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ELLE BEAUTY OBSESSION



SHINE ON! Clockwise from top right: Katy Perry; Welch; David Bowie; M.I.A.; Stefani; Julia Nobis at Dior Haute Couture spring 2013; Lopez; Lindsey Wixson at Jean Paul Gaultier Haute Couture spring 2013; Lady Gaga; Kasia Struss at Christian Dior ready-to-wear spring 2013

off. It may seem extreme, but it will have a trickle-down effect."

While makeup on the ready-to-wear backstage circuit often incites the same chorus of adjectives—tough! Boyish! Cool!—makeup at the couture shows inspires an altogether different class of descriptors: fantastic, over the top, out of this world. And in that, it aligns with the style seen on some of the most iconic concert stages and music video sets. After all, if there's one trend in which couture and pop converge, it's crystals. Both ridiculous and ridiculously glamorous, excess sparkle can skew clownlike—but it can also be ultra-decadent (and what could be more pop than that?). One ELLE editor remembers sharing a bathroom mirror at a party with Brit songstress Florence Welch and being enchanted by the tiny clusters of clear crystals the singer wore beneath each eye—the ultimate rock star party accessory.

For Christian Dior's spring couture collection, McGrath transformed models' mouths into multifaceted blooming flowers, using Swarovski crystals—a glitzy, modern foil to the refined, ultraladylike clothes, which designer Raf Simons said he wanted to be "about the very idea of spring." Meanwhile, Lloyd Simmonds, Yves Saint Laurent Beauté creative director of makeup, delivered a Bollywood-inspired rendition at Jean Paul Gaultier's couture show the same week, pairing crystals with shimmering charcoal cat eyes.

Of course, crystal-studded lips are the height of impracticality. Backstage at Dior, McGrath assumed the role of glam babysitter. "The girls would want to eat or drink, so we were replacing crystals night and day. Some would swallow them!" she recalls. "You don't realize how much the girls were chatting and laughing and eating and drinking. So there was a lot of replacing of crystals, even though we used theatrical waterproof glue."

Not willing to forgo food, drink, and free speech for bejeweled beauty? Makeup artist Mary Phillips, who keeps Jennifer Lopez glimmering both in concert and on the set of her music videos (she iced Lopez's lips with rose-colored crystals for her "Goin' In" music video last summer), recommends scaling back the sparkle for real life. "Less is more. Unless it's for a performance, I wouldn't have your entire lips crystallized," she says. Instead, strategic placement "at each inner eye corner is really beautiful and brightening," she says, "or at the top and bottom points of the lips." Or pay homage to '90s-era Gwen Stefani with a single rhinestone bindi.

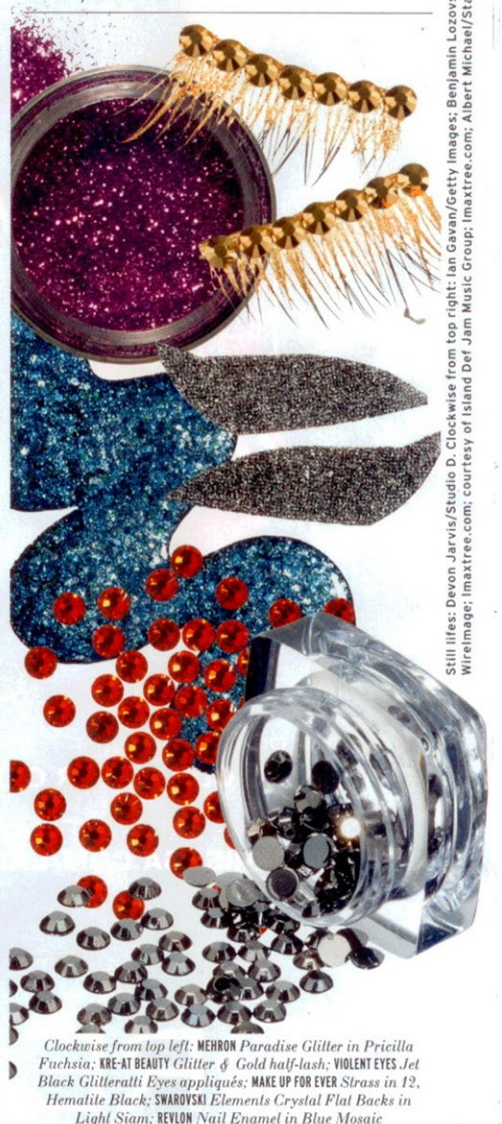
Otherwise, opt for crystals' more user-friendly little sister, glitter. Simply dab it over lipstick, says McGrath; "play with the

idea of putting metallic pigments on your lips. Using pink or bright red as a base can be a lot of fun." Still, choosing the right occasion is essential. "I think glitter lips are best for when you're going to a very special party," adds McGrath.

For 3-D sparkle that's guaranteed to stick around, nail art is the safest bet. Naomi Yasuda, who creates designs for Madonna, Eve, Estelle, and Alexa Chung, among others, has been using Swarovski crystals—"the most multifaceted"—in her impossibly intricate nail looks for more than 10 years. "It's easy to wear crystals on the nails," Yasuda says. "Just one along each cuticle makes a huge statement." —JULIE SCHOTT

FLASH MOB

From gilded lashes and glimmer appliqués to glitter polish and gem accents, there's a sparkle to suit every occasion



Clockwise from top left: MEHRON Paradise Glitter in Pricilla Fuchsia; KRE-AT BEAUTY Glitter & Gold half-lash; VIOLENT EYES Jet Black Glitterati Eyes appliqués; MAKE UP FOR EVER Strass in 12, Hematite Black; SWAROVSKI Elements Crystal Flat Backs in Light Siam; REVLON Nail Enamel in Blue Mosaic

Still lifes: Devon Jarvis/Studio D. Clockwise from top right: Ian Gavan/Getty Images; Benjamin Lozovsky/BFAnc.com; R. Bamber/Rex Features/courtesy of the Everett Collection; Ravi; Barry King/WireImage; Imaxtree.com; courtesy of Island Def Jam Music Group; Imaxtree.com