

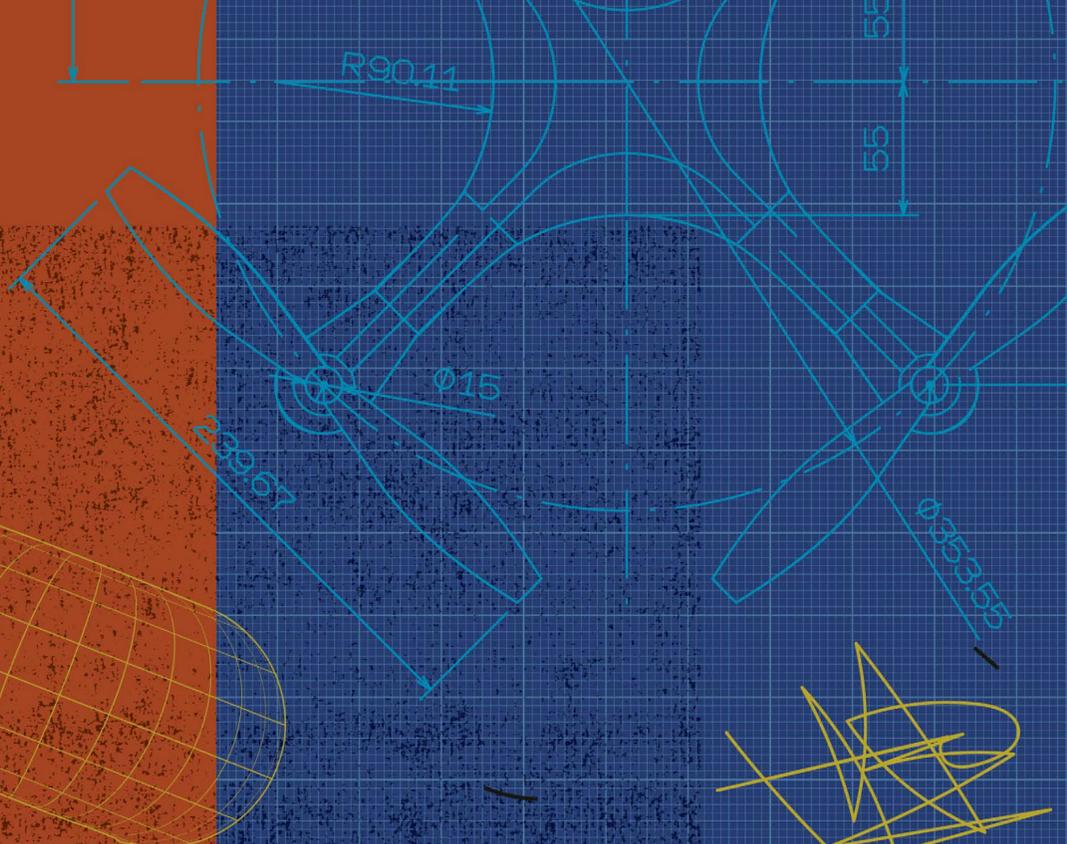
CREATIVE DESIGN TRENDS

2026

Rivendell



PACK
POSITIVE
CENTRE



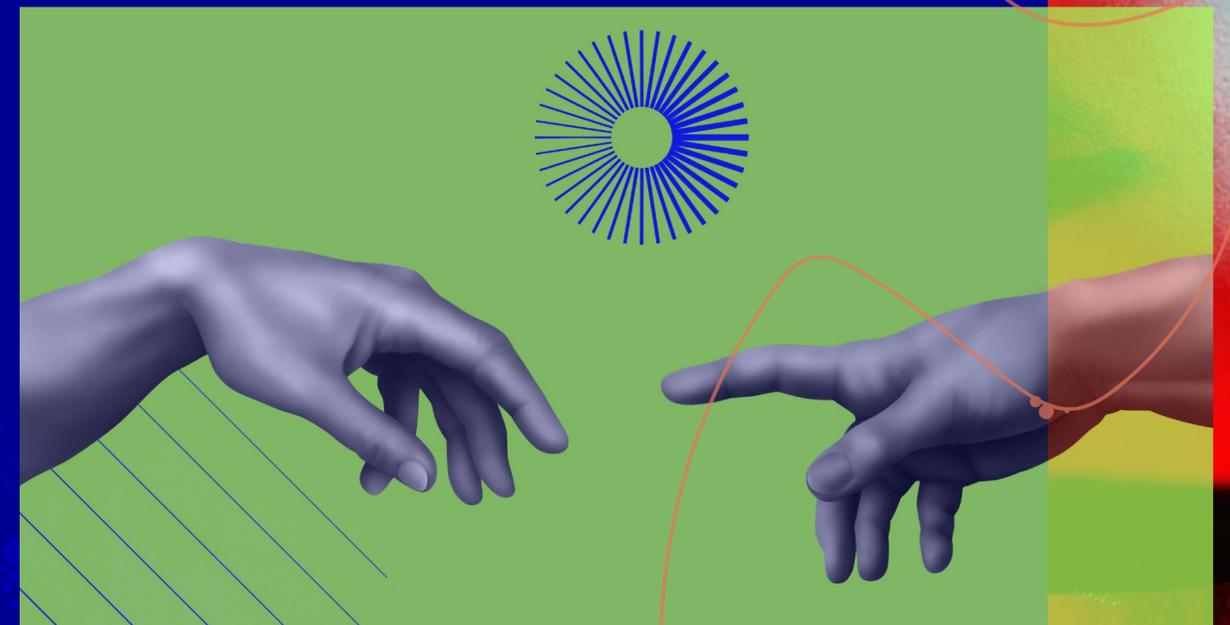
INTRO

Hello 2026!

If you're new here — welcome. The creative team at the Pack Positive Centre invites you to explore the ideas pushing design forward and the practices reshaping how creativity shows up in the world.

This year, imperfection takes centre stage. Expect playful doodles challenging AI's flawless finish and typography that fuses digital clarity with heritage-inspired character. The result? Work that feels more human, expressive, and unmistakably original.

So pause the scroll, grab a cuppa, and settle in as we unpack the design trends defining the year ahead.



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PLAYFUL DOODLES AND SCRIBBLES

Naive design feels like a subtle wink to the audience, saying, "yes, a real person made this". It's vibrant, playful and full of nostalgic charm. This style embraces imperfections, creating visuals that appear slightly chaotic yet intentional—an artful mess that feels approachable. Think bold colours, quirky doodles, irregular angles, and a sense of personality. It's a refreshing break from overly polished aesthetics, giving brands a more human and authentic vibe. Unlike sleek minimalism, naive design stands out by capturing attention with character.

