

The Fringe Evolution

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The Silent Screen Days

The film and entertainment industries have used false eyelashes since the silent screen days of 1916. The actors (male and female) talked with their eyes and the addition of false eyelashes helped deliver their words and thoughts loud and clear to movie audiences.

Soon after the movie *Intolerance* was released in 1916, society women started wanting the look...thick, luscious eyelashes. In those days, eyelashes were handmade by wig makers, they were expensive and the industrial strength adhesive made for very uncomfortable wearing.

Over the years, realized that a spokesperson (yes, even men in the early years) wearing false eyelashes delivered their messages in a more convincing, memorable and emphatic manner.

And so, the Fringe Evolution began in full swing, coming in and out of fashion like the winds of nature, over and over.

The British Invasion



1966.

Image from williamclaxton.com.

Model Peggy Moffett photographed by William Claxton,

Wearing eyelashes reached a peak in the early 1960's, thanks to the British

invasion and the influence it had on the fashion, cosmetic and music industries. There was actually a time in the mid to late sixties when every Walgreens, SuperX and Revco featured a six to eight foot wall section devoted exclusively to false eyelashes and eyelash adhesive products

False eyelashes came in a rainbow of colors and styles. The selections were endless, with colors including green, blue, purple and navy blue. You have to remember it was the sixties and that time period was all about color and lots of it. Styles were more outrageous than the colors. Mr. Griffith would have been in eyelash heaven. A few of the styles were so long and thick, I refer to them as having their own zip codes. This metaphor is very timely, since zip codes were invented in 1963.

The most popular brands in the United States were Eylure, Love, Mod, Max Factor and Revlon. Rimel and Mary Quant dominated the European markets. There were no instructions or advice for applying false eyelashes, it was a purely learn-by-trial-and-error, and errors there were a lot of. Eyelash adhesives were marginal at best when it came to adhering the eyelash to the eyelid. Many an eyelash fell off into a serving of soup or were loss on the dance floor.

Most of us (I use the first person here because I was definitely one of the over achievers when it came to eyelash wearing and layering in those days) used heavy eyeliner and lots of lash-building mascara to enhance the false eyelashes. If we couldn't find eyelashes heavy enough, we layered two or three pairs on at a time. I know, that seems impossible, but we were also the generation that used Man Tan® for a "golden glow", which was really a bright orange glow with lots of streaks and orange palms.

As the false eyelash evolution continued, the over-fringed look gave way to a natural looking growth-eyelash enhancement. Less eyeliner, less false eyelash and a normal looking eye with definition and expression. Ardell came out with several natural looking designs and best of all, a quality eyelash adhesive. The drug and mass market stores were also sliming down and reclaiming the wall space for other products

Just like today's world of influence, movies seemed to set the trend with *Love Story* and *Cleopatra* leading the way. Who can forget Ali McGraw's eyes and that white turtle neck from *Love Story*? The airline industry became a huge

influence when their ads with woman saying, “come fly with me” while batting those eyelashes. They started requiring stewardesses to wear eyelash enhancements as they were now being called.

And to everything there is a season of age

The young, hip and fashion eyelash buyers began to give way to the society mavins that used false eyelashes to correct their *mature eye problems*, that were being pointed out by the first celebrity makeup artists exploding into the fashion world. According to Mark Traynor, one of the first celebrity makeup artists, “using false eyelashes on the mature eye with a overhanging eyelid precluded the need or use of eyeshadow and eyeliner”. He was also quick to point out that “natural-looking false eyelashes give this type of eye a much needed lift”.

Women, especially mature women have always been inventive and creative when it comes to makeup and its application. Seeing and/or hearing the words “much needed lift” set in motion a movement that could have blinded the entire female population had not the immediate results been so horrific.

The theory was logical and simple. If a little eyelash adhesive on the eyelid and eyelash could create a “lift”, what could a lot of eyelash adhesive in the crease of the eye accomplish? I know; a mess is most likely the first answer to come to mind. Actually, the concept worked and worked really well - for a few days or at most, a couple of weeks.

Then the itching started, followed by those dreaded red, scaly and puss weeping eyelids. Next came the conjunctivitis (also knows as granulated eyelids), an inflammation of the conjunctiva which is the mucous membrane investing the anterior surface of the eyeball and the posterior surface of the lids

Several hundreds of dollars later, the women finally gave up on their self-fix and in later years turned to plastic surgeons to do the job correctly.

The eyelash winds are restless again and a storm is on the horizon

A few walls of eyelashes here and there in a common drug store is one thing, but when the industry insiders started talking and writing about the millions of dollars in annual sales by the mass market stores, it slapped the professional industry up along side their perfectly coiffed heads. They were not amused.

Not to be outdone by their OTC counterparts, the professional licensed beauty industry stepped into the eyelash market with the introduction of "Individual Eyelash Applications", which by the way had an extremely heady price point.

Individual human hair eyelashes were clusters of three to five (never an even number) individual human-hairs on an invisible band, just large enough for the hairs to adhere to properly. A few years later the OTC vendors would make the extremely uneducated design faux pas of using an even number of hairs.

