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The Mark Shaw Collection: Advocating for 1960's Television Advertising

By Meghan Holly

For the past year and a half I have been working with The Mark Shaw Collection consisting of over two hundred cans of 1960's television advertisements held by the Motion Picture Department at the George Eastman House. Thanks to the popularity of AMC's hit television show *Mad Men*, many people already think of the 1960s as the golden age of the American advertising industry. This wide-ranging collection of both 35 and 16mm film holds many examples of what makes the 1960s an extremely important and formative period in television advertising. While the images captured on the film are truly telling of the period in which they were shot, the most interesting thing about this collection may be the man behind the camera, Mark Shaw. Born Mark Schlossman in 1921, Shaw is a classic example of someone who lived the American dream. The son of two working class parents of Eastern European descent, Shaw grew up on the Lower East Side of New York City (Shaw 9). He studied industrial design at New York University and engineering at the Pratt Institute (Nourmand 14). Somewhere along the way he acquired an interest in photography. Shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor at the end of 1941, Shaw enlisted in the U.S. Air Force, declaring photographer as his occupation on official registration documents (*The National Archives*). After the war he worked for *Harper's Bazaar* and *Mademoiselle* before beginning work as a freelance photographer for *LIFE* magazine in 1952 (Nourmand 14).

Mark Shaw's history as a still photographer is well documented thanks to his son and daughter-in-law, David Shaw and Juliet Cuming. They run The Mark Shaw Photographic Archive, a business dedicated to the preservation of Shaw's photographic legacy. Their website describes in detail Shaw's time spent working for *LIFE*, "In his 16 years with the magazine, he shot 27 covers, and more than 100 stories" (Cuming). While his commercial and fashion photography is well respected, he is most often remembered as the unofficial photographer of the

John F. Kennedy Family. By the mid-1960s, Shaw was beginning to transition from print advertising into television advertising. Once a well-known contemporary of Alfred Eisenstaedt and Richard Avedon, Shaw faded into near obscurity after his untimely death in 1969. Since 1996, The Mark Shaw Photographic Archive has been working to bring Shaw's still photographic work the attention it deserves. Through my research and physical work with the collection I hope to begin to garner the same for his moving image work. This paper will first focus on the reasons why as archivists it is important for us to advocate on behalf of the collections we work with. Second, it will provide a detailed exploration into the historical and artistic relevance of Mark Shaw's work in television advertising.

My initial assignment in working with the Mark Shaw Collection was to complete a basic inventory of the materials. Janine Gericke, a student from the Selznick Class of 2013, started the initial inventory. Before she began working with the collection it had gone untouched for nearly forty five years, sitting in the archive virtually unnoticed since its arrival in the early 1970s. One of the main tasks assigned to me when I began working with this collection was to uncover its provenance. Too often films are anonymously left on the loading dock of an institution, an act often equated to that of a baby being left in a basket on the stoop of an orphanage. While the mysterious donor clearly had good intentions in bringing the materials to a place that is known to have the ability to properly care for them, they have also presented a great deal of problems with their anonymous donation.

The goal of archives is not just to protect and preserve the materials they hold, but ultimately to provide access to them. Penelope Houston's book *Keeper's of the Frame: The Film Archives* discusses both the history of film archiving and the theories that inspire general practice in most archives. While the book is a bit outdated when it comes to the discussion of technology

(the introduction makes the claim that we may soon see the day when all film is transferred onto laser disc), it is still a reliable source for understanding the basic goals and challenges faced by most archives. Houston explains archive's focus on access as such, "Access is the watchword, one might say the talisman, for the modern film archives. They talk about it all the time, practise it, worry about the ways in which they can make themselves and their services more available to the public" (Houston 95). Providing access to the materials an archive preserves is not a very surprising end goal. After all, a film can be properly stored in an effort to prolong its optimal condition for as long as possible, but this preservation is pointless if no one will ever see the materials being preserved.

More often than not a film goes unlooked at for great periods of time not due to the lack of interest, but because of rights issues. Not all films held in an archive are owned by the institution. More often than not their owner put them there on deposit, maintaining the rights while paying the archive to care for their materials. The lack of copyright control among archives creates a fear that generally motivates them to err on the side of caution. Houston goes on to detail the effect this fear has historically had on archives, "They were scared of what the film industry might do to them if they stepped out of line; apprehensive about revealing just what they had in their vaults and its occasionally dodgy provenance; nervous about any suggestion that they might seem to be exploiting their collections" (Houston 95). Today many archives have formed symbiotic relationships with those in the film industry, often becoming the institutions where members of the film industry have chosen to store their company's legacy. Some tension is also lessened by more films entering the public domain every year.

So why exactly is provenance so important? Knowing a film's provenance helps to determine its copyright and thus helps an institution to figure out how those rights will affect

their ability to make it accessible. When someone deposits a film with an archive they usually sign a contract. Every contract is different, but a contract may give the archive special clearance when it comes to copyright. When a collection exists in an archive without a paper trail, the uncertainties of the terms and the specifics of a film's copyright will often make an institution too nervous to make it accessible to the general public. It is what Houston referred to as 'dodgy provenance' that creates the real problem.

While not as extreme as the baby on the doorstep example, the story I've been told about the arrival of the Mark Shaw Collection is that a group of "ad men" showed up and informally presented the materials to the George Eastman House in the early 1970s. This story is usually followed with tales of wild, cocktail fueled, *Mad Men* style partying. The legend of the mysterious ad men makes for a nice story, but it doesn't clear up any copyright concerns one may have about the collection. With the assistance of my project supervisor and GEH Collection Manager Deborah Stoiber, I was able to procure the contact information for Jerry Ansel, Mark Shaw's business partner for a great deal of the time he worked in commercial production. Together they ran Ansel Shaw International. The two men later parted ways and Shaw continued to work under the title of Mark Shaw Associates. After leaving production work, Ansel went on to work in real estate. He is currently retired and living in Boca Raton, Florida where I was able to reach him by telephone. Unfortunately he was a bit short with me, claiming that his time spent doing production work was so long ago that he didn't remember anything. He did suggest I contact Mark's family, which at that point I already had.

Having found their contact information via their archive website, I reached out to David Shaw and Juliet Cuming during the spring of 2014 to see if they knew anything about how these materials ended up at the George Eastman House. While they have been a great resource for

background information on Mark Shaw and his work in still photography, the phone call they received from me was the first they had heard of George Eastman House's holdings of Mark Shaw's moving image work. Mark Shaw's first wife, Geraldine "Geri" Trotta was a writer for many publications including *Mademoiselle*. Knowledgeable in the industry, she advised Shaw to do his photography work freelance so that he would maintain the rights to his work. Copyright concerns with Shaw's moving image work remain unclear. The copyright lawyer for the Mark Shaw Photographic Archive recently suggested that many of the commercials in this collection may be considered orphan works since their copyright was likely owned by an ad agency or company that has either gone out of existence or may no longer know how to find the proper paper work.

The United States Copyright Office defines orphan works as, "a term used to describe the situation where the owner of a copyrighted work cannot be identified and located by someone who wishes to make use of the work in a manner that requires permission of the copyright owner" (Sigall 1). Having already proposed legislation regarding orphan works in both 2006 and 2008, the US Copyright Office has yet to pass a definitive law regarding orphan works. The general problem with orphan works as it concerns us here was explained in a statement given in 2008 by Marybeth Peters, who was at that time the Register of Copyrights, "When a copyright owner cannot be identified or is unlocatable, potential users abandon important, productive projects, many of which would be beneficial to our national heritage. Scholars cannot use the important letters, images and manuscripts they search out in archives..." (Peters). Thus, clearly aware of how detrimental the fear surrounding the use of orphan works can be in delaying or creating complete avoidance of a project, the US Copyright Office is still actively pursuing standards for dealing with them. As recently as June of this year they released an extensive

report entitled, “Orphan Works and Mass Digitization” in the hopes of raising awareness and understanding of the current problems that are keeping this important work from being completed. These issues are especially pressing when dealing with materials such as those in the Mark Shaw Collection. Already several decades old, they are beginning to see the effects of decomposition, suffering from things such as color fading and vinegar syndrome. Currently housed in properly climate controlled vaults, their decomposition has been slowed significantly. However, it cannot be magically reversed. Eventually the materials will need to be preserved in order to survive. Whether they are preserved in the form of a new print or a digital transfer, this work will take funding. It is easiest to procure funding when an institution knows that rights can be cleared, reassuring those involved that once the materials are preserved they will also be able to be accessed.