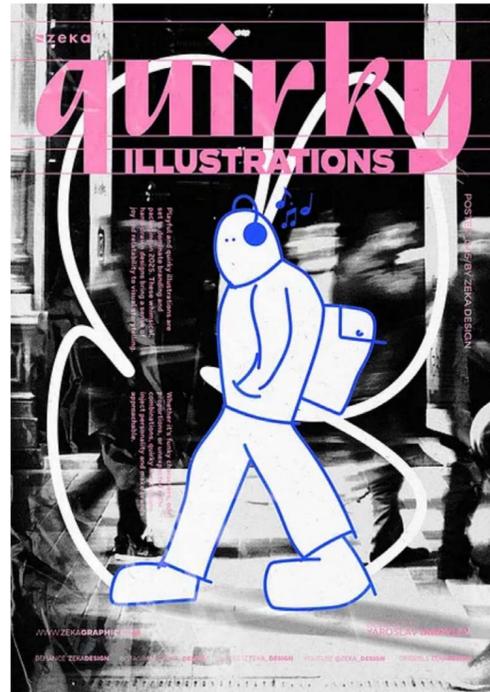
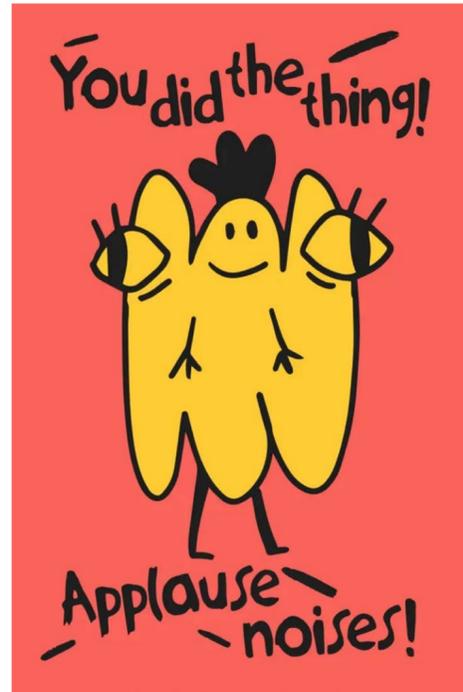
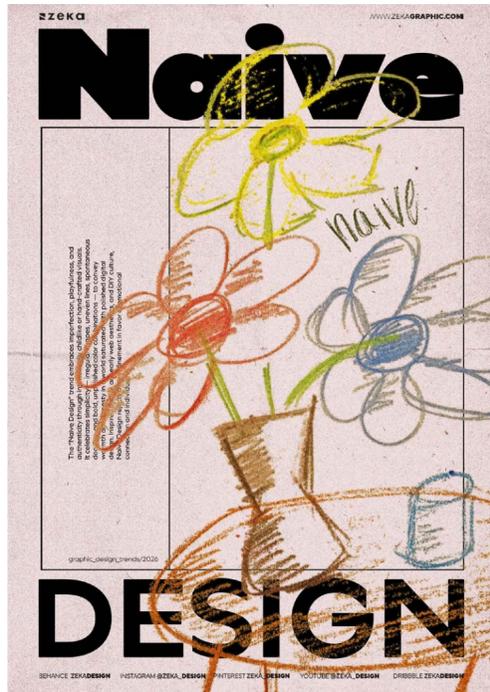
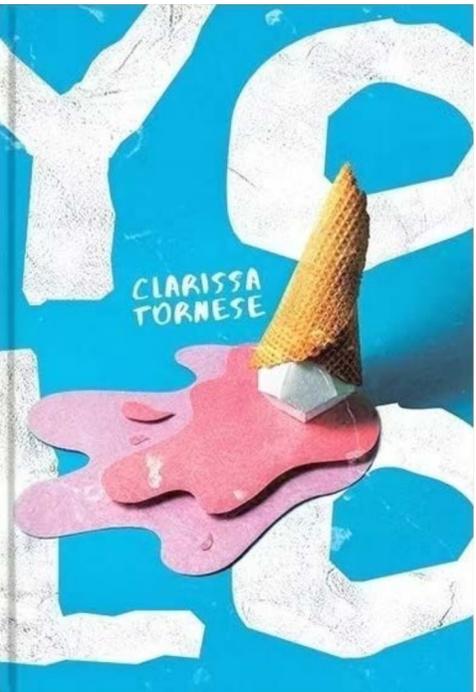


WHY IS IT TRENDING IN 2026?

Because it strikes the perfect balance between playfulness and simplicity. In an era dominated by AI-generated designs, this trend feels warm and personal, reminding us of the human creativity behind the work. The beauty of naive design lies in knowing how to make something perfect—and choosing not to.



This scribble and sketchbook style provides a feeling of authenticity, which can also build trust and connection with the viewer. With its raw and fun aesthetic, it evokes a feeling of collaboration through its layered and hand-drawn elements - celebrating the beauty of imperfect design.



COLLAGING AND PLAYFUL LAYOUTS

Collage and layering have dominated design trends this year, but one style that is truly stealing the spotlight is type collage. Imagine bold letters overlapping in unexpected ways, creating layouts that feel dynamic, chaotic, and full of personality.

This trend is all about breaking the rules, imperfect, playful, and unapologetically unique, it thrives on high-energy colour combinations; think bright, contrasting shades that make every element pop. Type collages grab attention, radiate fun and dominate, with bold overlapping letters mixed with cursive handwritten characters creating layouts that feel dynamic and full of personality. This style lends itself well to poster design and social, encouraging the viewer to pause and take it all in.





