

Three thousand: If you're like most Americans, that's the number of ads that you see per day. And also if you're like most people, you tune out most of them. So what's a company to do in order to break through and grab your attention? Should it advertise on garbage trucks? Or trim shrubbery to evoke a body part? Or should it try to reach you while you relieve yourself in the washroom?

Yes, yes, and yes. In fact, a growing number of companies are engaging in these and other guerrilla tactics. Often called ambient advertising, these approaches all make use of their immediate environments to create promotions meant to startle the viewer and generate buzz. "If you're trying to get under people's radar," explains Dylan Harrison, an art director at ad agency DDB London, "you need to do it in a way that's surprising to catch them off-guard."

These photos highlight innovative campaigns in which marketers have taken advertising beyond the usual, beyond the mundane, and beyond most people's expectations. Should your business buy ad space in local restrooms? Perhaps. Perhaps not. But at the very least, these ads may inspire you to create messages that passersby won't just walk past. —VADIM LIBERMAN

To boldly go ...





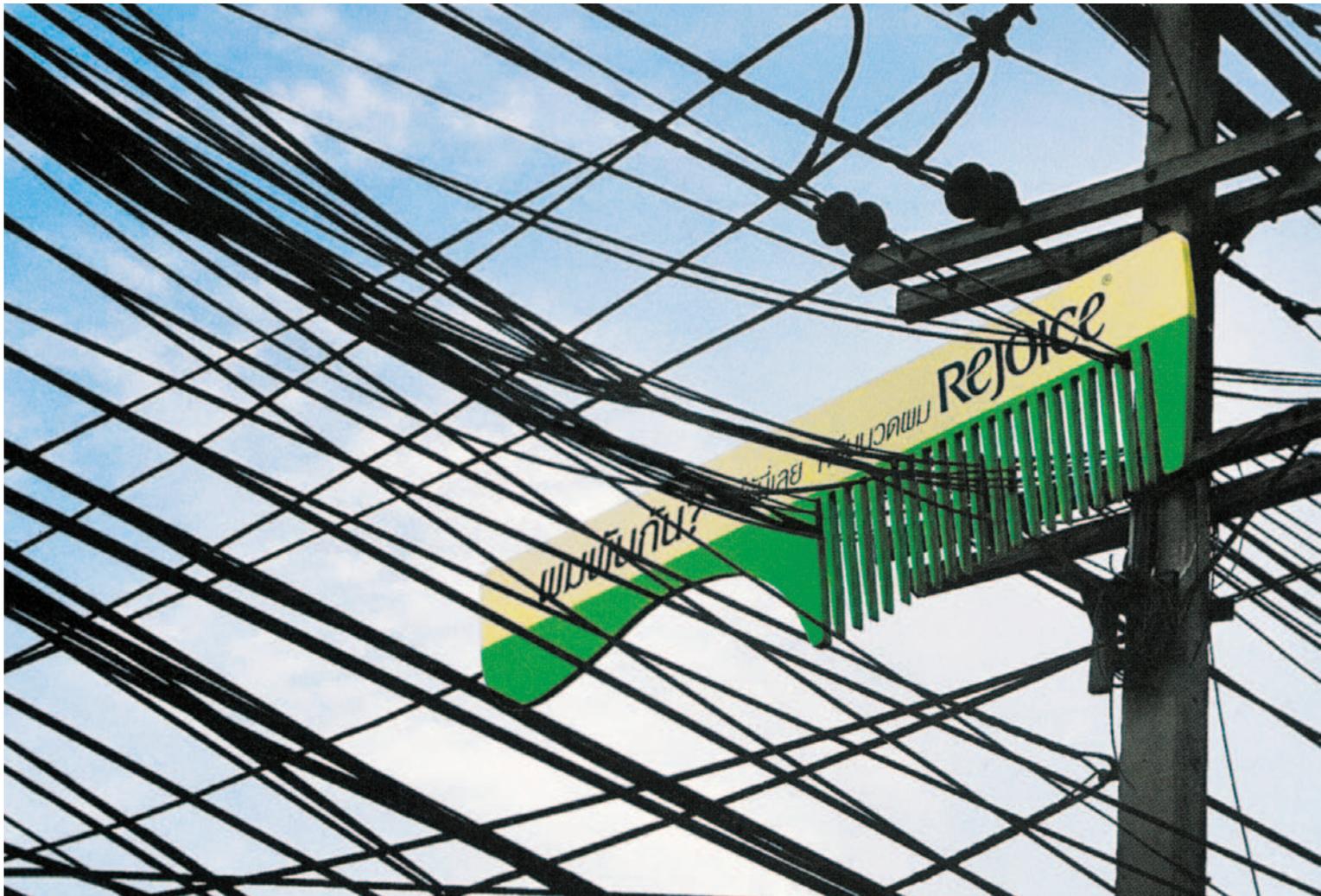
... where few ads have gone before

Getting Real

How can you make a toy fire engine look as realistic as possible? Easy: Use the real thing. That's exactly what Toys "R" Us did for its "Real Toys" Christmastime promotion in Germany. By slapping oversized price tags on actual fire engines, garbage trucks, and diggers, the retailer created the impression of toys driving around numerous German cities. "By transforming a real car into a toy car," explains Florian Meimberg, a creative director at the Düsseldorf office of ad agency Grey Worldwide, "you end up transforming the whole surrounding so that the city begins to look like a toy city." The campaign moved beyond wheeled vehicles: Given its success in Germany, the promotion later took off in Hong Kong—literally. By placing giant stickers on helicopters and jets there, Toys "R" Us was able to take its message to the sky. As Meimberg, who originated the concept, puts it: "This is where ambient advertising campaigns should be heading—leaving the usual advertising spaces and using the whole world as a stage."

