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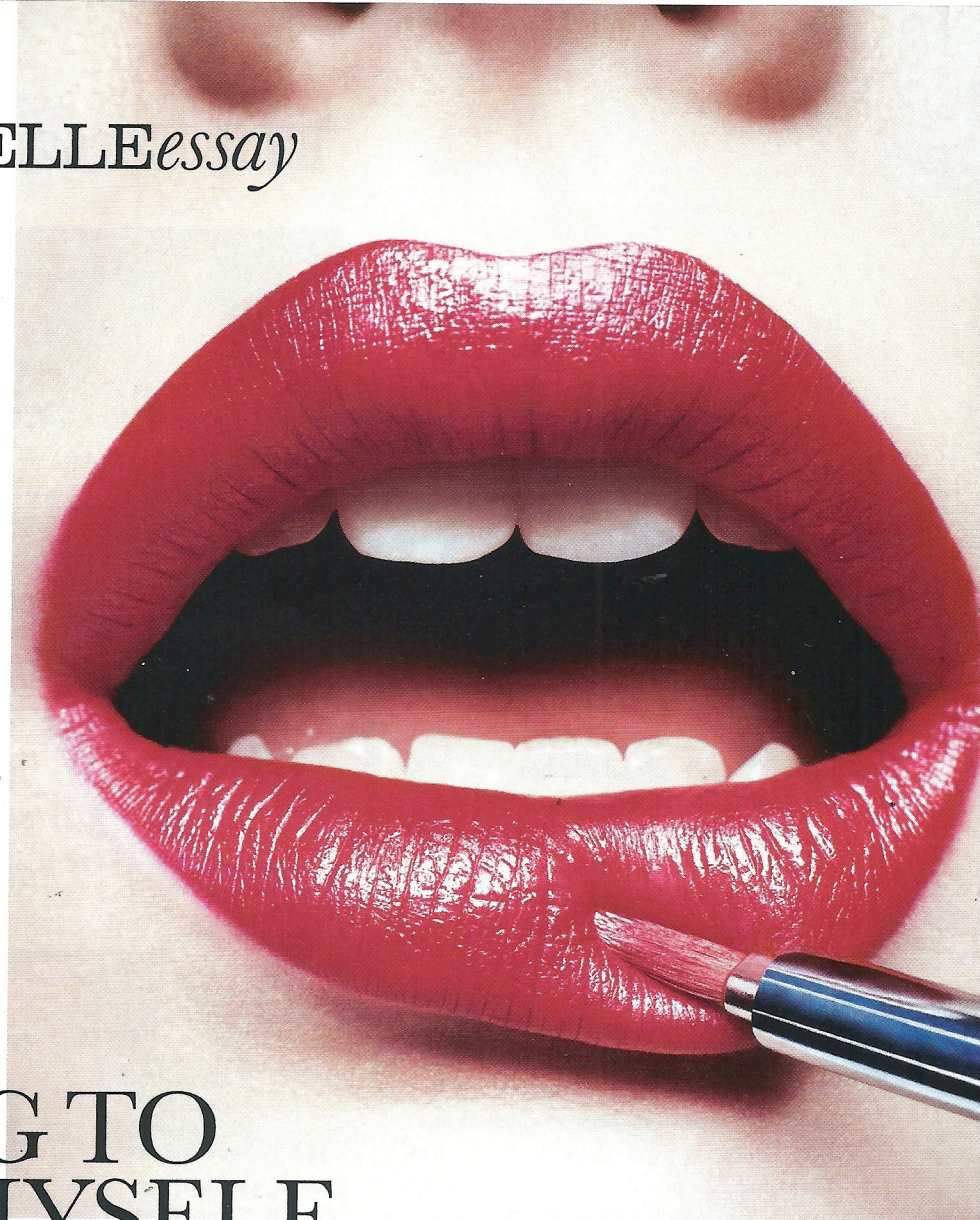
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Words by SLOANE CROSLLEY



LEARNING TO APPLY MYSELF

A wealth of online tutorials PROMISES to teach you the art of PERFECT make-up application. Could this cure Sloane Crosley's confidence crisis?

I flinch. I am a flincher. On those occasions I've had my make-up applied by professionals, things do not go, in a word, well. First, I involuntarily convince them of the veracity of my flinching condition via the high-speed fluttering of my eyelids. Then I make a remark about my preference for root canals, a joke at which I alone laugh. Finally, when anything calling itself a 'stick' or 'wand' approaches my face, I sheepishly slide off the canvas chair, lean into the mirror and apologise as I self-curl my lashes. By then, they are only too happy to relinquish their tools. There's a lot of, 'But what do you do when

you go to the optician?' followed by a lot of, 'I don't.' Even when by myself, I avoid putting make-up on my eyes. My eyelashes, bless each and every one, have the decency to protrude outwards and can be curled with the eye shut. But actual difference-making eye make-up? It has been a source of frustration for so long that my fear of it has taken the rest of my face down — a luscious red lip, a sultry smoky eye, even basic foundation have gone down the skill drain. These make-up moves are like false lashes — tried once, only to come unglued.

Luckily, there is one thing I can do perfectly every time: turn on my computer.

