# ATELIER CHEAT SHEET



## The grid

**Margins** (trim edge to content) · **columns** · **gutter** = the space between columns (Adobe). Pallas: images, text, motifs at least 3 mm, better 5 mm from the edges; offsets of ±1 mm in trimming, stapling and gluing are unavoidable – a margin of 10–15 mm hides this (our reading).

```
column = (page - left - right margin
- (columns - 1) × gutter) ÷ columns
```

15 mm margins, 5 mm gutter: A4, 3 columns (210 – 30 – 10) ÷ 3 ≈ 56.7 mm · 12″ front, 4 columns (315 – 30 – 15) ÷ 4 = 67.5 mm · 7″ front, 4 columns = 35 mm.

| FORMAT | W × H | SOURCE |
|---|---|---|
| A5 · A4 | 148 × 210 · 210 × 297 mm | Canon |
| A3 · A2 | 297 × 420 · 420 × 594 mm | Canon |
| 12″ sleeve, front | 315 × 312 mm | Pallas |
| 7″ sleeve, front | 185 × 185 mm | Pallas |
| CD booklet page | 121 × 120 mm | optimal media |

A sizes: ISO 216 – which does not necessarily apply to posters: ask your printer for its poster formats.

## Baseline & modular grid

“The baseline grid represents the leading for body text” (Adobe): set it to your leading or a factor of it, and lines in neighbouring columns align. Add horizontal divisions to the columns ⟶ modules, for posters and booklets (our suggestion). Booklets go as single pages (optimal media: 121 × 120 mm closed, 242 × 120 mm open, saddle-stitched; Pallas too) – build the grid on the single page (our suggestion).

## Grids in the software

- **Inkscape** (free): drag guides off the ruler; one rectangle per column, then Shift+G (“object(s) to guide(s)”); | guides, % snapping. 1.4: Ctrl+Shift+D Document Properties – modular grid (module width, height, gaps). Since 1.3 the Page tool sets margins and bleed.
- **Scribus 1.5** (free, GPL): File > New (size, margins); Document Setup = this document, Preferences = future ones; Preset Layouts: Gutenberg, Magazine, Fibonacci, Golden Mean, Nine Parts; Guides: Grid and Baseline Grid (hidden by default); Page > Snap to Guides / Grid; Insert > Frames… with columns.
- **GIMP 3.0** (free, digital cover): Image ⟶ Guides ⟶ New Guide (by Percent); Image ⟶ Configure Grid…; View ⟶ Snap to Guides.
- **InDesign** (paid): Layout > Margins and Columns; Layout > Create Guides (rows); View > Grids & Guides > Show Baseline Grid, then Align To Baseline Grid.

## Two vintage poles

**Grid:** Müller-Brockmann, “Musica Viva” (Zurich 1959, V&A), offset lithograph 127.9 × 90.5 cm – style “based on simple geometric grids”; his handbook (Niggli, 1981): grids of 8 to 32 fields. **Collage:** Jamie Reid, Sex Pistols flyer 1977 – “black and white photocopy with ransom note style text”, a “cut-and-paste aesthetic”. Grid, then break it (our suggestion): build the modular grid at final size, print 1:1, collage on tracing paper along the module lines, let one or two elements cross on purpose – everything else at least 3 mm, better 5 mm inside the trim. Adobe calls guides “merely suggestions”.

Inch tutorials: 1 in = 25.4 mm exactly (NIST) · 0.5 in = 12.7 mm · 0.1875 in ≈ 4.76 mm.

## The digital cover

| PLATFORM | SQUARE, IN PIXELS |
|---|---|
| Spotify | 640–10000 px per side, sRGB, TIFF/PNG/JPG lossless, don’t upscale |
| Apple Music | min. 1400 × 1400, recommended 3000 × 3000 or larger, JPEG/PNG |
| Bandcamp | at least 1400 × 1400 (bigger is better) |
| CD Baby | min. 1400 × 1400, max. 3000 × 3000 |

Exactly **3000 × 3000 px** fits all four; through a distributor, its rules win. Apple Music Style Guide 2.4: no web addresses, logos, QR codes or competitor references; no CD, vinyl, digital product or retailers; no prices or upselling, no audio-format claims (“Dolby Atmos”, “lossless”); nothing misleading. ⟶ Bandcamp URL and “also on 12″” go on the printed back – make two fronts from the start.

