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Subtle patter of the 'king of noses'

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Cosmetic surgery is more commonplace in Ireland than we think – it is just not talked about, says visiting Hollywood plastic surgeon Dr Raj Kanodia

THE NOVELIST George Eliot would probably be surprised to know that a quote attributed to her is painted on the wall of a cosmetic surgery clinic in Co Wicklow. "It is never too late to be what you might have been" is the message to callers at the Cosmedico Clinic in Kilmacanogue.

This week, the Beverley Hills-based plastic surgeon, Dr Raj Kanodia, who lists Jennifer Aniston, Ashley Simpson and Cindy Crawford among his celebrity clients, visited the clinic.

He has a disarming way of making cosmetic surgery sound like a perfectly reasonable, if not simply practical, response to the ageing process. Not much different from regular visits to the hairdresser, he suggests.

His patter is sprinkled with soothing words like "enhance", "augment" and "subtly", although these are occasionally mince with the harsher-

"deterioration" and, inevitably, "sag".

"By enhancing and looking youthful, we present the best of ourselves," Kanodia says, with the kind of conviction usually employed to state a fact that cannot be disputed.

But even before ageing becomes a problem, Kanodia claims he can help with minor physical imperfections. He employs the analogy of getting a coffee stain on a beautiful white dress.

"You have to fix that," he says. "That's what I do."

An attempt to put it to Kanodia that Irish women, in general, are simply not too bothered about that sort of thing is politely rebuffed.

"Do you think so?" he says, smiling tolerantly. "It's not that rare. The interesting thing is that people don't talk about it, but there's definitely an industry here also."

"Even in some remote areas, if they are presented with the idea of looking youthful and beautiful in a safe, artistic way, it's embraced and welcomed, whether it's in India, Ireland or Africa."

To suggest otherwise is to be

not entirely honest with yourself, he seems to suggest when he talks about the "sense of euphoria and wellness that beauty creates, whether we admit it or not".

Speaking about his Hollywood clients, he says he will turn them away from his surgery if they are already "perfect".

"Sometimes, being in Hollywood, my jaw drops. 'You're so beautiful, what do you want from me?' There are times I will say, 'You don't need anything. You're totally perfect.'"

Aniston, Simpson and Crawford must have been pretty persistent.

Kanodia also reveals: "The more beautiful they are, the more they want to preserve their beauty."

Kanodia's original specialism was rhinoplasty, and he acknowledges, with a laugh, that he is known as "the king of noses".

He says he has told some clients who want to have a one-millimetre bump removed from their nose: "That imperfection is the perfection on your face, so leave it alone." However, he would recommend the

removal of a larger bump.

"If it's a one-millimetre bump, that imperfection is good, but if it's a four-millimetre bump, that's too much," he says. "It takes away from her beautiful eyes."

Listening to Kanodia, it sounds as if the frightening concept of "going under the knife" is almost a thing of the past, thanks to the latest developments in what are sometimes called "facial aesthetics".

"In the past we just had to cut and lift," he says, gesturing against his own face.

However, "non-surgical" procedures using "safe" fillers,

Botox and lasers seem to be where it's at these days.

"Every culture has emphasised beauty and youth. Now we have some

At times I will say 'You don't need anything, you're perfect', [but] the more beautiful they are, the more they want to preserve their beauty



treatments, we can control some of this ageing process."

Soberly dressed in a dark suit, save for a floral-patterned tie and a surprising flash of butterfly-motif on the sock, Kanodia reveals a humorous side when asked about the impact of the recession on cosmetic surgery. Won't it make people stop and think, is my appearance really that important?

"And in the same second they go, 'Yes it is,'" he says, smiling. "All of us look in the mirror. If mirrors were taken away from this society or community, we'd be fine. And I'd be homeless!"

He advises that he doesn't think that the extent of the recession can be gauged by the impact on his practice. While he is no longer booked a year in advance, the next three months are solid. He also says that bad examples of cosmetic surgery have frightened people.

"With good Botox you can still move your face and can still have expressions," he says. "Bad nose jobs, bad breast jobs, bad facelifts – these are the ones that catch the attention of people."

"The art is to do it so subtly that nobody knows. The difference is the artist."

Some of his clients are approaching 80 years of age, he says. They exercise regularly and eat well.

"They say, 'I feel very young, make me look young.'"



Cindy Crawford: 'facial aesthetics' required? Photograph: Jeff Vespa/WireImage



Jennifer Aniston: among Dr Raj Kanodia's