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***The Semiotics of Images:
Photographic Conventions in Advertising***

This presentation explores semiotic power of photography in advertising. The photographic image has become the most preferable visual tool of the mass culture on the account of its correlation with reality and, consequently, its ability to visually transfer cultural and social conventions. We see photography today as an interesting medium to practice semiotics in relation to advertised message. The visual message is specific because the meaning here is expressed through spatially connected visual elements. The spatial orientation of visual elements can be seen as the means of transferring social reality conventions into this image space.

In the world of advertising where there is tendency to minimize the noise between the meaning that sender is transmitting and the meaning that the receiver might understand, the sender predicts the visual and verbal resources that a typical receiver holds and uses them to compose the message. This composition is made possible with conventions, established principles and norms by which meaning is formed. In our investigation we use photography as a carrier of these visual resources with an overview of social dimension within advertising discourse i.e. the balancing of visual and verbal ad content and social context that advertising discourse involves. Therefore, the object of our visual analysis is the production of meaning using photographic conventions and genre. We will discuss (on the selected examples) the specific forms of photographic convention and the motives for their application in the representation by analysing the advertised text.

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