

2021

René Magritte as an Inspiration for Modern Advertising Design

Huda Othman

Associate Dean, School of Architecture and Design, American International University, Kuwait,
dr.hoda.osman@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.aaru.edu.jo/faa-design>



Part of the [Art and Design Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Othman, Huda (2021) "René Magritte as an Inspiration for Modern Advertising Design," *International Design Journal*: Vol. 11 : Iss. 4 , Article 9.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.aaru.edu.jo/faa-design/vol11/iss4/9>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Arab Journals Platform. It has been accepted for inclusion in International Design Journal by an authorized editor. The journal is hosted on [Digital Commons](#), an Elsevier platform. For more information, please contact rakan@aar.edu.jo, marah@aar.edu.jo, u.murad@aar.edu.jo.

René Magritte as an Inspiration for Modern Advertising Design

Dr. Huda Othman

Associate Dean, School of Architecture and Design, American International University, Kuwait,
dr.hoda.osman@gmail.com

Abstract:

The advertisers would seek to create unique, unexpected, and dreamlike images for use in promotions because advertisers often try to gain consumers' attention, to fuel their fantasies and to induce them to view a product in a new light. As a result, surrealist ads have been used to promote a variety of products. One of the artists who have the most influence on advertisers and publicity is René Magritte. Parodying the works of famed artist like René Magritte not only catches the consumer's attention but also, it shows the advertisement from a novel perspective. Advertisers involved in designing persuasive communications have long been interested in creative ways of capturing audience attention and the use of incongruity is one effective way to do so. The surrealist advertisement is constructing the association between the images of the "unrealistic" artwork and the unbelievably good performance of the products or services as the works of surrealist painters are usually considered as a symbol of "unrealistic, absurd, surreal" concepts. In 1986 an article was published in the Journal of Advertising that sought to determine how and why Surrealism was effective in advertisements, this article stated that "social adaptation theory predicts that employing surrealist techniques in advertising design should draw attention because the information will be perceived as unexpected, novel and out-of-context". The main objective of this paper is to describe the influence of René Magritte's artworks techniques as on modern advertising design, through analyzing some modern advertising designs that got inspired by René Magritte's techniques. Also, this paper shows and analyzes the advertising designs of the well-known surrealist artist René Magritte. The importance of this paper is to explore René Magritte's approach in advertising designs and to discuss the key influences and motives that were the foundation for René Magritte's surrealist conception in ads designs. Also, to explore why René Magritte's artworks techniques are a great inspiration for modern advertising designs. The problem of this paper can be formulated as the following: How does Surrealism art conception affect in a modern advertising design?, What was René Magritte's approach in advertising designs?, What is the dissociation of image and text in René Magritte artworks?, What are the influences of René Magritte's artworks techniques as on modern advertising design?, How do René Magritte artwork techniques inspire modern advertising designers?. The hypotheses of the paper: Firstly, as an effective way to highlight the product's strength and strongly catch the audiences' attention to the advertising, designers use the concepts and techniques of surrealism such as surprise, unexpected juxtapositions, and non sequitur. Secondly, the modern advertising can explore new heights by parodying the artworks of surrealist famous artists such as René Magritte. Finally, the dissociation technique between image and text in René Magritte paintings is effective for advertising design, where incongruity is often used as a creative strategy. This paper follows the descriptive method to describe René Magritte's surrealist approach in advertising designs throughout the study of his artwork techniques and surrealist conceptions. This paper also uses the analytical method to analyze René Magritte's advertising designs, also to analyze chosen examples modern advertisings designs that use René Magritte techniques as an inspiration.

Keywords:

*René Magritte,
Surrealism movement,
Magrittean,
Advertising Design,
Social Adaptation Theory*

Paper received 25th April 2021, Accepted 8th June 2021, Published 1st of July 2021

Introduction:

Advertisement design is an important aspect of the society that directly interacts and affects the people. Has art been an inspiration for advertisers? Has it somehow influenced publicity? Of course, yes, we only have to look through a magazine or watch television to see this. Advertisement design

has been shaped by different art movements due to their ability to influence the viewer, one of the most art movement that widely used in advertising is Surrealism. Today, surrealism widely extends to advertising, where incongruity is often used as a creative tool, and advertisers involved in designing persuasive communications have long been

interested in creative ways of capturing audience attention and the use of incongruity is one effective way to do so (*Lee & Schumann, 2004*). Surrealism, with artists such as René Magritte, Salvador Dalí, Max Ernst, Hans Arp, Man Ray or Joan Miró, is a movement that has greatly influenced different types of applied arts like advertising design and cinema. Surrealistic art techniques, an outgrowth of the early 20th century artistic movement, are often visible in modern day advertisements. Some of the elements that characterize Surrealism are the interest in dreams, in dream-like atmospheres or in chance. Surrealistic art techniques also deliberately try to defy reason, by exploitation of incongruous juxtapositions and un-orderly connections, surrealism stresses the subconscious or non-rational significance of imagery (*Homer & Kahle, 1986*). The main aim of advertising is for the brand to be encoded and retained in memory so that it can be retrieved during a future purchase decision. Although it seems obvious that incongruous juxtapositions in advertising would create the desired effect. Knowing more about the cognitive impact of common communication techniques (such as the use of surrealist images) can, on one hand, provide a key metric of advertising effectiveness. On the other hand, it can help extrapolate popular theories in cognitive conflict monitoring to real-life settings. (*Keller, 1987*). René Magritte is one of the most celebrated artists of the 20th-century Surrealist movement. In the 1920s, the Belgium painter joined a group of young artists who wanted to create work that celebrated the subconscious mind and the world of dreams. During these years and beyond, Magritte defined his unique artistic style that critics called “Magic realism.” Throughout his long career, he produced paintings that blurred the line between reality and fantasy and invited the viewer to question what they thought they knew. From advertising to absurdity, René Magritte condensed the spirit of the 20th century's human condition into some of its most recognizable images. His influence on advertisements world still resonates today. He was a quiet, unassuming, bourgeois surrealist painter who wore a bowler hat and made a living by designing wallpaper and theatre posters. He was a genius who both ate and painted apples, who died in 1967, and who possibly had the longest lasting impact of any artist on the world of advertising and the way we now see ourselves in the 21st century. Some Magrittian art influences can be detected in advertisements and, therefore, the use of «Magrittian» art can be determined, so this paper

aims to study the influence and interaction between René Magritte's artwork techniques and present-day advertisements designs. This paper also investigates the surrealist conceptions of René Magritte and his unique design techniques in advertising.

