



## Syllabus

Wed 3-4.30pm in ET135

Week	Date	
1	Wed 1 Oct	Introduction
2	Wed 8 Oct	Visual structures
3	Wed 15 Oct	No class
4	Wed 22 Oct	Consciousness industries
5	Wed 29 Oct	Celebrity management
6	Wed 8 Nov	Celebrity production
7	Wed 12 Nov	Narratives of authenticity
8	Wed 19 Nov	Screening
9	Wed 26 Nov	The uses of activism
10	Wed 3 Dec	Student presentations
11	Wed 10 Dec	Student presentations

7 Jan 2015 essay hand-in



PR, advertising,  
branding rely on  
visual structures  
and semiotic  
strategies to  
convey their  
message  
powerfully, at a  
glance, without  
words



Madonna's Louis Vuitton Ads (2009)

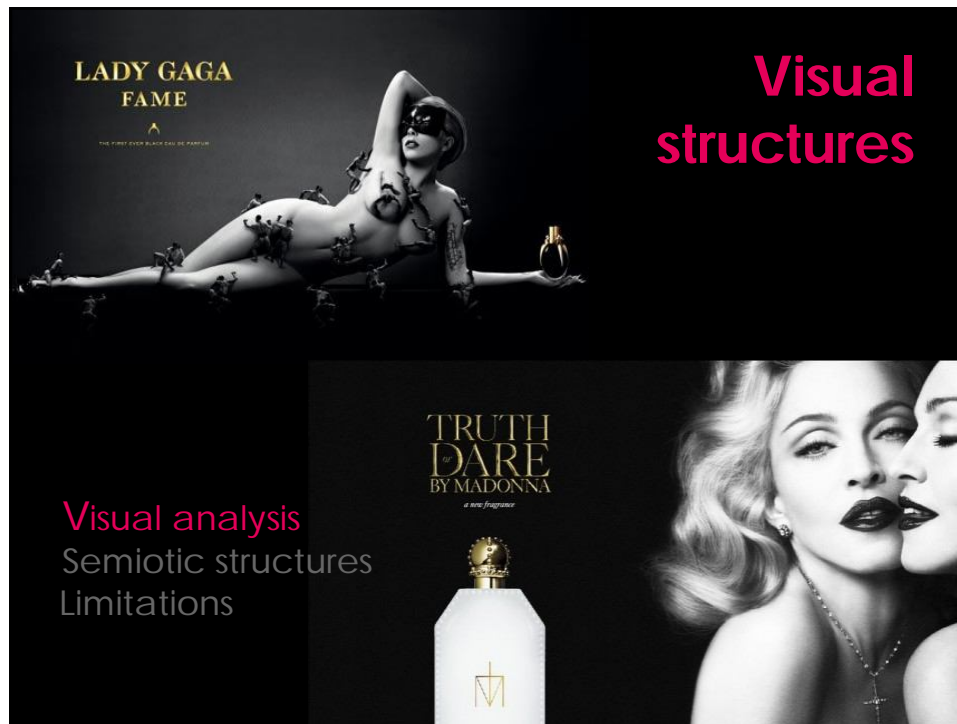
**Visual structures**

**Visual analysis**  
**Semiotic structures**  
**Limitations**

**LADY GAGA**  
**FAME**  
THE FIRST EVER BLAKE EAU DE PARFUM

**TRUTH**  
**DARE**  
BY MADONNA  
a new fragrance

A black and white photograph of Lady Gaga lying down, wearing a mask and holding a small perfume bottle. The background is dark.





## Activity

### Visual Analysis: How to read an image

Look at each of the following images:

Did you know it?  
What sort of picture is it, what does it look like?  
What was it made for?  
What is striking about it?  
What does it make me think about?  
What does it mean?  
Why am I looking at it now?

**Note down your impressions, thoughts and  
reactions**

John Walker – Illustration for *Gulliver's Travels* (2009)





Madonna's Louis Vuitton Ads (2009)



Eduard Manet-Olympia (1863)





Tamara De Lempicka - Madame Allan Bott(1930)



Early 20<sup>th</sup> c. representation of the femme fatale





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## What is visual analysis for?

PR, advertising, branding rely on visual structures and semiotic strategies to convey their message powerfully, at a glance, without words



## Visual structures

Visual analysis  
Semiotic structures  
Limitations

LADY GAGA  
FAME  
THE FIRST EVER BLAKE EAU DE PARFUM

TRUTH  
or DARE  
BY MADONNA  
a new fragrance

Sign

D - O - N - N - A



Signifier

Signified



Signs are not neutral

## Denotation and Connotation



Girl with a lollipop



## Rhetoric of the Image



in advertising the signification of the image is undoubtedly intentional; the signifieds of the advertising message are formed *a priori* by certain attributes of the product and these signifieds have to be transmitted as clearly as possible. If the image contains signs, we can be sure that in advertising these signs are full, formed with a view to the optimum reading: the advertising image is *frank*, or at least emphatic.  
(Barthes 1977: 33)

## Mythology



Modern myths are created by overlaying the sign with an extra hidden-in-plain-sight significance

"Myth, a thoroughly ideological process, works by presenting culturally specific objects and relations as if they were timeless, natural, and thus unquestionable."

