

Aesthetic Surgery

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TASCHEN

VII.7

“Beauty has to touch us and take our breath away”

Waffles Wu, Singapore



Fig. 1

1. WHAT FASCINATES YOU MOST ABOUT BEING AN AESTHETIC OR COSMETIC SURGEON?

Aesthetic surgery incorporates art, architecture and medicine. It is fascinating to have the power to remodel a person's face, their body, and even their self-esteem. In a way, it's psychiatry with a knife. Being an aesthetic surgeon requires not only a high level of technical proficiency but also a great sense of responsibility, and ultimately also humility. What I love most about my work is to see the improvement in the patients' confidence, well being and relationship with others as they become more beautiful, younger looking and more whole. This is especially so when you see an introverted child with a hideous cleft lip deformity suddenly blossom into a vibrant, bubbly person after the lip and nose are corrected. It's like magic and sometimes I feel like a magician. (see fig.9 a-b)

2. WHICH AREAS DO YOU SPECIALISE IN?

I am originally a craniofacial surgeon specialising in facial contouring and rhinoplasty but over the years, I have developed a widely respected method of non-surgical facial rejuvenation using Botox, filler injections, IPL and laser treatments and a unique non-surgical facelift using specially designed barbed threads called "Woffles Threads". I call this the 4-R-Principle and it consists of four steps – "relax, restore, resurface, redrape." Firstly, I

use Botox to relax the facial muscles that have become unattractive. Next, I restore the fullness of the face by injecting synthetic fillers into key areas. Then I resurface or retexture the skin using innovative programs of Intense Pulsed Light and laser treatments, and finally I stretch and smoothen the facial and neck skin (redrape) using a special nonsurgical technique I developed called the "Woffles Lift": in this I insert unique, barbed "Woffles Threads" into the subcutaneous tissue of the face via a long needle and elevate and suspend these tissues to the dense tissue of the scalp.

I also specialise in breast enlargements, for which I have developed my own method called the Invisible WW Sealith Technique which places a zigzag incision on the areola margin, making the resultant scar imperceptible. I also frequently do breast enlargements, for which I have developed my own method as well.

3. DO YOU REGARD YOURSELF AS AN ARTIST?

Totally! Without a deep passion for beauty, form and harmony, as well as the balance between them, I couldn't possibly do what I do! I love Modernist art and contemporary art, the sculptures of Henri Moore, Alexander Archipenko, Constantin Brancusi, Ju Ming and Zhan Wang, but also the paintings of Pablo Picasso, Fernand Léger, Le Corbusier, Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein and James Rosenquist. Surrealism is less important to me, although I very much admire René Magritte and Giorgio de Chirico. I used to collect mostly paintings, but my focus has recently shifted to sculpture. I enjoy their three-dimensional and physicality, and they are great in the garden. I'm also becoming increasingly fascinated with contemporary art from China which is challenging and politically charged. I have myself been working on a series of psychocrotic works on Chinese paper for the last 20 years and will be having a major retrospective exhibition next year as well as a commemorative book chronicling my art.

4. WHAT IS YOUR CONCEPT OF BEAUTY?

I don't have one. In the face, beauty is all about symmetry, proportions, balance and harmony. Naomi Campbell, Kate Moss, Maggie Cheung and Iman are all beautiful, but in completely different ways. Iman's nose in Elizabeth Tay-



Fig. 2 Waffles Wu, at his practice in Singapore, where he operates on numerous international clients. © Private archive Waffles Wu

Fig. 3 Waffles Wu has developed his own technique for facial rejuvenation, popularly known as the "Woffles Lift." The technique consists of four completely non-invasive stages, employing Botox, laser treatment and injections. © Private archive Waffles Wu



Fig. 4 Sandro Botticelli's "Birth of Venus" c. 1482 in the Galleria degli Uffizi. © Getty Images/Ernst Leung

ed by Sandro Botticelli's "Birth of Venus." Michelangelo's "Pietà" possesses a similar symmetry and harmony. In contrast to these, I never thought the "Mona Lisa" to be very beautiful – she's too masculine and not at all erotic. I would be frightened to go to bed with her!

