SELF-ME

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Abstract

Profilicity, a combination of the words *profile* and *authenticity*, describes a rapidly growing form of identity formation which implies that people are building their identities through online profiles. Given the popularity of beauty filters on social media, this translates into people not only identifying with their optimised digital selves but also aspiring to live up to them in their physical bodies.

This thesis explores the impact of modern technologies on our identity and appearance in relation to self-agency and self-optimisation. It aims to be deliberately provocative by exploring a deeply human issue such as identity and questioning the human capacity to be authentic.

Abstrakt

Profilicity, eine Kombination aus den Wörtern *Profile* und *Authenticity*, beschreibt eine rapide wachsende Form der Identitätsbildung. Sie impliziert, dass die Menschen ihre Identität über Online-Profile bilden. Angesichts der Beliebtheit von Schönheitsfiltern in den sozialen Medien bedeutet dies, dass sich Menschen nicht nur mit ihrem optimierten digitalen Selbst identifizieren, sondern auch danach streben, diesem in ihrem physischen Körper gerecht zu werden.

In dieser Arbeit werden die Auswirkungen moderner Technologien auf unsere Identität und unser Aussehen im Zusammenhang mit Selbstbestimmung und Selbstoptimierung untersucht. Sie will bewusst provozieren, indem sie ein zutiefst menschliches Thema wie Identität erforscht und die menschliche Fähigkeit, authentisch zu sein, in Frage stellt.

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1.
INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

With the advent of social media, users have become accustomed to representing themselves with an online identity and displaying themselves virtually. This constant self-presentation has led to face filters and photo editing apps such as FaceTune becoming popular tools to manipulate or rather "optimise" social media content. It appears as if the resulting artificial beauty ideal leads individuals to visit beauty clinics with their edited photos, wishing to emulate their digital selves in their physical form. It seems like there is a link between new technologies and the increase in beauty procedures, especially so-called non-invasive or non-surgical ones which are predominantly done with injectables of Botulinum toxin (referred to as Botox) and hyaluronic acid fillers (referred to as dermal fillers or just fillers), which at first filled in fine lines and wrinkles. These can now be used to restructure jawlines, noses, and cheeks. The procedures require refreshment every six to twelve months in order to avoid deterioration. The statistics of the International Society Of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons which includes 16 countries depict that in 2010 a total of 7,371,211 non-surgical procedures with Botox or dermal fillers, were performed. In 2019 the number increased to 13,618,735 which means that there has been an 84.8% increase in the total number of non-invasive procedures in 9 years. Because in 2019 women made up 87.2% and therefore the vast majority of the non-surgical procedure market, this thesis pays particular attention to the experiences of women.

Self-agency, which refers to a sense of control over actions and their consequences, is a common justification for beauty procedures. Yet through *neoliberal feminism*, which encourages individual women to focus on themselves and their own goals, targeted marketing and celebrities like Kylie Jenner, this very self-agency becomes questionable. Moreover, in our increasingly virtual world, digital humans are gaining influence. Virtual influencers like Lil Miquela (figure 1) with over three million followers on Instagram alone blur the boundaries between the virtual and real. In May 2019 top model Bella Hadid was featured with Lil Miquela in a campaign by American fashion brand Calvin Klein (figure 2). Seeing their faces side by side reveals their striking similarities. In October 2021 luxury brand Prada released its new Candy perfume campaign titled *Rethink Reality*. It featured the digital version of model Jade Eliasek (figure 3). Although her eyes look unrealistically purple and are disproportionately big, it is hard to discern Eliasek as CGI (computer-generated image). Miquela, Hadid and the digital version of Eliasek all look hyper-real and share the same flawless skin and doll-like faces.

In April 2021 the game engine Unreal Engine by gaming company Epic Games released the MetaHuman Creator. The free, cloud-based app exports rigged photorealistic digital humans prepared to be animated in Unreal Engine without experience in 3D character creation. The digital humans are not an exact copy of a physical person, however, with the gaming industry growing rapidly and investing in a potential metaverse, it is only a matter of time before technology offers an easy solution for people to digitise their physical selves. So how does this digital self look like, who designs it and what does it mean for identity formation?

Researchers Nick Yee and Jeremy Bailenson coined the term *Proteus Effect* in their study *The Proteus Effect: The Effect of Transformed Self-Representation on*

Behavior (2007) to describe a phenomenon in which a person's behaviour in virtual worlds is altered by the characteristics of their avatar—a digital representation of themselves. While research on the Proteus Effect addresses the impact of the appearance of avatars in online interactions, it does not address the question of what avatars mean for our physical self-perception and if they tie us more closely to the digital world. Yee and Bailenson's study uses avatars that were assigned to study participants without giving them the opportunity to personalise these avatars. This work extends the research on the Proteus effect by asking visitors to interact with the author's digital self and change her appearance. The work's interest lies in the impact that online appearances and online identities have on the physical self, respectively in the interplay between the digital and the physical self, thereby challenging ideas of self-agency and self-optimisation.

(figure 1)   © Brud

(figure 2) © Calvin Klein

(figure 3) © Prada

1.2. Related Work

1.2.1. Theories Related to the Context

In the 1980s and 1990s, women gained more financial power due to better-paid jobs after the second wave of feminism in the 1970s. Advertisers used the new disposable income women had to their advantage by selling an almost endless amount of beauty commodities to female customers. By implementing feminist terminology into their advertisement rhetoric, the industry successfully appropriated terms like empowerment or self-love for its benefit (Laing and Willson 2020). Philosopher Beate Hausbichler (2021) described how this has led to the contemporary notion of neoliberal feminism in which the consumption of goods makes up an essential part of the feminist canon. In the neoliberal feminist landscape, the focus lies on the betterment of the self which has to be improved through the consumption of commodities.

At the beginning of the 1990s, when Naomi Wolf wrote *The Beauty Myth* (1991), she compared the endless work on a woman's appearance to that of household, care and professional work. According to Wolf, the unrealistic expectations on women to look a certain way served as a mechanism to distract and keep them away from professional success. In the consumer-driven world of today, the same industry is now hailed as a universal good. Dara Berkowitz observes in her book *Botox Nation* (2017) that tools that promise to make a consumer more beautiful are embraced as feminist empowerment. The beauty industry is perceived as a worthy lifestyle choice characterised by self-love, self-care and wellness. Injectables, such as Botox and dermal fillers, have been marketed as a promising strategy for professional success and within the logic of individualism and autonomy. This led users to see themselves as active and self-governing subjects. The idea of self-agency and "doing it for yourself" is drilled into a consumption-driven mindset in a neoliberal structure in which it is unacceptable to participate in body enhancements with the hope to attract male attention but solely because women are liberated enough to have a clear idea of what they want to look like and who they want to embody (Berkowitz 2017).

Jean Baudrillard's theories of transaesthetics (1992), simulation (1994) and hyperreality (1994) demonstrate how neoliberal feminist media culture paradoxically turns what was considered anti-feminist into feminist. It offers an answer to why aesthetic beauty procedures are nowadays sold as feminist and perceived as empowerment. The *profilicity* theory coined by philosophers Hans-Georg Moeller and Paul J. D'Ambrosio (2021) explains how social media fosters the creation of identities based on profiles. It investigates how people are influenced by the validation of unknown users instead of physical interactions. This has led to a climate in which the creation and curation of online identities take on a major role in people's lives. Whilst other forms of identity technologies like sincerity and authenticity, which were more prominent in the past, still exist, profilicity, amplified by social media, rises to become the most dominant form of identity creation. Digital profiling and constant self-exposure have influenced the popularity of beauty face filters and photo editing apps like FaceTune. It seems that users change their looks in the hope that their digital identity will be more successful and receive more approval. It appears as if this triggers a feeling that they are not living up to their digital selves

and that their physical selves are inadequate. That is why it is likely that this process will manifest itself, even more, when people can digitise themselves for a virtual meeting or to play online games. When people already aspire to a technically created beauty ideal and are encouraged to consume beauty procedures, it indicates what our bodies will look like in the future.

1.2.2. Projects Related to the Design Approach

Works by body art performance artists from the late 20th century serve as the basis for the practical work in this thesis. As this project aims to be deliberately provocative in generating new ideas and challenging the status quo of authenticity and self-agency, it was crucial to use the art world as a reference. The selected artists work with their bodies to comment on and question society's behaviour. This project is not about rebelling against social change, as the author considers this unproductive and rather uninteresting, rather she is interested in the circumstances that have led to the current situations. Instead of clinging to old structures, she is concerned with the industries that seek to extract commercial success on the backs of politically significant movements like feminism. In particular, she is interested in the culture of constant self-optimisation that, disguised as self-agency and driven by consumer culture, seems to be firmly entrenched in modern times. The cited artists have inspired the author to work with her body in provocative and progressive ways to convey her message while leaving room for personal interpretation and interaction with the work.

      The first work that inspired this project was by the artist Marina Abramovic. In 1974, she performed her work *Rhythm 0* at the Studio Morra gallery in Naples (figrue 4). In it, Abramovic placed 72 objects, ranging from roses and a piece of bread to a pair of scissors, a knife and a gun with a bullet in it, on a table next to her. For the next six hours, visitors were instructed that Abramovic was an object and that they could use the objects laid out on the table on her at will. Abramovic took full responsibility. In 2014, the artist said in an interview uploaded on YouTube about her performance that she wanted to see, "How far the public can go if the artist does not do anything" (Abramovic 2014, video). The audience began by just looking at her or giving her a rose but soon became more and more violent. People cut off her clothes, held a gun to her neck and cut into her flesh. After six hours, the gallery owner declared the performance over and Abramovic began to move on her own. The spectators, shocked that she was not a simple object, quickly ran away. None of them could bear to be confronted with Abramovic. Although the audience was well aware of Abramovic's human existence, they alienated her and treated her like an object. The work shows how one can completely give up one's autonomy. It seems that Abramovic questioned the ownership of the female body because the project took place during the second wave of feminism. On websites like Render People (renderpeople.com), digital bodies of real people can be downloaded for little money or even for free. Those who buy them have full control over the bodies. Abramovic

was way ahead of her time when she created her work in the 1970s. For this project, she inspired the author by showing her a way to let others control her body with the help of pre-set tools.

Later, in the 1980s, and with the advent of new technologies such as the computer, the artist Stelarc began a series of works in which he questioned the existence of the body. He did not want to see his body as an object of desire, but rather as an object whose functionality could be changed by technology. For example, Stelarc hung himself from hooks attached to his skin. These performances were often site-specific and the body functioned as a sculptural element. The body is not seen as a personality but as a tool and object. In another work, which began in 1996, he attempts to attach a third ear to his body. 10 years later, in 2006, Stelarc had an extra ear surgically constructed and grown on his left arm (figrue 5). Furthermore, a small microphone was to be implanted in the ear. The microphone was then connected to a WiFi system that allows other people to hear what Stelarc hears in real-time. So the ear is not for Stelarc himself, but for people in other places who want to listen to what the ear hears from a distance (Stelarc 2013, video). Stelarc's work inspired this project because it shows how one can merge with technology, even become technology itself. As this project is about how the digital collides with the physical body and identity, Stelarc's works serve as inspiration for how one can view their own body as a technical object. Similarly, the author of this thesis works with her body, which becomes the object of the work.

In the 1990s, the artist Orlan created a series of works in which she was filmed undergoing severe plastic surgery on her body, especially her face, while reading poetry or answering live questions from her audience (figure 6). Her goal was not to become more beautiful or to appear younger. Orlan's work was a means of criticism regarding cosmetic surgery and its general practice. She went so far with the alienation of her body that there was no doubt that her surgeries were not intended to improve her appearance. Orlan performed a kind of reincarnation of her body in her present life (Restany 2001, video). It is likely that Orlan's work was a commentary on the mass culture of beauty treatments and the wellness, anti-ageing and beauty craze of the 1990s. She wanted to show where the constant self-optimisation leads and with what self-evidence it is practised. In this respect, this work ties in with Orlan's, as it likewise alludes to the constant self-optimisation of appearance and questions why this is taken for granted.

In contemporary art, new media artist Theo Triantafyllidis uses technology to reproduce himself in a game engine. For his work *Studio Visit* (2018), he created a virtual character by using a collection of different stereotypes of game avatars to produce virtual sculptures and paintings. Similar to Stelarc and Orlan, who used their bodies excessively to demonstrate their obsolescence, Triantafyllidis created and inhabited a virtual body. The practical part of this thesis focuses on the exploration of the author's appearance in the virtual world. While the bodies of Abramovic or Orlan were physical and the character of Triantafyllidis is fictional, this thesis explores the interactive confrontation with the digital body when it is given to an audience for optimisation and beautification. The above works influence the thesis by suggesting ways of working with self-agency, the human body and modern technologies. They open the spectrum of possibilities and impact the author's approach to the practical part of the thesis. Stella Speziali (2020) from the ZHdK Immersive Art Space has conducted a crucial study on digital humans, which is used to create the author's digital self.

(figure 4)   © Marina Abramovic Archive

(figure 5)   © Piero Viti

(figure 6)   © Orlan

1.3. Research Question and Thesis Statement

As lives increasingly take place online, people can create various social media profiles. This thesis explores how the creation and curation of these profiles affect people's appearance and identity.

Already today, some women aspire to look like a beauty filter, which is intensified by the normalisation of beauty procedures. These beauty procedures are, in turn, justified by self-agency and female autonomy. An interplay between the digital and the physical becomes visible, in which both sides converge.

Sub-Questions:

WHY ARE BEAUTY PROCEDURES PERCEIVED AS FEMALE EMPOWERMENT AND PASSED OFF AS A SIGN OF WOMEN'S SELF-AGENCY?

HOW DO DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES AFFECT THE PHYSICAL BODIES OF WOMEN AND HOW DOES THIS MANIFEST ITSELF BACK ONLINE?

HOW DOES THE INCREASED INVESTMENT IN ONLINE PROFILES AFFECT OUR PERCEPTION OF IDENTITY AND BODY, AND HOW DOES THIS IMPACT THE PROCESS OF IDENTITY FORMATION?

1.4. Methodology

The author approaches the project through practice-oriented research. This means that the theories studied are tested in practice through empirical, technical and material explorations to identify parallels or differences. For her, this is fruitful because the theory is underpinned by practice and vice versa.

Through empirical and ethnographic research such as interviews with experts and visits to opening events of beauty clinics, the author establishes connections between the increasing identification with the online self and people's efforts to live up to their technically manipulated self-image. By speaking with doctors and analysing online discourse about beauty treatments and marketing strategies of beauty clinics, she gains further insights into the commercialisation of feminism and the perception of beauty as an essential part of womanhood. This is explored theoretically by examining phenomena such as identity formation, neoliberal feminism and the growing discourse on beauty procedures such as Botox treatments. The strong presence of beauty clinics on social media has led the author to question the authority of the Swiss government in relation to unregulated advertising practices of beauty clinics. Phone calls and email conversations with Swissmedic and the Zurich Department of Health reveal that it seems as if the authorities are not keeping up with the rapid development of technologies to regulate advertising on social media platforms. As a result, clinics can easily reach a young target audience.

The technical investigation includes the analysis and definition of the current mainstream beauty ideal by comparing celebrities like Kylie Jenner or Bella Hadid with beauty filters and virtual influencers. The result of the so-called *Instagram-face* is confirmed by interviewing physicians who work with injectables and a marketing manager of a beauty clinic. In addition, the interaction between the digital and the physical is explored by using photogrammetry, 3D software, a game engine and motion capture to create a digital self of the author. An audience can optimise the author's digital self, which is then returned to the physical space using a 3D printer.

The first material investigation includes materials such as PVA filament and silicone. The materials are aimed to reproduce the artificiality of the beauty ideal. However, as the author explores the profilicity theory, she realises that her approach is not to show how technology alienates people from their bodies, but rather to show the phenomenon of how technology and nature converge. How they interact with each other and how a mechanism evolves where the artificial wants to appear natural but the natural is seen as outdated and needs technology to compensate for its deficiency. For this reason, the sculptures of the artefact are made of a natural material such as clay. Moreover, the porous nature of clay resembles the pores of the skin. The use of a highly technical machine such as a 3D printer and its visualisation through the layers created during 3D printing shows how beauty ideals are literally formed and brought to life through technology.

The significance of the work is that it offers an interpretation of how the physical world approaches the digital world and that by understanding this, as well as new and old forms of identity formation, one can go through life with more awareness and ease. Correspondingly, the work explores the reproduction of oppressive structures from the physical in the digital world. The author wants to

encourage awareness and recognition of such tendencies in order to proactively counteract them.

Working with a digital body confronted the author with questions of responsibility and ethics. Downloading another person's digital body seems strange to her while creating a new body would ultimately lead to the reinforcement of stereotypes. Therefore, the author decided to work with her own body, as it gives her the freedom to do with it what she wants and what she feels comfortable with. The responsibility she has in doing so is for her to remain true to her personal feelings.

Since technology makes it possible to expand a human body by its physical limits, one can wonder why the author decided to create an exact copy of herself. After all, through technology and CGI (computer-generated imagery) one can achieve the fulfilment of dreams and the expansion of the imagination, a kind of escapist dream. For the author, using technology only to create a copy of herself in digital space is part of the rebellion, to demonstrate her concern that oppressive structures from the physical world are being reinforced and duplicated in the digital sphere. She does not want to obey a technological desire or utopian vision, but to create something where she is true to herself. Moreover, it was important for her to speak of something she knows and experiences, like her body and identity, rather than some kind of mainstream fantasy. She aims for a critical engagement with the work that inspires visitors not to simplify anything, but instead to overly engage with it to the point where it might even seem ridiculous or humorous.

1.5. Aims and Objectives

This thesis analyses the impact of technology on identity formation to explore how online profiles increasingly shape how we see ourselves. In particular, it explores the impact of technology on the popularity and growing cultural discourse of beauty procedures to visualise the interplay between digital and physical appearance. Furthermore, it assesses the consequences of self-agency on feminism and cosmetic surgery and explores the motivations for beauty procedures. In doing so, the work identifies factors that link feminism to beauty procedures and it challenges women's self-agency over their bodies.

The thesis examines the factors through which the digital body is shaped, considering the current state of technology to create a digital self. Furthermore, it identifies key factors affecting the design of the digital body and predicts the impact the digital self has on the physical self. The work examines how online profiles influence identity formation, by analysing the components of profile-based identity formation and comparing it to earlier forms, it illustrates how it is becoming the most popular identity technology of the present and future.

1.6. Motivation and Personal Contribution

Because of the author's background and interest in fashion and branding, she has a profound knowledge of how communication strategies work, how trends are created and how market and consumer research is conducted. She also understands the ambiguity of fashion to create trends that paradoxically lead to what was marketed as "in fashion" being "out of fashion" just a few seasons later. This mechanism is profitable for brands to increase sales and can equally be applied to the beauty industry. The author's decision for the topic was based on her interest in digital bodies and online identities as well as her motivation to acquire technical skills in 3D design, animation and work with a game engine.

The author noticed that the people she sees online increasingly look like Instagram beauty filters and that the faces of celebrities like Kylie Jenner or Bella Hadid, as well as virtual influencers like Lil Miquela, bear striking similarities to these filters. This trend fascinated her and she wanted to find out more about how technology affects people's perception of beauty. Aware of the immense impact of well-made branding, the author questions the common argument of female self-agency in the context of beauty procedures. She hopes to contribute to a critical examination of the state of the female body and identity today and in the future.

The project contributes to the field of interaction design by looking at the interplay between digital and physical identity. How they literally converge and how the interaction with digital technology affects the physical self not only in its appearance but also in its identity. Contrary to popular belief that technology and digitalisation alienate people from their physical selves, the author aims to show that the two sides are approaching each other. She believes that it is unhelpful, even blocking, to remain in a mindset in which the digital is demonised and marginalised. Instead, she wants to show a way in which both worlds interact and nourish each other. At the same time, she is critical of already existing structures of neoliberalism, consumerism and sexism, which are reinforced and become even more powerful in the digital world. With her thesis, the author aims to provoke new interactions and ways of seeing technology while being critical of the reproduction of oppressive systems in the developing digital world.

2.
CONSUMING FEMINISM

2.1. Introduction

After the second wave of feminism in the 1970s, many women experienced financial growth and independence in the 1980s and 1990s. Advertisers saw the new disposable income women had, due to higher paid jobs, as an opportunity to sell beauty, cosmetics, fashion and media products to female consumers (Laing and Willson 2020). Women were sold body maintenance products as a model of female leisure, often with a faux feminist legitimacy attached to it. It was defined as a new category of rights or entitlements for women that is based on them earning a living and gaining certain freedoms (McRobbie 2011).

Naomi Wolf observed in her book *The Beauty Myth* (1991) that the more liberated and successful women were professionally and privately, and the more legal hindrances they overcame, the more tightly and strictly they were bound to an ideal of female beauty. After the second wave of feminism in the 1970s female beauty was the last remaining strong source to control women and it did not take long to show the effect it had on them. With women's breakthrough power structures in the 1980s eating disorders increased sharply and plastic surgery became the fastest-growing medical segment. Although women have never had more legal rights, money and power, the relationships they had with their bodies were probably worse than that of their unliberated grandmothers. The beauty myth acts as a celebration of women although it is "actually composed of emotional distance, politics, finance, and sexual repression. The beauty myth is not about women at all. It is about men's institutions and institutional power" (Wolf 1991, 13). Wolf observes that a real meritocracy means for men more competition at the job and household work at home. After the second wave of feminism, the tendency was, however, for women to do work in paid positions while still having to do all the unpaid household and care work. On top of that, the tireless work on the appearance was added. To get or keep a job women were expected to be beautiful, not only in jobs such as fashion models or waitresses but all across different business segments. It was a legitimate reason for a man to replace a female employee because he found her too old looking or to encourage her to wear makeup and dye her hair (Wolf 1991).

The rules on how a woman had to dress and look at work kept shifting, which was in favour of the beauty and fashion magazines that tell women how to behave and appear. Women were constantly confronted with the paradox of looking feminine and business-like at work. Finding the perfect balance was crucial as looking too feminine would have caused risks of sexual harassment because they would have been said to be "asking for it". On the other hand, looking too business-like would have marked them off as stiff and uptight women who were "too eager to make it in the business world" (Wolf 1991, 42). While those regulations did not apply to men, women were expected to spend money on their looks and work harder to be respected at work. Wolf observes that American, urban professional women in the 1980s spent a third of their income on beauty maintenance and considered it a crucial part of their professionalism. At the same time, women earned significantly less than their male counterparts and in positions that underline their physical attractiveness such as service or retail jobs.

In the last decades, feminism saw a shift towards a sensitivity described as post and neoliberal feminism. Postfeminism defined by feminist critic Rosalind Gill (2011)

is informed by postmodernist and constructionist perspectives and should not be compared to a single static notion of one authentic feminism as a reference point. She describes postfeminism as having a contradictory nature of discourses and the entanglement of both feminist and anti-feminist themes within it. Furthermore, Gill (2007, 148-149) notices that this notion, "Also points to a number of other relatively stable features that comprise or constitute a postfeminist discourse. These include the notion that femininity is a bodily property; the shift from objectification to subjectification; the emphasis on self-surveillance, monitoring and discipline; a focus on individualism, choice and empowerment; the dominance of a makeover paradigm; a resurgence in ideas of natural sexual difference; a marked sexualization of culture; and an emphasis upon consumerism and the commodification of difference."

According to philosopher Beate Hausbichler (2021) neoliberal feminism, being heavily influenced by capitalism consists of three parts: A feminist façade, commercial gain and the individualisation of a problem, but no criticism whatsoever of politics and corporations. It is a big shell with a strong presence, a combative slogan and an empty inside.

In a post and neoliberal feminist media climate and through conscious market manipulation, the global beauty industry has reached a value of USD 511 billion in 2021 (Djurovik 2022). According to the website Grand Review Research the cosmetic surgery and procedure market is estimated to reach a global value of USD 43.9 billion by 2025 due to the growing use of social media and technological advancement. This chapter discusses the consequences of post and neoliberal feminism based on the brands Dove, Gillette Venus and Victoria's Secret. Furthermore, it reflects how brands utilise social-political progress such as the *Body Positivity Movement* for their interest.

2.2. The Commodification of the Body

Consumer culture made the consumption of body maintenance commodities and body modification inseparably linked to feminism. Over time, advertisers were able to adapt to social trends such as the Body Positivity Movement. Although this meant they had to make a drastic strategic shift away from hammering absurd, slender female beauty ideals into the minds of consumers towards marketing where people are obliged to feel comfortable in their bodies, no matter what size or shape they are (Hausbichler 2021).

Hausbichler (2021) explains that the body positivity movement had its origins in the 1960s in the US. Activists founded feminist groups like *The Fat Underground* or *New Haven Fat Liberation Front* and started to fight against the massive discrimination fat people faced and for a new definition of the word *fat* from a negative to a neutral description. At the time, the movement was of no interest for corporations to capitalise on and therefore seemed irrelevant. This changed with the availability of the internet and later with the presence of social media. It resulted in today's situation in which anything can be labelled as body positivity, or more precisely, everything that can be consumed is labelled as body positivity. The main message of today's movement is not to worry about buying that dress or those skinny jeans because people can wear anything and feel good about it as long as they keep consuming. Beauty procedures are another example of how the Body Positive Movement is used to be capitalised on. Lip fillers or breast surgeries do not make anyone anti body positive but show that people can take control of their bodies and make their own choices about them. It is all about self-love and self-confidence. There is no criticism of the discrimination in education, on the job market or in the health care system that fat people still face today.

Body positivity has become a consumer-friendly and consumer-animating leisure activity that provides visibility on social media. Influencers on such platforms aim to "empower" others to love themselves when in reality they only want to increase their follower count and reach. Criticism of existing structures is lost and exchanged for an individual journey towards self-confidence, self-love and self-care. It is a celebration of the self that everyone must complete for their satisfaction. To accomplish what is required, people are motivated to work on themselves, both physically and mentally, and the industry offers all kinds of products to support them on this journey. Thus, loving your body does not mean that a person does not have to invest money and time in it and that the previous ideals no longer apply, they are merely expanded (Hausbichler 2021).

2.2.1. Harnessing Political Work for Commercial Success

One of the companies that is considered a "brave pioneer" of the body positivity movement is the personal care brand Dove. As part of the Unilever Group, Dove released their first *Campaign for Real Beauty* in 2004. Pictured were women with "real curves" in white underwear. The campaign was hailed as a step away from unattainable beauty ideals and to open up the definition of femininity. The irony that the product the campaign promoted was a skin firming cream was lost in the conversation. The campaign's tagline read, "New Dove Firming. As tested on real curves." The indirect message of the brand was that only firm curves are socially accessible and people are motivated to buy Dove products so that they can love their firmed curves. The campaign did not liberate women from a beauty ideal, it only tied them to the next.

Companies like Dove talk little about their products in their communications. Rather, they appear as a team of scientists or researchers of some sort. They give the impression of dedicating their lives to the question of why women feel unhappy in their bodies. Hausbichler observes that this encouraging and benevolent way of communicating, which establishes what seems to be an intimate and trustworthy relationship with consumers, makes them easily forget that it is the same company that sells them anti-cellulite or skin whitening creams.

Dove's 2021 campaign, titled *Reverse Selfie* aims to raise awareness about selfie culture and how face-editing apps cause low self-esteem in young girls (figure 7). The campaign text, alongside individual portraits of girls, half showing their natural faces and half showing their manipulated faces, reads, "Let's stop retouching apps from blurring her confidence. This is a representation of how far retouching apps can distort beauty. Harmful and readily available, 80% of girls are already using them by the age of 13. It's no wonder their perception of beauty and their self-esteem are so distorted. Help reverse the damage. Download our new Social Media Confidence Kit" (Campaignsoftheworld 2021). From the text, as well as the Reverse Selfie campaign film and the Parents Kit (a 32-page manual designed to help parents have *The Selfie Talk* with their daughters), it becomes clear that the campaign is not aimed at young girls, but at their mothers. To gain the trust of customers, the brand utilises their daughters to pose as their saviour and protector. This strategy, in which a brand does not sell its products directly, meaning it does not depict or mention them in the campaign, is more hypocritical than others. The brand assumes the role of an institution and disguises the brand message as the most important reason for the brand's existence. They take responsibility away from schools and educators and give the appearance that the brand is addressing socially relevant issues. However, for a brand sales feedback is primarily important. Dove's body positivity campaigns are still attractive to the brand to this day only because they generated financial growth and positioned the brand positively in the marketplace. If the campaigns had failed, the brand would have immediately returned to its old strategy or tried a different one. It does not make sense for a brand to stick with a strategy if it does not produce a positive result in product sales. Up to a point, a brand even needs to capitalise on social and cultural trends to stay relevant.

Hausbichler concludes that in this regard, it must be said that it is political activists and feminist collectives that do socio-political work for no profit and no recognition. Brands follow them only after doing market and consumer research to determine whether or not they can ultimately turn a profit. It is cynical to praise brands as brave and pioneering when in reality they are only harnessing political work for commercial interests.

(figure 7) © Dove

(figure 8)   © Gillette Venus

(figure 9)   © Gillette Venus

2.2.2. My Campaign. My Profit.

The women's shaving brand Gillette Venus, which belongs to the Procter & Gamble Group, has since 2018 been advertising its *My Skin. My Way.* campaign. The slogan has similarities with *My Body. My Choice.*, which is used to demonstrate in support of abortion. Gillette Venus thus puts a decision about body hair on the same level as a decision to have an abortion, while selling its product to boot. Although both involve the female body, the decision of whether to have body hair in a particular area never reaches the scope of the choice to have an abortion.

The Gillette Venus 2019 campaign portrays women with scars or stretch marks and moles exposing their "imperfect" skin. In the 1.30-minute campaign videos, protagonists like Marika talk about how they have found a way to love their skin. Marika is only filmed twice shaving her legs and arms with a Gillette Venus razor. The rest of the video shows close-ups of Marika's skin or her walking along a beach. Again, the product takes a back seat and the brand gives the impression that its socially relevant message is more important than selling its product. As a result, the brand is seen as a forerunner of diverse and inclusive body representation. Each portrait of the women in the campaign ends with the text "It's my skin and I'm proud of it", which sounds like an affirmation or ritual people should say to themselves daily to transform the relationships they have with their bodies mentally.

