The Safe Cigarette:

Conclusion

MUCH Milder
and "No Unpleasant After-taste"
From the menu of a
San Francisco restaurant
by Misses Williams

Practice-Based Ph.D. Jackie Batey
www.thesafecigarette.blogspot.com
The Safe Cigarette

One: The Safe Cigarette

Two: The Cigarette

Three: The Need to Reassure

Four: Personification: Who Should We Trust?

Five: Nature as Reassurance - The Menthol Cigarette

Six: Technology as Reassurance - The Filter-Tip

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“The drip-drip-drip makes even granite soften.
We trust the brand-name we have heard so often,
And join the queue of sheep that flock to buy:
We fools who know our folly, you and I.”
from his poem “The Ad Man” written in 1932.

Introduction

In the previous Fascicles I have explored the role that the designed image plays in persuading consumers
to purchase products that were, even at the time, regarded as dangerous to health and possibly terminal.
My method has been to identify and analyse a set of visual strategies developed by the manufacturing
industry and projected out by the advertising industry in the pages of the mass circulation weekly
magazines.
I have explored the repertoire of visual strategies:

1 The invention of early visual techniques from the 40’s with a multiplicity of information;
   the crowding of the one-page advertisement with a superfluity of reasons to buy.

2 The generation of anxiety in the one-page advertisement, with the incorporation of the
   soothing of the anxiety; the answering of assumed consumer anxieties within the
   page with no direct reference to the implicit concern.

3 The creation of personifiers to reassure the consumer in the shape of the famous and
   the non-famous; the use of traditional figures such as tobacco farmers, cowboys and
   ‘Indians’; the deployment of opera singers and throat specialists; the evocation of
   animals and the summoning up of Santa Claus.

4 The deployment of Mentholated brands and the technique of visualising juste milieu
   landscapes in an attempt to reassure consumers that the product is natural and
   therefore, wholesome.

5 The invention and visualisation of Filter-Tip technology and the assumption that a
   scientific explanation will carry a burden of truth because of its claims to stringent
   testing.
Whenever possible I have used the industries’, own first-hand visual manuals and I recommend this largely neglected source of information to other case studies where the public in America during this period was being persuaded to act in ways not conducive to its health, wealth and well-being. Yet it is not sufficient to do so in isolation. In this Fascicle, I will seek to locate the visual techniques, the choice of visual themes within a larger study of the American tradition of the Confidence Man, the Bunco Man, the Snake Oil Salesman and the purveyor of fakes. I will explore the tradition of satirical images aimed at the Advertising and Tobacco Industries. I will then discuss the production and development of my own Artist’s Books and Multiples conceived in that tradition.

**The Tonic/Toxic Cigarette**

From the 1940’s the American people, while being told of the unique quality of the American Dream in a Land of Plenty, have suffered many disappointments and disasters of which they were not forewarned by their government, their employer or any other guiding hand. The Tonic was invariably followed by the Toxic.

Despite all the reassurances of the ‘fifties the Safe Cigarette has, at last, been revealed as a fraud perpetrated by Senior Advertising Executives, “The best brains of their generation”. How did they accomplish their aims? Given the manuals mentioned above, and the general pretensions of the industry we may be forgiven for accepting advertising as a Science. The accumulated evidence tends to suggest that it had just as much in common with the tradition of the Patent Medicine Salesman. My analysis may suggest that these practices and attitudes never went away. Cigarette manufacturers before 1945 had used health claims regularly as part of their patter. In 1934 Camel cigarettes were promoted as an aid to digestion and as an energiser. In 1942 Brown & Williamson claimed that the menthol in KOOLS kept the sinuses clear and gave extra protection against colds. Smokers of the future would laugh at these outrageous claims but succeeding campaigns were hardly any more credible. The Royal College of Physicians Report, “Smoking or Health” (1983) identified that 1 in 4 smokers would be killed by the practice and that, on average, a smoker of twenty cigarettes per day could expect to loose an average of five or six years of life (fig 7:01).

“Of 1000 young adults who smoke regularly, one will be murdered, six will be killed on the roads, and 250 will be killed by tobacco.” James Wilkinson, Tobacco: The facts behind the smokescreen, Penguin, Harmondsworth 1986, p.15.
Of 1000 young American adults who smoke regularly...

- 1 will be murdered
- 6 will be killed on the roads
- 250 will be killed by tobacco

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James Wilkinson, *Tobacco: The facts behind the smokescreen*, 1986

Even during the late ‘forties a Madison Avenue executive was quoted as stating, “[George Washington] Hill would have known what to do about this health business, (fig 7:02) He would have made cancer fashionable.” The whole process has followed John Cheever’s dictum that American culture is condemned to veer wildly from intense anticipation to huge disappointment.²

The Confidence Man Unmasked

The Confidence Man of American culture is most commonly perceived as someone who travels from town to town with a vehicle advertising his wares. Working alone or with concealed associates he attempts to sell products made from generally accessible constituent elements while making grossly exaggerated claims for the benefits of the product. While the phenomenon can be found in other periods, cultures and societies, the profession excelled in the U.S. during the period 1860 to 1914 when the size of the nation and the irregularity of communications allowed the industry considerable license, minimum legislation and maximum entertainment. The spirit of the Confidence Man in American culture is neatly personified by the figure of P.T.Barnum who singlehandedly set the patterns and strategies for mass entertainment and mass deception from 1850 into the new century³. His example provides a polarity we see in the later imagery of cigarette advertising. On one hand there is our outrage at his obvious money-making scams but on the other there is a shared delight in his audacity, almost an admiration for his ingenuity. In Trickster in the Land of Dreams⁴, Zeese Papanikolas notes that “It was Barnum’s genius to discover America’s pleasure in being fooled.”

