

ADVERTISING

Gucci ad banned by ASA for unhealthy thin model

April 7, 2016



Gucci cruise 2016 ad campaign image

By STAFF REPORTS

Italian fashion label Gucci is the latest brand to face criticism from Britain's Advertising Standards Authority.

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A consumer complained about Gucci's placement of its cruise 2016 campaign on The Times' Web site on Dec. 15, which featured a dance party video, saying that individual models pictured at the end of the film looked too thin. In its ruling published April 6, the ASA noted that one model was gaunt, deeming the advertising irresponsible.

Difference of opinion

Two specific images from the campaign came under contention. One showed a female model leaning against a wall, while another woman was seated on a couch. Both were wearing garments that covered much of their limbs.

The ASA agreed that the seated model's legs were slender, but within proportion to the rest of her body, ruling that since her knee and ankle bones were not noticeable, she did not appear unhealthy.

Gucci's second model, however, was judged appearing too thin. This was due to her seemingly disproportionate torso and lower body, with her small waist size exacerbated by her pose.

Adding to the ASA's judgment of the model as appearing unhealthy was her "gaunt" makeup and melancholy expression.



The ASA ad in question

The ASA has warned Gucci that it cannot run the ad again in its current form.

Gucci defended its ad, saying that the placement was aimed at The Times' mature audience. The brand also noted that thinness is a subjective quality, and that it thought of the models in question as being slender and toned.

It also stood for its makeup choices, saying it opted for a natural look and lighting that would not create shadows on models' faces.

The Cruise 2016 Campaign The Director's Cut

The Times agreed with Gucci that what is considered unhealthily thin is a highly subjective issue.

Fashion brands may skirt controversy in their advertisements as a way to catch consumers' attention and make an impact, but sometimes these efforts bring public scrutiny.

Recently, ads from Saint Laurent Paris, Miu Miu and Tom Ford have come under fire from Britain's Advertising Standards Authority for ads that were deemed to depict unhealthy or indecent scenes. These controversies can help bring a brand into the public eye, but they can be both helpful and hurtful ([see story](#)).