The captions of the videos on YouTube provide further insight into how consumers are being targeted for the campaign. The one to Marika's story reads, "Meet the real women who are showing the world how many versions of beautiful skin there are—and how to own it. Marika was born with congenital nevi—a condition that left her skin covered in birthmarks from head to toe. Growing up in a world obsessed with perfect skin, she struggled with looking different. But today, she's empowered by it" (Gillette Venus, 2019, video). The campaign's advertising copy exemplifies how feminist terminology like "real women", "own it" and "empowered" is used to sell a product.

Until 2018, the brand partnered with the TV show Germany's Next Top Model, whose audience consists mainly of young girls. The viewers are taught from an early age that female body hair is undesirable and that it must be shaved to resemble a model's ideal of beauty. In the same year as the new *My Skin. My Way.* campaign was launched, the brand ended its collaboration with Germany's Next Top Model. Women are encouraged to celebrate and love their "imperfect" skin in Gillette Venus' new campaigns. This is ironic because the same company has in previous campaigns dictated to women what such imperfections look like in the first place by showing only slim, white, flawless models. Companies like Gillette Venus profit from manufacturing, distributing and perpetuating the insecurities they have previously created.

Although the more inclusive *My Skin. My Way.* campaigns by Gillette Venus seem like a step forward at first glance, its genuineness is questionable. Was the campaign ultimately just about following the current inclusivity and diversity trend to stay relevant as a brand? On top of that, the appropriation of feminist terminology gives a false idea of what feminism is all about. It gets associated with a highly individualistic lifestyle focused on finding empowerment through consumption. At this place, it must be clearly stated that the idea of what it means to be a woman is freer and more diverse today are the achievements of the women's movements. The achievement of neoliberalism and capitalism is to create saleable products that promise more liberation.

2.2.3. The Visibility Trap

Traditional media like magazines also rode the wave of feminism to financially capitalise on it. Self-esteem and self-love are favoured topics in women's magazines, from educational reads to those that mainly feature fashion trends, celebrities and cosmetics. Nowadays, there is even a new category of women's magazines that deals exclusively with one's improvement and development of the self. They all share in common that behind the façade of positivity and love, lies the main message of working on improving yourself. Hausbichler (2021) observes that whether this work is physical or psychological, it fosters insecurity and leaves feelings of dissatisfaction. The magazines present all the activities people are not doing, but apparently should be doing. *Empowerment* holds people responsible for everything. It creates the impression that everything is in one's own hands, one just has to feel empowered to do it, and once you do, you can achieve anything. Yet again, the discourse focuses on an individual rather than a complex political and structural problem.

If magazines already have a negative influence on women, the popularity of social media is even more disturbing. On platforms like Instagram, YouTube or TikTok, a user not only meets models who are styled and staged by a team of professionals but can get an intimate glimpse into the lives of ordinary people. Influencers share their picture-perfect lifestyles and users can follow them from the comfort of their couches. Although people realise that what influencers share is selected and edited, many feel unhappy about their own less perfect selves (Hausbichler 2021). The constant display of body images and the ability to zoom in and examine them closely increases the pressure to look a certain kind of way and to compare oneself to others. It, "Connotes a change of spectatorial power from an external, judgemental male gaze to a self-policing narcissistic gaze" (Laing and Willson, 129).

In general, it is worth questioning the use of social media and to what extent it is empowering. Social media is hailed as a tool to gain attention and build a following for vital social issues like feminism, but the mechanisms behind it are less empowering. To gain visibility, a user has to follow the rules of a few tech companies. To be of interest to potential companies and their advertising, platforms need to ensure that a user spends as much time as possible on them. That is precisely why users see personalised content on their screens, tailored to their preferences and interests. If the presence of political issues depends on their interactivity on social media, their visibility depends on technology companies like Meta or Google. Hausbichler (2021) questions who ultimately benefits from the popularity of social media: feminist politics or the technology companies? The former gains visibility at best, but the money goes to tech companies. Moreover, it is questionable what kind of feminism social media generates. Since users' time is the core business of Meta, Google, etc., it is not necessarily the best researched or most accurate content that gains the most visibility, but the content that generates the most likes, shares and comments, or in other words, that binds users more closely to the platform. This often provokes radical statements and popular feminism. Although it is reassuring to see feminist issues gaining interest through popular feminism on social media, visibility is often used for self-promotion. Popular feminism is a backlash against feminist goals opposing racism, capitalism and patriarchal structures because it needs to market itself like a product rather than an act against such structures. Popular feminism needs them and profits from them (Hausbichler 2021).

2.2.4. The Delusion of Inclusion

An examination of Victoria's Secret catalogues, between 1996 and 2006, shows the shift from a male gaze, in which the woman depicted is a passive object, to a gaze in which the model mimics typical male postures and thus appears active, while still being objectified. The brand catalogues give an insight into a new way of marketing feminism to the consumer. When Victoria's Secret began selling the WonderBra push-up bra as a means of empowering women in the late 1990s, the brand achieved profitable sales. It implied that empowerment is only possible through hyper-sexualised body representation and consumption.

When analysing the mid-90s catalogues, the models were portrayed passively, either lounging or standing cross-legged with their mouths slightly open or smiling. The women appear soft and gentle with neatly combed hair and relaxed posture. By contrast, in the middle of the next decade, the women pose provocatively staring aggressively into the camera. Their legs are no longer crossed, their buttocks and chests thrust outwards and upwards, their facial expressions are tough and their mouths are either closed or half-open. The hair is wild, often covering parts of the models' faces. Posing, in the same way, became popular in the late 1990s in men's advertising by brands such as Calvin Klein. Victoria's Secret sold their lingerie as a means of empowerment, justifying hyper-sexuality and hyper-femininity because the aggressive male poses and postures were perceived as self-empowering (Ouellette 2019).

Advertisers' opportunism successfully exploited the fact that consumers linked the ideology of a product to the ideology of empowerment. Assertiveness, power and independence do not result from political activism and not from the way women impact society, but rather from their sexual behaviour in seducing men. Sexual empowerment is not the same as social, economic and political empowerment, as postfeminism claims (Ouellette 2019).

Over the next decade, Victoria's Secret built a lingerie empire unlike any other, peaking in 2016 with net sales of $7,781 billion (Statista 2021). The brand's shows were hailed as the most popular fashion show of the year with a live TV broadcast featuring top models, referred to by the brand as its *Victoria's Secret Angels*, walking to a live performance by acts such as The Weeknd, Taylor Swift and Harry Styles. Shortly after the brand's peak in 2016, sales began to decline, and the brand aired its last television show in December 2018. By 2020, annual net sales had dropped to $5,413 billion and, according to the website USA Today (Tyko 2021), Victoria's Secret was forced to close nearly 250 shops worldwide. The company appears to have struggled to adapt to shifting cultural attitudes regarding its principal product: female sexuality. Competition reacted to customer demand for more inclusive marketing and products in the aftermath of the body positivity movements, which caused the so-called *bombshell style* that Victoria's Secret represented and sold for decades to go out of favour.

Just before the last show, Ed Razek, the former chief marketing officer of L Brands, the parent company of Victoria's Secret, said in an interview with Vogue Magazine (Phelps 2018) that the shows had always been "culturally diverse." Furthermore, he stated that the brand does not consider having trans or curvy models walk the show because it was a "fantasy". He described the Angels as "aggressively fit" and that they competed against each other with their workout routines. Finally, he expressed no interest in changing the brand's strategy to make it more inclusive.

Three years later, the brand underwent massive structural and strategic changes. The angels were replaced by brand ambassadors representing a wide range of body types and age groups. The seven women who make up the *Victoria's*

Secret Collective are recognised for their accomplishments. They include for example Megan Rapinoe, a 36-year-old American soccer and gender equality activist with short pink hair; Priyanka Chopra Jonas, a 38-year-old Indian actress and tech investor; Eileen Gu, a 17-year-old Chinese-American freestyle skier; or Valentina Sampaio, a 24-year-old Brazilian trans model. Victoria's Secret intends to give the word *sexy*, which in the past meant a slim, well-toned Barbie figure, a body-positive and inclusive meaning that is not tied to a specific body shape or size. This is a significant shift for a brand that has not long ago sold underwear under the guise of male fantasies, but pursued an ideal of beauty that has remained unattainable for the majority of women. Martin Waters, the chief executive of the brand said in an interview with The New York Times (Maheshwari and Friedman 2021), "We needed to stop being about what men want and to be about what women want." In the same interview, new ambassador Megan Rapinoe described Victoria's Secret's previous marketing as, "Patriarchal, sexist, viewing not just what it meant to be sexy but what the clothes were trying to accomplish through a male lens and through what men desired. And it was very much marketed toward younger women." That message, she added, was, "Really harmful." It poses the question, however, why women like Megan Rapinoe would want to be involved in restoring a brand whose values they rejected. Megan Rapinoe responded by explaining that she understood that she was being given the opportunity to reshape Victoria's Secret from the inside out and that the brand has acknowledged its past mistakes. Victoria's Secret is giving her a large platform to expand her vision of sexiness with that of the brand. Waters said of the future plans he has for the brand, "Our intent is to get back into the fashion show business." He continued, "We're not in a hurry to announce when that will be or how that will be... but we will redefine it in a way that's culturally relevant in the coming years." Waters mentioned that the company is creating a digital entertainment platform for women to celebrate their bodies. "It's all about the digital and the social," he added.

Among the brand's new efforts to expand its previous narrow definition of sexy was the launch of a Mother's Day campaign in 2021 that featured a pregnant model (figure 10). In response to the positive feedback, the brand began selling nursing bras. While pregnancy and breastfeeding were previously considered "not sexy enough" to be part of the Victoria's Secret line, it is now being celebrated as a bold step towards body positivity. The company aims to become, as Chef Waters phrases it, "A leading global advocate for women's empowerment" (Maheshwari and Friedman 2021).

The motivation behind Victoria's Secret's rebranding appears hypocritical. In 2018, there was no sign of interest from the brand to become more diverse and inclusive. Thus, it makes sense to think that its poor sales have forced the brand to change its strategy, rather than a deep belief in the negative impact that promoting and cultivating an unrealistic body image tailored to male taste has on women. It equally raises the question of why the brand still wants to be associated with the word sexy. Why is their main goal to be sexy? Why does pregnancy have to be tied to sexiness? Does this truly liberate women or does it just force new strings of expectations on them? Are there not more important aspects of a pregnant woman than her sex appeal? For a brand that has nurtured the image of a hyper-sexual and hyper-feminine woman for decades, it is hypocritical to now sell its image under the notion of inclusivity when it is really just about staying relevant in the market. For a brand like Victoria's Secret, inclusivity is a means to an end rather than a political and social change.
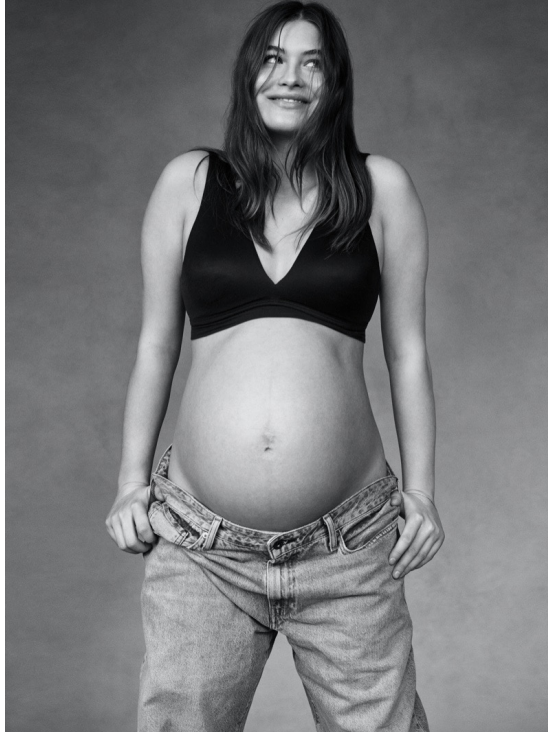
(figure 10) © Victoria's Secret

2.3. Conclusion

The emancipation of women in the second half of the 20th century and after the second wave of feminism brought with it a new area of post and neoliberal feminism. Both notions stress the importance of individual success and self-surveillance. The critique of and demand for political and structural discrimination is replaced by the requirement to consume and by the strong sexualisation of culture. It is those mechanisms that bound women to the expenditure of beauty commodities and sold it as an act of empowerment, self-care and leisure time activity. The rise and popularity of social media amplified this shift by giving users access to intimate parts of other users' lives and shifting the gaze from an outside, male gaze towards an inwards, self-policing gaze.

   The example of the Body Positivity Movement demonstrates how post and neoliberal feminism only disguises to liberate women from beauty ideals while binding them to new ones. Now, everybody has to feel like a supermodel no matter what shape and size somebody has. While the founders of the Body Positivity Movement fought for political and social shifts, brands like Dove utilise it to drive product sales. Gillette Venus and Victoria's Secret took a drastic and strategic shift in their communication strategy. The brands distanced themselves from exclusive and male-dominated ideas of female beauty towards an inclusive and female pleasing visual aesthetic. Although it is welcoming to see a less narrow idea of white, tall, slim and flawless expression of beauty, it is clear that brands are capitalising on the standards they previously perpetuated and have only moved away from because of consumer demand. Therefore, their sincere interests stay questionable.

   In the practical part of this thesis, the popular notion of self-agency within a post and neoliberal feminist structure is addressed by giving the digital face of the author to an audience to be optimised. It reflects the current climate in which everything, even beauty procedures, are labelled feminist and empowering, questioning women's self-agency over their appearance.

3.
NEW IDENTITIES

3.1. Introduction

From the previous chapter, it becomes clear that over the past decades femininity in western media such as in magazines, TV, advertising, film and online, has emphasised, "Individualisation, choice, sexualization and a preoccupation with the body and consumer culture" (Toffoletti 2014, 109). Sociologist Kim Toffoletti examined this postfeminist sensibility by analysing the reality makeover television genre through the lens of Baudrillard's theories of transaesthetics (1992), simulation (1994) and hyperreality (1994) in her essay *Baudrillard, Postfeminism and the Image Makeover* (2014). Since its publication, social media has gained popularity. Therefore it is of interest to extend her research by investigating social media's relationship to Baudrillard. Because social media platforms involve the display of the self, in hope, or expectations of approval in the forms of likes and comments, it indicates the improvement of status through the acquisition of forms of cultural and social capital. While in TV makeover programs the chosen protagonist gets assisted by a team of professionals, social media pretends that it is all in a person's individual hands. Toffoletti (2014) observes that consumption, transformation and self-betterment practises increasingly characterise the articulation of successful feminine subjectivities. This has only increased with the popularity and presence of social media platforms.

"Crucially", as sociologist Stephanie Genz (2011, 125) points out, "it is insufficient to view this kind of *body work* as a form of female oppression, in which women are manipulated into conforming to a patriarchally-inscribed beauty ideal." For her, "The postfeminist feminine body questions the causal link between beauty, oppression, and inauthenticity by highlighting a paradoxical form of female/feminine embodiment that is experienced as *authentic* while being (self) created. In effect, authenticity emerges as a new discursive ideal in postfeminist media culture that stresses the possibility of self-realisation in the absence of essentialist conceptualizations of the self". According to Genz the postfeminist media culture builds a paradox between the "real" and "unreal", the "authentic" and the "inauthentic."

With the popularity of social media, it seems as if people identify increasingly with their online profiles. Philosophers Hans-Georg Moeller and Paul J. D'Ambrosio coined in their book *You and your Profile: Identity after Authenticity* (2021) the term *profilicity* to explain profile-based identity work. Moeller and D'Ambrosio (2021, 3) define the correlation between social media, selfie culture and identity as follows, "Producing images of oneself— of one's face or body, of one's activities or possessions— in order to present them to others is at the heart of profile-based identity work. Social media has allowed an unprecedented number of individuals to engage in this work at an unprecedented scale. The presence of social media in people's lives has expanded explosively: millions spend several hours each day *interactively* participating in the merging roles of producer and audience. As a consequence, photo editing apps have become exceedingly popular. They are an important tool for manufacturing profiles, and thus profilicity."

Despite their huge popularity, selfies are criticised for being narcissistic, vain and reflecting an obsession with one's appearance. They lack individuality and

authenticity, especially when edited with an app. A reaction to stated criticism is that one should not lose sight of what true beauty is, which is pure and unfiltered nature. Instead of becoming a mass absence of uniqueness and originality, people must hold on to their individuality. This is not to say that social media use is not associated with major problems, such as stress, anxiety and addiction. As addressed in this thesis the high investment in one's self-presentation manifests itself in excessive time and money investments in new technologies, "And the capitalist commodification of beauty" (Moeller and D'Ambrosio 2021, 6). However, looking at the phenomenon from a philosophical standpoint offers new insights and understanding of it.

3.2. Simulating Liberation

On social media, thousands of user images depicting their bodies and faces are uploaded daily. These images can be edited with face filters or apps like FaceTune. In this process, a filter is applied to a photo or video that overlays the face of the person depicted, changing the external appearance. In most cases, it retains some primary aspects of the person's appearance, such as eye and hair colour, but manipulates the facial features such that the nose appears smaller, the eyes larger and the skin more even. As a result, there are a large number of seemingly perfect bodies and faces that conform to mainstream notions of beauty. Yet there is also a counter-trend: under the term body positivity, users show off their not-so-"perfect" bodies. No matter what the narrative emphasises, the celebrational depiction of the female body as an objective that can be observed stays. In that frame, social media opens the opportunity for everybody to upload their images in comparison to traditional media in which only a small percentage of models or participants of a TV show are granted the opportunity to be styled and staged by professionals and put on display. Therefore, one could think that female users of social media position themselves against popular media representations accused of depicting unrealistic feminine beauty ideals because it is in their interest to go against such tendencies. Instead of social change, which builds part of the essential work of feminist politics, gets replaced by a narrative of individual female transformation and display. Especially, the urge to resist male ideas of femininity echoes the consciousness of second-wave feminism in social media by placing self-love and the search for one's authentic inner self as key topics. Meanwhile, the focus on appearance, the sexualisation of the self and the heteronormative feminity which are common on social media characterise feminist critique of it. Social media indicates a crucial element of a postfeminist notion in which the feminist can not be clearly distinguished from the anti-feminist anymore. Therefore, the question arises if in postfeminism the allocation of either feminist or anti-feminist is possible (Toffoletti 2014).

Because the act of exposing the naked body of a woman becomes celebrated as evidence of women's agency by some feminists, it does not suggest that the media construes an illusion of empowerment for women that leads to a quantifiable or absolute truth about gender inequality. It would be an error to take this position as it would mean misunderstanding the contemporary cultural condition, as described by Baudrillard (1994), where signs conceal nothing but become realities. According to him, this occurs when signs are unable to be distinguished from the reality they are supposed to represent. In the absence of material referents, signs can only refer to themselves, leading to, "The implosion of one pole into another, the short circuit between poles of every differential system of meaning, the effacement of terms and of distinct oppositions, and thus that of the medium and the real" (Baudrillard 2007, 102). Virtualization has increased the ability of signs to influence social relations, including those of gender, over and above the reality that was once understood to precede representation. Toffoletti (2014) says that in order to understand today's feminist dilemma, one must ask how one can discuss feminist agendas or values when everything is potentially feminist due to the erosion of distinctions?

It becomes almost impossible in a postfeminist media climate to draw a line between what is feminist and what is anti-feminist because sexual objectification

has become a sign of agency and is understood as empowering. Baudrillard (2005) has explained a similar situation within the art canon. From a trash bag to a urinal to a plant or graffiti anything can be contemporary art. There is no clear line between art and non-art anymore. Art becomes everything and at the same time nothing at all. The value system in which people differentiate art from everyday objects or organisms becomes destabilised. The art known in a pre-contemporary art world from the past is lost. But precisely because art is now everywhere and anything, results in the erasure of it. The same phenomenon happens with feminism in a postfeminist culture in which anything can be declared feminist, no matter if that entails the right to have an abortion or undergo a cosmetic procedure. When everything is feminist its meaning gets lost. It becomes so widely spread that feminism becomes emptied. It has to be said that this does not mean that feminism and its political and social efforts have been achieved and have become superfluous nor that people do not believe in it anymore. It rather means that because of its excessive use and depiction there has become too much of it. As articulated through feminist discourses of freedom, choice, and rights, female emancipation has been infused into all images, actions, signs, and discourses of postfeminist culture. As feminism gets caught up in a play of signs and appearances, the result is a society of simulations in which everything seems to be against its nature (Toffoletti 2014).

On social media, users share intimate stories of their lives and put their bodies on display which they would unlikely do otherwise. On TikTok, short sketches of funny moments, daily situations or just random stories are popular with the hope that other users can relate and react to them. Users only understand them if they also understand the context the signs take place. This online world, which becomes more real than the real world, is described by Baudrillard (1994) as hyperreal. Although social media's content takes place in the real world it is not a realistic image of the world's reality. If meaning comes when signs work together then the use of constructed realities on social media becomes the norm and therefore reality. The expectations of the social media world will no longer align with users' expectations of the actual real world. Therefore, when we experience social media we actually live in a simulation. Although social media tries to be real there is very little reality in it at all. Users do not notice it because either they can not tell what is real anymore or they prefer the simulation.

To go back to the previous example of the new Victoria's Secret strategy, is the new ambassador Megan Rapinoe depicted in the campaign the real Megan Rapinoe or is it a carefully constructed, stylised and curated simulation of what she and the brand want to portray? After all, Megan Rapinoe became, just like Victoria's Secret lingerie, a product of the brand who sells herself. A similar situation occurs with the Dove or Gillette Venus campaigns. The audience does not know if the protagonists depicted are as content and carefree in their bodies as they suggest in the campaign. Furthermore, their bodies are displayed closer and more intimately than viewers would see them in real life. They become lined up for visual consumption. This creates a hyperreality in which the protagonists become a simulation of who they actually are. The more diverse bodies promoted in such campaigns are as much of a simulation as the highly perfected, airbrushed models seen in other commercials. This is because any meaning of the female body can only be transmitted and understood in a wider network of sign exchange. Social media and body positivity campaigns communicate that the acquisition of authentic femininity is possible and that this authentic self can be achieved besides all the simulated images of fashion models and cosmetically enhanced bodies.

It is all about taking agency over your own body and self-empowerment no matter your social position. Body agency and empowerment will free women from

restricting beauty ideals and gender expectations. As discussed before this is easy in a postfeminist context in which everything and anything can be read as a sign of women's equality. Yet, as Genz (2011, 130) examines, "At the same time, the project of self-betterment is an ongoing task, demanding the consumption of increasing amounts of information, data, signs and procedures to continually re-create and improve one's body, and accordingly, oneself."

In that way the body is a consumer object to be managed, transformed and worked on, even if only mentally. Compared to the slim, white, tall, beauty model the body positivity campaigns put less focus on what the ideal body should look like. Their emphasis lies within the realm that every body is acceptable; you just have to learn to love it. The focus is set on feeling confident and sexy in your body rather than its transformation to become skinnier and younger. It is about somebody's attitude rather than changing the body's physical appearance. Although the beauty standard to be met is not as clear in a body positivity campaign, it still does not offer a more progressive alternative because looking beautiful signifies feeling beautiful. Instead, following Baudrillard (1992, 10), the advertising of all styles, figures, ages and sizes leads to a "trans" state, in which, "Everything aestheticizes itself." This is described in a YouTube comment (2020) by a user on a video that addresses the current beauty standards, "I miss the days when only fashion magazine covers and supermodels had to be perfect." With the body positivity movement, any body can be aestheticised, there is no fixed realm of signs anymore that declare what is beautiful, ugly, good, bad, right or wrong. It all can be shifted and reassigned according to the given context. Baudrillard's notion of the transaesthetic, however, does not mean women's liberation from patriarchal beauty ideals. Rather the transaesthetic creates an environment in which everybody is put on display from which nobody can opt out. Baudrillard (1993, 16) states that this generalised aestheticization results in a situation in which, "All forms of culture – not excluding anti-cultural ones – are promoted and all models of representation and anti-representation are taken on board."

3.3. Sincerity, Authenticity and Profilicity

3.3.1. Insincere Sincerity and Inauthentic Authenticity

Against the background of Baudrillard's theories of transaesthetics (1992), simulation (1994) and hyperreality (1994), it is crucial to understand social media, "selfie obsession" and related phenomena such as cosmetic procedures and celebrity worshipping in terms of profilicity. According to Moeller and D'Ambrosio and as described in their book *You and your Profile: Identity after Authenticity* (2021) a common misperception is the myth that something like "true authenticity" exists. This bias is attributable to the fact that people adhere to an identity creation based on authenticity which makes them believe that something like authentic individuals and genuine beauty exists. Social media, therefore, threatens their identity and value systems. As a result, authenticity gets romanticised and nostalgia and good-bad dichotomies (such as natural vs. artificial) evolve. This does not mean that selfie-taking and photo editing apps are authentic. Rather, it is questionable why one would measure such phenomena against authenticity? The vehement defence of authenticity depicts how society is shifting towards profilicity and naturally tries to cling on to it since much of how one understands the world is based on the illusion of authenticity (Moeller D'Ambrosio 2021).

It is important to address the identity technologies known so far: sincerity and authenticity. Lionel Trilling defines in his book *Sincerity and Authenticity* (1972) the first as a type of identity creation that is formed by the social roles one was born into. From birth, one was not only assigned to certain gender and class roles, but also to one's religion and profession. This means that identification was defined by the people surrounding you like your family members or the church. Identification took place through a commitment to the roles people were given and took pride in genuinely carrying out those roles. Families served as the core social unit where sincere identity formation took place, developed, and was confirmed. Sincerity was the most popular identity technology in premodern times. With modernity, this system of predefined roles was disrupted because people suddenly found themselves exposed to a bigger variety of choices. For instance, a son left the family farm to move to the nearby city to work. Suddenly, he was exposed to a higher degree of choice regarding marriage, profession and religion. Therefore, the new mobility society experienced made it more dynamic not just in a literal sense but in a social sense as well. People started to question the roles they were born into and did not simply want to accept and follow them any longer. Their identity was not almost pre-made for them at birth anymore and self-agency became possible and even desired. With this the quest for somebody's true identity which was to be found deep inside of oneself started. Receiving an identity from the outside suddenly seemed inauthentic and facade-like, while the true self must be found somewhere underneath. The metaphor of a "mask" which covers up one's face to interact in society became a symbol to depict how somebody's true identity, hence self, was hidden and had to be broken free. The journey to break free from this mask seems to be the foundation of identity work called authenticity.

According to Moeller and D'Ambrosio (2021, 13) the term authenticity accurately describes how people feel about their identity, however, they question if finding

one's authentic self is possible, "How can we trust authenticity? Did we present our real faces to others, and did they show their true faces to us? Who can say for sure? What does an entirely original face look like? And if it looks like something, is it entirely original? What authentic hairstyle genuinely represents your true self?" Because such questions are difficult to answer, self-help manuals and books are popular. What seems to be forgotten is the intrinsic paradox of such manuals: by following somebody's advice on how to become authentic one already undertakes steps recommended by somebody else. How can it, therefore, be authentic? Nevertheless, people are expected and aspire to live up to their authentic selves. A modern woman is not automatically subscribed to the role of a mother and housewife anymore. Rather she is expected to compete, "In a hypermodern capitalist economy by discovering her calling, becoming independent, finding a partner uniquely suited to her, raising the most special children, and, of course, staying true to herself throughout" (Moeller and D'Ambrosio 2021, 15). On top of that, she is expected to always look youth- and joyful and take care of her appearance. If not she is seen as lazy and not in control of her life (see chapter *Techno Beauty*).

3.3.2. Second-Order Observation and the General Peer

Just like modernity initiated a shift from sincerity to authenticity, people are currently facing a new transformation due to new technologies, especially social media. Profilicity gains growing popularity while authenticity is fading away. In authenticity and sincerity, people in somebody's surroundings validate a person's identity through an interaction that takes place physically. With people's lives taking increasingly place online this validation cycle is moved to the virtual while *real life* interactions are becoming less important. Moeller and D'Ambrosio (2021) refer to the people who give somebody confirmation about their identity as their *peers*. The presence of such peers is crucial in sincerity and authenticity. That somebody is a good daughter, a responsible employee or a compassionate teacher needs to be confirmed by their parents, bosses or students. People can only perform their roles if their peers in their surroundings confirm it. In the same way, somebody's true authentic self must be confirmed by peers who are authentic themself which happens in their presence.

 Because social media happens online the lack of the present peer is often seen as making it superficial and fake. It seems that because the peers are virtual their validation is not taken as seriously as in sincerity and authenticity. However, in profilicity the present peer is replaced by the *general peer* which are people somebody somehow relates to but does not necessarily know personally. In fact, in profilcity the general peers are more important than the peers in your presence because it is taken for granted that the immediate peers see the person anyway. The

public profile of a person is therefore not addressed to them but rather to the general peer. For instance, that one's close friend likes a photo of oneself is not as attractive as having hundreds or thousands of people who do not know the user personally liking the photo. Actually, the general peer validating somebody's photo is even seen as more desirable because it is taken for granted that friends like your photo as a gesture to be a good friend. In profilcity people orient their profile and their identity towards people they do not know personally. Confirmation of one's identity is measured by the number of likes, comments or clicks the posted content boasts and can not be measured by the sincere and authentic responses of individuals. The interaction does not make a user understand what somebody else has thought or thinks. It can very well be measured in data, showing what is happening in society instead of in the mind of an individual (Moeller and D'Ambrosio 2021).

