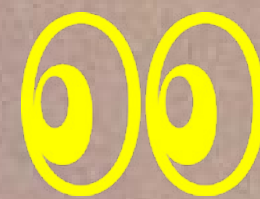
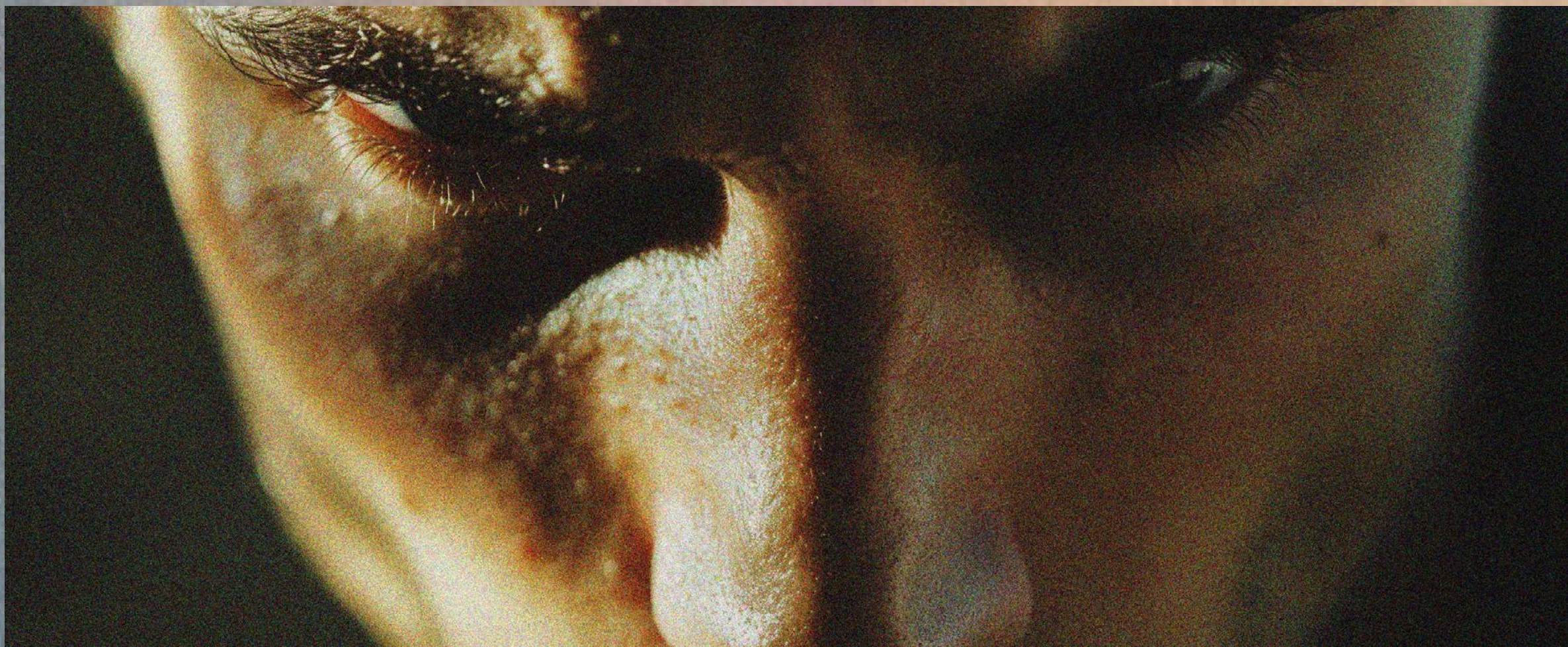


HOPEFUL MONSTERS.



LOOKSMAXXING



THE DANGEROUS *BEAUTY*
***TIKTOK TREND* THAT IS MORE**
THAN MEETS THE EYE.

