

Read about Carolyn Cowan

Vision, art and a glimpse of the future

She sold her possessions aged 18, bought a ticket to Milan and told Italian Vogue they needed her. And so begins the story of Carolyn Cowan; self-taught make-up artist, body painter, photographer and yogic teacher. Carolyn's inspired career has seen ups and downs that range from working as personal make-up artist to Freddy Mercury, seen her create iconic body painting for pop videos and work with the top names in fashion, pop and the world of celebrity. This has all been interspersed with a battle with alcohols and drugs; now clean, she is a spokesperson for Action against addiction. She also has two young children and a growing business in DVD production and yoga accessories.

She has been there for the top fashion magazines in the UK and Vogue around the world. Photographers know her name: Mario Testino, David Bailey and Snowdon to name just three. Art is her first love, but it was make-up that gave rise to her artistic abilities. Starting out in fashion make-up during the heady days of the 1980's and the new romantics in London, her main claim to fame is actually from painting the body. Think of Elton John's "I'm Still Standing", Duran Duran's "Rio" or Queen's "I Want to break free". In advertising the commissions come thick and fast. The Natrel body spray ad campaign is probably her most famous. She has tattooed Jean Claude Van Damme (with temporary paints), painted Billy Idol, and was also David Bowie's personal make-up artist to David Bowie in the early '90's. Her work is admired around the world and she's seen as one of the "gurus" of body painting.

Her creations are much more than merely painting t-shirts and jeans on the body (but she has done plenty of this). Her work is multi-dimensional, creating an illusion, ensuring this is properly lit. This is where her experience as a photographer comes in. Now she photographs most of her own work. She has a firm belief in the need for people to understand the demands of lighting in order to create the right effect or procure the desired illusion. She now teaches the art of painting the body at London Colleges and privately at home in small classes. These focus on the art of illusion and photography. This year she is to judge at the World Bodypainting Festival in Austria.

Her most recent project has been the development, filming and production of an instructional DVD, Bodypainting Masterclass: The Art of Illusion. It is an easy to follow step by step guide that takes the viewer on a journey. In her spare time - you ask when that is? She also teaches Kundalini Yoga and is involved in the Great British Yoga Festival.

Celebrities include: Freddy Mercury, Jean Claude Van Damme, Steve Strange, David Bowie, Tina Turner, Stephen Fry, Paula Abdul, Cliff Richard and Lady Thatcher.

Editorial: Vogue: UK, Italy, Germany and USA. Elle, Harpers and Queen, Cosmo.

Interested in a workshop with Carolyn, find details here...

Written on the body - Carolyn Cowan's DVD

Carolyn Cowan, self-taught make-up artist, photographer and yogic teacher is the undisputed queen of body painting. Now her skills and