Decoding the Future of Aesthetic Individuality

INDIVIDUALITY



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Introduction

INTRO

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Welcome to the Allergan Aesthetics report **“Decoding the Future of Aesthetic Individuality.”**

Last year, we shared our long-term vision for the aesthetics industry in The Future of Aesthetics report. Our 10 thought-provoking trends explore the industry with a broad lens, but one theme is intrinsic to almost all of them: **individuality**.[1]

Diverse Individuality notes that people of all ethnicities are now seeking aesthetic treatment and expect to feel seen and represented.[1] Other trends, such as The Digital Lens and Ephemeral Expression, nod to the acceleration and seamlessness with which patients can now find and change their expressions of individuality, while The New Masculine, Gender Inclusive Beauty and New Body Frontiers illustrate the increasingly diverse ways people express their aesthetic individuality.[1]

It’s immediately clear from these trends that individuality means different things to different people: that it’s a multi-layered concept that is hard to pin down. Yet in beauty, aesthetics and many other industries, the word is so heavily used it is almost a cliché. We wondered, do we really understand what individuality means today and how should it translate to the world of aesthetics?

As part of Allergan Aesthetics’ ongoing commitment to inclusivity and diversity, we commissioned this supplementary research to explore that very question. In this report, we aim to decode this complex and opaque concept, examining the myriad ways that individuality can be expressed and the many positive emotional benefits – like empowering confidence - we know can come in its wake. We will highlight the internal and external factors that unleash or restrict aesthetic individuality, exploring topics from culture to biology, from technology to the impact of social media. Our goal is to deepen understanding of this vital and rapidly evolving topic.

This report was created with our partners at Wunderman Thompson Intelligence, who are experts in future trends, research and providing cultural insight. A core element of the research included interviewing the world’s leading aesthetic practitioners and key opinion leaders, to whom we are enormously thankful for their time and input. We also supplemented these conversations with social listening, industry research and academic studies exploring how people define individuality.

Allergan Aesthetics fully supports individuality and self-expression, encouraging self-discovery every day. We also believe it’s important to help people feel that they have the right to choose how to express themselves throughout every moment of their lives. We hope that by adding more nuance to conversations around individuality, this will be a positive catalyst as we continue to build towards a brighter and more diverse future for the aesthetics industry.



Djamshid Ghavami

General Manager at
Allergan Aesthetics

* Research and interviews were carried out between September and November 2022

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Healthcare Professionals & Industry Experts

EXPERT OPINIONS

Allergan Aesthetics would like to thank the physician advisors and experts who gave their time and insights to enrich this report:



Dr. Jonquille Chantrey

Aesthetic Surgeon
United Kingdom



Dr. Mona Gohara

Dermatologist
United States



Dr. Luiz Gustavo

Plastic Surgeon, Injectables Specialist
Brazil



Dr. Kiyoko Kato

Surgeon and Cosmetologist
Japan



Dr. Alex Box

Identity Designer and Beauty Futurist
United Kingdom



Rae Morris

Makeup Artist
Australia



Dr. Marco Antonio Correa Varella

Experimental Psychologist
Brazil



Geraldine Wharry

Fashion Futurist, Advisor and Founder of the Trend Atelier
United Kingdom

UNDERSTANDING



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Understanding Individuality

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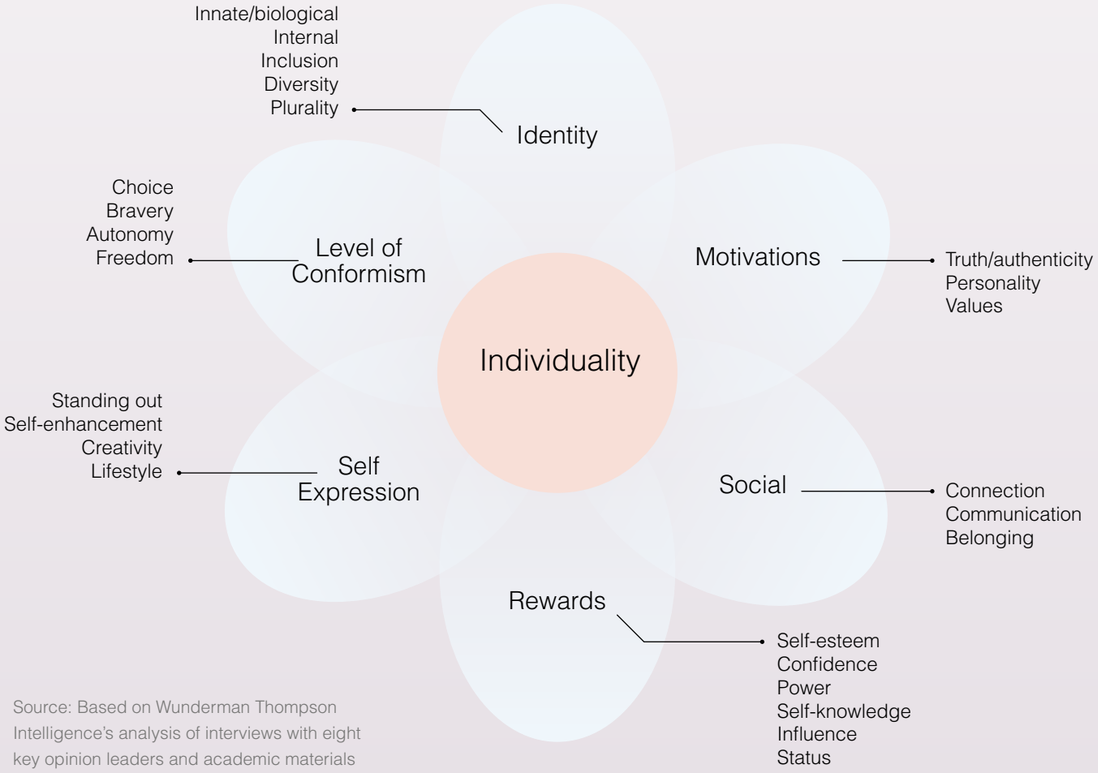
3.1 What is Individuality?

