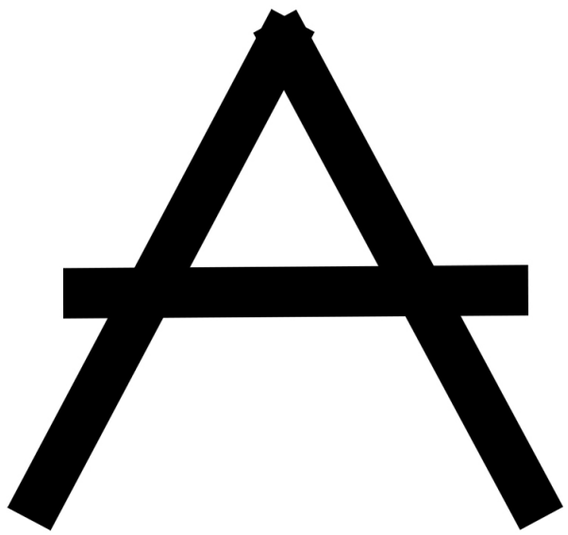
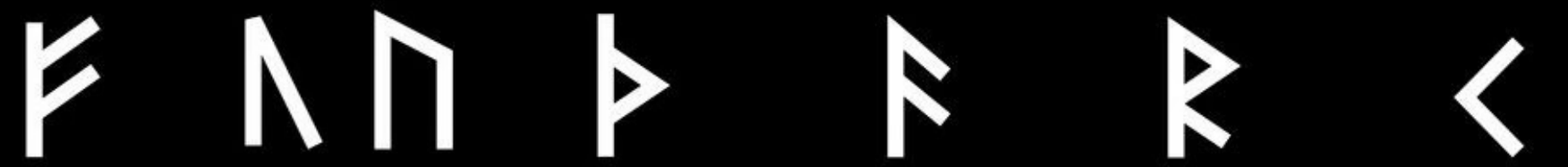
SIGNS
GRAPHIC SYMBOLS
ICONS LOGOS

SPRING 2025

Learning to create logos, symbols, marks, icons is learning a new language, a visual language, that communicates ideas, beliefs, information, navigation, values, quality, and lifestyle using a simple graphic.