Objectives

The main objective of this paper is to describe the influence of René Magritte's artworks techniques on modern advertising design, through analyzing some modern advertising designs that got inspired by René Magritte's techniques. Also, this paper shows and analyzes the advertising designs of the well-known surrealist artist René Magritte.

Significance

The importance of this paper is to explore René Magritte's approach in advertising designs and to discuss the key influences and motives that were the foundation for René Magritte's surrealist conception in ads designs. Also, to explore why René Magritte's artworks techniques are a great inspiration for modern advertising designs.

The Problem

The problem of this paper can be formulated as the following:

- How does Surrealism art conception affect in a modern advertising design?
- What was René Magritte approach in advertising designs?
- What is the dissociation of image and text in René Magritte artworks?
- What are the influences of René Magritte's artworks techniques as on modern advertising design?
- How do René Magritte artwork techniques inspire modern advertising designers?

Hypotheses

The modern advertising can explore new heights by parodying the artworks of surrealist famous artists such as René Magritte.

- The effective way to highlight the product's strength and strongly catch the audiences' attention to the advertising, designers use the concepts and techniques of surrealism such as surprise, unexpected juxtapositions, and non sequitur.
- The dissociation technique between image and text in René Magritte paintings is very effective for advertising design, where incongruity is often used as a creative strategy.

Methodology

This paper follows the descriptive method to describe René Magritte's surrealist approach in

advertising designs throughout the study of his artwork techniques and surrealist conceptions. This paper also uses the analytical method to analyze René Magritte's advertising designs, also to analyze chosen examples of modern advertising designs that use René Magritte techniques as an inspiration.

Theoretical Framework:

Surrealism is a form of art developed primarily in the 20th century in which an attempt is made to represent and interpret the phenomena of dreams and similar experiences. Surrealistic artists stress the subconscious or nonrational significance of imagery by exploitation of chance effects, unexpected juxtapositions, and unordered connections. One of the best methods that the surrealists have discovered for eliminating preconceived ideas and provoking revelations is the use of chance techniques. By juxtaposing unrelated objects, they revealed unexpected affinities between different objects. The basic philosophy of surrealism was articulated by Andre Breton, one of the most prolific writers about surrealism, he states that: "I believe in the future resolution of these two states, dream and reality, which are seemingly so contradictory, into a kind of absolute reality and surrealistic". Breton states further that artistic creation will never permit a total discrimination between the real and the imaginary. A Belgian surrealist painter, Rene Magritte's witty and thought-provoking paintings sought to have viewers question their perceptions of reality and become hypersensitive to the world around them. He began drawing lessons at age ten, and in 1916, went to study the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Brussels, where he found the instruction uninspiring and unsuited to his tastes. He did not begin his actual painting career until after serving in the Belgian infantry for a short time and working at a wallpaper company as a draftsman and producing advertising posters. He was able to paint full time due to a short-lived contract with Galerie le Centaure, allowing him to present in his first exhibition, which was poorly received.

<https://www.wikiart.org/en/rene-magritte> – (Accessed 11.11.2020). Surely the most celebrated Belgian artist of the 20th century, René Magritte has achieved great popular acclaim for his idiosyncratic approach to Surrealism. To support himself he spent many years working as a commercial artist, producing advertising and book designs, and this most likely shaped his fine art, which often has the abbreviated impact of an advertisement. In later years, he was castigated by his peers for some of his strategies (such as his tendency to produce multiple copies of his pictures), yet since his death his reputation has only improved. Conceptual artists have admired

his use of text in images, and painters in the 1980s admired the provocative kitsch of some of his later work. Through creating common images and placing them in extreme contexts, Magritte sought to have his viewers question the ability of art to truly represent an object. In his paintings, he often played with the perception of an image and the fact that the painting of the image could never actually be the object. His artistic interpretations influenced many modern artists, including Andy Warhol, Jan Verdoort and Jasper Johns. His art, which was especially popular during the 1960's, has also influenced numerous songs, movies, and books. Although the Surrealist manifesto stands against commercial art and advertising principles, Surrealist artist Rene Magritte has been widely influential in shaping advertisement design to its current state due to the graphics and psychological and symbolic connotations of his Surrealist paintings. In June 2011 Tate Liverpool presents: "*René Magritte: The Pleasure Principle*", the biggest exhibition of the Belgian surrealist's work in England for twenty years. *The Pleasure Principle* presented 100 of Magritte's paintings against examples of his commercial work and drew in a new generation of advertising creatives. The point this exhibition made was that, in a sense, we all live in a Magrittean world and we recognize it when we see it.

<https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-liverpool/exhibition/rene-magritte-pleasure-principle> - (Accessed 14.11.2020). His strange, haunting, poetic pictures have fueled advertising for many decades and still do 65 years after his death. These include contemporary advertisements for French State Railways, the award-winning Volkswagen ads from Doyle Dane Bernbach, the original 'Mad Men' of Sixties Madison Avenue, the series of Allianz ads which appropriated the *Ceci n'est pas un Pipe* motif, and the famous Absolut Vodka series which is still running today. Album covers? How about the *Mull of Kintyre* cover of the eponymous Paul McCartney album? Or the apple designating the Beatles' Apple Corp or the monochrome apple on your iPad or laptop? Directly and indirectly (in the case of Apple computers) all these roads lead to René Magritte.

https://www.christies.com/features/Magritte_and_Advertising-5518-1.aspx - (Accessed 10.11.2020).

