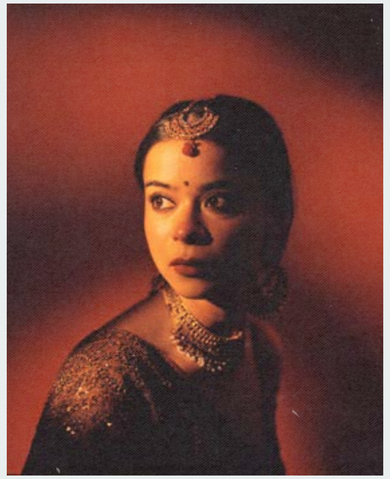
DESIGN TREND REPORT



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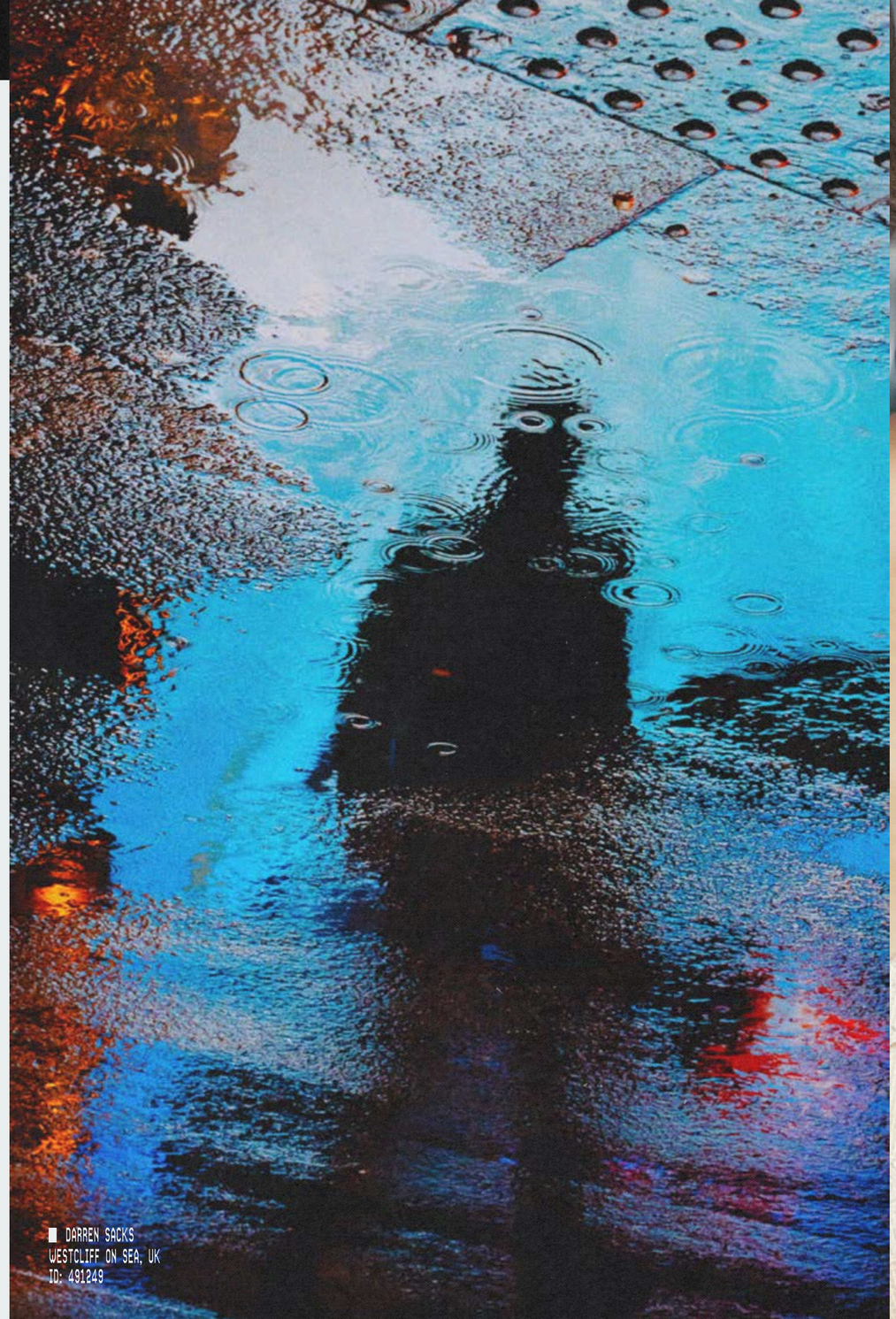
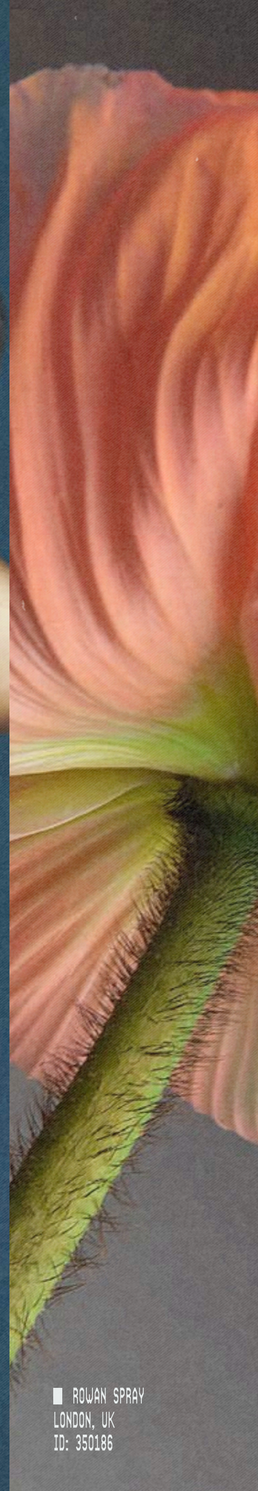
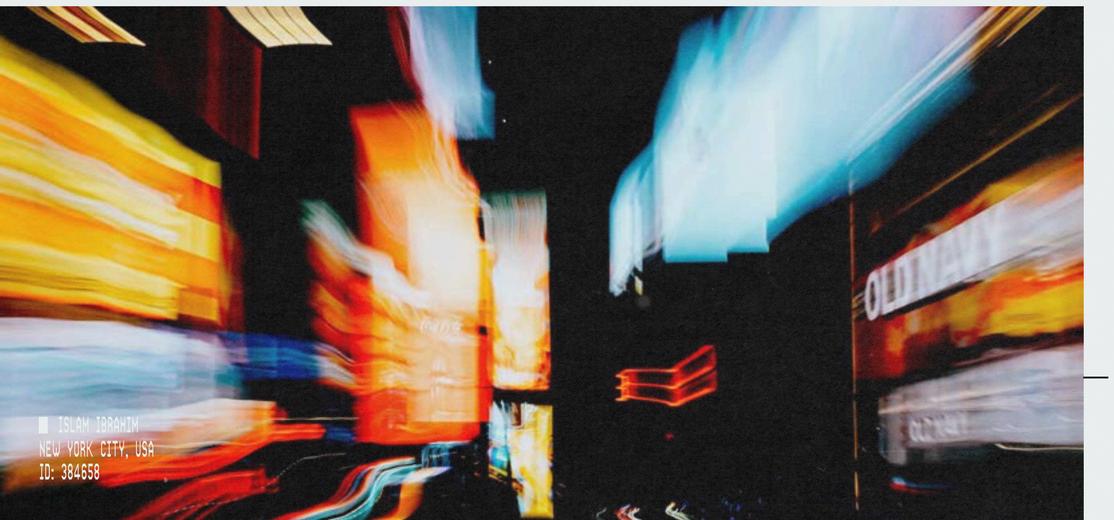


DARREN SACKS
WESTCLIFF ON SEA, UK
ID: 491249

ARIANNA GENGHINI
MILAN, ITALY
ID: 465270



ROWAN SPRAY
LONDON, UK
ID: 350186



THE TRENDS DEFINING 2026

"DESIGN IS NOT SUBJECTIVE. PROPORTION, HIERARCHY, CONTRAST—THESE ARE NOT OPINIONS." —MASSIMO VIGNELLI

Design culture is changing fast. The work that stands out now has one thing in common: a focus on personality over perfection. The kind of work that feels human, tactile, and curated, made by humans who take a swing and don't play it safe. The type of work creatives want to make.

Audiences are exhausted by sameness. They scroll past anything that feels generic or overly perfect. When everything starts to blend together, the only way forward is to take risks – bolder choices, stranger textures, louder colors, and authentic imagery that bring real presence to a layout. Designers aren't chasing rules right now. They're chasing feeling. They want work that makes you pause because it carries a pulse.

Imagery has never been a more polarizing point in design than it is now. The decisions around where or how to get images for campaigns and designs grow each week. This year, the decision is yours: define what you stand for and support the artists creating authentic work.

This report focuses on the trends that help designers inject character and push past safe defaults. More texture. More detail. More color. More weirdness. More intention. These trends reward experimentation and give creators the freedom to try ideas that feel alive.

This year, the work that cuts through isn't the work that plays nice. It's the work that plays.

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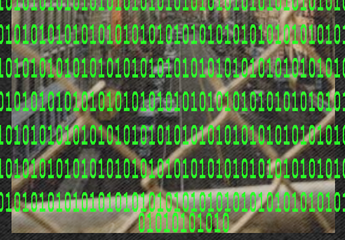
*__Stills__ is the trusted photo licensing agency for brands, agencies, and creatives who care about craft.

[PHOTOGRAPHY]



ALY KULA
BROOKLYN, USA
ID: 277176

DIRECT FLASH

GIVE YOUR DESIGN A VISUAL EXCLAMATION POINT.

Direct flash has shed its reputation as a quick, inexpensive fix and become a campaign-defining style. The era of polished studio lighting and composed sets no longer carries the same weight for every campaign. Those images still have a place, but as audiences gravitate toward work that feels real, direct flash injects life back into design.

Direct flash brings visual impact to your designs with striking contrast and strong pops of color. This style of imagery offers a sharp separation of highlight and shadow, creating natural spaces for type and design elements, bringing an eye-catching moment to your work before a headline is read or a message is processed.

This style is gaining a strong foothold across the sports and lifestyle industries as brands continue to build stronger brand identities and strengthen their connections to their communities. (BANDIT is an excellent example of a brand that continues to use direct flash imagery to bring grit and credibility in their campaigns.) The work feels lived-in, not staged, and audiences respond because it authentically reflects the culture they recognize.

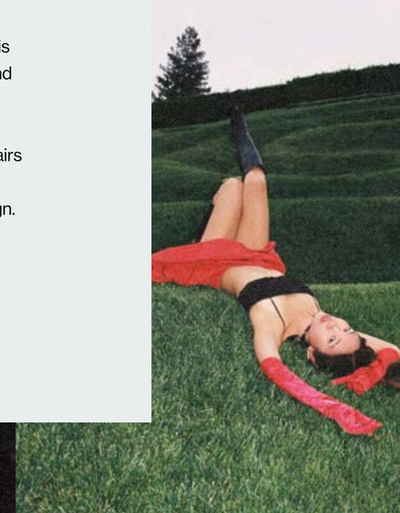
That relatability is why direct flash imagery is gaining popularity, because people want visuals that feel authentic and human. Its rawness makes designs more compelling and engaging, creating something approachable and authentic that instantly creates a connection with the audience.

