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COMD 3504

9 March 2022

Rolling Stone: Doja Cat DGAF If You Read This

In 1967 the first Rolling Stone publication was made in San Francisco, California, and founded by Jan Wenner. Jan Wanner was a student at the University of California. On November 9, 1967, the first publication from Rolling Stone was published and John Lenon's was on the front cover. Over 50 years, Rolling Stone's January 2022 publication has showcased using the right colors, typography, and impacting a community. A spread of a feature story, *Rolling Stone: Doja Cat DGAF If You Read This*, has exceeded the evolvement of publications by using specific design elements and targeting an audience.

The feature story has selected color palettes that associate with the content. According to the article, *Design As Art*, "Certainly if we now used the colours of the 'art nouveau' period for roadsigns, these would fade magnificently into their surroundings. At that time they used some really refined combinations of colour. Can we imagine a 'No Overtaking' sign with a coffee and chocolate car on a violet background? Well, yes. We can imagine it for fun, but we cannot use it for a roadsign in real life." Roadsigns have specific colors like red, blue, and yellow so they won't camouflage in their surroundings, they need to have a bright contrast. Making roadsigns have funny colors can make the designers laugh but it will damage the message we're sending to the audience. In the spread, there's a lot of text that in the third column rows, the reader can be easily lost, so they made the "M" in red for the reader to know where to start. The circles are yellow and red to make the columns breathe and have a contemporary appearance that relates to the topic.

The feature story has selected various typography that tells a message. According to the article, *On Typography*, “Once more it became clear that typography is not self-expression within predetermined aesthetics, but that it is conditioned by the message it visualizes.” Typography was not meant to be on designs to look ‘pretty’ but convey a message to the audience. In the feature story, the text is in serif fonts to showcase the old school style because Rolling Stone’s first magazine was published in 1967 and in 1815 was the year when the first serif font was made which was “Antique.” They’re using old-school skills to blend with the contemporary designs since magazines are present. Also, the pop-up quote in the spread is in big and capital to stand out from the text, this gives a hierarchy treatment and tells the audience that this quote is important. The “M” is in bold and italic to tell the reader this is where the paragraph starts, making these design choices is storytelling, where it starts and how it ends.

The spread has impacted a community of Doja Cat’s fans, the music industry, and designers. According to the article, *Foreword: Why Theory?*, “El Lissitzky, whose posters, books, and exhibitions are among the most influential works of twentieth-century design, had a huge impact on his peers through his work as a publisher, writer, lecturer, and curator. Wolfgang Weingart, Lorraine Wild, and Katherine McCoy have inspired generations of designers through their teaching as well as through their visual work.” Designers from the past have impacted a community filled with designers through prints and digital. Rolling Stone has a variety of designs in its publication. Their target audience is fans, the music industry, and designers. Rolling Stone has Doja Cat as their feature story and this will make the fanbase buy this issue. Producers, managers, songwriters, and job positions in the music industry will purchase the magazines because they want to inform themselves of what’s going on in the music world, what they find interesting and how can they use this for their own marketing and strategy. Designers that are interested in publication design and music, can look at Rolling Stone for inspiration. This will help designers come out of their comfort zone to try new design skills with typography, colors, grids, and images. As a designer, this publication was my first purchase, and looking at how Rolling Stone developed their publication inspired me to push myself harder in designing. Never settle less for what you design yesterday.

Contemporary designs have come a long way from the old times. There are reasons why a certain spread was designed like this, "Why this font? why this color? who is your target audience?" Rolling Stone had made design decisions (color, font, and impacting a community) to develop Doja Cat's feature story. Most publications use storytelling to convey to the audience of their content. Design is more than just visuals, it has a story.

chine. It's also unclear at what cost Doja is willing to keep writing.

MOST PEOPLE IN Doja Cat's immediate circle don't call her Doja. (Her stage name, a nod to both her love of felicity and her love of weed, is a source of some consternation for her: She has tried a few times over the years to change it and was persuaded otherwise by a former manager. "My image was the pothead hipster girl, and I'm not that," she says. "I still made a joke the other day that Doja Cat sounds like a *Publison*. And, you know, it didn't hurt my feelings, but it definitely hurt my feelings.") They call her Amala, as in Amala Hanam, or, her real name.

The younger child of graphic designer Deborah Sawyer and South African actor and dancer Dumisani Hanani, Doja moved to L.A., New York, and L.A. again, with her mother's mother, a Jewish architect and painter. They were not particularly observant, Doja says she grew up eating lobster and celebrating Christmas.)