Runes - The Elder Futhark



F Fehu
cattle, wealth

U Ūruz
aurochs, strength

Th Thurisaz
giant, thor

A Ansuz
god, odin

R Raido
journey, wheel

K Kaunan
ulcer, fire

G Gebō
gift

W Wunjō
joy

H Hagalaz
hail, air

N Naudiz
need, necessity

I Īsaz
ice

J Jēra
year, harvest

E Eiwaz
yew tree, tree of life

P Perth
unclear meaning

Z Algiz
elk protection

S Sōwilō
sun

T Tīwaz
the god Tiwaz, victory

B Berkanan
birch, birth

E Ehwaz
horse

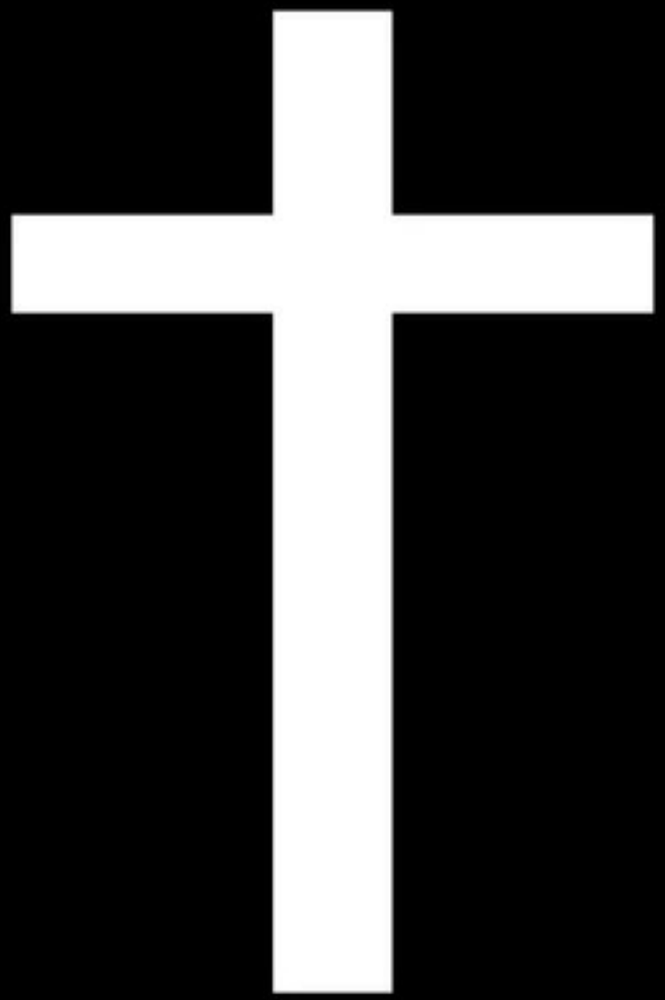
M Mannaz
man

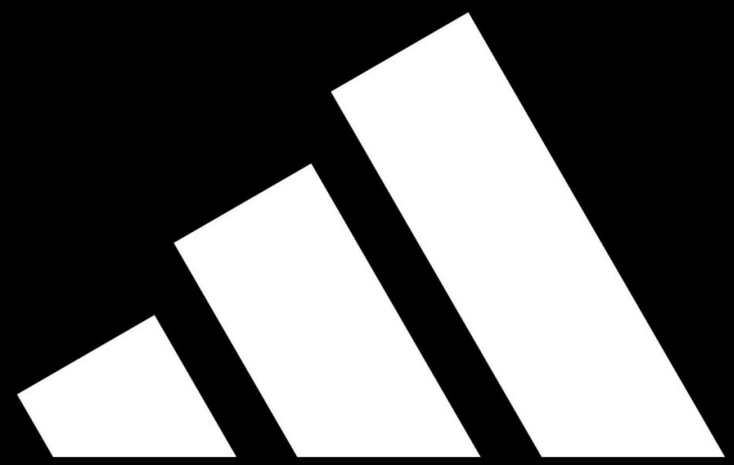
L Laguz
water, lake