Direct flash complements minimalist and bold campaigns alike, helping brands capture attention and drive engagement across styles. Whether you use a display type or a minimalist approach, this imagery stands out, ensuring your designs receive the attention they deserve.

Pro tip from our creative director:
As you create a campaign rooted in this style, focus on an editorial mindset. Find key visuals and textural additions that balance well. A combination of direct flash and slow shutter drag imagery pairs well together to create a cohesive and compelling visual style for the campaign.

EXPLORE IMAGERY

GS AND CO.
NEW YORK CITY, USA
ID: 187763



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IF YOU NEED DESIGN THAT SHOUT
WITHOUT APOLOGY, TURN THE FLA
ON—AND LET THE INTENSITY DO
THE HEAVY LIFTING.

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"DIRECT FLASH FEELS UNAPOLOGETIC, RAW, AND HUMAN."

JOE DIVER, CREATIVE DIRECTOR

RYAN BELK
CHARLESTON, USA
ID: 415720

PHOTO TREND
DIRECT FLASH

JEREMY BISHOP
SAN LUIS OBISPO, USA
ID: 474702

GS AND CO.
NEW YORK CITY, USA
ID: 68598

LINDSEY KUSTERMAN
LOS ANGELES, USA
ID: 446095

MAXIMALISM

LET THE VISUALS BE LOUD, AND
THE DESIGN CAN MEET THEM THERE.

When this year's Color of the Year feels more like a void than a statement, it's time to get back to what moves people: color.

Maximalism has returned as one of the year's top image-driven trends. Even brands with clean aesthetics recognize that bold colors, texture, and detailed imagery are essential for capturing attention.

Typically characterized by bold colors and imagery packed with details and subjects, this type of imagery breaks almost every rule of "clean design," but that doesn't mean you need to shy away from it.

Think of design and imagery as two sides of the same maximalism coin. It's permission to be bold – really bold. More daring than you even think is bold. We're talking so much color, type, and imagery that you begin to doubt if you even know what you are doing. Pro tip: keep going.

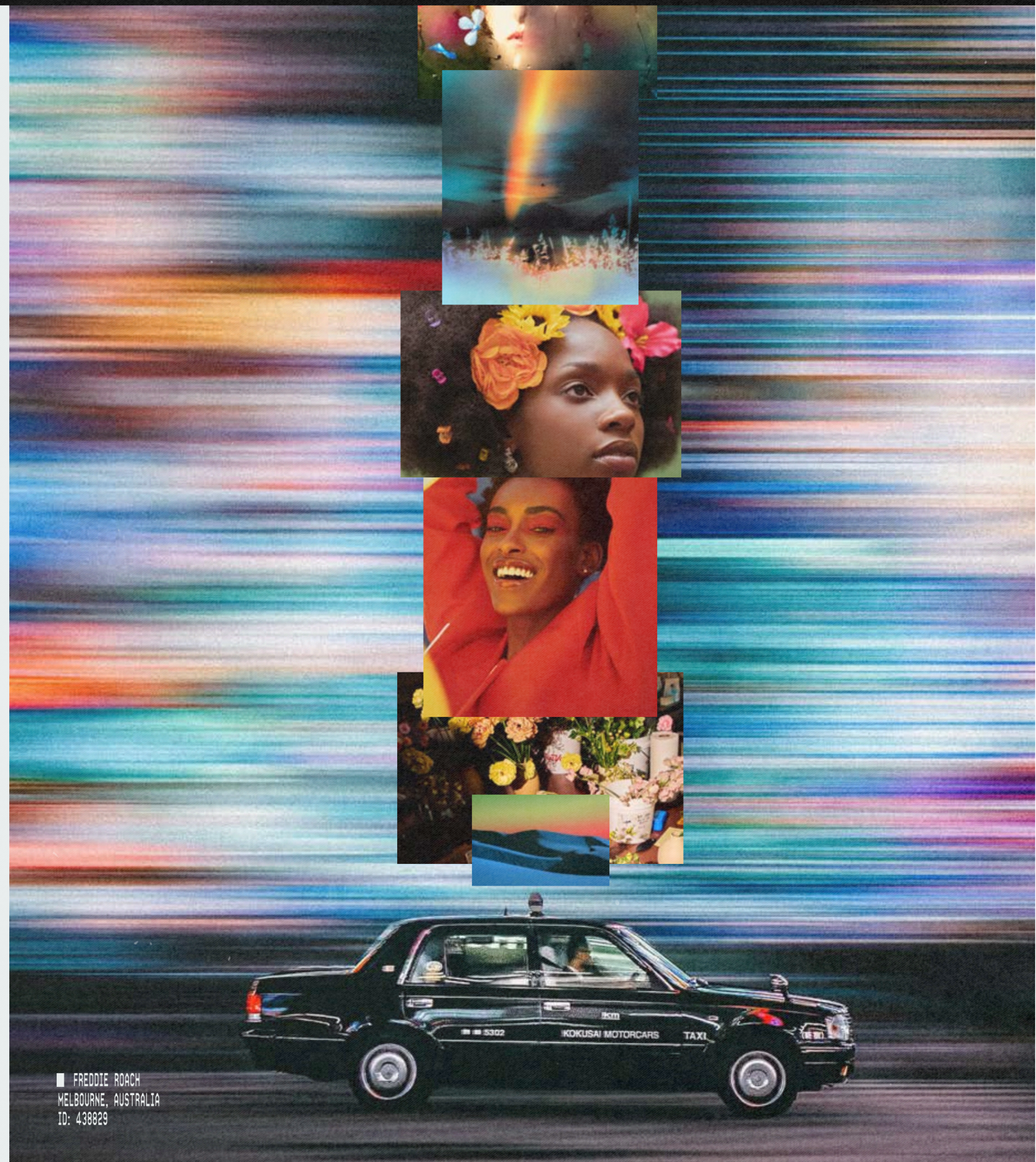
At its core, maximalism holds true to a key foundation of curation. A belief that, within the perceived randomness or chaos, a theme or style is being represented. Commonly paired with language like eclectic or clutter, this trend extends beyond those simple terms when applied to design. Imagine this more as permission to be the most extreme version of something. Push every element to the max and be bold with your choices.

Maximalism still holds to the standard that design has core principles that must be followed. Hierarchy, color theory, and layout are critical. Pair imagery and design elements thoughtfully, and use strong grids for order. Ensure you have a firm grasp of color theory to blend elements seamlessly. Lastly, never overlook the fact that they always read the largest text first.

2026 is the year to embrace personality and set clean and minimal aside. Let the visuals be loud, and let the design meet them there.

EXPLORE IMAGERY

GS AND CO.
NEW YORK CITY, USA
ID: 46135



FREDDIE ROACH
MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA
ID: 438829

GS AND CO.
NEW YORK CITY, USA
ID: 202598

ALISON SCARPULLA
CLEVELAND, USA
ID: 223529

ILKA AND FRANZ
LONDON, UK
ID: 287925

"DESIGN ONLY WORKS IF THE IMAGERY IS RIGHT."

MAXIMALISM INVITES YOU TO GO ALL IN. LET THE VISUALS BE LOUD, AND LET THE DESIGN MEET THEM THERE.

THINK OF MAXIMALISM AS DIRECTION. WHEN THE IMAGE HAS PRESENCE, THE WHOLE LAYOUT COMES ALIVE.

JASON MURRAY, ART DIRECTOR

BEATRIZ UALIM
LOS ANGELES, USA
ID: 21726

JENNI HELIN
LONDON, UK
ID: 283439

SARAH MCCOLGAN
LOS ANGELES, USA
ID: 380163

JENNI HELIN
LONDON, UK
ID: 368286

PHOTO TREND
MAXIMALISM

NIKOLAY
YEREVAN, ARMENIA
ID: 324587

SENSORY STORYTELLING

TELL THEM WHAT THE BRAND FEELS LIKE BEFORE THEY READ A SINGLE WORD.

Sensory storytelling uses imagery to evoke an emotional response before the viewer even has time to think. And what makes this style so effective? The right imagery.

It doesn't just show a product or scene; it conveys a feeling: softness, warmth, sharpness, coolness, comfort, tension. These sensory cues enable the audience to instantly "feel" the idea.

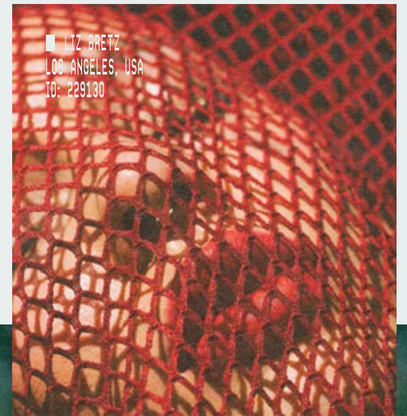
This style provokes a tactile reaction unmatched by others. While design often uses product or character images to spotlight items, sensory imagery lets viewers feel what's presented and expands the message's impact.

Amid endless ads and bold ideas, this trend invites viewers to pause and reflect. Is the image soft, glossy, or smooth? How does it make you *feel?*

Creative director Joe Diver advances this style, blending grid-based designs with tactile imagery, adding depth. "When paired with the right design system, it creates intrigue rather than giving everything away," Diver explains. That's the power of these images; they create a slight pause that keeps a person engaged with your design.

While some trends for this year shout, this approach whispers, urging creatives to harness the power of visual storytelling. The right image tells the audience what the brand feels like before they read a single word.

EXPLORE IMAGERY



■ ANASTASIA MIHAYLOVA
DNIPRO, UKRAINE
ID: 431642

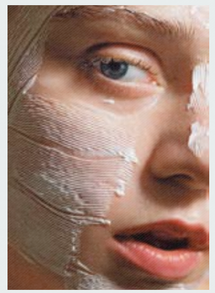
[01]

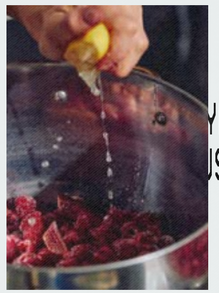
■ ANASTASIA MIHAYLOVA
DNIPRO, UKRAINE
ID: 431642

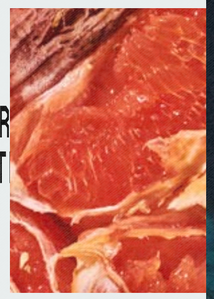
■ MEGAN ROGERS
LOS ANGELES, USA
ID: 387574

[02]

■ MEGAN ROGERS
LOS ANGELES, USA
ID: 387574







■ ANNIKA KAFCALOUDIS
MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA
ID: 25108

[04]

■ ANNIKA KAFCALOUDIS
MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA
ID: 25108

■ LINDSAY KREIGHBAUM
LOS ANGELES, USA

[05]

■ LINDSAY KREIGHBAUM
LOS ANGELES, USA

■ EREN SARIGUL
LONDON, UK
ID: 40429

ASHLEY CHRUSZCZ
RIVERSIDE, USA
ID: 433953

PHOTO TREND
... SENSORY STORY

GS AND CO.
NEW YORK CITY, USA
ID: 106146

PHOTO TREND
... DISTORTED WIT

DISTORTED WIDE ANGLE

CREATE INSTANT PRESENCE AND PULL THE AUDIENCE CLOSER.

