ThinkPad Design Spirit & Essence



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October 5, 2012

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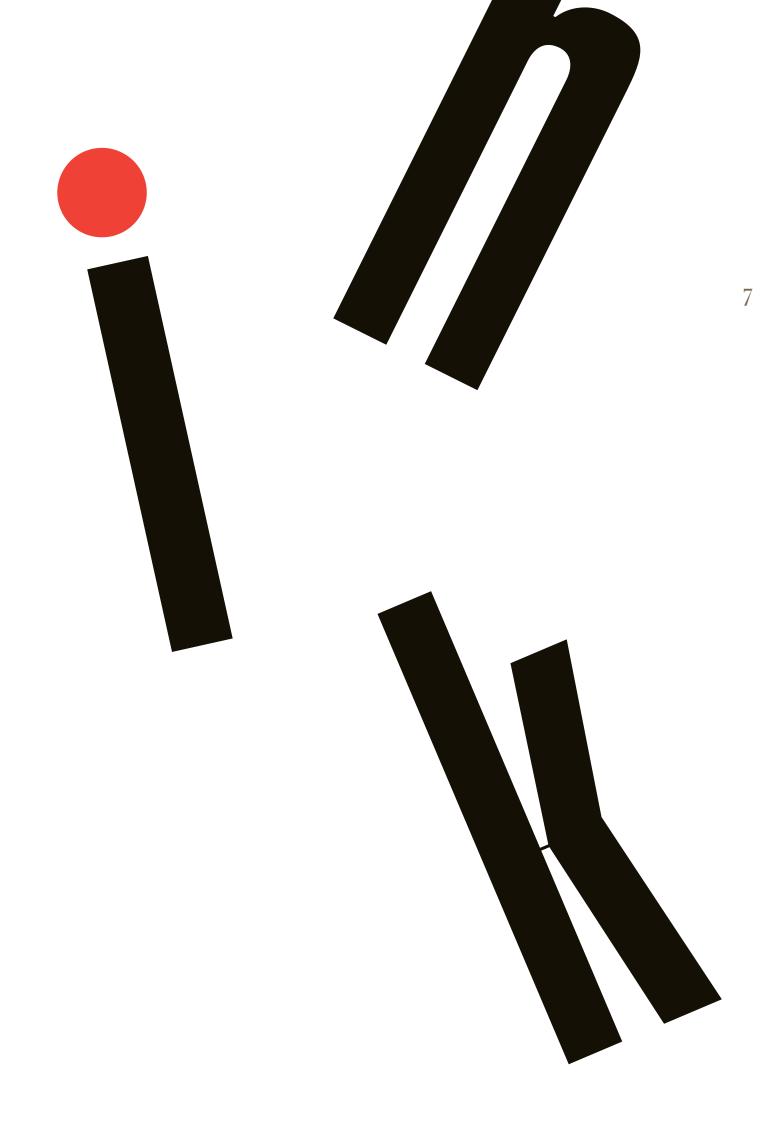
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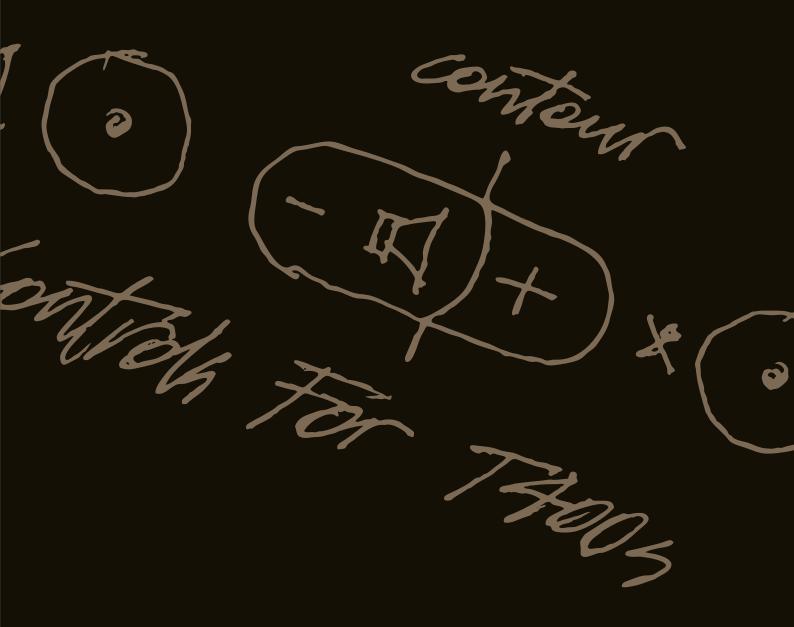




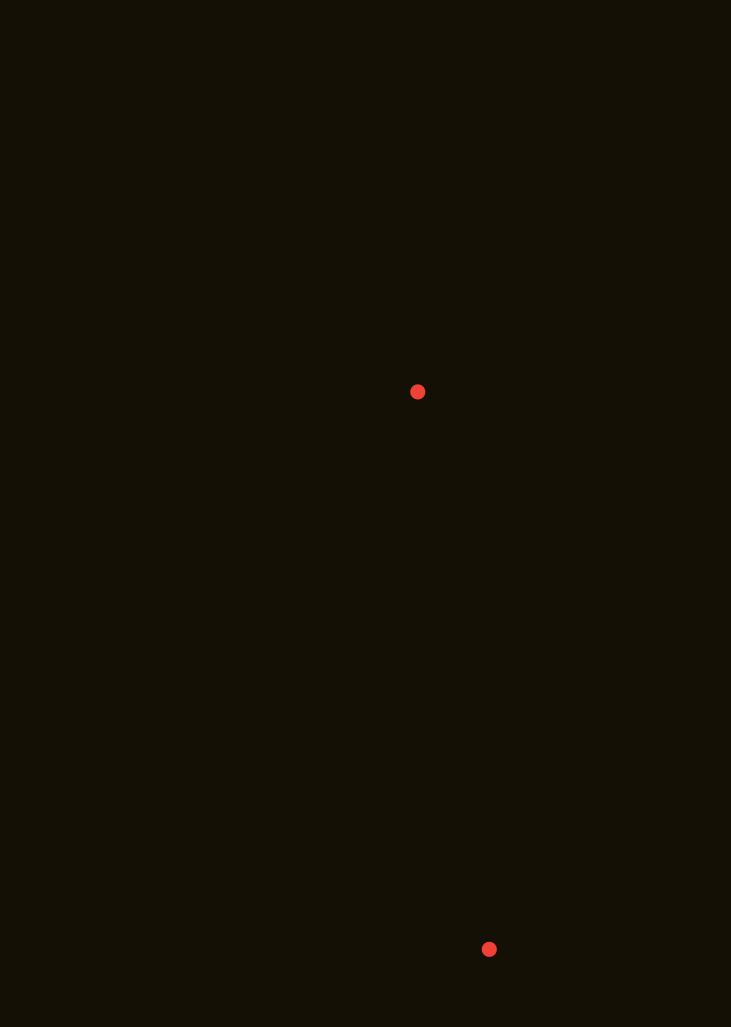
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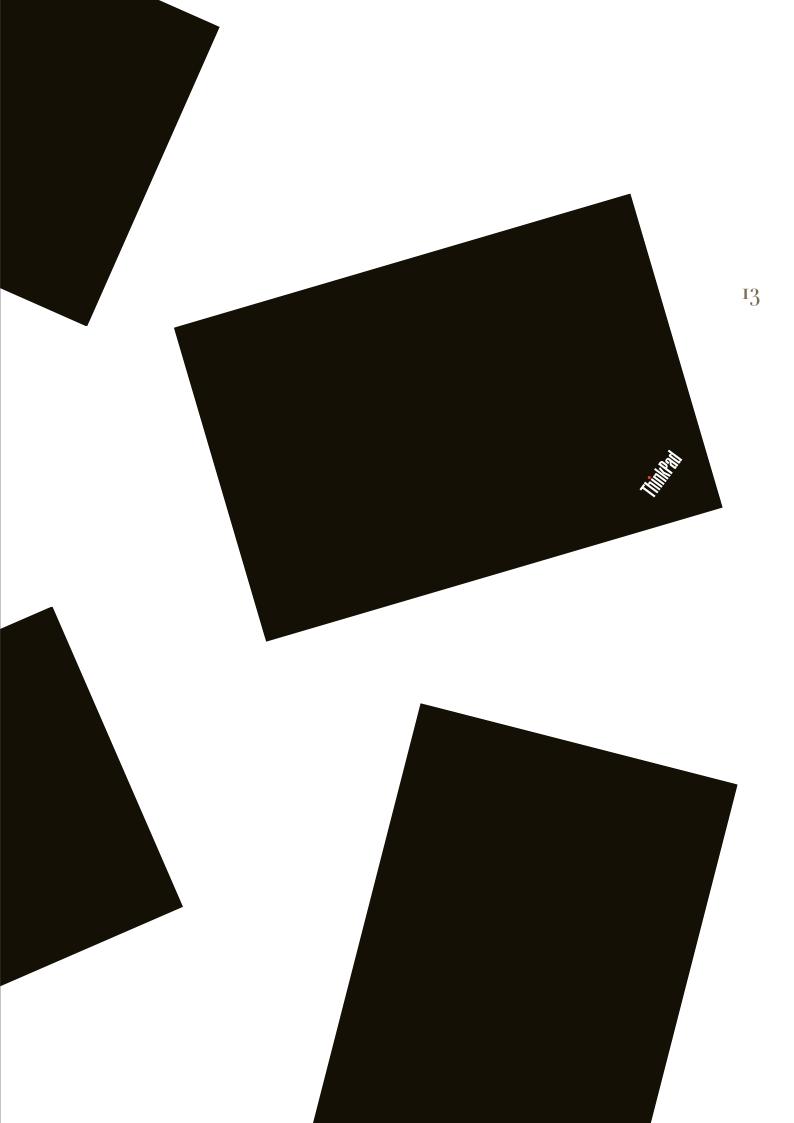
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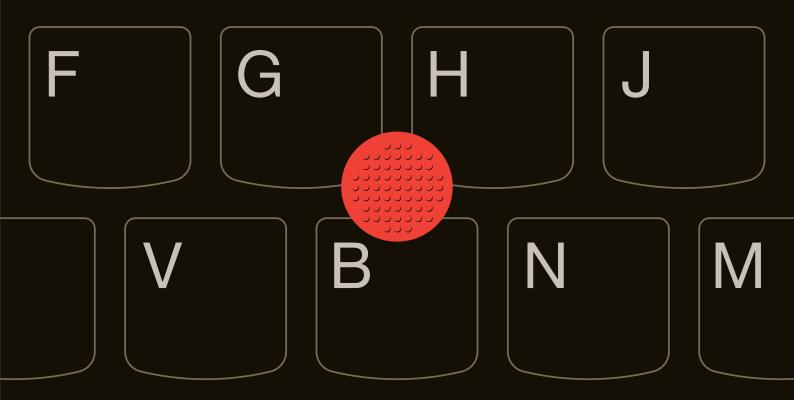
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A rectangular silhouette is unmistakably ThinkPad. Even with the logo obscured, it telegraphs ThinkPad. It's also the most efficient way to package the internals of a laptop computer. Nearly every technology component contained within this form-fitting envelope is rectangular. Little space is wasted. The Bento box has served ThinkPad well.