René Magritte Visual Art and Design Approach

Magritte wished to cultivate an approach that avoided the stylistic distractions of most modern painting. While some French Surrealists experimented with new techniques, Magritte settled on a deadpan, illustrative technique that clearly articulated the content of his pictures.

Repetition was an important strategy for Magritte, informing not only his handling of motifs within individual pictures, but also encouraging him to produce multiple copies of some of his greatest works.

<https://www.theartstory.org/artist/magritte-rene/> - (Accessed 10.11.2020). His interest in the idea may have come in part from Freudian psychoanalysis, for which repetition is a sign of trauma. But his work in commercial art may have also played a role in prompting him to question the conventional modernist belief in the unique, original work of art. The illustrative quality of Magritte's pictures often results in a powerful paradox: images that are beautiful in their clarity and simplicity, but which also provoke unsettling thoughts. They seem to declare that they hide no mystery, and yet they are also marvelously strange. As Magritte biographer David Sylvester brilliantly described, his paintings induce "the sort of awe felt in an eclipse." Magritte was fond of the dissociation of texts and visual images, and he employed both this technique in his most famous pictures. While those pictures often share the air of mystery that characterizes much of his Surrealist work, they often seem motivated more by a spirit of rational enquiry - and wonder - at the misunderstandings that can lurk in language. The men in bowler hats that often appear in Magritte's pictures can be interpreted as self-portraits. Portrayals of the artist's wife, Georgette, are also common in his work, as are glimpses of the couple's modest Brussels apartment. Although this might suggest autobiographical content in Magritte's pictures, it more likely points to the commonplace sources of his inspiration. It is as if he believed that we need not look far for the mysterious, since it lurks everywhere in the most conventional of lives.

René Magritte Surrealistic Advertising Designs

In 1924 Magritte began work as a freelance graphic designer in his hometown of Brussels. Over the next five years he produced advertisements for many quite different clients, including a Belgian fashion house and Alfa Romeo. From 1927, he spent three years in Paris trying to make his name as an artist among the Surrealist group gathered there around André Breton. This period ended with an exhibition which was suddenly cancelled, a row with the surrealist group and economic disaster. René Magritte retreated to Brussels and established the Studio Dongo advertising agency with his brother. In a tumbledown shack in his garden, Magritte created posters, music covers and advertisements right up until the 1950s, long after he had become internationally acknowledged as an important artist and designer. He never abandoned the commercial world, but went on appropriating its

advertising strategies into much of his art. The very non-painterly finish of his work which was deliberate, and not because he couldn't hold a paintbrush resulted in the slickness of surface that characterized much advertising and still does. It is ironic, then, that the world of commerce has in turn appropriated his appropriations, an endlessly repeating mirror world that is, in essence, very Magrittean. René Magritte was one of the first to use Surrealism in advertising, staying true to his bold, representational style of painting objects which he would place in unusual settings. By scrounging these objects from reality and restoring them in a field outside of their power, he gave the object (product, signifier) a new context. He would pair the image with the brand name (signified) to create the advertisement. This new take on adverts was striking. With the odd placements of normal objects gave them a sense of magic that would aid in selling the product. "*Georges Roque, 2001*". Magritte made no secret of the fact that this career in advertising was merely a means of obtaining sufficient capital to fund his 'real' work. The Surrealist painter René Magritte had a stint in the advertising business during his early art career. He designed adverts for a variety of clients ranging from parfumeurs (Soir d'orange, strange perfume by mem) "*Figure 01*", (Exciting perfumes by Mem), "*Figure 02*", and created posters for the Belgian Film Festival (*Figure 03*).

Dissociation of Image and Text in René Magritte Artworks and How Does It Inspire Advertising Designers:

The Surrealist painter René Magritte was fascinated by the interactions of textual and visual signs, and some of his most famous pictures employ both words and images. While those pictures often share the air of mystery that characterizes much of his Surrealist work, they often seem motivated more by a spirit of rational enquiry and wonder at the misunderstandings that can lurk in language. René Magritte spent a substantial portion of his fine-art career investigating the link between image and text, a primary consideration of illustrators when developing advertisements. The radical images of Magritte were recuperated by advertisers who exploited his style and inverted his methodology to create effective adverts. Magritte objected to the notion of illustration believing that it was based on a humiliating sub ordinance of image to text. From the late 1920's he began the exploration of freeing the constraint between image and text. "*Zinque Ollinger, G and Frederik Leen, 1998*". In a series of paintings entitled '*Interpretation of Dreams*' (1927-1930), "*Figure 04*", Magritte created a grid of images each with a caption underneath. However, these words did not correspond

rationally with the image above it, for instance an image of a bowler hat was labelled La Neige (snow), and no combination of the words and images on the pieces would form rational links. In the Surrealist magazine “La Révolution surréaliste, in 1929”, Magritte published “Les Mots et les images” “Figure 05” a document explaining the possible variations in relationship between words and images. “René Magritte, 1929”. René Magritte fine artworks of disassociating images from words also extended to his paintings and their titles. He deliberately gave

his paintings titles that were of no relevance to what the image was representing, knowing that the viewer would naively try to derive some sort of meaning or link between the text and image. “The titles of my pictures are only a conversational convenience; they are not explanations”; one of such paintings is ‘State of Grace’ which depicts the juxtaposition of a bicycle perched on a giant cigar. “René Magritte, 1943”.



