

November  
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# FASHION

Why is **FASHION**  
STILL SO AGEIST?

COATS GO  
BIG, BROWN  
and **BOLD**

FRAGRANCE  
LAYERING

+

ANOTHER  
REASON  
to **STOP**  
DRINKING:  
**GREAT SKIN**

**NELLY  
FURTADO**

SHE'S BACK AND MORE CREATIVELY CHARGED  
THAN EVER (THANK YOU, ADHD!)

# In the Thick of It

Content creator Meredith Duxbury has amassed a staggering 21 million followers across her social media platforms by showcasing a surprising “more is more” approach to makeup application.

By SOUZAN MICHAEL GALWAY



Every corner of social media has key players who have mastered the art of the shock factor. On #BeautyTok, no one does it better than Meredith Duxbury. Her videos are hard to miss, even harder to scroll past, and are centred on her signature makeup-application technique: a very heavy-handed approach—and that’s putting it lightly—that has helped her rack up over 18.5 million followers on TikTok (and three million on Instagram and YouTube combined). She applies no fewer than 10 pumps of foundation all over her face (including her eyelids and lips) and then, using a circular motion, rubs in the thick coat of makeup with her hands as if it were the most hydrating moisturizer in the world. And then comes concealer, contour, brow gel, blush, eyeshadow and mascara—the works. She often lip-synchs to a popular song through-

out the video. Even if you’re not on #BeautyTok, this is probably starting to ring a bell.

“I probably use 25 to 30 products each time,” says Duxbury over the phone from New York City. “It depends on how intricate the look is.” Ah, yes, the look—the final result after a small mountain of products have been applied and blended. After all is said and done, Duxbury’s makeup looks, well, normal. In fact, it looks great. Does it look like a full face of makeup? Sure. But it’s certainly no more extreme than the full beat that’s popular on TikTok.

So why the dozens of steps if the final product could probably be achieved with far less? Duxbury insists she’s been doing her makeup like this for years; she began wearing heavy, full-coverage foundation to cover her freckles, a former insecurity of hers. “I

started noticing that my beauty sponge was absorbing a lot of product,” she says. “When I’d use my hands, the foundation would melt really nicely into my skin.” The technique got her noticed on TikTok, and she quickly skyrocketed. By December 2020, she had built up a following of one million. That month, she started #TheFoundationChallenge, inviting others on TikTok to try her technique. By January 2021, she had grown her following to a whopping seven million. Today, she is the second-most-followed TikTok beauty content creator, and her most-watched video currently has more than 135 million views.

With this overnight virality came an obsession with creating her next hit. “At the time, I was really stressed,” Duxbury confesses. “I put so much pressure on myself, and I’d be so upset if I made a video that didn’t get, like, 30 million

views. I’d be up all night checking my numbers; I couldn’t sleep.” These days, she says, she doesn’t get sucked into the cycle: “The key to going viral is not doing something just because you think it’s gonna go viral; you have to really love it. The great thing about TikTok’s algorithm is that it gives everybody a fair chance. You don’t have to have connections or a ton of existing followers to go viral.” Another reason she prefers the video app over others is because it aligns with her style of working and communicating. “I have ADHD, and the way I work is very fast-paced,” she says. “I

lose interest in things unless they’re quick and to the point, so with TikTok being such short-form content, it allows me to get out what I need to say in 15 to 30 seconds.”

Duxbury’s most recent project is a limited-edition collaboration with Morphe (featuring two palettes, a multi-purpose gloss, a lip liner and lip glaze duo and a brow gel and brush), although she hopes to launch her own stand-alone brand one day and become a permanent fixture in the beauty world—an industry she says has been “very welcoming” to her and her controversial technique.

“That’s the beauty of makeup and why I think people get into the industry—there are no rules or limits; everyone feels free to do what they want,” she says. But when that day comes, don’t expect a minimalist no-makeup makeup offering. Duxbury says that doing natural makeup doesn’t challenge her brain. “With these complex, intricate looks, you need a steady hand, the lines have to be crisp and there’s blending—there’s just a lot to think about,” she explains. “I could do natural makeup with my eyes closed, but with full glam, you have to really pay attention.” ■



## Best Batch

Meredith Duxbury’s must-have beauty essentials.

1. Dior Forever Skin Glow Foundation, \$74
2. Kilian Paris Love Don’t Be Shy Eau de Parfum, \$375 for 50 ml
3. Morphe x Meredith Duxbury Lip Liner & Glaze Duo, \$22
4. Mugler Angel Eau de Parfum, \$123 for 25 ml
5. Patrick Ta Major Skin Crème Foundation and Finishing Powder Duo, \$71
6. Charlotte Tilbury Hot Lips Lipstick in “Kim K.W.,” \$48
7. LYS No Limits Cream Bronzer and Contour Stick, \$27

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