

The mission of Morton Kirschner: the influence of an American art director on Dutch advertising 1960-1980, Wilbert Schreurs

Abstract: The mission of Morton Kirschner: the influence of an American art director on Dutch advertising 1960-1980.

'America' has had a huge influence on advertising in Europe in the 20th century and the Netherlands are not an exception. Until now the attention in the literature has gone mainly to the developments following the Marshall Plan, more specifically to the introduction of marketing. But apart from these more or less systematic and theoretical processes there have also been influences of a more spontaneous character, which can be attributed to specific persons. This paper will focus on Morton Kirschner, an American art director who came to The Netherlands in the 1960s. He started his own advertising agency and his mission was to show Dutch advertisers what modern advertising was. His approach was based on the principles of the famous American advertising man William Bernbach. Kirschner wanted to break through what once has been called 'het gezellige reclamebehang' in Dutch advertising. Kirschner has had a clear influence on Dutch advertising, for instance in the use of humour, in the use of provoking images and in his notion of the relation between advertising and society. The example of Kirschner shows the important role of individuals in the Americanization of Dutch advertising. It also shows, in some aspects, what the barriers were. Interesting is that Kirschner's influence does not seem to fit in the clichés about the influence of America on Dutch advertising.

[intro] Advertising is often associated with the United States of America. The world's most famous brands – Coca-Cola, McDonald's, Nike – are American in origin, and advertising campaigns which are used all over the world often are produced by American agencies. Many of the most important developments in advertising have their roots in the US. American advertising agencies like J.Walter Thompson, McCann-Erickson and Doyle Dane Bernbach were the first to build up worldwide networks. In the 1920s Ford Motor Company already launched an international advertising campaign in Europe, with advertisements that were developed in America

and were published in newspapers and magazines in several European countries; this campaign can be seen as an early example of globalisation in advertising. Television advertising, nowadays the dominant kind of advertising, started in the US. Long before people in European countries like Great Britain, Germany and the Netherlands saw the first tv-commercials on their own television channels, tv-advertising already was an important part of the advertising business in the US. The format that was developed in the US – tv-commercials for different brands that were broadcasted together in breaks between tv-programmes – would become the standard for European tv-advertising (Samuel, 2001). To be short, American advertising has had a huge influence on the development of advertising in Europe.

In this paper I argue that the American influence on Dutch advertising in the 20th century had several dimensions. To begin with there is a direct and measurable influence, which we can see most clearly in the take-over of Dutch advertising agencies in the 1960s and 1970s. Another dimension is the use of advertising techniques, like hard-sell advertising in television, which were clearly inspired by American advertising. Related to this is the influence of the Marshall Plan, and more specifically the introduction of marketing, which has been important for advertising. Schuyt and Taveerne have called the introduction of marketing one of the most important, if not the most important innovation in Dutch business in the first decades after World War II (Schuyt & Taveerne, 2000).

But there is, apart from these more or less systematic and theoretical processes, another aspect of the American influence on Dutch advertising which is worth studying. In this paper I want to focus on the influence the American art director Morton Kirschner had on Dutch advertising. Kirschner came to the Netherlands in the early 1960s. Promoting the Bernbach-philosophy was his life-work and in this he seems to have been quite successful. In the next pages I will argue that the reception and influence of the Bernbach-style is an example of what could be called a positive dimension of the Americanization of Dutch advertising. It is harder to recognize as 'American' than some of the other aspects I mentioned; the Bernbach-style left more room for making the ads look Dutch. It was probably for these reasons that it met with far less criticism. But still the 'mission' of Kirschner can be seen as a clear and conscious attempt to make Dutch advertising less Dutch and more American.

