

Foreword

✍ Erik Spiekermann
2006

set in FF Meta Pro
(with Discretionary Ligatures switched on)

HOW DO YOU celebrate fifteen years of FontFonts? Give away free fonts? Organise a party? Publish a book?

Well, we wouldn't be designers if the idea of a book wouldn't have been the most appealing. Little did we know what we had got ourselves in for: we not only thought we could do this easily, but also quickly and on time. Not to mention within the budget. A familiar plight to us designers, and yet we keep thinking it can be done. We also know that we could (and perhaps should) have spent even more time on getting files in order, checking line-breaks, making sure all our spreads and chokes were correct and hundreds of PMS colours would print as 4c.

Fifteen years ago we had no idea that one day we could fill a 352-page book with showings of FontFonts. In fact, we're not exactly certain when the library was officially launched. Jan Middendorp writes in his introduction on the following pages that Neville and myself "created" a new library of digital type. While, normally, I hate the c-word, we certainly didn't plan very much, relying on our intuition instead. There was no budget, no timetable, no business plan – not a spreadsheet in sight. We just knew all these great designers who now had the tools to do their own type, while we had the tool for distributing them through FontShop. We also knew that we were not the only designers who were ready for alternatives to Helvetica, Times and even Garamond.

All the early FontFont designers were practising graphic designers, not full-time type designers, and they all *used* type every day. We didn't have to do market research to find out what we needed. Our claim "a library from designers for designers" was simply stating a fact.

Meanwhile, more than fifteen years later, I have 3524 FontFonts activated in my font library, and that may not be the latest number. While I'm quoting numbers: this book contains 540 illustrations, counted as links in my InDesign folders. Those include most specimen pages only as *one* illustration, so the real number of individual images that show off our typefaces must be in the thousands.

The work that friends and colleagues have put into the specimen pages and the articles is tremendous – it is incredible that we got all this work just by asking for it. I see it as proof to the fact that the FontFont library still reflects what we designers want and require.

One thing needs pointing out about the articles: Jan collected them from many sources, and most of them were written years ago. We did not edit any content, so they may occasionally mention facts that have been superseded by time and, sometimes, reality.

The people who "officially" produced this book are all credited properly on the previous pages. The many other contributors are mentioned in the final section, from page 348, in alphabetical order. We all share an emotional approach to type: for us, it is more than a tool to do our work with. We *love* type, and we think that this book shows our affection and enthusiasm for all things typographical.

The mistakes are all my fault.

Introduction: From designers by designers

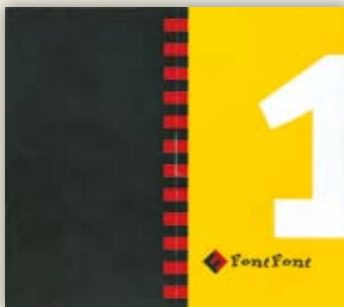
Jan Middendorp
2006

set in FF Meta Pro

When the FontFont type library was founded in 1990, it provided a meaningful alternative to what was then available to graphic designers. Over time, FontFont has grown to become one of the most influential players in the type world; it is now a large library among several others. But some of the initial pioneering spirit has remained intact.

→ A very young Just van Rossum with the first Random Fonts.

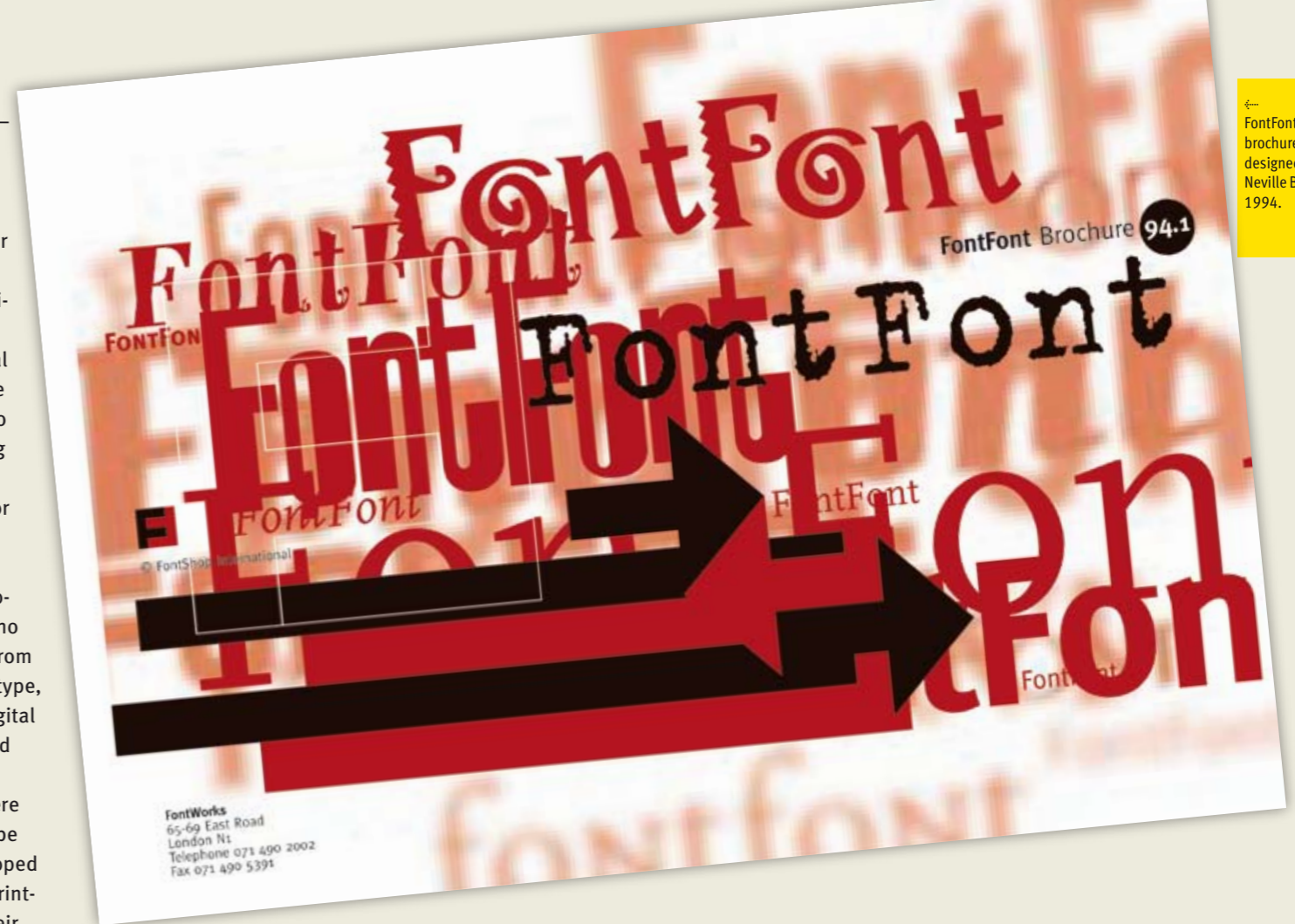
↓ The first FontFont brochures, smaller than a cigarette pack, by Erik Spiekermann.



