Warning:

Exposure to media beauty standards can be hazardous to your physical and



Sex,
Stereotypes
and
Beauty:

The ABCs and Ds of Commercial Images of Women

a presentation by

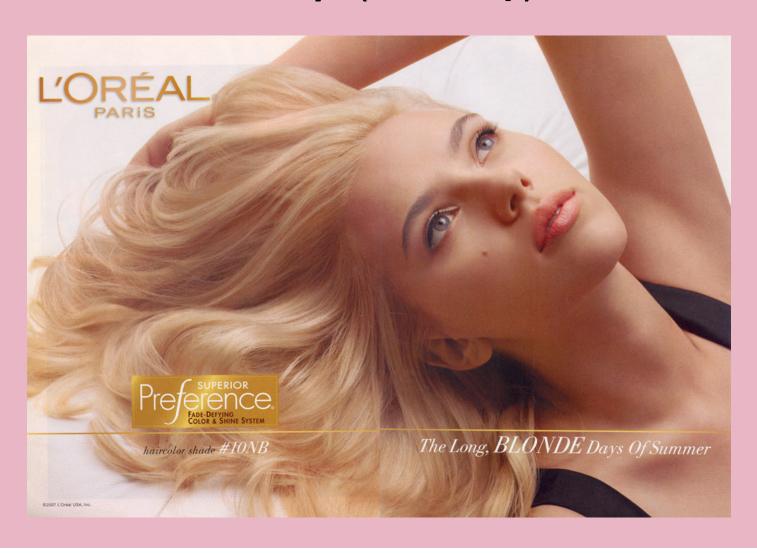




[A] Advertising

www.loveyourbody.nowfoundation.org

Advertisers promote a beauty standard that doesn't come naturally (or cheap) to most women.



The beauty industry promises that...



Long, shiny hair

Smooth, glowing skin





0 St. Next Laboratories, Inc. 3007



Pearly white teeth

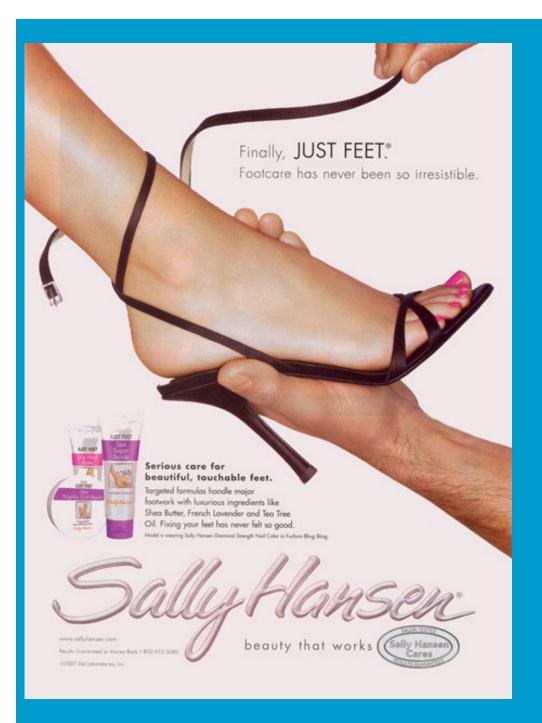
Plump, full lips



are all within your reach.

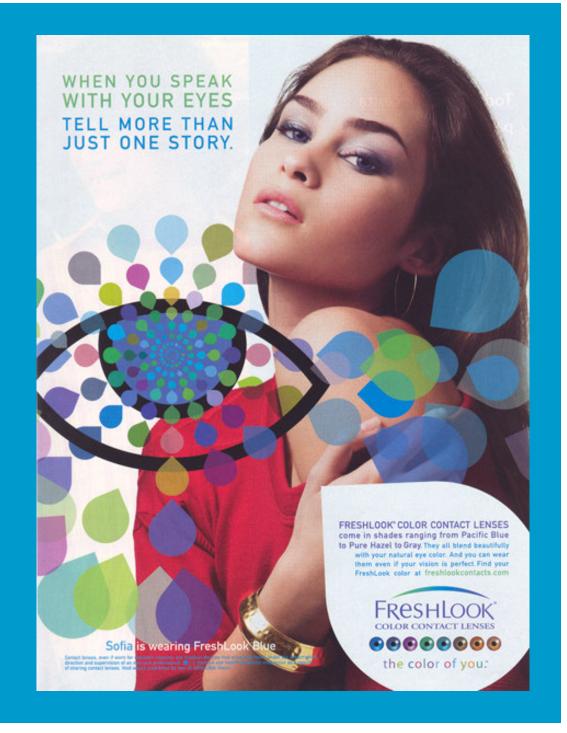
There's not a body part that can't be improved...

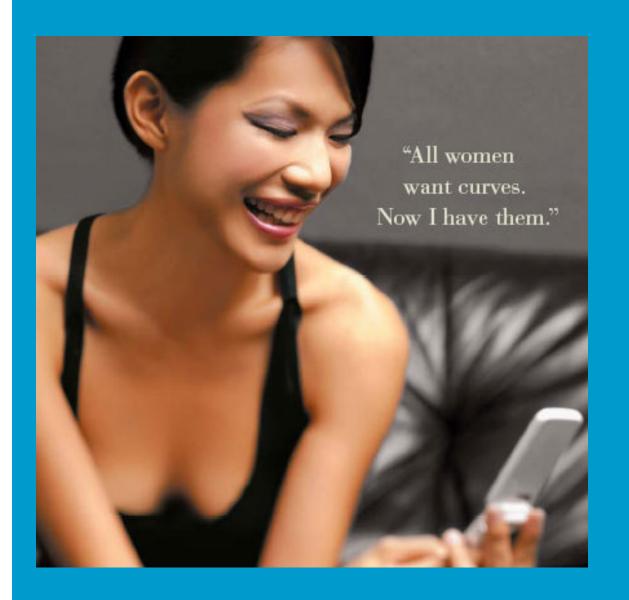
...or so say advertisers with products to sell.



