

AdHORITY

va 402/ project proposal

Aslı Çağlar

The AdHority

Project Definition

An installation criticizing the endless pressure of advertising industry over individuals

Goals & Objectives

The goals are;

- highlighting how the advertising industry controls every aspect of the daily life,
-
- how our private lives and freedom is ignored by the advertisements,
-
- how the being respectful to personal decisions is not valid for the advertisement industry,
-
- raising awareness on the growing control of this industry and making people react to this situation.

These may sound like impossible goals to achieve because the power of the advertisement industry is growing every day. The advertisement sector is growing parallel to the worldwide based on consumption. Therefore, the criticism of advertisements is just a way of criticizing the thought based on consumerism. Another criticism is on how the advertisements waste our time and pollute our surroundings visually.

Television, Internet, billboards are some of the media that the advertisement industry dominates. By using a remote control

that is altered and a television that has only advertisements, I want to show that even though the viewer has the remote control and it seems as if it is up to him/ her to change the channel, it is just an illusion. The remote control can't control the television and the control is limited. The viewer can only change the channel to watch another group of advertisements.

Therefore, my objective is to see the viewer that he or she is not in control even though he or she is holding the remote control. The remote control is representing how people are being controlled without even noticing. They even feel as if they are in control, however this is just an illusion created by the advertisement industry.

Target Audience/User

There are people who are already disturbed by the advertisements and they are aware of the control of the industry. This is a project that exaggerates the situation.

I think even people who are not aware of the situation are also disturbed by the advertisements. By creating this installation I aim to make them be aware of the manipulation and control of the advertisement industry. I am using a television and TV advertisements, so I can say the target audience is those who watch television.

Background information

This project is a reaction to the control of advertising industry over people and it is an installation that consists of a screen and an altered remote control that allows changing channels but each channel is just another group of advertisements.

I came up with this project as I was thinking of a problematic issue that everyone could relate

with. I thought that it had to be a problem that everyone faced everyday without even realizing. Also this problem had to be uncontrollable. Therefore, I started thinking about subjects that disturbed me and that I ran into without even knowing. And I saw that advertisements were actually occupying a big amount of my life and I didn't have any control over it.

When I enter most of the websites, I realized that the ads created kind of a "visual pollution". They appeared as pop-ups, and once I tried to close them another window appeared full of different ads. This was like a chain reaction that I couldn't control. Even if it seemed that it was my decision to click on them or close them, they continued to try to sell me some kind of product endlessly. Then I started to think of other places where I faced the same situation. On sites where we can watch films or series, there are again many advertisements. Once you try to click and skip the ads, the advertisement opens in another window, or it is impossible to click on the small writing that says, "skip the ads" because it disappears. There are also some websites that say, "click the advertisement to watch the video". The viewer must see the advertisement in order to watch something that he or she likes. It seems as the viewer's own decision but in fact there isn't a choice.

Then I thought of different media. The second thing that came to my mind was the television.

I thought of the countdown at the corner of the screen while there are commercials. Those commercials always pass that time limitation, or the countdown doesn't work. Even when the show you want to watch starts there are viral commercials. Most of the commercials resemble each other and most channels have commercial at the same time as a strategy in order to prevent people from watching other shows during commercial break. Even those who love to watch TV, do other stuff when there are advertisements. When people are watching programs that they want the advertisements are implemented inside the show. Again they do not have a choice; they have to watch the advertisements.

When people go outside they see streets that are full of advertisements. Billboards, vehicles, walls are all covered with them. There are flyers on the floor and like on the Internet, they this time create an actual pollution.

Another reason why I chose this subject for my project is that besides the pollution and the time waste of advertisements, I am also disturbed from the manipulation and amount of money spent on advertising. Besides being obliged to watch advertisements, there are subliminal messages that are imposed to the viewer without noticing.

There are many projects on the advertising and advertisement intervening the public space but in this project I will be more focused on the intervention of the personal space.

I think this project will not solve a problem because we live in a capitalist world but it will raise awareness regarding the subject. People will be more aware of the fact that advertisements are a big, uncontrollable part of our lives. Everyone is being controlled like puppets without noticing. I also think that the issue I want to underline will be more memorable because this project will show mental and subconscious occupation of advertisements by exaggerating and creating a situation where advertisements actually control people physically or advertisements can't be controlled physically.

My challenge is that this project will only be a criticism and it will raise awareness but I won't be able to change the way we are surrounded by advertisements. People will still watch minutes of advertisements while watching television and they will have certain messages inserted in their heads subconsciously. Another challenge will be to find the best way to transmit my message and attract attention. The problem that I want to underline has to be criticized in a way that it is clear, memorable and humorous. People should feel like they are part of the project because I think that it is the best way to make them remember it.

