

# The world of young makeup artists

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*Anyone who has ever discovered their love for makeup during their childhood would be able to savour the memory of putting on makeup on their sister or their aunt for the first time. They would be flooded with the nostalgia of pretending as if they were catering to actual clients and were putting in the effort to do a full-face makeup look for which they expected to be appreciated.*

For many, the passion withers away. Then again, many others find themselves holding onto this passion and building on it till it becomes a skill. Almost every makeup artist (or MUA as they are popularly called) in the industry has found themselves starting off their journey in a similar way.

Passion aside, if there is one other thing consistent within the journey to establishing oneself as an artist, it would be the struggles they face. Establishing oneself in any craft at all is a long and wearying journey. We are all familiar with the pioneering makeup artists in Bangladesh, Farzana Shakil and Kaniz Almas, and while they have set the standards of what it is like to be successful in the industry, the new generation of makeup artists face unique challenges of their own.

First and foremost, the number of people in this profession at this time is expanding,

and so artists find themselves having to double down not only in their craft, but also their online and offline presence. The role of social media is immense for any business and for many makeup artists, it can be a deal breaker. They have to cater largely to younger people and a good social media presence is vital. This generation has also broken away from the mould of the traditional, heavy-set makeup looks and are more likely to seek novelty. It is no longer about what is considered to be a good look but instead which look would complement and bring out the personality of their clients the best.

For younger people in the industry who have carved a name for themselves primarily through social media, things like handling surging client pressure, limited finances, and keeping up with the increasingly complicated algorithms mostly by themselves can make the pursuit of such a profession overbearing. Overbearing as it may seem, some persevere and manage to thrive if they have a good enough support system. Many households do not deem this to be a viable or safe career and are more inclined to motivate their children to sacrifice their passion for the sake of their education. While academic achievements are important, balancing these two things is quite a rewarding prospect.

Aneeka Bushra is an extremely well-

known name in the industry currently. While she has made a name for herself and has opened up her own studio in Dhanmondi, the road to this has not been smooth for her either. Recalling her experience, she says, "Being a makeup artist, that too at a young age, was a labyrinth of obstacles. Back when I started, being a MUA wasn't a thing. Since it wasn't considered a proper career, I was faced with many questions. I was looking at years of doubts, confusions and frustrations.

However, in the end, it was worthwhile for me."

She adds, "I think being consistent is key. At the end of the day, it won't become about the money or clients. It's all about your art and the joy of satisfaction you get from your art. Be true to your style and be consistent!"

As with all aspects of life, privilege can be pivotal to the success of a makeup artist. Everyone has their passions and dreams they aim to pursue, but sadly life does often get in the way. Makeup artistry is usually a side-hustle or creative output for artists and may have to take a backseat to other matters in life.

"Unless being a MUA is taken as a full-time job, most of us have to take on other jobs to pay the bills," says SuraChow, an emerging artist on Instagram.

Having privilege or a safety net can mean that aspiring MUAs may not have to worry about paying the bills or having food on



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the table, and can concentrate on their craft instead. Locally speaking, makeup artistry is still niche and not profitable for most new entrants. A lot of reluctance is associated with providing such entrepreneurs with financial assistance, loans, etc.

Makeup and supplies that MUAs need to purchase for their endeavours are expensive, and social media engagement doesn't necessarily translate into commissions and clients for artists. Additionally, more often than not, customers expect to pay online makeup artists less despite the effort that is put in, just because they don't deem it "traditional" enough. Hence, sustaining a business can become an issue from a financial standpoint for many MUAs.

Aside from facilitating makeup artists with more time and equipment to pursue their passion, having the right circle of friends can be a make-or-break factor for newer artists. Makeup artistry is aligned closely with social media, and mixing with the right crowd does wonders for creators. Having the right connections can lead to more visibility and clients. A small circle of creators dispropor-

tionately benefits from clout and connections, leaving the rest of the industry behind in the dust.

"If I had a big circle of influential friends or family, I'd be benefiting from their connections and maybe have been getting more clients," continues SuraChow. As disheartening as the unfair power dynamics privilege brings up, talent and perseverance usually nullify the setbacks on the road to success.

The internet is a wonderful place. As a result of social media's omnipresence, forming communities and socialising online is second nature to many young people. The presence of numerous niches and subcultures online, such as makeup TikTok, helps interested people connect together and bond more seamlessly than ever before.

Consequently, makeup artists have leveraged online communities to turbocharge their businesses. Many MUAs have slowly grown into mainstream prominence through online communities and niches. Luckily for creators, short-form content on Instagram and TikTok is prime real estate with maximum return on investment.

A simple search for makeup on TikTok or Instagram yields immeasurable results and risks flooding the 'for you' page with endless curated content. As a result, artists have a much higher chance of discovery and recognition if they're active on social media.

Pinky Peya, a popular MUA, and influencer, credits much of her success to social media. "Social media played a huge role for me to establish myself and get so many amazing clients in such a short span of time."

Furthermore, there's more to social media than just going viral or blowing up. Even though social media has seemingly filled up with vitriol these days, there are still microcosms of wholesome communities left. The online beauty community has become a space for many MUAs and followers to express their art and garner a sense of belonging. The love and support that makeup artists get online can make a lot of the struggles they go through establishing themselves feel like it's worth it.

"It's not always about popularity. Seeing so many people appreciate you and your work can give you a boost when needed," elaborates SuraChow.

In a nutshell, makeup artistry isn't going anywhere anytime soon. It's just getting started. Thanks to social media exploits and the relentless creativity of some fresh new artists, the industry is already on an upward trajectory and breaking glass ceilings. That being said, a lot of grit, dedication, and willpower goes into pursuing something so radical in a conservative country like Bangladesh.

"I think I want the perception of people of this country to change a bit. I would enjoy it if young girls and guys were encouraged more to pursue more artistic and creative endeavors," adds Aneeka.

Rest assured that Taaseen Mohammed Islam is silently judging you from the corner of the room. Ask him why at [taaseen.2001@gmail.com](mailto:taaseen.2001@gmail.com)



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