>

The invention of photo-engraving occurred at the same time that business in Europe and America began to appreciate the selling power of advertising and the benefits of developing “brands” that could become household names. The need for “branding” stems from the mid-nineteenth century when the market was flooded with a mass of similar, unidentified products produced by a plethora of small companies (Myers 1986: 21). This led to intense competition between the different manufacturers. In their endeavour to become market leaders manufacturers realised that advertising had the potential to create an “identity” for their product. This was the marketing background to what was to be known as “the soap wars” during the 1880's, when a battle for market leadership broke out between the two biggest soap manufacturers viz. A&F Pears and Lever Brothers.

### **Fine Art and the Soap Wars**

The ferocity of the “soap war” battle was indicative of how early the importance of both advertising and art were recognised in the marketing of products as both Pears and Levers used improved design and works of art to promote their products. According to Forty:

“the history of soap shows design being used commercially to create demand in a particular class market. Unlike printed cottons, where class differentiation in design had long been accepted, soap products were not manufactured for specific classes of consumer until W.H. Lever began to market his new soap, Sunlight, by giving it a brand image with specific working class appeal.” (1986: 76)

W.H. Lever realised that working-class households “were tending to spend more money on soap” and in 1884 he resolved to capture this market. For this he needed a distinctive product with a distinctive name, so in 1885 he introduced the name “Sunlight” for all the bar soaps he sold. In order to draw attention to the brand he sold it in one pound tablets, wrapped in imitation parchment with the name printed on it. Prior to Lever’s development

of a “brand” there had been nothing about the appearance of the tablets of Sunlight soap to identify it in consumers’ eyes as a working class soap. (op. cit. 78-79) Significantly thereafter, Lever Bros issued reproductions of well-known Victorian paintings in exchange for these soap wrappers. In response, their competitors, Pears issued Christmas Annuals containing chromolithographs and heliographs of popular art works from 1891 onwards.

These campaigns constitute the first deliberate attempt on the part of advertisers to use “high art” in the promotion of goods to a working class audience. As such these campaigns provide an early example of how signifiers of class and taste (the parchment wrapper and Fine Art images) can be linked to the notion of “civilized” behaviour patterns that the manufacturers of soap wished to promote. This marketing effort led to an unprecedented increase in advertising expenditure and by the end of the century both companies combined spending was in the region of half a million pounds on promotional campaigns (Jobling and Cowley 1996: 247). Much of this expenditure has been attributed to the cost of using “high” art in advertising but clearly the advertisers felt the expense was a good investment.<sup>10</sup>

From a South African perspective it is interesting to note that soap, at the height of Empire, was associated with the saying that “cleanliness is the next thing to Godliness.” According to Pieterse “washing blacks white had been a popular motif in the advertising of soap. Playing on connotations of the distinction black/white, such as dirty/clean, dark/light, it gets at the foundations of racial thinking” (1992: 195). This led to a type of advertising that implicitly, and sometimes overtly, created a perspective in which “clean,” “white,” “fair,” “light,” “good,” go together as the foundation of aesthetics and civilization. In the process soap became both a symbol and a yardstick of civilization (op. cit. 196)<sup>11</sup> (*figure 4.9*).

It is not unlikely that the desire to associate their product with *civilised* values induced both companies to consider the values associated with what a potential consumer would consider as “high” art. In 1886, the desire of Pears to find a visual symbol that would enhance their product in this way encouraged J. Barratt to purchase the copyright of “Bubbles,” an oil painting by Sir John Everett Millais (1829-1896) This early example of art in advertising is significant in that the advertisers not only chose to emphasised the monetary value of the original painting but also of the trade cards distributed for scrapbook collections. On the



figure 4.9



figure 4.10

cards that were handed out c.1887 the copy read “Put this in your Scrapbook. It cost £20,000 to purchase the first editions [of the cards], inclusive of £2,200 for the original painting” (Bernstein 1997: 130) (*figure 4.10*). This type of promotion is a forerunner of the current trend in corporate, “public service” sponsorship of the arts which will be discussed in Chapter Six.

Two points are significant in the choice of this work. Firstly, Barratt purchased the copyright from the *Illustrated London News* which was an early example of a mass media publication with a readership that, by definition, would have been middle class. Secondly, as Dyer points out “Millais was unquestionably the richest and most popular painter in late Victorian England” (1992: 35). Consequently Pears was guaranteed public acceptability by virtue of the artist standing both as a Popular Artist and as a respected member of the Royal Academy.

The social acceptability of a Royal Academician was a prize to be cherished by advertisers. Myers, has made the point that by the late nineteenth century advertising, along with “quack medicines, side shows and vaudeville,” was regarded as cheap and vulgar. The general perception was that only inferior products which couldn’t sell themselves needed advertising. In this context Pears’ use of “Bubbles” can also be interpreted as an attempt to upgrade the image of advertising as a whole (1986: 17). This is confirmed by Millais’ son who modelled for the original painting who claimed that the advertisement would “raise the character of our illustrated advertisements” and “lead to the final extinction of such atrocious vulgarities as now offend the eye” (Bernstein 1997: 130).

Unlike their colleagues in France, established British artists were initially unwilling to venture into the world of commerce. In this regard, Millais was no exception. However, he “warmed to the idea because of the quality of the engraving Pears intended to reproduce” (Dyer 1992: 35). Many members of the public were still hostile to what they perceived to be the “prostitution of Art” and *The Times* carried letters on the “debate” as late as 1899, three years after Millais’ death. (*ibid*)

Although target marketing (i.e. the tailoring of advertising to a specific social group

characterised by class, age, income levels and gender etc.) was not a common practice in the 1890's, the Pear's "Bubbles" campaign astutely catered for prevailing Victorian taste, as can be seen in the sentimental use of a "cherubic" child to sell a product. Significantly, the appeal of children, animals and young women in advertising still prevails today. During the late 1960's Pears Soap revived its association with Victorian art and paintings of young children when they commissioned another Royal Academician, pop artist and Victoriana enthusiast Peter Blake, to paint the portrait of the winner of the annual *Miss Pears* competition.

In spite of Millais' hesitation, during the early development of advertising, generally, there was no caste distinction between the fine artist and the advertising artist. (Goodrum and Dalrymple 1990: 157) Almost all advertising art was done by contract, directly between the agency or magazine and the artist. As more artists began to specialise in this commercial process they became known as "commercial" artists. However by the 1930's the divide between Fine Art and *commercial* art (popular and design art) began to widen and Goodrum and Dalrymple argue that this was a result of "the strictures of the Depression that forced both advertisers and publishers to tighten up and cut corners, and it became increasingly common to have an art department that turned out designs by salaried in-house designers" (ibid.).

### **The status of "commercial" art in South Africa c. 1900 -1920**

In South Africa, a survey of early editions of the *Natal Mercury* (1900 - 1920) reveals that graphic design/artwork still tended to be imported from England and this practice persisted throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Green and Lascaris confirm this when they note that the minutes of an early congress of the South African Newspaper Press Union (December 1890) speak of "standing advertisements received from home and *foreign* (our italics) Advertising Agents" (Green and Lascaris 1988: 29). Forty-six years later "standing advertisements" from "home" were still an issue and an editorial in the April, 1936 edition of the trade publication, *South African Advertising*, focuses upon some of the problems that arise when design is imported from abroad. The article includes an advertisement which shows a "native" (sic) dressed in a suit while cleaning the kitchen (*figure 4.11*).



**Missus! come look kitchen**



**BON AMI**

**makes things shine like new ones**

Native servants like using Bon Ami! For it works fast without scratching—and polishes as it cleans. That's why pots and pans cleaned with Bon Ami stay new looking for years and years and, too, why the kitchen sink shines and the windows glisten. Buy a cake of Bon Ami today and see for yourself how much better it cleans—and how much time and work it saves.



**BON AMI**

**it polishes as it cleans**

*figure 4.11*

Interestingly this example is an extension of the discussion of how soap was used by colonial advertisers in a racist manner that associated cleanliness with civilization. The focus of the text in the editorial is aimed at an alleged lack of understanding of South African conventions by an “overseas” artist who had been employed to prepare artwork for the South African market.

“What he might have said was ‘Missus! Come, look at my new suit!’ Natives do not clean kitchens when they are wearing their ‘Sunday Best.’ They wear a kind of house uniform. This picture is so out of place that it has defeated its own purpose. We believe it was prepared overseas, which explains a lot.” (*South African Advertising*, April, 1936 : 11)

An earlier editorial in the same publication in 1931 provides a number of insights into the attitudes of the industry towards the status of art and the artist and the role that they should play in South African advertising.

“Versatility is one of the chief assets of the commercial artist practising in South Africa. I have already mentioned a few of the subjects he may be called upon to illustrate. Overseas in London, New York, Paris and Berlin artists find it profitable if not absolutely essential to specialise. You have in London, Barribal, who does nothing else but pretty girls; Fougasse, humorous black and white; and many others specialising in such subjects as labels, lettering, motor cars, children, mechanical drawings, book covers, magazine illustrations and so on. The commercial art field in this country is not large enough to support the specialist, consequently the artist in South Africa is compelled to tackle all sorts of subjects to be competent in all the various mediums.” (Henderson 1931: 7)

The article is patronizingly titled “Our Long-Haired Friends” and it is clear from the discussion that the status of the commercial artist in South Africa was not very high (*figure 4.12*). Nor were they as well paid as their counterparts in Europe and the United States and further on in the editorial Henderson writes that “artists as a class seldom give the income tax authorities much overtime or many sleepless nights, so pay the man the price” (*ibid.*). As patronizing as the article is, it was clear about the role that the artist could play in a



# SOUTH AFRICAN ADVERTISING

A Monthly Journal Devoted to the Interests of Advertisers

Vol. 4 [New Series] No. 6

January 1936

Price 6d.

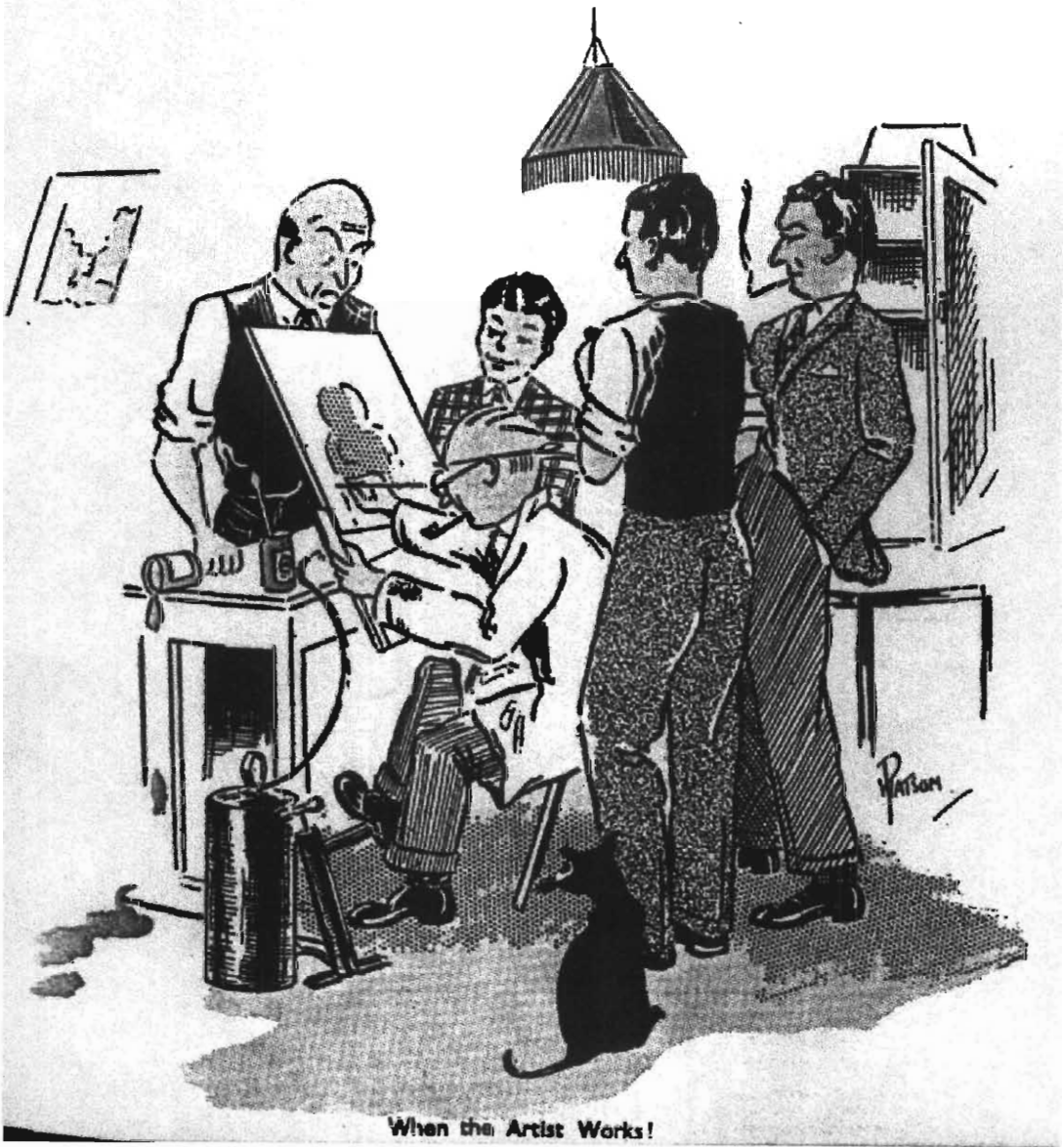


figure 4.12

successful advertising campaign: “Remember that he is absolutely essential to the profession of advertising. He can create the correct atmosphere for your products; his message is couched in a universal language and reaches the trade and public more vividly and more memorably than any other” (ibid.).

A topic that is of importance to the current debate on the need for originality and creativity in South African design art (which includes advertising design) is revealed in this early editorial. It is evident from the above that commercial artists in South Africa during the 1930's were not expected to be at the *cutting edge* as avant-garde artists and designers in Europe were. In fact, quite the opposite appears to be the case as local artists were obviously expected to “copy” styles from “overseas” magazines.

“Some of the tasks set him are well nigh impossible. To be handed a full page in colour from the ‘Ladies’ Home Journal,’ or a particularly brilliant effort from ‘Punch’ by Fougasse or Bateman, with the request for something ‘after that style of thing, and can I have it to-night or first thing in the morning?’ and to have a 6-inch double column to work with, is not so uncommon.” (ibid.)

### **The influence of the cutting edge in Europe**

The previously mentioned *fin-de-siècle*, the posters of Toulouse-Lautrec, Beardsley (1872-1898) and Alphonse Mucha (1860-1939) to name but a few, collectively belong to a new approach to art (l’Art Nouveau) that soon became an “international” style. Evidence of this influence is to be seen in early examples of advertising in South African newspapers at the turn of the century. An advertisement for Southalls’ Mosquito Cones published in the *Natal Mercury* in 1893 shows just how early this style had become an international one (*figure 4.13*). This early South African example is important in that it represents how the notion of a “new” art at the end of the century was grasped upon by advertisers as a means of associating their products with the mood of modernity that prevailed at the time. As Varnedoe and Gopink observe:

“The growth of advertising in the early twentieth century depended on a constellation of strategies for making certain objects or products take on vivid lives in the public imagination; and these efforts had, as artists realised,



affinities with modern art's insistence that the world be seen anew, as well as with its general spirit of invention and demand for change." (1991: 245)

Art Nouveau was not only international in scope but was the "initial phase of the modern movement" in that "modern architecture, graphic and industrial design, surrealism and abstract art have roots in its underlying theory and concepts." (Meggs 1983: 220) Whereas nineteenth century Art Nouveau advertising was concerned with the representation of pleasure and entertainment, modernist designers in the new century were to be concerned with utopian ideals. The idea of modernism carried with it not just an optimistic faith in progress, but the belief that individuals and societies could benefit from and have control over the radical restructuring brought about by modernism (Hewison 1990: 35). This is certainly true of the graphic design that was taught at the Bauhaus, which in turn was to be influential upon subsequent developments in art and design education and practice throughout the world, including South Africa.

The visual language of modernism was not only defined by the early European art movements but "the image of advertising was also transformed, as was most subsequent art and design" (Sobieszek 1988: 33). In this process Cubism, Russian and Hungarian Constructivism, De Stijl, *Art Decoratif* and the work of graphic designers and photographers at the German Bauhaus were all successfully incorporated into the domain of advertising. Thus the period was characterised by an unprecedented integration of art and design with a number of artists working unashamedly as advertising designers. In the process European graphic design and typography after World War 1 was transformed by contemporary developments. According to Sembach:

"by 1930 the influence of expressionism was already a thing of the past, and instead the catchword "New Objectivity" (Neue Sachlichkeit) had been coined. In this context 'new' probably did not imply "renewed" but was a synonym for 'unfamiliar, striking.' No doubt the choice of this name was inspired by the preference during those years for precision without atmosphere, for cool, subdued colours, a harsh metallic sheen and elegant contours." (1972: 10)

This was the design that spread to the rest of the world when the rise of Hitler in Germany forced many artists and designers to flee Nazi accusations of cultural bolshevism. In this way the modernist “style” was destined to become a truly “international” style by the end of WW2.<sup>12</sup> During the post-war years modernist ideals in advertising design were to spread via Britain and the United States to South Africa. In the interim a closer analysis of graphic design during the late 1920's and early 1930's reveals that within European modernist design it is possible to detect two distinct trends. Jobling and Cowley have identified the work of theorists and designers such as Herbert Bayer (1900-1985) and Jan Tschichold (1902-1974), who both worked in the field of typography and layout. Bayer was particularly influential as the professor of the newly established typography and graphic design workshop at the Bauhaus in 1925 and it was Bayer who advocated the use of *sans serif* typeface as the typographic expression of the age. It is his typeface, Universal (1925) that one associates with Bauhaus design (*figure 4.14*).

The rejection of the classical rules of typographic symmetry which established the importance of asymmetric typographic principles was codified as *Die Neuwe Typographie* by Jan Tschichold in 1925. Inspired by Bauhaus principles, “The New Typography” was intended to replace an outmoded commercial style, but in a very short time, became a commercial style itself (*figure 4.15*). Based on a grid system, with a doctrinaire insistence upon simplicity that rejected decorative elements as “bad taste,” both designers extensively used white space as an essential part of their layout. When Tschichold fled to Britain to escape the rise of Naziism he worked for Penguin Books in London and it was the modern paperback revolution in the 1930's initiated by Penguin Books that carried the banner of the avant-garde typography as a Popular Art form, throughout the war years and into the early 1960's.

It is interesting to note that as modernist inspired design came to be promoted as the epitome of “good taste” in both layout and product design both white as a colour or as an empty space became a signifier of taste. “White goods” such as stoves and fridges and other kitchen appliances were to become dominant in the post war years and it is interesting to note the images used in the marketing of these products. For example, a *Natal Mercury* advertisement in 1951 for Frigidaire features a group of people flocking around an oversized

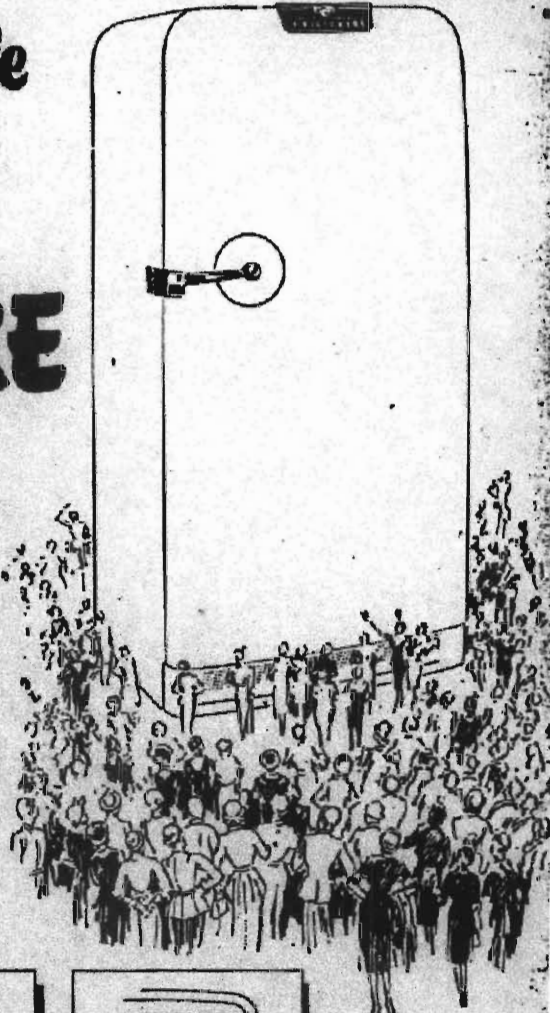


# Every housewife who knows-wants a FRIGIDAIRE

*Because* FRIGIDAIRE efficiency and dependability are so well known that the name has become synonymous with refrigeration. But there is only one genuine FRIGIDAIRE - and it's made only by General Motors.

The new FRIGIDAIRE models, of 7.4 and 9.2 cu. ft. capacities, now being made in South Africa, are as modern as any refrigerator can be. They're brilliantly new in every detail.

If you want a lifetime of dependable service - call on your FRIGIDAIRE dealer NOW.




**METER-MIXER** - the famous rotary cold-mixing mechanism that does a powerful job on a crickle of current. Seal-in-tantal, oiled for life, guaranteed for 5 years.



**GLACURE TRAYS** - With Instant Cube Release. Tray comes out on a finger-touch, cubes pop up, by simply lifting a lever. Only Frigidaire has them.



**SUPER-FREEZER** - Holds up to 20 pounds of frozen food. Freezes meat or keeps it frozen.



Enjoy the FRIGIDAIRE programme sponsored by Thomas Lorne - Spring Radio every Sunday 12.10 o'clock.

*You're twice as sure with two great names*  
**FRIGIDAIRE**  
*made in South Africa by GENERAL MOTORS*

figure 4.16



white fridge that looms over them as if it were a place of worship (*figure 4.16*). In this advertisement the fridge is used as a quasi-religious monolith. As mentioned earlier the notion of the “modernist” product and “advanced” technology as an object of veneration has its roots in fine art movements at the turn of the century such as Art Nouveau and Futurism. Curiously however, the curved surfaces and sleek lines of the Frigidaire fridge have their origins in the “objets d’art” of Art Déco, a modernist inspired design art movement of the 1930's. Streamlining, which had swept through the American design of products from the early 1930's, echoed Italian Futurism and subsequently influenced the Art Déco style (derived from the Paris Exposition of Decorative Arts of 1925) which in turn, domesticated modernist angularity and abstraction even in South Africa.

The notion of taste as a signifier of class and race has already been explained but it is important to note how the ideology of modernism was to become dominant in the field of design art and it should be noted that this essentially European conflict led to problems in multi-cultural societies such as South Africa where not all communities share the same value systems in the arts. It could be argued that as an “International Style” modernism in both art and design contributed to the difficulty experienced by artists and designers in South Africa in establishing a sense of identity on the African continent.

Another identifiable trend in modernist design during the 1930's that lasted into the 1950's only to be revived in eclectic terms during the 1990's, is represented by what Meggs refers to as the “Post-Cubist pictorial modernists” (1983: 300). Designers such as A.M. Cassandre, born Adolph Jean-Marie Mouron (1901-1968), Jean Carlu (b.1900), and E. McKnight Kauffer (1890-1954) used the spatial organization and synthetic imagery of Cubism in their work and in the process displayed their “modernity” in a more restrained graphic design style using flat, simple shapes with a careful integration of letter-forms into the overall composition (Jobling and Crowley 1996: 149). Hence the broad planes of restricted colour and the objective, bold geometric abstraction that one also associates with Cubism is also seen in Cassandre’s poster for the train “Nord Express” (1927) (*figure 4.17*). The stylized lettering in this poster was inspired by Cubist use of typography. Subsequently this type became a standard for Art Moderne typography (including Cassandre’s own typeface Bifur) which has since been adapted and used by many designers (*ibid.*). This is



particularly true of revivals that aim at reviving a sense of nostalgia (*figure 4.18*). A South African advertisement for Wilsons Mint Imperials (c.1990) can be seen in the same context (*figure 4.19*).

The spread of the influence of pictorial modernism during the 1930's is observed in an early example of a tourist poster for the Cape Peninsula Publicity Association and the South African Railways (c.1930) (*figure 4.20*). This poster produced by an unnamed designer uses the broad planes of restricted colour and bold geometric abstraction that one associates with Cubism and is particularly striking in its use of precise cool, subdued colours with elegant contours. Hence in style and image this poster for the promotion of tourism in the Cape Peninsula is given a strong European identity. Interestingly the target audience for "With your car at the Cape" was expatriates in the rest of Africa. In 1940 France had fallen under German occupation and an article in the March 1941 edition of *South African Advertising and Selling* noted:

"But these Belgians from the Congo, these Frenchmen from the Cameroons and neighbouring territories, and the Englishmen from Kenya, Uganda and the Rhodesias still take their two or three months' annual vacation. Nor have they less money to spend on their holidays. The question for them is, "Where shall we go?" That is where South Africa, particularly Cape Town comes in." (Anon 1941: 13)

Hence there was a very clear incentive to substitute the Cape for Europe as a holiday destination and in order to do this there was a practical purpose in utilising an explicitly European style. Significantly this was at odds with most other tourism promotion of South Africa at the time which was targeted at a European-based audience. This can be observed in a press advertisement for "A young country with an Ancient History" which appeared in conjunction with the Empire Exhibition at Johannesburg in 1936 (*figure 4.21*). This advertisement is typical of colonial promotions of the period in both style and content. The colony is conventionally portrayed (photographically) in its rugged geographic glory and in human terms - the stereotypical drawing of a tribesman with a shield. The images of underdeveloped Africa are accompanied by a text that describes South Africa as a country where "the ancient and the ultra modern sit side by side." Hence the appeal of the



## WITH YOUR CAR AT THE CAPE

For information write  
The Cape Peninsula Publicity Association  
& The South African Railways.

figure 4.20

## A young country with an ANCIENT HISTORY ...

By the Cape mountains the South  
Africa of today is a young country  
with the best of both worlds.  
It has the best of the best of  
the world's nature and the best  
of the world's culture. It is a  
young country with a rich  
history and a bright future.  
It is a country where the  
past and the future meet.  
It is a country where the  
best of both worlds meet.  
It is a country where the  
best of both worlds meet.  
It is a country where the  
best of both worlds meet.



## SOUTH AFRICA

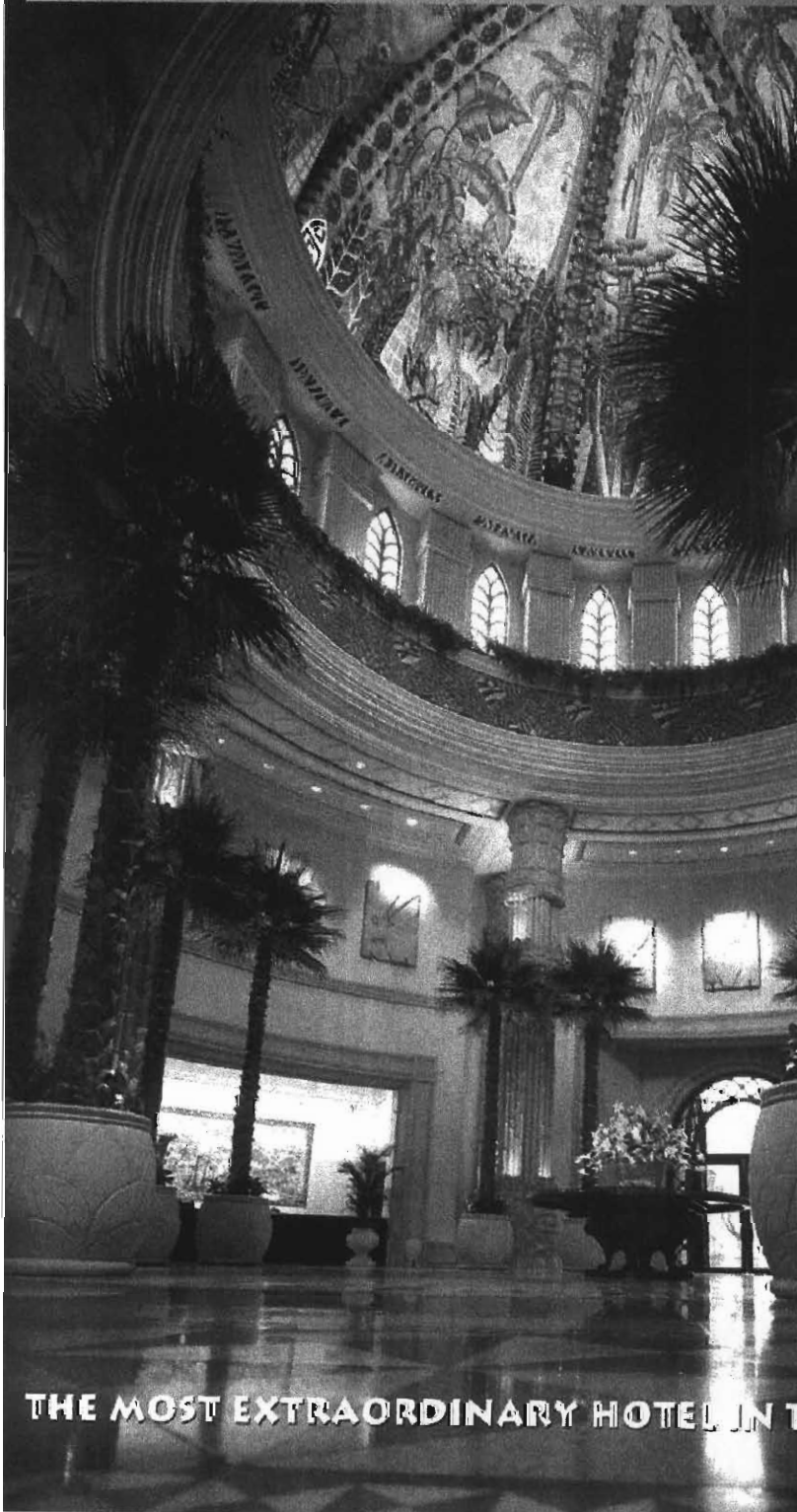
figure 4.21

advertisement is aimed at an overseas audience interested not only in the scenic beauty and cultural tourism but the developmental potential of the region hence, in spite of the “ancient” history the copy explicitly states that “judged by European standards South Africa is a new country.” The promotion of development in the colonies was a motivating factor behind initiatives such as the Empire exhibition.

On an aesthetic level it is evident that despite the stylistic differences between the two advertisements they both address their respective audiences in European terms. The picturesque scene of the waterfall is evocative of a European romantic painting in the same way that the landscape of the Cape poster was an echo of modernist views of the Mediterranean landscapes. The “Ancient History” advertisement however reflects a more profound ideology in that the image of the timelessness of undeveloped nature in Africa is equated with a description of a history that “stretches back into the dusty attics of time” where “there are traces of tribes and rites and rituals so ancient that their origin is beyond the knowledge of man.” This not only ignores the collective knowledge of the oral history of the indigenous people but provides an opportunity for “myth making” which was exploited throughout the region, for both commercial and political purposes.<sup>13</sup>

The political and commercial possibilities of the denial of “real” culture and history is enormous for colonial enterprise. During the nineteenth century this not only spawned the literary work of writers such as Rider Haggard but, during the later half of the twentieth century, inspired another fiction, “The Lost City” to promote tourism in the region (*figure 4.22*). These two examples of tourism posters from the 1930's serve to emphasise the nature of the influence of the colonial mode of thinking and how it affects the development of a sense of identity in the design arts. These and other factors have inevitably influenced the development of advertising in South Africa which is the subject of the next chapter.

STEP INTO A WORLD OF UNIMAGINED SPLENDOUR



Pass through towering  
doors of beaten copper.  
Your footsteps echoing over  
a million semi-precious pieces  
of hand laid mosaic.  
Across countless centuries  
of legend, into a world thought  
lost to modern man.  
A world of crystal staircases  
and soaring frescoed ceilings.  
A world of sensual beauty.  
Where service is an effortless  
whisper of tastes and touches  
once known only to an ancient  
royalty.

Welcome to The Palace.

SUN INTERNATIONAL  
CENTRAL RESERVATIONS

Johannesburg - (011) 786-7890

Durban - (031) 304-9237

Cape Town - (021) 21-5978



**THE PALACE**  
OF THE LOST CITY AT SUN CITY

THE MOST EXTRAORDINARY HOTEL IN THE WORLD

figure 4.22

## Notes

1. Forty makes reference to radio design in the late 1920's and maintains that in spite of it being state of the art technology, "the first (radio) was housed in a cabinet which imitated a piece of antique furniture, and so referred to the past" (1986: 11).

2. According to Panofsky:

"In 1433 Jan van Eyck made one of the great discoveries in portraiture. In the portrait of a *Man in a Red Turban*, completed in October 21 of that year, the glance of the sitter is turned out of the picture and sharply focussed on the beholder with an air of skepticism intensified by the expression of the thin mouth with its slight compressed corners. For the first time the sitter seeks to establish direct contact with the spectator..... We feel observed and scrutinized by a wakeful intelligence. (quoted in Kress and van Leeuwen 1996: 125)

3. Significantly, South African women's magazines confirm this view. Hence throughout the 1980's *Fair Lady* had an aspirational slogan, "The Woman You Want To Be" printed on the spine. Interestingly during the first half of the 1990's this changed to "The Woman You Are" and by 1998 the information age was reflected in the slogan "For Women Who Want to Know" (*Fair Lady* February, 1998).

4. According to Meggs, *stereotyping* involves "the casting of a duplicate of a relief printing surface by pressing a moulding material (damp paper pulp, plaster, or clay) against it to make a matrix. Molten metal is poured into the matrix to form the duplicate printing plate" (1983: 147).

5. By 1812 the system of flat plate against flat plate was replaced with the cylinder and reciprocating bed carrying type and with the invention of the automatic ink roller had the effect of speeding up the printing process. Jean is of the opinion that in this manner technological innovation was to give real meaning to the concept of the freedom of the

press, embodied in the *Declaration of the Rights of Man* which had been issued at the height of the French Revolution in 1789 (Jean 1987: 113).

6. The application of steam power to printing revolutionized the industry when Friedrich Koenig, a German engineer working in England, redesigned the press to make it possible (Craig and Barton 1987: 117). They go on to explain that “Koenig’s press, first used for *The Times* of London on November 28, 1814, increased the number of possible impressions almost five-fold - to 1,100 per hour as compared to the Stanhope” (ibid.).

7. The Nabis included, amongst others, artists such as Maurice Dennis (1870-1943), Pierre Bonnard (1867-1947), and Edouard Vuillard (1868-1940).

8. In 1858 Singer developed a domestic sewing machine, but it was too expensive, so the company introduced a hire purchase scheme to expand the market. (Brierley 1995: 6) Over a hundred and fifty years later, it is interesting to note the role that credit plays in the expansion of the market in South Africa. cf. *Edgars Club* and retail credit cards such as those offered by Pick ‘n Pay and Woolworths.

9. Goodrum and Dalrymple note that “woodblocks cost around \$300 apiece, while halftones ran \$20 for a picture the same size. Magazines thus exploded with pictures and by 1910 had permitted all forms of magazine printing to exploit the various styles of the artists” (1990: 162).

10. The importance that both companies gave to advertising is reflected in the increase of advertising expenditure (adspend) of both companies during the period 1865-1900. In 1865 Pear’s annual advertising bill was £80 but by the 1870’s this expenditure increased to between £100 000 to £130 000 after J. Barratt took control of the company (Jobling and Cowley 1996: 247).



11. A number of papers have been written on this subject most notably *Soft-soaping empire: commodity racism and imperial advertising* by Anne McClintock in which she quotes an advertisement for Pears Soap published in 1899, the year the Anglo-Boer War erupted:

“The first step towards LIGHTENING THE WHITE MAN’S BURDEN is through teaching the virtues of cleanliness. PEARS’ SOAP is a potent factor in brightening the dark corners of the earth as civilization advances, while amongst the cultured of all nations it holds the highest place - it is the ideal toilet soap.” (McClintock 1994 in Robertson et. al.: 132-153)

12. Bayer fled to the United States and worked at art director at the Container Corporation of America. Moholy-Nagy fled the Nazis and established The New Bauhaus in Chicago. (Illinois Institute of Technology.) Tschichold fled to London to become the influential designer for Penguin Books. As Robert Hughes pointed out in his television series *The Shock of the New*, it is ironic that the vision of the socialist inspired avant-garde of Europe was to be realised in capitalist America where they had fled because of the war. No doubt the dictum of less is more made good economic sense there (1973).

13. Hence the work of respected archeologists was ignored and the origin of the Zimbabwe Ruins was described as a “mystery” by colonial interests that sought to deny the existence of an indigenous culture.

