Artiz 2011

Culture Jamming
Disrupting the (information) Flow

Mentalgassi, Germany, 2011

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Unleash the fiend, invoke your dark side, vandalise everything. Stand in the middle of traffic and dance. Return favours twofold, and return malice fivefold. Insert tiny propaganda bombs into publications and news-stands everywhere.

Defy TV, denounce everybody, see through everything, place disturbing classified ads in newspapers, toss money at people, paint targets on cars, streak, defy classification, get yourself on TV.

Start a church, cross dress, write several conflicting autobiographies, be politically incorrect, make love to anything, make war on everything. Look normal, be insane.”

- Social Activism In the Information Age | headspace #4 | abc.net.au | 1998
“What makes a good advertiser good is precisely his or her ability to make us want something we did not previously feel any need for... Advertisers are therefore the contemporary world’s leading experts at instilling desire and manufacturing longing – injecting us with images, humour and state of the art graphics, as a virus might be injected via a finely tuned hypodermic needle.”

The Pretext
Consumer Culture

The Ideological Critique

• The major criticism of the consumer is aimed at the large sums of money invested in items which do not provide lasting satisfaction or happiness.

• This is compounded by the enormous investment large companies make in the promotion of these products.

• **EG.** The Gillette company spent US$1 billion developing and marketing the Mach 3 razor in 2005; Microsoft spent $10 million on 30 seconds of the Rolling Stone’s *Start Me Up* to launch Windows OS in 1995.

• As a result, consumer society would appear to be governed by commercially driven priorities which a person would not endorse upon rational reflection.
The Perfectionist Critique

• On the other hand we could assume that consumers are actually getting by large what it is that they want when they enact the role of “consumerist”.

• Is it possible that the consumer is purchasing into ‘goodness’ - where the good is the ‘image’, not good itself?

• In other words an association with the ‘good’ via the consumption of product is an attempt to correct the imperfection in the consumerist lifestyle.

• The creation of wants and needs breeds inequality, imperfection and emptiness; this critique suggests the consumerist can be cured of this ill via consumption and that this ‘need’ is manufactured by the corporation.
The Pretext
Consumer Culture

The Liberal Critique

• From this point of view, it is not the preference for product or the effects of marketing which are dubious but the cycle of consumer behaviour.

• As ‘we’ work more we spend more. We spend more on leisure and we aspire to more “positional” consumption.

• A positional product, holds value as a commodity and a narrative. It positions the owner above or beyond the fellow consumer. This in turn can create a “keeping up with Jones's” mentality – feeding the cycle.
The Question
Why Culture Jamming?
The Question
Why Culture Jamming?

A Definition

• “Jamming” originally was CB radio term for interfering with a conversation or a transmission by making obscene remarks or juvenile noises

• ”Media Hacking” is another term which is often used which sits nicely alongside the notion of the Activist as Hacker. However this suggests that the Jammer is exclusively software dependent.
The Question
Why Culture Jamming?

A Definition

"Culture jamming, by contrast, is directed against an ever more intrusive, instrumental technoculture whose operant mode is the manufacture of consent through the manipulation of symbols."

- Mark Nery | Culture Jamming: Hacking, Slashing and Sniping in the Empire of Signs
The Evidence
Jams & Jammers
The Evidence
Toyota

From a rugged mountain vista to deep in the plush forest, nature calls out for us. And the 1997 Toyota 4Runner, available in either 2-wheel or 4-wheel drive, is one of the only machines capable of answering that challenge. With a powerful 183-hp V6 engine* and the highest ground clearance in its class, you'll be able to handle almost anything nature may throw at you. And with 4Runner's roomy interior and available leather-trimmed seats, civilization's never really that far away. The 1997 Toyota 4Runner. Your answer for the call of the wild.

Nature...

IT'LL GROW BACK
The Evidence
Nike
The Evidence

Google

Goolag™
exporting censorship, one search at a time
The Evidence
Coca Cola
The Jammers
Adbusters
The Jammers
Adbusters
The Jams
Print Collateral Subversion
In 2006 Paris Hilton released her self titled album *Paris*. Well known street artist, agitator and social commentator Banksy made alternate sleeve designs for the CD package and surreptitiously replaced 100s of the originals in record stores all over London.
The Jams
Paris Hilton by Banksy
The Jams
Paris Hilton by Banksy

90% of Success is just Showing up
The Jams
The Decapitator

“The Decapitator” is a street artist/agitator/prankster who decapitates the models and subjects of fly posters, billboards and bus stops in and around London.
The Jams
The Decapitator

Chardon Champagne | Bus Stop | London | 2007
The Jams
The Decapitator

BT Telecom | Billboard | London | 2007

Dimitri from Paris | Fly Poster | London | 2007
The Jams
Are You Generic (.org)

A simple and fun do-it-yourself jam -- just print the PDF on label sheets and stick 'em on all the commercial magazines you love to hate.

http://www.areyougeneric.org/confessions/

Confessions of a Generic magazine | areyougeneric.org | 2007
The confessions of a generic magazine: “We loaded this issue with more advertising than content. The content we did publish was edited, censored and manipulated to please our advertisers or as lame filler between the product pushing ads. We got paid quite handsomely to produce this issue and are glad you will pay to read what we already got paid to print.” Are You Generic?
The Jams
Are You Generic (.org)

2.5 Hours.
3 Neighbourhood
Bookstores.
56 Magazines.
1 Message:

We miss content.
In 1998 commuters riding the San Francisco Bay Area's Rapid Transit System (BART) were presented with a puzzling choice of train destinations. In addition to final stops such as Daly City, Fremont, and Richmond, every 10 minutes the platform video monitors display the arrival of a train bound for "Capitalism" with the information "Stops at Nothing" beneath.