When validation for one's identity is credited through a virtual profile and not through physical presence, it shifts the way people observe what they are validating. Moeller and D'Ambrosio use the term *second-order observation* which was coined by sociologist Niklas Luhmann (2013) to describe the mentioned phenomenon. It shows how people are seeing the world, not through their own experiences but, instead, through the lens of others, "The observation of the observers— that is a shift from a consciousness of reality to a description of descriptions or the perception of what others say or do not say— has become the advanced mode of perceiving the world in modern society. This is true in all major functional domains, in science no less than in the economy, in art as much as in politics" (Luhmann 2013, 100). Related to social media this means that people do not simply attend a show of an artist to experience it in the present but rather to curate their online profiles. Therefore, they experience it as it is being seen, or will be seen. The same is for somebody's appearance. Under conditions of profilicity the point is no longer to be seen but rather to be seen as being seen. This means that the online appearance requests time and investment in one's self-image. Such notions are often seen and labelled as narcissistic. Moeller and D'Ambrosio counter (2021, 42), "From our own perspective, such moral posturing is misplaced. Rather than being a case of mass narcissism, the concern with one's self-image and profile reflects first and foremost the social proliferation of second-order observation. It has taken hold in all social systems, including the *intimacy system* of personal relations. To perceive that one is seen, and how one is seen, is only rational in a society where second-order observation prevails. In fact, it represents an advanced mode of perception that is more complex, more socially attuned, and therefore more mature than clinging to the problematic notion of some authentic appearance, or personal identity, which is supposed to exist independently of being seen. Arguably, the idea that there is such an original appearance of oneself, unseen by others, totally unaffected by society's gaze— or, in other words, the idea that one can exist in society without vanity, with no concern at all for how one appears to others, devoid of any reputation— can be regarded as much more vain and selfish than simply accepting that one's own image emerges only through the observations of others." Under conditions of second-order observation, prolific identity work never ends because it is exposed and sensitive to fast-changing and trend-based contexts. Therefore, somebody's appearance has to be reshaped and re-presented regularly to receive continuous feedback and validation on how one is seen as being seen by the general peer (Moeller and D'Ambrosio 2021).

In contemporary society, second-order observation is ubiquitous. Under its conditions, profilicity makes it possible to achieve identity.

3.3.3. Social-Validation Feedback Loops

For Moeller and D'Ambrosio (2021) it is crucial to understand that eventually, all identity modes are paradoxical. But it is precisely because of this paradox that they are useful and necessary for human existence. They help people make sense of who they are and what they value. Through identity, humans appear to be more than just mere biological organisms. Identity gives a sense of self and individuality. Sincerity builds identity by paradoxically appearing as if the social roles one finds oneself in are god-given, morally correct or declared by nature without an alternative. If people question the role assigned to them by birth, it is their fault and they have to try harder to accomplish it but it is never the fault of the role itself. Authenticity on the other hand paradoxically claims that an original and independent self is possible, one simply has to find it - even if what true authenticity is has to be learned and internalised by relying on others. The paradox of profilicity is that the identity has to act as if it was real although it is deeply fake and everybody knows that. No matter how fake the identity is, once it is presented, people are expected to live up to it and are held accountable for it.

Role commitment is key to sincerity while the proof of originality is crucial to authenticity and constant curation of identity, in order to be presented to the general peer, is requested for profilicity. This mechanism between investment into an identity and validation of it by the general peer is described as *social-validation feedback loops* by Sean Parker who was the first president of Facebook. In a video interview with the news website Axios, which was uploaded on YouTube (2017), he explains that the goal of Facebook was to give its users a bit of dopamine from time to time to make people addicted to the platform. Seeing that somebody liked or commented on a photo a user posted releases dopamine in the brain which then leads to users posting more content for more approval. Like that Facebook and similar platforms tapped into the human need to build identity and get accepted for it. Moeller and D'Ambrosio (2021, 52-53) explain, "While dopamine may play its part in how Facebook and similar networks function, social media thrive within the much wider and more complex framework of social-psychological structures and function on a much broader scale than mere brain chemistry. The social validation function that Parker rightly sees at the heart of Facebook's addictive effects offers as its reward more than a mere feeling. It offers affirmation of our identity, of who we are. This makes the addiction extremely powerful."

By positively engaging with the created content of somebody's profile in the forms of comments or likes, users get feedback from the general peer about the acceptance of their identity. By posting a photo of something users think of as worth curating their profiles with, they request acceptance. But simply posting one photo which generates approval is not enough. Social media platforms require constant curation and updates of a profile in order to stay relevant to the general peer otherwise it is dismissed as invalid. This is what profilicity has in common with fashion. Fashion must constantly prove that it is fashionable in order to appear natural, even if it is contrived and artificial. This continues until a trend reaches the point where it is considered outdated and its artificiality comes to the fore. Fashion and profilicity share the same paradox of having to constantly update themselves in order not to be considered artificial. At this point, the author wants to suggest adding the term *branding* to the word *curating* which is commonly used by Moeller and D'Ambrosio (2021), to describe the investments made into profile building. While curating stems from the Latin word "cura", which means "to take care" it expresses the importance people see in updating their profiles. However, people do not only take care of their

profiles but rather see their online profiles as being a possibility to not only exhibit but also market their persona as their personal brand. Just like brands use their communication strategy, people can test their personas by putting them out into society and continuously revising, updating and refining them. While people become more like brands, brands become more like people too. Terms like a *brand DNA* to refer to the core values of a brand are commonly used in marketing and branding practices. Moreover, as discussed in the *Consuming Feminism* chapter of this thesis, brands appear increasingly political and are even expected to participate in activism and have a sociopolitical, informed standpoint, even if that is completely vain, trivial and on the surface level the fact that they communicate it to the outside through their profiles is what is crucial here. In the same way, people can brand themselves through their profiles, too, by communicating their core values to the outside world to curate and brand their personal brand. As demonstrated by media personality Kim Kardashian, those human core values can be beauty, wealth and luxury as these are what drive her symbolic capital. Forming identity through profiles, therefore not only requests curation but also the branding of oneself to gain traffic and following.

3.3.4. Autonomy and Algorithms

A person is not limited to having only one persona online. It is normal to have different profiles and therefore different personas for different purposes. For instance, a person can have an active Instagram, LinkedIn, Tinder and Academia profile at the same time, yet most likely will curate and brand them differently and according to what feels like the most suitable. They all form and build a person's identity and enable this identity to be flexible. Identity is shaped more freely and according to its context in profilicity. It is not seen as a contradiction to depict leisure time activities on one profile while having others about academic interest and relationship status. People are requested to adopt quickly and according to a broad context which makes identity formation based on online profiles so popular and reliable. The multiplicity and flexibility that profilicity offers do not make it fragmented or fractured; it does not, "Reflect a broken self or a shattered ethos" (Moeller and D'Ambrosio, 69). It offers a solution to today's rapidly changing and diverse society in which one adapts to highly dynamic social-validation feedback loops. In second-order observation, profilic identity is not created by looking inwards to find out who we are, but by being aware of how others see us, because profilicity is based on the public presentation of the self. Since the general peer is not physically present or in the case of algorithms and AI not even human, in profilicity social-validation feedback loops are crucial to understanding how others see a profile and offer people the opportunity to design and brand their profiles accordingly (Moeller and D'Ambrosio).

Algorithms and AI are effective solutions for profilicity. While the observation of the self in authenticity required self-observation (first-order), the observation of observers (second-order), which is required in profilicity, demands advanced technologies and is perfectly suited to algorithms and AI. Moeller and D'Ambrosio (2021, 73) understand algorithms and AI, "As procedural and statistical operations simulating the general peer." In other words, algorithms and AI are not interested in suggesting content that most likely connects with a person's "inner truth and soul" but rather which content a person is most likely to click next and bind them longer to the platform.

Because algorithms and AI can read and understand profiles so accurately they can predict what a person is most likely to buy or make people vote for a particular party. This is why discussions about the imposed surveillance of algorithms and AI taking away people's privacy and even agency have been prominent in the media in recent years. Although the concerns about the thread to individual authonomy are real, Moeller and D'Ambosio (2021, 72) raise the question of whether the "individual authonomy" at risk has ever been protected, to begin with. Instead, they suggest that the strive for individual authonomy was a narrative employed to construct identity in an era of authenticity. "Rather than seeing the success of big data and rise of the *surveillance society* as signalling the end of authenticity and the curbing of our individual autonomy, we might see them as the end of the period in which we could credibly conceive of ourselves in this way. Maybe, given the social and technological developments of recent decades, it no longer makes much sense to speak of human beings as *autonomous individuals*; and maybe we must realize that we exist in a highly complex society and are embedded deeply in its social networks. Therein control, especially by the single individual, is limited. How we look and what we think and feel are highly contingent upon the lifeworld we inhabit, and it seems much of these aspects of life are simply not up to us. Maybe they never were." The current discourse of surveillance which makes individuals inauthentic and cuts their authonomy suggests a deep nostalgia for authenticity and the authentic self as well as the idealisation of individual authonomy. As discussed at the beginning of this chapter neither of those is possible or could ever have been. The comparison of the surveillance society to authenticity and measuring it towards a technology it is not capable of leads to the blindness of a societal shift towards profilicity. Whether for better or worse, surveillance is now so common and so efficient, not because it hinders authenticity, but because it is so effective when combined with profilicity.

While all forms of identity creation bear a downside in form of stress and anxiety, e.g. in sincerity that people are not fulfilling their given role as perfect as others expect them to and do not find themselves in it or in authenticity because one can not find who one truly is and what makes this person special and unique, profilicity demands constant attention towards profiles. Everything from work to holidays has to be evaluated and curated, checked if it suits the personal self-brand and is suitable for the platform. It is crucial to be opinionated but not too opinionated as one can get *cancelled* or held accountable for everything. Once something is online it is there to be reviewed by the general peer which can cause extreme anxiety and stress for people. This condition produces mediocrity as everybody wants to be seen as different, but different in the same way as everybody else (Moeller and D'Ambrosio 2021). This is exactly why Kylie Jenner is famous for her face, not because it looks so different from everyone else's, but because it is impeccably different. She has managed to create a face that is different from everyone else's precisely because it is mediocre and not the other way around.

It is crucial to stress, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, that this does not make profilicity more suppressive than sincerity or more fake and paradoxical than authenticity as all forms of identity creation have such tendencies. If profilicity is different from sincerity or authenticity then it is so in its complexity. Moeller and D'Ambrosio (2021) note that because of the flexible nature of profilicity it allows for different forms of identity formations to coexist, even including them. For instance, one can always withdraw profilicity by taking time off and committing to role-based identity creation (sincerity) at family events or in a religious community. In the same way, somebody can feel a true connection of friendship with a person and experience authenticity. However, often such experiences will then be rendered and displayed in profilicity. In that way, they enter one's profilic identity after all.

3.4. Conclusion

Baudrillard's writings on transaesthetics (1992), simulation (1994) and hyperreality (1994) argue that the gestures of female emancipation, along with its cultural representation, can only simulate liberation, while presenting the illusion of female empowerment cloaked in the guise of choice, rights, and freedom. The focus always lies on the betterment of the self, which has to be improved through the consumption of goods. Gender equality is sidetracked and replaced by the myth of self-agency. Baudrillard illustrates the paradox of how what was considered anti-feminist is turned into a sign of feminism.

Moeller and D'Ambrosio (2021) explain how society is witnessing a shift towards profilicity, which offers a contemporary form of identity creation in times of digital profiles. Like sincerity and authenticity, which were previously widely accepted forms of identity creation, profilicity is intrinsically paradoxical by wanting to appear real although it is deeply fake. It functions under conditions of second-order observation and by validation of the general peer. This means that one sees oneself as being seen and validates the acceptance of one's identity from a mostly unknown mass of online personas. This social media interaction leads to social-validation feedback loops in which one gives and receives affirmation from other users. Furthermore, profilicity is ideally suited to algorithms and AI, as interactions in the form of likes, comments or reposts can be easily collected, measured and evaluated. Society is becoming increasingly suited to profilicity, and digitalisation is having an unprecedented impact on accelerating this process.

It is relevant to remark that critics often see profilicity as the problem and sincerity or authenticity as the solution to it. Critics who see social media, for example, as a threat to authenticity automatically see authenticity as the only and ideal way to build identity. This idealisation and romanticisation of identity technologies are problematic as it promotes judgement and blindness to the potential challenges of said technology. For this reason, Moeller and D'Ambrosio (2021, 251) suggest that it is important to adopt a, "Suspicious attitude towards all of them," rather than defending one type of identity formation as the only correct one. Accordingly, it is crucial to look at all forms with scepticism and to keep them at a distance in order to observe them neutrally.

People who identify with their online profiles increasingly feel the desire to look like their optimised digital selves in their physical bodies (see chapter *Techno beauty*). As discussed in the previous chapter, in a post and neoliberal feminist climate, cosmetic procedures offer the optimal conditions for such a desire, as it is perceived as a sign of self-empowerment and self-agency. The current discourse on cosmetic procedures thus serves as a tool and profilicity as the motivation since the desire for identity is deeply rooted in being human to give people a sense of who they are in the world. The practical part of this thesis poses the question of the design of the digital self. Moeller and D'Ambrosio's theory of profilicity says a lot about the current circumstances of identity formation, but how will people create their digital bodies in the future? The artefact of this project offers visitors the opportunity to experience and question what this might be like.

4.
TECHNO BEAUTY

4.1. Introduction

In the 1980s and 1990s, authors and professors Sherry Turkle and Donna J. Haraway studied human interaction with new technologies such as computers. In her book *The Second Self, Computers and the Human Spirit* (1984), Turkle explores how the computer affects our awareness of ourselves, one another and our relationship to the world - not as a tool but as an integral part of our social and psychological lives. "Technology," she writes, "catalyzes changes not only in what we do but in how we think." For her, the computer is unlike a clock or a telescope, a machine that "thinks", which can challenge, "Our notions not only of time and distance but of mind" (Turkle 1984, 18-19). Haraway, in turn, imagines cyberspace as a place free of patriarchy and gender stereotypes. In her book *Simians, Cyborgs and Women* (1991, 155) Haraway describes the construction of a new identity in cyberspace as a, "Postmodernist identity out of otherness, difference, and specificity." Yet, 40 years later the opposite seems to be the case. The oppressive patriarchal and neoliberal structures found in the real world are reproduced and reinforced in the digital sphere, embedded in the logic of personal choice and pleasure. This is particularly evident in female beauty ideals and the culture that comes with them.

Social media encourages constant self-expression, and body and face optimisation, in the form of beauty filters and photo editing apps, is readily available and widely used. Despite the heavy investment in one's own profile, social media offers the opportunity to gain intimate insights into other people's shared lives, leading to constant comparison with one's own life. Since digitally optimised images are difficult to decipher, an artificial beauty ideal has become popular in recent years that is only possible through technology. It seems that this phenomenon is amplified by the popularity of celebrities such as media personality Kylie Jenner and model Bella Hadid. Both of them became famous for their impeccable faces and bodies. Kylie Jenner's face served as a template for so many Instagram filters it became known as the *Instagram-face*. Although it is widely speculated that Kylie Jenner and Bella Hadid had plastic surgery, Botox and fillers, it has become a desire among women to look like them. Face filters on Instagram, SnapChat or TikTok make facial adjustments easily accessible and give users an idea of what they will look like with fuller lips, a slimmer nose, higher cheekbones, and so on. Together with neoliberal feminist structures and the identification with one's own online profiles in times of profilicity, this leads to an interplay between the digital and the physical where both sides converge.

4.2. Input: Internalising Beauty

Extremely high cheekbones, puffy, heart-shaped lips (known as Russian Lips), with the upper lip as big as the lower lip, a tiny, cute nose, eyes which are tilted upwards (known as Fox Eyes) and a well-defined jawline along with smooth, tanned skin. Described is the current beauty ideal which is often referred to as Instagram-face. However, it very rarely occurs naturally and is usually only possible with the help of Botox, fillers and cosmetic surgery. Instagram-face is visible on social media and is amplified by face filters, photo editing apps, as well as celebrities and virtual influencers. It is so present that it has led to a phenomenon called *SnapChat dysmorphia*. Meaning that patients want to look more like their filtered selfies in their physical bodies. Furthermore, Instagram-face's strong ties to social media are associated with a younger audience's increasing interest in beauty procedures. For example, a BBC article from 2021 says that England banned Botox and fillers for under 18-year-olds after the number of requests rose rapidly. In a CBC Radio podcast titled *Generation Botox* (2020), Dr Asif Pirani of the Toronto Plastic Surgery Centre explains that millennials' growing interest in cosmetic procedures is partly due to a change in the culture that surrounds them, "I think it terms of Millennials they are different creatures than what we used to see in plastic surgery. I do not mean that in a bad way. What I mean is that millennials are more open to these kinds of things. They do not think of plastic surgery as having a stigma associated with it. And whether it is good or bad, in some circles having plastic surgery procedures is almost a social status. For some millennials having lip fillers is just like having a handbag from Louis Vuitton." Dr Pirani goes on to explain that there have always been certain types of global beauty ideals and probably always will be, such as clear skin, symmetry or high cheekbones. But there are others that are changing, like the Fox Eye or Russian Lips trend. These trends have been influenced not only by the media but also by new technologies in the cosmetics industry. When doctors have invested in a technical device, they want to push the procedures to recruit the costs incurred.

   Celebrity makeup artist Colby Smith describes the popular Instagram-face in an article published in The New Yorker (Tolentino 2019), "It's like an unrealistic sculpture. Volume on volume. A face that looks like it's made out of clay." He links Instagram-face to the notion that the world is getting increasingly visual and, "People want to upgrade the way they relate to it." In the same article journalist, Jia Tolentino notices something odd about the racial aspect of Instagram-face. She observes that it was as if the algorithm, in its urge to display only the most popular hits, tends to bring about a beauty ideal that favours white women which can create a look of racial ambiguity. Smith agrees and determines the following racial characteristics of Instagram-face, "We're talking an overly tanned skin tone [for a white person], a South Asian influence with the brows and eye shape, an African-American influence with the lips, a Caucasian influence with the nose, a cheek structure that is predominantly Native American and Middle Eastern."

   The racial ambiguity of Instagram-face is particularly problematic in the context of eugenics, i.e. the scientifically false and immoral theory of "racial improvement" and "planned breeding" to perfect human beings. In Brazil, for

example, after the abolition of slavery in the early 20th century, white elites were concerned because the majority of the population was racially mixed. They argued that the country would improve if they allowed white immigrants from Europe. The white elites believe that the mixture of the white immigrants with the Brazilians that were already there would create a more white and therefore more beautiful nation. The white Brazilian elites deliberately tried to eradicate indigenous and black people, seeing them as negative and inferior. Traces of the eugenic history in Brazil are still relevant today in the form of a law commonly referred to as the *right to beauty*, which made plastic surgery a national health issue and is now considered a human right. When plastic surgery became possible in the 1960s, one surgeon suggested that cosmetic surgery should be offered not only to those who could afford it but to everyone, hence the right to beauty. When Brazil eventually introduced a universal health care system, beauty was included. This means that there are hospitals in Brazil that offer fully founded cosmetic surgery. Alvaro Jarrin, who wrote a book called *The Biopolitics of Beauty: Cosmetic Citizenship and Affective Capital in Brazil* (2017), says in the same CBC Radio podcast (2020) mentioned above, that many working-class people in Brazil feel it is unfair that rich people are able to have plastic surgery and take care of their bodies however they want. It is hard to move up from the working class to the middle class, and working class people consider appearance to be a major factor in moving up in society. Jarrin goes on to explain that surgeons can gain symbolic capital by inventing a new technique, which motivates them to research new techniques on the working class people for the middle and upper classes. Dana Berkowitz, whose research for her book *Botox Nation: Changing the Face of America* (2017) shows that in the US, most women who are concerned about their appearance and undergo cosmetic procedures are middle and upper class women. This shows that the reasons for cosmetic surgery among predominantly white middle and upper class American women are fundamentally different from those of the predominantly brown and black Brazilian women of the working class.

Considering eugenics and the white beauty standard along with white privilege and the social class systems, it is highly problematic that white women appropriate facial features from indigenous and black people while still having the privilege of being white. It also shows once again that something is only accepted and considered desirable on a white body, while it is judged negative and imperfect on a black or brown body. In addition, the technical procedures and tools used are developed and tested on mostly non-white people whose oppressive systems have forced them to undergo them in the hope of moving up the social ladder.

4.3. Output: Implementing Beauty

Two major distinctions can be made between nonsurgical injectables. One of them being Botox, a purified and diluted form of the botulinum toxin, the world's deadliest toxin, and dermal fillers commonly referred to just as fillers. Botox Cosmetic is the first drug to have the registered trademark for botulinum toxin therapy and is still the most popular. Despite the fact that nowadays there are other companies selling the therapy, Botox the brand has become synonymous with the product. The name became so ingrained in people's vocabulary and consciousness that it is used as an adjective, "She is so Botoxed" (Berkowitz 2017, 3).

Botox was approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for cosmetic use in 2002 which made Botox available in Switzerland. So far, there are no statistics on the number of non-surgical interventions in Switzerland. However, statistics of countries like the US, Germany and France exist. The global survey of 2019, released by the International Society Of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons (ISAPS) in 2020, includes 16 countries and shows that globally the non-surgical injectables market is up by 8.6% compared to 2018. In Germany alone, 620,533 injectable procedures were made in 2019. From 2018 to 2019 the total number of non-surgical procedures in Germany increased by 20.71% in one year alone. It is the majority of women who undertake treatments. 9,508,832 women in 2019 used non-surgical procedures which is 87% of the global market. Further statistics show that 46.1%, i.e. almost half of Botox users are between 35 and 50 years old, 21.7% are between 19 and 34 years old, and the percentage of those aged 51 to 64 is 25.2%. This means that the age group of clients who use Botox preventively is almost as large as that of users who are in an age group where clear signs of ageing are visible. Thanks to injectables, cosmetic procedures are no longer just for people who want big changes or are struggling with the ageing process, but also for millennials and even generation Z members.

4.3.1. Botox's Power Through the Digital Age

According to an article in the Neue Zürcher Zeitung (2010) a vial of Botox, with 100 units of the active ingredient from market leader Allergan, costs a licensed provider approximately CHF 289. For the treatment of a frown line, 20 units of active ingredients are recommended according to the drug compendium. Per vial, a physician can treat at least two to four patients, depending on the task. If she treats a patient every half hour and charges CHF 500 per patient, the physician can achieve gross earnings of CHF 700 per hour or more. This makes Botox a time-efficient and profitable source of income for physicians.

Unlike in the US, it is prohibited in Switzerland to aggressively advertise drugs like Botox or fillers. However, in 2010 Swissmedic (Swiss Agency for Therapeutic Products) had to intervene because beauty clinics were increasingly designing websites with promotional content. Especially before-and-after images of clients play down the risks of injectables. Swissmedic ensured that

price indications for treatments were restricted and before-and-after pictures were banned. Nevertheless, on Instagram feeds and stories as well as in TikTok videos, well-established clinics in Switzerland use the platforms for promotional use. Before-and-after images, prices for lip fillers and special offers are regularly part of the social media marketing strategy of clinics such as Beauty2Go (figure 11-13). While paid national advertisements on billboards or TV are controllable, social media's regulations about what is appropriate to advertise and what not are the responsibilities of big tech companies like Meta. It seems as if, due to social media, beauty clinics can bypass government regulations. During a phone call with Lukas Jaggi (2021), who is the media spokesperson of online communication at Swissmedic, he confirmed the incidents from 2010. Jaggi also referred to the cantonal Departments of Health which, since then are regionally responsible for such issues. Béatrice Zürrer (2021), who works for the forensic medicine department of Zurich's Department of Health, responded to the author's email vaguely. The attached examples of promotional content on social media platforms put together by the author were not investigated. Instead, a general answer was given. Zürrer explained that according to an assessment by Swissmedic, photographs documenting the condition before treatment and after treatment are to be regarded as classic representations of guaranteed efficacy promises. These are not permitted even in the area of non-prescription medicinal products. Misleading claims about the efficacy or performance of a medical product, and thus classic before-and-after images in connection with a medical product, are not permitted. Furthermore, she stresses that, in practice, the websites of clinics are easier to check by the Department of Health because they are commonly accessible whereas advertising on Instagram, Facebook, etc. is often aimed at a specific, limited audience. In this regard, the department is particularly dependent on reports from the public about violations. If the Department of Health becomes aware of such violations, the clinics in question will be requested to immediately cease such advertising on all channels. If the department again becomes aware of further violations or if the inadmissible advertising continues to be offered, the Department of Health will file a criminal complaint. Zürrer (2022) also stated that the announcement of special offers or discount codes is prohibited as well because the Department of Health considers the raffling of such treatments to be inadmissible, as they can strongly influence the free formation of decision-making ability.

It seems as if the rapidly developing technology of social media is hard for Swissmedic and the health departments to control. It suggests that Swiss institutions are left behind by new technologies and passively watch instead of actively seeking solutions. This situation benefits the beauty industry, which is building an active presence on social media channels.
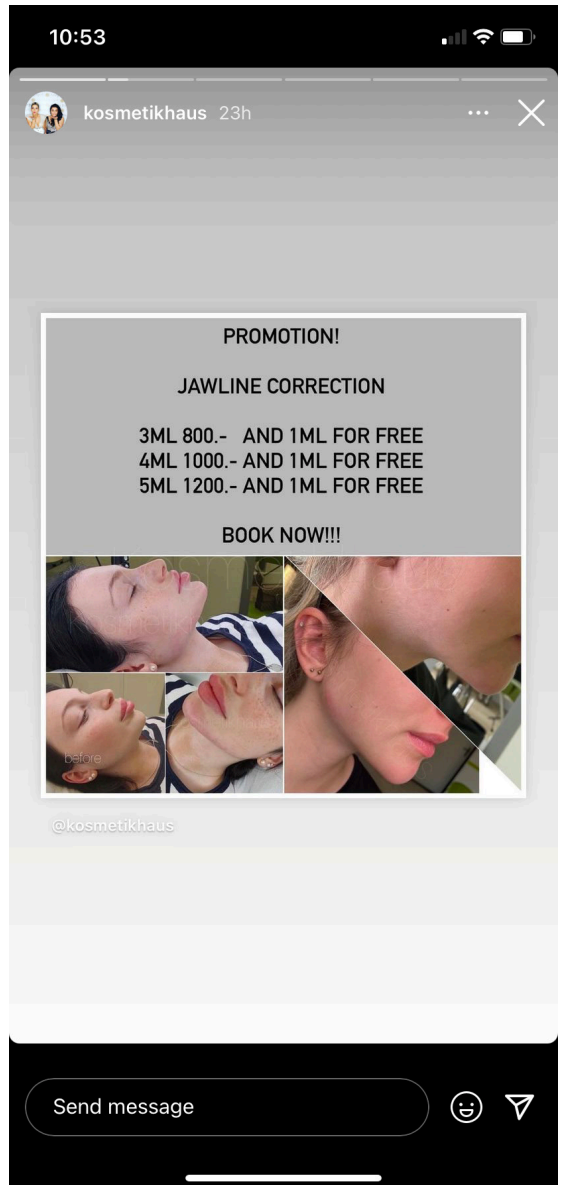
(figure 11)   © Kosmetikhaus

(figure 12)   © art_of_aesthetic

(figure 13)   © ykbeauty_praxis

(figure 14)   © Beauty2Go

4.3.2. Constructing the Botox Culture

Within the last ten years, injectable procedures have become less stigmatised which is partly due to the fact that millenials and generation Z grew closer to digital media. Influencers receive deals to visit beauty clinics to get injectables for free if they post about their experience positively. This means that those influencers have to make their visits to beauty clinics public and can not keep it a secret any longer. It seems that digital technology not only normalises but also encourages injectables. On the cover story of Time Magazine in 2015 journalist Joel Stein had already claimed that cosmetic procedures serve as a status symbol and predicted that they will become even more common and people who chose to age without technological intervention will eventually become the minority.

Being less stigmatised has obvious positive economical effects on the cash income of the pharma companies who produce the injectables as well as the beauty clinics and physicians. Beauty2Go, a Swiss beauty clinic, opened its fifth location only five years after launching the business. Founder Alexandra Lüönd says on the Beauty2Go website that the open and nonchalant injectables scene she discovered in Los Angeles inspired her to open a walk-in beauty business with reasonable prices and an LA spirit in Switzerland. Lüönd's vision is particularly evident in Beauty2Go's social media strategy. On Facebook, Instagram and TikTok, Beauty2Go posts content that is primarily aimed at a young audience. The company not only advertises with pictures of young, smiling girls to promote their latest lip filler offer but also posts pictures of its clients and actively engages with them. Going to Beauty2Go is not a secret anymore. It seems like an act of celebration, resulting in a feeling of euphoria and pure joy.

While the overall content and notion of social media platforms, especially Instagram, is to show highly stylised images of happiness and moments of success, the possible risks and side effects of having injectables are played down. Together with the biassed opinion of influencers posting their experiences with injectable, many customers are unaware of the potential danger they can cause. Ironically, the social media manager of Beauty2Go who was interviewed (2021) by the author was concerned about how thoughtless clients walk into the clinic. Dr Marc Panero Frade, a Beauty2Go physician who was also interviewed by the author (2021), felt that clients do not want to hear about possible complications. Their focus only lies on getting the injectables they want without consideration about what could possibly go wrong. This is hypocritical, considering how the same company naively - one could almost say aggressively - advertises on social media and then accuses customers of irresponsible behaviour.

At this point, it is important to emphasise that it is not the number of people who use injectables who normalise it but rather the culture surrounding it. According to the ISAPS statistic 620,533 injectable procedures were performed in Germany in 2019. This is 0.75 percent of the German population and because treatments have to be repeated once or two times a year the number of the population who actually had injectables is even lower. Rather, the normalisation of injectables refers to the emergence of discourses that portray it as a regulatory force in our cultural milieu.

4.4. Neo-Natural

The term *preventative Botox* is spread on social media and recommended by physicians. It encourages potential clients to start Botox before it is "too late", hence before wrinkles are visible. While Botox is used to paralyse facial muscles, fillers are used to plump up signs of wrinkles. Couching preventative injectables within discourses of responsibility legitimises the engagement in consumer beauty culture. This cultivates a neoliberal climate in which it is up to the responsibility of individual subjects to take responsibility for realising and securing their own well-being. Consequently, the problem of being ugly and thus the solution is left to the individual. Berkowitz (2017) exmplains that women who justify their use of injectables by relying on tropes of rugged individualism, produce social inequalities which stigmatise and devalue women who either refuse to do the same or do not have the financial capacity to participate in beauty culture. The idea of women's agency and their personal decision to use injectables take place in a web of structural inequalities and within contemporary social media culture, where ideologies of self-transformation and optimisation are present symbols of everyday life but are only accessible to a privileged handful (Berkowitz 2017).

