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Consuming the aesthetic of the everyday: A visual analysis of Errol Morris’ “High Life”

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Consuming the aesthetic of the everyday: A visual analysis of Errol Morris’ “High Life”.

Co-constructed meaning between marketer and consumer is a key dimension of convergent (Jenkins 2006) media. Using “Miller’s High Life” ads (1999-2005) we discuss how content convergence prompts different co-constructed meanings among consumer segments, how “mundane art” is produced and how the marketer/consumer relationship is transformed into a filmmaker/viewer-consumer one. From an interdisciplinary perspective, we discuss the implications of this transformed relationship for marketing.
Extended Abstract

Advancing on Schroeder’s (2006) view of marketing and consumption “as basic cultural institutions, rather than purely managerial initiatives” (p.7), this paper contributes to visual consumption and advertising literature. In this paper, we pose the core question of what marketing is, or has the potential to be, in the face of changing media trends. Using Errol Morris’ “Miller’s High Life” ads (1999-2005), we investigate co-constructed meaning between marketer/consumer as an effect of digital media and convergence (Jenkins 2006). In our example, content convergence prompts different co-constructed meanings among disparate consumer segments and the marketer/consumer relationship is transformed into a filmmaker/viewer-consumer one. We suggest that this transformed relationship is central to the emergence of digital media and the upswing of converged content, requiring us to re-evaluate the role of marketing in the cultural and media sphere. Morris’ work signifies a vital moment for marketing as it moves towards cinematic form and use of micro-narrative to represent and reflect daily life and thus transforming into media content in its own right. In doing so, a new advertising aesthetic is forged and marketing transformed from information/promotion to participation in the production, narration and reflection of cultural values, rituals and aesthetics.

This paper contains two aims that underpin both the analysis and discussion. The first aim is to show how convergent content (Jenkins 2006) can engage seemingly disparate consumers in the co-constitution of meaning. Morris’ Miller High Life advertisements demonstrate how convergent content disseminated across both digital and traditional channels engages traditionally fragmented consumers or audiences and invites a plurality of interpretations/meanings. The second aim is to show how Morris develops a new form of ‘mundane art'/advertising out of cinematic techniques that moves across media channels and engages diverse audiences.

In this paper, we expand on a visual analysis approach (Schroeder 2002; Schroeder and Borgerson 1998) to analyse Morris’ Miller High Life ads. The analysis focuses firstly on the visual elements of the advertisements. We then extend our analysis to interrogate the sound and cinematic conventions used in the ads. We then move to a discussion of their function as cultural products, co-constructed stories and aesthetic representations of the mundane vie quotidien. In this discussion, we draw from interdisciplinary perspectives such as film theory, media theory and marketing to show how documentary-maker Morris’ ads transform the traditional producer/intermediary/consumer relationship into a filmmaker/consumer-viewer relationship where the interpretive power of the viewer is as important as the filmmaker. This shift constitutes a significant change in the marketer/experience/consumer relationship revealing the consumer-viewer as aesthetically engaged and the marketing product as culturally/aesthetically informed.

The implications of Morris’s work are considered as these Miller narratives, that move across traditional and digital channels, facilitate diverse consumer responses and connect the brand with a seemingly disparate demographic – both the traditional Miller drinker and a new generation of digital savvy cynics. Morris’ multi-layered content delivered via convergent channels enables Miller to engage existing and new segments. This is made possible through the content of the ads themselves (since these complex little vignettes offer a range of interpretations) and through the media mode used. In our discussion, we indicate that the traditional Miller drinker who saw the ads on TV (a traditional media channel) embraced the ads as a reflection of their own lives, rituals and values. On the other hand, younger, non-Miller drinking consumers saw the ads online (having heard about them via
blogs) and drew a more ironic, parodical interpretation. The capacity for the ads to have resonance with these different audiences can be attributed both to the content of the ads and the channel of delivery thus emphasising the need for marketing to generate complex, engaging content that transforms into cultural product. This study of Morris’ campaign shows how contemporary media enables a level of audience engagement that has traditionally been reserved for cinematic or “formal” art forms. This medium opens the doors for practices such as advertising to evolve into meaningful cultural products with which various audiences can engage and participate in the co-construction process. In eroding or challenging the classical division between art and everyday life, Morris’ work gives rise to a new aesthetic, the aesthetic of the everyday, that is made meaningful by the consumers who inhabit its meaning.

