

a Graphic Style Manual for understanding how
TYPOGRAPHY AFFECTS DESIGN

DESIGN ELEMENTS

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FUNDAMENTALS

kristin cullen



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INTRODUCTION

Designers engage with words, typographically expressing them with purpose and poise. Typography is a process, a refined craft making language visible. Designers shape language with type and give words life and power to speak text fluently. Letterforms and their supporting characters are simple shapes that do so much. With distinct voices and personalities, type whispers delicately and shouts loudly. Communication lies at its core. Type is commanding and beautiful one moment, analytic and instructive the next. It is dramatic, whimsical, modest, and extravagant. Typographic practice (and those dedicated to it) gives spoken and written language vitality across time, generations, and cultures.

Rooted in everyday experience, type is ever-present. It often goes unnoticed. Other times, it radiates. A central goal of designers is marrying content and form. Function balances with aesthetics. Boundless methods exist to visualize text with type. Heightened attention and thoughtful articulation are essential. Discipline fosters skill and knowledge. Designing with type for communication challenges and fulfills and continually offers new things to explore.

Design Elements: Typography Fundamentals shares typographic basics. An instructional reader rather than historical survey, it teaches the language of type and typesetting methods. It is not a publication dedicated to software, tools, or technical tips, which evolve at rapid pace. Content focuses on guiding, well-founded principles that endure. They set solid ground on which to design with type across mediums. Limitless potential for meaningful and creative visual communication exists. *Typography Fundamentals* is the field guide for the journey.

May readers, especially students studying typography, gain knowledge and respect for language and typographic design. (With any luck, these pages will also spark a passion for type and typography.) There is so much to delight in and discover.

1

TYPE IN CONTEXT

12 *Definition & Function* 16 *In Practice*

“IMMACULATE TYPOGRAPHY IS

certainly the most brittle of all the arts. To create a whole from many petrified, disconnected and given parts, to make this whole appear alive and of a piece—only sculpture in stone approaches the unyielding stiffness of perfect typography.

For most people, even impeccable typography does not hold any particular aesthetic appeal. In its accessibility, it resembles great music. Under the best of circumstances, it is gratefully accepted. To remain nameless and without specific appreciation, yet to have been of service to a valuable work and to the small number of visually sensitive readers—this, as a rule, is the only compensation for the long, and indeed never-ending, indenture of the typographer.”

from “Clay in a Potter’s Hand”

The Form of the Book: Essays on the Morality of Good Design

JAN TSCHICHOLD

SELECTED READINGS

*The Alphabetic Labyrinth:
The Letters in History and Imagination*
Johanna Drucker

*Letter Perfect: The Marvelous History
of Our Alphabet from A to Z*
David Sacks

A Short History of the Printed Word
Warren Chappell
Robert Bringhurst



Textura
Goudy Text



Rotunda
San Marco



Schwabacher
Duc de Berry



Fraktur
Fette Fraktur

Studying typography starts with ABCs.¹ Letterforms share a heritage with prehistoric cave paintings and early writing systems, notably Sumerian cuneiform and Egyptian hieroglyphs. Over time, sparked by our human need to communicate, pictures of things developed into conceptual marks and sophisticated symbols of sound, which laid the foundation for alphabetic writing systems. Ancient cultures—the Phoenicians, Greeks, Etruscans, and Romans—devised, adapted, and refined alphabets. Thousands of years in the making, the Roman system is our present-day ancestor. Informed by advances of cultures past, it had twenty-three majuscules (uppercase letterforms) with consonants and vowels. (J, U, and W joined the alphabet in the Middle Ages, to mark sounds unneeded earlier.) In *Alphabet: The History, Evolution, and Design of the Letters We Use Today*, Allan Haley writes, “The Roman capitals have had, and still have, the greatest influence on the design and use of capital letters, enduring as the standard of proportion and dignity for almost two thousand years.” Minuscules (lowercase letterforms) evolved over hundreds of years, from their origins in handwriting. The late eighth and early ninth centuries saw the making of a standardized minuscule script with enhanced legibility. Called the Carolingian minuscule, it is a key predecessor of the lowercase letterforms we know now. The twenty-six-letter alphabet—the heart of typographic practice—has remained largely unchanged for thousands of years.



Johannes Gutenberg modeled his first typeface on mid-fifteenth-century calligraphic writing called Textura. It is narrow with tightly fitted characters and dense, angular strokes. Textura is part of a larger Blackletter family that includes Rotunda, Schwabacher, and Fraktur.

In Western civilization, the transition from lettering and handwritten scripts to mechanical typesetting occurred in mid-fifteenth-century Europe, when German-born goldsmith Johannes Gutenberg revolutionized the movable-type printing press. (Movable type was invented by Bi Sheng in China during the 1040s, and printed books using movable type emerged shortly after in Korea.) Gutenberg cast lead alloy movable-type blocks with reusable hand molds. Making almost 300 characters, he replicated calligraphic scripts of the period called Textura, a Blackletter style (named so because of its darkness). With narrow, tightly fitted forms, character strokes are thick and angular.

Gutenberg’s durable, individual characters easily reassembled and reprinted on wooden presses. His metal-based ink formula upheld better than water-based precursors. Adhering well to the metal type, the ink made rich blacks with a uniform imprint. Quality mechanization led to efficient production and circulation of text, as well as codified typefaces, which spread across Western culture. Gutenberg’s system catapulted type through time—from the Renaissance and Enlightenment to the Victorian Age and Modernism. Contemporary typographers and type designers continue the legacy. Typography endures and progresses with thrilling adventure past, present, and future.

¹ *Design Elements: Typography Fundamentals* shares typographic basics. An instructional reader, rather than historical survey, it teaches the language of type and typesetting methods. The abridged synopsis here creates context. Histories of alphabets and typography are multifaceted stories. Both offer wisdom and enrich visual communication. Selected readings noted in chapters support further study. See Appendices: Readings (page 148) for a complete list.

DESIGNING WITH TYPE

Projects in all media require distinct typographic use based on function. Merge communication with aesthetics—one without the other limits the potential to convey information effectively and beautifully. Although projects vary with individual needs, follow simple objectives for all when designing with type for communication.

- 1 *Convey information with type.*
Communicate with clarity.
- 2 *Assist the reading process.*
Make it accessible (and delightful).
- 3 *Uphold typeface integrity.*
Value it and its makers.
- 4 *Express text beautifully.*
Create visually inviting work.
- 5 *Design with appropriateness.*
Do what best serves each project.

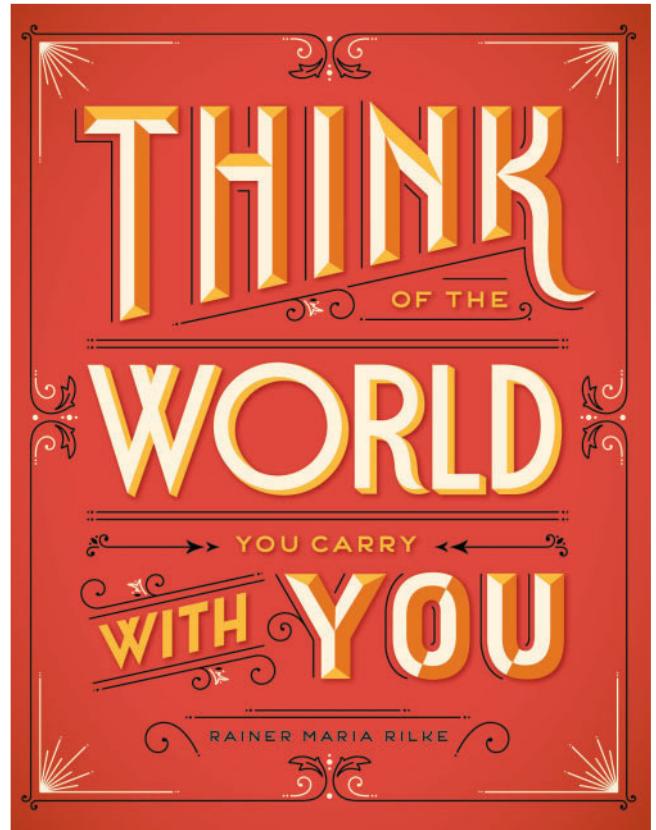
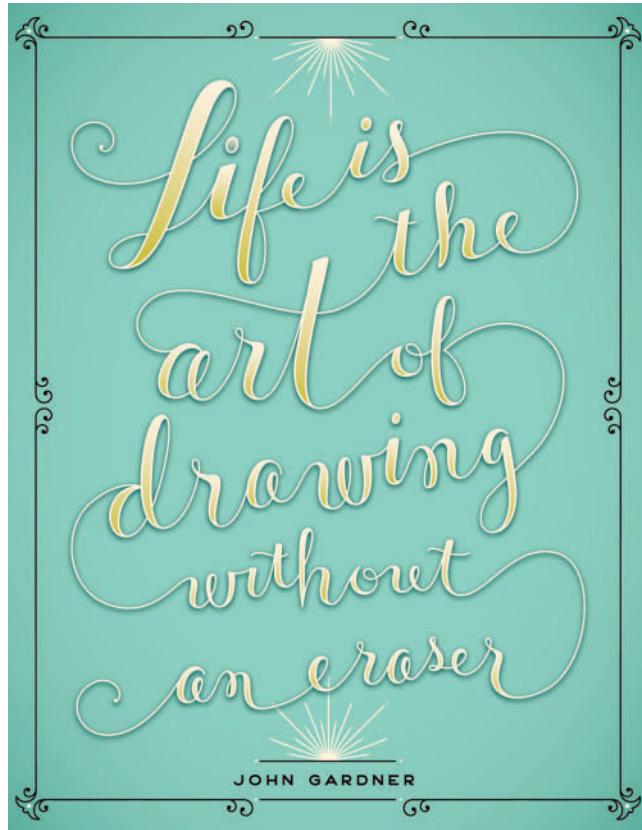
Typography is a process, a refined craft that makes language visible. Designers shape language with type and give words life and power to speak text fluently. With roles semantic and aesthetic, type that expresses text at its best serves both roles at once. Words, lines, and paragraphs carry messages via letterforms. Type conveys information and provokes emotion. It shares stories and influences behavior. At times, typographic characters are abstract constructs or images with no text to communicate, simply beauty made apparent. Typography is not handwriting, calligraphy, or lettering. Only type uses standardized forms that rearrange and reproduce in exact fashion without end. Systematized character sets fit for repeated use with ranges of text distinguish typography from other letter-making methods. Handwriting, calligraphy, and lettering tend to be reserved for customization in limited-edition and special work. Letterforms distinct from available typefaces made by hand or digital tools are unique typographic alternatives.

This vintage-inspired pocket planner, *Today Is the Day*, includes lovely lettering by designer and illustrator Jessica Hische. Intricate letterforms unique in appearance fill pages. Custom lettering offers one-of-a-kind alternatives to typefaces.

GALISON

The stylistic range of calligraphy, which means “beautiful writing,” is diverse—from ornate and sinuous to rough and painterly. Tools used, typically a brush or pen, influence appearance. The logotype for Piter Pan, a Ukraine rock band, is handcrafted, then digitally produced.

SERGEY SHAPIRO





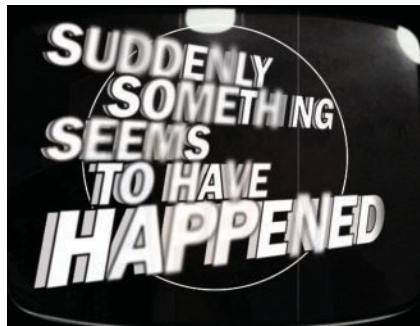
Directional and informational signage for the luxury hotel Estoi Palace Pousada is clear and consistently applied in sans serif Flama. Discreet and functional, it complements the elegant space.

—
FBA.

Typography is everywhere, crossing mediums that include environments, interfaces, packaging, and print. It will no doubt thrive in digital and physical works to come. Typography is at the center of design practice. Designing with type for communication is many-sided. It is analytic and instructive, dramatic and whimsical. Designers work with type objectively and subjectively with economy and extravagance. Environmental signage systems, for example, are practical and direct; clarity is imperative. Typography is also conceptual and interpretive. Motion sequences appeal to viewers through lively type treatments. Letterforms personify or emote strongly. Regardless of the medium, balancing function and aesthetics reigns. Use fundamental principles as the basis to marry text with type. Do so with appropriateness, a concept relevant to all things typographic.

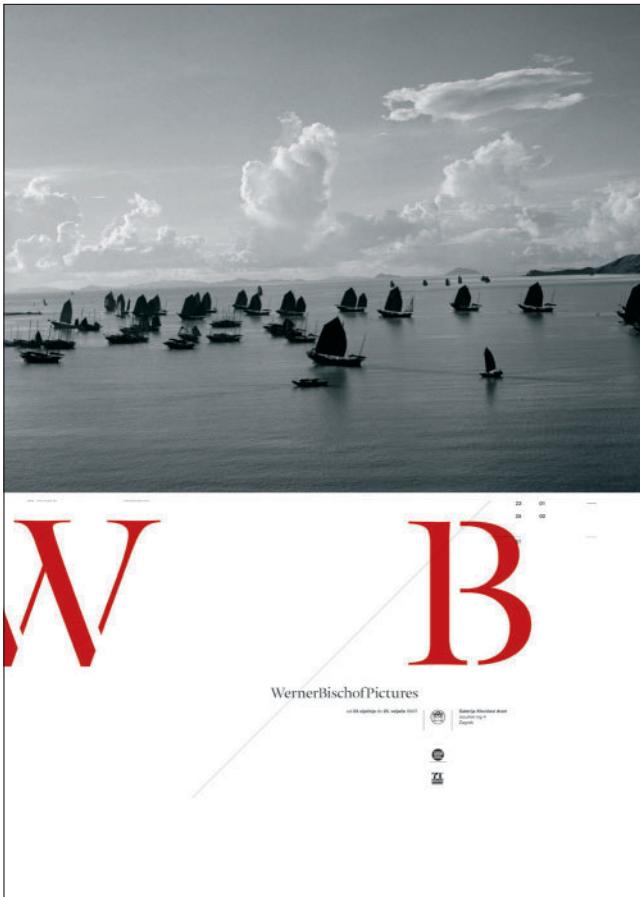
Macro- and microtypography describe approaches to typographic design. Macrotypography addresses composition or layout—the plan and organization of typographic elements. Key considerations include spatial positioning and relationship-building among elements and white space (negative space). The macro view is the compositional body, in which designers order, connect, and balance type. It is the first impression that engages viewers. Without immediate visual interest, communication ceases; the intended typographic messages are not received.

Microtypography refers to typesetting essentials and details. Designers transform plain text into a typographic system—a hierarchy, with optical emphasis and strategic variation. Letterform, word, line, and paragraph dynamics demand acute attention. A principal micro factor is spacing, which includes kerning and tracking. Aesthetic tailoring, as in refining punctuation and ragging, are other micro components. Microtypography ensures refined compositions with considered type settings. Projects are free of distractions and missteps that inhibit reading and communication. The microtypographic level is often undetected by viewers (a sign of its achievement). Macro- and microtypography are mutually dependent. The success of the whole (macro) depends on its parts (micro).



In this student project, choreographed letterforms perform the song "Que Sera" by Wax Tailor. The motion sequence visualizes sound and voice. One-off typographic arrangements in many typefaces shape scenes. Graphic elements frame the viewing area and support typographic action.

—
STROM STRANDELL



Different text in wide-ranging mediums for assorted viewers provides extensive typographic options. Designers might navigate multiple mediums or specialize in one or a limited few. Typography connects all. Numerous spreads with examples and captions follow to exhibit the diversity of typographic practice.

An elegant poster has limited and striking typography. *WB* (Werner Bischof) set in Typonine Stencil is in distinct contrast to the photograph. The color commands attention, and the letterform anatomy defines the alignment of subordinate text. The *B* stem, for example, is the main axis for logos and text, set in sans serif Akzidenz-Grotesk.

SENSUS DESIGN FACTORY

Environmental type engages physical space. The permanent installation at the University of Washington School of Business echoes a link between business and change. Typeset in Trade Gothic, stainless-steel letterforms in the stone flooring spell “change” along with synonyms like “adapt,” “innovate,” and “transform.” On each floor, words outside of the elevator doors connect with those inside the elevator. Revealed are phrases such as “global change” and “manage change.”

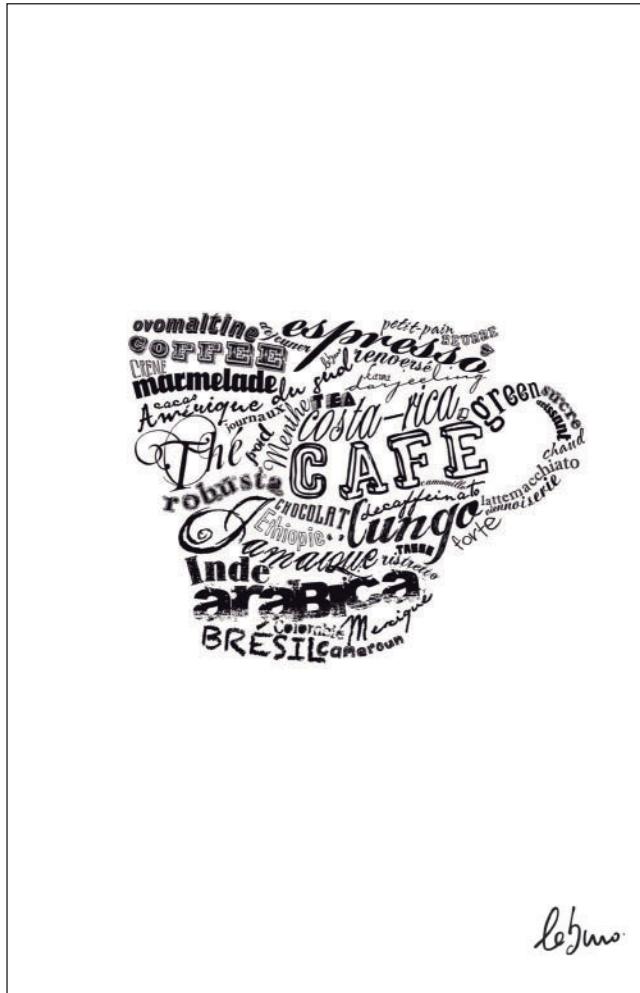
KAREN CHENG
KRISTINE MATTHEWS

• REVISE
• CONVERT
• DEVELOP
• CORRECT
• EXCHANGE
• TRANSFER
• MODIFY
• ADVANCE
• ADAPT

CHANGE

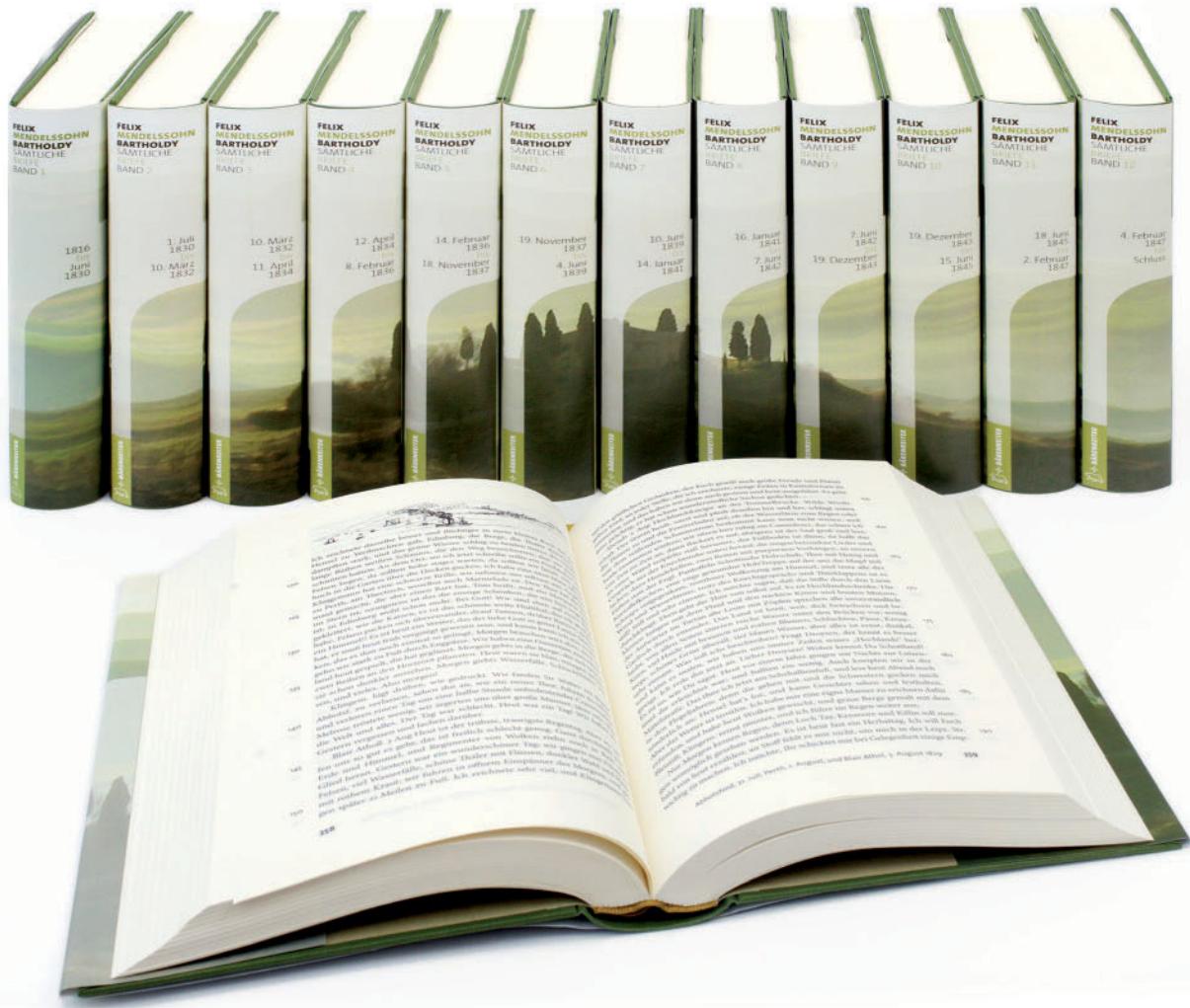
GLOBAL

MANAGE



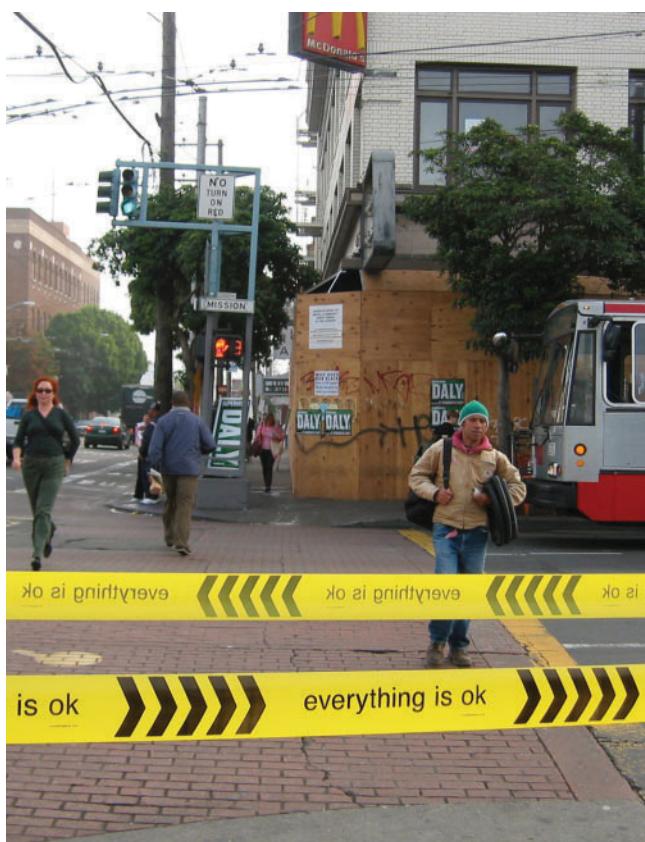
These expressively illustrated pieces are fine examples of type as image. Miscellaneous letterforms interact playfully. Just one element of a larger campaign for the bar Le Buro, the spirited typographic works enchant.

INVENTAIRE



Approximately 5,000 letters by composer Felix Mendelssohn comprise an edition of books. Book spines feature TheSans (from the superfamily Thesis) in a range of weights. A landscape inspired by Mendelssohn's music in soft shades of green and yellow appears when the volumes sit side by side. Connecting them provides a distinct surprise.

TAKE OFF-MEDIA SERVICES



Diverse applications from buttons to public spaces comprise the concept-driven campaign *Everything is OK. MINE™* explains the project as “a kind of social design experiment in subversive positivism. It explores the relationship between medium and message, challenges accepted modes of communication, and provides everyday citizens with tools for social commentary.” A consistent system of color and type—a trio of Helvetica, Trade Gothic, and Dot Matrix—unify elements across mediums.

MINE™

The Ramblas Tapas Bar logotype features the typeface Augustus. A speech bubble cleverly replaces the counter of *R* with a second bubble off its leg. The shapes interact and suggest the social exchange that results from sharing many small plates with others versus having one apiece while dining.

DAN BECKER

Helvetica capitals present a durable façade in the logotype for Compagnie La Lucette, a boutique real estate company. It stands solidly with modified letterforms like the “ette” in Lucette; the technique links characters and adds unique detail.

EURO RSCG C&O

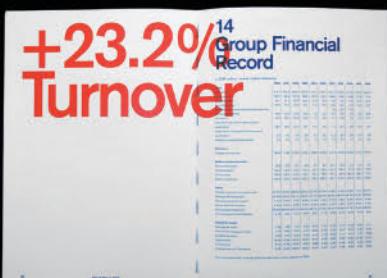
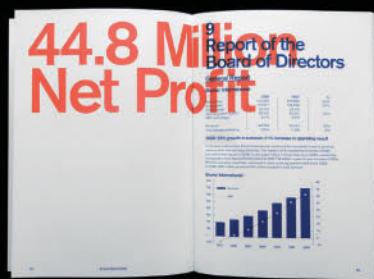
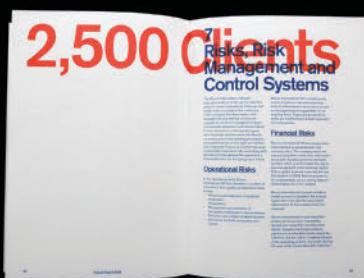
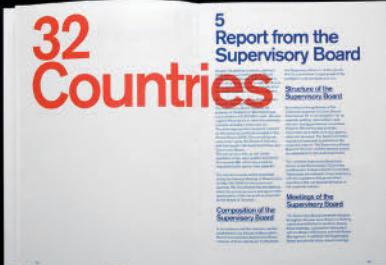
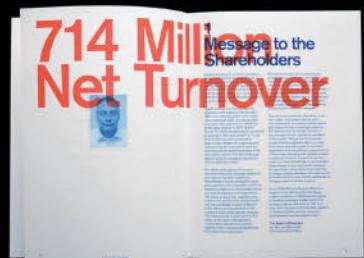
The round forms and clean lines of the typeface Avant Garde shape the logotype for the UK marketing firm Fab. Color and transparency add liveliness and suggest themes of interaction and exchange.

