

Case study

Lichtenstein exhibition at Tate Modern 2013

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Lichtenstein A Retrospective
Tate Modern

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Sponsored by Bank of America Merrill Lynch

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Background

Tate is a family of four art galleries in the UK, housing the collection of British art from 1500 to the present day and international modern and contemporary art from 1900 until now. There are over 66,000 works of art by over 3,000 artists in the Tate collection.

Tate's mission is to increase public knowledge, understanding and enjoyment of British, modern and contemporary art.

Tate Modern displays international modern and contemporary art from 1900 to now and annually stages a number of large scale, temporary exhibitions. These include monographic exhibitions as well as thematic shows.

In spring 2013, Tate Modern presented the first full-scale retrospective of the work of American Pop artist Roy Lichtenstein (1923-1997). The exhibition included over 125 works from throughout his career and showcased many key paintings.

One of the central figures of American Pop Art, Lichtenstein was renowned for his work based on comic strips and advertising imagery and his signature hand painted Benday dots.

Objectives

The exhibition reassessed Lichtenstein's work and enduring legacy and was an opportunity to attract both committed exhibition audiences as well as attract new audiences to Tate Modern.

The key objectives were:

- To maximise income and attendance targets to the exhibition.
- Let Pop Art and Lichtenstein fans know this is a major, unmissable exhibition
- Generate awareness and positive word of mouth in a crowded marketplace – get everyone talking about this exhibition
- Create high levels of engagement with Lichtenstein and with the Tate brand
- Bring Roy Lichtenstein to a new, younger audience.

Target audience

Using Tate's audience segmentation, the following target audiences were identified:

Primary: self-improvers, sensualists and urban cool

- 25-70 year old occasional exhibition visitors – Pop art has an extremely broad appeal
- Predominantly live in London and the South East
- Like art amongst other cultural activities but only visit galleries one to two times a year for the really big shows
- Not necessarily art experts but would recognise a Lichtenstein painting, they are low-risk art fans who tend to be more interested in seeing something they already know and love
- Some visit exhibitions because of their love of the art and artist, some will visit because they want a great cultural experience to share with a friend or family on a trip to London

Secondary: site-seers and social spacers

- 18-60 year old overseas tourists, predominantly living in France, Germany and Spain – Site-seers but also overseas aficionados and self-improvers
- Visiting London and wanting to be part of the 'latest thing'. They'll be going to the major attractions such as the British Museum, London Eye and Tate Modern
- They'll use the London Underground a lot during their stay (various research shows that over 90% of overseas and domestic tourists use the Underground regularly during a visit to the capital)

Tertiary: aficionados, actualisers and researchers

- The art world: art students, curators, teachers, museum and gallery workers and academics
- Will consider Lichtenstein a significant artist
- High-risk with their activities, early adopters who like to do things that are new, exciting and surprising
- Rely on trusted sources and word-of-mouth to find out about things to see
- Like to go to major contemporary exhibitions in smaller venues and will also travel from other UK cities to see the show
- Also includes school teachers and lecturers influencing their students to come

Process

The exhibition was on for a relatively short amount of time compared to other shows both at Tate and other major museums and galleries. Spring 2013 was a busy and competitive period within the London exhibitions calendar with exhibitions such as *David Bowie is* at the V&A, *Man Ray Portraits* at the NPG and *Light Show* at the Hayward Gallery.

Tate Modern needed to establish that this was the definitive Lichtenstein exhibition filled with distinctive and striking work by this well-known artist.

Based on the targets and key objectives, all potential marketing opportunities needed to be maximised. This included all Tate platforms, paid-for media, brand and media partnerships.

The strategy concentrated on building awareness amongst core audiences in the six months prior to opening in order to create excitement and anticipation around the show. To create high levels of awareness around the launch, paid-for media and Tate platforms were significantly up-weighted and interest was sustained through carefully planned activity across the thirteen week exhibition period. This ensured the exhibition stayed front of mind with a large audience and positive word of mouth was consistently generated.

A final week's campaign created a sense of urgency not to miss the exhibition before it closed on 27 May 2013.