THE LATE 1980S were an era of unprecedented changes in the world of typography. A new technology – desktop publishing – had recently been introduced and quickly gained popularity. More and more designers and pre-press studios began offering in-position typesetting on a Macintosh computer using Aldus (later Adobe) PageMaker software. In a mere five or six years the scene was to change dramatically, in terms of distribution and technology as well as design. Those design and printing companies that still relied on conventional typesetting, paying specialized firms by the centimetre for slips of text, soon found out that continuing to do so was bad for business; the most forward-looking among them had already begun buying PostScript fonts for their own use. Soon a font would cost about as much, or as little, as a few sheets of set text had cost before.

The type business, however, was slow in catching up. Throughout the 1980s the main players in the typographic world had been a handful of manufacturers who had struggled their way through the quick transition from photographic to digital technologies: Monotype, Linotype, Berthold, Hell. All these firms were still developing digital stand-alone typesetting systems which used dedicated font technologies; specialized type production firms such as ITC, URW and BitStream provided fonts that were customized for each machine. After the advent of Adobe PostScript (a digital page description language developed to streamline the exchange between computers and printing devices), type manufacturers began converting their fonts to the new system. Few, however, realized that the new technology involved new dimensions and a different relationship with customers – and therefore a different mentality. Although the actual production cost of a single copy of a font went down to the price of a diskette, companies continued packaging and marketing their typefaces as if they were still major investments. Yet the quality of the type did not always justify such presumption. A lot of the typefaces in the catalogues had been handed down from the metal era to phototypesetting to digital systems to PostScript, losing part of their character and integrity with each conversion. The new technologies called for new typefaces, but most type foundries reacted conservatively, even arrogantly, to proposals from younger designers.

Type designers were among the first to realize it was time for a change. Two of the first firms specializing in digital type design and production, BitStream and Emigre, had been founded by designers. In the Netherlands, young type designers began organizing themselves in order to exchange information about type production and juridical matters. Then, in 1990, a big change happened. In March of that year Adobe Systems decided to release the specifications of its PostScript Type 1 font format (which had been proprietary software up to then), hoping to turn it into a worldwide standard. This opened up possibilities for every designer to make fonts with simple, affordable font design software.



← FontFont brochure, designed by Neville Brody, 1994.

Never before had type designers had the freedom, the autonomy and the control they were to have from that moment onwards.

FontShop: from distribution to production

The year 1990 was also when designers Erik Spiekermann (Berlin) and Neville Brody (London) created a new library of digital type: FontFont, to be distributed through Spiekermann's firm FontShop, which up to then had limited itself to distributing fonts from other foundries. A separate company, FontShop International (FSI) was founded to act as font publisher.

Erik Spiekermann was one of the very few typographic designers in Germany who operated internationally. He had founded MetaDesign, a Berlin corporate design company that would soon establish offices in London and San Francisco. He had designed typefaces for Berthold AG in Germany and occasionally worked as typographic consultant for Adobe, a Silicon Valley software company that had its own type program. He was also well informed about the activities of recently founded American companies such as BitStream – the first type foundry specialized in digital type – and Emigre Graphics in California. Every time Spiekermann crossed the Atlantic he carried a shopping list from typographer friends in Europe, instructing him as to which new digital typefaces to buy

(they came on floppy disks and diskettes at the time, of course). Most of these emerging type collections did not have a European distributor. It was his wife, Joan Spiekermann Sargent, who suggested to Erik that by stepping into that niche, the type shopping expeditions could be replaced by a real business. So in 1989, the Spiekermanns founded FontShop, Europe's first distributor of type produced for desktop computers; as the slogan went, their activities were performed 'by designers, for designers'.

Graphic designer Neville Brody, one of Spiekermann's London friends, was at the height of his success in the late 1980s, having been the subject of a major exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum and of a successful monograph (*The graphic language of Neville Brody* by Jon Wozencroft, the world's best selling design book). Brody had drawn dozens of alphabets, notably as art director for *The Face* magazine, and had published a few fonts at a major foundry. However, he had not been pleased with the limited control he had over his work and was eager to find new opportunities.

The type library which Brody and Spiekermann envisaged was to have its own design-oriented philosophy; it would be curated and marketed in a way that was distinctly different from what other companies were doing.



↑ Just van Rossum and Erik van Blokland were in Berlin when the Wall came down, November 1989.

→ FF Dolores by Tobias Frere-Jones, 1991, one of the first FontFont releases.

↳ The original FontFont logo by Neville Brody. It was later changed to yellow and black.



When FontFont made its first appearance, it created somewhat of a splash in the type world, and was inevitably scorned by traditional vendors. The collection was in fact like no other. It had some points in common with Emigre – mainly in that it was a library of new fonts by, largely, young designers – but its scope and ambitions were different. While the Emigre library essentially represented the cutting-edge view of two people, Zuzana Licko and Rudy Vanderlans, FontFont was multiform right from the start. It set out to provide type in many different styles and for many purposes: the historically inspired alongside the contemporary; experimental and unorthodox ‘fun fonts’ alongside business-like and pragmatic text faces. And unlike most other libraries, FontFont seldom, if ever, published re-releases of fonts that had been previously available for other technologies.

Unreleased fonts

The FontFont type library was off to a flying start, releasing dozens of remarkable families during its first years. With hindsight, it is amazing how things fell into place within such a brief timespan. Intuition, passion, attitude and serendipity – rather than a carefully calculated master plan – were major factors contributing to FontFont’s early expansion.

Both Spiekermann and Brody had unreleased typefaces from the 1980s waiting in the wings; Brody had several hand-drawn alphabets that could be expanded into complete fonts. Among the early FontFonts based on this work were FF Typeface Four, Six and Seven, iconic faces of the early 1990s, and the FF Tyson/Tokyo series. FF Blur, the first typeface by Brody that explored the specific aesthetics of digital typography, became even more successful. And then there was Spiekermann’s FF Meta. Named after Spiekermann’s design firm MetaDesign, the font was based on a typeface that Spiekermann had drawn in the mid-1980s for the Deutsche Bundespost – although it had never been adopted by the client. While Brody’s faces represented the trendy, display-oriented side of the FontFont library, FF Meta epitomized the pragmatic, conventional-yet-modern aspect. Meta became an instant classic and has remained the best selling FontFont to date.

Parallel to FontFont, Neville Brody developed another project with co-editors Jon Wozencroft and John Critchley. FUSE, published by FSI, took the idea of innovation in typography one step further, to a place where functionality was not an issue any more. FUSE was a series of experimental typefaces and posters; each issue was conceived around a theme, which was contributed to by a host of type designers and graphic designers, many of whom did not have a direct relationship to the FontFont library.

International connections

One of the factors which made possible the rapid growth and diversification of the FontFont library was Brody’s and Spiekermann’s international, informal network of design professionals. Spiekermann has many business relationships and friendships in international typographic circles – notably in the Association Internationale Typographique (ATypI). Moreover, his company MetaDesign had become a fast-growing studio which attracted some of the best young typographic talents from Germany and abroad. Brody was well-placed to convince some of the best talents in British typography to step on board. Among the other people who contributed to FontFont’s internationalization was Ed Cleary, a Toronto-based Brit who was one of the main players in the Canadian type world, ran FontShop Canada and made important contributions to the early editions of FSI’s FontBook, until his untimely death in 1995. Cleary brought unorthodox Toronto designers such as Paul Sych and Barbara Klunder into the FontFont library. Other North American contacts included the founders of Boston’s Font Bureau, David Berlow and Roger Black; Black got involved in the creation of an Italian branch of the FontShop network and Berlow was, among other things, a collaborator on the digitization of Brody’s alphabets. Berlow also introduced Tobias Frere-Jones, who published his very first typeface as a FontFont – the lively, charming FF Dolores.

