





# *Imagine*

*a fantastical realm  
where liquefied rubies  
glide across the lips,  
shimmering gold  
skims the skin,  
and the faces of mortals morph  
into the ethereal.*

*This is what it is to be inside  
the world of  
legendary makeup artist*

*Pat McGrath.*

*A world in which senses are heightened,  
dreams are realized,  
and MUSES transform,  
if only for a moment,  
into goddesses.*

BY LIANA SCHAFFNER



You've sailed past the velvet rope and start down a dark corridor, feeling along the wall for balance. The sound of live music grows louder, pulsing in the floor and echoing up your calves. Finally, the narrow hallway opens wide and ejects you into the middle of a party. Your eyes barely have time to adjust to the dim light before something flashes in your peripheral vision.

It's a model with a mosaic of pink crystals and sequins glinting on her face. Another soon swans by, cerulean latex painted from lashes to brows. Next you spot Rihanna, who's arrived fresh from a magazine shoot; a golden starburst encircles her eye and trails down her cheek in metallic rivulets. And everywhere

there's transcendent skin—glowing to the point of incandescence, as though plugged into an LED light. This is a galaxy of stars, a world of extreme tones and textures. Welcome to the world of makeup as seen by Pat McGrath.

McGrath is the beauty industry's most creative, most coveted, and most prolific makeup artist. Using exotic materials like feathers, gold leaf, pearls, and leather, she transforms models into surreal beings, and catwalks into otherworldly realms—usually wedged somewhere between Versailles and outer space. McGrath masterminds the beauty looks for roughly 80 fashion shows each year, always maintaining a serene presence backstage. Her famously all-black wardrobe keeps her visually removed from the chaos of partially dressed models and racks of clothing that create a sense of unspooling for the unaccustomed observer. She calls people “darling” and marshals an army of assistants, reacting calmly whenever someone on her team applies a layer of foundation or a red lip that doesn't quite pass muster—meaning we have not yet arrived at perfection.

A keen, laser focus is how McGrath keeps her cool in this dizzying environment. “I have to pretend that no other world exists, or I'd go crazy,” she says. But outside the fashion show, or the magazine shoot, or the ad campaign, McGrath has a wandering gaze. She's always in search of inspiration. And these days, she's discovered it in an eclectic group of models whom she refers to—in the superlative language of the artist—as her muses. “They are their own women, representing a mix of

ethnicities, sizes, and backgrounds,” says McGrath of this exclusive club, which includes a thoughtful young writer, an Instagram sensation, and the most famous supermodel on the planet. “They allow me to experiment and create the looks I dream of in my head.” Grouped together for an early-morning photo shoot, with the sun forming tepid bars of light on set, these models provide a hazy glimpse into that very head, offering a clue to McGrath's creative psyche. She is an artist without a type. She's not interested in reaffirming her vision, only in challenging it.

And while she's at it, McGrath would like to challenge everyone else's notion of beauty, too. This is the premise of the namesake line, Pat McGrath Labs, that she (finally) launched a year and a half ago. “I want to change how people think about makeup, and disrupt the status quo,” she says. The five collections that she's created so far certainly achieve this goal. Eye shadows that flake like gold dust, lipsticks so shiny and pigmented they smack of latex, and highlighters that give skin a holographic glow have presented a bold alternative to the safe neutrals that form a unity of beige across beauty aisles and makeup counters. And it's a look that women are not only willing to experiment with but actually racing to try. McGrath's first collection, Gold 001, sold out on her website in six minutes and six seconds. Her more recent launches have made their way to Sephora—the Skin Fetish highlighters were gone within a couple of weeks.

If you can ignore (for a split second) the crazy popularity of McGrath's products, you'll find that her makeup also possesses built-in sanctity—an unusual concept for such a temporary medium. “I try to keep it on all day,” says Jasmine Sanders, a model and McGrath muse whose 2 million Instagram followers know her as Golden Barbie (and with skin and hair that suggest creamed honey, the handle isn't exactly hyperbole). “My boyfriend laughs at me because I sleep on my hands, trying not to ruin it.” That sentimental feeling also extends to McGrath. In fact, the one characteristic that all of McGrath's muses seem to share is their reverence for the woman herself. Each describes her in glowing terms, as if she can't quite believe that the master's gaze has settled on her. “It's an honor to be involved with these products. I would do anything for Pat,” says Sanders, whose eyes look remarkably wide and earnest, even though they're laden with glimmer and defined by a stiletto-ish flick of liner. She's a social-media force and models for top designers. But right now, at this moment, she's just another girl, happy to be invited to the party.

