5-1-1974

The Magnificent American

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"THE MAGNIFICENT AMERICAN"

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IN THE COLLEGE OF FINE AND APPLIED ARTS

OF THE ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

DATE: MAY, 1974

ADVISOR'S NAME: PROFESSOR HANS J. BARSCHEL
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CHAPTER I

PURPOSE OF THE THESIS

Having a background mainly in motion pictures, and minoring in communication design, graphic arts and printmaking the area with the utmost importance for my future work is film.

One topic of importance today is the recognition of the American "Indian" and his anthropological as well as cultural significance.

By using the film medium for television, I plan to depict the cultural significance of the Magnificent American, as Professor Barschel refers to, the American Native.

Hollywood has for years portrayed these remarkable people as crude savages. I intend to create a new image for these American Natives by using 30 second full color educational public service film spots to enlighten an ill-informed public to the outstanding cultural contributions the American Native has made long before Europe became culturally significant.

I propose to produce two 30 second educational spots on this subject, they will concern their role in making America great. I have spoken to many people attempting to obtain grants in order to show these spots
nationwide; local television has already agreed to broadcast them upon completion as a public service.

I am hoping this will stimulate an awareness and a better appreciation of the "Magnificent American".*

*The term "Magnificent American" has been originated by Professor Barschel while assisting me in preparing for this project.
AN INDIAN PRAYER

The following Indian prayer was recited by Chief Dan George of Canada's Squamish Indians when he appeared on Group W Productions' "The David Frost Show."

Recently Chief Dan George was honored for his film performance in "Little Big Man" by the New York Film Critics Circle and the National Society of Film Critics. The prayer was translated into English by Chief Yellow Lark of the Sioux Tribe in 1887.

Oh, Great White Spirit whose voice I hear in the winds, Whose breath gives life to the world, hear me...
I come to you as one of your many children.
I am small and weak.
I need your strength and your wisdom.
May I walk in beauty.
Make my eyes ever behold the red and purple sunset.
Make my hands respect the things you have made
And my ears sharp to hear your voice.
Make me wise so that I may know the things you have taught your children,
The lessons you have written in every leaf and rock.
Make me strong,
Not to be superior to my brothers,
But to fight my greatest enemy ---

Myself.

Make me ever ready to come to you with straight eyes

So that when life fades as the fading sunset,

My spirit may come to you without shame.
CHAPTER II

INTRODUCTION

For centuries the American Indians have been foreigners on the land which their fore-fathers cultivated and developed. The American Indians have been discriminated against and mistreated by every generation of peoples to come to this country. "Year after year through most of his life he has witnessed the erosion of his people, their customs and their land under the relentless tide of the white American civilization." ¹

The American Indians have been downgraded by all forms of modern communications. Many books and movies portray the American Indian as brutal savages. The American Indian has a difficult time finding a rewarding place in our society. In reality, the American Indian has contributed much to our culture. His art influence is becoming more and more apparent as we research some of the great contemporary painters. His values and lifestyles are being copied by many young people, and his

¹Dorothy Seiberling, "Our Indian Heritage," Life, July 1971, p. 38.
traditional foods are being served daily in our homes. Today the mass media is trying to educate our population in a brainwashing bombardment of television and motion pictures showing equality between all groups of people. They are trying to remove the old stereotypes from minority groups such as Mexicans, Blacks, Orientals, and Jews, but little has been done for the original inhabitants of this land.

"It's too bad in a way, that Columbus thought he reached the East Indies, and dubbed the peoples of this continent "Indians." People often seem to get the impression that an Indian is an Indian is an Indian-period. North American Indians vary widely in appearance, customs and language. Originally there were fifty-eight linguistic groups known north of Mexico."¹

Not only did the Europeans seize their lands, but "a steady decay in native arts and crafts provides a measure of the growing importance of European trade goods. Stone axes, knives and arrow points disappear and metal ones take their place. Native manufacture of pottery had become virtually a lost art. We may surmise that many less tangible elements of their culture had been eroded at the same rate."²


The title of my thesis, "The Magnificent American", was developed by Professor Hans J. Barschel in efforts to help return the dignity they so rightly deserve.

These thirty second television commercials record some of the contributions of these great peoples and hopefully will act as my small contribution in paying tribute to "The Magnificent American."
CHAPTER III

RESEARCH

Not being a Magnificent American, and not being able to find much information on this subject, I spent a lot of time talking with people who had good understandings of the problems facing the Magnificent American. Professor Hans. J. Barschel and I took many trips to interview people who understood these problems. On each trip, I took my Nikon F Camera, with macro lens to visually record the different things we discussed. These photographs were taken with Ektachrome X, in order to have slides for the purpose of my thesis, and for educational use by the Magnificent American.