Key elements of the Lichtenstein marketing campaign included:

Pre-opening communications to 103,000 Tate Members via print, regular email bulletins, social media posts and website updates; onsite communication via large format posters at Tate Modern and Tate Britain targeting all autumn 2012 gallery visitors; targeting overseas audiences planning to visit London in spring 2013 via Tate Facebook (500,000 followers) and Tate Twitter (800,000+ followers), advertising in titles such as *Britain* magazine and social and email promotions with Eurostar Cultural Offer. A major two-for-one ticket offer, open to *Times+* subscribers ran alongside an interview with Dorothy Lichtenstein in *The Sunday Times* three weeks prior to the exhibition opening.

The Tate website Lichtenstein exhibition page content included embedded videos and related programme such as Lichtenstein films and events. Promotional panels displayed membership, the online shop, exhibition catalogues, the curator-written blog and curator-led tours.

Launch marketing activity included large format outdoor advertising on London Underground in Zones 1 and 2; pay-per-click and Google Display Network activity with keyword targeting and re-targeting; *Times/Sunday Times* media partner activity targeting *Times+* subscribers; press and online advertising in a range of listings, lifestyle and broadsheet titles. A Tate email to over 400,000 contacts led on a 'book now' message for the exhibition and a link to the curator's blog. Tate social activity included regular posts about Lichtenstein encouraging visitors to post their experiences of the exhibition after visiting. Ticket offers included deals with train operators ATOC and Eurostar and a brand promotion with Toni&Guy including in-salon promotional postcards in salons across London and the South East and magazine advertising.



Exhibition period marketing activity saw takeovers on a small number of central London buses, videos in black cabs, large format posters on National Rail stations and digital outdoor sites which ran a short promotional animation created by U2 using animation developed by Run Wrake. Digital advertising included mid-page units on news, listings and key tourist sites plus targeted paid-for Facebook activity. During late March, there was a major advertising campaign at London Waterloo station plus continued activity with *The Times/Sunday Times* which focused on an exclusive reader evening and competition to win a trip to New York.



Iria Candela, the curator of the exhibition gave a Twitter tour on 8 April at #TateTour and a large scale advertising campaign on Caffè Nero cups, loyalty cards, leaflets and posters ran throughout the month and into May 2013.

Online PR targeted a broad range of bloggers outside of the arts, including fashion and beauty tastemakers and influencers.

Final weeks marketing included a focus on the 'final weeks' message and paid-for digital advertising. Tate's email, website and social activity also highlighted this final opportunity to visit the exhibition.

Outcomes

Key outcomes included:

- The exhibition attracted over 315,000 visitors in just thirteen weeks.
- The Lichtenstein exhibition page on the Tate website had a total of 880,000 page views. 80% from the UK, 20% were international with many visitors from France, Germany and the United States. The average dwell time was 1:33 and web traffic peaked on 20 February with 19,600 visits
- Lichtenstein generated 18,000 in-page Facebook likes and 1,331 shares on Twitter.
- Over 15,000 photos were tagged #Lichtenstein on Instagram
- The curator Twitter Tour created 800 tweets using #TateTour. The curator answered questions in Spanish, French and Portuguese
- Digital PR covered a worldwide base of over 3 million users
- Beauty vlogger Emma Pickles' Lichtenstein make up tutorial had 1 million views on YouTube

Key points for effective practice

- Advance notice of the exhibition needed to be balanced with messages about other Tate programme and content. It was important to create early awareness but also ensure a clear hierarchy of messages.
- Don't be tempted to crowd creative with lots of text and detailed information – lead with an arresting image and a limited amount of text to create a higher impact.
- Word-of-mouth remains the most valuable marketing tool – in an increasingly busy media landscape, visitors rely on the opinions of those they trust, be that online and all other forms of interaction.

Conclusion

The exhibition exceeded income and attendance targets and also hugely increased Tate's social engagement.

The marketing campaign was carefully paced to ensure maximum impact and by using media in unexpected ways e.g. targeted online PR, branded coffee cups, other brand promotions, digital ads in taxis and a curator's Twitter tour, the campaign aimed to surprise and delight both existing and new visitors to Tate Modern.

Online and offline media can work hand in hand to increase the reach of the campaign – Caffè Nero cups and images of the outdoor advertising campaign generated thousands of photos on Instagram.

Exhibition web page:

<http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/lichtenstein>