Le Monde

A "perfect" face, from the selfie to the scalpel

The standardization of the "Instagram face" leads to a gap between self-perception and reality. A phenomenon that benefits cosmetic surgeons.

In 2019, British artist and photographer Rankin explored the gap between self-perception and reality in adolescents in a project called "Selfie Harm". His idea ? Ask fifteen young adults to touch up their faces with their favorite app, then compare the result to the "nature" portrait photographed by themselves. And the contrast is striking: a refined nose, ultra lippy lips, manga-style eyes, each retouched image seems cloned, as if "avatardized". Or rather, each face presents a disturbing resemblance to that of some of the most influential stars of Instagram, such as Kim Kardashian (154 million subscribers), Kendall Jenner (120 million) or Emily Ratajkowski (25 million).

In a recent *New Yorker* article , journalist Jia Tolentino denounced the recent *"invention"* of a brand new beauty canon, which she calls the *"Instagram face"* . Namely a face with perfectly calibrated proportions, redesigned either by filters or by surgery. Basically, the face of Bella Hadid, star model of the catwalks, entirely reconfigured by multiple plastic interventions (which she denies however). For the British surgeon Julian De Silva, the top model would have a face *"perfect at 94.35%"* , because it almost conforms to the famous "golden ratio" of ancient Greece (an alleged ideal proportion between the eyes, the eyebrows, nose, jaw, etc.).