

International Journal of Arts and Humanities
(IJAH)

Bahir Dar- Ethiopia

Vol. 5(1), S/No 16, January, 2016:1-12

ISSN: 2225-8590 (Print) ISSN 2227-5452 (Online)

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/ijah.v5i1.1>

**Installation in Outdoor Advertising Designs: Engagement with
Graphics and Sculpture 3D Interface**

Amifor, John, FRPA

Dept. of Fine and Applied Arts.

Nnamdi Azikiwe University

Tel: +2348034951351; +2348026214593

E-mail: johnnieamifor@yahoo.com

Abstract

Out- of- home advertising transcends time. Today, it covers broad spectrum of referencing. The medium dates back to over 5000 years ago when the Egyptians used obelisk as directional sign for travellers. Subsistent economy in the South East and part of South-South geographical zone of Nigeria used the yam barn as attention getting device as well as storage system. Conventional outdoor platform came into existence in Nigeria since 1929, but from 1980s, optional site specifics were located in vintage positions in form of Installations. The 3D sculptural art form as a reminder medium, positions popular brands such as Star lager beer, Guinness and Milo beverage. Dictates of globalization experienced in Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) now uses installation as movable promotional medium seen in Triple.X Historical and analytical methods in addition to advertising theory espoused by Edward Meyer were used to position findings. By implication, advertising theory, practice and postulations worked to facilitate s transition since 1980s onto the globalization today. Triple.X promotional outing positions Nigeria's practice in time and space but lags behind the level of practice in advanced countries where diverse method of out- of- home designs are in competitive mode.

Key words: Out- of – home. Product promotion, s and Installation

Introduction

Out of home advertising is a broad categorization of media that reaches the prospects outside their homes. The characteristics of billboards is that consumers are exposed to its traditional message site within three to five seconds but the present innovations seen in installation and driven by technology and acquired perceptual skills moves the repertoire of out of home advertising to promotional sites where it engages the audience viewership. The benefit is that, outdoor sites now functions as both reminder medium as well as sites flavoured with entertainment for recall tendency. In addition, a manufacturer such as the Nigerian Breweries Plc. aspires to using brand line extension to generate a level of demand for the Star family products. Invariably, the product line enables the manufacturers produce higher volume to attain production economies of scale. The benefit to the consumer at end is that with the use of advertising as marketing communication mix, the cost of the products are lowered and becomes available to more consumers at the marketplace. Notable changes in media technology in advanced countries since 2009 showcase an outdoor advertising innovation seen in wireless dimension which in the words of Belch and Belch (2009) “can be quickly changed to reflect an advertising situation (rainy weather) or the presence of target audience member. Google has filed a patent for the new technology”. Curiously the new innovation is still being expected in Nigeria. Earlier, the advertiser used the traditional outdoor platform as (1); a reminder medium to campaigns as primary media to target audience; (2); in the industry service points as a directional function when placed in proximity to the products or services site such as hotels, resorts, gas stations, supermarkets, hospitals, among others.

Outdoor advertising is perhaps the oldest form of advertising dating back as Arens, Weigold and Arens (2009) put it at “5,000 years when hieroglyphic on obelisk directed travellers. In the middle ages, bill posting was an accepted form of advertising in Europe”. History of Design explains that during the nineteenth century, out of home media evolved to function as serious art forms located in poster paintings associated with both Manet and Toulouse- Lautrec. Further, and according to Moriarty, Mitchel and Wells (2009) Out- of- home advertising means ads on public spaces, including buses, posters on walls, telephone and shopping and shopping kiosks, painted and wrapped cars and semi- trucks, taxi signs, airport and bus terminal displays, hotel and shopping mall displays, shopping bags, among others.

