

<b>Institution:</b> University of Kent		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 33 Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Women We See: Improving Representation in Advertising on London's Transport Network		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2017 to 2020		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Dr Kaitlyn Regehr	Senior Lecturer	2017 to present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2018 to 2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> No		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b>		
<p><i>Women We See</i>, was a participatory research project that explored women's experience of mainstream advertising in London, and identified the misrepresentation and under-representation of the city's diverse populations. Responding directly to the research, the Mayor for London, as part of a campaign to drive gender equality across the capital, launched a competition that challenged brands to produce positive and inclusive advertising campaigns. The competition, the winning campaigns, and the widespread media coverage enriched public debate and raised awareness of issues around gender and diversity in advertising by challenging stereotypes and industry norms. This informed policy-making and the regulatory environment, enhanced the economic value of the winning brands, and has led to sustained positive change and legacy effects in the advertising sector.</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b>		
<p>Since she joined the University of Kent in 2017, Regehr's research has centred on media, gender, politics, and relationship cultures in the digital age. Through a series of projects and creative outputs she has addressed urgent questions around sexual consent, gender role expectations in society, intersectionality and gender representation, and safe digital practice. Regehr's research has been disseminated widely through academic publications, major media outlets, including the BBC, newspapers and magazines, international film festivals, high-profile podcasts, social media and via direct interventions with school pupils and teachers.</p> <p>Through projects running prior to and concurrently with <i>Women We See</i> (2018), the central project of this case study, Regehr has developed a methodology and understanding of intersectionality and gender representation that was key to the social and economic impact evidenced in this case study. With the practice-research project <i>The League of Exotic Dancers</i> (2017), Regehr led a documentary team embedded within one of the United States' first sex workers unions (the Exotic Dancer's League, established in 1955). Through collecting the stories of women involved in the League, and exploring their experiences and representations in a wider social context, the project challenged widely held gendered and ageist perceptions of burlesque. This research was disseminated through the documentary film <i>Tempest Storm</i> and a monograph [R1].</p> <p>Using the same methodological approach, Regehr questioned the ways in which technological properties of online digital communities feed the gender politics of toxic masculinity and anti-feminist discourses [R2, R3]. This research has been disseminated through her BBC3 documentary, <i>Inside the Secret World of Incels</i> (2019), and journal articles and has received widespread media coverage. The <i>Women We See</i> project developed directly from Regehr's</p>		

exploration of gendered representation and experience in *The League of Exotic Dancers* through a collaboration with Professor Jessica Ringrose (University College London). Commissioned by the Mayor of London's office, the project's subject was the prevalence of gender stereotypes in advertising. The aim of the project was to establish a culture of advertising that addressed women in all their diversity. Drawing on Regehr's expertise, it did this by collecting documentary-style interviews with women as they travelled between different boroughs throughout London. The project also included focus groups in two London schools and a quantitative survey of 2,000 men and women across London. This data provided the backbone for exposing, foregrounding, and then mapping diverse women's experiences of advertising in public spaces.

The research revealed that Londoners do not feel represented by adverts and wanted to see advertising better reflecting the city's population. In particular, the research showed Londoners want: a) to see diverse body types; b) adverts that showcase diverse representations of race, culture, age, ability, and religion; and c) advertisers to stop the practice of hidden alterations of women's bodies through photoshopping. Overall, the research showed that Londoners want advertisements based on realistic, useful, and interesting information, and which promote gender and sexual diversity. This research has been disseminated in a short documentary film and a number of publications [R4]. Impact occurred following the publication of Ringrose and Regehr's report on the findings of the project, *Women We See: Experiences of Gender and Diversity in London's Public Spaces* [R5], which recommended that advertisers tackle the issue of missing representation by considering how the intersecting issues of age, ability, culture, religious, ethnicity, gender and sexuality shape Londoners' identities and experiences. In direct response to the report, City Hall launched a competition challenging the advertising industry to address the lack of representation and diversity of women in advertisements on the London transport system.

### 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

[R1] Regehr, K., and Matilda, T., (2017), *The League of Exotic Dancers: Legends from American Burlesque*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. <https://kar.kent.ac.uk/76241/>

[R2] Regehr, K., (2020) In(cel)doctrination: How technologically facilitated misogyny moves violence off screens and on the streets, *New Media and Society*  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444820959019>

[R3] Ringrose, J., Whitehead, S., Jenkinson, A., and Regehr, K., (2020), *Play-Doh Vulvas and Felt Tip Dick Pics: Disrupting Phallogocentric Matter(s)* in *Sex Education: Reconceptualizing Educational Research Methodology* [Online] 10:259-291 <https://doi.org/10.7577/rem.3679>

