Research Article

Tiffany & Co., Cartier and Bulgari— An Analysis of Print Luxury Jewellery Advertisements

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Abstract

Historically known to be savoured by the selected few, luxury products are famous for not only their immaculate designs and artistry, but also how they make their possessors feel once they are put on and the messages they convey to others who see them. Luxury is not defined by what the product is, but rather what kind of an experience the product offers and what meaning the brand symbolises. Hence, these pieces of fine jewellery have ceased to be a way to accessorise outfits, they have become status and wealth symbols in their own right. Therefore, luxury products also provide satisfaction in the sense that their users feel good and accomplished for having access to these items. Being able to be a member of the elite group of consumers who are able to afford such extravagances; the people who have added, and continue to add, such jewellery pieces to their collection do so not only because they can, but because doing so elevates their status, rendering it unnecessary for such iconic jewellery houses as Tiffany & Co., Cartier and Bulgari to have to rely on overt communication techniques in their print ads to capture the attention of their consumers. In this light, this article will focus on print advertisements by Tiffany & Co., Cartier and Bulgari for their iconic jewellery pieces with regard to the techniques used such as symbolism, intertextuality, and polysemy, and include a short analysis for each advertisement by the author.

Keywords: Luxury, Jewellery, Tiffany & Co., Cartier, Bulgari, Advertisement, Symbolism, İntertextuality, Polysemy, Covert Communications, Ostensive Communications.

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Araştırma Makalesi

Tiffany & Co., Cartier ve Bulgari— Lüks Mücevherde Basılı Reklam Analizi*

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Öz

Lüks ürünler, tarihleri boyunca toplumun belli bir kısmı tarafından tüketilebilen ve sadece kusursuz tasarım ve işçilikten öte onlara sahip olan kişilere kendilerini nasıl hissettirdikleri ve sadece kullanımları ile çevreye verdikleri mesaj ile anıldı. Lüks, günümüzde ürünün ne olduğu ile değil, ürünün tüketiciye yaşattığı deneyim ve markanın sembolize ettiği anlam ile tarif ediliyor. Lüks ürünleri kullanan tüketiciler, ürünün onlara kendilerini nasıl hissettirdiğini ve satın alacakları markanın diğer insanlara hangi duyguları çağrıştırdığını ön planda tutarak mücevher gibi ürünlerin tüketimini gerçekleştiriyorlar. Bu nedenle, bu makalede ele alınan lüks mücevher markaları ve ürünleri artık sadece kıyafet tamamlayıcı aksesuarlar olarak değil, kendi başlarına da birer anlam ifade eden statü ve varlık sembolleri haline gelmişlerdir. Dünyada bu tür lüks ve/veya gösterişli ürünlere vakit ve sermaye ayırmış olan ve ayırabilmeye devam edenler, bunu sadece yapabildikleri için değil, daha ziyade sosyal statülerini olduğundan daha da ileriye taşıdıklarını hissedebildikleri için yapan küçük ve elit bir grubun parçası olma hissi bile, Tiffany & Co., Cartier ve Bulgari gibi ikonlaşmış mücevher markalarının basılı reklamlarında müşterilerinin ilgisini çekebilmek için aleni ve alışılmış iletişim tekniği kullanma ihtiyacını ortadan kaldırıyor. Bu bilgilerin ışığında, bu makalede Tiffany & Co., Cartier ve Bulgari markalarının ikonik parçalarına ait birer basılı reklam kampanyası, kullanılan iletişim teknikleri açısından ele alınacak, her bir markanın reklamı ayrıca incelenecek ve yazar tarafından da yorumlanacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Lüks, Mücevher, Takı, Tiffany & Co., Cartier, Bulgari, Reklam, Sembolizm, Metinlerarasılık, Çokanlamlılık, Örtülü Reklam, Açık İletişim Teknikleri.