EL STUDIO / PETE ROSSI



**COMPAGNIE
LA
LUCETTE**





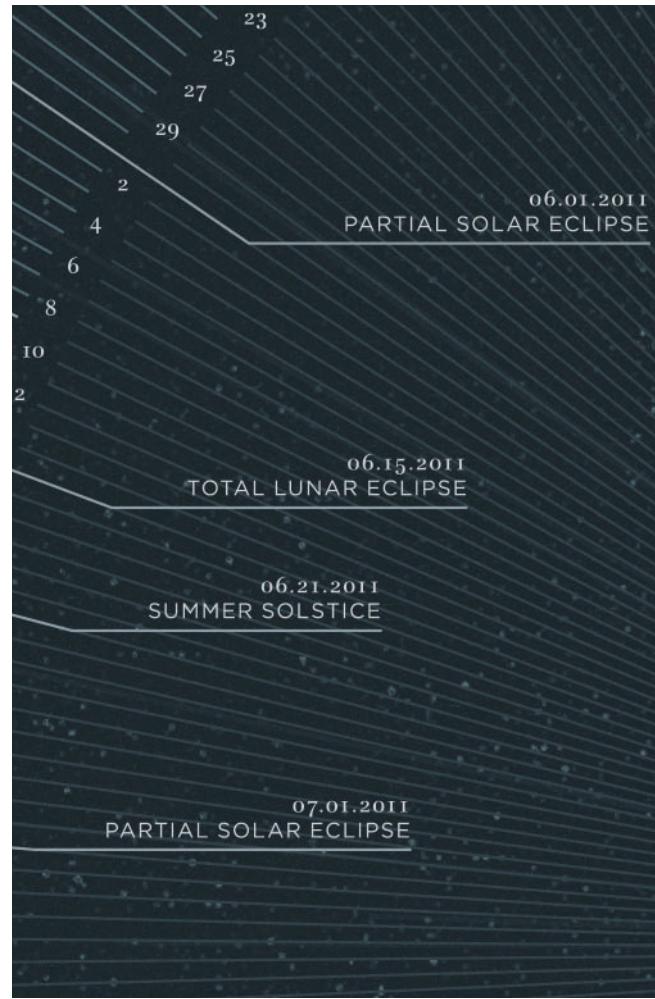
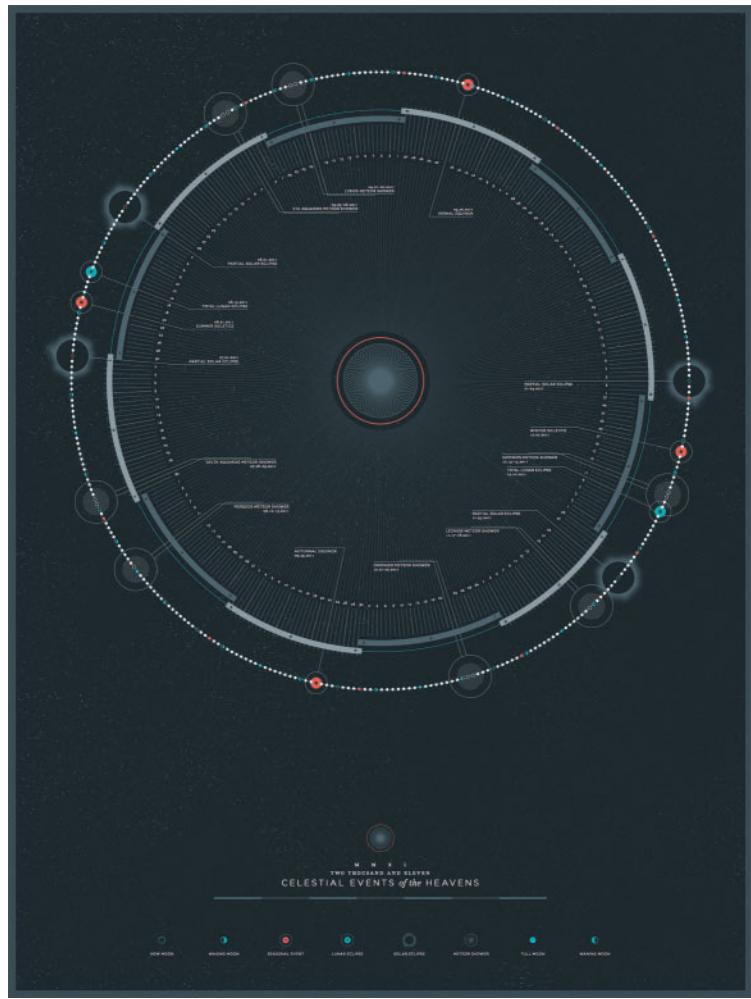


Type expresses sentiments and creates joy. A collection of everyday letterpress cards reminds us that even simple gestures merit typographic attention. Pictured typefaces include Archer and Futura, as well as a custom face seen in "Word," inspired by Franklin Gothic.

WALK UP PRESS

The typeface Akzidenz-Grotesk adds practical charm to the annual report for staffing agency Brunel International. Type size, weight, and color establish hierarchy. The dominant red text is unexpected, sharing brief statistics in an unusual manner. It adds notice and delivers company background boldly.

G2K / MATTHIJS VAN LEEUWEN



A data-driven poster, titled *Celestial Events of the Heavens*, tracks the moon's cycle and orbit. The subject matter inspires the radial structure and deep blue tones. Type settings, in Centennial and Gotham, are minimal and elegant. Lines extend like rays and call out key astral events. Oriented parallel to the eye, the text is readable from left to right on horizontal, not angled, baselines.

—
LUKE LANGHUS



Constructed letterforms creatively demonstrate an alternate method of using typefaces. A template set in the sans serif face Interstate is the foundation for constructing the graphic letterforms. The technique results in an eye-catching poster for the School of Visual Arts.

—
MIRKO ILLIĆ CORP.



The *Fathoms Deep* LP by the Tunnel displays weathered hand lettering in the title. The technique integrates text with image. Delicate type set in Centaur is quiet and dignified. Red numerals in Gingko Fraktur add a shot of color.

PATRICK L CRAWFORD DESIGN



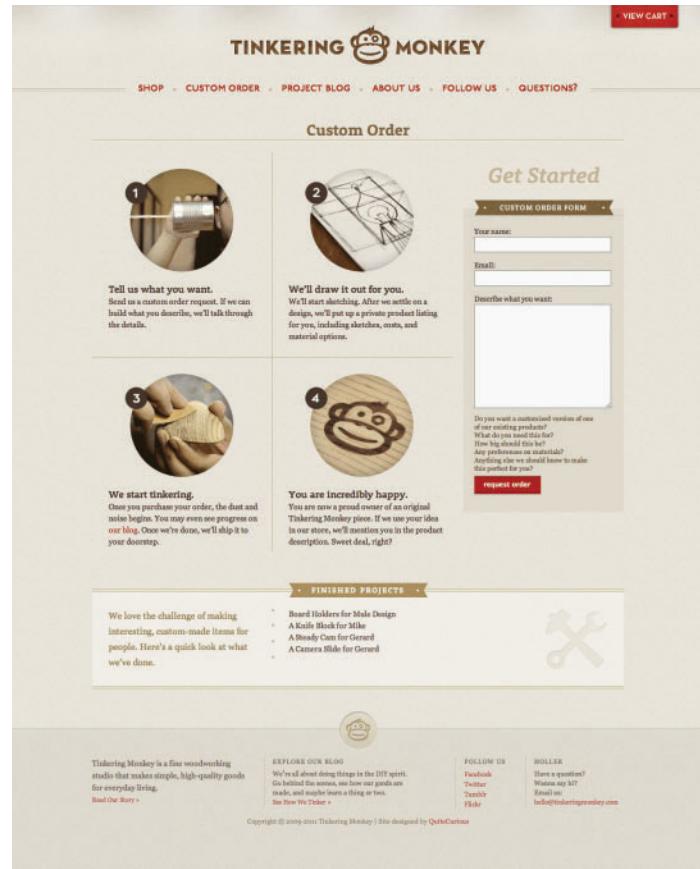
A bold color palette and delicate pattern set the stage for this simple sans serif and serif combination. The condensed sans serif Chalet Comprimé suggests sureness, and the serif Miller adds polish. The contrast is clear, the information conveyed with ease. A beautiful ampersand adds an extra touch of elegance to the design.

NADEN / MESKER DESIGN CO.



The serif typeface Plantin lists design services offered on a promotional mailer. Repurposing antique postcards, type blends with the vintage cards and preserves a historical look. The neutral sans serif Helvetica discreetly conveys contact information.

COLLECTIVE APPROACH



The Tinkering Monkey website is open and accessible. Main navigational links in sans serif Underground lie in the header. An uppercase setting plus color clarifies the site structure. Headings and subheads, such as “Taking the heat” and “We start tinkering,” in the serif Rooney Web combine well with Underground. Both typefaces have warm personalities.

PAULA CHANG



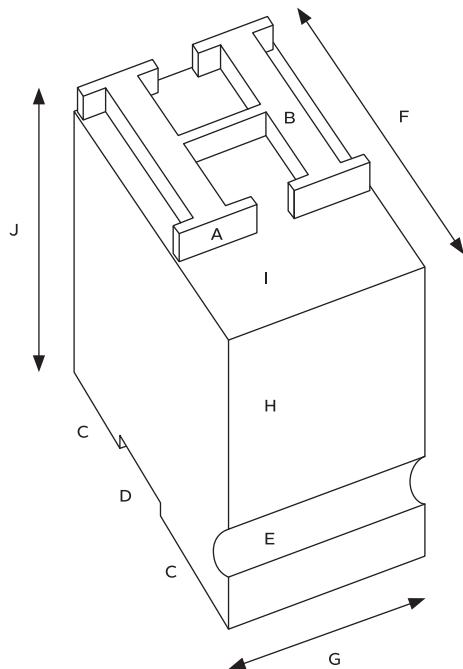
The package design for Dulce Vida, a 100-proof, 100% organic tequila, is contemporary and tasteful. The brand name in the Blackletter serif Brauhaus Alternate conveys confidence. Direct and refined, the versatile sans serif Flama accompanies the graphic logotype.

FOXTROT BRAVO ALPHA (FBA)

2

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

32 *Anatomy & Terminology*



Many typographic terms originate from metal typesetting days when typographers and printers set lead type slugs (cast-metal sorts) by hand to form words, lines, and paragraphs. They shape much of the terminology now used to describe type anatomy and measure.

- A Beard/Bevel
- B Face
- C Feet
- D Groove
- E Nick
- F Point Size/Body Size
- G Set Width
- H Shank
- I Shoulder
- J Type Height/Height to Paper
0.918 inch (2.3 cm)

Understanding typography fundamentals includes learning its terminology (the language of type), anatomy (the parts of type), and architecture (the framework of type). Designers share common terms that identify typographic building blocks. Basic terminology is typically constant across mediums, which builds mutual connections from one to another. For example, all typefaces, regardless of their diversity, share anatomical parts and details. A serif is always a serif in digital, print, or environmental projects. Knowing well the parts that comprise typographic practice aids type selection and use. Best expression comes with intimate knowledge of the essential elements, which include characters, measures, and styles. Typographic results arise through the considered manipulation of the essential elements. Cultivating an understanding and gaining proficiency begins with learning basic terminology, anatomy, and architecture.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

fi fl fj ff fb fh fk ffi ffi fffj ffff ffb ffh ffk ct st

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

1/4 1/2 3/4 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

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Select Glyphs

Alright Sans

Glyphs

Glyphs comprise all marks in a typeface from letterforms and numerals to punctuation and symbols. For instance, a diacritic (accent mark) is a glyph, not a character. It combines with a letterform to create a character, as in ' (acute) + e = é.

Characters

A character is a typographic element such as a letterform, numeral, or punctuation mark. Typefaces might have multiple versions of each character represented by glyphs. For example, the lowercase *g* character can have three glyphs: single story *g*, double story *g*, and small cap *G*. The term “alternates” (or alternate characters) applies to the variants.

THE PARTS OF TYPE



A Aperture An aperture (open counter) is the partially enclosed white space in letterforms such as *C* and *S*, as well as *n* and *e*.

Apex An apex is the top point of a letterform, where two strokes meet, as in *A* and *W*.

Arc of Stem An arc of stem is a curved stroke that flows smoothly into a straight stroke. Examples include *f*, *j*, and *t*.

Arm An arm is a short horizontal or vertical stroke attached to another on one end, such as *E*, *F*, and *L*.

Ascender An ascender is the part of lowercase letterforms—*b*, *d*, *f*, *h*, *k*, and *l*—that rises above the x-height.

Axis An axis is the invisible line that bisects character tops and bottoms at the thinnest points. It indicates character stress from oblique to vertical.

B Bowl A bowl is the curved character stroke that encloses counters, as seen in *a*, *b*, *g*, and *p*. Bowls are closed or open, depending on whether or not the curve connects to the stem.

C Chin A chin connects the arm and spur of the uppercase *G*.

Counter A counter (counterform) is the enclosed white space in characters such as *b*, *d*, and *o*. An open counter (aperture) is the partially enclosed white space in characters such as *C* and *S*, as well as *n* and *e*.

Crossbar A crossbar (cross stroke) is the horizontal bar that connects two strokes (*A* and *H*), crosses stems (*f* and *t*), or bisects stems (*E* and *F*).

Crotch A crotch is the acute inside point where two strokes meet, as in *V*.

D Descender A descender is the part of lowercase letterforms—*g*, *j*, *p*, *q*, and *y*—that falls below the baseline.

Dot A dot (tittle) is the rounded mark above the lowercase *i* and *j*.

Double story Double story refers to specific letterform variations that have upper and lower closed or open counters. For example, the lowercase *g* in some typefaces has a bowl plus loop. Another double story letterform is the lowercase *a*. It features a lower closed bowl with an upper aperture.

E Ear An ear is a small stroke that extends from the bowl of the double story lowercase *g*.

Eye An eye is the closed counter space specific to the lowercase *e*.

F Flag A flag is the horizontal stroke found on the numeral *5*.

Finial A finial is the curved and tapered finishing stroke seen in the lowercase *a*, *c*, and *e*.

H Hook A hook is the curved stroke in a terminal, as in the lowercase *f* and *r*.

L Leg A leg is the short, diagonal stroke that sweeps downward in the letterforms *K* and *R*.

Link A link is the connecting stroke between the bowl and loop of the double story lowercase *g*.

Loop A loop is the enclosed or partially enclosed counter of the double story lowercase *g*. It falls below the baseline and connects via a link to the upper bowl.

O Overshoot Overshoot (overhang) is the slight character portion that falls below the baseline or above the cap height or x-height. Examples are *A*, *a*, *O*, *o*, and *V*, *v*. It gives the optical sense that such forms are the same size as those sitting flush on the baseline.

S Serif A serif is a small finishing detail at the start and end of strokes.

Shoulder A shoulder is the downward curved stroke that extends off a stem, as in *h*, *m*, and *n*.

Spine A spine is the primary curving stroke of the *S*.

Spur A spur is a one-sided, small finishing detail that slightly extends from a primary stroke, as in the uppercase *E*, *G*, and *S*.

Stem A stem is the primary vertical stroke of a letterform.

Stroke A stroke is any curved, straight, or diagonal line that constructs characters. Arms, legs, and stems are specific stroke types.

Swash A swash is an embellished stroke that replaces a serif or terminal to create a swash character, a decorative form that is regarded as lively and elegant.

T Tail A tail is a downward finishing stroke. The uppercase *Q* typically features a distinct, often decorative, tail. Uppercase letterforms with legs—like *K* and *R*—sometimes have curved tails that fluidly extend from the diagonal stroke.

Terminal A terminal is the curved or straight end of finishing strokes, as seen in *a*, *c*, *f*, *j*, *r*, and *y*. Terminal styles include ball, beak, and teardrop (lachrymal).



A Marc Chagall monograph detail offers a look at letterform anatomy. Serif Plantagenet Cherokee has the double story letterforms *a* and *g*. Adnate (bracketed) serifs extend fluidly with curved stem connections, as in *h* and *l*—their bottoms are cupped. The *a* and *c* also feature teardrop (*lachrymal*) terminals.

SENSUS DESIGN FACTORY

Par is a book celebrating African Americans who fought segregation to play golf at top levels. The title, set in Gravur Condensed, features modified counters, which are enclosed or partially enclosed white spaces in characters that aid legibility. Such a look creates a clean diecut without sacrificing readability.

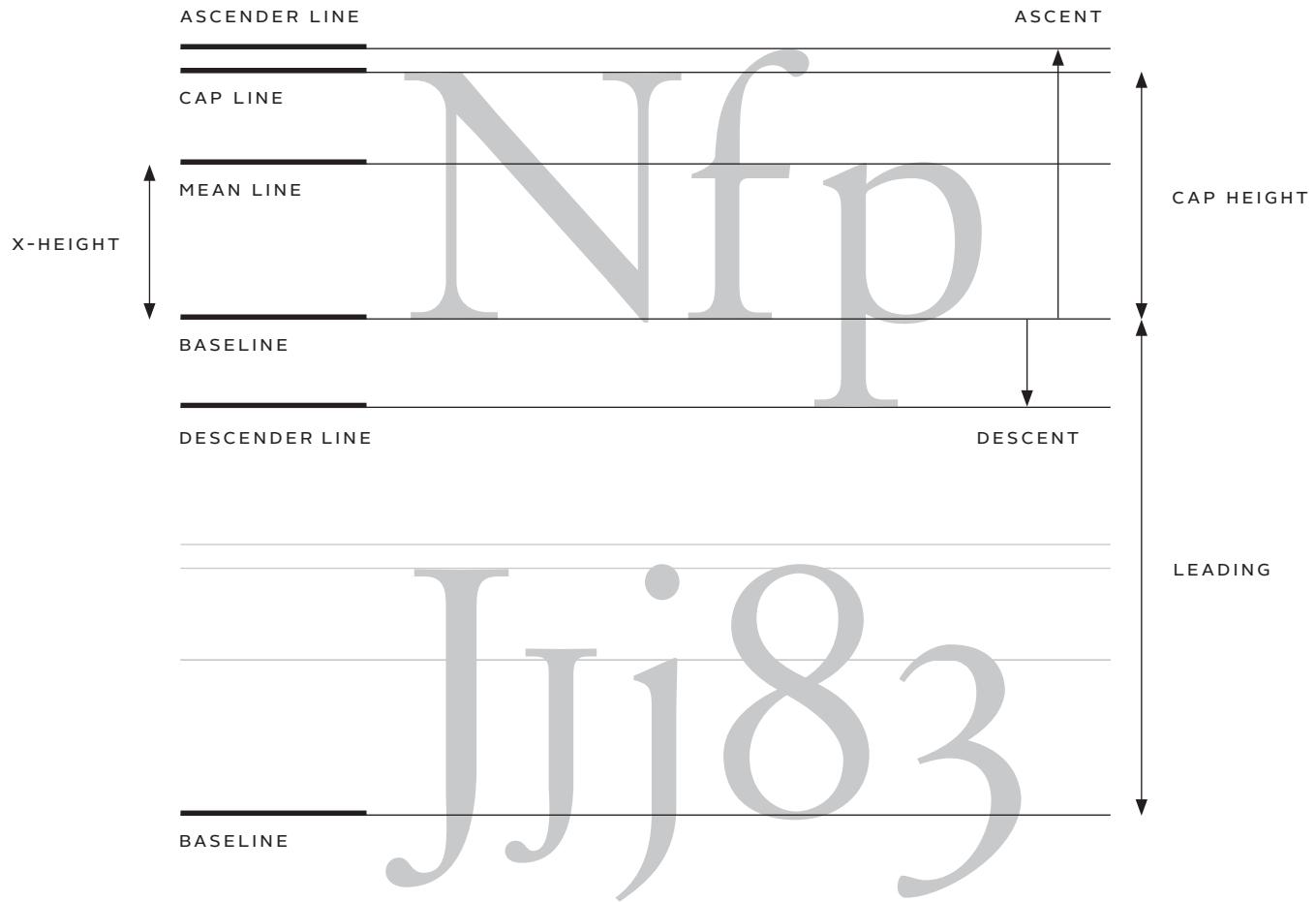
BLOK DESIGN



The Mariola Andonegui Arte Cultura Patrimonio logotype activates letter-form counters. The extracted counter spaces from the typeface Century Gothic provide graphic notice. The method deepens the aesthetic and adds dynamic effect.

LSDSPACE

THE FRAMEWORK OF TYPE



A *Ascender Line* The ascender line marks the height or highest point of ascenders.

Ascent Ascent is the maximum letterform height from the baseline beyond the cap line.

B *Baseline* The baseline is the imaginary line on which letterforms, words, lines, and paragraphs sit.

C *Cap Height* Cap height is the distance from the baseline to cap line that measures uppercase letterform height (without diacritics).

Cap Line The cap line marks the height or highest point of uppercase letterforms.

D *Descender Line* The descender line marks the lowest point of descenders.

Descent Descent is the maximum letterform distance below the baseline.

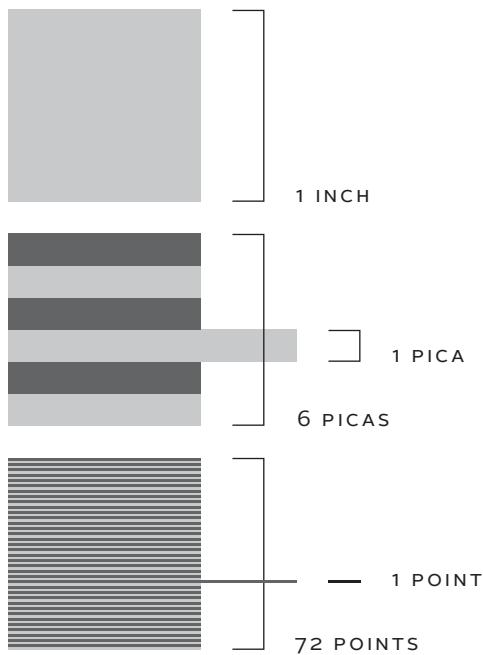
L *Leading* Leading (line spacing) is the vertical distance from one baseline to the next measured in points. The term derives from metal typesetting days when lead strips were set between lines of type to adjust vertical spacing.

M *Mean Line* The mean line (mid line) marks the height or highest point of lowercase letterforms minus ascenders and descenders.

X *X-height* X-height is the distance from baseline to mean line, or, typically, the top of the lowercase x. It measures lowercase letterform height minus ascenders and descenders. X-height conveys perceived typeface size.

BASELINE ALIGNMENT

Baselines are imaginary lines on which letterforms, words, lines, and paragraphs sit. Baseline alignment refers to a calculated system of horizontal guides at equally spaced vertical intervals that underlie typographic layouts. A baseline alignment system designates related positions for all type, no matter the range of point sizes. Baselines enable consistent horizontal alignment across compositions. Lines of type coincide; they also back up from page-to-page if viewed one atop another (see chapter 5).



1 pica = 12 points = 0.166 inch (4.2 mm)

6 picas = 72 points = 1 inch (2.5 cm)

1 point = 0.0138 inch (0.35 mm)

12 points = 1 pica = 0.166 inch (4.2 mm)

72 points = 6 picas = 1 inch (2.5 cm)

Em

An em is a typographic measure equal to the point size (type size) used. An em in a 6-point typeface is 6 point; in a 12-point typeface it is 12 point.



6-point em



12-point em

En

An en is a typographic measure equal to half an em. An en in an 8-point typeface is 4 point, in a 16-point typeface it is 8 point.



4-point en



8-point en

Pica

A pica (abbreviated *p*) is a typographic measure equal to 12 points. Picas measure line length.

Point

A point (abbreviated *pt*) is a typographic measure equal to 0.0138 inch (0.35 mm). Points measure type size and leading (line spacing).

Point Size

Point size (type size) refers to the body size of a character—not its appearing size. Typefaces that share matching point sizes do not always have the same optical size. For example, same-sized typefaces with tall x-heights (the distance from baseline to mean line, or, typically, the top of the lowercase *x*) look larger than faces with small x-heights.

Body Size

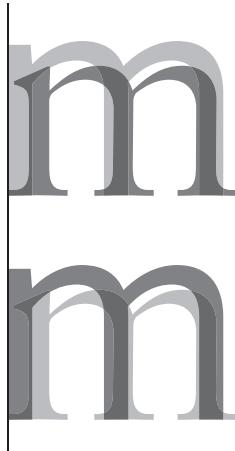
Body size is the area a character inhabits plus added white space surrounding it. Body height equals point size. The term body size originates in metal-typesetting days when lead-type blocks called slugs (or cast-metal sorts) contained characters. Lead slugs had bases slightly larger than the character size.

Appearing Size

Appearing size refers to optical size or perceived character size; 12-point type in one face might look larger or smaller than the same measure in other typefaces.

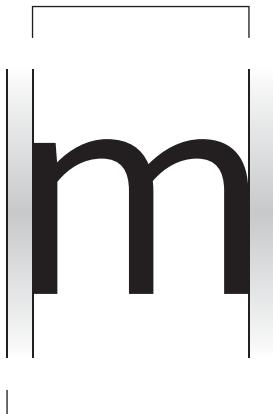
Sidebearings

Digital characters have slight white spaces on their left and right sides called sidebearings. Defining the distance between characters, sidebearings are substantial factors in typeface design. The term *set width* refers to the combined width of the character and sidebearings.



110-point Type Size
Epic and Alright Sans

CHARACTER WIDTH



SET WIDTH



Jenson



Bembo



Baskerville



Didot



Rockwell



Univers



Jenson



Baskerville



Clarendon



Akzidenz-Grotesk

Contrast

Contrast refers to the relationship between thick and thin strokes. Serif typefaces such as Bodoni and Didot have a high thick-to-thin stroke contrast. Sans serif typefaces such as Trade Gothic and Univers feature a low to uniform thick-to-thin stroke contrast.

Stress

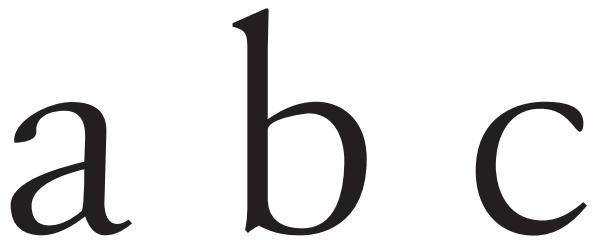
Stress refers to the invisible axis that bisects character tops and bottoms at the thinnest points. Orientation is oblique or vertical. Stress is detectable using the lowercase o as a guide.

Serif

A serif is a small finishing detail at the start and end of strokes. Basic serif constructions are reflexive and transitive; bilateral and unilateral; abrupt and adnate. Variants include cupped, hairline, rounded, slab, and wedge. The first roman serif typefaces appeared in the fifteenth century. Typifying the Humanist typeface category, the style was inspired by Italian handwriting called “lettera antica.” Other serif typeface categories include Old Style, Transitional, Modern, and Slab (see chapter 3).

Sans Serif

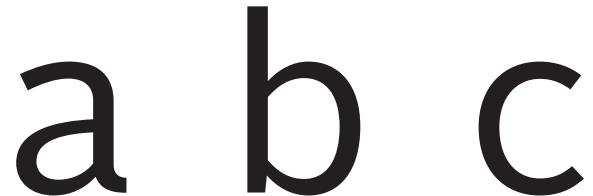
Sans serif refers to type without serifs and very low to uniform thick-to-thin stroke contrast. The first known sans serif typeface by William Caslon IV appeared in 1816. Vincent Figgins coined the term sans serif roughly twenty years later. Sans serif typeface categories are Grotesque, Geometric, Humanist, and Transitional (see chapter 3).



Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii
 Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr
 Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz
 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Serif

Epic

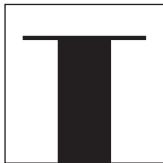


Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii
 Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr
 Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz
 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

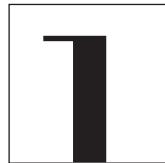
Sans Serif

Alright Sans





Abrupt
Bilateral
Reflexive

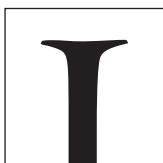


Abrupt
Unilateral
Reflexive

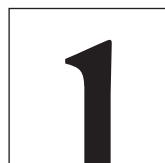
Serifs are small finishing details at the start and end of strokes. Serif constructions are reflexive and transitive; bilateral and unilateral; abrupt and adnate. Cupped, hairline, rounded, slab, and wedge are serif variations.

TYPEFACE, FONT, SUPERFAMILY

A typeface is the consistent design, or distinct visual form, of a type family. It is a cohesive system of related shapes created by a type designer. Characters such as letterforms, numerals, and punctuation share formal attributes. In metal typesetting days, a font was a complete character set of a typeface in one point size and style—12-point Centaur roman, for example. A font can also describe family members comprising typefaces such as light, regular, and bold. For instance, Bembo is a typeface, Bembo italic a font. Digitally speaking, font refers to a computer file that makes a typeface available for use and production. Superfamilies are full-bodied typeface families that can include serif, semi serif, sans serif, semi sans, and slab serif faces. Extensive weights and widths, as well as optical styles, are common. Unified by concept and form, superfamilies add unique flavor to typographic works, all connected by family ties. See chapter 3 for more on typefaces.



Adnate
Bilateral
Reflexive



Adnate
Unilateral
Reflexive



Adnate
Unilateral
Transitive

Abrupt Serif

Abrupt (unbracketed) serifs extend sharply with angled stem connections.

Adnate Serif

Adnate (bracketed) serifs extend fluidly with curved stem connections.

Bilateral Serif

Bilateral serifs extend off both sides of the stroke.

Unilateral Serif

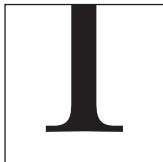
Unilateral serifs extend off one side of the stroke.

Reflexive Serif

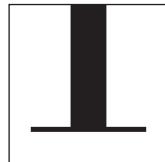
Reflexive serifs break slightly at the stroke then continue off it. They are typically evident in roman typefaces.

Transitive Serif

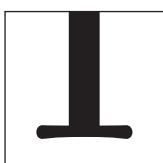
Transitive serifs flow smoothly out of the stroke without pause. They are typically evident in italic typefaces and most often unilateral.



