

Nail Art

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Nail art is a creative way to paint, decorate, enhance, and embellish nails. It is a type of artwork that can be done on fingernails and toenails, usually after manicures or pedicures.



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5000 BC — Although the exact origin of nail treatments is murky, many sources say it began in India as women dyed their fingertips with henna — a practice that continues to this day!

600 BC — Aristocrats during China's Chou Dynasty preferred a showier gold or silver on their lengthy nails. Blinged-out and bejeweled nail guards protected their nails, which were symbolic of wealth and leisure.

3000 BC — The Chinese formulated a complex lacquer of gum arabic, gelatin, beeswax, vegetable dyes, and egg whites. Crushed orchid and rose petals helped to produce shades from pink to red, but the solution had to be applied to the nail for hours, and sometimes even overnight, to produce a properly pigmented effect.

0 - 1800 AD — For a long period during the Middle Ages, manicures were more or less considered a thing of the past. The Dark Ages, indeed! It was during the Renaissance that the old tradition of manicuring nails was finally taken up again by wealthy European women — although they made sure to avoid any pigment. There was one bright spot in this period, though. Oceans away, the 15th Century Incas invented "nail art" as we know it — decorating their nails with intricate pictures of eagles.

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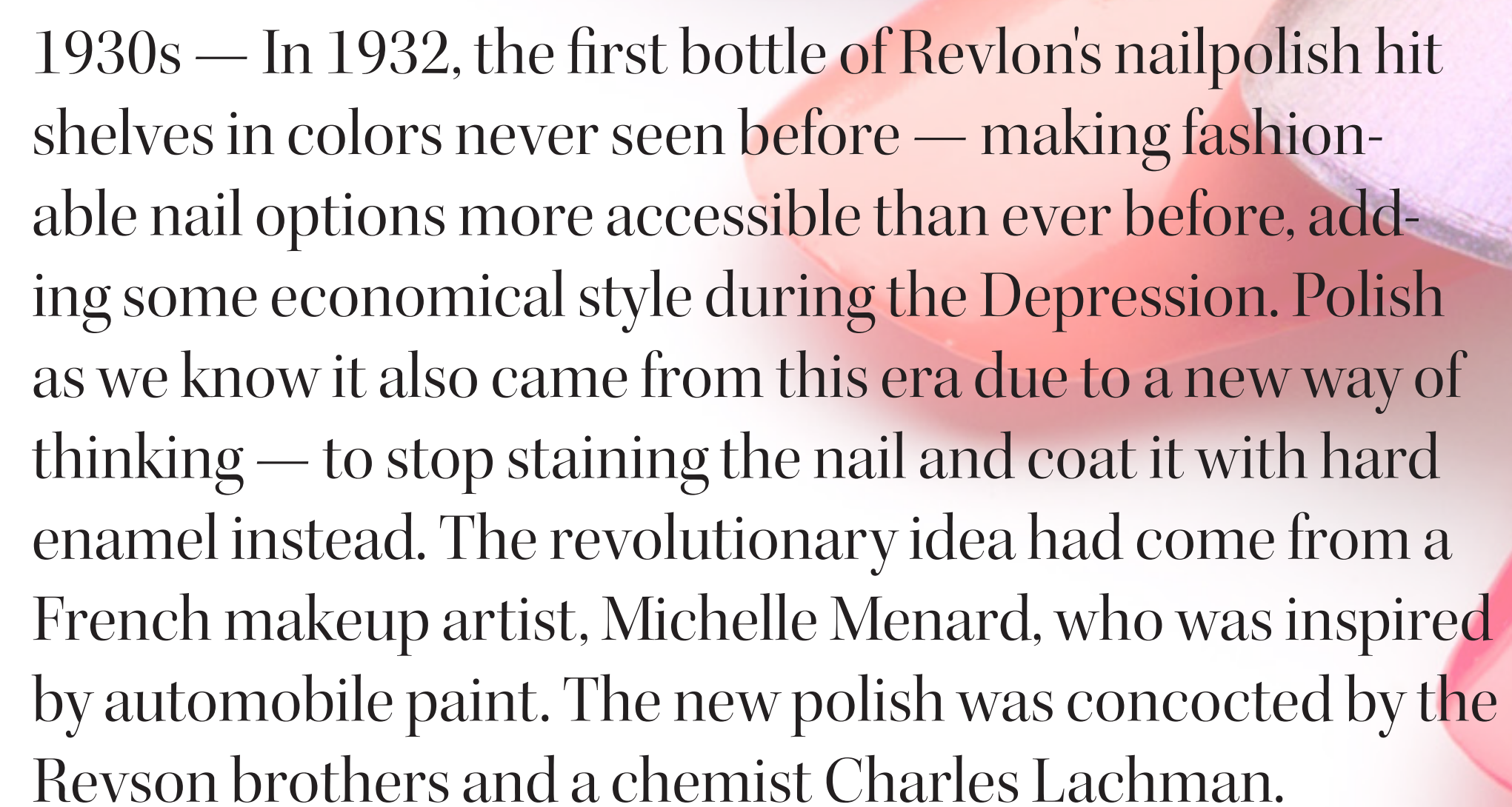
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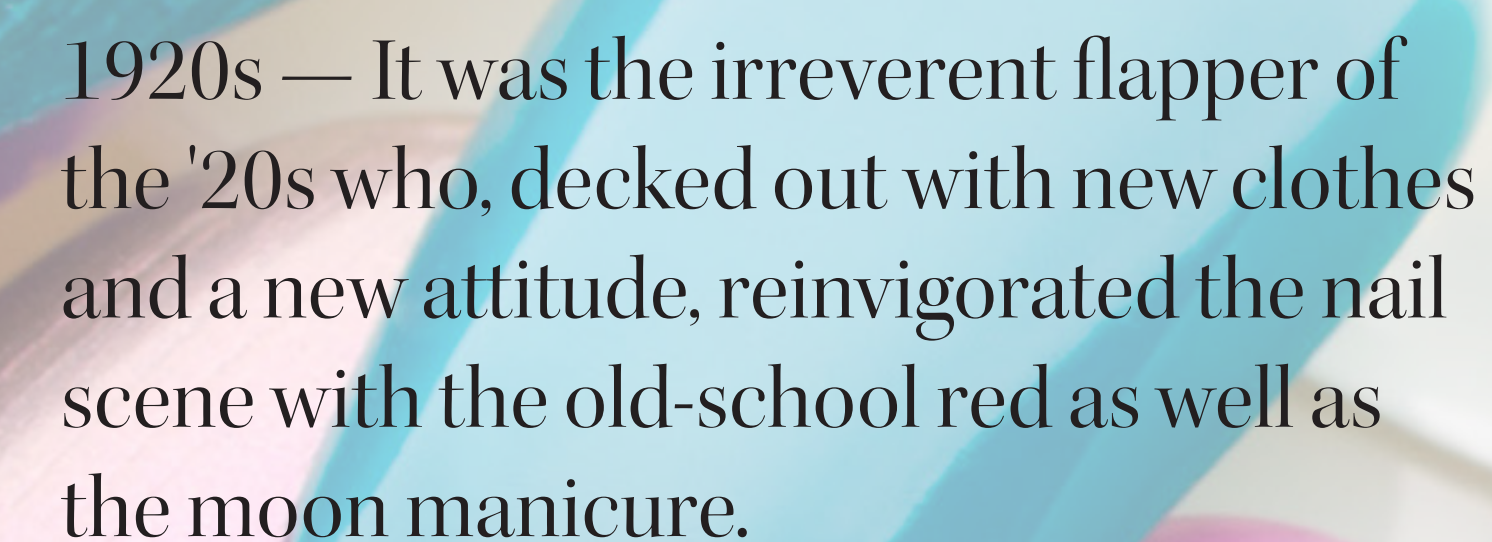
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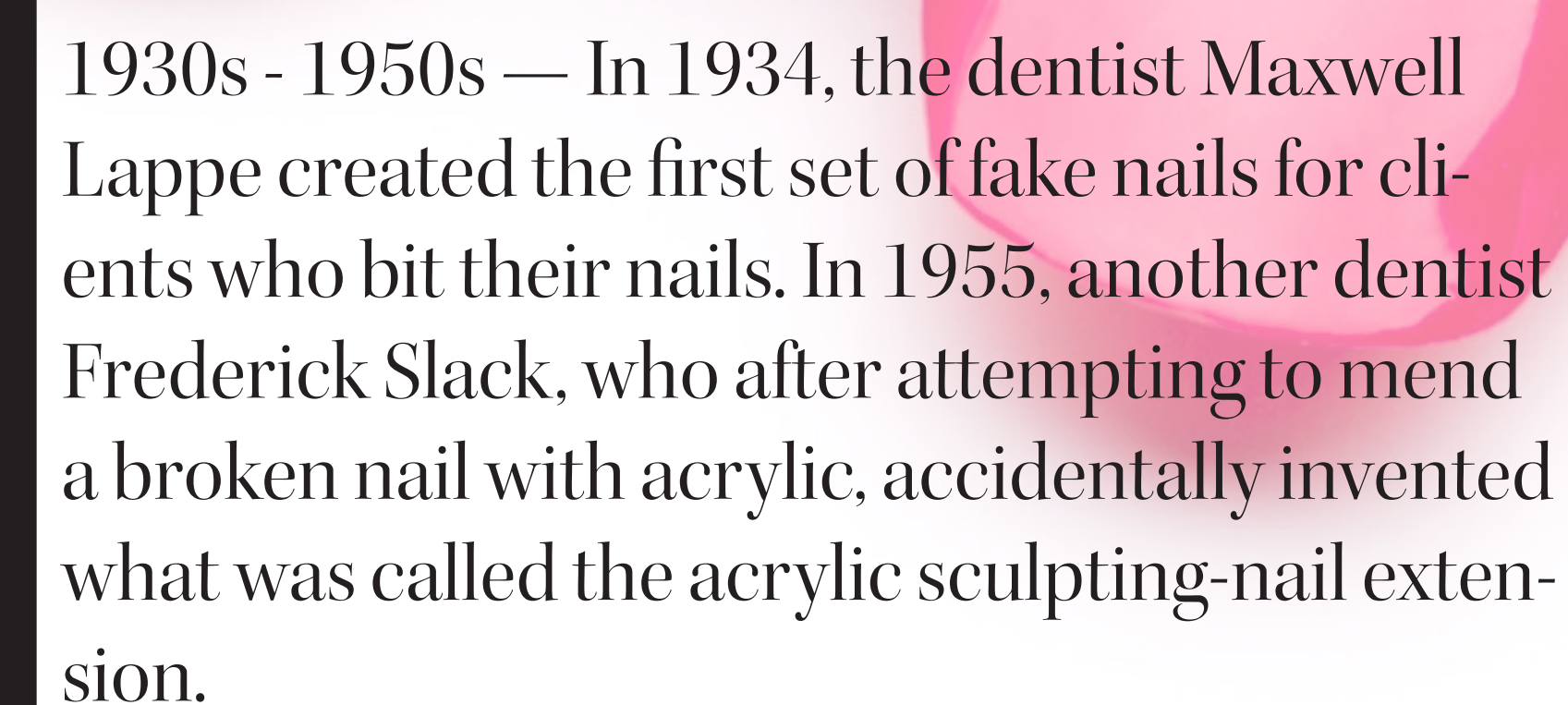
1800s - 1900s — Manicures were popular once again during the Victorian age with a simple treatment of a light tint of red oil, accompanied by a chamois cloth buffering. This minimalist treatment was in part due to the Victorian ideals of transparent inner beauty, physical hygiene, and moral purity. Etiquette guides recommended just a tad of lemon juice or vinegar to brighten the nail tips while Flaubert's most famous novel (1856) described Emma Bovary's nails as "scrubbed cleaner than Dieppe ivory".