May 2024



WELCOME TO

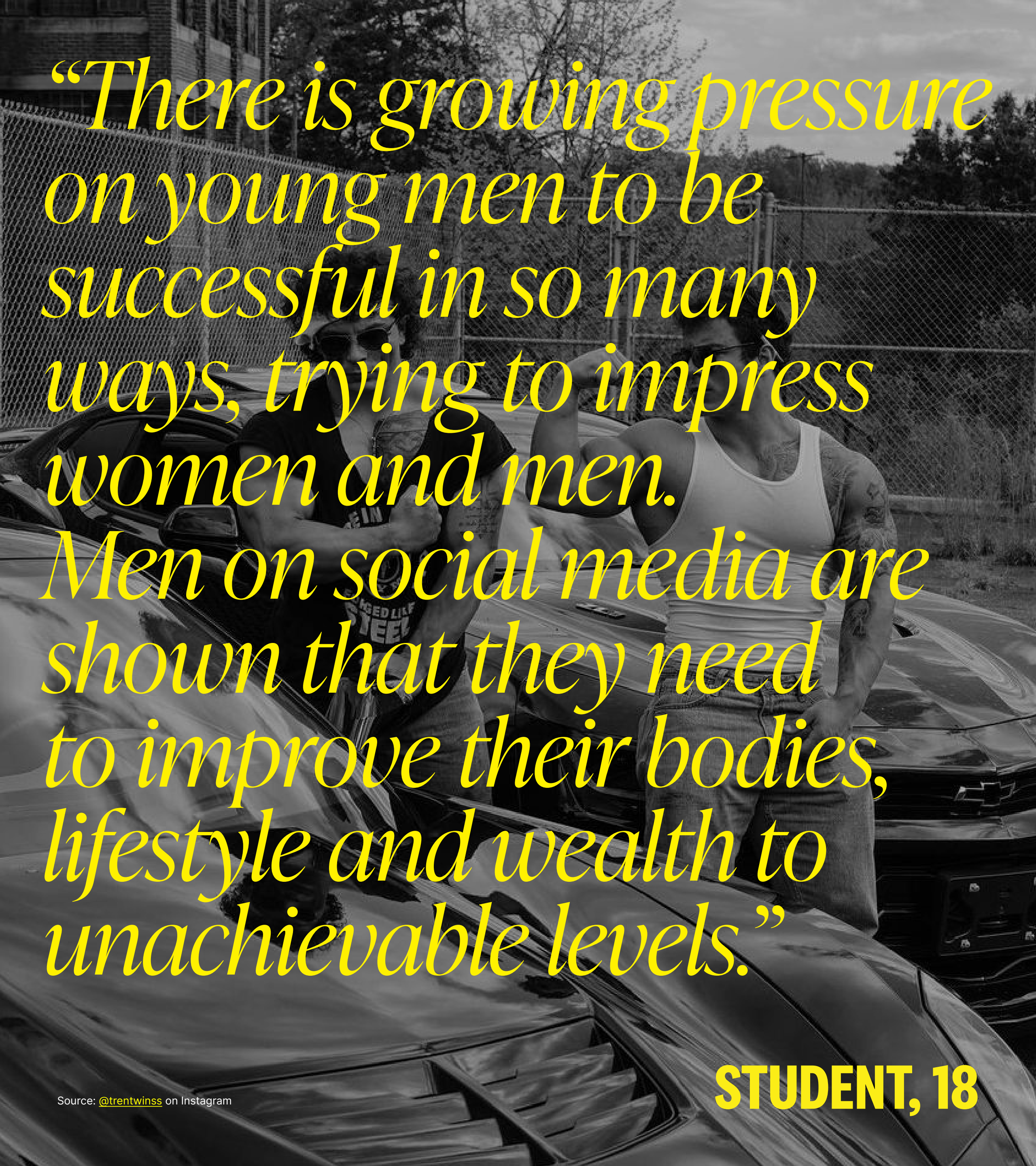
THE CHANGE *THINGS* LAB

Introducing **Hopeful Monsters'** new cultural intelligence and research unit uncovering the unexpected truths that shape the way we live.

Through *Change Things Lab*, we combine immersive ethnographic techniques, interviews with '*cultural informants*' and cutting edge technology to identify and **predict** real trends, happening right now in culture.

This quarter, we're taking a look at a worrying online trend impacting young men in Australia:
Looksmaxxing.





