

Body of Work



*Print Adverts by Diesel
'Be Stupid' Campaign
(2010)*

Introduction

Launched in 2010 by the global fashion brand Diesel, the *Be Stupid* campaign marked a radical departure from traditional advertising at the time. For a while, Diesel had been struggling with creative stagnation and declining sales. Known for its rebellious edge in the 1990s, the brand had become predictable and now had a 'stuffy' image. To reignite its identity, Diesel partnered with New York advertising agency Anomaly, whose philosophy, "The traditional models are broken", aligned perfectly with Diesel's need for reinvention. Having successfully campaigned for global brands such as Coca Cola, Budweiser, and Google, Anomaly was becoming synonymous with bold innovation and forward-thinking strategies.

The Diesel campaign's core message is provocative yet simple: "Smart may have the brains, but stupid has the balls." Through slogans like "*Smart critiques. Stupid creates*" and "*Smart has plans. Stupid has stories*," Diesel reframes 'stupid' as a metaphor for risk-taking, spontaneity, and creativity. Rather than portraying stupidity as ignorance, the ads celebrate impulsiveness as a path to originality and freedom. The ad images convey a sense of youthful rebellion and irreverence, challenging viewers to reject caution and embrace imperfection, risk, and fearlessness – a perfect message for recapturing the youthful market Diesel wanted back.

Visually, the campaign is striking. Shot by photographers such as Chris Buck and Melodie McDaniel, the ads feature darkly playful scenarios. Models in unexpected poses, risky settings, and bold typography in vibrant colours break the sterile mould of rival denim brand advertising. The multimodal design combines text, image, and layout to create a manifesto for living boldly, positioning Diesel as more than a clothing brand: now they promise a lifestyle of audacity, risk and reward for anyone courageous enough to get on board.

The campaign sparked a global conversation, winning awards at Cannes Lions while also facing controversy. In the UK, some ads were banned for being offensive and the sexualization of youth crossed unacceptable boundaries for many viewers. Yet this only helped to amplified Diesel's message, underscoring their disruptive aims: true creativity often means ruffling feathers and breaking rules.

How to Study Diesel Be Stupid Adverts

In this Body of Work you will find several images from Diesel's 2010 Be Stupid campaign. The collection presents a representative sample of the published ads: a woman climbs a ladder to flash a CCTV security camera, defying social norms; a model poses in her underwear covering her head and face with a floral display, showing her playfulness and making stupidity appear alluring. A couple run in the dark, shedding their clothes, aligning stupidity with fearlessness and spontaneity. There are many more images for you to decode.

This Body of Work revolves around provocative themes that challenge conventional thinking. The campaign celebrates rebellion and risk-taking, positioning youthful impulsiveness as a virtue rather than a flaw. It taps into youth culture, framing spontaneity and creativity as markers of authenticity. Anti-conformity runs through every image and slogan, encouraging viewers to reject caution and embrace sexuality and unpredictability. These ads suggest that breaking rules is not only acceptable but empowering, a way to stand out and have fun in a world that normally rewards 'smart' conformity.

The images' power lies in their simple and striking design choices. Bold typography dominates the layout, with oversized, blocky fonts in vibrant colours demand attention and convey the idea of brash creativity. Text and image juxtapose (sometimes ironically, sometimes humourously, sometimes emphatically) in pairing "Smart Thinks. Stupid Does" with an absurd, daring act. Playful imagery abounds: models dive into mailboxes, remove their clothes in public, or use their bodies as playgrounds, all signalling unpredictability. Bright, saturated colours evoke energy and youthfulness, while dynamic camera angles and framing add drama and create effects like intimacy, inviting the viewer to join in this slightly surreal world. Each ad hints at its own narrative, inviting viewers to imagine themselves as fearless protagonists in a story of rebellion. Spend some time browsing and annotating the images presented in this collection, then ask and answer the following questions:

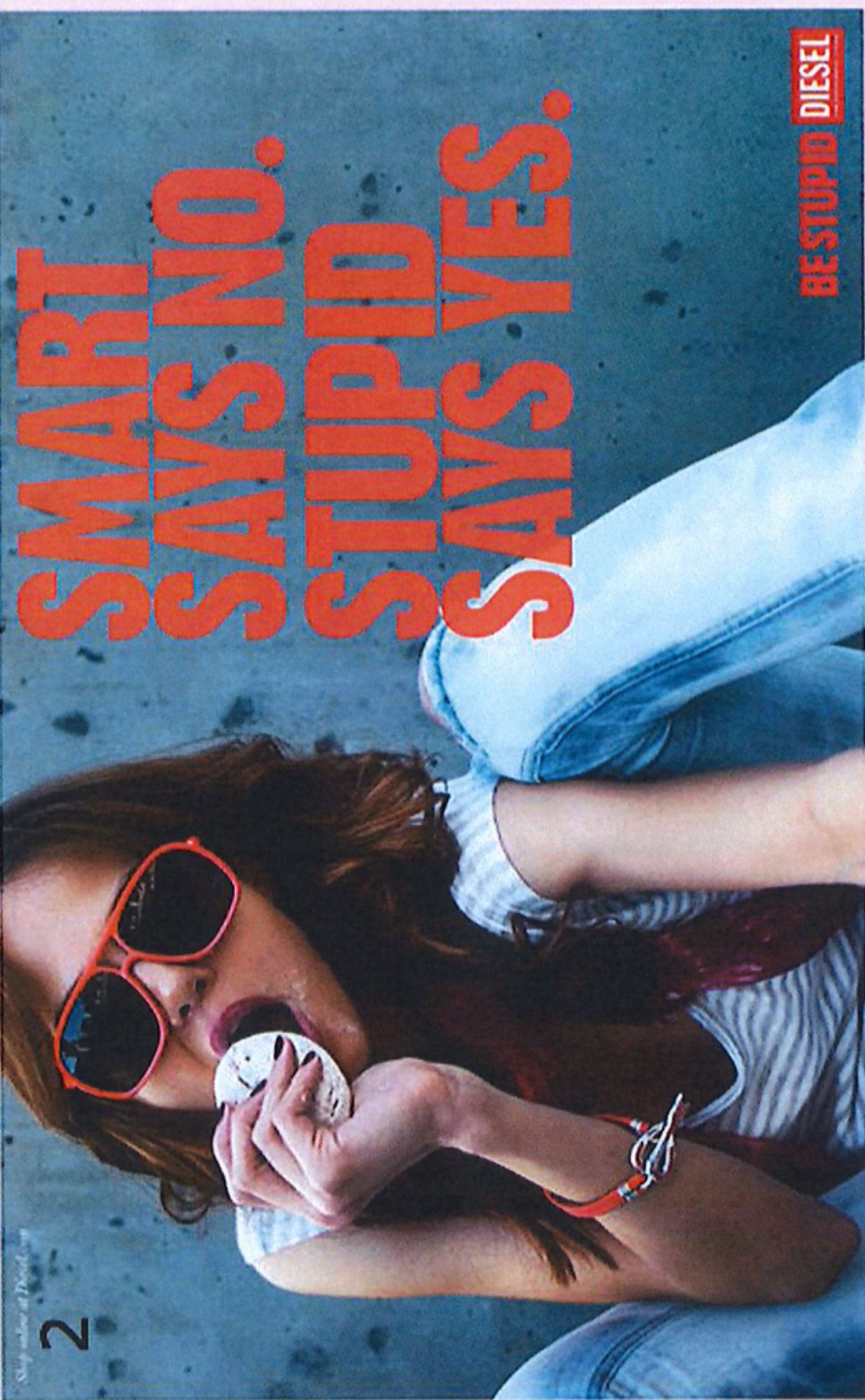
- What cultural values or messages about young people are being challenged or reinforced?
- How do text and image work together to create narratives?
- Does the campaign genuinely empower, or is it using youthful rebellion as a gimmick?

1

**YOU'LL
CREATE
MORE.**

Shop online at Diesel.com

BESTUPIO DIESEL



**SMART
SAYS NO.
STUPID
SAYS YES.**

BE STUPID DIESEL

Shop online at Diesel.com

2



**TRUST
STUPID.**

BESTUPID **DIESEL**

3

Shop online Diesel.com



**IF WE DIDN'T
HAVE STUPID
THOUGHTS
WE'D HAVE NO
INTERESTING
THOUGHTS
AT ALL.**

4

Shop online at Diesel.com

5

SMART MAY
HAVE THE
BRAINS, BUT
STUPID HAS
THE BALLS.



