

THESIS REPORT 2020

Submitted by Anwa Asad

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CHAPTER 1

1.1 KEYWORDS:

Wabi-Sabi, Beauty, subjectivity, objectivity, male beauty, female beauty, beauty through history, cosmetic surgery, aesthetic procedures, feminism, globalization, timeline, capitalism, consumerism, absurdity, game storming, Marco Mori, 3D animations, Foley sounds, projection mapping

1.2 ABSTRACT:

Beauty, being hard to be defined in a phrase or two, is referred to as a combination of different attributes such as color, shape and form that pleases our sense of sight. Owing to the fast speed and accessibility that the modern world offers, social media, consumerism and mass media and their potential to shape people's perception and create events, beauty is, now, more objective than it ever has been. Considering beauty standards, the race is never ending! The standards have never been static or solid.

They have always kept on changing. The fact which can be agreed upon, in this regard is that these standards and trends have always had regional basis but as a consequence of popular culture and internet, the line between the regions and these standards has become quite thin.

Influencers have become the "trend settlers" and people-followers. An important example of which is the popularity that some trends e.g. fuller lips, bigger hips, smaller waists, large eyes and lifted nose have gained.

The social media along with the rise of the cosmetic procedures these trends have normalized being “perfect”. Now cosmetic procedures are not only restricted to the western side, it’s a global thing. Everyone wants to look perfect; this has hit more insecurities than ever. So, in my project I am basically portraying the fact that there is no end to this and how absurd these procedures are! The fact that we are compelled to want to look perfect and how we are not satisfied with what we have and how we look. To show the absurdity of these procedures I am making four grotesque animations on different in-trend cosmetic procedures. And for the execution I am going with projection mapping on the four sides of a big 6 by 6 ft cube in a dark room. In my work scale does matter and I want it to be experiential.

1.3 PASSION:

The base of the topic was a Japanese philosophy I.e. “Wabi-Sabi”. According to philosophy, the Japanese's believes that we should always be happy with what we have, we should not reconstruct it. So after reading the philosophy I thought of a matter about which we all are always unsatisfied or unhappy so “beauty standards” clicked on my mind. As we see that cosmetic procedures and aesthetic clinics¹ are taking rise and

people are becoming more and more insecure about their looks. I am a victim as well , people always make fun of my nose because i have a bumpy nose , i always wanted to change my nose's shape because of the pressure and i feel so bad about it. So I started to question myself: who teaches us that what shape of our features is right and what is ugly ? Who makes these rules ? Who set the standards? So after all these thoughts I decided to work on “Beauty standards” , because now in our surroundings the physical appearance is one of the things people are so worried about. And as a teenager I heard a lot of people always complaining about their color , eyes , nose and hair etc. and it's very disturbing for me now once I have started thinking about it in detail. For me my thesis is the best platform through which I can bring up this issue. For me these standards are just making us go crazy and spreading negative vibes in our society. So I wanted to do deep research on how it started , where it comes from and when this will end?

1.4 PROJECT SCOPE:

I connect to my project on a personal level as well , in my viewpoint appearance is a very important issue for everyone these days. I know these standards are not a very new thing they are from the beginning of mankind but in today's world people are so crazy about them , cosmetic industries and aesthetic clinics¹ are taking full advantage of people's

SIDE NOTES:

1.aesthetic clinics
Are the ones which
Work on the alter-
-ation of the cosme-
-tic appearance.
e.g. excess fat ,
Botox, skin dis-
-coloration.

insecurities. There are very set standards for every feature and every one wants to follow these standards, people are having several surgeries just to achieve their desired look. People are losing their own identities and becoming someone else happily , they don't even realize what they are losing , they are damaging their own self esteem. Humans don't like to take orders or they like to be controlled but in this matter they are unconsciously obeying some one who they don't even know. And after all these questions in my mind i guess that these cosmetic procedures are so absurd and irrational , like we are not content with what we have we always want to change i and even its not promised that the same shape will be the “fashion” of the next year may be the trend will change over night so what we are doing ?. So through my project I just want to highlight my take on these standards and procedures. Like how i feel about them and i want to show my viewers the other side of beauty and that excess of everything is bad. we should not fall for the trap.

1.5 DESIGN STATEMENT:

2.addresses some social
Problem or evil present
In the society.

My thesis proposal is based on adaptive and systemic design². For me the set standards of beauty for example big eyes, fuller lips, lifted nose and perfect waist to hip ratio etc. are one of the biggest problems of today's society because they make us feel bad about our own self and one of the leading causes of depression in youngsters.

I want to show the absurdity of the cosmetic procedures, They promise to make us beautiful but I want to show what they are taking away from us in return I.e. our identities and mental peace. And how it's an ever ending race. Design is the best way to convey such thoughts and ideas, because for me it's easy to express thoughts in visuals than in words. people can relate to them and maybe our work can change someone's way of thinking or may help them.

3.the interaction among
The People, govern-
-ment and companies
is a process called
Globalization.

I feel like due to globalization³ of beauty standards through social media, mass media, literature and consumerism⁴ people are more inclined to follow the standards than ever before.

4.the process of the
Promotion of goods
According to the
Interest of consu-
-mers.

In my project I am talking about the current situation of our world. I know it's not a new topic, people have had several books and papers on this issue but in the 21st century people are so conscious about all their appearance , that it is now becoming toxic at times.

My project specially aims at young people the age group of around 15-35, because in my viewpoint they are the most affected age group. Initially I did my research on males and females both , but afterwards I decided to work on females , but the viewer is not gender specific. Males can also have an idea about the other side of beauty. And they play a major role in breaking this stereotyped , we should try to make it normal that it is okay to be the way you are , it is okay not to reconstruct yourself. When we want to change something in society then it should never be gender specific. Because society is made up of both the genders so together we can solve

the problem and try to make it normal for everyone and try not to pressurize one another.

1.6 TARGET AUDIENCE:

The main target of my project are the youngsters. The audience is not gender specific. The age group is around 15-35 years. I guess the competition is pretty much the same on both genders and the pressure as well but. I want to work on one gender so for that I conducted a session of “game storming”⁵ with my target audience to find the insights, afterwards from the results of the session I decided to work on females, the viewer is not gender specific obviously it is for males as well to show them that the “perfect women” of popular culture is not the only perfect.

5. Game storming is a design research technique to get insights, in this you gather your target audience, design a game, play it with your audience and try to get insights about your concerned matter. For example I played a game similar to that of “who wants to be a millionaire.” And then you conclude the session by a discussion among your audience about the matter.

Chapter 2

2.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

1. Are we losing our own personal identity in becoming or following someone else?
2. What is the end of the “beauty journey”? Is there any end? or are we on a road that has no end?

3. How absurd these cosmetic procedures are? What is their limit?
4. Are we consuming our own selves without even realizing this?
5. Are we the puppets of the unheard people? We are being controlled by our invisible masters.
6. When will we try to normalize the standards of physical appearance?

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK/CONCEPTS:

Before i started doing my research on my topic , earlier I was reading different philosophies for understanding the different structures within the society, Zygmunt Bauman’s: From privacy to publicity, in which he basically says that “the biggest contemporary fear today is, that nothing is in our control”(Bauman, zygmunt) ⁶.he claims that the meaning of privacy is altogether changed for people , today. They are not even private in their alone time, due to globalization through the internet. Then i read the philosophy of Karl Marx, basically his philosophy helps me in understanding the whole structure of consumerism, he focuses on the relationship between the capitalists and the working class, he says “Capital is dead labor, which, vampire-like, lives only by sucking living labor, and lives the more, the more labor it sucks”(Marx,Karl) ⁷. The structure of personality explained by Sigmund Freud, the three stages that

6. Bauman, Zygmunt.
“From
Privacy to Publicity”,
Re: publica 2015.

7.(Marx, Karl). As cited in
(Malone, Tyler.) “The
Zombies of Karl Marx:
Horror in Capitalism’s
Wake”

are “Id, ego and superego”.according to him the things we hear in our childhood had their impact on us, the entire life. Then the theory of “Panopticon” by Michel Foucault, “Knowledge linked to power, not only assumes the authority of 'the truth' but has the power to make itself true. All knowledge, once applied in the real world, has effects, and in that sense at least, 'becomes true.' Knowledge, once used to regulate the conduct of others, entails constraint, regulation and the disciplining of practice. Thus, 'there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time, power relations”

*(Foucault, Micheal) (1977)*⁸.” “The Panopticon was a metaphor that allowed Foucault to explore the relationship between 1.) systems of social control and people in a disciplinary situation and, 2.) the power-knowledge concept. In his view, power and knowledge comes from observing others. It marked the transition to a disciplinary power, with every movement supervised and all events recorded.”(*Mason, K.Moya*).

