

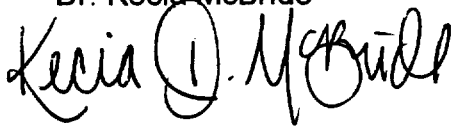
**“How Do You Dress a Doll Who’s More Than 12” Tall?”:
A Closer Look at the Ways That Women Are Portrayed
by the Advertising Industry**

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kecia D. McBride". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "K" and "M".

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to look at the various ways that women are often portrayed by the advertising industry. The first part looks at the physical characteristics of the typical advertised female. From there, it moves to the ways that the models act and react to the situations depicted in the advertisements and to their audience. The treatment of women appearing in advertisements and the spread of racial stereotypes is also examined. The unattainable ideals presented in ads are contrasted with the reality of women in today's world. Hope for improvement is supported with occasional positive messages in advertisements. Throughout the paper, current advertisements are referred to and analyzed to illustrate the points being made. All of these parts work together to reveal the negative messages that the advertising industry is sending society, concerning the ways that we should view females.

Acknowledgments

As always, endless thanks and gratitude to my parents for supporting me in all my academic endeavors and for keeping after me to not procrastinate (too much).

Recognition must also go out to Miss Logan Miller, who was a wonderful asset when it came to trying to remember current ads that I should be on the look out for, especially the example for a stereotype of Asian women (Fig. 21). She pointed out the obvious bias in the ad which I, nonetheless, had missed.

Finally, thank you to Dr. Kecia McBride. This thesis originally started out as a short cultural report based on an article I read in her colloquia class. From there, it expanded to a paper and finally to this thesis. Since that time, she has become my adviser and offered valuable critiques of how to improve what I had written and suggestions on new areas to look into.

“Women are only considered acceptable [within advertisements] if they are young, thin, beautiful, made-up, sprayed and scented, carefully groomed and polished, and, of course, with all unwanted hair removed.”

~ Jean Kilbourne

Although Ms. Kilbourne somewhat jokingly made this comment in her 1987 film Still Killing Us Softly: Advertising's Image of Women, she does have a point. There are very strong stigmas of women that are portrayed by the advertising industry. The fictional world of advertisements features a happy society made up of attractive, white, heterosexual men and young women who are part of nuclear families and never suffer from disabilities of any sort. When stated this way, it becomes obvious that advertisements can be ridiculous in their imagery. Unfortunately, we do not always realize how outlandish they can be while we are looking at them in daily contexts. Because we do not question the false nature of the ads, the idea that they might be potentially harmful often does not occur to us. But whether we realize it or not, the advertising industry does promote implicitly damaging images of females.

A Picture's Worth a Thousand Words: Physical Traits in Ads

One of the most blatant messages supported by imagery in advertisements is that the women in them must be beautiful. In the past, the emphasis in advertising was placed on other, more durable criteria. If a company wanted you to buy its product, they talked about its strengths and characteristics. Now, the product may not even appear in the ad. Instead there is a picture of an attractive woman. The selling power has shifted toward identities based on appearances (Barthel 3). One in every eleven advertisements will have some sort of direct message about beauty (“About-Face Facts on the Media”). Ads

strongly support the message that the most feminine girls will get the attractive boys (Barthel 74). One must be good-looking if she wants to garner attention (Fig. 1).

Besides being gorgeous, a woman in an advertisement also must be young. There is a double standard in the portrayal of aging within advertisements. Society tends to support the idea that it is acceptable for a man to show his age. Older men are associated with dignity and class. They are almost always respectfully characterized as a persons of maturity and intelligence. Women, on the other hand, are expected to remain as youthful as possible.

Images of aging women within ads are often not viewed favorably (Cortese 19). Many times, when older women *are* shown, they are demonstrating how young they look after using an anti-aging product, playing the role of either the sweet grandmother figure or the cranky senior citizen, or comically illustrating an example of a woman who has aged poorly. This last example is almost always used to demonstrate what we should strive to avoid, usually by using the product being advertised.

This message is demonstrated in an advertisement for SkinCeuticals skin care products (Fig. 2). It features an older woman who is obviously not taking the best care of herself. She has a cigarette tightly clamped between her lips. On a nearby table sits an ashtray full of old cigarette butts and what appears to be an alcoholic drink of some sort. Even though she is only sitting outside sunbathing, she wears make-up and has styled her over-bleached hair.

The text promises to counteract such an appearance. The company's products can "prevent premature aging and improve the appearance of existing damage." More than likely, these products are designed to work on reducing fine wrinkles and other relatively minor "flaws." They would probably have little effect on the heavy wrinkles that line the woman's face. The implication that a

small tube of cream can counteract the effects of extensive sunbathing, smoking, and drinking is ridiculous. Such habits can cause a number of extreme problems throughout the body, yet the ad only focuses on the damaging effects to the face. As long as she maintains a youthful complexion, who cares if she develops skin or lung cancer and has a liver damaged by alcohol?

This emphasis on youth has also led to an alarming trend. It is not uncommon to see fully grown women dressed up like little girls in advertisements. By presenting them as children, such ads send the message that females should stay childlike by remaining passive, dependent, and powerless (Still Killing Us Softly). Even worse, blurring the line between adulthood and childhood has led to a trend of presenting children as adults. This leads to the sexualization of young girls in advertisements (Slim Hopes). They are pictured not as children, but as miniature versions of adults. The young models are made-up, wear clothing similar to the fashions of grown-ups, and even imitate the poses and facial gestures of their older versions (Fig 3).

An example of this trend can be seen in an advertisement for Barbie Style, a line of girls' clothing inspired by Mattel's popular Barbie doll (Fig. 4). The little girl featured in the ad is wearing a child's version of an adult's outfit. It echoes trends in clothing worn by teenagers and women: a choker necklace, a boatneck shirt, straight-legged cropped pants, and combat boots. She wears make-up and nail polish. Her eyes are carefully averted from the camera. The message of the ad is best summed up in its text: "How do you dress a doll who's more than 12" tall?" The child is reduced to an inanimate object who has to be dressed and made to look pretty. Her goal is to imitate the unrealistic standard set by the product's namesake.

Such ads are insulting in their messages of what it means to be an adult or a child. By drawing a child-as-adult/adult-as-child parallel, they emphasize the

message that a female should always strive to measure up to the image of beauty that is designed and promoted by advertisers. Regardless of age, it is her duty to achieve the mirage of perfection (Moog 179). In the process, children are expected to become pint-sized adults before they have finished growing up, and women are told to deny the maturity and experience they have acquired over the courses of their lifetimes.

Although the image of youth is popular in ads, the models will be considered even more attractive if they are thin (Fig. 5). The "ideal" woman has grown progressively slimmer over time. About twenty years ago, the average model weighed about 8% less than the average woman (Slim Hopes). Today, the model's weight is about 23% less than that of her audience (NWHIC). It is not uncommon to see models wearing size 2 clothing in ads. Meanwhile, the average American woman wears a size 12 or larger (Sharrell).

If a model wears one of these everyday sizes, she is considered to be "plus-size." These women only seem overly large in size when compared to their exceptionally thin counterparts. In fact, they may actually be smaller than the majority of the women who will be viewing the ad. In some instances, women wearing clothing as low as a size 10 can be still be hired as a plus-size model ("Getting Started").

Because some plus-sized models are so small, it is sometimes hard to identify them. An ad for Versace Jeans Couture features such an example (Fig. 6). The woman in the ad, Sophie Dahl, looks like any other model. She poses on a bed, playing with a strand of her hair as she studies her audience with an expressionless face. At a first glance, most people would probably not even notice her weight, but she is still considered to be a plus-size model.