Awaiting me on the other side of that angelic power-on chime are a cavalcade of DIY beauty fanatics whose purpose is to aid make-up incompetents. YouTube boasts thousands of instructional videos meant to advance me from my stunted state. Here I can pause and flinch to my retina's content in the privacy of my own home — all without sacrificing (virtual) professional help. Perfect brows direct from your browser! Gone are the days of approaching hair salons and make-up counters with folded pictures torn from magazines. Beauty retail giants such as Mac and Sephora have wonderfully detailed tutorials if you want to know how to create a fierce flashy eye, say. I have turned to them in several instances, bouncing from my desktop to the mirror and back as if consulting a cookbook.

Recently, I found myself in front of the computer and on the phone with my sister before a black-tie party. Dress by Ralph ►

Lauren. Shoes by Manolo Blahnik. Dramatic Flinching by Instinct and General Make-Up Incompetence on loan from Mum. 'Did you know that you had to white out your lips in order to create a bright-red lip?' I asked my sister, having viewed Mac's *The Perfect Red Lip With Fatima*.

'No,' she said, 'I had no idea.'

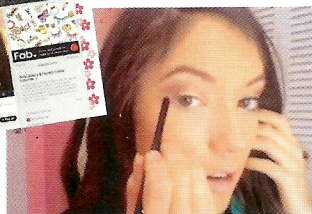
'Well, Mum wasn't so into teaching us how to use make-up. Now the internet has to raise me. Or at least raise my face.'

'In that case,' she said, 'ask it if it can teach me how to use false lashes.'

Turns out it can. In fact, Urban Decay's executive creative director Wende Zomnir recently filmed a video in which her adorable son Crash applies the brand's Urban Lashes to his mother's face. That's right, folks – so easy a seven-year-old can do it! And if you'd like a second or third opinion, just type 'false-lash application' into your browser. These masterfully executed videos break each step down en route to perfection. But there is one glitch. They are performed by people whose base level of beauty know-how surpasses my own, on people who don't need make-up: make-up artists and models. Yes, I want perfection. But I also want someone to tell me what to do when I inevitably don't achieve it.

That's where YouTube comes to the rescue. The site boasts an army of bedroom fairies, ready to transform me into a painted beauty. Their magic is in their lack of training: these tutorials are run by real people who just happen to be exceedingly skilled at doing their own make-up. Their appeal is in their self-application, their 'I have pores, too' levelling their bedroom doors and pink-framed prints. These women live in the world. Sure, there's a vaguely comic gap between a woman sitting in a designer dress in a city apartment (me) and a uni student surrounded by stuffed bunnies in her bedroom (her). But you can bet *their* mothers taught them how to use eyeliner.

Take xSparkage (or Leesha, to give her real name) who, now sponsored by L'Oréal,



Make-up maestros:
Michelle Phan, Elle
or Allthatglitters21,
and Blair Fowler

will teach you the practical (all-day foundation) with the same aplomb she applies to the impractical (how to render one's chosen Hogwarts house on one's face). Or Juicystar07 (Blair) who has well over half a million YouTube channel subscribers and her own online shop, but is 'just a girl who loves to play around with make-up'. She and her sister, Allthatglitters21 (Elle), have become internet celebrities. Their queen fairy, of course, is Michelle Phan. Combining practicality with good old-fashioned cheer, the 25-year-old from Florida began posting videos in 2007. They became so popular, Lancôme now sponsors her.

There's an air of fun to Phan's videos meant to settle the skittish viewer. One needs only watch her Halloween-themed *Snow White* tutorial in which she throws in the application of a fake bird on her

shoulder. Others had made valiant efforts, but ultimately it was Michelle who walked me through my flinching issues. The first video I watched actually began with the words, 'If you have shaky hands like me...'. I learned to stop fighting the flinch and apply eyeliner in small quick strokes. I learned I could cheat. Models are so accustomed to being yanked, they can maintain full conversations while their tear ducts are dyed aubergine. But Michelle taught me to squint downwards, have my

'YouTube boasts an army of bedroom fairies... their APPEAL is in their "I have pores, too" levelling'

lashes curtsy and sneak a little pencil or brush loaded with cream in there before my reflexes caught on.

Just like learning to cook via the internet, beyond-basics beauty via the web takes time and patience. If your question is specific in nature – where does the concealer come in? How do I make my eye more cat and less *Cats?* – there's a make-up tutorial for you. However, if you both literally and figuratively have no foundation, incorporating all the lessons at once can backfire. After weeks of e-training, I tried it all on the night of a black-tie do: the liquid eyeliner, the shadow, the false lashes and the bright lip. With a professional at the helm, it might have looked glamorous. But with only the internet as my guide? I folded under the pressure of the moment. My liquid eyeliner turned into a Rorschach test. My false eyelashes seemed determined to seek out a second lash line. All blushes went on too dark or too invisible. I scrubbed everything off, save the bright lip. Then, right before I left, I built up the courage for a thin layer of brown liner, drawn using Michelle's tips. I dotted the soft pencil across my half-open eyes and stepped back from the mirror. Did it make the difference? Maybe. But blink and you'll miss it. ■



See Lisa Eldridge's expert beauty tutorials at ELLEUK.COM/ELLE-TV