

Advertising and Consumer Culture

Centre for Modern Studies Third Annual Postgraduate Symposium

Friday 31 May, 2013

Humanities Research Centre (Berrick Saul Building), University of York

9:30am

Registration: Berrick Saul Building (BSB) Foyer

10:00am

Welcome & Introduction: Bowland Auditorium

PANEL 1: The Politics of Consumerism: America and the Eastern Bloc (Chair: Professor Lawrence Black, History)

10:10am

Andrea Vesentini (Humanities and Cultural Studies, London Consortium – Birkbeck, University of London) 'It's Cool Inside: the Advertising of Air-conditioning in Postwar America'

10:30am

Sarah Cullen (English Literature, Newcastle University) "See The Conquering Hero Comes - in a Viyella Robe": *Lolita* and Consumerism as Sexual Containment'

10:50am

Polona Sitar (Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, University of Ljubljana) "The Drink of Our and Your Youth": the Case of a Local Socialistic Brand in the Era of Globalisation

11:10am

Discussion

11:30am

Refreshments

PANEL 2: Gender and the Language of Advertising (Chair: Dr Claire Westall, English and Related Literature)

11:50am

Joelin Quigley-Berg (Sociology, University of Warwick) 'What Counts as Sexism? Regulating Sexist Offence in UK Television Advertising'

12:10pm

Rachael Alexander (English, University of Strathclyde) 'The Quest for the Perfect Home: Consumption, Consumerism and Advertising in Ladies' Home Journal and Canadian Home Journal'

12:30pm

Irina Koteyko (English Literature & Language, University College London) 'The Language of Modern British Advertising: a Linguistic Approach'

12:50pm

Discussion

1:10pm

Lunch Break

PANEL 3: Advertising Aesthetics (Chair: Dr James Boaden, History of Art)

2:00pm

Helen Taylor (English, Royal Holloway, University of London) "'You and Père Ubu holding hands in Piccadilly/ Walking off into the COCA COLA sunset": the Shorthand of Brands, Adverts, and Lists in the Poetry of Adrian Henri'

2:20pm

Giulia Simi (History of Art, University of Pisa) 'Consuming the Renaissance: Tano Festa and Mario Schifano in Italian Pop Art'

2:40pm

Rona Cran (English Language and Literature, UCL) 'Movies, Department Stores, and Modern Art: Frank O'Hara and Commodity Culture'

3:00pm

Discussion

3:35pm

Comfort break

PANEL 4: Anti-consumerism? (Chair: Dr Alex Beaumont, English and Related Literature)

3:40pm

Paddy Johnston (English, University of Sussex) 'False Advertising: Parodies of Adverts in Chris Ware's *ACME Novelty Library*'

4:10pm

Sam Burgum (Sociology, University of York) 'Resistance in Advertising, or the Problem of Interpassivity'

4:30pm

Lydia Nicholas (Anthropology, UCL) 'Fixing our Things, Fixing our Selves: Crafting an Anti-consumption Identity'

4:50pm

Discussion

5:10pm

Refreshments

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

5:30pm

Dr Jo Littler (City University London) 'Aspiration Nation? Consumer Culture and Meritocracy in the Recession'

6:30pm

Wine reception (BS/008)

ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHIES

PANEL 1: The Politics of Consumerism: America and the Eastern Bloc

Andrea Vesentini: It's cool inside: the Advertising of Air Conditioning in Postwar America



The paper focuses on visual advertising of air conditioning on popular American magazines in the postwar years, starting from the challenge encountered by art directors. Unlike refrigerators and all other kind of household appliances, the trouble with air conditioning was the invisibility of its benefits: how could the cool experience be translated into images? The goal was to dramatize the motionlessness of cool air. In his analysis of the advertising of the era, Marshall McLuhan suggests that its aim was “to generate heat”, but this might be the case when Madison Avenue actually had to cool down to originate the graphics of refrigeration. The essay analyzes the visual techniques used by advertisers in postwar decades (roughly from 1945 to the end of the 1960s) to convey the benefits of air conditioning, focusing on their emphasis on spatial divisions. The outdoor was increasingly associated with labor and the lower classes, whereas cool interiors became the ideal space for the expanding suburban middle class. The history of the visual advertising of air conditioning both mirrors the evolution of the United States into an indoor society and constitutes a historical document of the role that Madison Avenue played in this creation, providing a good example of how society and political life can be shaped through the use of images. Air conditioning lured many Americans inside in search for affluence, upward mobility, technological development, and not just for a shelter from heat and humidity.