## Chapter Five : Aspects of Advertising in South Africa

Advertising is a form of communication and it is interesting to speculate that the rock paintings are the earliest forms of visual communications design (Meggs 1983: 4). However, Sobieszek points out that the most rudimentary form of advertising, the spoken announcement, can be traced to the public criers in ancient Egypt (1988: 16). In common with other cultures, traditional African dress, body ornament and markings, can also be said to have functioned as a type of visual communication intended to inform another party of clan affiliations, religious belief, region of origin, social and marital status. However, the focus of this body of research is upon visual communication as a part of the capitalist economy and, as such, advertising in South Africa is inextricably linked with the development of the press since the mid-nineteenth century.

### A brief history of early advertising in South Africa

South Africa's first newspaper, the bilingual *Cape Town Gazette and African Advertiser* or *Kaapsche Stads Courant en Afrikaansche Berigter* was published in the Cape Colony on Saturday the 16<sup>th</sup> August 1800 (*figure 5.1*). Published by John Robertson and Alexander Walker the newspaper closed after 13 months when the government assumed responsibility for all printing. However public dissatisfaction had already been expressed about the expense of the newspaper and its advertising costs (Barenblatt and Sinclair 1989: 16). The weekly *South African Commercial Advertiser* was published by George Creig during January 1824 and South Africa's oldest daily title, *The Natal Witness* was published by David Buchanan at Pietermaritzburg in 1846. Thereafter there was rapid growth of the newspaper media in South Africa (Bryce ed. 1990: 9).<sup>1</sup>

Each of the early South African newspapers depended upon paid-for government notices and private advertising for revenue. When one reads these early newspapers one is struck by the fact that advertising is carried on the front page and "news" was relegated to the third or fourth page. In the case of the *Natal Mercury* this remained the case until as late as 1<sup>st</sup> October, 1953 (*figure 5.2*). The first edition of the *Natal Mercury* was in fact called *The Natal Mercury and Commercial and Shipping Gazette* and was published on Thursday, 25<sup>th</sup>



figure 5.1

(Largest Circulation in Natal.)      SECOND EDITION, for Town and Suburbs.

# The Natal Mercury.

ESTABLISHED 1845      DURBAN, TUESDAY, JULY 6, 1915      No. 11,383

**CEDAROL.**  
 Mosquito Bites.  
 H. G. MILNE & CO.,  
 211 WEST STREET, DURBAN.

## Bon Marché Sale

**The Sale where the Values are Greatest—always, and the Goods All New and Right-Up-To-Date.**

**EVERY DAY DURING JULY WE OFFER YOU SMART, NEW STOCK AT SALE PRICES. 17 CASES A WEEK, CONTAINING THE GOODS YOU WANT AT LESS THAN YOU PAY ELSEWHERE.**

<p><b>IMPROVED VALUE IN</b>  <b>CREAM WASH DELAINE BLOUSES.</b>          17 Cases containing very latest styles, looking only          but not equalled—made by famous French &amp; Italian          designers.  <b>YOUNG'S BELL FRONT!</b>  <b>ALL AT 3/11 EACH</b></p> <p><small>Special value to Ladies. THESE BLOUSES will          smart military or will suit any work. 17/11—  <b>SALE PRICE 2/11</b>  <b>17 CASES</b></small></p>	<p><b>EXTRA SPECIAL BARGAINS.</b>  <b>100 YARDS FINEST FLOUNCE, also with          and designs, just received, worth 12/11—  <b>SALE PRICE 1/11 yd.</b></b></p> <p><b>100 PAIRS LADIES' BODICES, in Black, Tan, and          colors, etc., all perfect goods, suitable for          work, ready 1/11 to 2/11 each—  <b>SALE PRICE 6<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> pair</b></b></p> <p><b>100 LADIES' FURBER HATS, of very latest          styles—made of quality cloth—worth          4/11—  <b>SALE PRICE 4/11 ea.</b></b></p>	<p><b>NOSE PURCHASE OF</b>  <b>LADIES' BLOUSES &amp; COMBINATIONS.</b>          EVEN LOW CASHMERE, CLOTH, FRESH          colors, all excellent, stylish, and          ready to wear—  <b>100 YARDS</b></p> <p><b>TODAY'S SALE PRICE</b>  <b>ALL AT 5/11 EACH</b></p> <p><b>100 LADIES' LADDER BLOUSES, just received,          all with or without full sleeves, double breasted,          and ready to wear—  <b>SALE PRICE 1/11 ea.</b></b></p>	<p><b>BEST VALUE IN</b>  <b>Popular-Priced Millinery.</b>          A Single Selection—  <b>ALL AT 5/11 EACH.</b></p> <p><b>100 NEW ENTIRELY FACED HATS, in Black          and various colors, worth 12/11—  <b>SALE PRICE 5/11</b></b></p> <p><b>100 NEW BLACK TASEL BRIM STRAWS, in          four small attractive styles, worth 1/11—  <b>SALE PRICE 1/11</b></b></p> <p><b>100 LADIES' READY-TO-WEAR, White and          colors, with necks trimmed with lace, worth 1/11—  <b>SALE PRICE 1/11</b></b></p> <p><b>100 LADIES' FELT HATS in various shapes, just in,          Black and colors, ready to wear and          fashionable—</b></p>
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figure 5.2

November, 1852. The charges for advertising were published as “four lines and under.....3 shillings and 3 pence per additional line” (*NM&C & SG* 1852: 1).

Besides official government notices in early editions of *The Natal Mercury*, shipping details were published noting times of arrival and departure as well as details of the products they carried. All these advertisements contain no images but the text reflects the development of commercial activity in the region. As Strutt points out, the discovery of gold in 1886 changed the importance of Durban as a harbour city and this saw the importation of more sophisticated goods e.g. imported fabrics and Japanese goods were widely advertised in various editions of the *Natal Mercury* during 1888 (1975: 347). Whereas the early editions of the *Natal Mercury* contained largely agricultural, commercial notices and advertisements for jams, jellies, preserves and syrups, by 1890 text based advertisements began to give way to a more graphic style (Sunlight Soap in *Natal Mercury* 18th July 1891) (*figure 5.3*). This occurred during the period that business in Europe and America began to appreciate the selling power of advertising and “brands” were developed (Barenblatt and Sinclair 1989: 16). As already discussed, one of the first brands to use art in advertising was Pears Soap, a brand that was widely advertised in South Africa at the time (*figure 5.4*).

It appears as if international trends became influential upon advertising in South Africa during the Second Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902). As British troops disembarked in Durban local traders were quick to exploit an expanded market (*figure 5.5*). British brands were advertised in new ways in that the consumer (the British soldier) was featured in the advertisement in a South African war context. In the process it could be argued that the Boer War began to change the way South African advertisements looked. For example Bovril advertisements were fiercely patriotic to the British cause and Bovril products were promoted throughout the Empire. McClintock maintains that companies such as Pears’ and Bovril began to represent their products as a “magic medium capable of enforcing and enlarging British power in the colonial world” (McClintock 1994: 146). Hence in “How Lord Roberts wrote BOVRIL” she observes that “the letters BOVRIL march boldly over a colonial map of South Africa - imperial progress consumed as spectacle” (*figure 5.6 a*).

“In an inspired promotional idea, the word BOVRIL was recognised as tracing the military advance of Lord Roberts across the country, yoking



*figure 5.3*



*figure 5.4*

together, as if writ by nature, the simultaneous lessons of colonial domination and commodity progress. In this ad, the colonial map enters the realm of commodity spectacle.” (ibid.)

In a later Bovril advertisement aimed at British soldiers in South Africa in 1901 a propagandist painting “The Relief of Ladysmith” by John H. Bacon was offered “free to purchasers of Bovril in Bottles” (*figure 5.6 b*). This constitutes one of the earliest examples of art being used as a marketing tool in South Africa. After the war the English influence was to become even stronger. Green and Lascaris contend that

“the English influence after the South African War was paramount. And it shows in the press advertising: *Peek Frean’s* and *Bovril*. It was not just the product mix. Ads *sounded* English. You did not advertise German engineering genius in those days. But “British throughout” was a feature sure to sell *Aston* bicycles.” (1988: 29)

In this way it could be argued that the advertising during the Boer War also introduced a merging of political and commercial interests that would be repeated less than a hundred years later during South Africa’s transition to democracy. As with other aspects of the Boer War this form of advertising represents a precursor to both advertising and government propaganda during the First World War (WW1) when “psychological methods” were used to great effect during the First World War. There are many famous posters deriving from this period; perhaps the most celebrated is the one entitled “Daddy what did you do during the War?” (*figure 5.7*) (Dyer 1992: 43). Unlike Alfred Leete’s “Britons Kitchener Wants You” (c.1915) (*figure 1.8*) this form of guilt laden propaganda enters the domestic domain and this was a technique that came to be used to sell goods and services once the war was over. Inevitably this more complex approach to communications design required specialist treatment. In part this explains why the practice of advertising agents was to shift from a mere space broker to a communications specialist.

To this end agents in the United States of America and Britain began offering additional copywriting, layout and artwork services to advertisers. According to Bryce, the first South African agency as such was the Cape Town based South African Contractors Ltd. which





figure 5.7



was founded in 1899 by Cecil James Sibbert (1990: 10). Sibbert developed subsidiaries in the Eastern Cape, Natal and the Transvaal which he collectively sold in 1927 to I.W. Schlesinger who owned African Films and African Theatres as Associated Advertising Contractors (op. cit. 13).<sup>2</sup>

According to Bryce “by the end of the First World War, another medium was being offered to advertisers: magazine titles began to appear with increasing frequency. Now the industry was beginning to formalise itself and the first real practitioners came on the scene” (op. cit. 10). According to *Marketing Mix* there are few titles that go back into history, the most notable being today’s giant, *Huisgenoot* (launched 1916) and the *Reader’s Digest* (SA edition launched 1948) (Anon. *Marketing Mix* October 1994: 64).

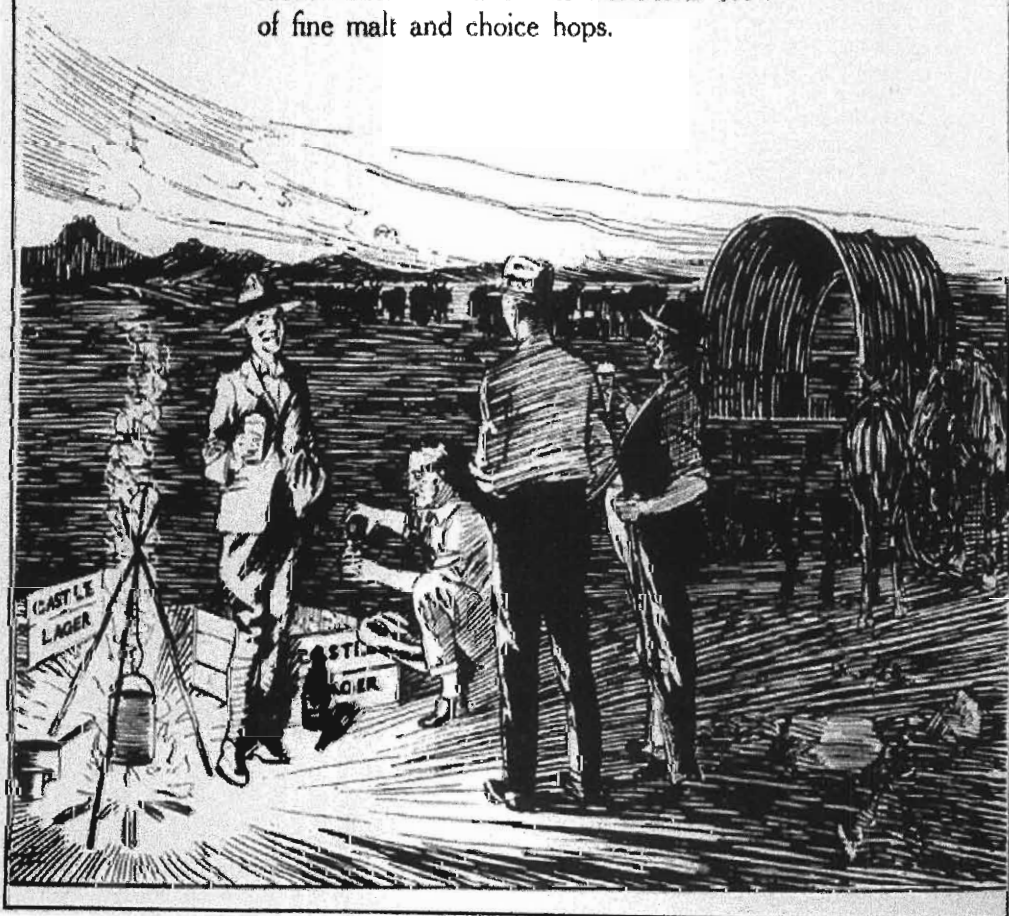
As Barenblatt and Sinclair point out, early advertising agents did not organise themselves into an industry. This was done by the Newspaper Press Union (NPU) which was founded in 1882 primarily to protect editors from harsh libel laws.<sup>3</sup> In 1912 the NPU resolved to have all newspapers register their tariffs and to regulate the commissions payable to “recognised” (accredited) agents. To this end the NPU initially recognised four agencies; the Central News Agency (CNA), SA Advertisers, FG Pay and Universal Advertising Company (1989: 18).<sup>4</sup>

Prior to the 1920's the advertisements carried in South African newspapers tended to feature illustrations that promoted the actual product. But, by the beginning of the 1920's, in common with the rest of the world, advertising strategists turned from promoting things to selling “ideas.” An early South African example is “Come! Let us inspan a few Castle Lagers!” (*Outspan* 20 May 1927) (*figure 5.8 a*). Uncharacteristically for the time not only is the bottle of beer not shown but the image and copy creates a “lifestyle” approach to advertising by showing an illustration of people around a fire drinking the product. Interestingly the headline “South Africans know the joy of trekking, hunting and camping in this great country of sunshine and open spaces.” is a precursor of the 1970's Chrysler radio advertising campaign “We love braaivleis, rugby, sunny skies, and Chevrolet.” It is interesting to note that when in 1962 advertisements for the same product included women (not necessarily as consumers) in a life-style orientated advertisement the conventions of

# *Come! Let us inspan a few Castle Lagers!*

South Africans know the joy of trekking,  
hunting and camping in this great country  
of sunshine and open spaces.

They also know the deep feeling of satis-  
faction to be found in this wonderful brew  
of fine malt and choice hops.



*figure 5.8a*



Manet's *Le déjeuner sur l'herbe* (1863) were used (figure 5.8 b & c).

Clearly this type of advertising was more complex than just illustrating the product with accompanying text. Hence the demand for a more professional approach within the local industry resulted in a dramatic growth in the number of advertising agencies in South Africa and by 1924 there were fourteen agencies recognised by the NPU offering full advertising/art services (Barenblatt and Sinclair 1989: 18).<sup>5</sup> This growth was also a consequence of the growth of the economy and a degree of sophistication in the market. By the late 1920's large retail shops such as Greetermans (1927) and the OK Bazaars (1929) opened their doors. In the words of the OK Bazaars advertisement of the time: "The Greatest Event in Shopping History is about to take place" (Bryce 1990: 58).

However, during October 1929 the Wall Street stock market crashed and an economic depression spread throughout the world, including South Africa. According to Ewen, this resulted in an overproduction of goods for depressed markets throughout the world. In an effort to stimulate consumption marketing trends became focussed upon the consumer (1984: 51-54). In the United States and Europe this is the period during which the early European Modernism of the 1920's, which was mentioned in the previous chapter, was introduced to the general public through magazine advertising as a means of encouraging consumption (Heller and Fili 1995: 8).

However, in the fledgling South African advertising industry the value of "art" (commercial and fine) was still a contested area as evidenced by the low status accorded to art and artists in *Our Long Haired Friends* in the October, 1931 edition of *South African Advertising*. A survey of early South African trade journals (1930-1965) reveals that while there was a gradual recognition of the value of artwork in the advertising process (c.1931) what was referred to as "Art for Art's sake" was considered to be "feeble" and "pointless" ("Harrow" in *South African Advertising* 1931: 19). Under the heading "Critical Commentaries - 5: Discussion On Commercial Art" "Harrow" writes: "Advertising owes no small part of its development to the commercial artist, and more recently to the specialist in commercial photography. The artistic standard and attractiveness of advertising today shows an enormous improvement on the standards of ten to fifteen years ago" (ibid.). However, in

the same commentary he writes,

“‘Art for art’s sake’ is certainly not a policy which the knowledgeable advertiser will adopt. Without doubt, there is a good deal of feeble, pointless ‘art work,’ which benefits nobody but the artist and the blockmaker. Let it be admitted that art, as understood by the average commercial artist, is not necessarily advertising as understood by the man who foots the bill.” (ibid.)

This early editorial implicitly begins to define the fine art (art for art’s sake) and design art (commercial art) divide. I contend that the antagonism between artist and advertiser is, in part, explained by the fact that prior to 1966, fine art courses were the only art courses available at South African universities and art schools (personal interview with Andrews, 1997).<sup>6</sup> Linked to the dearth of locally trained professionals was the dependency of the local industry upon “overseas” expertise. Green and Lascaris maintain that “Advertising was aimed at the white settler and could have come out of any provincial newspaper of the day. Lipton’s Tea, Carter’s Liver Pills, the Union Line - their ads are all there and look like a simple extension of campaigns run back home” (1988: 29).

However, by 1935 the trade journal *South African Advertising* began to feature articles that promoted the advantage of understanding of the South African market.

“(But) what does the British manufacturer know of South Africa? Nothing, or practically nothing. Of 4,000 national advertisers in Britain, how many are marketing their products in South Africa? An almost negligible quantity. And their reason for not having their products on the South African market is because of their abysmal ignorance of conditions here.” (A.J.L. 1935: 19)

Significantly, this period saw international companies such as Lever Brothers opening an office, Lintas, in Durban in 1935. In doing so Levers no longer sourced advertisements solely from their London office (Bryce 1990: 13). However, according to Bryce “creative people” were still sought “overseas” throughout the 1940's. Interestingly, one such person was the popular artist, Validimir Tretchikoff (ibid.). In order to encourage the development of local talent, “commercial” art courses were introduced as part-time courses in South African art schools. According to Andrews these courses were incorporated into a generic

National Diploma in Art and Craft during the 1950's until a specific National Diploma in Graphic Design was introduced at the then Natal College For Advanced Technical Education in 1966 (personal interview with Andrews, 1997).

In South African newspapers and magazines throughout the 1920's line drawings began to be displaced by black and white photographs although it is significant that the photographic company, Kodak refrained from using photography in their advertisements until the 1930's presumably when printing techniques in newspapers and magazines had improved sufficiently to do justice to their product (*figure 5.9*). In turn, black and white was to be replaced by colour photography, especially in magazines after WW2. It can be argued that full colour revolutionised print advertising. The October 1956 edition of a South African industry journal, *Advertising and Selling* admitted that although no research information on the use of colour advertising in South Africa existed “we can look to the U.S.A. as a guide. As subjects for advertising campaigns, there is no reason at all to believe that European South Africans react in any way differently to their counterparts in the U.S.A., Britain or indeed any white Western country (where according to E. Peterson the editor of *Printers Ink*) run-of-newspaper colour produces more outstanding sales results and successful advertising campaigns than ever before” (Anon. 1956: 23). This improvement in technology also came at a time of economic growth in South Africa and this revolutionised the advertising industry as a whole. This is the period that witnessed the growth of the “creative” agencies in the United States (Staniszewski 1988 : 91).

In South Africa the Nationalist Party Government came to power in 1948 and by the early 1950's the term Apartheid was introduced. Significantly, at a time when the United States government outlawed racial segregation in US public schools (1954), the South African government introduced the Natives Resettlement Act which led to the formal segregation of the various racial groups in the country with the establishment of Soweto and other townships. Perhaps, in order to control other aspects of South African society television as a medium was shunned. In the interim, commercial radio was permitted and *Springbok Radio* was launched on 1<sup>st</sup> May, 1950. According to Bryce commercial radio provided a massive boost for the South African advertising industry in that of the one hundred and nine weekly broadcast hours, twenty nine percent were devoted to advertising (1990: 16).



# You cannot forget days spent with a Kodak

Some holidays are soon forgotten. You have a glorious summer holiday and come home with nothing to show for it.

You can't forget a Kodak holiday. If you want to remember your holiday you must take a Kodak with you.

Don't waste your holidays this year. Make up your mind to keep a complete record of your good times. Take a Kodak with you.

**You can learn to use a Kodak in half-an-hour.**

There are Kodaks at all prices from the little Vest Pocket Kodak at £2 to the 3a Special Kodak with Zeiss Tessar (F5.3) lens and Compound Shutter at £18 10s. Here are two popular Kodaks:

**A Kodak for £4 4s.**

No. 1a Folding Pocket Kodak, takes pictures 4½ by 3½ in., fitted with rapid rectilinear lens, and Kodak half-bearing shutter, a very suitable Kodak for a lady's use ..... Price £4 4s.

**A Kodak for £4 17s. 6d.**

No. 3 Folding Pocket Kodak, takes pictures 4½ by 3½ in., the popular "quarter-plate" size, superior lens and shutter, a handsome Kodak, covered with seal grain leather ..... Price £4 17s. 6d.

And then, for the Children, there are Brownies, "little cousins of the Kodaks," from 7s. 6d. to 67s. 6d.

**Kodaks and Kodak Supplies to be had from all Kodak Dealers.**

Kodak catalogues from all Kodak dealers, or from

Kodak (South Africa), Ltd., 92-96, St. George's Street, Cape Town.

figure 5.9

Schudson maintains that elsewhere in the world television was the medium that revolutionized the advertising business by giving it a stronger emphasis upon the visual elements (1993: 62). Ironically television was only officially launched in South Africa in 1976 the year of the Soweto uprisings and this forced the South African government to introduce draconian media restrictions to control the images of unrest in the townships. In the United States (c.1956), according to Schudson the explosion in consumer products available meant that advertisements had to change dramatically because of the need to grab the viewer's attention (ibid.). Schudson contends that while in the United States television had made advertising more visual it became even more so in Europe because of the need to advertise across national and linguistic barriers (op. cit. 270).

Once again developments in print technology contributed to this visual trend. In 1956 the South African Society of Advertisers sought information "from abroad on how to use colour effectively" (Bryce ed. 1990: 18) and 1957 saw the first full page colour half tone advertisement for SA Breweries. According to Allan Raff, co-director of the Red and Yellow School of Advertising, "the lack of television advertising but the availability of advanced print technology contributed to the high standard of print advertisements in South African newspapers and magazines" (personal interview with Raff, 1996).

Improved print technology and the emphasis upon the visual also changed the way advertising agencies worked. According to Raff, prior to the 1960's, art directors in the agencies were technicians or illustrators who carried out the ideas developed by copywriters. During the first half of 1950's art and copy writing were separate departments and according to Raff, until quite recently, creative directors in most agencies in South Africa still tended to come from writing backgrounds (ibid.).

According to an editorial in the October 1994 edition of *Marketing Mix* the real impetus for full colour printing in advertising (and the consequent growth in the magazine sector) came with the launch of high speed gravure printing processes in 1963 (Anon. *Marketing Mix* October 1994: 64). A.W.T. Russel, the former head of design at Metal Box (SA) maintains that "the thin consistency of the inks used in gravure printing allowed for rapid drying and this, together with rotary technology, halved the press time." Russel contends



that “this speed together with colour capabilities and high resolution obtained from the copper drums revolutionised high capacity printing” (personal interview with A.W.T. Russel, 1997).

It could be argued that as the emphasis on images in advertisements became possible with these technological developments, the use of “art” as a rhetorical device, became a viable “tool” in the communication process. Schudson comments that, “advertisements with little or no copy that are common today would have been unthinkable fifty years ago.” Interestingly, he goes on to say that although it would be a mistake to identify “reason” with words and “emotion” with pictures it is true that new possibilities for the visual in advertising has stimulated the development of emotional, affected, or “mood” advertising (1993: 63).

### **Majority markets**

Since the 1930's the advertising trade press has encouraged the advertiser to realise the potential of the “black” consumer. cf. “4 out of every 5 are non-Europeans” (*figure 1.13*). However this potential was never fully realised because of the restricted earning capacity of the majority of South Africans due to prevailing segregationist policies. Consequently only the two official languages were catered for in South African advertising, namely, Afrikaans and English. Often the Afrikaans version was too direct a translation of the English advertisement and in doing so lost impact due to its non-idiomatic quality. Language however is not the only element that requires translation in an advertisement; the concept too is linked to a specific culture. This is particularly true of elements such as humour and notions about Art mentioned above. This presents a particular set of challenges for advertising designers in a de-segregated South Africa which will be discussed in due course.

The 1930's saw the intensification of the “Americanisation” of South Africa. This was certainly encouraged after the declaration of the Republic of South Africa in 1961 as colonial ties with Britain were loosened. Significantly, this occurred during a period when refrigeration, and improved storage facilities in stores and in homes in the United States had made more brands and product categories simultaneously available (Schudson 1993: 62). Research of newspapers and magazines in South Africa during this period reveals that

similar trends are discernable in “affluent” South Africa.

Although the British influence in South Africa had always been strong, the undisputed home of advertising was, and still is, the United States of America (Douglas 1984: 16). Douglas contends that because American agencies and advertisers control the vast majority of the money spent on advertising around the world, it is not surprising that the style and techniques of American advertising would be adopted in many countries (ibid). This is particularly true of South Africa where multi-national advertisers such as Coca-Cola and Johnson & Johnson have adapted their US advertisements for use in the local market.

Often products that are not made in the United States are advertised and marketed to resemble American products. This is particularly true of tobacco products that originate in the Southern African region which are sold with images of cowboys or positioned globally to promote the notion of the “Big Wide World Of Peter Stuyvesant.” However the main constraint upon the widespread influence of globalized advertising is the recognition of the importance of regional differences of language, culture and trade constraints that exist between countries. One of the ironies of the globalization of media and marketing is that it is accompanied by a growth in national and regional consciousness (Poggenpohl 1997: 30-34 ). Sharon Poggenpohl contends that the desire for a local “identity” can be seen as a reaction to the homogeny implicit in globalization (1997: 19). This was recognised by Reg Lascaris of TBWA Hunt, Lascaris in a SABC radio interview when he stated that “one of the biggest challenges confronting global advertising today is the need to cater for the differences of language and culture” (SAFM: “Talk at Will” August, 1997).

An important strand in post-modernism has been a move to insert a regional dimension into art and design and thus it is to be expected that as South African society changed during the transition from a country, internally divided and isolated by the world, to a democracy integrated within the global economy, the issue of a “local” identity in both art and advertising design should become an important one.

### **The search for identity c. 1988-1994**

By the late 1970's and early 1980's the practice of “importing” advertising artists from

“overseas” slowed as graduates from local design schools began to assert themselves. Similarly political events such as the Soweto uprisings (1976) led to the international isolation of the country which also discouraged immigration from Europe. Although it could be argued that the education of local design artists remained essentially Eurocentric, it is almost inevitable that as the commercial and political environment changed a different sense of identity would emerge.

Just as academics since the late 1980's became concerned with restoring the “other” to their rightful place in the various histories in South Africa, so advertising sought to correct the image of, not only the past, but for commercial reasons also the imperfect present. One of the most prominent examples of this trend is to be seen in South African Breweries (SAB) advertisements for beer since the mid-1980's which showed multi-racial groups enjoying SAB products. Ironically at the height of Apartheid, “mixed” consumption of alcohol in unsegregated public venues was anathema to the system of racial segregation. Throughout the 1950's and 1960's the control of the manufacture and consumption of beer was a highly politicized issue to the extent that, according to Maylam and Edwards it played a major part in the Cato Manor riots in Durban in June 1959 (1997: 128).

By the 1970's political control continued and hotels had to apply for International Hotel status in order to offer alcohol to a racially desegregated clientele. However, as petty apartheid laws were either repealed or became un-enforceable, desegregated alcohol consumption was still not the norm by the late 1980's. However, according to Green and Lascaris the SAB advertisements projected an image of society not as it was but rather as it could be. The images of men (irrespective of colour) drinking and enjoying each other's company was by 1990 still an aspirational image and emphasises the power of advertising to contribute to a social ideal and a democratised ideology. Green and Lascaris confirm this power when they state that “It (aspirational advertising) won't just reflect hope, it could accelerate these wished-for realities” (Green and Lascaris 1990: 84). Thus, Daniel Cook, the guest curator of “Mapping Terra Incognita” - a retrospective exhibition of works by Andrew Vester (b.1937) 1957-1997 describes a review of Vester's work by a visiting academic Carol Becker as follows:

“At the time (1990-1994), the disjunction between his stated political belief,

and the seemingly irresponsible (in the face of South Africa's spiralling violence) lyrical quality of his paintings was difficult to account for. This disjunction was resolved by Professor Carol Becker (Dean at the School of Art Institute of Chicago) when she previewed the HOTLANDS series while on a visit to Durban. She noted that Verster was 'not painting South Africa's violent present, but its glorious future.'" (quoted in Cook 1997: 27)

Significantly, Cook notes that Becker was, unintentionally, echoing Nelson Mandela's ANC Youth League Manifesto that "works of art can and should reflect not only the present phase of the national liberation struggle but also the world of beauty that lies beyond the conflict and turmoil of struggle" (Mandela quoted in Cook 1997: 27). This is the view that informed many of the advertisements produced during the transition to democracy.

Schudson also links the aspirational quality of advertising with politics when he draws parallels between the conventions of capitalist advertising and aesthetic conventions of Soviet Social Realism which was the official, state-sanctioned and state governed art that was practised in the Soviet Union from the rise of Stalin to power until the collapse of the Communist system at the end of the 1980's.<sup>7</sup> He calls this convention "Capitalist Realism."

Hence he simplifies the characteristics of Soviet Socialist Realism as follows:

- Art [*advertising*] should picture reality in simplified and typified ways so that it communicates effectively to the masses.
- Art [*advertising*] should picture life, but not as it is so much as life as it should become, life worth emulating.
- Art [*advertising*] should picture reality not in its individuality but only as it reveals larger social significance.
- Art [*advertising*] should picture reality as progress towards the future and so represent social struggles positively. It should carry an air of optimism.
- Art [*advertising*] should focus on contemporary life, creating pleasing images of new social phenomena, revealing and endorsing new features of society and thus aiding the masses in assimilating them. (1984: 214-215)

A significant amount of South African advertising conformed to these principals during the late 1980's and the early part of this decade. This occurred at a momentous time for the country. During the later part of the 1980's, influential individuals and eventually Nationalist government ministers entered into secret negotiations that led to the unbanning of the anti-apartheid movements, the dismantling of apartheid and the birth of what was then popularly referred to as the "new" South Africa. However as the euphoria of Nelson Mandela's release from prison in 1990 receded and during the period 1992-1994, South Africa began to experience the spiralling violence that Cook refers to above (1997: 27). This led to a great deal of anxiety and uncertainty at a time when interim constitutional talks (Codesa) were convened at the World Trade Conference Centre at Kempton Park. These talks were accompanied by the threat of a right-wing uprising and the assassination of the Communist Party leader Chris Hani in 1993 almost catapulted the country to the brink of civil war.

### **A sense of identity**

During this period the notion of "nation building" became a theme that advertisers adopted.<sup>8</sup> In doing so one might contend that a significant number of South African advertisements adopted elements of "Capitalist Realism" as defined by Schudson e.g. Pick 'n Pay's "Together We can make it Better" (c.1988/89) (*figure 1.6*). Curiously, seven years later South African Breweries (SAB), the sponsors of the South African football team (Bafana Bafana), have again ambiguously blended these elements in the jingle "One Nation One Goal." (1997) The building of a nation however requires a sense of nationhood. Colin Richards in his essay "About Face - Aspects of Art History and Identity in South African Visual Culture" maintains that "Ploughing the waves of sea is probably easier than finding common ground in conflicting nationalisms in South Africa" (1991: 104).

Richards quotes Albie Sachs on the subject as saying "we know what we struggle against .....But we don't know who we ourselves are. What does it mean to be a South African?" (op. cit.103) Sachs believes that culture and identity interweave, "Culture is a very deep thing. It's about who we are. It's what we mean when we say we are South Africans" (ibid.). Richards comments on nation building and observes that: "Notions of nation-building permeate cultural rhetoric across time and the political spectrum: from Mangaliso

(Robert) Sobukwe's pan africanism to the African National Congress (ANC) humanistic cultural pluralism, from F.W. de Klerk's "new" South Africa to Treurnicht's "old" South Africa" (ibid.).

Hence nationhood and cultural identities are also often framed within prevailing political and cultural ideologies. A specific ideology is discernable in a significant number of advertisements of the period that promoted a sense of nation building. While symbols of the "old" South Africa such as the flag and sporting emblems such as the Springbok were being reviewed, so elements of culture from South Africa's former marginalised cultures were used to create a sense of a new identity. At this juncture it is significant to note that when the general public were invited by the multi-party Negotiating Council (c.1993) to make submissions for the design for the "new" flag there was an apparent consensus about the need to create an alternative that was distinctly "African." Numerous submissions included the colours black, green and gold that were not only the party colours of the African National Congress (ANC) but also in part those of the opposition Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP). Commentators at the time agreed that these were colours that were "traditionally" African.

What constitutes "traditionally" African however presents a problem. According to Pieterse during the nineteenth century in popular novels, songs and images, the "Zulu" was frequently used to represent Africa or black people to British and other audiences. He explains that the British admired the Zulus as a "martial race" (1992: 104). However, in a society in which ethnicity had been used by the Apartheid State to "divide and rule" the majority, such stereotypical images were not acceptable. This was particularly so in a violent political environment in which the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) projected itself as a "traditional" Zulu cultural and political movement. According to Buntman, consequently the notion of Zulu ethnicity on a symbolic level was more likely to inspire emotion and strong opinion rather than to be an easily manipulated signifier available for the advertising agency's uses as it had in the past (1995: 16). Buntman maintains that much of the above explains why Bushman/San images were so attractive to advertisers in the late 1980's and early 1990's because "to the average viewer and consumer, Bushmen/San are largely uncontested and uncontroversial symbols of blackness and African-ness" (op. cit. 13).<sup>9</sup> It



should be borne in mind that, during the early 1990's, one of the controversial slogans of the Pan African Congress (PAC), was "One settler One Bullet" so it is significant that she goes on to say that:

"Bushmen evoke a Van der Postian, utopian and idyllic past, untouched by apartheid, development and industrialization. In the world represented by these advertisements South Africa can move from the Edenic world of the Bushman, where blackness, Africa, the environment and indigenous people are unthreatened; to a part-Western, part-African, post-apartheid multicultural society where all members of the population share common roots." (ibid.)

Both Buntman and Tomaselli maintain that the myth of the bushmen allowed consumers to embrace the idea of being part of black Africa and multi-racial South Africa without making the audience and consumer identify with other socio-political groups. Thus Buntman maintains that the "Bushman thus became available for nation (or company) building" (ibid.). An example of this is the logo for the South African Olympic bid in 1995 (*figure 5.10*). The superimposition convention used by the San to depict a number of hunters running together was copied by designers at Ogilvy & Mather from Patricia Vinnecombe's *Site B4* in the southern Drakensburg (Vinnecombe 1976: vii) (*figure 5.11 a*). In the logo design the figures have been reversed to create a sense of forward movement and the monochromatic figures have been rendered in the colours of the rainbow.<sup>10</sup> The San rock art theme has provided official sponsors of the team, such as Vodacom, with a number of related ideas to create an number of mainstream advertisements to promote their own products (*figure 5.11 b*).

It is significant to note that when the new logo was unveiled on the 17<sup>th</sup> November 1993 the National Olympic Committee of South Africa chairman, Sam Ramsamy stressed that the logo had nothing to do with the then "current national symbols furore nor did it compete for the protea" (*Daily News*, November 18, 1993: 5). It is equally revealing that the unveiling took place forty metres below the ground in a subterranean launch at the Wonder Cave near Kromdraai north of Johannesburg to the tune of the theme of Steven Spielberg's *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (ibid.). As will be discussed later in this chapter, the substitution of



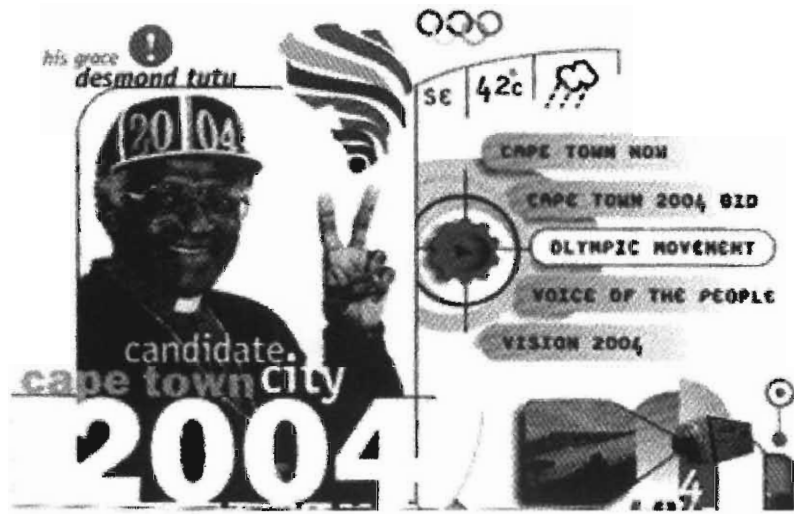


figure 5.12a



figure 5.12b



figure 5.13

indigenous culture with images and meanings created by Hollywood films continues to influence the quest for a South African identity.

