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.

I chose to look at two portfolio sites that are made by designers. These two options provide different interpretations of how to present information that is similar to what I am considering.
Set 1

Kat Zorina Portfolio

Write a comparison that weighs usability vs. aesthetics. When is the designer taking design liberties for aesthetic reasons? How does the design layout help you or the user navigate successfully or unsuccessfully? Was its success or failure due to aesthetics or technology or something else? Is the overall appearance beautiful to you? Why?

This designer generally did a good job of balancing usability and aesthetics in her portfolio design. The overall look of the design is fairly consistent, especially in her reserved use of color. I think that the “Work” section is beautiful because it is easy to navigate, looks very balanced, and I enjoy the salient change of color in the hover state of portfolio items. There is a lack of hierarchy in the typography of the “About” page that could be improved for both aesthetics and usability.

There are several usability issues that are distracting and frustrating. First, I expect the large icons on the home page to be interactive in some way. The only way to get to the next page is to click on one of the links in the top right corner, but I had assumed that the home page was the “Work” page at first (it discusses some of her work). I also wanted to be able to click anywhere on the portfolio tiles in order to drill into one item, but had to find a “link” icon in the corner to be able to do this.
Analysis 1

Examples

01 – Home Page

The home page includes a carousel that pages through images of several projects, tagged with the type of work it was (human-centered research, concept generation, or prototyping).

02 - About

The about section uses icons, images, and highlighted text to give the user an overview of the designer’s experience and training.

03 - Work

The work section, which is probably the most functional and aesthetically pleasing page, has a tile for each featured project and a brief description upon hovering. There is the option of going to a more detailed page by clicking on the link icon in the lower right corner of the tile.

Running Application for iPhone
Kat Zorina Portfolio

This UI is a portfolio site, with the following objectives:

Objective 1: Show examples of work
Objective 2: Give blurb about herself
Objective 3: Provide way to contact
Who uses this? How do they use it? How if at all does it change their behavior or the behavior of whoever is around them? What is the need for this? Are there work arounds? What time of day do they use it? Anything else?

This site is used by people who might be interested in hiring, collaborating with, or knowing more about the work of this designer. It is probably most useful for prospective employers, as it provides detailed descriptions of the designer’s past work and skills.
The designer had a simple color scheme of white background with gray text and borders and coral highlights.
Why do you think they chose these colors? Are they functional or aesthetic decisions? When are they functional and when are they aesthetic? How does it fit within a brand or does it stand alone?

I think these colors were chosen mostly for aesthetic reasons. They give the design a uniform look across pages that looks very consistent. The colors are also functional in the Work view, as they make the hover state quite salient. The color scheme does seem to be part of Kat’s personal brand.
Typography

It looks like Kat uses Oswald for titles and Helvetica for body copy.

All body copy is 12px, and titles are a bit larger. This is consistent across the UI, except for on the Contact page, where Helvetica is used for to label form input boxes (though Oswald might have looked better here).
Why do you think the designers chose this typeface(s)? Is this successful or unsuccessful? Are they functional or aesthetic decisions? What would you do differently?

I think that the typefaces are both functional and aesthetic. Overall, I think that the choice is successful in differentiating between different kinds of text on the screen. However, I might have chosen a slightly less square/more interesting body copy font to go with Oswald, though.
Kat Zorina Portfolio

The imagery in this UI includes icons on the home page and about page, and images of the designer and her work. Most of this is functional, as the icons provide insight into the category of work being represented, and the images of the work itself are the reason for users to visit the site.
Write a comparison that weighs usability vs. aesthetics. When is the designer taking design liberties for aesthetic reasons? How does the design layout help you or the user navigate successfully or un成功fully? Was its success or failure due to aesthetics or technology or something else? Is the overall appearance beautiful to you? Why?

This designer strikes an excellent balance between usability and aesthetics. The look of the site is simple— it is clear from the initial home page view that this is something he values. The scrolling behavior to get between sections is intuitive and efficient, while the layout of text, images, and sections provides just enough interest without overshadowing the content. The aesthetics seem to be a big win in this UI. Choices appear intentional throughout.
01 – Home Page

The home view gives the user one clear thing to focus on, and introduces a perspective that the designer feels defines him.

02 - About

The about section has very carefully chosen brief text blurbs with images arranged in a way that makes your eye want to flow down the page.

03 - Work

The work section includes one screenshot per project, with a hover state that shows a photograph icon. This is helpful because it successfully communicates that clicking on the tile will show a larger image, and probably not more info.

Analysis 2 Examples
Vanhue Portfolio

This UI is a portfolio site, with the following objectives:

Objective 1: Communicate personal design philosophy
Objective 2: Show examples of work
Objective 3: Give blurb about himself
Objective 4: Provide way to contact
Vanhue Portfolio

Who uses this? How do they use it? How if at all does it change their behavior or the behavior of whoever is around them? What is the need for this? Are there workarounds? What time of day do they use it? Anything else?

This site is used by people who might be interested in hiring, collaborating with, or knowing more about the work of this designer. It is probably most useful for prospective employers/clients, as it provides detailed descriptions of the designer’s past work and skills.
Color Palette

01 - Blue
- R: 16.1%
- G: 50.2%
- B: 72.5%

02 - Charcoal Gray
- R: 20.8%
- G: 20.8%
- B: 20.8%

03 - White
- R: 0%
- G: 0%
- B: 0%

Label
The designer had a primary color scheme blue, charcoal gray, and white.
Why do you think they chose these colors? Are they functional or aesthetic decisions? When are they functional and when are they aesthetic? How does it fit within a brand or does it stand alone?

The colors used in this design are mostly aesthetic. The blue and gray provide a pleasant color scheme that looks professional. In some parts of the UI, the blue color is used to bring more attention to an element, such as a button or section heading. The use of color does not seem to be part of this designer’s brand necessarily.
Type Inventory:
How many fonts are there?
How many sizes are there within those fonts?
What do those variations represent? (*body copy, headline, time, indicators, etc.*)
Is this consistent across the UI? (If not why is it broken?)

Typography

You may try a font detector app (e.g., *WhatTheFont*).

The designer uses museo-sans-rounded throughout, which is a beautiful and modern-looking sans-serif font. There is really not a lot of text on the screen in general, but the use of type size seems to correspond to elements that he wants to be highlighted more than others.
Why do you think the designers chose this typeface(s)? Is this successful or unsuccessful? Are they functional or aesthetic decisions? What would you do differently?

The typeface chosen is quite successful. It brings out the information instead of distracting from it, and looks very fresh. The largest font size on the screen is used for the quote on the initial home view, which communicates that the text represented there is very important to him. Interestingly, the headings in the “About” section are bold face, but not larger than the text underneath them. This looks unexpectedly nice.
Why do you think they chose this imagery? Are they functional or aesthetic decisions?

The imagery used in this page is aesthetic. It is very nicely designed (I assume he made the images) and consistent in color and style with the rest of the page. The images add interest through their simple shapes, splashes of warm color.