6. TO YOU, WHO ARE THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WOMAN AND MOST BEAUTIFUL MAN ALIVE?

Elizabeth Taylor and Ava Gardner when they were young. Of the current beauties, my picks are Penelope Cruz, Naomi Campbell, Kate Moss and Iman. In my eyes, the most beautiful man of all times was Elvis Presley. He had a seductive face, soft and masculine at the same time. Of today's men, I regard Tom Cruise, Johnny Depp and Jude Law as particularly attractive.

7. DO YOU REGARD YOURSELF AS ATTRACTIVE?

I've never thought of myself as attractive but I guess I must be because many people tell me so. They say I belong in a 1930's movie. I would say I am attractive but not in a startling, handsome way. I have a clear-cut face, expressive eyes and a well-trained body. But I don't think my looks are above average.

8. WHAT DOES AGING MEAN TO YOU?

The face and body becoming wrinkled, losing turgid skin. It also means becoming clumsy, losing strength, concentration, memory, energy and, most scarily of all, virility.

9. ARE YOU AFRAID OF GETTING OLDER?

Yes, I'm especially scared of losing my vitality and not being able to do what I want. This thought is more frightening than the thought of my eventual attractiveness dwindling.

10. HAVE YOU EVER UNDERGONE COSMETIC SURGERY YOURSELF? IF SO, WHAT WAS IT FOR?

I've already stated on non-invasive treatments. I inject Botox into my brow and fillers into my lips and cheeks. I use a combination of laser treatments, microdermabrasion, Radiofrequency therapy, chemical peels and



Fig. 5 Waffles Wu considers Iman, Naomi Campbell and Kate Moss to be among the world's most beautiful women. In him, there is a unique balance of grace, youthfulness, and also plenty of spirit. © Getty Images/Ernst Leung

Fig. 6 Waffles Wu performs revision rhinoplasty surgery. This is a selection of before-and-after photographs of patients with bumps. After the procedure, the upper lip and nose are fully separate and properly aligned. © Private archive Waffles Wu

beauty creams to preserve the tension of my facial skin. I had my nasal septum straightened 25 years ago.

11. HAVE YOU EVER OPERATED ON YOUR WIFE/PARTNER AND/OR CHILDREN IF SO, WHY?

My wife receives the same treatments as she. She also wants me to work on her breasts and tummy, should it become necessary, and do a "Woffles lift" on her face.

12. CAN YOU JUSTIFY EVERY OPERATION AND PATIENT REQUEST, OR IS THERE A POINT WHEN YOU REFUSE TO DO AN OPERATION?

I do some times turn away patients who have irrational requests or don't understand the limitations of plastic surgery. Some of these may suffer from Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD), which means they only imagine that they are ugly; no treatment could ever satisfy them. Others want to look exactly like somebody else, which often implies an infatuation or lack of maturity in which case their satisfaction with the eventual results may be short-lived. By and large, most patients today know from the information cycle what plastic surgery can and cannot do for them and are fairly realistic about their expectations.

13. WHAT IS THE MOST UNUSUAL REQUEST FOR SURGERY YOU HAVE ENCOUNTERED IN YOUR CAREER?

A 19-year-old girl desperately wanted me to make her look like an Alien – with square eyes, an enlarged head, fairy-like ears, a sloped brow, a pointed nose and narrowed cheekbones. I sent her to a psychiatrist to find out what was bothering her.

Then there was a short, overweight, dark-skinned man with a Southern Indian face – he wanted to look like Brad Pitt, even the skin colour. I explained to him it was just impossible and sent him away. He returned the next day having lightened his skin tone with make-up and wearing a blond wig: Obviously, I refused to work on him.