Outside of the plus-sized clothing industry, most overweight women in advertisements are reduced to the "before" image for weight-loss products or to

the role of the comic fat girl (Fig. 7). An overweight person in an advertisement is often treated as someone who should be pitied. They are frequently stereotyped as lazy, babyish, stupid, sloppy, or possessing no self-control. This supports the flipside of the American dream. We are often raised to believe that we can do anything if we want it bad enough. We just need perseverance, determination, and assertiveness. Unfortunately, people with weight problems are not often viewed as achievers. They represent what we are told to avoid by controlling ourselves and our impulses. It is a horribly unfair portrayal that is seen in everyday life and, unfortunately, further inscribed into the general consciousness by the advertising industry.

Actions Speak Louder Than Words:
Behaviors and Attitudes From and Toward Women in Ads

Besides showing reoccurring physical traits, ads also tend to show trends in the supposed behavior of women. They often are portrayed as trivial, weak, or needy. It is common to see a woman in an ad “spacing out,” which is referred to as *licensed withdraw*. The resulting look gives the female an appearance of disorientation or defenselessness (Cortese 33). This expression can be seen in an advertisement for Armani (Fig. 8). In addition to acting oblivious, female models are also frequently shown in childish or silly poses, or they are depicted trying to get a man’s attention (Cortese 33-34). Many ads feature images of women adoringly gazing at, caressing, or holding onto a man. The man, meanwhile, may or may not acknowledge her attention (Fig. 9 & 10).

The female subjects of ads aren’t just limited to responding to people appearing with them. There are further trends in the way that they react to their audience, the viewer of the ad. In everyday life, people stand upright and meet the eyes of those around them. Meanwhile, in many advertisements, women are

not shown looking directly into the camera or meeting the gaze of their audience unless they are crouched, nearly naked, restricted in some way, or showing other such signs of vulnerability ("About-Face: Gallery of Offenders"). One such example, shown in an advertisement for Natori, features an attractive woman wearing a pair of black lace underwear and a matching bra. She sits with her legs apart and her face raised to the camera, yet her eyes are lowered (Fig. 11). This submissive act isn't just limited to adult women. The child in the previously mentioned ad for Barbie Style also averts her eyes from the camera and her audience (Fig. 4). By avoiding the sight of their audiences, these women are made to look weak and scared.

Women are often made to look weaker by being placed in poses of subordination. They recline on beds or floors, bow their heads, or physically lower themselves, often by crouching at the feet of a man (Cortese 35). Such poses regularly appear in a number of advertisements for clothing, including those by Guess or Gucci.

Such poses can serve a dual purpose. In addition to showing subordination, these images can also be used to define the sexual availability of the models. The woman in the Guess ad seductively gazes out at her audience (Fig. 12). Like many other ads by the company, it "is associating an edge of danger with its brand name, a strategy that plays directly on the urgency and ambivalence of adolescents' sexual impulses" (Moog 155). As the model demonstrates, women shown reclining in advertisements frequently have their legs spread and/or their chest pressed forward. Meanwhile, the woman in the Gucci ad kneels on gravel in front of a shirtless man (Fig. 13). Both of these women illustrate the fantasy of the sexually available woman. This is one of the many roles that women in ads featuring sexual imagery are repeatedly made to play, even though the two most

common are probably the pure, innocent "fair maiden" and the sensual, exotic "dark lady" (Barthel 72).

The idea that "sex sells" is a common theme in advertisements. While some ads coyly hint at the subject with slightly suggestive pictures and double entendres in their text, others are blatant with their message. An ad for D&G Parfums features three people dancing (Fig. 14). The two women wear skimpy tops which look as if they are the cut-up remains of white tee-shirts. Everyone looks as if they have been doused with water, so the shirts have become nearly transparent in their wet state. The man in the ad seems to be staring at one of the women's breasts.

If the direction of the man's gaze is not clear enough in that ad, Lucky Brand has its own fragrance ad that makes sure that the audience knows exactly where its featured male is looking (Fig. 15). His surprised face is practically shoved into the woman's cleavage, which is prominently displayed as it bursts out of her very low cut midriff top. Playing the part of the temptress, she appears to ignore him as she gazes out at the audience while seductively popping a cherry into her mouth. To further emphasize the message, the ad appears to have been signed "Let Lucky! XXXOOO."

Some ads want there to be absolutely no confusion about the sexual elements of their images. Yves Saint Laurent developed a particularly offensive ad for Opium, one of their perfume fragrances (Fig. 16). It features Sophie Dahl, the model from the ad for Versace Jeans Couture. The only thing she wears is a pair of high heel shoes and a gold necklace and bracelet set. Her skin looks incredibly pale against the black backdrop. She lies on a slight platform that supports her hips and shoulders. She arches her back and presses her chest forward while fondling one of her breasts. Her legs are bent and spread open, and her head is thrown back as it hangs over the edge of the platform.

The ad is so blatant in its sexual imagery that it comes as no surprise that the image drew a large amount of criticism. In fact, according to the Advertising Standard Authority's annual report, it was the most complained about poster in 2000. One in three complaints about billboards was about it, and it eventually became the most complained about advertisement in the last five years ("Naked"). It was eventually removed, due to the outcry about how offensive and degrading to women it was.

When advertisements are not exploiting a woman as a whole, it is not uncommon for only sections of her body to be shown (Fig. 17). This symbolic dismembering acts to reduce her to a series of parts. She is not seen as a whole person. Ads that focus on the torso imply that "all that is really important about a woman is between her neck and knees" (Cortese 31). A woman shown without a head can have no brain, and if she doesn't have a face, then she seems to have no real individuality or personality. A woman without legs or feet cannot move, making her more subservient and dependent. This objectification sends the message that these women are somewhat less than human (Cortese 31). Studies have proven that, reducing a person to the level of a "thing" instead of a human being is almost always the first step to justifying violence against that person (Still Killing Us Softly).

This violence issue is sometimes openly expressed in advertisements. In an effort to differentiate between the characteristics of masculinity and femininity, male images are often displayed in connection to dominance and violence. This is frequently directed toward women, showing them "as victims of violence, potential violence, or the threat of violence" (Cortese 73). One of the more notorious examples of this is a promotional campaign that was run by Versace. The series of advertisements, which was sometimes unofficially referred to as

the "dead women ads," featured a number of women in uncomfortable positions, looking as if they had been murdered.

An example of one such ad features Madonna (Fig. 18). She appears to have fallen backwards and head-first down a flight of stairs. She lies with the top of her head on one step as the edges of others seem to be painfully digging into her shoulders, waist, and legs. Her face is expressionless as her eyes stare blankly off into space. Because she is sprawled out upside-down, her breasts look as if they are about to slip out of the low cut top of her dress. One of her arms extends toward the camera so that we can see the apple that she holds in her hand. It has a bite taken out of it, bringing to mind the story of Snow White's poisoned apple.

Unlike most women who have been the victims of violence, she has been given a very glamorous death. There is no sign of blood or injury. She is carefully posed on the steps, instead of lying in a heap at the bottom of them or twisted into some unnatural position. She is made-up, showing no sign of a death-like pallor, and her hair is carefully spread out across the bottom step. Most importantly, she is wearing a Versace gown which has remained undamaged in the fall.

Such advertisements are often another attempt to capitalize on sex, this time by linking it with danger. Many of these violent ads display images of fearful or intimidated women being grabbed, restrained, surprised by strangers or intruders, or running as if pursued (Cortese 72-73). There are reoccurring images of the "dark stranger." Hidden in the background or possibly only implied by a shadow, the image is suppose to inspire thoughts of mystery and romance. At the same time, it also suggests impending danger (Slim Hopes). The underlying message often seems to be that the woman should submit to this stranger; in fact, she should *want* to submit to him (Cortese 73).

The earlier advertisement for Armani features the dark stranger (Fig 8). The majority of the ad is dominated by a young woman wearing a leather coat, which she has pulled tightly around herself. The rest of the ad has a hazy, overcast look to it, giving the impression that she is outside on a cold, wet day. This is further emphasized by the fact that the approaching "dark stranger" is carrying an open umbrella. There is a slightly threatening feel to the ad. The young woman wears pale pink lipstick with a faint blue tint, making her look cold. Smudged eyeliner gives the skin below her eyes a slightly swollen, bruised look. By wrapping one arm around her waist and clutching at the top of her coat with her other hand, she appears to be trying to cover herself up. Her look of licensed withdrawal gives her audience the impression that she is oblivious to the man who is approaching her. The resulting impression is one of defenselessness.

