look @type
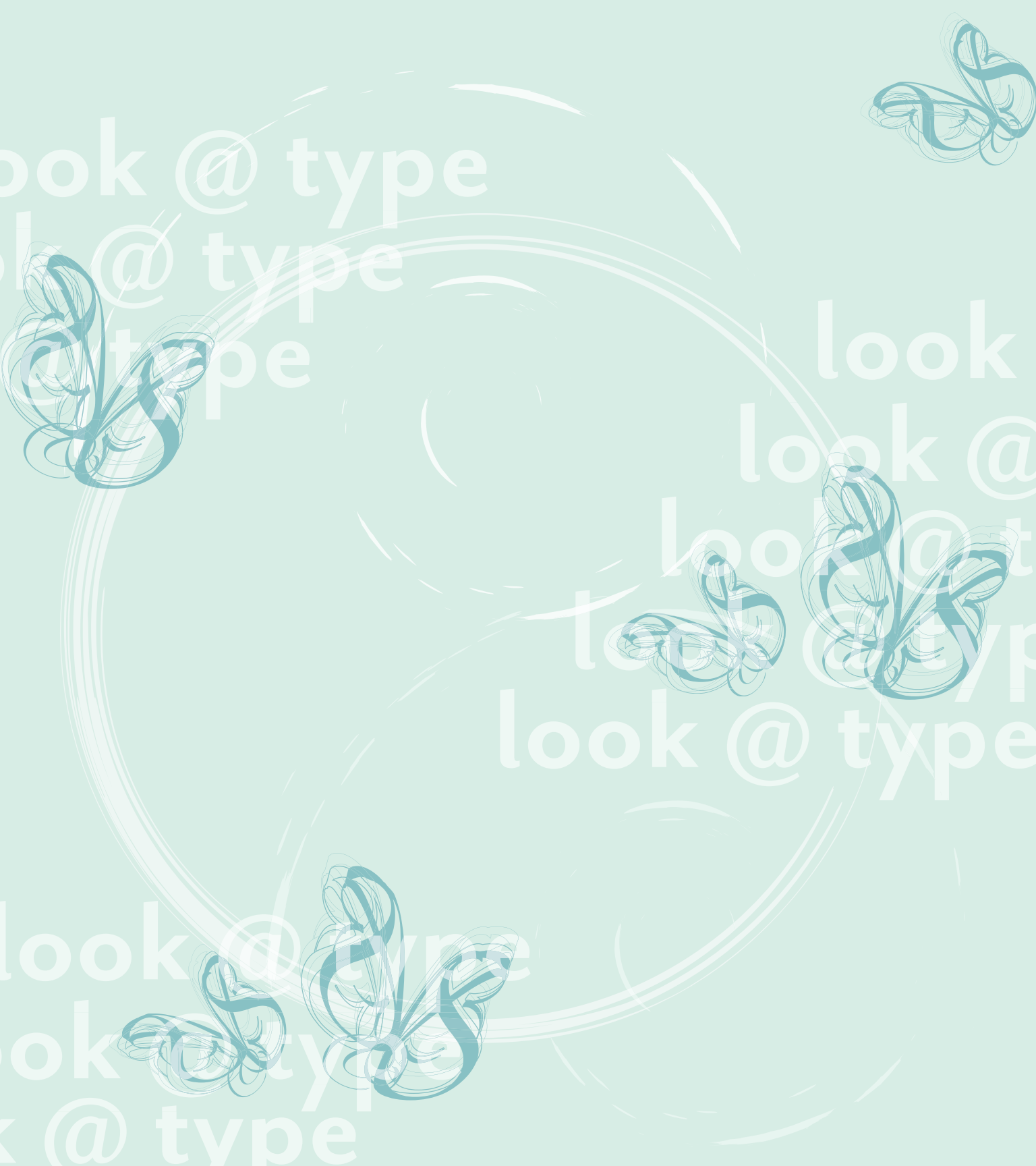
What? Makes A GOOD TYPEFACE

Setting Up a GRID

3 UP Close Type Designers

designed by
catrina padmore

For my daughter.

$\mathcal{I}$ntroduction

This magazine has been created to explore type in a contemporary style that will be educational and informative for the layperson who has no prior knowledge of typography.

Typography is concerned with the structuring and arranging of visual language. Typography refers to the arrangement of text on a page, and appears in some form or another in all instances of written communication. Depending on the purpose, typography can be used for optimum readability, impact, or an artistic statement.

In the first section we will delve into "What is a Typeface", looking at different kinds of typefaces, their characteristics, how they compare with one another and which ones are my favorites. In the second section "Typeface Design" there will be an overview on how typefaces are created using a grid, and following will be three interviews with well established type designers.

Quality typography can make a big difference in communications because it can impact the way the reader sees and feels about the topic being discussed. By the time you have reached the end of this magazine you will have obtained a working knowledge of type. Enjoy!

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What Makes A
GO?OD
TYPEFACE

Some identifying characteristics of a **good typeface** are universal.

Consistent design
A good typeface will have consistent design throughout its characters. This includes cap and x-heights, character width, stroke width, ascenders, descenders, serifs. Related fonts in a family should be similar in spirit, if not in actual design.

