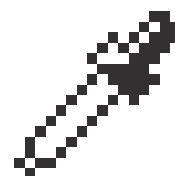


WEB COLOR GUIDE





KIRILL BRUSILOVSKY

# WEB COLOR GUIDE

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At the beginning of my designer career, an incident happened, which I remember until today. As I was working on a screen design, an older and more experienced colleague of mine, an art director looked over my shoulder and said: “Kirill, don’t you see that these two colors in the background just don’t fit together?” He was arrogant as most designers are, but I had a feeling, he was right this time. The truth was that I did not know, what is “right”, my choice of color was absolutely arbitrary, and it was easy to make me unsure. That was the reason for me to study design. My aim was to be sure about what I am doing, not out of arrogance, but out of knowledge.

Although the studying has given me a lot, actually the opposite of my expectations has come: I was taught, that in design there are no such things as wrong or right, that the creative process is always one with an unknown result – otherwise the design job is actually already done. Of course we had to paint color wheels, but there came no further explanation.

I had the impression that the numerous books about color theory haven’t brought me much further in the sense, that they did not help to make a deliberate and reasonable color decision, starting every new design project. The information from psychological studies, published in most books on this theme, say that red is a color of blood and has an aggressive or erotic influence or that violet stands for fantasy and dreams, and green for nature, and blue for calmness – all that was reasonable and important, but actually barely useful in concrete design situations.

The color harmony theories seem useful at the first glance and must definitely belong to the basic knowledge of a professional designer, but... Must a good design necessarily be harmonious? Is harmonious color combination universally good? Color harmony is a science and thus eternal. So, it does not give any clue about contemporary trends or regional cultural differences. The very same color composition may look well in Japan and would be barely acceptable

in Europe. It may look cool now, but would become “out”, when copied by everybody. Colors which are good for a bank would probably be not satisfactory for an entertainment site for kids.

In the past there was no color freedom. For many centuries it was a question of money and even power. Some painting and textile colors were extremely expensive and thus reserved for their unique purposes. Even in the 20th century using colors for print was a luxury until the last decades of the century. Even nowadays achieving certain print tones can be possible only using expensive additional solid colors. Web designers were restricted until the last years by a web palette which allowed only poor color choice. Luckily technical development made it obsolete. Nowadays every web and screen designer can and must choose out of 16.7 Millions of color tones. Many take away their own freedom, fixing on very few “favorite” colors.

My aim is to analyze modern color trends, in the context of their use. Probably my experience will to a great extend be personal and subjective. I have made the following research for myself, but I am also addressing designer colleagues, who are usually in love with one specific style, their style, accepting nothing else.

Kirill Brusilovsky  
*Düsseldorf, 2003*





The background of the image is a solid dark red color. Overlaid on this background are several stylized, flame-like shapes in a lighter shade of red. These shapes are abstract and organic, resembling fire or liquid fire. They are positioned primarily on the right side of the image, with some extending towards the center. The overall effect is a sense of heat and intensity.

**RED AND ORANGE**



## RED AND ORANGE



Red is actually not a trendy color. It's not because it is not "in", but because this basic color will never be out. Even if it's not your favorite color, you should know that there are a lot of people, who like it. However, we don't see red sites that often.

Perhaps it is so, because red background is very emotional and aggressive. Combination with black amplifies its impact. If you add bold sans-serif type, you will get a typical propaganda impression. Drawing attention this way may be seen as annoying.





BASELINE.NU



TOORMIX.COM



CELOTTI CONSULTING  
PRO SIEBEN



THEHORUSPROJECT

DHKY.COM



## NOBLE

Primary red, especially, combined with white backgrounds and other bright colors, can also achieve a bit cheap impression. If that is your goal – fine. If you want to have a more noble touch, you might experiment with darkening the red tone to bordeaux or leather red-brown. Dark red is much calmer than primary red and it makes it suitable as a good background for white text.

Darkening orange and yellow is much more trickier than red, because you won't get "dark orange" or "dark yellow", but rather a completely different color instead (mixing black to orange would make brown and mixing black to yellow would make, well... quite a wide palette of colors, which you would doubtfully like to use in most cases).

On the contrary yellow and especially orange tints are easier to handle, than the red ones. Red mixed with white will create rose tones, which creates actually an opposite mood to red.

