

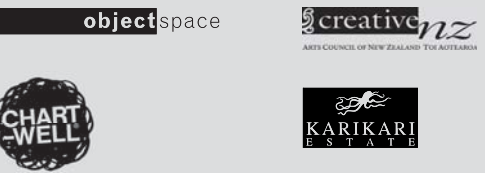
# **PRINTING TYPES**

**New Zealand Type Design Since 1870**

Jonty Valentine

Published on the occasion of the exhibition  
*Printing Types: New Zealand Type Design Since 1870*  
Curated by Jonty Valentine, July 2009  
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There is a moment in Gary Hustwit's 2007 documentary film *Helvetica* where designer Paula Scher humorously quips that the Helvetica typeface caused both the Vietnam and Iraq wars. Of course this is a joke but embedded in her hyperbole is the recognition that typefaces have power, personality and are omni-present. One other designer interviewed in Hustwit's film notes of Helvetica that "you will do what the type face wants you to do" so strong is its personality. *In the Language of Things* (2008) Deyan Sudjic makes a similar observation: "In the shape and form of a letter we have all the characteristics of an accent". This assessment contrasts with the orthodox assessment of literary critics noted by Jonty Valentine which is that typefaces have been "considered to be relatively dumb—by which I mean silent".

In an age where 'authors'/creators are often their own producers, decisions about typefaces—that were until recently largely the province of trained designers—are made daily by many of us. The explosion of type decision making opportunities can be related to the explosion in the number of things that are designed, produced and owned: we have never had more possessions. The sheer rate of the production and consumption of 'things' has raised the stakes—culturally, economically and socially—of debate and enquiry about design and its wider role. Local indicators of this interest, in relation to type, have been the emergence of the journal *The National Grid* in the last few years and the very successful *TypeSHED11* conference staged earlier this year in Wellington. (See website at <http://www.typeshed11.co.nz/>).

Objectspace aims to provoke new assessments about the making and functioning of craft and design: *Printing Types: New Zealand Type Design Since 1870* is an occasion for us (New Zealanders) to consider the work of local type designers. This is an important project because as Valentine says "it is remarkable how un-heroic and invisible the history of type design has been here". While writers such as David Bennewith, Noel Waite and Douglas Lloyd-Jenkins have started to excavate our type design history *Printing Types*, is I believe, the first exhibition and related publication completely focused on contemporary and historical New Zealand type design. Objectspace offers its congratulations and immense gratitude to Jonty Valentine who has curated this exhibition, written a provocative essay for the publication and designed the *Printing Types* publication. *Printing Types* follows on from the outstanding exhibition *Just Hold Me: Aspects of NZ publication design* that Jonty curated for Objectspace in 2006.

As well as curator Jonty Valentine I wish to thank all the contributors to the exhibition and publication. In addition I want to acknowledge the support of Air New Zealand, Desna Jury and AUT University, Stephen Connelly, Inhouse Design, Lara Strongman and The National Grid. Objectspace would not be able to set out to provoke new assessments of design, craft and applied arts culture without the major funding of Creative New Zealand and the support of The Chartwell Trust and Karikari Estate Wines.

*Howard Roark laughed.*

*He stood naked at the edge of a cliff...*

I read *The Fountainhead* by Ayn Rand again last summer.<sup>1</sup> I first read it in my second year as a graphic design student at university—at the same time I was introduced to typography. I'd forgotten a lot about it: how the novel begins, that it is so over-the-top and romantic. Somehow it's the perfect mix of Mills & Boon cliché<sup>2</sup> and philosophical argument. Although it's not an obvious choice, I want to use *The Fountainhead* as a metaphor for how I view type designers. While the main character, Howard Roark, is an architect, the book does describe the idealistic, adolescent, romantic way that I want to imagine the work of the designer protagonists of this exhibition—a usually anonymous group of people, some of whom make it their life's work to design typefaces. It is just the kind of compelling but flawed and entertaining mythology that I'm searching for, to start to tell a story that needs more heroes.

## STEREOTYPES

Re-reading *The Fountainhead* reminded me of a feature I read on Wellington type designer Kris Sowersby in the *Sunday* magazine last year.<sup>3</sup> In the article there is a photograph of Kris standing on one of Catherine Griffiths's monumental concrete tablets of type in the Wellington Writers Walk. The photo is pretty epic: Kris is pictured almost heroically with the sun behind him against a backdrop of water lapping against the wharf at the edge of the harbour. The image struck me as very Roarkesque. Referring to a panel discussion involving a number of local graphic designers, the writer commented: "Amongst the graphic designers, Sowersby somehow stuck out as the odd one out and, in his talk, he offered the analogy that, as a typeface designer amongst typographers (designers who use typefaces in their work), he is like a brick maker amongst architects." Nice. There is a parallel with Roark here too, who "had worked as a common labourer in the building trades since childhood,"<sup>4</sup> and, though qualified as an architect, is reduced to working in a granite quarry (because he refuses to compromise his design standards).

*The Fountainhead* is a book that many people say really influenced their lives. While Rand's philosophy of Objectivism has been criticised as being sophomoric and preachy, that was just the kind of grand narrative that I was looking for at the beginning of my career as a designer. Now it does seem like the ultimate adolescent boys book: individual genius, holding an uncompromising vision, being the avant-garde and standing up to the conservative establishment against all odds. I was struck by the heroic portrayal of Kris Sowersby; which was very unusual for a type designer in New Zealand. In fact it is remarkable how un-heroic and invisible the history of type design has been here. On reading Hoare's *Sunday* article, I was torn between being pleased that any type designer has achieved such a profile, but equally kind of frustrated by the lack of contextual foundation laying about the history of New Zealand typeface design. It was as if Kris was the first and only designer of type in New Zealand. But to criticise the article's author for this is a little unfair, because the history of type design in this country is hardly known, even to its creators.

## CONTEXTS

*The creators were not selfless. It is the whole secret of their power—that it was self-sufficient, self-motivated, self-generated. A first cause, a fount of energy, a life force, a Prime Mover. The creator served nothing and no one.*<sup>5</sup>

In *The Fountainhead*, Roark rejects history. The story begins with him being expelled from his university on the day of his graduation, cast out because he refuses to design buildings that reference the canons of classical architecture. Roark rejects the Dean's explanation that the rules or "proper forms of expression" of architecture come from the thinkers of the past and should be followed by modern designers. Roark argues instead that the mark of a modern building is in its ability "to follow its own truth. Its one single theme, and to serve its own single purpose."<sup>6</sup> Conflict between designers who look at the past for inspiration versus 'free thinking' innovators is the crux of the book. But by comparison, New Zealand type designers don't have a local canon either to pay homage to or reject.

Arguably New Zealand's first type designer was Robert Coupland Harding. From his early years as a newspaper printer in Wanganui, and then Napier, where he met the missionary William Colenso, the printer of the Treaty of Waitangi, Harding began to publish his own journals for which he was able to begin to demonstrate the typographic craft of a printer. Most notably he produced *Hardings Almanac* in the 1870s as well as New Zealand's first typographic design journal *Typo* which he began in 1887. *Typo* received such high international praise that a leading English typefounder wrote that: "For the future historian of typefounding of the present generation we shall certainly have to go to New Zealand."<sup>7</sup> As Don McKenzie has written, "Robert Coupland Harding, as practitioner, historian and critic of printing has a strong claim to be considered New Zealand's first and most eminent typographer." In addition to working as a publisher, printer, journalist and importing the first North American and European metal type brought into the country, he also designed printing borders. One in particular, 'The Book Border' produced in 1879, was used by printers worldwide (see p.12).

If Robert Coupland Harding was probably New Zealand's first designer of types, then who was next?<sup>8</sup> The field of type design in New Zealand is woefully under-researched. And although I don't want to suggest a definitive list of practitioners, when obviously that is problematic for any account of history, I would like to use this project as a prompt to start a bit more digging.

A typeface by Joseph Sinel has recently been digitised<sup>9</sup> based on an alphabet that he designed in the late 1920s. Joseph Sinel (1889-1975) was born in Auckland. He was an Elam graduate, and worked as an apprentice lithographer at Wilson and Horton, then travelled overseas working in Australia, England and finally the United States. In *40 Legends of New Zealand Design*, Douglas Lloyd Jenkins writes that Joseph Sinel is "widely considered the 'father of industrial design' and the man responsible for coining the phrase 'industrial design' in the 1920s".<sup>10</sup> From some descriptions Sinel sounds like New Zealand's own Howard Roark, working in New York in the 1920s, then California in the 1940s: he's even labelled a 'font of wisdom'.<sup>11</sup>

Next on my list is Bruce Rotherham who was a student at the Auckland University's School of Architecture and a member of the influential 'Group Architects' collective. Still as students in 1946 The Group published the manifesto *The Constitution of the Architectural Group*, stating as their general aim: "to further the appreciation of good planning and design in New Zealand".<sup>12</sup> Rotherham was the son of a commercial printer and had worked at his father's business learning the fundamentals of typesetting and graphic design. The study for his typeface 'Wedge' began in 1947, and the final font as it is presented here took over forty years to complete (see p.18). Wedge was designed in response to Herbert Bayer's 'Universal Alphabet', which Rotherham considered to be unreadable.<sup>13</sup>

Perhaps next is Joseph Churchward, who left Charles Haines Advertising in Wellington to become a freelance designer in 1962—starting up Advertising Art Studio, which became Churchward International Typefaces in 1969. He sold his first custom typeface, 'Churchward 1969' for Woolworths advertising, and other original designs to the H. Berthold type foundry in Germany.<sup>14</sup>

I'm already up to 1969, and I've only mentioned four people. And these designers, let alone their types, are with the recent exception of Joseph Churchward not really known to the local graphic design community, let alone to the wider public. New Zealand type designers really need some more grand narratives. But to achieve this, I suspect that there is a lot of work that needs to be done to abstract material from hiding places in private or public archives around the country. Which is why the purpose of this project is to begin to establish, or at least begin to lay the case for such a series of stories. To prompt further discussion, and to pose the question: who are the other New Zealand type designers out there currently hidden from our known history? And, to add to that challenge, to question *why* there is so little written about this subject.

## JUSTIFICATIONS

[Toohey:] *Mr. Roark ... Why don't you tell me what you think of me?*

[Roark:] *But I don't think of you.*

This question is from Ellsworth Monkton Toohey,<sup>15</sup> the antagonist of the book who represents backward-looking conservatism and anti-individualism. One of the most famous lines in the book, it is used to show that Roark is not interested in seeking the recognition of 'the establishment'. I want it to echo my question: why don't we care much about type designers in New Zealand? I'm going to speculate in order to answer this question. (That's what Ayn Rand would do). There are a few ways to go. Either, A., the production cost of old technology like letterpress casting made it unviable for types to be *made* and hence *designed* here; or B., I have not uncovered all of the type designers who were working here because there has been a lack of primary research in this area, and type designers didn't attain a high public profile to be written about unlike their artist, writer, or architect peers; or C., New Zealand simply didn't *need* its own type designers to overcome A. and B. options. Or perhaps all of these options could be true, all at once.

