

# BOLD BEAUTY

Manny Gutierrez is breaking the internet, boundaries, and building a badass brand WORDS BY VANESSA PASCALE • PHOTO CREDIT: DAMIR K.

I am seated in Dos Caminos in Times Square when Manny Gutierrez, aka Manny MUA, beauty guru and founder of Lunar Beauty, walks in and joins me. The animated and uncensored “boy beauty vlogger” has amassed a substantial social media following (over 10M followers and subscribers!) with his impressive makeup artistry and videos like, *Full Face Using Target Clearance Makeup* and *Testing New Viral Over Hyped Makeup!*

Manny MUA (which is an acronym for makeup artist) is in NYC doing press and to film a segment on *The Today Show* and Instagram. “We were talking about spring trends and with people who have created their own brand. I created Lunar Beauty, so they flew me out to do a *Today Show* segment with them and a couple of other creators.”

Three years ago, the former MAC makeup artist had an idea for an eyeshadow palette comprised of half neutral colors and half bright colors —something that had never been done before. “I was working on this concept, *Life’s a Drag*. I wanted to pay homage to drag, because that’s how I got into the beauty community. I would never have been Manny MUA without doing drag first. So, that’s kinda why I wanted to do it.” Last year, he launched his first product, *Life’s a Drag*, and has since expanded to a Greek Goddess Highlighter Palette, Greek Goddess Color Palette, liquid lipsticks, and lip glosses.

The family-run business —he recruited his dad and mom— came together pretty quickly. “I would say two and a half years is how long it actually took me when I

had the concept and to it being able to launch. Luckily for me, I had my dad. He was reaching out to different labs. I had old friends of mine helping connect with labs and things like that. It really starts with finding the connections. Just being able to connect with the lab, connect with the manufacturer... You will find labs and things like that through Google search. You have your lab that creates your formulas. You have your packaging people... You have all different parts. But once you hit every part, it becomes a well-oiled machine and you just have to get every section hit and then it kinda flows after that.” Manny makes sure to have his hand in every aspect of Lunar Beauty.

The former Sephora /MAC makeup artist grew to fame on Instagram by posting the makeup looks he was wearing to work back in 2013. “I was like, ‘I’m just wearing this makeup, might as well take a photo,’ ‘cause I didn’t see a lot of boys that were doing beauty back in the day. People were like, ‘This is really cool.’ They were interested, but kinda weirded out at the same time because I didn’t shave my face. I wasn’t trying to be like, a woman. I wasn’t trying to look like a woman or anything like that, I was just doing it as myself.”

Makeup enthusiasts quickly began to take notice. So many people asked Manny to create a channel demonstrating how he achieved these looks, that he decided to give it a try. “I didn’t really know what to do. I literally borrowed my mom’s camera and I bought soft boxes from Amazon for \$100. I was like, ‘OK, this is the



lighting, right?' So, I just kinda started on a whim really. And it kinda, honestly, grew from there. I think it's because: 1. I was really hardworking and I would always do my best to upload as much as I could. But also, there was not a lot of men in makeup doing it at the time. I feel like times were a little bit different, five years ago."

But fans weren't the only ones interested in Manny. He was one of the biggest

influencers in the beauty space and the mainstream beauty world had him on their radar. In 2017, Maybelline secured Manny for their Big Shot Mascara by Colossal ad campaign. This marked two firsts for Maybelline: The first time partnering with a beauty influencer, and their first campaign with a man as their star. "I was so excited because I was the first-ever male ambassador for Maybelline for a product, so I really, really was like, 'Dude, hell yeah! I want to do it!' I

just didn't know it was going to be as big as it was. I'm not thinking, 'Oh, well, I'm a guy doing it, this is so cool. I'm about to break boundaries.' That's not what I was thinking, I was thinking, 'Oh, this is great. Me, as a beauty blogger, Manny MUA, I wanted to do this. In my mind, I try not to compare myself to other girls. I just want to think we're all in it together... But afterwards, I was like, 'This is a big moment in beauty history!' I was like, 'What!?'"

