

TECHNIQUES AND IMPORTANCE OF CREATIVE PHOTOGRAPHY IN VISUAL COMMUNICATION AND ADVERTISING DESIGN

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Abstract

Creative photography is an art form that transcends mere representation, instead involves using visual elements and techniques to convey emotion, tell stories and evoke thoughts. This study explores the techniques and importance of creative photography by highlighting its ability to transform ordinary scenes into extraordinary images. Through an examination of various creative photography techniques, including composition, lighting, and colour and post-processing, this research demonstrates how photographers can break free from conventional norms and produce innovative and visually striking images. The importance of creative photography is also discussed. By exploring the techniques and importance of creative photography, this study also aims to inspire photographers, graphic artists and photography enthusiasts to explore beyond the ordinary and push into the realm of visual storytelling and explore new ways of seeing and interpreting the world around us. The methods of this research are literature review, case studies, interviews and surveys whereas studio experiments involving the use of editing software were also used; and at the end the findings includes both technical, artistic and thematic results.

Keywords: Creative, Techniques, Examination, Transform, Lighting.

INTRODUCTION

Photography has long been an artistic medium for capturing and conveying the world around us; from the earliest daguerreotypes to the latest digital images, photography has evolved into a diverse and dynamic art form that is capable of evoking emotions, sparking imagination and challenging perceptions. At the nucleus of this art form is creative photography, a genre that transcends mere representation, instead uses visual elements and techniques to convey meaning, tell stories and inspire creativity.

In the words of Sturken and Cartwright (2001) creative photography is more than just pointing a camera and clicking a shutter; it is an art that requires vision skill, creativity and the knowledge of computer designs and manipulation software; as photographers seek to capture the essence of their subjects, they convey complex ideas and emotions thereby creating visually striking images that engage and inspire audiences. Whether used in advertising, fine art, journalism or social media, creative photography has the power to communicate, connect and transform.

Aim and Objectives of the study:

Whereas the aim of this study is to give the reader or others who are not skilled in this art a ready and handy manual on how to carry out a cutting edge creative photography project, the objectives of this study are to:

- a. Identify the major techniques and importance of creative photography.
- b. State the various ways creative photography can be used in visual communication and advertising design.
- c. Itemize the various techniques to achieve a good creative photography work
- d. Demonstrate how to infuse creative photography into advertising design

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Although there are specialized professional digital cameras used in the process of creative photography, in this era of digital technology, phone cameras with high camera resolutions can as well serve the purpose but for the purpose of this essay, the following professional digital cameras are recommended for high-resolution shots.

- a) DSLR (Digital Single-Lens Reflex). This camera uses a prism and mirror system to view scenes through its lens.
- b) Mirror-less. This is similar to DSLRs but does not have a mirror but this feature makes it more compact.
- c) Point-and-shoot. This camera is compact and automatic made for casual shoots.

Other materials needed for creative photography are tripod stand which makes the camera stable and gives steady output.



Figure 1 (Left) DSLR Digital Camera. Source: iStock.com
(Right) Camera Tripod Stand. Source: iStock.com

The Computer can be regarded as the last basic necessity for a successful creative photography exercise. On the computer are all the basic tools and filters necessary for post-shooting operations.

Figure 2 Adobe Photoshop interface for transforming the ordinary photograph on laptop computer



Source: Felix Osaigbovo, June 2025

RESULT

In this essay, it was discovered that creative photography in visual communication and advertising design has been responsible for advancing the success of advertising with these reasons: It helps build and maintain brand identity and reputation; it drives sales in the sense that effective advertising leads to increased sales and revenue; it differentiates products as it helps distinguish products or services from competitors.

Creative photography in visual communication and advertising informs and educates as it informs consumers about products, services and benefits; it builds customer relationships, it help maintain relationships with target audiences. Creative photography in visual communication and advertising supports business growth and contributes to business expansion; it also creates jobs opportunities. It also promotes innovation and creativity in products, services and marketing strategies; it enhances customer engagement, fosters loyalty and encourages feedback and finally, creative photography in visual communication and advertising supports economic growth, it contributes to economic activity and growth by stimulating demand and consumption.