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Introduction

Advertisements have always been at the forefront of marketing as a means to getting the audience engaged with the content being put out and hopefully converting them into loyal customers. This article will discuss three print advertisements from esteemed jewellery houses Tiffany & Co., Cartier and Bulgari in terms of the techniques employed in the ads, such as covert vs. ostensive communication, symbolism, intertextuality and polysemy. These techniques are oftentimes utilised by marketers to increase the chances that the ads will be more captivating for their audience. As each advertisement serves to deliver a message that cannot be interpreted without the other elements present, the analysis will also include a subjective commentary on the meaning behind the adverts from the author, deriving from the study of each of the print adverts. The advertisements that will be analysed in this essay are all adverts for jewellery from different jewellery houses to capture how each brand's own personality is deeply embedded in its style of speaking to its consumer without having to rely on words too much. These jewellery houses have become industry giants with clearly defined and identified brand personalities, and each attracts a certain type of customer. Therefore, the brands need not include very specific wording and detailed explanations in order to convey the message desired; the imagery, paired with techniques such as covert vs. ostensive communication, symbolism, intertextuality and polysemy combined with the brand logo does that for the brands. The adverts analysed in this study were strategically chosen in that all three ads are for iconic jewellery pieces that have been identified with the respective brands over the years, combined with the brand symbol/logo.

Luxury Goods and the Motivations Behind Buying Luxury

In order to fully analyse the adverts, luxury marketing and luxury as a concept will be briefly touched upon. Luxury was traditionally meant to be enjoyed by the elite few of the society (Ghosh and Varshney, 2013, 146). Luxury goods not only communicate the social status, affluence and influence of those who possess them, but also illustrate an affinity which is irreplaceable for those who enjoy them (Cristini et al., 2017, 101). What is special about luxury goods is not that they are made to be offered to an exclusive market, but that they boast certain characteristics which high street products, being mass produced, lack. Luxury products are known for their craftsmanship, the consumer's ability to recognise which brand they are by their design, putting their logo on the back burner, a global reputation for the brand and its origin country for the excellence of the products, and an emotional allure (Ueacharoenkit, 2013, 22-23). With luxury products getting widely available due to mass production, the market for luxury consumers is exponentially growing, meaning that the luxury goods market has entered a new age where the goods are seen as commodities in consumers' path to the "democratic right to happiness" (Chandon et al., 2016, 299). Therefore, luxury brands such as Tiffany & Co., Cartier and Bulgari all elicit rarity, a prestigious brand personality and a sense of excellence. "Luxury is not that much attached to what the product is, but what the brand represents. Hence, consumers may accomplish their quest for well-being by having, owning, and using luxury brands which provide fulfilment and satisfaction of the demand… [to] 'feel good' yet also to 'show off'" (Cristini et al., 2017, 107). Drawing on this, it can be seen in the ads discussed in this essay how each brand's own identity is closely embedded in its sense of advertising and creating a dialogue with its target consumers. "A person who buys a luxury product is buying into a dream,

and the mechanisms underlying consumer reactions to luxury products tend to be impulsive, emotional, or extravagant" (Chandon et al., 2017, 300). Therefore, brands like Tiffany & Co., Cartier and Bulgari tap into the needs of social elevation and socio-psychological benefits consumers seek out of these purchases when shaping their advertising campaigns, which makes the consumer able to relate to the brand on a sentimental level (Shukla et al., 2016, 327).

