

Suuie



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Issue 001



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Editor's Letter

Welcome to *Suie* (水) ISSUE 01, and let's step together into the world of Beauty x Culture in East Asia.

The name *Suie* comes from the Taiwanese pronunciation of "water," which means "pretty." Although it's rooted in traditional language, today it has evolved into a trendy compliment among Gen Z—something you'll often hear both online and offline when people want to show appreciation.

Looking back on how this theme emerged, it really resonates with my life over the past year—from Taiwan to the UK—where I truly felt the distance between East Asia and Europe. And I don't just mean physical distance, but the gaps in culture, trends, and aesthetics. As a heavy social media user, I used to think I was already well-informed about global culture and trends. But after actually crossing 9,760 kilometres, I realised that what I'd learned online only scratched the surface. It wasn't until I lived in a new environment and paid attention to the small details that I started gaining real insights. Maybe that's what seeing the world is all about.

I love talking to people from all around the world, no matter where they come from. Their perspectives often make our "everyday" culture feel fresh and interesting. Of course, most of the time I'm the one asking curious questions. As a Fashion Journalism student, I naturally lean toward observing the details of "aesthetics" and "beauty." Through these cross-cultural conversations, I noticed differences, but I also began to re-examine the values I was raised with in East Asia. That reflection eventually made me think about wider social and cultural issues—and *Suie* is very much a product of those experiences.

At its core, *Suie* focuses on East Asian aesthetics and trends, while extending into broader discussions about society and values. It features light, easy-to-read stories that cover beauty and pop culture, but also dives into the cultural context that shapes these aesthetics. For example, why is the pursuit of slim body types still so dominant in East Asia? How has K-pop shifted mainstream beauty ideals? In the age of "effortless perfection," how did this carefully curated yet natural-looking aesthetic come to be?

As a Gen Z who's basically addicted to social media and the internet, I want *Suie* to be a bridge—sharing an honest, young perspective with both Eastern and Western readers. For Western readers, it offers deeper insights into East Asia than what you might find scrolling online. For anyone simply curious about East Asian culture and trends, it's a chance to encounter authentic stories. For Eastern readers, even if popular trends feel familiar, stepping outside the first-person view and exploring the cultural and social questions behind them might spark resonance, surprise, or even doubt. Whatever the outcome, I hope to explore aesthetics through the lens of an East Asian woman, creating space for thought and conversation, especially for female readers.

Sometimes I feel pretty ordinary. In a huge city like London, with so many people from East Asia, who would really need to hear my voice? But little by little, I've come to realise that words carry power. Even as just one individual, writing allows me to speak up. And if I keep expressing myself sincerely, someone out there will listen—and maybe even be moved. Just like right now, with you opening this magazine. Thank you for hearing my voice, and for stepping into the world of *Suie*.

Welcome
to Asian
Beauty world

Every era had its own icons.
How did they define what beauty meant at the time?
How have those styles and attitudes become part of how we see beauty today?

Face Cards

The Evolution of East Asian Aesthetics

Pick a fashion card from each era! Let's see how these style icons defined the beauty of their time—and how their looks and attitudes continue to shape the way we see beauty today.

The following images were generated by MidJourney. The visual reconstructions were created to help readers better understand the atmosphere, and they may differ slightly from the original historical appearance.

Ruo Zhao from the *Tang* *Dynasty*

618 – 907

I am Ruo Zhao, born in 705, during the Tang dynasty. Thanks to the stability and prosperity of the time—along with cultural influences from Central Asia and the Western Regions—our aesthetics became bold, rich, and extravagant.

Every morning, I followed the classic '**Seven Steps of Makeup**'. First, I applied white lead powder to my face for a pale, glowing complexion; never forget to whiten the neck too! We also used gold foil, shell, or paper cut into delicate flower or bird shapes and placed them on the forehead or between the brows.

Our signature makeup look featured thin brows and red lips. Lip colour was made from beeswax, gromwell root, and cinnabar, shaped into different styles like cherry lips or petal lips, but always aiming to make the mouth look as small and delicate as possible.





Jinyun from the *Qing* *Dynasty*

1644 - 1912

I am Jinyun, living in the Qing Dynasty in the 1700s. This was a conservative era, especially for women, who were strictly expected to be gentle, virtuous, and modest under the influence of Confucian values and traditional etiquette. The overall style was soft and restrained, unlike the bold and luxurious look of the Tang Dynasty.

We wore qizhuang (Manchu-style dress), usually made of satin and brocade, embroidered with patterns of flowers and birds. In the earlier period, the garments were loose and not fitted to the body. Hairstyles evolved into the qitou style, often decorated with delicate ornaments such as floral headpieces, hairpins, and dangling accessories.

Makeup followed the pursuit of natural beauty. Like in the Tang era, women favoured slender eyebrows and small cherry-shaped lips. A fair complexion was considered beautiful, so we used pearl powder to brighten the skin, but the ideal was a natural look—pale with a healthy flush.

Accessories like sachets, fragrant powders, and balms became especially popular, adding to a woman's elegance. Although Manchu women did not practice foot binding, most Han women followed this custom, as small feet were considered a mark of beauty. Instead, we wore high 'flowerpot shoes' that gave height while keeping our feet hidden under the long dress.

Fashionable Modern Women

I am Yingxue, living in Shanghai, China, in 1925. Between the 1920s and 1930s, Shanghai stood at the centre of modern life, a city where Western fashion was introduced, blending East and West, tradition and modernity. Influenced by the West, I still like to draw my eyebrows in the long, slender 'willow-leaf' shape, but I have also begun to apply eyeliner and use false eyelashes or mascara!

Around me, friends are cutting their hair short, and later, perming it. I followed this trend too, wearing a qipao with a cinched waist and side slits to highlight the beauty of curves.

At this time, ideas of women's independence were also rising. Everyone loved reading fashion magazines such as Liangyou and The Ladies' Journal. These publications presented a new image of women, inspiring everyone to become fashionable, independent modern girls.





Sakurako from *Japan*

I am Sakurako, living in Tokyo in 1923. At this time, Japan's media industry was growing explosively, newspapers, music, and films spread widely, and we became fascinated by the image of the Hollywood flappers. We cut off our long hair and changed to short bob cuts and finger waves, which became symbols of modern women expressing themselves.

Influenced by Western culture, dresses, skirts, and tailored coats became fashionable in the city. At the same time, we still wore traditional kimonos. But under the influence of the "Taisho Romance" spirit, kimono designs started to include brighter colours and more creative patterns. My favourite outfit is a Western-style dress that falls below the knee, paired with a stylish cloche hat and Mary Jane shoes. Accessories such as long gloves, silk scarves, and small handbags are also popular among city girls.

In my free time, I enjoy going with my friends to cafés, dance halls, department stores, and listening to jazz music. It is pretty different from my mother's generation, when women were mostly confined to the home and housework. It shows how women's social status was rising.

Unfortunately, this vibrant and colourful scene came to an end in the late 1930s. With the outbreak of war, the government began to regulate clothing and women's fashion. The lively, diverse styles gradually disappeared from the streets.

Mi-young from *South* *Korea*

I am Kim Mi-young, living in Seoul in 1955. Korea had just emerged from the Korean War, and with the presence of U.S. troops, American culture greatly influenced our fashion. Women loved wearing cinched-waist A-line skirts that fell below the knee, paired with high heels or loafers.

I cut my hair short with soft curls and light bangs, and I wore a pale foundation with bright red lips. Most of the time, I followed the trend of women embracing Western-style clothing, but during special holidays, I still wore the traditional hanbok.

Later, as the economy began to recover, brightly colored suits and even miniskirts started to appear. However, because society remained quite conservative, such bold styles were criticised and restricted by the government.





Hong Kong Stars

My name is Yating, and I lived in Taiwan during the 1980s. Hong Kong movies and film stars have had a profound influence on me. The images of Brigitte Lin, Maggie Cheung, and Joey Wong became my idols.

Their long black hair, curly locks, red lips, and natural makeup were all the rage at the time. White shirts, jeans, and broad-shouldered suits became my everyday wardrobe, embodying a confident blend of sensuality and intelligence.

The Hong Kong films of that era, especially those in the genres of martial arts and romance, not only made me fall in love with cinema but also spread widely across the Asian market, influencing young people in Japan and Korea as well. This trend lasted for a long time, well into the late 1990s.

Japanese Pop Culture Sweeps Across East Asia

I am Misaki, living in Tokyo in 1993, during a time when Japanese pop culture was sweeping across East Asia. Fashion back then was full of contrasts and changes—from the sweet, feminine looks of the 1980s to the street style of the 1990s.

When I was a child, my mother often dressed me in puff-sleeved blouses, ruffled skirts, and outfits with bows. Makeup was simple, soft pink lips and light eye makeup, reflecting the dreamy sweetness represented by idols like Seiko Matsuda and Akina Nakamori. Clothing and makeup carried a sense of fantasy and gentle beauty.

