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### THE USE OF ART AS AN INTERTEXTUAL TOOL FOR COMUNICATIVE PURPOSES. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ART AND ADVERTISING AS BRAND MANAGEMENT IN THE CASE OF THE CLASSICAL PYRAMIDS OF GIZA.

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Egyptian art comprises a series of artistic disciplines with clear communicative, advertising and propagandistic intentions. The constant commitment of the politico-religious power of the time, and throughout its history, has provided an extraordinary artistic legacy that, beyond showing techniques or feelings, both of the artists and of society, reveals, after analysis, the relationship between art and persuasive advertising, highlighting those circumstances, works or transmitters thanks to which both languages have been closer, either because advertising has been closer to art or vice versa.

The result of the confluence between artistic guidelines and communicative purposes (specifically propaganda) was an extensive persuasive campaign and the creation of a powerful brand image, which is analysed here and dissected in communicative terms.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Art has served as a communicative tool since its origins: first as propaganda and later as advertising. Art has been a concept profusely dealt with since the

origins of mankind, posing certain challenges to research since "to the boom of its expressions, we must add the complex continuity of a symbolism whose perception escapes us to a great extent" (Lloyd, 1979: 27) and whose intertextuality with other discourses is evident (Marcos, 1976). In communication, in general, and in advertising discourse, more specifically, there are many cases of intertextuality in a conscious and intentional manner. Previous studies (Badenes-y-Pla and García-González, 2017; Alonso and Conde, 1994; AA.VV., 1982; Eguizábal, 1990) insist that this transgression of the code used by advertising is not random, but responds to the need to express a particular effect in a different way.

Berger (1991) defines intertextuality as the conscious or unconscious use of other people's material in a text. O'Donohoe (1997, 2000) also starts from the consideration of intertextuality in communication as a postmodern phenomenon and analyses its implications for the perception of advertising messages. In this sense, authors such as Baker (1967: 19) refer to advertising as "advertising art". In fact, as De Vicente (2011: 191) points out, "between art and advertising there have been encounters, interrelations and connections, either because advertising has approached art or vice versa". These links have been shown through various exhibitions that have made a historical journey from the origins to the present day, and which have been held since the second half of the twentieth century (González, 1997: 55); the first of which was *Art et Pub dans le monde*, at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris.

In contemporary times, advertising fulfils an image-creating function in the same way as art. Thus, Gil (2003) demonstrated that works of art and advertising have similar functions in the social and personal domains. Therefore, advertising, as an integral part of the mechanisms of the consumer society, has promoted the iconographic diversity that proliferated in the visual arts, within the processes of change and rupture that modernity and the historical avant-gardes brought about, thus contributing to the fundamental conceptual transformations that have taken place in the field of aesthetics and art. In this sense, in 1998, Julieta Ortiz analysed the importance of the study of the advertising image in the Mexican press. The researcher started from the premise of understanding commercial communication in its advertising aspect as a fundamental part of the visual codes of the 20th century "in its interaction with the languages of modern art" (1998: 412), based on the premise that advertising images have taken up a large part of the tradition of Western art, while at the same time influencing the configuration of 20th century art.

Added to this is the fact that advertisers and artists have very blurred boundaries between them. Thus, Gombrich (2013) comments that "there are only artists (...), today they buy their colours and design posters for billboards; they have done and do many other things"; Eguizábal (1998: 15) speaks of "relevant moments" referring to advertising, linking it to "artists, with some achievements of international repercussion, as in the case of Ramon Casas"; Gurrea (1998: 165) points out that "the aesthetics of advertising is considered the most representative sample of the mass art of our time", and that "the aesthetics of advertising is considered the most representative sample of the mass art of our time", and that "the aesthetics of advertising is considered the

most representative sample of the mass art of our time", and Pérez (1998: 185) comments that artists like Warhol "do not copy Campbell's soup cans, Coca-Cola bottles, or Brillo soap boxes because he feels plastic empathy towards these elements, but because it allows him to use them as metaphors to explain the society in which he lives". And, above all these issues, carrying out communication objectives is a common capacity that puts art and advertising in intimate relation.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Art as A Basis for Advertising Campaigns*

