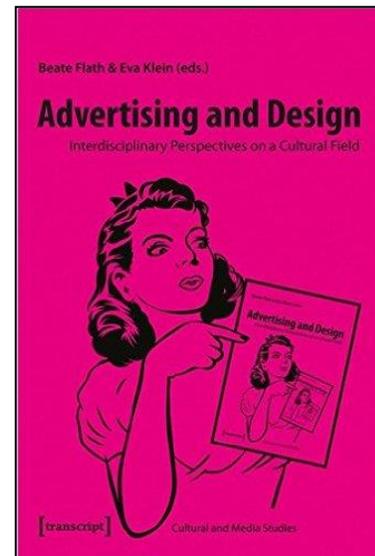


Beate Flath and Eva Klein (Eds.), **Advertising and Design: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on a Cultural Field**, Bielefeld, Germany: Transcript-Verlog, 2014, 200 pp., \$40.00 (paperback).

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When Apple launched the iPhone 5 in 2013, it rolled out an advertising campaign titled “Every Day,” produced in conjunction with TBWA/Chiat Day, Apple’s agency of record. The campaign was designed to highlight various features of the new iPhone and showcase how they fit within the everyday lives of the consumer. There were spots called “FaceTime Every Day” and “Music Every Day,” each one demonstrating the iPhone’s ability to enhance social connectivity. One commercial titled “Photos Every Day” was shot as a series of montages depicting various people across the world using the iPhone to capture and share images of commonplace encounters. There is a shot of an inquisitive child taking a photo of translucent jellyfish at an aquarium and another of a traveler capturing images of snowfall from a hotel room. There are images of cappuccinos, mountaintops, and so forth. The spot concludes with the title card, which reads, “Every day, more photos are taken with the iPhone than any other camera.”



As consumers of advertising, how do we experience such an ad? While audiences may perceive the commercial as a collective whole, it is also useful to think of an advertisement as a product that is fundamentally made up of different component parts. There are, of course, the moving images embedded within the ad—we are watching pictures of people taking pictures. There is also the audio to consider—the sound of a digital phone replicating the click of a mechanical camera. Then there is the music score that gives the spot its emotional tone—in this case, Rob Simonsen’s composition *Blue*. There is the graphic design of the title card, the editing of the spot, and the voice-over, each contributing to the experience in a different way.

What advertising means and how we experience it is a question taken up in the 2014 anthology titled **Advertising and Design: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on a Cultural Field**, edited by Beate Flath and Eva Klein. The collection derives from a lecture series on advertising held at the University of Graz during the winter term of 2012–13. As the book’s title suggests, the anthology takes a cross-disciplinary approach to the topic of advertising, which, as the editors note, was designed “to bring together different perspectives to provide a possibly deeper understanding of this phenomenon of everyday life” (p. 7). Providing a survey of the field, however, is an ambitious project, given that advertising has been studied through a wide range of theoretical traditions including communications, anthropology, sociology, psychology, art history, and marketing.

Over the course of 13 chapters, plus the editors' introduction, this anthology provides a glimpse into several lines of inquiry within advertising scholarship. According to the editors, the chapters are organized according to three main areas: advertising as a form of communication, advertising as persuasion, and advertising's relationship to the cultural environment. However, it is not always clear that the book follows this structure, nor is it always apparent that the contributors are always talking about advertising. For example, Margit Stadlober's chapter, titled "Under the Spell of the Lottery – Warning Included," is primarily about an 1829 Viennese Biedermeier painting. Although the painting includes an advertisement in the background, advertising is only incidental to the overall essay. Similarly, Charles Spence's essay is primarily about product design and the sounds associated with particular product experiences.