## WARM



## COZY



MANDCHOU

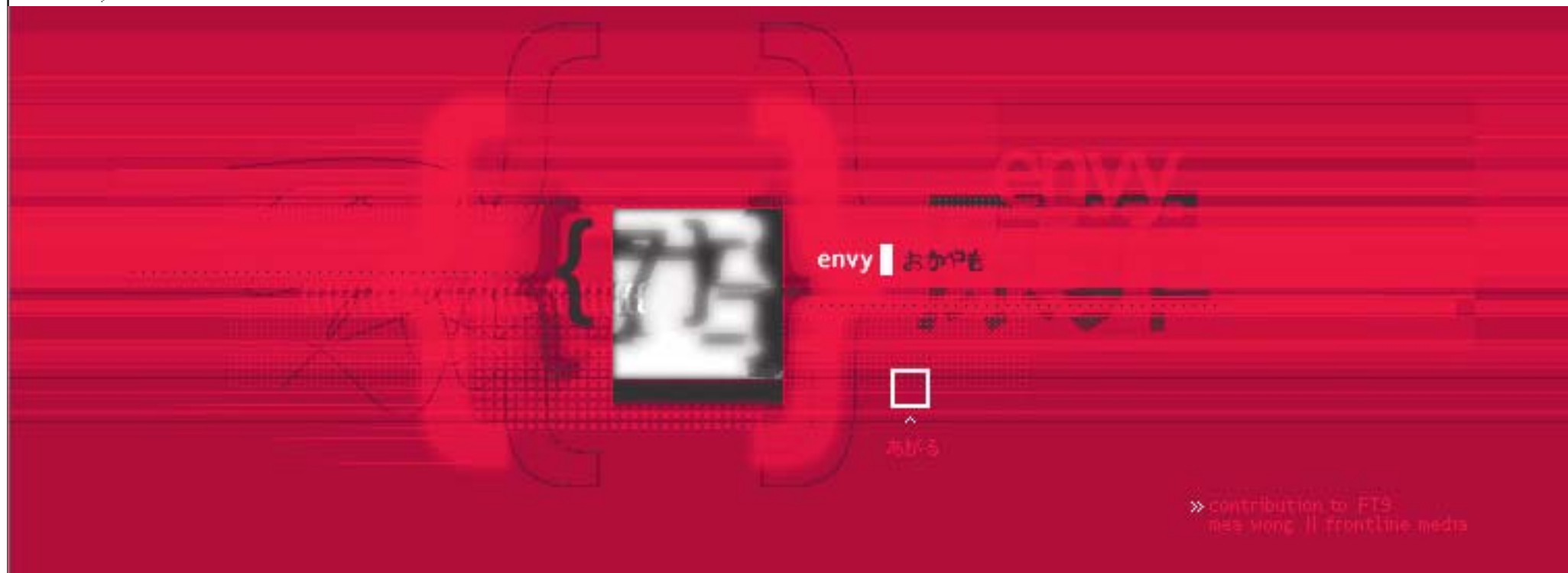


SOFLY DESIGNS



PERISCOPE

ENVY, MEA WONG



HOT

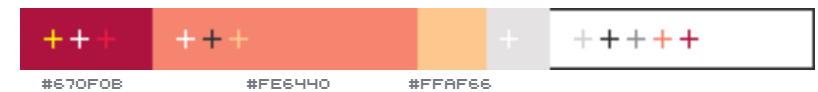
EXTRAUVAGANT

EXTRAVERT

BRAGGING

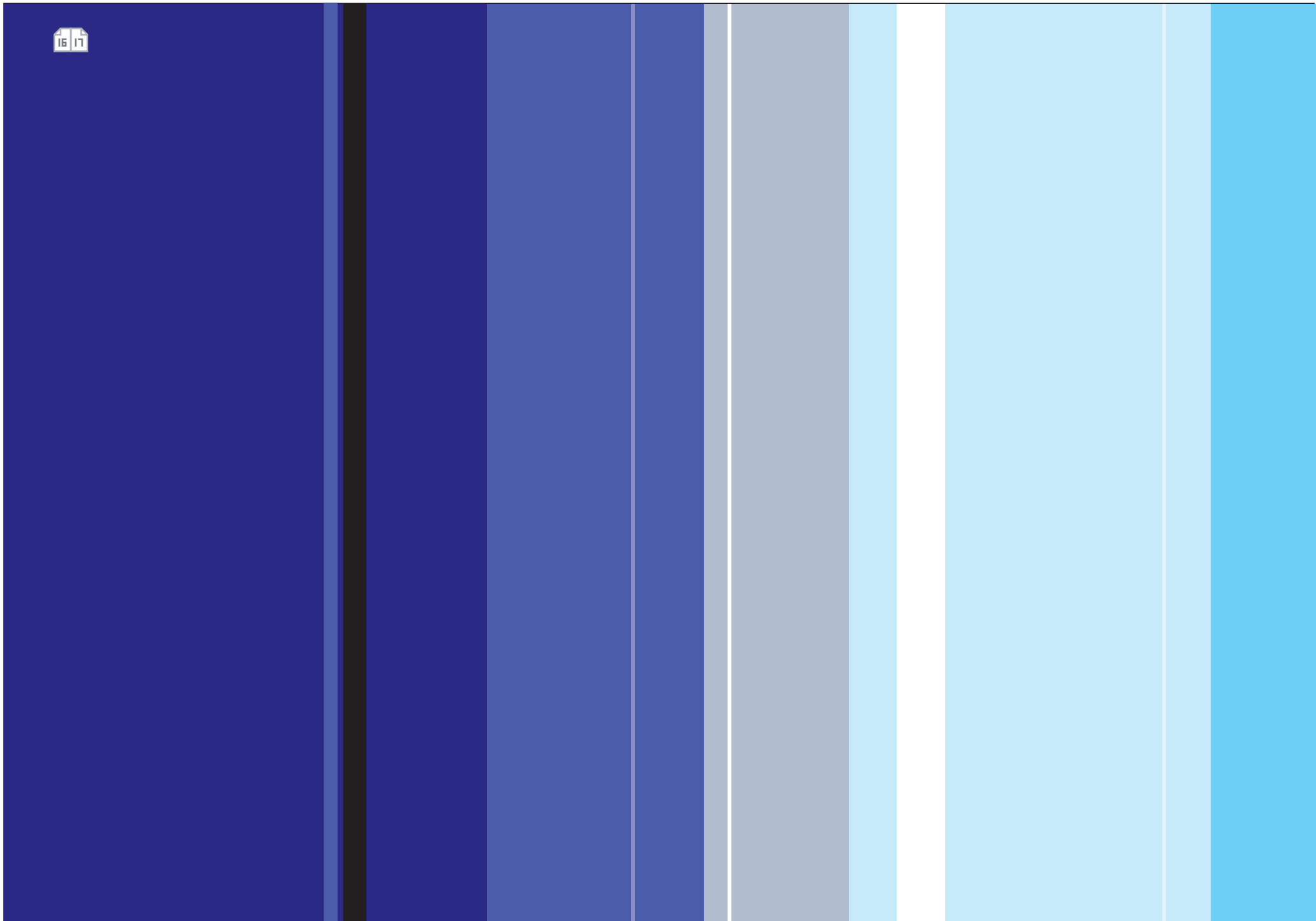
Have you ever seen amateur websites with orange backgrounds? I would bet for “no”. The reason might be that it is disliked by many people and is almost never a favorite color. Orange is something for designers and advertisers, only they may feel comfortable with it. Orange is bragging, extravert and artificial. An orange site would suggest openness, happiness, vitality, innovation and, most of all a designer’s courage.

Bright red, orange and yellow can be well combined, creating a warm, positive mood. Adding white to this combination would create a more formal look. Often orange is combined with grey.



HAPPY





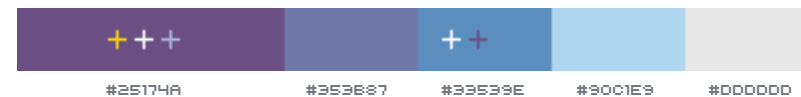


BLUE AND CYAN





Statistically, blue is named more often “a favorite color” than any other color. Out of all blue hues, the clear primary blue and its shades appear most conservative. Adding some orange areas would underline the conservative touch. Moving towards cyan and getting lighter, on the contrary, would make a design to look modern, even quite modish. Dark blue makes a calmer background than saturated normal blue and cyan. Choose the one or the other, depending on whatever effect is needed.



Lightening blue by mixing it with white may often become a problem because the blue tints would create “baby blue” (Of course, it might be a good choice, if you are designing a site for Pampers®). Especially if the blue tint has much of red amount, you probably won’t find the tone very attractive. If, by chance, you have to brighten blue (if, for example, placing half transparent white frames under the text is still your favorite effect) choose the blue, which is closer to cyan.