This approach dives into the warped world of wide-angle and in-camera distorted imagery. Rooted in the ‘90s and early aughts, this style continues to dominate every aspect of design and advertising, evolving with modern touches that make it both familiar and unexpected.

This is the year that design gets its personality back, and distorted and wide-angle imagery brings that punch of attention. Whether you grew up during the prime days of skate culture or were a fan of the music videos and band promos of the early aughts, this style has always held a beloved space in the hearts of consumers.

At times, it signals a playful tone or can push a simple concept into the unexpected. This renewed style paves the way for experimentation. The warped perspective creates a unique style and untapped design options to interact with them. Shaping text around curves and playing with perspective, or simply letting the images carry the weight of attention and keeping things simple.

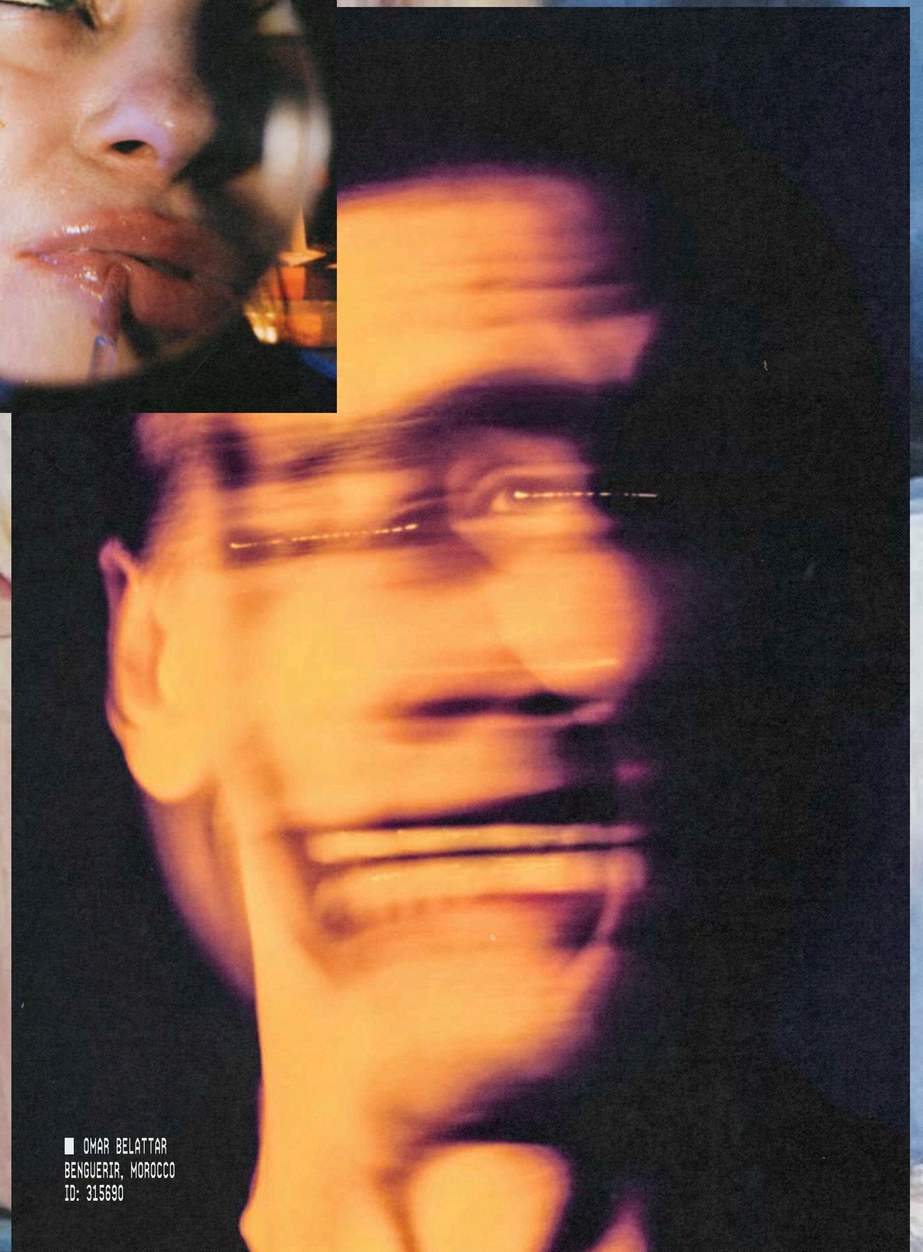
The success of ultra-wide-angle imagery lies in its ability to place the viewer right in the action. The natural distortion when the camera is positioned close to a subject instantly creates a more dynamic layout.

Along with wide-angle, you can introduce distortion into your compositions to further enhance the dynamics. While wide-angle helps draw a viewer’s eye to a specific point in an image, distorted imagery can help guide the eye through your design. Through stretching or warping, these unexpected changes can help create dynamic layouts to build around.

Cheers to a year where we embrace the odds and ends of stretching our visuals to keep viewers on their toes.

EXPLORE IMAGERY

GABRIELLE WHITE
JERSEY CITY, USA
ID: 369060



OMAR BELATTAR
BENGUERIR, MOROCCO
ID: 315690

SARA AND PHIL
LOS ANGELES, USA
ID: 33556

JOSE PEZZA
CÓRDOBA, ARGENTINA
ID: 470382

NIKOLAY
SAINT-PETERSBURG, RUSSIA
ID: 323903

SARAH MCCOLGAN
LOS ANGELES, USA
ID: 215123

FAIZAL WESTCOTT
BOSTON, USA
ID: 23969

LIAM KAISER
SALT LAKE CITY, USA
ID: 460333

GS AND CO
NEW YORK CITY, USA
ID: 108747

FRANCESCO GIOIA
LONDON, UK
ID: 227258

MOLLY STROHL
PORTLAND, USA
ID: 253830

GRANT PUCKETT
LOS ANGELES, USA
ID: 271535

SARA AND PHIL
LOS ANGELES, USA
ID: 33536

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LOS ANGELES, USA
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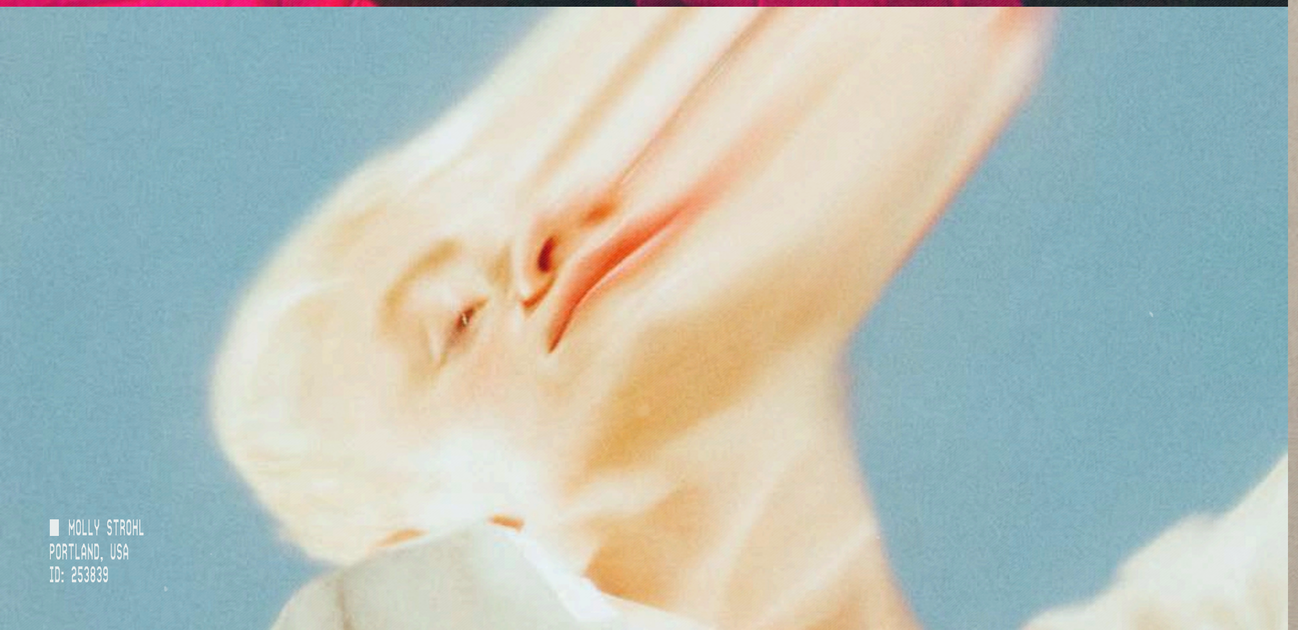
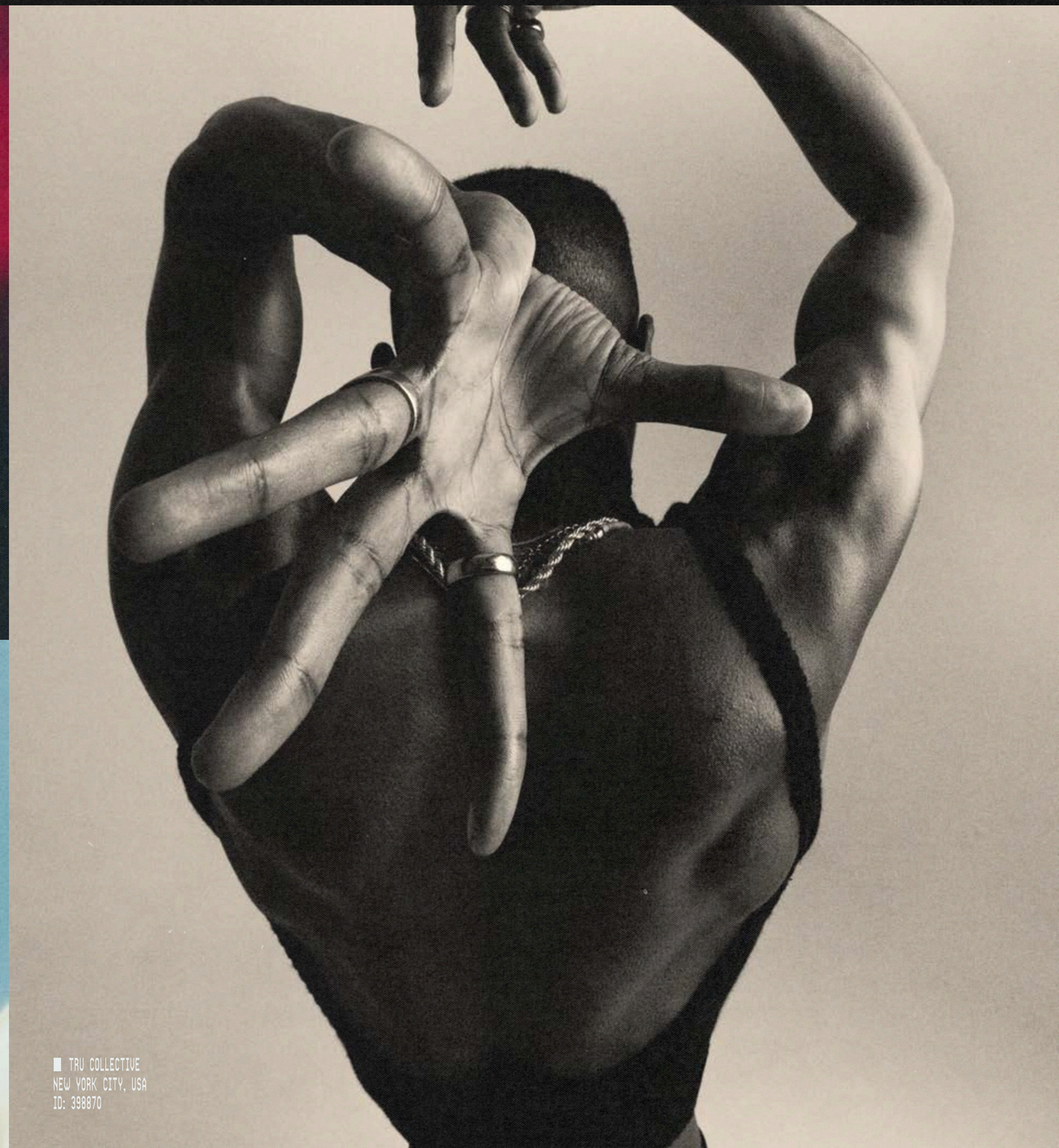
LEE MORTON
BALTIMORE, USA
ID: 362176



MOLLY STROHL
PORTLAND, USA
ID: 253839



TRU COLLECTIVE
NEW YORK CITY, USA
ID: 398870

GRUNGE

REAL IS BACK. AND IT'S UNWASHED.