Beautify your feet

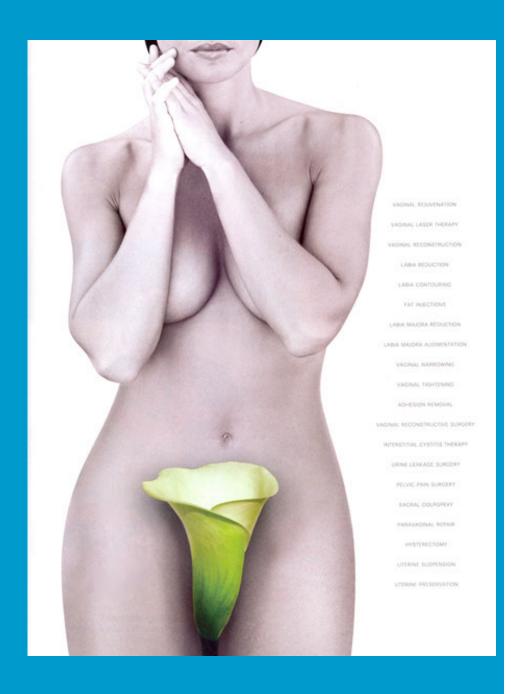
Change your eye color





Enlarge your breasts

Even "rejuvenate" your vagina!



Is it possible to buy the "perfect" face? the "perfect" body?





Even models aren't perfect. Make-up, lighting and airbrushing create the fantasies we admire, as shown in a revealing video from Dove.



Before



After

View the full video at www.campaignforrealbeauty.com

Because the mainstream beauty standard is so pervasive yet so unnatural, advertisers know their products will never be obsolete.

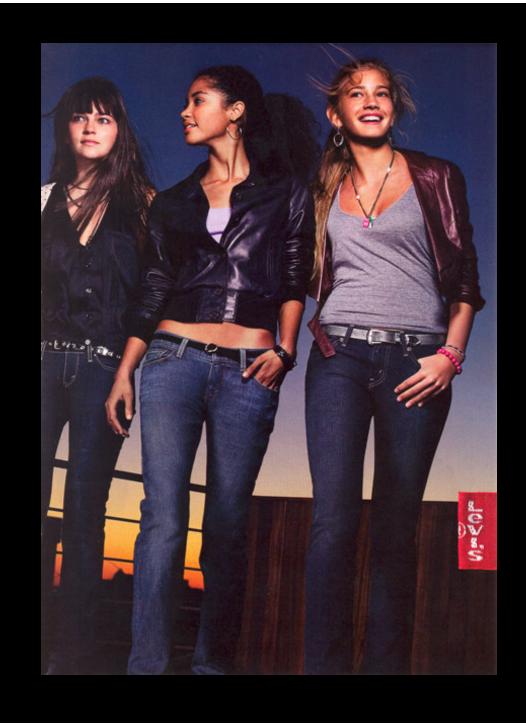
And women will always feel inadequate.

"Thin is in" has been the official fashion mantra for decades now.

