

Retro Supply Co

COLOR

A R C H I V E



50 COLOR PALETTES INSPIRED BY 20TH-CENTURY FOUND OBJECTS & EPHEMERA

Built from the Colors That Built Us

This magical book is a collection of 50 color palettes inspired by the objects, advertisements, packaging, and other design ephemera that shaped the 20th century.

Creating this book was a true family effort from the folks here at RetroSupply Co. Dustin (RetroSupply's founder), Rikki (RetroSupply's customer support specialist/graphic design student), illustrator Brad Woodard of Brave the Woods, and graphic designer/lettering specialist Jason Carne collaborated on this.

Together, we dug through decades of vintage treasures and pulled the color stories that define the retro aesthetic that makes us who we are.

This book is designed for artists, designers, and creators of all kinds who know that choosing the right colors can be the most challenging part of any project.

Each palette includes HEX, RGB, and CMYK values, enabling you to easily sample and apply them to your work. Use it as a jumping-off point! Try picking a color that catches your eye, then explore the supplementary tones that help bring it to life.

Whether you're working digitally or by hand, we hope these palettes spark new ideas and connect you to the nostalgia and creativity that fuel RetroSupply Co. every day!

Ben Cooper Skeleton Mask

Found at a toy show near the Clark County Fairgrounds, this Ben Cooper classic screams '70s Halloween. Deep blue, fire orange, and banana yellow blast across the box like a rocket pop. The big star-shaped window puts the mask on display like a prize. Ben Cooper was the king of mass-producing magic on a budget.



HEX #001DBD
RGB 0 29 189
CMYK 95 88 0 0



HEX #FBDFF00
RGB 251 223 0
CMYK 4 7 100 0



HEX #FB8829
RGB 251 136 41
CMYK 0 57 93 0



HEX #FB4B40
RGB 251 75 64
CMYK 0 85 76 0

KLM Austria Brochure

The pops of neon colors on this mid-century KLM Airlines brochure for winter vacations in Austria is so fun. With a color palette that feels more like a product of the 90s, it holds its warmth and charm in its ability to pair softer blues and pinks with the neon colors. What a great choice to add in that hint of a pink sunset to break up the blue sky.



HEX #357196
RGB 53 113 150
CMYK 83 50 25 4



HEX #7EC0BA
RGB 126 192 186
CMYK 51 7 29 0



HEX #F9E720
RGB 249 231 32
CMYK 5 2 96 0



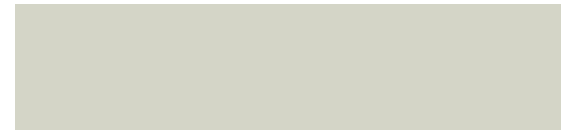
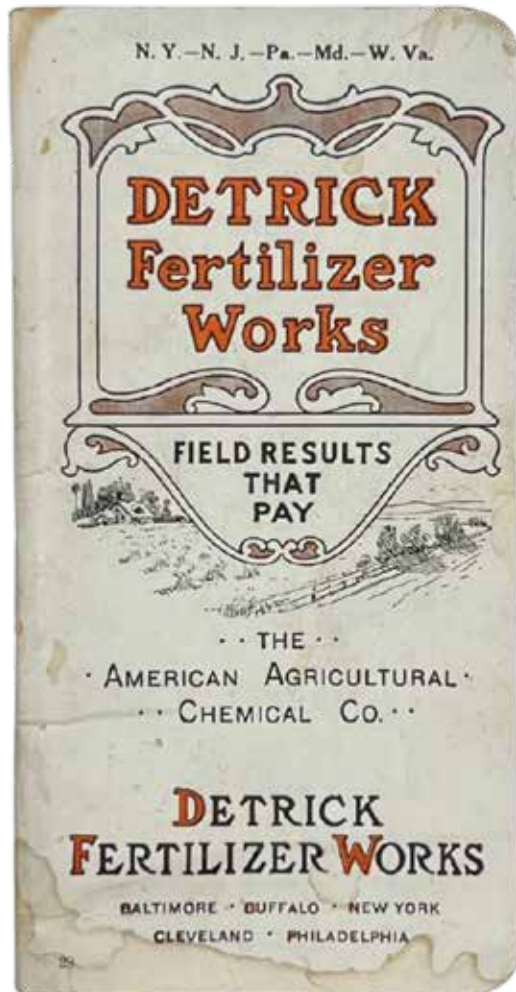
HEX #D78194
RGB 215 129 148
CMYK 13 59 26 0



HEX #B9366F
RGB 185 54 111
CMYK 26 93 33 2

Detrick Fertilizer Works Notebook

This 1913 pocket notebook came from a buying spree inspired by Aaron Draplin's notebook obsession. It's equal parts calendar, cheat sheet, and daily planner (designed to keep a farmer's hand flipping through it all year). Bold red ink on rough tan stock makes the cover sing, while every page doubles as an ad. Advertising like this stuck around in back pockets and barn drawers, making the advertising powerful and cost-effective.



HEX #D4D5C7
RGB 212 213 199
CMYK 16 11 21 0



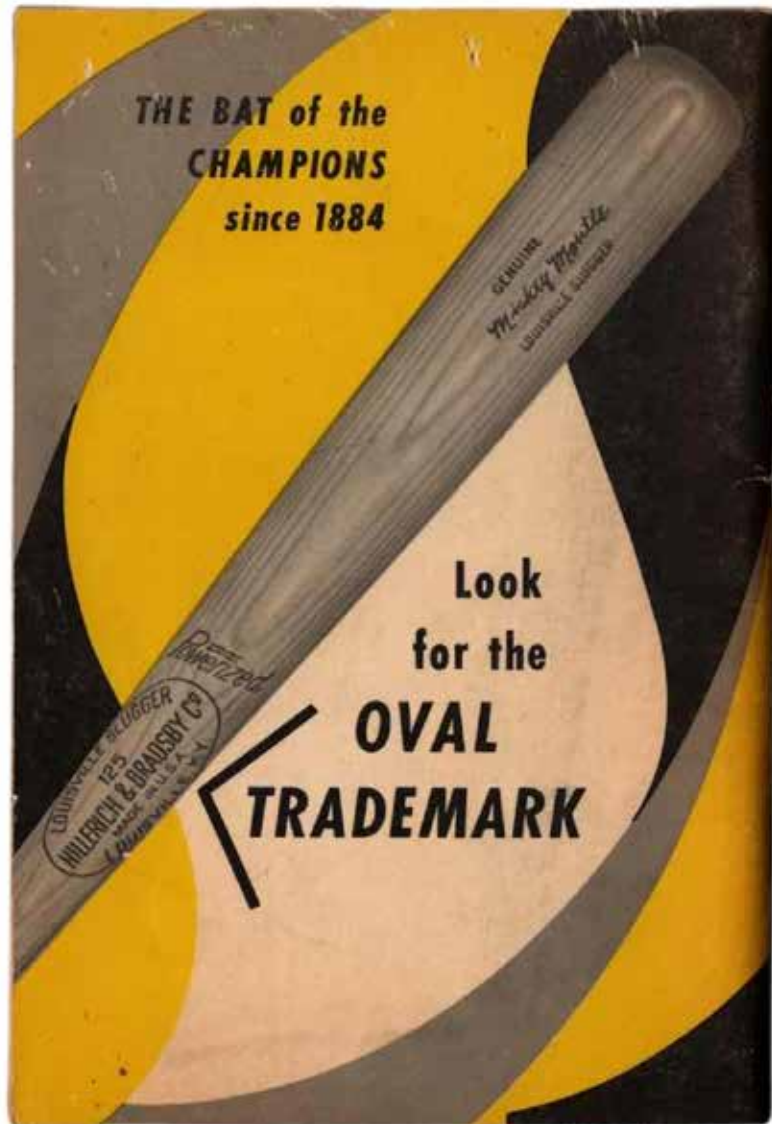
HEX #9F8471
RGB 159 132 113
CMYK 37 45 54 7



HEX #CE6026
RGB 206 96 38
CMYK 14 74 100 3

Oval Trademark Baseball Ad

A modernist slice of Americana, this ad uses a simple and energetic mid-century palette: canary yellow, charcoal black, and warm beige. That big S-curve swirl is a classic offset litho move utilizing bold shapes, cheap plates, and high contrast. The palette is almost Bauhaus-adjacent in its limited harmony. It's a reminder that with three flat colors and clean geometry, you can hit a home run.



	HEX #DC9F09 RGB 220 159 9 CMYK 14 38 100 0
	HEX #E8C198 RGB 232 193 152 CMYK 8 24 42 0
	HEX #AA8F71 RGB 170 143 113 CMYK 33 40 58 4
	HEX #73614D RGB 115 97 77 CMYK 49 53 68 26
	HEX #1B1714 RGB 27 23 20 CMYK 69 67 68 80

Anacin Tablet Tin

This yellow, green, and red tin feels like a punch in the eyeballs. Found in the same antique shop as the Crescent box, it's a perfect example of color hierarchy: ~75% yellow, ~20% dark green, and just a kiss of red. It's the kind of combo you'd never sketch out intentionally, but once you see it, you want to steal it.



