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SUMMARY

The 3rd North American ACR Film Festival in 2004 continued to evolve in several ways. It was notable that there were more films accepted from European, Australian, and Asian filmmakers than from North American filmmakers. There was also a corresponding shift in research sites and topics. Even within North America there several Mexican and Latino topics represented. Clearly the Film Festival has gone global. As co-chairs of the Festival, we are very pleased by this turn of events. It was evident that videography allowed these topics to be presented in a more vivid and engaging way that allowed ACR audiences and future audiences of these videos to better appreciate the texture and flavor of the phenomena presented. It also allowed audiences to take a comparative perspective and ponder, for example, how do digital photos and the visual diaries presented on blogs of young Koreans differ from the uses of such images elsewhere? Or, how do American Latinos differ in their feelings of community from Mexicans celebrating the Day of the Dead? Or how to Japanese and Chinese Christmas meanings differ from those in the West where the holiday originated?

This year the Film Festival People’s Choice Award went to a video by Mary Louise Caldwell and Paul Henly entitled Living Dolls: How Affinity Groups Sustain Celebrity Worship. Besides an excellent study of Cliff Richard fan clubs in Australia, the filmmakers also brought a little of big time Film Festival promotion to the conference with give-away postcards, pens, and other merchandise promoting their film. Other filmmakers appeared to take note of these marketing methods and we may well see more of this in next year’s festival.

On Saturday afternoon, besides a re-showing of the prize-winning film, the co-organizers held a mini-workshop on consumer videography. In addition to basic demonstrations and discussions of filmmaking and editing, a healthy discussion ensued about the nature of the medium as a vehicle for consumer research. Issues of theory, technique, voice, and representation stimulated lively and diverse opinions that carried out of the workshop and into the hotel hallways.

This year ACR President Debbie MacInnis also announced that the revamped ACR web site plans to offer downloadable videos or video trailers from the Film Festival in the Future. Together with downloadable consumer and marketing videos beginning in the online Academy of Marketing Science Review, a special DVD issue of Consumption, Markets, and Culture, and a new Film Festival at the 2005 European ACR Conference, the increasing popularity of videographic consumer research is strongly evident.

It is exciting to watch this emerging area of consumer research develop and to see a fresh batch of innovative videos each year. We have said during the two earlier Film Festivals that most filmmakers whose work was selected were first-time videographers. This continues to be true, although we are also beginning to see new films by those who have been in prior years of the Festival. Since many of the first time filmmakers have asked us for examples of prior films, we hope to have some of them up (in part or in their entirety) on the ACR web site by this time next year. We hope this will increase exposure to these videos as well as bring some of them more into the classroom and seminars.

FILM FESTIVAL ABSTRACTS

“Selling Tragedy: The Commodification of Ground Zero”  
Jean-Sebastien Marcoux, HEC Montreal  
Renaud Legoux, McGill University

This film deals with the selling of souvenirs at Ground Zero, a complex activity which has often been condemned as a form of crass exploitation of tragedy. It is based upon a field research conducted between March 2003 and March 2004, and uses ethno-videography and other qualitative methods. The film draws on consumer researchers’ work on the sacred and the profane, and extends it to traumatic, overwhelming situations, like the 9/11 attack. It opens up on a discussion of the construction of social memory, and its appropriation by individual consumers.

“Living Dolls: How Affinity Groups Sustain Celebrity Worship”  
Marylouise Caldwell, University of New South Wales  
Paul Henry, University of Sydney

Celebrity worship attracts limited attention in the marketing literature (exceptions include O’Guinn 2000; Pimentel and Reynolds 2004). In this study, we examine the case of sustained celebrity worship within an affinity group (Macchiette and Roy 1991) by focusing on the Cliff Richard Fan Club in Sydney, Australia. Our findings support and contradict prior research (e.g., O’Guinn 2000). We extend theory by demonstrating that affinity groups sustain celebrity worship by providing benefits beyond those directly linked to celebrity worship (Jenkins 1992; Kozinets 2001). For example, creating an extended social network that provides positive social stimulation and on-going emotional support.