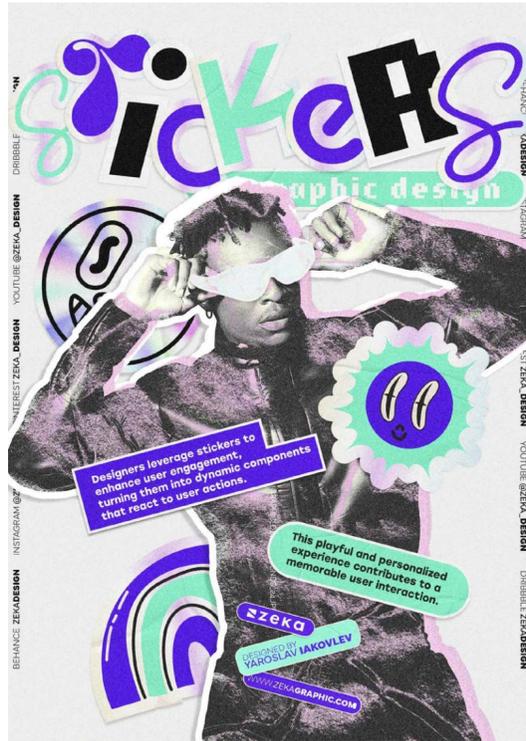
BEHANCE ZEKADDESIGN

INSTAGRAM @ZEKA_DESIGN

PINTEREST ZEKA_DESIGN

YOUTUBE @ZEKA_DESIGN

DRIBBLE



HANDMADE AND HUMANISTIC

Collaging and layering pushes designers to think beyond flat composition, turning type and imagery into tactile, almost physical experiences.

By stacking elements, playing with scale, transparency, and texture, designs gain depth and movement, guiding the viewer's eye through controlled chaos. This approach celebrates experimentation and intuition, allowing stories to unfold in layers rather than at a glance, making each composition feel immersive, expressive and alive.



Freshly Baked
CROISSANTS

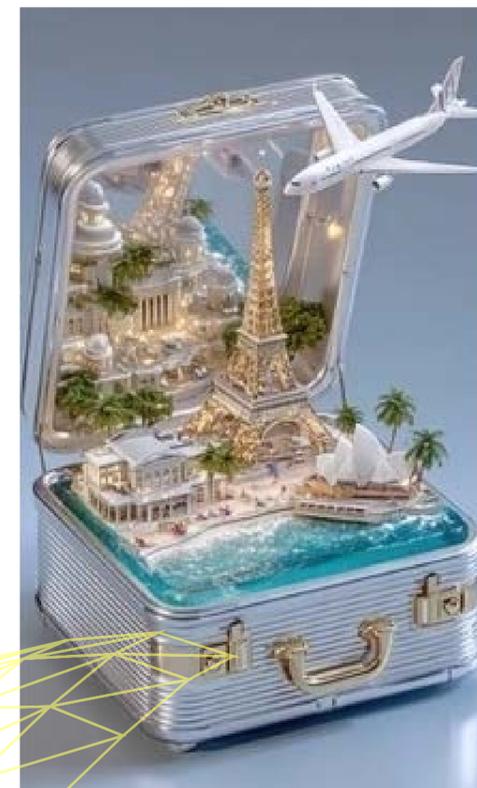


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HYBRID INTELLIGENCE

Deep breath, everyone: the "AI-pocalypse" didn't happen. Instead, 2026 has ushered in the era of Hybrid Intelligence, where AI has officially traded in its "job stealer" cape for a much more helpful "creative co-pilot" flight suit. We've finally moved past the idea of AI as a mysterious "magic button" that spits out finished masterpieces. Instead, it's become the ultimate power tool that happily grinds through the mundane tasks so the designer is able to tackle the good stuff at the heart of a project. This reinforces the irreplaceable need for skilled designers delivering high-level, big picture creativity that machines cannot imitate.



AI might be a literal speed-demon when it comes to predicting patterns, although built by humans, it hasn't lived through human experience. It can draw a heart, but it doesn't know what heartbreak feels like. It can't understand the "vibe" of a local subculture or the subtle emotional weight of a brand's legacy. Because it lacks that unpredictable thing we call emotional depth, the heavy lifting of strategic intent, cultural nuance, and storytelling remains exactly where it belongs—firmly in the hands of humans. In this new world, AI handles the how, but designers remain the absolute masters of the why.





INK TRAP FONTS

In 2026, we're seeing a renewed interest in fonts with sharp notches and cut-ins often called "ink traps" showing up in modern display typography. These shapes weren't originally decorative. They were created for old printing methods, where ink would spread and blur small details. The cut-ins gave ink somewhere to go, helping letters stay readable when printed quickly and cheaply, such as in newspapers or phone books.

