Center Acquires Papers of Feminist Advertising Critic Jean Kilbourne

Jean Kilbourne is a renowned author, speaker and filmmaker whose critique of advertising and its impact on society has brought her international acclaim. Known for promoting media literacy as a way to prevent problems originating from mass media advertising campaigns, she argues that the advertising industry sells more than products or services. It sells values, gender roles, success, self-worth, sexuality, popularity, normalcy and addiction. Dr. Kilbourne’s papers are now a part of the Rubenstein Library through a joint collecting initiative undertaken by the Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising & Marketing History and the Bingham Center for Women’s History and Culture.

Disturbed by ads she saw in magazines, she started clipping advertisements in 1968 and putting them on her refrigerator. Gradually she developed the emerging patterns into a slide-lecture presentation that she presented to her students and as a public lecturer, speaking out about media literacy and advertising. She was a pioneer, perhaps the first person to focus on advertising as an object of study for its social impact rather than for how well a particular ad sold toothpaste. She also suggested that media and advertising imagery presented a serious public health problem and promoted addiction. Her lectures quickly gained popularity and notoriety and she was named by The New York Times Magazine as one of the three most popular speakers on college campuses. Now nearly 38 years after her first public lecture, she has appeared at about half of all the colleges and universities in the United States and all of the major universities in Canada, as well as scores of private and public schools. Earlier in 2014 she even delivered a Tedx talk.

Kilbourne’s films, lectures and television appearances have been seen by millions of people throughout the world. She is perhaps best known for the films that are based on her lectures, including, “Killing Us Softly,” which chronicles how advertising depicts women over a 20-year span. Her other films include, “Slim Hopes: Advertising and the Obsession with Thinness,” and “Pack of Lies: The Advertising of Tobacco.” Kilbourne has also written many articles and editorials, has been interviewed by many newspapers and magazines, and has been a guest on hundreds of television and radio programs.

Kilbourne authored the book, Can’t Buy My Love: How Advertising Changes the Way We Think and Feel, in which she analyzes advertising’s effects on gender roles, alcohol and substance addiction, relationships, violence, and the objectification of women and men. Publishers Weekly called it “a profound work that is required reading for informed consumers.” She also co-authored, So Sexy So Soon: The New Sexualized Childhood and What Parents Can Do to Protect Their Kids.

Dr. Kilbourne’s papers includes her notable collection of clipped and categorized print advertising, book manuscripts and other writings, her films, recorded interviews, research files, slides of the ads found in her presentations, teaching files, and other materials related to her research, writings, and film projects. Arrangement and description of this collection will begin in early 2015 with hopes that the collection can be opened for research by late spring.
NEW ACQUISITIONS

William Golden Papers
Document Graphic Arts and Corporate Advertising

The Hartman Center recently acquired the papers of William Golden (1911-1959), a graphic designer who served as the Creative Director of Sales and Promotion at CBS. Golden is best known for his design of the CBS “eye” logo, and created for CBS a corporate identity aesthetic that reinforced the broadcaster’s image for elegance and good taste.

Golden was born in New York City and educated at the Vocational School for Boys. Upon graduation he left home for Los Angeles, where he worked as a lithographer and photo engraver, including a stint in the Art Department of the Los Angeles Examiner. Golden returned to New York after a few years and worked at the Journal American and House & Garden before joining the Promotion Department of CBS Radio in 1937. Golden was promoted to Art Director in 1940 but left the following year for wartime service in the Office of War Information. Golden later enlisted in the Army and worked on training manual designs until his discharge in 1946. Returning to CBS, this time to the television division, Golden undertook a complete redesign of CBS’ corporate identity materials—logo, stationery, the typeface used in print and television commercials. He and his staff (which included a young George Lois) redesigned the Didot typeface which became the iconic font for CBS for nearly half a century. In 1951, CBS debuted the “eye” logo, a design based on Shaker folk art, which served as the main broadcast icon on everything from network identification to mailers and record labels.

Golden won many awards from the professional design and marketing community, including the American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA), the Art Directors Club and the Direct Mail Advertising Association (DMAA, predecessor of the Direct Marketing Association). He was inducted into the Art Directors Club Hall of Fame in 1972, and was awarded the AIGA Medal in 1988. Golden’s legacy lives on today. CBS has retained many of Golden’s design elements that gave the corporation a distinctive aesthetic and attitude. Golden’s views on corporate advertising ran counter to many of the tenets of advertising’s “creative revolution” in that he believed that advertising should not aspire to art but should deliver a simple, direct and effective message.

The Golden Papers contain personal papers (including some of his personal wartime correspondence), professional publications, graphic designs, print advertisements for CBS radio and television sales divisions as well as for individual broadcast stations and programming, industry awards, photographs and memorial items. The Hartman Center is proud to preserve Mr. Golden’s papers and to make them available to scholars and students of graphic arts, broadcasting history and corporate advertising.

We thank the following donors for their generous financial donations. Your support is bringing advertising history to new audiences. Thank you.

