



Architecture as Political Image: The Perspective of Advertising

Dr. Graham Cairns ^{1,*}

How to cite: Cairns, G. 'Architecture as Political Image: The Perspective of Advertising.' *Architecture_MPS*, 2012, 1(1): 1, pp. 1–13. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14324/111.444.amps.2012v1i1.001>.

Published: 01 September 2012

Peer Review:

This article has been peer reviewed through the journal's standard Editorial double blind peer review.

Copyright:

© 2012, The Author(s). This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC-BY) 2.0 <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>, which permits re-use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited • DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14324/111.444.amps.2012v1i1.001>

Open Access:

Architecture_MPS is a peer-reviewed open access journal.

*Correspondence: gc@architecturemps.com

¹ AMPS (Architecture, Media, Politics, Society)

Title: Architecture as Political Image: The Perspective of Advertising

Author: Dr. Graham Cairns

Architecture_media_politics_society. vol. 1, no.1.

September 2012

Affiliation: Ravensbourne

Abstract:

In the realm of contemporary politics, the need to “communicate” is paramount. Some call political communication a process of manipulation, others a dark art of depict. Here, it will be examined as a form of promotion; as a form of advertising. However, it is an advertising typology that clearly appropriates architecture to its own persuasive ends.

The world of advertising has been subject to numerous developments throughout the course of its history. In the last three decades this has seen what had become the standard mode of visual communication, semiotics, replaced by divergent and ever more sophisticated systems. These systems, we suggest, require the application of phenomenology as an analytical framework if we are to fully understand how they work. However, the importance of semiotic systems of communication has not evaporated. They remain core to advertising and, although obvious to a now fully visually literate public, a reasonably effective technique. They also remain evident in the realm of architecture, political communication and, as we describe here, the combination of the two.

Examining two images of Barack Obama from the 2008 Presidential election in the United States, this paper underlines how core aspects of the standard semiotic system of analysis clearly reveal the promotional and persuasive techniques employed in “political imagery”. However, it also describes how they are incorporated into a broader framework of the politico-media-complex and how this has helped transform their communicative strategies into techniques which require the application of a phenomenological analysis. Employing the terminology of Ferdinand de Saussure, Roland Barthes, Judith Williamson, Noam Chomsky and Maurice Merleau Ponty it will describe these images in fully advertising terms; an approach that turns the politics in play into a form of *commercial* exercise and the candidate promoted into a “product”. The communicative techniques revealed are of course applied by all parties and individuals operating within the competitive political arena but these images of Barack Obama are perhaps the ones that reveal the similarities between the advertising and politics, and their use of architecture, most succinctly.

Title: Architecture as Political Image: The Perspective of Advertising

Author: Dr. Graham Cairns

Architecture_media_politics_society. vol. 1, no.1.

September 2012



Barack Obama at the Democratic Party Convention, 2008.

In the US the electoral machinery of the two main political parties is now in overdrive in the run-in to the 2012 Presidential election. With both Republicans and Democrats breaking all previous records on campaign funding and expenditure, this is the first “multiple billion dollar election.” Much of the finance raised by grass roots activists, individual and corporate donations, and the much questioned PACs and Super PACs, is being spent on campaign advertising. It is perhaps timely then, to pause and consider the sometimes explicit relationship that has emerged between the realms of political campaign imagery and advertising in recent decades; a relationship we suggest, that has been appropriating architecture for years.

As the election draws nearer in the coming weeks the nature of this relationship and its use of architecture will be ever more evident.

The use of adverts in political campaigns:

Any understanding of the incursion of advertising techniques into contemporary political communication will identify the end of World War II as a key turning point. This period represents the apogee of the socio-cultural influence of the United States. By direct extension, it also represents the epoch of the modern media political campaign, and what may be called “the *commercialisation* of Western politics.” In 1952 Dwight D. Eisenhower became the first US candidate to use TV adverts, employing up to 40 twenty second commercials in his successful presidential campaign. In 1960 the John F. Kennedy team used over 200 in what was seen as the first truly mediated Presidential election. Perhaps the most famous ever TV commercial in the US context however, was the 1964 Lyndon Johnson ad dubbed “The Daisy Girl.” Vehemently denounced at the time, “The Daisy Girl” ad showed an image of an innocent girl picking petals off a daisy juxtaposed with a countdown to a nuclear explosion. It ended with an appeal to vote for Johnson because “the stakes are too high”. It was seen as using contemporary “emotionally persuasive” techniques characteristic of the commercial advertising industry of the time, and was controversially withdrawn after one screening.¹

By the 1970s commercial advertising practices had become commonplace in other countries as well, with the UK Labour Party employing an advertising agency for the first time in 1970. This later developed into the use of advertising agencies and film directors to produce “political commercials” which were part-advert part-film. *Kinnock the Movie*, 1987, is held up as a typical example and is credited with immediate impact; Labour increasing five points in the UK opinion polls the day following its first screening.²

By the 1990s and the first decade of this century then, advertising agencies such as *Saatchi and Saatchi* had developed years of experience in promoting political parties. Indeed, it was now common practice to promote parties and politicians as “branded products.”³ A natural extension of this in the UK was the use of explicit advertising techniques in 1997 to re-brand the entire Labour party as *New Labour*. By the turn of the century the difference between advertising and political campaign messages had clearly blurred and the very latest advertising and PR techniques had become fully integrated into politic campaigning.