TRUSTWORTHY



BLASTRADIUS

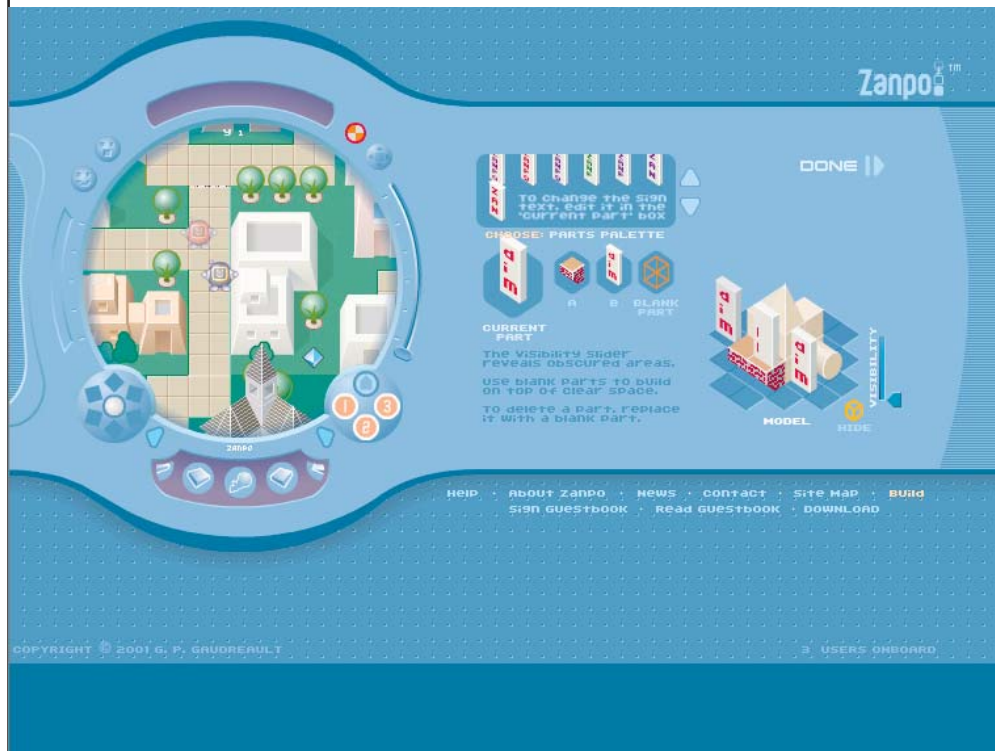


ALLIANZ



DEUTSCHE BANK

ZANPO



ITCAT MEDIA





COOL

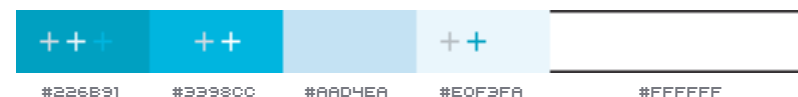
DYNAMIC

FRESH

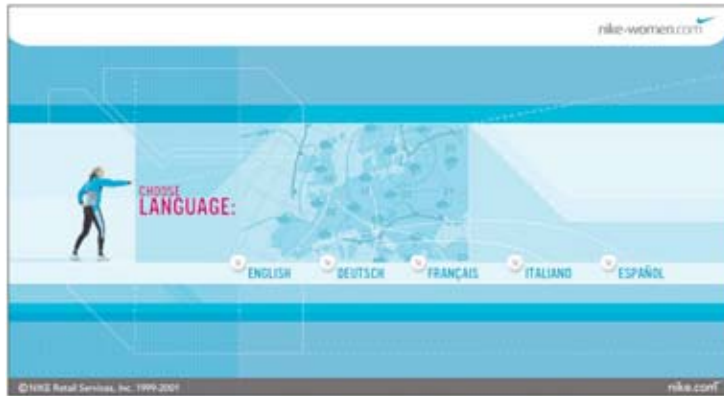
Taking some saturation out of blue would create a less shouting blue-grey or cold grey tone. Darker colors would create a bit cold and dim mood.

Especially calm and peaceful mood is reached, when blue is combined with white. Darker blue will make the combination look heavier, pale blue and cyan (if it is not oversaturated) would create a peaceful and calm mood.

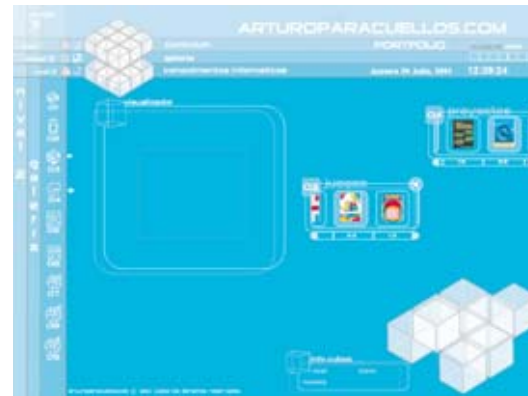
Blue is conservative, and yet modern. Because blue stands for trustworthy, faith and reliability and has almost no negative associations, it is well suitable for serious businesses. Cyan is, on the contrary, rather trendy, fresh and more extravagant than blue. It is a good choice for younger public.