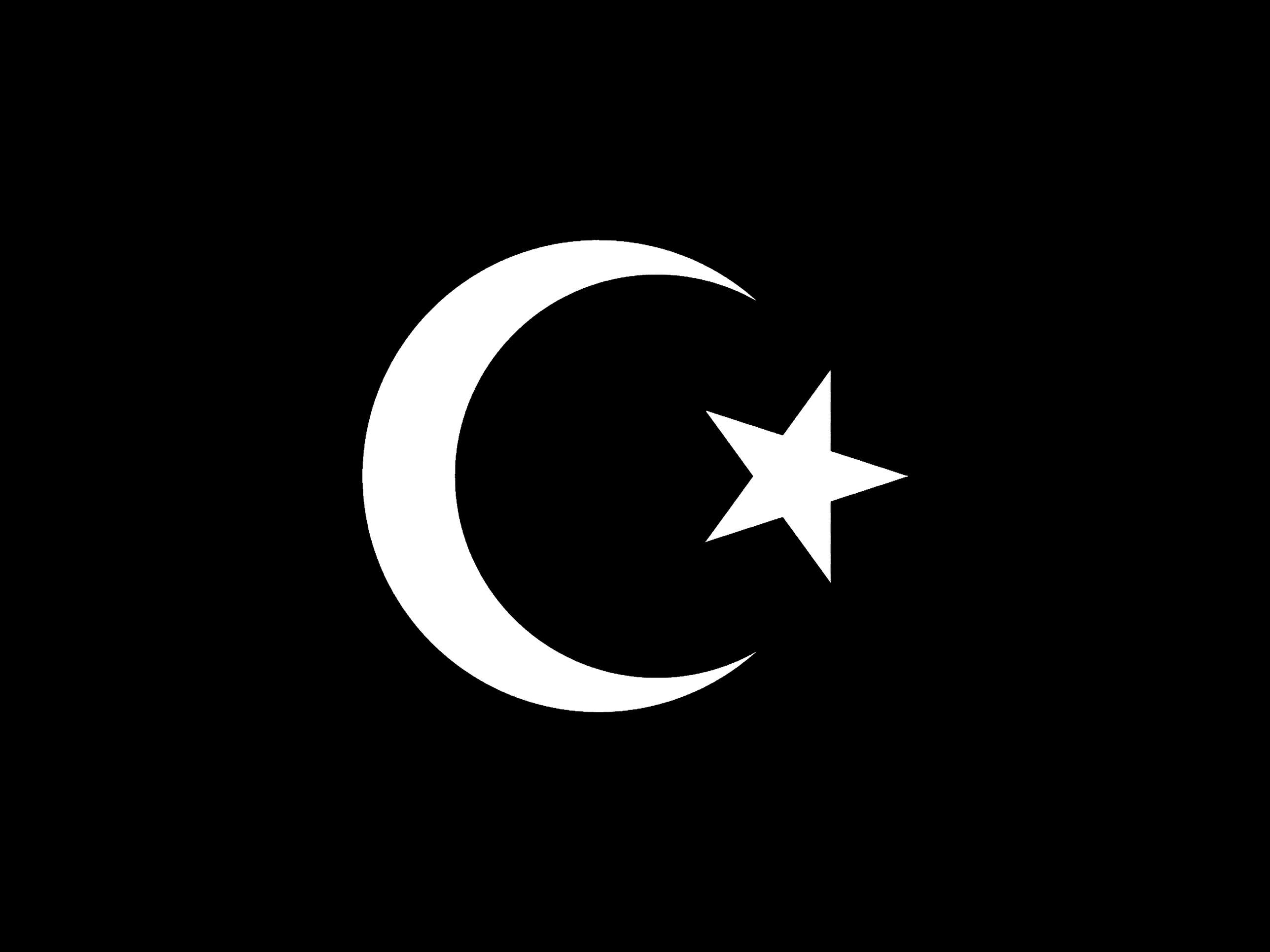
Ng Ingwaz
the god Ingwaz, fertility

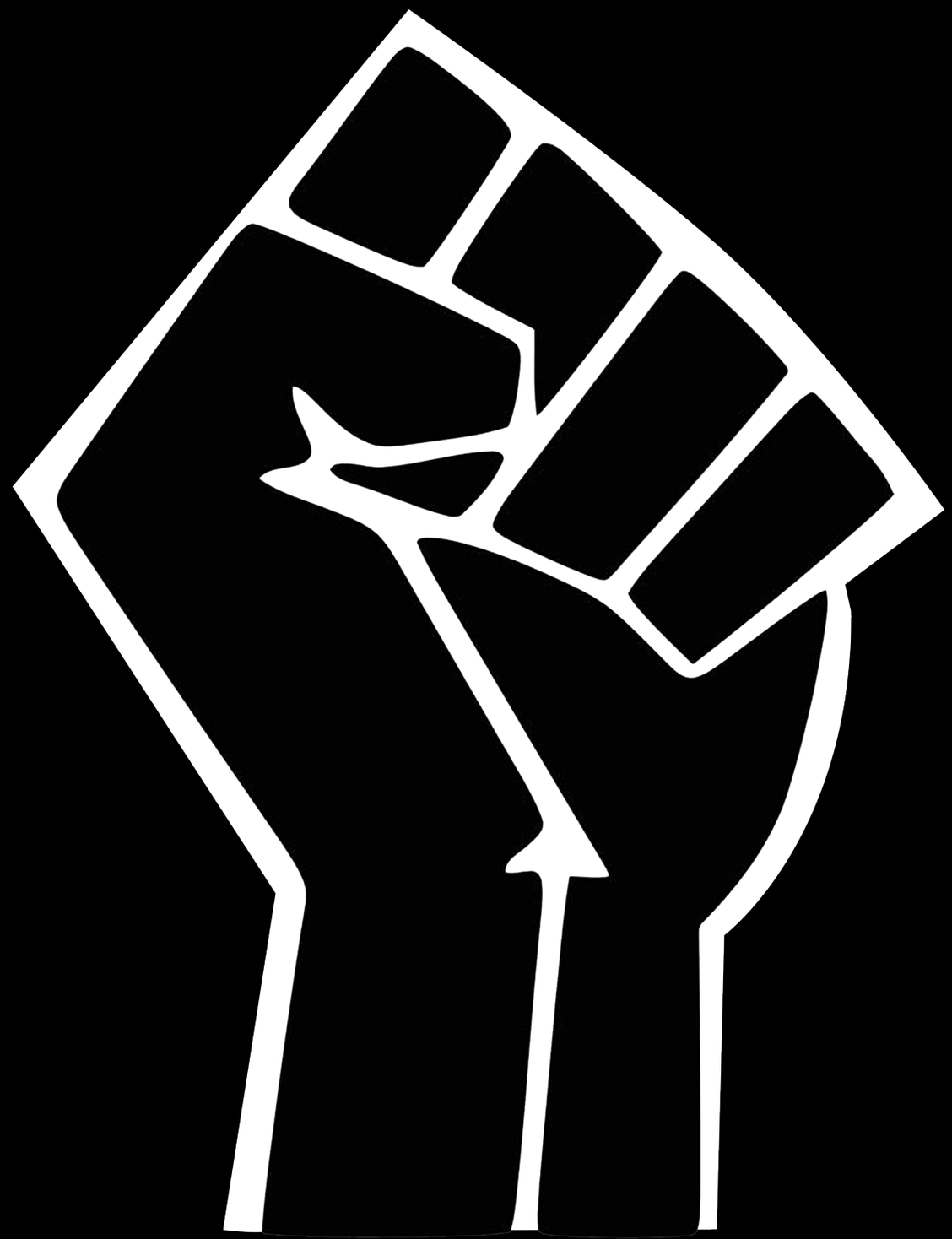
O Othila
heritage, property

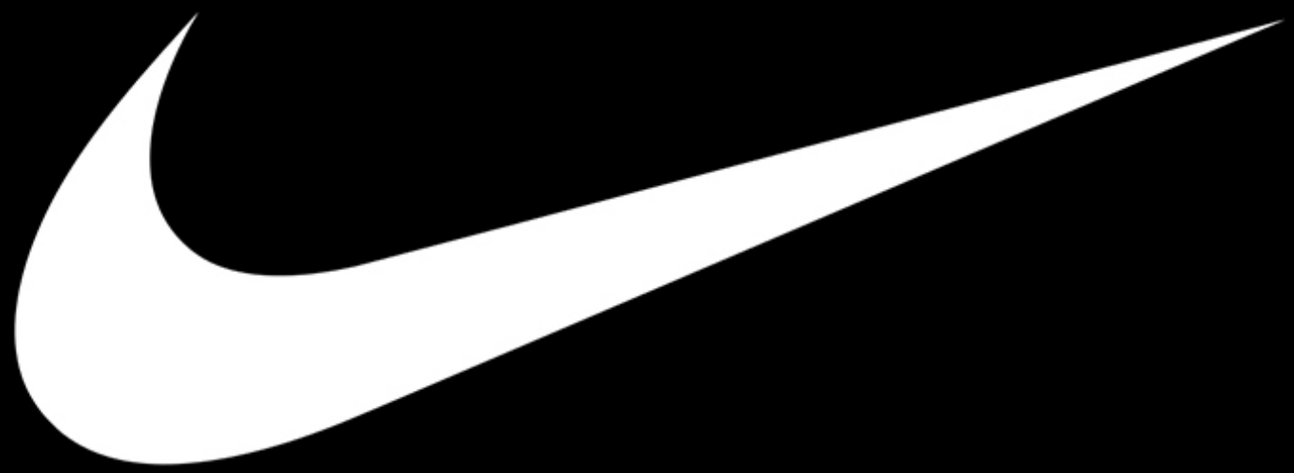
D Dagaz
day, dawn

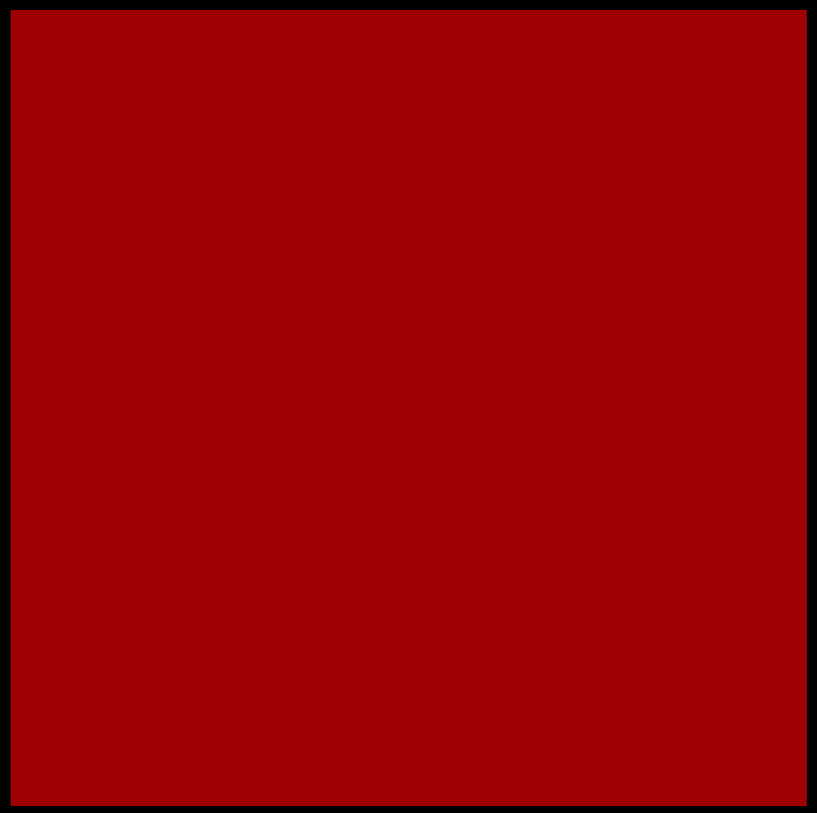


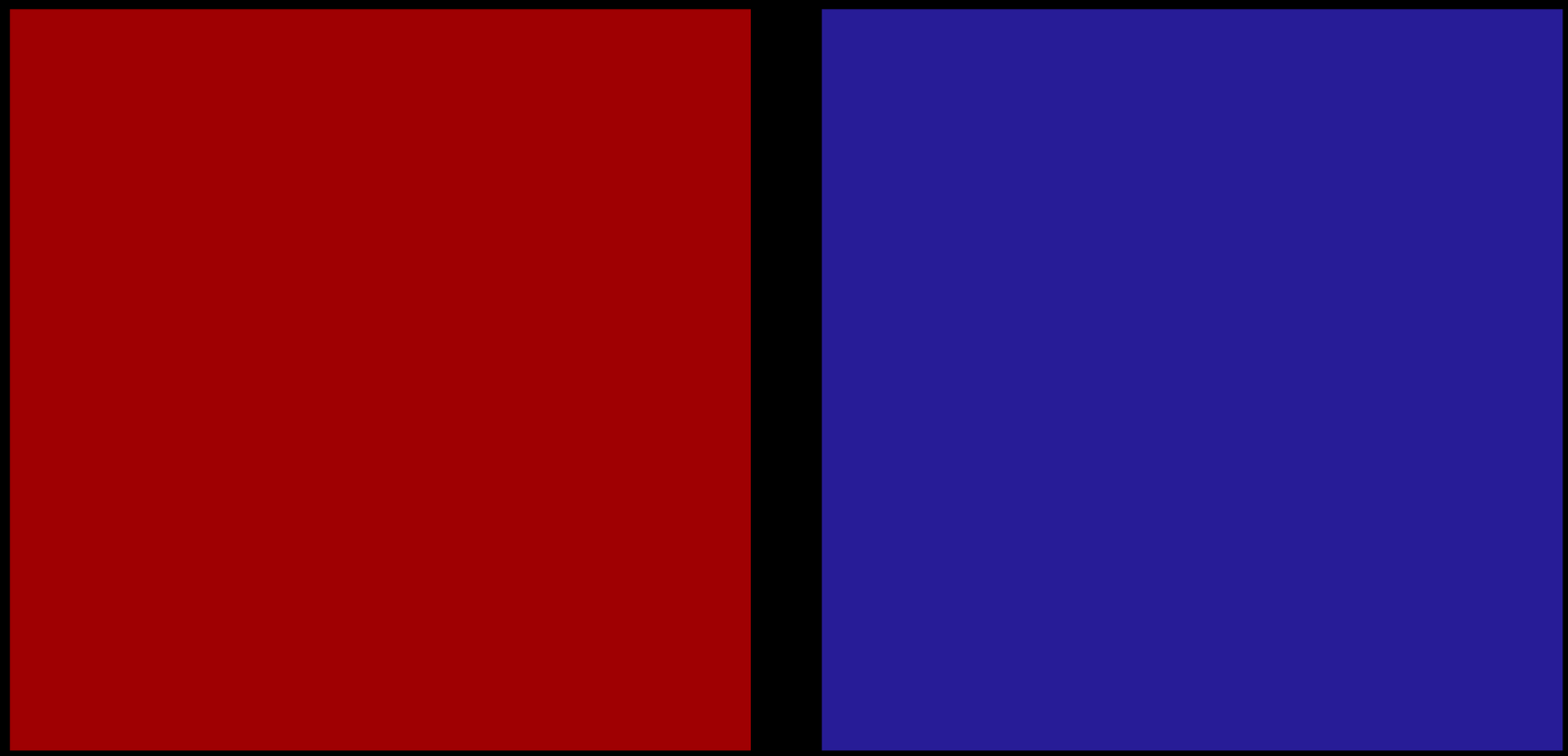


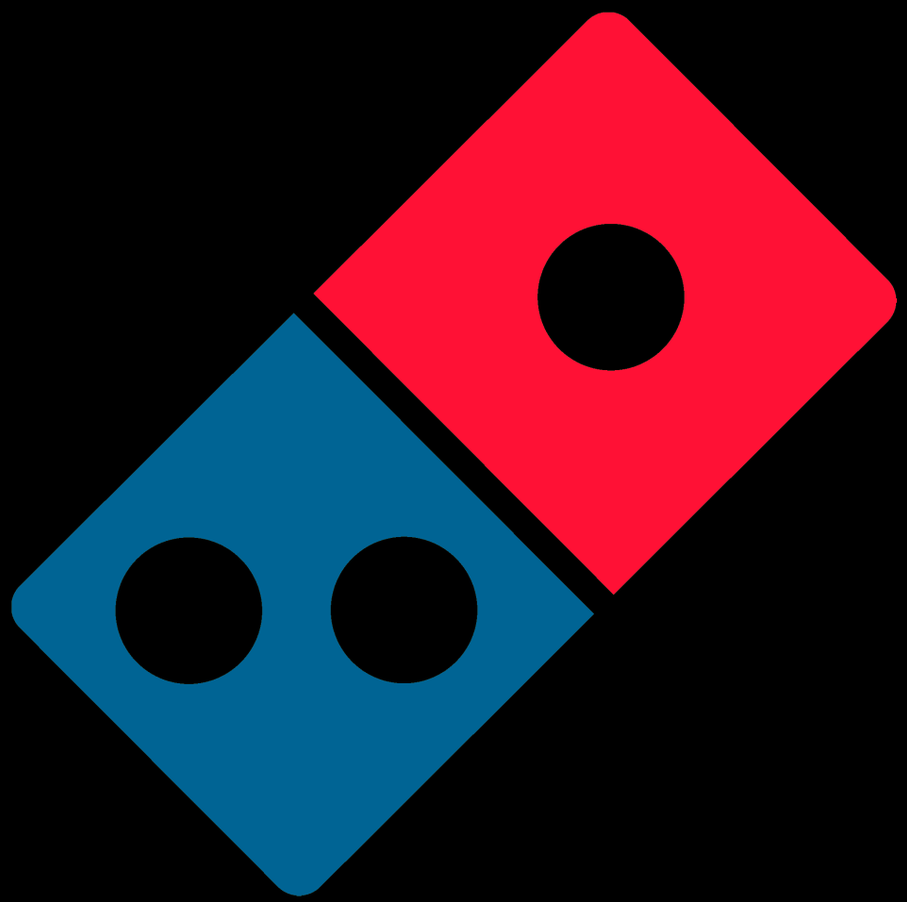


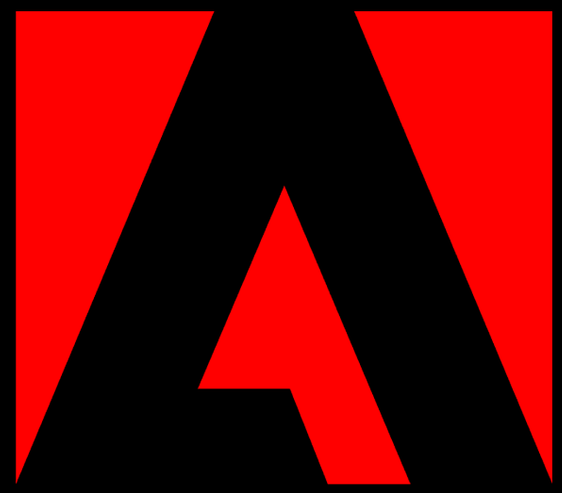












SIGNS

TYPES OF SYMBOLS

ICONS

LOGOS

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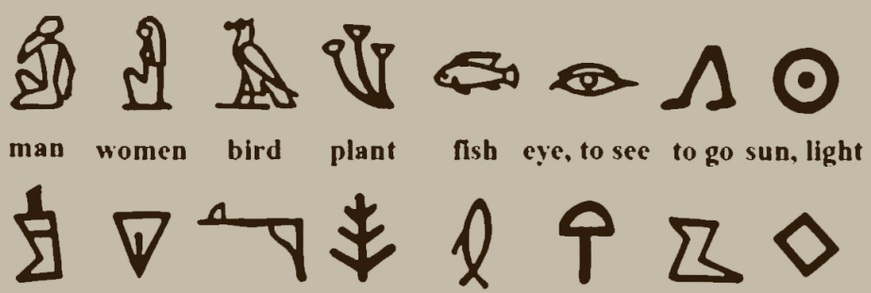
PICTOGRAM:

a pictorial symbol for a word or phrase. Pictographs were used as the earliest known form of writing, examples having been discovered in Egypt and Mesopotamia from before 3000 BC.

Oxford Languages

EGYPT



MESOPOTAMIA

IDEOGRAM:

a picture or symbol used in a system of writing to represent a thing or an idea but not a particular word or phrase for it. Especially: one that represents not the object pictured but some thing or idea that the object pictured is supposed to represent.

Merriam-Webster Dictionary

Logotypes aka Wordmarks:

a logotype is a logo that uses only type to represent the company to create brand name recognition. "Wordmark" is also used.

FedEx

Lufthansa

Instagram

facebook

Google

Walmart

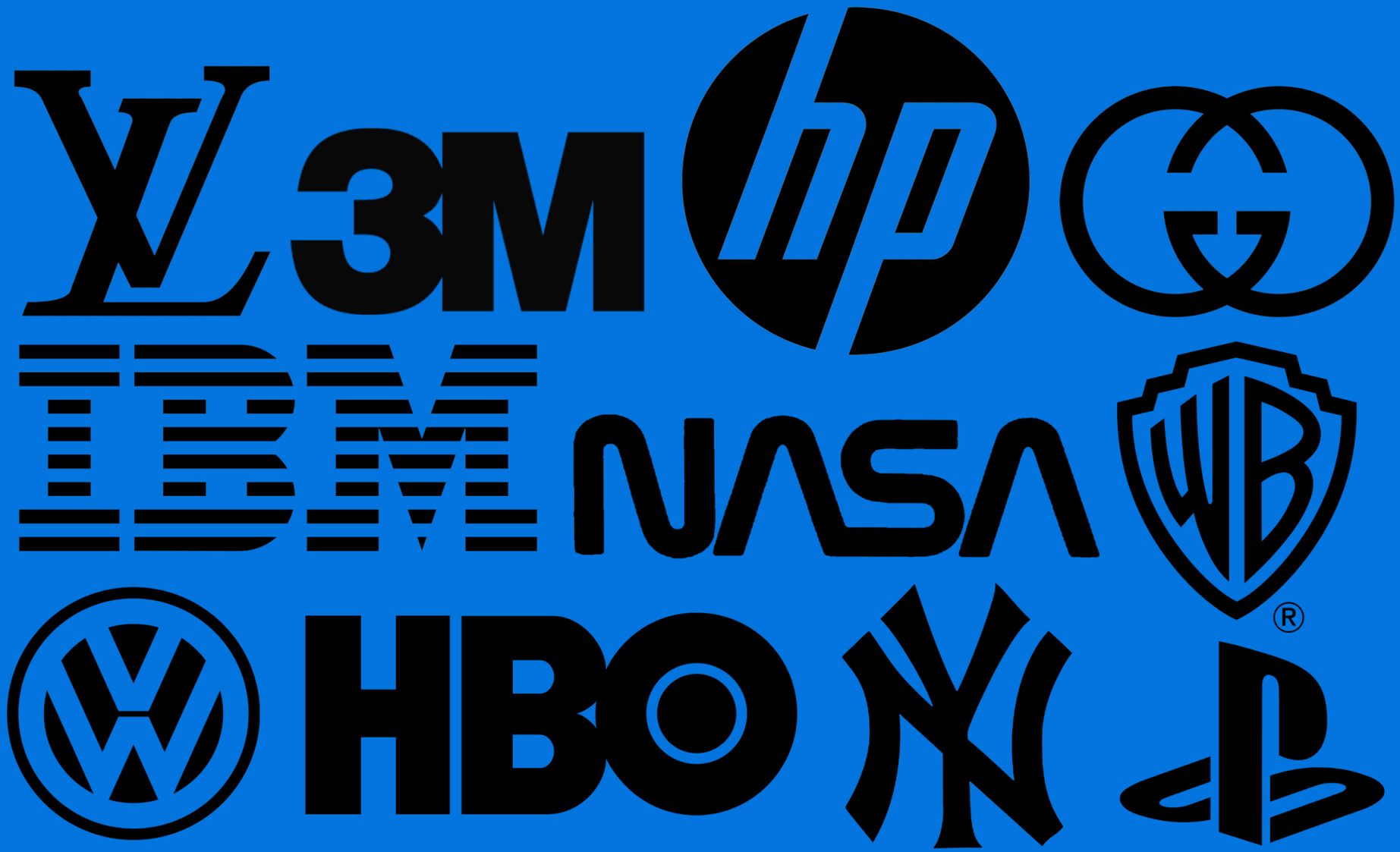
Crate&Barrel

adidas

Monograms:

a motif of two or more letters, typically a person's initials, usually interwoven or otherwise combined in a decorative design, used as a logo or to identify a personal possession.

Oxford Languages



Letterforms:

similar to a monogram, a letterform is a one-letter logo,
often added to add versatility to a wordmark.