“There is growing pressure on young men to be successful in so many ways, trying to impress women and men. Men on social media are shown that they need to improve their bodies, lifestyle and wealth to unachievable levels.”

Self-improvement is a journey almost everyone takes at least once in their lives. Driven by goals like finding love or getting rich, human beings are always seeking new ways to become *'better'* versions of themselves.

In recent months, we've noticed a certain trend bubbling away in mainstream media where young men are taking extreme **(and almost dangerous)** measures to improve their physical appearance.

With over 2 billion TikTok views, a Subreddit with 60,000 members offering advice and 'official' forums dedicated to the practice, the 'looksmaxxing' trend centres on techniques to make young men conventionally 'more attractive'.

As public concern grows by the day, we wanted to dig deeper into the cause through consumer insights and conversations with young men and industry experts.

**AND HERE'S
WHAT 
WE'VE UN-
COVERED.**



Source: [Patrick Bateman's American Psycho Grooming Routine](#)
by Ape to Gentleman

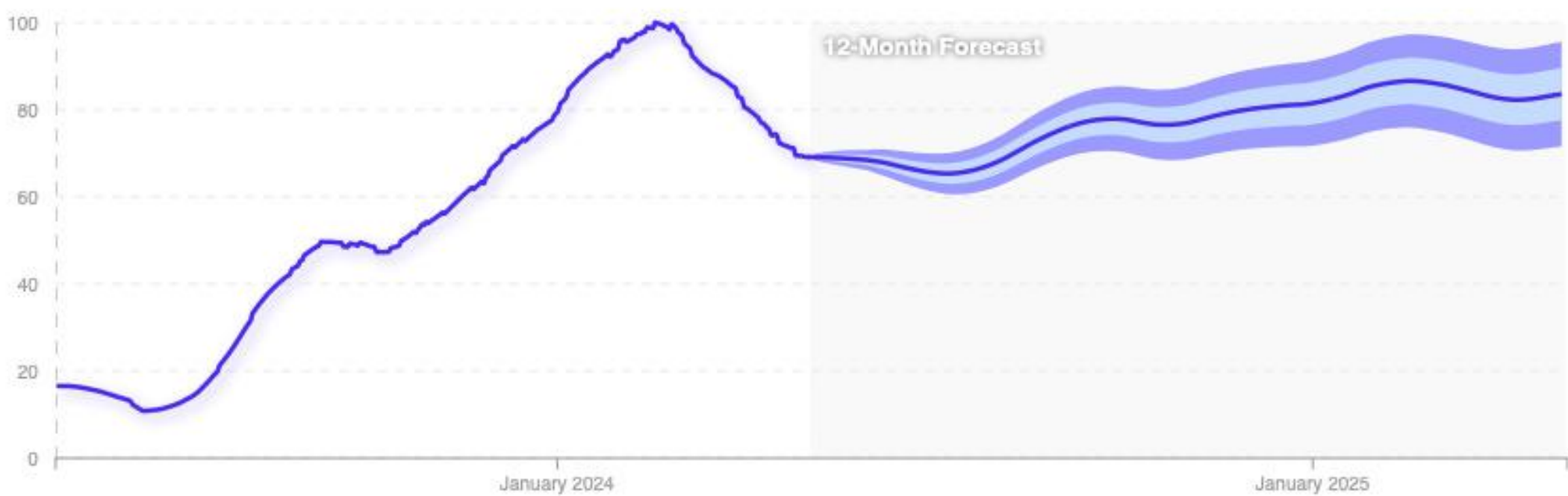
Slang for *'maximising your looks'*, the trend is named after the way characters level up and max out their statistics in role-play video games **(New York Times)**.

Originating from manosphere culture **(specifically the incel movement)** and driven by 'looksmaxxing' TikTok influencers like Kareem Shami, critics say the trend evokes *racist beauty standards*. However, the trend goes deeper than its toxic roots as 'looksmaxxers' **(yes they will even label themselves with it)** emphasise health and wellness in a way that is deceitfully problematic as impressionable young men looking to 'better' themselves are drawn to the movement while being unaware of its origins.



