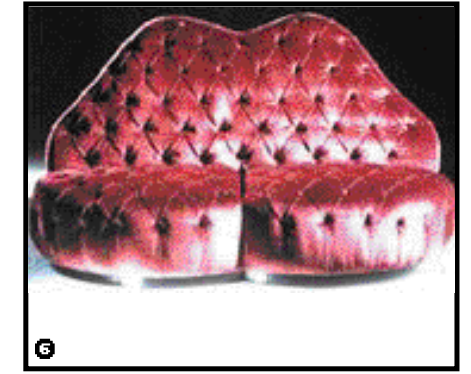
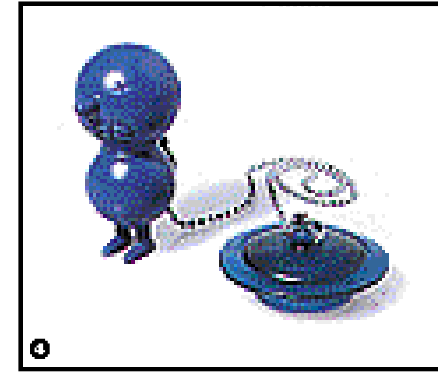


(Fun)

가

(Mario Gagliardi)



(Sigmund Freud)
(Der Witz) >

(Mr. Suicide), Massimo Giaccon
(Raymond Loewy)가

(shared frame of reference)

(Gestalt, Wertheimer) 가

가

가

(theme park)

(The Venetian Hotel)

(Paris - Vegas)

가

가

가

(fun - design)

(joke)

(globalizat)on
(stereot)op

가

가

(economy)

가

가

가

가

가

A

가

(imitati)on

(added American taste)

(Umberto Eco)가

(Zeitge)ist

가

(understand)ng

가

가

가

()
(subconscious)

(Americanization of Europe)

(Hearst Castle)

가 (assumpti)on

(Mr.

Suicide))

(Massimo Giaccon)

()

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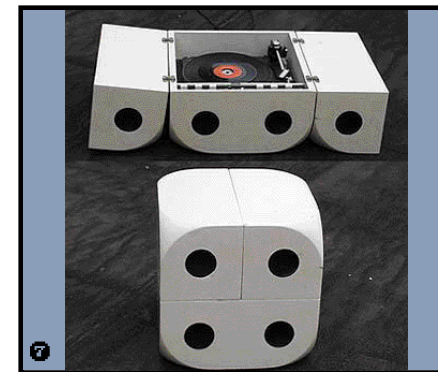
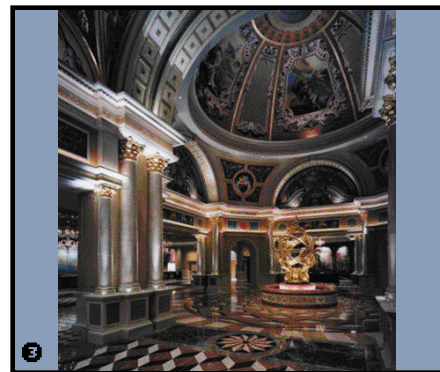
(fun) (entertainment)

A B

A

B

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10 (Achille Castiglioni) The grey eminence of Italian design, Achille Castiglioni, likes to play with meanings by bringing unexpected parts or proportions into his creations; the example shown is a converted tractor seat



11 (Bicycle Wheel) A radical approach of thinking behind the meaning of objects can be seen in the work of Dadaist Marcel Duchamp, who might have inspired Castiglioni



12 (Philippe Starck) Design genius Philippe Starck employs different ways to bring fun into his creations. The famous Juicy Salif lemon squeezer is not funny by appearance, but becomes funny through use, an effect everybody having used it can confirm. Starck fools the user, making the usage of its designs a symbol in itself.

13 (St. Martins Lane Hotel) (interactive)

14 (Kenny Scharf), (Pierre et Gilles) - (Mozart)

15 (Verduhla 'uhr' (Vivienne Westwood)

16 (Richard McGuire) New York graphic artist Richard McGuire designed this remarkable head puzzle: was he inspired by rush hour conditions in the New York Subway?