A licensed professional in a salon applied to the growth eyelash with an industrial strength liquid adhesive using tweezers, their instrument of choice. Of course the tweezers had to have the long handles, so they stood apart from the short handle tweezers intended for home use.

The Individual Eyelash Applications were advertised to last indefinitely. The claim that read well in print and quickly caught the attention of TV viewers much like the word *lift* mentioned earlier. The truth in advertising is that the clusters did last indefinitely wherever they ended up after falling off the eyelid. Everyones natural growth eyelash hairs shed on a rotating basis every three months or so. When the growth eyelash that the individual lash-cluster was applied to sheds, so did the individual eyelash.

Wear, tears, facial friction and skin care products were mortal enemies of the individual eyelash clusters. Side and face sleepers woke up to crooked and missing clusters on a daily basis. Women also realized that the industrial strength adhesive did not hold up well while swimming, especially in salt water. Many a woman left for vacation with their eyes full of super-sweeper eyelashes only to return with a spike or two of eyelash hairs left in place.

Of course there was a method to the madness of all this activity. The lash ladies returned to their salons by the thousands for reapplications. This, by the way was probably the intent from the introduction of this type of eyelash

enhancement.

Remember that industrial strength eyelash adhesive mentioned earlier? Unfortunately, it was very caustic to the eye and the eyelid, creating another mass exodus to ophthalmologists and dermatologist nationwide. The lashes and adhesive were designed to be applied to the top hairs of a growth eyelash - not to the skin of the eyelid. As this type of application became more high maintenance than high fashion, the problems and turf wars began.

The eyelash winds change direction again...

The ever evolving money-making cycle once again returned to the OTC retailers who were beginning to offer their own versions of individual eyelashes and adhesive. In order to offer the adhesive to the mass markets, the formulas had to be re-evaluated and reformulated with safer ingredients. Women slowly began buying their individual eyelashes retail and bypassed the professional market. Even with safer products that were easier to use, shortcuts is still the only word to describe the outcome.

Women across the country started applying and filling-in with their own individual eyelashes. They soon realized that applying individual clusters in front of a mirror was totally different then having a professional applying them. Time for a shortcut. It seemed to be much easier to apply the clusters to the eyelid skin than to the growth eyelash hairs. If you can't say anything else about women, you have to admit we can be pretty resourceful when we need to be.

Once again, the results of self-application were problematic at best. It didn't take long for the individual eyelash market to fade away, yet again.

And again!

I comment quiet often in my writings about how inventive and resourceful a woman can be when it comes to self improvement. Well, move over women of America because the beauty, spa and medical industries have just trumped your creativeness.

A majority of the franchise and professional brand cosmetic/hair care companies have evolved into the mass market via the super-cosmetic stores, Internet sales and home shopping channels. Health insurance companies caught onto the practice of Plastic Surgeons coding patients elective surgeries so they

would be covered and they stopped paying. The personal enhancement industries needed an infusion of income dollars.

In the day - invisible lines were drawn in the retail sand and each individual segment of the beauty industry played fair and would not cross that lines as a jester of good will. In return, the retail beauty industry would refer clients to the professional hair, spa, nail and medical communities. In return, the doctors would refer their patients back to the beauty industries for post op care and maintenance.

That professional good will started to erode several years ago and yet another change was in the air. Beauty salons became Day Spa's and imported expensive European product lines to enhance their bottom lines. Plastic surgeons left their respective hospitals by the thousands and opened their own surgery centers. That was not enough, so they branched out into makeup and skin care products. The final straw was when most plastic surgery practices became huge Day Spa's, offering all the services as a beauty salon and more.

Plastic surgery may not be affordable in today's economy. However, injectables have become main stream and quickly obtainable. Give up your lunch and Starbuck's habit for a week and you can afford a hit of Botox - during one of those lunch hours.

To say the beauty enhancement industry is in complete chaos is an understatement. Every beauty professional is searching for a quick influx of dollars and staying on your side the proverbial line in the sand no longer works.

2009 Eyelash Extensions Invade the Beauty, Spa and Medical Markets.

Yet another beauty innovation hits the beauty market and this time around, it is a battle between the Licensed Professional and the medical community. So far, the battle has been a calm one and the choice of professional is up to you, the consumer.

Eyelash Extensions are truly individual hairs that are applied to your growth eyelashes, hair-by-hair with an adhesive. Because there is not a band to be covered with eyeliner or eyeshadow, the finished application looks remarkably

natural. Additional lash hairs will need to be added on a regular basis. How often depends on how you care for the extensions and how well you follow instructions for after application care.

This time around, the industries are a bit more forth coming and realistic about the pros and cons of eyelash extensions and you will find disclaimers and limitations throughout the product literature. You will even find detailed information in the “not for everyone” section.

Before investing in the \$200.00 to \$400.00 procedure (depending on the city where are having the procedure), I highly recommend you read through chapter two and refresh your memory on the physiology and anatomy of the eyelash and eye area.