AßC Whyte
↘*New*↙
Cruise R^ots
“Bat” 70s
«Géorǵia,»
1982s &nd

te
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s
,»
nd

Today, those printing problems no longer exist, but designers are intentionally bringing these shapes back as a visual style. Instead of solving a technical issue, the exaggerated notches now give type a crisp, engineered and intentional look. You see this especially in branding and headlines, where designers want something that feels sharper and more distinctive than the smooth, rounded fonts that have been popular for years. For tech, media and innovation brands, this style communicates precision, confidence and a modern edge while still nodding to design history.



whyte inktrap

MODERN DISPLAY TYPEFACE

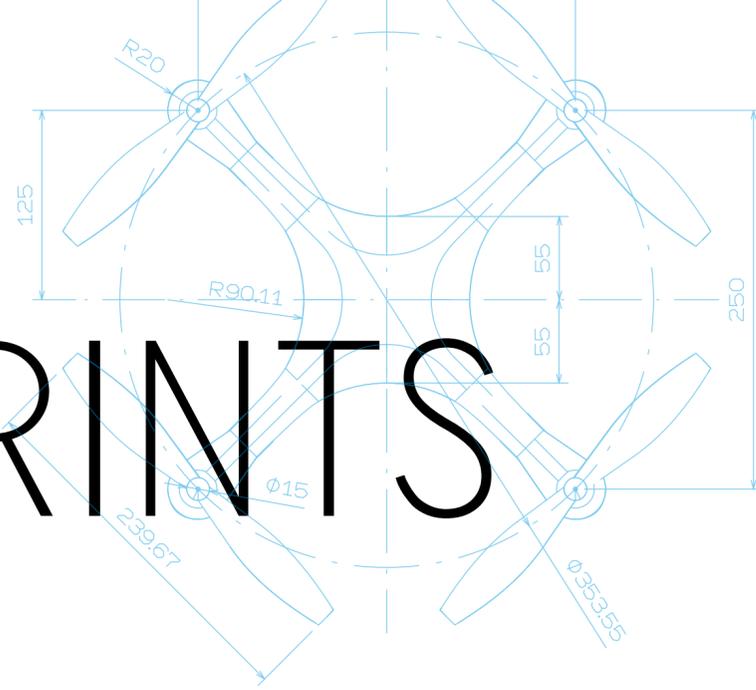
NeueTM
MONIQUE



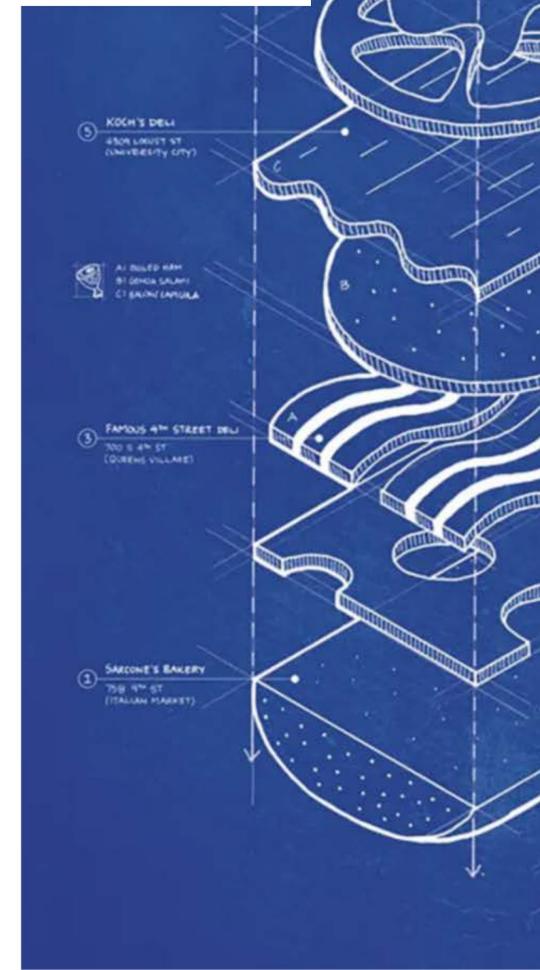
ZARMA ZARMA TYPE FOUNDRY COLLECTION NO.32 DESIGN BY AZZAM RIDHAMALIK CONDENSED FONT MONIQUE TYPEFACE. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED @2023 MULTI-PURPOSE TYPEFACE

TRENDS

DECONSTRUCTED BLUEPRINTS



In a conscious shift away from AI generated content, designers are looking back to earlier, simpler times, when products weren't made on a computer, but at a drafting table using pen and paper. In 2026 this now sees the rise of blueprint design.





