



False eyelashes, from left: **shu uemura** radiant blue; **shu uemura** premium edition blunt blue; **M-A-C** no. 7.

Mascara, clockwise from left: **YSL** waterproof, 6W; **Lancôme** Courbe Virtuôse, black; **Clarins** Wonder waterproof, turquoise (02); **smashbox** Bionic, jet black; **Chanel** Extracils Super Curl Lengthening, violine (14); **ck Calvin Klein** True Lashes, black (201); **YSL** Volumizing Infinite Curl, no. 5; **YSL** Everlong, no. 5; **Guerlain** Maxi Lash, wonder violet (53); **Dior** Diorshow, black (090); **Giorgio Armani** Black Gem Top Coat.

LASHING OUT

Going to great lengths for luscious eyelashes.

by **Alyssa Schottland-Bauman** / photography by **Clinton Hussey**

With just the blink of an eye, a woman can flirt, lure and captivate. Long, dark eyelashes seductively rim the eyes, accenting shape, luminosity and colour. Where would glamour icons like Sophia Loren, Greta Garbo, Marlene Dietrich and Bette Davis be without their signature lash-lined eyes?

Dramatic eyelashes have long been the ultimate symbol of femininity, and the quest for them has proven to be an endless one. What Mother Nature hasn't provided, women have found countless ways to enhance, using mascara, eyelash curlers, false lashes and even growth-promising formulas to better their lashes.

But the pursuit of flashy fringes may have originally been inspired by superstition rather than vanity. Phrases like "a dirty look", "the eyes are windows to the soul", and "if looks could kill" are all derived from one of the most prominent of folk fears: the evil eye, a dreadful gaze that was believed to bring harm to anyone it fell upon. The myth has many variations, and it was shared by almost every culture at some point. Persians spread herbs and salt to blind the devilish eye; Greeks and Romans hired sorcerers possessing the evil eye to curse enemies; and others burned anyone with a crazed gaze at the stake. But it was the intrepid ancient Egyptians who concocted a cosmetic remedy: in an attempt to ward off the evil eye, they would ring eyes with a black powder called *kohl*, applying it heavily to the lashes. This first incarnation of mascara was applied with glass, ivory or bone, and was made with a mixture of ingredients ranging from copper, lead and soot to burnt almonds, onion water and even crocodile dung.

Thankfully, there have been enough recent cosmetic inventions to create a mascara that works *sans* croc dung. Mascara as we know it was created in 1913 by chemist T.L. Williams. He made lash darkener as a cake-form mixture of coal dust and Vaseline for his sister, Mabel, whose lashes were white. (At the time, pale lashes were considered by some to be a birth defect.) Mabel was smitten with a man who was in love with someone else; a year later, however, the two were married, and Williams was convinced that it was his sister's new lustful lashes that had finally lured in the fellow. Thus, the company Maybelline (named after Mabel and Vaseline) was formed. Today, Maybelline's Great Lash mascara is one of the best-selling mascaras, with a sale every 1.9 seconds.

According to the latest L'Oréal Usage and Attitude study, 84 per cent of women wear mascara—it is the one beauty tool most women wear daily and feel naked without. It defines the eyelashes and frames the eyes, making them appear bigger, more vibrant and more awake. Formulas and brushes work together to lengthen, thicken, darken, curl, colour, condition and even grow the lashes. The word mascara comes from the Italian word *maschera*, which means mask—though it serves more to highlight than to mask. Whether it is a bare-face accent or the crowning touch on sultry, smoky eyes, mascara's low effort has a high impact.

The stunning effect that a set of lashes can have is nowhere more apparent than at the shu uemura Tokyo Lash Bar at Holt Renfrew in Vancouver. (Another will open in Toronto this year.) Makeup artists apply false-eyelash sets, half-sets or individual hairs that can take even the thinnest fringes to full extension. "False lashes are not just makeup—they're an expression of individuality," says Natasha White, director of marketing at shu uemura Canada. "Having long lashes is addictive. They elevate your mood—almost like wearing a really gorgeous piece of jewellery."

So acclaimed are the company's lashes that they've garnered approval from none other than the ultimate Material Girl: shu uemura helped Madonna add bling to her blink with custom-made mink lashes adorned with diamonds during her Confessions tour. That may be a bit extreme for the mainstream, but shu uemura's current collection does include rhinestone-studded lashes, electric hues, and feathers so long they flit above the brow. At these attention-grabbing lengths, the come-hither stare is a given. ●