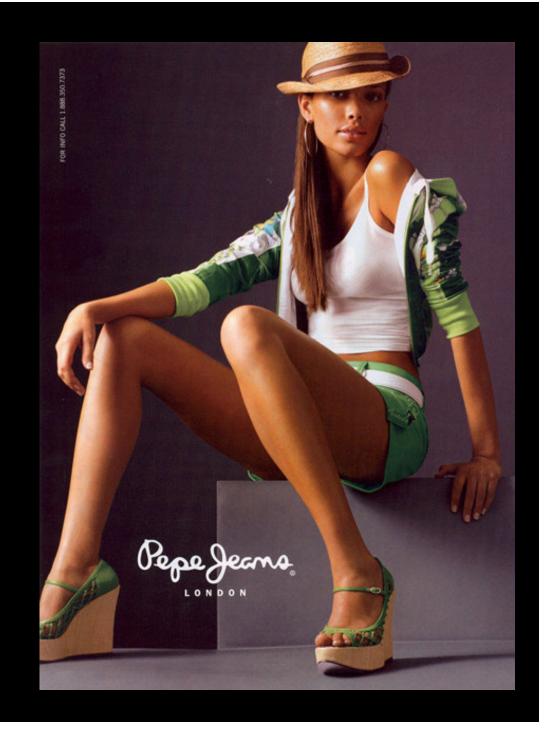


We are bombarded with images of incredibly tall models

With flat stomachs, visible hip bones



And long, slender legs



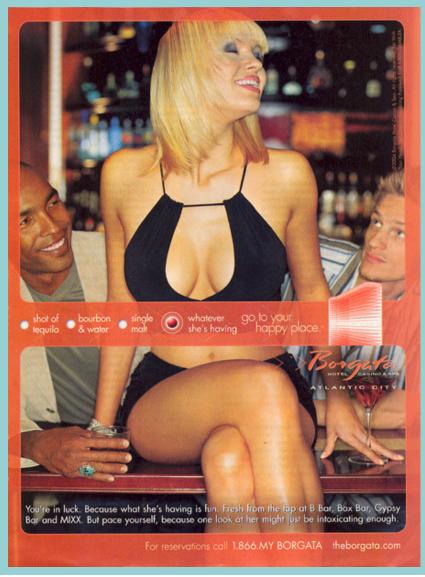


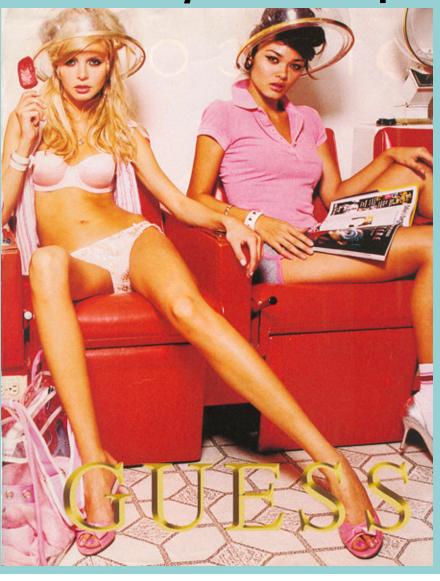
For some advertisers, women can never be too skinny

How can the average woman live up to this ideal without risky dieting, extreme exercise or liposuction?

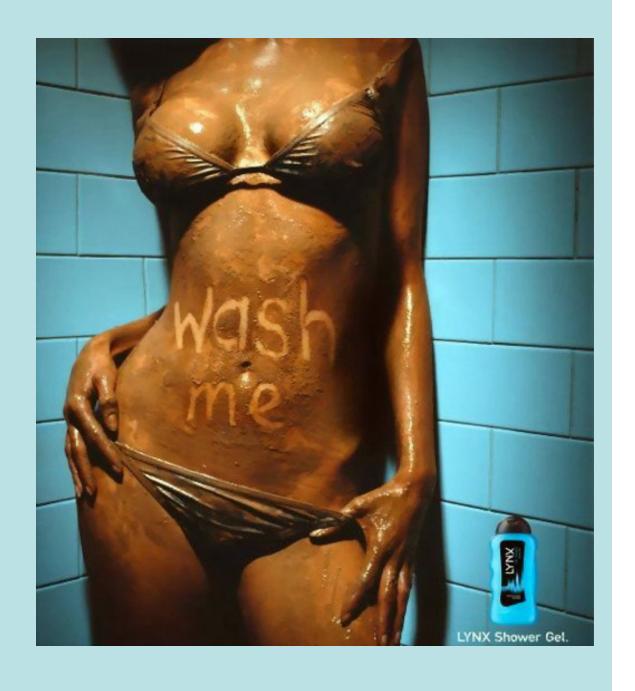
Advertisers often present women as sexual exhibitionists, performing for the benefit of the male gaze.

Through images like these, women come to think of themselves as always on display





Women's bodies and sexuality are used to sell countless products to men



A night out at the club is marketed using visual "come-ons" from sexy models



Advertisers rely on naked women to add allure to all kinds of products





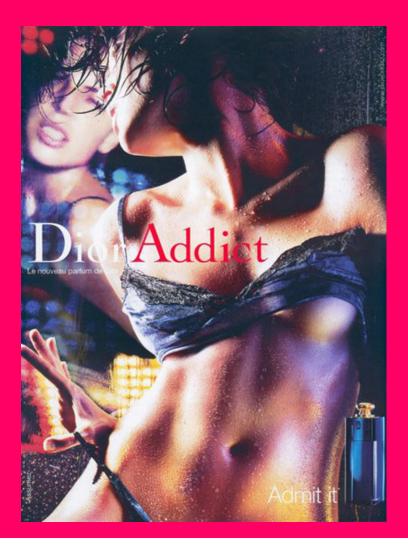
Q: Did you catch the phallic symbols in the last two ads?

A:

They were a cigar and a sword.

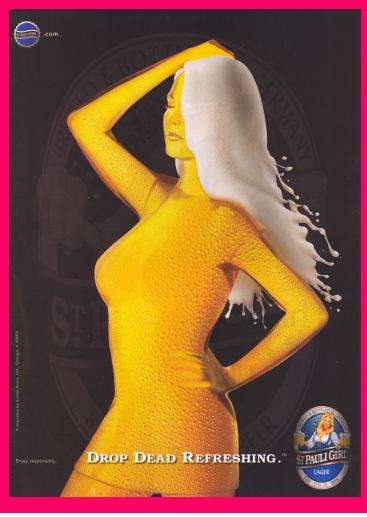
The beauty and fashion industries love to push "edgy" themes, like drug abuse





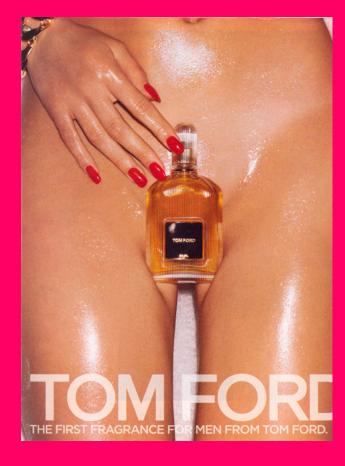
Women are objectified when they're turned into the product itself, just another "thing" to be bought and consumed

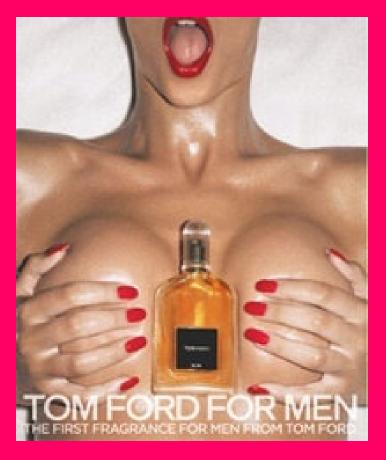




Warning: The next two images are from mainstream publications, but border on pornographic