Tiffany & Co., Christmas 2014

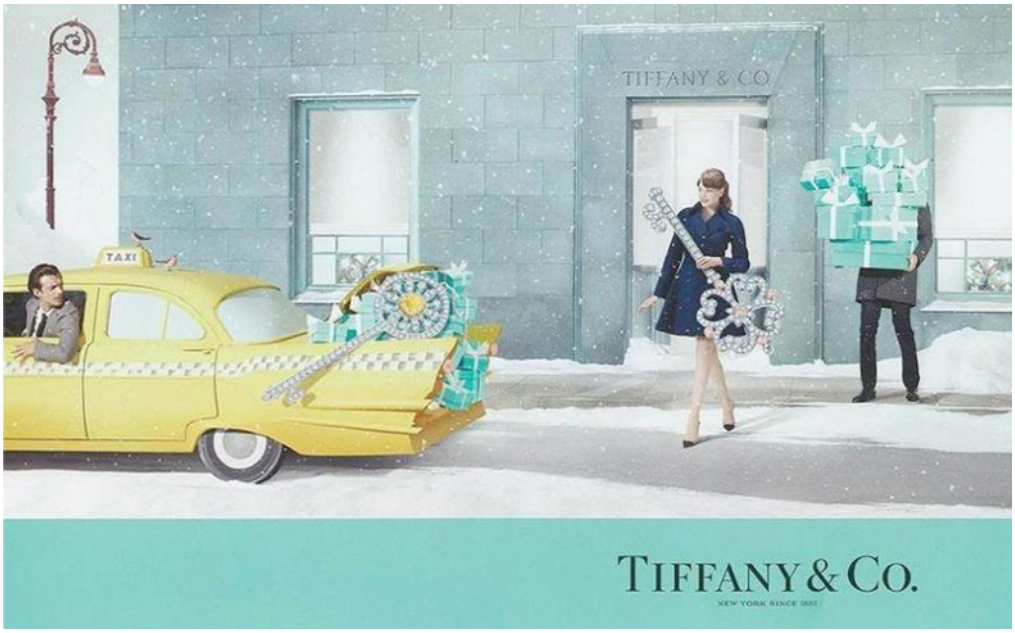


Figure 1: *(Source: http://www.bellomag.com/tiffany-co-christmas-2014-campaign/)*

For its Christmas 2014 print ads, Tiffany & Co. worked with fashion photographer Tim Gutt and model Valeria Garcia (Marquet, 2014). In the advert a woman is seen exiting a Tiffany & Co. store with one of their signature key pendants in her hands as well as another at the trunk of the taxi cab along with many little little blue boxes, and the concierge is seen carrying the rest of her countless little blue boxes, which are the trademark boxes of Tiffany & Co. The advert utilizes romantic colours and soft hues in true Tiffany's fashion. The store looks to be the flagship Tiffany's store in New York, the one made famous by none other than Audrey Hepburn in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. The dress model Valeria Garcia appears to be sporting is a modern version of the iconic black dress Hepburn made famous in the 1961 movie. The advert oozes of Tiffany's elegance and femininity, and alludes ever so slightly at the hit feature, which is a favourite with many women. Tiffany & Co. has tried to exemplify its main features and hint at its long heritage with this advert, while maintaining that it is the go-to brand for luxury jewellery among modern New York women today as well.



Figure 2: *(Source: https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/event/tiffany-co-store-ahead-of-earnings-figures-556392087?#vehicles-pass-the-tiffany-co-flagship-store-on-5th-avenue-in-new-york-picture-id474786214)*

When one looks at the advertisement, they can easily recognise the 'Tiffany Blue', a shade of blue made so popular by Tiffany & Co. that it is now called by that name. The whole advert includes Tiffany Blue as its base colour, and all the other colours used complement it, making it pop even more. Adding the signature key pendants and the little blue boxes, both icons for Tiffany & Co. into the mix only makes it more Tiffany's. Paired with the yellow cabs of New York and a beautiful brunette in a dress very closely resembling that of Holly Golightly in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, the viewer does not even need to glance at the Tiffany & Co. logo at the bottom right hand side of the poster to recognise for which brand this advertisement is.

