

Curated Style Guides — Motivation & Brief

Prompt Lab / Playground · Author: Ram · Date: September 30, 2026 (America/Los_Angeles) · Status: Work in progress · Eight active books · Print pick deferred · Food/cuisine excluded

Also known as: **Prompt Lab · Playground**

Write-up only.

1. Project framing

Curated Style Guides is **eight standalone books**, all built in the digital archive:

1. **Architecture**
2. **Botany & Birds**
3. **Educational Explainers**
4. **Layout Design**
5. **Children's book illustration**
6. **Concept art**
7. **Product design**
8. **Cartography**

Each book holds about **sixty unique styles**, sourced from real Midjourney-centric catalogs — primarily Midlibrary, with peers where they add unique named looks (Srefs.co, Geniea, sref-midjourney.com). Styles are live named pages with deep links and seeded previews.

Print selection is deferred: after starrng and grouping in the digital catalog, choose about **four** of the eight for print teasers. All eight stay maintained digitally.

The goal is visually rich, printable style-reference material: something you can get inspiration from, and also turn into something actionable. Print form stays open — cards, decks, or books.

2. Motivation — why this exists

When you are mid-prompt and feel stuck, this unlocks it.

Curated Style Guides is a **prompt lab** and a **playground**: a pocket inventory of real Midjourney styles you can open, see seeded up, and remix. Each page is a spark — not a finished commission — meant to **spark imaginative variations** and get you moving again when the blank prompt freezes you.

It is visually rich enough to print and keep nearby, and structured enough to act on: pick a look, read the tags, swap a variable, and unlock the next variation.

3. Scale — book as teaser, digital as archive

The **printed book is a teaser** — a window into a curated page you can browse.

- **Print target:** about **sixty pages** per book — roughly **fifty styles**, plus about **ten pages** for hot keywords, views, featured gallery, and visual inspiration in a tight grid.
- **Digital catalog:** an **ongoing maintained archive** the author collects over time — deeper, fresher, and far better maintained than the physical book. IDs on print pages point into that catalog.

Print stays light and private-friendly; digital carries the full living record.

4. Per-source visual range

Within each book's visual harvest, keep sources **pure-play** and **serially numbered** per source:

- About **40 styles from source one**
- About **40 from source two**
- About **40 from source three**

Each run stays true to that source's material — Midlibrary run, peer-two run, peer-three run — without mixing until a later messier pass. Serial numbers reset or namespace per source/page block as needed.

5. Featured gallery

A couple of pages of **interesting spreads**: a **visual grid with no prompt names** — only **square numbered thumbnails**, each with **one QR** linking to the digital catalog where the named source and saved archive live.

Gallery numbers may **share or diverge** from style-page ID space — leave that decision open until the digital catalog schema is locked.

6. Deeper pages (star-and-nominate)

After the skeleton is reviewed, the author **manually picks** up to about **thirty styles** for deeper treatment: full spreads with detailed text.

Flow: **star and nominate** from the pure-play harvest → those nominated styles get the rich page treatment (rendering, prompt sentences, keyword pairs, ID, dual QR).

7. Per-book variation vocabularies (tag cloud)

Keyword pairs sit beside each style so you can madlib without leaving the page. The same vocab feeds a **tag cloud** for browsing.

Architecture

- **Views:** elevation, axonometric, isometric, cutaway, night photo, dusk silhouette
- **Vantage points:** street, plaza, aerial, courtyard, threshold, roof
- **Locations:** desert, harbor, forest edge, dense city, campus, ruin field
- **Weather:** clear, fog, rain sheen, snow quiet, heat haze
- **Times of day:** dawn, noon, golden hour, dusk, blue hour, night

Example: *brutalist mass at dusk · glass box less-is-more in fog*

Botany & Birds

- **Eras:** herbarium plate, Victorian, cyanotype age, mid-century, woodblock
- **Materials:** watercolor, ink wash, linocut, collage, paper mosaic, tile
- **Compositions:** specimen alone, bird-and-host, life cycle, field pair, dense jungle
- **Seasons / light:** spring soft, summer blaze, autumn mute, winter spare, studio lamp
- **Specimens:** seed, leaf, bloom, canopy, songbird, raptor, insect-on-plant

Example: *Audubon study in cyanotype · pressed plant specimen in autumn mute*

Educational Explainers

- **Subjects:** earth layers, water cycle, heart, circuit, food web, city inputs
- **Diagram types:** blueprint, cutaway, cross-section, exploded, schematic, pictogram
- **Audiences:** kid how-it-works, textbook calm, journal figure, museum panel
- **Color systems:** white-line blue, neon outline, muted ink, primary ISOTYPE