1930s — In 1932, the first bottle of Revlon's nailpolish hit shelves in colors never seen before — making fashionable nail options more accessible than ever before, adding some economical style during the Depression. Polish as we know it also came from this era due to a new way of thinking — to stop staining the nail and coat it with hard enamel instead. The revolutionary idea had come from a French makeup artist, Michelle Menard, who was inspired by automobile paint. The new polish was concocted by the Revson brothers and a chemist Charles Lachman.



1920s — It was the irreverent flapper of the '20s who, decked out with new clothes and a new attitude, reinvigorated the nail scene with the old-school red as well as the moon manicure.



1930s - 1950s — In 1934, the dentist Maxwell Lappe created the first set of fake nails for clients who bit their nails. In 1955, another dentist Frederick Slack, who after attempting to mend a broken nail with acrylic, accidentally invented what was called the acrylic sculpting-nail extension.

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1960s — Youthful pastel nail shades were popular in the '60s. As stars like Farrah Fawcett and Goldie Hawn played up their eyes (and hair!), they left their nails more natural.

1980s — There was a lack of inhibition in fashion in the '80s, and so too did nail polish colors skew...a kaleidoscope of nail varnishes were made available, from neon yellows to glowing fuchsias to shocking blues.

2000s — With cool textures, sheens, and nail embellishments resulting in designs from ornate to just plain futuristic, there has been an unprecedented level of interest in nail art as well as the nail industry. Nails have become part of the whole outfit, with adhesives providing a never-before-achieved level of intricacy to manicure designs. Innovation in nail technology also has continued with the 2007 invention of Minx stick-ons. Creative Nail Design's Shellac also came out in 2008 with the first gel polish, aka the 2-week manicure. The past decade, DIY nail art reigned supreme, with nail enthusiasts skipping the salons and trying out (and blogging) a myriad of different homemade designs and effects.

