The death of individualism

After a tiring day at work, you come home and lazily scan through the channels. And while you skim through various commercials of similar products, you realise how all the actresses have the same features - high cheekbones, a sharp nose and full lips. In fact, even the male actors are uncannily similar - tall with rugged features.

Ever since the rise of globalisation, everything has somehow gotten rather homogenous. The world has become a smaller place, and is now at your fingertips. While previous generations were only concerned about their country, this generation wonders about the whole world, be it about food, films, literature, or even politics. And as more and more people become too awestruck with Hollywood and Bollywood lifestyles, they end up wanting to be more and more like them in every aspect.

You now have magazines and blogs everywhere following around celebrities and glamourising every nitty-gritty aspect of their lives - their clothes, hair, makeup, home décor, and even their relationships! So when the entire world is lauding Kylie's new lip surgery, plenty of young girls are also getting encouraged to go for surgeries. While it is natural for humans to be influenced by those that they admire, a much deeper problem related to insecurities lie within.

What these hypes do is that they tend to define 'beauty' conveniently, whether intentionally or unintentionally. Only if you look a certain way and dress a certain way can you be beautiful. Our world is made up of a variety of cultures and ethnicities, each of them with their own features. While the English poet Shakespeare praised rosy cheeks in his works, Tagore's poems spoke of dark-skinned beauties. Both were considered equally beautiful probably because back then the world appreciated diversity.

Beauty standards have now been standardised in such a manner that everyone is too insecure about themselves to really appreciate things that make them different. As the world celebrated high cheekbones, those with fluffy cheeks were made to feel not 'up-to-the-mark' and in a desperate attempt to feel better about themselves, they took to the contour sets, spending hours drawing out that invisible hollow beneath their cheeks.
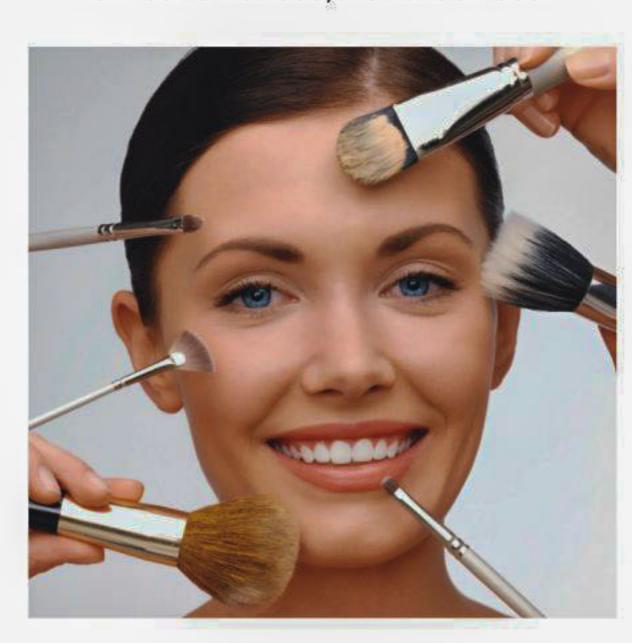
Moreover, our world now revolves around social media and while we scroll through hundreds of Instagram feeds in seconds or view other's Snapchat stories to get a glimpse of their personal lives, we often tend to validate people's worth based on how popular they are online. So when a trend takes the Internet by storm, you also join in to seek validation by the mass, whether or not you like the hype.

In fact, the world now is so fast-paced, one simply does not have the time to stop and really think about how they can bring out their personal style. When they see something that works for others - be it a fashion statement or an idea - they will simply follow it blindly, hoping it will work for them as well. Why bother putting an effort being yourself and risk being shunned by others when you can just pretend to be someone who is already accepted, even admired, in society?

And yet, deep inside people do want to stand out. With the variety of choices we are provided, no one wants to feel like they are just average. Their efforts just end up getting lost in the sea of mainstream ideas.

From our childhood, we have all been

taught to pick sides. We have been taught to think that there is only one right way of doing things. We automatically hate on others who think otherwise. Our necessity to categorise things and even people is what makes it even harder to be an individual. The world is not black and white. There are plenty of other colours in it - each equally special. The minute we forget that, we lose ourselves. We lose what makes us unique; we get lost trying to be someone else.

There is always a fine line between being inspired by other's work and blatantly copying them and one must not cross that line. So next time, let's celebrate the differences. Let's enjoy the little things that make us different. After all it is these imperfections that make us beautiful!

By Adiba Mahbub Proma

Food and Art at Favola in Le Méridien Dhaka

Le Méridien Dhaka has brought a wonderful combination offer of art and food together at their Italian signature restaurant Favola. Italian food lovers can get the opportunity to revel in their artistic mind through this offer. Guests who cherished painting and Italian cuisine can avail the offer from November 4-12, 2016. Favola is also offering an opportunity to their guests of participating in an art competition. To enjoy this offer, guests can order from the regular A La Carte menu. The artwork of the guest will be displayed throughout the whole month of November 2016. At the end of this month, three participants will be announced for special complimentary rewards.

This 9-day offer is available from 6:30pm to 11:00pm. Special offer is available for various bank and telecommunication partners.

For more information, please call, 01990900900

Fahima Choudhury – Breaking Stereotypes

Age is one of the most taboo topics in the world. Why so? Fahima Choudhury shared her viewpoints in the roundtable discussion arranged by Dove at the Daily Star Centre on the 18th of October, 2016. "While doing research we have come to realise staggering facts like women despising public revelation of their true age. At least 1 out of 10 women preferred to hide their age and if that wasn't bad enough; 1 out of 3 women strictly believed, to be considered beautiful, they had to be young". The advertising guru agreed that the situation was not a local concern but a world-wide phenomenon. At the roundtable, it was established that even today, when most women were relentlessly fighting to establish their rights, an absurd topic such as age could cause tremendous anxiety amongst the ladies. Fahima Choudhury added "I believe being in the advertising industry makes me more responsible towards breaking stereotypes such as this.I feel the constant need to create conscientious advertising and refrain from making anyone feel impracticable. I also realise that it is very important for us to keep the conversations alive so that people can come to us with their concerns and we can work on them together, as a team". When inquired how she personally felt about the topic, Fahima Choudhury retorted "My mother has been an incredible role-model in my life; she is a wonderful person who has boosted a strong sense of self-confidence into me in my formative years. The men in my family have always been supportive and have never made me feel self-conscious. They have all supported me and perhaps because of all that bearing, the inferiority complex, the anxieties never affected me". Carrying on the conversation, Fahima Choudhury had more to add. "This complex situation that we face even today needs to be addressed widely, not only amongst the girls but with the boys as well. They need to be taught how to treat women. We should refrain ourselves from telling our daughters how to dress; rather we should be teaching them how to be confident about the way they look". Before ending the discussions, the talented professional conferred "Dove is on a social mission to create a world where beauty is a source of confidence. But it also needs to be understood that the brand cannot fight the extremities alone; there should be more mass engagement to truly affect the world in a positive way and remove any prevailing prejudice."

By Mehrin Mubdi Chowdhury
Photo: Rashed Shumon