**Is there a pivotal moment when things started to really change for you?**

That's a really good question. You know, you're just going through life, working really hard, you don't stop to smell the roses, you're just doing your thing. But I remember, like, the moment I quit working a normal job [at MAC] was when I was like, 'Oh shit, I'm really doing this.' This is when I had hit 100,000 subscribers on YouTube and that's when I knew I could pay for the shit that I wanted because I can survive now off of just YouTube. I quit my job and was like, 'I'm really going to go into this full-time.' I just kinda dove right in after that. And from there, it's just been a whirlwind, honestly. It feels like it was just yesterday, but it was like 5 years ago.

**It's amazing how people just blow up like that!**

It's literally crazy. I don't even know. I feel like nowadays people don't blow up as easily. There's an oversaturation now, that it's like, you have to really be able to be different and do your own thing and not try to be in anyone else's lane because that lane is that person. You're not trying to be like anyone else.

**What do you think sets you apart? That garnered you this substantial following?**

I think, with me, I was so like, 'Yo, this is me. It is what it is.' I don't like to sugarcoat things. I like to be super honest on the channel. I curse right away. It wasn't like I was trying to be this prim and proper beauty blogger and that's what there was. I didn't see a lot of people that were being like, a friend. And that's what I wanted. I was like, 'I just wanna be like the homie next door with you, doing makeup, and teaching you how to do things.' But it's super hard [laughs].

**Last year, you landed on Forbes' 30 Under 30 list, which is major. Congratulations on that!**

Thank you so much.

**How did you receive the news?**

I'm trying to remember if my manager called me and she was like, 'You got on the...' I was like, 'What!?' I was so shook, because that's like such a big list to be part of and it's like, 'Oh my God. It's insane.' I was like, 'How does this even happen?'

Basically, it's just showing influential people that are under 30. I feel like those kind of things are very validating for you. As a creator, there's no rule book, there's no anything, so when you get things like this, you're like, 'Oh my God, I worked so hard.' It makes it so worth it when you have things like that happen. You're like, 'Dude, my hard is being noticed and it's paying off.' I got to go to the PEOPLE party for it and all that stuff with all these stars and I'm like, 'What the heck am I doing here? I'm not a star or celebrity.' So, it was crazy.

**I saw that you moved into a new place in Los Angeles.**

I just got a new place. I lived in Hollywood before and I was there for three years and I was like, 'I am so over Hollywood.' It's just a hard place to live in and it's just so much hustle and bustle. I wanted a place that was my sanctuary, so I moved about 30 minutes away. Now, I live in this cute, little community; you go there and you're like, 'I feel like I'm at peace.'