A key contribution to FontFont’s early growth was made by a group of young Dutch designers, many of whom studied at the Royal Academy of Arts (KABK) in The Hague. The typographer-craftsman-type historian Gerrit Noordzij had established an influential type programme here. Spiekermann hired The Hague graduates Just van Rossum, Erik van Blokland, and later Luc(as) de Groot, as assistants for his corporate type projects at MetaDesign. It was the time when Spiekermann postulated, half-jokingly, that ‘every design studio in Germany needs its Dutchman.’

A type project by Van Rossum and Van Blokland (who called themselves LettError, or LetTerror, depending on the mood) kick-started the type library. While working at MetaDesign in 1989, they began experimenting with the PostScript Type 3 technology in order to spice up digital type design. They wanted to bring back the liveliness of metal type by introducing a random function into digital typography. The result was Beowolf, ‘the world’s first randomfont’, equipped with a built-in algorithm that unpredictably modifies the outlines of each character while sending it to the printing device. Whereas the Dutch twosome saw it as pure experiment



Record sleeve by Neville Brody, featuring his own Typeface 6.

– and found the results rather ugly – their colleagues at MetaDesign were enthusiastic about Beowolf’s graphic possibilities. Spiekermann decided to publish the font, even before the idea of the FontFont collection had materialized. Initially Beowolf was not thought of as the start of a new collection; instead, it served to draw attention to FontShop as a smart, trend-conscious distribution firm.

Once the FontFont library was up and running, the Dutch connection made sure there was a fast growing offer of high-quality typefaces in a wide range of genres. Apart from the designers from The Hague – initially the LettError duo and Peter Verheul, later Luc(as) de Groot and Albert-Jan Pool – there were three designers trained at the Arnhem Academy who contributed some of the most striking text faces of the era: Martin Majoor’s FF Scala, Fred Smeijers’s FF Quadraat, and Evert Bloemsmas’s FF Balance. One of Holland’s most outspoken and iconoclast graphic designers was also recruited by FontFont: Max Kisman, a pioneer of computer-aided graphic design, contributed fonts originally created for magazines such as *Language Technology*, the forerunner of *Wired*.

Kisman and LettError, especially, used their digital tools to break new ground. Kisman’s Fudoni was one of the very first cut-and-paste type hybrids; LettError experimented with self-changing type but also made a series of ‘found fonts’ such as FF Trixie (a typewriter font), FF Hands (digitized handwriting) and FF InstantTypes, based on toy stamp letters and the like. Many of these ‘novelty fonts’ now seem part of a short-lived fashion, but at the time they were genuinely original. No one had done it before and many would imitate them, so that, with hindsight, each of these fonts heralded a new genre.

Local contacts

MetaDesign Berlin, having developed into Germany’s most prominent hothouse of corporate design, attracted many talented designers in the early to mid-1990s; several of them designed typefaces, either within the firm or after hours, which were welcomed to the FontFont catalogue. One such MetaDesigner was Italian-born Alessio Leonardi, who later joined xPLICIT in Frankfurt and went on to start his own company.

FF Thesis™ a typeface family ©
by Luc(as) de Groot

FF TheSans™
FF TheSerif™
FF TheMix™

3 forms 6 styles 8 weights 144 fonts

Plain Plain Plain
Italic Italic Italic
CAPS KLEINKAPITALEN
CAPS ITALIC KLEIN
Expert ~ ☺ ★ ☞
Expert Italic 6 ↗ ☞

Berlin 1994

TheSansCondensed
@Condensed Italic
Available soon

ExtraLight Light SemiLight Regular SemiBold Bold ExtraBold Black

1994: First showing of FF Thesis; with 144 weights the largest type family at the time.

Better known for his hilarious cartoons than for the serious corporate design which he is also capable of doing, Leonardi contributed a large number of entertaining hand-drawn and computer-processed fonts to the library. Another early contributor of unorthodox fonts was Fabian Rottke, designer of FF Ekkor and a number of Dirty Faces, and now a senior designer at Spiekermann's firm United Designers Network. Berlin-born Martin Wenzel was not at MetaDesign directly but worked in the same building: in the early 1990s he was a young typesetter at the Meta-affiliated CitySatz. As a neighbour of FS1 and MetaDesign, Wenzel had little trouble finding a publisher for his well-made early display fonts, such as FF Marten and FF Rekord. After having met Meta's Dutch designers, who had all graduated from the KABK in The Hague, Wenzel decided to travel to the Netherlands and study there in order to learn how to design a real text font. Years later the result was published as FF Profile, a sans serif made for legibility.

In the mid-1990s, Dutchman Luc(as) de Groot was Meta's type director. He drew corporate typefaces for Volkswagen and other Meta clients. In the evening hours and weekends he worked on what became the Thesis family, consisting of three sub-families (TheSans, TheSerif and TheMix) and eight weights – 176 fonts in all. Large families with different styles had been published before (e.g. Rotis), but never in such a consistent manner and in such a wide range of weights, including small caps and different sorts of numerals for each variety. At the time of publication in 1994 it was the largest digital font family ever. Five years later De Groot decided to start distributing his own fonts, withdrawing his designs from the FontFont library.

Italian Albert Pinggera came to Berlin to become De Groot's assistant at Meta Design. He was commissioned to redesign Letter Gothic as part of FS1's program of revamped 'industrial' sans-serifs. He then decided to take up studying advanced type design at the KABK in The Hague, after which he designed a much more personal typeface, the beautiful FF Strada.

Erik Spiekermann, MetaDesign's founder, has always relied on help from more patient designers for finishing and producing his typefaces. In the mid-1990s, Ole Schäfer became his main accomplice. Some of the Spiekermann FontFonts – parts of the FF Meta family, FF Govan, FF Info – were co-designed by Schäfer, who set up shop for himself a few years ago.

Today, Spiekermann works with a transatlantic assistant: American Christian Schwartz, who spent three months as an in-house type designer at MetaDesign Berlin in 1999. Schwartz, a freelance type designer, has worked with Spiekermann on FF Unit and FF Bau as well as the corporate typefaces for the German Railways and Bosch. Hamburg-born Johannes Erler briefly worked at MetaDesign before founding his own company, Factor Design. He designed two packages of pictograms, FF Care Pack and FF Dingbats, of which the latter has become one of the library's long sellers. Among the other former MetaDesigners who contributed to the library are Henning Krause (Magda Clean, with Berlin designer Critzler) and Jürgen Huber, who was type director at MetaDesign and made FF Ginger and FF Plus.

artwork by Gordon Protz

FF Providence

ANGIE,

WHEN WILL those clouds all disappear?