Frank Vaccarro, a Seneca American, tried to give us the insight into the present day situation facing his people. Frank Vaccarro, is an art teacher in a local high school, a businessman with his own craft store and a man proud of his heritage. Frank spoke openly of his frustrations and desires for his people.

Many of the Magnificent American art pieces I photographed in his store are used in my final television commercial. During one of our visits, I discovered a beautiful pot, which was broken on the side. This seemed
to symbolize the lives these people lead. By showing this on the screen as a title, I felt it would impress upon the viewers, the feelings of shame and show the mis-treatments which the white man has been plaguing these Magnificent Americans. Putting the pot together would be a new beginning for them.

Mr. Arleigh Hill of the Rochester Museum and Science Center, an older member of the Sioux American Society had a lot to tell about his life. The stories he revealed about his youth and family upbringing were very sensitive. Art and family life were of utmost importance. The respect of his elders and nature helped guide him through life. To him and the Magnificent American's wealth was not measured in white mans ways such as cars, houses, and money. Wealth was found in his art, his work, and having the time to teach his children, but most of all being close to nature.

Mr. Arleigh Hill spoke of his concern that these wealths which he cherished were being lost to the white mans money oriented society.

Arleigh Hill and Frank Vaccarro were both proud of their heritage and their past accomplishments. They fear more and more Magnificent Americans will give up their cultures for the white man's world.

Sheldon Fisher is owner and curator of the Ghost Town of Valentown. Sheldon Fisher, a white man, is very sensitive to the history of the Magnificent American. His museum contains old art of the Magnificent American,
tools, clothing, and all other items he can find. His mind sings with tales of folklore which he is only too anxious to explain to any interested person. Mr. Fisher is also concerned with perpetuating the Magnificent American's cultures. He is interested in seeing the Magnificent American get credit for all their accomplishments.

Of the three television public relations commercials I am producing, one shows the Magnificent American's contribution to our diet.

The second ad, shows their contribution in building the white man's towering skyscraper, and the third shows how contemporary art was influenced by the art of the Magnificent American.

The damage the media has done is quite extensive. Hopefully this small contribution will start the new respect that the Magnificent Americans deserve.
CHAPTER IV

PRE-PRODUCTION PLANNING

The decision was made to make public service television commercials promoting the Magnificent American. Robert Artlett, professor of literature at the University of Washington, assisted me in developing my concepts into a story boarded and scripted production.

Once the audio and visuals were storyboarded and approved the proper narrator had to be found.

A good projecting voice was important to give the advertisements professional quality. Many of the voices which were considered would not lend themselves to give my commercials character and individuality. I did not want the flavor of my ads to fit visual or audibly the stereotype of standard television advertising.

These ads are intended to educate the public. Therefore they needed their own unique identity. Robert Forster, a nationally known actor and local resident had this unique voice. His voice is professional and projects a solid demanding sense of importance.

After a meeting with him and discussing my intentions he decided to help me without charging me. He was very helpful and encouraging.
Earl Jerris of Jerris Productions was contacted and he agreed to allow us to use his recording studio and act as sound engineer without charge. Bob Forster and I met at Earl Jerris' sound studio for a recording session. We recorded and re-recorded the narration on ¼" magnetic tape. We spent several hours creating the narration for the three advertisements. Three different sound effects were necessary for the commercials. Bob Forster loaned me a personal tape of American Indian chants for my ad on Indian Art.

PCI Sound Recording Studios supplied me with the sounds of birds and wind noise, which they obtained from their library of sound effects. These sound effects were also recorded on ¼" tape. They gave each spot audio continuity.

People are bombarded with many television commercials nightly. I wanted my commercials to be remembered over all the other ones. I felt the technique of filmograph or freeze motion would satisfy these requirements. Filmograph uses still photographs or art plates, filmed with zooms and dissolves. This style was best suited for my subjects. Each of the three television commercials had their own artistic and technical problems.
CHAPTER V

PRODUCTION

"THE ART OF THE MAGNIFICENT AMERICAN"

The television advertisement titled "The Art of the Magnificent American" was created from 35mm slides of original American art.