In these campaigns, architecture has often been used in complex ways. In the 1960s the Kennedy administration invited the press into the White House and presented it as a place of high office and a family home. In the 1980s President Reagan was presented as a frontier pioneer against the symbolic backdrop of the Mid-Western ranch. A decade later, Bill Clinton was pictured on the modern stage sets of MTV, whilst symbolic images of George W. Bush against the rubble of the Twin Towers were clearly evident in the 2004 campaign; a means of appealing to raw emotions through what Charteris-Black calls “moral accounting.”⁴

In the UK, the first Post War Labour government often pictured its politicians in front of slums and new buildings to emphasise the *new deal* it represented. This was repeated by the Wilson governments of the 1960s and 1970s to promote itself as the party that “re-housed the nation.” More recently, Margaret Thatcher launched her 1979 campaign from a symbolic “white elephant of industrial decay” Battersea Power Station, whilst Tony Blair used a symbol of *Old Labour* policies, the Aylesbury housing estate, London, to launch his “new vision of the future” in 1997.

In the 2008 US campaign Senator McCain was pictured at the Vietnam Memorial to emphasise his War credentials while “Attack ads” from the Barack Obama team placed the Republican candidate in front of images of other Washington landmarks. The aim was to negatively associate McCain with the *political establishment* and thus underline their primary argument that he represented nothing more than a continuation of the Bush era.⁵ In all these cases the images use the strategies employed, and indeed

developed, in realm of commercial advertising. They also use architecture.

The semiotics of political communication:

When we consider standard commercial advertising, the basic “communicative strategies” employed correspond to the now well established, and understood, system of semiotic communication. Examined by Roland Barthes from the structural linguistics of Ferdinand de Saussure in the 1950s and 60s, it was most explicitly analysed in the realm of advertising by Judith Williamson in the late 1970s. Despite its age and predictability however, semiotics remains a cornerstone of advertising imagery and, by extension, political communication. Amongst its ideas and terms that are of interest in the context of this essay are the Saussurian concepts of the *signifier* and the *signified*, *paradigmatic* and *syntagmatic* relationships⁶; the Barthean notions of *denotation* and *connotation*, *anchorage*, *relay* and *association*; and notions of *referents*, *transference of values*, and what we may call *aesthetic coherence*, developed by Williamson.⁷

The directness of how these concepts and strategies are applied in the political realm, and the way this often appropriates architecture into the political communicative tapestry, was clearly laid out in an iconic image of Barack Obama on the campaign trail in the months leading up to his 2008 election victory. As in most standard “semiotic adverts,” in this image Barack Obama is placed in the centre of the shot. Focusing the eye of the viewer on “the product” being sold, this formal technique establishes the then Senator of Illinois as the key element of the promotional ensemble. Again, as per the semiotic advertising norm he is positioned in front of a key *referent*; a backdrop of classical architecture. In this case however, the referent does not operate alone; it is accompanied by a number of United States flags.

At the simplest *connotative* level, Obama is placed in an architectural setting resonant of values of power, authority and tradition that is laced with associations of patriotism. Following a standard semiotic reading, these values are *directly transferred* to the candidate through a standard process of *association*. However, there is more to it than such a one dimensional semiotic reading would suggest. As Barthes identifies with regard to advertising, in order to truly understand the semiotic functioning of this promotional image, it is necessary to comment on the cultural-political context around it.⁸ This image was produced in the aggressive political climate of the 2008 race for the White House. Obama was a newcomer to the national political scene and whilst this was seen as his greatest asset, his relative inexperience was identified as his Achilles’ heel. It thus formed the basis of most attacks upon him from his rivals, firstly by Senator Clinton and later by Senator McCain.⁹ This image is a direct attempt by the “marketing team” of the Obama camp to counter these criticisms.