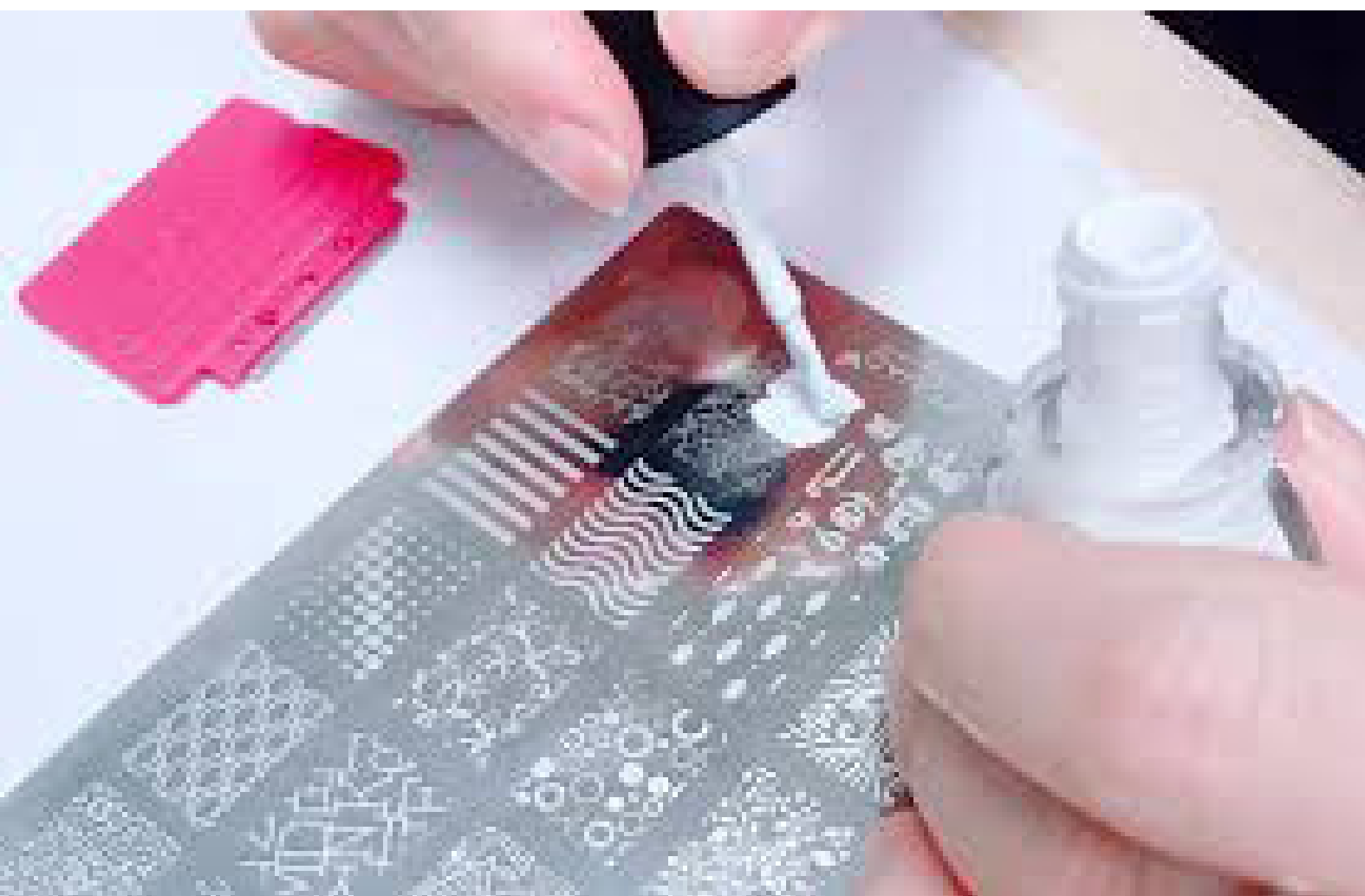
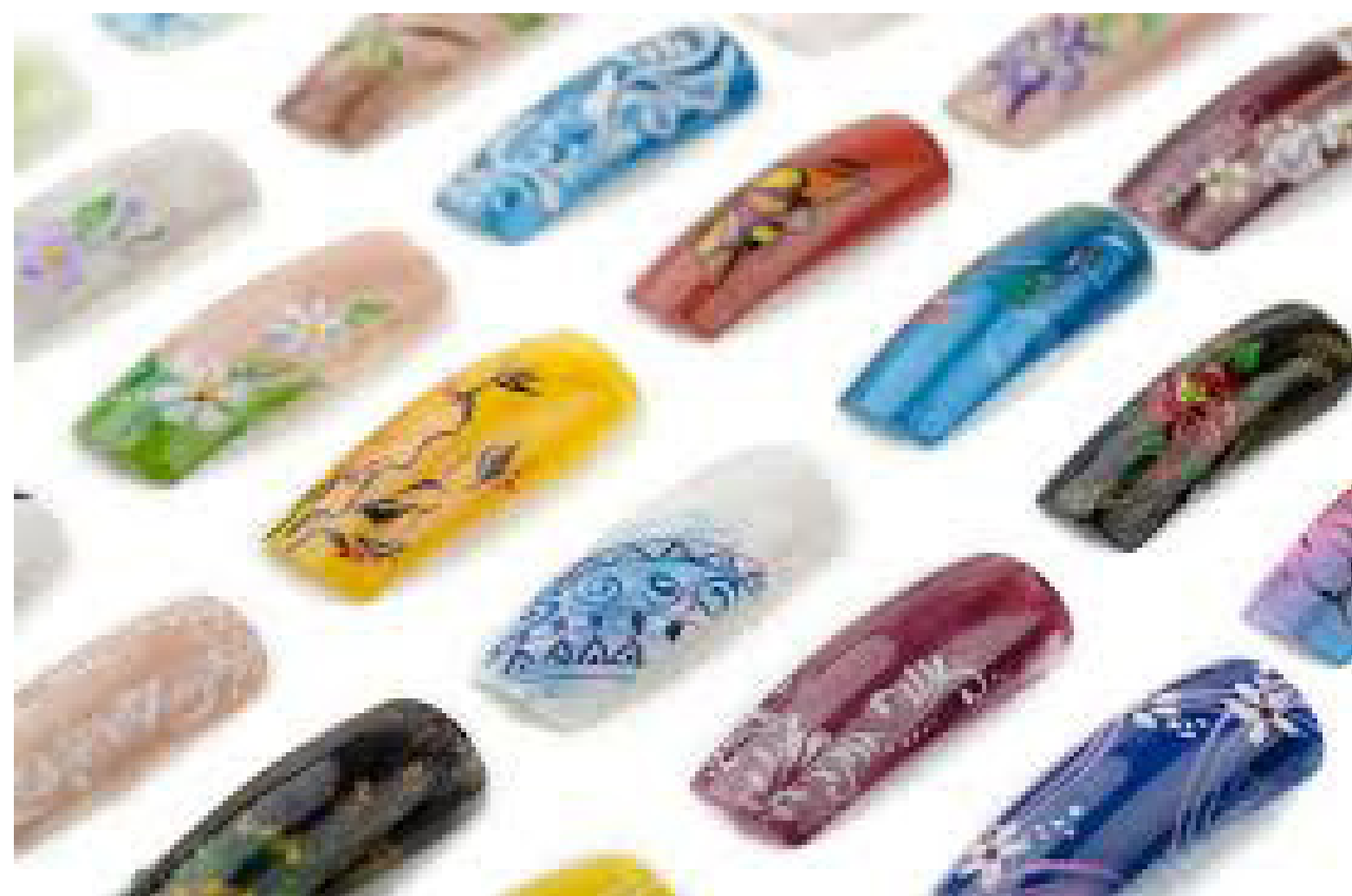