### A. Modern technology

I am restricting my interests for this exhibition to 'type design'. So firstly, I should acknowledge that there has been a rich history of a broader category of 'letter design'—commercial sign writing, lettering and calligraphy throughout the period of late 1800s to now. And although the line between type design and other manifestations of letter making is not always clear-cut, the history of type design's more commonplace relation may not be such a mystery. But that is another story. For this project I want to define type design as the production of a system of stylistically coherent types for printing using contemporary mechanical reproduction technology. The definition of contemporary type technology has of course changed a great deal over the last 100 years in New Zealand: from early letterpress hot metal type casting; to drawing for photolithographic cold typesetting which became popular in this country in the 1970s; to digital font vector production in the early 1990s. It may be this change in technology that partly explains the hole in our type design history. Simply put, we were probably well served by international type foundries and it was not viable to support the expensive and specialised craft of manufacturing metal types in New Zealand. Furthermore, even after the introduction of phototypesetting, the publishing of fonts was a specialised realm still requiring expensive technology. It is really only since the advent of digital technology, and software like Fontographer and Fontlab, in the early 1990s that it has become relatively easy for the independent typographic designer to produce and even to publish their own fonts.

### B. and C. Type is dumb

Possibly options B. and C. could be considered as one. The notion that New Zealand didn't really need type designers enough to overcome the expense of production (and that no one felt the need to speak up for them), begs the bigger question of why anyone needs New Zealand (or any new) types at all? And who needs to know about who designed them? This is a big a question to answer, but it is where the history gets really intriguing.

To illustrate: when I started my project research, I imagined that Denis Glover, as a New Zealand poet, journalist, printer, typographic critic would be a candidate for inclusion on the list of unknown type designers. But now I don't believe he ever did design a typeface. Why not? Wouldn't he have liked to design types? He was very opinionated about typography and typefaces. In an article entitled 'Typographical Printing Today', Glover summarised the history of printing and typography in New Zealand to the early 1960s.<sup>16</sup> "Printing in New Zealand got away to a bad start," he began. "It was a missionary venture, and notions of typographical style did not exist." Because Glover was operating within the narrow constraints of the English private press tradition, he was concerned mostly with the printing, the typographic layout and setting of local literature in foreign types. He was, it seems, not that interested in the use or design of local types. So in 1930 when Christchurch's Caxton Press (founded by Denis Glover) produced their first Type Specimen book (which inspires this project and publication, and see right image), it was full of English and European types. Even though the Caxton Press was the first to publish many of New Zealand's great writers, they used foreign types. There is also an intriguing disclaimer in the book: "This specimen type book has been designed not so much for the typographer (of whom there are not many in the country) as for the reader who has found some interest in comparing various faces and styles he has come across..."<sup>17</sup>

Part of the explanation for this may be that when in the company of writers it just seems trivial or unworldly to want to squeeze too much significance out of the choice of a typeface used in one's copy of a really important text. I hate to be the one to say it, but the formal quality of a typeface is of secondary importance in a literary (not to mention post-modern) world. Literary theorists (maybe just early structuralist semioticians) often stop at the 'arbitrary' form of the alphabet as a signifier, and are not that interested in going closer in to examine decisions about the 'material' or formal quality of signs—like the differences in shape of types.<sup>18</sup> Apart from needing to be easily readable, and maybe indexing mere stylistic changes in trends from an advertising perspective, types are by many considered to be relatively dumb—by which I mean silent.

### COUNTERS

In *The Fountainhead* Roark doesn't say much either. He's the introspective strong silent type who thinks his buildings speak for themselves. Though it is a very entertaining story, Ayn Rand is never really able to convincingly describe what makes Roark's buildings so amazing (apart from invoking modernist form-follows-function tropes). When I say that graphic design needs new stories, new histories—the real truth may be more that as well as addressing the lack of stories in typographic design, I am also calling for an alternative to the present stories about design in general. In *The Fountainhead* Roark breaks away from the conventional line that is promoted by people like Ellsworth Toohey on behalf of the conservative establishment. So at the risk of extending my metaphor too far, I think there are opposing narratives in my story too. The current dominant narrative of the design industry in New Zealand is the Design Taskforce's,

## NOTES

This specimen type book has been designed not so much for the typographer (of whom there are not many in the country) as for the reader who has found some interest in comparing various faces and styles he has come across. For that reason it has been thought best to keep technicalities to a minimum, and, in order not to spoil any good page with a label, to list the actual faces only in the notes. It is thus an anthology of agreeable quotations as much as a parade of typography, and those who read it need not be wearied by a catalogue of every variant letter in the founts displayed nor entertained to opinions on how type should be used. The appropriate quotation is on page 41.

Except for two linotype passages, the book has been hand set throughout. This certainly gives exact control over the minutiae of letter-spacing and justification, but there is no need to make a virtue out of necessity. If more good faces had been available for machine composition, either linotype or monotype, we should have used them.

### CASLON

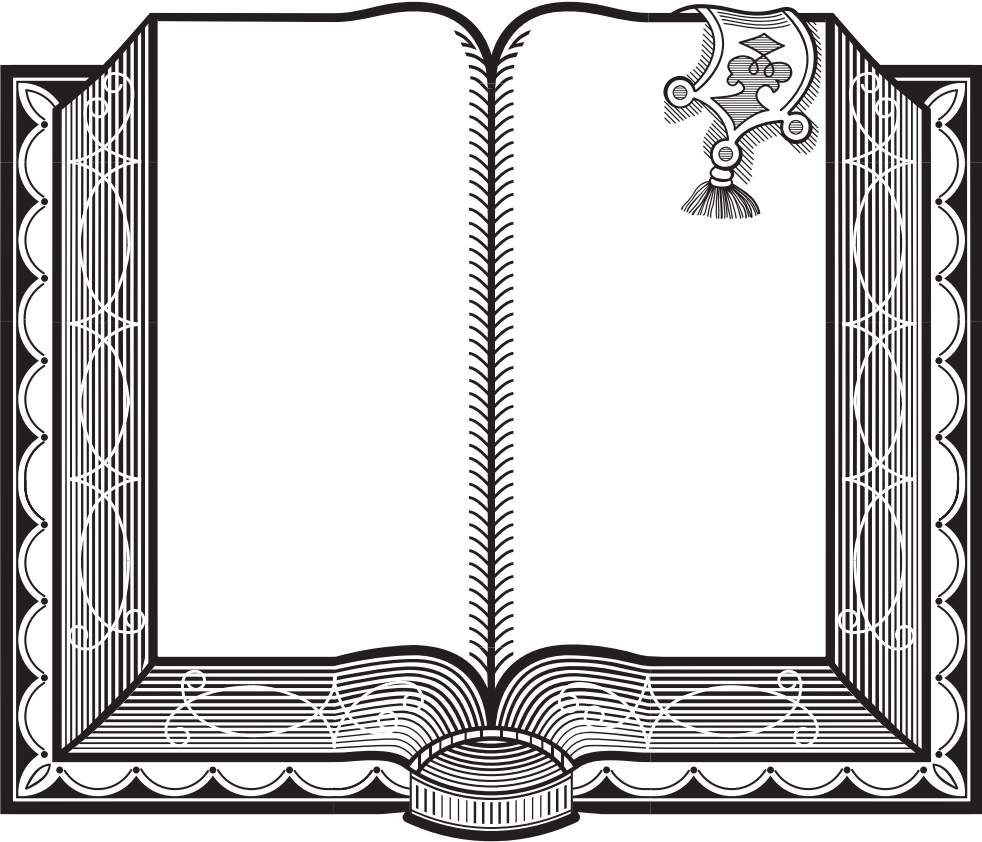
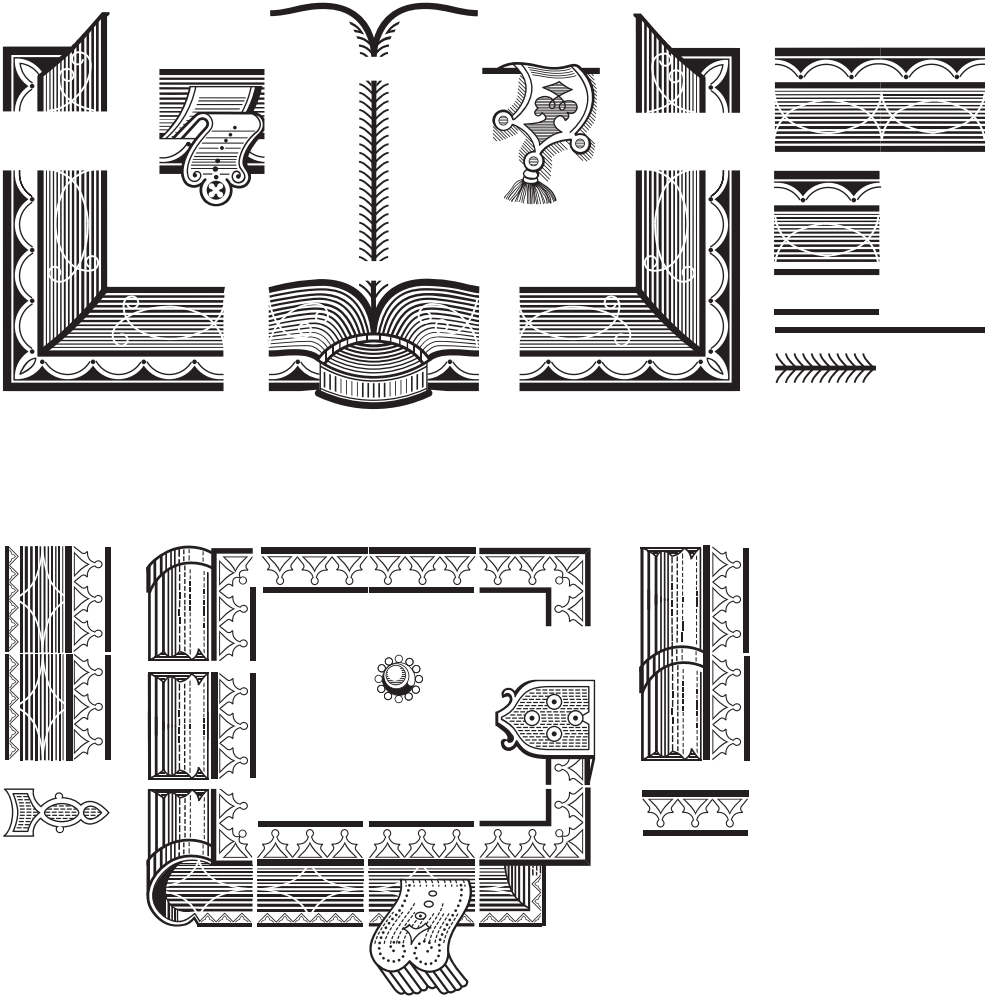
- Pages 7–24. Caslon Old Face. From Caslon's original matrices, and cast by Stephenson Blake & Co. except where specified. Title page in Caslon Old Face.
- Page 7. 14 point caps., roman and italic, with 30 point italic, 12 point leaded.
- Page 9. 60 point caps.
- Page 10. 30 point roman and italic caps. with 48 and 18 point caps.
- Page 11. 60 point caps., 24 point caps. and lower case, 14 point italic.
- Page 12. 12 point, 2 point leaded. Caslon fleuron border.
- Page 13. 30 point caps., with sonnet in 18 point caps. and l.c. and author's name in 14 point caps.
- Page 14. 36 point l.c. and 24 point italic l.c.
- Page 15. 18 point l.c. with 14 caps. and italic l.c. Initial, 48 point. The drawing is by Leo Benemann.