Even in seemingly harmless ads, the threat of violence can still be seen lurking just out of sight. Many ads illustrate examples of rough play. Men and women may innocently wrestling with or chasing each other (Fig. 19). Ads may show a man displaying his strength by picking his companion up or carrying her around. In these benign instances of mock assault, there is still a hint of danger. For the time being, the man is simply playing, but he has the potential to do real harm to the woman if he wanted to (Cortese 74).

Men have historically been positively depicted in ads that feature both sexes, in contrast to the negative portrayals of women. They are often pictured towering above the women. The men tend to be shown larger in relative size than the females they appear with (Cortese 27). They are characterized as the strong, serious, dependable one, even when modeling only underwear (Cortese 33).

Adding Insult to Injury: Representations of Female Minorities in Ads

All of the previous examples could apply to any woman, but minority women are also represented in a number of additional ways. When a female of another ethnic or racial group is shown, she frequently has very Caucasian features, especially if she is African American. She generally has straight hair, lighter skin, and facial features associated with a more Euro-American look. These characteristics are especially common in mainstream ads that a predominately white or a mixed audience might see. An exception might be made if the woman is advertising a product that is specifically marketed to a certain group or if the advertiser is trying to play off of the public's view of her race or ethnicity.

Each group has its own set of stereotypes that are displayed in ads. African Americans who do not have Caucasian traits are likely to be portrayed as wild, primitive, or animal-like. Explicit references might be made to emphasize their darker skin tone (Cortese 92). Women of a Latin American background are often defined in one of three ways. They may be the "Luscious Latina" who is sexually promiscuous, the culturally subservient and passive woman, or the overly emotional comic spitfire (Cortese 95). Asia women are associated with the mystique of the Orient and are often depicted as the delicate geisha or the exotic dragon lady.

Fig. 20 shows an example of one of the many stereotypes of the African American woman. Since she does not have the supposedly ideal features, she becomes one of the cliched versions of the black woman. Looking like she just stepped off the set of a Blaxploitation movie from the 1970s, she has an afro and wears large gold jewelry. She wears a leather outfit, which features a top that is totally open in the front, exposing the side of her breast. A oversized pair of fashionably "retro" glasses cover a large portion of her face.

Another minority archetype is shown in an advertisement for Hennessy Cognac (Fig. 21). The picture shows two women. At first glance, the text next to them seems to be identifying their dietary choices. The white woman ("vegetarian") chooses to avoid meat, while the Asian woman ("man-eater") does not. But a closer look reveals the bias. If the Asian woman simply was a *meat* eater, she should be labeled as a carnivore. The term "*man-eater*" carries very strong connotations. When used to refer to a woman, it implies that she is a sexually promiscuous individual who uses men. Thus, she fits perfectly into the role of the exotic "dark lady." She even appears dark in the picture, wearing a black dress and applying dark lipstick while standing partially in the shadow of her companion, who has also been reduced to a stereotype. The white woman has the light-skinned, blond-haired, blue-eyed features of an idealized model. She wears a light blue dress to further emphasize her paleness.

The Effects of Negative Advertisements

The public is often influenced by advertisements without really noticing them. A person spends an average of about two seconds looking at ads while flipping through a magazine (Cortese 27). People are constantly bombarded with images in ads. It is estimated that a person sees an average of 400-600 ads every day in magazines, billboards, television, and newspapers. By the time we are 60, we will have been exposed to 40-50 million advertisements ("About-Face Facts on the Media").

After studying the images displayed in advertisements, it becomes very obvious that one of their main concerns is to present a picture of what is currently considered to be ideal, especially when it comes to women. The "perfect provocateur" in ads is a hollow shell that only represents a female.

Normal women cannot achieve this look, because it is created artificially. As Jean Kilbourne states in her video Still Killing Us Softly:

Failure is inevitable, because the ideal is based on absolute flawlessness. She never has any lines or wrinkles, because that would indicate that she had the bad taste and poor judgment to grow older. She certainly has no scars or blemishes. Indeed, she has no pores. It's a look that's based absolutely on cosmetics, airbrushing, camera angles. . . It cannot be achieved. It's inhuman in its flawlessness, and it's the only standard of beauty that there is for women in the culture (Fig. 22).

Although all of these images are unnaturally created, women are still held to the standards that they raise. The current ideal for young Caucasian women is to be between 5'8"-5'10" and weigh 110-120 pounds *or less* ("About-Face: Gallery of Offenders [Archive]"). Because this body type is unattainable for most women unless they experience borderline starvation, many young women in the United States are literally starving themselves to death in order to try to fit the image created by the advertising and entertainment industries. The reality is that only 5% of women are genetically capable of achieving the current "ideal" look (Fig. 23). This minority is made up of unusually tall, slender women who tend to have slightly broad shoulders, narrow hips, and long legs (Slim Hopes). Their body shape is often described as being an inverted triangle, as compared to the bottom heavy pear shape that most women have.

Despite the contradictory messages we receive, even these models cannot achieve the ideal without help. As both Jean Kilbourne quotations stated earlier, the images we see in ads are carefully manufactured. Models must watch their weight and exercise to maintain the slender, toned look that is preferred by the people that they work for. Even plus-sized models are expected to have this toned appearance ("Getting Started"). Many of the thinner models also get

breast augmentations, due to the fact that most women with their genetic body type tend to naturally have small breasts. This does not fit with many print advertisers' preference for a more voluptuous, large breasted physique. When working, models spent hours having their hair and make-up done by professionals. Despite all of this work, the pictures taken of them are *still* altered. This has become even more common now that computer programs can be used to touch-up and change pictures (Slim Hopes).

We cannot always trust our eyes. Ads that give the impression of showing a woman segmented into different parts is, in reality, often a series of pictures taken of different women who specialize in modeling specific body parts (Fig. 17). In an even more extreme example, the cover of the September 1994 issue of Mirabella featured the picture of a beautiful brunette next to the caption "Who is the Face of America?" (Fig. 24). The magazine had hoped to find a woman who would personify the all-American beauty. Instead, the photographer ended up designing a woman who did not exist. She was created on a computer using parts of other models, which were then arranged to create the "perfect" cover model (Slim Hopes).

Within American society, people's views of reality have come to be heavily influenced by the media. Advertisements are everywhere. They have become such a part of our world that most people have come to view them as an accurate likeness of everyday life (Cortese 11). Although ads *do* try to mirror society, they often only reflect back certain aspects of life. They serve as representations. What is shown is not always the norm or even factual.

The main objective of advertisements is to persuade potential consumers to purchase particular goods and/or services. Women constitute a large part of this consumer market. They make over 80% of overall purchases of consumer goods (Barthel 7). Furthermore, although most of the target audience consists

of women, many of the people who work to create the ads are men (Barthel 6). They often include women in the pictures because they hope that their female customers will relate to the image and that their male customers will be attracted to it.

Advertisers try to be persuasive with those male and female customers by using beliefs, ideologies, and values already held by their audience. They then redirect these tenets so as to manipulate the people who see the ads. For example, ads might display a depiction of ethnic and gender relations as they function in society (Cortese 11-12). The hope is that the ads will strike a chord in the viewers because they can identify with something portrayed on the page.

As ideas and values change, the advertising industry changes to match them. One such example came after the Women's Liberation movement. As women have become more liberated, advertisers have worked to use these new ideas to their advantage. Many of the resulting ads have been aimed at the women who are not necessarily strong supporters of the movement, but who "are likely to try on the costume of the liberated woman just as they might assume any other instant identity" (Barthel 125). These ads assure women that they can be liberated while remaining feminine.

