

Deciding on a Makeup School or Workshop

by Mary Erickson

These are the things you need to look into when deciding on a makeup school or workshop:

- Who exactly is teaching the class and can this person be substituted? If you are offered a substitute can you opt for a refund? *If you are not assured the teacher promised, pick another school or workshop that will offer this assurance. You need to have this stipulation in writing. Pay with a credit card, this will give you recourse if they do not follow through. If they do not take a credit card, Run.*
- Does the instructor have a portfolio of published work you can view on line? Are they mentioned on IMBD? *Every experienced artist that has been in the industry for a fair amount of time will have paid work in their portfolio (on-line not hidden) or they will be mentioned on IMBD if their career is Film or TV. Stay away from people with resumes they cannot back up. Testimonials are easily fabricated, pay no attention to them. Stay clear of teachers with pictures that look like they may have been unpaid work or tests. If they are not straight from a magazine or advertisement you are probably dealing with someone that never really worked in the industry for pay. A career teacher. These are people that never made it and so they teach for a living, not someone you need to learn from. Key things to remember here.... 1) Pictures can be stolen, make sure they are on line 2) Testimonials can be fabricated and many times are 3) Resumes can and are a lot of the time fabricated. 4) There are very few teachers out there with the experience and knowledge to teach and so I do consider 90% of all workshops and schools a waste of your money.*
- Do they indicate you will make a lot of money after graduation? *Run if they do, you will not.*

With the ever-increasing number of makeup workshops and schools popping up across the country I find my email overflowing with new artists wanting my opinion on them, and artists giving me their opinion on workshops they have taken. I am going to share here my observations with you to help you make a decision on investing in makeup and related workshops.

Makeup industry workshops run from \$10.00 to over \$4,000.00 and go from an hour to a week or more/ there are many around the country, most are not worth the money, a few are, depending on where you are in your career and what you want to learn from the workshop.

A workshop is as good as its teacher. How do you know if the teacher is good? Here are some tips to help you.

DO NOT trust testimonials unless you hear them from the student face to face. Message boards on makeup and styling are owned or run normally by people with special interests, schools, magazines, makeup advertisers, etc. You will find many school administrators on these boards posing as students praising their schools and putting down other schools; ignore everything you see on the boards regarding schools. Ignore website testimonials, you have no way of knowing if these are real or not, I know many are not.

DO NOT TRUST PORTFOLIOS of the teachers work unless it is on a public web where there is some accountability, even then, I know one school doing workshops across the country that has stolen photos on their site, . I know this may surprise you, the level people in this business will stoop, it surprises me as well and I wish it were not so but since it is, you need to be aware.

If the workshop is offering photos, you need to make sure they are quality shots you can use in a portfolio. Check out the photographers work, this is VERY important. Check out the models, this also is very important, if the photographers and models are not good, you won't be able to use the shots regardless of the quality of makeup.

If the workshop is offering makeup, see if you can decline it and save some money. Most of the makeup included in these workshops are private label Cosmetics that you as an artist can get cheaper, A LOT cheaper on your own.

Is the instructor good? Lets say you want to learn airbrush, I would go to an airbrush expert, someone like Tobi Britton in NY or Suzanne Patterson in VA, not just any artist. Lets say you want to learn FX for film I would go to an expert for film FX, someone like Dick Smith who trained Rick Baker, not just anyone doing FX. For print makeup, don't go to a someone with a TV background, print and TV are nothing alike, go to someone with a successful print makeup career.

Be very careful about flying to take a workshop. Workshops sometimes cancel or postpone if the teacher gets a better paying job, gets ill, has a falling out with the workshop organizers etc. This may leave you with expensive airfare and hotel accommodations that cannot be refunded.

If the workshop is in your area it is best to sign up for the workshop as close to the date as possible; this is because most will not refund your money if you cannot make it. Reserving your spot way in advance is usually not necessary, even if they say it is, (unless the workshop is very popular.) Spots normally open up due to cancellations the last week and in fact there are very few workshops that will not make room for you at the last minute.

There are a few workshops out there that will not refund your deposit even 2 or 3 months before the class, I suggest staying away from any workshops with these policies, if they can't fill a spot 2 or 3 months before the class, you have to wonder why. My understanding is that if a workshop is held in California by law they must follow California law and refund most of your money all the up to the date of the class.

If you would like specific direction or opinion on workshops you are considering, please email me and I would be happy to give you my opinion based on feedback I have received and my knowledge of the industry. Email Mary@TheMakeupArtist.com and please include:

- 1) Where you live, where the workshop is taking place.
- 2) What area of the industry do you work or want to work (TV, Film, Bridal, FX, Print, Runway)
- 3) What type of workshop do you need, what is your focus?
- 4) If you are emailing about a specific workshop, please include the name of the teacher and web site address if there is one