Figure: 01, Advertising by René Magritte “Soir d'orage, strange perfume by mem”, 1946; Brussels, Belgium. <https://www.wikiart.org/en/rene-magritte/soir-d-orage-strange-perfume-by-mem> - (Accessed 12.11.2020)

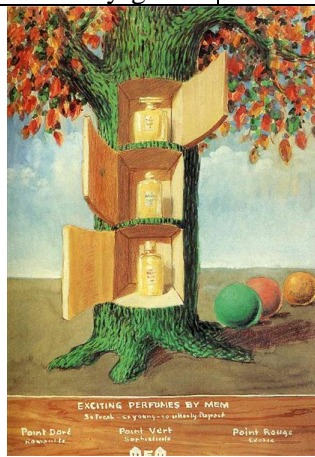


Figure: 02, Advertising by René Magritte “Exciting perfumes by Mem”, 1946; Brussels, Belgium. <https://www.wikiart.org/en/rene-magritte/poster-exciting-perfumes-by-mem-1946> - (Accessed 12.11.2020)



Figure: 03, Advertising by René Magritte “Belgian Film Festival”, 1947; Brussels, Belgium. <https://www.christies.com/lotfinder/Lot/rene-magritte-festival-mondial-5611217-details.aspx> - (Accessed 12.11.2020)

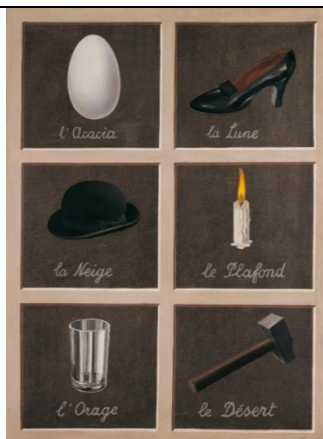


Figure: 04, The Interpretation of Dreams, 1930. By René Magritte. <http://www.artnet.com/magazine/features/boettger/boettger97-6-4-2.asp> - (Accessed 12.11.2020)



Figure: 05, Les Mots et les images. By René Magritte in a 1929 issue of La Révolution surréaliste. <http://labyrinthvsjardines.blogspot.com/2010/11/les-mots-et-les-imagesrene-magritte.html> - (Accessed 12.11.2020)

René Magritte was taking banal images and placing them in different contexts or juxtaposing them with disparately opposing objects. The dream-like images he created were in keeping with

the Surrealist ideas of Breton and were successfully radical and forward thinking for the time. His work seems to resemble the idea of Minor Détonnement that “Guy Debord,2011”

speaks of in 'The Society of the Spectacle'. Magritte's mimicry of a familiar image of little prior importance, (such as a pipe), put into a new context with new radical intentions, (to upturn the public's perception of reality and representation), gives the image new meaning. Though contrary to the spectacle's version of this, Magritte did not create 'Ceci n'est pas une pipe' "**Figure 10**", with the intention of it being a commodity. Little did Magritte know that his radical imagery throughout his artworks would be the ideal template for advertisers to use to sell their products. The very establishment that he detested would recognize the potential in his work, recuperating his radical ideas into commodities to promote mass media. "**Guy Debord, 2011**". The very ideas that René Magritte used to undermine the relationship between text and image, was what made his images ideal for advertising an industry that was chiefly concerned with the relationship between text and image. By not giving his paintings a specific meaning, he rendered the images ambiguous. *Since his images are not linked to a single explanation or interpretation, all explanations and interpretations become possible.* With no definite meaning illustrators could easily appropriate the images and add a slogan or brand to them, giving them a new intended meaning. According to Magritte 'the perfect painting produces an intense effect in a very short time this instant impact was also ideal for advertisers who wanted their advertisements to make an impression on the viewer when even just glanced

at. "**Georges Roque, 2001**". So, advertising designers reinstated the bond between image and text that Magritte had worked so hard to sever. The 'depth boys' would be called in to insert a witty phrase or meaningful statement, to accompany the readymade signifier. This phrase needed to be well thought out, creating a link to the consumers' unconscious desires. An apt example of Magritte's ideas being recuperated is the series of Volkswagen Beetle print adverts from the 1960's, by DDB agency "**Figure 06**". The advertising team used the conceptual 'big idea' method, popular in advertising at the time, 'short ironic conversational headlines were juxtaposed with provocative images, drawing on the lessons of Surrealism, and particularly Magritte. Unexpected combinations of image and/or contexts created ambiguity and surprise' (**Katherine McCoy, 1990**). This time the illustrators were mimicking Magritte use of image and text by placing words such as 'lemon' under a picture of the car (depicted in a realist style analogous to Magritte's work) (**Figure 06**), which was alienated from its habitual context. The composition of the image not unlike one of the grid squares in Magritte's. By this time Surrealist adverts had become common place and recognizable to the consumer. So due to Surrealism's established cultural image (dream images, juxtaposition etc.) the viewer was able to assume a link between the image and text, not expecting a logical answer for the puzzling juxtaposition.

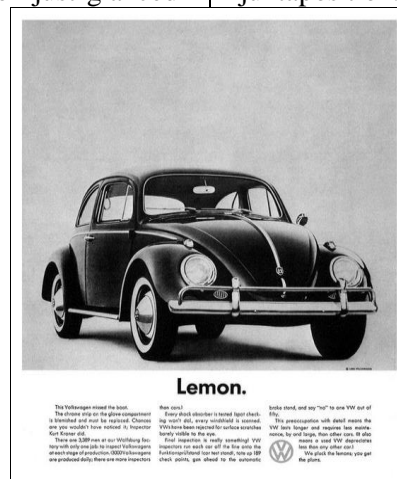


Figure: 06, 'Lemon' advertising for the Volkswagen Beetle 1960, by DDB advertising agency, inspired y René Magritte.

http://www.carstyling.ru/en/entry/Volkswagen_Advertising_Campaign_by_Helmut_Krone_1960_Think_Small/ - (Accessed 12.11.2020)

The 'Lemon' advertising, and the other adverts in the Volkswagen ads series, used an honest and charming humor that would correspond to the honest and charming car. Though the word 'lemon' (signifier) may seem to have no link to a picture of a Beetle (signified), it was in fact was a reference to the cars' appearance. Humor

continued through the slogans including 'Think small' (**Figure 07**) which was accompanied with a particularly tiny picture of the car, and 'Will we ever kill the bug?' (**Figure 08**), underneath an image of the car upturned (mimicking that of an actual bug). Even the use of the white page was to highlight the simplicity and minimalism of the car.

(Adam Curtis, 2002).

