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Fashion label's The Row recent pre-fall campaign shot

THE *age* OF BEAUTY



When it comes to being held in high regard, youth and gold have much in common: they are both currencies that tend to hold their weight in fluctuating markets; they are prized, valued above all else; they are symbolic, not just of achievement but of cachet, glamour, prestige.

So when the beauty industry, which thrives on an obsession with youth and thwarting the signs of ageing – the anti-aging market itself was valued globally at \$274.5 billion in 2013 (that's €198.4 billion, give or take a few euro) – shows signs of favouring an older model, well, the world stops and pays attention.

In the space of one week in February, both cosmetics giant NARS and new-to-the-business Marc Jacobs Beauty announced that their ad campaigns would be fronted by 68-year-old Charlotte Rampling (NARS) and 65-year-old Jessica Lange (Marc Jacobs).

As moves go, theirs were unorthodox; at 35, Katie Holmes seemed a relatively 'brave' choice for veteran beauty brand Bobbi Brown when she was announced as the face of the makeup and skincare line in late 2012. Pre-Rampling, NARS' most

Sixty-eight-year-old Charlotte Rampling the new face of NARS makeup, sixty-five-year-old Jessica Lange the face of Marc Jacobs beauty, is the industry finally losing its obsession with youth? **Rosemary MacCabe** investigates.

recent campaign was fronted by 21-year-old model, Toni Garn (although Garn replaced 43-year-old veteran British model, Stella Tennant, so NARS has form when it comes to featuring the more mature woman).

It's not just the world of beauty that has been making moves towards older models, so to speak. Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen's The Row used 65-year-old Linda Rodin in their pre-fall 2014 campaign Rodin also featured in Karen Walker's spring 2013 lookbook. Marc Jacobs' final Louis Vuitton campaign featured 'Marc's muses', including 70-year-old Catherine Deneuve.

Jacobs, speaking to a US publication, said that he finds women – all women – inspiring, and that the most beautiful part of a woman, in his opinion, is her eyes. It's a nice soundbyte, but perhaps a sidestepping of the question: is beauty

turning towards the older woman and away from its obsession with youth?

Nuala Woulfe, a facialist and skincare expert with more than 30 years' experience in her two Glashule salons, Nuala Woulfe Salon and Serenity Day Spa, is with Jacobs on his considered evasion.

"The healthier way to think about it is, look at these women – they're older but they look amazing for their age," she says. "Is it a fad? A certain amount of it, sure – but we've always seen women who have aged really, really well. We've always had clients who take good care of themselves – they're conscious of what they eat, what they do, they exercise. Some of them are in their 70s or 80s and they look amazing."

Ultimately, says Woulfe, women want to look youthful. "Everyone is talking about keeping hold of youth for the duration

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Charlotte Rampling



of their lives," she says. "But it's about confidence and acceptance, too; there is an awful lot to be said for a female who gets into her 60s, 70s and 80s and is confident in her skin – she might be in her 80s but she doesn't look it, and in her head, she's still in her early 60s."

Do women still come into salons – into Woulfe's salon, specifically – requesting that the clock be turned back, expecting a miraculous transformation?

"It's about not doing anything to the extreme," says Woulfe. "Women who have done too much, too young...it can age you terribly. But when you're working with good products and using good treatments, you can change someone's skin. Even if they've abused it at a young age, you can reverse that with really good skincare and treatments."

Though Woulfe's views on beauty are holistic – she recommends a good skincare routine, regular treatments, a healthy diet, exercise (no huge surprises or miracle cures there) – she accepts that there is an industry reliant on selling products to women who fear the onset of old age.

"It's down to marketing," she says. "People are afraid of getting older, so they try so hard at a younger age to prevent it."

As marketing campaigns go, the inclusion of older women in advertising is smart; the demographic known as "baby boomers", those born in the post-Second World War era, 1946-1964, are now over 60 years old and are, statistically, the world's biggest spenders. Companies employing the services of older models are appealing to a group of consumers they hope will identify with these new faces.

There is always a danger, however, in recognising coincidence and calling it a trend – and the fashion industry, at least,

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has a history of utilising the 'other', the non-model, to gain column inches. The moves are, more often than not, specific and temporary – take John Galliano's autumn winter 2005 collection, which was modelled by little people, identical twins, large women and bodybuilders. Some declared that this meant the fashion industry was moving away from models – yet, the following season, it was back to basics with under-25, over 5ft 11in women parading up and down the designer's Paris runway.

That being said, Aileen Gillic, business manager and nurse at Dublin's **River Medical** clinic, which offers plastic and cosmetic surgeries as well as non-surgical treatments such as Fraxel, IPL and anti-wrinkle injections, says the 'pro-ageing movement' is a very real thing – and something she's noticed in the demands of the **River Medical** customer.

"It's not necessarily about looking younger any more," she says. "It's about looking after your skin and looking the best for your age."

Gillic says that women have been turned off by the early image of fillers and Botox. "They haven't made women look younger – they just made them look strange." Women today are looking for "more advanced anti-aging treatments, in conjunction with fillers and Botox".

"Things like Fraxel and Thermage make your skin work hard – it's like bringing your skin to the gym," says Gillic.

Though Gillic makes a strong case for a change in buzz words – from anti-aging or anti-wrinkle treatments to skin health, facial volume and youthful volume – what she's talking about are, ultimately, procedures and treatments that will give an illusion of youth.

"People aren't looking at individual lines the way they used to – they're looking at the whole picture. They know that if they just fill a line, that's not going to make them look younger – it's about youthful volume."

While Rampling and Lange are sitting pretty in this season's campaigns, it's too soon to tell if this trend is here to stay. Both Woulfe and Gillic agree that women are still searching for ways to look youthful, even if they're opting for skin-plumping treatments to achieve Lange's pillowy youthful volume rather than old-school procedures such as Botox and dermal fillers.

NARS and Marc Jacobs Beauty may be a drop in the ocean; the majority of 2014's beauty campaigns will feature a selection of young, unlined faces. Kristen Stewart (24) is on Balenciaga's beauty ads, Kirsten Dunst (31) is the global spokeswoman for L'Oréal, Lily Collins (25) is the face of Lancôme and 21-year-old Cara Delevingne landed the campaign for YSL. But let's hope it is a sign of things to come. ■