YOUNG



NIKE WOMEN



ARTURO PARACUELLOS

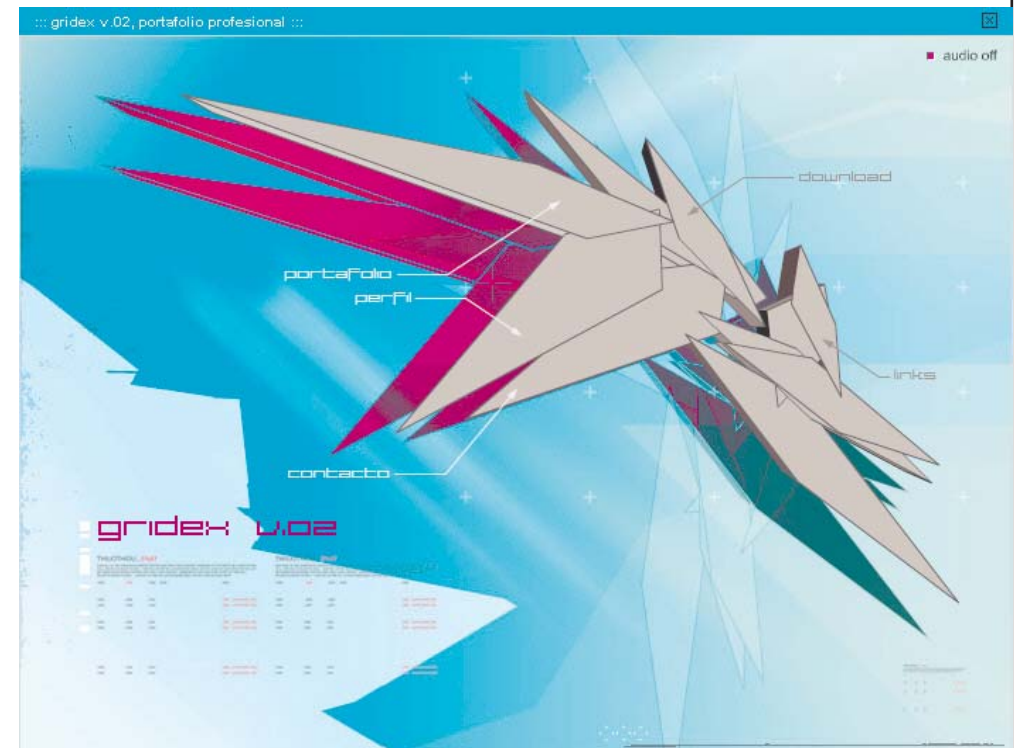


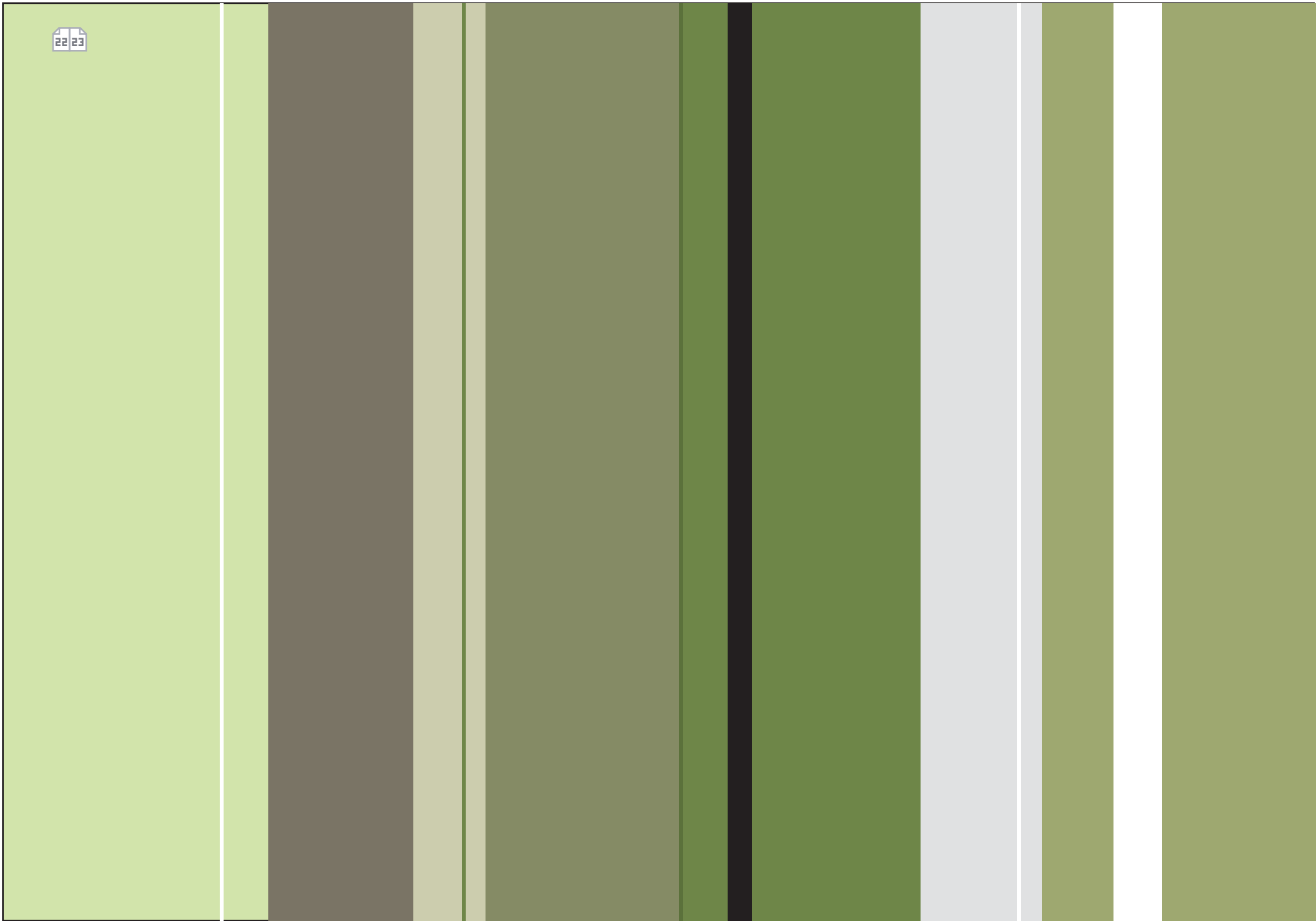
DIGIT

DESIGNGRAPHIK



GRIDEX





# SHADES OF GREEN







ORGANIC

ACIDIC

Green color is one of the most controversé – slight tone changes lead to complete interpretation change: from peaceful to military, from healthy to poisonous, and from natural to artificial...

Primary green tone is associated with nature and natural, but dissolved with white it looks more and more synthetic and especially combined with grey can fit well to provide a feeling of hi-tec. Combined with grey, green is often seen in techno designs.

Adding black and desaturating the warm green would produce olive or khaki, which may provide a bit military touch. These tones will not anymore provide the feeling of freshness, as saturated greens do.