17 (Swatch (fun) Swatch produced several designs where fun is understood as a means to reflect the image wanted by the wearer, lifestyle symbols employing and sometimes making fun of stereotypes

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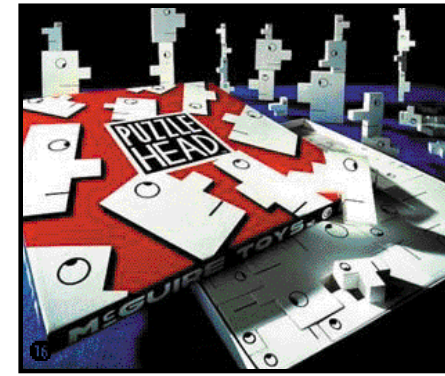
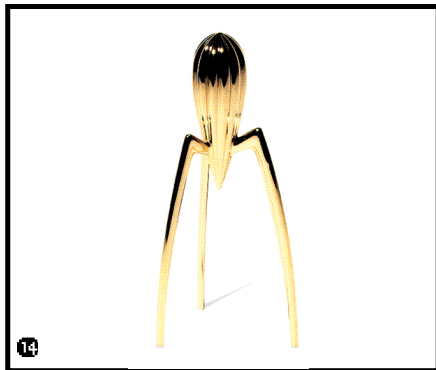
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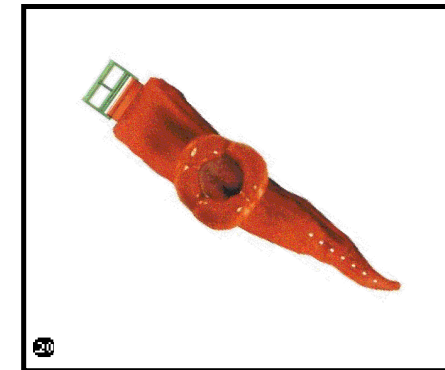
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Stereotypes of Fun

Design creates meaning. It reinforces and modifies the way how we interact with the environment, it reflects and at the same time changes the way how we make sense out of what surrounds us. It is a part of culture: culture is a shared frame of reference, determining our reaction to given situations. The interesting point is that while cultures are widely different from each other, the process of making sense of what surrounds us is becoming increasingly global. This "globalization" meant here is a globalization of stereotypes, an effect - and a condition - for the globalization meant by economy. It can be described as a process of blurring the distinctions of shared frames of reference. The process of sense-making, inherently different between cultures, is becoming increasingly similar through a process of designing visual stereotypes. Designed environments made for entertainment are becoming similar all over the globe. They employ and reinforce stereotypes taken from learned patterns of how entertainment looks like in the advanced world. Europe, for instance, is a stereotype of cultivation and culturally loaded romance, at least for non-Europeans. It can be replicated

and modified to reinforce the learned pattern of what Europe stands for.

The newest hotel-theme parks opened in Las Vegas are the Venetian and the Paris-Vegas, where Venice and Paris come as designed stereotypes. They are designed modifications how Paris and Venice actually look like in order to affirm their stereotype. The aesthetic ingredients used here are imitation and added American taste; Like Umberto Eco describes, this manner of Americanization of Europe has a tradition which can already be seen in Hearst Castle in California. Similar processes took place within other cultures; there is a Europeanization of America (Italo-Western movies for example) as well as a Orientalization of Europe (Asian Theme Parks imitating Europe, for example). While this is a large topic to be discussed separately, these processes show an ongoing conversion of cultural stereotypes to one integrated stereotyped culture.

Design, as a carrier of meaning, absorbs cultural sense-making through its creation: it is made by designers, being themselves part a culture and reflecting it. Design also influences and modifies the sense-making through its use and influence on cultural understandings of what is aesthetically pleasing and useful. That

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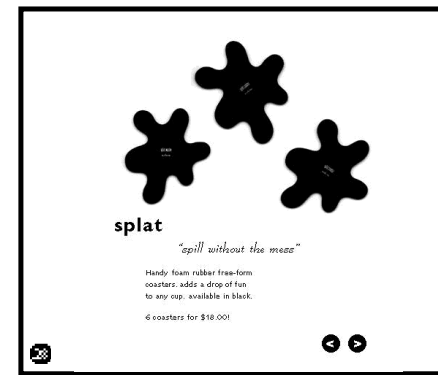
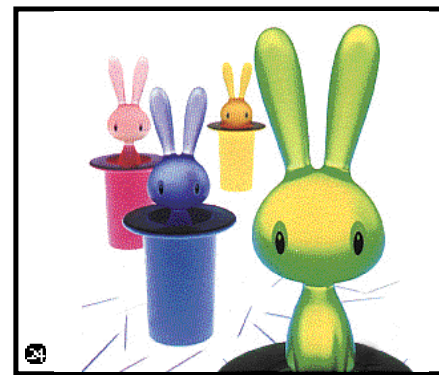
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22 (Kenny Scharf), (Ritzhoff) (fun) 가 Ritzenhoff imitates the Swatch principle for drinking glasses: They also share some designers which have worked for Swatch and Alessi (Massimo Giacomoni).

