

# Globe Life

Beauty trends

## Want smudge-proof eyeliner? Just tattoo it on

Popular in the 1980s, permanent makeup is back, bolstered by improved technology and recessionary cachet

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From Saturday's Globe and Mail Published on Friday, Jan. 15, 2010 3:36PM EST Last updated on Wednesday, Jan. 20, 2010 3:30AM EST

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Sandra Serafini of Hamilton, Ont. was on her way home from the gym with a friend a few years ago when he remarked that one of her eyebrows looked as if it was slipping down her face. In fact, the 49-year-old flight attendant's makeup was merely smeared, but she vowed to avoid such future embarrassments by undergoing what some might regard as a drastic remedy: micro-pigmentation.

A precisely focused brand of face tattooing, micro-pigmentation provides an alternative to traditional cosmetics by enhancing the colour and silhouette of eyes, lips and eyebrows on a long-term basis. Commonly known as permanent makeup, it is executed under local anesthetics by trained aestheticians wielding tattoo guns. The technique was trendy in the 1980s, but is currently experiencing a renewed popularity among women seeking the convenience and cost-efficiency of not having to buy and apply makeup for years at a time, says Pat Shibley-Gauthier, founder of the Micro-Pigmentation Centre, a Mississauga, Ont.-based school that trains aestheticians how to do it.

According to Shibley-Gauthier, recent improvements in technology have also made the process more attractive.

The old machines, she says, were "loud and intimidating, especially when coming at your eyes." Today, the tattoo needles are thinner and steadier, so the shaping and feathering are more refined, she adds.

Karen, a client who lives in Unionville, Ont., especially likes the greater range of colours and subtler pigments. Over the past 10 years, she has had her eyebrows tattooed several times, says the 70-year-old, who did not want her last name used.

Despite its label, "permanent makeup" isn't everlasting: The dyes (especially lighter colours) fade over time, so users can need touch-ups after a couple of years. Many women also come in for modifications if they aren't satisfied with how a treatment has turned out, says Tina Davies, an aesthetician who treats five to six micro-pigmentation clients a day in her midtown Toronto studio. Davies' own rosy lips and perfectly arched eyebrows are the result of repeat tattooing.

Shibley-Gauthier says that the nimbler technology makes such upkeep easier than it was in the eighties. It is especially useful, she adds, when micro-pigmentation goes wrong. "A lot of people have come to me crying" over what's been done in other places, she says.

Indeed, the procedure isn't a walk in the park. Even in the most skilled hands, lips and eyes have many nerve endings that are sensitive to repetitive needle pricks. Although pain during treatments is often minimal, the skin can swell, ooze and become scabby as the wounds close and heal.

With lip procedures, kissing, smoking, swimming and grinning are off limits for five days to limit exposure to bacteria while the skin heals. Food must also be chopped into small pieces and liquids must be drunk

through a straw.

Despite the drawbacks, fans aren't dissuaded. After she had her eyeliner tattooed chocolate brown, for instance, Suzy Bazzana, a marketer who lives in Richmond Hill, Ont., didn't see anyone socially for a few days. In her case, the anesthetic didn't work as it should have and she could feel the tattoo gun painfully pricking her eyelids. Nonetheless, Bazzana has had her eyelids tattooed three times in recent years – and would do it again in a heartbeat, she says.

“It is very convenient,” the 42-year-old adds. “I like the fact that I always have makeup on, no matter what.”  
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