As it becomes increasingly more difficult to distinguish what's real, rawness provides proof of life. A way of showing something is real because it's not perfect.

Hyper-polished imagery is cheap to produce and boring to consume. People want campaigns that feel real. Something that feels like them: unpolished, messy, and chaotic. When everything can be perfected, smoothed, staged, and polished, imperfection becomes a signal of authentic humanity.

They want to see the dirt under the fingernails; they want something honest. That's why the grunge aesthetic works.

While authentic imagery has been a must-have for years, this year it takes pushing your imagery to the next level. It takes showing something that reflects an honest presentation of the world. These images are packed with little moments that feel found, textures, and subtle touches that showcase a human hand in their creation.

This imagery create an opportunity to explore trends like scrapbook or scribble to then pack more interest into your designs. The images feel real because they *are* real, captured by real people in actual places.

Life is messy, and when you tap into that truth, your work will connect with your audience in an honest and authentic way.

EXPLORE IMAGERY

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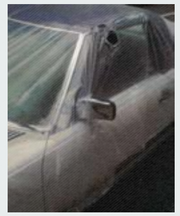

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USED WITH INTENTION, GRUNGE IS
DELIBERATE ENERGY. IT INJECTS
FRICTION INTO A LAYOUT SO THE
VIEWER FEELS SOMETHING, NOT
JUST SEES SOMETHING. THAT'S
WHAT MAKES THE STYLE SO
RELEVANT NOW: IT GIVES DESIGN
BACK ITS PULSE.

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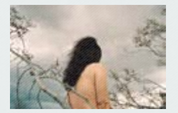


"IMPERFECTION CAN BE INTENTIONAL."

JOE DIVER, CREATIVE DIRECTOR

JOELLE TAYLOR
LOS ANGELES, USA
ID: 415399

PHOTO TREND
... GRUNGE

FRANCESCO GIOIA
LONDON, UK
ID: 297557

ZACHARIAH HAGY
ALBUQUERQUE, USA
ID: 345025

SURREALISM

GIVE THEM SOMETHING TO SENSE,
NOT JUST SOMETHING TO SEE.

When ordinary life isn't enough, surrealism flips it on its head, sparking curiosity and adding a level of interest to your designs that can't be found with any other style.

Surrealism's secret weapon is subtext and the engaging, thought-provoking meanings it can bring to designs and campaigns. These types of images can represent complex or nuanced concepts, helping to connect the dots between message, design, and imagery to create a complete and impactful concept.

Surrealism spans from the impossible to the uncanny, allowing you to explore concepts in new ways and push your designs into unexpected territory.

From high-concept, art-directed shoots to unreal worlds, this imagery ensures your designs stand out.

Designers often play it safe for clarity, but this imagery encourages asking what works with the image. Which colors or typefaces fit. Which typefaces could match the tone and personality of the image. Stills artist &Walsh has tapped into the power of surrealism for years, never shying away from pushing design, type, and colors to match the conceptual truth the image conveys.

The key to creating surrealistic work: craft. While generative technology enables many unusual images, true surrealism demands a human touch.

It's the soul creating the image who crafts the connection. That intention, skill, and time it takes to create the image translates directly into your campaigns, designs, and concepts. Creating a level of connection with the audience that cannot be found with artificial creation.

The authenticity of how the image was created matters, and people can always tell, even when the image is not grounded in reality.

EXPLORE IMAGERY

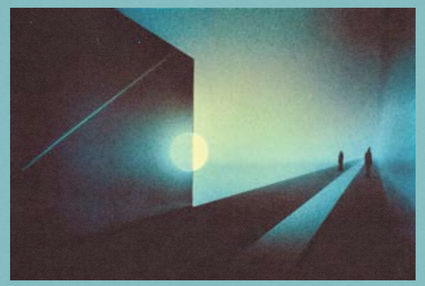
RINEGG
BRUSSELS, BELGIUM
ID: 31255

GIORGIA DIDONÈ
VENICE, ITALY
ID: 400293

CREATE INSTANT PERSONALITY WITH A SINGLE IMAGE.

SURREALIST IMAGERY FEELS FAMILIAR BUT "WRONG," ORDINARY BUT UNCANNY, AND THAT TENSION GIVES DESIGN INSTANT ENERGY.

ELIA PELLEGRINI
ROME, ITALY
ID: 30990



NIKOLAY
SAINT-PETERSBURG, RUSSIA
ID: 324012

JAKE WAGNER
DALLAS, USA
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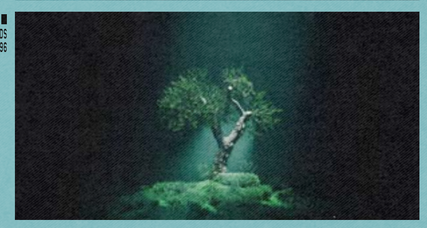
LEVIN LEE
COLOGNE, GERMANY
ID: 232422

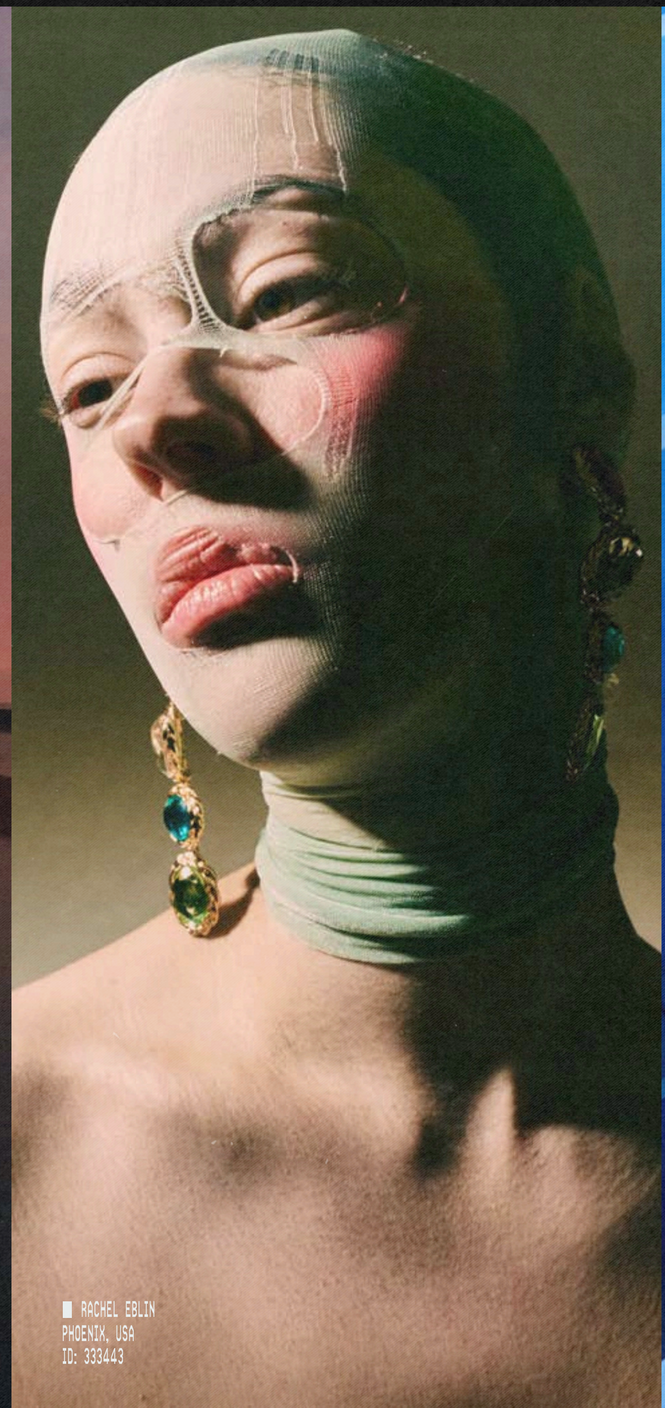
ZANE PRIEDE
RIGA, LATVIA
ID: 9027



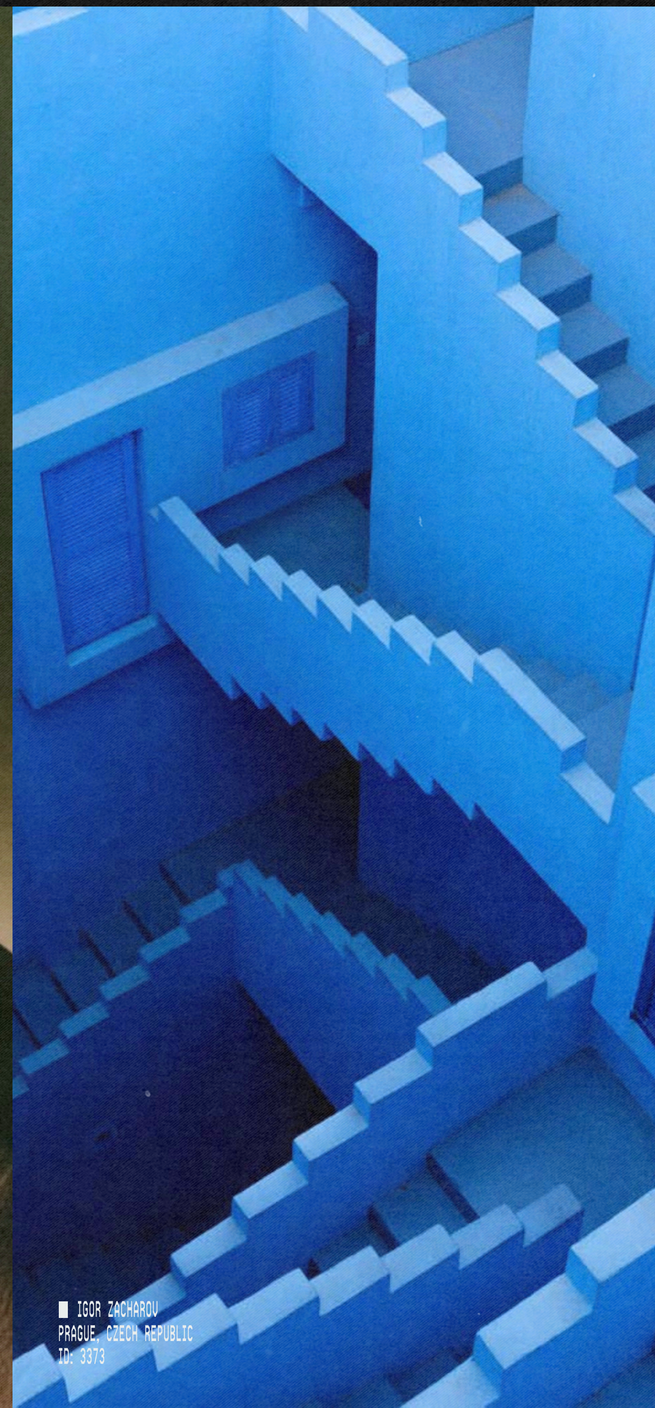
ARNAUD MORO
AMSTERDAM, NETHERLANDS
ID: 268886

ILKA AND FRANZ
LONDON, UK
ID: 287908

ALINA NECHAEVA
SOCHI, RUSSIA
ID: 457306



RACHEL EBLIN
PHOENIX, USA
ID: 333443



IGOR ZACHAROV
PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC
ID: 3373

AMERICANA

PULL THEM IN WITH REAL FACES, REAL LANDSCAPES, AND REAL GRIT.