The advertisers do not necessarily hold these views themselves; they simply wish to co-opt movements for change (Still Killing Us Softly). In order to do this, they flatter their customers by portraying them as females who have "deftly mastered the roles of superlover, supercook, superprofessional, supermom, superartist, supergardener, and superhousekeeper" (Moog 32). Since the advertisers may have not really embraced the new movement, they are not limited to supporting it if another message will better sell their goods.

Instead of using movements for change to their advantage, advertisements sometimes blatantly trivialize such efforts. An ad for Olay encourages its

viewers to “become a woman of the cloth” (Fig 25). The phrase “man of the cloth” is used to describe a male serving as a leader within a religious group. Despite the similar phrasing, the ad is not trying to imply that women should fight patriarchal religious beliefs which say that only men are allowed to hold positions of power within the church. Instead, it simply means that women should use Olay’s new Daily Facial Cleansing Cloths.

Another ad, for Nina Footwear, proclaims, “If you’re going to break the glass ceiling, you’ll need comfortable shoes” (Fig. 26). It focuses on a woman’s foot wearing a pair of sensible black heels, which she uses to crack the metaphorical glass ceiling. Unfortunately, in an attempt to get a good shot of her feet, thus emphasizing the shoes, the audience looks up toward the woman from a low angle. This results in them being put in a position where they are peeking up the woman’s skirt. While the text appears to be positive, the overall message seems to be that the woman will ultimately get ahead in her career based on how she dresses, instead of on her skills and intelligence.

In addition to trivializing external struggles that women face, ads also minimize the internal ones. In an advertisement for Reebok and Lady’s Foot Locker, the text above a group of women announces “Perfect balance...found” (Fig 27). The aforementioned “balance” is not an inner condition coming from mental or emotional well being. It is the physical balance that the women are forced to maintain as they stand one-legged on an unsteady piece of equipment during a workout routine.

It’s Not All Bad. . .

Fortunately, there has been an increased awareness of the way that women are treated by the advertising industry. Some advertisers have begun to make an effort to promote more positive and realistic images of females.

Plus-size models are becoming more common. In addition to being seen more frequently, they are also more likely to be portrayed in a positive light. They are no longer the lovable goofballs or the self-conscious women who hate the way they look. The resulting message is that women of a normal weight can be strong, confident, and sexy.

A series of advertisements for Avenue supports this message. They feature Kate Dillon, a former supermodel who suffered from anorexia in order to maintain her former size 4 figure before switching to the plus-size industry after a series of health scares (Dillon 141-2, 144). In the ads she looks happy and healthy. Although she is surrounded by attractive men, they are slightly blurred as the camera focuses on her. She dominates the image, pushing the men to the edges and background of the picture

The first ad shows her and a male model sitting outside (Fig. 28). He has his arm around her, and she leans back against his shoulder. Instead of focusing all of her attention on him or clinging to his side in an attempt to garner his attention, she instead gazes confidently at her audience with a hint of a smile. She appears to be quite comfortable as the center of attention.

Advertisement number two shows her sitting next to another attractive male (Fig. 29). They look as though they might be engaged in a conversation with someone just outside of the frame. She is so caught up in the discussion that she does not even acknowledge her audience. Like the other ad, she seems to be every at ease with herself. She makes no attempt to hide herself or appear apologetic for her weight. Why should she? As the ad asks, "What does size have to do with anything?"

Plus-size models are not only depicted as attractive, but also as sexy. One magazine layout features a very happy looking woman receiving a massage from a handsome man (Fig. 30). She wears a sheet, high heel shoes, and some

expensive looking jewelry. The massage is taking place outside of what appears to be a large, beautiful house. The image of wealth and indulgence is further emphasized by the glass of champagne that she holds. The bottle and a second glass sit on a nearby table, perhaps waiting for her companion to enjoy after he has finished pampering her.

These ads are not just reserved for clothing lines and businesses that only cater to plus-size women. Many businesses that previously used only thin models in their advertisements are now showing a variety of women. Parisian and Bloomingdale's are two such business (Fig. 31). Many high-fashion designers are also beginning to expand their range of sizes by starting new lines that allow women of multiple sizes to wear their clothing. Amongst these designers is Liz Claiborne, who started Elisabeth, a clothing line of sportswear for larger women.

While these advertisements support plus-size women by showing positive images, others show their support by addressing the ridiculous images that are promoted by the advertising industry. An ad for The Body Shop provides such an example (Fig. 32). Its text declares, "There are 3 billion women who don't look like supermodels and only 8 who do." The picture features a naked Barbie doll reclining on a divan. She is not a normal Barbie, though. Mattel's famous doll has long been criticized for her inhumanly unrealistic body, but this particular Barbie looks like a real woman. She has wide hips, heavy thighs, and rolls of fat on her belly. Although she is heavier than other Barbies, she shows no hint of self-consciousness as she stretches out in a seductive pose. Such ads show that some advertisers are becoming more enlightened about the treatment of women and their weight, but there are also other new messages that address such issues as age.

Even though older women have traditionally been treated poorly in advertisements, there are some new ads that are going against that trend. Money Magazine does a good job of demonstrating this (Fig. 33). The ad shows four older women and a girl on the beach. Everyone wears swimsuits and swim caps, and the women wear sunglasses. They all look as though they are having a good time. Each has a large smile on her face as she wraps her arms around the other women next to her. These are not the docile grannies or cantankerous senior citizens shown in many ads. These women are out living their lives and enjoying themselves, regardless of what age they are.

At the opposite end of the age spectrum are some positive ads featuring girls. Instead of being trivialized, they are given a sense of importance and worth. "Little girls have big dreams, too" is the theme of a series of ads being run by State Farm. Each ad tells about the dreams of a different girl as she aspires for greatness in her sport of choice. One of these ads focuses on a girl who falls in love with the game of golf after her father buys her a few clubs and teaches her to swing (Fig. 34). The text finishes with the advertisers announcing, "State Farm is a proud supporter of women's sports and women's dreams."

State Farm is not the only company to promote images of athletic women. Nike runs many ads featuring famous female athletes modeling its shoes and clothing. Unlike the stereotypically waif-like models, these women are strong and healthy looking. They proudly show off their figures, which are thick with muscles.

A Few Final Thoughts...

Even though there are some positive advertisements out there, they are far fewer than the less than positive one. There are not nearly enough ads that portray women realistically. It is no surprise that ads do not reflect the real

woman. Advertisers profit from women who have poor self images (Slim Hopes). Numerous studies have proven that women feel worse about themselves after being exposed to pictures of thin models or after looking through women's fashion magazines ("About-Face Facts on the Media"). The underlying message of many ads seems to be, "You're ugly! You're disgusting! Buy something!!" Unfortunately, many young girls and women believe this implied opinion. It is hard to think otherwise when we have grown up with societal images telling us that we should feel shame and self-disgust if we do not meet the standard set for us (Still Killing Us Softly).

Many advertised products try to present an image of being the instant solution to life's most complex problems. They offer false promises of fulfillment (Still Killing Us Softly). Through this process, the female body becomes nothing more than a piece of merchandise. It serves as decoration for a good. We never see ourselves reflected in the advertisements because that's not the purpose of most ads. Instead, advertisers want us to see what their product will do for us. The advertisement plays on our hopes and dreams to create a fantasy of what we might be, but only if we use the advertised good (Moog 35).

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“One hundred fifty.” Personal Homepage. Kate Dillon: a fan’s page. 11 Nov. 2001. <<http://home.att.net/~plumbagel/kate/kate43.html>> A page from the picture gallery, featuring Ms. Dillon in an advertisement for Avenue clothing.

“One hundred three.” Personal Homepage. Kate Dillon: a fan’s page. 11 Nov. 2001. <<http://home.att.net/~plumbagel/kate/kate43.html>> A page from the picture gallery, featuring Ms. Dillon in an advertisement for Avenue clothing.

“One hundred sixty-eight.” Personal Homepage. Kate Dillon: a fan’s page. 11 Nov. 2001. <<http://home.att.net/~plumbagel/kate/kate43.html>> A page from the picture gallery, featuring Ms. Dillon in an advertisement for Bloomingdale’s.