Individuality as a concept seems familiar. It feels like something we should intuitively understand.

Yet probe deeper, and it quickly becomes elusive, fluid and hard to define.

Based on our expert interviews and in-depth local research, there seems to be no one simple definition. Instead, this multi-layered and multi-faceted theme comprises a dynamic swirl of ideas including personal identity, inner motivations and needs, the desire for creativity and self-expression, social connection and the need to belong, through to the benefits and rewards of individuality. The graphic below shares just some of the layers we have identified that are associated with this term.

Figure 1: Perceptions of Individuality



Source: Based on Wunderman Thompson Intelligence's analysis of interviews with eight key opinion leaders and academic materials

"To me, individuality is the way we think, the way we speak, the way we dress, what we eat, the music we listen to, what we choose to do with our free time, what professions we choose to pursue in our lives, what passions, what partners. It's a conglomeration of multiple different data points that comprise a person, that make that person them and not somebody else."



Dr. Mona Gohara

Dermatologist
United States



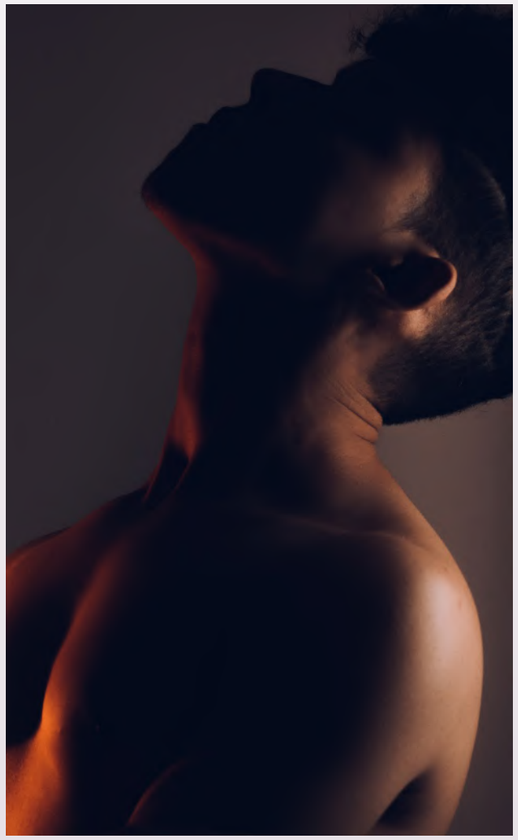
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Expressions of Individuality

One thing we do know is that individuality is a deeply personal concept that can manifest in many ways. As our graphic on page 10 shows, it's closely related to identity.

Communicating individuality is most immediately associated with self-expression, which from an aesthetic standpoint means how you look, but also how you move and sound. Another crucial expression of individuality is how you feel, your views and opinions, your choices, how you behave, and how you perceive you are treated by others. For any individual, it's made up of a "conglomeration of multiple different data points" as US dermatologist Mona Gohara explains.

Each of these expressions can be very subtle or extremely overt and people's ability to show individuality is affected by a wide range of inner and external influences (see Figure 2, page 19). It's only by acknowledging and responding to this complexity that the beauty and aesthetics industry can truly respect everyone's right to make individual choices and empower individuality.



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A Life-Long Journey of Self-Discovery

The drivers of individuality can be both fixed (like our DNA) and fluid. As people move through different lifestages, the need for, or propensity to express individuality can rise and fall.

Defining milestones in a patient's life, such as leaving home, starting their first job, having children, and the empty nest, can prompt them to reassess individuality, dialing it up or down depending on how confident they feel to show their true selves at any given time.

For instance, as young people leave home and experiment with their newfound independence, this can unleash a desire for self-expression and self-discovery through exploring beauty and aesthetic looks. Mona Gohara explains, "There is much stronger confidence in the younger generations and a much bigger desire to be individualistic, to be individuals, to express themselves, to march to the beat of their own drums, to be unapologetically who they are because their peers are like that."

Later, as people start careers, they might adopt a more conformist approach, blending in with other professionals in the workplace. Another dip in individuality may come during the family lifestage when the needs of the tribe become more pressing. One truism centers on a loss of identity for those becoming parents for the first time, especially mothers.

Brands are starting to respond to this by embracing expressions of individuality linked to this life stage: in the UK, Water Wipes' "This is Parenthood" campaign tackled taboos and dispelled myths by celebrating the perfectly imperfect world of parenthood.[2]



Model treated with JUVEDERM®. Actual results may vary. Images are for illustrative purposes only.

As responsibilities change and people become ever more comfortable in their own skin through their 40s, 50s and beyond, there seems to be another uptick in their desire to express their individuality.. "For older generations, individuality and beauty seems to be more about self-expression than self-enhancement," says marketing professor Shilpa Madan. "At 50 plus, women can be really expressive with their personal style. They have the money, they have the time, and they're empty nesters."

A person's identity is never complete or finalized, rather they explore an aesthetic journey of self-discovery throughout their lives. "I think where it becomes interesting with identity is the point of self-discovery," says fashion futurist Geraldine Wharry. "And how might your environment, whether it's the brands, your friends, your community, your practitioners, even your tech, become partners in that journey of self-discovery."