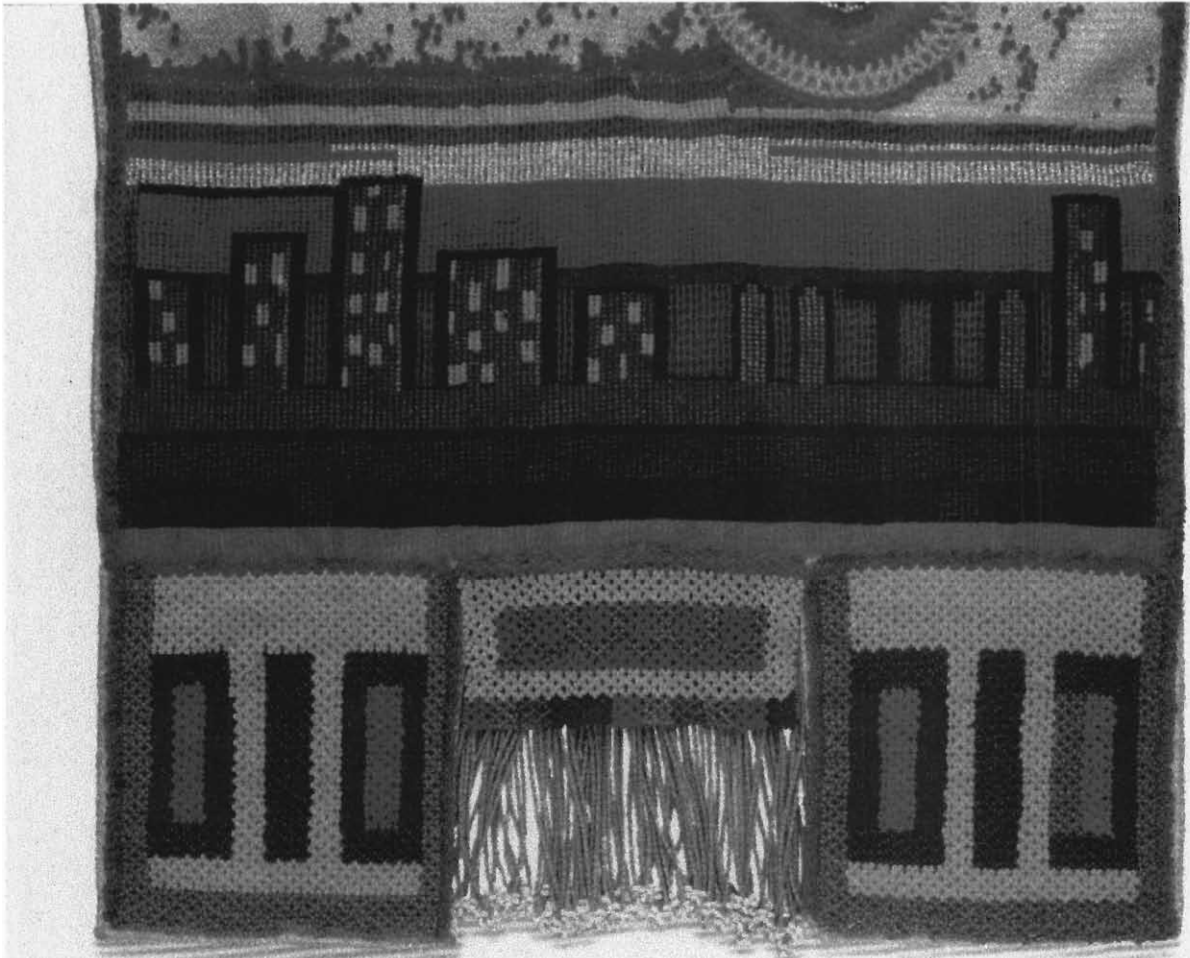
When the emphasis of South Africa's Olympic bid shifted to be promoted as an African bid during 1995, the logo was changed to a map of Africa in which the "rainbow" was transformed into the striations of a zebra pelt. In the process a well used signifier of Africa, the zebra skin, became the a symbol of the rainbow nation and Africa as a whole (*figure 5.12 a*). This logo was in fact based on one developed by Iaan Bekker at Lindsay-Smithers-FCB for the Johannesburg City Council's un-successful civil bid in 1993 (*figure 5.12 b*). According to Bekker the image of the continent and the colours were chosen to reflect

"all associations that I considered good ones as opposed to the idea of darkest Africa - which I think is a completely colonial and imperial throwback to previous centuries. I tried to depoliticise the whole approach and to concentrate on a purely physical reference to the continent."

(1994:7)<sup>11</sup>

Buntman's text draws attention to the fact that most of these images and advertisements are directed at what she describes as "the white élite" (1995: 12). Notwithstanding everything that Buntman has said about the dangers of advertisers using "ethnic" imagery it is significant to note that the mural painting and beadwork of a minority group, the Ndebele, also came to be widely used in South African advertising during this period (*figure 5.13*). Commenting upon the popularity of the "Ndebele style," Ivor Powell makes the point that "one is far more likely to see Ndebele designs in the suburbs of traditionally white cities than in the traditionally black townships" (1995: 138).

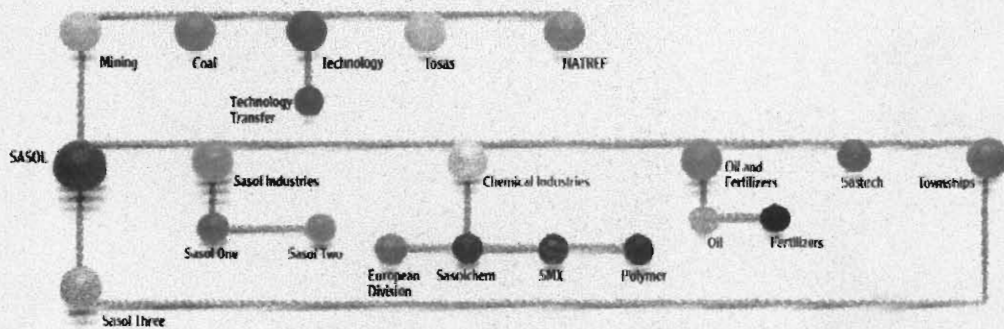
Schneider has pointed out that Ndebele mural painting developed as a part of the South African Tourist Bureau's promotion of a "tourist village" at KwaMsiza during the 1950's (Nettleton and Hammond-Tooke ed. 1989: 103-122). Beadwork, unlike wall paintings can be transported by the tourist and this undoubtedly facilitated the purchase and popularity of jocolos, mepotos etc. Inspired by the commercial possibilities of beadwork, Operation Hunger encouraged Ndebele women to produce saleable items during the 1980's. In this process older pieces were destroyed to make less tightly threaded contemporary pieces.



**A more resourceful future. Made in South Africa.**

Nowhere in the world is there a blueprint we can follow to realise our vision of a prosperous, revitalised South Africa. That's why we're working towards a marriage between the best of the industrialised world and the best of Africa. A marriage that will make this country unique.

In fact, our whole existence is based on this principle: developing advanced technologies for the down to earth realities of our country. Its resources, its needs, its people, its ecology. And its future.



**SASOL**  
 INTO THE FUTURE, RESOURCEFULLY.

HUNT LASCAPIE TBWA 005147

figure 5.14

Because of the subsequent demand these pieces show little detail other than a simple V-shape.

Stylistically these contemporary pieces tend to be more colourful than the traditional pieces in order to attract the attention of a purchaser and the predominant colours used are often those that the “new” flag designers recognised as being “traditionally African.” i.e. green, gold and black (*figure 5.14*). Hence according to Powell “the production of beadwork largely shifted away from its traditional forms towards the making of trinkets with a sufficiently “African” look to catch the eye of the casual tourist’s eye” (1995: 126). Thus the V-shape and “traditional” colours used by producers within the folk art (craft) niche to attract the attention of a consumer, influenced advertising designers within the design art niche to use it to not only attract attention but to acquire a sense of an African identity.

In this way the “ethnic” has become a commodity largely devoid of its original meaning that has been used by others for either political or commercial purposes. In fact what has been created is not “African” but rather a *mélange* that has resulted in a “pan African” identity. Hence “Ndebele-like” paintings are used to “decorate” litter bins in Durban in the heart of KwaZulu Natal. A global product with a strong American identity, Coca-Cola attempted to create a local identity by using a visual and verbal pun with their “Afri-can” using similar motifs (c.1996) (*figure 5.15*). This type of adornment has not only been limited to products and their promotion but has been placed on buildings. Significantly in an attempt at Africanisation the Neo-Classical buildings of the South African National Gallery (SANG) in Cape Town have been painted by Ndebele women. The logo for the SANG is a clear indication of how this in turn provides a series of post-colonialist, post-modernist opportunities for the graphic designer to merge Neo-Classical architectural form with an African identity (*figure 5.16*).<sup>12</sup>

It is significant that in 1997 in an article titled “Struggling to relate to Africa” in the *Mail and Guardian* (June 6 to 12 1997) Nkwenkwe Nkomo 1997 as a judge of the 1997 Loerie Awards is quoted by McCloy as describing advertisements which feature appropriated Ndebele design or a Basotho blanket as “bongo-bongo ads.” He goes on to say that “most local ads lack a South African identity” and journalist, McCloy agrees when he reports that



figure 5.15



figure 5.16



figure 5.17

although the standard of entries at “this years Loerie Awards was higher than in previous years” the view of many of the judges was that the “the advertising industry is still struggling to relate meaningfully to a multi-cultural society” (ibid.).

### **Technique and medium as signifier of identity**

Another signifier of an African identity that has been used widely is the medium of relief printing. Although certain materials and techniques may not be specific to a region it is how they are used within a culture that creates the sense of identity (Athavanker 1997: 2). Hence relief printing may be a global medium but the lino prints of John Muafangejo (1943-1987) and Azaria Mbatha (b.1941) are culturally different to those of Picasso (*figures 5.17*). Carving in Africa is a well established tradition and Steven Sack notes that in South Africa, as early as the 1920's, Tivenyanga Qwabe (b. c.1900) helped establish relief carving in burnt wood as a popular style (1988: 22). It was to this heritage that established white artists such as Cecil Skotnes (b.1926) were to look to express an African identity during the 1960's (Berman 1970: 18-19).

Trained at Rorke's Drift, both Muafangejo and Azaria Mbatha's work was born of economic necessity when one of the founders of the art centre at Rorke's Drift, Ulla Gowenius insisted that 'usefulness' should inform all activities at the mission (ibid.) Hence according to Koloane the Rorke's Drift Centre was the first institution to give expression to the linoprint technique and this was particularly important because:

“the linoprint technique is one of the most accessible mediums available for artists living in the crowded social conditions of the townships. The technique does not require elaborate space facilities and sophisticated equipment. One of its primary virtues is that it can be executed in any place and at any time. It is this portable quality which enables the township artist to persevere (sic) in his creative experience.” (Koloane 1985: 76)

Unlike Skotnes's oeuvre Muafangejo and Mbatha's work is intended to be largely didactic. According to Orde Levinson, unlike the Cubist work of Picasso, the typographic elements in their work may be expressive but it is also meant to be read and universally understood (Levinson 1993: 330). It is significant that when Mbatha went into exile in Sweden his



© Chamber of Mines, Johannesburg, November 20 1988

*When the forces of nature created the richest goldfield on earth, they conspired to bury it deep in the earth's crust in narrow, broken seams. There they embedded in quartzite, one of the hardest and most abrasive rocks known to man.*

*The result is an underground environment unique in the mining world, with enormous rock pressures and rock temperatures well above those of the human body.*

### **MINING TOOLS HAVE COME A LONG WAY SINCE PICK AND SHOVEL**

*Unlocking our mineral wealth in these conditions demands the kind of innovative, multi-disciplined approach by engineers and scientists that has made South Africa a leader in deep level mining technology.*

*Ongoing rock engineering research using advanced seismic techniques and sophisticated computer programmes has revolutionised the design of mine layouts, the prediction and control of rockbursts and the support of excavations.*

*Custom-designed computer programmes also optimise mine ventilation and refrigeration systems, using chilled water and ice produced on a massive scale.*

*The latent energy in columns of water piped down shafts is harnessed to power mining equipment at the rock face, with significant environmental and cost benefits. Water-based emulsion rockdrills penetrate the rock faster and less noisily than pneumatic drills.*

*Every day, innovative technology is dedicated to making mining more efficient, healthier and – vitally important – safer.*

MINING. THE FOUNDATION OF OUR NATION.



figure 5.18a



*A scant five years after George Harrison's discovery of what turned out to be the world's richest goldfield, Johannesburg had burgeoned into the largest city in South Africa. New towns, Boksburg, Dalplan, Benoni, Germiston, Randfontein, Roodoors and Springs, owing their existence solely to the mining industry, emerged to the east and west.*

*Other mining towns followed: Carletonville, Dunder, Evander, Messina, Orkney, Odendaalsburg, Phalaborwa, Sillfontein, Virginia, Welkom, Westonaria, Witbank and many more. Perhaps 60 in all.*

### **TWO KILOMETRES DOWN, THEY'RE BUILDING THE SKYLINES OF TOMORROW**

*Institutions such as the University of the Witwatersrand and the South African Institute for Medical Research owe their existence to the mining industry, as do many of our roads, rail links, dams, schools, hospitals, clinics and major development schemes. The Richards Bay harbour and terminal, built at a cost of more than R1,2 billion, has brought new life and prosperity to that area.*

*No less than 13,5 per cent of the wealth generated in South Africa every year (GDP) and two thirds of its foreign currency earned by exports is directly attributable to the mining industry.*

*It benefits national development as it services by paying R4 000 million annually in taxes while the industry's present annual wage bill amounts to R8 000 million. And, as a buyer of goods and services, most of them of local origin, it spends more than R10 000 million every year.*

*Naturally, being an integral part of the mining industry, the Chamber of Mines is proud of the part the industry plays in South Africa's growth. Proud that it laid the foundations for the Industrial Revolution that changed the face of South Africa.*

*But most of all, proud of the fact that by going two kilometres underground every day, mining men are helping South Africa come out on top.*

MINING. THE FOUNDATION OF OUR NATION.



Chamber of Mines, Johannesburg, November 20 1988

figure 5.18b

work retained its culturally specific identity. The same could be said of the Namibian Muafangejo whose bold black and white images were used by the exiled African National Congress as backdrops for the “Release Nelson Mandela” concerts held at Wembley Stadium in London in 1988 and 1990. The fact that Muafangejo’s work is largely concerned with the specific traditional culture of his Owambo community, the Kwanyama, is incidental in that the requirement of the designers of the concert backdrop was for an African identity which was encapsulated in both the form and content of the work.

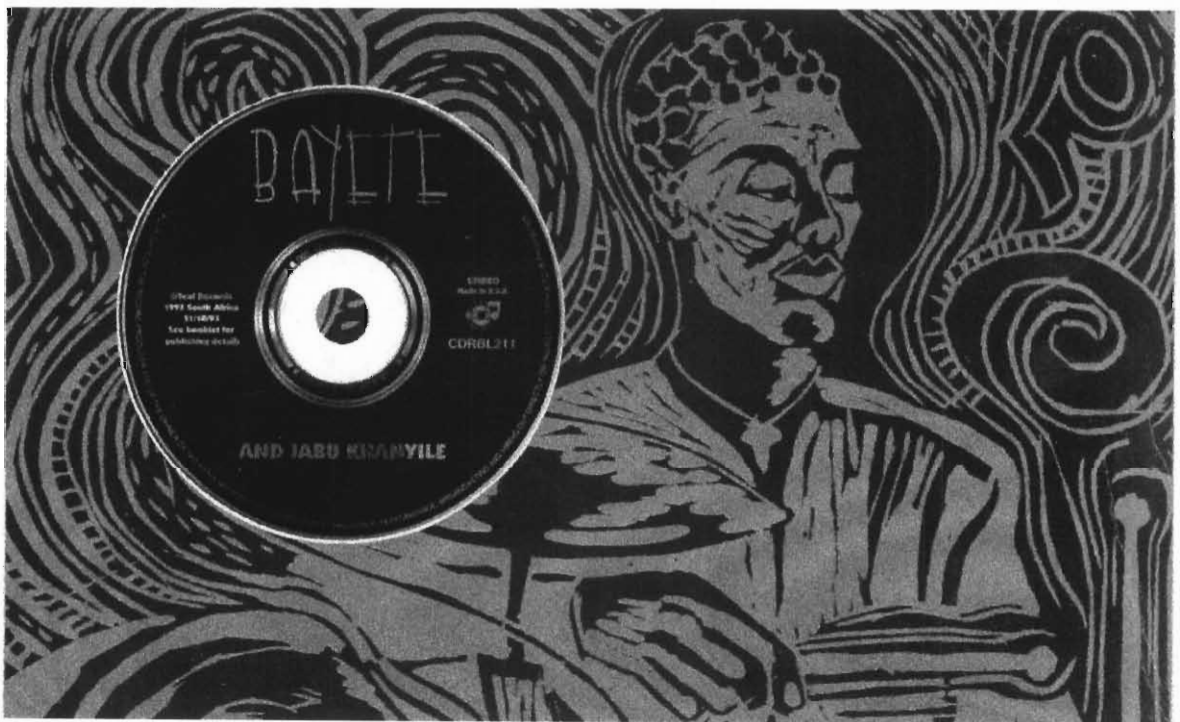
Significantly, in mainstream South African advertising at the time, a less radical set of images using the same technique were designed by Ogilvy & Mather, Rightford, Searle-Tripp and Makin for the Chamber of Mines. In a set of corporate advertisements that was published in the press during October and November 1989, graphic designer Riccardo Cappei was commissioned to prepare over two thousand wood-cuts for a short animated television advertisement (*figures 5.18 a & b*). In order to achieve the large number of prints required he produced a set of drawings which he then cut onto wood blocks with the assistance of requisite “black” students at the M.L. Sultan Technikon.<sup>13</sup> Significantly both workers and managers were rendered in what was perceived to be an “African” technique to create what appeared, at the time, to be an attempt at a new South African identity. A closer analysis of the images with their bold distortions and perspective emphasising the hands and machines of workers (and managers) is, however, reminiscent of the socialist spirit of the Mexican revolution in murals of Diego Rivera (1886-1957) and significantly, the posters and murals that Ben Shahn (1898-1969) produced for the Federal Arts project which has been described as representing a “capitalist-democratic realism” that portrayed the “proletarian-citizen set to work by Roosevelt’s New Deal” (Wood et al. 1993: 24) (*figure 5.19*).

It could be argued, therefore that what creates a new identity for the Chamber of Mines is a subtle reference to socialist-inspired murals emphasised by the expressive use of the “traditional” medium. This view is confirmed by the copy which has an ambiguous headline “Mining. The Foundation Of Our Nation” which, with hindsight can be recognised as an early example of corporate advertising promoting their own image and the notion of nation building. By 1994 the relief print was widely used to promote products as diverse as





*figure 5.19*



*figure 5.20a*

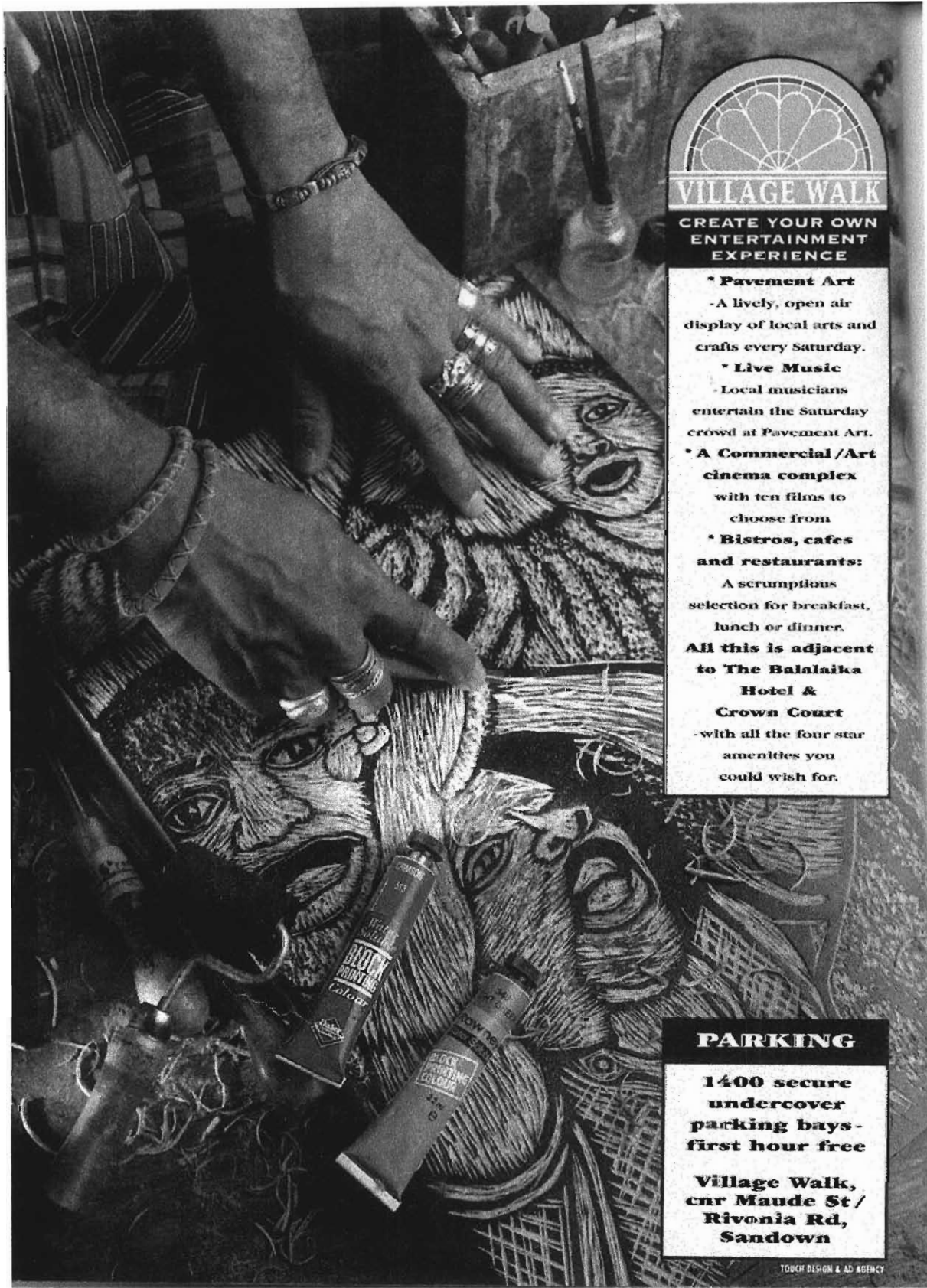
recorded music, and entertainment (*figures 5.20 a & b*).

### **The quest for identity since 1994**

Research for this dissertation began in 1994 the year of South Africa's first democratic elections. Inevitably events during the period 1994-1998 have helped shape the focus and content of this text; hence subtle shifts within society's attitudes towards what is considered to be art has been of interest, as has the transformation in the audience for both art and advertising. During this period unemployment, homelessness, illiteracy and crime levels have remained high, if not grown, in both rural and urban environments. A minority of black South Africans have benefited from post-election reforms and, partly due to this, a new middle class has emerged which has given rise to new markets. This has fuelled the current growth in "adspend" documented in Chapter One and is also reflected in the number of new agencies that have opened since 1994 most notably the agencies with a specific "black" identity such as Herdbouys.

Herdbouys was established by Peter Vundla in 1987 when he and four other Ogilvy & Mather employees broke away to form South Africa's first "black" advertising agency.<sup>14</sup> However the lack of education opportunities for black designers has meant that the vast majority of graphic and advertising designers in South Africa are still white although affirmative action and the awarding of important contracts on the basis of an integrated staff has forced many changes. One important contract awarded to Herdbouys was for a new identity for South African Airways (SAA). The controversy that surrounded this award raged at the bi-annual "Design Indaba" held in Cape Town during February 1997. Clearly at issue was not just the awarding of the contract on the basis of affirmative action but the issues surrounding the creation of a national and corporate identity for an airline that has to compete globally primarily as an African airline. The brief as described by Vundla was to position SAA as an "African airline but with an identity that inspires international confidence" (Vundla 1997).<sup>15</sup>

Public participation in the design was invited through the national press during 1995. Unbeknown to the South African public, however, an international design consultancy in New York, Landor Associates Designers & Consultants Ltd. were contracted by Herdbouys



**CREATE YOUR OWN ENTERTAINMENT EXPERIENCE**

- \* Pavement Art**  
-A lively, open air display of local arts and crafts every Saturday.
  - \* Live Music**  
-Local musicians entertain the Saturday crowd at Pavement Art.
  - \* A Commercial /Art cinema complex**  
with ten films to choose from
  - \* Bistros, cafes and restaurants:**  
A scrumptious selection for breakfast, lunch or dinner.
- All this is adjacent to The Balalaika Hotel & Crown Court**  
-with all the four star amenities you could wish for.

**PARKING**

**1400 secure undercover parking bays - first hour free**

**Village Walk,  
cnr Maude St /  
Rivonia Rd,  
Sandown**

TOUCH DESIGN & AD AGENCY

figure 5.20b

to “advise” the South African team of designers. The advertising design industry in South Africa was particularly angry at the “importation” of outside consultants.<sup>16</sup> Although the new corporate identity for SAA was not revealed at the Indaba, the design solution unveiled later in the year conventionally plays on the notion of the flag as the symbol of national identity (*figure 5.22*). In the process the new South African Airways livery is curiously similar to the “old” British Airways design and Garuda Indonesian (*figure 5.23*), both of which the international consultants, Landor & Associates designed (Steiner and Haas 1995: 188).

As already mentioned, by comparison, British Airways had launched itself as a “global” airline in 1997. This has as much to do with global marketing trends as it does with the global merging of financial interests and infrastructure to compete with national carriers throughout the world. BA has used 50 images representing different cultures from around the world to decorate 308 aircraft to “celebrate and unite the global village that BA serves.” ([www.british-airways.com](http://www.british-airways.com)) Significantly, South African culture is represented by three women from previously marginalised groups. Cg’oise Ntcox, of the Ncøakoe group/clan of the San is one (*figure 5.24*). “This design depicts seven jackals resting under trees and draws on the San’s prehistoric memories and mythology. Cg’oise is one of a group of a dozen or so artists who work at the Kuru Development Trust, an organisation of self development of the region’s San people. At the Trust they have been introduced to various techniques to keep alive their artistic tradition” (*Fair Lady*, August, 1997: 17).<sup>17</sup> The other tail (*figures 5.25 a & b*) is designed by two artists, Emmly and Martha Masanabo (no dates given) who are described on the British Airways website as representing the Ndebele people of Southern Africa: “highly respected artists in their village of Wolwekraal, in the Mpumalanga district, and their work is notable for its imaginative design and colour. They have produced one decorated panel each, using beadwork and mural-style painting in primary colours and dynamic patterns” ([www.british-airways.com](http://www.british-airways.com)).

The controversy surrounding aspects of the development of a new corporate identity for SAA provides a hint of the problems that confront South African designers in the struggle to establish a new identity during the post-apartheid era when politically there was a desire to cultivate cultural pluralism (‘unity in diversity’) and a “rainbow nation” fostered by the

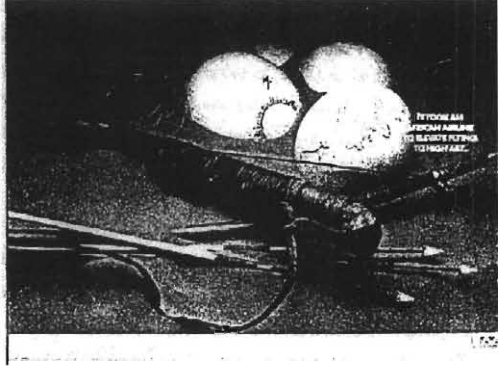


figure 5.21



figure 5.22



figure 5.23

Government of National Unity (Richards 1991: 104). The notion of “commonality” continues to inform attempts by advertising agencies in post-apartheid South Africa to find a series of common cultural and other denominators that are appropriate to use to address the “new” South African market. This has been the case since 1990 when, as quoted in the previous chapter, Green and Lascaris maintained that a new set of marketing criteria was required that “put the emphasis upon the things that joined us rather than the things that kept us apart” (1990: 35).

Difficult as it is to comment upon contemporary trends, perhaps cognisance should be taken of Said’s view that “when European culture finally began to take account of imperial ‘delusions and discoveries’ - in Benita Parry’s fine phrase for the Anglo-Indian cultural encounter - it did so not oppositionally but ironically, and with a desperate attempt at a new inclusiveness” (1994: 228). It could be argued that perhaps the same (desperate) attempt at a new inclusiveness is what has informed both art and advertising’s transition in South Africa over the past decade.

However, this transformation has been complicated by the fact that previous colonial governments and the Apartheid regime often used culture as a tool to divide rather than unite. As Colin Richards said in 1991 “within our borders the material and symbolic conditions for open exchange between black and white are effectively absent. We still know little about each other beyond the narrow roles history has cast for us” (1991: 104). The lack of “material and symbolic conditions” for open exchange between South Africans is still prevalent in 1998. This presents advertising designers with the challenge of selecting which images can be used to create a “new” sense of identity that will adequately reflect the transformations in politics, society and culture that have taken place since the first democratic elections of 1994. The period prior to the second set of elections in 1999 can be characterised, politically as one in which a growing trend towards an Africanist ethos is evident in many aspects of life (Mbeki 1996).<sup>18</sup>

Predicably this sense of identity is reflected in advertisements addressed to the majority of the market. To this end Ogilvy & Mather, Rightford Searle-Tripp and Makin use “super model” Naomi Campbell as “the newest member of the Sales House Club” (*figure 5.26*).



figure 5.24

A New **British Airways** for the New Millennium

We fly into the 21st century as an airline of people passionately committed to serving communities of the world, proud of our roots, but responsive to change.

We have travelled the globe in search of the ethnic and the Indigenous, the famous and the obscure to create a new global personality for the new era ahead.

Our revolutionary, new identity was launched June 10. To find out more, select from the menu below.




figure 5.25a



EMMLY MASANABO

MARTHA MASANABO

## Emmly and Martha Masanabo

Ndebele People, Southern Africa

The women of the Ndebele people of Southern Africa have developed a living art of remarkable ingenuity, richness and vitality. Every four years it is traditional for them to re-plaster the outside walls of their homes and paint on them bold geometric patterns, using images drawn from Ndebele beadwork, which features intricate designs in coloured beads. Twin sisters Emmly and Martha Masanabo are highly respected artists in their village of Wolwekraal, in the Mpumalanga district, and their work is notable for its imaginative design and colour. They have produced one decorated panel each, using beadwork and rural-style painting in primary colours and dynamic patterns.

figure 5.25b



In this campaign Africa is positioned in the global context. Hence the headline “My life has been a two million mile trip home” or the variation used on billboards: “Born London.....Birth Africa.” In this advertisement the sophisticated, internationally recognised model leans against a traditional African drum on the right hand side of the double page spread. On the left hand page the bark of a tree is used ambiguously to create a sense of natural fabric that echos the garment she wears. Golden browns and the hint of ethnic pattern on the drum signify Africa. In this manner both the model and the notion of Africa become *objects of desire*. The fashion photography and advertising layout echoes promotional images from Hollywood films or novels such as *King Solomon’s Mines* or as already mentioned, Sol Kerzner’s *Lost City* which according to Hall represents “Rider Haggard’s city of Sheba, or Wilber Smith’s Opet (sic.)”(Hall 1993: 38-39). Hence the regal pose of the “star” Campbell recalls images of the Queen of Sheba as informed by the Hollywood notion of Africa. In these terms Hall’s critique of the *Lost City* is instructive.

“(But) there is a dark side, a shadow to the benign magic of zebra chairs, designer toilet paper and leopard skin duvets. For the Africa of the *Lost City* is not the Africa of history - of West Africa’s kingdoms, Mapungubwe, the Shona city of Great Zimbabwe, the Swahili emporia of the East Coast, Nubia’s empires. It is rather the Africa of Europe’s colonial imagination - the dark, unchanging continent with no history of its own, a massive blank in the history of civilization that can only be filled by imagined invaders from the outside. (1993: 40)

In this advertisement one is able to observe how the shallow space of the fashion layout creates a void into which the advertiser can “invade” and create mythical messages. It is instructive to note that Ogilvy & Mather were presented with a Loerie Award in 1995 for a previous advertisement for “Sales House : Men of Africa” which featured the voice of local actor Henry Cele who had acted as Shaka in William C. Faure’s 1989 film *Shaka Zulu* (figure 5.27). In the television advertisement Cele’s voice-over echoes the deep voice of his character in the film. Thus aurally the persona of Shaka was infused into the advertisement. The subsequent print advertisements featured the signifiers that Hall refers to, animals and animal skins which are used to contrast with the sophisticated western clothing that the model wears. The hint of the ethnic in both these campaigns is significant for, as Preston-



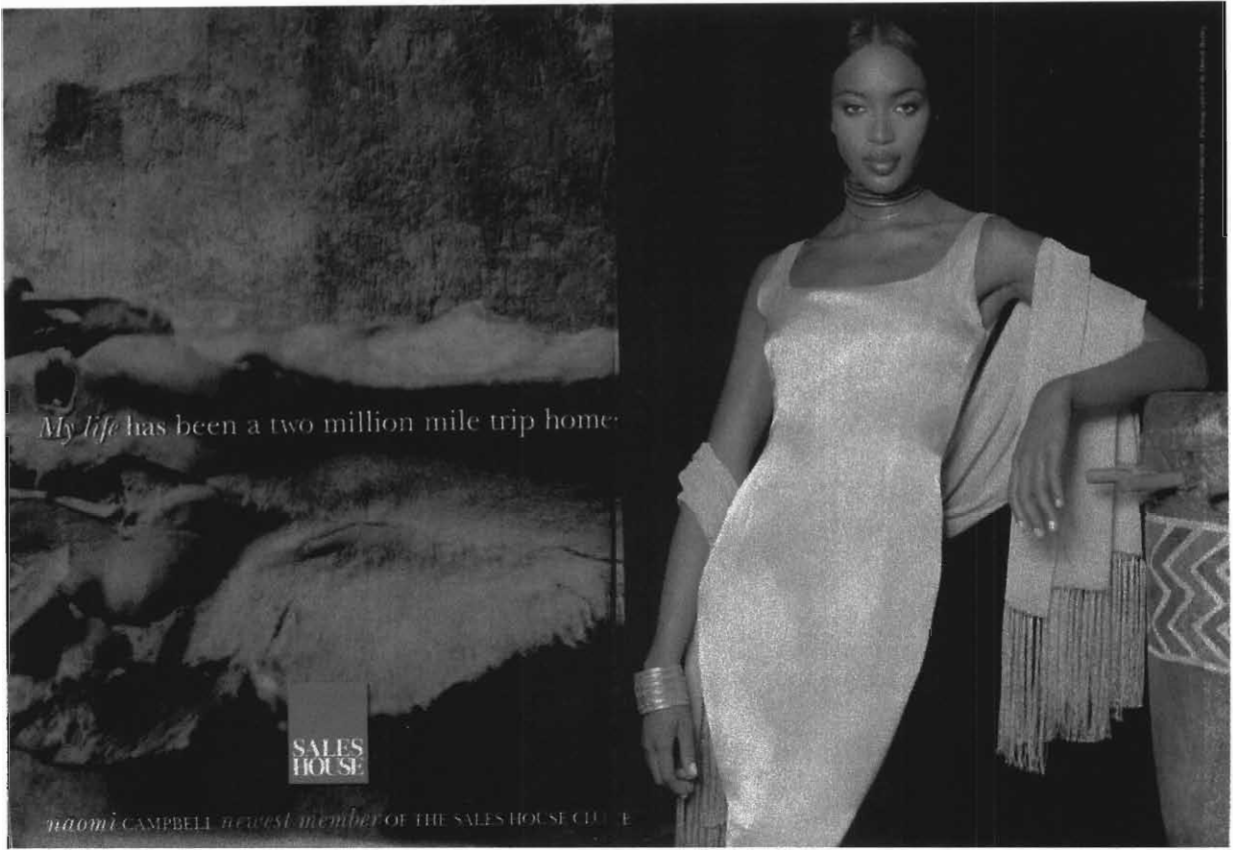


figure 5.26

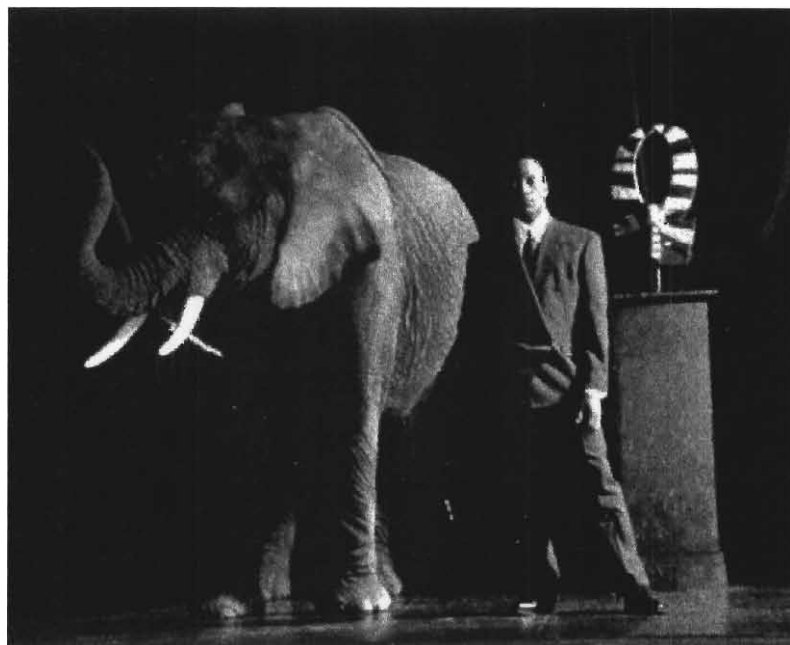


figure 5.27

Whyte and Thorpe point out “as a symbol the ethnic image is both powerful and multivocal” (1989: 124). They maintain that the ethnic links black people in a tangible fashion with cultural traditions which are no longer negatively perceived as they were during the colonial period, but are becoming the focus of both a local and a pan-African consciousness centred on change and liberation” (ibid.).