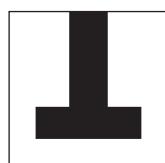
Cupped



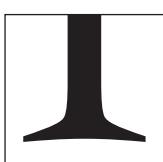
Hairline



Rounded



Slab



Wedge

Uppercase

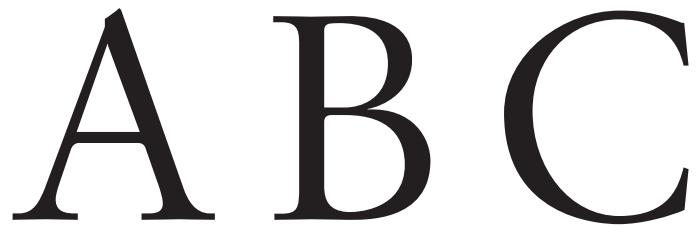
Uppercase refers to capital letterforms (majuscules). They share uniform heights called cap height. The term uppercase originates from letterpress printing. Sectioned type cases held uppercase and lowercase slugs; uppercase forms sat in the upper part.

Lowercase

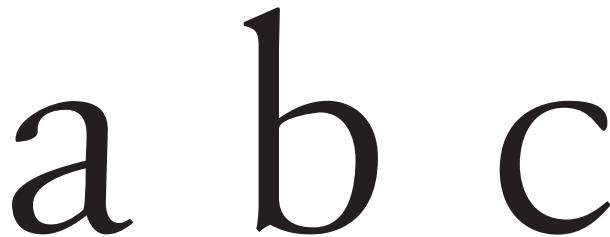
Lowercase refers to small letterforms (minuscules). They differ from uppercase in that they have more variation in form, as well as ascenders and descenders, which aid readability. The term lowercase originates from letterpress printing. Sectioned type cases held uppercase and lowercase slugs; lowercase forms sat in the lower part.

Small Caps

Small caps are uniquely designed uppercase letterforms that share with lowercase a similar weight and x-height (small caps are typically slightly taller). When elements such as acronyms and abbreviations are in body text, small caps replace full capitals, which are optically too large next to lowercase letterforms. Use small caps only if offered in a selected typeface—not all contain them. Reducing full caps to small-cap size makes them look too thin and narrow. “Fake small caps” are awkward and discordant.



Uppercase



Lowercase



Small Caps

Aa 123

Proportional Lining

Aa 123

Proportional Non-lining

Aa 123

Tabular Lining

Aa 123

Tabular Non-lining

Aa 123

Inferiors

Aa 123

Superiors

Lining Figures

Lining figures (titling figures) are numerals that are the same height as uppercase letterforms. Unlike non-lining figures, they do not have ascenders or descenders. Lining figures are well suited in combination with full capitals.

Non-lining Figures

Non-lining figures (old-style or text figures) are numerals with variable widths, ascenders, and descenders. Some sit on the baseline (0, 1, 2, 6, 8); others fall below it (3, 4, 5, 7, 9). They share weight and x-height with lowercase letterforms and small caps. Non-lining figures serve body and continuous text well. They blend fittingly with lowercase without commanding attention like lining figures, which are hulking in such situations and disrupt fluid reading.

Proportional Figures

Proportional figures are numerals with variable width or body size. For instance, the numeral 1 has a narrower width than the numeral 3. They accommodate many texts except numerical data or columns of numerals that require vertical alignment (in which case, tabular figures are apt). Proportional figures may be lining or non-lining.

Tabular Figures

Tabular figures are monospaced numerals, meaning all share the same character width or fixed width. They accommodate numerical data or columns of numerals that require vertical alignment, as in tables or charts. Tabular figures may be lining or non-lining.

Inferiors and Superiors

Inferiors and superiors are small characters used for special text such as footnotes, mathematical notations, and scientific formulas. Inferiors (subscripts) fall below the baseline. Superiors (superscripts) rise above the baseline and hang from or top-align to the ascender line. Inferiors and superiors are specially designed and proportioned forms, not reduced full-size characters, which appear too thin when scaled.

Analphabetics are characters used with the alphabet and are not included in its alphabetic order (or ABCs). They include punctuation, diacritics (accent or diacritical marks), and symbols. Punctuation marks clarify text structure and meaning. Common examples are apostrophes, commas, and periods. Diacritics, such as acute (‘), circumflex (^), and umlaut (“), are auxiliary marks that combine with letterforms and indicate a distinct sound or vocal emphasis. Symbols, such as arithmetical and currency signs, as well as copyright and registered marks, are special-purpose characters.

<i>Punctuation</i>		<i>Symbols</i>
⟨ ⟩	angle brackets	& ampersand
‘ ’	apostrophe (single quote)	@ at
*	asterisk	© copyright
•	bullet	¤ currency
׀	bar (pipe)	¢ cent
׀׀	broken bar	₡ colón
:	colon	\$ dollar
,	comma	€ euro
{ } { }	curly brackets	£ pound
†	dagger	¥ yen
‡	double dagger	° degree
…	ellipsis	⊛ dingbat
—	em dash	µ micro, mu
—	en dash	# octothorp (hash mark)
!	exclamation mark	¶ pilcrow
¡	inverted exclamation mark	® registered
« »	guillemets	§ section
-	hyphen	™ trademark
‽	interrobang	
·	midpoint	
()	parentheses	<i>Diacritics</i>
.	period (full stop)	Á Ó ‘ ’ acute and double acute
‘ ’	prime and double prime	Ú û ^ arch
?	question mark	Ě ġ ^ breve
՞	inverted question mark	Ќ ģ ^ caron
“ ”	quotation marks	Ҫ ș , cedilla
;	semicolon	Ŷ ŵ ^ circumflex
/	solidus	Ѐ ń . dot above (overdot)
\	reverse solidus	Ӑ ē ‘ ’ grave and double grave
[]	square brackets	Ӑ ī - macron
		Ӑ ӗ ‘ ’ ogonek
		Ӑ ۇ ° ring
		Ӗ ӗ schwa
		Ӑ ӱ ~ tilde
		Ӯ ԝ “ umlaut (diaeresis)
		Ҭ ӫ . undercomma
		Ҭ ӫ . underdot
		Ҥ ӫ - lowline
<i>Arithmetical Signs</i>		
÷	divide	
=	equal	
∞	infinity	
—	minus	
×	multiply	
%	percent	
+	plus	
±	plus-minus	
✓	radical	
≠	unequal	

SELECTED READINGS

The Chicago Manual of Style
The University of Chicago Press

The Typographic Desk Reference
Theodore Rosendorff



Posture

Univers 55 Regular, 56 Oblique



Weight

Univers 45 Light, 55 Regular, 65 Bold, 75 Black



Width

Univers 53 Extended, 55 Regular, 57 Condensed, 59 Ultra Condensed

USING TYPE STYLES

Use only available styles—posture, weight, and width—of chosen typefaces; these have been carefully considered and proportioned by type designers. Avoid relying on software conversions or manual modifications; select italic or oblique fonts from within the typeface. Avoid modifying roman styles by slanting, thus creating objectionable “fake italics.” Adding strokes to vary type weight is poor practice. Equally so is skewing or stretching letterforms to make narrow or wide alternatives, which diminish proper proportions and typeface integrity. Choose typefaces with a stylistic range that best meets needs. Those fittingly selected and expressed with skilled treatment produce quality outcomes.

Style is typeface posture, weight, and width.

Posture

Posture is the angle of letterforms relative to the baseline. Roman letterforms are upright with a vertical stance. (The term roman also refers to the regular weight of a typeface.) Posture also includes italics and obliques, which typically sit at a 12- to 15-degree slant from the roman position.

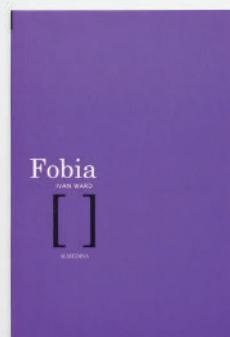
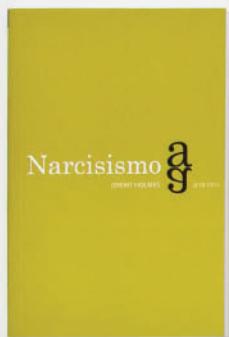
Derived from handwriting, the first italic appeared in Italy during the fifteenth century. Venetian printer Aldus Manutius introduced the style as an alternative to roman body text. Used in pocket-sized books, the narrower italic form allowed more words per line, which saved space and money. Italics and obliques now create emphasis within roman text rather than acting as substitutes for it. They are precise in construction and proportion. Serif typefaces typically have true italics—harmonious partners to romans with structurally different designs. Sans serifs traditionally feature obliques, which are aptly sloped versions of roman forms. Many contemporary sans serifs have true italics, and some serifs have obliques.

Weight

Weight refers to stroke thickness. Regular (book or roman) and bold are traditional weights common to most typefaces. Additional weights include thin, light, medium, black, and ultra.

Width

Width (how wide the letterforms stand) indicates horizontal letterform proportion. Condensed is a typical width narrow in appearance. Compressed and extra-condensed are others. Extended refers to widths with markedly broad appearances.





Identity materials for Emigre Film feature the non-lining numerals 5 and 2. Set in the serif face Matrix, the elegant numerals contrast with the remaining text, which appears in sans serifs Trade Gothic, Citizen, and Antitled. Such typeface distinction makes 52 a focal point, even though it is small in scale next to Emigre.

BLOK DESIGN

Letterforms, diacritics, and punctuation marks provide meaning and curiosity on the *Temas de Psicanálise* (*Themes of Psychoanalysis*) covers. The characters, set in Century Schoolbook, are key elements serving as personified graphics that support book titles.

FBA.



Inspired by Constructivism, promotional materials for Glasgow rock band Sindústry are bold in execution. A circumflex (^) above the U is for graphic effect not pronunciation. The diacritic is structurally sharp. It is a distinct visual note—typographic form used with dramatic intent. The typeface is Helvetica Ultra Condensed.

PETE ROSSI

LIGATURES

A ligature is the union of two or more characters. Varieties include stylistic, lexical, and discretionary.

Stylistic Ligatures

Stylistic ligatures resolve unwanted character collisions that occur when certain letterforms combine. Such ligatures deliver aesthetic refinement. Common examples are *fi*, *ffi*, and *fl*.

A comparison of the letter 'f' with and without a ligature. On the left, 'f' is a standard vertical stroke with a small loop at the top. On the right, 'ffi' is shown as a single, continuous, flowing stroke where the top of the first 'f' connects to the top of the second 'f', and the second 'f' has a small loop at the top of its stem.

Stylistic Ligatures

Lexical Ligatures

Lexical ligatures (diphthongs) represent composite vowels such as *æ* (aesc) and *œ* (ethel).

A comparison of the letter 'æ' with and without a ligature. On the left, 'æ' is a standard 'a' with a 'e' to its right. On the right, 'œ' is a single, ornate ligature where the 'a' and 'e' are joined together.

Lexical Ligatures

Discretionary Ligatures

Several typefaces also contain discretionary ligatures. They add stylistic grace with ornate or historical nuance. Options include *ct* and *st*.

A comparison of the letter 'ct' with and without a ligature. On the left, 'ct' is a standard 'c' with a 't' to its right. On the right, 'st' is a single, ornate ligature where the 'c' and 't' are joined together.

Discretionary Ligatures

Ampersand

Another ligature is the ampersand, which symbolizes the Latin word *et*, meaning "and." Some ampersand variations clearly echo their heritage as *e* and *t* ligatures; others vary indirectly, with little *e* and *t* resemblance.

A comparison of the ampersand symbol with and without a ligature. On the left, '&' is a standard ampersand symbol. On the right, 'ampersand' is written in a decorative, flowing script font where the 'a', 'm', 'p', 'e', 'r', 's', and 'a' are all joined together.

Ampersands

Logik

The Logik logotype conveys connections via a custom *gi* ligature, which also unites with the *k*. It is apt for a company that analyzes text documents and reveals links among them. The modified typeface is Century Schoolbook.

idAPOSTLE

A specially designed *ri* ligature enriches the aesthetic and personality of the Carissa Pelleteri logotype, which is set in Austin Bold. A modified *r* terminal replaces the dot (tittle) of the *i* and shapes the letterform.

JESSE REED

Swash characters *a* and *e* in the serif Minion add elegance to the Havana advertisement. The *st* discretionary ligature in “Lifestyle” fits well with the swash characters and ties together the treatment. The embellished letterforms also contrast with the geometric background and sans serif typeface Rimouski. Such visual distinction adds prominence.

FACE.

Havana Lifestyle.
Live And Let Live.

Wednesday 21st | We Own The Nightlife Tonite.
NRAC JACOBS JACKIE DRESS

Thursday 22nd | Indie Chic.
KINKY™ LIVE! OFFICIAL SPONSOR

Friday 23rd | Terrace: 80s Pop. Indoors. House.
NNU NNU RED SHOES

Saturday 24th | Dance & Disco.
VIKTOR & ROLF BLAZER

HAVANA.COM/LX
Av. 20 de Septiembre 1000, Col. San Pedro, 11200, CDMX, México

Face. / Art Direction & Design.

H A V A N A **VINOTECA**

3

ON TYPEFACES

57 *Categories of Type* / 70 *Selection Considerations* / 76 *In Combination*

q

A

a

B

α

C

A
A + A

D

A

E

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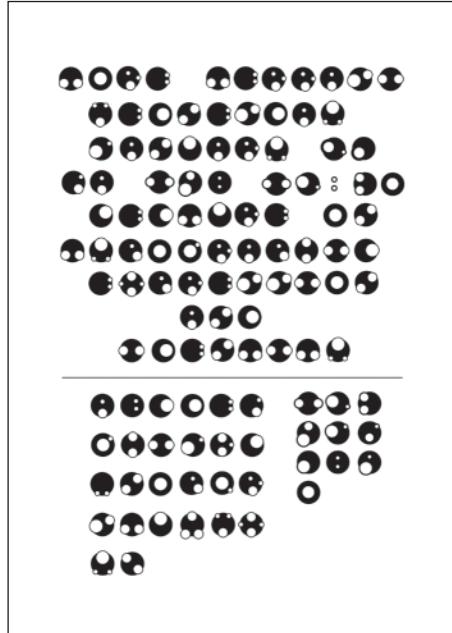
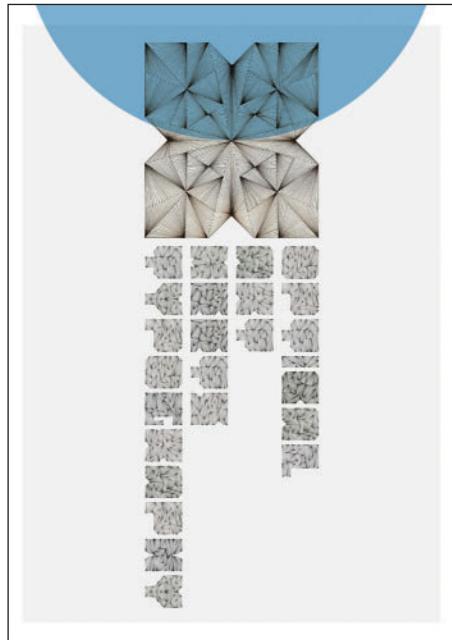
Typefaces exist in many shapes, which can make unending configurations. Anything imagined is available—from alphabetic and decorative to symbolic and experimental. With many choices, make quality selections and use what exists with discipline and skill.

- A Blackletter
Halja, Michael Parson, 2008
- B Brush Lettering
Filmotype Atlas, Charles Gibbons, 2011
- C Calligraphic
Alana, Laura Worthington, 2011
- D Chromatic
Rosewood, Carl Crossgrove, Kim Boker Chansler, Carol Twombly, 1994
- E Distressed
Stomper, Matthew Aaron Desmond, 1997
- F Experimental
Hunter, Si Scott, 2009
- G Incised
Albertus, Berthold Wolpe, 1932–1940
- H Mathematical
Universal Mathematical Pi, Linotype Design Studio, 1990
- I Monospaced
Orator, John Scheppeler, 1962
- J Ornamental
Adobe Wood Type Ornaments, Barbara Lind, Joy Redick, 1990
- K Pixelated
Pixelite, Rafael Neder, 2005
- L Period/Retro
Peignot, A. M. Cassandre, 1937
- M Sans Serif
Heroic, Silas Dilworth, 2008
- N Serif
Newzald, Kris Sowersby, 2008
- O Slab Serif
Caecilia, Peter Matthias Noordzij, 1990
- P Stencil
ARGN, Greg Ponchak, 2011
- Q Symbol
Carta, Lynne Garell, 1986
- R Typewriter
American Typewriter, Joel Kaden, Tony Stan, 1974
- S Unicase
DemocratICA, Miles Newlyn, 1991
- T Wood Type
Quentin, URW Studio, 2008

The terms *typeface* and *font* are commonly interchanged (and occasionally disputed). A typeface is the consistent design, or distinct visual form, of a type family. It is a cohesive system of related shapes created by a type designer. Characters, such as letterforms, numerals, and punctuation, share formal attributes.

Font has multiple definitions. In metal typesetting days, a font was a complete character set of a typeface in one point size and style, such as 12-point Centaur roman. A font can also describe family members comprising typefaces, such as light, regular, and bold. For instance, Bembo is a typeface, but Bembo italic is a font. Digitally speaking (and in common practice), font refers to a computer file that makes a typeface available for use and production. A font scalable to any point size embodies the design of a typeface. Designers select typefaces and work with fonts.

Typefaces influence communication through appearance and legibility. Aesthetics provide first impressions and express personalities, such as friendly, professional, or sweet and youthful, masculine, or utilitarian. Connotation, or implied meaning, inherent in typefaces plays a significant role, be it positive or negative. Apt typefaces directly engage viewers and send convincing messages. Legibility refers to the recognition of single characters and their relationships when set side by side. Type designers carefully construct characters and pay special attention to space, notably counters and sidebearings. Counters are enclosed or partially enclosed white spaces in characters, sidebearings the built-in space on their left and right sides. Character shape plus white space (counters and sidebearings) aid letterform recognition. Legibility relies on the invisible presence of space. Choose legible typefaces and—with attentive typesetting—shape readable text. Some typefaces intentionally challenge legibility. Artistry and expression drive utility, not communication. It is exciting to see such creativity for lovers of letterforms!



Typefaces are key tools of visual communication. Designers assemble language and form with them. Applied adeptly, typefaces create lasting effects. Take care when handling them, and respect their makers. Invest in them, and gradually build a quality typeface library. Stated gracefully by mid-twentieth-century designer Will Burtin: “Each typeface is a piece of history, like a colored stone chip in a mosaic that depicts the development of human communication. Each typeface is also a visual record of the person who created it—his skill as a designer, his philosophy as an artist, his feeling for the relationship between the details of each letter, and the resulting impressions of an alphabet or a text line.”¹ Typefaces are indispensable; they conduct visible language.

1. Rosen, Ben.

Type and Typography: The Designer's Type Book. Rev. ed. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1976.

Simple geometric shapes are the basis of Shape Font. Intended for use in headlines and titles, the typeface challenges legibility. The vertical-reading phrase “Optical Art Meets Typography” captures the concept behind the design.

—
RUI RIBEIRO

A graphic typeface pushes legibility on a poster that promotes an experimental type lecture at the University of Texas at Arlington. The designer states: “The modular typeface is composed entirely and ludicrously of circles and provides a playful visual play of form, counterform, legibility, and illegibility.” The top portion of the poster delivers lecture details, the bottom, the key from A–Z and 0–9.

—
TORE TERRASI

SELECTED READINGS

The Elements of Typographic Style

Robert Bringhurst

Manuel français de typographie moderne

Francis Thibaudeau

Printing Types: An Introduction

Alexander S. Lawson

"Type Classification"

Twentieth Century Graphic Communication:

Technology, Society and Culture

Annual Conference of the Friends of

St Bride Printing Library, London

Catherine Dixon

Identifying and organizing more than 550 years of typography and myriad typefaces is a challenging task (not without debate among typophiles) that has been taken on by many throughout the years, including Francis Thibaudeau, Maximilien Vox, Alexander Lawson, Robert Bringhurst, and Catherine Dixon. Classification began in the nineteenth century, by printers seeking to note lineage and classify typefaces during a period marked by many new styles. Various classification systems exist, each with organizational methods based on factors such as historical development, formal attributes, and intended use. These methods are points of departure, not perfect plans. Many typefaces fit easily in categories; others overlap in multiple ways or escape classification entirely. Regardless of the system (and the limitations of each), cataloging typefaces is a valuable exercise. Classification shapes context and provides descriptive terms, which aids general identification and selection.

Presented here is a scheme that provides a basic means of identifying and distinguishing typefaces for beginning readers. Dedicated only to serifs and sans serifs suited for most text, it is not a comprehensive model covering all typefaces. Formal traits and historical development shape the fundamental typeface categories:

1. *Serif*—Humanist, Old Style, Transitional, and Modern; 2. *Slab Serif*—Egyptian and Clarendon; and 3. *Sans Serif*—Grotesque, Geometric, Humanist, and Transitional.



CATEGORIES

SERIF

Humanist
Old Style
Transitional
Modern

SLAB SERIF

Egyptian
Clarendon

SANS SERIF

Grotesque
Geometric
Humanist
Transitional

HUMANIST SERIF

First Appeared
Fifteenth century

Archetype
Jenson
Nicolas Jenson, 1470

Humanist serifs are the original roman typefaces. They are strikingly different from Blackletter, the first typeface style (see chapter 1). Inspired by Italian handwriting, called “lettera antica,” Humanist serifs have a low thick-to-thin stroke contrast and bracketed serifs. The lowercase *e* features an angled, rather than horizontal, crossbar. Round forms such as *o* have an oblique stress.

Typical Characteristics

- Low thick-to-thin stroke contrast
- Oblique stress
- Angled crossbar on the lowercase *e*
- Bracketed serifs
- Small x-height

Examples

- Centaur
Bruce Rogers, 1915
- Guardi
Reinhard Haus, 1986
- Lynton
Leslie Usherwood, 1980
- Maiola
Veronika Burian, 2005
- Vendetta
John Downer, 1999

OLD STYLE SERIF

First Appeared
Fifteenth and sixteenth centuries

Archetype
Bembo
Francesco Griffo, 1495

Old Style serifs are more refined, with smoother and rounder forms than Humanist serifs. Because of improvements in type-making tools, the thick-to-thin stroke contrast is more apparent. The crossbar of the lowercase *e* is horizontal. The stress of the *o* shifts vertically, though not fully so.

Typical Characteristics

- Medium thick-to-thin stroke contrast
- Oblique stress
- Horizontal crossbar on the lowercase *e*
- Bracketed serifs
- Round open characters

Examples

- Aldus Nova
Hermann Zapf, Akira Kobayashi, 2005
- Berling
Karl-Erik Forsberg, 1951–1958
- Galliard
Matthew Carter, 1978
- Granjon
George William Jones, 1928
- Sabon
Jan Tschichold, 1967

TRANSITIONAL SERIF

First Appeared
Eighteenth century

Archetype
Baskerville
John Baskerville, 1754

Inspired by engraving, Transitional serif characters are mechanical in construction, with medium to high thick-to-thin stroke contrast. Bracketed serifs are sharper and refined—far more than Humanist and Old Style serifs, yet not extreme, like forthcoming Modern typefaces. Round characters are open, with tall x-heights. Vertical stress on round forms is barely oblique to vertical.

Typical Characteristics

- Medium to high thick-to-thin stroke contrast
- Slight oblique to vertical stress
- Horizontal crossbar on the lowercase *e*
- Moderately thin bracketed serifs
- Round open characters
- Tall x-height

Examples

- Arnhem
Fred Smeijers, 2002
- Bonesana
Matthieu Cortat, 2009
- Fournier
Pierre Simon Fournier, 1924
- Photina
José Mendoza y Almeida, 1971
- Whitman
Kent Lew, 2003–2008

MODERN SERIF

First Appeared
Eighteenth century

Archetype
Didot
Firmin Didot, 1784

Modern serif typefaces have a very high thick-to-thin stroke contrast. Advances in letterform making and printing methods made possible the superfine and now unbracketed horizontal serifs that typify Moderns. With vertical stress, characters are well balanced and noticeably upright, with slightly condensed proportions.

Typical Characteristics

- Very high thick-to-thin stroke contrast
- Vertical stress
- Horizontal crossbar on the lowercase *e*
- Hairline unbracketed serifs
- Tall x-height

Examples

- Ambroise
Jean François Porchez, 2001
- Carmen
Andreu Balius, 2007–2008
- Eloquent
Jason Walcott, 2008
- Moderno FB
David Berlow with Richard Lipton, 1995
- Walbaum
Justus Erich Walbaum, 1800

EGYPTIAN SLAB SERIF

First Appeared
Nineteenth century

Archetype
Rockwell
Frank Hinman Pierpont, 1934

Egyptian slab serif typefaces have a very low thick-to-thin or uniform stroke contrast. Heavy and square unbracketed serifs easily identify them. Historically, their heft worked well as display faces, notably for advertising. Contemporary slabs are typically more versatile than past models. For example, Archer by Hoefler & Frere-Jones has many weights and true italics that serve body-to-display text well.

Typical Characteristics

- Very low to uniform thick-to-thin stroke contrast
- Vertical stress
- Horizontal crossbar on the lowercase *e*
- Square unbracketed serifs

Examples

- Archer
Hoefler & Frere-Jones, 2008
- Caecilia
Peter Matthias Noordzij, 1990
- Calvert
Margaret Calvert, 1980
- Dispatch
Cyrus Highsmith, 1999–2000
- Memphis
Rudolf Wolf, 1929



CATEGORIES

SERIF

Humanist
Old Style
Transitional
Modern

SLAB SERIF

Egyptian
Clarendon

SANS SERIF

Grotesque
Geometric
Humanist
Transitional

CLARENDON SLAB SERIF

First Appeared
Nineteenth century

Archetype
Clarendon
Robert Besley, 1845

Clarendon slab serifs feature bracketed serifs and low thick-to-thin stroke contrast. Serifs smoothly transition into strokes, a detail making Clarendons appear more refined than Egyptians. A distinct trait is the bulbous ball terminals seen on characters such as lowercase *c*, *f*, and *y*.

Typical Characteristics

- Low thick-to-thin stroke contrast
- Vertical stress
- Horizontal crossbar on the lowercase *e*
- Square bracketed serifs
- Round ball terminals

Examples

- Egizio
Aldo Novarese, 1955
- Oxtail
Stefan Hattenbach, 2006
- Stag
Christian Schwartz, 2006
- Trilby
David Jonathan Ross, 2009
- Volta
Konrad F. Bauer, Walter Baum, 1956

GROTESQUE SANS SERIF

First Appeared
Nineteenth century

Archetype
Akzidenz-Grotesk
Günter Gerhard Lange, 1898

Grotesque styles were the first commercially widespread sans serif typefaces—specific to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They show little to uniform thick-to-thin stroke contrast. Curved strokes on letterforms such as *c*, *e*, and *s* end at an angle. Grotesque typefaces inspired Transitional sans serifs, which date from the mid-twentieth century. Bureau Grot (1989–2006) and Bau (2001–2004) are contemporary typefaces based on Grotesques.

Typical Characteristics

- Slight thick-to-thin stroke contrast
- Vertical stress
- Curved strokes like *C* end at an angle

Examples

- Basic Commercial
Linotype Design Studio, 1900
- Bell Gothic
Chauncey H. Griffith, 1937
- Franklin Gothic
Morris Fuller Benton, 1904
- Monotype Grotesque
Frank Hinman Pierpont, 1926
- Scheltersche Grotesk
Schelter & Giesecke Foundry, 1880



A e
Co

GEOMETRIC SANS SERIF

First Appeared
Twentieth century

Archetype
Futura
Paul Renner, 1928

Geometry and modularity inspire Geometric sans serif typefaces. Typically based on circles, squares, or triangles, they are rational in construction with uniform stroke contrast.

Typical Characteristics

- Uniform stroke contrast
- Vertical stress
- Inspired by geometric shapes

Examples

- Avant Garde
Herb Lubalin, Tom Carnase, 1970
- Brandon Grotesque
Hannes von Döhren, 2009–2010
- Bryant
Eric Olson, 2002
- Mostra Nuova
Mark Simonson, 2009
- Neutraface
Christian Schwartz, 2002



A e
Co

HUMANIST SANS SERIF

First Appeared
Twentieth century

Archetype
Gill Sans
Eric Gill, 1927–1930

Humanist sans take their inspiration from Humanist serifs. A handwritten influence is evident by the slightly more (though subtle) thick-to-thin stroke contrast, which distinguishes them from other sans serif typefaces. Typically, Humanist sans serifs feature true italics distinct from romans.

Typical Characteristics

- Very low thick-to-thin or uniform stroke contrast
- Slight oblique to vertical stress
- Calligraphic influence
- True italics

Examples

- Agenda
Greg Thompson, 1993–2000
- Elido
Sibylle Hagmann, 2010
- Leska
Alexandra Korolkova, 2008
- Mr Eaves
Zuzana Licko, 2009
- Neue Sans
André Leonardt, 2007



A e
Co

TRANSITIONAL SANS SERIF

First Appeared
Twentieth century

Archetype
Univers
Adrian Frutiger, 1957

From the mid-twentieth century on, Transitional sans serifs began as refreshed Grotesques, which are specific to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Characters feature uniform stroke contrast and vertical stress. Early Transitional sans serifs, such as Helvetica and Univers, have curved letterforms such as c, e, and s that end horizontally rather than an angle. Oblique italics are common.

