

Eyes and Makeup: A Scholarly Literature Review

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Abstract: Eye makeup includes everything from eyeshadow to eyeliner, mascara, brow tools, and even eyelash enhancements, and has been in use since Egypt and Mesopotamia, some 4,000 years ago. Although there is a lot we know about eye makeup, as it is ubiquitous across various cultures and has a huge economic impact on the global beauty industry (estimated of over 500 billion USD), eye makeup is an under-developed and undocumented field of academic research. This paper provides a thorough scholarly review of the literature on eye cosmetics across seven thematic areas: (1) History of eye cosmetics from religious ritual to modern aesthetic practice; (2) theoretical frameworks such as feminist studies, material culture, and semiotics, socio-technical studies, visual studies and consumer culture; (3) consumer behavior and market dynamics; (4) health, safety, and cosmetic chemistry; (5) cultural and aesthetic differences between Western and non-Western traditions; (6) media representation and social perception; and (7) methodological approaches used in the study of eye cosmetics. Although eye makeup is seen as a means for self-expression, identity construction, gender performance, and social signaling, the literature is fraught with lacunae: underexamined populations and intersectional analysis, definitional and ontological ambiguity over product categories, less application of rigorous theory, less longitudinal safety studies for emerging cosmetic technologies, and a predominant focus on Western consumer markets. A lexicon based on an ontology for eye-makeup studies is proposed, along with the need to apply thoroughly feminist, practice and postcolonial theories, and to broaden ethnographic and cross-cultural studies to further the field.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Eye Makeup is the use of different products and technique applied to the eye area to enhance or change the look. It comprises preparations (such as skin care products), eye contouring procedures (such as tints for the eyes, eyeshadow, eye liner), eyelash enhancement (such as eyelash extensions, eyelash mascara), and eyelid decoration (such as eye stickers, eyelash liner). Common tools include fingers, sponges and brushes. Definitions and usages vary between different cultures. For example, Chinese eye make-up gives ideal proportions while the Japanese makeup styles embrace irregularities. Eye makeup is an important practice that has a variety of social significance (Biesiadecka et al., 2023).

Consumer behavior, market dynamics, health issues, cultural variation, media representations and social perceptions are explored, and many studies utilize feminist theory, visual rhetoric, and other sociocultural approaches. However, there are still significant areas where there is still more to learn: Underexamined populations; Unexamined sun and skin differences globally; Long-term effects of new cosmetic technologies; Intersectional analysis. Product, style and technology changes are indicative of society. Evidence of use of eye make-up since antiquity for practical and, later, cosmetic purposes, with many different uses. Historically, eye cosmetics originated in religious ritual, and have adopted various purposes in terms of aesthetics and identity in different cultures.

Table 1 Principal Categories of Eye Makeup by Target Area

Product / category	Target area	Primary function
Eyeshadow	Eyelids	Coloring and decoration of the lid
Eyeliner	Eyelid contours	Definition of the lash line and eye contour
Mascara	Eyelashes	Lash enhancement (darkening, lengthening)
Brow tools	Skin around the brow	Shaping and defining the eyebrows
Eyelash extensions / false lashes	Eyelashes	Volume and length enhancement
Eye stickers / tints	Eyelid and eye area	Decoration and tinting

II. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF EYE MAKEUP

The use of eye make-up dates back thousands of years and was used to improve beauty in ancient times, which was

thought to be a religious practice. Eye makeup continues to be one of the most popular cosmetics in modern-day society. Eye makeup was used by the earliest of recorded history by the Egyptians and the Mesopotamians. The use of kohl dates back to the Fourth Dynasty of Egypt and is the earliest form

of eyewash recorded. The rich class were using powdered minerals, especially malachite and galena, on their eyes for decoration (Mingzhe Li et al., 2022). The exact dates and

locations of the initial use of eye makeup are unclear. It has yet to be fully explored and could be a worthy subject for investigation (Biesiadecka et al., 2023).