[tk] The first half of the 20th century

Since the start of the 20th century the Dutch advertising world has shown a great interest in American advertising. Books on advertising by American specialists were translated in several European languages (to give one example: *My Life in Advertising* by Claude Hopkins was published in 1923 and soon translated into Dutch as *Reclame, Mijn levenswerk*), and the authors of the first Dutch advertising textbooks borrowed a lot from American advertising theory. But in these years the development of advertising in the Netherlands was also inspired by other European cultures. Besides that, there was a critical attitude towards the influence of the US. De Grazia opposes the European view on advertising to the way American professionals looked at their work in the period before World War II. In Europe advertising was often seen as an art, while in the US advertising was considered as a science. (De Grazia, 2005) This difference had consequences for the judgment of the influence of American advertising. As far as Dutch advertising is concerned, the attitude also seems to have been related to the intellectual anti-Americanism in Europe in the period before World War II. Typical is the mainly negative reception of advertisements that were clearly American in origin and were published in the Netherlands. An interesting example are the reactions towards the introduction of the comics-technique in ad, that was developed in the US in the 1930s and soon was used in ads for products that were sold in the Netherlands. In the Dutch advertising trade press there was embarrassment. Was this Hollywood-style suitable for the Dutch public? Wouldn't it be much more logical to talk to the down-to-earth Dutch people in a way that was in line with their own tradition? (Schreurs, 2001)



[tk] After World War II: a growing influence

In the years after World War II the influence of America on Dutch advertising became stronger. One of the reasons was that American advertising agencies came to the Netherlands and took over Dutch agencies. The attitude towards this development was not always positive. Characteristic is a discussion in the Dutch advertising trade press in the middle of the 1960s about the 'ugly American'. According to Ruud

Koster, an advertising man who had sold his own agency to the American advertising agency Young & Rubicam, there were rumours about the way American advertising people operated in the Netherlands. In the opinion of Koster, the stories that American agencies in the Netherlands fired their employees without a good cause and that American managers would not listen to local advisors, were groundless and 'not conducive to a good advertising climate in our country'.

The negative attitude towards the Americanization of Dutch advertising was not without reason. It's hard to say if Koster was right, but the result of the shift in ownership of advertising agencies (from mainly Dutch in the first years after World War II to more and more American in later decades) seems to have been a change of climate in the advertising industry. It became more business-like, something not everyone in the industry was happy about. Advertising campaigns would become more and more international and this left less room for typical Dutch advertising. An example of this are the Dutch Coca-Cola advertising campaigns in the 1950s, which were often based on American material. This led to harsh judgements in the trade press, and to the conclusion that Dutch designers had nothing to learn from America.

But there were other aspects to the American influence on Dutch advertising. The most well-known influence is the already mentioned 'discovery' of marketing. One of the ways the Dutch economy benefited from the Marshall Aid was by the transmission of knowledge: Dutch advertising people not only learned a lot about marketing, but also about the way advertising was organized in the US. Another, less studied, influence has to do with the 'creative revolution' in advertising, which started in the late 1950s and came from the US to the Netherlands (and other European countries).