High-Wire Act

Tangled phone lines may be common in Thailand, but tangled hair doesn't have to be. That was the message that Leo Burnett's Bangkok office created for Procter & Gamble's line of Rejoice hair conditioners. A huge comb set among a bevy of utility cords in the city's central business district asks: "Tangles? Switch to Rejoice Conditioners." According to Somak Chaudhury, the art director who conceived the idea, advertising must first entertain before it can inform. "When one turns a tangled mess of wires that was an eyesore to everybody into a new medium, people notice it and get the message," Chaudhury explains in a recent issue of *Internationalist Magazine*. He adds that people appreciate such an approach "not because it's unconventional or ambient media or guerrilla advertising. They don't use such words in their lives. They talk about it just because it's something new."

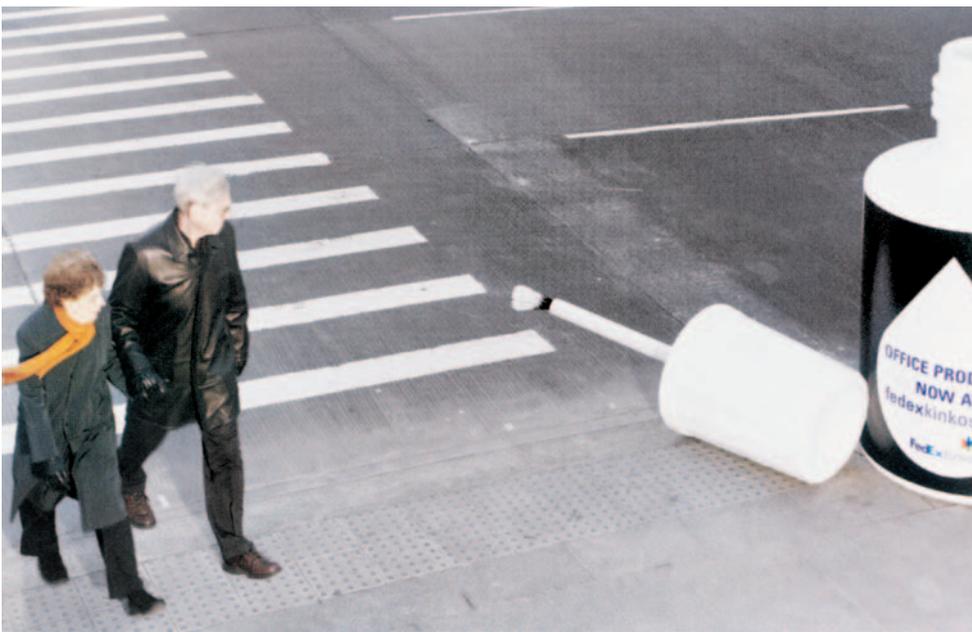




Hedge Fun

Philips may have developed its Bikini Perfect hair trimmer for a woman's private parts, but that didn't stop the consumer-goods manufacturer from promoting it in a very public way. To demonstrate the groomer's precision capabilities, Philips positioned numerous bushes—a bush, of course, being vernacular for pubic hair—in and near changing rooms of fitness centers, swimming pools, and other venues where women are particularly body-conscious. "A simple print ad wouldn't have engaged people as much," comments DDB London art director Dylan Harrison, who helped mastermind the campaign. "It was important to reach women in an environment where they would be receptive to the message." It was equally essential to communicate effectively in different markets. Featured in Spain, Italy, France, the United Kingdom, and other European countries, Philips' peculiar shrubs received positive feedback from women, Harrison says. "They really got the gag."



