

OUTWEST

Bold

(On a Fifteen Degree Ellipse)



(On a Fifteen Degree Ellipse)

Past Exhibition

h

The Revolution Will Be Digitized

Typefaces from
Emigre & FUSE

Apr 27–Nov 5, 2023

EMIGRE

In 1984, the year the Apple Macintosh computer was introduced, Rudy VanderLans and Zuzana Licko, husband-and-wife émigrés from the Netherlands and Czechoslovakia respectively, founded Emigre Graphics in San Francisco. Within a few years, the typeface foundry and its magazine, *Emigre*, became the late 20th century's wellspring of experimental digital typography and graphic design.

As early adopters of the Mac, Licko designed custom-bitmapped typefaces (letters made from squares or pixels on a grid similar to filling in boxes on graph paper) for the magazine. VanderLans used them in layouts that rejected Swiss modernist rigidity in favor of improvisation with a touch of reactionary postmodern eccentricity. By exploiting the limitations of the computer, they also developed a typographic language that challenged many established tenets of typography, including readability and legibility.

VanderLans and Licko effectively realized the power of the computer and the ultimate shift from photo-typesetting (where images of letterforms are projected onto light-sensitive paper and then printed) to digital type, dedicating their typeface business to showcasing original typeface designs specifically made for computer technology. Some Emigre typefaces were promoted on posters sent through the mail. Of these, some had complete samplings of fonts, while others showed how the type was composed as typography in phrases. It was an era of typographic audacity, reevaluation, and risk. The desktop computer made it possible for designers not trained in the intricacies of typeface design to be playful with custom fonts. *Emigre* magazine was considered controversial in the 1990s due to its denial of the standards established by an older group of modern designers, and provided inspiration for the breaking of those standards by younger postmodern acolytes.

Emigre Graphics (later called Emigre Fonts) became a touchstone for progress in the field, inspiring many imitators. Used in every issue of *Emigre* magazine's pages, the foundry's typefaces established new standards for experimental digital typography. Not content to follow tradition, *Emigre* created a tradition of its own.

Curation

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Angelina Lippert

Exhibition Design

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Special Thanks

Rudy VanderLans, Emigre
Zuzana Licko, Emigre
Neville Brody, FUSE
Rick Poynor,
University of Reading
Mark Andresen, artist

Bob Aufuldish, designer
Phil Baines, designer
Jonathan Barnbrook, designer
Elisabeth Charman, designer
Luc(as) de Groot, designer
Edward Fella, designer
Tobias Frere-Jones, designer
Jeffery Keedy, designer
Laurie Haycock Makela, designer
Gail Swanlund, designer
Teal Triggs, design educator
Rick Valicenti, designer
Erik van Blokland, Letterror.com



Thingbat/Blockhead, 1995

Type Design: John Hersey (b. 1954)

Poster Design: Rudy VanderLans (b. 1955)

Poster House Permanent Collection

- John Hersey created Thingbat in 1993, with Blockhead following in 1995. Aware of Emigre's reputation for promoting unique digital typefaces, he contacted the company to see if it would be interested in selling the fonts. Emigre added both to their inventory, producing this poster to advertise their arrival in its catalog.
- The poster is roughly divided in half, showcasing the complete alphabet for both typefaces, with Blockhead on top and Thingbat on the bottom.
- The topmost section features the four versions of Blockhead's illustrations printed in black, as well as the four versions of the typeface's letters in red. By typing each lowercase letter followed by each uppercase letter, and then overlaying the alphabet on the illustrations, Rudy VanderLans created a visually cacophonous and fun composition that showcases the complete fonts.
- The same technique was used for Thingbat One and Thingbat Two's 111 glyphs in the lower half of the poster.



Modula: Extended Remix, 1995

Type Design: Zuzana Licko (b. 1961)

Poster Design: Rudy VanderLans (b. 1955)

Poster House Permanent Collection

- Originally created by Zuzana Licko in 1985, Modula was her first high-resolution digital typeface designed on a Macintosh computer. Her goal was to work within the restrictions of what a computer could produce rather than push against those limitations in an attempt to replicate traditional type styles. The results were some of the finest and most famous digital typefaces of their time that changed the face of the industry.
- This poster, produced ten years later, revisits Modula, adding new variations to the original design to create an “extended remix.”
- The glass-beer-bottle motif first appeared in Rudy VanderLans’s 1991 poster for the release of the hip-hop band Basehead’s album *Play With Toys*, put out by Emigre Music. The album cover also featured the original version of Modula.



The most original ideas and intelligent work in graphic design today first appear in **Emigre**.

—Jeffery Keedy

Big Cheese, 1992

Type Design: Eric Donelan (b. 1961)

& Bob Aufuldish (b. 1961)

Poster Design: Bob Aufuldish (b. 1961)

Poster House Permanent Collection

- This is the first of a handful of posters put out by Emigre to advertise a new typeface available through its foundry. Interested parties could contact the company and purchase a disc containing the font.
- Unlike typefaces that use letters in an alphabet, Big Cheese is entirely made up of dingbats—symbols that correspond to letters and numbers. The designers have noted that their illustrations have no intrinsic meaning but, rather, take on new meanings when used. All 126 pictograms in the typeface are shown in the poster.
- The title type in the poster is composed of Zuzana Licko's Triplex font. Holes mimicking those in Swiss cheese were added to Triplex to play on the name of the advertised typeface.



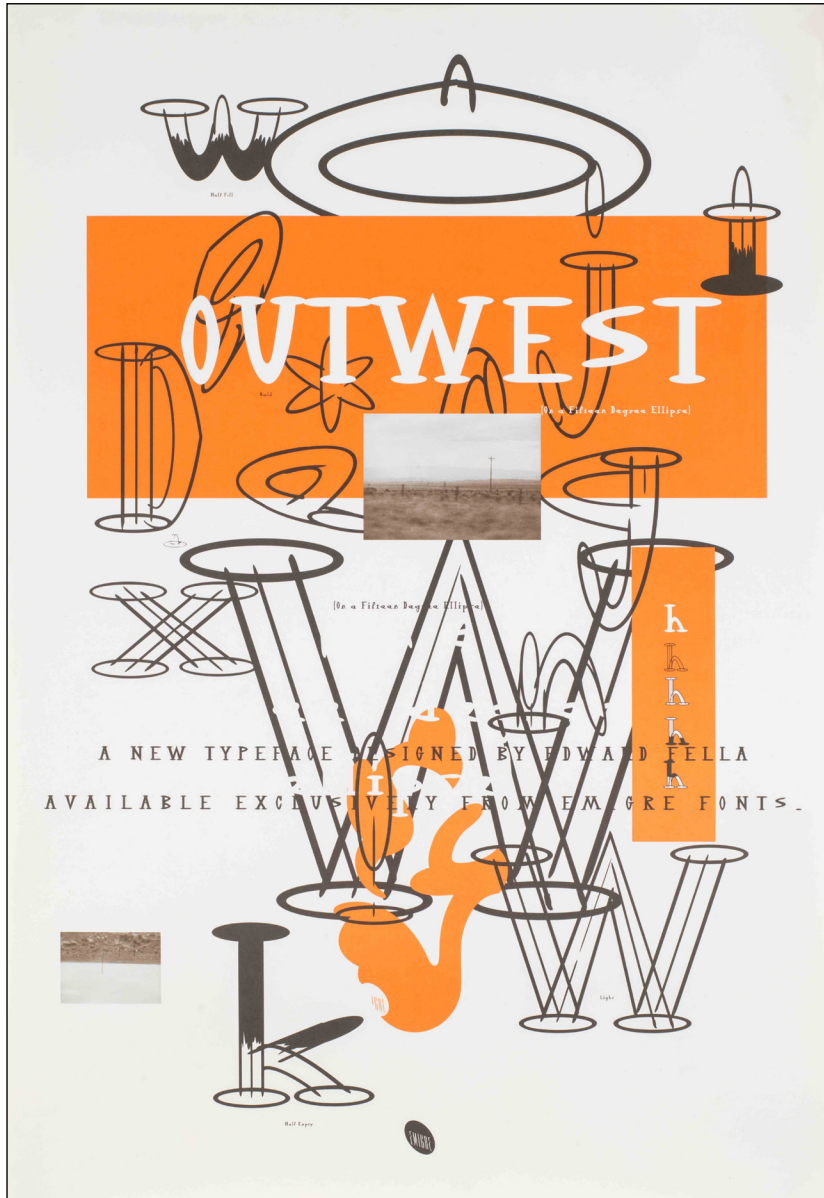
Motion, 1993

Type Design: Frank Heine (1964–2003)

Poster Design: Elisabeth Charman (b. 1967)

Poster House Permanent Collection

- This poster advertises the two available weights of Motion, a typeface that captures the frenetic energy of scribbly handwriting through intentional digital imperfections.
- Elisabeth Charman was interning at Emigre after completing an MFA at CalArts. She was drawn to Motion's dizzying lines that reminded her of the feeling of motion sickness. Feeling clever, she drove to Sacramento Airport and obtained an air-sickness bag, which she then photographed and inserted into the lower area of the poster.