“The Fantasy of My Ideal Home: Idealism and Realism in Home Comfort”  
Peisan Yu, Tung-Hai University, Taiwan

While the term comfort is being used pervasively in daily language, its manifestation in the making of home comfort is still under-explored. This videographic production is a follow-up on the interpretivist discourse of home comfort and its experientialism. A holistic view of consumption constellation and symbolism is employed to submerge into the realism and idealism in the fantasy of home of comfort. Based on the fifteen in-depth interviews with informants in Hong Kong and the urban regions of Taiwan, data of hand drawing, photographing, video shooting and verbal narration were gathered to acquire an profound account ideal home comfort. Altogether five Grounding Themes are raised for the foundation of their emergent themes.
“How Children in Rural China Become Consumers”
Kara Chan, Hong Kong Baptist University
James U. McNeal, Peking University
Fanny Chan Phil, Hong Kong Baptist University

Since Premier Deng Xiaoping adopted the Open policy in 1979, the Chinese economy has been enjoying rapid growth. Although living standard and income in rural China have improved, they still lag behind their urban counterparts. In this video, we visited a rural village in Chengdu Sichuan in August 2003 and interviewed seven children aged nine to twelve. The video starts with an overview of different types of shops in the rural area and continues with interviews of children. We found that rural children have limited consumption experience compared to urban children and that they rely heavily on personal sources for new product information.

“Fanatic Consumption: Reconsidering Fanaticism”
Scott Smith, Central Missouri State University
Jeff Murray, University of Arkansas
Jason Cole, University of Missouri
Molly Rappert, University of Arkansas
Dan Fisher, University of Tulsa

Fandom is often stigmatized as abnormal, dangerous, or silly (Lewis 1992). Examining so-called fanaticism in a consumer context provides insight into the processes that lead to deeply involved commitment to lifestyles and consumer products or brands. This research involved the interviewing of individuals who have experienced the “fanatic” label to attempt to understand the motivations that drive their consumption and to examine the way in which these stigmatizations are used, accepted, modified, or refuted by individuals.

“Generaciones/Generations: Cultural Identity, Memory, and the Market”
Lisa Penaloza, University of Colorado

In this documentary Mexican Americans in San Antonio, Texas share their market experiences—from the blatant discrimination of the 1940’s and 50’s, to the activism of the chicano/a rights civil rights movement in the 60’s and 70’s, to the gains of affirmative action through the 1970’s and 80’s, to the present popularity of Latino culture dubbed “Latino chic.” The film addresses a range of issues at the nexus of culture, consumer behavior and marketing, including identity, memory, social mobility, bilingual education, representations of Latinos/as in advertising and tourism, and the role of business in the Latina/o community.

“Xantolo: The Day of the Dead Celebration in the Huaxteca Region of Mexico”
Sindy Chapa, University of Texas-Pan American
Leticia Escobedo De Chapa, Institute of Research and Difusión of Mexican Folklore – Matamoros

This video shows how the tribe of Huaxtecos, located in the states of Tamaulipas, Veracruz, Hidalgo and San Luis Potosí, celebrate XANTOLO, which means “day of the dead.” The Huaxtecos celebrate “the dead” for three consecutive days. It begins on October the 31, with the creation of the altar, and continues through November the 1st and 2nd, known as All Saints’ Day and All Souls’ Day. Previous to the celebration, two other important days are considered for the Huaxtecos, the “Domingo Grande” and the Day of the Flower; days when the Huaxtecos shop and get ready for the celebration. Overall, it is appreciated through this video that the most prominent consumption symbols of the Huaxtecos during the Xantolo celebration are those related to the altars, the offerings, the cemetery, and the dances.

“Phoenix: Destruction and the Creation of Self”
Angela Hausman, The University of Texas–Pan American
Olga Chapa, The University of Texas–Pan American

The notion that possessions form the nexus of self-image is well established (cf. Belk 1988; Richins 1994; Wallendorf and Arnould 1988). Yet we know little of what happens when all one’s possessions are lost, especially when the loss is total and instantaneous. Involuntary disposition of possessions leads to dramatic changes in consumption behavior and the meaning of possessions as the new self is re-created. (Andreasen 1984; Mehta and Belk 1991). This film traces the journey made to reconstruct self after devastating fire loss.

“Tet and Consumption in Vietnam”
Thuc Doan Nguyen, University of Utah

Tet is the traditional Vietnamese New Year that derives from the Chinese Lunar New Year. In Victor Turner’s terms, Tet is a liminal time in the calendrical ritual of the Vietnamese culture. That is, it is set apart from the ordinary and everyday so that ordinary rules of behavior are suspended or inverted. In studying the traditional Vietnamese New Year, the one event where the Vietnamese consume the most, this video will address two questions: 1. How do the Vietnamese consume during Tet? And 2. How is globalism evident in Tet consumption patterns?