Andrea Vesentini is a PhD candidate in Humanities and Cultural Studies at the London Consortium (Birkbeck, University of London), where he is exploring interior spaces in postwar American suburbia and their interaction with the outdoors, from car interiors to single-family houses and shopping malls. He recently published a study on the depiction of cows and wildlife in New Yorker covers from the mid-thirties to the midsixties in Antennae: The Journal of Nature in Visual Culture. He received his BA in American Literature and Culture and MA in English and American Studies from the Ca'Foscari University of Venice, and also studied at the Sapienza University of Rome, Georgia State University and the City College of the City University of New York. He writes as a film critic and worked at the 2011 Venice Art Biennale curated by Bice Curiger.

Sarah Cullen: 'See The Conquering Hero Comes - in a Viyella Robe': *Lolita* and consumerism as sexual containment

In his essay, 'On a Book Entitled *Lolita*', Vladimir Nabokov states that he took pains on his travels around the U.S. to source numerous 'local ingredients that would allow me to inject a modicum of average "reality"' into his 1955 novel *Lolita*. This paper will focus on one of these local ingredients, the advertisement found pinned to Dolores Hazes' wall by the pervert Humbert Humbert, to argue that the novel presents advertising and consumer culture as central to the creation, manipulation and subjugation of the archetypal postwar teenager and housewife. Identified by Alfred Appel in the novel's commentary as a 1949 advertisement for Viyella robes, the advert describes its male subject as a 'conquering hero' in a Viyella robe, 'armed with Sunday breakfast for his deserving bride'. In *Lolita*, however, it is the 'thoroughly conquered lady' 'not shown' in the advertisement that is the focus of Nabokov's attention. This paper argues that Nabokov deploys this advertisement and its archetypal consumerist 'Cold Warrior' figure as part of a wider criticism of the unification of sexual conformity and consumer culture prevalent in the Cold War US, where the 'dangerous' sexual behaviour of women, closely associated with the Communist threat, is policed by participation in a consumer culture that binds together capitalism with images of safe 'marital' sexualities. Conducting a Cold War reading of Humbert's manipulation of Dolores and her mother through the exploitation of these ideal images and consumer goods, I challenge the traditional view of Nabokov's works as apolitical in order to locate him within a postwar liberal intellectual community that feared mass consumerism's creation of a conformist mindset that could leave the capitalist world open to the very totalitarian subversion it strives to guard against.

Sarah Cullen is a first year PhD student in English Literature at Newcastle University. Her research focuses on the links between the Cold War and authorship in experimental and metafictional literature of the long 1960s. Her broader research interests include avant-garde art and writing, Cold War identity politics and its impact on writing of the 1950s-70s, and the influence of early computing and cybernetics on U.S. literature and culture.

Polona Sitar: 'The Drink Of Our and Your Youth': The case of a local socialistic brand in the era of globalisation

This paper deals with a brand Cocta, which represents a carbonated non-alcoholic refreshing drink that was established in 1952, during the absence of consumer goods in Yugoslavia. With its clever packaging, promotion and special flavour it has survived virtually all stages of the Slovenian economy, as well as the arrival of Coca-Cola in the end of the sixties, the collapse of the first owner Slovenijavino, disintegration of the Yugoslav market, social changes during transition and the transmission into the hands of a foreign owner.

Firstly, the paper will provide a description of the brand Cocta and its representation in socialistic Yugoslavia, with the emphasis on the role of politics in advertising. The second part provides the contemporary image of Cocta, which is today known as a legendary drink that connects national heritage with modern times because it symbolizes the time-venerated local brands in the era of globalisation as it is known to all generations under different advertising slogans and images. U. Beck (2003) argues that inside the conglomerates such as Coca-Cola, the intertwinement of local-global plays a key role in the context of 'global localisation'; an important question is whether its consequence is a global, cosmopolitan culture which is seen as an opposition to the national.

In this context the paper examines why Cocta was created, how artists have been co-opted by advertising and commodity culture and how it changed over time according to social changes in the context of understanding the concept of 'glocalisation' (R. Roberston), which assumes that localisation and globalisation are two sides of the same dialectical process. The research is based on critical analysis of Cocta's advertisements and in-depth interviews with one of the first promoters of Cocta, as well as an employee of the business Slovenijavino and the artistic director of the advertising company that makes contemporary video advertisements for Cocta.

