

COLLAGE

When can the method be used?

Collages are mostly used in an early stage of the design process. They are a very suitable means of analysing the current context of use in an early stage of your project.

The process of looking for images for your Collage gets you into the right visual mood. Saying 'yes' or 'no' to images helps you to define the desired feeling of the design you are working on. Collages can support you with the generation and communication of an image of your desired context. The term *collage* derives from the French 'coller' meaning 'glue'. This term was coined by both Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso at the beginning of the 20th century when this technique became a distinctive part of modern art.

How to use the method?

Before you start making a Collage you need to determine its purpose. Furthermore, it is important to determine how the Collage will be used: is it instrumental in the design project as a means to generate criteria, for example, or will it be used to communicate a design vision? Analysing Collages helps you to determine the criteria that the solution must meet. Criteria of this kind also set a general direction for idea generation. With a Collage you can find criteria for matters such as the lifestyle of a target group, the visual appearance of a product, the context of use and the interaction with a product. Other criteria can concern the category of products that are comparable to the new design and how the new product will function in its environment. The creation of a Collage is both creative and analytical. After making Collages you can use these images to define a number of characteristic types of colours/textures and materials.

A Collage is a visual representation of the context, user group or product category. It helps you to develop visual design criteria and to communicate these criteria to your stakeholders.

Possible procedure

STEP 1

Determine the most suitable materials (2D and 3D). Intuitively gather as much raw imagery as possible.

STEP 2

Group together the imagery that concerns the target group, environment, handling, actions, products, colour, material and so on.

STEP 3

Decide on the function and meaning of the background: the orientation (landscape or portrait), colours, texture and size.

STEP 4

Experiment by drawing small sketches to set down the structure of the composition, paying attention to the creation of lines and axes.

STEP 5

Think about which imagery should be placed in the foreground and which in the background. Consider the size of the imagery and its relationship with the background.

STEP 6

Make a provisional composition of the Collage with the means at your disposal.

STEP 7

Assess the overall picture: are most of the characteristics represented?

STEP 8

Once the picture meets your expectations, paste the Collage.

Limitations of the method

- A Collage is personal and it is therefore sometimes hard to communicate its meaning to others.
- It takes a lot of time to find the right imagery for a Collage.
- Working from a computer screen and using digital images only limits your freedom.

Tips & Concerns

- If pictures do not meet your expectations, try to identify which element or elements are out of place: imagery (target group, products, et cetera), quantity of material, orientation, relationship, structure of the composition, foreground/background, treatment of material, separation/integration of material or types of colours/shapes.
- Consider the use of zoomed-in details of pictures and scale them up or down according to your needs.
- A mood board is a type of Collage expressing a specific mood or emotion.