With no known provenance information for the Mark Shaw Collection held at the George Eastman House, it is no surprise that the films had fallen prey to the popular trend among archives of having more materials than they have staff or funding to accommodate. Paolo Cherchi Usai, the Senior Curator of Film at the George Eastman House, outlines this problem in his book *Burning Passions: An Introduction to the Study of Silent Cinema*, “Having to deal with staggering amounts of decaying film with usually insufficient human resources, film archives are forced to set a minimum standard for what is considered an acceptable level of intervention and must apply this standard systematically without discussing individual cases except when they present especially challenging problems or when they are seen as being of exceptional aesthetic and historical relevance” (Usai 80). It is no great secret in the archival world that there are almost always more materials to work with than there is available manpower or funds to get the work done. Thus, upon being submitted to an archive materials are often cataloged using only the most

basic required information, moved into proper climate controlled storage and then forgotten about until a researcher or archivist voices concerns as to the materials relevance and advocates for their preservation.

When training to become a moving image archivist, one of the first things you learn is to treat every strip of film as a museum object, an object that in order to be protected needs to be treated with special care and respect. Whether the strip of film in question is a fully edited projection print or just bits and pieces of some production element, it should be treated with the same high level of archival quality care. You are quickly taught to consider the removal of even a single frame of the most mundane material as a curatorial decision. Houston emphasizes the above issue in her chapter entitled “Keepers” which focuses on the unique challenges presented to moving image archivists, “There is also the notion that it is not the job of archivists to lay down standards of quality, that in their eyes all films should be equal, and that even if a film has aroused no interest for fifty years or more, there can be no guarantee that it will not be the next thing to engage a researchers passionate attention” (Houston 82). There is no doubt that an archivist’s ability to remain unbiased when it comes to collection materials is an important job requirement. Imagine if archivists were able to service only the materials *they* deemed relevant. You could end up with one archivist that disliked a certain director. If they were in charge of preservation at an institution that held that director’s life’s work, their entire body of work could easily be forgotten about or destroyed. This is of course an extreme example. Most archives have a long and tedious de-accessioning process that involves the input of many people.

The main motivation for equal treatment of collection materials is, as Houston mentions, to preserve the greatest amount of materials possible as you never know what may become relevant to someone in the future. Houston goes on to say, “Once a film has been destroyed it is

gone for good; as long as it lives, someone, someday may find a reason to look at it” (Houston 82). So though most moving image archivists claim that their main goal is to provide access to as many films as possible, it all starts by trying to preserve as many films as possible. For if it isn’t preserved in the first place, there is nothing to provide access to.

Not only is it important to preserve as many films as possible, but as many different versions of a film as possible. When I first decided to attend the Selznick program I had a number of people ask me what exactly was held in the archives. It was clear to most people that the archive housed movies printed on film stock, but their question was usually more along the lines of whether or not the films in the archive were the “originals”. Whether an archive holds the original version of a film is much more difficult to answer than whether an archive holds a print of a film. Most people are used to considering the question of the original when it comes to the discussion of museum objects. For instance, one may say, “Does the Louvre have the original Mona Lisa?” Here original has a very straightforward definition. It is understood as the first version of the painting to ever be created by the hand of Leonardo da Vinci himself. Yet while the concept an original is easily understandable in this case, it is worth noting that just because a true original is known to exist, it isn’t necessarily easy to pick it out of the sea of forgeries and fakes that exist around any great work of art.

Defining original when it comes to film is innately much more difficult, and sometimes even impossible. This is due to the fact that each film is made up of a series of prints. As Cherchi Usai says, “The ‘original’ version of a film is a multiple object” (Usai 84). When someone inquires about the original film, they may mean the original negative that was in the camera when the movie was shot. Or they may mean the first positive print struck from that original camera negative. And then there is of course the question of which edit they are referring to;

even with the help of secondary sources it may be hard to determine which edit of a film was the first to be released to the general public.

While there is some clout that comes with being able to say that your institution has the original camera negative of a film, there is also a more utilitarian reason that archives want to hold early production elements. That reason is the desire to create the best quality preservation or restoration print of a film. The original camera negative is always going to produce the best possible image quality in a print. Each subsequent generation of a print will slowly begin to lose image quality. So in creating a new print it is always preferable to use the production elements that are generationally closest to the original camera negative.

The desire to preserve not only the earliest elements but also the greatest number of elements stems from the fact that films often have many different versions. Here I don't mean different versions generationally, I mean different edits. When making a new print of a film an institution may desire to create a print closest to the version originally released in theaters. Or they may desire to create one that includes a specific scene that was only released later on. This is part of what motivates an institution to try to preserve as many materials as possible. When an archivist undertakes a restoration project, it often happens that they have to pull elements from many different prints to create their restoration. Especially with older films where elements have gone missing over time, the materials will be pulled from various prints of different qualities to create the most complete version of the film.

This often means returning to a restoration to add to it whenever new or better quality elements are discovered. Thus a restoration project can easily become one's life's work. As Cherchi Usai explains, "The restoration of a film is often the fruit of individual tenacity (or obsession)" (Usai 81). The most well-known example of such a project is Kevin Brownlow's

restoration of Abel Gance's *Napoleon* (1927). His restoration has gone through multiple versions over time as new materials have been discovered. Houston agrees that it was indeed Brownlow's passion that made this restoration possible, "This was more than a restoration: it was a romantic quest in its own right, a labour of singular devotion, as Brownlow worked patiently for years, piecing together scraps and shreds of film from all sorts of sources to reconstitute the lost masterpiece" (Houston 129). While Brownlow worked on his restoration as an individual and not as a representative of any one archive, I believe that it is important for archivists everywhere to carry such passion and excitement for the collections they are working with. I know it is unrealistic to expect them to hold such passion for every collection they work with. As mentioned earlier, archives are typically understaffed and overfilled with materials needing swift attention. All I'm suggesting is that as archivists we act as lobbyists for the materials we work with, advocating on their behalf to the best of our ability. Often times an archivist will be the only one who knows a collection inside and out. If they don't voice its potential importance, it will likely be moved right back to the vault where it will go unnoticed for another fifty years or more.

Thus in an effort to advocate on behalf of the Mark Shaw Collection held at the George Eastman House, the rest of this paper will focus on the artistic and historical relevance of this collection. Before we tackle these issues, I'd first like to make a few disclaimers. When people see old advertisements, they often interpret the scenes portrayed in them to be honest representations of the time in which they were made. While these advertisements can certainly tell us something about the year in which they were produced, they are more likely a representation of the hopes and dreams of the people from that period than they are an honest representation of the actual people themselves. It is important to remember that first and

foremost they were created with the end goal being to entice the general public to buy a product. In a *Business Week* article about advertising production that Mark Shaw himself contributed to, print advertisements are described as, “Those four color confections that burn so brightly on the magazine page, those lively charades of the good life” (“All This for the Ad”). While not specifically speaking about television advertising, that quote serves to remind us that advertising in general is a representation of the lives we aspire to have, not the ones we actually live. This is an important point to make before attempting to decipher the specific historic relevance of these advertisements.

