

THE FRAGMENTATION OF WOMEN'S BODIES.

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A mouth. A pair of legs, usually in high heels. breasts. A mouth with red lipstick. Fragments of our bodies that we see daily, and it seems nobody seems to bother constructing a person around them.

This has a name: fragmentation of women's bodies. And although it may seem innocent, it is a mechanism whose purpose is our very own depersonalisation, stemming from a culture that lives by dehumanising women.

Fragmentation is efficient because it reduces a woman into a body part: it eliminates everything that is of no use and leaves only the part of the body that activates the desired response in men — the objectification and commodification of women. A person has a life of their own. A mouth does not.

For centuries, women have been represented by men. The male gaze — the masculine perspective as the dominant, hegemonic force in art and media — has dictated not only how women are portrayed, but for whom they are made to exist.

Simone de Beauvoir, in *The Second Sex*, raises a key question: not "what is a woman?" but why is she always defined in relation to man and never the other way around?

Beauvoir starts from an observation: in every known culture, humanity is divided into two asymmetrical categories. Man sets himself up as the Subject, the Absolute, the Essential. Woman, on the other hand, is constructed as the Other, the Inessential, the relative. She has termed this "otherness" (*l'Altérité*).

Women in those representations do not exist for the woman depicted. It exists for the one who looks. This is part of the alienation: women are not the subject of her own representation — she is an object constructed for the pleasure or the gaze of other men.

Women are faced not only with being constantly sexualised, but with being broken into pieces, literally. Body parts do not reflect women's life experience, self-awareness or perspective. It is there to be visually consumed by an implied spectator who, historically, is assumed to be male and heterosexual.

The context changes. The code does not. The system today operates with greater sophistication and a far more saturated presence, amplified by social media and algorithms. A woman's mouth becomes a pornified mouth — red, glossy, in a pose that refers directly to sexuality — and appears alongside anything that has nothing to do with it, either because it "sells" — to men — or simply to attract a male audience.

Like our breasts, biologically, to nourish a newborn — to serve the continuity of life itself. Yet it has been reduced to a single function: male pleasure. When this reduction is reproduced millions of times across images, screens and cultural narratives, it does not merely shape how others see women, it shapes how women see themselves.



Culture has repeated it enough times for it to seem normal. It comes at a cost that women learn from a very young age that their value is localised – in certain parts of the body, in a certain willingness to be seen and to receive the approval of the male gaze.



We are constantly dehumanised by a misogynistic culture that perpetuates this hierarchy in increasingly subtle and sophisticated ways. To identify and expose it is the first step towards dismantling it.