If someone searches for Botox in the hashtag function on Tiktok, they are flooded with videos of users who appear to be no older than their mid-twenties, showing their foreheads before and after Botox treatment and telling why they did it. Beauty2Go advertises on Instagram using a young, blond, blue-eyed model with perfectly smooth skin and the tag "Down with Frown Lines (Weg mit der Zornesfalte)" attached is a link to the Beauty2Go website which includes the prices for the Botox treatment (firgure 14). The model looks like she is in an age in which she does not have signs of ageing skin, yet the advertisement suggests that in order to look like her one must use Botox. Just like with Botox, fillers are not only sold to young women to balance their faces, highlight their cheekbones and jawlines or plump up their lips, the industry aims to convince potential clients to use the product even before it can actually do what it is meant for. The fear of ageing and not participating in something one might later regret is so big that clients are willing to spend a big sum of money on something which does not make a difference. Putting on sunscreen to protect skin from sunburns and skin cancer or going to a gynaecologist for a routine breast cancer check contrast to injectables, a cosmetic practice, which has nothing at all to do with somebody's actual health (Berkowitz 2017). Moreover, the word preventative is misleading because injectables are only preventative as long as a client keeps going back for more. Injectables lose their effect after four to nine months which means that by selling injectables as preventative the industry creates a lifelong consumer. Sociologist Berkowitz (2017, 55) critics the idea of preventative Botox by stating, "The idea that women are freezing their faces in time even before they see a hint of a wrinkle is disconcerting, to say the least, and speaks volumes about the unattainable appearance demands we place on women, our cultural infatuation with youth, and our inability to accept the changing, creasing face that comes with time."

This results in injectables being more and more perceived as a sign of self-agency and empowerment. Due to the fact that within post and neoliberal feminist discourses promises of empowerment are largely commodified and tied

to the possession of an attractive youthful body. As discussed in the *Consuming Feminism* chapter of this thesis, female empowerment is stripped of any political liberation and reduced to the practises and commodities to maintain an attractive, youthful body. Consequently, postfeminist practises exclude women who are unable to conform to narrow standards of female beauty, such as poor, overweight or unattractive women, or those who are unwilling to participate in such standards (Berkowitz 2017).

Moreover, if you do not participate in it, you are marked as irresponsible and lazy. This gets amplified because the narrative surrounding Botox is constructed in a way to progress the "enterprising self" (Berkowitz 2017, 55). It is more socially accessible to use injectables for reasons of professional advancement than to compete with other women for men's attention. Already in the financial crisis of 2008 statistics showed that Botox increased in times of economic instability. The beauty industry is embraced by employees who fear job loss, diminished prestige, and shrinking incomes (Berkowitz 2017). This tendency is repeated in the midst of the Corona crisis. Although many people were spending much more time in their own private walls, a BBC article (Meeson 2020) shows that the British Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons (BAAPS) reported an up to 70% increase in requests for virtual consultations since the start of the UK lockdown in March 2020. Seeing oneself for hours in a video call together with the economic and social uncertainty the pandemic brought, the growth in demand for consultation and possible procedures does not surprise. To maintain their competitiveness in the workplace a fresh and youthful look is an advantage for women since cite appearance-based age discrimination and employment-based ageism significantly disadvantage women more than their male colleagues (Berkowitz 2017). In commercial economies women feel the pressure to look better, fresher and more confident; a good looking woman appears as more careful and skilled than others. According to Berkowitz's research women think of the investments in their bodies as a tool to secure their jobs or maintain their competitive edge. They take pride in their initiatives, risk-taking and hard work and embed their explanation for aesthetic labour within masculine symbols of competition. On the one hand, the association of femininity with strong will and determination contrasts with the stereotypical image of passive middle-class femininity. On the other hand, the roots of power for such women are still tied to their beauty and bodies. This shows that women's entry into a male-dominated market does not liberate them from striving for an external female beauty ideal. For modern autonomous women to become more desirable to men is an added bonus but time invested in aesthetic labour is far and foremost to please themselves. Women who participate in an oppressive and youth-oriented beauty culture reify the structural expectations but deny their responsibility for doing so. The fostering of an oppressive system by efforts of becoming a better version of oneself validates appearance as an indication of character and rewards a narrow visual display of bodies while punishing all others (Berkowitz 2017).

There is a fine line between doing just the right amount and overdoing it. Having a completely frozen and too tight looking face is the biggest fear of users. Berkowitz (2017) observes that the "good" and "normal" consumer is constructed and only brought to existence by devaluing the opposite which is the unnatural, obsessed surgery junkie. Women are expected to do it, to invest time, money and effort into it, even to risk suffering potential side effects, but it should still look effortless and natural. The illusion of *naturalness* must be maintained. This is especially true when it comes to the reduction and prevention of signs of ageing as well as with lip fillers. Ending up with dinghy lips is a nightmare scenario for users.

Jennifer B. confirmed the addictive relationship a client can develop after having lip injections in an interview (2021) with the author. The first couple of days after the procedures the lips swell up and are bigger than what the client had agreed with the doctor. After leaving the clinic a lot of customers are feeling a sense of dissatisfaction because they fear looking unnatural. However, after a few days, the same client gets used to the pig lips and starts liking them but only shortly after the swelling goes down, leaving the client thinking that they are too small again. The result is that the client wants more filler and will eventually tempt for more during the next visit to the clinic. This cycle gives a delusional impression of how much filler is needed.

The marketing and media discourse of injectables promises to fulfil the desire for good looks without it being noticeable. On social media, the captions and comments of the clinics often cite words like "balancing the face", "fresh look", "looking awake" or "enhance". Berkowitz (2017, 58) summarises, "Woven throughout narratives was the notion that the good Botoxed body should be visible enough that it gets compliments and approving glances but should not stand out so much that it becomes a spectacle. Implicit in these statements is the notion that *looking like you* is not good enough, but now, with the advent of Botox, you need to look *like you, only better.* Seen as preferable to the natural body, the Botox body looks more relaxed, awake, and refreshed even if it is exhausted, stressed, or pissed off. In this way, Botox exposes the flawed natural body, setting new standards for deficiency and normalcy." Injectables should make you still recognisable as you - just an improved and enhanced version of yourself. It promises to unleash the potential that is in you. At this point, the author would like to suggest referring to this new form of a natural look as *neo-natural*, as the previous connotation of natural becomes outdated and is replaced by a new one.

Because Botox paralysis facial muscles, it limits their movement. When Berkowitz (2017) tested Botox, as part of her research for her book, she noticed how it amplified some facial features while restricting others. For instance, she was more likely to look bright-eyed and happy but was limited in her expressions to look upset, anxious or perplexed. Unlike men in powerful positions like CEOs or politicians who are expected to look angry or annoyed, women are taught from early childhood to look cheerful and calm. A woman who looks suspicious, distressed or judgmental is labelled as bitter and generally unhappy. Accordingly, women who are restricted by their expression of "unfeminine" expressions fit the patriarchal view of how a woman has to look and behave. Berkowitz (2017, 144) observes, "There is no name for men's serious, pensive, and reserved expressions because we allow men these feelings. When a man looks severe, serious, or grumpy, we assume it is for good reason. But women are always expected to be smiling, aesthetically pleasing, and compliant. To do otherwise would be to fail to subordinate our own emotions to those of others, and this would upset the gendered status quo." Berkowitz continues by giving the example of the viral pop-cultural idioms *resting bitch face* and *bitchy resting face*. According to the online website Urban Dictionary (2011) the expression resting bitch face means, "A person, usually a girl, who naturally looks mean when her face is expressionless, without meaning to." The same site offers an explanation about its etymological predecessor, "A bitchy alternative to the usual blank look most people have. This is a condition affecting the facial muscles, suffered by millions of women worldwide. People suffering from *bitchy resting face* (BRF) have the tendency to look hostile and/or judgemental at rest. Their expression does not necessarily reflect how they are feeling inside. BRF can ruin friendships and first impressions, start fights and kill an atmosphere." This example demonstrates how even just a blank facial expression is immediately read negatively when assigned to

femininity. The restriction Botox has on facial muscles can therefore be understood as a positive effect for women to appear attractive in a patriarchal structure.

Botox trains and disciplines the face and conditions its users to think of sceptical or annoyed feelings as incorrect. It is an example of how disciplinary institutions are practically embodied by customers, exemplifying how modern technologies become constitutive of self-policing subjects. Botox inscribes gender power relations on the flesh by interfering with the physiological functioning of the body, just like the restrictive corsets of the Victorian era changed female torsos by squeezing their waists. Botox provided people with technologies of the self via which they could interfere in their own bodies' natural processes and mould them to attain a culturally desirable aesthetic, in addition to imbuing feminine bodies with cultural norms and values. Users participated in continual self-monitoring and mastery of their own bodies by subjecting their bodies to constant surveillance, objectification, and discipline (Berkowitz 2017).

Because Botox users become used to having no signs of wrinkles on their foreheads they get panically stressed out when they see some movement coming back or a line starting to form after some months when Botox starts to lose its effect. The unnatural ability to not frown or move their eyebrows quickly becomes natural and seen as a normal look of the human face. The anxieties of the ageing body are only cured for a few short months before they come back stronger than before. Similarly to the habituation of illegal drug users that requires higher dosages to overcome physical dependence and tolerance, Botoxed bodies may develop a psychosomatic tolerance to the neurotoxin. In her book, Berkowitz (2017) noticed that the Botox users she interviewed started out with 15 to 20 units but quickly went up to 25 to 30 units within a year or two. Zurich based gynaecologist Regine Laser who offers injectable treatments to her clients says in an interview (2021) for this thesis, "I tell all my clients very clearly before their first treatment that once they start they will come back for more." This fact contradicts the claim of dermatologists and other professionals who claim that the more Botox clients use, the less they need since their facial muscles learn to relax. The fact that the majority of Berkowitz's subjects increased their units defies this rationale. She does not say that these users need more Botox to keep their brows wrinkle-free, but as they become acclimated to having no movement, they typically want less and less movement, which implies more Botox. Users are likely, if they have not already, to start getting filler injections after starting Botox. One cause for this might be that the clients lose their fear of needles. Another factor could be - what some doctors believe to be result of facial muscle recruitment - a pattern that develops when the face's ability to communicate emotion in the way it used to is limited, and then compensates by pulling from other muscles. To put it another way, human faces will continue to form expressions by using auxiliary muscles rather than Botoxed muscles, resulting in additional wrinkles in different places of the face. Apart from stopping Botox use entirely, the only way to improve muscle recruitment is by injecting Botox or fillers into these areas, resulting in a never-ending cycle of technological fixes (Berkowitz 2017).

Botox is one of several, "Contemporary cultural conjuncture in which the body and technology are conjoined in a literal sense, where machines assume organic functions and the body is materially redesigned through the application of newly developed technologies" (Balsamo 1996, 3). The Botoxed Body is the archetypal cyborg body, a technobody that spans the organic and the technical, revealing the postmodern instability of the human/nonhuman dichotomy and the illusory division between nature and technology (Berkowitz 2017). The body enhanced with injectables is more real than real or, revering to Baudrillard, hyperreal (1994); it is an

improved and better version of the real body, yet disguises itself as natural. Those bodies are preferred over natural bodies because they appear relaxed, alert, and rejuvenated even when they are weary, agitated, or frightened. Botox and fillers work by juxtaposing the failed natural body with new definitions of inadequacy and normality. The pressure to look like a better version of yourself is increasing with the acceptance and popularity of injectables (Berkowitz 2017). The users' casual acceptance of their transformed bodies sheds light on the changing meanings of natural to neo-natural.

Marketing discourses that profess to empower the largely white, joyful, and ageless women represented in beauty advertisements have been criticised for promoting a white beauty ideal. Despite the fact that the great majority of injectables users are individuals who can afford the medicine, injectables are increasingly being targeted to people from all walks of life (Berkowitz 2017). With American beauty culture as a model, clinics like Beauty2Go are applying targeted marketing that appeals to a broader and younger public. Because of low pricing and special offers, an increasing number of women are choosing to utilise injectables. For a rising number of women from all socioeconomic groups, such interventions constitute a cultural obligation in the long term. For women who either consciously resist this culture or simply cannot afford it, the cultivation of body capital becomes unattainable. Thus, the bodies of the economically privileged and beautiful are legitimised as moral and responsible while the bodies of the less privileged are increasingly stigmatised as old and ugly.

4.5. Conclusion

Women have overcome social, political and cultural obstacles, and yet women's beauty and bodies continue to be presented as their most important value. Cyberspace, once considered a space of female liberation and equality, has developed into a site of female objectification and oppression where a woman, whether digital or real, gains power only by sexualising her own body based on unrealistic beauty ideals. Moreover, identification with online profiles as well as face filters and photo editing apps led to an increase in beauty procedures in a neoliberal, feminst structure. It is as if the digital appearance influenced the physical one, which then, in turn, wants to appear natural in the digital space. In this interplay between the digital and the physical, it is crucial to change appearance moderately rather than drastically. This is why non-surgical injectables such as Botox and fillers are proving so useful, because they can be adjusted and used discreetly. This is crucial as the artificial, neo-natural body does not appear foreign or alienated. The boundary between technology, artificiality and nature is fluid. Both the natural in the old sense and the addicted beauty junkie are unwanted and outdated; what is being created is a new cyborgian, neo-natural look. Medical historian Sander Gilman (CBC Radio 2020, podcast) explains, "The great irony is that we think of aesthetic surgery as improving appearance when instead aesthetic surgery begins at levelling appearance. So the surgery is making people normal in the society they live in and it gives them their invisibility by being visible like everybody else."

For the accompanying artefact of this thesis, the author wants to draw attention to the interplay of the digital and the physical realm, as well as to the neo-natural look. The author's face is digitally processed to be optimised by users. They can change her face only slightly or make it appear grotesque. However, the more drastic the changes the user makes, the more the face begins to crack and glitch. This is an allusion to the neo-natural look, which should show no signs of artificiality, otherwise, the face is dismissed as irresponsible and inauthentic. Finally, the resulting faces are physically reproduced as 3D-printed clay sculptures. The natural materiality of the clay sculptures reflects the nature of the human body, while their creation through the 3D printing process is highly technical. Furthermore, the delicate, layered sculptures reveal the constructed and fragile nature of beauty ideals.

5.
ARTEFACT

5.1. Introduction

The practical part of this thesis explores phenomena addressed in the theory, such as post and neoliberal feminism (Gill 2007, Hausbichler 2021), Baudrillard's writings on transaesthetics (1992), simulation (1994) and hyperreality (1994) and the profilicity theory (Moeller and D'Ambrosio 2021), by giving it a form, materiality and a narrative. It questions concepts such as self-agency, the neo-natural look, consumer culture as well as the interplay between the digital and the physical realm. In this context, it does not make sense to develop a commercial product or service that can be sold. This is why the following research evolves towards an interactive experience.

      The issues explored in the theoretical part of this thesis are supported and refined by empirical and ethnographic research. This allows the thesis to gain insight into the beauty industry and culture in Switzerland.

5.2. Empirical Exploration

In order to understand the discourse on beauty treatments in Switzerland, empirical research was conducted. Since there is a lack of data and studies on the Swiss beauty industry, the author investigated the American beauty industry where a lot of information about the business is available. However, because this work focuses specifically on Switzerland, the author collected data in Switzerland herself by carrying out interviews and attending events to compare the culture in this country with that in the US. In particular, the research aims to find out whether the demand for non-surgical treatments has increased, especially among the younger generation, and whether this is influenced by social media.

Other questions aimed to find out whether beauty is perceived as an essential part of womanhood and whether marketing practices that are widespread in the US, such as free filler treatments at events or for newcomers, are also practised in Switzerland. Thus the study forms a real link to the beauty discourse in Switzerland.

5.2.1. Interviews with Physicians

With the popularity of injectables, beauty clinics have specialised in offering non-surgical procedures. However, probably due to their high profit, dermatologists and gynaecologists offer Botox and filler treatments as well. For this thesis, the author conducted interviews with two physicians from beauty clinics, one dermatologist and one gynaecologist, who work with injectables.

Dr Philippe Snozzi of Smoothline in Zurich was the first in the country to open a clinic specialising exclusively in Botox and filler treatments. In the interview, he confirms that the market has grown significantly in recent years. He explains that beauty procedure clients worldwide can be divided into four groups. The first, and this is the largest group in Switzerland, are people who are interested in "well-ageing" [gesundem Altern] which means that they wish to have some kind of control over their ageing process. Customers do not want to massively change their appearance, but rather improve, maintain or restore their existing features. Preserving a "natural look" is crucial for the client segment. Dr Snozzi goes on to note that most clients are over 35 years old, but are increasingly getting younger. The second group, are clients aged 18 to 35. They are exclusively interested in improving and optimising their beauty. For example, they want more defined cheekbones or fuller lips. These customers are mainly digital natives who have grown up with social media. He explains that they have a completely different attitude towards aesthetic medicine. It becomes part of a lifestyle, just as a tattoo can be an expression of a lifestyle. Thus,

injected lips become an expression of a lifestyle and a culture. He added that clients in the second group often do not have the financial means to go to Smoothline for treatments. Therefore, he has limited contact with this segment at his clinic. These clients are very price-conscious, have a strict budget and want treatment for as little money as possible. The third group are people who are systemically disadvantaged because of their appearance. An example would be people with a receding chin. Dr Snozzi explains that studies show that people with receding chins are unfairly disadvantaged in life. For example, they are considered less intelligent (although a receding chin does not affect a person's cognitive abilities), have poorer job prospects, earn lower wages and have difficulty finding a partner. Therefore, many people wish to have such features corrected to avoid being stigmatised and stereotyped. Finally, the fourth group, which according to Dr Snozzi is almost non-existent in Switzerland but more prevalent in countries like South Korea, consists of patients who want a complete change in their appearance. These people are no longer recognisable as the same person afterwards. It is important to understand that which body regions are the focus depends on socio-cultural reasons. In Switzerland or Western Europe, for example, people are very face-oriented. Procedures on the body play a minor role, apart from some universal classics that are very common worldwide, such as breast augmentation or breast reduction. Buttock augmentation, for example, is a marginal procedure in Switzerland, but in Brazil, which is very body-oriented, the treatment is very common.

This thesis focuses on the second group outlined by Dr Snozzi because they are particularly social media savvy. Furthermore, as the author is Swiss and this thesis was written in Switzerland, it focuses on the face rather than the whole body, as the face is the primary socio-cultural focus in Switzerland.

Like Dr Snozzi, Dr Carlos Panero Frade, who was also interviewed as part of this thesis, confirms the increase in millenials and generation Z who are interested in injectables. He works at the Beauty2Go clinic in Zurich, which specialises in affordable prices and targets a particularly young audience. Clients visit Beauty2Go with filtered photos of themselves to have certain features tweaked to match their digitally manipulated version. This is frustrating for Dr Panero Frade for two reasons: firstly, he works to a strict schedule that leaves him 30 minutes per patient. The time it takes him to explain to each patient that what they want is only possible digitally takes up extra time that is not included in his schedule. Secondly, he may have to turn clients away because he cannot give them the look they desire.

Dr Panero Frade explains that a filtered photo is two-dimensional and only suitable for a 2D digital world. The digital modified lips or cheeks not only look grotesque in a physical 3D body because of their extreme volumes but are also technically impossible to achieve. Dr Panero Frade sees his work as optimising clients so that they can reach their full potential, but not as making someone a completely different person. This is at odds with the rest of the interview, in which Madeleine Karasch, the marketing manager at Beauty2Go, and Dr Panero Frade repeatedly say that most clients want a natural look and Karasch even has to regularly convince clients that the results will look natural. These same clients later show a filtered photo of themselves to the physician, who then has to tell them that the desired results are not possible and will look unnatural. It seems that the words natural and unnatural have received new connotations. Natural according to clients is now a filtered self and unnatural is either a face without injectables and filter or one with too many injectables, which looks unmanaged and grotesque. It seems that people have become so accustomed to seeing themselves and other people with a filter that it is no longer considered unnatural. Dr Panero Frade explains that the identification

with a filter is so strong that clients who have had injections sometimes send him filtered photos via email for the mandatory two-week follow-up.

These examples show not only the increasing identification with the digital appearance but also the shift towards a neo-natural look. Whereby natural is not synonymous with a pristine body, but with a body enhanced by medical intervention and technology.

Dr Regine Laser, who runs her own gynaecology practice in Zurich and was interviewed as part of this thesis, explains her use of injectables with her holistic approach towards womanhood. She sees a woman's beauty as part of what it means to be a woman, and if a client is suffering due to the ageing process, perhaps is even depressed, it can be a relief to help with Botox and fillers. She goes on to explain that she does not inject young clients who, in her opinion, are merely following a trend. Similarly, for Dr Marianne Meli of the Dermanence Dermatological Clinic in Zurich, aesthetic procedures are part of the dermatologist's profession. The well-being of the skin is related to the well-being of the patient and thus also to a young and fresh appearance. Dr Meli says in a phone interview with the author that she does not yet notice a trend towards younger clients at her work, although she observes the trend in other clinics such as Beauty2Go. She attributes the absence of younger clients at her work to the higher costs at Dermanence compared to Beauty2Go. From the conversations with the physicians, it is clear that appearance is ultimately linked to being a woman, and that in turn means having a radiant, fresh, young-looking body and face.

In conclusion, it becomes clear that what has already been explored theoretically in this thesis manifests itself in the practical work of physicians. From identifying with the online self to the recontextualisation of the word natural to equating *being a woman* with *being beautiful* are all real-life phenomena.

5.2.2 Opening Events Beauty2Go

The author attended an opening of a new Beauty2Go clinic in Winterthur as well as a re-opening of a new location of a Beauty2Go clinic on Zurich's Bahnhofstrasse. Both occasions took place in a similar setting: Champagne, wine, juice and small snacks were served, a DJ played pop music and an event hostess played roulette with the guests. The roulette was without stakes, so that the guests did not lose money, but could win Beauty2Go vouchers. At both events, the live treatments with injectables were the highlight. In Winterthur, the treatments were performed on the company's marketing manager (figure 15). Visitors were encouraged to take photos and videos and post them online and tag the company's social media profile. At the second event in Zurich, guests were able to receive free dermal filler treatments, which were performed by two doctors from the clinic (figure 16-17). One of the doctors later explained in a conversation with the author that the fillers were sponsored by the manufacturer and that the amount he injected during the event was worth around CHF. 3,000.

The visitors were mainly women aged between 20 and 60. Most of them were less than 40 years old. Some came with their family, others with their partner. Many of them took a lot of time at the event to take photos of themselves or with friends to show where they were on social media. Not all of the eight to ten women the author spoke to had had injections before. Most of them were undecided because they were not sure what to make of it, whether this is really what they want. They attended

the event because they were curious or because a friend had brought them. Many of them also talked about the financial aspect of injections and whether they were worth the money. Women under 30 were particularly interested in lip fillers. Offering affordable lip injections is one of the key components to Beauty2Go's success. "One of Beauty2Go's goals is to prove that luxury does not have to be expensive," said company founder Alexandra Lüönd at the event in Zurich.

Both locations wanted to look glamorous and luxurious, but seemed rather tacky. The Winterthur location is situated in a historic building with ornamentation and prestige. The additional décor was in burgundy and gold tones (figure 18). The Zurich location is reminiscent of a traditional clinic, as it is predominantly white, with white marble floors and gold trim. The waiting area was decorated with velvet armchairs and coffee table books by fashion designers like Coco Chanel or Vogue Magazine (figure 19). Before leaving both events, a goodie bag was gifted to the guests that contained sunscreen, lip gloss and a lip cooler.

The events highlight what has already been described in this thesis as the normalisation of the culture around injectables. The categorisation of injectables as a sign of luxury, just like a Chanel handbag, breaks the taboo and shame previously associated with the industry. Just as fast fashion has democratised luxury fashion and made it accessible to everyone, companies like Beauty2Go are bringing injectables to a demographic that could not otherwise afford them. In the US, it is common to offer free injectables at beauty events. The fact that similar events take place in Zurich shows the influence of American beauty culture in Switzerland. It also illustrates how Beauty2Go and the manufacturers of derma fillers benefit from the addictive nature of the product. They are confident that clients who are hesitant because of the cost will undergo treatment if it is offered for free, and will eventually come back willing to pay the required cost.

(figure 15)   © Lea Ermuth

(figure 16) © Lea Ermuth

(figure 17) © Lea Ermuth

(figure 18) © Lea Ermuth

(figure 19) © Lea Ermuth

5.3. Material Exploration

Prototyping as a method enables a rapid process of material exploration to test and iterate ideas. Digital fabrication techniques were used to explore the plasticity of a digital phenomenon such as Instagram-face. During the experiments, the digital, two-dimensional images transformed into a three-dimensional form, giving them materiality and shape. In this way, digital phenomena from the theory became less abstract and were placed in a physical context.

As the work progressed and focused on the interplay between the digital and physical worlds, it became important to reflect mentioned mechanisms in the choice of materials and technology. For example, a technical 3D printer was used with a natural material such as clay to explore the interaction between a technical and a natural element and how they work together.

5.3.1. PVA Filament and Silicone

At the beginning of the work, the author focussed on the use of artificial materials such as PVA plastic or silicone to produce physical objects from observations made in digital space. Her aim was to get a feeling for the materiality and plasticity of a digital product and to give it a three-dimensional form. The author wanted to bring the "Instagram-face" visible online into the physical world and therefore decided to use a 3D printer with PVA filament, as it allows for a high level of detail and precision. However, the hard filament material did not allow her to recreate skin or organic textures. Therefore, she decided to create a plaster mould onto which she applied layers of silicone (figure 20). The soft and matte texture of the silicone was similar to that of skin, moreover, silicone was easily colourable to create the impression of tissue (figure 21).

For the second experiment, the author 3D modelled her own face and printed it with PVA filament (figure 22). This time she used plaster and silicone for the mould to achieve a higher level of detail (figure 23). The author aimed to find out what her face looked like in artificial material and what features stood out.

At this stage of the work, the author wanted to show the alienation of technology from the physical body, which is why it seems right to her to work with artificial materials. As she progressed, however, she realised that she does not want to depict the drifting apart of the technical and the natural, but rather their convergence. This is why she decided that artificial materials like PVA or silicone were not suitable for the project as they conveyed the wrong message.
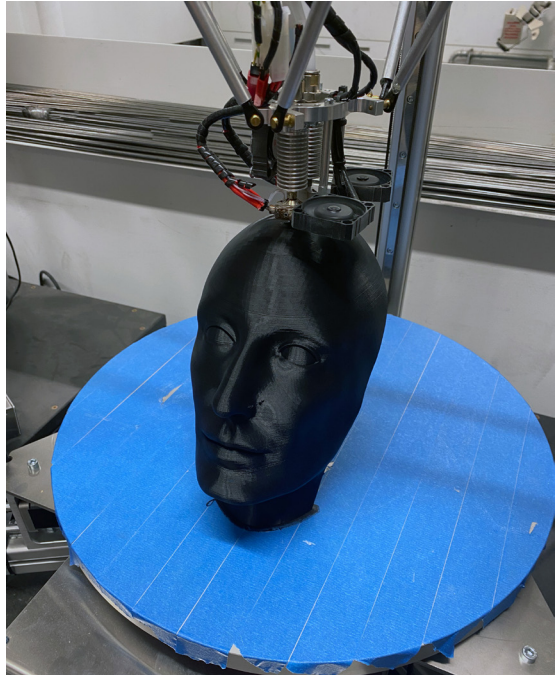
(figure 20) © Lea Ermuth

(figure 21) © Lea Ermuth

(figure 22) © Lea Ermuth

(figure 23) © Lea Ermuth

5.3.2. Clay

After the exploration of artificial materials and with the progression of the project towards depicting the interplay between the digital and physical realm, it made sense to bring the results of the digital optimisation process of the author's face during the prototype testing back into the physical world. Since a 3D printer can read digital data, the author decided to continue working with it but to use a natural material like clay instead of PVA filament as a material.

   Working with a clay 3D printer required far more physical work than using filament. The clay first had to be processed until it reached the right consistency. Afterwards, it had to be filled into printing tubes and during the printing process, manual support was required to hinder the printed figures from collapsing. The physical labour that went into this process reflects the work and effort that women have to put into their appearance. A kind of body work that is sold as leisure and wellness. Furthermore, the 3D printer, together with the clay, bridges the technical aspect of beauty treatments and the desire for a natural look. Finally, 3D printing reflects how beauty ideals are constructed through its layered structure and the porous materiality of the clay reflects the texture of the skin (figure 24-25). It refers to the voluminous look of Instagram-face which has been described as a face that "looks like it is made out of clay" (Tolentino 2019).

(figure 24)   © Lea Ermuth

(figure 25)   © Lea Ermuth

5.4. Technical Exploration

The exploration of technologies serves as a method for extending ideas from a technical standpoint. It explores what technologies can be used to convey the theoretical part of the thesis and to confirm and reinforce findings and ideas using digital fabrication techniques.

For example, a photo of the author's face was manipulated with beauty filters and compared to that of Kylie Jenner. In this way, the characteristics of the current beauty ideal, the Instagram-face, could be examined and identified. In addition, a digital duplicate of the author's body and face was created using photogrammetry and various 3D programmes. The manipulated body was animated with motion-capture technology, allowing the author to interact with her audience in real time. A co-creation process was formed not only between the audience and the author but also between the digital and the physical self of the author. Thus, the interaction between the virtual and the physical world was achieved through technical methods. The author's body was technically and virtually extended to overcome the limitations of the physical body.

5.4.1. Face Manipulation

The author examined face filters for similarities to Instagram-face and compared them to the face of Kylie Jenner (figure 26). She used her own face because it is the most familiar to her. A neutral, frontal portrait of the author (figure 27) served as a reference. In Instagram's filter search, she entered "Instagram face", "Kylie" and "Face lift" to find suitable beauty filters. When analysing over thirty resulting images, the most striking thing was how each filter smoothed the skin. The author has slight freckles all over her face, which were concealed. Her skin tone appeared darker. Her lips looked fuller and more heart-shaped. Sometimes a rosy red was added to them. Her nose, chin and lower jaw looked slimmer. Her cheekbones were more pronounced and her eyes appeared larger. Sometimes they were tilted upwards and their irises had a deep, light blue colour (figure 28-64). Some filters contoured the cheeks, nose and forehead and applied long black eyelashes (figure 40).