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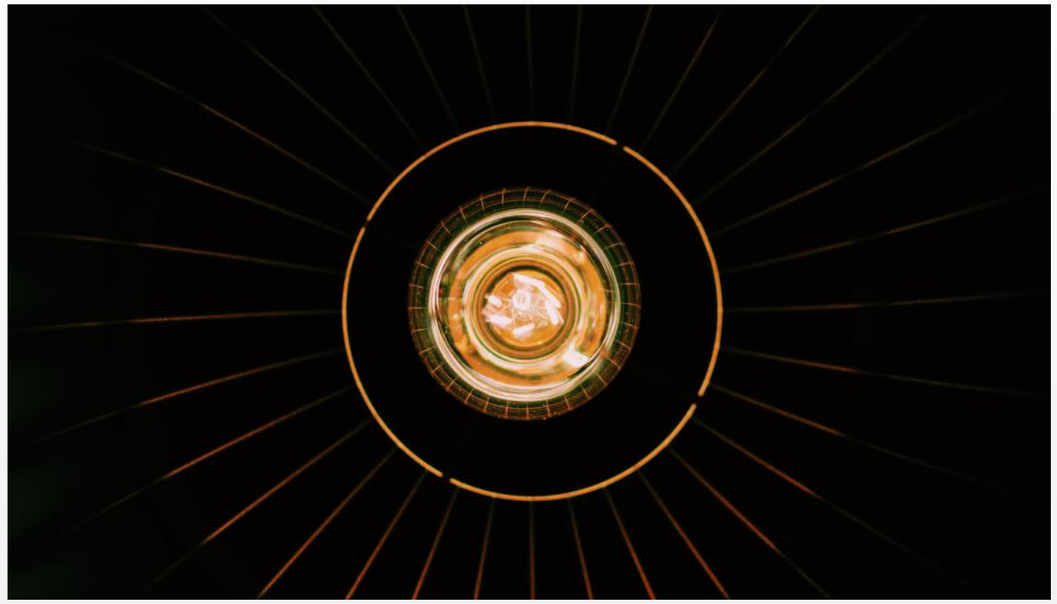
The Rewards (& Limits) of Individuality

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4.1 The Power of Individuality

While undoubtedly complex, striving to deepen our understanding of individuality is vital, because for many people, embracing aesthetic individuality can be an enormously rewarding experience.

People feel that they not only look physically enhanced, they look forward to being treated better socially. This leads to a significant emotional uplift for people, which is hugely significant for the aesthetics industry as there is no equal to making patients feel better about themselves. “I’ve seen people’s energy completely change just from the way that you make them look,” reveals leading Australian makeup artist Rae Morris.

The emotional payback here is a sense of power and agency, the feeling that positive change is possible. One poster in our social listening research comments, “Real flex in life is not money or power or status, but your individuality.”[3] This transformational, emotional impact puts patients in control and helps them feel like someone of influence. “Beauty is a source of power,” agrees Shilpa Madan. “Individuality to me is how can I shape my environment to suit who I am versus changing myself to fit in with the environment around me.”

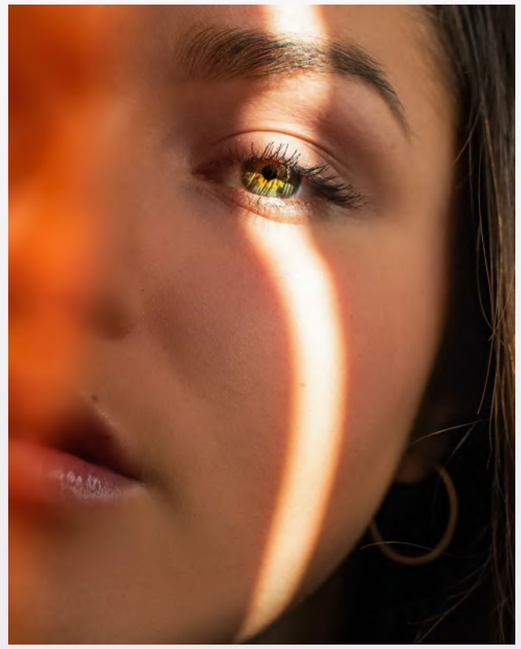
4.2 A Catalyst for Confidence

Yet more significant in the context of aesthetic individuality, is the powerful surge in confidence that comes from feeling you are presenting your authentic, best self to the world.

“Individuality means to me self-esteem,” says plastic surgeon Luis Gustavo, noting that it makes patients “feel more powerful, more happy, more secure.” As Brazilian psychologist Marco Varella puts it, “If you are signaling your best qualities, then you are really in the right emotional territory to be confident.”

Acquiring this confidence may not always come easy to patients who want to share their authentic and true selves, especially if aspects of their appearance do not align with traditionally accepted beauty standards. “To me, individuality is a form of bravery,” says Geraldine Wharry. “Presenting yourself to the world, whether that’s your vulnerabilities or your strengths in a way that is integral. That bravery creates an internal template, with the positive externality that it can inspire others to also own their true expression.”

The body positivity and body neutrality movements are fighting to achieve broader acceptance, giving people the confidence to celebrate their size, shape, and scars and to tell their authentic stories. “You’ve got modern icons with diverse bodies being desirable role models,” says Identity Designer Alex Box. “I think that’s immensely positive.”



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Beauty brands are increasingly incorporating positive affirmations into their communications and consumer experiences, seeking to reframe negative self-talk around body image.[4,5,6] These statements are reducing anxiety, teaching consumers to love their faces and bodies for their uniqueness. This is a notion fully supported by Allergan Aesthetics who believe aesthetic treatments should be a matter of personal choice, including whether people decide to have them or not. “At Allergan Aesthetics, we believe in the power of confidence: of shaping your own life, your own look. People want and need different things. That’s why we focus on delivering holistic approaches to treatment that reflect individual patient needs and aesthetic goals.” says Carrie Strom, Allergan Aesthetics.