DISCUSSION

Barnbaum (2017) is of the opinion that creative photography brings into focus the development of new patterns and ways of visualization in various lighting situation such as the rearrangement, modification and manipulation of images and in creative photography, there are various interesting ways of manipulating and enhancing digital images.

Creative photography means giving a photo a new look and feel, so making it creative; it could be referred to as a rather unique category of photography. Sontag (2025) submits that this genre includes photo retouch editing that is specially done to give a special feel and spotlight on a particular theme. It involves a new way of enhancing photos; otherwise they could just be seen as commonplace photos. These photo enhancements have become a normal practice in the creative industry as the post-shooting enhancements will always dichotomize creative photography from ordinary or normal photography. In most cases, Shenz (2012) opines that creative photography is more often than not done with the computer; and often times, more than one digital photograph are merged and filters and enhancement effects added.

The major difference between digital and creative photography according to Wright (2006) is that while digital photography is done with the digital camera with some limited tricks, creative photography involves a combination of digital photography and computer manipulations. In a nutshell, a creative photograph would be that, on which the graphic artist has deliberately used diverse filters and effects to attain its desired final product. Figure 3 is a typical example of creative photography. Here, there are four layers that were worked on and merged and at the end, looks as though it is a single layer. A careful look at figure 3 shows that the sunset sky is one layer, the foreground with landscape is another layer; the tree is a different layer while the man on the trunk of the tree makes a fourth layer. Each layer was worked on with Adobe Photoshop software and at the end, were merged to become one plane and even as they were merged, it is still impossible for anyone to notice where they were joined owing to the feathering effects on each line of joining.

Fig 3. A typical Creative photograph



Source: Felix Osaigbovo, May, 2024

Techniques of Creative Photography:

Creative photography is a radical departure from the conventional photography and a moderation of traditional concepts and ways of handling photography. Curtin (2011) asserts that when a photograph is in a digital format, one can edit or manipulate it with photo-editing software and in some cases; images can be improved upon by eliminating or reducing its flaws by adjusting the tones, colours and sharpness. Improvements in images have become easy with the availability of current image editing software like Apples Aperture, Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Light room; with this software, the creative photographer perceives the essential qualities of the subject and decodes it according to his taste in a post-shooting editing manner.

This can be seen in figure 4 where the image was “imported” onto Adobe Photoshop environment and it is at this stage the graphic artist decides what to do to the photograph and it is also at this stage that the photograph undergoes all enhancements that the artist wants to do. Most photographs used for advertisement purposes undergo retouching at this stage especially wedding photographs and those to be used in television adverts.

that composition is vital to designs in the sense that it is the basic prerequisite of any design irrespective of the medium being worked on because if the composition is faulty, the design becomes chaotic.

In respect to the above claim, Pointer (2011) describes composition as:

The ways in which pieces or components are combined and arranged visually to tell a story. Proper composition reflects alignment, placement, grouping, visual flow and space within a layout thus this outline can be any standard. Once a targeted audience and rationale have been determined, then composition, constituents and concept can cover that identified purpose making for a successful design.

Supporting this assertion of Pointer (2011), Simmons (2013) thinks that some designers, in most cases do their designs with pre-conceived opinion; that is to say, most of them already have what to do in mind without necessarily taking into consideration the key ingredients that makes up good composition; and in most cases, these designers, because they do not have the basic qualification, does their design in a haphazard manner and so a way remedying the situation might just be to go over it again and again because composition still remains the structure on which any good design is based.