There's something magnetic about imagery that captures the toughness, quiet resilience, and raw texture of the American West.

Honest and packed with story, Americana imagery is one of the most story-forward imagery trends for this year. These images are characterized by a quiet stillness at times, then contrasted with the toughness and grit of a horse galloping at high speed, from cowboys to everyday people and places in small rural towns, young and old. This approach embodies true authenticity. It's not meant to be a romanticized view of the American West, but an honest look at people and culture.

This imagery brings narrative weight and unique textures, colors, and character not found in urban imagery. Helping craft a distinct visual identity that stands apart from polished campaigns. The ongoing success of western TV dramas and films rooted in this culture shows people are drawn to this iconic style.

Using Americana imagery also creates a unique opportunity to find a balance between design and texture-packed imagery. Similar to sensory storytelling, these images evoke emotion. But remember: just because the imagery evokes a western aesthetic doesn't mean your design has to follow suit.

The contrast of brutalist design and Americana imagery can make a unique, honest identity. It softens design, warming a campaign's tone, allowing you the freedom to explore more interesting and rigid design systems.

People connect with stories, and when you can tap into that instantly with imagery, your designs are guaranteed to resonate.

EXPLORE IMAGERY

ZACH DELOACH
BROOKLYN, USA
ID: 458792

LEAH JUDSON
WASHINGTON, USA
ID: 7682

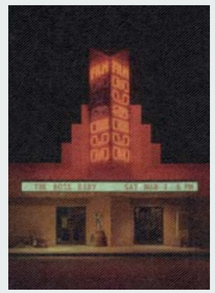
[01]

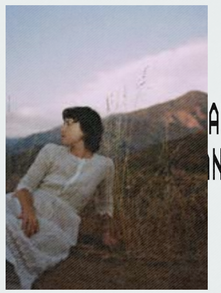
LEAH JUDSON
WASHINGTON, USA
ID: 7682

ANDRES MARZUL
BARCELONA, SPAIN
ID: 266993

[02]

ANDRES MARZUL
BARCELONA, SPAIN
ID: 266993





LAUREN WITHROW
LOS ANGELES, USA
ID: 320014

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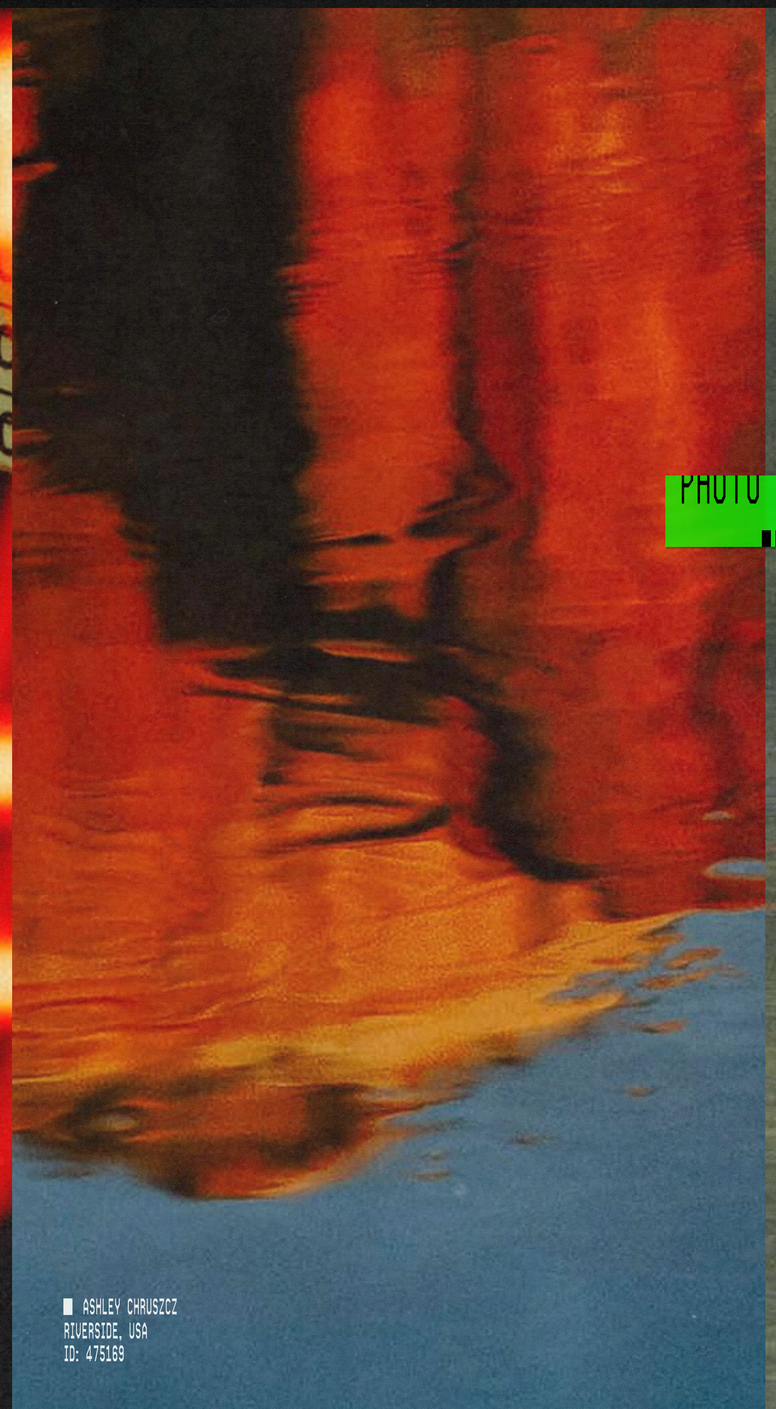
LAUREN WITHROW
LOS ANGELES,USA
ID: 320014

TYLER GLASS
LOUISVILLE, USA
ID: 1

[05]

TYLER GLASS
LOUISVILLE, USA
ID: 1

EREN SARIGUL
LONDON, UK
ID: 260743



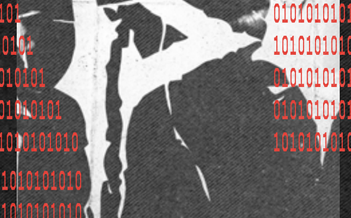
ASHLEV CHRUSZCZ
RIVERSIDE, USA
ID: 475169

PHOTO TREND
AMERICAN

KORBINIAN GRAD
MUNICH, GERMANY
ID: 354412

[DESIGN]

EVERYTHING
MUST
DIE



YYYY-MM-DD
2026-01-11
SKATE OR DIE
DON'T CRUSH THE FUTURE
2026-01-11
DON'T CRUSH THE FUTURE

DESIGN TREND

... SCRAPBOOK/SC

SCRAPBOOK/ SCANNER

IT'S DESIGN THAT FEELS LIVED IN. HUMAN FIRST, DIGITAL SECOND.

Most aspects of the design world allow for pixel perfection, clean edges, and sharp details; however, audiences increasingly want to interact with work that feels handmade, showing evidence of creation by hand. That's where the scrapbook and scanner trend enters as this year's rising star. For years, we have seen the hyper-curation of scrapbooking taking the internet by storm. This year, we want to push this trend to its limits.

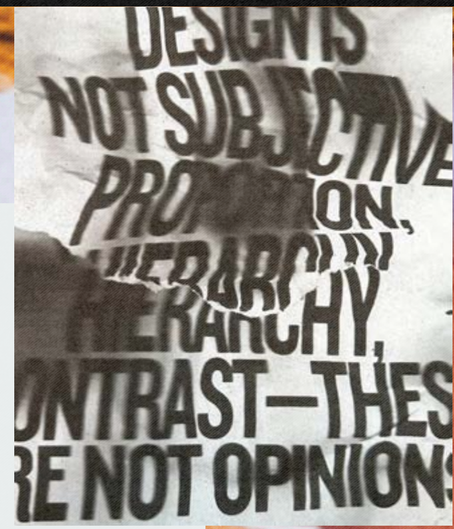
The act of designing digitally, printing assets, cutting them out by hand, and reassembling them into unique compositions introduces a layer of unpredictability that conveys a distinctly human-made quality.

Minor errors and lack of precision make the result yours alone, since it cannot be perfectly recreated.

To enhance this style, you can also explore various types of paper and textures. Create layered effects through scanning and using multiple assets. Try dragging images or text across the scanner while scanning each asset. This blend of art and design creates something that not only is unique but also resonates with people. It opens the question of how they did. Creating a second opportunity to capitalize on the process of making becomes part of the campaign.

From the grain to the artifacts from multiple scans, this trend is your permission to get messy and let go of perfection this year.

EXPLORE IMAGERY



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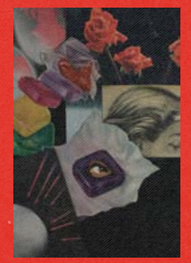

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WHEN INCORPORATED INTO CONTEMPORARY DESIGN SYSTEMS, STYLE INFUSES WARMTH, HUMANIT DEPTH WITHOUT REQUIRING A SINGLE LINE OF COPY.

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HUMAN FIRST, DIGITAL SECOND.

DESIGN TREND
INDEX/CATALOG

ID. 30990
ELIA PELLEGRINI

CYBER GOTH

GIVE YOUR DESIGN TEETH,
ATTITUDE, AND A POINT OF VIEW.

Think of cyber goth as this year's dark horse hero.

As creatives push brands and campaigns to have more individualistic identities, subcultures continue to be a driving force in design, and no other trend has the opportunity to connect with a certain generation and demographic like cyber goth: a bold, anti-establishment blend of metallic textures, hyper-color, and dark imagery.

