

Ambrose / Harris

TYPOGRAPHY

n. the arrangement,
style and appearance of
type and typefaces



Type Classification

The vast array of typefaces available means that some system of classification is essential, if for no other reason than to simplify the specifications for a piece of work.

Typefaces and type families can be classified according to their inherent characteristics. In order to understand the classification system, and the means by which a typeface is classified, one must be familiar with the terminology used to describe these characteristics. Many typefaces – and much of the terminology used to describe their distinctive features – originate from designs that span the past 500 years, and would have originally been cast in metal or cut in stone. Even now in our digital age, such typefaces still contain the distinct features associated with the physical necessities of the times in which they were created. Typeface classification provides one of those rare occasions when it is appropriate to form a judgement on appearance alone. It is important to obtain an appreciation of how typefaces are classified and the differences between their variations, in order to understand when best to use them within a design.

Typeface classification is based on anatomic characteristics and usually divided between four basic categories: Block, Roman, Gothic and Script (*Human Factors in Engineering Design*, Sanders and McCormick, 1993). Additionally a further category; 'Graphic' (or 'Experimental' or 'Symbol'), accounts for any typefaces that do not naturally fit into any of the four basic categories. The four basic categories can then be further sub-classified: Block (or Blackletter) contains those typefaces based on German manuscript handwriting; Roman houses all the serif typefaces; Gothic contains all the sans-serif typefaces, and finally Script contains those typefaces that mimic handwriting.

Absolut Label (left)

These spreads are taken from the first issue of a fashion magazine sponsored by Absolut. Designed by KesselsKramer, they feature distinctive typefaces for the multiple covers, which reflects the variety of locations featured in the publication.

Clockwise from top left: the cover combines a stencil typeface with clever use of colour to convey a sense of militarism and defiance; 'Greece' uses a retro-futuristic, Graphic typeface; 'Sweden' uses a Geometric typeface with exaggerated descender; 'Russia' demonstrates a Gothic, italic and bold typeface; 'Turkey' uses an extra-light display type with a distinctive dot on the 'i'; 'Brazil' uses a serif typeface; 'Spain' combines hand-drawn type with script and 'France' employs a typewritten typeface, which is used almost as an anti-fashion statement.



Block, Blackletter, Gothic, Old English, Black or Broken typefaces are based on the ornate writing style prevalent during the Middle Ages. Nowadays, they appear heavy and difficult to read in large text blocks, and seem antiquated.

Blackletter 686

This typeface is based on some of the earliest printing forms, which in turn were based on the script of North European books. Each stroke is accompanied by an offset hairline that produces a light / dark contrast.

Roman

Roman type has proportionally spaced letters and serifs, and was originally derived from Roman inscriptions. It is the most readable type and is commonly used for body text.

Book Antiqua

An old-style typeface, designed by Monotype that is a close copy of Hermann Zapf's Palatino. It has little contrast between stroke weights, which minimises distraction when reading.

Gothic

Gothic, Sans-serif or Lineale typefaces do not have the decorative touches that typify Roman typefaces. Their clean and simple design makes them ideal for display text, but may make them difficult to read in long passages.

Grotesque

Monotype's Grotesque is a 1926 design with simple, clean lines that make it suitable for text use. The absence of serifs is instantly noticeable. The 'g' has a loop rather than being double-storey as seen in serif typefaces.

A large, elegant script typeface example of the Künstler Script Medium font, showing fluid, handwritten-style characters.

Script typefaces are designed to imitate handwriting so that when printed the characters appear to be joined up. As with human handwriting, some variations are easier to read than others.

Künstler Script Medium

Künstler Script was designed by Heidelberger Druckmaschinen and has a pronounced slope angle.

Block typefaces

Block, Blackletter, Broken, Old English or Gothic typefaces (not to be confused with sans-serif Gothic), are based on the heavy, ornate writing style that was prevalent during the Middle Ages. Due to the complexity of the letterforms they can be hard to read – particularly if used in large blocks of text – and therefore usually serve a similar function to the decorative use of Scripts or initial capitals. Legibility is however linked to familiarity, thus the Gothic sans-serif styles that are common to us today would be equally hard for Middle Age man to decipher.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890

Examples of Block typefaces

(Shown left from top to bottom:

Engravers Old English, Goudy Text, Fraktur)

These examples demonstrate the ornate and decorative letterforms that contrast hugely with the relatively plain sans-serif typefaces that are in common use today.