The relationship between communication and art has received considerable attention (Viente, 2011; Fillis, 2002). Communication makes use of the plastic triumphs of works of art: aesthetics, resources or mythical passages (Pérez, 2000). This was confirmed, for example, by Daix (1990), who studied the influence of Picasso, Braque and Gris on advertising, or Banash (2004), who, more precisely, studied the influence of the collage technique (again Braque, Picasso and Gris, among others) as a form of advertising expression. Similarly, art has been nourished by advertising manifestations, as in the case of Pop works by artists such as Warhol, with his famous series of Campbell Soups or, more recently, the Spaniard Antonio de Felipe, with his series of Cows or Infantas. Moreover, as Hetsroni & Tukachinsky (2005) express, advertising brings to the street the artistic movements, especially the so-called modern styles, which know the value of art as communication (Jiménez-Marín & Elías, 2019). In this way, art abandons its traditional exhibition supports (museums, exhibition halls, etc.) and tries to actively participate in everyday life.

Art is a powerful resource in advertising. We can attribute to advertising the basic purposes of trans-textual relations considering that, on the one hand, they are based on a search for authority to try to give, by means of the voice, the figure or the work itself of another, a certain prestige, wisdom, recognition, etc. (Genette, 1989); and, on the other hand, this introduction produces an effect of complicity or recognition in the target audience (Jiménez-Marín & Elías, 2019). De Vicente (2010) analysed the way in which advertising creatives insert artistic elements in print advertising to advertise products. Analysing aspects such as which artistic manifestation is most used, the most usual type of reproduction, whether they are works recognised by the viewer, or studying their composition in the advertisement, among other aspects, are some of the variables analysed in his research, which shows that creatives or advertisers use characteristic visual codes in both the representation and the composition of artistic elements in print advertising.

Among the pioneering works on this object of research is Berger, who, in 1972, noted that advertisements often included works of art to imbue products with a sense of luxury and cultural value. Later, Williamson (1978) indicates that the use of works of art in communication strategies helps to transcend social distinctions, pointing out that when recognised works of art appear in an advertisement or any other form of communication, they contribute a system

of codes other than social ones that help the interpretation of the advertisements by the audiences. In line with Berger, Dyer (1982) argued that the use of art in advertising, from a professional point of view, has been closely linked to higher status and prestige, and the inclusion of works of art in advertisements serves as a symbol of high culture, high skills and high values (Walker, 1983). Caudle (1989), for example, noted how the incorporation of artists' artwork or tools in advertisements suggests that the products being offered are masterpieces in themselves and thus helps to position them with values of exclusivity. This author analyses the appropriate use in advertising of different artistic forms (portraits, landscapes, still lifes, abstract compositions, etc.) and styles (surrealism and impressionism). Another very interesting work has been the study carried out by Hetsroni & Tukachinsky (2005), who analysed the target audience's perception of products advertised with artistic manifestations. These researchers, who focused exclusively on sculpture, painting and architecture, studied the influence, in terms of prestige and status, of advertising a product using one of these artistic disciplines, as well as its commercial repercussions.

Regarding specific artistic styles, there are several studies that have delved into the use of surrealism in advertisements, such as Mostafa (2005). A pioneering work is that of Homer & Kahle (1986) who analysed the effectiveness of print advertisements designed according to the principles of surrealism. The results showed that ads with surrealistic content were more effective in terms of recall, recognition, attitude and influence on consumer behaviour. Another relevant work in this sense is the study "Magritte, advertising creative" (2006) by the researchers Mensa & Roca, in which they analyse the surrealist painter's facet as an advertising creative. These authors consider the author to be an "advertising artist" and discuss the influence of art on advertising, formulating the expression "pictorial and advertising surrealism" and stating that "there is a correlation between painting and advertising" (2006: 299), despite the fact that, in the words of Prat Gaballí, "surrealism applied to advertising has dangers of ineffectiveness, because pretending to remove the subconscious, it can happen, and often does happen, that it removes neither the subconscious nor reason" (Riera, Chica & Garriga i Puig, 1998: 124). For his part, Asenjo (1999) investigated images in advertising that have their referent in the history of painting, limiting his field of research to the period since impressionism. In the same year, 2005, Prieto analysed the historical context and the influence of an artistic style, the Bauhaus, on advertising.

