



Studio G

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Design like a lazy person

Design is easier if you put your
image *here* and your type *there*.

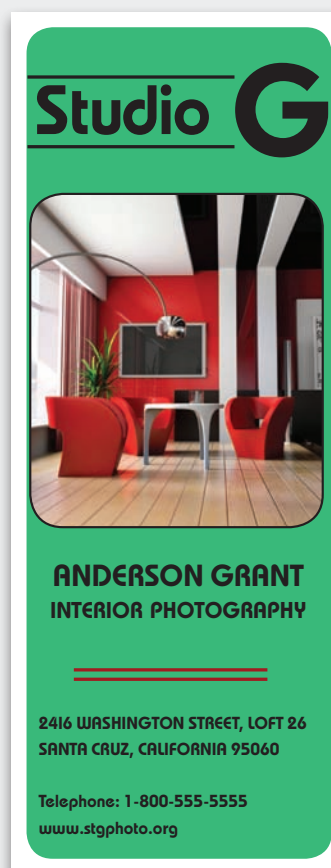
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Most designs are a combination of words and images. These are quite different things, and they interact in unpredictable ways. Getting them to look good together can be tough. Styles are often incompatible, details clash, contrasts can be wrong. You fiddle and fuss. And even if you get it right once, getting it right the next time means starting again from scratch.

This is too much work! A better way is to think like a lazy person. Put your image *here* and your type *there*. Keep each one simple, and keep their interaction to a minimum. This almost always yields a good design, and the results are easy to repeat! Let's see how:

Before



After

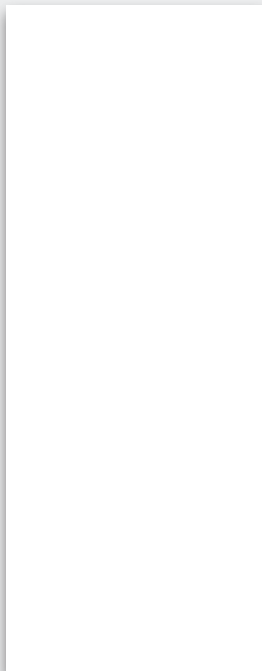


Before, this small brochure cover was designed the hard way. The designer chose unrelated typefaces and colors, then added backgrounds and outlines in an effort to pull them together. Design is easier than that.

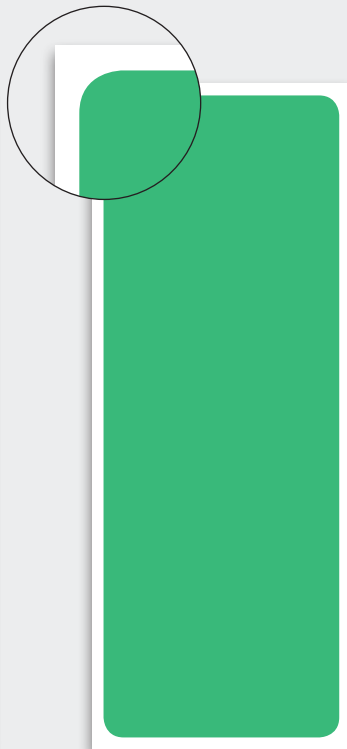
After, the image and words haven't changed, but segregating the page into two zones—image here, type there—yields a handsome, super-clean design in less time, and which is easy to repeat!

Before

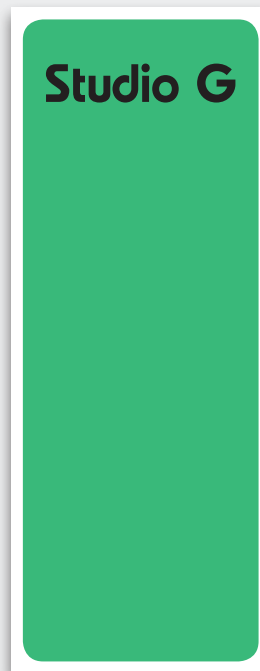
Design the hard way.



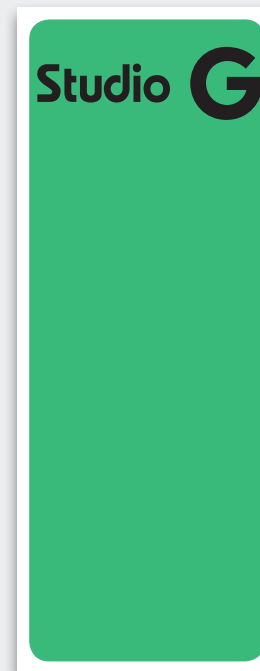
The shape of the page is the foundational design element.