POISONOUS

CALM





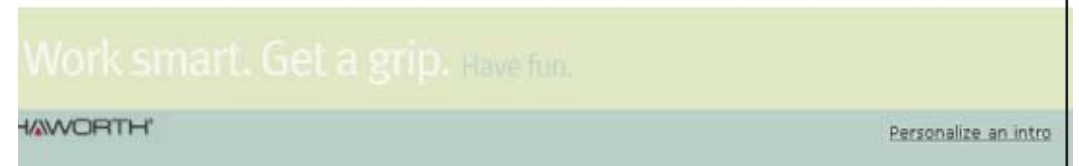
URBANATURAL



BLACKBOX

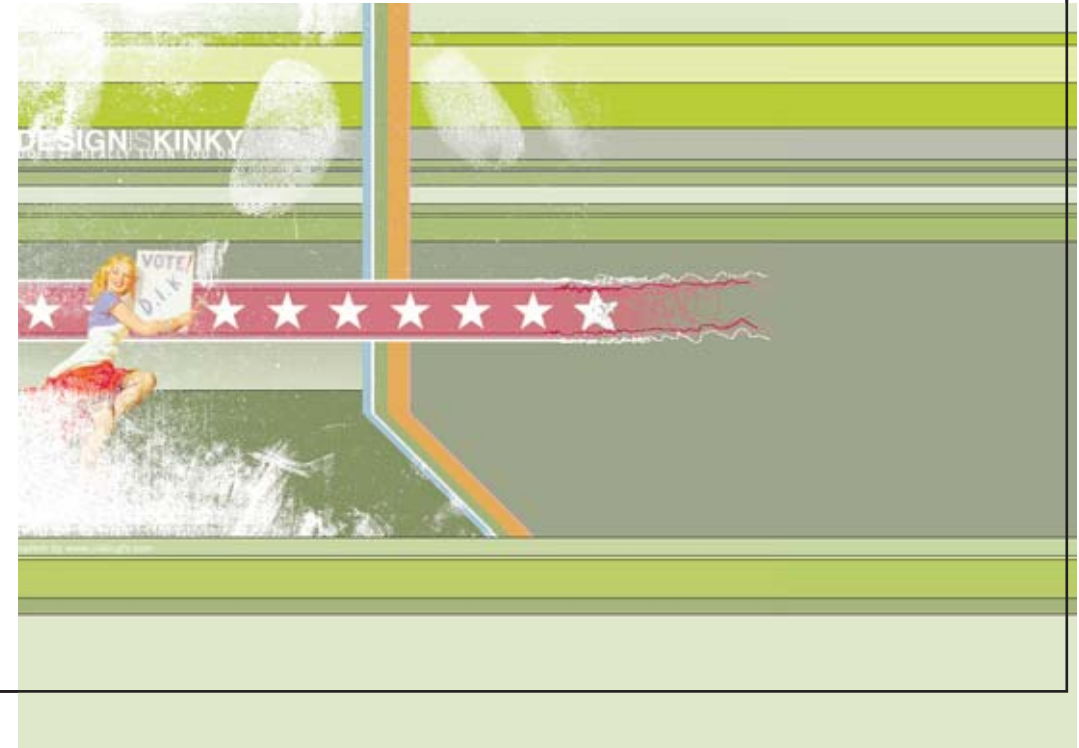


HIRES



MOTHERBOARD

DESIGN IS KINKY





## NATURAL

Oversaturated, fluorescent green, especially underlined with black background would look rather artificial and poisonous (Remember the poisonous gas in all these action movies?).

Clear, saturated green is irritating, if used as a text background. Dark green is much calmer and is better suitable. Light and less saturated greens may also be used.

The combination of green with blue and white would look balanced and conservative, associating the silence, peace and confidence. As you see, probably a good choice for a boring client, wishing to create a serious, trustworthy image.

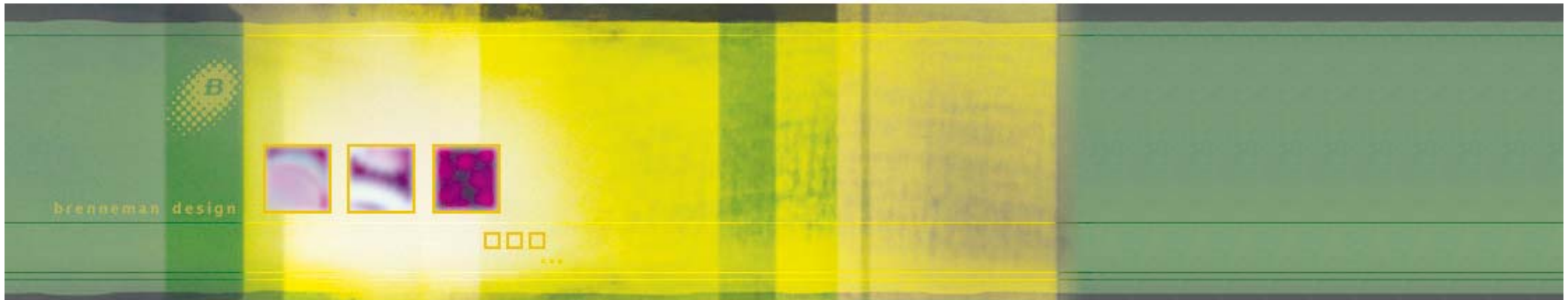
The combination of red and green is nothing but irritating – I always ask myself, if people, who use it are confident of it.