The entertainment value of hoaxes is a regular feature of American news gathering, a celebration of the skill of the hoaxer and a strong sense of entertainment in being fooled. This pleasure can be experienced by the observer and the participant. The partnership between outlandish claims and those who seem prepared to believe them became more complex as the systems of communication became more complex - print, radio, TV, the sales catalogue, cinema and billboards. It is possible to trace the audience’s gullibility as linked to the amount of entertainment/attention derived. It is unrealistic and simplistic to presume consumers who seem to believe advertisers’ puffing are intellectually challenged. It would be more accurate to suggest that as part of the bargain, consumers accept advertising hyperbole because it amuses them and activates their imaginations. Barnum was quick to appreciate the value of advertising and readily used every means available to him to promote his American Museum such as flyers, posters, banners, advertisements, competitions, the setting-up of rival museums, publicity events and stunts, and bargain days.

²I know that every dollar sown in advertising would return in tens, and perhaps hundreds, in a future harvest, and after
obtaining all the notoriety possible by advertising and by exhibiting the mermaid at the Museum, I sent the curiosity throughout the country, directing my agent to everywhere advertise it as ‘From Barnum's Great American Museum, New York.’ The effect was immediately felt; money flowed in rapidly and was readily expended in more advertising.” P.T. Barnum, Struggles and Triumphs, Penguin Books Ltd. New York, 1981, [1855], page 111.

Far from being chastened by revelation of his techniques of puffing and falsities, Barnum even boasted of his accomplishments in his autobiography. He is a vivid example of a much catalogued and analysed phenomenon in American society, the Confidence Man who appears in literature e.g. Poe and Melville and film e.g. How To Succeed in Business Without Really Trying (1967).

In 1857 Herman Melville published the most eccentric of his novels, The Confidence-Man, in which forty-five conversations are held on the deck of a Mississippi paddlesteamer, the Fidéle, during a twenty-four hour period. Melville allows the narratives to unfold leaving the reader to decode the scam. The Herb Doctor, one appearance of the Confidence Man, is a wonderful example of a man of medicine using the power of Nature to justify his dubious cures. His techniques are aligned to the visual strategies I have identified as being used in the selling of mentholated cigarettes, the assumption the Nature can not cause evil and therefore should be venerated and trusted. "Trust me, nature is health; for health is good, and nature cannot work ill. As little can she work error. Get nature, and you get well." It is also appropriate that Melville’s Doctor, as soon as he fears he has been identified for what he is, expertly and hurriedly exits the scene, rather as the disappearance of doctors in cigarette advertisements after 1955.

...notwithstanding the frigid regard of the company, till, suddenly interrupting himself, as if in reply to a quick summons from without, he said hurriedly, 'I come, I come,' and so, with every token of precipitate dispatch, out of the cabin the herb-doctor went." Herman Melville, The Confidence-Man: His Masquerade, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1984 [1857]. p.116.

The concept of allowing oneself to be gulled in order to receive entertainment is central to the American experience and can best be seen in L.Frank Baum’s, The Wizard of Oz (1900). Dorothy is warned that the Emerald City is so marvellous its brilliance could, blind onlookers, therefore all residents and visitors must have immovable green goggles fixed over their eyes. This unlikely notion actually has a basis in reality. During the Dakota drought of 1890, when an ingenious salesman had been selling green goggles for horses and mules to fool them into mistaking woodshavings for grass and eating it. In Oz, however, without the green lenses everything would appear banal and ordinary.

American satire after 1945 regularly unearthed and ridiculed the phenomenon, as indicative examples of visual attacks on advertising and tobacco in particular I have chosen to analyse two examples; Jack Levine’s Medicine Show (1955) and the comic monologue of Bob Newhart (the ‘sixties).
THE MASK IS OFF
IN CIGARETTE ADVERTISING

Chesterfield is first
to name
all its ingredients

Chesterfield uses the right com-
bination of the world’s best
tobaccos, pre-tested by laboratory
instruments for the most desirable
smoking qualities.
Chesterfields are kept tasty and
fresh by the only tried and tested
moistening agents . . . proved by
over 40 years of continuous use in
U.S.A. tobacco products as entirely
safe for use in the mouth . . . pure
natural sugars and chemically
pure, harmless and far more costly
Glycerol . . . nothing else.
You can be glad if you smoke
Chesterfields because they give
you every advantage known to
modern science.
For you that means that
Chesterfields are much milder with
an extraordinarily good taste and
no unpleasant after-taste . . .
All for your smoking pleasure
and protection.
They Satisfy Millions.