M A L C O L M D E S I G N
B R I T I S H C E N T R A L
S T E A L T H G A R R E T T
G R A P H I C F I G U R E

The British and French connections

Neville Brody's London contacts also yielded a number of highly original FontFont designers. John Critchley was a co-editor of Brody's FUSE series and went on to become head of MTV's print design department. He collaborated with illustrator Darren Raven on the delightful and smart FF Bokka and digitized the handwriting of many children for FF Child's Play. Swiss-born Cornel Windlin was an assistant of Brody's and later became his successor as art director of *The Face*. Working both individually and with his long-time typographic partner, Stephan Müller, Windlin designed a number of FontFonts based on 'found' alphabets originally made for specific technologies. Rian Hughes, another prominent designer on the London scene, published about half a dozen families as part of the FontFont library before founding his own company Device Fonts. Many of his fonts recall the unmistakable style of his famous vector illustrations. One British designer who established a long-time relationship with FS1 is David Crow of Manchester. He participated in the fuse series and put forward his original ideas on signs and typographic signifiers as a lecturer at the fuse conferences organized by FS1. He designed only one FontFont – FF Beadmap, made with artist Ian Wright – but has made an important contribution to the quality of the library as a member of its Type Board.

There has been a French Connection as well. FF Angie, published in 1995, was one of the first text faces to come out of a new wave in French type design. Its maker was Jean-François Porchez, who went on to become one of the most outspoken representatives of the French type world and quickly established his successful 'Typofonderie Porchez.' He is now the chairman of the typographers' association ATypl. It

AIRCRAFT

FF Providence by Guy Jeffrey Nelson, 1994.

Stealth, part of FUSE Classics, by Malcolm Garrett, 1991.

FF Angie by Jean-François Porchez, 1995.

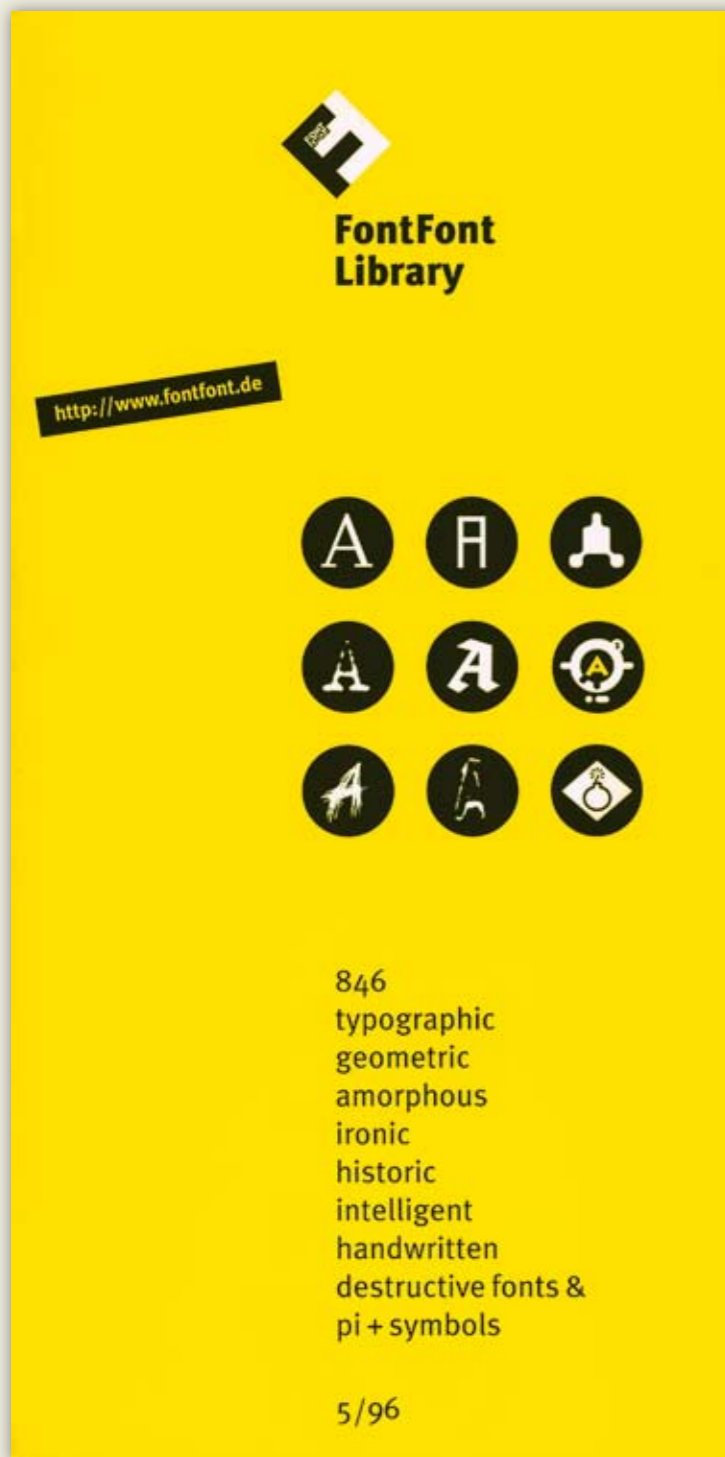
FF Aircraft, part of the FF Bastille Display package, by Albert Boton, 2002.

was through Porchez that FS1 came into contact with a prolific young voice in French type design: Xavier Dupré, who had worked as type director of a Paris packaging design agency but had also researched renaissance writing with one of the grand old men of French type design, Ladislav Mandel. In less than five years Dupré published seven families in the FontFont library – from tasty display faces such as FF Tartine Script to highly original text faces like FF Absara and FF Megano.

Dupré's older colleague Albert Boton has been at it a little longer. His type designing career, although he did not publish his first FontFont until 2002, spans five decades: in 1957 he worked under Adrian Frutiger on Univers and later designed such classics as Eras and Elan. Boton, born in 1932, has now retired from his day job at an advertising agency but has been immensely prolific since. In a few years time he produced six families of text and display faces, all published as FontFonts. Pierre di Scullo, finally, is a special case within the French type world. He is a graphic designer, writer, organiser and editor; each of his typefaces is a philosophical statement and/or thing to play with rather than a neutral tool. To the FontFont library he contributed FF Minimum, a series of alphabets based on a grid of squares; but it's the witty variants, from 'ceiling' (Plafond) and 'floor' (Sol) to 'drunk' (Ivre), which make the family such fun.

Stylistic exercises

If the substance of the FontFont library lies in its innovative yet practical text typefaces, from the ubiquitous, straight-faced FF Meta to the poetic, vulnerable FF Maiola, part of its unity lies in the broad range of experiments and exercises it has accommodated over the years. There is probably no other type



collection that has so many ‘firsts’ – and made so many contributions to the ongoing discussion about the forms and functions of digital type.

Di Sciullo’s Minimum is just one example; there have been other highly personal, one-off experiments. FF Disturbance by Jeremy Tankard is a take on the ‘universal’ alphabet with no separate upper- and lowercase. What was once the Holy Grail of Modernist typography became a stylish, classically inspired postmodern exercise in Tankard’s hands. The package FUSE Classics brought together some of the more usable typefaces that came out of the FUSE project. Moonbase Alpha is a space-age modular alphabet by Cornel Windlin. Malcolm Garrett, a central figure in British

graphic design, made FF Stealth: a minimalist geometric alphabet set in a mosaic of squares. Phil Baines, a typographer as well as researcher and author, examined the outer limits of legibility in his FUSE font CanYouReadMe?. By the time it was re-released as a FontFont, it had already been used effectively by many graphic designers – and so its name was changed to the affirmative FF YouCan(ReadMe). Pierre di Sciullo’s FF ScratchedOut is a damaged variety of FF Minimum that tests the reader’s ability (and willingness) to decode bitmap patterns and put the letters back together again.

