

COMPLAINT NUMBER	18/114
COMPLAINANT	C Richardson
ADVERTISER	Body Worlds Vital
ADVERTISEMENT	Body Worlds Vital, Out of Home
DATE OF MEETING	16 April 2018
OUTCOME	No Grounds to Proceed

Advertisement: The advertisement which featured on the back of a bus showed a plastinated human body without skin in a ballet pose with the wording “Gunther Von Hagens’ Body Worlds Vital. The Original Exhibition of Real Human Bodies – 23rd April – 13th July - Hilton Auckland, Princes Wharf – www.bodyworldsvital.com”

The Chair ruled there were no grounds for the complaint to proceed.

Complainant, C Richardson, said: The image of the body is very graphic and disturbing, showing muscles and tendons and also the open ribs and seemingly rotting bits.

It's pretty gross and offensive

Can see what they are trying to do with 'real bodies' But it's too much.

Should be removed..

The relevant provisions were Code of Ethics - Basic Principle 4, Rule 4, Rule 5;

The Chair noted the Complainant’s concern that the image of a skinless body with muscles and tendons showing was graphic and disturbing.

The Chair noted the advertisement, which was on the back of a bus, promoted the Dr Gunther Von Hagens’ Body Worlds Vital exhibition of real human bodies. She said the exhibition’s aim is to educate the public about the inner workings of the human body and show the effects of poor health, good health and lifestyle choices. It is also presented to motivate visitors to learn more about the science of anatomy and physiology through the use of real human bodies that had undergone a special process involving plastination and skin removal.

In considering the issue raised by the Complainant about the use of dead body images in an unrestricted medium to promote an exhibition, the Chair referred to a precedent decision, Decision 17/221 Appeal 17/012. That appeal considered a billboard showing the dead body of an identifiable person who had just been murdered and was Upheld by the Appeal Board. The Decision said in part:

“...The use of such an image to promote an exhibition in a poster advertisement to an unrestricted audience did offend against generally prevailing community standards. The Appeal Board agreed taking the image out of an exhibition context and placing it in an advertisement in an outdoor medium where it is difficult to restrict who would see it was in breach of the Code...”

Turning to the complaint before her, the Chair said the precedent did not apply in this case as the image was a depiction of a body in a ballet pose available for viewing at the exhibition. It was not presented in a gratuitous or violent manner. The image was similar to an anatomy model or a text book image used for educational purposes.

While acknowledging the advertisement was being displayed in an unrestricted outdoor medium and that the image could be confronting to some viewers, the Chair said it did not reach the threshold to be likely to cause serious or widespread offence taking into account generally prevailing community standards.

Therefore, the Chair ruled the advertisement had been prepared with a due sense of social responsibility to consumers and did not reach the threshold to breach Basic Principle 4 or Rules 4 and 5 of the Code of Ethics.

Accordingly, the Chair ruled there were no grounds for the complaint to proceed.

Chair's Ruling: Complaint **No Grounds to Proceed**

APPEAL INFORMATION

According to the procedures of the Advertising Standards Complaints Board, all decisions are able to be appealed by any party to the complaint. Information on our Appeal process is on our website www.asa.co.nz. Appeals must be made in writing via email or letter within 14 days of receipt of this decision.