ATELIER CHEAT SHEET

Seeing: contrast, hierarchy, space

- **Contrast** = the difference in colour, brightness or size that makes an object stand out. Bigger, darker or higher-contrast elements carry more visual weight (NN/g, screen UX – applied to print: our transfer).
- **Hierarchy:** no more than 3 sizes – small, medium, large · the most important element is the biggest · at most 2 big elements.
- **White space:** more space around an element = its own group, more attention. Empty space is not wasted space. **Figure and ground:** one clear shape on a calm ground – your focal point.
- **Squint test:** narrow your eyes – details go, composition and hierarchy stay.

How the eye groups

Proximity	close together = one group; can overpower colour or shape
Similarity	shared trait (colour, shape, size, bold or italic) looks related; often overpowered by proximity or common region
Common region	inside a border or on a shared background = a group; can overpower proximity and similarity

Borders added "in an abundance of caution" make a design busy – first try space. Content within columns, never in gutters. A palette of just two colours creates balance and supports hierarchy (NN/g).

Free: Inkscape 1.3 Align and Distribute (Shift+Ctrl+A), Clone (Alt+D) · Krita 5.3 View ▸ Show Rulers / Show Guides · Photopea View - Show - Grid, View - Snap. **Paid:** InDesign (subscription).

Balance & reading path

Symmetry "quiet and static", asymmetry "dynamic and engaging"; radial balance always leads the eye to the centre – a record label is radial by nature (our observation). Hierarchy comes from contrast in value and saturation, not hue (NN/g) – so check without colour:

1. GIMP 3.0: duplicate, Colors ⟶ Desaturate ⟶ Desaturate…, mode Luminance.
2. Filters ⟶ Blur ⟶ Gaussian Blur…, raise Size X/Y step by step (NN/g, screen: 5 or 10 px showed the groups; print files need larger values – our suggestion).
3. Note what you see first, second, third. Wrong order ⟶ change size, value or space, not the hue.

Krita 5.3: a Filter Layer with Desaturate on top leaves the paint layers untouched; Ctrl+Shift+U changes the pixels.

Type: how many fonts, which job

Most documents take a second font, few a third, almost none four (Butterick). Mix only clearly different fonts, each with a fixed role, never inside a paragraph.

Artist name, title	all caps fine for less than one line; +5–12 % letterspacing, kerning on
Emphasis	bold or italic, never both, as little as possible; with a sans serif use bold; never underline in print
Alignment	centred text for short phrases and titles, sparingly

Wood-type poster feel, free (SIL OFL 1.1): **Rye** ("inspired by posters using wood type") · **Sancreek** (caps-only display) · **Old Standard TT** (small text – our choice).

Body text in numbers (Butterick)

Point size, print	10–12 pt
Line spacing	120–145 % of the size (10 pt ⟶ 12–14.5 pt, our calc.)
Line length	45–90 characters incl. spaces, or 2–3 alphabets
Caps letterspacing	+5–12 % (0.05–0.12 em) = 50–120 in Adobe's 1/1000 em (our calc.)

- Wider margins ⟶ shorter lines. Paragraphs: first-line indent of 1–4 × the point size *or* 4–10 pt space – not both. Justified text needs hyphenation.
- Kerning = specific pairs, tracking = selected text, both in 1/1000 em; Metrics (Auto) is the default, Optical for fonts with little or no kerning or mixed faces/sizes (Adobe). Keep kerning on (Butterick). GIMP 3.0 spacing is in pixels: caps at 100 px ⟶ +5 to 12 (our calc.).

