



## Brass Eyeliner Container

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Today, eyeliner is a cosmetic widely used to define the eye while creating various effects such as making it appear larger or enhancing one's eye color. In the ancient world, eyeliner was called *kohl*, or *kajal*, which contains antimony sulfide and trisulfide (Al-Kaff et al., 1993). Riesmeier et al. (2022) reported that in ancient Egypt, *kohl* was not only used to enhance one's beauty for both men and women but also for religious and therapeutic purposes.

*Kohl* also has a long history in the Islamic world. The Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) encouraged the use of *kohl* as it was believed to be beneficial for the eyes. The Prophet used to apply *kohl* three times on his right eye, and twice on his left eye. For health purposes, *kohl* is applied to the waterline of the eyes using a small stick to protect the eyes from the harsh sun, and desert sand while soothing the eyes.

*Kohl* is traditionally stored in a container made of various materials such as brass, silver and glass. However, the *Kohl* container made of brass with a leaf-shaped applicator stick which was found in Pattani province, Thailand, which is believed to come from Ancient Persia stands out for their significance and aesthetic appeal. These brass containers not only serve a functional purpose but also the cultural beauty and heritage of the ancient society. For instance, in the times of Ancient Persia, eyeliner was used to enhance eyelash health and to ward off evil eyes.

Next, in terms of material used to make the container, brass, it is an alloy made of copper and zinc that is known for its durability and

malleability. Therefore, brass is seen as a perfect material to store and preserve the natural ingredients used to make the eyeliner.

Brass has several unique properties that make it suitable for storing makeup like *kohl* or eyeliner. Firstly, it is durable where it has a lower chance of breaking over time. Secondly, it does not rust easily, which is important when storing cosmetics that may contain moisture or oils. Thirdly, brass containers can be designed to have the feature of airtightness to preserve the freshness of the cosmetics. This is because cosmetics like *kohl* or face powders can degrade when exposed to air.

Furthermore, as brass has good thermal stability, it can withstand changes in the surrounding temperature without affecting the cosmetic powder which could degrade when being exposed to air. Next, brass is also a visually appealing material that could be polished while adding to its feature as a decorative item. Last but not least, studies have shown that brass contains natural antimicrobial properties (Arendsen et al., 2019) which can prevent the growth of bacteria that may contaminate the cosmetic products inside.



The Brass Eyeliner Container is displayed in the History and Ethnology Room of the Folklore Museum

## References

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