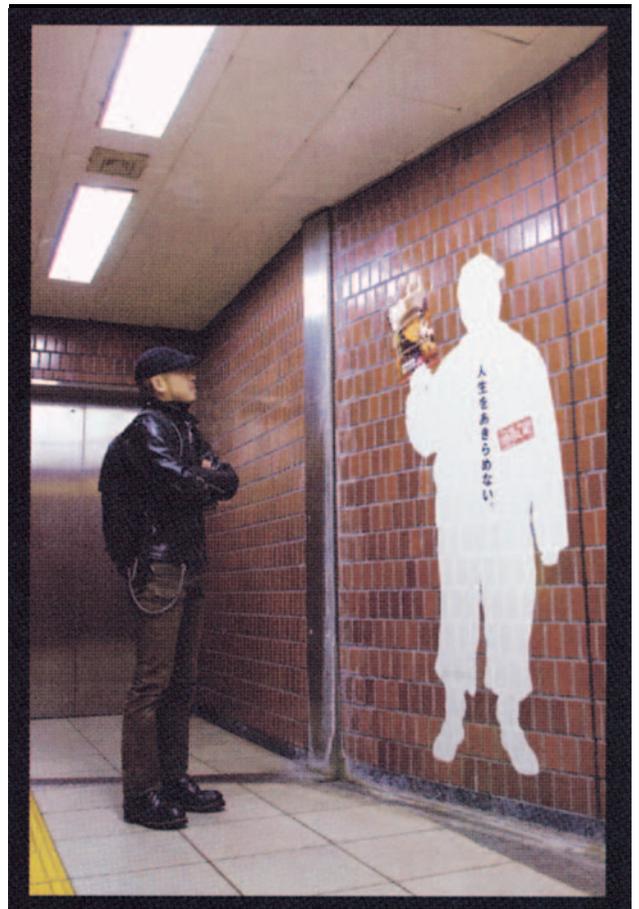
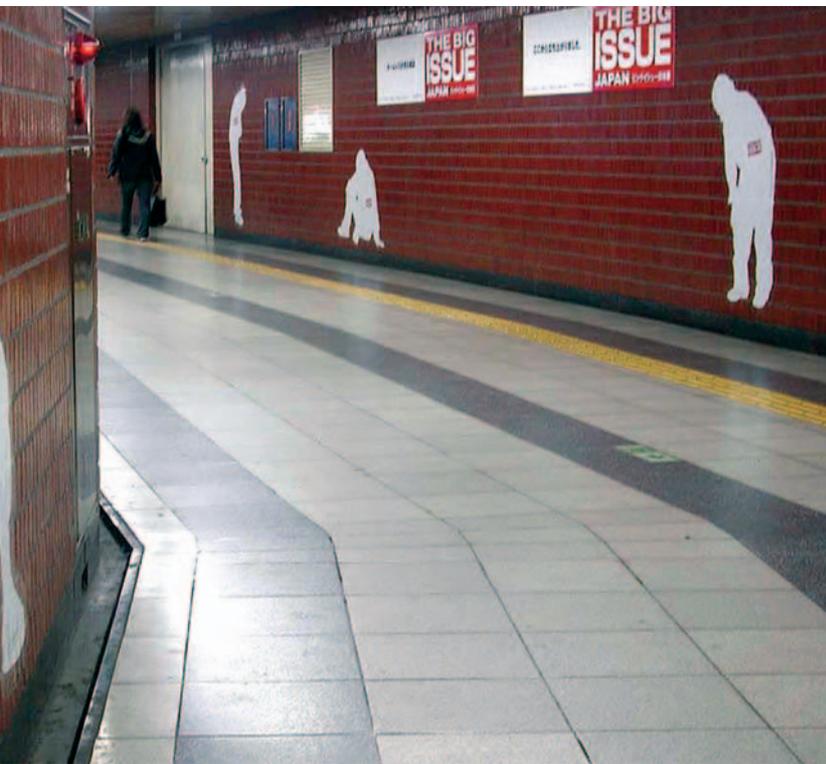


