

Myth Aestheticization

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2. Dagalp, I. (2022). From Brand Aesthetics to Brand Myth Aestheticization. Submitted to *Journal of Marketing Management*
3. Dagalp, I. (2022). Aestheticising the Viking Myth: Consumer Aesthetic Work in Viking Re-enactment. Submitted to *Journal of Business Research*.
4. Dagalp, I., Brunk, H. K. & Hartmann, B. J. (2020). The aestheticization of past-themed consumption. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 48, 509—511.
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This thesis theorizes the process of myth aestheticization for marketing and consumption. A concept of myth aestheticization springs from a simple yet complex idea: What if something is not “aesthetic” in and by itself, but it is made “aesthetic”? This thesis would like to refine the argument that aestheticization entails a process that typically translates myths into beautiful, sublime ideals and (re-)produced as something beautiful and/or sublime by brands and consumers, is a way through which consumer culture operates. In that aestheticization, there is a symbiosis between myth and consumption/brand activity. Following Böhme (1993; 2003; 2013) and Holt (2003; 2004; 2006), this thesis expands aesthetic work by investigating the different domains of it and contributes to the refined understanding of mythmaking.

To explore myth aestheticization, this thesis brings together a variety of empirical contexts – brand experience design executives, amateur hobbyists of historical reenactments, and retro appreciators – to illustrate how these producers and consumers incorporate myth aestheticization, thereby (re-)producing myths in consumer society. Considered alongside one another, these empirical contexts offer a vital complement to discussions of myth-making emergent in these aesthetic-related market activities. The findings show the ways through which myths are (re-)produced as being beautiful and/or sublime ideals through three major processes: cultivation, staging, and circulation. The myth aestheticization process helps to explain how discourses are promulgated through material and bodily actions through which enchantment can be produced by means of aesthetic work. Taken together, the studies illustrate how consumer cultural actors aestheticize myths in ways that reflect cultural tensions and enable economic profitability. The ideological aim of myth aestheticization is to make both the myth and the brand/product/place that carries the aestheticized myth enchanting.

This understanding of myth aestheticization holds important implications for understanding key processes in consumer culture on the level of brands as well as consumers, for marketing practitioners, and for future research.

Keywords: *aestheticization, myth-making, enchantment, aesthetic work, past-themed consumption, cultural branding, aesthetics*