Chesterfield Has for Your Smoking Pleasure and Protection
Every Advantage Known to Modern Science
Histories of the Patent Medicine vendors published after 1950\(^7\) always projected the outrages and eccentricities as a nostalgic evocation of American Capitalism in the period from the Civil War to the First World War, epitomised in the figure of P.T.Barnum and more pointedly here, James Buchanan Duke. Studies of advertising and marketing clearly present George Washington Hill as a similar breed of buccaneer soon to be rendered obsolete by legislation and anti-trust legislation. Yet when Jack Levine, an American Social Realist who combined sophisticated image making with social satire addressed the sources of corruption in American Society he returned to the Patent Medicine Salesman as a focus for his attack.

*The Medicine Show by Jack Levine*

All too often critical observations of American culture lack authenticity and relevance because they are, it is claimed, our own values projected backwards with the benefits of hindsight. Jack Levine’s painting *Medicine Show*, fig 7:05, of 1955, is a visual satire on Madison Avenue, TV advertising and the gullible public that supports them. The main character of the work is a snake-oil salesman accompanied by a cigarette girl. The cigarette girl’s tray reads, “VELENO” (Italian for “poison”), and yet the crowd still seems eager to see the show and buy the products. Most of Levine’s great satirical paintings attack abuses in American Society - the corrupt Judiciary, the Mafia, Political life and a flawed Democracy are set in dark and gloomy surroundings. Unusually, *Medicine Show* is set in the streets in the bright light of a summer’s day. When discussing this image Jack Levine has said, “I’ve always tried to make some point about charlatans - in this case a medicine show...I’ve always been trying to make a kind of indictment of mysticism, and people being fooled, people being gullled.” An early pencil study for Medicine Show marks the charlatan with a skull face, as Death. The gullled crowd bustles around his feet as he loudly extols the virtues of his wares into his microphone.

This view of the relationship of the liar supported by the gullible is something I have explored in my own work. The exploiting of a negative psychology is something Levine also mentions when discussing his satirical intent. “I am primarily concerned with the condition of man. The satirical direction I have chosen is an indication of my disappointment in man, which is the opposite way of saying that I have high expectations for the human race.”

“It is true that there is an underlying concern in his art with the injustices of life and society, with good and evil, and with moral rectitude, but what comes through most clearly are the incongruous relationships, ludicrous events, and ironies of existence that somehow define our political, social, and cultural character.” Milton W.Brown, *Jack Levine*, Rizzoli, New York, 1989, pp.68-73.

Against the background of Levine’s image lampooning the gull and gullled, it is important to stress the larger efforts of the Advertising Industry to persuade us of their honourable intentions. The Advertising
Fig 7:05  Jack Levine, “Medicine Show” 1955-6. Oil on canvas, 72 x 63 inches. Metropolitan Museum of Art, N.Y.
Industry has a remarkable record of absorbing criticism of its activities. It employed artists, writers and credible literary figures to give authenticity to its activities. It commissioned respected photographers and film makers.

The Role of Humour in the Unmasking

A survey of institutional American anti-smoking propaganda from 1945 reveals an inability to generate visual strategies of similar potency and penetration to those made by the manufacturing and advertising industries. The tone is worthy but lack-lustre. The production values have puritanical restraint and black and white is preferred to colour. Fig 7:07, is one such advertisement (LOOK, April 1957), for Bantron, a nicotine replacement treatment that is generally advertised at the back of the magazine, usually occupying less than half a page. In the advertisement shown here the pictured consumer, far from being delighted at the effects of his nicotine replacement treatment is flatly illuminated by the photographers flash, as if caught in some guilty act. Visually this is presented as a product that does not bring joy to its subscribers, only misery. It must also be pointed out that the cost of a full-page colour advertisement was prohibitive to smaller companies that simply did not have the immense advertising budgets of the major tobacco companies.

During my research period I have come to terms with the paradox many of my generation seem to experience, that American imagery of the post-war period is simultaneously tragic and hilarious. The housewife is ecstatic at the Christmas gift of a twin tub yet it will not enable her to escape domestic drudgery. Car owners float on fluffy clouds (fig 7:03) bras resemble pie-cases and are glued in place for days (fig 7:04), women are easily impressed by ‘Snap-Open’ cigarette packets (fig 7:06) and tension headaches are cured by wavy lines.

Critics such as Noam Chomsky9 have alerted the public to the dangers of the Military and Industrial Establishments, while Vance Packard showed that lack of ethical reflection in advertising was a matter for general concern.10 Seldom did American intellectuals see it however as their role to scrutinise the constructed image, manufactured in order to sell a product. Marshall McLuhan, perhaps alone amongst the post war critics, saw what less traditional rhetoric and analysis could contribute to understanding, particularly in the way images could be divorced from their original context for dissection. The role that humour was to play in alerting the population to abuses carried out in their name requires a separate and lengthy study. McLuhan juxtaposes image and analysis on the double page spread, with clear use of paradox and wit to make his point, fig 7:08 is a page from The Mechanical Bride (1951).

What has become most apparent during my researches is that the humour of the situation had been present all along in American culture. The comedy monologues of Bob Newhart capture perfectly
Fig 7:03  Detail, *U.S. Royal* advertisement, SEP, August, 1947

Fig 7:04  Detail, *Poses* advertisement, *LOOK*, May 1955
Fig 7.06  Philip Morris advertisement, SEP, April 1954

If You Want To
STOP SMOKING
BANTRON Can Help You!