So while reading these philosophies i came across a Japanese philosophy Wabi-Sabi,the crux of the philosophy is that we should make most of our life no matter what , our life is not perfect but enjoying those imperfections and living our perfectly imperfect life to the fullest.As there is a saying that “Life isn’t perfect, of course, but we all know it’s how you react to things that counts.”,(*Donovan , Landon.*)⁹ . Wabi-Sabi encourages us to focus on the blessings hiding in our daily lives, and

8.Foucault, Micheal (1977) as cited in (Mason, K.Moya) . “Foucault and His Panapcticon”

9.(Donovan, Landon) as cites in (Oppong, Thomas) “Wabi-Sabi: The Japanese Philosophy For a Perfectly Imperfect Life”

10. (Oppong, Thomas)
“Wabi-Sabi: The Japanese
Philosophy For a Perfectly
Imperfect Life”

celebrating the way things are rather than how they should

be. (Oppong, Thomas.)¹⁰ (2018). Similarly Richard Powell in his book

“*Wabi-Sabi simple*” mentioned that wabi-sabi is “a way of life that

appreciates and accepts complexity while at the same time values

simplicity,”¹¹ what does Wabi-Sabi say about rebuilding yourself ? So

according to Mike Sturm “Embracing wabi-sabi is as easy (or as difficult)

as understanding and accepting yourself — imperfections and all. It’s

about being compassionate with yourself as you are, and building on

whatever that is — not feverishly trying to rebuild yourself in order to

pose as something else entirely”. (Sturm, Mike.)¹² so i decided to work on

this philosophy and linked it with the current biggest problem i.e. Beauty

Standards. And the early philosophers help me to understand the structure

of society like consumerism and privacy after the invention of internet and

globalization, and contemporary meaning of privacy, and the different

personality structure like the childhood memory had an impact on us like

if we make fun of a child’s appearance it will have an impact on it

throughout his life, and the fear of surveillance and observation, the fear

of continuously looking perfect on social media platforms because we are

under observation all the time so we act accordingly , i linked all these

thoughts with my topic i.e. beauty standards .The topic addresses a very

serious problem found in our society today, the competition of looking

“perfect” and “beautiful”, the constant race of achieving beauty standards

of popular culture or what the media portrays. There is always a

11. (Powell, Richard.)
“Wabi-Sabi simple.”

12. (Sturm, Mike) as cited
in (Oppong, Thomas)
“Wabi-Sabi: The Japanese
Philosophy For a Perfectly
Imperfect Life”

competition going on between everyone , who is more beautiful or handsome and who will get the “approval” of the society. This competition is not healthy, it's just making us more and more insecure about our own selves and this all is due to the globalization of the beauty standard. So if we talk about this in detail what are the main ways through which the trends are transferred in the whole world, the main source in the internet. The social media platforms, everything is just a click away. Today if we see our social accounts we will see a lot of beauty bloggers. Everyone is promoting beauty standards. A Lot of youngsters are inspired by this and they have started their own youtube channel about fashion and beauty. On instagram or even on facebook you can follow any celebrity or public figure, and after following them on social platforms people start to follow them in real life , they want to look like them, they want to have the lifestyle and even they want to follow the same routine. Why do we want to be someone else? Why can't we be ourselves? Youtube, instagram, facebook, twitter or even snapchat are making us go crazy about these beauty trends. Today it doesn't even matter if you follow such pages or not they will continuously show ads related to fashion or beauty. People today want a huge number of followers on their social accounts just to feel secure that people acknowledge them and that they are “beautiful”.

Social media has a very huge role in the rise of the beauty standards and trends, but Media is also playing its part “properly”. Every channel, every

drama or movie has the same standard of hiring their casts. You will see the same features, same skin colour, same body shape in almost every drama or series. And the sad part is that if they have to make fun of a character, they will hire a person with the opposite qualities. For example they will hire a girl with dark skin or a girl with a healthy body , so they can make fun of that character.They are humiliating us in a way, they are showing us that if you do not have a fair skin color then please be ready for hate or negative comments. They are playing with our minds. And we are not even realizing this. They show us a perfect picture and sell their product, but what we are consuming is affecting our life in a very negative way. Media is a very powerful platform and it is in reach of many people. Media can help in normalizing the situation,eliminating the discrimination on physical apperance.

it's okay to have acne, because a lot of teenage girls have polycystic ovary syndrome due to which they have a lot of problems like they gain weight, they have facial hair and they have acne. So what should they do ? feel low about themselves? When we will make it normal to have a healthy body because people have serious medical conditions as well. As the same goes for males as well, a lot of boys can not grow a beard, it's not that they are not okay.Some boys have a very slim structure, no matter how much gym they do , they do not have a muscular body and it's fine.Every boy can not be 6ft tall , it's not under anyone's control and it's not a matter of death and life so we should stop making it one.

Who is selling all these ideas? Who is controlling our minds? In my viewpoint, consumerism (promoting a product as per consumer's interest) plays a major role in treating us as puppets, they sell their products by portraying a "perfect" scenario. As the beauty industry felt that people are getting more conscious about their physical appearance they took full advantage of that insecurity. They began to make products and cosmetics of beauty along with make-up. today We have lip plumpers , face lift tape and nose up lifter bridge etc. these all are beauty tools , used to enhance our features. They are new in the market because the manufacturers of beauty products found a good opportunity, because they knew people are gonna buy these products. Then after that when we talk about make-up, we have local make-up as well as imported make-up but the imported one is so expensive that a lot of people couldn't even afford it, so what does the market do? They started making dupe make-up products. For example "Huda Beauty" is a makeup brand by "Huda Kattan", she is a beauty blogger and a makeup artist. Her makeup is really expensive in Pakistan so what our market does is , it started producing the dupes of Huda Beauty, and people are happily buying them despite the fact that they are of low quality and not even good for skin. The rise of consumerism is basically because of capitalism¹³ , everyone is just selling their product for their own profit, everyone wants to earn money without even realising that what they are selling. Has capitalism really made us free? In my viewpoint I think no, because we are still being controlled by others.

13. an economic system in which industries and import export of a country is under the control of the private owners and for their profit interest rather than the state.

manufacturers of the cosmetic industries still using us for their own personal interest. So what are we, puppets? Consumerism is not just limited to the manufacturing of cosmetic products but the development of beauty apps for example the “youcam makeup” or “Retrica” etc. are also a part of consumer culture. Today we have a lot of photo editing apps, who is being benefited by them ? we are not, of course.

“We are governed, our minds are molded, our tastes are formed, our ideas suggested, largely by men we have never heard of.” (Bernays, Edward.) ¹⁴

14. (Bernays, Edward.)
“Propaganda” (1928)

Then under the umbrella of Consumerism I would like to talk about the most important fact that is advertisement, how the market showcase their products, and if we are talking about advertisement, we should definitely talk about the philosophy of Male Gaze, so in simple words male gaze is basically the misogyny found in the cinema, where they use women as objects for pleasing males. They sexually portray women for making their male viewer happy. they show what the males want to see. And they treat women as a tool. The theory was stated by a feminist film theorist from Britain Laura Mulvey, she said that “the gender power asymmetry is a controlling force in cinema and constructed for the pleasure of the male viewer, which is deeply rooted in patriarchal ideologies and discourses.”