Many tendencies and techniques in 1990s type design were pioneered by FontFont designers. Layered fonts such as FF Kipp, FF Identification and FF Advert Rough were made to create multicoloured typographic constructions. FF Dot Matrix, Screen Matrix and other bitmap fonts allowed designers to project the anti-aesthetics of electronic displays onto the printed page. FF Childs Play, FF Providence, FF Dolores, FF Priska and many others explored the allure of the hand-drawn and the hand-written in an informal and personal way that had hardly been practised before. The Dirty Faces packages, edited by Brody, were Font-Font’s contribution to grunge typography, as were such diverse and individualist inventions as FF Double Dutch and the FF Steel family. Equally individualist were many of the ‘alphabets’ of symbols, drawings and dingbats which provided the not-so-talented-draughtsmen within the graphic design world with bags of tricks to spice up their work.

Although FontFont was never about reviving older typefaces, a number of fonts in the collection were actually based on historical alphabets – either printing types or hand-written ones found in manuscripts. Manfred Klein and Jürgen Brinckmann’s FF Scribe Type series were painstakingly distilled from these ancient examples.

Type classification

As the collection grew, repeated attempts were made to classify its wide range of typefaces in a way that would make sense to the user while throwing into relief the unorthodox aspects of the library. Type classification has become an increasingly problematic exercise as the freedom of designers has grown and the number of possible variants on the letterform exploded.

Older classification systems are deeply rooted in the past and strongly biased towards serified book types. To the present-day user, to define the difference between early and late Venetian styles is definitely less essential than to have a basic understanding of the differences between, say, FF Meta and FF Scala Sans; and this is where traditional systems fail. In display type, the situation is even more serious. Since 1990 there has been a new trend about every two years, each bringing with it several new sub-categories which might be given names that might sound something like Forward-Moving Extended Semi-Geometric Mostly-Sans Faux-Italic (FF Blocker and



↑ FIFTEEN, the exhibition featuring 15 years of FontFonts; curator Jan Middendorp, designed by UDN. FUSE section curated by Neville Brody/Research Studios
← Banners designed, programmed and random-generated by Erik van Blokland.

FF Overdose could fall into this category, a sub-genre of ‘Techno’). All these ‘unusual’ letterforms are now mostly dumped into a group called ‘Other’.

FSI – that is, Spiekermann with marketing manager/writer Jürgen Siebert – came up with totally new categories for unusual faces: the 1996 FontFont catalogue offered no less than seven classes of display fonts, several of which were given names that were new to the type world: ‘ironic’, ‘amorphous’, ‘intelligent’, ‘destructive’ (in a way, more like a classification of designers’ intentions than of forms). On the other hand, the text typefaces that in traditional systems are so carefully categorized, were simply grouped under ‘Typographic’.

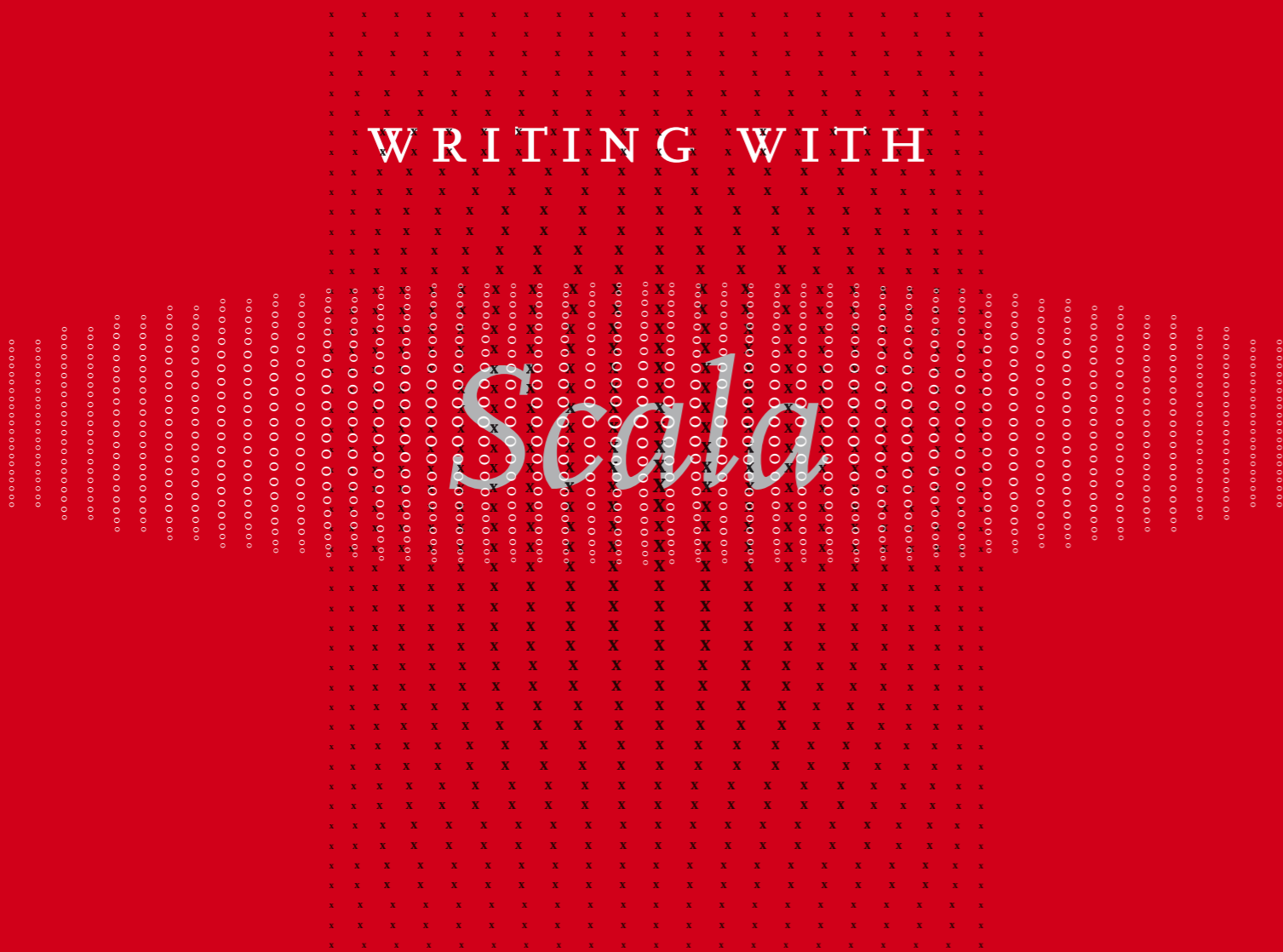
To some extent, this has helped to draw attention to the ‘otherness’ of contemporary digital type. In subsequent catalogues the number of categories was drastically reduced, but some of the novel and somewhat ambiguous terms remained. What began as a kind of in-joke, or tongue-in-cheek pseudo-typology, became the basis of something simpler and presumably more usable – but is certainly not yet definitive. And of course it shouldn’t be, in a field which is continuously moving and developing. It is amazing how a discipline such as type design, which must necessarily limit itself to creating minimal (and if not minimal, then audacious) variations of a given code, can still reinvent itself continuously. The recent publication of such a novel invention as Evert Bloemsma’s FF Legato – which invests sans-serif forms with new legibility qualities – suggests that the end is not in sight. There will always be room for new thoughts in type.