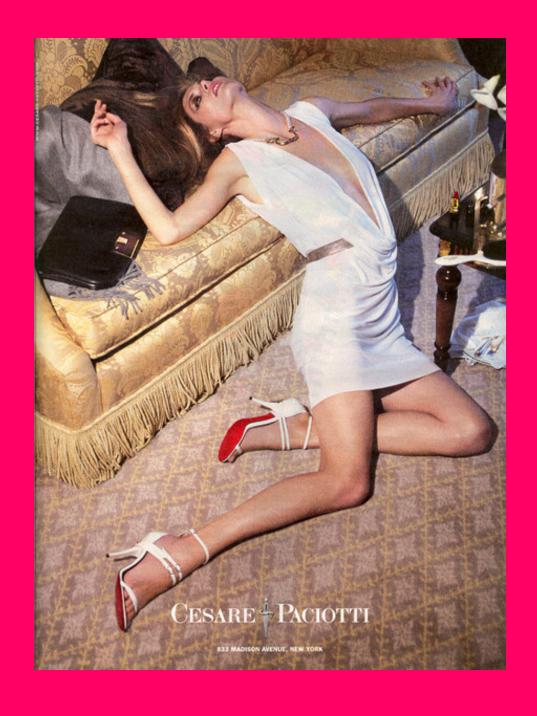
Women are dehumanized when offered up as isolated body parts, oiled up and ready for male consumption





Note the implied phallic symbol on the left and the woman's blow-up doll mouth on the right

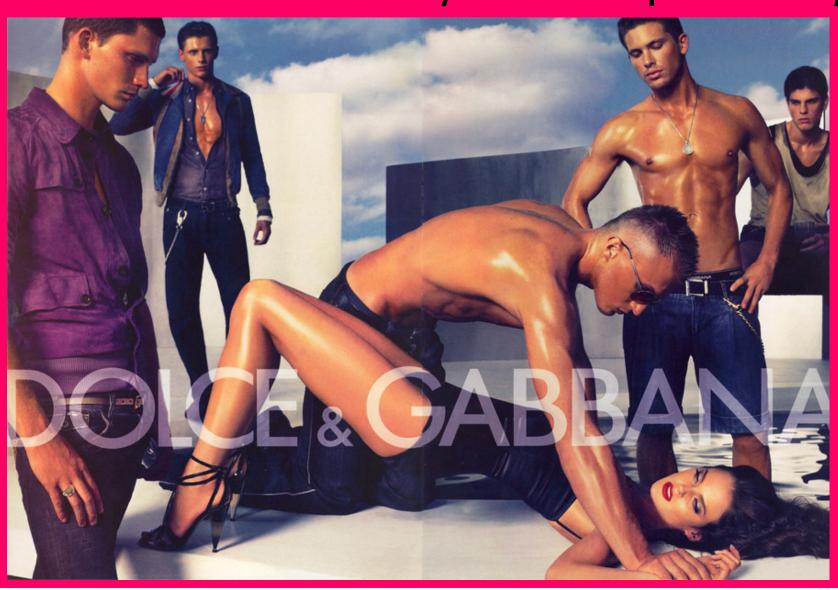
Women who appear to be in danger or distress are a common subject in fashion ads



Violence is glamorized when victimized women are presented as gorgeous and sexy



This ad, which suggests a gang rape about to occur, was removed from the market by D&G after public outcry



[B] Boys to Men

www.loveyourbody.nowfoundation.org

How do boys and men learn to see women?

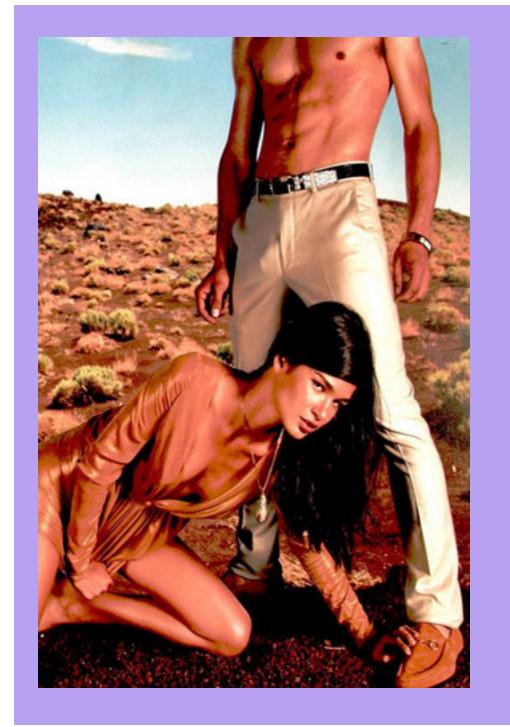
As a series of body parts?



As a reward, a symbol of success and luxury?

