

Introducing The MECCA Archive: Preserving Beauty Culture & Honouring Women's Stories

PRESS RELEASE

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It's estimated that less than 1% of recorded history is about women. At a time when cultural records are vanishing, algorithms erase yesterday's stories, and no country in the world has yet achieved gender equality, women's voices risk being lost. And yet, from rituals to revolutions, beauty has carried women's stories forward across centuries – from the ochre worn by First Nations women, Cleopatra's kohl-lined eyes, the powdered faces and red lips of the Victorians, the smoky eyes of the flappers, to today's radiant glow.

That's why, MECCA is proud to launch the MECCA Archive, a living collection of beauty's defining cultural moments – created to preserve women's stories, elevate overlooked perspectives, and invite everyone to help shape the future of beauty.

A Cultural Legacy, Powered by M-POWER

The MECCA Archive is MECCA's most ambitious purpose-led initiative to date, building on M-POWER's \$25 million commitment to support a global network of partners working towards gender equality.

"Beauty holds memory," says Jo Horgan, MECCA Founder and Co-CEO. "Through beauty, we can map the history of womankind – of creativity and conformity, of limitations and liberation. Yet so much of this history is undocumented, passed from girl to girl or lost to time. We hope the Archive helps change that."

How the MECCA Archive Works

Beginning as a digital archive, the project is designed to evolve over time – growing in content, format, and community participation. Each year, to mark International Day of the Girl (11 October), a new chapter will be co-created with MECCA's community. By anchoring its growth to this day, MECCA joins the global movement for equality, inviting girls and women to help write themselves back into history, and create a more inclusive future, through beauty.

To help shape the MECCA Archive's vision and curation, MECCA partnered with cultural archivist Lauren Crystal who said, "Beauty is such an accessible lens for exploring culture. Unlike archives that preserve brands or objects, this one is about perspectives – shaped by women's experiences, feelings and identity. We've developed a cultural framework to guide what we include, and to make space for voices too often left out of beauty's record. Already we can see clear gaps – First Nations perspectives, migrant cultures from the 1950s onward, the lives of working women in the 70s and 80s, and even the digital age, where so much has played out online but little has been preserved. That's why we're inviting contributions from the community – with each entry carefully curated – to help us build a richer, more representative record".

Chapter One: 21st Century Girl

The MECCA Archive's first chapter explores the cultural shifts that have transformed beauty since the year 2000, including:

- Sharing – Beauty finds its voice online, from tutorials to TikTok and the rise of community-led beauty
- Radiance – Glow as identity; "no-makeup makeup" as cultural revolution
- Grounding – Beauty as balm in a burnt-out world; ritual and resilience as self-respect
- Knowing – Ingredient literacy and transparency as activism; knowledge as agency
- MECCA's take on the products and people that defined 21st century beauty

Experience the MECCA Archive

To bring the MECCA Archive to life, MECCA is launching a multi-channel campaign that stretches across stores, digital, and social platforms – connecting purpose with the everyday beauty experience.

From immersive in-store installations and storytelling touchpoints to limited-edition Time Capsule Sets - curated collections of iconic products housed in collectible keepsake tins and offered at exceptional value - and content-rich digital moments, the campaign invites every customer to engage with beauty not just as product, but as culture.

“This is about bringing our purpose to the centre of everything we do – not just through special projects, but in the everyday MECCA experience. The Archive and campaign invite a bigger conversation: beauty not just as something we buy, but as something we create, share, and pass on. Our dream is that decades from now, a girl opens the MECCA Archive and sees herself in it – what mattered to us, what we created, and what we changed together. Beauty is part of our culture and history, just as much as art, music, or literature – and it belongs to all of us,” said Horgan.

The MECCA Archive lives online at mecca.com/archive, where customers can:

- Explore contributions from Jennifer Aniston, Anna Funder, Elise Loehnen, Elaine George, Isamaya, Amy Liu and others
- Trace beauty’s evolution in Australia and New Zealand over the past 200 years through the History of Beauty.
- Go behind-the-scenes of MECCA’s 27-year journey.
- Contribute their own stories, images and reflections to the 2025 chapter: 21st Century Girl and help us fill in the missing gaps in history through submissions to the History of Beauty timeline.

Looking Ahead

The month-long launch will culminate on International Day of the Girl 2025, when MECCA will announce a series of long-term commitments designed to accelerate progress towards gender equality.

BE PART OF THE STORY

Visit mecca.com/archive to explore, celebrate and contribute to beauty culture.

@MECCAbeauty #MECCAarchive

The logo for MECCA, featuring the word "MECCA" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The letters are slightly overlapping, with the "M" and "E" on top and the "C" and "C" on the bottom.

About MECCA

Since opening the doors to its very first store in Melbourne in 1997, MECCA has completely redefined the Australian beauty landscape, championing retail innovation and delivering the ultimate beauty experience to customers.

Founded by Jo Horgan, over the past 27 years, MECCA has grown to become Australia’s largest prestige beauty retailer, serving more than four million customers each year. With more than 110 stores across Australia and New Zealand and online, MECCA offers an exclusive edit of the best in beauty from more than 200 brands. Today, MECCA has a growing team of 7,000 spread across its Support Centre, Distribution Centre and store network, all working towards a shared purpose of emboldening through beauty, helping people to look, feel and be their best.

About MECCA M-POWER

M-POWER is MECCA's social change initiative championing equality and opportunity for women and girls. Just as MECCA is a destination for the best in global beauty, through M-POWER we've curated a superb and diverse group of founders and changemakers all striving to advance gender equality.

We call them the M-POWERed Collective and they work to educate girls; back female entrepreneurs and improve opportunities for women at work; drive improvements in health and safety; inspire positive masculinity in young men; and elevate the voices of women in all aspects of public life.

Our role is to give these organisations a platform and a voice to educate, engage and inspire. We're creating products to make giving with purpose easy. We're investing in storytelling that changes conversations, hearts, and minds. And we're mobilising the full resources of MECCA, giving our time and talents to help our Collective dream bigger.

Gender equality is the rising tide that lifts all boats. It's not a women's issue, it's a human rights issue. Together, let's make the world over.