15. (Mulvey, Laura) as cited in (Sampson, Racheal) “Film Theory 101 – Laura Mulvey: The Male Gaze Theory”

(Mulvey, Laura.) ¹⁵The male gaze is not only limited to cinema some theorists said that they have observed the objectification of women in advertisements as well. For example if we take a campaign of a Gucci

16. (Mulvey, Laura) as cited in (Sampson, Racheal) "Film Theory 101 – Laura Mulvey: The Male Gaze Theory"

perfume for men, we will notice that there will always be a sexually portrayed girl in the ads or on the posters. Why? Just to sell the product, just to attract men. Every perfume for men has girls in their ads. It's not just about perfumes, we can also see such type of advertisement where sex or representation of a girl sexually have nothing to do with the product being sold. Mulvey said "it is just to please the heterosexual male, rendering it a movie with touches of irrelevant objectification and misogyny." (Mulvey, Laura.)¹⁶ the women they cast in a movie or they hire for an ad they all are of the same form and structure. They all have a very thin waist, big boobs and "perfect facial features", they all are somehow the same. Every male in society has a very certain and a "perfect" image of a girl in their mind and due to which there is always a race of becoming better.

So after male gaze let's talk about female gaze. The female gaze is the opposite of the male gaze. Conceptually the female gaze is equal to that of male gaze, which means that when women objectifies a person, or even objectifies themselves through the perspective of a male. But some theorists believe that there is no such thing as a female gaze and if it is then there's not enough evidence on which they can analyse the female gaze. But some theorists suggest that the female gaze is just a woman working behind the camera, and to see a world through a woman's lens. In my viewpoint I guess there is a female gaze as well. We see a very specific kind of males in an advertisement or even in movies especially in

the leading role. They all are very “tall,dark and handsome”,they have a very muscular toned body.

Now if we are talking about beauty and standards of beauty so one should definitely talk about the movement of Feminism. Feminism in simple words is a movement to advocate the right of women and the equality of sexes. The movement was started in the 29th and early 20th century.

Basically the movement focuses on the rights and freedom of women.

And there were a lot of events related to female beauty and fashion. In

17. (Woolf, Virginia) ,
(1929)

“A Room of One’s Own”

1929 in “A Room of One’s Own” Virginia Woolf said that “what is your relation to the ever changing and turning world of gloves and shoes.”(woolf,virginia) ¹⁷ . Similarly during the campaigns of the

18.(Marcus, Garvey) as
cited in (Lengel, Laura) ,(
Warren John) “Casting
Gender: Women and
Performance in
Intercultural Context.”

movement some of the Black leaders criticized the ones who wanted to have white skin they said “why does she wanted to improve her appearance, why not herself.” Marcus Garvey said “ don't remove the kinks from your hair, remove them from your hair.” (Garvey,Marcus)

¹⁸.in the early 20th century cosmetics became a form of self expression.

Zelda Fitzgerald said “paint and powder were a way for women to choose

19.(Fitzgerald, Zelda) as
cited in (L.Rohde,
Deborah) “The Beauty
Bias: The Injustice of
Appearance in Life and
Law”

their destinies to be successful competitors in the great game of life.”

(Fitzgerald, Zelda) ¹⁹.in the early 20th century the lip rouge was used as a

symbol for women's right and women began to wear it in public rallies.

There were total 3 waves in the movement, in the first wave some of the

activists tried to link dress reform with feminism so for this sake in 1851

Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Amelia Bloomer launched a crusade for

replacing corsets. There was a rise of functional fashion. In the 2nd wave of feminism some women protested against the Miss America Pageant and boycotted it in 1968. There were “Freedom trash cans” in the campaigns, women discarded their bras in them and other items which they thought were signs of oppression. 2nd movement was more about the liberation of women like it became normal for women to not shave their legs and unadorned faces were the sign of freedom, and liberation. In 1990 some activists labeled themselves as third wave feminists. The 3rd wave of feminism was about encouraging sexual agencies. Sexualized clothing was in trend, punk rock was normal at that time, shave heads and green color was a trend at that time. Every wave of feminism has its own theories and ideas. But even now in the 21st century are we free? Do we enjoy freedom? In my viewpoint, no. We are not free, we are still under the same pressure. Facing the same problems regarding beauty and fashion. We have to free ourselves, otherwise no one's gonna do that for us. We treat our own self as objects. As the famous feminist Simone De Beauvoir said “So every female human being is not a woman, she must take part in a mysterious endangered reality known as femininity.” (*Beauvoir, Simone*)²⁰. Another saying of Simone De Beauvoir is “Women are nothing other than what man decides.” (*Beauvoir, Simone*). And other famous feminist Bell Hooks said “who cares about white folks in the segregated time.” (*Hooks, Bell*)²¹. Bell Hooks is a black woman

20. (Simone, Beauvoir) as cited in (Longhofer, Wesley) (Winchester, Daniel) “Social Theory Re-Wired: New Connections to Classical and Contemporary”

21. (Hooks, Bell) as cited in (Quick, Kimberly) (D. Kahlenberg, Richard) “Attacking the Black-White Opportunity Gap That Comes from Residential Segregation.”

.People often think that she is again feminine beauty but she was not against it, but she wants people to realize that it's okay to have dark skin, and one should not look down upon them. Today we think that make-up gives us confidence and it is a source of freedom of expression but make is not liberating us as much as we think it is.

Globalization of beauty through social media ,consumerism, capitalism, male gaze, female gaze, media, literature is the real cause of the problem. Because even in our romantic novels we have a very “perfect” imaginary girl.everything is selling the same idea. Despite making things normal and making the lives of people easy they are complicating it. No one knows the end of this road, and in my viewpoint this road will never end.

2.3 A) LITERATURE REVIEW:

The base of the topic is the Japanese Philosophy, “Wabi-Sabi”.After learning about this Japanese Philosophy , I started questioning my own self. What are the things we are unhappy about ? What are the things we want to change continuously ? and in my viewpoint in this era the thing

about which we are most concerned is our physical appearance. people continuously try to rebuild or reconstruct themselves.

I started with a question: “what is beauty?” The basic definition of beauty according to the *Dictionary* is “a combination of qualities, such as shape, colour, or form, that pleases the aesthetic senses, especially the sight”.

And similarly according to *Merriam-Webster* beauty is “The quality of being physically attractive”. according to Segan Garuba-Okelarín “beauty

22.(Okelarín,Segan,Garuba), “What Is Beauty? And What's Your Definition of Your Beauty?”

comes from within, you are beauty and beauty is you. You are the masterpiece—a work of art. there is only one you made up of your genes and life experiences” (*Okelarín,Segan,Garuba*). (2018)²². In one of his articles he says that today we see beauty through a fogged up mirror. He says “the mirror has been fogged up by different life experiences and memories as we grow up and now we have blended together to form our own definition of beauty.” According to him, the first mirror was formed when we were in our childhood. The comments we used to listen to when we were children, the comments our parents used to pass on us or even the people around us used to say about us or about others, about their appearance. The second mirror is the mirror formed when we were in our teenage, when we were thrust into the world, like during our teenage we go to school and college. That is the beginning of our social life, we meet new people, we absorb new ideas and thoughts everyday. We meet people of our own age and discuss various things and that is where we begin to make our own definition of everything. And then comes the final mirror.

The final mirror is by the socially constructed ideas of beauty, what the society thinks about beauty. The media, social media and popular culture etc. plays a vital role in forming our final mirror. We always compare ourselves with the standards they have set for us. They are the standard of measurements for us. And after all these experiences we force ourselves to accept that only a certain type of people are beautiful. And we make beauty as a very objective thing and we use ourselves as objects. Another saying by Segan Garuba-Okelarín is “I believe beauty is acceptance of yourself, perceived flaws and all, realise that they are the part of you and they make you, you. It's a radiance of spirit”.²³

23.(Okelarín, Segan, Garuba), “What Is Beauty? And What's Your Definition of Your Beauty?”

