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The sight and sound of olfaction:

*How neuroaesthetics explain the association of ancient divinities with
contemporary perfumes*

Ingrid Pettersen

ABSTRACT/RESYMÉ

This master thesis discusses the use of ancient Greek and Roman divinities in contemporary perfume advertising from 1980 to the present. I first introduce the mythological background of Eros, Medusa and other divinities that appear frequently in adverts. Next, I turn to the methods of neuroaesthetics and the importance of olfactory properties in multisensorial stimuli. Since smell is part of the limbic system it triggers the emotions more than the other senses and can elicit a more powerful response. An artist who has worked with smell is Sissel Tolaas, who in the exhibition 'RE_____ ' uses her own body smells. The following chapter consists of analysis of video commercials for perfumes, especially Yves Saint Laurent's *Kouros*, Versace's *Eros*, *Eros Pour Femme*, *Eros Flame* and Thierry Mugler's *Alien*. I then present an experiment conducted in September 2023, in which 10 students aged 20 to 30 years, 60% female, 40% male were invited to rate the perfume scents and classify the olfactory qualities as respectively 'male', 'female' or 'neutral'. The participants were also required to tell whether they found that a given scent was in keeping with the visual and verbal presentation of the perfume in the commercials. The conclusion reached is that the qualities associated with individual scents are more or less random, there being no specific male or female scent. Based on the packaging and advertising campaign, the consumer is led to believe that the perfume has certain qualities. Perfume is generally associated with sensuality and sold in order to increase sensual appeal. The reason for launching contemporary perfumes in the nostalgic guise of pseudo-antique ideals and antique settings is that the emphasis on handsome gods and beautiful goddesses sustains the notion of the product's timeless quality.

Denne master avhandlingen diskuterer bruken av antikke greske og romerske guddommer i moderne parfymereklamer fra 1980 til i dag. Først introduseres den mytologiske bakgrunnen til Eros, Medusa og andre guddommer som ofte opptrer i reklamekampanjer. Deretter ser jeg på neuroestetikk som metode og betydningen av duft i multi-sensoriske stimuli. Da duft er del av det limbiske systemet, vekker lukt/duft emosjoner mer enn de andre sansene og kan gi sterkere respons. En kunstner som har jobbet med duft er Sissel Tolaas, som i utstillingen 'RE _____ '.

benytter sine egne kroppslukter. Det neste kapitlet består av analyser av kommersielle videoer for parfymer, der det inngår antikke figurer, spesielt Yves Saint Laurents *Kouros*, Versaces *Eros*, *Eros Pour Femme*, *Eros Flame* og Thierry Muglers *Alien*. Deretter presenteres et eksperiment utført i september 2023: 10 studenter i alderen mellom 20 og 30 år, 60% kvinner, 40% menn, ble bedt om å karakterisere parfymer ut fra duften i kategoriene 'maskulin', 'feminin' eller 'nøytral'. Deltakerne skulle også svare på om de fant at en lukt var i samsvar med den visuelle og verbale presentasjonen i reklamefilmene. Konklusjon ble at kvalitetene assosiert med individuelle dufter er mer eller mindre tilfeldige og at det ikke er noen spesifikk mannlig eller kvinnelig duft. Ut fra innpakning og reklamekampanjer ledes forbrukeren til å tro at parfymen besitter visse egenskaper. Parfyme assosieres gjerne med sensualitet og selges for å forsterke brukerens sensuelle appell. Årsaken til å lansere samtidige parfymer i regi av pseudo-antikke idealer og i antikke settinger er at fremhevelsen av veltrente guder og vakre gudinner er med på å fremheve produktets tidløse kvaliteter.

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INTRODUCTION

The idea of my master thesis began on a cold and rainy November evening, during a discussion with my boyfriend, sister and brother-in-law; about how smelly odours are perceived. We had been out all day, chopping wood for next winter's supply and naturally that resulted in some sweat. On our way home, I wore my boyfriend's sweater and he asked me if it smelled sweaty and unpleasant. It did smell of sweat, but I did not find it unpleasant at all, in fact I felt comfort and safety from his odour. I replied to his question that I experienced his sweat as smelling nice, which led to the discussion about the sense of smell, and how odours are perceived exceedingly different from one person to another. My interest in odours and fragrances had existed for as long as I could remember, but this *one* observation - which I found especially intriguing – triggered my curiosity for how the olfactory system works, and how the other senses affect the perception of it. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit the world in 2020, olfaction and gustation got a boost in interest – understandably – as early symptoms of infection are loss of taste and smell.¹ The loss of olfaction reduces gustation significantly, causing food and beverages to be experienced as monotone and unappetising, and making products made for the sense of smell e.g., *perfumes, deodorants or scented candles*, purposeless. The senses are important for several reasons, amongst them are basic needs and survival. In order to distinguish between poisonous and safe berries, to smell the difference between spoiled and fresh meat, to taste the sweetness of ripe fruits, to hear someone or something lurking behind you, or to feel the crawl of a deadly spider on your arm, the senses are crucial. Sensory receptors gather information from external stimuli and send electric signals with millions of bits of impressions every second to the brain for processing and the senses cooperate with each other and influence how we make decisions.²

For me, the most *fascinating* of all the senses, are olfaction, due to its immense ability to weaken and intensify gustation, to cause physical feelings, (e.g., nausea, hunger, arousal, relaxation) and even trigger memories.³ Early in my research of the senses, I naturally read about Aristotle and his sense hierarchy where he deems sight as the highest of the senses (Robert Jütte, 2007). While Aristotle's idea of a hierarchy ranging our senses from top to bottom seemed old-fashioned and

¹ Cleveland Clinic, 2020

² George A. Miller, 1956

³ Margit Walsø, 2022, 39-41

outdated to me, it struck me how the fluid idea of antiquity's *deities* with their continuous relevance and ability to change, almost served as a juxtaposition to the firm schematic idea, which generated the subject matter for my thesis: *In what way has the meaning and qualities of the antique gods and goddesses changed gradually as the modern society has developed, and can neuroaesthetics give us the answer to how our senses can "trick" us into favouring one object over an other?* One of the biggest users of the antiquity's deities and their narratives is the advertisement industry, and I will argue that some of the deities frequently used, has become commercialised to a degree where the consumer easily can be ignorant of the fact that the product being advertised is placed in the context "good enough" for a deity.⁴ I will use a recent personal experience as an example of this:

I had never noticed this before, perhaps it was the high frequency of information from commercials in between TV-shows that had made me blind to the obvious; that the commercial for Gillette's razor for women, *Gillette Venus*, used Venus the goddess of beauty to promote their product. The product name and their slogans "Reveal the goddess in you", "Embrace your inner goddess" and even the lyrics sung in the background: "I'm your Venus, I'm your fire, your desire" followed by a woman talking for the rest of the commercial, all emphasise that Venus represented the razor.⁵ Towards the end of the commercial the words "[...] for the closest shave ever, in just one stroke, so close your skin stays smoother longer. And that's something all goddesses are entitled to." are said. In retrospect it is no surprise that Aphrodite/Venus – the goddess of beauty - is used for promoting a beauty product, yet I find it fascinating that I, blissfully ignorant, used this razor for years before noticing the context Gillette had put themselves in; that shaving one's legs with the Venus razor equals feeling like a goddess. Women removing hair from their bodies to enhance their beauty is not new, but it has nothing to do with descriptions of the ancient Goddess Venus' appearance. Gillette is merely using Venus' *quality* as the goddess of beauty as a powerful mean to promote their product; she still represents beauty, but since the perception of beauty is relative, the promoter – in this case Gillette – has the opportunity to define what is beautiful to how they see fit. To answer the first part of my subject matter I will present three deities/characters from Greek/Roman mythology: *Aphrodite/Venus*, *Eros/Cupid* and *Medusa* and look at how the perception of them has changed from antiquity to

⁴ I am using the term *user of the antiquity*, as that will be the point of view in this thesis

⁵ (Gillette Venus, 2000)

the modern age. I will answer the second part of my subject matter by looking at a beauty product that indulges the olfaction; *perfume*. The use of art historical references in perfume advertisements are plentiful, with elements like Greek/Roman architecture in ancient sceneries, symbolism, names, and the use of deities and mythological creatures. This raises important questions, like *how* and *why* art historical references and the Greek/Roman antique are used to sell perfumes and in what way the sense of *sight* and the sense of *hearing* are utilized to sell a product intended for the sense of *smell*.

STRUCTURE:

This master thesis is divided into three chapters with subsections, followed by a fourth concluding chapter. The first chapter will serve as a presentation chapter and will be focused on Greek/Roman deities, their meaning and qualities in antiquity and a discussion of what has been modified/changed as the modern society has evolved. The main goal in the first chapter is to look at what this new and changed modern context has done with the perception of the deities and representation of them. In chapter two, I am focusing on the terms *Neuroaesthetics*, *mirror neurons*, *prototypes* and *process fluency* and discuss the senses with main focus on *olfaction* and *gustation*. I will discuss the interactive exhibition “RE_____” by the Norwegian artist and scientist Sissel Tolaas, which focuses on the senses, especially on olfaction, to explore how art and olfaction can be put together. Chapter three will fuse the first and second chapters where I look at selected perfume advertisements and discuss the subject matter based on the discussion done in the two first chapters. I am going to use pictures of the commercial posters from the selected perfumes and screenshots from the video commercials to demonstrate and underline important points, while analysing. I will discuss the ways the chosen advertisements are using neuroaesthetics to trick the senses into desiring a perfume and look at how the selected deities and their qualities are used to sell the product.

To go deeper into the question of how the senses can trick a person, I dedicate chapter three to present an experiment I have designed and carried out for the purpose of figuring out if the advertisements are influencing the way a fragrance are experienced. For example, does the presented perfume really smell manly or feminine, or do we believe so because of the

advertisement and aesthetics around it? It will be a qualitative experiment with 10 participants. In the final and fourth chapter I will discuss and conclude the questions in this thesis and make some final remarks.

METHOD AND RESEARCH

Texts about antiquity, deities and the Greek/Roman mythology have been written in a great quantity from Homer's Iliad and Hesiod's Theogony to narratives through books, podcasts/song lyrics, movie scripts and dictionaries in the modern age. Amongst the literature I have chosen to support the first chapter, is *Mythology Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes* by Edith Hamilton, *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Mythology* by Roger Woodard, *Venus and Aphrodite* by Bettany Hughes and *Toward a 'Polychrome History' of Greek and Roman Sculpture* by Bente Kiilerich.

For the first part of the second chapter, the literature I will use is relatively recent, and its mostly based on article journals and research done in the field of neuroaesthetics, which was coined as a term by the neuroscientist Semir Zeki in 1999. To explain what neuroaesthetics is, I'm using *The Neurobiology of beauty, How the Brain Explains Art* and *Toward a brain-based theory of beauty* by Zeki. Gustaf Gredebäck's research *The Mirror Neuron System: Understanding others as Ourselves*, Giacomo Rizzolatti's *Understanding Others* and *The Golden Beauty: Brain Response to Classical and Renaissance Sculpture*, and *Prototypes Are Attractive Because They Are Easy on the Mind* by Piotr Winkielman et. al. are some of the sources for discussing Mirror neurons, process fluency and preference for prototypes.

A closer look will be done at the artist and scientist Sissel Tolaas' exhibition *RE _____* at the Astrup Fearnley museum, to see how art and the senses can be combined and give the visitor a multisensory experience. A thorough discussion of how the senses influence each other when looking at commercials (e.g., colours, packaging, branding, sounds), with main focus on olfaction is done. *Just how much of what we taste derives from the taste of smell* by Charles Spence, *Cross-Modal Associations Between Odors and colors* by Luisa Demattè, Daniel Sanabria and Charles Spence and *A Novel Multigene Family May Encode Odorant Receptors* by Linda Buck and Richard Axel are amongst the literature supporting my discussion. In part two of the second chapter, I'm analysing five perfume advertisements in video form; *Kouros* by Yves

Saint Laurent, *Eros*, *Eros pour Femme* and *Eros Flame* by Versace, and *Alien* by Thierry Mugler.

My goal in this master thesis is to find out how the senses' enhancement of each other can trick us into liking or preferring one object over another, and if the means used in commercials affect the experience of perfumes as manly, feminine or unisex, and if it makes the fragrances more likeable.

CHAPTER 1: PRESENTATION OF THE THREE PROTAGONISTS – *APHRODITE, EROS AND MEDUSA*

INTRODUCTION

The Greek mythology tells many stories explaining the world, natural phenomena and even feelings like falling in love. Many of them are highly fictional and not relatable to the human nature. An example of this is the birth of Athena, the goddess of war and wisdom; her mother, Metis, was married to Zeus. Gaea and Uranus warned Zeus that Metis would bear a son that would be stronger than his father and become king of gods and men, and a daughter who would be powerful and wise. So, to prevent their son from being born, Zeus swallowed his first wife, Metis, who already was pregnant with their daughter. She was then born out of his head.⁶

The deities were used in the conventional sense in Greek antiquity, but how are the circumstances in the modern age, that is in the 20th and 21st century? The sculptures, temples and ideas of the gods are still used frequently, but the connotation has shifted from a religious perception to a more commercial and mainstream use. To understand the change in meaning and importance of the deities and their mythology I will discuss three deities that are relevant for perfume commercials. The order will be *Aphrodite, Eros, and Medusa*, and the key questions will be who he or she was/is, qualities and attributes, and visual appearance.

This chapter will serve as a presentation of the three protagonists – *Aphrodite/Venus, Eros* and *Medusa*, with the purpose of determining how many different interpretations and visual portrayals there is already in antiquity, and the fluidity in their characters. Factors like visualisations of Eros' at different ages, Medusa's change from ugly and terrifying to beautiful

⁶ Roger Woodard. 2009, 90

and seductive, and Aphrodite as a symbol of beauty and romantic and sexual love make these deities everlasting images pertinent in modern as well as in ancient contexts.

APHRODITE

*Etymology*⁷: *aphros* = *foam*

Goddess of sexual love, beauty, fertility, the sea

*Personification of female grace*⁸

*One of the Olympians*⁹

The Birth of Aphrodite

The physical birth of Aphrodite can be found in two different myths. One tells a story about Gaia, the earth goddess, who is tired of joyless, eternal coitus with her husband/son Ouranos. She asks her son Kronos for help, and he then proceeds to cut off his father's genitalia which land in the sea. Foam is forming in the sea where the genitalia land, and Aphrodite rises from it. The other myth says that Aphrodite is daughter of the king of the gods Zeus, and Dione -a Sea nymph.¹⁰ Since Aphrodite is the goddess of sexual love, beauty and fertility (and the sea), it is necessary to look at how she has been presented in her different states.

Stories about a goddess of beauty, love and sex is strongly represented by the Greek Aphrodite, (and the Roman Venus) but the need for a goddess like her, with her qualities, can be traced further back. For example, before Aphrodite, the goddess is represented in the form of Astarte, Ishtar and Inanna, three goddesses that emerged from across the Middle East. They were often depicted as young girls, sometimes with wings, horns and jewellery and were also the original deities associated with the planet Venus.¹¹

⁷In Roman mythology, *Venus*:

Wen: to desire, to strive for goddess of beauty and love (Douglas Harper, 2023)

Cassell's Latin-English Dictionary: *Venus*: charm, loveliness, attractiveness. *Venustas*: loveliness, beauty.

⁸ Gloria Lotha et. al, 1998

⁹ J.A. Coleman, 2019, 20

¹⁰ Robin Hard, 2020

¹¹ Bettany Hughes, 2019, 17-21

The goddess would not always be presented solely with female qualities, but sometimes as a figure with both female and male qualities; a hermaphrodite.¹² The priests of Aphrodite were also presented like this sometimes, with for example female breasts and male beard. A sculpture from Cyprus more than 5000 years old, “Lady of Lemba” (fig.1) is also depicted with both female and male qualities; for a neck it has a phallus, big curvy thighs, breasts, a vulva and a stomach that is pregnant, clearly representing both sexes. It is a small (30 cm) figure – much older than the Greek Aphrodite – who represents life-giving powers. Many small figures like the *Lady of Lemba*, even older and smaller, has been found on Cyprus, and they are like her; small figures who are pregnant with phalluses instead of necks.¹³ These small figures and sculptures show the human desire to depict the understanding of life, and maybe even the need for making representations of feelings like love, desire, and lust, and for the spiritual and divine.



Fig. 1, *Lady of Lemba*
30 cm
Limestone, 3000-3500 BCE
Archaicwonder, 2014



Fig. 2, *Reclining Aphrodite*, Pheidias
approximately: 123x233 cm
Photo: Marble, 438BC-432BC
The British Museum, 2018

Many ancient sources describe Aphrodite. I have chosen five of them to support my text:

¹² Ashtar, Inanna and Ishtar were sometimes intersexual, androgynous or even transgender in the eastern practice and some greeks also believed that Aphrodite kept within her the cut of penis of her father. The term *hermaphrodite* stems from the Greek myth about the child of Aphrodite and the god Hermes. The beautiful baby was merged with a nymph, and then became a deity with both female and male qualities (Bettany Hughes, 2019, 77-78).

¹³ Bettany Hughes, 2019, 7-9

From *The Iliad*, Homer

*Your power are subduing spells and charms which
Bring all things mortal and immortal to your feet*

From the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*

*There she went in and put to the glittering doors,
And there the Graces bathed her with heavenly
oil, such as blooms upon the bodies of the
eternal gods - oil divinely sweet, which she had
By her, filled with fragrance. And laughter-loving
Aphrodite put on allure rich clothes . . . decked
Herself with gold . . . For she was clad in a robe
Out-shining the brightness of fire, a splendid robe
of gold, enriched with all manner of needlework,
Which shimmered like the moon over her tender
Breasts, a marvel to see*

From *The Greek Anthology*:

*Rising up frothier mother the sea. Look,
The Cyprian, she whom Apelles laboured hard to paint!
How she takes hold of her tresses
Damp from the sea! How she wrings out the foam
From these wet locks of hers! Now Athene and Hera Will say
In beauty we can never compete!*

From Sappho, *fragment 102*

*Mother darling, I cannot weave -
Slender Aphrodite - the Kyprian goddess - has
Broken me with longing*

From *The Aeneid*, Virgil

*She spoke, and as she turned, her neck
Shone with roselight. An immortal fragrance
From her ambrosial locks perfumed the air.
Her robes flowed down to cover her feet,
And every step revealed her divinity.*

...

*And then she was gone, aloft to Paphos,
Happy to see her temple again, where Arabian
Incense curls up from one hundred altars
And fresh wreaths of flowers sweeten the air.¹⁴*

Imaginations of Aphrodite's looks have existed for nearly 3000 years, and with illustrative descriptions like this; *her neck shone with roselight, immortal fragrance for her ambrosial locks, damp from the sea, she wrings out the foam the sea, from these wet locks of hers!, now Athene and Hera then will say in beauty we can never compete, decked herself in gold, her tender breast, a marvel to see and slender Aphrodite*, it is easy to imagine how the mere thought of her beauty could be impressive and intimidating or even overwhelming and scary. Her personality is also described vividly to substantiate the perception of the captivating goddess; *every step revealed her divinity, laughter-loving Aphrodite, your power (...) bring all things mortal and immortal to your feet and broken me with longing*. There is no doubt that Aphrodite's looks is an important part of her identity (maybe even the most important), and is an inspiration for great stories about admiration, jealousy, love, sex, passion, lust and more. The approach to capture her sexuality has changed with time.