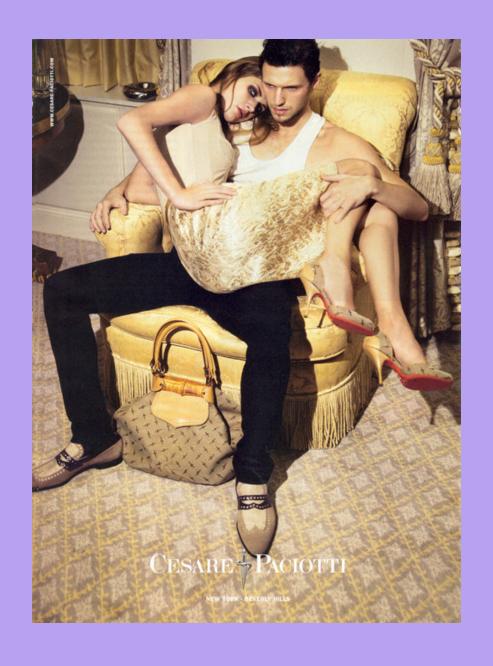


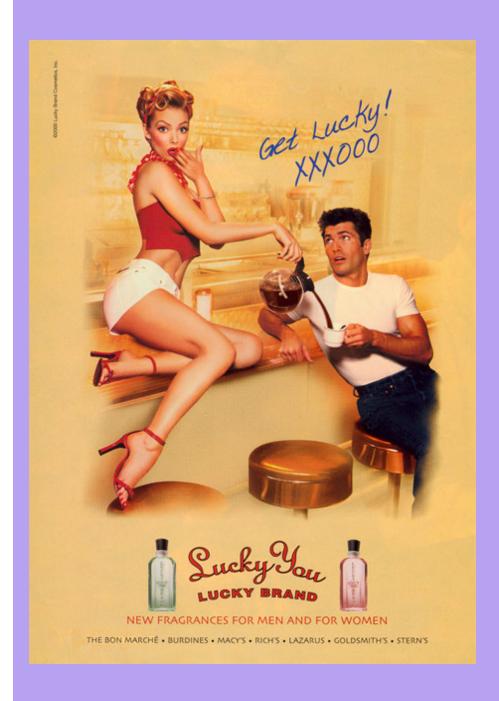




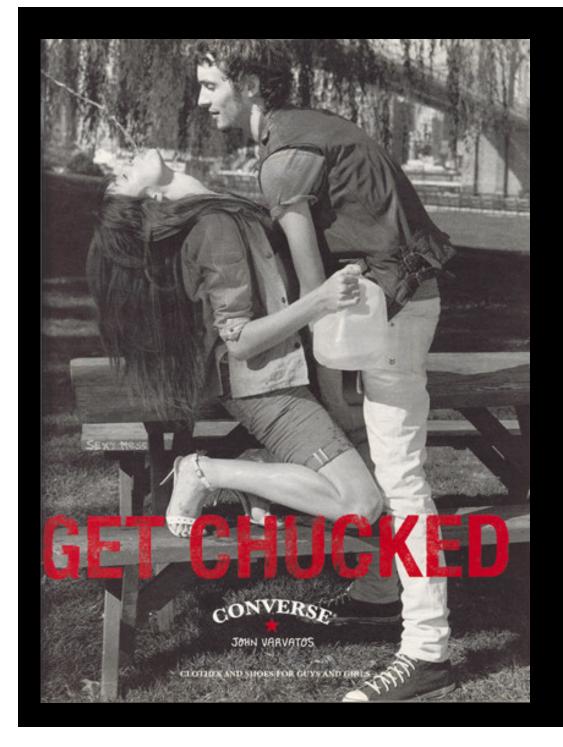
It's not unusual to see ads featuring women in positions that are submissive to men...

...women portrayed as accessories, as passive possessions of men...



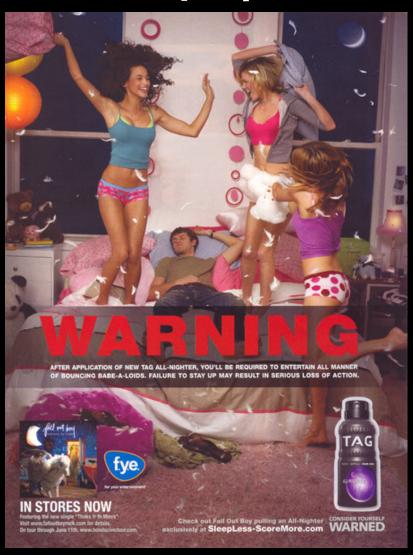


...or women as men's saucy servers.



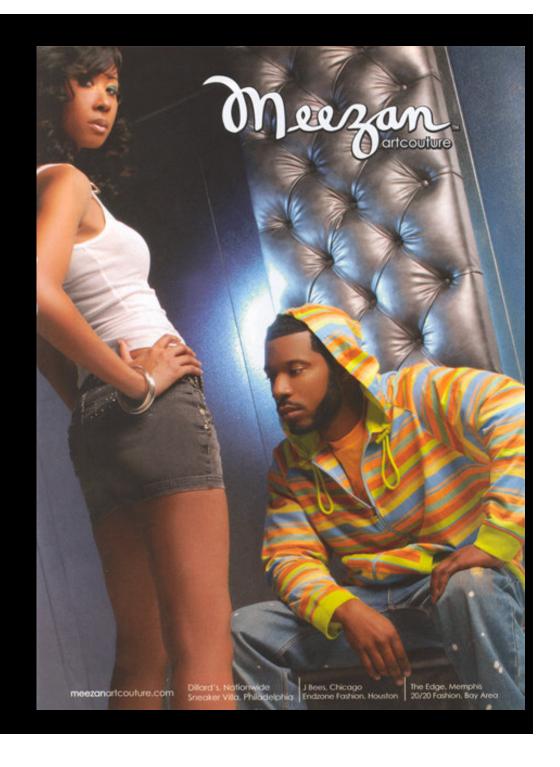
Women and men are frequently portrayed in sexually suggestive situations, where the woman appears ready and willing to please.

