

'Cosmic Soda' Music Festival Graphic Branding

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My design brief required me to design a new Australian music festival to attract the attention of young Aussies around the country who were keen to get back into the festival scene after the Covid-19 pandemic. Located in the seaside town of Port Elliot, founder Kurt Hendrick requested an entirely new brand creation, which included a logo, artist line-up and promotional posters, merchandise, passes, tickets, a festival map and a social media presence. They were required to propose a youthful, playful and cohesively colourful aesthetic, with the use of colours that were high in contrast, bright and eye-catching from a distance. The text was to be legible and the designs scalable for application to different products in the branding package. I began by researching worldwide music festivals to gain an indication of the demographic, indicating who the music festival was targeted towards.

It was discovered that most attendees were young adults between the ages of 18-30 years, influencing my designs by ensuring they provided a youthful, energetic and dominant aesthetic. The research also helped me discover that the diversity of the artist lineup, as well as the festival's environmental care, was a significant aspect that attendees considered before purchasing festival tickets. Hence, my artist line-up represented a variety of artists, as well as reusable drink bottles and predominantly electronic-based media as an alternative to single-use print media. I discovered the importance of a logo's application to a variety of products and therefore decided to keep my design simple and scalable for the brand's distinction across all elements of the package.

The final typography-based logo featured a small rainbow to separate the two words I had chosen to name my festival, 'Cosmic Soda.' This allowed the name to be quickly identifiable through the round, organic letter structure inspired by designer Kate Moross, who frequently uses colourful and contemporary 'bubble' typography. Similarly, the use of minuscule letterforms and a curved baseline was more functional for a young target audience. Variations to the festival logo allowed for easy application to alternate products, including a black outlined version, a colour version, and the rainbow icon, without typography. The logo was also easily scalable, maintaining clear legibility and readability through its minimalistic and highly effective use of shape, colour and space.

The designer Antonia Figueiredo of 'AF illustrations' was researched, assisting in the discovery of illustrative-based photography. Inspiration was taken from her use of linear movement and intense geometric patterns to create a storytelling ambience within her portraiture designs. This technique was employed in the posters which promoted the headliner artists featured at the music festival. I used a rounded brushstroke to create rhythmic, abstract movements around the artist's faces. Finer lines were incorporated to emphasise particular elements such as the eyes and clothing, stimulating the audience's perception of the person.

My personal aesthetic was developed from Figueiredo's illustrative designs, with a style that enhanced simple imagery through contemporary illustrations. I found these playful and rhythmic compositions created depth and texture to a previously flat, minimalistic design. The high contrast of warm and cool tones were drawn from the psychedelic movement of the 1970s, in which sporadic combinations were mixed to create a discordant effect.

This creates a timeless appeal, helping to retain attention and creates a symbolic ode to early music festivals like 'Woodstock'. Within the artist line-up poster for the festival, a solid black background was used, which carried over from the other general festival posters, incorporating a white drizzle overtop to symbolise stars. This helped to appeal to the 'cosmic' theme alluded to in the title. A gradation of soft airbrushed colours was used as a feature area of the poster, with the list of names located directly underneath, creating a downward motion of viewing, suiting the vertical composition. A sans serif font was used for the artist's name to complement the complexity of the other features, with the white typography being unified with the white clouds. Key information, including the location and dates, was also given, increasing the practicality of the design when received. In addition, two other posters were created to reiterate this information, using similar features such as the night sky background and clouds. Inspiration was gathered from the North Coast Festival, who use a similar approach on their map of a high contrast colour scheme to appeal to their more youthful audience.

The Cosmic Soda Map uses contrast with a warm orange and yellow against a dark background. Icons were created from the festival's colour scheme, to symbolise different locations without detracting from the typography. Transparent pink strokes complement the bold colours to add background details such as pathways and buildings. This incorporates balance and assists in the audience's spatial awareness of the map. A variation of the logo was diagonally placed to enforce the branding and develop a culture of belonging. The merchandise included a new design that was used on t-shirts, featuring a singular colour with environmental references of the sun, flowers and butterflies. Adaptations of the previous designs were also used on drink bottles, passes, tickets and clothing.

These were minimalistic, including the simplistic rainbow logo on the drink bottle, focusing on practicality to ensure their functionality was optimal. Replication was important for the social media presence, with reference to the festival's social details featured on all the designs for the festival. The aim of this was to boost the engagement of the intended audience to increase visual connections and familiarity. New designs were created as social media posts, including a countdown until the festival began. I ensured these were created with bold type features to be easily consumed when quickly scrolling through a busy social media feed.

The countdown was manipulated from a previous design to again be distinguishable, focusing on an emphasis of the countdown, which was centrally positioned. Throughout the designing of Cosmic Soda, I ensured that the designs targeted the audience through stimulating, dominant colours and soft-edged lines. It was important to create designs that were quickly recognisable and easily distinguished. The multiple variations allowed flexibility in advertising, being scalable to enhance their function.

Visual connections can be quickly identified through the designs and the brand, increasing identity and presenting a harmonious and unified feeling. The Cosmic Soda designs welcome curiosity and playfulness, and I discovered how vital movement and focal points were to enhance this brand's visual appeal.