As the 1990s arrived, I was drawn to the eclectic Harajuku style. Street fashion was about rebellion and breaking the rules; platform shoes, mini skirts, and carefree hairstyles became part of my wardrobe. Each outfit wasn't just about looking good; it was a way to express who I was.

From the gyaru style led by Shibuya 109 to Japanese fashion magazines that served as style bibles across Asia, I learned to imitate the models in those pages, discovering how to mix and match, and how to use makeup to shape my own unique identity.





The Rise of *K-pop*

My name is Jiaying, and I grew up in 2000s Korea, a time when the Korean Wave was rapidly sweeping across all of Asia. Music, movies, fashion, makeup, etc, everything was quietly changing. Since I was young, my favourite idol group has been Girls' Generation. Their sweet yet energetic style influenced our sense of beauty.

As I grew older, I learned to create a clean base makeup that emphasised skin's natural glow, while focusing on big eyes with delicate, long, and natural eyeliner and lengthy lashes!

We followed the beauty and fashion trends of K-drama leads and idols, buying the same makeup products and outfits. From the early trends of pure, innocent styles to the confident, bold, sexy looks, and later the girl crush, sweet yet cool style brought by BLACKPINK, one thing remained unchanged – their 'perfect' faces and bodies.

How about the present day?

Entering the 2020s, East Asian beauty and fashion have become more diverse than ever. With the rise of the digital world, different national styles not only coexist but also blend into one another, making it impossible to sum up the region with a single look.

In China, the trend of “New Chinese Style” mixes traditional aesthetics with modern flair, reinterpreting elements of the qipao into something elegant yet creative. In Korea, beauty and fashion are heavily shaped by idols, from sweet and feminine to sexy, or the bold girl-crush vibe, makeup, hair, and styling all serve as key references for East Asian aesthetics.

Meanwhile, Japanese fashion is known for its layered looks, ranging from utilitarian streetwear to urban-outdoor styles and vintage-inspired outfits, creating a truly eclectic atmosphere.

While there’s no single standard that defines East Asian aesthetics today, one thing is undeniable: K-pop’s influence remains incredibly strong, continuing to set trends and shape mainstream ideals, as you’ll see in more detail later on. Across the region, each country’s style retains its cultural roots while evolving with the times, coming together to create a vibrant, multi-voiced fashion landscape.



When we talk about East Asian Soft Beauty, two popular phrases in recent East Asian social media instantly come to mind:

“*white moonlight*” (白月光)
and
“*first love feeling*” (初戀感)

It's not easy to capture these ideas with a single English word, because they describe more than just a look—they evoke a mood. White moonlight symbolises that unforgettable figure in one's heart: pure, distant, and untouchable, like an ideal lover preserved in memory or imagination. The feeling of first love suggests a youthful, innocent, and sweet aura that makes the heart flutter with a subtle sense of romance. In the Chinese cultural context, this type of girl embodies the concept of Soft Beauty perfectly.

So what are the key elements of Soft Beauty?

At its core, it reflects East Asia's mainstream aesthetics: gentle, flowing facial lines rather than the sharp, defined contours often seen in the West; hairstyles that are light and soft—whether sleek straight hair with volume or natural waves—that frame the face rather than aggressive, slicked-back looks. Accessories follow the same philosophy: while Western style often favours bold jewellery like chunky earrings, layered chains, or statement rings, East Asian fashion tends toward delicate, understated details—think fine collarbone necklaces or subtle sparkling studs.

When it comes to clothing, Soft Beauty avoids overly bright colours and leans toward light, muted tones like beige, blush pink, cream, pale grey, or soft blue—creating a fresh, natural atmosphere. Common wardrobe staples include soft knitwear, pleated skirts, and flowy dresses. Makeup, too, stays close to a natural finish: nude tones, light eyeshadow, simple eyeliner, and curled lashes, all without harsh or dramatic lines.

Look closer, and you'll see that Soft Beauty combines gentleness, refinement, and subtle charm. It's not loud or attention-grabbing, but it radiates a sense of comfort, approachability, and sweetness—a kind of beauty that feels friendly and endearing. In fact, if you're not chasing a precise look, this has almost become the “default setting” of East Asian everyday aesthetics.

What is East Asian Soft Beauty?

To understand its roots, we can trace Soft Beauty back through history. For centuries, East Asian ideals for women emphasised gentleness, modesty, and restraint—values shaped by Confucian culture. Although Confucianism isn't a religion, it has deeply influenced social rituals and traditional norms. In classical art, poetry, and literature, the ideal woman was always described as graceful, demure, and soft-spoken. In many ways, soft beauty functioned less as a style and more as a social expectation—where women who were too bold or outspoken were rarely celebrated, while quietness and gentleness were praised as true beauty. This mindset began to shift in the 2000s, yet even today, some older generations still hold onto it. And perhaps because this image feels inherently gentle and approachable, it continues to resonate—after all, who doesn't warm to a kind smile and a soft demeanour?

So when I ask myself whether Soft Beauty' is simply a style or a cultural rule, the answer isn't easy. From today's perspective, with rising female consciousness, it can certainly be embraced as an aesthetic. Yet we also can't ignore the history of social norms and the male gaze embedded in it. After all, this image has been passed down for centuries, shaping the beauty ideals and values of generations.

But as a woman in the 21st century, I'd rather leave behind that historical burden and see Soft Beauty as a style of fashion and presentation—something we can play with, but never be confined by. Today, even if I wear an outfit that radiates sweetness, I can still walk with confidence, speak with strength, and express myself boldly. I can live entirely on my own terms.

photographer / IG@peter.design

model / IG@lxxinn



*And that's when Soft Beauty stops being a restriction, and simply becomes a style—
one that belongs to us, not defines us.*

What if I'm not
Gentle?



Clothing doesn't define a woman's worth

I often find myself wondering—today, fashion should be a free and diverse expression of personality and style, not something restricted by strict social rules. After all, history shows us how clothing has been used to discipline women: from Western corsets to the Chinese qipao, both once functioned as tools to mould women into “gentle” and “obedient” roles.

Yet even without those obvious constraints, women still carry invisible labels when it comes to dressing. Whether in the East or the West, a woman who chooses bold, sexy clothing is often still judged as “wild” or “improper.” These perceptions may not be as blatant as before, but they still linger, and in East Asian societies, they are even more pronounced. Despite living in an age of so-called “freedom of dress,” people continue to define women by the way they look.



photographer / Ziyi Xu

model / Pearl Peng

Take Soft Beauty, for example. A girl with a sweet, approachable appearance in East Asia is automatically associated with being “gentle” or “well-behaved.” Meanwhile, someone who embraces daring, party-girl styles is often labelled as “playful” or “not studious.” In fact, in many East Asian contexts, academic performance itself is tied to how “good” or “obedient” a girl is perceived to be.

And here lies the contradiction: who decided that a particular style of dress has to come with a certain personality? I can love mini skirts and punk eyeliner while also being an ambitious student with excellent grades. What’s more, in English, there isn’t even a direct translation for the word “乖” (guai, which has a similar meaning to obedient)—so what exactly are we trying to live up to? Labels like “good” or “not good” are nothing more than social expectations imposed on women.

What I really want to say is: a woman’s character should never be defined by her fashion choices. We are fully capable of embodying multiple, even seemingly contradictory traits at once. Just look at the unapologetic attitude of Charli XCX in *Brat*—refusing to be boxed into one label, and instead embracing the multiplicity of self. I can be the career-focused, hardworking “good student” and also the party-loving, life-enjoying *bad girl*. These identities don’t cancel each other out; together, they make me who I truly am.

Fashion is expression, not definition.

We don’t need to conform to anyone else’s prejudices or expectations.



model / Pearl Peng

photographer / Ziyi Xie

'You don't look like a medical student!'

For Nico, this is a line she's heard countless times. She spent her childhood buried in books, working her way into the medical program at a prestigious university in Taiwan. Yet outside of campus, that impressive title always seems to be met with doubt. She loves Y2K-inspired party-girl fashion, and on weekends she heads to bars downtown with friends. But every time she meets someone new, she's greeted with the same surprise: "You don't look like a medical student!" She can never quite tell—should she take it as a compliment, or an insult?

On Instagram, Nico shares her daily looks and stylish Y2K outfits, but the messages keep coming: **No med student would dress like that. or Are you even studying seriously? You look like you just like to party.** She can't understand why should fashion and intelligence be linked together? Does being a smart woman mean she must conform to the stereotype: plain clothes, glasses, and a book in her hands 24/7?

But Nico knows one thing for sure, the best response isn't explanation, it's results. When she stood on stage, ranked among the top five students in her class, she caught the looks of shock around her. At that moment, she realized—those labels had been shattered.