In traditional Nigerian society particularly in the present South East and part of South-South geographical zones, and similar to hieroglyphics on obelisks as directional information leverage to travellers, was the yam barn. The yam barn system sustained horizontal outward and informal publicity between farmers and none farmers alike. It served three basic purposes:

1. its site was a sign of affluence symbolizing an accomplished farmers, in the society
2. it provided means of consumption for the farmer, his family and the needy during famine, and
3. commercial transaction took place when other farmers came to buy from the rich farmer; during the period of hardship: the needy thronged to a reputable farmer's site to purchase yam tubers, and seedlings in similar vein as the Biblical Egyptian Pharoah and Joseph narratives.

Horizontally, the designed yam barn which served basically as a storage facility show-cased and legitimated classification of farmers in subsistent economy and mediated inter-relationship between successful farmers, their neighbours and aspirants who desired to be successful also. Conspicuously, yam tubers of various species displayed at various storage sites attracted the attention of passers- by. Undeniably, attention was drawn and action induced. Today, conceptual artists have deconstructed the yam barn design from its original sites as a storage system, an attention getting device to aesthetic art appreciation at home. We find such new function for yam barn in a sculptural piece in wood by Erasmus Onyisi.

Modernity

Over the years, contemporary African graphic art found audience in the market and invariably showed global awareness and integration alongside the dictates of modern advertising. Acknowledgement of such artistic contribution influenced the cause of advertising sub-sector growth in Nigeria's economy as it challenged other areas of modern Nigerian art history stunted with deciphering the border tension between identity and definition praxis.

Ironically, such double coded issues of identity and definition, given interrogation suggest parody and lacks full acknowledgement of results of earlier interrogations based on historical sequence and mutation in Onabolu and Kenneth Murray schools ideologue. As a result, the problem identified in this study rests with the fact that, modern Nigerian art historians hardly investigate visual communication design, a function of advertising in their research. Given, levels of creativity in the domain of cultural production, the missing link therefore, is historical and aesthetic documentation of the evolving trends in visual communication as marketing device. Most historians limit their scope of inquiry to painting and sculpture, and grudgingly textile and ceramics are studied. Visual communication design today propels global markets driven by technological expediency in its infinite flux. Perhaps, also, enough awareness has not been generated to encourage information gathering and processing required for such historical and aesthetic documentation.

Installation as an art has been in practice in Nigeria as this paper proves, at unconventional and recently conventional levels. It has been around in graphics for outdoor advertising dispensations unnoticed within the urban environments in Nigeria, particularly Lagos metropolis as noted in an earlier publication. Amifor (2013) situates that since the end of Nigeria's civil war in 1970, and consequent upon gradual process of creation of states by the various Military Governments in place, many new urban centres grew in number to absorb influx of migrants from the rural areas in search of greener pastures. This development precipitated by the actions of the government, objectively was aimed at taking development to the grassroots. By the year 2000, thirty seven states including Abuja and seven hundred and seventy six local government headquarters existed to serve as nuclei for development.

Consequently, given favourable income from the petroleum sector, urbanization provided the market and propelled greater advertising activities. This development aptly enabled marketing philosophy to function in conformity with the assertion by the world's famous professor of management, Peter Drucker that Fifty years ago, the typical attitude of American businessmen to marketing was that the Sales Department would sell whatever the plant produced, but today, it is our job to produce what the market needs.

Invariably, the underlining point made by Drucker lies in global reliance on market forces as the determinant and final arbiter of marketing activities which rests squarely on the law of demand and supply given a public. This in actual fact is a departure from earlier practice based on production and finance.

The situation in Nigeria was not different from the Western countries either, as gradually, buyers' market replaced sellers' market, particularly during the Structural Adjustment Period (SAP), the era of the military President Ibrahim Babangida regime, 1985-1993. There was so much money in circulation but the purchasing power of the consumer was curtailed by galloping inflation made possible by the falling value of Naira against the Dollar which became the exchange currency for desired manufactured goods imported from abroad; surprisingly advertising flourished to demand better creative possibilities.