By placing him in an architectural backdrop resonant of tradition, power and longevity, they are using the most basic semiotic advertising technique in the canon to promote their man. However, the architecture chosen is not an abstract representation of power. It is a neo-classical architectural set and can thus function as a direct representation of the White House itself. Thus, one can also say that in the context of this image, its architecture also functions at a *denotative* level; it refers directly to the seat of US political power and, as a result, places Obama in that seat long before the electorate have made their decision. The image is intended not only to transfer abstract values of power and authority, it is intended to transfer values directly associated with the US presidency.

Following the standard semiotic template however, the marketing team have further reinforced this transference through the typical trope of *syntagmatic relationships*, or what we may more easily call, *aesthetic coherence*. Here, it revolves around the colour coherence maintained across all elements of the image. The podium design is a combination of red, white and blue. This is linked to Obama’s blue suit and red and white striped tie which, in turn, aesthetically link him to the US national flag behind. Obama

thus becomes associated with an image of political authority, but also the most obvious symbol of US patriotism. Another knot is neatly tied in this strictly controlled promotional image.

Again, to understand the relevance of this almost literal integration of Obama with the flag as *referent*, it is necessary to understand the political context in which the image was produced; the election campaign of first serious Afro-American candidate. Furthermore; an Afro-American candidate who was brought up for long periods outside the US, and who has what some people describe as “an Islamic sounding name.” All these issues led to his patriotism being constantly brought into question by the political right during the “War Election” of 2008, and hence the use of this particular semiotic trope.

In bringing together the final parts of this promotional image however, the organisers of the convention have done one more thing. In the foreground are members of the public holding placards with the campaign slogan “Change.” Positioning these people so that they appear in the shot ensures a textual insertion into the image which functions as what Barthes describes as a form of *anchorage*; the superimposition of text to an image so as to reinforce its message.¹⁰ It thus ensures a perfect balance in the “product image” which is presented as resonant of tradition, experience and authority on the one hand, but does not lose sight of its freshness and presentation as “new,” on the other.

What we have then is an “advertising image” that primarily uses architecture to cleverly and skilfully navigate the multifarious issues of the political maelstrom of election campaigning. It is an intricate semiotic construct that not only uses standard commercial advertising techniques but does so with a level of astuteness that the best advertising executives would be proud of. It is a perfect example of how today, advertising techniques are integrally interwoven into political campaigning and, in addition, just how easy it is to incorporate architecture into the communicative mix.

A hidden promotional framework:

This use of advertising techniques and architecture in political communication is not restricted to clearly definable and clearly staged promotional imagery such as this however. In many ways, this type of obvious image corresponds to the type of advert inserted independently into a magazine or newspaper; imagery that reveals its identity as advertising on the surface. As with the advertising world itself however, this type of semiotic image operates within the framework of a broader logic; that of *hidden advertising*.¹¹ Hidden advertising has been defined by Hagen Jorgensen as commercial messages paid for either in cash or favours, that are not identified as such.¹² Given its concealed nature, it is highly controversial and is often considered to be the most malign and deceitful of all forms of promotion. It is also one of the most psychologically advanced; being based on an understanding of the un-conscious mind. Highlighted as a growing phenomenon by 2001 across Europe, Jorgensen described its manifestations as various.

One typical and well known example Jorgensen described a decade ago, is the deliberate use and positioning of branded products in films and T.V. programmes, more commonly known as *product placement*. Another example is the use of advertising images that imitate photographs used in printed journalistic articles in the hope that they will be read as related; a technique known as *imitating discourses*. It also includes the writing of journalistic articles which either contain hidden promotional references in their texts or, alternatively, are accompanied by images that indirectly help promote brands or products.¹³ Often referred to as *infomercials* or *advertorials*, these are not always so easy to identify as separate from genuine news and, in theory, are banned in many countries.

Although controlled by legislation in the commercial sector, the practice of trying to disguise advertising

as something else is widespread and is not limited to lightweight or overtly partisan journalism. The media commentator David Michie identifies that it can be found in even the most respected newspapers across the world and quotes UK estimates that place the amount of journalistic output influenced in this way as high as fifty percent.¹⁴ Another commentator from the UK, Edwin Baker, focus on the term *infomercial* and identifies its use as rife across the industry.¹⁵ The author and academic Frank Jenkins focuses on the same thing in the context of editorials, and hence employs the term *advertorial* and similarly argues that it is common across media formats throughout the apparently independent press.¹⁶

Inserted into newspapers or magazines, these pieces generally cover genuine news stories and give little, if any, indication of the fact that they contain promotional references. The reason for this is simple; these formats are trusted and secondary references in them will not raise the suspicions generally associated with direct forms of advertising. Consequently, they are seen as having more impact than standard advertising campaigns could ever hope to have.¹⁷ In every case the advertising stimuli is concealed within the context of another, generally trusted and apparently unrelated, medium. It is “hidden” and thus only unconsciously perceived.