23 (Alessi) 가 Alessi was the first prestige company introducing cartoon stereotypes into the high design world: in the meanwhile, the company is better known for its range of fun accessories than for its original production of stainless steel cookware. It is interesting to compare Alessi's creations with more affordable designs of Hong Kong toy manufacturers

24 (Yuen Kwon Plastics, Hong Kong) Alessi (Zolo-toys), (Zolo) (Zolo-toys) 가 가 (Toontown) 가 Zolo became known with Zolo-toys; however, the company also produces other articles which seem to be designed by an inhabitant of Roger Rabbit's Toontown

tural assumptions behind them. Designing is a process of signifying. The directness in which design for fun uses "Gestalt" (Wertheimer) is determined by their purpose: to be understood quickly. These designs use "Gestalt" as a narrative to meet their purpose. They can be lab-mice for the dissection of the DNA of culture.

The principles of fun-design are universal. They employ stereotypes via symbols and narratives to reaffirm and modify the same stereo-

types they are using. Drawing from the pool of stereotypes created by an increasingly global media influence, they are understood globally. While this is a lamentable circumstance for local cultures, it also part of the developing system of a global capitalistic economy.

As an example for a "fun product", the bathtub plug "Mr. Suicide(see photo 24)" by Massimo Giacomoni for Alessi is analyzed here in terms of its narrative:

Freud, in his work "the joke", explains the joke as an outlet for suppressed desires. The joke twists a narrative to find a way to steam off suppressed desires.

One strategy of the joke is to tweak expected outcomes so that the whole meaning-making process gets an unexpected twist; this twist will have to relate to another known set of values, producing a surprising insight; this would be the moment of laughter. A joke is a continuum of meanings, acquired social knowledge, which is embedded in a narrative with an unexpected twist which reveals another meaning. If this twist does not make sense, the effect of the joke, the moment of laughter, remains absent. This might be intended as in absurd narratives, or unintended as in jokes which are not funny, either because the audience does not under-

stand this new collision of meanings or this collision does not provide a new meaning. By using global stereotypes, the product narrative is understood globally.

Generally, a joke needs a starting set of reference, a narrative which leads from A to B, and an ending point of reference. The narrative needs a twist to get from A to B in an unexpected manner; The ending point needs a reference to another set of meanings; Through this process, underlying assumptions and beliefs are revealed and the cultural (Jung) and personal (Freud) subconscious is exposed in a manner which momentarily sets free hidden assumptions (cultural) or feelings (personal).

When we relate this basic structure to the realm of design, we might experiment in putting a designed product into different stages of the joke-process; it will need a starting point A, a narrative which leads to B, a different set of meaning at B, and a frame of reference which is understood by the audience.

There are several important differences in the way language does this in the told joke and in the way a single product can do that; when we extend the design notion to interactive designs, the process can come significantly closer to emulate a written joke, as it lives in a deter-

mined timeframe; both however, the product and the interactive design, work by visually suggesting a set of meaning and reference. Product design has less control over the narrative, as a product exists as an own entity. A product therefore needs to create a link to its environment. The narrative of a product is thus a result of its environment, the supporting communication channels (media) and its actual use. By concentrating the requirements for a joke in a product, meaning B has to be embedded in meaning A, as long as the product does not change its appearance from A to B (like, for instance, Japanese car-toys converting to robots). This embedding lives inside a set of stereotyped meanings and is expressed with a stereotyped aesthetic language.

The joke in "Mr. Suicide" is achieved in design terms by adding stereotyped cartoon-character features to it; it transposes cartoon-aesthetics into the product realm, similar to what toy-designers do. The starting point A is the product use, a bathtub plug. The ending point is the suicide cartoon character. The collision of these two meanings gives an result which lives inside an understood connotation like this:

bathtub plug - bathtub - water - /(here is the

twist, the collision of meaning-sets)/ - chain to the stopper - suicidal candidate.

The moment of laughter lives between the meaning-set <bathtub-water> and <water-chain-suicide>. The designing of this funny object required the concentration and embedding of two sets of meanings, the creation of a narrative or connection between them and the production of a referenced new meaning.

The narrative structure and visual language of "Mr. Suicide" is just one example of how stereotypes are employed in products for fun. It would exceed the possibilities of this article to give a detailed analysis of methods how stereotypes are used in product design; Instead, some examples are shown which, when seen in connection to each other, might reveal other patterns of employing visual, symbolic and narrative stereotypes and how designers handle them - sometimes successfully, sometimes not.

All design interacts with the environment. Some of the different ways it does that are shown in the photos 25 - 32, some of which are funny, some are unintendedly funny, and some end up being not funny at all, although they are meant to be. 25

25 Splat objects' Spill without the Mess' (Placebo)' Mints to cure all. Select your symptom - take 2 pills (Kookie Cutters)' tools for the culinary artist' (Malanotti) (Mario Gagliardi) 1993 'Salt of Life' - (Mr. Egghead'

(Mario Gagliardi) 1963 (Hochschule fuer Angewandte Kunst in Wien) CI, BI (1980) (Alcatel), (Rieger Bank), (Malanotti) (1990 - 1994), LG (LG Chemical Household and Healthcare) 2 1998 MoMA (Varig) (2001)