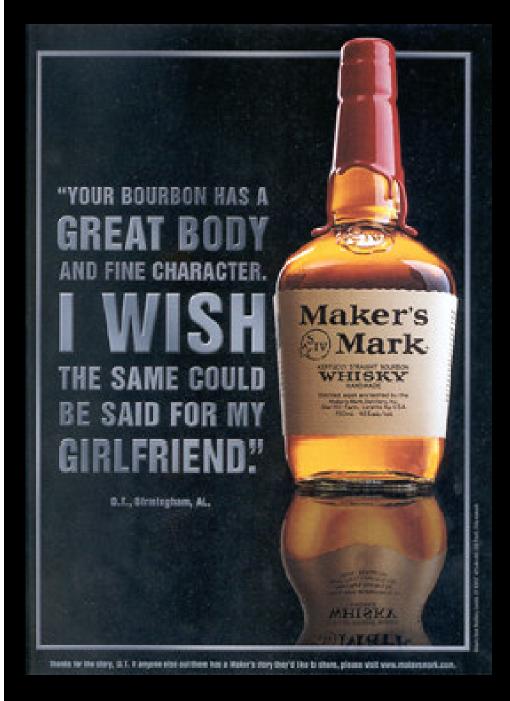
The male fantasy of multiple women is played out in many ads.





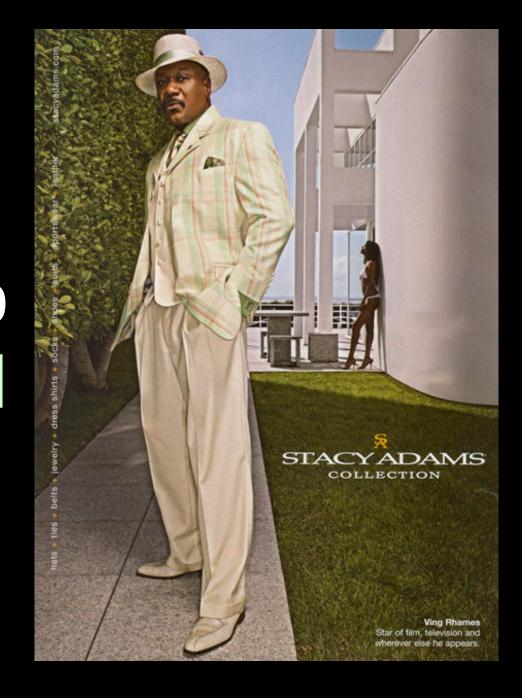
Male objectification of women is accepted, even expected. A woman's value is measured by her ability to attract male attention.





Male bonding through the practice of belittling women is often put to use in ads aimed at men.

The stylish and accomplished man is entitled to a sexy, bikini-clad woman waiting at home for him.





Even the nerdy guy can get some action if he knows what to do — supply alcohol (or mojito gum, in this case).

What images do men see of themselves?

Look through men's fashion magazines and you'll find symbols not just of physical beauty but also of strength, dignity, individuality, and other admirable traits not often linked to women.

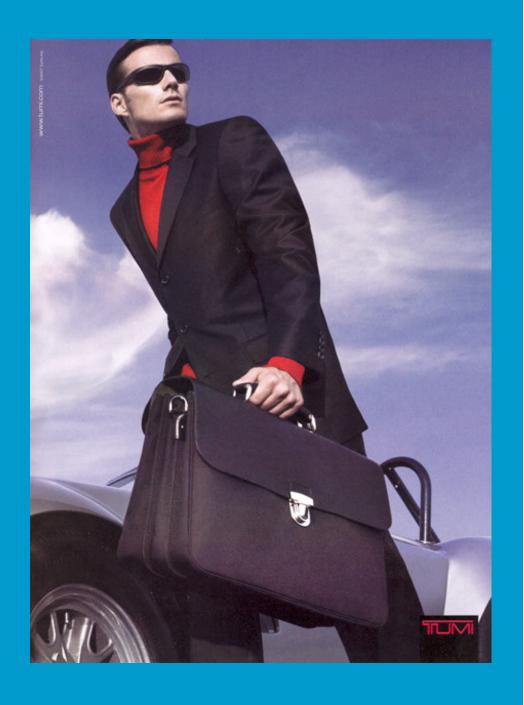
Men and boys are typically presented as proud, in control, and fully clothed!



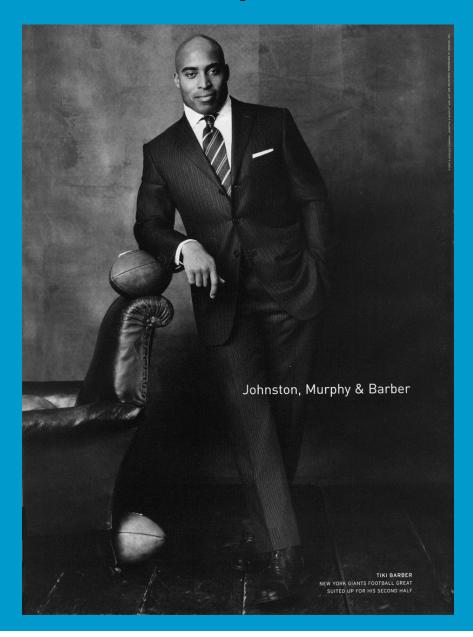


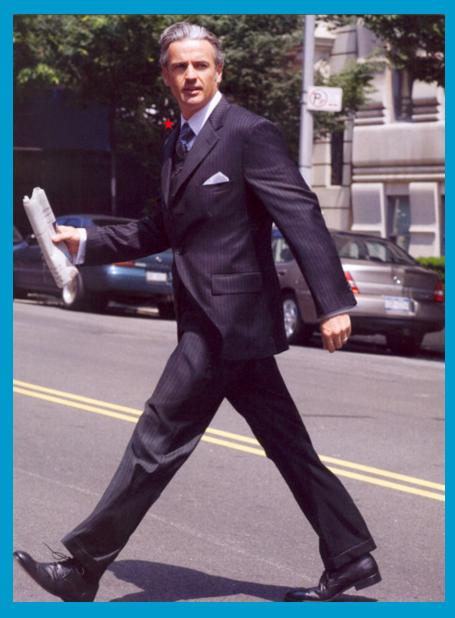
Images of men depict them as bold, adventurous, in motion.