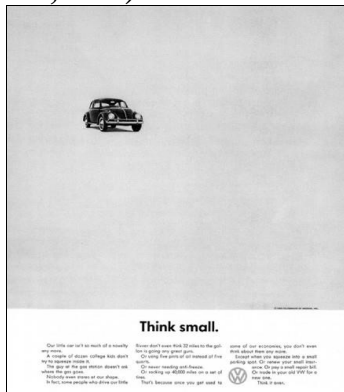


Figure: 07, 'Think Small' advertising for the Volkswagen Beetle 1960, by DDB advertising agency, inspired by René Magritte.

http://www.carstyling.ru/en/entry/Volkswagen_Advertising_Campaign_by_Helmut_Krone_1960_Think_Small/ - (Accessed 12.11.2020)

Here DDB emphasized the compact size, affordability, and reliability of the Beetle. In a society obsessed by money and a desire for getting your money's worth, the advert aimed at the consumers' intelligence, reassuring them of the benefits this reliable little bug would bring to their life. This series of adverts achieved great success during the 1960's and is still considered to be one of the best of the 20th Century. (Bob Garfield, 1999).

An Explanation of The Effects of Surrealism on Advertising through The Social Adaptation Theory: (Homer & Kahle, 1986):

Social adaptation theory implies that cognitions function to facilitate adaptation to an individual's environment. Persons seek equilibrium with the environment by assimilating new information into existing schemata while accommodating mental structures to incorporate new, discrepant information. Individuals evaluate information in terms of its adaptive significance. If an individual decides a certain piece of information has achieved its potential in terms of facilitating adaptation (with one's environment), processing of that particular information will cease, and processing attention will be directed elsewhere. In 1986 an article was published in the Journal of Advertising that sought to determine how and why Surrealism was effective in advertisements, as empirical investigations of its impact were unexplored up to this point. "A Social Adaptation explanation of the effects of Surrealism on Advertising" by Pamela M. Homer and Lynn R. Kahle dissects the convention of using Surrealistic images for advertising products, also carrying out a case study to ascertain statistical results and conclusions. The article concluded that the combination of Surrealism and priming (presenting subjects with statements leading them to expect further exposure to product related



Figure: 08, 'Will we ever kill the bug?' advertising for the Volkswagen Beetle 1960, by DDB advertising agency, inspired by René Magritte.

http://www.carstyling.ru/en/entry/Volkswagen_Advertising_Campaign_by_Helmut_Krone_1960_Think_Small/ - (Accessed 12.11.2020)

attributes) should interactively foster purchase intentions. The article details the main reason behind Surrealism's effectiveness to be related to Social Adaptation Theory. In an abridged form this theory can be described as such: a person seeks equilibrium in an environment, assimilating new materials into existing schemata, while also interpreting new information (creating unconscious links between images and text e.g. one sees a physical chair and mentally labels it to be a chair). Once the individual decides that a certain piece of information is adapted (unconsciously agrees that the chair is/ is called a chair) the individual stops processing it and moves onto another piece of information. Regarding to Surrealist images they cannot be processed (easily), because the image doesn't make sense, it does not fit into existing mental structures. Therefore, more time is spent trying to process the image/ looking at or thinking about the image. (Homer & Kahle, 1986). Social adaptation theory predicts that employing surrealist techniques should draw attention to the inadequacy of the existing schemata, because the information will be perceived as unexpected, novel, out-of-context, and therefore will not "fit" existing mental structures. This will stimulate accommodation processes. In contrast, if efforts are made to "prime" audiences with cues facilitating expectations of typical product-relevant information, it should stimulate thoughts about attributes in ads for similar products seen in the past. Assimilation processes should be expected since such information should "match" existing schemata. In the following lines I will apply the social adaptation theory to the Volkswagen Beetle advertising campaign in 1960 that including: "Lemon ad" "Figure 06", "Think Small ad" "Figure 07", and "Will we ever kill the bug ad" "Figure 08". One can deduce that the

juxtaposition of the image and non-corresponding text would cause the viewer to have to spend time trying to form a link between the two and assimilating it into an existing schema. The advertising gets processed more extensively as it is more difficult to comprehend, leading to more elaborate internal processing. The extra attention given to the advertising, along with the elongated period the consumer spends with it results in overall increased brand recall. Increased brand recall in theory leads to increased probability of purchase, making the Surrealist style of this advertising an effective means of promoting a product of the Volkswagen Beetle.

Analytical Study:

Analyzing for Modern advertising designs that get inspired by René Magritte style:

It is not surprising that advertisers would seek to create unique, unexpected, and dreamlike images for use in promotions because advertisers often try to gain consumers' attention, to fuel their fantasies and to induce them to view a product in a new light. As a result, surrealistic ads have been used to promote a variety of products. One of the artists who have the most influence on advertisers and publicity is René Magritte (1898-1967), who painted his way through Dadaism and evolved to Surrealism with influences of other movements such as Cubism, Orphism, Futurism, or Impressionism. In some of his paintings Magritte played with the realist images he painted and a series of words, which created an unusual association. Magritte's paintings also have a touch of reverie, a daydream quality which define the Magic Realism movement. This type of realism has widely influenced other types of art, for instance advertising. The modern advertisements that use the notion of surrealism such as "absurd" and "dreamlike" to highlight the product's strength, by parodying the works of surrealist painters, especially René Magritte, the advertisement itself is an index of the technical revolution. To be more specific, as the motivation

of surrealism is to liberate the unbridled imagination to realize human being's full potential beyond reason. Predominantly, the surrealist advertisement is constructing the association between the images of the "unrealistic" artwork and the unbelievably good performance of the products or services as the works of surrealist painters are usually considered as a symbol of "unrealistic, absurd, surreal" concepts. Additionally, parodying the works of famed artist not only catches the consumer's attention but also, it shows the advertisement from a novel perspective. In short, the surrealistic advertisement shows familiar products in unfamiliar formats, which contributes to establishing an association with the product and the idea of unprecedented innovation.

