CURATOR : JOSEPH WESNER
Linda Ferguson

SCULPTURE

Steve Handschu
James Hay
Matthew Holl and**SCULPTURE**
Gary Laatsch
Brian Liljeblad
Dora Natella
Matthew Schellenberg
Richard String

Michell Thomas

Robert Wilhelm

Opening Reception : Friday June 8, 5:30—8:30 pm

JUNE 8—JULY 7, 1990

Detroit Focus Gallery (313)962 -90 2 5
743 Beaubien, Third Floor
DETROIT, MICHIGAN 48226
WEDNESDAY - SATURDAY
Hours: Noon to 6 pm

ALSO IN THE AREA: THE MARKET PRESENTS Peter Gilleran · Gordon Orear   Opening 5 - 7:30 pm. Friday, June 8.

ED FELLA *produced a body of experimental typography that strongly influenced typeface design in the 1990s. His posters for the Detroit Focus Gallery feature damaged and defective forms, drawn by hand or culled from third-generation photocopies or from sheets of transfer lettering.* Collection of the Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum.

TYPE AS NARRATIVE

In the early 1990s, as digital design tools began supporting the seamless reproduction and integration of media, many designers grew dissatisfied with clean, unsullied surfaces, seeking instead to plunge the letter into the harsh and caustic world of physical processes. Letters, which for centuries had sought perfection in ever more exact technologies, became scratched, bent, bruised, and polluted.

Template Gothic: flawed technology

Barry Deck's typeface Template Gothic, designed in 1990, is based on letters drawn with a plastic stencil. The typeface thus refers to a process that is at once mechanical and manual. Deck designed Template Gothic while he was a student of Ed Fella, whose experimental posters inspired a generation of digital typographers. After Template Gothic was released commercially by Emigre Fonts, its use spread worldwide, making it an emblem of "digital typography" for the 1990s.

Dead History: feeding on the past

P. Scott Makela's typeface Dead History, also designed in 1990, is a pastiche of two existing typefaces: the traditional serif font Centennial and the Pop classic VAG Rounded. By manipulating the vectors of readymade fonts, Makela adopted the sampling strategy employed in contemporary art and music. He also referred to the importance of history and precedent, which play a role in nearly every typographic innovation.

CcDdEeFfGgHhIiJjKk

The Dutch typographers Erik von Blokland and Just van Rossum have combined the roles of designer and programmer, creating typefaces that embrace chance, change, and uncertainty. Their 1990 typeface Beowulf was the first in a series of typefaces with randomized outlines and programmed behaviors.

The industrial methods of producing typography meant that all letters had to be identical….Typography is now produced with sophisticated equipment that doesn't impose such rules. The only limitations are in our expectations. Erik van Blokland and Just van Rossum, 2000

BACK TO WORK

Although the 1990s are best remembered for images of decay, typeface designers continued to build a repertoire of general purpose fonts designed to comfortably accommodate broad bodies of text. Rather than narrate the story of their own birth, such workhorse fonts provide graphic designers with flexible palettes of letterforms coordinated within larger families.

Mrs Eaves: working woman

Zuzana Licko, fearless pioneer of the digital dawn, produced historical revivals during the 1990s alongside her experimental display faces. Her 1996 typeface Mrs Eaves, inspired by the eighteenth-century types of John Baskerville (and named after his mistress and housekeeper Sarah Eaves), became one of the most popular typefaces of its time.

Quadraat: all-purpose Baroque

Designed in the Netherlands, typefaces such as Martin Majoor's Scala (used for the text of this book) and Fred Smeijers's Quadraat offer crisp interpretations of typographic tradition. These typefaces look back to sixteenth-century printing from a contemporary point of view, as seen in their decisively geometric serifs. Introduced in 1992, the Quadraat family has expanded to include sans-serif forms in numerous weights and styles.

Gotham: blue-collar curves

In 2000 Tobias Frere-Jones introduced Gotham, derived from letters found at the Port Authority Bus Terminal in New York City. Gotham expresses a no-nonsense, utilitarian attitude that persists today alongside the aesthetics of grunge, neofuturism, pop-culture parodies, and straight historical revivals that are all part of contemporary typography.