¹⁴ For these and other sources, Garber & Vickers, 2003; Huges, 2019, 51, 47-48, 1, 80, ix

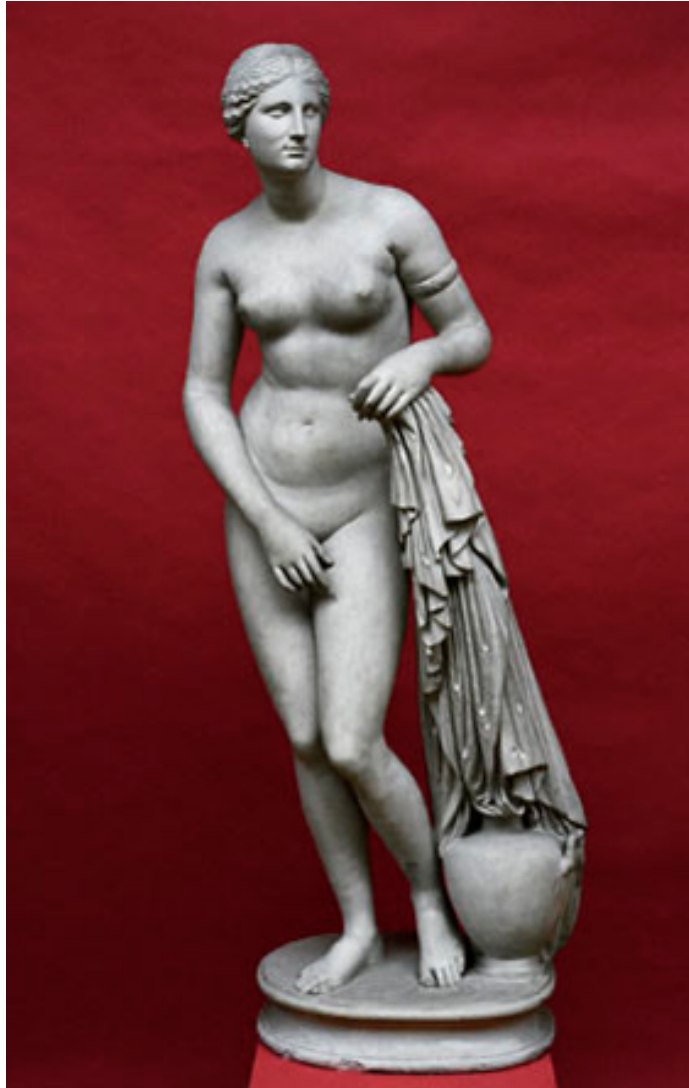


Fig. 3, *Aphrodite of Knidos*, Roman Copy, Praxiteles

2.05 m

Original Marble: 4th century BCE

Photo: *University of Cambridge*

She used to be clothed and adorned with rich silver and golden colours and clothes, beautiful robes and pieces of jewellery. The version of her that is naked or semi naked became popular around the fourth century BCE, with the *Aphrodite of Knidos* (fig.3) by Praxiteles as a front figure (Nigel Spivey, 2013, Jan Bažant, 2022). This revolutionary sculpture is credited with being the first female nude that is life-size. The nude Aphrodite was both rejected and celebrated,

which is understandable since the deity used to be presented with clothes on.¹⁵ With Praxiteles' novel version who was naked, only with the right hand in front of her sex and a piece of clothing in the other, it is easy to imagine that it was both interesting and shocking at the same time and the fact that she is life-size is also important to keep in mind. She is not part of a group but stands alone, which keeps the focus solely on her. She looks young and a bit shy, with the one hand covering her sex, her torso bent carefully so that she is leaning slightly forward, and her eyes gazing away from the viewer. Her facial expression is tender, with her closed mouth forming a tiny smile in the corner of the mouth. It looks so soft that it could remind of the Leonardo DaVinci's Mona Lisa with the sfumato technique. Her body is standing in the contrapposto position which is enhanced by a gentle s-shape from top to bottom. Next to her stands a bathing urn, maybe with perfumes or oils added in the bathwater, which indicates that she is going to take a bath, or - possibly more likely -, getting out of the bath and just having reached for the towel/clothing as she is caught naked by the viewer. The versions that exist today are Roman copies, but the original was made of marble and placed in the middle of a round room, so it was possible to walk around the statue and look at it from all angles (Diana McDonald, 2021)¹⁶ Even though she is a depiction of a mighty, out of the world, beautiful goddess, portrayed this way, she is humanised. She looks like a beautiful young woman, and the way she is modelled gives a soft and lifelike feeling, with her muscles in her arms and stomach, fat by her armpit and lower belly, and her skin, chiselled in soft and smooth manner. There is a great sense of depth and volume in the statue, making it lifelike enhanced by the light falling naturally on her creating shadows in the folds of the piece of clothing, under her breasts, her muscles, hair, eyes, mouth and more. Even in the white, monochromic versions that exist today, the statue provides a realistic feeling. Most likely the statue would have been polychrome painted in strong or light colours, with details like coloured irises and pink lips, making her look even more natural and impressive.¹⁷ Sadly, one can only imagine how she would have looked with her skin, hair, eyes and the clothing coloured, since the original is lost. Certainly, the written descriptions of her in *The Iliad* can give a hint, for example, *her neck shone with roselight*, and *her ambrosial locks*. It is also described how her clothing would have looked and imagine that the statue's robe would

¹⁵ University of Cambridge, 2023, <https://museum.classics.cam.ac.uk/collections/casts/aphrodite-knidos>

¹⁶ Spivey, 2013, 194-215

¹⁷ B. Kilerich, 2016

have been painted and adorned thereafter; From the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*; *For she was clad in a robe Out-shining the brightness of fire, a splendid robe of gold, enriched with all manner of needlework, Which shimmered like the moon.* Maybe she would not have looked humanised after all, if she still had her colours, or maybe it would have strengthened the human expression. I have made a suggestion of how she could have looked like painted, and also included *the birth of Venus* by Sandro Botticelli as examples (fig. 4 and fig. 5).¹⁸



Fig. 5, *Birth of Venus* Sandro Botticelli

172.5 x 278.5 cm

Tempera on canvas, ca 1485

Uffizi Florence, 2018

¹⁸ The Birth of Venus by Sandro Botticelli is made much later than the Knidian Aphrodite, but there are many similarities in the two depictions of the goddess, and it gives an idea of how the statue could have been coloured. Botticelli's Venus is based on the Venus de' Medici, a variant of the Knidian Aphrodite.

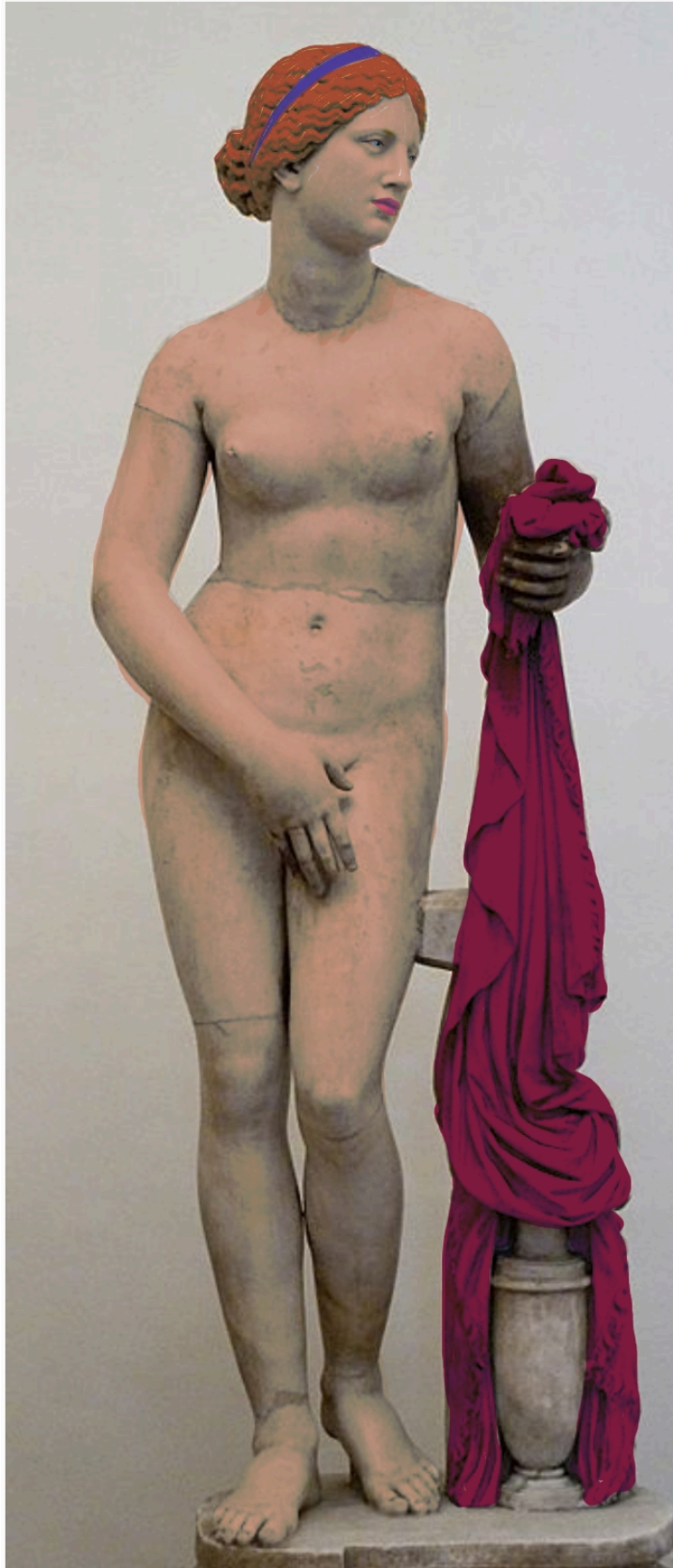


Fig. 4, *Aphrodite of Knidos*, restoration Ippoliti Buzzi

Colouration on photo

Ingrid Pettersen, Polychrome suggestion, 2023

National Museum, Rome

Above, I wrote that the Goddesses good looks could be the most important part of her identity, and one of the reasons for claiming that, is naturally from the change in the imagination of her with time. One important reason for changing how the Goddess looked was politics, and social status in ancient Rome. It was not only important that she was the one being depicted, but how she was visualised. Statues of her would be used as kind of a self-portrait (likely a member of the political elite), and they would be placed officially for everyone to see. Statues of Aphrodite were also used as decorations in private homes (Jan Bažant, 2022, 76).¹⁹

Venus has gone through a change from fully clad, to bare breasted, to fully nude and she has been the impossible goal for women to look like and the desire and frustration of men (see fig. 6 for an example). The Goddess has been loved and feared for her good looks and powers to seduce.²⁰ Her invincible beauty remains.

Another aspect that is important to take into consideration besides her look, is the attributes contributing to characterize the goddess. Several objects are associated with the Goddess that tells tales of what she stands for; love, beauty, fertility, and being the protector of fleets that leaves the safe dry land to set sail across the open and dangerous sea. Aphrodite is also viewed as the goddess of prostitution, protecting the sex-workers, both making sense since she is the goddess of sexual love and because of her birth story where she emerges from the sea (William Hansen, 2000). The attributes remain the same and has not gone through the same changes as the depiction of her looks.

One of the attributes; a seashell in the form of a scallop, is a symbol that stems from the birth of Aphrodite rising from the sea foam. The shell is found in depictions of her (for example with the goddess standing in a shell in Botticelli's painting *The Birth of Venus*(fig.5)), and it has been found pierced shells likely used as jewellery. Her bird is the dove, and sometimes the sparrow and the swan too. Aphrodite's tree is the Myrtle, and some flowers are connected to her like the

¹⁹ Cleopatra (and Julius Caesar) used statues of Aphrodite, and clothing to identify and represent herself. (Jan Bažants, s. 81, Hughes, s. 112, 124-127).

²⁰ When the Christian religion came, the Goddess of love and lust became a scary thing, and she was looked down upon and even replaced as Mary Magdalene in some artworks (Bettany Hughes. 142).

anemones and the red rose.²¹ She also had a girdle that was woven with the powers of love and desire and her fruit is the pomegranate, a fruit which is associated with fertility and life and death.²² During the process of writing this chapter I received a present, a set of *DOVE* shower gel and deodorant. The *DOVE* brand is well known all over the world, and its products exist in many beauty and grocery stores, yet I have never noticed before, the correlation between the dove and this brand who sells beauty products. The gift I received was truly notable since it uses not only one, but three symbols of Aphrodite: the dove, the pomegranate and the myrtle (fig. 7).



Fig. 6, *Venus Callipyge (Venus with the beautiful Buttocks)*
Roman copy, 1st century CE, Marble, ca. 300 BCE
Photo: *ILSistemone*, 2013
National Archaeological Museum, Naples



Fig. 7, *DOVE Christmas*
Carton, soap and deodorant
Ingrid Pettersen,
Molde, 2022

²¹ Edith Hamilton, 2017

²² Aron J. Atsma, 2000-2017

The ancient goddess is very much a part of the daily life around the world, highly used as a selling point cleverly disguised as her symbols. Her name is also used for marketing purposes for other beauty products, for example Venus Gillette as mentioned in the introduction. One of her flowers, the red rose, is bought and given as *the* symbol of love every day. For birthdays, Mother's Day, funerals and many other occasions where love from the sender to the receiver needs to be expressed with more than words, and for Valentine's Day only, there are produced around 250 million red roses every year (Safnow, 2018).

It is noticeable that many of the products need to smell good which makes sense, since Aphrodite often is described taking a bath in perfumed or oiled water and putting pleasant smelling oils on herself. Some odours can be intoxicating and does actually affect the human brain by being aphrodisiacal, like the jasmine and lavender. How the sense of smell affects the brain and how Aphrodite and other deities are used to sell nice smelling products will be discussed in the next chapter.

Aphrodite *or Venus'* popularity was already used for selling and commercial purposes in Pompeii, for example for an advertisement for a wool shop, and for election posters. Aphrodite had many children, including Aeneas, Hermes, Hermaphroditus, and Eros, which she had with the God of War, Ares. *Eros*, is the beautiful God of love and is used for selling various products and serves as a source for love stories like his mother.

EROS

*Etymology*²³: From: *eran, eramai, erasthai = to desire*

Personification of love

Eros is one of Aphrodite's many children, and the son of Ares, God of war (Ares is Mars in Roman mythology, hence the well-known expression *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus*). He is a young boy/man who is very beautiful.

²³ Cupid etymology:
from: *Cupere = to desire*. (Douglas Harper, 2018)

Eros, and sometimes another child called Himeros (means desire) are seen as older than Aphrodite and are described welcoming her when she is born from the sea, but from around the 5th century BCE Aphrodite was portrayed as the mother of the Erotes.²⁴ Eros is the God of love, and he holds the power to make men and Gods alike fall in love with anyone or anything, without the other part reciprocating the feeling. He is described and visually imagined in quite different ways, but he is always beautiful and often with his bow, and he is often depicted together with his mother. One of the ways he is depicted is as a plump baby, (in Roman mythology as Cupid, he is depicted like a flying baby, also called putto) flying around with wings holding a bow and golden arrow, and sometimes he is blindfolded. Another form he has is as a beautiful youth or young man, with wings and his golden bow and arrow.²⁵



Fig. 8 *Triumph of Galatea*, Raphael
2.95 m x 2.25 m
Fresco, 1511
Villa Farnesina, Rome



Fig. 9, *Eros Farnese*, Roman copy
Greek original, 1st/2nd century
National Archaeological Museum, Naples

²⁴ The Erotes are a collective of winged Gods that are associated with sex and love.

²⁵ J.A. Coleman, 2019

In fig. 8 *Triumph of Galatea* by *Raphael* we see a fresco- depicting a chaotic triumph scene. The fresco is filled to the brim with figures consisting of persons, animals, personifications, satyrs and sea creatures. The postures of the figures are characterised by muscles in tension and bodies in full motion. The only thing seeming to be still in the scene are the sky and ocean, making the lively scenario easier to study. The way their limbs are placed, creates together with the objects (arrows, lines attached to the dolphins etc.) and the gazes of all the creatures a strong X shape. In the top and bottom part of the frame four babies (putti) are creating kind of a diamond shape around the rest of the figures, with a fifth one in the left corner holding a bunch of arrows. The babies are abnormally muscular (in tone with the other figures), and plump, with beautiful, rounded cheeks. They all have the characteristic wings, and three of them are holding bows and arrows pointed downwards, ready to shoot. *Triumph of Galatea* is an example of how the baby cupid could be visually imagined.

The representation of Cupid seems to have been younger and younger, while Eros has gone in the other direction. Figure.9 shows the *Eros Farnese*, from the Farnese collection in the National Museum of archaeology in Naples (MANN, 2021). In this portrayal of him, the God of love is imagined as a beautiful youth, standing alone. He stands in a relaxed contrapposto posture with his back leaning slightly, right hand pointing to the ground, and a tranquil facial expression with eyes gazing down to his right, enhancing his delicate neck. He is naked, revealing a lean and muscular body. His hair is shaped in half long curls ending on top of his collar bone framing his youthful, handsome and divine face, with big eyes, a long, strong nose and plump lips. He has big, feathered wings on his back, but is standing without his bow and golden arrow.

In the late 1800s *Eros* was erected in London, in the Piccadilly Circus. This sculpture was designed by Alfred Gilbert to commemorate Anthony Ashley Cooper for his good deeds,



Fig. 10, *Eros/Anteros*, Bronze, finished: 1893

Photo: *Diego Delso*, 2014

10,97 m x 5,18 m

London

and to represent this he chose Anteros, the God of selfless love and one of Eros' brothers (fig. 10).²⁶ However, the statue is known popularly as Eros, therefore I believe it to be relevant for a closer look, because it represents a newer perspective on how Eros is imagined (Britainexpress & historicengland, 2023). It is a part of and stands on top of a fountain, *The Shaftesbury Memorial Fountain*, looking down at the city. He looks young still, but a bit older than the *Eros Farnese*. He stands on only his left leg, balancing on his toes, and holds a strong posture leaning forward as he watches the arrow it looks like he just shot. His face is beautiful, with big eyes, strong nose and full lips, and he radiates calmness and divinity. His body is slim, with very defined

²⁶ The 7th Earl of Shaftesbury (Mic Anderson, 2022)

musculature, especially on his stomach and his arms, and even though he is portrayed naked with only a piece of clothing covering his genitalia, he is not “over” sexualised.

