



Ad Standards Community Panel
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AdStandards.com.au

Advertising Standards Bureau Limited
ACN 084 452 666

Case Report

1	Case Number	0343/18
2	Advertiser	Imagine Exhibitions
3	Product	Entertainment
4	Type of Advertisement / media	Transport
5	Date of Determination	08/08/2018
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

- 2.3 - Violence Causes alarm and distress
- 2.3 - Violence Graphic Depictions

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This transport advertisement features a logo (reading 'Real Bodies The Exhibition') with messaging to 'See for Yourself! It's what everyone's talking about' along with location, contact information, and sponsor logos (WSFM, Sunday Telegraph). The main image is of a human body which has been dissected/cut in half and has had the skin removed.

THE COMPLAINT

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

The image is disturbing in that it depicts a dead human body. It is not possible to avoid the image in that it appears on the side of buses.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

Comments which the advertiser made in response to the complainant/s regarding this





advertisement include the following:

DESCRIPTION OF ADVERTISEMENT

The advertisement addressed in the complaint is a showcase size ad appearing on the sides of 20 metro buses in Sydney and the surrounding suburbs. The advertisement features our logo (reading 'Real Bodies The Exhibition') with messaging to 'See for Yourself! It's what everyone's talking about' along with location, contact information, and sponsor logos (WSFM, Sunday Telegraph). The main image is of a centerpiece specimen of our exhibition. This specimen is one of 20 real respectfully preserved human odies displayed in the exhibition which have been dissected and preserved using a process called plastination for the purpose of educating and enlightening visitors around the complex inner-workings of the human form. This particular specimen is featured in the 'hunger' gallery in order to display the digestive system of the human body.

Dear Ad Standards Community Panel,

It is our understanding that a complaint has been filed regarding the transit ads for Real Bodies The Exhibition, citing a violation of Section 2.3 of the AANA Code of Ethics, which states that "Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not present or portray violence unless it is justifiable in the context of the product or service advertised."

We strongly contest the claim that our advertisement violates this, or any section of the AANA Code of Ethics, based on the following criteria:

1. Real Bodies The Exhibition is a museum-style exhibition currently open for a limited time at the Byron Kennedy Hall in the Entertainment Quarter in Moore Park. The exhibition displays real human specimens that have been respectfully preserved in order to explore the complex inner workings of the human form in a refreshing and thought-provoking style. The exhibition is presented with the express purpose of educating the public and inspiring visitors of all ages to learn about the human body, and provides an approachable and fascinating insight into what's happening inside every one of us. Visitors to the exhibition have an opportunity to learn more about themselves through the study of the human form, and we hope they come away with an uplifting sense of how resilient, creative, and hopeful humanity has been through time. Seeing as the product that we are advertising is an exhibition of real, preserved human specimens, we believe the use of an image of one of those specimens in our advertising is completely justifiable within the context of the product or service advertised.

2. A depiction of the human form is not violent and does not suggest violence. Our depiction of human anatomy does not in any way show a 'strong suggestion of



menace' and in fact the presentation of anatomical specimens for educational purposes is a very normal visual image used throughout society. Examples of such images can be found in children's books and magazines on anatomy, in hospitals and doctor's offices, in science classrooms, and more. If none of these examples of anatomy displays are considered violent, then neither should our advertisements be considered as such.

*3. A similar complaint was filed and dismissed November 2006 with regards to another human bodies exhibition. According to the case report 409/06 available on your website, in response to a complaint against a TV advertisement for the exhibition *The Amazing Human Body*, "The Board took the view that while the advertisement clearly showed the innards of human beings, the images were clearly in a museum-style environment, the specimens were largely de-humanised and the nature of the exhibition implied that the bodies concerned were collected through professional, ethical means. The Board agreed that the advertisement did not depict violence." Additionally, "The Board noted that advertisers have a right to advertise their products or services subject to compliance with the Code. The Board considered that this issue was not an issue that was appropriately considered under the Code." We would argue that these arguments apply to our exhibition advertisements as well.*

*4. The specimens in *Real Bodies The Exhibition* are provided by Dalian Hoffen Bio-Technique Co. Ltd, one of the world's leading centres of plastination research and innovation. The specimens are all unclaimed bodies that have been donated by the relevant authorities to medical universities in China. The specimens featured in the exhibition were donated legally, were never prisoners of any kind, showed no signs of trauma or injury, were free of infectious disease, and died of natural causes. *Real Bodies The Exhibition* is mindful to show the utmost respect to the human bodies on display in our exhibition, treating the specimens with professionalism and care in our effort to educate and inspire visitors.*

5. OMA (outdoor media association) approved the creative to run on transit. We purchased this media through Billboards Australia, who has all creative approved by OMA before proceeding with production. The fact that OMA approved this creative means that it has not violated any standards.

*We feel confident that you will agree that the transit advertising for *Real Bodies The Exhibition* is not in violation of any of AANA Code of Ethics. Should there be any doubt, we invite the members of the Ad Standards Community Panel to come to the exhibition and see for yourselves the professionalism and respect that is used in the presentation of these specimens.*

THE DETERMINATION



The Ad Standards Community Panel (the “Panel”) considered whether this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics (the “Code”).

The Panel noted the complainant’s concern that the advertisement depicts graphic material.

The Panel viewed the advertisement and noted the 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 that this transport advertisement appeared on buses in Sydney and features a logo (reading ‘Real Bodies The Exhibition’) with messaging to ‘See for Yourself! It’s what everyone’s talking about’ along with location, contact information, and sponsor logos. The main image is of a human body which has been dissected/cut in half and has had the skin removed.

The Panel noted the complainant’s concern that the advertisement was graphic and disturbing.

The Panel noted that there is community conversation around the origins of the cadavers used in the exhibition and the moral and ethical implications of the exhibition, however noted that the role of the Community Panel is to adjudicate advertisements based on their content only.

The Panel considered that the advertisement does not contain blood or gore, and the imagery is similar to what would be visible in a doctor’s office, science classroom or an anatomy textbook.

The Panel noted that there is no threatening or explicit language used in the advertisement, and that the text is informative only.

The Panel considered the advertiser’s response that the product advertised is an exhibition featuring real, preserved human specimens and that the use of a specimen in advertising material is justifiable within the context of the product advertised.

The Panel determined that the imagery in the advertisement does not present or portray violence, and any graphic imagery is justifiable in the context of the product. The Panel determined that the advertisement 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.

