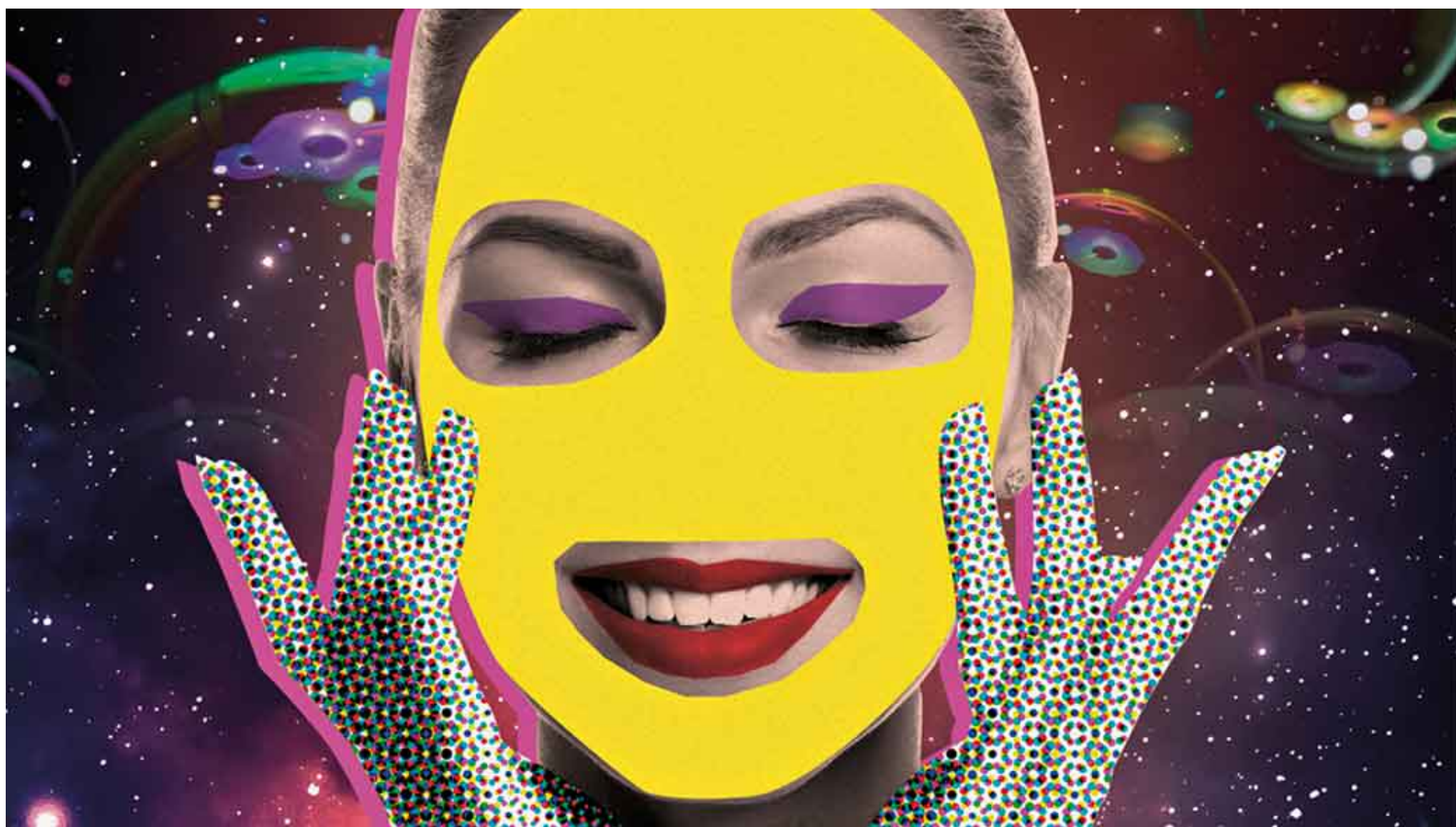


5 Beauty Trends To Watch In 2021

We're talking about ingestible skincare, "printing" your own serum-foundation, blue beauty products, the rise of Singapore beauty brands, and other exciting developments. You read about them here first

BY VANESSA CHIA / JANUARY 5, 2021



Credit: 123rf

You know the story: The world had big plans for 2020. Then, the global pandemic happened. Now that the new year has arrived, and with Covid-19 still not making an exit, will a new slew of beauty trends be the way forward?

Michael Nolte, creative director of Beautystreams, a forecasting and reference platform for the global beauty industry, says the coronavirus crisis will continue to have a large impact on the beauty industry. He says: "In 2020, the industry showed that it is indispensable and essential for many reasons, from transforming their businesses to produce essential supplies such as sanitisers... to showcasing how beauty products can lead to physical and psychological well-being."

