

Las Vegas Incorporated: experience +/- commodity = identity

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The Las Vegas Experience: Representation, Image and Identity Construction (project a)

All fakes are not created equal; there are good fakes and bad fakes. The standard is no longer real versus phony, but the relative merits of the imitation. What makes the good ones better is their improvement on reality.

- Ada Louise Huxtable

In a society dominated by image and the production and consumption of fantasy, Vegas is a modern Mecca. It is in Las Vegas that the image-copy improves upon the referent - with increased entertainment value and merchandising opportunities. The image of Vegas is everything, an adult theme park super-sized menu, with no going back to the value meal.

Even its own history has been repackaged for consumption: Jerde's conversion of Fremont Street into The Fremont Street Experience is only one example of many so-called unique image-experiences for sale. Vegas represents a new American geography, at once everywhere and nowhere, where for a few days all things might be possible. The Las Vegas Experience embodies a fluctuating condition of continuous reinvention.

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