For 25-year-old Ella, it's a simple choice. She doesn't understand why wearing black tights is so often seen as provocative. For her, the reasons are straightforward—keeping her legs warm in autumn and winter, creating the illusion of longer legs, and adding a sharper finish to her outfits. It's her personal style, and her fashion choices are made purely for herself.

But reality tells a different story. Because of her black tights, some men assume she's trying to seduce them. A few have even approached her with suggestive looks, instantly labelling her as "easy." It's uncomfortable and frustrating. Ordinary black tights—so practical in her eyes—have been charged with the symbolism of "seduction" in film, media, and pop culture. So the moment she puts them on, society reads her through that lens of stereotype.

These judgments completely ignore her actual reasons and deny her agency. She isn't dressing for anyone else—she's dressing for herself. Yet society keeps projecting its biases onto her.

I wear tights because I like them'

Soft Power

The Culture of Aegyo in East Asia

From Soft Beauty to the prejudices and labels women face in fashion, I can't help but think of a very particular cultural phenomenon in East Asia—aegyo. Much like the word 乖 (guāi), it doesn't have an exact equivalent in English, making it hard to capture the nuance and emotional layers. In Korean, it's called aegyo, in Chinese, sājiāo, and in Japanese, amaeru. Though the terms differ, their core meaning is similar—an expression of cuteness, dependence, and vulnerability, often conveyed through voice, facial expressions, and body language. In English, it might be described as acting cute, being dependent, or showing affection, but these translations only touch the surface. They don't fully reflect the cultural depth and social value that aegyo holds in East Asia.

Aegyo is deeply rooted in East Asian culture, appearing in romantic relationships, parent-child dynamics, and even the entertainment industry. For example, in Korean variety shows, idols are often asked to perform aegyo on camera, using exaggerated cuteness to charm audiences. In relationships, it is even seen as a skill; there's a Chinese saying, "A woman who aegyo, is one who is loved." Meaning that by showing softness and a need for care, a woman can spark protective instincts in her partner, strengthening intimacy. Of course, aegyo is not limited to women; men can also aegyo, though culturally it is more often expected of women.

This is where East-West differences in love and relationships become especially visible. In Western cultures, relationships emphasise equality and independence—there's less emphasis on who takes care of whom, and aegyo has no prominent role. But in East Asia, it is understood as an expression of love, a way to show a private, softer side to one's partner, strengthening intimacy through exclusivity. In Western contexts, however, the same behaviour might be misunderstood as immaturity or unhealthy dependence.

Not everyone is naturally good at aegyo. Some people do it effortlessly, while others need to build up courage before they can show it. But its influence extends far beyond romance; it has become a kind of social lubricant in everyday interactions. In the workplace, a soft tone when asking for help is often more effective than a blunt, formal request. Among friends, aegyo used playfully can lighten the mood, making interactions feel warmer and more personal.

Yet we can't ignore the gender expectations behind this culture. For centuries, patriarchal societies shaped women's roles to be obedient, gentle, and dependent, and aegyo reflects that legacy. The media has reinforced it: K-pop idols are asked to perform aegyo, while dramas frequently portray women as aegyo to win affection. Still, interpretations are shifting. Today, more male idols 'aegyo' to please fans, while dramas portray 'puppy-like' boyfriends or younger male leads who use aegyo to charm older partners. For modern women, aegyo is no longer just a passive gender norm, but can also be a conscious choice—a strategy, even a social skill that one can control and decide when to use.

Interestingly, the effect of aegyo also depends on contrast. When someone who is usually cold and aloof suddenly breaks out in aegyo, the unexpected difference becomes irresistibly charming. On the other hand, when someone is already cute aegyo, it may feel more predictable and less surprising. This delicate balance, knowing how much to show, when to use it, and how to keep it endearing rather than excessive, captures the subtle cultural artistry of aegyo.

Reflecting on this phenomenon that I once took for granted, I realise how closely it's woven into daily life and human relationships in East Asia. It's more than a cultural quirk; it's a window into understanding the deeper layers of society and interaction. I wouldn't define it solely by history or gender, but neither can I ignore how the media has shaped the image of women's aegyo. Just like our outfits don't fully define us, these soft labels attached to East Asian women should only exist if freely chosen—never as chains that confine us.



The images were generated by MidJourney.

Kpop has moved beyond music it has become a lifestyle

Beyond luxury endorsements, idols' off-duty looks spark just as much buzz. Their practice room outfits, often from Korean designer brands, are particularly popular—affordable enough for fans to replicate. Labels like Mardi Mercredi, Matin Kim, and EMIS gained significant recognition thanks to idol exposure. Mardi Mercredi even opened stores overseas, expanding from Tokyo to Shanghai and Hong Kong.

K-pop's influence across East Asia might be greater than you think. From songs playing everywhere to idols' considerable influence on selling products, it has quietly dived into our everyday lives. Nowhere is this more visible than in fashion. Luxury houses have long recognised the unique fan culture of K-pop. Take BLACKPINK for example, Jennie is the ambassador of Chanel, Lisa represents Louis Vuitton, Rosé is with YSL, and Jisoo is Dior. Their roles as global ambassadors not only confirm their influence but also bring fresh, youthful energy to each brand.

K-pop hasn't only pushed Korean brands onto the global stage, but it's also fueled tourism. According to a 2023 survey by the Korea Tourism Organisation (KTO), over one-third of inbound travellers said K-pop (including K-dramas) was the reason they decided to visit Korea. Better-known idols such as BTS, NewJeans, and Jennie have served as tourism ambassadors. Jennie, for example, helped turn Nudake, a dessert café she visited, into a viral hot spot—now listed as a must-visit in Seoul.

K-pop and K-dramas also work hand-in-hand. Idols often star in dramas or variety shows, promoting Korean culture while exporting every part of the Korean lifestyle, from food and fashion to entertainment. In Taiwan, for instance, the 2010s marked the rise of Hallyu as a mainstream trend. Korean dramas dominated screens, sparking a craze for Korean fried chicken; chains like Cheogajip Chicken(처갓집) soon entered the market. Actors holding Samsung phones drove sales booms before the switch to iPhones. And when Tzuyu debuted with TWICE, she became a household name and a source of national pride in Taiwan—proof of how difficult (and celebrated) it is for a foreign trainee to debut under a major Korean label.

Fashion followed suit, with “K-style” tags drawing customers into shops. Cafés inspired by Korean aesthetics also flourished—stylish, coordinated spaces that became photo-worthy hangouts for young women. In beauty, idols and actors shaped Korean makeup trends, making affordable brands like Innisfree and Etude House household names across Asia.

Hairstyles were even more directly influenced. EXID's Hani popularised the now-iconic “Korean air bangs,” sparking a full-blown trend that still dominates today. She often fixed her bangs with curlers, creating a cute, bouncy look. Young women quickly copied the style, even wearing curlers outside on the street or at school. At the time, many wondered, “Why is everyone carrying a roller on their bangs?” However, looking back, it became a defining part of my everyday style. With that single habit, **Hani transformed a personal quirk into a global trend—one that went far beyond South Korea.**

Life in the Diary of a K-pop Girl

Tiffany is a 23-year-old fresh graduate starting her career. Although she lives in Taiwan, her life is almost completely filled with K-pop. Every morning, she begins her day by opening Instagram and X, checking the latest updates from her idols BOYNEXTDOOR and NCT. At the same time, she also casually follows other K-pop groups, seeing who released a new song or who made a funny moment on a variety show. Even a short clip is enough to brighten her mood.

On her way to work, Tiffany listens to K-pop songs while scrolling through Threads. She has to admit, Threads is the perfect place for fans: it gathers so many people with the same passion, everyone shares news and discussions, and the algorithm always pushes her the content she wants to see the most. Sometimes, she even makes new friends there. Even though they are from different ages and backgrounds, their shared love brings them together.

After leaving student life and stepping into the workplace, Tiffany unexpectedly found a group of like-minded friends: they go to K-pop dance practice after work, meet up for meals while exchanging photocards, and even travel abroad together for concerts. Whenever someone wins an entry to a fansign event or when their idol reposts their content, they all celebrate without holding back. This pure happiness feels warm and precious to Tiffany.

On the metro, Tiffany often notices strangers carrying bags decorated with K-pop photo cards or plush keychains. She remembers when NJZ (NewJeans) held a pop-up store in Taipei—it drew huge crowds, and their cute plush charms sold out instantly. Soon, fans were hanging them on bags everywhere. It looked like a sweet accessory, but also like a small ritual in everyday life.