Illegibility was a flaw turned into a code by 1980s graphic designers.

—Steven Heller

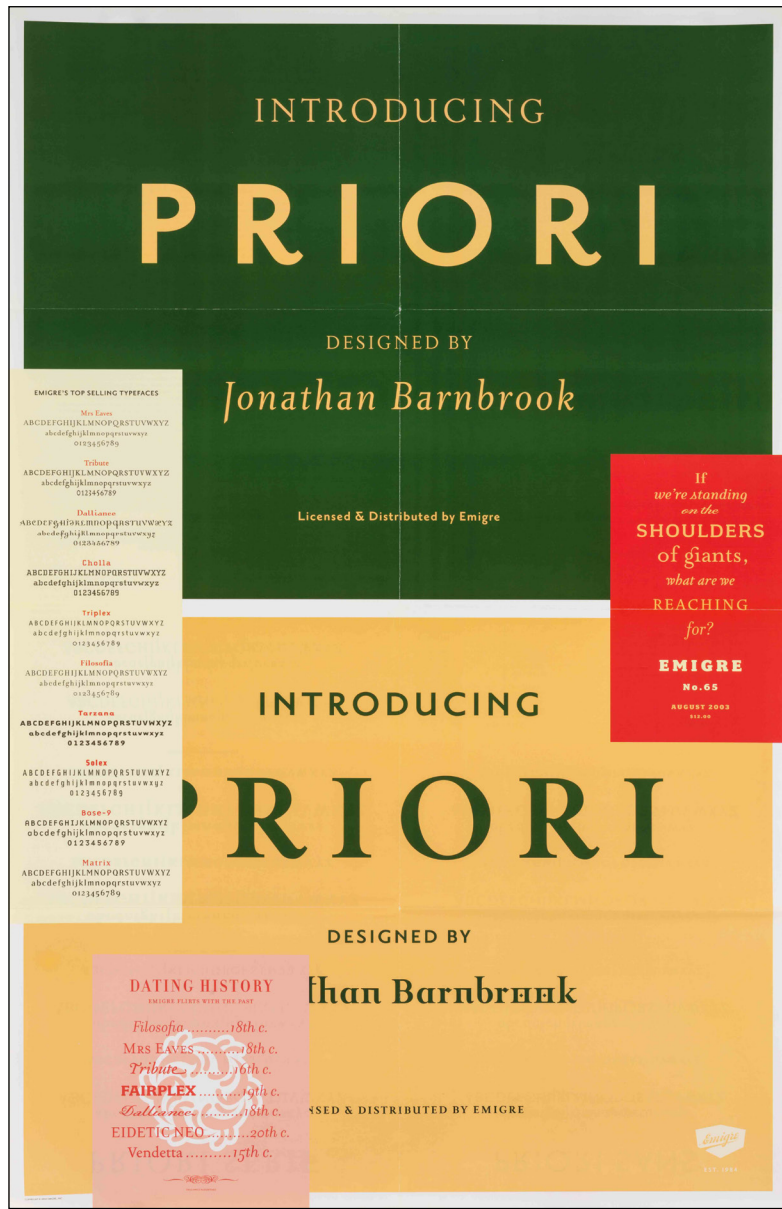
OutWest, 1993

Type Design: Edward Fella (b. 1938)

Poster Design: Rudy VanderLans (b. 1955)

Poster House Permanent Collection

- Edward Fella had an established career as a commercial designer before he began experimenting with lettering and avant-garde type styles. His influence on most of the other designers in this exhibition cannot be overstated—he has been called everything from “the guru of the new expressive typography” to the “Graphic godfather.”
- OutWest was originally commissioned by Laurie Haycock Makela (wife of P. Scott Makela, whose work is also featured in this exhibition) as a display typeface for *Design Quarterly*, a magazine published by the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis. As art director, she collaborated with some of the most avant-garde designers of the era and established the Walker as a vibrant, contemporary space.
- Fella created the letterforms by hand using the 15-degree ellipse on a standard architectural template, adding his own flair to the novelty font. In the magazine, he noted that anyone could use the typeface free of charge provided they digitized it. A few months later, Rudy VanderLans contacted Fella asking if Emigre could offer it. Zuzana Licko then transformed Fella’s sketches into a digitized typeface.



Priori, 2003

Type Design: Jonathan Barnbrook (b. 1966)
& Marcus Leis Allion (b. 1975)

Poster Design: Rudy VanderLans (b. 1955)

Poster House Permanent Collection

- Jonathan Barnbrook is one of England's best-known graphic designers, drawing much of his typographic inspiration from established 20th-century British fonts, most especially the work of Edward Johnston and Eric Gill, and display lettering found throughout London. In 1992, he released Manson (later renamed Mason) through Emigre, establishing a relationship between the West Coast foundry and his London studio.
- While Priori first appeared in the title treatment of Barnbrook's 2002 album cover for David Bowie's *Heathen*, it was not released to the public until the following year.
- The typeface itself is based on a common structure onto which any style can be applied, easily allowing serif and sans-serif variants to be inserted within a single word or sentence. It is meant to feel familiar and classic, yet strange and new.
- In addition to announcing the availability of Priori, this poster features a list of some of Emigre's best-selling fonts, some of which appear in this exhibition.



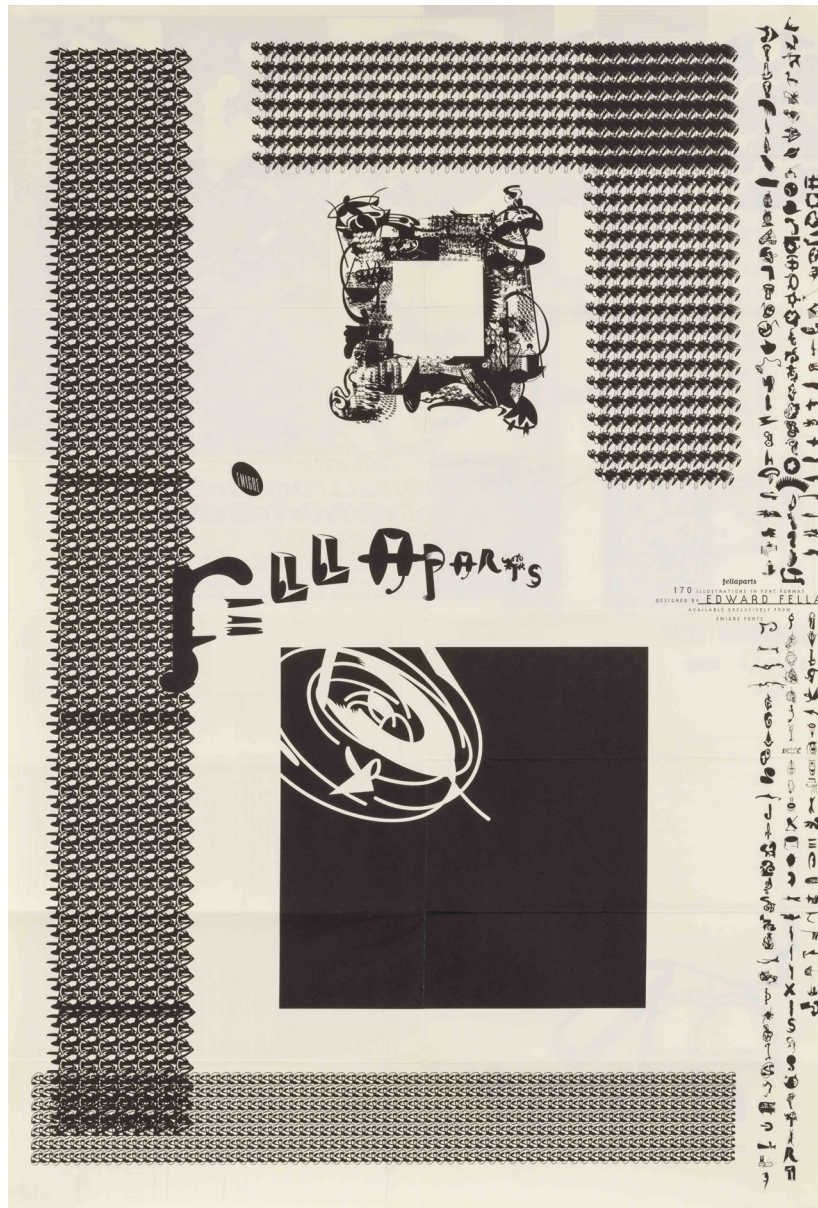
Base Monospace, 1997

Type Design: Zuzana Licko (b. 1961)