Men are styled and framed to imply power and status.

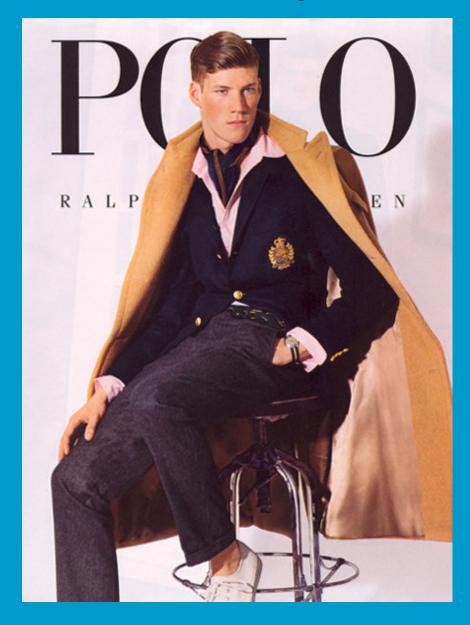


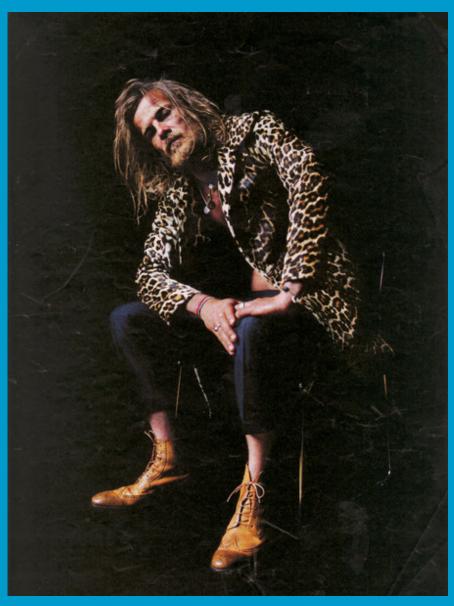
Athletic prowess and age convey authority.





There's room for polished and scruffy in a man's world.





[C] Celebrity Obsession

www.loveyourbody.nowfoundation.org

The media's obsession with female celebrities' looks and personal lives sends a message to all women...

...a woman's life is public property, especially her sexuality and reproductive status.

Who's too skinny? Who's too fat? Who's had plastic surgery? Who looks pregnant?





Celebrity magazines are littered with ads for diet products, often hawked by stars themselves.



Whoopi lost 30 pounds! You can too! "I lost 30 pounds on this program. It's so easy and you see the results fast. I lost 5 lbs. in the first 7 days and I'm on my way to losing more!" Whoopi Goldberg . Lose up to 7 pounds in just 7 days* Lost · Quick and Easy . Eat YOUR favorite foods · Personalized visits · Results start immediately Lose 20, 30, even Call for a free consultation 888-LANOW-70 100 pounds! www.laweightloss.com

Stars like Tyra Banks, known for their looks and swimsuit bodies, are pressured by the media to stay slim. They can't let the paparazzi catch them looking like they eat!



Breast obsession: Us Magazine devoted a four-page spread to celebrity cleavage.

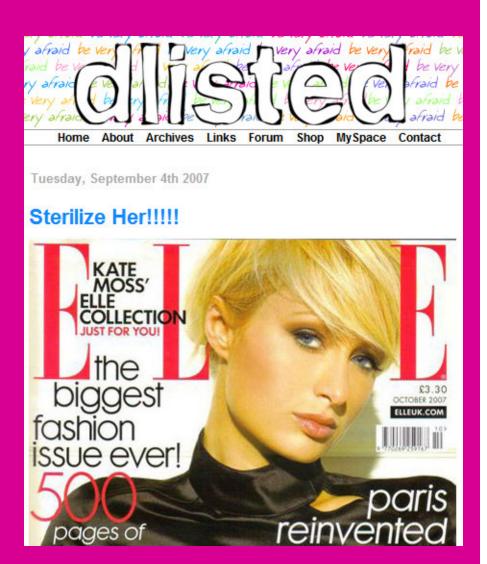




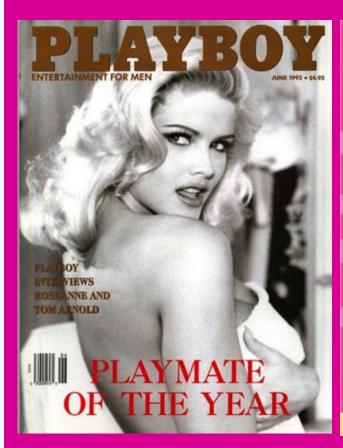


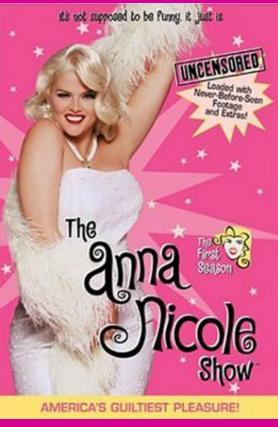
Female pop stars are now routinely marketed as sexual commodities, starting at ages barely past puberty. Monitoring their subsequent scandals and downfalls is part of the process.