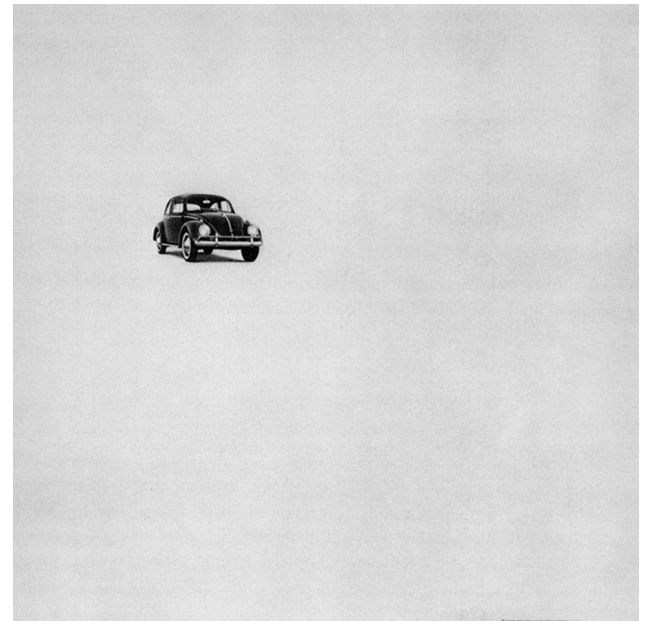
[tk] The creative revolution

From the 1950s onwards in the US a new way of thinking about advertising came into vogue. According to this approach, advertising did not have to be hard sell to reach the public and stimulate selling. It was also possible to make advertising that was creative, humorous and intelligent and that did not try to hammer the message into the head of the public, but instead of that asked the public to use its intelligence and think about the ad.

The growing interest in creativity can be related to developments in American society from the 1950s onwards. According to Thomas Frank there was a growing disapproval of conformism in the 1950s in the US. 'By the middle of the 1950s, talk of conformity, of consumerism, and of the banality of mass-produced culture were routine elements of middle-class American life', Frank writes in *The conquest of cool*. 'The mass society refrain was familiar to millions: the failings of capitalism were not so much exploitation and deprivation as they were materialism, wastefulness, and soul-deadening conformism: sins summoned easily and effectively even in the pages of Life magazine and by the sayings of the characters in the cartoon Peanuts'. The criticism was also directed to advertising. Advertising people were seen as the prototypes of the conservative business people who were morally corrupted and had no eye for what was really important. Novels like *The Hucksters* (by Frederick Wakeman) made the advertising man less popular than ever before. According to Frank, many advertising people agreed with the criticism and were convinced that their profession should change fundamentally (Frank, 1997) .

One of the most influential people in advertising in this period and one of the 'founding fathers' of the creative revolution was William Bernbach, whose work nowadays often is seen as the start of modern advertising (Berger, 2006). Together with Ned Doyle and Maxwell Dane, Bernbach started the agency Doyle Dane Bernbach in New York in 1949. Bernbach didn't believe in the scientific approach, which was characteristic for American advertising in the 1950s and which in his opinion led to dullness and uniformity. Advertising should engage the public and treat them as adults, not as little children. 'Advertising', Bernbach once said, 'is fundamentally persuasion. And persuasion happens to be not a science, but an art.' This meant that advertising had to be original or creative to be noticed. 'If your advertising goes unnoticed, everything else is academic.' To make creative advertising possible, a team of a copywriter and art director had to work close together to create campaigns in which copy and art (or text and image) were integrated (Fox, 1984).

The most famous campaign by Bernbach's agency, DDB, is without any doubt the campaign for Volkswagen. In this campaign DDB succeeded in finding a style and language that was in line with the growing discontent in the US with the conformistic society. Instead of the bombastic advertisements of brands like Cadillac, Oldsmobile and Ford, DDB came with a campaign that stressed the 'weaknesses' of Volkswagen. The fact that the Volkswagen Kever, the model for which the most well-known ads were made, was a small and ugly car and that it didn't change from year to year, but stayed the same, was admitted in the ads. The campaign was full of irony and it seemed that Volkswagen did not really take its own cars very serious. Next to this the campaign criticized American mass-consumption. 'Think small', the headline of one of the first ads in the campaign, asked the consumer not only to change the way he looked at cars, but it can also be seen as an invitation to look in a different way at consuming in general.



Think small.

Our little car isn't so much of a novelty any more.
A couple of dozen college kids don't try to squeeze inside it.
The guy at the gas station doesn't ask where the gas goes.
Nobody even stores at our shape.
In fact, some people who drive our little

Bever don't even think 32 miles to the gallon is going out great guns.
Or using five pints of oil instead of five quarts.
Or never needing anti-freeze.
Or racking up 40,000 miles on a set of tires.
That's because once you get used to

some of our economies, you don't even think about them any more.
Except when you squeeze into a small parking spot. Or renew your small insurance. Or pay a small repair bill. Or trade in your old VW for a new one.
Think it over.