Poster Design: Rudy VanderLans (b. 1955)

Poster House Permanent Collection

- Related to Licko's previous designs for Base-12 and Base-9, Base Monospace is a variant on the Base typeface in which each letter occupies a space of equal width. As some letters take up more space than others (the letter "m" versus the letter "i," for example), this results in visually uneven distances between letters.
- While monospace fonts are commonly considered less legible than those that use proportional spacing, typewriters favored them. As the typewriter was such a common tool, familiarity with how it rendered words ultimately allowed a "difficult" typeface to become universally readable. This underscores Emigre's belief that legibility is more an issue of frequent exposure than a natural state.
- Always fans of a good joke, VanderLans and Licko have inserted a pun within the poster by referring to Base Monospace as a place "nowhere near kerning." Kerning is the adjustment of the spacing between letters to make the text appear visually harmonious. With a monospace typeface, that is not possible.



Many professional graphic designers...believed that the Macintosh would contribute to the degradation of graphic design.

—The Emigre Book

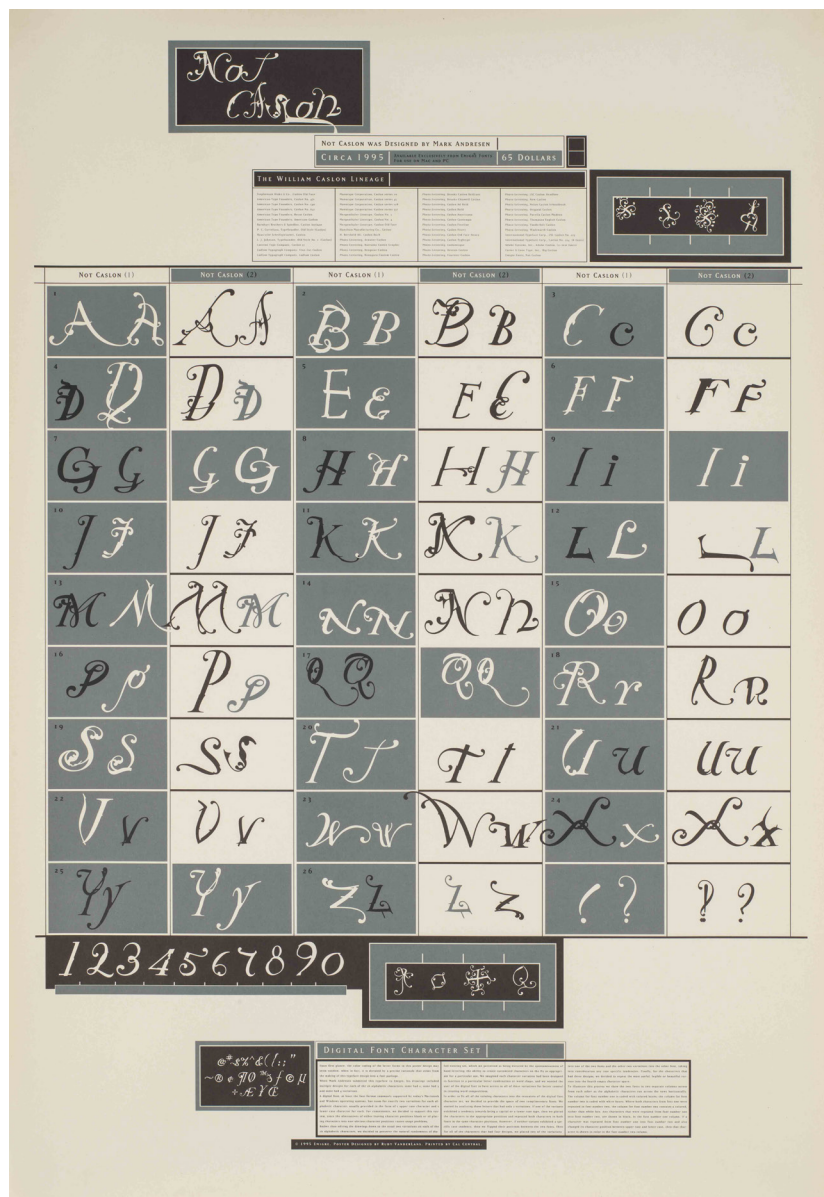
FellaParts, 1994

Type Design: Edward Fella (b. 1938)

Poster Design: Gail Swanlund (b. 1963)

Poster House Permanent Collection

- FellaParts is the second of two iconic character sets that Edward Fella released through Emigre. Considered together, they are exquisite examples of how some postmodern designers incorporated the language of American commercial art from the Victorian period through the 1950s into contemporary imagery.
- Rudy VanderLans approached Fella with the idea for the typeface, asking him to turn the various decorative elements Fella frequently included in his flyer designs into a dingbat typeface. Fella added additional glyphs to complete the set of 1,970 unique illustrations, all of which are reproduced on the right edge of this poster. While some contain recognizable motifs—Saturn’s silhouette or false eyelashes—most are whimsical icons without specific graphic reference.
- Gail Swanlund, a former student of Fella’s at CatArts, where she currently teaches, was an intern at Emigre when she designed this poster.



