

Does bare flesh make advertising bad or does bad advertising resort to bare flesh?

I was at the Joburg International airport recently to see my son off to Australia and once I had found my bearings there was some time to kill which meant coffee.

 By [Richard Clarke](#) 29 Jan 2004

There is a place called Lavazza in the international departures hall that had some advertising adorning the walls.

The first picture was of a naked woman with nipples exposed swinging from the chandelier with an extraordinary amount of empty coffee cups strewn below her on the floor.

Nudity and sex in advertising will always raise debate and the ASA recently had to deal with complaints about content that is dangerous to the moral integrity of the country.

It's obvious that the model had drunk too much coffee and the caffeine overload forced her into taking her clothes off and launching into space to grab the chandelier.

The idea is not new and has been joked about every time people drink coffee and the idea of female nudity for the sake of it is hardly creative. The point about creativity in advertising is getting a balance between the creative people thinking out the box and what the target market is prepared to go for as well as what the rest of society will tolerate.

The crowd at the coffee shop when I was there was a mix of tourists, elderly people and kids. Hardly the market that could be attracted into a coffee shop by the sight of naked breasts. But is it the market that could be adversely affected and more to the point, is it the market that has a right not to be subjected to this crude and vulgar display of flesh.

As I said interesting questions and the reason nobody has yet complained could be that nobody spends enough time there to take offense or else they simply filter it out.

The coffee itself was lukewarm and as far as taste goes I would pay more for Ricoffy. I could have chosen a bad afternoon to drink coffee but what about travelers whose last impression of our country is sub standard advertising.

On a lighter note there was a print ad for Olympus cameras in the same edition of Maxim magazine that I wrote about last week. A picture of the camera on water with a reflection and a punch line that reads, "Resists water, dust, snow and imitation".

'Your vision, our future' is the wording at the bottom which places them, rather handily, in control of their customers destiny.

Whether their competition at the top end of the photographic market would actually be keen on imitating them is a moot point but overall a good ad that hits the target.

Resorting to nudity in advertising simply to gain attention is no different from a movie director that throws bare bodies at the viewer because he is worried about dead parts in the plot. The topic is very subjective and any focus group of people in movies and advertising mixed with consumers and viewers would probably find different opinions based on different reasons.

That is why we need watchdogs like the ASA to maintain some sort of balance. They don't always get it right but then creativity is a constant dynamic.

ABOUT RICHARD CLARKE

Richard Clarke founded Just Ideas, an ideas factory and implementation unit. He specialises in spotting opportunities, building ideas and watching them fly. Richard is also a freelance writer.
View my profile and articles...

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>