## JASMINE SANDERS

When you're known in the fashion world as Golden Barbie, glowing like a precious metal is almost a professional obligation. “If I can get any more golden, I go for it,” says Sanders, who dazzles in this sparkling bronze eye shadow from McGrath's Metamorphosis 005 collection. Whether she's walking Paris runways or vacationing in Mexico with Kim Kardashian West, Sanders radiates warmth—a magical effect that McGrath is famous for re-creating with makeup. Golden Barbie also happens to be a real doll: “Introducing my mom to Pat was such a huge moment for me. My mom's a makeup artist. I cried.”

PHOTOGRAPHED BY EMMA SUMMERTON



Lamé dress from Preen by Thornton Bregazzi. Earrings by Oscar de la Renta and Sanders's own. These pages: Makeup, Pat McGrath; hair, Raquel Martuscelli; manicure, Jin Soon Choi of Jin Soon Natural Hand & Foot Spas. Fashion stylist: Natasha Royt. Details, see Shopping Guide.







## NAOMI CAMPBELL

Campbell has inspired so many artists, designers, and photographers that the supermodel is in a category all her own: She gets to decide who can claim her as a muse. McGrath is part of that small, elite circle. "We've worked together since the mid-1990s, and she inspires me in ways I've never imagined," says McGrath. "There is no one like Naomi." McGrath has always taken the same approach to Campbell: perfecting her complexion with minimal makeup, which allows her skin to peek naturally through. Here, a layer of vermillion glitter from McGrath's Lust 004 collection creates an extravagant effect on her lips and an allover glow.

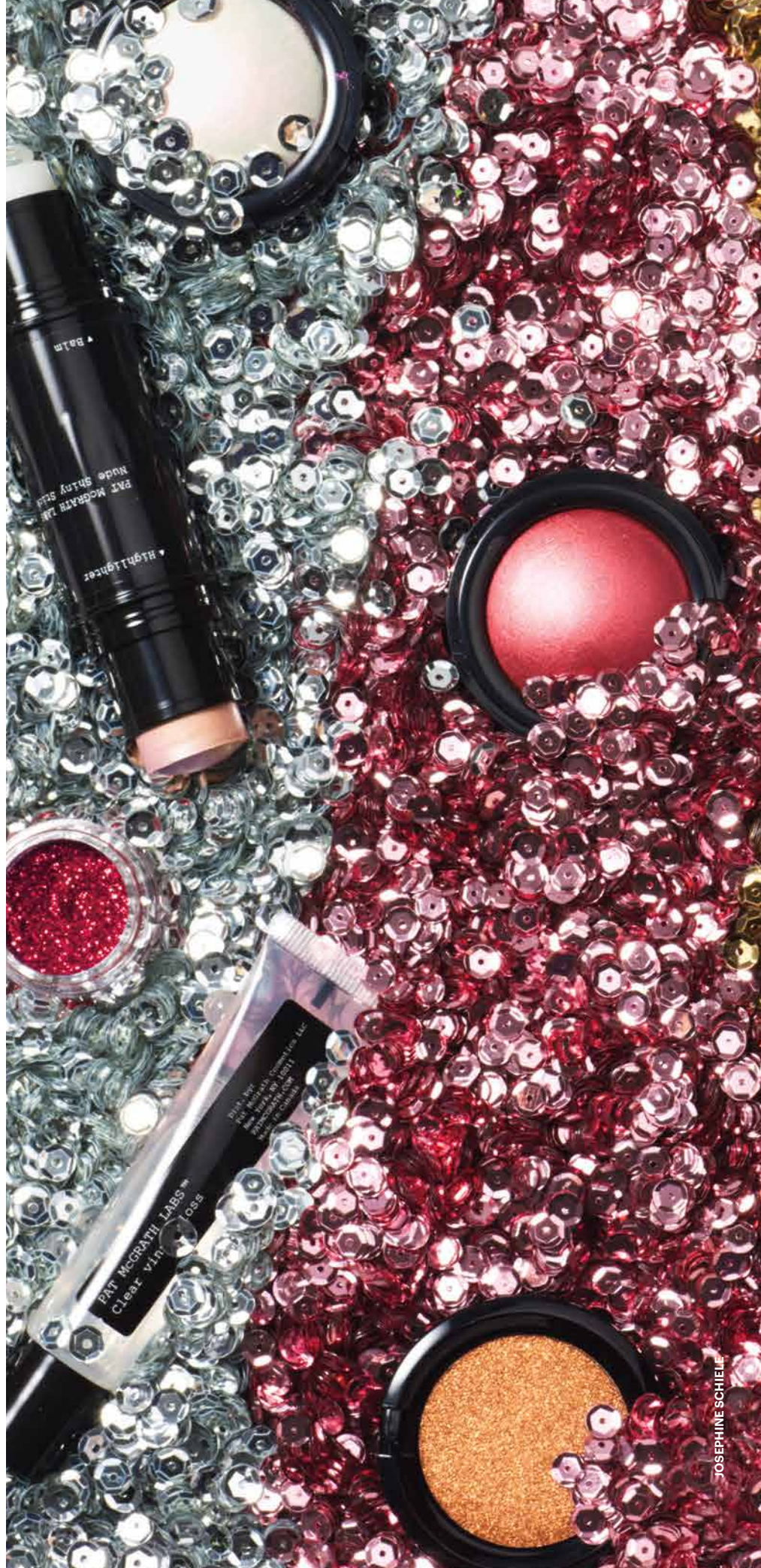
Go behind the scenes with Campbell and McGrath on the set of our photo shoot at [allure.com/naomi-pat](http://allure.com/naomi-pat).