‘Better by Design’, design in the service of marketing industry line.<sup>19</sup> This salvation narrative is still obsessed with looking forward, chanting modernist myths of innovation, and being saved by technology etc.,<sup>20</sup>— and in my opinion this slick grand narrative is perhaps at the expense of history and at the expense of less ‘successful’, untidy, personal, peripheral accounts. If the antagonist or the villain in *The Fountainhead* is Toohey, the villain for this story of New Zealand typographic design I’m recounting might just be ‘the design industry’ or at least the rhetoric of the marketing-innovation part of the industry when it promotes only the superficially new and ‘Better’.

A designer’s work is never produced in a vacuum. I don’t think it can really ever be “self-sufficient, self-motivated, self-generated” as Roark might wish to assert. All design relies on context for meaning; there is always a back-story. We do need new local heroes, but by placing them in the context of a larger story, with alternative mythologies, their work may potentially gain much more interesting layers of meaning. So for this project, and in the following pages, I am interested in starting some historical excavation and in presenting a range of stories that evidence the *different* ways that people talk about and contextualise type designed in New Zealand. I want to provide a prompt for type designers here to tell their stories in the international parlance of their practice but also in a range of our own local accents.

1. Ayn Rand, *The Fountainhead*. New York: Signet, 1993.
2. In fact ‘cliché’ and ‘stereotype’ were both printers’ words, and in their literal printers meanings were synonymous. Specifically cliché was an onomatopoeic word for the sound that was made during the stereo-typing process when the matrix hit molten metal. From Wikipedia: <http://www.wikipedia.org>
3. Rose Hoare, ‘God is in the Details’, *Herald on Sunday*. Auckland: New Zealand Herald, August 3, 2008, p.20.
4. *The Fountainhead*. p.25.
5. *Ibid*. p.678.
6. *Ibid*. p.24.
7. D. F. McKenzie, ‘Harding, Robert Coupland 1849–1916’ was published in the *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, Volume 2, 1993. It was also re-published in *The National Grid* #4, 2007, p.13.
8. This needs a bit of explanation. Because although the use of the term like ‘type’ may be straightforward at the level of common usage, I am problematising the term here by invoking it’s original usage and meaning. Firstly, from Robin Kinross: “A Dictionary definition runs as follows: ‘Typeface: the design of, or the image produced by, the surface of a printing type’ (*Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*)”. So *type* and *face* are different things. Then from that, the word *type* refers to, “a small rectangular block, usually of metal or wood, having on its upper end a raised letter, figure, or other character, for use in printing”. So by this definition borders (like Harding’s) are types. Also while we are getting down to it, a set of related images or types is traditionally referred to as a *fount*, or *font* to use the now more common North American spelling. Actually a fount is “a complete set of type of a particular size”. Robin Kinross, *Unjustified Texts: Perspectives on Typography*. London: Hyphen Press, 2002, p.113.
9. From P22 Type foundry website: <http://www.p22.com/products/freefont.html>
10. Douglas Lloyd Jenkins, *40 Legends of New Zealand Design*. Auckland: Godwit, 2006, p.122.
11. In the article ‘Joseph Sinel: Blueprint from the Edge’ by Paul Ward: <http://www.nzedge.com/heroes/sinel.html>
12. This is from a pdf of the manifesto from the Architecture Archive website: <http://www.architecture-archive.auckland.ac.nz/?page=exhibit>
13. See Adam Sheffield’s text in this publication, p.55.
14. This is paraphrased from an email with David Bennewith. Also see David’s text in this publication, p.39.
15. *The Fountainhead*. p.389.
16. Denis Glover, ‘Typographical Printing Today’, first published in A. H. McIntock (ed.), *An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*, 1966.
17. ‘Notes’, *Printing Types: A Second Specimen Book of Faces Commonly Used at the Caxton Press, Christchurch, New Zealand*. Christchurch: Caxton Press, 1948, p.77.
18. An illustration of my point here is Paul Elliman’s ‘bit alfabet’—an ongoing project by a writer/designer that plays with the alphabet as a collection of arbitrary signs. Elliman’s typeface of discarded junk proves that letterforms can literally be found in any object. Elliman is interested in the collection as evidence of mechanical reproduction, or more the breaking down of the machine ‘technology’ used in his found typeface: “The found letters appeal to me as part of a splintered struggle between technology and language: the world as a giant machine breaking down.” Paul Elliman, ‘The World as a Printing Surface’, *Karel Martens: Counterprint*. London: Hyphen Press, 2004, p.13.
19. See the government supported Design Taskforce publication, *Success By Design*, ‘A Report and Strategic Plan’. 2003.
20. I say “still” here because they (the design establishment) were saying the same thing in the late 1960s. See *DesignScape* 1, New Zealand Industrial Design Council, February 1969.



15pt  
Regular

[illegible]

28pt  
Regular

**Each character - glyph,  
letter, digit, mark -  
has something about  
you programmed into it.  
Like the time you broke  
your leg. For the first  
few days you needed  
help from your family to  
stand up and get around  
and your Dad saw the  
opportunity to design  
the ligatures.**



a b c d e f g h  
i j k l m n o p q r s  
t u v w x y z A B C D  
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*Š š Ÿ f ^ ˇ ˉ — ` ´ , “ ”*  
*„ † ‡ … ‰ ‹ ™ −*

*It occurred to me*  
*then that there must*  
*be a face that was*  
*as elementary as the*  
*‘universal alphabet’*  
*but that would be*  
*as readable as the*  
*recognized book*  
*faces.*

10pt  
Light

	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z
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80pt  
Black

**The Light  
can swing  
either  
way.**

18pt  
Roman

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o  
 p q r s t u v w x y z A B C D  
 E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S  
 T U V W X Y Z 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8  
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 . / : ; < = > ? @ [ ff ] ^ — `   
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 , “ ” „ † ‡ • … ‰ ‹ › ⁄ Fr ™ —  
 fi fl

34pt  
Roman

It seemed unfair that  
 there were people like  
 that who were being  
 overlooked. New Zealand's  
 typographic history is far  
 richer than people realize,  
 even though there has  
 been a sudden interest in  
 Kiwi typeface design in  
 recent years.

20pt  
Regular

a b c d e f g h i j k l m  
 n o p q r s t u v w x y z  
 A B C D E F G H I J K L M  
 N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z  
 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 ! " &  
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 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 À È Ù ā ē ī  
 ō ū



str. ln. pl.

40pt  
Regular

Maybe it is a joke  
 played between  
 the City Planner's  
 and Surveyor's  
 departments, to put  
 the longest street  
 name in the smallest  
 street.

11pt

A city aardse stad Abandoned city Abject city Abstract city Achterkant stad Achtung stadt Acrobat city Act city Action city Additive city Affect city...

B city Backside city Bag city Balance city Bamboo city Banal city Banker city Barbarian city Barbell city barbie city Baroque city city of Bars Basic city...

C city Cafes city Cakewalk city Caleidoscoop stad Camera city Campaign city Champagne city Candle city Canyon city Car city Circus city Casual city...

D city Dada city Dagboek stad Dagelromen stad Dagelijkse stad Daglicht stad Dam stadDownwardness city Dandyish city Dansende stad Dappermarkt...

E city Earth city Earthquake city East city Echte stad eclectic city Eco city Eco-media city Economische stad Edge City Edible city Edo city...

F city Fabricated city Fabulous city Facades city Factory city Fair city Fake city Fall city Fame city Familiar city Familiebanden stad Fancy city Fantasy city...

G city Game city Gang city Garden city Garnalen stad Gas city Basket city Gasconader city Gastvrijheid stad Gated city Gaten stad Gebeurtenis stad...

H city Habituation city Hair city Hak stad Handle city Handelsnatie stad Handelsverhoudingen stad Handel city Hang-on city Happiness city Haploid city Happy city...

I city Ice city Iconicity city Iconografische stad Iconophobic city ideale stad Identiteiten stad Idoru city Illusions city Illustratie stad Imagination city...

J city Jabberwock city Jabot city Jacquard city Jaculation city Jaculiferous city Jade city Jalous city Jam-packed city Japanophilia city Jargon city Jarred city...

K city Kaarsen stad Kaart stad Kaede stad Kaiserin stad Kainotophobia city kak stad Kakidrosis city Kaleidoscope city Kalon city Kalpis city Kame city...

L city Lab city Label city Labor city Labyrinth city Laid-back city Landmark city Language city Large-scale city Last city Land city Landschappen stad...

M city Magazine city Magic city Mathematical city Martyr-oshka city Maybe city Mayor city Maxittutti city Mean city Mecano city Mechanical city...

N city Nacht stad Nachttier-rie stad Naked city Nattied Nattaak stad Nano city National city Naval city Natuurlijke stad Narrow city National city...

O city Oasis city Obesity city Obey city Object city Oblique city Obsessive city Obstacle city Obvious city Ocean city Octet city Odd city Odyssey city Oeuvre city...

P city Pan city Panorattic city Papier stad Para city Paradijs stad Parallele stad Paranoide Stad Park city Parkeergarage stad Market stad...

Q city Qatar city Qua city Quack city Quackery city Quad city Quadrangle city Quadrangular city Quadrate city Quadralic city Quadrature city...

R city Raatt stad Raccoon city Radicale stad Radio city Radiofracttanten stad Radiostation city Rangeerterreinen stad Raster city Rationalistt city Rave city...

S city Sacrale stad Safe city Saint city Sattenlevings stad Sandy city Salejonkers stad Satan city Sauntered city Schizoprenic city Schwartz stad...

T city Tactic city Tafel stad Takeshi city tale city tapp city Target city Tassen stad Testbare stad Taste city Taxis city Techniek stad Technologie stad Tegelaar stad...

U city u boat stad Ubiquitous city Ubiquity city Udder city ufo stad Uglification city Ugly city ulen stad uitgebreidende stad Uiterlijke stad Uirgangs- punten stad...

