

Why beauty avatars are rocking the latest make-up looks

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Cosmetic brands are choosing to boldly go where few have gone before – the metaverse, where beauty avatars are sporting the latest looks. But what does this mean for you?

Beauty brands are playing in the digital playground known as the metaverse, using avatars to sport the latest looks in a virtual world.

Maybelline New York is among the cosmetic giants dabbling in this emerging 3D digital space, launching an avatar called May to promote a new mascara.

Bleach-haired and decked in sparkly purple, May featured alongside Maybelline global ambassador Gigi Hadid to launch the Falsies Surreal Extensions Mascara in February.

So why would the beauty industry choose to use a virtual influencer in a realm where you can't touch or feel what's in front of you?

Why beauty avatars are all the rage

Maybelline says it is because their new mascara's effect is so surreal, "only an avatar can bring it to life".

"When a mascara delivers a transformation as surreal as this, it takes something just as surreal to introduce it," Maybelline New York senior vice president of global brand experience Shivani Shah says.

"That's where May comes in.

“We’re thrilled to grow our Falsies portfolio with the help of our first avatar, who brings to life the product’s surreal lash extension look and next-gen technology in a fun and unexpected way.”

Last year, Maybelline partnered with cross-game avatar platform Ready Player Me, to provide free expert make-up looks that can be applied to your avatar in seconds.

L’Oréal-licensed brand Prada also ramped up its metaverse marketing efforts to bring products to life, launching virtual model Candy last year to promote its fragrance collection, while NARS Cosmetics has created a trio of stylish “meta-humans” inspired by lipstick shades, each sporting a distinct look, personality and backstory.

How beauty avatars help bridge the gap

BEAUTYSTREAMS creative director and trend authority Michael Nolte says the powerful possibilities of the metaverse have pushed beauty brands to find new ways to engage and captivate consumers.

“Avatars have become a trendsetting domain for the digital experience, and beauty brands are showing an increasing interest in this new medium, as well as spending a growing slice of their influencer marketing budgets on virtual influencers,” Michael says.

These immersive virtual experiences are bridging a gap between shopping online and visiting a physical store, allowing customers to make more personalised connections with brands, he explains.

“Within the metaverse, consumers can shop in a virtual store the same way they do in a physical retail one and try products at their leisure, immediately seeing what they would look like after application,” Michael says.

So, what does the future hold?

“The metaverse not only allows for beauty brands to highlight their products and tell their story in ways that don’t currently exist within e-commerce, but they also are able to build communities amongst their shoppers,” Michael says.

He believes the number of virtual influencers globally will grow as the real and digital worlds continue to merge, and that interactions with avatars will become more human-like, allowing brands to create deeper emotional connections with consumers.

“While today’s avatars may be lacking the true authenticity and naturality of human-to-human interactions, it is clear technology is evolving to indicate that in the future, avatars won’t feel so different from humans,” he says.

Written by Melissa Iaria.