

MAKEUP TOOLS

You've heard the expression: 'A good tradesman never blames his tools'. This is generally true, having said this; a carpenter doesn't use a butter knife to cut a beam of timber. You can apply the same rules in makeup artistry. You could have the most expensive makeup brushes on the market and still do a crappy job. At the same time makeup artists aren't going to battle through a makeup with just cotton buds and sponges. Like any trade makeup has a tool for just about every job. Most makeup artist find their favorite brushes eventually, this a matter of trying them and working out what works for you. There are however some tools you must have. The best way to choose what's right for your is to think about their purpose and how you or your client will benefit from using them.

Fibres

- Natural hair
- Synthetic

Kabuki Brush

The word Kabuki originates from the famous Kabuki theatres of Japan which can be translated as "the art of singing and dancing". Around 1603 a famous Kyoto entertainer Izum no Okuni gathered a group of young female misfits, some of whom where involved in prostitution, and taught them acting, singing and dance. Her direction gave these social outcasts order, respect and a sense of identity. The entertainers wore elaborate makeup, which combined with the avant-garde style of entertaining immortalized its cultural significance. The Kabuki brush as we know it today is a dense dome shaped brush made from soft fibres. The Kabuki performers would use this style brush to define the checks and to contour the face. Over the past 400 years, people have discovered more uses for the Kabuki brush. Most people today prefer to use it when applying foundations because the brush evenly distributes the product and creates a smooth texture. It is also popular for bronzing, applying blush, setting powders or blending contour lines.

Duo Fibre Optic

Fibre Optic brushes or Due fibre brushes deriver their name from Optical Fibre which is similar in appearance. The transparent Optical Fibres are not much wider than human hair and are mostly used for transmitting powder and relaying information in communications. The makeup Fibre Optic brushes gave dense natural or synthetic hairs at their base with clear long, normally synthetic fibres, coming through the body of the brush. There are various types of makeup fibre optic brushes. They can be used for applying foundation, knows as stippling, which creates a pixelated finish much like air brushing. People also use them for blending eye colours or applying blush, bronzers and contour colours. The clear fibres should pick up less product meaning you are able to blend the colours with less intensity. The darker fibres ensure you still have control.

Synthetic liquid brush

Synthetic foundation brushes are great for applying liquid foundations because unlike natural hair brushes they don't absorb the product and are easier to clean. There are hundreds to choose from and they come in a variety of different shapes and sizes. Some synthetic brushes can leave streaks so blending the foundation after application with a sponge or soft fibre optic brush will smooth the texture. These brushes are also great for cleaning up any fallout from around the eyes which is particularly useful when creating a smoky eye look.

Natural fibre liquid brush

Also know in artistry circles as natural filbert brushes they are popular for some makeup artists because they are less likely to leave streaks and the fibres stick together better when wet.

Domed mop brushes

Given the diverse ways makeup artists use these brushes they don't have a particular name to classify all of them. Instead, brand title them by purpose. Perhaps it's a clever way to sell more brushes, but there is no doubt of their importance in our makeup kits. You can purchase them with synthetic fibre or in natural hair and they are available in many sizes.

Blush brush

Small to medium domed brush and available in synthetic or natural hair. Blush brushes are mostly sold with medium density fibres as they pick up less product but still have enough body to blend with.

Powder brush

This variety are normally medium to large in size and are mostly used for setting foundations and as the name suggests; applying powders. They are also available with synthetic or natural fibres. You can spend from around \$20 to \$120 for these brushes however it's not necessary to invest a lot in them. Just remember the better the quality the longer they normally last.

Body brush

Generally extra large in size to cove a larger area. Density will depend on the manufacturer however, most are medium to dense. Makeup artists will often use these brushes for applying body bronzers and powders that don't require detailed precision.

Contour brush

It is a blush brush with a different name. These brushes are often slightly angular with longer fibres towards one side of the brush. This allows for defined contouring with softened edges.

Liquid mop

These brushes will create a full coverage look with liquid foundation and allow you to paint the product thick on the skin. They come in synthetic or natural hairs but just remember that natural hair will absorb more product and these brushes do pick up a lot of product.

Concealing brush

These are small flat synthetic brushes that allow you to apply small amounts of product to areas of concern. They are useful for detailing the lip line when you have applied a strong lip colour.

Eye and Detail Work Brushes

Fine tip eye lines brush

Synthetic delicate fibres come to a fine point for detailed work around the eyes. They are also useful for detailing body art or creating temporary tattoos. Look for an eyeliner brush that is inexpensive and firm to touch. They don't last long so you may need to regularly replace them.

Fine tip brush

Fine tip brushes are similar to the fine tip eyeliner brushes. They have denser fibres and a generally larger size. These brushes are great for working under the lower lash line and for detailed concealing.