14. WHAT WOULD YOUR PATIENTS' REACTIONS BE TO SURGERY?

They are generally surprised how well it went, they are very grateful and their self-esteem improves – which is

evident in their body language, their make-up and in the way they dress. Breast enlargements in particular make shy, timid women very confident, almost overtalkative.

15. COULD YOU NAME SOME OF YOUR MORE WELL-KNOWN PATIENTS?

I can't, for ethical reasons. I can tell you however that some of my patients feel quite at home on the red carpet at the Oscars.

16. DO YOU BELIEVE THAT BEAUTY LARGELY EMANATES FROM WITHIN?

Certainly! The inner core of a person is where true beauty resides but unfortunately many people don't get beyond the exterior shell because this is what attracts or repels first. This is where our profession can help. Of course there are many beautiful people who appear cold, dull or superficial. Beauty is always a mixture of interior and exterior qualities – this is a well-known fact.

17. DO YOU THINK THAT BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE ARE HAPPIER AND LEAD MORE FULFILLED LIVES?

This is often the case, because they receive more compliments more self-confident, and as we all know, self-confidence is the key to success which in turn breeds a form of happiness. However, some people become obsessed with the pursuit of beauty because of what it represents and the promises it may fulfil, a better life, better spouse, better career. I don't think these people are realistic and I find they are often not happy.

18. DO BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE HAVE BETTER SEX?

Not necessarily. I'm sure they receive more offers, and often will end up having more sex than the average person but more often than not, this will make things more complicated and the sex may not necessarily be better. In many cases, they cannot actually fulfil the sexual promise suggested by their beautiful face. Beautiful people are also more easily exploited.

19. WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR COSMETIC

SURGERY?
It will be predominantly non-invasive and without scars. More and more people will demand cosmetic procedures but will want to spend less time on them. I believe my "Woffles lift" will revolutionise facial rejuvenation! In terms of aesthetics, I think the so-called "global" look will

be prevalent, a look I also describe as "pan-ethnic." It fuses the European and Asian concepts of beauty, featuring a straight nose, large, almond-shaped eyes, high cheekbones and full lips.

Interview: Eva Karcher, Munich

Cheeks

Correction of the zygomatic arch: A procedure that is usually carried out to produce higher cheekbones. To achieve this effect, the surgeon implants autologous material or a silicone pad. The operation requires local or general anaesthesia. The surgical cut is made either on the inside, i.e. from the lip fold above the upper teeth, or below the lower eyelid on the outside. To create space for the implant, the skin and the subcutaneous tissue are detached from the bone temporarily, and sown on again after the implant has been placed. Very rarely, the opposite result is desired – a reduction of an over-sized zygomatic arch. In this case, the bone is shortened surgically and filed down for added roundness. Cheekbone operations are predominantly performed on Asian patients. In Europe, it is more common for the rim of the eye socket to be augmented or reduced, respectively by screw-mounting a prosthesis or by filing down the bone.

Swellings or haematomas may occur for one or two weeks. Visible sutures are removed after five days, sutures on the inside of the mouth are self-dissolving.

Risks: In some instances, the implant may shift.

Hospital stay: Outpatient.

Fit for work: After one week.



Fig. 15

For the arch-bones to appear raised, the zygomatic arch can be corrected, e.g. with a silicone implant. © Blue Brain Belgium

Fig. 16 a-b

The face can also be changed by injecting fillers into the cheek area. This not only rejuvenates the face but also emphasises the facial features. The same clinical effect can be achieved with the injection of nerve regeneration fillers, a procedure which takes 5 minutes, requires no anaesthesia and has virtually no downtime. © The Woffles Wu

Men in particular suffer from hair loss. They can opt for autologous hair transplants – with the micrografting technique shown here, the surgeon transplants tiny strips of skin containing hair follicles into the balding areas. © Blue Brain Belgium

Fig. 17 a-b

During the first stage of the operation, the surgeon harvests a skin section containing donor hair – e.g. from the back of the patient's head – and slices it into thin strips. The strips are kept containing 1 hair follicle; one then transplants them into the bald spots. These implants are called micrografts. © Blue Brain Belgium

