

Artist's social media shut down after 'homophobic' complaints about cartoon nipples



Troels Sommerville · 15:19, Mar 23 2022



SUPPLIED

Oliver Cain has seen his online social media presence scrubbed because of complaints over an image depicting a shirtless man.

[Oliver Cain](#) poured his time, money and soul into building his online presence to sell his artwork, only for it all to be undone by cartoon nipples.

For the past three years the young Auckland artist has been building his online profile and customer base through Instagram, but at the end of February his account was blocked, then disabled, because of a complaint over a painting.

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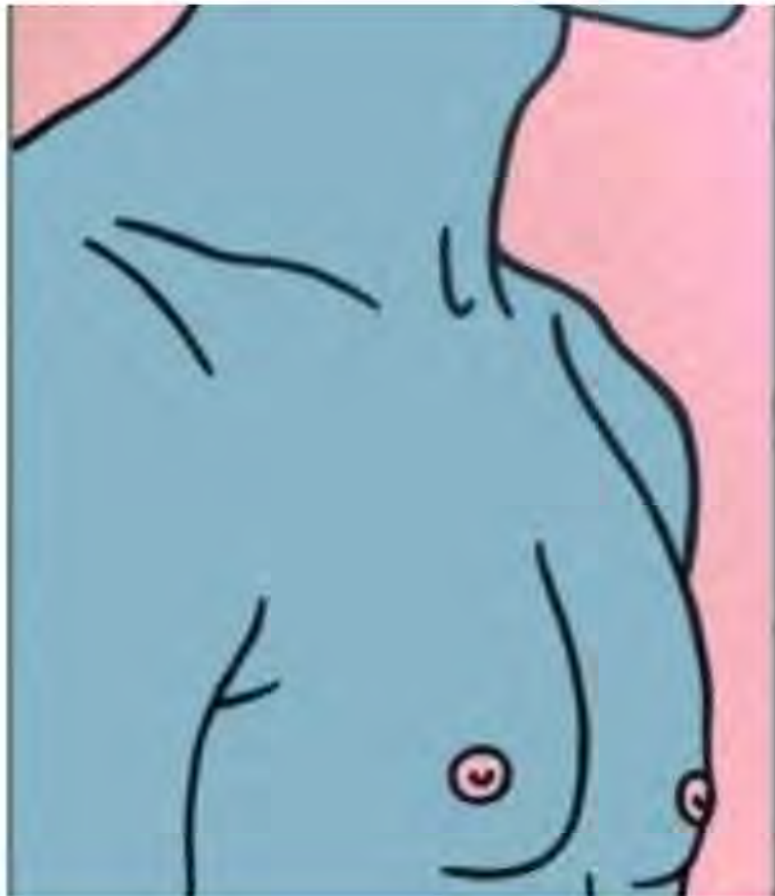
It's caused a lot of frustration for Cain, who has lost both money and access to nearly all of his overseas clients.

"I have lost years of contacts and communication and the development of a loyal community and customer base because of the narrow-mindedness of a few individuals that reported my work," he said.

"It's crazy how it can all just disappear with a snap of the fingers."

The picture at the centre of the drama is a stylised painting of the chest of a man with blue skin and pink nipples.

Cain, who has had no problems in the past, believes the complaints are "homophobic".



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Cain chose the "safest" of his paintings for a sponsored post to avoid any possible pushback.

The painting was part of an exhibition that was set to be part of Auckland Pride celebrating the Rainbow community, before the Omicron outbreak saw festivities canned.

But Cain still went ahead with his exhibition at Ponsonby Central in the centre of the city and decided to pay for a few sponsored posts to draw some attention to it.

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Given the exhibition had a “light homoerotic theme”, Cain decided to choose the “safest” painting, “because I know how some people can be”.

It had all gone swimmingly, until the day before the exhibition closed he got a message saying his account had been blocked because he had been posting offensive content.

“It’s basically because someone reported the post as being nudity, which is mind-blowing when you consider it’s of a person with blue skin,” he said.



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Cain has been working for years to build an online presence as an artist, and has seen it all disappear.

“Compare that to all the other shirtless people on Facebook and Instagram and it doesn't really make sense.”

He has already appealed the decision once and been knocked back, but he is now waiting on a second appeal to try to get his account back.

“I find it ridiculous that there is no help for any issues or problems that come as a result of the service you are paying for.

“Meta [the company that owns Facebook and Instagram] is one big black hole that you throw all your hopes, dreams, and endless hours into with absolutely no way of contacting them.”