The gain on working on such a project is to learn more about the advertising industry, how people are manipulated, what are the statistics about the advertising sector and what are the subconscious messages that the advertisements impose. As well as raising awareness on the subject, I will also be more aware and have more reliable information on the subject mat-

ter.

Also from the technical aspect, this project will be helpful. I will learn how to realize the project using different software that I don't yet know how to use.

There are many books and articles about the manipulation of advertising.

Eşikaltı Büyücüleri, Ahmet Şerif İzgören

This is a book about violence, death and sexuality that is present in advertising sector. It is based on the idea that visual elements gain more and more importance in our lives. If you achieve to direct as much as these visuals as you can you can manipulate the others by using unethical methods. It explains how our subconscious is controlled and shaped.

I think this is a very helpful book to understand the use of subliminal message. The author gathered all the experiments done on this subject and he also has many examples regarding the subject. These examples make the subject more understandable.

Adbusters

This is a magazine that is completely ad-free and it criticizes the advertisement industry. They explain their mission as to let people take a break the mental pollution and to transform the way information spreads in the society.

I really liked content, editorial design and the approach of this magazine. Even the way it is published and shipped to different continents supports the idea of not spending money. There are no advertisements in the magazine and that's why they don't spend much money on things such as printing and shipment.

<http://www.adbusters.org/magazine>

Steve Lambert's projects on the criticism of advertising are very clever. They are mostly project based on simple ideas but they are very effective. They attract a lot of attention and they

criticize the advertising sector with irony.

<http://visitsteve.com/>
<http://antiadvertisingagency.com/>
<http://vimeo.com/4371530>
<http://illegalbillboards.org/>

Light Criticism

This is a project realized by Anti-advertising Agency and Graffiti Research Lab. This is a project that protests advertising and the way graffiti artists are treated in New York. Many Graffiti artists were sent to jail but there were no consequence for the advertising agencies that had the entire city filled up with manipulative advertisement. So, for this project they used black foam core cut with a laser cutter and they hang this black foam to the bus shelters, display ads, television store windows... The cutout had different versions: NYC'S TRUE GRAFFITI PROBLEM, GRAFFITI and GRAFFITI=ADVERTISING.

The simplicity and the content of this project are very strong. The issue that is criticized is clear and it is applied in an effective manner.

<http://vimeo.com/14050409>

Add-Art: Art Replaces Ads

This is a project that is based on a simple idea. It replaced the ads on websites with art. It is a plug-in for Firefox. Instead of seeing art you can see art and this project gets rid of the advertisement pollution as well as attracting attention how much space advertisements occupy. Sometimes we don't even notice the advertisements consciously but once they are replaced with art we can see how much space they occupy.

<http://visitsteve.com/made/add-art-art-replaces-ads/>

I enjoyed this project a lot. It is a simple plug-in but it clearly gives the message. It changes the

visual pollution created by the advertisements. It replaces them with an artwork and by doing that it actually attracts more attention than the advertisements. Because once the advertisements are replaced with works of art, the way the web site looks is more unusual and the viewer can understand how much space that the advertisements take.

Commercial Break

This is a 15 second commercial created by Steve Lambert's class at SMFA: John Pearson, Jon Larkin, and Daylynn Richards. It aired during Good Morning America in Boston the first week in May 2011. It highlights the messages and fixed slogans used in commercials.

<http://vimeo.com/22959195>

In this project the visuals are not fancy as they are in commercials. They don't look attractive at all. However, the slogans of commercials are included with these unattractive visuals. I think this contrast makes the project more memorable.

Ad Lib Poster Project

This is again a project by Anti-advertising Agency. There is an illustration of a blank billboard and the starting point of the project is "This is your billboard. Thousands of people will see it every-

day. What would you like to say to them?”. This is a project to cause interaction, reaction, and exchange of ideas between people everywhere the posters come out.

<http://antiadvertisingagency.com/project/ad-lib-poster-project/>

The idea of this project is again very strong. Also it involves the viewer and I think that once the project involves the viewer it is stronger and more memorable. It is also a very fun project, even if the drawings differ from person to person; there is a main illustration that gathers them all to be the part of the same project.

This Space Available

This is a documentary about the visual pollution that billboards create at public spaces. There are interviews with artists, billboard executives, authors, and residents that are disturbed that their city is polluted due to the increasing amount of billboards. Also the legal aspect of the issue is criticized. I think this is one of the strongest projects criticizing the advertisement industry. The interviews, the legal aspect and the fact that people can easily relate to it make this documentary very successful.