V city Vagabonds city Vakantie stad Valkuil stad Vanstaalbestendig stad Vegetarian city Veiligheid stad Ventilator city Verbeeldings stad Verblifswitte stad...

W city Waarheid stad Walking city Walls city Wandelende stad Wanderlust stad Wandelvereniging stad Wandelschulering stad Wandelschuleringen stad...

X city Xanthippe stad Xanthine stad X benen stad Xes city Xenoglossia city Xenoith city Xenottancy city Xenogattic Xenottanic city Xenophobic city...

Y city Yabber city Yack city Yachtsttan city Yaffingale city Yajna city Yakutan city Yakow city Yale city Yattttterhead city Yank city Yankee city Yappok city...

Z city Zachtgroene stad Zaden city Zak stad Zakelijke stad Zaklappen stad Zattbia city Zany city Zapp city Zeal city Zealotry city Zealous city Zebra crossing...



32pt  
Simanu

a b c d e f g h i j k  
l m n o p q r s t u v  
w x y z 0 1 2 3 4 5 6  
7 8 9 ! \$ % ' ( ) \* +  
, - . / : ; < = > ? @  
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32pt  
Kiona

a b c d e f g h i j k  
l m n o p q r s t u v  
w x y z 0 1 2 3 4 5 6  
7 8 9 ! \$ % ' ( ) \* +  
, - . / : ; < = > ? @  
\ \_ — ¡ ¢ £ ¤ ¥ ¦ § ¨

56pt  
Kiona

typography  
exists to  
honour content,  
like music,  
dance and  
anything else that  
lends grace to  
language.

REGULAR

42pt

A B C D E F  
G H I J K L  
M N O P Q R  
S T U V W X  
Y Z 0 1 2 3  
4 5 6 7 8 9  
! \$ % & ' ( ) \*  
+ , - . : ; = ?

30pt

THIS TYPEFACE  
CONSISTS OF A  
REGULAR WEIGHT  
VARIABLE SET  
OF FONTS  
THAT CAN BE  
ADJUSTED TO  
FIT YOUR  
DESIGN  
NEEDS  
WHETHER YOU  
NEED A  
MODERN  
OR A  
CLASSIC  
LOOK  
BOTH  
CAN BE  
ACHIEVED

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n  
 o p q r s t u v w x y z A B  
 C D E F G H I J K L M N O P  
 Q R S T U V W X Y Z 0 1 2 3  
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 ˙ ˚ ˛ ˜ ˝ – — ‘ ’ ‚ “ ” „ †  
 ‡ • … ‰ ‹ › ⁄ Fr € ™ − fi fl

It is what takes  
place between  
a work and the  
viewing individual,  
their bodily and  
psychological  
experience, that  
makes a work  
'living' or organic.

66pt

*A B C D E*  
*F G H I J*  
*K L M N O*  
*P Q R S T*  
*U V W X*  
*Y Z*

*air new*  
*zealand*

From Banner to Book Combinations may seem to be a strange transition; but as a matter of fact, it was the next stage, and a natural one, in the process of evolution. The Ribbon suggested the Scroll, and the Scroll the Banner, and without these probably the Book design would never have been devised. As the original designer of the latter, in the year 1877, the writer can speak with certainty as to its having been in a great measure derived from the three preceeding designs. The simplicity and effectiveness of the Scroll and Banner patterns—at that time possessing the important additional attraction of novelty—led him to experiment with the design of an open volume in perspective—three sides type, and the upper edge brass-rule. All attempts at realistic representation were unsuccessful, and the idea was for a time abandoned. Then occurred the thought that the mistake lay in attempting a type-design in perspective—it must be on the principle of a font elevation, and rectangular. The arrangement of the characters was then a simple detail: there must be four corners, all different, two centre-pieces, and extension characters; and a scheme almost identical with the synopsis at the head of the next column was the result. In the border, as originally designed, the two justifying-pieces — and — were absent, the idea being to supply their place with brass-rule. The lower corners were not L-shaped, but square, the same size as the upper corners, and the white-line pattern on the edge of the book was absent. This was introduced by the founder, and improves the effect, but it prevents the border from justifying, as in the original scheme, to a nonpareil em. The border being double, the original unit was a pica in width and a nonpareil in depth—as cast, the unit in width is three ems (Didot), or more than half-an-inch, which is often inconvenient in adapting it to a card of a given size. The original synopsis included 14 characters; but two of these were never engraved. They were a

pair of lower corners, intended to vary the design altogether, and to produce with the three regular corners the effect of a pile of sheets or cards on a board ... The two book-marker characters were of course introduced to break the stiffness of the horizontal lines. Only one caution is necessary in arranging the pieces. A careless compositor sometimes transposes the right and left lower corners, reversing the curves at the angles, which has an exceedingly bad effect. Within reasonable limits, very considerable variation may be made in shape and size; but it is quite possible to overdo it in this respect. We have seen it set so extravagantly large as quite to destroy the effect. When the pages are enlarged to small quarto, for example, the idea of a book is lost, and the effect of the centre-piece, representing the back of the volume, is ridiculous ...

From the open to the closed book was a natural transition; but the border is entirely different. Not one piece can be made to interchange. Here again it was necessary to adopt a strictly rectangular form; and the same number of characters—fourteen—were required to complete the design ...

The drawings were sent to the Johnson Foundry, Philadelphia; and they appeared in due time, coming out in 1879 as one series of 28 characters. With the exception of the changes we have noted, the original design was followed, even (approximately) to the scale. We had drawn it to 3-line nonpareil, and suggested that the nonpareil standard would be preferable to any of the continental standards—then in almost universal use for borders. This suggestion was not adopted; but, strangely enough, this was the last combination ever cut to the emerald body by Mackellar. All his succeeding borders have been made to a pica-nonpareil standard.

Few borders are better known—the «Book» combination being in nearly every jobbing-office. The original founders patented the design in

the United States; Figgins secured the rights for the United Kingdom; Woellmer for the German empire; and Mayeur for France. Wide-spread and well known as it is, its practical uses are after all very limited. It is in favour wth printers as being adapted peculiarly to their own business, but is not found very serviceable for outside work. Unless great care is exercised in spacing, the junctions are liable to appear; and its wide unit of justification is somewhat against it. In abandoning the suggested brass-rule and casting separate characters, the founders made a small but decided improvement on the original design.

Unlike its predecessors, the Book combination has never been imitated or varied. It is in but one size and style, and all existing fonts are from the original engravings. In the line of development it at present closes a series, no further evolution of the type-and-rule idea having appeared during the last twelve years.

The principle it illustrates is an important one—designs for the insertion of type should always be rectangular and not rhomboidal, as they must be when drawn in perspective. Such designs look very well until the lines are inserted, when the horizontals and perpendiculars of the letters immediately destroy all illusion of perspective. ¿Do designers and comps ever think of the incongruity of representing lines of type at the angle of 90° printed on a card in perspective, lying at an angle of 35° or 40°? Yet nothing is more common. Mortised designs for type are almost without exception open to this objection. The defetct can readilly be avoided. Nothing would be easier than to make the opening for type rectangular, and arrange the other lines of the drawing accordingly.

This text was first published in *Typo*, 27 June, issue 54, Vol. 5, 1891, p.85, edited by Robert Coupland Harding.

**On the 9th of January 2008 the tag list on [www.MyFonts.com](http://www.MyFonts.com) for the typeface Churchward Marianna read: 3d, blimp, bulbous, cool, decorative, funny, headline, heavy, informal, newzealand, obese, outline, party, poster, retro, round, sansserif, shadow, signage, spunky [suggest].<sup>1</sup> <sup>Fig. 1</sup> A few weeks later, around the 14th of February, a new word had been added to the list: biographical.<sup>Fig. 2</sup> Now did this word come to appear there? What could its relation be to a typeface?**

[...]

Design Credits

First seen on MyFonts: June 24th, 2007  
Designed by: [Joseph Churchward](#)  
Designed when: 2007  
Letterform design based on: [Churchward Marianna](#)  
Contained in Categories: [Decorative & Display](#), [Funny](#), [Sans Serif](#)  
Design owned by: [BluHead Studio](#)  
MyFonts Keywords: [3d](#), [blimp](#), [bulbous](#), [cool](#), [decorative](#), [funny](#), [headline](#), [heavy](#), [informal](#), [newzealand](#), [obese](#), [outline](#), [party](#), [poster](#), [retro](#), [round](#), [sansserif](#), [shadow](#), [signage](#), [spunky](#) [suggest]

Fig. 1

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Fig. 2



**Your Dad was working all the time; like you said (drawing out the ‘loved’) “He LOOOOVED it!”. He designed this typeface in 1969, when you were six, and he named it ‘Marianna’.**

**It was through you that I managed to get in contact with Joseph in the first place, so finally meeting you in Dublin last December felt like quite a significant moment.<sup>2</sup> I was set to interview you on a specific perspective of his practice - connected to how we perceive and understand our parents’ JOBS as children. But this was quickly replaced by a lengthy exchange: stories about you growing up, around and eventually working at Churchward International Typefaces Limited, were interrupted by the things I had discovered and made about your Dad’s body of work over the past two years. Incidentally, the interview turned into a conversation. It was quite soon after, maybe even on the ride back to my accommodation in town, that I began to reconsider a question that had been introduced to me in the preceding months by a fellow designer.<sup>3</sup> It was a question that had simultaneously annoyed and intrigued me: ‘Can a typeface be biographical?’ I started to think about it in relation to the typeface your Dad designed for you. Driving through a rainy, dark Dublin night it suddenly occurred to me that the first time we may have actually ‘met’ was by virtue of your typeface in 2005.**

**Looking back to 2005, in my very first interview with Joseph that you conducted and transcribed for me, he touched briefly on what influenced the typeface Marianna.**

I called it Marianna because Marianna was fat in those days and it was a fat design... You were plumpy... That’s why I called it Marianna, because it was plumpy.<sup>4</sup>

**I remember, quite vividly, reading this quote for the first time. It made me laugh out loud. But my laugh was coupled with that warm, prickly-scalp sensation you feel when embarrassed. Being fresh to his work at the time - and it being the closest I had yet come to his speaking voice, well, it just seemed too . . . unequivocal. Even though it touched whole-heartedly on one of the well-established methods of finding a name for a typeface,<sup>5</sup> I didn’t really know that more could be made of it. The ‘Marianna Quote’, along with some other potentially cryptic answers to my initial questions, was stored away in a folder on my computer’s hard drive.**

**About a month after this interview I was given an assignment to design a poster for our end-of-year exhibition.<sup>6</sup> Spurred on by a friend, it seemed like a good opportunity to fish out Joseph’s quote. The idea was similarly unequivocal: to try and keep the spirit of my initial interpretation while setting the quote about Marianna in the eponymous font. At the time a digitised version of the typeface didn’t exist.<sup>7</sup> I began the activity of cutting and pasting the quote together, using a scan from an old Churchward’s type catalogue. It felt like the closest (digital) equivalent I might get that would hark back to the good-old-days of composing headline lettering by hand, just like your Dad did (and you, too, some time after).**

**The process of constructing the quote - spacing and composing the letters to make the design - unveiled a discovery that, in hindsight, could be best described as serendipitous. Aside from the result being a bit humorous to read and look at, the form and content were now mingling with one another. Marianna (the type) not only became more animated all of a**

sudden, but hinted at something that went beyond the corporeality of the quote. It had acquired an independent, yet discrete personality that seemed to populate the letterforms. An oral, descriptive and formal conflation of Marianna had resulted in a tangible response to my initial disenchantment. I was surprised to notice that it was the work that was speaking.