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- Anthony Weir
- Molly & Eric Denlinger
- Ellen Gartrell McGeorge
- Marcia Ricker
New Hope for Headache Sufferers: Pain Relief in Mid-Twentieth Century American Advertising

Kelly Hacker Jones is a PhD Student in American History at the State University of New York at Stony Brook.

The quest for relief of aches, pains, and cold symptoms has drawn Americans to the medicine cabinet since the turn of the twentieth century, when patent medicines that claimed cures for everything from cancer to the common cold dominated the pharmaceutical landscape. But how has this expectation of relief found in a bottle come to dominate our thinking about pain? And why have Americans come to expect fast relief from conditions such as these, which have plagued humans for centuries? Recognizing the influence of advertising upon cultural norms, and having familiarized myself with the online exhibit, “Medicine and Madison Avenue,” I set out for the Hartman Center this past summer, in search of an answer to this question.

The J. Walter Thompson Competitive Advertisements provided a wealth and richness of advertisements for over-the-counter analgesics for me to explore; I was able to trace developments and themes in advertisements for Alka-Seltzer, Anacin, Bayer, Bufferin, and other miscellaneous pain relievers, from the mid 1950s until about 1980. It was while examining these ads that I realized that advertisers liked to use images that demonstrated some effect on the body. Moreover, as there is no single cause for a headache (making it difficult to sell a single remedy), advertisers created different types of headache, such as “housewife fatigue” and the “tension headache;” the latter claim being so effective, that a 1978 federal court ruling ordered the word “tension” struck from all future ads for the drug. But beyond characterizing aches and pains as easily solved problems, advertisements made taking a pill look like part of a modern, middle-class lifestyle. What’s the cure for tension and irritability on a hot summer day in an ad from 1962? Take a couple of Bayer aspirin and putting your feet up! Or, for that summer cold, take two Alka-Seltzer tablets dissolved in water, as instructed by a 1970 ad which cleverly disguises the medicine as a cocktail. By creating an association with leisure in these images, ads for analgesics brought these drugs out of the medicine cabinet and into the living room.

The J Walter Thompson Company Vertical Files, as well as the American Association of Advertising Agency Records, also provided valuable inside industry documents on controversies surrounding advertisements for pain relievers. As these documents reveal, largely as a result of unverifiable claims made by the advertisers of Anacin and Bufferin, the advertising industry came under severe scrutiny for wording and imagery used to sell over-the-counter analgesics. These sources, alongside other contemporary publications that address advertising techniques, have been crucial in demonstrating that not only did advertisements for these products affect how Americans reacted to pain and their perception of drugs, but that government and regulating bodies felt that these advertisements were so nefarious that something had to be done.

Looking Back

Mustang turns 50

2014 marks the 50th anniversary of the Ford Mustang. The Mustang inaugurated a new class of vehicles—the “pony car,” which aimed to be affordable, stylish, and sporty. Debuting with a suggested retail price of $2,368, it quickly exceeded sales forecasts and set a record with over 400,000 models sold in the first year. The launch marked the first ever advertising "roadblock" when the J. Walter Thompson agency bought media time on all three broadcast networks to announce the new car. The advertising campaign presented the car as a unique design that was also practical and financially attainable. Above all, it stressed individualism and fun. This magazine ad features a bold, red convertible with a V8 engine and bucket seats. It cajoles the viewer: “Why don’t you find more fun?”

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JWT Timeline
Documents 150 Year History of the Agency

As Reference Archivist for the Hartman Center since October 2013 Josh Larkin Rowley has fielded dozens of reference inquiries regarding the archives of the J. Walter Thompson Co. (JWT) advertising agency. Established in 1864, JWT is considered the oldest enduring advertising agency in the world, and one of the largest, with a current presence in over 90 countries. The archive consists of roughly 5,000 linear feet of material and 160 individual collections including the papers of nearly 60 former executives, the records of six offices, 25 departments and functional centers, and over a dozen “artificial” collections such as writings and speeches, agency publications, and newsletters. Navigating this web of interconnected collections is enough to intimidate the most seasoned archival researcher, including library staff.

The portal consists of three major features: an interactive timeline, an administrative history of JWT, and a list of collections in the Rubenstein Library associated with the agency. The timeline feature marks important dates in the history of JWT. Viewers scroll from event to event using the arrows or scroll through the timeline bar and select a specific event.

The second feature of the portal is an in-depth administrative history of JWT. This portion of the portal presents the history of JWT in a more linear fashion. Entries in the administrative history cover several basic topics: people, accounts, offices, innovations, and general company history. Researchers can trace important personnel; long-term clients; opening dates of domestic and international offices; technical achievements and innovations in radio, television, and print advertising; milestones in billings; and the history of the agency’s corporate branding. Each entry is illustrated with relevant photographs, advertisements, and internal documents.

The final feature of the portal is perhaps the most important component of the timeline. To further assist researchers in making connections between JWT’s corporate history and collections in the archive, we have included a list of collections with published online guides.

You can visit the timeline at: library.duke.edu/rubenstein/collections/creators/jwt1. Explore the images, advertisements, records, and archival collections documenting the agency’s 150 years of operation.