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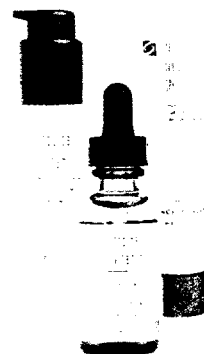
The bad news?... sunbathing, smoking and drinking can cause you to look old before your time.

The good news?... thanks to the pioneering research of SkinCeuticals, we have skin care products with ingredients like vitamin-C and microfine zinc-oxide that prevent premature aging and improve the appearance of existing damage.

SKINCEUTICALS®

Practice safe skin care - for the health and beauty of your skin.

For more information, please call 800-811-1660, or visit our website at www.skinceuticals.com





GUESS
kids



How do you dress a doll
who's more than 12" tall?



Barbie®
Style

A



B



world premiere

YOU'RE INVITED TO VIEW THE VICTORIA'S SECRET
CANNES 2000 FASHION SHOW,
WEBCAST LIVE ON MAY 18.
WWW.VICTORIASSECRET.COM

78



VERSACE

JEANS COUTURE

FOR INFO CALL 1-888-3-VERSACE

Mess you up!

IT'LL
CHANGE
YOU!

THEY DON'T
WANT YOU
TO KNOW!

DON'T
CHEW
EXTRA
POLAR
ICE

JUST
GUM?
NO WAY!



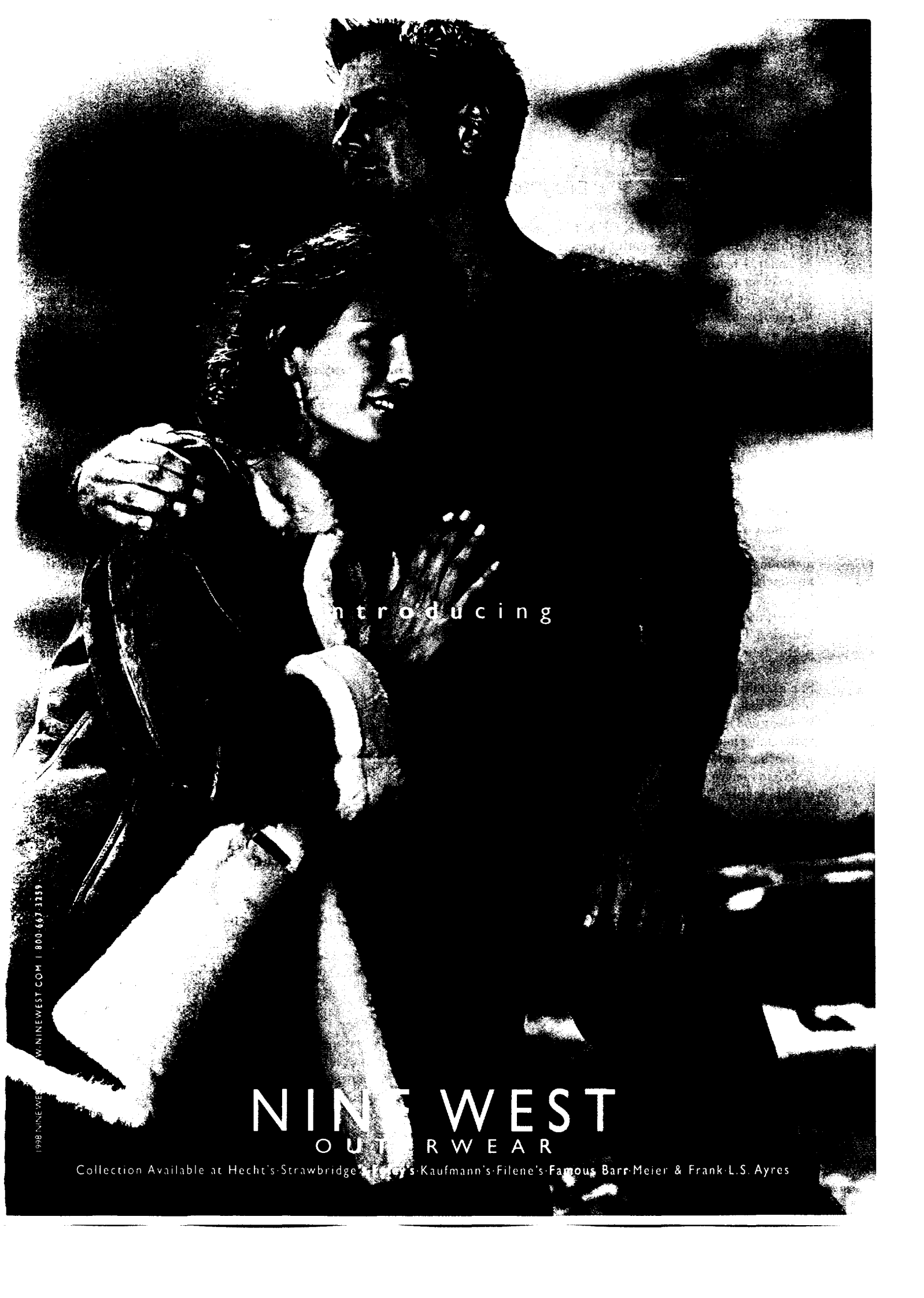
introd.....