Lace dress by Dolce & Gabbana.  
Hair: Dante Blandshaw.  
Details, see Shopping Guide.



# All That Glitters

When Pat McGrath sent models onto Prada's spring 2016 runway with lips coated in molten gold, a frenzy began to brew. A few days later, she was in the Jardin des Tuileries during Paris fashion week, painting the 24-karat liquid-powder onto the lips and lids of her model friends (Bella Hadid, Lily Donaldson), not to mention a few Parisian passersby. A makeup phenomenon—and Instagram sensation—was born. When Pat McGrath Labs Gold 001 was finally available to the public a month later, it sold out in 366 seconds. It's been followed by four more collections: Phantom 002, a collection of jewel-tone pigments; Skin Fetish 003, two highlighting kits that replicate the famously luminous skin McGrath has created backstage for decades; Lust 004, three lip kits that all include (of course) gold pigment and loose glitter; and Metalmorphosis 005, pigments in gold, silver, copper, and bronze. Though quantities have increased, the products—always packaged with hundreds of sparkling (and highly Instagrammable) sequins—still disappear quickly...in weeks, if not seconds. But we suggest you keep an eye on McGrath's social channels for news of old favorites making a return early this year.







Highlighter

PLAY ACCORATE LABS  
Golden Shiny Skin

Balm

PLAY ACCORATE LABS  
Lipstick





Lace top by Zimmermann.  
Bra, underwear, earrings, and  
necklace, Elsesser's own.  
Details, see Shopping Guide.



## PALOMA ELSESSER

Elsesser has the sort of creamy, hypnotic complexion that holds a person's gaze—and guides a makeup artist's touch. "Her face is the ultimate canvas," says McGrath of the model and writer. "She's a hard-core beauty." McGrath uses a shimmery gold stick from her Skin Fetish 003 line to accentuate the high points of Elsesser's face, creating what the model calls "rich baby skin." A dramatic swoop of liquid liner anchors all that incandescence. "I'm happy to sparkle like a glazed disco ball," says Elsesser with a laugh.

To see original McGrath looks on three more of her gorgeous muses—Hailey Baldwin, Ruby Aldridge, and Mallory Merk—go to [allure.com/pats-muses](http://allure.com/pats-muses).

