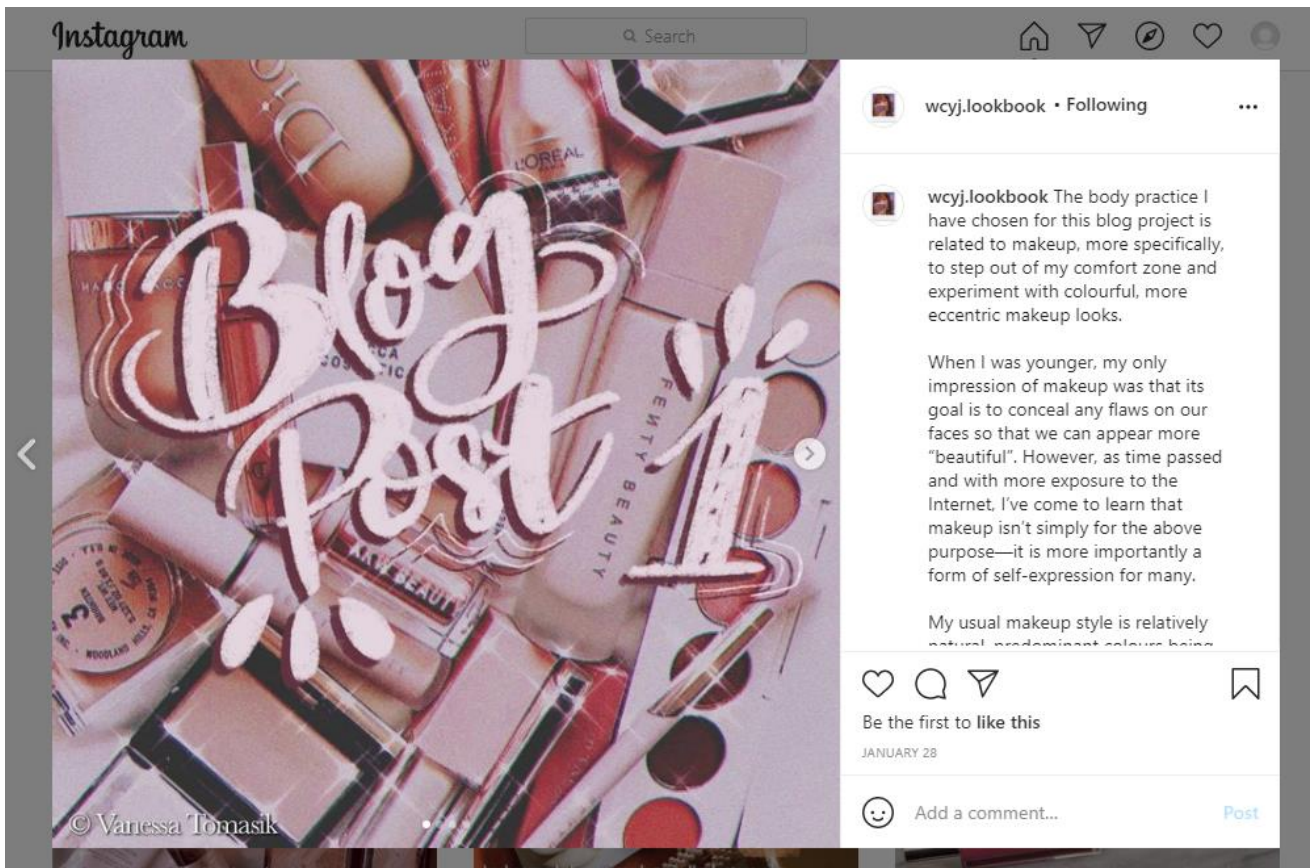


Janice's Instagram LookBook Blog Post #1



The body practice I have chosen for this blog project is related to makeup, more specifically, to step out of my comfort zone and experiment with colourful, more eccentric makeup looks.

When I was younger, my only impression of makeup was that its goal is to conceal any flaws on our faces so that we can appear more “beautiful”. However, as time passed and with more exposure to the Internet, I’ve come to learn that makeup isn’t simply for the above purpose—it is more importantly a form of self-expression for many.

My usual makeup style is relatively natural, predominant colours being nudes, peaches and pinks to achieve the so-called “my face but better” makeup look [see slides 2 and 3]. While I like this style regardless, I find myself being drawn to perhaps less conventional looks [see slide 4 for my inspiration], and I admire those who embrace such looks in their daily lives for their confidence.

I’ve noticed that in places like Hong Kong, more adventurous makeup styles are not only less common, but are even frowned upon. Reasons for critique mainly revolve around the society’s conservative atmosphere, which views such makeup looks as improper or weird. I believe it is these comments and scrutiny that discourage people, including myself, from experimenting with makeup and going beyond the natural style.