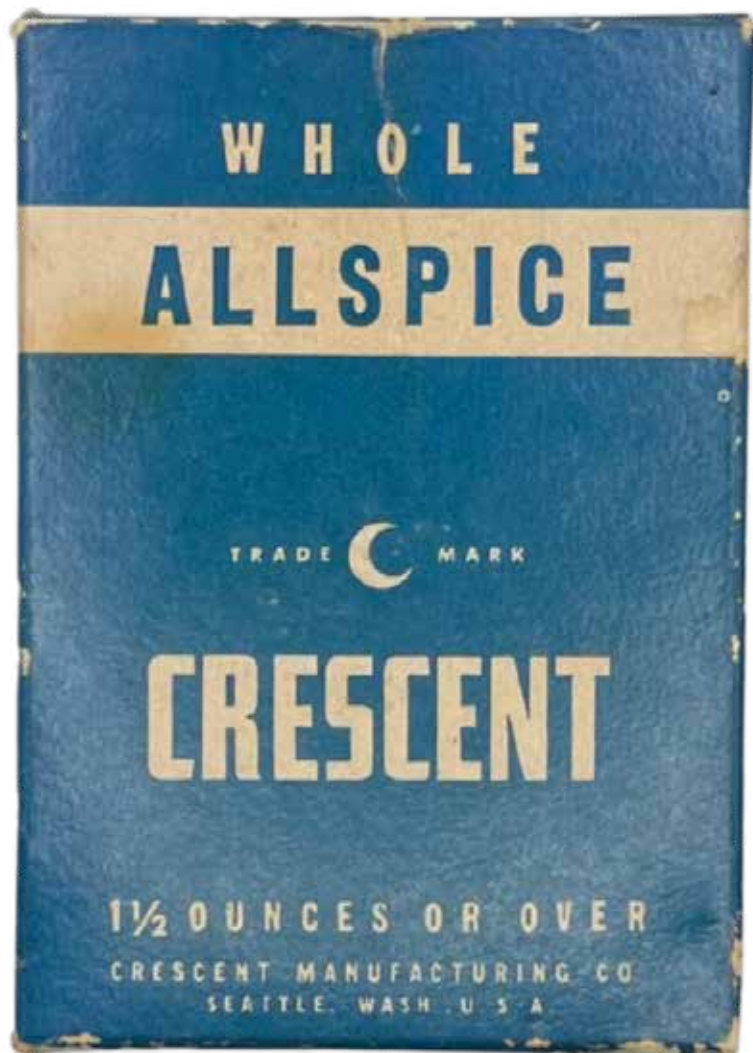
HEX #3B6227
RGB 59 98 39
CMYK 76 38 100 31



HEX #D3D727
RGB 211 215 39
CMYK 21 3 100 0



HEX #B9362F
RGB 185 54 47
CMYK 19 92 91 9



Crescent Allspice Box

Found in a Vancouver, WA antique shop, this simple two-color box traces back to Crescent Manufacturing, an 1883 Seattle spice firm that struck it big with Mapleine during the Gold Rush. The deep blue on cream is beautiful and economical. It's proof that one strong hue, well-placed, can carry a brand. A minimalist gem from the days when flavor and frugality went hand in hand.



HEX #145E85
RGB 20 94 133
CMYK 93 61 29 9



HEX #E0D4BE
RGB 224 212 190
CMYK 12 13 24 0

Jaguar Yams

A roaring slice of southern swagger, this 1940s Jaguar Brand yam label runs has some bold primary color energy. The soft litho blur and slight misregistration give it some warmth. That little edition of the dark blue stands out nicely too on that light blue background.



HEX #CD1429
RGB 205 20 41
CMYK 13 100 96 3



HEX #E6B714
RGB 230 183 20
CMYK 11 27 100 0



HEX #869E26
RGB 134 158 38
CMYK 53 22 100 3



HEX #7AA892
RGB 122 168 146
CMYK 55 20 48 1



HEX #124B84
RGB 18 75 132
CMYK 99 78 22 7

Corrosives PSA

This is one of my favorite advertisements from the 1950s! The Queensland Division of Occupational Safety had a morbid sense of humor with this one. Check out the little angel in the bottom corner telling you not to take any chances, he's great. Also, check out this limited color palette, it's *chef's kiss.*



HEX #CD5884
RGB 205 88 132
CMYK 17 80 24 0



HEX #719A8C
RGB 113 154 140
CMYK 59 26 47 2



HEX #5F3C38
RGB 95 60 56
CMYK 46 70 66 45

Csepel Truck Match Labels

Csepel Automotive Factory was a Hungarian manufacturer of industrial trucks during wartime. This is a beautiful collection of branded match labels they used for advertising in the 1960s. The type on these are incredible, but the color palette doesn't scream 60s, and that's why it's so fascinating!



HEX #FFB844
RGB 255 184 68
CMYK 0 31 83 0



HEX #EE9DC8
RGB 238 157 200
CMYK 3 47 0 0



HEX #A31D96
RGB 163 29 150
CMYK 42 99 0 0



HEX #551E86
RGB 85 30 134
CMYK 83 100 9 3



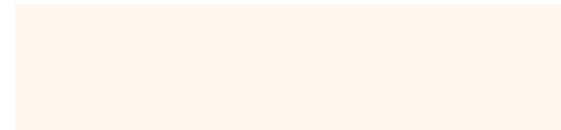
HEX #100F17
RGB 16 15 23
CMYK 77 71 61 80

Kentucky Club Tobacco Tin

Tobacco tins had some of the best graphics, and this is no exception. The light blue and brown colors have just enough warmth to them to allow that beautiful, reddish-brown color on the horse to work so well. Pair that with the contrast of the black and white and the entire piece looks as if it could leap off the shelf.



HEX #5D9EAA
RGB 93 158 170
CMYK 65 24 30 0



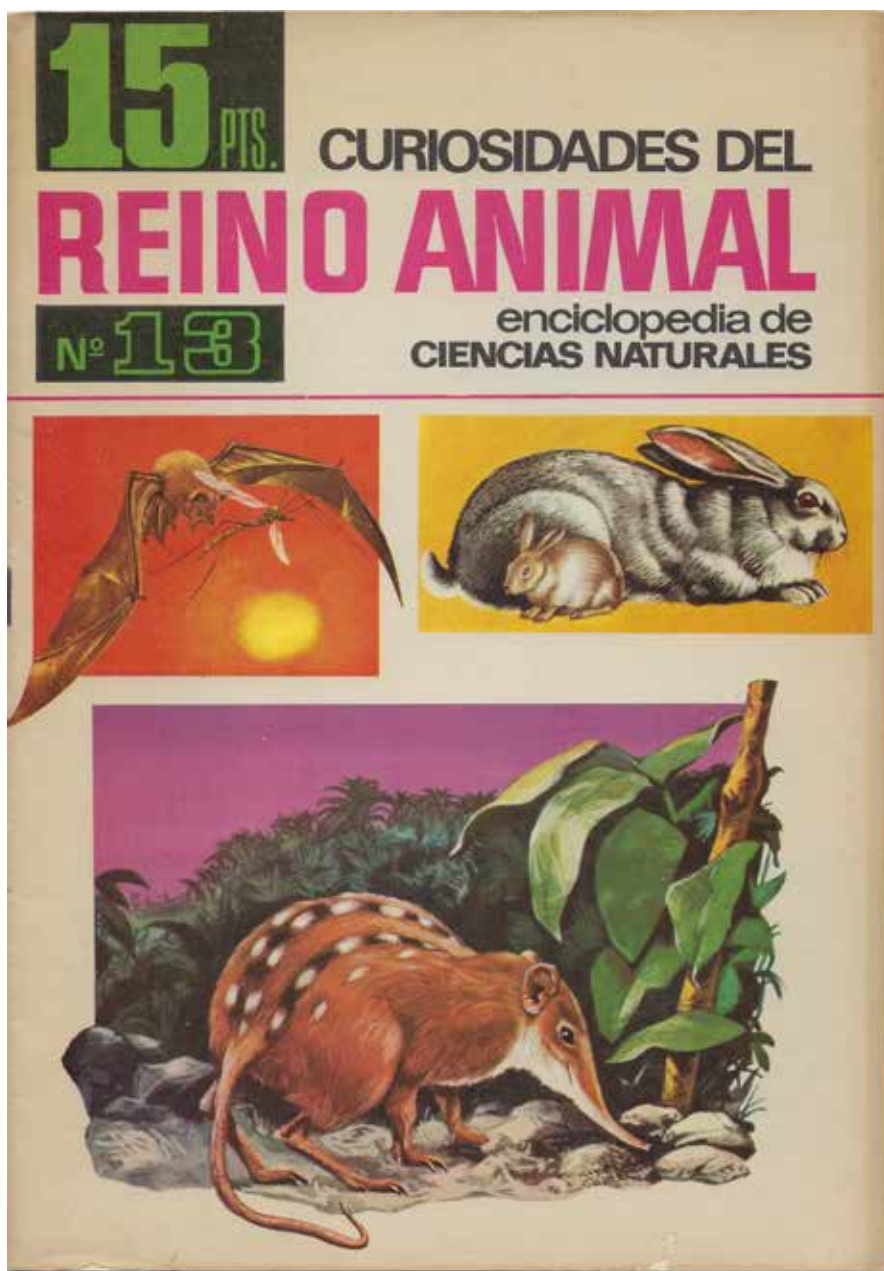
HEX #FFF6EF
RGB 255 246 239
CMYK 0 3 4 0



HEX #E32400
RGB 227 36 0
CMYK 5 97 100 1



HEX #383728
RGB 56 55 40
CMYK 64 57 75 60



Reino Animal Magazine

If you didn't know the date of this magazine, the colors give it away. Having been published in 1969, it is an amazing hybrid of 60s and 70s era colors. The groovier pinks, purples and oranges are used sparingly, but pack quite a punch. But the hero of this color palette is the genius mix of warm and cool greens throughout. Both in the typography and the forest scene below.