From the innovative mills emerged installations. Modern installation art as viewed today is a new development to some people, as earlier noted. Urbanization in Nigeria with its attendant problems located in increased population explosion, size and density lacked coherent planning. A common feature is increasing accommodation of all manner of trading and professional practice scattered all over the city as seen in auto workshops, vulcanizers' display, spare parts shops and scrap sites as illustrated in (Plate1), is a vulcanizer's attention getting device in Nigeria's environments.

Be it in urban or rural areas of Nigeria, many out of home publicity or advertising, both conventional and unconventional display methods solicit the attention of prospective customers for patronage. That their sites are not often noticed and artistic tendency acknowledged by the public outside their target audience does not suggest the absence of their presence. Clearly, they are functional form of out of home advertising. In fact, the effectiveness of these display sites rests with discernible minds of the focused target audience to deduce meaning based on observation as well as associate the various fragments as a whole. Perception at this point can make out the unintended artistic value associated with these installations as conceptual art.

Conspicuously, and undeniably, attention is muted, drawn and action induced. The attention generated often gingers initiative to stimulate artistic production in constructing these sites with a difference. Aesthetically, the installed objects elicit artistic appreciation located in assemblage as a sculptural form, that in which materials exploitation and functionality foregrounds artistic endeavour; this is suggestive in use of materials which mediates between their nature and conceptual artistic skill displayed in conscious attempt at sculptural production.

We are witnessing further development in extensive use of sculpture, now married with graphics for outdoor advertisement message delivery in new forms. This is visible in (Plate2), a Star Lager Installation. As of the past thirty years, this trend in outdoor advertising design is visually located in mixed media; it suggests the marriage of graphics art and sculpture .in apparent aim of differentiation and positioning of various products or services being advertised.

Out of home advertising recent developments is still a reminder medium that fits into overall global marketing mix in current trends located in content laden satellite transmissions, including cable networks digital imaging, video electronics, magazines, internet among other forms of media as campaign strategies. Invariably, advertising in Nigeria today absorbs global approach given graphic representation in art practice between the state and the market as well as national and multinational cultural variables. In the midst of these aggressive social activities, a climate conducive for meeting up with ever shifting network of tastes, habits and life styles are created to renegotiate equilibrium in identified new constituencies of cultural practices.

The nature of advertising itself as usual positions it along variable global change in constant flux, that in which its purpose is to draw attention to itself with text and image and sometimes verbal and sound combined. The essence is to be noticed as well as to influence consumer's behaviour. The very characteristic of this part of marketing mix is that, it has often changed with the time particularly in mode of presentation, objectively to be effective. The focus on installation is pointer to this allusion. Admittedly, (Plate3) Milo responds to the objective of making a difference and to be noticed using space as dominant principle of design. The site of Milo at a

busy Costain intersecting roads adjoining entry into the third mainland bridge, Lagos Island and to Apapa, Ijora and Ajegule on another side was incredible. Also, from the same Costain, another road leads to Orile Iganmu and on to Badagry. Clearly, it was a vintage site for a reminder medium in its right function. Positioning and good site location added to effective graphics seemingly sustains good exposure.

Significance of Installations

In the past years mixed media in modern Nigeria art has been framed in the domain of painting and sculpture, sometimes in textile and ceramics. Today, we experience ceramics sculpture signifying gradual shift and incursion of ceramics into the realm of sculpture. But, hardly do we reference graphics sculpture as are recently being encountered in our environment through visible outdoor materials.

Originally, the business of advertising involves production of persuasive message construct using 2D graphics to influence behavioural pattern as seen in print and electronic media as well as the internet. Graphics new incursion into space perception now appropriates a traditional 3D sensibility to achieve its objective; marketing trend is squarely located in deconstruction of sculpture from its autonomous function as an art object and now appropriated as a marketing factor. Assuming new function in product positioning in urban space, sculpture lends itself to being subverted and re-invented at specific sites created to fulfil social functions. Undeniably sculptural installation using its current utility role enhances specific nature of message construct in space and in time as well as social context of advertising. With hindsight one can foresee greater pre-occupation of using design to also foreground wider resolution of chaos associated with urbanization and its attendant problems of aesthetics in town planning. At the end, art will assume extra mutual presence to subvert its notion of self-imposed exclusivity associated with modern Nigerian art history narratives to contextual social responsibility.