Robert F. Thorpe, interstate truck driver says: "I tried to stop smoking many times. My wife bought me Bantron. Now, thanks to Bantron, my cigarette craving has stopped."

Fig 7.07  Bantron advertisement, LOOK, April 1957
As the ad implies, know-how is at once a technical and a moral sphere. It is a duty for a woman to love her husband and also to love that soap that will make her husband love her. It is a duty to be glamorous, cheerful, efficient, and, so far as possible, to run the home like an automatic factory. This ad also draws attention to the tendency of the modern housewife, after a premarital spell in the business world, to embrace marriage and children but not housework. Emotionally, she repudiates physical tasks with the same conviction that she pursues hygiene. And so the ad promises her a means of

How much more Know-How is needed to make human life obsolete?

Is there any known gadget for controlling a rampant Know-How?

The lady in the ad has found a mechanical substitute for moral choice?

King Midas knew how to change everything into gold. Where did all that popcorn come from?

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the values of his society and communicates them us with a energy and unflinching eye. By means of LP’s and radio, Newhart’s *Introducing Tobacco to Civilisation* encouraged, through humour, a close scrutiny of the act of smoking itself, a technique I have identified as lacking any official manual. An official in the *East India Company* is speaking to ‘Nutty Walt’ (Sir Walter Raleigh) on the telephone getting him to describe the smoking of a cigarette in clinical and ridiculous detail. The visualisation of the dialogue creates a picture of a wild eyed lunatic setting fire to a bundle of leaves held in his lips in ways that no visual strategy could disguise.

Less known is Newhart’s depiction of the advertising profession. He presents a vision of the press agent in his monologue *Abe Lincoln vs. Madison Avenue* where he comments on Vance Packard’s *The Hidden Persuaders* and considers what would have happened if Abraham Lincoln had had a press agent. “Hi Abe sweetheart, how are you kid?...I got the note, what’s the problem?...You’re thinking of shaving it off, er, Abe don’t you see that’s part of the image, right, with the shawl and the pipe and the string tie...You don’t have the shawl...Er, where’s the shawl Abe?...You left it in Washington!...What are you wearing Abe?...A sort of cardigan...Abe don’t you see that doesn’t fit with the string tie and the beard, Abe would you leave the beard on, (sigh)...and get the shawl!”

Newhart’s one-sided monologues examine shoddy services, poor working conditions, and more generally the quiet, decent person’s feelings of anxiety and inadequacy in a world gone mad. It is significant that Newhart’s repertoire of abrasive word pictures includes both manufacturing and marketing. Perhaps the great traditions of American humour are the most effective counterweights to the efforts of the rich and powerful seeking the trust of a gullible public.

> “Americans want to be liked - and Senators are no exception. They are by nature - and necessity - social animals. We enjoy the comradship and approval of our friends and colleagues. We prefer praise to abuse, popularity to contempt. Realizing the path of the conscientious insurgent must frequently be a lonely one, we are anxious to get along...”

The tradition of deploying the visual strategies listed and analysed above but for satiric effect (the context in which my own work is to be viewed) can be found in the period here under discussion outside conventional humour. Three indicative case studies can be used here to substantiate my own directions - the graphic art of Bruce McCall, the studio based work of the *Fluxus Group* and the satiric culture of *MAD* magazine.

The humorous illustrations of Bruce McCall directly satirise the public’s desire for consumer products and the visual strategies used by the advertisers. McCall had worked as a commercial artist, a magazine editor and an advertising copywriter and creative director in the United States and abroad. Fig 7:09 shows an advertisement for the fictitious Swillmart. McCall’s favourite subjects is the fanciful dream cars of the ‘fifties and ‘sixties, he has created pastiche advertisements for imagined cars each expertly
illustrated and tartly explained. His work satirises the cult of the automobile and parodies the paranoia, the politics, the obsessions, and the crassness of the post-war decades.

"The automobile was no longer just an appliance, but a rolling boudoir, a metal mistress, a leather-clad dominatrix with great big pointed silver bumpers. And the industry's leaders had the vision to follow the mob." Bruce McCall, THE LAST DREAM-O-RAMA: The Cars Detroit Forgot to Build, 1950-1960, Crown Publications, New York, 2001, p.5.

While working for The National Lampoon he implied that America was sandwiched between the wickedness of Mexican border towns, and the dullness of Canada (where the only ice cream sold is vanilla). In the range of humour available, I find his approach effective in creating visual conventions close to the original material while leaving the absurdity of the propositions to be slowly revealed. Humour connected with health anxieties must be carefully pitched, as clear statements representing scientific fact and the legal position can, by the accuracy of the fact, repel the person targeted. To inform people they have been fooled does not always bring the messenger a reward.