The industry will still grow in 2021. Nolte says that in Western Europe, the skincare and personal care categories will recover quickest, with a growth forecast of 3.3 per cent, followed by premium fragrances, hair care, and colour cosmetics.

What's exciting: niche trends such as sustainability, holisticity and localism, which existed in 2019, have now been accelerated by the global pandemic, and will become mainstream in 2021. The new year promises to be exciting – and it is looking pretty Star-Trek-like futuristic.





#1: THE RISE AND RISE OF TECH AND BIG DATA

The focus will be on hyper-personalised skincare and smart devices that can “diagnose” skin using Big Data, IoT and artificial intelligence (AI). “Big Data and AI will offer levels of customisation that will revolutionise dermatology, personal care and skincare,” says Nolte.

(Read also [“These Skincare Apps Will Make You Feel Like A Beauty Expert”](#))

We’ve already seen [skincare apps](#) that deliver customised advice and product recommendations based on your unique skin concerns. There are also made-just-for-your-skin serums like home-grown brand Skin Inc’s Custom-Blended Serum, which taps into its one million-strong database.

The rise of bespoke skincare will bring about the need for smart skincare. “Basic skincare alone is no longer adequate. We are now ready to tap on smart skincare ingredients, smart cosmetic formulations, and intelligent skincare devices to postpone the signifiers of ageing, and better manage our skincare routine to stay timeless,” says Dr Gladys Teo, head of R&D of born-in-Singapore brands Heure and Est.lab.

Instead of counteracting the effects of skin ageing, smart skincare “understands the skin’s natural make-up, and works with its existing state to chemically change it,” says Dr Teo.

Let’s say you’re bothered by your wrinkles. In traditional skincare, you’d use products containing retinol and vitamin C to stimulate the skin to produce more collagen. In smart skincare, the ingredients are brought right to your genes, to turn off the switch that causes skin ageing.

Heard of a face device that scans your skin, then makes a concealer-serum on the spot to hide pigmentation and treat dark spots? That’s Procter & Gamble’s Opte Precision Skincare System, dubbed the first personalised hand-held inkjet printer for your face.

The smart device has an enhanced digital camera that scans skin at 200 frames per second. It then analyses the image using its proprietary algorithm, to detect tonal differences in your skin. And then, the magic: It “prints” out coloured droplets of its Optimizing Serum (think of it as a foundation or tinted moisturiser that perfectly matches your skin tone). Opte is currently available only in the US and China.

The tech advancements don't stop there. L'Oreal's Perso, unveiled at the 2020 Consumer Electronics Show, is a three-in-one AI-powered home system that creates skincare, foundation or lipstick on the spot, using a mobile app and a device.

The app has a precise shade finder tool to dispense the perfect foundation or lipstick shade for you. For skincare, it assesses environmental factors like pollution, air quality and humidity, while considering enlarged pores, deep wrinkles, dark spots, loss of firmness and radiance.

The information is fed into the device to engage its three-cartridge system, which then dispenses the respective formula. The AI learns as it goes along, adapting future formulas to your results. L'Oreal plans to roll out the system in 2021.

In addition, Dr Gladys Teo believes that wearables will shake up the beauty industry. Equipped with facial recognition, sensors (UV exposure, skin's pH levels, temperature, humidity, and so on), and the ability to collect and interpret data, these gadgets will allow brands to create customised skincare products and/or recommend skincare regimens.

#2: MAKING SELF-CARE & WELLNESS THE KEY

"Self-care, well-being and holistic approaches to beauty were already big pre-Covid, and were amplified in 2020," says Nolte, adding that the movement will grow further in 2021.

These buzzwords align with our need to feel that we're investing in ourselves. In fact, Google searches for "self-care" have risen by 100 per cent in the last five years.

Tied to that are conversations about mental health and well-being, especially with increased isolation during the global pandemic.

Newby Hands, global beauty director at Net-a-Porter, says: "We believe we will see the continuation of people being more conscious of their well-being, and enjoying taking the time to reset."

And in light of lockdowns and mandatory mask-wear, efficacy will be everything. Hands says the customer's attention will shift to highly active skincare formulas, and high-tech tools like LED masks and microcurrent devices.

Priming for this, Net-a-Porter had already launched new tool-focused brands Tripollar, Dermaflash and PMD Beauty. And in product formulas, proven active ingredients, like niacinamide, vitamin C, retinol, and peels that do a specific job, will be a big focus.

