



Case Report

1	Case Number	0239/12
2	Advertiser	ShearEwe
3	Product	Professional services
4	Type of Advertisement / media	Mail
5	Date of Determination	27/06/2012
6	DETERMINATION	Upheld - Modified or Discontinued

ISSUES RAISED

- 2.2 - Objectification Exploitative and degrading - women
- 2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Gender

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

Image of a woman wearing a oink jumpsuit reclining on a chair whilst a man appears about to shear her as if she were a sheep. The text reads, "Shear Ewe Livestock Services. Taking the hard work out of hobby farming".

THE COMPLAINT

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

The leaflet depicts three male shearers shearing - the central shearer is shearing a woman removing her scanty pink jumpsuit while restraining her. The objectification of women the sexual positioning of the woman the representation of a woman as an animal and the restraint used were offensive. I actually thought this was someone's idea of a sick joke. My work colleagues thought it was a covert ad for a porn site so I rang the mobile number only to find it was the business owner, who was shocked I found his brochure offensive. I object to receiving this type of discriminatory material in my private mail box. The business owner stated he had placed the offending material personally in my mailbox which was even more concerning as I live in an isolated rural area and now feel very vulnerable.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

I feel that the complainant has exaggerated some aspects of the advertisement. In the complaint for instance the word 'scanty' referring to the pink jumpsuit (which is actually Kari Traa wearing her own thermal undergarment designed for wearing under ski suits and made from wool). Also there are no restraints in the picture and the shearer has only a hand resting on her lightly, clearly. The position she is in, is more seated than sexual and I am not really clear about how she is being depicted as an animal while seated comfortably and clearly not objecting to treatment, guess it depends on your point of view. Again depending on your point of view, who is being taken advantage of? You could argue that Miss Traa is taking advantage of the shearer, though I see it as a mutually beneficial arrangement. I also note the complainant has suggested that she showed her work colleagues the add before calling me. Yet I had the call in the early afternoon within 4 hours of the advertisements being delivered. So I question the accuracy of the statement. I also have an objection to the insinuation that I am akin to a porn site and that I am sick, offensive and dangerous. It is slanderous, and I feel insulted. Something I have no intention to reciprocate. I apologise that the picture was found offensive, it was not our intention, but rather it was meant to be complementary. Perhaps the complainant is unaware of the significance of the picture.

The picture is in fact a work of art. It was used in a campaign to showcase her clothing brand during the Sponsorship of the 2008 Golden Shears Competition held in Norway that year, and has gained some appreciation and fame. The lady in the picture is in fact the founder of the Norwegian clothing brand 'Kari Traa', (also her name) so I feel that this shows that shearers are trustworthy, gentle and accommodating. Someone you would trust to give you a hair cut, I realise that hobby farmers treat their pet sheep like family. The picture also educates people where wool comes from, that it is a natural resource and harvesting of wool is beneficial.

The shearers in the picture are the best in the world. Miss Traa is seated in a position as you would sit in your cars drivers seat or in one of those chairs in a salon when you get a pedicure. She looks relaxed comfortable and in control, as she is.

Quoted from wikipedia:-

"Kari Traa (born January 28, 1974 in Voss, Norway) is a Norwegian champion freestyle skier. She won the Olympic title in the Moguls Event at the 2002 Winter Olympics, finished second at the 2006 games, and finished third at the 1998 games.

She is four times World Champion, from 2001 (Moguls & Parallel Moguls) and 2003 (Moguls & Parallel Moguls), and has also three silver medals (both Moguls and Parallel Moguls in 1999, and Moguls in 2005). She has a total of 37 World Cup victories.

Kari Traa missed the cut for the final round and finished 14th in Albertville - the first official Olympic Mogul Competition. Kari did not compete when the Games came to Lillehammer, Norway in 1994. She injured her knee after wiping out on a training run just three weeks before the Olympics. After the 1998 Olympics in Nagano, Japan - Kari finally had an Olympic medal to wear when she won bronze.

She started a company in 2002, selling sports clothes, and has later won awards for successfully launching her collections. Her autobiography Kari was issued in 2006. After finishing her active career she has been engaged in recruitment of young ski talents and participated as arranger of world cup events. She is also engaged in the festival (Extreme

Sports Week) held at her home community Voss, regarded as one of the world's largest extreme sports festivals.”

I believe that Kari Traa exudes confidence, strength of character. Is a master of her own domain, individual, decisive and both sexually and mentally liberated. I don't feel that she would let herself be objectified and vilified. I would not be using this piece of art in our advertisement if I thought otherwise. I obtained full permission from the Kari Traa Organisation to use the picture.

Please advise me if you feel that I should add an explanation of the picture and where it comes from, to be better received and so avoiding future complaints.

Out of the 1500 leaflets I have personally delivered to hobby farms and the like, to establish my campaign for this virgin business, this is the only complaint the business has received.

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 offensive and is objectifying and demeaning to women.

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

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

The Board then considered whether the advertisement complied with Section 2.2 of the Code which 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 image of the woman depicted as a ‘sheep’ about to be shorn. The Board noted that the woman is dressed but that she is posed in a mildly sexualised manner with the suggestion that she will soon be naked (from the shearing). The Board considered that the image makes use of the woman’s sexual appeal and attractiveness. The Board noted that advertiser’s response that the image uses an artistic work which was used as part of promotional material during a shearing competition.

The Board considered that the image depicts the man in a position of power and the woman in a submissive position. The Board also considered that the image depicts the woman in a position in which she is compared to an animal, with a suggestion also of commodification (ie: that there is, as there is in shearing, many others to be shorn).

The Board considered that the representation of the woman as a sheep being shorn was irrelevant to the service advertised. The Board considered that the impact of the advertisement as a whole is exploitative of women and is also degrading. The Board determined that the advertisement breached section 2.2 of the Code.

Finding that the advertisement breached section 2.2 of the Code on the above grounds, the Board upheld the complaints.

ADVERTISER RESPONSE TO DETERMINATION

Due to the decision made by the ASB we've opted to modify the material.