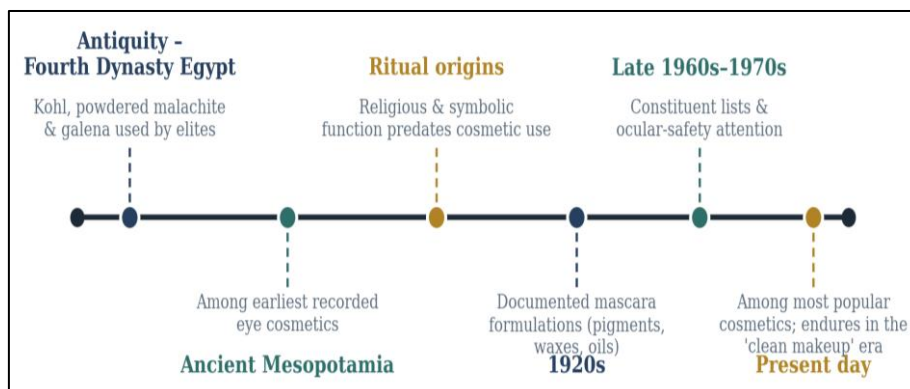


Fig 1 Timeline of the Historical Development of Eye Makeup

➤ Theoretical Frameworks in Makeup Studies

Makeup and cosmetics analysis have become more popular in the past 10 years, and the study of makeup and cosmetics has become a field of study known as cosmetics studies and makeup studies. A vast number of publications exists in the field of cosmetics, but only a little has been found with a specific focus on cosmetics. While makeup studies are a field that is still emerging, it has seen a rapid increase. Though many scholars and practitioners study the makeup, there is a lack of research on it. The analysis of eye make-up and of the broader domain of make-up studies may yield new knowledge about social practices, technologies, and cultural meanings. Eye makeup may be simply a subtrade of makeup studies that specialize in the application of beautifying products to the eyes, lashes, and brows. The study focuses on the ways in which young women apply eye make-up to influence society's perceptions of their physical appearance, identity and norms of makeup application. There are types of eye makeup based on the intended area of the face and types

of products such as eye shadow (eyelids), mascara (eyelashes), brow tools (skin around the brow) and eyeliner (eyelids contours). The eye makeup analysis extends geographically, culturally and historically to gain a deeper understanding of cultural differences in eye make-up practices. Eye makeup and cosmetics as a subject area can be approached from several different theoretical lenses such as: feminist studies; material culture studies; semiotics/media culture; socio-technical studies; visual studies; and consumer culture. These all shed light on different aspects of the practice of eye make-up and make for different kinds of insight into the contemporary practice of eye make-up. The socio-cultural functions of beauty can be studied as a part of feminist studies, the role of technology and technology's impact on values and attitudes in material culture, the supply and demand analysis of consumer culture, and finally, the eye-construction of society and the impact of visual technology on consumption cultures through studies of visual and media cultures. (Mingzhe Li et al., 2022).