[tk] Bernbach in the Netherlands: the beginning

When Bernbach launched his first campaigns, advertising in the Netherlands was dominated by hard sell. Advertisements were used by companies to tell the public which products they should buy, and the function of advertising was purely to sell. Advertising was seen as 'salesmanship in print', so the first Dutch advertising theorists had learned from the US.

From the 1960s, with the introduction of marketing, this view slowly began to change. Marketing implicated that companies should concern themselves systematically with the whole process from developing a product to closing the sale. This gave advertising a new role. Advertising, marketing showed, could not be held responsible for the selling of the product. There were too many other factors that influenced the

way the consumer decides, like the package, the location of the shop, personell etc. Advertising should stick to and focus on its main object: communicate.

This change of view has important repercussions for the advertising business and specifically for the creative people at the advertising agencies. In the view of a lot of advertising agencies, marketing meant that advertising had to be based on scientific principles. But according to others it meant that they should create campaigns that were able to deliver the message in a attractive way and focus on hard-sell. The public couldn't be forced to buy a certain product. Instead of that, advertising should gather sympathy for the brand. To reach this goal, creativity was vital.

Bernbach's campaign were noticed quite soon in the Netherlands. In the advertising trade press Bernbach and his agency were frequently mentioned from the end of the 1950s. In 1958 the Dutch journalist Max Tak, who worked as a correspondant for *Revue der Reclame*, had an interview with the copy-chief of DDB, Phyllis Robinson. She told him about the approach of the agency. 'This agency believes in originality in the first place and in the copy of the ads in the second place.' Af few years later Dimitri Frenkel Frank, a copywriter (among other things) who worked at the advertising agency Prad, in the same trade journal wrote about Bernbach and used him as an example of how advertising should be done. The article had the title 'Why are there so few brilliant advertisements?' and explained the myth of what Frenkel Frank called 'degelijk adverteren'. This myth implicated that advertising campaigns had to be based on market research and that advertisers had to use the right appeals and focus on the content to reach their goal.

The success of DDB illustrated, according to Frenkel Frank, that advertising had to do more than just give an analysis of the problem of the advertiser. It had to communicate and to do that, it had to reach the public. 'They (DDB – WS) have no problem in believing that with the techniques we have nowadays it's not difficult to know more or less what you have to tell and to whom. But they know damned well that it is a hell of a job to reach a public that has grown tired of advertising and is confronted with an overkill of media. You have to have a product that sells itself – or you have to be really brilliant.'

Bernbach was not the only renewer in American advertising who was noticed in the Netherlands. *Revue der Reclame* translated an article about the importance of creativity by Leo Burnett, the 'architect' of the Marlboro-campaign. And the leading Dutch copywriter Joop Roomer had several interviews with leading American advertising people which were published in the same trade journal. In one of these interviews (with Walter Weir) the importance of combining copy and art was stressed.

Were these principles practiced? Were Dutch advertising agencies using this new, creative way of thinking in their ads? It is hard to say, because advertising history in the Netherlands is still in its infancy and a lot of detailed research has to be done. But after studying advertising trade journals like *Revue der Reclame* en *Ariadne* it seems to me that in the beginning the practical implications were small. It was Morton Kirschner who would make it his mission to introduce and spread the 'gospel' of Bernbach in the Netherlands.

[tk] Morton Kirschner: the first years

Morton Edward Kirschner was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1927. At high school the young Kirschner developed an interest in art, and after World War II he went to the art department of Pratt in Brooklyn. 'Originally I wanted to paint', he says in his memoirs *The Holy Bible of Advertising*, 'but I had the wisdom to see that I wasn't talented enough to devote my life to painting.' Advertising at first wasn't a serious alternative, 'since advertising for someone as idealistic as I, was a dirty word. The typical tv advertisements of the day consisted of a scene with someone being hit on the head with a hammer and a voice-over explaining that if you had a bad headache what you had to do, was to take a Bayer aspirin' (although Kirschner mentions the brand