Abstract Marks:

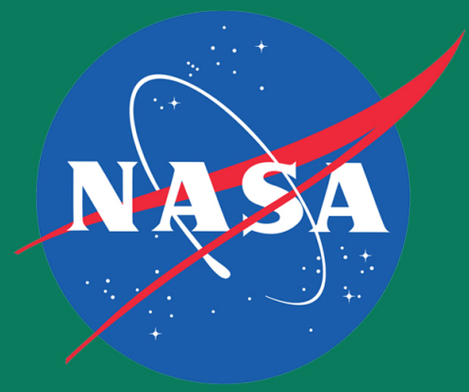
a symbolic image that represents a company, idea, belief, organization, or product. At times there is no clear relationship between the symbol and what is being represented and meaning is learned through interaction.

MASCOTS:

a character that represents an idea,
team, product, business, or organization.

Emblems:

a symbol that combines text and images within a border. Scalability can be an issue with this combination - either the type or the symbol can become congested or illegible at smaller sizes.



Combination Marks:

a combination mark combines a wordmark and a symbolic image or logo. Proportions between type and image should be considered to create balance at different scales.

DUN & DUN
FINE ART PRINTS

AMERICAN
PHEASANT TAIL

Hook: Mustad 94840 Size 12, Body: Stripped Peacock Quill ribbed with Gold Wire, Thread: White Silk, Hackle: Gray or Blue Dun, Tail: Gray Hackle, Wing: Lemon Wood Duck

SIGNS

FORMAL APROACHES

ICONS

LOGOS

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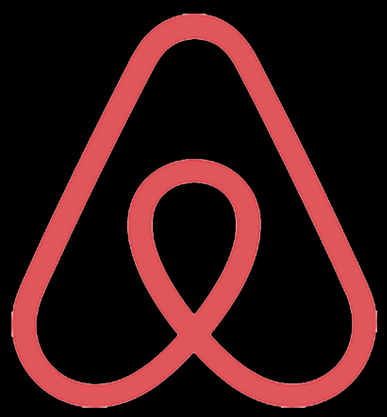
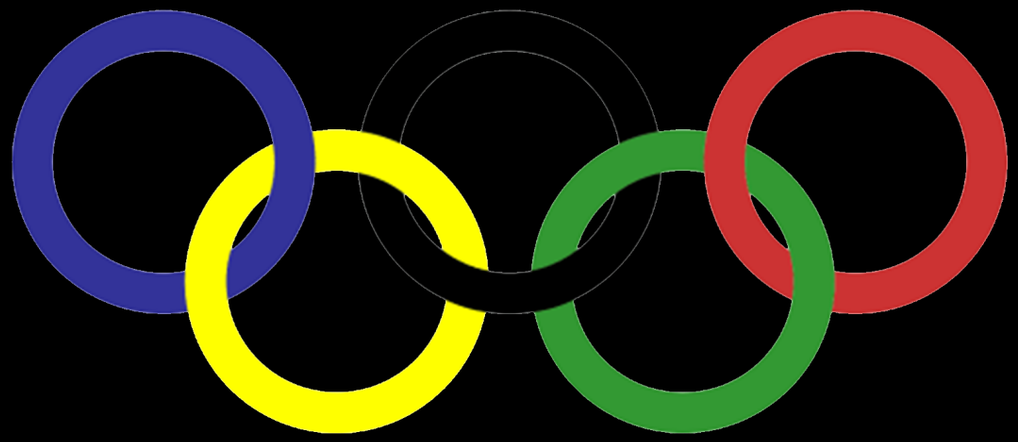
Overlap