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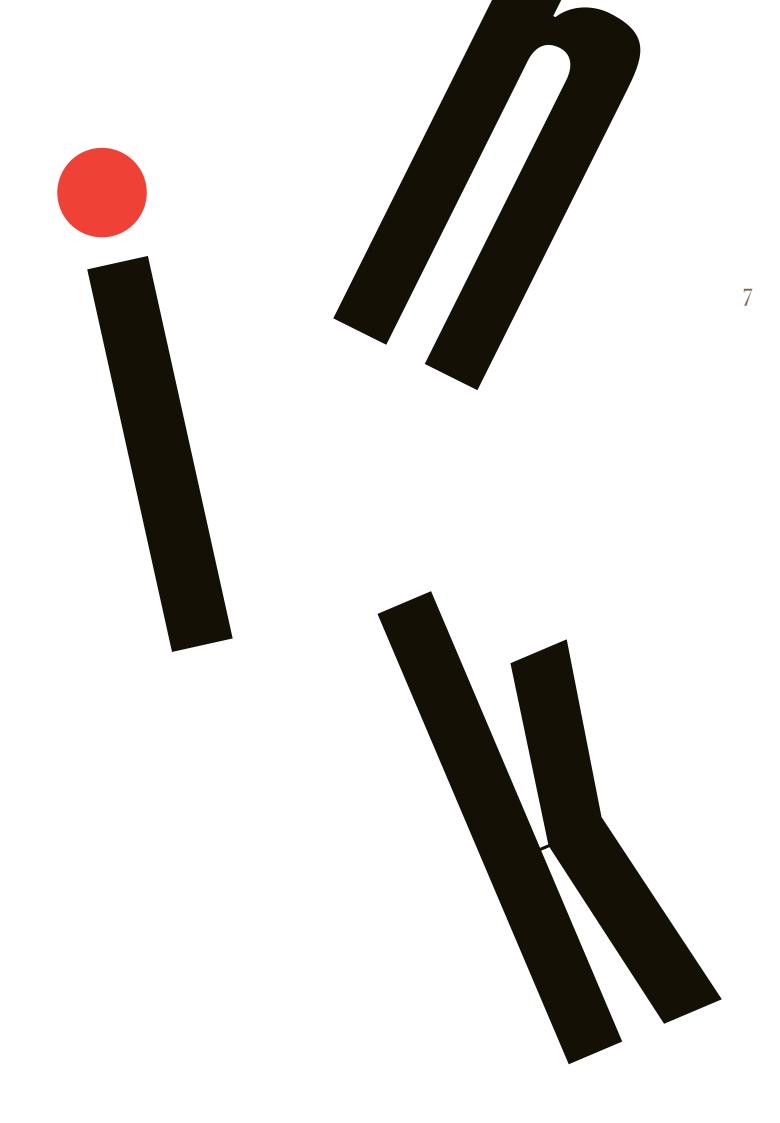
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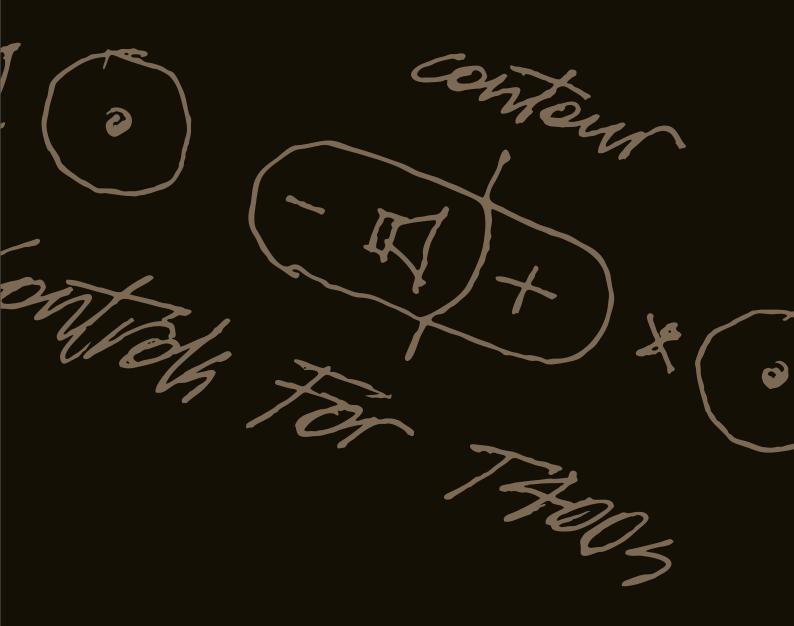