1- Allianz advertising campaign: "Figure 09"

The agency Atletico International Advertising reinterpreted one of Magritte's most famous works "Ceci n'est pas une pipe" "Figure 10" for their campaign for the insurance company Allianz "Figure 09". These images show daily elements that may turn into a threat or danger in our everyday lives, such as a banana peel or a roof tile. The goal of the advertising campaign is that we need to contract an insurance with Allianz to protect ourselves from these threats. The advertisers are trying to make us see beyond what is in the advert. The advertisements copy the same style of the original painting. Magritte presents a combination of an image and a sentence and tells us that what we see is not what we think it is: we see a pipe; therefore, we think it is a pipe. However, it is not a pipe. It is the representation of a pipe. It may seem curious that, while Magritte did not intend to sell his paintings using these characteristics, advertising agencies use Magritte's resources to try and convince potential buyers to buy their products or services.



Figure: 09, Allianz advertising campaign by Atletico International Advertising Agency, Germany, October 2006

https://www.christies.com/features/Magritte_and_Advertising-5518-1.aspx - (Accessed 11.11.2020)



Figure: 10, “Ceci n’est pas une pipe” by René Magritte (1928-1929)

<https://www.wikiart.org/en/rene-magritte/the-treachery-of-images-this-is-not-a-pipe-1948> - (Accessed 11.11.2020)

2- Volkswagen Polo Blue Motion advertising: “Figure 11”



Figure: 11, Polo Blue Motion advertising campaign by DDB Agency, USA, December 2008

https://www.adsoftheworld.com/media/print/volkswagen_magritte (Accessed 11.11.2020)

The agency DDB, which created this advertisement for Volkswagen, reinterpreted Magritte’s piece ‘The Son of Man’. This advertisement represents the “absurdly low” fuel consumption of the car. With the adaptation of surrealistic images along with the signs and symbols, the advertisement underlines the strength of the vehicle with unbelievably low fuel consumption of oil, which represents the breakthrough technology in case of oil depletion. The advertisement contains several denotations that the company designed to proclaim that the vehicle has absurdly low consumption of fuel. Magritte’s original painting shows a man in a bowler hat, who becomes a service station attendant with an hourglass instead of the apple as

his face “**Figure 12**”. Next to the man in the advert there is a chess game going on where we can see two very different parts: trees on one side and the oil industry on the other. It looks like trees are defeating the industry, since there are many of its pieces out of the game and even falling off the board. There are other elements in the advert that show Magritte’s influence. For example, the easel next to the chess game may represent another of his paintings, ‘Human Condition’ “**Figure 13**”. Through the Volvo shape we can see a blue sky, recurrent in other of Magritte’s paintings. Another element we could find interesting is the bottled oil tanker, which may be trying to convince the buyer that, since the car has a low consumption, it will pollute less.



Figure: 12, The Son of Man by René Magritte (1964)

<https://www.wikiart.org/en/rene-magritte/son-of-man-1964> - (Accessed 11.11.2020)

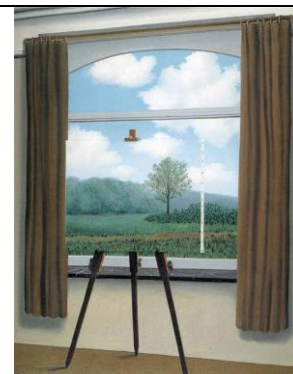


Figure: 13, The Human Condition by René Magritte (1933)

<https://www.wikiart.org/en/rene-magritte/the-human-condition-1933> - (Accessed 11.11.2020)

3- Brussels Airlines advertising on Plane “Meet Magritte” - 2016: “Figure 14”

René Magritte simply could not have been overlooked as a Belgian and world icon. The Belgian surrealist left a great mark on the entire cultural world and he had a strong bond with the sky and the world of aviation. He often described ordinary objects and presented his perceptions of reality in a very unique way. According to him, illusions and dreams roam freely, and time does not exist. As these views are quite similar to when one is flying up in the sky and observing the world from above, Brussels Airlines decided to honor his work with a plane fully dedicated to René Magritte. In March 2016 the Brussels Airlines presented its long-awaited Magritte aircraft, a flying piece of art, dedicated to the famous Belgian artist René Magritte. “Magritte” is the second aircraft in a series of Brussels Airlines planes with a special design, inspired by Belgian icons. The plane, an Airbus A320 baptized Magritte, is a 37m long flying piece of art that has come to life thanks to a close cooperation between Brussels Airlines and the Foundation Magritte, the organization that safeguards René Magritte’s oeuvre. The Belgian icon was the inspiration behind the recent masterpiece created at International Aerospace Coatings for Brussels

Airlines. The flying artwork depicts internationally acclaimed, surrealist artist, René Magritte. The design on the Airbus A320 was expertly crafted by three Belgian designers, with the artwork brought to life by airbrush artist Andre Eisele. On the outside, the design incorporates two of Magritte’s paintings, *La Clairvoyance* (1936) “Figure 15” and *Le Retour* (1940) “Figure 16”. The cabin interior has undergone a surrealist makeover as well and features a flock of cloud-filled birds, taken from *Le Retour* (1940) and the work *La Belle-Société* (1965-66) “Figure 17”, which features the famous man in the bowler hat. “Ceci n’est pas un avion.” It is a lot more than just an aircraft. It is a dedication to one of the greatest Belgian artists, René Magritte. A Belgian icon with the gift to look at things like no one else could and who revealed the world to us from a different angle. Therefore, Brussels Airlines has created Magritte, an Airbus A320 in honor of the painter. Covered with the famous clouds and birds taken from three of René Magritte’s paintings, this surrealistic aircraft is painting the European skies for 6 years. If René Magritte were to have seen this plane, he would probably have said “This is not an airplane, this is only the image of an airplane”.