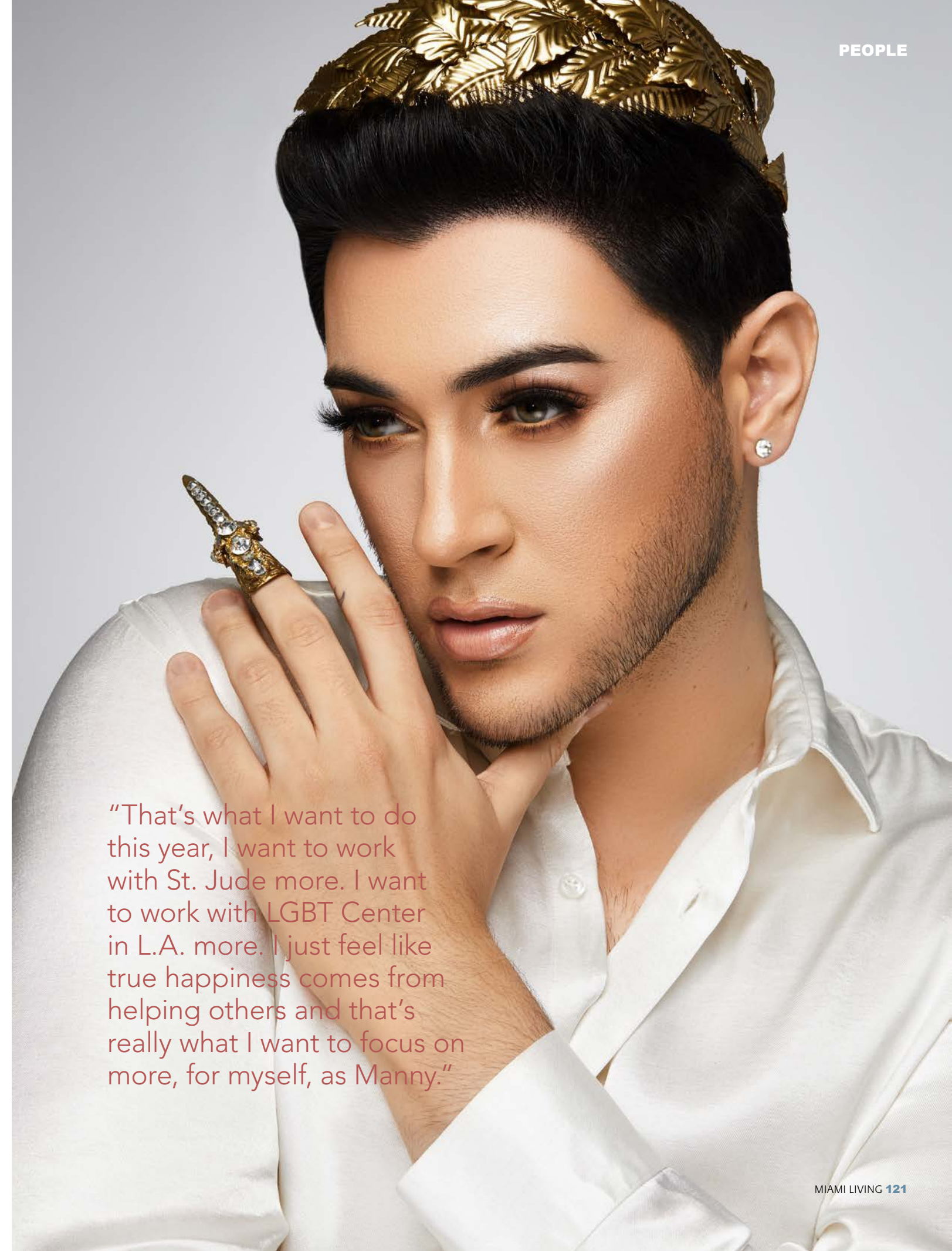
*Manny orders tacos and a Sprite.*

**What has surprised you most in your career?**

The support that people show. It's so baffling because they don't actually know me in-person, so it's getting to see this kind of support, getting to see the people at meet-and-greets, things like that. People feel so connected to me and it's amazing. I don't know them but they know me... I always want to ask questions, like, 'Tell me about yourself.' To see how I affected their lives in a positive way, that's always shocking. I'm just me, living my authentic self and by me living my authentic self, it helps everyone else be themselves, too. It's really cool. I love that.

**That is awesome. And you are working with St. Jude.**

Yes. Yes. Yes! That was so amazing. Last year, last August, I went to St. Jude and I got a girl named Hannah. She's 12. I'm like, 'Girl, we're not doing the full glam on you. We're doing some concealer and highlight.' And it was so fun. I'm doing a fundraiser with them and I wanted to raise \$20,000 for them and luckily, we already passed that goal by a lot. It's been amazing. I've been wanting to work with St. Jude for awhile and going to the facility really is just so eye-opening. Dude,



"That's what I want to do this year, I want to work with St. Jude more. I want to work with LGBT Center in L.A. more. I just feel like true happiness comes from helping others and that's really what I want to focus on more, for myself, as Manny."

like, these kids—who have terminal cancer, that are trying to fight it— have such happy demeanors. They live such happy lives and it's so amazing. Makes you feel like, 'Dude, your problems are not the only problems in the world... It puts things in perspective and that's why I wanted to go and meet these kids and see how happy and amazing they are. I absolutely loved it and hope to work with them more. That's what I want to do this year, I want to work with St. Jude more. I want to work with LGBT Center in L.A. more. I just feel like true happiness comes from helping others and that's really what I want to focus on more, for myself, as Manny.

