

Latest News	In Depth	Papers	Books	Brandcameo	Directory	Ca
-------------	----------	--------	-------	------------	-----------	----

find a job

Senior Consultant, Strategy
Interbrand
New York, United States

Consultant, Strategy
Interbrand
New York, United States

Director, Strategy
InterbrandHealth
London

Client Manager,
InterbrandHealth
New York, United States

[view all jobs...](#)

holidayze

Behind The Scenes: The 2010 Victoria's Secret Holiday Campaign

Posted by [Abe Sauer](#) on December 9, 2010 12:00 PM

key topics

- Airlines, Alcohol, Automotive, Beauty, Beverages, Branded Entertainment, Design, Corporate Citizenship, Entertainment, Fashion, Financial, Food, Healthcare, Luxury, Media, Mobile, Non-Profit, Pharma, Product Placement, Retail, Sports, Sustainability, Tech, 2012 Olympics

top news

archives

The Victoria's Secret holiday ad is fast becoming a December tradition. More epic than its rest-of-the-year relatives, its holiday campaign strives to define and differentiate the Victoria's Secret brand as the leader in its segment.

The brains and talent behind these ads is an organization called, no kidding, "The Institute For The Development Of Enhanced Perceptual Awareness."

While a behind-the-scenes video of the shoot was released (above), we spoke with "The Institute" CEO, Scott Gardenhour about the brand, the babes, and blowing things up — the stock in trade of his partner and Institute co-owner, the slo-mo-loving, action director superstar Michael Bay, who once again directed the VS holiday campaign.

Gardenhour says he and Bay started [The Institute](#) (as it's better known) in 2001, picking a tongue-in-cheek full agency name because "there were a lot of companies that had these pretentious one or two word names, so we decided to go in an entirely different direction. Just rolls off the tongue doesn't it?"

The Institute has imagined commercials for the [Got Milk?](#) campaign as well as many others, but the Bay-directed Victoria's Secret holiday ads remain its highest-profile work.

Of the 2010 commercial, Gardenhour says the focus this year "was to have images that were still epic in scale, but with a softer flare than last year." By softer, he means fewer helicopters, hot rods, knives, airplanes, and explosions, all elements of last year's commercial, which was a literal circus — compare below:



Of the toned-down 2010 version, Gardenhour says, "The folks at Victoria's Secret are masters at having their pulse on the social zeitgeist and knowing when it is time to change. Hence why they have had so much success. I think this is in response to that change in pulse." He would not discuss the budget for this year's shoot, but confirmed that it was "in line with broadcast spots of this scale."

Gardenhour says that capturing the Victoria's Secret brand is especially challenging because the "brand is always challenging you to try new and interesting things which allows for the freedom to take risks."

Ostensibly aimed at the holiday season, we asked Gardenhour why the ads eschew traditional "holiday" imagery or themes.

"These spots aren't meant to be so on the nose with regard to Holiday," he explains. "It's more about cinematic, epic images that capture people's attention and solicit a response." He also reasons that since these "holiday" spots premier at the Victoria's Secret Fashion Show, they have to be more than just a shopping commercial, "you have to have film that is worthy of, well, a premier."

One part of the original filming that was not "worthy" of the final cut? Gardenhour says, "There was an exterior dusk scene we set up on the grounds of the Milwaukee Museum where we had all of the models on a platform. There were evergreen trees covered in snow behind them, with two large crystal chandeliers hanging above the with Lake Michigan in the background." It didn't make the cut, but he adds, "It was pretty great."

Milwaukee still made the final cut though. An interior shot of the architecturally-celebrated Milwaukee Art Museum can be seen early in the commercial. Below is a still from that portion, giving Cheeseheads a fantasy of their own.



More about: [Victoria's Secret](#), [Advertising](#), [Holiday](#), [Retail](#), [Fashion](#), [Got Milk?](#), [The Institute](#), [Michael Bay](#), [Scott Gardenhour](#)