"The arts and crafts of the American Indian are probably not as well known to the general public as Flemish painters or Grecian sculptors. Their image suffers from an over-population of commercialized turkey feathers and leather scraps defiled with beads. The real thing is responsible craftsmanship inspired by a long tradition of meaningful design. Indian art has the charm of uncorrupted primitive honesty, yet its graphics are as modern as today. As always, what is fundamentally good is true, and the truth will always endure."¹

The majority of the slides I photographed at Frank Vaccarros' store and the Museum and Science Center. Mrs. Frederick Hoffman, a Magnificent American posed for me wearing different Indian jewelry which was also supplied

¹Eastman Kodak, "If Indians should advertise this is a way of doing it," Applied Photography 46, (1970): 1.
by Frank Vaccaro. The Memorial Art Gallery and Rochester Museum and Science Center were kind enough to provide me with some slides of American Indian and Modern Art that were not readily available for me to photograph. With all these resources at hand the comparison between the Magnificent American and Great Contemporary Art became my message. This statement shows the definite similarities between the Art of the Magnificent American and the Contemporary Artists.

Out of over one hundred slides in my possession, I chose those slides that would best convey my message and work best on television. After the selection was made, the slides had to be converted to 16mm film.

The conversion was done using an optical reduction printing method. It was constructed using various commercially manufactured pieces of equipment. A few components I had to custom build. These parts consisted of a slide carriage to hold a 35mm slide. This was made from an 11 X 14 formica and wood construction with a metal rig to hold the slide.

The basic optical printer consisted of a Burke and James Saturn Vertical camera stand mounted to a custom built formica and wood table. A 10" hole was cut in the center of the table where a 500 watt 3200 Kelvin light source was placed. Over the light source, in the hole in the table, was a \( \frac{3}{4} \)" piece of heat absorbing glass, and 1/8" piece of opal glass to diffuse the light. A 4" box fan was placed in the table to help control the heat of the 3200 Kelvin 500 watt bulb. The fan had to be carefully
chosen and mounted to eliminate any vibration when it was running. Any vibration would cause softness in the focus of the image on the film. A Bolex 16mm Rex with a C mount to Nikon F adapter was placed on the vertical camera stand. The C mount to Nikon F adapter made it possible to put a Nikon Macro Lens on the 16mm Bolex. This lens allowed me to get close enough to photograph the 35mm slides.

The film for this part of my project was Eastman Kodak Color Original 7252, which is Tungsten balanced. This film needed no filtration. Tests were made to determine the correct exposure. The exposure selected to give the best tonal ranges was an F 3.5 at camera speed of 24 frames per second. This film was processed by Motion Picture Labs of Memphis, Tennessee.

A one timing-light color 16mm work print was made so not to damage the master. This work print was then viewed many times in order to determine the proper timing and dissolve rates for each of the sequences. The work-print was edited and grease pencil marks placed over the area where the dissolves would appear on the finished film. Once I was satisfied with the imagery, the original footage was conformed using A and B roll form of editing. This type of editing provided the maximum control of dissolves without any splice marks in the final print.

The title frame for all three advertisements was originally produced as a 35mm slide. A 4 X 5 inter-negative on Kodak Eastman Color 6008 was made, a 5 X 7 color print was produced from the internegative.
The title "The Magnificent American" was phototypeset by Rochester Monotype. An 11 x 14 ortho negative served as my title.

The title was shot on an Oxberry Animation Stand without any camera movements.
CHAPTER VI

PRODUCTION

"THE FOODS OF THE MAGNIFICENT AMERICAN"

The advertisement showing the Magnificent Americans contribution to our foods required different creative and technically solutions.

Foods have been photographed in every way possible. Most food pictures are designed to enhance a recipe in a cookbook or magazine. I wanted my photographs to show the simplicity and beauty found not only in the foods but in the plant growth itself. I seldom see photographs of plants in their natural surrounding. By showing them in their natural surrounding we see not only the foods of the Magnificent American, but instill their feelings of respect for nature.

As each vegetable came in season, care was taken in finding the best subject, location, and time of day for the best natural light.

Maximum resolution and best color fidelity had to be achieved in the color prints. The camera that would work best was a Speed-Graphic 4 X 5 with a 135mm lens. By using my chosen lens, it allowed me to do both macro, or close-up shots, and normal distance photographs with a very slight amount of compression in the imagery. A 2½ X 3½ roll film
back was placed on my 4 X 5 camera. The 2 1/4 X 3 1/4 format was used because it was closest to the 2 X 3 format of 16mm film. The use of roll film gave me greater mobility on location. The film used was Ektacolor S negative film because of its color latitude.