Even though work can be tiring, Tiffany feels motivated when she thinks about saving money to watch concerts abroad. Just last month, she flew to Seoul to see BOYNEXTDOOR's concert live. To her, it wasn't just entertainment—it felt like recharging her life. Every meeting with her idols becomes her reason to keep working hard, and it also pushes her to try things she never imagined before: figuring out foreign ticketing sites, booking flights and hotels, searching for the same merch shops idols go to. These experiences expand her perspective and make life more colourful.



After work, Tiffany walks through the busy Xinyi District and sees dance crews performing K-pop covers on the street, surrounded by curious onlookers. As someone who loves dancing, she immediately sends her friends a dance challenge video she watched that morning, and they agree to practice together after work on Friday, planning to perform and film in the lively city centre. Street dance seems to be turning into a trend, with people stopping to watch naturally. K-pop music has already become like the background sound of the city, playing everywhere.

In fact, K-pop doesn't just fill Tiffany's daily life—it shapes her attitude toward life. She used to be hesitant and afraid to make decisions. But after listening to BOYNEXTDOOR member Leehan's interview, she felt deeply inspired. His positive mindset touched her: "Just try it now. Doing it won't kill you, but not doing it might leave you with regret." Since then, whenever she faces difficulties, she recalls this line and takes the first step bravely.

At the same time, K-pop also led Tiffany to start learning Korean, exploring Korean culture, and practising dance. It's no longer just music—it's a lifestyle, a source of positivity. For her, K-pop is a flavour that seasons her life, and also a driving force that helps her grow and expand her world. Whether it's work, friendships, or self-growth, Tiffany's life feels more meaningful and exciting because of this passion.

From London Streets to Seoul Chic: What's Next in K-Beauty

Even on the streets of London, you can spot massive Korean beauty stores—and lately, several new ones have opened in a row, showing just how huge the K-beauty market has become. In East Asia, K-beauty is even more of a cornerstone. Beyond the early wave of brands like Innisfree and Etude House, others such as 3CE, Rom&nd, and Clio Cosmetics have gained loyal followings thanks to their practical products and affordable prices. Today, let's put the products aside and look at what's trending in K-beauty for 2025—and how it sets itself apart from Western makeup styles.

Glass Skin / Butter Skin

The most iconic K-beauty look has long been glass skin: skin so dewy, clear, and luminous it seems to glow from within. But in 2025, the trend has shifted. Instead of a full-face glow, the new base makeup look blends half glass skin, half butter skin. Think of blush, lips, and highlighter with a glossy finish, while eyeshadow and foundation lean matte. The overall effect? Lightweight, natural, and healthy-looking skin.

Blush Under the Eyes

Blush is no longer just for the cheeks—it's now placed directly under the eyes and blended softly, creating a youthful, cute, and slightly flushed look. Cream and balm blushes are especially popular, as their smooth, mousse-like textures melt into the base makeup and give a natural glow, as if the colour is radiating from within.

Juicy Glass Lips

K-beauty lip looks are never as simple as just swiping on lipstick. To get that natural pouty, glossy effect, start with a lighter lipstick shade as a base. Then, add a slightly darker shade to the inner lips, blending outward to create the blurred lip effect. Finally, top it off with a shiny gloss or tint for ultra-hydrated, high-shine disco lips.

Low-Saturation Eyes, amp, Lips

Vivid or heavy colours are rarely seen in K-beauty. Instead, soft muted tones—like beige, rose, or peach—are used to create depth and dimension. In 2025, shimmery shadows are being replaced by minimal, natural-looking shades. Lip colours follow the same direction: nude pinks and tones are favoured over bold red lips, matching the gentle overall vibe.

The Aegyo-sal Must-Have

Something you won't find in Western makeup but is essential in K-beauty: the aegyo-sal (the subtle puff right under the eyes). Adding this detail makes the eyes look bigger, sweeter, and friendlier—giving the effect of a natural smiling eye. Creating aegyo-sal is an art: first, highlight just under the lower lash line with a shimmery or bright shadow to give a puffy effect, then add a soft contour underneath to enhance the 3D look.



Image source: iStock (licensed)

Isn't It Fascinating That You Can Choose Your *Eye Colour*?

Colour Contact Lenses Have Become a Daily Staple in East Asia

Colour contact lenses—yes, we're talking about those subtle (or not-so-subtle) eye enhancers—are exactly what they sound like: tinted lenses that come in a variety of diameters, shades, and designs. In many parts of Asia, they're not just popular—they're practically a beauty essential. You could even say they've crossed the line from trend to daily ritual. With thousands of styles and a massive market to back them, coloured contacts have become a booming industry in their own right.

But wearing coloured lenses isn't just about looking cute; though, let's be honest, that's part of the fun. For many people who already wear contacts for vision correction, the logic is simple: "If I'm going to wear lenses anyway, why not choose a pair that actually enhances my eyes?" Others reach for coloured contacts to subtly enlarge the iris, sharpen their gaze, or tie together a full makeup look. In fact, finding the right pair of lenses for your face and style is key. That's an art in itself.

Take natural brown-ringed lenses, for example. They're close enough to your real iris colour to pass for "no makeup" days, yet still add just the right amount of sparkle to make your eyes look more awake. On the other hand, if you're after that bold, Western-inspired glam, cool-toned blues and greys with intricate patterns can instantly elevate your makeup game. Swapping out eye colours to match your outfit or your vibe?

Honestly, that's half the fun.

With thousands of brands on the market, a few standout names have risen to cult status. One of the biggest players is OLENS from South Korea—famous for their soft, natural-looking lenses that enhance without overpowering. Their diameters stay on the smaller side, but the way they brighten your eyes is anything but subtle. Bonus points: they scored BLACKPINK as global ambassadors, which helped them dominate nearly 50% of the Korean coloured lens market. They've also become a must-buy souvenir for K-beauty lovers visiting Seoul.

Another rising star is Hapa Kristin, who skyrocketed in popularity after naming IVE's Jang Wonyoung as their muse. Their signature "teary-eyed" design gives a fresh, glossy look—as if your eyes are forever caught in the perfect lighting. Combine that with high comfort levels, and you've got a favourite among detail-obsessed beauty lovers.

And the numbers back it up. According to a 2025 report by Credence Research, the Asia-Pacific coloured contact lenses market was valued at around USD 4.602 billion in 2024 and is expected to reach USD 6.023 billion by 2032. If that doesn't prove the power of the "gaze economy," we don't know what does.

So, after all that—what colour would you want to try first?





Korea's

NEXT LEVEL PHOTO BOOTHS

In recent years, the streets of Seoul have seen a striking boom in photo booth stores. In the trendiest youth hotspots like Hongdae, it feels like there's a photo booth every five steps! In just four short years, these booths have multiplied from zero to over a thousand across the city. And this wave of sticker booth culture hasn't stopped at Korea's borders—it's swept across East Asia to Taiwan, where revenue from such booths has doubled annually. But what exactly makes these photo booths so irresistible? And how have they evolved over time?

It all started with "인생네컷" (Four Cuts of Life)—a simple setup offering cute props and filters like soft-skin, black and white, and vivid colour effects, along with playful frames. Today's booths, however, have stepped up their game. Many now feature virtual photos with K-pop idols and collaborations with illustrators and artists, giving their frame designs a fresh, creative twist.

With fierce competition in the market, photo booth brands are constantly innovating. Some introduce unique photo paper options, from translucent styles to holographic metallic textures and glittery finishes. Others experiment with camera angles—offering Y2K-inspired top-down shots, quirky fisheye effects, or dramatic low-angle perspectives.



Photo via Instagram/@meng_pint25



Recently, booths have taken it even further by offering intricately themed backdrops. Step into a store, and you might find multiple rooms, each with a distinct setting—one might mimic the inside of an elevator surveillance cam for a moody vibe; another, the peek-out perspective from inside a washing machine (complete with props like rags and detergent); or a dreamy fish tank setup where real goldfish swim across the foreground. There are even themes inspired by subways, airplanes, and bathhouses—it's like stepping onto a film set!

These wildly imaginative setups are undoubtedly part of their charm. But what really makes photo booths stand out is their beauty filters—they enhance your features in a natural way and capture you at your best.

No doubt, they've become the perfect tool for making memories with friends or a date. Whether it's after a hangout or a date, snapping a quick photo is almost a must.

Who wouldn't want to keep a little piece of that lovely moment?

FROM ELEVATORS TO LAUNDROMATS IT'S A SNAPSHOT REVOLUTION

BE AN *idol* FOR A DAY IN THE STUDIO

Even more buzzworthy than photo booths in the past year is a next-level, dream-fulfilling phenomenon: *the K-pop Idol Experience Photo Studio*. Step inside, and you can instantly transform into a K-pop star. Surprisingly, this trend has caught on even faster in China, from Shanghai to Chongqing to Chengdu; these studios are popping up like wildfire, becoming the latest must-visit destinations for young people seeking their idol moment.