Blue print

This visual language speaks to transparency, order, and technical mastery — yet it's being used in unexpectedly poetic ways.

head
88° 31' 667

arm1
/3456/8

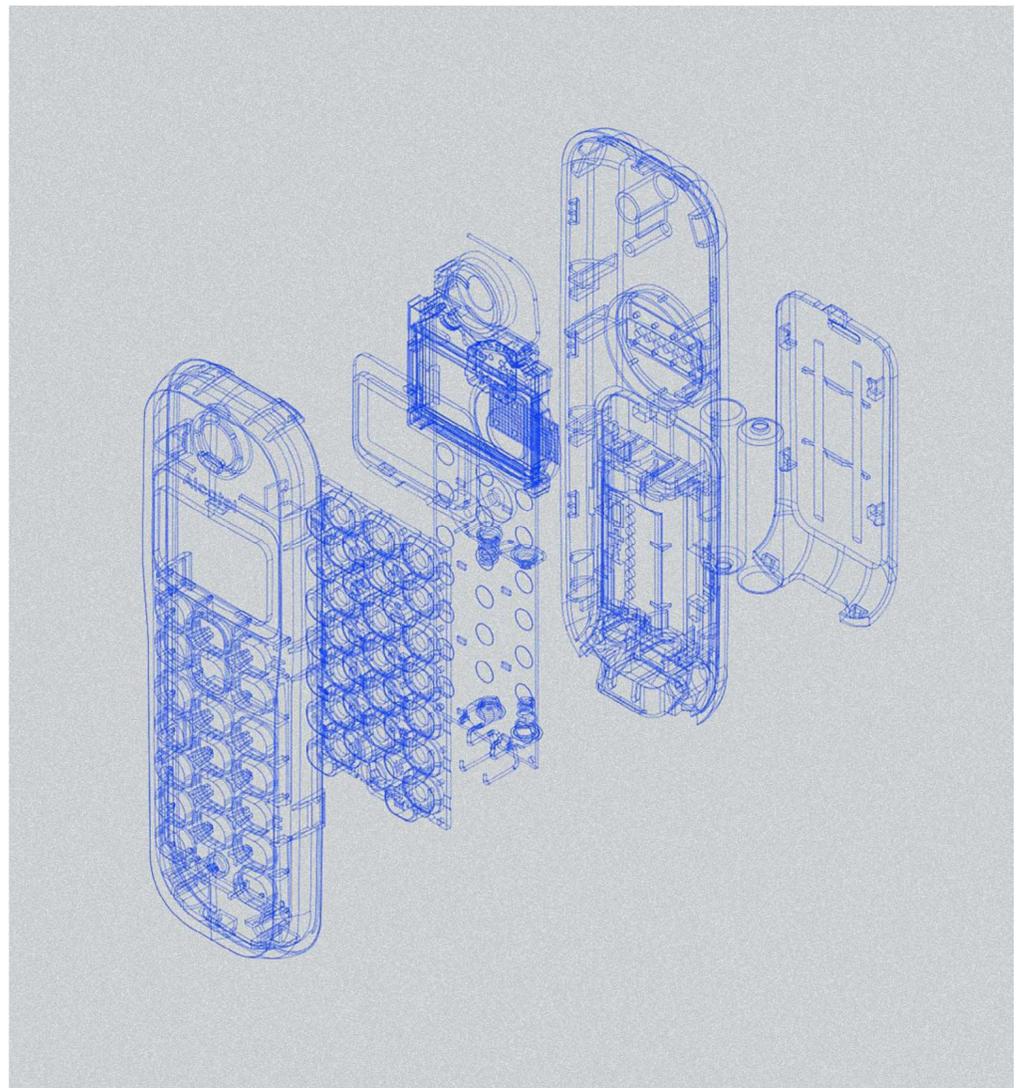
heart
132552° 11'S

hand 1
652° 518%

des/gn

graphic design trends 2026
WWW.ZEKAGRAPHIC.COM

Blueprint design delivers graphic elements through obsessive and hyper detailed technical drawings, giving the illusion the design is data driven. Over explaining becomes the look, feel and aesthetic. It makes ordinary products feel considered, overly engineered and more premium.



PANTONE®

COLOUR OF THE YEAR

As we dive into 2026, Pantone gently sets the tone with their Colour of the Year – Cloud Dancer.

A “lofty white” that suggests the idea of peace and allows a moment of grounding reflection in the busy fast-past climate we find ourselves in. Pantone have chosen to be bold in their choice this year, but not in a way that follows historical choice's like 2023's Viva Magenta and 2021's Illuminating Yellow. Others may suggest it signifies a sign of retreat as appose to progress, and are left feeling uninspired...