Using humour to make social comments has been less visible in the fine arts than in the commercial arts. The Fluxus Group of New York during the 'seventies is a prominent exception, reacting against the social, cultural and artistic climate of the time and especially the seriousness of Abstract Expressionism. The boundaries between art and life were deliberately blurred making the audience question the very nature of what an artwork might be. Fluxus created work, often in cheaply reproducible forms, that was functional, conceptual, inexpensive, ephemeral and funny. During an interview in 1978 George Maciunas stated "I would say I was mostly concerned with humour, I mean like that's my main interest, is humour..." It is interesting to see how the disciplines of music, fine art, typography, illustration, publishing, performance and design merged successfully together to create a genre that could be afforded and enjoyed by all and ultimately produced by all. Fig 7:10 is an image if the Flux Year Box 2, from 1966.

First published in 1955, MAD magazine (regularly dismissed as trivial and adolescent) has been the most significant mass distributed publication to take adventurous visual humour into the marketplace, and since its inception, was the most radical voice of opposition to the Tobacco Industry. I found Some Straight Talk (fig 7:11), an influential example of using a standard visual strategy to establish a clearly understood context in which to reveal the sordid reality of commercial deceit. Advertising was a regular target for the Magazine and indeed strategies for the selling of cigarettes were often parodied as can be seen from figs 7:12 and 7:13. One of the principal cover artists of MAD was Norman Mingo who started as a commercial artist with Lucky Strike c1940 -1950, before working for MAD from 1956.

"'If you were growing up lonely and isolated in a small town, MAD was a revelation. Nothing I read anywhere else suggested there was any absurdity in the culture. MAD was like a shock, breaking you out.' Robert Crumb". Maria Reidelbach, Completely MAD: A History of the Comic Book and Magazine, Little, Brown & Company, Canada, 1991, p.36.
Some straight Talk about selling cigarettes to a hostile public.

We're R.J. Riddles Tobacco, and we're trying to improve our image.

That's why you keep seeing these drab, black-and-white ads, full of long-winded copy, in which we wax informative on the subject of smoking and try to prove how well we understand and appreciate both sides of the smoking controversy.

We explain the pros and cons of smoking. We present both the smokers and non-smokers arguments. We tell kids that we don't want them smoking, like their parents. We say anything and everything we can think of, so you get the subliminal message that us "bad guys" are really "good guys" and that maybe our product isn't so bad, either.

This isn't as easy as you might think. New anti-smoking laws are popping up all across the nation. Non-smokers continue to argue that "passive" smoking is just as deadly as "active" smoking. The atmosphere is very unfriendly out there right now.

We want to replace this hostility with the trust and confidence the public once had in us—before the ax falls and we get legislated out of business. These double-talk ads were our F.R. firm's brilliant solution.

So, we may be keeping this up for awhile. It's a great way to advertise because—since we don't picture our product—we don't have to include that lousy Surgeon General's Warning.

R.J. Riddles Tobacco Company

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"U.S Cigarette-Makers will rather fight than quit!" MAD Magazine, Issue 88

"CHESTERFIND" MAD Magazine, Issue 41
The Artist’s Books and Multiples

This thesis had begun as a way of understanding and contextualising the American imagery from the 1950’s that informed my own paintings and illustrations. I was drawn toward images of tension and hidden threat where people were, on the surface, leading everyday lives. I initially felt that the drama and rhetoric of the period, the creation and soothing of anxiety, was of more interest when it contained the comic or even absurd.

As a working illustrator/designer and educator I have found the experience of examining my own attitudes and concepts with regard to my visual work incredibly valuable. The themes of the Fascicles demonstrate how the initial impetus was broken down into separate strategies, and from this understanding I began to formulate and design a sequence of multiples, which took as their overarching concept the creation of anxiety and its reassurance. Instead of merely observing the techniques of duplicity and persuasion I felt it appropriate not only to critically analyse the individual components of visual techniques not consistently identified before but to actually perpetrate some myself in the spirit of Philip Guston’s paintings of the Ku Klux Klan. Guston was able to cope with his horror at everyday violence and terror by attempting to expose it to ridicule. Guston said of his paintings of the Ku Klux Klan, “I almost tried to imagine I was living with the Klan. What would it be like to be evil? To plan, to plot?”

In City Limits (fig 7:14) the Klan figures travel in a car reminiscent of a circus clown’s, the three hooded figures tightly packed inside. Guston paints the moments when the Klan members are at rest, sitting, smoking and chatting, the ominous moments before their more ominous missions.

“This is what makes such paintings and drawings so uncanny, that the evil arrives with the greatest matter-of-factness and, as such, seems to be an outright synonym of middle-class citizenry” Dore Ashton, “Yes But...”, A Critical Study of Philip Guston, Viking, New York 1976, p.4.

I found it an aid to the understanding of the first hand evidence, the thousands of single full colour magazine pages in mass circulation weekly American magazines of the 1950’s, to place myself in the position of the manufacturer of Tobacco products, in the position of the designer to a cigarette account in Madison Avenue. In this way I could test what it means to formulate the plausible claim for a product, to articulate the unique selling proposition, to attempt to outmanoeuvre rivals. I deployed copy in strap lines, presented scientific diagrams, made outrageous claims, devised worthless offers, illustrated myself as my own brand character and invented wholesale lies and fantasies. To align with the Fascicle structure I invented three ailing cigarette brands:

**Damp Cigarettes**; this brand is an exaggeration of all that is absurd about the process of smoking. e.g. **Surely Not**
Fig 7:14  Philip Guston, “City Limits”, 1969, Oil on canvas, 77 x 103 1/4 inches. Estate of Philip Guston