Tiffany & Co. is a brand that symbolises a higher status, and many individuals in life have social goals in relation to their social standing (Gardner and Levy, 1999, 133). Therefore, Tiffany's products have a personality that can be described as sophisticated, intellectual and elegant, as per the social status they symbolise. Similar to brands, specific products also have symbolic aspects and meanings. Which is essential is in buying products is the extent to which a consumer's lifestyle and what the product symbolises coincide (Hirschman, 1986, 327). Therefore, advertisements by the company are a crucial factor in consolidating what the product represents, and the kind of lifestyle and consumer it symbolises. In this advertisement by Tiffany & Co., it can clearly be seen that the kind of woman Tiffany's speaks to is the sophisticated upper-class woman who lives in a big city with endless resources and who likes indulging in luxurious products such as jewellery. Hence, Tiffany's has become a symbol for these women in the same sense that key pendants and little blue boxes have become a symbol for Tiffany's.



Figure 3: *(Source: https://i.pinimg.com/originals/78/70/58/787058ac6e4d255f9fdb3608640edeeb.jpg)*

Advertisements cannot be created or interpreted solely on their own, making all advertisements intertextual in this regard (Kuppens, 2009). They often draw from popular culture references such as movies, television series, or even music and literature (Conradie, 2012). When one looks at the Tiffany & Co. advert, they immediately think of *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. However, how exactly the advertisement refers to items and draws upon the context of the movie can only fully be understood and appreciated if the audience is already familiar with the movie and have seen it prior to encountering the advert (Kuppens, 2009). How intertextuality works can be explained by the Relevance Theory (RT). RT suggests that the audience views the advert in terms of what they find relevant, and construct the context from there (Conradie, 2012). This process relies heavily on the background knowledge of the audience so that the intertextual references do not escape them. The triumph of the references rests on the audience's "cultural literacy, intertextual competence, genre literacy, popular culture capital or media literacy" (Kuppens, 2009, 119). Consequently, if someone who is not familiar with *Breakfast at Tiffany's* sees the advert, the intertextual references like the clothing style, the storefront, the yellow cab and even the hairstyle of Valeria Garcia will elude them.

Polysemy refers to point that words or pictures have "a network of multiple but related meanings" (Nerlich et al., 2003, 3). Therefore, depending on their own

background knowledge, members of the audience are able to infer a different meaning when subjected to the same advertisement. The fact that Tiffany & Co.'s advert is intertextual also alludes to its polysemy, where the advert means different things to viewers who are familiar with *Breakfast at Tiffany's* versus those who are not. Those who have not seen *Breakfast at Tiffany's* will be rather limited in their interpretation of the advert, restrained by what is presented to them—the beautiful woman exiting a Tiffany's store with a lot of Tiffany boxes and two of their signature key pendants, whereas someone who is familiar with the movie will be able to recall harmonise what they have seen in the movie with what they are given, and reminisce on Holly Golightly's life and her glamour, intensifying the experience for them. Throughout the advert, covert communication techniques are employed, whereby Tiffany's is not trying to directly sell products to its audience, but rather pictures the allure of the experience (Ashley and Leonard, 2009, 213).

Cartier, Christmas 2012



Figure 4: *(Source: http://jetsetfashionmagazine.com/wordpress/shopping/cartier-a-winter-tale)*

For their Christmas 2012 advertisements, Cartier opted for an illustration picturing its signature Love bracelets, their trademark red boxes boxes and its symbol, the Panthère de Cartier—the Cartier Panther. In the advert, the panther is portrayed as it is captivated by the Love bracelets and has directed all its attention towards them. The Love bracelets pictured are in rose gold and white gold, covered with pave diamonds as well as with no diamonds, the newly introduced 'small' model that is thin with regular-sized models, exemplifying the diverse range that Cartier Love bracelets come in and how there is one for everybody. Meanwhile, the red Cartier box, and the bigger white box that is its wrapping, appear to the bottom left of the advert, ever so slightly catching the eye but not distracting from the panther and the Love bracelets, where the audience's main attention is purposefully directed at. The red on the box and its wrapping also provide a contrast to the otherwise cool blue tones used throughout the advert, drawing the attention to Cartier's insignia colour.

