Aesthetic Analysis

Pick two UI exemplars to engage in UI aesthetic analysis. The two example UIs you choose will serve as pieces of “competitor analysis” for your UI, with an emphasis on aesthetic.

Why did you pick these two examples? How do they relate to your UI design? Describe your choice in this text box.
Tumblr Mobile

Tumblr approaches some issues with its aesthetics at the cost of usability. Some of its screens privilege content over aesthetics, packing a lot of information into a single screen because it just might not fit anywhere else. Yet, in other screens, like the login, I feel like a designer had a lot of fun building something elegant. The introduction to tumblr doesn’t really match the rest of the experience, but it’s definitely a nice one. Overall, though, I think tumbler does its job well; it handles a variety of content in a way that feels coherent. Even though tumblr feels a little breathless at time, I wonder if the designers embraced that, encouraging users to move through their feed and their interface with the authority of a critic: there’s time for wonder, but users need to interact to get the full experience. Passive consumption just won’t do.
Analysis 1

Examples

01 - Login
A muted, but entirely pleasant login page. The purpose shines through with a leveled login menu, and the background hints at a metropolitan, classy-without-trying-too-hard aesthetic.

02 - Dashboard
Content dominates the page, with built-in hierarchy for user commentary. The interface is highly linear and sequential, and it provides a toolbar of options (which will persist, and encourage posting above all else) but also links to other user’s pages.

03 - Explore
The exploration page does a lot of image-heavy work, providing trending tags, as well as recommendations. It maintains a linear format, but with a new, horizontal line at the top of the interface for displaying the tags. A search bar sits at the top for bottom-up searching.

04 - Account
Images make way for text, denoting favorites, people you’re following, and settings (pardon the French.) The user’s blogs take on individual color palettes based on the user profile assets, creating personalized spaces for account settings and account observation.
Mobile Tumblr

To engage with content.  
To find new content.  
To find similar content.

Tumblr already existed, but packing all of the information and functionality onto a smaller screen is a big challenge. The UI needs to let many types of content shine through while providing users with a set of tools and guidance on how to use them.
Users

Mobile Tumblr

Tumblr users access it anywhere; it’s meant for moments of spare time and procrastination, for gaining inspiration and losing periods of productivity. It’s a personalized experience, generating a stream of content based on the people you follow, and privileges the person whose interest can be defined in a few tags. If you can articulate the particular class of interest, whether it’s a show or an activity like drawing, you’re likely to find a community - so buckle up, and get ready to reblog and make your own contributions.
Analysis 1

Color Palette

01 - Text Grey
R - 0%
G - 0%
B - 0%

02 - Faded Aqua
R - 0%
G - 0%
B - 0%

03 - Tumblr
R - 0%
G - 0%
B - 0%

04 - Icon Grey
R - 0%
G - 0%
B - 0%
These colors definitely scream “Tumblr”, but they also serve an important purpose: They lend themselves well to the content they might display. Rather than using pure blues, these seem to be desaturated, fading into the background like we see on the login screen photo background. The colors are distinct but not overwhelming.
Analysis 1

Typography

Tumblr Mobile

Type Inventory:
Helvetica Neue (2), Bookman Old Style [modified] (1)

Caption, list item, subheading, body copy, logo.

Captions and body copy are in Helvetica Neue Light, whereas list items and subheadings use a heavier weight. The logo is Bookman Old Style, and doesn't show up elsewhere. There is very little hierarchy added to the site using typeface.
I think this falls into the philosophy of Helvetica being relatively neutral. Tumblr’s design is less about their own content shining through; instead, the interface needs to accommodate an incredible amount of content that includes images, text blocks, and even other typefaces. Helvetica offers a balanced way to deliver the message they need while not being so distinctive as to distract from everything else going on in the interface.
Especially on the mobile app, there really isn’t much imagery outside of that login screen. Again, they are in the business of sharing the images of others, not producing their own.
Feedly Mobile

Feedly balances usability and aesthetics well, lending its interface to a minimalist scheme that ports in content well. The design highlights recent articles, creating striking visuals, while also facilitating efficient understanding of further objects; there’s a cohesive idea of articles consisting of an image and a title text blurb. Overall, I think the aesthetics actually make Feedly work better; the interface packages articles in such a way that they enhance it, making it beautiful by virtue of its function.
### Analysis 1

#### Examples

**01 - Feed Title**

Title cards pull imagery from the RSS feed article and fill the screen with the content, providing eye candy before drawing people down to the title and source of the article.

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**02 - Additional Content**

Creates a simple grid of content from the feed, limiting what can be seen at any given point in time. Provides users a sense of what the content is through the title and images from the article.

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**03 - Navigation**

Relies on a text grid, revealed from the left of the screen, in order to provide users with an easily navigable overview of their feed.

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**04 - Article**

Pulls the content into a simple UI, favoring pure text and inline images with little embellishment on behalf of Feedly.

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Running Application for iPhone

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Interface Aesthetics

Spring 2015

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Objectives

Feedly Mobile

To generate content from user RSS feeds
To navigate RSS feed content
To consume RSS feed content

The designers probably wanted to figure out how to use the few assets websites have in common - i.e., images and text - to make any article appear to be worth reading. Then, they had the challenge of deciding how to make that array of content cohesive and readable on their interface.
Feedly Mobile

I think the typical Feedly user is a digital hoarder, as evidenced by its integration with services like Pocket. Feedly is for browsing news that doesn’t show up in the NYT. Thus, I don’t think Feedly necessarily influences people in the same way Tumblr does; people seek out Feedly as a tool for accessing sources of info, not as a source in and of itself. It is most likely used in the morning and night as a result, when people are trying to get a handle on what’s happening in the day.
Analysis 2

Color Palette

01 - Royal Blue
R - 0%
G - 0%
B - 0%

02 - White
R - 0%
G - 0%
B - 0%

03 - Paper Ash
R - 0%
G - 0%
B - 0%

04 - Feedly
R - 0%
G - 0%
B - 0%

Feedly Mobile

01 - Label

02 - Label

03 - Label

04 - Label
Feedly Mobile

Here, I think there’s another issue of varying content alongside the fact that it’s very specific types of content. Where Tumblr deals in the world of images, Feedly is much more focused on articles, and actually handles images pretty poorly (my infographics subheading, for example, is a mess.) This color palette privileges readability while still giving some sense of brand with jarring flashes of blue and green; rather than being unpleasant, they have a springtime feel that places a quirky, organic life into an interface that could otherwise be a little too stern.
Name of UI Example 2

**Type Inventory:**
Helvetica, FF Milo Serif

Body copy, headlines, titles, subtitles

The fonts are used consistently; I don’t really see any breaks in how the font is used, outside of a heavier weight of Helvetica being used for titles/buttons.
The sans-serif Helvetica provides a sleek, yet neutral overlay for a variety of titles on a variety of photos. Yet, the Milo Serif provides a highly readable newsprint typeface for delving into the article. It’s a pleasant juxtaposition of ultramodern interface to a cozy serif that I would describe as “sophisticated but approachable.”
Feedly Mobile

I actually can’t find any native Feedly images. The interface is literally a vessel; when there’s no outside content to display, the designers used buttons and color in the place of any images.