ARMANI
COLLEZIONI



RALPH
RALPH LAUREN

THE NEXT GENERATION OF RALPH LAUREN FRAGRANCE



Introducing

NINE WEST

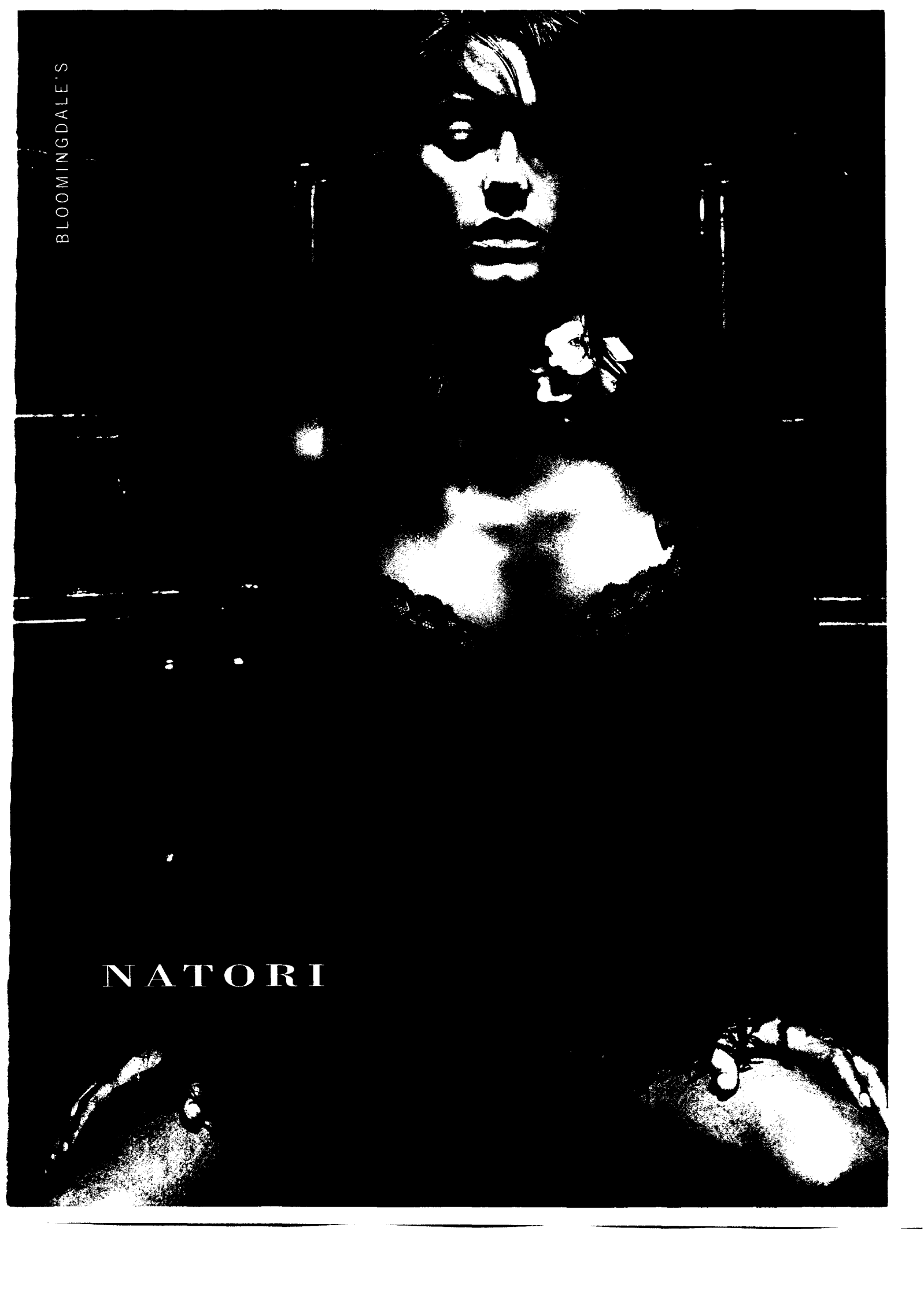
OUTWEAR

Collection Available at Hecht's Strawbridge & Carey's Kaufmann's Filene's Famous Barr Meier & Frank L.S. Ayres

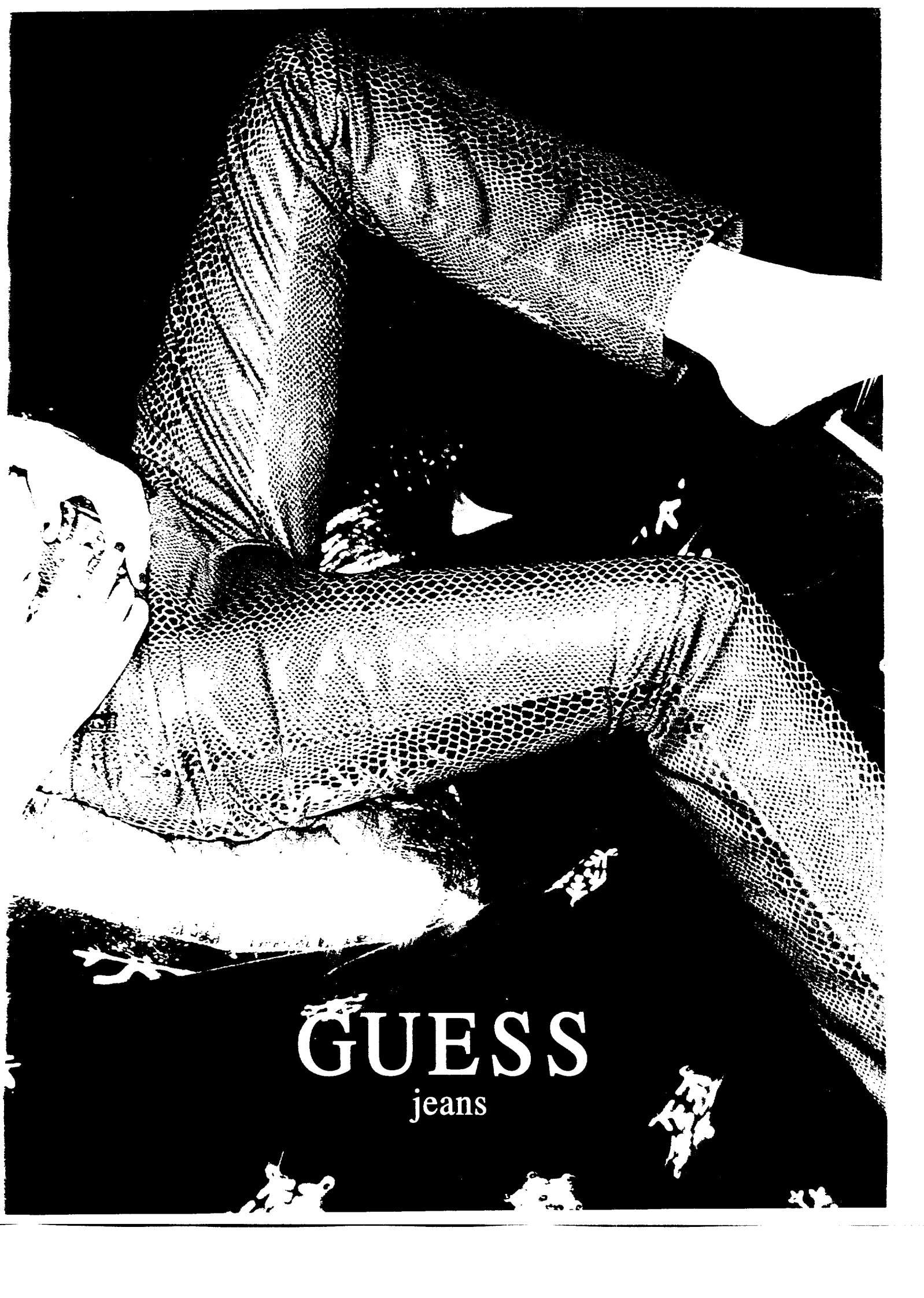
1998 NINE WEST WWW.NINEWEST.COM | 800-667-3339

BLOOMINGDALE'S

NATORI







GUESS
jeans



© 1997 Guccio Gucci
New York, New York

GUCCI

EUROITALIA SRI MONZA MI ITALY

D&G BOUTIQUES SOHO N.Y. / LA...
...EDMAN SAKS FIFTH AVENUE NO...

D&G

DOLCE & GABBANA

PARFUMS



Get Lucky!
XXX000



Lucky You
LUCKY BRAND



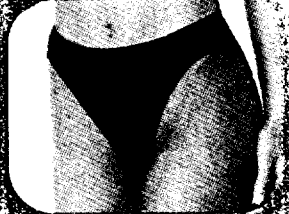
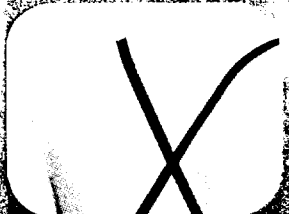
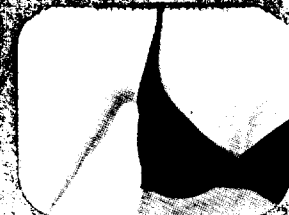
NEW FRAGRANCES FOR MEN AND FOR WOMEN

HECHT'S • STRAWBRIDGE'S • FOLEY'S • ROBINSON'S-MAY • KAUFMANN'S
FILENE'S • FAMOUS-BARR • L.S. AYRES • THE JONES STORE • MEIER & FRANK



advertisement courtesy of
http://www.ananova.com/news/story/sm_268992.html

PHOTOS: KENISCHUNG STORES: 1-800-WACOAL-0 www.wacoal.com NORDSTROM BLOOMINGDALES MACYS/WEST



PERFECTLY SLEEK. PERFECT CONTOUR. COLLECTION BY WACOAL.