Meta has been approached for comment but is yet to respond.

Instagram reinstates queer Auckland artist's page after 'homophobic' complaints ▶

Troels Sommerville · 18:24, Mar 25 2022



Auckland artist Oliver Cain is “glad to be back” on Instagram after the account he had spent years building was taken down because of “[homophobic](#)” [complaints over cartoon nipples](#).

Cain had been locked out of his Facebook and Instagram accounts for nearly a month after posting what he thought was the “safest” piece of art from his latest exhibition.

It was a “nightmare” for the young artist, who lost access to clients and contacts across the globe.

But after *Stuff* ran a story on Wednesday, Cain got the news on Friday his account had been reactivated.

READ MORE:

[* Artist's social media shut down after 'homophobic' complaints about cartoon nipples](#)

“It’s a big relief to get it all back up and running,” he said.

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Cain said it had been a nightmare trying to get in touch with anyone from the social media company, Meta.

Looking back on the whole escapade, Cain said it had “definitely been stressful” and he was happy he could get back to working on his art instead.

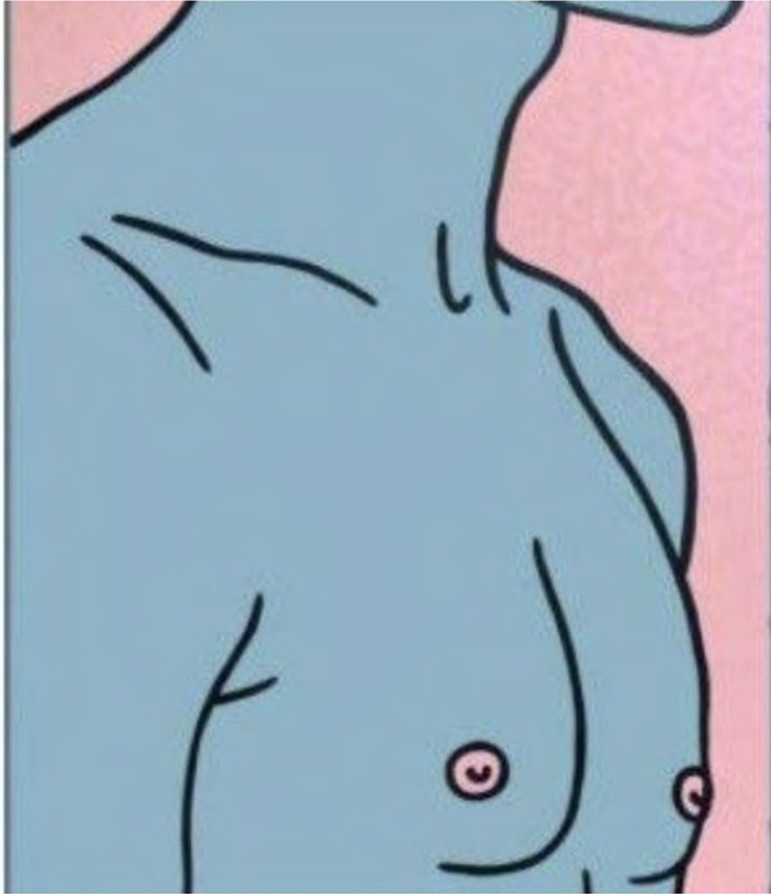
The drama started after he had paid for a sponsored ad on Instagram to advertise his most recent exhibition at Ponsonby Central in Auckland.

There had been positive feedback and a good turn out to the exhibition, celebrating [Auckland Pride](#) and raising money for the [New Zealand AIDS Foundation](#). But on the second to last day he got a message telling his account had been reported for nudity.

The ad for the exhibition featured a heavily stylised painting of the chest of a man, with blue skin and nipples.

Cain said at the time he had picked the least provocative picture because he didn't want to offend anyone, so when his account was shut down he put the complaint down to homophobia.

“Compare that to all the other shirtless people on Facebook and Instagram and it doesn't really make sense,” he said.

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The picture that caused Cain a month of headaches was the safest one, he said.

Yet he was initially knocked back when he tried to appeal the account cancellation, and was left waiting for a response for weeks after he appealed a final time.

Stuff also contacted Meta for comment, but did not receive a response.

But on Friday morning, the good news came through.

Cain said he was now going to try to get his account verified, which he hoped would give him added protection from people who might maliciously report him.

In the meantime he also said he would back up all the contacts he had stored on the account.

FIRST STUFF ARTICLE

SECOND ARTICLE