FROM

But what really takes the experience to another level is the set design: perfect recreations of a concert backstage, the iconic pink wall from music shows, famous variety show sets, and even the backdrop of a fan signing event. It felt just like stepping into an idol's Instagram post! The props are equally detailed: rhinestone-studded microphones, those familiar idol-only water bottles, even life-sized staff mannequins from fan sign scenes. You're free to snap selfies with your phone or book a professional photographer session. Many studios also offer to create your own exclusive "idol photocard"—a collectable staple in K-pop fan culture. (Some real idol photocards, after all, have been resold for thousands of pounds!)

Loving Idol

TO

Becoming

ONE

The magic begins the moment you choose your outfit. A thick, glossy "idol lookbook" opens before you, filled with iconic stage styles—from Jennie and Jang Wonyoung to Karina. Nearly every performance outfit you can imagine is there, meticulously replicated down to the smallest detail: matching clothes, accessories, earrings, necklaces, belts, etc. It's a full-body transformation into your favourite K-pop star. You can do your own makeup or opt for a professional upgrade. Many studios offer glam services that perfectly recreate the signature idol looks, right down to every subtle highlight and eyeliner flick.

Here, you don't need to sing or dance to shine. Just strike a pose, hit the shutter, and become your own version of a K-pop idol!



Photo via Rednote / @阿里嘎多九朵



Photo via Rednote / @拉多加甜

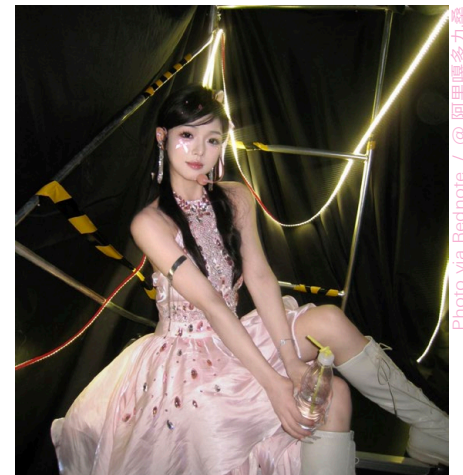


Photo via Rednote / @阿里嘎多九朵



What's your
MBTI



Many also say that MBTI has not only helped them understand themselves better but has also brought a sense of self-acceptance and healing. One friend shared how she used to struggle with being introverted—feeling like society constantly pushed people to be more social, more outgoing, more present at parties. She began to question her own nature, even disliking herself for not fitting that mould. But as MBTI gained popularity, "I-types" (introverts) started getting more visibility and understanding. She realised countless others felt the same—people who recharged in solitude rather than crowds. It wasn't a flaw; it was simply a personality trait. And MBTI reminds us that every type has its own spark and strength.

Now, she can confidently say, "I'm an I-type," and people immediately understand what that means—maybe she's quiet because she's slow to warm up, or perhaps she's skipping a night out because it's emotionally draining, not because she's unfriendly.

Some have even said that traits once considered flaws—being overly sensitive, having niche aesthetics, being intense or impatient—are finally being understood and validated through MBTI. It's no longer about trying to fit into society's personality ideals or fearing you're "too different." MBTI offers a sense of belonging—it shows you that you're not alone, but actually just one of millions who feel the same. And that brings peace, even self-love.

MBTI, short for Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, is a type of 16-personality test based on psychologist Carl Jung's theory of psychological types. In recent years, MBTI has skyrocketed in popularity across East Asia, not only becoming a must-have topic for self-introductions when meeting new people, but also giving rise to endless discussions, memes, and personality-based analyses.

Much like astrology, MBTI is irresistibly addictive. Its charm lies in how uncannily accurate it can be—capturing people's behaviours, thoughts, and personalities with just a 94-question test and a combination of eight letters. At first, the letters may seem confusing, and the sixteen personality types hard to remember. But with enough exposure, people start to internalise the characters: ENFP becomes the cheerful, outgoing "golden retriever"; ISFJ, the thoughtful, slightly anxious friend. These traits and impressions gradually find a place in everyone's collective understanding.

So, how big is MBTI in East Asia?

It first exploded in Korea, and thanks to K-pop idols, the trend quickly spread across the region. Fans became eager to know their idols' types—who's compatible with whom? Who shares the same type? What started as a fun icebreaker has now extended into job interviews and résumé applications—yes, you might even be asked about your MBTI at work. The MBTI craze has spilt into business too, with brands launching perfumes or office supplies matched to each type, and personality initials printed on mugs, T-shirts, badges, almost like a stylish name tag or personal statement.



Extraversion

Focuses on the outer world. Enjoys interacting with others and gains energy through social engagement.



Intuition

Uses imagination and intuition. Tends to focus on abstract ideas and future possibilities, and enjoys exploring new concepts.



Introversion

Focuses on the inner world. Feels recharged through solitude, while social situations can be draining.



Sensing

Relies on concrete experiences and the five senses. Values practicality, reality, and pays close attention to details.



Feeling

Emotionally aware and empathetic, prioritizing emotions and human connections in decision-making.



Perceiving

Prefers a flexible, open-ended lifestyle. Enjoys spontaneity, possibilities, and adapting to change.



Thinking

Logical and analytical. Prefers objectivity and principles, making decisions based on reason and efficiency rather than emotion.



Judging

Likes structure and planning. Tends to be organised and prefers having clear plans and routines in both work and life

How do people use it in real life?

E

I went to my friend's party yesterday! It was so much fun! Met tons of people!

I

You are such a big **E**!

Everyone was super nice.
Wanna come with me tomorrow?

Socially anxious, I type here just want to stay home and watch a movie.

I already made a plan. Finish my report in the afternoon, go grocery shopping, then cook dinner and have a cosy movie night!

I haven't even decided what to wear to the party yet!
You are such a **J** person!

P

J

F

I'm gonna cry... the hair colour I got today is nothing like what I wanted.

T

Did you tell your hairstylist?

I didn't dare... he's someone I knew from before and I didn't wanna hurt his feelings!

Girl, you're the customer—you have every right to ask for a refund or a fix. That's literally his job.

You're such a logical **T**-type. Do you even get this emotional struggle?

Nope... but I'll help you figure out what to say. Talking to him is the only way to solve it directly.

.....
You know, sometimes **F**-types just want a little comfort.

S

N

Creative Director / Jessica Tu
Photographer / Jiawen Li
Makeup Artist / Ran Dai
Model / Chantelle Huang



Is Being as Beautiful as the New Standard of Perfection



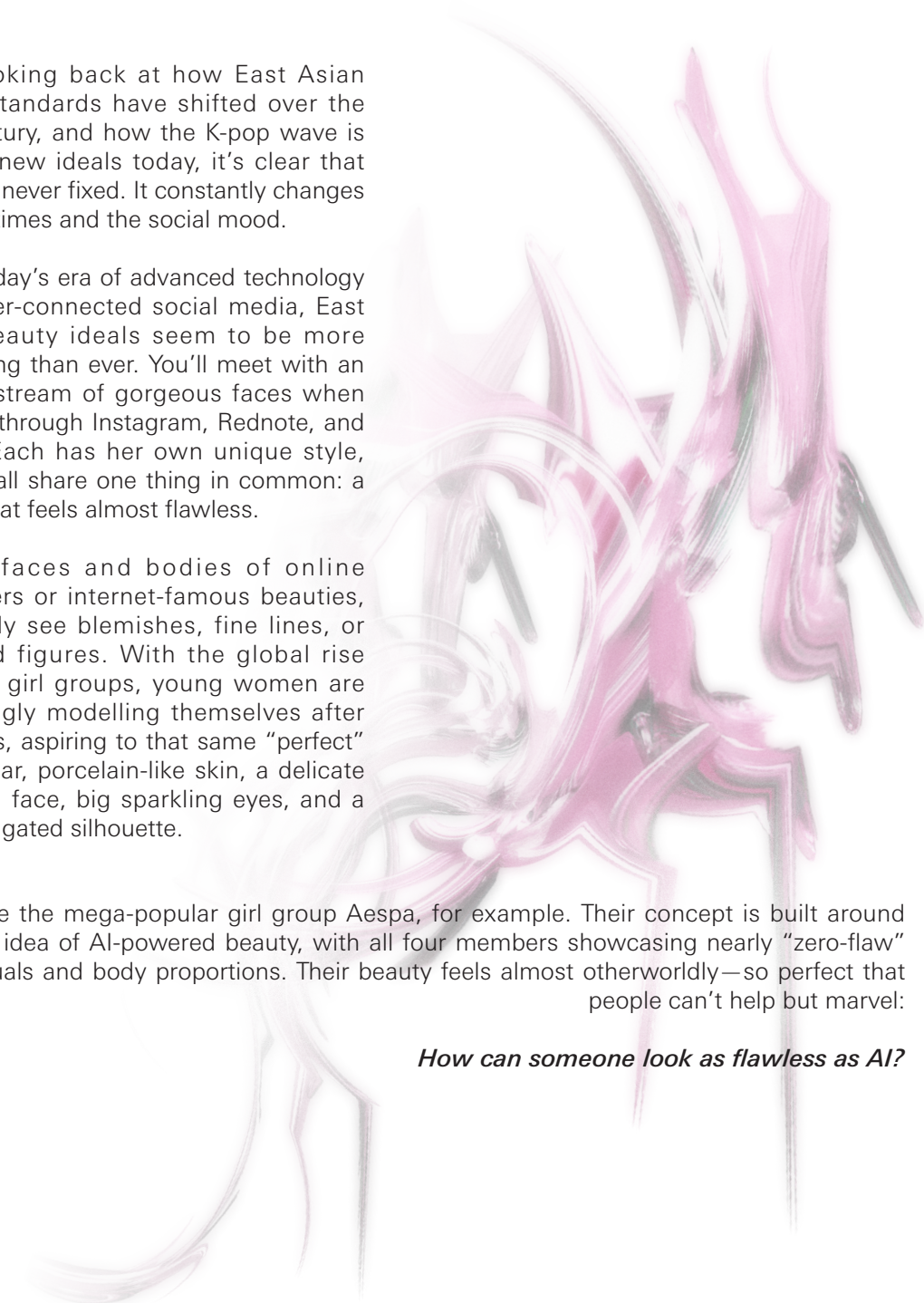
After looking back at how East Asian beauty standards have shifted over the past century, and how the K-pop wave is shaping new ideals today, it's clear that beauty is never fixed. It constantly changes with the times and the social mood.