[R4] Ringrose, J., and Regehr, K., (2020), *Feminist Counterpublics and Public Feminisms: Advancing a Critique of Racialized Sexualization in London's Public Advertising*, *SIGNS: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*. <https://doi.org/10.1086/709362>

[R5] Ringrose, J., and Regehr, K., (2017), *The Women We See: Experiences of Gender and Diversity in London's Public Spaces*, Report for Greater London Authority  
<https://kar.kent.ac.uk/76242/>

### 4. Details of the impact

#### Influencing decision making at the Office of the Mayor of London and raising public awareness

In 2018, Sadiq Khan, the Mayor of London, unveiled his #BehindEveryGreatCity campaign to drive gender equality across the capital. Responding directly to recommendations from the *Women We See* (WWS) research project, City Hall launched a competition to act as a catalyst for change in the advertising industry by addressing the lack of representation and diversity of women in

advertisements on the London transport system. The WWS research was integral, since it informed both the competition brief and the criteria for judging entries [a]. Indicating the economic and social importance of this issue to policy-makers in the capital, Transport for London (TfL) offered the winners £550,000 worth of prominent advertising space across the TfL network. The TfL network is one of the most valuable advertising estates in the world: 11.8 million journeys are taken on TfL tube, bus, and rail networks every day, and the TfL estate accounts for 20% of the advertising space across the UK and 40% of London's outdoor advertising [k]. Demonstrating the international reach of the research, the campaign was rolled out across the UK, Ireland, and the Netherlands on social and digital channels [c].

### **Enhancing the economic value of the winning brands**

Holland & Barrett's Me.No.Pause campaign, which focused on diverse women's experiences of menopause, won the competition. The Head of Marketing Campaigns for the Greater London Authority (GLA) confirmed in March 2019 that one of the reasons the Me.No.Pause campaign was chosen as a winner was 'how it responded to the research' [b]. The Chief Customer and Digital Officer at Holland & Barrett described how they engaged with the research: 'After reading the Women We See research and discovering that Londoners feel the women they see in advertising are not truly representative of the diversity of the city, we instantly knew that as a leading high-street retailer we wanted to try and help change this' [c]. Mothercare, celebrating the digitally untouched images of post-partum bodies of new mothers with their #bodyproudmum campaign, were competition runners-up. Their campaign responded directly to the research findings that 'Londoners want to see diverse body types' and that 'Londoners want advertisers to stop photoshopping images' [R5].

In terms of direct economic impacts, Holland & Barrett's Chief Marketing Officer reported in June 2019 that the Me.No.Pause campaign 'definitely paid back' for the brand in a number of ways. It boosted sales (delivering a 171% sales uplift in menopause-related products) and had a 100% positive response on social media, sending Holland & Barrett's 'positive brand buzz through the roof' [d]. It validated Holland & Barrett's strategy to reconsider their customer base and in particular women over the age of 45, namely 'audiences who aren't represented but who are nonetheless commercially important' [c]. To connect with these customers and as part of their longer-term sales strategy, more than 6,000 staff across 800 Holland & Barrett stores were provided with additional training to advise women on menopause matters [i].

The Mothercare campaign featured in a number of national press titles and on TV, including *Lorraine* and *Loose Women* (March 2019). Positive social media including reposts by celebrities and bloggers, increased digital conversation by 40%, and the campaign achieved over one billion total impressions, bringing tangible benefits to the company [e, f]. Reflecting the increased awareness of, and trust in, the brand, the campaign attracted 54,000 people to the Mothercare website and contributed to a 2.8% increase in market share compared to the period immediately before the campaign [f]. A YouGov survey (June 2019) of Mothercare's brand favourability illustrated a significant change, with an 18-20% increase in the proportion indicating that Mothercare was a brand that 'cares for parents', 'understands parenting issues', and is a 'brand I love' [f].

### **Sustaining positive change in the advertising sector by informing policymaking and the regulatory environment**

Minutes from TfL's Advertising Steering Group (ASG), which provides advice and guidance to TfL on the implementation of its advertising policy, reported that the response to the competition significantly exceeded expectations [g]. The winning campaigns succeeded in challenging attitudes around gender and diversity, while ensuring positive economic returns for the brands. This outcome led the ASG to suggest that the competition become an annual fixture, thereby ensuring a legacy for the research and persistency of its impact [g]. The competition was therefore relaunched in January 2019 with a focus on London's ethnic and racial diversity. TfL's Director of Customers and Revenue, reflecting on the potential for the competition to continue to drive

widespread change in the industry, stated, 'it was heartening to see how brands embraced the challenge last year and I look forward to seeing how they do again' [h].

