



The State of Slay

**Movements and Insights
into the World of Beauty**

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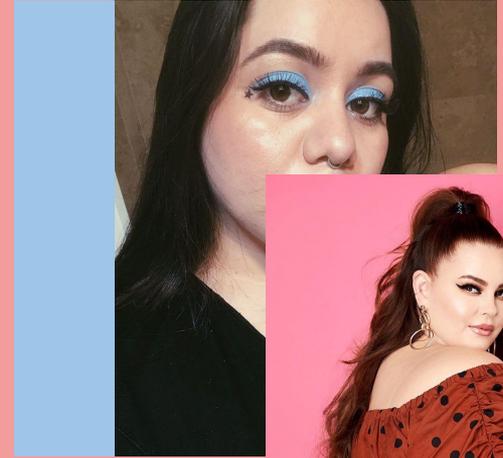
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A few weekends ago, I spent two days, immersed in the world of one of the biggest beauty events of the year. With over 30,000 people present over the course of the weekend, BeautyCon LA brought together makeup and beauty enthusiasts into one space.



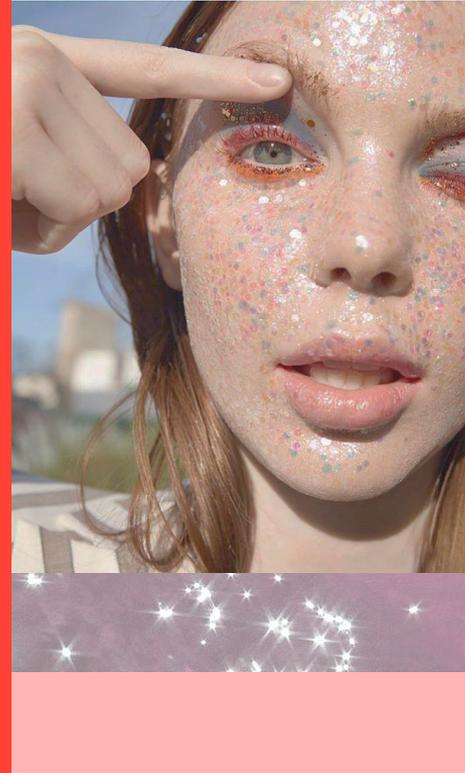
After my professional people-watching experience at BeautyCon, I turned to the internet to do some more research and compiled this report with the most compelling cultural currents and movements of the beauty world.

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Beauty Online



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Beauty Online

The beauty community's online presence has changed since the halcyon days of beauty gurus like Michelle Phan. Now, lengthy beauty videos dominate the genre on YouTube, while elaborate technical lighting setups on both YouTube and Instagram make even the worst makeup look incredible.

In a move away from the HD world of YouTube and Instagram, beauty and makeup enthusiasts are turning to less-produced platforms and seeking out beauty opinions in more direct digital communities.



Beauty Online

Both TikTok and Facebook Beauty Groups have emerged as the next loci for makeup and beauty enthusiasts.

TikTok's shortened format allows for more immediate, easily shareable content. With natural lighting or minimal lighting setups, TikTok's users can share quick, 'instant' transformations, or edited montage sequences.

Meanwhile, Facebook Groups - specifically, Facebook *Beauty* Groups - provide the space and platform for beauty lovers to foster online communities, away from the sway of influencer-laden platforms.



Beauty Online

While beauty enthusiasts will still peruse YouTube and IG for the personalities of their favourite gurus, TikTok and FB Beauty Groups represent the makeup itself.

Users on TikTok and FB Beauty Groups are tapping into the nostalgia factor of *old-school* beauty tutorials and even old-school forums and message boards, highlighting makeup for the sake of makeup: simple, pared down, with lo-fi or less production, and fewer filters.



Beauty & Style Friendship Club

FB, 14K members

A forum for everything beauty and style, with the candor shared between friends.