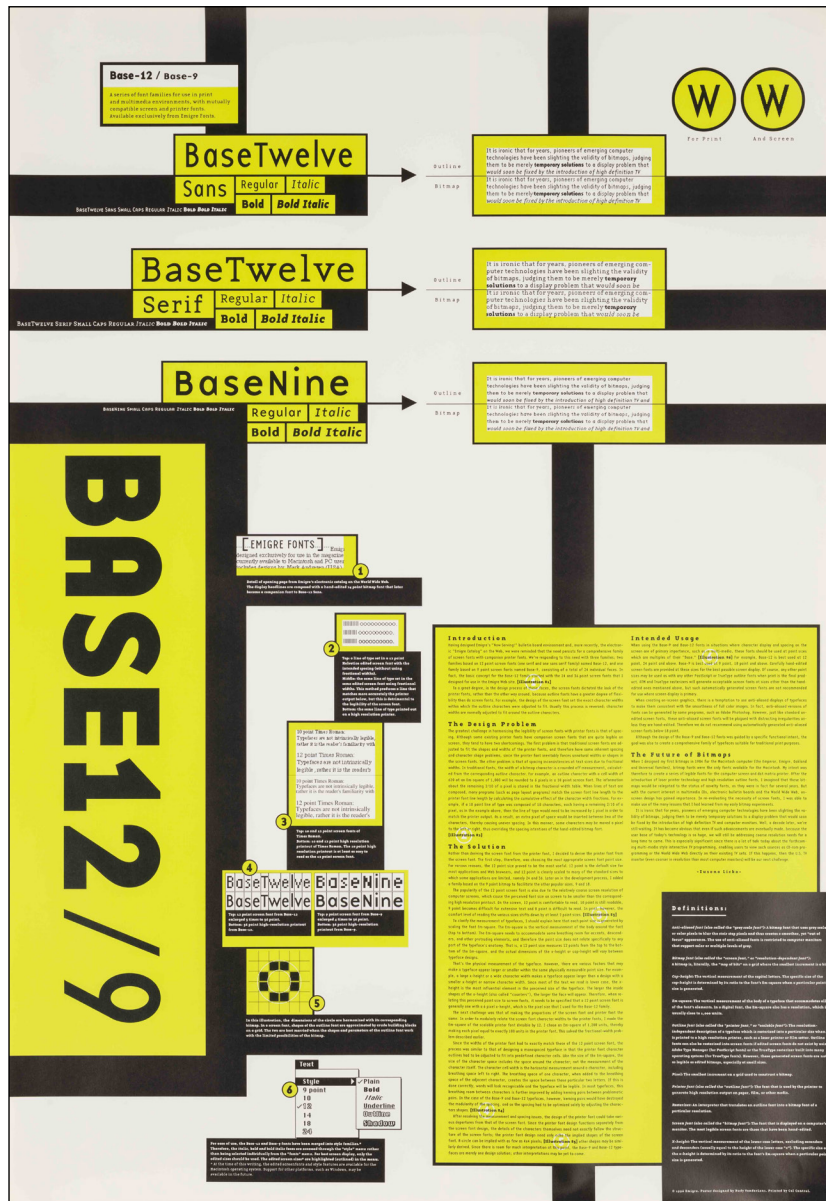
Not Caslon, 1995

Type Design: Mark Andresen (b. 1950)

Poster Design: Rudy VanderLans (b. 1955)

Poster House Permanent Collection

- Taking its name from the 18th-century typefounder William Caslon, Caslon is considered to be the first English typeface and is known for its clean legibility.
- Here, Mark Andresen's typeface is exactly what its name implies—everything that Caslon is not. Inspired by the architecture of the French Quarter in his home city of New Orleans as well as Haitian Vodou symbolism, the letterforms are wild and effervescent, incorporating an abundance of swashes and curls.
- The typeface first appeared in 1991 on an advertising poster for 688, a punk-rock club in Atlanta, Georgia. Andresen created the letterforms by combining the most elaborate elements of various typefaces using pieces of dry-transfer lettering. In 1995, Zuzana Licko digitized the typeface for release through Emigre Fonts.



Base-12/Base-9, 1995

Type Design: Zuzana Licko (b. 1961)

Poster Design: Rudy VanderLans (b. 1955)

Poster House Permanent Collection

- This poster advertises the three font families within the Base typeface, all of which take the numeric portion of their names from their point size on a screen. At this time, the way letters rendered on a screen was not necessarily how they appeared when printed. Typefaces like these were meant to solve that problem by creating more parity between the two.
- The three font families are presented in the upper-left area of the poster, each of which is offered in regular, italics, bold, and bold italics. Base-12 has both a serif and sans-serif variation, resulting in a total of 12 unique typefaces.



Filosofia, 1997

Type Design: Zuzana Licko (b. 1961)

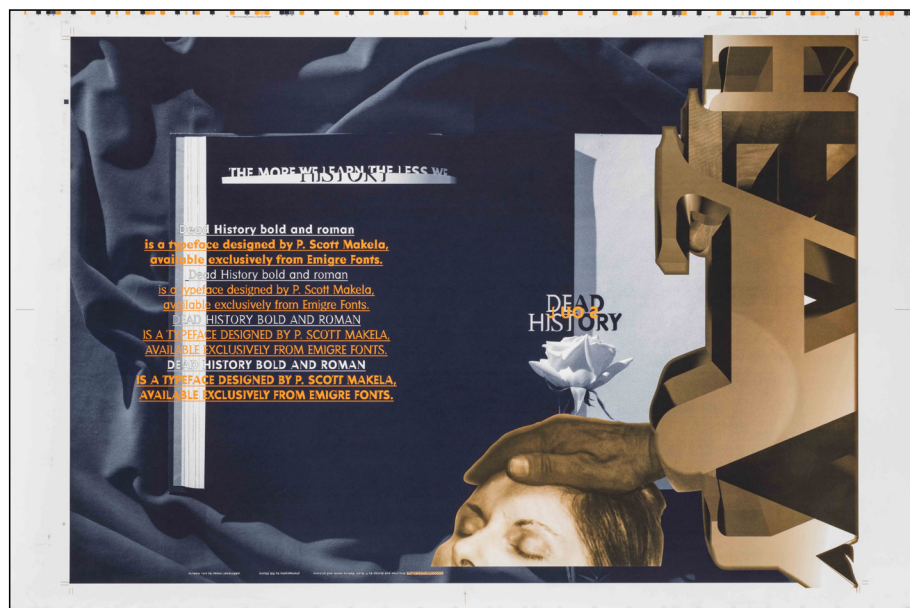
Poster Design: Massimo Vignelli (1931–2014)

Poster House Permanent Collection

- Designed in 1996, *Filosofia* is Zuzana Licko's contemporary take on Bodoni, a late 18th-century typeface created by Giambattista Bodoni that remains one of the most pervasive and beloved typefaces of all time.
- Massimo Vignelli was a vocal fan of the classic Bodoni, referring to it in *Design Observer* as “one of the most elegant typefaces ever designed.” Meanwhile, in a 1991 interview published in *Print* magazine, he noted his distaste for the work of Emigre and its postmodern fonts.
- Asking Vignelli to create the poster for *Filosofia* was a long shot; however, Vignelli not only accepted but also wrote in his reply (in all caps) “THE WAR IS OVER.” This poster, therefore, acts as evidence of Emigre's eventual acceptance by the old guard.

I like to experiment with what the computer can do with things that were not possible with other technologies.

—Zuzana Licko



Dead History, 1994

Type & Poster Design: P. Scott Makela (1960–99)

Poster House Permanent Collection

- Dead History is a mashup of two preexisting fonts: Linotype's Bell Centennial and Adobe's VAG Rounded, resulting in a typeface that is both serif and sans-serif.
- The typeface was originally created by P. Scott Makela in 1990, but was redrawn by Zuzana Licko in 1994 before being licensed for sale through Emigre Fonts.
- Makela's choice of "Dead History" as the name of the font carried both political and personal significance. He wanted to signify that the age of traditionally produced typefaces was "dead," which he emphasized through the incorporation of a photograph he had taken of his mother on her deathbed.
- Makela was a graphic and typeface designer who taught at the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Michigan, one of the few academic institutions at the forefront of digital typeface design in the mid-to-late '90s.

FUSE

Founded in 1991, *FUSE* was a language laboratory in the guise of a hybrid magazine featuring both printed and digital material—a unique showcase for experimental digital-typeface designers and typographers, packaged in a cardboard box. Replacing bound pages, the magazine’s content came on a computer diskette and included five folded, printed posters that explained and sampled the featured typeface designs.

The editors—designer Neville Brody and writer Jon Wozencroft—observed that the advent of early desktop-type drawing tools enabled the democratization of the previously monastic practice of designing and producing typefaces for widespread use. Type had always been the domain of a few highly trained, conservative artisans whose practices were out of alignment with the speed of change happening in the late 20th century. Any bespoke typefaces would have to be hand-drawn until, with the Fontographer program (which made it possible to forgo primitive bitmapping), type design became liberated.

FUSE was, in fact, a manifesto declaring that new visual languages and structures were necessary to express new tendencies and cultures. “The way a font looks has as much impact as what is said with that font,” said Brody. Readers were not expected to be able to compose readable words with these freeform typefaces, “but you will be able to compose visual structures which have inherent in them the basic rhythm and visual quality of type. We’re trying to create a form of visual poetry.” This means the language could be abstract and could be composed of any number of components. This idea had precedent in the expressive typography of the early 20th century.

FUSE was not conceived as a type foundry. Each box was an opportunity for inventive graphic designers to create new sets of social expression—the results were never intended for commercial consumption but as triggers for further invention. The posters were concrete evidence of *FUSE*’s mission to explore the new technical opportunities for what a typeface might look like in the present and future, and to provide an outlet for those designers who were testing the tolerance of type and its users. The final physical issue of *FUSE* was printed in 2000, while issues 19 and 20 were only available digitally. In 2012, its posters were printed as inserts for inclusion in the book on the magazine published by Taschen.