4.3

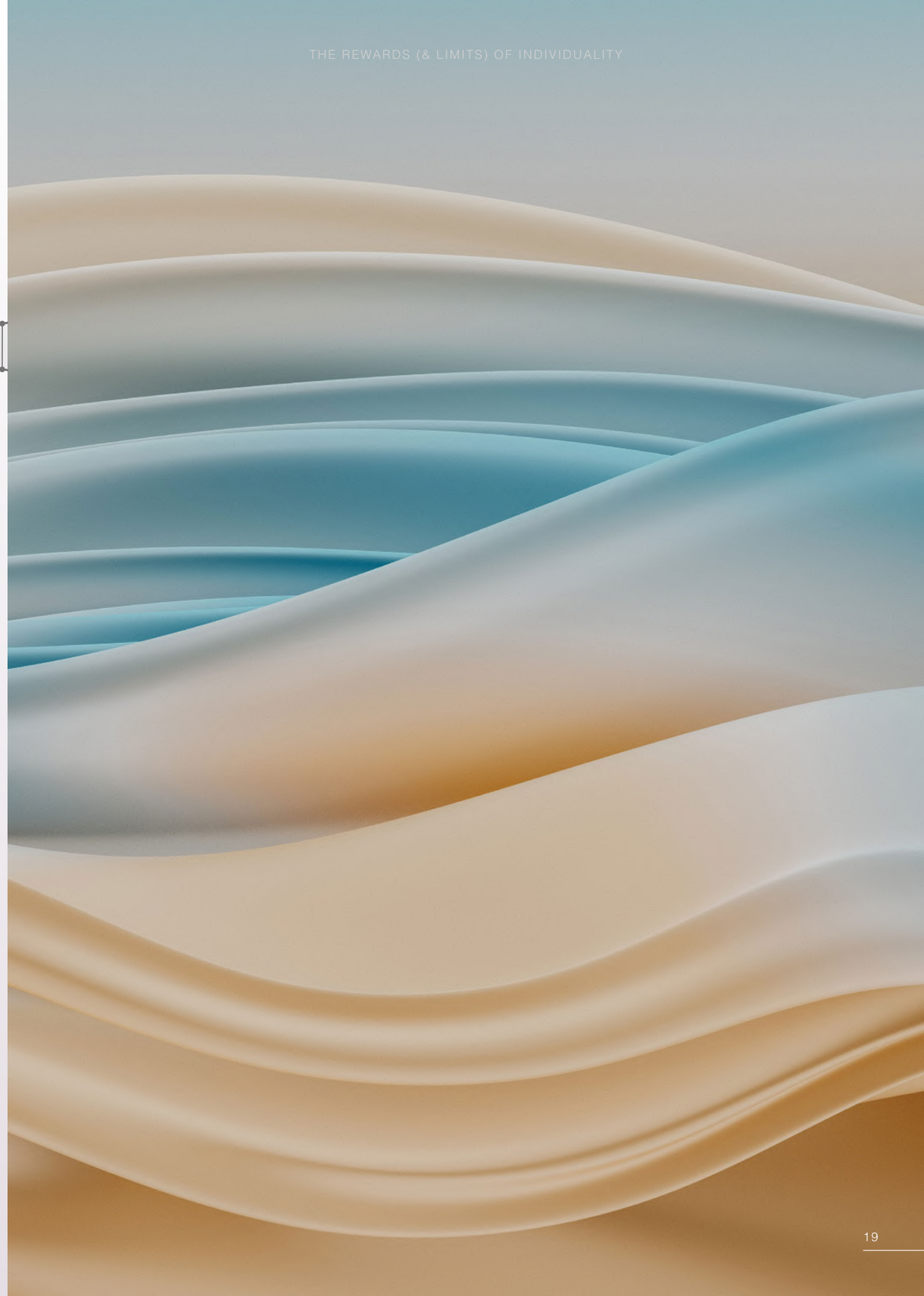
The Spectrum of Individuality

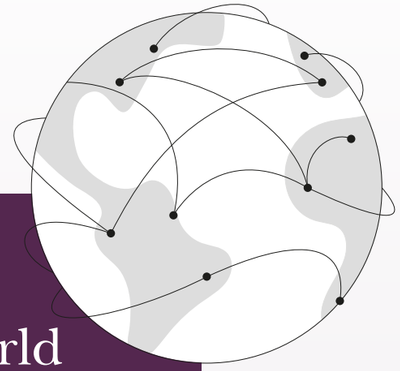
While individuality might feel like a product of the modern era, it's deeply rooted in an evolutionary impulse to preserve our own species.

Encrypted into DNA, genetic uniqueness dictates eye, hair and skin color, the structure of a person's face and even informs some of the behaviors that makes us all unique.

But humankind also has a strong evolutionary need for connection. As Alex Box, puts it, "If you're away from a herd, that can be seen as vulnerable." So, while people gain power from showing their aesthetic individuality, they also take comfort from the collective. This creates a spectrum of individuality, a fluid and ever-changing tug-of-war between the need to be individual and the pressure to conform to group identity.

Where people sit on this spectrum, or how much they express individuality compared to how much they conform, is something that evolves throughout life, ebbing and flowing as environments, surroundings and contexts change. It can even fluctuate every day as people navigate between places where they feel safe and confident to show their individuality, such as when they're with close friends, and places where they feel less free to be themselves, perhaps at work. As we noted, individuality is a journey.





4.1 Collective Conformity: Individuality Around the World

Sociologists tell us that cultures around the world may lean towards collectivism or individualism. Individualistic societies, which often tend to be more affluent ones, value autonomy, self-direction and independence.

Those living in tighter, collectivist societies, primarily in Asia, are much more likely to align with the norms of their communities in most settings.[7] As Shilpa Madan explains in her research paper, Impact of Culture on the Pursuit of Beauty: "Collectivistic societies adopt a philosophy that the individual and the group are indistinguishable. Common goals, values, and fate are assumed to bind the individuals of these societies together."[8]

What does this mean for individuality? Our research suggests that it's not that individuality doesn't exist in collectivist societies, but that it is displayed in more subtle ways, or viewed in a different context, such as putting your best foot forward for the collective good.

