

100 Women We Love

June 30, 2016 | by Shannon Leigh O'Neil and Gabby Hymowech; Edited by S.E. Jackson |



photo by Mariusz Jeglinski

RUBY POLANCO

"If you don't see enough of what you want in the world, then it's up to you to create it!" That's the lesson to be learned from Ruby Polanco's rise to entrepreneurial success. Polanco, who now has a multi-million-dollar beauty empire, was motivated to start it because there were too few products for the Latina population. So, in 2005, she developed Ruby Cosmetics, a cosmetics line aimed at Latinas. A year later, she created her first makeup school for those wanting to pursue a career in beauty but not wanting to go to cosmetology school. Ruby Makeup Academy now has four branches in Southern California that graduate more than 1,200 students annually. "Every time new students come to us, they arrive as insecure young girls, but after they gain confidence in the skills they've learned, they become elegant and savvy women," she says. "Watching their amazing transformation is the most fulfilling part of my career." The out businesswoman, honored in 2014 and 2015 by Inc. Magazine and more recently, in May, by Latina Magazine, says figuring out she was gay "felt like I was home." —GH