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GRAPHIC DESIGN MAGAZINE
GDM

Editor's Comment

Graphic Design Magazine is dedicated to discussing and promoting the understanding of contemporary issues in the graphic design industry. The design professional, academic, student or enthusiast will benefit from knowing more about the wider impacts of graphic

design in the world, and the potential for positive change that the medium holds. Graphic Design Magazine heavily uses illustration, photography and colour to utilise the power of visual communication in promoting understanding of these issues.

This issue looks at how graphic design relates to the growing problem of greenwashing. This is the deceptive use of an environmentalist brand image for a company to misrepresent their impact on the world.



Contents

An overview of each article featured within this limited sample version of the Graphic Design Magazine issue on Greenwashing.

4

Misdirecting Climate Action

A look at prominent early examples of corporate greenwashing.

D. Hunter Schwartz - Yello

6

'Greenwashing' Origin: Jay Westerveld

How the term 'Greenwashing' was coined, and examples of it within various industries.

Bruce Watson - The Guardian

9

'Companies Are Valuing Profit Over People'

Understanding the reasons for, and consequences of, corporate greenwashing.

Tori Everson - Duclarion

10

Graphic Designers' Greenwashing

A graphic designer's nuanced perspective on the industry's part in the harmful trend of greenwashing.

Ellen Shapiro - Commarts

14

Big Tech Greenwashing: Corporate Memphis

Linking the issue of greenwashing to companies' use of 'Corporate Memphis' graphic design.

Sriya Choppala - T-Artmagazine

MISDIRECTING CLIMATE ACTION

1970-71 Earth Day and 'Keep America Beautiful'

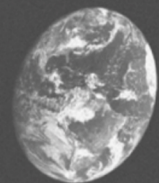
By D. Hunter Schwarz - Yello.substack.com

KEEP AMERICA BEAUTIFUL FOR ME.

It's Your Duty.



PROTECT OUR PLANET: Get Involved In Litter Picking!



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From the first Earth Day 50 years ago to today's climate crisis, compelling images and strong visual communication has raised awareness and served as a powerful call to action for environmental causes. But some images have been more effective than others.

The inaugural Earth Day, celebrated on April 22, 1970, was the result of gripping images of an oil spill off the coast of Santa Barbara, Calif., the year before. The disaster led to images of dead animals washed up on the shore and birds covered in oil. President Nixon said the spill had "touched the conscience of the American people." It also inspired Sen. Gaylord Nelson (D-Wisc.) to start a day dedicated to the planet after he flew out of Los Angeles and saw the spill from his plane's window, Earth Day coordinator Denis Hayes told Pacific Standard. For its part, NASA has been

credited for its Apollo missions and the moon landing, which also occurred in 1969. The missions' remarkable photos of the Earth showed the planet as an "isolated ecosystem floating in space," influencing attitudes about protecting it, according to the Center for Lunar Science and Exploration.

Much of the environmental emphasis in the mid-20th century was about littering, a focus that was intentional.

A conglomerate of packaging and consumer companies, including Coca-Cola and the Dixie Cup Company, formed a group in 1953 called Keep America Beautiful that created ad campaigns that put the onus for a cleaner planet on consumers as opposed to companies. It shifted the discussion away from regulating production and packaging.

In 1971, Keep America Beautiful released their most

well-known ad, which showed a man dressed in traditional Native American clothing. The ad became known as "The Crying Indian" commercial because of the single tear that rolled down the man's face after he encountered pollution and garbage. The tagline "Don't Mess with Texas" was also the result of an anti-littering campaign. Created by the Austin-based ad agency GSD&M for the Texas Department of Transportation, it debuted in 1986 in an ad starring Stevie Ray Vaughan that

aired during the Cotton Bowl. The campaign targeted males ages 16 to 24 and resulted in a dramatic reduction of roadside litter. It brought in \$143,000 in royalties for the state from 2004 to 2016, according to Dallas News.

Environmental visual communication has since shifted from recycling and litter to climate change at large, and companies have adopted messaging to present themselves as environmentally conscious, even if it's not accurate. It's a practice known as...

...“Greenwashing”.

Verb

To make people believe that your company is doing more to protect the environment than it really is.

Cambridge Dictionary