A Lot of people claim that beauty is subjective and everyone perceives beauty in a very unique manner, in my viewpoint I guess globally we say beauty is subjective but if we see the matter on a very personal level we treat beauty as a very objective thing. If a person has a dark skin so we will make fun of him/her, why? because it is rooted in our mind. Who does that with us? we treat beauty as an objective thing without realising that we are treating our own selves as objects. Because according to Neil Van Leeuwen “objective is whose claim is determined by the object and subjective is whose truth is based on the subjective experience” *Leeuwen, Neil, Van. (2016)*²⁴. According to Razib Khan “we usually say that beauty is subjective and culturally constructed especially explanation the “Eurocentric Westren” beauty standards, as if they are unique.”²⁵ beauty standards are malleable and vary across time and place we can not

24.(*Leeuwen, Neil, Van*) ““BEAUTIFUL” AND THE METAPHYSICS OF BEAUTY” (2016)

25.(Khan, Razib) “Beauty is objective & subjective” (2012)

guarantee that that we consider as beautiful in 2019 , will be considered beautiful in 2020 as well may be the beauty of 2020 will be totally different from that of 2019. It's a never ending road and a never ending race.

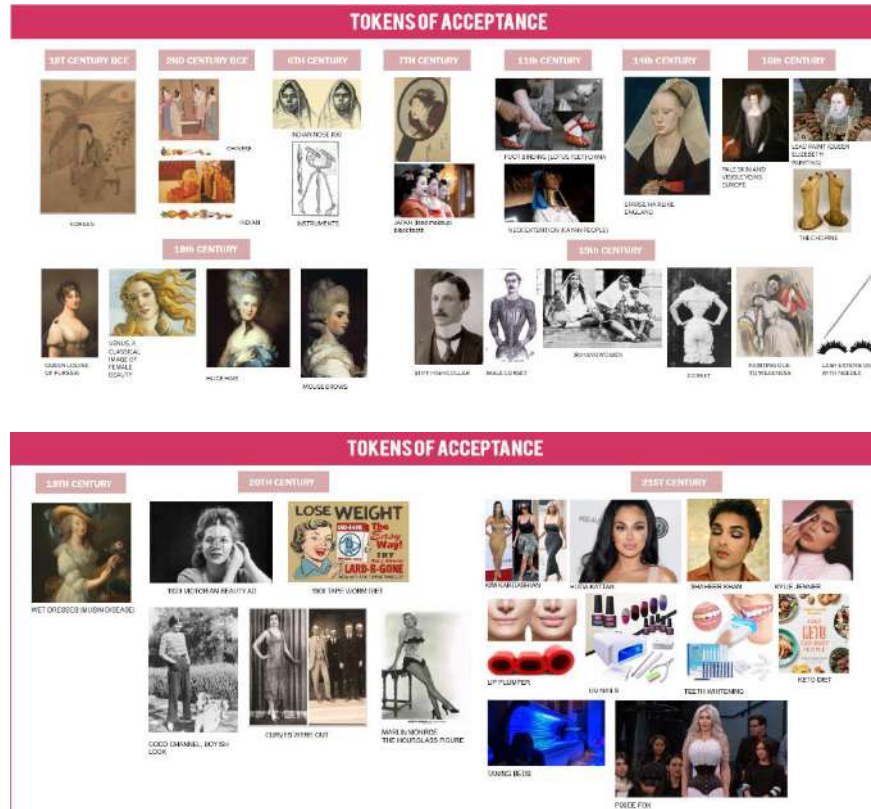
Beauty standards are not a very new thing , people are following these standards from the beginning of mankind, it's just that the standards vary from one region or era to another. For example people of the Kayan Tribe used to believe that long giraffe necks are beautiful, and for that purpose they used to wear long neck rings. Similarly in the 10th century there was a practice of binding feet in China because Lotus feet were considered beautiful there. Teeth blackening was considered beautiful in Japan. The practice was called Ohaguro. As the time passes the trends have changed and due to the technology advancements the ways have been changed.and one more interesting thing is that in old times every region or era or even tribe has its own signs of beauty. But today due to globalization the line has become very thin. In today's world everyone follows a very particular set of standards. Mainly they are transferred from the West to the rest of the world and people follow them. even if we see the standards of Korea today they are very much similar to that of the West: bigger eyes, fuller lips and thin lifted nose. I guess the boundaries are blurred but the pressure has increased a lot. The pressure is not only on females but on males as well, if we talk about male beauty the first thing that comes in our mind is the body shape the muscles and then the beard and

moustaches etc. even their hairstyles. standards are for both the genders.the whole society is suffering from.

If we talk about the cosmetic procedures then they are not a new invention of the 21st century , cosmetic procedures were being followed in the 6th century as well, “Shushtara” is the father of Indian surgery, used to perform skin drafting in the 6th century. Hindus did the first surgery of nose , reconstruction of nose in 600 BC by 1000 AD many other surgeons performed it as well. Then in the 16 th century Gaspare Tagliacozzi did nose drafting by taking a piece of skin from the under arm. In 1798 Pierre DeSault of Greece named the surgeon as “Plastikos”, which means molding. By the 19th century cosmetic surgery had become easy by the invention of anesthesia. And then after that in 1923 US performed a modern nose job and in 1931 they performed the first face lift. The only difference is that now they are more advanced and easily accessible.we have very advanced and new technology and procedures. We have tanning beds, face slimming tapes, fuller lips cups and liquid nose jobs. If we go back to 2015 people were not so into cosmetic or aesthetic procedures. But today every area even in Pakistan has an aesthetic clinic who does Botox, nose jobs and implants. Why is it so ? because people are now more into them. And cosmetic industries and clinics are taking full advantage of it. I am not against the invention for sure it is a very useful invention. At times people get injured or people get into an accident ,

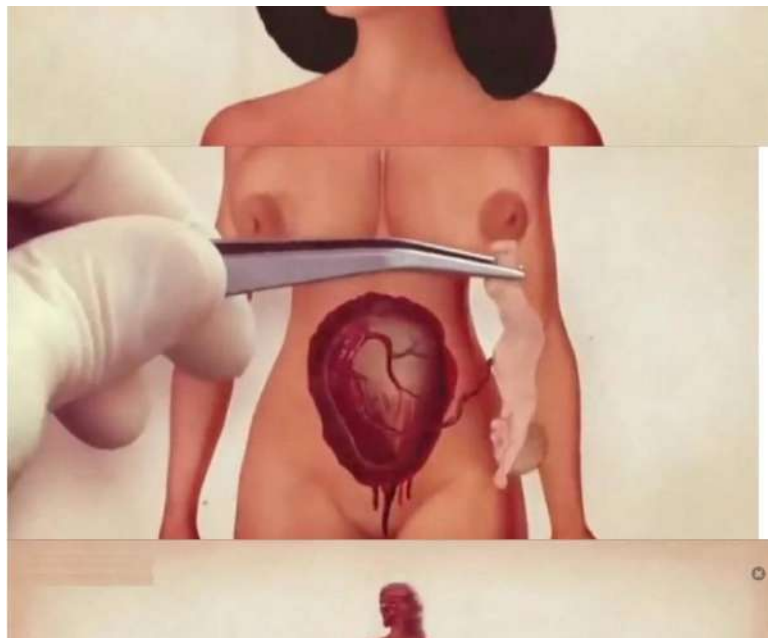
cosmetic procedures are a life savior for them. But today people are following them just to fulfill the standards of beauty.