Fig 7:15  Will Burtin, “The American Bazaar” montage feature, FOR, November 1947
**Lemorette** Cigarettes; this ‘lemon flavoured’ Filter-Tip brand focuses on the use of science and technology to reassure. e.g. *Which Filter Works?*

**Elysian** Cigarettes; this menthol brand is promoted using landscape and the natural to reassure. e.g. *Menthol Daze*

Whenever possible I used the design industry’s own manuals and tutorials, freely available at the time in bookshops, magazines racks and even in correspondence courses. Instead of scrutinising statistical and economic data, I sought an understanding through the pictures that were daily available for the consumer, the pictures that rarely appear in any published study of the American cigarette industry. In these manuals the authors explain the dynamics of the page, the sequence in which information is to be absorbed and how most effectively the reader is led to believe a sequence of unlikely propositions.

My sequence of multiples began as artifacts such as counter cards and slowly consolidated into something more ambitious in which the extended editorial flow allowed a more complex set of references and the exploration of modes of humorous satire that I would not have previously used. Throughout, design and illustration decisions were informed by the closest possible access to the strategies and indeed spirit of firsthand material. The analysis and the masquerade informed each other while the gatefold to each fascicle provided a bridge from one to another - The source material is presented in a manipulated montage of persuasion, in the style of the period e.g. Will Burtin’s “The American Bazaar”, *FORTUNE*, November 1947 (*Fig 7:15*), a layout I particularly admire.

The multiples emerged from my findings over a long concentrated period of time. This has really allowed me to focus my design activities. I am beginning to better understand my anger at social problems and how humour can be employed to change understanding. Researches into visual strategies have enabled me to be more specific in developing my own satirical responses. I am also more comfortable with the notion that satire and irony need not necessarily be funny although appropriate. Discovering many other visual people with similar aims and outrages, such as Bruce McCall and Jack Levine has placed the work I am making within a context and tradition. This has been reassuring as well as inspiring. Textual sources of black humour from John Cheever and Kurt Vonnegut, the work of comedians such as Bob Newhart and filmmakers such as Stanley Donen and Stanley Kubrick have broadened my own visual language and understanding of what I am trying to achieve.

By these means I felt I had unmasked the fraud and duplicity of a whole generation of creative people devoted to selling a product they knew to be deadly. How did the Advertising Industry accomplish its aims in the creation of the Safe Cigarette? In the process I no longer saw the Manufacturing and Advertising Classes as ruthless technologists of Public opinion, rather a return to the gaudy and barely legal days of the shadowy confidence man evoked by Melville and the glittering tray of rubbish purveyed by the brash Persian pedlar in *Oklahoma!*
A Closer Look At - Which Filter Works?

It is appropriate to view the CDROM at this point [or visit www.thesafecigarette.blogspot.com]. A closer look at one of the multiples is included here, as an example.

This book was produced in an edition of 7 printed on 130gm cartridge paper, the cover is yellow card and the stuck-in cigarette cards are printed on glossy card. The book measures 190mm x 120mm.

Which Filter Works? (fig 7:16) began with the series of six cigarette cards, each one based around an actual factual diagram found within U.S. cigarette advertisements of the period. I felt the redrawn diagrams needed to be placed with the context of a collectors’ book. The book was planned to parody the science and technology that promotes Filter-Tip cigarettes. My invented brand Lemorette was the focus for the book, as if the book was a promotional item to introduce a new brand. Consequentially the name Lemorette is mentioned as many times as possible. The tone of the book is instructional but rather patronising, the consumer’s children are often being encouraged to participate and the jaunty tone regularly states the obvious, as if assuming the consumer is childlike in intellect. I experimented with constructing 3D imagery since I very much wanted to create a novelty, a ‘gimmick’. The book was therefore created in red/green anaglyph 3D to add to the sense of cheap novelty. 3D glasses are included in the front of the book and the consumer is instructed when to put them on and take them off. Some diagrams require the viewer to close one eye and then switch to the other in order to get the hidden messages within the pages. It was intentional that the viewing the book should feel complex and the novelty glasses were chosen to make the reader feel somewhat self-conscious, if wearing them in public. The book is in two sections, the first half is informational and offers advice and justifications, including headings such as;

A Doctor Speaks... (fig 7:17)

This is a bogus endorsement from a medical specialist suggesting he has been paid to say whatever the manufacturers want him to.

What’s 3D and why the funny-looking glasses?

Explanation of how to view 3D, suggesting that the novelty glasses can enhance understanding.

Psychological fact: PLEASURE HELPS YOUR DISPOSITION

Double page chart intended to show how increased smoking can ease anxiety. The claim ‘PLEASURE HELPS YOUR DISPOSITION’ was actually used by Camel in their 1954 advertisements.
**A Doctor speaks...**

Dear Fellow Smoker,

Doctors told 'smoke for pleasure
My taste recognises and appreciates full
Rich flavour and cool mildness - just like you...