HEX #444034
RGB 68 64 52
CMYK 62 58 70 51



HEX #65943F
RGB 101 148 63
CMYK 66 23 100 6



HEX #E0B039
RGB 224 176 57
CMYK 13 30 92 0



HEX #CE4577
RGB 206 69 119
CMYK 16 88 30 0



HEX #A04A73
RGB 160 74 115
CMYK 37 83 33 6



HEX #C63631
RGB 198 54 49
CMYK 16 93 90 5

El Producto Cigar Tin

Sometimes simple is best when working with color palettes, and Paul Rand was the master. With only three colors, incorporating textures like halftones can stretch your palette a bit further. But the biggest win on this tin is the restraint shown when using that gold-ish-brown. The yellow in that brown and the pink is what makes them feel so right for each other.



HEX #B37D4D
RGB 179 125 77
CMYK 27 52 77 7



HEX #D5C877
RGB 213 200 119
CMYK 18 15 65 0



HEX #EF9E92
RGB 239 158 146
CMYK 3 45 35 0



HEX #B52313
RGB 181 35 19
CMYK 20 97 100 12



US Army M-18 Tank Tin Toy

Japanese tin toys are known for their bright, high contrast paint jobs. Even though this tank is that military, olive green, the bright yellow highlights and blues in the gray color keep this delightfully on brand. If the gray was just a tint of black, instead of the blue here, the other colors would feel as vibrant as they do here.



HEX #2B2B2B
RGB 43 43 43
CMYK 70 64 63 65



HEX #576163
RGB 87 97 99
CMYK 66 51 51 23



HEX #9B9432
RGB 155 148 50
CMYK 41 32 100 6



HEX #D2A700
RGB 210 167 0
CMYK 19 32 100 0



HEX #FF452A
RGB 255 69 42
CMYK 0 87 88 0





US Western States 76 Union Road Map

It's hard to believe this cover is only using two colors because it feels so detailed and complex. This is a masterclass on taking a straightforward complementary color palette with orange and blue, and making it sing with tints and shades. The limitations in printing with only two colors was no match for the artist who created this. Adding that white in the orange to get that peach color for the sky deserves a chef's kiss.



HEX #192F98
RGB 25 47 152
CMYK 100 94 3 1



HEX #DD503F
RGB 221 80 63
CMYK 8 83 82 1



HEX #DD9D7D
RGB 221 157 125
CMYK 12 42 51 0



HEX #3F3348
RGB 63 51 72
CMYK 73 77 47 43



Vintage Tin Windup Robot

Substituting a single color from an iconic color palette, like primary colors, is a way to make a palette feel a bit more unique. The gold color replacing yellow in this palette has such a nice feel to it. Thankfully the artist decided to lighten that blue as well so that it has higher contrast against that shade of gold.



HEX #B69552
RGB 182 149 82
CMYK 29 38 79 4



HEX #5FADDC
RGB 95 173 220
CMYK 59 18 2 0



HEX #B43035
RGB 180 48 53
CMYK 21 94 84 11

20th Century Color Archive | RetroSupply Co. **18**

American Fruit Jar Rings

The classic primary color palette never misses, but sure can be elevated with some sneaky color additions. Bringing in the warm light blue and green colors brings some satisfying dimension to the packaging as a whole.



HEX #233D70
RGB 35 61 112
CMYK 98 85 29 15



HEX #B6CBBE
RGB 182 203 190
CMYK 29 11 26 0



HEX #CACB5A
RGB 202 203 90
CMYK 24 10 80 0



HEX #FFDB00
RGB 255 219 0
CMYK 2 10 100 0



HEX #E71B32
RGB 231 27 50
CMYK 3 100 87 0

Have a Sweet Cigar Sign

A bold split-complementary palette of brick red, golden orange, and deep brown makes this tobacco promo feel sweet, spicy, and urgent. That dotted halftone glow behind the type? A trick of the trade from early litho or screen processes, giving dimension without extra plates.



HEX #C0080A
RGB 192 8 10
CMYK 17 100 100 8



HEX #E38A26
RGB 227 138 38
CMYK 9 53 100 0



HEX #402A15
RGB 64 42 21
CMYK 51 67 84 66

Winchester Swift Ammo Box

This cartridge box plays in heavy primaries with knockout type in white and black. Notice how the inks soak into the soft stock, giving the colors an earthy depth. The bright palette masculinity and the ability to jump off crowded shelves.



HEX #B53D2C
RGB 181 61 44
CMYK 21 89 94 11



HEX #E2B418
RGB 226 180 24
CMYK 13 28 100 0



HEX #414F58
RGB 65 79 88
CMYK 75 59 50 32



HEX #0D1215
RGB 13 18 21
CMYK 77 68 64 81

Black Light Owl Ceramic

Found in a hidden basement shop tucked off a backstreet in the Columbia River Gorge, these neon-painted owls are pure black light nostalgia. Born from the psychedelic boom of the late '60s and early '70s, they lit up dorm rooms and basements everywhere. Kitsch? Absolutely. But the saturated palette and radiant contrast still make your eyes buzz in the best way.



HEX #F9433C
RGB 249 67 60
CMYK 0 88 78 0



HEX #FDF46F
RGB 253 244 111
CMYK 4 0 68 0



HEX #18A947
RGB 24 169 71
CMYK 81 5 100 0

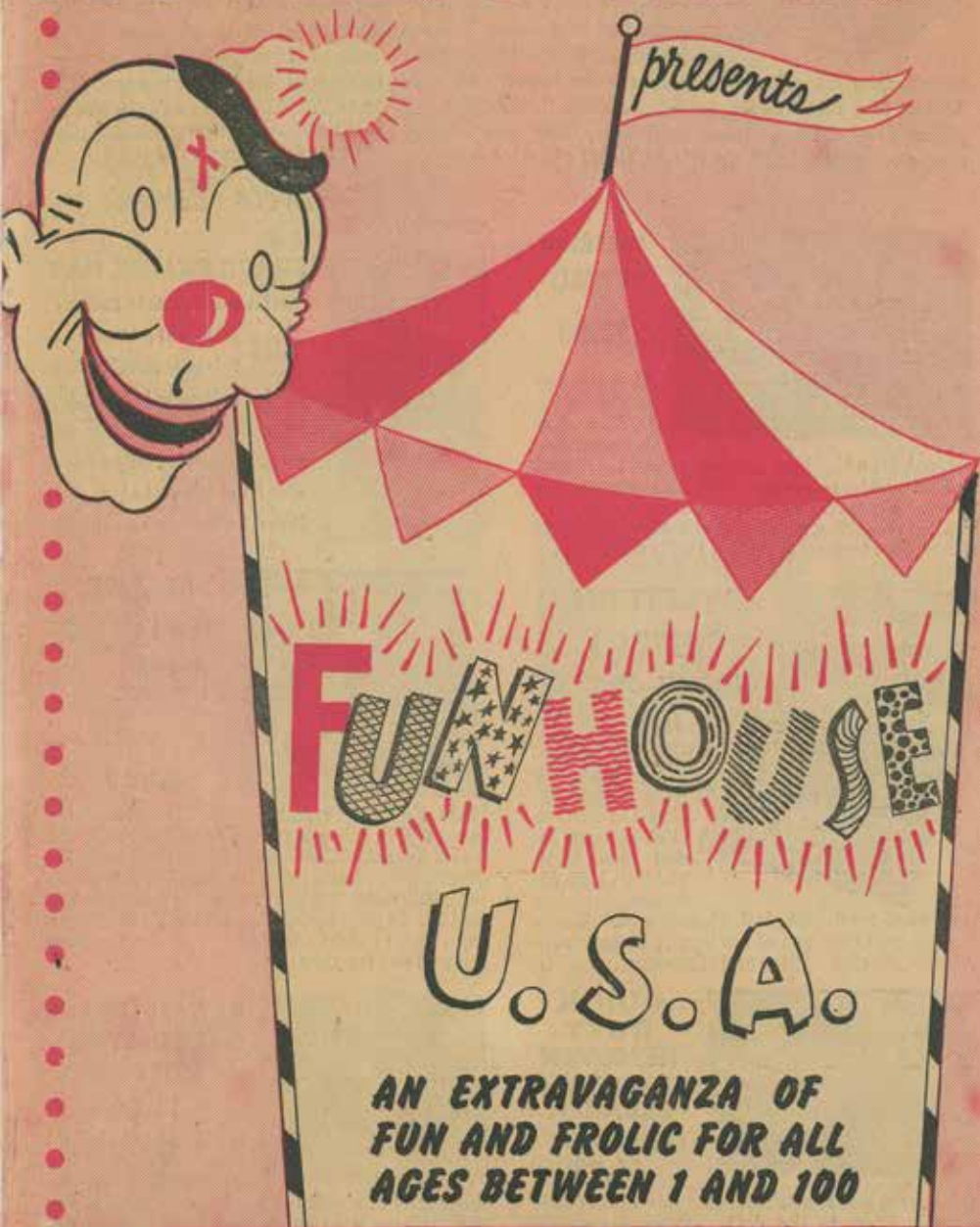


HEX #914A7F
RGB 145 74 127
CMYK 47 83 23 4



HEX #62372E
RGB 98 55 46
CMYK 42 73 73 47

NOVELTY MART



New 1953 Catalog of Amazing Items

Novelty Mart Ad

This page taken from a 1953 Novelty Mart catalog features Uncle Bernie! He's a terrifying adaptation of a clown who sells you low-budget household products and apparently has ties to Frank Zappa, which is pretty weird. Either way, the color palette of this ad is down-right beautiful.



