

THE
CREATIVE WORLD OF
ADVERTISING

J.L. GREYLING
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ADVERTISING

BY

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"From station walls and shop windows to newspapers
and glossy magazines, advertising photographs seem to be everywhere and are
now so commonplace that it is easy to pass them by with barely a thought as
to how they came to be."

(The Photo 56, 1982, Canendish M, p. 1546)



Fig. 1 Taken from : Secrets of Studio Still Life Photography, Preweiler, G.,
p. 71

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INTRODUCTION

Photography, a fairly basic concept, but when you specialise in a certain field you will see that it is a much more complex demanding job.

Advertising is one of those specialised fields where to stay in business takes more and more talent, technical skill and innovation to create that overwhelming new image that would stop people in their tracks and make them want to go and buy the item advertised.

Advertising itself has many different specialised fields but in this book we will only take a look at the advertising of beverages, jewellery and cosmetics. I will take the reader on a journey through the creative world of some professional photographers and their work as well as my own.

To understand where it is all going, a broad look will be taken at advertising as a whole, what it is about and how to get jobs.

CHAPTER ONE

WHAT IS ADVERTISING

The reply would usually be that it's got something to do with selling. Yes, indeed it's got to do with selling, but not only washing powder and cooldrinks, but also services, the image of a corporation, the view point of a political party or it could even be education. The way all these things have been sold to you, the public, is through an image of a product, service or corporation.

There are many different ways to sell that idea, but it is the photographer's job to see to it that through his innovation it is done in the most effective way. He must create the sense that the people really need that item or service. It is his job to show that item to its best advantage without obscuring the truth.

Because advertising, especially the visual media, is so powerful in the sense that it influences human behaviour, certain rules have been laid down to restrict advertisers and not use it as a propaganda medium. Most of the rules are made by the advertisers themselves except for the 1981 Broadcast Act which controls radio and television advertising. (Getting jobs in advertising, 1988, Timber. J, p 12)

A) THE ADVERTISING BUSINESS

"In the world of advertising over ninety per cent of the images used are produced photographically and are the result of the creative collaboration of the art director and the photographer" (The Photo 56, 1982, Cavendish. M, p 1546)

Students should take the time while they study to be creative and put together a portfolio, because as soon as they enter the "business", very few photographers get to fulfil their creative instincts as well as to keep the client happy. Getting jobs and to continue getting jobs, photographers must do self promotion and establish a reputation, because they are selling a specialised skill in a specialised and crowded market.

To get a reputation, the photographer must not only have the technical skill to do the job, but must also be able to solve any problem that might come his way.

Besides the fact that photographers are chosen for their personal style and ideas, their main concern will be to photographically recreate the image the art director and advertiser have decided on.

B) WHAT MAKES THE ADVERT EFFECTIVE ?

An effective advertisement is not merely just a "pretty" picture in a magazine or in a shop window, but a promotion and selling tool. For David Ogilvy there is a certain criteria that must first be satisfied.

- 1) Did the idea make him gasp when he first saw it ?
- 2) Would he have liked to have thought of it himself ?
- 3) Is the idea unique ?
- 4) Does it fit the campaign ?
- 5) Could it be used for up to 30 years ?

(Professional Advertising Photography, 1988, Saunders. D,p 8)

So now one can see that when you measure your "pretty" pictures to these standards they are just pictures, unless they had an idea behind them.

CHAPTER TWO

BEVERAGES

Beverages are perhaps some of the most predominant images in advertising, that of people enjoying themselves while drinking fruit-juice, soda, beer or any other beverage. It doesn't matter what they drink, a new and fresh concept is always in great demand.

When shooting beverages there are lots of little tricks in lighting and other things you can do, but the photographer must always be aware of the rule of truth in advertising. So, if he is doing a generic shot, he can do as he pleases to show the product the way he wants, but when doing a specific product he must remember that he is legally responsible to portray the truth.

The photographer has two options to choose from when doing beverage advertising, namely the lifestyle shot and the product shot.