Thus, I chose this body practice in order to encourage myself to step out of my comfort zone when it comes to makeup. I will also observe the differences in others’ behaviour and attitude towards me (if any) when I am wearing bolder makeup on my face, as well as my own feelings and epiphanies regarding my relationship with makeup, and how others’ judgement affect my self-esteem and self-expression choices.

This experiment will mostly be centred around eye makeup as my eyes will not be obstructed by a mask when I am in public, making it easier for others to notice the change in my makeup style without having to remove my mask.



Janice's Instagram LookBook Blog Post #2



In the second blog post, I will document my observations, experiences and feelings in regard to my chosen body practice. Since the last blog post, I have experimented with white eyeliner (Slide 2) as well as red and gold eyeshadow (Slide 3).

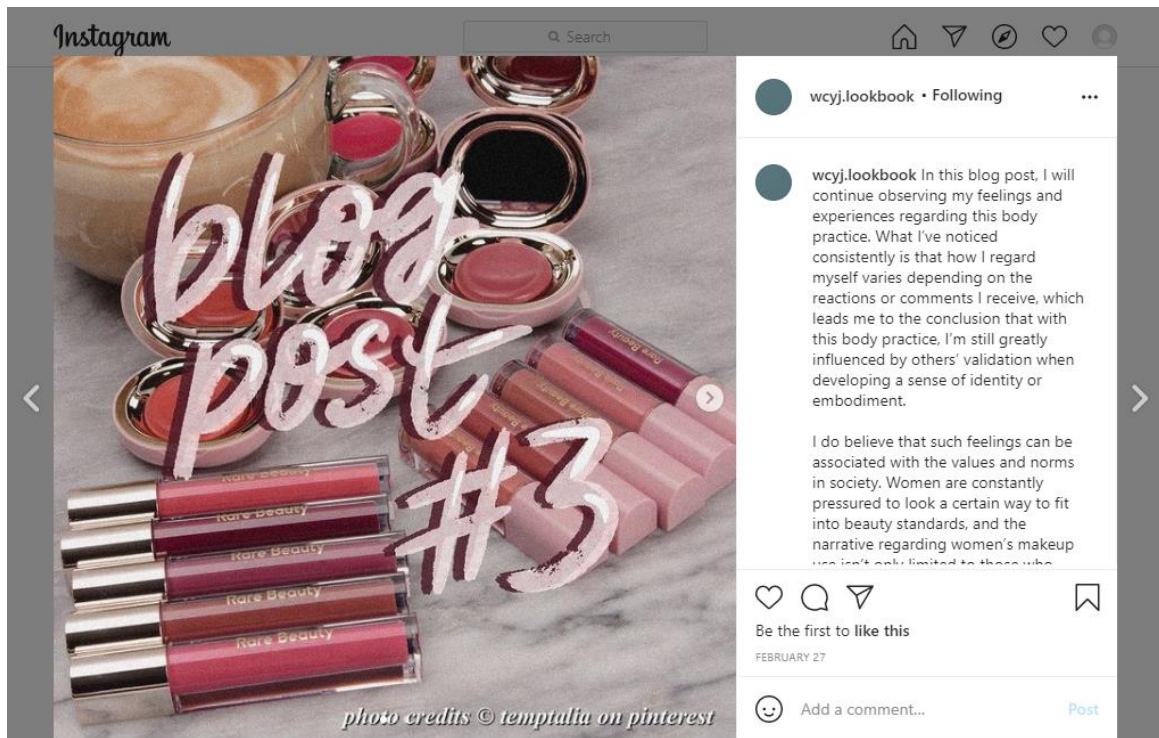
There was a strong sense of giddiness and excitement that bubbled within me during and after finishing these makeup looks alone in my room, as it felt like I was doing something different with myself and to my surprise, due to the fact that I tend to have low self-esteem, I was pleasantly surprised with the end results.

However, such positive feelings wavered when I stepped into public. My family and friends have likened these looks to a parrot or something only foreign girls would dare try. I also observed strangers such as cashiers or servers giving me odd or shocked looks once they noticed my eye makeup, which made me extremely self-conscious as I felt like people were either silently judging or privately ridiculing my choice of makeup.

I was definitely more self aware of my physical appearance, not necessarily in a positive manner at all times, while carrying out this experiment as I was constantly worried about whether people were talking about my face. But I feel that it is important to continue being in public with these bolder makeup looks as I'd like to keep observing others' reactions and whether my self-perception will evolve accordingly. So while I felt embarrassed of my makeup when I was in public, I felt a sense of empowerment and liberation in private that I hope I can sustain while in the presence of others.