Garth Walker of Orange Juice Design which is affiliated to Ogilvy & Mather, the agency that made both Sales House advertisements had the opportunity to screen “Men of Africa” for a German audience of academics, students and designers at an advertising design conference at Potsdam during June 1998. According to Walker “they were shocked at the Fascism in the ad!” (personal interview with Walker, 1998). It is instructive to consider the views of an independent group of observers (especially with a formerly East German perspective) with respect to how the implicit chauvinism in such prize winning advertising is an indication of how various political ideologies still pervade a great deal of South African advertising. However given the Imperialist inspired advertising and promotions mentioned at the beginning of this chapter when, during the Boer War in 1901, reproductions of “The Relief of Ladysmith” by J.H. Bacon (no dates given) were offered “free to purchases of Bovril in Bottles” (*figure 5.6 a*), such an approach to advertising is not unusual in South Africa even a hundred years later.

Hence just as San culture was “emptied” of its original value and meaning for consumption by a predominantly white South African audience at the beginning of the decade so, at the end of the first four years of a democratic dispensation in South Africa, a specific notion of African culture can be observed to be subject to a similar process of “myth-making.” As a result a sense of a common South African identity remains as elusive as ever.

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## Notes

1. The rapid growth in the newspaper industry throughout South Africa is borne out by the number of publications that followed each other in rapid succession. *The Natal Witness* was published in 1846 and the following year the *Eastern Province Herald* appeared in Port

Elizabeth. *The Kerkebode*, the official mouthpiece of the Dutch Reformed Church was published in 1849. *The Friend* was published in Bloemfontein in 1850, in 1852 the *Natal Mercury* in Durban. The Cape Town based *The Cape Argus* and the Johannesburg *Star* followed in 1857 (Bryce 1990: 9).

2. This company was to become African Amalgamated Advertising Contractors (Afamel) which after a number of mergers was to be an important component of South Africa's sixth largest advertising agency, McCann Erickson with gross billings of R231 million during 1996 (*Adfocus* 1996: 26).

3. Barenblatt and Sinclair point out that the advertising industry did however establish the Association of Advertising Agents (AAA) during the 1930's. The AAA grew out of the advertising agents committee that was convened by the head of Cape Advertising Contractors, Stanley Ashmead-Bartlett c.1930 in Cape Town. These early meetings were attended by the head of each agency and were intended to sort out problems between agencies, act on behalf of the industry in matters of mutual interest and to promote professionalism. Committees were formed in all the main centres and when Bartlett moved to Johannesburg he transformed the local committee into the national executive of the AAA. The need for greater professionalism and to establish the position of agencies as principals of law, prompted the 1959/60 chairman, David Hart of Grant Advertising to establish the Association of Accredited Practitioners in Advertising (AAPA) (Barenblatt and Sinclair 1989: 20). The AAPA which has since reverted to its original acronym AAA, proposed that a joint body that represented the AAA and the media should be established to accredit agencies and on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1983 the Joint Accreditation Committee (JAC) took over the task of recognition. However since 1987, rulings by the Competitions Board have made this system of accreditation redundant and a free trade situation applies (op. cit. 23).

4. According to Bryce by 1912 as the newspaper groups had grown in status and size and consequently the proprietors had taken control of the NPU (Bryce 1990: 10). In 1912 the NPU resolved to make all the newspapers register their tariffs and to regulate the commissions payable to agents. It was agreed that a 15 percent commission and discount

was the maximum that was to be allowed. In reality this was not always strictly adhered to and by the 1980's the system was amended to enable a more flexible combination of fees and commission (ibid.).

5. This figure grew to thirty-one in 1965, three of whom were linked internationally. By 1988 the number of internationally linked agencies had risen to fifteen. In 1996 there were so many agencies and specialist studios that *Marketing Mix* chose only to list the "Top Thirty" twenty seven of whom were internationally linked (*Adfocus*, 1997).

6. Fine Art courses had been established over fifty years earlier. The Cape Town School of Art was established in 1880 with another in Port Elizabeth the following year. The Durban Art School was established in 1884 as an extension of drawing classes that had been established for railway draughtsmen. Graphic Design as a specific discipline was only established during the mid-1960's (personal interview with Andrews 1997).

7. Schudson points out that Socialist Realism was defined at the First Soviet Writers' Congress in 1934 and called upon the artist to present a "correct historically concrete representation of reality in its revolutionary development." According to Schudson, art was obliged to do so in a form that will educate "the working masses in the spirit of socialism" (1984: 214-215).

8. Nation Building had been proposed in the late 1980's by the editor of the *Sowetan*, Aggrey Klaaste as a non-governmental, self help exercise (Green and Lascaris 1990: 187).

9. In 1992 the Director of the Centre for Cultural and Media Studies at the University of Natal, Keyan Tomaselli made similar points in a paper *The Post-Apartheid era: The San As Bridge Between Past and Present* which he presented at the "Eyes Across the Water-Visual Sociology and Anthropology Conference in Amsterdam (1992). Subsequently he edited an edition of *Critical Arts*, "Recuperating the San" which focussed upon how the "new" South Africa has recuperated a different, affirmative image of the San in comparison

to the negative, prejudiced representation of “bushmen” previously popularised by pro-apartheid media” (1995: i). Buntman has also subsequently revised and expanded her 1994 text as *Selling with the San: Representations of Bushman People and Artefacts in South African Print Advertisements* published in *Visual Anthropology* (1996: 33-34).

10. The term “Rainbow Nation” suggesting unity in diversity was coined during the struggle by Desmond Tutu after protesters had been sprayed by the police with purple dye. During the transitional period the term came to be used by Archbishop Tutu to symbolize unity in the “new” nation. By the time of the Olympic bid the term had gained broad currency within South Africa.

11. A full interview with Bekker and a comprehensive display of the application of the Johannesburg bid identity is featured in the April 1994 edition of *Image and Text*.

12. It is interesting to note that when Durban architect, Roy Farren was commissioned to design a new electrical sub-station for the Berea, the newly elected City Council questioned the cost of his design and asked why he had not used “beadwork” (sic) to embellish the structure (personal interview with Farren, 1997).

13. Unfortunately Cappecci works and resides in New York so was unavailable for comment however, a colleague, Dennis Bronner supervised the print sessions and provided valuable facts and insights.

14. Many “black” M L Sultan Technikon graduates were employed by Herdbouys and before their acquisition by the international advertising agency Bates Wells in 1998, of the 56 employees over a half of the staff were non-white (personal interview with Vijay Archary, 1997).

15. SAA had already used the art and the material culture of the region to promote the company during 1991 when a series of press advertisements and calenders developed by

Lindsay Smithers declared that *It Took an African Airline To Elevate Flying to a Fine Art*. This advertisement represents an example of what Tomaselli (1995) had described as “recuperating the San” in order to create a new identity at the beginning of the decade. Buntman discusses this campaign in the same vein in her essay *Selling with the San* (1995 & 1996).

16. A number of issues surrounding the SAA project were raised by various members of the design industry during the plenary sessions of the 2nd International Design Indaba held at the BMW Pavilion, The Waterfront, Cape Town during 27-28 February 1997.

17. An interesting insight to this “use” of art is to be gained in a *Mail & Guardian* article that maintains that Cg’ose Ntcox was unhappy about only receiving seven cows for her work. The article alleges that the Kuru Development Trust “pocketed half of the BA fee (£1 900)” and David Hillman, a partner at the London design group Pentagram was quoted, in the same article, as saying that “it is not unusual for unknown illustrators to be ripped off” (*Mail & Guardian* July 17 to 23 1998).

18. This speech was delivered at a ceremony marking the acceptance of the new Constitution in 1996. The term “Africanism” is sometimes used with its sister phrase “African Renaissance” which Mbeki also championed in the same speech (Siluma 1997 in *Sunday Independent* October 1997 : 8).

## Chapter 6: Business and Art in South Africa

“With us, art can go so much further.” Standard Bank advertisement (Hunt Lascaris/SBSA 1996).

Although by strict definition sponsorship does not constitute direct advertising, it plays a very important role in the overall marketing strategy of many South African companies.<sup>1</sup> The association of goods and services with sponsorship of the arts not only creates goodwill but can be exploited in advertising. The advertising that surrounds Standard Bank’s sponsorship of the annual Standard Bank National Arts Festival, which was established in Grahamstown by the 1820 Settlers National Monument committee during the 1970’s, reflects a particular identity that is addressed to a niche market that supports events such as the Grahamstown Festival. (*figure 6. 1*) The Standard Bank not only supports this event but also sponsors the Standard Bank National Drawing Competition and in addition the Standard Bank Investment Corporation has expanded and ensured the growth of the University of the Witwatersrand’s African Art Collection which is housed in the Gertrude Posel Gallery (Berman 1994: 462). Another important commitment to the arts was the establishment of the Standard Bank Gallery in Johannesburg (*figure 6.2*).

McAllister maintains that many companies are attracted to “high culture’ sponsorship because “a large benefit that corporations receive from sponsorship is the link between the corporation and the corporation’s product and a noble referent system” (1996: 197). Sponsorship creates a tie between sponsor and sponsored, especially in cases such as the National Arts Festival, to minutely pervasive levels (op. cit.198). Hence the Standard Bank is not only perceived to be the sponsor of a “noble” event but the association with “high” culture is particularly valuable in that it establishes an image for the bank that can be exploited pervasively in its mainstream advertising. As mentioned in Chapter Four Pears Soap provided a prototype of this form of promotion with the “Bubbles” trade cards distributed to collectors for their scrapbooks. Close on a hundred years later the Standard Bank exploits similar positive associations with the arts in an advertisement for “Achiever Plan” (1993) (*figure 6.3*).

Standard Bank National Arts Festival

3-13 July 1997 Grahamstown South Africa Book at Computicket

A Project of the Grahamstown Foundation

figure 6.1



**Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist when he grows up.** (Pablo Picasso)

Parents: They'll tell you a thousand times to grow up. Get a real job, become an accountant, a doctor, be responsible, realistic. And just when your imaginary playmate looks for new lodgings, you realize that staying an artist is going to take more than just a healthy dose of creativity. It's going to take sponsors like Standard Bank.

to the development of the cultural life of today's South Africa. To this end we dedicate the Standard Bank Centre Gallery. So why not visit our Gallery today and bring out the artist in you. Standard Bank Centre Gallery, cnr. Simmonds and Frederick Streets. Enquiries: 011 636-4331.



With us, art can go so much further.

figure 6.2



It took a long time for me to turn my talent into something that provided more than just entertainment.

At the age of 29 this time has come my brother still looks in all fingers and thumbs, and I now have the finances at my disposal to ensure my future. That's in part thanks to a special bank account.

The future's secure. It's no easy account to qualify for, but with

**C major by 3.**  
Tchaikovsky by 8.  
Sibelius by 20.  
But I've  
only just become  
an achiever.

you need to earn a minimum of 2000 per month but if your bank manager gives you the okay, it's an

account and worth having.

You see, not only are my charges guaranteed up to 2000, but I have a revolving credit facility of R15 000 and receive a 100% bond on the first 20% of my home loan, with a 100% rate concession.

So now I'm able to buy my own house. Naturally I'll ensure there's a special bank account for my savings. Soundness, of course.



With us you can go so much further.

figure 6.3



In this advertisement the “artistic reward” of the artist, in this instance a musician, is associated with the rewards of investing with the Standard Bank account. The image of the violinist is bathed in a golden light in the manner of an “old master.” The product is thus subliminally linked with fine things and the achievement of pleasure. The copy reinforces this message “C major by 3. Tchaikovsky by 8. Soloist by 16. But I’ve only just become an achiever.” The implication is that Standard Bank’s product is part of the hierarchical progression in artistic and performance terms that values one form (of art) above another.

Up until the mid-nineteenth century architecture, painting and sculpture were the three principal visual arts of Europe and they flourished because they received substantial patronage from the most powerful and wealthy individuals, groups and institutions within European society (Walker 1983: 9). However, by the end of the millennium the situation is very different. Culture is no longer dominated by the fine arts but by the mass media. Similarly, the powerful institutions and individuals who previously acted as patrons of the arts have also shifted to some extent. They are no longer the church, monarchy, aristocracy, national or local government or organised guilds and it could be argued that a significant shift in the nature of patronage of the arts occurred during the first half of this century.

Within the new paradigm, Andy Warhol’s self promotion can be seen as a consequence of the desire, if not the need, for artists, especially the avant-garde, to promote themselves more effectively to the point where Tomkins describes the art of Warhol as “the art of publicity” (1982: 216). It is instructive to note however that Picasso was probably the first avant-garde artist during the twentieth century to use modern marketing techniques to promote himself and his work. It is equally important to note in the self promotion of the artist invariably other important interests such as gallery owners, publishing houses and even royalty are also involved. A case in point is when the Royal family of Monaco, the Grimaldis, offered the Grimaldi fortress in Antibes to Picasso as a studio after WW2. The fortress had been a halfhearted regional museum before the war and the curator offered it to Picasso in the hope “he might leave something behind” (Bernier 1991: 126). Picasso exploited the opportunity to allow Carpa to photograph him in his new studio with the Michelangelo sculptures in the Grimaldi collection (*figure 6.4*). Commercial use of the notion of the “masterpiece” to enhance the status of the product has been referred to with

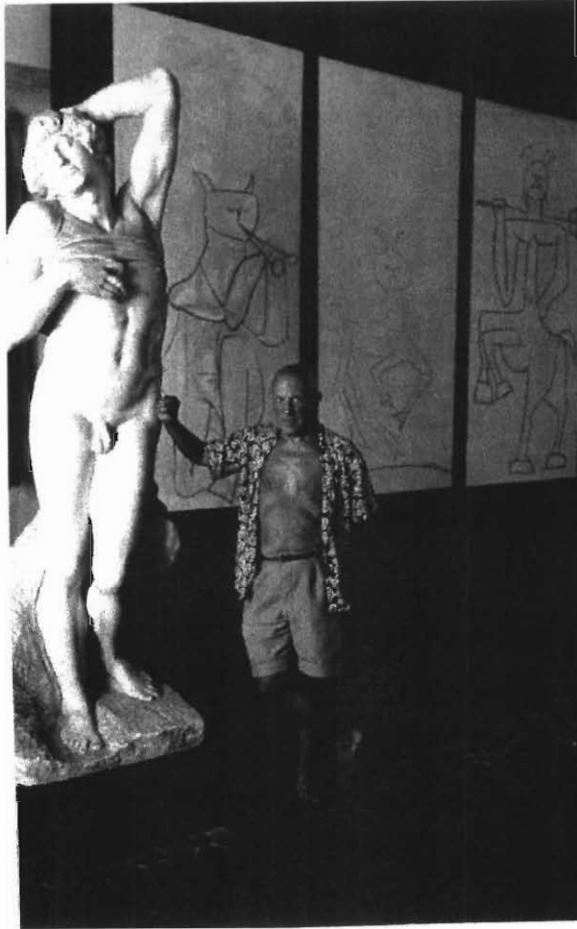


figure 6.4



figure 6.5

respect to the Standard Bank's "Achiever Plan" above, however Carpa's photograph of Picasso can be interpreted as a particularly subtle variation on the theme. Significantly, this and other photographs of Picasso relaxing on the beach with family and friends were distributed widely in the mass media at the time. In this particular photograph it can be observed how Picasso's large drawings in the background are equated with the grand scale of the "Dying Slave" of Michelangelo in the foreground. Indeed it could be argued that the relaxed Picasso with open shirt leaning against the Michelangelo subliminally equates Picasso the "modern master" with the work of a recognised master of the Italian Renaissance.<sup>2</sup>

Warhol used a more complex set of techniques when he surrounded himself with the rich and famous at his "factory" during the 1960's. These images were published in book, magazine and movie forms. Hence the celebrities that came to bask in the glory of the artist became the subject of his paintings and movies and in turn enhanced the celebrity of Warhol and his work. In doing so, he not only contributed to the commodification of art and its producer but, paved the way for him to epitomise both the artist and the "product" as a commodity. (*figure 6.5*)<sup>3</sup>

### **Fine Art as Popular Art**

While an important aspect of this dissertation is the notion of "high" or Fine Art having functioned as a commodity for over one hundred and fifty years, yet still retaining a certain aura or value it must be recognised that it was artists such as Warhol and the advent of Pop art during the 1960's that brought about a blurring of the distinction. In fact, Pop Art as the name indicates was a popular movement that heightened the perception of arts as commodity (Mamiya 1992: 133). Mamiya contends that artists in the Pop movement "appropriated the mentality that was fundamental to mass production and utilized the strategies that had brought about corporate dominance. In this manner, Pop art did more than reflect consumer culture - it brought about a realignment of the cultural community so that it was more consistent with corporate models, and in so doing, it contributed to a validation of that very system"(op. cit.15).

It is common to find specialist Fine Art magazines such as *Ventilator* or *Art News* publishing

# GOODMAN GALLERY

LEADERS IN CONTEMPORARY SOUTH AFRICAN ART



LOWY/CATHERINE - SEQUOIA - 1A, 512 CHESHAM ROAD W 112 201 1290

## FORTHCOMING EXHIBITIONS:

NORMAN CATHERINE

RECENT WORKS IN VARIOUS MEDIA - 17<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER TO 8 OCTOBER

WILLIAM KENTRIDGE

"FELIX IN EXILE" - 15<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER TO 5 NOVEMBER

WILLIE BESTER & ZWELETHU MTETHWA

"IN OUR LAND" - 12<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER TO 26 NOVEMBER

### GOODMAN GALLERY

2b Hyde Square, Hyde Park, Sydney 2106  
Tel: 61 11 728 11 12/4, Fax: 61 11 720 5887  
Gallery Hours: 11:00 - 7:00  
Thursday to Saturday

*figure 6.6*



*figure 6.7*

interviews with artists with the intention of promoting their ideas and work. These articles are often accompanied by advertisements from galleries that promote the artists that they “represent” in ways that are not dissimilar to consumer advertising (*figure 6.6*). A recent development is the establishment of web-sites such as *www.culturbox*, which features the art and views of South African artists such as William Kentridge (b.1955) for promotional purposes. (*www. kulturbox. views de/univers/doc/kentr/s-kentr.htm*)

Hobsbawn maintains that it is ironic that avant-garde art lends itself so readily to be used in mass culture; specifically advertising (1994: 181). The accumulative effect has been that art has become “popular” and “fashionable” over the past forty years. In addition Hewison is of the opinion that during the late 1950's there was a clear need to find a way out of the cultural stalemate that matched the ideological and military stalemate of the Cold War:

“Both capitalism and communism seemed to have produced authoritarian, hierarchical, bureaucratic and intellectually alienating systems, with mass destruction the bleak concomitant of mass production. The old cultural models seemed worn out, and ways were sought to subvert the established categories that enforced conformity. (1986: 45)

Some have argued that with the advent of the Pop movement the era of the avant-garde artist, isolated from society, had ended. According to Hewison, with the Pop movement the avant-garde became affirmative and “affirmation propounded by the avant-garde is rare.” (op. cit. 4) Significantly less conservative domains such as rock and roll music and its promotional products became a vehicle for the promotion of Fine Art as a Popular Art form when well established Fine Artists such as Peter Blake designed the cover of *Sgt. Peppers Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967) for the Beatles, while Richard Hamilton created the “individually numbered” *White Album* cover and collage insert for them in 1968 in order to extend the notion of the “limited” edition into the Popular Art (music) context. Further, the act of designing a minimalist white square as an album cover was an audacious act, especially so in an industry that required images of the performer on the cover in order for the consumer to recognise the product. I would contend that during the 1960's the involvement of fine artists in popular music promotion is a significant example of art's engagement in the marketing process.

The involvement of artists in design for popular music has continued unabated over the past thirty years, but in South Africa, until recently, very little money was invested by the South African music industry in promoting South African artists. However, as with business support for the fine arts, the lack of support for South African musicians has recently shown encouraging signs of being reversed. A relevant case in point is Mango Groove's video for their song *Another Country* (1995) in which the animated drawings of William Kentridge are used. As a group of performers, Mango Groove have come to represent a cultural crossover of African and euro-centric musical forms. Curiously *Another Country* is performed as a celebration of the "new" country animated by Kentridge's brooding images. *Stephen's Ink* (1994) which is the focus of the video shows a street in Johannesburg streaming with protesters and this work relates to the period c.1990-1991 when mass processions were legalised. (figure 6.7)

Subsequent images of violence that accompanied the IFP march on the ANC headquarters at Shell House in Johannesburg in 1994 had caused a degree of unease amongst many South Africans (Spiro in Greers 1997: 37). However in the video the empty billboard on the side of the building, located just off centre is used as a screen to project the filmed image of the lead singer, Claire Johnston singing lyrics of re-assurance in the "new" nation. In doing so this example of a Popular Art form captures the paradox implicit in much of Kentridge's Fine Art work in a way that remains essentially faithful to his original intention. In his own words Kentridge has maintained that he is interested in:

"the way in which history disappears, how disremembering happens, particularly the South African landscape around Johannesburg which is nondescript, which owes all its features to events and to people on them (sic) rather a landscape that is given shape by mountains rivers and gorges. It is an entirely social landscape." (Kentridge 1994)

In this video one observes how art that might be seen as relatively inaccessible to most South Africans is used within the mass cultural context. Subsequently a drawing from *Stephen's Ink* has been purchased by Gencor for the Gencor Collection hence one can also see how the change of context does not necessarily detract from the original value of the artwork. The status of the original remains intact, it is as if the original image has been

“borrowed” for commercial purposes.

### **Business and art**

The examples of Picasso, Warhol and Kentridge are but few examples in which different interests become involved in promotion of fine artists as popular or design artists. Indeed the second half of this century, especially in the United States and Western Europe has witnessed the development of art as a “big business” and it could be argued that post-apartheid South Africa is experiencing the birth pangs of a similar trend. The growing tendency of business in South Africa to become involved in the promotion of art is but one aspect of this international development. After WW2 the United States experienced a significant growth in its economy, driven largely by consumer spending. By the late 1950's there was a significant growth in the number of Corporations in America. This dynamic growth promoted the need for the expansion of foreign markets. For South Africa this expansion occurred at a time when the colonial power, Britain, was adjusting to the post war reality that saw her demise as a world and colonial power. In part this explains why, during the late 1950's, American influence in South Africa became stronger. Geographically and climatically South Africa is similar to the US and this began to influence the nature of the architecture and the consumer products that were imported as well as the way of life as a whole. According to Green and Lascaris the merging of South African and American culture is best illustrated by the General Motors advertisement of the 1970's already mentioned in the previous chapter: “Braaivleis, rugby, sunny skies and Chevrolet” (1988: 38).

However, it should be recognised that the “Americanisation” of South African culture was not unique. It was part of an international trend that was spearheaded by the availability and popularity of American music and the influence of Hollywood movies. Inevitably, American marketing and advertising models and methods were to be influential in South Africa as well. According to Osborne, the growth of the large corporation and the popularisation of art described above occurred at the time of a significant change in the relationship between business and the arts in the United States (1966: 13). In 1966, August Heckscher, President Kennedy's National Advisor on the Arts, described the attitude of business towards the arts as traditionally hostile to cultural interests. He described business as being the source of

much ugliness (from smoking factories to glaring billboards) which mark the public scene. However he noted a new phase in the relationship and he attributes the change in attitude to the fact that:

“The arts are no longer the concern of the few but are sought after and in one way or another are enjoyed by a growing majority of the people. Business interests awake to their own involvement in this strange cultural ferment. The arts in their various forms comprise a vast market to be exploited.” (Heckscher in Osborne 1996: 13)

As previously noted the context in which the merging of high and low culture occurred resulted in the celebration of Pop Art which contributed to the “growth in enjoyment by the majority of the people” that Heckscher referred to in his article. However Heckscher goes on to refer to the philosophy of the lawyer-economist, Adolf A. Berle, whose contention was that the corporation was a social organisation, concerned with its own survival and continuity and therefore inevitably concerned with the overall environment within which it operates. According to Heckscher writing in 1966 this view was “accepted by virtually all the managers of the great corporations”. This is the philosophy that has an echo in the Business Arts South Africa (BASA) initiative that was launched by the South African government some thirty-one years later in 1997. Encouraged by tax incentives to philanthropic enterprises, and non-profit arts institutions falling into this category, companies in the United States began to consider seriously the maintenance of a favourable atmosphere in the broader social sense as a legitimate purpose for the expenditure of funds. (ibid.) Significantly, in South Africa, one of the main aims of the newly established BASA is to act as a conduit for representations regarding tax incentives to government (BASA 1997).

### **The Power of Art**

During the Renaissance, secular interests - significantly banking interests such as the Medici, realised the power of art. The Catholic Church overtly used art as a propaganda tool during the Reformation and recent history in South Africa witnessed the political use of art as a “cultural weapon” in the struggle against apartheid.



It must be recognised that, besides direct contributions such as the Nedbank Arts Trust which is administered by the Bartel Arts Trust (BAT) in Durban, corporations act as patrons of the arts in the traditional sense of the word. They commission architects to design architectural “statements” and purchase art for their offices. What is of particular interest however, is the way in which this patronage can be used to promote the commercial interests of the company. An early example of this is an advertisement in the early 1970's for Trust Bank which prominently featured their Mies v.d.Rohe inspired head office building in Johannesburg. The “Banking will never be the same again” (1972) campaign (*figure 6.8*) was aimed at creating an image of a modern bank far removed from the staid, traditional image of other banks.<sup>4</sup> The modernity of a pure glass building signified what the copy claimed for the Trust Bank as a “modern” and therefore a “progressive” bank.

The thrust of their advertising campaign featured the black glass monolith of their head office and interestingly this not only echos the image of the Frigidaire in the previous chapter but also refers to the image of the black monolith that Stanley Kubrick used as a symbol of enlightenment in his futuristic film *2001 a Space Odyssey* which had been released in 1968. Although Kubrick's film is sceptical about the power of technology the overall image of *2001* was one that, paradoxically, emphasised the efficiency of technology. As previously discussed the notion of the benefits of technological advance and the ideology of modernism were exploited by manufacturers earlier in the century. Though the term “modernism” is loaded with many meanings an important meaning is one in which “between the wars it became the badge of those who wanted to prove that they were both cultured and up to date” (Hobsbawm 1994: 184). Undoubtedly the desire to prove that they were “cultured” and “up to date” is a factor that has influenced many business people to become sponsors of the “modern” arts.

### **Business and Arts South Africa (BASA)**

In September 1996 Colin Tweedie, the Director General of the Association for Business Sponsorship of the Arts (ABSA) in Britain visited South Africa to advise the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology which had invited him, to report on the feasibility of forming Business and Arts South Africa (BASA). (personal interview with Brown 1997)<sup>5</sup> Drawing heavily on Tweedie's recommendations Business Arts South Africa (BASA) was

**THE TRUST BANK**

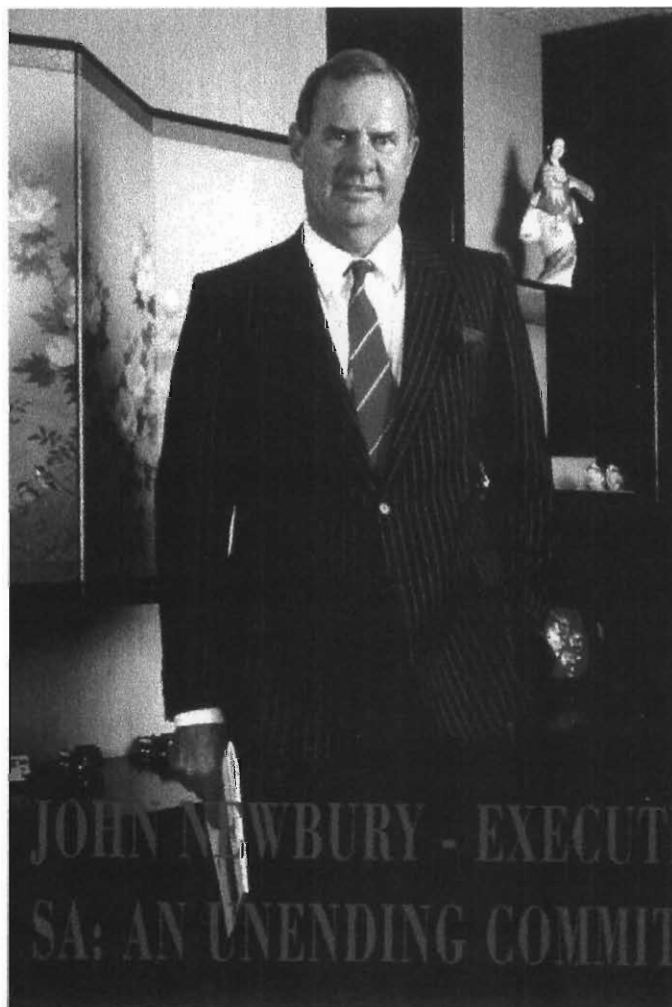
A smile and a handshake and suddenly you know the difference. Suddenly you are surrounded by all that's best in modern banking. At The Trust Bank they buried yesterday - yesterday. Today you enjoy the advantages of full-service one-stop banking. Of fresh thinking and new ideas. Of security and solid, sound advice. Of convenience and fast, efficient service. Nothing stops you from bringing your account to The Trust Bank right now. You won't fill in the forms - we will. And it'll be the last change you make.



**Banking will never be the same again.**



*figure 6.8*



*figure 6.9*

launched by the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology in 1997 with the Deputy President Thabo Mbeki as its Patron. Openly modelled along similar lines to its counterparts in the United States of America (Business Committee for the Arts), Great Britain (Association for Business Sponsorship of the Arts) and Japan (Association for Corporate Support of the Arts in Japan) BASA has been formed “To promote and to encourage sustainable partnerships between the private sector and the arts, to their mutual benefit and to that of the community at large” (BASA 1997: 1).

Unlike its British and American precedents which were established by corporate and commercial interests, the South African initiative is driven by Government. In post-apartheid South Africa the government has a clear motive for wanting to encourage a marriage between art/culture and business interests. During the early part of this decade cultural activists argued that the Apartheid regime had used the tax base of the entire nation to sponsor the cultural interests of a minority group in subsidising the various provincial Performing Arts Councils (PAC's) and the visual arts institutions. Various groups convened meetings and conferences that finally resulted in the formation of the National Arts Coalition in 1993 which became the basis of the Arts and Culture Action Group (ACTAG) which was appointed by government soon after the national elections in 1994 to advise on the state of arts and culture in South Africa (Frost 1997: 5). Representations and recommendations by ACTAG and other interested parties to Government became the draft for the Arts, Culture and Heritage White Paper (1996) which formally proposed, amongst other things, that the private sector should be encouraged to support the arts.<sup>6</sup>

In the meantime, as a consequence of much of the criticism, many symphony orchestras, ballet and opera companies came under fire not only for financial reasons but also for their alleged “eurocentric” cultural bias. As a result, business interests have been called upon to fill the vacuum. In the interim, State and municipal subsidies to the arts in general have been cut and government clearly sees business involvement as a panacea for the lack of public funding. Increasingly, the museums and municipal art galleries in South Africa have been subjected to the same forces; financial and cultural. The cuts in funding have severely restricted the capacity of the museums and galleries to acquire new works and Geers has noted that this occurs at a time when “current collecting policies of South African museums

are influenced by the fact that they have historically neglected to acquire works by some of our most important black artists, which as a result are now both rare and expensive” (1997: 10).

According to the Director of the Durban Art Gallery (DAG), Carol Brown, there is a need for museums and galleries to approach business and wealthy individuals to become involved in acquisitions and support (personal interview with Brown 1997). To this end the French beverage company Pernod Ricard donated a sculpture by Jeremy Wafer to the DAG and has subsequently undertaken to provide cocktails at all exhibition openings.<sup>7</sup> If one is to consider the number of sponsored exhibitions held at the Durban Art Gallery over the past two years one can see that there is already a clear and growing trend towards obtaining funds from different sources. For example, Andrew Verster’s retrospective at the DAG in August 1997 was sponsored by a number of interests viz. Standard Bank, McCarthy Retail and BASA.

Significantly, during the period 1996/97, a number of exhibitions held at the Durban Art Gallery were sponsored by foreign governments via agencies such as the British Council, Alliance Francaise and US Information Service. In this way the intertwining of art and commerce (and foreign government policy) is about to become a way of life for cultural and art workers in South Africa. Further evidence of this is, the Standard Bank International Economic Benefits of Arts and Culture conference convened in Grahamstown during 1997 which Brown describes as: “ground-breaking talks.... with delegates from community art centres academic and state organisations.....and a lesser but nevertheless important number from the business sector” (Brown 1997). However as already noted, Marilyn Martin, the Director of the South African National Gallery, maintains that “sponsorship money is nervous money, they don’t like controversy” and her view implies the danger of corporate (and foreign government) interests only approving support for what they perceive to be “uncontroversial” exhibitions and publications.

### **The Benefits to Business**

If Shorris is correct and to the powerful “art has no value only uses” then under the heading The “Benefits to business” some of these uses become clearer in the BASA launch brochure

when the capacity of the arts and culture to “regenerate the inner city is highlighted.” In a crime-ridden South Africa the prospect of a vibrant, attractive central business district (CBD) presents business with a special incentive to encourage cultural activities. Culturally vibrant city centres are also viewed by BASA as essential to the growth of tourism which in turn offers many opportunities for business.

“SATOUR has declared 1997 the start of a three year campaign to market the country to international tourists through vibrant and diverse arts and culture of South Africa. The era of the arts being regarded as an area for charitable donations is over, there are now increasingly sound business reasons for the arts and business to enjoy mutually beneficial partnerships.”  
(BASA 1997)

Significantly, listed thereafter under the “Benefits to business” is “more specifically, benefits to businesses that sponsor the arts include an enhanced capacity to pursue high profile marketing strategies. The arts have been effectively used to brand commodities and for corporate image building” (ibid). It has already been observed how effectively Standard Bank has exploited this benefit.<sup>8</sup>

At the Standard Bank International Conference on Economic Benefits of Arts and Culture (1997) this theme was repeated by a number of delegates who noted that “a society cannot be healthy or viable without culture” (Brown: *Sunday Tribune*, 3<sup>rd</sup> August, 1997: 16). During the 1960's the majority of US corporate heads had accepted Berle's theory that business interests can only thrive in communities that are peaceful, healthy and prosperous. In a South Africa that is in the process of transformation from a violent past to an uncertain future this vision is more than just a commercial concern. Implicit in the call for art sponsorship in South Africa is, a merging of political and commercial interests. A vision in which art and culture becomes an exploitable commodity not only for advertising but also for social engineering, nation building and tourism promotion is described as “A thriving artistic and cultural life is a crucial component of any democracy. It is through arts and culture that South Africa will develop a sense of nationhood” (BASA: 1997. “The Benefits to Business”).