An exhibition and a book

In late 2004, FontShop International first presented a travelling exhibition titled ‘FIFTEEN: 15 years of type for independent minds’. The exhibition, celebrating the FontFont type library as well as the experimental FUSE project, premiered in London in November and subsequently travelled to Manchester, Berlin, New York and Helsinki, where it was shown during the annual ATypI conference. In early 2006, stops were made in The Hague (where Erik Spiekermann was celebrated as winner of the prestigious Gerrit Noordzij prize) and Antwerp. Later that year, the exhibition went to Bologna, Barcelona, Valencia and Goa (!).

We never had any hope of finishing a full-size catalogue in time for the exhibition. Instead, we took our time to collect existing material and commission pages from writers and designers. Making a book about FontFont was an ideal occasion to dig up (and edit) some interesting writing that had previously been published in printed and online magazines or as part of limited-edition books. It also enabled us to ask a host of eminent designers – FontFont designers as well as typographers from several parts of the world – to contribute words and images. The diversity of what they have come up with is staggering. The result is a unique collection of type specimens and visual essays that is as rich and multi-layered as the FontFont collection itself.

Many thanks to you all. ☺



TYPE SPECIMEN | WRITING SAMPLE

writing by Ellen Lupton

WRITING WITH SCALA

Scala by Martin Majoor

I FIRST USED SCALA IN 1991, when Robin Kinross mailed it to me in New York City on a floppy disk. Robin was writing an essay for an exhibition catalogue I was editing, *Graphic Design in the Netherlands: A View of Recent Work*. His essay was about typeface design, and this is what he had to say about Scala, designed by the brilliant young typographer Martin Majoor:

Scala sums up many characteristics of recent Dutch type design. It is an “old style” face, perhaps, but it follows no established model—it invokes memories of W. A. Dwiggins and Eric Gill. Scala has a definite, sharp character of its own, which escapes the Van Krimpen mold. As usual with the Dutch, *the italic has a strong, insistent rhythm, perhaps to an extreme*. Much love and attention has gone into the “special sorts,”—there is even an x-height ampersand (&)—and the figures are, of course, non-lining.¹

Presented on the following pages are specimens of texts that I have written over the years, sampled and reconfigured to provide a showing of this amazing typeface. All of these texts were originally written in Scala. As a writer who is also a designer, I often compose my words directly on the page, and I am happiest when writing in Scala. Its crisp geometry and humanist references make Scala at home with both the visual and literary qualities of the written word. Scala’s x-height, which may be unfashionably large by today’s standards, has always sat well with me, reminding me of my own bottom-heavy figure. Scala’s distinctively shaped characters call attention to the physical presence of typography; at the same time, their design allows the letters to recede into the texture of words, enabling the process of reading to move forward with comfort and ease.

FF Scala family,
designed by Martin
Majoor, beginning
in 1991.

1. Robin Kinross, “Non-Lining Figures: On Recent Dutch Type Design,” in Ellen Lupton, editor, *Graphic Design in the Netherlands: A View of Recent Work* (The Cooper Union and Princeton Architectural Press,). Published in Scala, 1992.



REZA ABEDINI



Bilak



FF MAGDA, MAGDA CLEAN



[1] It is obvious that ultimate cutter life can only be achieved through proper usage and maintenance of the tool. These tools are manufactured with the faces of the teeth either in radial or undercut plane, spirally or straight gashed, and must be sharpened accordingly. Any deviation produces taper on the O.D. of cutter and inaccurate threads. It is also important to resharpen thread cutters at regular intervals to avoid excessive dulling which could result in cutter failure and damage to the work.

[2] Nos accessoires pour montage de tuyauteries ont été développés à l'aide des expériences faites dans la pratique et sont considérés partout comme un grand progrès dans l'outillage pour le montage de tuyauteries. Ils garantissent, en effet, l'exécution de filets impeccables, une étanchéité parfaite et un meilleur rendement, tout en facilitant le travail du monteur.

Random text fragments from Catalogs of Industry & Trade from the collection Van Baar, The Hague. Titles & Companies: see page bottom.

Die Spannkloben können umgedreht werden.

[3] Unsere Planscheiben sind besonders kräftig, sie haben aus Stahl geschmiedete und gehärtete Spannkloben, die voneinander unabhängig durch Stahlbindeln bewegt werden und bei No. 1a-5a und 1n-4n sich gegen die Scheibe festklemmen lassen. Die Spannkloben können umgedreht werden. Wir halten Planscheiben mit glatter Bohrung auf Lager, so daß sie auf jeder beliebigen Drehbank oder anderen Werkzeugmaschine verwendet werden können. Es kann auch das Gewinde für die genannten Spindelköpfe eingeschnitten werden. Es empfiehlt sich, das in Frage kommende Spindelgewinde in den Planscheibekörper selbst einzuschneiden, damit dieser möglichst nahe am Spindellager sitzt.

[4] Depuis 1918, le progrès technique en sidérurgie ne s'est manifesté par aucun procédé fondamental nouveau, mais bien par le perfectionnement des procédés et d'outillage existant et par le récupération toujours plus poussée des sous-produits. Ainsi, le nombre de hauts fourneaux en ordre de marche ou en activité a baissé, mais cette diminution fut compensée par une augmentation de la capacité de production des haut fourneaux.

[5] Wij hebben het genoegen U hierbij te overhandigen den eersten Nederlandschen catalogus der TERRY-producten, welke wij met stijgend succes sedert verscheidenen jaren importeren. De groote en steeds uitbreidende vraag naar onze artikelen heeft ons doen besluiten een catalogus in het Hollandsch te doen verschijnen, omdat het begrijpen van catalogi in een vreemde taal, hoe prachtig ook uitgevoerd, voor velen eigenaardige bezwaren oplevert. Wij hopen, dat wij door aanbieding van deze catalogus wederom een stap nader mogen komen tot het doel, n.l.: het brengen van de uitgebreide series TERRY-artikelen in handen der Nederlandsche verbruikers. Van deze gelegenheid maken wij gebruik Uw aandacht te vestigen op het feit, dat wij, naast de TERRY-producten, voor Nederland en Koloniën de alleenverteenwoordiging voeren van

BENTON & STONE LTD., BIRMINGHAM
fabrikanten van ENOTS grease guns, verfspuiten, oliespuiten, hydraulische crics, parfum-spuiten, benzinekransen, oliekransen, luchtpompen, enz. enz.
ABINGDON WORKS LTD., BIRMINGHAM
fabrikanten der beroemde KING DICK schroefsluutels, dopsluutels, enz. enz.
POWEL & HANMER LTD., BIRMINGHAM
fabrikanten van rijwielen-, motor-, en automobiellampen, hoorns, spiegels, klaxons, ruitenwissers, mistlampen, richtingwijzers, enz. enz. enz.
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fabrikanten van kantoor- en werkplaats-stoelen, zooals o.a. geleverd aan Postcheque- en Girodienst, Amsterdamsche Bank en vele andere groote instellingen.
Voor al deze artikelen houden wij ons beleeft aanbevelen tot het doen eener aanbieding onder toezending van prijslijsten en modellen.