This idea was made more apparent when, in a telephone conversation with Joseph, the subject of Robert Louis Stevenson came up. Joseph said something that really struck me: “Perhaps designing a typeface is like writing a book.”<sup>3</sup> It became clear that by using the common definition of ‘biography’ as a catalyst, while also considering this particular insight into your Dad’s designing process, I could make a connection to your typeface. What I mean, is that through Joseph’s process of designing, a narrative was occurring that would result in a biographical disposition being instilled in the Marianna alphabet.

Something else as well. During our conversation in December you reminisced about the occasions when you would sit in your Dad’s studio, swinging your legs on the office chair. Not really talking much and trying to be on your best behaviour because your Dad was concentrating on his designs. I like to imagine that Joseph was designing Marianna during these moments, writing as he was designing. This time he happened to be busy writing about you. Each character - glyph, letter, digit, mark - has something about you programmed into it. Like the time you broke your leg. For the first few days you needed help from your family to stand up and get around and your Dad saw the opportunity to design the ligatures.<sup>3</sup>, Fig. 3



Fig. 3

Of course - as is generally the case with typefaces - this type of information is often divorced from its expected function. But it could be argued that influences live in a kind of palpable creation system that exists in the circumstances of its genus. This is a place where Roland Barthes’ ‘natural state of the letter’<sup>10</sup> might be compared with the natural innocence of the child. This idea is perpetuated in the essay ‘The Storyteller’ by the philosopher, Walter Benjamin, where an equal relationship between the storyteller and the craftsman is elucidated.”

For your Dad, a typeface is complete when the balance of the letters are found, then - without much pause for reflection - the next one is diligently begun.<sup>12</sup> Even though it is your Dad’s wish that the alphabets are used, this is not the primary reason he obsessively designs them. Instead, he describes it as an ‘inquisitive urge’<sup>13</sup> or (more tellingly) as ‘Chinese ghosts’ “[Which push him to] do the bloody work!”<sup>14</sup> Perhaps it is in this hypothetical space that the alphabet could also develop a hidden personality. A latent spirit that was planted in the crafting grows and remains embedded as a cipher or code. Maybe these are things conveyed in transmission. ‘Invisible’ traces to which a viewer might be sensitive; traces that are apprehended for later reference. More often than not, this is how we come to understand, or react to, a style. We receive a signal before we start reading.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand - as your Dad quite clearly reflects - ‘It’s there, you just have to find it’.<sup>16</sup>

Looking further, I discovered that these kinds of transmissions are not uncommon in various historical manifestations of communicative writing. For example, in Oriental calligraphy, or ideographic writing cultures in general, the practitioner's hand infers an important layer of meaning and narrative. In the early Irish written tradition from the time of the Book of Kells, complex scripted letterforms were 'inhabited' with stories, symbols and figures. These figures were apprehended by the speaker and the receiver, the literate and illiterate, as much by the eye as by the ear.<sup>17</sup> More recently, these visual transmissions seem to prevail in the coded backgrounds of uncontained letters that are found in multitudes of graffiti pieces. Similarly, a more specific example is seen in 12-year-old Kate McCann's entry for the 2008 'Doodle for Google' competition. Miss McCann's work is entitled 'Up My Street'. The small 'g' of Google is a school; the 'e' is a fully fledged train station. It seems the activity of inhabiting letters with ulterior meanings is still prevalent.

In the more black and white world of typefaces you might have to look a bit further to read these transmissions. There are other 'daughter' typefaces around, such as Eric Gill's 'Joanna'. Gill's emphatic insistence that letters were 'things, not pictures of things'<sup>18</sup> already presupposes an inextricable link between both Joanna's letter and her anatomical renderings. Recently, on receipt of the type specimen for Typotheque's latest typeface, I encountered the eponymous Greta, adjacent to her alphabet, staring out at me from the cover. Again, Barthes is a good reference point about how, when regarding reading and form, these manifestations of transmission work. For example, when describing Erté's illustrated alphabet in 'Erté or À la

Lettre', Barthes suggests a relationship between the human and the letter via the motif of silhouette:

The silhouette, if only by its etymology, is a strange object, at once anatomic and semantic: it is the body which has explicitly become a drawing.

He concludes,

The silhouette is an essential graphic product: it makes the human body into a potential letter, it asks to be *read*.<sup>19</sup>

When considering Marianna's optical provocations, and because it is evident that typefaces and humans share some common physical characteristics, I wondered if (in person) you might share 'common terms' with a written description of the typeface Marianna. Also, I was curious about how this description might reflect back on you? To test this out in a kind of controlled situation I consulted a curious feature of the MyFonts website. It is possible to search for a particular style of typeface by adjectives or keywords. A compilation of these related words (tags) is listed for every font in the MyFonts system. By revisiting this list (see the beginning of this essay)<sup>Fig. 1</sup> - and since meeting you - I could quite easily relate these words to your character: 3d, cool, decorative, funny, informal, newzealand, party and spunky. Used in this way, the adjectives create a set of idioms that relate to both the typeface and the subject. Consequently they touch on some kind of language that designers generally use to describe events or choices in their work - however much they're intended or innocuous.

**Inevitably, this led towards a curiosity about how these ideas might be transmitted in more tangible ways: through reproduction. (Designers, in general, are quite pre-occupied by reproduction.) When considering the many ways and means by which Marianna has been applied, printed and disseminated over the years, I wondered if this matter might contribute to a burgeoning biographical myth? During the course of its 39-year-long existence, Marianna has been rendered for use by the various available technologies of the day.**

**From its more humble beginning as hand lettered forms, to mechanical production as photo-lettering, Dia-type, Computa-type and Letraset, Marianna has recently been ‘born again’ as a fully-fledged Opentype version. It is within these systems of production and reproduction that a biographical message might be conveyed. If Marianna has been designed as writing, which is very much about you, each rendering also conceivably carries an adumbrated - albeit arrangeable - account of your story. Maybe this begins to up-size the original question from ‘Can a typeface be biographical?’ to ‘Can a typeface be a biography?’ That is, where the typeface is a kind of gestalt that captures the character of a person.**

**[...]**

## **Together**

**When taking these different prospects into consideration, two possible readings of Marianna in relation to the term ‘biographical’ seem to eventuate. First, there is the optical recognition of the alphabet - the messages sent via its morphology. Second, is a more latent message that exists in its crafting, or creation. Both readings seem capable enough of holding an account of both person and personality - and there exists the possibility that these accounts oscillate in this ‘inhabited alphabet’.**

**Since its creation, Marianna has been published a few times over by a handful of different publishers. ‘She’ has been purchased, swapped and used by many people in different places.<sup>20</sup> Now that it is fully digitised it takes up just 120kb of hard disk space on a computer, so - if you have it - Marianna is always attendant. Whenever I make use of Marianna I am conscious of also sending something about you out into the world. Something akin to digital pollen, transmitted by wires, disks, signals, film, ink and paper that takes hold over screens, objects and printed matter.**

ENDNOTES

1. MyFonts.com, <http://www.myfonts.com/fonts/blhd/churchward-marianna/>.  
2. 1.12.2007.  
3. Interview with Will Holder, Maastricht, 5.2007.  
4. Joseph Churchward, unpublished interview with David Bennewith, 20.10.2005. Conducted and transcribed by Marianna Churchward.  
5. Emily King. 'Thirty-six point Gorilla', first published in Eye, No. 23, Winter 1996. Text can be sourced online from Typotheque.com, [www.typotheque.com/articles/thirty-six\\_point\\_gorilla](http://www.typotheque.com/articles/thirty-six_point_gorilla).  
6. Year 7 students of the Werkplaats Typografie Masters programme, Arnhem, Netherlands, 2006-7.  
7. Since 2007 a digitised version of Marianna has been available for purchase from MyFonts.com. Digitisation by BluHead Studios of Norwood, MA, USA.  
8. Telephone conversation with Joseph Churchward. David Bennewith. 21.11.2007.  
9. Sebastian White. Instabilities in writing and standing, 'Memory Character, Resurrection Character', workshop, Royal College of Art, 26.02.2008, David Bennewith. 'In writing and medical tools a ligature occurs either when two or more letterforms are joined as a single glyph or a patient's leg or legs are injured and are unable to support body weight. Ligatures usually replace consecutive characters sharing common components, or legs.'  
10. 'Such is the alphabet's power: to rediscover a kind of natural state of the

letter. For the letter, if it is alone, is innocence: the Fall begins when we align letters to make words' in Roland Barthes. 1991. 'Erté, or Á la lettre', 'M', The Responsibility of Forms. Translated by Richard Howard, The University of California Press. p. 127.  
11. 'An orientation towards practical interests is characteristic of many born storytellers . . . It contains, openly, or covertly, something useful'. See Walter benjamin. The Storyteller. Reflections on the Works of Nikolai Leskov. [www.slought.org/files/downloads/events/Sf\\_1331-Benjamin.pdf](http://www.slought.org/files/downloads/events/Sf_1331-Benjamin.pdf), p. 2.  
12. David Bennewith, Joseph Churchward and Warren Olds. 1.2007. 'Churchward Video Notes A-J'. The National Grid #3, p. 54.  
13. Joseph Churchward, unpublished interview with David Bennewith, 20.10.2005. Conducted and transcribed by Marianna Churchward.  
14. 'Churchward Video Notes A-J'. Op cit. p. 57.  
15. Edward Wright. 'Conversation, Handwriting and the Poster'. Edward Wright. readings, writings. Department of Typography and Graphic Communication. University of Reading, United Kingdom, p.39.  
16. 'Churchward Video Notes A-J'. Op cit. p.58.  
17. 'To the early Irish, Latin was 'primarily a written or 'visible' language . . . [apprehended] as much (if not more) by the eye, as by the ear.' [. . .] In the Book of Kells (late eighth or early ninth century) occurs the famous CHI-RO (folio 29), an elaborate motif in which the letter [a sort of 'P'] encrypts a human form.' Jed Rasula and Steve McCaffery, 2001.

Imagining Language, An Anthology. MIT Press. p. 380.  
18. Eric Gill, 'Autobiography' in Fiona MacCarthy, 1989. Eric Gill. A Lovers Quest for Art and God. E.P. Dutton, New York. p. 144.  
19. 'Erté, or Á la lettre', The Responsibility of Forms. Op cit. p. 107 ['The Silhouette']; p. 113 ['The Letter'] (Author's emphasis).  
20. You proudly told me that Marianna is one of your Dad's best-selling typefaces. Conversation with Marianna Churchward, Dublin, 1.12.2007.