Cartier have employed silhouettes of pine trees and snow with this being a Christmas advert. However, it is not so much about Christmas as it is about Cartier's three iconic symbols—the panther, the Love collection and the red boxes. With the audience's attention being on those first and foremost, and the Christmas touches later on, it is Cartier as a brand that comes forward without heavy branding. The Cartier logo is only displayed at a relatively small font at the top right hand corner, not a place for a brand wishing to ostensibly sell its products to the audience. With ostensive stimuli, the audience can know that they are planned and placed there to be applicable and to make a point (Tanaka, 1999). However, with this advert the cues are rather covert in the sense that while the sophisticated customer will be able to know it is a Cartier advertisement straight away, others will need to search the advert for a little longer.

The Cartier Panther has become an important symbol for the brand, as animal symbols are used to relay certain connotations and attributes to brands, a phenomenon called anthropomorphism (Lloyd and Woodside, 2013, 5). As consumers look at the advert, the Cartier Panther is the first thing to catch their eye. The longer the audience's encounter is with the advertisement, the higher the level of advertising engagement, meaning the more akin they are to the brand; which, in this case, is Cartier (Lloyd and Woodside, 2013, 8). Similar to Tiffany & Co., Cartier has become a symbol of a certain social status of its own, thanks to its signature items like the Cartier Panther, the Love collection and the red boxes. In most cases, a brand's logo becomes a symbol in its own right, much like the Cartier Panther (Lloyd and Woodside, 2013, 9). Hence, just as these commodities symbolise Cartier, Cartier itself symbolises a specific identity that is unique to the company (Carrier, 1990). The panther is most widely associated with brands that appeal to "exclusively feminine brands…those related to beauty, grace and sinuosity" (Lloyd and Woodside, 2013, 10). The Cartier Panther was first introduced as a symbol in 1987, when the Duke and Duchess of Windsor purchased a panther brooch from the jewellery house (Lloyd and Woodside, 2013, 13). Deemed extraordinary and treacherous, the panther quickly became the company's symbol, perfectly captivating its elegance and demure as well as it does its rarity and ferocity.

The instantaneous response to the advert and realising it is for Cartier after initially having seen the Cartier panther, the Love bracelets and the red box also relies on intertextuality in that it implies the consumers are previously acquainted with the brand to recognize it without ostensibly being subjected to the brand name. If consumers unfamiliar with the brand were subjected to this advert, it would take them a longer time and more cognitive resources to figure out it is for Cartier. Intertextuality questions the way of interpretation audiences are so used to and forces the consumers to draw on their previous knowledge and experiences, and leads to the line between what is given and what is inferred to become blurred (Landwehr, 2002).

The intertextuality of the advert also exemplifies its use of polysemy, which occurs when there is more than one interpretation that can be derived from the subject (Vicente, 2017, 1). Similar to intertextuality, polysemy also encourages the audience to be more engaged with the advertisement and to decode its message differently than viewers who do not possess the same levels of advertisement or brand literacy (Puntoni et al., 2010). By doing so, Cartier achieves to create a covert marketing of its products by only using contextual clues throughout the advertisement and employing a smaller than average logo, rather than heavily branding its advertisement.