In terms of artistic formats, there are studies on the influence of specific artistic disciplines in advertising, such as the studies carried out by Caro & Jiménez-Marín (2006) and Jiménez-Marín & Gómez (2006). The first, "Commercial architecture as a support for the creation of identity in the fashion sector" studies the use that large companies in the textile sector are making of one of the artistic disciplines, architecture, to stand out from the competition by seeking notoriety and distinction. The second, "El uso de la pintura en la publicidad de revistas femeninas en España" (The use of painting in the advertising of women's magazines in Spain), lists the advertisers who regularly use painting to publicise or recall their products, services or brands.

Along the same lines, Canales (2006) analysed the role of the image in two fields with such opposite functions and purposes as mural painting and outdoor advertising. Madrazo, Hernández, Rivera & Sabat (2007: 821-835) also present the results of a study on the multidisciplinary and interdisciplinarity of disciplines such as communication and art, specifically architecture.

This intertextuality has meant that, on occasions, the boundaries between advertising and art are or have been blurred. While it is not difficult to understand that art can serve as an advertising claim, as has been explained in this section, it is more complex to accept that advertising, and even other forms of communication, can be considered art. Because the commercial objectives of advertising are, a priori, far removed from the postmodern concept of the self-absorption of art. Authors such as Davidson (1992) support this approach, but others such as Fink (1994: 25) argue that advertising is an art form in its own right and possibly "one of the most exciting of the 20th century. Art doesn't really challenge people's minds the way it did... advertising has now taken over as the new means of expression". In the art market, this confusion reaches unimaginable limits: a work can be considered art if it is exhibited in a gallery or museum, and advertising if it is inserted in the pages of a newspaper. But the aims of the two disciplines are radically different. While the aim of advertising is to inform, remind and persuade (Sánchez, 1999), the aim of art is, beforehand, purely aesthetic and perceptual (Ruhrberg, Schneckenburger, Fricke & Honnef, 2001).

### *Art as A Form of Advertising*

The techniques and tools of advertising, as well as its language, show artists different possibilities of communication, and art, in this sense, shows its value as a communicator, trying to participate in everyday life, as it did in previous centuries when art was one of the main channels of communication. Thus, as early as ancient Egypt, art was used for propaganda and advertising purposes. Throughout human history, there is a long list of artists who used their art for communicative purposes: The Cubist Grosz or the photomontages of Heartfield (against the Nazi regime); Lissitzky, Rodchenko and Maiakovsky (against the Soviet political system); the Spaniards Renau, Picasso and Miró (in favour of the Republic). Just as the early Dadaists made themselves known in Zurich through posters, the German Expressionists used art as a means of communication, taking elements from advertising. The group of artists consisting of Kollwitz, Grosz, Heartfield produced works of art that tried to counteract the effects of Nazi propaganda. With Pop Art, there was a progressive approach to the language of advertising, seeking reflections on society (Pérez, 1998).

Later, the works made by some of the members of collectives such as the Guerrilla Girls, or artists such as Hans Haacke or Barbara Kruger, served as a model for the art groups of the 1980s where their creations are aimed at disturbing the viewer and making them reflect. Contemporary activist actions rely heavily on the ability of art to communicate revolutionary ideas to the viewer (Aladro Vico, Jivkova-Semova & Bailey, 2018).

With all this we ask ourselves: Can art be advertising? Two clear tendencies can be found in both languages that link them. Specifically, there is a tendency in some artistic movements to use resources from communicative language for advertising or propaganda purposes. Thus, certain currents emerge according to which there is a move towards two models of artistic production: one faithful to the methods of classical creation, and the other whose main interest is to adopt and achieve new techniques and new media. The first of these models, which is committed to a classical conception (the two-dimensional model of representation of reality in advertising is inherited from art), continues on its way and stops to examine previous artistic movements; on the contrary, the model that is committed to the street is very permeable to the visual influences of the environment, so that advertising is a great field of action and influence (Pérez, 1998).