This text is set in Cloister Black, which was designed by Morris Fuller Benton and Joseph W Phinney in 1904. As you can see, when a sizeable block of text is set in a Block typeface the ornate letters affect legibility. This has more to do with the text styles that we, as readers, are accustomed to interpreting than being a fault of the typeface. When printing was in its formative years those people that could read would have had little trouble reading this text, but as we are now accustomed to reading simpler and cleaner typefaces the ornate elements of Block confuses the eye and slows down tracking from letter to letter. Legibility can be improved by being more generous with the tracking between letters or the space between words.

Roman typefaces

The decorative serifs of Roman typefaces help the eye track from letter to letter, which is why they are typically used for body text. Roman typefaces comprise the oldest typeface classification and its designs originate from text that was carved into Roman stonework.

Many variations of Roman typefaces have been developed. These variations can be further sub-classified as **Old Style Venetian (or Humanist)**, **Old Style Aldine (or Garaldes)**, **Old Style Dutch**, **Old Style Revival**, **Transitional**, **Didone**, **Slab serif (or Egyptian)**, **Clarendon**, and **Glyphic**.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890

Examples of Roman typefaces

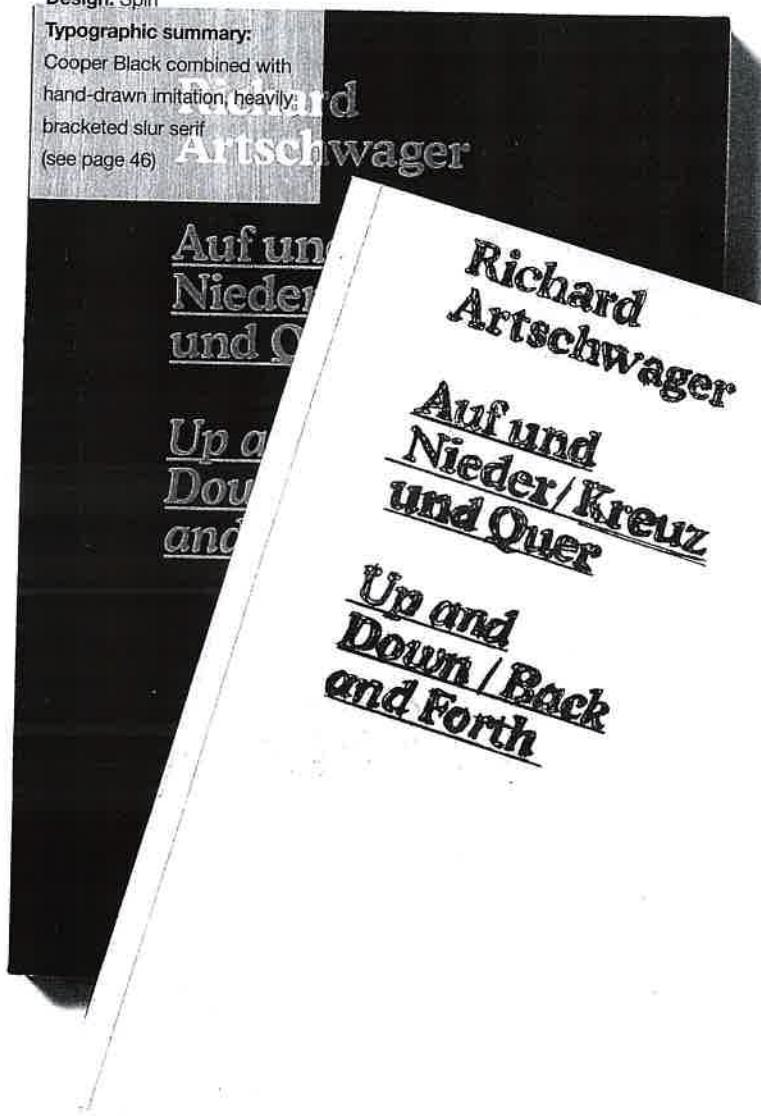
(Shown left from top to bottom: Cochin, Garamond, Souvenir) Although these three examples are all classified as serifs they are quite different. In particular take note of the 'Q', 'g', 'J' and 'K'.