Similarly they co-opted an electronic street sign and reprogrammed its sequence to comment on the recent dotcom crash on Wall Street.
Street Culture
Paste Ups

Jerm, 2010

London, 2008
Street Culture
Paste Ups

Melbourne, 2010

Paris, 2008
Shepard Fairey, Amsterdam, 2009
Case Study
The iPod Jam
A little over a month after September 11 and as the bombs started to fall in Afghanistan, Steve Jobs, Apple CEO, introduced the first iPod.

21st October 2001
Case Study
iPod Marketing
Case Study
iPod Marketing
iPod Campaign 2003
The Initial Disruption

Object as Interruption

• The highly successful design for the iPod advertising campaign of 2003, by the TWBA design firm, is now considered to be emblematic of the MP3/iPod generation

• The design signifies the first expression of the “new cool” in the 21st century.

• In and of itself this campaign was somewhat of a “disruption”, coming as it did so close behind the Napster debate and the demonising of the “MP3”
Object as Interruption

“Our Disruption was to celebrate music, not what was wrong with it. And using the white iPod as the iconic symbol of the digital music revolution....

The creative executions were silhouette images of many types of dancers, all holding an iPod in one hand and dancing with complete freedom. Set against neon bright colors, the aesthetic stood out among all types of media environments.”

- Duncan Miller, TBWA iPod campaign Producer
iRaq

The Evolution of An Idea
Object as Interruption

• The ubiquitous success of the iPod campaign and its connotations of “revolution” and new found “freedom” for music lovers and the much maligned MP3 also presented an opportunity to artists, pranksters and jammers alike

• This was after all the first six months of the Iraq War when concepts such as liberation, freedom and revolution were running thick and fast in the mainstream media.

• The irony that iPod somehow represents liberty and freedom while it significantly reduces one’s senses was not lost on many jammers
iRaq

The Evolution of An Idea

Object as Interruption

- Many critiques, jams and interruptions were performed and deployed on and around the iPod campaigns of 2003 and 2004
The Evolution of An Idea

Object as Interruption

• And so the inevitable political jamming of the consumer product advertisement.

• Using an iconic image of an Abu Ghraib detainee photographed by the US military and paraded on TV and in newspapers by the world’s media, “Copper Greene” created one of the most disquieting propaganda jams of recent times.

• The name of the artist, “Copper Greene” is taken from the secret army division of the US Military created by Donald Rumsfeld to carry out covert “interrogations”.

Copper Greene | iRaq | London | 2004
The Evolution of An Idea

Object as Parody

• As a piece of ultra “subversive parody” the culture jammers have managed to use the pre-existing power of the ubiquitous design and infuse it with a sharply observed political message

• The new reconstituted image is layered with meaning which goes well beyond the poster’s original context:

  • The outstretched arms
  • The awkward pose
  • The electrical wires
  • The pointed hood
The Historical Incident

2005 Abu Ghraib prison

2000 Gaza crossfire
France 2 via Associated Press. “A Palestinian and his 12-year-old son cowered behind a cement block from crossfire between Palestinians and Israeli troops in Gaza. Moments later the son was dead and the father wounded.”
iRaq

The Historical Incident

1989 Tianamen Square

1972 Children fleeing a napalm strike, Vietnam, 8 June 1972.
Huynh Cong (nlck) Ut.
1963 Thich Quang Duc
Vietnamese Buddhist monk who burned himself to death; an act of self-immolation in protest against the manner in which the current government was oppressing the Buddhist religion.

1936 The Fallen Soldier
p: Robert Capa
Photograph taken during the Spanish Civil War.
The Iconic Pose

1996 The People vs. Larry Flynt movie poster
Directed by Milos Forman.
Poster ©Columbia Pictures Corporation.

1991 It's Our Pleasure to Disgust You poster
by Barbara Kruger
The Iconic Pose

1970 Street Theatre
p: David Fenton
A mock crucifixion during an antiwar rally, Washington D.C., May 9, 1970.

1975 L’Espresso magazine cover
d: unknown
iRaq

The Iconic Pose

1968 Black Moses album cover for Isaac Hayes
ad: The Graffiteria/David Krieger
p: Joel Brodsky

c1820 Disasters of War etching
a: Francisco de Goya
iRaq

The Graphic Design

2004 iPod ad campaign
s: TBWA/CHIAT/DAY

1999 Paul Smith Bag
ad, d, p: Aboud Sodano
iRaq
The Graphic Design

1958 Vertigo movie poster
a: Saul Bass
Directed by Alfred Hitchcock.
Poster © Paramount Pictures.

1972 Ne! book cover
d: Roman Cieslewicz
c: gzh & galerija sc, zagreb
iRaq

The Graphic Design

1956 Saxophone Colossus—Sonny Rollins
record cover
d,p: Tom Hannan

1900 Motorova Dvoukolka ad
c:Laurin & Klement
iRaq
The Graphic Design

1894 Hamlet poster
\textit{The Beggarstaffs}
(William Nicholson and James Pryde)

1832 Self-Portrait silhouette
\textit{Johann Gaspar Spurzheim}
Self-portrait with skull in hand.
See Chapter #49

c510-500 BC Black Figured Water Jar (hydria) with Mythical and Real Scenes
From Vulci, ancient Etruria (now in Lazio, Italy).
Culture Jamming
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The Apple Wheel | The Onion | 2009

New Sony Product | The Onion | 2009
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Jams

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