



# PREMIER

Sunday, November 2, 2008

A B C



**Cranberry Glades offers  
a bit of Canada in W.Va.**

*In the Wild:* Rare and varied  
plants can be seen along hike.

**Page E8**

**MUSIC REVIEWS: Pink, Kenny Chesney, Hank Williams III, Lucinda Williams, Cure, Joe Lovano, Mary Mary, *HSM 3*. E7**

**Book by Cleveland TV's Big Chuck. E4** Treat yourself to a ride on San Francisco's cable cars. E8

**E**

# Art meets advertising

Youngstown museum's exhibit explores dabbings in medium

**By Dorothy Shinn**

Beacon Journal arts and architecture writer

Who pays attention to commercials?

This is a timely question, as both political parties are flooding the airwaves (and occasionally the newspapers) with commercials (ads in print media) that either support their candidate or slam their opponent.

As perhaps some of us know, we ought to pay closer attention to all kinds of advertising, not just political ones, because not all ads are truthful, accurate or even real.

Artists have been paying attention to and playing around with the advertising medium for nearly a century, and there's an exhibit at the McDonough Museum of Art in Youngstown that demonstrates many of the ways this has been done.

Through Nov. 8, *Agency: Art and Advertising* explores the occasionally



**A group of Italian artists put together this poster for *United We Stand*, a movie that does not exist.**

Co. in the February-March 1921 edition of *The Arts* magazine, a photograph of a “penlike” sculpture by the Russian-born Constructivist Alexander Archipenko

puzzling, often dazzling, frequently provocative works by artists from Marcel Duchamp to Jeff Koons and an art group named 0100101101 01101.ORG.

Beginning with Duchamp's fake, punning, full-page Dadaist ad for *Archie Pen*

Please see **Art, E3**

## Details

**Show:** *Agency: Art and Advertising*

**When:** Through Nov. 8. Hours: 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday, until 8 p.m. Wednesday

**Where:** McDonough Museum of Art, 410 Wick Ave., Youngstown

**Information:** 330-742-1400. or <http://www.mcdonoughmuseum.yzu.edu>



# Art

## Ads in 1960s tout fictional gallery

Continued from Page E1

illustrated a fictional pen that “draws automatically a line of accurate length such as, for instance, the hypothenuse of a possible triangle in which the length of the two other sides is given arithmetically.”

Actually, artists have created works for the advertising media for a long time, going back to Toulouse-Lautrec in France and the *Ukiyo-e* prints of Hiroshige in Japan.

Once clear-cut, the relationship between art and advertising hasn’t remained so.

Given the growing ubiquitousness of the advertising medium and the increased use of propaganda methods and embedded, subconscious manipulations, there arose in the art community new views of ads that took on the character of an institutional critique.

These were gradual, and in the beginning, quite innocuous. Take, for instance, the advertising antics of Ray Johnson’s 8 *Man Show*, which appeared as a small illustrated ad in the Village Voice on July 30, 1964, for the Robin Gallery.

The ad reads “8 Man Show, Herms, Johnson, Brecht. Robin Gallery. Sponsored by David Bourdon; Michael Malce; Dorothy Podber; Larry Poons and Studio 3 of San Francisco” and includes an illustration of an ink-drawn coiled snake, signed Karl Wirsum.

Conceived and composed by artist Ray Johnson for the non-existent Robin Gallery, the ad was basically a play on the word/image of the figure “8,” which laid on its side becomes the infinity symbol, as does, more loosely, the letter “B.”

The ad’s humor lay in its imagery and the fact that the Robin Gallery had no physical location. The name also alludes to the former Reuben Gallery, the birthplace of happenings.

Then, in the Village Voice Sept. 17, 1964, edition, a second ad appears: “Ray Johnson, & other Living Americans in 38-man show at Robin Gallery, Section B2, 1st Ave & 27th St. Hours: 7-4 Mon., Wed., Fri., 2:30-4 Tues., Thurs., weekends & holidays.”

This was an ad conceived and composed by Andy Warhol, a friend and admirer of Ray Johnson, when Johnson was quarantined in Bellevue with hepatitis. The address is the hospital’s “Section B2” ward and the hours are visiting hours.

Art next begins to use the ad medium as a way of exploring ideas. At first these are ideas that examine the art world.

But gradually, these ads begin to explore and critique society and the status quo.

Actually Akron was not only the “beneficiary” of one of these early ads, but it also participated in a slice of contemporary art history as a result.

Among the most notorious of “art” ads from the 1970s is Lynda Benglis’ November 1974 Artforum ad featuring a sunglasses-wearing Benglis nude, oiled and holding something we can’t say somewhere we can’t cite.