Legibility
Simply put, legibility is the ease which type can be read. It is a quality of the actual design of the typeface. Factors affecting legibility are weight, character shapes, ascender/descender length, counter size, stroke contrast, and character width.
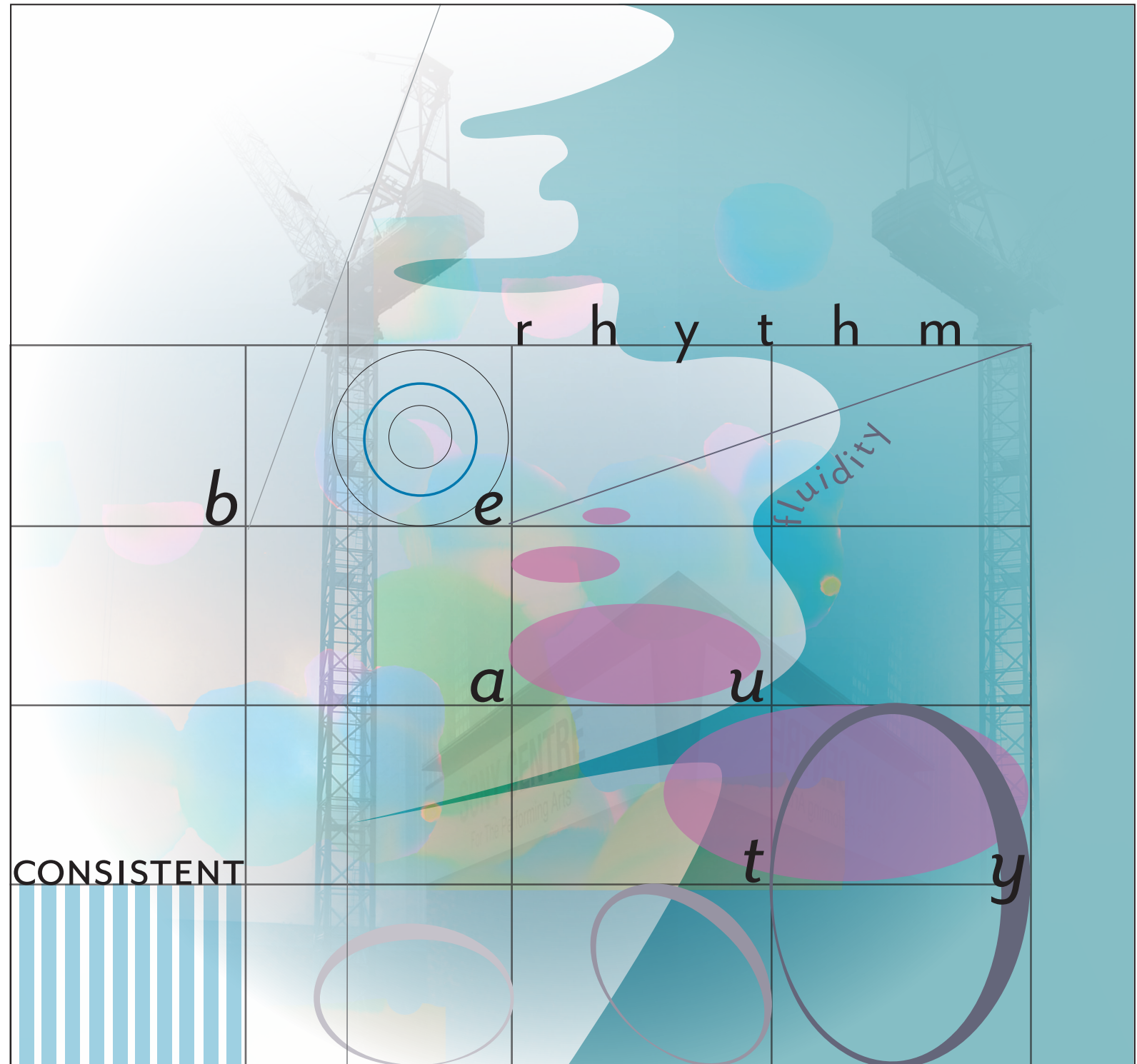
Spacing
A typeface that is well-spaced is not too tight nor open. It has even spacing overall between characters throughout the design.

Kerning
A typeface that is well spaced may have some character pairs that are too open or too tight. These awkward pairs can be improved with kerning (increasing or reducing space between characters). A good typeface has built-in kern pairs.

Even color and texture
Even color and texture is probably the most important quality of a good text typeface. It is the consequence of the above factors (a consistent and legible design, with good letterspacing and built-in kerning) plus proper word spacing.

b e a u t y

rhythm

fluidity

CONSISTENT

You can tell that word spacing is correct when the typeface can be read easily, without the words running together or getting separated by rivers of white space that interrupt the color and readability.

classifying type

egyptian

old style

modern

sans serif

transitional

Grunge: A New Category
Now part of the common lexicon of typography, grunge was a development sprung from postmodernism and deconstructionism. Type was developed as primarily image, and less for its readability. Grunge typography was a big enough movement to rate its own category, and encompasses a wide variety of 'dirty' typefaces. Around 1995 to present.

Classifying type: Old Style letterforms are closely connected to calligraphy and the movement of the hand.

Transitional and modern typefaces are more abstract and less organic. These three main groups correspond to the Renaissance, Baroque, and Enlightenment periods. Designers still continue on to create new typefaces based on these historic characteristics.

Aa
Old Style
These roman typefaces of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries emulated calligraphy.

Aa
Transitional
These transitional typefaces have sharper serifs, higher contrast and a more vertical axis than old style letters.

Aa
Modern
These typefaces designed by Bodoni in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries have thin, straight serifs, vertical axis, and sharp contrast from thick to thin strokes.

Aa
Egyptian
Egyptian fonts have heavy, slab-like serifs. They were introduced in the nineteenth century in order to be used for heavy type in advertising.

Aa
Sans Serif
Sans serif became popular in the twentieth century, as a move towards an international aesthetic in typography. San serif can be geometric, as in Futura, or more humanist, as with Gill Sans. Sans serifs with a variation in stroke weight are becoming more common.

typeface anatomy

Familiarize yourself with these terms to see and compare the underlying structure of type designs.

Arm/leg: An upper or lower (horizontal or diagonal) stroke that is attached on one end and free on the other.

Ascender: This is the part of a lowercase character that extends above the x-height.

Bar: The horizontal stroke in characters such as A, H, R, e, f.

Bowl: A curved stroke which creates an enclosed space within a character (the space is then called a counter).

