

perpendicular angel design

organizing and simplifying, one illumination at a time

AN EVENT APART OT 2021: DESIGN IN THE BACKGROUND BY ERIC MEYER

Next up: Eric Meyer's presentation Design in the Background. Because this year I used Twitter's threading / topics feature, it's giving me 2 tweets in each embed I do here. I'm embedding every other tweet for readability.

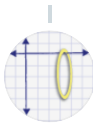


Anne Gibson @perpendicularme · Oct 11, 2021



Replying to @perpendicularme

Now it's time for [@meyerweb](#) and Design in the Background
[#aeat](#)



Anne Gibson
@perpendicularme

. @meyerweb is using his own website at meyerweb.com to demo during this talk so if you want live examples, go check his website. (Also check his website because it's good.) #aeaot



meyerweb.com
The web home of Eric A. Meyer, CSS guy; and his wife Kathryn, doctor of nursing.
meyerweb.com

3:32 PM · Oct 11, 2021



♡ 1 💬 1 ↗ Share this Tweet

[Tweet your reply](#)



Anne Gibson @perpendicularme · Oct 11, 2021



Replying to @perpendicularme

Starting with the page background, the bottom layer in your CSS is the only one that can be a solid color. You can't have solid backgrounds (even translucent ones) anywhere except the bottom of the stack.

#aeaot



Anne Gibson

@perpendicularme

Above the base color, Eric has multiple images, then a gradient that starts at the bottom and goes up until it fades out. That was done through experimentation. Throw in a couple numbers, see what you like, play with things. #aeaot

3:36 PM · Oct 11, 2021



1



Share this Tweet

[Tweet your reply](#)



Anne Gibson @perpendicularme · Oct 11, 2021



Replying to @perpendicularme

"It's the web. Nothing's pixel perfect. It can't be.... our rules are suggestions." The browsers might or might not take our suggestions, but there's no guarantee. #aeaot



Anne Gibson

@perpendicularme

The masthead has a similar fade, which is a linear gradient that fits at 179 degrees. Tilted, it gives a little bit of overlap and gives a more organic feel. Use the arrow keys in the web inspector to fiddle with things until they feel right. #aeaot

until they feel right. #aeat

3:39 PM · Oct 11, 2021



1



Share this Tweet

Tweet your reply



Anne Gibson @perpendicularme · Oct 11, 2021



Replying to @perpendicularme

A radial gradient from left to right - in the center of the design it's fully opaque, and to the sides it's not opaque. at the edges of the screen it's grey.

[Dang this is a lot more in-the-browser] than my old "tile a photoshop image" approach] #aeat



Anne Gibson

@perpendicularme

linear gradient generators exist on the web if you don't work with them regularly.

The code is compact for text descriptions of images. CSS syntax is images as much as SVGs or pngs are

#aeaot

3:45 PM · Oct 11, 2021



1



Share this Tweet

Tweet your reply



Anne Gibson @perpendicularme · Oct 11, 2021



Replying to @perpendicularme

A look at the footer. The element box is sized in ems or something relative. (As its pretty much the whole rest of the design.) Part of it is a ::before pseudo-element so the footer could have all of its content w/o padding and the main gradient wouldn't get lost #aeaot



Anne Gibson

@perpendicularme

one image repeated along the x-axis allows for the wave design without having to have a huge long image.

then the same image again, layered on top, to cover a gap that was displaying.

It looks random and organic but it's 2 slightly different sized/positioned images.

#aeaot

3:52 PM · Oct 11, 2021





1



Share this Tweet

[Tweet your reply](#)



Anne Gibson @perpendicularme · Oct 11, 2021



Replying to @perpendicularme

don't forget CSS can do mix-blend-mode: darken so you don't have to do your blending in Photoshop or whatever. [#aeat](#)



Anne Gibson

@perpendicularme

For the headers, there's a wave 9% offscreen to the left and a vertical offset that was found through experimentation. Height is auto-scaled to preserve aspect ratio.

On the other side is a different image wave pinned to the bottom right corner.

[#aeat](#)

3:55 PM · Oct 11, 2021



1



Share this Tweet

[Tweet your reply](#)



Anne Gibson @perpendicularme · Oct 11, 2021



Replying to @perpendicularme

At big viewports, the waves never touch but they both appear, giving a split.

A translucent gradient makes the smaller wave look like it's a little further in the distance. [#aeaot](#)



Anne Gibson

@perpendicularme

Eric styled mostly mobile-first when he was doing his page design. At the mobile size there's only 1 wave.

At the desktop sizes there's the two waves.

Backgrounds don't have to be this complicated, they can be separated more simply.

[#aeaot](#)

3:58 PM · Oct 11, 2021



1



Share this Tweet

[Tweet your reply](#)



Anne Gibson @perpendicularme · Oct 11, 2021



Replying to @perpendicularme

A separator above the metadata on a blog post starts as a linear gradient.

Separators can also be complex.

An `<hr>` gets styling specifically. It can be sized and margins can be added. It's a box of zero height with a border.