Client: Deutsche Bank

Design: Spin

Typographic summary:

Cooper Black combined with
hand-drawn imitation, heavily
bracketed slur serif
(see page 46)



Up and Down / Back and Forth

This catalogue for works by artist Richard Artschwager was created by Spin design studio and features a series of charcoal-on-paper drawings. The inner pages of the book are reflected in the design of the outer. The outer uses Cooper Black – an extra bold old style revival typeface – set in pink against a woodgrain background. Cooper Black is also used for the captions inside the publication. The inner pages feature a reproduction of the cover hand-drawn in charcoal, which is a prelude to the work that follows.

Roman variations

Perhaps it is because the Roman typefaces are such an important mainstay of the printed word that so many variations have been developed. Over time, Roman typefaces have been modified to reflect changes in style, which has resulted in the evolution of new sub-classifications. These sub-classifications help us to more precisely define and distinguish serif typefaces, as the differences between them can be extremely subtle and therefore hard to spot. Some typefaces straddle two or more classification groups to further complicate matters. Remember though the classifications exist to guide and clarify the specifications of a brief.

Old Style

Old style (or Antiqua), typefaces were developed in the 16th and 17th centuries to replace Block typefaces as the standard letterforms in use. They are distinguished by their irregularity and slanted ascender serifs that have low contrast between the thick and thin strokes. They also possess bracketed serifs and a left-inclined stress.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890

Bembo

Bembo was created by Monotype in 1929 for a Stanley Morison project. It is based on a Roman-face cut by Francesco Griffo da Bologna, which Aldus Manutius used to print Pietro Bembo's 1496 publication of *De Aetna*. Morison modified letterforms such as the 'G' to create a typeface with legibility that was suitable for almost any application.