Bayer, this example seems to direct to a famous American hard-sell tv-ad for Anacin

which was created by Rosser Reeves, the author of *Reality of Advertising*, the 'bible' of hard-sell). At first Kirschner tried his luck as an illustrator, but wasn't successful. Afterwards he himself explained this by a combination of his lack of talent and bad timing: illustration was getting out of fashion because of the growing popularity of photography. Because Kirschner had to make a living, he overcame his disapproval of advertising and found a job at a small ad agency, Simon Blume. Soon he noticed the work of DDB. 'It was advertising with a sense of humour. It was honest, they dared to criticize their own product, they gave information, they told us things the way they were and in doing so, they completely opened up the American advertising scene.'

Kirschner tried to get a job at DDB, but had, again, no success. The rejection by DDB and the fact that the work at other agencies didn't satisfy him, got Kirschner into what he himself called 'a slight depression'. He quitted his job and took a trip to Europe. Kirschner visited England, Norway, Sweden, Germany and then the Netherlands. Here he met a girl who later became his wife. After resuming his journey he returned to Amsterdam and married her. Together they went back to New York where Kirschner tried to make a living in advertising. Again without success. Then his father-in-law found a job for Kirschner at Prad, at that moment the leading agency in the Netherlands. Kirschner returned to Amsterdam and started to work for Prad's client the Bijenkorf, one of the most luxurious department stores in the Netherlands.

[tk] Kirschner in the Netherlands

Working at a Dutch agency was a culture shock for Kirschner. He soon found out that the way advertising was organised in the Netherlands was totally different from the US. Art directors were unknown and the working together of creative people in teams, to combine copy and image, one of the principles of Bernbach's approach, was also unknown. Later on Prad would be the first agency to experiment with a team, but without success; another agency, Franzen, Hey & Veltman, succeeded in this and would take over the leading position from Prad. At Prad the account executive, who had direct contact with the clients, was the central figure. He came up with the idea, wrote the copy and then gave it to the studio where the illustrator drew an image or where they hired a photographer. 'This was a really old-fashioned way of

working, but it was the standard way of making advertising in Holland.’(Kirschner, 1999).

Working for the Bijenkorf, Kirschner had to co-operate with Dimitri Frenkel Frank. Although Frenkel Frank, as we saw before, was familiar with the new developments in American advertising, he held on to the old way of working. He wrote the copy and Kirschner had to make the illustrations according to Frenkel Frank’s instructions. But Kirschner didn’t want to be just a performer and decided to leave Prad. At the agency he had met an account executive, André Schmidt, who also had had enough of the traditional way things went at Prad. Together they started a new, small agency at the Prinsengracht in Amsterdam, the Schmidt & Kirschner Company.

[tk] Kirschner’s own agency

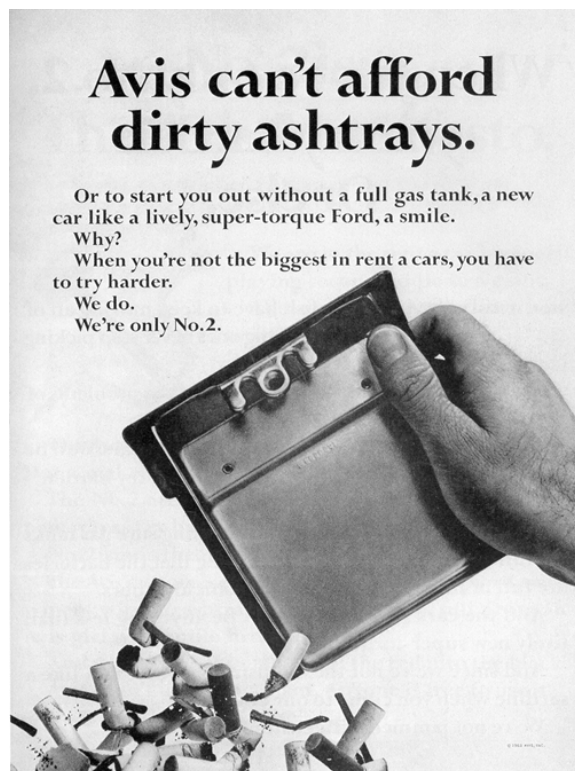
The new agency soon got a few small clients: Tiger Plastics, William Rickers (the importer of Ronson lighters and Falcon pipes) and Brandsteder, the importer of Sony. At his new agency Kirschner was able to put his views into practice. ‘I started with a theory based on the teachings of Bill Bernbach’, he later recalled in his memoirs. Kirschner would stay true to these principles all his life and created several advertising campaigns which were clearly ‘Bernbachian’. Characteristic for the advertising Kirschner made was his use of humour. In several campaigns, for brands like King Corn and Campari, he chose a humoristic approach. His believe in humor and in self-mockery, which was inspired by Bernbach, was quite new in the Netherlands.