Cap Height: The height of capital letters from the baseline to the top

Counter: Partly or fully enclosed space within a character.

Descender: The part that descends below the baseline.

Ear: The small stroke projecting from the top of the g.

Link: The stroke connecting the top and bottom part of a g.

Loop: Lower part of the g.

Serif: The projections extending off the main strokes of the characters of serif typefaces.

Shoulder: Curved stroke of the h, m, n.

Spine: Main curved stroke of S

Stem: Straight vertical stroke

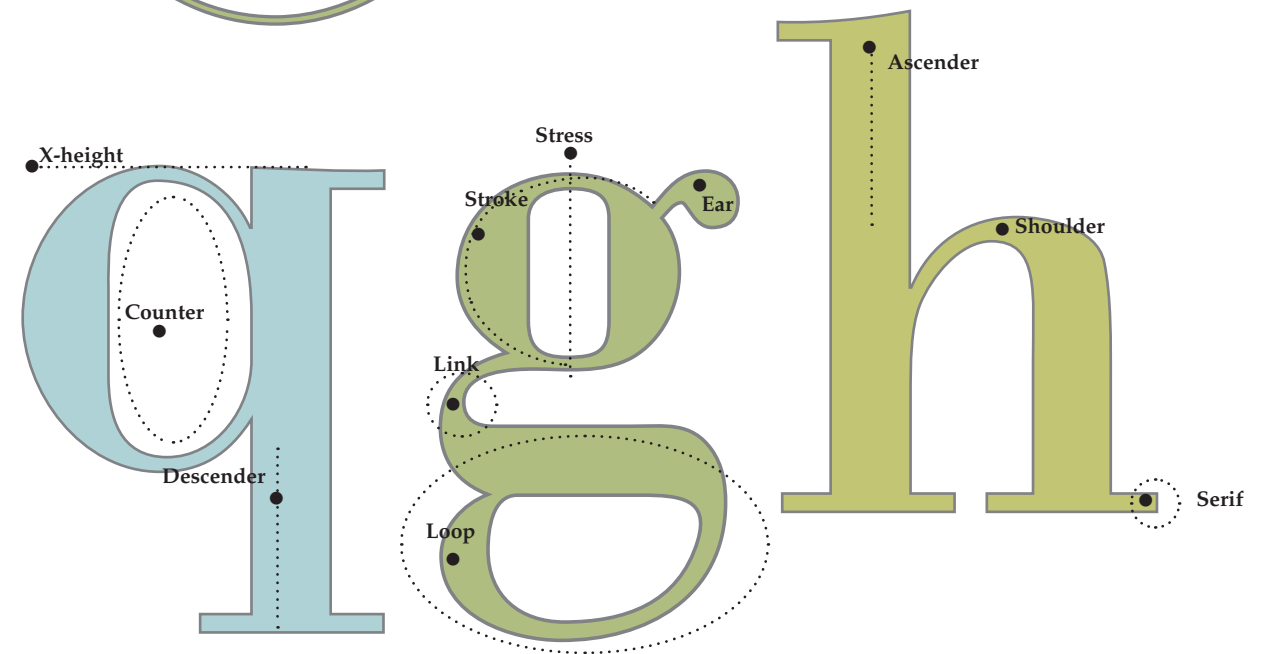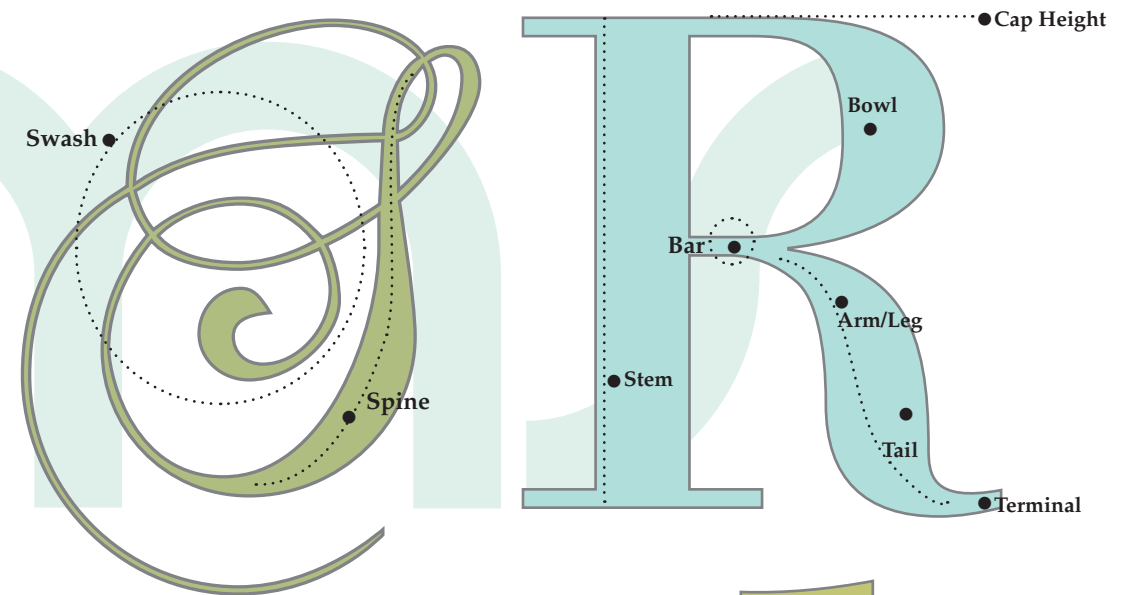**Stress:** The direction of thickening in a curved stroke.

Stroke: Straight or curved line.

Swash: A fancy flourish replacing a terminal or serif.

Tail : The descender of a Q or diagonal stroke of an R.

Terminal: The end of a stroke not terminated with a serif.

X-height: The height of lowercase letters, specifically the lowercase x, excluding ascenders and descenders.