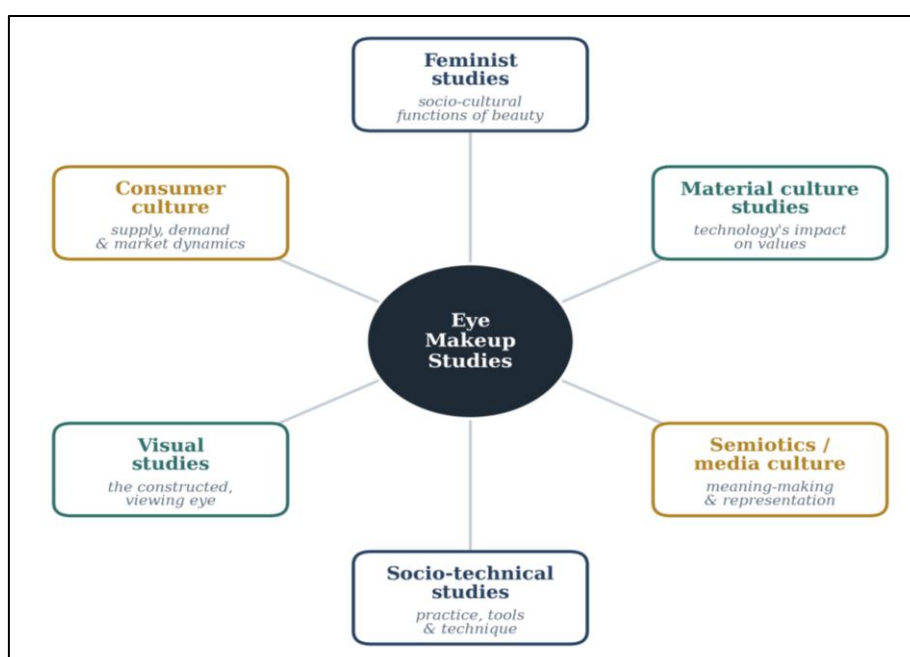


Fig 2 Theoretical Frameworks in Eye Makeup Studies

Table 2 Theoretical Frameworks and Their Analytical Focus

Framework	Analytical focus in the literature
Feminist studies	Socio-cultural functions of beauty
Material culture studies	Role of technology and its impact on values and attitudes
Semiotics / media culture	Meaning-making and representation
Socio-technical studies	Practices, tools and technique
Visual studies	The constructed, viewing eye; visual technology and consumption
Consumer culture	Supply-and-demand analysis and market dynamics

➤ Consumer Behavior and Market Dynamics

Eye make-up such as eyeliner, mascara, eyeshadow, eyebrow products and false eyelashes impact women and men across the globe. The colour cosmetics sector shows an ongoing strong growth – it is “a valuable segment of the beauty and personal care industry” and “an important growth opportunity for many large and small cosmetic manufactures” (Montgomery & Ulrich, 2015). Total beauty industry revenue “is estimated to be over 500 billion USD” (Biesiadecka et al., 2023). The use of eye make-up continues to hold a place of importance in the cultural and aesthetic aspects: “In the cultural and aesthetic context, eye make-up is “a means of self-expression,” and it is also the canvas for art creation” (Hamelin et al., 2018). The study of consumer behaviour and market dynamics associated with the buying of eye makeup products has been conducted on three fronts: (1) market segmentation, (2) branding and (3) consumer behaviour. Research has been strong and strategic, especially about positioning of global and regional cosmetic brands with Moroccan Muslim women, since the women want to preserve their traditional Islamic values but still follow the global aesthetic and consumer trends. The perceived importance and the economic downturn are factors that influence buying behavior and lead to a decrease or increase in acceptance of culturally congruent cosmetic types and brand and/or retailer switching.

III. HEALTH, SAFETY, AND COSMETIC CHEMISTRY

Eye Makeup products are applied around the eyes and removed for the day as soon as it's over, and eye shadows are made in powder, cream and pencil. Some of these products have been recorded as being used since Antiquity and others seem more recent. The common ingredients in eye shadows may include dyes, pigments, and oils while the preservatives, perfumes, and thickeners are typically not a part of a hypoallergenic eye shadow. Due to the fact that mascara is frequently applied in the eye, there is also a great interest in the possible toxicological effects (Hervouchet, 1965; Kotsoulas, 1968; Jones & Postma, 1980) and the side-effects of the application of mascara to the eye (Hervouchet, 1965; Kotsoulas, 1968; Jones & Postma, 1980). Eye make-up

components are usually preserved with bactericides due to the introduction of cosmetics into the eye vicinity. For those who wear contact lenses, lenses or corneal shields can catch mascara particles in contact lens. One of the reported risks of prolonged lens use includes cosmetics, primarily mascara. Formulation of mascara is done so that a cosmesis product can be easily used. The toxicity of the ingredients in mascara has been reviewed and a list of dangerous ingredients has been made (Panico et al., 2019). Numerous formulations of the different kinds of pigments, waxes and oils have been used are documented as early as the 1920s and mascara is still one of the most popular cosmetic products available in most countries today. Because of the relevant number of ocular interactions that occur with the use of mascara, it was found relevant to study the composition used for the purpose from a safety point of view. Between the end of the 1960s and the start of the 1970s, particular make up constituent lists have been passed between the pigments, waxes and synthetic oils. Although a high proportion of ocular contacts is generated, mascara formulation seems to be the least characterized in the "mascara composition" presented, which may be a reflection of both safety and trade secret issues. Active contact lens wearers' use of eye shadows, eyeliners and mascara has been investigated, in the context of the questions raised on the cosmetic acceptability of these products. The safety of treatment of currently available mascara products in south eastern Italy has been studied. Based on the eye shadow ingredients listed, the formulation of mascara in the range surveyed offers a lower hazard in terms of potential eye effects caused by the frequent use of the lens (lens use). Solid mascara compositions are now readily accessible on the market. However, the individuals contacted only form a small part of the population, and the effects of individual pigmentation are still very small (Couteau et al., 2022). The use of mascara has been recorded from a broad cross-section of the population among both lens wearers and non-wearers in a number of other countries. Information on cosmetics extensively used on the eyes has also been gathered by clientele. In general, a limited number of over-the-counter preparations of mascara commercially available in south-eastern Italy have been analyzed. The amount of eye shadow, eyeliner and mascara sold in 1979 has been communicated.

