



Volume 12
Issue 2
2017

Finnexia[®]: Learn Finnish ... faster!

Lisa Erdman

Finnexia[®] is a multimedia advertisement campaign for a new (fictitious) medication that helps people learn the Finnish language. Using the framework of a satirical medical advertising pitch, Finnexia[®] presents an opportunity for public dialogue about acquisition of the Finnish language and its role in the experience of foreigners in Finland. The target audience for this project is primarily foreigners living in Finland. The presentation is meant to evoke an alternate reality that promotes conversation about cultural integration in Finland. Finnexia[®] is the media art component of my artistic research entitled, “Performative art interventions facilitating public dialogue.” The doctoral research is conducted at Aalto University in Finland.

The pharmaceutical parody of Finnexia[®] presents a satirical critique of over-medicalization and the increasingly popular pill-popping approaches for treating a widening array of physical and mental ailments. The Finnexia[®] project involves investigating people’s experiences and thoughts relating



Figure 1. Finnexia® website, 2012 <http://www.finnexia.fi>
 Branding concept by Lisa Erdman, design layout by Sarun Pinyarat.

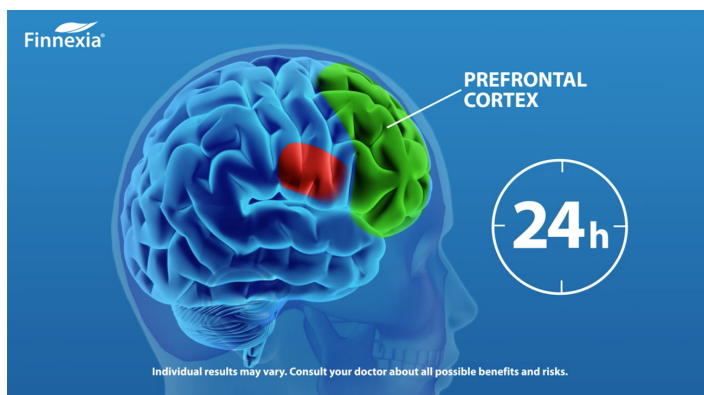


Figure 2. Finnexia® medical animation. 2012. Video online:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fBzD8NJE-88> Produced by Lisa Erdman. 3D visualization by Topi Kauppinen. Audio by ProvoiceUSA.

to their own cultural experience, not out of an urgent desire for answers, but rather as a means to generate more questions that may lead to new perspectives on the issues at hand.

In September of 2012, Finnexia® was presented as a live-performance intervention at the Helsinki Railway Station, during the performance, the Finnexia® medication was presented to the public as though it were a real product. The physical performance area of Finnexia® consisted of a tradeshow pop-up booth, a roundtable discussion area, and a survey table. In exchange for filling out a questionnaire about their relationship to the Finnish language, people were offered candy and the chance to win a pack of Finnexia® (placebo) pills, or free coffee. Over the course of three days,



Figure 3. Finnexia® performance. 2012. Helsinki Railway Station, Finland. Produced by Lisa Erdman. Photo by Maurice Fitzpatrick.

audience members were invited to share their own personal stories about living in Finland and learning the Finnish language. The intent was to create a space in which common cultural assumptions are challenged, and where open dialogue might happen.

Lisa Erdman (U.S.)
is an artist and doctoral candidate at Aalto University in Helsinki, Finland.
Email: Lisa
.erdman@aalto.fi