Eros is a part of contemporary art history also, and I have chosen *La Danza di Eros (The Dance of Eros)*, painted by the Italian artist Giorgio Dante (fig.11). In this oil painting *Eros* is taking up most of the canvas from top to bottom, filling the frame. He is dancing in the air in front of nature and trees. He is dancing alone, and in this painting, he looks like a young man, not a teen. His posture is elongated and holding a soft pose that reminds of the move’s ballet dancers have. His arms are lifted effortlessly, with the right arm stretching the away from his right leg, creating a long, elegant line. His face is beautiful *as always*, framed by soft curls. His plump lips are closed, and his gaze is somewhat dreamy; he looks upwards, but it does look like he is lost in his own thoughts and dance. The body, and especially the torso is full of well-shaped muscles, strongly highlighted by the light coming from his left side, creating soft shadows and emphasises his divinity. The big white fabric in this scene goes around him and looks like it is being held up by wings the viewer can’t see in the back, while in the front it gives a feeling of being a second away from falling down and expose his genitalia. I will argue that this portrayal is more sexualised (but not extreme²⁷) than the two older examples for three reasons; he is depicted a little older, as a more mature, sexually available young man versus a baby or a teen, the V shaped lines from his hips to the genitalia is strongly emphasised and the fabric reminds of a bedsheet rather than a piece of clothing.

In the three versions I have looked at he is depicted as a handsome male, with a symmetric and slightly androgynous face, with big eyes, full lips, a strong nose and prominent jaw line. A divine facial expression and naked body seems to be the general way to portray him, with only a piece of fabric, if any. One of the attributes associated with Eros is of course the golden bow and arrow which he carries around with him (another is the lyre), and those who are struck by his arrow falls in love. The myth about the arrow through a heart has a solid place in our society disguised as a simplified heart with an arrow through it and are drawn in diaries and notebooks by young people in love throughout the world (fig.12). I used to draw them myself when I was a teenager,

²⁷ During my research about Eros, I have found illustrations and portrayals of the God much more sexualised and exaggerated. For example in illustrated videos or fan art on websites like for example DeviantArt. I will provide a links to the website with the search result in my literature list.

knowing that the heart with an arrow through it was a symbol of being in love, but without knowing why it was a symbol, nor the stories behind it.



Fig. 11, *The Dance Eros*
180 x 100 cm
Giorgio Dante, 2013-14
Oil on canvas

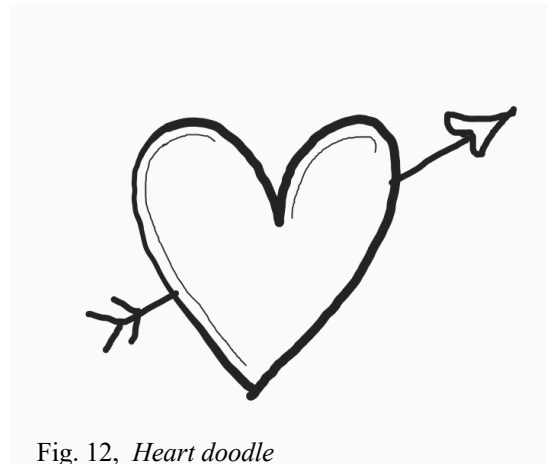


Fig. 12, *Heart doodle*
5 cm x 5 cm
Ingrid Pettersen, Sketch on phone
Bergen, 2023

The bow and arrow have also influenced the name of the top part of our lip; the curved m/w shaped upper lip is called *cupids bow*.²⁸ The symbols of Eros are highly integrated in the common language of love, with or without knowledge about his stories. The story of Eros and

²⁸ Grace Gallagher, 2022

Psyche is important for the analysis of one of the perfumes in chapter two, and therefore I will include it. This story is told with the Roman names.

Cupid and Psyche

A man had three very beautiful children, Psyche and her two sisters, but compared to Psyche the two other sisters' looks were nothing. Men from everywhere would come to see the beautiful girl and worshipped her as if she were a Goddess. But her beauty was not a blessing, because even with her numerous admirers, no one would become more than just that, and they always went on to marry another girl. Both of her sisters would marry well, each with a king, while Psyche would be alone, thinking she would never get married. All of the attention given to Psyche from admiring and worshipping men made Venus, who was supposed to be the most beautiful of all jealous, and she was filled with anger and a lust for punishment. She went to her son, Cupid, to tell him about her problems. He, as usual would offer to help her with her troubles, and she gave him the task of finding Psyche, and use his powers to make her fall in love with the nastiest creature in the whole world. But when Eros saw Psyche, he fell in love immediately, and did not want to hurt her. He did not tell his mother this of course.

Psyche continued to be unmarried and alone, which was harder for her parents than for her. They went to the oracle of Apollo, to ask for advice, and he told them to leave Psyche on a hill where the husband destined for her, a serpent with wings, would come to make her his wife. This was all lies from Apollo; Cupid had come to him earlier and begged for his help with his feelings for Psyche, and he wanted be the one to marry the beautiful girl. Psyche was left on the hill, where the mildest wind of them all, Zephyr, would come and pick her up and take her to her new home. Here she ate the best food she had ever tasted, listened to the sweetest music she had ever heard, and she took the loveliest bath of her life. She had company only by voices in the palace that talked softly to her, but she could not see anyone. That night her new husband came, but she was not allowed to see him. She trusted him, and even though they always met only when the daylight was gone, she trusted him to be kind, and not at all a monster.

After some time, she convinced her husband that she should be able to meet her sisters again, which he said yes too, but with a warning that the meeting would be the destruction of their marriage and her undoing. Psyche and her sisters were first filled with tears of joy and laughter,

but after seeing the marvellous palace, and the wealth her husband had given Psyche, – even though they both married wealthy kings –, the two sisters became jealous and planned how they could ruin her happiness. The next time they came to visit her, they planted doubt and fear in Psyche’s heart about never being allowed to see her husband in daylight, and they told her that he, for sure, was awful. The two sisters said that she could not know what he was and that they had learned that he was a winged serpent, as stated by Apollo’s oracle. The two of them told her to hide a lamp and a knife by her bedside, so when he fell asleep, she could look at him, and then stab him to death. They would wait for her and support her after she had killed her husband. When the night came and he fell asleep, she took the light near his face, and was relieved that he was not a monster. Instead of feeling fearful, she was stunned by his beauty. She could not stop staring at him and ended up spilling hot oil on his shoulder and wake him. Cupid then fled away in anger and said that love could not live without trust and went to see his mother to heal his wound. Venus was furious when her son told her the story and went to find Psyche to punish her. When they met, Venus gave her four tasks to accomplish; to sort a huge pile of all the smallest seeds there is, to get golden fleeces from sheep near a riverbank, to get a flask with black water from a dangerous river and finally to go to the underworld to ask Proserpine for some of her beauty to put in a box as a gift for Venus. All of these impossible and dangerous tasks Venus gave to Psyche were supposed to be unmanageable, but help was offered to her on her journey, and she succeeded. During the last task Psyche was tempted and opened the box with beauty, and ended up falling into a deep sleep. Cupid found her, took away the sleep from her and put it back inside the box, and then pricking her with one of his arrows to wake her. Cupid then went to Olympus to ask Jupiter for his blessing to marry Psyche. He said yes, and she was given ambrosia to become immortal so she could live on Olympus with Cupid (Edith Hamilton, 99-107).

The moment he finds her and wakes her up from eternal sleep is a moment of love and passion, and the dramatic love story between the immortal God of love and a mortal human is naturally a source of inspiration for artists. In the second chapter, where I will discuss perfume commercials using Greek and Roman mythology, a statue of Cupid finding Psyche and kissing her is both recreated with models and seen in the background in one of them, and I will do an analysis of the commercial. The statue in the commercial is *Psyche Revived by Cupid’s Kiss* made by Antonio Canova in the late 1700s (fig.13).



Fig. 13, *Psyche Revived by Cupid's Kiss*, Antonio Canova
1.55 m x 1.68 m
Marble, 1787-1793, photo: Kimberly Vardeman
Louvre, Paris

MEDUSA

Etymology: from Greek “Medousa” = guardian

medousa (μεδουσα), reigning

One of the three Gorgons. Gorgon: from Greek “Gorgones” = the grim ones

Gorgos: grim, fierce, terrible²⁹

²⁹ Douglas Harper, 2023

Medusa is not a Goddess, but a mythological monster. She had two gorgon sisters *Euryale* and *Stheno*, who were immortal, while Medusa herself was mortal.³⁰ The gorgons had golden scales on their bodies, great wings and on top of their heads came out a bunch of snakes instead of locks of hair and sometimes they had beards. Medusa's gaze could turn anyone who looked directly into them, to stone for ever.³¹ She is described as an ugly, terrifying creature, sometimes with green coloured skin, but she was not always a monster. To begin with she was a beautiful girl and had a life as a priestess for the Goddess Athene, leading a life of chastity. Some stories say that Medusa claimed to be more beautiful than Athene, others that she fell in love with the God Poseidon, was intimate with him and married him behind Athene's back. Another version of the myth says that Medusa bragged about her hair being fairer and longer than Athena's, which made the goddess so angry that she turned Medusa's hair to living snakes. A different way this is told, is a bit gloomier and goes in short like this; Poseidon sees Medusa and falls for her beauty. He chases after her, and rapes her in the chapel of Athene.³² In both versions of the story, Athene is furious about the sexual intercourse and since she cannot punish Poseidon, she chooses to punish Medusa instead and she turns her into an ugly monster. With help from Athene and Hermes, Medusa is killed by Perseus, who cuts off her head. Her two children by Poseidon *Pegasus* the winged horse and the giant *Chrysaor* sprung out from the wound in her neck. Her dripping blood from the neck is said to be the source of the poisonous snakes in the desert in Libya (they were created from the blood droplets hitting the sand, and the red coral reef in the sea. He used her head as a weapon against his enemies, and then gave Medusa's head to Athene, who placed it on her shield for power.³³ Regardless which version is the correct one, her fate certainly is cruel.

The early visual imagination of Medusa made her out to be an ugly, scary creature, sometimes with a beard, and with her tongue sticking out. In Greek art deities went through a change in appearance, looking younger, the monsters became less monstrous, and Medusa would be depicted as a beautiful woman with snakes for hair (Roger Woodard 2009, 302).

³⁰ J.A. Cole, 226

³¹ Edith Hamilton, 157

³² Roger Woodard 2009

³³ Aron J. Atsma, 2000-2017

THE GROTESQUE, FRIGHTENING AND BEAUTIFUL MEDUSA

How the look of Medusa is imagined has changed a lot from the Greek antique to today. I have chosen some examples from ca 580 B.C.E to 2010 to demonstrate the development (fig 14 to 19) in the visual imagination of the gorgon. The two examples from B.C.E *The Antefix* and *Medusa on the Artemis temple* both illustrate Medusa as a scaring



Fig.14, *Medusa*, Temple of Artemis
Archaeological Museum of Corfu
Antonis Chaliakopoulos, 2020
580 BCE



Fig. 15, *Antefix*
0.29 m x 0.29 m
The British Museum
Painted Terracotta, 500 BCE



Fig. 16, *Medusa Rondanini*, Roman
copy
José Luiz, 2017
Marble, 5th century BCE



Fig. 17, *Medusa*, Caravaggio
55 x 60 cm
Oil on canvas/shield, 1595-1598
The Uffizi Gallery

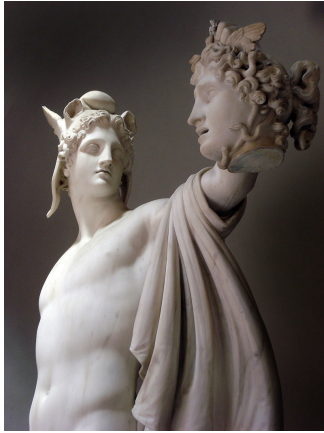


Fig. 18, *Perseus with the head of Medusa*,
Antonio Canova, Marble, 1804-1806
Ricardo André Frantz, 2010



Fig.19, *Uma Thurman as Medusa*
Photo
Percy Jackson and the lightning thief
Screenshot of Movie, 2010

creature with the tongue sticking out in a mocking grin, big staring eyes, and the ante fix shows her with a set of horrifying big teeth and a full beard too. Colouration was an important part when Medusa (and other deities) was depicted, and as explained by Bente Kiilerich in *Græsk skulptur*, red, black, blue and white paint fragments once existed on the archaic Corfu gable, which can give an idea of how Medusa was imagined (Bente Kiilerich, 2007, 53). It is clear that they were polychrome, strongly coloured, making the impression quite different. Perhaps she had red skin, or/and maybe the hair was coloured green with black details to resemble the pattern of poisonous serpents to enhance the frightening and grotesque impression she was supposed to give.

The *Medusa Rondanini* is the opposite of grotesque; the beard and the canine tooth are gone, she is symmetric, with smooth skin, full lips with no tongue sticking out, and heavy eyelids giving a more seductive gaze than the earlier, more monstrous versions. The *Medusa Rondanini* has been credited as the first one of its kind; the beautiful Gorgon, dated to the fifth century B.C.E, which would make it unique, and without any equal for around a hundred years. However, there is uncertainty about this, and it could be dated to the fourth century as well, making the depiction of Medusa as beautiful, less unique and surprising. The original was probably in bronze (the

marble version is a Roman copy) (Janer Belson, 1980, 373-378). In the end of the 16th century, Caravaggio made his *Medusa*, which depicts her right after she is beheaded, with blood squirting from her neck. *Medusa* is painted on a shield, which gives associations to Athene who hung Medusa's head on her shield after Perseus gave it to her. She is screaming and making a funny face, but she still has a beautiful face. The beautiful *Medusa Rondanini* is being used in the 1800s by Antonio Canova in his *Perseus with the Head of Medusa, or Perseus Triumphant*. The head Perseus holds up in front of him is clearly inspired by the *Medusa Rondanini*, except for the size. The image of Medusa as a beautiful woman was established when Canova made his sculpture, and it is still holding up today. Fig. 19 is a screenshot from the movie *Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Thief*, showing the actress Uma Thurman in the role of Medusa. She is still frightening with her snaky hair and fatal gaze, but she is highly feminine and beautiful, she is scarier for her seductiveness than her ugliness, and she looks human. She is also in control of her own power, using sunglasses as a tool to control her gaze and being able to look at people without turning them to stone. The story and fate of Medusa is gruesome no matter which of the versions is true; she is either punished for marrying someone, for being bold enough to say that she is beautiful, or for being raped by a man of power and then punished for it by Athene turning her to a monster, who is so terrifying to men with power that her head is wanted.³⁴ noteworthy the beheading of Medusa by Perseus is used in modern politics, as a symbol of power. In 2016, when Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump was standing for election against each other, supporters of Trump made memes to make Clinton look like a harmless opponent, with one of the memes being Trump holding Clinton's head in his hand in various versions. Trump is here placed as the triumphant hero, the strong man, who holds his opponents head in his hand with a mocking face, making her the loosing victim (Mary Beard 2014, 69-89).

³⁴ I believe this version is the most horrifying, because of the unjust towards raped women who are still to this day sentenced to death by stoning in some countries, instead of the people committing the crime (Chris McGreal, 2008).



Fig. 21, *Trump and Clinton*,

Political art

Elise Barry, 2022



Fig. 20, *Perseus With the Head of Medusa*, Benvenuto

Cellini

Art in Context

Bronze, 1545-1554



Fig. 22, *Make America great again*

Political art

Researchgate,

Gianluca Stringhini, 2018

DISCUSSION

The deities, monsters and dramatic myths from thousands of years ago are still highly integrated and relevant to different aspects of our daily lives. How they have been portrayed has naturally changed in various degrees over time; Medusa from scary and grotesque to seductive and beautiful, Eros and Cupid from a beautiful youth to a more and more infant baby and a handsome young man, and Aphrodite from already beautiful to more and more perfected to the standard of the time she is portrayed. What has changed more is the way our culture over time has changed what beauty, love and power means. Nevertheless, what they stand for and symbolise remains the same, beauty, love, and power. Maybe the reason, *or part of the reason*- why the old Gods still exist is that they represent something fundamental in humans no matter what time we exist in. Love, power and beauty will probably never stop being important, and therefore changes to make these values fit is necessary. A modern company that uses the deities to define their products and brand is Versace, with a stylised version of Medusa Rondanini, as their logo. In chapter three I will take a closer look at three perfumes from Versace and their use of mythology in their products and advertisement. In the following chapter about Neuroaesthetics I will discuss why objects are regarded as beautiful and desirable, and how the senses influence our impression.



Fig. 23, *Robot Medusa*
Ragnar Johansen, 2016
Painting on house wall
Aalborg, Denmark

CHAPTER 2: NEUROAESTHETICS, ART AND PERFUME ADVERTISEMENTS

Neuroaesthetics is a relatively new field, and was coined as a term in 1999, by the neurobiologist Semir Zeki (Semir Zeki, 1999). The science of neuroaesthetics caught my attention because of its possibility to gain a better understanding to why some pieces of art are considered more beautiful than others, or why some people are thought of as more or less attractive, and my perennial interest for the sense of smell. Questions like why certain odours can trigger old memories, or how smelling food or a beverage before consuming it can enrich the experience, has always made me curious about the subject. The olfactory experience is unique for each human being, and is influenced by experiences, genes, cultural differences and more (Linda Buck and Richard Axel, 1991), so how is it possible that for example some perfumes can be perceived as “classic”, “iconic”, “for him”, or “for her”? Can one perfume “fit all”, or is it simply a question of good marketing? In the aesthetic triad of neuroaesthetics I found the sensory-motor system, which is important for my task as I intend to use this part of neuroaesthetics to support my thesis.³⁵ I argue that the sense of smell is highly influenced by the sense of sight and hearing, and that the objects of smell used in everyday life can change, relative to the visual and/or auditory stimuli experienced connected to it.

This chapter will consist of two parts: *neuroaesthetics and the senses*, and *perfume advertisements*. In the first part I will discuss how the senses affect one another, with focus on vision, smell and taste, and I will look at how the senses can be the focus of an art exhibition, with “RE _____” by Sissel Tolaas as my example. The second part will be divided into analyses and discussions of perfume advertisements that uses art historical references, connected to the deities from the first chapter.

³⁵ Oshin Vartanian and Anjan Chatterjee, 2021

PART ONE

WHAT IS NEUROAESTHETICS

Neuroaesthetics is a subfield of neurobiology, which focuses on understanding the brain mechanisms that are activated when having an aesthetic experience. It tries to understand the neural mechanisms that are prone to inherited aesthetic preferences in comparison to gained or learned preferences where the aesthetic judgements are thought of as subjective. It's exploring the relationship between perceptual and aesthetic judgements, experienced through feelings like love, hate and pleasure. Neuroaesthetics as a discipline implies that aesthetic experiences can be scientifically studied, and therefore that it can be objective, while experienced subjectively.

Neuroaesthetics initiates a deeper understanding of the brain and its mechanisms that are activated during an aesthetic experience, and it does not try to answer the question of what beauty is. Aesthetic judgements and experiences are central to the human mind, and it plays a big role in the choices being made of for example partners, clothing and value of art. It is, in my opinion important to continue the studies of neuroaesthetics, to gain a better understanding of the human brain and how aesthetics can impact it (Hideaki Kawabata and Semir Zeki, 2003).

