

Makeup artist Nerissa Nashin's movement to celebrate all skin tones

For too long, the beauty industry has mirrored societal biases, notably through colourism, where lighter skin tones are often preferred over darker ones. To break the stereotype, Nerissa Nashin – a determined makeup artist – is challenging deep-seated norms. Her mission is bold yet beautifully simple: confronting the bias toward fair skin that pervades the beauty industry.

Colourism is the preferential treatment given to lighter skin over darker skin, sometimes even within the same community. This bias is not just superficial. It can influence job prospects, social status, marriage agendas, and media representation.

Nerissa's philosophy is rooted deeply in the need to counteract this preference that has long plagued many cultures worldwide, including Bangladesh. Having been shamed for her darker complexion all her life and watching people constantly insult and make fun of those with dark skin, Nerissa wanted to address the issue of colourism after she moved back to Bangladesh upon completing her degree in Economics and Global Studies from Swarthmore College, Pennsylvania.

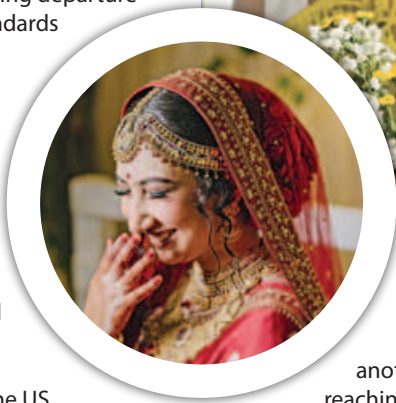
"My whole philosophy stems from, trying to address skin colour bias in the country – the preference that we have for fair skin being equated to being beautiful. So, my makeovers are about being true to your complexion," Nerissa explains with compelling sincerity.

Her approach is a refreshing departure from traditional beauty standards that often diminish the rich diversity of skin tones. She emphasises the inherent beauty in each individual, irrespective of their skin colour.

With her philosophy gaining traction, Nerissa sought to scale her impact. She applied for and secured the Democracy, Human Rights, and Labour grant from the US embassy and the US Department of State, which propelled her mission forward.

"The US Department of State funded this grant. And using that, I was able to grow further. I researched where this bias originally came from and its impact. We conducted several workshops across the country to raise awareness and educate people on its origins. I wanted to know why colourism is still around!" Nerissa details.

The workshops served as platforms not only for education but also for open dialogues, fostering a community of individuals committed to redefining beauty standards. The reception to Nerissa's work revealed a notable demand for a new beauty narrative — one that



