Ancient Images, Modern Eyes: The Classical World in Modern Media & Advertising

Wednesday 6th March 2019
The University of Warwick – Westwood Campus

An exciting day of interactive workshops, discussions and activities on the theme of Classical Antiquity as it appears in modern media and advertising.

Beginning with the Renaissance and happening as recently as Ariana Grande’s video for the hit song God is a Woman, the ancient – and most often the Classical – world has been a constant source of inspiration for the visual media we create. Whether we reference it allusively or borrow from it directly, the Classical World has never gone out of fashion when it comes to art, advertising and design – and shows no sign of doing so.

Why does modernity seemingly have such an obsession with all things ancient and mythical? In what ways has classical imagery been used to be persuasive, beautiful, aspirational or evocative? How might our continued reliance on this imagery serve to enshrine negative or derogatory ideas concerning race, gender and aesthetics?

Over the course of this event, we will explore:

- a variety of media which has utilised imagery from, or reminiscent of, the ancient world and the purpose or intentions behind the usage of such imagery;
- what the modern use of images designed to look ancient or classical says about our relationship with our ancient past;
- the ways in which images and ideas from classical antiquity are in fact reconfigured or manipulated – both consciously and unconsciously – for modern media purposes, and the effect this has on our perception/understanding of classical antiquity itself;
- the ways in which the depiction of classical antiquity participates in wider issues surrounding the portrayal of race and ethnicity;
- the part the depiction of classical antiquity in media and advertising has played in both establishing and reinforcing long-held ideas concerning gender and sexuality;
- the ways in which evoking classical antiquity has been used as a tool for sexualisation and to reinforce certain aesthetic/bodily ideals;
- the ways in which, in recent years, classical antiquity has in fact been increasingly invoked in order to repurpose/reclaim imagery which previously signalled the disenfranchisement of certain groups, or to spotlight issues concerning social diversity and thus provoke conversation as to how to better achieve diverse representation in modern visual culture;
- the very benefit of looking at both the ancient world and modern media through this lens.
This event will involve a series of interactive talks and activities on numerous themes pertaining to the depiction of the ancient world in modern media – including issues of diversity, gender expectations and beauty ideals - hosted by researchers from Department of Classics and Ancient History at Warwick University, culminating in participants designing their own advertising campaign inspired by an aspect of ancient society. The day will get young people engaging with Classics and Ancient History in a way that is purposeful and feels strongly relevant to them – not just as students, but also as consumers of modern media.

This event is open to students in secondary school years 9 – 11. All are welcome; however, it may be of particular interest to those studying Media, English Literature, Sociology, Fine Art, and Classics/Ancient History.

Indeed, this event will provide a stimulating vehicle for putting into practice some of the wider aims of the various GCSE Media syllabi, helping to inform students’ critical understanding of the role of the media on its contemporary society. It will achieve this by:

- providing students with an engaging opportunity to develop enquiry, critical thinking and creative skills through consideration of issues that are important, real and relevant to them and to the world in which they live;
- providing students with a unique context in which to consider aspects of style, presentation, values, audience and representation and to employ their understanding of relevant media codes and conventions;
- providing students with an innovative framework within which to exercise fundamental principles of semiotic analysis, including denotation and connotation;
- encouraging students to consider how a medium engages the interest of its audience, and to make judgements as to who a target audience might be;
- allowing students to consider how the form itself influences the nature of the product as well as how audiences interpret and respond to different media forms and even become producers themselves;
- enabling students to appreciate the ways in which the media re-presents (rather than simply presents) the world and constructs versions of reality, and the ways aspects of reality may be represented differently depending on the purposes of the producers;
- enriching students’ awareness of current debates and audience issues, including several aspects of bias and representation;
• encouraging students to consider the different functions and uses of stereotypes, including an understanding of how stereotypes become established and how they may vary over time;
• encouraging students to consider how and why particular social groups may be under-represented or misrepresented, as well as the social, cultural and political significance of particular representations in terms of the themes or issues that they address, and how different representations reflect the social, historical and cultural contexts in which they were produced.

Attendance at this event is entirely FREE OF CHARGE.

Lunch & refreshments will be provided.
Please kindly arrange your own transport – for information regarding transport links, parking & accessibility, please get in touch.

For further information, please contact Kathryn Thompson at:
ancimagesmodeyes@gmail.com

Deadline for booking: JANUARY 31st, 2019
Please visit the event webpage to book your place:
www.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/classics/research/outreach/warwickclassicsnetwork/events/ancientimages

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