

DECODING ADVERTISEMENTS

JUDITH WILLIAMSON TIM HODGKINSON

DECODING ADVERTISEMENTS is a new kind of event - simultaneously a concert and a digital projection of images. The images are reproductions of 1970's advertisements from magazines and newspapers projected at glamorously high resolution onto a very large screen. The music has been specially composed for this work and is performed live by 10 woodwind and brass players.

The piece lasts about 45 minutes.

Judith Williamson's pioneering book 'Decoding Advertisements' ruthlessly exposes how the virtual world of advertising draws us in as willing participants in the society of the spectacle.

The continuing resonance of this text is evidenced by the recent launch of a new Boyars edition - actually the 15th impression.

Composer Tim Hodgkinson, treasuring a frayed copy of the original, had long been haunted by the counter-intuitive notion of setting the book to music. Uniquely, the musical idea for 'Decoding Advertisements' is not to set the verbal text at all, but only the visual material which the verbal text decodes.

For this project Williamson has reconfigured the structure of her argument into sequences of ads whose rhythms and cadences themselves become eloquent and revelatory. We may have all kinds of responses to the individual ads, but the order in they appear quickly becomes their most telling aspect and starts to give them a definite sense. They start to work together, not as ads, but as a way of expounding what advertising is and how it works. It is this new sense, rather than the individual ads, that the music addresses.

Hodgkinson's cool autonomous score is a gage of distance, but its flexibilities of rhythm and performance-gesture ensure that each experiencing of Decoding Advertisements is unique and unrepeatable.

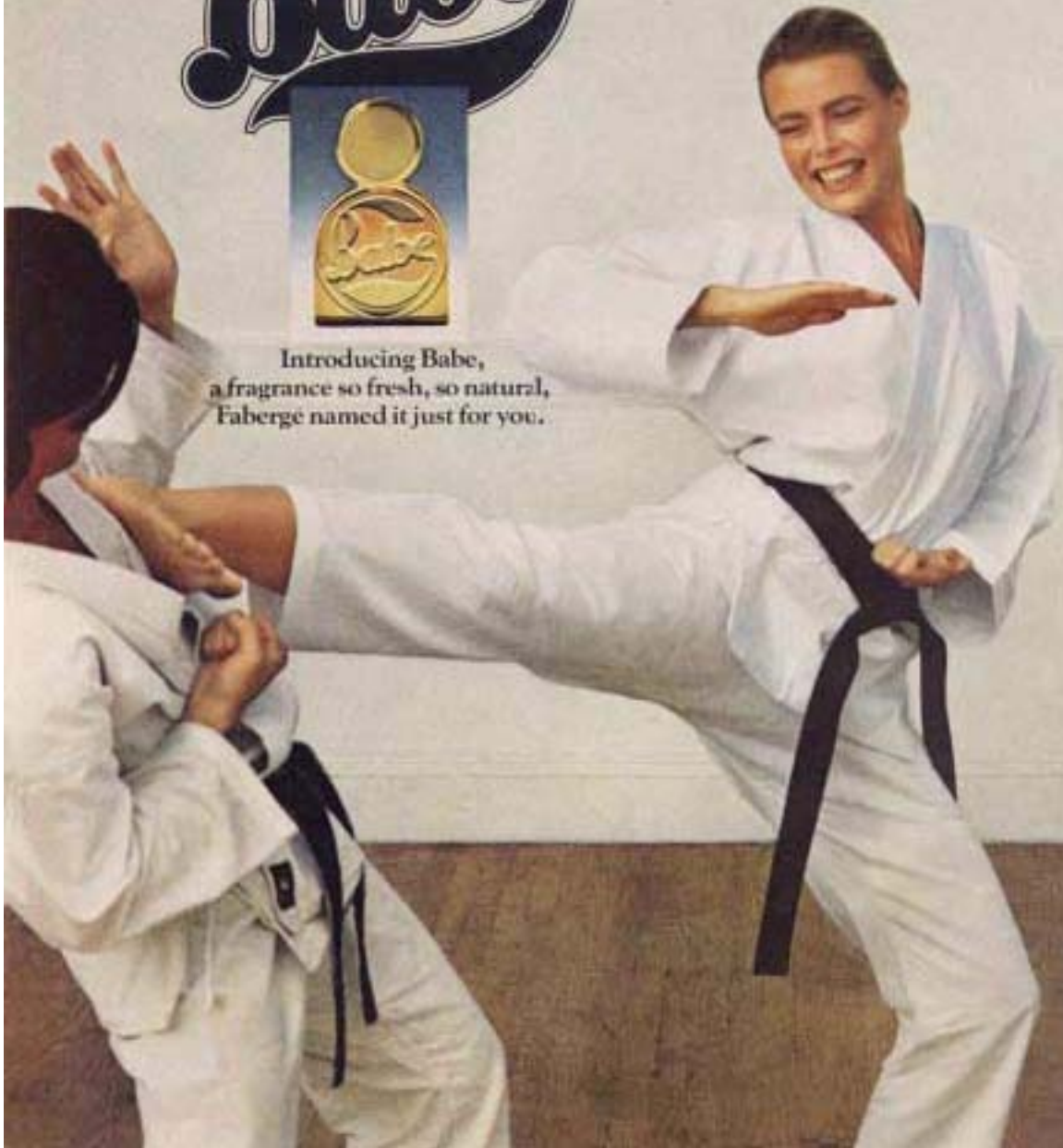
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