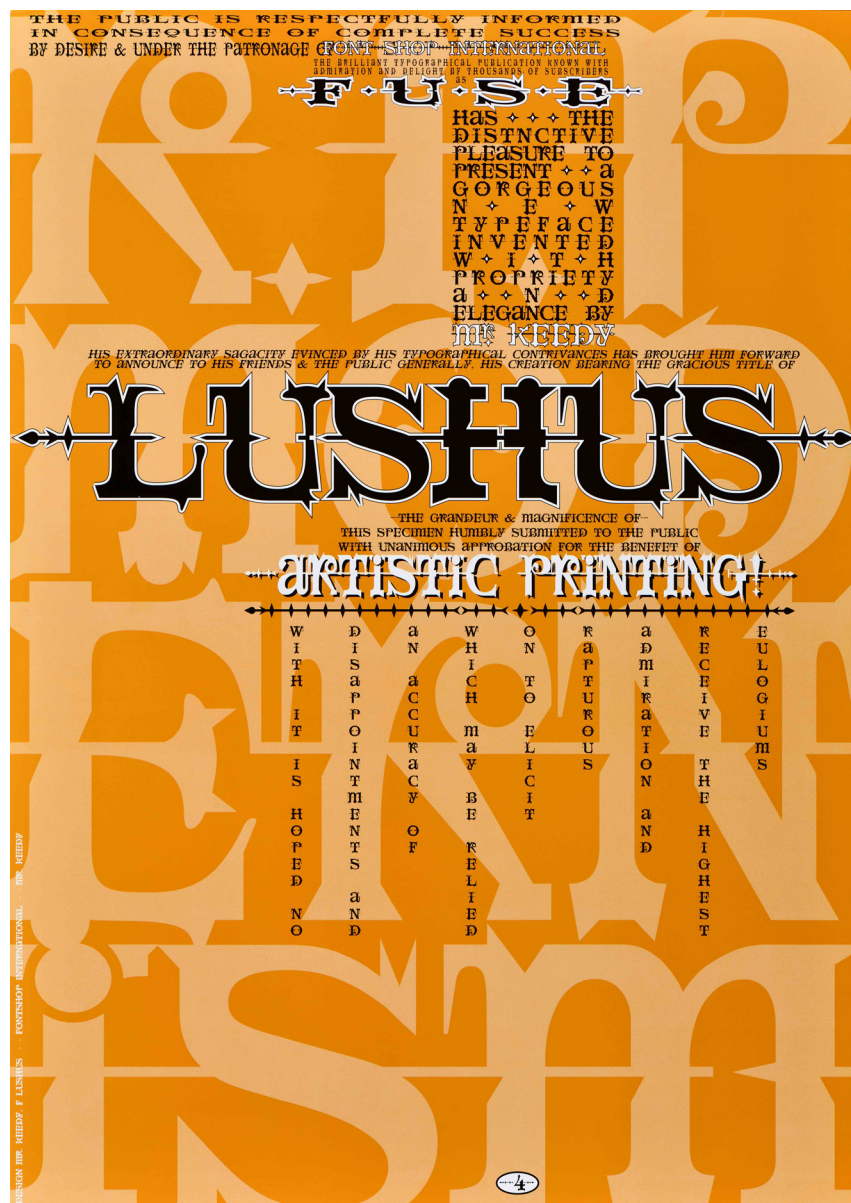


DearJohn, 1992

Barbara Butterweck (b. 1961)

On Loan from Neville Brody

- DearJohn is a modular typeface consisting of three separate segments: a regular, a bold, and an italic. The user is invited to combine these elements as they see fit, varying the weight and color of each segment to create a custom letterform. The progression of this process can be seen in the three flush-left lines of text on the poster that show the entire alphabet being built.
- Scholars have compared DearJohn to visual elements of Futura as well as to the concept behind Bruno Munari's 1935 typeface, Essential, in which he considered the least amount of information a reader would need to recognize a letter.
- This poster was included in issue three of *FUSE*, dedicated to the idea of "(Dis)InFormation."



FUSE was both a forum for debate and an experimental workshop.

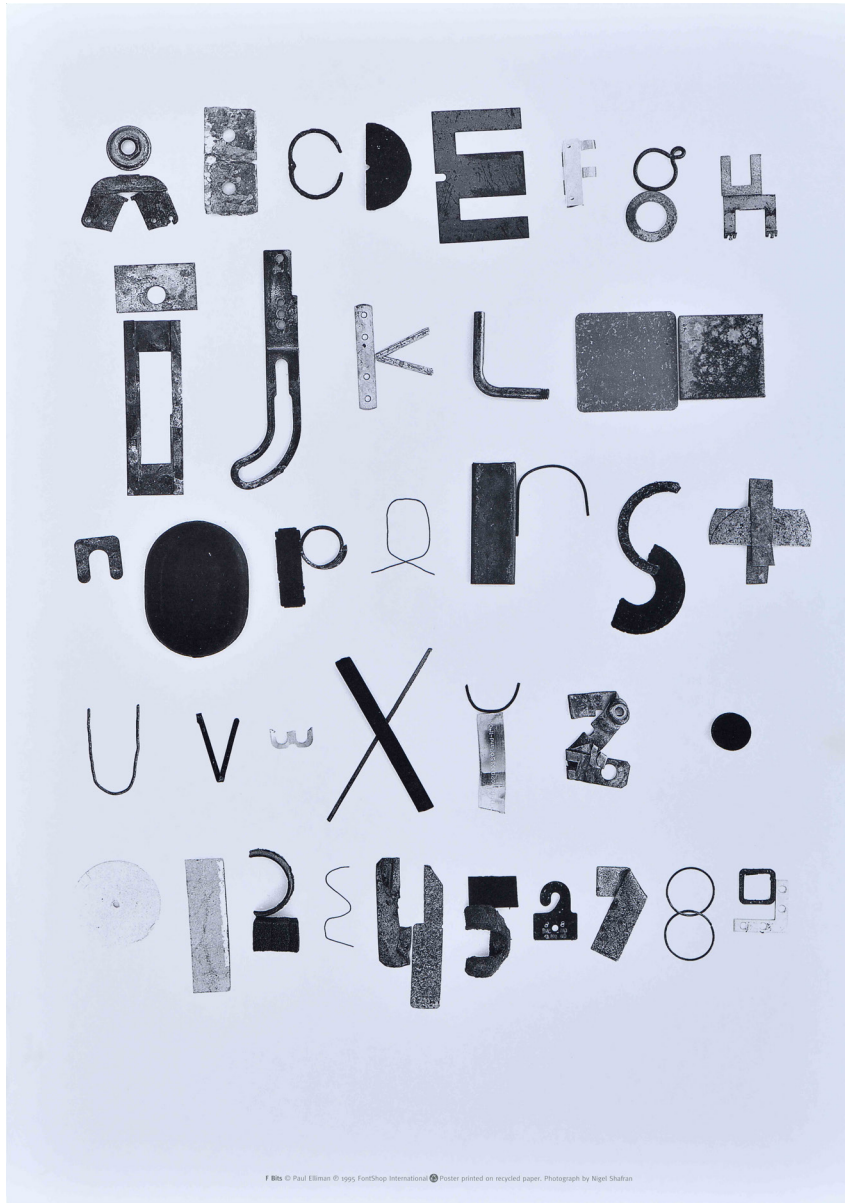
—Steven Heller

LushUS, 1992

Jeffery Keedy (b. 1957)

Poster House Permanent Collection

- Issue four of *FUSE* focused on the concept of “Exuberance,” and was the first edition of the publication to include work by American designers. Jeffery Keedy (better known as Mr. Keedy) wrote the companion essay, “A Type of Death,” in which he discusses how the modern obsession with sterile, clean typefaces has taken the soul out of letterforms.
- With *LushUS*, Keedy created a digital typeface inspired by the ornamental fonts of the Industrial Revolution, with elements of Egyptian, Tuscan, and other Revival types. The result is full of highly decorative serifs and jaunty accents. Even the text on the poster humorously parodies Victorian sideshow and circus announcements.
- In naming the typeface, Keedy played on the dual meaning of “lush,” signifying both luxury and a heavy drinker, while the “US” pointed to the fact that the issue highlighted designers from the United States as well as the collective meaning of “us” as a community.
- Keedy further invited future users to “feel free to add ornamentation to this typeface: more is not a bore.”