The filtered photos showed similarities to Kylie Jenner's face, mainly in skin texture, eyes and lips. Overall, the filters were more dramatic and looked cheaper than the original. But because we know our own faces well, the filters seem more natural and real applied to other people, especially people we do not know personally. Furthermore, it depends on what natural facial features someone has. For example, the author's blonde eyelashes looked unnatural when overlaid with false dark eyelashes. However, when people with dark lashes use the filter, it looks more realistic.

Jennifer B., who was interviewed for this thesis and has undergone several cosmetic surgeries and injections, confirms that much of the motivation to have something done is based on beauty filters. Her last surgery was influenced by a filter and she went to the physician with a filtered image of herself to show the desired result. The procedure, called *ponytail lift*, involved making incisions high up on the face - above the front of the ear or beyond the hairline. Jennifer B. underwent the procedure because she wanted her eyes to have the fox-eye look, which means that the eyes tilt slightly upwards. However, the surgery went wrong and she paid CHF. 10,000 for something that changed nothing about her face apart from two scars. She told the author how disappointed she felt afterwards, but even this would not stop her from having another treatment or repeating it. She attributes her positive attitude towards the procedures to the good feeling she had after previous treatments that went well.

Jennifer B. likewise identifies a connection between Kylie Jenner, Instagram-face and beauty filters. For her, full lips, high cheekbones, big eyes, a pointed nose and a pronounced jawline are part of the popular beauty ideal and she is convinced that most beauty filters give you more or less this look. Examples like this reveal the impact face filters have on the body and how they portray the natural face as flawed and unsatisfactory. They motivate potential customers to optimise their appearance and adapt to technologies. Furthermore, the phenomenon shows the interplay between the digital and the physical and illustrates the mechanism at work. It also shows that even after cosmetic surgery, the physical appearance is not good enough for social media and therefore the technologically enhanced self continues to be preferred, idealised and praised.

(figure 26)   **© Kylie Jenner**

(figure 27)   © Lea Ermuth

(figure 28-39)   © Lea Ermuth

(figure 40) © Lea Ermuth

(figure 41-52)   © Lea Ermuth

(figure 53-64)

### 5.4.2. Photogrammetry, 3D Creation and Motion Capture

To obtain an accurate copy of the author's face and body, she used photogrammetry to gain the necessary data. The data was then processed into point clouds (figure 65) and converted into a 3D mesh (figure 66). After applying the texture (figure 67), the resulting body and head meshes were cleaned up. In 3D software, blend shapes were created for specific facial parts to change their shape, e.g. to resize the nose. In addition, the body was rigged to resemble a human skeleton. In a game engine, in this case, Unity, the head and body were connected to the interface. Using an Xsens motion capture suit, the body was animated in real-time by the author.

      The process was challenging as it required a variety of different software and technologies that have not been specifically developed for each other. This shows that the process of digitising and animating a human body is in its early stage, but could become much more accessible in the future.
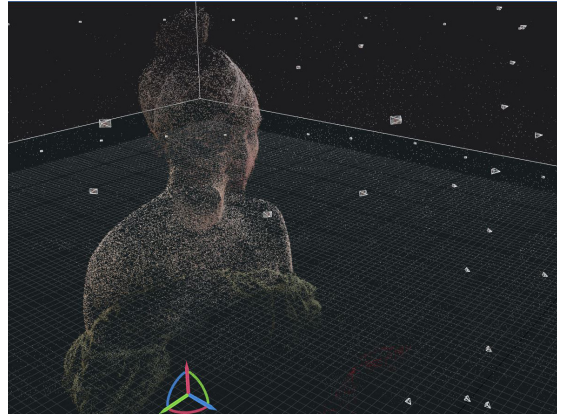
(figure 65)   © Lea Ermuth
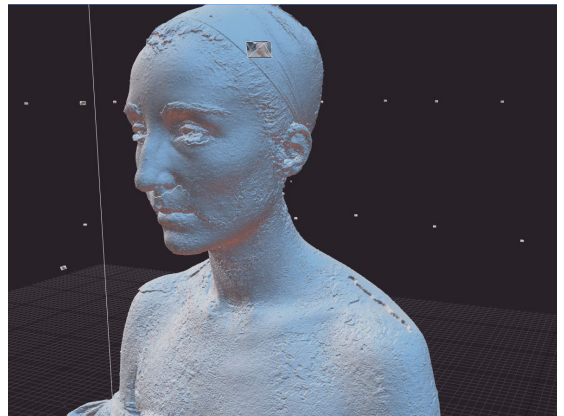
(figure 66)   © Lea Ermuth

(figure 67)   © Lea Ermuth

5.5. Storytelling Exploration

Storytelling methods were used to guide visitors through the experience. It enables the translation of theoretical ideas into a narrative that makes them visually and sonically accessible to visitors.

The first exploration was a user test where participants of the Zurich University of the Arts could optimise the digital face of the author. An interface was used to show visitors how to interact with the work. In this way, it was tested whether the interface was understandable and easy for visitors to navigate and whether the interaction between the visitor and the author's digital self was visible and clear. The collected data was then used for the second part, which is a video narration of the screen recordings of the user test. The author's voice was used to guide the visitors through her thought process during the face optimisation. In this way, the work provides an opportunity not only to convey but also to critique concepts such as neoliberal feminism and to question the self-agency women feel during beauty treatments.

5.5.1. Interface Development

A digital interface for the first prototype was developed in several stages. It focuses on simultaneous information exchange between the author's digital self and the user. By selecting a facial part to modify, for example, the nose, the user could then adjust the nose volume by moving a slider upwards or downwards. Using motion capture technology, the author's digital self-performed the desired adjustment in real-time. Thus, the changes were not visible on the face until they were performed by the author. Users found this method difficult for two reasons: first, the authors' face was unfamiliar to them, so it was difficult for them to recognize the changes. Second, since the user was not provided with a preview window, it was difficult for them to visualise what the final result would look like.

The second prototype (figure 68-69) has been simplified in order to make it easier for the user to follow as well as to provide a direct preview of the desired changes. Using the various sliders, the user can select and manipulate a particular facial area and immediately view the results in the interface preview window. The sliders did not specify exactly what changes were made, because the author did not wish to impose a specific idea on the user, but rather to allow the user to explore these options for themselves. It was also possible to superimpose several sliders, which gave each face a unique appearance that could not be predicted in advance. Once the users had made the desired changes and had seen them in the preview window, they pressed the "Continue" button, which took them to the next scene in which the author performed the changes. In this manner, the user was able to control the changes, see them immediately, and adjust them gradually to achieve the desired results. The preview enabled users to see what changes were being implemented before the motion-capture animation made them apparent, even if they were only minor changes.

The author deemed the word "optimise" the most appropriate word to describe what a user should do with her face. Other options were "beautify", "modify", "manipulate" or "change", but the first word was too directly related to the word "beautiful", while the last three were too broad. The author chose the word "optimise" because it is included in the term "self-optimisation", which is a key concept throughout the thesis. In addition, the term allows the audience to freely interpret what optimization means to them while providing a clear indication of improvement. In words such as "modify", "manipulate" or "change", there is no clear reference to improvement.
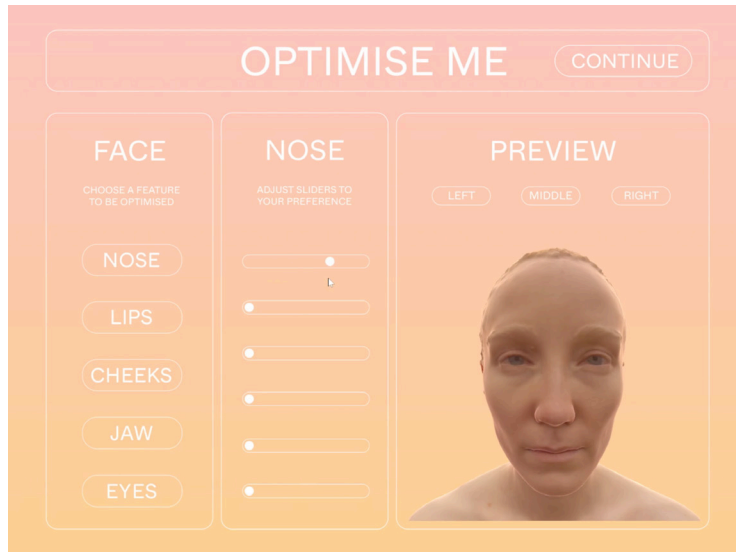
(figure 68) © Lea Ermuth
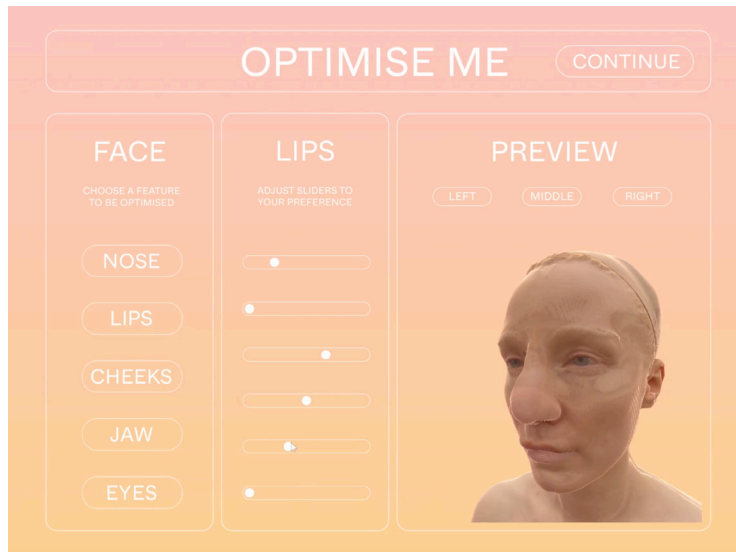
(figure 69) © Lea Ermuth

5.5.2. Video Narration

The voice-over during the video of the screen recordings taken during the prototype testing at the Zurich University of the Arts offers an opportunity to reflect on and deliver aspects of the theory to the audience. This is important as the final artefact is rather abstract for a visitor to understand, using a voice-over offers the possibility to make sure to bring across crucial aspects (figure 70-71).

 While the author is optimising herself the voice-over transmits her thought process. In this way topics like self-agency and self-optimisation can be questioned and addressed. She can express how she identifies more with the optimised version of herself than with her original appearance because it feels "more like herself" just like her favourite filter. As authorship is a crucial part of this thesis the author can express personal experiences of how she perceives herself, what she likes about herself and what not. She hopes through this she can build a relatable relationship with the audience as this kind of self-talk is something people are familiar with. The tone-of-voice is rather soft and calm. This builds contrast and contradiction to the actual content of the voice-over which is critical and questionable. Nevertheless, it also implies some irony as the main goal of the thesis is to be provocative and question common justifications for beauty procedures. Irony allows referencing the absurdity of the beauty industry and its discourse which motivate people to undergo medical procedures for healthy bodies.

(figure 71)   © Lea Ermuth

5.6. User Engagement and Interaction

User engagement was tested through an interactive performance by the author with an audience. This allowed her to collect data and information about how people from the design department of the Zurich University of the Arts optimised their faces. In addition, the method is crucial to test whether the interaction and experience work both technically and conceptually.

   With the help of a questionnaire, the work gained additional insight into the users' thought processes during the experience. It provided the opportunity to understand whether users recognise the impact of modern technology on beauty ideals discussed in the theoretical part of the thesis. This made it possible to test whether the topic of the work is something people are engaged with and would like to learn more about. In addition, more ideas can be developed about where else the experience can be tested and placed to gather additional data that can be compared and expanded upon with the theoretical part of the work.

5.6.1. Prototype Testing

The prototype test took place on two afternoons for two hours each at the Zurich University of the Arts (figure 72-73). Beforehand, the author sent out an email invitation to all bachelor's and master's students in the design department. The visitors were able to interact with the developed application and were asked to fill out a feedback form with three questions afterwards. Additionally, they were asked to state their gender identity and age. The application ran on a computer in one room, while the motion capture animation took place in an adjacent room and was therefore not visible to the visitors. Next to the computer was a text with instructions and a short, two-sentence description of the project. During the two days, 22 people tested the application and shared their experiences. About 75% of them identified themselves as female and were between 20 and 30 years old, two people were in their mid-40s. Almost all of the visitors knew the author from school or were friends with her. This means that no one considered the character visible on the screen to be fictional.

The results ranged from only slight changes to the author's face to changes that disfigured the entire face and made it look grotesque. From the first and second questions of the survey, which ask what influenced the users' decisions during the optimisation process and whether they wanted to achieve a certain aesthetic, it appears that the users wanted to rebel and set themselves apart from what they thought most others were doing. Hence the grotesque results. Others, on the contrary, wanted the face to look natural, and deliberately oriented themselves towards Western beauty standards, what they saw on social media, or simply what they thought was beautiful. Some expressed concern that because they knew me and were aware that I was a real person, they were hesitant to go to the extreme.

In the third question, visitors were asked if they feel that the fact that our society is becoming more and more visual (e.g. through social media) has an impact on the way we appear and interact with each other. They were also asked if they could give examples. The answers to this question were mostly in agreement. Two people think that the overflow of visual stimulation leads to people and themselves judging how others look. Others think that social media makes it difficult for people to accept themselves and that the digital persona is becoming more important. In addition, some see the influence of digital beauty filters manifesting itself in the real world in the form of extreme make-up.

From the experiment, it is evident that people are aware of a mainstream beauty ideal that is influenced by social media. Even the people who changed the face into a grotesque figure were aware of this by deliberately rebelling against it. Some people from the game design department were, in addition, influenced by video game culture. However, the author understands this phenomenon to be very site-specific, as the invitation email, among others, reached the game design department of the Zurich University of the Arts. In addition, it became apparent that people were intrigued by the topic because they themselves had observed similar phenomena and felt affected by them.

Going forward, it would be intriguing to test the experience with participants who are not sure if the visible face belongs to an existing person. In addition, it would be interesting to compare the results of the application from people of different age groups such as teenagers or older people and people without a design background.

(figure 72) © Lea Ermuth

Self-Me
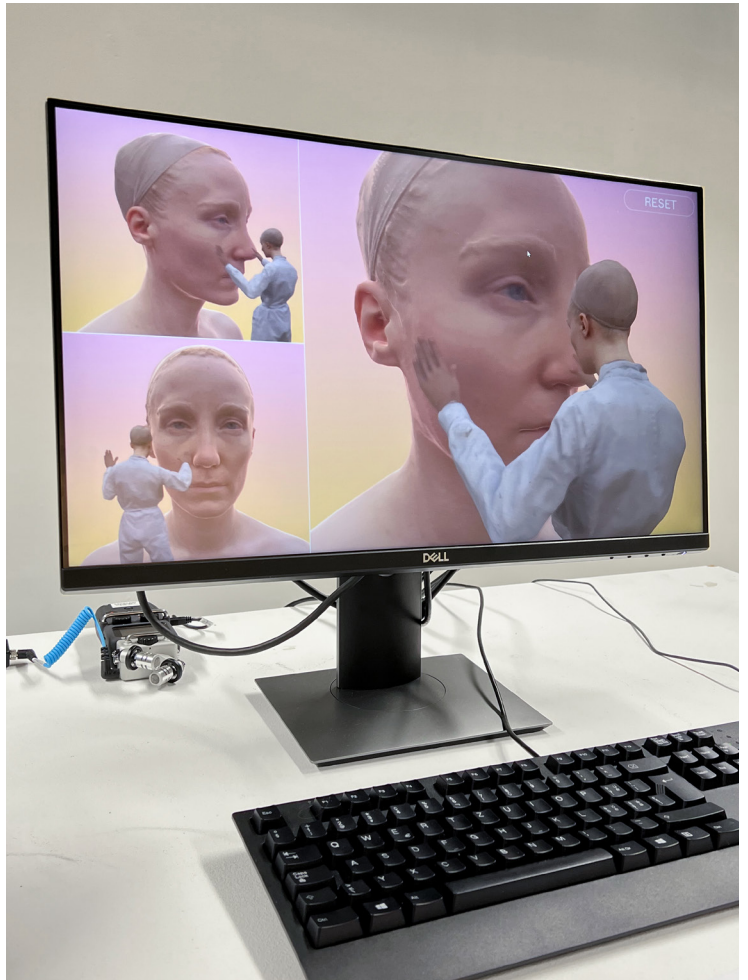
(figure 73)   **© Lea Ermuth**

5.7. Conclusion and Artefact Concept

Taking the theoretical explorations into account, the author identifies the interplay between the digital and the physical realm as well as the increased identification with online profiles and the resulting optimisation of the body as the key elements to address in the practical part of the thesis. The work aims to do that by working with the author's body and appearance. For that, her body and head are digitalised. Her face can virtually be optimised by visitors. This is an allusion towards the standard justification of beauty procedures to be an act of self-agency and that women are liberated enough to do with their bodies as they please. The author questions people's ability to have an authentic self and therefore to take a genuinely authentic decision because it ignores society and the social constructions people live in. If technology like beauty procedures becomes the norm, it is impossible to opt out without having to sacrifice social status and capital. Therefore, the work depicts how people are influenced by their surroundings and the internalisation of what others tell them is "beautiful" or "flawed". Moreover, the empirical research shows what is perceived as beautiful is increasingly dictated and designed by modern technology. The visitor to the artefact thus symbolically stands for the society and culture that internalises what is presented online. In this way, a co-creation process takes place between the audience and the author. When a user optimises the face too much it begins to crack and break. This symbolises the idea of the "neo-natural" beauty, which has to be navigated between a thin space in which one always fears to either do too much or too little. The case of doing too much so that beauty procedures become visible is stigmatised as addictive and irresponsible behaviour.

Once the visitor is finished optimising the face and presses the "Continue" button another scene appears. In this scene, the author's digital self and her head are visible as two separate objects. While the digital self is animated by the author in real-time using motion capture technology the head appears to be static and sculpture-like. It is bigger in size than the digital self which is a hint towards the importance the appearance of the face has in our culture. Furthermore, the head is separated from the body to depict that people look at themselves as "seen as being seen" (Moeller and D'Ambrosio 2021) meaning how others perceive them on online profiles.

The digital self then starts to undertake the previously programmed changes on the head sculpture. The author who is animating her digital self in motion capture receives the desired changes on her face and by touching the corresponding facial parts models her face into the optimised end result. It appears as if it is the author herself who does the changes to her face, when in fact it has been pre-programmed by the visitor. While she performs the visitor can hear the author's thought process. With a calm, quiet voice she gives into the neoliberal feminist idea of doing it for herself and the feeling of empowerment. Nevertheless, she cannot stop being somewhat ironic about it. Which gives the whole situation a bizarrely serious atmosphere. Like that the project wants to reflect on the absurdity of beauty procedures which are medical procedures undertaken on healthy bodies for the sole reason of self-optimisation and the strive towards a constructed ideal which is increasingly dependent on fast-changing trend cycle similar to fashion.

Once the author is done optimising her face the gathered end results are used and brought back into the physical world by 3D printing them into clay sculptures. Working with a 3D printer and clay builds several references to the project. Firstly, the 3D printer is a technical machine and combined with a natural material like clay builds a reference towards how the technical merges with the natural. The layered structure of the sculptures reveals that it was made with a 3D printer although the machine is absent. The manual labour that goes into the 3D printing process with clay furthermore, reminds of the work that women put into their appearance. Finally, the natural, porous material of the clay resembles the nature of the human body and its skin.

The recordings of the artefact experience will be edited into a video and shown on two screens during the exhibition. Visitors can observe the author's optimisation process and performance and listen to her reflections. The clay sculptures are displayed on a shelf-like construction that is attached to a wall together with the screens. Overall, the exhibition concept is an allusion to consumerism. In the remotest sense, the shelf resembles a bag display of a luxury fashion brand. The clay sculptures are accordingly exhibited as objects of consumption. The various facial shapes can be consumed and recreated. Since the work is about the construction of beauty ideals and the work to maintain it, the materials of the shelf are reminiscent of a hardware store and scaffolding. It juxtaposes the luxurious lifestyle that the beauty industry wants to sell to its customers with the fact that it is a labour-intensive and constructed practice that is primarily financially profitable for the industry itself.

6.
CONCLUSION

6.1. Summary of the Thesis, Arguments and Findings

The thesis gives an overview of how the current climate of post and neoliberal feminism (Gill 2007, Hausbichler 2021) is linked to the consumption of beauty products and the commodification of feminism. Today, post and neoliberal feminism is no longer about political change that should benefit marginalised and discriminated people in particular, but is sold as an individual journey that everyone has to manage for themselves. If not, it is one's own responsibility, and there is a seemingly endless amount of consumer goods that are supposed to help one on this path. Furthermore, it is shown how a socio-political movement like the body positivity movement is used by brands to sell their products. The critique of current power structures is overlaid and overshadowed by commercial interests. Brands give the impression that they are responsible for socio-political change, while in reality they only use it to boost their sales. Furthermore, the statement that "everyone is beautiful" gives people the feeling that if they do not feel "beautiful" they have a deficiency and can compensate for it by consuming products. The thesis argues that the requirement for everyone to feel like a supermodel and to realise their full potential puts people in a state of self-optimisation. Brands pretend to address these deficiencies through the consumption of their products. Paradoxically, however, it is the same brands that dictate to people what such deficiencies feel or look like. Moreover, the market is constantly producing new trends and products, so that what is considered beautiful is constantly changing which leaves customers constantly longing for more in order to be satisfied with themselves.

With this situation outlined, the work analyses how what used to be perceived as anti-feminist, e.g. beauty procedures, is now seen as feminist. The thesis explains this phenomenon on the basis of Baudrillard's theories on transaesthetics (1992), simulation (1994) and hyperreality (1994), according to which feminism in a post- and neoliberal climate can only simulate the liberation of women. The thesis states that in this structure, beauty procedures are sold as a commodity for a woman's success and because women can buy them with their self-earned money, they give them a sense of empowerment. This justifies the sense of self-agency that many women experience when undergoing beauty procedures.

Now that the concepts of self-optimisation and self-agency have been explained, the work addresses the urge to resemble the optimised digital self in the physical body. It explains the phenomenon with the profilicity theory (Moeller and D'Ambrosio 2021), which states that people increasingly identify with their online profiles. Because of the human desire for identity and its affirmation, it is only logical that people strive to live up to their online selves. This is profitable for the beauty industry in a post and neoliberal feminist structure of self-optimisation and self-agency. Therefore, the thesis argues that digital technologies influence the human body by showing a technically enhanced version of it that makes the physical body appear lacking. As people identify with these perceived flaws and strive for self-optimisation and self-agency, the growing discourse on beauty treatments seems like a logical consequence. As this thesis shows, in this process, it is crucial to understand the transition from the natural to "neo-natural" look. It describes a state in which a body without technical enhancement through beauty procedures

appears outdated and lazy, while a body with too much enhancement is labelled as crazy and addictive. This creates a mechanism where the artificially enhanced body wants to appear natural in the digital space, while the natural body tries to look like the optimised digital version of itself. This shows how the physical and the digital are converging not only in the way people appear but also in the way they form their identities. The artefact reflects this mechanism by its use of technology and materiality. There is a constant exchange and convergence between the physical and the digital as well as the natural and the technological.

Furthermore, it is argued that there is no such thing as a truly authentic self and thus an authentic decision because people are influenced by the world around them. Due to the lack of authenticity, self-agency becomes questionable. How can someone really know what they want to look like if this image depends on what they see and consume? The thesis argues that it is questionable to consider beauty procedures as an act of self-agency and empowerment because the idea that they are a free choice is blind to society and the social pressures that exist in that society. "Not belonging" has social consequences that are not discussed within the definition of self-agency. This is why it is essential to understand that when technologies like beauty procedures become a social norm, there is no longer an individual who can decide for or against technology because it is embedded in a much larger social construct that needs to be integrated into the thought process. Therefore, it is not a free choice to participate in beauty culture or not without having to accept or risk high social costs. This is reflected in the artefact of the project, as it allows other people to optimise the author's digital face. The audience symbolises the social construct of the author which influences her. Although she might feel authentic it is impossible for her to make an authentic decision.

Furthermore, the work offers answers and suggestions on how to deal with the increasing digitalisation of this world as well as the rapid development of technologies. Explaining phenomena such as the profilicity theory (Moeller and D'Ambrosio 2021) offers individuals an understanding of what is going on around them and through this hopefully, some feeling of control and comprehension of it. It explains to people post and neoliberal feminist structures and their close connection to consumer culture and the never-ending self-optimisation process. In this way, the author hopes to encourage people to pay attention to the commodification of political movements and the disguising of oppressive systems. She believes that by developing a sensitivity to these mechanisms, they can be reduced and prevented.

6.2. Reflection

At the beginning of the work, the author asks herself how technology influences people's perception of beauty. This idea intrigued her because she noticed an increasing similarity in people's online appearances. At the same time, she became aware of the growing normalisation of beauty treatments. It seems logical to her that because of the artificial beauty ideal portrayed online, there must be a connection with the growing discourse on beauty treatments. Over time, however, this thesis grew into much more. Building on the theme of beauty, the thesis evolved into questions dealing with identity formation, women's liberation and self-agency, and the interplay between the digital and physical realm.

The author is aware of the influence of branding on consumer culture through her prior knowledge. She is well versed on how brands conduct market research to exploit socially relevant issues and how this leads to post and neoliberal feminism and its characteristic of only simulating women's liberation. As she forms her identity through authenticity, she is uncomfortable with the idea of identical bodies and faces based on a digital model. Learning and accepting that she herself is not authentic and that the idea of being authentic is as paradoxical as identifying with an online self has not only made her more sensitive to identity formation but also more empathic and less judgmental. Through her own process in this work, the author hopes to reach other people who are asking themselves the same or similar questions.

So the point is not to condemn people who undergo beauty treatments but to criticise the structures and industries that coerce individuals into undergoing them. Moreover, the work is not meant to incite fear of the inevitable digitalisation and the associated perception of alienation from the natural self, but rather to show how the exact opposite is taking place. This awareness is much more helpful than romanticising the past which brings paralysis and condemnation of the future and its new developments.

6.3. Outlook

Designing one's own digital body has become far more present and real than it was a year ago. At least since Mark Zuckerberg's (2021) announcement of Meta's aim to build a metaverse, the idea of a digital body suddenly did not seem so far-fetched to people. Platforms like Decentraland allow people to enter a metaverse, interact with other people online and buy land. To get access, people are asked to create their avatar. Even though the possibilities are currently rather limited to stylised figures, the author of this thesis speculates that in the near future it will become far easier to digitise oneself and create realistic-looking digital humans.

The promise of the metaverse by Zuckerberg (2021) is that people will enter the metaverse as God created them. It offers the opportunity to build a society from scratch. People can invent themselves, create themselves, in some way almost give birth to themselves. The boundaries of who and what they can be is their imagination and no longer the class of where they come from, the colour of their skin or their gender.

This thesis argues against this utopian tendency, as the reproduction of female objectification in the digital world is already visible. Since Meta's "Horizone Worlds" platform launched in the US and Canada in December 2021, there have been several experiences of sexualised violence towards female avatars. Meta responded by stating that the victims should have activated the "Safe Zone", which is a personal space from where users can mute, block and report content or people. A feature like the "Safe Zone" relies on personal responsibility and shifts the responsibility from the platform operators to the users. Because the identification with the virtual body increases (Yee and Bailenson 2007, Moeller and D'Ambrosio 2021), the risk of harassment also grows and becomes more real.

Furthermore, the pledge of multiple personalities is an old one that is very reminiscent of the early days of the internet (Turkle 1984, Haraway 1992). However, the hyper-commercialisation of the internet is countering this vision with opposite logic. Namely, the power of a few big platform companies and their business with data extraction. This thesis fundamentally contradicts the utopian ideal of a free metaverse, especially because people enter the metaverse with social preconditions and particular socialisation. This means that whoever has a lot of money in the physical world now naturally also has the opportunity to buy goods in the metaverse that are withheld from others. Social inequalities will reproduce themselves, and people will have to deal with spaces where exclusion and inclusion will play a role. The thesis questions how utopian this actually is.

Sociologist Thorstein Veblen (1912) describes the concept of "conspicuous consumption" as consumption that does not keep people alive but distinguishes them in relation to recognition. It is likely that everything people consume in the metaverse is ultimately conspicuous consumption because people do not really need it. Under these conditions, the author estimates that it is likely that a person's look is crucial in the metaverse, as the same structures of race, class and gender are reproduced and distinguished by outward appearance. These ideas are already visible in the amount of digital fashion sold by luxury brands like Balenciaga, Gucci and Louis Vuitton. Just as in the physical world, these goods are recognised as

status symbols and therefore serve as "conspicuous consumption". The transfer of symbolic capital from physical brands to the digital world leads the author of this paper to speculate that the metaverse will not be as utopian as its advocates would like people to believe.

Philosophy has been asking itself for thousands of years what people know about the outside world, what reality is, and what the relationships between people are. Through the digital world, these questions can be asked by those who have not yet engaged with philosophy. In other words, through the digital world philosophical questions move closer to life. Through the metaverse people can think about their own situation in new ways. This epistemological impulse could help encourage people to question socio-political structures, which ultimately is the overarching goal of this thesis and its author.

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(figure 1)	Brud. 2020. *Lil Miquela*. Photograph. Snobette. Accessed 16 May 2022. https://snobette.com/2020/05/caa-signs-influencer-lil-miquela-as-first-digital-client/.
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Interview Herr Dr. Philippe Snozzi von Smoothline in Zürich, 05.09.2021

Gegründet wurde Smoothline 2007 durch Dr. Snozzi und weitere Gründungspartner, welche mit der Eröffnung der schweizweit ersten einzig auf Faltenbehandlungen mit Fillern und Botox spezialisierten Klinik Pionierarbeit leisteten.

Ist der Anteil der Millennials in Ihrer Praxis gestiegen? Wenn ja, wie sehr?
Philippe Snozzi —— Bei uns in der Praxis ist der Zuwachs generell massiv gestiegen. Nicht nur von Millennials, aber von allen Altersgruppen. Die Frage ist immer, welches Patienten- oder Kundensegment man ansteuert. Es ist also auch eine Frage der Positionierung der Klinik auf dem Markt. Es gibt verschiedene Interessens- und damit Kundensegmente, die an der Ästhetischen Medizin interessiert sind. Ganz vereinfacht kann man sagen, dass es weltweit vier grosse Patient:innen-Segmente gibt.

