

Anyone looking for a uniformly progressive or even indigenous style of advertising in Holland will be slightly disappointed. What is the reason? The Dutch are fond of business, and hence why not of what promotes, encourages and animates trade, namely advertising? The secret is revealed in the numerous quiet canal streets of Amsterdam. The houses are narrow, and seem poverty-stricken and almost decayed, so silent and reserved are they. But when one enters them one feels quite lost in the midst of the valuable marble, expensive carpets, heavy oak panelling, old chests, enchanting pictures, wrought candelabra, rare jugs and utensils.

That is the whole point, for here, hidden from the outer world, the big deals and real business is done, as it was fifty and a hundred years ago, to the accompaniment of fat

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ADVERTISING ART IN

LAND



Photo: Scherls Bilderdienst

cigars and good liqueurs. Owing to his traditions and experience, the Netherlands merchant does not like a showy façade. But, after all, what are advertising and its artistic form of expression, advertising art, but the inviting, appealing, attractive and frankly open façade of trade?

Hence advertising art still has a hard time in Holland. Mistrust and prejudice have restricted its development. Where it appears it is mixed, and still without a national physiognomy of its own. Even excellent and noteworthy achievements clearly betray the influence of the great advertising nations. In any case it is worth while examining what is available.

The field of advertising is dominated by two important advertising agencies which do remarkable work in the midst of a people who are only too bound by tradition and, in many cases, directly hostile to advertising. One of the quiet houses described above, in the Heerengracht, is the home of the van Alfen advertising undertaking. Here everything which seems too experimental is systematically and intentionally avoided, yet every adver-