

Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center
University of Michigan
715 N. University Avenue, Suite 202
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

The Donna Karan Company, LLC.
550 Seventh Avenue
New York, New York 10018

To Whom It May Concern:

Each year the University of Michigan's Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center (SAPAC) holds a campaign on sexism in advertising to educate the campus community on the cultural impact of sexist and misogynistic imagery. This year, SAPAC volunteers chose your advertisement as one of ten finalists for the most sexist ad of 2007.

I, _____ find your advertising strategy to be particularly offensive for the following reasons:

- The advertisement's framing, angle, shadowing, and the positioning of the model overtly suggest that the viewer or photographer is stalking the young woman. In a nation in which 1 in 12 women are stalked in their lifetimes, the glorification and eroticization of this form of sexual violence are irresponsible, at best.
- By using an emaciated model in the advertisement, DKNY demonstrates that it supports a limited and unattainable standard of beauty – a beauty defined by extreme gauntness. The young woman in this ad looks powerless and weak.

Although most Americans believe that they are immune to the messages of advertising, certainly DKNY's marketing team understands the power of advertisement. So, it disappoints us that DKNY would use such sexist imagery in its influential marketing campaigns. Images, such as the one about which we are writing, eroticize all forms of sexual violence – sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, stalking, and sexual harassment – against women. We write this letter with the hope that DKNY will be more conscientious about the images its marketing team chooses to represent the company. The advertisement in question, and others like it, is offensive to women and perpetuates the myth that stalking or being stalked is sexy and adventurous. It is quite possible to sell clothing and undergarments without the use of sexist imagery. In the future, we hope that your marketing team will be more aware about issues of sexual violence and how we can all work together to change the prevalence of sexism in advertising.

Sincerely,

Signature: _____