Stacy Anderson of Diesel

BE STUPID **DIESEL**

6

**SIN.
CONFESS.
SIN AGAIN.**

BESTUPID DIESEL

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**SMART
PLANS.
STUPID
IMPROVISES.**

BESTUPID DIESEL

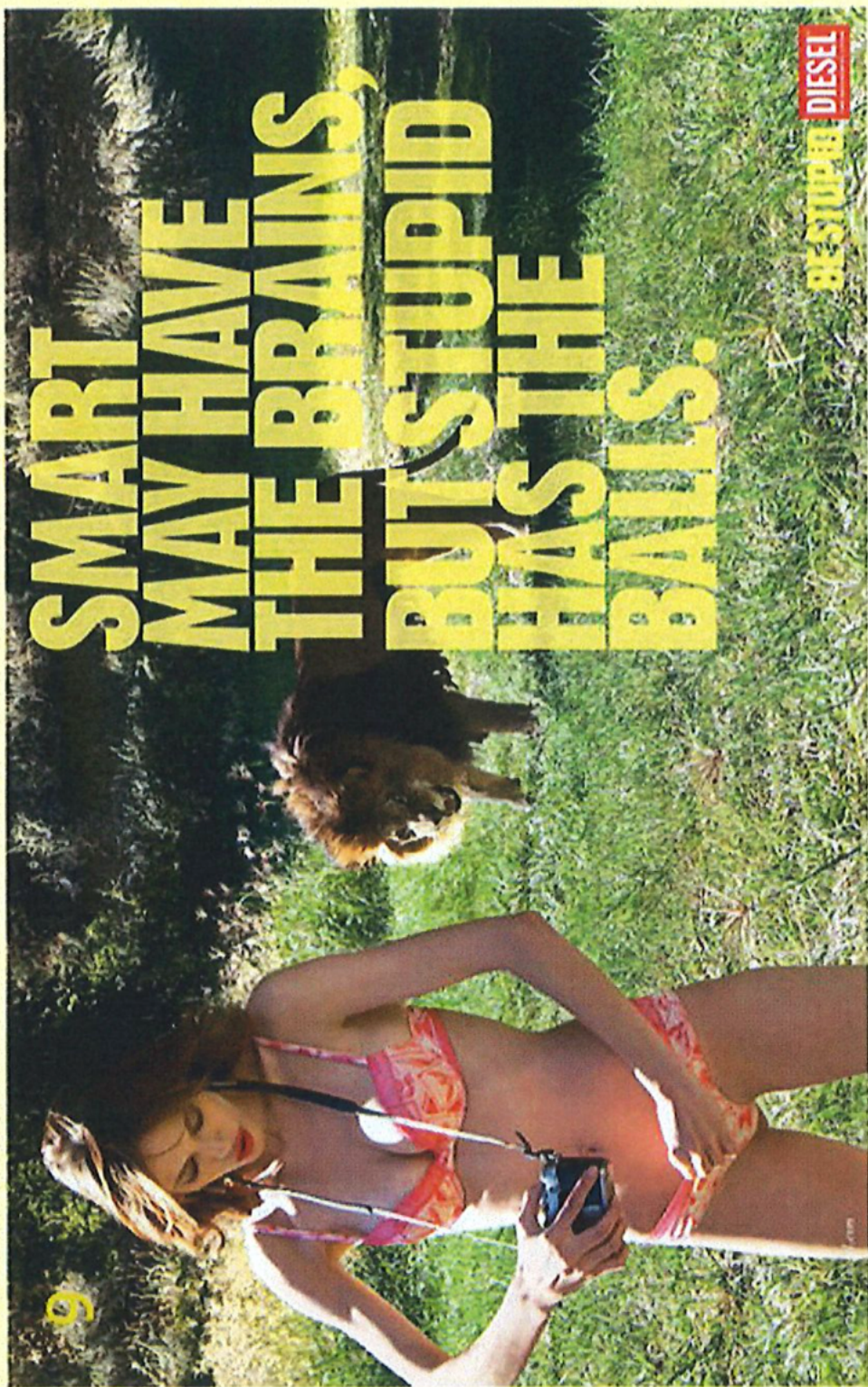
Shop at Diesel.com



9