As part of this co-constructive experience, Morris’ work also demonstrates the divergent audiences and interpretations to which convergence gives rise. These ads have resonated with the traditional Miller drinker and a generation of media consumers who appreciate the ironic and irreverent. This appeal to such divergent demographics confounds traditional marketing logic and reveals the willingness of diverse consumers to engage in a consumer-viewer/filmmaker relationship where meanings can be constructed and challenged. The traditional producer/intermediary/consumer relationship into a filmmaker/consumer-viewer relationship constitutes a shift in the marketer/experience/consumer relationship, revealing the consumer-viewer as engaged in diverse interpretive acts.

Finally, we also conclude that, given the contemporary media landscape, marketing has the potential to be a major source of cultural production. As convergence content demands more sophisticated material, marketing must transform into art-based cultural production, a form of media that contributes to cultural discourse. This re-envisioning of what marketing does, what it means in culture and what contribution it must make for future survival in a media-driven world will be central to the future purpose and practice of marketing.
Consuming the aesthetic of the everyday: A visual analysis of Errol Morris’ “High Life”.

Introduction

In response to changing consumer expectations, the dissolution of an uncritical “consumer culture” and the advent of digital media, marketing practice has re-evaluated how to use media channels and content. As consumer attention moves from billboards to Facebook and radio to YouTube, the rise of the visual medium signified by “the screen” has significantly impacted on marketing (Zwick and Dholakia 2006). The evolution of the visual has also had the effect of forcing marketing to consider the sophistication and quality of its content. By way of advancing on existing discussion on marketing in the contemporary media-oriented cultural context (Sherry et. al. 2001), this paper poses the core question of what marketing as cultural producer is, or has the potential to be, in the face of shifting media trends prompted by digital technology (Meamber and Venkatesh 1999). Specifically, we focus on convergence (a term coined by Jenkins (2006) to refer to complex media content disseminated across a range of channels) in advertising and the effect that convergence has on advertising content as cultural product (Lash and Urry 1994; Venkatesh and Meamber 2006).

The aim of this paper is twofold. Firstly, the aim is to show how convergent content can engage seemingly disparate consumers in the co-construction of meaning. We use the examples of Errol Morris’ Miller High Life advertisements (1999-2005) to demonstrate how convergent content disseminated across channels engages seemingly fragmented consumer segments and invites a plurality of interpretations/meanings (Lemke 2009). The further aim is to excavate how Morris develops a new form of ‘mundane art’/advertising out of
cinematic techniques that carries across media channels and engages diverse audiences. Borrowing from the principles of visual analysis (Schroeder 2002; Schroeder and Borgerson 1998), we analyse Morris’ Miller High Life ads, excavating their function as cultural products, co-constructed stories and aesthetic representations of the mundane *vie quotidien*. We argue that documentary-maker Morris’ cinematically inspired ads transform (Goldstein, Johnston and Sharpe 2006) the traditional producer/intermediary/consumer relationship (Kozinets 2001; McCracken 1988, 1989; Solomon 2003) into a filmmaker/consumer-viewer relationship where the interpretive power of the viewer is as important as the filmmaker. This shift constitutes a significant change in the marketer/experience/consumer relationship revealing the consumer-viewer as aesthetically engaged (Burroughs and Mick 2004; Hirschman, 1980) and the marketing product as culturally/aesthetically informed. Advancing on Schroeder’s (2006) view of marketing and consumption “as basic cultural institutions, rather than purely managerial initiatives” (p.7), this paper contributes to current scholarship on visual consumption (Schroeder 2002; Scott 1990, 1993, 1994; Tharp and Scott 1990) and advertising aesthetics (Brown, and Patterson 2001; Joy and Sherry 2003; Schroeder 2006; Venkatesh and Meamber 2006).

