

‘Cha-Ching Perra’

The Sound Futures of Consumerist Aesthetics

In 1955, John Burgas, vice-president of Ford Motor Company, coined the term ‘consumerism’ as a defense tactic to protect the company from its critics, arguing that this new term would “pin the tag where it actually belongs—on Mr. Consumer, the real boss and beneficiary of American system.”. Burgas determined that although their critics would be fast to condemn capitalism and their company, they would be weary to proclaim “Down with the consumers!”.

Echoing this sentiment, in the year 2000, Daniel Harris writes “the aesthetics of consumerism are not foisted upon us; they emerge out of a rich and imaginative collaboration between the forces of capitalism and our own fears and desires.” In *Cute, Quaint, Hungry and Romantic*, Harris attempts to define the aesthetics of consumerism at the turn of the century, arguing that the average consumer does not know capitalism from the standpoint of Hegelian dialectics and Marxism, but rather from sensual advertisement that seduces our neurons to fire, all while depriving us from actual physical pleasure. Harris explains that although anti-capitalists attempt to portray consumers as a white-washed victim exploited by financier-reptiles, if there *is* a conspiracy we are both the tacticians and beneficiaries.

Today—20 years after Harris—understanding that we, the consumers, are responsible for the design of the products we consume, is that we ask: *what does consumerism feel like now?* In an era of influencers, conscientious buying, overnight global shipping, Jeff Bezos prematurely-crowned as the world’s first trillionaire, a deadly pandemic, a national social justice movement and the birth X Æ A-12—*what are the new aesthetics of consumerism? What does it sound like? What is the next trend? The future of aesthetics? Do you want to change it? Consume it? To smash it? Are you the one who will create it? To patent it? Will you claim your riches or break the system with it?*



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