SOFTWARE & TECH

Making Faces By Kevyn Aucoin

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The Enduring Legacy of Making Faces By Kevyn Aucoin

In the vast and ever-evolving world of beauty, few names command as much reverence as Kevyn Aucoin. A visionary makeup artist whose work graced the covers of Vogue, Harper's Bazaar, and the faces of Hollywood royalty, Aucoin was a true artist. His seminal work, **Making Faces By Kevyn Aucoin**, is more than just a beauty manual; it is a cultural artifact, a masterclass in artistry, and a heartfelt invitation to explore the transformative power of makeup. Published in 1999, this book has transcended its status as a mere tutorial guide to become a cherished bible for makeup enthusiasts, professional artists, and anyone who has ever looked in a mirror and wondered, "What if?" This article delves deep into the magic of **Making Faces By Kevyn Aucoin**, exploring its content, its impact on the beauty industry, and why it remains an indispensable resource over two decades later.

The Man Behind the Brush: Kevyn Aucoin's Philosophy

To understand the book, one must first understand its creator. Kevyn Aucoin was not merely a makeup artist; he was a sculptor of light and shadow, a psychologist of beauty, and a champion of individuality. His philosophy was built on the premise that makeup should not be used to hide, but to reveal. He famously believed that anyone could be beautiful, and his work was dedicated to helping people see the unique beauty they already possessed. This ethos is the beating heart of **Making Faces By Kevyn Aucoin**. Unlike many instructional books that focus on rigid rules and corrections, Aucoin's approach was fluid, encouraging exploration and self-expression. He saw the face as a canvas, and he taught his readers to see it that way too, not with judgment, but with the eyes of an artist.

What is Making Faces By Kevyn Aucoin?

Making Faces By Kevyn Aucoinis a comprehensive, visually stunning guide to makeup application, but it is so much more than a step-by-step manual. It is a deeply personal book that combines technical instruction with heartfelt essays, behind-the-scenes stories, and breathtaking photography. The book is structured in a way that takes the reader on a journey. It begins with the fundamentals of technique, moves into the exploration of different facial features and color theory, and culminates in a gallery of transformative "face charts" and inspiring photographs of countless iconic women. The core message is one of empowerment: makeup is a tool for transformation, celebration, and artistic expression, not a mask to please others.

Structure and Content Overview

The book is divided into several key sections, each building upon the last:

- Lessons in Light and Shadow: This foundational section covers the basics of highlighting and contouring. Aucoin teaches readers how to use light and dark to sculpt the face, creating dimension and structure. He emphasizes that this is not about creating a "perfect" face, but about enhancing one's natural bone structure.
- The Face Charts: Perhaps the most iconic feature of the book, the face charts are detailed, painted illustrations that map out complete makeup looks. Each chart corresponds to a specific photograph in the book, allowing the reader to see exactly how a look was constructed. These charts are a brilliant teaching tool, demystifying even the most complex looks.
- Portfolios: This section is a visual feast, featuring Aucoin's most famous editorial work. From classic beauty

shots to avant-garde transformations, these photographs serve as inspiration. The accompanying anecdotes offer a glimpse into his creative process and his relationships with the subjects.

- Transformations and Interviews: Aucoin includes candid interviews with many of the women he photographed, including Julia Roberts, Demi Moore, and Whitney Houston. These conversations explore their personal relationships with beauty and image, adding a deeply human and relatable layer to the book.
- Color and Product: While the book is not a product catalog, Aucoin offers his insights on color theory and product selection, emphasizing quality over quantity and encouraging readers to find what works for their unique skin.

Key Techniques and Lessons from Making Faces By Kevyn Aucoin

What sets **Making Faces By Kevyn Aucoin**apart from other beauty books is its focus on artistry over tricks. Aucoin's techniques are timeless, rooted in classic artistic principles rather than fleeting trends. Here are some of the most valuable lessons the book imparts:

The Art of Contouring and Highlighting

Aucoin did not invent contouring, but he certainly elevated it to an art form. His approach was subtle and sophisticated. He taught readers to feel their own bone structure and apply shadow where the face naturally recedes (hollows of the cheeks, sides of the nose, temples) and light where it naturally comes forward (tops of cheekbones, bridge of nose, brow bone, cupid's bow). He emphasized blending, warning against harsh lines. This is the foundation of modern sculpting, and his teachings remain the gold standard for natural-looking dimension.