As I mentioned before, the procedures are being followed by the beginning of mankind, and for me they are absurd from the beginning. I made a timeline of beauty through history:



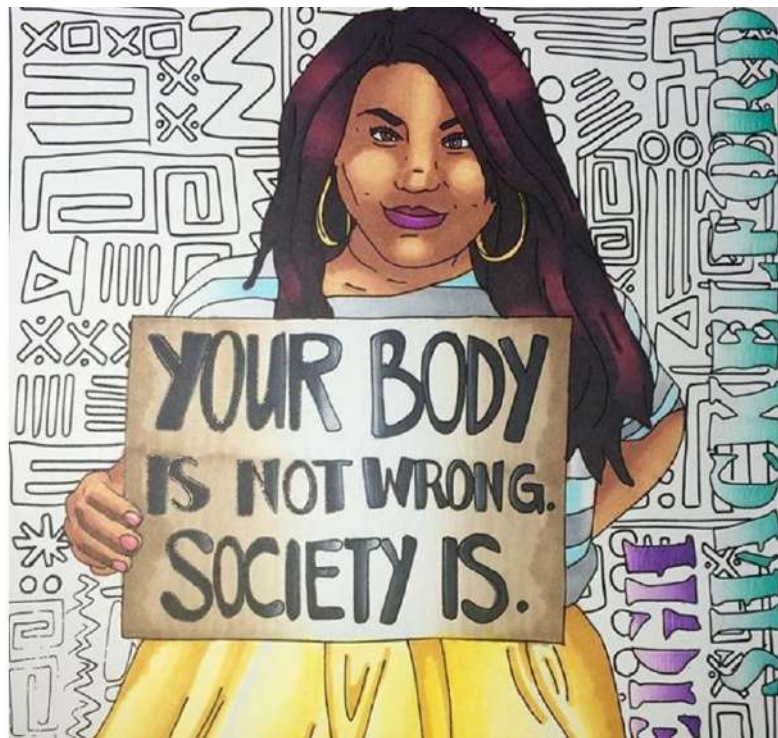
From this timeline we have a basic idea that only the ways and standards are changing but the pressure remains the same. the conclusion is that “the cosmetic procedures are very absurd”, and that there is no end to them. We are on a road that has no end and it haunts me like when will we be satisfied or happy? Or we can just dream about it? Losing our identity and following someone else is what we want?

2.4 B) VISUAL REFERENCES:



Fredric

Doazan , short animation film titled as "*Supervenus*"',in the animation he showed the absurdity of Westren beauty standards.



A Canadian artist, *Allison Tunis* , made a book that combines art therapy , an inclination for adult coloring books and the body positivity

movement. The name of the book was *“Body Love: A fat activism coloring book.”*





Jessica Ledwich, a Melbourne based photographer, made a series known as “*Monstrous Feminine*”, in which she portrayed the peculiar beauty standards of the contemporary world.

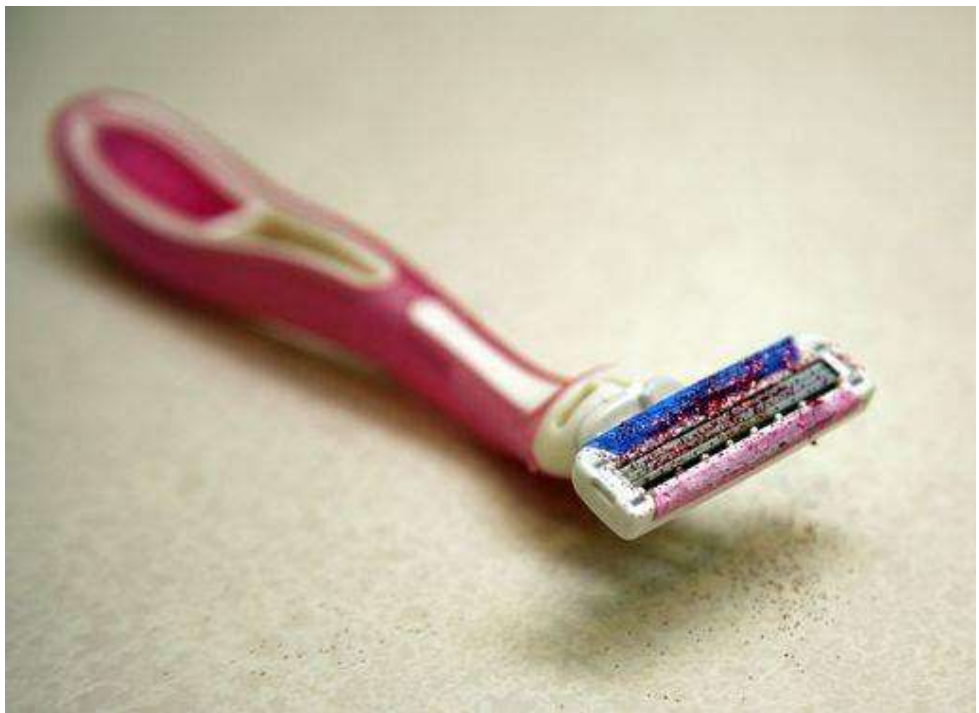


Anna

Utopia Giordano, series of photoshopped images titled as “*Venus*”. In the series she photoshopped the classical paintings according to the beauty standards of the contemporary world.



Paola Kudacki's , "*Plasticity*" is a photographed series of an American model Leila Goldkuhl wrapped in a nylon and trying to escape, questions our chase for "perfection."



Hannah Altman, created a series of pictures titled as “And Everything Nice”, in which she expresses the biological expressions of a woman's body like crying and bleeding etc, she replaced it with glitter.

3.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS EXPLAINED:

So what do i actually mean by saying that we are losing our own personal identities, in the present era, people try to completely change themselves for example Pixie Fox, who is known as a human doll had over 200 cosmetic surgeries to become like a doll , she is inspired by barbie, so she wanted to look like one, she spent £500,000 on her surgeries.where is her own personality or identity ?has it not faded away ? people today just know her as a human doll.Similarly Rodrigo Alves known as Human Ken Doll had spent more than \$750,000 for 72 cosmetic surgeries. He had severe medical problems after the procedures. But still the craze of becoming “Ken”had forced him to do so. A lot of people get inspired by different celebrities or public figures and they decide to look exactly like them. So who are you? A dupe of a person ?

My second concern was when this will end ? Will it ever end ? In my opinion the journey of “perfection” has no end because people are following these trends since the 1st century BCE and today here we are in the 21st century, still following the beauty trends. And the more sad news is that they are going to change after some time. Like for example may be in 2012 we follow a very specific shape of eyebrows and the style of doing make-up but now in 2020 we have completely changed look form that of 2012. These trends will always be evolving and they have no limit, we have to control our own selves, we should not fall in the trap. Because this is definitely a trap for us. Once we will start following them then there is no going back.

My third concern basically questions the absurdity of the cosmetic procedures. Once on Reddit a plastic surgeon states some of the most peculiar surgeries people have asked him to perform, he said “I once had a parent call to make an appointment for her son. She was Korean and claimed her son wanted Asian eyelid surgery (to make an extra fold to look more Caucasian)²⁶. He was only seven!” isn't it strange? Like from the very beginning of our life we have learned to reconstruct ourselves and to never be happy , the way we are. Lips fille, breast implants , nose jobs, botox and face lifting are very popular procedures. People have serious medical issues after the surgeries , like after an implant there is a very high risk of getting breast cancer. And even it affects your back bone as well. If we talk about the fillers , the medical complications related to the fillers like , asymmetry of the lips, swelling and bruising, infection, tissue loss and ulceration of lips. excess of everything is bad. New, more shocking new inventions of the cosmetic industry are Bokerface so for this procedure you have to pay £400 so make your face completely absent of any expression , like a doll. Ball ironing makes your testicles look youthful. Cinderella surgery, this is a very strange procedure, the bones of your feet will be broken in order to feel the pain wearing the high heels. The 'Kim Kardashian' this is basically just swapping our whole self with that of a celebrity. I mentioned a few of them and the list is very long.They promise to make us “perfect” “flawless” and “beautiful” , but in my opinion they are making us full of flaws.

Cosmetic procedures are a very big risk and people just take the risk without a second thought, because their looks matter a lot to them.

