

Audi pulls 'sexist' China ad after public outcry

SHANGHAI, China: German automaker Audi apologised on Thursday over an advertisement it aired in China that was slammed as sexist for showing a bride-to-be being roughly examined like a piece of livestock.

The Chinese-language spot for Audi's used-car division, which appeared online and also reportedly in movie theatres, was criticised on social media for depicting an anxious mother-in-law crashing the wedding to pull and prod the bride, even prying her mouth open to check her teeth.

Separate statements by Audi AG and the used-car division apologised and said the ad had been pulled.

"The lack of consideration ... caused the public to view the advertisement as disrespectful to women. We hereby extend our most sincere apology," the used-car unit said.

Audi AG's statement said it "deeply regrets" any offence caused by the ad, which it said "does not correspond to the values of our company in any way".

Audi is a member of the Volkswagen group and its brand is operated in China -- the world's biggest car market -- by VW's joint venture with its Chinese partner FAW Group.

The Audi AG statement said the joint venture had launched an investigation to ensure nothing similar occurs in future.

The advert generated thousands of comments and nearly a million "reads" on China's Twitter-like Weibo service.

"Are you picking out livestock? ISIS exams mouths and teeth like that when they are trading sex slaves," wrote one user.

Another called the commercial "extremely obnoxious".

China has a history of occasionally insensitive product pitches.

A Chinese detergent maker last year apologised over an advertisement showing a black man stuffed into a washing machine and later emerging as a fair-skinned Asian, after initially dismissing its critics as too sensitive.

One of the best-known examples was the Chinese toothpaste brand "Darkie", whose label pictured a black man showing off his white teeth.

After it was acquired in the earlier 1990s by American consumer-goods giant Colgate-Palmolive, the logo was tweaked and the name changed to "Darlie", under which it is still available.

Source: AFP

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