"Holy harmony" is one of the key principles of Japanese culture, spirituality and philosophy, and is predicated on the belief that group harmony takes precedence over all else.[7]

Japanese surgeon Kiyoko Kato believes this informs most Japanese people's approach to aesthetic individuality. She says: "They don't care about individuality; they just want to get back to how they looked five or ten years ago. Some patients care more about how they look to their family, especially their husband or their partner." This contrasts with motivations in Spain, where the primary reason for self-care is to feel comfortable in your own skin, rather than looking good for others.[9]

There are signs that attitudes towards individuality are softening in some collectivist societies, with brands taking steps to inspire change. One international haircare brand is trying to encourage Japanese schools and workplaces to soften restrictive rules about permitted hairstyles and hair colour via their social media campaign for instance,[7] while in China, one underwear brand is fighting body stereotyping with its campaign dubbed "No Body is Nobody."[7]

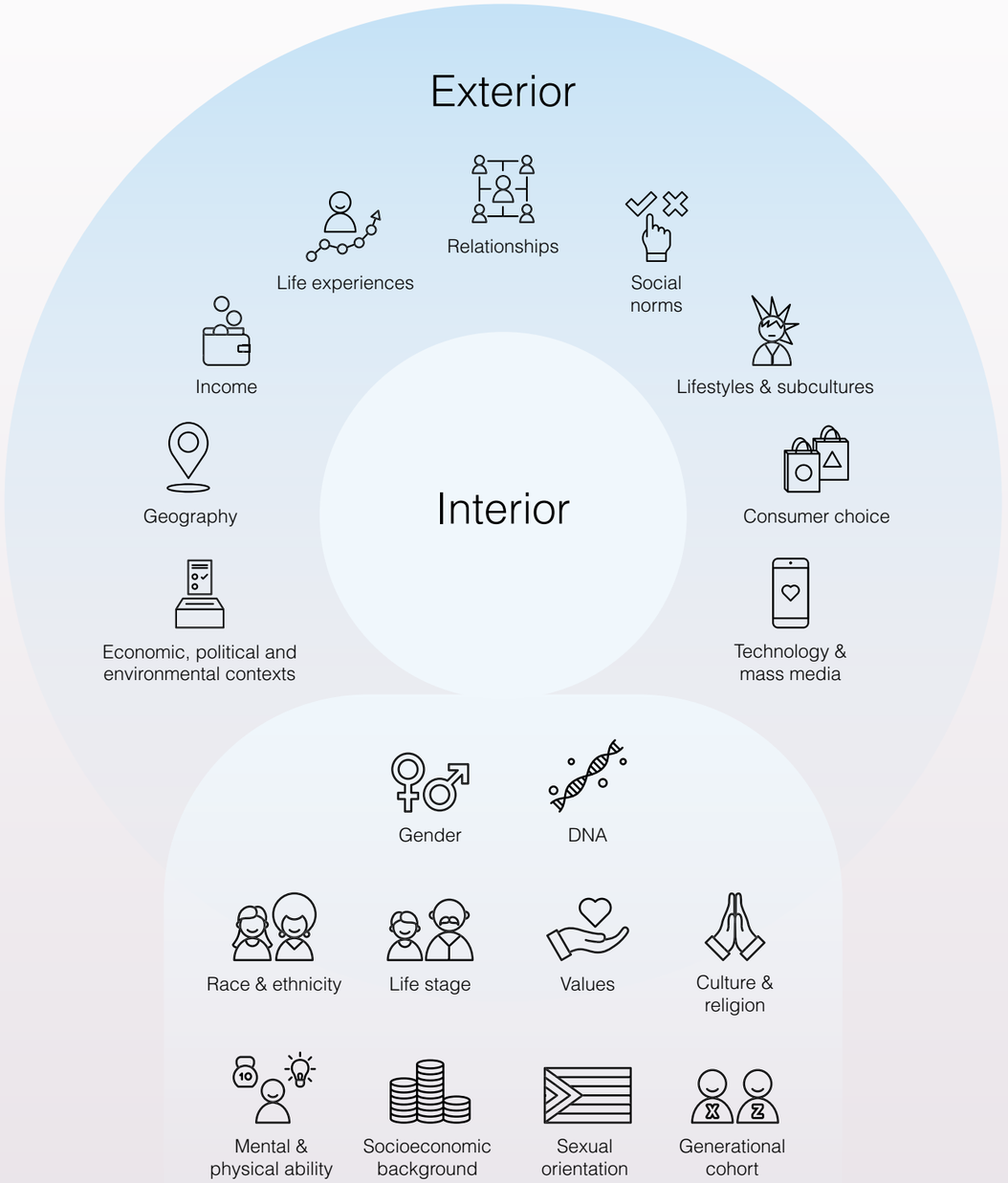
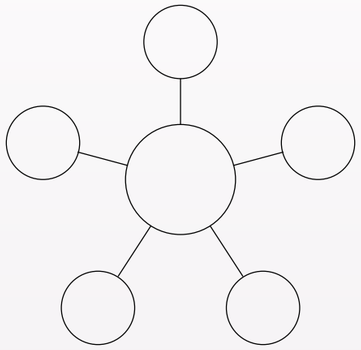
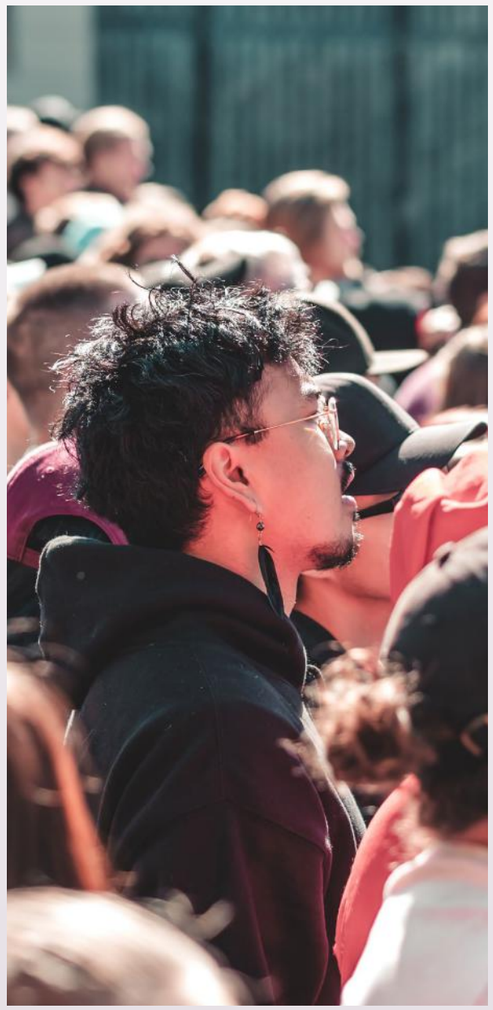


