

YAKSHI

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Topic

Appropriating buddhism into modern context.



Hanuman's Mace. Him being known for his strength.



Possible Objects



Sculpture of Avalokiteśvara, with probably the most number of arms carved on any God EVER! You have to count it a few times before getting the number of arms right (it's 34, by the way). This gilded bronze sculpture was made in the Dali kingdom (937-1253), an independent state in what is today Yunnan province, China. Each arm of this figure holds an important Buddhist symbol. If you look closer, the headdress contains many small Buddhas, with Amitabha (the Buddha of infinite light) at the center.

POSSIBLE APPROPRIATION

Used in the modern context we could change the items into phones, laptops, books, etc. to represent the fast paced lifestyle that Singaporeans are having!

Change it into a housewife, carrying a baby, sweeping the floor, plunging the toilet!

Possible Objects



*Stele with the Buddha, Avalokiteshvara, and Maitreya
China, Eastern Wei dynasty (534 -550) Limestone*

This stele, probably from a niche in a cave temple, depicts the Buddha and two bodhisattvas. Dressed in princely clothes and jewellery, a bodhisattva is one who has achieved salvation but chooses to forgo entering nirvana to aid others. In this sculpture, the Buddha looks like a distinguished Chinese scholar engaged in academic discourse.

POSSIBLE APPROPRIATION

With **Lee Kwan Yew** being represented as the buddha (with the same context that he was idolised by the people with him promoting it), and the 2 bodhisattvas could be **Lee Hsien Loong** and **Goh Chok Tong**. All of the, would be donned with white shirts to represent the **PAP**.

Chosen Object

Gateway Bracket with four shalabhanjika.

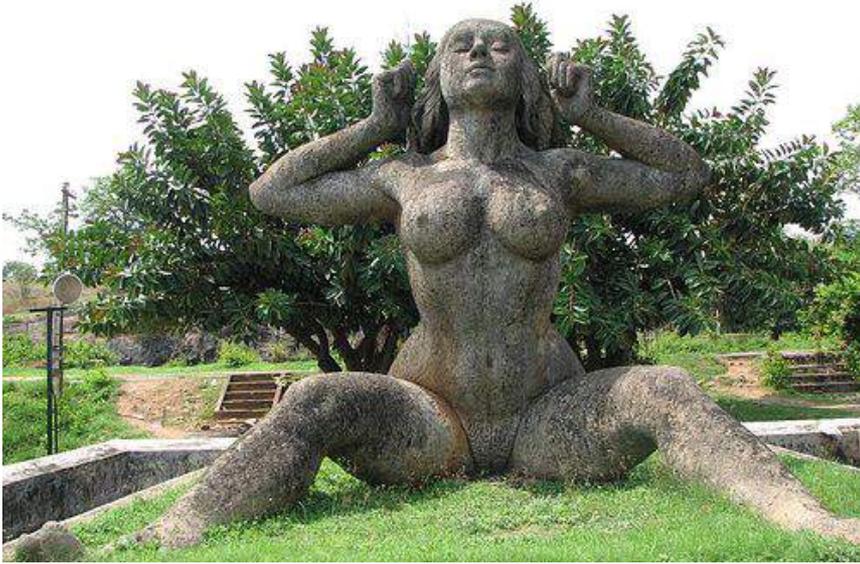
- 4 Yakshi (2 front 2 back)
- Identified by postures, big bosom and excessive jewelries.
- Flowering tree to represent the saying of “just one touch from them could arose the tree to flower” <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/07/30/arts/gallery/ancient-religion-sculptures-buddhism/>



Thesis

While the voluptuous body of Yakshi was seen as a sign of fertility in the past, that same body today would be seen as a tool of sexual objectification.

Past Artistic Response



Yakshi at Malampuzha, Palakkad, 1969

Image Source:

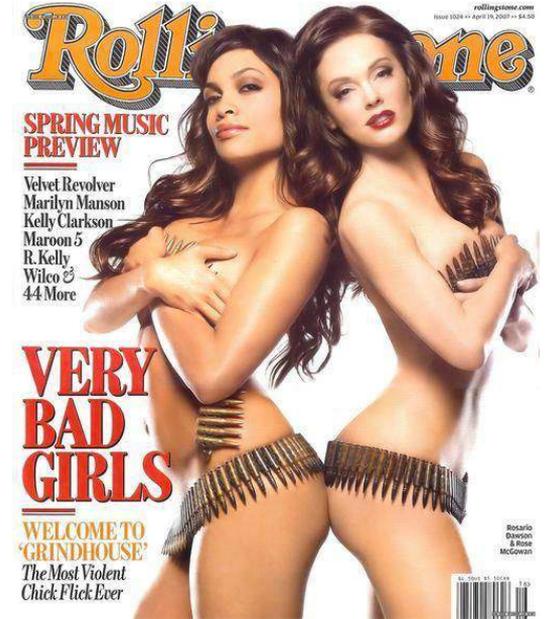
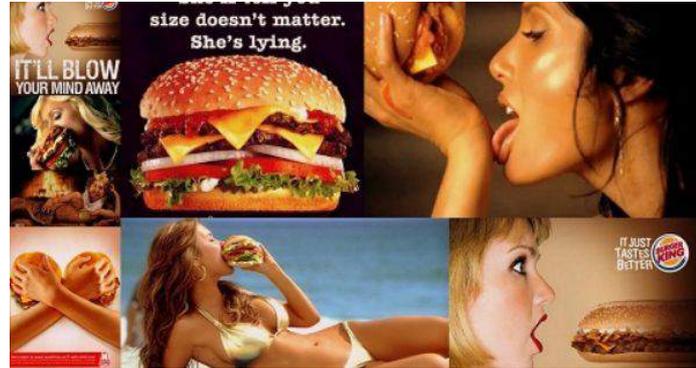
http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-9Z6nbJdpHCY/UJx_hmH7a6I/AAAAAAAAADHs/0NUcoeHd5oE/s1600/yaks.jpg



Yakshi is presented in a provocative position in comparison to her original posture, being more vulgar and influenced by how sexuality is presented in a modern day context.

Possible to also be in a birthing position but without the presence of a belly or a baby, it is not as literal if it is.

Female exploitation in media



Appropriation

- Objectification of women's bodies
- Women allow themselves to be objectified

- Removing Yakshi from her past context and modernizing her
- FHM: Men's lifestyle magazine featuring the hottest girl and advice for men
- Imagery of large exposed breasts
- Fertility symbol in a pornographic/voyeuristic context

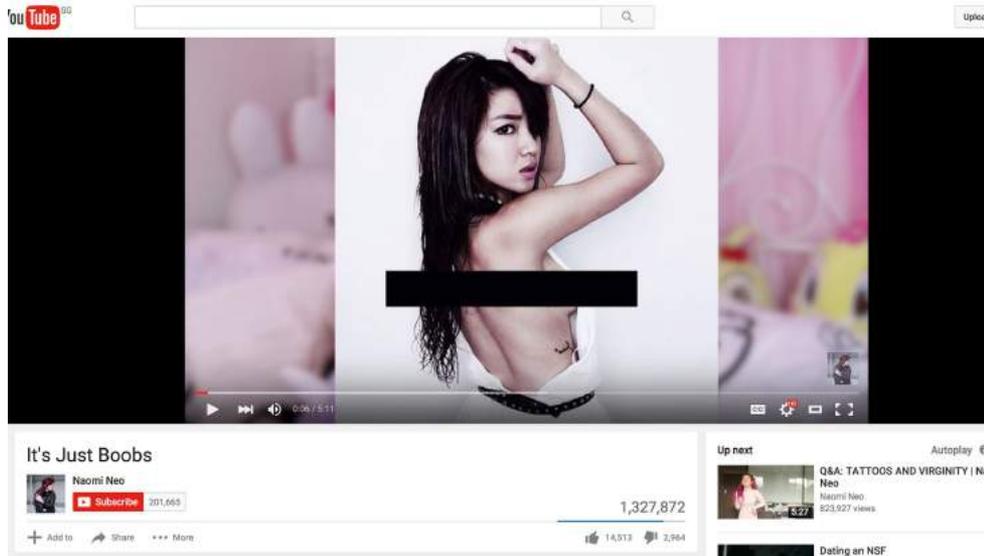
FHM Magazine



FHM's style of cover are consistently designed with a scantily dressed woman in front with emphasis on their figures, especially their bosoms.

Appropriation

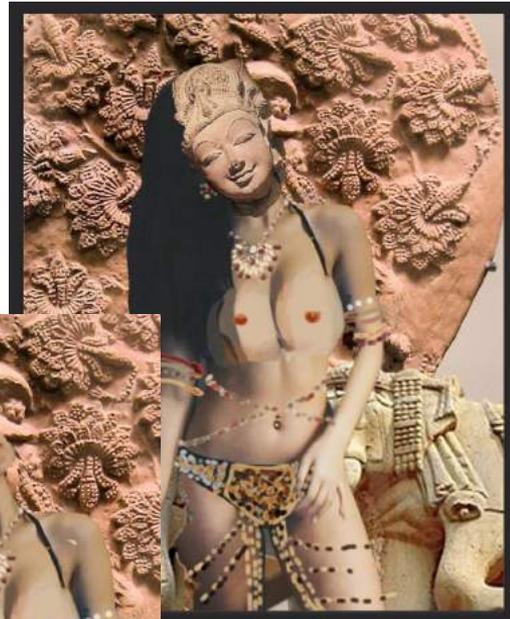
- Naomi Neo is a famous blogger
- Known for her good body and is open on sexuality
- Naomi Neo: It's just Boobs



