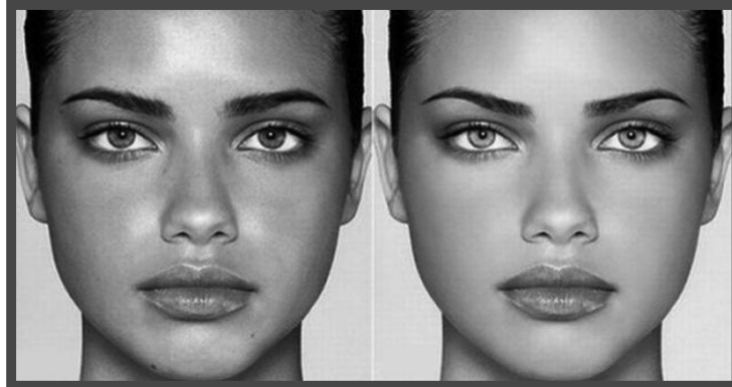


DIGITAL KNIFE: EVERYONE ON SCREEN IS ALTERED

Deepak Chandra Goel, Associate Design Fellow



Ever wondered what make the on screen heroes have near perfect physique and glamour girls who have set impossible standards of physical beauty. How do they look so immaculate and impeccable all the times? Welcome to the world of Digital Knife. This is the secret Hollywood procedure that has fooled us for years

This is one of the most guarded vanity magic tricks. Diet pills, plastic surgery and Botox were pretty little secrets before they were accepted as the norm. The entertainment industry's latest miracle dose is a technique that is so effective that nearly every movie star is a part of it for more than a decade. It's called "beauty work or retouching work."

It's a digital procedure in which a handful of skilled artists use highly specialized s/w in the post-production stage to slim, de-age and enhance the bodies and faces of the star performers to make them larger than life.

This is the master print that we see on screen which is everything digitally remastered. The first rule is not to talk about beauty work. Under strict NDAs, Hollywood top shots sit in on days-long retouching sessions, directing the artists to make every frame suitable. At one such facility, young wannabe actors/actresses disrobe for a handheld capturing every pore and hairs thereby creating a template for future beauty work which, as a result, will appear all the more natural.

As Photoshop is to magazine photography similarly digital beauty has become to celebrities in motion: a potent blend of makeup, plastic surgery, muscle-sculpting, hair restoration, dental work and dermatology. Even the most flawless-in-real-life human specimens are going under the digital knife. Why is that because they can, the world demands it and in this age of ultra-high definition, they have to. Some times it's, it's for pure vanity sometimes because the film requires it: Consider a scenario when a 24-year-old actress is tasked with playing a 17-year-old young-adult heroine, digital beauty becomes more like digital type-casting.

Nobody looks like what you see on TV and in the movies. Everybody is altered," says Claus Hansen, a beauty-work pioneer who plies his trade at Method Studios this is one of the handfuls of shops in Los Angeles that specialize in video retouching. Young generation who idolizes movie, TV and music stars should know that "what they see is smoke and mirrors."

"They look at it like an image that we need to make more appealing," he said. "It's an industry like anything else, and people should want to look amazing. They of course have a spark and something special — they already have an aura around them."

So happy with retouching are today's actors that many are willing to sit shoulder-to-shoulder with the artist for days at a time, personally looking for flaws they want corrected. Hips are narrowed, calves slimmed, turkey-necks tucked. Pores are tightened. Eye-bags reduced (sometimes, entire hangovers are erased). Hair is thickened, teeth whitened. Underarm-skin is de-jiggled. Belly fat obliterated, abs raised. The list of enhancements can be as long as any given actor's complaints — or studio's expectations — regarding his or her appearance, and one thing for sure is that the men are getting as much work done as the women.

Artificial beauty is as old as the moving image, and the story runs deep. Rita Hayworth's career took off when she used a pioneering (but painful) method called electrolysis to raise her "ethnic" hairline. Marilyn Monroe essentially invented lip gloss and sewed buttons into her bras for a pert nipple effect.

All were done at a time when lighting and the soft glow of standard definition of TV were there to wash out the tiny imperfections that make us look human. Now as technology has



evolved and 4K Ultra high-definition standards hit cinemas and TVs, these tiny imperfections can be glaring. "If you look at someone holding a telephone, it's not just the person who has to look good. The telephone has to look great."

"I've done beauty on cars, beauty on products, and beauty on computers — if you look at someone holding a telephone, it's not just the person who has to look good. The telephone has to look great" as quoted by Hansen. "Everything in commercials has to look pristine."

Another beauty artist from a different company who did not want to be named recalled a time when an A-list star in a superhero film was unhappy with his crow's feet in a close-up. When the usual technique to smooth them out wasn't yielding a natural-looking result, the VFX team copied the crow's feet from a slightly younger actor's face and voila! The world's first wrinkle-transplant was a success.



"One of the most difficult things is if you do too much with the eyes"

All beauty artists agree that aging (yes, they sometimes need to add the years, too) and de-aging is as much science as it is art. The face and body go through significant structure changes as we get older, factors that need to be taken into account. Over time, the eyes get slightly further apart; earlobes elongate; foreheads appear to widen as the hairline recedes. The artists must have a grasp on these and many other aging factors to compose a convincing older or younger likeness. It's a basically game of micro millimeters.

That level of precision takes time. A three-second medium to close-up shot can take anything from three to six hours — and that's actual artist's time, not including rendering. These are all money shots.

There is another set of entertainers who have braved the heat of High definition, a number of younger actors have gone out of their way to pose without makeup or retouching. It's their way of protesting what they consider to be excessive beauty standards.

A very contemporary example would be a roaring success of Bahubali 2: The conclusion a made in India film which has scorched the charts of US Box office. This has a lot of demand in the Entertainment industry. As per the Global Animation Industry Report of May 2017 the size of the industry is \$244 billion in 2015 with a projected CAGR of 5% which is nearly \$270 billion in 2017. The Design education at SoDS especially Digital Design Programme has some modules that cover these aspects of technology and thereby making the students ready for the future learning and earning.

SoDS NEWS

HANDS-ON WORKSHOP ON GLASS HANDICRAFTS



School of Design Studies as a part of Open Elective organizes a hands-on workshop on Glass Handicrafts for the 3rd. Year students B. Des (Product Design).

This workshop was anchored & imparted by Mr. Rajesh Kumar who is a famous Craftsman from Firozabad.

The focus & purpose of an 'Open Elective' is primarily to impart the students with allied inputs which are generally, skill oriented in nature so that the students understand the importance of Skill in certain creative domains; the students are also expected to learn the 'Characteristics and Behavior' of various material and then explore creative possibilities.