When applied in the political realm exactly the same logic is in play. The spin doctors of political communication have used the “photo opportunity” for years as a way of inserting what are effectively advertising images into mainstream news coverage. Every time a politician is photographed for a press article the image created potentially functions as a political tool; to be either mastered, dominated and controlled or, alternatively, feared. When controlled, the politician in question clearly determines the associative framework at play and turns the apparently independent and “innocent” journalistic photograph into a form of direct political promotion.



Barack Obama and Angela Merkel at the Reichstag, Berlin, 2008

In these scenarios, the political images we see in the press operate as a form of *imitating discourse* in that they can be defined as deliberate and direct promotional images presented in the guise of genuine

journalistic photography. Textual analysis of the accompanying articles often reveals how the articles too function as infomercials or, in some cases more directly as advertorials. Obviously, in countries with clearly partisan media organisations such scenarios are common and the public has, by and large, learnt to “read between the lines.” However, as David Michie and Noam Chomsky have identified in a media context, and authors such as Frank Jenkins and Edwin Baker in an advertising context, this also occurs in the press organisations generally considered independent.¹⁸ Consequently, our tendency to “read between the lines” is diminished.

Returning to the 2008 US election, a number of typical examples of these visual *imitating discourses* were evident throughout both the McCain and Obama campaigns. Perhaps most obvious at an international level during Barack Obama’s summer tour of Europe, this use of hidden advertising techniques relied heavily on our reading of architecture. On a visit to meet with a series of heavyweight European political leaders, the Democratic candidate repeatedly “met the press” in front of the architectural symbols of established political power. These images, carefully controlled and staged, saw Barack Obama photographed against semiotically associative backdrops such as the Reichstag, the Champs-Élysées Palace and 10 Downing Street.¹⁹

Although presented as “independent and objective” press photographs, these images become semiotic constructs fully integrated into the hidden communicative framework of the politico-media complex.²⁰ Pictured in addition with the leaders in question; Nicholas Sarkozy, Angela Merkel and Gordon Brown, the Obama team facilitated the production and international dissemination of images very similar to that they more clearly “manufactured” for the Democratic Party convention in August the same year.²¹ These international images however, were presented as somewhat more coincidental, more journalistic and hence, more reliable. In short, they were presented as if they were a natural element of news which was to be trusted as independent and not directly partaking in the “dirty game of advertising.”

Hidden advertising then, represents another form of promotional strategy that originated in the advertising context but which has easily transposed itself in the political realm. It is also a form of promotion that totally inverts one of the standard principles of semiotic advertising. In this format there is no longer any attempt to draw the attention of the public to the advertising image as such; a basic objective of standard practice. On the contrary, there is a deliberate move towards invisibly weaving the advertising stimuli into a host medium so that it is appropriated as a secondary reference. It is thus perceived as a seemingly insignificant part of an apparently “non-promotional experience” which, as identified by Michie in *Invisible Persuaders*, gives the reference or image a credibility it would otherwise lack.²²

Inevitably, the non-promotional experience or non-promotional context that is appropriated by advertisers using hidden strategies is seen as being compromised, and possibly even totally corrupted by the process. In the context of the media the potentially destructive and polluting consequences of advertising are clear and have been extensively laid out by Chomsky in numerous texts.²³ As one of Chomsky’s five “filters” for understanding the Politico-Media-Complex, advertising has a much deeper impact on press objectivity than isolated cases of hidden advertising of course. However, it is in this isolated context that we see most clearly the way in which political communication appropriates the strategies of the commercial sector and how this involves the appropriation of architecture.

The phenomenology of political communication:

In order to understand how all of this works in terms of political communication, voter persuasion or consumer opinions, it is pointless to consider the deciphering of codes found in isolated and identifiable semiotic images. This may well play a role, but it is one that comes into play at a different level to that considered in standard formats. What one has to understand in the context of hidden advertising is how we perceive peripheral phenomena integrated into apparently non-promotional experiences. To paraphrase Walter Benjamin, we have to examine how we perceive in a state of distraction; a question that was central to the work of the French phenomenologist Maurice Merleau Ponty.