### *Art as Propaganda*

Parallel to the art-advertising intertextuality, there are questions about the way in which propaganda and art relate to each other. These have several open flanks from which to analyse them and attempt to answer them. There are questions that perpetuate the debates surrounding both concepts, such as those posed by Clark: "Does the use of art for propaganda imply the subordination of aesthetic quality to the message? On the other hand, can the criteria for judging aesthetic quality be separated from ideological values? (2003: 10).

The interrelation between the two concepts can be since the propagandistic potential of art is unquestionable. In this sense, Huici points out that the image and the symbol "are dimensions that man processes from premises based on intuition and emotion, as opposed to the logical-rational processing that is typical of verbal language" (1996: 46). For this reason, plastic art, fundamentally visual, is a good propagandistic instrument, since "the image lends itself to persuasion and to the implantation of models and patterns of conduct in a much more effective way than any other language" (Huici, 1996: 46). Hence, powerful visual propaganda is a determining factor in any propaganda strategy. As Thomson points out, "a feature of the most effective propaganda empires, both political and religious has been that they early on established a decisive artistic identity, a significant style differential consistently applied; what in modern commercial terms would be described as strong branding" (1999: 80). Due to this empowerment of artistic identity, empires and institutions such as Egypt and its Colossalism, Greece and its refinement, or the Counter-Reformation Church and its theatricality have gone down in history. Art as the identity of an empire, state or institution is a propaganda tool that, in addition to pursuing and achieving certain indoctrination effects in its time, prevails as a visual identity that is easily recognised over the years and centuries.

Perhaps because of this link between certain artistic movements and the regime in which they were born, Marxist positions have been reached which state that all art has practical effects on those who observe and enjoy it, and therefore it is also conceived that all art is propaganda, since such enjoyment

would have a direct or indirect effect on the class struggle (Vivas, 1935: 91). "The reason for this", explains Vivas, "is that the artist cannot help reflecting the values, ideas, and ideals -what the Marxist calls the 'ideology'- of the class to which he belongs" (1935: 92). However, one of the problems Vivas sees with this position is that, if all art is considered propaganda, then another term for propaganda would have to be devised, one that correctly delineates the difference between what was then called art and what was called propaganda; "other you are prepared to show that there is really no difference in kind between the two things" (1935: 93). Similarly, the assertion that all art is propaganda also has a nullifying tinge to the very characteristics of art: "art does not lead to action. War posters do. Art leads to contemplation, to knowledge in the Aristotelian sense. War posters don't. And an extension in the meaning of a word propaganda cannot obliterate this difference" (1935: 93). The difference between art and propaganda would thus be, for the author, that while the former leads to contemplation, the latter leads to action.

For his part, Monroe (1934) affirms that art would be propaganda if the artist is interested in some political cause, and not only in aesthetic matters. But Monroe does not go so far as to affirm that there is no propaganda in art, but rather argues that it would be almost invisible to the eyes of the public (1934: 211). In short, Monroe argues that art is art insofar as it is the creativity of the artist, and not because of its possible ideological intention, so that, for all art to be propaganda, the propagandistic element of the work must arise precisely from that creativity and spirit of the artist. Orwell's (2009) position is also reductionist, as he focuses the similarity between art and propaganda on the message, stating that "All art is propaganda". In fact, Orwell refers throughout to the impossibility of the practice of art for art's sake because, according to him, all art is propaganda because the political commitment of the author is always extracted from the work.

In this text we will consider that propaganda art exists if there is an intention of power in the work, given that power is the explanatory element of propaganda. Therefore, for a work of art to be read as propaganda, there must be a political or religious entity that intends to legitimize its power through it. It would not be enough, therefore, to simply embody the artist's ideology.

