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Volume 11: 2018-19

ISSN: 2041-6776

**The Fetishisation of the Phone: A Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis
of Camera-Phone Advertising**

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English Dissertation: Full Year

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Introduction

The visual world has always been important in our understandings of the world around us, because, as Berger (2008) suggests, '[s]eeing comes before words' (i), but, as 'a new design culture has evolved' (Ledin and Machin 2018: 7), the visual has become even more significant in our everyday lives, as images now 'surround us' and 'have entered the mainstream of life' (Berger 2008: 25). Camera-phones, therefore, have become an important way for people to capture and communicate their surroundings as part of the everyday reality of this new culture. However, as the growth of this design culture has simultaneously seen a growth in the photograph's use as 'a tool [...] to express commodity culture through advertisements' (Ramamurthy 2015: 233), the boundaries of consumerism and the personal have become blurred. This is potentially problematic as photography is central to 'processes of identity formation and memorialization' (Gye 2007: 279), which suggests that camera-phone producers and advertisers potentially have significant power over how consumers construct and understand their own and others' identities and experiences. Despite this, however, camera-phone advertising has typically been overlooked, with little research exploring how and what ideologies are salient within the advertisements for these products. To fill the gaps in the current research and respond to this imbalance of power, I am conducting a Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis of Huawei's advert for the P20 Pro camera-phone to uncover the salient ideologies it propagates, building an understanding of how these ideologies affect consumers' perspectives and how far they are potentially used to manipulate and control consumers' behaviours. To do this, I will examine how Huawei exoticise and subsequently fetishise their product to manufacture desire, exploring how and what ideologies this produces and perpetuates to develop an understanding of their effects.

Literature Review

Advertising

One thing critics typically agree on is the prevalence of advertisements in modern life: they are 'ubiquitous [...] inescapable' (Williamson 1990: 11) and 'with us all the time' (Vestergaard and Schrøder 1985: 1). Delin (2000) even suggests that they are 'one of society's most pervasive forms of discourse' (122). Therefore, advertisements could potentially have a big influence on our lives. However, Dyer (1992) suggests that advertising's pervasive nature causes us to 'take advertisements for granted' (1). Expanding on this, Cook (2001) suggests that the West's 'long tradition of high-pressure advertising' has led to 'more tolerance and amused scepticism about it' from consumers (3). Therefore, as Vestergaard and Schrøder (1985) suggest, it is 'unreasonable to expect readers to decipher adverts as factual statements about reality' (117). Most people, as Cook (2001) continues, will consider adverts 'inevitable and unremarkable' (3), which leads him to suggest that adverts 'exist on the periphery of receiver attention' (222). Adverts, therefore, tend to occupy a liminal position where despite being significantly present in our lives, we pay little conscious attention to them. However, far from irrelevant, in this position, adverts have the potential to influence viewers without their conscious awareness, which puts advertisers in a position of power, as their messages meet less conscious resistance, making them highly influential. The analysis of advertising is, therefore, important, as it can reveal how and what ideologies are being propagated, which can 'reveal the role of discourse in reproducing or challenging socio-political dominance' (Bell and Garret 2001: 6).

Within the analysis of advertisements there have been many attempts to categorise them. Leech (1966) suggests that advertising 'uses a predominantly concrete language, matching its concrete purpose' (26), describing it as a form of 'loaded language' that 'aims to change the will, opinions, or attitudes of its audience' (25). However, whilst many critics agree with Leech that most commercial advertisements have a similar purpose, some, like Delin (2000), have noted that adverts can also have more 'complex or longer-term aim[s] that [do] not include purchasing at all' (122). Furthermore, many, like Williamson (1990), have taken issue with Leech's static

view of advertising, suggesting that '[t]he components of advertisements are variable [...] and *not* necessarily all part of one "language" or social discourse' (12). Vestergaard and Schrøder (1985) also go further, suggesting that an advert must 'flexibly accommodate its messages to suit the changing climate of opinion among the consumers' (170), which Goddard (2002) explains by suggesting that 'for adverts to work, they must use our commonly shared resources of language in ways that affect us and mean something to us' (4). Therefore, as language and social culture are constantly changing, so are adverts. Cook (2001) views this constant adaptation as 'parasitic', suggesting that adverts 'appropriat[e] the voices of other genres, and hav[e] no independent existence' (219). He proposes instead, that, because '[e]ach new ad is encountered against a background of thousands of earlier ads', we should consider advertising as 'a genre advocating a change of behaviour' (Cook 2001: 6, 231). However, whilst prevalent trends can be identified, considering advertising as a genre itself can be constrictive, as it is important to remember that adverts are short-lived and constantly evolving, limiting how relevant categorisations like this are for analysis long-term. As such, categorisations of advertisements should only be used loosely and for contextual positioning. To uncover the salient ideologies of adverts, emphasis must instead be placed on the specific social and cultural contexts of the distribution and consumption of individual adverts, rather than broader advertising contexts, which may be less accurate.

Many critics agree that advertising's constant evolution and tendency to appropriate things is an attempt to connect with audiences. Williamson (1990) proposes that an advertiser's purpose is to 'translate statements from one world of things [...] into a form that means something in terms of people' (12), which 'gives those goods a social meaning' (14). Therefore, as Vestergaard and Schrøder (1985) note, 'in our consumption of goods, we satisfy both material and social needs', as objects 'become carriers of information about what kind of people we are, or would like to be' (5). This, they suggest, 'makes it possible for advertisers to exploit people's needs for group membership [and] self-identification' (Vestergaard and Schrøder 1985: 6). Therefore, as Goddard (2002) observes, adverts 'function both to reflect and to construct cultural values' (4), making them, in Williamson's (1990) view, 'one of the most important cultural factors moulding and reflecting our life today' (11). Many, such as Williamson (1990), argue, however, that this is not achieved through language alone, suggesting that 'it is structure which signifies in ads: not genuinely "significant" things' (168). Many have identified this 'structure' as a fictional world: Vestergaard and Schrøder (1985) suggest that 'adverts function on the level of the day-dream' (177), and Dyer (1992) describes it as 'a dream world' (184). Within this fictional world, Vestergaard and Schrøder (1985) propose that the viewer 'is able to make come true those desires which remain unsatisfied in his or her everyday life' (117). However, they argue that 'in order for people to find it relevant, the utopia visualized in adverts must be linked to our surrounding reality by a causal connection' and so 'inevitably becomes evidence of the dreariness of everyday life' (Vestergaard and Schrøder 1985: 118). Adverts, therefore, have the power to influence our desires and identities, as well as reflect society. This has led some critics to see advertising as 'fulfil[ing] a function traditionally met by art or religion' (Dyer 1992: 2), as it 'creates structures of meaning' (Williamson 1990: 12) and can 'answer a need for display and repetitive language' (Cook 2001: 221). Whilst this is perhaps an extreme view of the power of advertising, it does begin to examine how adverts influence us. However, much of this research has been conducted from a sociological standpoint rather than a speech and discourse perspective, which overlooks the micro-level processes behind the effects of advertising. In order to understand the salient ideologies of advertisements, these processes must be examined through close linguistic analysis.

The Camera-Phone

Mobile-phone advertising has the potential to be particularly influential given its large scope, with 95% of UK households owning one (Statista 2019). This popularity has been recognised by most critics, who see mobile-phones 'an increasingly ubiquitous part of everyday life' (Glutz, Bertschi and Locke 2005: 11). Kropivnik and Luthar (2011) suggest that this is particularly the case for younger users, who see their mobile-phones as 'an aesthetic object, a status symbol, and/or a technological fetish' (523). They suggest that this attitude stems from advertising

discourse that 'promises not just meaningful sociality but also (pseudo)individuality' (Kropivnik and Luthar 2011: 508). However, others have attributed the link between mobile-phones and their users' identities to the 'sentient' relationship we have with our phones, as they stimulate multiple senses at once (Vincent 2005: 120). But, whether it stems from the phone itself or its advertising, most critics agree that users now consider their phones as 'an extension' (Kropivnik and Luthar 2011: 225) or 'part of one's body' (Aguado and Martínez 2007: 144). Considered as such, mobile-phone advertising has the potential to influence both individual identity constructions and ideologies about other phone users.

The role of mobile-phones in identity construction was strengthened further by the introduction of camera-phones, which Palmer (2014) suggests are now 'the default consumer camera of choice' (245). Connections between photography and cognition have long been recognised by critics such as Sontag (1979), who suggested that photographic practices have the potential to 'alter and enlarge our notions of what is worth looking at' (3), but more recently, critics have also recognised the role of photography in social practices more broadly: Ibrahim (2015) suggests that '[i]mage is an integral part of human communication' (42) and Rubinstein and Sluis (2008) suggest that 'Western culture is now characterized by ubiquitous photography' (9). Much of this is attributed to how 'technology has made it much easier for us to produce and distribute images' (Ledin and Machin 2018: 1). The introduction of the camera-phone in particular has been considered responsible for 'the evolution of new kinds of imaging practices' (Gye 2007:279), such as 'spontaneous image capture' (Rubinstein and Sluis 2008: 21). Critics have, therefore, been particularly interested in how camera-phones 'change the definition of what's photoworthy from what's special and enduring to what's often transitory and ordinary' (Van House et al. 2005: 1854), which Ibrahim (2015) terms 'banal imaging' (45). Consequently, most critics agree that the camera-phone has 'important repercussions for how we understand who we are and how we remember the past' (Gye 2007: 279), as it becomes a 'tool for an individual's identity formation and communication' (Van Dijk 2008: 57).

However, whilst sociological research has examined the use and effects of mobile-phones and camera-phones on the individual and society, little attention has been paid to its advertising. Recognised as 'central [...] to processes of identity formation and memorialization' (Gye 2007: 279), the camera-phone itself and how it is presented to consumers has the potential to significantly influence individual ideologies. Therefore, camera-phone advertisers have considerable power and so attention must be paid to the salient ideologies that they propagate, as 'power is transmitted and practiced through discourse' (Machin and Mayr 2015: 4). By doing this we can begin to understand how their power and propagated ideologies affect individual perspectives.

Methodology

To fill these gaps in the research and understand the effects of camera-phone advertising, it is essential to conduct a close analysis, as 'it is often the smallest linguistic details where power relations and political ideology can be found' (Machin and Mayr 2015: 5). This will provide the initial foundations required to begin to understand how camera-phone advertising can potentially influence and affect consumers. To do this, I am conducting a Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis of Huawei's television advert for the P20 Pro camera-phone.

Data

Huawei have a large influence worldwide, recently overtaking Apple to obtain the second largest share of the global smartphone market (Su 2018). With an 'annual growth rate of 69%' despite sales restrictions in the US (Shilov 2018), this influence is expected to rapidly grow even further. In an increasing position of power, then, Huawei's advertising has the potential to reach large audiences, with the ideologies propagated through them, therefore, having the potential to significantly influence a large proportion of the population. As such,

Huawei's advertisements are ideal for analysis, as, with such a large scope of influence, they are likely to have a significant effect on the individual perspectives of those viewing them. Furthermore, such rapid growth is also an indicator that the advertising of Huawei's products is particularly effective, suggesting that the ideologies propagated through their adverts are highly influential or resonate strongly with consumers, making them a particularly valuable source of data, as they are likely to provide relevant and reliable findings.

I am analysing Huawei's advert for the P20 Pro camera-phone in particular, as it is their most popular product, with Huawei selling 'over 16 million units of the P20 and P20 Pro' in just eight months (Li 2018). Such popularity suggests that the phone's advertising has had a large reach and impact. As such, it is likely to provide useful data as the ideologies propagated in the advert are likely to have influenced many people. Whilst this small sample size potentially limits how far my findings are generalizable, the advert's success and wide scope suggests that it is likely to be representative of the most popular and generally accepted ideologies, which ensures that my findings are as reliable as possible. Furthermore, the small sample size will allow for a more in-depth and accurate analysis, which can also take context into consideration, providing a more thorough and extensive analysis, which will produce more robust results that are more likely to be relevant and replicable.

A transcript of the advert can be found in the appendix, including screenshots of each scene, which are reproduced throughout the analysis as examples.

Method

For this analysis, I will adopt a Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MDCA) approach. Producing a 'more thorough and systematic analysis of language and texts' (Machin and Mayr 2015: 1), Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is ideal for close analysis as it allows for the examination of micro-structures that can uncover salient ideologies within discourse, as 'much of this meaning lies at the implicit level' (Machin and Mayr 2015: 56). Furthermore, as CDA also enables the consideration of the 'mutually constitutive relationship between discourse and context' (Ainsworth and Hardy 2004: 244), this method will enable me to consider the sociocultural impact of the advert, producing a more reliable and relevant analysis of camera-phone advertising's effects, as 'language is always in context' (Cook 2001: 5). Whilst CDA has 'traditionally been subjective' (Machin and Mayr 2015: 216), which may reduce the credibility of my findings, its focus on context will focus my analysis and allow me to draw upon the pre-existing sociological research to guide and qualify my analysis, ensuring it is reliable. Furthermore, I have chosen data that is likely to be representative of camera-phone advertising more broadly, which will limit how far the subjectivity of the analysis distorts the relevance of my findings to camera-phone advertising more broadly.

As television adverts combine multiple semiotic resources – including imagery, sound and language – it is also crucial that the analysis is multimodal in its approach, as the different semiotic resources 'come to operate as coherent wholes' (Ledin and Machin 2018: 29), with each element interacting and affecting interpretation. MDCA is ideal for this analysis, then, as despite semiotic resources 'seem[ing] transparent' they are actually 'always coded' (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006: 32), and, therefore, in the same way as language, require close analysis to uncover their underlying ideologies. Whilst this may limit the scope of my analysis, as typically '[v]isual language [...] is culturally specific' (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006: 4), it will provide the most accurate and comprehensive analysis possible, the results of which will provide the foundations for future research that can apply these findings to other cultures and contexts.

Therefore, despite its minor drawbacks, MCDA will provide the most comprehensive and accurate approach to the study of Huawei's camera-phone advert, as it allows for close analysis that will uncover the salient ideologies propagated by Huawei within the context of their sociocultural effects, producing relevant, reliable and accurate findings that are more likely to be replicable and generalizable. Using this approach, I will examine how Huawei exoticise their phone to make it appear desirable and subsequently position it as a fetish, drawing upon research in language, image and sound analysis to examine what ideologies are salient within the advert and how they are propagated. I will then relate these findings to contextual factors that will reveal how they affect the viewer.

