

## “Annotations For The Ideal Filipina”

Materials: Red marker, Red Lipstick

For this project, I wanted to address how Filipino beauty standards have affected my identity as a Filipino woman. While I also struggle under the pressure of Eurocentric beauty standards as I live in America, I wanted to focus more on the Filipino lens of beauty.

I stared at the camera in my performance while harsh lighting shone against my face. With a red marker, I began writing notes on my face as the word “ideal” is repeated in different intonations in the background. These notes address features that I have that don’t fit the ideal Filipino beauty standard. I was often told I was too tan or too dark, that I didn’t have a tall nose (*pango* in tagalog), or that my face is asymmetrical. If you look up online at what the ideal Filipino beauty standards look like, my face does not fit under the category at all.

Given that, I realized that Filipino beauty standards are too often colorist and fat-phobic. It is extremely toxic to Filipino women young and old, but it is so often praised in Filipino society. This is evident in Filipino television, as there is always some form of advertisement urging people to buy whitening creams and dieting pills, and undergo plastic surgery. Growing up under those terms, I can say that I am both a victim and a perpetrator in keeping the status quo.

### **Red Symbolism**

The use of the red marker is a reference to the act of correcting mistakes and editing a paper. Therefore, Filipino society’s obsession with beauty is akin to editing “mistakes,” as there is a culture that is created from nitpicking every single aspect of a Filipina’s face.

Furthermore, wearing red is believed to be attractive. So, I wore red, used a red marker, and put on red lipstick. Though, while I continued to annotate myself and present myself in this way in the harsh light, I did not see myself as attractive, nor did I see myself as desirable. Perhaps this was because I am already content with how I looked prior to annotating myself and that I have grown past the beauty standards that challenged me as a child. In realizing this, I have proven to myself that I have changed and that I am getting better at feeling secure about my own identity as a Filipina.