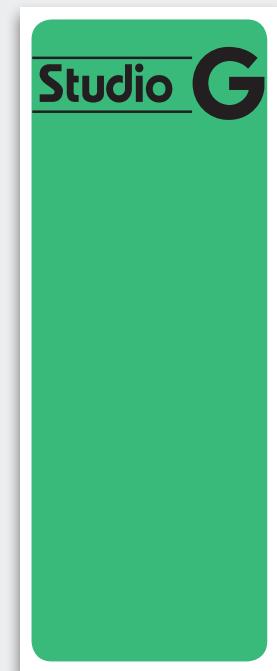
Add a green background, and you get a white frame, too.



Center the name at the top. Hmm, looks kinda insignificant . . .



. . . so enlarge the **G**. Dang, now Studio looks like it's floating . . .



. . . so draw some lines to anchor it. Better.

Before

Design the hard way.



Add the photo. Leave thin green side edges for a bit of trim.

Add outline and round corners to tie into the existing elements.

Set the name in the Studio typeface; use all caps for impact.

Set contact info at the bottom, because it's least impressive . . .

. . . and fill the empty space with red lines to tie into the photo.

Before

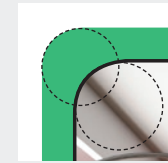
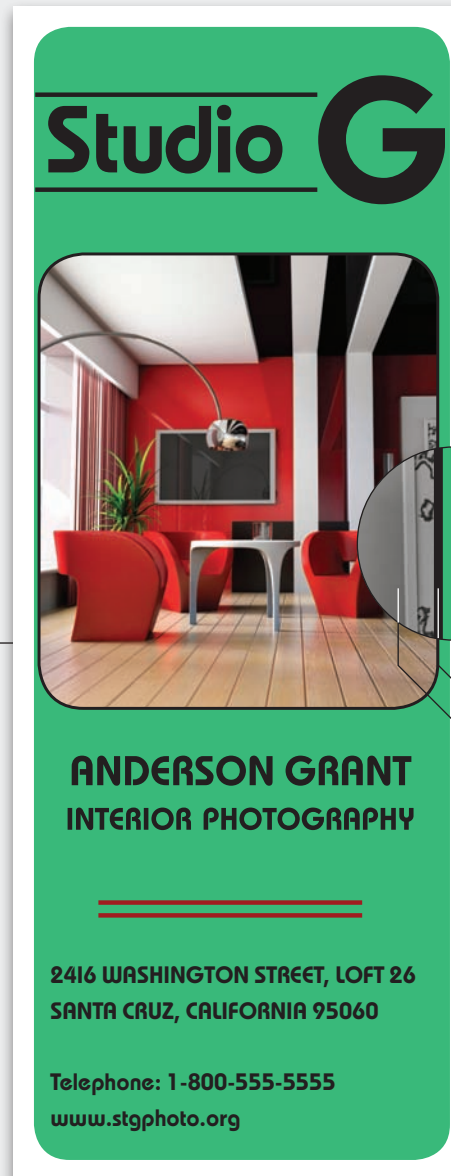
It was hard to do, and it's unattractive, too. Why? Because the designer tried to force his choices onto the page out of sync with the subject matter.

Studio



Playful circles Round Bauhaus Demi is a fun, quirky, typeface—when it's round. To look round, however, requires big, tightly set, lowercase letters (above). Problem is, the designer chose uppercase letters, which are predominantly straight, and set his words in small, straight lines (left and below). The result defeats the typestyle, whose quirky details now just look messy.

ANDERSON

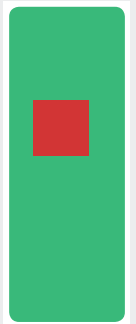


A theme is good, but . . .

The designer understood the value of a theme and set round corners (above) to match his round typeface. Problem: It's not enough roundness; the lines are still mostly straight but now have ambiguous edges, too, an effect amplified by the many overlaid shapes (left). These create busy-ness, not design; instead of a single sharp edge, the eye must now "process" one, two, three, four separate objects unnecessarily.

