



Ad Standards Community Panel
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AdStandards.com.au

Ad Standards Limited
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Case Report

1. Case Number :	0074-20
2. Advertiser :	Victorian Opera
3. Product :	Entertainment
4. Type of Advertisement/Media :	Poster
5. Date of Determination	11-Mar-2020
6. DETERMINATION :	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

AANA Code of Ethics\2.3 Violence

DESCRIPTION OF ADVERTISEMENT

This poster advertisement is promoting a performance of Richard Strauss' Salome and features a painting of a woman holding a mans severed head.

THE COMPLAINT

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

Frightening and distressing for children and excessively gory and realistic violating code 2.6a

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

Regarding complaint reference 2.3, we believe Victorian Opera's representation of Salome was justifiable in its portrayal of the opera itself. The 115-year-old opera and 2000-year-old story is centrally themed around Salome being presented with the head of John the Baptist.



In accurately promoting this known story, we consciously depicted this component as an obvious illustration and opted for an artistic representation consistent with classical painting. The intention was never to depict violence in a realistic manner.

THE DETERMINATION

The Ad Standards Community Panel (Panel) considered whether the series of versions collectively forming this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the AANA Code of Ethics (the Code).

The Panel noted the complainant's concern that the advertisement was frightening and distressing for children and excessively gory and realistic.

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

The Panel considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.3 of the Code. Section 2.3 states: "Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not present or portray violence unless it is justifiable in the context of the product or service advertised".

The Panel noted the advertiser's response that the image is justifiable in the portrayal of the opera Salome as the opera is centrally themed around Salome being presented with the head of John the Baptist.

The Panel considered that the scene depicted in the advertisement is relevant to the Biblical story being told in the Opera.

The Panel noted that the Poster advertisements were placed in outdoor areas and that they would likely be seen by children.

The Panel considered that the image was highly stylised rather than realistic, and not excessively gory, that the colours were muted rather than bright and the advertisement would be unlikely to attract the attention of children.

The Panel considered that the focus of the advertisement was the representation of the story being told, rather than on blood and gore, and that overall the advertisement wasn't excessively violent considering it was very clear that it was in the context of a scene from a play.

In the Panel's view the violence portrayed in the advertisement was justifiable in the context of the product advertised and did not breach Section 2.3 of the Code.

Finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on other grounds, the Panel dismissed the complaint.