## CALM



## UNRIPE

## SIMPLE

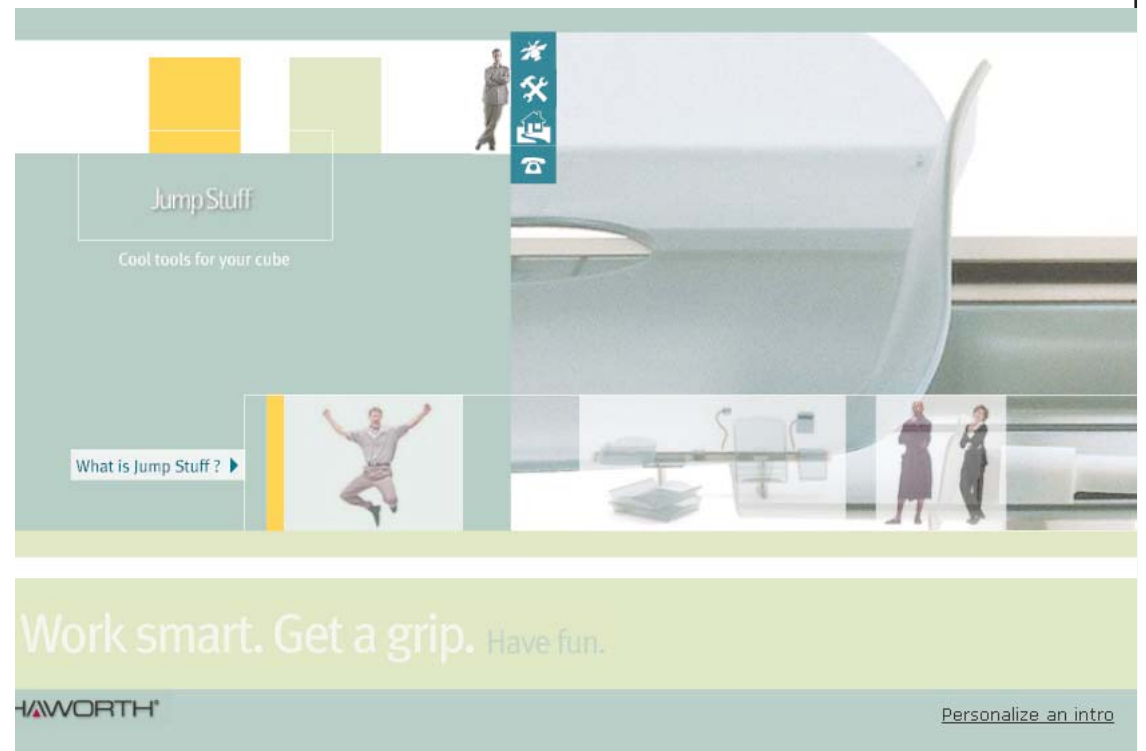


BRENNEMAN DESIGN

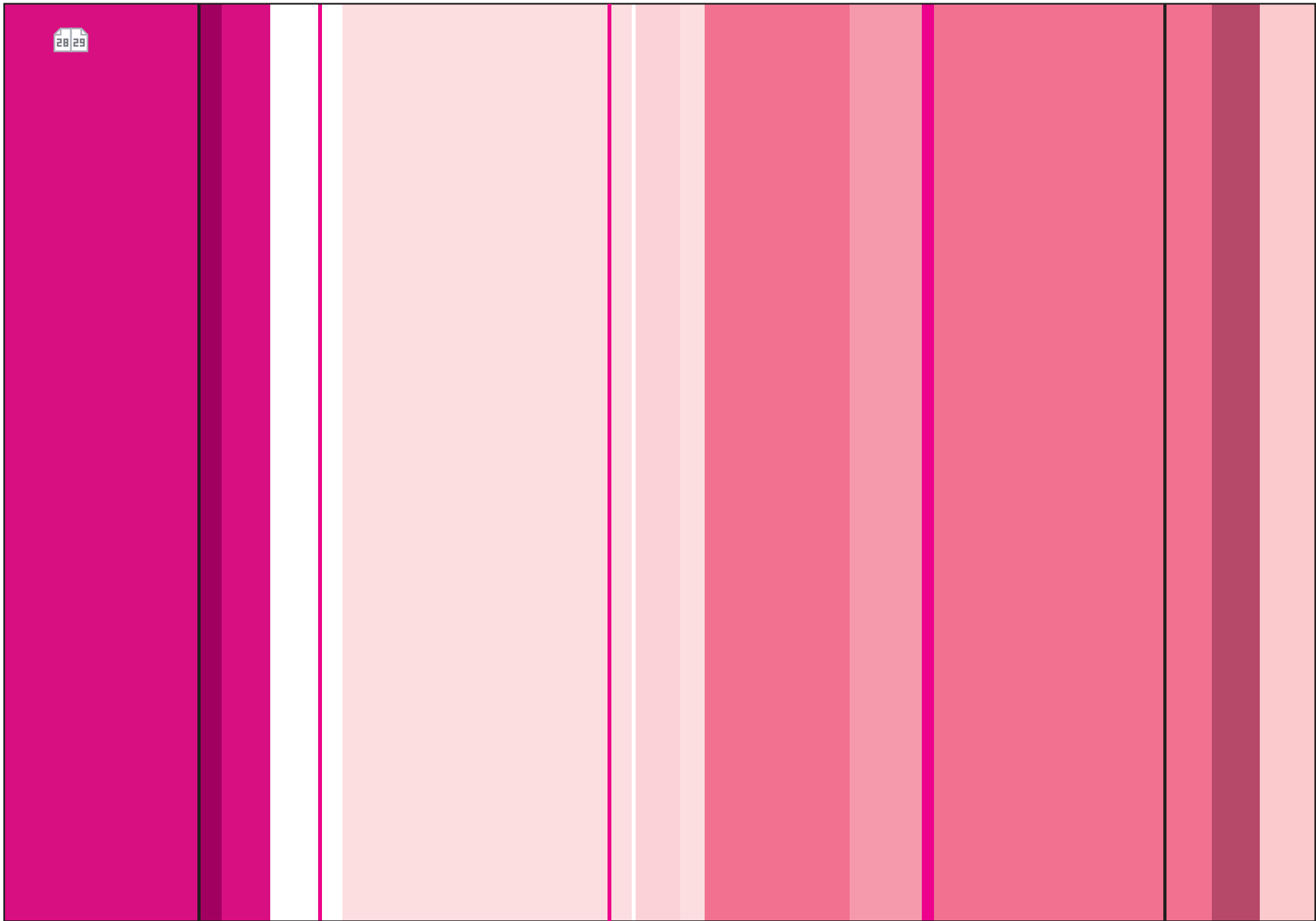
AVOCADOLITE



MOTHERBOARD



28 29



**PINK AND MAGENTA**





SOFT

FEMININE

SEXY

Pink stands for softness, friendliness, charm and other typical qualities of “the gentle sex”. It fits well to all kinds of themes connected with femininity. Variations of pink are also seen time to time on designers’ sites, especially preferred by feminine designers.

Pink and Magenta, combined with other fluorescent tones such as yellow and cyan were a big trend in the eighties. This trend has disappeared from the fashion in the nineties, but has continued on print and on screen. One of the reasons could be that Magenta, as well as Cyan and Yellow are the basic print tones and are also a part of a system palette on PC.

Only the few know, that pink was not always considered feminine – until the beginning of the XXth century it was a typical boys’ color.