With the recent development sculptural installation with graphics overture, assumes functional medium of advertising in conditioning total communication in our highly competitive and fragmented media scene. This is evidenced in (Plate4) Milo illustration, exhibits artistic production and vintage planned locations to solicit viewers' attention using branding as its cardinal focal point to situate benefit. However, such implicit, benefit is based on reliance of the consumers perception of the brand name associated with Star which has maintained, sustained advertising presence in the prime media over the years. In this sense, installation is used as conveyor belt in drawing the attention of the audience in transit, that which makes the target public become exposed to the sites as a result of their movement to certain destinations. Human traffic is considerably heavy at Costain where Milo huge basketball player was located. Presumably, same reasoning explains why the Lagos State government considered it more appropriate to replace Milo with the statue of Alaba Funsho William

on the old site of Milo basketball player. Williams was a prominent Lagosian and a politician assassinated during the Olusegun Obasanjo regime.

Most effective positioning of Milo image was size imposition and construction which was dominant in space to include attractiveness of graphics combined with sculpture realized in fibre glass and direct graphic imaging to differentiate these sites from the conventional bill boards. Another major attribute is that consumers can walk around or past them; in fact share sizes of the installations arguably exhibit politics of representation, that which is synonymous with big time advertising spenders, mostly multinational corporate organizations such as Nigerian Breweries PLC of Star lager or Nestle of Milo, Guinness and Cadbury of Bournvita fame in the media.

The issue of politics of representation is rationalized given the philosophy of advertising message construct based on differentiation. Reasoning responds to the fact that, it is rare for two products to be identical. They may perform identical functions, but each contains slight nuances that makes it more or less attractive to individual segment of the market; given these slight nuances, the differences are then positioned as benefit in sublime message constructed to the public. Both Milo and Bournvita as well Ovaltine since 1970s used sports mantra in different categories such as athletics, basketball, football, and table tennis for product positioning, above all differentiation.



Plate 1: Unconventional Site



Plate 2: Star Lager Beer Conventional Site



Plate 3, Milo Site



Plate 4, Radler, Promotional Site

The use of installations now ensures marriage of sculpture with graphics essentially to create effective design. In addition, the essence of these art forms to cultural value is amplified by Scsletch (1985) assertion that. “The cultural uniqueness of advertising lies in the fact that, symbiosis is created; not so much between art and imagination as between art and information, but even art and reality”. The strong visual expression seen in installations recently focuses on integration of artistic creation married with research and new drive technologies in 2D and 3D design constructs. Meaning is located along the development and vocabulary of globalization dispensation which foregrounds graphic art practice. Aesthetically, installations, such as Star, Guinness and Milo negotiate practice of accommodation in choice of sites as they still allow visible presence of the conventional billboard. Also, the Milo site suggests deconstruction of a basketball player from the field to site location on the street; in fact a player who drinks Milo as the image suggests symbolically, displays height of athletic performance. Contextually the use of natural language of form in sculpture show elasticity of motion which is suggestive of specific vocabulary of representational iconic, that which also submit to orderly arrangement grounded on interrelationship and conformity with the environmental orderliness without compromising commercialism.

Promotional Angles

Out of home media means more than billboard, a reminder medium as earlier noted. Reasons for buying outdoor advertising space rests on variety of purposes and one of the reasons resonate from promotional introduction of a new product as (Plate 6) Triple. X, a Star brand consumer lager beer reveals. The advertisers considered

appropriate location as a prime reason to effectively comply with accessibility, geographical flexibility, demographic flexibility impact, cost and creative flexibility powered by new technology. New Technology in its infinite flux propelled installation of the product as an exhibition medium capacity rather than a reminder one in a traditional site; this helped to “bring customers eye ball – to eye ball” with the new product.