Analysis

Exoticisation

In Huawei's advert for the P20 Pro camera-phone, a dichotomy is created between old and new, which exoticises the product. This is achieved by repeating pairs of scenes: the first depicting burning photographic equipment and the second, feet walking (as shown in figure 1)

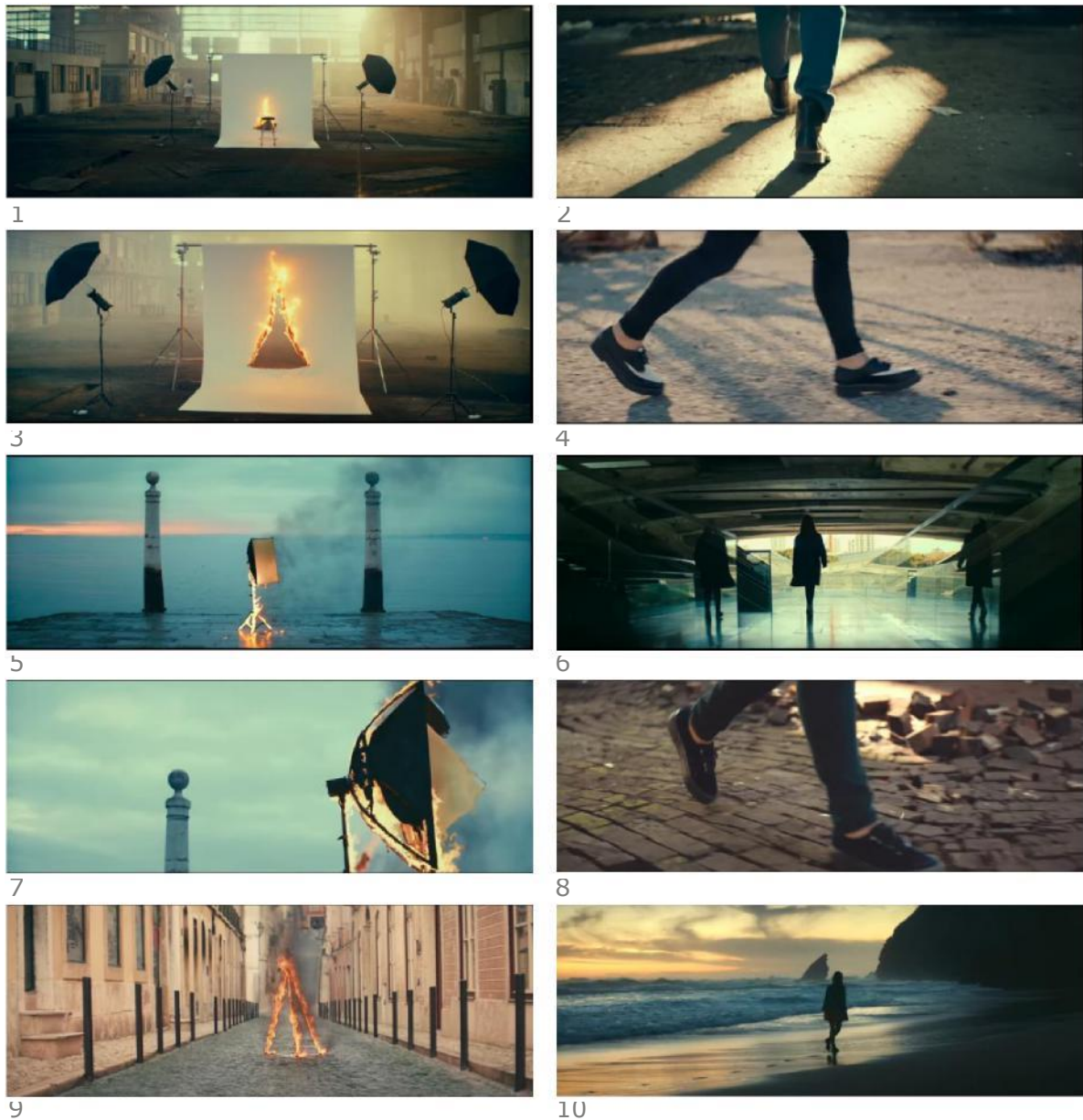


Figure 1: First 10 scenes in chronological order.

Although the two types of scene seemingly depict unrelated things, the viewer's understanding of narrative progression, and the scenes' repetitive, alternating pattern creates a link between them, encouraging the viewer to compare them. In doing so, a contrast of stillness – in the scenes of burning photographic equipment – and movement – in the scenes of walking – is established. As the viewer expects a causal link between consecutive scenes, it is assumed that the first scene is chronologically before the second. As such, given that in the background of the first scene a man is seen walking away from the burning equipment, it can be inferred that the subsequent scenes are related in the same way; the characters are moving away from the burning photography equipment. However, the non-specific locations and uncharacterised depictions of the characters in these scenes works to decontextualize the narrative, which Machin (2007) suggests 'usually means that the image is symbolic rather than documentary' (51). Therefore, this sense of movement and progression over time becomes symbolic of a progression away from the past or the old, which is characterised by traditional photographic studio equipment. As such, Huawei seem to suggest that old forms of photography belong in the past. Therefore, when the alternating pattern of scenes is broken by the introduction of the phone (as shown in figure 2), it will be positioned as the 'new', as the viewer's understanding of narrative progression considers this to mark an end to the progress.



Figure 2: Breaking stillness-movement pattern.

This, then, creates a dichotomy between old and new technologies, which works in a similar way to Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) Given-New structure, which suggests that by presenting the product as new, it becomes 'something to which the viewer must pay special attention' (181). With the product as the main focal point, Huawei are then able to transfer the positive connotations of progress and newness onto it. In doing so, they also transfer negative connotations of oldness to previous forms of photography, with this contrast elevating the status of the product further and exoticising it as something uniquely new. Furthermore, by burning the old equipment, it is left without use-value, suggesting that the 'new' qualities of the phone render the old useless, an idea reinforced in the conclusion of the advert, as the phone is described as part of a 'renaissance in photography' (Huawei 2018: 0:55). In this position, the phone is not only depicted favourably to the viewer, but becomes an item of desire, because, as Campbell (2005) suggests, within capitalism, there is a 'continuing desire for the new on the part of consumers' (44). Huawei can, therefore, be seen to create this dichotomy between old and new to implicitly manufacture a consumer-commodity relationship between the viewer and the product, without the viewer's awareness.

Huawei explore this relationship further through presentations of life with the product. By presenting many of the characters in the advert from behind (as shown in figure 3), Huawei 'offer us their point of view, their perspective on the world' (Machin and Mayr 2015: 99).

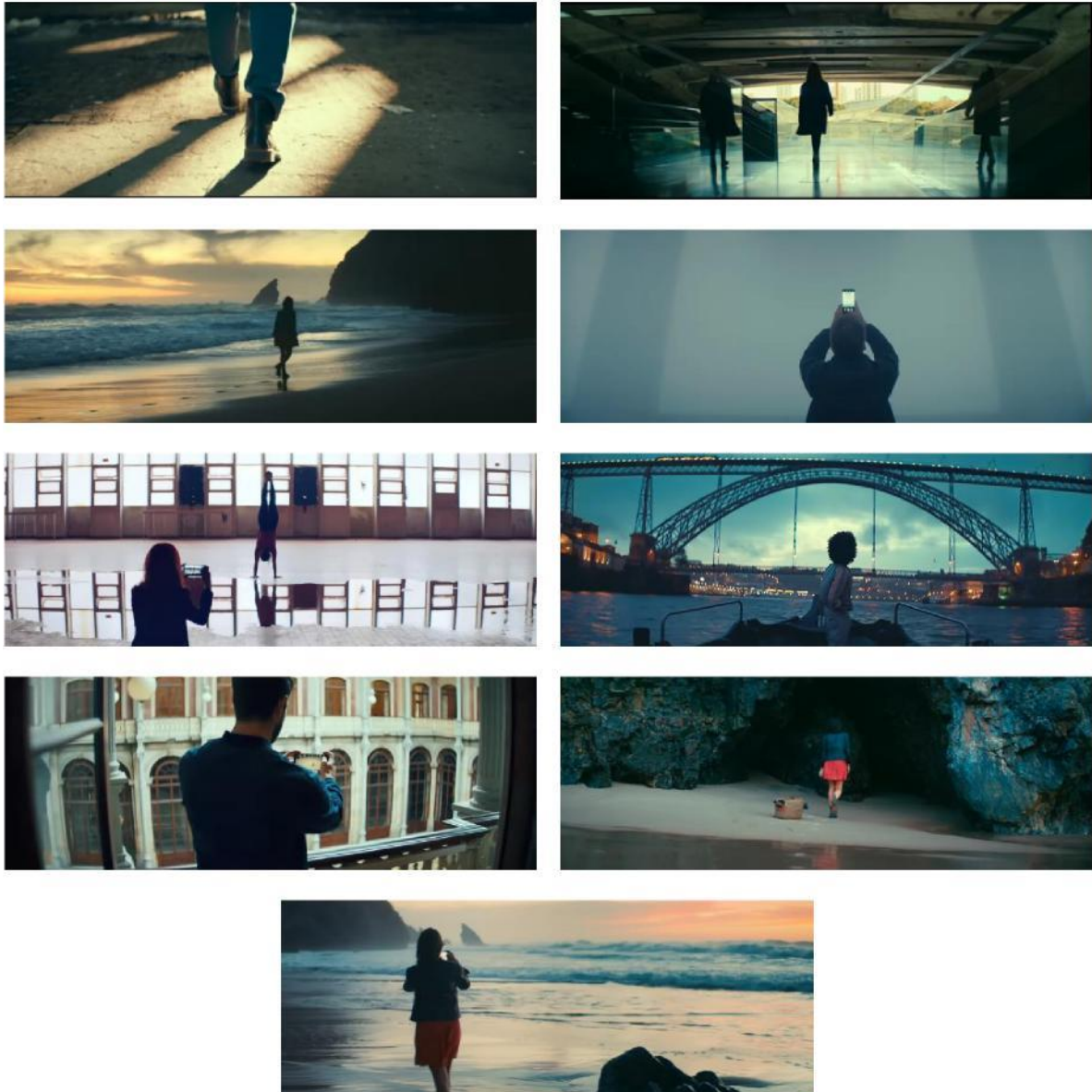


Figure 3: Characters from behind.

As all the characters appear to own the product, this provides the viewer with an insight into life with the phone, through the perspective of the characters in the advert. At points, the viewer's insight is taken even further and instead of showing the characters' backs, the advert shows their point of view (as shown in figure 4), allowing the viewer access to not only their perspective but their eyes as well.

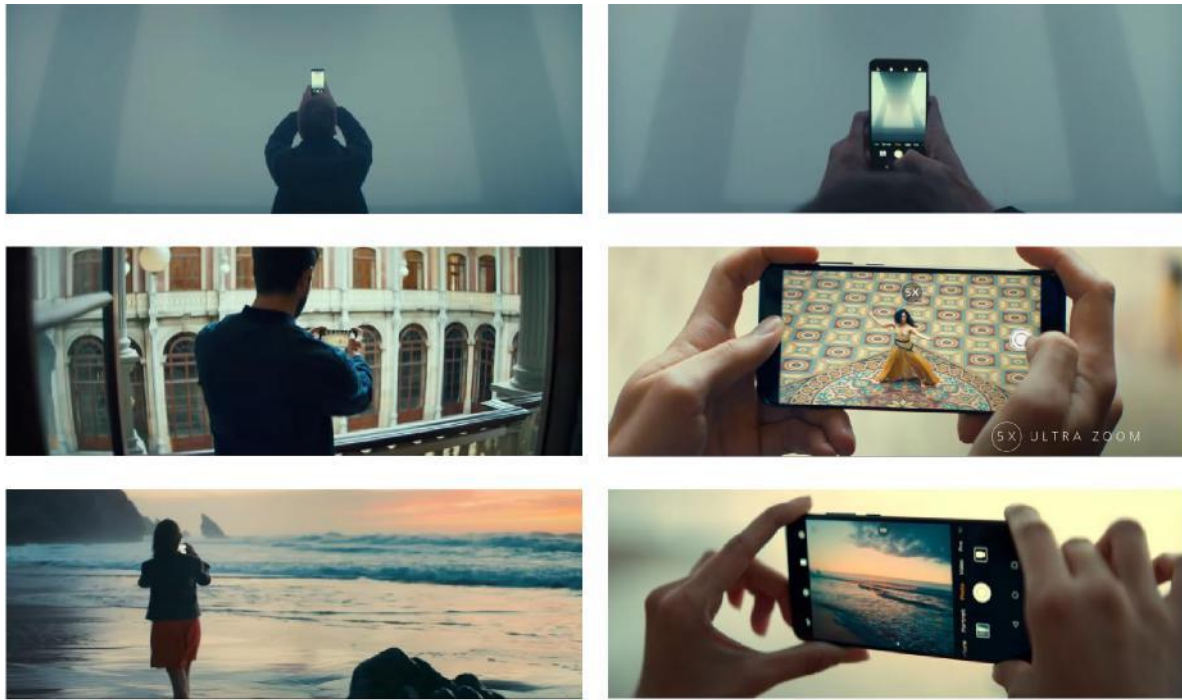


Figure 4: Left to right: transition from behind characters to their point of view.

This creates an almost tangible relationship between the viewer and the phone, extending it beyond just a consumer-commodity relationship into an empathetic experience for the viewer. However, despite camera-phones typically being used to '[enact] our personal lives' through images of the 'banal' (Ibrahim 2015: 48), the experience Huawei presents is not one of such a reality. Instead, it works, as Vestergaard and Schrøder (1985) have observed of many adverts, on 'the level of the day-dream' (117). Using non-specific locations, often with either blurred, hazy, or absent backgrounds (as shown in figure 5), Huawei present a world that is softer than reality, one that approaches a hyper-reality in that it is flawless and without the harshness of everyday life. By lowering the modality of the narrative world in this way, Huawei align the product with ideas of fantasy, exoticising the phone, as it becomes aligned with the viewer's fantasies and desires.