FIGURES

1. MyFonts description as at 9.1.2008.  
2. New keyword 'biographical' added as at 14.2.2008.  
3. Ligatures of Churchward Marianna, Joseph Churchward, 1969. BluHead studios, 2007.

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Trespassers Will be Prosecuted:  
A B-Grade Horror in Four Parts  
Luke Wood

*“...and there was even talk of having Elvis's corpse dug up and the stomach analysed for traces of drugs these two years on which led me to fantasize: Can you imagine anything more thrilling than getting to stick your hand and forearm through the hole in Elvis's rotted guts slopping whatever's left of 'em all over each other getting the intestinal tracts mixed up with the stomach lining mixed up with the kidneys as you forage fishing for incriminating pillchips... as you pull your arm out of dead Elvis's innards triumphantly clenching some crumbs off a few Percodans, Quaaludes, Desoxyns, etc. etc. etc. and then once off camera now here's where the real kick to end 'em all comes as you pop those little bits of crumbled pills in your own mouth and swallow 'em and get high on drugs that not only has Elvis Presley himself also gotten high on the exact same not brand but the pills themselves they've been laying up there inside him perhaps even aging like fine wine plus of course they're all slimy with little bits of the disintegrating insides of Elvis's pelvis—SO YOU'VE ACTUALLY GOTTEN TO EAT THE KING OF ROCK 'N' ROLL!—which would be the living end in terms of souvenirs, fetishism, psychofandom, the collector's mentality, or even just hero worship in general.”<sup>1</sup>*

\* \* \*

Part I: Grave-robbing and Cannibalism

Being that my career as a designer has involved helping artists to make books or posters etc., I've often been vaguely interested in art that referenced, appropriated, or inhabited the conventions of graphic design—and vice versa. Examples are numerous, easily found, and particularly frequent across generations of New Zealand art. From the likes of Billy Apple to Daniel Malone—who, interestingly enough, cannibalised the older-but-still-very-alive Apple by way of a name change a few years ago. And then of course there is Colin McCahon. Who, like Elvis, casts a sort of posthumous shadow over everything.

*“There are those who want a text (an art, a painting) without a shadow, without the 'dominant ideology'; but this is to want a text without fecundity, without productivity, a sterile text... The text needs its shadow: this shadow is a bit of ideology, a bit of representation, a bit of subject: ghosts, pockets, traces, necessary clouds: subversion must produce its own chiaroscuro.”<sup>2</sup>*

McCahon's interest in the everyday is well documented, and while his 'word paintings' are well known for their use of lofty, poetic, and often biblical texts, his formal points of reference came from comic books, advertising, and signage. He claimed to be interested in the 'look of words', not only what they 'meant', and the story of how as a boy he “fell in love with signwriting” while watching someone paint 'HAIRDRESSER AND TOBACCONIST' on a shop-front window has been firmly embedded in the popular imagination of NZ art history.

*“I collected bones from charnel-houses; and disturbed, with profane fingers, the tremendous secrets of the human frame.”<sup>3</sup>*



Photograph of a sign on a farm gate used in *I Will Need Words* by Wystan Curnow to illustrate McCahon's vernacular reference.

Like McCahon, the graphic designers I grew up liking never seemed particularly bothered by borrowing or appropriating bits and pieces from other people's work to make something 'new' of their own. As such I've never really subscribed to ideologies that emphasize 'innovation' and 'originality' as fundamental to design, and prefer

instead to consider that all design is really just, to varying degrees, a process of re-design. And nowhere does this seem clearer than in the evolutionary history of type design.<sup>4</sup> In saying this though, I don't mean to make the mistake of sounding like I want to legitimise this THING. That is not my intention here at all—quite the opposite actually. Obviously my project does not belong to a civilising lineage of concern for the conditions of reading. Mine is a more marginal exercise—a monstrosity—a 'Display' face. (Which makes perfect sense actually, the term 'monstrosity' comes from the Latin 'monstrate' meaning to 'exhibit' or 'to show'. And within a practice dominated by an unsurpassed concern for invisibility,<sup>5</sup> any use of the term 'display' is more than likely cynical.)

Typefaces, unlike handwriting, can usually be described by/as shifts in systematic relationships across the body of a grid. My work here pays only very little attention to that tradition, and makes absolutely no claim to its lineage. The McCahon typeface is, instead, a kind of illegitimate hybrid, made from stolen parts. The raw material for my exercise coming entirely from books, McCahon's body of work being well entombed in various publications.

\* \* \*

Part II: Reanimating The Corpse

*“It was on a dreary night of November that I beheld the accomplishment of my toils. With an anxiety that almost amounted to agony, I collected the instruments of life around me, that I might infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet. It was already one in the morning; the rain pattered dismally against the panes, and my candle was nearly burnt out, when, by the glimmer of the half extinguished light, I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs.”<sup>6</sup>*

Of course a corpse can never be reanimated 'whole', or perfectly as-it-was. McCahon with his paint and brushes—colours and edges bleeding into one another, the texture of the surface, and the paint sitting there on that. Me with my vector outlines, restricted like Victor Frankenstein, by the technology available to me. Ones or zeros, on or off, black or white—you can't have both at the same time. My monster, like Victor's, is an approximation. I've had to add bits that weren't there originally and leave out certain other bits that were. I can't reproduce the infinite possibilities of nature, and I've had to 'step-in', picking the best 'a' to go alongside the 'b' and so on, and so on.

*“...SoFA is currently exhibiting Luke Wood's typeface McCahon, which attempts to reproduce some elements of the script Big Mac used on his paintings. Homage, yes, but one somewhat missing the point. McCahon's painted signs were great art because every letter expressed something of his personal expression, strained out of blood, bone and muscle. This, on the other hand, finding its apotheosis as vinyl stick-on transfer lettering, is merely self defeating and cheap—endlessly repeating in mass production what was unique and individual...”<sup>7</sup>*

At odds with The Original, my ungodly 'version' is infinitely reproducible, the same each time, doomed to repeat itself over and over and over...

*“I am shocked to see the McCahon project occupies the main gallery while McCahon originals are placed as secondary in the back gallery—Don't see the purpose of this computer project, it seems to 'cheapen' the artist's work. It merchandises and trivialises the work of McCahon.”<sup>8</sup>*

Actually at this point in time the typeface wasn't for sale. I'd never intended for it to be available to others to use. But the monster, a trespasser by its very being, cannot be contained...

\* \* \*



### Part III: The Monster is Loose

*"I stepped fearfully in: the apartment was empty; and my bedroom was also freed from its hideous guest. I could hardly believe that so great a good fortune could have befallen me; but when I became assured that my enemy had indeed fled, I clapped my hands for joy, and ran down to Clerval."*<sup>9</sup>

I'd never thought very far ahead, and, in fact, the typeface sat unfinished for a good year or so until I was approached by Sam Brodie, who (under the aegis of the DINZ Design Ambassador scheme) was putting together some sort of CD-based collection of 'New Zealand design'. I didn't know what to expect, but it seemed like a good-enough motivation to finish the thing off. And that was its first outing, in public, sort of. Mostly the CDs were distributed overseas, and apart from the odd comment from friends who'd seen it I didn't hear anything more. Until...

*"... I perceived in the gloom a figure which stole from behind a clump of trees near me; I stood fixed, gazing intently: I could not be mistaken. A flash of lightning illuminated the object, and discovered its shape plainly to me; its gigantic stature, and the deformity of its aspect, more hideous than belongs to humanity, instantly informed me that it was the wretch, the filthy demon, to whom I had given life."*<sup>10</sup>

In late January 2003 a friend posted me a cutting from a newspaper containing an advertisement for 'A Question of Faith', an exhibition of McCahon's work then on at the City Gallery in Wellington. The text in the ad, as had been suspected, was set entirely in the McCahon typeface I had made. I remember it feeling quite strange. Slightly horrifying actually. Firstly it just seemed so blatantly inappropriate—to advertise McCahon's work using a font that quite obviously mimicked it. But then also there was the question who did this? And

where did they get the typeface from? The weird feeling that someone had ripped me off... which was stranger still, considering that my work was a rip-off of sorts anyway.

I contacted the City Gallery and was told that Saatchi & Saatchi in Wellington had done the work, and that, interestingly enough, someone there had designed that typeface. I contacted Saatchi & Saatchi, and they spent a couple of weeks trying to convince me that someone there had indeed done it, and that if I'd simply copied McCahon what made me think my copy would necessarily be any different to someone else's copy. When I finally offered to send them my original drawings for the thing along with a letter from a lawyer they finally gave up and with minimal fuss a small amount of money was sent my way.

It was a hollow victory though, and I still felt some unease. That my creation had escaped, not even really 'finished' properly, and was now out in the world (via a slip-up with that CD), was vaguely horrifying. Other people using the thing was a possibility I hadn't planned for, or considered.

*"I considered the being whom I had cast among mankind, and endowed with the will and power to effect purposes of horror, such as the deed which he had now done..."*<sup>11</sup>

Over the next few years the thing kept appearing in the strangest places—in the pages of The Listener, the titles for a reality TV show, a logotype for Peta Mathais, an insurance company, a film festival guide...

I'm not usually very sentimental, but I do sometimes feel quite bad about all this. Bad for Colin I mean. Sometimes it is a bit like I've dug him up and set him to work, zombie-like—the shell of his former self. But then there's something I quite like about that too. Let me see if I can explain...

\* \* \*

### Part IV: Full Circle (or The Monster Comes Home)

*"That he should live to be an instrument of mischief disturbs me..."*<sup>12</sup>

Shortly after the incident with Saatchi & Saatchi, as a vain gesture to reclaim the thing, I organised to show it—to demonstrate it—publicly by way of exhibition. A sort of 'freak show', if you like. As is usually the case with displays of monstrosity there was some hype around the event. I myself was not entirely disappointed with the exhibitions (there were two in the end), but they certainly didn't feel how I imagined they would.



McCahon: A Typeface by Luke Wood exhibition at the Hocken Library, Dunedin, 2003.

At the time I had naively enjoyed the idea of having taken the thing from the gallery, redistributed the quality and spirit of the original, and then fed it back into that system. In reality this was a failed gesture. I am no artist, and this was not my domain. This was not the outcome I was looking for, and the monster was not put to bed.

*"Come on, my enemy; we have yet to wrestle for our lives; but many hard and miserable hours must you endure until that period shall arrive."*<sup>13</sup>

Around five years later, last year in fact, a well-known purveyor of fruit juices in New Zealand, Charlie's, re-branded and repackaged its products. The new bottle labels being based loosely on the

vernacular of hand-painted signs often seen around roadside fruit stalls and orchards. The gist—the marketing angle—being to do with 'honesty'. Funnily enough the typeface on those labels is, of course, my McCahon. Unlike particular other outings though, this one is quite legitimate, and Charlie's have paid me for an 'exclusive licence for the beverage sector'. Apart from the fact that it was a friend who initially approached me about this, I was quietly very interested in it going ahead.