HEX #CE4555
RGB 206 69 85
CMYK 14 87 62 2



HEX #D88E81
RGB 216 142 129
CMYK 14 51 44 0



HEX #D6C0A3
RGB 214 192 163
CMYK 16 22 36 0



HEX #45453B
RGB 69 69 59
CMYK 64 56 67 47

WIBC Atlanta Patch

This 1971 bowling patch is stitched in a classic embroidery-friendly palette: red, yellow, mint green, and sky blue. Chosen for contrast and legibility at a distance. This warm split-complementary scheme is bright but grounded, giving that Southern Belle a Technicolor glow. It's proof that even fiber-based design obeys color theory rules.



	HEX #AB283A RGB 171 40 58 CMYK 23 97 76 14
	HEX #E7C625 RGB 231 198 37 CMYK 11 18 99 0
	HEX #AAC082 RGB 170 192 130 CMYK 36 12 61 0
	HEX #72B3AE RGB 114 179 174 CMYK 57 13 33 0
	HEX #B48277 RGB 180 130 119 CMYK 29 51 49 3

Mikado Pocket Warmer

This box has such a nice, warm glow to it, thanks to the undertones of yellow throughout the palette. Substituting green for the traditional blue color in a primary color palette helps the illustrated scene feel softer and more outdoorsy. Keeping those colors in the artwork more analogous and flat, allows anything in red to grab your attention.



HEX #D83409
RGB 216 52 9
CMYK 9 93 100 2



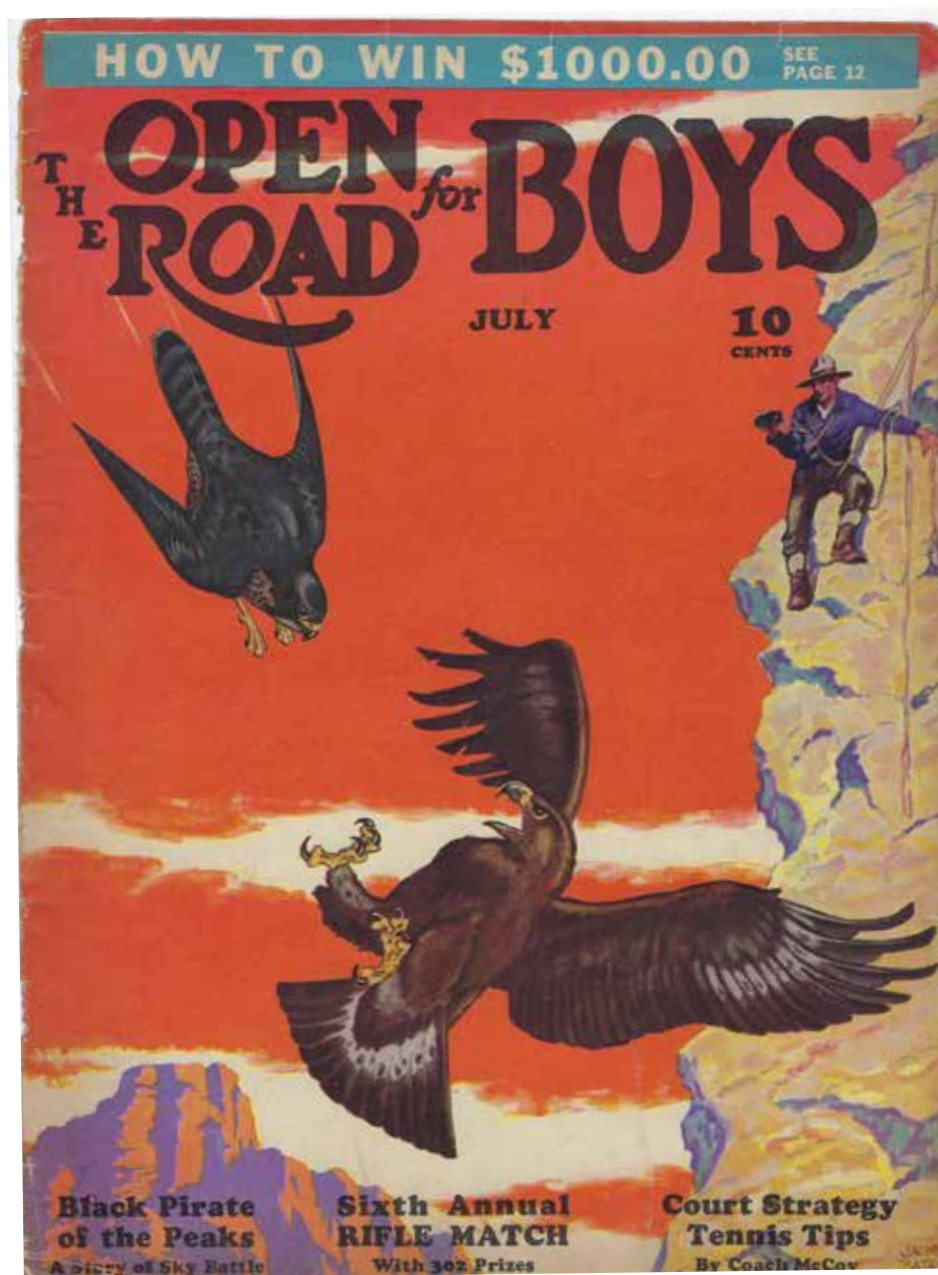
HEX #FF9708
RGB 255 151 8
CMYK 0 48 100 0



HEX #FFD53D
RGB 255 213 61
CMYK 1 14 86 0



HEX #3A6551
RGB 58 101 81
CMYK 77 40 70 27



The Open Road for Boys

As bold and eye-catching as this near solid orange sky is on the cover, the cooler blue and purple tones in the shadows of the mountain faces are what help ground this piece. They help differentiate the parts of the scene that are passive against the hero of the scene that is backed in an intense orange.



HEX #D2451E
RGB 210 69 30
CMYK 12 87 100 2



HEX #DECF77
RGB 222 207 119
CMYK 14 12 65 0



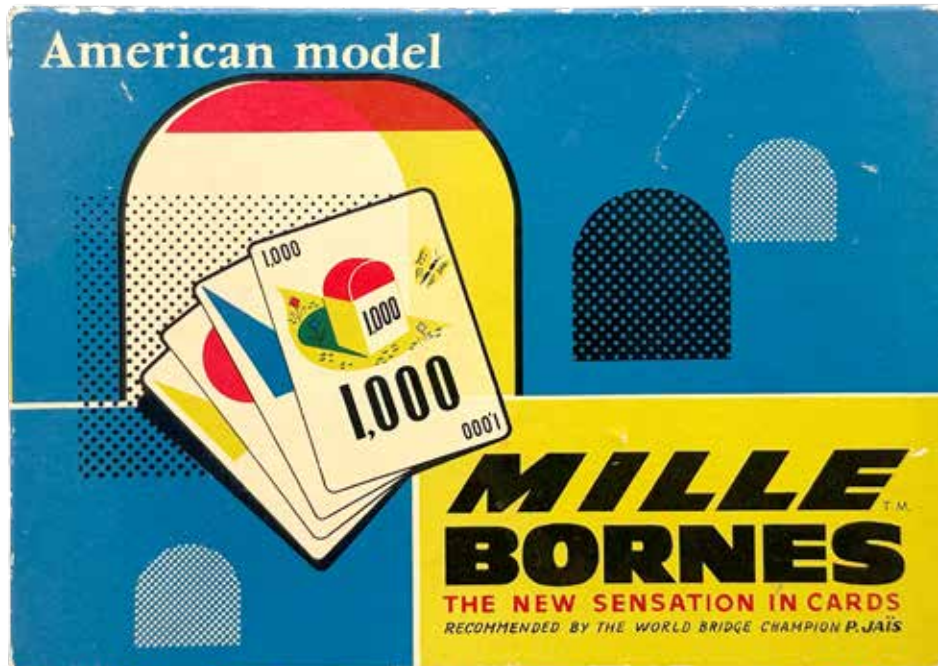
HEX #4F8B94
RGB 79 139 148
CMYK 72 32 38 3



HEX #626597
RGB 98 101 151
CMYK 70 64 17 2

Mille Bornes Card Game

At first glance, this 1960s card game might feel like any other artwork that uses a primary color palette. Though it feels slightly more elevated because of its use of color overlays. A great example is where the blue and yellow overlay to create green shadows. Just because you have a limited palette, doesn't mean you can't find ways to get more colors out of it with simple techniques.



HEX #0084B2
RGB 0 132 178
CMYK 84 37 15 0



HEX #FBE32C
RGB 251 227 44
CMYK 4 5 93 0



HEX #F5253D
RGB 245 37 61
CMYK 0 96 77 0



HEX #0A1300
RGB 10 19 0
CMYK 71 59 74 82

Milwaukee Transit Passes

These transit passes designed and issued by the Milwaukee Electric Railway & Light Company from 1930 through the mid 1960's were created by a still unknown/unnamed artist that worked in-house for the company developing new art weekly for decades. Each pass had its own theme, relating to holidays, events, or seasons taking place during the week they were issued, many of which feature beautiful illustration, strong layout skills, and a mastery of limited color palettes which make these some of my favorite ephemera pieces in my collection.