When choosing a font, graphic designers consider the history of typefaces and their current connotations as well as their formal qualities. The goal is to find an appropriate match between a style of letters and the specific social situation and body of content that define the project at hand. There is no playbook that assigns a fixed meaning or function to every typeface; each designer must confront the library of possibilities in light of a project's unique circumstances.
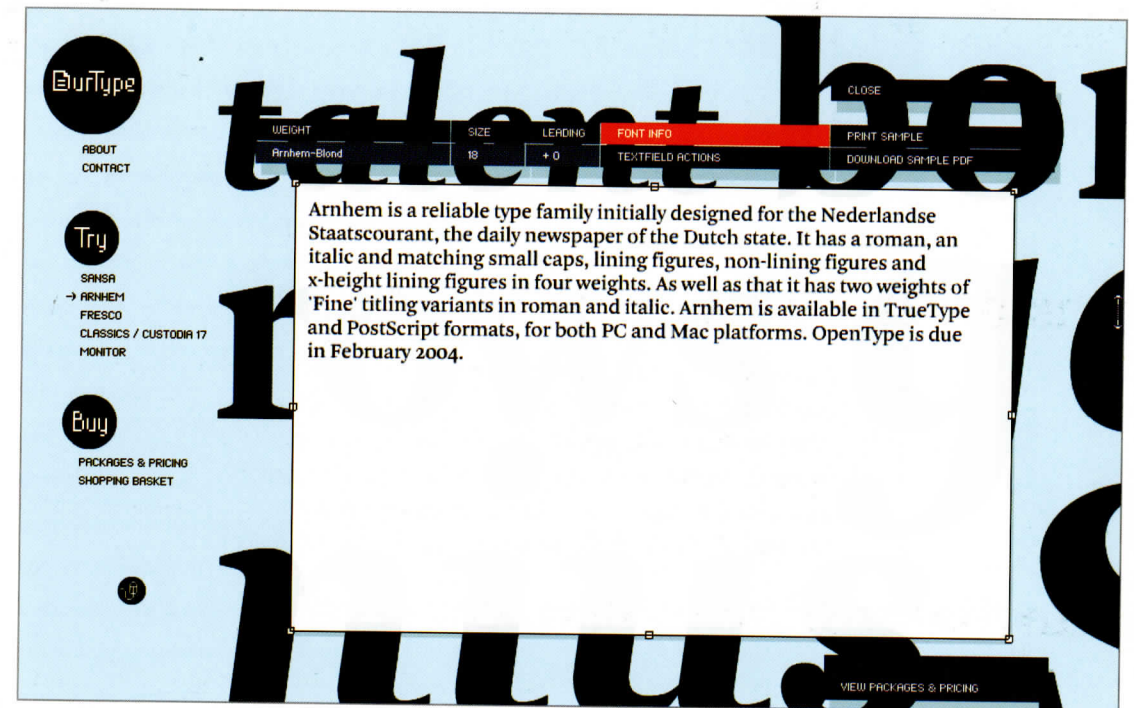
OURTYPE.COM
Web site, 2004
Designers and publishers: Fred Smeijers and Rudy Geeraerts
This Flash-based Web site for a digital type foundry allows users to test fonts on the fly. The designers launched their own "label" after creating fonts such as Quadraat for FontShop International. Displayed here is the typeface Arnhem.

Can we envision

1. a font that asks more questions than it answe...
2. a font that has projective memory that reminds you to rememb...
3. a font with a limited life spa...
4. a font with an expiry da...
5. a font that's gone ba...
6. a font without temporal inflection, without the imprint of its tim...
7. an apolitical font, a font that doesn't ca...
8. a font unaffected by the force of gravity and the weight of human histo...
9. a font without family, without ances...
10. a Marshall McLuhan font that stubbornly persists in bidding farewell to itse...
11. a font that takes advantage of all that promised "processing power...
12. a font that does something other than sit on its ass in a digital museu...
13. a font with the capacity to breed with other fon...
14. a recombinant font — every letterform the unruly child of a predictable but random proces...
15. a font that sounds as good as it loo...
16. a font that writes its own scri...
17. a font that thickens the pl...
18. a font that responds and reacts to the meaning it carries and conve...
19. a font that assumes the intelligence of its reade...
20. a font that might sense your level of agitation, fear, or aggressi...
21. a font prone to sudden outbursts and tantrum...
22. a font that exceeds the typographic geno...
23. a font whose parents are Father Time and the Mother of Inven...
24. an ambient font, a font without qualiti...
25. an everyday font, a font of common s...