We choose to believe Cloud Dancer was chosen to deliver a versatile foundation that can be used alone in its minimalist form, or indeed vamped up with practically endless colour combinations to portray any vibe, from dreamy pastels to tropical tones.

Cloud Dancer has already divided creatives across the globe, but maybe that's exactly what this year's colour of the year was meant to provoke. A conversation about what we crave and what we reject.



Cloud Dancer
11-4201



14-4005 TCX
Nantucket Breeze

14-4912 TCX
Rinsing Rivulet

14-0827 TCX
Dusky Citroen



18-1512 TCX
Rose Brown

16-1329 TCX
Coral Haze

14-1217 TCX
Amberlight



17-3323 TCX
Iris Orchard

14-0443 TCX
Kiwi Colada

12-0643 TCX
Blazing Yellow

THE SPARK

Mini themes, styles and inspiration to watch out for within our top trend picks that could be the creative spark that makes a good design an epic one!

GLITCHY GLAM

Maybe it's a reflection of the unrest over the past year, or the takeover of AI, but one thing is for sure, intentionally imperfect and cute glamour is going to be everywhere in 2026, from fashion to design.



90'S RAVE



There is a resurgence of futuristic imagery and design, based on rave flyer aesthetics similar to that of the early 90's. A time when things were simpler and design software had many more restrictions. The last year has seen a real shift back to 90's fashion and design, largely inspired by trends in music.



GOTHIC ART AND FONTS

In 2026 we are going to see inspiration taken from both the distant and recent past. From gothic and pixelated fonts, to gothic style imagery taken directly from the visions of old Dutch masters and 16 bit pixelated video game inspired imagery.

It is also predicted that designers will take inspiration from simple, naive, bright garish designs, heavily influenced by the early days of the .com boom and simple Flash animations.