Cap Height
Swash
Bowl
Bar
Arm/Leg
Spine
Stem
Tail
Terminal

Ascender
X-height
Stress
Stroke
Ear
Shoulder
Counter
Link
Descender
Loop
Serif

What is Display Type

Display types are graphically strong—they command your attention. Display faces are designed for use at larger point sizes, including for headings, titles, and headlines.

Display type is intended to be eye-catching, legible and versatile. Display faces have to be good mixers, with features that are not too quirky, such as sans serifs typefaces. The purpose of display type is first, to attract the reader's attention, and second, to draw that reader into the text. Once you've chosen your type, you'll still have to set your display text properly to maximize its effectiveness.

Here's what to look for: a good display typeface should have a distinct, assertive personality. Whether it's a decorative design with a flamboyant attitude (the "life of the party"), or a simple bold sans with minimal embellishments (the "strong, silent" type), a good display design makes a powerful and specific first impression. Display applications may only consist of a few words or sentences. What is important is that the characters you will actually use in the headline look good and work well together to express the tone of the piece that you are working on.

"a good display typeface should have a distinct, assertive personality"

Legibility: smaller amounts of copy set at larger sizes make fewer demands on the reader. When setting display type go for impact and expressiveness, rather than just legibility alone.

Letter spacing: As type gets larger, the letter spacing tends to look more open. The solution? Use tracking to tighten the letter spacing.

Word spacing: the space between words gets to be "too much" as type size scales upward. Reducing excess word spacing improves appearance and readability. Leave enough space to create a separation between the words, but no gaping holes in the copy.
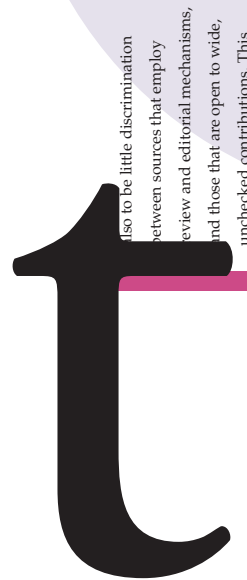
Kerning: This changes with scale. A letter pair that seems perfectly kerned at a smaller size might look unbalanced and uneven when set larger. Always look your display text over carefully and adjust any uneven combinations.

Choose your display face carefully, make the necessary adjustments to spacing and kerning, and you will be ready to create strong display copy.

Display types have personalities: they can create a wide range of expressions, from solemn to shocking to graceful.

Our students, both young and mature, often find themselves for the first time in an environment where research and rigorous discussion inform design practice. The strong focus on identifying user needs and designing within a rigorous methodology is often at odds with past experiences of design as a self-expressive enterprise: in other words, design with both feet on the ground, in response to real-world briefs. In addition, students are expected to immerse themselves in the literature of the field, and, as much as possible, contribute to the emerging discourse. (There are many more books and articles on typeface design than people generally think; some are not worth the paper they're printed on, but some are real gems.) I shouldn't need to argue that research, experimentation, and reflection on the design process lead not only to better designs, but better designers.

In recent years, two significant factors have started influencing attitudes to design. Firstly, as generations grow up using computers from primary school onwards, it is more difficult to identify the influence of the computer as a tool for making design decisions, rather than implementing specifications. Secondly, the trend in higher education to restructure courses as collections of discrete modules results in a compartmentalisation of students' skills and knowledge: it is becoming more difficult for the experience in one class to have an impact on the work done in another. (A third, less ubiquitous, factor would be the diminishing importance of manual skills in rendering and form-making in design Foundation and BA/BFA courses, a subject worthy of discussion in itself.)

So, repeating the caveat that these observations are strictly personal, I offer them in the hope they will prove interesting, at least to the

people setting up and running new courses in typeface design, and the many designers teaching themselves.1 Design has memory (even if many designers don't) Typography and typeface design are essentially founded on a four-way dialogue between the desire for identity and originality within each brief ("I want mine to be different, better, more beautiful"), the constraints of the type-making and type-setting technology, the characteristic of the rendering process (printing or illuminating), and the responses to similar conditions given by countless designers already, from centuries ago to this day. Typographic design never happens in a vacuum. A recent example is Emigre magazine: can its early period be seen without reference to the sea-change in type-making and typesetting tools of the mid-eighties? and not its middle period a mark of emerging maturity and focusing critically and selectively, on those conventions worth preserving in a digital domain? Emigre is important as a mirror to our responses to new conditions and opportunities, and cannot be fully appreciated just by looking at the issues. (Especially if you look scaled-down images, rather than the poster-like original sizes!) At a more subtle level, the basic pattern of black and white, foreground and background, for "readable text" sizes has been pre-

stable for centuries, and pretty impervious to stylistic treatments. Does not a type designer gain by studying how this pattern survives the rendering environments imposed by genre and style? And yet, many designers have a very patchy knowledge of the history of typography and letterforms. More worryingly, students and designers alike have little opportunity to experience genre-defining objects in reality (imagine discussing a building looking only at the blueprints for building it, not walking up to it, and through its rooms). It is perhaps not surprising that the wide but shallow knowledge gained from online sources is dominant; there seems

also to be little discrimination between sources that employ review and editorial mechanisms, and those that are open to wide, unchecked contributions. This shallow approach to reading and investigating results in a lack of coherent narratives, not only about how things happened, but also why. And how were similar design problems addressed under different design and production environments? What can artifacts tell us about how people made decisions in similar situations before? How did changing conditions give rise to new solutions? To paraphrase Goudy, the problem is not any more that the old-timers stole all the best ideas, but that the old ideas are in danger of being rediscovered from scratch. (Just look at the web designers rediscovering the basic principles of text typography and information

text ^type

Is it decipherable?

Text typefaces are designed for use in long-running text passages like those found in books and magazines.

The emphasis in text-face design is on readability. This goes beyond mere legibility—the ease with which the eye identifies individual characters—to encompass the ease with which the eye can pick out words and groups of words at a glance. A good text face lets you read at higher speeds and for longer periods of time without tiring.