26. a font that slows the pace of reading for the difficult passages (and skips along through easy bits)
27. a font that writes between the lines
28. a font that refuses to utter imperatives or commands
29. a karaoke font, a lip-synching font, a font without a voice of its own
30. a font that listens while it speaks
31. a font that toggles effortlessly between languages
32. a font for speaking in tongues
33. a font that speaks in dialects
34. a metropolitan font for uptown, the ghetto, and suburbia alike
35. a font that simultaneously translates
36. a font that sings the plaintive songs of lonely whales
37. a font that grows
38. a font that learns
39. an evolutionary font
40. an entropic font
41. a "live" font
42. a promiscuous font, a font that fucks fonts, a font-fucking-font
43. a font that emerges, unfolds, performs, evolves, and passes away
44. a font of youth
45. twin fonts, identical but distinct
46. a generative font that renders itself according to behavioral tendencies
47. a font that is something other than a recording
48. a font that is different every time you "play" it
49. a font with the metabolism of a fly
50. a font with a demographic algorithm that projects itself onto you, the average reader
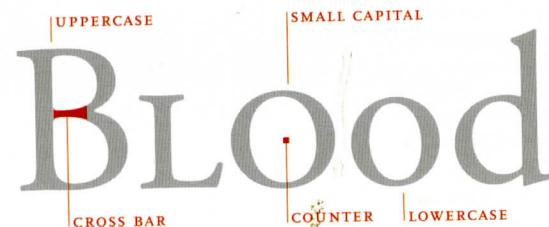
LIFE STYLE
Book, 2000
Designer and author: Bruce Mau
Publisher: Phaidon
Photograph: Dan Meyers

In this post-industrial manifesto, graphic designer Bruce Mau imagines a typeface that comes alive with simulated intelligence.

Fancy

CAP HEIGHT
X-HEIGHT
BASELINE
STEM BOWL SERIF DESCENDER

flesh

LIGATURE ASCENDER
FINIAL

fresh

TERMINAL ASCENDER
SPINE

Blood

UPPERCASE SMALL CAPITAL
CROSS BAR COUNTER LOWERCASE

Some elements may extend slightly above the cap height.

CAP HEIGHT
is the distance from the baseline to the top of capital letter. The cap height of a typeface determines its point size.

skin, Bones

X-HEIGHT *is the height of the main body of the lowercase letter (or the height of a lowercase x), excluding its ascenders and descenders.*

THE BASELINE *is where all the letters sit. This is the most stable axis along a line of text, and it is a crucial edge for aligning text with images or with other text.*

The curves at the bottom of letters such as o or e hang slightly below the baseline. Commas and semicolons also cross the baseline. If a typeface were not positioned this way, it would appear to teeter precariously, lacking a sense of physical grounding.

body

Although kids learn to write using ruled paper that divides letters exactly in half, most typefaces are not designed that way. The x-height usually occupies slightly more than half of the cap height. The bigger the x-height is in relation to the cap height, the bigger the letters will look. In a field of text, the greatest density occurs between the baseline and the top of the x-height.

Hey, look!
They supersized
my x-height.

Two blocks of text are often aligned along a shared baseline. Here, 14/18 Scala (14-pt type with 18 pts of line spacing) is paired with 7/9 Scala.

*12 points
equal 1 pica*

*6 picas
(72 points)
equal 1 inch*

Big

60-POINT SCALA
*A typeface is measured
from the top of the
capital letter to the
bottom of the lowest
descender, plus a small
buffer space.*

*In metal type,
the point size
is the height of
the type slug.*

HEIGHT Attempts to standardize the measurement of type began in the eighteenth century. The *point system,* used to measure the height of a letter as well as the distance between lines (*leading*), is the standard used today. One *point* equals 1/72 inch or .35 millimeters. Twelve points equal one *pica,* the unit commonly used to measure column widths.