The neuroscientist Semir Zeki coined the term "neuroaesthetics" in 1999, with his main interest and focus on the study of the visual brain in primates. He pioneered the field of studies of the neurobiological functions in the brain regarding art and aesthetics, and with that contributed to the establishment of neuroaesthetics as a discipline, which then was a whole new field within the neuroscientific studies (Andrea Eugenio Cavanna and Andrea Nani, 2014). The expression *beauty is in the eye of the beholder* means that what one person considers as beautiful may not be what another person does. Zeki has found that even though what is beautiful varies from one person to another, the same area in their brain is activated when looking at something they consider to be beautiful (Semir Zeki, 2021). The area that is activated is located in the medial orbitofrontal cortex (fig. 24), which is part of the emotional brain.

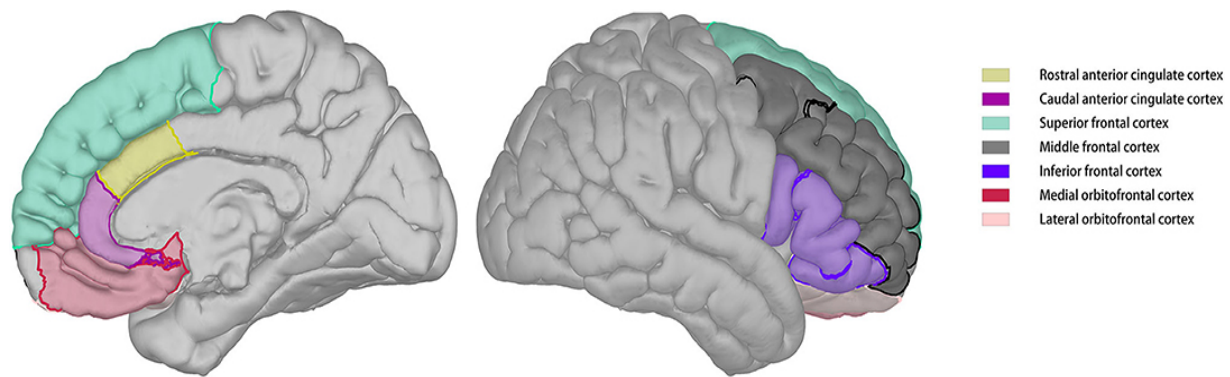


Fig. 24, *Medial Orbitofrontal Cortex*
 Borrowed illustration
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fnagi.2022.896191>

This suggests that two persons' experiences of beauty can be considered as similar to each other, even though the object they each prefer is completely different to each other, and that the experience is based on emotions, not thoughts. If what is looked at is considered as beautiful, the brain will light up in the medial orbitofrontal cortex. Zeki has also found that the stronger a subject experience the beauty, the more activated the medial orbitofrontal cortex is activated. (Semir Zeki, 2012)

In 2007 Giacomo Rizzolatti, Emiliano Macaluso and Cinzia Di Dio published a paper that investigated the question of how the brain responds to beauty in art, using renaissance and classical sculptural masterpieces as objects. They used proportions as the independent variable, showing the test subjects photos of the original sculptures and modified versions of the sculptures. The main question for this paper was if there exists an objective beauty (*if* the objective conditions essential to the artworks (in this case it was the golden ratio) were able to draw out a specific neural pattern in the observer, underlying for the sense of beauty). The results showed that the brain activity was different with the golden ratio conditions compared to those that were modified; they found that the joint activation of neurons in the anterior insula and specific populations of cortical neurons responding to the physical properties of the used stimuli were what changed the perception of the artworks (in this case sculptures) to "beautiful" from "ugly" (Cinzia Di Dio, Emiliano Macaluso and Giacomo Rizzolatti, 2007).

Another relatively new finding in neurobiology is the mirror neurons, discovered by the Italian neurobiologist Giacomo Rizzolatti. In his studies of Macaques, he found that the same activation in the brain happening when the macaque gripped something physically, also happened when he looked at someone else gripping something.³⁶ The same areas in the brain were active both during participation in the activity and during passively observing the activity. It lit up areas both for mirror neurons and areas that necessarily are engaged during a specific action, for example reaching and gripping a pencil.³⁷ Naturally, there are some limitations; for example, if the action performed does not make sense for a human being. Giacomo Rizzolatti explained this during a presentation of a study using humans, monkeys and dogs as objects. The test subject was presented with a human, a monkey and a dog biting food, and the mirror neurons were lit up looking at all three videos, as biting food is something we understand and has done ourselves. Then the subjects were presented with a human reading with the sounds of pages turning, a monkey smacking his lips, and a dog barking and the results here show some of the limitations; mirror neurons in the subject's brain were activated when looking at another human reading, it was also activated when seeing and hearing the monkey smacking his lips, but it was not activated when looking and listening to the dog barking. The action of reading and smacking lips was familiar to the subject, but barking was, of course, not. Neither the mirror neurons nor the areas used during mouth activity (in this case; barking) were engaged, while the areas used during hand activities (flipping the pages) and mouth activities (lip-smacking) with the mirror neurons showed activity. Rizzolatti also points out that experience is an important factor for how strongly the mirror neurons are activated. For example, the more experienced a subject is to for example cutting vegetables fast and professionally, the more activation in the brain when the subject observes for example a cooking show on television. A subject who has not done a lot of vegetable cutting will then have activation but visibly less than the experienced one (Giacomo Rizzolatti, 2012). Studies done by Professor Gustaf Gredebäck of babies supports the importance (but not completely dependent of) of experience. He points out that in order to understand another person's actions, experience plays an important role in making sense of what is going on

³⁶ Like humans, Macaque monkeys are in the category of primates. Giacomo Rizzolatti and his colleagues inserted a fluid in the brain of the macaques that made clicking noises in a speaker whenever parts of the brain were activated. Testing the same in human brains requires fMRI scanning as its not considered ethical to inject the necessary fluid in the brain (Giacomo Rizzolatti, 2012)

³⁷ So far, mirror neurons in humans have been detected in the areas of premotor cortex, the supplementary motor area, primary somatosensory cortex and the inferior parietal cortex (Sourya Acharya and Samarth Shukla, 2012)

in the environment around them, using examples of dancers recognising dance moves and chopstick users recognising the hand movement of eating with chopsticks. The importance of having the ability to recognise other persons' movements and behaviours makes sense in everyday situations like protecting a baby from falling down, or protecting oneself from a punch in the face, and I also assume that it is a useful quality in the case of fitting into a group of other humans and relate to and have empathy with others.³⁸ In his studies of babies, he found that babies have mirror neurons, which indicates that it is something we are all born with. Instead of fMRI (which is something that cannot be used on babies), EEG is being used to detect the activity in the baby's brains. The same type of activation in adults also happened in the baby brain when the baby performed actions like reaching, and when the baby saw another person reaching for something. Gredebäck found that in babies as well as in adults learning is experience dependent, for example in infants that was in the learning process of crawling, he found that the ones with more crawling experience had more activation in their brains when watching other babies crawl than the babies who just started learning. He also found that babies don't just have a passive activation in their mirror neurons, but they can, like adults with fully developed brains, anticipate what is going to happen next and what the person they are observing is going to do (Gustaf Gredebäck, 2010). This might not be very surprising given that anticipation is elementary to all movements; for example, if you are jumping on one foot, and then switching to the other foot, the brain anticipates where the gravity will shift in order for the body to stay up and not fall down. But it is interesting that this is something we are born with, because then it opens up the possibility to study for example what babies find beautiful before culture and environment affects the way of thinking, and thus get a closer answer to whether general beauty really exists. However, babies cannot anticipate everything, for example using a brush to comb hair, or even anticipate what is going to happen when one person takes a spoon to feed another human. In his studies he found that it took 193 days of being fed before the baby was able to anticipate that action, which demonstrates the importance of experience; the mirror neuron system in the brain is taking the motor representations it already has, and uses it so make sense of the actions of others. Gredebäck suggests that the mirror neuron system allows us to understand others as ourselves (Gustaf Gredebäck, 2010).

³⁸ David Freedberg and Vittorio Gallese, 2007

Repetition and consistency are clearly two key factors to understanding and learning, and interestingly studies show that an important part of how our brain judges the information it's been given also are repetition and consistency (prototypes), of the *process fluency*. How information is being processed in the brain is not the same for all types of information. The obvious differences like the senses are of course being processed in different parts of the brain belonging to for example vision or smell, but how recognisable and familiar something is, makes a difference for how easily it is processed and if the person looking at it likes it or not. In *Prototypes Are Attractive Because They Are Easy on the Mind* by Piotr Winkielman, Jamin Halberstadt, Tedra Fazendeiro and Steve Catty argue for exactly that; the more familiar something is, the more easily it is read and processed by the person taking in the information. To test their thesis, Winkielman et al. conducted a three-part experiment, where they used random dot-based patterns in all three parts to test if the preference for prototypes stems from general mechanisms (Piotr Winkielman et. al., 2006).³⁹ The first two parts, the participants were asked to rate and categorize how attractive dot patterns were, first random patterns then common geometric patterns which varied in the prototypical level, and in both part one and two the predictor of both attractiveness and fluency (speed) was the prototypicality. In the third part the psychophysiological technique of facial electromyography was used, and it confirmed that viewing abstract prototypes draws out a quick and positive affective reaction. The first experiments findings showed that fluency - as they expected – makes prototypes more appealing, and that the stimuli that were more prototypical both make the stimuli more attractive and easier to process than the stimuli that was less prototypical, and interestingly it showed that even with controlled fluency, the stimuli more prototypical predicted attractiveness independently. In the second experiment they found that the stimuli that were more prototypical were categorized quicker and judged as more appealing or beautiful than stimuli that consisted of distorted patterns, and as they found in experiment one the attractiveness was significant even when the fluency was controlled. In the third and last experiment they tested if prototypically stimuli caused genuine positive reactions even if it were random abstract patterns, using facial EMG (electromyography) to detect if the “smiling muscles” and “frowning muscles” were activated.

³⁹ Research has shown that humans process prototypes at a higher speed than non-prototypes -a phenomenon referred to as *the beauty in averageness effect* (Piotr Winkielman, JaminHalberstadt, Tedra Fazendeiro and Steve Catty, 2006, 799)

Prototypical patterns were used as stimuli, with the prototypical patterns divided in two; “prepared” and “unprepared”.⁴⁰ Response in the brow region was zero in both tests, while it showed a clear difference in the response in the cheek area, with the first second – *the immediate response* – the most significant. The participants of the test also had to judge if they liked the stimuli after 7 seconds of viewing, and the prepared stimuli was preferred over the unprepared stimuli, even though both were prototypes. This means that *“If prototypical stimuli are processed fluently, and stimuli that are processed fluently are attractive, then perhaps prototypes are attractive because of their fluent processing”* (Piotr Winkielman et. al., 2006, 800, 804). In conclusion, the brain is literally mirroring what the eyes observe, whether it is through live action, through a painting, or through a screen, and if the process fluency is easy, it makes what we observe more pleasant. In the case of mirror neurons although, in my interpretation, it is arguable that in cases of trauma (like experience of war, abusive relationships, life changing accidents etc.), it could be negative for the brain to mirror similar traumatic experiences (for example in movies and the news).

The senses affect each other and can make a person remember things that happened in the past, feel disgust, pleasure, happiness, sadness and even anger. The next part is about an art exhibition that triggers those feelings and more in the visitors, by engaging different senses, combining art and science.

RE_____

An artist that has used the sense of smell as the main focus in her art is Sissel Tolaas. With a degree in art combined with an education in chemistry, linguistics and mathematics she is using science to create art that triggers our senses, with focus on the sense of smell, and she has developed a smell-encyclopaedia *Nasalo*, with more than 2000 different terms for smell (Inger Wold Lund, 2023).

⁴⁰ Prepared stimuli means that the same stimuli were shown prior to the test, unprepared stimuli were not (Piotr Winkielman, JaminHalberstadt, Tedra Fazendeiro and Steve Catty, 2006)

In the exhibition *RE* _____ she creates an opportunity for the audience to be reminded of memories connected to certain smells and let the visitors be interactive with the art in the exhibition, which is a hybrid of visual stimuli and tangible art (Astrup Fearnley Museet 2021). The visitors start the experience with the smell of money, captured in liquid form in an ampulla, instead of a conventional ticket, and are then invited in to wash their hands with a bar of soap, that Tolaas has created with her own body-odour as the scent. The visitor can choose to not read about the different works during the visit (and then read about it in the end), and thus the chance to have a completely unique experience is possible. From the beginning to the end (no matter which end the visitor wants to begin from), four of the senses are being challenged by sounds, visual stimuli, the interactive art you can touch, and of course smelling the hands after. For example, one of the walls in the exhibition smells like male anxiety sweat, and the visitors are supposed to stroke their hands up and down the wall, and then smell the hand afterwards, and notice if any emotions like disgust arrives.

The main sense in this exhibition is the sense of smell; the entrance ticket that smells like money (fig. 25), a bar of soap with Tolaas' personal scent to physically wash your hands (fig. 26), and a touching wall with male anxiety sweat and different objects to pick up and throughout the exhibition that all smells different, like for example the smell of snow or wet asphalt (Mona Pahle Bjerke, 2021). The work Sissel Tolaas has done and still does regarding the sense of smell in her artwork is in my opinion an important portal for the general visitor to understand and to be more aware of the sense of smell in the daily life, and Tolaas makes it easily accessible for the public to understand the sense of smell and memory. From personal experience and observation of people (that I know and completely strangers) around me, I dare to say that it is common to take our senses for granted and to forget what for and why the senses actually exist. For example, our (humans) vision have a wide range of colours compared to many other animals (Ellen J. Gerl and Molly R. Morris, 2008), helping us as human beings to find ripe fruits and berries in the nature. The sense of hearing helps noticing the surrounding that's not visible, making staying safe, helping humans and animals crying for help and find water to mention a few examples. The sense of touch is useful for example to not burn or freeze the skin severely, or to notice a poisonous spider crawling on you (Dean Burnett 2016, 152-187). The two senses left are the senses of taste and smell. The two of them are strongly connected, and gustation is highly dependent on the olfactory receptors in the nose. The sense of taste has the basic tastes; sweet,

bitter, sour, salt and umami, and they function without olfaction, but are limited to the degree that distinction between nuances are more or less non existing. An example of this is if one eats a lemon and then a lime with the nose closed; it's not possible to distinguish the difference between the two fruits, just that it tastes sour. If one does the same but with the olfactory receptors "open", the difference of taste is very clear, and it's easy to separate the lime from the lemon. The question that example raises, is how one sense (smell) can affect an *other* (taste) in such a significant way, while it is in fact, not the same if it's flipped the other way. To answer this, it is necessary to take a closer look at how the olfactory sense functions in the human nose and how it is affected by the other senses.



Fig. 26. bars of soap
2021
Photo: Astrup Fearnley Museet



Fig. 25. Entrance Ticket
2021
Photo: Astrup Fearnley Museet

THE SENSE OF SMELL

Smell does not only cross barriers in space, it can also take us back in time. To come across a smell you had forgotten is a bodily experience. You can feel an intense happiness or a great sorrow. It feels physical, and that it is. Just a few molecules of the same smell you have experienced before is all it takes. They hit your nose. And suddenly you remember (Margit Walsø, 2022, 22. Translated from Norwegian).⁴¹

In my opinion, all the senses are worth writing about and all are equally important as they help making it possible to survive for all living beings. It is easy to take the senses for granted, and not giving them much thought because they are “just there”, but if one or more of the senses disappears or are compromised in any way, they become very noticeable in their absence. An example of this is the covid pandemic that affected the entire world in 2020 and gave many people short- and long-term symptoms with one of them being the loss of smell, and with that the compromised or disturbed sense of taste.⁴² I will focus mainly on the sense of smell, with some attention on the senses of taste, vision, hearing and feeling.

The human nose is quite “weak” compared to other animals and even though we can smell incredibly many different odours, still is some restrictions, for example, if the molecules are too big for the human nose, we simply cannot smell it. The sense of smell is a chemical sense and a physical reaction; molecules in gas form go through the nostrils to the top of the nose cavities to hit the olfactory epithelium, (right under the olfactory bulb) which is found in the root of the nose between the eyes and has around 50 million different olfactory sensory neurons on each side.⁴³ The olfactory cells are active, and the neurons renew more or less every 40 days. After an intricate process neuronal signals are finally sent to the part of the brain that handles information about odours, *the primary olfactory cortex*, which sends the neuronal signals to the higher

⁴¹ Original quotation: «Lukt krysser nemlig ikke bare grenser i rom, men kan frakte oss tilbake i tid. Å kommer over en lukt du har glemt, er en kroppslig opplevelse. Det føles fysisk, og det er det. Bare noen molekyler av den samme lukten som du har kjent før, skal til. de treffer nesa di, og plutselig husker du.» (Margit Walsø, 2022, 22)

⁴² It still affects the world in 2023, but in 2020 it was much more extreme, considering restrictions and number of hospitalisations.

⁴³ The olfactory bulb is a bunch of cranial nerves that is an extension of the brain, sitting right above of the crib form plate. The Olfactory Epithelium (approximately 2.5 square centimetres) is separated from the brain by the crib form plate which has many holes in it, so that the sensory cells can send signals to the olfactory bulb through it (Anju Sharma et. al, 2019).

cortical area (includes the cortices for language, vision, awareness and visuospatial recognition) and the limbic system, which grant a conscious odour perception and opens up for relations between specific odours and emotions, memories, sensations and behaviour (Linda Buck, Richard Axel, 1991).

As mentioned above, the senses of smell and taste got a lot of attention after the covid pandemic hit, with loss of taste and smell as one of the symptoms, both short and long lasting. The sense of smell naturally got a lot of attention because of this, due to its importance to the gustatory sense and the pleasure of smelling food, perfumes and drinks suddenly being gone or unpleasant for an uncertain period of time, and for those that got long-covid it has been periods up to a year or even more (Renata Emmanuele Assunção Santos et. al, 2021).⁴⁴ The 5 tastes on the human tongue; salt, sour, bitter, sweet and umami, are important for the taste, but the flavours of for example a rich chocolate, a fresh lime, or freshly grounded coffee beans are part of the experience and excitement of gustation, which is caused by olfaction. It is no doubt that the sense of smell influences the sense of taste, but the sense of sight also affects gustation (and olfaction) with different visual stimuli.⁴⁵ With artificially or naturally coloured foods and drinks (e.g., meat, soda, candy, fish, bread etc.), eye catching packaging (e.g., glossy paper/plastic), colourful branding and other visual effects it is easy for the gustation to be tricked and mixed with the generated anticipation we do before tasting something, the experience can be dulled down or enhanced. The colour of something seems to give a psychological expectation for specific flavours that often can be hard to ignore, so unless blindfolded while eating or drinking something it appears impossible not to be influenced by the visual stimuli (given that all the senses are working properly) (Charles Spence, 2015). In my interpretation this can be looked at from two different perspectives. One is from the personal standpoint; if the psychological impact of the colours seen on the packaging, labels with brand names or colour of the food/drink itself can enhance the gustatory experience, then it makes sense to let oneself be influenced. The other perspective is from a commercial standpoint; “how to sell as much as possible to the consumer,

⁴⁴ The sense of smell has been given much of the credit for the complexity in the gustatory experience. Both the ortho nasal and the retro nasal olfaction are used to explain the difference between taste (sweet, sour, bitter, salt and umami) and flavour (lemon, lime, strawberry, cinnamon etc.), and it has become quite normal to give olfaction 75-95% of the credit of gustation. This number is not supported by clear evidence, but both popular writing and academic texts seems to agree with this assertion, that most of the sense of taste is dependent of the sense of smell (Charles Spence, 2015).