One of the most successful campaigns and one of the best examples of the influence of Bernbach was the campaign for Sony. In the Netherlands in those days Philips was by far the leading company in consumer electronics. Sony was small in more than one aspect: the products the company made – radios, televisions, recorders etc.

- were smaller than those of others. The campaign for Sony was based on the idea of small versus big. A good example of this idea is an advertisement Kirschner made together with copywriter Jim Prins. In the ad see a photograph of Sony products; the bodycopy tells us that Sony is only a small player in the market of consumer electronics. 'But can a small company concur with a giant? Smart question. Think about this for a moment: when you're small you cannot permit yourself to bring less than the best and to be later than the first.' In the concluding lines of the ad the idea of the campaign returns: 'When you buy a radio, a television or a tape recorder, it is good to realise that there are giants and little boys. Let's call the first one for convenience's sake Goliath and the second one David. You know who won.'





The message was clear for everyone who knew the market: Goliath was Philips and David was Sony. At Philips they were not amused by this campaign. It was not done in Dutch advertising to mention the competitor. But Kirschner (and the importer of Sony, Brandsteder Electronics) had no problems with it, and the aggressive strategy turned out to be successful for Sony. In his memoirs Kirschner writes that, after making up the campaign, he had a strange feeling about it. He realised that it looked a lot like the Avis campaign (We're only number two, so we have to try

harder) by DDB. But he himself wouldn't call it plagiarism. 'I never consciously stole from the Avis campaign, but it is possible that I did so unconsciously.' (Kirschner, 1999)

Another campaign by Kirschner's agency which was characteristic for his style, was the campaign for the Internationaal Wol Secretariaat or IWS (international organization for the promotions of wool). At the time the first wool-campaign started, Kirschner & Schmidt Company had gotten together with an other agency, Hees & Vettewinkel, to form Kirschner Hees & Vettewinkel or KVH. The chief problem of the IWS was that wool had to defend itself against synthetics. Synthetics were cheaper and stronger than wool but had also disadvantages. 'It became quite obvious to us that wool had to position itself as a natural product and directly against all synthetics.' The slogan of the campaign, which started in 1969, became 'Liever naakt dan namaak', which was a free translation, made by Jim Prins, of Kirschner's own line 'Wool or nothing'. The campaign showed people who preferred being naked to wearing clothes made by synthetic fabrics. Showing naked people was not new; in Dutch tv the VPRO had already made the headlines with the program Hoepla in 1967, in which a woman (Phil Bloom) read an newspaper while being naked. But still the wool-campaign created a lot of rumour. The campaign was a illustration of Kirschner's view of the relation between advertising and society. 'Advertising very

rarely leads society, but it follows the society', he writes in his memoirs. 'I believe that if you can tie in to things that are actual and are happening within the society, then you can create a campaign which is not only good for your product, but it so topical that it's also good for the society you are advertising in.'