Typical Characteristics

- Uniform stroke contrast
- Vertical stress
- Neutral personality
- Curved strokes like C end horizontally

Examples

- Aktiv Grotesk
Ron Carpenter, Fabio Haag, 2010
- A.R.S. Maquette
Angus R. Shamal, 1999, 2010
- Corporate S
Kurt Weidemann, 1990
- Dagny
Örjan Nordling, Göran Söderström, 2009
- Helvetica
Max Miedinger with Eduard Hoffmann, 1957



Hand-embossed business cards feature the Humanist serif typeface Centaur. Set solely in tracked uppercase, the typeface is elegant. Capitals are one of Centaur's finest assets. Subtle changes in type size, color, and value aid hierarchy.

PATRICK L CRAWFORD DESIGN



Old Style typeface Garamond pairs with Benton Sans (a contemporary revival of the 1903 Grotesque typeface News Gothic). Garamond conveys spirited messages framed in colorful talk bubbles. The letterforms are warm and friendly.

ADDIS CRESON

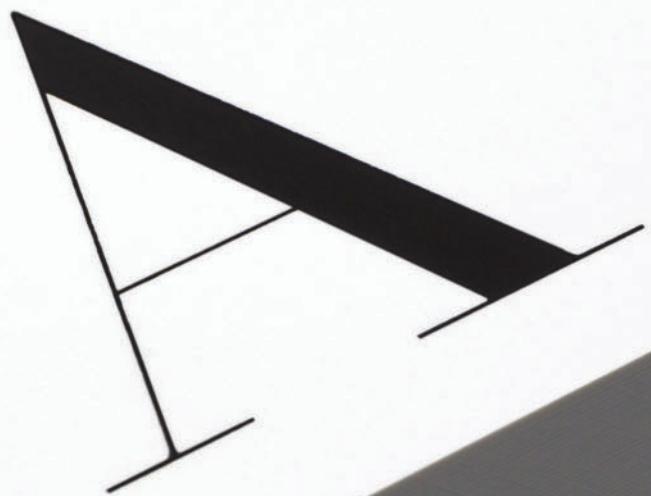


The Hartney logotype is set in Century Schoolbook, a Transitional serif typeface. Lowercase letterforms feature a tall x-height and open counters. The typeface personality is welcoming; a touch of italic adds sophistication. Geometric sans serif Futura in limited use complements the serif typeface.

—
NIEDERMEIER DESIGN

The iconic work for *Harper's Bazaar* by famed designer Alexey Brodovitch inspires the Anna McGregor logotype. The A is grand, typeset in the Modern serif Bauer Bodoni. The black and white palette reflects the extreme contrast inherent in the face.

—
NELSON ASSOCIATES



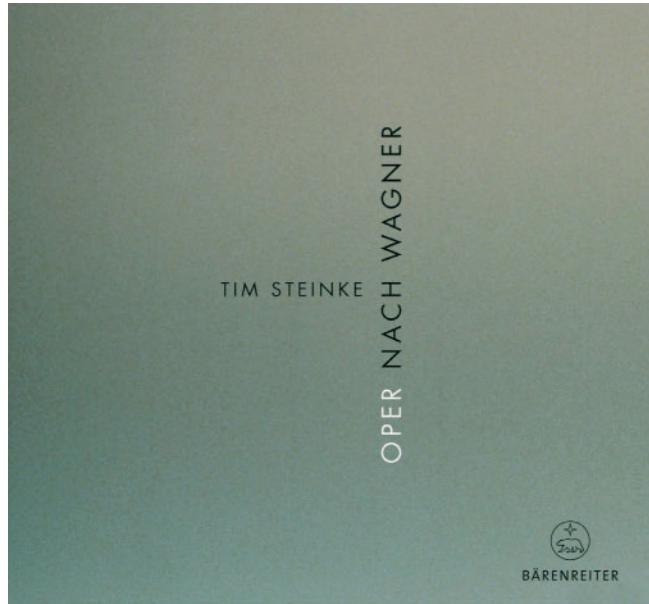
ANNA McGREGOR WEDDING
The Studio, ARCH 69, NEW COVENT GARDEN,
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Web banners for an online course exhibit strong figure-ground relationships. Slab serif typefaces—Giza (an Egyptian slab) with a pinch of Sentinel (a Clarendon slab)—seamlessly interact with closely cropped photographs. Letterforms, numerals, and punctuation function as words, graphic forms, and image carriers.

CHARLES GIBBONS



The photograph provides an implied vertical axis from which the book title *Oper Nach Wagner* rises. Title and author connect perpendicularly and echo the image. Orientation and type size variations order the text, set in *Futura*, the archetype of Geometric sans serifs.

TAKE OFF—MEDIA SERVICES



Grotesque sans serif *Akzidenz-Grotesk* grabs attention. Color identifies the band names—*Neat Neat Neat* and *The Dalles*—on the 7" (18 cm) record sleeve. Mixing with graphic elements and photography, type commands the design. Its scale and flush-left alignment give it a solid presence.

FALKO OHLMER



THE MAY FAIR IS A MEETING SPACE. ITS GLAMOROUS HALLS ARE CAPTURED IN SOME OF THE CRYSTAL AREAS, FROM THE RETRO CHIC LOBBY TO THE RETRO CHIC THEATRE. A FLEXIBLE SPACE OFFERS ALMOST ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES IN THE HEART OF LONDON.

Karen Cheng knows your type.



AIGA TH.2\5\09
7P, RM.5401

Her work has been published by Communication Arts, the American Center for Design, Critique, the Society for Publication Designers, the University +College Designers Association, How Magazine and PIE Tokyo.

Karen Cheng received her Master's Degree from the University of Cincinnati College of Design, Art, Architecture and Planning. Prior to joining the faculty at the University of Washington in 1997, she worked in Brand Management at the Procter and Gamble Company and studied engineering at Penn State University.

She is active in the Seattle chapter of the AIGA, where she has been a board member and chair of the education committee. Her book, *Designing Type*, was published by Yale University Press in Spring 2006. She is currently Chair of the Visual Communication Design program.

*All UC students are invited to attend.

Classic Transitional sans serif Univers sits convincingly in a poster that promotes a lecture by designer, professor, and author Karen Cheng. Each line of the three-part title "Karen Cheng knows your type" changes weight from top to bottom—65 Bold to 55 Roman to 45 Light.

JESSE REED

The May Fair Hotel logotype is refined and contemporary. A redrawn version of the Humanist sans serif, Topaz has thin strokes that evoke timeless elegance. Collateral materials extend the logotype and capture the glamour and heritage of the London landmark.

NELSON ASSOCIATES



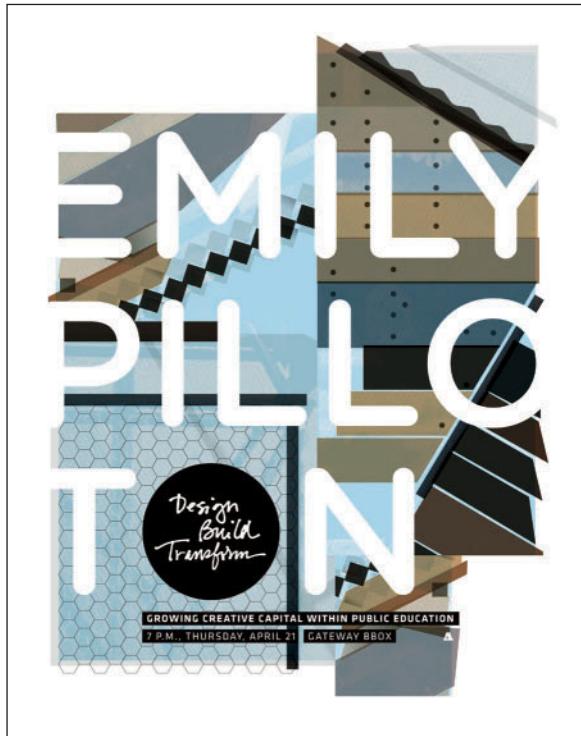
Typeface quality depends on character construction and how well the forms work together. This poster promotes the typeface Skolar, designed by David Březina. Skolar is a hearty text face with strong serifs and tall x-height, which aid reading at small sizes.

DAVID BŘEZINA

Typographer Beatrice Warde wrote: “There are bad types and good types, and the whole science and art of typography begins after the first category has been set aside.”² What constitutes a good typeface? It is a system of thoughtfully conceived and constructed characters working together as words, lines, and paragraphs. It is highly legible, with well-considered space built in and around the characters. Good typefaces used with care and creativity serve texts, authors, and readers. Smart selections give designers the precise kit of parts to do this. However, everything is relative. Quality typefaces do not guarantee success—regardless of their legibility or attention to detail. A great face poorly handled still leaves text unreadable, just as ill-chosen typefaces send mixed messages. Conversely, fitting faces of mediocre merit work if typeset well. There are few absolutes. Like much in typography, flexible principles guide the process for choosing and combining typefaces.

To begin, start with the text—not the type. Take time to read and grasp it as well as possible. Get a sense of its mood and energy. Pinpoint the main message. Context initiates decision-making. Next, carefully map the text. Note its quantity and variety, or types of text, then order it by importance. Determine the technical needs of a typeface, such as stylistic range (posture, weight, and width) or special features (ligatures, numeral styles, and small caps), to create hierarchy. A project with limited types of text needs less typeface range than one with multiple variables. For example, books are textually rich, with many options such as body text, headings, captions, footers, and folios. When thinking about typefaces, begin with the text largest in quantity, most often body text. An ideal choice is a face designed for extended reading at small sizes in either serif or sans serif. In contrast, posters often contain minimal text, such as titles, dates, and brief descriptions. An attention-grabbing display face might echo the title perfectly, as a modest face conveys supporting text. Think first of the text and its typesetting needs, then make appropriate choices.

² Beatrice Warde, “On the Choice of Typeface,” in *Texts on Type: Critical Writings on Typography*, eds. Steven Heller and Philip B. Meggs (New York: Allworth Press, 2001), 196.



Determine the medium, users, and viewing conditions. Typefaces for environments observed from a distance vary greatly from tablets seen inches away. Those for corporate annual reports differ from children's books, as do the viewers. The former may lend itself to reserved typefaces set conservatively, the latter to friendly faces set expressively. Short-term assignments might require contemporary faces that speak to present-day social conditions. Trustworthy, classic characters might best assist long-term ventures. Innovative concepts can benefit from custom typefaces. Informed choices are essential. There are vast numbers of typefaces to discover (with many more to come). Regardless of the medium, seek excellent examples. Observing type in practice is a great way to learn.

The name Emily Pilloton set in Gotham Rounded knocks out of a graphic background in a poster promoting a lecture at the Maryland Institute College of Art. The face is friendly and contemporary. A second typeface, Klavika, contrasts Gotham. The sharp sans serif presents supporting text with clarity. A hand-lettered subtitle complements the typefaces.

AGGIE TOPPINS

The One Atlantic wine labels feature a custom typeface designed in collaboration with Darden Studio. It is distinctive and adds value. Letterforms demonstrate a posture shift from roman to oblique that marks the wine type. Color reinforces the typographic nuance.

MUCCA DESIGN

Alphabetical

+44 0120 896729
0120 896729
0120 896729
0120 896729

A

We are a creative graphic design studio based in London. Our design philosophy is simple: work closely with clients to create designs with character and relevance, fulfilling briefs to the letter. We apply this thinking across identity, print, digital, environment and packaging design.

To receive a free issue of our latest project updates and news stories — or to see our full portfolio please get in touch.

B

Design Museum picks **Alphabetical** to create identity for Designers in Residence

Design Week magazine just published the exciting news of our appointment by the Design Museum to create the identity for the Designers in Residence 2011 programme. The project, which will run from 12th March to 11th September 2011, will showcase the work of 12 emerging talent from the UK and abroad. We're delighted to be working with the Design Museum to create a new identity for the programme, reflecting the breadth of the exhibition and the variety of the work on show.

C

Lamplighter Drama

It's a privilege to lend our work for the branding of a new theatre production company, Lamplighter Drama.

The project was inspired by founding members Charlotte Lloyd Webber and Emma Rousell's love for the classic novel *Lamplighter* by Andrew de Saussure. The play is set to premiere at the Lyric Hammersmith in March 2011.

D

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E

Non Zero

We have just finished working on a new identity programme for the live music events company Non Zero. Specialising in live music events, documentaries and promotions their visually distinct style has earned them a cult following. The company's unique and energetic on-stage-in-a-lifetime moments forms the basis of the identity, which invites the viewer behind the scenes.

F

Alexena Cayless

Getting the chance to work alongside contemporary designers from different disciplines is always a treat for us. We're excited to be working with the young designer Alexena Cayless recently invited us to lend our expertise to her first major project. Alexena is currently working on a new identity for the Design Museum.

G

Merry Christmas One & All

It's a privilege to lend our work for the branding of a new theatre production company, Lamplighter Drama.

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G

Merry Christmas One & All

Particular media necessitate special consideration. Type for the web, as well as digital devices and gestural interfaces, meet challenges because conditions vary, unlike fixed mediums such as print. Multiple browsers, platforms, and screen sizes present type differently. Typefaces suited to one might not suit another. Expect the unexpected in digital realms. Be flexible and responsive. Digital formats know no bounds. Unlimited virtual space offers potential unseen in other areas. Digitally displayed, quality typography is progressing swiftly. For instance, web font technology advances at a rapid pace and makes available quality typefaces that work seamlessly on screen. Designers have options akin to fine print work minus the technical hurdles that once limited web and digital display type. Barriers across platforms and devices, as well as mediums, are minimized. Demand for and access to first-rate typographic settings (and the technical means to execute it) in digital mediums is growing. Such great typographic potential and invention exists!

Typefaces create atmosphere. They spark emotions and express historical, contemporary, or cultural connotations—all before the text is read. Subtle messaging via the physical characteristics of typefaces prompts viewer participation. Some faces are casual or dignified, others mechanical or playful. Univers is neutral and no-nonsense and can be dressed up or down. It looks good in everything. Robust and friendly Clarendon sits firmly without intimidation. Mrs Eaves charms; it is traditional with contemporary flair. A fitting typeface personality makes an impression.

An apt twenty-six typefaces add typographic character to the Alphabetical website. Letterforms from A to Z, each distinct, organize the site, which is a portfolio and news stream fusion. Support text, as seen in the contact information, dates, and headings, are set in Gotham.

ALPHABETICAL

A

æ fb ct fy ee ff ḡi fh īp fj ky fl gg gy oe sp ḡgy fr st ft īp py tw tt ty tty
A A A M B C C M D F F C G H E F I U B F L I A N T C O M P E R U D T T U P V A T W U L T Y U R

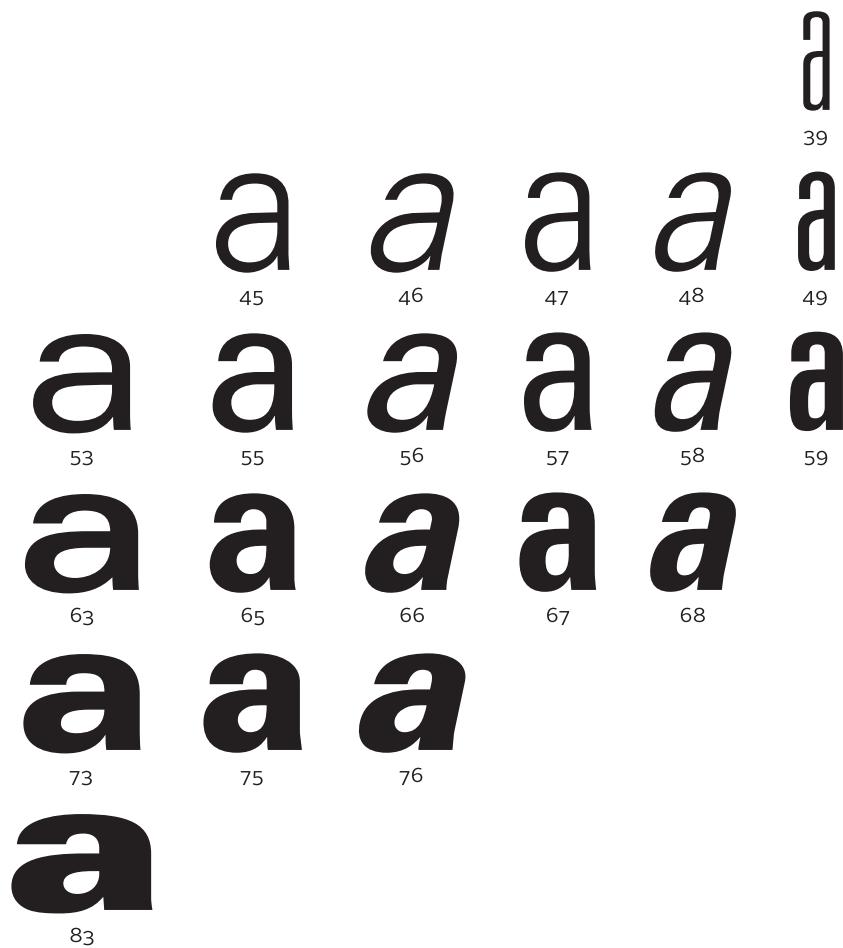
Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

B

AaBbCc1234

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

C



- A A Baskerville revival, Zuzana Licko's Mrs Eaves is a serif typeface featuring open counters and supple curves. A notable feature is its extensive ligatures. Named after Sarah Eaves, John Baskerville's housekeeper and later wife, Mrs Eaves is stylish, charismatic, and gracious.
- B Robert Besley created the original Clarendon in 1845. (In the 1900s, it was updated by Monotype and again later by Hermann Eidenbenz.) Its distinctive slab serifs make it stand out in display settings. Bracketed serifs and ball terminals contribute to its friendly, stout personality.
- C Univers, designed by Adrian Frutiger in 1957, was the first typeface to use a numerical naming system for each font (the original design contained twenty-one fonts). The first number defines type weight, the second width. The typeface offers variety in a cohesive, legible package. Its neutral tone is an asset. Univers can wear many hats and satisfy diverse projects.

Aa

Display
24 point and up
48 pt Minion

Aa Aa Aa

Subhead, Body, Caption
L to R

Aa

Subhead
14 to 24 point
24 pt Minion

Aa Aa Aa

Display, Body, Caption
L to R

Aa

Body
9 to 14 point
14 pt Minion

Aa Aa Aa

Display, Subhead, Caption
L to R

Aa

Caption
6 to 8 point
8 pt Minion

Aa Aa Aa

Display, Subhead, Body
L to R

Slight adjustments in contrast, proportion, and weight optimize typefaces used at specific point sizes. Caption and body styles designed for comfortable and extended reading perform well at small sizes. They are too dense and muddy enlarged. Subhead and display styles crafted to shine at large sizes fall short when they are reduced. Stroke quality is lost. Optical styles maintain typeface legibility and elegance at all sizes when used as planned.

Examine the design of typefaces. Look for legible, well-proportioned, and acutely crafted characters. When typeset, words and lines read fluidly. Reliable typefaces have consistent styles (posture, weight, and width) to provide for typographic variation and emphasis. Depending on the quantity and variety of text, a range of styles—from light to bold weights and condensed to extended widths—add versatility. Likewise, ligatures, swash characters, and alternate glyphs offer diversity. Certain typefaces, including Minion by Robert Slimbach, have optical styles, commonly caption, body, subhead, and display. Optical styles feature subtle adjustments in letter-form contrast, proportion, and weight that enhance appearance at specific point sizes. For example, if setting type above 24 point, use the display style, which appears too thin at small sizes. Conversely, 6- to 8-point type size requires caption styles, which look too heavy at large sizes. Optical styles represent fine attention to detail. No matter the type size needed, optimal forms exist. Ample typefaces offer typographic opportunities.

In this student project, changes in point size and weight create variation and emphasis. The contrast is simple and effective with just one typeface—Helvetica. Confident type settings convey the Knoll brand.

KRISTÍN AGNARSDÓTTIR



Examine letterform anatomy.

a a a a

Sentinel and Whitney, Hoefler & Frere-Jones

Compare and contrast features.

Epic, Neil Summerour

Alright Sans, Jackson Cavanaugh

Seek the typefaces of one designer, as they often share approach and style.

Glypha and Univers, Adrian Frutiger

Science does not apply when it comes to pairing typefaces. Examine letterform anatomy. Compare and contrast features. Seek the typefaces of one designer—they often have a similar approach and style. Let intuition lead decision-making. What looks optically fit is often good. Strive for distinction that suits the content.

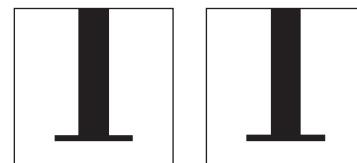
Starting out, begin with one quality typeface. A dependable choice normally meets all needs. For instance, proven effective over time, Helvetica by Max Miedinger is ever-present. Sometimes one typeface is not enough. Creating broader typeface palettes has benefits. Multiple faces differentiate types of text. They extend typesetting possibilities and foster rich typographic color and texture. Relationships between typefaces, typically up to two or three, deepen personality. In all cases, thoughtful deliberation leads the way.

Pairing one serif and sans serif typeface works in most situations. Contrast is key. Check comparative and contrasting features, such as letterform proportion, x-height, stroke quality, and stress. Typefaces with similar x-heights and counters mix nicely. Specific letterforms also provide cues. Look for consistent anatomy traits. For example, typefaces with double story characters (lower-case *a* and *g*) might pair better than one face with them, the other without. Examine all typeface offerings. If text calls for small caps and multiple numeral sets, choose faces that include them. Avoid redundancy. Typefaces with marked likeness, such as those from the same category, are poorly matched partners.

In use, assign each typeface specific roles. For instance, body text may look best set in a highly legible serif face designed for reading. A complementary sans serif serves brief captions or subheads well. Text in limited quantity, such as title pages or short headings, works nicely in striking display faces. When combining typefaces, carefully review the size relationships between letterforms. Match them optically, not by point size. At the same size, one typeface can look larger or smaller than another when set side by side. Subtle adjustments create balanced combinations. Be decisive. Use typeface combinations to enrich and clarify text.



Too similar angled crossbars on the lowercase e
Centaur and Jenson



Too similar hairline, unbracketed serifs
Bodoni and Walbaum



Too similar stroke contrast and counters
Frutiger and Myriad

Typefaces of the same category make unhappy companions. When mixing typefaces, distinction between them is vital. Contrast loses to similarity. Competing identities do not benefit the text they aim to distinguish.

The One Love Organics packaging typography is fresh and elegant. Serif Filosofia and san serif Gotham are the dominant typefaces. The designer's lettering (with a color splash) marks the products' names. Handwriting combines with the type and adds a human touch.

—
ONE LOVE ORGANICS



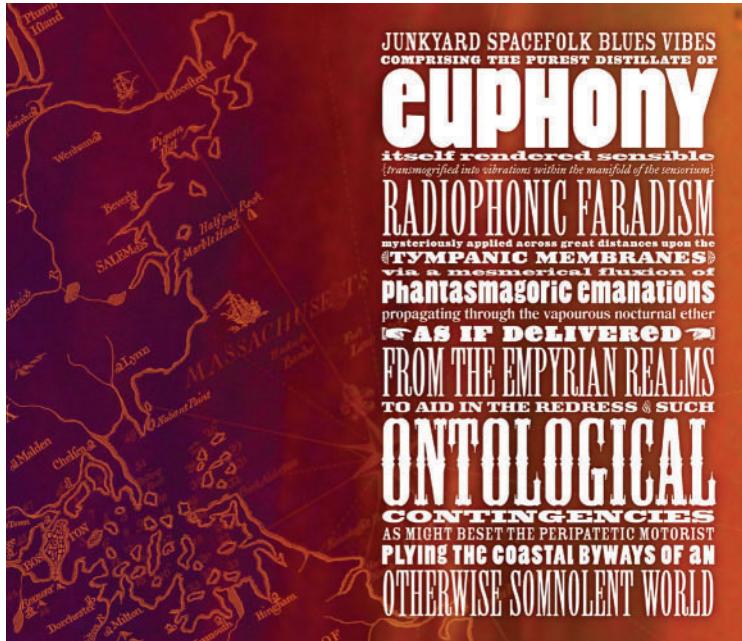
Bodoni and Univers unite in identity materials and menus for the New York City restaurant and cocktail bar Compose. Bodoni directs the eye to names, menu items, and prices. Its poised setting emphasizes the typeface attributes of high stroke contrast and majestic majuscules. Descriptive text set in Univers supports the refined serif.

—
JESSE REED



The book series *Temas de Psicanálise* (*Themes of Psychoanalysis*) uses Century Schoolbook and Scala Sans on the spines. The typefaces distinguish titles from authors with the support of type size and case changes.

—
FBA.



Ten typefaces appear on the CD cover *Moonmonster* (one in a series called *The Book of a Number of Hours*). The mix, which includes Giza, Zapata, and Ironmonger, is striking. Typographic expertise is required to manage this combination and quantity of faces. The back cover quietly contrasts the front with one typeface, Historical Fell.

—
CHARLES GIBBONS

DISPLAY	BIG	TEXT	MICRO	SANS
a a A A LIGHT				
a a A A BOOK				
a a A A MEDIUM				
a a A A SEMIBOLD				
a a A A BOLD				
a a A A BLACK				

If seeking multiple typefaces, superfamilies are excellent choices. Designed as full-bodied typographic systems, they offer consistency across serif, semi serif, sans serif, semi sans, and slab serif typefaces. Whether using two, three, or four faces, superfamilies harmonize. One size fits all.

Sans Serif
Sans Serif Italic
Sans Serif Bold
Sans Serif Bold Italic
Mix
Mix Italic
Mix Bold
Mix Bold Italic
Serif
Serif Italic
Serif Bold
Serif Bold Italic

Nexus

MARTIN MAJOOR

Sans Serif
Sans Serif Italic
Sans Serif Bold
Sans Serif Extra Bold
Semi Sans Light
Semi Sans Light Italic
Semi Sans
Semi Sans Italic
Semi Sans Bold
Semi Sans Extra Bold
Semi Serif
Semi Serif Bold
Sans Serif Light
Sans Serif Light Italic
Serif
Serif Italic
Serif Bold

Rotis

OTL AICHER

n n

n n

n n

R R

R R

R

R R

Superfamilies simplify the process of combining typefaces. They may include serif, semi serif, sans serif, semi sans, and slab serif faces. Extensive weights and widths, as well as optical styles, are common. Unified by concept and form, superfamilies add unique flavor to typographic works, all connected by family ties. For instance, type designer Martin Majoor's Nexus ("connection" in Latin) contains serif, sans serif, and slab serif typefaces. He describes it as "three typefaces, one form principle."³ The allied and versatile threesome stems from one design concept driving its development. (A monospaced typewriter face adds character to the core trio.) A second example is Rotis by Otl Aicher, which contains serif, semi serif, sans, and semi sans faces. Used interchangeably, the typefaces transition effortlessly from one to the next. Superfamilies are comprehensive systems fit for wide-ranging, particularly complex, typographic projects.

An abundance of typefaces exists. Although a handful can be enough to last a lifetime, explore and test faces of all sorts. Create specimens with a range of settings suited to specific texts and mediums. No matter the situation, always review typefaces in context. For instance, print samples. What looks great on screen might not translate on paper. Review typefaces in multiple browsers and screen resolutions, as well as digital devices. Mock up three-dimensional environments or packages. Know what type looks like in specific mediums. Tailor aptly. Good typefaces fittingly selected—and expressed with skilled treatment—yield beautiful results.

³ "FF Nexus," *FontFont Focus*, FSI FontShop International, 2007.

4

TYPESETTING FACTORS

86 *Space & Spacing* 92 *Alignments & Paragraphs* 104 *Hierarchy* 114 *Aesthetic Tailoring*

“TYPOGRAPHIC STYLE,

in this large and intelligent sense of the word, does not mean any particular style—my style or your style, or neoclassical or baroque style—but the power to move freely through the whole domain of typography, and to function at every step in a way that is graceful and vital instead of banal. It means typography that can walk familiar ground without sliding into platitudes, typography that responds to new conditions with innovative solutions, and typography that does not vex the reader with its own originality in a self-conscious search for praise.”

from The Elements of Typographic Style

ROBERT BRINGHURST



Intelligent treatments and attention to detail are emphases of typographic craft. Transforming text with type that articulates it well rests with designers. Typesetting principals lead the way. Learned methods of typographic handling become second nature with repetition. Proceed with care. Principles and access to typographic tools and software do not always render effective results. Set type convincingly through decisive use—avoid relying solely on principles. Adaptable thinking is essential. Applying principles well is equal to reworking or discarding them for best results. Setting type also relies heavily on optical, not mechanical, factors (or default settings). What looks correct visually most often stands—a challenging concept to convey, especially to beginners. Typographic training involves learning to see with keen eyes. Observing type critically, notably flaws that inhibit function, offers valued insight to set it well. Detect problems (unseen by most) and fix them. Ensure nothing comes between the words and the readers. Skilled typesetting involves learned principles and practice plus thoughtful observation and treatment.