⁴⁵ Food stimulates several senses, which encodes the neural processing of it. It begins in the brainstem and extends through the gustatory neuraxis (Patricia M. Di Lorenzo, 2021).

the buying customer”? If the goal is to sell as many products as possible to make a large profit from a product it makes sense to make it as attractive as possible in every way. Both the personal and commercial points of view are (naturally) constantly and dynamically changing and influence each other in different ways; if the consumer seems to prefer a certain hue of red in their sausage or salmon, or children wanting candy in colourful and glossy packaging or a specific brown hue in bread, the companies making these products can perfect the looks of their products in a natural or unnatural way, making their products more appealing than for example products sold by a competing company. It is not only colour, packaging or branding foods or drinks that are being modified, some other ways that products are being changed because of consumer preferences are for example “perfect” cucumbers, bananas. Carrots, apples, and other fruits and vegetables with the right size, no bruises, no insect bites and the right colour (Berkeley Economic Review, 2021). From the commercial point of view, all the possibilities for modification of foods and drinks are a smart “tool” to use. From the consumers viewpoint I would argue that it can be a bit more complicated. Take for example organic vegetables/fruits versus inorganic ones; the organic ones may vary in size, shape and colour, contain spots or marks and they are more expensive than the inorganic products, which in turn tends to more or less have the same size, with no or very few marks, having a clear, strong colour and being lower in price than the organic ones. Ignoring the price difference, it can still be more tempting to buy the more appealing looking products, even though pesticides has been sprayed on for protection against bugs and a lot of perfectly eatable foods are being thrown away because they aren’t “pretty” enough which is both questionable and a bit paradoxical in a world where over 800 million human beings are starving.⁴⁶ Fruits and vegetables are merely an example, and one can argue that with or without pesticides its good for the human body to eat them, however, if this knowledge about how the consumer can be manipulated to prefer or like a product that that can cause illness and addictiveness in its consumers it is clearly not for the consumers best, e.g., fast

⁴⁶ According to World Health Organization in 2021, 828 million people, *9.8% of the world’s population*, were affected by hunger, 924 million were facing food insecurities at a severe level, and just under 3.1 billion people could not afford to eat a healthy diet (World Health Organization, 2022)

food, cigarettes, alcohol, candy etc.⁴⁷ I have made an example of such a type of products; an advertisement from the fast food chain *Burger King* for the impossible burger from 2019.⁴⁸ I have three versions of the commercial to use as examples; the first one is edited to have only black and white colours (fig. 27), the second one to have “normal” colours (fig. 28), and the third one which I have left unedited (fig. 29). I asked my three roommates to tell me what they thought about all three versions, and I have taken their answers into consideration in my discussion.



Fig. 27 BK black and white
The Impossible Burger, 2019
Edited by Ingrid Pettersen

⁴⁷ Evidence shows that consuming commercial fast food in higher amounts can negatively impact health, both long and short term. (Timothy Huzar, 2023)

⁴⁸ I would like to point out that this is not a critique of Burger King, in fact, I am quite fond of this burger, because it is plant based and gives people with a plant-based diet an option and shows that change is possible. I am choosing this commercial merely because it is known all around the world and is a product that changes dramatically when colours are changed.

In this colourless version of the commercial the food does not look quite like it will be tasteful, as one might expect from a burger with bread and vegetables. The burger appears hard and cold which gives it an impression of being tasteless. Underneath the burger is the bottom part of the bun, which can look like many things, but not bread, i.e., a compact sponge, concrete or pumice. The vegetables and sauce (from bottom up; pickled cucumber slices, ketchup, onions, tomato and lettuce) seem to have lost their fresh appearance without colours, making it hard to see what they are. The sliced onions remind of boiled egg slices, the tomatoes could be mistaken for rubber, and the lettuce resembles burnt or torn paper. The top bun looks quite like what it is even without colours which I believe is because of the seeds (without them it, the bun would look like a crab shell.) The appearance as a whole comes across as being odourless, and the logo in the background kind of disappears and is barely noticeable.



Fig. 28 BK normal colours
The Impossible Burger, 2019
Edited by Ingrid Pettersen

This second version (fig. 28) with natural colours looks quite nice and fresh, and it is not difficult to imagine what flavours to expect. Even though the bottom bun looks hard, it still looks like

bread, the burger looks “meaty” and nicely grilled, and it is easy to imagine what texture one expects the burger to have. The ketchup looks like it is rich in taste, and the vegetables appear fresh, crispy and ripened. The top bun looks like it will be crunchy on the outside and soft on the inside and the mayonnaise between the lettuce and top bun looks savoury. The logo behind the burger is noticeable with the bold, red letters, *which bears resemblance to two burger patties*, between two mustard coloured bun shapes, and like the burger, it stands out from the blue background. The third version (fig. 29) is the actual ad and unedited by me. The bottom bun appears crunchy and soft, and looks newly baked and a bit sweet, and the mind is with ease led to expect the burger patty to be juicy and savoury with fresh colours and visible grill marks, and together with the vegetables which look full of taste and have crispy texture, the all over expectation of this burger is that it should be rather tasty. The logo is easily noticed with deep colours on the blue background.



Fig. 29 BK advertisement
The Impossible Burger, 2019

The colours of the food in the version used for advertisement clearly look unnaturally strong and contrasted, but are still appetizing, and maybe even more so than the version with natural colours. Next to the black and white, the normal coloured version is appealing, and it is easy for

the mind to know what to expect in terms of odours, flavours and textures. Coloured versus black and white versions gives difference in the same three factors; sight, gustation and olfaction, but the original one seems to push the effect further, enhancing the textures with the maximizing of all colours, and ensnare the senses more, with its perfected appearance. The burger as a whole and the logo, “pops” out of the blue coloured background caused by the well-chosen contrasting hues of orange on the buns in both real burger and the logo burger. It is a perfectly mixed cocktail to evoke a multisensory experience, which doubtlessly gives an opportunity to predict the consumer’s behaviour, which in turn is being willingly “tricked” into buying a product that gives a rewarding reaction in the brain, regardless of for example health effects, environmental issues or other possible negative consequences (see footnote 10 for health consequences) (Scott I. Rick, Beatriz Pereira and Katherine A. Burson, 2013). A brand with a good reputation, a well named product or clever, intriguing packaging in commercials are in addition to colours, important assets in use for advertisement, and for the consumer/customer experience. If a famous brand in the more expensive price range, and a relatively unknown brand in the more “normal” price range both release the very same new product, it is likely to assume that the well-known, more exclusive brand gets the competitive advantage, even just giving the exact same product no name, a number or a name makes a difference. Also, the gained experience and cultural context can serve as an influencing factor of how a product will be perceived, for example in how colours represent different flavours e.g., lime/apple or mint/raspberry (Charles Spence, 2015, 9).⁴⁹

It is clearly many factors that can influence how a product is received; packaging, labelling, the use of familiar faces (actors, artists, athletes), characters (Santa Claus, Mickey Mouse, a clown) or ideal stereotypes (the sweet old grandma, a happy group of friends, a happy middleclass family), branding and presentation of the finished product. Interestingly the average person has watched around two million commercials on TV, which is a huge amount of time for the brain to possibly be impacted and based on the amount of money spent on television commercials (4,38

⁴⁹ Another example of how colour perceptions in different cultures are for example holidays; I have a strong connection to the colour yellow and easter holiday/celebration, with chocolate in yellow plastic, yellow decorations and so on. When I lived in South America some years ago, I noticed that yellow was used in occasions that was for death or mourning, while for easter on the other hand was covered in the colour purple, a colour I normally associate with advent and the waiting time before Christmas.

billion dollars in 2007), I would argue that this is a fact the companies promoting their products know (Martin Lindstrom, 2008, 17-18).

In the second part of this chapter, I will focus on chosen means used in perfume commercials, and as mentioned above, olfaction has the ability to trigger memories, emotions, sensations and behaviour due to the limbic system (and it can also “wake up” the areas for language, vision and awareness), which will be of importance in analysing perfume commercials.

PART TWO

PERFUME ANALYSIS

I have chosen perfume advertisements in video form to exemplify how the goddesses, gods and architecture of the Greek and Roman antiquity are used to sell a product (perfumes) together with the means discussed in the first part of chapter two, in order to try and understand why commercials with these elements are effective, using neuroaesthetics.

Kouros by Yves Saint Laurent⁵⁰



Fig. 30
Screenshot from *Kouros* video commercial



Fig. 31
Screenshot from *Kouros* video commercial

The first advertisement I will look at is for *Kouros* by Yves Saint Laurent from 1981.⁵¹ The video opens with a handsome, athletic man, diving elegantly into the water, taking a night bath (fig.30). The water splashes refreshingly around him, while he swims towards what looks like white columns. When he comes up from the water a beautiful woman hiding behind the columns, is gazing at him, she is wearing antique looking golden jewellery (fig. 31), and a long white

⁵⁰ Link to video commercial: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4K2IY6MAe50&list=PLTupo1-rMk6_LRgh-gKtIerM4BLRLQBKR&index=12

⁵¹ Charlotte Chrétien, *Kouros: les dieux vivantes ont leur parfum*, Antiquipop 21/10, 2016, <https://antiquipop.hypotheses.org/2111>

dress, giving an association to the Greek peplos. He notices her, and they start walking towards each other behind a row of columns that drags the mind to old ruins of Greek temples, but on their own they look quite different from the ruins; at first glance they can appear Tuscan in their order with a smooth surface and simple base and echinus, but a closer look reveals columns that looks glass/plastic like, and with the silver metallic details, they look almost futuristic (fig.32). When the couple reach each other, they are behind the middle column, hiding, creating a secret atmosphere making it up to the viewer to imagine what will happen. The moment they meet, the middle column starts moving, turning 180 degrees revealing the columns as enormous perfume bottles while the name of the perfume *KOUROS* appears in bold letters above the columns in the sky. Once the bottle is finished turning, *Yves Saint Laurent* is written in the sky in beautiful handwriting, underlined by a confident male voice saying “Kouros, the other fragrance for men, by Yves Saint Laurent” (fig.33). Throughout the video there are sparkling divine sounds, a bell and a flute playing a melody that enhances the feeling of a connection to the divine, ancient nature, and together with the blue and white colours it underlines a connection to the water.



Fig. 32
Screenshot from *Kouros* video commercial



Fig. 33
Screenshot from *Kouros* video commercial

The bottle is square and simple in shape, like a Tuscan column, or arguable even like an actual Kouros statue with a symmetric, and strong figure which indicates that this is an odour for men (fig.34), (fig.35), and it pursues the masculine ideal of being desired by a beautiful woman. This

scenario is making a connection between the fantasy of a desired, handsome, athletic, masculine ideal, and the man who wears this perfume. The use of columns and the name *Kouros* draws a line between something classical and immortal and works as an indicator of a quality product. I would argue that the mirror neurons are being activated by this commercial, by actions of the sensual manner, diving and swimming in the water; and the fluency process is made easy with the recognisable shape of the columns. Several of the means discussed before are being used, i.e., colours, the shape of the bottle, the ideal male character etc. and together with easy processing, activation of the mirror neuron and use of senses for sight, touch and hearing, this commercial promotes the product well.⁵²



Fig. 34 *Kouros* Yves Saint Laurent
Perfume bottle
Photo: FrAGRANTICA



Fig. 35 *Kroisos Kouros*
Parian Marble, ca. 530 BCE
National Archaeological Museum, Athens

⁵² Although this commercial may seem a bit comical to the modern eye, it is important to remember that technology has come a long way since 1981, and that it probably was modern and seductive then.

EROS by Versace^{53, 54}

Because of Versace's logo, the mind is automatically drawn back to the gorgons from the Greek antique and because of its resemblance to *Medusa Rondanini*, to the Roman empire.

Eros is a perfume for men from 2012, and the first of a commercial trilogy created by Versace. The video commercial for *Eros* starts off very sudden with dramatic music, dark colours and stormy weather. In the first scene two well-known sculptures appears: the Discobolus to the left, and the Laocoön group to the right, with a man walking towards a podium on top of a stone staircase. The scene is framed by columns of the Corinthian order on each side. The male character (I will call him Eros here) walks with big, strong steps towards the staircase and then climbs them and steps onto the podium. During the walk its being showed 12 different shots on average (that is one per second and I would argue that this does not give the brain a chance to be bored) with different angles, close ups, and the video changes between moving or still pictures. Eros is only wearing a boxersshorts, a cape and shoes, revealing an athletic body and leaving very little to the imagination of the viewer (fig.36). He is walking among the two mentioned sculptures, an unknown pair of legs of grand size and pieces of what looks like ruins. There are eagles flying from the sky towards Eros, the weather is storming and is being lit up by lightning, and with his cape looking almost divine or royal, fluttering behind him as he walks, this creates a dramatic scenery. His climbs up the staircase pointed out by a close up shot of his sandals, which are reminiscent of the sandals that the gladiators wore (fig. 37).

⁵³ Link to video commercial: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gsPsM6YYrfY&list=PLTupo1-rMk6_LRgh-gKtIerM4BLRLQBKR&index=3

⁵⁴ I have previously done analysis of *Eros* and *Eros pour Femme* in my Bachelor assignment *Antikkens referanser i parfymereklamer* submitted to the University of Bergen, spring 2020.



Fig. 36
Screenshot from *Eros* video commercial



Fig. 38
Screenshot from *Eros* video commercial



Fig. 37
Screenshot from *Eros* video commercial

When he reaches the podium, he lets go of his cape, standing in a sculpture like posture as it starts to rain heavily (fig. 38), the next part of the commercial gets more sensual with close ups of Eros' face and him stroking his wet hair back from the face, and close ups of his torso glistening from the rain. His face and body are lit up by several lightnings and the music is playing on beat with the rapidly changing pictures and sounds of the storm. Eros bends down to pick up a golden bow and arrow leaning on the podium, and as he rises, he points the arrow towards the skies shooting it straight up and as the arrow hits the clouds it immediately stops raining and creates a hole letting the sun and light shine through the very dark skies (fig. 39). He then stands on the podium holding the bow, looking like a god statue (fig. 40). The commercial ends with a close up of the perfume bottle in front of dark clouds and a woman saying "Versace Eros" in a sensual French accent, and as she says, "the new fragrance for men", the bottle is being crushed by the gold arrow and the name of the perfume shows up in big yellow letters (fig. 41).



Fig. 39
Screenshot from *Eros* video commercial

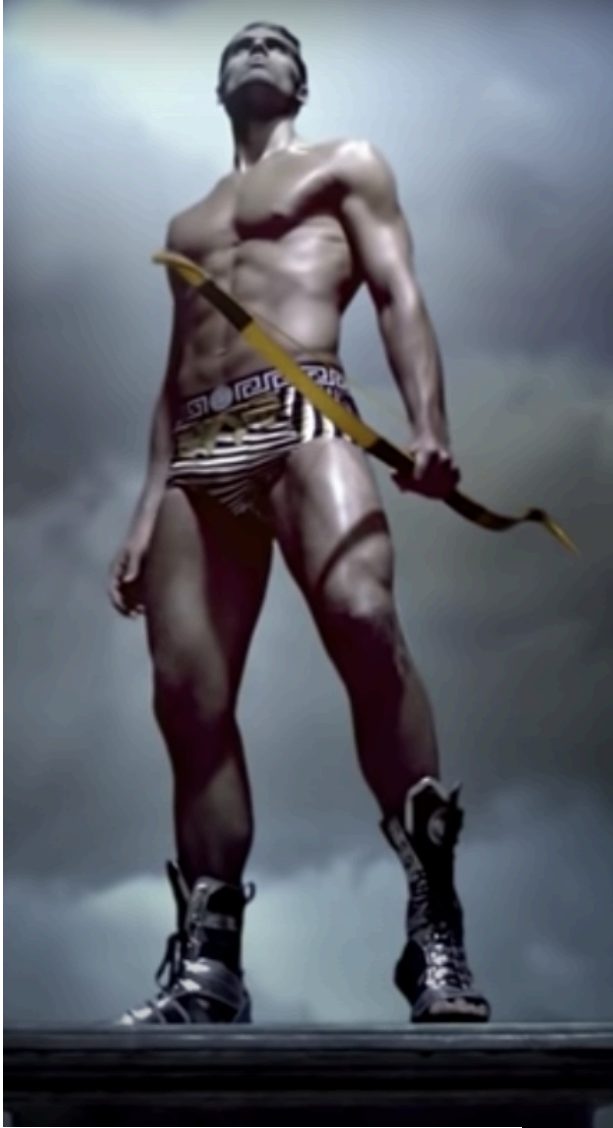


Fig. 40
Screenshot from *Eros* video commercial



Fig. 41
Screenshot from *Eros* video commercial

The video commercial promoting *Eros for men* have quite a dramatic and heroic feeling to it. Colours, sound, the character, emotions and well-known classical art historical objects are being used, and some of it are maximised. For example, to enhance how dramatic, heavy and stormy the weather is, the colours of the skies are dark blue, almost black some places, giving the lightning a strong effect every time it lights up the hero Eros, and the surroundings. The feminine voice whispering “Eros, Eros, Eros” from the very beginning underlines that the character in the video is the God of love, and the music strongly emphasizes the divine nature of Eros as the instruments changes the pace and beat of the melody and vocals in tune with his steps and the

quickly changing angles. The commercial is linked to art historical masterpieces from the very beginning; with the columns, pieces of stones lying on the ground, famous sculptures and the pedestal in a place that reminds of old ruins it is almost impossible to not experience a feeling of divinity and greatness. In the end of the commercial the sculptures are not visible anymore, but the mind is still reminded of beautiful sculptures as Eros looks like a statue in the last shot. I would presume that the weather is a reference to the Greek god Zeus, (indicated by the lightning and eagles) hence it is worth pointing out that he quiets the storms, stopping the rain and lightning, only with *one* hit of his golden arrow, highlighting his powers, and in this case, underlining his masculinity, which is a selling point in this commercial. His powers, muscular body, the silent strong (and I would say androgynous) face, and the sensual woman's voice in the end, is clearly targeting the male user. The square, blue bottle is also pointing that out, and as a whole, this commercial is bold, artistic and a good advertisement for the perfume, selling a fantasy of feeling (and smelling) strong and masculine like a Greek god (fig. 42).