Polona Sitar is an ethnologist, cultural anthropologist and communicologist. Currently she is a PhD student (2nd year) in the department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology at the Faculty of Arts

at the University of Ljubljana and she is working as a young researcher at the Department for interdisciplinary research at the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Science and Art. Her research focuses on socio-historical aspects of everyday life of Slovenian women in socialism through the aspects of consumption. She is also interested in popular culture and music, and the analysis of discourse regarding gender and class in reality television shows.

PANEL 2: Gender and the Language of Advertising

Joelin Quigley-Berg: What Counts as Sexism? Regulating Sexist Offence in UK Television Advertising

This presentation will explore how UK television advertising regulation operates in response to public claims of sexism in advertisements. Stereotypical and sexualising images of gender and sexuality in advertising have been issues close to the heart of the second wave feminist movement, and continue to be so today. Yet the regulation of such images has not been widely researched. This presentation will explore how regulation practices deal with complaints of sexism in advertising and what cultural values and assumptions govern the structures of British television advertising regulation.

I will be arguing that advertising regulators occupy a position of power in defining what is to be seen as acceptable and unacceptable portrayals of gender and sexuality in our popular media landscape. They are in a position to define sexism as it appears in advertising and popular culture, or, alternatively dismiss any claims of sexist offence. I will examine British advertising regulation of such offence, exploring and critically discussing where the line has been drawn and why; in short, what counts as sexism?

The presentation will also feature a historical account, tracing the regulation of gender and sexuality from early television advertising (1950s) to current times. I will provide a discussion of how advertising regulation has been affected by a public discourse on gender and sexuality portrayals in popular culture, and how the history of advertising regulation affect current regulatory practices.

Finally, I will explore the recent stream of so-called postfeminist advertisements and how sexism has seemingly become a less tangible concept within both regulation and popular discourse in the wake of postfeminism.

Joelin Quigley-Berg is a third year PhD student in Sociology at the University of Warwick. Her research interests include gender, feminism, the body, popular culture, popular media and

advertising culture in particular. Her thesis is on the regulation of gender and sexuality in UK television advertising.

Rachael Alexander: The quest for the perfect home: consumption, consumerism and advertising in *Ladies' Home Journal* and *Canadian Home Journal*

The study of magazines is a growing area of interest within many academic disciplines, among them marketing, literary studies, gender studies, sociology and history. The diversity of these disciplines illustrates the wide appeal of magazines as an object of study; this is due partly to their value as an historical resource, and partly to the variety of features present in the magazine considered as a text. While there exists extensive work on North American mass market periodicals, there are relatively few studies on Canadian publications and no comparative studies of the two. This paper seeks to compare the advertisements presented in *Ladies' Home Journal* and *Canadian Home Journal* within the context of domesticity and nationalism, examining the extent to which the quest for the perfect home is constructed in a national framework. The paper focuses on the affluent 1920s, since 'magazine advertising peaked in the 1920s and never again approached that level.' (Poe 1976, 256) The 1920s are widely acknowledged as the golden age of general-interest magazine publishing. American periodicals, established in the 1890s, were flourishing, while numerous Canadian equivalents were being established. In periodical studies it is more common to view ads as 'framing' the stories, which are the real focus of interest for most critics. This paper will take the opposite approach, reconstructing the advertisers' point of view by discussing adverts in relation to the types of fiction and journalistic content that were placed alongside them. In comparing the advertisements from selected issues of the *Ladies' Home Journal* and *Canadian Home Journal*, this paper will examine the ways in which magazines taught upwardly mobile readers how to consume, and the extent to which they constructed consumption as an aspect of good citizenship.

Rachael Alexander is a first year PhD candidate at the University of Strathclyde, primarily based in the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences faculty. Given the interdisciplinary nature of her research, she has a second supervisor based in the Department of Marketing. While her background is in literary studies, her research focuses on comparisons between American and Canadian mass-market magazines in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries within the context of consumer culture.

