

## Project Proposal

*Maybe-Next-Time-You-Can-Design-Me-Better* is a six-minute experimental film inspired by Toni Morrison's debut novel *The Bluest Eye* in which Pecola Breedlove, a teen black girl fervently longs for a pair of blue eyes in the hope of fitting in. It was a poignant yet relatable read for me, and I decided to visualise my thoughts by portraying myself, a young average Asian woman.

Pecola's obsession with her 'ideal' beauty is not only relatable for African-Americans, but western standards have fundamentally affected women's perceptions of beauty in Asia as well. Growing up, I remember being exposed to skin whitening commercials, products, and remedies, for example, moisturising your face with milk because people tend to connect a lighter skin tone with beauty ideal and a higher social status. I have met girls who felt inferior only because they thought their skin was not fair enough.

This short video performance thus aims to re-narrate the issues of internalised shame towards one's appearance and living by abiding whitewashed beauty standards. Another issue that I attempt to tackle in my project is whitewashing in the media. The entertainment industry favours picking white actors to represent non-white characters. The anime remake *Ghost in the Shell* (2017) which is also included in this video, has been accused of whitewashing Asian characters and culture for casting Scarlett Johansson for an originally Japanese heroine. Ironically enough, it tells a story about attachment to identity.

Is erasure or stereotyping the only termination for Asian characters? Limited opportunities for representations make it even more arduous for non-white ethnic groups to own their narrations, which would further internalise the shame of who they are.

Ranzhi Liu