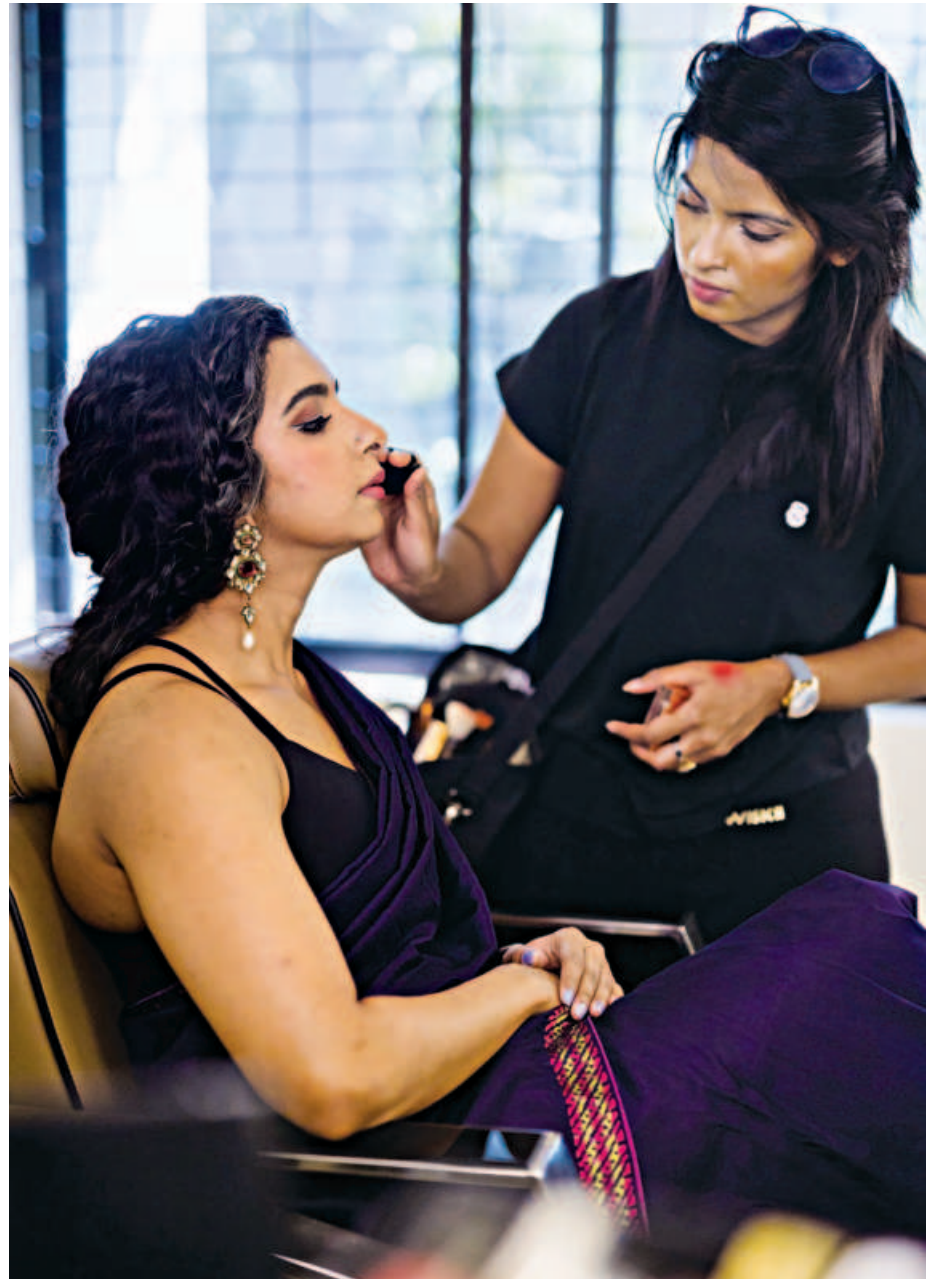
resonates with a broader demographic, especially the youth.

"One thing led to another, and salons started reaching out to me. They wanted to collaborate. And I thought why not? If I can keep this going, I can reach more people and offer this service through my services and genuinely have an impact on the industry," Nerissashares, highlighting the expanding influence of her work.

Since then, she has partnered with Studio Salon in Gulshan 2 to offer her signature true-to-complexion, understated makeovers to those interested in embracing their natural skin tones.

The shifts occurring are not just within individual perceptions but also the commercial dynamics of the beauty industry.

"I think it also has to do a little bit with what the clients want. It is like demand and



supply. If there's a demand for it, there's going to be a supply. So, it is almost like consumers versus brands. If consumers stop demanding something, then brands will have to oblige."

"Similarly, if clients stop demanding this, then makeup artists will have to oblige and change how they do things and stick to true to complexion makeovers," Nerissa explains, outlining the economic and cultural forces at play.

Looking to the future, Nerissa is optimistic yet realistic about the challenges ahead. She continues to expand her educational offerings and her reach within the beauty industry.

"I do have a roadmap for the future," she shares. Her ambition is underpinned by a series of classes she has begun offering, designed to empower individuals to appreciate and accentuate their natural beauty through makeup.

"I've started offering classes for teaching

people who want to learn how to do makeup on themselves. My classes focus on embracing our natural skin tone and getting the right shade of foundation, blending it all to create a natural, not overly done, cohesive look," details Nerissa.

In our modern world, where the definition of beauty is often narrow and exclusive, Nerissa Nashin offers a vision that is inclusive and empowering. Thanks to makeup artists like her, the beauty landscape is changing for the better, but there's still work to be done.

Together we can help turn the beauty world into a more inclusive space where every shade is seen and celebrated. After all, beauty is a spectrum where everyone deserves to shine!

By Ayman Anika
Photo Courtesy: Nerissa Nashin
Essentials – <https://www.instagram.com/nerissa.nashin>