Janice's Instagram LookBook Blog Post #3



In this blog post, I will continue observing my feelings and experiences regarding this body practice. What I've noticed consistently is that how I regard myself varies depending on the reactions or comments I receive, which leads me to the conclusion that with this body practice, I'm still greatly influenced by others' validation when developing a sense of identity or embodiment.

I do believe that such feelings can be associated with the values and norms in society. Women are constantly pressured to look a certain way to fit into beauty standards, and the narrative regarding women's makeup use isn't only limited to those who wear it versus those to don't, and I've observed that there is much discourse within the makeup-wearing group. Some may feel obligated to wear makeup, others (like myself) may grow to enjoy makeup and view it as a form of self-care. In my opinion, either reaction is valid and I don't really see the need to determine which is more "liberated" or "empowering". I believe that the embodiment and identity in relation to makeup is highly personal, and the liberation from social values is defined by how we let go of our personal judgments and prejudice.

This week, I've also been trying to do some more research into the cosmetic industry and how it affects people, in particular women due to us being the main target of said industry. Indeed, a lot of consumerism goes into the cosmetic industry. I've realised there is a "Everyone's talking about this product so I have to get it" mentality that is very prevalent among makeup users, which ties greatly into consumerism and profits corporations.

In conclusion for this blog post, I'm excited to look more into the different social norms and values surrounding makeup, as well as doing more research into the cosmetic industry as a whole.



Janice's Instagram LookBook Blog Post #4



In this post, aside from documenting my experiences and feelings, I will also be focusing on two conversations I had with my mother and close friend which gave me additional perspectives on how others view the relationship between about makeup and gender.

In terms of my personal experiences, I found myself feeling less self-conscious as I continued with this body practice, as I tried telling myself to focus more on how my relationship with makeup changed during this weeks-long process. Experimenting with more adventurous colours and styles brought me a lot of joy, as I was finally doing something I was always too scared to. And while it can be daunting doing something so far out of my comfort zone, I enjoyed simply having fun with the process.

I felt a stronger sense connection with myself and my self-expression this week as a result, which consolidated my belief that makeup truly has no restrictions regardless of age, gender etc., and that no matter which style people are more comfortable with, whether they preferred a more modest approach or a bolder one, makeup is ultimately a form of self-expression, so any approach is valid and deserves respect. What is important, in my opinion, is not giving societal norms the power to negatively impact our self-expression and self-esteem.

[continuation of caption in slides 4-5 due to word limit]