<http://thisspaceavailablefilm.com/>

The Festival of Art on Billboards

On their website the idea for this festival is basically explained as “The idea behind Art Moves Festival is the presentation and popularization of art on billboards and the exchange of experiences concerning actions in the public area and also visual aspects showing up-to-date culture.”.

I find this idea fun, effective and memorable at the same time. It is not a protest that is aggressive but the criticism and the main message is transferred in fun manner and it is also visually very attractive.

This project is also a very fun project. It is a festival, exhibition and the critic of an issue. The visuals are very attractive and I think choosing a different concept each and using the billboards as a mean of exhibition are very good ideas. It is like a collective exhibition exhibited in an unusual manner. The way the works are exhibited also contributes to the concept.

<http://www.artmovesfestival.org/>

New York Street Advertising Takeover

This is a project by Keith Haskel and his team. They want to attract attention to the omnipresence of advertising. They convert public space that is used unlawfully for advertising by painting over the advertisements in white and later on they cover them with art works.

This project kind of reminds the “Light Criticism” project. It is against the visual pollution of advertising in public spaces. The way the project is realized also resembles.

<http://kskill.com/videos.php>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GKYwJ5wKeCU&feature=player_embedded#!

All these examples helped me to see different projects on the criticism of the advertisement industry. I saw how people criticized the same issue. Also the documents I read helped me to concentrate on the aspect I wanted to criticize the most. I found out that what I wanted to criticize was the control that the advertisement industry had over people. So I thought the best way to criticize this problem was to create an installation using objects such as television and remote control. I wanted to play with the concept of control and lack of control using an altered remote control and a television where all the channels have advertisement as content.

Detailed project description

In this project there will be several groups of advertisements. The advertisements will be grouped according to a survey. This survey has 10 questions. There are questions to have general information about the target audience (those who participate the survey). Then there will be questions about different industries, age groups, genders, colors in advertisements. These questions The participants will be asked to range the choices instead of giving a single number. This way I will find out which advertisements attract more attention according to their industries, techniques, content and visual qualities. The answer of each question will help me to decide the content of each channel. The advertisements that belong to the group that attracts attention will be the content of that channel. I will randomly cut 10 seconds of each advertisement that belongs to that group and form the content. This way people will watch the advertisements that attract most of their attention.

There will also be an altered remote control that will supposedly allow the viewer to change the channel. However, even if the viewer changes the channel, it will be just another channel full of advertisements. The viewer will hold the remote control

and this will refer to the viewer being in control. However, it will not allow the viewer to choose not to watch the advertisements. It will only give limited control. This will underline the aspect of advertising industry controlling people, not respecting the personal space, and making the viewer feel as if he/she is the one choosing to watch that advertisement. Remote control is a metaphor for the control of advertising industry over people by making them believe as if they are in control.

Scope of the Project

There will only be several channels and only the advertisements that are included in groups according to the survey will be included. The advertisements that will be included are the ones that I will be recording from the television. Therefore, only recent advertisements will be included. These advertisements will be in Turkish. There are many different mediums such as Internet, TV, magazines and billboards where there are advertisements but this project will use the television as a medium to criticize the issue.

Required know-how and Resources

I plan to find the best and most practical solution to convey the message. For the project, I plan to do a research on sensors, creating a circuit for an alternative remote control, editing advertisements to create a collage for each channel, software that can be used in detecting the signal of the altered remote control.

Difficulties & risks

One of the challenges is creating the installation. There can be several methods that I can think of but it is hard to decide which one is the best solution to give the message. Also there are some technical problems. Some of the solutions that I find are difficult to realize and I don't have enough information on most of them. Therefore I can't judge if it is even possible to realize them or not.

Phases of the Project

1-Doing a research on different advertisements and conducting a survey to decide content of each channel.

2-Gathering advertisements to create the content of each fake channel.

3-Doing a research on the technical aspect and deciding which is the best method to realize the project.

4-Editing the advertisements and creating the content of each

channel.

5-Designing the installation and the room.

6-Combining the advertisements and the installation.

7-Making the remote controller.

8-Documentation and promotion of the project.

Criteria of success

I will connect send data to the PC with the remote control and play videos according to the different data that is sent. I will group the advertisements according to a survey that I conduct. The results of the survey will determine the content of each channel. Then I will design a personal environment to exhibit the project in order to give the message that people don't even have the chance to decide whether they want to be exposed to advertisements or not in their own personal space. Even though they hold the remote control in their hands, they are not free and in control. They are only free to choose the channel of advertisements they like to watch.