[6] Zur gefl. Beachtung: Die Garnituren No. 140, 150, 160, 170, 180, 190 und 200 enthalten ausschließlich Werkzeuge von ausgesuchter, einwandfreier Bearbeitung und Qualität. Die Laubsägbogen, Drillbohrer, Hämmer usw. sind fein vernickelt, (bei Nos. 190 und 200 hochfein poliert), die Holzhefte hochfein poliert. Bei der Auswahl der Werkzeuge wurde besonder wert darauf gelegt, daß nur wirklich erstklassige, für den Laubsäger praktische Werkzeuge Verwendung fanden.

[7] Gearing Rack - A simple traversing motion which, by the use of standard chain, pinion, and end attachments eliminates costly gear and rack cutting. A wide variety of chain and wheel sizes is available, also end attachments for all methods of mounting. For example, using 0.75 in. pitch chain and a pinion of 19 teeth, one revolution of the pinion will produce a traverse of 14.25 inches.

[1] GO & GO CO Goddard & Goddard Company Detroit (Mich. USA) 1959	[2] +GF+ Geoges Fischer Société Anonyme Schaffhouse (CH) 1952	[3] Loewe Werkzeuge Ludw. Loewe & Co Actiengesellschaft Berlin (D) 1929	[4] Talabot S.A. des Hauts Fourneaux Forges et Acieries du Saut-du-Tarn (F) 1935	[5] Herbert Terry & Sons Ltd. Redditch (U.K.) (Dutch catalog) 1929	[6] Blosta Carl Blombach Wuppertal (D) 1932.	[7] Renold Renold Chains Limited Manchester (U.K.) 1955
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COLL. GERT DUMBAR

DECIMAL EQUIVALENTS

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3	32	.046875	35	32	.546875
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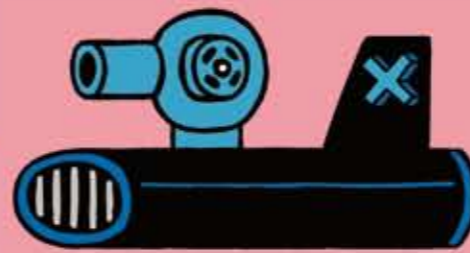
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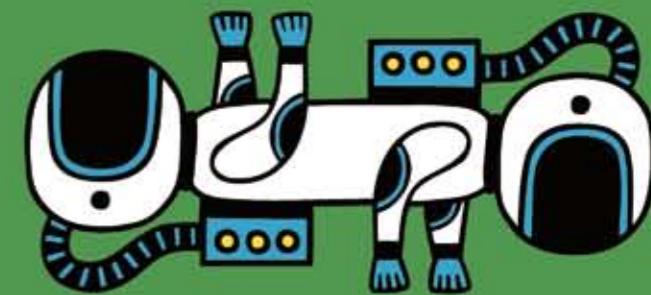


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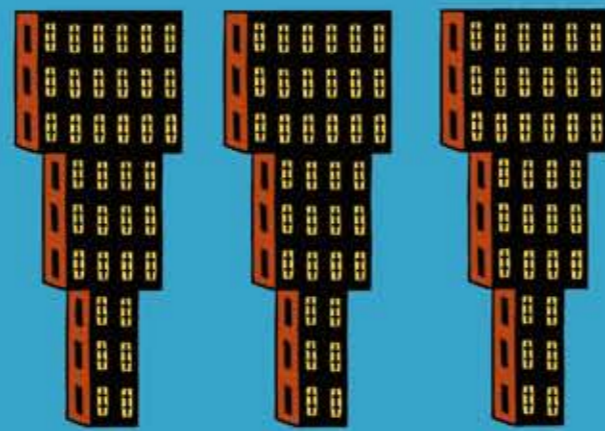


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COLD



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HOT



tomorrow

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Thunderstorm



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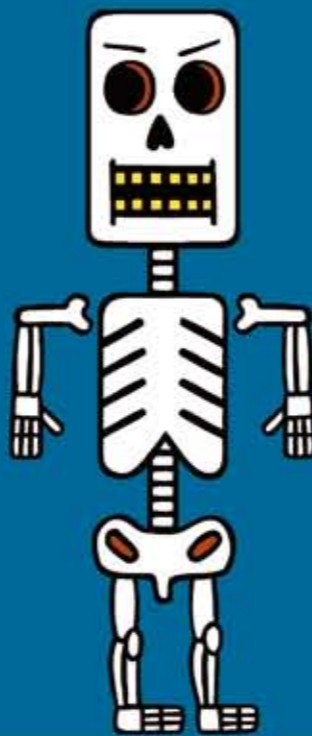
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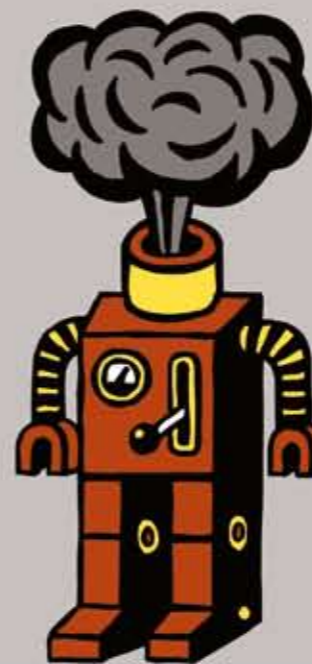
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NO



New



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Arnhemsche Courant

LETTERGAZETTE

[QUADRAAT DISPLAY BOLD ITALIC 54 PT]

[QUADRAAT SANS DISPLAY BLACK 18 PT]

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AT ARNHEIM we come to a totally new Holland. The Maliebaan and the park at Utrecht, with their spacious residences, had prepared us a little for Arnheim's wooded retirement; but not completely. [QUADRAAT CAPS + REGULAR + ITALIC 14/18]

ARNHEIM THE JOYOUS Rotterdam is given to shipping; The Hague makes laws and fashions; Leyden and Utrecht teach; Amsterdam makes money. It is at Arnheim that the retired merchant and the returned colonist set up their home. It is the richest residential city in the country. Arnheim the Joyous was its old name. Arnheim the Comfortable it might now be styled. [9/13]

It is the least Dutch of Dutch towns: the Rhine brings a bosky beauty to it, German in character and untamed by Dutch restraining hands. The Dutch Switzerland the country hereabout is called. Arnheim recalls Richmond too, for it has a Richmond Hill – a terrace-road above a shaggy precipice overlooking the river. [QUADRAAT BOLD 8/13]

I walked in the early morning to Klarenbeck, up and down in a vast wood, and at a point of vantage called the Steenen Tafel looked down on the Rhine valley. Nothing could be less like

the Holland of the earlier days of my wanderings—nothing, that is, that was around me, but with the farther bank of the river the flatness instantly begins and continues as far as one can see in the north.