This can lead to the erroneous distinction, as Thomson (1994: 4) argued, between pure (superior) art and propaganda (inferior) art, according to which there are, on the one hand, great artists who are not willing to put their work and talent under the orders of powerful individuals or groups; and, on the other hand, second-rate artists who do accept such commissions and who, because they are worse artists, will produce ephemeral and defective works. History's great works of art resulting from propaganda commissions (from Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel to Picasso's Guernica) justify the opposite. On the other hand, Clark (2003: 8) argues that once the artist reclaimed his ideological freedom in the mid-nineteenth century, the art that continued to be created under the protection of the institutions of power, an art that was clearly propagandistic, could not be well considered. In the same vein, Levy (2004: 70) argues that it is a practically impossible task not to judge the work of art in

terms of its propagandistic content: "Speer's work will always be read as Nazi architecture but never unambiguously as good architecture".

Some authors disqualify art as propaganda, such as Adorno (2004), Ruesch & Bateson (2009) or Dewey (2008), for whom the distinction between art and propaganda lies in the fact that, while the former produces new discourses, opening up a range of new ways of seeing the world, propaganda narrows the public's gaze towards preconceived ideas. On the other hand, there are those authors who naturalise art as propaganda, where Hauser (1994) stands out, for whom artists have always followed the orders of a superior or of a particular community; only exceptionally in history, the author explains, can we find examples of this disconnection between the artist and the organisations (1994: 128).

There is thus an artistic-advertising campaign of the politico-religious power during the Ancient Empire with a literary basis that shows the scholarly tradition of communicative persuasion by religious and political power, with an eternal interest in advertising (McDaniel, 1986; Percy, 2000; Mulyanegara, Tsarenko, Mavondo, 2010).

Although religious propaganda has existed since the beginning of mankind, there is evidence that from 2686 and 2181 B.C., a thoughtful image campaign began to be undertaken to demonstrate supremacy and gain adherents to power (Kelly, 1982), in response to the social revolts that had been developing in the lower strata (Hartwing, 2014) and that had been raising counter-propagandist movements (Taylor, 1995), with a real display in quality and quantity of the architectural arts. In this way, funerary architectural constructions emerge as one of the most outstanding historical examples of propaganda art. Thus, the so-called Egyptian art, and its architectural constructions, is presented, in essence, as a style full of parsimony, as well as theatricality and staging, which sought to impress and impose itself on the passer-by, the faithful and the slave.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This article takes as its subject of study the architectural ensemble of Giza, without forgetting other pyramids scattered throughout the Arabian territory. This system was, at the time, the most important in the territory in economic, social, religious and artistic terms.

The main objective of this research is to establish the lines on which the brand image of the Ancient Empire is built, as well as its management in communicative terms. In order to achieve this objective, we propose a methodology that, beforehand, starts with the analysis of a sample of architectural works of the Ancient Empire such as the whole of the Nile Valley: The Great Pyramid of Keopso of Khufu (-2547 to -2530), the Pyramid of Khafra (-2519 and -2493), and the Pyramid of Menkaura (-2489 and -2471), so that the final sample has been 3 works.

After contextualising the architectural ensemble following the analytical line of Jowett and O'Donnell (1986), we approach the works in communicative terms through a discursive analysis of the works by a key author: Levy (2004),



who provides us with the distinctions she makes in a work of art between the propagandist, the message and the dissemination. Once the actors of propagandistic communication have been identified, a reflection on the works in terms of *branding* is carried out. In branding, the brand image is placed in the sphere of the receiver within the general process of communication, assuming the result of the interpretation made by the different audiences, visualising, translating and interpreting a series of cognitions, emotions and/or behavioural patterns (Capriotti, 2009). In a social context with an illiterate population, the analysis of the three pyramids is even more relevant in these terms, since the image that power projects on the minds of its publics is one of the main sources of information for the citizens of the time. Moreover, this image has been configured as the main symbol of the entire Egyptian civilisation, and is, in turn, the emblematic image of Egypt today.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Analysis of the architectural ensemble as a branding tool for politico-religious power*