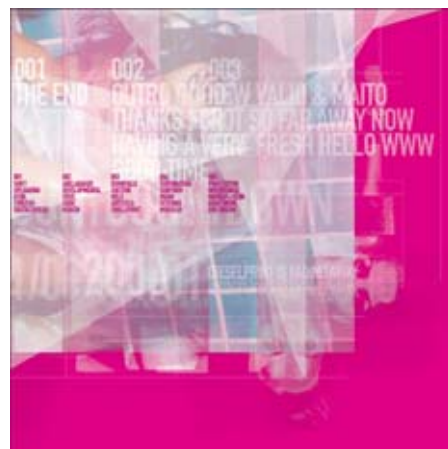
SWEET

GAY





SINCRETIC MEDIALABS



DIESELPRINT

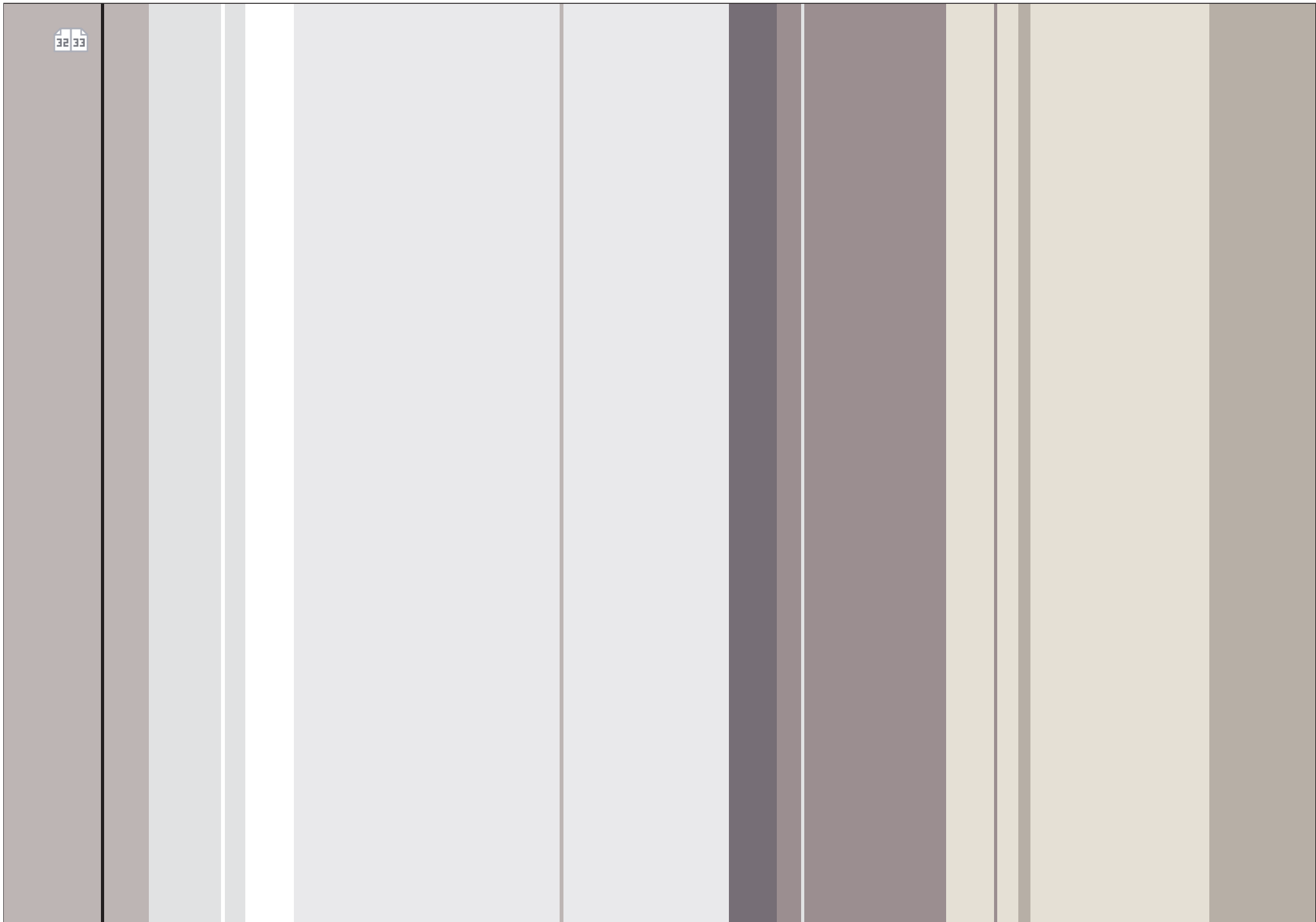
MISSPATO



M8TRIX

HALFPROJECT









# NEUTRAL COLORS



TECHNICAL

HARD

METALLIC

Nowadays color is not luxury even on paper. Especially on the screen, the true extravagance lays in reducing the coloriness.

Strictly speaking, “neutral” color is the tone, which does not reflect any single wave-length on the spectrum. Neutrals create only effects of darkness or lightness as in black, white or grey. When talking about neutral color palette, I also mean using colors with reduced saturation. Neutral palette may consist of cold and warm grays, brown, beige, sand, ivory and other tones.