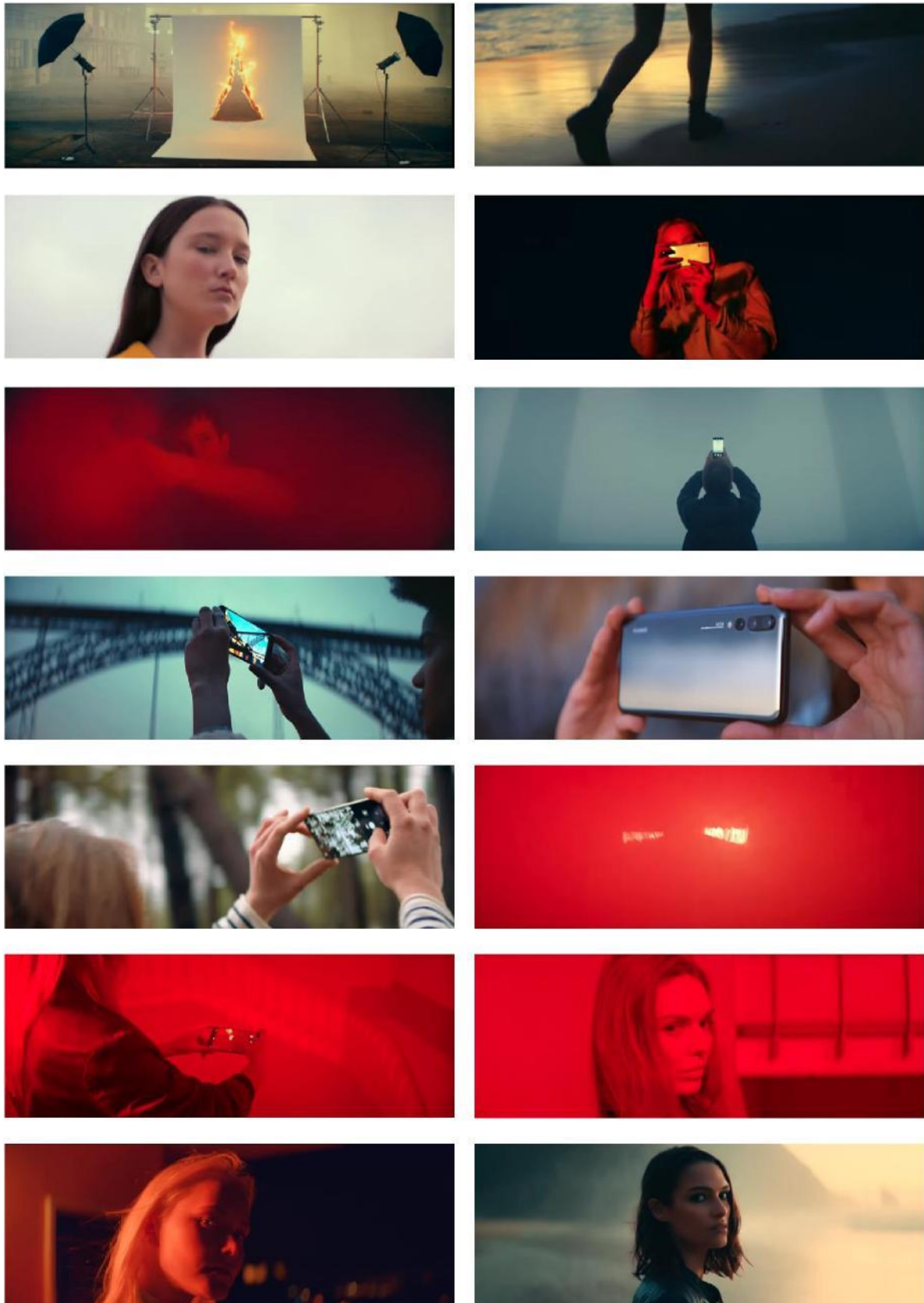


Figure 5: Scenes with decontextualized backgrounds.

Furthermore, by implicitly establishing this world as a fantasy, Huawei are able to bypass the viewer's expectations of their everyday reality. Consequently, much of the imagery in the advert is characterised by the sublime. Impressive landscapes and man-made structures dwarf the characters (as shown in figure 6), making them look small and insignificant.

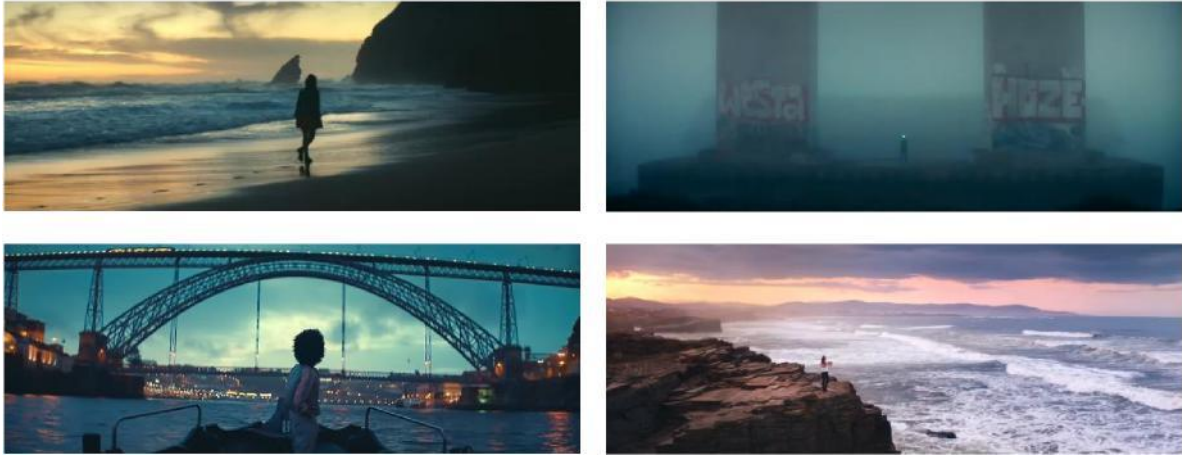


Figure 6: Sublime imagery.

As the viewer is accessing this world through the characters' perspectives, these ideas are transferred onto the viewer, which produces a sense of inadequacy and anxiety. With the viewer positioned in this way, Huawei are able to present the phone to the viewer as the solution to their fears. They do this by offering these sublime scenes to the viewer through the screen of the phone (as shown in figure 7), demonstrating its ability to capture the incomprehensible and mediate it for the viewer. As such, the phone is imbued with the power to transform, implying that similar fantasies of a better reality are within reach for the viewer, perhaps even possible, with the help of the product. Vestergaard and Schrøder (1985) see this as an indication that advertising is 'founded on a subconscious desire for a better world' (120). However, given that it was a capitalist, consumer-commodity, relationship that enabled the viewer to enter this 'better' world, this view seems too optimistic. Instead, the advert seems to be founded on the producer's ability to exploit consumers' desire to mislead them about their expectations of reality.

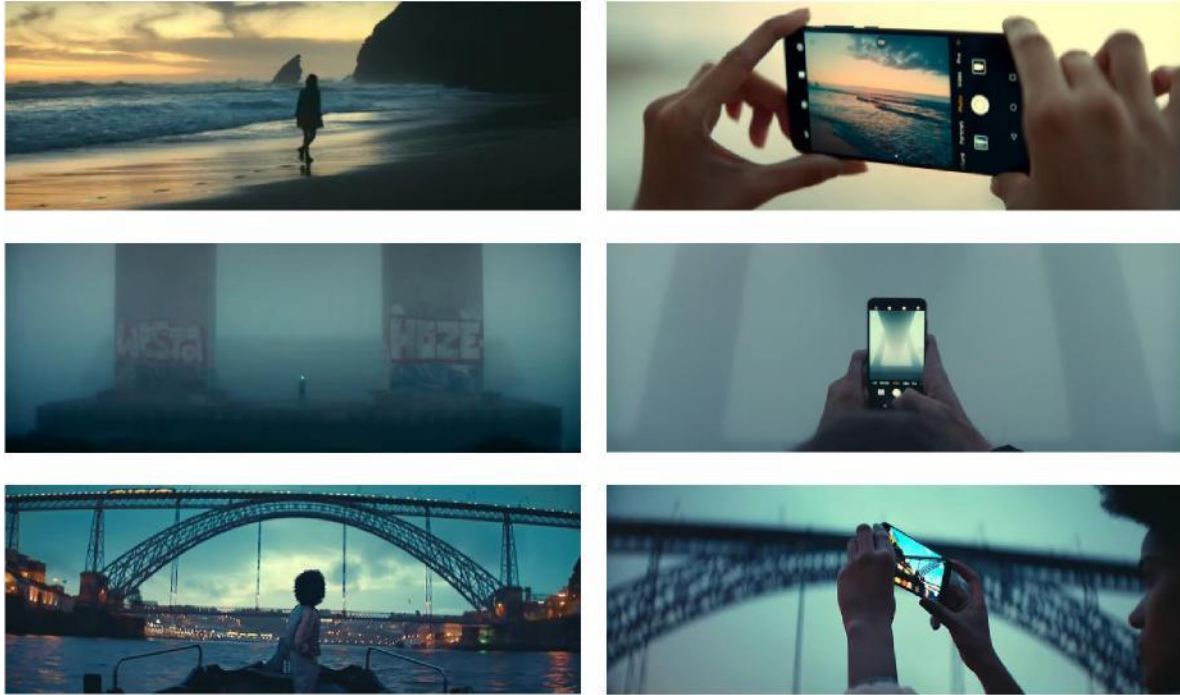


Figure 7: Left to right: camera-phone mediating the sublime.

Therefore, even though the viewer is aware that the fantasy depicted is not a representation of their life, Huawei, by associating their product with the glamour of such a world and suggesting that it has transformative qualities, give the viewer false hope of realising their own desires and creating their own 'better' world.

However, these false hopes only appear tangible to the viewer through the advert's connection to reality, because, as Cook (2001) suggests, the advert must 'achieve enough contact between fiction and reality [...] for the passage of the product from one world to another to be feasible' (181). Huawei create this contact by shifting to a markedly different style in the concluding frames of the advert, allowing them to depart from the fantasy world of the main body of the advert and enter into the viewer's reality. In contrast to the almost cinematic presentation of the fantasy world – which is characterised by frequent movement and bright colours – these final frames are monochrome stills, with more resemblance to presentation slides than a television advert (as shown in figure 8).

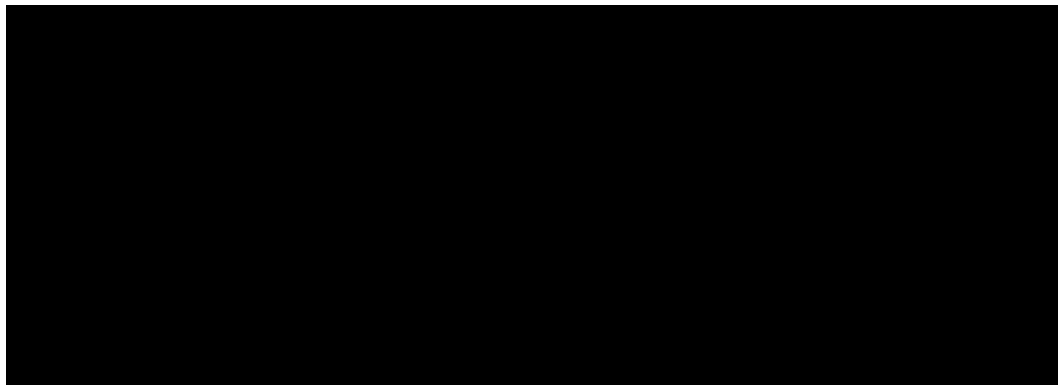




Figure 8: Last three frames in chronological order.

Text-heavy, these frames are attributed more value and credibility than the previous imagery, as the written word is associated with ‘relay[ing] information objectively and impersonally’ (Cook 2001: 76). As such, these frames connote ideas of fact and realism, positioning them outside the fantasy world and within the viewer’s reality. By separating the fantasy world and reality through such a stark contrast, Huawei are able to eliminate all other connections between the two worlds, positioning their phone – the only aspect to appear in both – as a clear link between them. As such, they imply that the phone can provide access to the fantasy world from the viewer’s reality, essentially not only associating their product with desirable ideas but suggesting that such fantasies are genuinely tangible through the purchase of their product. The importance of the phone in providing the viewer access to these fantasies is foregrounded through its consistent position at the centre of each frame in the fantasy world (as shown in figure 9).

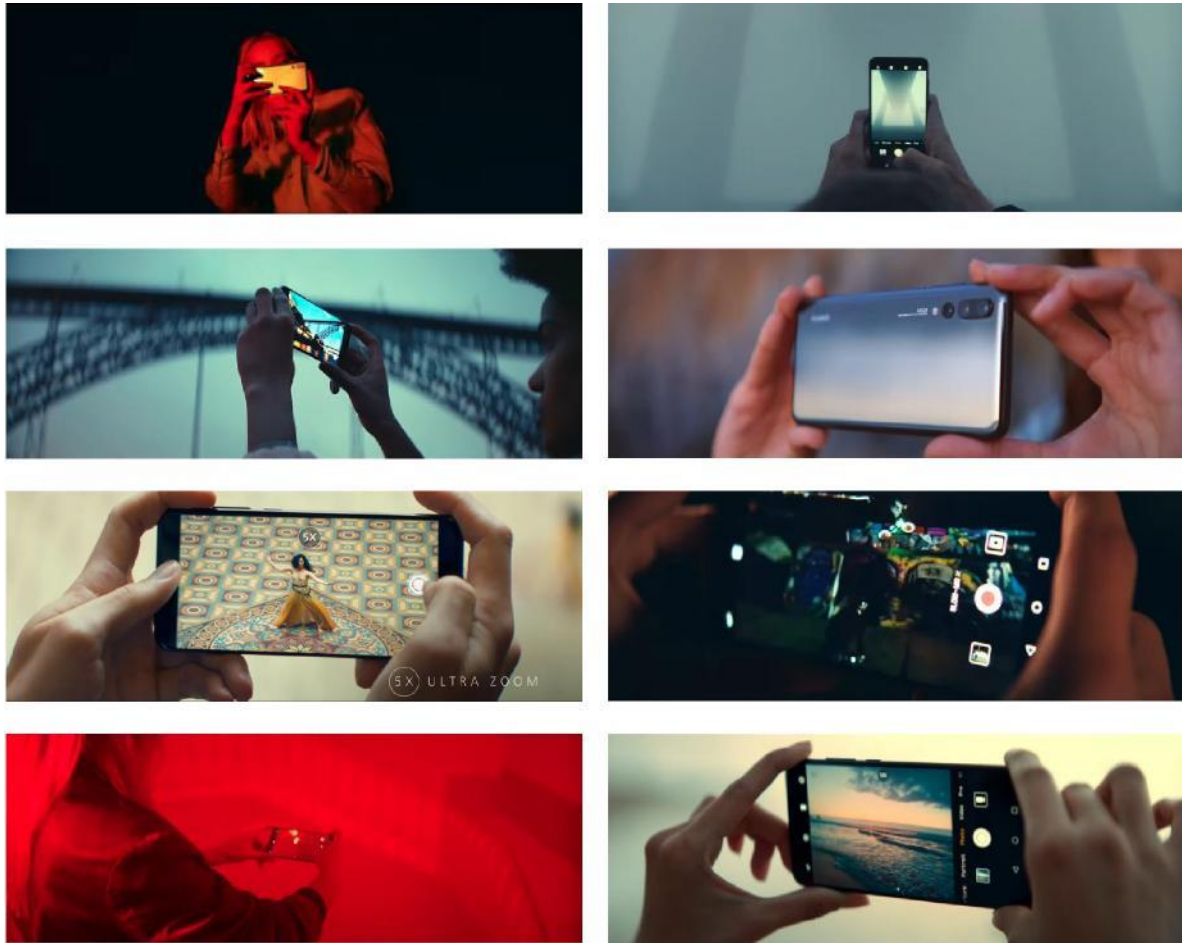


Figure 9: Phone in centre of frame.

