



Some hair stylists exclusively style hair in preparation for photo shoots, fashion shows, or star-studded events like awards shows.

CHAPTER FIVE

Out in the World

Before you've even finished high school, you'll start to feel that pressure of "What's next?" Soon you will be faced with a lot of big decisions about what you want to do with your future and how you can accomplish your goals. The good news is that everything you've learned working in the theater is valuable out in the real world, whether you continue on to a career in the theater or decide to try something else. Let's look at some of the career paths you might take if you love working on hair and makeup in the theater.

A Professional Hair Stylist

If you've gained some experience as a hair stylist as part of a theater production and want to continue on down that career path, you'll be pleased to know that working as a hair stylist is a versatile job in which you are often able to set your own hours, choose your own clients, and essentially be your own boss. Hair stylists can work for or own a salon; find a job in the fashion industry, styling hair for photo shoots and fashion shows; style hair for weddings or other events;

or work in the entertainment industry, styling hair for TV, movies, and theater. Some hair stylists go into style education careers, working to teach others how to style, cut, perm, and dye hair as part of the faculty of an accredited **cosmetology school**.

Many hair stylists are freelancers, meaning that they will work for a number of different clients, picking and choosing the work they would like to do as it comes. A freelance hair stylist might start the day traveling to a client's apartment for a quick cut and dye. Later that afternoon, there might be a wedding party to take care of. That night, he or she might have to style a celebrity client for an appearance at a charity gala. In short, there is no one way to be a hair stylist. Just remember that all states in the United States require you to be licensed to work as a professional hair stylist. You'll be required to take a certain number of hours of classes through an accredited cosmetology school, and then you'll have to do some hands-on training or an apprenticeship before you take the state exams. While it might seem like, "What's the big deal? It's just styling hair!" there are safety and sanitation issues that come with all branches of cosmetology that help keep you and your clients safe and free from any type of infection. You might also discover, as you begin to train for your cosmetology license, that there are a lot of things you didn't know.

Professional hair stylists must stay on top of the latest trends, but they should keep a working knowledge of hairstyles throughout history, especially if they choose a career path that takes them into the entertainment industry. Following other hair



Hair stylists who work outside of a salon can work from anywhere, even in the client's home.

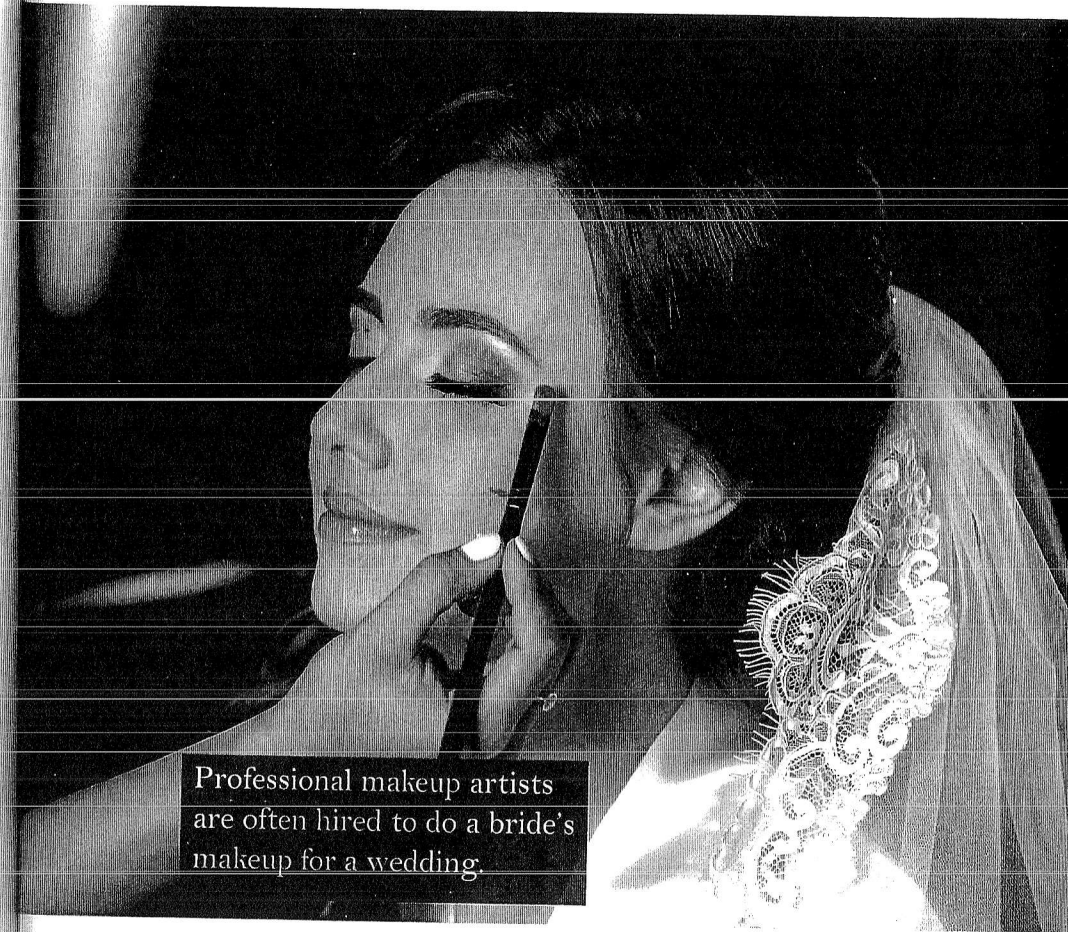
stylists on social media sites like Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook will give you a great opportunity to see what everyone else in the field is doing. Creating contacts with other hair stylists will also put you one step closer to finding great gigs in the field. You might want to create your own website and social media profiles so that you can establish your brand. Websites and Instagram are great places to show off your work and generate a following.