Our Proto- types



Drafts



Artist Statement

The image shown is a modern interpretation of the Indian Buddhist Goddess, Yakshi. Traditionally associated with the idea of fertility and nature in ancient India, she was identified through her large, round breasts, small waist and large thighs and hips. These days, the voluptuous body that Yakshi possesses may be interpreted in a totally different way. In the modern world, sexual objectification of women have become much more commonplace, and a voluptuous body such as hers may be seen as a tool of pleasure in the eyes of men. It is no longer associated with the idea of being fertile or baby conceiving, but instead as means of sexual gratification.

As such, we decided to remove Yakshi from her traditional context to show this shift in perspective towards the well-endowed body. To effectively bring across the point, we placed her into a modern piece of media that portrayed women in a more provocative manner that man would find sexually attractive.

Known for featuring the 'hottest' women on the planet, FHM was our choice of medium on which we would appropriate Yakshi. To localise it, we designed a Singaporean FHM cover featuring Yakshi in the form of Naomi Neo, a popular blogger known for her voluptuous body and outspoken attitude about sexuality.

As such, we have created an artwork that appropriates Yakshi as a social statement and reflection on how much the meaning of a woman's body have changed over the years.

Bibliography

Manipulating Cultural Idioms.

Sirhandi, Marcella C.. 1999. "Manipulating Cultural Idioms". *Art Journal* 58 (3). [Taylor & Francis, Ltd., College Art Association]: 40–47. doi:10.2307/777859. <http://www.jstor.org.ezlibproxy1.ntu.edu.sg/stable/pdf/777859.pdf>

Represented in sculpture since approximately 200 B.C.E., the yakshi has always been conceived as a voluptuous creature with large globular breasts, small waist, and exaggerated hips and thighs. Bhattacharya's female fatale, entwined by the vine that signifies her tie to nature, has tubular arms that echo the essence of the creeper. Her partner, emerging from the center of the flower, is literally the spirit of the plant—a common definition for yaksha/yakshi

Unclothed sensual, feminine figure as one of the most canonical motifs of Indian art.

"ART HISTORY AND THE NUDE: ON ART, OBSCENITY, AND SEXUALITY IN CONTEMPORARY INDIA". 2004. "ART HISTORY AND THE NUDE: ON ART, OBSCENITY, AND SEXUALITY IN CONTEMPORARY INDIA". In *Monuments, Objects, Histories: Institutions of Art in Colonial and Post-colonial India*, 237–67. Columbia University Press. <http://www.jstor.org.ezlibproxy1.ntu.edu.sg/stable/10.7312/guha12998.13>.

Over different periods and genres, the voluptuous feminine body in sculpture came to be endowed with a variety of meanings. The figures came to be read as symbols of growth, bounty, and fertility, as the embodiment of a divine maternal spirit, or as classical literary ideals. In the process, the sexual form moved from its initial primeval association with nature and fertility rites to its later, more complex divine and aesthetic connotations.

Interacting Like a Body: Objectification Can Lead Women to Narrow Their Presence in Social Interactions

Saguy, Tamar, Diane M. Quinn, John F. Dovidio, and Felicia Pratto. 2010. "Interacting Like a Body: Objectification Can Lead Women to Narrow Their Presence in Social Interactions". *Psychological Science* 21 (2). [Association for Psychological Science, Sage Publications, Inc.]: 178–82. <http://www.jstor.org.ezlibproxy1.ntu.edu.sg/stable/41062184>.

Sexual objectification occurs when a person is viewed as a mere body that exists for the pleasure and use of others (Bartky, 1990). This treatment targets women more often than men

For these reasons, women are theorized to willingly participate in their own objectification and become preoccupied with appearing as "good objects" (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Drawing on these ideas, we predicted that when objectified, women would try not only to appear as good objects, but also to behave like ones.

Contemporary Indian Art: A Question of Method

Sinha, Ajay J.. 1999. "Contemporary Indian Art: A Question of Method". *Art Journal* 58 (3). [Taylor & Francis, Ltd., College Art Association]: 31–39. doi:10.2307/777858. <http://www.jstor.org.ezlibproxy1.ntu.edu.sg/stable/pdf/777858.pdf>

Taking reference from contemporary Indian art, much of which centres around adapting Indian cultural symbolism, was an important stepping stone in our process. Ravinder Reddy and other contemporary Indian artists' works subvert or transform the meaning of traditional religious figures such as Kali and Yakshi into modern-day works into modern-day contexts, which served as an inspiration for our project.

THANK YOU!



GROUP HISTORY!