#### Are you working on anything else?

Right now, my focus is working on Lunar Beauty and growing my brand. Now, I want to have a fully realized line. I want to expand it, come out with more shades. I'm actually going to BeautyFest Asia next week in Indonesia, which is really, really exciting. I've never been there before, so that's really, really fun. Just focusing on bettering myself as a person rather than social media. That's great, but it's also my job. I want to make me happy as Manny as well. So, that's what I'm working on, myself [laughs].

#### What do you do in your free time?

My favorite thing to do is going to the movies. I love playing with my dog, Zaya. I hangout with my friends a ton, like game nights, that's always my favorite thing to do as a pastime. I like to hangout with my family a lot. I'm really close with them. I joined a volleyball league last year; that was really, really fun. I played volleyball all through high school. I want to join another league now. I like to go to the gym, it helps me center myself a bit more, work out aggression.

#### What is a normal day like?

Depends on the day. The days that I'm filming, I'll wake up, I'll be on social, check Twitter, everything, check all my emails, make sure things for the brand are secure for the day. Then, I will go to the gym. Take pre-workout, so I have energy to film. Come home, film, send it off to my editor, 'cause I have an editor now. Thank God! And that takes up the whole day.

#### Do you still do people's makeup?

I don't take clients on. If there was a big opportunity, if Lady Gaga asked me to do her makeup, I'd be like, 'Yes! Absolutely!' I would love to do that. I also do it for collabs on my channel, like I had Shay Mitchell on my channel, just different people that have loved glamming. I'll glam on my channel as a collaboration between YouTubers.

#### Is there anyone who started following you or subscribing to your channel that you're like 'Oh my God! I can't believe they're aware of my work now.'

Not following, but I remember, oh my gosh, it was crazy. I'd just done something at the Universal lot. I was driving home and I was at a stoplight and I was talking to a friend of mine, Snapchatting them, and I looked to my left because someone was trying to get my attention from a car. I'm like, 'What?' I roll down my window and it's fucking Miley Cyrus. She's like, 'I see you making your video.' She knew who I was. We had a really tiny exchange. I was freaking out. This is two weeks before [this past] Valentine's Day. On Valentine's Day, I get a package in the mail and it's a bouquet of weed. It's literally a bouquet and it's weed. I was like, 'What the fuck?' And it was from Miley. She was like, 'Hopefully this helps you, if you're alone on Valentine's Day, this will make you feel better.' I was like, 'Well, I am, so that's fucking fantastic.' So basically, Miley Cyrus sent me a bud bouquet.



#### That's awesome!

So great! Other than that, I dunno. That was one of my more memorable moments where I was like, 'Holy fuck!' I was like, 'An A-list celebrity knows who I am!' I was shook. It's also fun to go to young Hollywood events and a star will meet me and be like, 'I know who you are.' That's always really shocking to me, I'm like, 'Why?' I love it. This is spicy as fuck [the taco].

#### I saw your Instagram story last night about how you will not eat hot peppers.

I am not good with spicy at all. I can eat Hot Cheetos, but that's different.

#### I am spicy everything.

I wish I was like that. I'm Mexican and my family is like, 'What's wrong with you?' My grandpa is biting into a pepper, I'm like, 'What the hell are you doing?' I'm shook every single time. He's like, 'You'll get there eventually.' I'm like, 'No, I literally will not. I would rather die.'

#### Is there anything you want to do that you haven't done yet?

My next goal is to have it [my brand] in stores, and for it to be big and people to see it and love it. That's why I called it Lunar Beauty, I wanted it to live on its own. That's why it's not Manny MUA Cosmetics. I want for it to be bigger, have its own little life.

#### Are you in talks with any stores?

I'm in Morphe stores and Beauty Bay in the U.K., things like that. I'm in talks with other stores as well, so I have to see how that goes. Some big ones.

#### Which store is your ultimate goal?

I would say Sephora; I feel like that's where my brand would belong. That's my goal—to be in stores, not just online. That's a hefty goal, but it's what I want. **ML**

*Keep up with Manny on Instagram and Twitter: @MannyMUA733, and check out [lunarbeauty.com](http://lunarbeauty.com) and his YouTube channel: [youtube.com/user/MannyMUA733](https://youtube.com/user/MannyMUA733)*