When **Lemorette** approached my Association the 
"Laboratory Independent Endorsers" I was already ready to 
confirm views strongly held by the **Lemorette** chief executive.
We asked a couple of doctors - What cigarettes do you smoke?
-The brand named at least once, was **Lemorette**

*Doctor Wolf is our top boffin when it comes to athletes foot. His research bought us 'Mr. Damp' the cream that brought relief to hundreds... Keep up the good work Dr. Wolf!*

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*Fig 7:16  Front Cover to *Which Filter Works?* By the author, 2001*

*Fig 7:17  "A Doctor speaks..."  *Which Filter Works?* By the author, 2001*
So what’s wrong with cigarettes? / Worries melt away...

This diagram needs to be viewed by blinking each eye in turn, hence the diseases associated with smoking that appear listed above the woman’s head fade away and the brand name Lemorette takes their place.

What’s a filter anyway? (figs 7:18 - 7:20)/ How do other brands compare?

Although the title suggests that this section will explain what a filter is, the text goes on to skirt around the issue by taking about umbrellas and roofs, again speaking, as if to a child. The diagram needs to be viewed by blinking each eye in turn to see the Lemorette brand stopping all harmful lines from penetrating the body, closing the other eye shows tangled lines in the lung area when a different brand is smoked.

What about these rigorous tests?

This double page spread shows a bar graph that is all but useless since it has no axis numerals, instead the danger is shown by simply making the bars longer or shorter, the categories read ‘safe’, ‘inert’, ‘concern’, ‘risky’, ‘dangerous’ and ‘deadly’ but again no qualification of the measurements are given. Opposite is a cross-section of the Lemorette filtered cigarette, parodying the conventions of the cross-section diagrams that appear so frequently in Filter-Tipped brands’ advertisements. The Lemorette filter is so complex that only about a sixth of the cigarette is actually tobacco. The filter names however are all genuine and in use by various brands.

The second section is a graphic interpretation of a large extended cigarette - this is where the 6 cigarette cards are inserted. This section also has additional statistics and comments about the brand. It ends with a performance chart and image of the factory where Lemorettes are made. The book ends with a final endorsement from Dr.Wolf about Lemorette “The World’s first SAFE Cigarette”. By inventing yet more ludicrous selling devices, and meaningless visual exercise I wanted to indirectly focus the reader on the petty distractions used in promoting Filter-Tips, testing if the absurd and inconsequential could indeed work as part of the Medicine Show.

The Sharp Exit

Throughout my thesis, the central proposition was to identify and analyse visual strategies better to understand my own anger at the ways in which those who organise us seek to solve social problems. My own initial intuitions were not to pursue types of visual rhetoric in ways familiar in propaganda and manifesto (e.g. “Your Country Needs You”). My fascination was in the exploration of how humour can
What's a filter anyway?

Think of an umbrella on a rainy day
Think of the roof on your house
Think of the atmosphere around the planet
Filters just STOP it.

Filters are designed scientifically to trap or strain out risky substances - resulting in what is often described as a more pleasing smoke. Recent reports have given the "big thumbs-up" to the effectiveness of modern filtering. But how do other brands compare?

How do other brands compare?

This is best shown in a diagram - specs on now.
Open each eye in turn to reveal the truth:

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Fig 7:18  “What’s a filter anyway?”  Which Filter Works? By the author, 2001

Fig 7:19  GREEN lense only

Fig 7:20  RED lense only
undermine the seemingly frozen and unchallenged partnership of selling and buying in the context of an artificially created anxiety.

In an atmosphere of gathering restrictions for advertisers of tobacco after 1965, in both the U.S. and U.K., visual strategies had to evolve to emphasise the consumers’ freedom of choice and perceived rebelliousness. Brand diversification and the expansion of overseas markets has changed the focus. In the musical *Oklahoma!* the Persian pedlar sells his wares, and by the time the shoddy goods are exposed he is off over the horizon, relying on the shortness of the public memory. Companies proliferate, subdivide, re-form with new initials and continue to trade, perhaps in the Third World. Charlatans appear in different guises, with different destinations. Their bosses seem to be able to change their nationalities at will. “Hog Island in the Caribbean was going nowhere until they changed the name to Paradise Island.” wrote Al Ries and Jack Trout in 1981. *Windscale* became *Sellafield*, *The National Cranberry Association* became *Ocean Spray*, ‘Regular’ became ‘Metholated’ and ‘Filter-Tipped’ and then came ‘Lite’, but the consumers still developed cancer, giving credence to the popular lamentation, *the more things change - the more they stay the same*.

I believe it is not adequate merely to study the statistics of import and export, the business profile, the annual report or the leaked memorandum. We must therefore scrutinise the moment of decision when an image leads us to do things that we know are bad for us. It is now admitted that the Safe Cigarette never existed, and unless we understand this, we are doomed to repeat the cycle indefinitely. Only by understanding visual strategies can we then construct more effective personal filtration systems and although some historians have previously voiced concern that humour can act to deflect outrage rather than encourage action. In William Sargant’s *Battle For the Mind: The Mechanics of Indoctrination, Brainwashing & Thought Control*, (1957), the author identifies that a cynical humorous outlook is the most equipped to withstand external emotional stresses and strains. “The safety of the free world seems therefore to lie in a cultivation not only of courage, moral virtue and logic, but of humour: humour which produces the well-balanced state in which emotional excess is laughed at as ugly and wasteful.” The main weapon in our armoury and in my work is humour - irony, satire, the lampoon and disconcerting juxtapositions.
Fig 7:09  Bruce McCall, “Swillmart”, Zany Afternoons, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1982

Fig 7:10  “Flux Year Box 2”, 1966. The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection, Museum of Modern Art, New York,
Endnotes to Fascicle Seven

1
As mentioned in Fascicle One, the advertising manuals for use within the Industry, that have been particularly useful are:

The Art Directors’ Club of New York, *Annuals of Advertising Art* are also excellent in highlighting advertising achievements. Most have an introduction by the President of the Club which surveys success in the field.

