Who Designs a Celebrity’s Identity?

The people and strategies behind a star’s public image

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Conceptualized & Created by Athena Shih

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The face we see isn’t created alone

A celebrity’s public identity is shaped through repeated choices: clothing, beauty, photography, interviews, and partnerships.

DISCUSS • What makes a public image feel authentic?

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Who actually builds the image?

Fashion stylist

Creates signature looks and chooses designers.

Creative director

Defines the visual story across campaigns.

Hair & makeup team

Builds recognizable beauty signatures.

Publicist / brand strategist

Manages narratives, audiences, and partnerships.

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The mask: image versus person

PERSONAL SELF

Private tastes, values, experiences, personality

PUBLIC PERSONA

Curated styling, visual codes, public appearances, media narrative

Where does creative direction end and personal identity begin?

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From red carpet to revenue

Attention

A memorable look earns media coverage.

Association

Repeated imagery becomes recognizable.

Partnerships

Brands pay to connect with that identity.

Ownership

The celebrity may build products or businesses.

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Case study: a signature image

Choose a celebrity and examine:

01 What visual details repeat across appearances?

02 Who is credited for styling and creative direction?

03 Which brands benefit from the association?

04 What changes when the celebrity rebrands?

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The business trade-off

Consistency

Recognition helps an image become an asset.

Reinvention

New eras can reach new audiences.

Can a carefully constructed image still be genuine?

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Let’s discuss

Who has the most power: the celebrity, stylist, or brand?

Can an image become more valuable than the talent behind it?

If you were creative director, what would you change?

Fashion Enterprise & Innovation Club

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