“Maddening Times: Mad Men in *Its History*” by Dana Polan, is one of a series of essays in a collection entitled *Mad Men, Mad World: Sex, Politics, Style & The 1960s*. In this essay Polan describes the way in which audiences often choose to view the fictional television show *Mad Men* as a factual representation of the 1960s, stating, “Viewers assume it offers a picture of the way things were in those times. The paradox here is that a series appreciated as an aesthetic accomplishment – that is, as a construct whose value lies precisely in its creative divergence from reality...is also appreciated as an accurate picture of its time” (Polan 40). It is this same sentiment that I fear may be present when people look at the advertisements in the Mark Shaw Collection. While they do create a polished version of years past, it is important to remember what they really are, ‘a lively charade of the good life’. Thus I will do my best to analyze these advertisements as fictional clues to a previous decade, not as factual representations of one.

My final disclaimer is to acknowledge that Mark Shaw did not work alone. Over time Shaw owned a series of production companies. Most prominent in the collection held at GEH are advertisements produced under the company titles of Ansel Shaw International (ASI for short) or Mark Shaw Associates (also at times shortened to MSA). As mentioned earlier, Ansel Shaw

International was a company run by Jerry Ansel and Mark Shaw. They eventually parted ways prompting Shaw to form Mark Shaw Associates.



Figure 1
Clockwise: Unidentified girl, Jerry Ansel
and Mark Shaw.
George Eastman House, Rochester.

Even when Shaw was running his own production company he surely had other people working for him. No matter what production company name he was working under, Mark Shaw was generally hired on to a job by an advertising company. The credits on the films in the collection show that he frequently worked for the J. Walter Thompson advertising firm. My point here is that while this is the Mark Shaw Collection, there is no doubt that a number of people were involved in the production of each one of these advertisements. This makes it hard to determine what decisions were made by Shaw and which had input from others. Being an award winning still photographer, Shaw likely had a bit more creative control over his work than your average cinematographer. We know for a fact due to some of the production credits included on films in the collection that Shaw often wore many hats, working as both cameraman

and director on a number of shoots. I would just like to acknowledge that the commercials in this collection are the product of a collaboration of a great number of people. However, the collection is named after Mark Shaw as he is the common denominator. His long history in still photography will allow us to draw comparisons between his still and moving image work, allowing us to better determine his influence on specific projects. My artistic assessment of this collection will be most concerned with what I believe to have been the contributions of Mark Shaw.

Before we dive into a discussion of collection specifics, I would first like to address Mark Shaw's general business practice and beliefs related to advertising. Luckily these have been fairly well documented as Shaw has both written for and been written about in a number of publications. Most of these articles focus on the years in which he worked as a still photographer but the general ideas are applicable to his moving image work as well. One article in particular offers a quote that seems to sum up his general practice as the man behind the camera, "The mood sells...who cares if the girls hair isn't in focus. The technique is to build life (no pun intended)" ("Behind Fashion Scene"). This quote illustrates the way in which Shaw paid more attention to capturing a feeling with his photography, rather than following every technical rule.

This doesn't mean that his photography was devoid of detail. One of Shaw's most critically acclaimed print campaigns was a series he did for Vanity Fair lingerie. The black and white photos show graceful models artfully posed in delicately pleated, sheer material. Here not a single hair is out of focus, leading to this statement later on in the same article, "For, as Shaw explains, it was his technique that turned lingerie photography from 'the mushy type to more detail'—in fabrics that is. And detail counts – if it builds life" ("Behind Fashion Scene").

Ultimately, the technical choices he made on a shoot were determined by the mood he was trying to capture.

In an attempt to capture a subject at their most honest, Shaw preferred to work outside of the studio. This practice is recounted in the introduction to *Dior Glamour: 1952-1962*, a book featuring a decade worth of photos taken by Shaw, “Indeed, by the photographer’s own admission, ‘some of my worst photographs are made in the studio.’ Shaw, who occasionally referred to himself as ‘the fastest camera in the East,’ was more suited to moving or roaming around than being locked in a studio” (Cavassoni 22). He tended to let the subject speak for themselves, preferring to fade into the background as a photographer, once stating “People tend to freeze in front of the camera...I shoot a few frames and try not to move around too much...it makes the person less aware of the photographer. Mainly I try to...create an atmosphere of a friend taking their picture, rather than a photographer.” (Nourmand 14). Shaw’s photographs tend to have an intimate feeling, often catching people at their most relaxed. He was known to have often affectionately referred to his photographic work as “snapshots” (Cavassoni 14).

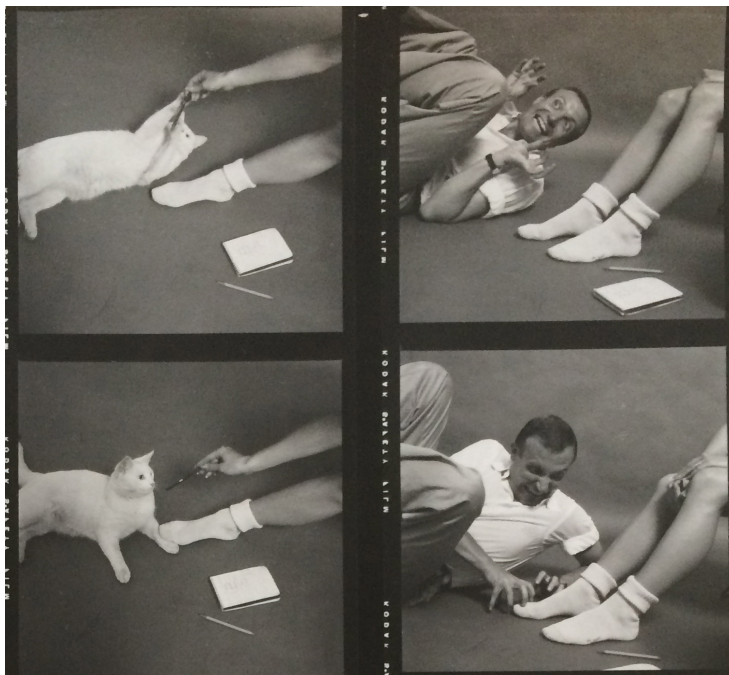


Figure 2
Shaw, Mark. Mark Shaw Photographic
Archive, East Dummerston.
©Mark Shaw

Noted by many as a quiet guy, Shaw often had a playful manner when working with his subject. This is revealed through a number of photographs taken behind-the-scenes on various shoots. During one shoot involving a cat, Shaw can be seen laying on the floor and imitating the furry feline (see fig. 2). In a another photograph taken during his prestigious Vanity Fair lingerie shoot, Shaw can be seen smiling and sporting some of the lingerie himself (see fig. 3). The relaxed demeanor he displayed on set no doubt helped to put his subjects at ease.

Figure 3
Shaw, Mark. Mark Shaw Photographic
Archive, East Dummerston.
©Mark Shaw



One of Mark Shaw's most memorable still photographic collections was a series he shot for *LIFE* magazine featuring a young Audrey Hepburn on the set of *Sabrina* (1954). According

to an article written about Shaw called *Behind the Scene: Mood Tells the Story*, “He did one of the longest photo stories Life ever published on a woman – the Audrey Hepburn photos in 1953 while Audrey was doing “Sabrina” in Hollywood” (“Behind the Scene”). Extremely focused on her work, it is said that the young actress wasn’t thrilled by the idea of a photographer following her around set, but Shaw soon broke through her serious exterior. The fact that these photos can still be seen today represents another triumph for the inquisitive archivist. In the introduction to *Charmed by Audrey: Life on the set of Sabrina*, Juliet Cuming describes the rediscovery of these well-respected photos in a collection of boxes stored at the home of Mark Shaw’s ex-wife, Geri Trotta. After Mark Shaw’s untimely death in 1969, his work was split between his ex-wives, “Mark’s extensive body of work was left in disarray, and much of it was packed into boxes to be sorted later. The photographic estate was left jointly to Pat Suzuki and Geri Trotta, with Geri given the task of managing it” (Shaw 12). With the creation of the Mark Shaw Photographic Archive, David Shaw and Juliet Cuming worked to take over the rights and management of his still photographic work, eventually buying out Trotta’s portion of Shaw’s work. In the book, Juliet discusses the discovery that they held an incomplete collection, “As we began to delve into the archive, we found that several of Mark’s most important negatives were missing. These included the negatives to the famous Audrey Hepburn story. Mark had loved the Audrey photos and displayed them in his home, but the original film, representing weeks of work, was mysteriously absent” (Shaw 13).