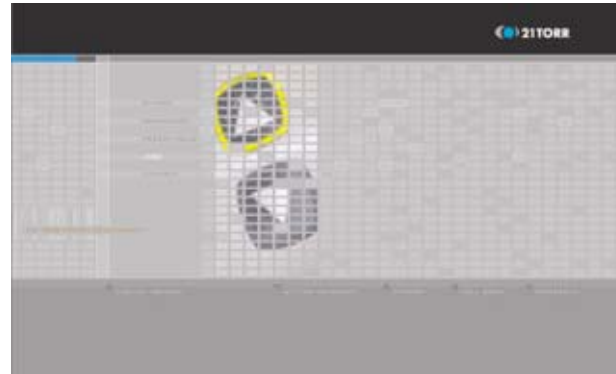
SOPHISTICATED

SIMPLE

DULL



HEAD-SPACE

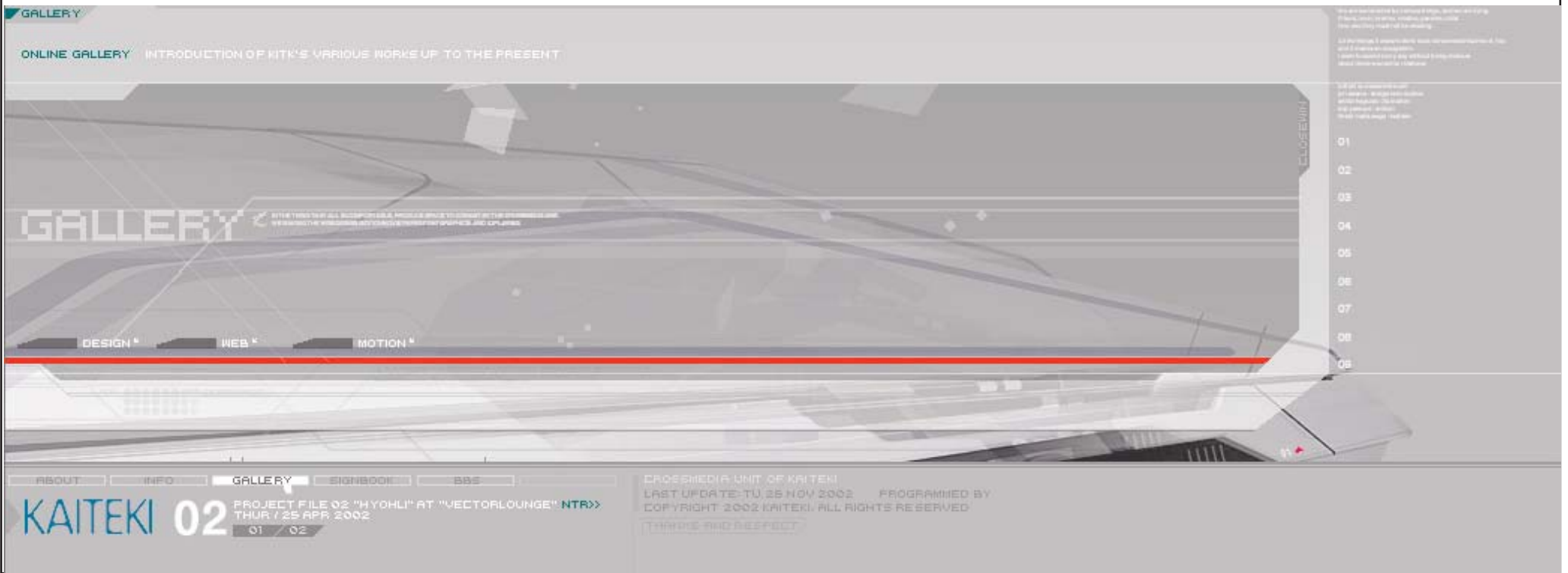


21 TORR



STE7130

## KAITEKI





SHARP

COOL

VALUABLE

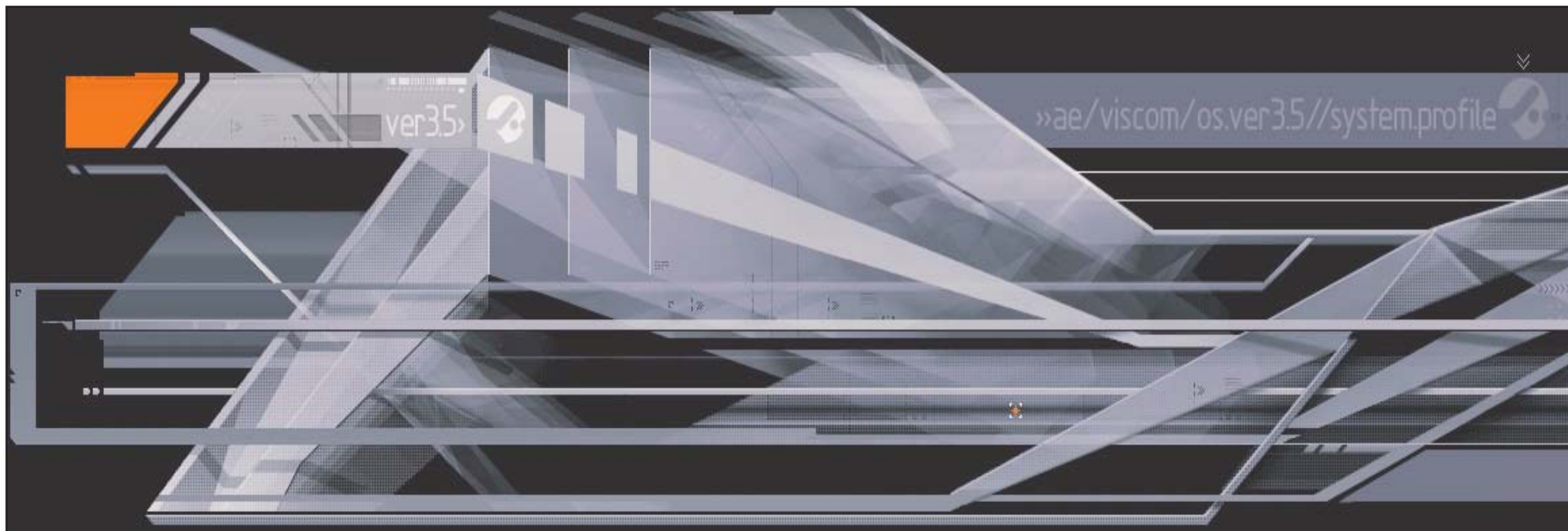
TECHNICAL

Although grey and beige are often described as conservative, sad and dull, especially on the screen, neutral color combinations seem modern and sophisticated. The trick is instead of using the pure grey, to use its warm or cold shades. On the neutral mouse grey sticks the modest image of the older browser generations, where grey was a standard background color.

Colder tones would provide a modern, technological and futuristic touch, probably because they are associated with a coolness of glass and metal. On the screen, cold grey gets the attributes of silver, and also stands for value. In a cold RGB grey, the amount of blue is slightly greater than the amount of red.



FAR



PERIFORM

2ADVANCED



PRAYSTATION



PEUGEOT





## NEUTRAL COLORS

NOBLE

FINE

CONSERVATIVE

Warmer neutrals would generate a warmer and softer atmosphere, a feeling of something fine and noble. A warmer RGB tone is created by taking equal RGB values and then slightly increasing (not necessarily equally) the amounts of Red and Green.

Combining cold and warm tones requires much sensitivity, while using tints and shades of a single color (monochromatic palette) is the least complicated and is often sufficient.

Light neutral colors are well suitable as backgrounds for all kinds of serious and sophisticated presentations. They also have an advantage over using a white background: you can use white to subtly highlight important elements, such as buttons.



SLOW

CLOSE



The screenshot displays the KIMOTION software interface. On the left, a sidebar contains a file browser with a grid of icons, a text box labeled "BITTE AUSWAHLEN", and an "AUDIO" section with a volume slider and a speaker icon. The main workspace is a 3D perspective view of a white table with a grid, featuring three gray document icons. At the bottom, a navigation bar includes icons for different views and a button labeled "news & stories". The KIMOTION logo and "new media design" tagline are in the bottom right corner.





GREY PLUS X



## UNEXPECTED

## FUTURISTIC

Grey background combined with saturated yellow, green or orange creates a modern look with a bit of technological touch.

Combined with red, grey provides a touch of modesty and seriousness. Red Elements may be used for underlining important elements and guiding user's attention. Combination of red with grey is calmer and less aggressive than with black.

The combination of grey with blue, often darkened or desaturated used to be for a long time the first choice of web designers, storming the "cool pages" lists, and becoming a mainstream. But it does not leave too many possibilities to look original.

Using grey with only one additional color may also be especially recommended for beginners, because, at least concerning colors, there is not much false, that can be done.



## MODEST



ESTUDIO



KINGBRAND



JUNG VON MATT

HONDA-MOTOR

QUALITY COMES STANDART.  
PROVEN PERFORMANCE.

новости  
о компании  
почему мы?  
специальные предложения  
где купить?  
приглашаем к сотрудничеству  
faq  
форум  
свяжитесь с нами

каталог продукции

автомобильная электростанция

водные насосы

газонокосилки

мотокультиваторы

мотороборочные агрегаты

моторные моторы

генераторы

специальные предложения

10-10-2002 Скидки на цены

В салонах компании "Асена Моторс" снижены цены на весь модельный ряд снегоочистителей!

01-10-2002 Специальные осенние цены

В наших салонах с 1 октября 2002 г. действуют специальные осенние цены на мотокультиваторы, мотопомпы и на электромеханические газонокосилки.

21-05-2002 Специальное предложение

Снижена цена на генераторы EC 2100 NEW и EC 2200.

23-04-2002 Новая цена!

Теперь самая популярная модель генератора EM 4500 SIK/3/CL стала доступна - новая цена 1990\$.

22-04-2002 Новая модель мотокультиватора

Поступила в продажу новая модель мотокультиватора F220.

Copyright (c) 2001. Honda Power Equipment | Developed by RSC SOFT

Участник  
Bamber's  
TOP  
мото  
945 100  
4 21  
72



**BLACK AND DARK**





## BLACK AND DARK

EVIL

DEPRESSING

UNDERGROUND

Black things are often expensive. Many people, especially designers find black things cool: black cars, black clothing... Black is never out of trend.

On the screen black usually has quite an opposite effect: sites with black or extremely dark backgrounds are usually the domain of hackers, porno-sites, Satanists, and other suicidally endangered species. Often it is used for amateur private sites. There are some rare exceptions, but they rather prove the rule.

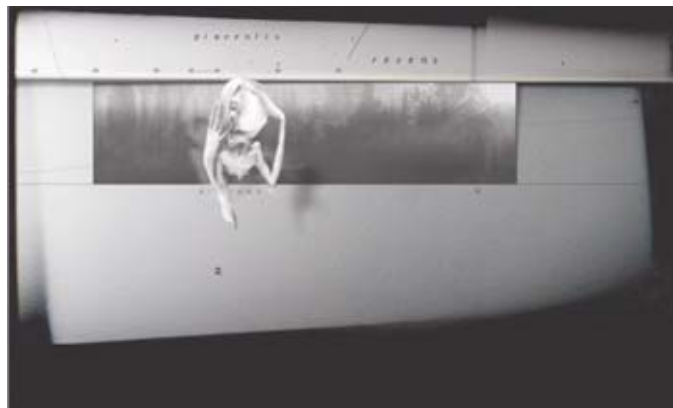
For a serious presentation black can usually only be used as a background for pictures, to make them appear brighter.



DANGEROUS



MY PET SKELETON



CONCLAVE OBSCURUM



WES BENSCOTER



BRITTLE BONES

KILFISH