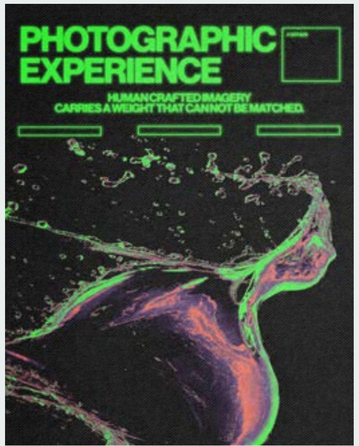
There's a continued rise of chrome and metallic color ways finding their way into more mainstream campaigns, but we want more.

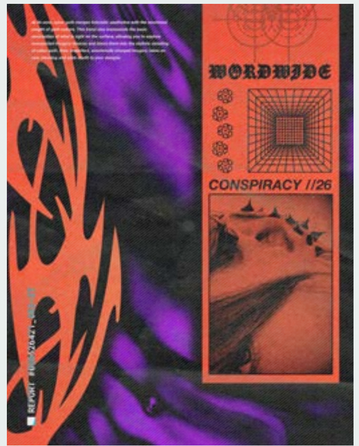
Embracing a harsher visual language packed with intricate, spiked line work that borders on tribal markings. Angular, sharp typography and dense compositions layered with texture, noise, and distortion create a sense of controlled chaos that rejects minimalism without becoming messy.

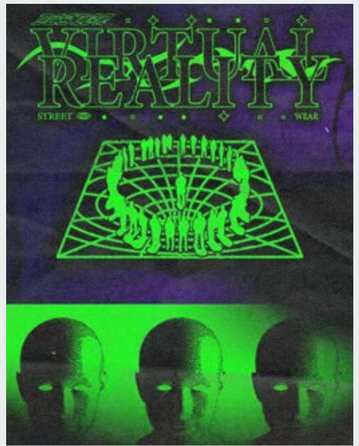
Once only found in underground scenes and anti-establishment culture, this visual style has moved into high fashion, music, and advertising without losing its edge. No longer reserved for the fringe, cyber goth offers a way to be bold without feeling out of place.

At its core, cyber goth merges futuristic aesthetics with the emotional weight of goth culture. This trend also transcends the basic assumption of what is right on the surface, allowing you to explore unexpected imagery choices and blend them into the stylistic detailing of cyber goth. Raw, imperfect, emotionally charged imagery takes on new meaning and adds depth to your designs.

EXPLORE IMAGERY





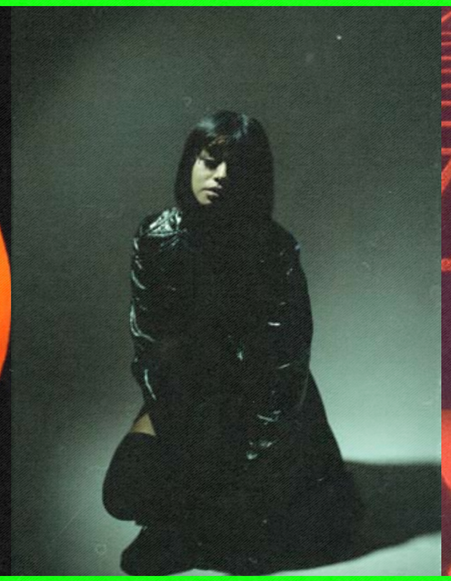


OMAR BELATTAR
BENGUERIR, MOROCCO
ID: 328073

RINEGG
BRUSSELS, BELGIUM
ID: 30719

JOSE PEZZA
CÓRDOBA, ARGENTINA
ID: 470379

AHMED ABDELSWAFI
CAIRO, EGYPT
ID: 404101

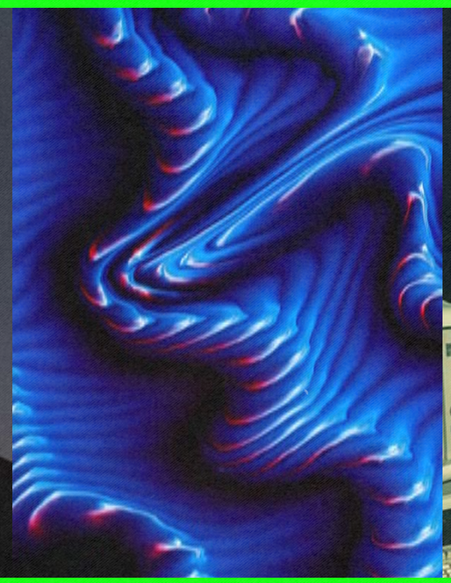


JAKE WAGNER
DALLAS, USA
ID: 23969

NIKOLAY
SAINT-PETERSBURG, RUSSIA
ID: 499632

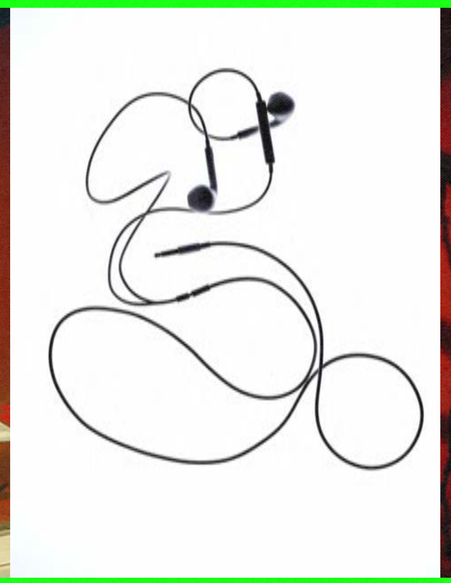
REALSMIGGY
NEW YORK CITY, USA
ID: 316426

PASCAL SCHONLAU
LONDON, UK
ID: 306535



ROMAN DE GIULI
NUERNBERG, GERMANY
ID: 423584

ANDREW TESDAHL
ALBION, USA
ID: 497872

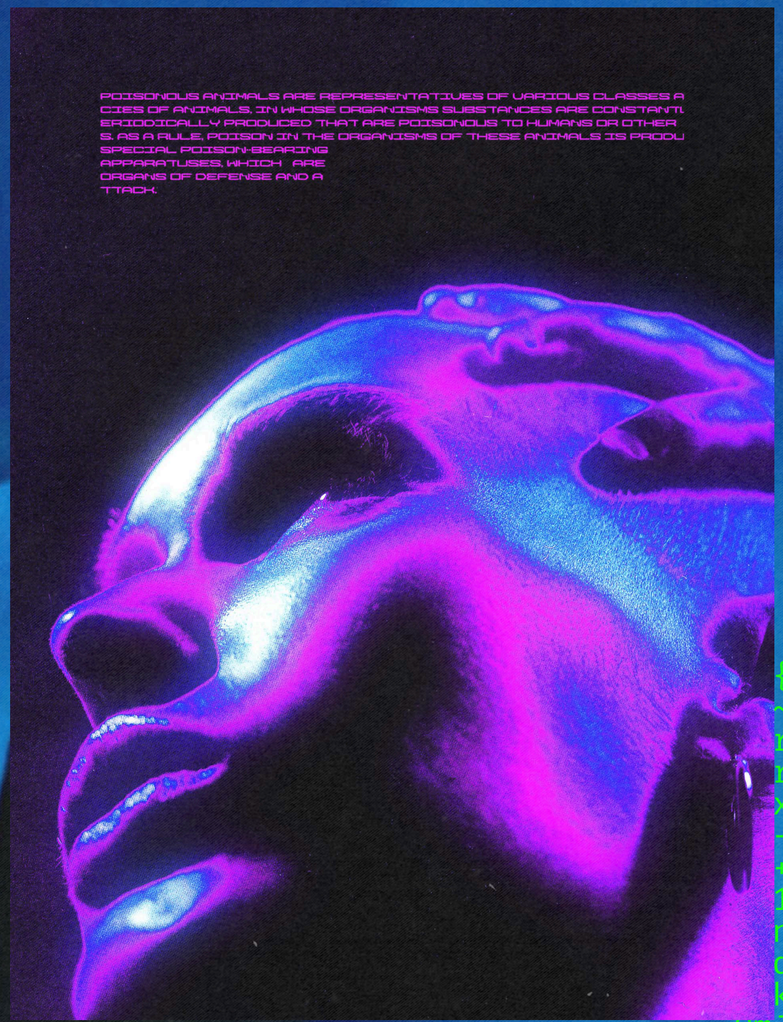


OFF-MENU STUDIO
LJUBLJANA, SLOVENIA
ID: 466927

ZACHARIAH HAGY
ALBUQUERQUE, USA
ID: 344944

CYBER GOTH

POISONOUS ANIMALS ARE REPRESENTATIVES OF VARIOUS CLASSES A
CIES OF ANIMALS, IN WHOSE ORGANISMS SUBSTANCES ARE CONSTANTL
ERIODICALLY PRODUCED THAT ARE POISONOUS TO HUMANS OR OTHER
S. AS A RULE, POISON IN THE ORGANISMS OF THESE ANIMALS IS PRODU
SPECIAL POISON-BEARING
APPARATUSES, WHICH ARE
ORGANS OF DEFENSE AND A
TTACK.



EMILIE NGUYEN
WASHINGTON, D.C., USA
ID: 390475

FUTURE MEDIEVAL

HEAR YE, HEAR YE! LET'S SHIFT THE VIBE TO SOMETHING ARCHAIC.

Future medieval revives the world of the Middle Ages – a unique blend of blackletter type, ornamental detailing, and mythical elements, all filtered through a digital eye. Ornamentation is the foundation of this trend – dark, intricate embellishments packed with symbolism.

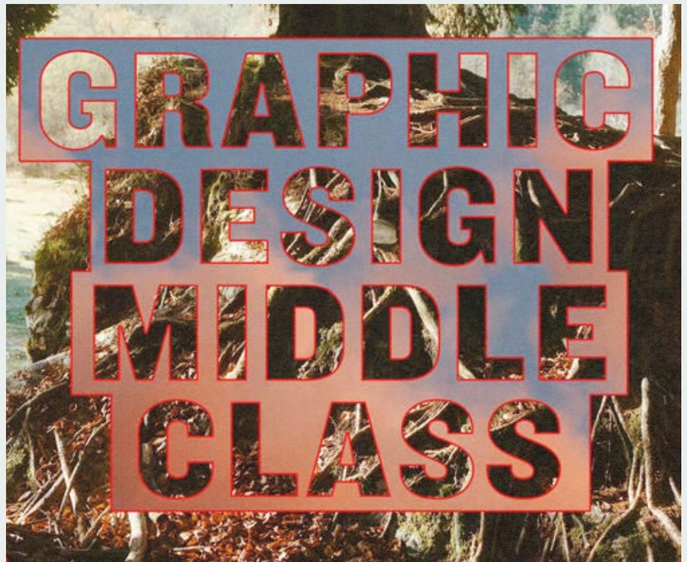
This visually rich, symbolic aesthetic appeals across generations and industries, from films like *Saltburn*, brands like Liquid Death, and even Swedish electronics brand Teenage Engineering's EP-1320 medieval synthesizer.