CHAPTER 3

3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY+ DATA SOURCE/S:

Initially I did qualitative research. Because in the beginning I had a lot of questions in my mind and the topic of beauty standards in itself is very vast and has a lot of branches. So I want to be more specific and in order to find my area of interest I began to do desktop research. Initially I began my research from understanding the society and how it works, for that cause I read different philosophies I came across. Wabi-Sabi, the philosophy, was the main turning point in my thesis because after reading that, I decided to work on Beauty Standards. And these early philosophers help me in linking my idea and creating a solid base for my arguments. I just continued to do research on my own topic. So I can have a better understanding of my topic and I can have different viewpoints on it, because I don't want to be biased, and I want to find the main focus point. Qualitative research was the main source of information for me. but on the other side I keep on observing the people around me, and I keep on talking

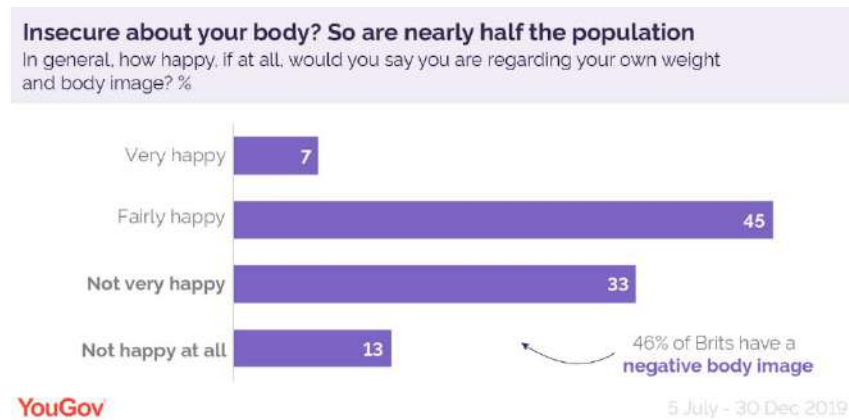
about my topic with my fellows to get their viewpoint because i guess they are my main target audience. I began to keenly observe how people pass bad comments on each other's appearance and make fun of each other. We are the real culprits. Even during our routine life sometimes, I got a lot of insights for my project. i was looking up for some case studies or a collected data related to my topic as well so i found some :

1. “Ipsos poll conducted in America from January 3rd to 5th in 2018 , it was on the behalf of RiverMend Health. 1,004 adults ages 18 from Washington, Hawaii and Alaska were interviewed online. The report is written by “Chris Jackson”, *Vice President, US, Public Affairs*. “Marie-Pierre Lemay” *Senior Account Manager, US, Public Affairs*. The poll was basically conducted because “many people report feeling unhappy about their looks and body”. So in the online interview they were asked different questions related to the problems”.

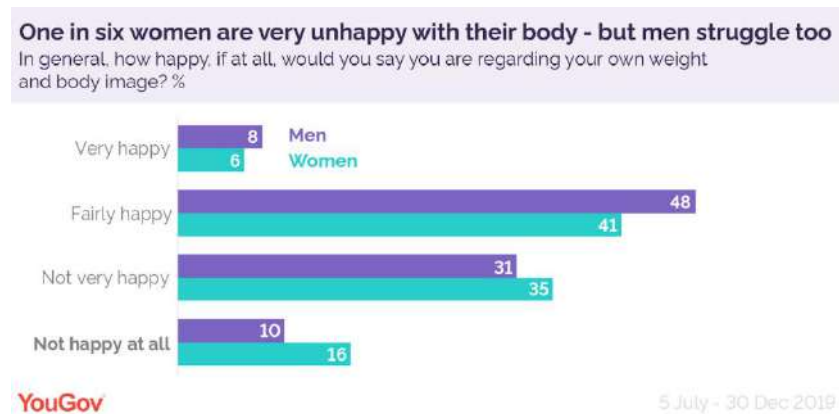
“Dissatisfied with their bodies : women (83% vs. 74% of men), younger adults (86% of those ages 18-34 vs. 75% of those 55+), and those with a college degree (82% vs. 75% of those with no college degree). (*Jackson, Chris*) (*Lemay, Marie, Pierre*) (2018).

<https://www.ipsos.com/en-us/news-polls/most-americans-experience-feeling-dissatisfied-with-body-looks-from-time-to-time>

2. Eir Nolsoe is a data journalist conducted a study with the help of yougov.co.uk , a data tracker on how many people are :



<https://yougov.co.uk/topics/overview/trackers>



<https://yougov.co.uk/topics/overview/trackers>

3. There are studies on the increase cases of cosmetic procedures:

A case study by ASPS(American Society of Plastic Surgeons)

President Dr. Alan Matarazzo

“The ASPS reported that the top five procedures in 2018 were:

Breast augmentation — 313,735 procedures.

Liposuction — 258,558 procedures.

Nose reshaping — 213,780 procedures.

Eyelid surgery — 206,529 procedures.

Tummy tuck — 130,081 procedures.

Breast augmentation and liposuction rose by 4 and 5 percent respectively from 2017”.

According to the study 18 million people underwent cosmetic procedures by 2018 in America. A quarter and a million more than 2017.

4. Similarly according to ISAPS (International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery) *INTERNATIONAL SURVEY ON AESTHETIC/COSMETIC PROCEDURES, 2018.*

“surgical procedures worldwide absolute numbers and changes compared to 2017:

1. Breast Augmentation 1,862,506 procedures +6,1% 2.

Liposuction 1,732,620 procedures +9,2% 3. Eyelid Surgery

1,099,960. Abdominoplasty 888,712 procedures +9,7% 5.

Rhinoplasty 726,907

nonsurgical procedures worldwide absolute numbers and changes compared to 2017.

1. Botulinum Toxin 6,097,516 procedures +17,4% 2. Hyaluronic

Acid 3,729,833 procedures +11,6% 3. Hair Removal 916,869.

Non-Surgical Fat Reduction 473,316. Photo Rejuvenation
436,656". *ASPS (American Society of Plastic Surgeons)*

<https://www.isaps.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/ISAPS-Global-Survey-Results-2018-new.pdf>

After these case studies and my research on different thoughts on beauty standards , my idea was funneling down. Now my main focus was on the cosmetic procedures. And why they are increasing and on their absurdity. But now the problem was whether I should work on both the genders or on females or males , I personally wanted to work on one gender whether male or female. So without being biased i conducted a “Game storming session” with the males of age 15 to 25 to get the insight that whether the pressure is more on the males or females.

Age group: 15-25

Gender: males

Question: whether the pressure is more on males or females?

Result: the pressure is more on the females.

So, after that session I decided that I will work on females for now.

I have a pretty much clear concept now and my idea was somehow locked up, I have decided to work on the cosmetic procedures and their absurdity.

I was doing my visual research side by side as you can refer to them in the section of “Visual Reference”. I noticed that the work on beauty standards are somehow similar to one another, addressing the contemporary standards.

CHAPTER 4

EXECUTION

4.1 MEDIUM OF PRESENTATION+ PRE-PRODUCTION:

When I started visualizing my project, I decided to make 3D animations. But I want to make them absurd or bizarre so I got inspiration from a German artist Marco-Mori, his work was not particularly on beauty but his work is very grotesque at times. So, I decided to make something similar on my topic.

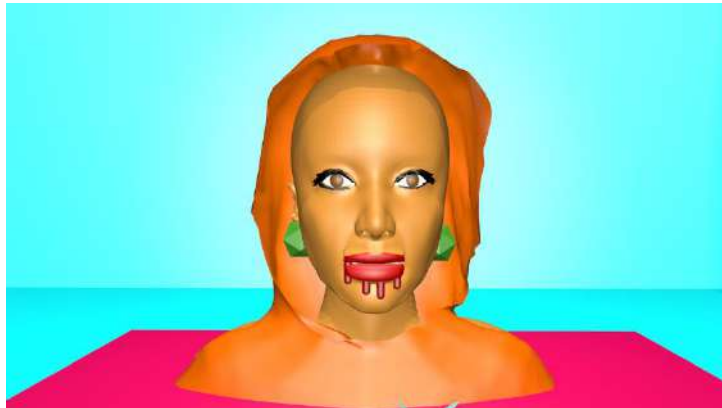




Work of *Marco-Mori*.