Irina Koteyko: The Language of Modern British Advertising: a Linguistic Approach

The language of print advertising in the UK has been the subject of extensive research, but until now there has been no attempt to provide a unified linguistic analysis of both commercial and non-commercial advertisements. Likewise, there have been no corpus-based investigations of how the choice of language is conditioned by such non-linguistic parameters as addressee's gender (males vs females) or product type (e.g., food, cosmetics, financial services, cars, personal accessories, etc.). The current paper aims at redressing these omissions. The data for the study was collected from twenty-four newspapers and magazines published in the UK from March 2006 to January 2007. The three hundred and sixty-four advertisements were sampled to allow comparison between commercial advertising subcategorised by various types of goods and services, and non-commercial advertising represented by charity and government adverts. Applying the multi-dimensional (MD) approach (Biber 1988), six dimensions of variation in advertising discourse (e.g., a hard-sell dimension, a narrative dimension, etc.) are identified and explained. Controlling for the product type, it is shown that cosmetics advertisements targeting females tend to use elaborate description with a pseudo-scientific focus (e.g., *A "Youth Index" was also proven and confirmed by an exclusive digital imagery technology "Pixel Skin"*), while adverts aimed at males are characterised by a terse description dominated by disjunctive grammatical structure (e.g., *Youthful appearance. Renewed looking, fresh feeling skin*). Do advertisers believe that women are more easily 'blinded by science' or does the finding reflect possible gender-based differences in information processing? These and similar questions will be asked to analyse the underlying causes of the observed variation.

Irina Koteyko has just finished PhD studies at the Department of English Language and Literature, UCL. Her PhD thesis analyses linguistic and situational variation in advertising discourse using the Multi-Dimensional (MD) approach (Biber 1988). The derived MD model presents the first unified functional analysis of commercial and non-commercial advertising in the UK. At the moment, she is writing a book proposal on the language of modern British advertising. Before joining UCL in 2005, she worked as a PA in KPMG Moscow and as a Teaching Fellow in the Moscow State Linguistic University, Russia.

PANEL 3: Advertising Aesthetics

Helen Taylor: 'You and Père Ubu holding hands in Piccadilly/ Walking off into the COCA COLA sunset': the shorthand of brands, adverts, and lists in the poetry of Adrian Henri

The Merseybeat movement in the 1960s sought to foster a direct connection with the audience, using the live event to create a space where they could interact with the public. Adrian Henri, Roger McGough, and Brian Patten all wrote poems connected to their situations, area, and lifestyles, but it is to Adrian Henri that consumer culture is most important. Henri, a painter, filled both his poems and his paintings with strong visual imagery influenced by contemporary American Pop art and the European avant-garde tradition. There are two main uses of brands and adverts in his poetry: first, representing place; second, recording memory.

Advertising slogans and found images celebrate Henri's own time and place – the 'Liverpool 8' collage sequences are, in particular, an attempt to recreate his environment. Common cultural referencing connects the poet with the audience, but the use of adverts is also a way of recreating (and fixing) the social space on the page or canvas.

Brands also frequent Henri's love poems. In *City*, for example, his listing of the contents of various rooms serves as a way of recalling the memories of those times back into the present. By amassing physical, specific objects Henri builds an image of the girl herself – an otherwise mostly anonymous presence in the collection.

In naming everyday items and specific brands Henri created a shorthand, using allusions which he knew the audience would 'get' in order to recreate an emotion, an event or a place. It is not surprising that a poet who was also a painter would choose the big, bright, colourful world of advertising in order to fully express his poetic ideas.

Helen Taylor has long been interested in the links between poetry and other art forms, particularly music and visual art, and uses interdisciplinary methods to explore the 'total art' of Adrian Henri and the Liverpool Poets. She read for her BA in English Language & Literature at Corpus Christi, University of Oxford, before taking the Writing in the Modern Age MA at Queen Mary, University of London. Helen is now in her final year of PhD study at Royal Holloway, University of London, working with Professor Robert Hampson on the first critical study of the Merseybeat movement.

Giulia Simi: Consuming The Renaissance: Tano Festa and Mario Schifano in Italian Pop Art

In 1967, referring to his cycle of works dedicated to Michelangelo, the Italian painter Tano Festa stated: “An American paints Coca Cola as a value. Michelangelo is for me the same thing: we are in a country where instead of consuming canned food we consume The Gioconda on chocolates”. Three years had passed since the Venice Biennale sanctioned the definitive shift of focus from contemporary art produced in Europe to the United States, where pop artists had made the consuming culture a key factor in artistic research. Actually a small group of Italian artists had already developed an original response to themes involving mass media, entertainment industry and the rising power of commodities.