In the same way, Simmons (2013) proffers solution to such anomaly that the principles on which composition should be based are rhythm, balance, golden proportion, and hierarchy, rule of thirds, unity and dichotomy between positive and negative spaces. Relating to the above, Pointer (2011) suggested five principles of good composition which are Alignment, Contrast, Proximity, White Space and repetition. Whereas Simmons (2013) and Pointer (2011) came up with different levels of principles, Sanders (2011) advances a more detailed description of design layout. He points out that principles of design should include 'eye movement' as it relates to other principles that have been put forward by other experts. Sanders (2011) explain further that the physical elements of layout should include white space, trade mark, illustration and signature. In furtherance of the above indices put forward by Simmons (2013), Pointer (2011) and Sanders (2011), this researcher came up with the following as aspects of advertising and graphic design layout:

Introductory Slogan:

This part introduces the product to prospective customers and in most cases may be a way of calling attention on the product with captivating catch phrases; for instance, the age long UBA advert catch phrase till date has been '*Wise men bank with UBA*'; this simple catch phrase has become associated with UBA over the years and in all their adverts both in electronic and print media, it is what introduces the product, that is UBA banking to would-be customers.

Illustration:

This is the pictorial aspect of ad designs; the purpose is that people who cannot read would be able to decode and appreciate the pictorials be they photographs, cartoons and other drawings, logos and other pictorial elements.

Copy:

This is the typographical and the text portion of the advert design. It conveys information about whatever is being advertised; it elucidates the element and benefits of whatever product or services being advertised. Sometimes, it highlights prices and other beneficial areas of the product.

Subject Matter:

The subject matter does the actual ‘talking’ in any advertising design, it tells the targeted audience what the product does, its efficacy and convinces prospective customers why they must patronize the product and its benefits. Here, attention is concentrated on making the product sell. The subject matter could be emphasized either in illustration, bold texts and wild colours in order to attract interests.

White Space:

The importance white space in any ad design cannot be over flogged in the sense that it is the availability of white space that gives the composition breathing space; this does not refer to the literal ‘white’ part of the design; white space helps define and separate different sections. Osaigbovo (2024) thinks that it is the white space that gives the design some ‘room to breathe’ as the design might become chaotic or congested if it is clustered with extraneous elements. In figure 6, even as the background is predominantly green, the white space or negative space is well utilized and that is why the design does not look choked.

Pay Off:

In most existing advert designs, Meggs and Purvis (2020) posits that there is always a pay off; this could be regarded as ‘the final word’ or the tagline as the case may be as it may come often at the bottom of the design. It could be the slogan for a institution product, service, program or event for instance in the advert of MTN Nigeria, the slogan ‘*Everywhere you go*’ is their pay-off or tagline and that is why it always comes at the bottom of the advert. A look at figure 6 shows an advert design of a computer engineering service; all the elements used in the advert are computer related but an element of surprise in the design is the inverted bottle corks; this might look confusing to a novice and that part of the design calls for curiosity but the artist decided to use it to attract attention because the corks are deliberately placed where the cord of the computer mouse broke and that was where the problem started. Another interesting aspect of the design in figure 6 is the introductory slogan; here, the word “disconnected” is represented by broken line which is an indication of distortion of flow of current.

Fig 6. Advert of Service



Advert design of service. Source: Felix Osaigbovo, May, 2025

With the foregoing, the importance of creative photography in visual communication and advertising design could not have been overemphasized as this writer summarizes it as follows: Creative photography captures attention as unique perspectives and techniques are capable of arresting viewers' attention. The story-telling potentials of creative photography conveys emotions, ideas and narratives; creative photography evokes emotions as the images engender feelings, empathy and connections; also creative photography enhances communication, the visuals convey complex ideas simply and effectively and it encourages experimentation and innovation. Creative photography inspires, educates and influences audiences making it a powerful medium for self-expression and communication and also projects cultural heritage.

CONCLUSION

Creative photography plays a significant role in visual communication and advertising design so serving as a formidable tool for the conveyance of images, evoking emotions and capturing attention. The techniques employed in creative photography according to Grundberg (2009) can significantly enhance the impact of an image, making it more effective in communicating the intended message. As demonstrated in this essay, the importance of creative photography in visual communication and advertising design lies in its ability to create visually engaging, appealing and thought-provoking images that resonate with audiences, build brand identity and drive consumer engagement. By understanding and applying the techniques of creative photography, graphic artists and advertisers can harness its potentials to create compelling visual narratives that captivate and persuade. Ultimately, the strategic use of creative photography in visual communication and

advertising design can lead to more effective and memorable campaigns that underscore the significance of the medium in this digital age.

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