1. Gruppe (die grösste Gruppe): Menschen, die am "gesunden" Altern interessiert sind. Das heisst, sie sind nicht daran interessiert grossartige Veränderungen vorzunehmen. Sie möchten vielmehr das erhalten, was sie haben im Sinne der Prävention oder gewisse Sachen wieder herstellen, die verloren gingen. In der Schweiz würde ich schätzen, dass diese Gruppe rund 95% aller Patient:innen ausmacht. Dieses Publikum ist auf Natürlichkeit bedacht und möchte nicht, dass das Umfeld merkt, dass etwas gemacht wurde. Gewollt sind möglichst subtile Eingriffe. Die Gruppe besteht hauptsächlich aus einem älterem Publikum, obwohl ich sagen muss, dass auch dieses immer jünger wird. Grundsätzlich hat man in den letzten zwei Jahrzehnten begonnen, sehr viel über den Alterungsprozess zu lernen. Zuvor war nur sehr wenig erforscht.

Für die Ästhetische Medizin spielt es eine wichtige Rolle, was sich im makroskopischen Bereich verändert, also was während des Alterungsprozesses mit dem Körper passiert. Zu der Frage, was es für anatomische Veränderungen gibt, hat man erst in den letzten 15 Jahren viel dazugelernt. Zum Beispiel weiss man heutzutage, dass es zu grossen Veränderungen in der Knochenmasse im Gesichtsbereich und im Schädelbereich kommt. Vor allem im Mittelgesichtbereich finden grosse Umbauten von Knochenmassen statt, in anderen Bereichen des Körpers verändert sich die Knochenmasse überhaupt nicht. Es kommt zu einer Verschiebung des Fettgewebes, dass heisst das in gewissen Bereichen das Fettgewebe zunimmt während es in anderen Bereichen abnimmt. Aber das Wichtigste sind die strukturellen Veränderungen, die passieren. Früher war man wahnsinnig auf die Hülle des Körpers fokussiert, man hat sich einfach angeschaut, ob die Person Falten hat oder nicht. Heutzutage weiss man aber, dass dies nur einer von ganz vielen Aspekten ist. Die Falten, die sich zeigen, entstehen durch tiefer liegende grundlegende Probleme. Das Gesicht fällt nicht nur nach unten, sondern es fällt nach innen und nach unten und es entsteht eine innwertige Rotation. Das sind alles ziemlich komplexe Vorgänge,

welche man erst in den letzten 15 Jahren richtig begonnen hat zu verstehen. Dementsprechend haben sich auch die Behandlungen angepasst und man betrachtet das Thema ganzheitlicher. Die meisten Menschen fangen sich aber erst an damit auseinanderzusetzen, wenn sie erste "Symptome" feststellen, also die ersten Veränderungen im Gesicht bemerken. Das passiert so ca. ab 35 Lebensjahr, wenn viele den Wunsch haben Körperbewusst zu altern. Wir in der Praxis haben von Anfang an dieses Zielpublikum angesprochen. Wir haben die meisten Kund:innen von 35 Jahren aufwärts bis zu Kund:innen, welche über 90 Jahre alt sind.

2. Gruppe: Das jüngere Publikum von 18 bis 35 Jahren wurde extrem wichtig. Bei diesen Person geht es wirklich primär darum, ein Enhancement zu machen, also Körperoptimierung. Sie wünschen sich zum Beispiel definiertere Wangen weil sie finden, es würde besser aussehen oder ein bisschen vollere Lippen machen sie attraktiver. Das sind vor allem Millennials und Digital Natives, die mit den sozialen Medien aufwuchsen. Die Kund:innen haben einen ganz anderen Zugang zur Ästhetischen Medizin. Es wird Teil von einem Lifestyle wie zum Beispiel ein Tattoo Ausdruck von einem Lifestyle sein kann. So werden behandelte Lippen, insbesondere Lippen die extra so behandelt wurden, dass sie nicht mehr natürlich ausschauen, Ausdruck eines Lifestyles und einer Kultur.

Ich schätze, diese Gruppe macht in Westeuropa ca. 15% aus. Dazu möchte ich noch sagen, dass das junge Kundensegment oft gar nicht über die finanziellen Mittel verfügt, um sich bei uns behandeln zu lassen. Daher haben wir in unserer Praxis weniger Kontakt zu diesem Segment. Diese Kundschaft achtet sehr auf den Preis, haben ein strenges Budget und möchten möglichst viele Behandlungen für möglichst wenig Geld haben. In der Schweiz haben wir die spezielle Situation, dass der Markt gar nicht reguliert ist. Sie können in der Schweiz zu irgendeiner Kosmetiker:in gehen und sich etwas spritzen lassen. In anderen Ländern ist dies völlig unvorstellbar. In Deutschland wurde gerade letztes Jahr wieder eine Person zu dreieinhalb Jahren Gefängnis verurteilt, weil sie einer Kundin etwas gespritzt hat. In der Schweiz wäre es laut Gesetzestext auch nicht legal, aber es gibt eine grosse Grauzone, die genutzt wird und in derjenigen regulatorisch nichts unternommen oder von den Behörden nicht eingeschritten wird. Das heisst, wir haben in der Schweiz einen extrem fragmentierten Markt auf dem sich viele tummeln.

Das sind die zwei grössten Kundensegmente und dann gibt es noch zwei kleinere dazu.

3. Gruppe: Dies sind Menschen, die mit einem Makel geboren wurden, der sie in ihrem Leben beeinträchtigt und unter dem sie leiden. Ein Beispiel dazu kann ein stark fliehendes Kinn sein. Darunter leiden viele und man weiss aus Studiendaten, dass diese Menschen im Leben benachteiligt werden. Ihnen wird zum Beispiel mindere Intelligenz zugerechnet, sie haben schlechte Jobaussichten, sie haben einen schlechteren Lohn und sie haben Mühe in der Partnerfindung. Ich denke, dass ist evolutionär sehr tief verankert, weil sehr viele genetische Syndrome eben auch mit kognitiven Beeinträchtigungen einher gehen. Beim fliehenden Kinn ist diese Kausalität überhaupt nicht vorhanden und trotzdem ist die Vorstellung tief in uns verankert.

4. Gruppe: Aus meiner Sicht spielt diese Gruppe in der Schweiz gar keine Rolle. Diese Gruppe ist aber beispielsweise in Südkorea oder in Brasilien sehr vertreten, wo die Leute noch einmal einen ganz anderen Zugang zur Ästhetik haben. Man muss immer sehr stark soziokulturell unterscheiden,

welche Körperregionen im Fokus liegen. In der Schweiz oder in Westeuropa ist beispielsweise das Gesicht sehr im Fokus. Eingriffe am Körper spielen eine kleinere Rolle bis auf ein paar universelle Klassiker, welche weltweit sehr häufig sind wie zum Beispiel Brustvergrösserungen oder Brustreduktion. Hingegen sind Povergrösserungen oder andere, ähnliche Eingriffe in der Schweiz ein Randphänomen. In Brasilien kommen diese Behandlungen sehr häufig vor, weil die Menschen dort extrem körperorientiert sind. Korea ist auch wieder Gesichts-orientiert und sie sind sehr progressiv im Umgang. In Korea gibt es sogenannte Transfomationspatient:innen, die exakte Aussagen über das gewünschte Aussehen ihrer Nase, Ohren und Lippen machen, woraufhin das Messer angesetzt wird. Diese Menschen erkennt man danach nicht mehr wieder. Dies wäre in der Schweiz zum Beispiel völlig unvorstellbar, in Korea hingegen ist dies soziokulturell akzeptiert.

Es gibt diese vier Gruppen. Ich denke, in der Schweiz ist die 1. Gruppe immer noch das grösste Segment. Ihnen geht es vor allem um "anti-aging", obwohl ich diese Wort nicht mag weil es vielen dieser Menschen nicht ums nicht-Altern geht sondern vielmehr um ein "well-aging" also darum, gesundheitsbewusst zu sein, innerlich wie äusserlich. Um noch einmal auf Ihre eigentliche Frage zurückzukommen: Ich denke, dass der Gesamtmarkt eine extrem starke Zunahme von Millennials beobachtet. Wir haben aber in der Praxis keinen extremen Zuwachs bemerkt, weil Millennials nicht unsere Zielgruppe bilden.

Denken Sie das Millennials eher zu Beauty2Go gehen?

Absolut. Beauty2Go ist der Klassiker, der wirklich total auf dieses Kundensegment ausgerichtet ist. Also auch auf den sozialen Medien sehr aktiv ist und sich an Influencer:innen richtet. Sie bieten zudem ein tiefes Preissegment an.

Sprechen die Menschen offener über ihre Behandlungen? Ist es ein Statussymbol geworden, sich die Lippen oder die Nase machen zu lassen?

Ich kann mir das sehr gut vorstellen. Ich weiss nicht, was dazu konkret für Untersuchungen oder Daten vorliegen aber so wie ich es erlebe ist dies tatsächlich so. Diese Art von Kundensegment will, dass man die Eingriffe sieht so wie man auch ein Tattoo sieht. Es wird zum Statement: Ich möchte dies so machen, ich entscheide das über meinen Körper. Dies unterscheidet sich eben diametral zum Segment der ersten Gruppe die verhindern wollen, dass man es merkt. Alles, was wirklich gut gemacht ist, dürften Laien gar nicht erkennen oder zumindest nur vermuten. Bei den Millennials ist es genau das umgekehrte. Sie wollen gerade, dass man es erkennt, auch dass es zum Teil grotesk aussieht. Die Motivation dahinter ist für mich schwer nachvollziehbar. Primär sind es auch junge Frauen die Eingriffe machen.

Bei Männern sind es weniger aber auch hier werden es mehr. Männer haben generell viel mehr Angst vor irgendwelchen invasiven Eingriffen, auch wenn diese nur minimal sind. Dies spielt auch eine grosse Rolle. Wenn wir zum Beispiel einen anderen Bereich der Medizin anschauen, welcher in den nächsten Jahren sehr grosse Fortschritte machen wird, ist das die Longevity Medizin. Hier geht es darum, die gesunde Lebensspanne durch Eingriffe zu erweitern. Dort haben Männer eine viel grössere Affinität. Obwohl es dort auch Überschneidungen gibt, ist es viel mehr technisch. Aber um noch einmal zurück zu kehren es sind wie gesagt viel mehr Frauen und wenn man Männer fragt, gefallen ihnen offensichtlich behandelte Lippen nicht. Also machen es Frauen aus anderen Gründen.

Kommen Kundinnen mit einem z.B. mit FaceTune oder mit einem Facefilter bearbeiteten Foto von sich selber?

Ja, bei den Jungen sieht man das sehr oft. Wie gesagt, bei uns in der Praxis ist dieses Segment nicht so gross aber bei denen, die kommen sehe ich es immer wie häufiger. Meistens kommen diese Kundinnen nach dem ersten Gespräch nicht noch einmal, weil ich ihnen erkläre, dass dies einfach nur Trends sind die nicht nachhaltig und nicht nachvollziehbar sind. Vielen kommen auch mit Bildern von irgendwelchen Influencer:innen und wünschen sich zum Beispiel die gleichen Lippen. Trends sind zum Beispiel Fox-Eyes oder Russian Lips. Diese Trends werden alle paar Monate oder Jahre geändert und machen aus meiner Sicht wenig Sinn.

Ich denke, Technologien haben einen extremen Einfluss auf junge Menschen. Beispielsweise Selfies haben dieses Gebiet verändert, weil für ein Selfie gewöhnlich eine Weitwinkelkamera verwendet wird und diese verzerrt die Gesichtsproportionen anders als ein 50mm Objektiv. Dadurch wird automatisch auf jedem Selfie die Nase grösser und länger. Hierzu gibt es ganz klare Studien, die belegen, dass die Anzahl von Nasenkorrekturen parallel mit dem Anstieg der Selfies zugenommen haben. Ausserdem haben ca. 2% der Bevölkerung körperdysmporphische Störungen. Bei diesem Krankheitsbild hat man eine verzerrte Wahrnehmung des eigenen Körpers. Diese Gruppe dürfte man prinzipiell nicht behandeln weil man weder ihnen noch sich selber als Ärzt:in einen Gefallen macht. Es führt sogar eher zu einer Verschlechterung der Situation. Man weiss, dass bei Patient:innen bei denen es um Nasen geht dies noch viel Höher ist als in der allgemeinen Bevölkerung und diese Dinge verstärken sich dann immer gegenseitig. Die sozialen Medien führen schon zu einer Verschärfung gewisser Probleme, vor allem bei Menschen die eine körperdysmorphische Störung haben.

Kennen Sie den Begriff Instagram-Face?

Ja, das habe ich auch schon gehört. Dieser Trend gibt es absolut. Wie gesagt, vor allem das jüngere Publikum fährt total darauf ab. Ich finde das völlig absurd. Sie reden von Dingen von denen sie überhaupt nichts verstehen und der Einfluss ist extrem stark. Die meisten würden das Wort "Jaw Line" niemals kennen oder verwenden aber auf einmal wollen sie unbedingt ihre Jaw Line korrigiert haben. Die Kund:innen kommen nicht, weil sie festgestellt haben, dass ihnen ihre Jaw Line nicht passt sondern sie kommen weil sich durchgesetzt hat, dass eben eine Jaw Line auf eine gewisse Art auszusehen hat und wollen diese dann ebenfalls. Dies ist ganz klar von den sozialen Medien ein Stück weit beeinflusst.

Das Ganze ist eine grosse Diskussion, in der zwei Extrempole bestehen. Es gibt Autor:innen die sagen, dass das ganze Schönheitsideal aus verschiedensten Motiven schlussendlich künstlich herbeigeführt ist. Die klassische Verfechterin dieser These ist Naomi Wolf, eine bekannte Feministin, die in den 90er Jahren ein Buch geschrieben hat mit dem Titel The Beauty Myth. Darin legt sie dar, dass Frauen in ein Schönheitsideal hinein gezwängt werden was schliesslich auch Mechanismen des Patriarchat sind, um Frauen zu unterwerfen.

Dann gibt es die Gegenbewegung. Diese ist insbesondere von weiblichen Autor:innen vertreten die sagen, dass es naturwissenschaftlich ganz klar widerlegt ist, dass Schönheitskonzepte wirklich programmiert sind. Man weiss aus Daten, dass Säuglinge auf attraktive Gesichter ganz anders reagieren und eine andere Gehirnaktivität zeigen, woraus sich schliessen

lässt, dass Schönheit sehr tief in uns verankert ist. Die Diskriminierung von weniger attraktiven Menschen beginnt schon im Säuglingsalter, ohne dass diese durch Marketing beeinflusst sind. Man weiss auch, dass weniger attraktive Menschen im Leben wirklich benachteiligt sind und ich denke, die Wahrheit liegt irgendwo zwischen diesen beiden Polen. Gerade die These von Naomi Wolf ist aus meiner Sicht nicht zu vernachlässigen. Man sieht, wie stark soziale Medien einen Einfluss haben und Schönheitsideale und Trends vermitteln, welche aus meiner Sicht definitiv nicht evolutionär etabliert sind und nichts mit irgendwelchem Darwinismus zu tun haben. Daher denke ich, dass die Wahrheit relative komplex ist und irgendwo in der Mitte liegt.

Die Antwort auf die Frage ist nicht schwarz oder weiss, sondern in ganz vielen Grautönen. Aber es ist extrem schwierig mit den ganzen Druck der eben gerade durch die sozialen Medien generiert wird umzugehen. Das ist ein ganz anderer Druck als früher, um der Norm zu entsprechen oder irgendwo hineinzupassen. Zusätzlich passiert dieser Prozess in einer Zeit, in der junge Menschen in ihrer Entwicklung noch stark auf Einflüsse reagieren. Man weiss, dass das menschliche Gehirn erst mit zwanzig Jahren wirklich ausgereift ist. Unter diesen Umständen ist es fraglich, wie sinnvoll irgend ein ästhetischer Eingriff bei einer 16-jährigen ist, wenn man weiss, dass sie dies mit 30 ganz sicher nicht mehr machen würde. Andererseits kann man aber auch sagen, dass wenn sich mit 16 jemand mal die Lippen aufspritzt, um es auszuprobieren als pubertäre Erfahrung ist dies auch nicht so schlimm.

Gibt es Risiken bei minimal-invasiven Eingriffen und wird auf diese wegen Instagram oder YouTube zu wenig Rücksicht genommen?

Das ist ein riesiges Problem. Die Gefahren werden überhaupt nicht thematisiert. Auch die minimal invasiven Eingriffe können sehr schwerwiegende Nebenwirkungen haben. Dies können abgestorbenen Nasen bis hin zu Erblindungen sein. Den Gefahren ist man sich nicht bewusst. Vor allem wenn diese Behandlungen von nicht medizinischem Fachpersonal durchgeführt werden, bei denen das Bewusstsein gar nicht vorhanden ist. Ich denke, das Problem liegt im Aufbau des ganzen Systems der Influencer:innen. Oftmals sind sie jünger, es fehlt ihnen an einer gewissen Lebenserfahrung, sie rutschen in das "Influencen" rein und viele erstellen einen Beitrag, um neuen Content zu kreieren. Eine Klinik lädt sie ein, um zu einer gratis Behandlung vorbeizukommen, im Gegenzug posten sie über die Behandlung und deren Resultat. Ich denke nicht, dass bei so einer Aktion viel über allfällige Risiken und die Nachhaltigkeit des Contents nachgedacht wird. Es geht nur darum, inwiefern sie von ihrem Influencertum möglichst lang profitieren können. Oftmals wird über diese Themen nur sehr oberflächlich gesprochen.

Durch Face-Filter und FaceTune kann man ein schnelles und einfaches Bild von sich selber mit volleren Lippen oder einer kleineren Nase erhalten. Denken Sie, dies hat den Trend beschleunigt?

Bei dieser Frage sind wir wieder beim Thema Technologie. Technologie ist immer allem anderen voraus. Es braucht Jahre, um Technologie aufzuarbeiten und zu verarbeiten, vor allem soziokulturell. Dies beobachtet man insbesondere in den sozialen Medien, am Beispiel der Pandemie konnte man sehen, wie soziale Medien auch zu einer extremen Spaltung der Gesellschaft führen. Man sieht Phänomene, die man zuvor nicht gesehen hat oder nie an die Oberfläche kamen. Das gleiche gilt auch für die Ästhetische Medizin. Technisch ist vieles auf einmal machbar, die Frage ist, ob dies wirklich sinnvoll ist. Die ganze Verarbeitung von neuen Technologien braucht Jahre

bis überhaupt langsam ein Bewusstsein dafür entsteht. Der Bereich der Ästhetischen Medizin ist sehr kompetitiv und setzt natürlich viele unter Druck, Trends zu verfolgen. Wenn man immer hinterfragt, was eine neue Technologie überhaupt macht und soziokulturell bedeutet, ist der Zug schon längst abgefahren. Darum glaube ich, ist es umso wichtiger, die Konversation darüber offen und ehrlich immer wieder von Neuem zu führen.

Botox verhindert Zornesfalten, wie wirkt sich das auf unsere Wahrnehmung von Frauen aus? Wie lesen wir die Gesichter anders?

Ich bin davon überzeugt, dass Botox ein Stück weit einen Einfluss hat. Ob dieser jetzt positiv oder negativ ist, ist sehr schwer zu bewerten. Auch hier gibt es Argumente in beide Richtungen und es ist wieder eine Grauzone. Was Sie verstehen müssen über Botox ist, dass es auch nur sehr fein einsetzbar ist. Viele der mimischen Falten entstehen nicht, weil jemand häufiger böse schaut als andere oder die Stirn mehr runzelt, es hat vielmehr mit der Ruhespannung der Muskeln zu tun. Wie viel Spannung verbleibt auf dem Muskel wenn man nicht böse schaut? Darum bekommen ganz viele Menschen, die eigentlich gar nicht viel böse schauen ganz tiefe Zornesfalten, weil sie eine erhöhte Ruhespannung haben und andere, die oft die Stirn runzeln bekommen diese nicht. Das ist genetisch bedingt, man kann das nicht beeinflussen. Sie können nicht Menschen mit tiefen Zornesfalten sagen, sie sollten einfach weniger böse blicken und dann erwarten, dass diese weg gehen.

Botox ist kein ON oder OFF Prinzip, also entweder kann man das Gesicht bewegen oder nicht. Im Prinzip genügt es, wenn man einfach die Ruhespannung reduziert. Man kann theoretisch so behandeln, dass noch die volle Bewegung möglich ist und trotzdem hat Botox eine gute präventive Wirkung. Statt mit einem ein ON-OFF Switch lässt es sich vielmehr mit einem Dimmer vergleichen, den Sie genau so drehen können wie Sie möchten. Also auch hier wieder kein Schwarz-Weiss-Denken. Die grundlegende Frage ist immer, was gewünscht und das langfristige Ziel ist, und das ist auch wieder soziokulturell bedingt. Eine Französin möchte möglichst nicht eingeschränkt sein in ihrer Mimik, dafür kommt sie alle drei Monate. Dies ist jetzt ein wenig klischiert aber es trifft auch zu. Tendenziell russische Patientinnen möchten sechs Monate gar keine Mimik mehr, weil sie Mimik sowieso unnötig finden und sie am meisten für ihr Geld haben möchten.

Die Mimik ist aber für den Menschen extrem wichtig, vor allem evolutionär gesehen. Es ist ein wichtiges und feines Kommunikationstool. Der Mensch ist ziemlich der einzige Primat, der so eine feinmotorische, mimische Muskulatur hat. Selbst ein Affe hat ganz wenige, mimische Ausdrücke die er machen kann und eine Katze hat noch viel weniger. Dies ist auch ein Grund warum zum Beispiel ein Fisch kurz vor seinem Lebensende immer noch genau gleich alt aussieht. Wir Menschen sind auch eins der wenigen Tiere, wo die mimische Muskulatur überhaupt im Knochen verankert ist, so dass wir überhaupt so fein unser Gesicht bewegen können. Das sieht man bei anderen Tieren eigentlich nicht. Dies ist auch wichtig, da die Mimik eine grosse Rolle in unserer Empathiefähigkeit spielt. Der Mensch hat sogenannte Spiegelneuronen, das heisst wenn Sie traurig ausschauen, aktiviert das meine Spiegelneuronen und ich mache automatisch auch ein trauriges Gesicht, damit ich Ihren emotionalen Zustand viel besser kognitiv wahrnehmen und verarbeiten kann. Wenn dieser Vorgang durch Botox blockiert ist, ist dies durchaus ein Argument dafür dass der Mensch auf dieser Ebene weniger emphatisch sein kann, weil dieses System wegfällt.

Es hat aber auch durchaus Vorteile. Man weiss zum Beispiel, dass Botoxbehandlungen einen extrem positiven Einfluss haben können auf Leute mit einer therapieresistenten Depression. Man weiss vor allem aus der Verhaltensökonomie, dass das Ganze zu irrationalen Entscheidungen im Leben führen kann, die nicht unbedingt positiv sind. Die Arbeitsgruppe von Prof. Ernst Fehr an der Universität Zürich ist auf diesem Gebiet relativ führend unterwegs. Einer der einfachsten Versuche in der Verhaltensökonomie ist das sogenannte Ultimatum Spiel. Das funktioniert so: Partie A hat einen gewissen Geldbetrag welche sie an Partie B abgeben muss. Also ich habe zum Beispiel 10 CHF und muss Ihnen einen Teil davon geben. Sie können diesen an- oder ablehnen, wenn Sie annehmen dürfen wir beiden den Betrag behalten, wenn Sie aber ablehnen gehen wir beide leer aus. Die rationale Lösung wäre natürlich, dass Sie immer annehmen, weil sonst hätten Sie gar nichts. Wenn ich aber nur 1 CHF von den 10 CHF anbiete, danken sich die meisten, dass sie auf diesen einen Franken auch verzichten können und lehnen ab. Studien zeigen aber, dass die Mehrheit der Empfänger:innen Beträge unter 3 CHF ablehnen. Die Mehrheit der Sender bietet Beträge von 4 bis 6 CHF an. Daraufhin hat man angefangen, Versuche zu machen in denen man Menschen Punkte auf die Stirn klebte und anderen zwischen die Augen. Dann gab es zum Beispiel eine Gruppe, die ihre Augenbrauen hoch ziehen mussten, um ihre Stirn zu runzeln. Das war die Gruppe B, also diejenige, die den Entscheid über die An- oder Ablehnung des Geldes fällen musste. Dann gab es eine andere Gruppe, die die Augenbrauen zusammenziehen musste, um böse zu schauen. Die letzte Gruppe musste gar nichts machen. Daraufhin hat man gesehen, dass die Gruppe, die die Augenbrauen zusammenzog um böse zu schauen, das Angebot signifikant öfters abgelehnt hatte als diejenige, die die Augenbrauen hoch zog oder ihr Gesicht unverändert liess. Man sieht also, dass die Mimik nicht unbedingt einen positiven Einfluss haben muss, denn rational gesehen hat man jedes mal wenn man ablehnt verloren. Es ist ein emotionaler Entscheid, der einem kein Benefit gibt.

Es kann wieder in beide Richtungen gehen und es ist tatsächlich so, dass es einen Einfluss hat, wie stark dieser ist, sei aber dahingestellt. Wahrscheinlich ist auch hier die Wahrheit irgendwo in der Mitte. Vielleicht heben die positiven Aspekte die negativen auf oder umgekehrt aber ich bin definitiv davon überzeugt, dass es einen Einfluss hat. Es wird in jedem Fall eine Veränderung geben, aber wie schnell und ob wir diese bemerken ist schwer zu sagen. Es hat natürlich alles einen Einfluss. Wenn man im Tram unterwegs ist, schauen 90% der Personen auf ihr Handy. Es findet auch dort auf non-verbaler Ebene viel weniger Kommunikation statt. Die Leute schauen nicht mehr umher, sie schauen nicht mehr wer neben ihnen sitzt. Hier hat sich ebenfalls etwas durch Technik und Medien komplett verändert, die aus meiner Sicht einen extremen Einfluss auf uns Menschen haben. Heutzutage ist es ein ganz anderes Reisen als es früher war.

Wohin wird sich der Trend Ihrer Meinung nach entwickeln? Was wird das nächste große Ding sein?

Ich denke, die Beschleunigung wird sicher bestehen bleiben. Es gibt sehr schnelle, technische Entwicklungen und viele Menschen sind damit, aus meiner Sicht, ein Stück weit überfordert. Ich denke, im Moment wird der Trend sicher anhalten. Es ist eine langsame Lernkurve, wie man mit elektronischen Medien umgeht. Für jede:n ist der Umgang mit sozialen Medien ein Lernprozess, also wie viele soziale Medien möchte ich zulassen, möchte ich

privat in den sozialen Medien unterwegs sein, nur beruflich, beides oder gar nicht. Das sind alles Entscheide, die jede:r für sich selbst irgendwie fällen muss.

Alles ist schnelllebig in der heutigen Zeit, auch im Berufsleben. Es ist nicht mehr so wie früher, als man irgendeinen Beruf erlernte, sich vielleicht noch ein bisschen weiterbildete aber schlussendlich bis zur Pension auf diesem Beruf arbeitete. Heute wechselt man das Berufsfeld mehrmals im Verlauf seiner Karriere, weil alles so dynamisch ist und sich so schnell verändert. Dies führt zu sehr viel Druck, vor allem für die jüngere Generation.

Ich denke für jede:n ist das ein Lernprozess, wie viele soziale Medien man zulassen möchte: Möchte ich privat in den sozialen Medien unterwegs sein oder nur beruflich oder in beidem oder gar nicht. Das sind alles Entscheide die jede:r für sich selbst irgendwie fällen muss.

Wünschen Sie sich manchmal eine Welt, in der Schönheit weniger wichtig wäre?

Ja, durchaus. Andererseits klingt dies sehr paradox wenn ich das sage, weil ich mein Geld damit verdiene. Schlussendlich denke ich, ist es mehr "wishful thinking" und es wird schlussendlich nie der Fall sein. Ich glaube, der Wunsch des Menschen nach Schönheit und Selbstoptimierung besteht schon seit es die Menschheit gibt. Diesen Wunsch gab es schon bei den alten Ägyptern und ich denke, dies ist einfach universell vorhanden und wird nie weggehen. Natürlich wäre es wünschenswert - genauso wie es wünschenswert wäre, dass wir viel weniger auf materielle Dinge in unserem Leben fokussiert sind. Schlussendlich sind es Wunschgedanken und jede:r kann bei sich selbst bestimmen, wie viel man zulassen möchte oder was seiner eigenen Lebensphilosophie entspricht. Ich denke aber nicht, dass sich dies aus der Welt schaffen lässt, da bin ich sehr darwinistisch veranlagt. Dieser Drang ist viel zu tief in uns genetisch verwurzelt.

Ein anderes Beispiel wäre die Gier der Menschen. Irgendwie braucht die Menschheit diese Gier, sie ist ein Trieb für sehr vieles, weil sie uns zum Beispiel zum überleben anregt oder uns dazu bringt, besser zu sein als andere und so einen eigenen Überlebensvorteil schafft. Trotzdem wissen wir, dass es etwas ist was uns wahrscheinlich nicht glücklich macht, sogar ein Stück weit unser Verderben darstellt. Trotzdem sitzt es tief in uns, wir können es nicht einfach ausschalten. Gleichzeitig sehe ich natürlich täglich in meinem Beruf, dass ich sehr vielen Menschen viel Freude bereite, ihnen etwas Gutes tue und es eine extrem befriedigende Arbeit ist. Man kann den Menschen in einem Gesamtsystem, das an und für sich als Ganzes nicht so gut ist, trotzdem etwas Gutes tun. Ich denke, wir befinden uns ein ganzes Leben lang in diesem Paradox.

Ich kann das sehr gut nachvollziehen, vor allem weil ich aus der Modebranche komme. Ich denke, die Modeindustrie ist auch in diesem Paradox gefangen.

Genau. Ich denke, Mode ist ein Klassiker. Ich liebe Mode über alles und gleichzeitig gibt es ganz viele Menschen die sagen, dass Mode absolut sinnlos ist. Vor allem, weil es so viele Ressourcen verbraucht. Für mich ist Mode aber gleichzeitig auch Kultur, Ausdruck von Kunst und Lebensformen und noch viel mehr. Aber auch hier kann man in beide Richtungen argumentieren.

