

# Empowerment of Beauty

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## Abstract

This artist talk invites to explore the "Empowerment of Beauty" through a series of short narratives, delving into the intricate connection between women and their instrumental role in nurturing and shaping the world. Influenced by the artistic legacy of Eva Hesse, a German-born American sculptor renowned for her inventive use of simple materials to evoke organic forms, the accompanying video embraces her inspiration. The aesthetic narrative unfolds against the breathtaking backdrop of natural landscapes in Shanghai, China, as a tribute to the city's rich cultural tapestry. The series of short narratives weave together a visual and narrative tapestry, capturing the essence of the feminine as a potent force in championing protection, inclusion, and care. The video, set amidst the captivating landscapes of Shanghai, serves as a backdrop to showcase the profound impact of beauty in empowering women. In celebrating this connection, the paper illuminates the pivotal role women play in fostering a more compassionate and inclusive world, utilizing both the artistic influence of Hesse and the natural splendor of Shanghai to enhance the narrative.

## Keywords

Empowerment of Beauty, Feminine Essence, Eva Hesse, Organic Forms, Natural Landscapes, Shanghai, China, Protection, care, Aesthetic Narrative.

## Introduction

The profound connection between women and nature [1] has deep roots in ancient classical mythology, where numerous goddesses were intricately linked to the earth. This paper embarks on a journey to explore the concept of "Empowerment of Beauty" by tracing the historical threads of this connection. One notable example from early classical mythology is the relationship between goddesses and nature, exemplified by figures like Persephone and the mother Demeter.

In the tapestry of ancient mythological narratives, goddesses [1] were often associated with Mother Earth, symbolizing the nurturing and life-giving aspects of nature. This association extends to the very essence of creation, drawing parallels between the opening of the womb and the emergence of life from the earth [1]. The language used in classical literature further reinforces these connections, with terms like "womb" and "bosom" resonating through works such as "Paradise Lost."



Figure 1. "La Primavera" by Sandro Botticelli – A "Primavera" Painting Analysis" [2].

This exploration seeks to unravel the rich tapestry of early classical mythological connections between goddesses and nature, laying the foundation for understanding the profound and enduring relationship between women and the natural world. As we delve into the narratives inspired by Eva Hesse and set against the picturesque landscapes of Shanghai, China, we draw inspiration from these ancient roots, acknowledging the timeless and universal aspects of the feminine connection with the nurturing forces of the earth.

The Primavera painting by Sandro Botticelli [2] is indeed a masterpiece that has captivated art enthusiasts and scholars for centuries. This iconic work, translating to "spring" in Italian, is set in an orange grove and features an array of mythological figures. Despite its visual richness, the true meaning of the painting has remained a subject of debate and mystery among art historians.

The ambiguity surrounding the interpretation of Primavera [2] has fueled discussions and diverse perspectives within the art community. Some art historians describe it as an "enigma" due to the elusive nature of its symbolism and narrative. The painting has been approached from various angles, with interpretations ranging from allegorical representations of beauty, fertility, and love to more complex and esoteric readings. One prevalent theory [2] suggests that the Primavera was commissioned by Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de Medici for his wedding in 1482. This context adds a layer of personal significance, potentially linking the artwork to themes of love, celebration, and the bounty of nature.

The inclusion of mythological figures, such as Venus, Mercury, and the Three Graces, contributes to the enigmatic quality of the painting, inviting viewers to explore the layers of symbolism embedded in the composition.

Primavera's enduring allure lies not only in its visual splendor but also in the ongoing discourse it inspires. The ambiguity surrounding its meaning allows for a continued exploration of its cultural, historical, and personal significance. Whether perceived as a celebration of beauty and love or as a more complex allegory, Botticelli's Primavera remains a testament to the timeless power of art to evoke contemplation and spark intellectual curiosity across generations.

## Empowerment of Beauty

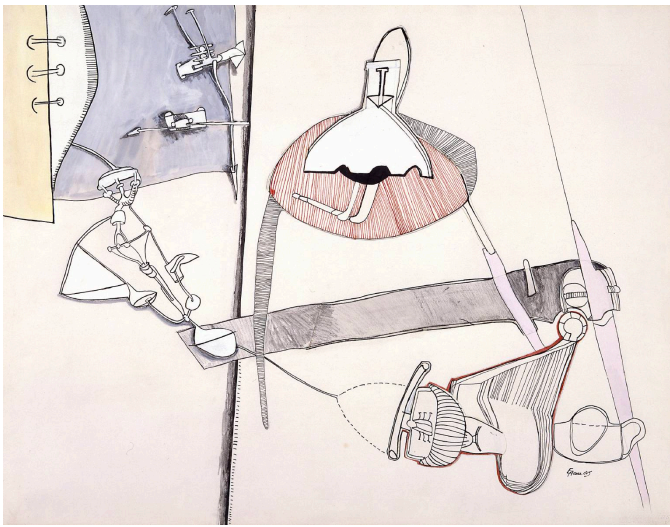


Figure 2. Untitled 1965, The estate of Eva Hesse, courtesy Hauser & Wirth, Zürich [3].

### Technical Description of the Shanghai Shooting:

The cinematographic endeavor set in the natural landscapes of Shanghai, China, seeks to visually encapsulate the essence of the "Empowerment of Beauty" in the context of the profound connection between women and nature. Inspired by the rich mythological and artistic traditions explored in the paper, the shooting incorporates various technical elements to convey the narrative seamlessly.