Such central compositions are identified by Arnheim (1974) as ‘balanced’ and result in ‘the whole assum[ing] the character of “necessity” in all its parts’ (20). Considered as such, the phone and its surroundings – the fantasy world – are inextricably linked. This suggests that the phone is not just essential for accessing the fantasy world, but necessary for its creation, implying that the viewer’s fantasies can only exist through the phone. This link, although completely fabricated, is legitimised by the advert’s grounding in reality. Able to exist in both the fantasy and real worlds of the advert, the phone enters a liminal position where it is able to take on qualities from both worlds, allowing Huawei to attribute it with fantastical qualities without losing credibility. In doing so, Huawei prevent the viewer from passing judgement on the product, as it is no longer seen as a commodity. Understood as a tool with which the viewer can access and create their own desires, the phone exceeds its physical capabilities and becomes more associated with the viewer’s potential experiences than a sense of ownership. As such, the phone is exoticised beyond its use value and status as a commodity and becomes fetishised for its ability to transform the viewer’s reality. Therefore, with the physical reality of the phone seen as secondary to the viewer’s experience with it, Huawei are able to severely mislead the viewer about what they are actually purchasing, appearing to sell them their dreams rather than a product.

Fetishisation

In selling the viewer their dreams through the exoticisation of the phone, Huawei substitute the economic value of their product for a social value. Residing in its technical specifications, the economic value of the phone is referenced in the advert through small captions in the bottom, right hand corner of three frames (as shown in figure 10).

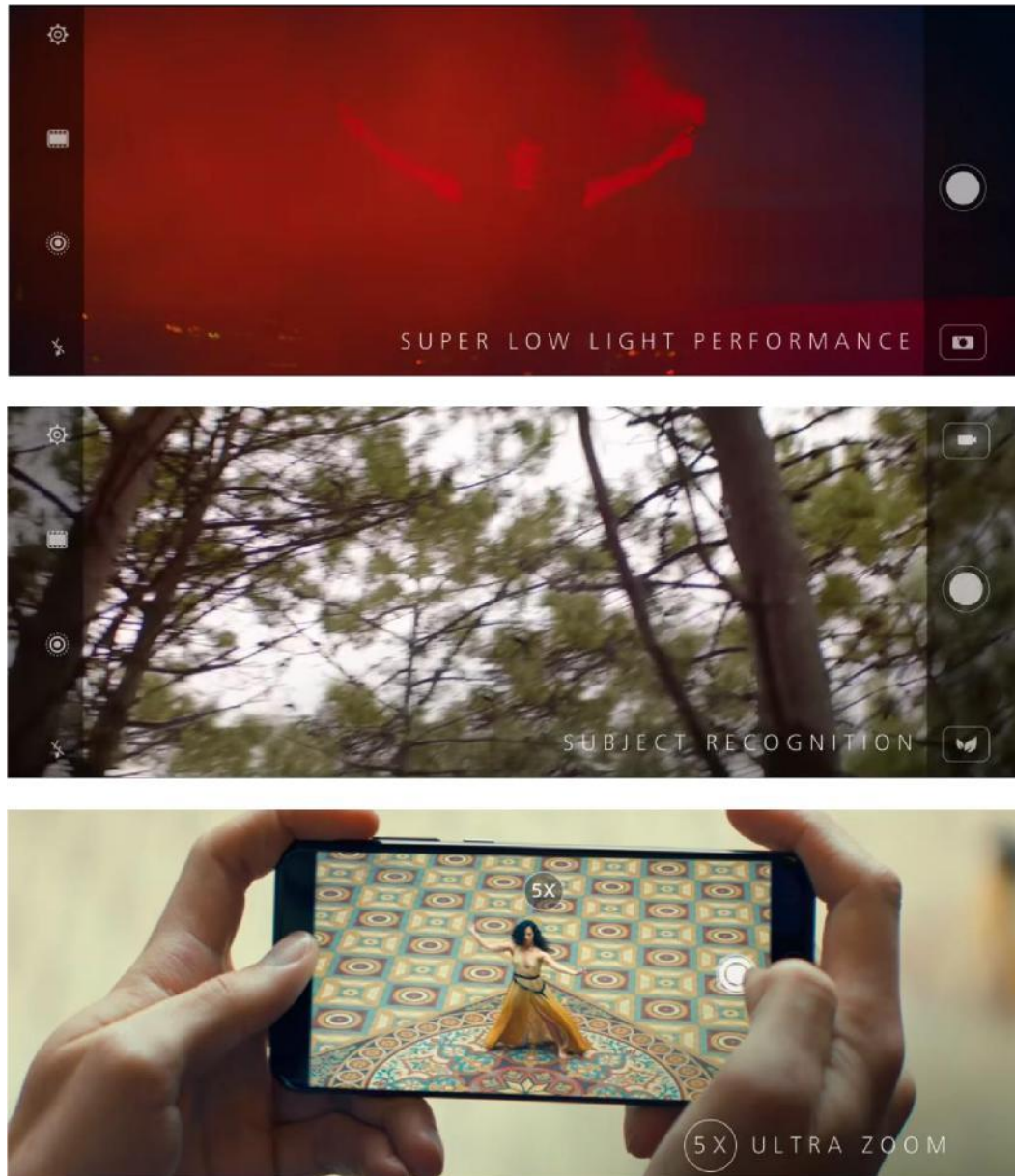


Figure 10: Technical specification captions.

However, only appearing very briefly – for no longer than one second each – and taking up less than ~5% of the frame (see appendix B), these captions are overshadowed by the visuals in the advert. The economic value is, therefore, considered secondary to the aesthetics of and experience with the phone. Huawei, therefore, shift the viewer's attention away from the phone's functions, disguising its position as a commodity. As such, the desire produced through the exoticisation of the phone is subsequently misplaced, as its establishment is based on the aesthetics and experience of the phone rather than its actual capabilities. The phone is, therefore, evaluated by the viewer for its social rather than economic value, because, as Dant (1996) suggests, it is through such 'displacement of desire that an object acquires special social value' (499). No longer considered as a commodity, then, the phone is able to take on human-like qualities beyond its actual capabilities. Huawei achieve this through the low repetitive beat of the accompanying music, which builds tension that is then released in crescendos coinciding with images of the phone, associating the emotions it evokes – of excitement and power – with the product. As '[s]ound and music can feel like they are a part of us, inside us' (Machin 2011: 172), it seems as though the phone itself evoked those feelings and so it becomes not just associated with the qualities of excitement and power, but with an implicit emotional capacity, despite being a man-made object. The phone, then, perceived to have human capabilities, takes on the role of a character in the advert. As such, frames that focus on the phone's screen (as shown in figure 11) take on the characteristics of what Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) identify as 'demand' images, where 'represented participants look at the viewer' (117). Brighter than the rest of the frame, the screen of the phone attracts the viewer's attention in a similar way to eye-contact, engaging the viewer in a direct address, which Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) suggest 'demands that the viewer enter into some kind of imaginary relation[ship]' (118). Huawei, therefore, engage the viewer in a human-like social relationship, which disguises the consumer-commodity relationship the viewer has been positioned in. Understood in social terms and through a personalised relationship, the phone also becomes individualised, taking on a uniqueness similar to that of an individual human personality.

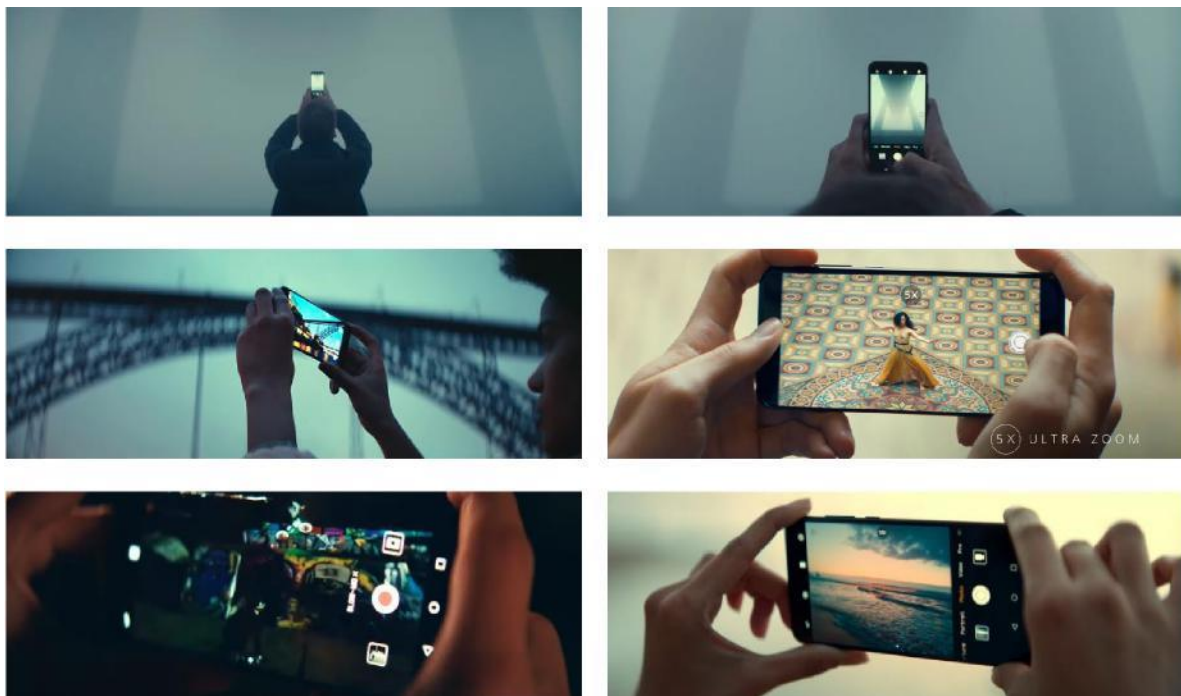


Figure 11: Demand images of the phone.

By presenting their phone in this way, Huawei are able to differentiate it from their competitors' products. However, in doing so, they also fetishise the phone, as it takes on

social qualities that it cannot inherently possess. As such, Huawei mislead the viewer by creating a desire for their product that exceeds its physical capabilities, obscuring how similar the phone is to others on the market by elevating this non-existent social value above the phone's actual functional capabilities.

As well as having its own social value, Huawei also imply that their phone is able to impact upon the social value and identity of others. This assumption is produced through the phone's relationship with the characters in the advert. Always appearing within a character's hands (as shown in figure 12), the phone appears inseparable from the body.

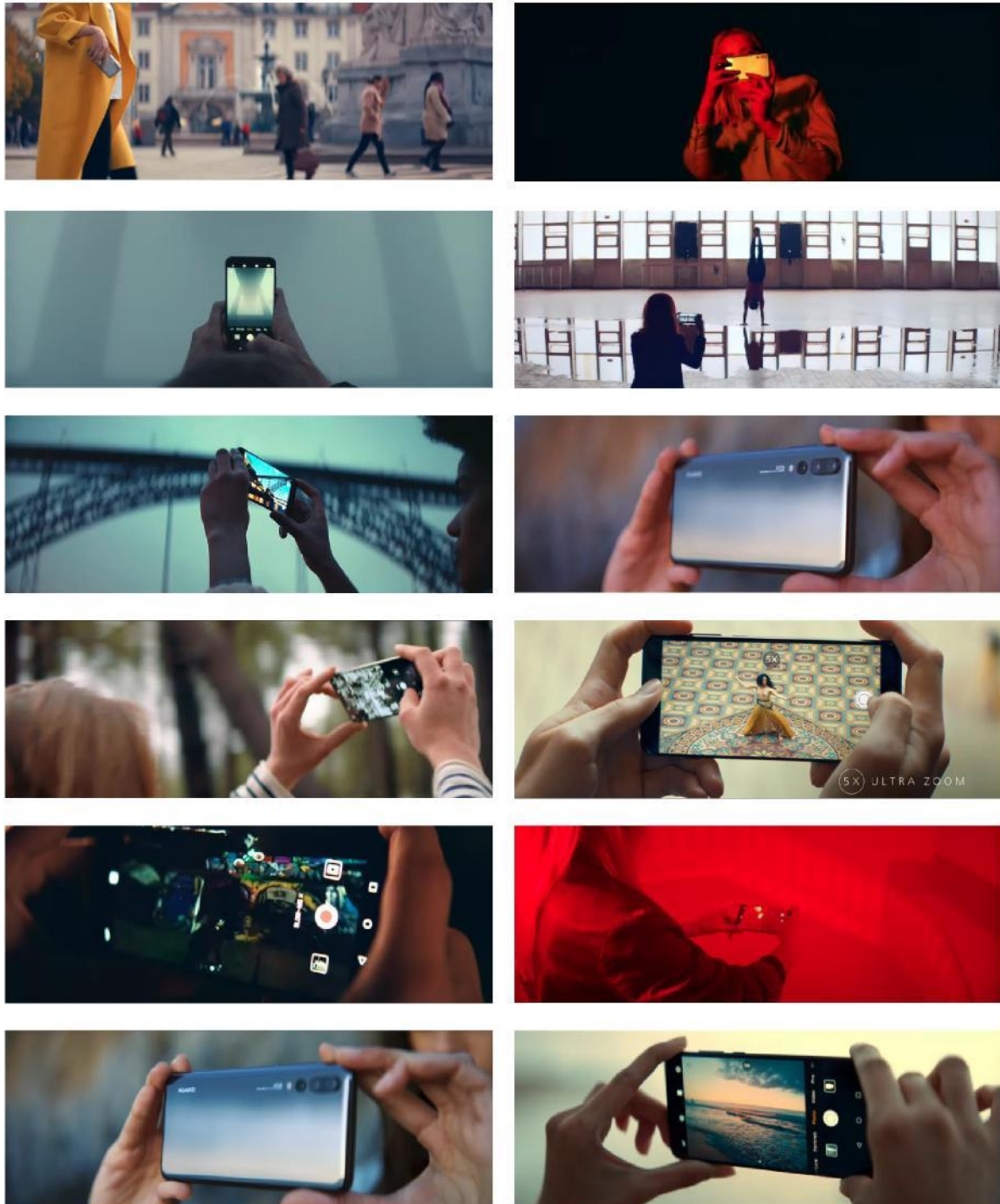


Figure 12: Scenes containing the phone.

