

Melanie Watkins-Patel

Lana'i – An island sanctuary like no other



My first impression of this image is its simplicity, a wide space with only three elements apparent within it.

The largest percentage of the image is made up of calm water, mostly white and silver grey but with dark indistinct reflections on the left and right sides.

The eye is drawn to a pale Caucasian woman, partially submerged, her body barely visible under water, almost naked.

There appears to be only one small word in a plain text on the image itself. On closer inspection there is an unobtrusive statement below the frame of the picture to the right.

The overall impression of the image is a calm, quiet place of isolation, there appears to be nothing except a distant reflection but we don't know what it is.

The colours in the centre where the woman bathes are pale; there is nothing vibrant in the frame, mostly white and silver grey, a neutral colour scheme used in an image is to relax the viewer.

Psychologically, white can be associated with purity and cleanliness. Grey can induce feelings of timelessness. In contrast the reflections are black, the colour of authority and power. Large areas of grey can promote feelings of nothingness; white space in a picture has nothing to say - used to express silence.

The surface of the water although calm, has a few ripples. By definition a ripple is something that moves in a way that is not obvious; it can also be a feeling that spreads through a person, perhaps we are meant to believe that they are spreading from the figure, as she looks to the side in a wistful manner.

In psychology, looking to the left and down is a sign of someone accessing their feelings, remembering. As her body is submerged in the water perhaps this indicates she is submerged in her thoughts as well.

The figure appears devoid of make-up, her hair simple and swept back giving the appearance of a natural beauty, in tune with her surroundings.

Traditionally in European/North American culture a white model has often been used to represent the average person, whereas a non-white model might be used to express the exotic.

Advertisements often speak of transformation, of the future, they present someone to emulate, someone already perfect but not un-attainable. We define our place in the world by self-image. We therefore seek out social and personal improvement.

The pose is unusual; sitting with her knees bent, legs out to the side, hands clasped together by the side of her face.

Sometimes a direct reference to art is employed in advertising, using familiar paintings or sculptures from the past. This appears to be the case here, the figure showing similarities to popular images of nymphs or mermaids sitting, the hands positioned as if to hold up a shell or arranging the hair.



A Mermaid

J W Waterhouse 1900



Hallucination

Gucci 2018



The Siren

E Poynter 1864

These mythological creatures are associated with nature and sensuality, her slightly parted lips suggests this too.

The object (the woman) has now become an icon. The aim is to present an image of something to be desired, an image of how life should be and the promise of future fulfilment.

The attachment to art gives it prestige; it reinforces your (belief) in your own cultural values.

The text within the image is a mystery to us until we read below – an island sanctuary like no other. The name is not as important as the feeling of serenity and sensuality it wishes to convey.

We all have the feeling of something missing in our lives; the idea portrayed by advertising is that the purchase itself is a leisure activity/therapy.

The implication is that to visit such a unique destination sets you apart from everyone else, it will elevate you; make you more attractive, a better version of yourself to be envied by others.

Ways of Thinking - John Berger

Practices of Looking – Marita Sturken/Lisa Cartwright