If your passion is wigs, you don't have to work in the theater to do what you do best. Wig stylists can make and style wigs for those suffering from hair loss, including cancer patients. Wigs are also a prevalent fashion accessory for many African American women. High-quality wigs are also in demand by professional cosplayers who sometimes can't find a specific wig for a costume and might hire a professional to make one. A quality wig that looks natural, fits well, and lasts forever requires the work of a wig professional.

Hair for the Stage

It's rare for a theater to hire a full-time hair stylist, but if styling hair for the theater is what you do best, there are ways to push your career in that direction. Hair stylists who work in the entertainment industry are sometimes referred to as "entertainment hair specialists" or "theatrical hair specialists."

Many hair stylists who work in the theater are complete-package artists, trained in a variety of skills, including makeup, wigs, and special effects, as well as hair styling. There are schools that specialize in training artists specifically in styling for stage, film, and TV. As you start out, you might need to take on volunteer roles or apprentice under a more experienced stylist. Eventually, you'll be well qualified for any number of jobs in the entertainment industry. Once you've developed a good reputation and a strong client list, you can begin to choose jobs specifically in the theater, and you'll be well on your way to winning that Tony.



Professional makeup artists are often hired to do a bride's makeup for a wedding.

A Professional Makeup Artist

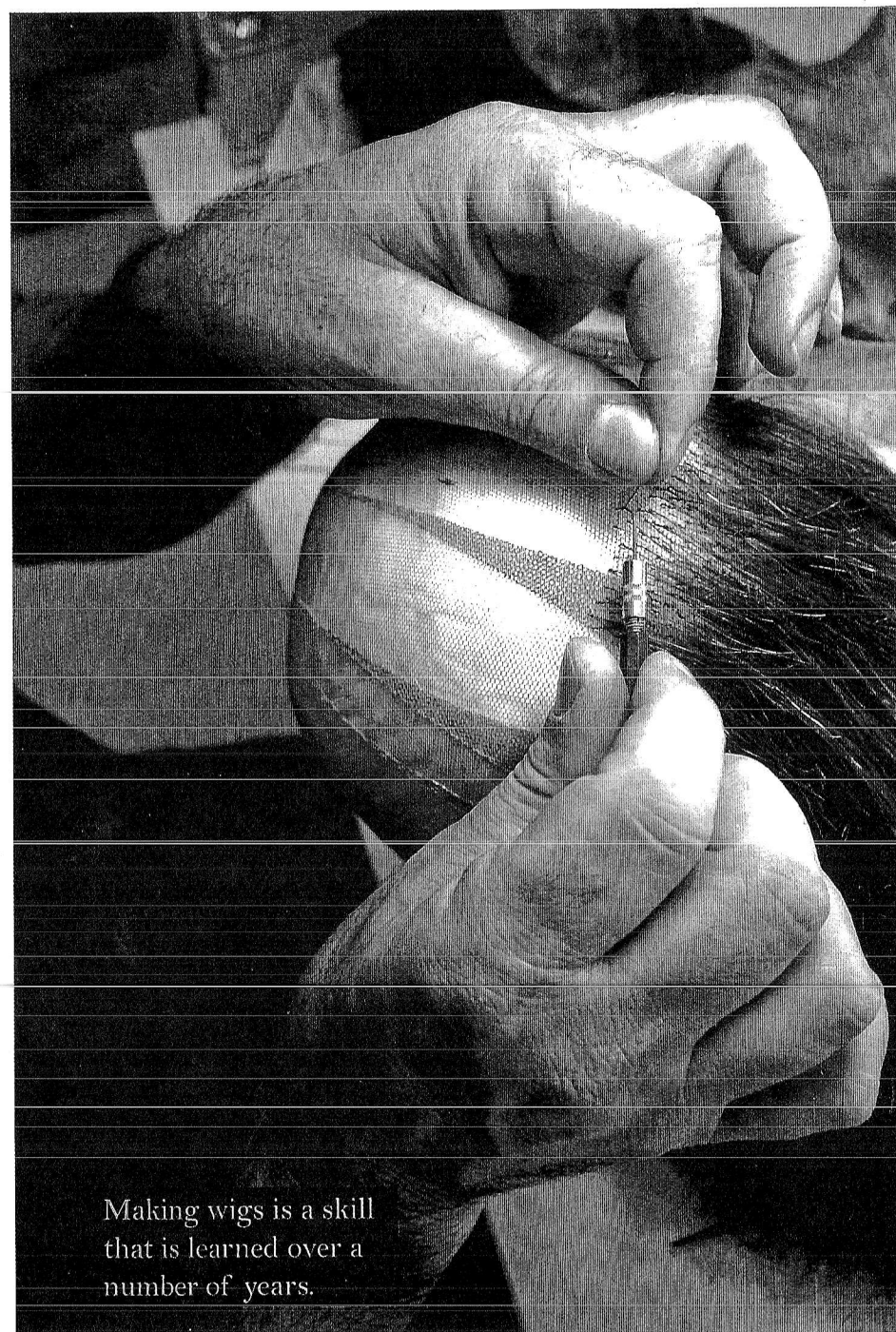
Many professional makeup artists are also freelancers who can choose the types of gigs they take. If your experience in the theater has put you on a path to being a professional makeup artist, you'll be able to choose your specialty and gain experience in the type of makeup art you want to do. Makeup artists might work in a salon or rent space in a few different salons, catering to a variety of clients. Some travel around,

