

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

Diamond Trading Company
17 Charterhouse Street
London, EC1N6RA, England

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 and U-M students were torn as to whether your Right-Hand-Ring campaign empowers or degrades women. I'd like to share with you some of the ways in which we found the campaign harmful so that you might revise future individual advertisements.

While recognizing your intention to make women recognize the independent, unique, and powerful parts of themselves, I, _____, found your advertising strategy to be particularly offensive because of the ways in which you:

- Imply that, in order to celebrate femininity, one must be a romantic, heterosexual, married mother (e.g. "your left hand believes in shining armor", "your left hand says 'we'", "your left hand celebrates the day you were married", "your left hand rocks the cradle".)
- While selling "right-hand" rings, feature models prominently displaying left-hand wedding bands implying only certain women are eligible to indulge themselves in such a way.
- Enforce Ameri-centric notions even though your slogan says "women of the world" (that is, many Muslims, Jews, and Orthodox Christians sport wedding bands on the right hand, as do citizens of Norway, Germany, Poland, Venezuela, India, Spain, Russia, and most of Eastern Europe.)

Such slogans and implications contribute to a culture that insists on very rigid standards for women. SAPAC would like to encourage you to empower *all* women, not only married women, straight women, and mothers. Such images, while possibly empowering women that do manage to fit your definition, make Others out of women who do not. This is the first step in condoning and promoting intolerance of individual choices and the complexity and diversity of our world's women. In the future, please be aware of the effects of this type of advertisement; we can work together to change the prevalence of sexism in advertising.

Sincerely,

Signature: _____