Figure 2: Interior and Exterior Influences on Individuality

Source: Based on Wunderman Thompson Intelligence's analysis of interviews with eight key opinion leaders and academic materials



4.5 The Safety of the Crowd



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Individuality can also be influenced by economic, political, and environmental factors. Individuality flourishes in times of abundance, while tougher times, when people need the security of the group, elicit more collectivist behavior.

“In times of trouble you have this tendency to conform with your group because without a group, you cannot survive,” asserts Marco Varella. “Then in times of plenty, when there is no plague, no wars, then people are more liberal.” There is also an opportunity cost to stepping outside of the safety of the crowd to express individuality. In the workplace, this might lead to someone being deemed unprofessional, limiting their opportunities for progression. In wider society, it might lead to a person being demeaned, harassed, or even ostracized from society altogether.

It’s also important to acknowledge that, for some, the idea of individuality is intertwined with negative connotations. “Individuality to me actually separates us from each other and it can come across as slightly negative and self serving,” reveals Rae Morris. “The word I prefer to use is unique.” All these complex factors influence everyone’s personal approach to individuality; the aesthetics industry must bear them in mind when offering to help patients in different regions and cultures unlock their true selves.

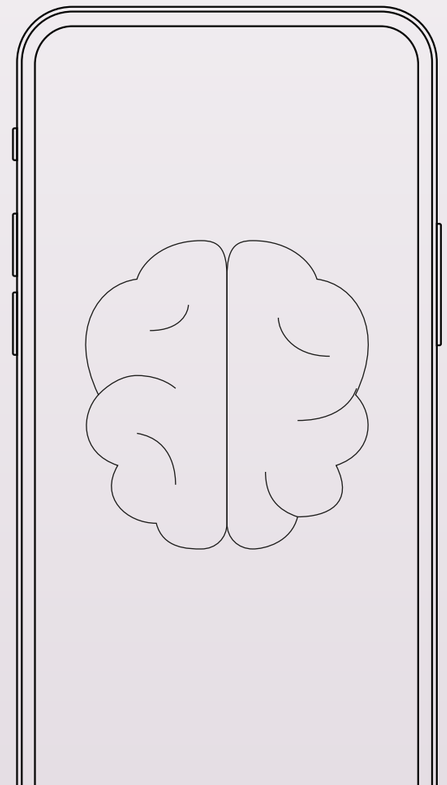
4.6 The Social Media Effect

Within the journey of self-discovery, technology, and most specifically the internet and social media have had a game-changing impact in recent decades, providing a platform for self-expression, while democratising access to information and communities of likeminded people.

As Marco Varella explains, “Social media will really help you to find your tribe, to find those people that relate to you.” Technology’s influence will continue to evolve believes Alex Box, who says “I think the metaverse is allowing people to be other forms of themselves.”

While the whole world has benefited from social media platforms, they have had a crucial impact in collectivist societies like Japan and China, providing Millennials and Gen Z with a vital outlet for self-expression denied to previous generations.

The fast-paced nature of short-form video platform TikTok has also accelerated the speed at which younger consumers can cycle through new and different expressions of their individuality. This experimentation as a form of individuality ties in with the short-term treatments discussed in the Future of Aesthetics report’s Ephemeral Expression trend.[1]



On the flip side, the pervasive use of online filters has been blamed for skewing perceptions of aesthetic beauty. “Many people want the Instagram looks, want overfilled procedures, overfilled faces,” reveals Luiz Gustavo. Governments are starting to crack down on edited photos to mitigate the perceived negative effect on mental health and body image. In January 2022, the UK government introduced the Digital Altered Body Images Bill,[10] requiring logos to be displayed on modified commercial images. This follows Norwegian legislation that requires content creators to disclose when images have been retouched.[11]

The algorithms that underpin social media are also said to have diluted individuality by encouraging people to conform to popular group aesthetics.[7] “Do we really know ourselves, know what our own thoughts and our own drivers are anymore?” asks UK-based aesthetic surgeon Jonquille Chantrey. “How much of the culture around us is influencing our own motivations?”

This tension between individuality and the collective, reinforced by social media, could suggest that some may not seek true individuality at all, but rather the illusion of individuality, and that the illusion is sufficient. This is backed up by Alex Box’s view of modern individuality. “The idea of the individual standing out, being a ‘singular’, is being replaced by collective communal individualism.” she says. “Modern individuality is much more a collective individuality.” This can be seen clearly in a diverse and plural society like Brazil, where people are encouraged to show their aesthetic individuality, but tend to do so within the boundaries of their chosen tribes.