Typography also can be measured in inches, millimeters, or pixels. Most software applications let the designer choose a preferred unit of measure; picas and points are a standard default.

ABBREVIATING PICAS AND POINTS

8 picas = 8p

8 points = p8, 8 pts

8 picas, 4 points = 8p4

8-point Helvetica with 9 points of line spacing =
8/9 Helvetica

WIDE LOAD

INTERSTATE BLACK
*The set width is the body of the letter
plus the space beside it.*

TIGHT WAD

INTERSTATE BLACK COMPRESSED
*The letters in the condensed version of the typeface
have a narrower set width.*

WIDE LOAD

TIGHT WAD

TYPE CRIME:
HORIZONTAL & VERTICAL SCALING
*The proportions of the letters have been
digitally distorted in order to create wider
or narrower letters.*

WIDTH A letter also has a horizontal measure, called its *set width.* The set width is the body of the letter plus a sliver of space that protects it from other letters. The width of a letter is intrinsic to the proportion of the typeface. Some typefaces have a narrow set width, and some have a wide one.

You can change the set width of a typeface by fiddling with its horizontal or vertical scale. This distorts the proportion of the letters, forcing heavy elements to become thin, and thin elements to become thick. Instead of torturing a letterform, choose a typeface with the proportions you need, such as condensed, compressed, or extended.

32-PT SCALA **32-PT INTERSTATE REGULAR** **32-PT BODONI** **32-PT MRS EAVES**

Do I **look fat** in this paragraph?

*These letters are all the same point size, but they have different
x-heights, line weights, and proportions.*

When two typefaces are set in the same point size, one often looks bigger than the other. Differences in x-height, line weight, and character width affect the letters' apparent scale.

*Mrs Eaves, designed by Zuzana Licko in 1996,
rejects the twentieth-century appetite for
supersized x-heights. The font, inspired by the
eighteenth-century designs of John Baskerville,
is named after Sarah Eaves, Baskerville's
mistress, housekeeper, and collaborator.
The couple lived together for sixteen years
before marrying in 1764.*

nice *x-height*

48-PT HELVETICA **48-PT MRS EAVES**

*Bigger x-heights, introduced in the twentieth
century, make fonts look larger by maximizing
the area within the overall point size.*

Every typeface wants to know, "Do I look fat in this paragraph?" It's all a matter of context. A font could look perfectly sleek on screen, yet appear bulky and out of shape in print. Some typefaces are drawn with heavier lines than others, or they have taller x-heights. Helvetica isn't fat. She has big bones.

9/12 HELVETICA

Every typeface wants to know, "Do I look fat in this paragraph?" It's all a matter of context. A font could look perfectly sleek on screen, yet appear bulky and out of shape in print.

12/14 HELVETICA

Every typeface wants to know, "Do I look fat in this paragraph?" It's all a matter of context. A font could look perfectly sleek on screen, yet appear bulky and out of shape in print. Some typefaces are drawn with heavier lines than others or have taller x-heights. Mrs Eaves has a low waist and a small body.

9/12 MRS EAVES

Every typeface wants to know: "Do I look fat in this paragraph?" It's all a matter of context. A font could look perfectly sleek on screen, yet appear bulky and out of shape in print. Mrs. Eaves has a low waist and a small body.

12/14 MRS EAVES

*The default type size in many software applications is 12 pts.
Although this generally creates readable type on screen displays,
12-pt text type usually looks big and horsey on a printed page.
(12 pts is a good size for children's books.) Sizes between 9 and 11
pts are common for printed text. This caption is 7.5 pts.*

Revolver
Heft 2

die schä-del knacken hören

JASPER MORRISON:
EVERYTHING BUT THE WALLS
Book, 2002
Book designers: Jasper
Morrison, Lars Müller,
Matilda Plöjel
Publisher: Lars Müller
Cappellini store windows
designed by Jasper Morrison
Photograph: Dan Meyers
Typography is realized at an
urban scale in this storefront
created by the industrial designer
Jasper Morrison. The existing
architecture determines the size
and pacing of the monumental
letters.