A text face is designed for body copy, that is, for use in long texts, particularly books. Text faces are generally

seriffed, with modest contrast, generous character widths, and fairly light stroke weights. Factors which affect legibility include weight, character shapes, ascender and descender length, counters, stroke contrast, and character width.

So how do you select a specific typeface for body copy, and why? Text is generally set at 14 point or less, with 9–12 points being a good starting point size. Readability is key so use the readability test: when setting long blocks ask "is it tiring or difficult to read long passages set in this typeface?" Keep in mind that there are many other factors, including line spacing and line length, that will influence the choice of text type for a project.
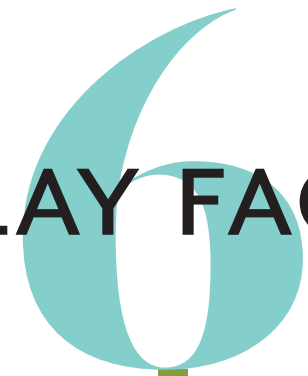
Why is it that two typefaces can be set in the same point size, and one often appears bigger? Bigger x-heights, make a typeface seem larger. Differences in line weight and character width can affect the letters' apparent scale.

FAVOURITE DISPLAY FACES

Rockwell

Rockwell is based on an earlier, more condensed slab serif design called Litho Antique. The 1933 design for Monotype was supervised by Frank Hinman Pierpont. What I like about Rockwell is the strength conveyed in its personality.

Narziss

Narziss is an upright neoclassic display font with big contrast designed by the German type designer Hubert Jocham. I like that it has drama in its extreme contrast, much like Bodoni, and I enjoy the drops for their elegance.

Bodoni

Bodoni is a series of serif typefaces first designed by Giambattista Bodoni in 1798. The typeface is classified as modern. Bodoni has high stroke contrast and hairline serifs at right angles to the uprights. I find Bodoni aesthetically pleasing for its contrast and its serif design.

Rockwell is classified as an Egyptian/Slab Serif typeface. Why is it called Egyptian? The first slab serif font was presented in the early 19th century by Vincent Figgins under the name Antique. However, in view of public craze in Europe for everything Egyptian at those times, the slab serif fonts were commonly called Egyptian.

FAVOURITE DISPLAY FACES **6**

Franklin Gothic

I believe the typeface Franklin Gothic designed by Morris Fuller Benton has a relation of heaviness and lightness that is beautiful, bold and assertive. It has also the expression of finesse, lightness, friendliness.

MoMA
Design Store
The Museum of Modern Art Spring 2007

Romeral

Romeral is a thick slab serif display face which I enjoy. It is deigned by Juan Pablo de Gregorio. It conveys visual impact—ideal for headers. Due to the geometric characters it is relatively easy to work with. The typeface expresses to me credibility and reliability.

crunchy
monday

Spin Cycle

Here is an experimental unicase sans serif typeface designed by Jess Latham of Blue Vinyl. Some of the characters are leaning to the left or right and that was the seed that began the idea for this font. I like that there is an element of surprise and flow to the font.

MAGNET
FUSION

Did you know? Franklin Gothic is an extra-bold sans-serif type that was named in honor of America's greatest printer, Benjamin Franklin.
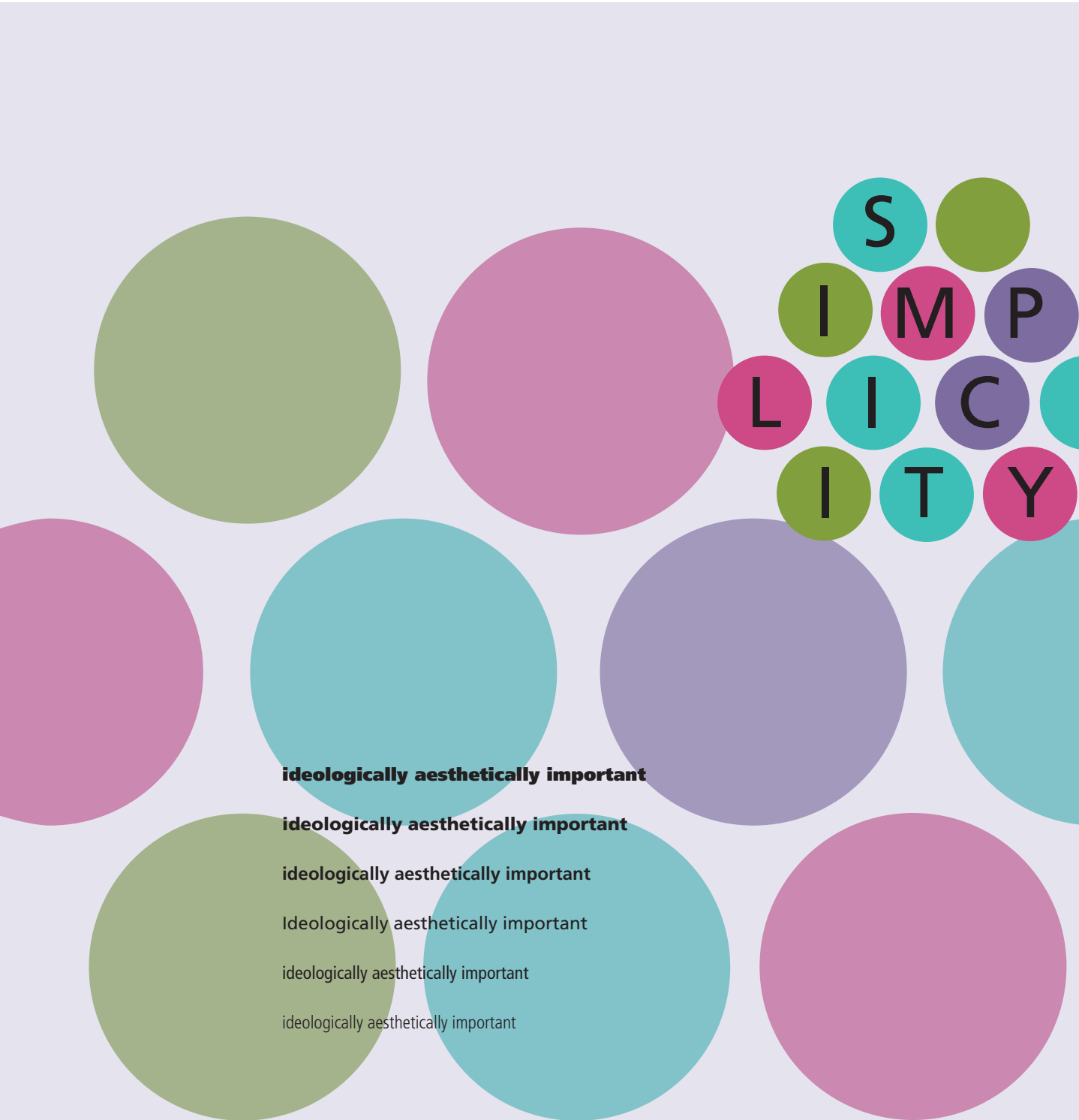
S
I M P
L I C
I T Y