As such, the characters and the phone become intrinsically linked. Huawei also take this connection even further, as the characters' faces are only revealed after they are seen to interact with the phone (as shown in figure 13).

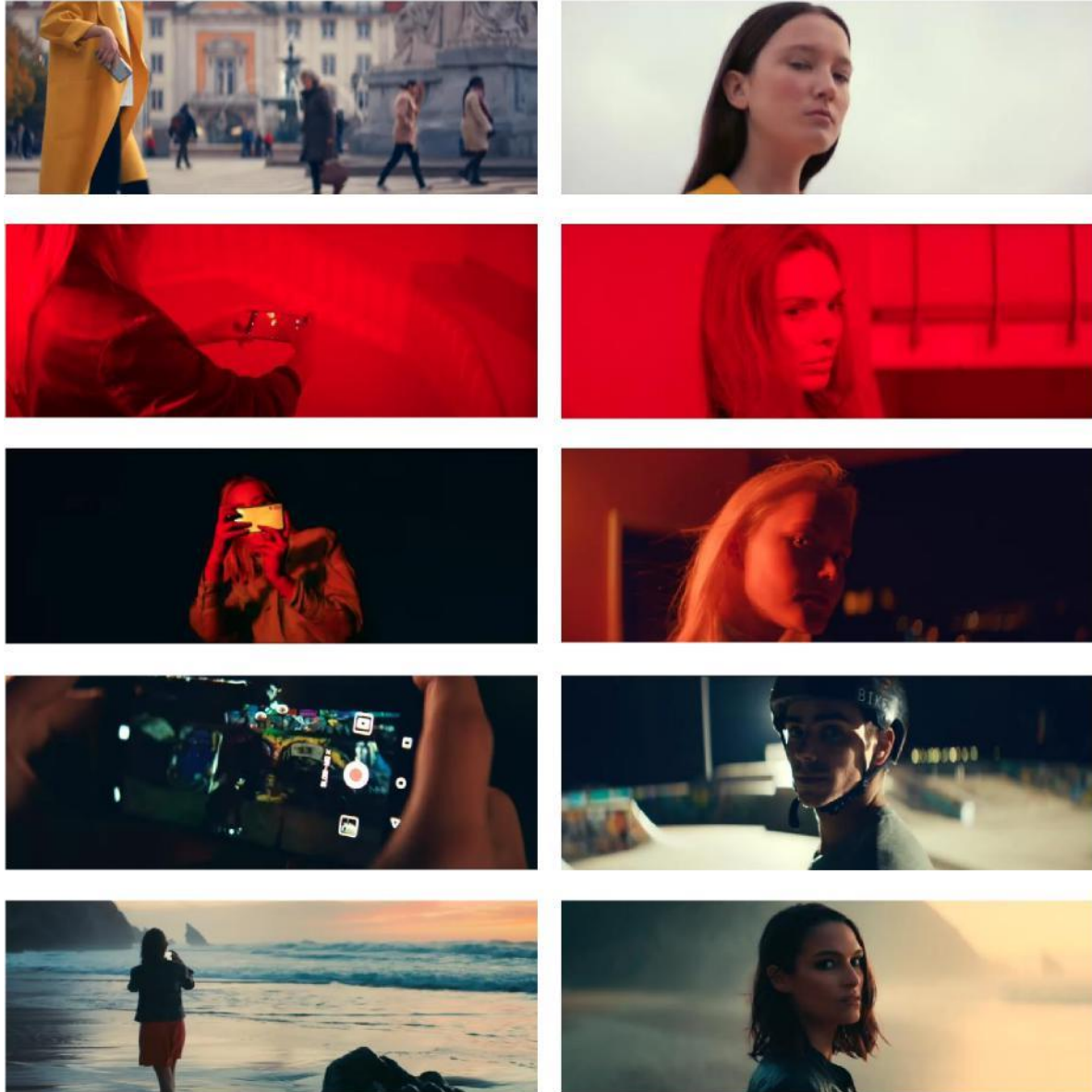


Figure 13: Left to right: transition from characters using the phone to showing their face.

As the face is the most widely used and recognised marker of our identity, the phone, therefore, becomes not just linked to the characters' bodies, but to their individual identities. Therefore, as the phone is personified, the traits of the characters subsequently become transferred onto it. Pictured individually and each within a different setting, Huawei present the characters as individual and unique. Often either dressed or shrouded in bright colours (as shown in figure 14) or participating in extreme or adventurous activities (as shown in figure 15), these characters are shown to stand out and be bold. As such, they become associated with desirable characteristics like courageousness and creativity, which, transferred onto the phone, make it seem more exciting and desirable. However, as the characters' identities are only revealed after they are shown to own the phone, Huawei, disguise this transfer of characteristics by exploiting the reader's understanding of narrative progression to imply that the phone actually plays a role in producing the identities of the characters, rather than the

other way around. As such, Huawei implicitly promise the viewer that by owning the phone they can become like the characters depicted, promising, therefore, not just to transform the consumer's experience of the world – by allowing them access to their desires and mediating their surroundings as previously discussed – but also to transform the consumers themselves.

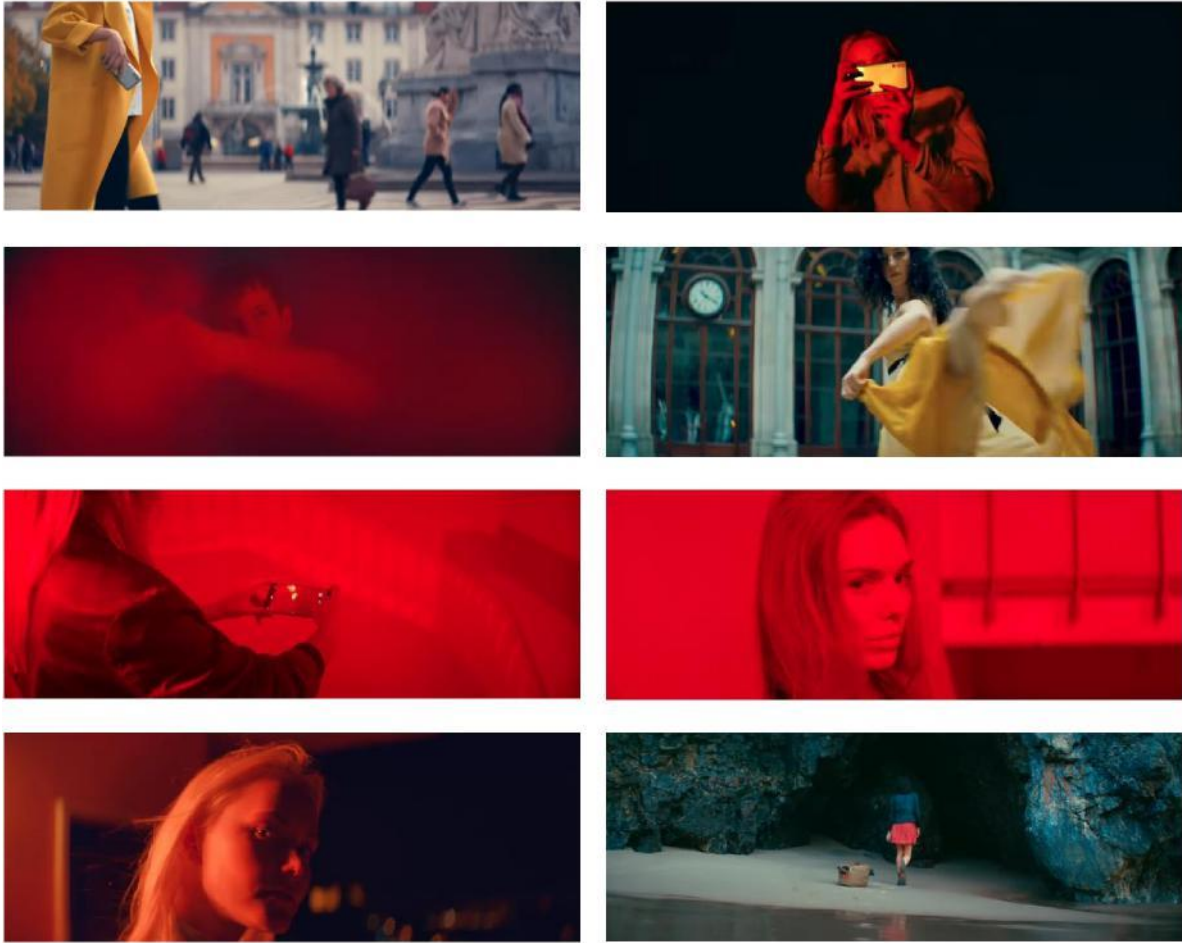


Figure 14: Characters dressed or shrouded in bright colours.

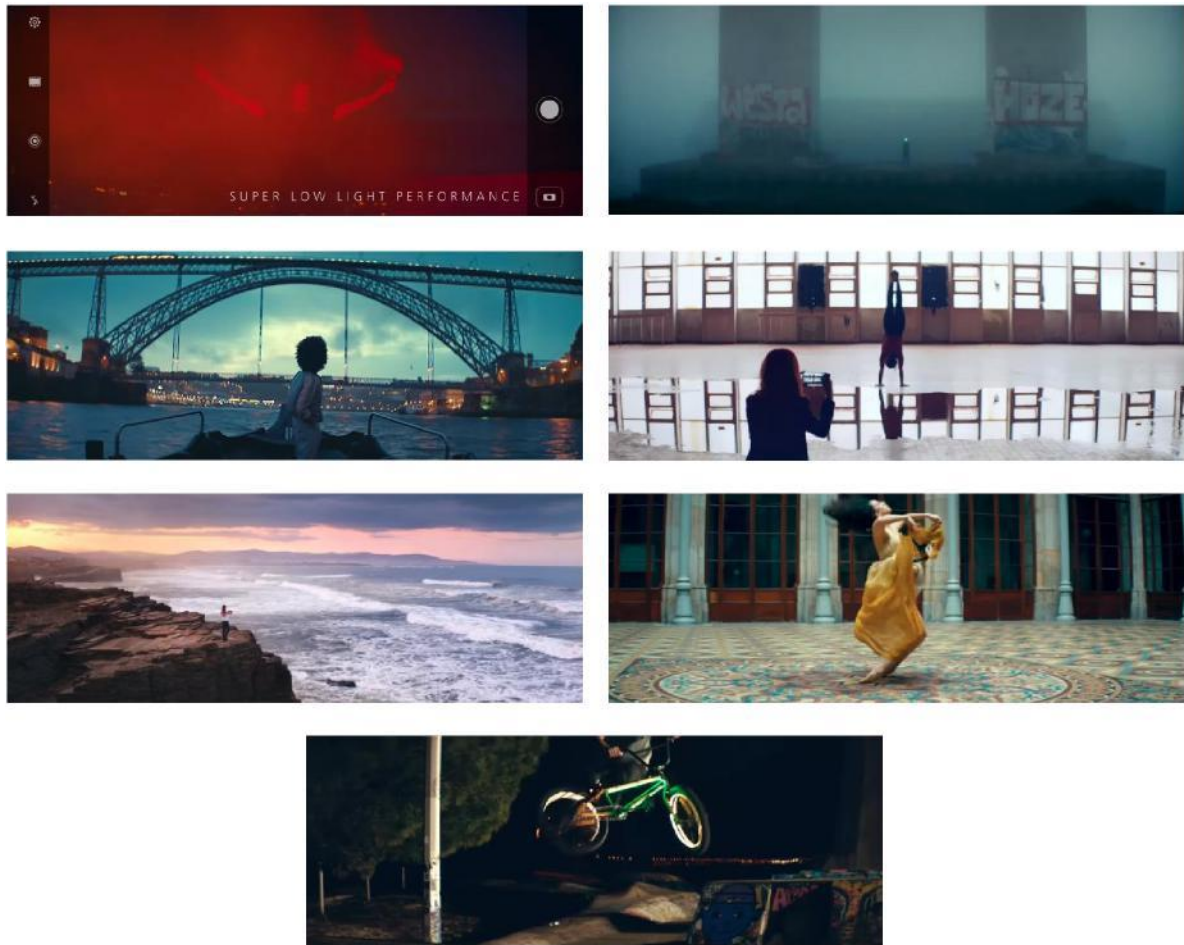


Figure 15: Characters participating in extreme or adventurous activities.

Furthermore, if we consider a fetish, as Lloyd (2008) does, to refer 'to the human ability to project value onto a material object' (8), in giving the phone this transformative ability, Huawei subvert this relationship, as they suggest it is the phone that can project value onto the consumer. This then, removes the role of the consumer in the process of fetishisation, as the product is presented as already having these qualities inherently. As such, Huawei prevent the viewer from challenging the position of the phone, rendering the viewer powerless and deceiving them into blindingly accepting the exaggerated claims they put forward as true, despite providing no substantiated evidence for them.

