



Que Bella!

How Do We Define Beauty?

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A thing of beauty is a joy forever
—John Keats



Figure 1: This beautiful face demonstrates symmetry.

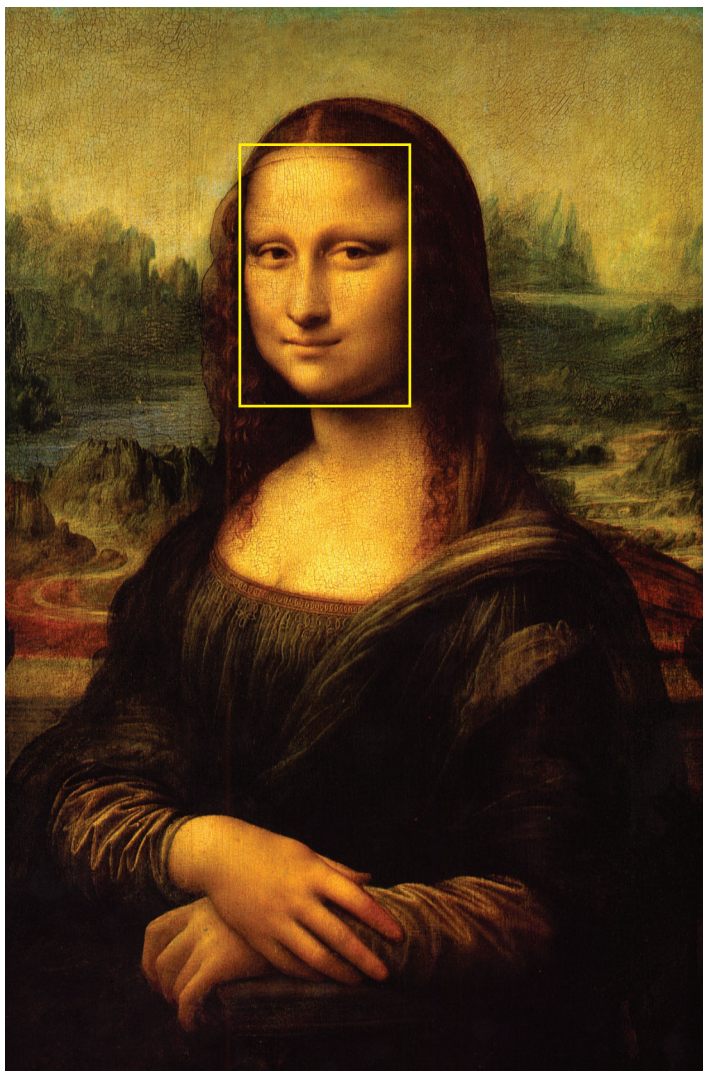


Figure 2: The Mona Lisa, the most studied piece of art in history, demonstrates Leonardo's use of the Golden Ratio.

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he study of beauty is as old as human civilization. This discipline is given the name “Aesthetics.” The mind’s eye is drawn to beauty. The appreciation of beautiful people, things or places is almost instantaneous. Scientific studies have demonstrated that the human brain recognizes a beautiful object, face or person in less than one second.

Yet the definition of beauty is something that escapes us. Even the words to describe this are elusive. While we instinctively know what appeals to our own sense of beauty – we “know it when we see it” – defining what determines attractiveness is not always easy. In frustration, we often give up and claim that “beauty is in the eye of the beholder.” Surprisingly, people from a variety of different ages, races and cultures agree on what is and isn’t beautiful.

Despite our inability to universally define beauty, it’s in our nature to strive for it, which is why we’re always looking toward enhancements to bring us closer to the ideal perfection. In fact, science proves it.

Two common components of the interpretation of beauty are facial symmetry or proportion and smoothness of skin. Although true facial symmetry is very rare, the more symmetrical the features, the more beauty is perceived. This beautiful face demonstrates the classic features of beauty that include facial symmetry and smoothness of skin (see fig. 1). The photo below of a beautiful face demonstrates the symmetry of the eyes and central face. Other details of the beautiful face narrow the scope of our visual inspection, such as eye shape and width, brow position and cheeks. This central area of the face,

while only a small percentage of the total size, controls the vast majority of attention. Moving downward, we then notice the nose, lips, jawline and neck. Smooth flowing lines without breaks or irregularities.

Despite the inability to verbalize what we see, there is a formula to describe beauty that is known as the Golden Ratio. The “Golden Ratio” or “Divine Proportion” can be used to describe beauty in art, architecture, nature and the human form. Both the Greek and Roman empires incorporated the Golden Ratio into the classic and timeless beautiful architecture. When studied, Leonardo da Vinci’s art regularly and routinely demonstrates strict adherence to the Golden Ratio. This ratio is consistently found throughout history in the famous pieces of art such as the Mona Lisa as well as the beauty of today demonstrated by Angelina Jolie.