[tk] Creativity

Kirschner not only demonstrated his philosophy in his work, but also in articles in the trade press. In 1966 there was an interesting discussion in the *Revue der Reclame* about creativity. It was started by a market researcher, A. Baart, who had attacked what he called the myth of creativity and defended the view that originality seldom was an advantage in advertising. Kirschner reacted with an article in which he stressed the importance of creativity as the 'life juice of advertising' and as the best way to make an ad noticed. Creativity in advertising was, according to Kirschner, a method to use given factors (like the advantages of the product, market position etc.) and to select and present one or more of these factors in such a way that they draw the attention of the consumer, force him or her to remember the message, make the product attractive and create a longing for it. This kind of creativity in advertising should not be confused, Kirschner stressed, with creativity in literature and pictorial art. In this article Kirschner made clear that he wasn't charmed by the 'mystic' view of creativity. Creativity should be based on information and related to the product.

[tk] The different faces of advertising

For many people advertising is a source of irritation. It disturbs you when you look at tv-programs. It spoils the view when you make a walk in nature or through the city, and it ask for your attention when you're surfing on internet. Advertising tells us that consuming is good, that buying the right brands make you happy and rewards you with respect from others. Advertising is hated for this and it is not strange that in the Netherlands there have been several attempts to start a tv-station without advertising. So far, without succes.



But advertising also has other faces. It can be seen as an essential part of modern society and has become 'one of the great vehicles of social communication' (Leiss et al, 1997). Because advertising is nearly everywhere, it is an interesting source of knowledge about society. Advertising people are able to translate their notions in compact texts and images. In the Netherlands in 2005 the insurance company Ohra came up with a tv-commercial, 'Purple Crocodile', that showed how a mother was not able to get back a toy of her daughter because of bureaucracy. This commercial became very popular and the title of it was used in a new government-law that had the object to force back needless bureaucracy. The Ohra-commercial is a fascinating example of the way advertising can be related to developments in society.

Advertising has also become entertainment. At YouTube many commercials can be found that are funny and in the Netherlands each year the public chooses the best tv-commercial in de "Gouden Loeki".

These aspects of advertising – the way it tells us something about society and the way it entertains us – can already be seen in the campaigns by Morton Kirschner's agency, KVVH. When we look at it from this perspective, the work of Kirschner has been ground-breaking in Dutch advertising. His use of humour and irony was new: in the 1960s advertisers in the Netherlands were not used to self-mockery. The importance Kirschner attached to creativity was also quite new, and the same holds for the provocativeness of some of his campaigns. In these aspects he has had a clear influence on Dutch advertising. The reserve advertisers in the Netherlands had to the use of humour and provocative images would in later years become far less. Dutch advertising would become world famous for its creativity and more specifically for its use of humour. In the 1980s 'Humorous advertisements were widespread in the United States, in Britain, and in other countries, notably Holland (Clark, 1988). In 1996 the Dutch tv-commercial 'Elephant' for the brand Rolo won a Grand Prix at the international advertising festival at Cannes in 1996. More recently the *Advertising Age Encyclopedia of Advertising* wrote that the 'work coming out of Amsterdam, Amstelveen and Rotterdam has earned respect for its creativity and humor' (McDonough, 2003),

