

COMPLAINT NUMBER	18/137
COMPLAINANT	M. Durand
ADVERTISER	Farmers Trading Company
ADVERTISEMENT	Dior Perfume, Television
DATE OF MEETING	8 May 2018
OUTCOME	No Grounds to Proceed

Advertisement: The television advertisement for the new Dior perfume Miss Dior featured actress Natalie Portman, portraying a woman in an intense relationship with a male character including several close ups of Natalie’s face and two brief arguments between the couple. One scene shows Portman shove her beau and in another he yells “I love you” to which Portman replies loudly, “prove it”. The advertisement concluded with the words “Available now at Farmers.”

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

Complainant, M. Durand, said: “This Miss Dior advert depicts a tumultuous relationship between two young lovers. In one segment 16 seconds into the advert, Miss Dior appears to shove a man (possibly her lover) hard in the chest. This is part of her urge for him to prove he loves her (i.e. she encourages him to prove it with an act of physical aggression towards him). The impact on him to to send him rapidly out of the camera's view. While we do not see an impact the impression is made explicitly that he is her loved and that she hits him hard enough to push him off balance and quickly. This is domestic violence against a man inflicted by a woman. The advert breaches sections 4 (Decency) and 7 (Violence) of the Code of Ethics. If the advert was reversed and showed a male acting violently towards a woman there would be absolutely no doubt as to it's unacceptability. However the advert suggests violence towards men is justified in times of frustration and tries to normalise violence in a way that is supremely sexist.”

The relevant provisions were Code of Ethics - Basic Principle 4, Rule 4, Rule 7;

The Chair noted the Complainant’s concern the scene where Natalie Portman pushes her male partner depicts and normalises domestic violence and would not be acceptable if the actors’ genders were reversed.

The Chair noted that a double standard may well exist in the portrayal of gender and that it was the role of the Complaints Board to reflect existing and accepted community standards, not set them. While she acknowledged the Complainant’s concern, the Chair said the advertisement was a story about love that showed a range of extreme behaviour, including the female jumping off a jetty into the ocean dressed in an evening gown.

The Chair noted a previous Ruling (16/305) which considered a similar scene in an advertisement for health insurance where a woman threw a bunch of flowers at a man. The Ruling said, in part: “The Chair viewed the advertisement and said the scene that the Complainant was concerned about was part of a story. The advertisement was portraying real life events including an argument. In the Chair’s view, the overall takeout was that a

person's health was more important than life's ups and downs. While acknowledging the scene showing a woman hitting the man with a bunch of flowers was not ideal, the Chair did not consider it reached the threshold to breach the Code of Ethics."

The Chair took into account the context, audience, medium and product and disagreed the advertisement normalised violence or portrayed that violence towards men was justified in times of frustration. The Chair said the scene subject to complaint was brief and while it showed an aggressive action, it did not reach the threshold to be encourage or condone violent behaviour. It was part of the story of the intense relationship between the couple.

While the Chair noted the offence the advertisement had caused the Complainant, taking into account prevailing community standards, she said the advertisement was not in breach of Rule 4 or Rule 7 or Basic Principle 4 of the Code Ethics and ruled the complaint had no grounds 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.