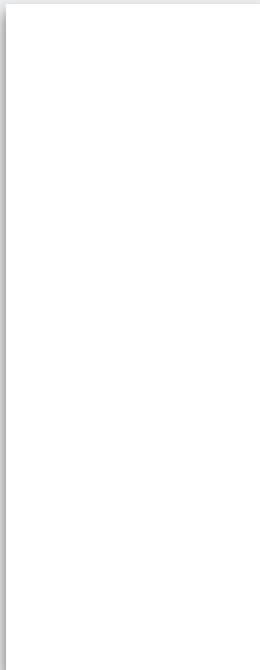
Green overpowers

Red and green are *complementary*, or opposite, colors, which are strong when used in roughly equal proportions. Here, however, there's too much green, which merely deadens the red photo.

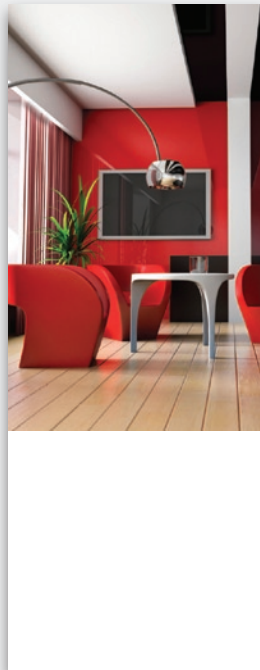


After

Design the easy way.



The shape of the page is the foundational design element. Pay attention to it.



Place the photo at the top; touch the edges. This yields two zones.



Set the name in a tall typeface, upper-left corner of the zone.



Stack the remaining type in a neat column, which mimics the shape of the page. Color with swatches from the photo. That's all there is to it!



After

Why does it work? The photo is the show, and the elements conform to the page. Photo and name are big, expansive, beautiful, *clear*.

Big to small . . .

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Dark to light . . .

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Separate by size and value

The carefully set type has four levels of visual hierarchy—position: top to bottom; size: big to small; weight: heavy to light; color: dark to light. These signify relative importance and also move the eye from one to the next.



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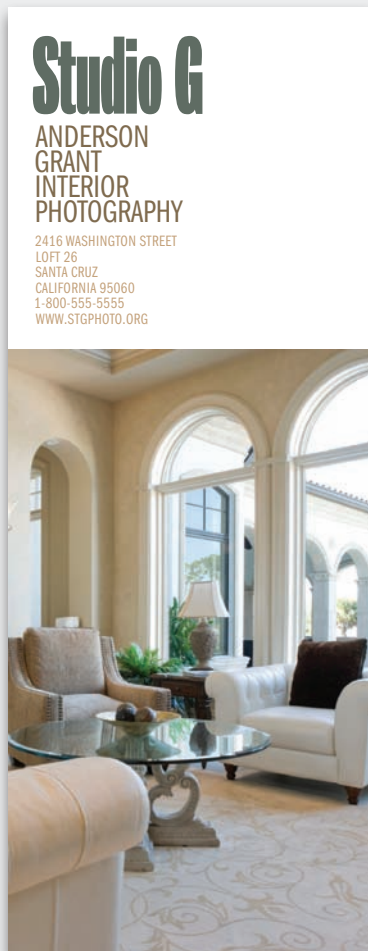


Short lines of uppercase type pack tightly together—lowercase type can't do this—and yield a crisp, vertical, *intentionally designed* look. Its placement on the left leaves on the right a field of white that's active, pushing the eye back toward the type.

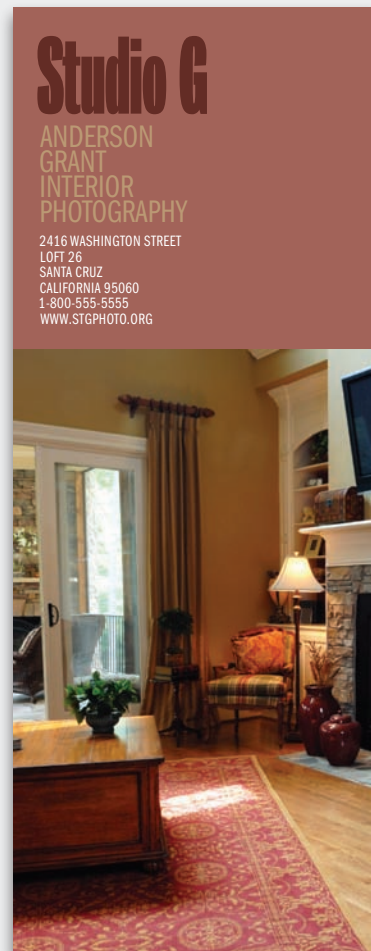
Variations

Lazy-person design is versatile enough to accommodate a whole portfolio!

