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Truth is not always what it seems

First Speaker

Ladies and Gentlemen, a very good evening to you all. I'm Ms Chan the Dean of the Faculty of Media & Photography at the International Academy of Film and Television here in Hong Kong and I'll be your host for the night. We also have with us here this evening Ms Krishnan the Dean of Admissions.

We're indeed honored and privileged to introduce our guest speaker tonight, who is none other than Ms Tolworthy one of the most renowned photographers in the world who has recently come to Hong Kong for the 2012 International Arts Festival.

As you can imagine, Ms Tolworthy has achieved much during her career. She graduated from the New York Institute of Photography with a degree in the Arts. She landed her very first job at Marie Claire Magazine's photography department in 2008 and since then has become one of the fashion industry's most inspiring photographers. Her work can be seen everywhere from the back of buses to features in fashion magazines. Ms Tolworthy has established a photographic style using multiple photos to create a surrealistic and impressionist composite image.

The real reason we're all here today is to hear the answer to tell us simply, the truth is not always what it seems – at least in her line of work.

So without further adieu, let's put our hands together for Ms Tolworthy!

Main Speaker

Thank you! What a warm welcome. It wasn't too long ago I was sat in a lecture hall much like this one, listening to my mentors tell me all about what the future holds.

I suppose you're all very eager to dive into my career in fashion photography and understand how I achieved all I did. Well, how about I start off by telling you all what I really do...

Now, you must understand that being a professional photographer based in the fashion industry in the 21st century doesn't only require a DSLR camera and a mesmerizing model, but also, the science of graphics editing software, or more commonly called-photoshop.

But I know what you're all thinking... you're thinking: "isn't photo editing cheating?!" Well I'm going to tell you right here and right now that photo editing is like Robin to Batman – inevitably bounded to one another for the better good.

At Marie Claire Magazine, we redefine the entire concept – or truth - of photography and fashion. Where I work, there's no such thing as imperfect. Thanks to photo editing software such as Adobe Photoshop Pro and Corel Paintshop Pro, we've managed to make the human race flawless.

Don't get me wrong, our models and our clothing collections of the season are quite superb as they are; but it simply isn't perfect.

We make sure that every little aspect of the photo is in proportion by shaving off parts of the person in the photo and sliming them down to the socially acceptable sizes.

Another extremely important tool we use is colour contrasting in which we ensure the colour of the collection matches the season. For instance, we may brighten up the photo by intensifying the yellow and orange colours present in a photo for our fall collection.

Most importantly, we soften the photo of the model making her skin as soft as a baby's and airbrushing away all the unnecessary bits.

Judging by the turn out tonight, I see that interest in the photography profession is definitely increasing. I'm sure your school provides various courses regarding photography, but, in my opinion, it's no longer so much about the photography itself in the fashion industry, but rather more about what the photo has the potential to become after a bit of a touch-up, so really, it's all about creativity and your ability to go the extra mile in perfecting your work.

Tonight, I leave you with this; within the photography department of fashion, the saying "Nobody's perfect" no longer applies...

Thank you for your time!

3rd Speaker

Thank you Ms Tolworthy for that thought-provoking speech. Let's give her a round of applause!

Photography no longer means taking photos with a camera, but it also involves the use of so much more technology and software that miraculously distort what is true out there in the fashion world.

Media has such a huge impact on our daily lives as everywhere we turn, we're exposed to it. As Ms Ms Tolworthy mentioned in the beginning of our talk today; her's work can be seen everywhere, I believe one of your recent campaigns for the iconic British brand, Burberry can be seen on a larger banner outside Sogo.

We can all agree that Ms Tolworthy's career has been stupendously successful; however, it does show the sad truth about our society in the 21st century...

Our concept of reality isn't quite conveyed accurately through the media, especially in fashion, as socially constructed ideas appear to have dominated today's world and what we may believe is true, perhaps, really isn't. Truth CLEARLY is not always what it seems...

Anyway, we are indeed very much inspired by your work and I'm certain our students here in Hong Kong will look up to you and aspire to be like you in the future.

Once again, on behalf of all of us here, thank you so much Ms Tolworthy for being here today.