



OLANDRIA CARTHEN LEADS MAC COSMETICS' NEW BLUSH CENTERED CAMPAIGN WITH PAINTED BY ESTHER

A case study exploring beauty marketing, cultural influence, and the growing importance of creator recognition



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ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN



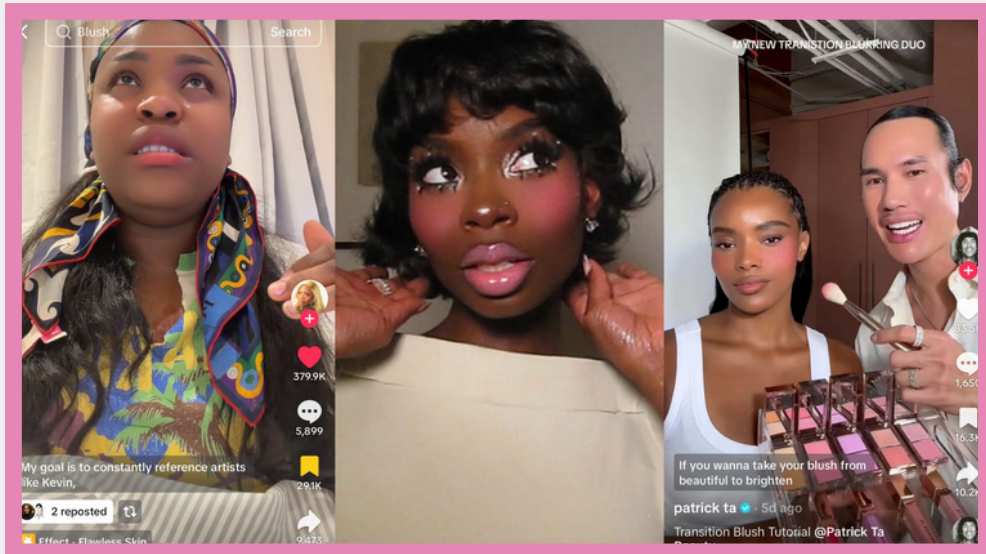
MAC Cosmetics announced a new blush focused campaign featuring reality television personality **Olandria Carthen**, best known for **Love Island USA Season 7**, alongside celebrity makeup artist **Painted By Esther**, also known as **Ngozi Esther Edeme**.

Centered around MAC's blush collection, the campaign highlighted Esther's signature blush techniques while celebrating bold blush looks on deeper skin tones and encouraging women with dark complexions to embrace color confidently.

The campaign quickly gained attention online not only for its emphasis on inclusivity and artistry, but also because it launched amid ongoing beauty industry conversations surrounding originality, creator recognition, and ownership of makeup artistry trends.

At the time, social media discussions were heavily focused on comparisons between Esther's long established blush techniques and Patrick Ta's recently launched "Transition Blush" collection.

HOW THE CONVERSATION BEGAN



Before “blush draping” became one of beauty’s most viral trends, Painted By Esther had already built a reputation online for her bold, heavily flushed makeup techniques designed specifically for deep and dark skin tones.

Through social media tutorials, workshops, and editorial work, Esther consistently showcased blush placement techniques that emphasized color payoff, layering, and dimension.

Last week, makeup artist Patrick Ta launched his “Transition Blush” collection, which included a cream blush, powder palette, and blending brush centered around a three-step technique that blended color from the under-eye into the cheeks.

Soon after the launch, beauty fans on social media began comparing Ta’s campaign language and instructional techniques to methods Esther had publicly shared for years. Viral side-by-side comparisons highlighted similarities in wording, product positioning, and blush application techniques.

The controversy sparked broader conversations online about:

- **Creator acknowledgment in the beauty industry**
- **Appropriation versus inspiration**
- **The visibility of Black makeup artists within mainstream beauty**
- **How social media preserves artistic authorship**

While Patrick Ta later acknowledged Esther’s influence in an updated caption, many online users felt the recognition came only after public backlash.

WHY THIS MATTERS

1

IT REINFORCES MAC'S LEGACY OF INCLUSIVITY

MAC Cosmetics continues to focus on inclusive beauty by highlighting blush made for deeper skin tones.

The campaign shows how blush can be used in a way that enhances richer complexions, not just lighter skin tones.

- Focuses on deeper skin tones
- Shows blush techniques for richer complexions
- Supports MAC's long term commitment to inclusivity



2

IT PUBLICLY VALIDATES PAINTED BY ESTHER'S INFLUENCE

Painted By Esther's blush techniques were already widely recognized online and being highlighted by beauty communities.

The MAC campaign reinforces her role as a key innovator in modern blush artistry by placing her work at the center of MAC's MACzine feature.

- Highlights Esther's signature gradient blush technique
- Positions her as a leading voice in modern blush artistry
- Gives her official brand visibility through MACzine
- Reinforces her influence in shaping current blush trends

3

OLANDRIA CARTHEN EXPANDED THE CAMPAIGN'S CULTURAL REACH

Olandria Carthen served as the MACzine cover star, helping amplify the campaign beyond the beauty industry.

Her presence connects MAC's blush storytelling to broader pop culture and digital audiences, increasing its visibility across social media.

- Featured as the MACzine cover star
- Bridges beauty marketing with pop culture and influencer spaces
- Expands reach across TikTok, Instagram, and digital platforms
- Increases overall campaign visibility and shareability



PR TAKEAWAYS

BRAND POSITIONING

MAC Cosmetics positioned itself as a brand rooted in inclusivity, artistry, and creator-led storytelling. The campaign, featured through MACzine, emphasized Painted By Esther's signature gradient blush technique while showcasing blush as a tool of expression for deeper skin tones.

Rather than responding directly to online discourse, MAC reinforced its values through collaboration and creative direction.

- Centers Black artistry and creator-led innovation
- Highlights blush techniques designed for deeper skin tones
- Uses MACzine as a storytelling platform rather than traditional advertising
- Reinforces MAC's identity as an inclusive, artist-first brand

TIMING & CULTURAL RELEVANCE

The campaign launched during heightened online conversations around blush artistry, originality, and crediting creators in beauty.

Social media discussions had already been drawing comparisons between Painted By Esther's techniques and other commercial blush launches, increasing sensitivity around creative ownership and recognition.

- Arrives amid viral discussions about blush technique ownership and influence
- Reflects ongoing debates about crediting Black beauty creators
- Aligns with growing consumer demand for transparency and recognition
- Positions MAC within a real-time cultural conversation rather than outside it

SOCIAL MEDIA IMPACT

The campaign generated strong engagement because it blended beauty marketing with cultural discourse.

Audiences responded to both the visuals and the narrative behind the collaboration, particularly the emphasis on Esther's influence and Olandria as the face of the MACzine feature.

- Beauty campaign tied to MACzine editorial storytelling
- Spotlight on Painted By Esther's signature blush technique and philosophy
- Olandria Carthen featured as the face of the issue, amplifying reach across digital audiences
- Online conversations framed the campaign as both celebration and industry acknowledgment

Audience response highlighted:

- A "full-circle" recognition moment for Painted By Esther
- A win for Black beauty creators and visibility in mainstream beauty
- A strategic brand move during ongoing industry debates
- A celebration of blush artistry on deeper skin tones