THE *Normal* TRUTH

CONSUMER INTEREST & 12-MONTH FORECAST - LOOKSMAXXING



In the last 12 months, there has been a 316% increase in consumer interest on the term ‘looksmaxxing’ within Australia and it is set to increase over the next year (NWO.ai).

How to get a defined jawline

maxillamaxer · Mar 19, 2024

maxillamaxer
Iron

Joined:	Nov 15, 2022
Posts:	216
Reputation:	144

Mar 19, 2024

This article has been created for informational purposes only. It is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice and should not be relied upon as health or personal advice.

1-) Leanmaxxing
If you are already overweight, it is almost impossible to have a pronounced jawline, so you must lose weight first.

2-) Mewing!
Unless you are under 8 years old, Mewing will not significantly change your facial bone structure, but if you make it a habit to stick your tongue to your palate, your tongue muscles will pull the hyoid skin upwards, which will give you a more pronounced jawline.

3-) Chewing
Chewing may hypertrophy the masseter muscle, allowing you to have a more prominent gonion, but if your gonial angle is significantly wider than ideal, chewing may not be suitable for you, and excessive chewing may cause temporomandibular joint problems.

4-) Orthodontic Treatment
If your mandible is too far behind your maxilla, that is, if there is a gap between your lower teeth and upper teeth when you close your mouth, this indicates that you have an overbite. In such a case, receiving orthodontic treatment may give you a more pronounced jawline, but if the orthodontic treatment includes tooth extraction, go to another orthodontist because this process may cause your facial bone structure to move backwards.

5-) Orthognathic Jaw Surgery
If you have an overbite that is too large to be resolved with orthodontic treatment, you can lengthen your mandible and achieve ideal closure with BSSO, but if both your mandible and maxilla have not developed forward, you can extend your face completely forward with bimaxillary surgery. If the problem is in the chin, you can have a pronounced jawline with genioplasty, more risk-free and cheaper.

6-) Jaw implants
Jaw implants may be the ideal option for you, especially if your maxilla is properly developed and you do not have any malocclusion. Thanks to jaw implants, you can make the ramus longer, the chin more forward, the gonial angle narrower, and the jaw wider.

1-) MSE, FaceMask and MSDO
Let me tell you from the beginning that this method is experimental and if your face is seriously deformed, this method may not be sufficient. MSE expands the maxilla, while MSDO expands the mandible. At the same time, MSE provides a lateral expansion and opens the midpalatal suture. In this way, it is possible to pull the lower maxilla forward with the facemask. Moreover, since MSDO provides an angular expansion, your chin will grow forward. As a result, after these procedures, you may have a more pronounced jawline.

More than *90% of young people* in Australia have some concern about their body image, with more than one in three very or extremely concerned (**Butterfly Foundation**).