But in today's era of advanced technology and hyper-connected social media, East Asian beauty ideals seem to be more demanding than ever. You'll meet with an endless stream of gorgeous faces when scrolling through Instagram, Rednote, and TikTok. Each has her own unique style, yet they all share one thing in common: a beauty that feels almost flawless.

On the faces and bodies of online influencers or internet-famous beauties, you rarely see blemishes, fine lines, or un-toned figures. With the global rise of K-pop girl groups, young women are increasingly modelling themselves after their idols, aspiring to that same "perfect" look—clear, porcelain-like skin, a delicate V-shaped face, big sparkling eyes, and a slim, elongated silhouette.

Take the mega-popular girl group Aespa, for example. Their concept is built around the idea of AI-powered beauty, with all four members showcasing nearly "zero-flaw" visuals and body proportions. Their beauty feels almost otherworldly—so perfect that people can't help but marvel:

How can someone look as flawless as AI?



When it comes to shaping the idea of the “perfect beauty,” social media is no doubt one of the most significant driving forces. It spreads these standards across the globe in the fastest and most powerful way. But alongside it, there’s another major player we can’t ignore—photo-editing apps.

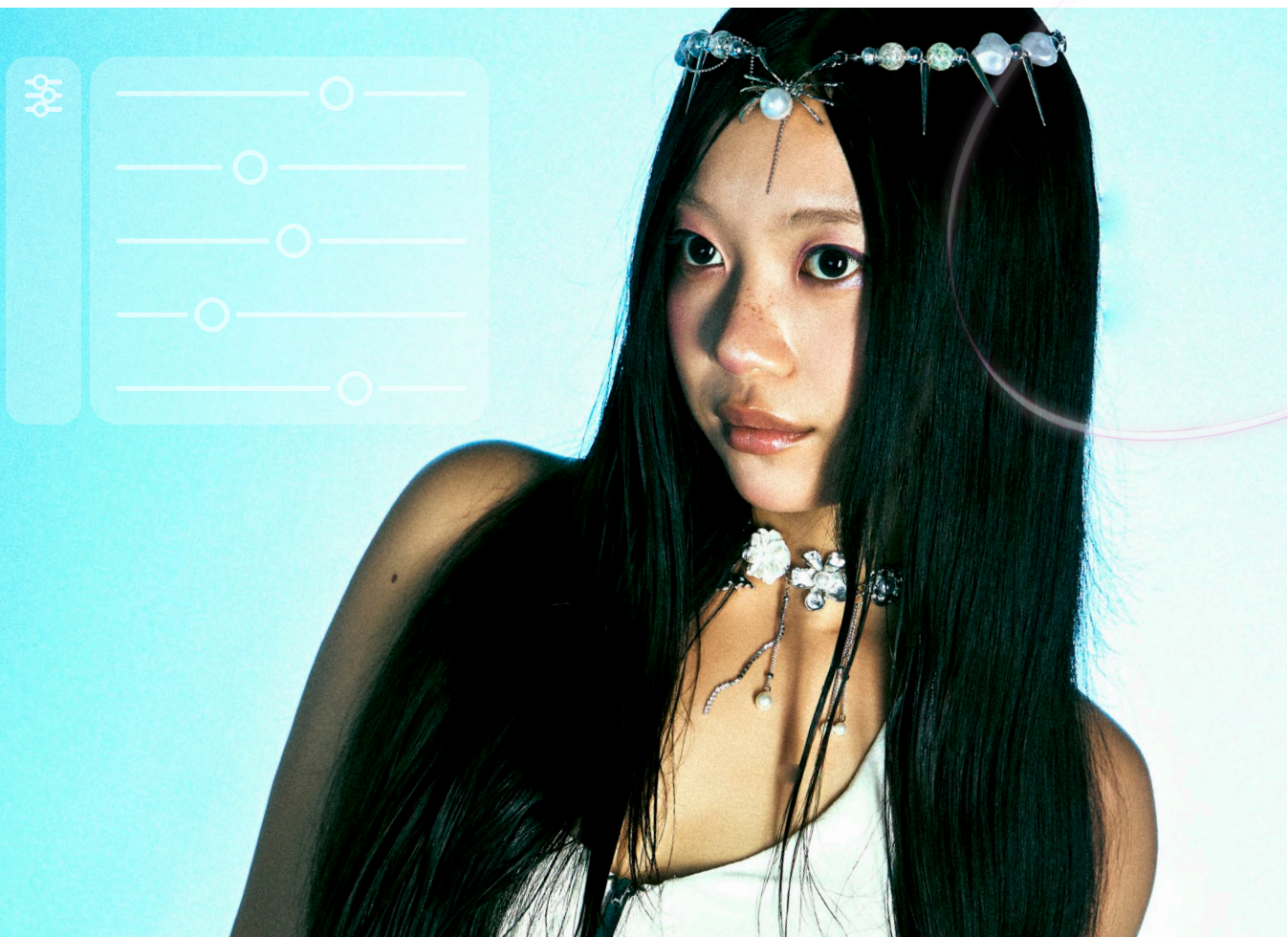
In East Asia, more than 70 to 80 per cent of young people between the ages of 18 and 30 use editing apps on a regular basis. And it’s not just celebrities or influencers—these tools have become a daily essential for anyone posting online. I once chatted with friends from Europe and realised how unfamiliar they were with editing apps. Compared to East Asia, far fewer people use them, and when they do, they usually just use simple colour filters rather than reshaping the face or body.

So, how advanced are East Asian editing apps? Take China’s Meitu Xiuxiu, which has been downloaded over one billion times. Or Korea’s short-video and selfie app Snow, which has more than 100 million monthly active users and a usage rate surpassing 70%. These numbers show just how widespread these apps are and how deeply they’ve become a part of people’s everyday habits.



With constant upgrades in technology, editing apps can now do things like one-tap facial fillers—instantly brightening the face and erasing every fine line—or one-tap body reshaping that gives you sharp shoulders, a slim waist, and endlessly long legs. But creating edits that look natural and beautiful isn’t as simple as pressing one button. Skilled users fine-tune details step by step—subtle adjustments that keep everything seamless. Some can even “swap faces” with incredible precision: closing an open mouth, filling in gaps in the hair, or reshaping features so smoothly that the final image looks completely transformed, yet impossible to detect.

Editing has gone far beyond basic beautification. It has evolved into a craft, even a profession. And for those chasing the image of the “perfect East Asian beauty,” mastering the art of photo-editing has almost become a must.



Body Shape



Honestly, I feel like conversations about body shape are far less sensitive in East Asia compared to the West. It wasn't until I started living in London that I realised how taboo it is there to comment on someone's body. Whether it's a compliment or a criticism, pointing out another person's size is generally seen as off-limits.

But in Chinese-speaking cultures, it's quite the opposite. People often greet each other after a long time apart with comments like, *"Have you gained weight?"* or *"Wow, you look so skinny now!"* For some family elders, remarks about body size are even considered a way of showing care. But do people really care about the comments? Many would say they actually feel offended. When being thin becomes a compliment, and commenting on body size turns into a social habit, people naturally become hyper-aware of their figures; after all, you never know whether the next comment will be praise or critical.