Among them, the two Rome-based artist Tano Festa and Mario Schifano identified a distinctive trait of so called Italian Pop Art investigating the connection between high and low culture through a deep relationship with the images from the Art Historical canon. Michelangelo’s *Creation of Adam* or Leonardo’s *Self-portrait* appeared as a Warholian *Marilyn Monroe* or *Brillo Box*, visual fragments of a country in the middle of economic boom where ancient and modern, sacred and profane merged into a unique blurred landscape. My paper intends to explore practices and languages of both artists in the Sixties Italian scene, tracing differences and points of conjunction. The work of Tano Festa mainly focuses on a re-enactment of the images of Italian Renaissance as advertising icons; the cross-media and overproduction of Mario Schifano’s work places Art Historical masterpieces alongside brand logos, highways landscapes and TV images in a sort of frantic private and collective memory archive of the new Italian consumer society.

Giulia Simi graduated in 2004 in History of Art and Media at the University of Pisa with a dissertation on the two Greek-born multimedia artists Maria Klonaris and Katerina Thomadaki. After a Postgraduate Masters course in Multimedia Content Design at the University of Florence she has worked as a digital communication consultant in media, publishing and contemporary art field for several years. In 2011 Simi started her post-graduate research in History of Art and Media at the University of Pisa. Her research, is supervised by Prof. Sandra Lischi and relates to the Italian Post-War artistic scene crossing contemporary art, cinema, video. It mainly focuses on the work of Mario Schifano facing themes such as mass media and consuming society, amateur practices, self-narration, private memory, archive. Among her recent publications: Pratiche amatoriali per la realizzazione di una TV indipendente. Il caso Telestreet [Telestreet: amateur practices for an independent TV network], in Creton L., Naugrette C., Péquignot B., Pratiques et esthétiques. Le coût et la gratuité 3, Collection Arts et Médias, L'Harmattan, Paris, 2013 and Jonas Mekas: pratiche di spostamento dai diari scritti ai diari filmati [Displacing practices: Jonas Mekas

from written to filmed diary], in Arabeschi. International Journal of Studies on Literature and Visuality, no.1, Luca Sossella editore (forthcoming).

Rona Cran: Movies, Department Stores, and Modern Art: Frank O'Hara and Commodity Culture