**SMART
MAY HAVE
THE BRAINS,
BUT STUPID
HAS THE
BALLS.**

BE STUPID DIESEL



10

**SMART
LISTENS TO
THE HEAD.**

**STUPID
LISTENS TO
THE HEART.**

Slap on a Diesel

BESTUPID DIESEL

More info at Diesel.com

11

**GOODBYE
INHIBITIONS.**



BESTUPID DIESEL

**BEING
STUPID
MAXIMIZES
YOUR
ASSETS.**

12



BE STUPID DIESEL

**STUPID
ALWAYS
MEASURES
UP.**

13

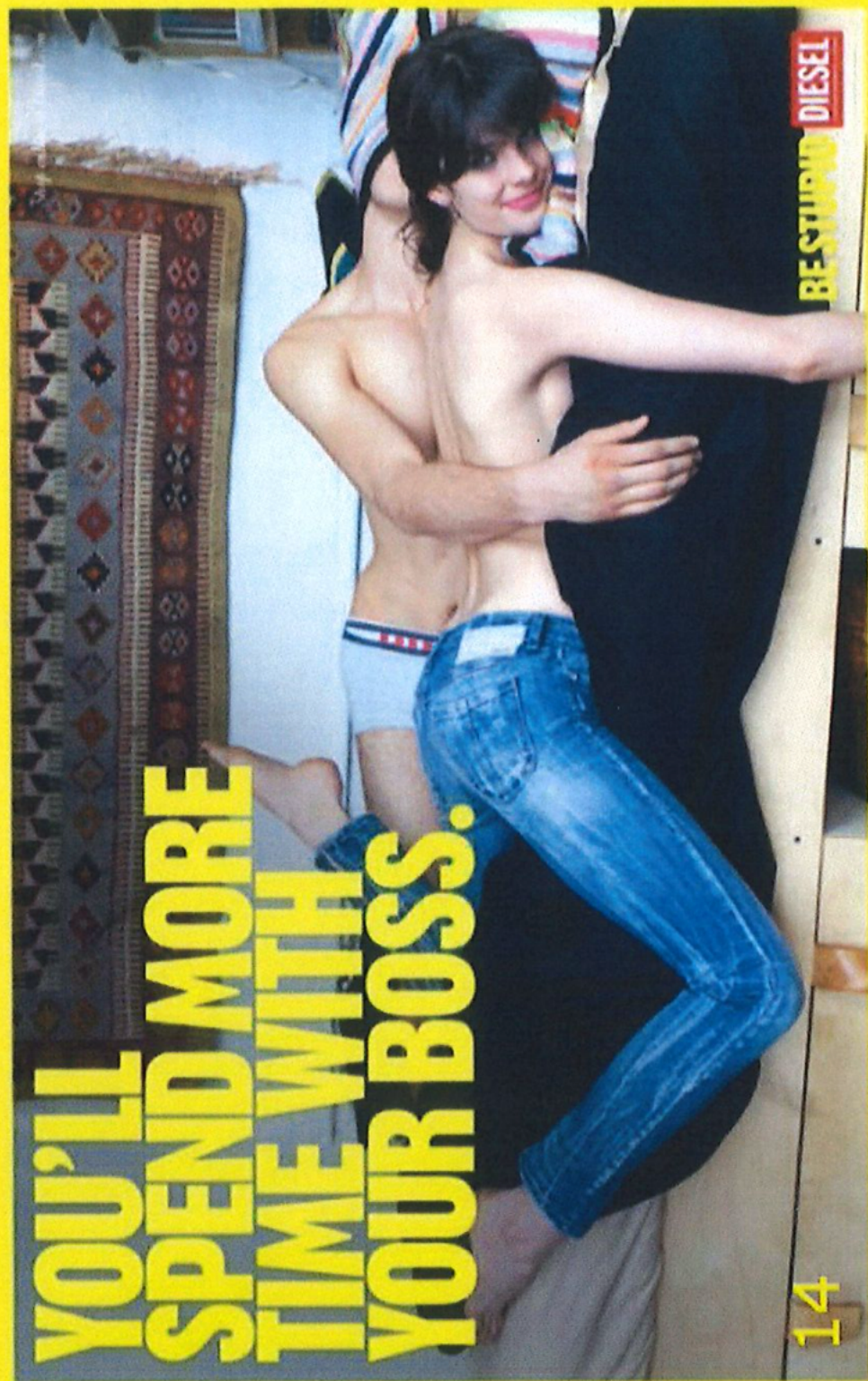
BE STUPID DIESEL



**YOU'LL
SPEND MORE
TIME WITH
YOUR BOSS.**

14

BE STUDIO DIESEL

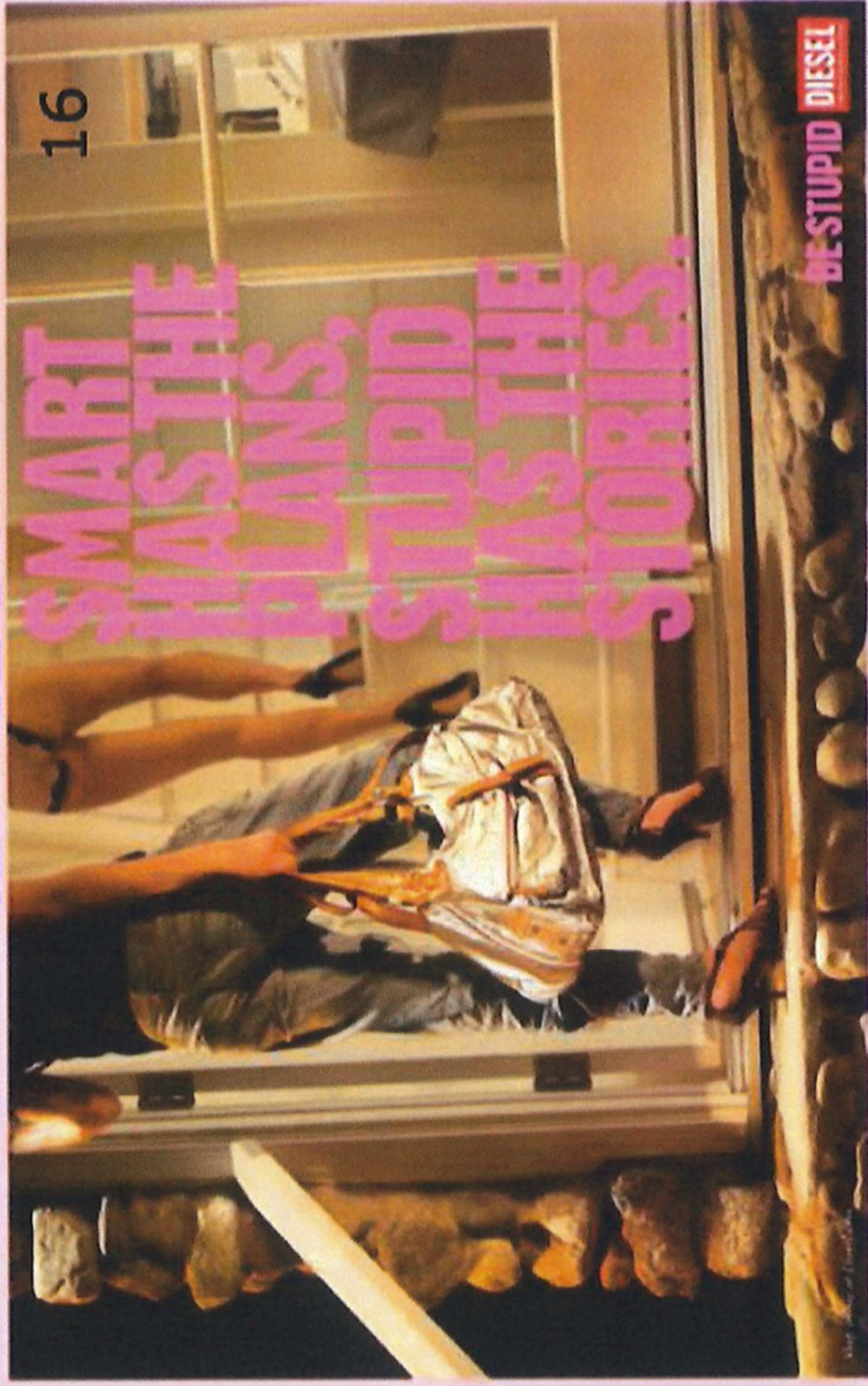


15

LEAD
THE
WAY.