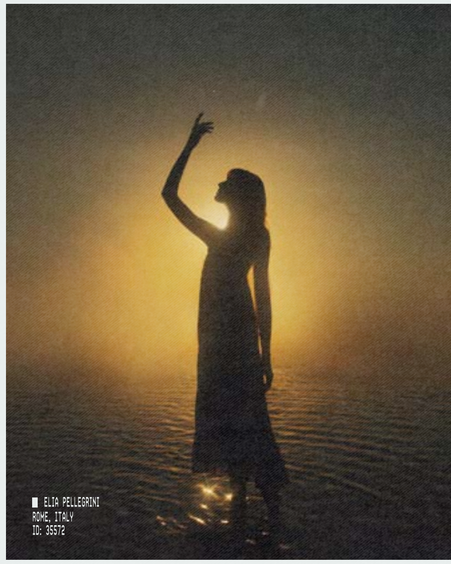
This trend has been hiding in plain sight, waiting for its time to shine. Blackletter typography is a central component of this trend. Whether sharp and geometric or fluid and calligraphic, it is the centerpiece. Symbolic icons like gargoyles, knights, and griffins serve as key visuals, often set in symmetrical, bordered layouts.

To go beyond obvious cues, add imagery to layouts. Layering detailed ornamentation over dark, textural imagery creates a new layer of depth, transforming a design from flat to emotionally rich.

As audiences grow tired of polished, tech-focused designs, this style carves a path for your work to stand out.

EXPLORE IMAGERY





ELIA PELLEGRINI
ROME, ITALY
ID: 497889

DANIEL ERNST
FRANKFURT, GERMANY
ID: 19935

RECONNECT AUDIENCES WITH SYMBOLISM AND STORY.

THE POWER OF THE TREND LIES IN HOW THIS FUSION PLAYS OUT WITHIN DESIGN: IT SURPRISES PEOPLE. IT FEELS FAMILIAR AND STRANGE AT THE SAME TIME.

THE KEY IS THE IMAGERY. WHEN THESE ORNATE DETAILS ARE PAIRED [illegible] PHOTO THAT CONVEY THE [illegible] THE DESIGN SNAPS INTO [illegible] RICHER.

CASEY MCCALLISTER
BOULDER, USA
ID: 415032

JERICHO PATRICK
LOS ANGELES, USA
ID: 345190

ELIA PELLEGRINI
ROME, ITALY
ID: 17631

DESIGN TREND
... FUTURE MEDIEL

TRU COLLECTIVE
NEW YORK CITY, USA
ID: 396105

ALEKSANDRA SKOWRON
CASAL MOINHO, PORTUGAL
ID: 411007

DESIGN TREND
SKATE/SURF

SKATE/SURF SHOP

THERE'S ONLY ONE RULE:
MAKE IT SHOUT.

What started as a quick and cheap way to create flyers has evolved into its own art form. Built with cutouts, tape, and copy textures, this loud design style is now a mainstream trend. Top brands use it to seem rebellious and anti-polish. Independent creators like Jesse Nyberg continue to push this style into the spotlight. It is character-rich and feels custom.

Of all design trends, this one adheres to one rule: make it shout. There is nothing subtle here. With bold colors and gritty textures, this style thrives on personality and chaos. Other styles require grids and structure, but this trend says, *"Screw your grids, I'll do what I want."*

Nothing is clean or polished; the messier, the better. It is a chaotic mix of photos, hand-drawn elements, scanner textures, and pops of color.

The skate/surf shop aesthetic brings fun back into the design world, challenging designers to explore a style free from a digital chokehold. Sure, key principles of design can help bring order to the chaos, but remember: this style is about rebellion, so don't be too rigid.

This style also thrives when your process goes analog. Print elements, assemble layouts, then scan them back in to add type and effects.

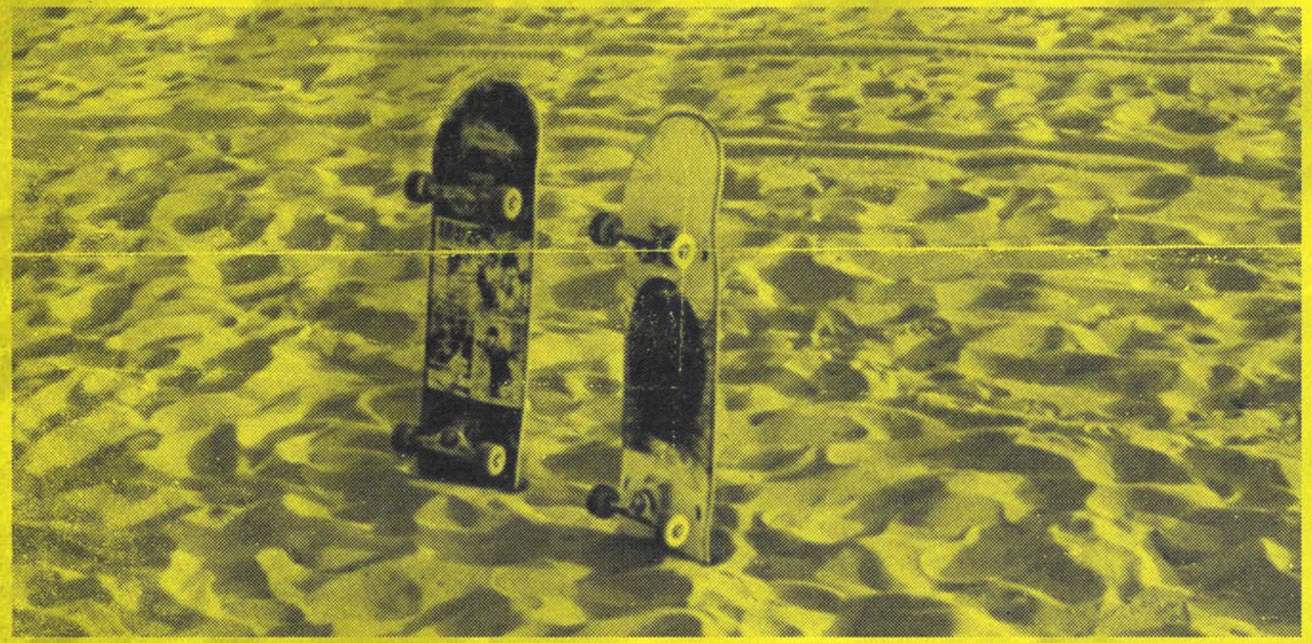
Images play a crucial role and are often halftoned to achieve a newsprint effect to effectively blend visuals. Overlays and blends fill a design with bold colors. When all these elements are combined, you'll end with a result that commands their attention.

EXPLORE IMAGERY

OMAR BELATTAR
BENGUERIR, MOROCCO
ID: 304613

FULLY CAPABLE HUMAN CREATIVE

WHAT YOU HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR



INSPIRATION

■ BEN STRANG
SANTA MONICA, USA
ID: 2228

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■ BEN STRANG
SANTA MONICA, USA
ID: 2228

■ BOBBY PRZYBYLSKI
SANTA ANA, USA
ID: 449076

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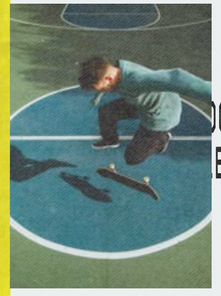
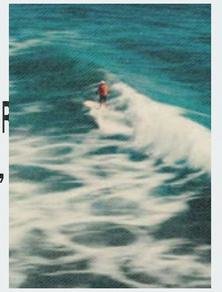
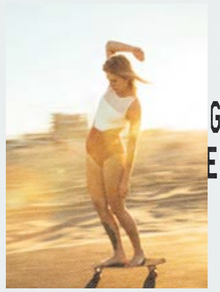
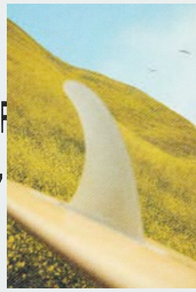
SANTA ANA, USA
ID: 449076









■ GRANT PUCKETT
LOS ANGELES, USA
ID: 13606

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■ GRANT PUCKETT
LOS ANGELES, USA
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■ JEREMY BISHOP
SAN LUIS OBISPO, USA

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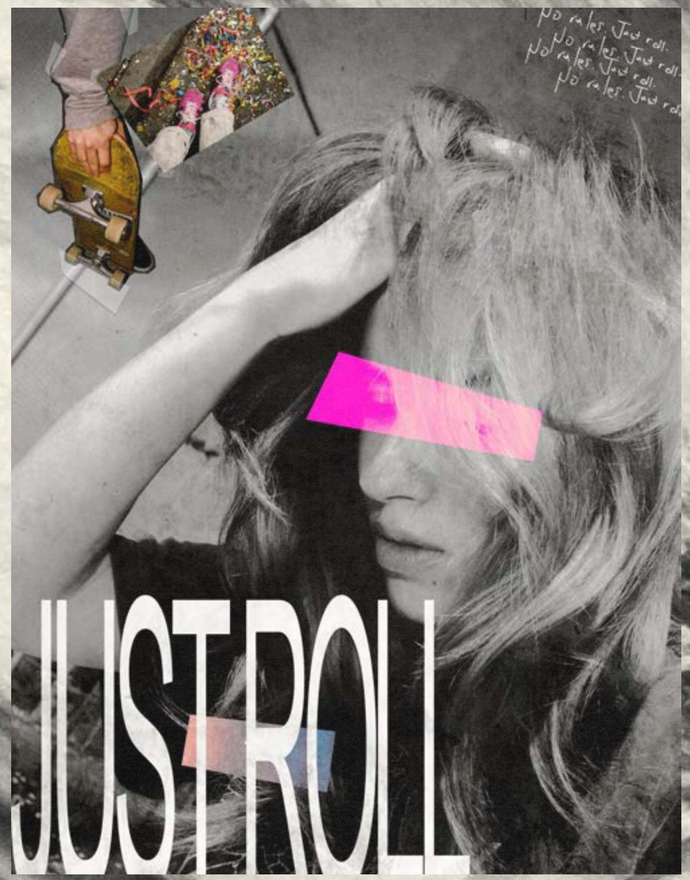
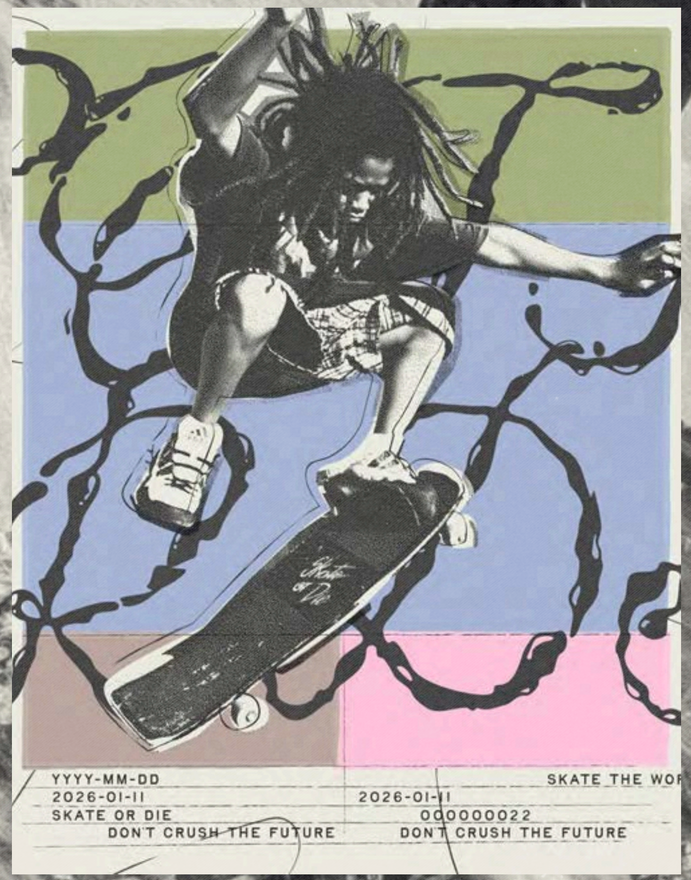
■ JEREMY BISHOP
SAN LUIS OBISPO, USA





ID: 30990
ELIA PELLEGRINI

SCRIBBLES

BLUR THE LINE BETWEEN ART AND DESIGN IN THE BEST WAY.