The following paper commences with a conceptual background overview of the status of advertising in contemporary media and the relationship it makes possible between marketer and consumer. The significance of Morris’ work is also considered in this section. We then outline the visual analysis method to be used followed by a detailed analysis of two Morris Miller’s ads. Finally, we move to a discussion of the impact of Morris’ work and how it has attracted diverse audiences as a result of its complexity followed by a brief conclusion.

**Conceptual Background**
Recent marketing scholarship has emphasised cultural production as “grounded in the notions of symbolic meaning generation and consumption of aesthetics in everyday life” (Venkatesh and Meamber 2006; 21). This view departs from classical conceptualisations of art, aesthetics and cultural production as separate from (and superior to) daily life (Barilli 1993/1989; Dewey 1934; Smigzin 2006) or “distinguished from the material aspects of life and privileged because of its importance in human development and metaphysical discourse” (Venkatesh and Meamber 2006; 20). The re-connection between cultural production, aesthetics and the everyday (Lash and Urry 1994; Venkatesh and Meamber 2006; Stern et al. 2001) re-situates producer and consumer in a culturally embedded relationship of symbolic exchange, ritual sharing and meaning making (McCracken 1993; Nava and Nava 1992) and disavows the primacy of “high art” or the aesthetic as purely intellectual (Cassirer 1944). Equally, this re-evaluation of aesthetics invites a consideration of advertising as art, media content (Jenkins 2006), and cinematic “mirror”, held up to the rituals, symbolisms and narratives inherent to seemingly mundane consumption experiences.

Advertising has been long identified as a source of cultural production because of its artistic (Brown 1996) or creative quality (Kotler 1991; Martin 1995). Its intrinsically visual nature (Schroeder 2002, 1997; Scott 1994) connects advertising with the epistemological and sensorial thrust of the late twentieth century that increasingly champions the visual as the primary mode of perceptual engagement (Schroeder and Borgerson 2002) particularly with the rise of the internet and its associated media. Morris’ Miller Beer advertisements draw on this advertising as visual art form trajectory (Stern et al. 2001), advancing further by consciously introducing cinematic tropes and micro-narrative into the content. The ads are intended as “mini-films” rich in representational and symbolic value. They employ Morris’
signature cinematic tropes, blending cinema, art and advertising to create a series of postmodern vignettes that humorously pastiche, represent and reflect masculinity and lifestyle sensibilities (Holt and Thompson 2004; Schroeder and Zwick 2004). In doing so, the ads capture the nuance of daily life and evoke connection with consumers on the grounds of shared values, rituals and rhetorical symbolisms (Scott 1994) via the aesthetics of cinema.

Significantly, we also see a merging of media and marketing genres to create this novel content (Jenkins 2006). While the ads obviously promote Miller beer, their importance resides in their evocation of embedded social mores, transforming these ads into aesthetic depictions of ingrained social values through merged media/cinematic and marketing content. Morris’ work signifies a turning point for marketing’s media use (the ads appear on TV and web), moving towards cinematic form and use of micro-narrative to represent and reflect daily life and thus transforming into media content in its own right. In doing so, a new advertising aesthetic is forged and marketing transformed from information/promotion to participation in the production, narration and reflection of cultural values, rituals and aesthetics (Venkatesh and Meamber 2006).

