



# USE OF HISTORICAL PAINTINGS IN ADVERTISEMENTS THROUGH YEARS AND ITS IMPACT ON CONSUMERS: A CASE STUDY.

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**Abstract—** This case study explores the evolution, idea, impact, and reasons for using historical paintings in advertisements over the years. This paper will also analyze various advertisement campaigns and their popularity and effectiveness on the consumers and enhancement of brand messaging. This study will also try to elucidate the strategies used by advertisers to clout the power of historical artworks to grab the attention of consumers and possible customers. This paper will also try to investigate the ethical considerations surrounding the usage of historical paintings in advertisements and their significance for both the art world and the advertising industry.

**Keywords—** Historical artworks, advertisements, brands, consumers, advertisers.

## I. INTRODUCTION

According to the Cambridge Dictionary ‘Advertisement’ means a picture short film or song that tries to persuade or coax people to buy a product or service. Meaning advertisements are means for gaining consumers and potential customers for a launched product or service in the market. Thus, it can be easily said that advertisements play an important role in grabbing consumers’ attention and conveying a brand’s message adequately. Over time, advertisers have used different creative strategies to make their products sell and campaigns successful. Out of all the different strategies and approaches used, one that has been widely embraced is the use of historical paintings as a visual element in advertisements. Doing so, allows advertisers to tap into the cultural, emotional, and historical importance attached to these paintings, as well as have an emotional impact on the consumers. And, this case study investigates how historical paintings have been used in advertisements and their impact on consumers and possible customers.

## II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

Anything related to history always holds a lot of importance not only in art history but also to the current population as it reflects the culture, values, stories of different eras, and the evolution of people and society over time. The same applies to historical paintings, they are no different from any other historical artifact. Advertisers recognized the potential that these historical artworks hold in invoking emotions among the viewers and also how it aligns with people’s feelings. Hence, started using them in advertisements to gain potential customers. And they have been doing this over time. The early examples of using historical paintings in advertisements date back early as the 19th Century when acclaimed paintings were quite often reproduced in print ads for luxury goods and services.

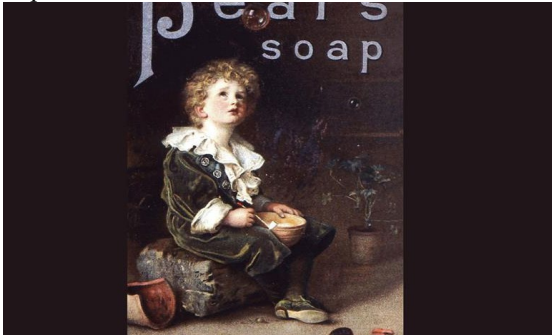
## III. EVOLUTION OF STRATEGIES OVER TIME:

The first-ever advertisement was noted to be made during 3000 BC, found in Thebes in Egypt. Advertisement is an ancient form of marketing but has evolved their strategies and mediums over time, based on the requirements of the current society. Just like in the 19th century usage of historical paintings was reproduced in print ads for the advertisements of luxury goods and services. But whereas, in the 20th Century historical paintings were also used in television commercials. While in the 21st century characters from historical paintings or paintings as a whole are turned into animated videos or GIFs, and are used not only for luxury products but also for various non-luxurious products. And these various approaches through time have always been used in advertisements to establish a sense of nostalgia and create a connection between the past and the present. It is a journey that shows the evolution of humans and their advertisement strategies.

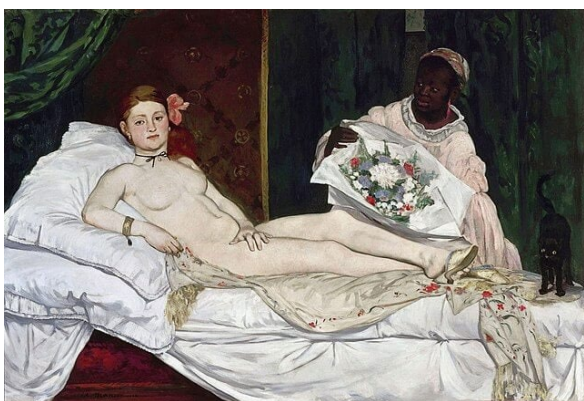
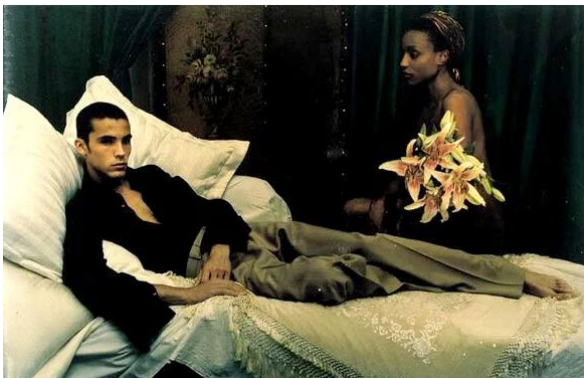
## III. CASE STUDIES