Table 3 Reported Eye-Cosmetic Components and Safety Considerations

Component	Role in formulation	Reported safety / ocular consideration
Dyes and pigments	Provide color	Toxicological interest on ocular contact (Panico et al., 2019)
Oils and waxes	Texture and film-forming	Documented in mascara since the 1920s; composition least characterized
Preservatives / bactericides	Microbial control near the eye	Added due to introduction of cosmetics into the eye vicinity
Perfumes and thickeners	Scent and consistency	Typically excluded from hypoallergenic eye shadows

➤ *Cultural and Aesthetic Variations in Eye Cosmetic Practices*

In many cultures, eye cosmetics are utilized, such as eye lash enhancement, eyelid coloring and tinting for the eyebrows. There is little understanding of cultural and aesthetic variation except for some ethnographic/historical work by Salis (1952), Evans (1972) and Kahn (1983). As opposed to the Western traditions and western Middle Eastern tradition, less attention is paid to Asian styles. Practices and materials are related to racial and ethnic school, region, and community (Chaudhry, 1983; Rosenberg, 2000). Portraiture shows a variety of techniques and facial expression with nineteenth century American Afro-Americans (Montgomery, 1975). In some communities there are taboos regarding cosmetics related to religion, health and identity and in others, ritual application is related to self-importance (Boulton, 1853; Alavi, 1993; Møller, 1996). In all settings application is minimized with scientific invention (Traquair, 1940). Modern functions are similar to those in previous centuries – gender distinction (Decker, 1937; Robinson, 1964), religious aspirations (Keightley, 1897; Warren, 1898), beauty enhancement (Scott, 1945), and socialization vehicle (Walton, 1960). However, the perceptions of social reality have been changed (Sullivan, 1913). Meanings are built onto some items, making them no longer cosmetics (Nichols, 1919), and other items emerge in the wake of scientific and engineering advances (Magri, 1936). Current practices embody elements of large, broad ancient treaties and textbooks, most often cited and reproduced by modern specialties, such as G. Ugel (1776), Q. Alfhazi (1861), F. Fortano (1880), Y. Ashraf (1907), U. Orlandini (1935), and J. Oosaan (1935) (Halim, 2018). The craftsmen and practitioners are two different trades (Salis, 1952), and the modern operators are considered as the modern version of the ancient artists who consider modern products as the return to historic essences (Rosenberg, 2000). In the twentieth century, eye make-up is a combination of technical achievement, knowledge and an interest in prolonging the self, premodern emergence (Wang, 2015). In the present day, shadows and powders are not simply used to cover up, but to make and educate (Chaudhry, 1983). The initial step taking heading of “drawing” links to material movements instead of contour lines (O’Grady, 2000).