It wasn’t until after Trotta’s death in 2005 that the Audrey Hepburn negatives from the Sabrina shoot were discovered in a set of long forgotten boxes, “As the estate attorney sifted through the layers of accumulated belongings he found, towards the bottom, a series of boxes with the name ‘Mark Shaw’ scrawled on them. Buried beneath papers and photographs were

several sets of missing negatives – including those of Audrey Hepburn.” (Shaw 13). A discovery that Cuming goes on to describe as one that led them to believe that their, “archive was now complete.” While this discovery of the lost Audrey Hepburn negatives may have completed the still photographic portion of their archive, it certainly didn’t complete a representation of Shaw’s entire body of work. The phone call they would receive from me in the spring of 2014 would introduce them to a whole new collection of his work that they had yet to learn still existed. Thus further proving that whether it is a single project like Kevin Brownlow’s restoration of Abel Gance’s *Napoleon* (1927), or the piecing together of one man’s life’s work, archivists never truly know when their collection is complete. While this can be frustrating at times, it can also lead to some exciting discoveries.

The Feeling Sells

The uncovering of such a large portion of Shaw’s moving image materials allows us to create comparisons between his still photographic work and his later television advertising work. One thing that this has made apparent is that he continued the practice of using a mood to sell a product throughout his career. In a print ad created for Chrysler and printed in January 1961 (see fig. 4), Shaw perfectly portrayed for the consumer the way that some cars create a rough ride, jostling their passengers about. The ad features the cut-out images of three different people that we are led to believe have been thrown into different uncomfortable positions by a car with poor suspension. The ad boasts that when you ride in a Chrysler there will be, “No squat on the start, no dive on the stop, no lean on the turn.” The advertisement attributes this to Chrysler’s torsion bars that, “exert a steady, equalizing force that helps eliminate the bounce and sway, and keep the car ‘on the level’.” The powerfully physical images of the people squatting and leaning create a relatable feeling for any viewer that has ever travelled in a car with poor suspension. Possibly

the most intriguing part is that the ad creates this feeling without even showing a car. The only thing remotely close to an actual image of a car is the diagram of a car's chassis along the bottom margin of the ad.



Figure 4
Shaw, Mark. *Chrysler Advertisement*. 1961. Mark Shaw Photographic Archive, East Dummerston. ©Mark Shaw

I attribute the creation of this concept to Shaw as it reappears years later in one of his television advertisement's for Ford. This specific advertisement aims to create for the viewer the feeling of being uncomfortably squished in a car with limited interior space. It begins with a

series of still photographic cut-outs of a man squeezed into different uncomfortable positions. Though this commercial uses still photographic images, they are made to look like moving images. One instance features two different still photographs of the same man, alternated in rapid succession to give the illusion that he is blinking. Images of a man forced into a small space are often accompanied by horizontal or vertical black borders, furthering the sense of a confined space (see fig. 5).

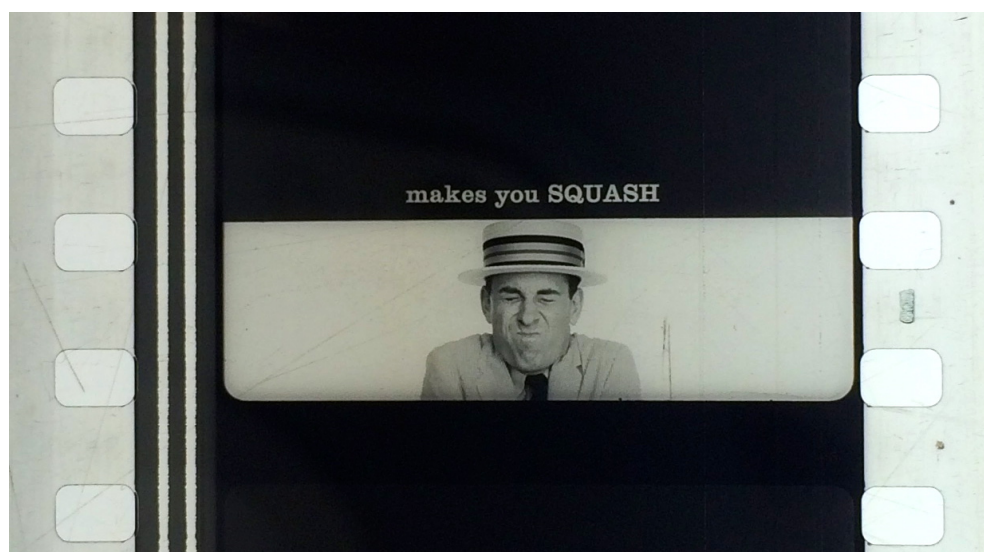


Figure 5
Ford Advertisement.
George Eastman
House, Rochester.

Just as the text in the corresponding Chrysler print ad highlights the different ways someone may be jostled around in an unsteady vehicle, the jingle that accompanies this commercial compliments the images by adding to the feeling of being cramped in a car, “Do you squirm, getting in and out, like a worm, wiggle in and out....” The man shown driving the car is soon joined by a few others as the jingle continues, “...if your knees seem to touch your chin, what a squeeze when two more get in.” The advertisement continues to show the first man in a series of compromising positions, before moving on to show all three men comfortably sprawled out on a plain white background (see fig. 6). At this point, the tone of the jingle switches to be more relaxed and the singers begin to explain the feelings associated with riding in a Ford, “In a

Ford, you relax in the backseat, relax getting in and out of the backseat. Stretch your legs, lift your chin. You're in a Ford, let two more get in." Only after all of this do we actually see the product itself. Again, as in the Chrysler print ad, displaying the actual product is not the main goal of this commercial. The car itself is only visible during the last thirty seconds of this two-minute ad. Here Shaw is trying to sell the product by first selling the consumer on a feeling, or mood, associated with the product. Both of these advertisements highlight the way in which Shaw used mood to sell a product.



Figure 6
Ford Advertisement. George Eastman House, Rochester.

All Breck Ads Aren't Beautiful, Or Are They?

Discovering the way Mark Shaw used a similar concept in both a print advertisement and a television commercial brings attention to the fact that television was a fairly new medium at this time. One of the most unique things about this collection is the way in which it highlights the different changes and trends associated with early television advertising. What followed the introduction of television into American homes was a period of trying to figure out what this new medium would be and subsequently how it could be best used to make money. Thus, this was a very transitory and formative time for television advertising.

In the beginning, most television advertising was integrated directly into the television program itself. This is generally what was referred to as single sponsorship advertising, one company would sponsor a program, during which their product would be the only one advertised. Like many choices that were made at the start of television broadcasting, this funding model was a hold-over from radio. Yet, television proved to be a much more expensive medium, "Television's higher costs were directly attributable to its being a visual medium, requiring a multiplicity of elements unnecessary for radio production, including sets, cameras, lights, blocking rehearsals, a different actor for each part, makeup, and costumes" (Meyers 274). With the cost of producing a television program proving to be far greater than that of producing a radio show, advertisers were forced to split their time slots with multiple sponsors, but not without raising concern. With multiple companies sharing an interest in any given program, who would control the content of that program? What about viewers? Could they handle receiving information on more than one product per program, or would their messages just be lost in the mix?