Fig. 42
Screenshot of *Eros* by Versace perfume bottle
Versace

Eros Pour Femme by Versace⁵⁵

The fragrance *Versace Eros Pour Femme* from 2014 is the feminine version of *Versace Eros*, as indicated by the name. The video commercial for *Eros Pour Femme* is a continuous story from the *Eros* commercial and narrates an alternative ending. The video starts just before he stops the storm in the first commercial, with Eros walking amongst the ruins of columns and big pieces of stones towards a small staircase (fig. 43). Like in the previous commercial, he is only wearing a boxershorts and sandal shoes and in his left hand he is holding the golden bow and arrow. The weather is stormy with immensely dark colours, and the first sound heard as he walks, is thunder, rumbling loudly, creating a sublime feeling. When he stops and lifts up his bow and arrow, ready to shoot, eagles are screeching obscurely in the background (fig. 44). The scenery changes, showing a woman under the water while floating slowly towards the surface encapsulated in an eerie, divine light, enhanced by watery and harp like sounds (fig. 45). The rain is pouring down, but when Eros notices her appearance, he looks intrigued and distracted he lowers his bow and arrow instead of stopping the rain.



Fig. 43
Screenshot from *Eros Pour Femme* video commercial

Fig. 44
Screenshot from *Eros Pour Femme* video commercial

⁵⁵ Link to video commercial: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uYdMgjCKTz4&list=PLTupo1-rMk6_LRgh-gKtIerM4BLRLQBKR&index=4



Fig. 45
Screenshot from *Eros Pour Femme* video commercial

A beautiful female voice starts singing a celestial melody accompanied by a glittery sound when she shows half her face above the surface. Eros starts walking into the water, still holding his bow and arrow, and she comes further up from the depths, showing her whole face, which seems to make Eros captivated, demonstrating the presence of her feminine energy and beauty to be hypnotizing (fig. 46), (fig. 47). As they come closer to each other, both of them have their

mouths slightly open, indicating sexual attraction, but while her facial expression shows a focused mind, he appears to have lost himself by the sight of her, and he does not seem to be aware that the rain has stopped without him shooting his arrow. When he reaches her, she rises up from the water putting her hands on his chest in a seductive way, making him so mesmerized that he does not notice that she is stealing his golden arrow (the eagles are making eerie sounds in the background as she takes it out of his hand) (fig. 48).



Fig. 46
Screenshot from *Eros Pour Femme*
video commercial



Fig. 47
Screenshot from *Eros Pour Femme*
video commercial



Fig. 48
Screenshot from *Eros Pour Femme* video commercial

Suddenly the music changes from the seductive, slow, divine melody to an intense, fast paced rhythm of instruments instead of vocals, and they start kissing with an underlying indication that they are going to make love (fig. 49). The pictures changes rapidly (in the same manner as in the *Eros* commercial), showing mostly close ups of her, then their faces, bodies and hands touching while in the water. She is looking persuasively in the camera confronting the observer with complete confidence during the seance, while he is completely engrossed in her, not noticing that she is seducing him to keep his attention away from the stolen arrow (fig. 50). After their meeting is finished, she makes a final look into the eyes of the observer, before she walks away into what looks like a golden “end of the world”, with Eros’ gold arrow in her hand, wearing a dress that reminds of a short peplos, with a gold belt around the waist, gold jewellery on her arm and gold sandal boots on her feet and calves (fig. 51). The music goes back to the divine feminine voice, and the next picture shows her lying on her side, supporting her head with the one hand, and holding the arrow teasingly with the other. She is looking directly into the camera as to let the observer know that she has won (fig. 52). A very large version of the perfume bottle is standing in front of her, and the commercial ends in the same manner as the *Eros* commercial, with a close up of the bottle and the name of the brand and perfume in bold letters next to it. A sensual, dark male voice says “Eros Pour Femme, by Versace” as the commercial ends.

Contrasting to the square, blue *Eros* perfume bottle, the *Eros Pour Femme* bottle is round and soft, and gives an overall expression as being feminine emphasised by clear glass with gold details (fig. 53).



Fig. 49
Screenshot from *Eros Pour Femme*
video commercial



Fig. 50
Screenshot from *Eros Pour Femme*
video commercial



Fig. 51
Screenshot from *Eros Pour Femme* video commercial



Fig. 53
Screenshot of *Eros Pour Femme* perfume bottle
Versace



Fig. 52
Screenshot from *Eros Pour Femme* video commercial

Both the advertisement for *Eros Pour Femme* and *Eros* uses the “ideal” masculine and feminine stereotypes as a selling point, and the qualities that are portrayed as important are quite different, even though both use beauty and attraction as a factor. In this alternative ending in Versace’s story for *Eros*, she catches his attention merely with her presence, as if everything else loses importance. She is aware of her ability to distract the opposite sex and seems to be in complete control of her powers over him. The way she looks directly at the camera and into the eyes of the observers underlines that she is not there to be objectified or observed, she is there on purpose, letting him believe that she is there for his pleasure, taking advantage of his excitement to steal his arrow. Regarding the art historical context and artefacts there are few; the same surroundings with fragments of stones and columns (although no famous sculptures), her clothes and accessories, and the golden arrow, however the most significant pointer is that she is seducing the god of love. This advertisement is highly sexualised, and it is understandable that some people could be offended by this, or think it’s degrading to women, but I would argue the opposite; in this scenario the objectified woman uses her knowledge about this to give herself an opportunity to get what she wants, and I would suggest that this commercial is rather empowering. My perception is that the biggest selling point for *Eros Pour Femme* is empowerment, awareness and control, which leads the consumer to make a connection between those qualities and the fragrance.

Eros Flame by Versace⁵⁶

The *Versace Eros Flame*, a fragrance for men from 2018 is different from the two first commercials, as it’s not a continuing part of the story, although it bears the same main name as *Eros* for men, and it has the same design, but with a different colour suited for the version of the fragrance; *Flame*. It also has the same types of characters *a beautiful man and woman*, passionate for each other, but this time the commercial is not focused on sexual attraction in the same manner, but rather on a deeper emotional attraction (fig. 54).⁵⁷ The video starts in black and white with the two characters looking at each other passionately, while holding around each

⁵⁶ Link to video commercial: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=23-gS7jvc-I&list=PLTupo1-rMk6_LRgh-gKtIerM4BLRLQBKR&index=5

⁵⁷ In *Eros* the American model *Brian Shimansky*, were used as the main character, while in *Eros Flame*, Versace has used the Colombian model *Salomon Diaz*, making them relatable to a broader group of people.

other. From the very start, violins from a famous piece of classical music from the 18th century plays loudly; The most intense part of “*summer*” by Antonio Vivaldi sets a classical tone for the product being advertised.⁵⁸ The black and white video turns into a photo, a snapshot held by the male character, and the video is continuing in colours. In the background stands a familiar sculpture in a niche, and even though she is blurry it is undoubtedly *Venus de Milo*, indicating that he is standing in the Louvre (fig. 55). As the first stop in the intense violin music occurs, the video stops for a second, focusing on a close up of the male model, crying from his left eye (fig. 56) before the music and video continue in a symbiotic manner. The video zooms out, revealing that he is on a tv-screen, watched by a woman lying on her side on a red carpeted floor in the museum, clad in clothes from Versace, with their iconic acanthus leaf pattern on the suit (fig. 58). The second stop in the music is accompanied by a close up of the woman, also crying from her left eye, almost as if she is mimicking him (fig. 57).



Fig. 54
Screenshot from *Eros Flame* video commercial

⁵⁸ Summer by Antonio Vivaldi from 8m,10s: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KY1p-FmjT1M>



Fig. 55 (image on the top) Screenshot from *Eros Flame* video commercial

Fig. 56 (image to the middle left) Screenshot from *Eros Flame* video commercial

Fig. 57 (image to the middle right) Screenshot from *Eros Flame* video commercial

Fig. 58
Screenshot from *Eros Flame* video commercial

She opens a very large bottle of the *Eros Flame* (in the same manner the model in *Eros Pour Femme* does with an enormous perfume bottle in front of her), and slips one of her tears in it, as if the last ingredient of the potion is a tear of heartbreak, which gives it a magical kind of feeling. When the “mixture” is finished they reach their hands towards each other, even though it is impossible for them to make physical contact through the screen. As the music gets to its most intense section, the focus shifts to a prominent sculpture in the Louvre; *Psyche revived by Cupid's kiss*, by Antonio Canova from the 18th century (fig. 59), giving an instant nudge back to the black and white photo from the beginning where they are holding each other in the same posture as the statue, implying that the two of them together are personifications of Cupid and Psyche or that their love story is as dramatic and passionate as Cupid and Psyche's. The video rapidly changes from showing the sculpture to showing the base, which is one Versace has made up. On the base it is written “EROS FLAME, THE NEW VERSACE FRAGRANCE FOR MEN” which is read by a female voice with a French accent (fig. 60). This really is a strong connotation, placing their own brand and product in the same category and importance as a world-famous piece of art.⁵⁹ Versace shamelessly indicates that they are of the same quality, and it gives their product a feeling of being exclusive, timeless, and good enough to be compared to a masterpiece. The advertisement ends with a picture of the red bottle in front of the base (fig. 61).⁶⁰



Fig. 59, *Psyche Revived by Cupid's Kiss*,
Antonio Canova
1.55 m x 1.68 m
Marble, 1787-1793, photo: Kimberly
Vardeman

⁵⁹ Canova's sculpture has also been used to promote clothes. see «Jeans – Made in Italy» by Bente Kiilerich, 2012, 174-179.

⁶⁰ For eros in advertising, see C. Mercier, Cupidon, une divinité-star internationale de la publicité, *antiquipop* 14/2 2022, <https://antiquipop.hypotheses.org/10490>

EROS FLAME

THE NEW
VERSACE FRAGRANCE
FOR MEN

Fig. 60
Screenshot from *Eros Flame* video commercial



Fig. 61
Screenshot from *Eros Flame* video commercial

Alien by Thierry Mugler⁶¹

The fifth and last advertisement I will have an in depth look at is *Alien* by Thierry Mugler from 2005. The music used in this video commercial is *Brennsteynn* by Sigur Rós, and it gives the commercial an ancient, mystic feeling with the Icelandic language (Sigur Rós, 2013). This advertisement lasts for one whole minute, which is twice as long as the four commercials analysed above. The commercial starts with a total solar eclipse which immediately draws a connection to the infinite mysteries of our expanding universe, supported by a quiet sound reminding of spaceship bedroom ambience (RainRider Ambience, 2023) (fig. 62). The sun give life to the desert dunes and lights up a half buried ancient looking palace (fig. 63), (fig. 64). Crackling noises are heard in the background, which substantiates an eerie feeling, enhanced by the change in scenery to inside the palace, which has a skeletal looking ceiling (fig. 65). As the music intensifies, clips from around the room shows columns and arcs around a beautifully decorated floor which leads to a statue of a feminine figure with wavy high hair, clad in a gilded mermaid dress standing on an octagonal pedestal (fig. 66), (fig. 67). The octagon is used in mathematics and architecture, but it also serves a symbol for resurrection and rebirth (Mark Reynolds, 2008, 54).



Fig. 62 (above, left)
Screenshot from *Alien* video commercial

Fig. 63 (above, right)
Screenshot from *Alien* video commercial

⁶¹ Link to video commercial: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xvhDTxwUkEc&list=PLTupo1-rMk6_LRgh-gKtIerM4BLRLQBKR&index=2



Fig. 64 (left)
Screenshot from *Alien* video commercial

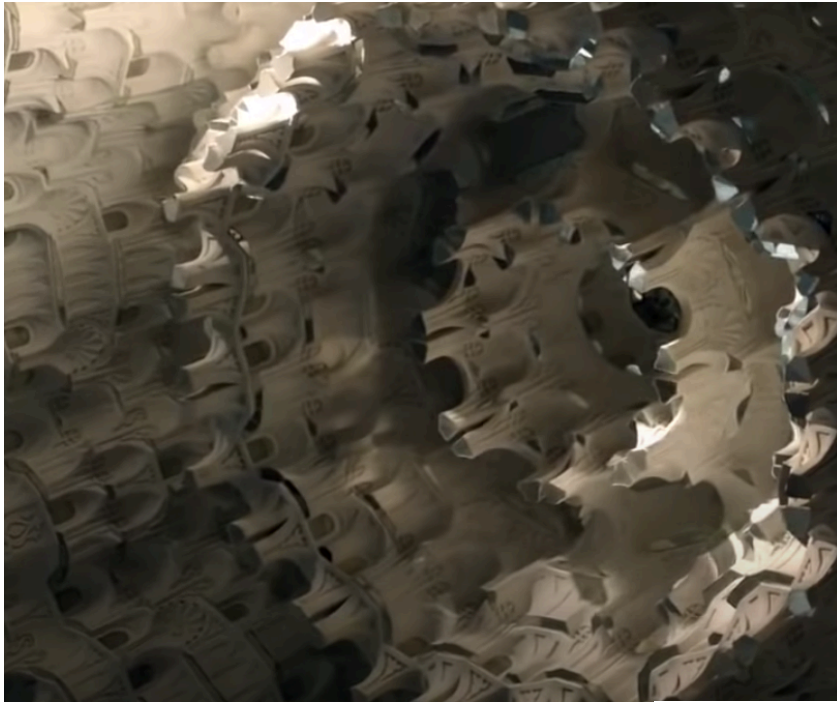


Fig. 65
Screenshot from *Alien* video commercial

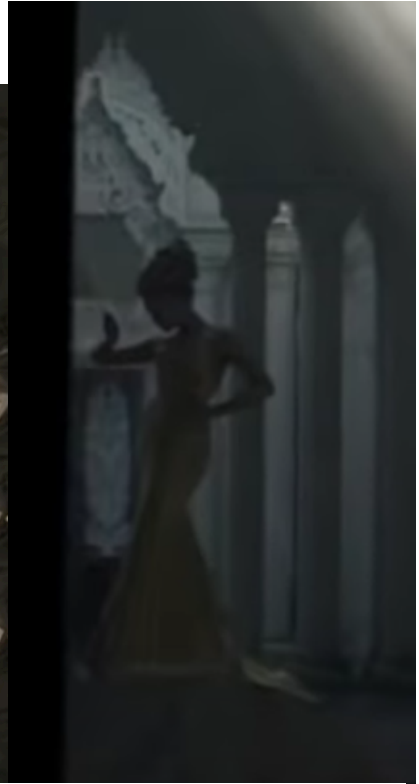


Fig. 66
Screenshot from *Alien* video commercial



Fig. 67
Screenshot from *Alien* video commercial

The sun rays are shining from the roof and are moving towards the statue. When the rays hit her shoulders, it wakes her up, and we see her take a deep breath, as if it gives her back the breath of life from being frozen for a long time. She wakes up, moving more and more while soaking up the life-giving sun, with elegant movements, almost like a dance. When she finally opens her eyes, she looks up towards the ceiling and reaches her arms up to the light source and starts summoning the light with her bare hands, looking like a gold goddess (fig. 68). The ceiling is visible for less than a second, and it certainly looks divine, almost extra-terrestrial (fig. 69), and it shows how she is changing it from the cold and bony appearance it had before she woke up (fig. 65). She holds the light ball in front of her face (fig 70), looking at it with complete attention, - and then a glimpse of the ceiling shows again – before turning the light ball into a purple and gold glass flask, magically floating in her hand sending out rays of golden light from inside the glass container (fig. 71).

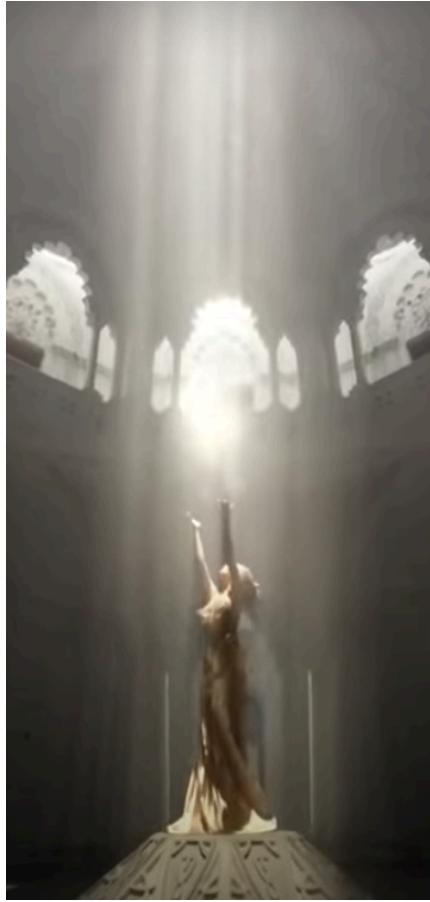


Fig. 68
Screenshot from *Alien* video commercial



Fig. 69
Screenshot from *Alien* video commercial



Fig. 70
Screenshot from *Alien* video commercial



Fig. 71
Screenshot from *Alien* video commercial

The sun shines on her once again, and now it's like she has soaked it all up, and her dress starts glowing in such a strong manner that the whole room is being lit up, and thus disclosing heavily gilded and decorated interior. In my interpretation there is a resemblance to the character in the advertisement and Phidias' Athena Parthenos (fig. 72), e.g., her hair going upwards reminds of the crown, the golden and glowing dress, the staring straight forward and the somewhat similar posture with the right hand holding a divine object, emphasizing her as an ancient goddess (fig.73). The commercial ends with her, standing in the centre as a living golden goddess sculpture, with an enlarged image of the bottle on the right side of her and the name; *Alien* in large letters and the brand name underneath and a woman saying the name and brand (fig. 74).



Fig. 73
Screenshot from *Alien* video commercial



Fig. 72
Athena Parthenon reconstruction
Photo: Mary Harrsch
The Nashville Parthenon. Tennessee



Fig. 74
Screenshot from *Alien* video commercial

COMPARISON AND DISCUSSION

In order to get a deeper understanding of what kind of means different perfume commercials use to advertise and make their product attractive, I have watched a great quantity of commercials, mostly for perfumes, but also quite a few for well-known brands making products like beverages, beauty tools and food. I have found one main component that applies to all of them regardless of the type of product, and a few that goes for the majority, but not all. The component I found that is common for all, is interestingly, not of a material manner, but rather playing on a psychological effect; the illusion that a desired quality can be achieved by the use or consummation of a material product. Typical selling points that I found are based on basic human needs like happiness, love, desire, family/friends and a feeling of freedom and affiliation. A few examples: 1) I mentioned in the introduction that Gillette have a product called *Venus Gillette*, which is a razor for women. They use the slogan *embrace your inner Goddess*, together with a scenery that shows happy gorgeous women together, in a location that gives the feeling of freedom (like the beach), laughing

and having a seemingly stress free, idyllic life. 2) the beverage Coca Cola uses a happy life, full of laughter and loving moments in company with good friends or family as a huge selling point and promotes *sharing* as the natural thing to do with a coke. 3) L'Oréal Paris has made their slogan *because you're worth it* quite famous and uses self-treatment and spoiling oneself as a way to make their products desirable and including a wide diversity in women in their campaigns as a mean to reach out to as many as possible. 4) The fourth and last example are commercials for perfumes in general, i.e., a fantasy where a certain fragrance somehow can improve you as a person; to be desired by the opposite (or same for that matter) sex, to be strong, independent and empowered, to be masculine or feminine, successful, happy, loved etc.