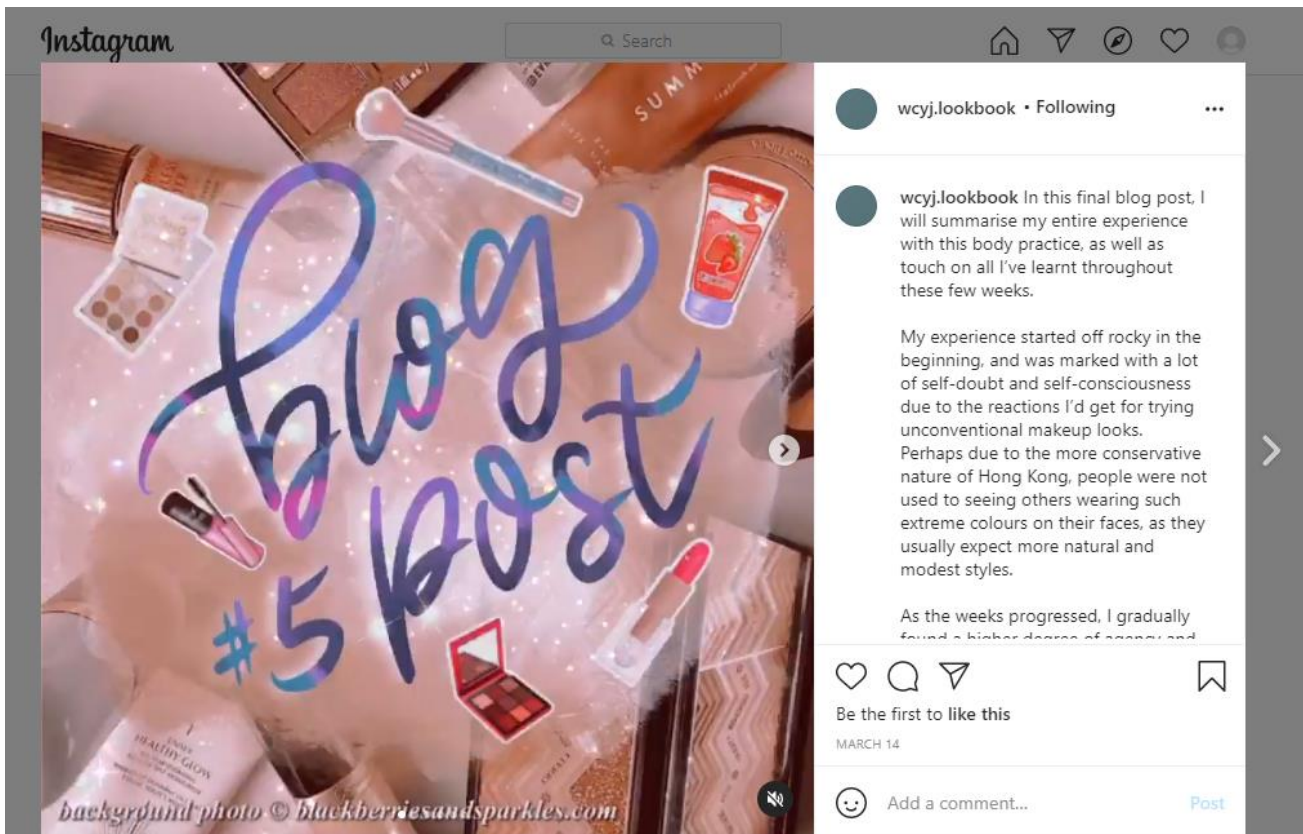




As for the conversations I had regarding makeup with my mother, she shared that when she was younger, it was prevalent that makeup was marketed towards women solely, men rarely wore makeup and those who did were seen as outliers or were assumed as being homosexual. She pointed out that in recent years, the idea of men wearing makeup is seemingly more accepted in societies, even more traditional ones, due to the popularity of K-Pop, where both male and female idols wore makeup frequently. As both of us are avid K-Pop fans, we agreed that makeup has no gender, and that everyone should be allowed to experiment with it without facing judgment.

With my friend, he shared that while he has a lot of interest in makeup and wants to try putting some on, he often cannot freely share this passion with his male friends or adult family members, as it isn't a widely-accepted topic in these groups. The idea that men who wear makeup are girly or "not real men" frankly show a great deal of misogyny and toxic masculinity. Both insinuate that being girly or having feminine-associated interests are things to be ashamed of, and perpetuate a wider issue where men are frequently told that acting "like women" (such as talking in a higher-pitched voice or crying) takes away from their masculinity. Our conversation showed that there is still much to do in order to eliminate stigma surrounding makeup and gender, as well as to tackle toxic masculinity.

Janice's Instagram LookBook Blog Post #5



In this final blog post, I will summarise my entire experience with this body practice, as well as touch on all I've learnt throughout these few weeks.

My experience started off rocky in the beginning, and was marked with a lot of self-doubt and self-consciousness due to the reactions I'd get for trying unconventional makeup looks. Perhaps due to the more conservative nature of Hong Kong, people were not used to seeing others wearing such extreme colours on their faces, as they usually expect more natural and modest styles.

As the weeks progressed, I gradually found a higher degree of agency and self-image as I tried to remind myself continuously that I was doing this experiment for my personal growth, and not for others' validation or acceptance. In this last week of carrying out this body practice, I felt more comfortable with myself to the point where I even forgot that I was wearing unconventional makeup when hanging out with my friends or going in public. It really showed me that if I don't give others the power to influence how I feel about my physical appearance or methods of self-expression, I can feel more empowered within myself as I wasn't burdened by constantly trying to seek approval from others.

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Aside from gaining a different perspective of the relationship between makeup and gender through conversations with my mother and friend, as detailed in the previous blog post, I also learnt quite a bit about consumerism in the cosmetics industry.

What I've noticed during my entire experiment was that I found myself not having the products needed to achieve certain looks, and there were moments where I felt tempted to purchase said products for this experiment, until I realised it would be a waste of resources and money if I blindly bought these products without considering if I'd truly continue using them as frequently after this experiment ended. In the end, I decided to make do with what I have on hand instead.

I think this reflects the "got to have it" mentality that many makeup users have as companies constantly market products towards us, using various tactics to convince us that we absolutely must own them. The ever growing cosmetics industry is proof that it thrives on this mentality us consumers have.

In conclusion, I think my overall experience with this body practice has been quite positive and I've learnt a lot about self agency, empowerment, gender and consumerism regarding makeup. There were also some epiphanies I had regarding society's norms and standards of beauty, as well as the toxic culture of comparing oneself to others on social media, but perhaps those can be explored in the final portfolio.