Illustrating the longer-term impact of the research on the regulatory environment and the advertising sector more generally, Ringrose and Regehr's WWS report [R5] was sent by the GLA to the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA), the UK's advertising regulator. Acknowledging how the WWS research has informed the drive towards more representative advertising, the Head of Marketing Campaigns at GLA wrote in a letter to Regehr and Ringrose: 'We were very encouraged by the ASA's timely publication of advertising guidance on depicting gender stereotypes. It's publication at the end of last year [...] demonstrated the work that we are collectively doing in this area is part of a movement driving forward change' [b].

### Enriching public debate by challenging stereotypes and industry norms

The advertising campaigns, both underpinned by WWS research, contributed to wider public impact by stimulating more open, empowering and positive conversations about the reality of women's experiences of childbirth and the menopause. They were widely received as challenging taboos, stereotypes and industry norms. As well as reaching a daily audience of approximately 11.8 million tube, rail and bus passengers over a period of 12 weeks, the competition and resultant campaigns generated significant media coverage nationally and internationally on television and radio, as well as in print including women's, consumer, and trade magazines [e, i]. Mothercare's #bodyproudmum had a global impact with 1 billion earned impressions on social media by March 2020 [f], while Holland & Barrett's Me.No.Pause campaign achieved over 495 million impressions [i]. Commissioned research from YouGov showed that by 11 February 2019, just two weeks after its launch, 11% of the female population – 2.9 million women – had talked to friends, family or colleagues about the [Me.No.Pause] campaign [i]. Reflecting the wider impact on under-represented groups, Bunny Cook, who is gender-neutral, stated in an interview with *Hello!* magazine that 'I'm the LGBTQ face and voice in the mix – and I'm surprised to be in that mix at all. The message I constantly receive is that I don't exist, I'm not valued and I'm not included. This campaign is an opportunity to change [...] it's fantastic that they are reaching out and changing the images and messages that are sold to us' [j].

### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

[a] Transport for London and City Hall Press Release, launching competition to increase diversity in advertisements. This corroborates that the competition was directly informed by the *Women We See* report.

<https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/city-hall-and-tfl-launch-competition>

[b] Letter of 17 March 2019, from the Head of Marketing Campaigns, Greater London Authority, addressed to Dr Kaitlyn Regehr and Professor Jessica Ringrose. This corroborates the impact of the research on the decision to award the prize to Holland and Barratt, and that the research has been part of the drive for change in regulation of the advertising industry.

[c] Article in Campaign Live with the Chief Marketing Officer at Holland & Barrett, 4 February 2019. This corroborates that the *Women We See* research directly informed the development of their campaign.

[d] Article in *Marketing Week* with the Chief Marketing Officer, Holland & Barrett, 3 July 2019; and case study compiled by H&B brand agency, Pablo. Both sources corroborate the economic impacts of the *Me.No.Pause* campaign.

<https://www.marketingweek.com/holland-barrett-brand-refresh/>

<https://www.adforum.com/creative-work/ad/player/34600313/me-no-pause-case-study/holland-barrett>

[e] Mothercare 2019: Annual Report and Accounts. This report corroborates that positive media response to the #bodyproudmums campaign resulted in tangible benefits for the company.

**[f]** Entry to the *Account Planning Group* competition, 2019 submitted by the creative agency, Mcgarrybowen, for the #bodyproudmums campaign, which they devised for their client, Mothercare. This corroborates economic impact of the campaign.

**[g]** Transport for London, Advertising Steering Group Minutes, 18 January 2019. These minutes contain reporting of the reaction to the 2018 competition and the discussion that led to its relaunch in 2019.

**[h]** Transport for London and City Hall press release, relaunching the competition in 2019. This corroborates the extent to which the 2018 competition contributed to driving change in the industry. <https://www.jcdecaux.co.uk/news/city-hall-and-tfl-launch-competition-improve-diversity-advertising>.

**[i]** Written evidence submitted by Jessica Ringrose and Kaitlyn Regehr to the UK Parliament's Women and Equalities Committee's Enquiry into Body Image, 'Changing the Perfect Picture'. This evidence details the public response to the Mothercare campaign and the resulting economic impacts.

**[j]** Interview in *Hello!* magazine with Bunny Cooke, 13 February 2019. This corroborates the widespread media coverage and the impact of the drive for greater inclusivity and representation. <https://www.hellomagazine.com/healthandbeauty/health-and-fitness/2019021368726/gender-neutral-and-the-menopause/>

**[k]** Datasets clarifying Transport for London journeys by transport type and value and audience reach of Transport for London advertising estate <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/public-transport-journeys-type-transport> <https://tfl.gov.uk/info-for/media/press-releases/2019/january/transport-for-london-s-advertising-revenue-increases-as-innovative-advertising-platforms-are-introduced#:~:text=TfL's%20advertising%20estate%20accounts%20for,engaged%20audiences%20in%20the%20world>.