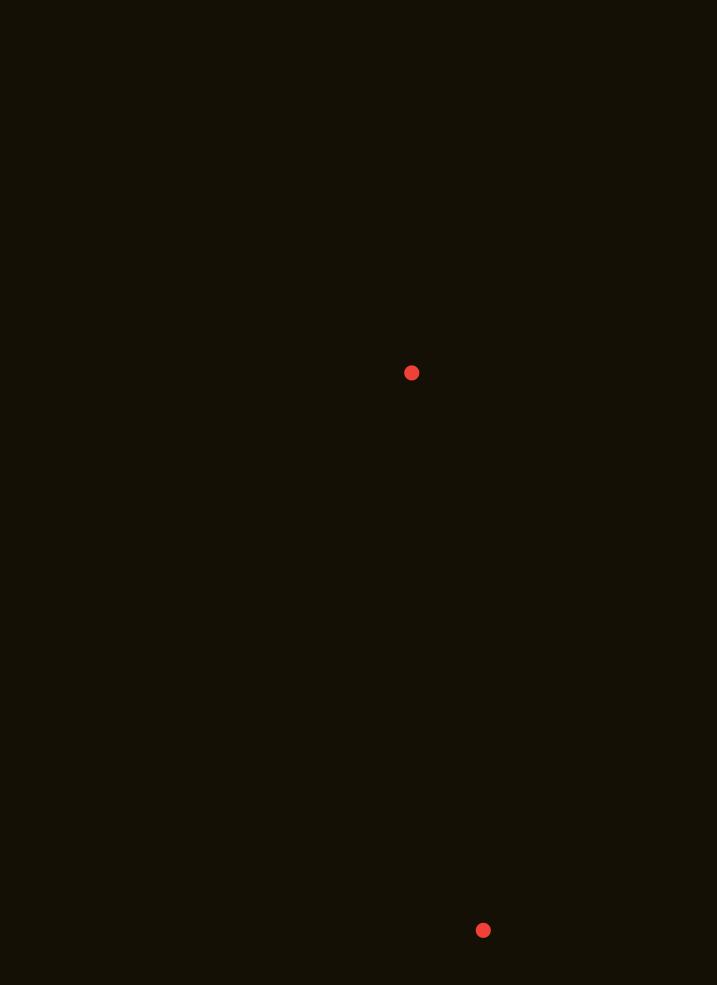
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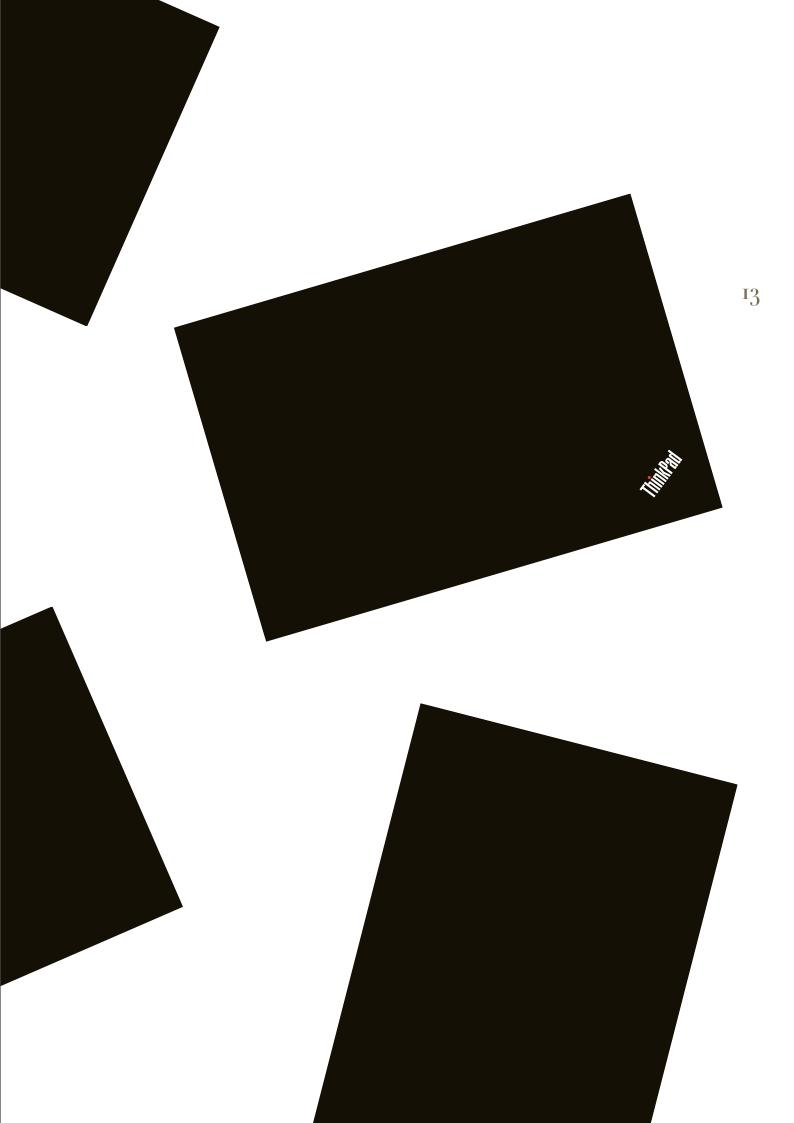
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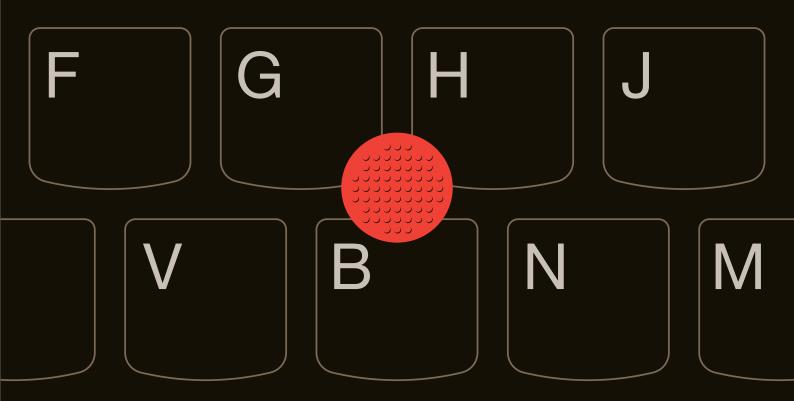
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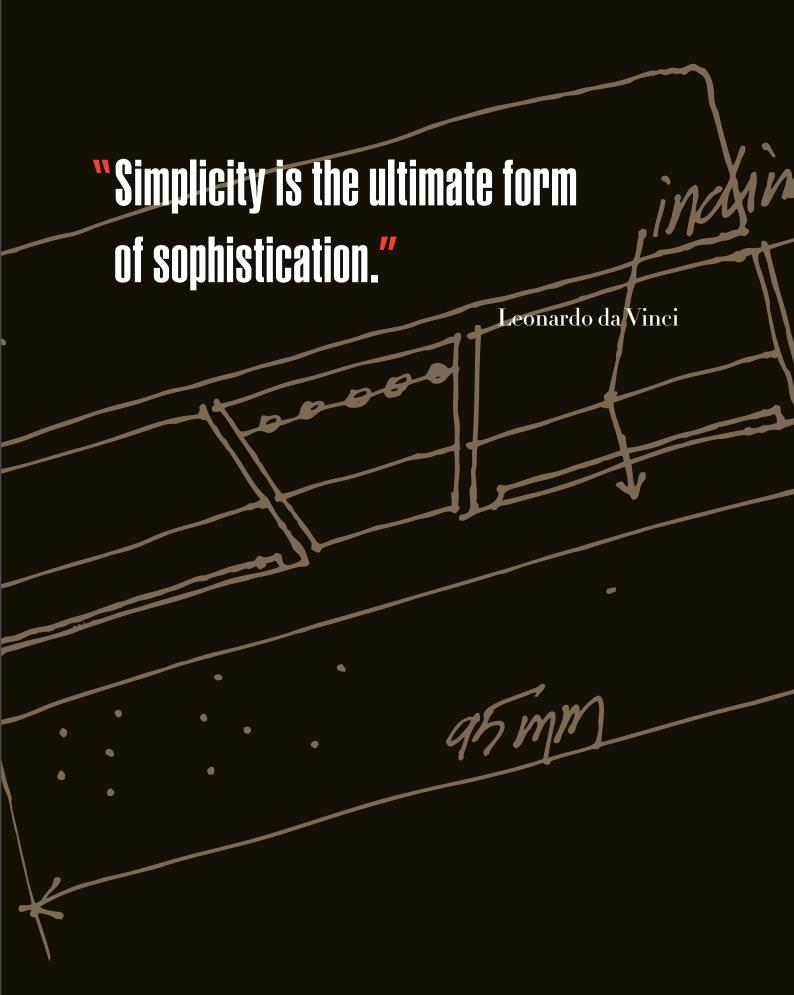
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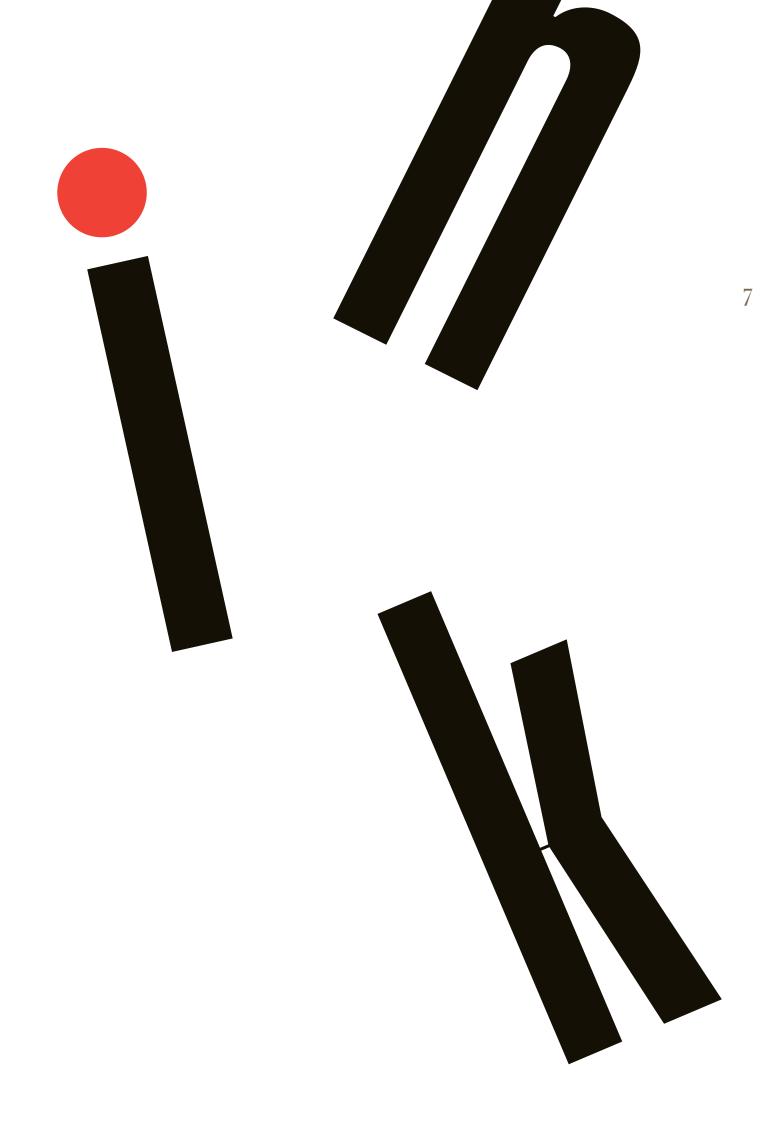


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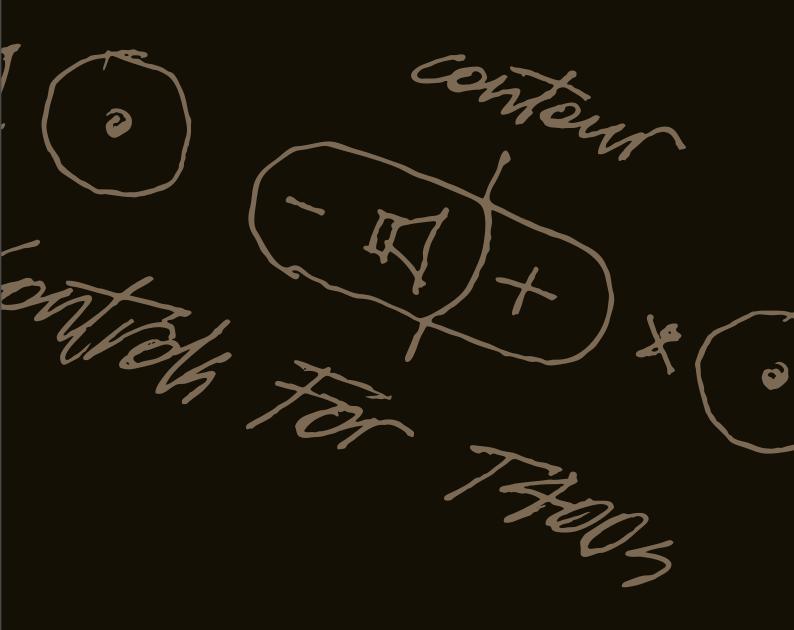




