

## A bull market

If the relationship between commerce and interpretation is a spectrum of opportunities, the cows on the cover gaze from one extreme end of it. They are part of the scenery in Cadabra!, a particularly surreal part of Cadbury World, the visitor attraction at Cadbury's chocolate factory in Birmingham. Here small carts trundle visitors through a bizarre landscape inhabited by characters more or less related to chocolate or to Cadbury's products. Parents exchange glances of queasy disbelief, while their children are probably too full of the chocolate bars they've been given at regular intervals during the tour to mind what happens next.

Cadbury World is undoubtedly commercially successful: if you turn up in high season without an advance booking you're unlikely to get in. As an exercise in interpretation it does a reasonable job of telling the history of the company and the rather scary industrial scale of its operations. But most of its visitors would be hard pressed to say what a cocoa plant looked like after the experience, and cocoa's sometimes shady history and economics is left behind after a brief mention of the Aztecs in an old-fashioned section at the start of the tour. By the time you step into the fevered acid-trip of Cadabra! those themes have been relegated to an Aztec-style head-dress on a cute cocoa bean with a smiling face, who waves cheerily as you lurch round the next bend.

That tension between what a commercial attraction could do, and what it needs to do or can get away with to satisfy its customers, is at the heart of many of the articles in this issue. It may even reveal a rather uncomfortable truth: that interpretation is a negotiated settlement in which the audience's expectations and wants have the strongest bargaining position.

James Carter, editor

I ran the wrong kind of business, but I did it with integrity  
*Sydney Biddle Barrows, US 'Madam'*