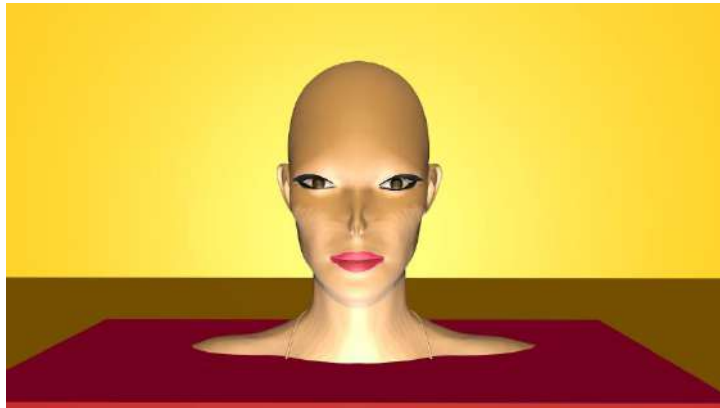
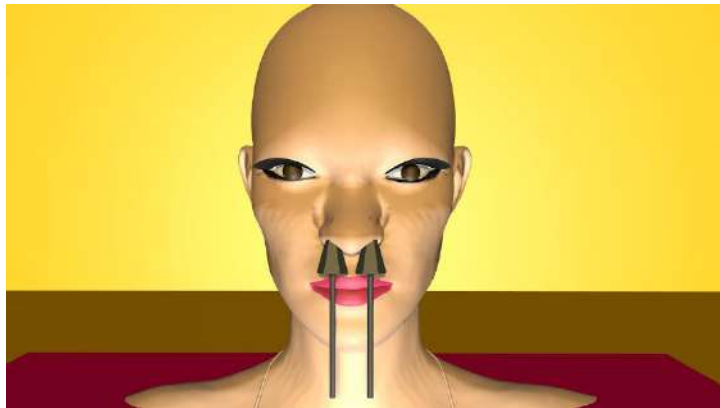
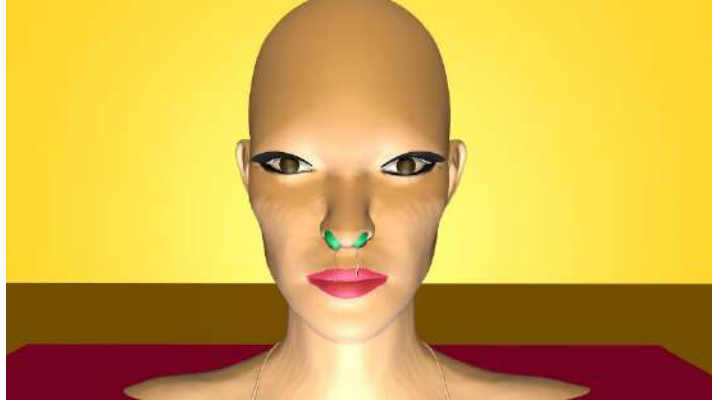
I worked on the same idea in my 7th semester as well. First, I chose the procedures about which I want to make the animations then after that I physically sketched my storyboards and wrote their scripts and concepts. in my 7th semester I worked on lip fillers, nose jobs, body modification etc. in the fillers animation the bees come out from the mouth of the women and do her Botox treatment on the lips. In the nose job one the arrows from the surroundings pop the balloons in her nose and her nose shrinks. Similarly, in the body modification one the whole body is enclosing in the container and takes shape accordingly. Basically, all these animations show the absurdity and how we consume our own selves in fulfilling the wishes others have planted in our mind. and after writing down the concepts and locking down the story boards I started doing my digital 3D work. I used

cinema 4D for 3D animations and modelling. Here are some still renders of my previous animations.



Lip Filler's

animation (still renders)



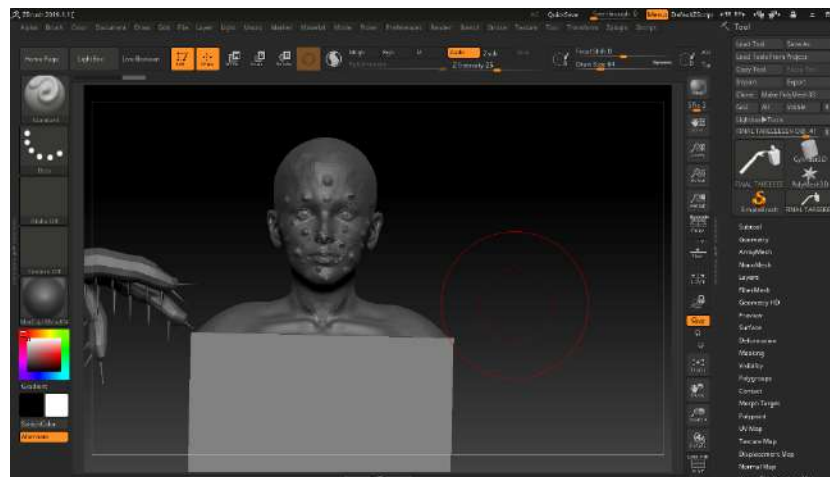
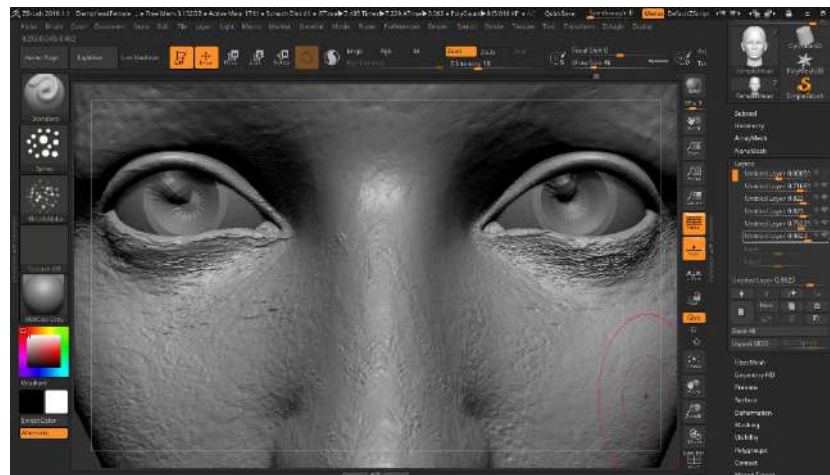
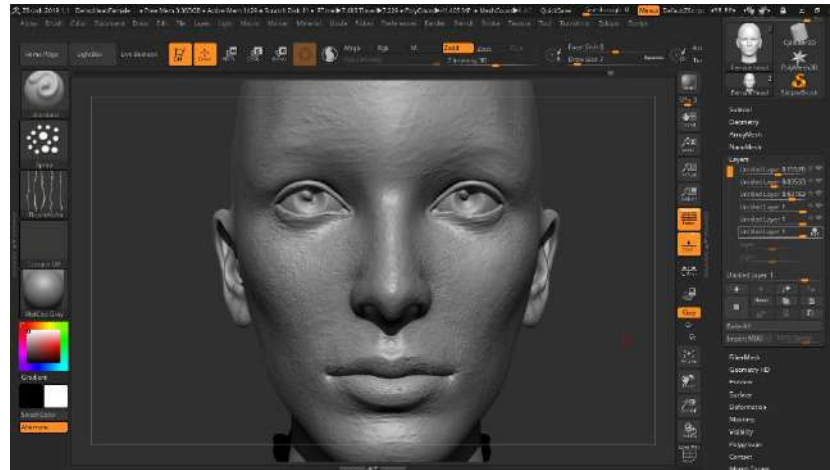
Nose job's

animation (still render)

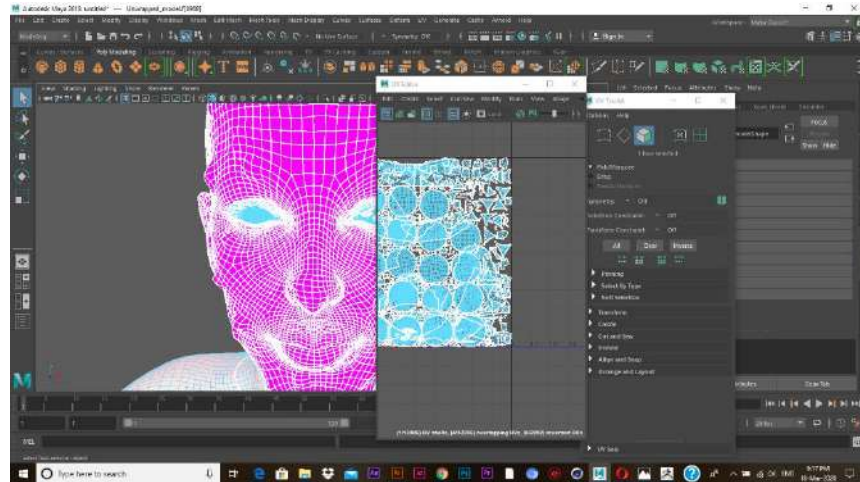
The feedback I got in my 7th semester was, I should think about whether I want to add the culture or region aspect or not. And pay more attention to

the technical part of animation like textures and lights etc. and work more on the concept part and chose the words more wisely.