Despite the lack of a clear organizing framework, several themes appear to emerge in this anthology. For example, the relationship between high art and advertising is one of multiple recurring themes taken up by several contributors. In her essay titled "Multiple Mona Lisa: Art as a Tool of Advertising," coeditor Eva Klein traces the use of da Vinci's subject in a variety of advertisements ranging from Pantene hair products to Toshiba's Magimix blender. In doing so, Klein demonstrates the ways in which *Mona Lisa* has become malleable, able to be used for a variety of purposes, regardless of product type or messaging strategy. However, the fact that those ads that feature *Mona Lisa* easily come and go while the original endures speaks to the temporary nature of advertising compared with the endurance of high art. In the book's concluding chapter, subtitled "Discussions on Drawing the Line Between Art and Advertising," Bernadette Collenberg-Plotnikov approaches the subject through the lens of art history. In doing so, she complicates the popular narrative that high art remains exclusive while advertising is designed to accommodate the masses. Collenberg-Plotnikov's objective is not necessarily to police the strict borders that delineate high culture from popular culture, but to encourage a relational perspective in which a better understanding of advertising can shed light on the unique role and purpose of art.

Sound appears to be another topic of particular interest to the editors. Werner Jauk's essay, "Pop & Ads: The Sound of Mass Media," for example, examines the relationship among pop music, digital media, and emotional bonding. Specifically, Jauk argues that pop music, which is a distinctly digital form designed to reach the masses, is uniquely poised to prompt emotional bonding in consumers. Furthermore, because of their capacity to reach a wide audience, the combination of pop music and advertising can generate excitement on a mass scale. In her own chapter, Beate Flath, one of the coeditors of this anthology, also writes about the relationship between music and emotional bonding in advertising. In her chapter, titled "The Sound of Image: Aspects of Sound Design Within the Digital Mediamorphosis," Flath examines the conditions in which sound in advertising becomes more connotative and intuitive.

Overall, the anthology is most successful when it contributes new insights to our understanding of advertising (and its related fields) and how it works. For example, Charles Spence's essay, titled "Multisensory Advertising and Design," provides an intriguing look into product design and the ways in which manufacturers manipulate sound to achieve a desired effect. Spence, who is head of the Crossmodal Research Laboratory at Oxford University, reveals how the sounds we experience when consuming a product are not happenstance, but engineered to prompt particular sensory cues. Whether it

is enhancing the audible crack of chocolate when biting into an ice cream bar or designing a bag of chips with a "signature sound," a deft approach to audible design can ultimately enhance the consumer brand experience.

In a similar way, "'The Voice' of the Music Industry: New Advertising Options in Music Talent Shows," written by Holger Schramm and Nicolas Ruth, effectively illustrates the various strategies used by large music companies that market their music in such programs. For example, the authors' focus on the popular television show *The Voice of Germany* reveals a variety of strategies used by Universal to showcase its licensed music. These strategies include the use of hosts (who are often artists signed with the label), the marketing of compilation albums based on the performances in the show, and the professional practice of "voting by download," in which audiences can have a greater impact on the outcome of a contest by purchasing music. By revealing these industrial practices, the authors make a compelling case that despite their pretenses of artistic excellence, such shows are almost entirely commercial in nature.

The book is less effective when the contributors are addressing material that is already well covered within the corpus on advertising, prompting the reader to question why the contributors did not simply engage in a more thorough literature review. For example, Bernhard Kettmann's chapter, titled "Semiotics of Advertising and the Discourse of Consumption," attempts to address the cultural meanings embedded within advertising, but claims no new territory here. Rather, this same task has been previously taken up in a more comprehensive way by scholars such as Judith Williamson (*Decoding Advertisements*, 1978) or Bob Goldman and Stephen Papson (*Sign Wars*, 1996). Similarly, the chapter titled "Advertising Effects Despite Scepticism: Eroticism, Humour, and Celebrities," by Jörg Matthes, covers familiar material from the vast literature in persuasion studies. While these essays touch on important lines of inquiry within advertising scholarship, they do not always illuminate existing concepts or themes in new ways. Despite these limitations, the anthology delivers on its promise of providing a cross-disciplinary look into advertising, and although this survey is not exhausting, it offers the reader a glimpse into how the topic has been approached from a variety of academic traditions, including social psychology, art history, and cultural studies. Consequently, this text might be a useful resource when coupled with more foundational pieces in the field.

References

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Williamson, J. (1978). *Decoding advertisements: Ideology and meaning in advertisements*. New York, NY: Marion Boyers.