*"The completion of my demoniacal design became an insatiable passion. And now it is ended; there is my last victim!"*<sup>14</sup>

Colin McCahon's interest in the vernacular art of sign-writing came up often in his letters and conversations. I'd been vaguely aware of this—the 'Hairdresser and Tobacconist' story for example—but in reading the books that I was scanning his letterforms from I was surprised at how frequently he would comment on it. One instance in particular was sparked in my memory by the initial approach from the juice company...

*"You've all seen those number paintings without realising it. For example fruit stalls with white lettering. The best in New Zealand are on the Bombay Hills."*<sup>15</sup>



Charlie's 'Honest Juice, Orange', labels designed by The Wilderness, 2008.

The signs he’s talking about are commonly black boards with white hand-painted letters and numbers on them. The exact same signs that Charlie’s are now mimicking for their labels. And so, as if through some sort of voodoo or dark magic, McCahon is returned to his point of departure. Commercial, vernacular, cheap, reproducible; this awful stuff...

“The awful stuff made by the W.D.F.F. & the signwriting of the towns & the football & racing & advertising. Is that possibly the culture, & from there we must start. Not from the imports but from the awful stuff around...”<sup>16</sup>

It’s like Romero’s zombies who, brain-dead, do what they know best... and head for the mall. The monster is a creature of habit.

\* \* \*

“The combined effects of the drugs and rotted bodily organs wore off about thirty-six hours later. I came out of a deep and not unrestful sleep feeling disoriented, displaced, vaguely depressed, emotionally numbed, but with mind and body in a relatively sound state. After a couple of days I was even able to listen to music again, even his albums. There’s just one thing that’s different. If they exhume the body again, I don’t think they should be worrying about drugs (I certainly wouldn’t take any more drugs that came outa Elvis Presley’s stomach!). I think they should take him down to a taxidermist’s, and have him stuffed, like Trigger. I could say something like ‘and then have it placed on the steps of the White House’, but that would be glib. The trouble is, while I know he should be stuffed and put on display somewhere, I don’t for the life of me know where that should be. Because I guess he really doesn’t belong anywhere, anymore, does he? Does he?”<sup>17</sup>

1. Lester Bangs from ‘Notes for Review of Peter Guralnick’s Lost Highway, 1980’ published in *Lester Bangs, Psychotic Reactions and Carburetor Dung*, edited by Greil Marcus. Serpent’s Tail, London, 1996.

2. Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, 1973. This quote used by Aaron Kreisler in his text ‘Lost For Words’, *McCahon: A Typeface by Luke Wood*. University of Canterbury, School of Fine Arts Gallery, July 2003.

3. Victor Frankenstein in Chapter 4 of Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*.

4. Given the parameters of legibility the development of typefaces from one to another is often incremental, and it is relatively common for a typographer to use an existing face as a starting point in the development of their own. Eric Gill’s redesign of Edward Johnston’s typeface for the London Underground is a well-known example.

5. See Beatrice Ward’s ‘The Crystal Goblet’ for instance.

6. Victor Frankenstein in Chapter 5 of Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*.

7. Andrew Paul Woods, in ‘Up The Arts’, *Canta*, Issue 16, July 2003.

8. Anonymous feedback from Hocken Library exhibition of the McCahon typeface, December/January 2003.

9. Victor Frankenstein in Chapter 5 of Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*.

10. Ibid., Chapter 7.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid., Chapter 24.

13. The ‘Monster’ in Chapter 24 of Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*.

14. Ibid.

15. Colin McCahon, from a talk at Outreach, Auckland 1979. Quoted by Wystan Curnow, *I Will Need Words*, National Art Gallery, Wellington NZ, 1984.

16. Colin McCahon in a letter to John Caselberg, 21 February 1951. Quoted by Peter Simpson, *Answering Hark*, Craig Potton Publishing, Nelson NZ, 2001.

17. Lester Bangs, from ‘Notes for Review of Peter Guralnick’s Lost Highway, 1980’ published in *Lester Bangs, Psychotic Reactions and Carburetor Dung*, edited by Greil Marcus. Serpent’s Tail, London, 1996.

Wedge  
Adam Sheffield

Wedge was designed by Aucklander Bruce Rotherham. The study for Wedge began in 1947, and the final font as it is presented in this exhibition took over forty years to complete. Rotherham was an undergraduate student at the Auckland University’s School of Architecture. He was the son of a commercial printer and had worked at his father’s business learning the fundamentals of typesetting and graphic design.

While at University Rotherham met William (Bill) Wilson and with Marilyn Hart, Allan Wild and William Toomath founded the Architectural Group. Rotherham took responsibility for the design and print production of their manifesto *On the Necessity for Architecture* and the group’s magazine *Planning*, which only had one famous issue, *Planning 1*. The Group also distributed numerous event invitations, Christmas cards and other printed material all produced at night at Rotherham’s father’s studio.

It was during this period that he was provoked by Herbet Bayer’s 1927 ‘universal alphabet’. He greatly admired the pure geometry of the typeface but he considered it to be virtually unreadable when used to set large bodies of text. Bayer’s typeface was not therefore a suitable replacement for the san serif faces that were the fashion of the day for setting architectural and art publications.

“It occurred to me then that there must be a face that was as elementary as the ‘universal alphabet’ but that would be as readable as the recognized book faces. Pondering on what made favoured text faces readable a number of considerations acting one on another soon became evident: form, formation, perception, lower-case-ness, combine-ability, distribution of letter area, percentage use of each letter, spacing, greyness, familiarity, historic precedence, acceptable change, geometry, contrast of forms, avoidance of static forms, the eye’s travel, movement, nature of termination of strokes, function of ascenders and descenders, b-q-x-

height, overall character, paper surface, printing process (and the list has been ever growing). The design task this set in motion was to try to understand and order these influences. (The unreadability of the Bauhaus alphabet may now be explained by the apparent failure to address some of these factors). In this way the development of Wedge began.”<sup>1</sup>

In 1958, after ten years of development, Rotherham approached Monotype with a version of Wedge. After several trial paragraphs Monotype recommended that Wedge had a number of weaknesses in key letter groups in particular r, n, m, h. The company recommended that the project be set aside for a few years so the remaining design problems could be worked through. Rotheram wrote: “I was advised to put the work aside, when the design issues could be seen afresh.”<sup>2</sup>

Rotherham practiced architecture in New Zealand and then in Great Britain for over thirty years before, by chance, he heard a BBC radio show ‘Science Now’ discussing the topic of computer type setting. Realising that Wedge was still a relevant project he contacted the item producer Adrian Pickering at the University of Southampton’s School of Electronics and Computer Science. Pickering was interested and excited by the prospect of a collaboration and worked closely with Rotherham in the production of digital version of the face.

Some ten years later Wedge was available for use.

1. Bruce Rotherham. c.2003.  
2. Ibid.

National is a deceptively simple sans serif with subtle quirks in the details that give it a distinctive—but not distracting—personality. While National travels through, and touches on, a lot of historical material, it is designed to thrive in our modern typographic climate. National’s details are drawn from the best pre-Akzidenz grotesques, giving it a humble, workmanlike character with an agreeable tone of voice. Its extensive character set includes a wide array of accents, seven numeral sets, alternate forms for some base glyphs, and small caps across all styles. In short, all the good things that the exacting typographer should expect from a contemporary OpenType typeface. [http://www.klim.co.nz/national\\_info.php](http://www.klim.co.nz/national_info.php)

On Mon, 11/5/09, [jonty@thenationalgrid](mailto:jonty@thenationalgrid) wrote: In The National Grid (Issue #2) you wrote that creating National Gothic was prompted by us (TNG) using Helvetica in Issue #1, and that you thought New Zealand needs a National typeface because “reading local words set in foreign typefaces is rather irksome.”

On Mon, 11/5/09, [kris@klim.co.nz](mailto:kris@klim.co.nz) wrote: You're right, the inspiration for National was the arrival of *The National Grid* in my letterbox. According to the TNG website at the time, “The National Grid is a space to speculate, critically enquire, research and explore graphic design issues within a New Zealand context.” However, turning to the first article entitled ‘Beautiful, Boring Postcards’ I sighed when I saw it was set in the arguably beautiful, but decidedly boring Helvetica. A feeling of ennui arose within me.

Had you been thinking about designing a national typeface before this?

Yes, I had. It was one of the reasons I decided to start the foundry. At the time I did feel very strongly about using local typefaces for local content. I saw typefaces as an accent. For example, reading a James K. Baxter poem set in Bembo is like listening to an Italian accent—and I thought

this was rather inappropriate. However, I must say that since then I have mellowed in my outlook! I no longer think as strongly about the accent thing as I used to. It is nice that Kiwi designers have a local choice, but it would be tremendously naïve to think that every local word *must* be set in a local typeface. It’s neither interesting nor feasible. I'd really hate to become one of those vehement typographic evangelists!

Your mention of Bembo reminds me of the anecdote that Rose Hoare quoted from you in her article in the Sunday magazine—saying that what made you fall in love with letterforms was noticing from redrawing Bembo “that the arch of the ‘n’ subtly curves into the right-hand stem—all the way down into the serif”, and next to your sketch you had written “cheeky Bembo!” Are there any National letterforms (or parts of glyphs) that make you now think “cheeky Kris!”?

No, I don't think so—I can’t see the cheekiness. That’s not to say that other people can’t see it though. It’s just so hard to see your own hand or style. Christian Schwartz & I have had this style conversation before. As it turns out, I can pretty much tell his and he mine. I showed him some work in progress and asked “is there any identifiable ‘Kris-ness’ to it?”. He replied: “Yes. In the g f and s. And the a. And the v. Sorry, Kris. Your style is distinctive. And you get your fingerprints on everything!”

Sometimes when I see National (or any of my types) out in the wild, I usually get a feeling of familiarity (almost like hearing my own voice) before I can identify it as *mine*. It's hard to explain precisely, sorry.

Can you tell me a bit about the National system?—I count eighteen typefaces from Thin to Black. Why did you do such an extensive range of weights for this type family?

The first release of National had six weights, from Book to Extrabold, which I thought was a fairly good range. But when I saw people using it for display purposes I realised that it could really benefit from lighter and darker weights with tighter spacing. The original, core weights of National are spaced primarily for text use, meaning that they're quite loose. So when it's used at larger sizes it can look a bit weird—unless care is taken to tighten it up. The Thin & Black are made especially for display use, around 20 points & larger. The Light can swing either way.

Also, designers really love to have a range of weights, styles & widths to play with—especially for complex typographic work. I think that having an extensive range of weights helps to sell it. This is quite important to me, I'd hate to spend ages on a typeface that doesn't get used or isn't quite complete!