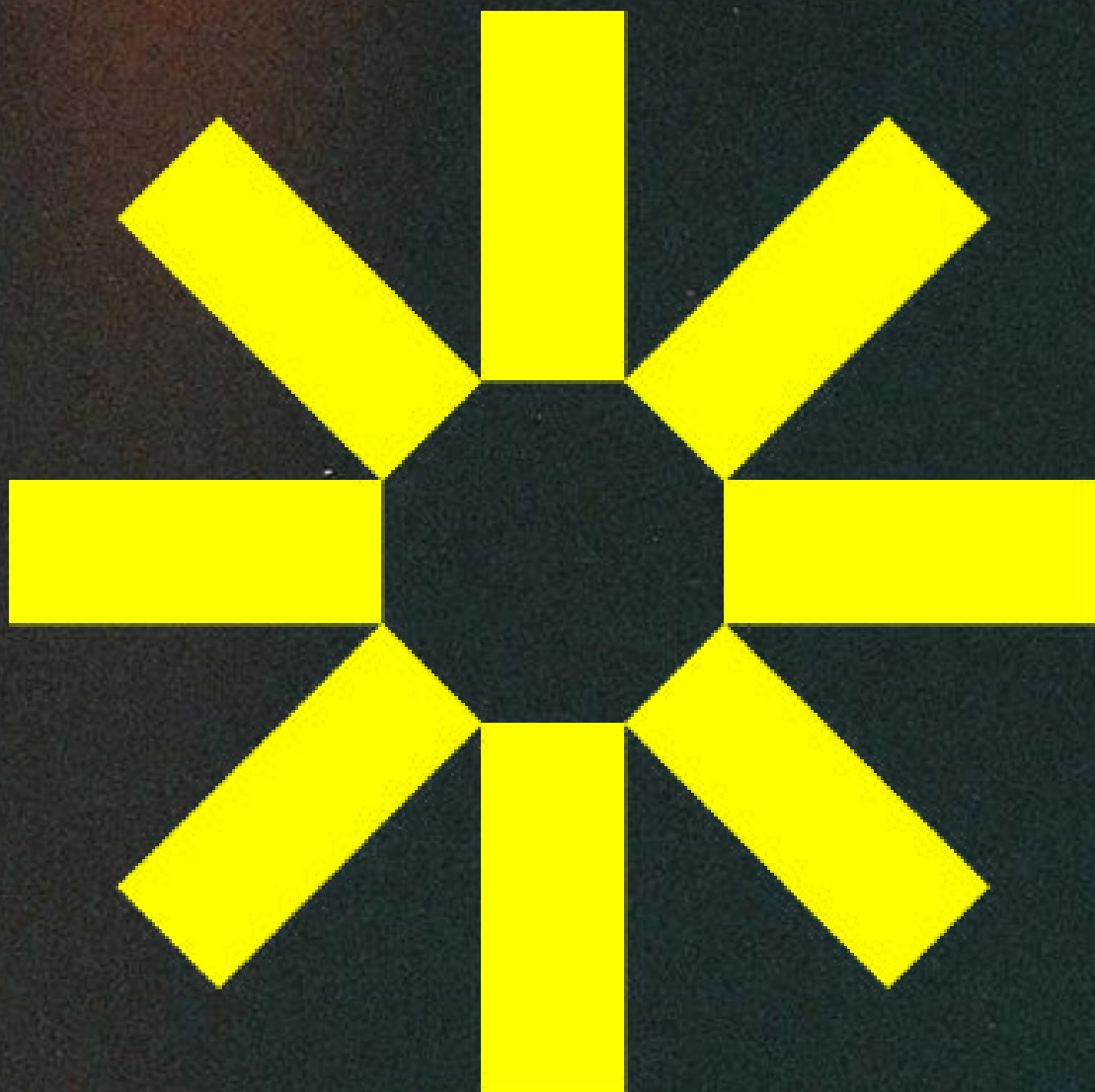
25% of people experiencing Anorexia Nervosa or Bulimia Nervosa *are male*, and almost 50% of people experiencing Binge Eating Disorder are male (**NEDC**).

Despite evidence showing the rise in body image issues among young men, there's a concerning lack of awareness about the problem and *insufficient assistance available* to help them as much of the support readily available is still geared towards women.