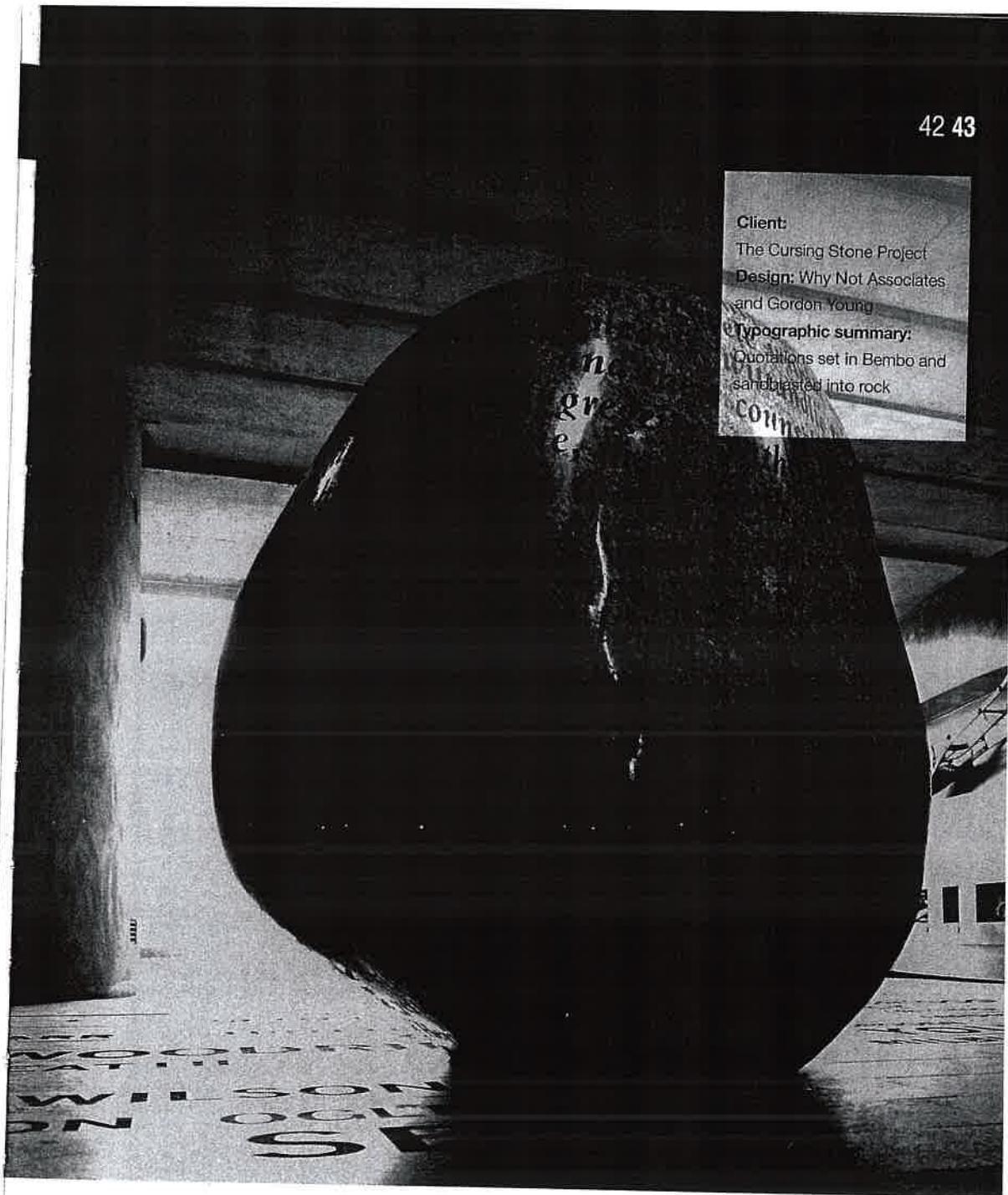
Transitional

Transitional typefaces have a medium contrast between their thick and thin strokes and a lower degree of left-inclined stress. A distinguishing feature of a transitional typeface is a flat or triangular tip where the diagonal strokes meet, as can be seen in the 'W'.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890

Baskerville

Baskerville was designed by John Baskerville in the 18th century. A versatile font, Baskerville is used for both body text and display type. Note the absence of a middle serif on the 'W' and the distinctive capital 'Q'.



The Cursing Stone

The Cursing Stone, created for Glasgow's millennium project, was the result of a collaboration between Why Not Associates and artist Gordon Young. Text quotations from the 1525 *Mother of all Curses* speech by Glaswegian Archbishop Gavin Dunbar were set in Bembo and sandblasted into a 14-tonne boulder.

Modern (or Classicist or Empire)

These typefaces were developed towards the end of the 18th century and are recognisable by the high contrast between the thick and thin strokes of each glyph, as well as the flat, unbracketed and often thin serifs.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890

Bodoni

Based on an 18th-century design by Gianbattista Bodoni this typeface has hairline serifs and heavy down strokes.

Slab Serif (or Egyptian)

Slab-serif typefaces are distinguished by larger, square serifs, which were considered to be bolder than those of their predecessors. Slab-serif typefaces can be further classified into Clarendon and typewriter styles.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890

Serifa

Serifa has a solid appearance and simple slab serifs that do not dominate the characters.

Clarendon

A slab serif sub-classification, which uses subtle serif brackets.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890

Century Schoolbook

Has a greater contrast between the thick and thin strokes than those of slab serif typefaces, this is particularly noticeable on the serifs. The tail of the 'Q' penetrates the counter and the 'J' has a prominent tail dot.

Typewriter

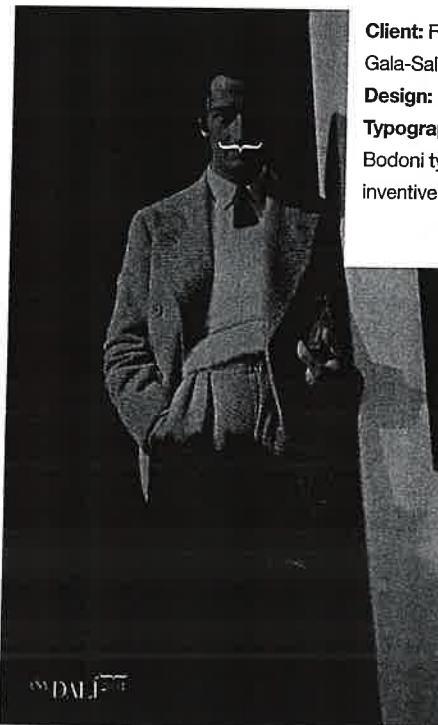
A sub-classification of slab-serif typefaces, these have serifs of equal width to the stem of the character.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