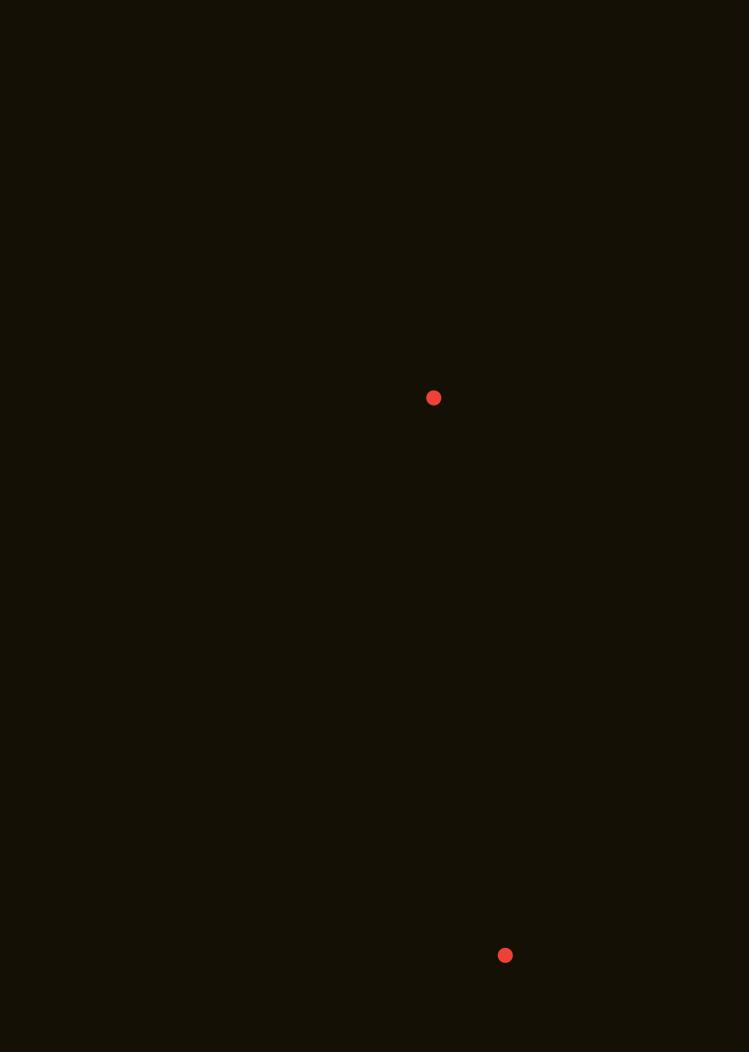
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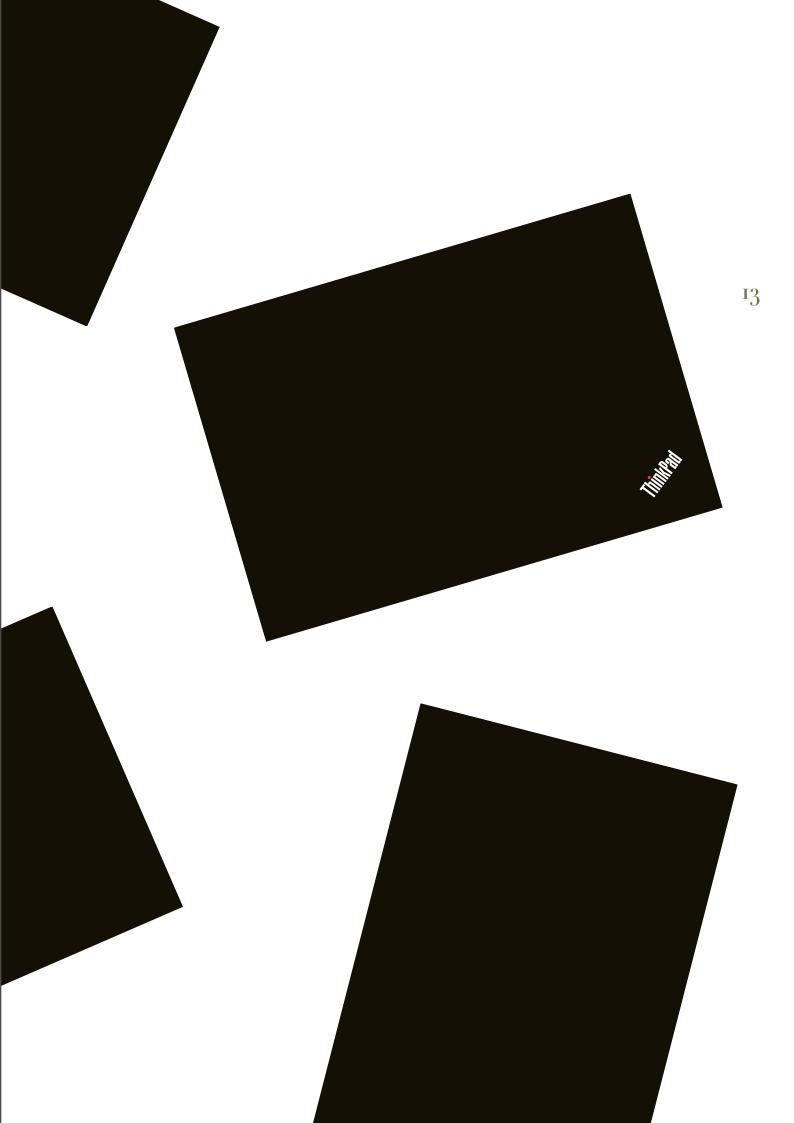
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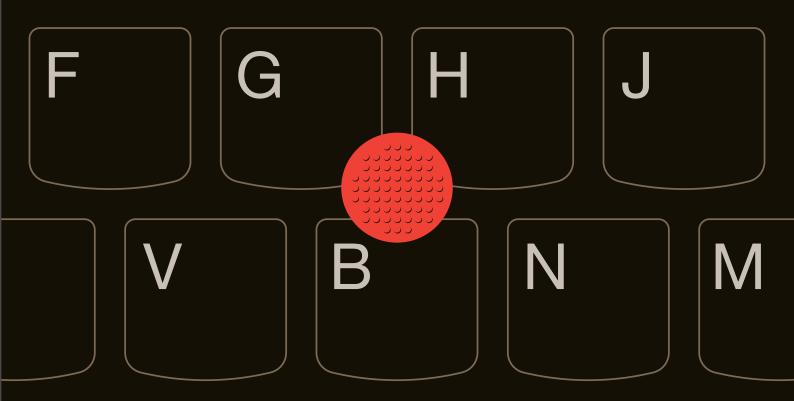
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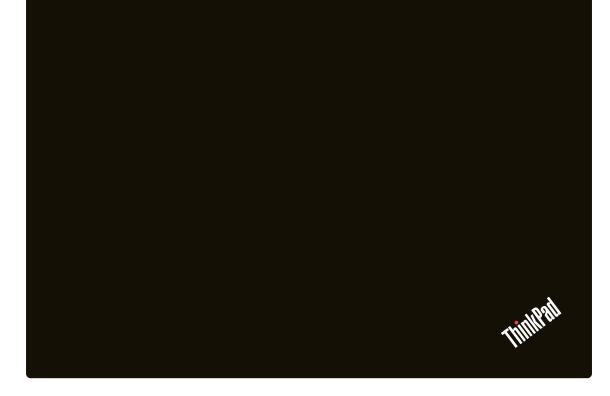