Bulgari, Rachel Weisz, 2011

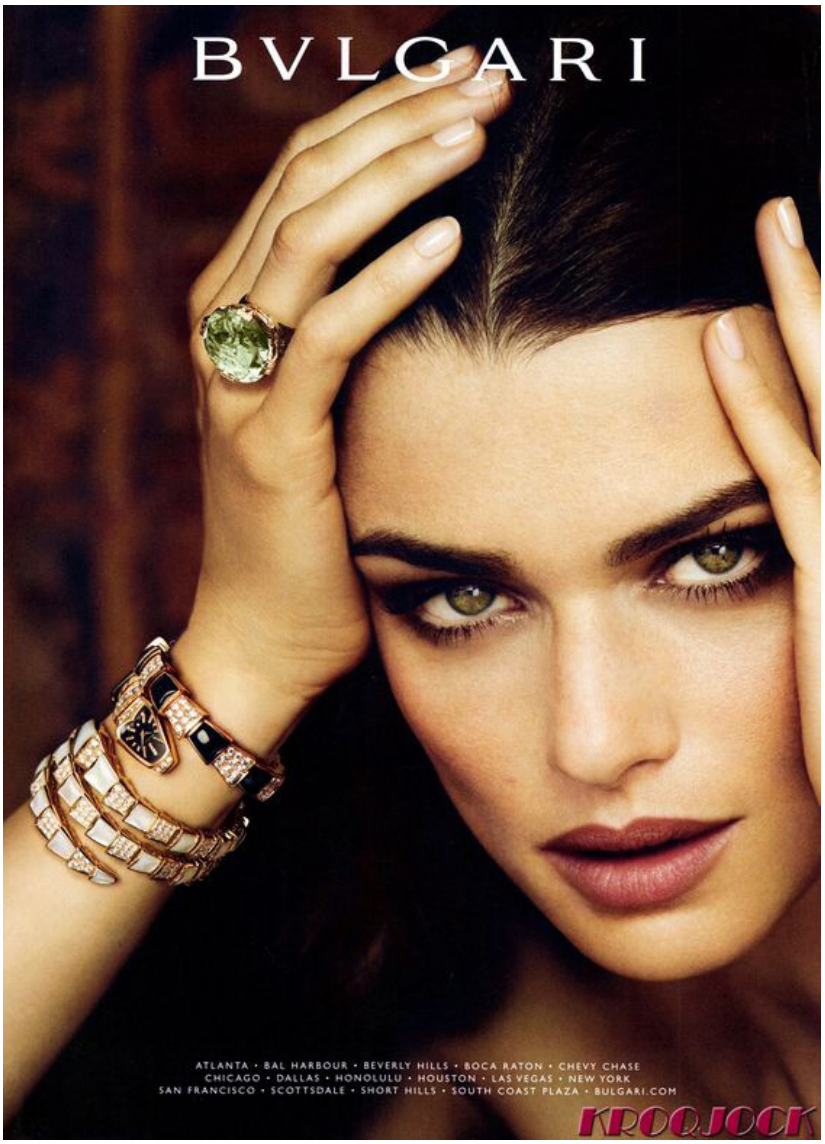


Figure 5: *(Source: https://salmaglamour.wordpress.com/2011/09/18/rachel-weisz-for-bulgari-fall-2011-ads-campaigns/737633350_celebutopia_net_rachel_weisz_bulgari_fall_winter_2011_scanned_by_kroqjock_hq_1_122_251lo-3/)*

For their advertisement from 2011, Bulgari have chosen actress Rachel Weisz as their campaign face. In the advert, Weisz is seen in Bulgari jewellery, looking into the camera. With her hair slicked back and her makeup mirroring the classic Italian makeup, also recreated by Monica Bellucci's campaign for Dolce & Gabbana Beauty, and British makeup artist Charlotte Tilbury more recently as the Dolce Vita look, Weisz looks the epitome of the Italian beauty: elegant, poised and sexy. Weisz has bare nails, a decision by Bulgari to not detract from her face and the jewels. She is seen sporting a Bulgari Parentesi cocktail ring, a Bulgari Serpenti watch with onyx and diamonds and a Serpenti bracelet with mother-of-pearl and diamonds. The focus on her makeup look is on her eyes, where her right hand, covered in all the jewellery, rests next to her eye area. With the green in her eyes complementing the green stone of the ring, the advert looks cohesive overall, and the eye of the audience has no trouble figuring out where it is supposed to focus and what path it needs to follow. Lastly, the Bulgari logo can be spotted at the top and centre of the advert, and

locations of various Bulgari boutiques around the United States of America can be seen in fine print at the bottom.

