

Mr. James Molison Curator  
Australian National Gallery  
Canberra, ACT 2600  
Australia

2209 Gaynor ave.  
Richmond CA 94801  
May 12, 1988

Dear Mr. Molison ,

For the last three years I have been doing cultural work around health issues. My current effort involves encouraging artists, museums and galleries to disassociate themselves from the tobacco industry.

Tobacco companies with the support of galleries and museums help create an attitude of complacency toward the disease, death, and economic burden their products place on society. I'm hoping the Australian National Museum can take a leading role in supporting and publicizing a "No Tobacco Money " policy.

As an artist whose work you've collected I'm requesting that you not use my Art in association with the tobacco industry.

I am aware that in the past you have accepted tobacco company money in exchange for sponsorship credit. Hopefully, by this date you have found other sources of support. In the case you still accept tobacco money I hope artists you include in these exhibits will be informed about the nature of their sponsor and be given a opportunity to respond.

I am interested in hearing your response and would be happy to discuss this matter further.

Doug Minkler

In my design classes I use tobacco ads to raise a number of important issues to future designers. We look at how ads create stereotypes and the exploitation of women, in particular.

Though tobacco industry designers see their job as merely technical they have more impact on society than many legislators. For example, the Attorney General's efforts to discourage pregnant women from smoking are dwarfed by the advertising industry's efforts to associate smoking with good health ,glamor, and popularity.

*Virginia Slims* advertising depicts suffragettes juxtaposed to affluent, attractive, fashion models. These images, combined with the slogan "*You've come along way baby,*" not only trivialize women's history of struggle but undermine their health by making smoking appear progressive and modern.

Other issues my classes study in relation to tobacco advertising are racism, ecology, international marketing and freedom of speech. Of special interest to students is the definition of "selling out" and how they can survive as designers without doing so.

One project we do is to create "counter" ads in response to the ones we generally see on billboards and in publications. I discourage generic anti-smoking ads in favor of satiric ad campaigns against well known brands. ( Virginia Slims becomes Virginia Slime, Lucky Strike becomes Lucky Stroke, Marlboro to Barfboro, etc.) This approach is effective because the viewers remember the "counter" ad whenever the original ad is seen.

Dissecting tobacco ads and re-assembling them to improve the Nation's health helps students understand how communication arts can be used positively. They learn technical and composition skills as well as the political dynamic of the design business.

The text and video I use in class is provided by the organization, Doctors Ought to Care (DOC) . DOC believes that the communication arts are essential in the battle against the tobacco companies. This organization sponsors "counter" advertisements for the printed and electronic media, and poster contests for students . They have produced The Cigarette Underworld, edited by Dr. Alan Blum, a medical journal with articles such as: Superman and the Marlboro Woman: The Lungs

of Lois Lane, Women and Children Last. DOC also publishes a quarterly newsletter that features the latest billboard alterations, new "counter-advertisements," and other forms of cultural resistance to the cigarette industry.

Doug Minkler

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