A) THE LIFESTYLE SHOT

When doing the lifestyle shot the colour and shape of the container and label and the properties of the liquid and its colour don't play such a big role. The photographer's job is to associate the product with the way of life the target audience currently enjoys it or aspires to. *Accordingly to 3*

Here the photographer must be able to control a large number of people and a large lighting scene. His main concern however, is to prevent the scene from looking staged.

B) THE PRODUCT SHOT

With the product shot there are a few things to look at, like the colour, shape and size of the container and label, and the properties and colour of the liquid, because that is what you are going to concentrate on. It is the photographer's job to show it like never before and maximize its appeal without the benefit of touch. *(H)*

First look at the container, to decide how you can enhance its shape or colour by a particular prop or background or by contrasted lighting. Is the label a strong enough design for a close up, or should you try to blurr or obscure the label without upsetting the client ?

Next, look at the liquid, what are its properties and how can you enhance them to your benefit? Look what happens to it at different temperatures and when it is shaken. If the liquid is too dense and causes trouble in the lighting set up, you can try to dilute it. In order to add bubbles to alcohol you can put glycerine in it.

Other tips that come in handy are to spray bottles and glasses with crystal clear (an acrylic coating that glazes the surface) and then with water to add water droplets that don't run down. A mixture of water and glycerine has a similar effect. If you can get hold of acrylic ice cubes, it will also save you a lot of time and effort

C) LIGHTING

By using the most straight forward ways of lighting you can produce some of the most compelling shots. By under-lighting the photographer can get intense colour saturation and back-lighting gives you a sharp edge, which is particularly effective with clear bottles filled with coloured liquids.

Side lighting will give you a sense of roundness, and then there are all the other unorthodox methods, each with their own characteristics. Naturally there is no standard for lighting, but each bottle and its contents will point you to the appropriate lighting setup.

Camera angles together with special effects and the right lighting setup also provides for images with an edge.

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CHAPTER THREE

JEWELLERY

This is a subject I found some photographers try to avoid, because of the difficulty in lighting and handling of the subject. One of the main objectives is to showcase the jewellery and clearly convey a sense of quality no matter what the price of the piece.

Most people would think that it would be easier to photograph cheap costume jewellery than a rare and a very costly art piece, but interestingly enough it takes the same skills and technical know how to photograph both of the pieces.

Two of the main problems faced when photographing jewellery are to capture the beauty of different stones like rubies, diamonds, emeralds, turquoise and so on, because gems like rubies and turquoise tend to soak up light where as sapphires and diamonds reflect light.

The other problem is dealing with the inevitable highlights and reflections, because you are working with highly reflective materials such as gold, silver, brass, chrome or tin and the solution to both these problems lies in the lighting.

②

A) LIGHTING

Lighting jewellery can cause many problems, because you are working with reflective surfaces. But this can be solved in a number of ways.

When lighting reflective surfaces there are two main ways of doing it, a broad bank light or the use of a constructed diffusion tent. The bank light will give you long well-defined highlights, but you must try to keep your subject-to-light source ratio as large as possible.

By using a light tent, which can be constructed out of almost any diffusing material, you are completely controlling your surroundings and therefore simplifying your reflections while still retaining the impression that the surface is shiny.

Two other ways to reduce the reflection of yourself and your equipment are by using a long lens, to make the reflection very small, or by using dulling spray, but this might take away the natural shine of the object.

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B) BACKGROUND AND OTHER FACTORS

Your background is one of the things that can make or break your photograph and needs just as much attention as your lighting and composition. Backgrounds need not to be plain and consistent. One can use almost anything as your background to help create the right atmosphere or to simulate a location.

Another thing that can mess up your photograph is when you develop your film and you see that your jewellery or your props are dirty and full of finger marks. So, when working, make sure that everything is spotless and just before shooting, check again.

Jewellery and cosmetics are very expensive and need to be handled very carefully. It is therefore good to have insurance to cover those items when in your possession and something unforeseen should happen.

CHAPTER FOUR

COSMETICS

This is now really one of the fields where you do not sell the product, but rather the image of the product, the style, the class or the success you will receive with the product.

I think that with cosmetics you are combining all there is to know about photography into one, because you can do almost anything, use any technique, lighting setup or special effect to make the image work in that campaign, to sell that image.