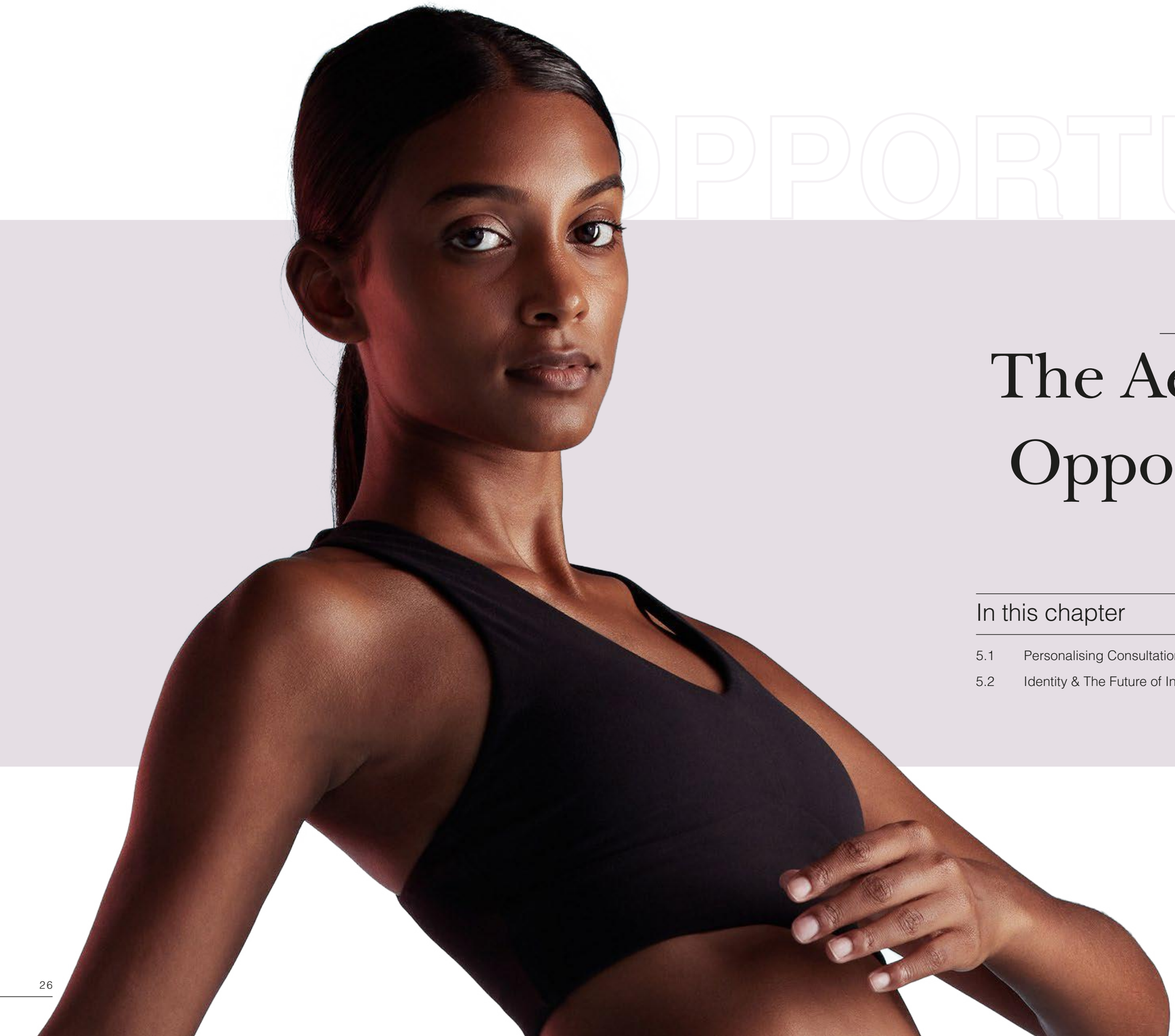


“The idea of the individual standing out, being a ‘singular’, is being replaced by collective communal individualism.”

Alex Box

Identity Designer and Beauty Futurist
United Kingdom

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5

The Aesthetic Opportunity

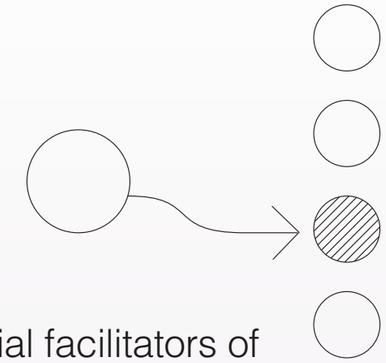
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5.1 Personalising Consultations



Brand and consumer choices are crucial facilitators of individuality. People can now shop the world, buying from brands that align with their values, lifestyle and worldview.



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Digital commerce allows them to join or embrace any number of different sub-cultures or pastimes that give their identity more uniqueness and depth. Meanwhile, the drive to personalisation over the past decade is providing consumers with increasingly tailored product and service options.

The beauty industry has been leading the way to deliver choice that supports individuality and self expression. Brands in these categories increasingly aspire to create hyper-personalised products that reflect each person's preferences, skin type, and microbiome.

This raises the bar for other categories, so it follows that aesthetic practitioners should aim to deliver this same level of personalisation to patients to ensure they are all treated as individuals through every step of their consultations and treatments. Building on the idea that patients are on a life-long journey of discovery, consultations shouldn't be treated as a one-time appointment, but as part of an ongoing dialogue with patients that ensures they are always able to show the latest iteration of their aesthetic individuality. "The best results come with good assessment, the best products and respecting a person's individuality," reveals Luiz Gustavo. "The consultation is the most important part."

Jonquille Chantrey agrees, adding that it is only through effective consultations that HCPs can understand: "Who is that person, their motivations & personality? How do they want to externally express themselves & why?"

5.2 Identity & The Future of Individuality

Elements of a person's identity such as their socioeconomic status, gender, sexuality, ability, race and ethnicity influence how far people can express individuality (see Figure 2, page 19). Those lucky enough to be part of the status quo will often feel more secure in showing theirs. As Mona Gohara explains: "You do have to feel there's a certain privilege that comes along with being able to express your individuality."

Yet those who have experienced marginalisation may have a clearer sense of their own identity as well as a greater understanding of the true power of expressing their individuality. "There is a lot more power of knowledge of self in groups that have had to fight for the skin that they're in," says Alex Box.

To support that fight, the aesthetics industry should also be on a journey of discovery, exploring how it can help even more people to find and embrace their personal definition of individuality. "At the heart of it, inclusivity is all about honoring someone's individuality," argues Shilpa Madan.

As noted, the beauty industry has pioneered personalisation and acknowledging the individual. Now the aesthetics industry can respond, ensuring everyone feels that they are truly being listened to, heard and catered for as a unique individual.

