



I Approve This Message: Decoding Political Ads

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A new exhibition designed by [Thinc Design](#), "I Approve This Message: Decoding Political Ads," will open at the Toledo Museum of Art on July 14, just a few days prior to the July 2016 National Conventions.

Utilizing television spots that date as far back as the 1952 election of President Eisenhower, the exhibit focuses on how ads use imagery, music, sound effects, camerawork and words to persuade, stir emotions and capture votes. The show will run through Election Day, November 8.

Working with Adam Levine, assistant director of the Toledo Museum of Art and guest co-curator, Harriett Levin Balkind, founder of HonestAds, Thinc shaped an immersive experience to help sensitize visitors to the emotional impact of these ads.

"One of our objectives is to help visitors gain insight into the power of political ads through an emotional journey," said Tom Hennes, founder and creative director of Thinc. "We hope to unveil some of the most potent ways they pull our emotional levers."

Thinc divided the main gallery of the 7,000 sq. ft. space into theaters displaying ads that focus on particular emotions, such as fear, anger, pride and hope. More than 50 ads will be projected in full, while frame-by-frame breakdowns of key ads will demonstrate how individual elements impact viewers. These elements include music that plays with joy or anxiety, editing that is fast or jittery, and images that are unusually dark or colorful. In the center of the gallery, a dramatic wedge-shaped space is a "Mood Room," a place to take pause and experience how ambient images and sounds create emotion.

The ads flow historically and show evolving techniques and themes that develop over time, beginning in 1952, when the first political TV commercial ran, through 2012. In the "Fear Theater," visitors will see ads such as the Lyndon B. Johnson 1964 "Daisy Girl," which begins gently with a little girl pulling petals from a flower and ends with nuclear annihilation. Commercials such as the Ronald Reagan ad many call "It's Morning in America" will be among examples in the "Enthusiasm Theater."

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