SABON
Aa
HUMANIST OR OLD STYLE
The roman typefaces of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries emulated classical calligraphy. Sabon was designed by Jan Tschichold in 1966, based on the sixteenth-century typefaces of Claude Garamond.

BASKERVILLE
Aa
TRANSITIONAL
These typefaces have sharper serifs and a more vertical axis than humanist letters. When the fonts of John Baskerville were introduced in the mid-eighteenth century, their sharp forms and high contrast were considered shocking.

BODONI
Aa
MODERN
The typefaces designed by Giambattista Bodoni in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries are radically abstract. Note the thin, straight serifs; vertical axis; and sharp contrast from thick to thin strokes.

TYPE CLASSIFICATION A basic system for classifying typefaces was devised in the nineteenth century, when printers sought to identify a heritage for their own craft analogous to that of art history. *Humanist* 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 roughly to the Renaissance, Baroque, and Enlightenment periods in art and literature. Historians and critics of typography have since proposed more finely grained schemes that attempt to better capture the diversity of letterforms. Designers in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have continued to create new typefaces based on historic characteristics.

CLARENDON
Aa
EGYPTIAN OR SLAB SERIF
Numerous bold and decorative typefaces were introduced in the nineteenth century for use in advertising. Egyptian fonts have heavy, slablike serifs.

GILL SANS
Aa
HUMANIST SANS SERIF
Sans-serif typefaces became common in the twentieth century. Gill Sans, designed by Eric Gill in 1928, has humanist characteristics. Note the small, lilting counter in the letter a, and the calligraphic variations in line weight.

HELVETICA
Aa
TRANSITIONAL SANS SERIF
Helvetica, designed by Max Miedinger in 1957, is one of the world's most widely used typefaces. Its uniform, upright character makes it similar to transitional serif letters. These fonts are also referred to as "anonymous sans serif."

FUTURA
Aa
GEOMETRIC SANS SERIF
Some sans-serif types are built around geometric forms. In Futura, designed by Paul Renner in 1927, the Os are perfect circles, and the peaks of the A and M are sharp triangles.

Sabon
14-PT SABON

This is not a book about fonts. It is a book about how to use them. Typefaces are essential resources for the graphic designer, just as glass, stone, steel, and other materials are employed by the architect.
9/12 SABON

Selecting type with wit and wisdom requires knowledge of how and why letterforms evolved.
7/9

Baskerville
14-PT BASKERVILLE

This is not a book about fonts. It is a book about how to use them. Typefaces are essential resources for the graphic designer, just as glass, stone, steel, and other materials are employed by the architect.
9/12 BASKERVILLE

Selecting type with wit and wisdom requires knowledge of how and why letterforms evolved.
7/9

Bodoni
14-PT BODONI

This is not a book about fonts. It is a book about how to use them. Typefaces are essential resources for the graphic designer, just as glass, stone, steel, and other materials are employed by the architect.
9.5/12 BODONI BOOK

Selecting type with wit and wisdom requires knowledge of how and why letterforms evolved.
7.5/9

Clarendon
14-PT CLARENDON LIGHT

This is not a book about fonts. It is a book about how to use them. Typefaces are essential resources for the graphic designer, just as glass, stone, steel, and other materials are employed by the architect.
8/12 CLARENDON LIGHT

Selecting type with wit and wisdom requires knowledge of how and why letterforms evolved.
6/9

Gill Sans
14-PT GILL SANS

This is not a book about fonts. It is a book about how to use them. Typefaces are essential resources for the graphic designer, just as glass, stone, steel, and other materials are employed by the architect.
9/12 GILL SANS REGULAR

Selecting type with wit and wisdom requires knowledge of how and why letterforms evolved.
7/9

Helvetica
14-PT HELVETICA

This is not a book about fonts. It is a book about how to use them. Typefaces are essential resources for the graphic designer, just as glass, stone, steel, and other materials are employed by the architect.
8/12 HELVETICA REGULAR

