

# Gender, Stereotyping and Advertising – UK Developments

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## Who am I?



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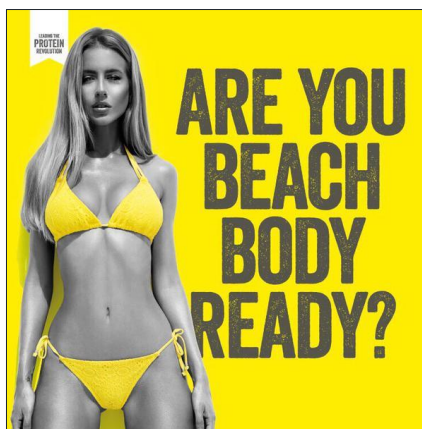
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There's a long history....



But new challenges....

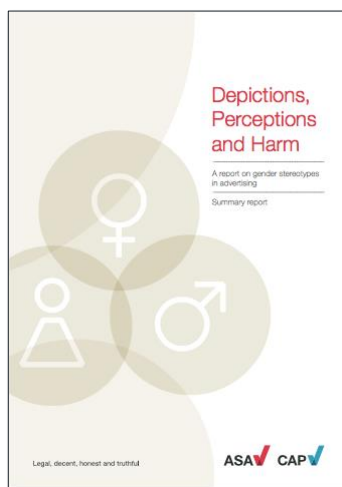
Body Shaming?



387 complaints; offensive body shaming; socially irresponsible. **NOT UPHELD.**

## Gender Stereotyping

ASA Report into gender stereotypes in advertising



## ASA Report into gender stereotypes in advertising

Why does this matter?

- How does society consider gender stereotypes?
- Is the ASA getting its approach right?
- Gender stereotypes can imply people should look or behave a certain way because of gender; can have damaging affect on how people see themselves or others
- Advertising is only one of several factors that influence perception, but ASA's role is to ensure advertising does not harm or offend
- ASA has been good at dealing with objectification or unhealthy body image
- But more to do re ads that show stereotypical gender behaviours
- Not all stereotypes are necessarily bad, but some are likely to cause a problem
- Conclusion: there is a need to change the way the ASA regulates gender stereotypes

## Gender Stereotyping

ASA Report into gender stereotypes in advertising

- Types of issues:
  1. Roles: occupations, position, roles usually associated with a specific gender
  2. Characteristics: Attributes or behaviours associated with a specific gender
  3. Mocking people for not conforming to a stereotype
  4. Sexualisation: Portraying individuals in a highly sexualised way
  5. Objectification: Depicting someone in a way that focuses on their body
  6. Body Image: Depicting an unhealthy body image
- New 'standards' for ads that feature stereotypical gender roles or characteristics
- Clarify standards re objectification, inappropriate sexualisation, unhealthy thin images, mocking for failure to conform to gender stereotypes

## Examples: Roles, Occupations & Characteristics

ASDA Stores Ltd ( Television) – 2013



620 Complaints: Outdated Stereotypes. **NOT UPHELD**

## Examples: Roles, Occupations & Characteristics

Aptamil – TV 2016 – used in research; vilified on Twitter; but no recorded complaints!



No reported complaints

## Examples: Mocking for non-conformity

Moneysupermarket: 455 complaints 2017 (#2)



**NOT UPHELD:** Unlikely to condone or encourage harmful discriminatory behaviour.



## Examples: Objectification and Sexualisation

Pile Height t/a Turf Group – 14<sup>th</sup> June 2017



1 complaint: **UPHELD**: not explicit, but demeaning and objectifying; therefore offensive



## Examples: Objectification and Sexualisation

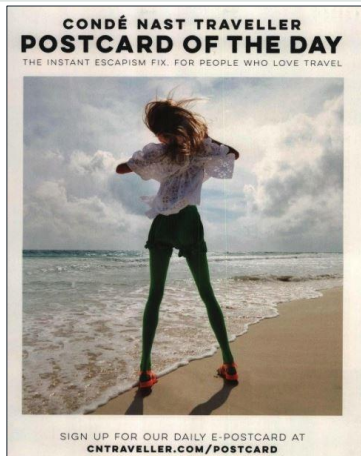
Croftscope t/a BOCA – 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2017



2 complaints: **UPHELD**: objectified a women for an unrelated product

## Examples: Depicting and unhealthy body image

Conde Nast – 8<sup>th</sup> November 2017



1 Complaint: **UPHELD**: Unhealthily thin model, socially irresponsible

## Reality v Research

Tom Ford – 29<sup>th</sup> April 2015



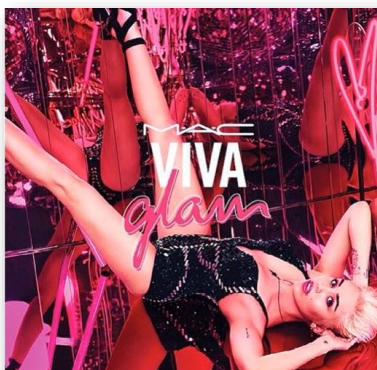
Reality: 2 complaints: Degrading and Objectifying: **NOT UPHELD**

Research:

- Sexualised pose and gratuitous nudity was unnecessary.
- Air-brushing promotes unrealistic body image.
- unrealistic and potentially harmful message to girls that this is how women should look, potentially limiting future aspirations.

## Reality v Research

Tom Ford – 29<sup>th</sup> April 2015



Reality: 3 complaints: overtly sexual & inappropriate for children: **NOT UPHELD**

Research: Adults said:

- overly suggestive and clearly objectified women
- would not feel comfortable with children or grandchildren seeing this advert

## Consultation on New Rule and Guidance

May to July 2018

***Advertisements must not include gender stereotypes that are likely to cause harm, or serious or widespread offence.***

Neither rule nor guidance intended to prevent ads from featuring:

- Glamorous, attractive, successful, aspirational or healthy people or lifestyles;
- One gender only, including in ads for products developed for and aimed at one gender;
- Gender stereotypes as a means to challenge their negative effects.





