Photo of the Day | Happy Friday!!



Students walk around campus on a cloudy, windy day in Storrs on Thursday, Nov. 12, 2026. Campus was active this past week, with students prepping for the end of classes and Thanksgiving break. PHOTO BY MORGAN BLANCHARD, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

GIRL, UNINTERRUPTED: AI ADVERTISEMENTS AND THE LUXURY OF HUMAN CREATION



FILE LOGO/THE DAILY CAMPUS

by Gianna Cassino
ASSOCIATE OPINION EDITOR
SHE/HER/HERS
gic23015@uconn.edu

It's November, which means the holiday season is fast approaching. Aside from coffee shops capitalizing on seasonal menus, many brands have already begun rolling out holiday advertising campaigns. The holidays are a prime season of consumerism, so the way corporations present themselves during this time reflects prominent consumer values. This year, I'm forecasting highly-praised human creation associated with luxury.

Prada's Holiday 2026 advertising campaign featured celebrity ambassadors exploring an animated winter wonderland and interacting with a menagerie of cartoon forest animals. The commercial, entitled "Drawing Prada: Animated by Hand," garnered 3.3 million views on their YouTube channel in a matter of weeks. A follow-up video highlighted "veteran animator" John Pomeroy and his process leading animation for the campaign.

Pomeroy attributes the spark of hand-drawn animation to its "authenticity and truth," and his authenticity sells. One commenter denoted handmade art "a luxury status symbol in this time of AI slop." The sentiment of humanity as a status symbol is something we'll return to, but long story short: the campaign's humanity resonated with Prada's customer base as well as viewers like myself who wouldn't dream of dropping $3,000 on a beige leather purse.

Compare that with Coca-Cola's Holiday 2025 advertisement, featuring AI-generated forests and downright uncanny cartoonish animals. Posted to its YouTube channel, the ad garnered three million views and thousands of frustrated comments. One reads, "one of the richest corporations on the planet using AI should upset everyone," and they're exactly right.

It's no surprise that Prada can afford to hire veteran animators who work by hand and makes a miniature documentary shouting them out; it's a luxury brand. But Coca-Cola is also a huge corporation raking in billions of dollars annually. It has just as much ability to lift up artists rather than advertise its products with AI slop. So, why doesn't it?

It all comes back to class divide.

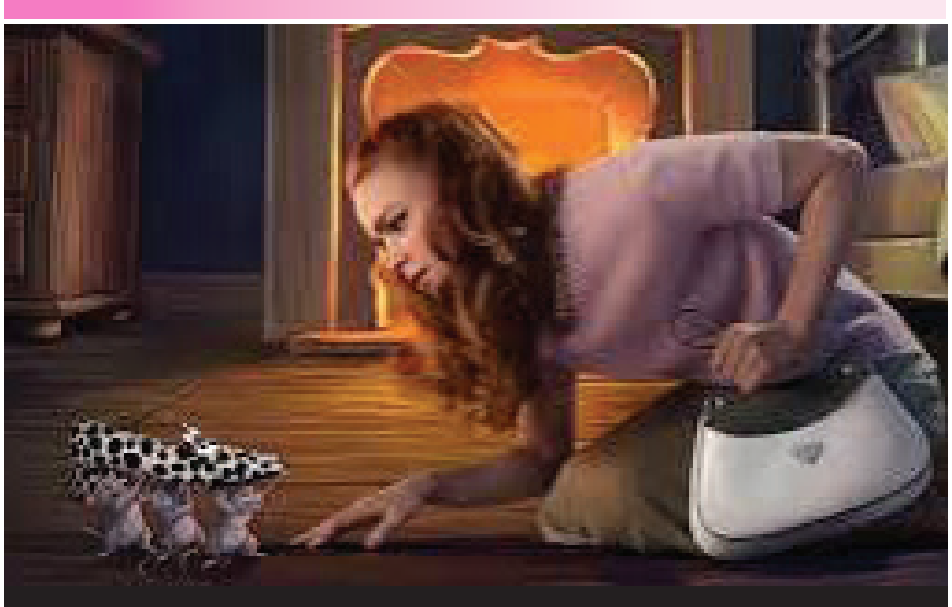
Coca-Cola's products, affordable and warranting repeat purchases, are everywhere: restaurants, grocery stores, college dining halls. Coca-Cola can afford to hire artists, but it can also afford to run an ad that thousands of people hate. Boycotting Coca-Cola's wide range of food and drinks is far from an impossibility, but it takes more effort than choosing not to buy a singular, thousand-dollar bag.

Prada's accessories are intended for long-term use and cost thousands of dollars apiece — they're the kind of financial decision that warrants thought. If customers don't resonate with a brand, they'll take the large sum of money they would have spent on a ridiculously expensive bag elsewhere. Prada knows its customer base will consider brand ethics before committing to purchases. People who can afford a Prada bag can afford to commission artists and will likely appreciate Prada's decision to do so.



A still from Coca-Cola's Holiday 2025 advertisement featuring AI-generated forests and cartoonish animals. Posted to its YouTube channel, the ad garnered three million views and thousands of frustrated comments.

PHOTO COURTESY OF @PMWTV ON INSTAGRAM



Actress Sadie Sink in Prada's Holiday 2026 advertising campaign. The commercial, entitled "Drawing Prada: Animated by Hand," garnered 3.3 million views on its YouTube channel in a matter of weeks.

PHOTO COURTESY OF @PRADA ON INSTAGRAM

It's not simply that boycotting luxury brands is more of a conscious decision. The working class is also being trained by society at large to rely on artificial intelligence. With less time, money and personal assistants, life coaches or therapists at our disposal, members of the working class are being sold chatbots as a replacement for community.

Your average working mom might not have the means to commission an artist to draw a banner for her child's birthday party, so she prompts AI to do it instead. Although such uses of AI seem like a budget-friendly option, using large-language models to get services like therapy and art for free rather than hiring a professional human causes a loss of community.

It often seems like the working class does not have a choice when it comes to artificial intelligence. AI is pushed onto students, from elementary schoolers forced to accept Google's AI to continue using their school's Chromebooks to college students constantly being sold AI as a "learning tool" and field of study. AI is a 24/7 "friend," it can answer any question (confidently and often nonsensically) and it's completely free.

The people who seemingly "have no choice" to not use AI (and the products associated with it through advertisements) are the ones who it most puts at risk. Data centers are being placed primarily in low-income communities, perpetuating loud noises, increased electrical bills and negative health impacts. Familiar brands selling us on AI alongside their products will never undo that damage.

On the topic of freedom: to echo the refrain of my media literacy professors, if a product is "free," you're the product being sold. Take a step back to consider why AI is being so insistently pushed upon the working class.

Those who substitute chatbots for genuine thought, creativity and meaningful connection further perpetuate the idea that human creation is a luxury. It sounds ridiculous when you take a step back and think about it – being a human is completely free, as is creativity, and we shouldn't have to consciously choose either one. If you can't afford to commission an artist, you have the option to make an effort yourself or ask a friend before turning to AI. Creativity should not be considered a luxury and humanity should never become a status symbol.