

atedge
where visionaries unite

AtEdge connects the world's most talented
assignment photographers with the most
active and influential art directors.



photographer

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Analysis of a photographic advertisement

This photo of a girl with a lamb across her shoulders is an advertisement for “AtEdge” found in the inner cover of the September/October 2015 issue of CA Communication Arts 56th Design Annual. The girl is very young, around 10 years old, and is slightly smiling. Her expression is relaxed but determined. She has white skin, blonde hair, and hazel eyes. Her hair is worn down, in no particular hairdo, just tucked in between her neck and the lamb. Her fair skin accentuates the sparse freckles she has throughout her face. She is wearing a button up striped shirt underneath a white fleece jacket. Both the shirt and the jacket have buttons. The lamb is placed across her shoulders and appears to be relaxed. It has white fur throughout its body, with light brown fur on its ears and legs. The image is a medium shot, showing the girl from the waist up.

Although the page crops out most of the surrounding blurry environment, one can tell that it is an outdoor mountain scenery. The overall composition of the photo makes one feel like they are they are right there in front of the girl. There is some text in this advertisement, on the top and bottom of the page. On the top is the logo of “AtEdge”, followed by a short description, website, and phone number. On the bottom are the name and website of the photographer, as well as the agency they are represented by. The focus of this page is the photo of the girl, although the purpose is to advertise “AtEdge”. By using this image where the focus is this young girl, the designer of this ad wanted to catch the eye of the viewer when they might not pay

attention to ads. It being on the inner cover, it might as well be ignored, but thanks to this strong image, one can't do but stop and learn more about what this image is about. The photo is so simple yet captivating; it might be the girl or the goal or both or who knows what.

Following Roland Barthes' essay "Rhetoric of the Image", we can examine the messages behind this advertisement. There is no real relationship between the picture of the girl with the lamb and the text other than the photographer who took the image. Although it is unlikely the photographer initially took this picture for advertising purposes, because of the placement of the text over the image and where this image is found, we can still distinguish a denoted linguistic message and a connoted linguist message. The denoted linguistic message is pretty simple, the name of the company and the caption as well as the photographer and agency info. With a function to relay, the text and the image work together to convey the meaning that this is an ad targeting photographers and representation agencies. The name of the company "AtEdge" can be interpreted as a connoted message. It transmits this idea of sharpness, quality, superiority, that one can achieve by joining the company. The relation between the image and the text does not fit the function of anchorage, the meaning of the image does not relate to the text other than the photographer who took the picture.

When we focus on the picture of the girl with a lamb over her shoulders, it could be interpreted as a denoted image with a non-coded message of just a girl with her lamb. If we examine the picture more attentively it can actually be interpreted as a connoted image with a coded message. The coded message of the image can be attribute to the signs of the girl and the lamb. The signified of the girl is the energy she radiates. When looking at her face and body language, one is stricken with her strong and determined expression as if she wants to demonstrate how strong she is by holding the lamb over her shoulder. At the same time, she

seems a little nervous because she is not used to being photographed in a professional but casual setting. The lamb is just a cute lamb, or it could be a signified of a heavy weight, at least for a young girl. Depending on the background of who is looking at the advertisement, the image can be interpreted as either denoted or connoted. Regardless of the relationship between the image and the text, the simplicity of the picture is a powerful advertisement in that it catches the eye of viewer enough to make them stop and want to learn what this image is about.

References

Image from the September/October 2015 issue of CA Communication Arts 56th Design Annual.

Barthes, Roland. Essay "Rhetoric of the Image." 1977. PDF.