Method

In this paper, we analyse two Errol Morris’ “Miller high life” beer advertisements. To do this we employ visual analysis (Schroeder 2002; Schroeder and Borgerson 1998), since this method allows us to trace possible meaning construction occurring in visual images (Schroeder and Zwick 2004; Stern and Schroeder 1994). Visual analysis has been used frequently to research advertising images and provides a way of excavating the symbolisms, meanings and rituals embedded in visual imagery.
Drawing from interdisciplinary influences such as film theory and media studies, we expand here on Schroeder’s method to take in the other elements of the moving image such as its complex time-based, intertextual and technological qualities (Conomos 1989), spatio-temporal structures, perceptual and affective dimensions (Deleuze 1989) and audio-visual relationships (Chion 2009). Our objective is to analyse the intrinsic details of Morris’ work in order to identify the cinematic techniques and qualities contained in the ad before moving to a discussion of the kind of consumer response invited and the divergent interpretations these ads have generated. Therefore, the ensuing visual analysis is strongly influenced by film theory to mine the techniques and details of Morris’ ad while the discussion then re-focuses on the impact of Morris’ work on consumers.

**Analysis**

To understand the meaning construction in this series of 80 commercials, viewers should view them as inter-related miniature worlds or, as Morris describes them, “the haiku of the West” (in Grundman 2000; 11). Each advertisement has a title that corresponds with signs and references to masculinity (Holt and Thompson 2004; Schroeder and Zwick 2004). *Broken Window, Duct Tape, Faucet* and *Fridge* reflect on everyday objects and things. *Alternative Fuels* and *Drinking Responsibly* signal an ironic private commentary on social change. *Callus* and *Five o’clock shadow* focus on the anti-aesthetic of the working body. *Mother-in-Law, Gossip, Newly-wed* and *Grandma* refer obliquely to observations about the opposite sex. *Hotdog, Bacon, Devilled Egg, Donut* and *Deer Sausage* reflect the mid-west man’s preoccupation with protein, home cooking and weight gain. Here we analyse *Hotdog* and *Gossip* to show how Morris has used commercials as a reflective site for the Miller man
to voice his struggles and inner dialogue with contemporary issues about health, lifestyle, diet, obesity, relationships and society.

Hotdog

In *Hotdog*, cooking hotdogs becomes a space for a defiant interior monologue. We see a big close-up of a plate with a pair of hotdogs, framed from a cook’s point of view, as he wrestles to fork one of the hotdogs and place it on a bun. Morris alternately shifts the consumer-viewer between the point-of-view of the cook (the subject) and eyewitness (the object) and intimate observer (empathic subject-object), through a series of close-ups. We see/share the characters experience through this alternation and fusion between subject and object. We view the hotdogs on a plate from our/the character’s point of view.

We watch our character eat it. We are mesmerized by the sound of boiling water as we watch a pot of hotdogs on the boil. Synchronised with the ‘realism’ of this visual narrative, a voice declares “Who cares what’s in a hot dog?” Eluding the techniques of expository documentary and commercials to explain what we are seeing, Morris borrows from the vocal style of the movie trailer genre to play/subvert ‘voice-of-god’ conventions (see Nichols 2001; 46-48). What he constructs is an intimate voice – a sardonic, internal voice – that appears through Morris’ correlation between editing, framing and point-of-view – to be connected to the character. The voice says

> When diverse cast aside elements come together to form something great. That’s the American way. Nope, you do not ask of the hot dog. The hot dog asks of you!
What are you made of? What spice do you add to the national knockwurst? What flavour do you contribute to the high life?

This domestic echo of Kennedy’s patriotic call to the nation ironically subverts the invocation of the American dream and leaves the viewer with an appropriate anti-climax, watching innocuous hotdogs simmering in a saucepan.

Morris disrupts our expectations of the advertising genre by combining an intimate, ‘mundane’ visual narrative with the voice track in unexpected ways. The relationship between Morris’ cinematic elements (image, sound, script and voice) create a new dimension in the construction of masculinity, that is – we begin to hear the thoughts and inner struggle that go on inside a man’s head. The voice acts as a sign of an interior monologue and provides access to the bizarre inner life – the voice in our head. However, the Miller man himself in Hotdog is visually fragmented. We only ever catch partial views of him. Fluctuating between anonymity and intimacy, Morris uses some of the stylistic techniques he developed while filming Robert S. McNamara in his documentary Fog of War (2003). That is, the use of the jump cut, tilt and angles that frames the human head in ways that break accepted television and cinematic conventions – and are ‘deliberate editorial decisions’ (Baker 2006; 18). Rebelling against the central and traditional framing of the human figure, inherited from postcards, painting, portraiture and landscape (Schroeder and Zwick 2004; 29-32) television and cinema, Morris reminds us that in documentary or advertising the subject is always framed. He introduced this technique into advertising from reflexive filmmaking – the process of intentionally breaking with continuity editing and processes – ‘to challenge these techniques and conventions’ (Nichols 2001; 126).