Symmetry & Asymmetry

Solid vs Line

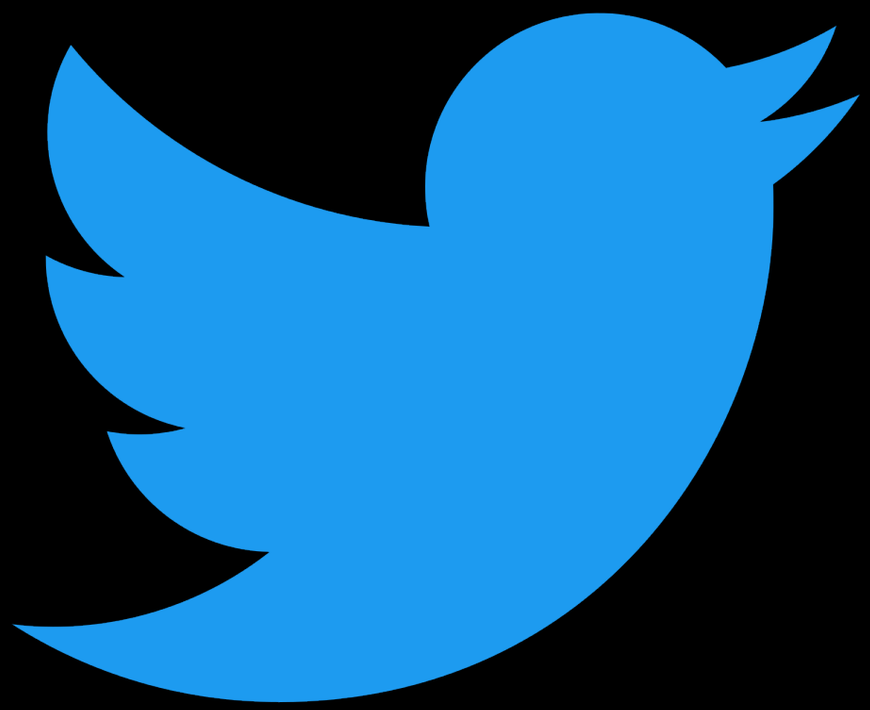


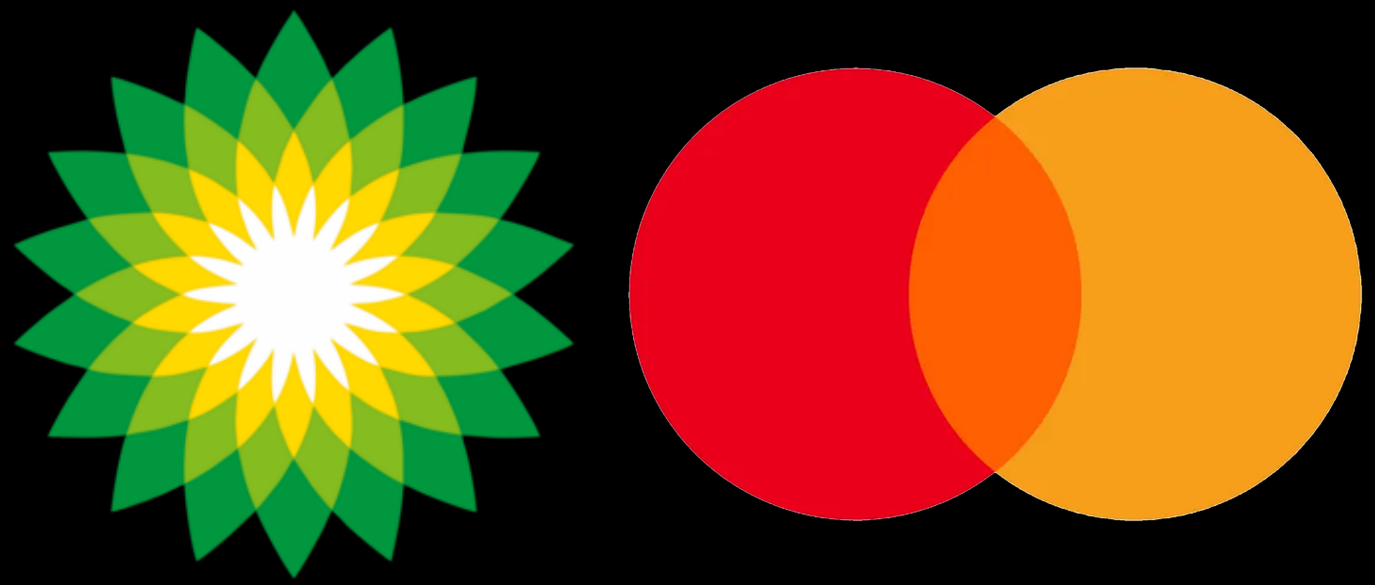
Figure Ground / Negative Space

Round vs Angles

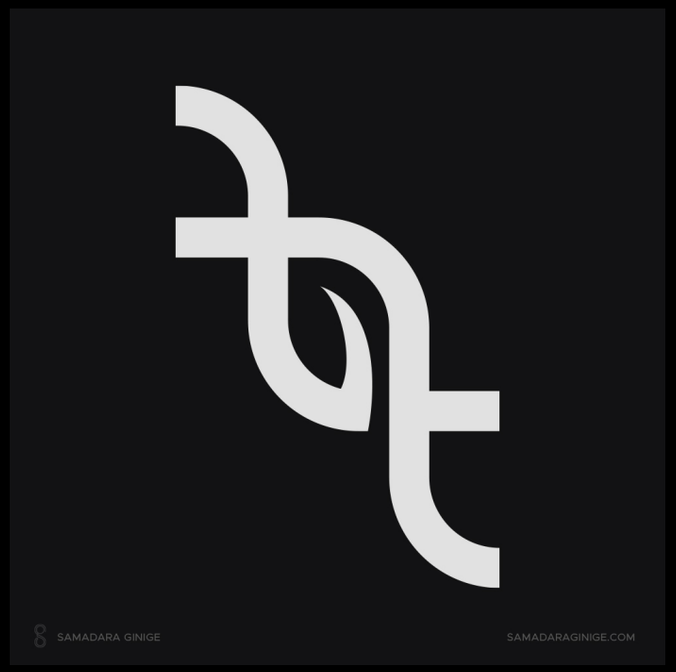
Gradients

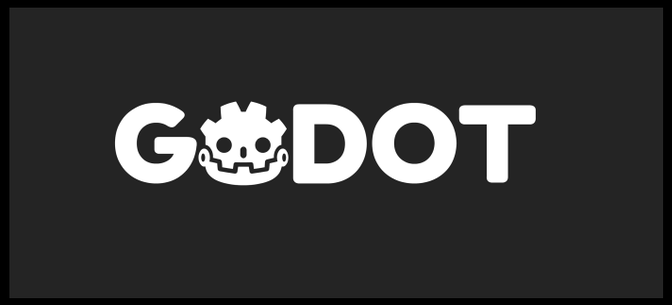
Complex

Simplified

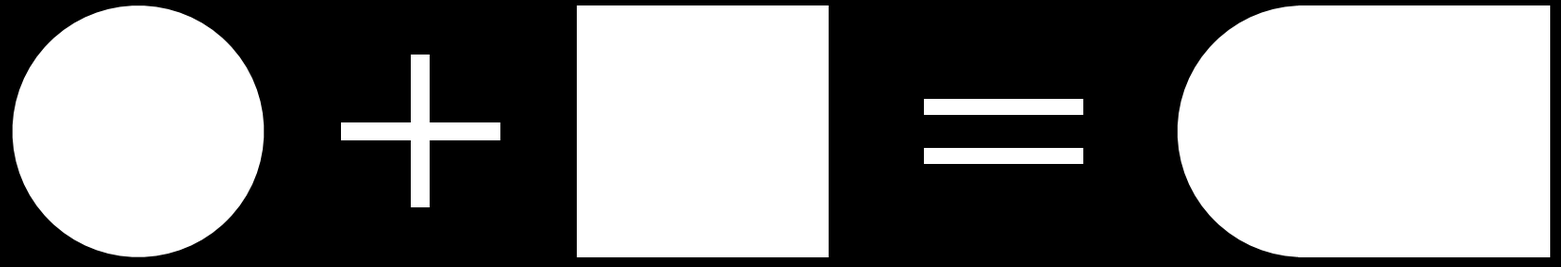


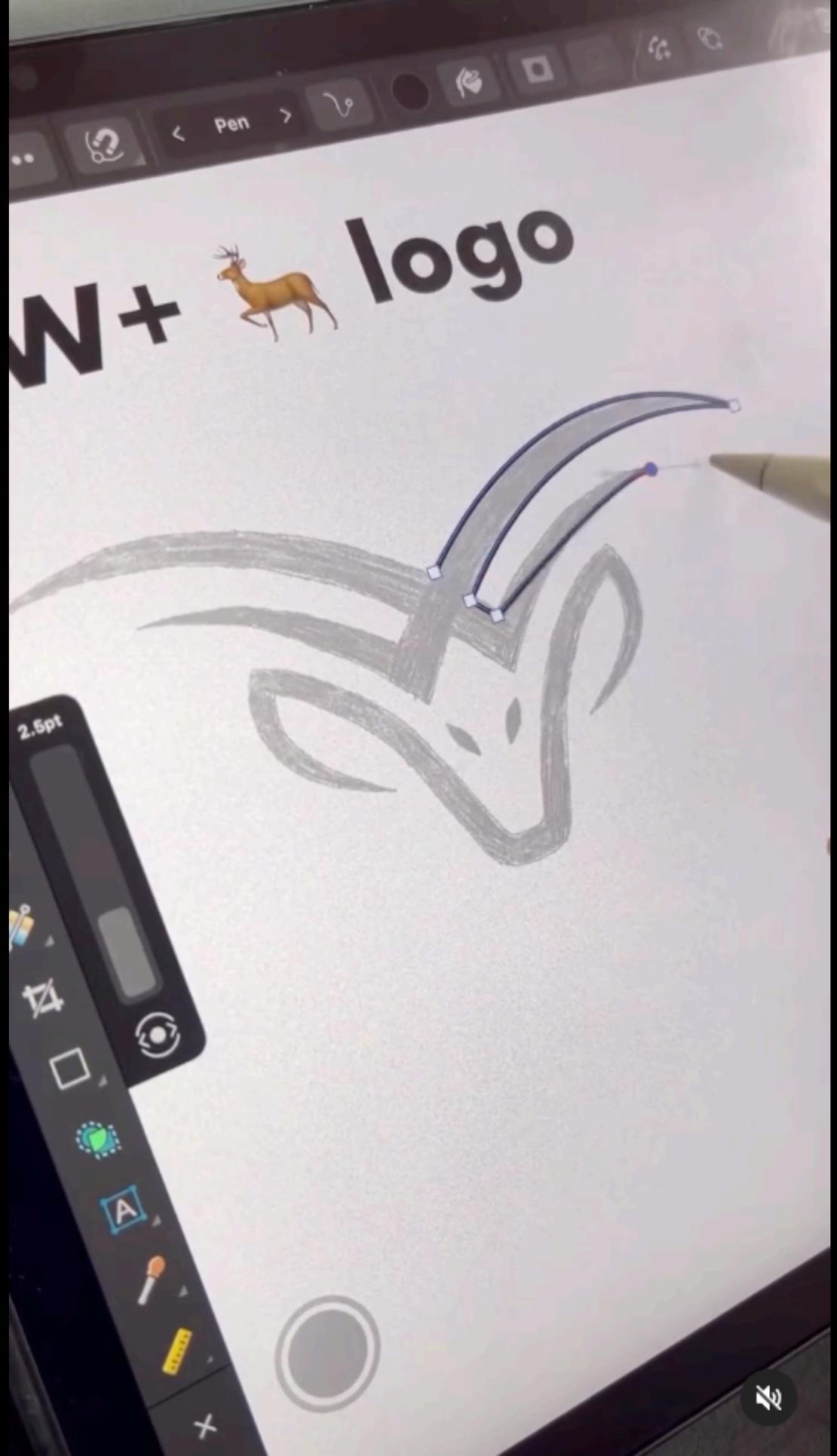
Customize Letters





Creative Math





WILD MUSK

Work by @saptweb

8 Things to think about when designing a logo

A successful logo meets the following 8 criteria:

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1. SIMPLE

TOO MUCH COMPLEXITY CAN CREATE ISSUES WITH SCALABILITY AND VERSATILITY. TOO MANY COLORS CAN CAUSE PRINTING ISSUES FOR VARIOUS NEEDS. LOGOS ARE AS SIMPLE AS THEY CAN BE BUT NOT SIMPLER.

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2. Clear

Recognizability is critical for sign, symbol and logo (brand) design. All elements should be clear and intentional. Color contrast should be considered for multiple printing and digital platforms. Clarity is important for recognizability.

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3. Scalable

Logos live in a variety of places from as small as the favicon in the tab of your browser window to blown up on a truck. Elements should be checked by zooming in/out to be sure clarity and legibility remain consistent, and that negative spaces don’t become congested.

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4. Versatile

Color and amount of detail should be considered since the logo will likely be printed on a variety of materials and used in different marketing and sales channels. Where will the logo live?

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5. Distinctive

The logo or symbol shouldn’t look like something that currently exists or too close in similarity to a competitor. Research is key here to spend time looking at how the design problem has been solved in the past and how you can do something different.

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6. Timeless

The logo or symbol shouldn’t rely too much on current trends. Designers need to consider the scale of the brand, organization, or idea - how long will it be around, how much is it expected to grow/expand? Researching historical movements as well as contemporary logo designers is important to develop a good mental (and digital) library of different ways to solve visual problems.