Words on top



Colored field



Horizontal



Top, bottom, left, right Orientation of photo and text field can be changed effortlessly, because each is self contained; the type works equally well top or bottom and can easily be adapted to left or right. Color is the connection; in each case, the type colors have been derived from the image. Remember *hierarchy*—emphasize the name, and keep the supporting type low key.

Variation

Sometimes you have no option to change color or typeface; they may be house styles. What to do?

Retain the simplicity

Use two fields, one for photo and one for words. No gingerbread.

Play to the strengths of the type

Bauhaus is round; the light version is even somewhat stylish. Set it tightly in lowercase. By using lowercase even on the initial letters, you'll have a *style*.

Retain the type hierarchy

Top to bottom, big to small, dark to light. In this case, the type is predominantly the same weight.



Retain the alignment

Bauhaus is not condensed, so it won't form a strong column. Instead, align it to the right, in this case, flush with studio. Let the **g** hang in open space for emphasis. Key is to keep the type shaped; don't just scatter it around.

Darken the green

Deeper shade keeps the red from clashing; the similar quantities now complement each other correctly.

Article resources



Typefaces

1 [Bureau Grot Extra Comp Black](#) | 84 pt

2 (a-b) [ITC Franklin Gothic Book Comp](#)

a) 27/21 pt, b) 13/13 pt

Images

Images: iStockphoto.com

3 ([2768718](#))

4 ([1885513](#))

Colors

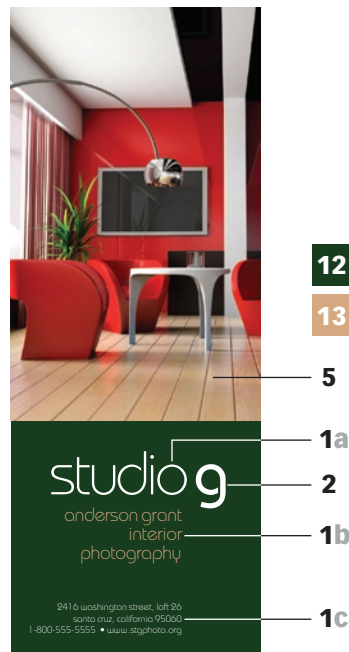
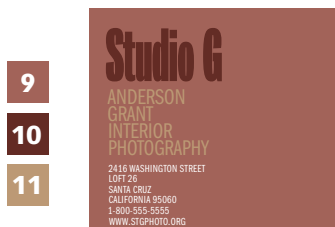
5 C0 M100 Y100 K40

6 C45 M51 Y71 K20

7 C24 M35 Y55 K0

8 C65 M45 Y70 K20

Article resources



Typefaces

1 (a–c) Bauhaus Light | a) 75.5 pt,
b) 23.5/23.5 pt, c) 11.5/14.5 pt

2 Bauhaus Medium | 75.5 pt

Images

Images: iStockphoto.com

3 ([4578680](#))

4 ([5009801](#))

5 ([2768718](#))

Colors

6 C19 M52 Y100 K3

7 C45 M51 Y71 K20

8 C24 M35 Y55 K0

9 C31 M65 Y61 K13

10 C38 M81 Y78 K50

11 C27 M38 Y58 K2

12 C80 M45 Y90 K60

13 C16 M35 Y51 K0

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Before & After magazine

Before & After has been sharing its practical approach to graphic design since 1990. Because our modern world has made designers of us all (ready or not), Before & After is dedicated to making graphic design understandable, useful and even fun for everyone.

John McWade Publisher and creative director
Gaye McWade Associate publisher
Dexter Mark Abellera Staff designer

Before & After magazine

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For the current table of contents, [click here](#). To save time and paper, a paper-saver format of this article, suitable for one- or two-sided printing, is provided on the following pages.