FUSE was a reset, an opening of the doors of typography to practitioners from other fields.

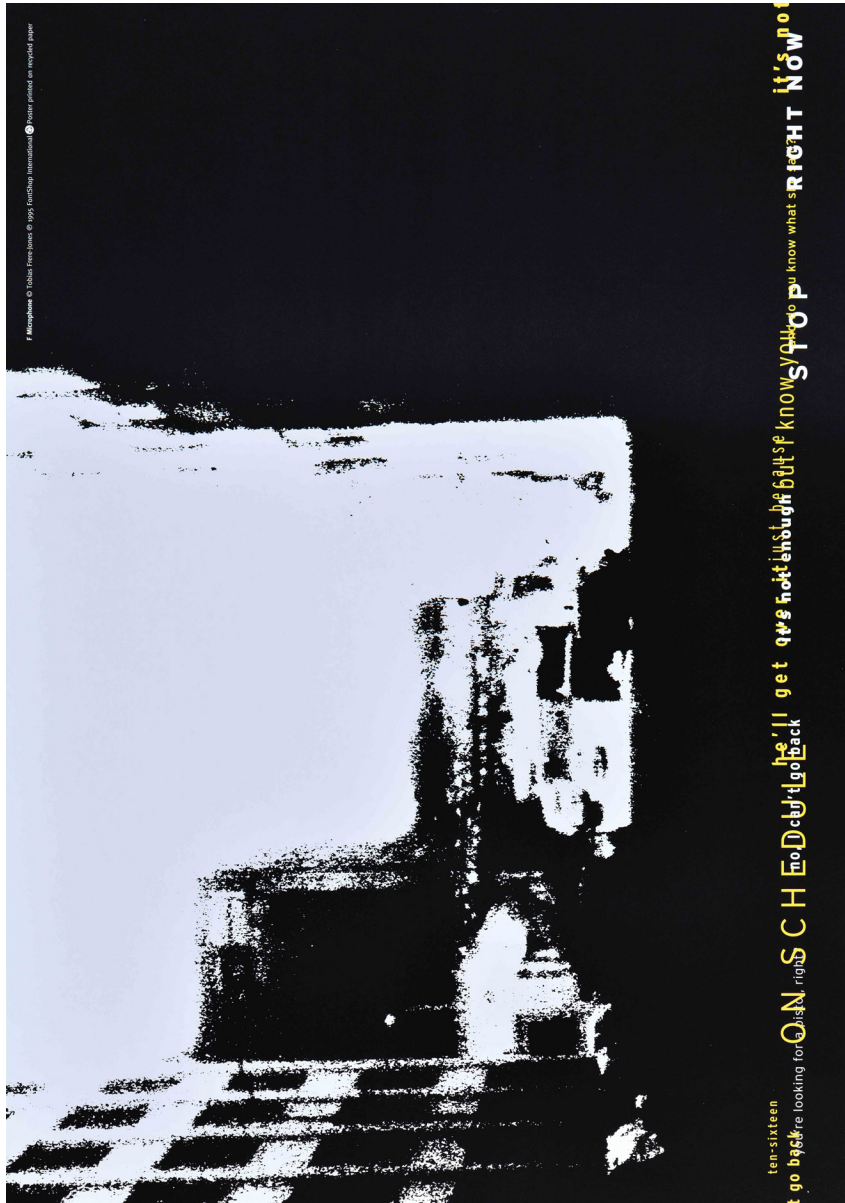
—Neville Brody

Bits, 1995

Paul Elliman (b. 1961)

Poster House Permanent Collection

- Also known as Found Font, Bits was submitted by Paul Elliman to issue 15 of *FUSE* (Cities).
- Each letterform is derived from an object found by Elliman between 1989 and 1995, mostly consisting of industrial trash. No glyph is repeated, and each salvaged piece of debris is small enough to fit comfortably in one's hand.
- While seemingly random, Elliman's process of making this alphabet plays with the concept that an environment—particularly a city—creates a language. As formal writing skills developed in response to the needs of domestic agriculture for systems of accounting and trade, and urban centers were established, human language became more complex. Contemporary society provides new challenges for communication—a shift that is reflected in Bits.



Microphone, 1995

Tobias Frere-Jones (b. 1970)

Poster House Permanent Collection

- Also created for issue 15 of *FUSE*, Microphone is a conceptual typeface that links each letter on a keyboard with a distinct phrase. By typing, the user creates fragmented conversations similar to those one might overhear while walking down a city street.
- Tobias Frere-Jones developed this typeface during his daily commute around Boston, writing down phrases he overheard in public. To reflect this variety of voices and volumes, each phrase in Microphone is rendered in different point sizes and weights of the Interstate typeface he had designed a few years prior.
- In order to maintain a level of randomness, Frere-Jones assigned numerals 0–9 followed by letters A–Z (starting with uppercase, then lowercase) to the phrases in the order in which he recorded them. For example, the uppercase “A” produces “so beautiful,” while the lowercase “a” produces “two forty-nine.”
- While the typeface was developed in Boston, the background image in the poster is a blown-up still from a Super-8 film shot on Washington Street in Dumbo, Brooklyn.

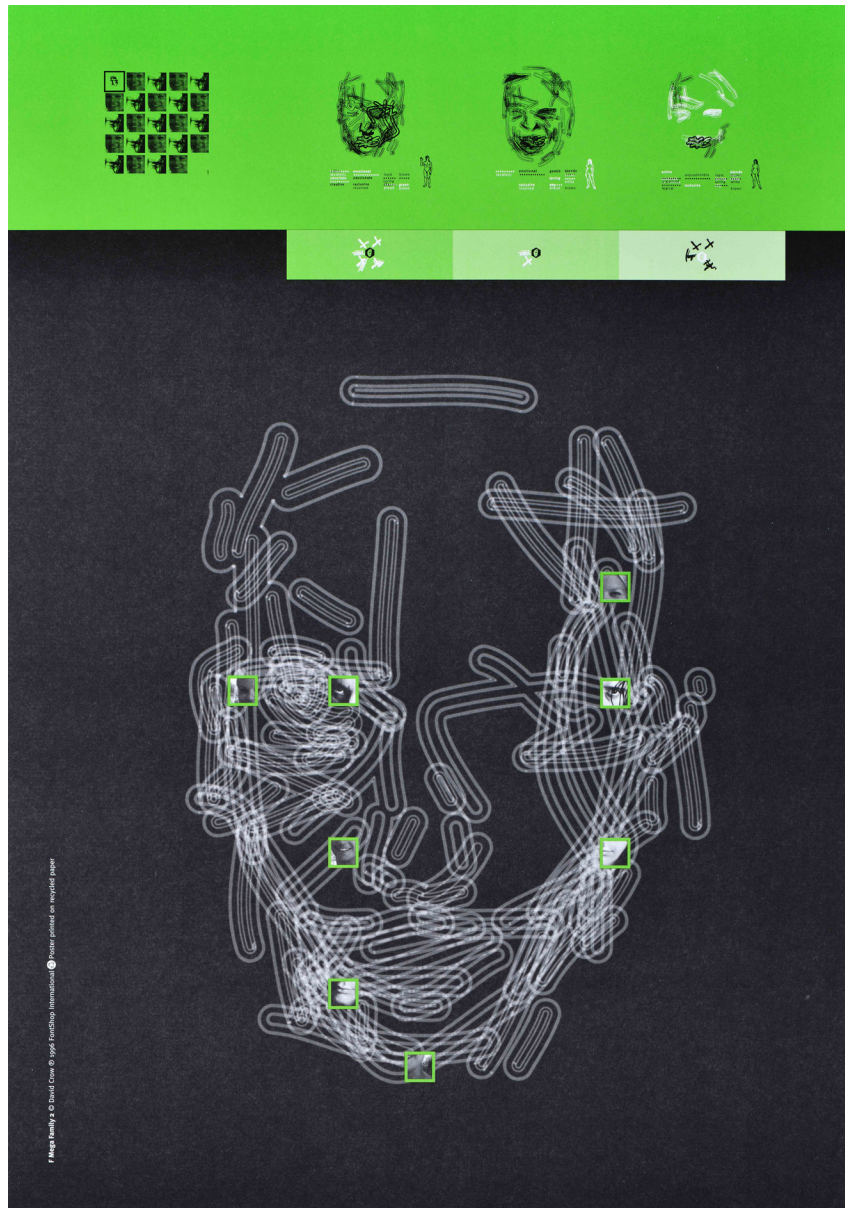


Echo, 1997

Neville Brody (b. 1957)

Poster House Permanent Collection

- Echo Download and Echo Three were produced as bonus fonts for issue 17 of *FUSE*, with this poster serving as both a promotion for the typefaces and the publication itself.
- As a conceptual typeface, Echo creates sections of text that look like they impart information, but which make no collective sense upon reading. In Echo Download, each keyboard letter is linked to three lines of abridged blind copy, while in Echo Three, the user can produce more varied point sizes and weights of similar broken phrases.
- The text fragments used in all versions of Echo were lifted at random from scans of *The Guardian* newspaper. The variation in point size derives from the use of headlines, introductory copy, and body text. Brody cut these sections into segments before assigning them to individual characters. When used, the result suggests the experimental cut-up technique made famous by William S. Burroughs and Brion Gysin.