Stemming from a branch of philosophy born in the late 19th century with the ideas of the Italian thinker Franz Brentano Merleau Ponty's work would reach the apogee of its influence in the 1960s. However, it was with the publication of *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy*, 1910 by Edmund Husserl, that phenomenology was truly established in the intellectual world of Western Europe.²⁴ For both Brentano and Husserl, phenomenology represented an attempt to understand human consciousness through the explanation of *perception*, or what may be alternatively called, *sensorial and mental experience*.²⁵

Following the phenomenological trend of seeking to understand human consciousness through the act of sensorial perception, Merleau Ponty came to argue that phenomenology's ultimate goal was, in the final analysis, unachievable. His reasoning was simple; the nature of perception and sensorial experience is inherently ambiguous. In his terms, perception will always be *equivocal*.²⁶ He argued that this was due to a number of factors. Firstly, the objects we perceive tend to be more complex than they appear on the surface; they are *complex configurations*.²⁷ Secondly, we have a multi faceted but inherently limited sensorial apparatus that prevents any full comprehension of our environment.²⁸ Thirdly, objects are never perceived in isolation.²⁹

The net effect is that, for Merleau Ponty, even when we are concentrated and focused, our overall perception, and thus our understanding of consciousness, remains ambiguous. Of particular importance in the context of this argument however, is that the very essence of the perceptual experience Merleau Ponty describes involves the continual appropriation of primary and secondary stimuli. Given the limited nature of our sensorial apparatus and the complexity of the phenomena we attempt to perceive, we are forced to apply what he refers to as "selective attention."³⁰ The primary stimuli will be the centre of our selective attention but, importantly, he suggests that the secondary stimuli are still absorbed; albeit at a lower level of attention. It is at this level of secondary attended objects, absorbed with lower levels of attention, that hidden advertising and political communication work.

Applied to the "journalistic photographs" described earlier from Barack Obama's 2008 European tour, the *phenomenology of hidden advertising* suggests that they function on two counts; firstly on the basis of the "trust" assigned to the press on the part of a generally cynical public and secondly, as a result of "selective attention." Despite levels of public distrust regarding the press recorded in public surveys, Michie and Baker identify that there is still an assumption that the press does not operate on exactly the same basis as explicit advertisers; that their content remains primarily news. In theory, this ensures that when we read an article about a political state visit in a newspaper, we are not expecting to be exposed to explicit promotional imagery. Consequently, to paraphrase Goldman and Papson's comments on

advertising, “our defences are down” and the effect of the imagery in question has a greater chance of “getting under our radar.”³¹

Selective attention amplifies this effect by turning our attention to the article that accompanies the photographs and which, in theory, is the most important element of the journalistic ensemble. In the European coverage of Obama’s short pre-election tour the headlines and articles in question dealt with the public reaction to the visit, the soundbites from the different politicians involved and discussions of the issues covered in the meetings. In Merleau Ponty’s terms, this apparently standard diet of political commentary becomes the primary focus of the reader’s attention and the explicit promotional image is seen to be “backgrounded.” If we consider the photographs in question in purely promotional terms then, they become the hidden stimuli inserted into an independent host medium; the press article. In short, they become *imitating discourses* operating within a bigger promotional framework and work on a mind that absorbs them as secondary independent phenomena.

The use of architecture here is clearly secondary deeply embedded. Indeed, it is hidden. Nevertheless, it is a central component of the overall promotional strategy employed and its role is underlined if we consider one particular incident from this European tour; the request by the Obama team for their man to give a speech in front of the Brandenburg gate on the Berlin leg of the 2008 tour. In an attempt to echo John F Kennedy in 1963 and Ronald Reagan in 1987, the Obama team sought the most symbolic photo opportunity they could in the German capital; an opportunity based on the communicative power of architecture.³² In the event, the request was turned down. The reason; the Brandenburg Gate is “reserved for Presidents.”

Despite the rebuff however, Obama was given permission to deliver a speech at the Victory Column. Originally a symbol of the Prussian victory against the Danes in 1864, the Victory Column is an architectural symbol of some touristic interest. However, it clearly lacks the cultural and political connotations of the Brandenburg Gate; the Gate that divided East and West for almost thirty years; the gate that became a symbol of the repression of Communism and the Freedom of Capitalism; a symbol defended by the US army throughout the second half of the twentieth century. It may be an architectural symbol of an ancient Empire but, in the United States particularly, it is read as the architecture of democracy. However, it is the preserve of Presidents.

Conclusion:

Clearly political communication, particularly in the high octane context of election campaigning, is a field of activity in which every scrap of knowledge from the advertising world is put to work in the creation of “political images”; both literal and metaphoric. What this essay has intended to sketch out, is an overview of how this commonly occurs and how it often involves the use of architecture. We have only scratched the surface of the issues at play however, and only done so in the most direct and currently relevant context; US Presidential campaigns. During the course of the project *Architecture and Political Image* hosted by Architecture_Media_Politics_Society, the intention is to delve much deeper and range much wider in our analysis of these issues.

The intention is to move beyond the “image” and examine how the manipulation of imagery by political parties in both the US and the UK subsequently feeds into the development of architecture in both

countries. Taken from an historical perspective, it is an investigation that will reach back to the earliest examples of political art in the newly independent US, and examine even earlier examples of “political imagery” in the UK. It intends to show a historical lineage of architecture as political image and underline its roles and influences today. For the time being however, this essay offers an introduction to the role architecture currently plays in political campaign imagery; a role which clearly draws on a cultural interpretation of buildings that echoes across continents.