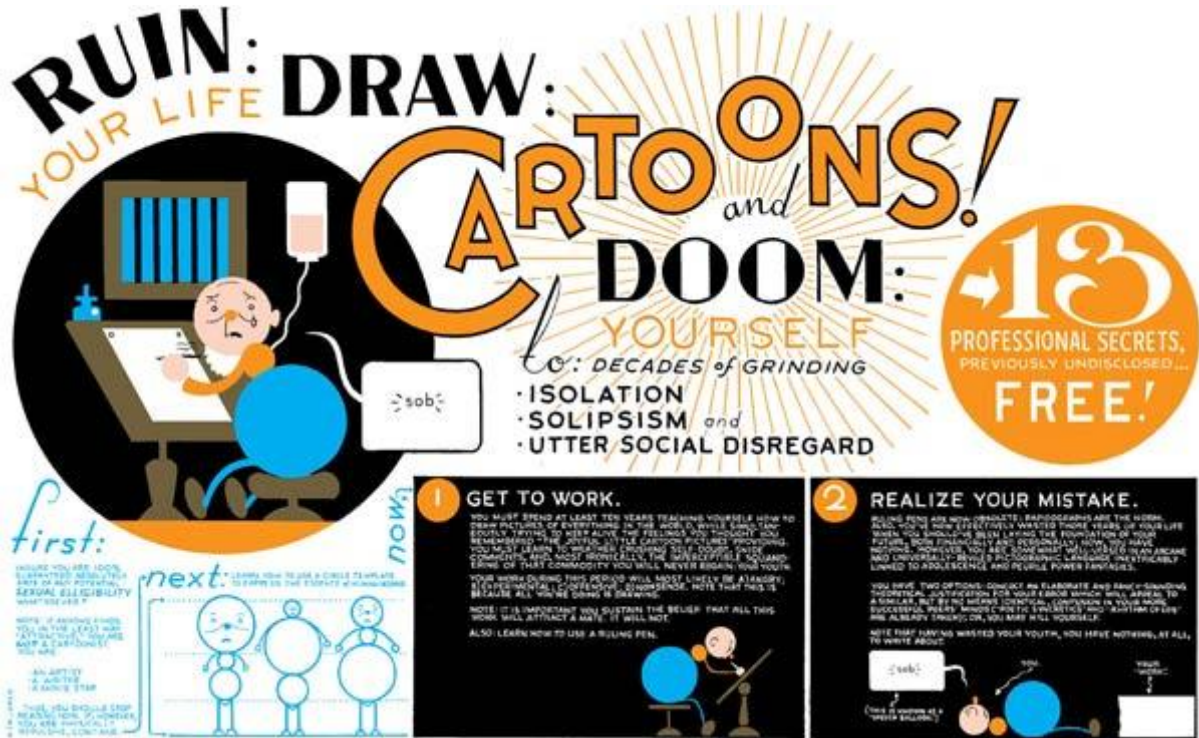
The New York poet Frank O'Hara (1926-1966) never took an oppositional stance toward commodity culture: it was an important part of his poetry, which explores the Manhattan landscape in its entirety. His convivial attitude toward commodity culture was also a key aspect of his role as a critic and curator at the Museum of Modern Art, where he was required to promote modern art in such a way that it could withstand the complexities of commodification and politicization, enabling it to remain fresh, original, and even revolutionary. Whilst, simultaneously adorning the walls of government buildings or being co-opted into advertising US interests abroad. O'Hara avoided what fellow poet John Ashbery would later denounce as a 'loyalty-oath mentality [...] where Grove Press subway posters invite the lumpen proletariat to "join the Underground Generation", as though this were as simple a matter as joining the Pepsi Generation, which it probably is'. O'Hara refused to present avant-garde art as antagonistic or 'oppositional'. Instead, he showed that art's 'impulse to technical innovation [is located] within the cultural and economic mainstream', as modern artists react creatively to 'the stresses and strains of a specific historical moment' (Blasing 1995).

This paper explores O'Hara's provocative and dynamic relationship with US commodity culture during the post-war decades. It considers how burgeoning consumerism intersected with O'Hara's life as a critic and aesthete, and shows how the fusion of high academicism with his own lowbrow interests helped to infuse the language of high culture with the language of commercialism within the context of his work. Ultimately, his embrace of consumerism and advertising as a valid cultural phenomenon enabled him to advertise himself as the quintessential poet of modernity, typified, arguably, by the sustained references to his 1957 collection *Meditations in an Emergency* during the second season of *Mad Men* (2008).

Rona Cran recently completed her PhD, Catalysing Encounters: Collage in the Work of Joseph Cornell, William Burroughs, and Frank O'Hara, 1930-1970, in the English Department at UCL, where she also taught for a year. Her next project is a study of twelve contemporary British poets. Ongoing research and teaching interests include the American novel, the New York Schools of Poetry and Art, Beat writing, censorship and publication histories, and the influence of early twentieth-century European art on American culture.

PANEL 4: Anti-consumerism?

Paddy Johnston: False Advertising: Parodies of Adverts in Chris Ware's *ACME Novelty Library*



Chris Ware's *ACME Novelty Library* is one of the most critically acclaimed and groundbreaking comics in today's continually evolving landscape of books, graphic novels, strips and webcomics. Often his comics, which come in formats which are fragmented, intricate and difficult to read and engage with visually, include wry parodies of adverts tucked into the corners of their busy pages, such as the above image inviting the consumers of his comics to ruin their lives.

The inclusion of such parodies feels at home in independent comic books, which are markedly different from the traditional mainstream superhero comic books. These works, with film adaptations, franchising and much associated advertising, warmly embrace consumerism, while the independents such as Chris Ware mock it and parody it. But are they so different, and can the independents truly exist outside consumerism, as it would appear they wish to?

This paper will explore the complex relationship between comics and consumer culture, with regard to how advertising and merchandising have affected comics and their creators. I will use Chris Ware's long-running series as a synecdoche for the comics world as a whole, and draw upon a number of critical works in the field which discuss comics and consumer culture, with the aim of presenting a succinct summary of how advertising and consumerism have affected comics, and vice versa.