Mega Family 2, 1996

David Crow (1962–2022)

Poster House Permanent Collection

- Created for issue 16 of *FUSE* (Genetics), Mega Family 2 is more of a game than a usable typeface. The upper and lowercase keyboard letters are linked to various parts of both a male and a female portrait. By typing, the user can blend that “genetic material” to create a portrait featuring characteristics from both “parents.”
- The numeric keys are linked to additional content, including phrases and icons. Some combinations will delete or override others, much like dominant and recessive genes. Finally, shift “X” and shift “Y” will produce gendered thumbnail images.
- The top banner of this poster indicates all possible glyphs within the typeface, while the central image shows a combined portrait.



Autosuggestion, 1994

Neville Brody (b. 1957)

Poster House Permanent Collection

- For issue nine of *FUSE* (Auto), Neville Brody revisited his 1992 typeface *Blur* in which the letterforms appear slightly out of focus as if they have been cheaply reprinted with a photocopier.
- Brody inverted *Blur*'s characters so that the negative space of each letter became the dominant feature, furthering his investigations into the outer limits of legibility.
- *Autosuggestion* was released as a bonus font. While there were no strict rules about how many typefaces could be released per issue, typically *FUSE* featured four "official" fonts and at least one bonus font, all reflective of that edition's theme.
- This poster promotes the entire issue and not just the typeface, featuring the names of the other type designers—Mario Beernaert, Margaret Calvert, Russell Mills, and Vaughan Oliver—in the central image.

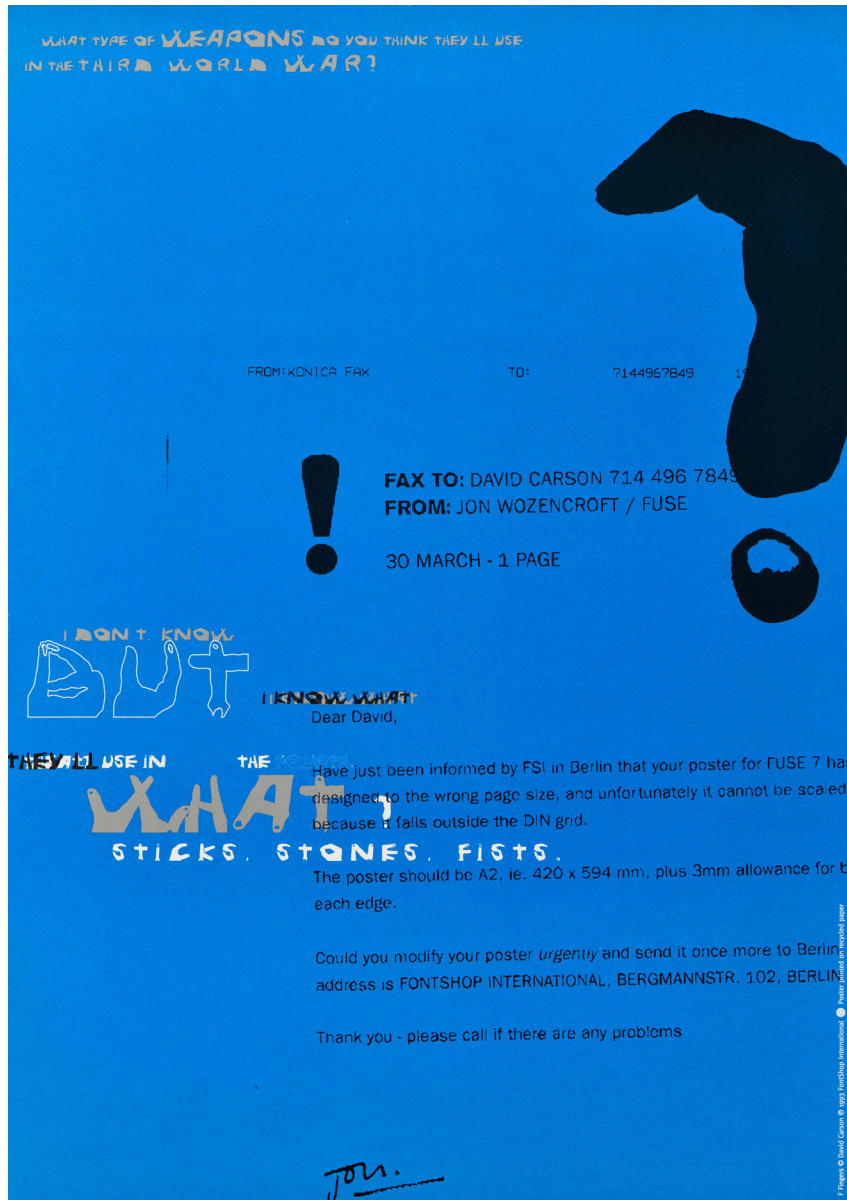


Uck N Pretty, 1992

Rick Valicenti (b. 1951)

Poster House Permanent Collection

- The inspiration for Uck N Pretty came from fellow designer Jilly Simons's accusation that with his typographic experiments, Rick Valicenti was "killing pretty." Valicenti doubled down on this idea, producing a portfolio of letterpress collages with that "insult" as the title.
- Neville Brody saw the "Killing Pretty" series and asked Valicenti to design a typeface and poster for *FUSE* as part of the "Exuberance" issue. Once again, Valicenti collaged, drew, scanned, and digitized his imagery to create the typeface, simultaneously producing what he calls "a very ugly poster."
- The typeface is meant to embody the "modern-post-modern, pre-millennium, early-paradigm shift world" of the early '90s, with the intention that users could drag and distort each letterform as needed to best express their message.
- The text on the poster reads "Don't Kill Pretty," with Valicenti's name in the circle at the lower left. The image also appeared in the April 1993 issue of *Esquire* magazine.



Fingers, 1993

David Carson (b. 1955)

Poster House Permanent Collection

- Created for the seventh issue of *FUSE* (Crash), *Fingers* answers the question of what letterforms might look like after the death of typography. Namely, that people would likely invent a personal sign language using their fingers.
- More easily readable than many other fonts presented in *FUSE*, *Fingers* is based on David Carson's actual hands replicating Roman letters.
- The poster features part of a fax from *FUSE* cofounder Jon Wozencroft to David Carson asking him to resize the poster he had designed for the issue. It is overlaid by punctuation and commentary in *Fingers*.



Mutoid, 1994

John Critchley (Dates Unknown)

Poster House Permanent Collection

- Issue ten of *FUSE* (Freeform) opened with an essay by Jon Wozencroft, in which he stated that the publication would be pushing the limits of typography even further, acting as “an outlet that uses the keyboard more as a musical instrument or palette of colors.”
- Mutoid perfectly reflects this idea, eschewing language in favor of imagery that corresponds to letters on a keyboard. By typing, one would output heads, legs, arms, and torsos that could be combined to create a “mutoid” creature.
- This comparatively simple poster does not display the entire array of options, but rather a dynamic figure composed of six body parts made from the characters “h,” “l,” “4,” “m,” “t,” and “y.”