Because cosmetics are so personal it is almost always combined with the human element, a nice image of the product and a image of the people it is intended for.

A) LIGHTING

When it comes to lighting cosmetics you get in contact with alot of different surfaces, from transparent and reflective objects to solid and very dull objects.

The type of image that you want to portray will determine your lighting and the mood you are looking for. Lighting setups can vary from high-key images right down to very contrasty and moody ones.

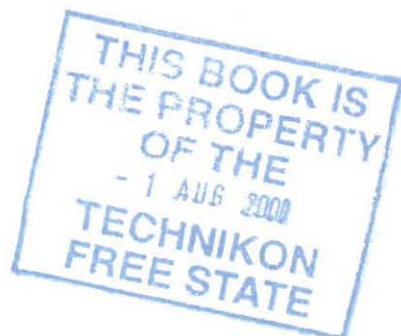
Creative lighting can also provide for those images that puts you a cut above the rest. In my opinion you should be a master in lighting to do really compelling cosmetic shots or for that matter any other subject.

B) CREATING THE RIGHT MOOD

Cosmetics is all about selling an idea about a product and to do that you must create the right mood. You must, through your image, convince the people that they not only need the product, but that they will actually have that style and charm the product stands for.

When creating that mood you can make use of lighting, backgrounds, props special techniques and many more. It is here that the photographers ability to be creative will distinguish him from the rest.

The mood can also be provided by the human element or in some cases you don't even see the product, just the name of it with a picture of a man or woman that would use it.



CHAPTER FIVE

CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHERS AND THEIR WORK

GARRY PERWEILER

For Garry the object is everything, so he comes in really tight on it with his eight by ten inch Sinar and tries to show that object like never seen before.



Fig. 2 Taken from : Advertising Photography, Solomon, A., p 55

"Still life is a problem-solving occupation. Every object has its own problem. The more things you investigate, the more knowledge you accumulate. When you master one subject matter, it opens up a hundred other possibilities - for other pictures later on. Gradually you expand your vocabulary."
(Advertising photography, 1982, Salomon. A, p 50)

Garry started photography after giving up painting, it was too messy for him and he wants his life to be in order as well as his work. This he does by being minimalistic. His minimal colours strike with a shock as they leap out of flat backgrounds. He also likes to play on reflections, turning silver to white.