[#aeaot](#)



Anne Gibson

@perpendicularme

One pixel gradient that fades toward the sides, then a 3pixel gradient on top which fades more quickly, then a few small images, and now it looks like a filagree on the page. [#aeaot](#)

4:02 PM · Oct 11, 2021



1



Share this Tweet

[Tweet your reply](#)



Anne Gibson @perpendicularme · Oct 11, 2021



Replying to @perpendicularme

He uses a feature query for supports background size so that any browser that doesn't support resizing backgrounds just gets a plain gradient on an `<hr>` [#aeaot](#)



Anne Gibson
@perpendicularme

using `currentColor` allows the background to match the text color of the blockquote Eric's showing now, so that it can stand out slightly more.

[#aeaot](#)

4:06 PM · Oct 11, 2021



1



Share this Tweet

[Tweet your reply](#)



Anne Gibson @perpendicularme · Oct 11, 2021



Replying to @perpendicularme

Masking! Eric rarely has cuts in his blog posts. He generally posts the whole article on his homepage. On rare occasion though he'll hide spoilers behind a cut. The link is plain text.

Add 1px tall gradients at top and bottom... then images to cap the ends.

[#aeaot](#)



Anne Gibson
@perpendicularme

Two images with masking around the sides like the wave image in the header. Filled in opaque parts and made the rest translucent. As long as Eric's careful, they fit with the link and mask out what's behind them by a tiny bit. [#aeaot](#)

4:09 PM · Oct 11, 2021



1



Share this Tweet

[Tweet your reply](#)



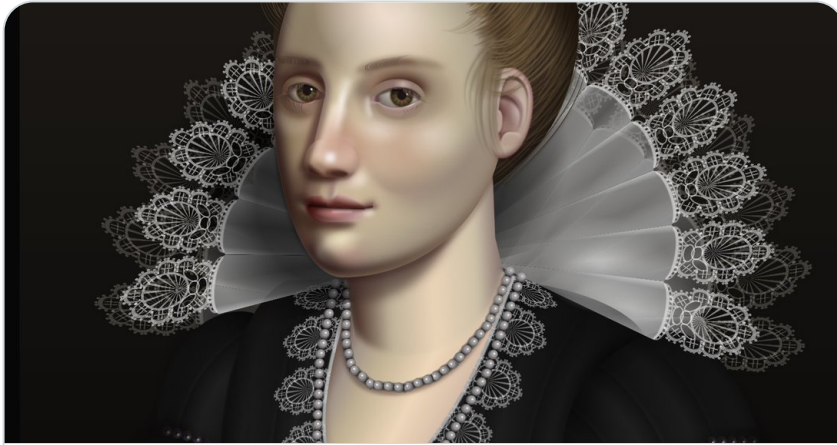
Anne Gibson @perpendicularme · Oct 11, 2021



Replying to @perpendicularme

Truly artistic uses of background that Eric has seen. [diana-adriano.com/nursses-look](#) has all html and css, no css, all

diana-adrienne.com/purecss-face has an HTML and CSS, no svgs, all written by hand. Border radius and 3d transforms and backgrounds FTW. #aeaot



Pure CSS Oil Painting - by Diana Smith aka cyanHarlow
An ongoing series in which I create art using only CSS and...
diana-adrienne.com



Anne Gibson
@perpendicularme

a.singlediv.com is another great resource for seeing single-element pages made of just one div. #aeaot

4:11 PM · Oct 11, 2021



1



Share this Tweet

[Tweet your reply](#)



Anne Gibson @perpendicularme · Oct 11, 2021



Replying to @perpendicularme

"How is the performance with backgrounds?"

In mobile contexts, be careful, because you never know how old a device might be. Otherwise, they're pretty efficient. And you can use media queries to simplify backgrounds for mobile devices.

#aeaot



Anne Gibson

@perpendicularme

You can make Captain America's shield with 5 background images and a `::before` and an `::after` #aeaot

4:14 PM · Oct 11, 2021



1



Share this Tweet

[Tweet your reply](#)



Anne Gibson @perpendicularme · Oct 11, 2021



Replying to @perpendicularme

Background images can be animated for size, position, and more. [be careful with that when it comes to making your users with vertigo puke] #aeaot



Anne Gibson

@perpendicularme

You're doing all this design on a single element. You don't have to have 16 wrapper divs to make this work. They're decorations, so if they don't load, they don't load, and when they do load, they look fantastic.

[Progressive enhancement!] #aeaot

4:16 PM · Oct 11, 2021



1



Share this Tweet

[Tweet your reply](#)



Anne Gibson @perpendicularme · Oct 11, 2021



Replying to @perpendicularme

You're doing all this design on a single element. You don't have to have 16 wrapper divs to make this work. They're decorations, so if they don't load, they don't load, and when they do load, they look fantastic. [Progressive enhancement!] #aeaot



Anne Gibson
@perpendicularme

That talk was so engrossing it felt like 15 minutes passed. Thank you @meyerweb for a great presentation! #aeaot

4:19 PM · Oct 11, 2021



1



1



Share this Tweet

[Tweet your reply](#)