These were questions that many were willing to face, not just because of funds, but because of just how much power was left in the hands of a single sponsorship advertiser. Those participating in single sponsorship not only had the power to control what went into a program, they had the power to decide what to take out, “The priority of profit meant that the producers had to submit to the will of the advertisers. Sometimes that resulted in censorship... The agency handling the General Motors account objected to so many scripts that the CBC’s play anthology ‘General Motors Presents’ earned the nickname ‘General Motors Prevents’” (Rutherford 14). The model of single sponsorship wasn’t challenged until the early 1960s when the FCC held summits to decide what content was appropriate for television and who was in charge of censoring such content. It was then that Fairfax Cone, the chair of Foote, Cone & Belding, suggested ‘magazine concept’ advertising, “Cone emphasized that his version of the ‘magazine concept’ was the only viable way to raise the standards of television. Rather than buy time for a specific program, he argued, advertisers should buy time that would be distributed across a network’s schedule...” (Samuel 156). Dispersing the sponsorship between multiple advertisers meant that the networks no longer relied on a single sponsor to fund any given time slot. Diversifying sponsorship allowed the people creating the programming more creative control, as they now had more options as to where their funding could come from. Upsetting one advertiser no longer meant complete and total financial ruin for a program. Plus, the lower rates of divided sponsorship made television advertising affordable to a wider range of businesses. So if one advertiser did pull their funds, there was more likely to be another one waiting to take its place.

Coming on the heels of radio, it was no surprise that television not only followed its lead in program funding, but also in commercial style and production, “the risks of staging live demonstrations and the expense of filmed demonstrations meant that many early television

commercials simply replicated radio strategies” (Meyers 270). With television being shot live, so were the ads. The live ads were often spoken by the star of the show and may even have been composed as part of the plot to be read in character by the actor. While live ads worked into the program kept production costs low, they raised the risk of something going wrong, “as when a refrigerator door did not open in a 1954 live commercial, or when a cigarette spokesman coughed after announcing ‘never an irritation’” (Meyers 269). Yet, television soon surpassed radio in advertising sales, proving to investors that the medium of television deserved an increase in production quality, “The live spot gave way to the filmed ad, animation briefly enjoyed a lot of favour, and after 1956 came experiments with videotape” (Rutherford 11). The move to pre-record both television programming and commercials not only gave rise to a higher production value, it also gave all involved an extra sense of security allowing for any mistakes to be edited out.

Pre-recorded advertisements not only prevented on-screen mishaps, they also allowed for greater creative control, “The switch to film ensured ad-makers more control over the look and feel of the commercial, allowing them to leave the TV studio to shoot anywhere money could take them” (Rutherford 16). Filming ads allowed for a greater range of moods and effects. Commercials could now be shot on location, or effects could be added in post-production. The possibilities really were endless. No longer were products forced to use the same set as the show they were sponsoring, often times being forced awkwardly into the plot of the show. Now commercials were able to become their own show, with their own narrative. They could tell a story completely separate from that of the program they were supporting.

In 1964 Shaw shot a commercial that would go on to win him the prestigious Clio Award for his work as both the Director and Cameraman for the shoot. It is called “Night Ride” and

features a woman with luminous blond hair riding in a convertible at night (see fig. 7). Long shots of her in the passenger seat are overlaid with close-up shots of her tossing her windswept hair back and forth. Lynn Spigel equates the artistic quality of this commercial, and others from that time period, with the stylistic qualities of the film's of the French New Wave:

Some commercials created the feel of European art films by, for example, featuring moody, dark, and poetic scenes then associated with French new-wave films' homage to American *film noir*, such as Godard's *Alphaville* and Truffaut's *Shoot the Piano Player* (1960). A commercial for Breck shampoo ("Night Ride," Y&R, 1964) presents shots of a woman's face framed through a windshield and edited together with car headlights and stop signs to create a poetic montage. (Spigel 233)

The use of montage in this commercial doesn't further a narrative, but rather creates an aura of desire around this mystery woman. The final close-up shots show her as she continues to tousle her golden locks and smile coyly at the camera, as the male voiceover finishes the commercial with this statement, "...like men seldom realize that all Breck girls aren't beautiful, or are they?" With the audience already conditioned to equate Breck girls with the lovely blond in the commercial, the advertiser has promised beauty without *really* promising anything. This statement also serves to create a curiosity in both the male and female viewers, the former wanting to find a Breck girl and the latter yearning to be a Breck girl.



Figure 7
Night Ride. 1964. George Eastman
House, Rochester.

During a conference held by the American Association of Advertising Agencies in November 1964, Edward H. Mahoney, Vice President and Manager of TV and Radio at Fuller & Smith & Ross, spoke of a study that showed that the, “‘most-remembered’ commercials would show that each message was founded on one of ‘four action drives’—hunger, sex, security and anger” (Mahoney 40). He went on to list Breck Shampoo’s “Night Ride” as an example of a commercial made that year that fit into the ‘sex’ category. While today we think of the saying ‘sex sells’ as cliché, in 1964 it was being promoted as an innovative concept recently discovered by an industry study. Not only was the “Night Ride” advertisement shot and directed by Mark Shaw visually cutting-edge, it was also a thematic trendsetter.

Even David Ogilvy, one half of the advertising agency Ogilvy and Mather, remembers the first time he tried to use sex to sell a product, “The first advertisement I ever produced showed a naked woman. It was a mistake, not because it was sexy, but because it was irrelevant to the product – a cooking stove” (Ogilvy 25). “Night Ride” uses the allure of sex to sell shampoo, a product we are led to believe will affect our outward appearance. If we follow the logic that our appearance will determine the likelihood of our sexual encounters, then this is an example of a relevant attempt to use sex to sell a product. All of the creative thought and attention to detail that went in to the making of this advertisement shows just how powerful a pre-recorded commercial can be.

During the same year, Breck Shampoo could be seen advertised on an episode of *The Patty Duke Show* (“The Patty Duke Show”). Two young characters, Patty and Cathy Lane, do their best to try to work a plug for Breck Shampoo and Breck Hair Set Mist into the plot of the show. They begin by discussing their fears over the ways in which the world may soon be over run with synthetics. It transitions into their thoughts on how Breck may soon be the only thing

left without synthetics. Patty starts by saying that Breck is the, “only leading shampoo that doesn’t have a synthetic detergent base,” she goes on to say, “That’s the thing about Breck Hair Set Mist, too. It doesn’t make you look synthetic.” Cathy further prompts her by interjecting with, “What do you mean Patty?” Patty gladly carries on to say, “Well, its got a new filtered formula. You see, when you put it on you don’t see big globs of hairspray. And it doesn’t feel stiff or sticky, like Sally in English class. Her hair looks like wood.” Their banter continues on in a similar fashion for a bit longer and then ends with the canned guffaws of a laugh track. As hard as the show’s writers tried to spin these dry marketing facts into the tween-like chatter of their characters, its believability as natural conversation is as stiff as Sally’s hair. When viewed together, these two Breck commercials are a great example of the way in which television was beginning to transition from live advertising to pre-corded advertising with higher production value. Though *The Patty Duke* show is a special example. The fact that Patty Duke played both Patty and Cathy undoubtedly required more pre-recording than your average television program.

Around the same time, Mark Shaw helped to create another Breck advertisement that falls somewhere in the middle of this spectrum. It is entitled “Library Steps” and features another beautiful blond Breck girl, but this time she is accompanied by a male counterpart played by McLean Stevenson of *M*A*S*H* fame (see fig. 8). This commercial is pre-recorded and follows a brief narrative. While the dialog is not as forced as that of the Breck advertisement squeezed into the premise of *The Patty Duke Show*, it is still clunky enough to highlight that pre-recorded commercials were a new medium at this time. On the other hand, it is no where near as heavily produced and avant-garde as “Night Ride”.

This Breck ad features a young woman sunning herself on some city steps, when she is suddenly approached by a man who finds her hair so beautiful that he must simply find out what

product she uses. The woman gladly indulges this stranger with a thorough description of her new Breck Hair Set Mist. She even happens to have a large bottle of the product with her in her purse. While some viewers may find it odd that she keeps a full size bottle of hairspray in her purse, this at least enables her to recite some of the perfectly curated facts about the product as if she were reading them from the can. It is hard to believe that anyone would be able to spout such well-worded marketing jargon off the top of their head. After she finishes her spiel on the new Breck Hair Set Mist the conversation quickly dies off and after an uncomfortable pause McLean Stevenson's character ventures to say, "Hey do you, uh, work around here in the neighborhood?" While the dialog in this ad is still awkward, sometimes to the point of being off-putting, it functions as it's own narrative completely outside of the predetermined universe of a television show. Mark Shaw only had a hand in creating the two pre-recorded Breck commercials discussed here. Yet when placed together with the segment from *The Patty Duke Show*, all three work together to demonstrate the ways in which product endorsement in the early 1960s was transitioning from live advertisements to pre-recorded commercials with higher production value.