makeup kit in tow, to wherever a client is. The fashion and entertainment industries make up the largest percentage of jobs for professional makeup artists, according to Sokanu.com. Other makeup artists might style clients in preparation for a wedding or other event. It's also not uncommon for a makeup artist to do makeup part-time, while working a second job that helps pay the bills.

Full-time makeup artists might work for one specific person or company. Companies like Sephora and Ulta Beauty often hire full-time makeup artists to help sell products and give demonstrations in the store. Some of these makeup artists might represent a specific brand and give demonstrations using a particular line of products.

A very specific type of professional makeup artist works for a funeral home, preparing the deceased to be seen by friends and loved ones during their funeral. According to Chron.com, a makeup artist who works in death-care services might even make a slightly higher salary than a makeup artist who exclusively styles the living.

Says Lindsey Bacon, "I think that doing theater makeup is a great way to get a foundational understanding of makeup as a medium and a business. You get a great understanding of how lighting affects the look of makeup. You learn how to manipulate faces with shadow and highlight to create characters, age looks, and fantastical creature effects. You learn tricks to create long-lasting makeup looks that can stand up to extreme temperatures and perspiration."



Making wigs is a skill that is learned over a number of years.

MAKEUP ARTIST LINDSEY BACON

Portland-based makeup artist Lindsey Bacon started out like many professional makeup artists: with a love of theater. She says, "I got into makeup design by taking a theatrical makeup class in high school. As a child, I loved art and drawing, I performed in local and school theater, and was a total nerd for special effects from movies. But it wasn't until taking a makeup class that I realized I could put together all of the things I loved into one job."