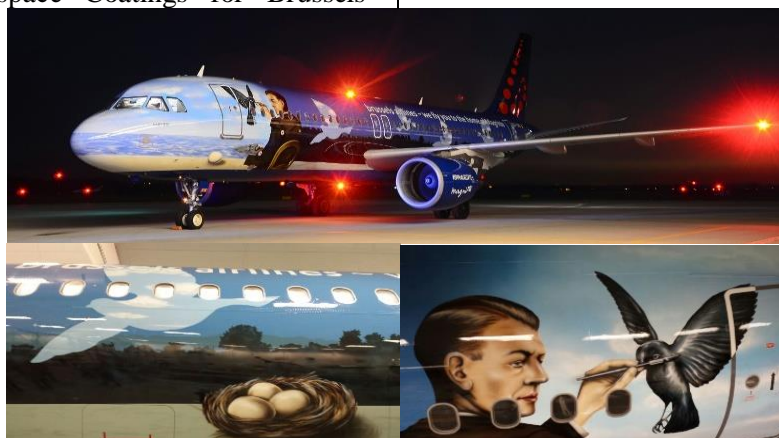


Figure: 14, Brussels Airlines advertising on Plane “Meet Magritte”

https://www.brusselsairlines.com/en-rw/misc/meet_magritte.aspx - (Accessed 16.11.2020)



Figure: 15, *La Clairvoyance* (1936) by René Magritte

<https://www.renemagritte.org/la-clairvoyance.jsp> - (Accessed 16.11.2020)



Figure: 16, *Le Retour* (1940) by René Magritte

<https://www.renemagritte.org/rene-magritte-painting-gallery4.jsp#prettyPhoto> - (Accessed 16.11.2020)



Figure: 17, *La Belle Société* (1965-66) by Magritte

<https://www.renemagritte.org/rene-magritte-painting-gallery1.jsp#prettyPhoto> - (Accessed 16.11.2020)

4- Mimi Foundation advertising 2010: “Figure 18”

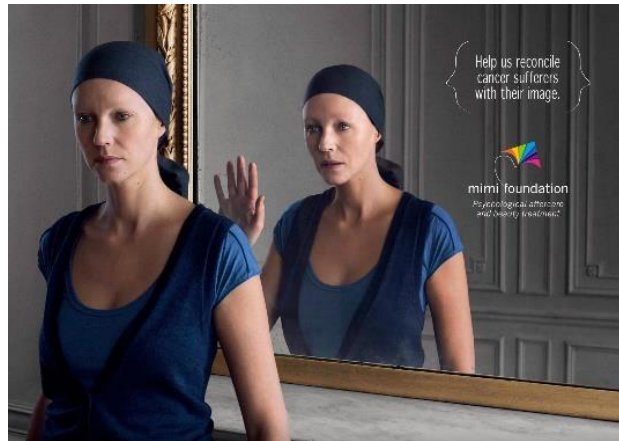


Figure 18, Mimi Foundation Print advertisement created by Leo Burnett, France 2010.

https://www.adsoftheworld.com/media/print/mimi_foundation_mirror - (Accessed 16.11.2020)

This is a print advertisement created by Leo Burnett, France for Mimi Foundation, within the category public Interest, NGO. The main concept of the advertising here is to help us reconcile cancer sufferers with their image or helping somebody to overcome cancer also means helping this person to be somebody. This advertising idea was inspired by the famous painting “Not to be Reproduced (La reproduction interdite) *“Figure 19”* created by René Magritte in 1937. This painting was commissioned by poet and Magritte patron Edward James and is considered a portrait of James although James' face is not depicted. This painting was one of three produced by Magritte for the ballroom of James' London home. The work depicts a man standing in front of a mirror, but whereas the book on the mantelpiece is reflected correctly, the man can see only the back of his head. The whole idea of a title about reproduction is interesting here. We think about reproduction as something that tells us the truth. Reproduction also suggests multiplicity. All that plays into the image that we see on this canvas. <https://www.renemagritte.org/not-to-be-reproduced.jsp> - (Accessed 16.11.2020)

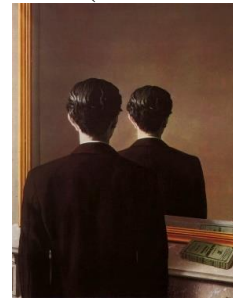


Figure 19, Not to Be Reproduced (1937) by René Magritte <https://www.renemagritte.org/not-to-be-reproduced.jsp> - (Accessed 16.11.2020)

5- Genlux Magazine Editorial Designs “*Sir Realist*” 2009: “*Figure 21*”

The photographer Andrew Matusik used some of René Magritte Masterpieces Artworks “*Figure 20*” as inspiration for his photoshoot for *Genlux magazine* winter issue. René Magritte has grabbed the spotlight once again in the Winter issue of Beverly Hills-based Genlux Magazine. Andrew Matusik created an Amazing editorial called “*Sir Realist*” “*Figure 21*” A beautiful work, really well executed, and you can see that Andrew spends a lot on photoshop compare to Magritte who was painting, it’s “Technology Vs. Art”.



Gonconda (1953) by René Magritte

<https://www.renemagritte.org/rene-magritte-painting-gallery1.jsp#prettyPhoto> (Accessed 16.11.2020)



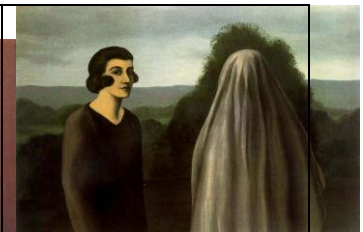
The Pilgrim (1966) by René Magritte

<https://www.renemagritte.org/the-pilgrim.jsp> (Accessed 16.11.2020)



The Lovers II (1928) by René Magritte

<https://www.renemagritte.org/the-lovers-2.jsp> (Accessed 16.11.2020)



The Invention of Life (1928) by René Magritte

<https://www.renemagritte.org/the-invention-of-life.jsp> (Accessed 16.11.2020)

Figure 20”: René Magritte Masterpieces Artworks - <https://www.renemagritte.org/> - (Accessed 16.11.2020)



Results

- 1- Advertising design has been shaped by different art movements especially Surrealism due to their ability to influence the viewer.
- 2- Surrealism, with artists such as René Magritte, Salvador Dalí is a movement that has greatly influenced different types of applied arts like advertising design.
- 3- Surrealism technique shows the advertisement from a novel perspective.
- 4- Surrealist artist René Magritte has been widely influential in shaping advertisement design due to the graphics and psychological and symbolic connotations of his Surrealist paintings.
- 5- René Magritte has created the dissociation technique between image and text.
- 6- The ideas that René Magritte used to undermine the relationship between text and image made his images ideal for advertising design.
- 7- Social adaptation theory predicts that employing surrealistic techniques in advertising design should draw attention to the inadequacy of the existing schemata, because the information will be perceived as unexpected, novel and out-of-context.