Figure 8
From left to right: Unidentified woman and McLean Stevenson.
Breck Advertisement. George Eastman House, Rochester.

Things Go Better with Music

One of the other big changes in television advertisements of the 1960s was the growing popularity of the use of music. While the television commercials of the 1950s hadn't been silent, they placed a greater emphasis on the spoken word, "...many early television commercials relied on existing radio commercial techniques, such as a lengthy verbal commercial delivered by the star, extolling the reasons-why to buy" (Meyers 270). This early style of working the advertisement directly into the show, like the Breck ad in *The Patty Duke Show*, didn't leave much room to add music. Once television moved from single sponsorship advertising to the magazine concept it was a lot easier to add music to advertisements. The ads were much less likely to be performed as part of the show and they were almost certainly filmed ahead of time.

Among other elements of higher production, this allowed for the addition of music, "Research showed that music, either as a jingle or under the voice-over, boosted commercial recall and helped viewers remember the brand being advertised" (Samuel 166). With the importance of music in advertising growing undeniably, many advertisers brought in the best in the business. Rock 'n' Roll had taken over the popular airwaves, leaving a lot of talented songwriters desiring to pick up work. "Even the likes of Cole Porter and Leonard Bernstein partnered with advertisers, the former licensing his song 'It's DeLovely' for a DeSoto commercial, the latter composing a score for a deodorant spot" (Samuel 166). Many of the songwriters who had been previously employed to tell stories through musical theater, now found themselves writing songs to fuel consumerism. Popular rock 'n' roll musicians of the era also had their chance to cash in on commercials.

In the 1960s two of the top selling soda companies attempted to rebrand themselves to be more appealing to younger consumers, and both used music to do it. Pepsi-Cola's 'Think Young'

campaign featured a repurposed version of, “Eddie Cantor’s hit song of 1928, ‘Makin’ Whoopee!’ – an anthem of youth of a previous generation. By substituting new lyrics and calling it ‘The Pepsi Song’” (Samuel 153). While Pepsi’s approach was to reclaim a song already accepted by the youth of another generation, Coca-Cola chose to hire popular folk music group The Limelites to sing the jingle for their ‘Things Go Better with Coke’ campaign. This jingle quickly became a popular portion of the campaign, “Company records claim that within three months, two-thirds of the public surveyed was able to recognize the all-important theme song” (Rutherford 45).



Figure 9
Coca-Cola Advertisement.
George Eastman House,
Rochester.

Both companies also increased the aesthetic value of their campaigns by hiring well-known and accomplished photographers to help in the production of their advertisements. “Pepsi went all out for its new campaign, hiring photographer extraordinaire Irving Penn to supervise the commercial shoot” (Samuel 153), while Coca-Cola used no other than Mark Shaw. A handful

of television commercials from the ‘Things Go Better with Coke’ campaign are held in the collection at The George Eastman House (see fig. 9).

May the Best Man Win

One of the commercials produced by Ansel Shaw International was a Libby’s canned food commercial created for J. Walter Thompson entitled “Omnibus”. It begins with a series of symbols often associated with patriotism, such as a star, an eagle, an elephant and a donkey. These symbols are intercut with shots of a crowd of people brandishing signs and posters that boast the state they are representing. The word vote flashes on the screen as jingle singers belt out, “Election, selection and may the best man win. Count the votes and see who’s in!” This is followed by a quick series of shots featuring what appears to be a presidential candidate speaking at a podium, another politician type kisses a baby, smokes a cigar and receives a kiss on the cheek from a woman we are led to believe is his wife (see fig. 10). The jingle continues on, “but the foods that are finest...are from Libby’s, Libby’s, the very flavor test.” This statement leads viewers to believe that Libby’s canned foods have already passed an examination more rigorous than any a presidential candidate may undergo, proving its superior quality. The commercial continues on to show the woman and man who had previously posed as a political family, now serving Libby’s canned food to their family.



Figure 10
Omnibus. George Eastman House,
Rochester.

This commercial is especially telling of the times in which it was made in that presidential debates had only recently reached television screens across America in the early 1960s. I am unsure as to exactly what year this advertisement originally aired. The Kodak edge code on the film stock the advertisement is printed on is representative of 1962. However, that doesn't tell us what year the advertisement first aired. This could be one of a series of prints of the same advertisement, meaning that an earlier print could have aired prior to 1962. It also could have easily aired for the first time after 1962. While the edge code provides us with a clue, the only thing it tells us for certain is that this film stock was made in 1962.

No matter what year it originally aired, the Libby's "Omnibus" commercial is very clearly a product of that early era of television in which presidential elections were just starting to take shape on screen. Living in a society where television is no longer just broadcast into our homes, but onto our phones and our computer screens, it is hard to imagine a time when politics had not yet reached the television airwaves. Today we consider it completely normal to be bombarded by a barrage of commercials featuring politicians publicly slinging mud at each other every four years. However, this wasn't always the case. It wasn't until 1952 that the first presidential election was broadcast on television. A National Public Radio story released in 2012 recalls this presidential first, "Some milestone moments in journalism converged 60 years ago on election night in the run between Republican Dwight D. Eisenhower and Democratic Illinois Gov. Adlai Stevenson. It was the first coast-to-coast television broadcast of a presidential election. Walter Cronkite anchored his first election night broadcast for CBS" (Henn). This 1952 live broadcast certainly created a great deal of excitement among the American public. It was in this same year that the first ever television commercial was bought as part of a presidential campaign:

...the most significant innovation related to the role of television in the 1952 campaign was undoubtedly Eisenhower's use of short spot commercials to enhance his television image. The Eisenhower campaign utilized the talent of successful product advertising executive Rosser Reeves to devise a series of short spots that appeared, just like product ads, during commercial breaks in standard television programming slots. (Kaid)

As we know, Eisenhower won the 1952 election, further proving the power of television advertising and advertising executives. Adlai Stevenson waited until the 1956 election to attempt adding television advertising to his election campaign (Kaid).

The 1960 presidential election also went on to prove that the election candidates who were the first to embrace television's new offerings were at an advantage. The presidential candidates of that year, John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon, were the first to ever partake in a presidential debate to be broadcast nationwide on live television. The History Channel recounts the details of that historic debate:

...television was a relatively recent addition to America's living rooms, and politicians were still seeking the right formula for interacting with the public in this new, more intimate way. Kennedy nailed it during the Great Debates, staring directly into the camera as he answered each question. Nixon, on the other hand, looked off to the side to address the various reporters, which came across as shifting his gaze to avoid eye contact with the public – a damaging blunder for a man already known derisively as “Tricky Dick.” (“The Kennedy Nixon Debates”)

Not only did it take participating in new technological advances to win an election, candidates also had to study and train to master this new way of interacting with the public. While the television broadcast of the Great Debate was groundbreaking, plenty of Americans still listened

to the debate on the radio. This created an interesting divide in audience perception, "...while most radio listeners called the first debate a draw or pronounced Nixon the victor, the senator from Massachusetts won over the 70 million television viewers by a broad margin" ("The Kennedy Nixon Debates"). While the numbers at the polls were close, Kennedy won out in the end. The outcome of the photogenic candidate winning the election after the first ever televised presidential debate set a new precedent for the importance of a politician's on-screen presence.