HEX #E9C241
RGB 232 193 63
CMYK 10 22 89 0



HEX #D6839F
RGB 214 131 159
CMYK 14 58 18 0



HEX #1B8871
RGB 27 136 113
CMYK 83 25 64 7



HEX #A56097
RGB 165 96 151
CMYK 38 73 12 0



HEX #9E8F4E
RGB 158 143 78
CMYK 38 36 81 7

Snell-Jones Tack Box

Red, black, and kraft brown (AKA the holy trinity of no-nonsense packaging). Printed with minimal inks on chipboard, this layout is all about legibility and strength. The V-shaped composition builds hierarchy while using negative space smartly. For designers, it's a great example of understated reliability.



HEX #49473D
RGB 73 71 61
CMYK 62 56 67 45



HEX #C4A66D
RGB 196 166 109
CMYK 24 32 66 1



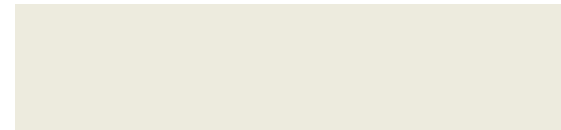
HEX #BF4730
RGB 191 71 48
CMYK 18 85 92 7

Manor Markets Nametag

My grandfather's original nametag from his days as a produce clerk after WWII. A black, white, and green palette gives this grocer tag its visual snap. The greens shift subtly between hues, suggesting ink variance or aging, adding unexpected depth. While modern palettes chase gradients, this piece reminds us how a near-monochrome scheme can still pop when paired with bold type and negative space.



HEX #1C2329
RGB 28 35 41
CMYK 79 68 59 69



HEX #EDEBDE
RGB 237 235 222
CMYK 6 5 12 0



HEX #57A646
RGB 87 166 70
CMYK 71 11 100 1

Shell Premium Matchbook

This matchbook roars with pure, high-saturation primaries that read instantly at a distance. Likely printed with oil-based inks on coated board, the design uses heavy text weight and smart alignment to make every inch feel loud and efficient. Again, the limited palette was often a necessity that came to characterize the style.



HEX #2A2424
RGB 42 36 36
CMYK 67 67 64 70



HEX #AE3E3C
RGB 174 62 60
CMYK 23 87 78 13



HEX #E29A16
RGB 226 154 22
CMYK 10 43 100 0



HEX #546176
RGB 84 97 118
CMYK 71 57 38 15

Royster Fertilizer Notebook

A textbook example of duotone design: red and navy on a tan stock. Likely letterpress or early offset, this palette maximized visual contrast with minimal cost. The red handles headlines and accents, while navy gives weight to type and structure. You can almost feel the ink sitting on the paper grain. It's a humble but powerful palette that is still used today for logo systems and identity work.



HEX #2C4468
RGB 44 68 104
CMYK 91 75 35 22



HEX #B5302F
RGB 181 48 47
CMYK 20 94 89 11

Midway Wheel of Chance

This carnival game faceplate was printed directly onto metal (most likely through lithographic spot-color layering). The palette is... a lot, but it works. Bright primaries, eye-popping tertiaries, and deep blacks, all held together by tight registration and smart zoning. Each number and burst lives in its own space, avoiding visual mud despite the chaos.



HEX #BD3A27
RGB 189 58 39
CMYK 18 91 99 8



HEX #C27104
RGB 194 113 4
CMYK 20 61 100 6



HEX #E9C902
RGB 233 201 2
CMYK 11 17 100 0



HEX #83951E
RGB 131 149 30
CMYK 53 26 100 6



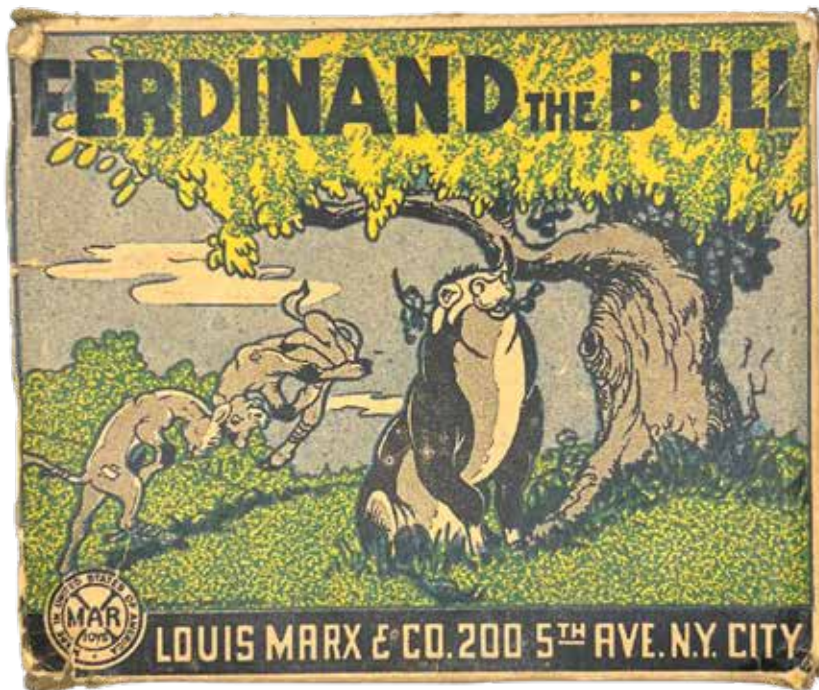
HEX #233F69
RGB 35 63 105
CMYK 96 80 33 21



HEX #734953
RGB 115 73 83
CMYK 47 72 51 28

Ferdinand the Bull Box

Snagged on eBay, this empty toy box still packs a punch. The matte stock, bold yellow base, and limited palette of greens and blues (with halftone blacks for depth) showcase pre-gloss, pre-digital ingenuity. Look closer and you'll see blue halftones blending into tree shadows and sky fades. Its packaging as storybook is proof that great illustration doesn't need much more than ink, texture, and love.



HEX #434544
RGB 67 69 68
CMYK 68 59 60 43



HEX #FEE139
RGB 254 225 57
CMYK 2 7 88 0



HEX #789A65
RGB 120 154 101
CMYK 57 24 73 4



HEX #5B8385
RGB 91 131 133
CMYK 68 36 43 7

Hex Sign

Mad Magazine did a series of covers and backs in these eye-ball-grabbing color schemes. This piece uses a limited red, blue, and black triad (classic for offset printing on pulp paper). The strong diagonals create energy that is reinforced with high contrast, almost neon colors. It's a great study in flat, high-saturation inks that don't rely on realism. Every shape and symbol sings, thanks to tight value control.



HEX #327CB0
RGB 50 124 176
CMYK 81 45 11 0

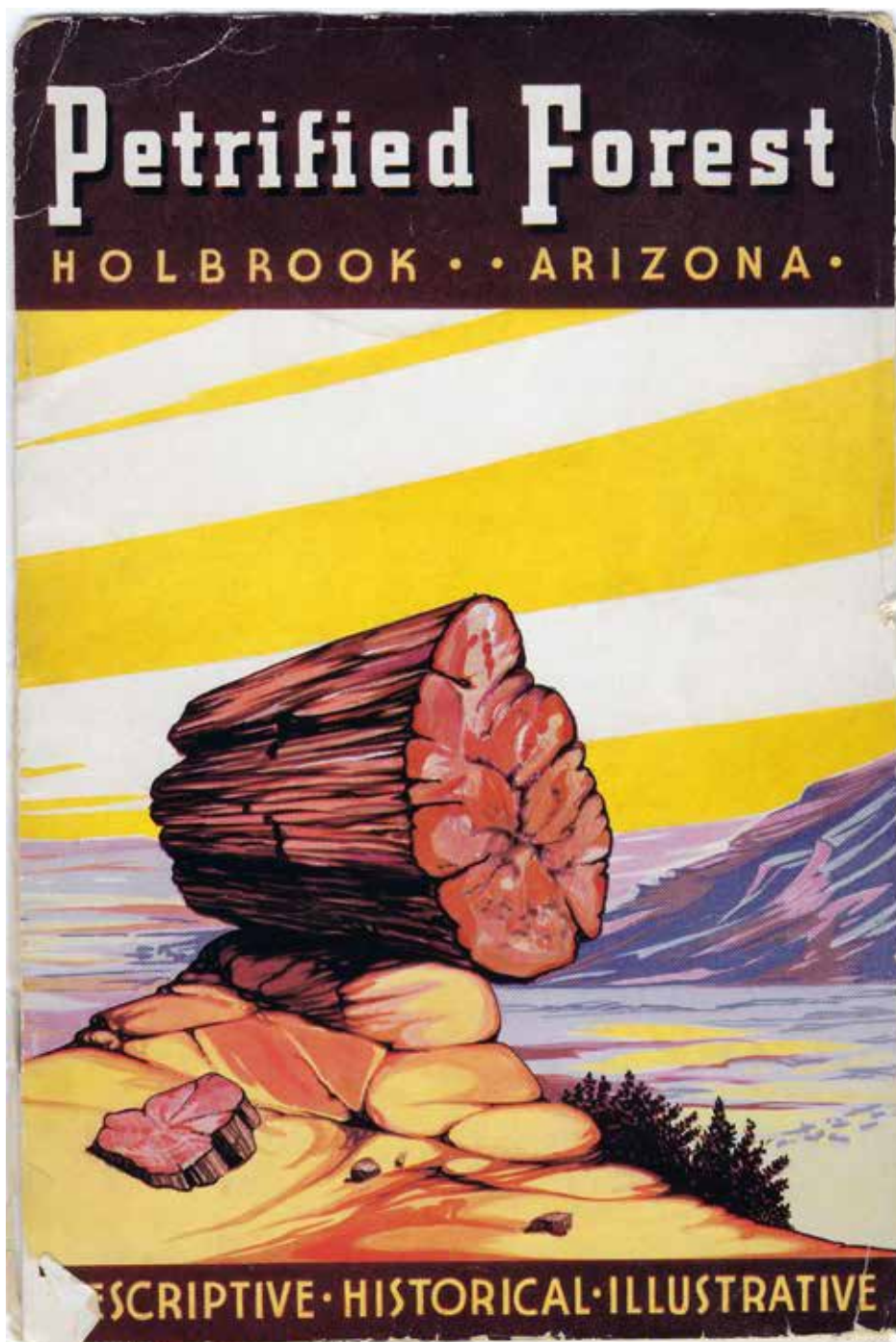


HEX #F55231
RGB 245 82 49
CMYK 0 83 89 0



HEX #454444
RGB 69 68 68
CMYK 66 60 59 43





Petrified Forest Booklet

This booklet cover captures the colors and vibe of this part of Arizona perfectly. The overall complimentary color palette is great with the warmer in the foreground, and the cooler in the background. The analogous palette in the background works great to make those mountains look far off in the distance, and bring in some beautiful, unexpected purples to the composition.