The choice of shooting in the natural landscapes of Shanghai is deliberate, leveraging the stunning backdrop of the city's scenic beauty to symbolize the harmonious relationship between women and nature. The juxtaposition of urban and natural elements within the cityscape adds layers of meaning, highlighting the enduring connection between the feminine and the organic world.

Drawing influence from the aesthetic legacy of Eva Hesse [3] and the timeless allure of Botticelli's Primavera, the cinematography employs a blend of classical and contemporary styles.

The use of natural light and vibrant colors accentuates the beauty of both the surroundings and the subjects, creating a visual language that echoes the themes of beauty, fertility, and empowerment. The shooting unfolds as a series of short narratives, capturing intimate moments that portray the empowerment of beauty. The mythological undertones from ancient classical mythology, as well as the more contemporary influence of Hesse's work, are woven into the visual storytelling. Each scene is carefully composed to reflect aspects of protection, inclusion, and care, drawing from the arguments presented in the paper.

Symbolism plays a crucial role in the technical execution, with elements such as natural elements (flowers, water, earth) and mythological motifs strategically incorporated. The camera frames capture the subtleties of expression and interaction, emphasizing the nurturing and powerful qualities of the feminine concerning the natural environment.

The audio component complements the visual narrative, with carefully chosen soundscapes and music enhancing the emotional resonance of each scene. The soundtrack reflects the themes of beauty, love, and empowerment, creating a holistic sensory experience for the audience.

In essence, the technical description of the Shanghai shooting endeavors to translate the conceptual arguments presented in the paper into a visual and auditory tapestry. Through meticulous cinematography, composition, and symbolism, the goal is to evoke a visceral and contemplative response that celebrates the timeless connection between women and the empowering forces of nature.

## The Enigmatic Nature of Beauty

We recognize the enigmatic nature of beauty, much like Botticelli's Primavera. It is a concept that eludes precise definition, yet its impact resonates across centuries. Through the convergence of ancient myth, artistic legacy, and contemporary cinematography, this exploration seeks not only to unravel the complexities of beauty and empowerment but also to inspire a continued dialogue.

As the narratives unfold against the backdrop of Shanghai's natural landscapes, we are reminded that beauty, in its various forms, holds the power to transform, nurture, and empower. The final considerations invite us to appreciate the enduring connection between women and the natural world, recognizing the profound impact of beauty in fostering a more compassionate, inclusive, and empowered society.

## Final Considerations

As we conclude this exploration into the "Empowerment of Beauty" through the lens of women's connection with nature, the synthesis of mythological, artistic, and cinematic elements reveals a tapestry of profound significance. The journey began with an acknowledgment of ancient classical mythology, where goddesses personified the intimate link between women and the earth. This connection, reminiscent of Botticelli's Primavera, transcends time and culture, providing a timeless foundation for our narrative.

Eva Hesse's influence brought a contemporary perspective, urging us to reconsider beauty through simplicity and organic forms. The series of short narratives, shot amidst the natural landscapes of Shanghai, seamlessly wove these influences into a visual and narrative exploration. The technical choices, from location selection to cinematography style, were intentional in conveying the nuanced themes of protection, inclusion, and care.

The Shanghai shooting encapsulates the essence of empowerment as it portrays women in their multifaceted roles, embodying the nurturing forces of nature. Each frame speaks to the arguments presented in this paper, celebrating the beauty that empowers women to take up the banner of protection and inclusion. The symbolic imagery, drawn from mythological and natural elements, adds layers of meaning, inviting viewers to contemplate the intricate relationship portrayed.

## References

[1] University of Alberta, "Nature being represented as woman," accessed on January 12, 2024, <https://sites.ualberta.ca/~dmiall/Travel/Presentations/Nature.htm>

[2] Alicia du Plessis, "La Primavera" by Sandro Botticelli – A "Primavera" Painting Analysis," Art in Context, Posted May 19, 2022 Updated September 27, 2023, accessed on January 12, 2024, <https://artincontext.org/la-primavera-by-sandro-botticelli/>

[3] TATE, Eva Hesse (1936–1970), "page of the artist TATE modern collection," accessed on January 12, 2014, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/eva-hesse-1280>

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## Author Biography

Born in 2003 in China, Lilyann Ma is currently in her 3rd-year of undergraduate studies in the Advanced Program in Technoetic Arts at the Roy Ascott Studio in Shanghai. With a background in experimental art, her focus is on interactive art, emphasizing the visual presentation of ideas rather than practical problem-solving. Her artistic style leans towards the dreamy utopian aesthetic, often incorporating elements such as plants, crystals, and metals into her works. Driven by a passion for music, she delves into audio-visual interactions using tools like TouchDesigner, aspiring to create more sophisticated VJ (Visual Jockey) works in the future. This multidisciplinary approach aligns with her studies at the Roy Ascott Studio, where she seamlessly blends artistic expression with a deep concern for contemporary societal issues. She aims to draw attention to critical topics such as women's empowerment, birth control, population management, and authoritarian politics in family planning, stimulating meaningful dialogue. As a student of Technoetic Arts, she explores the interconnectedness of technology, art, and society.