For presentation format

[Print:](#) (Specify pages 1–12)



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Format: Landscape
Page Size: Fit to Page

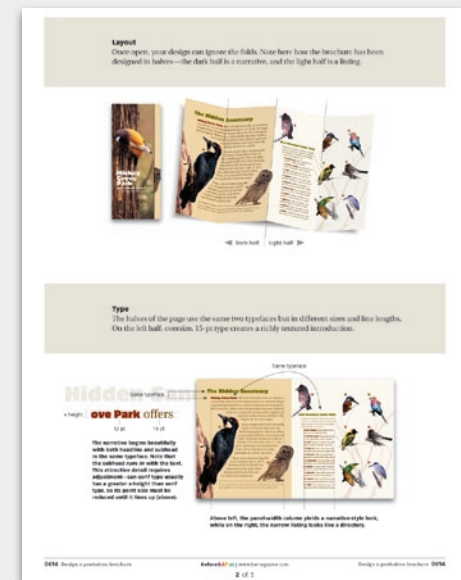


Save

Presentation format or
Paper-saver format

For paper-saver format

[Print:](#) (Specify pages 14–19)



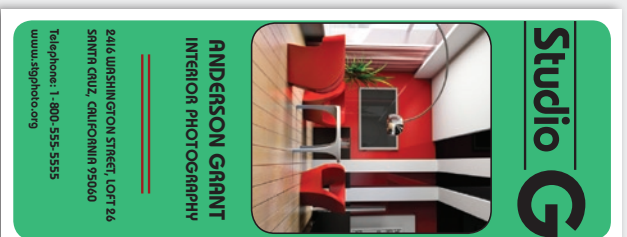
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Before



After



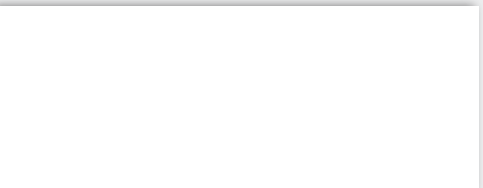
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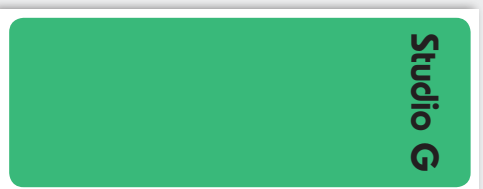
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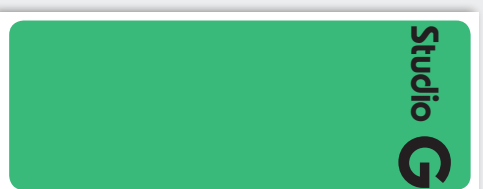
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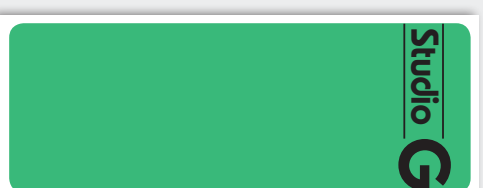
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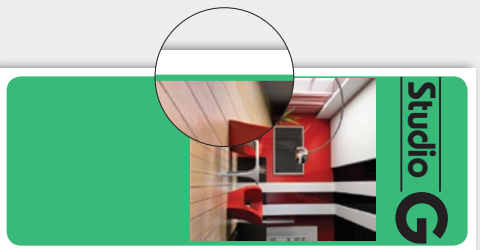


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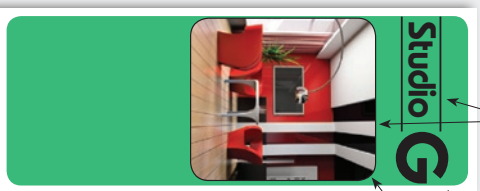


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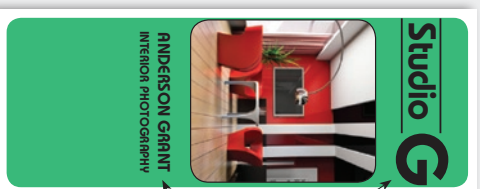
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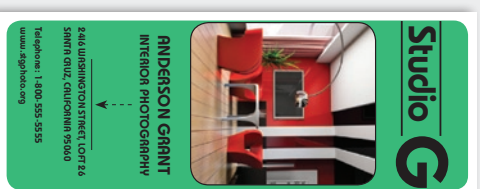
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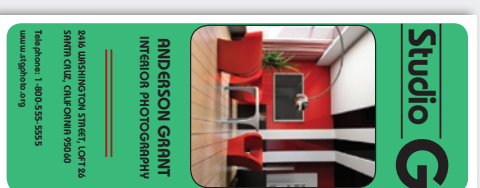
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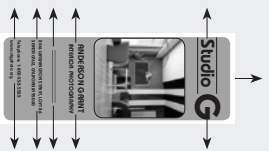