HEX #471D20
RGB 71 29 32
CMYK 46 81 69 65



HEX #F9DD31
RGB 249 221 49
CMYK 4 8 91 0



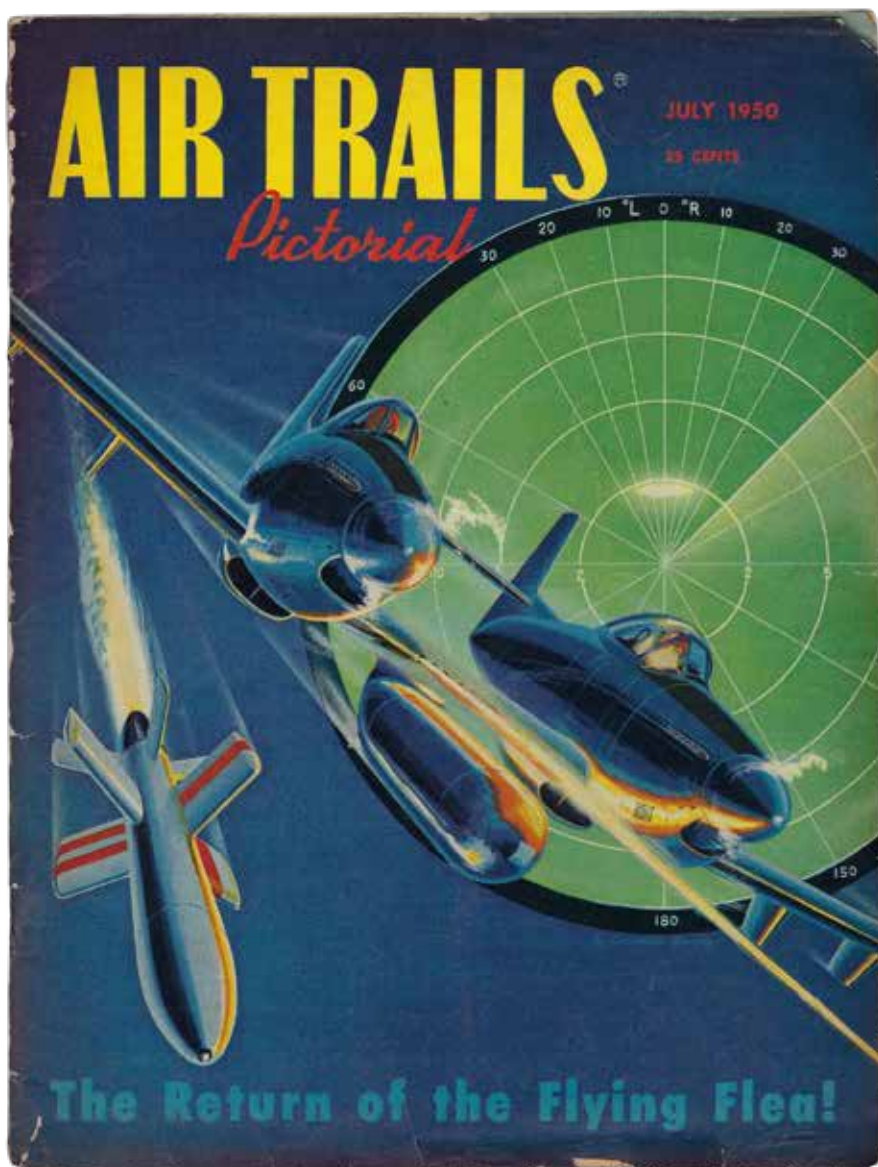
HEX #CB5D24
RGB 203 93 36
CMYK 15 75 100 4



HEX #BF7AA9
RGB 191 122 169
CMYK 24 61 7 0



HEX #3E3C6F
RGB 62 60 111
CMYK 87 86 29 15



Air Trails Pictorial

This 1950 Air Trails magazine cover pairs a beautifully cool background seafoam green and deep royal blue, with bold reds and yellows in the typography on top. Bringing it all together is the use of the warmer reds and yellows in the reflection of the flames from the missiles.



HEX #223757
RGB 34 55 87
CMYK 94 79 40 33



HEX #438B58
RGB 67 139 88
CMYK 76 24 81 8



HEX #E5D61C
RGB 229 214 28
CMYK 13 8 99 0



HEX #CB3E1F
RGB 203 62 31
CMYK 15 89 100 4

Dragon Dominoes

Going all in on warm, analogous colors for the cover looks fantastic here, but needs that black in the palette to make this work. Without that, there wouldn't be enough contrast for this to stand out as well as it does. Even the way the artist painstakingly penned every one of those scales, helped dim the colors a bit on the dragon to give it more dimension.



HEX #DB0000
RGB 219 0 0
CMYK 8 100 100 2



HEX #FF781B
RGB 255 120 27
CMYK 0 66 97 0



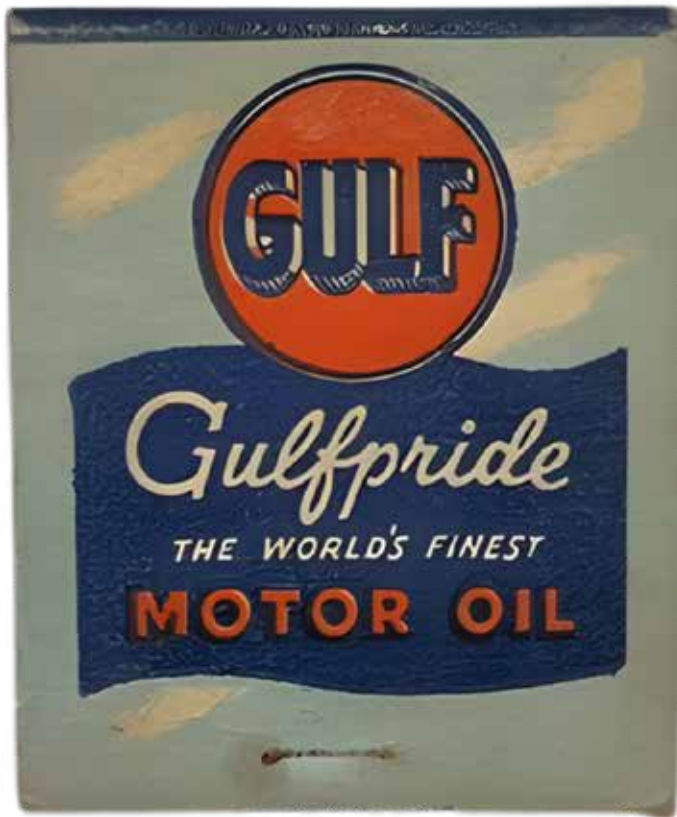
HEX #FFE61A
RGB 255 230 26
CMYK 2 4 97 0



HEX #FF8994
RGB 255 137 148
CMYK 0 59 26 0

Gulf Matchbook

This matchbook channels a classic primary palette of orange and blue (split into dark and light shades) and applies it to coated stock using flat spot-color lithography. Matchbooks like this were inexpensive to print but had to make a strong impression in a small space. It's a classic example of a brand being reinforced through goods made for pockets, dashboards, and greasy garage counters.



HEX #213252
RGB 33 50 82
CMYK 94 82 41 36



HEX #CA4419
RGB 202 68 25
CMYK 15 87 100 4



HEX #969B88
RGB 150 155 136
CMYK 44 31 48 2



Washington Highway Map

This cover is a great example of how contrast and restraint can help elevate an illustration. The dark background with blue line art helps this busy background work alongside the even busier hero illustrations. And when the more detailed characters have a lot more colors, they are mainly reusing the colors that are emphasized in the shapes to tie it all together.



HEX #C17358
RGB 193 115 88
CMYK 21 62 68 4



HEX #F6EE72
RGB 246 238 114
CMYK 6 0 68 0



HEX #41AF49
RGB 65 175 73
CMYK 75 4 100 0



HEX #58B5BB
RGB 88 181 187
CMYK 63 9 28 0



HEX #9582AC
RGB 149 130 172
CMYK 45 51 12 0



HEX #282932
RGB 40 41 50
CMYK 77 70 56 61

Fireproof Hotel Matchbook

This mid-century matchbook pulls from a warm, triadic palette of brick red, mustard yellow, and olive green. The inks were likely rubber-based spot colors, laid on soft chipboard. A combo that naturally mutes saturation and adds grain. It's a great example of flat color work forced to create depth through shape and spacing alone.



