

Live Tinted Closes Seed Round, Raising More Than \$3 Million

Funding was led by Montage Ventures.

BY RYMA CHIKHOUNE

LIVE TINTED has closed its seed round of funding, raising more than \$3 million, WWD Beauty Inc has learned exclusively.

Led by California-based Montage Ventures, other investors include Jesse Draper's Halogen Ventures and Curate Capital, which both focus on funding companies with female founders, as well as Fearless Fund, a firm founded by Black women that supports businesses created by women of color.

"Where we're at right now, I do feel like this brand is bigger than myself," said Live Tinted founder and chief executive officer Deepica Mutyala, a Texas native of South Asian descent.

"More women of color need to be able to get the opportunity to get funds, and I want to inspire other people and change the statistics out there," she continued, noting the lack of funding available for women, particularly women of color.

"It was really hard to do this," Mutyala went on, regarding raising capital. (In 2019, Live Tinted raised a pre-seed round of funding from beauty industry power players that included Bobbi Brown, Toni Ko of NYX Cosmetics and Hayley Barna of Birchbox.) "We still have to push to have a seat at the table...I think it's

important for other women of color to see that they can do it also. And I want more companies to see this as, you can do it, too, stop acting like it's so hard. It should be the norm."

With the new funds, Mutyala plans to expand the brand's retail footprint in the fall, grow her team with executive hires and new product development.

"I want every product to feel like a hero product and something that people need in their lives that simplify their lives and are very problem- and solution-oriented," said Mutyala, who recently launched the Hueguard, a primer and moisturizer with SPF 30 that doesn't leave a white cast. "If you actually listen and create products that you feel like you haven't seen as a person of color, people will resonate with that."

The entrepreneur began her career as an intern at L'Oréal before joining Birchbox. But her life took a turn in early 2015, after she uploaded a YouTube video of herself applying red lipstick to color correct her under eye circles. The clip went viral (nearly 11 million views to date), and she began building a following, then her brand, Live Tinted, which has a 68 percent repeat customer rate. Industry



Deepica Mutyala

sources estimate the brand will do between \$5 million and \$10 million in sales this year.

Going from "a beauty exec to an influencer to now [having] my own beauty brand, it is surreal, to say the least," Mutyala said.

She's created a board, all people of color, composed of herself alongside Neilesh Mutyala, president of Live Tinted, Sherry Jhavar, president and cofounder of Blended Strategy Group, and Daphne Che, principal at Montage Ventures.

"We started as a community brand," Mutyala said of plans ahead.

"And that, to me, is also a core pillar of the brand I don't want to lose, which means overinvesting in storytelling and the community and giving them a platform to be able to tell their stories. I wanted to create a brand that had a purpose behind it, and really make it so colorism was not a thing for the next generation. So, with that comes skin tone conversations, diversity and inclusion...and then doing the right thing is a part of that, which means being clean, vegan and cruelty free, [having] efforts toward sustainability."

Dawn Goldworm Writes A Scented Children's Book

The book, which aims to educate children on scent, launches this week. BY JAMES MANSON

DAWN GOLDWORM may rely on her nose professionally, but now, she's trying her hand at something new.

The scent designer and industry veteran has written a children's book about scent, which launched this week. Published by Penguin Random House and called "The Smell of a Rainbow," the scented picture book aims to educate children about scent.

"We understand that the world uses and experiences scent in so many ways that people really don't understand or consciously know," Goldworm said. "In childhood, that's where that starts, your whole basis for your olfactory preferences are from childhood."

Goldworm added that neurologically speaking, color made the most sense

for teaching kids about scent, given that scent and color are processed in similar parts of the brain.

"Color is the only mechanism, or the only language, if you can call it that, that passes into the part of the brain that understands scent an emotion. It's really the way we communicate how we smell — it's through color," she said.

To that end, each of the book's pages represent different colors of the rainbow, and each is scented to mimic olfactory associations with that color. For example, the green page is scented to imitate freshly cut grass.

"You have so many touch points with smell, from the smell of your mother to the smell of your baby products, sun tan lotion, et cetera," Goldworm added.

"We had to think of the most positive, colorful ingredients because we wanted the book to be about joy."

The microcapsule technology is a 21st century answer to scratch-and-sniff books, which Goldworm said is the first of its kind for children's books.

"When you open the book, the capsules break on their own, so the pages are already scented," Goldworm said. "If you do decide to rub it or scratch it, you just get more of a smell, but you don't have to. And over time, as you keep turning the pages, it just gets more scented, since kids love to read things over again."

Despite its brevity — the book concludes in 14 pages — the regulatory landscape on children's toys posed some hurdles for Goldworm.

"From a safety and compliance regulatory perspective, we had the entire perfumer's palette cut down to a fraction of its size, which is very tiny," she said. For the color green, for example, posed the most challenges. "It's my favorite

because it was so hard to do — the traditional ingredients we'd use to create green fragrances weren't allowed, so we had to figure out how to get the smell of freshly cut grass."

Even for adults, Goldworm said the book's fragrances rekindle childhood associations with certain colors. "You smell these different things that you wouldn't necessarily put together, but they document all the good memories we have from childhood related to color," she added.

The Smell of a Rainbow by Dawn Goldworm