Bacon went on to work as a freelance makeup artist for theater and film, while working a full-time job outside of makeup design. After a few years, she decided to pursue working as a makeup artist full-time. She left her full-time job to take a position at Sephora, the national makeup retail chain. Now working as a freelance makeup artist and blogger,

Bacon frequently showcases her work on Tumblr, Twitter, and Instagram. She loves the business side of the business.

"As a makeup artist, you're often your own boss, so being in control of the budget and/or subject to the constraints of the budget of your theater department is helpful for learning the ropes of managing your own small business."

Bacon's experiences in theater taught her a lot about collaboration and creativity that she doesn't feel she would otherwise have learned. She says, "You learn how to manage time and workflow in a fast-paced environment while still having the room to be truly creative. You get plenty of time and repetition to practice and perfect your craft."

Makeup in the Theater

If you've been bitten by the theater bug, and you know that designing and applying makeup for the theater is your career of choice, then the good news is that you already have experience that will put you on the path toward your goals.

Many professional makeup artists who work in the theater are trained across a variety of arts. This is a great thing because a stylist with a variety of

skills will be able to take on work with any type of show. Not every show is going to require someone who is *just* a makeup artist or *just* a wigmaker, but most shows will require someone who knows and can manage both, or even sew a button on a costume or style a **fascinator**. The longer you are in the business, however, and the more experience you gain, you will find yourself being able to be more selective about

the jobs you take. And if makeup is your one true love and you want that to be your focus, then time and experience will very likely give you that ability.

Offstage Careers

Art and design is a widespread career path covering a variety of career options. If you have experience as a hair and makeup designer either in high school or college, that is a bonus on your résumé to help you land a job in a variety of professions.

Graphic Designer

A person with an eye for design might enjoy working as a **graphic designer**. Graphic designers create visual concepts for advertising, book publishing, magazines, and other mediums. They usually use design software on a computer, but some might work by hand. Graphic design involves choosing color palettes, fonts, and graphics in order to make something cohesive and intriguing to consumers. A very rare graphic designer might be self-taught through building up experience—perhaps gained through working in a theater. But most jobs in the field require at least a bachelor's degree in graphic design. Any kind of design work you've done is a valuable addition to your résumé.

Artist/Illustrator

A novice hair and makeup designer who really loves the art aspect of the work might look into building a career as an artist or illustrator. Art is a virtually

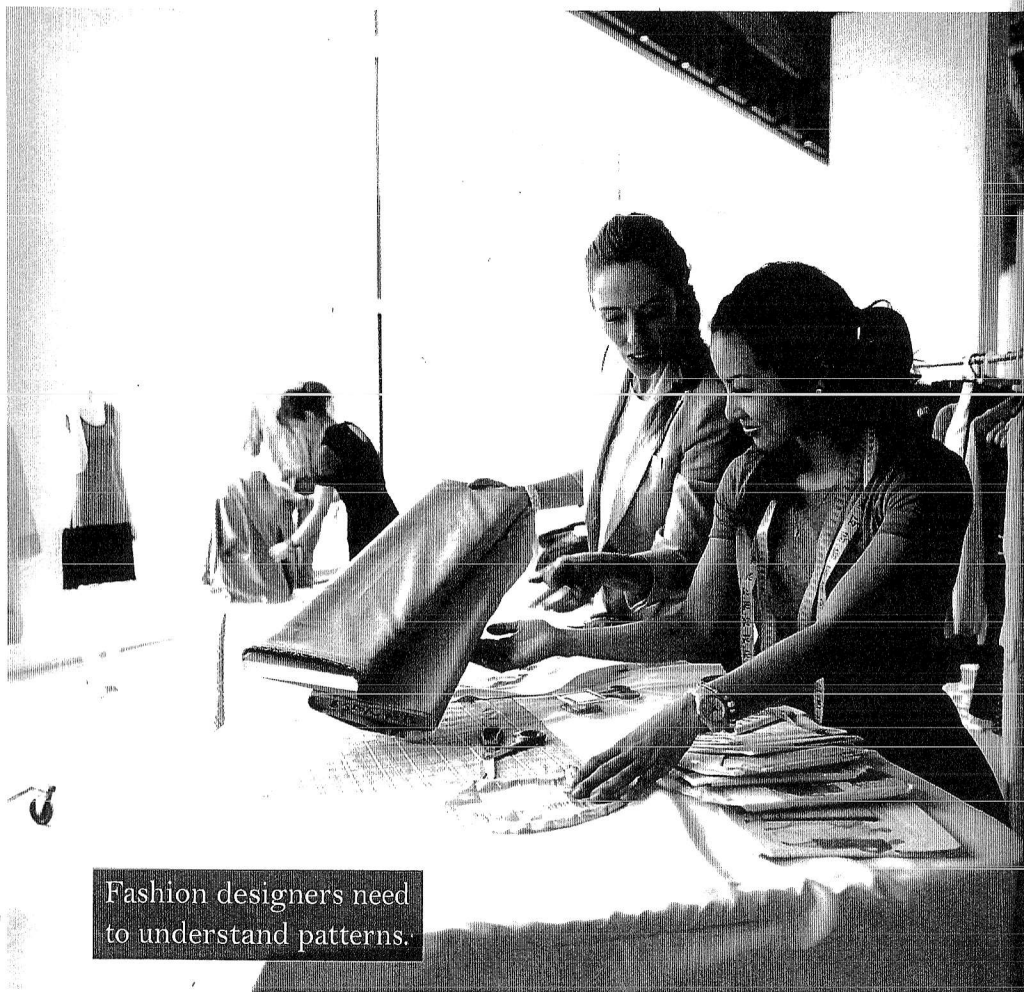
boundless field of study. There are painters who work on canvas, or muralists who paint images on walls. There is sculpture and printmaking, calligraphy and collage. Illustrators create art for books and comic books. This type of art is used to tell or enhance a story.