Gossip
In *Gossip*, a Miller man watches from the sidelines in female encounters, listens, becomes mute or invisible in the face of his domestic relationships.

Female presence in the Miller world are usually marked by *things* – such as the food and beer that magically appear on a table, the swinging door between the kitchen and dining room, a crocheted tablecloth or low lighting. Sometimes a blurred female presence hands a man a beer or, as in *Newly-wed*, gaze bewildered at the alcohol section of a supermarket fridge. In *Gossip*, Morris plays with the dual meaning of *estranger* (the disruption of the bond of love, friendship or loyalty) and *ostranenie*, the experience of having the familiar made strange (Schlovsky 1965; Benjamin 1969). The soft blur and fuzzy presence of a group of women at lunch become strangely alien as a voice-over narrates “Civilised society is based on some degree of restraint.” Simultaneously, we see a glimpse of a well-dressed woman firmly clutch her fork and plunge it into a piece of food - perhaps this is Morris’ homage to Artaud’s theatre of cruelty. The voice shifts the consumer-viewer’s point-of-view – the scene now only *appears* to be civilised. We see the women as if from the perspective of an alien, removed in space and time from its surrounds, a perspective constructed through the montage of low angle tilts, varied focal lengths and close-ups of talking women until, a man sits at a table and buries his face into his hands. This Miller man is here – under duress. We see the scene as if through his eyes – a disenfranchised man, cast adrift from his familiar working world. The chatter surrounding him is barely recognisable as the voice-over/alter-
ego reveals his thoughts. “You might disagree with much of what the gal’s have to say, but there are times when even the most miss-guided opinion is better left, uncorrected. Don’t you open your mouth unless its t’fill it up again with another sip of beer.”

Discussion

Morris’ advertisements signal the transition to convergence (Jenkins 2006) marketing, as distinct from transmedia narrative (Kinder 1991) in that convergent media reaches diverse audiences whereas transmedia engages the same audience across media platforms (Bernardo 2011; Dena 2004). The lines between media art form and marketing content blur and thus transform advertising into ‘mundane art’. Morris’ Miller narratives, which move across traditional and digital channels, facilitate diverse consumer responses and connect the brand with seemingly disparate demographics – both the traditional Miller drinker and a new generation of digital savvy cynics. Given that “changes in volume [of product sold] are driven primarily by increases in the size of the key demographic targets” (Beer Institute Annual Report 2001), Morris’ multi-layered content delivered via convergent channels placed Miller in the unique position of simultaneously moving across existing and new segments.

In 1998, when Weiden & Kennedy pitched their now famous “Miller High Life Man” campaign and commissioned Morris to direct, it was in an effort to save the brand after unsuccessfully attempting to re-position as a subpremium beer. Morris’ work appeals to the hardworking, simple, traditional consumer identified by Miller’s market research but perhaps more surprising is the alternative interpretation generated by a new generation of consumers. The ads themselves produce two disparate interpretations. The ads ran on TV during primetime sports programming, where, as one blogger notes, “If you've never seen
them, you probably don't watch much football”. The traditional TV medium and timeslot reached the kind of white, working man depicted in the ads and revitalised the brand among its core consumers. For this audience, the ads represent self-reflective snapshots of life, resonant for their accurate depiction of the values, struggles and dilemmas faced by the everyday “guy” and the aestheticisation/nostalgia of a former American way. It is precisely because of their “realness” that these ads became successful with the man of middle America. As one online commentator suggests:

The whole aesthetic of the campaign begs to be understood as a throwback to an earlier era of simplicity and trustworthiness — never more pronounced than in the completely politically incorrect reference to trading in pants for skirts. The homophobia and misogyny of the statement, it seems, is supposed to be offset by the elegiac tone harkening back to when such attitudes were apparently not only acceptable, but laudable (Alilunas 2009).