Look in the “Bibliography and References” section of Fascicle 8 for more Advertising manuals and information.

2

3

4
For an excellent, all encompassing study of the theme of the confidence man in American culture, from the Pilgrim Fathers to the MX missile, see Zeese Papanikolas, *Trickster in the Land of Dreams*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln and London, 1995. Of particular interest in the context of Fascicle 4, is Chapter 4 “Cowboys, Wobblies, and the Myth of the West”, pp. 73-90, and with relevance to the theme of the fraudster in this Fascicle, is Chapter 5, “The Road to Oz”, pp. 91-108.

5
As mentioned above, the theme of the confidence man and the following disappointments can be found in a wide range of material in American culture, The following satirical sources have been very useful.
For a wider variety of sources concerning the theme of the confidence man, look under “Ethical Considerations and Communication” in the “Bibliography and References” section of Fascicle 8.

6

7
See Zeese Papanikolas, Trickster in the Land of Dreams, ibid.
See Carl Sifakis, Hoaxes and Scams, A Compendium of Deceptions, Ruses and Swindles, ibid.

8

9
For further reading on Noam Chomsky, see:

10

11
Bruce McCall has contributed visual and written humour to many magazines in North America and was a prominent member of the original National Lampoon team and its radio show, having also written for the television show Saturday Night Live.

12

13
For more information on the artists and humour of MAD Magazine, see Dick de Bartolo, Good Days and Mad: A Hysterical Tour behind the Scenes at MAD magazine, Thunder’s Mouth Press, New York, 1995.
Sotheby’s, Mad About Mad, Sale Catalogue, New York, October 20th 1995.
One of the main reasons for undertaking this program of study was that I have been able to further refine and extend themes undertaken at B.A.(Hons) and M.A. Previously I had examined Western notions of Paradise and Hell by exploring Medieval Apocalypse Manuscripts, the believability of visions of Paradise led me on to explore Fraudsters and Confidence Tricksters. Whilst studying for my M.A. I was inspired by the similarity of Advertising strategies to the techniques and patter of Bunco Men - the justifications used in the selling of improbable dreams. I also took the opportunity to explore these visual themes in the context of L. Frank Baum’s *Wizard of Oz*, drawn to the motif of the journey and the possibility of establishing a control on the material to be expressed in the seven colours of the rainbow. At the end of the yellow brick road was a force of terrible power that is revealed to be a fake, a poseur fooling the people, another fusion of the comic and threatening.


Once the Tobacco companies noticed, that with every smoker who quits and every anti-smoking law that comes into effect their profits started falling, their strategies changed. The Tobacco companies have adopted a two-pronged strategy to survive into the millennium; diversity at home and market heavily overseas. The major cigarette companies have ploughed their profits billions into non-controversial packaged goods, primarily processed foods and beverages, beginning as early as 1950. Philip Morris took over *General Foods* ($5.6 billion) and *Kraft Foods* ($13 billion), and R.J. Reynolds, acquired *Nabisco Brands* ($4.9 billion, now *Nabisco Holdings Corp.*). Camel have their own brand of clothes and Salem apparently operate as a travel agent.

A wave of imitation cigarettes have emerged with the drive for many to give-up smoking. Nicotine gum and Nicorette patches are now familiar in chemists along with a plastic cigarette that salves the smokers need for an item in the mouth. Even more bizarre, the FDA has even recently approved a metal cigarette, in which nicotine is placed for inhalation by the smoker as part of their giving-up. Smoking cessation itself has created a very lucrative market. It is this growing demand that has seen the re-emergence of Bravo, the lettuce cigarette. In 1968, the attempt to create a lettuce cigarette by World Tobacco, failed to catch-on. However in 1999 Bravo has surfaced again, advertised as a practical way to assist giving-up Tobacco cigarettes. World Tobacco based in the U.S. were (at the time of writing) in the process of building a lettuce-processing plant to enable them to mass-produce the product, “from field to cartons”. www.safersmokes.com


*The National Cranberry Association* changed its name to *Ocean Spray* to overcome consumer hostility to cranberry sauce. In November 1959, the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare set off a national food panic when he announced that domestic cranberry products were “contaminated” with a weed-killer called aminotriazole (Aminotriazole caused cancer in laboratory rodents). As a result of the federal warning, schools discarded cranberry products, supermarkets suspended sales and millions of Americans had Thanksgiving dinner without cranberry sauce. An important catalyst in the 1959 cranberry scare was the Delaney Clause, a 1958 amendment to the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act that banned from food any artificial substance that could be shown to cause cancer in lab animals.