Author name and book title typeset in TheSans (from the superfamily Thesis) on the cover of the book, *Handle. Die Opern*, share size and weight. Color and position shifts distinguish them. The photograph inspires the color choices, which ties type and image together.

TAKE OFF—MEDIA SERVICES

Serif Mercury and sans serif Knockout combine on the *International Drawing Annual* cover. Three levels of text—organization name, tagline, and book title—share uppercase settings and justified alignments. Changes in type size, width, and tracking provide variation.

AUGUST BUREAU

TYPESETTING FACTORS

Space & Spacing

SELECTED READINGS

*Explorations in Typography:
Mastering the Art of Fine Typesetting*
Carolina de Bartolo
with Erik Spiekermann

Typography: Macro + Microaesthetics
Willi Kunz

TYPOGRAPHIC COLOR

Typographic color refers to overall type lightness and darkness based on value, not on hue. Light and dark values influence type appearance and hierarchy. Type lacking color is dull and flat; strong color enlivens works with variation and emphasis. Text quantity, typeface, and space in and around letterforms combined with well-articulated factors such as type size, style, and spacing shape typographic color. Dark elements make strong imprints; light elements connote openness. Their interaction nurtures spatial depth, rhythm, and texture—all highly desirable typesetting attributes.

In *Typography: A Manual of Design*, designer and typographer Emil Ruder writes: “The oriental philosophers hold that the essence of created form depends on empty space. Without its hollow interior a jug is merely a lump of clay, and it is only the empty space inside that makes it into a vessel.” Typesetting happens in accord with the space in and around it. Space is as much a physical presence as typographic marks. Their collective relationship enlivens works. Space can change the look and feel of type, noticeably improving or weakening it. The act of spacing adjusts and refines the distances between characters, as well as the overall appearance of words, lines, and paragraphs. It includes kerning, tracking, and leading (line spacing). The terms *normal*, *loose*, *tight*, and *negative* describe spacing. *Normal* typically means an even, gray field of text. It lacks light and dark values, called typographic color (not hue), which vary and emphasize. For instance, tight spacing creates a blacker impression than loosely spaced type. Readability declines as spacing decreases or increases beyond average ranges: type looks awkwardly squeezed or scattered. Key spacing goals are balance and consistency. The eye guides because spacing type relies on optical sensitivity. What works well once might not work again; always space with a delicate touch, case by case.



The regional charter publication, *Het Streekpact Voor de Westhoek* (*The Regional Pact in Flanders Fields*), offers an example of apt tracking applied to uppercase settings (in the typeface Trajan), which rely on open spacing for best recognition.

DESIGN SENSE

Kerning adjusts slight spaces between characters and corrects ill-fitting pairs that distract because of collisions or gaps. Certain combinations appear too close to or far from each other when typeset by default. Such pairs are common with letterforms that combine with *T*, *V*, *W*, and *Y*—for example *Ty*, *Va*, *Wi*, and *Ye*. Numerals, notably *1*, often need kerning to bring others closer to or farther from them. Slivers of space around punctuation like em dashes (—) and backslashes (/) set well with attentive tunings. A well-designed typeface has considered kerning pairs, which ease typesetting because quality spacing is inherent. Still, regardless of the typeface strength, manual adjustments can be required. Body (9 to 14 point) and caption (6 to 8 point) styles typically need less notice than display styles (24 point and up) because space between characters grows at large type sizes. Irregularities are more evident. Kerning fixes awkward appearances.

Tracking affects the overall spacing of words, lines, and paragraphs. Normal tracking refers to standard spacing set by default without adjustments. Type designers preset it in typefaces. When used decisively, tracking improves type appearance. For instance, uppercase settings (full and small caps) rely on open tracking for identification. Their lack of ascenders and descenders slows readability. Added space around such characters improves recognition. The same applies to sequences of lining figures (numerals the same height as uppercase letterforms), such as phone numbers and zip codes. Alternatively, lowercase settings typically need less tracking because ascenders and descenders improve identification. Condensed typefaces with narrow proportions and counters in upper and lowercase may benefit from slightly open tracking. Avoid tracking paragraphs or continuous text. When spaced too loosely, tightly, or negatively, paragraphs no longer read fluidly.

Kerning

TRACKING

Typography

Irregular Spacing

Typography

Adjusted Spacing

1950–2012

Irregular Spacing

1950–2012

Adjusted Spacing

UPPERCASE

Before Tracking

UPPERCASE

After Tracking

lowercase

Normal Spacing

lowercase

Too Loose Spacing

lowercase

Too Tight Spacing

Kerning

Attentive typesetting will eliminate unwanted collisions or gaps that distract. Kerning adjusts the slivers of space between characters. Such fixes are common with letterforms next to *T*, *V*, *W*, and *Y*. Delicate shifts closer to or farther from one another remedy awkward character combinations. Numerals, especially those paired with *1*, often require care, as do punctuation marks, including dashes, parentheses, and backslashes. Character space increases at large type sizes and makes errors more apparent. Kerning finesse type for best presentation.

Tracking

Tracking affects overall spacing of words, lines, and paragraphs to enhance readability. Uppercase settings (full and small caps) and lining numeral sequences rely on open tracking for recognition. Lowercase settings typically need little to no tracking because of their variation in shape. Condensed typefaces with narrow proportions and counters in upper and lowercase can often benefit from slight tracking. Avoid tracking paragraphs or continuous text. Words, lines, and paragraphs loosely, tightly, or negatively tracked look spotty and no longer read as intended.

"No matter how admirably we plan our work or how fine in design are the types we select, its appearance when printed depends on good composition—the combination of type into words, the arrangement of words into lines, and the assemblage of lines to make pages."

Positive Leading 9/24

"No matter how admirably we plan our work or how fine in design are the types we select, its appearance when printed depends on good composition—the combination of type into words, the arrangement of words into lines, and the assemblage of lines to make pages."

Solid Leading 9/9

"No matter how admirably we plan our work or how fine in design are the types we select, its appearance when printed depends on good composition—the combination of type into words, the arrangement of words into lines, and the assemblage of lines to make pages."

Negative Leading 9/6

"No matter how admirably we plan our work
Typographers on Type:
 or how fine in design are the types we select,
An Illustrated Anthology from
 its appearance when printed depends on good
William Morris to the Present Day
 composition—the combination of type into
 Ruari McLean, ed.
 words, the arrangement of words into lines,
 w. w. Norton
 and the assemblage of lines to make pages."

Overlapping Leading 9/24

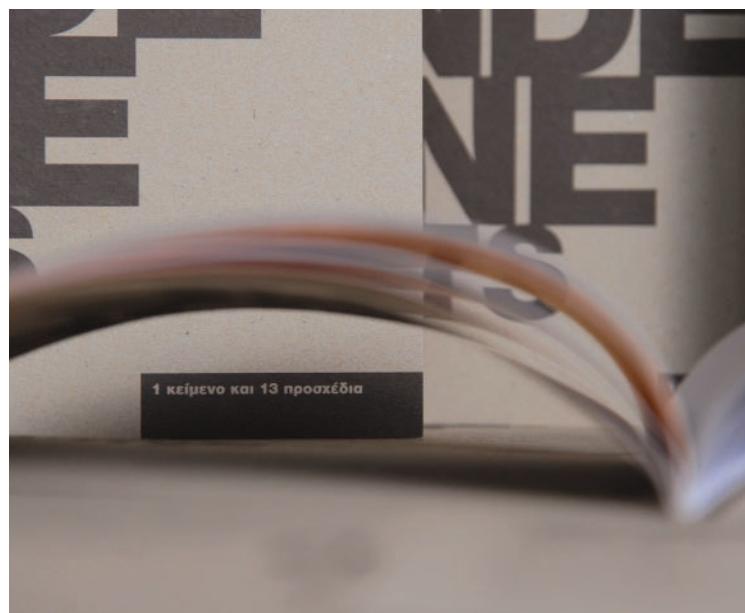
Leading is the vertical distance from one baseline to the next measured in points. Leading options are positive, negative, and solid. Positive leading is greater than the point size; negative leading is less. Solid leading equals point size. Positive leading is apt for most type settings. Negative leading can work for display styles (24 point and up) but not body styles (9 to 14 point). Leading depth varies and is influenced by type size, x-height, and line length. Start with leading that is at least larger than word spaces. Examine ascent (the maximum letterform height from the baseline beyond the cap line) and descent (the maximum letterform distance below the baseline). Typefaces with tall ascenders and long descenders require more line spacing to avoid touching. Long versus short lines also need open leading because the eye travels farther from one line to another. Too much paragraph leading creates loose interline space. It gives the appearance of single lines, not sequential thoughts. Tight leading shapes compact text blocks, which can be difficult to navigate because of the limited space between lines. Viewers see too much at once. Leading can also overlap, which weaves together lines of type. One text fits into the line space of another. Overlapping leading offers visual interest, as well as typographic texture, via merged yet contrasting text.

Leading is the vertical distance from one baseline to the next measured in points. It is positive, negative, or solid. Positive leading is greater than the type size, solid leading equal to it. Negative leading is less than the type size such as 9-point type size with 6-point leading. Overlapping leading is an alternate line spacing method that nests contrasting text types.



Overlapping leading is an alternate line spacing method that intermixes different text. One text fits into the line space of another. It nests without distraction and adds typographic texture. Combined typefaces, Deck and Matrix, as well as type size, distinguish content.

BLOK DESIGN



The exhibition catalog and invitation details for the Vakalo School of Art and Design (Athens, Greece) illustrate solid leading, in which the leading equals type size. Baselines of uppercase letterforms in the typeface Helvetica stack on cap lines for a bold impression.

DESPINA AERAKI
GIOTA KOKKOSI

TYPESETTING FACTORS

Alignments & Paragraphs

Hemp won't get you high, but it can fuel our economy.

By 1999, worldwide hemp retail receipts were estimated at \$150,000,000 with the United States' consumer purchasing over 60% of that amount. These numbers do not take into account the large quantities absorbed by commercial and industrial users in the U.S. and around the world, whose major purchases have justified the planting of tens of thousands of acres in 31 other countries.

Had it been legal to harvest *industrial hemp* in the U.S., our economy would have seen a growth of approximately \$90,000,000 instead of fueling that of other countries.

Learn the facts about industrial Hemp and the lucrative impact our country can gain from harvesting this crop.

Be Informed. *Vote Hemp.*
www.HempAmerica.com

HEMP AMERICA

Typographic alignment refers to type configurations. Alignments are flush-left/ragged right (FL, FL/RR); flush-right/ragged left (FR, FR/RL); centered (C); and justified (J). Flush-left settings are common and offer reading ease because the starting points of lines and paragraphs are fixed. They nurture left to right reading with comfort. Flush-right alignments are fit for words or lines. They contrast well with flush-left text, when juxtaposed along alignment edges. A ragged left edge creates irregular starting points per line, which can make reading paragraphs difficult. Centered alignments connote formality and classic typography. Useful in limited settings with minimal text, such as book title pages, centering rarely applies to continuous text (running paragraphs). Justified settings create clean lines and strong left and right alignment edges. Justified paragraphs pose challenges when variable word spaces, which flex in width based on type size and line-length relationships, cause noticeable flaws such as rivers (unsightly gaps or holes that appear in justified settings).

A call-to-action poster promotes the benefits of industrial hemp. A flush-left headline in DIN commands notice. Body text set in Newzald adopts the same alignment. The paragraph features a subtle rag with light in-and-out movement along the ragged right edge. Graphic carriers emphasize select text.

JESSE REED

Paragraphs are the largest text bodies in typographic design. Optimal settings seek balance among type size, line length, and leading. Type size is neither too small nor big. Line length is neither too narrow nor wide. Leading is neither too tight nor open. Forty-five to seventy-five characters per line is an ideal range for continuous text. A line length that is too wide makes it difficult to travel back across the paragraph to the next line and is tiring to read. Small type sizes are often ill-suited to long lines; there are too many words per line. If the line length is too short, the transition to the next line happens too quickly, and disjointed reading arises. Large type sizes fit poorly in narrow line lengths because the word count per line is limited, and excessive hyphenation, which is typically best prevented, may occur. Generous leading may break paragraphs into individual lines rather than sequential thoughts. Tight, solid, or negative leading merges lines together. Either too much is read at once or lines collide. Avoid forcing paragraphs into unsuitable arrangements. Uphold continuous text integrity and invite readers into paragraphs with considered treatments.

Line length describes the width of a text line, measured in picas. An ideal line length contains forty-five to seventy-five characters per line. If too long, it is difficult to move across and down to the next line. If too short, the transition to the next line happens too quickly. Large type sizes work best with wide line lengths, small type with narrow.

Forty-five to seventy-five characters per line is an ideal range for continuous text. A line length that is too wide makes it difficult to travel back across the paragraph to the next line and is tiring to read. Small type sizes are often ill-suited to long lines; there are too many words per line. If the line length is too short, the transition to the next line happens too quickly, and disjointed reading arises. Large type sizes fit poorly in narrow line lengths because the word count per line is limited, and excessive hyphenation, which is typically best prevented, may occur.

Above Average Line Length
89 characters per line

Optimal settings seek balance among type size, line length, and leading. Forty-five to seventy-five characters per line is an ideal range for continuous text.

Average Line Length
68 characters per line

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Average Line Length
45 characters per line

Below Average Line Length
31 characters per line

Designers engage with words, typographically expressing them with purpose and poise. Typography is a process, a refined craft making language visible. Designers shape language with type and give words life and power to speak text fluently. Letterforms and their supporting characters are simple shapes that do so much. With distinct voices and personalities, type whispers delicately and shouts loudly. Communication lies at its core. Type is commanding and beautiful one moment, analytic and instructive the next. It is dramatic, whimsical, modest, and extravagant. Typographic practice (and those dedicated to it) gives spoken and written language vitality across time, generations, and cultures.

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Flush Right FR, FR/RL

Flush-right alignments are best suited to words or lines, rather than paragraphs. Flush right contrasts well with flush left text, when juxtaposed along alignment edges. Flush right is less fitting for paragraphs because the start of each line varies in position. The stable left edge seen in flush-left and justified alignments fosters improved reading conditions for continuous text.

Flush Left FL, FL/RR

Flush left is a multipurpose alignment method, especially for paragraphs. It offers a fixed point from which words, lines, and paragraphs begin, which eases left to right reading. Fixed word space typically makes ragging easier to manage than justified alignments with variable word space.

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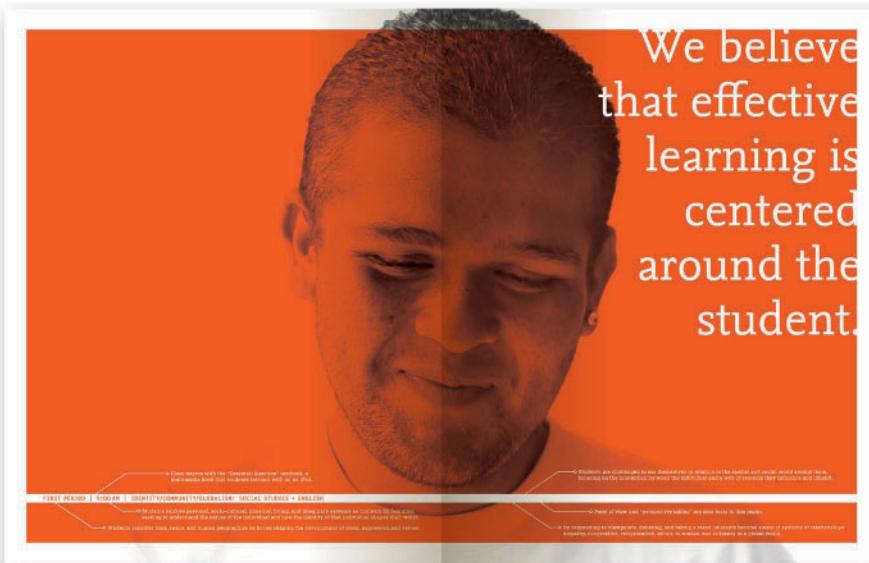
Designers engage with words, typographically expressing them with purpose and poise. Typography is a process, a refined craft making language visible. Designers shape language with type and give words life and power to speak text fluently. Letterforms and their supporting characters are simple shapes that do so much. With distinct voices and personalities, type whispers delicately and shouts loudly. Communication lies at its core. Type is commanding and beautiful one moment, analytic and instructive the next. It is dramatic, whimsical, modest, and extravagant. Typographic practice (and those dedicated to it) gives spoken and written language vitality across time, generations, and cultures.

Centered C

Centered alignments fit short amounts of text, such as that in title pages, packaging, or business cards. Centering is rarely practical for running paragraphs. Left and right ragged lines do not offer alignment points for support text, nor do they create relationships with format edges.

Justified J

Justified alignment often produces harder, geometric settings with clean flush edges. It has variable word spaces, which means word spaces flex in width, based on type size, line length, and number of characters per line. Attention to such factors is vital to well-justified settings, which are prone to rivers—disruptive gaps and holes that run through justified paragraphs.



Spreads from the Realm Charter School brochure display flush-left and -right alignments. Flush-right settings work well in limited cases, such as single lines, as seen here. Consistent positioning along the top and side format edges, as well as type set in Nexus Mix (from the superfamily Nexus), offer unity. Support text at spread bottoms set flush left in the typefaces Nexus Typewriter and Vitesse share information about students' daily activities.

—
MINE™



A handbill with limited text is best set in a centered alignment. The piece announces a musical event at The Monastery Manchester. Combined typefaces, including Trade Gothic, Blackoak, Campanile, Freebooter Script, JF Ferrule, Stymie, and Clarendon convey a sense of Victorian Age printed matter.

IMAGINE-CGA



Centered alignments express formality and tradition. Business cards for the wealth management company Florin Kildare aptly reflect such qualities. Customized type settings (the logotype is a redrawn version of Austin with text in Monotype Baskerville) and premium-handcrafted papers convey confidence, heritage, and trustworthiness.

NELSON ASSOCIATES



Justified body text with ample line length offers a clean edge for footnotes stemming off it in a flush-left alignment. Serif typeface Utopia in different type sizes further distinguishes text in an exhibition catalog that celebrates Portuguese literature. An uppercase treatment plus color shift introduces opening words of the first paragraph with distinction.

—
FBA.

Dense fields of justified type in the sans serif Knockout grab attention on the Grip Limited website. Type size varies per line to best fit measures and maintain consistent tracking. Slab serif Archer delicately complements Knockout in limited type settings such as "Contact Us," "About Us," and "Jobs." Multiple navigation options support collapsible columns and ensure the design is user friendly.

GRIP LIMITED

A paragraph indicator is a visual cue that signals the beginning of a new thought. It is a silent note that provides a fleeting pause and smooth transition from one paragraph to another. Reading continues fluidly and does not halt.

Multiple methods exist to signal new paragraphs. Common paragraph indicators are indents and half or full line returns. A traditional indent is equivalent to one em space. Exaggerated indents range up to half the measure of the line length. Outdents are expressive indicators. First lines of paragraphs shift outside the body text, rather than into it. Length varies, depending on the desired effect. Graphic elements such as circles or squares, and symbols such as fleurons (•), fists (☒), or pilcrows (paragraph sign)(¶) are other paragraph indicators. Such devices can be lighter in color or value than body text. Be inventive, but be careful not to over-indicate paragraphs—it can inhibit reading and result in the indicator being more prominent than the text.

Opening paragraphs, such as chapter or section introductions, are starting points, not continuations. Thus, paragraph indicators that signal a change from the preceding paragraphs are not needed. First lines of beginning paragraphs occasionally merit special attention, such as typographic variation. Investigate changes in type size, style, or case. Try a baseline shift, which is a type position change above or below the baseline. A companion typeface is also effective. Drop caps add ornate flair when fit to content. Opening lines and paragraphs are invitations to readers. Create a unique start when appropriate. Establish a fitting tone for paragraphs that follow.

Indent

A traditional approach is an indent equivalent to one em space. Indents can also match the leading. Be sure that they are not too slight, which can look like an extra space or unplanned misstep. An indent alternative equals half the paragraph measure or line length. Such extension might be excessive for large amounts of continuous text, but in limited use, the exaggerated effect is unexpected and dramatic.

Full and Half Line Returns

Full and half line returns signal breaks between paragraphs. A full line return maintains baseline alignment (see chapter 5), if in place. Full returns can benefit paragraphs with leading of little depth. The space between paragraphs is apparent; the pause is clear. Full returns applied to openly leaded paragraphs can distract. Too great a distance between paragraphs breaks them apart; the space is too large and leaves paragraphs in chunks. Sequential thought ceases. A half line return is a reasonable substitute. It is any measure greater than the leading but less than a full return. Tailor appropriately.

Outdent

An outdent refers to first lines that shift outside the paragraph body. Ledge-like in appearance, outdent lengths vary from a half to a full paragraph width or more. Outdents work well when dramatic effect is desired. They sometimes have a second emphasis factor, such as a style or case change, that contrasts with the body text.

Graphic Elements and Symbols

Graphic elements, such as circles, squares, and triangles, offer expressive ways to indicate paragraphs. Integrated throughout body text, they shape what looks like one paragraph. These devices often appear lighter in color or value than the body text. Embellished symbols, including fleurons (☞) or fists (☞), add decorative character. Consider the pilcrow (¶) for literal representation. Graphic elements and symbols require discretion to avoid being stronger than the paragraphs they signal.

24 POINT



18 POINT



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☞ These devices often appear lighter in color or value than the body text.



☞ Embellished symbols, including fleurons or fists, add decorative character.



☞ Consider the pilcrow for literal representation.



☞ Graphic elements and symbols require discretion to avoid being stronger than the paragraphs they signal.

Ragging and hyphenation are methods that finesse paragraphs. Ragging is dedicated to fine-tuning paragraph edges with manual line breaks. It remedies line ends with awkward angles, curves, holes, and shapes that appear when using default settings. Rags may be active, with ample in-and-out movement from line to line, or understated, with subtle shifts. No absolute method exists. Achieve a smooth ebb and flow, and adjust anything that distracts from reading. Whether loose or tight, rag consistently. Prevent empty spaces, truncated words, short lines, or ledges that extend into or beyond the average line length. Discreet adjustments in column width or type size can assist ragging. Use such techniques in limited cases when manual line returns, hyphenation, or occasional copy edits do not solve the issues. Avoid ragging by tracking or manipulating word space. It often leads to inconsistent spacing. Save ragging until the end of typesetting with final text placed.

Typesetting without hyphenation is ideal but not realistic, especially for continuous text (running paragraphs). Hyphenation splits words across lines and improves typographic appearance. With it come many guidelines. Watch consecutive hyphenations at line ends—strive for no more than two in a row. Do not hyphenate proper names and nouns. The first and last full paragraph lines are hyphen free. Break words into grammatically correct syllables. Avoid hyphenating words with fewer than five letterforms. Split words down the middle in best cases. Too little left behind or brought ahead is awkward, for example, the *-ed* in “hyphenated.” A rule of thumb is two letterforms behind, three ahead.

Rivers, orphans, and widows are further factors to control when refining paragraphs. Rivers are gaps or disruptive holes that run down and across justified alignments. Widows are one, two, or three short words on the last paragraph line. They do not fill enough line length; their diminutive stature draws attention. Review and alter previous lines with effort to add heft to the last line. It need not meet average line ends; half the measure is fitting. Orphans arise in multiple-page projects. They are first paragraph lines ending pages or last paragraph lines beginning new ones.

Hyphenation on line 1

Three hyphens in a row,
lines 1, 2, and 3

Large hole, line 4

Angle, lines 4, 5, and 6

Ledge on line 9

Ragging and hyphenation are methods that finesse paragraphs. Ragging is dedicated to fine-tuning paragraph edges with manual line breaks. It remedies line ends with awkward angles, curves, holes, and shapes that appear when using default settings. Rags may be active, with ample in-and-out movement from line to line, or understated, with subtle shifts. No absolute method exists. Achieve a smooth ebb and flow, and adjust anything that distracts from reading.

Before

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After

Rivers and irregular spacing

Too open spacing between words,
lines 1, 3, 6, and 7

Too tight spacing between words,
line 5

Widow on line 8

Rivers, orphans, and widows are further factors to control when refining paragraphs. Rivers are gaps or disruptive holes that run down and across justified alignments. Widows are one, two, or three short words on the last paragraph line. They do not fill enough line length; their diminutive stature draws attention. Review and alter previous lines with effort to add heft to the last line.

Before

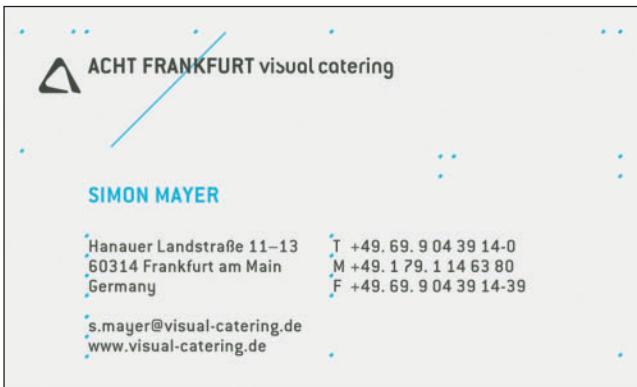
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After

Ragging refines paragraph edges. Awkward angles, curves, holes, and shapes that appear through default settings need tending. Rags may be active, with liberal in-and-out movement, or unassuming, with subtle variation. Hyphenation supports ragging by decisively splitting words across lines. Unwanted rivers, orphans, and widows also need special attention. Rivers are unsightly gaps or holes that appear in justified settings. Widows are one, two, or three short words on the last paragraph line. Orphans isolate single paragraph lines between pages.

TYPESETTING FACTORS

Hierarchy



Business cards contain the Acht Frankfurt identity with the name set in sans serif Conduit. A custom typeface distinguishes the brand descriptions “digital solutions” and “visual catering.” Case contrast separates the company and brand. A shared baseline with matching cap and ascender heights maintain their unity.

FALKO OHLMER

Hierarchy orders text by complementing and contrasting relationships. Without it, typographic design lacks focus and visual interest. Hierarchy is inherent to typesetting. Start with text when defining hierarchy. Map it by noting the quantity and variety. Rank text by importance. This defines what viewers see first, second, third, and so on. A systematic scheme unfolds that lets designers set type with purpose. The visualization of ranked text expresses hierarchy. Some elements lead; others support. Type combines cohesively and consistently to facilitate navigation. Engage viewers and direct them where to go and in what order.

Designers conduct hierarchy with typographic, spatial, and graphic factors, which offer limitless combinations to achieve variation and emphasis. Typographic factors include type size changes, style contrasts (posture, weight, and width), typeface combinations, case distinctions, and baseline shifts. For instance, a type size adjustment might be enough to differentiate basic text with few variables. Alternatively, a project might consist of three type sizes and two weights in one typeface. Headings and body text share point size and vary through a weight change or uppercase setting. Combined serif and sans serif typefaces offer more possibilities. Assign each face a function. Use their attributes to best advantage. Amplify and minimize type with appropriateness. Too few typographic factors do not distinguish; too many are redundant and complicated. Take time to build a typographic system—a well-thought-out palette of typefaces and proportional type sizes and measures, whose components interact and integrate. Systems tailored to specific text establish typesetting guidelines. When applied, repeated treatments are visual guideposts that direct viewers through projects.



The cover of a post-9/11 political study, *Transatlantic Relations in the Times of Crisis*, displays weight and color emphases to attain hierarchy. Sans serif Etica set flush left is neutral and adopts a sober personality suited to the subject matter. Strong weight contrast gives notice.

DAVID BŘEZINA

Spatial and graphic factors support type for hierarchical benefit. Spatial factors include spacing (tracking, kerning, and leading), orientation shifts (horizontal, vertical, and diagonal), and position changes. For instance, leading affects the depth and typographic color of lines and paragraphs. Tight leading often projects dark impressions; open leading is optically lighter. Consider orientation shifts to juxtapose type. Rotate elements and contrast horizontal and vertical directions. Examine type positioned in close proximity versus distant. Contrast alignments, such as flush-left and -right alignments, that meet along an axis. Graphic factors including line, shape, and color also support type and aid hierarchy. Carriers or devices such as circles or squares can enclose and accentuate typographic elements. Lines direct the eye to specific type settings. Color distinguishes elements. Many options exist. Experiment and discover distinctive typesetting techniques in concert with spatial and graphic factors for best results.