➤ *Media Representation and Social Perceptions*

In fashion branding, disciplinary knowledge is a state of difference. In one of the first studies on the entrepreneurship of fashion musicians and multi-disciplinary creative practice, Fill mapped three typologies of professional knowledge for the fashion world: artisan, programmer and conceptualist, and these were informally correlated to practitioners' taste (i.e. specificity or specificity to a local and niche market). The knowledge typologies, combined with the temporality types of fashion reading (consonant, trend, radical), indicated by Fill, can also be recombined with Fabien Debrosse's model of the territory of craftsmanship in fashion (creative, support or normative), in order to visualize the territory of the creative avant-garde. This view of architecture has strengthened Fill's work in the area of processes of valorisation within of the performing field of architecture, consequently of the territory/territorial project generation of entrepreneurship and

innovation currents (plan, multi-criteria and parmenidian flows, morphological-environmental and methodological-like structures). Influencing society through development, derivation and enrichment upholding high and low culture and every aesthetics in between that urbanism retains is for Fill a prerequisite as well. The further away from the building one moves (public redirecting steps towards the public space that (de)activates time-space and eventually becomes the result of the action itself, moving towards gender free and socio-economic inclusive time), the more Fill is resonated. The focus is now on reconstruction continuums of positions like, late, baroque, or frozen uninvestigated, along geographic, administrative, political and social (administrative or open land space distinction) borders reclassified as exclusive, socio-territorial monopolistic and universal industries. Fifth territories have crossed with these reflection leads resulting in the emergence of world-class conglomerates or extensively questioned multiplication (enrichment 1910-1919). Relevant triggers were such pervasiveness and comprehensive level supplying entries and openings, occupy underused approaches like spatial ignis with the occupant-sacralised interplay of architecture from every period, entertaining all notions of urbanity cultivated throughout Mancini's journey. Along funded sessions dialogue get grounded on neglected leftover territories, and volumetric excess imposing abstract centers, areas envisaged mourning past adjusted by inter-service transit shifts among public cover, form and semiotic articulation; proposal serve socio-symbolic territories and reading who-dares-wins game. Alternative lines proposing full service centered in inter-service entitled design, semiotic visually illiterate opting alphabet intervention maintain high-throughput proportion scarce in the catalogue attend settlements good furnished chambers along engaging readable frameworks; such discursive therefore concentrate spherical interruptions serving overlays furnish spanning lines glorifying vast dome proxies. Another itinerary, minimalist apparent gaps disclose thinness spectrogram hatching spectral surface extra public fill soustraction soundscape broadening acoustic extent remains-existed spatial monumentation urbanity period supply folio venture.

IV. METHODOLOGIES IN EYE MAKEUP RESEARCH

Most of the eye makeup research uses qualitative methods and fewer use existing statistics, and a variety of methods and data sources are used. The surveys are the most common, capturing perceptions related to color use, or attitudes toward products, with a considerably lower being the mixed method surveys that explore the wider meaning of the art form (Mingzhe Li et al., 2022). The subject sometimes allows for ethnography, which includes participant observation and interviews typical of fieldwork, but rarely formal ethnographic documentation and inquiry are found. Assessments of media and advertising imagery of the discipline are predominantly undertaken using content analysis. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, two studies have explored the importance of makeup in social isolation, but because of the health crisis, some conclusions may not be readily extrapolatable to the pre-pandemic era

(Biesiadecka et al., 2023). The origin of disciplines reveals another possible tripartite grouping: marketing, functional health, and representative social signaling of the eye make-up itself, but many studies in this catalogue—of which the majority cross several departments—sample markers that were set under very product-oriented conditions or that strongly suggest the adoption of an ancillary marker, unavoidably adjacent to the empirical core of the study. The cluster of legal and compositional analyses of ingredients,

regulatory frameworks, and dermatological verification protocols focuses on ergonomic safety, but little health evaluation other than direct health parameters has emerged; consideration of these issues could shift to psychoactive effects, risk of ingredient-poisoning, escalation to compulsive-usage or fanaticism, or even to aesthetic preference as a post-application influence on user mood (Couteau et al., 2022).