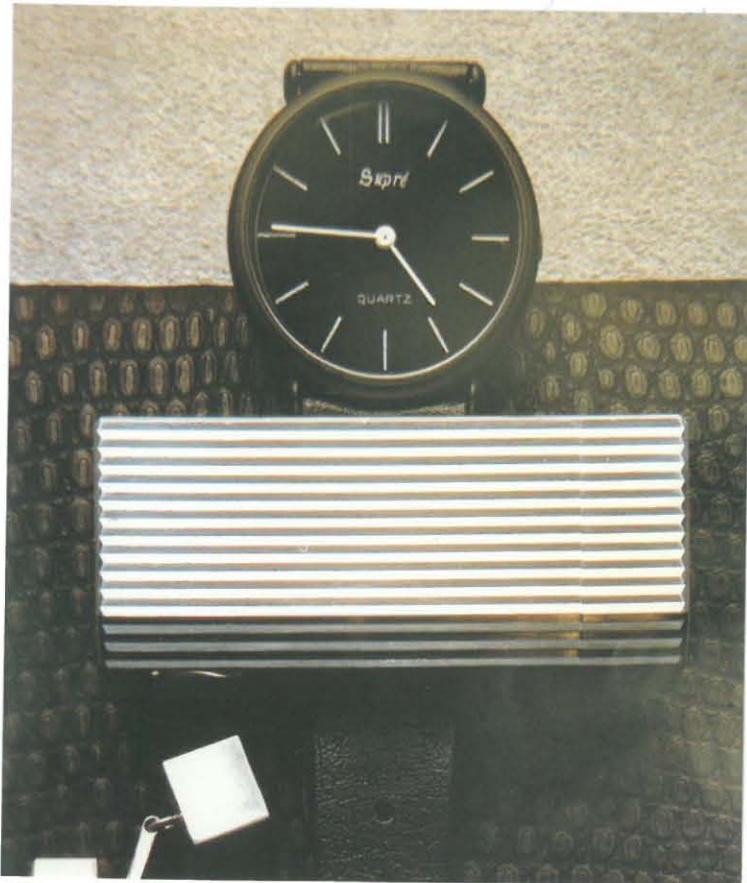


Fig. 3 Taken from :Secrets of Studio Still Life Photography, Preweiler,G.,
p. 57

"Garry Perweiler tries to make a universal statement that expresses a personal point of view. Put that way, it sounds like an impossibility. But isn't it exactly the mark of the great commercial photographer." (Advertising Photography, 1982, Salomon. A, p 63)

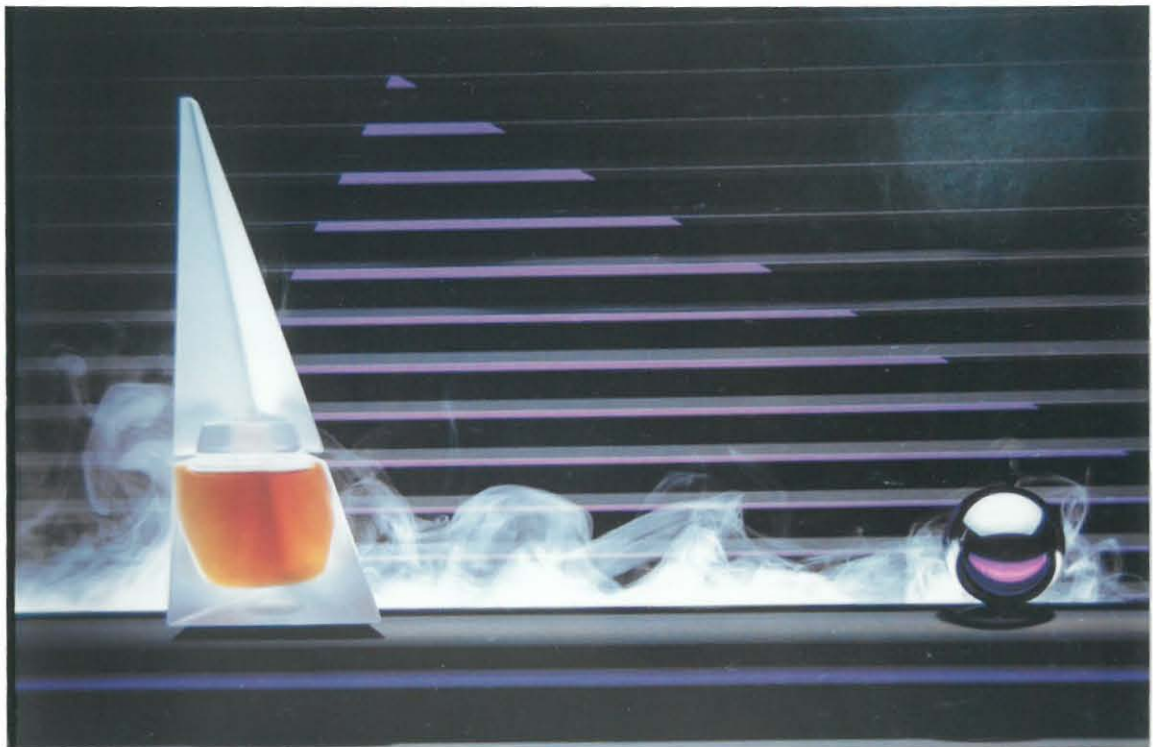


Fig. 4 Taken from :Secrets of Studio Still Life Photography, Preweiler,G.,
p. 31



SETH JOEL

For Seth the first thing to do when doing still life work is to look at the critical characteristics of still life photography. He believes in a strong composition and relationship between product and props.



Fig. 5 Taken from : Photographing Still Life, Joel, S. , p. 37

Equipment is another important thing for Seth. He believes that standardizing equipment and mastering certain techniques are critical to success in still life photography. Beyond the creative and technical aspects it is also important for him to have a broad base of clients. "A certain degree of specialization in one area is an asset, while complete compartmentalization is a handicap."

