



Move over, Bob Ross: Swedish painter Raino Rydelius rendered the beauty of nature on the smallest of canvases. While exhibiting his miniature paintings around the world in the 1980s, Rydelius began moonlighting as a guest nail artist in select salons.

two-tone polish application, handpainting, freehand and stenciled airbrushing, gel art, marbling, snakeskins, feathers, seashells, cameos, three-dimensional art and three-dimensional molds.” The writer noted that while the West Coast pioneered many nail art styles, East Coast techs often possessed a more experimental attitude, and a surprising number of nail artists thrived in the conservative states of the South and Midwest. Remarkably, many salon professionals reported that women in their mid-thirties to fifties were their most dedicated nail art customers—those who had enough money for art on all ten fingers.¹³⁶ For all of its kitsch, *L.A. Times* beauty columnist Paddy Calistro noted, the nail artist’s repertoire of holiday motifs, Garfield cartoons, and even applied voice-activated flashing lights conveyed its own kind of endearing elegance, a mass-fashion “sign of the times.”¹³⁷ The California Valley girl protagonists of the 1988 cult comedy *Earth Girls Are Easy* would agree. As manicurist Valerie, Geena Davis daily changed her nail décor, kept a dryer in her convertible, and offered such pearls of wisdom as, “a relationship is a lot like a porcelain nail . . . you can break it and you can glue it back together, but it’s not going to be as strong as it was.”

While nail technicians found a worthwhile career in silk wraps, fiberglass nails, and gel systems, many urban black women found a