Plastic surgeons now have the tools available to better approach this concept of ideal beauty with both invasive and non-invasive measures. The introduction of lasers and chemical peels to improve the appearance, quality and texture of the skin has made vast enhancements to the smoothness and tone of the skin. Also greatly advancing our ability to make changes are the injectable fillers that can now be used to fill lines and wrinkles as well as change facial proportion and enhance certain natural features.

More invasive and aggressive treatments, such as facelift and neck lift surgery, when performed properly, will allow for more dramatic changes necessary to return the individual to better proportion and provide a more pleasing and attractive appearance. Naturally, as the treatment becomes more aggressive, more “downtime” or recovery will be necessary. Your plastic surgeon should not be trying to create a “new” you, he or she should be striving to obtain a fresher, more youthful appearance that brings you more toward the “Golden Ratio.”

Be prepared to discuss your goals and desires with your surgeon. You must be involved in the consultation process and you should have realistic expectations of what can be accomplished with whatever type of treatment you choose for your rejuvenation process. 👁️ 👁️

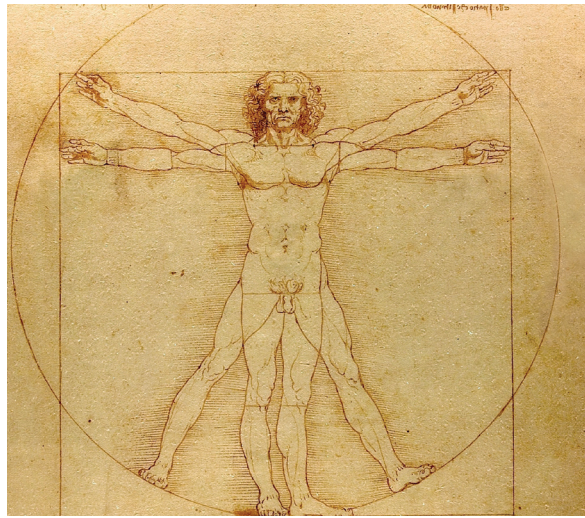


Figure 3: DaVinci's Vitruvian man clearly shows the divine proportion of the “Golden Ratio.”

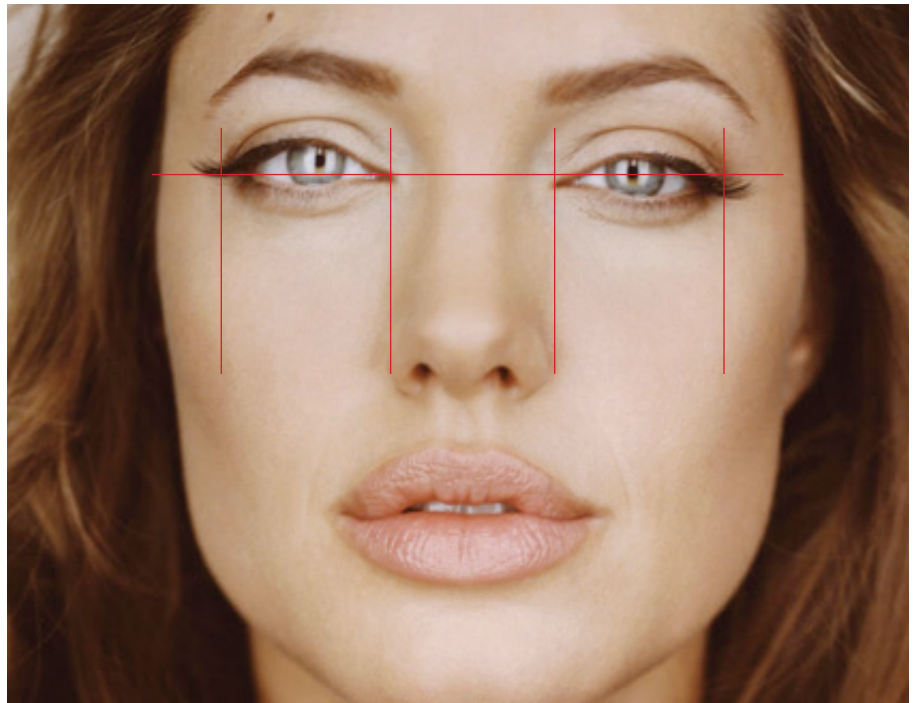


Figure 4: Angelina's face demonstrates the proper proportion with the aid of the Golden Ratio. Note the slight asymmetry of the position of her eyes as illustrated by the included lines.



Figure 5: The addition of soft tissue filler injections has increased attractiveness by slightly altering the facial shape. Note the eyebrow asymmetry of the first photo persists after the treatment. These alterations bring the person closer to the Golden Ratio.