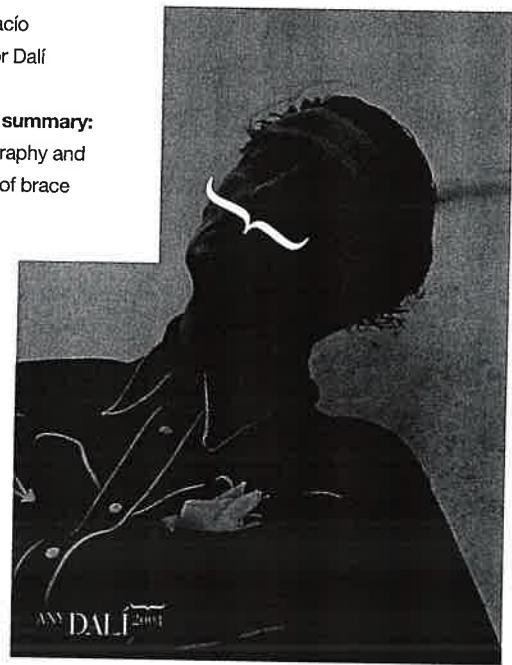
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890

American Typewriter

This typeface has additional finials, reminiscent of ink-traps that appear in non-digitised typewriter typefaces.



Client: Fundació
Gala-Salvador Dalí
Design: bis
Typographic summary:
Bodoni typography and
inventive use of brace



Dalí 2004

Spanish design studio bis was asked to develop an identity to mark the celebrations of the 100th anniversary of the birth of artist Salvador Dalí. Photographs of the surrealist painter were used as the central iconic image in the various pieces of work with typography in Bodoni, Dalí's favourite typeface. A brace (or curly bracket), was inserted over Dalí's face in each photograph as a clever imitation of his famous moustache.

Serif variations

There are many ornate and noticeable serif styles available and most are grouped within the following categories. As serifs, particularly the more ornate ones, are frequently used for display type, it is important to consider them carefully.

SLUR SERIF

Cooper Black – designed by Oswald B. Cooper in 1921, this typeface was ahead of its time.

Slur serifs are rounded, almost ‘inflated’ variations; although ill-defined, these serifs are highly distinctive.

BRACKETED SERIF

Berkeley – based on **California** and originally designed for the University Press by Frederic Goudy.

Common in many typefaces, bracketed serifs have a curve that creates a smooth transition from serif to stroke.

UNBRACKETED SERIF

Memphis – Geometric typeface designed by Rudolf Wolf.

Unbracketed serif typefaces have equal, or monoline, serif and stroke widths.

BRACKETED SLAB SERIF

Clarendon – confusingly both a typeface (see page 44) and a font.

Bracketed slab serifs have monoline serifs ‘softened’ by joining blends.

UNBRACKETED SLAB SERIF

Egiziano Classic Antique Black – designed by Dennis Ortiz-Lopez.

Unbracketed slab serifs carry the heaviest serifs with no joining blends.

WEDGE SERIF

Meridien – Adrian Frutiger’s font, specifically designed to contain no straight strokes.

Wedge serifs display a triangular serif shape.

HAIRLINE SERIF

Bodoni – Morris Fuller Benton’s cutting of Gianbattista Bodoni’s masterpiece typeface.

Hairline serifs have disproportionately thin serifs, but often retain decorative tails, terminals and ears.

Peter Blake Invitation

The typography on this exhibition invitation is developed from found objects belonging to Peter Blake – some of which appeared on his album sleeve design for the Paul Weller's 'Stanley Road'. As the title suggests, the exhibition is about the commercial art practice of Blake. The pronounced wedge-serif make a distinctive design statement.

Client: London Institute Gallery

Design: Webb & Webb

Typographic summary:

Found typographical objects used instead of traditional characters. Typeface with distinctive wedge serif



Gothic typefaces

Gothic typefaces – also called sans-serif typefaces – have been in existence for more than 100 years. The absence of any serifs, whilst providing a clean letterform, can impinge on the legibility of the body text. Historically typographers have tried to address this issue by cutting Gothic typefaces suitable for setting body text. Even so Gothic typefaces remain limited in their use and are more commonly used in short bursts as headings or other display functions. Gothic typefaces always have a 'g' with a tail rather than the double-storey 'g' used in some serif typefaces.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890

Examples of Gothic typefaces

(Shown left from top to bottom: Din, Folio, Frutiger)

These examples illustrate the variety of stroke weights and openness that sans-serif typefaces possess. Folio and Frutiger are bolder in appearance and have rounder letterforms. By comparison, Din is lighter and more condensed.