As well as targeting the viewer's desire to improve their individual identity, Huawei also draw upon our desires for group membership in the advert. Despite the characters being portrayed as individuals, they are not developed or characterised, with most only appearing on screen for 1-2 seconds. Remaining somewhat generic, then, the characters are seen as symbolic or representative. As such, it is easier for the viewer to project themselves onto the characters, recognising the potential for them to transform themselves into the kind of person depicted in the advert, which is something encouraged through Huawei's manufacture of a shared perspective between the characters and viewer, as discussed earlier. Additionally, however, this generic quality also makes it easier to connect the characters to one another. Achieved through the rhyming of scenes, which depict visually similar scenes of different characters in similar positions or completing the same movement, Huawei create an implicit sense of connection throughout the advert. From the repeated scenes of feet walking at the beginning of the advert (as shown in figure 16), to the sequences of head shots towards the end (as shown in figure 17), Huawei link the characters to create an impression of similarity.

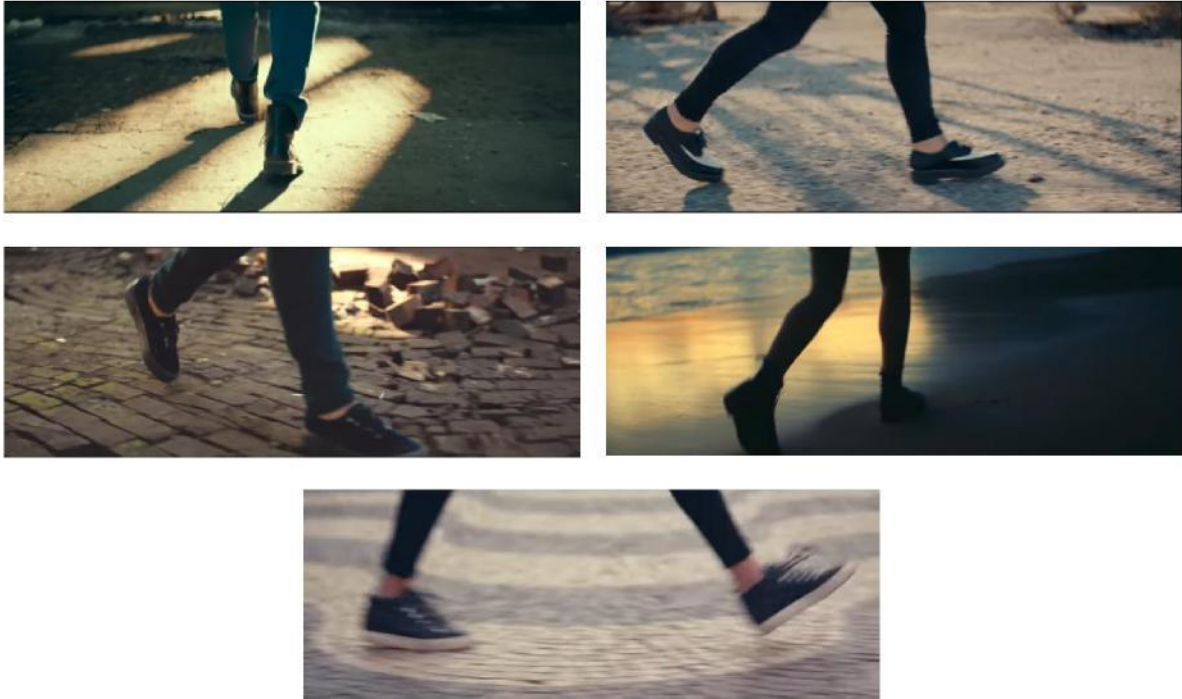


Figure 16: Rhyming scenes: feet walking.

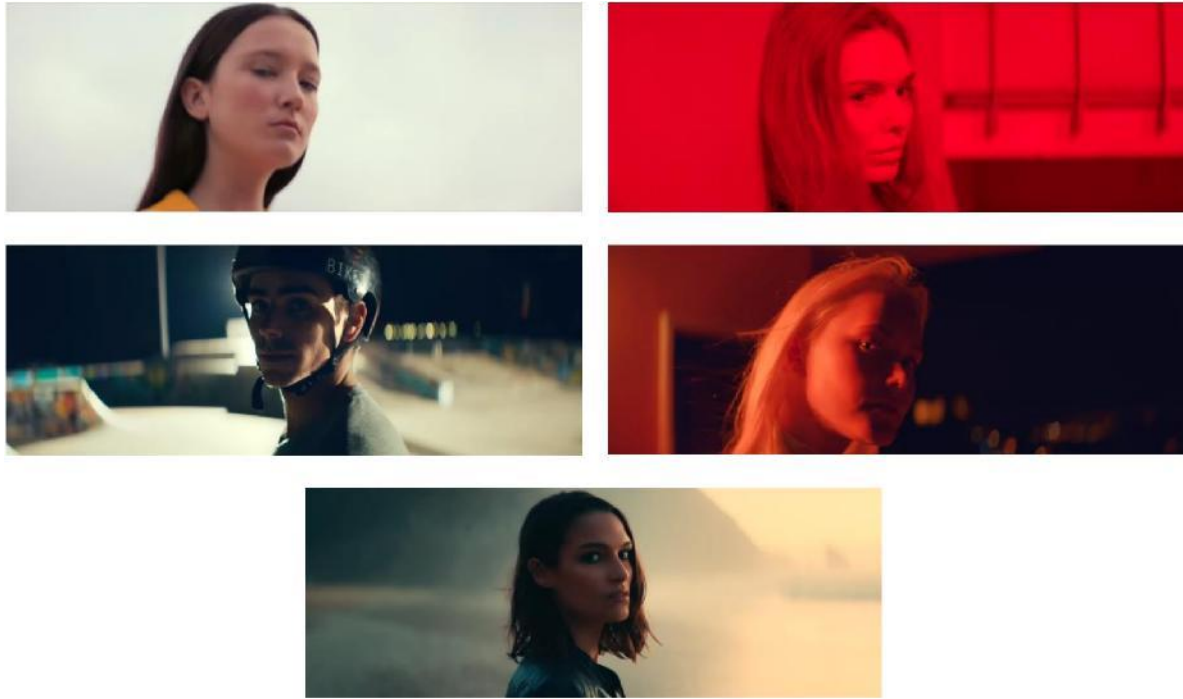


Figure 17: Rhyming scenes: faces.

Reinforced by the repetitive beat of the accompanying music, which remains at the same pace throughout most of the advert, these characters are presented as equal members of the same group, building a sense of community. As each character's identity is defined by their relationship with the phone, this community is subsequently based around ownership of the product. Huawei are, therefore, seen to, as Vestergaard and Schröder (1985) have observed of much advertising, 'exploit people's needs for group membership' (6) by implying that the consumer will also become a member of this group through the purchase of their product. As such, Huawei's direct appeal to 'join the renaissance in photography' (Huawei 2018: 0:55), actually disguises a sales pitch, as the only way to join the group is to buy the product. In conflating these ideas, Huawei essentially promise the consumer a sense of acceptance and belonging despite having no control over such a community or the acceptance of the consumer within it, misleading the viewer through implicit suggestions that exaggerate what the consumer is actually buying. Furthermore, as well as working to make the product seem more desirable to the viewer, the creation of this community also implicitly reinforces the phone's position as a fetish. If we consider that '[t]he fetish quality [...] is assigned through cultural mediations' (Dant 1996: 513), the community created within the advert can be seen to simulate the cultural conditions required to create a fetish. The mass use of the phone within the advert, then, implies a group acceptance of its inherent fetish quality. As such, Huawei mislead the viewer by presenting the product as a pre-existing fetish, despite it only being able to occupy this position through consumers' use of the product. This, therefore, exaggerates the social worth of the phone in order to manufacture a level of desire that exceeds its worth but is accepted by the viewer nonetheless.

Discussion

In their advert for the P20 Pro camera-phone, Huawei manufacture desire through the exoticisation of their product. By wrapping exciting experiences around the phone Huawei position it as new and part of a better world, a fantasy world, allowing them to transfer positive connotations onto the product, which exoticises it by presenting it as unique and glamorous. In doing so, they also simulate the experience of owning the phone for the viewer by aligning the characters' supposed perspectives with that of the viewer's, which encourages them to project themselves onto the characters who exist within the fantasy world. As the fantasy world is modulated to appear better than the viewer's reality, this evokes feelings of insecurity and anxiety, causing the viewer to become dissatisfied with their own life in comparison and subsequently conflate their desires for a better reality with the fantasy that Huawei produce in the advert. Huawei then misdirect this desire onto their phone by creating enough contact between the fantasy world and reality to present the phone as the solution to the viewer's problems, as it acts as a point of access between the two spaces. The viewer, therefore, inadvertently enters a consumer-commodity relationship with the phone through which Huawei exploit the viewer's insecurities to translate their desire for a better reality into a desire to purchase their product.

Huawei disguise this relationship, however, through the fetishisation of their phone. By misdirecting the viewer's desires, Huawei appear to sell the viewer their dreams rather than a phone, as they foreground the aesthetic and experiential qualities of the phone over its actual technical capabilities, disguising its position as a commodity. Substituting, therefore, the economic value of the phone for a social value, Huawei personify their product, imbuing it with human-like characteristics that exaggerate its use value and thus position it as a fetish. In doing so they conceal the consumer-commodity relationship between the viewer and the phone, replacing it instead with a personal one, through which the phone is individualised and differentiated from its competitors. Presented to the viewer in human-like terms, the phone is able to take on characteristics and qualities impossible for an object to possess, allowing Huawei to present the phone as capable of transformations only possible for humans. As such, Huawei are able to promise the reader a transformation of their identity and social status through the purchase of the phone. Despite having no control over either of these aspects of the viewer's life, Huawei legitimise their claims by presenting the phone as a pre-existing fetish, removing the viewer from the process of fetishisation and simulating the acceptance of the fetish through the fictional community within the advert. This enables Huawei to bypass the viewer's judgement and present the phone as inherently having a value that it is impossible for an object to have. Huawei, therefore, mislead the viewer by exaggerating their phone's abilities, positioning it as a fetish in order to legitimise its role as the solution to the viewer's insecurities and to manufacture an irrational desire for it.

To an extent, Huawei's fetishisation of the phone may be seen as an attempt to reframe the abilities of its 'AI assistance' (Huawei 2018: 0:49) into understandable terms for the viewer, working to distinguish the phone as more capable than its regular competitors due to its intuitive abilities. However, the phone's AI only works 'to ensure you always get the perfect photos every time' (Huawei 2019: Camera), having no effect on any other aspect of the user's life or experience with the phone. Instead, then, the phone's fetishisation is likely economically motivated, designed to mislead the viewer in order to create desire beyond the value of the phone to generate more purchases rather than inform the viewer. However, the effects of this reach further than just Huawei's sales figures. By implying the phone can impact other aspects of the consumer's life – more specifically their identity and social position – Huawei also draw upon wider ideologies recognised by critics such as Van Dijck (2008), who suggest that the camera-phone is often seen as 'a tool for an individual's identity formation and communication' (57). Seen as such, Huawei's fetishisation of the phone becomes more problematic, as the boundaries of the fictional and the real become blurred. As such, the position of the fantasy world as fiction becomes less clear. Presented to the viewer mediated through the camera-

phone, a medium understood by the viewer to construct and represent aspects of identity in their reality, the fantasy world may come to act as a genuine example of reality for the viewer, or at least conflate the viewer's current understanding of reality with unrealistic expectations. In doing so, Huawei essentially dictate what the viewer should aspire to by presenting their fantasy world as an ideal reality. As such, through the presentation of their characters, Huawei imply that the viewer should be adventurous and unique, yet accepted by a wider community. However, the insecurities and anxieties produced through the disparity between the viewer and this perceived ideal are unable to be remedied as they are borne from a desire for something that does not exist. By fetishising the phone to present it as a tool with which the viewer can transform their reality into this fantasy, then, Huawei perpetuate a continual cycle of dissatisfaction and anxiety, exploiting the viewer's fears and rendering them powerless to object, in order to gain economically whilst the viewer suffers socially and psychologically.

To prevent the construction and spread of such detrimental ideologies and effects, more research must be conducted to examine how prevalent these processes are in camera-phone advertising more broadly, because, as Fairclough (2001) suggests, '[a] single text on its own is quite insignificant: the effects of media power are cumulative' (45). Therefore, further research analysing the ways camera-phones are fetishised and the false promises made by the advertisers for these products will provide a greater understanding of how viewers are being affected and contribute to efforts to regulate advertising so that it provides truthful and reliable information, preventing the manipulation of consumers by those in power and working to empower the consumer so that they can make more informed and genuine choices.

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Appendix



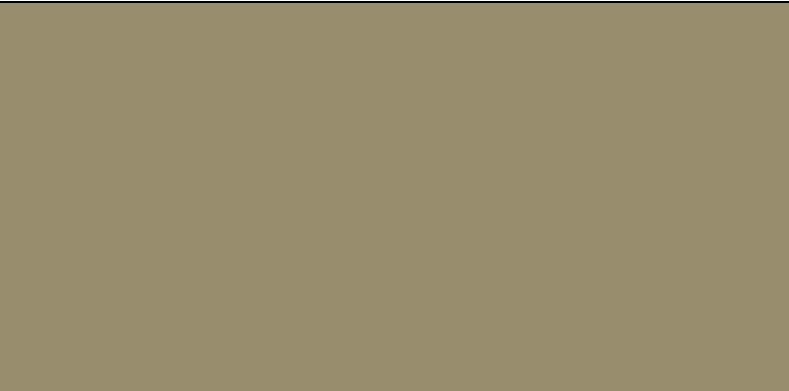
(A) Transcript

Transcribed by author on 17/02/2019 from:


Huawei (2018). 'Photography Will Never Be the Same'. On *YouTube*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JundwIHm1Vs&t=1s> [Accessed: 17/02/2019].

