



**ADVERTISING
STANDARDS
BOARD**

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Case Report

1	Case Number	0336/16
2	Advertiser	Love and Rockets.tv
3	Product	Sex Industry
4	Type of Advertisement / media	Outdoor
5	Date of Determination	10/08/2016
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

- 2.2 - Objectification Exploitative and degrading - women
- 2.4 - Sex/sexuality/nudity S/S/N - general

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The billboard shows an image of two women posed on their knees wearing space outfits and holding a type of ray gun - the lettering across the poster states 'Love and Rockets, Boldly Go.'

THE COMPLAINT

A sample of comments which the complainant/s made regarding this advertisement included the following:

I object to images of exploited women in view of children and families. It is not appropriate for society. Everyday exposure to this content are directly associated with a range of consequences, including higher levels of body dissatisfaction, greater self-objectification, greater support of sexist beliefs and of adversarial sexual beliefs, and greater tolerance of sexual violence toward women. Moreover, experimental exposure to this content leads both women and men to have a diminished view of women's competence, morality, and humanity.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

Comments which the advertiser made in response to the complainant/s regarding this advertisement include the following:

In response to the complaint it is important to establish the rationale behind the artwork. Love and Rockets is a venue with a long-established aesthetic of space exploration and fantasy, reflected in its name, interior design, branding and all prior campaign creative. We have recently refreshed the look and feel of the brand to strengthen these space exploration themes and their association with the Love and Rockets name, and consider the artwork to justifiably reflect the established positioning of our brand. The Love and Rockets brand won Gold in the 2009 Queensland Design on Show (QDOS) Awards – Corporate Identity/Branding category, and the artwork in question is the first creative execution in a campaign produced by the same reputable agency. Our work with Love and Rockets requires us to be very aware of the wider community and of the AANA code of ethics. We are very sensitive to how the models are portrayed and so have in this case been clear in presenting the models in this billboard in a heroic stance. They are positioned as the leaders of an expedition to space – an obvious connection to the name of the club. In developing this campaign a great deal of effort was made to ensure that the content was not too suggestive or offensive and that there was no overt references to nudity. We believe we have maintained this in the attached creative work. In direct response to the complainants’ reference to depicting the people in the billboard as exploited women as with all of the work we do with Love and Rockets our intent is quite the opposite. We do not believe that we are portraying them as exploited women as the complainant has suggested but rather positioning them as empowered women and the heroes of the piece. As mentioned we are very aware of the Code of Ethics when we are creating this work and in response to section 2 of the code please find following:

- 1. 2.1 – discrimination or vilification – we do not believe that there is a case to answer regarding this billboard and section 2.1 of the code. The subject matter of the billboard neither discriminates against nor vilifies any sector of the community.*
- 2. 2.2 – exploitative and degrading – The current complaint suggests that there is a case to answer under this section of the code. As mentioned above we are conscious of code of ethics in doing our work and we do not believe that this billboard portrays its subjects in an exploitative degrading manner. We believe that the heroic adventurers setting is one where the subjects are the leaders of an expedition as opposed to ‘exploited participants’. The poses that the subjects are in are not submissive.*
- 3. 2.3 – violence - we do not believe that there is a case to answer regarding this billboard and section 2.3 of the code.*
- 4. 2.4 – Sex, sexuality and nudity – We are aware of the code of ethics and the context in which this billboard is portrayed. We have been careful to ensure that we treat the subject matter with sensitivity to the relevant audience. All the subjects are fully clothed and their poses are powerful and not suggestive.*
- 5. 2.5 – Language - we do not believe that there is a case to answer regarding this billboard and section 2.5 of the code. The language used is not strong, obscene or inappropriate for the audience.*
- 6. 2.6 – Health and Safety - we do not believe that there is a case to answer regarding this billboard and section 2.6 of the code. In summary, given that this piece of work is outdoor we have made sure that the billboard does not include any sexual imagery that can be reasonably suggested to be in contravention of Prevailing Community Standards. We acknowledge that outdoor advertising as a medium is viewed by all cross sections of society and we have again made a conscious effort to ensure that the models used in the billboard are fully clothed and ensured that there is no suggestive posing on the billboard itself. We have done this to ensure that the artwork is acceptable and does not run counter to prevailing community standards.*

THE DETERMINATION

The Advertising Standards Board (“Board”) considered whether this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics (the “Code”).

The Board noted the complainant’s concerns that the advertisement is exploitative of women.

The Board viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser’s response.

The Board noted that some people may prefer not to see gentleman’s clubs advertised but noted that such businesses are permitted to advertise provided the content of the advertisement complies with the Code.

The Board considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.2 of the Code. Section 2.2 of the Code states: “Advertising or marketing communications should not employ sexual appeal in a manner which is exploitative and degrading of any individual or group of people.”

The Board noted that in order to be in breach this section of the Code the image would need to use sexual appeal in a manner that is both exploitative and degrading.

The Board noted that the women are fully clothed and considered they are not positioned in a sexualised way. The Board noted that the women are clothed in futuristic attire and positioned with their ‘weapons’ in an empowered way in a futuristic scene and in the Board’s view they are not presented in a manner which uses sexual appeal to demean them.

The Board considered that the advertisement did not employ sexual appeal in a manner which is exploitative and degrading to any individual or group of people.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.2 of the Code.

The Board then considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.4 of the Code. Section 2.4 of the Code states: “Advertising or Marketing Communications shall treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience.”

The Board noted that the advertisement is a large billboard which would be seen by a broad audience.

The Board noted that the women are fully dressed in their space wear, with one woman revealing some cleavage, but no nudity. The Board considered that the woman are dressed as warriors in a futuristic environment and are not posed in a sexualised manner.

The Board considered that the advertisement did treat the issue of sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.4 of the Code.

Finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on other grounds, the Board

dismissed the complaint.