Client: Still Waters Run Deep

Design: Still Waters Run Deep

Typographic summary:

Metallic printed Helvetica

Neue 25, large point size

Still Waters Run Deep

This brochure was produced for the tenth birthday of design studio Still Waters Run Deep. The use of Helvetica Neue 25, demonstrates the simple beauty of lower case typographic detailing such as the terminal tail stroke on the 'a'. This typography is deceptively simple. As the letters used are set in a large point size, the tracking and the kerning (see pages 94–99), are far more important than when text is typeset in a smaller point size (body text for example). Belonging to an extended type family (see page 62), Helvetica Neue 25 is the thinnest version of the typeface and when combined with the metallic ink printing, it creates an elegant typographical statement.

Gothic variations

Gothic, or sans-serif, typefaces were developed later than their Roman counterparts, and within the Gothic classification typographers have created an imaginative and widely different body of typefaces. Consequently, a variety of sub-categories have evolved to more precisely define them.

Distinctions between different Gothic typefaces can be readily and easily seen in a study of the letters 'a', 'e', 'g', 'G', 'M', 'R' and 'y' as the examples below demonstrate.

Grotesque

Grotesque typefaces have a more condensed form than those of Neo Grotesques and possess a 'g' with a double-storey (rather than a loop), and a 'G' with a chin.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890

Alternate Gothic No. 2

Alternative Gothic No. 2 has a condensed character body.

Neo Grotesque

Neo-Grotesque typefaces have broader characters than those of Grotesques and possess a 'g' with a loop (rather than a double-storey), and a 'G' with a chin.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890

Akzidenz Grotesk BQ

Akzidenz Grotesk BQ has rounded strokes and a full shape.

The Moving Picture Company (right)

This design, created by Form Design for The Moving Picture Company, uses a white foil (see page 146) on a high-gloss white board. This adds a tactile element to the design and also produces a subtle white-on-white effect, as the letters appear when the viewing angle and the reflected light are changed. The text in this example is set in Akzidenz Grotesk and clearly displays the main characteristics of the Neo-Grotesque typefaces.

Client:

The Moving Picture Company

Design: Form Design**Typographic summary:**White, foil blocked Akzidenz
Grotesk type on white high-
gloss card

100
The
What We Do
Commercials, T
Feature Films
3D Animation
MPC Online: www.mpc.com
ImTel® Laser
Screening Room

Geometric

Geometric is a descriptive term applied to certain Gothic typefaces and also to some Graphic typefaces (see page 58). The Geometric Gothic variations have a very rounded shape and are distinguishable by their splayed 'M', 'N', 'V' and 'W' characters. The leg of the 'R' joins the bowl near the stem and the 'G' is chinless.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890

Futura BQ

Futura BQ demonstrates the splayed 'M', 'N', 'V' and 'W', the leg of the 'R' joining the loop near the stem and the chinless 'G'.

Humanistic

Humanistic typefaces are similar to Geometric ones as they also possess splayed 'M', 'N', 'V' and 'W', a chinless 'G' and an 'R' with a leg joining the bowl near the stem. However, they have more stroke weight contrast and a double-storey 'g'.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890

Optima

Optima has the double-storey 'g' and shows the contrast between the weights of higher strokes.

Square

Square typefaces, as the name suggests, have squared characters rather than rounded characters. The 'g' has a tail and the 'Q' has a tail that crosses the bowl. The 'G' is chinless.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890

Eurostile

Eurostile clearly has a squarer appearance when compared to the other typefaces shown on this spread.

Yauatcha (right)

This stationery for Yauatcha, by North design studio, uses Futura SB Extra Light, tightly tracked to give a very elegant and controlled appearance. The stationery uses a bold, abstracted pattern of tea plant growth on the reverse that shows through the page. The fluorescent circular pattern on the reverse invokes the impression of liquid, and contrasts with the serene nature of the typography.