By the time the Libby's "Omnibus" commercial was produced, America had likely only witnessed three presidential elections featuring some form of a live television component. While today we may dismiss the intro to this commercial as average or menial, at the time of its debut it was certainly playing on the popular culture of the moment, benefitting from the excitement the nation felt when watching the poll numbers come in on live television during election night coverage or seeing their newly elected president address the American public upon election.

Mark Shaw's connection to the 1960 presidential race between Kennedy and Nixon goes much deeper than the creative of a Libby's canned food commercial. As mentioned earlier, Shaw is often remembered as the unofficial photographer of the Kennedy family. Tony Nourmand explains how Shaw first encountered the Kennedy's in *The Kennedys: Photographs by Mark Shaw*, "It was through *LIFE* magazine that Mark first met the Kennedy family in 1959. Mark was assigned to shoot a cover story on the young senator from Massachusetts' pretty, thirty-year-old wife, Jacqueline Kennedy. Entitled, 'Jackie Kennedy: A Front Runner's Appealing Wife,' Mark photographed the couple at home, at work and on the campaign trail" (Nourmand 14). This first assignment was just the beginning of a lasting friendship between Shaw and the Kennedy's. The photographs Shaw shot for *LIFE* may have even had a hand in helping to get Kennedy elected to the presidency.

From High Fashion to Hollywood

Mark Shaw produced a series of commercials for make-up brand Max Factor, in what appears to be one of Shaw's easiest transitions from high fashion to commercial work. An early contributor to the world of movies, Max Factor created flexible grease paint and pancake make-up that helped actors look their best as they made the move from stage to screen. He went on to craft the signature looks of some of Hollywood's most legendary starlets. One of his most well-known transformations was that of Lucille Ball, "Most people know that one of Hollywood's most famous redheads, Lucille Ball, was actually not a red head at all. She became one at Max Factor" (Richter). Originally just creating tools for the movie industry, Factor began selling some of his products publicly as early as the mid-1910s ("The Max Factor Story"). By the 1960s, Max Factor was easily a household name. When creating advertising for a brand so synonymous with old Hollywood glamour, it is no surprise that Shaw pulled inspiration from his earlier still photographic work in high fashion.

Themes used by Shaw in a 1961 shoot for Dior appear to have been replicated for a Max Factor television commercial called "Discontinents". The original Dior ad shows a brunette woman posing in a blush sequin dress on a street at night (see fig. 11). The blurry orbs of the out of focus street lights, above a mess of streaky glow set off by a series of taillights creates the background. These non-descript spots of light seem to mimic the sparkle of the delicate sequins on the model's dress. In the Max Factor television commercial a brunette woman in a sequined dress is once again seen in front of the backdrop of soft circular city lights (see fig. 12). This time she is riding in the back seat of a car and the spots of light seem to be created by the headlights of cars following her. The sultry voice of the lady performing the voice over urges her to, "Turn it on," as the model's perfectly manicured finger is shown pressing a button on the car's stereo. The

music shifts from a drudgingly slow jazz to a more modern dance beat. Suddenly the woman who was in the back of the car appears to be standing and dancing side-to-side as she gently



Figure 11
Shaw, Mark. Dior, *Model in Blush Sequins*,
1961. Mark Shaw Photographic Archive,
East Dummerston.
©Mark Shaw



Figure 12
Discotints. George Eastman House,
Rochester.

swings her hair. The background has now become a sea of sparkles, giving the effect of an out of focus disco ball. Some of the spots of light even pass between the woman and the camera, seemingly allowing her to blend into the sea of light. The smooth sounds of the voice-over continue to say, “The new shimmer and shine colors shaking up the fashion scene, emotional hints called the Discotints. Lip and nail colors for *you*, the now generation.” The words “Discotints” and “Max Factor” scroll across the screen in a typeface that also appears to be made out of small orbs of light. After a few more quick product descriptions are provided, we see the same polished digit change the channel on the radio once more. The slow sounds of a relaxed jazz fill the space as we once again see the model in the back seat of the car.

With the voice-over stressing the fact that this make-up collection is for the “now generation”, this commercial appears to be part of a rebranding campaign similar to those being

pursued by soft drink companies around the same time. The edge code on this particular commercial makes it appear to have been made around 1962, making the Discotints a collection that could have easily been influenced by the Dior line from the previous year or possibly just the man that shot it. With the direct reference to the “fashion scene” one would not be surprised if this collection had been directly inspired by a fashion giant such as Christian Dior.

Around this same time Shaw produced another ad for Max Factor focusing on their Ultralucent Crème Lipstick. This commercial seems to draw its inspiration from an earlier shoot Shaw did with Coco Chanel herself. It bears a striking resemblance to one photograph in particular. This photograph features the fashion icon in front of her famous mirrored staircase at her boutique in Paris. In the photograph she is perfectly posed so that her image is equally reflected in each facet of glass (see fig. 13).



Figure 13
Shaw, Mark. *Coco Wall of Mirrors Alone*. Mark Shaw Photographic Archive, East Dummerston.
©Mark Shaw

In the Max Factor Ultralucent Crème Lipstick commercial a series of mirrors are arranged to mimic the aesthetic of Chanel’s mirrored staircase. The ad begins with a model emerging from behind one of the mirrored panels. She moves gracefully as if she is floating in her long, white gown reminiscent of the lingerie from Shaw’s award-winning Vanity Fair print

advertisements. She twirls in front of the mirrors, as if purposely allowing us to admire her reflection. Then she starts applying Max Factor's Ultralucet Crème Lipstick. Soon all we see is the tube of lipstick displayed alone in front of the mirrors. As the camera backs away the lipstick begins to be reflected by a few of the panels, and then a few more, until it is shown equally in each panel. It looks exactly like the earlier still photograph taken by Shaw, if you were to replace Chanel with a tube of Ultralucet Crème Lipstick. The grace and aesthetic pleasure of the ad screams high fashion even for those unfamiliar with Chanel. But for anyone familiar with Coco Chanel, the scene will undoubtedly bring to mind her famous mirrored staircase.

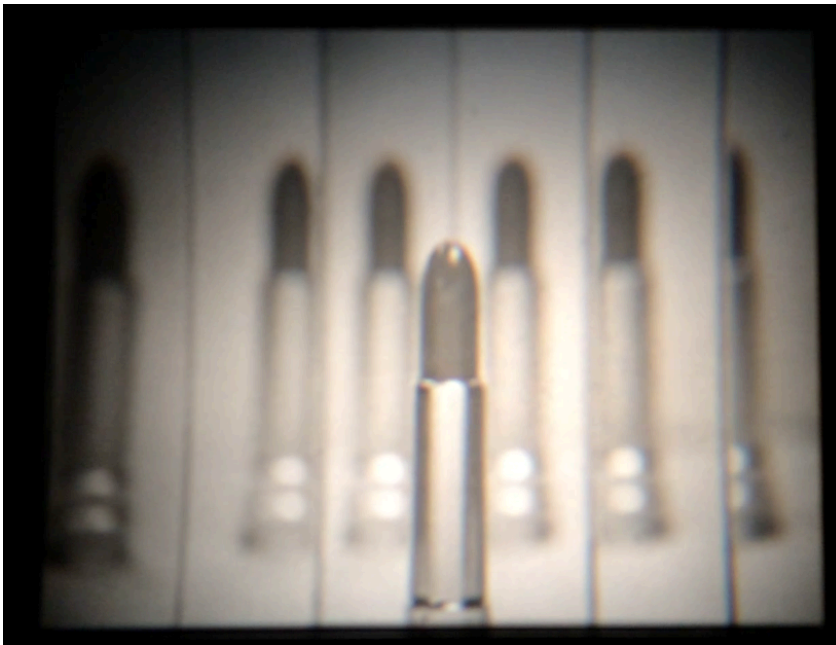


Figure 14
Ultralucet Crème Lipstick.
George Eastman House,
Rochester.