So moving forward to 8th semester where my concept and idea was pretty much locked, because I am working on the same idea, but this time I paid special attention on my story boards and technical stuff related to animation. I decided to make the model generic because I am talking about the procedures in all over. so, I did not add any aspect related to culture or any specific region. And for my scripts this time I started to think beyond my comfort zone. And this time I chose to work on the skin related procedures as well so I chose acne related procedures, breast implants, nose job and lip fillers. Because these are the most popular procedures among people and people always said to me that you are so flat please use some breast enlargement creams or get an implant, your nose is so bumpy, your lips are so thin, o you have so oily skin and acne. I its not only about me I know a lot of people specially of our age have to listen to such comments daily. As earlier I mentioned the medical problems related to them as well and they are one of the causes I worked on these procedures. So, I started making the story boards, wrote their scripts. But this time I did modelling in a new software called “Zbrush” , a software used for sculpting 3D models.



Then after modelling the character I unwrapped them in a software called Maya a 3D software, for textures.



After the unwrap I texture them in a software called “Substance painter”, a software used for texturing 3D models.



After the textures I make light set-ups for my animations in Cinema 4D using “Greyscale Gorilla Light kit pro 3”, I has studio lights like ring, softbox and LED light etc. , it has studio set-ups as well.



the light set-

up



Render

Result.

I tried different light set-ups first, and then decided the final one. After finalizing the environment, I started doing animations I did rigging in “Maya” and the rest of the animation in “Cinema 4D”.

I named my project as “A Peculiar World”. And gave a name to each animation as well.in total I made 4 animations, “the filling station” (lip

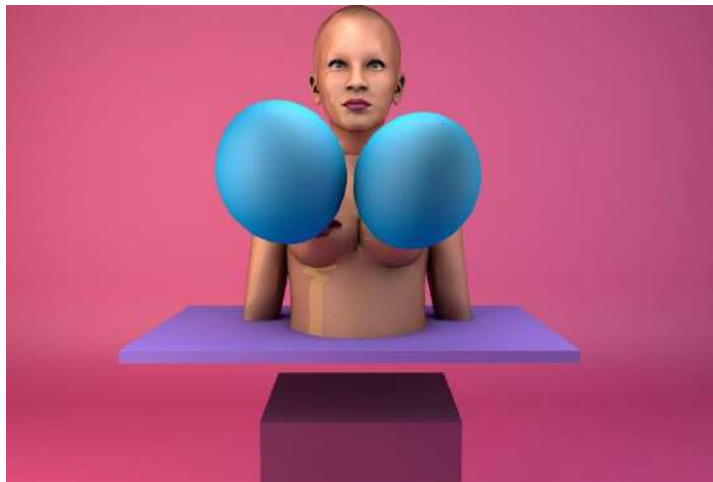
filler), “A flying institute” (breast implant), “A popping factory” (acne treatment) and “A cleaning garage” (nose job).

Some still renders from my final animations:



“A filling station”

(still render)



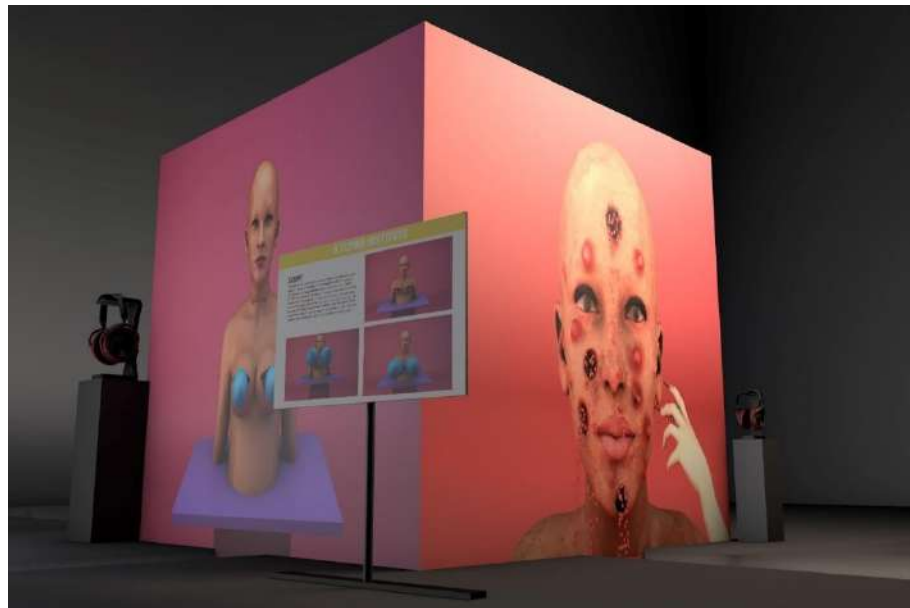
“A flying

institute” (still render)

CHAPTER 5

5.1 PRODUCTION:

For the final display of my project I decided to go with “projection mapping”, as scale does matter in my work so wanted to project my 4 animations on the four sides of a cube (6 by 6 ft.), in a dark room. And for the sound of the animations I decided to place 4 Bluetooth headphones, one for each animation on the plinths. So you can have an individual experience of each one of them.





A visualization of my display, but due to the current situation we can not display our thesis, so now we are going we the idea of a virtual thesis.

CHAPTER 6

6.1 CONCLUSION:

Its hard to conclude this whole thesis year in few words, it's a very new experience for me and I am sure for all of my fellows as well. We used to do assignments throughout our degree program but this time we were the one who have to decide everything, there were no limits. At the beginning of the thesis I was very scared because there were a lot of thoughts but as time passed by and I did my research and resolved my idea, the anxiety level was a bit less. I learned new things, apart from the thesis information

as well, I experienced how to work under pressure and how to meet deadlines and how you have to be on schedule during the project. During our thesis we all were under great competition and at times I became very anxious, but as time passed by I learned how to work under competition and how we should always maintain healthy competition. I believe that these things will help me in my practical life a lot. And if I talk about the things, I learned about my degree so I learned how to do research like research in depth how to make links how to create a solid base for your argument. How to support your argument with qualitative as well as quantitative research. How not to stick yourself on one thing one should keep exploring new ideas as we should never stop our visual research. Visual research is as important as literary research is because it opens our mind. And by taking inspiration I does not mean that copy someone else's work. Get inspired but never stuck yourself. The whole process is very important and we should follow each and every step to reach our final destination.

I learned new software's like Zbrush, Substance painter and Maya etc. before going into my practical life this was the last chance for me to learn new things that will help me in future and I guess I took advantage of this opportunity. The medium I chose for my project was 3D animation, it was a new and a difficult medium for me, I had basic knowledge about it but due to my project I learned new technicalities, I learned studio lights set-up, rigging, texturing and unwrapping. My project helped a lot in building up my 3D skills. I guess if I did not do this project I will never learn these

things because in your practical life the challenges are different and studying environment is best for learning and experimentation.

Design is a field that is full of opportunities. Design helps us to identify and a problem and we can solve it by using design. I know it is not only limited to identifying a problem and solving it, but for me the most interesting part about design is that it helps us better understand a situation. We have different research methods and data gathering technique in design. and we can visualize all our information and concern in any medium we want. People can connect to visuals and sounds more. We can address harsh or difficult most situation by design because it conveys the message in a way that people understand it. Design is not just making posters or animations it's a whole process of thinking. I learned design thinking during my project like how to make an idea out of your research and how to communicate it to the world.

By taking this project forward I wish to make animations on each and every procedure and add body modification procedures as well. And I will work on males as well, will not confined it just to females. And work more on the technical stuff and try to better to make them better than before. I would like to showcase my project in different NGO's and exhibition. I would like to make it viral through social media platforms, so more and more people can look at my work and maybe it will help someone. I do not want it to end here. I want that more and more people can see my project.

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