Surmounting of Visual Chaos in Urban Space

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Abstract. The importance of this article content is called forth by the fast public space changes that have been taking place in cities of Russia during last decades. To a certain extent, these changes are associated with new information media and means. Nowadays, the visual aids that dominate the public space are advertisements. The aim of advertising is to promote products and services informing the target audience. Forms and ways of achieving it are defined by the customer and the advertising agency. An avalanche of advertising information is trying to occupy a larger space and is doing it more and more actively and sophisticatedly. The visual chaos that resulted from aggressive advertising forms, creates a large number of problems for the residents; sometimes the situation does not seem safe enough. The objective of the given article is to analyze a complex of problems related to existing forms, effectiveness, and art quality of advertisements in the context of the urban environment. The article deals with historic experience of advertising techniques, forms and methods for public space advertising and visual object humanization offered by the world designer community. Most interesting methods successfully integrated in the contemporary urban environment for solving the above mentioned problems are given as well. As a result, new projects can be drawn up by young designers, student architecture studios, and decorative artist alliances. Paradoxical ideas, new forms of designing, an art of large-scale element arrangement, and an ability to find basic factors of interaction of space and form will help to surmount visual chaos, to reduce the urban context tension, and to form an aesthetically attractive visual informative imagery of the environment of Russia’s cities. This article is meant to be a basis of the content that allows to get quickly acquainted with actual concepts and methods for solving problems of advertisement integration in the visual structure of contemporary cities by means of actual forms of visualization, gaming technologies, and new forms of actual art.

1. Introduction

For the Western society, the time of reckless consumption and uncontrolled confidence in advertising technologies passed long ago. In Russia, this story only begins both in consumption and in the advertising industry. The latter attracts huge money, a great number of copywriters, psychologists, market experts, graphic designers, and merchandisers; all of them are permanently engaged in improving mechanisms influencing potential consumers’ consciousness. Strictly speaking, our fast developing market of goods and services is highly profitable without any tricks of advertising companies. An avalanche of products succeeded the goods famine in Russia; now there is a demand for everything – from the heavy road-building machinery to the toothbrushes and teddy bears. Step by step, a space for competition of brands is widening; it means that advertising technologies come to the front and become one of efficient factors in conquering customers.
The general characteristic of the contemporary advertising in Russia is an individual theme for a monograph. It should be noted that the given article concerns only public or street advertising forms. The pathos of street advertisements cannot confuse city residents any longer. From morning to night people, see gigantic pictures of nude beauties, nice little dogs and cats, happy babies, and well-muscled machos, provided with catchy slogans that as a rule have nothing in common with the pictures.

2. Actuality
The content of advertisements in Russia not only appeals to the tastes and wishes of the consumers but it is characterized by deep understanding of the Russian mentality details, style of life, and specific Russian humor. So charming slogans “Dig your mother-in-law into sand”, “Contract killing” or “If you haven’t money we shall print it” with telephone numbers and approximate prices attached, will not be a surprise for worldly wide residents. They know perfectly well that these are ads of a travel agency, a pest control company, and services of a print shop. Perhaps, there exist some teams that determine the efficiency of such surrealistic experiments, however, the general impression and image can be judged as aggressive and destructive because children and teenagers can read, too, but their metaphorical consciousness has not been formed, yet.

Before the XIX century, advertising was only a means of informing about goods. It had no great significance for the commerce development; and it existed mainly in the form of advertisements in printed publications. In the end of the XIX century, the situation changed; advertising agencies appeared in different countries, including Russia, and the advertising had a fast progress. By the XX century, the advertising had turned into a real industry. Up to the middle of the XIX century, the Great Britain became a leading advertising country, but later this place was occupied by the USA.

Today, the advanced advertising industry is highly profitable in all countries having a developed consumer market. The late 80-s of the last century are considered to be a revival of advertising in our country; in the early 90-s, advertisements began to be published in great volumes in the mass media.

During that period, new advertising agencies appeared in Moscow. The same referred to the advertising studios, among them there were “Video International”, “Schuka”, “Maxima”, and “Aurora”. A little later, studios were organized in other regions of Russia. Then international advertising agencies began to open. At present, they occupy a half of Russia’s advertising market. This fact has influenced the level of the work and the qualification of the advertising agencies, and their employees’ qualification. Advertising educational programs have been included in the curriculum of different universities of the country.

“The advertising makes consumers familiar with goods or services, provided by the given production, commercial, transport, financial and credit, or some other enterprise, it is realized in the form of advertisements, published in press and over the radio, posters, exhibitions, etc.; in the bourgeois society, the advertising serves the interests of capitalists, striving to widen commodity marketing and to foist certain goods or services. Here from, there is a figurative meaning of this word: advertising – an excessive praise. Under imperialism, advertising costs reach enormous volumes. In the socialist society, the advertising informs the consumer about produced goods, helps the customer to choose the necessary one, and forms the consumer’s tastes…” [7] This historical citation is quite appropriate here, though it is worded somewhat too passionately. Since coaches of all sorts came to Russia’s market and began to advertise not only the way of life but also the way of thinking and the style of life, the advertising technologies have acquired an unscrupulous character. On the background of “I will teach your life…” naturally for a shortest time and moderate pay, the advertisements about sausages and cosmetics begin to seem acceptable and even nice.