This lack of sensitivity also reminds me of viral social media trends, such as the "A4 Waist Challenge" and the "Touch Your Belly Button From Behind Challenge." Both were designed to show off a slim waist as proof of how thin you were. When these challenges spread, those who succeeded proudly posted their videos, while those who didn't often blamed themselves for not being skinny enough and envied those who could. Few questioned the meaning behind it. Instead, the message quietly seeped in: thin equals beautiful.

It's not just social media challenges; online platforms are constantly pushing out articles about dieting and weight loss. Fitness content can be positive, but some so-called "quick fixes" are concerning. And yet, these slimming articles and weight-loss product ads attract huge traffic and attention. When mainstream media keeps promoting messages like "how to get thinner" or "ways to maintain a slim figure," how are people supposed to break free from such beauty standards?

Because these ideas feel so normal, people often unconsciously chase thinness, measuring themselves against the same standard we mentioned earlier—bodies as slim as K-pop idols. And it's not just idols. Actresses, celebrities, and influencers also face immense pressure to appear flawless on screen, often looking even thinner in real life than they do on camera. Any slight change can draw harsh criticism online. For regular people, it shows up in the form of concern—comments that may seem caring, but actually reinforce these hidden beauty rules.

Of course, things today are better than before. The message that "thin equals beautiful" is no longer openly promoted, and some public figures have stepped up as role models, encouraging people to embrace their natural selves. Still, if you look closely, the preference for slimness is very much alive, embedded in subtle details and deeply rooted beliefs that remain hard to shift. People may say "health matters most," and society may celebrate more diverse standards of beauty and body types—but when it comes to themselves, many still hold on to strict expectations, caught in a cycle of self-contradiction that's hard to escape.

Not Just for Stars !

A Rising Trend in East Asia

Of course, people are no longer satisfied with beauty that exists only online. After all, everyone knows how powerful editing apps and filters can be. That's why, on the journey to achieving "real-life" beauty, non-surgical cosmetic procedures have quickly become a trend.

The modern beauty ideals in East Asia tend toward a natural, refined look, rather than drastic transformations, but rather subtle tweaks through injectables that make the face appear more defined and delicate. And Korea's aesthetic clinics deliver exactly that. With constantly updated treatments, innovative techniques, and relatively affordable prices, they've become an irresistible draw not only for locals but also for tourists. For many young East Asians, a trip to Korea now comes with a checklist: shopping, food adventures, and, of course, a day or two at a clinic for consultations and treatments, before heading home looking refreshed and glowing.

Some of the most popular procedures right now include **Thermage**, often called the slimming miracle or V-shape secret, which tightens and lifts while reducing fine lines, loved by many celebrities who get it done regularly. Then there's **Rejuran**, known for repairing skin and improving texture for a smoother, radiant finish. And of course, **Hyaluronic Acid fillers** have almost become a daily beauty essential, used to plump lips, fill tear troughs, refine the nose, and enhance facial contours.

Unlike Western beauty ideals that favour sharp contours and defined jawlines, East Asian aesthetics place more emphasis on delicate, refined features, youthful and flawless skin with a radiant, glass-like glow, and a soft V-shaped face with smooth, flowing lines.

While lip enhancement is popular in both regions, the desired look is different. In the West, it often leans toward fuller, sexier lips, whereas in East Asia, the preference is for sweet and cute **pouty lips** (입술 필러). The focus is on creating a natural upward curve, where the upper lip hints at a subtle smile, giving off a youthful and charming vibe. This is usually achieved through hyaluronic acid fillers, with special attention to the Cupid's Bow, not to draw sharp lip lines but to create a plump, soft look that feels effortlessly natural and irresistibly pretty.

Cosmetic enhancements now go beyond the face, extending into body contouring. One of the most sought-after treatments is Botox for creating "right-angled shoulders." The trend first sparked because of Blackpink's Jennie, whose naturally sharp 90-degree shoulder line exudes confidence and elegance. Online discussions and countless fitness tutorials followed, but for those who don't want to spend hours training, or can't achieve the look through exercise, Botox has become a quick and effective solution.

When it comes to this rising wave of cosmetic tweaks, we can't ignore the influence of K-pop. Idols with flawless, refined features have become the standard of beauty. With social media and idol culture driving the trend, cosmetic procedures have shifted from being "reserved for celebrities" to becoming "a part of everyday beauty care." According to The Korea Times and The Korea Herald, between 2020 and 2022, the number of women in their 20s and 30s getting non-surgical procedures grew by an average of 10–15% annually. Statista also reported that South Korea's non-surgical aesthetics market (including Botox and fillers) expanded by around 25% between 2018 and 2022, proving just how mainstream and youthful these treatments have become.

With just a few injections, you can refine your features, reshape your face, or give your skin a luminous glow. The process may sting a little, but for beauty seekers, the promise of a one-hour "glow-up" is a temptation that's hard to resist.



Creative Director / Jessica Tu
Photographer / Jiawen Li
Makeup Artist / Ran Dai
Model / Chantelle Huang



Yet, while we chase after increasingly strict beauty standards, there's a question we often forget to ask:

Is this endless pursuit truly healthy?

Take the once-trending "no-makeup makeup" look as an example. The whole point was to wear makeup that made you look like you weren't wearing any at all, as if you were naturally flawless. But what we called "natural beauty" wasn't really natural—it was another carefully crafted illusion. This kind of "effortless but actually very calculated" beauty, couldn't it be seen as an even stricter standard in disguise?

Appearance anxiety has become one of the defining issues of our era. As we scroll through endless feeds filled with perfect faces, immaculate makeup, and polished idol images, that anxiety creeps in. We want to look better, yet in the process we also become part of the cycle: editing photos, trying cosmetic procedures, and then sharing those images online, feeding the very anxiety that drives us.

Of course, there's nothing wrong with wanting to look beautiful.

Everyone has the right to shape their own image.

But if our choices are driven only by "appearance anxiety," maybe it's time to pause and ask ourselves:

Is this really the version of me I want?

Beauty has never been a single formula. Sometimes, small imperfections are what make someone truly unique and memorable.

Do we really need to look as flawless and untouchable as AI models to be considered beautiful?

LONDON

Hair Salon

Even in the UK, many young people from Asia still prefer to look for East Asian hairstylists. So, what's their secret?

Think back to the idea of "Asian Soft Beauty" we mentioned earlier, and you'll understand why. When it comes to hair aesthetics, there's a clear difference between East Asia and the West. In East Asia, the focus is often on whether a hairstyle can flatter the face, making it look smaller and the contours smoother. And when it comes to creating perfect curves and airy textures, Japanese and Korean stylists are true masters. Not only do they stay on top of East Asian trends, but with their skilful hands, they can deliver transformations so striking that it feels almost like a "new face."

Here, I've gathered two experiences from girls in London, along with two recommended East Asian hair salons, so you can also find your ideal style with ease.

Haco Hair – A Japanese salon in Brick Lane, East London

This salon brings together stylists from both Japan and Korea. Their Instagram showcases bold, cool, and creative styles, but their cutting skills are just as impressive as their colouring. Jessica, from Taiwan, came here wanting to try the "layer cut," a style that has made a comeback in recent years. Known for its bold layers, soft volume, and touch of edge, it was once a huge trend across East Asia in the 2000s. At Haco Hair, Jessica finally got her dream cut, perfectly balanced, not over the top, but adding life and personality to her straight, long hair.

Ikkar Hair London – A Korean salon near Warren Street

All of the stylists here are from Korea, and they specialise in designing hairstyles tailored to both face shape and personal style. Kathy shared her experience of wanting a look that would make her face appear smaller. The stylist carefully thinned out the hair and added soft bangs, creating a light, airy style that instantly flattered her features, making her face look visibly slimmer.



Style

Whether it's the bold layers of a Japanese cut or the delicate face-framing details of a Korean style, these East Asian hairstylists use their refined techniques to harmonise hairstyle and face shape perfectly.

The result? Even when you're far from home, you can still enjoy that familiar and comforting touch of East Asian beauty.

Sharing Your East Asian Fashion Icons and Outfits!



Cindy Wang

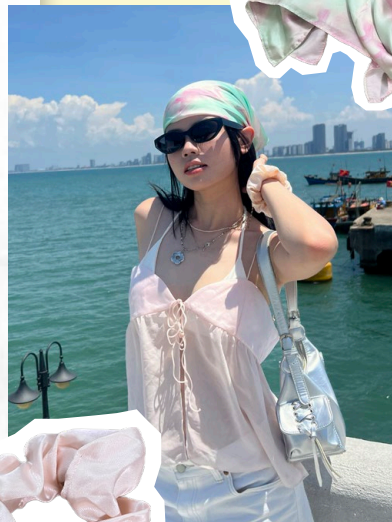
My Fashion Icon: Nayeon [임나연](#)

Nayeon from TWICE is often described as a “juice-type” beauty, since she gives off a really fresh and lively vibe! Her personal style is quite versatile, but it usually mixes sweetness and energy with a casual touch (which I personally think fits my own image too). You’ll often see her wearing simple basics paired with a pop of bright colour or some little highlight, and I really love that kind of style. I use this formula a lot myself—it makes them look cute without feeling overly dressed up.