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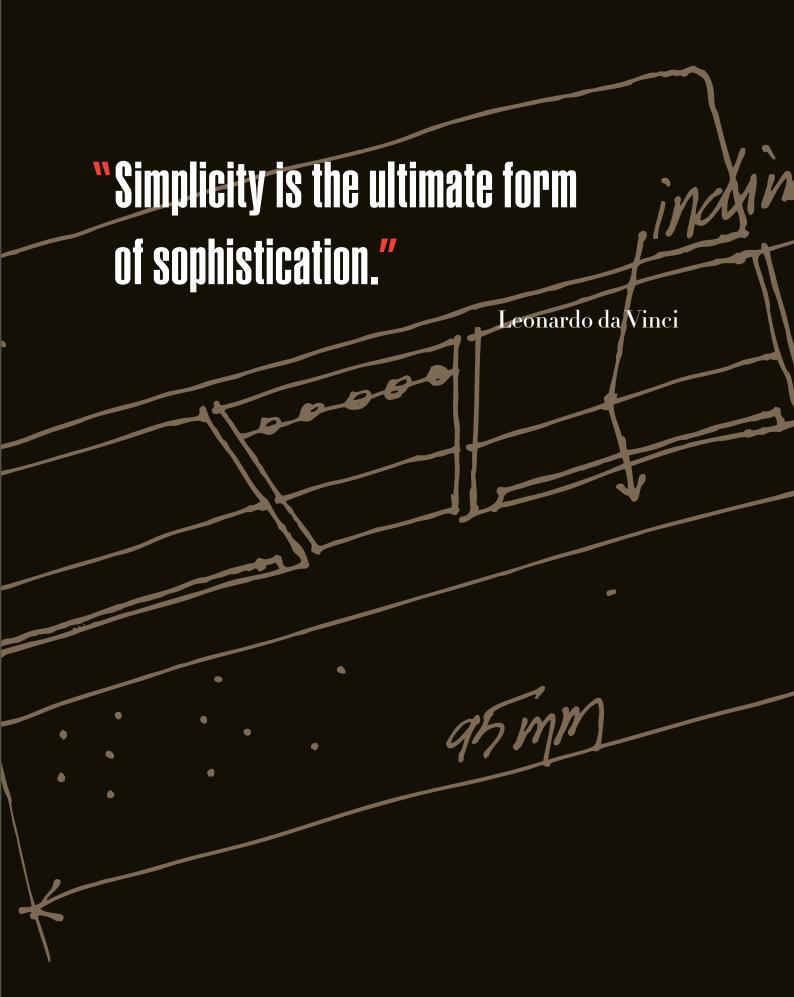
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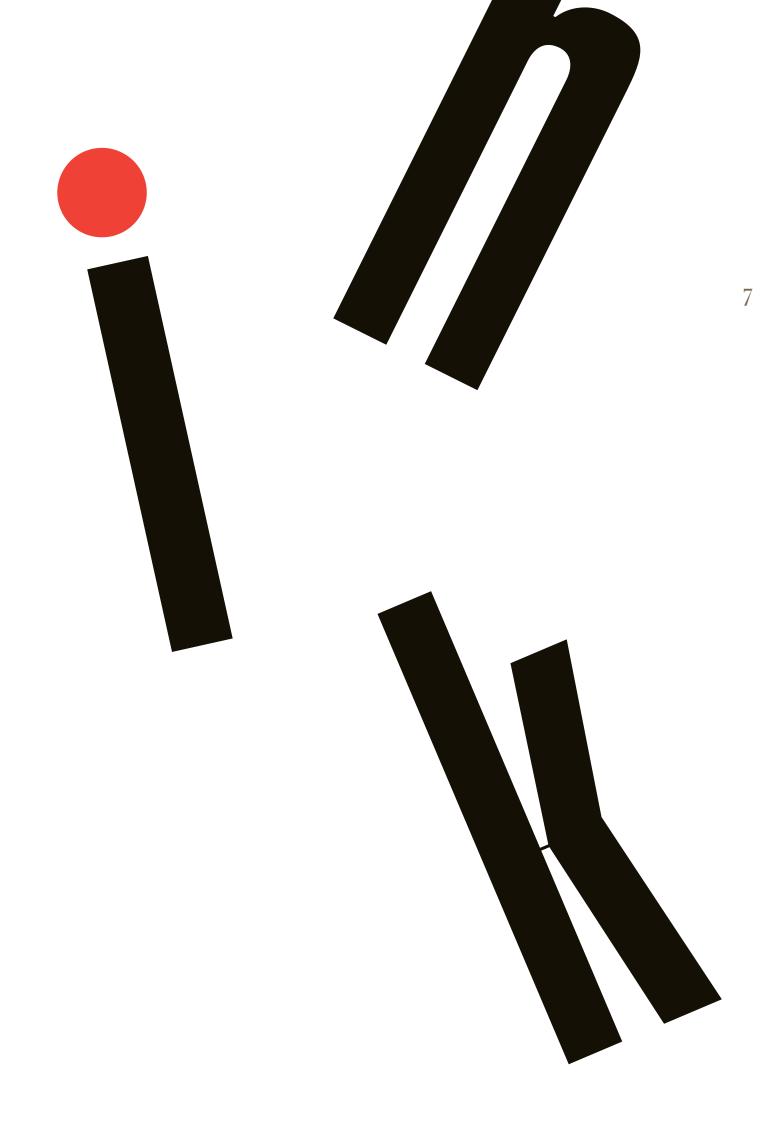


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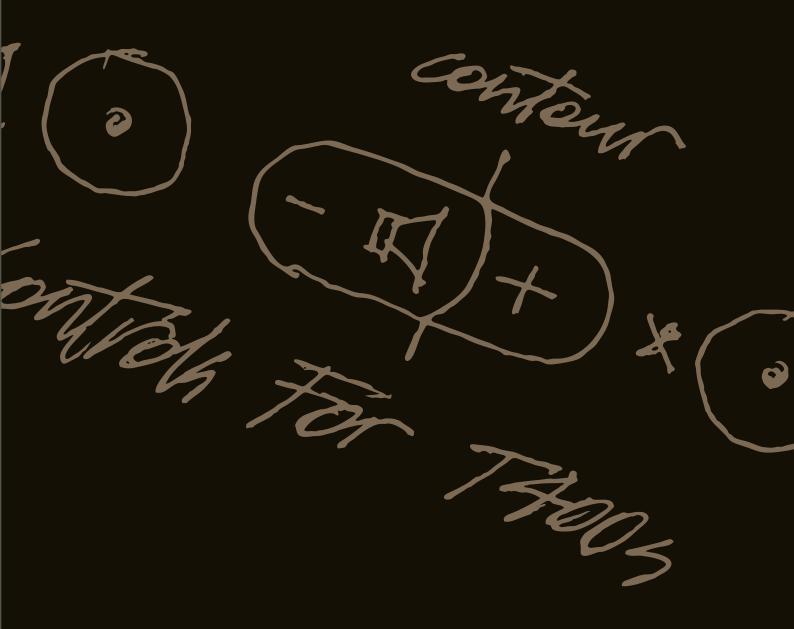




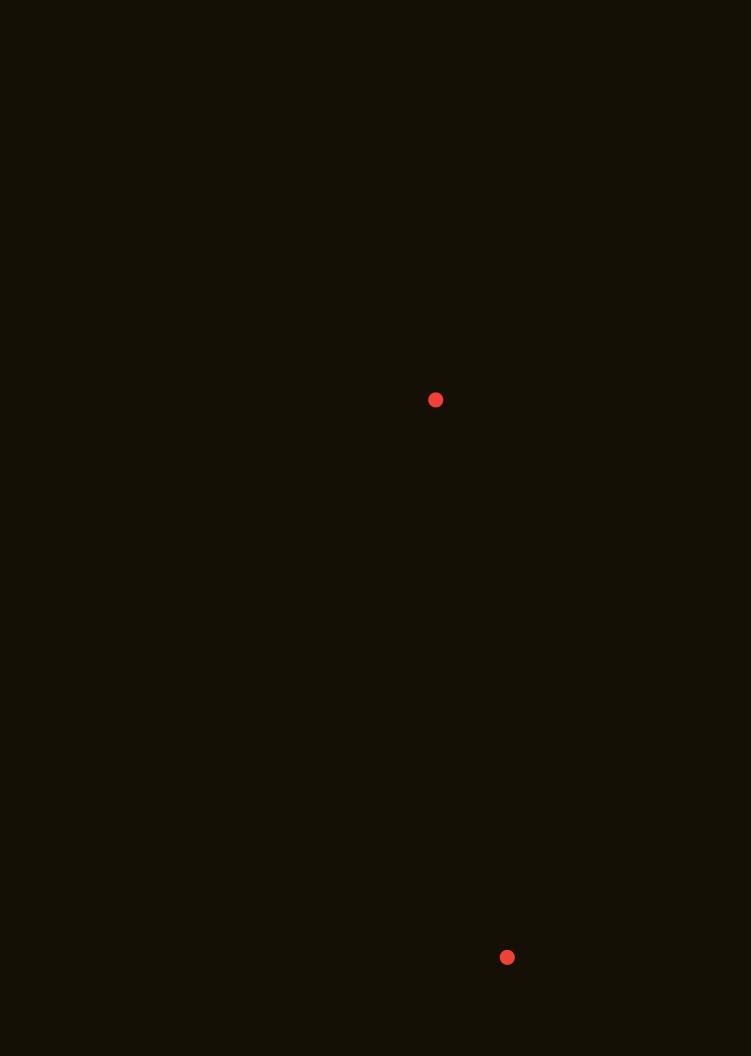
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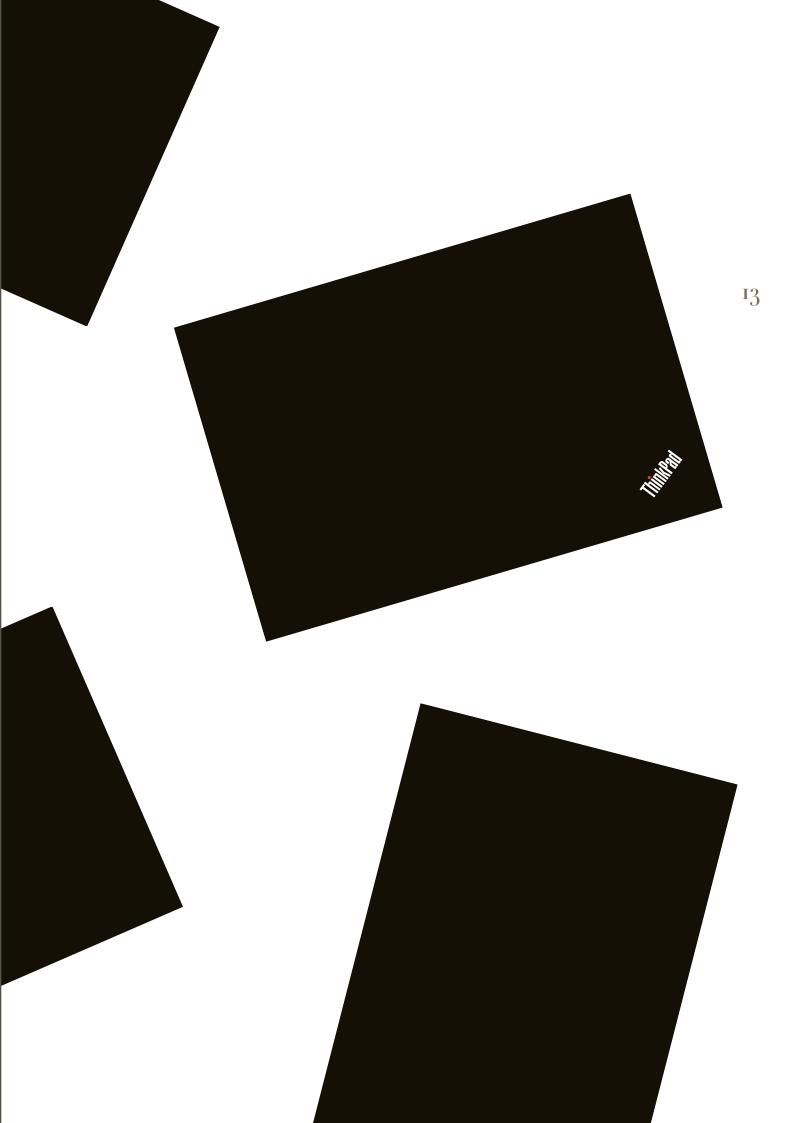
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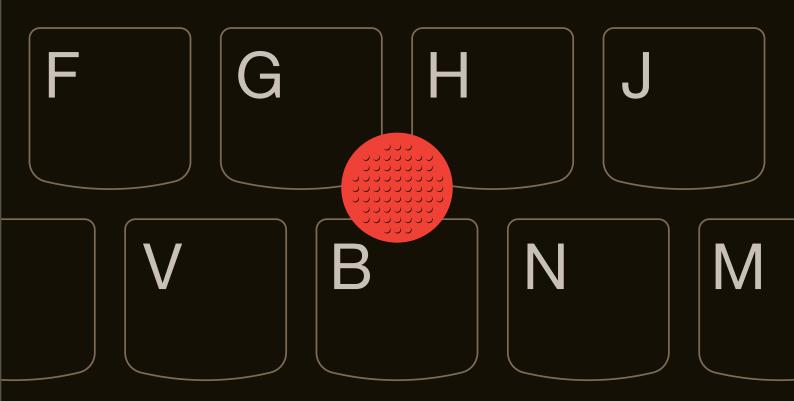
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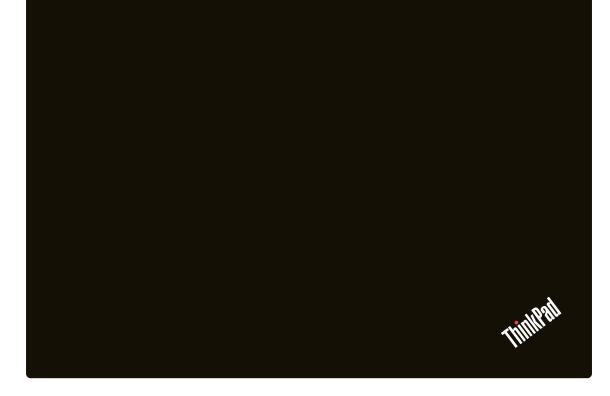