It was a very beautiful morning in May, and as I rested now and then among the resinous pines I was conscious of being traitorous to England in wandering here at all. No one ought to be out of England in April and May. At one point I met a squirrel—just such a nimble short-tempered squirrel as those which scold and hide in the top branches of the fir trees near my own home in Kent—and my sense of guilt increased; but when, on my way back, in a garden near Arnheim I heard a nightingale, the treachery was complete. [QUADRAAT ITALIC 9/13]

And this reminds me that the best poem of the most charming figure in Dutch literature—Tesselschade Visscher—is about the nightingale. The story of this poetess and her friends belongs more properly to Amsterdam, or to Alkmaar, but it may as well be told here while the Arnheim nightingale—the only nightingale that I heard in Holland—is plaining and exulting.

TETTERGAZELLE

[QUADRAAT BOLD ITALIC CAPS 12 PT]



Tesselschade Visscher and the Chambers of Rhetoric Tesselschade was the daughter of the poet and rhetorician Roemer Visscher. She was born on 25th March, 1594, and earned her curious name from the circumstance that on the same day her father was wrecked off Texel. In honour of his rescue he named his daughter Tesselschade, or Texel wreck, thereby, I think, eternally impairing his right to be considered a true poet. As a matter of fact he was rather an epigrammatist than a poet, his ambition being to be known as the Dutch Martial. Here is a taste of his Martial manner: [QUADRAAT BOLD + REGULAR 8/13]

Jan sorrows—sorrows far too much: 'tis true
A sad affliction hath distressed his life;—
Mourns he that death hath ta'en his children two?
O no! he mourns that death hath left his wife.

[QUADRAAT BOLD ITALIC 8/13]

I have said that Visscher was a rhetorician. The word perhaps needs a little explanation, for it means more than would appear. In those days rhetoric was a living cult in the Netherlands: Dutchmen and Flemings played at rhetoric with some of the enthusiasm that we keep for cricket and sport. Every town of any importance had its Chamber of Rhetoric. 'These Chambers,' says Longfellow in his *Poets and Poetry of Europe*, 'were to Holland, in the fifteenth century, what the Guilds of the Meistersingers were to Germany, and were numerous throughout the Netherlands. Brussels could boast of five; Antwerp of four; Louvain of three; and Ghent, Bruges, Malines, Middelburg, Gouda, Haarlem, and Amsterdam of at least one. Each Chamber had its coat of arms and its standard,

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TOTALLY NEW HOLLAND

Klarenbeck

IZAAK WALTON

Tesselschade
shipping? ahoy!

short-tempered Dutchmen

MEISTERSINGER

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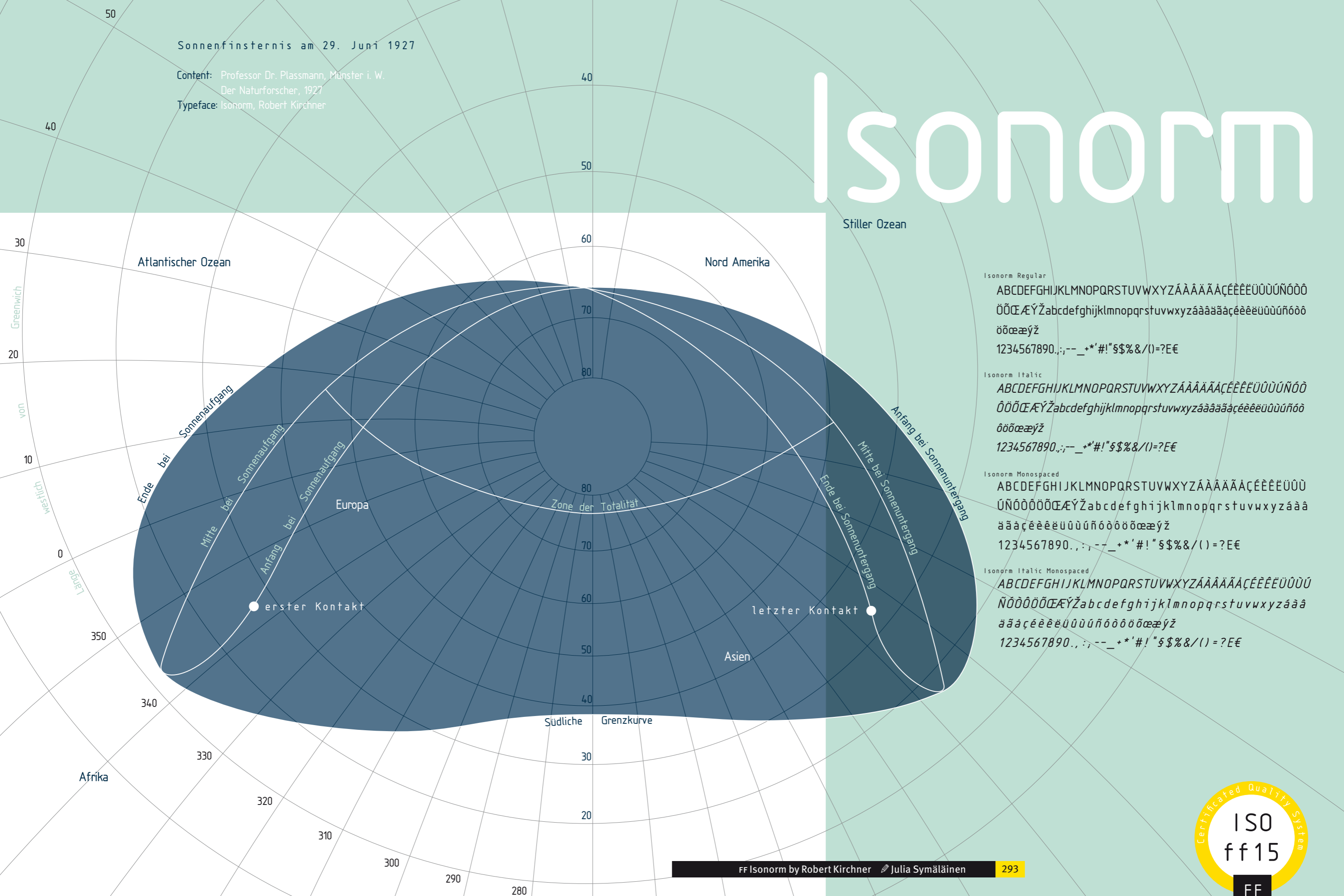
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Sonnenfinsternis am 29. Juni 1927

Content: Professor Dr. Plassmann, Münster i. W.
Der Naturforscher, 1927

Typeface: Isonorm, Robert Kirchner

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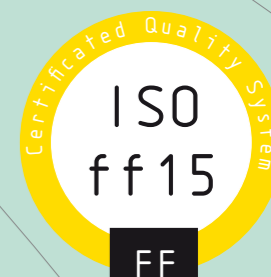
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FFUnit

by Erik Spiekermann

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FF Unit Bold, *FF Unit Bold Italic*, FF Unit Bold Alternative, *FF Unit Bold Alternative Italic*

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Ggg Hh Iii Jjj Kk Lll Mm Nn Oo Pp
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