Similar to Cartier, Bulgari's symbol is also an animal, the snake. The audience engages more with the advertisement when they spot the snake motif, because circumstantial pertinence for the brand is at a high level and when consumers engage with the advertisement more, this also increases brand involvement (Lloyd and Woodside, 2013, 8). Advertisement engagement "is a sense of involvement, of being connected to something—frequently a specific brand. Engagement comes from experiencing something: experiencing, for example, media content" (Lloyd and Woodside, 2013, 8). The long-haul prosperity of a brand image relies upon the brand's capacity to choose what the brand will symbolise, turn it into a viable notion and progressively preserve and protect it (Park et al., 1986, 135). The snake, akin to the panther in Cartier's case, is a symbol favoured by "exclusively feminine brands…related to beauty, grace and sinuosity" (Lloyd and Woodside, 2013, 10). The snake is cold, distant but assuredly alluring and exquisite. Since covert communication techniques are employed similar to those of Tiffany & Co. and Cartier, the audience with the relevant level of media and genre literacy will be able to comprehend this is a Bulgari advertisement due to the snake motif.

The intertextual reference in this advert is that of the Italian heritage. Rachel Weisz's makeup is done in such a way that it reflects the true definition of the Italian beauty favoured by many makeup artists such as the famous celebrity makeup artist Charlotte Tilbury to this day. Similarly, Monica Belluci's campaign with Dolce & Gabbana, a brand of true Italian heritage and who very proudly owns up to it and even has a collection "that used reproductions of Boticelli's *Birth of Venus*… [and who] draws their inspiration from the past, especially their Italian heritage", has favoured a makeup look very familiar to the one seen on Rachel Weisz on this advert (Witwer, 2017, 21-22).

Clearly, this advertisement will mean different things to those who are aware of what the snake represents of Bulgari as a brand, and whether Bulgari is an Italian brand or not, and if they are familiar with other Italian brands and the Italian heritage as a look. To those unaware of such connotations, it will most likely be an advertisement from the jewellery brand Bulgari. However, those who are aware of the symbolism and intertextuality employed in the advertisement will be able to perceive the reference that Bulgari is very attached to its Italian roots and exudes feminine elegance, and will continue to do so over time. With this "purposeful strategic ambiguity", Bulgari will compel the audience to engage more with this advertisement, producing a favourable reaction from the consumers (Puntoni et al., 2010, 53).



Figure 6: *(Source: http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-2102726/Che-bella-Monica-Bellucci-creates-lipstick-line-Dolce--Gabbana--shows-perfect-pout-brand-new-campaign.html*

Figure 7: *(Source: http://www.charlottetilbury.com/au/the-dolce-vita-lip-kit.html)*

Conclusion

To conclude, the three print advertisements from Tiffany & Co., Cartier and Bulgari have resorted to the use of symbolism, intertextuality, polysemy and covert communication techniques in their print advertisements, where the contents of the advertisements increase engagement from the audience rather than the brands trying to explicitly sell their collections to the end consumers. The way in which the advertisements are sketched illustrate each brand's own identity and refer to each brand's roots. In each advert, there is a clear path intended for the eyes of the audience, and without any overarching cues, the eyes are able to deliver. Intricately combining the jewellery houses and their symbols in print ads, Tiffany & Co., Cartier and Bulgari have successfully managed to deliver their desired messages and products to the audience without saying much at all. The advertisements studied in this essay all include archetypal pieces from the brands' collections, icons which have become synonymous with the brands over the years, so much so that they act as symbols for the brands, reiterating the redundancy for these jewellery houses to employ ostensive techniques. Hence, the common characteristics found in all of these advertisements through the analyses of symbolism, polysemy, and intertextuality posit that brands which have a solid history and have managed to arouse certain emotions in their target audience need not employ traditional ostensive communication techniques in order to convey their desired message.

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