1970s — The practice of applying long fake nails became widespread. To match the demand for expert manicures, beauty salons opened at an even higher rate. In 1976, American Jeff Pink created one of the most well-known manicures for busy Hollywood starlets: The French Manicure.

1990s — The minimalist '90s brought traditional colors like reds, nudes, and pinks back en vogue, though the grunge fans had their moment to shine, too; Look anywhere, and you could spot chipped, black nails filled in with Sharpie markers.

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Application

Manicurists start with the same techniques as for the manicure or pedicure:

Acrylics: a chemical mixture of monomer liquid and polymer powder that can be directly applied on the nails or on artificial nails, also called nail extensions or enhancements.

Nail gel: a chemical combination similar to acrylics, also known as shellac nails. Manicurist applies several layers on the fingernails or/and toenails and lets it cure under a UV or LED light. When the gel is fixed, it hardens the nails. The gel is also typical in a polish form known as gel polish, and, like other forms of gel, it also requires a UV or LED light to cure. The difference between acrylic and gel is that acrylic dries naturally, but gel needs UV light to cure. Similarly, where regular nail polish will dry naturally, the gel polish will remain tacky until cured by a UV light.

Nail polish/nail varnish: a lacquer applied to finger and toenails to protect or as a base color. Nail manicurists also use a base coat to protect and strengthen nails and prevent natural nails from yellowing or staining.