## Print data: three zones

**Trim size** (final format) · **bleed** around it, cut off · **safety margin** inside, nothing important there. Adobe calls 3 mm (0.125 in) bleed standard, some printers want more; Pallas: 3 or 5 mm all around. Always use your own plant’s template.

| TEMPLATE | TRIM | BLEED | DOCUMENT |
|---|---|---|---|
| 12″ LP cover, 3 mm spine (Pallas) | 315 × 312 mm per side; open 633 × 350 mm incl. flaps | 3 mm | 639 × 356 mm |
| 7″ sleeve, no spine (Pallas) | 185 × 185 mm; open 370 × 185 mm | 5 mm | 380 × 195 mm |
| CD booklet (optimal media) | 121 × 120 mm; open 242 × 120 mm | 3 mm | 127 × 126 mm per page (calc.) |

- Images: colour and greyscale 300 ppi, line art (bitmap) 1200 ppi. Colour: CMYK – “do not supply RGB” (Record Industry). Type: nothing under 6 pt (Pallas).
- Cassette (National Audio Company): 300 ppi minimum (600 recommended), CMYK, backgrounds out to the bleed lines, all fonts outlined.

```
px = mm ÷ 25.4 × 300
12″ front with bleed: 321 × 318 mm
→ 3792 × 3756 px (rounded up)
```

## Two plants, two rulebooks

| | OPTIMAL MEDIA (V1.2) | PALLAS (10-2025) |
|---|---|---|
| PDF | PDF/X-1a or PDF/X-3 | PDF/X-3, ideally via Distiller |
| Profile coated | PSO Coated v3 (FOGRA51) | PSO Coated V3 |
| Profile uncoated | PSO Uncoated v3 (FOGRA52) | – |
| Total ink | max. 300 % | max. 300 % (picture-disc labels 280 %) |
| Smallest type | 4 pt positive, 5 pt negative | 6 pt recommended |
| Thinnest line | 0.10 mm pos., 0.15 mm neg. | 0.1 mm pos., 0.15 mm neg. |
| Spot colours | Pantone, HKS | Pantone Solid C/U only, no HKS; knock out |
| Proof | contract proof only per ISO 12647-7, 1:1, media wedge | optional, extra cost |

1. Document at template size incl. bleed; delete the template layer before export (Pallas).
2. Embed fonts or convert them to paths (Pallas).
3. Barcodes as vectors, 100 % black (K) on white; EAN at least 30 mm wide (optimal media).
4. Black overprints, white knocks out (optimal media).
5. One PDF per product; booklets as consecutive single pages.

## PDF/X, colour standard, spines

| | |
|---|---|
| PDF/X-1a | ISO 15930-4:2003, PDF 1.4 – CMYK and spot colour |
| PDF/X-3 | ISO 15930-6:2003, PDF 1.4 – colour-managed: CMYK, gray, RGB or spot |
| PDF/X-4 | ISO 15930-7:2010, PDF 1.6 – plus PDF transparency, optional content |

- Export what your plant names, not the newest variant. Pallas wants transparencies flattened at medium resolution.
- FOGRA51/52: sheet-fed offset, 60 lines/cm; PS 1 coated, PS 5 uncoated with optical brighteners (Fogra); ISO 12647-2:2013. Both profiles free from ECI.
- Labels are heated in drying and pressing – metallic Pantone or very whitish colours can shift (Record Industry). Colour in mass printing is only approximate (Pallas).
- Pallas spines: 3 mm (1 LP), 5 mm (2 LP), 7 mm (3 LP); gatefold 6 mm (1–2 LP), 8 mm (3–4 LP). 12″ posters folded from 600 × 600 or 600 × 900 mm to 300 × 300 mm.

Sources: Adobe (InDesign, Learn InDesign) · Pallas (print-data specification 10-2025, templates) · optimal media (Datenanlieferung Print V1.2, templates) · Canon · ISO 216, 15930, 12647-2 · Scribus · Inkscape · GIMP 3.0 Manual · V&A · Niggli · NIST · Record Industry · National Audio Company · ECI · Fogra · Spotify for Artists · Apple Music (Provider Support, Style Guide 2.4) · Bandcamp Help · CD Baby. Details: adubta-music.de/atelier.html