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I'm proud of what has been achieved and of all the incredibly talented designers, engineers and thinkers who have helped to make this milestone possible. Special thanks to Tom Hardy, John Karidis, Arimasa Naitoh, Richard Sapper, Ted Selker, Tomoyuki Takahashi, and Kazuhiko Yamazaki for their inspiration, dedication and creative spirit.

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"Simplicity is the ultimate form of sophistication."

q5 mm

Leonardo da Vinci

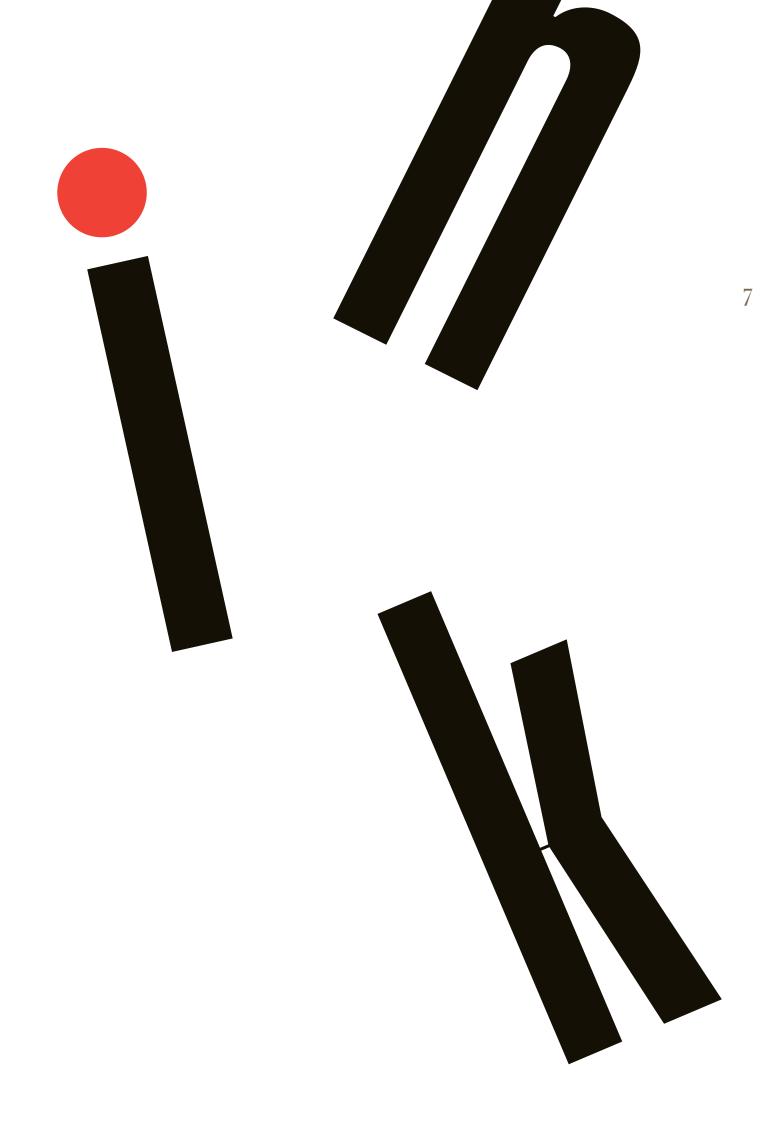
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Great design begins with an inspired idea. It must have clarity, be aesthetically compelling, and have relevant meaning to others. When ThinkPad was introduced in 1992, we had just such an idea. Inspired by the beautifully crafted Japanese Bento box, ThinkPad design is rooted in simplicity, surprising function, and lasting value. Simplicity, however, should not be confused with a lack of visual interest. Simple, without interest, is dull.



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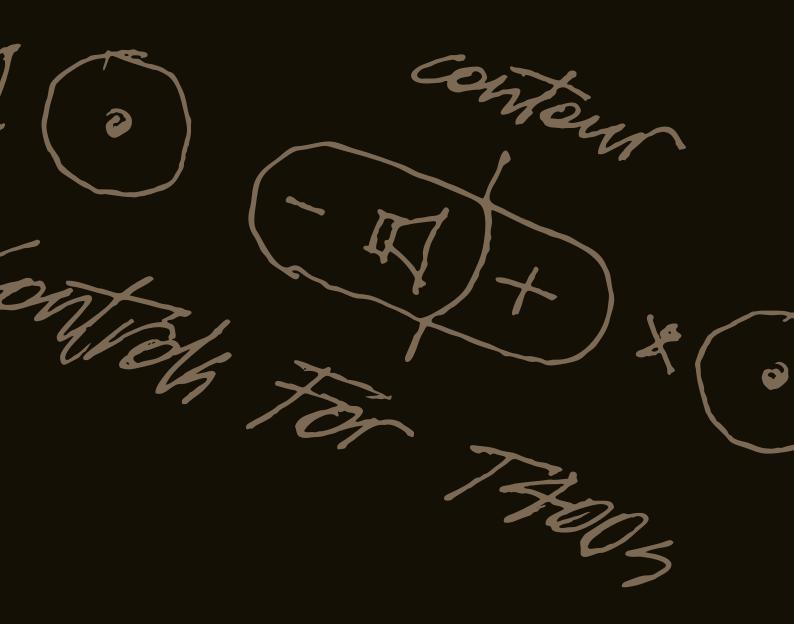




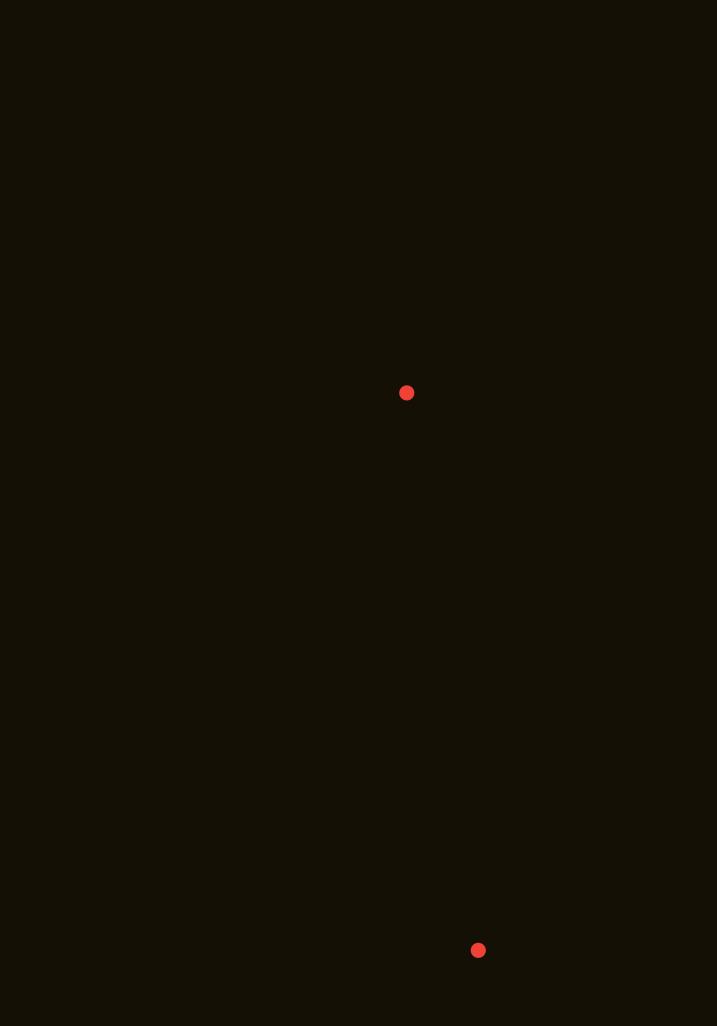
A design concept, as simple as ThinkPad, lives or dies based on the designer's attention to detail. Everything from the specific formulation of a paint, precise logo placement and the exact geometry of the slightly raised nubs on the TrackPoint cap have equal importance.
ThinkPad designers live in a world of continuous refinement and the quest for perfection.

