



THE VOLUME

We begin the tenth year of our magazine with a survey of the whole field of advertising art. We have requested a number of artists in various countries to report to us on their work; for the purpose of this work conforms to the purpose of this magazine. All the artists who have replied were already recognized men when our magazine was founded. Their opinions are the result of many years of experience.

To sum up, we recognize in all these replies the artists' determined will to further development, which however is faced almost everywhere with economic depression and must combat this as well as irritating theories of advertising.

We should like to comment on the fact that in the short time in which we have been at work, innumerable new theories of advertising and new prophets have arisen whose high-sounding phrases have almost deafened them to the call of their true tasks. They are supposed to be an aid to making money, that is the genuine honest meaning of their business. So much is prated about the spirit of propaganda, the spirit of our age, the technical spirit, the artistic spirit, the spirit of the nation, the spirit of intellect (as it were, the mind of mind) and so on. Everything, even the most primitive goods has had to be connected up with culture and science and only one theory was relatively quickly let drop—the theory of truth in advertising. Cigarette factories to-day concern themselves with picture-dealing and military policy; toothpastes and skin creams are proclaimed as the nations' most sacred possessions and yet people are surprised that business keeps getting worse and worse. We must certainly accentuate the fact that in the last ten years propaganda has undoubtedly made great progress in the realm of organisation; but where means of expression are concerned, it is almost everywhere in a state of depression which could scarcely be worse. The reason is that everybody works according to one theory, following one scheme, and the continual repetition causes the scheme to become banal and insupportable. It is really high time that we paid more attention to what these theorists do with their pens and pencils and less to what they merely say.

We must once again realize clearly that it is only creative imagination which rejoices and inspires mankind, for it is almost always the pictorial element which decides the success or failure of every advertisement. When the cave-men scratched the first pictures known to man on the walls of their stone caves, they did it for the joy of making a picture and creating a form. The other Neandertal men had the joy of looking on. So it was, so it is and ever shall be—in spite of all new theories.

Thus the parole for the future must be: away from the set scheme, free development for artistic form, for it is economically the most successful and therefore the only form suited to the purpose. The phalanx of capable creative artists which stands ready and waiting represents an economic credit which has not by a long way been put to its full use.

H. K. F R E N Z E L,
E D I T O R