The means I found that are used in most, but not all, of the commercials I have looked at, is the use of sounds and music to enhance the idea in the advertisement, beautiful actors or actresses portraying characters or collaboration with celebrities, and rapidly changing pictures. Naturally, when the means are described in written form and read like I do here, it seems like it should be easy to understand when an advertisement affects whether or not a product is necessary to acquire, but when the brain is in a "relaxed" state or inattentive to these types of influence, for example during a heartbreak or in loneliness, it makes sense that the promise of improvement from purchasing a product could be convincing. One does not automatically get to be part of big group of happy, beautiful friends by drinking Coca Cola, nor does one get the freedom to run around on the beach feeling like a goddess from shaving away body hair with the *Gillette Venus* razor, but the brain will naturally connect the associations given by the commercial to the product and based on *prototypes are attractive because they are easy on the mind* I would argue that repeated promotion with the same message equals easier processing and with it a greater object preference for the brain, and thus a higher likeliness to be affected by an advertisement (Winkielman et. al). The use of people of all ages (and even animals if one look at commercials for cat and dog food) that are considered beautiful and/or attractive is also a factor I found to be utilized without exception in perfume advertisements.⁶² This tactic is quite clever to use as one of the selling points, because the brain tends to conclude that beautiful/attractiveness equals good and unattractiveness equal something bad. In *Shared brain activity for aesthetic and moral judgments: implications for the Beauty-is-Good stereotype* by Takhasi Tsukiura and Roberto Cabeza they found in their studies that the overlap (in the same participants) between positive

⁶² This goes for many of the commercials for other products I have looked at, but not all.

aesthetic and moral judgements are remarkably correlated with each other, showed in the activations in the medial orbitofrontal cortex (activity in this area is known as the region related with positive emotions and rewards), and that negative attractiveness and goodness ratings was correlated, showed in increased activity in the insular cortex (the region in the brain associated with the processing of pain and emotions of the negative sort) (Takashi Tsukiura and Roberto Cabeza, 2010, 6-7).

The characters played by beautiful actors, *famous or not*, does not have a correlation with a certain scent, nonetheless the brain will automatically judge a perfume to smell better than if actors activating the insular cortex are used to play the characters. So, I will claim that a beautiful person mixed with the qualities of a mythological deity in a scenery with familiar objects (statues, paintings, architecture etc.), will enhance the “beautiful experience” for the brain, because in addition to activate the medial orbitofrontal cortex, it also provides easy processing fluency for the brain *and* activates the mirror neurons both in the actions seen, and in the predictable outcome; it’s a triple “boost” for the brain, and needlessly to say, this ought to make a commercial more preferable over one that does not have these qualities. The commercials I have looked at in this study use these means to a great extent, and there are several other perfume advertisements that use these traits, but in various degrees. For example, *Goddess* by Burberry; the video commercial consists mostly of a woman running and climbing a hill with a pack of lionesses⁶³. A few words are said before she starts running, and after she has reached the top of the hill; “There is a goddess in all of us, strong as a lioness.” and “embrace the power within.” followed by the fragrance name and brand (fig. 75). The character and surroundings are not portraying her as a goddess, but with the new fragrance from Burberry, she, and anyone who uses it, are empowered to embrace the goddess within. The message from the advertisement is quite clear, only with a few words and the indicating name. Another commercial that uses a few, but effective means is *God Is a Woman Perfume* by Ariana Grande. First, the name of the perfume is named after Ariana Grande’s song *God is a woman*, which gives those who has seen the music video made for the song, an immediate interconnection to the strong message in it.⁶⁴ During the commercial heads of statues are displayed in the grass before Ariana,

⁶³ Link to video commercial: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rmydvz5uyGA&list=PLTupo1-rMk6_LRgh-gKtferM4BLRLQBKR&index=13

⁶⁴ Link to video commercial: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wDqzKuzWeqk&list=PLTupo1-rMk6_LRgh-gKtferM4BLRLQBKR&index=16

and some of them bears resemblance to some very important statues; a head in front of the yellow flowers that look inspired by the Caryatides, the Knidian Aphrodite to Grande's right (fig. 76) and another head (fig. 77) that could resemble both the head of the Knidian Aphrodite and Venus de Milo. Nothing is said in this commercial, but a piece of the song is played in the end; "when you try to come for me, I'll keep flourishing yeah... God is a woman. When all is said and done, you'll believe God is a woman". Even though it's not many parallels to Greek deities and mythology, it is interesting how the ones that are being used in this commercial are enough to draw the parallel between a scent and ancient divinity.



Fig. 75
Screenshot from *Burberry goddess* video commercial



Fig. 77
Screenshot from *God is A Woman* video commercial



Fig. 76
Screenshot from video commercial

There are three more advertisements I find worth mentioning (briefly as I will not analyse them), that are more comparative to the ones I analysed on account that they go to a greater length to put themselves in a context of divinity and classical; *Gaultier Divine* by Jean Paul Gaultier,

Olympéa and *Invictus* by Paco Rabanne.⁶⁵⁶⁶⁶⁷ The commercials for *Olympéa* and *Invictus* are both consisting of a mix between references to mythology and modern objects; for example, the scenery is reminding of the home of the Greek gods *Olympus*, statues that comes alive, and mythological characters. Modern objects are used in both commercials, like for example a white car with wings that could be a modern version of Pegasus, football stadium with paparazzi photographers and modern music playing in the background (the same song, *Power* by Kanye West, is used in both commercials). The *Gaultier Divine* is part two after a fragrance for men, like *Eros* and *Eros pour femme*, and *Invictus* and *Olympéa*. This commercial leads the mind to the Gates of Paradise in Florence at first, with gilded doors telling a story of the stormy sea. The whole video is thoroughly divine with putti, the main character sitting in a shell looking like Venus controlling the sea trough a bottle, a mermaid, a head that reminds of a gorgon, all in a divine light and the entire video is like an explosion of gold (fig.78).



Even though Fig. 78 s references to Greek, Roman or other
 Screenshot from *Divine* video commercial
 types of mythology, they do so in various degrees and thus end up with a result different from
 each other. There are some similarities though; as mentioned it is the idea, *the fantasy*, that is the

⁶⁵ Link to video commercial: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fDrCCj2UCaw&list=PLTupo1-rMk6_LRgh-gKtferM4BLRLQBKR&index=14

⁶⁶ Link to video commercial: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oH7axwK5YTY&list=PLTupo1-rMk6_LRgh-gKtferM4BLRLQBKR&index=9

⁶⁷ Link to video commercial: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ozXQx_pyyA

most significant common component, but the most important observation I have made while studying a countless number of perfume commercials, both relevant and not relevant relative to the use of deities and mythology, is the common *missing* substance. They are all advertising a perfume, something that is made for the sense of olfaction, but they do so without the possibility for the possible buyer to actually smell it. Sight and hearing are the senses of greatest importance in order to sell the olfactory product through a commercial, and I do believe that they are of great importance in order for the consumer to get an interest in the product.⁶⁸ Many of the commercials are clearly directed towards specific target groups, especially male and female. The question is; If one adds the possibility of smelling the fragrance belonging to a perfume advertisement, will it work? Is for example the *Eros* perfume smell as manly as the advertisement claim, or will the *Eros pour Femme* perfume give the feminine power it depicts in the commercial? I have conducted an experiment to test questions like these, using blind testing, added description and then showing of the bottle and advertisement, providing a multisensory experience. My experiment will be the last part of my thesis before concluding and finishing.

⁶⁸ Brian Moeran, *The colors of smell: Perfume Advertising and the Senses*, 2011. Core.ac.uk/download/pdf/17278736.pdf

CHAPTER 3: THE PERFUME EXPERIMENT

In order to find out to what degree an advertisement affects how a fragrance is perceived, I find it necessary to do some research, so I have conducted an experiment for my thesis in order to test the effect of perfume advertising. The participants will answer whether or not they like the fragrance, and if they experience it as feminine, masculine or unisex. The experiment is divided in three parts, where the participants will smell the same ten different perfumes in all parts, in a random and different order each time, with a pause with time to smell on a cup of coffee beans between each fragrance to “reset” the olfaction. In part one the participants will be handed out a piece of paper of the same kind used in perfume shops with fragrance sprayed onto it.⁶⁹ No other stimuli or information will be given. In the second part, the participants will hear the description of the perfume made from the producer, with descriptions directly targeting the different sexes left out (“for her”, “masculine” etc. Words like sweet, strong, musky etc. will be left in.), and then be given a sample with the belonging perfume. Information about the perfume name and brand will not be given. They will then answer the same questions as in part one. In the third and last part the participants will be given information about the brand and name of the fragrance, listen to the same descriptions as in the previous part, followed by watching the perfume commercials (two of the perfumes do not have video commercials, in which cases the participants will be showed the poster commercials). The answers from part one will serve as a base for comparison.

Ten men and women between the age of 23 to 31 participated in the experiment, and were instructed to not wear perfume, deodorant or other products with a fragrance in order to maintain as little as possible distractions for the olfaction

⁶⁹ I bought the paper they use for smelling perfumes at the beauty store *KICKS*.

Random order of perfumes in part 1, 2 and 3 (see fig. A after the discussion for a visualisation of all perfumes):

ROUND 1	ROUND 2	ROUND 3	FEMININE, MANLY, UNISEX
Versace – Eros	Lancôme - Idôle	Versace – Crystal Noir	M
Tom Ford – Noir Extreme	Victorias Secret - Angel	Mugler - Alien	M (has been F, then U, and now M) (FN)
Lancôme - Idôle	Mugler - Alien	Victorias Secret - Angel	F
Rituals – Soleil d’Or	Rituals – Soleil d’Or	Tom Ford – Noir Extreme	U
Versace – Eros pour Femme	Versace - Crystal Noir	Versace - Eros	F
Paco Rabanne – Olympéa	Armani - Code	Paco Rabanne - Olympéa	F
Mugler - Alien	Versace - Eros	Lancôme - Idôle	F
Armani – Code	Tom Ford – Noir Extreme	Rituals – Soleil d’Or	M
Victorias Secret - Angel	Versace – Eros pour Femme	Armani - Code	F
Versace – Crystal Noir	Paco Rabanne - Olympéa	Versace – Eros pour Femme	F

Graph A.1 illustrates how many of the participants experienced the different perfumes in the way it is advertised (*Versace Eros* is for men according to *Versace*, *Lancôme Idôle* for women and so on). The yellow part represents the first round, the orange part the second round, and the red part represents the third round. In the first round none of the fragrances was experienced as intended by the producer by all of the contestants, with the highest being *Soleil d’Or* at 80%. The lowest was *Noir Extreme* with only 20% experiencing it as manly in all three rounds. It varied between 50 and 30 % percent who experienced this fragrance as either unisex or feminine in all rounds, which is quite interesting! I was taught by the seller at KICKS when I bought it, that *Tom Ford Noir Extreme* has been sold as both a fragrance for women, as a unisex scent, and now it is being

sold as a fragrance for men. The commercial for *Noir Extreme* is not clearly directed towards *either* men or women, so, if that is the purpose, Tom Ford has achieved it.

7 out of 10 perfumes increased from the first round to the third, 2 decreased and 1 stayed the same, which suggests an impact from the stimuli given. For example, it appears that *Eros* was experienced as a fragrance for men by 30 % of the participants after only smelling it, while after they were informed what perfume, they were going to smell, seeing the commercial, and looking at the bottle, *Eros* was experienced as a manly scent by 90% of the participants. *Eros pour Femme* went from 60 % to 100 % experienced as a fragrant for women when smelling it after listening to the description of the fragrance (GA.3)

*A passionate fragrance, embodying strength, individuality and seduction. (...): The ultimate in Power and seduction from (...), from the captivating fragrance to the elegance of the bottle (...).*⁷⁰

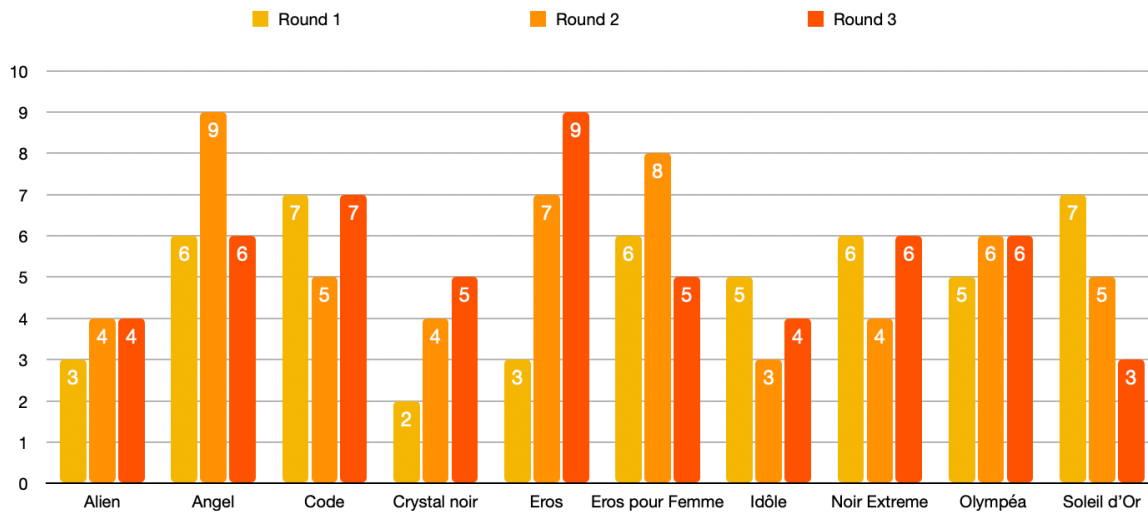
The perfumes *Angel* and *Idôle* were the only two fragrances that had a result of 100% after the third part, although several of the perfumes had an increase in part two and/or part three. A common factor between these two is a highly feminine bottle, with a pink saturation and elegant design (see fig A). Even though the commercials for the two fragrances are fairly different from each other, they do have some similarities; there are many beautiful women in the advertisement, but no men, and all are portrayed as strong and powerful, but while *Idôle* by Lancôme focuses more on feminine power, underlined by the powerful words said during the commercial “*can you hear that? That’s the sound of thunder and bangs. That’s us, coming for change.*”, the commercial for *Angel* by Victoria’s Secret steers the focus in a more sexual tone with many of the “angels” in sexy lingerie with their iconic angel wings on as accessorise.

The fragrance *Code* by Armani, was less experienced as the sex it was advertised for in round 3 from round 1, which is interesting because that suggests that the advertisement had the opposite effect. The *Code* advertisement is clearly directed towards men, and underlines this with a

⁷⁰ I modified the text for the purpose of the experiment. For the full description from Versace: https://www.versace.com/no/en/women/accessories/fragrances/eros-pour-femme/eros-pour-femme-edp-100-ml/R750032-R100MLS_RNUL.html

woman saying “for men” in the end of the commercial, but something made the participants experience this as more unisex than after only smelling the fragrance in round 1. The bottle could be for both men and women as it is black and elegantly round in its design (see fig A).

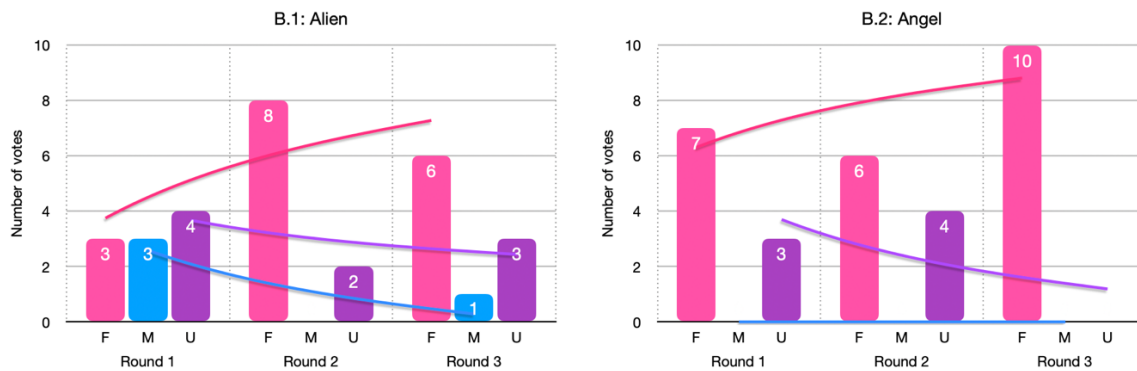
GRAPH A



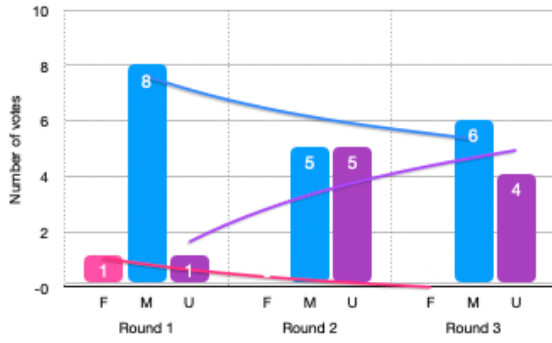
Graph B. 1-10 shows what the participants answered in all three rounds per perfume, *feminine*, *manly* or *unisex*. *Angel*, *Idôle (f)* and *Soleil d'Or (u)* was not experienced as a fragrance for men by any of the participants in either round, and only one time each for *Crystal noir* and *Eros pour Femme*. Both *Alien* and *Olympéa* were considered as all three after round 1, but became significantly more perceived as a feminine and not at all as a masculine fragrance after round 2. *Eros*' results also changed notably from F, M and U in round 1 to 90% in round 3, while *Code* started out as highly masculine to masculine and unisex. The *Noir Extreme (M)* had the most exciting result regarding the fragrances for men with half of the participants experiencing this

perfume as a feminine scent in both round 1 and 2, but after seeing the commercial and perfume bottle the experience changed to masculine (GB.8). These results show an intriguing tendency; it appears that the fragrances for women are easier to identify as a feminine scent than the fragrances for men as manly. It would be interesting to take this experiment further to test this tendency in a larger scale with more participants and preferably more fragrances.