Paddy Johnston is a first year doctoral researcher in the Department of English at the University of Sussex, with research interests in Comics Studies and Visual Culture. His thesis, entitled 'Working with Comics', aims to investigate the relationship between comics (of all forms) and manual labour, as well as to examine the role of digital distribution in the ever-changing landscape of comics.

Sam Burgum: Resistance in Advertising, or The Problem of Interpassivity

In a society where there has recently been a re-emergence of resistive sentiment - with heightened activism and radical discourse in the wake of the financial crisis - it has become more crucial than ever to consider the *nature* of this resistance. For instance, we must ask questions of what the role of resistance is and in what medium it plays out so that we can establish its effectiveness in overcoming the current ideological framework.

It could, for instance, be seen as problematic that resistance and rebelliousness is so often used in advertising and consumer culture (often insinuating a resistance *against* the very consumer society that it is a part of). This paper intends to present a few examples of this 'anti-consumer consumerism' and suggests a fundamental problem that this presents for any contemporary resistive project: interpassivity.

Interpassivity (Pfaller 2003; Zizek 1989; Fisher 2009) refers to the relieving of the passivity of the subject through an 'other'. For example, when we watch a comedy on the television that contains canned laughter, we tend not to laugh ourselves and yet somehow feel relieved. The canned laughter can be said to act interpassively on our behalf - enjoying the programme for us - so that we don't have to.

This paper suggests that this concept could be applied fruitfully to resistance because anti-consumer products could be said to "perform our anti-capitalism for us, allowing us to continue to consume with impunity" (Fisher 2009:12). By demonstrating potential examples of this in advertising, the aim is to show how the concept might be applied to the analysis of consumer culture in order to reconsider the nature of resistance in our society.

Sam Burgum is a PhD student in the Sociology department at the University of York. In 2012, he completed his masters in Social Research and is now embarking on ESRC funded research into the commodification of resistance and the implications this may have for contemporary social movements (in particular, the Occupy movement). This is a continuation of work that Sam undertook for both his undergraduate dissertation (on the incorporation of anti-capitalism into the music industry) and his masters dissertation, which included empirical work interviewing members of Occupy London.

Lydia Nicholas: Fixing our Things, Fixing our Selves: Crafting an Anti-consumption Identity

This paper investigates the process by which anti-consumption morality and the hacker ethos drawn from digital culture is leveraged to market Sugru, a new self-setting rubber intended to be used to fix and personalise mass-produced objects. It used interviews with users recruited through social media and analysis of marketing materials. Sugru does not advertise conventionally but promotes the anti-consumption practice of repairing, reusing and repurposing products instead of buying new; practices for which it is an ideal tool. The paper looked closely at the use of explicitly political language including a number of 'manifestos' to posit this 'fixing' as an extension of the process of 'translating products from alienable condition' (Miller 1987), which gave consumers the ability and responsibility to improve their immediate home environment, the wider environment the future and themselves. Campbell's craft consumption, Shove et. al's work on DIY and Coleman on Hacking and Free/Open Source Software are referenced to place consumers' efforts to physically alter their possessions in the wider context of a struggle for control over what the products they own can do and can be. Ideas about empowered, creative consumption, openness and 'hacking' which had emerged in the digital sphere were found to have been translated to physical objects, both organically and within Sugru's marketing. Informants expressed a strong desire for conceptual and practical tools with which to resist mass-consumption which they described as wasteful, expensive and homogenous, and many responded positively to Sugru's apparent fulfilment of these desires. However, factors such as gender, education, experience and cultural capital were found to affect informants' ability to translate these desires into practice.

Lydia Nicholas is in the Digital Anthropology MSc at UCL. After a first degree in English Literature at Oxford she worked in a number of production companies before moving to Emap where she researched emerging technologies, behaviours and business opportunities in the TV, Film and New Media sectors. She then worked in a digital content agency building tools and platforms for ongoing digital campaigns for varied clients. Having explored the changing media landscape from within the private sector her key research interests are emergent behaviours relating to new technologies and new business practices.

KEYNOTE: Dr Jo Littler

Dr Jo Littler is Senior Lecturer in Cultural Industries at City University London and the author of Radical Consumption: shopping for change in contemporary culture (Open University Press, 2009). She has published widely on consumerism, particularly as it intersects with the politics of globalisation; accordingly, her work has addressed topics such as ethical consumption, anti-consumerism and the culture industry.