In each country with a developed infrastructure, there is a problem of advertising abundance in the urban context; however, it is expressed in a different way: types of outdoor advertisements, forms of their arrangement, and places of their installation. In 1995, the Federal law “About Advertising” [1] was adopted, which raised the advertising industry on a new level and established certain regulations concerning advertisement placement in the contemporary urban infrastructure.
At present, the main forms of the outdoor advertising carriers are banners, billboards, screens, Morris columns, displays, outdoor posters, signboards, firewalls, lighting devices, canopy structures, etc.

The climax of the advertising technology intervention into the urban environment was a notorious accident in the Moscow underground. While the billboard support structure being installed, the underground transport power supply system was broken and that resulted in the cessation of the longest line traffic. This accident can be regarded symbolic for the interrelations of the urban infrastructure, the architecture, and the advertising industry. The architects’ strenuous search for most organic solutions of the cityscape formation where a great many factors are to be taken into account, such as historical buildings, natural landscape proper, green zones, and many others, was annulled by a gigantic advertising structure in an instant.

Now one can observe a process of aesthetization and humanization of the outdoor advertising industry in Russia. As a whole, the number of outdoor advertisements is decreasing; first of all, it is related with a rapid development of media technologies, Internet and social networks. Undoubtedly, in the foreseeable future this development will go on and influence the profit of goods and services manufacturers. But the number of such expensive and inefficient forms as gigantic banners and structures will unavoidably continue to decrease. The process of replacing outdoor advertising forms has begun but it will not stop tomorrow. Consequently, both positive and negative advertising experiences in this country must be analyzed and discussed by all the participants of the process. As far as advertising structures and forms have become not only usual components of the cityscape but are trying to occupy most popular places in cities, the residents must have a possibility to express their opinion, needless to say of architects and designers.

3. Discussions
It is impossible to imagine a contemporary city in Russia without advertising modules and complicated advertising structures. Nowadays, the outdoor advertisements allow to promote products, attract consumers, and widen market outlets.

The today’s state of the outdoor advertising in Russia’s cities despite this industry’s fast development and high profitability, still gives rise to many questions and complaints. The main problem is incoordination of advertising manufacture companies; this results in motley discrepancy and reduction of efficiency. Another problem is an all-round installation of advertising carriers when the urban environment and the population composition of the neighboring areas are neglected. Russia’s outdoor advertising market is very dynamic and specific. New companies are constantly appearing; they are conquering their own customers; the market is rising. The city inhabitants receive a good part of information from the outdoor advertisements. It provides a possibility of choice and has an impact on production development. A successful functioning of the advertising industry greatly depends on a skillful usage of advertising tools and on the quality of design. The professional understanding of composition, usage of modern fonts, general style, and graphic culture make some samples of advertising modules be creations of art. This enhances the prestige of the ordering company and evokes trust of the consumers. However, while advertisement placement, it is necessary to reach a concurrence of actions of all companies that manufacture and install advertisements in the urban space in order to achieve its maximum efficiency. The placement of three and more advertisements of different kinds on a single ground sharply reduces its efficiency. Visual chaos, motley, and persistence create surplus tension, reduce perception capability, and switch off mechanisms of analysis and fixation of information, which is sometimes useful and aesthetically attractive.

4. Results
Street advertising as a new phenomenon of the urban environment is lately acquiring a more humane character; and the number of advertisements is decreasing. First of all, the process is associated with more efficient advertising mechanisms in social networks and mobile applications. Nevertheless, the outdoor advertising industry will be preserved in the streets of Russia’s cities, that is why designers
should work at improving its quality and methods of more organic placement of advertising modules in the urban environment. Students of the Chair of Design and Art History of the Ufa State Petroleum Technological University are engaged in creative searches in the area of social advertising; they are working at actual design projects. The young designers are captivated with new technologies, such as motion design, animation, and video. These projects are very interesting and well adapted to contemporary advertising tools and digital technologies. Alongside, graphic designers regard traditional forms as an actual trend, requiring great efforts, inventiveness, and high professional skills.

Our long-term co-operation with the Chair of Media Design of the Duale Hochschule, Ravensburg, Germany, gave us an opportunity to get a scientific support of Professor Markus Rathgeb, who was the Head of the Design department. Under the Professor’s guidance, bachelor N. Trofimova worked out a kind of a pocket dictionary or a digest for a practicing designer. It comprises main rules of composition, standards of the font usage, and others. Interesting and expressive forms of integration of advertising carriers were proposed by junior students. These were advertisements in a graffito style, bulk lighting installations, plane silhouette architecture forms, made of light materials, printing on a transparent base (acrylic glass), unexpected formats such as a circle of an oval, and many others. It seems to be promising to use advertising elements in designing selfie zones, so popular among the residents. These projects will perhaps change the image of public areas of cities in Russia in the nearest future; and the urban environment will become stylish, aesthetically attractive, and memorable.

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