



CASE REPORT

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| 1. Complaint reference number | 503/06 |
| 2. Advertiser | Samsung Electronics Aust Pty Ltd |
| 3. Product | Housegoods/services |
| 4. Type of advertisement | TV |
| 5. Nature of complaint | Discrimination or vilification Gender - section 2.1
Portrayal of sex/sexuality/nudity – section 2.3 |
| 6. Date of determination | Tuesday, 16 January 2007 |
| 7. DETERMINATION | Dismissed |

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement depicts a man setting up a new LCD TV in a lounge with the aim of watching the cricket. His wife decides that the room furniture needs rearranging to set the TV as a focal point. A male voiceover explains that the TV's "fine lines and subtle curves will inspire her to make some changes". Various shots are shown of the arrangement and rearrangement of furniture as the voiceover continues "So let her change the room...But not the channel". As the couple sits down on the sofa to watch TV the woman moves away again and the man leans his head back with a resigned expression on his face.

THE COMPLAINT

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

I found this ad very sexist...This is really reinforcing gender stereotypes which is totally inappropriate in the 21st century.

I do not find the stereo typical nature of the advertisement offensive, suggesting that the man is only interested in the tv while the furniture around him changes, but I do find the voiceover suggestion that he allows it to happen offensive and the implication that the man is in control of what the woman is allowed to do.

It presumes that women couldn't possibly be interested in watching sport on TV and are happiest when badgering their partners are frivolously re-furnishing their lounge rooms with hot pink furniture. What stereotypical nonsense. It's an insult to women like me who happen to be watching.

Oral sex implication is used to promote the selling of the product.

Towards the end of the advertisement, the girlfriend's head goes down and disappears from view. The man's head goes back suggesting relaxation. It can be inferred that the man is satisfied because his girlfriend is performing fellatio upon him.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

Comments which the advertiser made in response to the complaint/s regarding this advertisement included the following:

We do not believe that the advertisement vilifies women in any way, or that the advertisement discriminates or encourages discrimination against women.

The aim of the advertisement was to promote the Samsung LCD television, by stating that the TV is so well designed, a consumer would be inspired to change the lounge room to match its beauty.

The plotline of the advertisement clearly shows that the man is indeed not in control of what the woman does, as the redecoration of the lounge room is clearly her idea (Voiceover: “But she has other ideas...”). That the man rearranges furniture at the direction of his wife also implies, if anything, that the man is working for his wife, rather than the other way around.

The tone of the advertisement is light-hearted, and the use of “Imagine” as the first word of the advertisement sets up the situation as a hypothetical, rather than as instructive of how to treat gender roles. We feel the plotline is a humorous depiction of a single situation in a hypothetical relationship between two equal partners, and not a general statement on perceived gender inequality. Accordingly, it is our view that the complaint should not be upheld.

THE DETERMINATION

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

The Board viewed the advertisement and considered whether it breaches Section 2.1 dealing with discrimination on the basis of gender.

The Board noted the complainants' comments that the advertisement stereo-typed women and that the man was in control of the woman's actions.

The Board noted the language used in the advertisement and the depiction of the woman changing the furniture in the room. The Board agreed that the decision to change furniture in a living room was usually a joint decision between a couple, and the relinquishment of that decision to one or other gender did not of itself imply that either gender would normally take on that role. Hence the Board agreed that the advertisement did not of itself discriminate against, or vilify women.

The Board also noted some complainants' comments that the final sequence depicted oral sex. While the Board recognised that some people may have noticed the potential implication of oral sex, the implication was not strong enough for many people to perceive. Further, the depiction was far from explicit and the potential offence to those in the audience who would have perceived the reference would not have warranted removal or changing of the advertisement.

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