

Make up Artistry and Photography

By Veronica & Nina Sorley

Make up is an art form, not unlike painting, whereby the creative process can be expressed on multiple levels. There is a role for the make up artist, a role for the model, and a role for the photographer.

The makeup artist seeks to realise a artistic vision or inspiration through a number of technical stages. Put simply these are:

1. Have a plan. Have a picture in your mind to work towards.
2. Create a base. The base level of makeup lets you move beyond the natural skin tones and control skin imperfections and create the baseline contrast.
3. Add detail. Depending on the vision this is detail which define the creation.
4. Add secondary detail. Often this is shading and highlights to further accentuate the detail and builds a 3D effect which is more engaging.
5. Continue to develop the detail and secondary details until the desired level of complexity is achieved, or you exhaust the available time. In photography terms this develops the vision from low definition to high definition and can be very time consuming.



The model brings the vision to life. This is where emotion and connection to the surrounding world is create.

Then the photographer adds another layer of visual interpretation and creates the images which allow the creation to shared and enjoyed by many across time and distance.



Thinking about the capture

Most shadow work for this sort of photography is controlled by the makeup artist. Scary photos tend to have dark cool tones, loving cosy feeling photos tend to have warmer brighter tones

Themed photos take a little bit of pre-planning most times. A lot of themed photography these days are based on comic book or movie heroes or villains, so it makes it easy for you to build your story as a photographer.

Capturing with a mobile phone

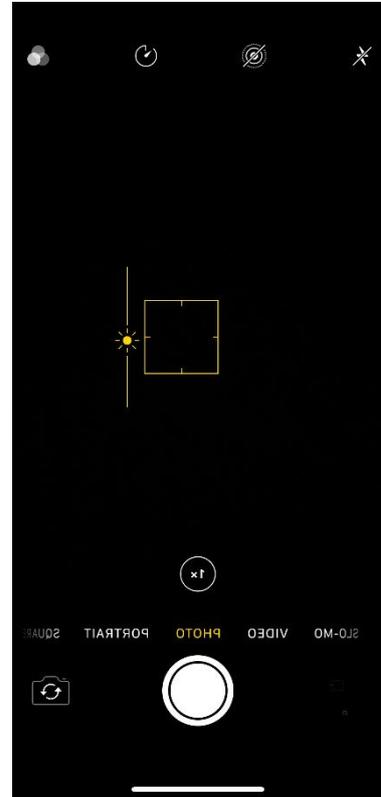
Mobile phones have changed the face of, and the public's perception of photography for ever. The ease of quickly sharing images and engaging with social media platforms is very powerful. Never forget the camera that you have with you.

The following is based upon iPhone photography but can be adapted for other models of phones

When photographing makeup on a phone, no special apps are necessary. Good results can be achieved with only the in-phone camera and in-built apps. Most phones will have in-built editing features including filters, exposure, highlights, shadows, contrast, brightness, saturation etc...

When using an iPhone, if you tap on the screen a little yellow square will appear where you can set the desired focus point. On the right side of this square there is a small sun icon. You can drag the sun icon up and down to change the exposure. Of course, you can still change the exposure after the image has been taken with the editing features in the Photos app on the iPhone.

I typically take photos where there is soft lighting. Hard lighting may add unwanted shadows to the makeup therefore making it appear less effective. This is not always the case and depends on the type of makeup look and where shading and highlights have been applied. It is best to play around with lighting and the positioning of your phone camera and the model.



When photographing 3-Dimensional makeup, it is important to take notice of the shadows applied with the makeup and where your strongest light source is coming from as this will create the most effective and realistic look possible.

Capturing with an Interchangeable Lens Camera

Please note that any camera can achieve the desired outcome. It just takes a little bit of creativity and knowing your equipment.

Suggested lenses are your usual portrait lenses, but basic kit lenses can certainly produce good images. Remember your exposure triangle which will help you work with the aperture limitations of your lens.

I would recommend a 24-70mm f2.8 medium zoom if available for group shots of a Zombie Walk or something in the similar range. For singling out specific zombies a 70-200mm f2.8 telephoto zoom is ideal if you have this in your collection. It covers a good range of focal lengths and is the perfect complement to 24-70.