Key

Notation	Meaning
V	Voiceover
C	Caption (captions are formatted as closely to the original as possible, please refer to the screenshot and visual description for more information)

	Time	Language	Music	Visual Description	Scene Screenshot
1	0:00		Low, soft repetitive synthesised beat.	Photography studio setup in an abandoned building. White backdrop on fire. Empty stool in front. Man walking away in the background.	
2	0:03		Same as scene 1: Low, soft repetitive synthesised beat.	Close up of feet of man walking away. Blue jeans and black boots.	
3	0:04		Quiet whirring, animalistic, almost screeching sounds overlaying the low, soft	Closer angle of burning screen. No stool. Triangle shape is cut out of the screen, with the edges burning. Misty background. Man walking	

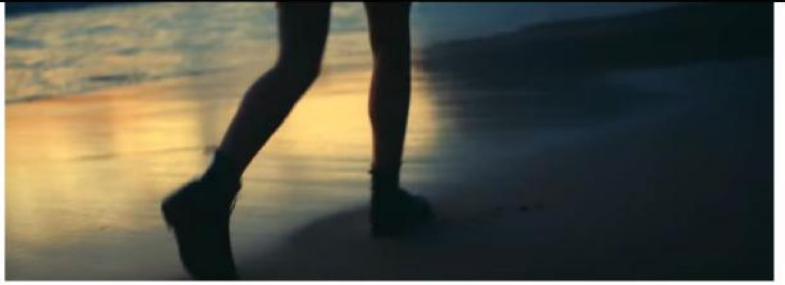

			repetitive synthesised beat.	away barely visible in the background.	
4	0:06		“huh” sound echoes over the low, soft repetitive synthesised beat.	Side view of feet walking. Black leggings and black flat platform shoes.	
5	0:07		Volume of low, repetitive synthesised beat slowly increasing. Scratching, animalistic noises.	Photography equipment on fire. On a promenade. Empty except for burning equipment between two pillars. Blue sea in the background with slight sunset.	


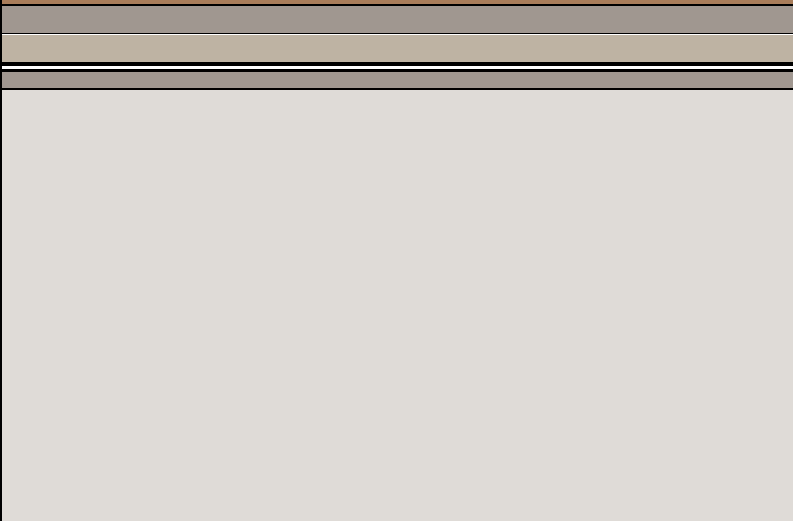
6	0:08		Low, repetitive synthesised beat.	Dark figure of a woman walking away from the camera under a tunnel with glass side barriers. Dark edges with bright centre. Very reflective.	
7	0:10		Whirring or scratching animalistic noises. Low, repetitive synthesised beat.	Close-up of the burning photography equipment on the promenade. Burning equipment to the right of screen, top of one pillar on the left. Grey cloudy sky in the background.	



8	0:11		Noticeable increase in volume of the low, repetitive synthesised beat.	Close, front/side view of walking feet from line 4. Walking along brick path. In the background the path has been ripped up, scattered bricks.	
9	0:12		Louder “huh” sounds over the beat. Animal sounds.	Burning tripod in the middle of a dark-paved city street. Bright stone terraced buildings on either side with small black pillars lining the path. Background is road leading uphill.	


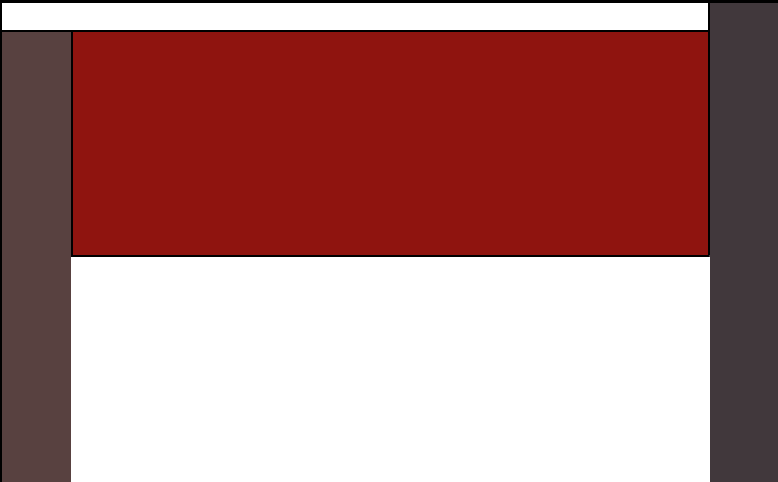
Loud, low, repetitive synthesised beat.	Feet walking along a beach. Dark, silhouette-like. Wearing boots. Dark, reflection of a sunset on the left. Some sea seen in the top left of the background.
Loud, low, repetitive synthesised beat.	Wider shot of the woman walking on the beach from line 10. Silhouetted against the sunset. Light on the left and dark on the right. Huge rock face on the right in the direction the woman is walking.

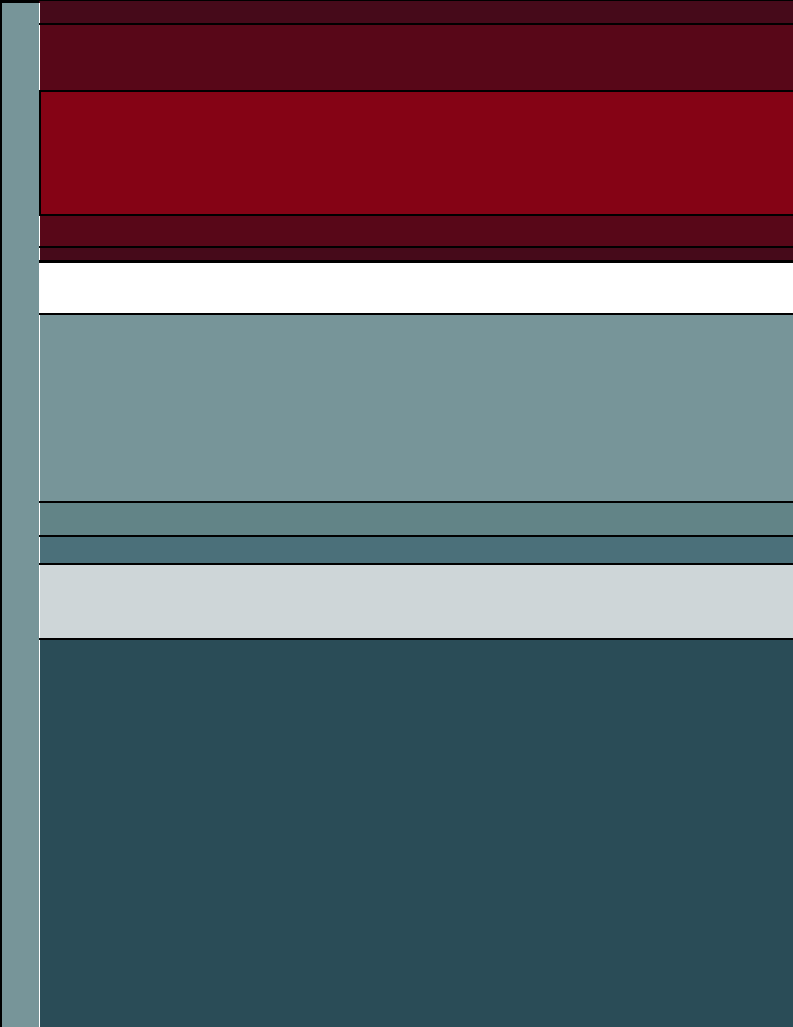
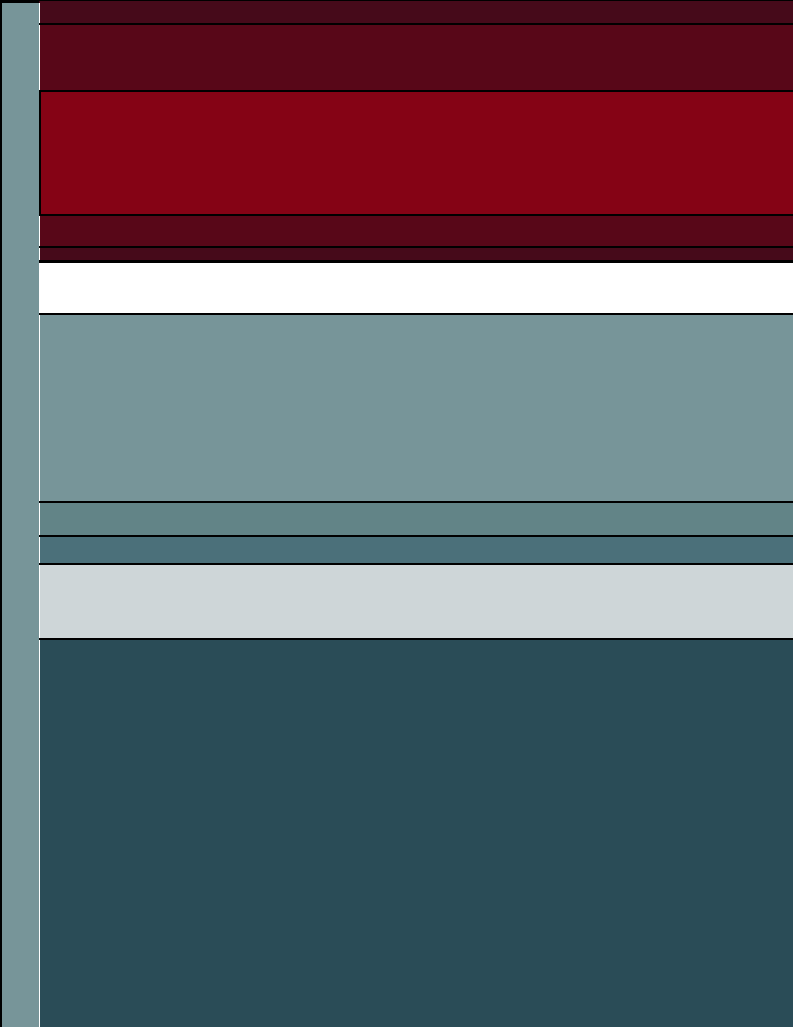
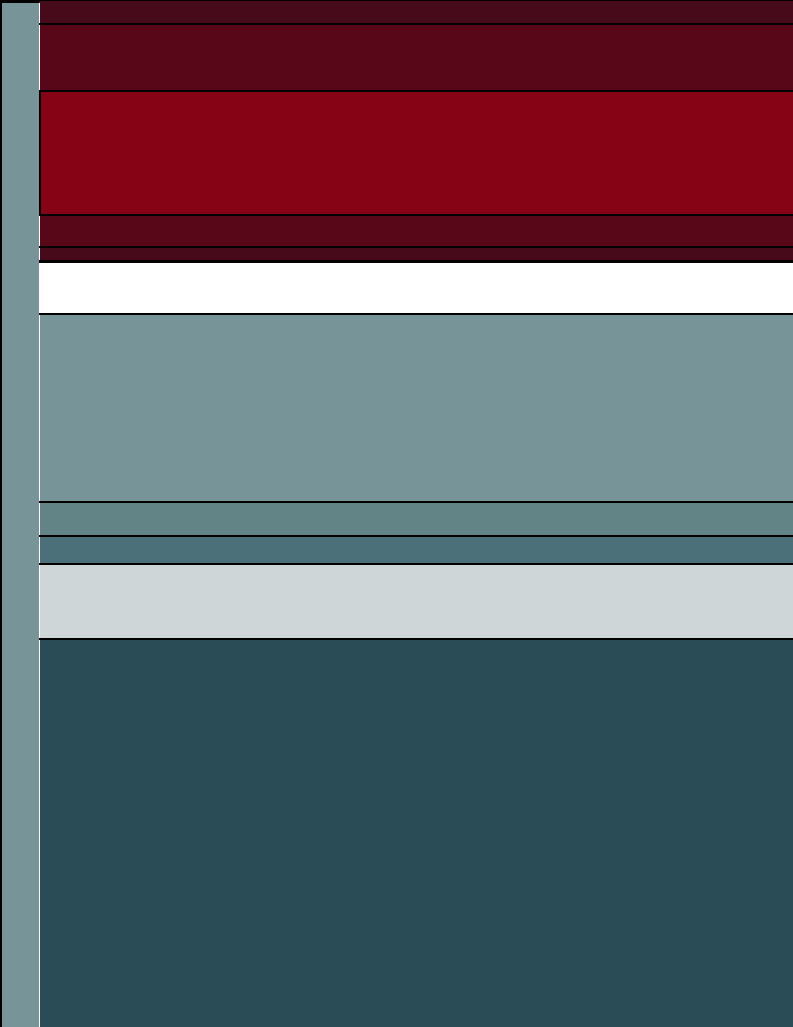
The Fetishisation of the Phone: A Multimodal
Critical Discourse Analysis of Camera-Phone
Advertising


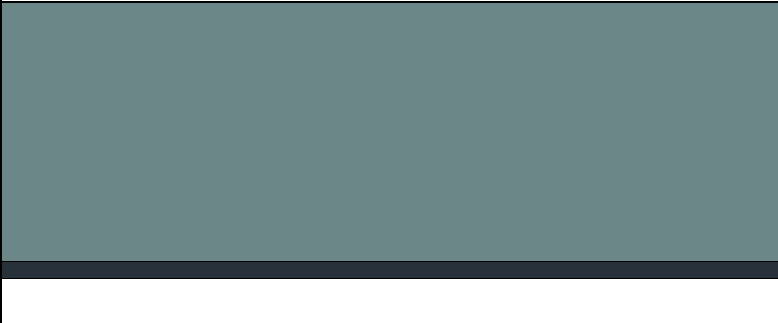

10	0:13		128	
11	0:14			

12	0:15		<p>Animal noises over loud, low, repetitive synthesised beat.</p>	<p>Close up of the burning tripod from line 9. Tripod in the centre. Background: light stone houses. Doorways covered in graffiti.</p>	
13	0:16		<p>Loud, low, repetitive synthesised beat. Higher, sound increasing in pitch, almost like a release of energy.</p>	<p>Side view of feet walking. Wearing black leggings and black laced shoes with white sole. Walking on brick swirl pattern which takes up whole background.</p>	

14 0:17	<p>Higher sound concludes with a continuous lower sound. Background beat stops.</p>	<p>Wider angle of the body of the person from line 13. Wearing yellow coat. Taking phone out of pocket of coat. In a town square. Large traditional building in the background with a yellow-painted section. Large statue in the background to the right and a fountain between the statue and building.</p>	
15 0:18	Loud "huh".	<p>Low angle, looking up at the face of the woman from lines 13-14. Looks at camera. Long, straight</p>	



				dark hair swept back. White background.	
16	0:19		Loud explosion of noise.	Another woman holding phone as though filming the viewer. Red lighting. Black background.	
17	0:20	[C] SUPER LOW LIGHT PERFORMAN CE	Explosion of noise starts to fade as the background beat returns.	Framed by phone screen graphics in camera-mode. Filming a man holding two red smoke flares. Caption bottom right in white capital letters.	