15 BROADWICK STREET
LONDON W1F 0DL
TEL 020 7494 8888
FAX 020 7494 8889
EMAIL MAIL@YAUATC

YAUATC
CAR RD
CAE

Client: Yauatcha
Design: North
Typographic summary:
Tightly tracked Futura SB
Extra Light

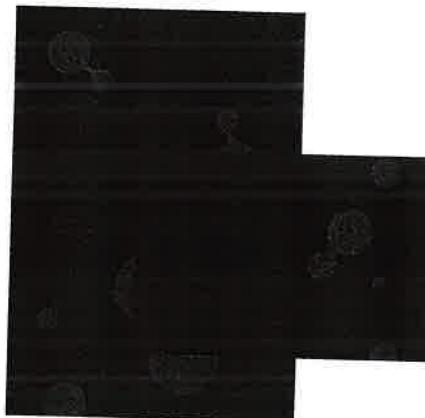
丘記茶苑 YAUATCHA

15 BROADWICK STREET
LONDON W1F 0DL
TEL 020 7494 8888
FAX 020 7494 8889
EMAIL MAIL@YAUATCHA.COM
WITH COMMENTS

丘記茶苑 YAUATCHA

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PHOTOGRAPHY
KAREN WILSON

DESIGNER
CAROLINE RODRIGUEZ



Rounded variations

Rounded variations possess rounded – rather than squared-off – stroke endings, which results in slightly more relaxed and visually appealing letterforms. Many of these rounded variations find their origin in other typefaces (for example, Helvetica Rounded is based on standard Helvetica). The rounding of these established typefaces creates an open and spacious appearance.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890

Helvetica Rounded

A rounded version of Max Miedinger's classic design; Haas Grotesk. Later named Helvetica (an adaptation of the Latin name for Switzerland ('*Helvetier*')). The rounded variation is a direct adaptation of the original sans-serif.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890

Vag Rounded Black

Designed by Adrian Williams for Volkswagen in 1979, VAG Rounded exhibits similar characteristics to Helvetica Rounded but there are noticeable differences. The letter 'a' is noticeably geometric and the lower case 'j' and 'y' are rendered without the curved stroke at the end. The vertical stems of the upper case 'M' are oblique.

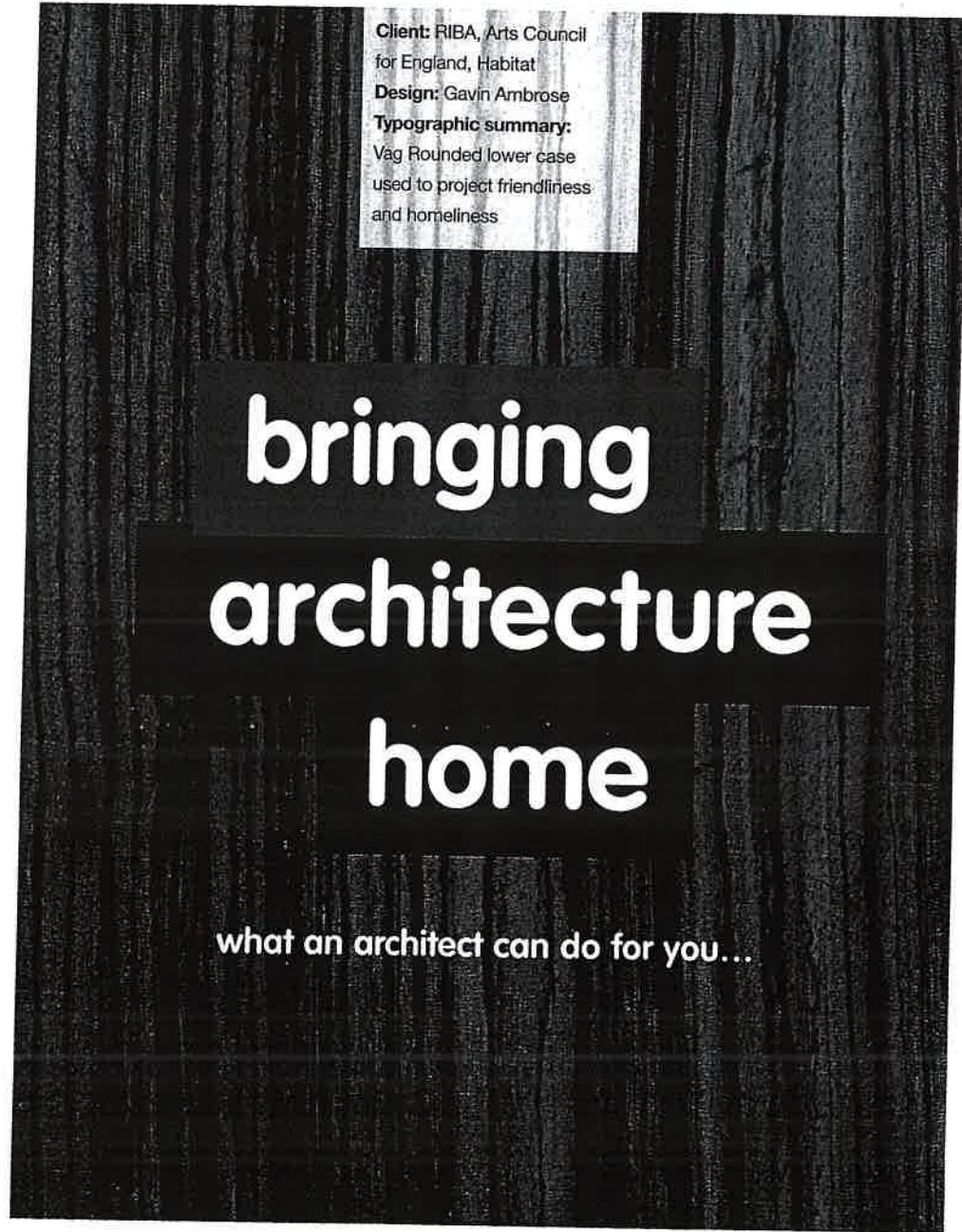
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890