In common with the published aims of the BASA the aim of the American BCA was to encourage corporations to support the arts and guide them in that effort. To this end, a booklet produced by the BCA in 1986 entitled *Involving The Arts in Advertising: A Business Strategy* described three ways of business becoming involved with the arts. The first was “Underwriting arts exhibitions and programs and supporting the catalogues, programs, and advertising that accompanied them.” Recent sponsorship of exhibitions at the Durban Art Gallery confirm that this has already begun.<sup>9</sup> The second item listed in BASA document is the “Sponsoring (of) public service advertising for arts institutions and handling the placement in the appropriate media” (ibid.). However the third “strategy” is the most significant in that it draws the attention of Business to the benefit of, “Making use of the arts in advertising the company’s own products and services.” As explained The Standard Bank’s involvement in the sponsorship of the National Arts Festival is an example of how profitable and effective this strategy can be.

During the 1960's US business practice had a great influence in South Africa and it is not inconceivable that many bankers and business leaders would try to emulate their US colleagues. The Florentine patrons, the Medici, were bankers and it is significant that, in South Africa, banking and related insurance companies in particular, e.g. Volkskas, Sanlam, Standard Bank and AA Mutual Life seem to enjoy the role of patrons. According to Margolin many business leaders in the United States, in public speeches over the years, compared themselves to the Medicis. For example, he quotes Willard Butcher, then Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Chase Manhattan Bank Corporation, as referring to his colleagues on a national arts and humanities committee in 1986 as “Corporate Doges” (1992: 195).

### **Corporate Art Collections**

In South Africa during the 1960s the tobacco giant, Rembrandt van Rijn, no doubt capitalising on the company’s namesake whose image is carried on its products began to assemble large collections to be followed by other patrons such as Mining Houses and Insurance Companies. Ironically they may find that their art “investments” have outperformed their other investments as has been rumoured to be the case with the Chase Manhattan Bank Collection. Clearly, the investment value of art should not be overlooked

as a motive for the establishment of prestigious collections. Margolin explains that “the purchase of art as an investment is something that a business person can understand, particularly since the function of art objects as economic tokens is now a widely accepted part of the art market. The buyer need not be a connoisseur as much as a shrewd investor who can anticipate the future value of a work of art” (op. cit. 201).

Hence the possession of a valuable artwork or artefact “becomes a metaphor for recognising a good investment opportunity” (ibid.). Consequently it is interesting to observe the number of times that when a Managing Director (MD) or Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of a company appears on television or in a magazine, invariably, they are interviewed or photographed in their offices with a painting behind them or with a sculpture on their desk. In the portrait of John Newbury the Executive Chairman of Nissan (SA) which accompanied an article that celebrated his achievement in winning the Institute of Marketing Management (IMM) Marketing Person of the Year in 1993 he stands in front of an oriental screen surrounded by Japanese figurines, ceramics and a number of models of the vehicles that Nissan manufactures (*figure 6. 9*).

The text acknowledges that “the award recognises his quest for the continual improvement of Nissan SA since he took the helm just over ten years ago. This improvement is explained in the mission statement of the Japanese Kaizen philosophy” (*Marketing Mix* November/December 1993: 47). Kaizen is described as a philosophy which “means making small, consistent improvements, or doing it right the first time and better the second” and the article maintains that “it is easy to visualize the larger-than-life personality of John Newbury, personally articulating the company philosophy” which has “translated to bottom-line results and has been clearly felt in the market” (ibid.).

The inclusion of Japanese artefacts in the photograph provide a number of visual markers. They serve to link the South African subsidiary with the parent company in Japan in a subtle manner that not only represents a Japanese identity but the Kaizen philosophy which is used by Nissan SA to embody the “fine art” of manufacture in Japan. Hence the miniature vehicles on the left are equated with the ceramic miniatures on the right which visually signify the company’s mission which strives to aims to “supply high quality and good value

products.” In the context of the article the image of John Newbury, in a conservative pin strip suit represents not only the man who has “taken the company from survival mode in the mid-Eighties into a position of profitability and substantial market share in the early Nineties” but a man of taste and refinement.

In the Nissan SA example Japanese art works are useful in signifying a particular company loyalty and philosophy. However many other South African companies and subsidiaries use their art collections to signify a very different set of commitments in South Africa. In this context the “progressive” or “conservative” nature of the art collection can act as a signifier not only of personal taste but of a corporate commitment to political and social transformation. According to Spiro, who was the acting director of the Johannesburg Art Gallery when she served on the art committee that purchased work for the Gencor Collection, the Chairman, Brian Gilbertson, in spite of initially not always being comfortable with the committee’s selection, has, more recently “shown the collection to high-ranking colleagues from other major South African corporations and a tour of the collection is now a standard part of the agenda of international visitors to Gencor” (1997: 42).<sup>10</sup>

An early precedent for corporate support of the arts in South Africa is to be observed in the commitment of Anton Rupert’s tobacco giant, the Rembrandt van Rijn Corporation. According to Berman even “in the name - Rembrandt van Rijn - chosen for the corporation which he created projected his private predilection for the arts” (1994: 359). Company policy, internationally, was to direct a portion of its profits to the benefit of the community in which it operated and according to Berman in South Africa this policy was “given public expression in a country wide art competition, conceived in support of the 1960 Union Festival - the celebration of 50 years of Union.” This form of corporate support was assured of national coverage when selected works toured the country as “The Joy of Living.” Interestingly this title focuses upon the association of art and pleasure which is not far removed from the notion of “smoking pleasure” promoted in much of the Rembrandt Corporation’s subsequent advertising.

A precursor of visually exciting cigarette advertisements at the cinema were made by the Rembrandt Corporation when, according to Berman a series of short advertising films were



made to promote established local art. In 1964 the Rembrandt van Rijn Foundation was established with an exhibition site at Milner Park, Johannesburg where the Rand Easter Show was held annually. At this point it is important to note that although the Rembrandt Corporation is based in South Africa it has been a major international tobacco corporation since its inception. Hence it is likely changing attitudes to the sponsorship of the arts in the United States of America would not have been lost on its founder Dr Anton Rupert who according to Berman had, with his wife, already established an impressive private collection of South African art known as “The Rembrandt Collection” (ibid.).

The annual Rand Easter Show provided a high profile for both national and international art exhibitions which were also sponsored by Rembrandt to tour all the major centres ensuring national exposure and publicity for both the art and its sponsor. Subsequently the link between support of the arts and education became close when in 1980 the Rembrandt Foundation building at Milner Park was transferred as a gift to the University of the Witwatersrand Art Department two years after the inauguration of the University’s “African Tribal Art Collection” sponsored by the Standard Bank at the Gertrude Posel Gallery in 1978 (op. cit. 462).

Rembrandt was not the only South African corporation to recognise the benefits of associating its goods and services with the arts. During the 1960's the insurance and finance giant, Sanlam also used works of art selected from its collection to produce calendars. Sanlam’s use of the calendar as a promotional item began with the issue of calendars as part of a wider campaign by the National Road Safety Council (c.1967). According to Evelyn Cohen, who wrote the text for *Art Collection SANLAM Kunsversamelling*, “Sanlam embarked on its art collection almost by chance” (1993: xii).

“The then managing director, Dr A.D. Wassenaar, himself an art lover, suggested a calendar of reproductions of works by South African artists. Twelve artworks were duly borrowed and reproduced. The Sanlam calendar was a resounding success and to this day owners of the original calendars still treasure them as collector’s items.” (ibid)<sup>11</sup>

Thereafter, Dr Wassenaar began to assemble Sanlam’s own art collection. To this end

Sanlam was initially advised by F.L. Alexander, the art critic of *Die Burger*. One can surmise that the “element of chance” that Cohen refers to is that Sanlam soon realised that their clients enjoyed calendars illustrated by artworks rather than public spirited road safety campaigns. Art on calendars has a longer “shelf life” and significantly, Cohen goes so far as to describe them as “collector’s items.” Calendars with art works would also be more widely displayed than road safety campaigns and consequently the Sanlam logo would be given wide coverage in homes, offices, school rooms, libraries and in the company’s own banking halls.

In the South African context as previously described, the collection of art work by the premier Afrikaner banking interest (which was established in March 1918 specifically, to create an opportunity for Afrikaans speakers to become involved in the South African economy) would be influenced by other Afrikaner nationalist aspirations. The notion of national pride implicit in the term “our art” as in “our” land is value laden. A collection of cigarette cards issued by the United Tobacco Co. (South) Limited (c.1960) illustrates how the two notions can be merged (*figure 6.10 a & b*).

Collectable cards were a well established marketing device by 1960. Curiously, fine art reproductions had been used by Sunlight Soap at the end of the nineteenth century as a promotional item (Forty 1986: 76). *Our Land/Ons Land* (no dates given) features a series of one hundred drawings in colour by Charles E. Peers. An investigation of the images included in this collection reveals that, with few exceptions such as “Flower Sellers, Cape Town” and “Ricksha Boy,” Durban the only people shown in any significant numbers are Voortrekkers. For the most part the images are barren landscapes. The first image of “Table Mountain from Blaauwberg” is described as “The age-old mountain which has witnessed the passing of Diaz, da Gama, Drake and the landing of Jan van Riebeeck in 1652” (Anon. c.1960: 1). The style of the coloured drawings are in the “manner of” early J.H. Pierneef (1886-1957) or Hugo Naudé (1869-1941).

In an article titled “Tainted Landscapes” Hazel Friedman maintains that “South African landscape is to white Afrikaans culture what braaivleis and rugby are to its consumer culture” (1994: 26). She maintains that “As Afrikaners lost touch with the land through

urbanization and the Depression of the 1930's, so did the obsession with landscape grow. Painting it catered to the nostalgic need for consolation in the face of the traumas accompanying this rural exodus" (op. cit. 27). However landscape painting in South Africa, like the land itself, is a contested area. Friedman maintains that "landscape has become entangled with Afrikaner identity.....it has used the grammar of godliness to sanitise a vision of racial power" (op. cit. 26).

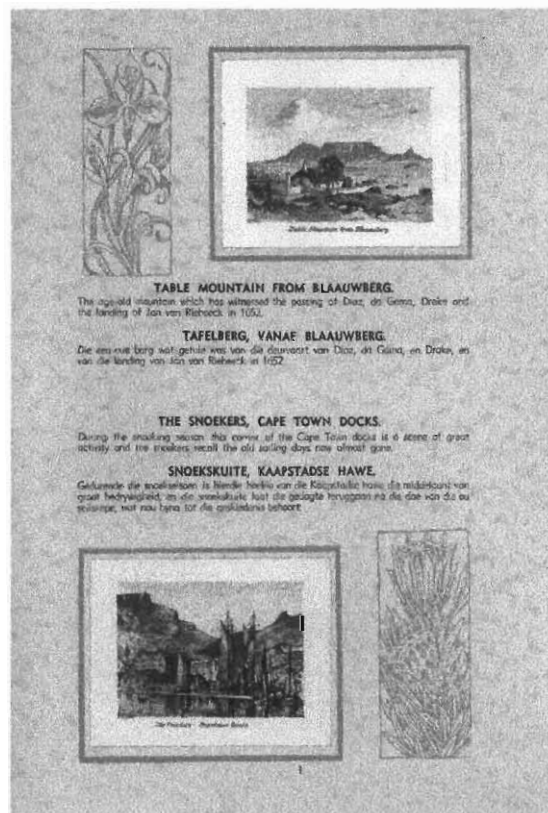
Carruthers and Arnold maintain that the Imperial vision is exemplified by the work of Thomas Baines (1820-1875) who portrayed the land as vacant to be possessed and controlled (Carruthers and Arnold 1995: 87). However Coetzee maintains that this ideology was perfected by Pierneef (1886-1957). When the South African Railways and Harbours commissioned him to paint thirty two panels for the newly built Johannesburg station in 1929 the responsibility for the advancement of tourism lay with them. According to Coetzee the panels were to serve a practical purpose and advertise the country in general (1992: 21). In an interview with Barry Ronge in the *Sunday Times* Coetzee maintains that the panels are "full of nothing but politics. They are not landscapes, they are culture-scapes. They were created according to a programme of Afrikaner nationalism" (ibid).

Coetzee comments on Pierneef's panels as speaking of the "possession and control" of the land which is a form of cultural imperialism in an artistic mode. Coetzee asserts that Pierneef uses similar motifs of uninhabited land to create a Afrikaner nationalist vision. Undoubtedly, in these panels Pierneef contributed to the establishment of a tradition of landscape painting in which space is used symbolically. It is significant to note that Adolf Jentsch (1888-1977) also painted desert scenes which are equally barren and timeless. According to Esmé Berman both these artists were in the vanguard of artists coming to terms with the African environment.<sup>12</sup> This is the imagined environment that has proved to be so attractive to South African advertisers who are afforded the opportunity to imprint upon it their own images and values (1984: 209).

In the *Sunday Times* article Barry Ronge pointed out that at the time of its planning, the Johannesburg station building for which the panels were made, was seen as the symbolic showpiece of the powerful mining industry. The mining industry went so far as to pressure



figure 6.10a & b



government of the time to “accept the enormous budget by insisting that one of the world’s foremost mining cities needed a fitting port of arrival and embarkation for tourists” (1992: 21) In this sense Pierneef’s work can thus be seen as the celebration of the economic might of the capitalist mining empire.

### **The Gencor Collection**

Sixty five years later (1994) these same mining interests, in the form of the mining conglomerate, Gencor Ltd. were to appoint Kendall Geers as an art consultant to assemble an art collection which, in the words of the Chairman, Brian Gilbertson was to “illuminate a great subject: the transition from the old South Africa into the new. This struck a chord, for Gencor was then undergoing its own transformation, from the traditional South African mining conglomerate to today’s focussed international mining company” (1997: 7).

Margolin maintains that in the United States:

“corporate art does not have a specific theme or style as did works sponsored by the Medicis and the Doges, whose values shaped form and content of the work they commissioned. Conversely, corporate sponsors, when they engage in public rhetoric about art, depend on art’s prior cultural value to legitimate themselves and their products.” (1992: 197)

However, in South Africa it can be argued that corporate patronage in South Africa has always gone beyond these confines. As mentioned with reference to the United Tobacco cigarette card collection, in South Africa patronage clearly has tended to have a political dimension. Tellingly, Gilbertson refers to the tranquil landscapes of the past when he writes in the Foreword:

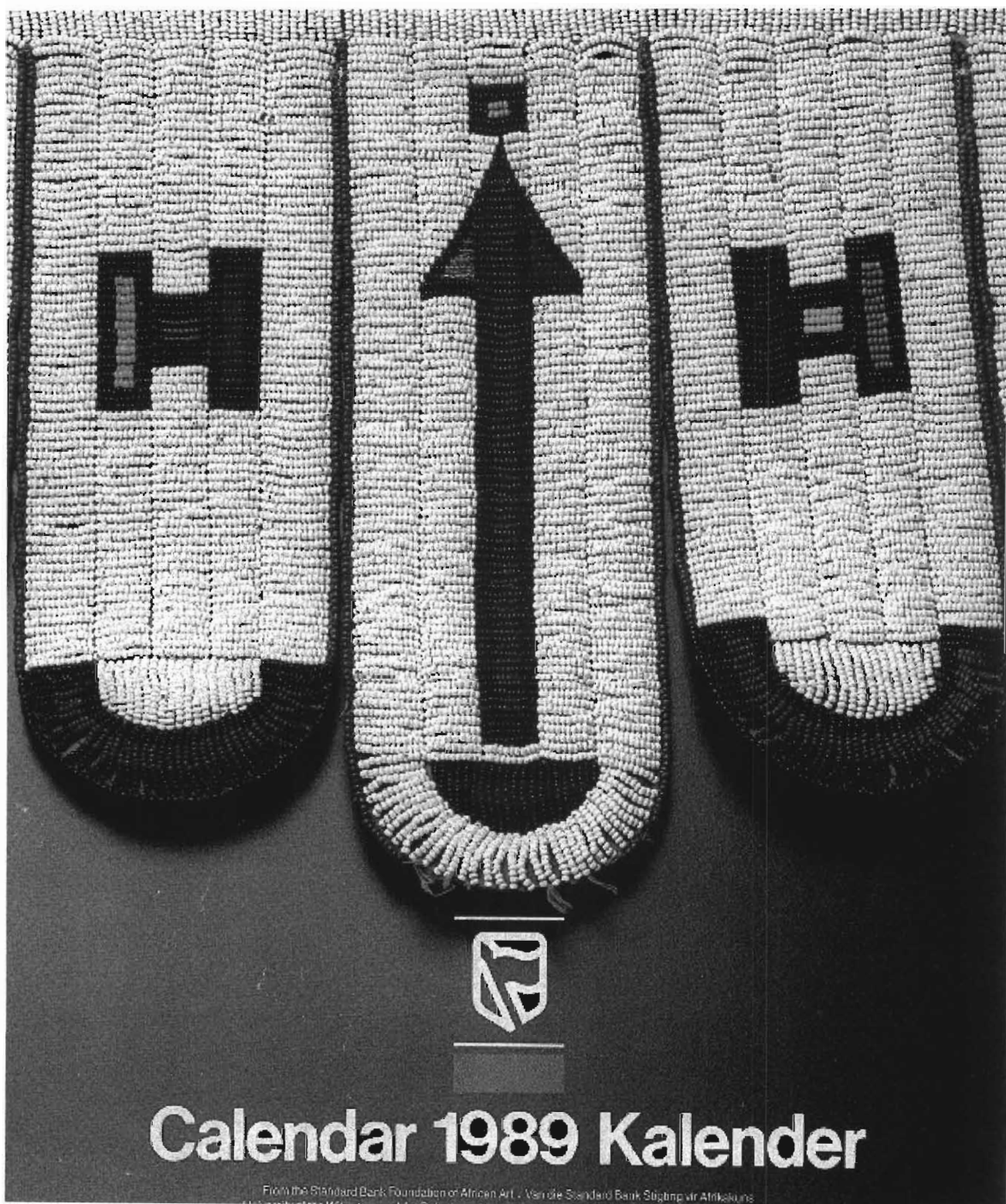
“I have often thought that these radically new artworks on our walls - so different from the tranquil scenes of farmlands, mountains and animals of the past - enabled all at Gencor to adapt more easily to the immense changes that were taking place around us, in our business, social and political lives. Perhaps we were even encouraged to embrace the new opportunities that flow from such revolutions. (1997: 7) <sup>13</sup>

This excerpt takes on deeper meanings when one considers that what Gilbertson refers to as a “traditional South African mining conglomerate” was in effect “a conservative Afrikaner mining house” (1997: 24) participating in an industry that is not renowned for enlightened employment and human rights practices (cf. migrant labour system and De Beers Anglo American submission to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, November, 1997). The “new opportunities that flow from (the changes around us)” were made explicit elsewhere in the Foreword: “often these days our corporate visitors will make a brief tour of the important works. It is rare for them not to show a strong and positive response” (op. cit. 7).

Although Gencor has, hitherto, not used its collection as part of any advertising campaign the association of the corporate interests with a newly defined concept of South African art clearly has significant dividends. Some of these benefits may not be obvious and it is intriguing to note that Gencor’s commitment to the notion of a “new” South African art occurs at a time when the re-structuring of Gencor has resulted in a significant shift in the companies operations “off shore” to the newly established base in London. Market uncertainty about Gencor’s intentions prompted Gilbertson to appear on “Business Tonight” to reassure the market that “for the unforeseeable future Gencor will remain a South African based company” (Gilbertson on “Business Tonight,” SABC 3 15<sup>th</sup> January 1998).

In this context Gencor’s commitment to a “progressive” art collection that celebrates the political and social transformation in South Africa while (allegedly) relocating can be viewed as a cynical exercise. If this is the case it is not the first time that art has been used to create a “smoke screen” to disguise other business objectives. According to Andrew Verster BMW sponsored “Tributaries: A view of South African Art” which was exhibited in Germany during 1987 purely “so that they (BMW) could remain in South Africa” at a time when US car manufacturers such as Ford were heeding the anti-apartheid calls for dis-investment (personal interview with Verster 1998).

Verster describes “Tributaries” as “the most important [exhibition] in changing the image of South African art but it wasn’t their vision it was [the curator] Ricky Burnett’s vision.”<sup>14</sup>



*figure 6.11*

All they [BMW] wanted to do was promote a new image of art in South Africa for a German audience so that they could remain here.” According to Verster BMW’s lack of real commitment to the “new image of art in South Africa” was evident “when they commissioned Hans Hallen to design a flashy new headquarters at Midrand and stuffed it full with ‘art in the park’ paintings.” Clearly Gencor has learned a few things with the establishment of their headquarters.

The power of art to serve very specific ideological and business objectives abounds throughout the history of business sponsorship of the arts in South Africa. In the commercial context the precise date of the change to the “new image of South African art” can be established by consulting the Standard Bank Calendar. Two years after Burnett’s “Tributaries” and a year after Sack identified “The Neglected Tradition” the 1989 Standard Bank Calendar broke with the tradition of featuring only the established artists of the “old order” and was dedicated solely to the works from the Standard Bank African Art Collection at the University of the Witwatersrand (*figure 6.11*).<sup>15</sup> The subsequent advertising and promotional opportunities that have arisen from this collection which is now housed in the Gertrude Posel Gallery represents an astute and rapid marketing adaptation to a new political and aesthetic ideology.

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## Notes

1. McAllister maintains that “sponsorship *is* advertising” and there are several factors that have led to a significant increase in sponsorship in the United States and the United Kingdom since 1980. The factors he mentions such as deregulation and media clutter apply in the South African context. In addition he mentions the important factor of the rising costs of traditional advertising which prompted promoters to “view sponsorship of large and small events as a way to stretch the traditional advertising dollar, especially through free publicity” (1996: 181-182).



2. Not only did the Grimaldi sponsorship of Picasso bring glory to them at the time but also, upon his departure the old fortress became the *Musée Picasso*, one of the great attractions of Antibes (Bernier 1991: 126).

3. It is interesting to note that “Warhol” as a commodity has been taken to an extreme to the point where the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts Inc. market a number of items including a range of “decorated” Porcelain coffee mugs with Warhol’s images and signature on.

4. In the 1990's when money is available at any time from Automatic Teller Machines (ATM’s) in the street and in shopping centres it is difficult to imagine the restrictive practice of banking less than forty years ago. Not only were clients restricted to limited banking hours but the architecture normally associated with banks was that of a fortress. (cf. Reserve Bank Building, Durban.)

5. ABSA in the United Kingdom (UK) had been formed c.1976 as an independent body owned by 300 businesses and formed to support the arts through a combination of sponsorship and a sharing of skills. Through a system of tax incentives and plural funding - where government matches donations or makes significant contribution, over the past 20 years ABSA has raised \$97 million in new money for the arts. (\$65 million from business and \$32 million from government). (*Sunday Tribune*, September 29, 1996: 23)

6. The National Arts Coalition which was launched in Johannesburg during December 1993, was important in forming the Arts and Culture Task Group (ACTAG). Central in all this activity was Mike Van Graan the secretary-general of the Arts for All campaign, of the National Arts initiative and of the National Arts Coalition. The ACTAG report was presented to government in August 1995 and became the basis of the draft white paper on Arts and Culture which was subsequently past into law as the Arts, Culture and Heritage White Paper of 1996 (Frost 1997: 6).

7. According to Brown Pernot Recard originated from the bohemian favourite *Absinth*. (Personal interview with Brown 1997) The involvement of alcoholic beverage companies in using the arts is dealt with in more depth in Chapter Seven.

8. It is clear that the BASA launch brochure draws strongly upon the example established by its predecessor in the US, the Business Committee for the Arts (BCA) which was founded, in part due to David Rockefeller's efforts, in 1967 (Margolin 1992: 195). Rockefeller, then the Chairman of the Chase Manhattan Bank, maintained (as Deputy President Mbeki was to repeat 31 years later) that it was the arts that would determine America's success as a civilised society. Margolin quotes Rockefeller as saying, "The ultimate dedication to our way of life will be won, I am convinced, not on the basis of economic achievements alone but on the basis of those precious yet intangible elements which enable the individual to live a fuller, wiser, more satisfying existence" (1992: 11).

9. In Europe and the USA it is evident that this type of support has accomplished significant results in the cultural sphere. Corporate support for various opera houses, ballet, theatres and art exhibitions is a well established practice there. Increasingly, in South Africa this is also the case. While there has always been support for exhibition catalogues, exhibition promotion and art competitions by corporations, eg. Standard Bank National Drawing Competition and the AA Mutual Vita Awards. It is significant to note the number of recently published art history texts have been subsidised by banking and mining interests. Two recent publications that reflect this trend are, Kendal Greers' *Contemporary South African Art* (1997) which features the Gencor Collection sponsored by Gencor, while Jane Carruthers and Marion Arnold's *The Life and Works of Thomas Baines* (1995) was sponsored by The Anglo American and De Beers Chairman's Fund, The Ernest Oppenheimer Memorial Trust, First National and Syfrets Banks. Carruthers and Arnold (1995) credit the sponsors for providing contributions that "went towards the defraying of costs of this publication." (1995: 4) This type of sponsorship enables lavishly illustrated texts of high quality to be published at a price that the South African public can afford.

10. The Gencor Collection is housed in Gencor's new headquarters at 6 Hollard Street, Johannesburg. The collection was assembled during the period 1994 -1997 by Kendall Geers assisted by an art committee that included the Chairman's wife, Rensché Gilbertson, the architect of the new building, Mark Pencharz, Trevor Julius the interior designer, Lesley Spiro, the then acting Director of the Johannesburg Art Gallery and Des Dussing, Gencor's project manager for the new building, who was also chairman of the committee (1997: 24).

11. This form of sponsorship is typical of the nature of sponsorship before the 1990's which was often initiated at the "whim of the CEO" According to McAllister when the corporate executive "favoured tennis, the company would sponsor tennis events. The increase in the amount of money involved in sponsorship, however, has altered the approach to sponsors" (1996. 182).

12. It should be noted that even Berman differentiates the quest for a South African "identity" during the 1960's from earlier efforts when she notes that "during the 1960's the quest for identity had become a universal concern; the development in local painting should not therefore be attributed to chauvinistic impulses, such as had motivated the earlier ideal of a "national art." It was spurred on by a growing consciousness of the dissimilarities in physical surroundings, cultural ethos and sociological habit, which distinguished the experience of South African artists from their counterparts in Europe or the USA." (Berman 1994: 209)

13. It is interesting to note that the South African petroleum company, Engen (formerly Mobil) was a subsidiary of Gencor before it was unbundled. (Spiro in Keers ed. 1997: 26) Margolin quotes Herbert Schmertz (1987), the then Director and Vice-President of the Mobil Corporation, as saying "we remove the arts and humanities from the category of things done because they are nice - like ladies being chauffeured down from Scarsdale to roll bandages for the Red Cross - and we demonstrate instead that patronage is just another aspect of the market place, another move you make there to sell your products and services and enlarge your share" (Schmertz in Margolin 1992: 195).

14. Verster is not the only artist or critic of this view. The sculptor Andries Botha described *Tributaries* as “seminal” (personal interview with Botha 1998). The academic and critic, Colin Richards describes it in his essay “Desperately Seeking Africa” as “the single most dramatic coming out of the ‘transitional’” (Richards 1990: 1).

15. No black artists were represented in the 1986 Standard Bank Calendar. All the works that were featured were from the Standard Bank Art Collection and the artists included were: Ernest Ullmann (1900-1975), John Mayer (b.1942), John Thomas Baines (1820-1875), Gregoire Boonzaaier (b.1909), George Boys (b.1930), Maud Eyston Sumner (b. 1902), Aubrey Fielding (1903-1981), Adolph Jentsch (1888-1977), Aleksander Klopcharovs (b.1918), Jacob Hendrik Pierneef (1886-1957), Martinus Johannes (Tinus) De Jongh (1885-1942) and Pieter Willem Fredrick Wenning (1873-1921).

## Chapter 7: Art in Advertising

“All they want is some kind of class. They wouldn’t use somebody who produces beautiful knitting.” (Andrew Verster 1998)

As outlined in chapters Four and Five the relationship between art and advertising in the west has been established over a long period of time. While Chapter Six sought to investigate the complex relationship between business and art in South Africa through patronage and sponsorship, this chapter seeks to discuss the specific rhetorical devices that advertisers use to enhance their products and services by using art in their advertising. While some of these devices, such as “the masterpiece phenomenon,” “the artist as bearer of cultural value,” “signifiers of product performance,” and “the blurring of art and ads” (sic) have been identified in the American context by Victor Margolin in his essay, “Product Appeal and the Aura of Art” (1992: 194-207), this chapter seeks to investigate these and additional devices in the South African context.

Dyer explains that “the word ‘rhetoric’ arises frequently in any analysis of advertising since it refers to those techniques, usually verbal, that are designed and employed to persuade and impress people” (1992: 158). While the historical origins of rhetoric can be traced back to Ancient Greece and Rome to describe “the effective or artful use of speech and writing” (ibid.) this chapter will focus primarily upon visual rhetoric.<sup>1</sup>

Many of the advertisements discussed in this chapter will be drawn primarily from South African print media i.e. newspapers and magazines. Unlike television and radio advertising, which are aimed at a general audience, the specific nature of print media enables advertising to be aimed at specific audiences. It has already been observed how in the past, language, ethnic and racial segmentation have been major determinants in identifying target markets in South Africa. Cultural notions that are intrinsically linked to specific groups inevitably have an impact upon the way in which the visual arts can be used in advertising. This is particularly true of a multicultural society where it cannot be assumed that everybody shares the same cultural values. For example, it could be argued that the various ethnic and

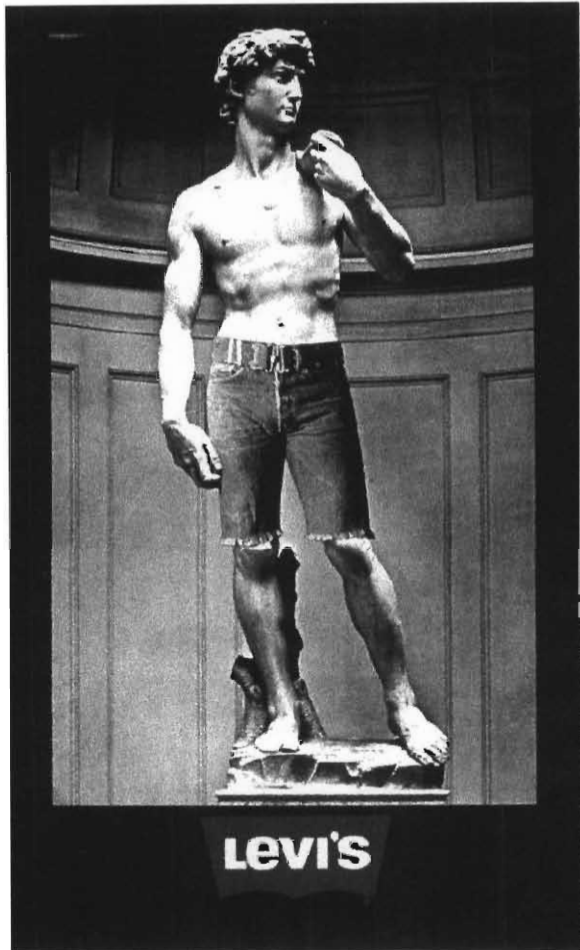


figure 7.1

**CHRISTMAS IN AFRICA**

**makro**  
Compare the Makro Deal.  
Prices valid in all Makro stores from 21 November to 24 December 1996.  
PRICE PER 148 g/100 g

**CHRISTMAS IN AFRICA**

By Solomon Mshale

Appreciation of the clear and vibrant colors by South African artist, Mshale is proud to present a series of art by prominent young artists, especially during this season of peace and happiness.

For Christmas 1996, Makro has extended its art collection with the vibrant colorful style of well known artist, the South African Mshale.

Inspired by David Hockney's works, and new finding similarities to his own style, Mshale's work draws his viewer through traditional style life and unusual living in the township.

Mshale is a new history formed schooling, but as a young man he followed the dream of an entrepreneur in the established Mshale's under the guidance of the late Professor Walter Roth.

The artist finds profound inspiration in traditional art and life. His mother's vibrant background and her role as a traditional leader are part of his inspiration that he work in both African and western to create a great artwork with an improvement during the struggle, and also enhanced the energy of his distinctive work.

His work, called 'Love season', are printed in limited edition and come in a sturdy new look to fit the current landscape.

Since 1981, the artist's work has been displayed in group exhibitions in Germany and Amsterdam at the World Trade Centre in Toronto (1994), at the Knight Galleries International in Toronto (1995) and he was invited on a group visit to the Art and East Gallery in Toronto in 1996. In 1999 Mshale was recognized for the PBS Video New Award.

Makro believes in quality works of art by Roy Solomon Mshale and is pleased to hold your well Makro's Christmas theme for 1996.

The artist can be contacted through Mshale Knight the Art Source at 801 1436 0233.

**makro**

RECOGNITION  
MARGARIT  
GOING TO AMERICA  
WINNER BOOM  
TROPICAL LIFE  
TRIBAL SINGS  
DANCING ROTY  
TRIBAL SINGS 2

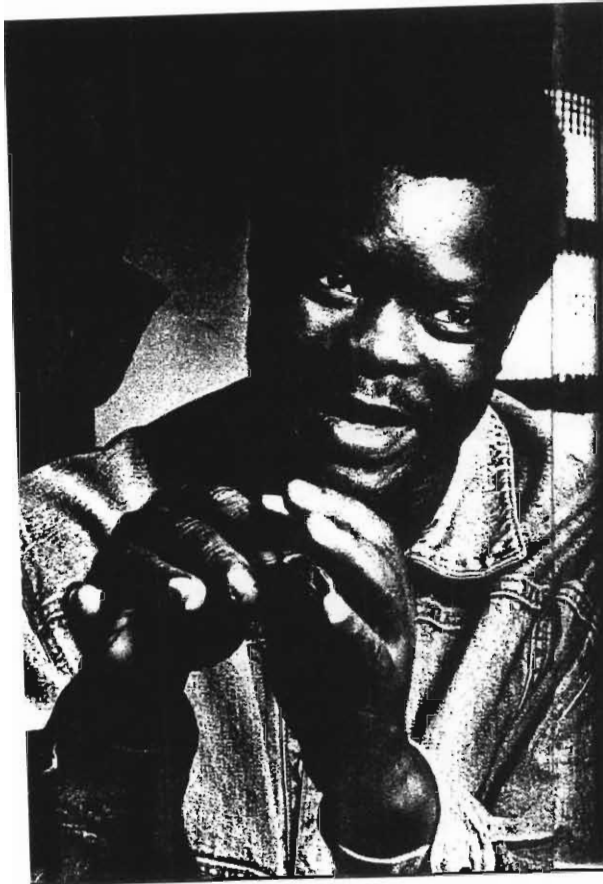
figure 7.2

language groups in South Africa do not even share the same sense of humour. Humour is significant in that it has become an important feature in the irreverent use of art as lampoon or as pastiche. Often the references made in lampoon or pastiche require a shared cultural perspective to be effective e.g. Michelangelo's "David" in Levi jeans (*figure 7.1*).

### **Art and corporate goodwill**

The 1996 "Makro Christmas in Africa" catalogue which contains details of gifts for staff, friends, clients and colleagues is "illustrated" by the woodcuts of Roy Solomon Ndinisa (no dates known) (*figure 7.2*). This example illustrates how corporate patronage - "Makro is proud to invest in works of art by prominent rising artists, especially during this season of peace and happiness" (1996: 68) goes beyond sponsorship and has very specific uses in the marketing process. There are several reasons why a bulk merchandising company such as Makro would wish to associate themselves with the Natalie Knight Gallery and employ the art of Ndinisa in a Christmas catalogue. "Makro Christmas in Africa" exploits the power of colourful artwork to capture attention and stand out against the catalogues of competitors that proliferate during the festive season. The headline "Christmas in Africa" and the lino cut images powerfully confront the tradition of Eurocentric Victorian Christmas imagery. This style is also within the tradition of non-profit agencies such as The South African Institute of Race Relations / African Art Centre that has published Christmas cards with lino-cut artwork by Rorke's Drift artists since the 1960's as part of a fund raising drive. Implicitly, therefore, the catalogue creates a feeling of corporate goodwill.

As previously discussed, various forms of relief printing, especially lino, are value laden in terms of expressing the notion of an African identity. However the copywriter, (presumably informed by the Natalie Knight Gallery) describes Ndinisa as "impressed by David Hockney's works, and even finding similarities to his own style." However scenes of "Tribal Life" (no dates given) and "political subjects such as imprisonment during the struggle, (which) are also reflected on many of his dramatic works" have no precedent in Hockney's work. According to the brochure notes Ndinisa attended art classes at an organisation in Pretoria called PAMDA, under the guidance of the late Professor Walter Battiss. However Ndinisa's work is still validated in terms of art in the northern Hemisphere, hence, besides reference to Hockney, much is made of the fact that his work



## "My friends have always given me the courage to believe in my art and myself"

H.K. Budasa

...the first Lion Match Art Competition...  
...pay tribute to Hamilton Budasa, a...  
...friend of friendship and sharing...  
...as an inspiration throughout...

