

Western Beauty Standards and their Impact on Young Women

What are Beauty Standards for Women in the West today?

In one word: Unrealistic. A face ought to consist of big eyes with long lashes, a small, pointed nose, full, lush lips and high cheekbones. Big breasts and large hips should be combined with a tiny waist, while the skin must not show stretch marks.

What is their Impact on Young Women?

For example: A vast majority of the 14 individuals I interviewed consider themselves too heavy, while also thinking their breasts are too small - this fits the ideal for body shapes.

What are Different Experiences of White Women vs. Women of Color and cis Women vs. trans Women?

Racism and transphobia are firmly anchored in beauty standards: The closer Women of Color are to white ideals, the more beautiful they are considered. White women - as well as cis women - are better represented in ads, on catwalks, in pop culture. Trans women are pressured to change their bodies according to cis women's example: Only by taking hormones and by having gender affirming surgeries, a trans woman is seen as a „full woman“.



Matura Paper by Emilia Wehrli
Supervised by Jolanda Mottier
Atelierschule Zürich