This nostalgic connection with traditional America, a glorification of the minutiae of everydayness and an expression of now politically incorrect ideas offers a comforting narrative for the target Miller consumer.

The ads were also broadcast digitally via a host of online forums, Youtube and Morris’ own website. Complementing the national TV campaign, the digital dissemination of the ads captured a younger, more cynical audience who picked up the nuance and pastiche of Morris’ work. Unlike the loyal Miller drinking audience who connected with the represented simplicity and patriotism as reflective of their lives, this new audience saw the ads as humorous, ironic and parodical – the “anti-beer” ad. This division between traditional Miller consumers who identify with the ads’ “certain quintessential, working class, Midwestern truths” (Popken 2007) and the consumers who see Morris as a master of irony and pastiche appear to co-incide with the dissemination medium. Traditional Miller consumers
encountered the ads during sports viewing while the clever, ironic appeal of the ads meant awareness spread quickly among young bloggers and social commentators online who then viewed it on Youtube.

These ads invite a range of interpretations and directly engage the view or consumer in a co-construction of meaning. For the traditional Miller drinker, meanings are harmoniously reflected in and by the ads as they convey the realities of everyday life. For those who see the ads as parody, the meanings must be deciphered or looked for as the seemingly representational gives way to the humorous. To understand how Morris achieves this multi-layered, open narrative, we must also consider the techniques he employs. Morris’ distinct filmmaking style developed as a reaction to accepted cinematic conventions, rules and modes of practice (Baker 2006) introducing a shift in the gendered space of advertising from representation to embodiment. Through a range of aesthetic, surrealist and absurdist techniques, (montage, ostranenie, de-framing, the jump-cut, unusual tilts and angles, cross-cuts or parallel editing between image and voice track and voice-in-the-head monologues), we see through a man’s eyes and alter ego. Identity is constructed not only by what he sees but what he thinks about what he sees in the world around him. The male ‘gaze’ has been overwritten by another dimension – how he inhabits the suburban world and what he thinks about it as he ambles between work and pleasure, fixing a faucet, digging a hole in the lawn, or cooking his lunch. He shows that we can scrutinize reality through images and the fictions that people create about themselves (Grundman 2000; Conomos 2000). In his documentaries, Morris developed a range of hybrid cinematic techniques, borrowed from across genres, to shift the engagement from subject to viewer and to ask us to see cinema for what it is: a construct or representation’ (Nichols 2006; 125). Morris imports this technique of converging fiction and non-fiction to explore ‘the intersections of the ‘fictional’ and ‘real’
worlds we create and inhabit’ (Grundman 2000: 1) into the constructed masculine world of Miller’s High Life beer.