Source: [James Ryan](#) on TikTok

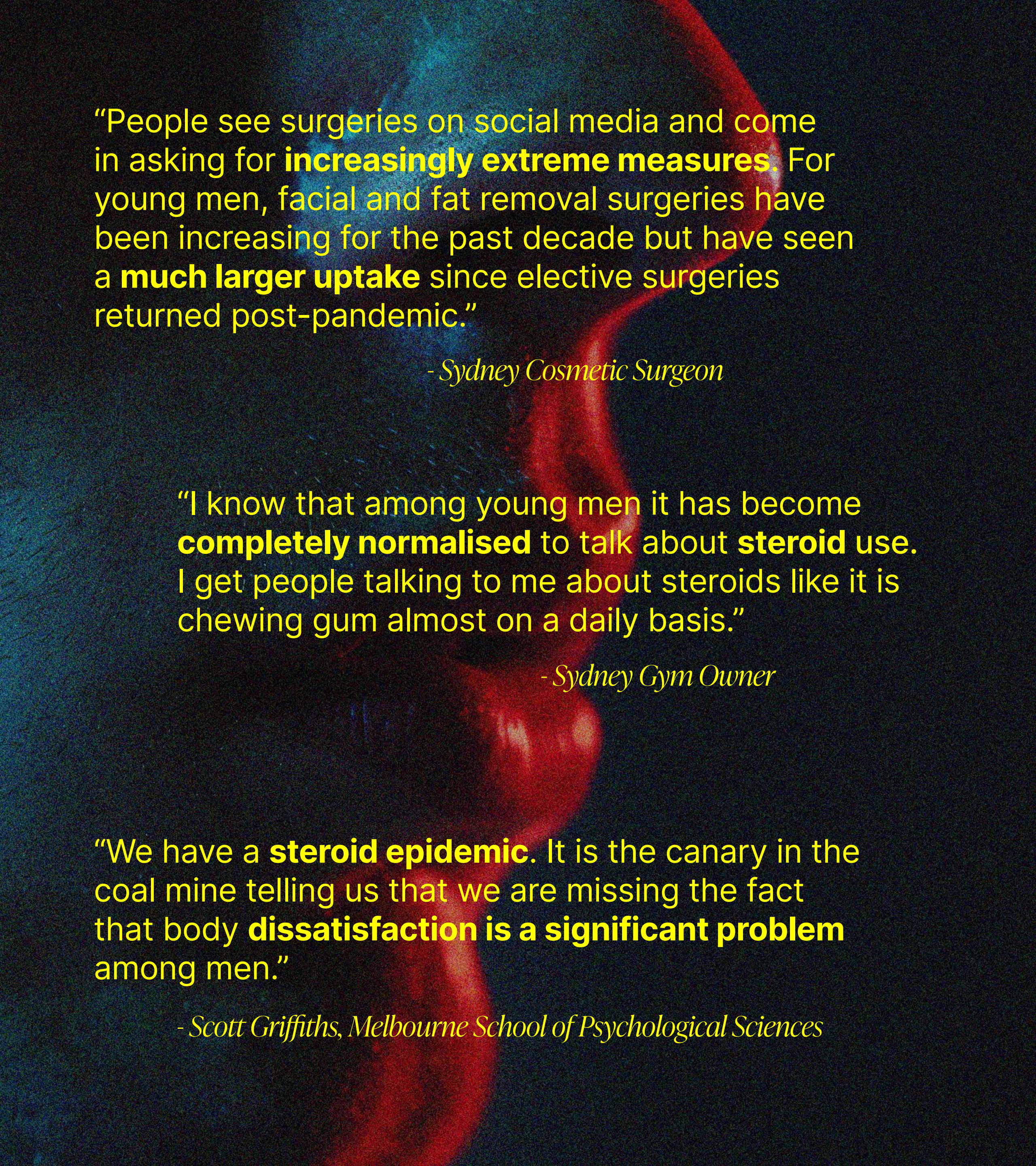
“I feel like we’ve gotten a little better at not doing this with girls. Maybe we should start not doing it with guys.”



Don't take our word for it.

WE SPOKE TO A
FEW EXPERTS

And here's what they had to say...



“People see surgeries on social media and come in asking for **increasingly extreme measures**. For young men, facial and fat removal surgeries have been increasing for the past decade but have seen a **much larger uptake** since elective surgeries returned post-pandemic.”

- Sydney Cosmetic Surgeon

“I know that among young men it has become **completely normalised** to talk about **steroid use**. I get people talking to me about steroids like it is chewing gum almost on a daily basis.”