Arial Rounded Extra Bold

A rounded version of Arial – with curved stroke ends like Helvetica Rounded, but with a chinless 'G' as found in Vag Rounded.

Bringing Architecture Home (right)

This concise guide for homeowners about the advantages of hiring an architect was a free cover mount designed for *Elle Decoration* magazine. Vag Rounded was selected as the typeface because its soft edges are friendly and homely, and reflect the nature of the brochure. This also makes hiring an architect seem less intimidating.



Script typefaces

Script typefaces were created to mimic handwriting and indeed some, such as Pushkin, were based on the handwriting of a specific person. Many have extended termination strokes so that they link together, much like the handwriting they are intended to resemble. They are neither classified as Roman or Gothic, as they may share attributes of each.

As Script typefaces are difficult to read in large text blocks, their usage is usually confined to providing supplementary decorative details such as brand names or captions.

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
1234567890

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
1234567890

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
1234567890

Examples of Script typefaces

(Shown left from top to bottom:
Flemish Script, Berthold Script,
Zapf Chancery)

Script typefaces vary in legibility depending upon how elaborate they are. Flemish Script is considerably more difficult to decipher than Zapf Chancery due to its ornate strokes.

Kew

For the corporate identity for Kew, SEA Design chose to interpret the brand name in a script. The typeface is soft, feminine, personal and friendly, and on the bags shown is complemented by atmospheric background photography by Richard Learoyd.

Client: Kew

Design: SEA Design

Typographic summary:

Hand-drawn script, which creates a feminine and personal feel



Graphic typefaces

Graphic typefaces contain characters that could be considered images in their own right. These experimental variations include the widest array of styles with varying degrees of legibility. Often they may be designed for specific, themed purposes. Characters may absorb the attributes of whatever they are being used to communicate, or they may provide an image connection to the subject matter.

Graphic typefaces can emphasise the drama of a design, although their complexity can adversely affect legibility and so are unsuitable for use in body text.

abcdefghijklmnoprqrstuvwxyz
1234567890

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234567890

abcdefghijklmnoprqrstuvwxyz

Graphic typeface examples
(Shown left from top to bottom:
Pop Led, Dynomoe, Dr No)
These decorative typefaces are most effective in display texts such as headlines or brand names. The eye has to work too hard for information when typefaces such as Pop Led and Dr No are used extensively.



Client: Caro Communications

Design: Form Design

Typographic summary:

Bespoke letters formed from a single round-cornered square

Carolyn Lakin

Caro Communications
Fax: 020 7531 5112, Tel: 020 7531 5112, E: p@carocomm.demon.co.uk
VAT Reg: 521 9210 95



Caro Communications

This identity, created for public relations firm Caro Communications, features a logotype whose letters are formed by the rounded corners of a square. In this experimental typeface, characters are only legible through their shared relationships – the 'c' and the 'o' provide enough 'code' to decipher the other letters. These very graphic characters, can become unreadable in isolation so their use is restricted to the main marque, with a secondary sans-serif typeface used for additional information.