HEX #363231
RGB 54 50 49
CMYK 67 64 63 59



HEX #954232
RGB 149 66 50
CMYK 28 81 83 24



HEX #B99944
RGB 185 153 68
CMYK 28 36 88 3



HEX #7D793A
RGB 125 121 58
CMYK 49 40 92 17



HEX #4E606D
RGB 78 96 109
CMYK 72 54 44 19

Washington Ferry Brochure

It's hard to go wrong with the colors turquoise and pink. They complement each other perfectly and scream 1950s. The key to this palette so well is the darkest color isn't black, but instead is a dark, cool green. This helps keep the entire palette feeling cohesive and soft. Bringing in the red for the typography was just a delicious red cherry on top.



HEX #1A453C
RGB 26 69 60
CMYK 85 50 69 48



HEX #377165
RGB 55 113 101
CMYK 79 37 61 18



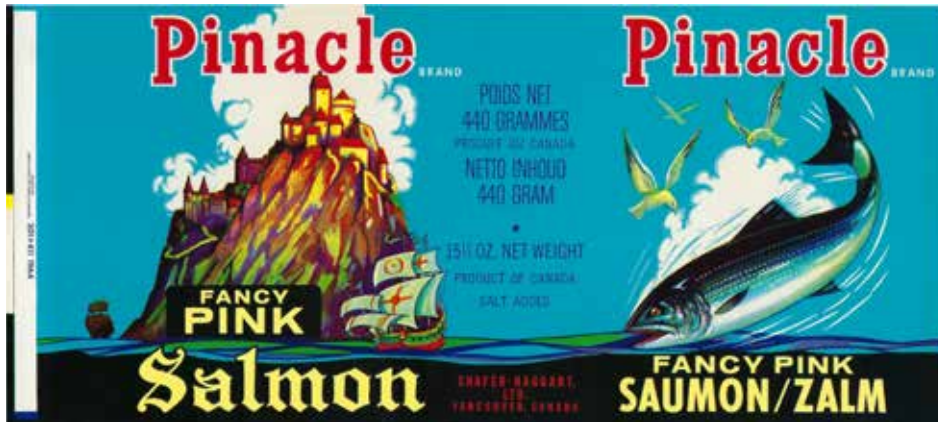
HEX #DC5854
RGB 220 88 84
CMYK 9 80 66 1



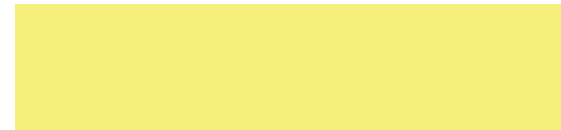
HEX #D2A294
RGB 210 162 148
CMYK 17 38 37 0

Pinacle Pink Salmon Label

There are a lot of beautiful colors being used in this lithograph label, but my eye is on the yellow. It is doing so much of the heavy lifting by keeping all of these colors feeling harmonious. Using yellow as a highlight throughout pulls the warm yellow that is in all of the colors. And by not using yellow in the clouds, it allows the images and text not get lost in the busy illustrations.



HEX #009CB6
RGB 0 156 182
CMYK 79 20 24 0



HEX #F5EF7B
RGB 245 239 123
CMYK 6 0 65 0



HEX #C80416
RGB 200 4 22
CMYK 15 100 100 5



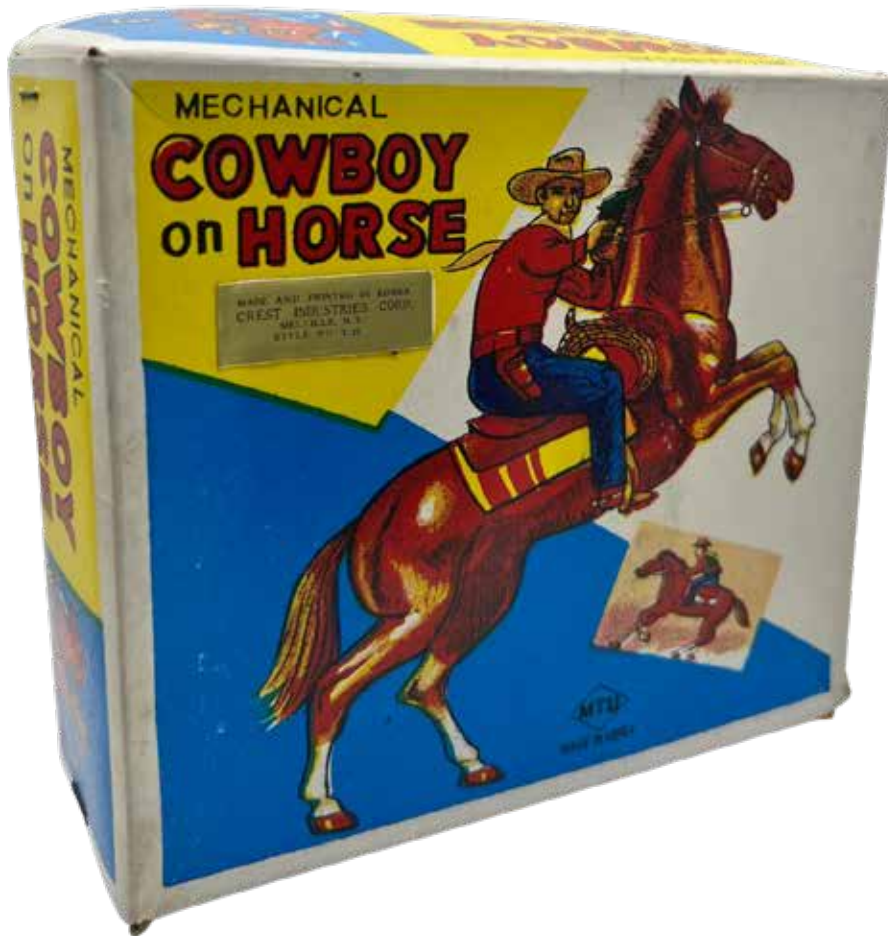
HEX #3FA41E
RGB 63 164 30
CMYK 76 10 100 1



HEX #0B110D
RGB 11 17 13
CMYK 75 65 68 83

Mechanical Cowboy Box

Discovered just a block from the site of the Salem witch trials, this wind-up cowboy toy is a heavy, metal marvel of its era. Found among East Coast relics, its construction feels nearly indestructible—back when toys were built like pocket watches. The magic is in the commitment to bright primary colors, printed tin, and the kind of design made to be loved and handed down.



HEX #CB0000
RGB 203 0 0
CMYK 13 100 100 5



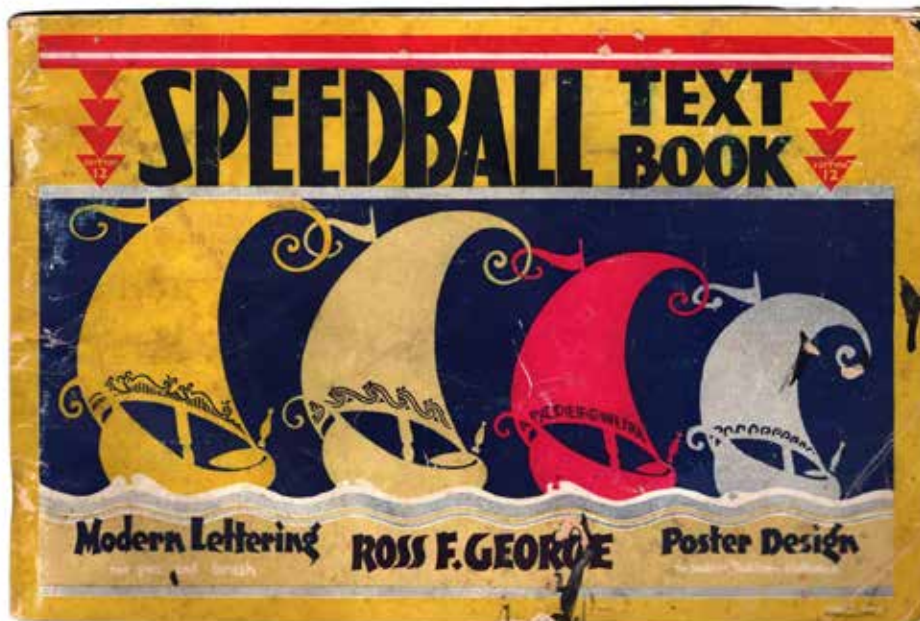
HEX #EAD500
RGB 234 213 0
CMYK 11 9 100 0



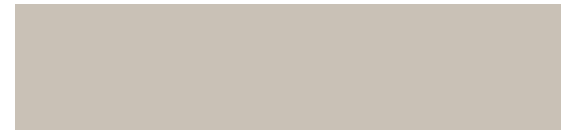
HEX #0054BD
RGB 0 84 189
CMYK 91 72 0 0

Speedball Text Book

This iconic lettering guide throws down a deep, inky navy with blasts of canary yellow, fire red, and soft cream. The triadic palette is engineered for maximum visual energy without muddying the contrast. Printed using spot colors on matte paper, you can see where the ink built up or wore thin, giving it that raw, tactile feel.



HEX #191C3F
RGB 25 28 63
CMYK 96 91 43 51



HEX #C9C1B6
RGB 201 193 182
CMYK 22 20 26 0



HEX #E0BA71
RGB 224 186 113
CMYK 13 26 65 0



HEX #E0A018
RGB 224 160 24
CMYK 12 39 100 0



HEX #D92227
RGB 217 34 39
CMYK 9 99 98 1

Touring Card Game

Choosing to go with a dark, reddish-brown color for contrast in this palette was a win. It harmonizes all of the colors together and doesn't demand more attention than it needs. Having the pinks and reds work so well with the browns, helps the entire cover feel like an idyllic drive down a country road.