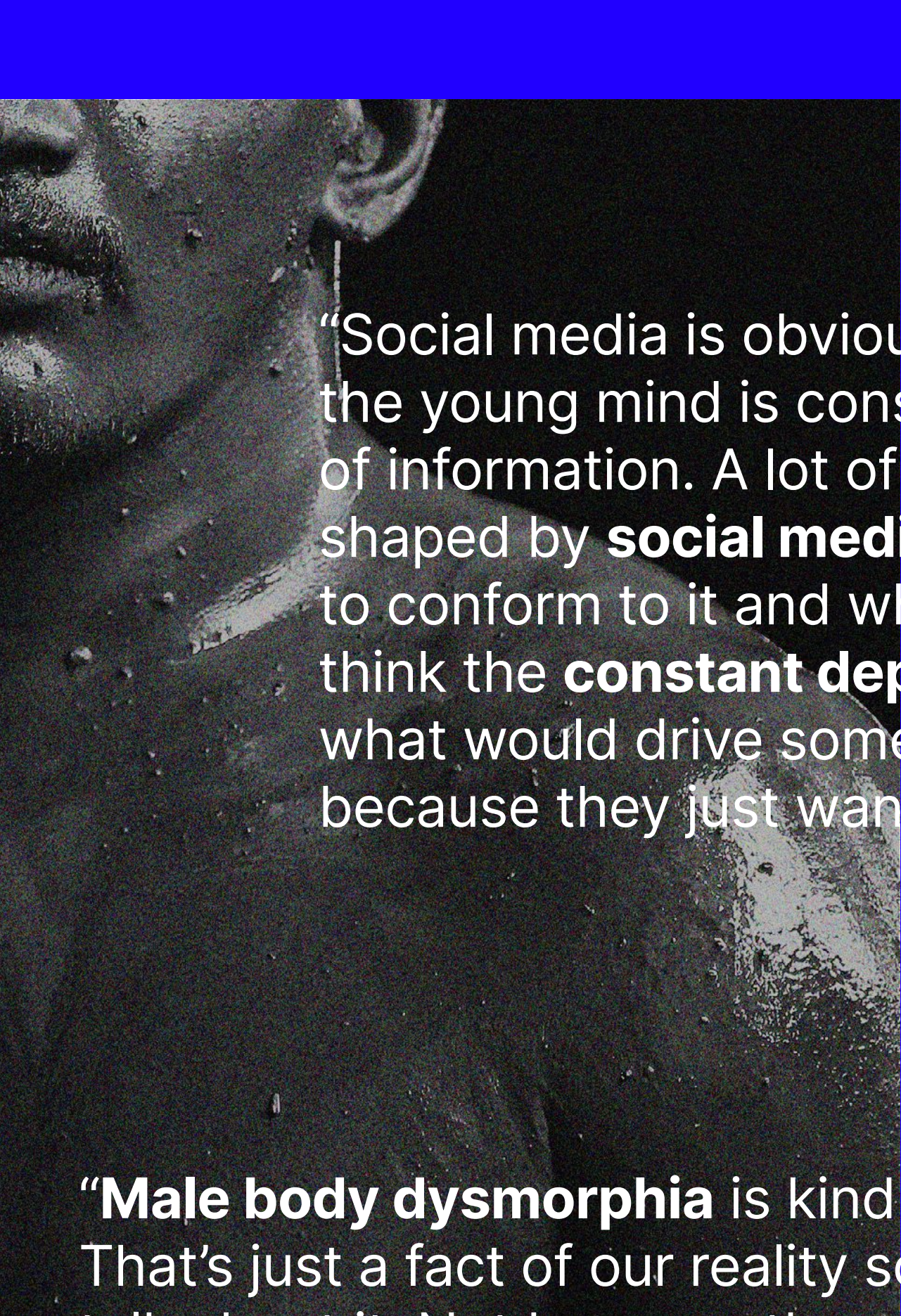
- Sydney Gym Owner

“We have a **steroid epidemic**. It is the canary in the coal mine telling us that we are missing the fact that body **dissatisfaction is a significant problem** among men.”

- Scott Griffiths, Melbourne School of Psychological Sciences

BUT IF THAT *wasn't enough* FOR US
TO UNDERSTAND WHAT YOUNG MEN
ARE *truly* EXPERIENCING, WE HIT THE
STREETS TO TALK TO *young men*
between 18-25 TO HEAR HOW THIS
TREND IS AFFECTING THEIR *lives.*





“Social media is obviously a very powerful tool and the young mind is constantly exposed to a barrage of information. A lot of people’s **self-esteem** is shaped by **social media**, so they feel like they need to conform to it and what it’s telling men to do. I think the **constant dependency** on social media is what would drive someone to change their looks because they just want to fit in.”