Genau. Ich denke aber auch, dass Mode sehr stark demonstriert, dass sie in diesem paradoxen System funktioniert in dem sie einen Trend kreiert, um nur wenige Monate später zu erklären, dass das was eben noch Trend war jetzt kein Trend mehr ist, sondern genau das Gegenteil. Da gibt es auch gewisse Parallelen zur Schönheit. Dort funktioniert der Mechanismus nur langsamer und weniger offensichtlich. Daher denke ich -um noch einmal auf diese Veranlagung des Menschen von Gier nach

Schönheit oder Mode zurückzukommen- dass wir schon gewisse Veranlagungen haben, aber gleichzeitig sind wir auch extrem beeinflussbar. Wir haben die Gier, aber sie ist dann noch nicht steif genug, um auf etwas festgelegt zu sein sondern ist form- und beeinflussbar.

Da bin ich mit Ihnen einverstanden, das ist sicher ein Stück weit so. Karl Lagerfeld sagte mal, dass Menschen, die in Trainerhosen umher liefen ihr Leben nicht mehr im Griff hätten nur um dann ein paar Kollektionen später selbst eine Trainerhose zu entwerfen. Als er darauf angesprochen wurde, meinte er nur dazu, dass dies schon drei Jahre her sei, und dass das was er vor drei Jahren gesagt hätte nicht mehr für den heutigen Moment zählt.

Interview Beauty2Go, 07.09.2021

Madeleine Karasch ist Marketing-Managerin bei der Beauty2Go Klinik und damit auch verantwortlich für die Social Media Kanäle der Firma. Dr. Carlos Panero Frade arbeitet als Arzt in der Filiale in Zürich. Beauty2Go spezialisiert sich auf tiefe Preise und ein junges Zielpublikum.

Wie nehmen Millennials Schönheitseingriffe war? Wie unterscheiden sie sich von älteren Generationen?

      Carlos Panero Frade ⸺ Die jüngere Generation hat nicht viel Ahnung, was die Eingriffe bedeuten. Sie möchten zum Beispiel eine Botoxbehandlung, welche aber mit Filler gemacht werden muss.

      Madeleine Karasch ⸺ Ich mache das Social Media für Beauty2Go und ganz oft mache ich Überzeugungsarbeit. Die meisten haben Angst, dass es unnatürlich wirkt. Zum Glück kann ich der Kundschaft von meiner eigenen Erfahrung berichten, weil ich mir selbst Botox und Filler unterspritzen lasse. Sie möchten nicht das Übertriebene, was direkt auffällt sondern eher das, was sehr natürlich aussieht.

      CPF ⸺ Etwa 20%-30% möchten, dass es künstlich aussieht.

      MK ⸺ Genau, sie kommen auch häufiger. Viele denken, dass man von einer Unterspritzung dicke Lippen bekommt aber das funktioniert gar nicht. So viel geht gar nicht rein, es ist auch nicht das Ziel von uns und die meisten von unseren Ärzt:innen raten davon ab. Diese Leute müssen häufiger kommen, um das gewünschte Resultat zu erhalten.

      CPF ⸺ Die meisten Kund:innen wollen nicht, dass es auffällt. Sie wollen schön, frisch und wach aussehen. Andere sollten nicht erkennen, wie sie diesen Look bekommen haben. Zum Beispiel eine Influencerin mit über 30'000 Followers auf Instagram möchte der Klinik nicht auf Instagram folgen, weil sie nicht will, dass die Leute eine Verbindung herstellen. Obwohl es ganz klar ist, dass sie sich alles machen lässt. Sie hat grosse Brüste, eine spitze Nase, grosse Lippen und sich die Jaw Line machen lassen. Obwohl es ganz offensichtlich ist, möchte sie es nicht öffentlich machen.

      MK ⸺ Aber für Leute, die nicht in dem Bereich arbeiten, ist es nicht so offensichtlich. Bevor ich hier gearbeitet habe, ist mir das auch nicht aufgefallen. Es gibt viele Stars, zum Beispiel Bella Hadid oder Hailey Bieber, von denen ich immer dachte sie wären natürlich und jetzt sehe ich, dass alles gemacht ist.

      CPF ⸺ Es kommt aber auch auf die Ärzt:in an. Ich achte genau darauf, wo ich mehr Volumen machen kann. Ich respektiere das Gesicht. Andere machen das nicht.

Kommen die Kundinnen mit einem z.B. mit FaceTune oder mit einem Facefilter bearbeiteten Foto von sich selber?

      CPF ⸺ Leider ja. Wir arbeiten in unserer Klinik mit Zeitfenstern. Pro Patient:in brauchen wir ca. 30 Minuten. Optimal brauchen wir 7 bis 8 Minuten für die Beratung aber wenn jemand mit unrealistischen Vorstellungen kommt, kostet das viel mehr Zeit. Man muss immer erzählen, dass dieser Wunsch gar nicht realisierbar ist, weil es ein digitaler Filter ist. Das können wir nicht genau so nachmachen. Es gibt sogar Leute, die uns für die Kontrolle nach zwei Wochen Bilder mit einem Filter schicken, so können wir gar nichts erkennen. Das spielt total gegen uns.

Also ist es gar nicht möglich so auszusehen wie mit einem Beauty-Filter?

MK —— Das ist total unrealistisch. Es gibt zum Beispiel auf Instagram einen Filter, der total krasse Fox Eyes macht. Ich erschrecke mich selbst daran, wie anders mein Gesicht aussieht mit dem Filter. Das geht gar nicht. Jedes Gesicht oder jeder Mensch verarbeitet die Produkte anders und das versteht auch nicht jede Person. Das heisst, nur weil du direkt nach der Behandlung so aussiehst heisst das nicht, dass es so bleibt. Man muss schon noch warten bis es abgeheilt ist und es wird trotzdem nie so aussehen wie mit einem Filter.

CPF —— Ich muss dazu sagen, dass sind nicht nur jüngere Generationen sondern das sind auch ältere Menschen. Aber die Millenials und Gen Z benutzen viel zu viele Filter und darum möchten junge Menschen fast alle die gleichen Sachen gemacht haben. Sie wollen eine Nasenkorrektur, eine Jaw Line und viel zu viel Volumen. Für mich ist das ein bisschen schockierend.

Kennt ihr den Begriff Instagram-Face? Könnt ihr es beschreiben?

CPF —— Ja, das ist total scheisse. Für mich als Arzt ist das totaler Schwachsinn. Die meisten Leute auf Instagram schauen andere Personen an, die Filter benutzen und denken, das sei die Realität. Wenn sie dann eine Behandlung machen, wollen sie genau so aussehen aber das geht nicht.

MK —— Dadurch ist die Erwartung von den Kund:innen unrealistisch und dementsprechend ist auch ihre Rückmeldungen negativ. Das macht es den Ärzt:innen extrem schwer, weil es eigentlich ihr Ziel ist den Mensch zu erfrischen, das Beste aus dem was schon da ist herauszuholen und nicht ihn so zu verändern, dass er aussieht wie jemand anderes, sondern die Vorteile hervorzuheben.

Denkt ihr auch, dass die Filter Unsicherheiten hervorrufen die man sonst gar nicht hätte?

CPF —— Ja, auf jeden Fall.

Gibt es Risiken bei minimal-invasiven Eingriffen und wird auf diese wegen Instagram, YouTube und Influencer:innen zu wenig Rücksicht genommen?

CPF —— Ja, die Influencer:innen habe keine Ahnung von den Risiken. Sie möchten eigentlich gar nichts davon hören. Sie haben kein Interesse. Ihnen ist es egal, wenn ich über Risiken spreche, obwohl es grosse Risiken gibt (z.B. kann man bei einer Nasenunterspritzung blind werden), sie wollen nur genau so aussehen wie in ihrer Vorstellung. Wir reden hier von einem ganz grossen Business und dieses möchte nicht über Risiken sprechen.

Glauben Sie, dass wir uns aufgrund von Technologien wie soziale Medien und Schönheitsbehandlungen immer ähnlicher sehen?

MK —— Ich glaube nicht, dass wir uns immer ähnlicher sehen, sondern es gibt einfach ähnliche Merkmale wie z.B. die spitze Nase oder volle Lippen, aber wenn wir zehn Bilder von Frauen nebeneinander legen kommen wir nicht zum Schluss, dass die alle gleich aussehen. Vor allem weil die Leute dafür immer noch zu unterschiedliche Konturen haben. Jede Lippe hat ihre eigene Kontur und jede Augenpartie ist unterschiedlich. Also kannst du sie gar nicht so ähnlich gestalten, weil sonst sieht es wirklich so aus als ob das ein Roboter-Mensch wäre. Aber die Vorstellungen über ein gewisses Körperteil haben schon ihre Ähnlichkeiten. Die Anatomie ist zwar anders, aber ich erkenne schon auch Trends die verfolgt werden. Dabei ist es uns wichtig, den Kund:innen auch zu zeigen, dass es uns nicht um Trends geht sondern darum, dass die Kund:in mit einem besseren Gefühl rausgeht, also wirklich eine Verbesserung sieht und fühlt.

Könnt ihr sagen wie sich die Trends entwickeln werden? Also was zum Beispiel die nächste populäre Lippenform wird?

CPF —— Es gibt zum Beispiel diesen Trend der "Russian Lips" heisst. Total schrecklich. Den machen wir nicht. Diese Lippen sind ganz flach und unnatürlich. Aber das ist die Tendenz, weil die Leute sich nur Bilder in 2D anschauen. In 3D mit Bewegung sieht das fürchterlich aus. Das mache ich nicht, weil hinter jeder Behandlung mein Name steht. Ich entscheide, was ich mache.

MK —— Trends sieht man immer. Zum Beispiel auch mit den Augenbrauen. Jetzt wollen alle volle Augenbrauen, in den 00er Jahren war das ganz anders. Und so wird sich alles immer verändern. Vielleicht in zehn Jahren heisst es dann auf einmal die Oberlippe ist grösser als die Unterlippe. Es braucht nur einen Star, der genug Einfluss hat so wie Kim Kardashian mit ihrem riesigen Hintern.

CPF —— Also zum Beispiel bei Männern ist es die Jaw Line und das Kinn. Vor 5 Jahren waren alle zufrieden mit ihrer natürlichen Jaw Line, kleiner wollte mehr. Aber jetzt, seit ein paar Jahren, wollen Männer die Jaw Line sichtbarer machen. Die Leute verlieren ein bisschen die Realität. Sie wollen immer mehr, mehr und mehr.

Botox verhindert zum Beispiel Zornesfalten, wie wirkt sich das auf unsere Kommunikation aus? Wie lesen wir Gesichter wenn die Mimik eingeschränkt ist?

MK —— Diese Frage ist ganz lustig weil ich auch vor kurzen Botox gespritzt bekommen habe.

CPF —— Gut gespritztes Botox nein. Schlecht gespritztes Botox ja.

MK —— Also du siehst es bei mir. Ich kann meine Augenbrauen noch bewegen. Hier auf der Stirn passiert zwar nix und ich habe keine Zornesfalte. Aber die Zornesfalte ist nicht der Ausdruck für Zorn, ich kann trotzdem böse schauen und meine Mimik zeigen. Wenn es zu viel ist, kann das natürlich passieren. Wichtig ist, dass man sich Botox bei Leuten spritzen lässt, die es auch wirklich gut können. Es sollte eigentlich gar nicht die Kommunikation verändern.

Dann glaubt ihr also, dass Falten, die sich zum Beispiel auf der Stirn oder zwischen den Augenbrauen bilden, nicht wichtig sind für die Kommunikation?

MK —— Nein, die sind nicht wichtig. Da sind zum Beispiel die Augenbrauen wichtig oder das Lächeln. Aber nur weil Falten entstehen finde ich nicht, dass dies ein Ausdruck von Kommunikation ist.

CPF —— Ich glaube, die Kommunikation kommt vom Augenbereich nicht von der Stirn. Diese Falten sind nicht nötig zum Kommunizieren.

Wie steht ihr zu einer Welt, in der Schönheit weniger wichtig wäre?

CPF —— Dieses Business wächst jedes Jahr.

MK —— Wenn jede Person auf sich selber wert legt, dann finde ich nein, dann sollte es nicht weniger wichtig werden weil die persönliche Einstellung und der Wunsch, sich persönlich schön zu fühlen, sollte immer unterstützt werden. Aber wenn man die Einstellung hat, ich benachteilige Menschen die nicht schön sind, dann würde ich sagen ja. Man muss immer schauen auf was es sich bezieht. Wenn beispielsweise jemand einen Job nicht bekommt wegen dem Aussehen, finde ich das nicht fair. Man sollte eher darauf achten, wie die Person kommuniziert und ins Team passt. Aber ich würde mir nicht wünschen, dass die Leute weniger auf ihr Äusseres achten, weil ich finde jeder muss sich für sich selber schön fühlen.

CPF —— Ich finde schon, dass Frauen, die mehr in ihr Äusseres investieren, mehr Value haben als andere. Weil sie sich dafür Zeit nehmen und es ihnen wichtig ist.

MK —— Ich finde es wichtig, dass man Behandlungen immer für sich selbst macht und niemals für eine andere Person oder für die Gesellschaft. Entweder für sich selber oder gar nicht. Wir haben auch Patient:innen mit Lippen die nicht mein Geschmack sind, aber wenn sie das wollen dann: Who cares? Man sollte es jedoch nie aus den falschen Gründen machen.

CPF —— Als Arzt sage ich bei den Extremen nein. Ich schicke die Leute nach Hause ohne Behandlung.

MK —— Das verstehe ich auch aus deiner Sicht, weil es deine Arbeit ist. Aber wenn eine Person Schlauchbootlippen hat, sollte man sie nicht dafür verurteilen. Genau so habe ich das meiner Familie auch erklärt. Es ist mein Körper und meine Entscheidung. Es muss mich keine Person schön finden ausser ich selbst.

Ich denke, dass ist diese Gratwanderung zwischen was ich wirklich möchte oder was mir vorgesagt wird, dass ich es möchte. Niemand ist pur, niemand ist nicht beeinflusst von den sozialen Medien. Oder nicht?

CPF —— Ja genau. Du bist was die Medien dir sagen was du bist.

MK —— Aber das gab es auch schon immer. Es gab auch schon vorher Schönheitsideale. Es ist einfacher geworden durch die sozialen Medien und auch verstärkt, aber ich meine man sieht es ja, dass es das schon früher gab.

MK —— Ja, aber die Leute hatten eine realistische Idee davon was sie wollen. Jetzt sehen sie auf den sozialen Medien die ganze Zeit das Gleiche. Die alten Leute hatten das nicht. Sie hatten eine natürlichere Vorstellung. Früher gab es keine Technologien wie heute.

Interview Frau Dr. Regine Laser, 16.11.2021

Frau Dr. Laser hat ihre eigene Praxis für Gynäkologie und Geburtshilfe in Zürich. Auf ihrer Webste bietet sie nebst Schwangerschaftsberatung, Bioidentische Hormontherapie und Homöopathie unter der Rubrik Anti-Aging auch Botox- und Filler-Behandlungen an.

Wie sind Sie als Gynäkologin dazu gekommen Botox- und Filler-Behandlungen anzubieten? Wie sehen Sie die Überschneidung?

    Regine Laser —— Mein Ansatz in Bezug zur Frau ist ein ganzheitlicher, ich sehe sie als Ganzes. Mit ihrem sozialen Umfeld, mit ihrem Ruf, usw. Dies hat sich für mich so ergeben mit meinem Schwerpunkt auf die Wechseljahre. Der Hauptzustrom von Patientinnen, die solche Behandlungen wünschen, ist so ca. 50 Jahre alt. Sie nehmen an sich wahr, dass es eine rasante Veränderung gibt. Ich mache diese Behandlungen schon sehr lange, bestimmt schon 16 Jahre. Das ich Botox und Filler mit ins Programm genommen habe, war eigentlich mehr als Gimmick noch dazu gedacht. Es muss zunächst alles andere erstmal stimmen. Die Frauen müssen gesund sein. Einzelne sprechen mich darauf an, weil ich auf meiner Website kommuniziere, dass ich diese Behandlungen mache. Ich selbst gehe nie auf jemanden zu und spreche etwas an.

     Ich denke der Vorteil ist bei mir, dass es diskreter gelöst wird und nicht so offensiv. Wenn ich mich in der Dermatologie anmelde für eine Sprechstunde und schon von vornherein weiss, dass ich nur dort hingehe, um meine Falten behandeln zu lassen, dann ist man schon die Frau mit den Falten, die rein läuft. Hier ist es anders, weil die Frauen wegen anderen Anliegen kommen und das Thema mehr per Zufall oder als Nebenangelegenheit aufkommt. Auch im Sinne von tiefem Vertrauen. Darum sind diese Behandlungen mehr wie eine kleine Dienstleistung unter Freundinnen. Auf einer persönlichen Ebene, um ihnen zu helfen sich besser zu fühlen. Wenn man sich selbst im Spiegel gefällt, dann ist das auch gleich ein besserer Tag, wie wenn man sich selbst als verknautscht ansieht, weil alles zu hängen beginnt. Es gibt auch eine Untersuchung darüber. Bei dieser bekommen depressive Personen Botox. Bei einer Depression fangen die Gesichtsmuskeln ebenfalls an zu hängen. Man sieht einem Gesicht an, ob es ein glückliches, trauriges, müdes oder erschöpftes Gesicht ist. Leute mit Depressionen haben oft Schwierigkeiten ihre Gesichtsmimik zu bewegen. Man hat Untersuchungen gemacht, bei der depressive Patientinnen, ohne andere Medikamente, Botox gespritzt bekommen haben und sie sich nach der Behandlung tatsächlich wieder besser gefühlt haben. Es hat sehr viel auch mit der Selbstwahrnehmung zu tun.

Die Frauen, die sich bei Ihnen behandeln lassen, sind also vor allem in den Wechseljahren?

    Ja, ich würde mal sagen, sie sind so 40 plus. Es hat natürlich keinen Sinn mit 55 Jahren anzufangen, wenn man sein ganzes Leben geraucht hat und die ganze Haut völlig durch ist. Dann haben die Behandlungen keinen Sinn mehr. Wenn man es macht, ist es schlau schon anzufangen, wenn die Falten noch gar keine Chance hatten tiefe Furchen zu graben.

Was Sie ansprechen nennt man auch präventives Botox. Wie stehen Sie dazu?

    Präventives Botox macht schon Sinn, weil man mit den Behandlungen anfangen muss, wenn sich die Falten noch nicht einprägen haben. Das wissen die meisten nicht, aber es kann sein, dass dieses Wissen jetzt über die sozialen Medien verbreitet wird.

Ich denke im Moment lassen sich viele Frauen, die erst 25 Jahre alt sind mit Botox präventiv behandeln.

> Wobei ich sagen muss, zu meiner Aufklärung gehört immer, dass ich die Patientinnen darüber informiere, dass wenn sie einmal anfangen sie nicht mehr aufhören wollen. Das ist eine Entscheidung, die man treffen muss. Man muss sich die regelmässigen Behandlungen auch leisten können.

Braucht man auch immer mehr Filler und Botox, je länger man es macht?

> Ja, klar. Mit der Hautalterung will man mehr. Vor allem wenn man möchte, dass man immer irgendwie am Optimum bleibt. Als Begriff verwende ich bei diesem Thema immer die "Endoptimierung der Frau". Dies Bezieht sich aber nicht nur auf Botox und Filler. Auf Englisch sagt man "Human Enhancement". Dies ist ein soziales Problem, weil es bedeutet, dass alle, die es sich leisten können für sich und ihren Körper, also auch ihre Gesundheit, immer das Maximum rausholen. Endoptimierung heisst, dass man immer super chic aussehen möchte. Jemand hat tolle Busen, keine Falten, die Haare sind nicht fettig und ohne Schuppen und Fett kann man sich absaugen lassen. Am Ende muss man das politisch diskutieren. Es existiert ein ganz starker Druck zur Endoptimierung. Da sagen zu können: "Ihr könnt mich mal, meine Falte gehört mir und ich mag sie" dazu gehört viel Mut.

Meine Recherche zeigt, wie wichtig es ist, dass man es auf keinen Fall mit Botox und Filler übertreibt, sonst wird man auch abgestempelt. Stimmt das?

> Auf jeden Fall, zu viel geht gar nicht. Das ist peinlich wenn es zu viel ist. Genau so ist es auch wenn man es nicht macht. Dann gilt das als schlechte Fürsorge.

Also muss man genau die Mitte finden?

> Ich würde sagen, dass die Intelligenten es versuchen so zu gestalten, dass es gar niemand wahrnimmt. Sondern es als natürlich genetisch verlangsamter Alterungsprozess wahrgenommen wird. Man muss das wirklich auch sozial unterscheiden, es gibt Leute die es irgendwie schlau und intelligent lösen und gute kosmetische Ergebnisse haben. Es gibt aber auch andere die irgendwie Sachen machen, dass sie zum Beispiel die schlimmsten Lippen der Welt haben. Das finde ich wirklich furchtbar. Also wenn dann etwas komisch aussieht oder zu viel gemacht wurde, wird dies als abwertendes Kriterium gesehen. Das spricht dann nicht für diese Person. Daher kommt es schlussendlich darauf an, wer welche Mittel hat, um bei dem Spiel mitzumachen. Oder wie intelligent man ist für sich selbst zu entscheiden was man braucht und was man nicht braucht.

Sie machen die Behandlungen schon seit über zehn Jahren. Mittlerweile haben nicht nur Teenager Social Media. Merken Sie da einen Veränderung?

> Ja, während Corona haben viele Video-Chats mit ihrer Kundschaft gemacht. Das hat einige schon beeinflusst, wenn sie sich die ganze Zeit selbst im Video betrachten konnten. Eine meiner Patientinnen macht beispielsweise Finanzcoaching für Frauen. Sie hat nur mit Frauen zu tun. Ihre Kundinnen haben angefangen Bemerkungen zu machen, ob sie müde sei oder ob es ihr nicht gut gehe. Das geht gar nicht. In einem Businesskontext ist es so, dass es zur persönlichen Brand gehört ein gewisses Aussehen zu haben. Man muss selbst on top sein, um ein Coaching für andere anbieten zu können.

Das klingt stark nach dem Buch von Naomi Wolf "The Beauty Myth"?

> Genau, dass kann ich sehr gut nachempfinden. Wenn man völlig unteroptimiert ist, um es mal so auszudrücken, ist das sicherlich schlecht. Wenn man aber völlig überoptimiert ist, kommt das bestimmt auch nicht gut an. Es muss irgendwie ein gepflegtes Aussehen sein.

Glauben Sie, dass Ihre Patientinnen beeinflusst sind von Social Media?

> Das Glaube ich schon. Ich glaube aber auch, dass das total unterschiedlich ist. Man muss das schon nach Alter ein bisschen aufsplitten. Junge denken daran, was sie zusätzlich an sich verbessern könnten. Sie haben ja schliesslich keinen echten Leidensdruck durch Falten, usw. Wie gesagt, da geht es um die Endoptimierung. Leute denken irgendwie, dass wenn sie Endoptimiert sind, sie auf dem Paarungsmarkt ein paar Punkte mehr haben. Ich denke nicht, dass sie es nur machen, um einen besseren Job zu kriegen.

Erkenne Sie einen Trend welche Behandlungen im Moment sehr beliebt sind, oder sagt Ihnen der Begriff Instagram-Face etwas?

> Ich habe gar kein Instagram. Bin wohl völlig weg von allem. Aber ich kann mir das gut vorstellen. Das ist wahrscheinlich die Benchmark, die durchschlägt.

Kenne Sie Kylie Jenner?

> Ich mir sie mir tatsächlich vor ein paar Tagen mal auf Wikipedia angeschaut. Sie und ihre Familie sind ja irgendwie die Grössten auf Instagram. Diese Familie ist hyper-endoptimiert. Da ist nichts mehr echt. Solche Extrem-Beispiele habe ich aber in meiner Praxis nicht. Ich finde das ist völlig weg von dieser Welt. Solch ein Verhalten ist mir fremd. Leute die so aussehen möchten, haben wohl eher eine psychische Störung.

Denken Sie, dass Leute sich wegen dem Drang zur Selbstoptimierung immer ähnlicher sehen?

> Das wäre ja grässlich. Ich war tatsächlich mal an einem Kongress, ich glaube von der deutschen Anti-Aging Gesellschaft. Der Kongress nannte sich Human Enhancement. Dabei ging es um Sensoren, um schneller zu arbeiten. Man kann schon so viel auf medizinischen Bereich machen wie zum Beispiel eine künstliche Hüfte oder Ohrenimplantate. Dieses Feld wird sich noch viel weiter ausweiten in der nahen Zukunft. Dadurch kann man auch auf kosmetischer Ebene viel machen. Menschen sind durchaus optische Wesen und daher ist das ein weites Feld. Es ist schon bedenklich aber es wird nicht aufzuhalten sein. Die Frage stellt sich, wie die Leute dann in 200 bis 300 Jahren aussehen. An dieser Konferenz wurde auch diskutiert, wie dies zu einer Spaltung der Gesellschaft führt. Es wird Leute geben, die sich alles leisten können und dann andere die das nicht können. Dies wird optisch sichtbar sein. Ich glaube es wird wirklich so kommen.
>
> Man sieht auch jetzt schon in der Covid-Situation. Manche kommen ziemlich gut damit klar und bei anderen geht gar nichts mehr. Leute werden aus der Krankenversicherung raus fliegen. Dies hat schwere Folgen. In der Schweiz ist das noch nicht der Fall, aber in anderen Ländern sieht man solche Szenarien schon jetzt.

Glauben Sie Botox hat Auswirkungen auf unsere Mimik und wie wir Mimik lesen und wahrnehmen? Und Auswirkungen auf unsere Empathie?

> Es sollte ja nicht so sein, dass man bei Botox keine Mimik mehr hat. Wenn das passiert, ist es einfach nicht gut gemacht. Es sieht künstlich aus. Ich denke aber nicht, dass Botox unsere Wahrnehmung von Empathie einschränkt.

Denken Sie die Menschen wären glücklicher, würde man nicht so viel Wert auf Schönheit legen?

> Die Evolution will, dass wir uns mit der:dem passenden Partner:in paaren. Alles was wir an Eigenschaften haben, wird dazu angelegt, dass wir gut auf diesem Markt erscheinen. Bis zu diesem Punkt der Paarung kommen all unsere Eigenschaften in die weitere genetische Selektion herein. In der Phase als man sich in der Steinzeit paaren konnte, kam es darauf an, wie

man geschaffen ist. Wenn man zum Beispiel einen Klumpfuss hatte, wurde man nicht genommen und daher fielen diese Gene raus. Andere Gene, die erst später im Leben eine Rolle spielen -wie zum Beispiel ein Brustkrebsgen- wurde nie rausgefiltert, da es erst viel später ausbricht. Ich denke also schon, dass Schönheit irgendwie auch dazu gehört bis zu einem gewissen Grad. Schönheit ist demnach ganz tief in unserem Wesen drin.

Die Optik ist für uns unglaublich wichtig, um zu urteilen. Das geht mir auch so, man kann es gar nicht abschalten. Man würde natürlich nie etwas sagen aber das passiert einfach. Ich denke wenn man von sich behauptet, man tut das nicht, wäre man nicht ganz ehrlich. Im Bezug auf Schönheit denke ich nicht, dass Frauen dies nur für Männer tun, sondern um im Konkurrenzkampf herauszustechen. Darum denke ich auch, dass Frauen sehr verletzt sind, wenn andere Frauen über ihr Aussehen urteilen. So wie es meiner Patientin ging, bei der die Kundinnen ihr mitgeteilt hatten, dass sie müde aussähen. Das war irgendwie abwertend gemeint und gar nicht emphatisch. Es war sehr wertend. Klar wäre es schön, wenn wir weniger auf Schönheit achten würden, aber ich glaube wir bewegen uns eher in die andere Richtung, hin zur Selbstoptimierung.

Interview Jennifer B., 06.09.2021

Jennifer B. lebt in Zürich und ist 32 Jahre alt. Mit 20 hat sie sich das erste mal ihre Lippen unterspritzen lassen und seit dem sich zahlreichen, chirurgischen und nicht-chirurgischen Behandlungen unterzogen.

Wann hast du mit Botox und/oder Fillern begonnen und was hast du behandeln lassen?

Jennifer B. —— Zurzeit mache ich mehr chirurgische als nicht-chirurgische Eingriffe. Ich habe früher sehr oft Filler verwendet. Als ich 20 Jahre alt war, habe ich mir zum ersten Mal die Lippen aufspritzen lassen, und das tue ich auch jetzt noch, aber nicht mehr so oft wie früher, weil sich mein Schönheitsideal im Laufe der Jahre verändert hat. Übrigens bin ich jetzt 32 Jahre alt. Wenn ich zurückblicke, denke ich, dass ich mit 20 völlig übertrieben habe. Ich hatte einen anderen Blick auf Schönheit und eine andere Wahrnehmung. Später habe ich mir meine Augenringe und Wangen unterspritzen lassen. Botox habe ich mir nie spritzen lassen, aber das werde ich sicher bald tun.

Wie bist du dazu gekommen dir deine Lippen unterspritzen zu lassen? Ich vermute, als du vor 12 Jahren begonnen hast, war es noch nicht so populär und bekannt. Ich habe das Gefühl, dass in den letzten drei bis fünf Jahren Fillers und Botox viel beliebter wurden und man begonnen hat, viel offener darüber zu sprechen. Wie empfindest du das?

Bei mir ist das schwer zu sagen. Ich habe mich immer dafür interessiert und fand es immer spannend. Generell finde ich es toll, wenn sich jemand an etwas stört und man es ändern kann. Ich selbst hatte schon immer schmale Lippen, und als ich erfuhr, dass man sie unterspritzen kann, war für mich sofort klar, dass ich das machen würde. Als ich 18 Jahre alt war, habe ich noch etwas gezögert, weil ich lange Zeit niemanden gefunden habe, dem ich mich anvertrauen konnte. Irgendwann habe ich mich dann aber doch getraut und bin zu jemandem gegangen. Aber dieser Wunsch kam von mir allein. Ich fing an, selbst zu recherchieren und Leute zu fragen, bei wem oder wo sie waren.