(Photographing Still Life, Joel. S, p 14)



Fig. 6 Taken from : Photographing Still Life, Joel, S. ,p.

"A still life photographer must not only be technically competent and completely familiar with an enormous variety of shooting approaches, but in short he must be an electrician, engineer, carpenter, plumber, magician, stylist, designer, salesperson, negotiator, psychologist and business expert."

(Photographing Still Life, Joel. S, p 15)



Fig. 7 Taken from : Photographing Still Life, Joel, S. ,p. 75

CHAPTER SIX

AUTHOR'S WORK AND DISCUSSION THERE OF

SCHOONSPRUIT

This was a very simple shot although it took me a few shots to get the right one. I placed the glass at an angle and filled it with fairly flat carbonated water to get the bubbles on the side of the glass. The next step was to place the piece of lemon and cherry in the glass, to add the essential bit of colour.

The next was trial and error to get the schoonspruit bottle horizontal with enough water pouring out of the bottle and glass and the lemon and cherry not falling down in the glass.

The lighting was done very simple, black velvet in the back, a spot light from the bottle's end and a mirror at the glass and to reflect enough light to illuminate the rest of the scene.

Technical data : Four by five inch Sinar view camera, 180 mm lense, f 11, 100 ASA Fujichrome film.



Fig. 8 Schoonspruit

BECK'S

In this shot I went in very close, because i found the neck part of the bottle the most exciting. I wanted to show the texture of the label and through that create my image. The bottle was placed on a mirror for background and a few water droplets for a fresh and cool feeling.

The lighting setup was done with two lights, a large hazy light over the top and a studio flash with a round reflector from bottle's end sides. I also had two white reflectors at about a 45 degree angle opposite the studio flash. A piece of black card was placed opposite the label to enhance the texture of it.

Technical data : Four by five inch Sinar view camera, 360 mm lens, f 22, 100 ASA Fujichrome film.



Fig. 9 Becks

BONNIE AND CLYDE ←

With this ad I tried to take a less expensive whisky and make it look just as smooth and expensive as your average high class whisky. This I merely did by placing it in a very neutral setup and by using very soft and even lighting.

The bottle and glass were both placed at an angle on an infinity curve and were lit by a hazy light over the top and slightly from the front and a studio flash with a round reflector from the glass's side and a reflector behind the bottle, to give the liquid a bit more punch.

Technical data : Four by five inch Sinar view camera, 360 mm lens, f 22, 100 ASA Fujichrome film.



Fig. 10 Bonnie and Clyde



Fig. 11 Untitled

COSTUME JEWELLERY

In this shot I pretended I was given the assignment to shoot these items for a brochure for some jewellery store. With this in mind, I went for a background that won't distract your attention of the jewellery and through composition and lighting showed it to its best potential.

The composition took quite a while, because I had to change it each time I changed the lights. Another problem I had was as soon as I had all the stones properly lit, I had numerous highlights. This I solved by using a big hazy light over the top and with fibre-optics just to bring out the gems.

Technical data : Four by five inch Sinar view camera, 360 mm lens, f 11, 100 ASA Agfachrome film.



Fig. 12 Costume Jewellery

SILVER AND GOLD

When I looked at these pieces, I decided to present them as ancient jewellery so, when it came to choice of background, I decided that the piece of rusted flat iron complemented that feeling.

In this shot the lighting was done with just one light, a large hazy light, slightly from the front and to the top. For the rest I just used white reflectors and pieces of black card to get the final result. The only problem in the end was that the earring on the left reflected too much of the black card and I couldn't get hold of the jewellery again to re-shoot.

Technical data : Four by five inch Sinar view camera, 360 mm lens, f 11, 100 ASA Agfachrome film.