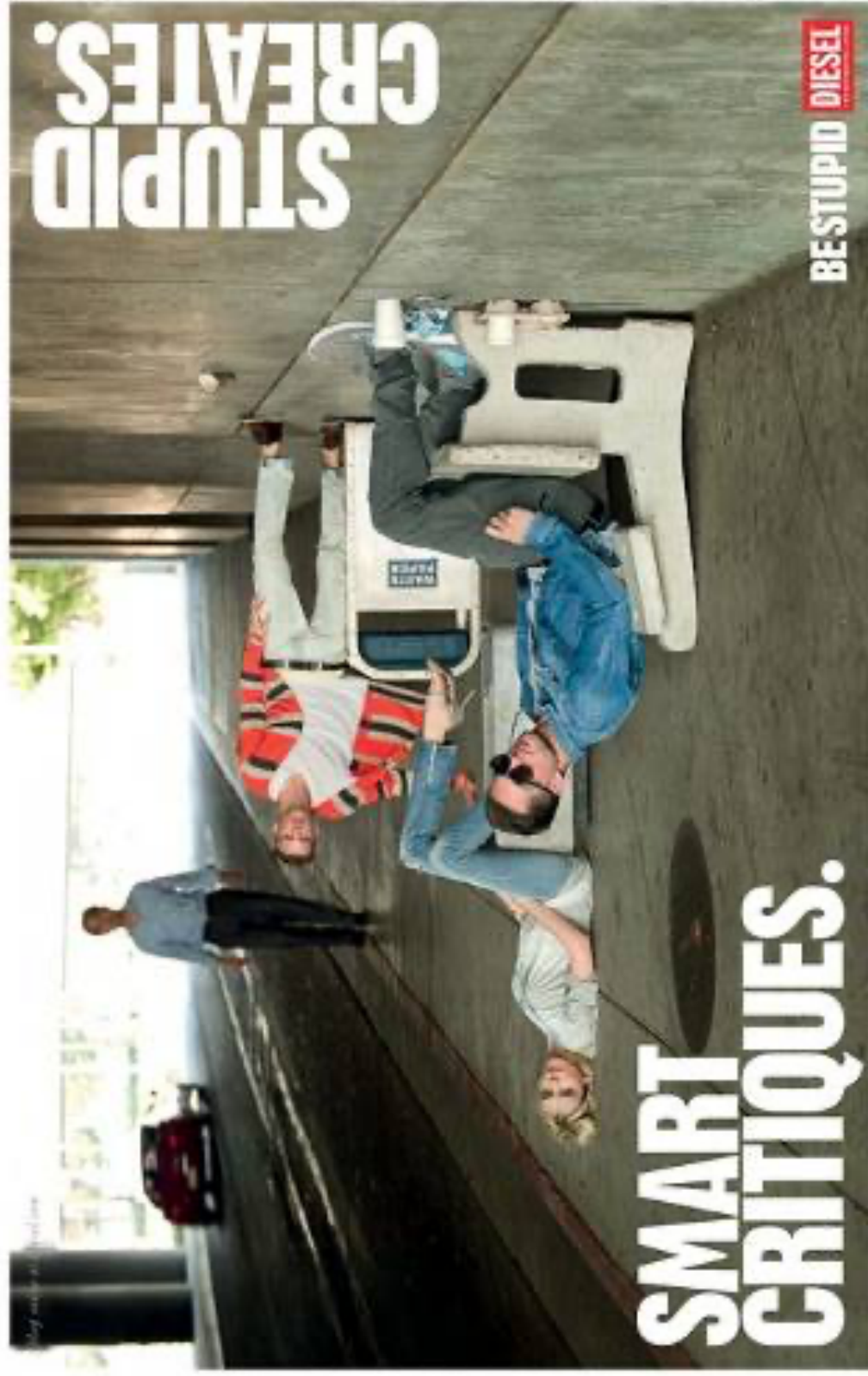
DIESEL BESTUPID



16

SMART
HAS THE
PLANS,
STUPID
HAS THE
STORIES.