ideologically aesthetically important

ideologically aesthetically important

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Ideologically aesthetically important

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ideologically aesthetically important

Frutiger
My Favourite Sans Serif Text Face

F rutiger. This is a sensible typeface designed by Adrian Frutiger. It has a contemporary feel as it is simple and clean, robust and highly legible.

Originally it was intended to be used for airport signage, (suitable to the Charles de Gaulle Airport outside Paris) but Frutiger has a universal quality that makes it appropriate for many applications.

Ideologically and aesthetically this typeface is important because Adrian Frutiger is a designer of typefaces driven by application and end use.

Frutiger's work is deeply modern and relevant. He demonstrated how type designers have to make work suitable for their time, not the past.

Some have suggested that the font Myriad is taken from Frutiger. What does Frutiger think?

Of course Myriad was influenced by Frutiger, but so have been a hundred others. Frutiger recognizes that Myriad has enough of a different look to be part of the normal process of designers: being strongly influenced by others, both past and present, but taking their ideas and making something significantly different.
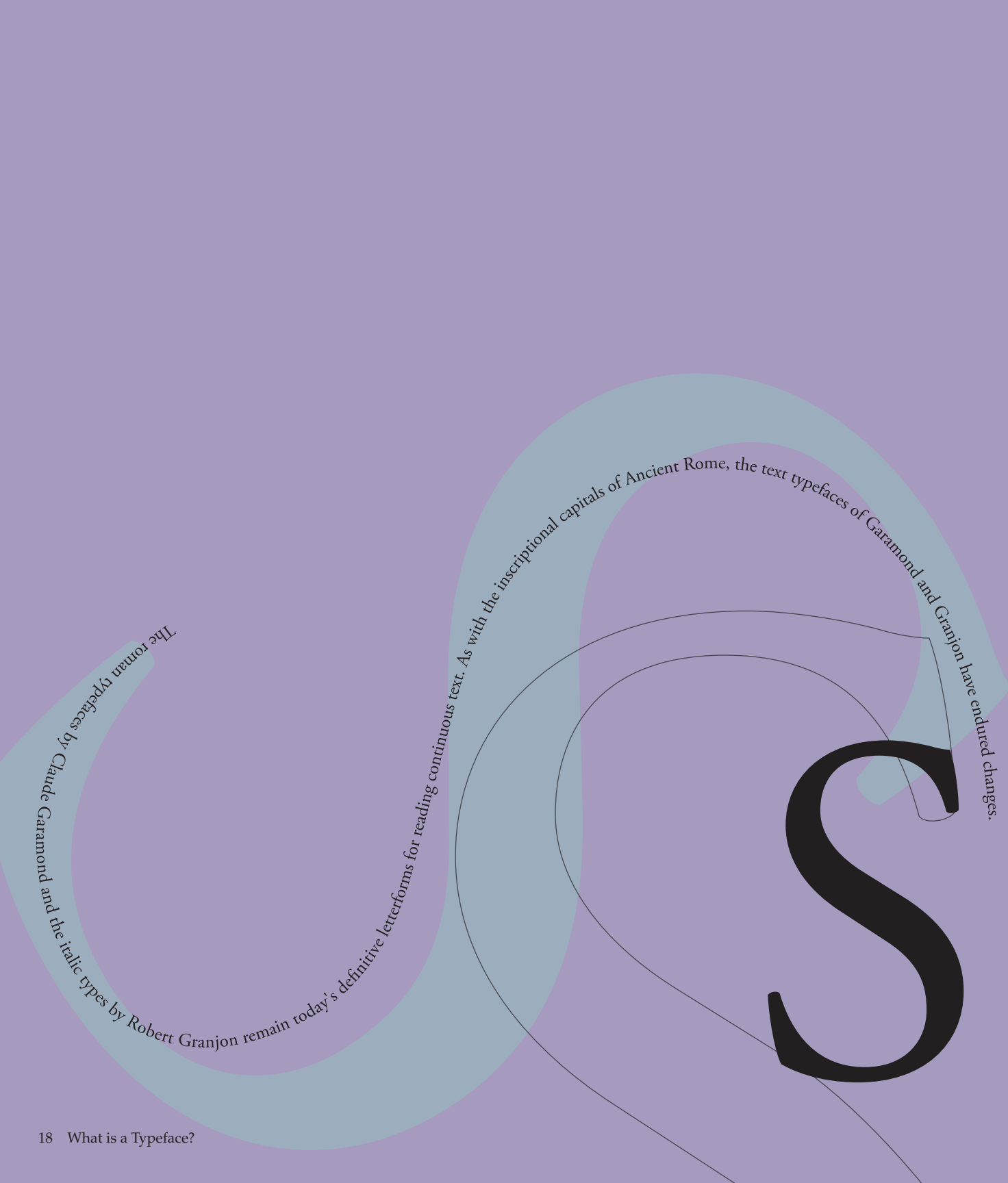
The amazing thing about Claude Garamond's types was that they were exquisitely cut. Seems that no types had been so balanced, nuanced, graceful and even-textured before. At the time this would be a major feat since every punch was hand-cut. There are so many types to choose from, many of them variations on Garamond, that Garamond has become a genre itself. The times are very different now. And our idea of what is beautiful and even-textured has evolved. For instance, in Garamond's time there weren't a slew of humanist sans designs to choose from, or even any sans designs to select from. Really, Garamond (the genre) is a very sturdy and readable kind of type, so it's had longevity. That long life is one reason it's admired.