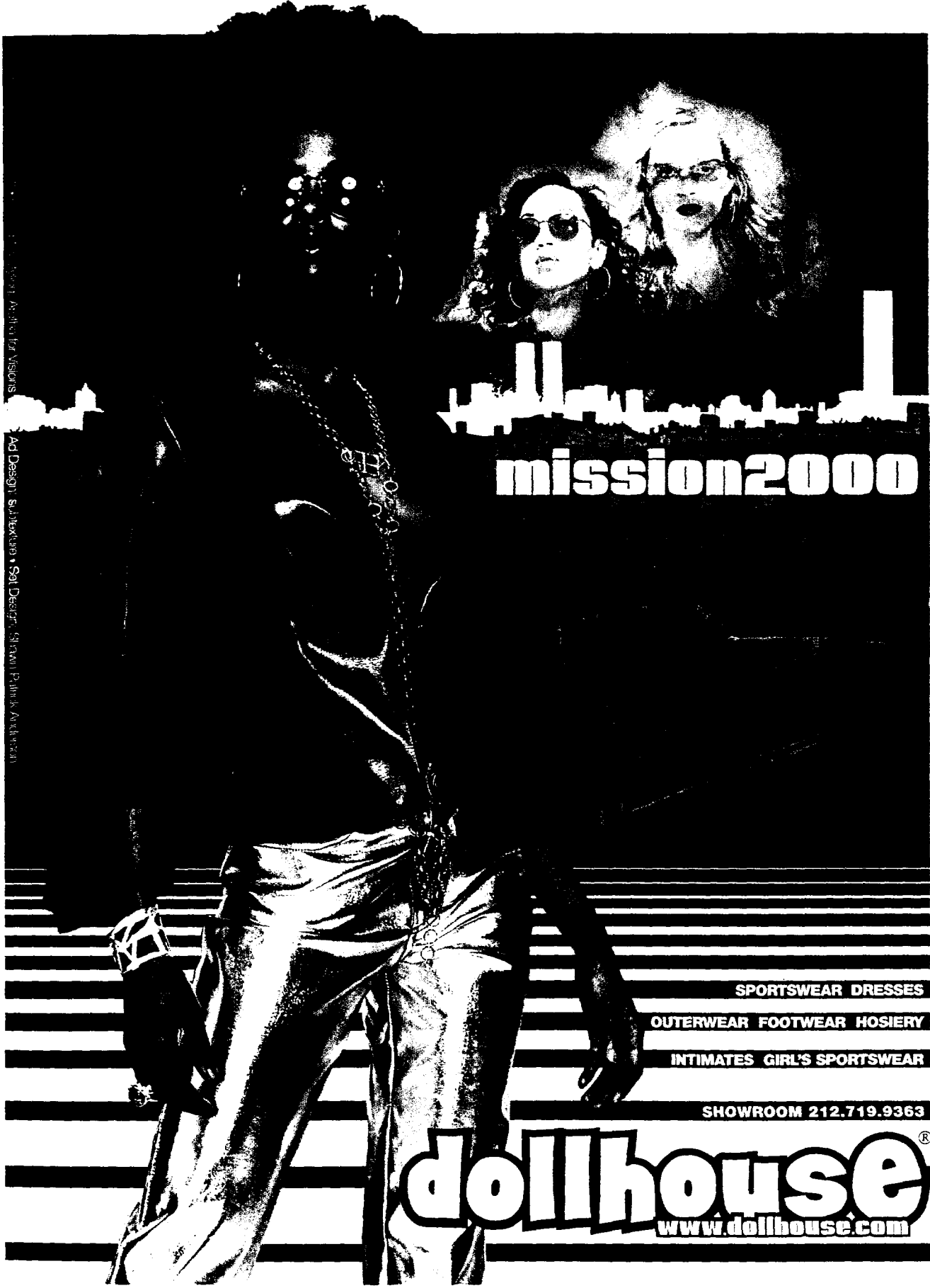


advertisement courtesy of
<http://www.media-awareness.ca/eng/med/class/teamedia/versace.htm>

FIG. 18



FIG. 19



Special Advertising Sections
Ad Design: Subterfuge • S&L Design • Steven Patrick Anderson

mission2000

SPORTSWEAR DRESSES

OUTERWEAR FOOTWEAR HOSIERY

INTIMATES GIRL'S SPORTSWEAR

SHOWROOM 212.719.9363

dollhouse®

www.dollhouse.com

marieclaire www.marieclaire.com | ONLY @basingstade

FIG. 20

vegetarian

man-eater

mix accordingly



FIG. 21



all **NEW** shades

COOL

EFFECT™

shadows
that **COOL**
as they
color

The water-based
formula slips on,
feels cool, stays put.
Now how cool is that?

www.maybelline.com

Josee is wearing Cool Effect™ Cooling Cream Eye Shadow and Cool Effect™ Cooling Cream Eye Liner in New Cold Mauve. ©2000 Maybelline LLC, DIST.

FIG. 22



E

D

F

916 \$15.

B The backless micro-chemise in sheer mesh with matching thong. Black (93). Imported nylon. Sizes XS,S,M,L. CHEMISE, J5-137-853 \$28.

E The mesh kerchief top with matching pant (not shown). Ties in front and back. Geometric print (99). Imported nylon. Sizes XS,S,M,L. KERCHIEF, J5-137-855 \$38.

Imported. Sizes XS,S,M,L,XL. SARONG, J5-137-851 \$18.

Imported. Sizes XS,S,M,L,XL. SARONG, J5-137-850 \$48.

CALL FREE 1-800-888-8200

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FIG. 23



advertisement courtesy of
<http://www.finearts.yorku.ca/rwickens/CTTPOnlineAdvance/Mirabella.html>

FIG. 24

become a **woman** of the **cloth**

ew **dailyfacials**



have a little bit of

FIG. 25



IF YOU'RE GOING TO BREAK THE GLASS CEILING,
YOU'LL NEED COMFORTABLE SHOES.

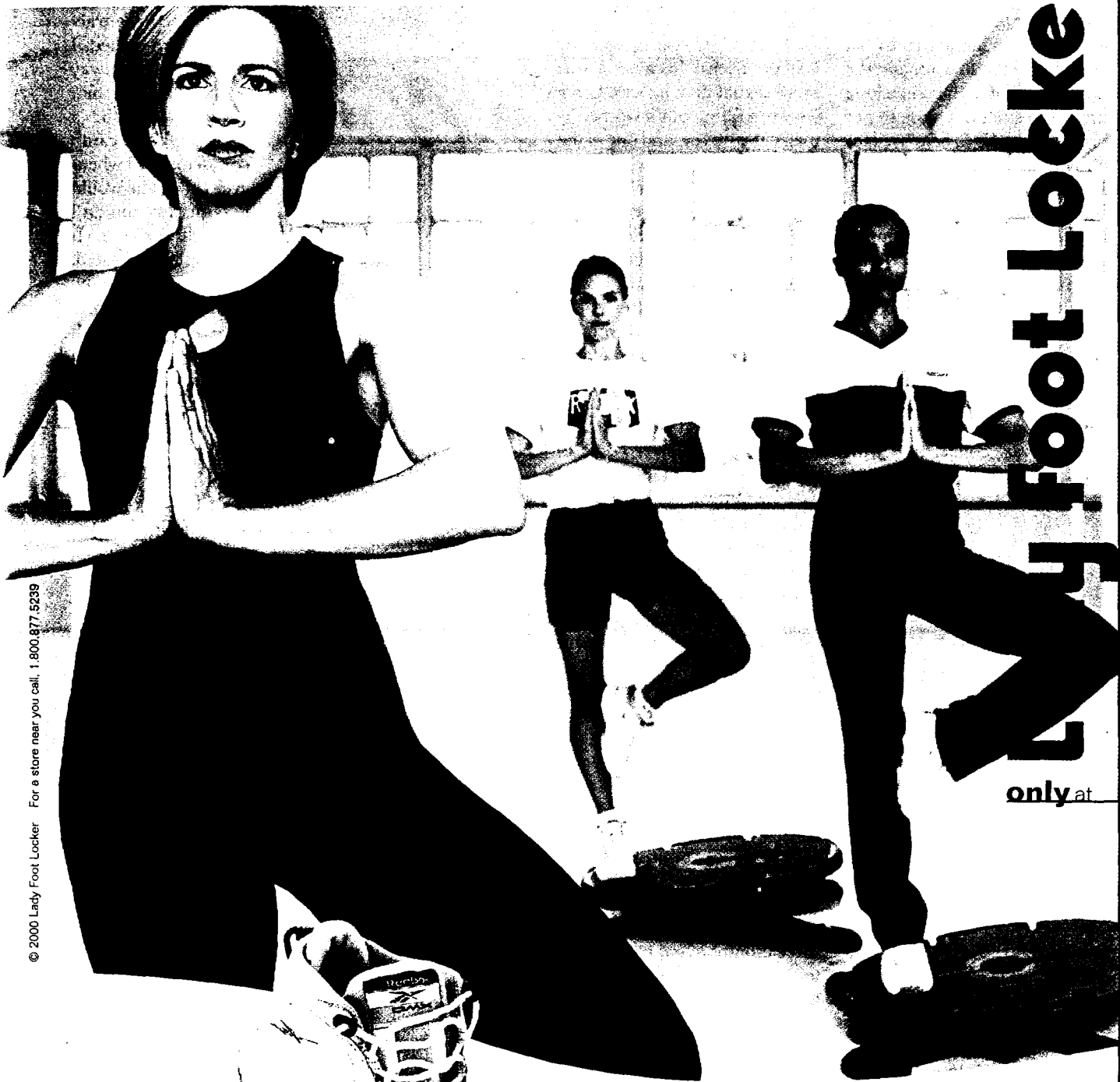
Nina Comfort's gel-cushioned pumps are shock absorbing so you won't have to watch your step quite so much on the way to the top, leaving you free to concentrate on watching your back. Widths AAA to EE, sizes 4-12. For the store nearest you, visit ninashoes.com or call 1-800-233-NINA.