Angled liner brush

These are small synthetic brushes perfect for creating strong even lines. You can still achieve a thin line with the angled liner brush. The fibres are also quite firm so you might find them easier to work with than a fine tip eyeliner, particularly if you are using a thicker gel liner. They can also be used to define the eye brows. These brushes come in a variety of sizes and densities. The firmer and shorter the fibres the more exact the line will be.

Squared brush

These are as the name suggests they are square in shape. They are firm and great for creating strong angles. The shape of this brush means it doesn't smoothly create lines and if not used correctly may flick loose product creating fall out.

Rounded eye shadow brush

They come in many sizes and depending on the density and softness of the fibre they can be used for applying the shadow and for blending. Smaller rounded eye shadow brushes are better for detailed work while the larger variety are better for applying colour to the entire lid or for blending. As a makeup artist it's important you carry several of these brushes in your kit. These brushes are either synthetic or natural. Most makeup artists prefer the natural fibre because they're easier to blend with and create a nicer finish.

Rounded blending brush

Once again makeup artists prefer to use the natural fibre varieties however, there are synthetic options available. They can be dense however; they should be quite soft and malleable, perfect for blending edges and working product along the crease line.

Fluffy eye brush

Smooth natural fibres allow you to gently blend without picking up much product. They are also great for applying and blending concealer under the eyes. Just remember once you use it for concealing you will need to wash it thoroughly before using it again with eye shadows.

Fan brush

Mostly only used by makeup artists, these brushes are useful for softly blending large areas like cheeks, for applying blush or contour colours and for cleaning away fall out. They come in synthetic or natural fibres and require care to maintain their shape.

Horse shoe angles brush

The brush has been cut on a harsh angle. It is often used for applying shadow to the mobile eye lid while softly blending into the socket line. They are normally dense and relatively large in shape. They are more of a personal preference rather than a necessity in your kit. Natural or synthetic varieties are available.

Bullet eye brush

These are dense short to medium length natural fibre brushes that allow you to apply highly pigmented colours to the socket line and define the upper and lower lash lines. Particularly good for detailed glamour eyes they are a must have tool.

Lip brush

Synthetic fibre lip brushes are more common as they tend to be easier to clean. Lip brushes come in a variety of shapes so it's important to find what's comfortable for you. I find the flat firm brushes with long or extendable handles are the easiest to with and give you a more defined lip contour. It's imperative to regularly clean your lip brushes as they tend to harbor bacteria. It is also a good idea if your lip brush comes with a case that you can clean out with hot soapy water to kill the bacteria. Most lip brushes are inexpensive so keep that in mind because you will need to replace them regularly.

Brow brush Mascara wand

These are screw shaped brushes made from synthetic material that is used for shaping the brows, applying mascara and brushing out excess foundation or powder from brows. They are generally all the same shape and should be inexpensive to purchase. They can be very useful when working on makeup clients or for setting the brows in shape. Just make sure the end is thoroughly cleaned between each use. You don't want to put excess foundation into mascara and try working that into the lashes.

OTHER MAKEUP TOOLS

Sponges

These tools are great for blending and smoothing out foundation or even clean up fallout from eye shadows and pigments. Some people also apply foundation with sponges however, the sponge will absorb product so you will find your foundation is used up quickly.

Scrapple

Makeup artists use these tools to hygienically dispense products. They are usually made from hard plastic or metal. Makeup artists also use them regularly in special effects makeup and for blocking eye brows.

Cotton tips

Must have tool. They are great for picking up small specks of product fall out, such as when you make a mistake with mascara, and for defining lip and eye contours.

DMAC pads

Cotton pads for removing makeup.

Tissues

You can use tissues to prevent fall out, applying mascara and many other uses.

Brush cleaner

Quickly disinfects and cleans brushes or tools between clients or products.

Pallet

You can dispense product onto a pallet to make the application process faster.

Petrie dish

These are used to hygienically work with loose or mineral makeup. It also makes it easier to work with the product into the brush because of the curved wall around the dish.

Makeup case

There are many varieties on the market and some can be very expensive. They are mostly used by professional makeup artists to store their gear when on location or on a set.

Lash curlers

These are normally metal hand held devise that clamp together and bend the lashes. You can also purchase heated lash curlers however, they can damage the lashes if done incorrectly.

Lash glue

Normally a latex based adhesive that is used to glue false eyelashes on your eyes. Makeup artists will also use this glue to stick feathers or other light objects to the face.

Tweezers

You never now when you may need to pluck a random stray hair. However, makeup artists also use tweezers to apply false lashes.

Small scissors

You may need to trim eyebrow or facial hair as a makeup artist. These small scissors are also important to have when trimming down false eyelashes.