

Debbie Millman
Biography
www.debbiemillman.com

Named “one of the most creative people in business” by *Fast Company*, “one of the most influential designers working today” by *Graphic Design USA*, and a “woman of influence” by *Success Magazine*, Debbie Millman has built a remarkable career at the intersection of design, storytelling, and cultural commentary.

Debbie is the founder and host of *Design Matters*, one of the first and longest-running podcasts in the world. Over the past two decades, she has interviewed more than 700 of the world’s most creative thinkers and makers. The show has earned a Cooper Hewitt National Design Award, multiple Webby awards and Ambie nominations, and numerous accolades from *Apple Podcasts*, which named the show one of their “All-Time Favorites” three times. *Design Matters* has also won three Communicator Awards, a Signal Award, three awards from The Academy of Interactive and Visual Arts and the OnAir Fest Audio Vanguard award. *Design Matters* has been listed on over 100 “Best Podcasts” lists, including one of the best podcasts in the world by *Business Insider* and *Vanity Fair*.

Debbie is the author of eight books, including three collections of interviews that have extended the ethos and editorial vision of *Design Matters* to the printed page: *How to Think Like a Great Graphic Designer*, *Brand Thinking and Other Noble Pursuits* and *Why Design Matters: Conversations with the World’s Most Creative People*. *Why Design Matters* has won a Graphis award and an iF award. Her most recent book, *Love Letter to a Garden* was published in 2025.

Debbie is the co-owner and Editorial Director of PrintMag.com, where she and her partners acquired the publication from bankruptcy and secured the legacy of the brand’s 80 year history and archives. She and her wife, New York Times best-selling author Roxane Gay acquired the online literary magazine, TheRumpus.net in 2025.

In 2010, Millman co-founded the first graduate program in branding at the School of Visual Arts in New York City. Now in its 16th year, the program has earned international acclaim, with student work spanning collaborations with The

Museum of Modern Arts, the Lewis Latimer Museum, the Joyful Heart Foundation, Kholsa Ventures, the television show *Billions*, Sundance Institute and Chobani, among many others.

For two decades, Millman was President of Sterling Brands, where she helped grow the firm from a 15-person boutique into a global consultancy. She played a pivotal role in its 2008 acquisition by Omnicom and led major branding initiatives for Burger King, Hershey's, Haagen-Dazs, Tropicana, Star Wars, Gillette, and the No More campaign to end domestic violence.

A prolific writer and illustrator, Debbie's work has appeared in publications including *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *New York Magazine*, *The New York Review of Books*, *Print Magazine*, *Baffler Magazine*, *Afar Magazine* and *Fast Company*. She is the author of two books of illustrated essays: *Look Both Ways* and *Self-Portrait As Your Traitor*; the latter of which has been awarded a Gold Mobius, a *Print Typography Award*, and a medal from the Art Directors Club. Her artwork has been exhibited in the Boston Biennale, Chicago Design Museum, Anderson University, School of Visual Arts, Long Island University, The Wolfsonian Museum, the Museum of Broadway, the Cooper Hewitt National Design Museum and the Czung Institute for Contemporary Art. She has been critic-in-residence at Cranbrook University, Old Dominion University, Notre Dame University, the State University of New York at Oswego, and has conducted visual storytelling workshops all over the world.

A past president of AIGA (one of only five women to serve in the role in its 100-year history), Millman received the organization's Lifetime Achievement Award in 2019. She is a frequent keynote speaker and has delivered talks at TED (one of the Top 10 most popular TED Talks of 2020), Aspen Ideas Festival, Inbound, Design Indaba, Web Summit, and universities and design festivals around the world. She has been a juror for global competitions including Cannes Lions, The Clio's, the One Club, D&AD awards, ASME, the Webby's, the Ambies, the Signal Awards and many more.

In 2022, Harvard Business School introduced [a case study on Debbie](#). In 2024, she was appointed as an Executive Fellow at HBS and is currently working on the development of a new course for second year students.

Debbie is currently on the board of *Law & Order SVU* actor and activist Mariska Hargitay's Joyful Heart Foundation, and is working to eradicate sexual assault, domestic violence, child abuse, image-based abuse and the rape-kit backlog. She is also on Canva's design advisory board, and serves on the boards of Letterform Archive, The Art Director's Club and The Center for California Literature.

Some of her favorite creative collaborations include designing beach towels for One Kings Lane, a limited edition notebook with Baron Fig, playing cards for Deckstarter, a calendar with Seth Godin for McNeal publishing, and pajamas for Pixie Home. Her most recent commissions include the design and illustration of a permanent installation at the Broadway Museum in New York City and the concept and design of the vault plate aboard NASA's Clipper mission to Europa, one of Jupiter's moons. The Clipper will reach its destination in 2028.

Debbie lives in Manhattan and Los Angeles with her beautiful wife, two lovable cats and a very charismatic dog.

Some very special, selected press, writing and interviews:

Press

[New York Times](#)

[Los Angeles Times](#)

[Big Think](#)

[The Marginalian](#)

[Harvard Business School](#)

Writing

[The New York Times: The Rebranding of Democracy](#)

[The Washington Post: The Queer Quarantine](#)

[The Philadelphia Inquirer](#) (Amelia, no title is intentional)

[Print Magazine: The Most Revealing Thing About the Vanity Fair Photos](#)

[WePresent: The Personal Brand Paradox](#)

Interviews

[The Mel Robbins Show](#)

[Rethinking](#) with Adam Grant

[Sway](#) with Kara Swisher

[The Tim Ferriss Show](#)

[Dare To Lead with Brené Brown](#)

[How To Be A Better Human](#) with Chris Duffy

Some fun videos

[PBS with Ken Burns](#)

[Dropbox](#)

[The Wall Street Journal](#)

[AIGA](#)

[The Poetry Foundation](#)

[The Webby Awards](#)