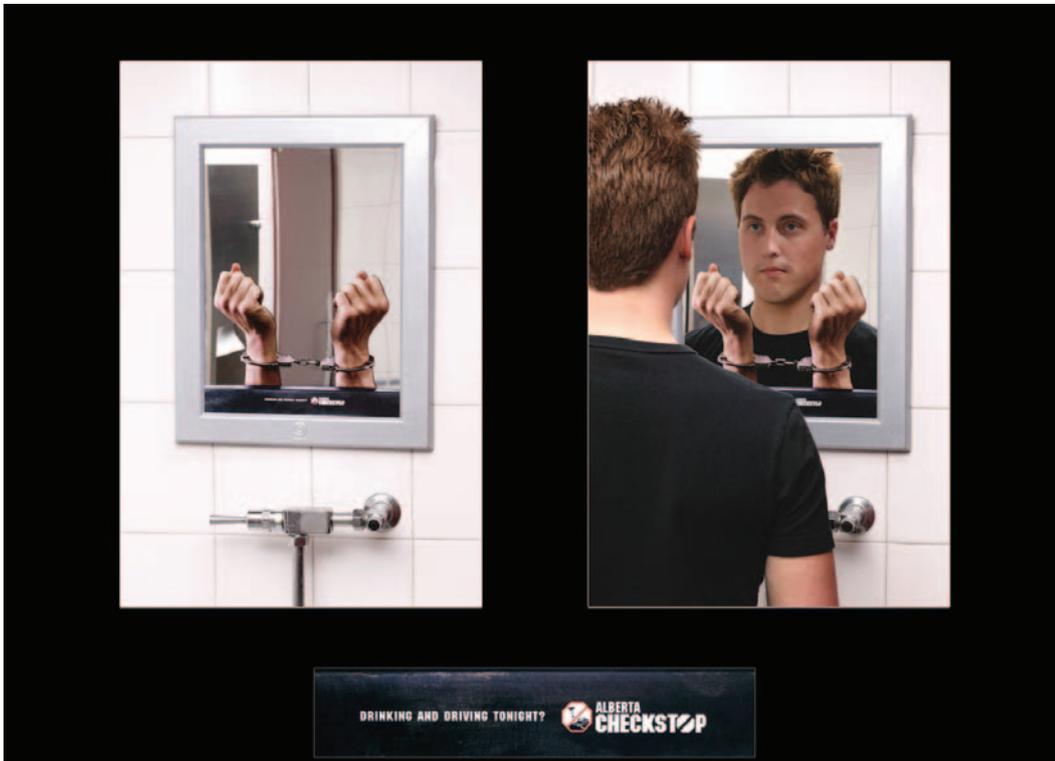
Taking It to the Street

When you leave the office, you don't always want to be reminded of work. But your job is exactly what FedEx Kinko's wanted to call to your attention once you stepped out onto the sidewalk. To announce its online office-supply store, the company thought big. Really big. It launched a street campaign highlighting . . . well, a huge highlighter, among other standard office supplies. Each item played off its surroundings—including the six-foot highlighter that looked as if it drew a yellow curb, as well as a whiteout bottle that gave the impression of creating a crosswalk—to reach workers in a non-intrusive way.

Up the Homeless

Why would a company plaster Japanese subway corridors with silhouettes of homeless people? Because it's looking to help them. Osaka-based *Big Issue Japan* is a biweekly magazine that not only raises money for the homeless but is sold by them. To increase the public's awareness of the magazine as well as encourage homeless people to join its sales team, the magazine worked with Ogilvy & Mather to create four series of posters to demonstrate how the magazine helps homeless people work their way back into society. The accompanying series shows how a man gradually stands up to sell the magazine. Minoru Kawasaki, Ogilvy's creative director of the campaign, explains that the project was challenging because "we didn't want to reach people by sending an intimidating message, and we didn't want to create something that would make the people who sell *Big Issue* uncomfortable." The approach worked: During the period of the promotion, magazine sales tripled.





Arresting Advertising

Pretty much everyone knows that you're not supposed to drive after you've been drinking. But a reminder can't hurt—especially just before the drinker staggers out to the car. With that in mind, Canadian police set out to target potential drunk drivers where most of them are sure to be at some point in a typical evening: the washroom. Working with ad agency MacLaren McCann, police developed a campaign featuring mirrors sporting such ominous features as the top of an orange jail jumpsuit, or a pair of hands in handcuffs, gripping prison bars, or holding a prisoner-

ID placard. Looking in the mirror, you can't help but envision what it would be like to be arrested. Installed over urinals in restaurants and watering holes throughout Alberta, the ads asked, "Drinking and driving tonight?" "You have a captive audience for the message," explains Mike Meadus, the art director who created the campaign for McCann. "We used the medium in such a way that the viewer is the ad." And because not all drunk drivers are male, Meadus is experimenting with ideas appropriate for women's stalls. He adds: "I'm trying to get the message across that a jail cell isn't that much bigger than a stall."