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7. Memorable

This goes along with distinctiveness. The logo should have a quality that sets it apart from like logos. Making associations and connections between shapes, letters and content using creative math help create discoverability which engages the viewer at a more personal level.

"Design is Thinking made Visual"

Saul Bass

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8. Appropriate

The shapes, line, color, visual cues should all directly relate to the content and messaging of the organization. The logo should communicate the values, beliefs, lifestyle, quality, ideas and information to the appropriate audience.

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SYMBOLS

PROCESS

MARKS

ICONS

LOGOS

1
RESEARCH
BRIEF
MOOD BOARD

Find out about the organization, product, idea, belief.
Who is the audience?
What appeals to the audience?
What has been done in the past?
What visual information can you gather for inspiration?

What do you want to say and who do you want to say it to?

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2
SKETCH
CHOOSE 3 DIRECTIONS

Sketch a variety of directions and explore each direction. Observe your patterns and try the opposite of what you're doing (i.e. simple, make it complex / shapes, work with lines, if it's two things, make it one, etc.)

What do you want to say and who do you want to say it to?
AND WHAT VISUAL LANGUAGE WILL YOU USE TO SAY IT?

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3
BUILD & ITERATE

Keep everything live, don’t delete any directions you’ve explored. Experiment. Try different colors, different typefaces, different tools. Use elemental shapes and build off of that. Zoom in/out often to check scalability.

What do you want to say and who do you want to say it to?
AND WHAT VISUAL LANGUAGE WILL YOU USE TO SAY IT?

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4
REVISE
REVISE
REVISE

Don’t fall in love with anything yet. Test your logo on mock-ups, in black/white, on different backgrounds/ photos. Make it small and very large. Turn it upside down. Simplify, reduce, extract the essence of the concept.

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5
CREATE BRAND GUIDELINES

Include logo, brand typeface/alphabet, color palette with hex and RGB values, key descriptive words, a brand pattern to complement the logo, real-world mock-up, color & b/w version.

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