HEX #4A1515
RGB 74 21 21
CMYK 43 86 76 66



HEX #FF3C00
RGB 255 60 0
CMYK 0 89 100 0



HEX #FF8A48
RGB 255 138 72
CMYK 0 56 76 0



HEX #A7AC00
RGB 167 172 0
CMYK 40 21 100 1



HEX #88AC91
RGB 136 172 145
CMYK 50 19 49 0

Sky Rangers Tin Blimp

This tin litho toy uses a CMY variation of tomato red, pale yellow, and powder blue, printed with layered spot inks on metal. The palette flattens perspective, making it feel like a comic strip in 3D. Each color is separated for clarity which was essential in this analog printing process. Use it as inspiration for playful palettes that feel both dimensional and nostalgic.



HEX #AC351F
RGB 172 53 31
CMYK 23 91 100 15

HEX #E2B000
RGB 226 176 0
CMYK 13 30 100 0

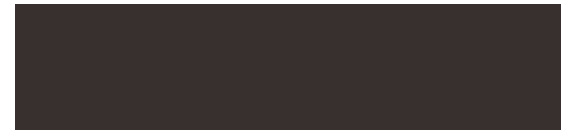
HEX #62A4B5
RGB 98 164 181
CMYK 63 22 24 0

Whipping Cream Lid

Unearthed from a grab-bag of ephemera at Creative South in Georgia, this lid proves how little ink it takes to leave a mark. Just blue on white, with honest typography and a gentle curve to the type. No gradients, no fuss. Just a potent reminder that when color is costly, composition and clarity take the lead.



HEX #DD9E12
RGB 221 158 18
CMYK 13 39 100 0



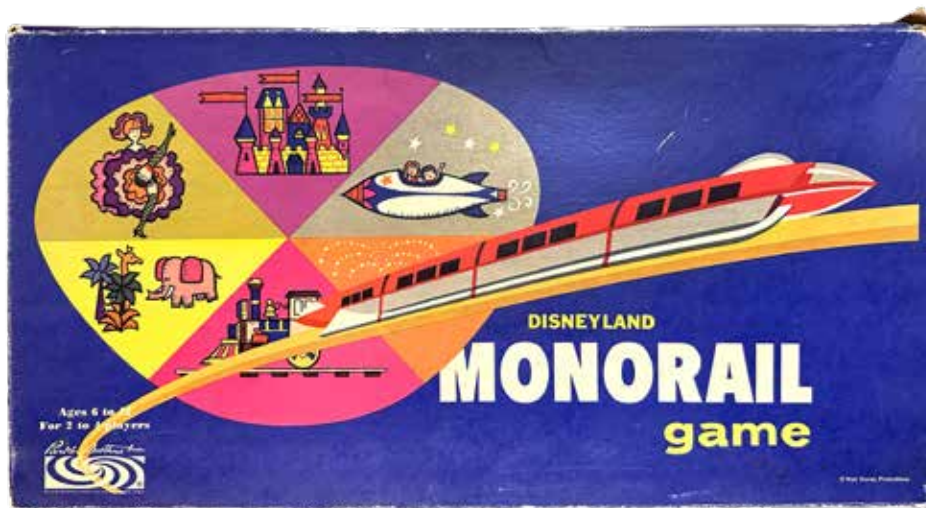
HEX #38302E
RGB 56 48 46
CMYK 64 65 64 61



HEX #2E457B
RGB 46 69 123
CMYK 94 82 24 10

Disneyland Monorail Game

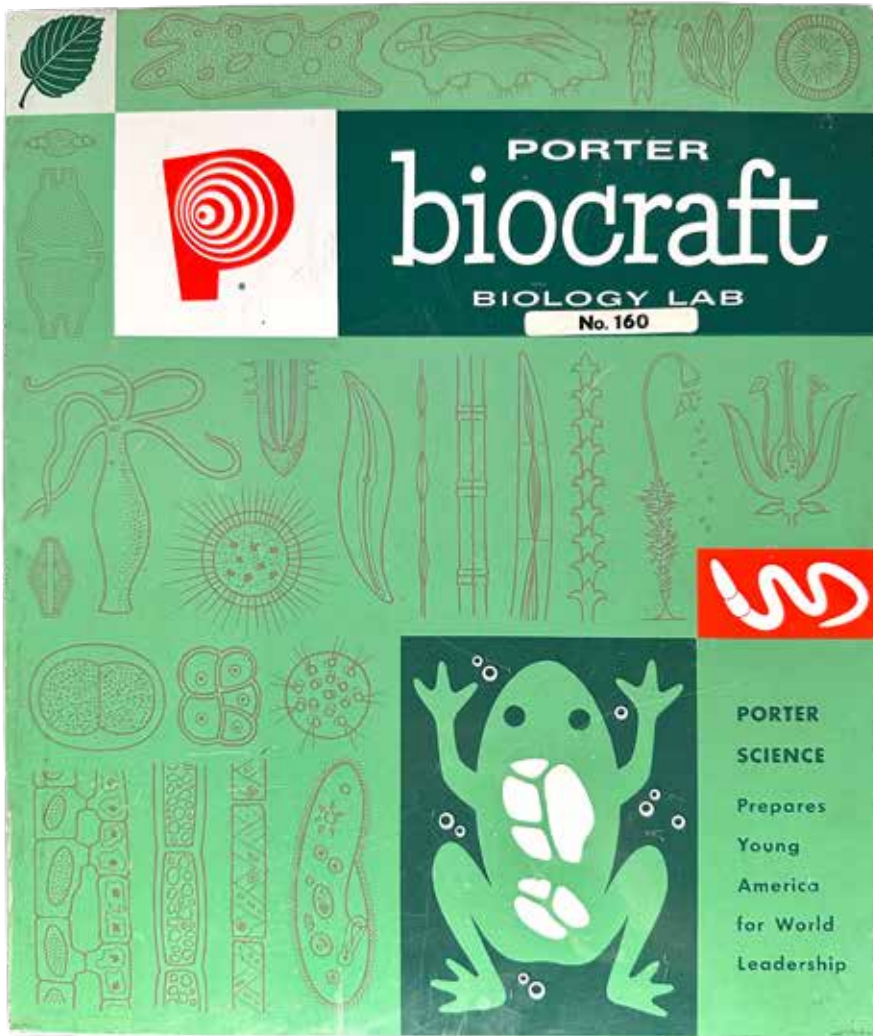
There are a lot of odd colors that made it into the color palette of this 1960s board game cover, but it still works. The key is the amazing, deep blue color that dominates the background. Once you set a warm, analogous color palette on top it truly shines. Leaving all the little strange additions of color like brownish-gold color behind the dancer feel like they can slip into the party as well.



	HEX #C34684 RGB 195 70 132 CMYK 23 87 19 0
	HEX #FF457B RGB 255 69 123 CMYK 0 87 27 0
	HEX #FFFC4A RGB 255 252 74 CMYK 5 0 80 0
	HEX #FF9E47 RGB 255 158 71 CMYK 0 45 79 0
	HEX #D8B233 RGB 216 178 51 CMYK 17 27 95 0
	HEX #222D99 RGB 34 45 153 CMYK 100 96 1 0

Porter Biocraft Lab Kit

This vintage science kit comes in a cool metal tri-fold box and includes a working microscope! The colors definitely read as "science experiment" with nice greens and an olive tone for the line drawings. The pop of red from the logo is super eye-catching next to the greens.



HEX #004C45
RGB 0 76 69
CMYK 91 47 67 42



HEX #7CC491
RGB 124 196 145
CMYK 53 1 56 0



HEX #909172
RGB 144 145 114
CMYK 45 34 60 6



HEX #FF0000
RGB 255 0 0
CMYK 0 99 100 0



Conchon-Quinette Catalog

Conchon-Quinette was a French clothing company that was known for its in-house business model. They controlled the entire process from manufacturing to sales. This is a beautiful cover from the Fall/Winter edition of their 1956-1957 catalog showcasing French fashion for the whole family, plus a bright and showstopping color palette that I want to use all of the time.



HEX #EE531B
RGB 283 83 27
CMYK 1 82 100 0



HEX #59A4BB
RGB 89 164 187
CMYK 65 21 21 0



HEX #F1E7B2
RGB 241 231 178
CMYK 6 5 36 0



HEX #D2B08D
RGB 210 176 141
CMYK 18 30 46 0



HEX #D58057
RGB 213 128 87
CMYK 14 58 71 1



HEX #717775
RGB 113 119 117
CMYK 57 45 48 12



Seattle World's Fair Touring Map

Aside from this absolutely stunning composition of the illustration, this 1962 map cover has such unexpected uses of color. Using the orangey-red for the shadows on the space needle helped justify the use of it everywhere else, and make both the structure and the title pop to the front. This kind of split-complimentary color palette works so well as all of the colors are so well balanced throughout the piece.



HEX #CD552F
RGB 205 85 47
CMYK 14 80 95 3



HEX #F9ED6F
RGB 249 237 111
CMYK 4 1 70 0



HEX #6FA564
RGB 111 165 100
CMYK 61 16 78 1



HEX #477292
RGB 71 114 146
CMYK 77 50 27 5



HEX #474661
RGB 71 70 97
CMYK 76 72 40 26

© 2025 RetroSupply Co. All rights reserved.

All color palettes, descriptions, and photographs in this book were created from objects personally collected and photographed by the RetroSupply team or sourced from verified public domain materials. This publication and its contents may not be reproduced, distributed, or used for commercial purposes without written permission from RetroSupply Co.