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An Alternative To Makeup School

I get 5 to 10 emails a week from people interested in a career as a makeup artist. Rather than answer each one of them; I am giving the basic pointers here on where to begin training.

People interested in a makeup career normally start with questions about training. If I were starting today a career in this field **I would personally not spend money on makeup school** (unless I were getting into film FX) I see no need for class training in beauty makeup. I do see a need for training but this setting does not appeal to me and most successful artists never did attend formal training.

Most successful artists I know trained under a great artist. Consider what you get for your dollar. The average school is about \$9,000.00 for this you sit in a class with a lot of other aspiring artists, you listen to their questions that may not pertain to you, you are taught by teachers that may or may not know much about makeup. Some of the teachers I found in schools were people that had not held a real job in the industry in years. When you graduate, you join the hundreds of artists graduating that year to pound the pavement. The problem is, you are not ready.

Industry people do not care that you ever went to a makeup school, they want to see your portfolio, they want to see tear sheets, and they want to see experience on the set. This takes a few years of free work (they sometimes fail to mention this at makeup school, in fact I think 99% of the schools will never tell you this) you will need a portfolio that is competitive with the other artists pounding the pavement. Take a look at some of the portfolios you will be competing with and don't bother going out for paying jobs until yours is up to par.

For the first 2 years of your makeup career you will work free with photographers and models "testing" you will probably pay for the photos you put in your book so testing actually costs you money. If you are getting into film, TV and video you will need a reel. This is more free work; normally you will assist or work independent films for free. To get enough good work on a reel or enough good work in a portfolio you can plan on a 2-year process. This time is not cut short by time spent in school.

So if I were starting out now I would call **successful** commercial and fashion photographers in my area and ask them, "I am looking for a good artist to assist, can you refer me to the artists you use?" Some will give you names; these are the artists you should call, the ones whose names you hear over and over, the busy, working ones. You can also get a list of these people in your local film commission guide.

When you find the successful artists call them; ask them what their ½ day rate is, and then offer to buy their time for ½ day. Get a private lesson, pick their brain, have them show you what YOU need to know about makeup, do this with 2 or 3 artists because everyone has a

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different method and you need to find a style that suits you. In 3 or 4 half day lessons you will learn what most aspiring artists will pay \$9,000 to learn and you will learn it from better teachers (in most cases) What you pay for those ½ days will vary but a good artist will probably have at least a \$400.00 half day rate (5 hours) some will be more. So 4 days at \$400.00 per day is \$1,600.00, that's a lot better then \$9,000.00 and you have many added benefits. The biggest benefit if getting to know and gain the trust of the best working artists in your area. Most artists would trust someone they trained to fill in on paying jobs. This is a foot into the industry that most will never get. Another added benefit, you will learn one on one, you can ask questions when you want. You have a professional undivided attention.

Keep in mind that there are many artists out there that would never groom their competition so you may have to contact 3 or 4 before you hear a “yes”. I cannot stress enough the importance of finding a good, working artist to teach you, do your research, this is very important, you do not want to learn from someone that is not VERY successful in the business.

For artists interested in private makeup lessons there is a list of very good artists willing to tutor at www.makeuplessons.com. There may be one in your area.