The two-page color spread caused a furor even before its publication, and in the following issue, there appeared a letter signed by five of Artforum’s associate editors denouncing the work as “an object of extreme vulgarity.”

John Coplans was Artforum editor at the time, and as a result of the flap over this ad, he resigned. Thus, he was looking for a job at about the same time the Akron Art Institute was looking for a new director, and Coplans became director for 18 months.

During his tenure, the first major fundraising campaign for a new Akron Art Museum was begun. Coplans also established a highly influential magazine, Dialogue, that was subsequently taken over by the Ohio Arts Council.

There’s another back story to this ad that’s explored in this exhibit, although because of the sensitive nature of the Benglis imagery, you’ll have to view it in the McDonough front office.

Benglis was responding to an earlier ad showing artist Robert Morris likewise oiled and stripped to the waist, sporting heavy chains, a spiked dog collar, sunglasses and a Nazi helmet. Another art group, the Art Guys, attached corporate logos to everyday business suits designed by Todd Oldham and wore them for a year. Similar to the logo-en-

crusted jumpsuits worn by race-car drivers, the idea came to the artists while watching a football game on Jan. 1, 1996.

“The announcers didn’t introduce it as simply the ‘Fiesta Bowl.’ It was called something like the ‘Taco Bell Fiesta Bowl brought to you by Miller Beer,’ ” explained the Art Guys. “Then that familiar light went off inside our heads.”

For this project, the Art Guys shifted roles from artists to organizing institution and assembled an impressive advisory board to recruit sponsors. For a year and a half they sold space for 62 embroidered logos from 56 companies. They promised clients they would wear *SUTTS: The Clothes Make the Man* anywhere they would be seen by large numbers of people.

They also produced a book and a video documentary on

each sponsor, recording the entire project.

In early December 2005, ads for an action-packed blockbuster began appearing on the streets of Berlin, Brussels, Barcelona and New York. Featuring explosions, jet fighters and such Hollywood megastars as Ewan McGregor and Penelope Cruz, the glossy posters for *United We Stand* took the cities by surprise, as such a film didn’t actually exist. The tipoff was that among the “stars” featured in the poster were members of 010010110101101.ORG, Italian art guerrillas dedicated to turning the advertising industry inside out.

Touching on themes of Euro-

pean identity, the Iraq war and the proliferation of U.S. political propaganda, *United We Stand* is a fabricated epic that drills home the insidiousness of marketing strategies.

Reminiscent of early Pop Art juxtapositions of analysis alongside uncritical admiration – such as James Rosenquist’s site-specific, wraparound painting *Fill* – the *United We Stand* campaign robs marketing of its mystique and reveals its guile, while at the same time probing consumer society’s submissive, uncritical acceptance of advertising’s sophisticated, manipulative imagery.

Here’s a conundrum: Almost none of the visual artists I know were taken in or even slightly

persuaded by the various campaigns of George W. Bush.

Why? They paid attention. They saw, as apparently many did not, that the images being presented often didn’t coincide with the audio messages being heard and that the proffered images were heavily edited and/or juxtaposed in ways that weren’t logical or congruent with reality.

It doesn’t take an artist or an “ad man” to see a ruse. It takes awareness. Manipulated media is redundant.

Dorothy Shinn writes about art and architecture for the Akron Beacon Journal. Send information to her at the Akron Beacon Journal, P.O. Box 640, Akron, OH 44309-0640 or dtgshinn@neo.rr.com.



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## November 6, 7, & 8

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| 5 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 9 | 8 | 6 | 4 |
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11/02/08

Answer for the sudoku puzzle appearing on Page E7.

|          |            |         |
|----------|------------|---------|
| REACTS   | IMPUTED    | MORPHS  |
| INLAID   | NURSERIE   | ASHLEA  |
| GOOSLIT  | TTLELEACRE | THEART  |
| ULEE     | OLDS       | DICE    |
| PLANOP   | FLUIDER    | CHARGED |
| FORWARD  | BLASH      | SERTA   |
| WAS      | LOIS       | ELECT   |
| EDOM     | NTHS       | EERO    |
| ARUBA    | HEEDS      | SOTHERN |
| STANES   | T          | OUNDER  |
| ETD      | TROUBLED   | SLEEP   |
| LESBROWN | EDAM       | VOWLED  |
| LEANEST  | EKING      | THIRD   |
| PIAL     | DAC        | TEJ     |
| AKIT     | PANIA      | EV      |
| IDIES    | RECORDS    | LEVEE   |
| READAPT  | TWEAK      | NBASTAR |
| RIP      | SEIK       | MYST    |
| STARS    | INNOV      | COLE    |
| STATUE   | EMBOIT     | BURLAP  |
| SONORA   | DODGENT    | ARTERY  |

11/2/08

Answer for the crossword puzzle appearing on Page E2.