A key part of this is representation. The DREAM (Driving Racial Equity in Aesthetic Medicine®) initiative has been created by Allergan Aesthetics and skinbetter science® to promote diversity in aesthetic medicine. Its recent Forces of Beauty report found that "black women feel aesthetic treatments are not for them because many doctors lack training in treating Black skin."[12,13] Mona Gohara adds that, "To make people feel seen as an individual, it's about taking the next step to innovate products specifically for different groups of people."

In the future, within aesthetics individuality, identity and inclusion will be indelibly linked. There is a growing momentum behind inclusion that is empowering people who have been fighting for representation for generations to fully embrace their individuality. The aesthetics industry has an opportunity to drive innovation, professional education and training that can inspire and amplify change, delivering universal inclusion and representation.

This is key to Allergan Aesthetics, as Carrie Strom, President, Global Allergan Aesthetics notes, "Being inclusive of all people is one of our core principles. We believe in Aesthetics for everyone. With that, comes a relentless pursuit of new possibilities in medical aesthetics, driving innovation to new levels to tackle unmet needs for all individuals, and providing leading education to support practitioners in delivering this."

> "At the heart of it, inclusivity is all about honoring someone's individuality."



Shilpa Madan

Marketing Professor
United States

6

Conclusion: What It Means

Expressing your individuality can be magical. It can build confidence, self-assurance and can be a source of power, giving people the strength to show their true self to the world, strengths, vulnerabilities, weaknesses and all.

But as this report highlights, individuality is a hugely complex concept that is unique and deeply personal to each patient. It can be expressed in many ways and with wildly varying degrees of overtness or subtlety. It ebbs and flows along a fluid and life-long journey of self-discovery influenced by many internal and external factors.

By its nature, there is no one-size fits all solution for supporting individuality in patients. Ultimately, it is about giving everyone the tools and on-going support they need so they feel they have the right to choose how to express themselves throughout their lives.

From the perspective of the aesthetics industry, this means continually reappraising every touchpoint on the customer journey, every product and every service and considering how to make them more inclusive, representative and customisable for each patient.

Above all, the consultation is the vital moment, where patients must feel seen, heard and treated like unique individuals. As Mona Gohara puts it: “The consultation is where the relationship happens.” And it is only through treating this relationship as an on-going two-way dialogue dictated by the needs and desires of the patient that we can truly be said to be supporting their right to express their aesthetic individuality.

Delivering on individuality is undoubtedly a challenge, but one which will bring innumerable rewards and emotional benefits for patients.



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Footnotes

This study was led by Allergan Aesthetics in collaboration with Wunderman Thompson Intelligence, the global futures think tank for Wunderman Thompson. All data cited within the report is credited in the references and was correct and up-to-date at November 30, 2022.

Beginning in September 2022 and ending in November 2022, Wunderman Thompson Intelligence conducted a series of in-depth interviews with 4 leading practitioners and experts in the aesthetics industry as well as 5 experts in in other research fields including psychology, beauty, marketing and futures. The healthcare professionals and other experts quoted in this report were paid to participate in this research project. Details of eight of the interviewees may be found on pages 6-7. An additional interview was conducted with Shilpa Madan, Assistant Professor of Marketing at Virginia Tech in the United States, the findings from which also helped to shape the report.

Wunderman Thompson Intelligence also undertook extensive desk and web research across consumer and business media, and market and industry reports in multiple geographies, specifically Brazil, China, Japan, UK and USA. Local language desk research was conducted by Wunderman Thompson's teams in Brazil, China, Japan
and Spain.

A global social listening study that forms part of this report was conducted by Wunderman Thompson UK's Digital Performance Team in October 2022 using Netbase and across platforms including Instagram, Twitter, TikTok™, Blogs, Forums and Online News.

Endnotes

1. Allergan Aesthetics. *"The Future of Aesthetics global trends report."* May 2022. ALL-AGNA-220005

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About Us

About WT Intelligence

Wunderman Thompson Intelligence is Wunderman Thompson's futurism, research and innovation unit. It charts emerging and future global trends, consumer change, and innovation patterns—translating these into insight for brands. It offers a suite of consultancy services, including bespoke research, presentations, co-branded reports and workshops. It is also active in innovation, partnering with brands to activate future trends within their framework and execute new products and concepts. The division is led by Emma Chiu and Marie Stafford, Global Directors of Wunderman Thompson Intelligence.

About Allergan Aesthetics an AbbVie company

Allergan Aesthetics, an AbbVie company, develops, manufactures, and markets a portfolio of leading aesthetics brands and products. Their aesthetics portfolio includes facial injectables, body contouring, plastics, skin care, and more. Their goal is to consistently provide customers worldwide with innovation, education, exceptional service, and a commitment to excellence, all with a personal touch.

For more information,
visit **www.allerganaesthetics.co.uk**

About AbbVie

AbbVie's mission is to discover and deliver innovative medicines that solve serious health issues today and address the medical challenges of tomorrow. We strive to have a remarkable impact on people's lives across several key therapeutic areas: immunology, oncology, neuroscience, eye care, virology, women's health and gastroenterology, in addition to products and services across its Allergan Aesthetics portfolio.

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Mandatory requirements and disclaimer

This content is intended for United Kingdom adult (>18yrs) audience only.

You should always consult a healthcare professional to help you decide if treatment is right for you and provide you with a full list of side effects.

Adverse events should be reported to Allergan Aesthetics, an AbbVie company.

Reporting of side effects (UK)

If you get any side effects, talk to your doctor, pharmacist, or nurse. This includes any possible side effects not listed in the package leaflet. You can help by reporting side effects directly via the Yellow Card Scheme at https://yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/ or via the MHRA Yellow Card app, available in the Google Play or Apple App Stores. Adverse events should also be reported to AbbVie at ProductSurveillance_EAME@allergan.com. By reporting side effects, you can help provide more information on the safety of this product.

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