In the two principal examples we have discussed, our aim was to highlight a number of issues. From a purely advertising perspective, we have identified a recently documented change in general strategy; the shift from semiotics to phenomenology. Although not yet fully investigated it has been examined indirectly in a number of texts and, in some limited cases, discussed specifically and in detail.³³ In particular, the focus on the phenomenological reading of hidden advertising means we have had to draw attention to questions pertaining to the media and its political and commercial independence. This is an issue more widely investigated and which continues to generate great controversy.³⁴ It is also one that runs throughout the project that this paper stems from.

These issues are fully integrated into the principal point we have tried to raise and underline here; the appropriation of architecture in political campaigning. Although political communication is a long established field, its broadness has meant very little attention has been given to this question, and it is this imbalance that the *Architecture and Political Image* project seeks to address. From what we have laid out here, it is clear that the politicisation of architecture is not something that only occurs in the built context; in the great palaces of dictators or the homes of democracies for example – what we may call the “hard power” of political architecture.³⁵ On the contrary, we have seen that it is operative at the level of image as well.

This “soft power” manifestation of architecture in the political arena is, we suggest, not only under examined at the moment, but is completely underestimated in importance. As the *Architecture and Political Image* project will attempt to prove, it may well be inconceivable to construct the architectural icons of political power without understanding how architecture operates first of all in this “softer” guise as political image. The relationship between the two we suggest, will not only be found in the context of the US and the UK, the context of our study, but will also be manifest in multiple places and at multiple times. The starting point for the enquiry however, is the United States where the use of architecture as political image is perhaps at its most advanced and sophisticated and, right now, in full flow.

This article is available on the agreed terms of open access. Users are allowed to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of the articles in this journal without asking prior permission from the publisher or the author. This is in accordance with the BOAI definition of open access. Users are expected to fully cite and reference the sources of any material accessed under this agreement. Copyright agreements have been supplied by the author to ARCHITECTURE MEDIA POLITICS SOCIETY. Image 1, European Pressphoto Agency b.v. Image 2, Fair use agreement. For specific enquires on copyright of the text and its images contact the author. g.cairns@rave.ac.uk; For information on the journal see: www.architecturemps.com

¹ Ted Brader, *Campaigning for Hearts and Minds: How Emotional Appeals in Political Ads Work* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2006), 6-9.

² Kavanagh and Butler examine both the Tory and the Labour Party campaigns of the 1987 election with particular emphasis on the use of mass media communications by the labour Party. See: David Butler and Dennis Kavanagh, *The British General Election of 1987* (London: Macmillan, 1988), 154-155.

³ Jennifer Lees-Marshment, *The Political Marketing Game* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 66.

⁴ Jonathan Charteris-Black, *Politicians and Rhetoric: The Persuasive Power of Metaphor* (London: Palgrave, 2005), 256.

⁵ E.D. Dover, *On Message: Television Advertising by the Presidential Candidates in Election 2008* (Maryland: Lexington Books, 2010), 185.

⁶ Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (London: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1966), 122.

⁷ Williamson develops ideas laid out by Barthes and, through him, Ferdinand de Saussure. In particular she adapts these ideas to the specifics of advertising in the UK. Whilst she does not use the term “aesthetic coherence” she describes the process of ensuring an aesthetic correlation between different elements of an advert so that the “transfer of values” is made more efficient. See: Judith Williamson, *Decoding Advertisements: Ideology and Meaning in Advertising* (London: Marion Boyars, 1978), 24. For information of the use of the term “aesthetic coherence” in this same context, see: Graham Cairns, *Deciphering Advertising, Art and Architecture* (London: Libri Publishing, 2010), 11-17.

⁸ For an overview of the context for the conference in the mediated election of 2008, see: Douglas Kellner, “Media Spectacle and the 2008 Presidential Election,” *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies* 9, issue 6 (2009): 707-716; Max Paul Friedman, “Simulacrobama: The Mediated Election of 2008,” *Journal of American Studies* 43, no.2 (2009): 341-356.

⁹ Dover, *On Message*, 201.

¹⁰ These ideas of Roland Barthes are discussed in: *Image-Music-Text* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978). They are examined by John Storey, *Cultural Studies and the Study of Popular Culture: Theories and Methods* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), 91.

¹¹ Hagen Joergensen, “Hidden Advertising.” International Consumer Protection and Enforcement Network (ICPEN) Meeting, Port Douglas, Australia, April 2 2001, 1.