Font licences

	SIL OFL 1.1 (FREE)	ADOBE FONTS (SUBSCRIPTION)
Cover, poster, T-shirt, logo	yes (OFL FAQ Q1.1), no extra permission	yes, also merch for sale, no limit on items
Font to the print shop	allowed with copyright notice and licence; never sold by itself	no – the printer needs its own licence
Embed in PDF	yes, full or subset (Q1.12)	yes; may be distributed regardless of subscription status
Limits	changed font: no Reserved Font Name without written permission	no changes to the files; no customer-text or single-glyph products

Your artwork stays yours (Q1.1.1), no credit required (Q1.1.2). A logo can be a trademark, the typeface in it cannot (Adobe). Reserved Font Name: Rye, IBM Plex – yes; Sancreek, Old Standard TT, IM Fell English – no. Google Fonts: mostly OFL 1.1, some Apache 2 or Ubuntu Font License 1.0 – read each licence file.

RGB or CMYK

RGB is additive: red, green and blue light at full intensity = white – everything on screen is RGB. **CMYK** is subtractive: cyan, magenta, yellow inks plus black, "four-color process printing". Some screen colours are "out of gamut" in print. CMYK in % per ink – Adobe's bright red: 2 % C, 93 % M, 90 % Y, 0 % K.

Edit in RGB, convert late (Adobe; Krita too). Ask your print shop first: file format, colour space or profile – CMYK profiles differ per printer, even per paper or ink; some want sRGB (Krita).

GIMP 3.0: no CMYK mode, but soft-proofing and CMYK import/export · **Krita 5.3:** CMYK images · **Inkscape:** no colour management for export – profiles in Scribus.

Spot colours, small palettes

- Spot colour = "special premixed ink"; each needs an extra plate (higher cost); more than four colours ⟶ consider process. Pick from a library your printer supports – "Don't rely solely on your monitor" (Adobe).
- Fewer colours = fewer screens, plates or drums: plan the limit from the first sketch.
- **Photoshop:** Grayscale (8-bit only) ⟶ Duotone; Monotone to Quadtone, "darkest at the top, lightest at the bottom". **GIMP 3.0:** Gradient Map; Image ⟶ Mode ⟶ Indexed… "Use custom palette", dithering None = solid. Posterize counts per channel: 3 levels = 27 colours. **Krita:** Gradient Map "Nearest"/"Dither", Palettize.

Print profiles (ECI) & soft proof

PROFILE	FOR	RELEASED
PSO Coated v3 (FOGRA51)	premium coated paper, ISO 12647-2:2013 PC 1	30 Sep 2015
PSO Uncoated v3 (FOGRA52)	wood-free uncoated white paper, PC 5	30 Sep 2015
eciCMYK v2 (FOGRA59)	CMYK exchange colour space, no press condition	5 Jul 2021

GIMP 3.0: Image ⟶ Color Management ⟶ Soft-Proof Profile…; View ⟶ Color Management ⟶ Proof Colors, Mark Out Of Gamut Colors. Photoshop: View ⟶ Proof Setup ⟶ Custom; View ⟶ Proof Colors.

Contrast, calculated (WCAG 2.2)

AA: 4.5:1 normal text, 3:1 large text (at least 18 pt or 14 pt bold) · AAA: 7:1, large 4.5:1 · graphics needed to understand content: 3:1 (AA).

```
c = C/255; c ≤ 0.04045 → c/12.92
else ((c + 0.055)/1.055)^2.4
L = 0.2126 R + 0.7152 G + 0.0722 B
ratio = (L1 + 0.05)/(L2 + 0.05)
```

C = 8-bit channel value, L1 = the lighter colour; range 1 to 21. Don't round: 4.499:1 does not meet 4.5:1. #777777 on white = 4.48:1 (fails AA), #767676 = 4.54:1 (our calc.). Logo text: no requirement (unless deliberately low-contrast). A web standard – for print a yardstick (our transfer).

Sources: Nielsen Norman Group · W3C (WCAG 2.2, Understanding 1.4.3) · Butterick's Practical Typography · Adobe (Illustrator, Photoshop, InDesign, Adobe Fonts, colour help) · SIL OFL 1.1 & OFL-FAQ · Google Fonts repository · Inkscape · Krita Manual 5.3 · GIMP 3.0 Manual · Photopea · Scribus · ECI · V&A. Details: adubta-music.de/atelier.html