Allen (52)

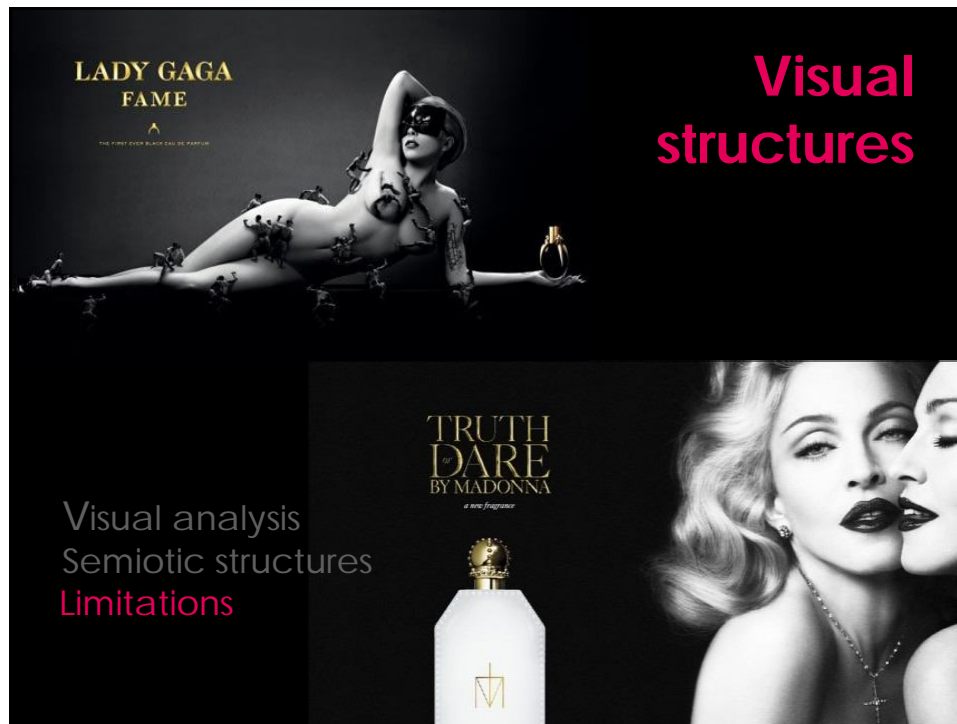


## Celebrity cult

Celebrities as mythological figures

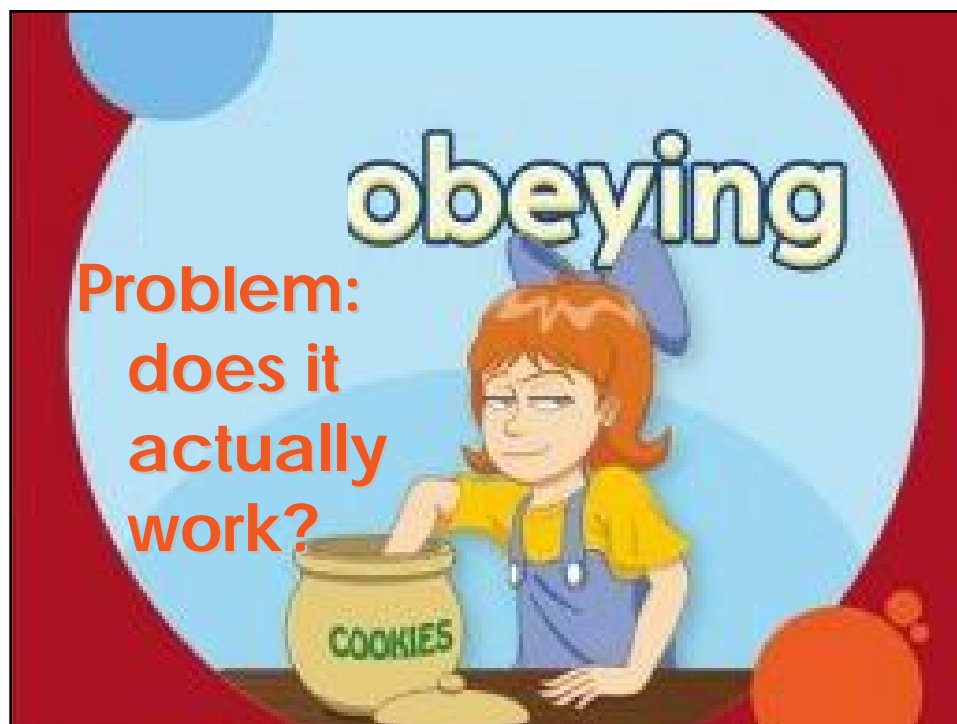
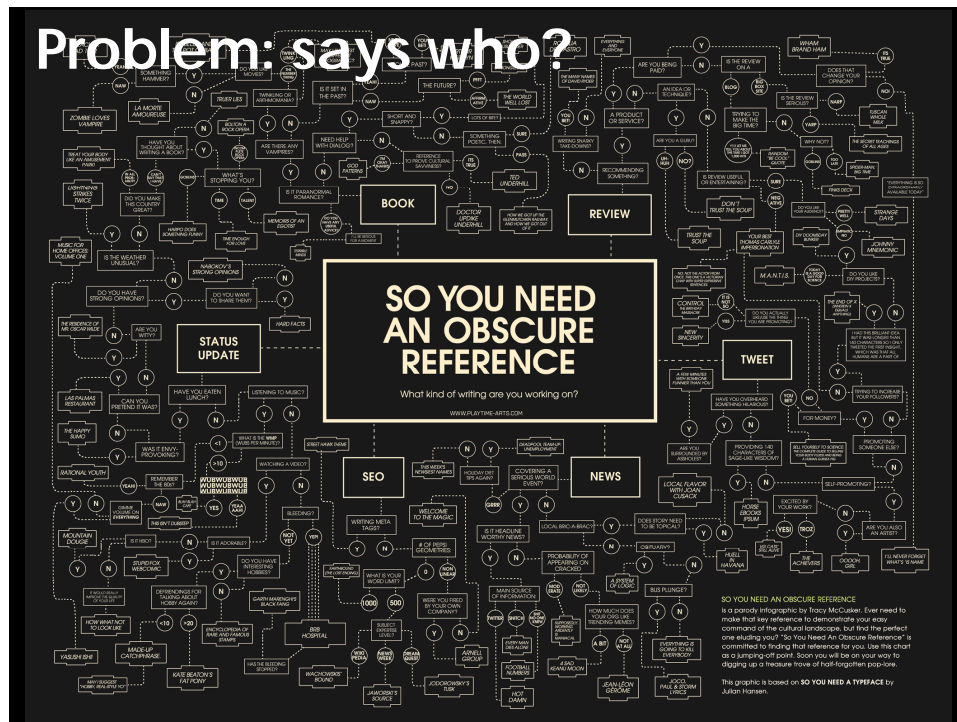
"Myths are the stories societies live by. They provide ways of conceptualising and understanding the world, and therefore they are crucial to a society's efforts (always in the interest of dominant groups) to construct and maintain a sense of self-identity (in terms of acceptable sameness and unacceptable difference)."

(Storey 1999, 28)





Problem: says who?



# Recap

How to read images

Signs

Connotation and denotation

Mythology

The limits of interpretation:

- When to stop?
- Who knows?
- When to believe?



## For next week

### Readings

Barthes, R. (1977) "[The Rhetoric of the Image](#)" in *Image Music Text*. London: Fontana. pp.32-51.

Lister, M. and Wells, L. (2001) "Seeing beyond belief: Cultural Studies as an approach to analysing the visual." in Van Leeuwen, T. and Wells, L. eds. *Handbook of Visual Analysis*. London: Sage. pp.61-91.

Ott, B. and Mack, L. (2010) "[Rhetorical Analysis](#)" in *Critical Media Studies*. Wiley-Blackwell. pp. 99-122.

Prieto-arranz, J. (2012) "[The Semiotics of Performance and Success in Madonna](#)." *The Journal of Popular Culture* 45 (1): 173-196.

Van Leeuwen, T. (2001) "Semiotics and iconography." in Van Leeuwen, T. and Wells, L. eds. *Handbook of Visual Analysis*. London: Sage. pp.92-118.



## For next week

### Activity

Madonna – *Truth or Dare* perfume advert

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2IEJ5bl9J0E>

Lady Gaga - *Lady Gaga Fame* perfume advert

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=az1-oLmxhHQ>

Watch these two videos. Perform a compared visual semiotic analysis.

These are some of the questions you may want to consider: What connotations can you identify? Which symbolic meanings? Which iconic signs? How does the advert use these elements to convey its message? Write down a summary of your findings and post it on the class blog as a comment to today's lecture.



Questions?

*Have you signed the attendance sheet?*