## Guiding Principles: Scenarios featuring gender-stereotypical roles and characteristics

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- Ads may feature people undertaking gender-stereotypical roles e.g. a woman cleaning the house or a man doing DIY,
- or displaying gender-stereotypical characteristics e.g. a man being assertive or a woman being sensitive to others' needs,
- but they should take care to avoid suggesting that stereotypical roles or characteristics are:
  - always uniquely associated with one gender;
  - the only options available to one gender;
  - never carried out or displayed by another gender.



## Guiding Principles: Pressure to conform to idealised gender-stereotypical body shape or physical features

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- Ads may feature idealised body shapes and physical features stereotypically associated with women (e.g. a small waist) and men (e.g. an abdominal 'six pack')
- but they should take care to avoid suggesting that an individual's happiness or emotional wellbeing should depend on conforming to an idealised gender-stereotypical body shape or physical features.



## Guiding Principles: Scenarios aimed at or featuring children

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- Ads can be targeted at and feature a specific gender
- but should take care not to explicitly convey that a particular children's product, pursuit, activity, including choice of play or career, is inappropriate for one or another gender.



## Guiding Principles: Scenarios aimed at or featuring potentially vulnerable groups

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Ads should be sensitive to the emotional and physical well-being of vulnerable groups of people who may be under pressure to conform to particular gender stereotypes.

## Guiding Principles: Scenarios featuring people who don't conform to a gender stereotype

Ads should avoid mocking people for not conforming to gender stereotypes, including in a context that is intended to be humorous.

## The shape of things to come?

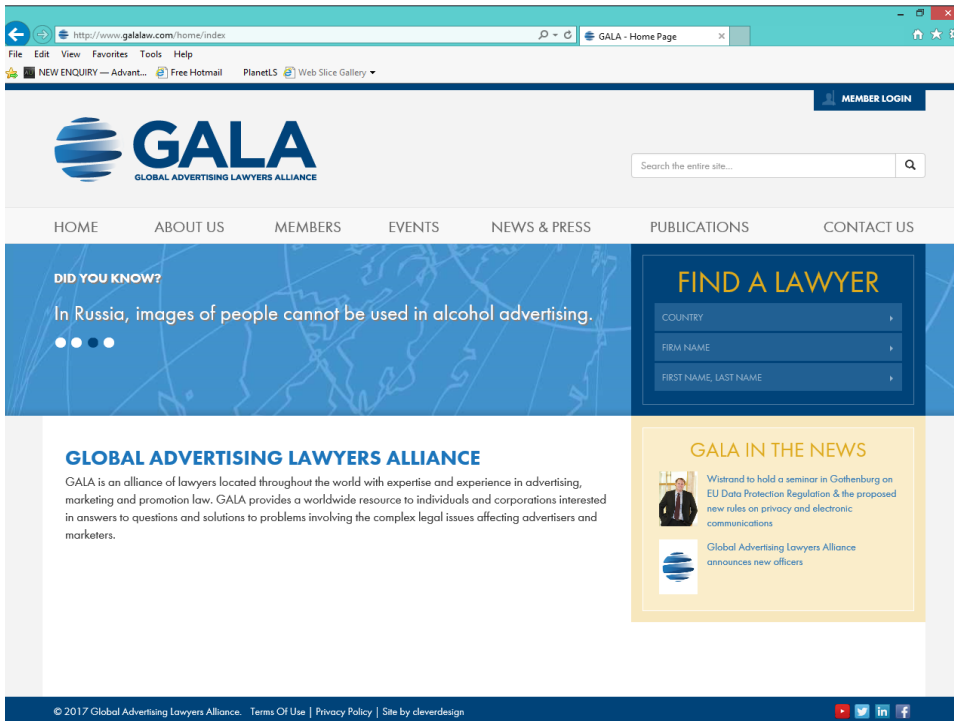
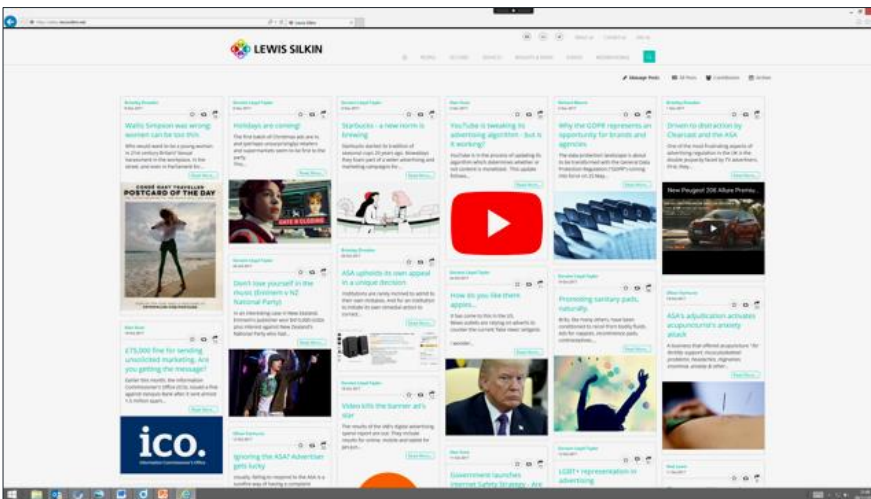
Lewis Oliver Estates – 11<sup>th</sup> July 2018



2 complaints that objectified man because irrelevant to service: **UPHELD**



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## Any Questions?

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