My Favourite Serif Text Face
Garamond

Garamond is a seriffed type designed by Claude Garamond that is admired for it being readable, elegant and for its having an even color. Garamond is distinguishable in that it has a really low x-height.

Garamond has come to represent the traditional typographic form of type's first three and a half centuries. I enjoy it because it is a classic.

Garamond is the quintessential oldstyle face, and embodies the qualities of longevity and durability. Garamond is great because readers generally find it easy on the eyes. There have been a lot of technically great font designs that have come and gone over the years because people just don't enjoy looking at them, but Garamond is one of the few typefaces that just holds up over the centuries.

There are roughly 5–6 typeface declinations from the original drawn by Claude Garamond. Interestingly there are subtle differences in each family around the anatomy of the characters. Following are declinations of Garamond:

• Garamond Simoncini
• Adobe Garamond
• Garamond Monotype
• Garamond Berthold
• Garamond ITC
• Garamond Stempel

setting up a grid

A basic grid for working with type
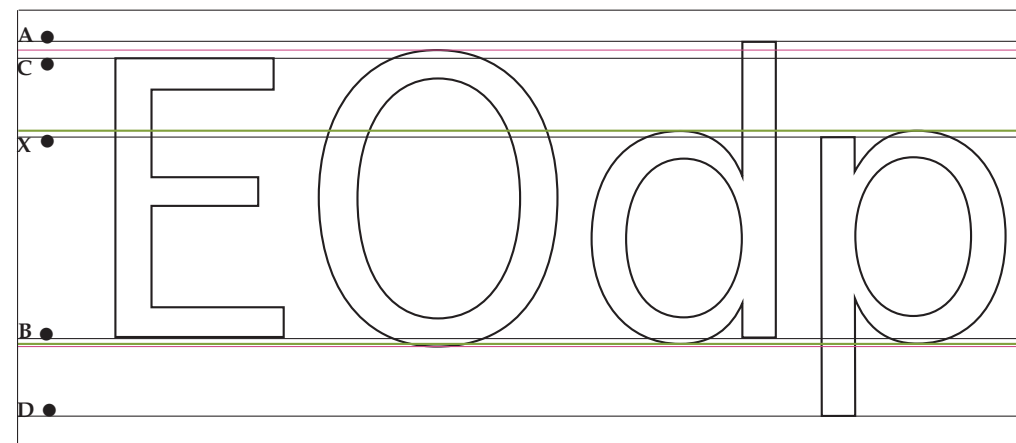
GUIDES
A: Ascender
B: Baseline
C: Cap Height
D: Descender
X: x-height

NOTE: For all round characters (both UC & LC), you must overshoot the guides just slightly.
Red Guides: overshoot guide for CAPS.
Green Guides: overshoot guide for LC.

How the Grid Works with a Character

Type designer Patrick Griffin gave us a quick lesson in type design. He shared the following tips with us to keep in mind when designing type.

First it is important to keep track of the math as you work. When designing type a grid is used. The grid ensures consistency in the design. Important grid lines are explained here:

- **Baseline:** Where the base of the letter sits.
- **Cap Height:** This is the line that indicates the height of the capital letters.

- **X-height:** This line marks the height of the lowercase letters—specifically the x.
- **Ascender:** This line indicates the height of the ascenders in the lowercase.
- **Descender:** This line indicates the depth of the descenders in the lowercase.
- **Overshoot guide for caps:** This guide shows how high the overshoots should reach for capital letters. Letters that need overshoots are curved on top or pointed.
- **Overshoot guide for lower case:** This guide shows how low to extend the overshoots for lowercase characters.

Procedure
Start with the Uppercase and begin with the letter I. From this capital I you can build the H, T, L, E, F so simply copy & paste in order to construct these letters. Keep in mind that the vertical strokes should always be slightly thicker than the horizontal strokes. Letters need as much in common with each other as possible.

Diagonals
When constructing letters that have diagonal strokes, the diagonals should be slightly thicker than verticals but there is no exact formula for making diagonals the correct stroke width; this is something that needs to be done by eye. Keep in mind that Y, M, N, R all have different angles of diagonals; likewise be careful with K and Z.

Rounds
For round letters, start with the capital O and model other round letters like C, D on this. To construct the O, match the top and bottom widths to the width of the horizontal strokes; match the sides to the width of the vertical strokes. Overshoots are needed for optical reasons. The O has overshoots on the horizontal and vertical strokes of curves, so increase slightly the widths here. For lowercase letters, they are thinner vertically and horizontally (not as bold or thick as upper case). Remember to always do the Upper Case first. The overshoots for Lower Case letters is slightly lower than that of the Upper Case letters. All lowercase letters except for z need overshoots.

When designing a typeface work in Illustrator. Remember to use closed paths. Ideally letters should be constructed with as few points as possible—extra unnecessary points can give an uneven appearance (the jaggies).

kris SOWERSBY
TYPE DESIGNER

Kris Sowersby is an independent type designer, typographer and graphic designer. Based in Wellington, the capital of New Zealand, he runs the Klim Type Foundry. Three of his typefaces have won awards. Here are excerpts from a interview with him.

