



Ad Standards Community Panel
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Advertising Standards Bureau Limited
ACN 084 452 666

Case Report

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| 1 | Case Number | 0056/18 |
| 2 | Advertiser | Honey Birdette |
| 3 | Product | Lingerie |
| 4 | Type of Advertisement / media | Poster |
| 5 | Date of Determination | 21/02/2018 |
| 6 | DETERMINATION | Upheld - Modified or Discontinued |

ISSUES RAISED

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

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This advertisement features two window posters. The first depicts a blonde woman in black studded lingerie with a champagne bucket beside her. The second image depicts the same woman in the same lingerie reclining on a room service table with a glass of champagne. Both images feature the text 'Do not Disturb...GEORGIA'.

THE COMPLAINT

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

The model wears a costume depicting sexual bondage, dominance, sado-masochistic (BDMS) behaviour towards women that encourages sexual violence towards women. Whether consensual or not, this advertising normalises violence against women and teaches our kids that it is normal. This may be "normal" in a porn shop, and Honey Birdette should be classified as one and not allowed in a shopping centre.



This is not the first time I have been bothered by Honey Birdettes advertising. When I have to walk past their store with my 2 young sons I am often bothered by the sexual nature of their advertising, directed at adults, but displayed in a setting where children can openly see it. I think what particularly bothers me about this ad though is the choker around her neck. Combined with the bondage style lingerie and the legs spread I feel this is too sexualized for display where children can see. Although the woman is alone, the choker around her neck and the connotations with it of being controlled or restricted or wearing a collar like a dog is somehow degrading and I would think very confusing for young children. To my mind this ad does not meet 2.2 or 2.4 or the AANA Code of Ethics, in particular given it's location on display to children.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

The advertiser did not provide a response.

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 complainants' concerns that the advertisement is overtly sexualised and is inappropriate for viewing by a broad audience that would include children.

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

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 the AANA Practice Note which provides guidance on the meaning of the terms exploitative and degrading:

Exploitative - purposefully debase or abuse a person for the enjoyment of others, lacking in moral, artistic or other values

Degrading – lowering in character or quality a person or group of people.

The Board noted that in order to breach this Section of the Code the images would



need to be using sexual appeal in a manner that is considered both exploitative and degrading.

The Board noted that there were two separate poster advertisements which featured the words 'Do not Disturb...Georgia' and a model in black studded lingerie with suspenders and a collar. In the first image the woman is sitting on a room service trolley drinking a glass of champagne. The second image features the same woman standing with her hands at her sides, her legs slightly open with one knee pointed to the side.

In particular the Board noted the complainants' concerns that the lingerie depicted in the advertisement features a choker or collar and that this is degrading towards the woman.

The Board considered that the advertisement is slightly more sexualised than typical lingerie and that it is almost more of a costume than something you would wear under clothing.

The Board considered however that this is a style of lingerie sold by the store and it was reasonable for the store to depict it in their advertising.

The Board considered that the collar around the woman's neck was part of the lingerie, and did not appear to restrict the woman or suggest that it was a restraint of any kind. The Board considered that collars and chokers are common in current fashion and do not necessarily have a fetish suggestion.

The Board considered the pose of the woman in both advertisements was strong and confident and that the advertisement did not appear to lower the woman in character or quality.

The Board considered the wording associate with the image 'do not disturb...Georgia' and considered the wording did not sexualise the woman or suggest that she was not in control.

The Board considered that while some people may consider the use of lingerie with a choker exploitative, in the Board's view the depiction did not debase the woman. The Board also considered that the woman was depicted as confident and in control and considered that neither image would be considered degrading of the woman.

The Board considered that the advertisement did not employ sexual appeal in a manner which is exploitative and degrading of 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 considered the complainants’ concerns that the advertisement was too sexualised for a general audience which would include children.

The Board considered that these posters appeared in store windows in shopping centres and as such would be seen by a broad audience which would include children.

The Board considered each image separately. The Board noted the first image featured the woman sitting on a room service trolley drinking a glass of champagne.

The Board considered that the style of lingerie the woman was wearing included a waist-cincher, stocking suspenders and a bra which connected to a collar.

The Board considered that the woman’s breasts and genitals were fully covered and that the image did not contain nudity.

The Board considered that this style of lingerie, and in particular the collar, did add an element of S+M to the advertisement and was more sexualised than typical lingerie, however the Board considered that the woman’s pose was not overly sexualised and the overall effect of this poster was not inappropriate for a broad audience which would include children.

The Board then considered the second image. The Board noted that this image depicted the same woman and lingerie as the first advertisement. The Board noted that in this advertisement the woman was standing with her hands by her sides, her legs apart with one knee pointed to the side.

A minority of the Board considered that similar to the first image, the advertisement did not contain nudity and that while the lingerie was sexualised the overall effect of the poster was mild and not inappropriate for a broad audience which would include children.

The majority of the Board considered the pose of the woman, with her legs open, in the second image was more sexualised than in the first image.

The majority considered that the woman’s pose in addition to the type of lingerie added a level of sexuality to the advertisement that was not sensitive for the broad audience, which would include children.

Overall, in the Board’s view the advertisement did not treat the issue of sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience and determined that it did breach



Section 2.4 of the Code.

Finding that the advertisement did breach Section 2.4 of the Code, the Board upheld the complaints.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE TO DETERMINATION

We launched an entirely new campaign on the 6 March called LA campaign and these images haven't been in our store windows for over a month.