Morris transforms the conventions of the 30-second commercial into a series of micro-narratives – *moments* that appear as if they’ve been taken from a collective ‘real’ world of masculine domestic enterprises and transformed into ‘personal story worlds’ (Grundman, 2000: 1). Morris has reconstructed the ‘*Millers’ world*’ as a hybrid world that exists somewhere between the consumer-viewers’ childhood and adult experiences. Scenes or tableaus from these worlds are marked by the absence of contemporary technology – microwaves, cell phones, home theatre systems and laptops. These worlds exist in a half-light, a type of *refugia* located in Morris’ mid-west, post-war, suburban America. Morris confronts the limits of mid-west masculinity through a simultaneous reflexive engagement with its construction. Historically, Miller beer commercial campaigns developed the stereotype of the rugged working class man looking for a little Miller time – *because he deserved it* (Miller, 2002). Morris appropriates this genre and reflexively inverts it, using a range of postmodern techniques to provide the consumer-viewer with a humorous insight into masculine thought. For the traditional Miller consumer, he humanises the Miller brand through a focus on men’s preoccupations, temporary vulnerabilities, fantasies, confusions and internal monologues. For a new generation of consumers, Morris engages their sense of irony, contradiction and humour. In both instances, he shifts the relationship between product/consumer to filmmaker and consumer-viewer. He addresses the consumer-viewer by constructing a shared social world where ‘real’ physical activities such as digging a hole, fixing a faucet or a fridge are also the site of an encounter with inner, virtual worlds of perception, involuntary memory, reminiscence, affect (Deleuze 1973) and refuge (Bachelard 1994) interpreted either nostalgically or humorously. Morris brings this intersection between
cinema as thought system (Deleuze 1989), neo-realism and a reflexive narrative mode (Nichols 2001) to advertising, inviting his audience to bring their own interpretive lens.

The appropriation of cinematic techniques enables Morris to introduce a more complex level to the aesthetics of representation in marketing. These techniques contribute to a self-consciousness between filmmaker and consumer-viewer. Morris’ universe indicates a reflection on the conscious unity between the perceptions of subject, filmmaker and consumer-viewer and the personalised story worlds they share and inhabit. This collective visual experience, made possible through digital media and the importation of cinematic technique, establishes a new level of engagement between the marketer as art producer and consumer as consumer-viewer.

**Conclusion**

In this paper, we posed the question of what marketing is, or has the potential to be, in the face of changing media trends. Using Morris’ Miller “high life” ads as the case in question, our analysis and discussion of the Miller suite enables us to move towards some possible answers. Firstly, we conclude that contemporary media technology itself enables a level of audience engagement that has traditionally been reserved for cinematic or “formal” art forms. This traditional division between high and low art (a central tenet of the Modernist era) or, even more pejoratively, between art and the everyday is challenged by the evolution of media. This medium opens the doors for practices such as advertising (that speak to the mundanity of life as so frequently depicted in ads) to evolve and transform, inviting filmmakers such as Morris into the mix. In eroding or challenging the classical division between art and everyday life, Morris’ work gives rise to a new aesthetic, the aesthetic of the everyday. This also leads us to conclude that the convergence culture of which Jenkins
(2006) speaks has not only already commenced but is laying the ground for the transformation of traditional marketing to a co-constructed art form that engages the consumer as consumer-viewer and re-presents the daily life.

As part of this co-constructive experience, made possible through convergent media forms, Morris’ work also demonstrates the divergent audiences and interpretations to which convergence gives rise. In this respect, we conclude that marketing has the potential to prompt meaningful, collective interpretive acts and be the catalyst for social engagement with converged content. These ads have simultaneously resonated with the traditional Miller drinker and a generation of media consumers who appreciate the ironic and irreverent. This appeal to such divergent demographics confounds traditional marketing logic and reveals the willingness of diverse consumers to engage in a consumer-viewer/filmmaker relationship where meanings can be constructed and challenged. The traditional producer/intermediary/consumer relationship (Kozinets 2001; McCracken 1988, 1989; Solomon 2003) into a filmmaker/consumer-viewer relationship constitutes a shift in the marketer/experience/consumer relationship, revealing the consumer-viewer as engaged (Burroughs and Mick 2004; Hirschman 1980) in diverse interpretive acts.

As a result, we might also conclude that marketing has the potential to be a visible contributor to cultural production in the form of media content (as well as pure advertising) that far transcends its promotional or managerial function. While consumer researchers have long established that consumers use marketing messages and commodities for a host of meaning-making purposes, marketing practice itself might also start to regard itself as a form of art-based cultural production, a form of media that contributes to cultural discourse. This re-envisioning of what marketing does, what meaning it brings to the cultural sphere and
what potential as a cultural producer it must realise for future survival in an increasingly visual, media-driven world will be central to the future purpose and practice of marketing.

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