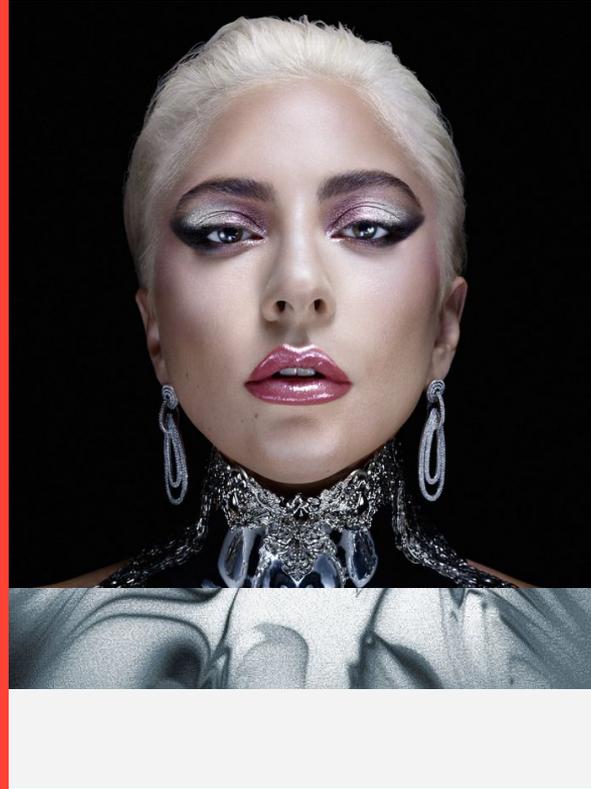
Glamour Empire

FB, 79K members

Established in 2016 by beauty enthusiasts, for beauty enthusiasts.

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Celebeauty



Celebeauty

Gone are the days of celebrity perfumes (thanks for holding it down though, Ariana): we're in the age of celebrity beauty lines.

Instead of collaborations, celebrities are now launching their own brands, veering into the territory of merch makeup. Lady Gaga recently launched Haus Cosmetics, Selena Gomez is reportedly starting her own line soon, and *the* Selena is also rumored to have a posthumous makeup line in the works.

However, much like celebrity perfumes, it's easy for these new beauty lines to get lost in the swell and saturation of the current beauty industry.



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Celebeauty

Some celebrity lines, however, make waves:

There is no way to discuss celebrity beauty lines without mentioning Rihanna's Fenty Beauty, who changed the game with its initial launch of *forty* foundation shades.

Fenty Beauty recognized the need for a broader foundation palette and delivered, setting a new standard not just for celebrity beauty lines but for the broader cosmetic industry — ushering in the Fenty Effect.



Celebeauty

And then there's Florence by Mills, a playful, Gen Z-focused brand by *Stranger Things'* Millie Bobby Brown. Brown recognized the need for a brand to focus specifically on younger skin, pivoting the spotlight away from 'anti-ageing' concerns to focus on how younger people care for their skin and play with makeup.

Rather than blending into the saturated beauty market, brands like Fenty Beauty and Florence by Mills are standing out by focusing on what hasn't been addressed by other brands, focusing on a niche or specific demographic, and leaving space for others to join.



Alternative Glamour

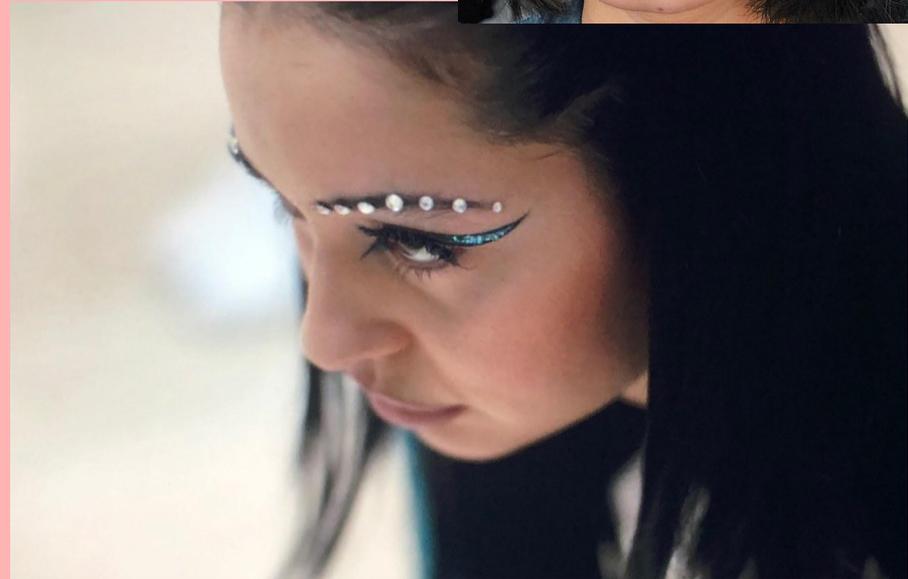


Alternative Glamour

Tired of the full-beat, full-glam makeup of Instagram, makeup enthusiasts are also turning to other aesthetics to express themselves.

The MUA of *Euphoria*, Doniella Davy, tapped into this desire and the bright world of face gems and glitter when designing the makeup for the characters for HBO's hit new show.

Euphoria makeup takes an everyday look and turns it into a fun, messy gesture, basking in the cynicism that comes with social media 'perfection' and banking on irreverence. It embodies the club kid aesthetic, and rather than communicating status, it's a form of escapism.