The use of installation at promotional site complements its assemblage at vintage locations, with open space capable of accommodating large crowd. This time not only consumers in transit but the curious audience that experienced the presence of a phantom bottle erected at the promotional site; also given the reasons of managing global media clutter, the desired marketing decision rests with interpreting advertisement message duly influenced by context or more appropriately the environment where it appears. Therefore, it is on basis of context that we can appreciate the venue Polo Park where the promotional launch was considered capable of making impacts. In fact, Polo Park hosts political rallies since second republic dating back from 1979 onwards.

Clutter

Globalization is synonymous with integrated marketing communication (IMC) strategies adopted by marketers. Advertisers faced problem of media clutter, therefore current direction requires co-ordinated marketing communications to avoid duplication efforts peculiar with advertising agencies dominant role. IMC evolved since 1980s and progressed from the decade before the millennium. Many scholars have defined integrated marketing communication that it:

Is a strategic business process used to plan, develop, execute and evaluate co-ordinate measurable, persuasive and communication programs over time with consumers, customers, prospects, associates and other targets considered relevant external and internal audiences. The goal is to generate both short term financial return and build long term brand and shareholders value.

(Schultz, 2004)

From 1990s onwards, precisely the year two thousand, the new millennium decade marketers became more sophisticated, and IMC was better understood. Our study show that installation was used in 1990s as an outdoor platform in major Nigerian cities; Guinness, Milo and Star are good examples as earlier noted. But 2015, (Plate5) TripleX out of home is a good branding effort in apparent promotional function. The beauty lies with its infinite flexibility. The structure could be dismantled and assembled in a new promotional venue due to its flexibility. As a matter of facts, since 1980s stakeholders were taking reasonable steps to condition the rapid development witnessed in event

marketing, sales promotion, direct marketing and public relations as they challenged the role of advertising as dominate tool of marketing communication as earlier noted. New technology was the answer to those changes and IMC opened its floodgate to integrate all the marketing mix now managed individually.

Line Extension Culture

The new brand adds up to line extension creative communication practice in Nigeria associated with the multinationals such as Unilever, Paterson Zochonis, Nigerian Breweries Plc. Nestle, Cadbury among others. As narrated in another paper Otao and Obisesan in similar vein point out that "The battle to look for market was drawn when brands began to look for ways to outwit one another by using 'Fluoride Gel' some came in red, other in white, while some combined colours". The Star logo is visible on Nigerian Breweries other brand – line- extension. Such products include Triple. X with benefit claim to consumers reading "Extra smooth", "Extra strong" and Extra Africa herbs. Other Star brand line extension are Radler lager Beer with Citrus Juice has added cliché as "Shine with double refreshment" and Star Lite, all have visible Star logo on their labels. Again, the truth is that Nigerian market is dynamic and absorbs all manner of products. However, in addition to extent of the local market, Star Lager beer has high brand consumer's loyalist whom the product earned their confidence for over fifty years. Therefore as the new product, Triple. X has Star trademark on its label, it is assumed that the new product depending on its cost as a crucial factor, and as a result of consumer behaviour may gain reasonable proportional share of the market.

Positioning the Product

The concept was mind blowing aimed at sensitizing the public about the unique nature of Triple.X. The city Enugu was considered to have greater marketing potentials required for launching Triple.X. Among such attributes are that the city accommodates all races meaning that people are at peace living in such environment owing to its calm nature, security, and its inhabitants being lovers of fun out of door.

Polo Park hosts political rallies in the city since 1979 and presently it houses Shoprite, an international departmental stores outfit where unique people including foreigners converge. Given the expanse of space at Polo Park, the thirty five feet bottle and other assemblages consumed two days of technical input to put together. The news concerning the bottle spread like wild fire. Meanwhile share size of the bottle was visible as people thronged to view "What was new" at the site.

