

What are the ads that were blocked? When was this first an issue?

Visit Flanders uses the strength of Facebook to promote the Flemish Masters-program to cultural & city lovers. We do it by the so-called 'sponsored post.' It is the only way we can reach the right target group in different countries.

The problems started in February of this year when we started promoting the Flemish Masters project.

During the first advertising wave on Facebook different ads were blocked. This reoccurred with each of the three advertisement waves after the first one in February.

Which paintings are being deemed offensive?

Facebook has been blocking masterpieces by the so-called Flemish Masters Peter Paul Rubens, but also the female baroque painter Michaelina Wautier. The most famous work is 'The Descent from the Cross' by Peter Paul Rubens, to be admired in the Cathedral of Our Lady in Antwerp. Another example is Michaelina Wautiers 'The Triumph of Bacchus'. But also paintings with cherubs, buttocks, and breasts are blocked.

What steps were taken to resolve the issues with Facebook?

We followed the proper steps and filled in an appeal form and mailed the Support Team of Facebook.

Who/what has been our contact with Facebook and what has been the outcome to date?

Before the open letter – by VISITFLANDERS and the Flemish art museums – there was no personal contact with Facebook. We tried to contact them multiple times but did not get a reply. The first reaction came after the open letter and press release. Facebook contacted our Peter De Wilde, CEO of VISITFLANDERS, via e-mail.

Is a meeting with Facebook now scheduled, as is being reported?

Yes. At the moment we're looking for a date suitable for both parties. We will invite them for an informal meeting in one of our beautiful museums in Antwerp or Brussels. In the days of the Flemish Masters, paintings were always hung in studies and parlors to stimulate conversation. And what better way to have an elevated discussion about nudity than being immersed in it?

What's our opinion towards Facebook?

We're not against Facebook. In our opinion, Facebook gives us the opportunity to really connect with a whole range of people. That's also why we chose this platform for the international promotion of Flemish Masters. With our video, we playfully want to question why our cultural heritage cannot be spread by this platform.

What's our opinion about naked in social media?

It's not necessarily a discussion about nudity. It's a discussion about cultural heritage having a place in our contemporary world.

What's the message of the video?

Flanders is a unique art destination. And it's impossible to experience all of its artistic richness online. Because we are naturally modest in Flanders, we do not shout out about it often enough. This stunt enables us to make our presence felt and also honor the spirit of Peter Paul Rubens. Even when it's not always possible to admire our Flemish Masters online, you can admire them any time 'full monty' in Flanders, in the actual surroundings where the masterpieces were created for, and where our Flemish Masters lived and worked.