

The “Branding” of War

In viewing the work “Infiltration of Opulent Militarism”, Jonathan Terranova speaks to “selling a lifestyle of opulence through the fashionable profiteering of war.” Integrating military, economic and political systems into a “brand” created to the human desires of status, power and virility.

Desires that are as ancient as humankind itself.

Using military and monetary iconography with interchangeable “national” color schemes, these images become cross-cultural and global without boundaries. A shared desire that is familiar in consumer attachment to designer fashion - to connect with something perceived larger and more meaningful than the individual self. An attachment to the brand that becomes part of their own identity in a search for validity. The “key” and “weapon” combined clearly communicate prosperity through war.

Jonathan successfully demonstrates how these images can be integrated into everything from the corporate environment to the benign environments of our everyday lives. How they can become wholly familiar in the human psyche and subsequently blur the distinctive origins of greed that brought it forth.

Opulence alone brings morality into question, but I believe that Jonathan’s examination reveals a more haunting question - Could society reach a point of being morally disconnected from the cost of war in human lives and destruction of our planet in order to achieve greater individual prosperity? That the tragic consequences of war become nothing more than “commodity” for an insulated few (or many) who benefit from its destructive forces?

It brings to mind a prophetic passage from John F. Kennedy, who at the dawn of the Military Industrial Complex, said:

“Those who seek power by foolishly riding the back of the tiger, end up inside.”

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