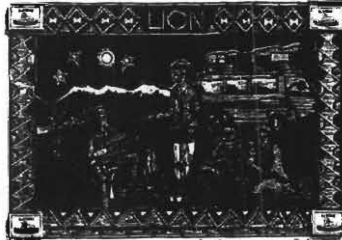
Hamilton Budasa was born in Cape Town in 1958. Since childhood he knew that art was his destiny. While a student at the University Arts Project, he was awarded a bursary by the Italian Consulate to study in Perugia, Italy for a year.

Today Hamilton Budasa spends much of his spare time painting his artistic impressions as Community Arts Project and in his school. He also likes to use his contemporary art at the Children's Home. Recently, Lion Match asked Hamilton to create a picture to act as an inspiration to artists wishing to enter the Lion Match Art Competition. He asked him to use as his theme "Matches and Friendship". Here are a number of encouragements from Hamilton to artists everywhere:

"By entering this competition you will not only enjoy yourself, you will make and meet new friends".

How you can become the Lion Match Artist of 1991 - And win valuable prizes.

your vision of friendship with everyone. Simply draw or paint a picture, or create a collage of any size or colour on the subject of Lion matches and friendship. Aim to show why Lion matches are so useful in our lives. The easiest and cheapest way to light a fire is lamp, a candle, a cigarette or anything else - and to show why Lion matches are always seen as your friend. Then, send us your work. The artists who create the best pictures will receive valuable prizes:  
First Prize ..... R2,000.  
Second Prize ..... R1,500.  
Third Prize ..... R750.



This new picture is Hamilton Budasa's own vision of friendship. What is yours?

In the Lion Match Art Competition, we extend the hand of friendship to all the artists of South Africa. This is your opportunity to become the Lion Match Artist of 1991 and to share

with the First Prize will be featured in Lion Match advertising in the future. It is also intended that the best pictures will be shown at special exhibitions all around South Africa. Here's what you do: Send your picture or painting, with your name and address to: "Lion Match Artist of 1991", P O Box 706, Cape Town, 8000.



As long as you've got a Lion you've got a friend, friend.

Post your entry to Lion Match Art Competition, P.O. Box 706, Cape Town, 8000. All entries must reach this address by 15 September 1991. Cut out and paste this coupon on the back of artwork.

1. The artist's name and address must be clearly visible on the artwork. 2. The artist's name and address must be clearly visible on the artwork. 3. The artist's name and address must be clearly visible on the artwork. 4. The artist's name and address must be clearly visible on the artwork. 5. The artist's name and address must be clearly visible on the artwork. 6. The artist's name and address must be clearly visible on the artwork. 7. The artist's name and address must be clearly visible on the artwork. 8. The artist's name and address must be clearly visible on the artwork. 9. The artist's name and address must be clearly visible on the artwork. 10. The artist's name and address must be clearly visible on the artwork.

figure 7.3



has exhibited at the Knight Galleries International in Toronto (1995) and that Ndinisa “was invited as a guest artist to the Arts and Events Gallery in Toronto in 1996” (ibid.).

The financial and political dividends of formal arts sponsorship in South Africa were discussed in the previous chapter but the “Christmas in Africa” brochure represents an example of ad hoc patronage that various companies use from time to time. This essentially opportunistic form of support usually manifests itself in the form of art competitions which can easily be a part of corporate goodwill advertising. To that end Lion Match not only launched an art competition in 1991 but used it as an opportunity to position the company at the forefront of the transformation process at the time. In order to do this the competition was targeted at the primary consumers of the product and only advertised in black market magazines: *Bona* and *Drum* (figure 7.3). The competition announcement featured a photograph of Hamilton Budaza (b.1958) described as an ex-student of the Community Arts Project (CAP) in Cape Town. Lion Match commissioned him to produce an artwork on the theme “Lion Matches and Friendship” in order to inspire artists wishing to enter the competition. In the call for participation entrants were encouraged to “simply draw or paint a picture, or create a linocut” and the competition rules noted that “it is possible that the picture that wins the First Prize (R3 000) will be featured in Lion Match advertising in the future” (*Drum*, August 1991 p.23 - 24). Thus the apparent altruism of the “Lion Match and Friendship” competition has a number of very specific advertising and corporate objectives that are achieved by using the visual arts produced by both the trained (Budaza) and the untrained hand of the general population.

The goodwill generated by a professed commitment to development is implied in many competitions. This is particularly true of art competitions aimed at children, eg. Sanlam Child Art competitions which were officially supported by the Natal Education Department (amongst others) throughout the 1970's. However a first prize of R3 000 and the loss of copyright in future advertisements does not constitute a meaningful commitment to the upliftment of artists within the black community. Verster comments “the sponsors of competitions are not interested in art at all. They are more interested in having their names and logo on the entry forms” (personal interview with Verster 1998). However, this early example of a “development” orientated competition is an indication of how dangerous (and



figure 7.4



figure 7.5

unscrupulous) the practice of appropriation of the “raw material” by advertisers can be. Professional artists are equally vulnerable to this practice.

The winner of the Standard Bank Young Artist Award in 1991, Andries Botha (b.1952) maintains that while the Standard Bank has been “scrupulous and fair in all their dealings with him” he is cynical about the motives of many other corporate sponsors of competitions for professional artists. According to Botha, artists in South Africa are vulnerable to exploitation because of the limited nature of sponsorship available for the arts (as opposed to sport) which enables commercial interests to have “no deep, profound commitment but they can get a lot of stuff for nothing. All they want is value for their bottom dollar” (personal interview with Botha 1998). Nevertheless since 1991 there has been a growing trend to use (appropriate?) the art and design of the unskilled as a signifier of a “local” identity which will be discussed as “the power of the vernacular” later in this chapter. In the interim it may be instructive to consider the more conventional rhetorical devices in order fully to appreciate recent shifts in South African advertising.

### **The power of the antique**

As explained in Chapter Four, during the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, art images tended to be used, primarily, as a means of calling the consumer’s attention to the product. Even at this early stage images from antiquity seemed to lend themselves readily to this type of device (*figure 7.4*). Given the nineteenth century penchant in the west for Neo-classical styles denoting higher values, it is not surprising that frequent references to antiquity were made in the promotion of products. In more sophisticated contemporary advertising, the capacity of “Classical Art” (and here the term is used to include the art and architecture of the Italian Renaissance) to exploit the hierarchical values and meanings that western society has accorded these historical periods is best observed in “Unquestionably Rare” an advertisement for Glenfiddich Whisky (*figure 7.5*).

This advertisement is aimed at the high end of the market as an 18 year old, pure malt whisky. Hence the unique selling proposition (USP) of “rare” is identified as a characteristic of Glenfiddich Whisky.<sup>2</sup> The referent to rarity are the antique books which also signify an aristocratic interest in “rare” and fine things. By implication the consumer of Glenfiddich

CLASSIQUE

MASTERPIECES MADE FOR THE INDIVIDUAL

MICHEL HERBELIN  
PARIS

figure 7.6

would be (or could become) in possession of both material and intellectual property. This makes the advertisement highly aspirational. However the main signifier of quality is not the antique but Antiquity. The notion of “perfection” and the “ideal” is embodied in the Classical hence an ionic capital is used as a pedestal to display a fine “work of art”- Glenfiddich. To reinforce this message, the notion that fine art is not mass produced, and thus rare, is transferred onto the product (Margolin 1992: 198). Subliminally, the notion of the Classical being the embodiment of perfection is also “carried over” into the bottle on which the word “Excellence” is prominently displayed.

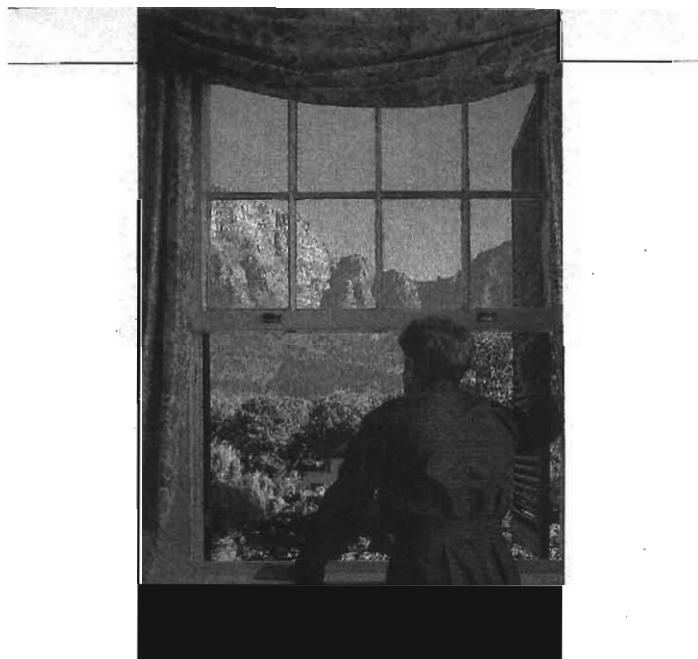
### **The frame**

Another value laden “prop” that is often used to “display” products in advertising is the picture frame. Frequently products are framed as if they are the “masterpieces” on display in a museum. An advertisement for Michel Herbelin watches in the October 1997 edition of *Cosmopolitan* is an excellent example (*figure 7.6*). Curiously, although the product is framed within simple classic frames, they are “stacked” in a manner reminiscent of eighteenth century displays. Subliminally this is in keeping with the extravagance and relatively ornate character of the French product. However, the overall product image of Michel Herbelin is essentially a modern one. The layout of the advertisement creates a sense of modernity by emphasising the angularity of the “Classique,” enlarging it with the simple logo Michel Herbelin (Paris) at the bottom. In this manner, the notion of tradition becomes merged with the modern (new). In this advertisement one can observe the significance of the frame and the exhibition setting in creating a sense of status and value.

A variation on the theme of the picture frame is to found in the window or a doorframe as used by the German romantic artist Casper David Friedrich (1774-1840) to create an illusion of a painting within a painting. In many of Friedrich’s paintings a person was portrayed, with their back to the spectator, contemplating the view beyond (*figure 7.7*). However, whereas Friedrich used this device symbolically for religious reasons, a direct reference to his work is used for commercial and humorous effect in “One night at The Vineyard will change your view of hotels in Cape Town” (1995) (*figure 7.8*) The fact that tourists to whom this advertisement is addressed might be aware of the paintings of Friedrich not only ensures a high degree of recognition value, but also the gentle hint of humour creates a



figure 7.7



One night at The Vineyard will  
change your view of hotels in Cape Town.  
*(And of many other hotels far beyond.)*

The best luxury left is simplicity, quiet and space around us. You  
realist you can expect at the Abbey of Hout with its classic Cape Georgian  
architecture, rather, published and a spectacular mountain views.

At the perfect setting, just ten minutes drive  
from the city centre, is only part of its distinctive character.

Originally the famous 'Toby Anne Barnard' - the  
Cape's oldest, oldest hotel - the Vineyard carries on a proud  
tradition of hospitality and good taste.



All year round, its elegant interior shines with the confidence of a popular  
residence for the business, owners' homes and restaurant guests.

Where can it be a cafe restaurant, Sit in patios to enjoy glass-roofed  
coffee shop and some of the amenities that complement the  
refined country house atmosphere.

Against this is a bridge to the city, it is a pleasure to walk to the  
many activities of the Vineyard?

Telephone Cape Town: (021) 361 2107, Fax: (021) 361 5355.

THE PERFECT SETTING

figure 7.8

"The Laughing Cavalier"  
1624  
copy after Frans Hals  
contemporary of  
Rembrandt  
van Rijn

Timeless  
treasure

Endless pleasure  
*Each Cigarette a Masterpiece*

figure 7.9

positive mood in the communications process.

### **Margolin's Masterpiece phenomenon**

Margolin maintains that the rhetorical device most often used to enhance the status of a product is its comparison to a so-called masterpiece. This he refers to as the “masterpiece phenomenon” (1992: 199). He goes on to maintain that “for a work of art to function effectively as masterpiece in a product advertisement it must be recognizable as such by large numbers of people. Just as celebrities have degrees of name recognition for advertising purposes, so do works of art” (ibid.). As discussed above often the picture frame is fundamental in creating a sense of general recognition as a masterpiece. This is particularly true of the ornate or baroque frame which is frequently used in advertising. An obvious example is the one that surrounds “The Laughing Cavalier” (1624) described in the advertisement as a “copy after Frans Hals, contemporary of Rembrandt van Rijn” (RVR 304E) (*figure 7.9*). This cigarette advertisement is an example of another device in which the product emerges from within the frame of the “masterpiece” into the “real” world of consumption. In the process, metaphorically and physically, the image of the product creates a bridge between the realm of revered artwork and that of everyday commodities. Hence each Rembrandt van Rijn Filter De Luxe cigarette can be described as “a masterpiece.” This is the device that informed “The Art of Rubens, the Technology of Agfa” mentioned in Chapter Two (*figure 2.7*).

Besides specific works from antiquity, art produced during the Italian Renaissance has a special attraction for advertisers not only because of the status accorded the Renaissance in the west but also because of the notions of ideal beauty that are held to be evident in the works of Renaissance masters. In South Africa this is particularly true of Leonardo's “Mona Lisa” (1503), Michelangelo's “Creation of Adam” (1508-1518) and Botticelli's “The Birth of Venus” (c.1489-1490). In an advertisement for Sweetex, (*figure 7.10*) published in the South African *You* magazine (1994), it is important to note how the juxtaposition of the image “created by Botticelli” with that “created by Sweetex” is used to reinforce the notion of “ideal” beauty embodied in the goddess images of Botticelli. The notion that the beauty in a woman's body has been “immortalised by art” is the focus of the advertisement. It is interesting to note how the same concept of “ideal beauty” informs the *Playboy* magazine



Created by Botticelli.

Created by Sweetex.

**Create the body you'd love to have,  
without investing a fortune.**

Throughout the centuries, women's bodies have been immortalised in art. Now you can make your body a modern masterpiece with the help of a new classic - Sweetex, the no kilojoule sweetener. Use it as part of your kilojoule controlled diet and stay slim, without investing a fortune.

**Sweetex**  
diet  
*Sweetener*

The Classic Sweetener.

*figure 7.10*



*figure 7.11*

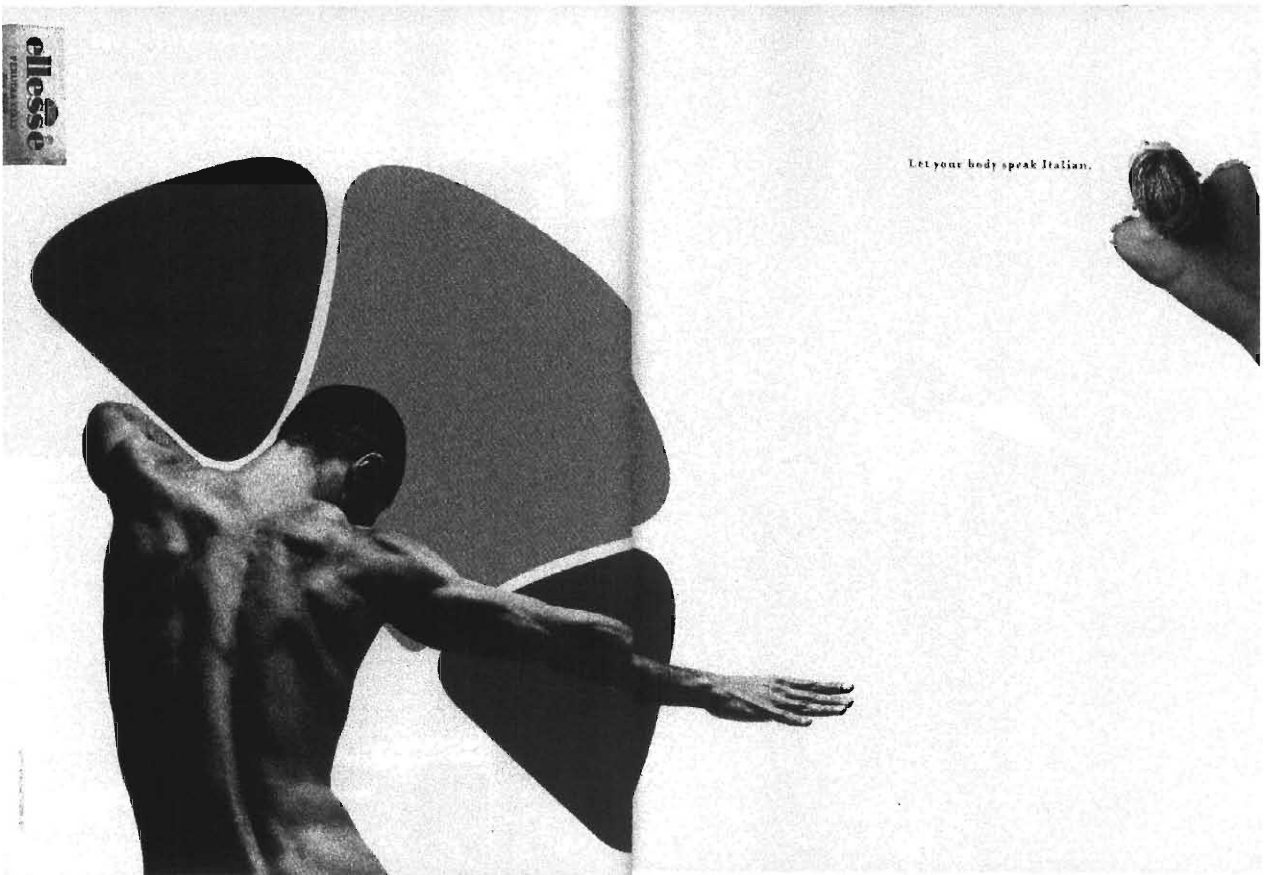
feature on Cindy Crawford (1995) (*figure 7.11*).

Often classical and classically inspired images lend themselves for use in advertising because of the visual clarity of their composition. Further, the value laden association of such works within western society enables them to be used as an instantly recognisable icon which is in its simplest terms “the Greek word for image” (Read ed. 1966: 414). Hence the classic “moment” or “ideal” pose in Classical Art is the perfect vehicle for print advertising in that it provides an image that is easily “read” on a visual level and understood in terms of the various meanings and values that it represents. This is confirmed in the widespread use of naked male and female models for the promotion of products which utilise the notion of the “ideal” albeit in a contemporary sense, but not in a manner that is dissimilar to that encapsulated in classically inspired art.

This is the context in which the Durban based advertising agency, Mathews and Charter’s “Let your body speak Italian” advertisement for Ellesse jeans needs to be considered (*figure 7.12*). It is significant to note that the product (denim jeans) is not shown at all. The only signifier of clothing is the seam label in the top left hand corner. The notion of “speaking Italian” (style?) is encapsulated in the photographs of the muscular male figures which in turn make allusions to the male gods of Roman antiquity and the realism of the Renaissance masters.

### **The masterpiece and medicine**

A representative from the marketing division of a pharmaceutical company, Novartis, in answer to the question as to why art is so widely used in the promotion of medical products gave the unequivocal response that “the competition is so great that we will use anything that works to get attention” (personal interview with Coppin 1997). According to Coppin “expensive calendars with good quality reproductions of artwork compliments the professional status of the medical practitioner and is more likely to be attractive to the patients as well.” Leonardo da Vinci is widely used in the medical context possibly because his work embodies not only the connotation of high art but, as a Renaissance man, he also represents the enquiring scientist who made informative scientific studies. This explains the widespread use of his anatomical drawings such as “Universal Man.” In the same way



*figure 7.12*

Rembrandt's "The Anatomy Lesson Of Dr Tulp" (1632) also offers a variety of value laden possibilities for advertising within the medical profession (*figures 7.13 a & b*).

Canonical works by artists such as da Vinci are so widely recognised by various audiences that they are often subject to lampoon even within the fine arts (*figure 7.14 a & b*). In the popular and commercial domain this can take many forms and is evident in a "flyer" for a vitamin pill, Royl 6. This promotional item was published by Vesta Medicines in 1992 but can still be found in doctors waiting rooms throughout South Africa (*figure 7.15*). In many popular art history texts Leonardo da Vinci's "Mona Lisa" (*La Gioconda*) (1503) is purported to represent a stereotypical image of feminine perfection and it is within this paradigm that the Royl 6 "Mona Lisa" is used to personify "feminine serenity." Ironically, the notion that a woman should be her "serene, sweet self... everyday of the month" can also be viewed as a continuation of a crude tradition of promoting quasi-medical feminine products in South Africa since the beginning of the century. cf. "Feluna Pills for females only" (1918) (*figure 7.16*).

### **Art as signifier of modernity**

At the turn of the century the Austrian architect, Adolf Loos, took a radical stance when in his seminal essay, "Ornament and Crime" he declared that "the evolution of culture is synonymous with the disappearance of ornament from architecture" (quoted in Sparke 1995: 117). Loos provided the moral and aesthetic justification for modernist design and in the process, Victorian "clutter" of the nineteenth century, described in Chapter Three, became synonymous with bad taste. The "formal purity" of European Modernism which Loos inspired, with its emphasis upon the simple, unadorned, geometric, shape in which form followed function was the modern style that was to spread throughout the world to become *the* International Style in both art and design.

Ironically, the austerity of the credo of "less is more" was at odds with the conspicuous consumption of early capitalism and (mass) producers initially ignored it. However, Heller and Fili have explained how the taste for the "modern" came to be used by advertisers during the 1930's to enhance the sales of their products and significantly this "industrial design was initiated not by forward-thinking businessmen but through clever advertisers and



figure 7.13a

Discover some hidden rewards for your diligent work.  
 Ontdek 'n verborge beloning vir u harde werk.

*The Anatomy Lesson of Dr Tulp by Rembrandt portrays an affair of deep human significance: man's quest to solve the mysteries of life. The insatiable hunger for knowledge of the laws that govern our existence. Like Dr Tulp and his students have made a study of the human body, we have made a study of financial systems vital to man's well-being. And based on the expertise gained, have created a financial package to support and enhance your modern lifestyle - ProMed.*

*Die Anatomieklas van Dr Tulp deur Rembrandt weerspieël 'n handeling van diep menslike betekenis: die mens se soeke na die geheimenisse van die lewe. Sy onvervaardige drang om ons bestaan te ontrefel. Soos Dr Tulp en sy studente 'n studie gemaak het van die mens se liggaam, het ons 'n studie gemaak van finansiële stelsels wat lewensbelangrik is vir die welstand van die mens. Uit die leere wat ons geleer het, het ons 'n finansiële pakket saamgestel om u moderne lewenstyl te ondersteun en bevorder - ProMed.*

Call toll-free 080-01-23456 now for your obligation-free print of the Anatomy Lesson of Dr Tulp by Rembrandt.  
 Skakel tulvry 080-01-23456 nou vir 'n gratis afdruk van die Anatomieklas van Dr Tulp deur Rembrandt, sonder verpligting.

figure 7.13b



figure 7.14a



figure 7.14b

Feeling like  
**THIS**  
doesn't have  
to be part of  
being a woman . . .



...When **ROYL 6** can help  
you be your serene, sweet  
self ... every day of the month.



Due to food manipulation and processing, it is difficult to obtain all the required B complex vitamins from our daily diet. Our bodies are unable to absorb large doses of vitamins all at once - so ROYL 6 has developed a sustained release formulation. This allows your system to absorb these vitamins over a number of hours when your metabolism needs them most, which closely mimics the natural digestion process.

figure 7.15

## WHAT A MAN expects of a wife



He wants a home, and companionship. And the greatest of these is companionship.

He may have outside friends but most of his time is spent with his wife. His comfort, his pleasure, his personal interests, his children are all intimately bound up with her. And, given Health, she should be the greatest contributor to his happiness. Without Health she cannot be the wife and mother she hopes to be. She cannot be the companion she ought to be.

Temperament and behaviour, closely allied, are mainly determined by Health. If regular bowels, rich blood and free functioning make her the happy woman she can be, she will be a joy to herself and those about her. But if irregularities, impoverished blood and constipation, with their attendant headaches and nervous disorders, fray her nerves and make her miserable, she will fall far short of his hopes and anticipations.

We want the Feluna message taken into homes where women suffer.

Feluna has been compounded specially for them. Aches and pains, Anaemia, depression, irritability, prostration, headaches, all directly due to improper functioning and impoverished blood are quickly corrected by the Feluna treatment.

A Feluna wife is a happy woman. She has Feluna Health. If she knows how to be a successful wife, Feluna will make her one.

Feluna Pills are sold at 3/3 per bottle; trial size, 1/3; or direct from P.O. Box 781, Cape Town, on receipt of price. 3d. per bottle extra in Rhodesia.

**FELUNA** PILLS for  
females only  
FOR BETTER HEALTH AND HAPPINESS

FM47/40-1

figure 7.16

packagers who transformed Modernism into a commodity” (1995: 65). As noted in Chapter Five commodified modernism was also introduced to the South African consumer through product design particularly refrigerators, stoves and motor vehicles. However during the 1940's, the American influence in advertising of these and other products such as cigarettes became widespread. According to Berstein, the use of the various modern art movements in advertising of these products communicated that “the brand is in touch” (Berstein 1997: 29). Hence aspects of Cubist and Futurist painting were adopted as ornamental motifs that imbued new life into otherwise traditional layouts of cigarette packets (*figure 7.17*).

Without exploring the ideological implications of white as a signifier of “taste,” it is important to recognise pure white space in an advertisement has a functional role to play in attracting the reader’s attention. A surprisingly early example of the “modern” use of meaningful white space is seen in the *Natal Mercury* (1915) in an advertisement for Nugget Boot Polishers (*figure 7.19*). Note how this advertisement stands out in the “clutter” of the other advertisements on the page. This example is also interesting in that it is an early piece of branding of a product with a clear logo, “Nugget.” This product identity is still used by the company today. (Another example of early branding still in use today is the Art Nouveau inspired Coca-Cola logo.) However effective blank space may be, in print advertising, it should be noted that this device is not a cheap alternative.

### **Modernity as signifier of youth**

An example of how South African advertising has used aspects of modern styles to convey meaning and value but, with different connotations, is to be observed in how the Cape Town based division of Ogilvy & Mather, Rightford, Searle-Tripp and Makin (O&M) used Piet Mondrian’s Neo-Plasticism in their “Red Yellow Blue” campaign for Volkswagen’s CTI Golf (1984). This campaign was so commercially successful that it has subsequently been used as case study in many South African marketing courses of how advertising can play a major role in the building of a brand (Barenblatt and Sinclair 1989: 243-244). The CTI Golf campaign shows how art can be used within the total marketing mix from the initial development of the brand concept to the exterior design of the vehicle, through to the final brand positioning and the communication style. Throughout the modernist style of the Dutch de Stijl movement, specifically the work of Piet Mondrian (1872 -1944), was



figure 7.17

clever cooks deserve a **JEWEL**

**A Jewel of Priceless Value . . .** with diamond hard, diamond-bright Highlight Green enamel, and sparkling chrome accents . . . a dazzling Jewel! After a wipe down with a damo cloth.

**Every Meal A Masterpiece . . .** serves on piping-hot plates from the easy-reach canopy or rack . . . cooked to a turn in the easy-clean family size oven, and on the 4-plate "High" to "Simmer" cooking top.

**A Gem To Operate . . .** with a fire that's tended by turning the Duplex firebars with a key-fuelled through a forward-fired door . . . and with oven temperature shown on a reliable indicator.

- Optional 4-gallon hot water heater-essentials
- Useful storage compartment in the at-still
- Solid cast-iron and steel construction

SEE THIS JEWEL AT YOUR DEALER'S TODAY!

**ANOTHER**

**URBAN ALKIRK BROWN CO**  
 (PTY) LTD.  
**SOLID FUEL STOVE**

Used by:  
 The Gold Store Division of  
 THE DEBBAR FALSTRA TRAM CO. (PTY) LTD., JAGGERS, NATAL.

figure 7.18

(OPPOSITE FIRE STATION)  
 Telephone 438.

**School of the Boys**

**HAMOL, URG.**

**De WITT'S**  
**BOOT POLISHES**

**Pains in the Back**  
 Rheumatism, Lumbago, Stiffness, Gravel and other Urinary & Bladder Troubles.  
**De WITT'S—The Only "Proof Cure."**

**De Witt's Pills**

**NOTICE**

**ANTIS**  
 ANTISINE

**LOST &c.**

**RISTOW**

figure 7.19



incorporated into the design and advertising (*figure 7.20*). This example is also significant in that it represents a creative design process in which the judicious use of fine art adds “value” in the revitalisation of an old product. According to Barenblatt and Sinclair this was achieved by a unique working together of designers at the Cape Town office of O& M and product developers at Volkswagen.<sup>3</sup>

The Jumbo Golf was a much bigger car and was to be “positioned” further up market than the proposed “entry level” CITI Golf it was about to replace. Hence product differentiation was required to avoid confusion. According to Barenblatt and Sinclair in order to create a unique identity, for the CITI Golf it had to be seen as a totally new product (*ibid.*). The “no frills” CITI Golf was marketed as a “fun” city car and was launched in limited range of colours: red, yellow, and blue which were considered to be the fashion colours of the decade. These primary colours were “colour keyed white bumpers, white wheels and modern CITI graphics at the rear” (*ibid.*).

With an emphasis upon economy the limited choice of colours undoubtedly contributed to keeping costs down. Mondrian’s reasons for limiting colour were much more esoteric and idealistic and in 1937 he wrote of a future in which we all lived in a “realized art” in the sense that even domestic items would be art (Josephson 1996: 1). Striving for this concept of a pure universal art, Mondrian and others in the De Stijl movement emphasised the modernity of their quest. Writing on the subject of ‘Neo-Plasticism: the General Principle of Plastic Equivalence’ in 1920 he noted that one should not “forget that we are at a turning point of culture, at the end of everything ancient: the separation between the two is absolute and final” (1993: 288).

In order to give the car a “modern” urban feel, The “Red Yellow Blue” campaign exploits two notions about the work of Piet Mondrian. Firstly, the spirit of the city environment of New York implicit in his later work “Broadway Boogie Woogie” (1942-43) and “Victory Boogie Woogie” (c.1942) which he described as an attempt to express “movement in equilibrium” (Mondrian in Chipp 1968: 362). This is merged with earlier de Stijl principles of limiting colour to red yellow and blue within a black and white grid, e.g. Mondrian’s “Composition with Red Yellow and Blue” (1921) to create the modern, vibrant and



**The nice thing about red,  
yellow and blue is that you  
don't need that much green.**



The great thing about a Citi Golf or Citi Golf Sport is that it doesn't cost a lot to own. In fact, it's one of the lowest priced, low on gasoline cars on the road.

Stress error too, in exclusive red, yellow and blue (With custom paint and a guarantee for three years against corrosion.)

And street-wise for years and years, thanks to Volkswagen's solid, under-the-skin German engineering. Choose the economical 1.3 litre Citi, the potent 1.6 litre Citi Golf Sport, or the new 1.8 litre Citi Golf Automatic.

And you've got the fun loving, low loading, easy going freedom of the Citi.

In fact, there's nothing like a Citi Golf to drive away those financial blues.

P.S. Even when you sell your Citi you don't lose too much green. You'll get back 80 to 85% of your original paid cash price—better than just about any other car on the road.

Isn't that what you'd expect from Volkswagen?



**Citi Golf**   
Get the freedom of the Citi.

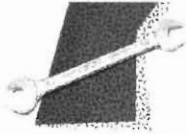


figure 7.20

distinctive feel that the advertisers needed. In the process it could be argued that the integration of the styling of the product and the advertising campaign that followed created an image of “balance between the universal and the individual” that the 1922 De Stijl Manifesto had sought, albeit with a very different purpose in mind.

### **The artist as bearer of cultural value**

Margolin has identified the device whereby the representation of “the artist as a bearer of cultural value” is widely used in American advertising. It was noted in Chapter Three that the modernist emphasis upon individuality and the commodification of art resulted in the importance of “authorship” and this has resulted in the modern notion of the artist as the possessor of a great deal of status. It was observed how the status of the authorship has been adopted by artists, designers and contemporary marketing strategies as “the designer label” with the signature acting as a logo. Normally the signature is used in advertising as an act of endorsement. Sports products are often signed by high profile sports stars. e.g. cricket bats signed by Jonty Rhodes. But the use of other forms of celebrity endorsement of products is an important and well established practice in advertising. Normally this is limited to appearance of movie stars recommending beauty and perfume products or sports stars recommending healthy foods or endorsing sports apparatus and clothing lines.

While it has been observed that the notion of an artist in a generic sense is often used in South Africa, it is rare for a recognised local artist, other than an actor or musical performer, to be featured in an advertisement. In the specialist musical press it is to be expected that well known performers will be featured endorsing the brand of instrument that they play. Possibly because of the low status accorded fine art and artists in South Africa most of the examples in mass media advertising features recognised international artists such as the “art” director, Orson Welles who appeared in a series of advertisements recommending Minolta Photocopiers. Significantly in this example the artist is used to promote a medium of visual reproduction in which the copy is advertised “as good as the original.”

International film directors such as Wells and Alfred Hitchcock are not only know for their artistic output but both have physical features that are instantly recognisable. In the same

manner Andy Warhol promoted himself as a recognisable “image” and a “name brand” to be used to good effect in advertising in the United States (*figure 7.21*). In South Africa such examples however are the exception to the rule and the notion of the artist tends to be restricted to either the signature or in the authorship of a specific piece of artwork that is intended for advertising. Two examples of how this occurs is to be observed in the BMW “Art Car” series that was discussed in Chapter Three and the promotion of Absolut Vodka.

### **Message in a bottle : fine art and alcohol**

The association of art and alcohol consumption has been well established from Classical representations of Bacchus the God of Wine to rowdy wedding scenes by Brueghel (c.1525/30-1569) to the point where during the late nineteenth century the image of the French artist as a consumer is well documented in the biographies of the Post-Impressionists and has subsequently become a part of the popular image of the artist at the time. On the commercial level, fine artists such as Pierre Bonnard designed posters to advertise Champagne and the popularity of *Absinthe* amongst bohemians at the turn of the century, a beverage which was eventually to be banned, was graphically captured by Picasso in “The Absinthe Drinker” (1902). Further, many post-Impressionist and Cubist still-life paintings contained wine bottles and consequently the notion of the Parisian café-society has become linked with popular notions of the French avant-garde of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. This is the association that encourages agencies such as Hunt Lascaris (Cape) to place a South African wine, Zonnebloem Lauréat on a table with a wedge of Camembert cheese, nuts and a cut of beef in front of a “Pissarro-esque” street scene (*figure 7.22*).

In this advertisement a number of advertising textual and visual rhetorical devices are employed. The headline makes reference to “A Masterpiece in the Fine Art of Claret Blending” and thereafter the copy is at pains to link the South African wine to the recognised quality of French viticulture, hence it is maintained that, in the words of cellarmaster Wouter Pienaar, “*Lauréat* represents a significant achievement for us in that we have created an harmonious and beautifully balanced wine blended in the Bordeaux tradition” (Hunt Lascaris: 1996). At the bottom of the advertisement the slogan “The Fine Art of Wine” is dominant linking the process of wine production with the notion of fine art. In turn a French identity which is already valued in viticulture (and art) is created for the

# Andy Warhol and Sonny Liston fly on Braniff. (When you got it-flaunt it.)



figure 7.21

## INTRODUCING ZONNEBLOEM LAURÉAT. A MASTERPIECE IN THE FINE ART OF CLARET BLENDING.



To say that Laureat is the pride of the Zonnebloem range of exceptional red wines is to understate its true greatness.

In the words of cellar master Wouter Pienaar: "Laureat represents a significant achievement for us in that we have created an harmonious and beautifully balanced wine blended in the Bordeaux tradition."



It is a complex blend of full and fruity Cabernet Sauvignon, the soft and velvety elegance of Merlot, rounded off by the lighter Cabernet Franc.

The grapes were selected from premier vineyard blocks in the Stellenbosch district, and each varietal was individually matured in small Nevers oak



barrels, for nine months, before being brought together to harmonise.

The result is an intensely flavoured wine with rich fruit complexities interlaced with a deep backdrop of French oak.

It is elegant and lively red in colour, glowing with ruby hues. On the nose, the first expression is a pronounced fruitiness. On the palate, it is a swirling

mélange of artistically integrated berry character and wood. On the soul, it's pure inspiration.

**ZONNEBLOEM LAURÉAT** If ever there was a wine that perfectly illustrates the true mastery of the

winemaker's art, Zonnebloem Laureat is the wine.