Selecting type with wit and wisdom requires knowledge of how and why letterforms evolved.
6/9

Futura
14-PT FUTURA

This is not a book about fonts. It is a book about how to use them. Typefaces are essential resources for the graphic designer, just as glass, stone, steel, and other materials are employed by the architect.
8.5/12 FUTURA BOOK

Selecting type with wit and wisdom requires knowledge of how and why letterforms evolved.
6.5/9

MCSWEENEY'S
Magazine cover, 2002
Designer and editor:
Dave Eggers
This magazine cover uses the Garamond 3 typeface family in various sizes. Although the typeface is classical and conservative, the obsessive, slightly deranged layout is distinctly contemporary.

The idea of organizing typefaces into matched *families* dates back to the sixteenth century, when printers began coordinating roman and italic faces. The concept was formalized at the turn of the twentieth century.

Adobe Garamond was designed by Robert Slimbach in 1988.

The roman font is the core or spine from which a family of typefaces derives.

ADOBE GARAMOND REGULAR

The roman form, also called "plain" or "regular," is the standard, upright version of a typeface. It is typically conceived as the parent of a larger family.

Italic fonts, which are based on cursive writing, have forms distinct from roman.

ADOBE GARAMOND ITALIC

The italic form is not simply a mechanically slanted version of the roman: it is a separate typeface. Note that the letter a has a different shape in the roman and italic variants of Adobe Garamond.

SMALL CAPS HAVE A HEIGHT THAT IS SIMILAR TO *the lowercase* X-HEIGHT.

ADOBE GARAMOND EXPERT (SMALL CAPS)

Small caps (capitals) are designed to integrate with a line of text, where full-size capitals would stand out awkwardly. Small capitals are slightly taller than the x-height of lowercase letters.

Bold (and semibold) typefaces are used for emphasis within a hierarchy.

ADOBE GARAMOND BOLD AND SEMIBOLD

Bold versions of traditional text fonts were added in the twentieth century to meet the need for emphatic forms. Sans-serif families often include a broad range of weights (thin, bold, black, etc.).

Bold (and semibold) typefaces each need to include an italic version, too.

ADOBE GARAMOND BOLD AND SEMIBOLD ITALIC

The typeface designer tries to make the bold versions feel similar in contrast to the roman, without making the overall form too heavy. The counters need to stay clear and open at small sizes.

A full type family has two sets of numerals: *lining* (123) and *non-lining* (123).

ADOBE GARAMOND REGULAR AND EXPERT NUMERALS

Lining numerals occupy uniform units of horizontal space, so that the numbers line up when used in tabulated columns. Non-lining numerals, also called "text" or "old style" numerals, have a small body size plus ascenders and descenders, so that they mix well on a line with lowercase letters.

A *type* **family** CAN BE faked by *slanting,* or **inflating,** or SHRINKING letters.

ITALIC   BOLD   SMALL CAPS

TYPE CRIME:
PSEUDO ITALICS
The wide, ungainly forms of these skewed letters look forced and unnatural.

TYPE CRIME:
PSEUDO BOLD
Padded around the edges, these letters feel blunt and dull.

TYPE CRIME:
PSEUDO SMALL CAPS
These shrunken versions of full-size caps are puny and starved.

THESIS FAMILY

Designed by Lucas de Groot, LucasFonts, 1994
Thesis is one of the world's largest type families.

This is not a book about fonts. It is a book about how to use them. Typefaces
THESIS SERIF MEDIUM ROMAN

are essential resources for the graphic designer, just as glass, stone, steel, and
THESIS SERIF MEDIUM ITALIC