Triple.X was positioned as the first ever drink with three benefits as the name suggests:

- Extra Smoothness

- Extra Strength
- Extra African herbs.
Cola nut and bitter cola

Strategies

The marketing strategy of the promotional launch rests with the need to maximize sales and consumer benefit based on brand equity. The emergence of Triple.X in the market is brand line extension resting on the use of a successful name Star to launch a new product into the market. The overall objective is to gain competitive edge over similar product in the market above all, economy of scale as earlier noted. There is another Star brand Radler within brand-line-extension which contains Citrus Juice as benefit to consumers. In history of advertising brand product line- extension is an influence from Procter and Gamble’s successful use of Ivory soap brand in an attempt to take sales away from competing brands. Star Lager beer marketers, arguably are following the global trends since the axiom today is “Think globally, act locally”.

Aptly, findings respond to the situational paper “What Agencies Really Think of Global Theory” presented by Edward Meyer, the Chief Executive of Grey Advertising. It is used in this paper to access practice in Nigeria grounded on the promotional out-of-home installation exhibition Triple. X and rationalized as follows:

1. Brands and messages that can be adapted for visual appeal avoiding problems of trying to translate words into dozen languages
2. Brands that are promoted with image campaigns that play to universal needs, values and emotions
3. High tech products and new products coming to the world for the first time, not steeped in the cultural heritage of a country
4. Products with nationalistic flavour if the country has reputation in the field.
5. Products that appeal to a market segment with a universally similar tastes, interests needs and values.

Mayer’s espouse sustains and responds to the marketers choice of Enugu earlier pointed out as ideal city with rationalized values in product positioning of Triple. X. In addition, a manufacturer such as the Nigerian Breweries PLc. aspires to using brand line extension to generate higher level of demand for the Star family products. Invariably, the product line extension conditions production of higher volume to attain economies of scale. The benefit to the consumer rests squarely with the use of advertising as marketing communication mix; as a result, costs of the products are lowered and become available to more consumers at the marketplace.

Conclusion

Clearly this paper has proved continuity in outdoor advertising both in unconventional and conventional message delivery. The trend so far raises sculpture from its primordial functions to assume new role that solicits part of consumers heavily loaded time schedule for attention in an enabling persuasive message exploit; in addition it mediates between market dispensation and persuasion, including aesthetics sensibility. Recent promotional launching of Triple. X responds to global marketing theories and practice in vogue today as such we “Think global and act local” within the Integrated Marketing Communication imperatives.

Given the developments, installation as seen along the streets or promotional site- specific rather than subvert both the conventional bill boards and photography often used, solicits combination of text with material forms to intensify skill at plotting creative differentiation in outdoor designs. The outdoor accommodates economy of scale; at the end brand equity is built to the satisfaction of the advertiser and the consumer.

References

- Amifor, J. (2013). Creative Designs that impact on outdoor platforms. *Awka Journal of Fine and Applied Arts*, Vol. 1, pp.80 - 92.
- Arens, F.W. Weigold, M.F. & Arens, C. (2009). *Contemporary advertising*. New York: McGraw-Hill Irwin.
- Belch, G. E. & Belch, M.A. (2012). *Advertising and promotion, an integrated marketing communication perspective*. New York: McGraw-Hill Irwin.
- Meyer, E. (1984). What agencies really think of global theory? *Marketing and Media Decisions*, December 1984, p. 74.
- Moriarty, S. Mitchell, N. & Wells, W. (2009). *Advertising principles and practice*. Upper Saddle River: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Schultz, D. (in Belch and Belch 2012). *Advertising and promotion, an integrated marketing communications perspective*. New York: McGraw- Hill Irwin.
- Schlecht, O. (n.d.). Advertising: A driving force within the economy and society. *How Brand Advertising Benefits an Economy*. New York: International Advertising Association, p.25.