18	0:21		Background beat slowly returns.	Normal framing – no screen graphics. Man sweeps red smoke flare across screen.	
19	0:22		Background beat quieter, back to original volume.	Misty light white/blue background. Two large pillars or buildings splitting background evenly.	
20	0:22		Low, repetitive synthesised beat.	Pans down the pillars to small figure standing between them holding a phone – light of the screen visible. Big graffiti on bottom of pillars.	



21	0:23		Low, repetitive synthesised beat.	Closer angle of the back of the figure from line 20. Holding phone up to take a picture. Dark and misty background.	
22	0:23		Low, repetitive synthesised beat. Camera shutter sound when picture taken.	Close-up of the camera in the man's hands from lines 20-21. Clicks to take a picture.	
23	0:24		Low, repetitive synthesised beat.	Back of a woman using phone to film in foreground. Woman is filming another woman doing a handstand. Large puddle between two women reflecting the	

				large bright windows in the background.	
24	0:25		Low, repetitive synthesised beat.	Side of woman's face on the right of screen. Hands in centre holding phone to take a picture. Dark grey/blue background of a bridge. Vibrant image of the bridge on phone.	
25	0:26		Low, repetitive synthesised beat.	Wider angle of the bridge from line 25. Back of the woman standing on a boat in the centre. Bridge spanning across the frame in the background. Blue/grey tones with a cloudy sky.	



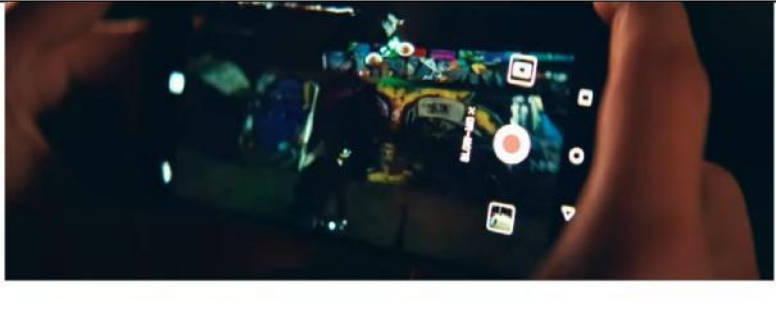
				Lights of the city in the background.	
26	0:27		Low, repetitive synthesised beat. Additional breathy sound almost like it is expanding.	Close-up of the back of the phone being held in two hands. Can see Huawei logo. Blurry grey background. Light reflecting off back of phone.	
27	0:28		Breathy sound almost like it is expanding. Volume slowly increasing. Beat continues in background.	Wide angle of woman from line 26. Woman looks small standing on edge of cliff. Cliff expanding to the left and rough seas on the right. Sunset.	

<p>28</p>	<p>0:29</p>	<p>Breathy sound almost like it is expanding. Volume slowly increasing. Beat continues in background, also increasing volume.</p>	<p>Top of a woman's head. Focused on hands holding phone on the right. Background: woodland. Spans round to see phone screen.</p>	
<p>29</p>	<p>0:30 [C] SUBJECT RECOGNITION</p>	<p>Breathy sound almost like it is expanding. Volume slowly increasing. Beat continues in background, also</p>	<p>Switches to phone screen-view, image framed by phone camera graphics. As though taking an image of the woodland. Spans round the woodland scene. Caption in white capital</p>	



			increasing in volume.	letters in bottom right-hand corner.	
30	0:31		Breathy sound coming to a conclusion. Volume slowly increasing. Beat continues in background, also increasing in volume.	Normal framing. Women in yellow dress, sweeping fabric across the frame. Old style stone arches with wooden framed windows in background.	
31	0:32		Background beat stops. Breathy sound continues.	Switches to higher angle, woman from line 30 sweeping hair across frame.	

32	0:33		Breathy sound quiets. Loud "huh" noises.	Wider angle. Back of the woman from lines 30-31 dancing, spins round to face camera. Patterned, tiled floor.	
33	0:34		Momentary quiet.	Back of a man holding phone out in front of him. Standing on balcony overlooking room from lines 30-32. Dark foreground. Bright background. Camera moves towards the phone.	

34	0:35		Beat starts again louder than the original beat.	Woman from lines 30-32 dancing in centre of circle pattern on tiled floor. Drops to the floor.	
35	0:36	[C] 5X ULTRA ZOOM	Loud, repetitive, synthesised beat.	Close up of the phone held by the man in line 33. Presses zoom button. Caption in white capital letters in bottom right corner. "5X" in white-outlined circle.	

36	0:37		Loud, repetitive, synthesised beat.	Fast panning of walls in room where woman is dancing.	
37	0:37		Loud, repetitive, synthesised beat.	<p>Woman from lines 30-36 sitting on the floor catching her breath.</p> <p>Looking straight at camera. Zooms closer to her face.</p>	
38	0:38		<p>Loud, repetitive, synthesised beat.</p> <p>Quiet screeching, animalistic noises.</p>	Close up of phone being held in two hands. Screen in camera-mode. Filming dark space with brightly coloured graffiti	




39	0:39		Loud, repetitive, synthesised beat.	Back of man's head on left. Dark background: dark blue sky and pillars.	
40	0:40		Loud, repetitive, synthesised beat. Sound of bike spinning.	Man riding BMX bike with lights on rides up ramp and does trick in the air.	
41	0:40		Loud, repetitive, synthesised beat. Sound of bike spinning.	Lower angle, looking up at the trick from line 40.	

42	0:41		Loud, repetitive, synthesised beat. Whooshing sounds, as bike spins.	Red with spinning strips of light.	
43	0:42		Loud, repetitive, synthesised beat.	Red. Back of woman holding phone, filming lights from line 42 below her.	
44	0:43		Loud, repetitive, synthesised beat.	Red. Woman with head against wall looking straight ahead, off screen to the right. Turns to face the camera.	


45	0:43		Loud, repetitive, synthesised beat.	BMX rider in helmet looking at camera. Skate ramps covered with graffiti floodlit in the background.	
46	0:44		Loud, repetitive, synthesised beat. Animalistic screeching noise.	Red lighting. Woman looking at camera. Dark night sky in background.	
47	0:45		Loud, repetitive, synthesised beat.	Back of woman entering a cave from the beach. Wet sand in foreground. Dark cave opening. Woman drops brown bag and walks into the cave. Woman wearing red skirt and blue jacket with blue	

				shoes in similar shades to the rock face.	
48	0:46		Loud, repetitive, synthesised beat. "Huh" sound.	Side angle of woman's head walking, emerging from the cave.	
49	0:47	[VI the world's first triple lens	Beat stops. Replaced by quieter, almost clicking beat, slightly higher in pitch than original beat. Voiceover: female voice, non-native to UK.	Back of woman walking towards the sea. Holding phone up to take a picture. Rough seas and large jagged rocks in background. Sunset.	

50	0:48	[VI smartphone with	Clicking beat gets faster. Same voiceover as scene 49.	Close up of the back of phone being held in two hands. Same as line 26. Light reflecting from back of phone. Can see logo.	
51	0:49	[VI AI assistance	Clicking beat gets faster. Same voiceover as scene 49 and 50.	Screen-side of phone being held. On-screen: camera mode. Taking a picture of the sea at sunset. White line with circle in centre turns red when lined up with the horizon.	

52	0:50		<p>Mixture of animalistic noise and the expansive breathy noise. Background beat becomes quieter.</p>	<p>Framed by phone screen graphics. Red line with circle in the middle. Taking picture of the sea at sunset.</p>	
53	0:52		<p>Volume increases. Comes to crescendo and lowers. "Huh" sound when actor looks at camera.</p>	<p>Side of woman's head looking off screen to the right. Turns to face the screen. Blurred, misty background of rock face and the sea.</p>	
54	0:53	<p>[V+C] photography will never be the same</p>	<p>No background beat. Quieter animal sounds. Same voiceover as scenes 49-51.</p>	<p>Black screen. White text in capital letters in centre. "A" of "PHOTOGRAPHY" and "I" of "WILL" in red.</p>	

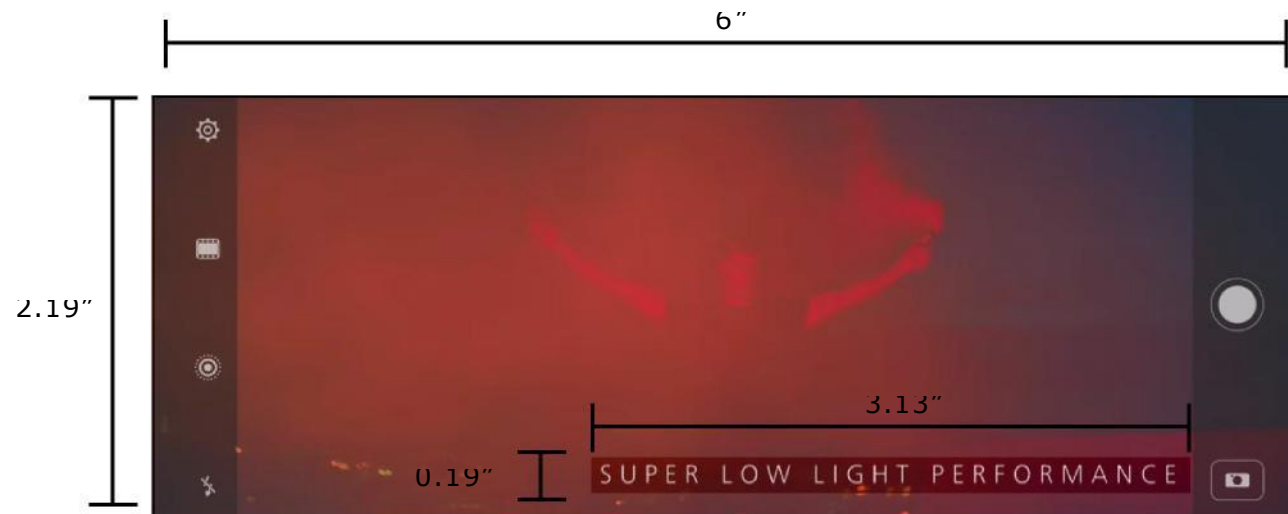
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55	0:55	<p>[V] the Huawei p20 pro</p>	<p>Quiet animalistic whirring sounds. Same voiceover as scenes 49-51 and scene 54.</p>	<p>Black background. Three phones lined up separate from one another on the left. Back two phones show the back of phone. Front phone shows the screen-side. Logo in bold white capital letters on the right centre of frame with phone model in white letters to the right of it. Smaller caption – “co-engineered with Leica” – underneath the model name. “Leica” depicted as their logo. Below caption in white capital letters – “JOIN</p>	
		<p>[C] HUAWEI P20 Pro CO- ENGINEERED WITH Leica JOIN THE RENAISSANCE IN PHOTOGRAPHY</p>			

				<p>THE RENAISSANCE IN PHOTOGRAPHY” – with “AI” of “RENAISSANCE” in red.</p>	
56	0:58	[C] HUAWEI MAKE IT POSSIBLE	Quiet.	<p>Black background. White Huawei logo in centre. Logo appears to reflect light as it moves upwards over it. Caption appears in white capital letters below the logo.</p>	

(B) Calculations

Percentage of the frame taken up by the caption:



Frame size:

$$6 \times 2.19 = 13.14$$

Caption size:

$$3.13 \times 0.19 = 0.5947$$

Caption as percentage of frame:

$$(0.5947 / 13.14) \times 100\% = 4.5\%$$



Frame size remains the same:

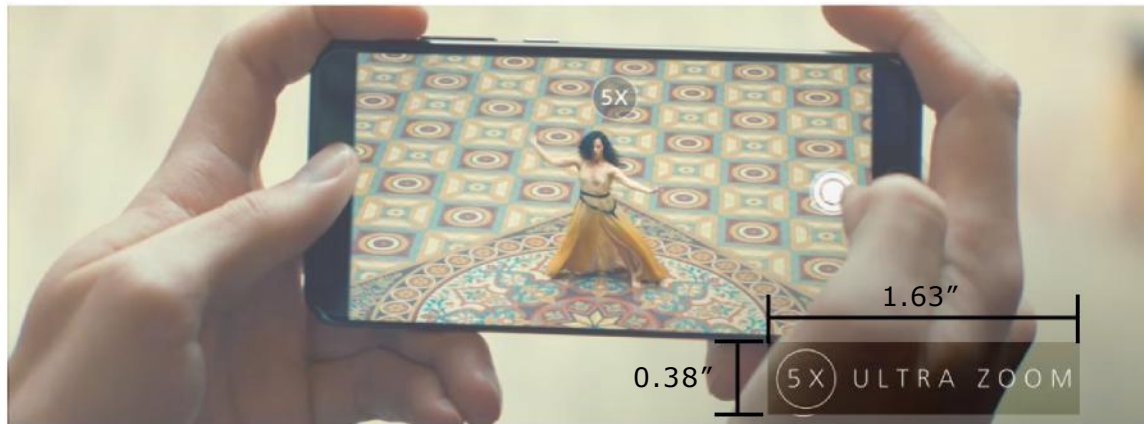
$$6 \times 2.19 = 13.14$$

Caption size:

$$2.31 \times 0.19 = 0.4389$$

Caption as percentage of frame:

$$(0.4389 / 13.14) \times 100\% = 3.3\%$$



Frame size remains the same:

$$6 \times 2.19 = 13.14$$

Caption size:

$$1.63 \times 0.38 = 0.6194$$

Caption as percentage of frame:

$$(0.6194 / 13.14) \times 100\% = 4.7\%$$