¹² As Consumer Ombudsman for the Danish Government, Joergensen’s comments are made from a very specific geographical context. His comments are negative in tone and he proposes strict control. Since his comments a number of European governments have relaxed restrictions on this type of promotional activity. See: *Ibid.*, 3.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁴ David Michie, *Invisible Persuaders* (London: Bantam Press, 1998), 2.

¹⁵ Baker echoes some of the ideas laid out by Chomsky with regard the relationship between advertisers and the press. He suggests that the financial dependence of the press on advertisers gives them the power to fundamentally distort press coverage and editorial policy. See: Edwin C. Baker, *Advertising and a Democratic Press* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 103.

¹⁶ Frank Jenkins, *Advertising* (London: Prentice Hall, 2000), 147.

¹⁷ Michie, *Invisible Persuaders*, 6.

¹⁸ In addition to the texts referenced above by Michie, an extensive overview of the press and its relationship with the political establishment is available in various text by Noam Chomsky. See: Noam Chomsky, and Edward Herman, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (New York: Pantheon, 1988); Noam Chomsky, *Necessary Illusions* (Boston: South End Press, 1989); *Media Control: The Spectacular Achievements of Propaganda* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 1997); Peter Mitchell and John Schoeffel, eds., *Understanding Power: The Indispensable Chomsky* (London: Vintage, 2002).

¹⁹ The tour and its imagery were commented upon across the European and US press. Some examples include: Gregor Peter Schmitz, “Obama’s Berlin Speech: People of the World, Look at Me,” *Spiegel*, July 25, 2008; Annette Heuser, “A European Honeymoon,” *The Washington Post*, July 24, 2008.

²⁰ Although this term is not used explicitly by Chomsky and Herman it refers to the complex and integrated relationship between politics, the media and big business they describe. See: Chomsky and Herman, *Manufacturing Consent*.

²¹ See: Kellner, *Media Spectacle*.

²² Michie, *Invisible Persuaders*, 6.

²³ See in particular: Chomsky and Herman, *Manufacturing Consent*, 1-37.

²⁴ Joseph J. Kocklemans, *Phenomenology: The Philosophy of Edmund Husserl and its Interpretation* (New York: Doubleday and Company Inc., 1967), 1.

²⁵ Michael Hammond, Jane Howarth, and Russell Keat, *Understanding Phenomenology* (Massachusetts: Basil Blackwell Inc., 1991), 1.

²⁶ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception* (London: Routledge and Keagan Paul, 1962), 6.

²⁷ Merleau-Ponty suggests that every object or experience we consider is a combination of factors that he calls a *meaningful configuration*. For example, if we scan an article on a page of a magazine or newspaper it may seem to consist of simple documentary imagery and an accompanying text. The text however is actually a mixture of facts, opinions and speculations which are in turn made up of multiple direct and indirect references. Similarly, the imagery used is a combination of figures and actions that are composed of multiple gestures, expressions, suggested narratives and more. With a normal level of concentration he suggests, it is impossible to consciously absorb, identify and analyse every aspect of such overall *configurations*. Hammond, Howarth, and Keat, *Understanding Phenomenology*, 138.

²⁸ His second point is that we have a limited sensorial apparatus. With this apparatus we are able to absorb multiple stimuli simultaneously but we cannot apply the same level of attention to each one. For example, if we are reading an article in a paper we are not paying attention to the surrounding articles found on the page. Neither do we focus on the activities in the room we sit in, or pay attention to the sounds we hear in the background. Given the limitations of our physiology, we are forced to selectively choose a limited number of objects for conscious appropriation whilst other objects present in our perceptual field become *back-grounded*. He calls this *selective attention*. See: Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 67-68.

²⁹ If we imagine ourselves reading a page of our magazine, we know that we are not able to appropriate everything it contains with the same level of attention; we are forced to selectively focus on the article’s main themes whilst paying less attention to accompanying imagery for example. This does not mean however that back-grounded stimuli go totally unnoticed or become irrelevant. Although not the centre of our attention, they are present, and are thus tangentially perceived. This means that they assert at least some unwitting influence on the perceptual experience. See: *Ibid.*

³⁰ Merleau-Ponty discusses selective attention and relates it to various studies in psychology; in particular with relation to Gestalt Psychology. It His discussions of it appeared in both the *Phenomenology of Perception* and his earlier text; *The Structure of Behaviour* published later by Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1983.

³¹ Robert Goldman and John Papson have argued that the 1980s saw the emergence of a new genre of advertising that subverted many of the previous semiotic systems. Whilst they do not cover hidden advertising and the phenomenological arguments put forward here they do describe the reasoning behind the developments they describe as the cynicism and increased visual literacy of the contemporary public. See: Robert Goldman, and Stephen Papson, *Sign Wars: The Cluttered Landscape of Advertising* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1996), 84.

