



Beat Frutiger
Im Junkholz 40
CH - 4303 Kaiseraugst
061 811 67 41
www.fru.ch fru@fru.ch

Answering Recurrent Questions

How did you come upon body-painting?

While attending classes at the school for arts and crafts in Bern, my aim was to become an art teacher. In 1979 my teacher for three-dimensional shaping, Walter Kretz, was officially unveiling a concrete sculpture at a public swimming-pool. On the opening day our class mixed color pigments with glycerin, because we intended to transform about a thousand swimmers as well as ourselves:

"I will never forget my first sight of a human being completely covered by paint, including hair and swimming-trunks as green as the surrounding grass. The creature seemed to be more extraterrestrial than human, Martian perhaps. But it was neither artificial nor cute, rather quite frightening in its physical presence. From then on I developed my passion for body-painting." (Quoted from "Schminke Maske Körperkunst" p.13)

How old is the art of body-painting?

It is suggested that painted bodies were the beginning of art itself some 40 000 years ago. Later on, art developed into painting, sculpture and of course make-up culture. Today's body-painting began in the sixties. The connection between art and body-painting or make-up can be seen as follows:

"Man is driven by an immense desire to change his appearance. This is unique: no other living creature attaches more importance to its appearance. The human being continually changes his naturally created appearance in the course of his lifetime, through clothing, hairstyle, distortion (of the skull, the feet, the muscles, etc.) tattooing and painting. Man's creative power reveals itself first and predominantly in his appearance. So man himself literally becomes a work of art, in his own eyes, as well as in the eyes of others." (Quoted from "Schminke Maske Körperkunst" p. 6)

What kind of book is this?

The book "Schminke, Maske, Körperkunst" mainly results from papers, working instructions, and photographs of my classes. I give make-up lessons for teachers in Bern (further education training), for beginners, for people interested in theatre make-up, and for others who want to form masks. In 1990 I ran a private body-painting course in Italy (Toscana).

Can you make a living as a make-up artist?

Originally, I am an art teacher teaching drawing, woodwork, photography and film. The money I get from courses, commissions for theatre and advertising agencies is used for my own work. In my studio I carry out my ideas and take pictures after having created suitable backgrounds. These pictures are then presented in exhibitions.

What kind of exhibitions are these?

Every year or so, I take part in an exhibition of a group of artists. My first individual exhibition

was in 1990, my second in 1992 at the “no name” gallery in Basel. My latest exhibition entitled “moon calendar sheets” concentrated on the subject of mythological women.

Who are your models?

It is obvious that I prefer female models. There were some men, but generally men are less interested in make-up than women. Only about ten percent of the people attending my classes are men. Men are often too hairy for my kind of painting, and besides I simply prefer women. They are students, teachers, secretaries, cosmeticians, etc.

How do you find your models?

I never work with professional models from agencies. I couldn't afford it. I ask women who I think will be able to show enthusiasm for my work. I prefer to work with the same model for an extended period. “Moon calendar sheets” with Mariella Lucrezia is a typical example of such a cooperation. The model's appearance, character, and ideas contributes much to the end result. Therefore, I'm continually searching for new models. Any women interested may feel free to contact me!

What products do you use?

Specific brands are often important to make-up artist or to the public, but not to me. I work with “Kryolan” products, but I wouldn't mind using others. To protect the model's skin, I have replaced fat-based make-up with water-based for body-painting. In the future, I plan to keep things simple and use as few products as possible. I place more importance on significance and communication than on technical knowledge

What makes body-painting interesting?

The transformation and its effect on the model and the public are always astonishing. Each kind of mask makes its owner act differently in a new identity. My early work consisted of transforming the body into various materials: flesh became marble, bronze or granite. Bodies and motions became more beautiful and harmonious as the result of this change. Painting, surrounded by an audience is always interesting for the model and for myself. This could be at a party, a private club, a fashion show, a vernissage or a fair. The dialogue, outloud or silent, between public, model and artist supports the understanding for the feelings about body image and transformation. The reactions and remarks of the public are very informative. The model's nudity has never been a bone of contention. Instead, people tend to ask questions such as those above. I remember that amazing question from an elderly lady on the opening day of a hairdressing salon. I was painting a granite statue, and grass was growing in place of hair. Standing between her friend and me, the lady asked:

What is this good for? Is it healthy?

I was so taken by surprise that I knew no answer. Now I would say: it's healthy for the psyche. At a time when psychosomatic disease is fast becoming an epidemic, body-painting can be a remedy.