# Analysis of the Elements Representing the Image of the Femme Fatale and the Makeup of Subjects in Paintings

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## Ⅰ. Introduction

The image of the femme fatale emerged with the active insistence on freedom and gender equality, which replaced what used to be the passive attitude of women amid the rapid industrialization and urbanization that occurred at the end of the 19th century. At the time, when sexual identity was confused, psychological factors, such as sexual fear and men's desires, were reflected and were prevalent in art and literature. The image of the femme fatale represents women who are simultaneously attractive and fearsome.

The somewhat wicked character of the femme fatale became popular among actresses in films, with the public imitating the makeup and costumes of the femme fatale. The image also found expression in visual arts and literature.

This study attempts to identify the similarities between the visual elements of the femme fatale in modern makeup and painting, and a variety of images focusing on the theme of the femme fatale that enjoyed popularity in paintings produced at the end of the 19th century.

## Ⅱ. Femme Fatale Image and Makeup in Paintings

The kind of femme fatale imagery that was in fashion in the 19th century was observed and analyzed in the paintings of that period. Based on the results of the analysis, the femme fatale was classified into three sets of imagery: cruelty, mystery, and sexual appeal. Modern makeup showing these classes of femme fatale imagery is herein classified and analyzed.
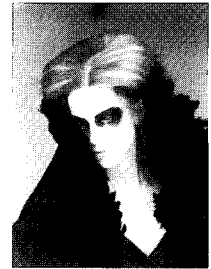


⟨ Figure 1 ⟩

1) Cruelty

Cruelty is the representative image of the femme fatale brought about by the retaliatory spirit and hatred of men, typified by the enchantress that draws thorough plans to murder men. Judith Slaying Holofernes (Figure 1) by Artemisia Gentileschi, a female artist, depicts the Old Testament story of how Judith seduced the enemy commander Holofernes, and how she slew him to save her country. The work represents the image of
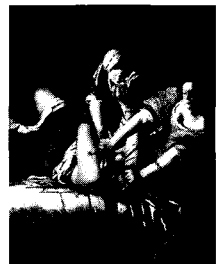
cruelty with bold, overwhelming patterns, and heavy and dark color schemes.

Contributing to the visual effect expressing "cruelty" is the decadent makeup, which enhances the particular mood and beauty of strong frames. The makeup style presented in the Alexander McQueen Collection (Figure 2) illustrates the bold pattern surpassing the eyes, and creates an impressive shadow. With the cubic effect cleverly executed with the black pencil, and with the eye shadow widely applied, this work somehow gives a visual expression of a skull.
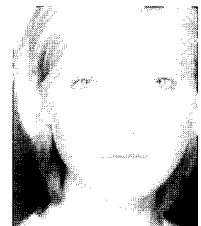
⟨ Figure 2 ⟩

### 2) Mystery

Mystery is created by the desire of some men to engage in erotic sexual fantasies. Danae (Figure 3) by Gustav Klimt, a famous Austrian artist, captures the mystery of the moment when Danae sensually greets Zeus in Greek mythology. The visual factors that contribute to the image of mystery are the graceful mood and overall sense of harmony, the splendid colors, the delicate lines, and the smooth shapes. The makeup that effectively conveys this image of mystery is the natural makeup, which produces spontaneity and focuses on overall harmony.
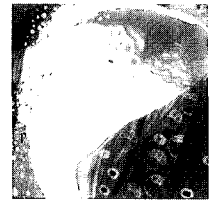
⟨ Figure 3 ⟩

The skin tones are done in bright and splendid (Figure4) colors to allow the viewer to sense the illusion of smoothness and silkiness rather than overpower him or her with exaggeration. In such imagery, the women's cheeks glow naturally to emphasize femininity.

⟨ Figure 4 ⟩

### 3) Sexuality

Sexuality emerged as women tried to free themselves from the domination of the opposite sex, which is an image that appeals to men with lascivious propensities. Odysseus and the Sirens (Figure 5) by Draper, a neoclassical painter, depicted the sirens, who try to seduce Odysseus, in sexually stimulating appearances. The erotic imagery of the sirens is one of the widely expressed themes in paintings. The dark blue sea highlighted the dazzling beauty of the sirens, whose fair complexion⟨ Figure 6 ⟩

⟨ Figure 5 ⟩

emphasized their red lips in a most erotic way. This expressive emphasis characterizes the visual elements of female sexuality.

The makeup for this kind of imagery is one that emphasizes the eyes or lips with strong colors, instead of burying them in overall harmony. The natural eye makeup and fair skin accentuates the vivid red lipstick

⟨ Figure 6 ⟩

(Figure 6) in such a way that the overall effect highlights glamorous sexuality.

## III. Conclusion

Femme fatale themes are classified according to visual symbols of cruelty, mystery, and sexuality. The paintings and makeup have the same consistent types of expressions.

The pictorial factors for the image of "cruelty"express the mood through dark colors and dramatic contrast effects. The type of makeup that conveys the image of "cruelty" is the "decadent" makeup. The image of "mystery" is represented by the overall harmony created by the soft mood, splendid colors, and delicate lines, which are all expressed through the use of natural-looking makeup. The pictorial factors representing "sexuality" involve using makeup to highlight only certain parts.

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