BASIC VARIATION AND EMPHASIS FACTORS

Typographic
Point Size
Style (Posture, Weight, Width)
Typeface Combinations
Case Distinctions
Baseline Shifts

Spatial
Spacing (Kerning, Tracking, Leading)
Orientation
Position

Graphic
Line
Shape
Color



A

B

LEVEL 1

Typeface

Thesis TheSans

Type Size

9 point

LEVEL 2

Typeface

Thesis TheSans

Type Sizes

Any combination of 8, 12, 16, 24, 48, 72, and 144 points

LEVEL 3

Typefaces

A Thesis TheSans and Century Schoolbook

B Thesis TheSans and Clarendon

Type Sizes

Any

Many methods exist to create hierarchy and variation. Here, a series of student-designed studies exhibits basic typographic, spatial, and graphic factors. Project objectives include hierarchical achievement, as well as typesetting and compositional variation. Typefaces and type sizes were assigned for each level.

TYLER BROOKS

■ julian stanczak

□ ■ **august 4, 2007–february 11, 2008**

□ □ ■ **contemporary arts center** □ 44 east sixth street □ cincinnati, ohio □ 45202

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the contemporary arts center exhibits the work of internationally significant artist julian stanczak. polish-born stanczak trained under josef albers and conrad marca-relli at yale university's school of art and architecture. he brought this background to the art academy, where he taught from 1957–1964.

stanczak's work is characterized by *scientific precision* and the *illusion of pulsating motion*. using repeated line patterns, his work studies the optical behavior of colors in close proximity to each other. his work earned him the moniker "*father of op art*."

on lines, he writes: "*i found line—repeated line with its potent timing—paralleling many aspects of daily life. from the point of action, line behavior is distinct from color; line activates the surface of the canvas more than a single flat color. this activation of a surface through various oppositions of values and wavelengths of line in different situations, offers not a stable but an endlessly active surface, which is controlled by the range of color-fusion and tempo.*"

Weight change and orientation contrast are dominant typographic and compositional techniques. Squares support type and lead the eye to key text: title, date, location, and description. The study also features consistent lowercase settings. Slight tracking of the title "Julian Stanczak" offers subtle variation without sacrificing readability.

CONTEMPORARY ARTS CENTER
44 East Sixth Street
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

august 4, 2007 — february 11, 2008

julian
stanczak.

The Contemporary Arts Center exhibits the work of internationally significant artist Julian Stanczak. Polish-born Stanczak trained under Josef Albers and Conrad Marca-Relli at Yale University's School of Art and Architecture. He brought this background to the Art Academy, where he taught from 1957-1964. Stanczak's work is characterized by scientific precision and the illusion of pulsating motion. Using repeated line patterns, his work studies the optical behavior of colors in close proximity to each other. His work earned him the moniker "Father of Op Art."

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Dramatic type size contrast gives attention to "Stanczak." The stem of the *k* is a leading edge for support text (location, sponsors, and contact information), which sits at flush-left and -right alignments. Bold and italic styles add typographic color in justified paragraphs. A slightly exaggerated indent signals the second paragraph.

AUGUST 4, 2007—FEBRUARY 11, 2008

Julian Stanczak

CONTEMPORARY ARTS CENTER

44 East Sixth Street
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

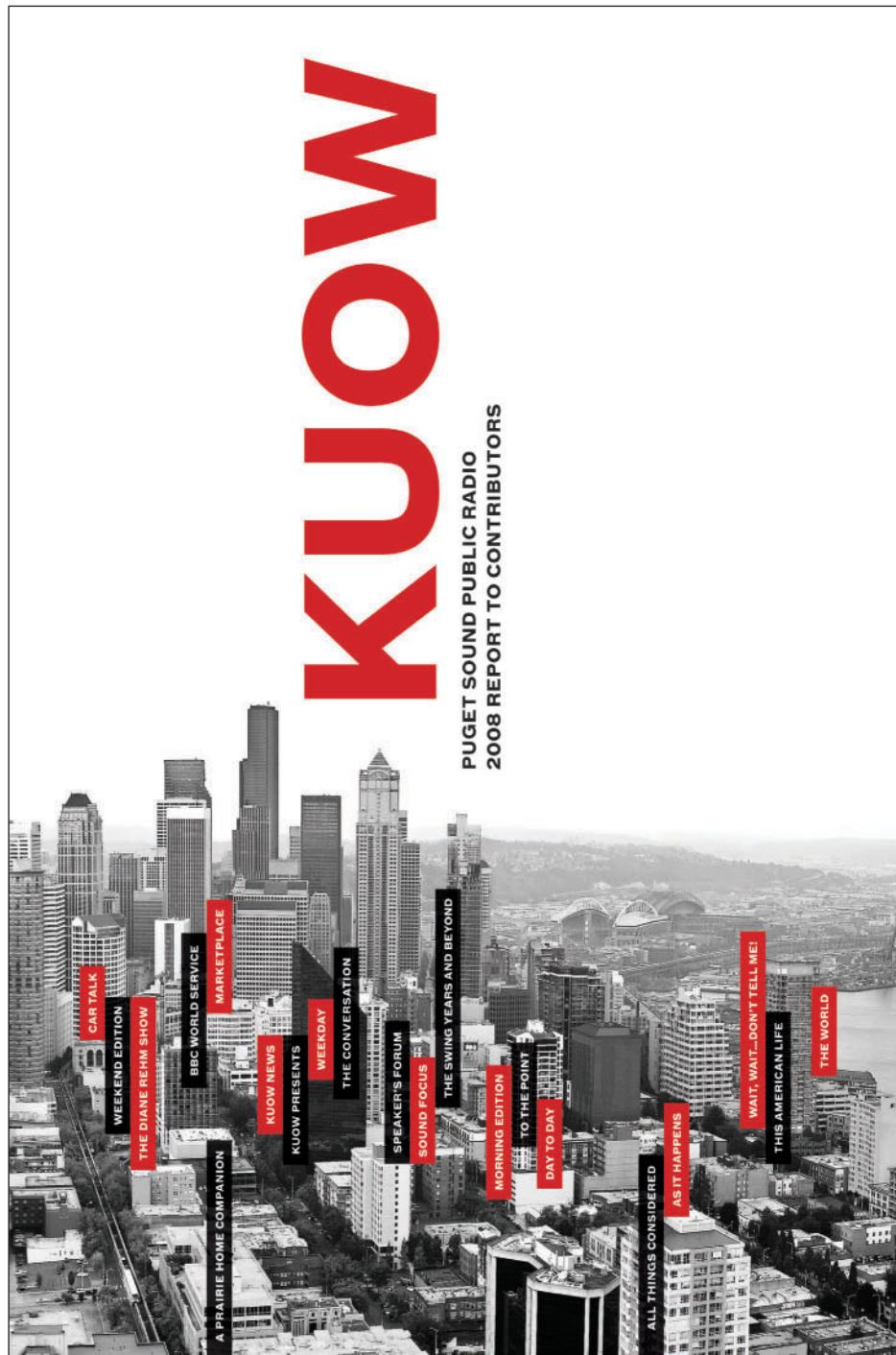
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L P K

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A combination of Century Schoolbook and Thesis TheSans fosters hearty typographic texture through size, posture, weight, and case shifts. The typefaces mix effectively in the paragraph. Such variation rich with typographic color calls attention to sentences.



The annual report cover for KUOW, the NPR affiliate radio station in Seattle, features the typeface Bau. A durable uppercase setting with vertical orientation echoes the image on which it rises up like a radio tower.

CHENG DESIGN

A baseline shift is a change in type position above or below the baseline. “Reisz” in the Allison Reisz Photography logotype set in the typeface Chalet (Paris 1970 and 1980) shifts above the baseline. The change is subtle and offers distinction.

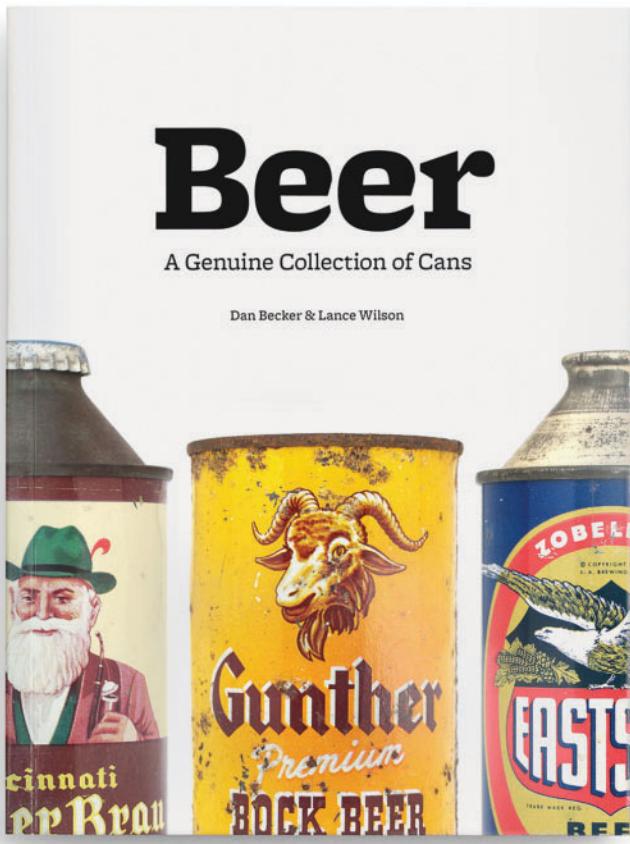
LUXECETERA

Multiple typefaces shape the Bun Mee logotype, which features a customized version of Refrigerator Deluxe with Banque Gothic. A third typeface, Numbers Depot, appears in “2010.” Relationships among typefaces contrast with personality. Vintage, hand-painted letterforms inspired the typeface selections.

MINE™

ALLISON REISZ PHOTOGRAPHY





The cover of *Beer: A Genuine Collection of Cans* contains three levels of hierarchy: title, subtitle, and author names. Contrasting point sizes in the serif typeface Freight creates hierarchy. An interior spread shows a similar three-level structure with a heading, body text, and caption. Simple size shifts with position changes achieve order.

DAN BECKER
LANCE WILSON



Rainier

The history of Rainier beer dates back to 1878 when it was first brewed in Seattle, Washington. In 1916, alcoholic beverages were outlawed in Washington State, and as a result, Rainier moved to San Francisco until Prohibition ended.

Throughout its history, Rainier was produced by several different breweries. The brand survives to this day under the ownership of Pabst.

TYPESETTING FACTORS

Aesthetic Tailoring

Adept typesetting involves studied principles and practice plus keen observation and treatment. Aesthetic tailoring is the final typesetting phase when designing with type for communication. Called microtypography, it ensures refined type settings. Projects are free of distractions and missteps that inhibit reading and message delivery. All mediums and formats require an enhanced sensitivity to typographic detail. Presented here are fundamental etiquette factors that offer simple methods to tailor type.

italic *fake italic* **fake italic**

weight **fake weight**

width fake width **fake width**

TYPE TYPE type type T
T Y Y
Y P P
P E E

m m combined typefaces

54-point Epic and Alright Sans 18-point Epic and 16.5-point Alright Sans

Maintain proper typeface proportions. Use only available styles—posture, weight, and width—of chosen typefaces, which have been carefully considered and proportioned by type designers. Select italic or oblique fonts from within the typeface. Avoid altering roman styles by slanting, thus creating objectionable “fake italics.” Adding strokes to vary type weight is poor practice. It is inadvisable to skew or stretch letterforms to make narrow or wide alternatives. Proper proportions and typeface integrity are diminished.

Maintain baseline relationships. Baselines are imaginary lines on which letterforms, words, lines, and paragraphs sit. Letterforms maintain shared baselines, which support left to right reading patterns. Stacking type breaks the natural reading flow. Shift orientation, if vertical presence is desired. Type reads up or down with intact baseline relationships.

Match combined typefaces optically when set side by side. When setting multiple typefaces, carefully review the size relationships between them. Match them optically, not by point size. At the same size, one typeface can look larger or smaller than another set side by side.

Choose roman (or regular) brackets, curly brackets, and parentheses. Brackets, curly brackets, and parentheses remain upright (roman or regular) even if the text inside them is italic.

SMALL CAPS FULL CAPS

SMALL CAPS FAKE SMALL CAPS

SMALL CAPS lowercase

forty-five	breaking	1900–2000	31–36
NOT	NOT	NOT	NOT

forty-five	breaking	1900–2000	31–36
------------	----------	-----------	-------

“When I’m working on a problem, I never think about beauty. I think only how to solve the problem. But when I have finished, if the solution is not beautiful, I know it is wrong.”

• R. Buckminster Fuller

Before

“When I’m working on a problem, I never think about beauty. I think only how to solve the problem. But when I have finished, if the solution is not beautiful, I know it is wrong.”

• R. Buckminster Fuller

After

Insert ligatures and avoid character collisions.

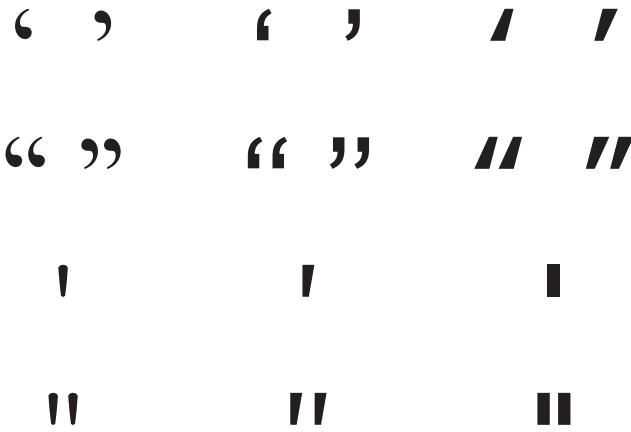
A ligature is the union of two or more characters into one. Varieties include stylistic, lexical, and discretionary. Become familiar with typefaces and know ligature availability. If they exist, use them. If they do not, be attentive to character collisions and kern aptly.

Use small caps only if offered in typefaces selected.

Small caps are uniquely designed letterforms that share a similar weight and x-height with lowercase (SMALL CAPS are typically slightly taller). When elements such as acronyms and abbreviations appear in body text, SMALL CAPS replace FULL CAPITALS, which are optically too large next to lowercase . Use SMALL CAPS only if offered in a selected typeface—not all contain them. Simply reducing full caps to small-cap size makes them look too thin and narrow. “Fake small caps” are awkward and discordant. SMALL CAPS also require open tracking.

Use hyphens and dashes appropriately. Hyphens (-) appear in breaking (break-ing) and compound words (forty-five, well-equipped). En dashes (—) link items such as dates (1900–2000), times (8:00–9:00), and page numbers (31–36). Extra space is unneeded before and after en dashes. Kern to avoid accidental collisions. Em dashes (—) separate thoughts. No spaces are needed before and after—though kerning can pertain. En dashes can replace em dashes when separating thoughts. In such cases, space before and after the en dash is required. Regardless of the method, use them aptly and consistently.

Refine punctuation. Slight, distracting spaces form when punctuation marks such as periods, commas, and quotation marks sit along flush edges. Manual modifications that position such marks outside flush edges ensure optical alignment. Hanging punctuation applies to (noting a few) asterisks, apostrophes, commas, periods, and quotation marks. Other marks that share visual weight with characters such as question marks and exclamation points typically do not need attention.



Use correct apostrophes, quotation marks, and primes.
 True apostrophes (single quotes) and quotation marks (double quotes) are curved or angled, open or closed. They are not straight up-and-down forms, which commonly appear by default in place of correct marks. Keyboards provide one key for two sets of symbols—left (open) and right (closed) apostrophes and quotation marks. Typing the assigned key makes ambidextrous, typewriter-style, straight, or dumb single and double marks. Recognize the difference between true and fake forms. Ensure accurate use and manually substitute proper forms through glyph menus. The option to turn on “smart quotes” exists in software applications, which eases the process altogether through automatic replacement. Prime marks, which are typically straight or angled, represent measures such as feet and inches, minutes and seconds, and arcseconds and arcminutes.

- Balance bullets optically or substitute midpoints.
 No adjustments.
- Bullets are common typographic devices that identify list items.
 Reduced 1.25 points with a slight baseline shift up (0.5 pt).
- Midpoints are smaller bullet alternatives.
 No adjustments.

Balance bullets optically or substitute midpoints.

Bullets are common typographic devices that identify list items. Hung outside alignments, bullets often appear too large next to type set at the same size. Thus, slight point size reduction serves them well. Baseline shifts (type position changes above or below the baseline) optically balance bullet position adjacent to text. Midpoints are smaller bullet alternatives that require no size adjustments for optical fit.

Insert one word space between sentences. Only one word space between sentences is required. Double spaces add extra, unwanted white space between sentences that distract. Punctuation followed by a single word space plus the next sentence start (typically with a capital) offer enough visual cues that render useless the double space.

Refine paragraph and line edges. Ragging refines paragraph and line edges. Awkward angles, curves, holes, and shapes that appear through default settings require tending. Rags may be active, with liberal in-and-out movement, or unassuming, with subtle variation.

Word space?•Insert one space between sentences.

Word space?•Insert one space between sentences.

Refine paragraph and line edges. Ragging refines paragraph and line edges. Awkward angles, curves, holes, and shapes that appear through default settings require tending. Rags may be active, with liberal in-and-out movement, or unassuming, with subtle variation.

Before

After

Unwanted rivers, orphans, and widows also require special attention. Rivers are unsightly gaps or holes that appear in justified settings. Widows are one, two, or three short words on the last paragraph line.

Fix rivers, orphans, and widows. Unwanted rivers, orphans, and widows also require special attention. Rivers are unsightly gaps or holes that appear in justified settings. Widows are one, two, or three short words on the last paragraph line. Orphans isolate single paragraph lines between pages.

Proper Words	syllables		
Proper Words	syl- lables	into	hyphen- ation
NOT	NOT	NOT	NOT
Prop- er Words	syll- ables	in- to	hy- phenation

Control hyphenation. Hyphenation splits words across lines to improve typographic appearance. Watch consecutive hyphenations at line ends—there should be no more than two in a row. Avoid hyphenating proper names and nouns. The first and last full paragraph lines are hyphen free. Break words into correct syllables. Avoid hyphenating words with less than five letterforms. Split words down the middle in best cases. Too little left behind or brought ahead is awkward. A rule of thumb is two letterforms behind, three ahead.

Kerning

Typography

Before

Typography

After

UPPERCASE

condensed

Before

UPPERCASE

condensed

After

Avoid tracking lowercase and paragraphs (continuous text). Lowercase settings typically need minimal to no tracking because of their shape variation. Words, lines, and paragraphs loosely, tightly, or negatively tracked no longer read as intended.

Before

Kern between characters. Attentive type setting monitors unwanted collisions or gaps that distract. Kerning adjusts the slivers of space between characters. Such fixes are common with letterforms next to *T*, *V*, *W*, and *Y*. Delicate shifts closer to or farther from one another remedy awkward combinations. Numerals, especially those paired with *i*, require care, as do punctuation marks including dashes, parentheses, and backslashes. Character space increases at large type sizes and makes errors more apparent.

Track specific settings. Tracking alters the overall spacing of words, lines, and paragraphs to enhance readability. Uppercase settings (full and small caps) and lining numeral sequences rely on open tracking for recognition. Condensed typefaces with narrow proportions and counters in upper and lowercase can benefit from slight tracking.

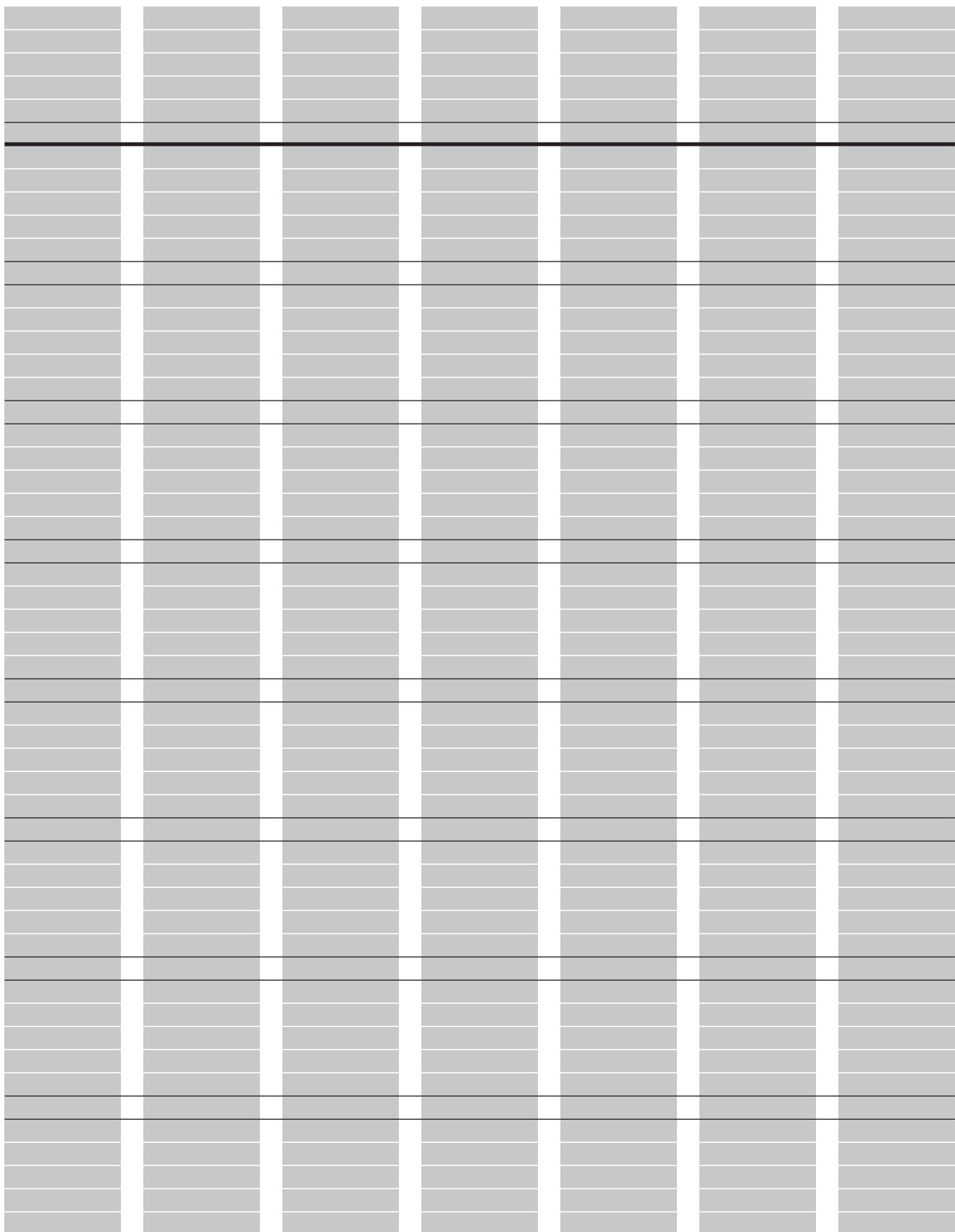
Avoid tracking lowercase and paragraphs (continuous text). Lowercase settings typically need minimal to no tracking because of their shape variation. Words, lines, and paragraphs loosely, tightly, or negatively tracked no longer read as intended.

After

5

STRUCTURE

122 Baseline Alignment 126 Grid Systems 138 Alternate Methods



Structure shapes typographic compositions and offers designers creative potential. Used to order, connect, and balance, structure helps designers build rational layouts. Harmony follows with clarity and aesthetic grace. Viewers engage in and navigate works without distraction. Structural systems are mathematic, mechanical, intuitive, and organic. Designers construct them differently based on function, experience, and preference. Inspiration exists in architecture, art, geometry, music, and nature. All areas offer methods worthy of in-depth discovery. For instance, research classic proportion systems such as the golden section, divine proportion, and root rectangle. Study the findings of mathematicians, artists, and designers such as Fibonacci, Leonardo da Vinci, and Le Corbusier. Explore grid systems comprised of vertical and horizontal spatial divisions. Rely on intuition and allow connections between typographic elements to assist decision-making. Regardless of the plan on which the structure derives, the goal is communication through typographic design. Use structure to achieve it.

Boundless options exist to divide compositional space and distribute content. Shared here are basic structures with a focus on grids and alternate methods suitable for typographic design. The objective is to provide examples that foster success on macro-typographic levels.¹ Fundamental structures are adaptable and responsive skeletal supports critical to composition. They guide the layout process yet remain unnoticed in final works; their form need not be apparent to viewers. Content and context drive structural development. As in choosing typefaces and typesetting, first analyze text and understand it. Identify the users and viewing conditions. Define the medium and its parameters. Make structures that satisfy conditions and best support the content. Solid frameworks generate inviting physical or virtual canvases ready to explore. Synthesize in them typographic elements and white space. Control positions and refine alignments, and creative and clear communication will follow. Aptly built and exercised structures give viewers the subconscious sense that compositions feel right.

SELECTED READINGS

Design Elements: Form & Space

Dennis M. Puhalla, Ph.D.

Geometry of Design:

Studies in Proportion and Composition

Kimberly Elam

The Power of Limits:

Proportional Harmonies in Nature,

Art, and Architecture

Gyorgy Doczi

¹ Macrotypography addresses composition or layout—the plan and organization of typographic elements. Key considerations include spatial positioning and relationship building among elements and white space. Microtypography refers to typesetting essentials and details. Principal micro factors include spacing and aesthetic tailoring (see chapter 1).

STRUCTURE

Baseline Alignment

Baselines are imaginary lines on which letterforms, words, lines, and paragraphs sit. Baseline alignment refers to a calculated system of horizontal guides at equally spaced vertical intervals that underlie typographic layouts. A baseline alignment system designates related positions for all type regardless of the range of point sizes. Baselines enable consistent horizontal alignment across compositions. Lines of type coincide; they also back up from page to page if viewed one atop another. Vertical rhythm and typographic unity are compositional goals. Baseline alignment helps achieve them. Body text leading (the vertical distance from one baseline to the next measured in points) typically regulates baseline intervals. For instance, if body text leading is 10 point, set a 10-point baseline alignment system. Leading for other elements follows in multiples of 10 (20, 30, 40, and so on). If a stricter interval is desired, an alternative is a 5-point baseline grid with multiples of 5 (10, 15, 20, and so on). Take the time to build baseline alignment systems. They aid typographic decision-making and structural development. Baseline intervals also influence margin size or grid module height. They can inform positions of elements such as illustrations or photographs that accompany type. Baseline alignment systems are reliable control factors suited for all projects. Order is evident to viewers, even if sensed intuitively.

The Grid System

The ultimate resource in grid systems.

The grid system is a layout system. It provides a number of benefits and each designer can base a solution appropriate to his personal needs. This article explains how to use the grid in an air that requires precision.

Joel Miller-Brennan

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Regulatory Grid System An article outlining the regulatory system for quality presentation in using modular grid systems.	Editor Grid Pattern A web app and Photoshop template for creating modular grid systems.	Universal Principles of Design A book by Steven Heller that explores the first principles of design in the first comprehensive, cross-disciplinary resource of design.	The Golden Grid Template A PSD template based on the Golden Grid by Visualize Creative.	Grid-A-Licious 2.0 A PSD template for WordPress.	Corporate Risk Watch Corporate Risk Watch.
Grids: Reconcile Structures of Design Grids, along with visual hierarchy, typography, color, and imagery, are the basic foundations of design. They are widely agreed to be the key to success.	Six Column Sandbox A column, row and padding grid system that's based on a baseline of 1. It's the paragraph text baseline, and the baseline of 25px.	Designing for the Web A book by Steve Krug that explores the design of practical websites.	Photoshop 4 Column Grid A PSD template for Photoshop that's based on a 1200x768 screen resolution.	Bon Grid Pad A range of beautifully designed, high-quality, grid notebooks printed on grid lines.	Graphic Magpie Graphic Magpie.
About About this site by the International Typographic Style movement and powered by legend Joel Miller-Brennan. This site is a resource for the study and practice of any web design. The Grid System is an ever-growing resource where graphic designers can learn about grid structures and how to use them.	Subscribe Subscribe by Email RSS Twitter Facebook	Archives February 2011 November 2010 October 2010 May 2010 March 2010 December 2009 November 2009 October 2009 September 2009 August 2009 July 2009 May 2009 March 2009 February 2009 January 2009 December 2008 November 2008	Colophon Based on a Mac Set in Helvetica. Printed on Recycled Paper. Hosted by TypeTopia. Powered by WordPress.	Goodies A list of links to other resources.	Grids A range of beautifully designed, high-quality, grid notebooks printed on grid lines.
Created by Antonio Carusone , graphic designer and author of the design and typography blog AriaOne . Special thanks to Steve Krug for his help and wisdom.	For general inquiries or submissions, please send an email to: Hello@TheGridSystem.org	Subscribe by Email RSS Twitter Facebook	Goodies A list of links to other resources.	Grids A range of beautifully designed, high-quality, grid notebooks printed on grid lines.	Grids A range of beautifully designed, high-quality, grid notebooks printed on grid lines.
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Designers Bookshop

[Grid Calculator by Designers Bookshop](#)
A tool for creating grid systems.