Alternative Glamour

***Euphoria*-style makeup finds its friend in e-girl (and e-boy!) aesthetics, especially popular on TikTok. With bright, blushing cheeks, winged liner, hearts and applied stars, the e-girl aesthetic is Gen Z's play on the codified nostalgia of scene and emo kid makeup, with its own unique spin.**

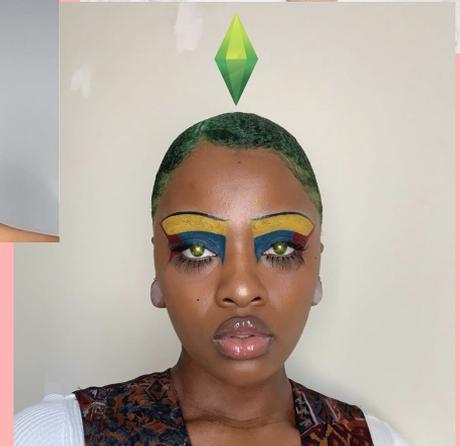
E-girls and e-boys play with their identities through their makeup, toying with the definitions of beauty and even gender, undefining them in the process. Much of the style relies on the aesthetic of anime, so the makeup itself represents a blending of real and animated aesthetics, remixing them both and turning it into something new.



Alternative Glamour

In a similar push against perfection, beauty enthusiasts are also embracing beauty filters: not to smooth their skin or FaceTune so heavily as to veer into uncanny valley, but to play with visual effects. Users are able to create their own filters, filled with illusions work, playing with wild and weird looks.

With filters and the irreverent makeup of *Euphoria* and e-girls, there's the distinct recognition that what we put out on social media is only *part* of who we are. And since it's all a presentation anyway, why not present as a cyborg, a sunset, or even a Sim?



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Beauty With a Purpose



Beauty With a Purpose

Within the wide world of beauty, there is also space to embrace social consciousness in ways that acknowledge the concerns of beauty enthusiasts, as well as their beauty rituals.

For example, several brands not only use their platform to promote social causes: their entire platform exists to promote a social message *through* products. There's Soapbox Co, who have a 1:1 donation ratio for every bar of soap purchased. And Thrive Causemetics, where every product comes with a donation to a partner organization to help women thrive no matter their situation.



Beauty With a Purpose

And although the on-going trends of the no-buy, empties, and Project Pans may seem like a potential loss, brands can easily tap into those rituals, too.

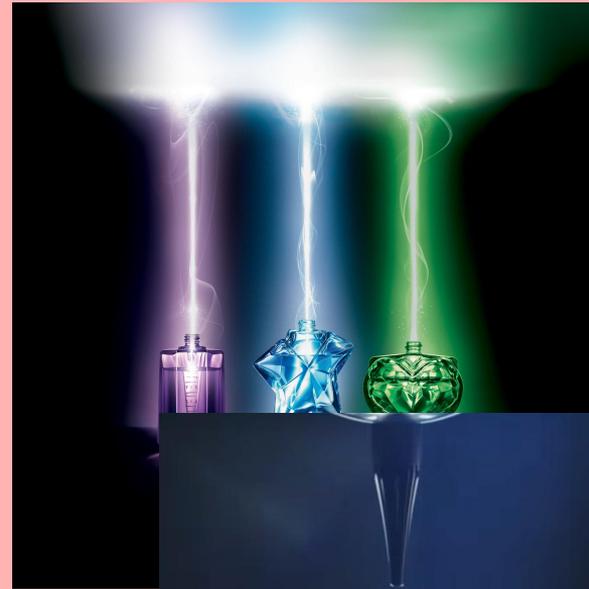
MAC, Lush, and Pacifica, among other brands, offer ways to celebrate celebrating finishing products. MAC's *Back to MAC* program rewards users with a free lipstick after bringing in 5 empties, while Lush gives away face masks after five empty tubs. Recycling programs not only help reduce waste - they drive a sense of loyalty.



Beauty With a Purpose

In the style of MAC and Lush, then, comes Mugler's eco-refill bottles. Refillable through a station called Mugler Fountain, the bottles make a new custom of purchasing perfume. Every refill brings life back to a used bottle, and cuts down on waste, while also providing perfume owners with a new experience on every refill.

Between giving back and recycling programmes, brands are standing for social causes that not only connect them to their audiences, but also add different layers of experience to their products.



Key Takeaways



1 Embrace the Lo-Fi

Moving away from highly-produced content cuts to what beauty enthusiasts care about the most: makeup itself. Give space to all the flawsome ways people use makeup.

2 Embrace the Niche

With the myriad of styles and aesthetics in the beauty world, look deeper to find the smaller currents within bigger movements to find gems.

3 Embrace the Purpose

Tapping into the concerns beauty enthusiasts have, such as sustainability or other social causes, allows brands to add different layers of experience to their products.

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With Love.

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