Religion was the basis of life in Egypt, and as a society that believed in life after death, funerary art was of primary importance. The pyramids, such as the pyramid of Cheops (2589 BC - 2566 BC), are the symbol of Egyptian art, and were the residences, filled with precious objects and personal belongings, which the pharaohs ordered to be built to house them after death. The defining characteristic of Egyptian art in general is undoubtedly Colossalism, both in architecture and sculpture. This was intended to honour not only the gods, but also the pharaoh, who was one of them. In fact, sculptures of the pharaoh who had financed it were placed on the façade of the temples. Thus, in both the Proto-Dynastic and Imperial periods, cold and direct propaganda art was produced, of disproportionate size, and in which the boundaries between political and religious power were quite blurred.

Arnold Hauser explains the situation in which the Egyptian artist found himself as follows:

The main and for a long time the only maintainers of artists were priests and princes [...]. In the workshops of these patrons the artists worked as free or forced labourers, as hired labourers or as slaves for life. [...]

Their creations consisted for the most part of offerings to the gods and royal monuments, of accessories for the worship of the gods or the monarch, of instruments of propaganda that served either the fame of the immortals or the posthumous fame of their earthly representatives (1994: 46).

It should not be forgotten that, although the artist was not a slave, his work was carried out within the narrow limits imposed on him by kings and priests. Further on, Hauser states that "each [the king and the priest] sought in the artist an ally in the struggle for the maintenance of power" (1994: 47).

In short, the origin of art as propaganda is inherent to the appearance of the first hierarchical societies. As Pérez Lagarcha explains in a chapter devoted to

the legitimisation of Egyptian power through art, when the leaders appeared, "art concentrated on them [...]. Through art, the king and his closest followers adopt certain poses, certain symbols that make art more closed, eliminating the freedom of the artist" (2000: 148). Furthermore, the author comments that this art is changing, acquiring new aesthetic precepts as a noble class rises, imitating pharaonic art, and the leaders have, therefore, to continue to maintain a well-differentiated position (2000: 152).

For Thomson, the main function of Egyptian art was to impress the gods rather than the subjects (1999: 92). Be that as it may, we must take into account two facts: on the one hand, the three thousand years of the civilisation of ancient Egypt, in which various forms of government, various reforms and new forces of relations between the elements of the gods-pharaoh-subjects downline took place; and, on the other hand, the divine character of the pharaoh, of which he had to convince the population through visual elements. That is why it is perhaps more correct to say that the moment art honours the gods, it convinces the subjects, who live with it.

### CONCLUSION

This research is based on the relationship and interaction between art and advertising. Almost all the artistic movements and styles known throughout history have circulated in advertising, in their different forms and formats. Both large and small works, well known to the general public, or that have gone unnoticed, have been and continue to be a source of attraction, re-interpretations, hooks or *insights* for advertising, communicative and persuasive campaigns. In this sense, the architectural ensemble of Cheops, Chephren and Mykerinos has not been left out. Society's exacerbated need to make use of advertising with iconic references is not only not new but has been a part of human beings ever since advertising has existed as an economic-commercial activity. And the same is true of the Egyptian pyramids: between this art and advertising there are these bidirectional connections, bringing one closer to the other and using common techniques. These points of union not in vain exemplify the power of Egyptian art to serve as a tool to achieve a clear objective: the adherence of its subjects, its target public, to its company, the demi-god pharaoh.

It could be said, then, that the pyramids of Egypt in general and the Great Pyramid of Giza are one of the most powerful landmarks in history. It concentrates in its architecture a whole series of values of the Ancient Empire associated with the divinity of the pharaoh, his absolute power, the astrological and architectural knowledge of the ancient civilisation and the richness of its interior decoration, related to a meticulous artistic work in such early stages of history. The Colossalism and constructive force are the reflection of a great propaganda work that responds to the absolute power of the pharaoh; in this case, of the triad of pharaohs Cheops, Chephren and Mycerinos. It is this effective propaganda campaign through art that has made the pyramids of Egypt a timeless symbol. They are a brand that has been able to convey different values over time associated with its territory, but there is only one unmistakable timeless (and non-spatial) value that endures through the centuries: the power of power.

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