Fig. 13 Silver and Gold

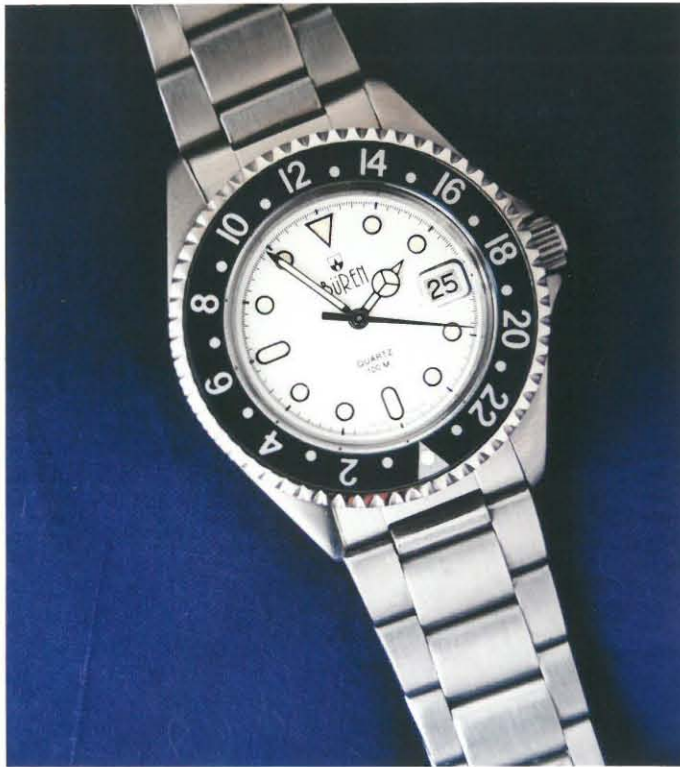


Fig. 14 Untitled



Fig. 15 Untitled

INSIGNIA

In this insignia shot I went for a monochrome black and white effect. I looked at the insignia spray can and saw mainly black and white, so I chose the props and background in the same colours. I thought it worked quite well to create the effect of class and distinction together with the James Dean picture in the back.

I kept the F-stop down so only the insignia would be in focus and the props won't distract your attention. The lighting was very simple, two bronchiolar flashes at a 45 degree angle on either side of the scene. I had no problems with highlights, because of the simplicity of the scene and lighting. Simplicity can work.

Technical data : Four by five inch Sinar view camera, 180 mm lens, f 5.6, 100 ASA Fugichrome film.



Fig. 16 Insignia

KNOWING

In this shot I went for a simple and clean shot and through this show its beauty and quality. I used the box it came in to show the name and I think the pieces of broken glass add to the feeling that it is the best. One can also see it as sculpture, with all the unwanted pieces chipped away.

The lighting was very basic, a hazy light over the top for the overall light, a light from the bottom to give a bit of life to the pieces of glass and a spot light at an angle from the back to give a bit more saturation to the perfume.

Technical data : Four by five inch Sinar view camera, 360 mm lens, f 16, 100 ASA Agfachrome film.



Fig. 17 Knowing

LICHFIELD

This shot took a bit of planning to get the light scene and props with the product. I had to go for class and I think that the gold shaving set and the clean all in focus scene helped to create the sense of class. I decided on a specific arrangement of props and product and I knew that this would cause trouble with the lighting, because of so many reflective surfaces.

The result that I achieved, was by using only two lights. A large hazy light over the top, for soft, even, overall light and the second on the right hand side facing away from the scene onto a white reflector, which reflected the light back into the mirror to get the highlights on either side of the props and product.

From the front I had another reflector to cut out the camera and myself from reflecting in the shaving set. On the left I placed a piece of black card to bring out the shape of the objects.

Technical data : Four by five inch Sinar view camera, 180 mm lens, f 16, 100 ASA Agfachrome film.



Fig. 18 Lichfield



Fig. 19 Untitled

CONCLUSION

"While it is important to master a number of photographic techniques, they are frequently useless unless the photographer can also visualize a picture long before exposing the film. This ability to conceptualize an image is highly valued by art directors and clients because it involves creativity and often problem-solving." (Photographing Still Life, Joel, S., p 78.)

Photography, especially advertising, can be very challenging, awarding and glamorous, but in the same breath you can say that it is very demanding. It does not take only one or two award winning pictures to establish a reputation, but always a new unique photograph that will stop people and make them think, "Who did it?", "How was it done?".

In all we can say, advertising is not just a selling tool, but it intrigues, entertains, stimulates and it poses questions.

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