OTHER MATERIALS ARE EMPLOYED BY THE ARCHITECT. SOME DESIGNERS CREATE
THESIS SERIF MEDIUM SMALL CAPS

their own custom fonts. But most
THESIS SERIF BLACK ROMAN

graphic designers will tap the vast
THESIS SERIF EXTRA BOLD ROMAN

store of already existing typefaces,
THESIS SERIF BOLD ROMAN

choosing and combining each with
THESIS SERIF SEMI BOLD ROMAN

regard to the audience or situation.
THESIS SERIF MEDIUM ROMAN

Selecting type with wit and wisdom
THESIS SERIF SEMI LIGHT

requires knowledge of how and why
THESIS SERIF LIGHT ROMAN

letterforms have evolved. The history
THESIS SERIF EXTRA LIGHT ROMAN

of typography reflects a continual tension between the hand and machine, the
THESIS SANS MEDIUM ROMAN

organic and geometric, the human body and the abstract system. These tensions
THESIS SANS MEDIUM ITALIC

MARKED THE BIRTH OF PRINTED LETTERS FIVE CENTURIES AGO, AND THEY CONTINUE TO
THESIS SANS MEDIUM SMALL CAPS

energize typography today. Writing
THESIS SANS BLACK ROMAN

in the West was revolutionized early
THESIS SANS EXTRA BOLD ROMAN

in the Renaissance, when Johannes
THESIS SANS BOLD ROMAN

Gutenberg introduced moveable type
THESIS SANS SEMI BOLD ROMAN

in Germany. Whereas documents and
THESIS SANS MEDIUM ROMAN

books had previously been written by
THESIS SANS SEMI LIGHT ROMAN

hand, printing with type mobilized all
THESIS SANS LIGHT ROMAN

of the techniques of mass production.
THESIS SANS EXTRA LIGHT ROMAN

Interstate Light
Interstate Light Compressed
Interstate Light Condensed
Interstate Regular
Interstate Regular Compressed
Interstate Regular Condensed
Interstate Bold
Interstate Bold Compressed
Interstate Bold Condensed
Interstate Black
Interstate Black Compressed
Interstate Black Condensed

Designed by Tobias Frere-Jones, Font Bureau, 1993
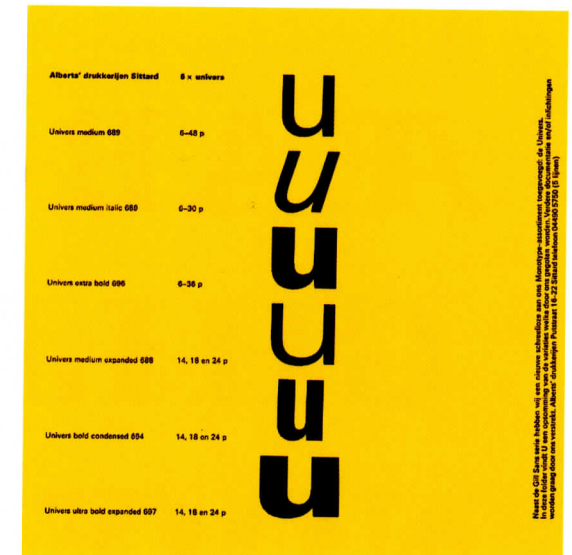
UNIVERS *was designed by the Swiss typographer Adrian Frutiger in 1957. He designed 21 versions of Univers, in five weights and five widths. Whereas many typographic families grow over time as they become popular, Univers was conceived as a total system from its inception.*

Scala
Scala Italic
SCALA CAPS
Scala Bold

Scala Sans
Scala Sans Italic
SCALA SANS CAPS
Scala Sans Bold
Scala Sans Bold

SCALA JEWEL CRYSTAL
SCALA JEWEL DIAMOND
SCALA JEWEL PEARL
SCALA JEWEL SAPHYR

Martin Majoor's Scala, used throughout this book, began as a serif typeface. Majoor later added a sans-serif sub-family as well as an ornamental "jewel" set. Majoor's diagram above shows how the serif and sans-serif forms have a common spine.

A traditional roman book face typically has a small family—a "nuclear" group consisting of roman, italic, small caps, and possibly bold and semibold (each with an italic variant). Sans-serif families often come in many more weights and sizes, such as thin, light, black, compressed, and condensed. In the 1990s, many type designers created families that include both serif and sans-serif versions. Small capitals and non-lining numerals (a courtesy traditionally reserved for serif fonts) are included in the sans-serif versions of Thesis, Scala, and many other big contemporary families.