1. Pears Soap’s “Bubbles” (1890): This advertisement by Thomas J Barrett (Pears soap) is often accredited as the

first man who annexed high culture commercialism. This ad made a place for itself in the history of advertisement when Thomas J Barrett bought the copyright to Sir John Everett Millai's painting "Bubbles" for £2,200 and used it to sell Pears soap. The painting was used for advertising a soap because the name of the painting "Bubbles" fit appropriately with what the company was trying to sell; Soap.



2. YSL's Autumn/Winter Campaign (1998): YSL's Autumn/Winter Campaign for their brand featured the photography of Mario Sorrenti using the backdrop of an image created after the glorious "Olympia" by Edouard Manet. The fashion line uses this historical artwork to add some value and essence to the brand image, and also to show the amalgamation of the past with the present.



3. Paddy power's "Last Supper" (2005): Paddy power uses Leonardo Da Vinci's epochal painting "The Last Supper", where Jesus and the Apostles gambling at the 'Last Supper'. Even though criticized for its bold take on religion, what the company tried to do by doing so was draw a connection between history and the contemporary world.



4. Kelptic.com's Impressionisme (2013): Kelptic's Impressionisme campaign uses famous paintings of painters like Van Gogh, Seurat, and Monet. It places its glasses in front of famous paintings which shows one side of the painting very clearly whereas the other side is blurred. Doing so, it is trying to connect to the nostalgia of the olden time, which may have faded over time.

5.





- Ukrainian Ministry of Culture and Information Policy (2020): The Ukrainian Ministry of Culture and Information Policy during the pandemic quarantine wanted to utilize the motto, 'Work smarter, not harder,' it used the historical artwork 'Orpheus and Eurydice' by Frederic Leighton. They used this famous artwork to establish a connection between the past and the present but also to use culture to teach and motivate the public to do something extremely important with something that they relate to.



#### V. REASONS WHY COMPANIES USE FAMOUS ARTWORKS TO ADVERTISE THEIR PRODUCTS?

There are different reasons why companies use famous artworks to their artworks and they have been doing it for ages.

- Cultural and Emotional Connection:** Incorporating famous artworks in their ad campaigns to sell their products, allows them to create a cultural and emotional connection. The connection helps create a positive impact and association between the brand and its potential customers.
- Grab the attention of potential customers:** Famous artworks of well-known artists are already quite eminent amongst the public, hence using them to advertise products, it helps the companies grab the attention of potential consumers and customers.
- Timelessness and Nostalgia:** Using famous artworks from centuries ago form a part of the classics which portrays nostalgia and timelessness amongst the public. It evokes

the connections of the past and creates a connection with the present and the future, along with a sense of belonging, which never gets old.

- Being unique: Using famous historical paintings in their advertisement campaigns helps them stand out amongst hundreds of competitors they have in the market. Moreover, it also aids them to create a unique sense of being different from others.

#### VI. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Even though using famous historical artworks helps companies create a sense of connection between the past and the present and also creates a unique brand identity for them, it also raises certain ethical questions. It questions the copyrights, artistic integrity, art commercialization, balance between the interests of the artists, and advertisers, and how important it is to create a balance between all of these.

#### VII. CONCLUSION

The use of historical paintings in advertisements has been happening for years now, and there are numerous reasons why companies use such classic artworks to sell their products. They do so to create a connection between the past and the present, and also to create a feeling of nostalgia and timelessness. It also evokes a sense of authenticity and sophistication. Nevertheless, doing so also gives rise to ethical considerations which play a huge role in its acceptance by the public. In short, even though using historical paintings in advertisements often have a positive impact on consumers, but keeping in mind the ethical considerations companies must ensure a respectful and responsible approach should be used when using historical paintings in advertisements.

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