Example: *heart chambers as peeled-open cutaway for textbook calm*

Layout Design

- **Grid systems:** single column, two-up, modular 2×3, five-column fine, broken grid
- **Type pairings:** Swiss quiet sans, bold cutout display, experimental layered type
- **Paper stocks:** newsprint, coated white, kraft, letterpress tooth
- **Scales:** postcard, poster, wall wayfinding, book cover, card deck

Example: *nested color squares on kraft at poster scale*

Children's book illustration

- **Moods:** whimsical, cozy, adventurous, gentle night
- **Looks:** storybook watercolor, flat editorial, soft collage
- **Cast:** animals, kids, toys, weather helpers

Concept art

- **Scales:** character, vehicle, environment, establishing shot
- **Worlds:** spacecraft, alien terrain, ruined megacity, soft sci-fi
- **Finishes:** paintover, keyframe, material study

Product design

- **Stages:** napkin sketch, orthographic drawing, exploded schematic, hero render
- **Materials:** plastic, metal, wood, fabric, glass
- **Views:** three-quarter, top, section, detail callout

Cartography

- **Types:** terrain, city plan, fantasy atlas, transit diagram
- **Textures:** ink contour, hypsometric tint, parchment, clean GIS
- **Elements:** legend, compass, route, place labels

8. Style page layout

Each style page is dominated by a **visually rich rendering**, then:

- A few sentences of the **prompt** that created that visual style (as displayed on the page)
- A couple of **keyword pairs** left for inspiration (from that book's vocabulary)
- An **ID number** for referencing the entry in the digital catalog
- **Two QR codes** (see below)

Catalog name, humanized rename, and one-line look sit with the prompt so the page stays scannable at arm's length.

At the back of each book (or the set): a **master variation index** — all keyword pairs in one place for fast madlibs across styles.

9. Dual QR codes per page

Every full style page carries **two QR codes**:

1. **Payload QR** — encodes the **prompt text on that page** (the style prompt as displayed). Scan with a phone to grab and edit the prompt digitally.
2. **Source QR** — a small code linking to the **specific catalog page** the style was crawled from (Midlibrary or peer). Replaces long URLs and seed strings in print so readers can return to the origin and review it.

Featured-gallery thumbs use a **single QR** to the digital catalog entry (named source + archive), not the dual pair.

10. Five pages of harvested renderings (visual inspiration)

Each book includes about **five pages of distinct harvested renderings** found in the wild (Twitter/X and similar) — finished work that shows prompt magic outside the lab, including possible architect-specific looks.

- **Digital versions** carry **full attribution**.
- **Printed version** is for **private use** and stays light, with a **footnote** pointing readers to the digital catalog for attribution.

These pages sit in the tight-grid inspiration allotment alongside hot keywords, views, and the featured gallery.

11. Madlib concept

Stem = core style (humanized or catalog name)

Variables = location / era / material / view / audience / grid words from the vocab

Pattern:

[style stem] + [one view/era/material] + [one place/season/audience/scale]

Examples:

- *quiet concrete and light + courtyard + blue hour*
- *pressed plant specimen page + cyanotype + winter spare*
- *white-line blue plans + exploded + kid how-it-works*
- *primary-color geometric school + broken grid + poster scale*

The playground is the stem; the lab is swapping variables until something unlocks. The payload QR makes the current stem-plus-variables grab-and-go.

13. Print selection (deferred)

All **eight** books are active in the digital catalog and deep crawl.

Print comes later: after starring (up to ~30 per book) and proposing groupings, pick about **four** books for print teasers. The other four remain digital-first.

Food and cuisine is **not** in the set.

14. Working principles

- Real catalog styles only — no invented Midlibrary slugs.
 - Midlibrary first for named artist and movement pages; peers for poetic or unique gaps.
 - Per-source harvests stay pure-play and serially numbered; messiness later.
 - Star-and-nominate up to ~30 styles for deeper full spreads.
 - Link out via source QR; respect catalog terms (no hotlinking Midlibrary images without permission).
 - Eight books in the digital archive; about sixty print pages each for whichever four later go to print; digital stays maintained for all eight.
 - Gallery ID space vs style-page ID space left open.
 - Private-use print stays light on attribution; digital carries full credit for harvested wild work.
 - Mobile review board: controls in a drawer; Cloudflare pushes only when aligned.
-

Curated Style Guides / Prompt Lab / Playground.