Coco

My Fashion Icon: [@j876my](#)

My recommended fashion icon is the Instagram account [@j876my](#). She’s a Korean influencer and model, and I really love her overall style and photos. They have such a lively energy that instantly puts you in a good mood. She often plays with unexpected colour combinations and layers accessories in creative ways, which makes her outfits super fun and gives me a lot of inspiration. I’m determined to experiment with styling that feels unique, and I hope that when people see my photos, they can also feel that same sense of energy—like something refreshing and eye-catching.



Ziyi Xie

My Fashion Icon: Fa Cai Zhai Nu ([發財宅女](#))

I really like Fa Cai Zhai Nu, a Xiaohongshu (rednote) fashion blogger with 700,000 followers. One of the reasons I admire her is because, like me, she’s petite—so her outfits are especially relatable and inspiring for me. Her overall style leans toward an “Obedient rich-girl style,” but she never relies on exaggerated puffy skirts to create that so-called “rich girl” look. Instead, she pays attention to details and balance. For example, when her outfit feels very feminine, she’ll carry a black woven bag to tone it down. When she wears a preppy, student-like set, she’ll layer it with a Ralph Lauren sweater vest to add depth. Even in her most basic everyday looks, she’ll add fun little touches—like pinning a small plush toy to her waist—to make the outfit more playful. She usually sticks to neutral colours, but occasionally adds pops of pink or blue that make her stand out. I especially love her go-to combination of “a cropped top + above-the-knee skirt + knee-high boots.” It keeps the right amount of skin showing while giving petite girls like us a complete, well-layered silhouette.



Ashely

My Fashion Icon: [@yuri.__.nn](#)

I want to recommend a Japanese fashion blogger on Instagram named Yuri. Her style leans towards girly and cute, often using sweet elements like lace, ribbons, and ruffles. What makes her stand out is that she never shows her face in her posts—she only shares her outfits. For me, that gives her content a special kind of credibility. We often buy into clothes because the model or influencer looks beautiful, but Yuri makes us truly focus on the styling itself. If I still like the look without seeing her face, then it means I genuinely want to try that style.

Yuri often wears light tones, not too colourful, but simple basics like white, grey, and light blue. She adds little details with cute statement pieces, such as lace socks, Mary Jane heels, tiered skirts, or a slim scarf tied around the neck. Her looks are full of thoughtful touches but never feel too complicated!





Acknowledgement

At the moment of writing this, my living room is covered with scattered suitcases and clothes. I look at the home that is slowly becoming empty, and I begin to write the final article for this magazine. My time in London is about to end, and looking back on this year, I can only say—it has been both rich and magical.

In fact, everything happened as if by fate. I had no master's plan at all back then, until one day I suddenly decided to try applying for Fashion Journalism at LCF. It was my one and only application. With the mindset of “if I get in, I'll go,” I let destiny choose a new path for me, rewriting the life I had already planned out.

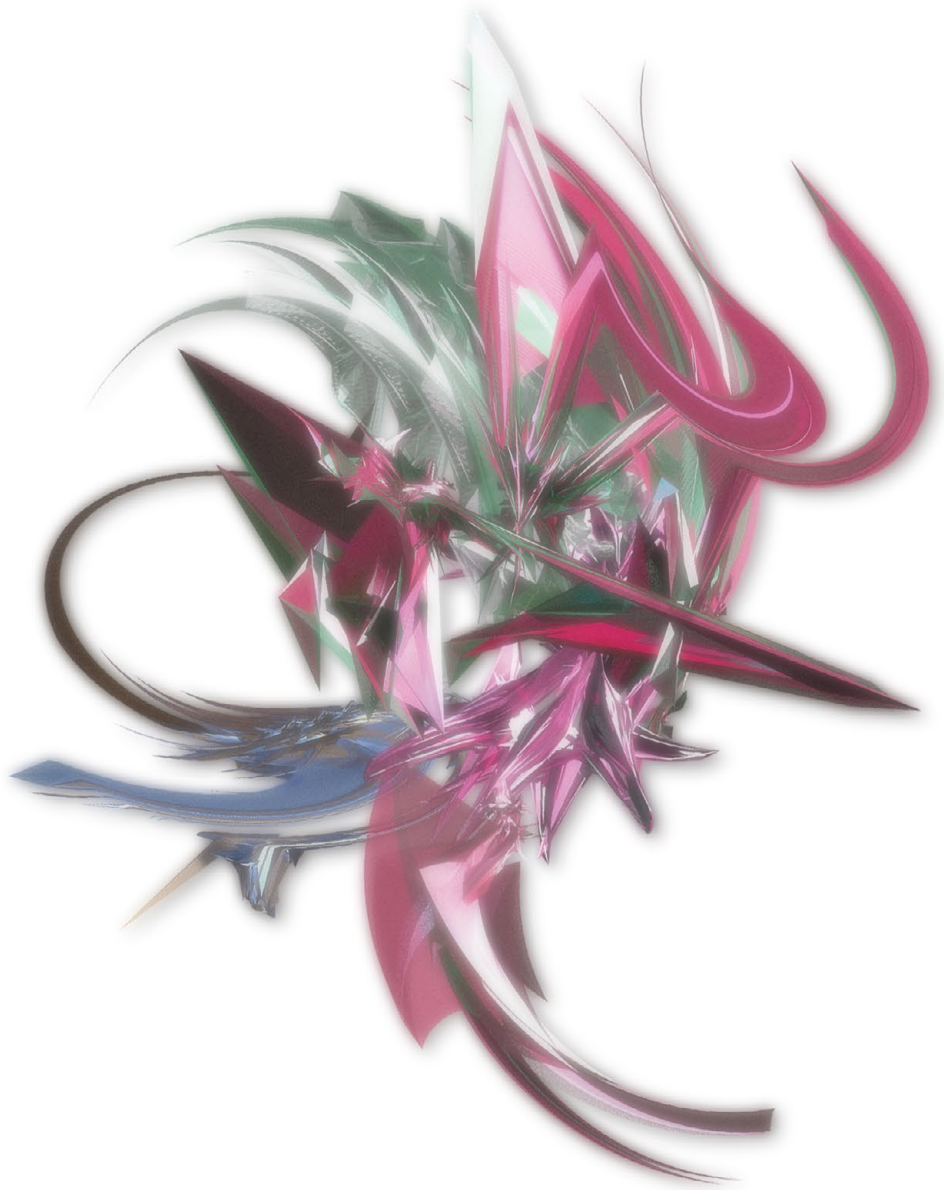
First of all, I want to thank my parents, who gave me the chance to study abroad. I never imagined that I could truly dive deep into the subject I love. It isn't a “respectable” or “profitable” profession in the eyes of many Asian parents, yet simply because of my passion, they gave me the chance to step out into the world. Crossing the ocean, carrying the weight of rent and living expenses three times higher than in Taipei, I came to the heart of the world to realise a dream I had always held inside.

I also want to thank our course leaders—Andrew, Angela, and Lynsey—for their guidance and support throughout the program. I am especially grateful to Andrew for choosing me in the first place, allowing me to begin this incredible journey, and for designing such a thoughtful and enriching course that led us to explore fashion journalism in so many different ways.

At the same time, I want to thank the girls of the 24/25 MA Fashion Journalism course. Whether during the challenges of our final projects or in the daily group chats, you were always generous in offering help, filling the classroom with joy and energy. Special thanks to Zoey, Bianca, Tonia, Khushi, Ash, Serene, and Selen, who were with us for half the year. I still remember our very first day—we started talking right away and stayed connected until the very end. Beyond the classroom, you gave my life in London countless colourful moments.

And to my layout designer, Evian and graphic designer Lamy—thank you for building this magazine with me. You spent so much time discussing and coordinating, turning my imagination into reality. We truly were the best team.

For me, this year of master's study has been far more than academic learning. London is far from my hometown, with a culture and lifestyle that are completely different from what I know. Yet what I have gained from both the classroom and daily life is much more than I ever expected. The feeling of this city is hard to describe. Although this was not my first time visiting, living here for a long period allowed me to experience its multifaceted charm more deeply. Perhaps I am only a temporary passerby in this place. Still, as a 23-year-old, I feel nothing but gratitude and fortune to have lived here, to have met so many special people, and to carry with me a precious and unforgettable memory.



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