How did you get started with type?

There was a point at design school when I realised that I loved drawing letterforms, so much so that I would prefer to make typefaces than become a graphic designer. I think it was when I was drawing Bembo letter by letter, trying to understand how it was put together. I noticed that the arch of the 'n' subtly curves into the right-hand stem, all the way to the serif.

For some reason that struck me as being quite amazing. It is a detail that would seem rather innocuous, yet lends so much warmth and character

to the overall printed impression. I still have that sketch, I wrote "cheeky Bembo!" next to it.

What is your favourite part of the designing process?

I have two parts. The first is the initial sketching and drawing, figuring out the how and why of the face. This is the most creative, engaging part of the process. The second part is finishing a typeface, getting it on the shelf or delivered to the client. This is good for two reasons: the job is complete and I can get paid.

"Why else would I spend countless hours doing it?"

Hi!

Fejoia Type Specimen by Kris Sowersby

When Kris Sowersby was asked "Why Type Design (as opposed to, say, bear wrestling in the circus)?" he replied, "Because I love it! Why else would I spend countless hours doing it?"

Patrick
TYPE GRIFFIN
DESIGNER

Meet Patrick Griffin, the passionate font guy in the leather hat. A few months into his rookie year, colleagues began calling him a type freak. Most could not relate to the obsession, even those who were doing the exact things he was. He says "So I think it's the other way around. You don't get into type. Type gets into you."

How did you manage to create such a huge number of fonts in just five years?

Hard work, constant learning and good planning help a lot, but I think it's mostly the love of it. When you love what you do, you are willing to put long hours into it every day.

I found that after a while of doing this stuff, type becomes a constant preoccupation of the mind, always running somewhere in the background while I'm doing other stuff, like the tune in your head that doesn't go away for days. Sometimes it worms itself into daily life in general. Like instead of being angry at a parking ticket, I find myself checking out its design and the fonts that were used on it.

When type has such a hold on you, it becomes a second skin and comes out of you in spades. It's one of those things that can be a gift or a curse, depending on the situation.

"..type becomes.. like the tune in your head that doesn't go away for days"

Big Love

Memoriam Typeface by Patrick Griffin

Did you know Patrick Griffin has a background is design in general, and set design in particular? Designing props, sets and collaterals for dramatized documentaries and commercials. He did that for about sixteen years, and these were his first exposures to type.

Alex
HAIGH
TYPE DESIGNER

Alex Haigh is a freelance senior designer/art director originally from Sheffield. He runs a studio called Thinkdust and also works alongside large digital agencies on large accounts for well known brands.

When did you first notice your interest in design and typography?

It all started when I left school and studied graphic design in Sheffield, back in 2001. Whilst studying I had a part time jobs to fund my way through education. Although not the most glamorous of scenes, thinking back my first ever design related job was my core foundation and introduction into typography. It began at a Sheffield Newspaper. I would finish college and then go to work until around 2 in the morning setting small text adverts for the newspaper. After around 2 months of doing this I found myself beginning to craft. It was quite funny really as I found I wasn't satisfied, I never am in life. So whilst the other co-workers were typing adverts straight out and saving I would purposely work quicker to spend time on the kerning, leading, and generally just experimenting with type to see what worked. These were the core basics and probably the most important

"..like everything else design related in my life, it turned from attention to obsession"

introduction I could have had. Following this like everything else design related in my life, it turned from "attention" to "obsession".

After your first fonts, when did you decide to open a type foundry?

We live in an era where anyone with a computer and basic knowledge can easily create something, yet actual quality is a completely separate entity. I am sure many others find this problem is also related to graphic design. I respect the days where computers were not around, and design was all in the detail, craft and talent. Unfortunately this technical side opens up the doors to dilution. If you've got freehand/illustrator and fontlab you can create a typeface, it's as simple as that. The real question is, what percentage of the typefaces produced over the past 4 years hold real aesthetic and technical quality? This is one of the two reasons I started the Hype For Type foundry, beautiful typefaces, high technical quality, and affordable for designers. As any designer knows if you've got a nice print or digital project, finding something that's got both an aesthetic and technical quality is tough. Finding this for an affordable price, even tougher.

Any words for those that want to start designing types?

I would say just throw yourself into it, everyone always has plenty to learn, and it's always as with everything a case of working extremely hard, and keeping that drive and focus.

MIYAGI
A TRIBUTE
TO THE FAMOUS
LETRASET 1980'S
YAGI LINK DOUBLE.
A PREVIEW IN FINER
DETAIL

Miyagi Typeface Designed by Alex Haigh

What advice does Alex Haigh have for the young wanna-be typographers?
"I think you have to be patient, through creating my own typefaces I have learnt that if you give up on a letter just because you're finding it difficult to suit the overall composition, it can end up destroying the entire typeface. So be patient, take your time and try to make everything feel like a family in the same way you would design a brand identity or website."

about
the author

Catrina Padmore is a Toronto city dweller, with interests in illustration, dance, motorcycles, wayfinding, city events and discovering innovative ways to meet the challenges of being a single parent.

Catrina has been a part time student at George Brown College School of Design since 2004. What does the future hold for Catrina? "Well, it's kind of like looking in my kitchen spice cupboard. My daughter tells me she likes to go in there just to smell the spices and by the way can she have some of those little silver balls? There are seasonings from around the world, sauces, baking essentials, custard powders, cupcake holders, honey, even a little rum. It's the promisings of something good—so many of the ingredients are there.

My design future is like that. Having picked up a healthy dose of life experience, collecting some core design courses, engaging in creative interests, these are like my kitchen cupboard. I am more and more willing and prepared to try anything design related—the ingredients are there."

notes

Typographic requirements
Bullets: see page 20
Typographic Texture: see pages 6,10, 12, 19
Photography: Catrina Padmore page 2, 20

credits

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