© 2000 NINA FOOTWEAR

nina[®]

FIG. 26

Perfect balance...found.



Lady Foot Locker
only at

footlocker.com



The Reebok Power Trainer II DMX aerobic shoe with the latest DMX moving air technology is powered from within. Get them and the exclusive apparel collection only at Lady Foot Locker.



POWERED BY
DMX

Reebok, the Vector Logo, and DMX are registered trademarks of Reebok International

FIG. 27



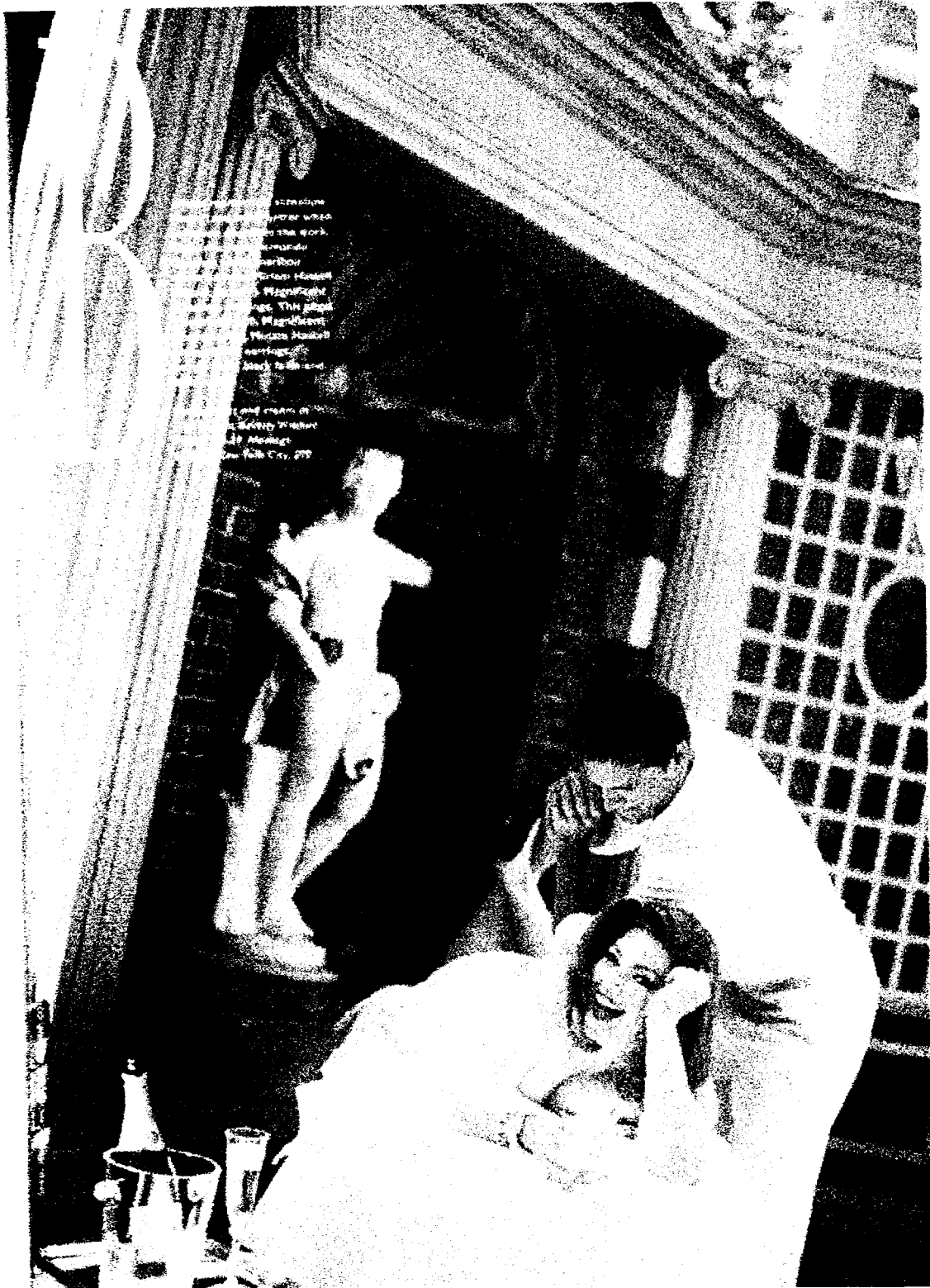
advertisement courtesy of
<http://home.att.net/~plumnbagel3/kate150.html>

FIG. 28



advertisement courtesy of
<http://home.att.net/~plumbagel2/kate103.html>

FIG. 29



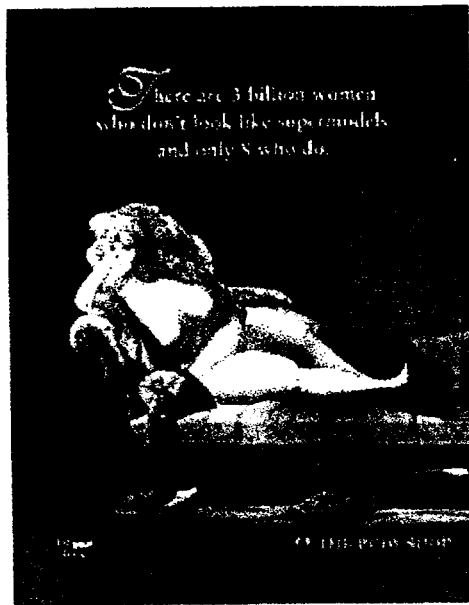
advertisement courtesy of
<http://home.att.net/~plumbagel/kate/kate43.html>

FIG. 30



advertisement courtesy of
<http://home.att.net/~plumbagel3/kate168.html>

FIG. 31



advertisement courtesy of
<http://www.about-face.org/light/progress/gallery/image1.html>



advertisement courtesy of
<http://www.about-face.org/light/progress/gallery2/image10.html>

FIG 33

It began with a gallery of one,
a father shouting "Watch me, Daddy!"
before a swing that launched more earth than ball.
With talent and desire
those three junior clubs

in a little cloth bag became the keys to a future.

And after endless miles of fairways
and thousands of buckets of balls, she's poised
to leave a mark on the world
as indelible as those her shots once left on her
parents' aluminum siding.

State Farm is a proud
supporter of women's sports and
women's dreams.



Little girls have big dreams, too.

Be sure to watch the 2001 State Farm Classic,
August 31 and September 1 on ESPN 2, and September 2 on ESPN.
Check your local listing for exact times.



State Farm Insurance Companies ♦ Home Offices: Bloomington, Illinois ♦ statefarm.com

FIG. 34