

## **Brands We Should Not Buy**

**“These 8 brands were racist for exhibiting works that demeaned black people”**

“prada

No explanation whatsoever could justify Italian luxury fashion brand Prada’s decision to launch a racist blackface product at its SoHo boutique in New York last December which enraged customers. Social media complaints of keychain figurines displayed in the store which featured black-faced monkeys with big red lips resembling the racist blackface of the 19th century drove the brand to issue an apology and later withdraw the products from the stores. Dubbed “Pradamalia”, the blackfaced monkey reminded people of performers who entertained white people by painting their faces with burnt cork, greasepaint or shoe polish and exaggerate their lips to depict the black uneducated slaves on plantations as slow and dumb.

gucci

Gucci recently joined the long list of fashion brands that have offended black people with its newly released black woollen jumper that looked like the racist blackface used to demean black people in America’s history.

The luxury brand placed on sale the black “balaclava jumper” which covers the lower half of the face featuring a red cut-out around the mouth. It quickly received backlash on social media for the design

which was deemed offensive. The company took to social media to apologize for what it acknowledged to be an “offence” and added that it would be removed from sale.

adidas

This February, the sportswear brand withdrew all-white Ultraboost sneakers from a collection designed to honour Black History Month, after heavy criticism from some social media users. The all-white running shoes were part of a specially-designed edition created by the Harlem Renaissance to commemorate Black History Month, an annual observance which recognizes the contributions of African Americans to the US over the years. While the majority of the brand’s Ultraboost line sneakers were black with orange and purple elements, the all-white shoes were easily noticed, raising concerns for some social media users in the midst of the Black History Month celebrations, reports *RT*. The sports company later removed the shoes from the collection.

h&m

An ad on Swedish fashion brand H&M’s website stoked anger last January for displaying a black boy modelling a hoodie with the inscription “Coolest Monkey in the Jungle” for its UK stores. This was described as racist and inappropriate especially when other white models were wearing a similar sweatshirt with inscriptions including “Mangrove Jungle Survival Expert”. The brand received a lot of backlash forcing it to remove the ad of the black boy who had posed

with his hands in his pockets. Social media was buzzing with lots of comments on Twitter questioning the reason behind the brand's decision to clothe the black boy in that hoodie. Others called for the sack of those behind the promo photos while some called for a boycott of the brand.

amazon

Last January, the online retailer was compelled to remove a series of products from its website after they bore a slogan suggesting slavery is good. Amazon was heavily criticized when a third-party seller named Styleart listed a number of items emblazoned with the phrase "Slavery Gets Shit Done" on Amazon's Marketplace platform. The products included bags, children's T-shirts and bibs, laptop cases, and mugs. Human rights organization Anti-Slavery International described the items as "absolutely shocking" and asked Amazon to "do better to control what you sell." Some customers also called for a boycott of the website until the merchandise was removed.

qiaobi

A 49-second advert for Qiaobi, a brand of detergent manufactured by a Chinese firm set off a firestorm on various social media platforms in May 2016. The advert featured a black man attempting to flirt with a young Chinese woman. She smiled back at him but apparently thought he could do with some improvement, so she loaded him into a washing machine. After he had spent some time spinning, he came out an "enhanced-looking" version of himself: a fair Chinese man. In

response to the “noise” that trailed the advert, the makers of Qiaobi came out to issue an apology which many described as more offensive than the advert it sought to redress. “We express our apologies to the African people because of the spread of the ad and the over amplification by the media, we sincerely hope that the media will not over-read it,” the statement said. Eventually, Qiaobi pulled the ad after running it for months.

dove

In October 2017, Dove apologised after publishing an advert on its Facebook page which showed a black woman turning into a white woman. The ad showed a black woman removing her top to reveal a white woman underneath apparently after using Dove body lotion. The white woman subsequently takes off her top and turns into a Middle Eastern woman. Dove was accused of racism over the online advertising campaign and it later admitted it had “missed the mark” with the image it posted on Facebook.

wycon

Italian beauty brand Wycon got into trouble recently when it released a gel nail polish shade called “Thick as a Nigga.” The brand has chosen a number of provocative names for its polish colours, including Dirty Talk, Lap Girl, but the choice of name for the darkest polish in its collection attracted a lot of criticism. After the backlash, the brand renamed all of their nail polish shades to just numbers and released a statement that read: “We’re sorry that this post has

triggered these types of reactions: every color from our Gel On collection is inspired, with a cheerful attitude and a pinch of naivety, by famous song titles, many of which derive from the landscape of hip hop. For example "Drop it like it's hot" by Snoop Dogg, "Bootilicious" (sic) by Beyoncé (sic), "Candy Shop" by 50 Cent, Lollipop, Lady Marmalade etc... The reference here is "Thick Nigga" (sic) by DBangz. Wycon is the brand for everybody #nobodyexcluded is our motto and we didn't mean to offend anybody!"

Source: Face 2 Face Africa

Link:

<https://face2faceafrica.com/article/these-8-popular-brands-were-racist-for-exhibiting-works-that-demeaned-black-people>