Growing up, Doja had no interaction with her father, and though they have since connected on social media, she has never met him in person. All she knew was what she remembers her mother telling her: that they'd met in New York while he was performing on Broadway, had had a brief relationship, that he was too busy traveling and touring to spend time with her and her brother. "I felt confused, a little bit," she recalls. "It's a little strange to see everybody else with their dad, and you didn't even really have one."

Gabrielle Haines, one of Doja's childhood best friends, says growing up without a father impacted Doja tremendously. "She would always think her dad was coming, and he didn't come," says Haines. "She'd say, 'My dad is gonna come, he lives in Africa, he's just performing,' and he wouldn't come."

When Doja was about eight, Deborah, who would later go by the Sanskrit name Ishwari, packed up the family and drove across the country to relocate to the San Ananiam, a commune in the Santa Monica Mountains led by jazz legend Akira Coltrane. Deborah wanted to move to the mountains to get some peace and quiet, but this did not particularly jibe with Doja, who describes herself as a "hipper" kid. "It was very repressing," she says of the ashram. "My brother liked it; he had a lot of friends. But I didn't have many friends. For me, it was just like, 'I can't eat what I want to eat. I can't really do kid stuff.' Like, God forbid you don't have a scarf on your shoulders."

The family eventually moved to Oak Park, an upper-middle-class suburb of Los Angeles, where Doja befriended and started making poetry with Haines' mother, Haines' older sister, Alicia Haines, occasionally babysat for Doja and her brother. The sisters would later be featured on the *Realiti* TV series *Pretty Wild*, and Haines served one month in jail for her involvement in the *Bling Ring* celebrity-theft scandal. "We were a little bit more of the latchkey kids," says Haines. "We had those hippie moms and were

given probably more freedom than kids should have been."

Doja and her brother were one of the few, if not the only, mixed-race kids where they grew up. "I looked different. My hair was different," she says. "People were very racist and very rude and said 'people were very racist and very rude and saying up were white and Jewish, she says, and her brother used to make fun of her for not having black friends. Haines remembers that Doja would constantly beg her to let her have her hair."

According to Haines, Doja's brother's behavior is "not a good kid, a sweet kid."

It was while Haines was babysitting Doja that she started rapping, posting verses on Haines' Myspace. Doja had grown up with music: Her brother often played 50 Cent and Nas, her mom loved *Frykholm* and Earth, Wind, and Fire, and many afternoons at the ashram they'd participate in ecstatic chanting services. "I knew that I could rap. That was the first thing I knew in my heart I could do," she says.

She did not feel the same way about singing, which still makes her self-conscious. Her aunt, a vocal coach, taught her breath control by having her sing in front of a candle without moving the flame, and she was able to successfully prepare for her audition to the same Los Angeles performing arts high school her brother had attended (she sang "Part of Your World" from *Little Mermaid*).

When she was 16, Doja dropped out of high school, which she has attributed to her struggles with ADHD. "It felt like I was stuck in one spot and everybody else was progressing constantly," she says. She's said this was a period of artistic awakening for her, a time when she became obsessed with the sound of her voice layered on top of beats. But it also seemed like a difficult time: "I definitely didn't like to leave my room. I don't know if I was neurotic, but I definitely thought that hard for me to go outside, but then there was a period where all I did was go outside to get the lack out of the house and it didn't matter where I was going," she says. She attended a few of word, she made, including "So High," a whippy, Amherst-tripping drum pop anthem that caught the attention of the man who would become her longtime producer, *Not Beats*.

Today, Doja cringes when she listens to "So High." "It's some of the laziest lyrics I've ever written," she says, but she heard the song and

was "blown away" by her talent. "The music wasn't great, but this girl's voice was so good," he recalls. He started shuttling her to the studio in Echo Park to record, remembering that the studio served as an escape for Doja to escape from the turmoil of her life. "I don't know if she would want me to be there, but she was a shut-in," he says. "The studio was a safe place for her. I had this feeling that I should be there every day and give her a creative and go."

Through Let's Haines, Doja signed to Kemosabe Records, an imprint of Atlantic Records. Her first single, "Mooo," was released by pop music magazine *Dr. Luke*. In 2014, she released her debut EP, *Doja Cat*. "I gave Doja her first taste of mainstream music as well as her first taste of internet fame," says Haines. "I think it's good to be more sensitive about just kind of back away."

Over the next few years, Doja was making something of a creative limbo. Though she continued to tour and make music, she was struggling to find a consistent output. "She was healthy and needed a break," she says. "She was camouflaged. 'I don't do any drugs. I just drink too much,'" she says. "She stopped making music for a while. She was finding herself, and she wasn't paying much attention to her."

It's probably not a coincidence that this period coincided with Dr. Luke's legal battle with Doja, which became public shortly after Doja's

"Anyone who says that I'm NOT A RAPPER IS DENIAL. They don't know what they're TALKING ABOUT."