
Retro Supply co
THE MID-CENTURY
COLOR
CATALOG
25 Color Swatches Inspired by Mid-Century Packaging
FREE BONUS
Downloadable
Color Swatches

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book is created by designers for those who love seeking out mid-century inspiration. As design becomes all digital, there always seems to be a craving to seek inspiration from vintage advertisements, packaging, or badges. This is what we've done here. We've gone through and researched vintage packaging, and have found beautiful examples to bring to you to inspire your creations.

Use these color palettes as is, or you can input the values of a color you love into Kuler by Adobe to generate a custom palette to use.

Happy creating!

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SODA BOTTLE CAPS

Crown bottle caps were printed in saturated eye-catching colors. Marketing agencies paid close attention to making bottle caps so colorful and attractive that consumers would save them (serving as a reminder of the brand and building brand loyalty).

In your own work try pairing a saturated color with black or a high-contrast secondary color for maximum impact.

rgb
232 | 145 | 61
cmyk
7 | 50 | 87 | 0

rgb
47 | 85 | 60
cmyk
79 | 43 | 79 | 39

rgb
119 | 173 | 178
cmyk
55 | 18 | 29 | 0

rgb
0 | 0 | 0
cmyk
0 | 0 | 0 | 100

rgb
224 | 106 | 56
cmyk
8 | 71 | 88 | 0

source



ESSLINGER'S LITTLE MAN ALE

Esslinger's was the first Philly brewery to sell beer in cans, doing so right after the Prohibition repealed. The cans were an immediate hit, and this iconic logo was seen all over the city.

To replicate this iconic piece, use primary colors that are saturated.

rgb 25 | 57 | 68
cmyk 89 | 65 | 54 | 47

rgb 219 | 51 | 40
cmyk 10 | 95 | 100 | 0

rgb 230 | 203 | 54
cmyk 12 | 15 | 93 | 0

source



SPACE-O SPACE GAME

Space - O, A New Space Game for Boys and Girls predates The Jetsons with it's space age illustrations. "Space O, A New Space Game for Boys and Girls. Man you rocket ship, set your instruments , start your countdown! Play today this fast, exciting, new game of tomorrow's space age!"

For your own work, use red as a primary color, and offset it subtly with the blue and cream.

rgb 223 | 32 | 39
cmyk 7 | 100 | 100 | 0

rgb 111 | 167 | 168
cmyk 59 | 20 | 34 | 0

rgb 254 | 215 | 177
cmyk 0 | 17 | 31 | 0

source

BAZOOKA BUBBLE GUM



Bazooka Bubble Gum was developed after World War II. With its distinctive name, taste, and red, white and blue logo and packaging, soon became a familiar part of Americana

To replicate this, try using bold blocks of color, and use white sparingly.

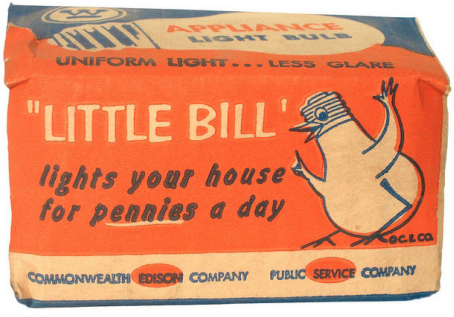
rgb 238 | 49 | 36
cmyk 0 | 97 | 49 | 36

rgb 26 | 104 | 179
cmyk 89 | 60 | 0 | 0

rgb 255 | 255 | 255
cmyk 0 | 0 | 0 | 0

source

LITTLE BILL LIGHT BULBS



Little Bill was the mascot for Commonwealth Edison Company. He had a light bulb body and advertised low electric rates.

Bring Little Bill into your design by using blue for important information, and the red and beige for other playful elements.

rgb 246 | 115 | 61
cmyk 0 | 69 | 83 | 0

rgb 77 | 103 | 116
cmyk 73 | 51 | 42 | 16

rgb 240 | 189 | 132
cmyk 5 | 27 | 53 | 0



STAFLEX DRESSMAKING INTERLINING

Staflex Iron-on Interlining was used for dressmaking in the 1950s. It was as easy as ironing on a piece of lining, and a collar, cuffs, or necklines were immediately finished. This was the perfect way for people at home to fix up their clothing, or finish if they made their own!