Fig. 18 a-b

The Singapore-based cosmetic surgeon Waffles Wu has developed his own zig-zag technique for breast augmentation. The Invisible WW Sealith Technique produces hardly any discernible scars. © Private archive Waffles Wu

travel scholarship awarded for the best proposal for a basic research/epidemiological study on cleft lip repair in ASEAN – Nov/Dec 1991

Publications:

“Barbed Sutures in Facial Rejuvenation” *Aesthetic Surgery Journal* 2004; 24 pp. 582–587.
“The Oriental Nose: An Anatomical Basis for Surgery” *Annals Academy of Medicine*, 1992; 21 pp. 176–189

Many appearances in over 250 magazines, journals and newspaper articles and television interviews

Societies:

— International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery (IASAPS)
— Singapore Association of Plastic Surgeons (SAPS)
— Cosmetic Surgery Society of Singapore (CSSS)
— Associate member of American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS)

Key aspects of activity:

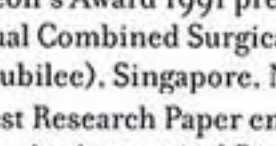
— Aesthetic facial surgery, skin care and body contouring surgery
— Non-surgical facial rejuvenation using the 4-R-Principle: Botox to relax facial muscles, contour jawline, create brow lift effect and refine pore size and skin texture. Fillers for volume restoration, IPL/Thermage for skin quality.
— Woffles Lift and Aptos for skin redraping
— Scarless upper (suture technique) and lower transconjunctival lid surgery with fat repositioning
— Facial contouring with implants, autogenous fat grafts and synthetic fillers
— Composite rhinoplasties using surgical dorsal implants and cartilage graft tips

— MACCS, Minimal Access Cranial Suspension
— The 20-minute facelift and neck lift.
— The Woffles Lift with Woffles Barbed Sutures
— The WW Sealith – Invisible Scar Sutures
— Augmentation Refinement
— High-volume liposuction HVL using the STARS rotary power assisted system

Wishes for the future:
To push the envelope of Non-Surgical Facial Rejuvenation and the creation of the beautiful face, never to stop in the pursuit of Beauty and Youth, to see more of the world and understand more about human nature, to start a Modern Art Museum, to play more squash, to raise a decent family

Wishes for the future:

To remain enthusiastic about my work. To learn something new every day.
To remember that "doctor" means "teacher" and to educate my patients, my students, my fellow surgeons and, most importantly, myself. To take adequate time for family and leisure.



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Biography:
Born 2 February 1960. Married, two children.
1984 graduated with MBBS from Singapore University
1987 Medical officer in plastic surgery.
1989 FRCS (Edinburgh)
1992 Finished plastic surgery training in Singapore under Prof. S. T. Lee. Cleft and aesthetic fellowships to Bangkok (Siriraj, Chulalongkorn, Ramathibodi and Bumrungrad Hospitals) and Tokyo (in 1991).
1992–1993 Craniofacial Fellow at Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne under Anthony D Holmes.
Numerous visits to clinics in the USA.
1994–1999 Craniofacial surgeon & head of Aesthetic Surgery Division, Department of Plastic Surgery, Singapore General Hospital.
Since 2000 aesthetic private practitioner.
Advanced Trainer for Botox and pioneer of Botox facial sculpting, masseteric reduction, brow lifting and Mesobotox (microBotox) for skin tightening and lifting.

Pioneer of the Woffles Lift non-surgical face lifting system using patented Woffles Threads, allowing for rapid recovery and natural results.
Young Surgeon's Award 1991 presented at the 25th Annual Combined Surgical Meeting (Silver Jubilee), Singapore, Nov 1991 for the Best Research Paper entitled: “The Oriental Nose: An Anatomical Basis for Surgery”.
SEAMIC/IMFJ Travel Research Award 1991—