- Student, 18

“**Male body dysmorphia** is kind of a known thing. That’s just a fact of our reality so people just don’t talk about it. Not because they don’t want to talk about it, but because it’s not worth talking about. **Everyone knows it exists**. But on the other side, there’s people who would deny its existence... There’s definitely some of that going on as well but it’s **ingrained in male culture**.”

- Student, 22

But what exactly does this all mean?



Source: ["Patrick Bateman" from American Psycho, 2000](#)

There is already significant evidence to show the relationship between **problematic social media use in youth** and the negative mental health outcomes it can have on body image.

While the issue has *traditionally* focused on *women*, we're in a period where the downward pressures on young men IRL have finally caught up with their social media habits and they are now crossing like the beams in **Ghostbusters**.

It's becoming increasingly easier for young men to *seek and interact* with their role models who are partaking in **two-way conversations** with their audiences.

The advice gets more and more accessible as online communities aimed at men continue to evolve.

Merging this with the accessibility of information online and the growing '*manosphere*' phenomenon in the digital era, the **fear of isolation** that makes most people willing to heed the opinion of others has formulated the collective behaviour of the '*looksmaxxing*' community and ultimately, young men.





Source: [Changing masculinity: Is advertising doing enough to represent modern men?](#) via Campaign Asia, 2023



IMPLICATIONS FOR *BRANDS*

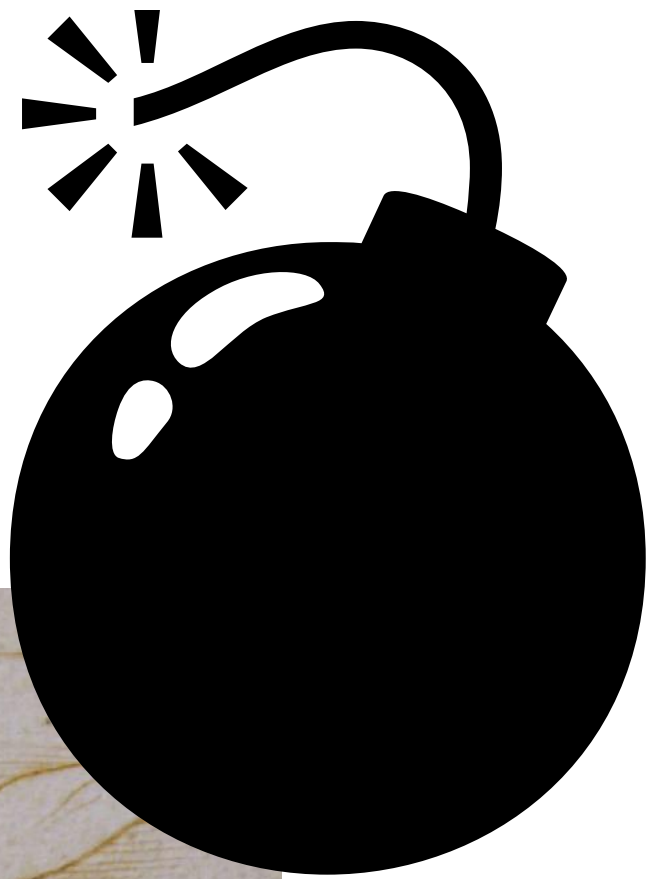
Body positivity has been at the forefront of many iconic brands targeting women but there has been very little awareness on male body dysmorphia and mental health. With this increased pressure on male body image, there is no better time than *now* to drive positive change and **start the conversation**.

The issue is deeply entrenched in the lives of young men who feel *inadequate* due to **societal pressures**.

Whether it's simply *diversifying* the body types used in ads or trying to tackle the issue through a deeper approach that brings awareness to the problem, brands play a pivotal role in shaping the new '**standard**' in male body image that has allowed women to embrace diversity.



**NEED MORE
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SUPERFICIAL
UNDERSTANDING
OF CULTURE?**



**OUR TEAM IN THE
CHANGE THINGS
LAB ARE WAITING
BY THE PHONE FOR
YOUR CALL! ***

**Phone line being installed, better just email us instead*

hello@hopefulmonsters.com.au