Choose one of these colors as a base, and another that will be used to make important information pop. Use the last throughout the piece to bring it all together.

rgb 211 | 169 | 93
cmyk 18 | 32 | 74 | 0

rgb 70 | 47 | 45
cmyk 54 | 70 | 65 | 59

rgb 203 | 172 | 154
cmyk 21 | 32 | 37 | 0

source



EIGHT O'CLOCK COFFEE

The Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company created Eight O'Clock Breakfast Coffee, and it later dropped "breakfast" after a survey that was conducted! The survey asked what times people drank coffee, and the majority reported either 8 a.m. or 8 p.m.

Replicate this vintage design by using the red to stand out and draw attention, and integrate the yellow and black in with important information that needs to be seen.

rgb 254 | 47 | 41
cmyk 0 | 93 | 89 | 0

rgb 203 | 170| 73
cmyk 22 | 30 | 85 | 1

rgb 0 | 0 | 0
cmyk 0 | 0 | 0 | 100

source

BRILLO SOAP PADS



"Twice the shine in half the time" was the famous slogan for Brillo Soap Pads. Brillo Soap Pads promised that results were guaranteed, and if they weren't, a free utensil would be given to those who weren't satisfied. To enjoy a commercial from 1958 about Brillo, click here.
To achieve the clean design of Brillo Soap Pads, use the color of your paper, or white, as much as possible, and play with the red and blue.

rgb 181 | 26 | 22
cmyk 20 | 100 | 100 | 12

rgb 21 | 32 | 111
cmyk 100 | 97 | 25 | 17

source



BLATZ MILWAUKEE BEER

Blatz received it's name which played on the fact that many other beers had a different taste when bottled and canned from how they tasted fresh from the keg. Their famous jingle was "Kegs, Cans, or Bottles, all taste the same. The three best is one beer - Blatz is the name."
Use blue as a base in your vintage inspired design. Remember to shy away from yellow text, it's always hard to read! Use the blue on yellow if highlighting information.

rgb 63 | 75 | 89
cmyk 76 | 63 | 47 | 32

rgb 215 | 71 | 37
cmyk 10 | 87 | 100 | 1

rgb 230 | 220 | 123
cmyk 11 | 6 | 64 | 0

source

REESE'S PEANUT BUTTER CUPS



Reese's Peanut Butter Cups were the company's most popular product and was marketed separately. They were also marketed in several sizes including a 1 cent, 2 cent and 5 cent size. In 1942, due to wartime rationing and the popularity of the Peanut Butter Cup, H.B. Reese discontinued all other product lines and focused his efforts on the Peanut Butter Cup
To replicate Reese's in your own design, use orange as the main color, and the yellow and brown for minor details.

rgb 235 | 80 | 52
cmyk 2 | 54 | 88 | 0

rgb 246 | 182 | 58
cmyk 3 | 31 | 89 | 0

rgb 112 | 34 | 12
cmyk 33 | 90 | 100 | 45

source

LEAF PAL BUBBLE GUM



This Leaf Pal Bubble Gum image was used as a header display in gum ball machines in the 1950's!

Notice how the red brings your eye in, but then the blue highlights all the good stuff? Try using that in your own design, with the yellow as a base. .

rgb 245 | 74 | 28
cmyk 0 | 86 | 100 | 0

rgb 247 | 234 | 60
cmyk 6 | 1 | 87 | 0

rgb 16 | 9 | 121
cmyk 100 | 99 | 17 | 18



CRA•O•TEC CRAYONS

Cra-o-tec #104 Crayons for home and school, was made by Best Art Products Brooklyn NY in the 1950's. These crayons were advertised as the "best color crayons for best color effects."

Use these colors as inspiration, by limiting the palette to red and blue, and finding a colored paper to print on.

rgb 254 | 28 | 6
cmyk 0 | 98 | 100 | 0

rgb 40 | 62 | 101
cmyk 93 | 79 | 35 | 23

rgb 224 | 183 | 131
cmyk 12 | 28 | 54 | 0

source



CRA•O•TEC CHALK

Not only did Best Art Products Brooklyn NY make crayons, but they also produced chalk!

This fun design uses teal as a base, and cream and black to highlight the illustration and information on the box.

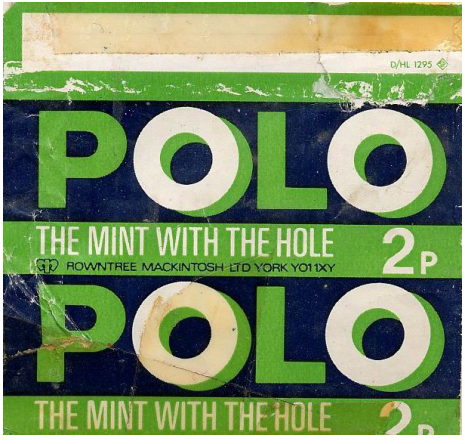
rgb 59 | 132 | 87
cmyk 79 | 27 | 80 | 11

rgb 0 | 0 | 0
cmyk 0 | 0 | 0 | 100

rgb 231 | 209 | 160
cmyk 9 | 15 | 41 | 0

source

POLO MINTS



Polo mints actually started back in 1939, but due to WWII, their introduction to the market was delayed until 1947. “Polo” refers to “Polar,” referencing the refreshing mint taste.