Ich denke, dass die Branche im Allgemeinen nicht offen genug damit umgeht. Ich denke, dass führt zu großen Problemen, weil es so viele unprofessionelle Behandlungen gibt. Natürlich ist es auch ein riesiges Geschäft aus der Sicht der Leute, die es praktizieren und anbieten. Das ist vor allem in der Schweiz der Fall. Wenn man sich zum Beispiel Brasilien anschaut, ist es völlig normal, dass man sich an seinem 18 Geburtstag die Brüste vergrössern lässt. Hier ist es immer noch ein grosses Tabuthema. Das verstehe ich nicht, vor allem bei Leuten, die eine Behandlung hatten, die gut aussieht. Wenn es gut gemacht wurde, sieht man es nicht als Leihe, sondern nur die schlechten Ergebnisse. Aber ich denke, die jüngere Generation geht offener mit ihren Behandlungen um. Obwohl ich sagen muss, dass die Jüngeren auch ein bisschen gespalten sind. Entweder wollen sie in gewisser Weise speziell und alternativ aussehen, oder sie sind sehr offen für Schönheitsoperationen.

Wie haben deine Familie und dein Freundeskreis auf deine Eingriffe reagiert?

Meine Familie war total dagegen, als ich mir meine Lippe habe aufspritzen lassen. Dazu muss man allerdings auch sagen, dass ich dazumal mit 20 wirklich völlig übertrieben hatte. Operative Sachen habe ich erst mit 30 begonnen und mittlerweile hat meine Mutter, die total dagegen war, sich ein Facelift machen lassen. Natürlich habe ich ihr nicht gesagt, sie sollte das tun aber ich denke schon, dass sie irgendwie durch mich beeinflusst wurde.

Von meinen Freundinnen haben sich sehr viele früh ihre Brüste machen lassen. Ich war die erste in meinem Freundeskreis, die sich die Lippen hat

spritzen lassen. Vor 12 Jahren war es, wie gesagt, noch nicht so normal wie heute. Es gab durchmischte Reaktionen, einige fanden es super und andere waren total dagegen. Mittlerweile sind viele in meinem Freundeskreis sehr offen was Schönheitseingriffe betrifft. Was ich aber in meinem Job als Coiffeurin lustig finde ist, dass ich viele Kundinnen über 40 habe bei denen man dezent Eingriffe sieht, z.B. eine Narbe eines Liftings oder etwas anderes, die aber vehement bestreiten, dass sie etwas haben machen lassen. Ich habe schon mal eine Kundin gefragt, die sich offensichtlich die Lippen hat aufspritzen lassen, wo sie für ihre Behandlung hingeht und sie meinte zu mir, dass sie sich niemals etwas machen lassen würde und ihre Lippen natürlich seien. Viele können nicht dazu stehen. Aber das sind schon eher die älteren meiner Kundinnen.

Was lässt du dir denn aktuell noch machen mit Filler?

Vor ein paar Wochen habe ich mir meine Lippen spritzen lassen, aber ich mache dies nicht mehr so oft und extrem wie früher. Ich muss jedoch sagen, als ich mir meine Augenringe und Wangenknochen unterspritzen lassen habe, war mir das viel zu viel und ich liess es wieder auflösen. Wie schon gesagt, werde ich bald meine erste Botoxbehandlung machen lassen. Ich finde es schön wenn man sieht, dass jemand ein bisschen etwas hat machen lassen aber ich finde auch, dass viele mit der Zeit eher älter aussehen oder ein völlig entstelltes Gesicht haben. Viele Menschen mit Filler sehen extrem schnell zu gemacht im Gesicht aus. Es sieht manchmal aus wie eine Maske. Ich denke, viele verlieren den Blick ein wenig weil man sich sehr schnell daran gewöhnt. Ich kann aus eigener Erfahrung sagen, dass man am Anfang immer eine kleine Schwellung hat und man sich denkt, eigentlich es ist ein wenig zu viel aber dann nach dem zweiten oder dritten Tag gewöhnt man sich daran. Wenn nach zwei Wochen die Schwellung abgeheilt ist, denkt man sich die Lippen sind gar nicht mehr so gross und wünscht sich die Lippen mit Schwellung zurück. Ich wünsche mir da auch ein wenig mehr Verantwortungsbewusstsein unter den Ärzt:innen.

Du machst jetzt mehr operative Behandlungen. Heisst das, dass du dir jetzt Eingriffe, die zu zuvor mit Filler gemacht wurden, jetzt mit einer OP hast behandeln lassen?

Meine letzte Behandlung kann man nicht mit Filler machen. Die OP lief total schief, ich war extrem enttäuscht. Ich habe ein Ponytail-Lifting gemacht, welches bewirkt, dass meine Augen ein wenig hochgezogen werden. Nachdem ich recherchiert habe, suchte ich mir einen Arzt in der Schweiz und es hat überhaupt nicht geklappt, da man das Resultat nicht sieht weil er eine andere Operation gemacht hatte. Für die Operation, die ich wollte, schneidet man beim Haaransatz auf der Seite ca. 2cm auf und zieht die Haut mit einem Faden hoch. Er hat mir aber links und rechts meiner Stirn eine ca. 6cm langen Schnitt gemacht und einfach ein wenig Haut weggeschnitten. Ich weiss bis jetzt nicht was dieser Arzt gemacht hat. Bis jetzt war ich nachträglich noch weitere zwei mal bei ihm für eine Konsultation aber es hat nichts gebracht. Ich habe schlussendlich rund 10'000 CHF. für zwei Narben ausgegeben.

Würdest du nach dieser Erfahrung die gleiche OP noch einmal bei einem anderen Arzt machen lassen oder lässt du es jetzt lieber bleiben?

Ich würde es schon noch einmal machen lassen aber es war mir schon eine Lehre. Ich hätte nie gedacht, dass mir so etwas passieren würde, vor allem weil ich durch Weiterempfehlungen zu ihm gekommen bin. Im Moment lasse ich diese OP aber lieber bleiben. Es passieren generell viele Unfälle, auch mit Botox und Filler. Ich hatte letztens eine Kundin, die hatte sich mit Botox die Gummy Smile Behandlung machen lassen. Dabei spritzt man Botox vorne in

den Oberkiefer unter die Lippe damit beim Lachen die Lippen nicht so weit hoch gehen, dass man die Schleimhaut oberhalb der Zähne sieht. Danach riet ihr der Arzt ihre Lippen, welche auf einer Seite ein wenig ungleich waren, mit 0.5 ML Filler auszugleichen. Dabei hat er ausversehen eine Arterie in ihrem Gesicht getroffen. Dies hat zu einer Nekrose in ihrem Gesicht geführt. Sie hatte extreme Schmerzen und sie musste drei Wochen lang jeden Tag in der Klinik vorbei damit der Arzt ihr mit dem Skalpell die tote Haut wegmachen konnte. Mit Hyalase konnte man den Filler wieder auflösen. Schlussendlich wurde es wieder gut aber im schlimmsten Fall hätte sie erblinden können. Es kann also immer etwas passieren. Ich denke, viele Ärzt:innen bieten Unterspritzungen einfach an weil es eine schnelle Geldquelle ist, ohne dass sie sich zuvor richtig damit auseinandergesetzt haben oder geschult wurden. Viele Ärzt:innen unterschätzen selbst die Risiken.

Warst du schon einmal bei Beauty2Go?

Ja, dort habe ich schon einmal eine sehr schlechte Erfahrung gemacht. Marketing-technisch sind sie beeindruckend. Ich denke, vor allem jüngere Menschen sind sich den Risiken nicht bewusst und überlegen nicht wirklich, was eine Behandlung für Konsequenzen haben könnte. Man möchte etwas ausprobieren. Auf Instagram sieht man extrem, wie viel Follower Kliniken in kurzer Zeit bekommen. Das Zielpublikum ist schon auf Instagram unterwegs.

Was hat dich dazu veranlasst, zu Beauty2Go zu gehen?

Ich hatte dazumal eine Mitbewohnerin, die sich noch viel mehr hat machen lassen als ich. Sie hat sich z.B. die Wangen aufgespritzt, eine Nasen OP gemacht und noch viel mehr. Sie meinte immer zu mir, ich sollte auch mal zu Beauty2Go gehen. Also bin ich einmal mit ihr hin, um meine Lippen machen zu lassen. Es war ein einschneidendes Erlebnis, was meine Erfahrung mit Unterspritzungen angeht. Es war gar nicht hygienisch und ich bekam eine riesige Infektion an der Lippe. Es wurde nicht steril gearbeitet, ich musste Antibiotika oral einnehmen und auch eine Antibiotikacrème auftragen. Bis es wieder verheilt war, vergingen ganze fünf Wochen.

Denkst du, dass auf den sozialen Medien zu wenig auf die Gefahren von nicht operativen Eingriffen aufmerksam gemacht wird? Influencer:innen posten ihren Besuch in einer Klinik, den sie oft gesponsert bekommen und berichten, wie zufrieden sie mit dem Resultat sind, reden aber nur selten über die Risiken. Ausserdem posten sie manchmal ein paar Monate oder Jahre später noch ein Video, in dem sie erzählen, wieso sie ihre Fillers haben auflösen lassen oder es nie mehr tun würden. Es scheint, als gäbe es online einen sehr leichtfertigen Umgang mit diesen Behandlungen und als fände auch eine Art von Verharmlosung statt. Wie empfindest du das?

Ich finde da hast du vollkommen recht. Wir haben beispielsweise bei uns im Salon auch Deals mit Influencer:innen, die alles gratis bekommen. Eine davon war bei mir, um die Haare machen zu lassen und erzählte mir dabei, dass sie sich kürzlich hat Fettabsaugen lassen in einer deutschen Klink, die sehr viel mit Influencer:innen wirbt. Danach hat sie richtig starke Thrombosen bekommen. Sie erzählte mir, dass sie das nie mehr machen wird, weil sie nicht auf ihre Channels laden darf, dass sie richtig starke Thrombosen bekam, da sie einen Deal mit der Klinik hatte. Sie musste einen gewissen Content posten, wovon auch ein Teil Aufklärung war, welcher aber vom Arzt vorgeschrieben wurde. Das sie aber danach wirklich davon betroffen war, musste sie verschweigen. Ihr wurde ihre Verantwortung bewusst und sie fühlte sich schuldig, dass jetzt das gleiche jemand anderem auch passieren könnte.

Ich denke, die Reichweite, die Influencer:innen haben, ist enorm. Man sieht es zuerst bei einer, dann bald darauf bei der nächsten, usw. Ich denke, es

beeinflusst die Leute extrem in ihrer Entscheidung etwas machen zu lassen. Jetzt haben wir sehr viel über das Negative gesprochen, ich denke aber es gibt sicher auch positive Dinge. Was ist denn bei dir deine Motivation, etwas machen zu lassen? und wie fühlst du dich dabei oder danach?

Wenn man etwas hast spritzen lassen und auch nach den OPs fühlt man sich gar nicht gut, weil es kurz danach echt nicht gut aussieht und Schmerzen verursacht. Es ist nicht angenehm und man ist aufgeschwollen. Ich denke aber wenn du wirklich einen gute Ärztin findest, die dich wirklich versteht und etwas machen kann, fühlst du dich danach besser und das ist dann schon etwas sehr Schönes. Es ist eine art Fine-Tuning. Das finde ich echt super! Ich würde beispielsweise meine natürlichen Lippen nicht zurück wollen, aber ich denke man muss für sich selbst einen Weg finden, dass es gut aussieht. Bei mir war das einschneidendste Erlebnis, als ich mir vor 2.5 Jahren an den Armen und Beinen habe fettabsaugen lassen. Davor hatte ich richtig Respekt von der OP. Kurz danach ging es mir erstmals richtig schlecht, weil ich so starke Schmerzen hatte. Anschliessend ging es mir aber umso besser. Ich war so zufrieden mit dem Resultat habe mich einfach gut gefühlt. Das war sehr erfüllend.

Was denkst du beeinflusst dich in deiner Wahrnehmung von Schönheit?

Bevor ich meine Coiffeurlehre begonnen habe, hatte ich die Kunstgewerbeschule besucht und viel gezeichnet. Schon dort oder auch als Kind habe ich beim Zeichnen einer Frau diese mit vollen Lippen dargestellt. Für mich war das einfach klar, dass es zu einer Frau dazugehört. In meinem Umfeld hatten aber wenige Frauen grosse oder aufgespritzte Lippen. Mittlerweile bin ich aber schon von Instagram Filtern beeinflusst. Um ehrlich zu sein, habe ich die OP, die schief ging, nur gemacht wegen einem Facefilter. Ich bin auch zum Arzt gegangen mit einem Foto, auf dem ich den Filter angewendet hatte und habe ihm gesagt, dass ich mir etwas in diese Richtung vorstellen würde.

Ich bearbeite meine Fotos mit FaceTune oder FaceApp, das macht mir richtig Spass. Ich finde es auch in gestalterischer Hinsicht interessant um herauszufinden, was man alles machen kann. Es ist mir aber auch schon passiert, dass ich ein Foto, welches ich bearbeitet hatte, neben ein unbearbeitetes Foto hielt und erschrocken war über die starke Veränderung. Es ist extrem, wie schnell man sich daran gewöhnt sich selbst mit einem Filter zu sehen. Neben dem bearbeiteten Foto denkt man sich dann beim Original, dass man völlig zerstört aussieht: Richtig müde, gar nicht frisch, mein Gesicht ist dick, usw. Ich denke, dies verleiht sehr dazu sich Schönheitseingriffe machen zu lassen, das merke ich bei mir selbst auch.

Du kennst sicher Kylie Jenner oder? Es gibt ein Begriff, der nennt sich Instagram-Face. Das bedeutet, dass Kylie's Gesicht für so viele Vorlagen von Instagram-Filtern genutzt wurde, dass es jetzt Instagram-Face heisst. Kannst du mir Instagram Face beschreiben?

Dazu würde ich sagen: Katzenaugen (Fox Eyes), kleine Nase, grosse Lippen, hohe Wangenknochen, eher spitziges Kinn, definierte Jaw Line. Ich denke, das ist der Klassiker unter den Filtern. Gerade Filter im Beauty Bereich sehen eigentlich immer alle genau gleich aus. Grundsätzlich ist es schon bei vielen Filtern so, dass sie generell schlanker machen, die Wangenknochen herausstechen, die Augen grösser machen. Sie bieten alle eine Gesichtsoptimierung.

Kannst du dazu stehen wenn ich sage, dass soziale Medien deine Wahrnehmung von Schönheit beeinflussen und beeinflusst haben?

Ja, auf jeden Fall. Ich muss dazu auch sagen, dass ich mittlerweile auch gerne wieder mehr Natürlichkeit sehe. Ich finde es zum Beispiel auch sehr schön, wenn jemand sich gar nicht schminkt oder auffällt und nicht so dem klassischen Bild, welches ich zuvor beschrieben habe, entspricht. Ich denke, ohne soziale Medien würde man diese alternative Form von Schönheit auch weniger sehen. Mittlerweile mag ich auch, wenn ich oder jemand anderes ein wenig Charakter hat.

Ich denke, wir Frauen machen uns selbst am meisten Druck. Wir sind unsere härtesten Kritikerinnen. Nimmt man beispielsweise mal fünf oder sechs Kilo zu, weil man in den Ferien war oder einfach nicht so auf seine Ernährung geachtet hat, nimmt man die zusätzlichen Kilos viel extremer wahr und fühlt sich schlecht, den anderen fällt es aber oft gar nicht auf oder sie finden es nicht schlimm. Ich denke, wir gehen oft mit uns selbst auch zu streng um.

Denkst du nicht das hat auch damit zu tun, dass wir uns selbst viel öfter fotografieren und selbst sehen?

Ja, das denke ich auch. Für mich ist es auch immer wieder verwunderlich bei meiner Arbeit zu merken wie eine Person ist, wenn sie sich nicht im Spiegel sieht im Vergleich dazu wie sie ist, sobald sie sich bewusst im Spiegel wahrnimmt. Die ganze Person verändert sich. Das passiert auch wenn man ein Selfie von sich selbst macht. Oft hat man ein gewisses Gesicht, das man dann aufsetzt, welches für Aussenstehende total unnatürlich wirkt. Wenn man dann auf irgendeinem Schnappschuss ist oder der Winkel nicht genau stimmt, denkt man sich man sieht total schlimm aus. Ich merke das auch bei mir selber, weil ich durch meine Arbeit die ganze Zeit von Spiegeln umgeben bin. Vor allem wenn ich mich sowieso schon nicht so gut fühle bevor ich meine Periode bekomme. Dann wünschte ich mir schon ab und zu, dass ich nicht auch noch von Spiegeln umgeben wäre. Es wäre sicher auch interessant zu wissen, wie viele Fotos Leute von sich selbst auf ihrem Handy haben.

Du hast zuvor erwähnt, dass du bald einmal Botox verwenden möchtest. Machst du dies im Sinne von präventivem Botox?

Ich glaube, über diesen Punkt bin ich schon darüber hinaus. Es klingt jetzt vielleicht komisch, aber ich habe riesigen Respekt vor Botox und zwar weil ich einfach so viele Menschen sehe, die so schlecht gespitzt sind. Bei vielen ist es einfach too much und die Haut sieht nicht schön aus. Ich werde es sicher machen, aber mit einem Baby Botox beginnen. Man sollte schon schauen, dass man es macht bevor das Gesicht eine Falte bildet. Aber ich finde es gibt nicht Schlimmeres wie ein Gesicht, das von Botox völlig entstellt aussieht. Das gefällt mir gar nicht.

Botox schränkt die Mimik ein. Denkst du, dass die Leute die du kennst und Botox verwenden anders kommunizieren weil ihre Mimik eingeschränkt ist? Oder macht dir das Sorgen?

Ich würde sagen, dass Botox ja vor allem in der Stirn verwendet wird. Mich persönlich würde die eingeschränkte Mimik nicht stören, solange es gut aussieht. Ich denke, wenn jemand so viel verwendet, dass man gar keine Mimik mehr sieht, sieht es auch nicht mehr schön aus. Ein paar wenige, kleine Falten dürfen sich schon noch bilden. Eine Hautärztin hat zu mir gesagt, man sollte das Gesicht so bewegen, dass es die richtige Mimik anregt. Also das Gesicht so bewegen, dass es Falten verhindert mit Face-Yoga oder so. Mein Zahnarzt hatte mir auch schon geraten, Botox in meinen Kiefer zu machen, damit ich nicht mehr so stark auf meine Zähne beisse und mit den Zähnen knirsche.

Wie stehst du zu einer Welt, in der Schönheit weniger wichtig wäre?

Diese Frage habe ich mir schon oft gestellt und ich habe auch schon mit vielen darüber gesprochen. Ich find immer, dass Schönheit im Auge der Betrachterin liegt. Für mich gibt es viele Menschen, die auf den ersten Blick schön wirken aber sobald sie einen Satz aussprechen verfliegt diese erste Faszination. Ich selbst habe schon oft die Erfahrung gemacht, dass viele Menschen auf mich zukommen um mir mitzuteilen, dass ich ganz anders bin als sie eigentlich von mir gedacht hatten. Viele denken von mir ich sei eine "Tussi", arrogant und überheblich, weil ich blondes Haar habe und mich stark schminke. Diese Vorurteile mir gegenüber stören mich sehr fest. Ich denke, Menschen achten stark auf das Äussere, egal ob das jetzt positiv oder negativ ist. Klar ist das Äussere das erste, was man sieht aber ich finde es schon schlimm, dass dadurch Vor- wie auch Nachteile für die Person geschaffen werden. Viele Menschen bekommen so gar nicht die Chance zu zeigen, wie sie wirklich sind, weil sie von Anfang an schubladisiert werden. Allgemein denke ich schon, dass schöne Menschen bei vielen Dingen einen Vorteil geniessen. Ich finde das eigentlich ungerecht und traurig aber so ist es nun mal. Ich würde es unterstützen, wenn Schönheit weniger wichtig wäre in unserer Gesellschaft.

Würdest du denn trotzdem gleich aussehen? Also wenn Schönheit weniger wichtig wäre?

Ja total. Ich sehe so aus und mache Schönheitseingriffe für mich. Weil ich mich so am wohlsten fühle. Als ich meine Lippen so stark aufgespritzt hatte, sind viele Leute zu mir gekommen und haben ihre negative Meinung dazu geäussert. Mich hat das aber nie beeinflusst und ich habe es weiterhin gemacht. Schlussendlich muss es mir gefallen und wenn dies der Fall ist, werde ich es weiter tun. In der Schweiz spüre ich schon eine starke "Feedback-Kultur". Die Leute sagen mir dauernd ungefragt ihre Meinung, auch wildfremde Menschen. Ich bekomme auch sehr viel Kritik von Frauen. Ich finde, dass wir doch weniger aufeinander rumhacken, sondern uns gegenseitig unterstützen sollten. Das finde ich extrem schade. Ich finde, jeder Mensch sollte einfach so rumlaufen können wie er:sie gerne möchte.

Was denkst du über Kylie Jenner oder Kim Kardashian?

Früher habe ich immer Keeping up with the Kardashians geschaut. Auf Instagram folge ich beiden, aber ich folge ihnen nicht mehr bewusst. Von der Persönlichkeit her leben sie aber nicht das vor, was mich sehr interessiert. Ich finde schon, dass sie sehr gut aussehen und sie haben viel erreicht. Aber dieser Trend zur extremen Hourglass-Figur kann ich nicht verstehen. Gewisse Beauty Dinge, die sie mit den Haaren oder dem Make-up kreieren, finde ich sehr schön. Aber sonst läuft es einfach mehr so nebenbei mit in meinem Social Media. Bewusst gehe ich nicht auf ihr Profil oder möchte etwas so haben, wie sie es haben.

Würdest du sagen, dass sie das Mainstream-Schönheitsideal geformt haben in den letzten Jahren?

Ja das würde ich definitiv sagen. Ich finde das beste Beispiel ist, dass Kylie mittlerweile fast aussieht wie Kim weil sie zum gleichen Arzt gehen. Ich finde allgemein, dass bei Instagram sehr viele sehr gleich aussehen, auch wegen den Filtern. Bei Kylie und Kim werden sehr wahrscheinlich alle Bilder bearbeitet. Es gibt Trends bei Botox und Fillers die alle nach machen und dadurch sehen immer wie mehr immer ähnlicher aus. Auch Bella Hadid ist ein gutes Beispiel. Sie behauptet nichts gemacht zu haben, obwohl sie alles operiert hat was man sich operieren kann. Das finde ich schon krass weil sie es einfach nicht zu gibt.

Hast du selbst auch Bedenken, dass du auch aussehen könntest wie alle anderen?

Darüber habe ich noch gar nie nachgedacht. Ich denke, früher war ich auch noch unsicherer und habe mich mit anderen verglichen. Auf Instagram sehen einfach alle gleich aus, weil sie die gleichen Filter brauchen und sich die gleichen Filler machen lassen usw. Man kommt schnell da hinein aber ich denke, jede Person ist schon immer noch einzigartig, auch wegen ihrem Charakter.

E-Mails

E-Mail-Verkehr mit Frau Beatrice Zürrer, 30.11.2021

From: **Zürrer Béatrice** Beatrice.Zuerrer@gd.zh.ch
Subject: AW: Interview Bereich Beauty
Date: 30 November 2021 at 11:56
To: lea.ermuth@zhdk.ch

ZB

Sehr geehrte Frau Ermuth

Gerne beantworte ich Ihre Fragen betreffend Werbung im Bereich Beauty wie folgt:

Allgemeines:
Die Bekanntmachung der Berufstätigkeit und Werbung müssen sachlich sein und dürfen nicht zu Täuschungen Anlass geben (§ 16 Gesundheitsgesetz; GesG). Das Verbot der Irreführung untersagt bspw. Aussagen, die zur Täuschung respektive zum Erwecken von falschen Eindrücken gemacht werden. Für Ärztinnen und Ärzte gilt zudem Art. 40 Bst. d Medizinalberufegesetz (MedBG; SR 811.11), gemäss welchem sie nur Werbung machen dürfen, die objektiv ist, einem öffentlichen Bedürfnis entspricht und weder irreführend noch aufdringlich ist.

Damit wird Werbung für ärztliche Leistungen weder durch das Medizinalberufegesetz noch durch das kantonale Gesundheitsgesetz verboten. Normale Werbemassnahmen wie Inserate, Plakate, das Verteilen von Flyern etc. mit welchen per definitionem ein gewisses Bemühen um Aufmerksamkeit verbunden ist, sind deshalb grundsätzlich zulässig. Die Grenzen des Zulässigen finden sich hingegen in aggressiveren Praktiken wie zum Beispiel Werbeanrufen oder unaufgeforderten Haustürbesuchen. Unzulässig ist Werbung aber auch dann, wenn mit den Werbemassnahmen eine übermässige Beeinflussung der Entscheidungsfreiheit der Patientinnen und Patienten und/oder ein Verlust der Unabhängigkeit der behandelnden ärztlichen Person einhergeht.

Wird bei der Behandlung ein verwendungsfertiges Arzneimittel oder ein Medizinprodukt eingesetzt, sind sodann die Bestimmungen der Verordnung über die Arzneimittelwerbung (AWV; SR 812.212.5 und der Medizinprodukteverordnung; SR 812.213) zu beachten. Gemäss einer Beurteilung von Swissmedic sind Fotografien, die den Zustand vor der Behandlung und denjenigen nach der Behandlung dokumentieren, als klassisch Darstellungen von garantierten Wirkversprechen zu werten. Diese sind nicht zulässig, gemäss Swissmedic auch im Bereich von nicht verschreibungspflichtigen Arzneimitteln (Art. 22 Bst. b AWV). Gemäss Beurteilung der Swissmedic sind sodann auch irreführende Angaben über die Wirksamkeit bzw. Leistungsfähigkeit eines Medizinproduktes, und damit klassische Vorher-Nachher-Bilder im Zusammenhang mit einem Medizinprodukt nicht zulässig (Art. 21 Abs. 2 MepV).

Faltenunterspritzungen mit Botolinumtoxin dürfen nur durch Ärztinnen und Ärzte mit Berufsausübungsbewilligung vorgenommen werden (in keinem Fall durch eine MPA oder eine Kosmetikerin).

Faltenunterspritzungen mit Hyaluronsäure dürfen nur durch Ärztinnen und Ärzte mit Berufsausübungsbewilligung vorgenommen werden, sowie durch Pflegefachpersonen mit entsprechender Weiterbildung, jedoch nur unter der Aufsicht und Kontrolle eines Arztes/einer Ärztin. Kontrolle und Aufsicht eines Arztes/einer Ärztin bedeutet in der Regel räumliche Anwesenheit. Kosmetikerinnen etc. dürfen damit keine Faltenunterspritzungen mit Hyaluronsäure vornehmen (Ausnahme: Kosmetikerinnen dürfen Faltenunterspritzungen mit kurzzeitverbleibendem Hyaluron vornehmen; dieses verbleibt höchstens 30 Tage im Körper; in der Schweiz ist aktuell kein derartiges Produkt zugelassen).

Betreffend weiterer Behandlungen aus dem Bereich medizinische Kosmetik verweisen wir zudem auf unser «Merkblatt rechtliche Grundlagen der Kosemtik», welches Sie unter dem folgenden Link finden:

https://www.zh.ch/content/dam/zhweb/bilder-dokumente/themen/gesundheit/gesundheitsberufe/arzt_aerztin/weiterfuehrende_informationen/merkblatt_rechtliche_grundlagen_kosmetik.pdf

1. **Wie ist es möglich, dass Kliniken auf den sozialen Medien Inhalte posten dürfen, welche ihnen auf ihrer Website untersagt sind?**

Unzulässige Werbung – zum Beispiel «Vorher/Nachher-Bilder» oder reisserische Werbung, etc. - sind generell verboten, sowohl im Internetauftritt wie auch auf sämtlichen sozialen Medien. Erhält die Gesundheitsdirektion Kenntnis von Verstössen, werden die betroffenen Beauty-Institute schriftlich aufgefordert, entsprechende Werbung auf sämtlichen Kanälen, also neben der Homepage insbesondere auch auf sämtlichen sozialen Medien wie Facebook, Instagram etc. per sofort zu unterlassen. Erhalten wir erneut Kenntnisse von weiteren Verstössen bzw. werden die unzulässige Werbung sowie die teils unzulässigen Behandlungen weiterhin angeboten, reicht die Gesundheitsdirektion eine Strafanzeige ein.

In der Praxis ist es natürlich so, dass die Homepages eines Instituts durch die Gesundheitsdirektion leichter überprüfbar sind, da diese allgemein zugänglich sind. Dahingegen richtet sich Werbung auf Instagram, Facebook, etc. oft eine spezielles, eingegrenztes Publikum.

2. **Wie ist es möglich, dass man nicht für Behandlungen und rezeptpflichtige Medikamente werben darf, sich aber Werbeplatzierungen auf den sozialen Medien kaufen kann und dies auch passiert? Zählt hier das amerikanische Gesetz? Falls nicht wie kann man dies kontrollieren?**

Wie bereits unter 1. ausgeführt, schreitet die Gesundheitsdirektion jeweils ein, wenn sie von derartigen Werbeschaltungen Kenntnis erhält. Hierbei sind wir insbesondere auch auf Meldungen aus der Öffentlichkeit über Verstösse abhängig. Oftmals steht aber nicht nur die unzulässige Werbung im Vordergrund, sondern auch die unzulässige Art der Behandlung (zum Beispiel Faltenunterspritzungen mit Hyaluronsäure oder Botolinumtoxin durch Kosmetikerinnen und Kosmetiker oder andere unbefugte/unqualifizierte Personen).

3. **Wie ist es möglich, dass man für Behandlungen die auch ein gesundheitliches Risiko mit sich bringen Aktionen wie Black Friday Sale oder Gewinnspiele veranstalten darf?**

Die Gewährung von Rabatten ist nicht per se unzulässig, sondern nur wenn diese an bestimmte Voraussetzungen oder Bedingungen geknüpft werden und damit die Entscheidungsfreiheit des Leistungserbringers und/oder des Patienten mit Bezug auf die Behandlung eingeschränkt wird. Wir erachten die Verlosung von derartigen Behandlungen als unzulässig, da sie die die freie Meinungsbildung/Entscheidungsfähigkeit stark beeinflussen können. Auch hier wir wiederum bei täuschender Bekanntmachung/Werbung gegebenenfalls Strafanzeige eingereicht.

Freundliche Grüsse
B. Zürrer

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