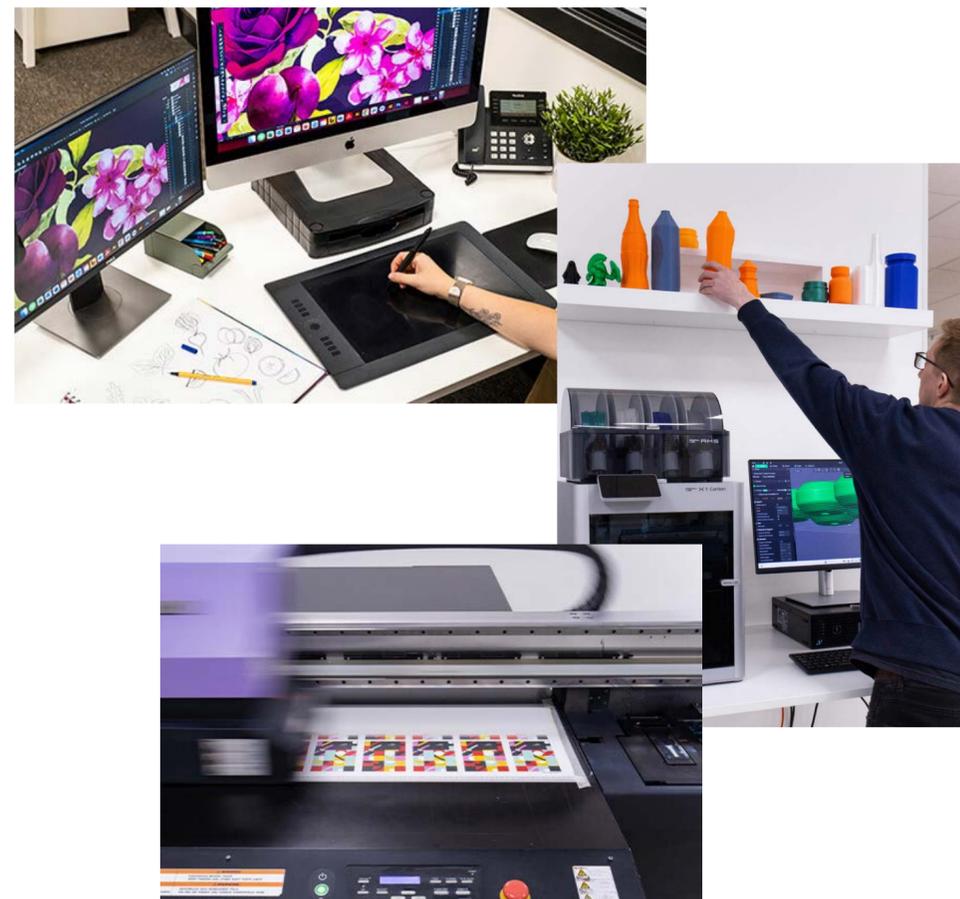
READING LIST



- [adobe.com](https://www.adobe.com)
- [creativebloq.com](https://www.creativebloq.com)
- [creativeboom.com](https://www.creativeboom.com)
- [creativereview.co.uk](https://www.creativereview.co.uk)
- [coloura.co.uk](https://www.coloura.co.uk)
- dev.to
- iamsteve.me
- itsnicethat.com
- kittl.com
- lindsaymarsh.substack.com
- [pantone.com](https://www.pantone.com)
- tosche.net
- [typographica.org](https://www.typographica.org)
- [whowhatwear.com](https://www.whowhatwear.com)
- [zarmatype.com](https://www.zarmatype.com)

THE CREATIVE TEAM

This publication is brought to you by the creative team at the Pack Positive Centre in Leeds. Based out of Rivendell (North), the team support concept creation, packaging design and artwork for multiple packaging formats. Our creative services include concept design, 3D design and adaptive design for new formats and EPD.



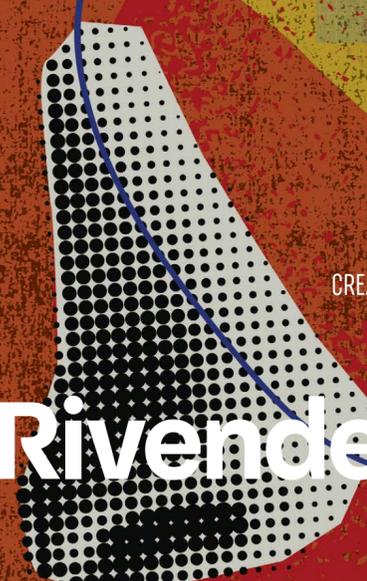
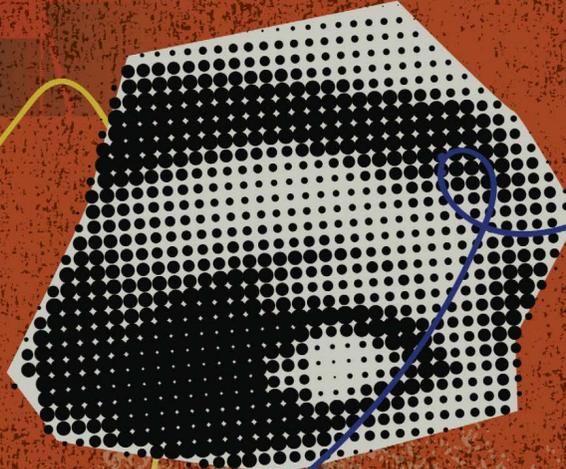