Replicate the playful design of Polo Mints by using large shapes, and the white as a highlight.

rgb 94 | 166 | 70
cmyk 69 | 14 | 100 | 0

rgb 0 | 13 | 57
cmyk 100 | 91 | 42 | 58

rgb 225 | 220 | 198
cmyk 11 | 9 | 22 | 0

source

MYERS PB FITTING



PB Board Fitting became a perfect option for organizing home spaces or garages!

To achieve the timeless look of the Myers PB Fitting packaging, designate each color for certain information. Like pictured, the yellow can be the base, while white is used for minor details, and the black is used for all of the important information that the buyer needs to know.

rgb 204 | 151 | 46
cmyk 22 | 42 | 100 | 0

rgb 0 | 0 | 0
cmyk 0 | 0 | 0 | 100

rgb 213 | 196 | 142
cmyk 18 | 19 | 50 | 0

source

ATOM BOMBER



Not only did the box serve as an the packaging for the Atom Bomber, but the outside of the box was used as a part of the game! The red was used on the outside of the box as a target for children to use when playing with the Atom Bomber.

Use these colors in your own design by having red be the focal point and offsetting it with blue and white.

rgb 202 | 32 | 0
cmyk 14 | 98 | 100 | 0

rgb 0 | 36 | 49
cmyk 93 | 71 | 56 | 64

rgb 240 | 234 | 216
cmyk 5 | 5 | 15 | 0

source



POST'S SUGAR CRISP BEARS

Early advertisements for Post's Sugar Crisp Bears featured three animated cartoon bears named Candy, Handy, and Dandy as the mascots. The early slogan said, "As a cereal it's dandy—for snacks it's so handy—or eat it like candy!"

To replicate this playful design, focus more on using the yellow, cream, and blue.

rgb
163 | 13 | 12
cmyk
24 | 100 | 100 | 20

rgb
207 | 166 | 44
cmyk
21 | 33 | 100 | 0

rgb
206 | 166 | 44
cmyk
21 | 33 | 100 | 0

rgb
41 | 53 | 132
cmyk
100 | 95 | 10 | 5

source



PORTER CHEMCRAFT JUNIOR EXPERIMENT MANUAL

Prior to the Chemcraft Junior Experiment manual, there were no scientific toys available for children. Brothers Harold and John Porter made the first chemistry sets for children: boxes of “chemical magic” that could create dramatic effects like color changes and invisible inks Use the red as a base, and the yellow and blue to highlight information.

rgb
173 | 22 | 11
cmyk
22 | 100 | 100 | 15

rgb
198 | 173 | 48
cmyk
26 | 27 | 100 | 0

rgb
0 | 0 | 0
cmyk
0 | 0 | 0 | 100

rgb
42 | 132 | 145
cmyk
81 | 33 | 38 | 5

source

ASTRONAUT SPACE HELMET



The Astronaut Space Helmet were for kids who were dreaming of shooting for the moon!
Mimic the vintage feel by using the cream color for big shapes, and the red and blue for line-work.

rgb 15 | 48 | 99
cmyk 100 | 89 | 33 | 24

rgb 144 | 50 | 12
cmyk 28 | 88 | 100 | 28

rgb 199 | 199 | 166
cmyk 23 | 15 | 38 | 0

source



BLAIR LOW ODOR SPRAY FIX

David Blair, a commercial artist in the 1950's, created Blair Low Oder Spray Fix, which was the first aerosol product on the market. Artists recognized the benefits of the spray, and Blair Art Products was born to create more high quality products for artists.