Thinking For A Living

[Thinking for a Living™](#)
A user-friendly platform dedicated to open source design education.

Basic Maths

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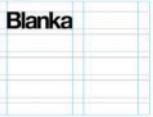
The Grid System Flickr Group



TypeNeu

[JN.](#)
TYPENEU, AN ODYSSEY IN TYPOGRAPHY.

Blanka



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The Grid System website features multiple columns and baseline alignment. Text set in Helvetica shares a common baseline interval that marks typographic position. A considered vertical grid structure with a horizontal baseline alignment system fosters order, connection, and balance.

ANTONIO CARUSONE

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The ultimate resource in grid systems.

The grid system is a layout system. It provides a number of benefits and each designer can base a solution appropriate to his personal needs. This article explains how to use the grid in an air that requires precision.

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Musings on the Relationship Between Grids and Guides An article that sees a link between the grid and the user interface.	GuideGuide A column, row and padding grid system for Photoshop CS4 & CS5.	Ordering Disorder: Grid Principles for Ordering Disorder A book by Alex T. Flanagan that bases its grid system on grids and the Web and provides a variety of ideas and techniques of grid design.	660px Grid Templates A grid based WordPress theme that uses a 660px grid system with uniform grid template sizes ranging from 3 columns to 12 columns.	The Columnist A grid based WordPress theme that uses a 660px grid system with uniform grid template sizes ranging from 3 columns to 12 columns.	Arc Jet 170 A column, row and padding grid system for Photoshop CS4 & CS5.
Regulatory Grid System An article outlining the regulatory system for quality presentation in using modular grid systems.	Editor Grid Pattern A web app and Photoshop template for creating modular grid systems.	Universal Principles of Design A book by Steven Heller that explores the first principles of design in the first comprehensive, cross-disciplinary resource of design.	The Golden Grid Template A PSD template based on the Golden Grid by Visualize Creative.	The Golden Grid Template A PSD template based on the Golden Grid by Visualize Creative.	Grid-A-Licious 2.0 A PSD template for WordPress.
Grids: Reconcile Structures of Design Grids, along with visual hierarchy, typography, color, and imagery, are the basic foundations of design. They are widely agreed to be the key to success.	Six Column Sandbox A column, row and padding grid system that's based on a baseline of 1. It's the paragraph text baseline, and the baseline of 25px.	Designing for the Web A book by Steve Krug that explores the design of practical websites.	Photoshop 4 Column Grid A PSD template for Photoshop that's based on a 1200x768 screen resolution.	Bon Grid Pad A range of beautifully designed, high-quality, grid notebooks printed on grid lines.	Graphic Magpie Graphic Magpie.
About About this site by the International Typographic Style movement and powered by legend Joel Miller-Brennan. This site is a resource for the study and practice of any web design. The Grid System is an ever-growing resource where graphic designers can learn about grid structures and how to use them.	Subscribe Subscribe by Email RSS Twitter Facebook	Archives February 2011 November 2010 October 2010 May 2010 March 2010 December 2009 November 2009 October 2009 September 2009 August 2009 July 2009 May 2009 March 2009 February 2009 January 2009 December 2008 November 2008	Colophon Based on a Mac Set in Helvetica. Printed on Recycled Paper. Hosted by TypeTopia. Powered by WordPress.	Goodies A list of links to other resources.	Grids A range of beautifully designed, high-quality, grid notebooks printed on grid lines.
Created by Antonio Carusone , graphic designer and author of the design and typography blog AriaOne . Special thanks to Steve Krug for his help and wisdom.	For general inquiries or submissions, please send an email to: Hello@TheGridSystem.org	Subscribe by Email RSS Twitter Facebook	Goodies A list of links to other resources.	Grids A range of beautifully designed, high-quality, grid notebooks printed on grid lines.	Grids A range of beautifully designed, high-quality, grid notebooks printed on grid lines.
View All Articles →	View All Tools →	View All Books →	View All Templates →	View All Blog Posts →	View All Grid Posts →

Designers Bookshop

[Grid Calculator by Designers Bookshop](#)
A tool for creating grid systems.



Thinking For A Living

[Thinking for a Living™](#)
A user-friendly platform dedicated to open source design education.

Basic Maths

[Basic Maths](#)
A grid-rich WordPress theme like no other. Get it now.

The Grid System Flickr Group



TypeNeu

[JN.](#)
TYPENEU, AN ODYSSEY IN TYPOGRAPHY.

Blanka



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A 12-point baseline alignment system
underlies the *International Drawing Annual*.
Body text in the serif face Mercury is set
at 9/12 (9-point type over 12-point leading).
Sans serif typefaces Gotham and Knockout
in various point sizes have leading in
multiples of 12 (24, 36, 48, and so on).
Margins also fit the system at 72-point.

AUGUST BUREAU



THE ARTISTRY OF DRAWING The practice of drawing little enters the creation of my work in the form of small details. I consistently, and perhaps obsessively, sketch abstract shapes, dead little birds, and designs for contraptions. I formalize these into objects, often on old scraps of household paper. Sometimes these doodles evolve into finished works, and other times they merely serve to document an idea. Sketches pervasively accumulate in my office, at home, and in the studio, and I often don't necessarily dictate my making. Many also find their way into the interior spaces and onto the surfaces of my objects.

Clamping pieces of wood together impermanently, I am able to look at the overall composition and then decide on changes. I might Sherman boards or stack together a variety of linear parts to three-dimensionally draw out objects. This process of sculpting is similar to sketching, and like a worked-over, much erased sketch, the completed sculptures have linear elements that vary in intensity, gesture, and movement. I consider each piece of material to be a small component to the whole, like marks making up a drawing.

SECOND PRIZE

TRAVIS **TOWNSEND**

Lexington, Nantucket

[**RENOVATED FLIGHTLESS DESS**] My disassembly sculptures play off the forms and function of tools, toys, beans, perhaps, military equipment. These process-oriented works take a winding path to completion, evolving from continuously redrawn sketches and traveling through many transformations before being cut apart, reassembled, and reworked. Parts are often transplanted left behind, or recycled. Through this method of construction/reconstruction, I am able to intuitively build and then, at a later time, make necessary changes.

Embracing the unplanned, these oddly familiar, nearly useful-looking sculptures are infused with human characteristics and gestures. Curious inspection and patient observation reveal previously unseen drawings and roses-like interties, many with small chairs and ladders 'left over' from previous inhabitants. These things have like the mystery, of a ritual object from a broken-down culture, the myth or metaphorical functions are left to the imagination. In an increasingly commercialized, displaced society, I'm attempting to blur somewhat clarity, objects that reveal a layered history.

Rajit for _____ (with *Constellation Drawing*) is the most recent permutation of a work that has been slowly transforming for eleven years and continues my experimentation with connecting the sculptures to wall drawings. My hope is that viewers will fill in the blank and finish the narrative for themselves. Who inhabited this craft and from where were they feeling? Another *Tankard* (with *Permutation*, with *Roundup* (3 *Cloud Drawing*) and *Tankard* (with *Infection Drawing*) are two other works that, among other associations, suggest a narrative about the society that once operated (and controlled the drawings of) these desecrated vessels/devices. *

THE GAP IN DRAWING

HELEN BARFF
London, United Kingdom
Artist
Camberwell College of Art, B.A. in Drawing, 2004
Goldsmiths College, B.A. in Fine Art and Art History (Honors), 1999

TO DRAW IS TO LOOK,
BUT HERE I PROPOSE THAT WITHIN THAT OBSERVATION
IS A MOMENT OF BLINDNESS
THAT IS CRUCIAL TO THE MOTIVATION TO DRAW.

Fling the Estates states the origin of drawing when Buttocks traces the shadow of her departing lover on the wall, but she isn't looking at him, she is looking at his shadow. There is always a *grip* (drawing you can't) look at the subject and the mark on the page at the same time. As Derrida writes in *Monsters of the Blinds*: *Buttocks does not see her lover... it is as if seeing were forbidden in order to draw... if one draws only on the conditions of not seeing...* *Buttocks follows the trails of a shadow or a silhouette... her hand is guided by Cupid*, whether she remains on the surface of the wall or even if she disappears into the wall, *she remains a trace, a stain, a stain of blindness*. *From the stain, perception belongs to recollection... Detached from the present of perception, fallen from the thing itself, which thus divided... a shadow is a circumspect memory, and Buttocks' stick is a stife of the blind*. (100-103)

Saccades are the fast movement of the eyes between fixed points. We don't see a whole scene at once. The eye moves between these various points within the scene. Saccadic masking, or suppression, is a procedure where the mind blocks visual processing during eye movements. Neither the motion of the eye, or any blur in the image, nor the gap in visual perception is noticeable to the viewer. Between looking and drawing we

At the centre of our vision, where the nerves hit the retina is a blind spot, we don't see anything; the brain fills in the information. Our brains continue to encounter this visual masking. In this gap we don't see, we remember.

Vision therefore carries in it something unseen, something mute. A drawing contains a trace of a subject. A subject is located in front of the drawer but in the act of making the drawn mark it is unseen. Between the subject and its representative mark on the page is a distance or "blind gap" that reflects on a memory of the subject.

Drawing is a blind gesture from within vision. It exists in the space between looking, where things are remembered and forgotten. This gesture contains a lament. In the touch of drawing on a surface, whether harsh or gentle, there is a reassurance in this contact. A sense of the body, the hand, the pencil, the paper, the world.

It is these gaps in vision that provokes the reason to draw. Although all about looking, drawing happens in moments between looking. We draw to try and see through the blindness. We draw to try and

“THE GRID

does not automatically ensure an exciting solution. The designer must still exercise all the experience at his command: discretion, timing, and a sense of drama and sequence. In brief, the intelligent designer will recognize that the grid can help him achieve harmony and order, but also that it may be abandoned when and if necessary. To function successfully, the grid system, like all workable systems, must be interpreted as freely as necessary. It is this very freedom which adds richness and a note of surprise to what might otherwise be potentially lifeless.”

from A Designer’s Art

PAUL RAND

SELECTED READINGS

Grid Systems in Graphic Design
Josef Müller-Brockmann

Making and Breaking the Grid
Tim Samara

STRUCTURE

Grid Systems



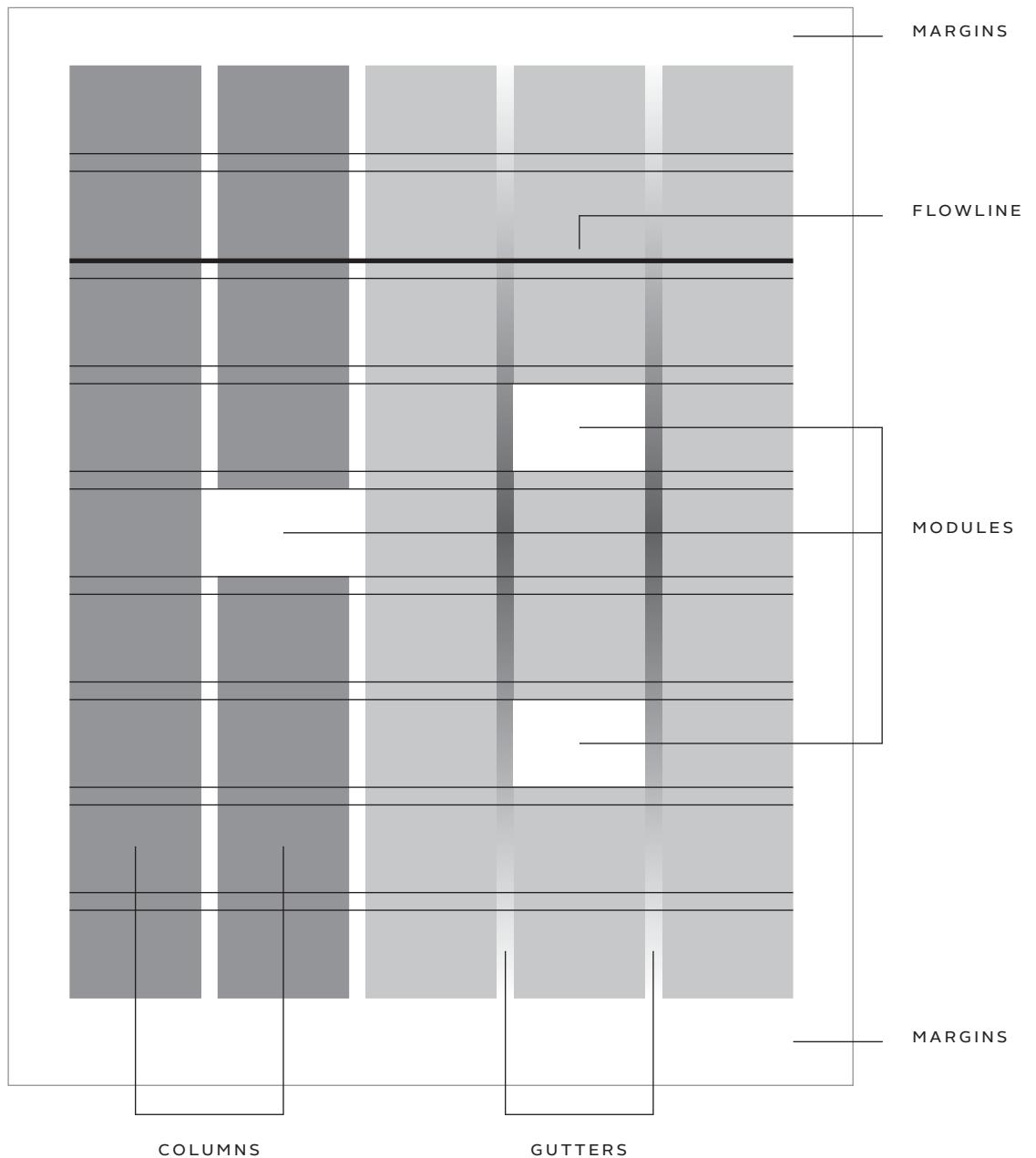
Grid systems are vertical and horizontal divisions of space that structure compositions. They offer multiple position and sizing options for typographic elements. Grids promote clarity and consistency and make designing with type efficient. They help designers organize information and users navigate layouts. Proportional relationships between typographic elements emerge naturally. Invisible sightlines create connections up, down, and across layouts. Alignment fosters harmony. In *A Designer's Art*, Paul Rand wisely explains grid use: "The grid does not automatically ensure an exciting solution. The designer must still exercise all the experience at his command: discretion, timing, and a sense of drama and sequence. In brief, the intelligent designer will recognize that the grid can help him achieve harmony and order, but also that it may be abandoned when and if necessary. To function successfully, the grid system, like all workable systems, must be interpreted as freely as necessary. It is this very freedom which adds richness and a note of surprise to what might otherwise be potentially lifeless."

Designers customize grids based on content assessment and typographic settings; their breadth and quantity define them. Flexible, not restrictive, grids accommodate diverse typographic elements across mediums. Adaptable factors, not absolutes, lead their development and application. Use grids to express text best. Break them in service to it. Proficiency develops with practice.

A simple three-column grid fosters consistency in Neenah Paper's Against the Grain website. Such grids are well suited to works with changing content, which can rest in one column or span many. Sans serif Avenir distinguishes headings, subheads are Helvetica; body text is in Times.

—
RULE29

BASIC GRID ANATOMY



Grids guide typographic layouts.

Vertical and horizontal spatial divisions offer multiple alignment and sizing choices. Used effectively by designers, grids nurture order, connection, and balance. Grids are developed after a careful analysis of content and context. They accommodate all compositional components comfortably.

Columns

Columns are vertical guides that split space into segments. Framed by margins, columns divide the active area and offer positioning options. Single-column grids are best suited for works with continuous text. Multiple-column grids serve projects with many typographic variables and elements, such as illustrations or photographs.

Gutters

Gutters are thin channels of white space that separate columns and rows. Their size typically equals body-text leading or the baseline alignment interval. Gutters prevent collisions when elements juxtapose.

Flowlines

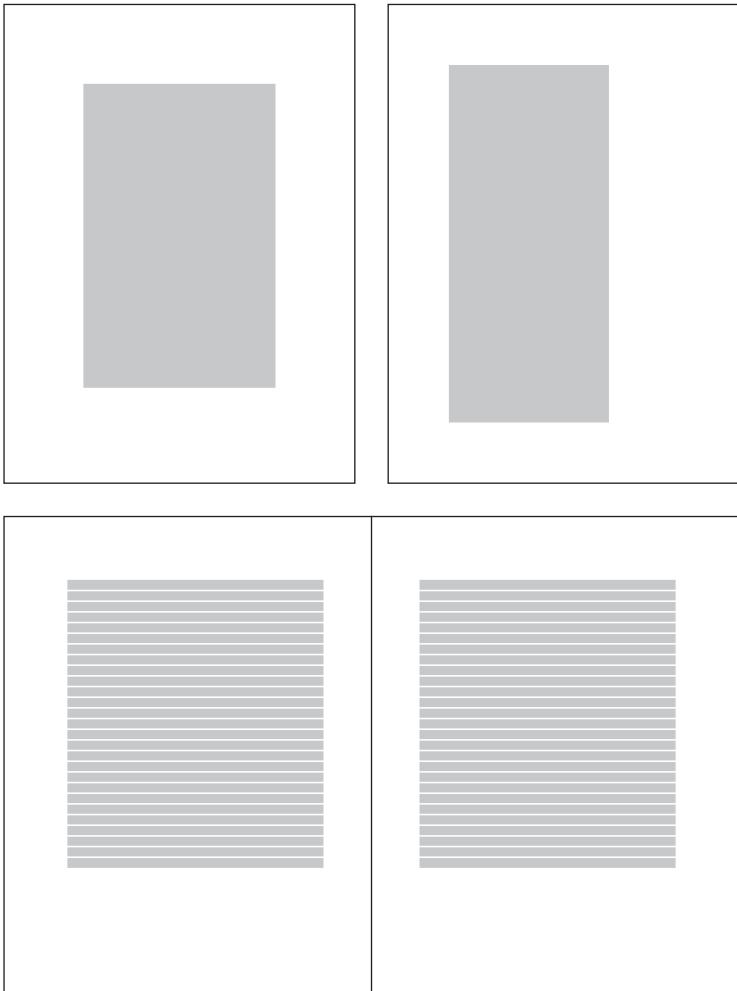
Flowlines (hang lines) are limited horizontal guides that indicate where key elements rise or hang. For instance, one flowline might set the consistent starting position of body text; another might define the heading location.

Margins

Margins define the active compositional area where typographic elements dwell. They are a buffer between live content and format edges. Margins also deliver essential white space (or breathing room) that frames layouts and directs the eye to positive areas.

Modules

Modules are active spaces occupied by elements and white space, which fill single modules or cross many. Modules are square or rectangular, with horizontal or vertical stress (wide versus tall). A set of modules forms a spatial zone.



Single-column grids are simple structures suited for works with continuous text (running paragraphs). Examples include journals and novels. Such frameworks also serve text-rich websites, such as blogs. Single-column grids are devoted to framing a text block. Margins—left and right, top and bottom, inner and outer (for spreads)—define the active area and provide white space. Margin size varies per text and project dimensions. Wide margins typically maintain reader focus. Generous space creates an open environment minus peripheral distraction. Books and some multiple-page publications benefit from full margins that provide ample finger room to hold them. Small margins extend active layout space and host more content. They can also produce apt compositional tension because of the proximity of elements to format edges. (Small margins are typically useful for multiple column and modular grids with varied text and image.) Inner margins in publications where pages meet at a center spine demand deliberation to avoid lost content.

To make single-column grids, first resolve the ideal paragraph setting, which balances type size, line length, and leading (see chapter 4). Readability and comfort level are essential. Multiples of the body-text leading (or baseline alignment interval) can shape margin size. Spatial divisions then share proportions. If included in the text, variables, such as footers and footnotes, affect margins because they typically reside in them. Margin space must accommodate such elements with the text block. Identify typographic variables and their settings before making decisions. Nurture optimal conditions for extended reading and handling in all mediums. Be flexible. Modify measures as necessary through the layout process.

Single-column grids are structural systems suited for continuous text. Framing the body text is the central factor. Balance relationships between type size, line length, and leading for extended reading. Symmetry offers balance, asymmetry variation.

STILLSTAND DER ERZÄHLTEN ZEIT

René Zechlin

Das Theaterstück *Les Noces d'Arlequin* von Carlo Berlizzi stand von 1761 bis 1779 ununterbrochen auf dem Spielplan der Pariser Comédie Italienne. Zur Beliebtheit des Stücks trug sicherlich die Integration des Gemäldes *L'Accordée de Village* (Die Dorfbraut, 1761) von Jean-Baptiste Greuze bei, das zu den bekanntesten Bildern der damaligen Zeit und zu den Hauptattraktionen des Louvre gehörte. In der Mitte des zweiten Aktes hob sich der Vorhang, und das Publikum erkannte das Gemälde in Form eines schauspielerischen Standbildes wieder. Diese erste überlieferte Aufführung eines Tableau vivant, der Nachstellung eines Gemäldes mit unbeweglich verharrenden Darstellern, war gleichzeitig eine Überlagerung unterschiedlicher Darstellungs- und Erzählformen in Malerei, Literatur und Theater. So wurde das lebende Standbild durch einen Harlekin gestört, der die Darstellung des Gemäldes durchschritt und sie kommentierte. Die Idee des Tableau vivant, das vom späten 18. bis zur Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts als gesellschaftliche Unterhaltung in privaten Salons äußerst beliebt war, basierte „auf der Vorstellung, beim Gemälde handele es sich gewissermaßen um ein ‚angeholtenes‘ Zeitbild, das nur in Körperllichkeit rückübersetzt werden brüchte, um wieder ganz und gar lebendig zu sein.“ Denis Diderot griff die Darstellungsform von Berlizzi in seiner Theorie der Theaterkunst von 1758 auf. „Die Rolle, die er dem Lebenden Bild dabei zuerkennt, ist die

Joanna Barck, *Hin zum Film – Zurück zu den Bildern: Tableaux Vivants, „Lebende Bilder“ in Filmen von Antonioni, Korda, Visconti und Pasolini*, Bielefeld, 2008, S. 13.

14

STANDSTILL OF NARRATED TIME

René Zechlin

Carlo Berlizzi's play *Les Noces d'Arlequin* had an uninterrupted run from 1761 until 1779 at Paris' Comédie Italienne. Surely one reason for the play's popularity was the inclusion of the painting *L'Accordée de Village* (*The Village Bride*, 1761) by Jean-Baptiste Greuze, which was among the most famous paintings of the period and one of the main attractions at the Louvre. In the middle of the second act, the curtain rose, and the audience saw the painting reenacted in the form of a theatrical scene. This first known performance of a tableau vivant, the reenactment of a painting with actors frozen in place, was at the same time an overlapping of various forms of representation and narrative in painting, literature, and theater. This tableau vivant was thus disturbed by a harlequin who walks through the scene commenting upon it. The idea of the tableau vivant, which was extremely popular as a form of entertainment in private salons from the late eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries, was based "on the notion that a painting was in a certain sense a 'frozen' picture in time that only needed to be translated back to physicality to become entirely animate." Denis Diderot took up Berlizzi's mode of representation in his theory of the theater: "The role granted to the tableau vivant is that of a positively understood interruption or break in the plot [...] Interrupting the acting by freezing the scene, the attention of the spectator is to be drawn to particular matter, and the scene was removed from

Joanna Barck, *Hin zum Film – Zurück zu den Bildern: Tableaux Vivants, „Lebende Bilder“ in Filmen von Antonioni, Korda, Visconti und Pasolini* (Bielefeld, 2008), 1.

15

A catalog spread for artist Omer Fast employs a single-column grid. Plentiful margins define the active text area and provide room to hold the piece. Justified body text contains German and English essays differentiated by sans serif Metallophilic and serif De Walpergen Pica (Fell Types).

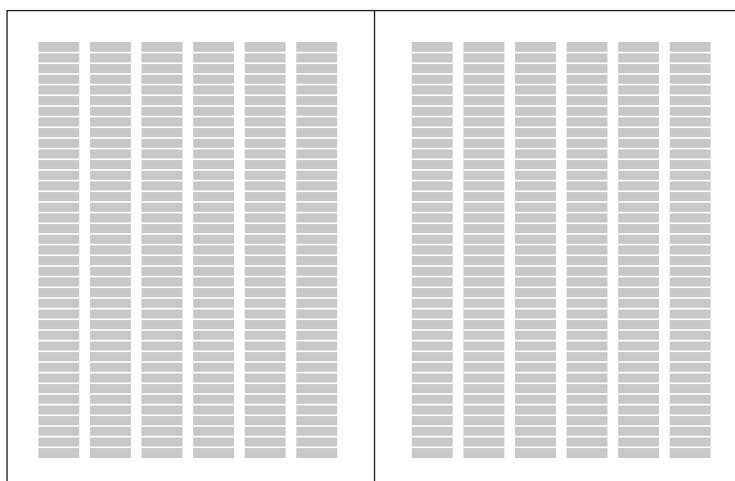
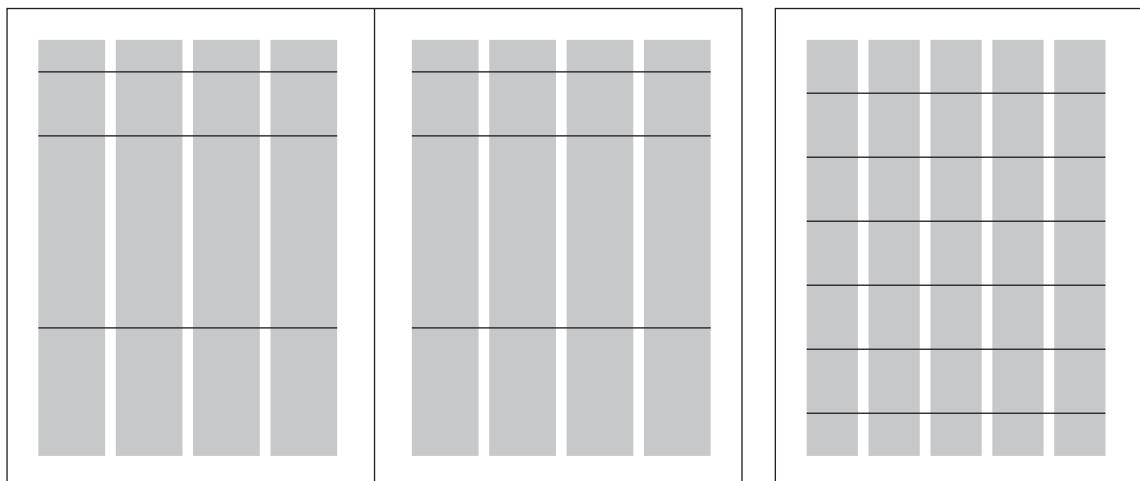
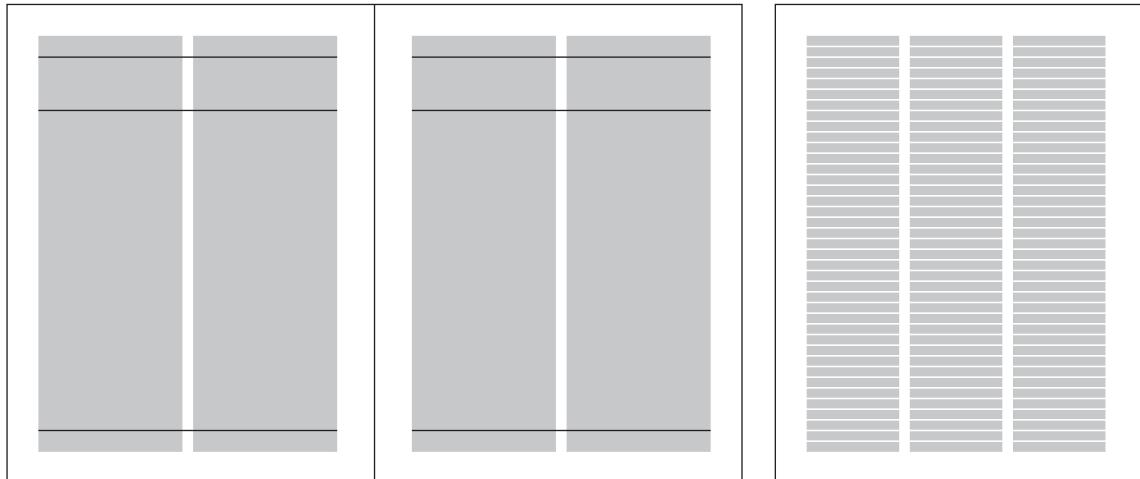
PROJECT PROJECTS

Multiple-column grids range from two-column structures to intricate varieties with eight, twelve, sixteen, and more spatial divisions. They are fit for projects across mediums with diverse text and factors, such as images, charts, and tables. Creating multiple-column grids follows simple steps that adapt per project and designer preference. The first step is choosing layout dimensions that best support the content. They are neither too small, making for tight quarters; nor too big, engulfing elements in space. Using standard sizes is a good starting point. They are established dimensions that accommodate content with economic efficiency. For example, a now common website width of 960 pixels is divisible by 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, and so on. This flexibility offers many grid options. Confirm current dimensions for mobile devices or tablets, because digital formats advance quickly. The North American and International Standard Organization (ISO) provides standard paper sizes for print works.