The vegetables on the ground had to be shot on a sunny day with a 2 X 3 foot aluminum reflector used to act as fill for the harsh shadows which was created by the sun. To determine the proper exposure, a Weston #4 light meter with optional incident cone was used. When the camera mounted on a tripod was in proper position for my shot a meter reading to determine normal exposure. Five negatives were exposed for each final picture required. One at normal exposure, one 1/2 stop over, one 1 stop over, one 1/2 stop under, and one 1 stop under. This would insure me the best results.

The corn photograph was taken using the same technique with the addition of a polarizing filter over the lens. This assured me maximum color fidelity in the blue sky.

The popcorn picture was photographed under studio strobes using umbrella lighting.

All film was processed by a standard Kodak C 22 process. The best negatives were enlarged to 8 X 10 prints. The borders were trimmed off the prints and they were mounted on black Oxberry pin registered boards.

Each print was photographed on the Oxberry 16mm Animation Camera with a slow, pre-plotted camera zoom.
The film used was Ektachrome Commercial Original. The film was developed and work printed by Motion Picture Labs of Memphis, Tennessee.

The work print was edited, dissolved placed in with a grease pencil and conformed the same way as the previous advertisement.
CHAPTER VII
PRODUCTION
"THE BUILDING OF THE MAGNIFICENT AMERICAN"

The advertisement on building a Magnificent America, was made from a series of photographs of buildings which I located from various sources. The picture file from the Rochester Public Library supplied the pictures of bridges, sky-scrapers and men working on construction. All pictures had to be full color and fit the 16mm format.

The pictures were mounted on black Oxberry pin registered boards and photographed on the Oxberry animation camera using pre-plotted zooms. The film used was Ektachrome Commercial Original. It was developed and work printed by Motion Picture Labs of Memphis, Tennessee. The work print was edited, dissolves placed in with a grease pencil and conformed the same way as the rest of the advertisement.

Two separate types of sound prints had to be made. The sound prints made for the projection were balanced to 5200 Kelvin, the standard in the industry for projection film. The sound prints for television use were balanced to 3200 Kelvin, the standard in the industry for television use.
CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

Great harm has been done to the Magnificent Americans. I hope my efforts will act as a catalyst for other projects.

Through working with the Magnificent Americans, not only did I experience a better understanding of these people, but I achieved a new awareness. I attained a new appreciation for all the arts and a renewed respect of nature.

I learned to separate and integrate importance of educational communication and advertising. Through the use of educational advertising and educational communications, a better understanding of all cultures can be achieved.

There seems to be a void on television of instilling this positive reexistence of the Magnificent Americans. When one sees a positive portrayal of his own culture it brings about a positive psychological pride of ones origin.

To achieve these various commercials I extended my technical understanding of still photography, sound recording and motion picture production. I feel all three commercials communicate as intended. These experiences have convinced me that public services assistance is needed in many different areas.
The mass media has sold billions of dollars worth of floor waxes, deodorants and sporty cars - now let us use this communication tool to instill more respect towards our fellow man.
Indian civilization has given the world the basics for contemporary art.

Indians had countless ways of using art to enrich their lives.

The Magnificent American

What is distinctly American and European Art is the Art of the American Indian Plate.

For the American Indian Plate was part of their life.

Habitat
For the American Indian, maize, or Indian corn, was a living symbol of sun, of life. Indians had countless ways of preparing corn breads.

Zoom out of popcorn soups even popcorn.

Zoom out of squash Indian civilization has given the world such foods as: squash, pineapple, watermelon.

Zoom out of beans beans, chocolate.

Zoom out of tomatoes the potato the tomato. What is distinctly American Food
The Iroquois Indians/The Building of the Magnificent American

1. Zoom out of bridge construction 100 years ago. A tribe of Iroquois Indians were given jobs on a bridge construction over the St. Lawrence River.

2. Zoom out of night shot of bridge. Having uncanny balance, they quickly became experts in the most dangerous high steel work and have helped construct some of this land's great monuments. The Magnificent American works.

3. Zoom out of second night shot of bridge. The Iroquois since then have helped construct some of this land's great monuments. The Magnificent American works.

THE MAGNIFICENT AMERICAN

bowl...title "The Magnificent American" to build a Magnificent America.
OXBERRY

Filmaker 16mm Animation Stand Model 5332

...for the industrial and educational animation producer requiring professional standards.
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