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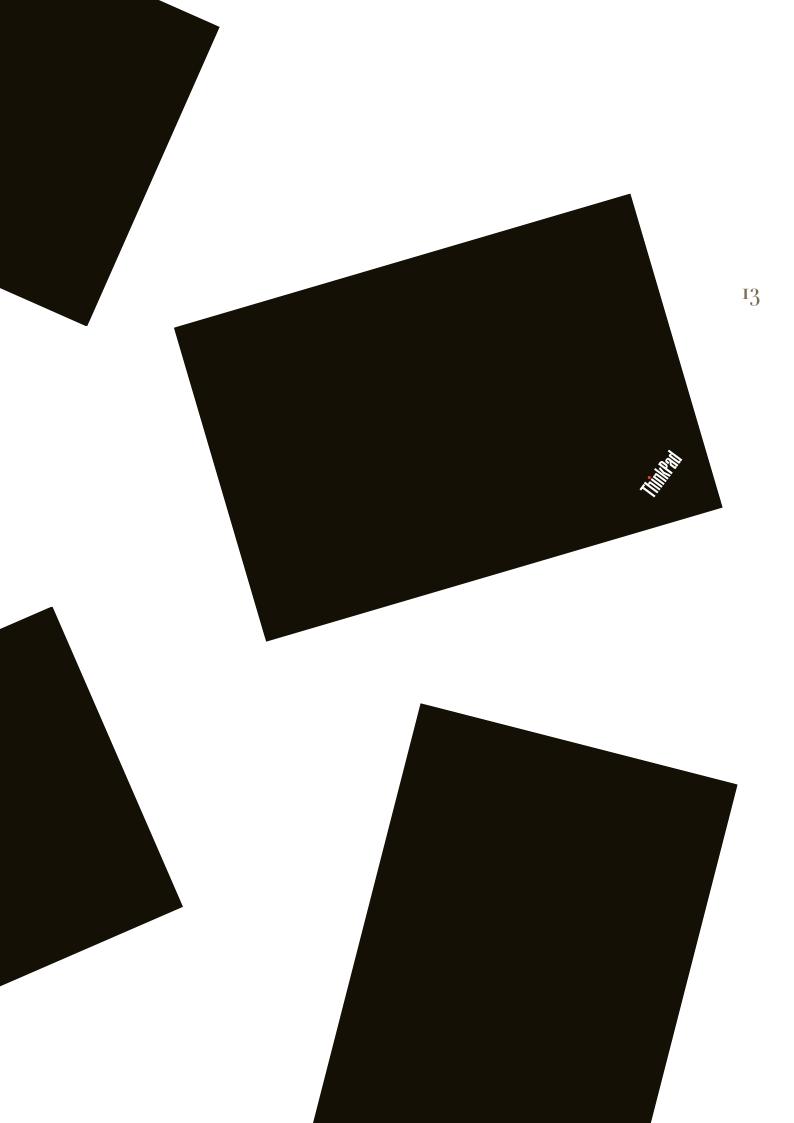
Mies van der Rohe



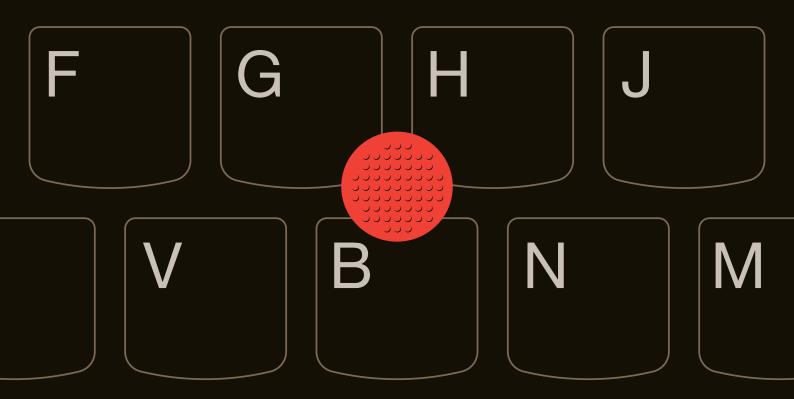
Certain colors are thought to have taboos and cultural prejudices. Black is one of those colors. It's use is often highly debated in design circles, yet offers significant virtues if used appropriately. It's truly a color with conflicting connotations. Black can be the color of serious and conservative values, or the color of mystery, sex and death. Irrespective of these notions, black is synonymous with ThinkPad. It outwardly broadcasts a spirit of power, sophistication and authority for all who carry one.



A rectangular silhouette is unmistakably ThinkPad. Even with the logo obscured, it telegraphs ThinkPad. It's also the most efficient way to package the internals of a laptop computer. Nearly every technology component contained within this form-fitting envelope is rectangular. Little space is wasted. The Bento box has served ThinkPad well.



The red TrackPoint is the center of attention for ThinkPad. It draws you into the keyboard and punctuates the design in a way that defines the brand and user experience. Using a TrackPoint requires a bit of learning as anything worthwhile does, but once mastered, it's efficient and highly addictive. Uniquely, there is no need to move your hands from the comfort of the home row.



16 The dynamic ThinkPad logo placement contrasts the strict rectangular product geometry like a stamp of trusted authority. It demands attention because of its asymmetrical corner position and seemingly arbitrary 37 degree angle. It would be safer to place it horizontally and in the center, but it also would be far less memorable and aesthetically boring.



The ThinkPad logo is set in a highly condensed and hand-refined typeface that reinforces the brand's visual impression of strength and solidity. The closely aligned bold vertical strokes of the individual characters create a rhythm, or cadence, that has meaning. The bright red dot adds important visual interest to the signature, connects with TrackPoint and brings life to the brand.

INKPA PA **MANA** Pa 49 Pa

Human interaction superiority is a hallmark of ThinkPad design. The slightly dished power button, the feel of the TrackPoint cap and the unrivaled typing experience has not happened by chance. Every design detail is the result of rigorous study and painstaking analysis. The concave shape of the ThinkPad keys uniquely maps to the curvature of the human finger. If you have square fingers, type on a square keyboard. The creators of ThinkPad have labored over these critical details for years, so that you don't have to. Once you have experienced typing on a ThinkPad, second best just won't do.



22 Since its inception, pioneering innovation has been core to what makes a ThinkPad. A creative focus and spirit drives the search for new ideas. An integrated pointing device, color display technology, keyboard illumination, and the use of exotic materials such as carbon fiber are all part of the numerous ThinkPad firsts. The 701C "Butterfly", with its magical expanding keyboard, landed almost immediately in the Museum of Modern Art's permanent design collection.





Wenty years after the introduction of ThinkPad, each successive generation is true to the original concept of uncompromised performance and quality. Evolution is what guides the ThinkPad designer. The goal is to make each new ThinkPad better than the last. This is a difficult but rewarding task. Change for the sake of change is not part of the ThinkPad heritage or culture.



²⁶ The ThinkPad brand and design are synergistically linked in a way that few competitors can enjoy. Durability, quality, power, and a serious attitude of accomplishment are all reinforced by the design. It's nearly impossible to separate the ThinkPad brand from its design and vice versa.





Devoid of superfluous ornamentation, ThinkPad is the enemy of trendiness, design clichés, fleeting fashion, or competitive emulation. Instead, it is the embodiment of an original and authentic idea. It has become an icon, or symbol, of ultimate portable computing and success. Few have dared to mimic this hallmark design.



30 The experience of using a ThinkPad is one of cool logic and ergonomic comfort. Things are in the right places, they just seem to feel right. You have the sense that there is a clear purpose behind every design detail. It's not unlike the sensation derived when you slide behind the wheel of a well-tuned sports car. It becomes a natural extension of your body.



32 ThinkPad will continue to evolve and improve over time. Creating the next ThinkPad is a balancing act between a strong heritage and a future vision. Both are important. Ensuring that the next generation ThinkPad is superior to the last is an obsession that will continue to drive design. It's what we do.

"Change is easy, improvement is far more difficult."

F.A. Porsche



David Hill is a Vice President of Design for Lenovo. He has led the design and user experience of the now iconic ThinkPad brand since 1995. He conceived the evolution design strategy, where the core DNA is passed along to each successive generation. David often compares this strategy to how Porsche manages the design of their forever classic 911.