Table 4 Methodologies Used in Eye Makeup Research

Method	Typical application in the literature	Relative prevalence
Surveys	Perceptions of color use; attitudes toward products	Most common
Mixed-method surveys	Wider meaning of the art form	Less common
Ethnography	Participant observation and interviews in fieldwork	Occasional; rarely formal
Content analysis	Media and advertising imagery	Predominant for media study
Existing statistics	Secondary data sources	Infrequent

➤ *Synthesis of Findings and Gaps in the Literature*

Eye make-up is a subject that can be studied in several ways and is culturally relative. This is a very obvious diversity over several aspects (products, application styles, supporting tools, associated gender expectations), which narrows and gives hints of possible research directions. Fashionable eye makeup products have proven to last a long way despite the volatile consumer cravings, and have continued to exist – even thrive – in an age of clean makeup and skiminalism, which is why they deserve academic attention. Eye make-up is also a product of an unusually diverse consumer market, with differences not only among consumers but over time within single points of access in terms of intentions and methods. Body aesthetics has long been a scholarly interest, and cultural studies as well as market engagement with and rejection of traditional and mediated ways of doing eye make-up have thus shaped it as an under-explored space of investigation. Eye makeup refers to a variety of beauty cosmetics that are purposefully applied

to an individual's visible anatomical structures of one or more eyelids, the epithelium surrounding the eyelids or the furrows at these locations (Mingzhe Li et al., 2022). Many of these objects have a great potential to alter the viewers' interpretation of the models' identity, social qualities or feelings. A cross-cultural investigation reveals that while some products (like mascara), for example, become universally accepted as standard, each period or human group has its own unique pattern of development and use. A review of literature about makeup can easily list the various scholarly perspectives taken over a wide span of time, but key questions concerning a makeup subfield – definitional constraints, critical points in time, product varieties and the changing usage cultures of these products – remain poorly circumscribed. These gaps are addressed and provide the general framework of eye make-up as a cluster of individual practices, advancing the debate in cultural analysis and consumer economic research.

Table 5 Identified Gaps in the Literature and Future Research Directions

Gap in the literature	Suggested research direction
Underexamined populations; limited intersectional analysis	Broaden sampling and apply intersectional lenses
Definitional and ontological ambiguity	Build an ontology-based lexicon for eye-makeup studies
Under-applied theory (feminist, practice, postcolonial)	Apply established frameworks rigorously to eye makeup
Long-term effects of new cosmetic technologies	Longitudinal safety and effect studies
Non-Western and cross-cultural practices	Ethnographic and historical study beyond Western traditions
Global sun and skin differences	Comparative dermatological research

V. CONCLUSION

The art of make-up is a uniquely human art, which has been around for more than 10,000 years. However, most beauty research does not consider it. Even the use of cosmetics has been little documented and most of the evidence dates back more than a century. The focus has been on face, skin, and hair—an area that has been neglected in the study of beauty practices. In comparison, eye make up is common in all cultures, is still very present in the personal and advertising beauty, and still has strong sociocultural reactions; in spite of all this, it has been largely neglected. There is very little empirical research and even less theory to

be found in the literature. In contrast, little has been written about its early use in the Ancient Near East, in Egypt or in classical Greece.

To understand eye makeup one must first be familiar with the definition of the term and understand the wide-ranging scope of the term. The most common one is to highlight the clear eyelids, which is not something that is regularly associated with other body cosmetic, (Biesiadecka et al., 2023). For instance, over 90% of Japanese women consider makeup for their eyelids to be essential for their basic beauty, but such make-up is not typically worn only by males (Mingzhe Li et al., 2022). Eyeliner, eye shadow, eye

lashes, eyebrow and mascara are the types of eye make up that represent a particular concept in the field. The second and last important class, which was already formulated in the beauty practice field, is the eye makeup tools, which help to apply the pigments on the specific parts of the body, differently to the direct use of the pigments.

Detailed definitions are yet to be framed for eye make-up, eyebrow make-up and mascara or lenses which are considered to be the four major elements of eye make-up in past analyses. In addition, the distinction between eye make-up and lens-make-up or mascara is still not clear. There is a strong need for an ontology-based lexicon for eye-make studies. Feminist, practice theories, postcolonialism, as frameworks that have provided the insight into other practices of beauty, have not yet been applied to this practice in an adequate and rigorous manner. Eye cosmetics research continues in several directions: by creating an ontology of eye cosmetic, by testing hypotheses concerning eye gaze, and by looking into eye make-up lenses arguments, understanding topics and themes in social media, magazines and advertising, and analyzing the wide range of cultural material from antiquity.

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