

## Michael DeVellis, Creator of The Powder Group

Michael DeVellis is the brain behind The Powder Group, one of the coolest places to learn how to do makeup in New York. Starting his career at MAC by working with artists, Michael quickly established himself as one of the most important behind the scene forces in the industry. He realized that he needed to do his own thang and founded [The Powder Group](#). [The Makeup Show](#) will be held May 14 and 15, and will be one of the foxiest trade shows you have ever laid your eyes on.

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### **Where are you from?**

Connecticut--born in Bridgeport, grew up in Trumbull, lived in Hartford for ten years before I moved to the City in 1992.

### **How did you come to New York?**

I always knew I was going to live here. It was just a matter of the right time. As a kid I knew it. In high school we'd take field trips to the City for shows and

museum trips. When I was in University we'd come to the city a few times a month to go clubbing--the days of Tunnel and The World--when NY nightlife had a great, creative energy to it. The opportunity to move permanently to the City presented itself when I was in Retail Operations for MAC in Connecticut. I moved to NY to open the Saks account for the company and then went to do more product and program development.

### **Can you talk about your time at MAC?**

It was amazing. I learned so much. When I joined the company in the early 'nineties, it was a privately owned business out of Toronto. The owners Frank Toskan and Frank Angelo were amazing trailblazers. They changed the industry like no one has ever done ever. Some time in the mid-late 'nineties, Estee Lauder partnered with the company to develop the brand further, then bought out the brand. It was another amazing learning experience for me. They allowed so much autonomy for us and really encouraged the creative edge that MAC had to this day.

### **How did you start?**

Accidentally, actually. A friend turned down the job managing a Connecticut MAC store and I was doing mostly freelance work at the time. I jumped on it.

### **What did you do there?**



I started in Retail Operations and ran the NYC market where I opened the Saks door, SoHo Store and Bloomingdale's--we more than doubled the market in around a year. It was a time of wild growth for the company and myself, as well. I was asked to take on a project developing a product line and programs for the professional makeup artist customer. We had been growing very quickly in the retail area and Frank Toskan wanted to be sure we refocused on the pros that got us there in the first place. My team developed a full product line called MAC PRO and MAC PRO stores in key pro-markets. I also worked in product development in other areas, but it always came back to working with the professional side of the business. We developed a product support program, professional membership program and master classes all under a new department called Artist Relations. We were really at the forefront of developing this sort of concept for the professional customer.

### **What is the Powder Group?**

The Powder Group is a resource for anyone who loves makeup, especially those who work with it. We focus on mostly the professional makeup artist but most of the events we produce are open to consumers or anyone else who might be interested in participating. We are really event producers: seminars, workshops, trade shows--anything related to makeup. We do private events, in-salon events--you name it. We also have a great Regional Talent Listing that allows people from across the country to find makeup artists in their area. The Community section of our website is designed to be a resource as well as an event listing.

### **How did you come up with the idea?**

As you can see from the work I did with MAC, most of my background is working with the professional makeup artist. I love it. I love the behind-the-scenes thing much more than the front-of-house. There was a huge void in the NY market a few years ago. There were very few non-banded opportunities for consumers or professionals to become excited about makeup without being in a retail environment. I also knew at the time that it would need to fill another void I say--there were no trade shows exclusively for makeup artists in New York! There were similar events happening in LA, Toronto and London, but oddly not here in the City. Fortunately I already had a relationship with Metropolitan Pavillion in Chelsea from working on other events there. We met, I approached them about the concept and we decided to partner on producing the event.

### **Are you an artist yourself?**

Yes, I love doing makeup, but I don't do much work in that area now. Running The Powder Group and developing The Makeup Show have sort of take over my life. In a good way! When I do makeup work it's more about body painting, airbrushing and the like.

### **Where did you get your training?**

Alot was self-taught, some with MAC and much from the many top artists who I've been fortunate enough to have worked iwth, and develop educational events with, over my years in the industry. I'm a little bit of alot of people when it comes to my techniques.

### **Who are your favorite artists?**

Now you're going to get me in trouble! Honestly, there are so many incredible talents out there. By default you can see some of my top favorites by their position as speakers at the The Makeup Show. Billy B is an incredible talent and a wonderful friend--so generous and full of sharing. Eve Pearl is a genius at getting real women to understand how to feel gorgeous. Sam Fine and Ve Neil are just both incredible--legendary, really! Then there are talented artists like James Vincent, David Klasfeld and Johnny Lavoy who both do alot of presenting for me at the Powder Group--these are names that will be the legends of tomorrow. Frances Hathaway for her art-inspired work. Then there's Leslie Lopez, Judy Chin, Kelly Gleason...I feel like I am forgetting someone in my Academy Award speech! There are seriously so many great talents--to me a great talent is not oly about skill...but having a great personality attitude. All my favorites have great attitudes.

### **What does it take to succeed as an artist?**

Patience, skill, determination, alot of effort, good attitude and logic.

### **How did you come up with the idea of this show?**

Filling a void. New York makeup artists deserve as how like this. Great professional brands, huge names from the business, gorgeous space at Metropolitan Pavillion. The Industry coming together to inspire. New York City is the global epicenter for beauty and we didn't have our won makeup artist--until now. I love the big beauty shows at big convention centers--they offer something really great for the beauty industry--but we wanted to produce something that felt like a community event, something to celebrate the creativeity and the passion of makeup