



# NEWS

Illustrator Kilian Eng

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## INDUSTRY INSIGHTS: LUISA RIVERA X LUSH

At the AOI we always enjoy seeing new projects from our members, and this one we are about to feature nearly took our breath away: A completely illustrated campaign by **Luisa Rivera** for cosmetic brand **Lush**.

Luisa's delicately magical watercolour illustrations are applied in a great number of ways: a shop window display in Oxford Street, a pattern for a reusable cloth, peacefully paced online animations, and a handbook telling the factual and emotive stories of essential oils.

We really wanted to find out more about the process behind the campaign, so we chat to Luisa and Lush Art Director Nat Cook about how the campaign flourished and sprung to life.



### What attracted you to commission Luisa for this project?

**Nat Cook:** Luisa's work is deeply beautiful, with amazing colour palettes and lovely application. We loved her editorial and abstract illustrations and they were a perfect fit for the storytelling surrounding essential oils. We also wanted a follow on that wasn't too far removed from our previous journal "The Self Preserving Journal", and this will be something we continue as we release more in the series.

### The campaign is based on essential oils and an essay by Annabelle Letten. How did you respond to the text and developed the final visuals?

**Luisa Rivera:** While I was developing the illustrations the text was also being written, so we worked with a brief which had snippets or parts of that essay. Therefore, we were focusing on specific ideas, which is a creative method that I enjoy. The essay is so thorough that it includes the usages of essential oils in different regions of the world, so one of my main interests was to depict those identities properly (Egypt, Greece, Persia, etc). Therefore, I studied the importance of essential oils but also the aesthetics of each place. The creative process was straight forward: for each illustration, I presented two or more sketches and Nat would pick a direction, which I then continued in the final work. I felt very comfortable throughout the project, because Nat gave me creative freedom, which translated into confidence.

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Lush has previously worked with Owen Gildersleeve and Charlotte Day on a previous campaign, and also commissioned Charlotte to create packaging. Is it important for Lush to have an active collaboration and relationship with illustrators? Is illustration important to the brand?

NC: Ah yes both lovely collaborations! We believe it is important to build up both our in-house and external networks. We want a range of diverse styles that suit the stories we're telling. Illustration helps you explore storytelling without any parameters, especially when exploring historical and emotional subjects. We need to think about our topic matter and what aesthetic will fit appropriately.



Can you give us an overview of the process from start to finish?

NC: Head perfumer and buyer, Simon Constantine collaborated with the in-house brand team to scope out the journal. Once the content was written it was a matter of immersing ourselves in the topic. It was easy from there; so much of it is visually immersive content and I suggested sections that would work well with illustration – both factual visual references like our buying ingredients or more conceptual like how essential oils make you feel.





**NC:** We spoke to our key stakeholders on the project and commissioned some sample illustrations from Luisa and some other great illustrators. After much deliberation we felt that Luisa was the best match. She took to this project like a duck to water; both her factual and conceptual illustration is so on point – she’s able to convey a message in her illustrations that are both beautiful and effective. Once we had the illustrations we were able to get the journal together very quickly; in addition we began work with our in-house team on the global campaign that would support this storytelling online and in our retail shops.

**LR:** In terms of the illustration work, I see three stages. Firstly, the initial part, where I got to develop some samples responding to the Essential Oils as a theme. Secondly, after my work was selected, we began the campaign with the botanical set, depicting the species behind the oils. And lastly, we focused more on the conceptual side of the project, creating illustrations that responded to the essay.

**NC:** The digital team animated the illustrations, bringing some of the history to life via our [online essential oils hub](#), whilst our studios team developed the retail campaign and in-store elements. Luisa’s illustrations were so beautiful we also decided to produce a “knot wrap” a reusable fabric gift wrap so customers could also take a slice of Luisa’s talent home!



**How did the rest of the Lush team get involved?**

**NC:** I work very closely with the team here at Lush – we discuss initial sketches collaboratively on where they will sit and what they communicate with the leads of each specialism having their input. The topics for Luisa’s illustration was specific but her approach was open to interpretation due to the emotive subject of essential oils.

Jack Constantine, Chief Digital Officer and visual direction for brand, works alongside the team to develop the ideas helping us escalate them into full concepts. Once complete I work with the rest of the creatives and decide how we make this come to life. We have a lot of different avenues – from retail windows, to installations and our online content for the stories to live so we need to make sure all of this is pulled together cohesively. It’s important for everyone’s creative input (as others will visualise differently) and we have a really amazing in-house team who steer the creativity of our projects. It all came together beautifully with Lush’s knowledge and expertise alongside Luisa’s illustrations.





**LR:** I was very lucky to work directly with the team at Lush who knew all about these applications, which I hadn't tried before in my work. From the beginning we decided the usages, dimensions and platforms, so I was aware of resolution and layering during the illustration process. But it's definitely a team work, because what came next, that is, animating or building the structures for the window display was done beautifully by the team behind the project. Here's a nice example: when Nat sent me the mock-ups of the window at the Oxford Street store, in my mind I understood the scale, the look and how it would work. However, since I don't normally work with these applications, it wasn't until I saw it in person that I fully grasped the immersive quality. And it was such a happy moment for me, I couldn't stop taking pictures!

**How did the public respond to the final Essential Oils campaign?**

**NC:** There was very positive reaction to the campaign – everyone thought the design was beautiful. Our customers were keen to get hold of The Essential Oils Journal which was distributed through our shops globally, plus with Luisa's illustrations it was a wonderful keepsake for our customers.



**How important was this project for you Luisa?**

**LR:** It was an amazing project, because the human body, especially the female one, and nature have always been present in my work. Initially, these topics came very intuitively from my own experiences in this world, but after a while I became more aware of that. Therefore, I have worked with clients that are related with environmental issues, and my personal work also has traces of that. In that sense, working with Lush was great because it's a brand that respects nature and actively gives back to our planet. For example, the Essential Oils Knot Wrap is a friendly alternative to paper packing or carrier bags, and it's made from recycled plastic bottles. There's a mission behind the products, and that's an ethos that I share.





We'd really like to thank Luisa and Nat for being part of this interview. You can see more photographs and insights about the project in [Luisa's Blog](#).

See more of Luisa's work: [Website](#) / [Blog](#) / [Instagram](#)

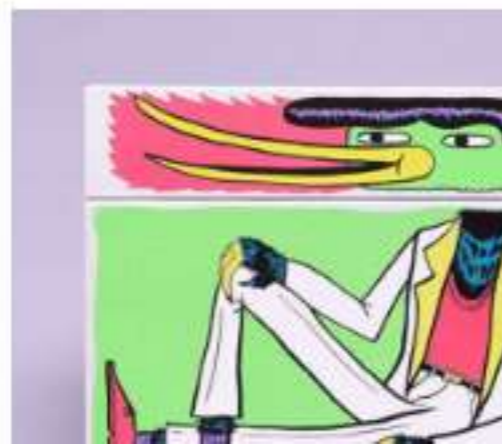
Her illustrations can be found animated in the [online essential oils hub](#).

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