

FILM

A VERY MODERN ICON

In the last year, actress Lupita Nyong'o has redefined what it means to be a beauty brand ambassador. *Stylist* meets her...

From her early days working as a production assistant to her Oscar-winning role in 2013's *12 Years A Slave*, Lupita Nyong'o's meteoric rise has broken the traditional Hollywood mould (she's next in the behemoth *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*). And, after an impassioned speech about race and beauty during an awards ceremony last year, she was appointed Lancôme's first black ambassador. Here, she talks to *Stylist* about her definition of beauty.

How did your upbringing affect your self-confidence?
I moved to Mexico at 16 and lived in a town where there were only a few black people. The locals were fascinated by my skin. One man asked to take my picture. I felt so beautiful – like the sun itself.

Do you consider your hair to be a political statement?
Shaving my head wasn't

a conscious thing – I was just tired of going to the hair salon. When I began acting, I thought it was more important to hone my craft and spirit rather than concern myself with my appearance.

How does it feel to be the first black woman to represent Lancôme?

I'm in a place of privilege. I'm honoured to be an image that young girls of my skin colour will see and help them feel more beautiful and validated.

How would you describe your relationship with make-up?
I like to experiment. In terms of lipstick, I like bright colours, like Lancôme L'Absolu Rouge In Rouge Rayonnant, especially for the red carpet.

What is the best beauty advice you've been given?
Protect your skin from the sun. As my skin is dark, it's harder to detect a problem, but it can burn.



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