Method

Mood board

A board, physical or digital, that brings together images, colors, materials and typefaces to express the tone and character a design will aim for.



In Spanish

Moodboard

Origin

Design practice with no single author; Garner and McDonagh-Philp (2001)

Output

A visual board with the project's tone, colors, textures and references

What it's for

Helps interpret a brief and agree with the team or the client on something hard to put into words, such as an atmosphere or a style.

Key elements

It expresses a tone, it doesn't copy

The images suggest a character; they are not the final design.

Chosen with intent

Each piece is there because it says something about the project, not just because it's liked.

For conversation

It helps check that everyone imagines the same thing.

How it's done

1 

Gather references of images, colors, materials and lettering.

2 

Choose and arrange what best expresses the tone you're after.

3 

Discuss it as a group and adjust until the team agrees.

Applications in design

When to use it

When starting a brand, product, space or fashion project, when a style has to be agreed.

Avoid

Using images from other projects as if they were the solution; copying them raises rights issues.

Don't fall for it

Explain in one sentence why each image is there; if you can't, it doesn't belong.

Connections

Used by

- Art direction
- Interior design
- Fashion design
- Packaging design
- Industrial design
- Multisensory design
- Brand identity design
- Motion design

Related to

- Sketching

Authors and works

2001	**S. Garner and D. McDonagh-Philp**	They studied its use in design education as a tool to interpret and resolve the design problem through visual stimuli.

Sources

Original sources

- Garner, S., & McDonagh-Philp, D. (2001). Problem interpretation and resolution via visual stimuli: The use of "mood boards" in design education. Journal of Art & Design Education, 20(1), 57–64. View source (https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-5949.00250)

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