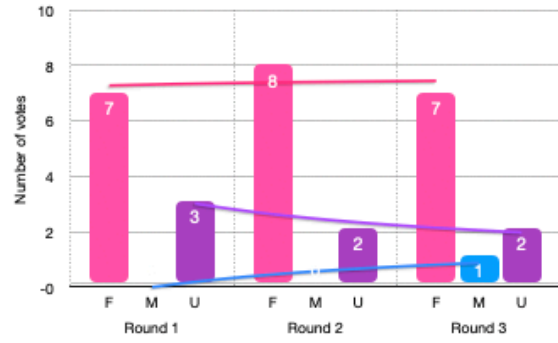
GRAPH B, 1-10



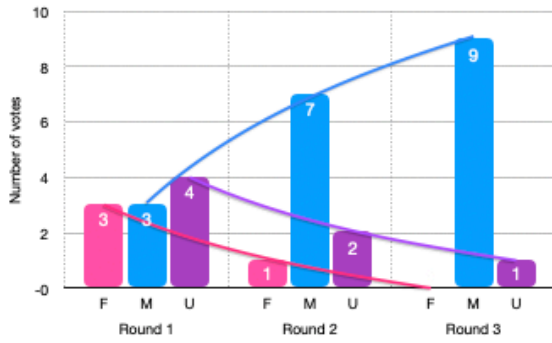
B.3: Code



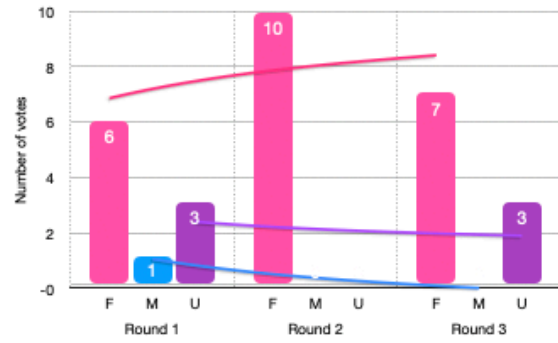
B.4: Crystal Noir



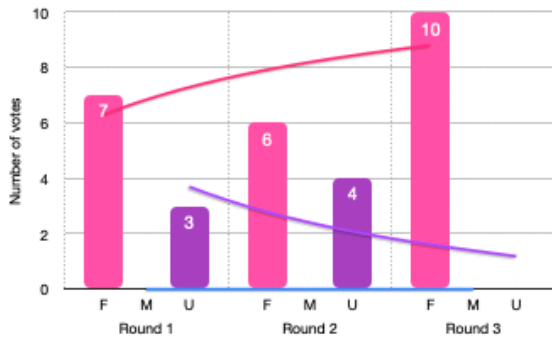
B.5: Eros



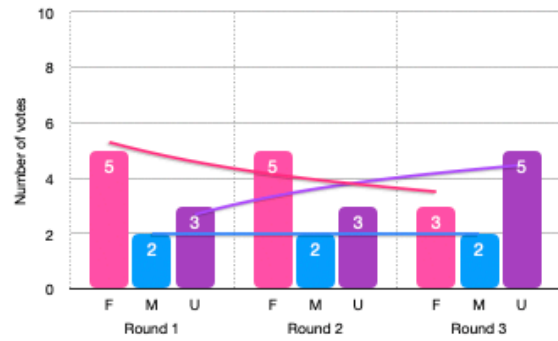
B.6: Eros pour Femme



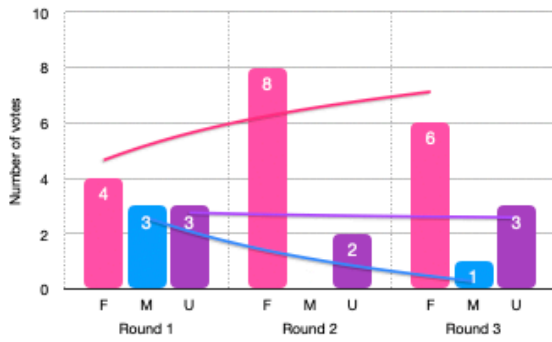
B.7: Idôle



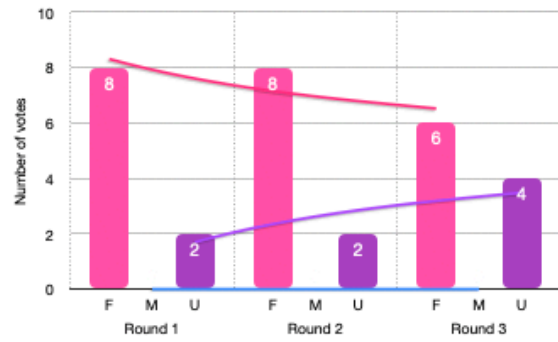
B.8: Noir Extreme



B.9: Olympéa

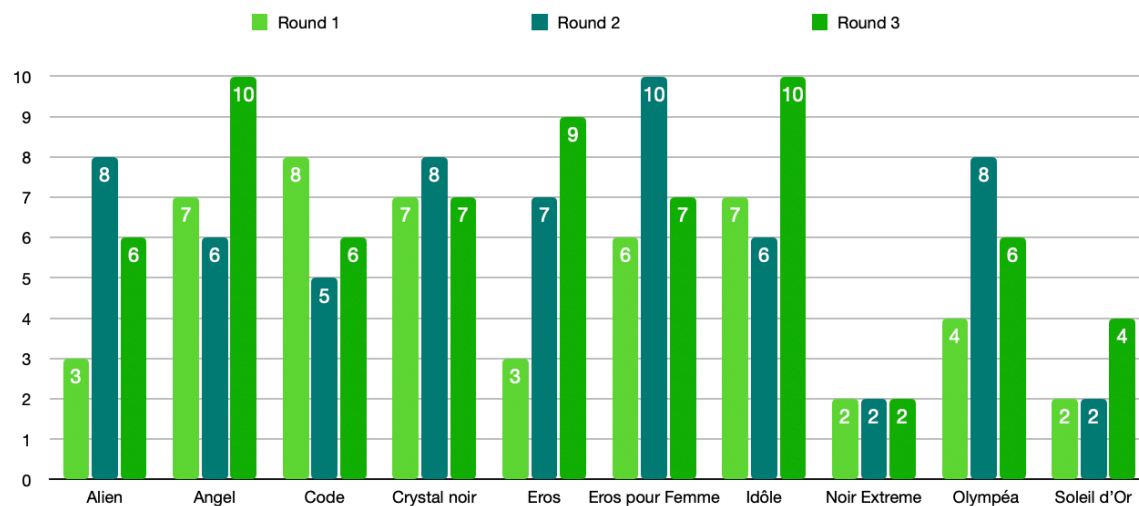


B.10: Soleil d'Or



Graph C shows to what degree the different fragrances were experienced as likeable per round. The results for *Eros* had the exact same result in each round as the results in graph A, with an increase from 30% to 90%, and although it is noticeable, it is the only fragrance with these results, ergo I do not believe this similarity to have significance for my experiment. *Soleil d'Or* was the most surprising, as I expected all the fragrances tested to be more “liked” after seeing the bottle and commercial in round 3, but this fragrance had the opposite results, as it went down 20 % each round. This perfume is not directed towards either men or women in its commercial, nor does it contain any person, and in my interpretation, this could be *one* possible reason for the decrease in likeability; no persons or characters in the commercials equals little activation for the mirror neurons (since the mirror neurons fire during the observation of another person’s action), and little prototypicality (no easily recognisable model), which perhaps could make it uneasy for the viewer to immerse themselves into the advertisement. Whether one likes a scent or not is of course influenced by personal preferences and memories, but the experiment showed a difference after stimuli had been given in round 2 and round 3, in both positive and negative directions.

GRAPH C



DISCUSSION

The experiment I conducted was in a small scale, but it did provide good enough results to support and discuss my thesis. My expectations before the test, was that round 3 would impact the experience of the fragrance, which it did, but round 2 changes the results compared to round 1 more than expected, which is a pleasant surprise, since it points out how important words in an advertisement are.

Ideally, my experiment would have been done over three days in order to avoid influences from the memories of the previous rounds, and a 50/50 men/women participant group. If this experiment was to be taken further, it could be useful to test it on a larger scale with a larger group of participants and more fragrances, especially more unisex scents. Since the olfaction changes with age, this could also be of interest to test, and perhaps a non-smoker/smoker group. The test showed a larger difference in the perfumes that were highly directed towards either men or women, which underlines the importance of using strong female/male characters that are familiar, for example Greek deities. Before moving on to the concluding and last part of this thesis, I would like to mention an observation I have found to be slightly paradoxical. The advertisement made for the perfumes I have analysed and the ones I used in my experiment all promote themselves as products that would make the buyer stand out from the crowd, to be *unique*, if they buy a mass-produced product. How can a product be unique when a high number of copies are made and sold all over the world? If one follows the way Walter Benjamin thinks about this modern way of producing, it is even arguable that the product meant to make the consumer unique or one of a kind in reality does not have any “aura”, no matter how beautiful the bottle is, how seductive the fragrance is or how “one of a kind” it is presented as in an advertisement (Walter Benjamin, 1935). It is then fair to say that the way a product is promoted as a “tool” for making a person stand out, is contradictive to the desired result of selling an abundant number of said product.



Fig. A. The perfumes used in the experiment

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION

When I started writing this thesis, I had a goal of learning everything about olfaction and how it can change the way one perceives commercials and art. I have learned much, but the most important lesson I have been taught, is that there is no way of knowing everything about this subject because even though modern science has discovered and gained a lot of understanding regarding the brain, it still is an “ocean” of mysteries left to resolved. This has made me aware of the fact that there exists much knowledge about how the senses work and are processed in the brain, but research and testing are of great importance in order to gain more knowledge and understanding. As I wrote in the introduction; I wanted to find out in what way the meaning and qualities of the antique gods and goddesses has changed, gradually, as the modern society has developed, and if neuroaesthetics can give an answer to why the senses can “trick” us into favouring one object over another. Maybe finding these answers could lead to an understanding of why antique deities still are thought of as attractive and used for commercial selling. Regarding the first question, I do believe that the conception of the deities *-at least the ones I have looked at-* have changed. The most reasonable explanation for this outcome, is that *we* have changed considerably, not only ourselves, but also the society and culture we practice from when the antique deities were worshipped for the first time, and for that reason, changed the deities with us. Take for example how the beauty ideal has changed and is changing still. A beautiful big breasted figurine with a big round belly would probably not be the perception of an ideal body for women in the modern Western world, but it was probably considered as the most beautiful ideal when it was made. The way Versace has depicted the image of the deities in some of their commercials is a good representation of the stereotype image of ideal beauty today. Whether the depictions were/are completely realistic is not of great importance; since it is an *ideal*, they can be exaggerated and modified as needed as long as it is experienced as realistic enough to be “achievable.” It seems to me that, *they; Aphrodite, Eros, Medusa-* and other deities, exist as a symbol and a representation of qualities that are meaningful and important for us, and that is not changeable in the way appearances are. As long as the importance of beauty exists, –no matter how differently beauty has been and can be perceived in different cultures today and over the centuries- the idea of Aphrodite will continue to exist, she will just come in different forms, e.g., Venus in Roman

mythology, Freyja in Norse mythology or Lakshmi in Hindu mythology. The same can apply for the symbol of love; as long as the desire for love to be reciprocated by the loved one, the idea of Eros (or Cupid in Roman mythology etc.) will have a reason to exist. Love and beauty is part of nature; beauty, to a certain degree, equals higher attraction value which again equals better chances at reproducing ones genes, and love secures relationships and safety e.g. motherly love, love for a partner, nature, one selves, animals etc., and gives the brain a feeling of connection and meaning, not to mention rewarding hormones which basically is motivation to repeat an action, and therefore I find it reasonable that love and beauty will always exist. Aphrodite/Venus also seems to come back in waves, as a measurement for women's beauty; for example, the Venus measurements contests from the 1920's.⁷¹ She is part of the ongoing body positive movement that started in 2012, where she is promoted in a *body accepting* context and thus put into a role where she represents both inner and outer beauty.

As far as I have figured out, Medusa is the one that has changed the most out of the three mythological characters I wrote about in chapter 1. Her appearance is imagined as a terrifying gorgon, sometimes with a distorted face, looking petrifying in the way only a monster is able to, with vile snakes for hair. She is also imagined completely opposite; terrifyingly beautiful and seductive, still with snakes for hair, framing her face in a flattering manner and either way, appalling or appealing, Medusa always seems to bring with her an aura of powerfulness and strength. Clearly, her head is an exceptionally mighty tool as her gaze continues to turn those who looks into her eyes in to stone, even after her beheading (and then it is easy to imagine how strong Perseus must have seemed, winning over such a powerful creature, or how terrifying Athena would look with Medusa's head on her breastplate), making her tremendously symbolic for war and fighting in order to control and win over the opponent. She has also become a symbol for another type of power; *inner strength and mental power*, and even *survival*. I have noticed that the *gorgoneion* is used as a tattoo motif to symbolize mental strength and survival for victims of rape, domestic violence etc. I saw this first in a comment section on a social media platform, where people from all over the world (most women but also a few men) asked why some had chosen her head as their tattoo, and what it meant to them, and people answering, telling their strong stories. I find this development to be rather honourable of Medusa's memory as it takes root in another

⁷¹ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_yzQTqP2ZKA from 4:10

part of her story; instead of just focusing on her ability to petrify, the focus is on her as a beautiful young woman who is the victim of cruel events inspiring people today to use her appearance to show the world (or themselves) that they too are stronger than ever and it can even be a reminder to never forget, but still overcome something that has had an impact on somebody's life, and *understandably* she has also become a feminist symbol for women fighting against male oppression. The most important symbolism she has been given *in my opinion* though, is the symbol of luxury and Italian fashion, given to her by Giovanni Versace from his use of her head as the logo for his fashion brand *Versace*. Asked for his choice of Medusa, Gianni Versace answered 'Seduction, sense of history, classicism. Medusa means seduction, a dangerous attraction' (M. Garber & N.J. Vickers, 2003, 276). She is a strong character to have as a logo, and their maximalist design with acanthus leaf and meander patterns in gold, product names like *Eros*, *Greca Goddess* and *La Medusa* brings it all together, and because the Versace brand is an important part of fashion history, so is Medusa. As I mentioned in chapter 1, she is also used in personal campaigns in modern political context from time to time in order to make a fool/looser out of someone (e.g. Hillary Clintons head instead of Medusas, held by Donald Trump instead of Perseus), and that is an use of Medusa and her story I find to be on the tasteless side, because in that frame of reference she is degraded to only represent ridicule and mockery of another woman. As long as a political need (i.e., war, personal campaigns) and as long as victims in need for a strong person, and in some cases the idea of a strong *woman* exists, she will continue to be a symbol of power, either the *brutal* kind of power over others or the *mindful* power over one self. She will be a part of fashion history as long as people care about fashion and find it important to spend money on it, and since the modern way of depicting her tends to be a beautiful woman, it brings to mind the power of beauty. As for the second part of my thesis, "*can neuroaesthetics give an answer to why the senses can "trick" us into favouring an object over another*", the answer I find to be most accurate is *yes*, but in order to get to that answer, it has been an absolute necessity to gain a deeper understanding of how different branches within the field of neuroaesthetics work, both by themselves and relative to each other. The senses, are interdependent, constantly changing the outcome of how an experience will be. This is fascinating because what I have found, is that if something is believable in a manner that it is convincing even though the one being convinced is aware of it, the mind is given permission to be "tricked". As discussed at the end of chapter 2, the combination of mirror neurons, the senses (and simultaneously the experienced senses are fused together improving

and/or changing each other), beauty and easy process fluency is really quite effective and powerful. Knowledge about these factors is clearly valuable in the field of marketing, as the goal normally is to sell as many as possible products, and the way to achieve that is by marketing a product in such a way that it is believable no matter whether it is true or not. Process fluency, mirror neurons, beauty and the senses are fluid though, so the personal taste someone has does not necessarily reflect the taste the same person has had or are going to have.

Beauty is shaped by factors like culture, celebrities, social media, upbringing etc. (although symmetry seems to be an element that is considered beautiful across what is “learned” or gained knowledge).⁷² How beauty is experienced depends not only on the factors mentioned, but also on how persons with influential power on social media platforms with a big base of followers choose to promote, and then, the impact process fluency, experience of the senses and mirror neurons have on the brain's perception of beauty, which means that it is dynamic and changeable. That the senses are influenced by each other is something I have discussed already, but it is also important to consider how additional factors can have an impact on the different senses when discussing them. There are unavoidable aspects like having refractive error (the need for glasses), colour blindness, hearing damage from loud noises from concerts, headphones etc., aging, asthma and allergies (a stuffed nose for example makes the sense of taste compromised), certain medicines or smoking, which can cause gustatory disturbance due to changed vascularization, quantity and even the form of the taste buds to mention a few (Alessandra Fraga Da Ré et.al, 2018). These are factors that not necessarily are considered when advertising products like foods or perfumes, but I would think that it is wise to have it in mind when targeting a desired consumer/customer group. Regarding process fluency, it requires both time and frequency to get the most out of it and that is why prototypes are favoured; because the brain is used to them, and as mentioned in chapter 2, the easier the process fluency goes in the brain, the easier it is to like something as it is not challenging. The same I would argue, goes for mirror neurons; it is dependent on gained repeated experience. Therefore, the clue to understand how a group (whether it is a few persons or a whole country) is to understand these processes in the brain, and then figure out what is easily processed by the desired group based on their history, experience, culture etc., and use the same language (in all its

⁷² An example that comes to mind is the different eyebrow trends that changes quite rapidly; very thin, bushy and bold, shaved off in order to draw them on with makeup, and a trend that is occurring on social media now in 2023 *thoroughly bleached brows* no matter your natural hair or skin colour.

forms; verbal, bodily, symbolic, cultural etc.) in order to activate the mirror neurons to forward the intended message. Naturally there will be personal differences within a group, so it would probably be beneficial to find what is common for most, not all. Some symbols or ideas can be so embedded in “everyone” minds that a mere logo or colour combination or a name can be enough for the brain to like an object more, which was apparent in my experiment where some of the perfumes were much more liked after hearing the descriptions. It is fair to say that having the knowledge about how the mirror neurons, process fluency, the senses and perception of beauty functions and affect each other in the brain is valuable in order to make good advertisements for buyable products (neuromarketing). I would like to take one more possible use of this way (with profit as the goal) of promoting something into consideration before finishing this thesis. I would argue that commercials made for good causes and not for profit (e.g. for taking care of the environment, kindness to animals, compassion etc.) should use more of these “tricks” like using known characters, celebrities, a desired quality, colours and so on in order to get their message forward. I will use Aphrodite/Venus as my example: the symbol of beauty is used for the purpose of selling razors, she has been used as a measurement to determine how beautiful a woman is, selling super glue, hands-free headsets and other products one has to give money in order to get. She has also been used for a non-profit cause to support the body positivity movement, but why not take it further? Perhaps it could be possible to use already established strong symbols to make personal qualities desirable in order to create more harmony and less suffering in the world? What if for example compassion towards others, kindness to animals, non-violent behaviour towards your spouse and family (and others of course) and patience were promoted vigorously as the most desirable qualities there are? From my point of view, using this way of advertising would be a tremendously potent tool in order to improve safety, harmony and mental health (to name a few) in a group, large or small. My conclusion to my research questions, is that advertisements have the potential to be highly effective if the means used are well thought of and put together as a finished advertisement with caution and precision, and that the use of Greek deities could be beneficial because of their familiarity and strong connection to what they symbolize and represent. An effective commercial can be a powerful tool.

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