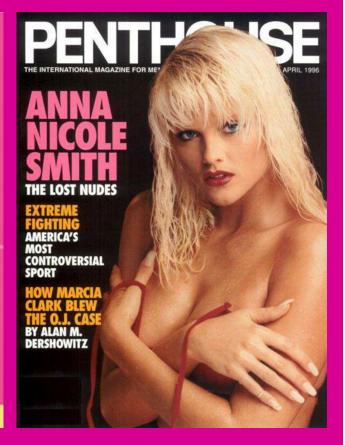
What do the average woman and Paris Hilton have in common? Women are supposed to be sexy, but if they flaunt their sexuality or have too much fun, they're labeled sluts.



Anna Nicole Smith spent her life trying to fulfill our society's elusive beauty standards and sexual ideals, dying young like her idol, Marilyn Monroe.







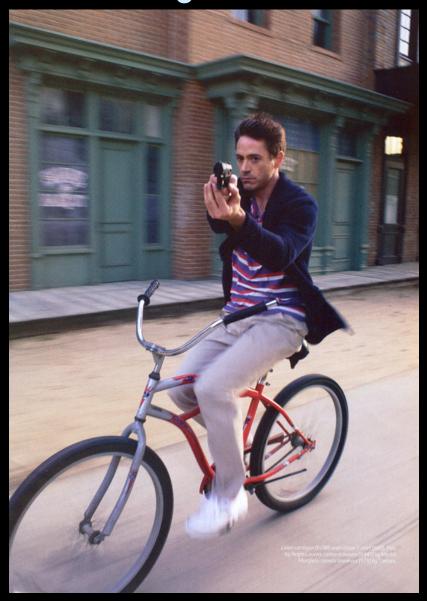
Are male and female actors portrayed differently?

One magazine. Two actors. Spot the difference.





Robert Downey Jr. is portrayed as active, even threatening, while Christina Ricci is passive, vulnerable.





[D] Dangers

www.loveyourbody.nowfoundation.org

Media messages and images can contribute to:

Low self-esteem

Body image issues

Eating disorders

Compulsive exercise

Cosmetic surgery risks

Accusations of being a slut or a tease

Blame for being targeted with sexual assault

Dehumanization of women and girls

Many women rarely see themselves reflected in our popular culture. We need to see more:

- Women of color and different ethnicities
- Women of different sizes, shapes and ages
- Women with disabilities
- Active, strong women and girls
- Smart, successful, in control women
- Anyone who does not fit the "ideal" description of what a girl/woman should be
- Men in non-traditional roles

Some advertisers <u>are</u> incorporating diverse, positive, refreshing images into their campaigns:

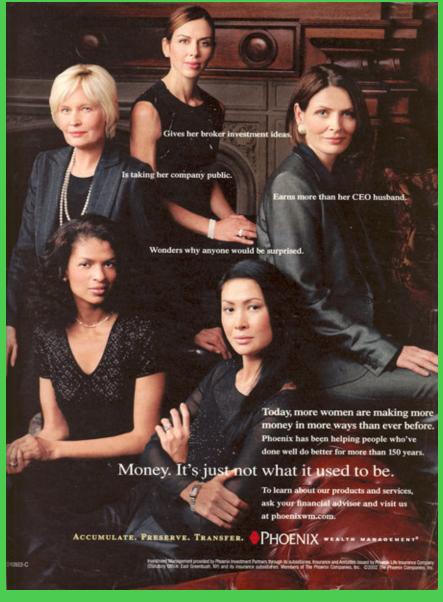
Advertising's concept of beauty is expanding



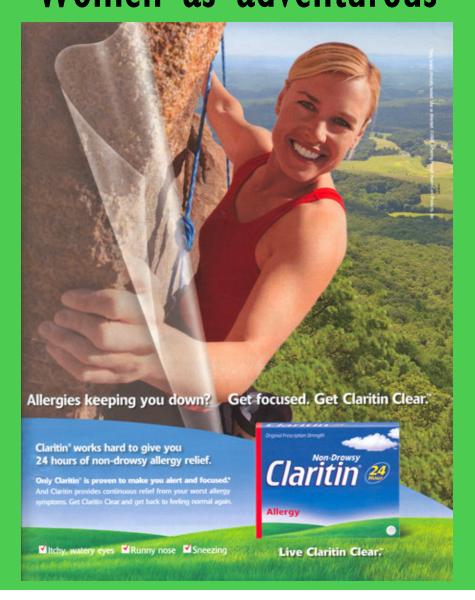


Successful women are portrayed more often





The sexes are being presented in nontraditional roles: Women as adventurous Men as nurturing





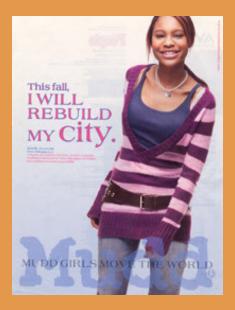
But it's still NOT enough!

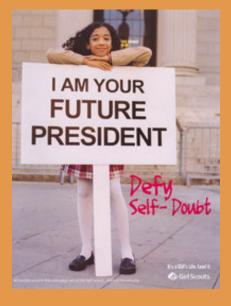
Ending the tyranny of beauty standards and sex stereotypes would change women's lives...

Freedom from beauty standards can mean:

- > Confidence, pride, celebration of all kinds of shapes, sizes, skin tones, ages...
- > Less stress; jumping off the beauty treadmill can be relaxing
- > Less money spent on beauty products, diet gimmicks, spray tans, surgery...
- > More time to focus on school, work, hobbies, athletics, politics, community, personal fulfillment, spirituality...
- > More time to build for the future, develop skills that will last









What we all need to do:

- > Talk back to advertisers that objectify girls/women
- > Talk back to media executives
- > Talk back to retail outlets
- > Stand up for ourselves and other women







Sex, Stereotypes and Beauty:
The ABCs and Ds of
Commercial Images
of Women

A presentation of the NOW Foundation's Love Your Body campaign

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