[GB] Guidance on the Use of Digital Enhancements Re-Issued

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On 27 July 2011, the UK Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) ruled that two cosmetic advertisements were "misleading". L'Oreal's brands, Lancôme and Maybelline, were the object of adverse adjudications because "they could not demonstrate that images of Julia Roberts and Christy Turlington, which had been digitally enhanced, were an accurate representation of the results the products could achieve. As such we judged the ads were misleading."

Whilst the specific matter concerned magazine advertisements, misleading advertising is prohibited likewise under UK advertising rules applying to broadcasts, in the UK Code of Broadcast Advertising (BCAP Code), which gives the rules for broadcast advertisements.

Section 3.12 states: "Advertisements must not mislead by exaggerating the capability or performance of a product or service."

The ASA in a statement said that "while advertisers are not prohibited from altering or enhancing images in all circumstances, if they do decide to reach for the airbrush, they have to be careful not to exaggerate the capability or performance of a product."

Several high profile ASA rulings in this area have set a benchmark for what is and is not acceptable when using post-production techniques: L'Oreal (UK) Ltd t/a Lancôme; L'Oreal (UK) Ltd t/a Maybelline; Procter & Gamble (Health & Beauty Care) Ltd; Rimmel International Ltd; Coty UK Ltd t/a Rimmel London.

The ASA Guidance on cosmetic advertisements has been re-issued.

ASA Adjudication on L'Oreal (UK) Ltd t/a Lancôme

http://www.asa.org.uk/ASA-action/Adjudications/2011/7/LOreal-(UK)-Ltd/SHP_ADJ_149640.aspx

ASA Adjudication on L'Oreal (UK) Ltd t/a Maybelline

http://www.asa.org.uk/ASA-action/Adjudications/2011/7/LOreal-(UK)-Ltd/SHP_ADJ_149632.aspx

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BCAP Section 3.12

http://www.cap.org.uk/The-Codes/BCAP-Code/BCAP-Code-Item.aspx?q=Test_General+Sections_03+Misleading+advertising_Rules_Exaggeration

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