³² A range of authors have dealt with architecture in this political and communicative context. For example, see: Adrian Tinnewood, *Visions of Power: Ambition and Architecture from Ancient Rome to Modern Paris* (London: Mitchell Beazley, 1998); Deyan Sudjic, *The Edifice Complex: How the Rich and Powerful--and Their Architects--Shape the World* (London: Penguin, 2008); Murray Edleman, *From Art to Politics: How Artistic Creations Shape Political Conceptions* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995); Anthony Alofsin, *When Buildings Speak: Architecture as Landscape in the Habsburg Empire and its Aftermath, 1887-1933* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2008).

³³ The phenomenological interpretation of advertising put forward in this paper is based on the work of Graham Cairns who has argued that the past forty years in advertising has seen the emergence of three categories of advertising strategy that he defines as semiotic, post-structural and phenomenological. See: Cairns, *Deciphering Advertising*.

³⁴ The arguments about the relationship between the press and politics upon which this paper draws are primarily those of Chomsky. See arguments on the filters of advertising and ownership in: Chomsky and Herman, *Manufacturing Consent*.

³⁵ The distinction made between hard and soft power by Joseph Nye is used here by way of analogy to mark out a difference between explicit uses of architecture by political leaders or parties and the more indirect uses of architecture in campaign imagery to try to “influence” attitudes. It will be expanded upon as this project progresses. See: *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 1990); *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004).

Bibliography

1. Baker, Edwin C. *Advertising and a Democratic Press*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995.
2. Barthes, Rolande. *Image-Music-Text*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1978.
3. Brader, Ted. *Campaigning for Hearts and Minds: How Emotional Appeals in Political Ads Work*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006.
4. Butler, David and Dennis Kavanagh. *The British General Election of 1987*. London: Macmillan, 1988.
5. Cairns, Graham. *Deciphering Advertising, Art and Architecture*. London: Libri Publishing, 2010.
6. Charteris-Black, Jonathan . *Politicians and Rhetoric: The Persuasive Power of Metaphor*. London: Palgrave, 2005.
7. Chomsky, Noam. *Necessary Illusions*. Boston: South End Press, 1989.
8. ---. *Media Control: The Spectacular Achievements of Propaganda*. New York: Seven Stories Press, 1997.
9. Chomsky, Noam and Edward Herman. *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. New York: Pantheon, 1988.
10. Dover, E. D. *On Message: Television Advertising by the Presidential Candidates in Election 2008*. Maryland: Lexington Books, 2010.
11. Friedman, Max Paul. "Simulacrobama: The Mediated Election of 2008." *Journal of American Studies* 43.2 (2009): 341-456.
12. Goldman, Robert and Stephen Papson. *Sign Wars: The Cluttered Landscape of Advertising*. New York: The Guilford Press, 1996.
13. Hammond, Michael, Jane Howarth, and Russell Keat. *Understanding Phenomenology*. Massachusetts: Basil Blackwell Inc.,1991.
14. Heuser, Annette. "A European Honeymoon." *Washington Post* 24 July 2008
15. Jenkins, Frank. *Advertising*. London: Prentice Hall, 2000.
16. Joergensen, Hagen. "Hidden Advertising." International Consumer Protection and Enforcement Network (ICPEN) Meeting, Port Douglas, Australia, April 2 2001.
17. Kellner, Douglas. "Media Spectacle and the 2008 Presidential Election." *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies* 9 no.6 (2009): 707-716.
18. Kocklemans, Joseph, J. *Phenomenology. The Philosophy of Edmund Husserl and its Interpretation*. New York: Doubleday and Company Inc., 1967.

-
19. Lees-Marshment, Jennifer. *The Political Marketing Game*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.
 20. Merleau-Ponty, Maurice *The Phenomenology of Perception*. London: Routledge and Keagan Paul, 1962.
 21. ---. *The Structure of Behaviour*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1983.
 22. Michie, David. *Invisible Persuaders*. London: Bantam Press, 1998.
 23. Mitchell, Peter and John Schoeffel, eds. *Understanding Power: The Indispensable Chomsky*. London: Vintage, 2002.
 24. Nye, Joseph. *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*. New York: Basic Books, 1990.
 25. ---. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. New York: Public Affairs, 2004.
 26. de Saussure, Ferdinand. *Course in General Linguistics*. London: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1966.
 27. Schmitz, Gregor Peter. "Obama's Berlin speech: people of the world, look at me." Spiegel 25 July 2008.
 28. Storey, John. *Cultural Studies and the Study of Popular Culture: Theories and Methods*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996.
 29. Williamson, Judith. *Decoding Advertisements: Ideology and Meaning in Advertising*. London: Marion Boyars, 1978.