Move Me MM, 1994

Luc(as) de Groot (b. 1963)

Poster House Permanent Collection

- Issue 11 of *FUSE* was dedicated to the theme of Pornography. Also included was an essay by Jon Wozencroft on “extratransubstantiationism,” an extension of the Catholic belief that during the eucharist the bread and wine turn into the literal body and blood of Christ prior to communion.
- Luc(as) de Groot created Move Me MM as a play on both concepts. The typeface begins as a traditional, sans-serif uppercase alphabet, but can be “morphed” into louche graphics reminiscent of the individual letterforms. These naughty icons were inspired by earlier ink and aquarelle drawings he made while single.
- The “MM” stands for “MultipleMaster,” a type of font that can be adjusted by the user along a continuous axis. In this case, the glyphs can become more or less explicit, allowing the user to “hide” the dirty typeface as one might hide pornography. This was the first MM typeface offered outside of Adobe.
- The poster shows the pornographic versions of the letters “A” and “S” overlaid so that a female figure, spread eagle, appears to be embraced by large hands.

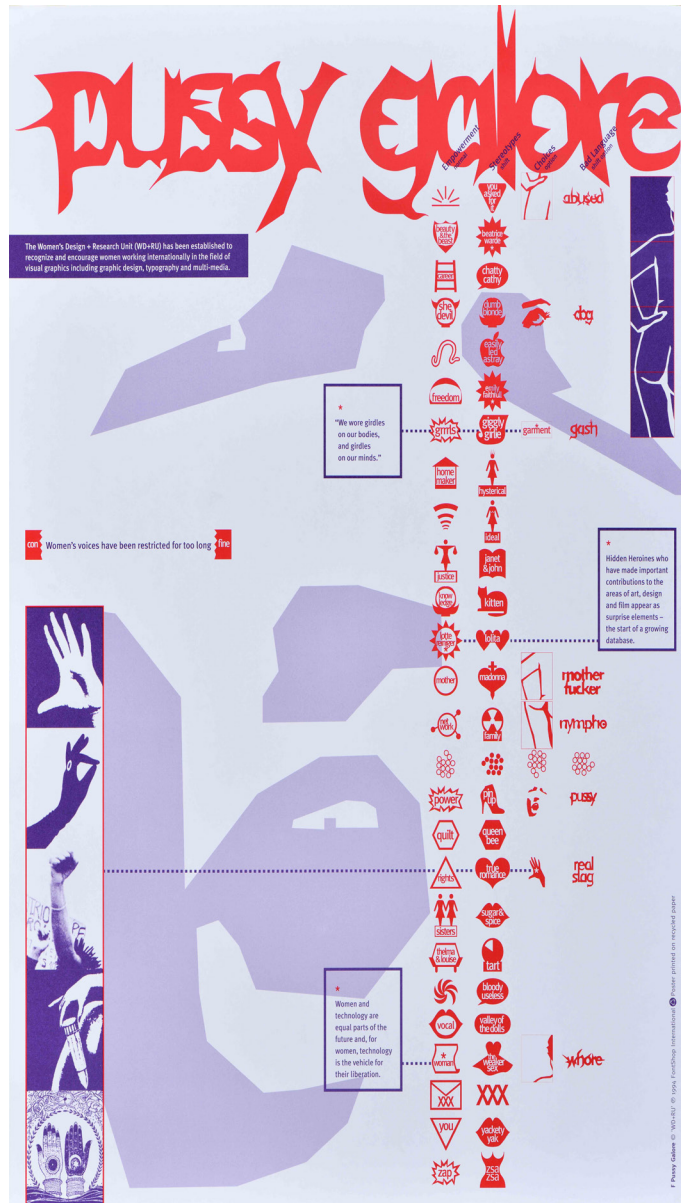


WhatYouSee/WhatYouGet, 1994

LettError (Erik van Blokland, b. 1967
& Just van Rossum, b. 1966)

Poster House Permanent Collection

- Also included in issue 11 was this poster by the Dutch group LettError promoting a typeface that (intentionally) promises a lot and delivers little.
- “Inspired by cheap signs on the doors of strange bars in bad neighborhoods,” the digital letterforms reference seedy locations that use fancy fonts and neon lights to lure customers. LettError noted that “we made them look like the stuff other nameless, tasteless people have made in the last 30 years.”
- Playing on the concept of high expectations versus disappointing reality, the printed versions of each letterform fail to resemble the over-the-top tackiness of the on-screen glyphs. This division between what is shown on screen and what is printed was achieved by combining two different fonts into a single file so that the digital rendering would not match the physical product.



Pussy Galore, 1994

Women's Design + Research Unit (WD+RU, f. 1994)

Project Team: Siân Cook, Liz McQuiston, & Teal Triggs

Poster House Permanent Collection

- After attending a *FUSE* conference at which all of the speakers were white men, Teal Triggs was inspired to form Women's Design + Research Unit with colleagues Siân Cook and Liz McQuiston in order to highlight and encourage women working in design and typography.
- Pussy Galore was the group's first project, presented in *FUSE* issue 12 under the theme of propaganda. Rather than expressing a standard alphabet, each letter of the typeface corresponds to an ideological statement, phrase, or symbols within women's history or ideas about femininity.
- The poster showcases the full extent of Pussy Galore in four columns near the right edge of the poster. The first two columns indicate glyphs corresponding to the Roman alphabet in lower and uppercase, while the less populated third and fourth columns show Easter eggs that can be inserted by using the "shift" and "option" keys.



Cyber, 1995

Neville Brody (b. 1957)

Poster House Permanent Collection

- Like Autosuggestion, Neville Brody released Cyber (sometimes referred to as CyberStatic) as a bonus font in *FUSE* issue 14. As such, the corresponding poster acts as a promotional tool for the entire issue and not just for his typeface.
- The names of the other type designers featured in this edition are placed around the white dot letters spelling out “Cyber.” They include Moniteurs, Xplicit, Brett Wickens, Rick Vermeulen, Francis Stebbing, and Vera Daucher; the latter two won the Royal College of Art Student *FUSE* competition for their typeface Trinity (also released in this issue as a bonus font).



Crux95, 1995

Brett Wickens (b. 1961)

Poster House Permanent Collection

- Also created for issue 14 of *FUSE* (Cyber), Crux95 distorts standard letterforms through sets of binary options that shift or remove portions of a glyph. The central text, “without you I’m zero,” playfully references the series of 1s and 0s that comprise binary code.
- Brett Wickens was inspired by Alan Bartram’s article “Reading by Machine” in the June 1962 issue of *Typographica*. In it, Bartram explores how degraded a font can become before a machine is no longer able to recognize it.



The only criteria was to be as questioning of convention as possible

—Neville Brody

Can You...?, 1991

Phil Baines (b. 1958)

Poster House Permanent Collection

- Can You...? appeared in the first issue of *FUSE* (Invention) and is the first of two decorative typefaces Phil Baines contributed to the publication. Four years later, it was released as You Can (read me), although it has also been referred to as Can You (and do you want to) Read Me? and a few other similar variations.
- Inspired by designer Brian Coe's experiments with typeface legibility in the 1960s, Baines was interested in discovering how little of a letterform was needed for it to remain readable. He noticed that by working with a serif typeface, more of a letter could be removed and still be recognizable. The finished alphabet with all possible accents is rendered in the top area of the white column along the right side of the poster.
- The base typeface for Can You...? is classic Clarendon, created in 1845 by Robert Besley. Baines references this in the text within the white column, where he also includes other facts about the typeface. The larger text in the pink area of the poster addresses the need to "reconsider the old before reaching the new" and other philosophical thoughts on the future of typography, written in the voice of V. Real, Baines's short-lived alter ego.
- As Baines did not own a Macintosh computer, this was the only poster produced as a physical maquette for *FUSE*, complete with overlays on a board. All other posters for the publication were submitted as digital files.



State, 1991

Neville Brody (b. 1957)

Poster House Permanent Collection

- As one of its founders, Neville Brody frequently contributed to *FUSE*. This is the first type specimen poster he created for the publication.
- While the majority of the typefaces released by *FUSE* are not traditionally readable, *State* retains enough visual information from the Latin alphabet to provide legibility. It is presented only in uppercase, and Brody has given equal importance to the shape of each letter and its corresponding negative space.
- The entire alphabet and number system are presented in the lower-right corner, while the text across the middle of the poster reads “Fuse a line through chaos of communication.”

Press Reviews

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