In an even less subtle attempt to associate Max Factor with the world of high fashion, Shaw shot an ad featuring Jean Shrimpton. A contemporary of Twiggy, Shrimpton was one of the 'it' girls of the 1960's fashion world. Vogue UK remembers the model as being, "Nicknamed 'The Shrimp', she was famed for her thick fringe, arched brows and doe-eyes" (Sowray). Her signature brows and big eyes were key points in her Max Factor ad. The commercial begins with the camera panning across a dimly lit restaurant to land on a woman perusing a menu.

Slowly the menu is lowered and Shrimpton peers over the top as the male voice-over murmurs, “The long and lingering look, it’s never gone out of style.” This is followed by a series of close-ups and extreme close-ups focusing on her face and eyes respectively. She applies a series of products to her eyes as the accompanying voice-over goes on to say, “With each stroke of Lashful, special lash builders make your lashes look thicker, longer, more lush. All you! Your eyebrows absolutely natural too. Smoothly colored, shaped, extended with Max Factor’s Brush and Brow eye-brow make-up.” By focusing on the fact that this collection exists only to enhance a woman’s natural beauty, the viewer is led to believe that with a few simple changes to her beauty regimen, she can make her natural features as striking as those of Jean Shrimpton.



Figure 15
Max Factor Advertisement Featuring Jean Shrimpton. George Eastman House, Rochester.

What is New is Old Again

One of the things advertisements are best at documenting are the introductions of new technologies. Alas, any technology that was new in the 1960s is certainly antiquated now.

Advertisements from the time of the products release help to remind us that at one time these products were new and exciting. One such commercial produced by Mark Shaw was called “Words on Paper”. It introduced the IBM Selectric, a new, top of the line, electric typewriter. This commercial, created for Benton & Bowles in 1967, was the third and last ad to win Mark Shaw a Clio Award. This time the award was given to the production company as whole. After viewing the commercial and seeing how artfully it was produced, this is not surprising.

The commercial begins with a voice-over announcing, “There’s a better way to put words on paper,” as you see a woman’s hands flying across a keyboard as text appears on the paper above. Next the ad focuses in on what specifically makes this typewriter cutting edge. The camera moves to an extreme close-up of the unique, circular printing element as the voice-over states, in an explanatory tone, “This is what makes it different, an ingenious printing element that works faster than the eye can see. Watch it in action.” The metallic orb covered in raised typeface moves in a blur as it efficiently creates the typed document. This visual is paired with the sound of a flurry of high pitched typing. Next we are invited to witness the mechanism in finer detail as it is shown in slow-motion. The accompanying voice-over states, “Now in slow motion as it turns, tilts, prints.” A lower pitched thump accompanies the printing element every time it hits the page.

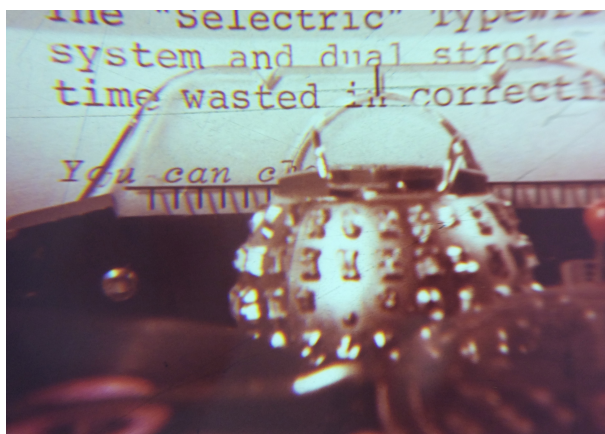


Figure 16
Words on Paper. 1967.
George Eastman House,
Rochester.

The commercial continues to show a series of similar metallic orbs, each featuring a different typeface. A well manicured hand selects a new printing element and demonstrates how it easily snaps into place on the typewriter head. The main focus of the ad is the speed and ease with which the IBM Selectric allows you to complete a job. The voice-over compliments the demonstration by saying, “From many different snap-on snap-off elements you can select the best type style for the job & be ready to type again in seconds.” Though today most people work on computers and can change fonts with the ease of a drop down menu, at the time it originally aired this was undoubtedly an impressive display of technology. Viewing this commercial today functions as a reminder of the restrictions associated with using a typewriter.

While watching this and other commercials during the course of my research, I often invited my classmates and colleagues to watch the ads with me. While viewing this commercial in particular I remember a number of people saying, “oh, I’ve seen one of those before” or “I have one of those printing elements lying around the house somewhere.” Statements like those remind us just how pervasive advertising and commercialism is in our culture. While many people tend to view America’s consumerism and mass consumption in a bad light, there is something delightful that happens when it is viewed under the lens of nostalgia. Some products allow us to share a laugh over an absurd item that was at one time popular or make us smile when they bring back a childhood memory. Whether we like it or not, as the American public, consumerism is an important part of our collective memory.

Thus whether it’s a Max Factor commercial enlightening us on the fashion trends of a bygone era or an election themed canned food ad that sparks a conversation about our presidential past, the advertisements in the Mark Shaw Collection are part of our cultural heritage and deserve to be preserved. What’s more, they make up a broad category of Mark

Shaw's work. A body of work that when studied as a whole brings to light new things about Shaw as an artist, such as which themes were constants in his work throughout his career. Overall, the Mark Shaw Collection is both historically relevant and artistically important.

Future Recommendations

After pushing for archivists to advocate on behalf of the collections they work with, I would certainly be amiss if I didn't offer a few suggestions for moving forward with these materials. Right now the best thing that can be done for this collection is for it to be consolidated and reorganized. This was the original motivation behind creating an inventory of the Mark Shaw Collection. Currently consisting of over two hundred cans, it contains a great deal of duplicate materials. It holds both negative and positive footage, magnetic soundtrack materials, cuts, edits and trims. Out of the fully edited and produced commercials, many offer both 35mm and 16mm versions. Basically, the collection is much larger than necessary.

On top of that, the materials aren't organized in any specific way within the cans. For the purpose of my inventory project I used an alphabetical labeling system to differentiate between what was often many reels in one can. The only purpose of this labeling is to connect the reels to their subsequent descriptions in the inventory. Often, the multiple small reels within each can represent a series of commercials and sometimes even a series of different brands. My suggestion would be to first reorganize the materials by brand. Subcategories could be created within each brand to represent the different commercials. However, if the materials are first consolidated, there may not be enough remaining footage on any one specific commercial to bother creating any categories past that of brand.

Museums and other cultural institutions operate according to their unique mission statement. The George Eastman Houses' International Museum of Photography and Film

promises in its mission statement to, “lead through practice and programs in the interpretation of photographic and motion picture heritage” (“Our Mission”). While the Motion Picture Department does house some television materials, they certainly aren’t the focus of the archive. This means that television commercials are getting even farther away from their central mission. So far, outside of a few compilation reels of fully produced commercials, the Mark Shaw Collection has yet to be officially accessioned into the museum’s collection. This means that if the museum was to decide to get rid of some or all of these materials they wouldn’t have to go through the long process of officially de-accessioning them.

With that said, I do feel that it is important for the materials to remain at the George Eastman House for the time being. Once they are consolidated, duplicates could be offered to archives with a mission statement that focuses on television materials. Or they could be given to the Mark Shaw Photographic Archive. Theoretically it could help any future researchers looking for materials on Mark Shaw to have all of his work in one place. However, the MSPA is not yet climate controlled and doesn’t currently have the proper equipment to work with or view motion picture film.

The most important thing is that the two archives with large Mark Shaw collections, MSPA and GEH, are aware of each other’s holdings and have begun a discussion of how to best advocate for the materials. It is still early in the process, but Deborah Stoiber of the George Eastman House, Juliet Cuming of the Mark Shaw Photographic Archive and I, have been working together to write a proposal for a collaborative exhibition of both Shaw’s still photographic and moving image work. While it is yet uncertain whether or not this will come to fruition, I know that I have successfully advocated for the collection by starting a strong working relationship between the two archives.



Figure 17
In Vermont with the
David Shaw and Juliet
Cuming family during a
research trip to the Mark
Shaw Photographic
Archive.
Shaw, David. 2015.

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