- EDELE BOOTH**
- AMELIA CARRERA**
- DAVID COOPER**
- DUNCAN KIRKBRIDE**

Ready to take your packaging to the next level?

Contact our Pack Positive Centre creative team at ppc.design@coveris.com

```
10 HTT=INT(RND*(HT+1))
20 FOR M=1 TO 21:HT=HTT:STEP 1
30 LOCATE M,N:PRINT " "
40 NEXT M
50 X=1:Y=3
60
70 LOCATE Y,X:PRINT " "
80 IF SC>HS THEN HS=SC
90 LOCATE 1,1:PRINT "SCORE: ";SC;"  "HS
100 IF Y=22 THEN 3000
110 FOR N=1 TO 20
120   T$=INKEY$
130   IF T$="" AND LAR=0 THEN 200
140   NEXT N
150   W=W+1
160   GOTO 300
170   LAR=1:Z=X:W=Y
180   GOTO 310
190
200 IF LAR=1 THEN 400 ELSE 500
210 W=W+1
220 IF W=21 THEN LAR=0
230 TE=SCREEN(W,Z)
240 IF TE=73 THEN 400
250 LOCATE W,Z:PRINT " "
260 FOR M=1 TO 20
270   GOTO 300
280 LOCATE W,Z:PRINT " "
290
300 LOCATE Y,X:PRINT " "
310
320
330
340
350
360
370
380
390
400
```

TE=SCREEN(W,Z)
IF TE=73 THEN 400
LOCATE W,Z:PRINT " "
FOR M=1 TO 20
GOTO 300
LOCATE W,Z:PRINT " "



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