
Feminine Beauty: Happy Fatty?

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Media and feminine self-esteem

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Social psychologist Andrea Meltzer showed to 448 heterosexual women images of women that had been added a few extra kilos using a computer. The subjects of the experiment were informed that such ladies – enhanced with Photoshop - had been considered attractive by men.

Then, when asking them about their feelings regarding their own bodies, they showed great satisfaction with their fitness.

The Meltzer commented on this regard: "It is possible that women who believe men prefer those with more voluminous bodies than the models showing in the media, experience greater levels of self-esteem and lower levels of depression". Nevertheless, she specified that it's unclear how long these effects may last."

In Cuba, although related studies aren't plentiful, it is confirmed the increase of the overweight and obesity in the population, with tendency to a worsening of such problem, thus confirms a study of the Institute of Nutrition and Hygiene of Goods and the National Institute of Hygiene, Epidemiology and Microbiology, published in April 2012.

Hence several Cuban women who like the rest of the world, could be unhappy about their body image.

Tell me shining mirror

For those and the members of the Company it Dances Voluminous the overweight is not reason for depression.

So many years of instruction, so many campaigns for the reading and the programming of two educational channels have paid off. Cuban women have a large knowledge and spirituality that could keep her save in the ocean of trivialities.

Crying your heart out for not having the latest shampoo brand on the international market or because the dye of your hair was darker than usual doesn't seem to be among the main anguishes of women in Cuba.

Of course, we must add the very peculiar characteristics of our economic reality. The complications of every-day life that in their case includes in an almost pre-established way the house chores, they are also heavy duties that keep the feet of Cubans steady on the ground.

I don't say the latter is strong point, but, undoubtedly, forces you to review your priorities, which, in general, don't rank on the first place among aesthetics, matters, cosmetology and other perfumed herbs.

Anyway Cuban women don't walk around all scruffy one smelling of onion and garlic, garlic? You certainly are worried now like, like the rest of ordinary people, your image, which is not a trivial thing. And it's exactly at this point where audiovisual messages and the media environment that generally revolves about it, gives a notch in favor of anguish.

María Esther Mustelier is one of those who gets mad at television... and at her husband as well. "You have to see him when those skinny girls appear on the screen shaking it with the music. I guess his blood pressure must hit the skies because his ears turn blazing red", she declares with despite to Cubasí.

So it happens that also to this unique island reach, every time faster, the models of feminine beauty heightened by the international fashion which means the market. And in movies, documentary films, video clips, magazines, etc., the successful woman is the skinny, slender one, the tall one.

The paradox of it is that, according to Manuel Martín Serrano, "The mass media produces and reproduces at a discursive and symbolic level the societies", and ours is not precisely of women like storks.

Anorexia-bulimia the stereotypes of beauty imposed by the media have ended up creating cases of nervous anorexia or bulimia to imitate that "pattern" of perfection.

Hence crazy diets proliferate, even dangerous, and, mainly, dissents, low self-esteems. Exercises are fine, not eating much which is equal to take care of health, but going over the limits... luckily, as I highlighted at the beginning, it is not an unsettling phenomenon in Cuba despite María Esther's displeasures.

Anyway, it's worth reminding the word of Doctor Isabel Moya, Head of the Woman's Editorial and researcher on the topic media and gender:

"Black women, mulatto women, mapuches, mixtecas, yucatecas, aimaras, Guaraní do not follow the main trend of the reality built by the media. In soap operas, video clips, and publicity, the predominant feminine body still responds to archetypes pre-established at the factory of the patriarchal cultural homogenization, which ignores the multiplicity of gender identities. In the third millennium the ghosts of the man-centered dominance use the body as a pretext. After the new technological breakthroughs the old contents survive".