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Design and text: David Hill Design Support: Shigeyuki Kimura, Mario Rampone, Jeff Skinner



ThinkPad Design Spirit & Essence



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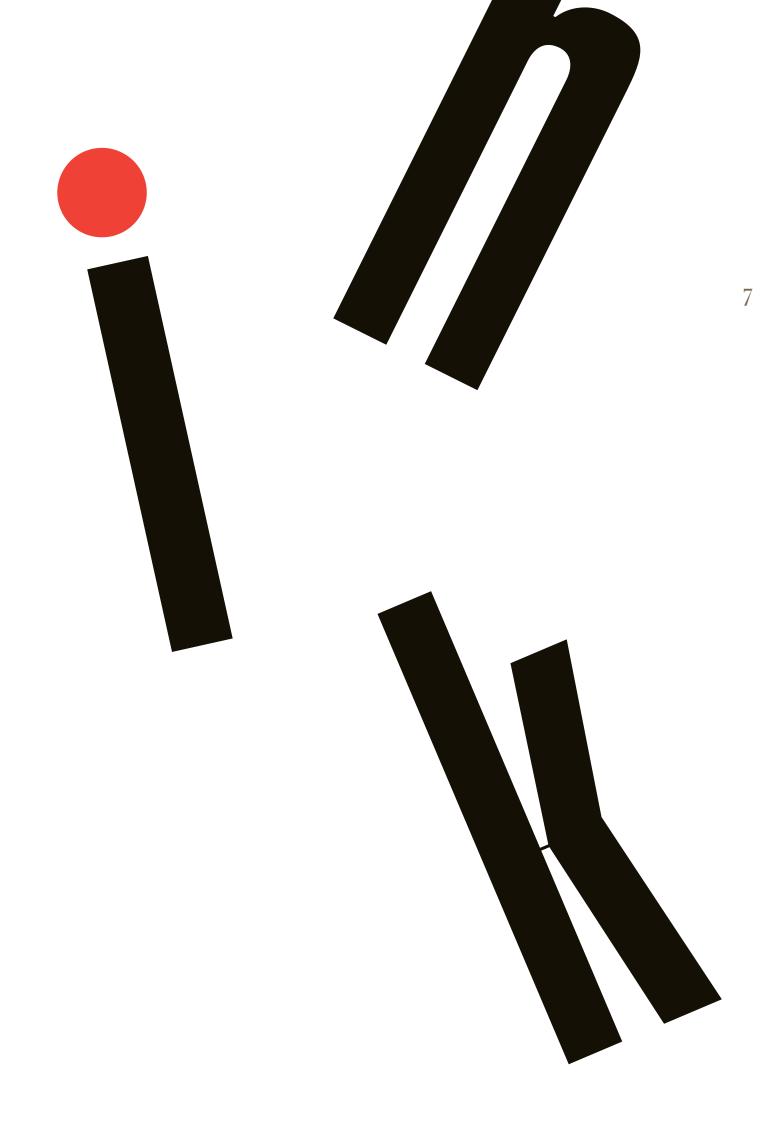
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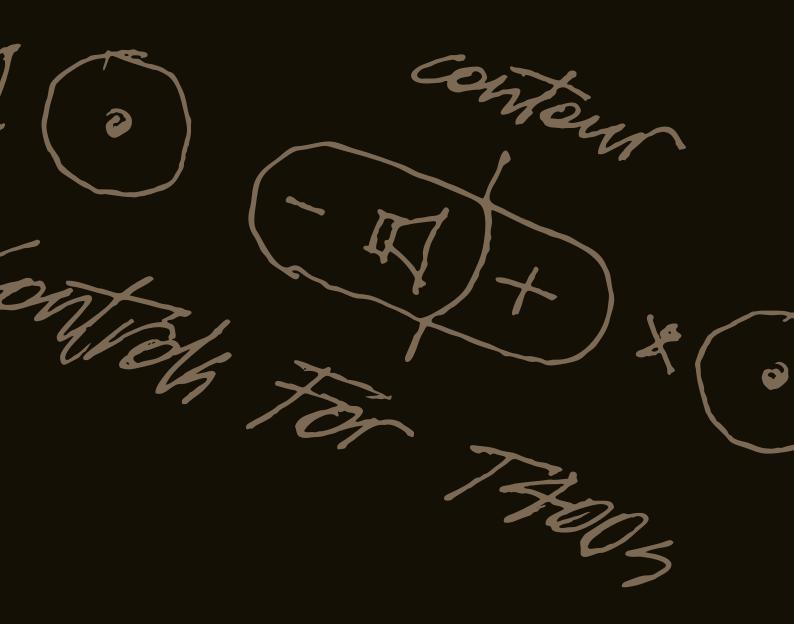




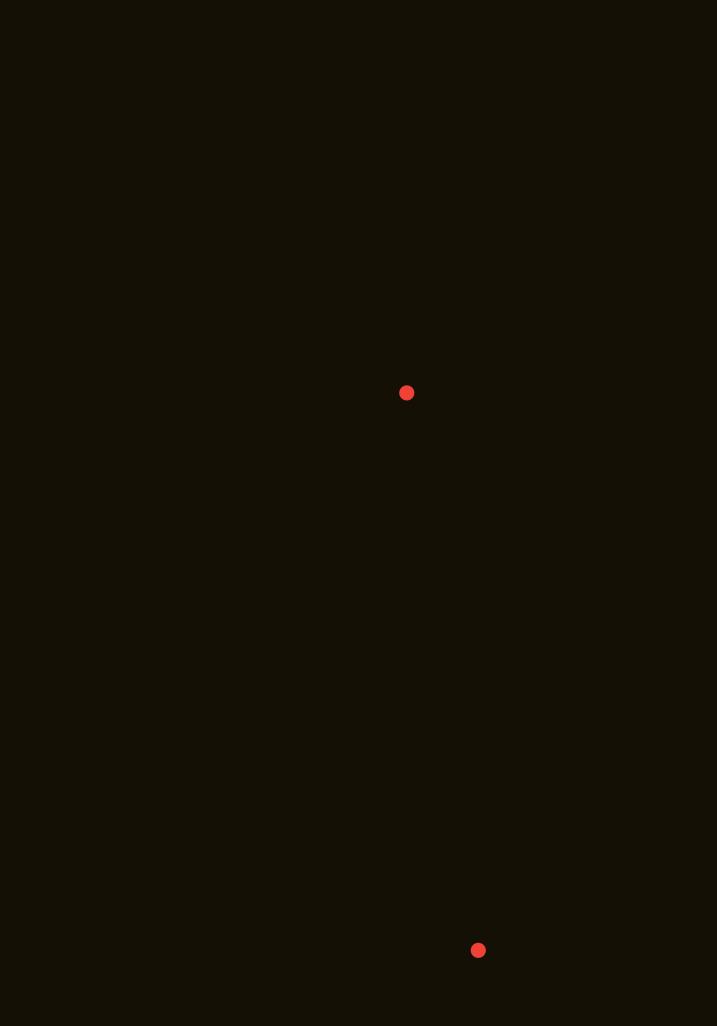
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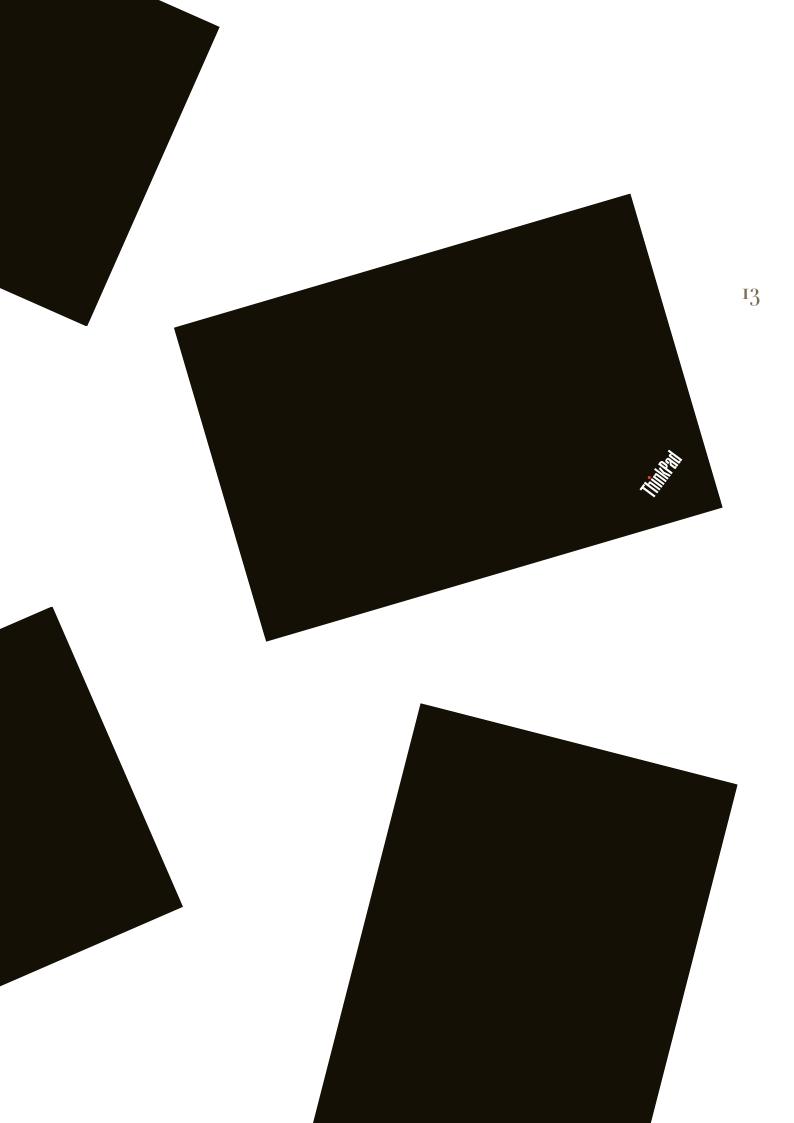
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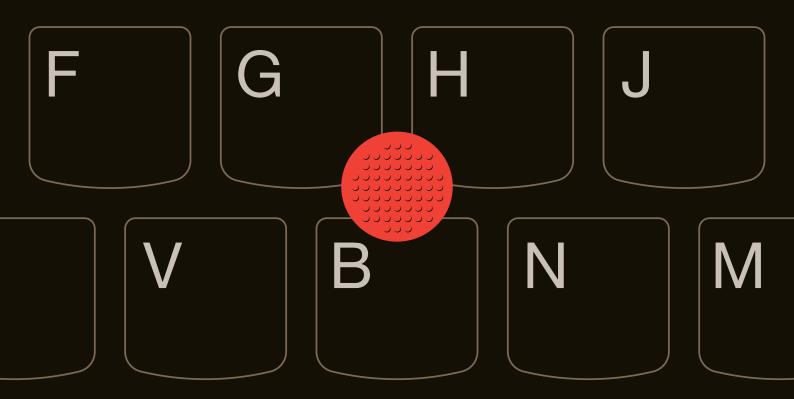
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