Many artists are self-taught. Others go to art school to learn more about their craft. Some artists can make a living as an artist, selling paintings or sculptures. Others might work for specific companies, creating art for an ad campaign or comic book franchise. Being an artist requires a lot of talent and some know-how of the business side of creating and selling art.

Fashion Designer

Since hair and makeup is already a big part of creating costumes for a theater production, you might already have an established interest and experience in creating costumes. Fashion design is just one step beyond that. Fashion designers create clothing and/or accessories to be purchased and worn by the public. A fashion designer can be a hat designer or a jewelry designer, a shoe designer or a clothing designer. A designer who loves bright colors and flashy patterns will make that his or her signature style. A designer who adores classic looks, like vintage dresses, might find ways to update those classics. Fashion design is all about realizing your own style and then bringing it to life.

Beyond just creating designs for clothing, fashion designers must learn the business side—how to get



publicity and create a personal brand. Fashion shows allow designers the chance to show off designs to magazines, celebrities, and company buyers.

Many fashion designers attend a fashion design school, but some might just use their sewing and design skills and begin making and selling clothing. Some designers might sell their work through sites like Etsy, hoping to be noticed by a large clothing brand.

Interior Designer or Decorator

Interior designers and decorators have an eye for living space design. Some theater experiences might give you the extra little push you need to pursue this type of career.

“Interior designer” and “interior decorator” might seem like interchangeable terms, but they are actually a little bit different. Interior designers work with architects, engineers, contractors, and others in order to create an aesthetically pleasing, safe, functional space within a building. This requires a degree, as some knowledge about architecture and building structure is necessary. Interior decorators choose accessories such as rugs, lamps, and furniture in order to “style” a room. This does not require a degree, just an eye for design and a head for business.

Your Life as a Hair and Makeup Designer

Maybe you’ve been bitten by the theater bug. You’ve styled your share of wigs. You’ve huddled backstage, monitoring an actor to make sure her eye makeup is holding up during her big onstage cry. You’re ready to make the leap. You want to design hair and makeup professionally. Many designers are self-taught, while others might attend cosmetology school or art school or take classes to learn more about both. A hair and makeup designer might start out as a hair stylist or makeup artist, sometimes gaining valuable experience as a volunteer or in an unpaid position. One of the

most important things a hair and makeup designer needs is a portfolio of past work, so be sure to photograph all of your work. Many hair and makeup designers use online portfolios for easy sharing, so technology training would not go amiss.

Your Theater Legacy

Whether your life takes you back to the theater or onto a completely different career path, the experience of working in theater is one that you will carry with you for life. It will be worth the effort, even if it just raises your makeup game or teaches you how to style the wig for your Sailor Moon costume. Or it gives you a better understanding of art, life, and how great it feels to reflect back on a job well done.