For those looking to explore prime lens options an 85mm is an awesome portrait lens, and a 50mm f1.8 lens is often available at an affordable price for a close shot either out in the street or portrait in studio. But a standard kit lenses will be enough if you work within its capabilities.

For more unusual perspectives wide angles are great for getting down low with a group coming towards you and pointing up to get an impending doom perspective.

Shooting in a studio tips

Camera sensitivity ideally is ISO 100, you can go higher but should not need too.

A shutter speed of 1/60sec works well but can depend somewhat on the lens you are using. Shooting a f8 at 35mm is my go too but in this situation you can use flash typically reflecting or bouncing to light my subject.

Ideally you would always capture in RAW which allows you more control for post capture editing and processing.

Street Photography tips

On the street you don't have the controlled studio environment, and the most significant challenge is often lighting. Direct and bright sunlight isn't your friend in this situation unless you are after a specific look. Softer daylight and very low flash to complement the continuous light tend to work best for the style we shoot.

A zombie walk is a fantastic opportunity to get access to lots of made up subjects. Most people walking and dressing up expect some attention and will be obliging in most situations but a big smile and a point to the camera is always polite and you usually get a nod of yes.



Using Your Flash when photographing creative makeup

Diffused light is your friend in this situation as you don't want makeup shine bouncing off your subject. There are two ways of doing this. One is to learn how your flash works and adjust its strength to the look you want to achieve. The second is out of camera by adding a diffuser or adjusting your flash to bounce off a ceiling etc so the light isn't direct and harsh. Light that is too harsh flattens your subject and doesn't fully present the detail and washes out the make-up shadowing which doesn't do the it justice.

Post processing

Most folks by now are doing a little processing and if you aren't you should consider it, particularly if you are shooting in RAW.

With this sort of photography I have found by making the blacks as black as you can, it enhances the shading that the make up artist has done and adds a bit more depth to the colour and can be the difference of making or breaking the look.

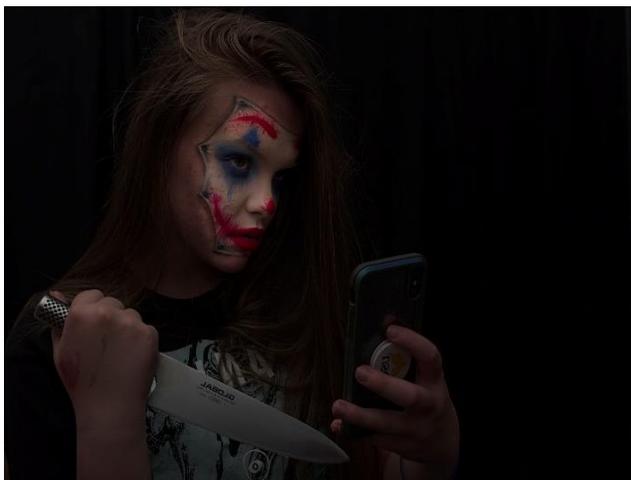
Depending on how you light your subject, often when you darken your blacks you can get a darkened shadow over your subject. Most processing programs these days have a 'lift shadow' slider. If they don't you can use a 'lighten' brush and set the feathering to 100% and only lift the lighting a tad. You can slide your opacity up and down a little until you get the look you are hoping to achieve. Without being too cliché, a good old Vignetting border can darken the mood beautifully and can be creatively combined with a bit of noise intentionally added, and maybe try in black and white. Your imagination is your only limitation.

Taking post processing a step further - Overlays and backdrops (Advanced)

For club competitions you must have taken all components of the photos yourself, but for commercial purposes as long as you have paid for the use of the program you should be fine.

With the Zombie walk in mind I would consider maybe photographing a car wreckers yard, a long lonely stretch of road, or even a group of trees towards evening to give you a silhouetted shot to give you that deserted lonely feeling. These can be used as a backdrop for a composite shot to help illustrate your story. There are numerous videos on YouTube to help walk you through your preferred Post processing program on how to do composite or layering photos. Most programs have online tutorials or support. You can also often find someone that has done what you are wanting to do that can help you if you get stuck.

Example: Original Image



Combined with an overlay



The most important thing we have left until last is have fun, after all that is what taking photos is all about.