Was this all solely due to Kirschner's influence? Of course not, but he was the one of the first advertising people in the Netherlands who chose for an approach and style of which these elements were an important part. In this Kirschner was strongly influenced by his 'master' Bill Bernbach and he never had an problem in admitting this. Kirschner was convinced of the superiority of the ideas of Bernbach and believed that they could be used to modernize Dutch advertising. There were a few obstacles which stood in the way of this modernization. To lack of belief in creativity was one of them: Kirschner was one of the first advertising people in the Netherlands who had a clear vision of what creativity in advertising amounted to. Another problem Kirschner met was the fact that Dutch advertising was 'gezellig' (cosy). As one of his former employees said in an article which was written after Bernbach died (and in which he was called 'the Dutch Bill Bernbach') Kirschner wanted to break through 'het gezellige reclamebehang' (the cosy advertising wallpaper) in the Netherlands. In his memoirs describes cosyness a 'a typical Dutch cultural phenomenon in advertising, because this 'gezellige' kind of advertising seems to be rewarded with prizes even to this day' (Kirschner, 1999). Kirschner detested this kind of advertising, and blamed the advertising agency Franzen, Hey & Veltman (FHV), the leading agency in the 1970s and 1980s, with clients like Albert Heijn, Douwe Egberts and Heineken. According to Kirschner FHV was responsible for the fact that Dutch advertisers were satisfied with cosy advertising. 'Our campaigns were in fact strange for Holland. They were much too aggressive and direct. FHV had built up the image of three young talented people trying to make great advertising. We had a much wilder image, a combination of an American and an old fox.' (Kirschner, 1999)



Is the work and influence of Kirscher an example of Americanization? This depends, of course, on the way you define Americanization. But it seems clear that Kirschner does not fit in the clichés of the influence of America on European advertising. For the period before World War II De Grazia opposes advertising that is oriented to science (US) with advertising that is more like art (Europe). Zeitlin refers to notions of Americanization, in which 'Radio, television, advertising, and above all Hollywood

cinema worked alongside Marshall Plan propaganda to diffuse seductive images of the 'American way of life'. (Zeitlin, 2004) The influence Kirschner had clearly does not fit in these views of Americanization.

Interesting also is that Kirschner's work may be strongly inspired by Bernbach, but that this doesn't mean that it is simple to recognize it as 'American'. Earlier on, in the 1930s, advertising campaign which were clearly American by origin were criticized because of the fact that it did not fit in Dutch culture. But this was not the case with the work of Kirschner and that seems to be part of the explanation for the acceptance he got. He opposes against Dutch tradition but, despite the fact that he detested 'gezellige' advertising, realized that advertising has to connect with the local culture to be understood and accepted by the public. The wool-campaign is a clear example: showing naked people in an advertising campaign in the 1960s would have been impossible in the US. Interesting in this context is the observation Kirschner makes when he writes about a visit he made to the US in the 1970s. The cause was the invitation to develop an advertising campaign for Campari, a brand KVH already served in the Netherlands. The presentation he gave in the US was not well received: the ads he had made were too controversial. 'The land itself had become much more puritanical than I remembered it. People in advertising were afraid to do or say anything. If you wanted to make controversial advertising, advertising that shook people up a bit, you were much better off in Europe, or at least in Holland.'

(Kirschner, 1999)

To conclude: there seems to be reason enough to suppose that Kirschner has had a clear influence on Dutch advertising. When we look at the use of humour and of provoking images and at the attention for creativity, Kirschner was one of the first advertising people in the Netherlands who chose a new road, and in this he influenced other advertising people. Art directors and copywriters who would later become influential in the Dutch advertising business, like Jim Prins and Bela Stamenkovits, were trained by Kirschner. In his days Kirschner was one of the few people in Dutch advertising who held on to a clear 'philosophy', based on the lessons of Bill Bernbach. His mission was to spread the 'gospel' of Bernbach in the Netherlands, and in this he opposed not only against hard-sell advertising, but also

against the cosy kind of advertising that was beloved by many Dutch advertisers and advertising agencies.

Is Kirschner's work a form of Americanization? It depends on the definition, but it seems that the straight way in which Kirschner was led by American examples and the way he translated this to the campaigns he made for Dutch advertisers, illustrates how influential the US were. More research has to be done to get more insight into the relation of American and Dutch advertising, and this paper should be seen as an exploration of some possible directions, based on the first findings of the study of the work and ideas of Morton Kirschner. It is far too early to come to a solid conclusion and to answer the question to what degree he succeeded in his mission. But at this stage it seems clear that the example of Kirschner shows that Americanization, as far as (Dutch) advertising is concerned, is a many-sided phenomenon.



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