With the dimensions set, define the margins. They frame the usable composition space and provide buffers between content and format edges. They also offer essential white space (or breathing room) that activates layouts and directs the eye to content. The allocation and proportion of white space is equal in compositional value to type. It is a considered factor in the layout process. Margin size varies with every project. Ample margins provide open canvases that surround content liberally. Small margins offer more usable space, which is ideal for complex projects. Close connections between elements and format edges add tension that benefits some works. Review existing designs for inspiration. Acquire a sense of what works in varied formats and mediums.

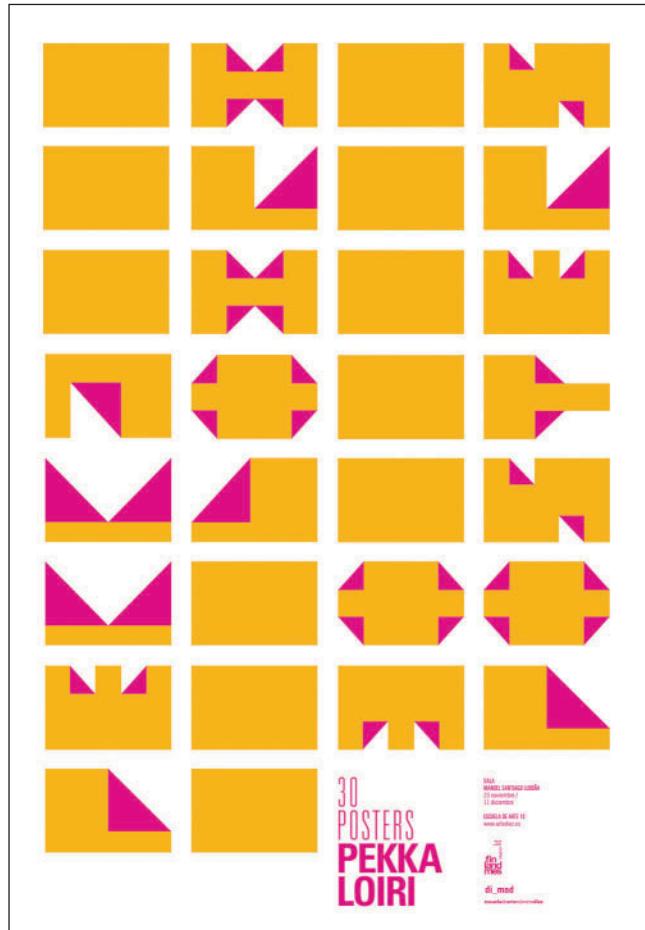
Columns are regions dedicated to positioning type and other elements. They are created by dividing the area inside the margins into equally distributed vertical regions. Quantity and width varies to suit content and type settings. Too many columns can stifle decisiveness; limited numbers restrict invention. More columns typically offer flexibility through multiple alignment points. Using a primary element as a guide is one tactic to divide space. It ensures the grid accommodates it. For example, two to three columns can provide ample width to contain the body text, with the captions fitting one column. Make spatial divisions that hold everything.

Next, add intervals, called gutters, between the columns. Gutters are thin channels of white space that separate columns and prevent collisions. If text and image sit side by side, a gutter is the spatial pause where text ends and image begins. Gutters also separate paragraphs if set directly next to one another. A typical gutter measure equals the body-text leading or the baseline alignment interval. As a final grid-building step, consider adding horizontal flowlines (hang lines). Unlike baselines that underlie layouts top to bottom, flowlines are limited guides that reference where key elements rise or hang. One flowline might define the consistent starting position of body text; another might mark heading location. Use baselines to inform flowline location.



Two or more equally dispersed vertical spatial divisions comprise multiple-column grids. They provide many position and alignment options. Too many columns can stifle decisiveness; limited numbers restrict invention. Flexibility serves multifaceted projects.



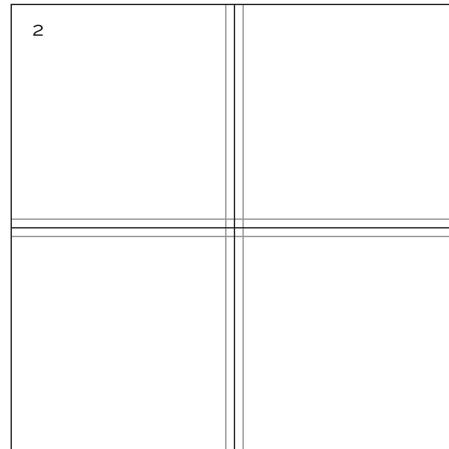
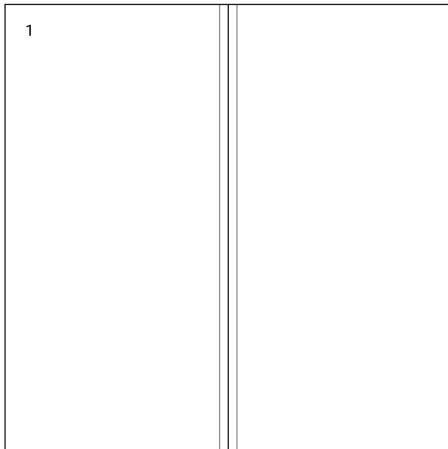


Color-filled rectangles make a modular grid instantly evident. Although grids are typically unseen, the structure defines the design and adds graphic interest. Custom letterforms fit into modules and spell "Pekka Loiri 30 Posters." Two modules contain informative text in Univers Condensed.

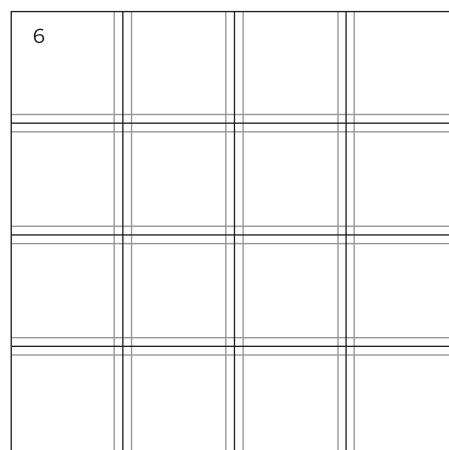
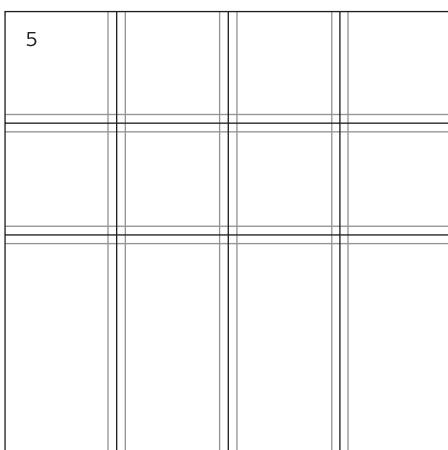
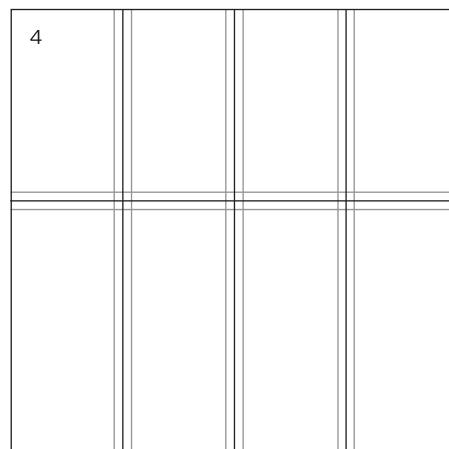
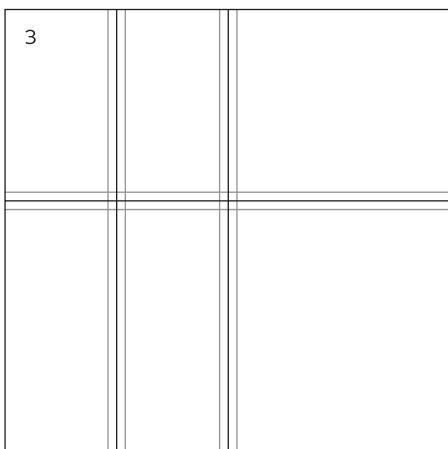
—
LSDSPACE

Modular grids are suitable for multifaceted projects in any medium. They have equally distributed spatial modules vertically and horizontally—a precise system of columns and rows. Modules are active spaces in which type and elements such as illustrations and photographs reside. Content can fill single modules or cross many in any direction. Combined modules form spatial zones. Depending on composition size, modules can be square or rectangular, with horizontal or vertical stress (wide versus tall). Average paragraph line length and leading, as well as key image dimensions, can regulate module proportion and stress.

Be certain the modules contain the dominant elements to their best advantage. Baseline alignment intervals can also define module height. Multiple modules offer flexibility and alignment options. Too few modules limit positioning and scaling choices; too many cloud decision-making. Test the options. Find the right balance in accord with content. Modular grids, like multiple-column grids, also have intervals between modules called gutters. Gutters are buffers for juxtaposed type and other elements. Body text leading or baselines typically inform gutter size. Modular grids are easy-to-build structures that adapt across mediums through consistent module proportion, regardless of layout dimensions. This flexibility makes modular grids useful for projects with components in different media.



Building modular grids starts with dividing the compositional space in half vertically. Proceed horizontally. Subdivide space equally until a desired module proportion and quantity forms that best supports content. Add intervals called gutters between modules to separate them.



STRUCTURE

Alternate Methods



A right-facing folio from the GreenLight Fund 5 Year Progress Report shows an improvised structure formed by typographic bonds in Akzidenz-Grotesk. Letterforms, words, and lines create alignment points and guides that define units and structure the page.

MONDERER DESIGN

Alternate methods offer compositional options beyond traditional grids. The lack of preset spatial divisions nurtures intuition and experimentation. Inspired by improvisation, axiality, and geometry, alternate methods best suit projects with limited text—letterforms, words, and lines; paragraphs or multiple-page sequential formats can pose challenges. Improvised methods use type as alignment edges and points, which form as the designer positions it in the space. Connections between elements govern decision-making. For instance, if one letterform, word, or line shifts position, others follow. Designers compose type organically. It is a responsive process. Like grids, alignment fosters harmony. Elements depend on one another to decide location and attain compositional balance. Such spontaneity aids designers who find it rigid to begin working with a grid. In the inspiring words of Josef Albers: “To experiment is at first more valuable than to produce; free play in the beginning develops courage.”²

² Bayer, Herbert, Walter Gropius, and Ise Gropius, eds. *Bauhaus 1919–1928*. New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1938.



Improvised methods inform the design of some logotypes. Connections between letter-forms and words advise alignment; they rely on their structure to achieve balance. Logotypes are compact, independent units with aesthetic vigor that stand strongly. A medley of typefaces echoes celebration and diversity in a logotype that marks the centennial at the Faculty of Humanities, University of Lisbon, Portugal. The logotype functions at small and large sizes. Its rectilinear alignments fit its use on the building façade.

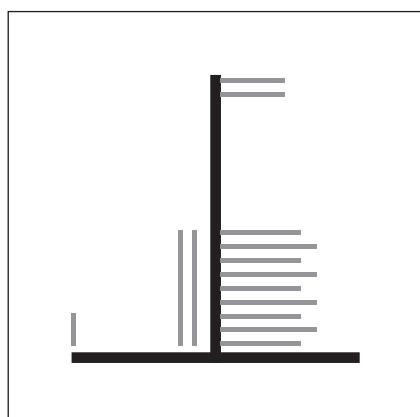
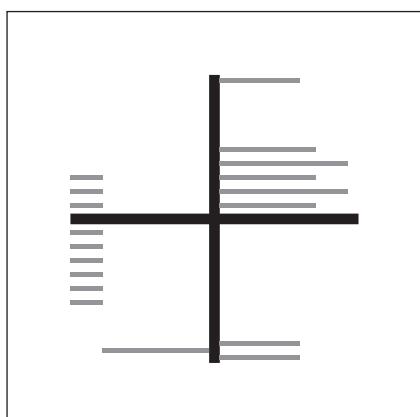
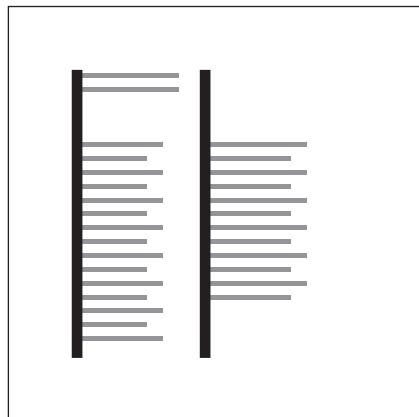
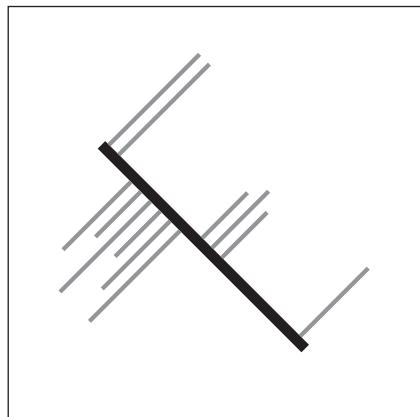
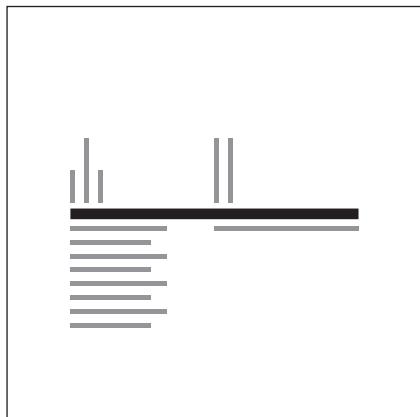
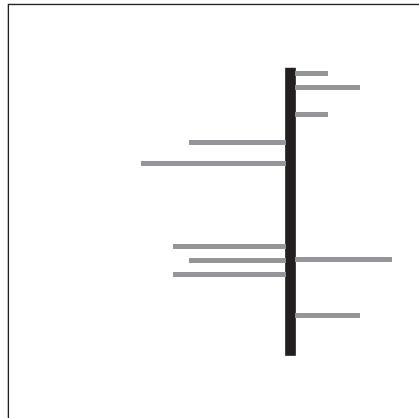
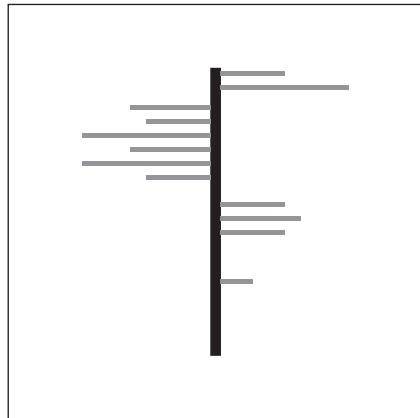
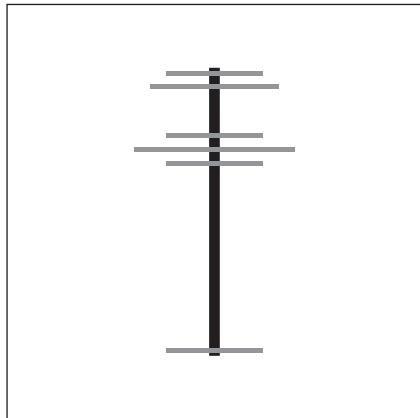
FBA.



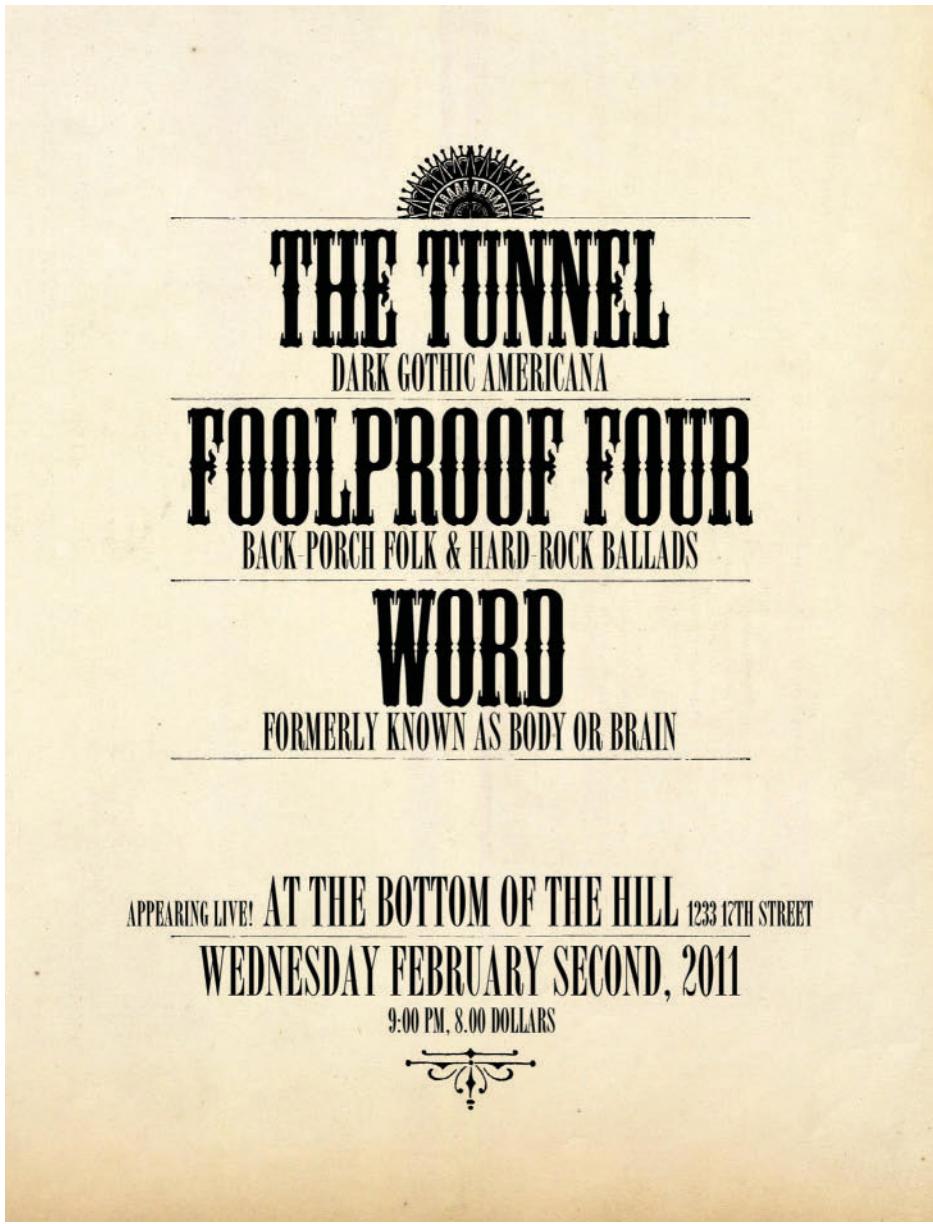
Two perpendicular axes structure the *Typeface* film poster. A vertical axis stems from the *l* of **O BRAZI ČRK** (typeface in Slovene). It defines the flush edge for type. Weight and posture variations in Univers aid typographic hierarchy.

TOMATO KOŠIR

Using a single axis, or a relationship between two axes, offers composition methods pertinent to works with limited text. A simple typographic structure develops by placing one line—an axis—in a composition. The axis is a guide. It provides immediate alignment edges and points for type. For example, start with one vertical axis. Divide a composition in half with it. A basic structure with a centered, symmetrical axis appears. Type may extend from the left and right sides of the axis. Move the axis up, down, left, or right. An asymmetrical structure emerges; type attains a decisive horizontal or vertical emphasis. Rotate the axis ninety degrees. Elements shift in orientation. They can be turned vertically or can hang from or rise above the axis. Spin the axis another thirty or forty-five degrees for a dynamic diagonal scheme. Type might sit along the diagonal axis or stem from either side of it. Adding a second axis adds complexity. Make it parallel or perpendicular to the first axis. The point where two axes meet is a focal point. Proximity to a focal point aids hierarchy. Simple structures suitable for limited text need not be complicated.



Placing in space an axis as guide makes a basic structure. It delivers alignment edges for type—in the center, with horizontal or vertical stress, or on a diagonal. Such configurations serve projects with limited variables.



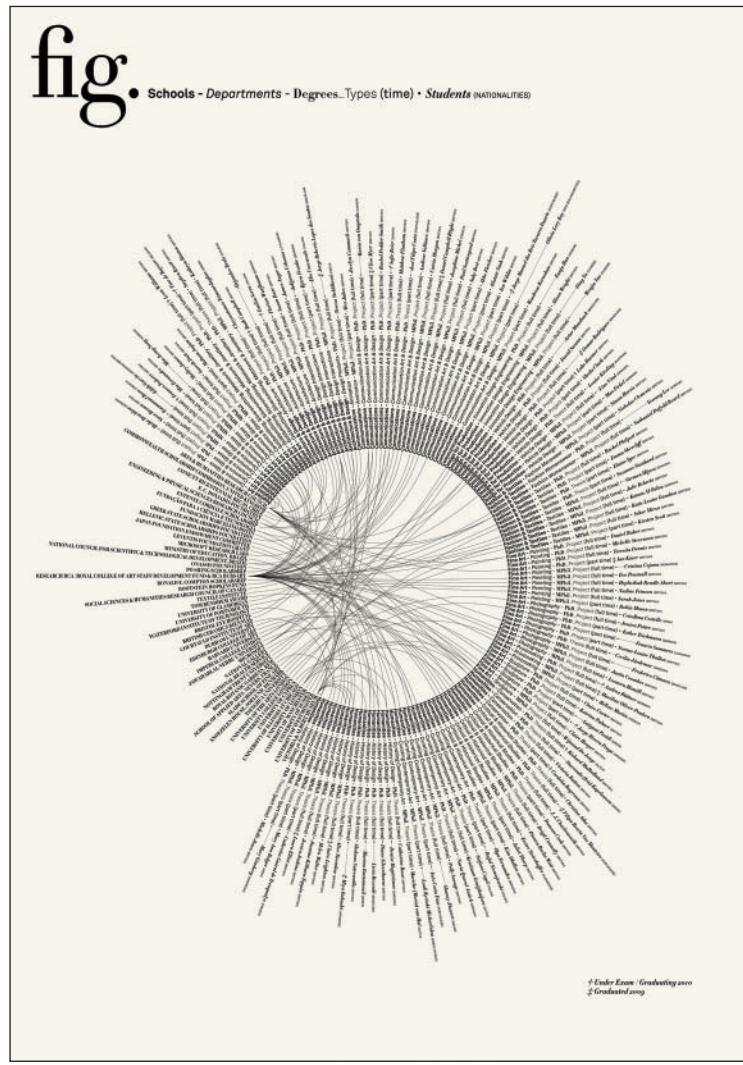
A central axis structures the print for The Tunnel, Foolproof Four, and Word. Ornamental typefaces Mesquite and Bordeaux create ambiance. A symmetrical layout with limited text that expresses proper mood and apt typesetting does not need structural complexity to be successful.

PATRICK L CRAWFORD DESIGN



Typographic elements stem from the left and right sides of a slightly off-center, single axis. Spatial dimension adds depth and character. A custom designed typeface amplifies style.

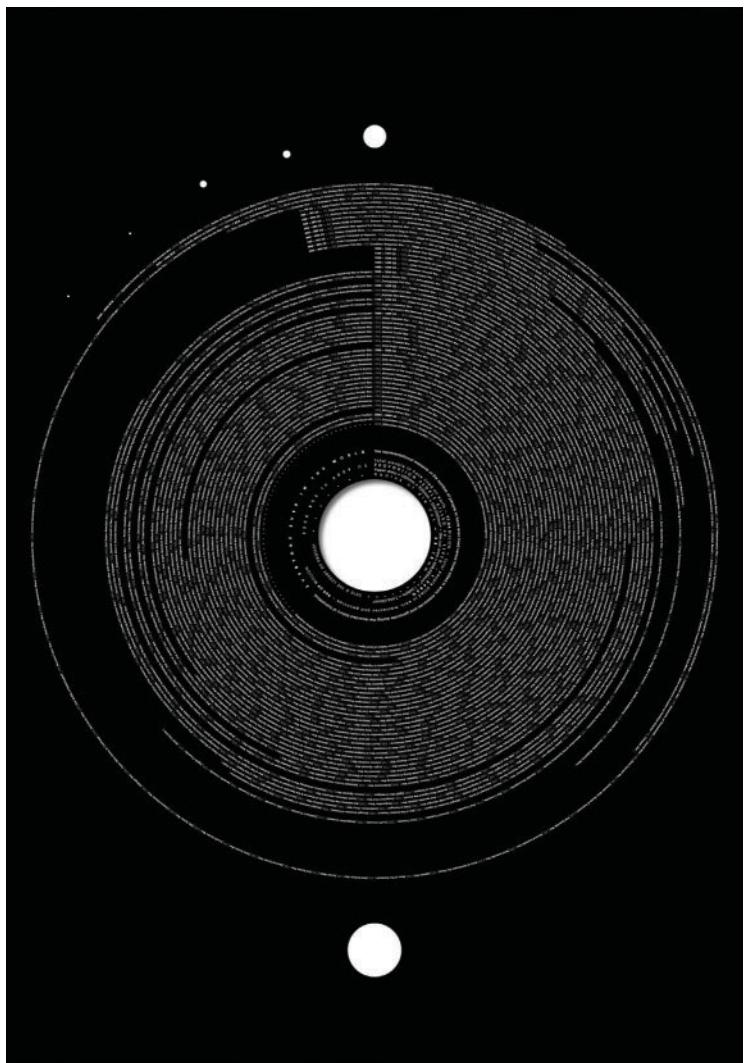
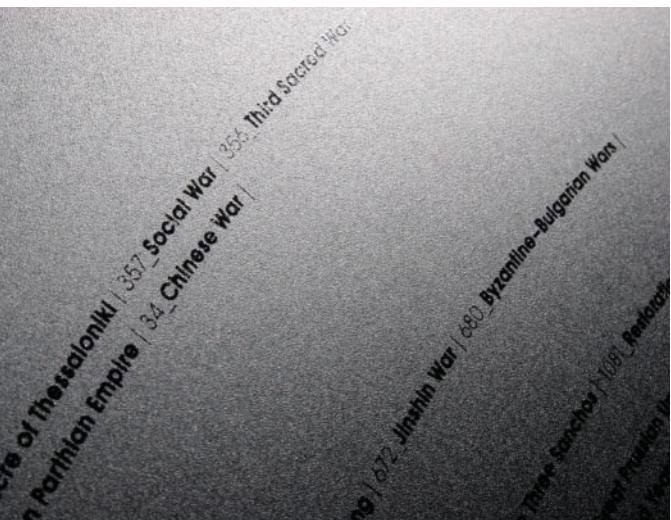
MIRKO ILIĆ CORP.



Radial structures make dynamic impressions. Lines of type extend from and revolve around a central core. This poster visualizes the connections between Royal College of Art research students and funding agencies, as well as academic and industry partners. Sans serif Akkurat pairs with serif Didot to order information.

KARIN VON OMPTEDA
PETER CRNOKRAK

Geometric shapes such as circles, rectangles, or squares inspire a third variety of alternate structure and composition methods. With more complexity than improvised or axial plans, type can rotate concentrically around circles, extend from arcs, or wrap around edges of squares. Many possibilities exist. These atypical structures suit selective projects with text tailored specifically for them. Geometric-inspired layouts exude vibrant first impressions, but be aware of eclipsing communication goals. (Some geometric compositions intentionally and aptly defy typographic design for communication. Artistry or expression, not direct message delivery, drives their function.) Typographic expertise is required to manage such formats. Be attentive to overall composition (macrotypography) and typesetting essentials (microtypography). Seek similar quality on both levels. Avoid forcing type into geometric shapes or awkward arrangements. It sacrifices typeface integrity and can hamper readability. Smart decisions and settings, as well as heightened sensitivity, are essential.



Everyone Ever in the World is a rotational structure in which type (Avant Garde Gothic) forms concentric circles, meaning all share a common center. It is a self-initiated poster described as “a visual representation of the number of people [who] lived versus [being] killed in wars, massacres, and genocide during the recorded history of humankind.”

THE LUXURY OF PROTEST

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