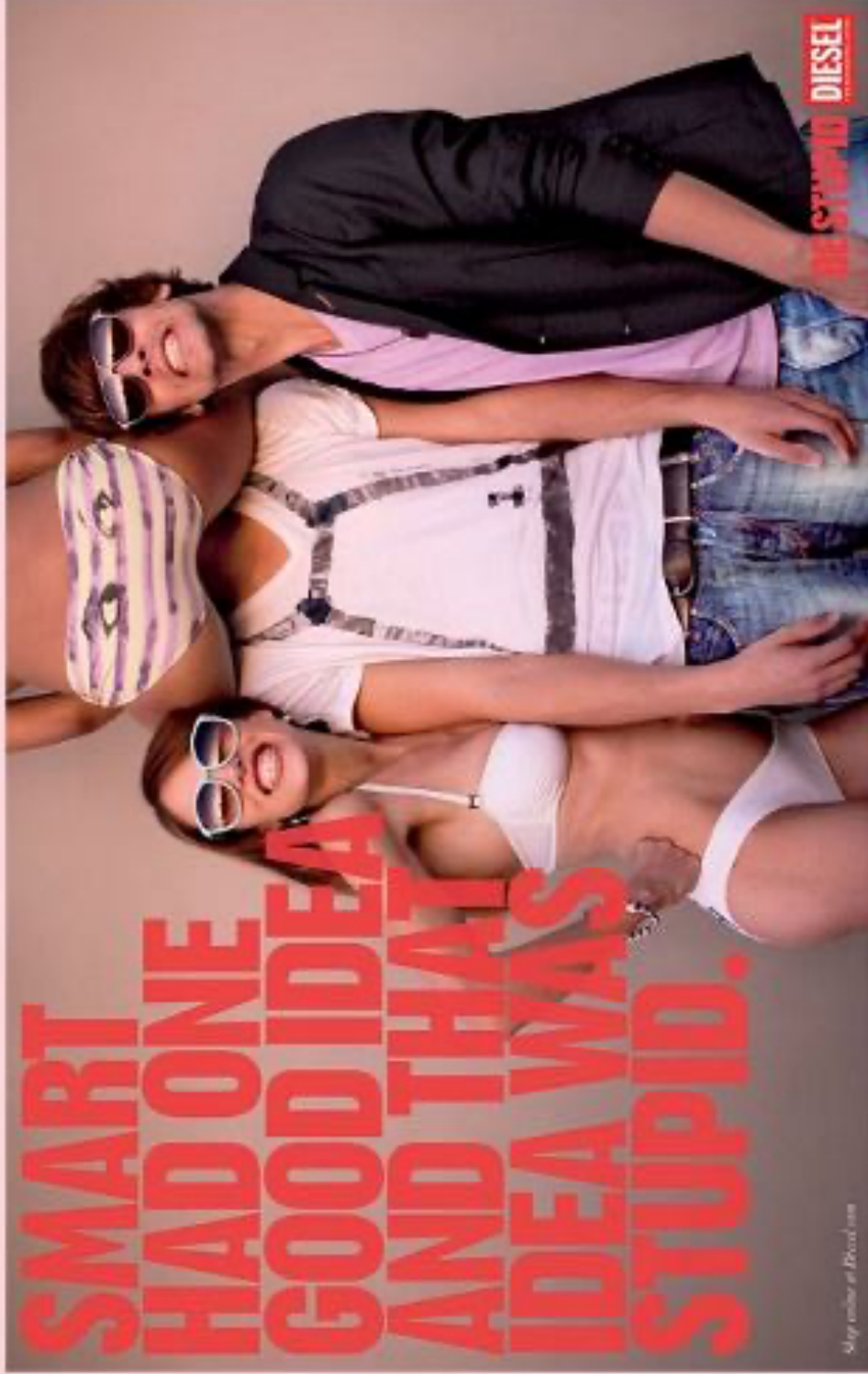
BE STUPID DIESEL



**SMART
HAD ONE
GOOD IDEA
AND THAT
IDEA WAS
STUPID.**

May online at Diesel.com

BE STUPID DIESEL



**SMART
LISTENS TO
THE HEAD.
STUPID
LISTENS TO
THE HEART.**



BE STUPID DIESEL

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