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<div align="center">Visual Analysis of Rolex's Homepage</div>

A document's design is developed with a set of goals in mind, and as consumers, people can rhetorically judge whether or not the creator succeeded. One of the most iconic luxury brands in the world, who has a familiar name to most of those consumers, is Rolex. While they certainly use the art of design when developing watches, it is also true that, as a prestigious status symbol, they consulted core design principles when making their website. The website's homepage has a set of critical features, that when analyzed as the principles of design that they are, can be seen improving, and sometimes hindering, the overall user experience.

Before talking about the elements of Rolex's homepage that express the conventions of design, it is vital to first clarify what *design* means. For me, design refers to an object's purposeful composition; a purpose of simultaneously being enticing, alluring, and effective. Whereas I'm more of a novice of the concept, Robin Williams describes design via four core principles in her book *The Non-Designer's Design Book*. Those principles of contrast, alignment, repetition and proximity will be the main lenses used to look at Rolex's homepage here, as well two ideas she mentions on *not being a wimp*. "It's okay to do the unexpected" and "don't be afraid to make your graphics very bold or very minimal" (Williams, 85).

For the document, the purpose of this analyzation is to focus on Rolex's website's homepage specifically. While there are obviously different sections on the company's site, the homepage has an important significance, akin to the monolith of all traffic, because users come to and leave from it. The homepage's design is marked (in order of placement) by a dropdown navigation bar, a large multimedia introductory graphic, a section of watches, and an information panel.

Despite not being the first thing a user sees, the first design object on Rolex's homepage is their navigation bar. It has a drop down menu and three buttons to the right, the company name and logo in the middle, as well as a *Search* and *Save* options on the far left. It is crucial to note the principles of proximity and alignment being used here. The drop down menu is placed extremely close to the buttons labeled *Watches*, *World of Rolex* and *Store Locator*. These three are all related to the act of purchasing a Rolex watch in a *broad* sense. They allow the user to see a selection, understand more about the selection, and allow you to find a selection (This is particularly important for Rolex, as you cannot purchase their product directly, like most other companies. It must be obtained through a third-party retailer.) Proximity is also seen with the *Search* and *Save* options, which are placed closed together since they are built to be used together when browsing the site in a *narrower* effort, i.e. particular styles and models. Both of these sections of the navigation bar have properties of proximity in them, and despite being located on opposite ends of the bar, they exhibit the concept of alignment. As Williams says, "Even if separate elements are not physically close on the page, they can *appear* connected, related, unified with the other information simply by their placement" (Williams, 54)

The first thing a user sees when visiting Rolex's homepage is a large multimedia window. In it, there are two video options that cycle on a loop of eight seconds. One is of a

watch, the *Yacht-Master 42*, and the other is an advertisement about the company's sponsorship of the US Open (a premier tennis tournament). Each exhibits a form of repetition, as they play for the exact same length of time, use the same button to expand on, and utilize the same typography. That typography and expand button also exhibit the principle of alignment, because during both videos on loop they are justified to the left of the document. The most significant aspect of this section, and possibly the whole website, is how the videos are played. Unlike most videos on webpages, there are no borders, play buttons or headers. They cover the entirety of the page, until the user scrolls to the next section. While describing this design in words sounds bold, it is visually minimal and unexpected. Large sections of the video act like whitespace for the document, as the user's focus is concentrated on the page's typography and buttons. This is one of the situations, in my opinion, that falls under what Ellen Lupton means when she says, "Not all digital media favor linear flow over spatial arrangement" (Lupton, 93).

As a famous watch company, Rolex does not shy away from displaying their pieces on their homepage. After a short text description of their main product, which is aligned to the center, there are two interactive murals. The first is titled *All Rolex Watches*, with the second being titled *New 2019 Watches*. Each of them can be scrolled to the right, to see new photos of different watches with the watch title aligned to the top center of each photo. The murals display a heavy amount of repetition in their structure and overall content, while concurrently using the principle of contrast. This is due to how each photo has a different color scheme and background displayed. While it is worth noting the strengths of this section, I also believe it to be one of the document's weakest. Without knowing the author's intentions, or sales statistics used to influence their ultimate decisions, I have to say I disagree with the use of a larger introductory picture for the *All Rolex Watches* block. I also think that the *New 2019 Watches* mural should have a title block, and it should be placed above the *All Rolex Watches Block*. While they are near each other in space, the *New 2019 Watches* block is a subset of the first, and it is the most important for the user to see. (They are what is being currently sold, and presumably the most sought after for information on.)

The last section to touch on for the document's design philosophy is its information panel. A staple for all websites, it lists social channels, legal information, and other miscellaneous information.  It is another example of the power Williams mention in a very minimal design, as there is almost no contrast. Besides the headers for each branch of information, all of the typography is aligned to the left in the same font and size. The only bit of flair in the entire section is the use of social media logos next to the company's hyperlinks for each account, and even those are in the same dull grey.

It isn't controversial to argue that watches are pieces of art, so from an art company, a user might expect a lot out of their website's design — and Rolex delivers. The document hits all of the notes that I expect out of a design from my definition. It uses a unique and minimalistic experience that is enticing, alluring and effective. Each of the homepages main sections also exhibits pieces of William's core principles of design.

Works Cited

Lupton, Ellen. *Thinking with Type: A Critical Guide for Designers, Writers, Editors, & Students*. Princeton Architectural Press, 2010.

Williams, Robin. *The Non-Designer's Design Book*. Peachpit Press, 2014.