

'Multi-roots' beauty is the new 2023 standard: Beautystreams

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The number of poly-origin citizens continues to rise worldwide, and beauty has a duty to shift discourse and improve product development to cater to subsequent evolving needs, say experts.

At this year's Cosmoprof Worldwide Bologna tradeshow in Italy, Michael Nolte, SVP and creative director at trend forecasting firm Beautystreams, hosted a dedicated panel session on the key future trends set to shape the next five years in beauty. According to Beautystreams, 2023-2028 would centre around 'celebrating otherness' – a theme it had carved up into five key trends: not about age, just for me, local love, open type and multi-roots.

Black textured hair, Caucasian freckles and Asian eyes

Addressing the last trend 'multi-roots', Nolte said this was highly relevant for beauty businesses today because of shifting patterns worldwide. By 2065 in the US, for example, there would be no single majority racial or ethnic group in the population.

Lan Vu, founder and CEO of Beautystreams, said: "Today, people are mixed origin and coming from all countries and they intermix. So, you can have a black person, maybe with black textured hair, Caucasian freckles, and Asian eyes. How do you address that?"

"It has to be in a personalised way," Vu said.

Michèle Verschoore, scientific directorate of L'Oréal Research and Innovation, agreed and said beauty offerings had to cater to different skin colours or hair types but also to differing beauty aspirations. And to achieve this, Verschoore said industry had to start with research.

Quantifying diversity – 'it's a whole spectrum'

"This is a topic we have been working on for more than 35 years," she said.

Beauty brands and researchers now had plenty of data to demonstrate the "diversity of skin colour and diversity of hair shape", stretching far beyond dated 'dark' or 'fair' skin and 'stiff' or 'frizzy' hair definitions, she told attendees at the panel talk. "It's a whole spectrum."

Extensive classifications now existed across industry, Verschoore said, defining and categorising various hair types and skin colours, but moving forward, it would be critical that industry started to carve these out simply by what was visually seen rather than any knowledge on ethnic or racial origins of a person.

"It has to be addressed, not through origin, it has to be addressed by what you see," she said. "...We don't consider for research the origin; we just consider the biological parameters we observe and the beauty aspirations."

'Really important' to categorise skin colours and hair types

Whilst hair type and skin colour were often "difficult to categorise", particularly as the rates of mixed ethnicities grew, Verschoore said it was "really important" these were quantified at research level by industry.

Why? Because of the extent of diversity in today's global population, she said. Taking India and Africa as two examples, she said there was a "very, very wide range" of skin colours alone amongst citizens living in these two places. For consumers, this meant the act of buying a suitable foundation remained tough, for example.

"That's why [L'Oréal has] done all this research with different techniques, in 65 chromatic shades."

Beyond skin colour – unevenness a 'major concern'

On the topic of skin colour, Verschoore told CosmeticsDesign-Europe there was plenty more to consider beyond 'colour' or 'tone'.

"What is interesting in skin colour classification is that it's not only the skin tone, it is also the unevenness. And we have been also working a lot in the last 20-25 years on that," she said.

Unevenness could be seen in all skin colours, she said, and it remained a "major concern" for consumers worldwide across the skin colour spectrum and thus was important for industry to understand and have data on.

"What the difficulty is today, is to correct this unevenness without touching the skin colour or origin, because skin colour or origin has to be preserved," she said. "We are not going to enter into the so-called 'whitening business' – I am campaigning against [skin] whitening, especially in Africa, because it's a health issue. It's a disaster."

Verschoore said she had been running educational programmes in African schools for some time now, educating teenagers on how to care for acne and skin concerns at a younger age and thus avoid any issues of dark spots later on in life – often considered undesirable and the cause for many consumers to invest in illegal and dangerous 'corrective' products.