THE FINE ART OF WINE



figure 7.22

South African product by incorporating it into a pastiche of a French Impressionist painting. As Barthes emphasises it “Wine is felt by the French nation to be a possession which is its very own, just like its three hundred and sixty types of cheese and its culture. It is a totem-drink, corresponding to the milk of the Dutch cow or the tea ceremonially taken by the British Royal Family” (1973: 65).

A further referent to fine art is made by photographing the product in a composition in which the items on the table merge with the painted street scene in the background to become a “still-life” painted in the manner of a French “master.” Hence a subtle variation of the “masterpiece phenomenon” is at work without the master being identified. The association of the “art of wine making” with fine art production is a long standing one hence the use of artwork on the actual product in the form of labels is to be expected. Given the fierce competition for market share amongst wine producers on international markets there has been a marked trend during the 1990's to use artworks as a source of identity for both the individual product and the country of origin.

A recent example in South African wine promotion is the “Art on Wine” series in which designer Micky Du uses the work of artists such as Norman Catherine (b.1949) and William Kentridge (b.1955) on wine bottle labels (*figure 7.23 a & b*). However an earlier precedent in South Africa occurred during the early 1980's when Durban artist Andrew Verster was commissioned by J. Walter Thomson (JWT) to produce a painting for the Stellenbosh Farmers Winery that “gave the atmosphere of their flagship Zonnebloem Premier Grand Crû” for their first “Fine Art of Wine” series which was published in *Time* magazine during June, 1984 (*figure 7.24a*). Verster maintains that in this instance style was all important. “They [the advertising agency] wanted a Hockney but they couldn’t afford him but my style at the time was considered close enough” (personal interview with Verster 1998). The only brief given to Verster was that the bottle and label should feature in the painting and as such is a precursor of the strategy currently employed by Absolut Vodka that trades on the style of specific artists.<sup>4</sup> In this instance style alone proved to be not enough and, according to Verster, the double page advertisement appeared only once. Subsequently artists such as Graham Berry were commissioned by JWT to produce work that featured the product more prominently (*figure 7.24 b*). Interestingly the new “The fine art of wine” campaign was only



figure 7.23a



figure 7.23b

**Picture a Premier Grand Crû with body, character and personality and you begin to appreciate the art of Zonnebloem wines.**

**ZONNEBLOEM** When you consider the delights of taste, body and flavour in a wine as crisply dry as Zonnebloem Premier Grand Crû, you'll understand a little better the art of fine wine-making.

Every wine in the Zonnebloem range holds a reputation of excellence won over many decades of dedication and inspiration.

So it is with Zonnebloem Premier Grand Crû.

Long in advance, the cultivars to be used in its creation are chosen for the special qualities they may contribute.

Then in the vineyard, the most promising grapes are carefully watched over, especially as harvest time draws near, so that each grape may give of its best.

Later, in blending, experience and inspiration again join forces to further enhance the wine's intriguing nuances. The result of this uncommon combination of skill and talent is regarded by many as something of a contradiction: a bone-dry white wine with distinctive character, expressing itself in fullness of flavour and complexity of taste.

It's an accomplishment few other grand crû's have been able to achieve, though many have tried to match.

Successive tastings, both here and abroad, attest to these sought-after qualities in Zonnebloem Premier Grand Crû.

Enjoy it now, in the freshness and vigour of its youth.

Once you appreciate its unique pleasure, the wine will always remain as an inspired illustration of excellence in the wine-maker's art.

**Zonnebloem Premier Grand Crû**  
The fine art of wine.

figure 7.24a



CANEMBERT ET VIN, GRAHAM BERRY, 1983 (panel) crayons and wash, 30 cm x 27 cm

The art of Zonnebloem's wine masters is reflected in its finest advantage in Zonnebloem Cabanet Sauvignon Blanc de Noir. One of the very few made entirely from the most respected of red cultivars, it is full, firm and very distinctive, bringing the sturdy character of a noble red to the clarity of a crisp dry white. Creating a wine of rare and delicate elegance.



The fine art of wine  
1983 vintage now available

figure 7.24b

THE FINE ART OF FLYING  
by Bruce New



An Air France model represented a series of which is a number of one space. The Fine Art of Flying. The composition of the design is a series of horizontal lines and a central vertical line. The design is a series of horizontal lines and a central vertical line. The design is a series of horizontal lines and a central vertical line.

2000 years of history in four sets with one



THE FINE ART  
OF FLYING  
AIR FRANCE

figure 7.24c



published during 1987 when Air France advertised their service as “The Fine Art Of Flying” (*figure 7.24 c*).<sup>5</sup>

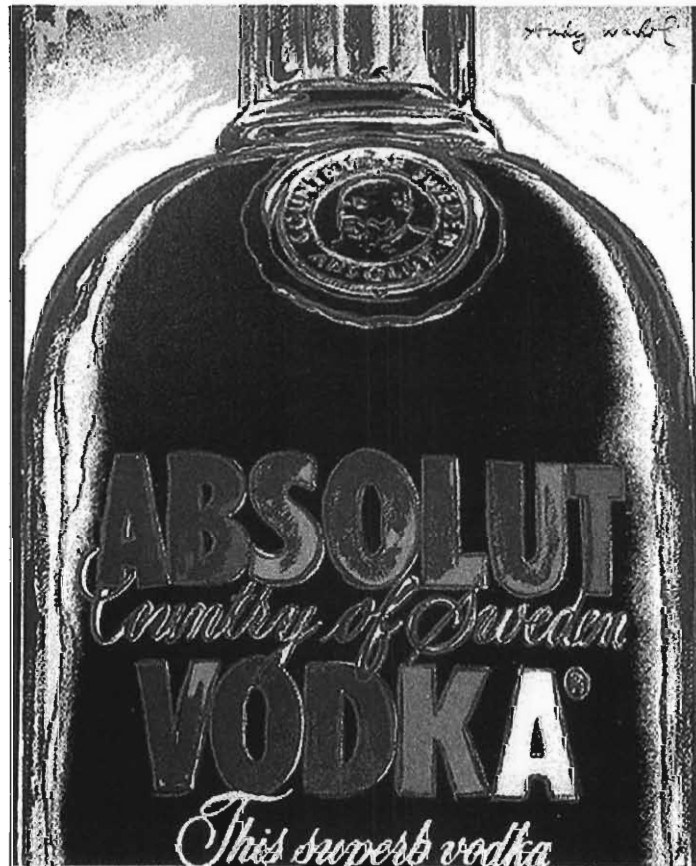
French companies have clearly recognised the possibilities of associating their products with art in international markets. In the process the Parisienne/French identity as an important art centre is merged with consumer products. In the case of alcoholic beverages the assumed link between Paris based artists and alcohol at the turn of the century (e.g. Van Gogh and Picasso) has created a number of possibilities which have been used by producers such as Pernod who approached the Durban Art Gallery (DAG) for permission to serve their product at all exhibition openings (personal interview with Brown 1997). No doubt Pernod have also been inspired by the success of Absolut Vodka in using artists to create specific art works to promote their product.

According to Christine Brown in an article “Absolutly Ingenious” published in *Forbes Magazine* in 1991: “Through brilliant promotion, Carillon Importers’ Michael Roux has made Absolut the leading imported vodka in the US, selling some 2.7 million cases a year” (1991: 128- 129). Brown goes on to outline the complex relationship between Roux’s patronage of the arts and its commercial value in the \$9-million advertising campaign to a point where he found himself as an art patron with the power to elevate artists from the ranks of the unknown. For example Romero Britto, a locally known Miami artist whose “turnover” and prices doubled within a year of the Absolut commission in 1991 (*ibid.*) (*figure 7.25*).

Significantly, according to Roux, the idea of using “contemporary artists to move vodka came originally from the late artist-promoter Andy Warhol.” In 1985 Roux paid Warhol \$65,000 for a painting of an Absolut bottle and five years’ reproduction rights (*figure 7.26*). “Absolut Warhol” was an overnight sensation, linking the vodka to the chic art set. The next year Warhol suggested that Absolut commission a painting by his protégée Keith Haring” (*op. cit.* 129). Carillon Importers (CI), a subsidiary of Grand Metropolitan, then published lithographic editions of these works. Clearly, making the advertisement art is seen as an important part of the overall marketing strategy, hence unsigned prints were sold to the public while signed ones were donated to museums.



*figure 7.25*



**ABSOLUT WARHOL.**

ABSOLUT VODKA IS 40% ALC/VOL (80 PROOF). ABSOLUT VODKA IS A PRODUCT OF SWEDEN. ABSOLUT VODKA IS A REGISTERED TRADEMARK OF V&S VIN & SPRIT AB. © 1999 V&S VIN & SPRIT AB. ABSOLUT VODKA IS A PRODUCT OF SWEDEN. ABSOLUT VODKA IS A REGISTERED TRADEMARK OF V&S VIN & SPRIT AB. © 1999 V&S VIN & SPRIT AB.

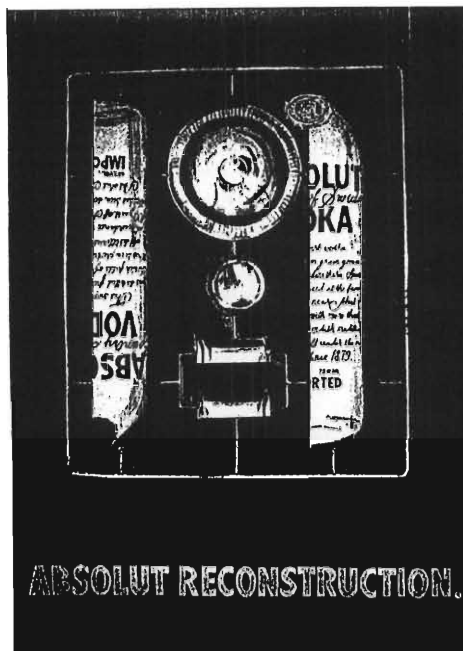
*figure 7.26*

It is important to note that in the Absolut advertisements each artwork is no different from other paintings in the artist's oeuvre, other than that they contain an Absolut bottle as a central focus. Margolin refers to this device as "the blurring of art and ads" (1992: 207). According to Brown, initially the commissions tended to reflect Roux's personal taste for exuberant pop art however on analysis one can detect that a pop art treatment is most appropriate for this type of advertising in that the commercial product or object is always the subject of the painting or sculpture. (ibid.). Since the mid 1990's the Absolut campaigns have been shifted into what can only be described as a post-modernist phase. This may have been prompted by the need to develop the brand globally. In keeping with the successful global advertising strategies of the Italian fashion company, Benetton, which had successfully incorporated controversial topical issues into their campaigns (*figures 8.1 a & b*), CI commissioned a series of paintings and sculptures by Soviet Artists that incorporated the Absolut Vodka bottle in "Absolut Glasnost."

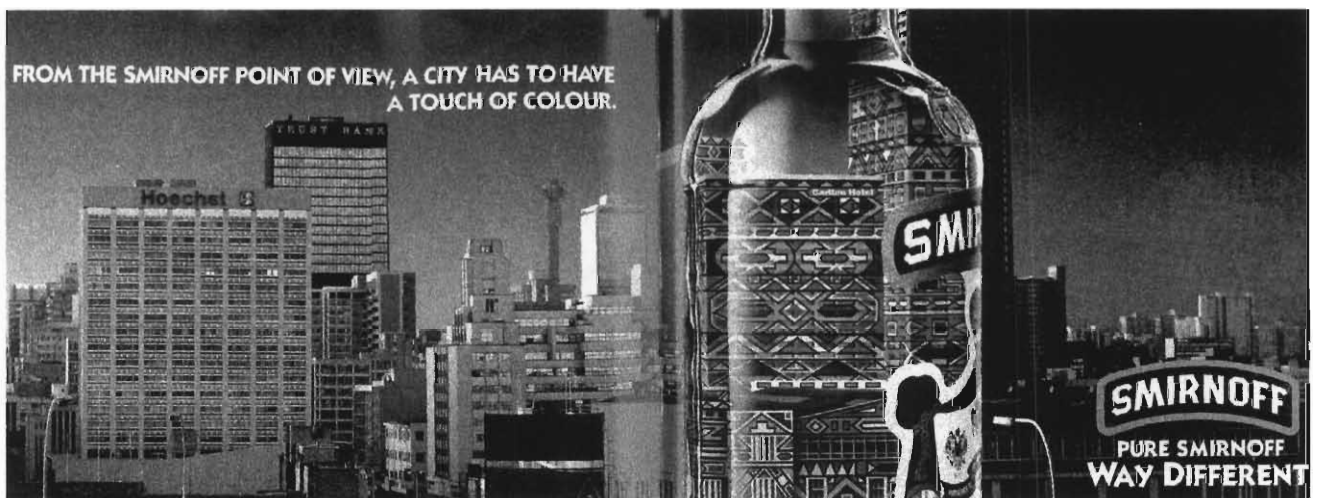
In keeping with the trend of giving global products a local flavour the South African distributors Seagrams SA commissioned the Johannesburg advertising agency, Net#work to design the print campaign for Absolut in 1996. Net#work's first attempt to arouse creative interest was aimed at first year students at the AAA advertising school and from this project Andre Stewart's "Absolut Reconstruction" was chosen to launch the campaign in South Africa (*figure 7.27*). The success of Absolut Vodka's use of art as advertising prompted Smirnoff Vodka to launch what is known in industry parlance as a "me too" marketing strategy in which Surrealist inspired images are used internationally (*frontpiece*). In the South African Smirnoff campaign the local identity uses a bottle filled with an Ndebele mural design superimposed upon the drab buildings of Johannesburg (*figure 7.28*).

### **Art as signifier of identity**

The complexity of the issue of a sense of identity in both South African art and advertising is a thread that runs throughout this dissertation. But it must be recognised that the notion of identity, be it personal, corporate, religious, ethnic cultural or national, is a complex one and this complexity is not unique to South Africa. Identity can be tasted, smelt, felt, heard as well as seen and cultural identities can be regional, national or continental. As Barthes (1974) and others (Bell and Valentine 1997) have pointed out consumption of food and



*figure 7.27*



*figure 7.28*

wine can provide a particularly strong sense of identity.

Similarly, in many societies a “national style” or national school of painting in art can become a signifier of a specific national identity that can be exploited by marketeers. Advertisers in South Africa often use this phenomenon in order to promote products associated with a particular country or region. The package design for *la Vita Pasta* is a particular case in point in that it reveals how Michelangelo’s Sistine Chapel fresco “The Creation” (1508-1512) is used as a signifier of Italy and this image is integrated with the two other signifiers of the region viz. Pasta and the Italian flag (*figure 7.29*). The use of colour in this packaging is also significant in that the yellow of the macaroni is linked to the yellow/browns of the fresco. The two images are framed by a simple gold border which in turn is placed on a black background which is punctuated with gold squares. The gold squares are arranged in a manner that is reminiscent of gold tesserae inlays in the copula of a Romanesque church. The other colour that is used is terracotta which one associates with Italian tiles. Significantly a small terra-cotta coloured symbol of wheat is placed on what appears to be a nineteenth century wood-etched image of a Neo-Classical woman. These two images act as a medallion in the right hand corner of the pack.

While the packaging of this product functions as part of the “masterpiece phenomenon” as previously explained, it is clear that this is also an example of how a number of different visual elements can be used to create an association with a specific national identity. The yellow/gold and terra-cotta signifies Italy as much as it signifies the wholesome wheat which is used to manufacture the pasta which is quintessentially a part of Italian culture, in spite of its Chinese origins.<sup>6</sup> The nineteenth century notion of Neo-Classicism of the medallion is merged to the notion of Renaissance classicism of Michelangelo. The implicit meaning is one of quality. This notion of quality is transferred into the wholesomeness of the ingredients and perfection of cooking that is assured.

### **The power of the vernacular**

On a visual level most post-Modern art and design contests and defies the restrictions imposed by the ideology of Modernism. This has advantages in multi-cultural societies where the tendency of post-modernist art and design is to create a sense of local or regional



figure 7.29



figure 7.30

14-02-1995 08:34 FROM LINDSEY SP114080 BOND TO 280837 P.04

You are walking, walking through the city, through the taxi rank, down a road in the township. You see everything around you. You see type. Highly inventive street typefaces. You see type who have no formal knowledge of fonts, serif, italics or cursive. You note how the lettering simply gets the message across with self-charm and a great sense of vitality. You pick up on the African love of script fonts used to denote an important person or vocation. "Ye olde English" type makes a superb job of impressing the passer-by about how good the person or business being advertised really is. And it strikes you that that is precisely what type is supposed to do - provide the platform to convey the message in such a way that it does that message full justice. You are walking, walking and seeing ...

**STREET**



The real Chicken Wont!

**popatlall kara**  
KING OF SARRIES

*Jakes Bargain Furnishers*  
477 Main Road Tamper.

**ALWIN** →  
**MOTOR SPARES**  
100% OLD MAIN RD

LAKESHAVEN CHILDREN'S HOME  
*Preschool*  
"JEWEL OF INDIA..."  
**ZISHA**  
**UTHUP**  
Village Green  
4 AUG 95 470m  
Tel: 20 201 201  
Tel: 577828 or 577812

**TURNPIKE SPRINGS**  
TAMPER/SET  
NEW - USED  
25 RANA RD ISIPINGO  
TELE 9026088

United Champion Studio  
PRINTS

**THANGEE GUNDEE AND SON**  
STALL 610 VENIAM MARKET  
**SPECIALIST**  
VISIT OUR SHOP...

MR C.V. JOINT  
RECONDITIONED  
ALSO NEW  
TEL NO

**777**  
**FAST FOODS**



figure 7.31

identity. In turn this has proved particularly useful to advertisers who wish to market global products with a “local flavour.” e.g. Coca-Cola’s “Afri-can” (*figure 5.15*). In this manner the language of multi-national advertising is given a local “accent” by use of the local idiom. Hence the power of the vernacular as a signifier of identity. This was one of the prime motives for Garth Walker to publish *i-jusi* a promotional magazine for his studio Orange Juice Design (OJD) (*figure 7.30*). The stated aim of the *i-jusi* (a street version Zulu for juice) which is distributed to the industry free of charge is “to create a debate about a new visual language in South Africa” (Gunning and Walker 1995: 1).

Walker describes the award winning publication as “*Ray Gun* meets Africa” which is significant in that *Ray Gun* is an international showcase for post-modern design when he wants to promote “local is lekker because we don’t need to copy Europe and America all the time” (personal interview with Walker 1997). Amongst other things *i-jusi* documented informal typography and advertising on the streets of Durban “to show how ordinary South Africans use graphic design and advertising in their everyday lives so we can be recognised as a creative powerhouse”<sup>7</sup> (*figure 7.31*):

“Get your nose out of the CAs and D&ADs just for a minute and look around. You’ll see a bunch of Joe Citizens painting pictures, murals, signs, making icons out of beads, wire and wood, laminating photographs onto cool drink cans, you name it, it’s out there. They have no need for decorated type, the likes of Bodoni serif and Mac technology. They simply take what they want from the rest of the world, mix it into an African stew and serve it up original and charming designs. Moreover, designs that have a function. And it is these designs that end up in Western galleries and museums to be ogled at by art *aficionados* worldwide.” (Gunning and Walker 1995: 1)

While the “Joe Citizens” may “take what they want from the rest of the world, mix it into an African stew and serve it up” this practice has potential pitfalls for the professional designer particularly in a society as culturally sensitive as South Africa. Initiatives such as *i-jusi* inevitably have to tread the fine line of appropriation of the “other” as discussed with reference to the Lion Match competition. In spite of these contradictions and dangers, *i-jusi* has been recognised both nationally and internationally as an important attempt on the part



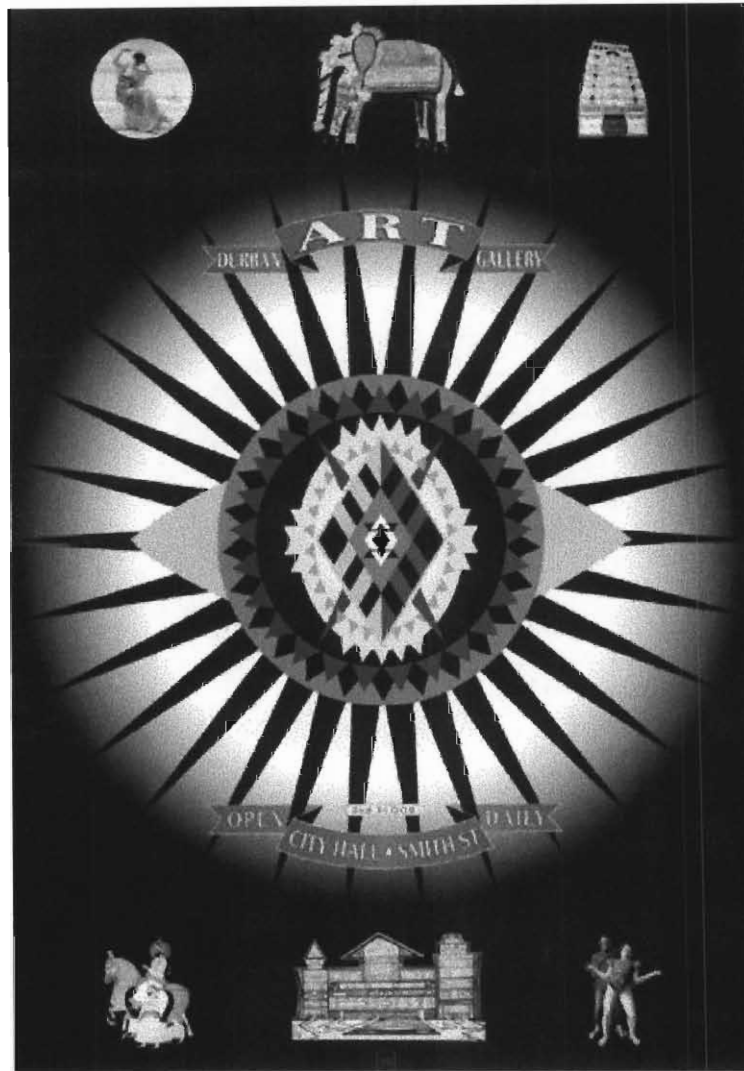


figure 7.32



figure 7.33

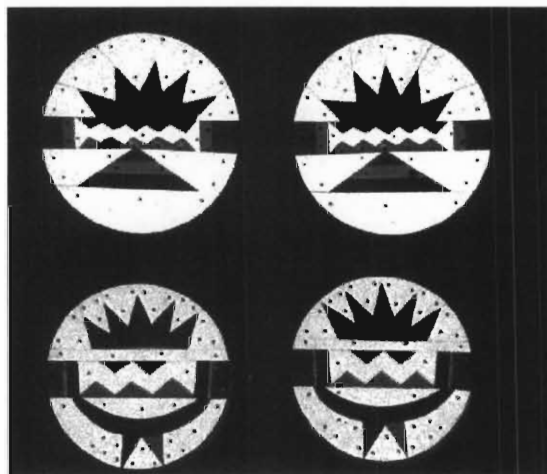
of the South African design industry to come to terms with a South African identity. For OJD this has been particularly useful when the brief demands a more inclusive approach such as the poster and promotional material for the Durban Art Gallery (DAG) (*figure 7.32*).

Since its establishment in 1892 the DAG represented the epitome of European “high” culture and until recently was renowned primarily for its impressive collection of Victorian paintings which were displayed in the main circular gallery of the Neo-Baroque buildings that form part of the City Hall complex. In order to reflect the changes in South Africa and at the gallery, the new curator, Carol Brown, commissioned OJD to design promotional material for the gallery because of Walker’s exploration of different notions of identity and taste in *i-jusi* (personal communicate with Brown 1997). According to Walker, the images for the brochure were selected by the curator hence “Monster Field” by the British painter Paul Nash is juxtaposed with a traditional Zulu ceremonial beer pot by Nesta Nala (*figure 7.33*). A detail from a Hindu temple inspired work of local artist Bronwen Findlay, “Vase and Elephant” frames a photograph of the Victorian grandeur of the Circular Gallery. In the top left hand corner is a sculpture of Bafana Mkhize, “Voting” which echos the crouched figure of John Roome’s “Monument to my home Town” on the front cover. The borders of the whole design are permeated by a typeface that forms a rhythm that echos the vibrancy of the street beyond the confines of the gallery. In addition to all this a mandala, based on Zulu earplug designs, provides a sun that illuminates the whole poster.

Traditionally, Zulu earplugs are artifacts that were made to be worn in a hole pierced in the lobe of the ear as part of a rite of passage from childhood to adulthood ceremony (Jolles 1997: 49). While by the 1950's the ear-piercing ceremony had lost its ritual significance and became cosmetic, the pattern of the earplug in the DAG poster reveals yet another legacy of Durban’s colonial past when men manually cleaned the floors of many buildings with Sunbeam wax polish. (*figure 7.34 a & b*) According to Jolles, although the workers may not have made the earplugs themselves he has visited many Zulu earplug factories in Durban and Johannesburg and has seen “Sunbeam polish tins lying around” and although he can’t prove it scientifically he maintains that “it seems most likely that the pattern was based on the Sunbeam logo” (personal interview with Jolles 1998). The earplug can be considered



*figure 7.34a*



*figure 7.34b*



*figure 7.35*

as an important signifier of Zulu identity and status within the various groups of workers. According to Jolles, association of the earplug motif with a “traditional” Zulu identity prompted the IFP to use it extensively on their promotional material (Jolles 1997) (*figure 7.35*). That OJD should use this motif as a source for many designs as a signifier of KwaZulu- Natal, and specifically on the poster and brochure for the DAG, is an indication of how permeable the borders between the various visual arts have become.<sup>8</sup>

Taking from the streets to create fine art was an intrinsic part of Pop Art during the 1960's. But for it to go back into the streets in the form of design art is a relatively new phenomenon to be observed in contemporary South African design. This can not only be seen in the DAG poster but is evident in the Mathews and Charter campaign for Kwa Zulu-Natal's East Coast Radio (1997). After the Standard Bank had sponsored an exhibition of west African hair dressing display art in art galleries throughout South Africa during 1995 (including the DAG), Mathews and Charter saw the commercial possibilities of appropriating the style, including a crude wooden frame for the pun “We've Got Waves To Suit Any Kind Of Head” (*figures 7.36 & 7.37*). Ironically since the physical borders of South Africa have become permeable and prone to immigration from the north, this type of barber sign has become a popular feature on the streets of Durban (*figure 7.38*). However the Mathews and Charter example and the DAG poster serve to emphasise the role that “high art” institutions still play in mediating between art, artifact and the public.

In South Africa the blurring of the cultural boundaries can be regarded as a direct result of the forces of transformation since 1990. Since then there has been a growing trend to invite public participation in everything from submission of proposals for the constitution, to the design of the national flag, livery design for the national airline carrier (SAA) and the creation of art for advertising. The blurring of the boundaries between art, advertising and democratic participation occurred when in 1991/92 a South African advertising agency, Young & Rubicam, developed a television viewer competition supported by *Bona* magazine to promote Colgate toothpaste. The stated marketing problem at the time was that the “Colgate Smile” was a concept conceived in the United States. In an effort to avoid the racial connotations implicit in the American white toothpaste smile on pink skin, Young & Rubicam changed the background to the dominant brand colour - red (*Marketing Mix*,

*Visit*

**Sportin' Waves**

**FRANK NARO Saloon**

**DADA LUMBA**

**Barber signs from Africa**  
 Exhibition of hand-painted boards used by African barbers to attract customers

**Durban Art Gallery**  
 March 15 – April 2 1995

Standard Bank National Arts Festival

© 1995 University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg and Standard Bank Group Art Collection

*figure 7.36*

**WE'VE GOT WAVES TO SUIT ANY KIND OF HEAD.**

ELVIS PRESLEY

FRANK SINATRA

JOHN TRAVOLTA

MARILYN MONROE

JOHN F. KENNEDY

WILLIE NELSON

BILL CLINTON

OPRAH WINFREY

94.95 FM

cost of a quality

*figure 7.37*

October, 1993: 31). Looking for a growth in what, in 1992, was referred to as “the main market” the viewers of the CCV TV programme, “Nogomgqibelo Show” were asked to create their own expression of the “Colgate Smile” by using Colgate packs to construct a design or sculpture. These sculptures were featured at the finals of the “Colgate Spread a Smile Show” (*figure 7.39*). According to Shelly Berman, Marketing Manager (Oral Care) at Colgate-Palmolive, “the aim (was) to incentivise (sic.) purchase and involvement with the product given that toothpaste is such a low involvement product. At the end of the day when you are selling toothpaste you are essentially selling end benefits” (*ibid.*).

The response was overwhelming with more than 15 000 entries and the top 50 sculptures were exhibited at the Market Gallery in Johannesburg. A number of sculptures were also animated in a series of television advertisements throughout 1993. The notion of using the work of unskilled artists in advertising in this campaign represents another variation on the Absolut campaign theme in that the conditions of the competition insisted that the packaging of Colgate Toothpaste be the sole material in the “assemblage” or sculpture. In this example, the power of the vernacular as a signifier of identity is a precursor of what Walker recognised in *i-jusi#1* and much of the work subsequently produced by OJD. Walker comments that since the establishment of OJD in 1993 the work of the studio has been feted by “overseas people” while in South Africa it may have “given us credibility but hasn’t earned any bucks” (personal interview with Walker 1996).

However the ability of the vernacular positively to affect the bottom-line was evident in the Colgate campaign when in a declining market Colgate-Palmolive increased market share by 1% 1991-1992. According to an editorial in *Marketing Mix* “in a market worth R180-million this translates into a considerable sum of money” (*Marketing Mix*, October, 1993: 32). The Loerie Awards presented to OJD and Garth Waker for design in 1996/1997 also ensured an increase in market share that caught the attention of South Africa’s largest advertising agency, Ogilvy& Mather. No doubt this helped influenced them to buy into the company in 1997. Clearly the visual arts can have a great deal of value and meaning in advertising and promotion in South Africa.



*figure 7.38*



*figure 7.39*

## Notes

1. Both the art historian Ernst Gombrich (1909-1995) and the writer Roland Barthes (1915-1980) explored art and popular culture respectively in terms of visual rhetoric and it was Barthes who developed a theory of semiology, or “science of signs” which, in part, has informed this text.

2. The theory of a Unique Selling Proposition (USP) was developed by Rosser Reeves of Ted Bates in the USA. USP has become a philosophy of advertising in which every product is recognised as possessing a characteristic which can be developed to make it unique in its class.

3. The Volkswagen Golf originally introduced into the South African market during the mid-1970's as a replacement for the VW Beetle had come to the end of its shelf life with the introduction of new Jumbo Golf in 1984. However in common with many developing countries, car manufacturers in South Africa cannot afford to write-off the capital investment involved in the establishment of a plant and machinery necessary for the manufacture of specific models. (Hence the VW Beetle was manufactured in South Africa many years after the model had been withdrawn from more developed markets and this is the reason why it was still produced in Brazil, until 1995).

4. In 1998 Absolut Vodka commissioned Verster to “decorate” a set of glasses with “fake stained glass paints” for sale at the Visual Arts Association auction in Cape Town (personal interview with Verster 1998).

5. If Zonnebloem’s “The fine art of wine” campaign can be described as a precursor of the Absolut Vodka strategy of using artists to feature the product in their work then the Air France “Fine Art Of Flying” can be viewed as forerunner of the current British Airways use of international artists to enhance their new “global” strategy. The copy of “The Fine Art of Flying” explains that the motivation behind the commissioning various international artists such as the Venezuelan, Jesus Soto, was to “capture its new spirit” of the airline



(figure 7.24c).

6. Marco Polo introduced Chinese noodles into Italy at the end of the thirteenth century. (Microsoft Encarta).

7. In a further effort to “Africanise,” OJD Walker has worked closely with students from the ML Sultan Technikon to produce *i-jusi#3* (1996), *i-jusi#5* (1997) and *i-jusi#7* (1998).

8. Walker is a keen collector of Zulu earplugs but knew little of their history and meaning other than that “they are very different to Ndebele work and are from this [KwaZulu-Natal] region.” He maintains that he uses the motif because “the shapes are strong and the colours are vibrant” and as such they provide a “very simple way of crossing over a craft aesthetic into graphic design” (personal interview with Walker 1998).

## Conclusion

This dissertation has attempted to describe the development of advertising during a period of radical transformation in society, economics, religion and politics. This was the period in which, amongst other things, the purpose, meaning and value of fine art changed dramatically. This was also the period in which, to use the words of Marx and Marshall Berman, “all that is solid melts into air” (Berman 1982: 15). This text has described how the “solid” institutions of the old order “melted” and were replaced by the uneasy, but exciting, world of modernisation and modernity. According to Berman modernisation refers to the economic, social and technological innovations associated with the rise of capitalism while modernity describes the radically-transformed character of life under capitalism (op. cit. 15 - 36). In these terms Berman regards modernism in art and design as the quest to articulate the experience of modernity and as such this text recognises advertising as an important part of modern culture.

Although Berman maintains that the experience of modernity was primarily focussed in western Europe and America the developing world was [and still is] not immune (op. cit. 125). This was particularly true of colonies such as South Africa when their importance as markets for mass produced products was recognised during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. To this end the initial introduction of brands such as Sunlight Soap and Bovril was discussed and linked to the colonial interests they served (*figures 5.3- 6b*). This text has described how, with the marketing of these products, the role of the “commercial” artist became more complex as advertising began to play a role in the expansion and creation of markets by presenting commodities as objects of desire. Inevitably, in this quest, advertising began to address issues of taste and status.

In the interim the avant-garde in art and design in Europe began to lose their oppositional and marginal role. Indeed the idealism of artists and designers at the Bauhaus had actively sought to utilise the modernisation process to create a better world for the mass. This desire was echoed in Russia by the aptly named “constructivists” who significantly renounced pure fine art in favour of a graphic design orientated “agitprop.” Ironically the rise of both Stalin

and Hitler extinguished the development of these trends in both Russia and Germany, but the well documented exodus of artists and designers to Britain and the United States ensured that modernism (as defined by Berman) would take hold within capitalist economies rather than the socialist idealism envisaged by the Bauhaus and Constructivist experiments.

This text has described how the notion of progress implicit in modernity became a useful marketing tool in the promotion of “modern” products such as fridges and stoves which were marketed primarily to women in South Africa as convenience products (*figure 4.16*). This occurred particularly at the end of WW2 when according to the Fredric Jameson, “a new kind of society began to emerge (variously described as post-industrial society, multinational capitalism, consumer society, media society and so forth). New types of consumption; planned obsolescence; an ever more rapid rhythm of fashion and styling changes; the penetration of advertising, television and the media generally to a hitherto unparalleled degree throughout society” (1998: 19). While all these characteristics may have been slow to manifest themselves in South Africa (particularly for political reasons, the development of media and the delay in the introduction of television until 1976) they were, and still are, important indicators of change that are described in this text.

By the 1960's the “metanarratives” of modernism as the French philosopher Lyotard calls them were challenged (1987: xxiv). The Utopian spaces of modern architecture may have been the first to fall into disfavour with the masses that they were intended to uplift but the euro-centric, male dominated view of modernism was to be vehemently challenged by post-colonial and feminist critics alike. This text has not only absorbed and reflected many of these views, but has attempted to explain the consequent breakdown between high and low culture within the South African context, albeit a South Africa that during the period 1960 - 1990 was subjected to increasing cultural, political, technological and economic isolation.

High modernism's disregard for the “other” be it woman's art, indigenous culture or popular art, was paralleled by a conservative regime in South Africa that used colonial notions of cultural superiority to divide and rule the country under the system known as apartheid which only began to collapse towards the end of the 1980's. By this time the term postmodern had been defined by theorists and philosophers to describe a new condition that

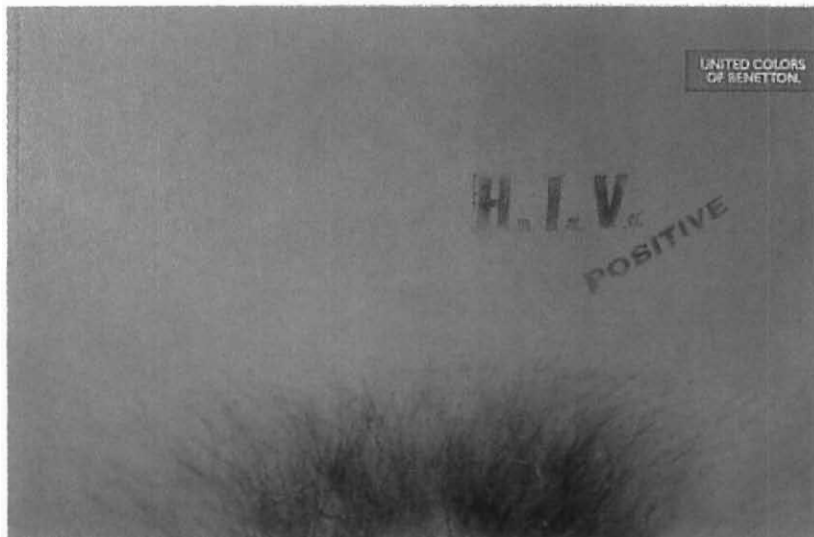
prevailed elsewhere with the alleged collapse of modernism and its concomitant notions of modernity and modernisation. Like modernism, postmodernism is not merely a description of a stylistic change in art and design but reflects fundamental shifts in culture, science, economics, politics and philosophy.

