

## Methods and Procedures

It is one thing to write about advertising and its commodification of the self, and much has indeed been written, but in order to properly describe their content, it is best to show them in a visual medium, such as video. The video medium is capable of sampling the primary advertising text, whether television or radio commercials, or video captures of print or internet advertisements, and integrating the spectrum of advertising messages into a unified text. Video is also a highly personal medium, associated with home movies, and therefore, ideal for exploring issues of individual identity.

The relationship between consumer, commodity, and consumer capitalism will be examined in this creative project. This project will examine the advertising industry's practices of capitalizing on the individual's desire for self-improvement and self-discovery as a program that helps realize the producer's desire for strengthening its brand and economic growth. The aim of this project isn't to create a simple dichotomous relationship between buyer and seller, subject and object, the real and the contrived, but to examine how commodities structure experience, language and desire, via artistic practice informed by academic theory and criticism.

Video art, in its relatively short history, has often engaged in cultural and media critique, derived from its shared technologies and conditions with television (Antin, 1986, p. 162). The first video art work exhibited was Richard Serra's "Television Delivers People," a text piece broadcast on network television, addressing the economics of television—delivering viewers to advertisers. Broadcasters financed the development of television sets, because each set created a salable commodity of the people that purchased it (Antin, 1986, p. 149-50). In 1972, Nam Jun Paik created, "The Selling of New York," short videos aired as advertisements on WNET-TV that critiqued New York City's effort to sell itself as the major media market. These videos depicted

normal people, going about their everyday lives oblivious to the constant droning of the television sets in their midst. Inserted as punctuation ... are off-the-air commercials for American products (i.e. Pepsi) produced and aired on Japanese TV for the major industrial market in Asia. (Ross, 1986, p. 173)

This project will culminate in a two-channel video installation consisting of montage narratives that incorporate images and excerpts of advertisements, past and present, and other footage that comments on or serves as counterpoint to the advertising texts. By appropriating and recontextualizing the advertisements in a montage form, the material will be understood differently “from within a novel critical framework.” (Ross, 1986, p. 176) Multiple channels allow for simultaneous juxtaposition and conceptually fit with the reality of advertising’s omnipresence and the inescapability of commercial speech.

One channel of the installation will serve as the voice of the consumer, with imagery illustrating the consumer’s relationship with goods. The second will depict the voice of the goods’ producer, with imagery illustrating how expanded consumerism aids in the corporation’s quest for self-actualization. The installation will evoke a dialog between the aspirations of the consumer and the producer, revealing the similarities in their identity issues and respective desires for growth, highlighting confluences in language.

Most images will be stripped of any soundtrack, to be replaced with voiceover narration. Voiceover narrations will sometimes converse in a back and forth exchange, and at times will overlap. Musical accompaniment will be non-existent or minimal, to convey an intimate, internal speech or a clinical confidential memorandum, depending on the speaker’s identity. The disparity between low-energy audio and high-energy visuals will jar the viewer into a closer reading of the work. When aesthetically appropriate, the source material’s original voiceover will be presented as subtitles.

The consumer narrative will draw from personal texts, mostly internet journals and websites. The producer narrative will be derived from corporate texts: press releases, financial statements, internal documents, and media representations of corporate culture and consumerism, and informed by research in marketing and advertising practices.

Each channel of the installation will be projected on a separate wall of a public space with a small directional speaker positioned on the floor, centered below the projected image.

They will either be projected on two facing walls or two adjacent walls, depending on the site of exhibition. The installation will be open for public viewing. Each video will be approximately 10 minutes in length and set to loop repeatedly.