“Happy New Year: An Examination of Chinese New Year Food Shopping Behavior”
Lien-Ti Bei, National Chengchi Univeristy
Etta Y. I. Chen, National Chengchi Univeristy

For the family reunion, shopping special and traditional food for Chinese New Year becomes an important ritual activity. This film explores the unique behaviors and interactions from both vendors and consumers in the Di-Hua Street, which is the most representative New Year food market in Taipei. Shoppers in Di-Hua Street and two families are interviewed to reveal their feelings about New Year food shopping activities. Chinese New Year atmosphere, bargaining skills, and consumers’ impulse and eager of purchases in a festal market are all demonstrated in this film.
“Because It Is There: An Extreme ServiceScape”  
Gulnur Tumbat, University of Utah

This film introduces the concept of extreme servicescape illustrated by Everest base camp in Nepal. It is a temporary home and a pilgrimage site for climbers, guides, and Sherpas for over a 2-month period. It is mainly characterized by a moving glacier, cold weather, and constant avalanches. It is not wilderness in its physical sense but an extreme servicescape with its computers, satellite phones, and even coke or beer, or anything from the civilized world that would make clients—who pay at least $65,000 to climb the mountain—endure living at this place and feel home.

“Beyond the Camera Lens: A Look Inside the Photo-Taking Culture of Korea’s Youth”  
Joonyong Seo, Seoul National University  
Hae-Joo Kim, Seoul National University

This film focuses on the emergence of a new photo-taking culture in Korea, led by young owners of digital cameras. Based on offline interviews of twenty young Koreans and online observation of website postings, we found that these young consumers try to seek fun and self-presentation through photo-taking. At the same time, they try to record precious experiences of their past and communicate them to others. In addition to technological advancement, these psychological factors were analyzed as the prime sources of the sudden photo-taking culture of Korea’s youth.

“Santa Claus is Coming to Town: Assimilation of Christmas in Japan”  
Junko Kimura, Hagoromo University – Japan  
Russell Belk, University of Utah

Based on videographic fieldwork in Osaka, Kobe, and Kyoto, we investigate the popular celebration of Christmas in Japan. From our interviews and observations we consider broader debates on globalization, localization, and hybridization in contemporary celebrations of consumption. We find that multinational brands, media, and retail chains play important roles in promoting a global Christmas, but that Japan adapts rather than simply adopts these imports. It does this through the joint processes of making the exotic familiar and keeping the exotic exotic. Christmas is made to suit Japanese sensibilities or it is treated like visiting foreign pavilions at a World Fair.

“Sinolization of a Western Holiday: The Sweethearts’ Christmas”  
Xin Zhao, University of Utah  
Russell Belk, University of Utah

Christmas has come to urban Chinese retail stores, shopping malls, restaurants, bars, and private parties. Christmas carols, Santa Clauses, Christmas Trees, and gift-giving are increasingly common. However, this is a young people’s holiday celebrated mostly by couples. Based on interviews with consumers, sales people, and a department store manager, we find that interest in Christmas and Christmas activities is high despite confusion as to its religious aspects. The Chinese celebration of Christmas is compared to the Spring Festival (Lunar New Year) celebration but is seen as less of a family holiday. There is also an attempt to blend Buddhist deities into the Chinese Christmas celebration.

“Private Spaces in Public Places: An Exploration of the Concept of Sacred Space in the Context of Public Restrooms”  
Norlaine Thomas, University of Manitoba

This film looks at people’s attitudes towards the public restroom space, and their reactions to the growing presence of advertising and other commercial manifestations in these private spaces. Interviewees talk about their experiences, memories and impressions of the less obvious functions of public restrooms. The film draws upon the concept of the sacred as well as exploring liminal space, an area set apart from the everyday world with its own rules and boundaries. Gender issues arise in the examination of the different interpretations of the spaces allotted to males and females. Privacy, safety, and anonymity are developed as themes in the context of this distinct environment.

“Consumption in an Intercultural Marriage”  
Yasmin Sekhon, Bournemouth University  
Russell Belk, University of Utah

Any time a couple forms a household, changes in consumption patterns and rituals must occur. When the members of the couple are from different cultural, religious, and ethnic backgrounds, more change is necessary. We examine the sorts of consumption changes and impact on identity in marriages between second generation Indian immigrants in the U.K. and Anglos in the UK. This video focuses on one couple comprised of a Sikh man and an English woman. Areas on which we focus include dating, marriage, home decor, food, music, houseguests, money, gift-giving, religion, and racism.