Once again South Africa could not remain immune and the isolation from the world that the apartheid regime sought was a practical impossibility in a world intent upon globalization, not only of economies but of culture and politics. That this process was fuelled by technological developments such as the expansion of computer and satellite television networks is almost without doubt. The role of television coverage of the Vietnam war during the 1960's in influencing support for the war is well documented. Similarly when South Africans were subjected to strict media restrictions during the various States of Emergency the rest of the world were exposed to the images of terror in the townships which hardened international resistance to apartheid and undoubtedly contributed to its demise. The same might be said of events elsewhere in China and eastern Europe to the point where wars are now fought on television ("War in the Gulf" on CNN) as entertainment. This is the 'obscene' universe that Baudrillard writes about in his essay "Ecstasy of Communication" to explain the annihilation of human values in the media age. This is the age in which the media (especially television) is both the receiver and distributor of information (Baudrillard 1985: 128). According to Baudrillard it is in this context that advertising is "no longer a more or less baroque, utopian or ecstatic scenario of objects and consumption, but the effect of an omnipresent visibility of enterprises, brands, social interlocutors and the social virtues of communication" (1985: 129).

Here one needs to consider how often, on television and in the print media potent news images are juxtaposed with advertising images. As a postmodern commentary and exploitation of this phenomena the Italian fashion company Benetton under the guidance of creative director Oliviero Toscani has deliberately used anti-fashion images of aids sufferers, disaster victims and other controversial images in order to promote their products in the global marketplace (*figures 8.1*). The Benetton advertisements which are not only printed in magazines but are displayed as large outdoor billboards give credence to both Baudrillard's and McAllister's view that the "new" advertising in the media age has



*figure 8.1a*



*figure 8.1b*

contributed to the destruction of the public and private space. This research project has attempted to reflect these trends especially in respect to its relationship with the arts and chose, as Baudrillard does, to identify cultural centres and museums as an important focus of promotional activity. In his words:

“No longer limited to its traditional language, advertising organises the architecture and realization of super-objects like Beaubourg [Pompidou Centre] and the Forum des Halles, and of future projects (e.g., Parc de la Villette) which are monuments (or anti-monuments) to advertising, not only because they will be geared to consumption but because they are immediately proposed as an anticipated demonstration of the operation of culture, commodities, mass movement and social flux. (1985 : 130)

This text has also concerned itself with the other effects of the postmodern condition on advertising in South Africa. Much has been said of the importance of identity in the initial stages of the post-apartheid era. The quest for a sense of identity was not only viewed as a political imperative during the period 1990-1994 that witnessed South Africa's transition to democracy, but also reflects the contradiction of the importance of national and regional identity at a time of globalization in the media that destroys notions of difference. As Aynsley explains;

“It is now likely that the urban populations around the world share more attitudes and common life expectations with one another than they do with rural populations in their own countries. Manufactured and designed goods contribute significantly towards this apparent commonality of urban existence, from Buenos Aires to Bangkok.” (1993: 59)

Given these circumstances and South Africa's legacy of apartheid the quest for a common identity is likely to remain an elusive concept. That advertisers sought to exploit the possibility of an identity for the “new” South Africa during the period of transition to democracy has been dealt with at length and no doubt provides an example that will be repeated again and again as political and commercial opportunities arise in the future. Hence the visual arts as much as they possess and express a sense of identity will remain vulnerable

to exploitation.

This is not to imply that the visual arts have been aloof from the process of change and one of the implicit features of this dissertation has been to explain how fine art from its inception became a commodity for consumption. While many histories of art describes how fine artists worked in opposition to consumer culture, most concede that by the 1960's seminal postmodernists, such as Warhol, became complicit with it (Docker 1994: 117). This feature of postmodernist art has provoked as much criticism from Marxist theorists as that which is normally reserved for advertising itself. In this the American Marxist critic Fredric Jameson differs from Baudrillard in his belief in the omnipresent power of the media as the central force but instead proposes that the global spread of the market with its own 'logic' has absorbed cultural and economic systems to make up the latest phase of the world capitalist system which he calls - "late, consumer or multinational capitalism" (1998: 20).

### **Learning from Las Vegas (again)**

If the role of history is to provide an understanding of the past in order to explain the present then, perhaps, there is no more fitting conclusion to this dissertation than an article published in the global news magazine *Newsweek* during the final days of this research project. The article, entitled "Vegas Meets Van Gogh," reports on the plans of the casino entrepreneur Steve Wynn to use his art collection to "help attract ultra-high-rolling gamblers to his \$1.8 billion Bellagio hotel and casino, opening Oct. 15" (*Newsweek* August 1998 pp. 66-67)<sup>1</sup> (*figure 8.2*). The journalist Peter Plagens describes the Bellagio as a "3,000 room Renaissance fantasy, set on an artificial Lake Como" and explains that "the paintings will hang in the Bellagio Gallery of Fine Art, a state-of-the-art facility inside the hotel, near the casino" (Plagens 1998: 66).<sup>2</sup>

When Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Stephen Izenour wrote *Learning from Las Vegas* in 1972, the kitsch, spontaneity and mixed messages in the architecture that they described as a part of Las Vegas' urban design became the inspiration for much of what has subsequently become known as Post-modernism (Heller and Lasky 1993: 162). If there is anything to be learnt in this instance it is that the actual artwork now appears to have entered the promotional domain and that no doubt the status and value of art will,

# Vegas Meets van Gogh

Forget Wayne Newton. Steve Wynn's gambling on blue-chip art to bring high rollers to his new casino. BY PETER PLAGENS

**C**ASINO ENTREPRENEUR STEVE Wynn is the world champion at crossing the kind of flashy, gaudy line you need to succeed in Las Vegas. He even used to appear in commercials for his casino in a commercial for Frank Sinatra. But Wynn, who is 51, is so toward, capped, cooled and fit he could pass for one of his own mistresses — has a higher side. He's become one of the world's most passionate art collectors — both personally and on behalf of his public hotel company, Mirage Resorts. In the last few years Wynn has bought van Gogh's "Portrait of a Man" (1889), Gauguin's "A Tahitian Family" (1890), Matisse's "Matisse" (1910), and Picasso's "Portrait of Dora Maar" (1937) — worth a total of \$10 million for paintings by Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning, Jasper Johns, Roy Lichtenstein and Robert Rauschenberg. Recently he snatched up Monet's "Waterlily Pond and Path by the Water" at Sotheby's for \$32 million. Another also was original by Vincent and Tony Bennett. Wynn and Mirage have amassed \$300 million worth of art. "I'll tell you this," says influential New York dealer Larry Gagosian, "he's buying more art than the Getty Museum."

Wynn hopes that great art will help attract ultra-high-roller gamblers to his \$1.5 billion Bellagio hotel and casino opening Oct. 15. Bellagio is a 1,000-room Renaissance fantasy, set on an artificial Lake Caesars with 1,200 fountains. The paintings will hang in the Bellagio Gallery of Fine Art, a state-of-the-art facility to be built near the casino. Wynn has hired the former head of Fort Worth's distinguished Kimbrell Art Museum, Edward Pilchery, as the gallery's "curatorial director." The inaugural exhibit will feature essays by such not-

ed scholars as New York University art historian Robert Rauschenberg. So how about a sneak peek at the collection? "I'd love to show it to you," Wynn says over the phone. "But several hotels right. Right now it's a secret. Come out a few days before the official opening, and I'll show it through myself." Then he adds, "We have to have an understanding. I don't want you writing about the hotel. I don't want a movie story. This is about art, about the picture."

Wynn's passion for paintings is genuine, by all accounts. Last December the van Gogh awarded dining at the Phillips Collection in Washington, D.C., where it was no loan from a collector. The collector's director had taken the conservator's workshop with word that Wynn had just bought the work. "I'm honored in a week it was flown to Las Vegas on a private jet for me for a Wynn party. There were treated guests to a knowledgeable 20 minutes talk on the painting. Not unexpected, says Eisenstein, "I was taken to his office to see de Kooning's 'Pollock' and Pollock's 'Prime,'" the art historian recalls. "Wynn was an unexpected present. He was amazing, lectured to me on the pictures to prove he'd done his homework." Gagosian says that Wynn "uses a lot less artwork, a lot less name-dropping than other clients. When he talks about how looking at Pollock research lines of Monet, it's not something he read but something he's actually feeling." Wynn also doesn't hedge much



Anybody's hats: Will Pissarro's "Dora Maar (Self)", Lichtenstein's "Turpids... Loc" and van Gogh's "Portrait of a Man" (right) bring high rollers to the tables.



Masters' Medals: Bellagio's Wynn and the coming attractions (clockwise from top): Jackson Pollock's "The Image of..."

and goes right away. "This is what it must have been like when I got the Frank and J. P. Morgan a hundred years ago," the dealer says. But the savings come behind Wynn's obsession with art, he's suffered from some of the same problems as he was 20. Eventually it will save him that.

If Wynn is really serious about his disinterest in art, he's also serious about the legacy of his father, a complete gambler who died deep in debt at the age of 46. After graduating from the University of Pennsylvania, Wynn took over his dad's business operation in Maryland, paid off the L.L.U. and set out for Las Vegas. In a legendary move, he bought a parking lot next to Caesars Palace from Howard Hughes, put out the word that he was going to open a small casino on it and then sold the property to Caesars for a quick \$300,000 profit. With that stake he merged the thriving Golden Nugget into Mirage Resorts and began his

effect to transform the image of Las Vegas from a place of raucous and spectacle to a place of the whole family. The Mirage Resorts, from inners (Singapore) and Roy, and Wynn's Treasure Island casino stages piano-club battles for kids whose parents have come to town to gamble. Bellagio is named after the art and the collection of which the project they're in Monte Carlo.

Which brings us back to great art and big casinos — inevitably intertwined ever since the pharos commissioned golden statues for their funds. Wynn is only showing off his treasures to the nation or the Madras. And if that Wynn's pictures will hang when people can see them, rather than hidden in a vault.

But Wynn continues an old tradition with intention to the bottom line. When Mirage stockholders objected to his art spending, Bellagio bought back four paintings with \$25 million of his own money. They had purchased some more art with personal funds and pushed the combined balance back to the company for a total \$8 million a year. Mirage Resorts has also applied for a Nevada tax break on valuable art put on public view. The law passed last year after intense lobbying by Wynn — could save the company \$15 million in sales tax and \$3 million a year in property taxes. But the gallery plans to charge an admission fee, not a tax, at least one per person. Last week the state tax commission decided that Wynn can not enjoy both the exemption and the tax relief. For another hearing is scheduled for October. Finally, the art in the gallery will be for sale; van Gogh's "Portrait of a Man" for a reported \$12.5 million, about double what Wynn paid for it.

He just might not come out of profit. The Asian recession has especially hit the number of "whales" gamblers who can afford to lose \$1 million a night to lower than 100. And some people simply question the power of blue-chip paintings to attract the rich and blue-chip to Bellagio's gaming tables. As for the van Gogh, the Gauguin and the Picasso — they'll return their digests just fine, as they always have. When the Roman sage Seneca said, "Via longa est, ars longa," he wasn't just talking about you know.

figure 8.2



figure 8.3

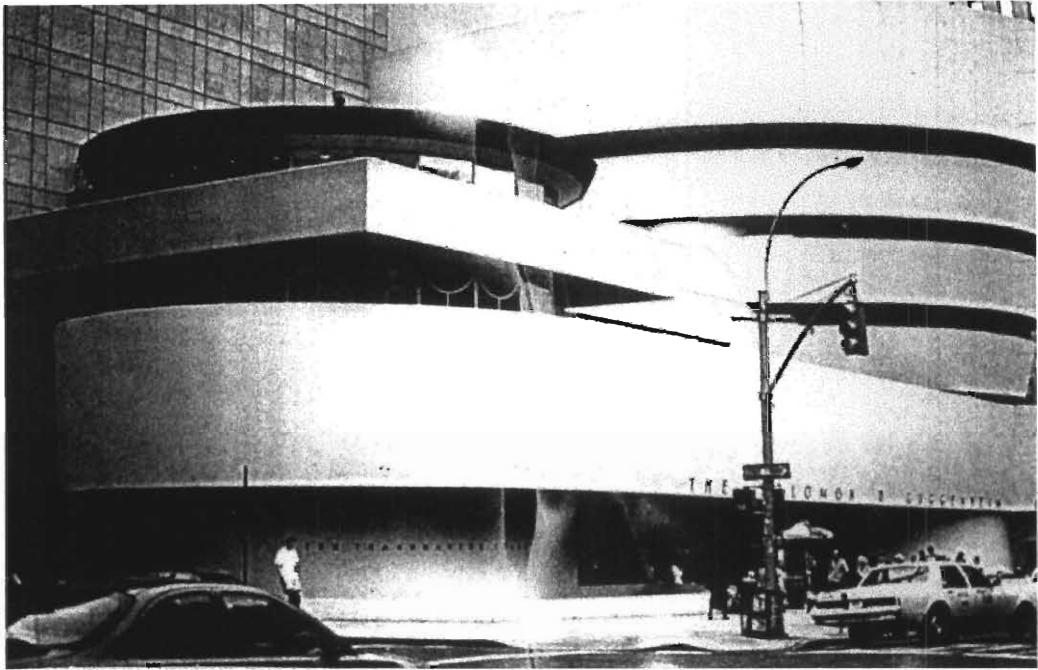


henceforth, be used (and abused) in other crass and unusual ways in the future (*figure 8.3*). However this development has had a long gestation period since the work of art became a commodity - an object to be desired in an economic system in which all the visual arts function, to a greater or lesser degree, alongside other commodities as objects for consumption. As noted in Chapter Three Gablik maintains that “Commodity fetishism is the distinguishing mark of our culture, and the artist’s consciousness has been fatally enriched with this knowledge” (1991: 37).

Much has been said throughout this text about the importance of culture, especially the creation of a notion of a national identity in post-colonial societies such as South Africa. However it needs to be recognised that the culture that has nurtured the use of art as a marketing tool is a “promotional culture”<sup>3</sup> which, because of globalization, is now pervasive worldwide. Many have noted that the paradox of globalized culture is that it encourages the growth of local identities almost as an anecdote (Poggenpohl 1997: 30), hence the quest for identity in both South African art and advertising cannot be considered in isolation.

It has also been noted that both artists and art museums were amongst the first to become a part of the new promotional culture. As Baudrillard has pointed out even the architectural design of major art museums in Europe and the United States is intended to act as a significant promotional vehicle (1985: 130). Hence it could be argued that both the Guggenheim Museum in New York and the Pompidou Centre in Paris not only created a great deal of publicity because of the audacity of their design but they still serve as cultural icons in their respective environments (*figures 8.4 a & b*). In keeping with Baudrillard’s views all indications are that this tradition continues with the establishment of the Guggenheim museum in Bilbao, Spain and in South Africa with the proposed “Newtown & Culture as Habitat” development in Johannesburg which was described by the *Mail & Guardian* as “a master plan that hopes to improve the life of the area by bringing new concepts about shopping, living, recreation and cultural production” (*Mail & Guardian* August 28 to September 3 1998: 8).<sup>4</sup>

During the second half of the twentieth century, these museums and developments like them



*figure 8.4a*



*figure 8.4b*

around the world have had to compete, not only with each other, but with the popular culture of the street and with the media for an audience. In order to do this many large museums in Europe and America have established large retail outlets within their complexes to sell “art” merchandise and books (*figure 2.1 a & b*). In addition, coffee shops and restaurants have been established that resemble the theme restaurants of franchised hotel groups and in the process created the equivalent of a “cultural” Disneyworld.

This has changed the primary role of the museum which has for the past two hundred years valorised art. However, according to Hein, within the trend to popularise culture, the museum not only serves to “preserve the inherited past, but to define the present and to articulate a sense of it that can be transmitted to generations of the future” (1992: 543). He goes on to explain that:

“Once the domain of the private collector and the educated connoisseur, museums now draw the same crowds as department stores, amusement parks, and beaches and for much the same reasons, people go there to get information, to be entertained, to shop, to eat, and to socialize with friends.”  
(*ibid.*)

All indications are that this trend is emerging in South Africa as well. The reasons for cuts in municipal and government subsidies to cultural institutions has been explained in Chapter Six and it is likely that in addition to increased corporate sponsorship (with all its attendant dangers) museums and galleries in South Africa will be under pressure to become income generating institutions (personal interview with Brown 1997). To that end the new buildings for independent galleries such as the Natal Society of Arts (NSA) already give expression to the need for attractive shops and refreshment outlets on their premises. While the success of such ventures is to be commended, it is an inescapable fact that, in this scenario, the consumption of the art and culture on display in the gallery space is merged with the consumption of food and commodities on sale elsewhere in the complex.

While the DAG has been slow to follow the lead of the NSA and other museums in South Africa in developing these types of facilities, the Gallery is at the forefront of another trend in targeting a new audience for art. Events such as “Red Eye” merge the low culture of



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AUGUST 16, 1998

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*The  
body  
eclectic*

PAGE 3

**ADD SOME STYLE TO YOUR MOTORING!!!  
YOU WILL NOT FIND BETTER VALUE!**



**CHICO 1300 IMOLA**

- + 1987 MODEL
- + IMPORTED 16V WHEELS
- + CUSTOM INSTRUMENT CLUSTER
- + CUSTOM DECAL PACK
- + 881 5700 RPM
- + CHOICE OF COLOURS
- + TWIN HEADLAMP
- + RICKY SPOILER
- + HATCH EQUIPMENTS
- + LOW MILEAGE
- + NEW COLOURS SPD
- + FREE 1000 OIL CHG.

**R35 990** inc VAT



**1997 CONQUEST TAZZ**

- + LOW KM'S
- + CHOICE OF COLOURS
- + F.S.H.
- + TWIN SPORT EXHAUST
- + CODED BUMP
- + GRUNDIG RADIO TAPE
- + 1300 MULTI VALVE ENGINE
- + FREE TANK OF FUEL

**R36 990** inc VAT



**HONDA 1500 MANUAL LUXLINE**

- + 1987 MODEL
- + AIRCON
- + SERVICE HISTORY
- + CHOICE OF COLOURS
- + GRUNDIG RADIO TAPE
- + FULL SERVICE HISTORY
- + CUSTOM CARPETS
- + LOW KM'S
- + POWER STEERING
- + ALUMINUM DISCS
- + CENTRAL LOCKING
- + BALANCE OF 36 MONTHS
- + MAINTENANCE PLAN
- + FREE TANK OF PETROL

**R62 990** inc VAT



**CORSA LITE 1300 SPORT**

- + 1987 MODEL
- + CHOICE OF COLOURS
- + 1 SPEED SHIFTER
- + FULL SERVICE
- + LOW KM'S
- + FULL FACTORY WARRANTY
- + TRANSPARENT MADE BODY
- + COLOUR COORDINATED BUMPERS
- + SPORT DECALS
- + COLOUR COORD. WHEELS
- + 5 AND 6 SPEAKER OPTICAL
- + FREE TANK OF FUEL

**R37 990** inc VAT

## HYMAN CARS

214 WEST ST. BORRAN 3327624  
 7 POUND ALFRED ST. BRN 3402650  
 A/N LAZARUS G/22 3378845 / 3414002  
 589 MARINE DR 6665000 / 6665 6703 3372  
 8 FRANKLYN DR 341 0700 / 3410662, 241  
 0740001 / 0001 3347845 / 3347830

**OPEN SUNDAY**  
11am-2am

figure 8.5

“rap” performers from local townships with the “high” performance “art” of the Vita Prize for Art (1998) winner Steven Cohen. Performance art, such as Cohen’s work, lends itself to, and is perhaps designed for, subsequent promotion and publicity <sup>5</sup> (*figure 8.5*). It could be argued that the “grand gesture” of much of contemporary performance art is, in itself, an attempt on the part of fine artists to come to terms with the same media clutter that forces advertisers to resort to similar modes of address in order to attract the consumer’s attention.

Within the notion of a promotional culture there is little wonder that a crisis has developed for the visual arts. Within such a culture, the issue of appropriation of the creative output of art and craft producers, without respect for community ownership of form, pattern and motif and the flaunting of the individual artist’s copyright is a particularly serious issue but one that cannot be dealt with in the depth it deserves in this dissertation.<sup>6</sup> Within the course of this research project it is clear that a wide gulf still exists between fine art producers and the “messy world of money” upon which promotional culture and its agent, advertising thrives. Having said that, perhaps it needs to be recognised, as this dissertation has done, that advertising has infiltrated every aspect of our lives from the aircraft we fly in, the sport and entertainment we watch, the supermarkets we shop in, to the art galleries and museums we visit and even as we wait in doctor’s waiting rooms.

Many fine artists have responded accordingly. Artists such as Barbra Kruger and a group of anonymous women artists in New York, the Guerrilla Girls, have blurred the lines between art and advertising. They have adopted the rhetorical devices of advertising (and publicity) to challenge the ideology of consumerism (*figure 8.6*) and the institution of a (white) male dominated art and art history in posters such as “WHEN RACISM & SEXISM ARE NO LONGER FASHIONABLE, WHAT WILL YOUR ART COLLECTION BE WORTH?” (c.1987) (*figure 8.7*).

Jeff Koons (b. 1945) has taken an even more radical stance and used both the rhetoric and a form of pornography and advertising as a means of expression: “I want to have impact on people’s lives. I want to communicate to as wide a mass as possible and the way to communicate to the public right now is through TV and advertising. The art world is not



*figure 8.6*



*figure 8.7*

effective right now” (Koons 1992: 77). The call for a moral and social dimension to artistic practice, embodied in the “social sculpture” of Joseph Beuys (1921-1986), represents yet another response to the conundrum that the detached nature of western modernism has created. As noted in Chapter Three it is sad but almost inevitable that the division between the fine arts and commercially based design arts should occur at the birth of the “modern” when both artists and philosophers declared that only the “useless is beautiful” (Gautier quoted in Chapter Three). Gablik agrees and quotes Flaubert who proclaimed his antipathy towards society when he declared that “Life is so horrible that one can only bear it by avoiding it. And that can only be by living in the world of art” (1991: 5). According to Gablik in her call for *The Reenchantment of Art* this attitude, partly, accounts for the failure of modernism. She maintains that the problem lies in the fact that “the sub-text of social responsibility is missing in our aesthetic models, and the challenges of the future will be to transcend the dis-connectedness and separation of the aesthetic from the social that existed within modernism (ibid.).

In South Africa, with a multicultural society that does not necessarily subscribe wholeheartedly to western concepts of fine art, perhaps a paradigm shift is possible. The need for a shift in advertising design has already been noted and bridges need to be built. The details of such a paradigm shift are not the subject of this dissertation, but clearly the role of education in this process cannot be underestimated. As stated in the Preface an important aim of this dissertation has been to investigate the relationship between the visual arts and advertising (design) in order that a framework of understanding can be created.

### **Future developments**

The fact that this conclusion was written twelve months before the turn of the millennium cannot be overlooked. Nor can the fact that it takes place at the end of a period in South Africa’s history when the government of National Unity is about to be dissolved and a second round of democratic elections are to be held early in 1999. This is relevant because this dissertation has sought to explain that both advertising and the visual arts are products of a particular time and place. This is particularly true of advertising which makes no attempt to embody metaphysical elements that enable many works of art to transcend the

limitations imposed by time and space and helps explain the strong sense of nostalgia that advertisements included in this text may evoke.

As loath as one may be at predicting the future, current trends in advertising and the media serve to indicate that, as Clem Sunter has put it, “the future is not what it used to be” (Sunter 1989: 16). This is particularly true of the relationship between the visual arts and advertising in a globalized culture influenced, if not dominated, by a globalized economy and media. Throughout this research project the importance of technological innovation has been emphasised. In conclusion it needs to be recognised that once again technological developments are about to transform the present and shape the future. One rarely notices when dramatic changes in technology occur hence it is difficult to be precise about the exact moment when the motor car replaced the horse or when the computer replaced the typewriter and the same is true of current changes taking place with the integration of media.

Up to now this text has emphasised the importance of the print medium in disseminating images, especially the art image, and in the process changing their value and meanings. However all indications are that the changes effected by the digitization of the image will be more significant than it already is. It has already been noted that the practice of graphic design has had to be reinvented over the past five years, with changes in the print industry, with the introduction of Apple Mac computers and powerful image-orientated software. In the field of the education of graphic designers one doubts that the true significance of these changes has been fully absorbed. The speed of the change is likely to accelerate and appropriate responses are required. This is particularly true as to the nature of the visual literacy required of artists, designers and the public at large. In their text, *Reading Images - The Grammar of Visual Design*, Kress and van Leeuwen believe that in the near future the literacy associated with writing (the “old” literacy) is about to be replaced by a “new” *visual* literacy. They maintain that the new visual literacy will be resisted because:

“for centuries now, (writing) has been one of the most essential achievements and values of western culture, and one of the most essential goals of education, so much so that the major and heavily value-laden



distinction made by Western cultures has been that between literate (advanced) and non-literate (oral and primitive) cultures. No wonder that the move towards a new literacy, based on images and visual design, can come to be seen as a threat, a sign of decline of culture, and hence a particularly potent symbol and rallying point for conservative and even reactionary groupings.” (1996: 15)

In South Africa where there is a high level of illiteracy, the new technology and the trend towards an integrated oral and visual means of communication offers a number of very exciting possibilities.<sup>7</sup> As noted in Chapter Two, in the 1960's Marshall McLuhan was concerned with the same issues and was visionary in conceiving the concept of the “global village” in which the central importance of the visual, aural and oral was restored in mass communications. But as Brown points out “he was looking at the future through a pair of binoculars” and spoke in metaphorical terms of technology being an extension of the human body. From a distance nothing could prepare McLuhan for the fact that computers are not an extension of our brains “they are the repository of our memory” (Brown 1996: 11). In the words of Lyotard, “what we are approaching is not the end of knowledge - quite the contrary. Data banks are the Encyclopaedia of tomorrow. They transcend the capacity of their users. They are ‘nature’ for postmodern man” (1987: 51).

On this subject it must be noted that the normal repository of art - the museum - is also about to be digitized. Of particular importance to the subject of this dissertation is what Joel Stein wrote in *Time Digital*, when he described the activities at Corbis, one of the world's first digital-archive companies, established in 1989 by Microsoft's Bill Gates:

“While Corbis may be sitting on the fuse of the information explosion, it's still a pretty boring place to work these days. Until the Internet really happens - until bandwidth becomes fat enough for high-resolution images and until a standard for digitalising video is implemented - the company can only plan and scan. Most of the people in the building, which is 15 minutes from the hipper and younger Microsoft campus at Redmond, Washington, have boring jobs. Like feeding 40,000 pictures a month into one of eight giant \$150,000 scanning machines that digitalize the images. Or improving

the tint on those images, or poring over research books for the captions. Even the few people there who actually create things are making CD-ROMS about Cezanne, Volcanoes and Da Vinci. And though the discs have impressed CD-ROM aficionados, most consumers rarely boot up their CD-ROM drives, let alone for treatises on Da Vinci. Especially at \$35 a disc.” (1996: 26)

The article entitled “Image is Everything” goes on to explain why Microsoft, the world’s leading computer software company which currently dictates the “form” of computing, is so interested in the future of its “content.” According to Stein it is “based on a sketchy suspicion that in the multimedia future, computer based “content” will be as valuable as movies, television shows and music are today” (op cit. 26). Significantly, Corbis has concentrated primarily on art images. Lucrative deals have been “cut” with many museums and with estates of dead artists such as the photographer Ansel Adams. The article points out that Corbis has contacted all the major art museums in the world, but, until the legal issues that surround copyright in the electronic environment are clearer, many museum directors prefer to wait because “we’re dealing with a world of hypothetical value instead of realistic value” (op cit. 29).

European museums have not been so reticent and in 1996 the Louvre published their entire collection on CD-ROM while in 1995 Microsoft released the whole of the British National Gallery in digital form on a CD-ROM, aptly named - *Art Gallery*. Corbis is currently responsible for titles such as *A Passion for Art: Renoir, Cezanne, Matisse and Dr Barnes* and a major treatise on Leonardo da Vinci. Although Corbis does not own the originals they own the rights of the digitized image. These image rights will be very important when the Internet is expanded to accommodate high quality images in the future; as a Corbis executive puts it; “Someone in China isn’t going to get to the Louvre” (ibid.).

Through this technology, at the end of the millennium, Malraux’s “Museum without Walls” will have been created in cyber space. Given the current invasion of the internet by advertising it is only a matter of time before visual art images will be used in ways that this dissertation could only guess at. But whereas Malraux, writing in 1965, was looking

through the same binoculars available to McLuhan, when he spoke in terms of the photographically reproduced image, we are now concerned with a globally transmitted micro processed image. The digitized image is reproduced by high resolution cameras which are capable of replicating even the texture and patina of the original and can be reproduced and transmitted in a variety of other forms. This confirms the importance of the early theories of writers such as Benjamin, Malraux, Berger and McLuhan mentioned in the Preface to this text as still having currency. This is particularly true in view of the fact that contemporary graphic design software programmes such as Photoshop and Corel Draw enable designers to “cut” and “paste” photographic and draw images and text from a variety of sources to be “assembled” and juxtaposed in a manner that utilizes the visual language developed by the early modernists. These computer programmes and related cinematic techniques have however, created a “virtual” reality in the public space that the avant-garde could only have dreamed of.

This is the technology that lends credence to the notion that “history is dead” in the sense that the images and sounds of the past are as fresh and as accessible as those of the present. Strains of the past are freely blended with the new as a characteristic of postmodernism in popular culture (Jameson 1998: 5-10). In marketing terms this cultural “re-run” has already lead to a consumer revolution in the promotion of music CD’s and video recorded films. In outlets throughout South Africa so-called classics from the past are marketed side by side with new products at the same price. On the creative level, as Jameson has pointed out in respect of film, in contemporary rock music strains of the past (often Beatle music) are blended by musicians (such as Oasis) with great success. Hence in practical rather than philosophical terms the past is no longer discounted. The current trend to merge image and sound on the internet and on the new digital video disc (DVD) format ensures that this trend is likely to go even further. Given the history of previous technological revolutions reflected on in this dissertation the consequences of these developments for the relationship between the visual arts and advertising is bound to be enormous.

In conclusion it needs to be said that however unpredictable the future may be, one thing is certain and that is that advertising will adapt to the new circumstances and exploit it to the full. As with the past this will not only offer a wide range of new exciting possibilities

for designers, but will have a profound effect upon our cultural, political, economic if not our spiritual lives. Possibly this type of complexity explains the current sense of ambivalence that many experience as the new millennium dawns. As this dissertation has pointed out this is in marked contrast to the optimistic mood amongst artists and designers during the previous *fin-de-siècle*, which acted as midwife to both modern art and advertising.

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## Notes

1. The article lists the paintings with their monetary values in brackets as thus: Van Gogh's "Peasant Woman With straw Hat Sitting in the Wheat" (\$47.5 million), Gauguin's "A Tahitian Family" (\$20 million), Matisse's "Michaela" (\$10 million), and Picasso's "Portrait of Dora Maar" (for an undisclosed sum) and Monet's "Waterlily, Pond and Path by water" (\$32.7million). The rest of the collection includes works by Jackson Pollack, Willem de Kooning, Jasper Johns, Roy Lichenstein, Robert Rauschenberg (Plagens 1998: 66).

2. To this end, Wynn has "hired the former head of Fort Worth's distinguished Kimbell Art Museum, Edmund Pillsbury, as the gallery's 'consultative director.' The inaugural catalogue also features essays by such eminent scholars as New York University art historian Robert Rosenblum (Plagens 1998: 66).

3. Andrew Wernick (1991) deals with promotional culture in depth in his impressive text *Promotional Culture - Advertising, ideology and symbolic expression*.

4. The "Newtown & Culture -as- Habitat" report is a 40 page blueprint for the reconstruction of Tribune Hall and its adjoining lots and boiler houses in Johannesburg. This report was funded by the Ernest Oppenheimer Memorial Trust and was released to the public at a function at the Market Theatre on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> August 1998. The proponent of the idea and the driving force behind the project is the art dealer Ricky Bennet (cf. BMW Tributaries). (*Mail & Guardian* August 28 to September 3 1998: 8).

5. In his performance “Dog, Ugly Girl, Faggot and Jew” Cohen rode about the Durban Art Gallery on roller skates with fireworks inserted in his anus (Red Eye, July 1998).

6. In multi-cultural societies such as South Africa the rights of communities to their “traditional” art and craft forms needs to be addressed. Aboriginal leaders in Australia have already raised the issue and, given the current abuse in the South African context, one can anticipate similar moves in the not too distant future. In the interim individual artists have a number of problems protecting their copyright. Durban artist Andries Botha explained that a sculpture of his was featured prominently in a Nedbank advertisement which was set at the SA National Gallery in Cape Town. “I sold it (the sculpture) to them (the National Gallery) for educational and cultural reasons and didn’t sign away the copyright for it to be used in an advertisement!” (personal interview with Botha 1998). However given the complex relations between the bank, the advertising agency and the museum, Botha was told by his lawyer not to pursue the issue because of the expense.

7. Notwithstanding the basic developmental needs of South Africa the current policy of the South African government is to establish a sophisticated information infrastructure in the country “to meet the challenges of the twenty first century” ([www.anc.org.za](http://www.anc.org.za)).



over 300 million followers



EXCLUSIVE TO DISH: CALL (031) 289 2250, (021) 508 2250, (031) 710 2250, (041) 315 2250 OR (051) 503 2250

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- figure 7.27* Stewart, A. C. 1994. "Absolut Reconstruction" (source unknown).
- figure 7.28* Designer unknown, 1994. [Ndebele Smirnoff Vodka]. (Powell 1995: 152-153).
- figure 7.29* Designer unknown, 1997. "La Vita Macaroni" including detail of Buonarroti, M. (1475 - 1564) Sistine Chapel Ceiling (1508-12) Sistine Chapel, Fresco, Vatican, Rome. (Orbis Marketing 1997).
- figure 7.30* Walker, G. and Gunning, S. 1996. *i-jusi* # 3 (Orange Juice Design 1996).
- figure 7.31* Walker, G. and Gunning, S. 1995. *i-jusi* # 1 (OJD 1995).
- figure 7.32* Walker, G./ OJD, 1997. DAG poster.
- figure 7.33* King, L./ OJD, 1997. DAG brochure.
- figure 7.34 (a)* Designer unknown, [Sunbeam polish lid.] (Lever Bros. 1998).
- figure 7.34 (b)* Zulu earplugs, private collection. (Jolles 1997: 51).
- figure 7.35* Designer unknown, c.1993. IFP sticker (Jolles 1997: 58).
- figure 7.36* Designer unknown/Standard Bank Ltd. 1994. poster, medium, size and whereabouts unavailable. (Standard Bank Ltd. 1994).
- figure 7.37* Mathews & Charter, 1996. "We've Got Waves To Suit Any Kind Of Head" (*Marketing Mix* "Media Guide" 1996: 15).
- figure 7.38* Sutherland, I. 1998. [Streets of Durban,] photograph, Durban.
- figure 7.39* Young & Rubicam, 1993. "The Colgate Smile." (*Marketing Mix*, October 1993:31).

- figure 8.1 (a) & (b)* Toscani, O./ Benetton, c. 1995. "United Colours of Benetton" (Bernstein 1997: 13).
- figure 8.2* "Vegas Meets Van Gogh" (*Newsweek*, 31<sup>st</sup> August, 1998: 66-67).
- figure 8.3* [Modern Medici] (*Newsweek*, 31<sup>st</sup> August, 1998: 67).
- figure 8.4 (a)* Sutherland, I. 1994. Guggenheim Museum. photograph, New York.
- figure 8.4 (b)* Sutherland, I. 1996. Pompidieu Centre, photograph, Paris.
- figure 8.5* "The Body Eclectic" (*Sunday Tribune*, "The Other Magazine" August 16 1998: 1).
- figure 8.6* Kruger, B. (b.1945) 1987. "Untitled: I Shop Therefore I am," photographic silkscreen on vinyl (281.9 x 287 cm). Mary Bosan Gallery, New York (Varndoe and Godnik 1991: 390).
- figure 8.7* Guerilla Girls, 1989. "Do women have to be naked to get into the Met Museum?" poster, (27.9 x 71.1 cm), private collection (Fineberg 1995: 464).

*end-piece*: Saatchi & Saatchi, 1997. [Beavis and Butthead do Michelangelo] advertisement for Music Television (MTV) and DStv (*Elle*, January, 1998: 52-53).