This year's design work demands the human touch. A piece that showcases your crafted final product. From idea to execution, you added something, and this trend is the fastest path to making this happen.

Designers, artists, and creatives have been painting, scribbling, and doodling over images for decades, but this resurgence is more fine art than product. You can embrace the mistakes and happy accidents that come with really painting or drawing over images.

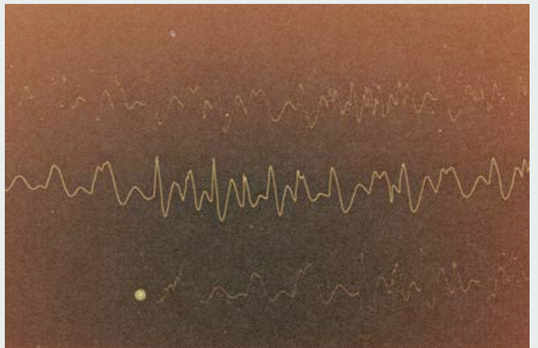
But don't attempt this digitally. Yes, current tools allow you to create this style, but do it by hand.

Those little texture notes and imperfections will show through like an artist's hand. Instantly, audiences connect because they can tell the craft and intention of the work.

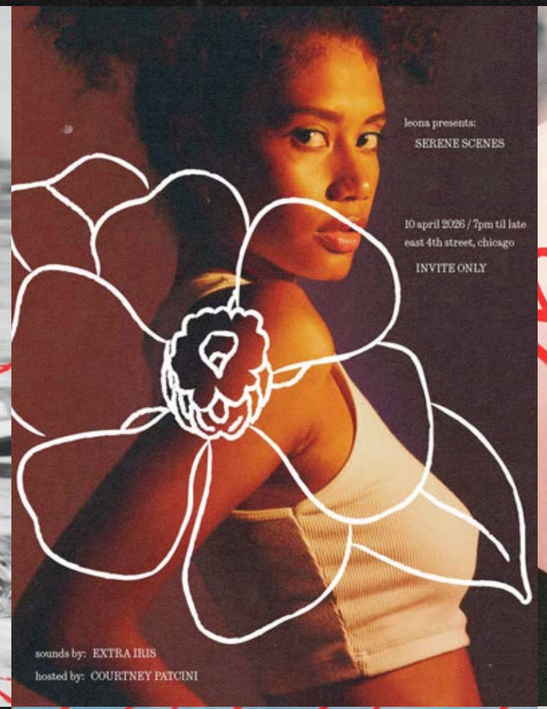
As for imagery selected for this mixed-media style, the floor is yours. But consider color balance and contrast. Often, the visual effects of tension or comfort that correct color usage are overlooked. The second is contrast. This style allows for subtle, soft tones that blend in or bold and bright decisions that really stand out. Both have a seat at this table; just make sure you know who the table is for.

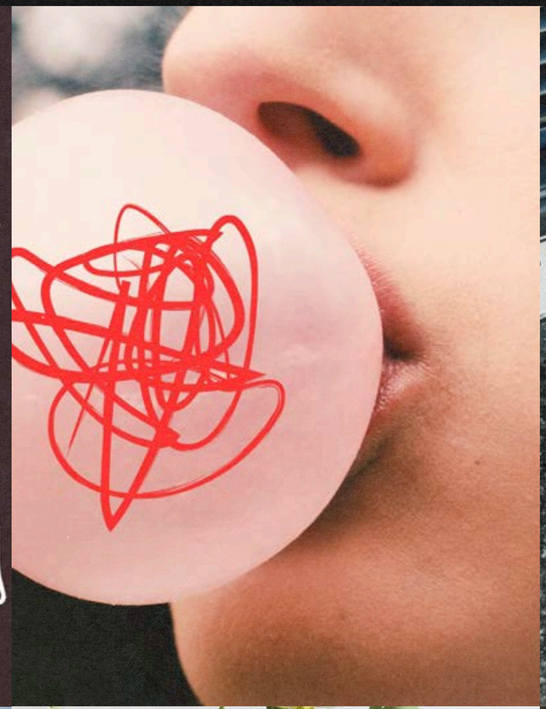
Like other trends in this report, this style feels like it screams humanity, but on a deeper level, it's art. This blurs the line between art and design in the best way – the way that causes people to take pause, look, and spend time with your work.

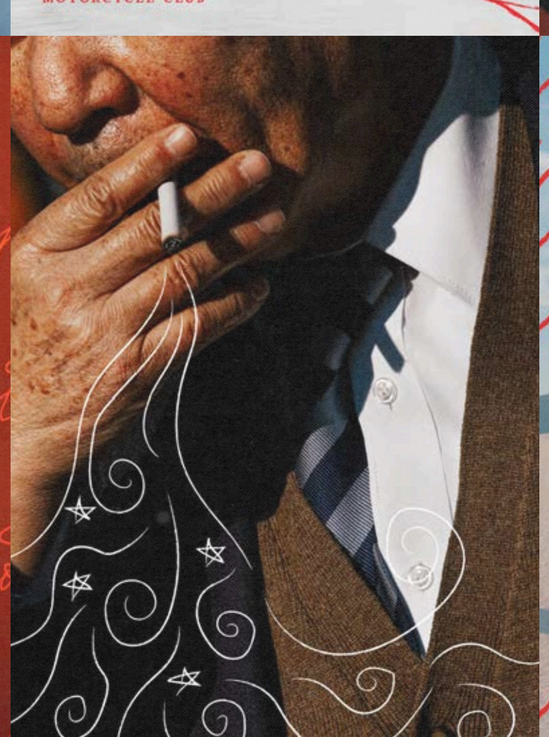
EXPLORE IMAGERY

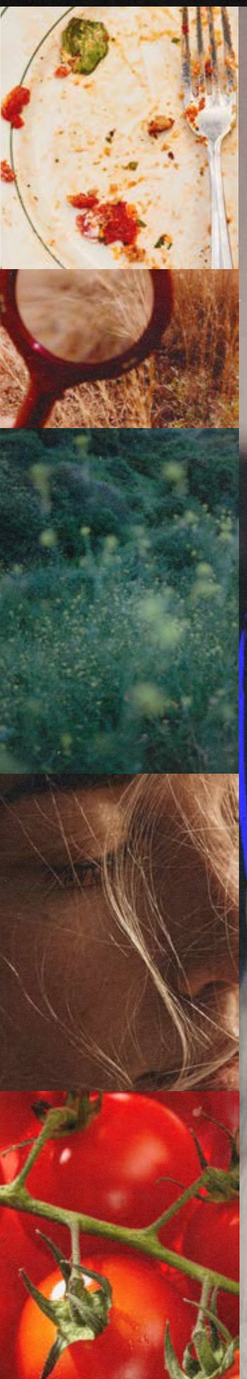


UNKNOWN LEGEND
MOTORCYCLE CLUB


leona presents:
SERENE SCENES
10 april 2026 / 7pm til late
east 4th street, chicago
INVITE ONLY
sounds by: EXTRA IRIS
hosted by: COURTNEY PATCINI







this one!

"So It Goes"
STORIES FROM
THE MEDDITERANEAN
"SO IT GOES"
WRITTEN AND
PRESENTED BY
ISABELLA COLATOSTI
"SO IT GOES"
WRITTEN AND
PRESENTED BY
ISABELLA COLATOSTI
"SO IT GOES"
WRITTEN AND
PRESENTED BY
ISABELLA COLATOSTI
"SO IT GOES"
"SO IT GOES"

INDEX/CATALOG

INVITE THEM TO BROWSE, LINGER, AND DISCOVER.

Think of the index/catalog aesthetic as curated order: a layout that invites the viewer to browse, linger, and discover.

This design style creates impact by showing how images relate. A product, a texture, a detail, a portrait – each element claims space, yet the page stays connected, and each layout forms a whole from smaller components. Whether the work tells a story or highlights images to craft a feeling, your image arrangement clarifies connections.

Order brings clarity. Images add personality. Whether you lock your layout to a grid or let it flow, this style enables you to curate, arrange, and showcase ideas at once.

So let your curation and taste take center stage. When it comes to style, there is no one rule to follow here. Images are often cut out from their original backgrounds. The key visuals arranged on the page build a larger narrative. They are typically placed on a solid background. This reduces distractions for the viewer.

Part catalog, part collage, this trend enables viewers to find calm and understanding in the structured presentation. The world feels chaotic and overwhelming, and this trend makes complex visual ideas easier to absorb, offering viewers a way to find peace in the arrangement and order of imagery.

EXPLORE IMAGERY

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WHETHER THE WORK TELLS A STO
OR HIGHLIGHTS IMAGES TO CRAFT
FEELING, YOUR IMAGE ARRANGEME
CLARIFIES CONNECTIONS.

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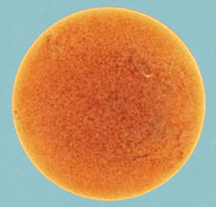

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"AI MAKES VOLUME EASY, BUT TASTE MAKES IMPACT."

JASON MURRAY, ART DIRECTOR

ONYX

Onyx is an activewear brand built for strength, movement, and everyday confidence. Inspired by the grounding energy and resilience of the onyx stone, our pieces are thoughtfully designed to support you through every phase of your day from intense workouts to slow mornings and everything in between. We believe activewear should feel as good as it looks, blending performance, comfort, and style without compromise. Every detail is intentional, from the fit and fabric to the way each piece moves with your body. Onyx exists for those who show up for themselves, embrace their power, and move through life with purpose. This is more than clothing; it's a reminder of your strength, your presence, and your ability to evolve. Onyx empowers you to feel grounded, confident, and unstoppable no matter where your day takes you.

Design is emotional. People feel your work before they understand it. And nothing shapes that first moment more than the imagery you choose.

The right image gives a layout weight, clarity, and personality. It sets the tone before the type speaks. It pulls the viewer in and tells them what kind of world they're stepping into. When imagery feels real – textured, human, intentional – the entire design takes on that honesty. Audiences trust what feels authentic. They move toward work that feels grounded instead of manufactured.

This year's trends push design toward more presence and more personality: louder color, richer texture, stranger compositions, bolder ideas. But the constant running through all of them is imagery. Designers reach for visuals that help them connect with people – visuals that make the work feel crafted, not automated.

As you move forward, lean into imagery that makes you feel something. Choose photos that add friction, softness, warmth, grit – whatever the concept needs. Let the picture lead the emotion, and let the design build around it.

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PEOPLE SEE IT BEFORE THEY READ IT. MAKE THAT FIRST MOMENT COUNT.