Dr Teo Wan Lin, medical director of TWL Specialist Skin and Laser Centre, and a Her World Tribe member, adds that in addition to increased interest in home devices, the emphasis will also be on at-home facial treatments "because people are now a lot more conscious about spending their time outside".

Leading the self-care cause is Selena Gomez's Rare Beauty. The actress has spoken openly about her depression and anxiety, and ahead of its official launch, the brand has launched its Rare Impact Fund, with the ambitious goal of raising US\$100mil (S\$1.33mil) over the next 10 years to bring mental health services to underserved communities in the US. One per cent of all sales of Rare Beauty products will be donated to the fund.



#3: INGESTIBLE SKINCARE

While supplements have been around, ingestibles are more akin to edible skincare.

Japanese beauty brand Orbis led the way with Defencera in 2019. Described as an edible moisturiser that contains ceramides extracted from brown rice, it's designed to prevent skin dryness from top to toe.

In 2020, beauty guru Bobbi Brown launched her line of ingestibles, Evolution 18, for better skin, hair and nails. After leaving her namesake brand in 2016, she prepped for her next chapter by enrolling at The Institute of Integrative Nutrition in New York to become a certified health coach.

The result is a wellness line of seven products packed with active ingredients like biotin, collagen, keratin and hyaluronic acid, that can be consumed in a variety of ways – a daily gummy after your vitamins or a scoop of powder that can be added to your morning smoothie.

Singapore cosmeceutical skincare brand, Recherche, has also launched its own edible skincare range, for collagen production and skin brightening. The products are made with pure, concentrated edible skincare actives and natural plant-based ingredients, making it easily digestible with enhanced absorption.

Dr Teo Wan Lin's Dr TWL Lip Lab Lipserum Stick too, has a fully edible formula containing purified salmon roe DNA, which has anti-wrinkle and regenerative benefits. Although, she cautions that ingestibles should never replace evidence-based medical treatments.

#4: THE NEXT LEVEL OF SUSTAINABILITY

When we talk about sustainability – whether it’s environmentally friendly packaging, sustainably sourced ingredients, clean formulas or responsible manufacturing – we’re really talking about how we are all interconnected and interdependent on our environment and ecosystem.

The next big focus will be Blue Beauty – protecting our oceans and water resources, as water is the industry’s most-used ingredient. That means product formulas that contain little to no water, so that synthetic preservatives don’t need to be added, thus doing away with plastic packaging.

Leading the way is British bath and body brand, Lush, which in 2017, launched Naked, its zero-packaging range of solid shampoo bars, conditioners, soaps and massage bars; currently, 35 per cent of all Lush products come packaging-free.

In 2019, Unilever halved the amount of water its consumers need when using its products, while L’Oreal achieved a 60 per cent decrease in water consumption in its manufacturing processes, such as by treating and recycling industrial water on site.

In addition, the French beauty giant is committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2025, by improving energy efficiency and using 100 per cent renewable energy. It is also ensuring that by 2030, 100 per cent of the plastics used in its packaging will come from recycled or bio-based sources.

In Singapore, smaller indie brands are also supporting sustainability in a big way. For instance, Singapore-born Glowfully not only offers products that shun nasties like parabens, phthalates, sulphates and formaldehyde, its H2o Jelly Mask is also a zero-waste product. It’s made with a natural ingredient extracted from red seaweed, which you can melt in 60 deg C water after use (it becomes an essence for the face or body).

#5: GOING LOCAL WITH S-BEAUTY

With the global pandemic making many consumers look inwards, local consumerism has been on the uptick. “We can expect that local beauty will be the ‘destination beauty’ in 2021, as local consumption sustains local economies,” says Nolte. Products produced locally are also more sustainable, he adds.

Nolte shares that in China, there is a strong consumer demand for domestic products, especially among the young. “Chinese consumers are increasingly convinced by the high quality of local products, and appreciate Chinese brands that perfectly understand their taste and skin colour needs.”

We’ve seen a growing number of born-in-Singapore beauty brands in recent years that not only provide customisation, but are also sustainable and clean.

According to Lim Ker Han, director of Heure and Est.Lab, Singapore is at the forefront of science and innovation, which is why many large beauty players, from retailers to suppliers, are setting up their R&D centres here. In fact, the country has been ranked as the most innovative nation in Asia-Pacific and the eighth globally for the past seven years, according to the Global Innovation Index.

“We are literally at the epicentre of skincare innovation,” says Lim. “And we hope that the R&D we conduct in our labs will continue to shape the way the industry moves.”

This article first appeared in the January 2021 issue of Her World.