

Lipstick: Love The Look, Hate The Work!

It was not near lunch yet and I was already reapplying my lipstick. Usually, this was a mindless routine task, but on this morning something snapped. I was all alone and thought to myself in annoyance, "I wish I could just tattoo my lips a natural color and be done with it." The thought was completely foreign to me and I took a second to consider the possibility. "Interesting concept", I thought and then I forgot about it. Tattoos of any kind were way out of my box and one on the lips seemed unthinkable. Two days later, while casually thumbing through a magazine, I discovered there was such a thing as tattooed lipstick. It is called permanent makeup, cosmetic tattoo, dermal pigmentation or micro-pigmentation. Now, after years of freedom from applying lipstick, or practically any makeup, I find it unthinkable to be without my cosmetic tattoos.

Beauty Is Not Pain

I expected a lot of pain when receiving permanent lip color. In fact, it took me five years to muster up the nerve to do it. Finally, while doing extensive training with a permanent makeup practitioner, I decided to trust and put my face in her competent hands. I liked that she is an artist, as I am and her skills as a technician were being clearly and impressively demonstrated to me. It went surprisingly well. For the most part the topical anesthetic worked to block the discomfort, except for small twinges. One especially sharp twinge of pain brought tears to my eyes, but it vanished as quickly as it came. There was no fumbling about, her hands moved efficiently and with an instinct garnered from experience. For an hour or two afterwards my lips felt hot, tender and huge, more than they looked. Nevertheless, I got up from the chair and immediately went to a fine restaurant with a friend, enjoyed myself and took care not to order spicy food. The cosmetic tattoo procedure was simple and caused no inconvenience.

Make Your Lips Look Their Best

There are different options for permanent lip color. The first is a lip line; a single color in a crisp outline around the mouth. The second is a lip shaper; a lip line that is softly blended into the natural lip color. The third is full lip color. The fourth is a combination of full lip color with a lip line or shaper in a slightly darker or different color than the fill. Most lip colors can be achieved, but a good eye and the effective application of basic color theory is essential to success. You will not get the brilliance of topical makeup because permanent makeup is viewed through a veil of skin. Lip balm or gloss will give permanent lip color a lipstick-like sheen. One with sunscreen is always recommended.

The Best Kept Secrets About Permanent Lip Color

The first secret is augmentation. Cosmetic tattoos can create any number of effects on the face. When applying permanent lip color you make small, crisp and precise adjustments in shape that can create symmetry. You can also make lip curves more sensuous, adjust the balance between the upper and lower lip, make the mouth

appear slightly larger or smaller, cover scars and even give the lips a subtle upturn. The second secret is based solely on my personal experience and that of some of my clients. It concerns age lines that radiate out around the mouth and tend to fill up with the lipstick you wear. Skillfully applied pigment into the edge of the lips, called the vermilion border, detracts from age lines and may stop or minimize lipstick from bleeding. Granted, it is not often that I apply lipstick, but when I do it stays put. A well-defined vermilion border is not only youthful, but I have been told consistently over the years that my age lines are not visible. I don't believe people were just being nice. The lines are still there, but visually the lips themselves dominate.

Cosmetic Surgery Considerations

What if you wish to address similar lip issues with medical cosmetic procedures? If you choose to get any kind of lip filler, then have permanent makeup done first so the lip shape is clearly established. If you already have lip filler, let it go away completely before having permanent makeup applied. If you wish to treat age lines around the lips, treat them first and then have permanent lip color added later. With these simple tips you can get the most out of your lips and look your best.

Dawn Willard's extensive career in the fine and applied arts has included lettering, illustrations and photo and film styling. Twenty-three years as a photo and film stylist taught Dawn an array of artistic skills, one being makeup. Ms. Willard's foray into permanent makeup began in 1996. She currently owns the Permanent Makeup Studio in Asheville North Carolina. She has explored a variety of techniques and has clients coming to her from Illinois, Ohio, South Carolina, Tennessee, New Hampshire, New Mexico and numerous towns in western and central North Carolina. She can be reached at <http://www.DawnColors.com> or starjump@gmail.com.