



Doctor of beauty and confidence

TEXT: ARNE ADRIAENSSENS | PHOTOS: DR. HOUTMEYERS

Consulting a plastic surgeon is a scary step for many. Stepping forward with your complexes makes you feel vulnerable, and this withholds people from grabbing the opportunity. Plastic surgeon Dr. Philippe Houtmeyers, however, is convinced that the right treatment can make many people more beautiful on the in- and outside.

Unrecognisable film stars who have been botoxed till the last wrinkle: when it comes to plastic surgery, these extreme examples are all we can think of. “Unrightfully so,” says Belgian cosmetic surgeon Dr. Houtmeyers. “Unlike how they use plastic surgery in the United States, we in Europe strive towards the most natural result possible. My patients expect rejuvenation without it being obvious that they have consulted me.”

Because of this European mentality, a plastic surgeon serves a very different cause here. No longer do they rebuild people endeavouring utopian perfection. Instead, they solve the anxieties and uncertainties of their patients in a physical way. “We try to rebuild our client’s self-esteem,” Houtmeyers adds. “Feeling beautiful again can do wonders for your mental state and change your entire life.”

Houtmeyers is mostly known for his aesthetic surgery of the breast and face. After six years in the hospital operation theatre of Sint-Niklaas, he is considered an authority in the fields of sex-change surgery and breast reconstruction as well. “The most rewarding aspect of my job is to see breast cancer survivors blossom into self-confident and strong women again. For many, the reconstruction is a moment

of closure, after which they can finally turn over this dark page.”

That so many of his patients return home happily, is because of the guidance and information they receive. “I hardly ever perform surgery based on a single consultation. During our first meeting, I listen to patients’ wishes and we talk about the diverse possibilities. Afterwards, I give them some time before we schedule a second talk.” This way, he creates clarity for those who come to him with wrong expectations. “Some people assume I can fix all of their problems with a single cut, but that unfortunately isn’t true. I can make people look nicer and feel better, but nobody can create perfection.”

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