Replicate this fun illustration by only using the white for blocks of Illustration or copy, and using the negative space with yellow and brown to create a fun piece.

rgb 187 | 178 | 104
cmyk 30 | 23 | 72 | 0

rgb 57 | 38 | 31
cmyk 55 | 69 | 72 | 68

rgb 211 | 203 | 190
cmyk 17 | 16 | 23 | 0

source



FLETT'S VANILLA ICE CREAM BAR

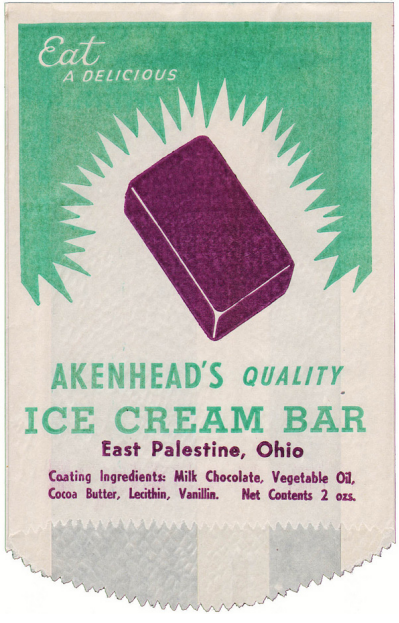
The ice cream industry took off in the 1950's, and the packaging was an important part of it. The packaging was made with inexpensive wax-lined food package and a bright single color of ink to catch the attention of kids

To replicate the fun and simple design of Flett's, use negative space wisely with the red!

rgb 202 | 30 | 60
cmyk 13 | 100 | 78 | 5

rgb 255 | 255 | 255
cmyk 0 | 0 | 0 | 0

source



AKENHEADS ICE CREAM BAR

Akenheads Ice Cream, located in East Palestine, Ohio produced all sorts of dairy products in the 1950s. The dairy industry changed when television marketing focused on the equipment and efficiency, but primarily it focused on the packaging. Therefore, each ice cream package had to be bright and catch eyes of those who were passing by.

This design uses teal to highlight the main object, which is in purple.

Try using these colors in your design and guide eyes to the main object.

rgb 97 | 180 | 136
cmyk 64 |7 | 60 | 0

rgb 93 | 42 | 75
cmyk 58 | 89 | 44 | 36

rgb 255 | 255 | 255
cmyk 0 | 0 | 0 | 0

source

KESTRAL REPAIR KIT



Kestral Repair Kit is a repair kit for plastic beach balls and play rings. Kestral also manufactured inflatable swimming pools and such, so the company didn't expect their products to be tossed when they developed a leak.

Enhance your vintage design by using these colors. If you're sending this to print, try finding a colored paper to use (instead of white), and only use red and blue.

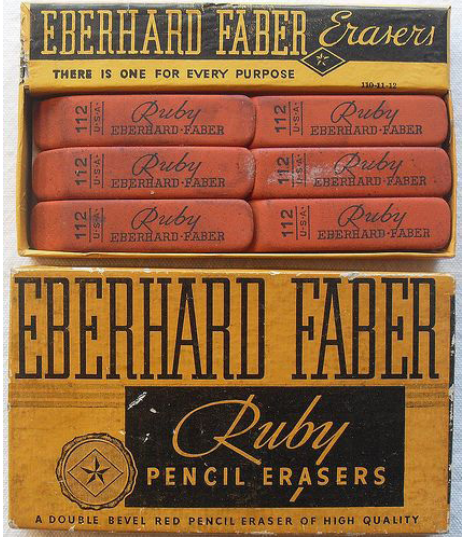
rgb 159 | 4 | 12
cmyk 24 | 100 | 100 | 22

rgb 26 | 109 | 149
cmyk 89 | 52 | 24 | 4

rgb 191 | 167 | 95
cmyk 28 | 31 | 75 | 0

source

EBERHARD FABER ERASERS



Eberhard Faber Company was opened in NYC in 1861 and quickly became America's first lead pencil factory. In addition to creating these iconic erasers that are still around today, Eberhard is responsible for erasers being on top of pencils, which is a phenomena only in America! Replicate the packaging design of Eberhard Faber Erasers by sticking to these two colors, one for information, and the other for your base.

rgb 224 | 81 | 86
cmyk 13 | 28 | 78 | 0

rgb 0 | 0 | 0
cmyk 0 | 0 | 0 | 100

source

JIF PEANUT BUTTER



Jif Peanut Butter debuted in 1958, with “Jifaroo”, a blue kangaroo, as the mascot. Their advertising emphasized that it was made for choosy moms, and they focused on the ridges in the jar, which meant that getting every last bit of peanut butter out of the jar was easier than ever. To replicate this playful design, use one color as a base, and use the rest of the palette for blocky objects.

rgb 219 | 209 | 16 cmyk 18 | 9 | 100 | 0	rgb 0 | 32 | 140 cmyk 100 | 95 | 12 | 6	rgb 247 | 51 | 25 cmyk 0 | 93 | 100 | 0	rgb 31 | 164 | 119 cmyk 79 | 11 | 70 | 0	rgb 92 | 163 | 219 cmyk 61 | 24 | 0 | 0

source