Enhancing, Not Hiding

One of the most revolutionary ideas in the book is Aucoin's insistence on enhancing one's natural features rather than trying to correct them. He viewed asymmetry as interesting, not flawed. He taught techniques for eye shapes, lip shapes, and face shapes that worked *with*the individual's bone structure, not against it. For example, his advice for hooded eyes or thin lips was never about creating an illusion that wasn't there, but about making the most of what one has in a flattering and authentic way.

The Power of Color

Aucoin had a masterful understanding of color. In **Making Faces By Kevyn Aucoin**, he shares his insights on color theory in a way that is accessible and practical. He discusses undertones, complementary colors, and how to use color to evoke mood and personality. Whether it was a subtle pink blush for a fresh look or a bold red lip for a statement, he treated color as a powerful tool for storytelling.

Tools of the Trade

While the book is not heavily product-focused, Aucoin discusses the importance of quality tools, particularly brushes. His favorite brush was a good, soft powder brush, and he advocated for using the right tool for the right job. He also had a genius trick for cleaning brushes quickly, emphasizing that hygiene is essential for a flawless application.

The Cultural Impact of Making Faces By Kevyn Aucoin

When **Making Faces By Kevyn Aucoin**was published in 1999, the beauty industry was dominated by a very specific, often unattainable ideal. Aucoin's book was a breath of fresh air. It celebrated diversity of age, ethnicity, and face shape at a time when the industry was much more homogenous. The book featured a wide range of models and celebrities, including women of different races and ages, and it presented them not as products of a factory, but as unique individuals.

The book also played a significant role in democratizing makeup artistry. Before the age of YouTube tutorials and Instagram reels, **Making Faces By Kevyn Aucoin**was the ultimate education for aspiring makeup artists and beauty enthusiasts alike. It was often passed around among friends, studied like a textbook, and kept on coffee tables as a piece of art. It inspired a generation of artists, many of whom credit Aucoin as their primary influence.

A Timeless Resource in a Digital Age

In the 2020s, where beauty content is consumed in 30-second clips, **Making Faces By Kevyn Aucoin**stands as a testament to the value of slow, deliberate learning. The book does not offer quick fixes or viral trends. Instead, it teaches principles that transcend time. The techniques for creating a soft, diffused look are just as relevant today as they were in 1999. In fact, many of the trends that cycle through social media—like "clean girl" makeup or "strobing"—are simply reinterpretations of the fundamentals Aucoin laid out decades ago. This is why the book has maintained its cult following. It is an anchor in a sea of fast-changing styles, offering a grounding in classic beauty.

Why You Should Still Read Making Faces By Kevyn Aucoin

For anyone who is serious about makeup, whether as a professional or a passionate hobbyist, this book is essential reading. It is not a quick reference for a specific look, but a comprehensive education in seeing the face as an artist does. Here are a few reasons why it remains so valuable:

1. It teaches artistic principles, not trends. Understanding light, shadow, and color will make you a better makeup artist for life, regardless of what is "in" this season.
2. It is beautifully produced. The photography is stunning, and the face charts are an ingenious teaching tool that you can refer back to again and again.
3. It is deeply human. The interviews and personal stories remind us that beauty is about feeling good, not about perfection.
4. It is inclusive and empowering. Aucoin’s message that everyone is beautiful is more important now than ever.

How to Use the Book as a Modern Learner

If you are used to video tutorials, approaching a book like **Making Faces By Kevyn Aucoin**might feel different, but it can be incredibly rewarding. Start by reading the essays to absorb the philosophy. Then, study the face charts. Try to recreate a look on yourself or a friend using the chart as a map. Pay attention to placement and blending, and don’t be afraid to experiment. Use the portfolios for inspiration, and remember that Aucoin’s ultimate lesson is that makeup is a form of self-expression. There are no mistakes, only learning experiences.

Conclusion: The Lasting Magic of a Masterpiece

Two decades after its publication, **Making Faces By Kevyn Aucoin**remains a cornerstone of beauty literature. It is a tribute to a brilliant artist who saw beauty in everyone and who taught a generation to use a makeup brush not as a tool for conformity, but as a wand for self-discovery. In a world that often uses makeup to hide, Aucoin taught us to use it to reveal. His book is not just about making faces; it is about making art, making connections, and making peace with the face you see in the mirror. The techniques are valuable, but the philosophy is priceless. For anyone seeking to deepen their understanding of makeup beyond the surface, there is no better companion than this timeless masterpiece. It is a gift to the beauty world that will continue to inspire and educate for generations to come.

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