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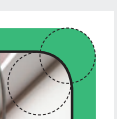
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1 2 3 4



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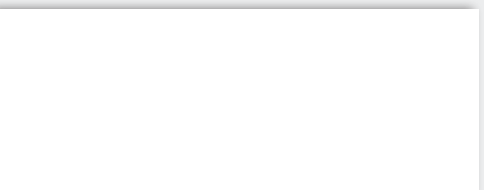
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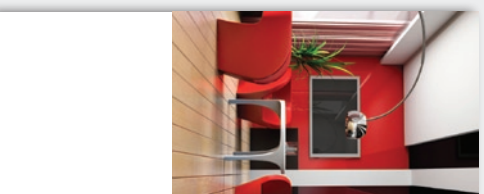


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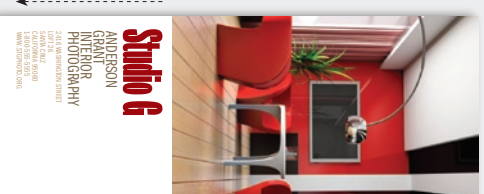
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Why does it work? The photo is the show, and the elements conform to the page. Photo and name are big, expansive, beautiful, *clear*.

Big to small . . .

Dark to light . . .



Separate by size and value

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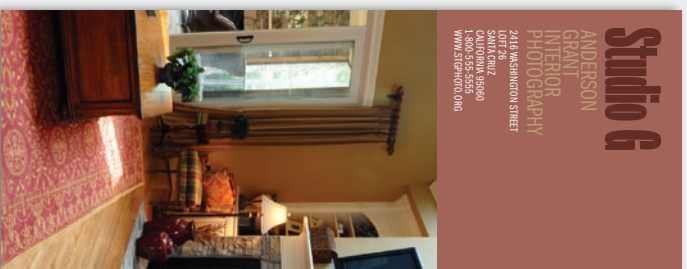
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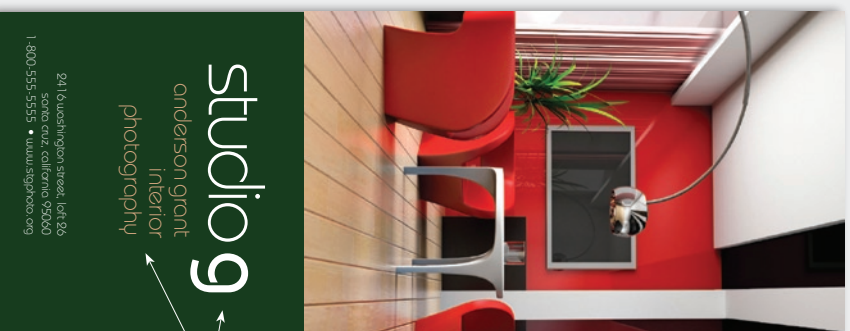
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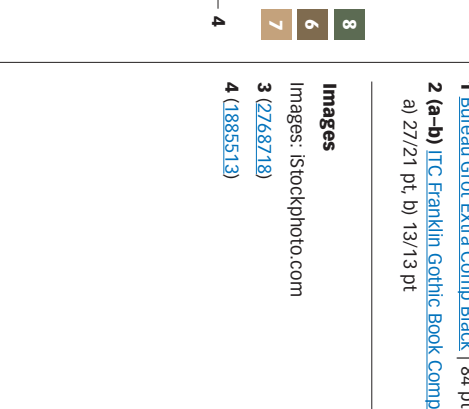
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a) 27/21 pt, b) 13/13 pt

Images

- Images: iStockphoto.com
- 3 (2768718)
 - 4 (1885513)

Colors

- | | |
|---|------------------|
| 5 | C0 M100 Y100 K40 |
| 6 | C45 M51 Y71 K20 |
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| 8 | C65 M45 Y70 K20 |

Article resources



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- 1 (a–c) Bauhaus Light** | a) 75.5 pt,
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2 Bauhaus Medium | 75.5 pt

Images

Images: iStockphoto.com

- 3 (457.8680)**
4 (5009801)
5 (2768718)

Colors

- 6** C19 M52 Y100 K3
7 C45 M51 Y71 K20
8 C24 M35 Y55 K0
9 C31 M65 Y61 K13
10 C38 M81 Y78 K50
11 C27 M38 Y58 K2
12 C80 M45 Y90 K60
13 C16 M35 Y51 K0

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