Discussion and Conclusion

Little is known about the effectiveness of surrealistic art techniques in advertisements. This

paper study findings do to justify further investigations of the phenomenon. Surrealism proved to be effective in motivating subjects to devote more attention to the advertising messages. Advertisers would seek to create unique, unexpected, and dreamlike images for use in promotions because advertisers often try to gain consumers' attention, to fuel their fantasies and to induce them to view a product in a new light. As a result, surrealistic techniques have been used to promote a variety of advertisements. The surrealist advertisement is constructing the association between the images of the “unrealistic” artwork and the unbelievably good performance of the products or services as the works of surrealist painters are usually considered as a symbol of “unrealistic, absurd, surreal” concepts. Surrealism is very effective in advertisements as the social adaptation theory predicts that employing surrealistic techniques in advertising design should draw attention because the information will be perceived as unexpected, novel and out-of-context. The social adaptation theory hypothesized that accommodation was likely because the surreal format was unexpected, novel and didn't fit neatly into any existing schemata. I strongly believe that this paper should encourage further study the persuasive impact of surrealistic messages. Several interesting issues for future analysis might be pursued, including medium effects, product category effects, role of involvement, optimal level of repetition, functions of novelty, and

individual differences.

References:

- 1- Adam Curtis, *"Happiness Machines."* The Century of the Self. BBC Television, 2002.
- Aoife McGuinness, *"From conflict to creativity – exploring the cognitive processing of surrealist advertising imagery"*, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, July 2018.
- 2- Bob Garfeild. Ad Age Advertising Century: The Top 100 Campaigns. Advertising Age. 29 Mar. 1999.
- 3- Georges Roque, *"The Advertising of Magritte."* Graphic Design History. Ed. Steven Hiller and Georgette Balance. New York: Allworth Press, 2001.
- 4- Guy Debord, *"Society of the Spectacle - summary: "Unity and Division within Appearance"*. "The Cultural Studies Reader. May 25, 2011. Web.
- 5- Homer, P.M and Kahle, L.R. *"A Social Adaption Explanation of the Effects of Surrealism on Advertising"*, Journal of Advertising, Vol.15, 1986.
- 6- Katherine McCoy, *"American Graphic Design Expression: The Evolution of American Typography"*, 1990. Published By: Walker Art Center, DOI: 10.2307/4091231, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4091231> - (Accessed 10.11.2020).
- 7- Keller, K. L. *"Memory Factors in Advertising: The Effect of Advertising Retrieval Cues on Brand Evaluations"* Journal of Consumer Research, 1987. 14(3), 316. <https://doi.org/10.1086/209116>
- 8- Lee, E. ju, & Schumann, D. W. *"Explaining the special case of incongruity in advertising: Combining classic theoretical approaches"*. Marketing Theory, 2004. 4(1– 2), 59–90. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1470593104044087>
- 9- Lesley-Ann Daly, *"The Appropriation of Surrealism as an Aesthetic for Consumption"*, University of the Arts London, February 2013, DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.1.4730.1363.
- 10- Magritte, René, *"René Magritte ou les Images défendues"* Les Auteurs associés. Brussels, 1943.
- 11- Magritte, René. *"Les Mots et les images"*. La Révolution surréaliste, Brussels, 15 Dec. 1929.
- 12- Zinque Ollinger, G and Frederik Leen, *"Magritte 1898-1967"*. Michigan: Ludion, 1998.
- 13-
- 14- <http://labyrinthosvsjardines.blogspot.com/2010/11/les-mots-et-les-imagesrene-magritte.html> - (Accessed 12.11.2020)
- 15- <http://www.artnet.com/magazine/features/boettger/boettger97-6-4-2.asp> - (Accessed 12.11.2020)
- 16- http://www.carstyling.ru/en/entry/Alfa_Romeo_Advertisement_by_Ren_Magritte_1924/images/10910/ - (Accessed 10.11.2020)
- 17- http://www.carstyling.ru/en/entry/Volkswagen_Advertising_Campaign_by_Helmut_Krone_1960_Think_Small/ - (Accessed 12.11.2020)
- 18- https://www.adsoftheworld.com/media/print/mimi_foundation_mirror - (Accessed 16.11.2020)
- 19- https://www.brusselsairlines.com/en-rw/misc/meet_magritte.aspx - (Accessed 16.11.2020)
- 20- https://www.christies.com/features/Magritte_and_Advertising-5518-1.aspx - (Accessed 10.11.2020).
- 21- <https://www.renemagritte.org/> - (Accessed 16.11.2020)
- 22- <https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-liverpool/exhibition/rene-magritte-pleasure-principle> - (Accessed 14.11.2020)
- 23- <https://www.theartstory.org/artist/magritte-rene/> - (Accessed 10.11.2020).
- 24- <https://www.trendhunter.com/trends/surrealist-editorials-genlux-magazine-inspired-by-rene-magritte> - (Accessed 16.11.2020)
- 25- <https://www.wikiart.org/en/rene-magritte> - (Accessed 11.11.2020).
- 26- <https://artisticusj.wordpress.com/2013/04/27/would-magritte> - (Accessed 26.03.2021). By borrowing these objects from reality and resituating them in a field outside of