Our 1997 type release, JY Décennie, has been designed for both the web and print. Essentially applying the principles of newspaper typefaces, attention has been paid to the Windows versions of the family to ensure clarity when used in web browsers. It was originally conceived with an Australian broadsheet newspaper in mind, and ultimately launched to commemorate JY&A's 10th anniversary. Input for the design came partly from JY&A Fonts' site visitors using the Font Studio feedback form.

The design itself is based on Australian and New Zealand wood type, which was used widely by European settlers during the nineteenth century.

There are small cap and expert fonts, as well as a Titling Roman and Italic, for use with initial caps or headlines. Titling is JY&A Fonts' first display typeface, with a design that complements Décennie's text sizes. A sans serif version, JY Décennie Express, is also available.

All typefaces have been fine-tuned, with the text fonts featuring 2,200 kerning pairs each and Titling featuring 3,300. <http://www.jyanet.com/fonts/font130.htm>

When I started designing type in the 1980s, Joeseeph Churchward had recently shut up shop in Wellington. It was an opportunity missed, and Joe and I never met till many years later.

It wasn’t easy to start off solo as the first digital type designer in New Zealand. Churchward aside, New Zealand wasn’t known for type, and even *ProDesign*, publishing an article about typography in the 1990s, failed to mention any type designers. I remember writing to a Kiwi journalist who said there were none in this country, again in the 1990s. (She claimed her search engine revealed none; my own search through all the major search engines at the time proved otherwise.)

When *Publish* in the US wrote a small piece about yours truly, one of the remarks was that they never associated elegant type design with New Zealand. It wasn’t a great situation—not only did I seem to be the pioneer, I also had to be the battler who fought the idea that Kiwis weren’t designing type both offshore and, even more tragically, locally.

I knew I was never alone. Mark Geard, for example, had worked on Novalis and he and I struck up a friendship early on. Kiwi expat

Paul Clarke designed National, a comprehensive serif family, for First National Real Estate in 2001. Both were connections to the Churchward era, and arguably understood type better than most people. I'd rate them as the most knowledgeable New Zealand typeface designers, ever. Neither was after recognition—they were interested only in creating beautiful typefaces.

It seemed unfair that there were people like that who were being overlooked. New Zealand's typographic history is far richer than people realize, even though there has been a sudden interest in Kiwi typeface design in recent years. And it seems that men like Geard and Clarke are still being overlooked—and I've spent the good part of 13 years as a typography columnist giving props where it's due. Ironically, I had to do this for *Desktop*, an Australian magazine, because in 1996 no one here gave a damn. That engagement has continued almost on a monthly basis since.

In my mind, type design is a collegial affair and in the last 20-odd years I've built up a wonderful rapport in this world. I probably have more in common with some of the names of the 1980s and 1990s than the younger ones today: those of us who had to play with Arts & Letters and Fontographer 3, learning the tools and figuring out what features to put in. I hung out with Emigre, popped down to Adobe, swore with Spiekermann. I fought for type design copyright protection by helping start TypeRight. Designers, including the late Evert Bloemsma, sent me their work to check. I joined the QuickDraw GX tech group to examine what characters were needed as feature-rich fonts were being developed. (While GX never took off,

many of the ideas found their way into OpenType, the dominant font format today.)

Part of this was out of genuine interest. The other part was telling the world: New Zealand is a player in the international typographic scene.

I rushed the early stuff, and spent way too long on the later stuff. JY Alia, my latest release, was conceived as an idea back in 1994—I didn't finish it till 2009. Somewhere in between we did some meaty international commissions, a few of which I still can't discuss.

Along the way, I can probably take credit for more than a few names in Australia and New Zealand getting their starts or even their first pieces of press coverage.

I wouldn't trade the experience for anything. New Zealand did indeed become recognized as a source of digital type, and those who followed me had fewer battles to fight. All I ask that we continue to create type that is worthy of the battle.

Pam  
Maarten Idema

Pam is a typeface designed specifically for the street map maker as part of the Masters of Design at the Royal Academy of Art in the Hague 2004.

Maps have always contained a large amount of written and graphic information, used largely for location familiarisation and way finding. Like any other demanding utility design, maps need to be as clear and unambiguous as possible. They have a different set of typographic idiosyncrasies from that of a book and yet you won't find a typeface designed with the street map in mind.

To satisfy these demands the map maker will piece together different fonts of varying styles, weights, and sizes—cluttering the visual terrain with a some what clip art like application of icons and other cartographic symbols.

Pam is an attempt to resolve a number of these issues whilst adding more functionality to aid in the making of street maps. Pam's aesthetic was largely influenced by how economical it could be with space, how it fit on a line and how it worked at small sizes. Currently, Pam comes in regular and extra bold with supporting icons, arrows, and borders.

1. Economy of space

Maybe it is a joke played between the City Planner's and Surveyor's departments, to put the longest street name in the smallest street.

Condensed typefaces, whilst obviously more economic in line space, are comparatively harder to read. At a condensed size, round strokes within the letter have less space to turn and so appear to have more vertical stress. The text rhythm can seem like a series of repeating stems—jarring the eye. Pam needed to be conservative on line length and yet maintain legibility.

This was achieved by constructing strokes around open counters, increasing the x-height and retaining a rounder shaped letter. All the while conserving on character width.

JeanCVDam  
str.

Pam includes a set of map abbreviation glyphs and arrows. The example above shows the abbreviation for straat in Dutch. Whilst the arrow and 'str.' visually sit on different levels, features in the font allow the text to be made with one line of type. This means arrows and abbreviations are consistently offset above or below the street name. Edit the street name and all the aligned arrows and abbreviations move together as a block with the edit.

2. Performance between lines

Type is generally applied to a street using one of the following three methods.

ENA RD

To make neater and seemingly larger text the map-maker will often use capital letters. The downside, however, is that capital letters are much harder to read than their lowercase brothers. This diagram uses PamCS (cap height shift).

Major Avenue

Making the x-height fit the street height is a good method for maintaining larger text sizes and is surprisingly easy to read. This method is commonly favoured by countries that use accented characters. Small ascenders and descenders can help to tidy up protruding street elements. This diagram uses PamXS (x-height shift).

Hüngrystraat

This style of application is not commonly used on small maps because it generally doesn't work if the applied typeface has long ascenders and descenders like those in Helvetica. This diagram uses PamES (em shift).

PamXS, PamCS and PamES have been tailor made to fit the height of the street—no matter what method you choose. The size has been scaled and the baseline shifted so that line and type match. For example to have the x-height fill the street choose PamXS and then set the type to the same weight as the line. The 9pt line used here uses 9pt text. You won't ever have to fiddle around with guessing the measure of either your type or baseline shift. Just click and type.

3. Type at small sizes

Apart from keeping counters open and maintaining a large x-height, the following features were implemented to retain character defining areas of white space that could aid in the reading of small print. The next three points refer to an area, highlighted in diag. 1, best described as an external junction counter. Most common in the letters a, d, g, n, m, p, q, r and u.



**External junction counters.** Making the stroke junction meet further down the stem (see diag. 2) gives more white space to the external counter of the junction. Without this space, stem and junction stroke can melt into each other when printed small. If the stroke is pulled further up the stem, towards the top of the terminal, the result can be a square shaped counter. This leaves the determining characteristics of characters like 'm' and 'n' with a non-desirable angular appearance.

**Stroke contrast.** Diagram 3 shows how adding contrast by decreasing the width of a stroke before it joins a stem increases white space.

**Ink traps.** Bell Gothic Centennial compensates for ink that bleeds into tight areas of small print by using ink traps. You could argue that this technique is outdated with the improvement of printing conditions. The ink trap, however, still functions to optically change the weight of letter by allowing a line to take a more extreme turn coming into the trap (see diag. 4).

Stroke contrast, and ink traps are accentuated in the extra bold in order to maintain this external junction counter. Note that this white space functions differently on stems that ascend or descend. Like the b, d and h.



“Wandering letters... that umm... had been left out. They were dishevelled, messy, uncontained and eroded. I could barely understand them.”<sup>1</sup>

I was watching a homeless guy walking along the street the other day. He was speaking as he walked but he wasn’t speaking to anyone that I could see. He was just speaking forwards—or, maybe [better], outwards. He was speaking as he walked and when I watched I started to think about Narrow Gauge’s typeface ‘Auster Regular’ again.

One way that letters are connected to language is by *doing* them. It is both the letters physical and practical manifestations that provide and assume meaning. The form of these physical and practical things are defined by boundaries that are also given and assumed; which in turn provide some kind of foundation for their creation—or their designing.

The boundary of ‘Auster Regular’ seems to be defined by its source material. The framework is inspired by a specific segment in Paul Auster’s story ‘City of Glass’<sup>2</sup>—an ambivalent tale of a writer who’s life becomes consumed by superficial characters seemingly of his own creation. Hired as a personal detective, the writer records the movements of his quarry through the city, by sketching small maps in his notebook he assumes they take the form of letters. The construction of ‘Auster Regular’ stems from an alliterate writing experiment by Oulipo artist Walter Abish, published as a book called *Alphabetical Africa*.<sup>3</sup>

This boundary provides a structure and a working method. The structure is a grid; in ‘Auster Regular’ it could be compared to a space for mapping —reminiscent of the rectangular 11 x 4 city block illustrated on page 81 in ‘City of Glass’. The working method, how the letters are formed, is an additive layer on which the wanderings emanate—according to the alliterate experiment there are 26 versions of ‘Auster Regular’. I say wanderings because the marks appear aimless,

random, akin to rambling. Sure they are describing a recognisable form—a letter, an alphabet—but they are denied the regulations of fluidity and balance connected to conventional font designing. Therefore what happens inside of this boundary creates something only remotely connected to either source, in the end.

In ‘Auster Regular’ the form of the letters become transient: in the outcome of its alliterate, repetitive, overlapped bits of flotsam & debris, scratches & brisk, you can imagine a kind of path being described, but with no fixed origin or destination. The letters describe a psychic territory that alludes to a space of emotional *parole*.<sup>4</sup> Which brings me back to the homeless guy at the beginning. As I watched I thought of the forms while the homeless man spoke outwards and told.

1. Unknown source, unknown date.  
2. Paul Auster, *City of Glass*. Penguin Books, 1980, p.80–87.  
3. Walter Abish, *Alphabetical Africa*. New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1974. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alphabetical—Africa>  
4. *Parole* (meaning “speech”). A linguistic term used by Ferdinand de Saussure, parole describes linguistic performance or language production in use.

Typography exists to honour content, like music, dance and anything else that lends grace to language. Rather than create a singular mark to represent Black Grace, a Pacific contemporary dance company, a typeface was created to become the voice of Black Grace.

The display face reflects the art of the tattoo. In Pacific culture, tattooing has a huge significance: a person’s mana, their spiritual power or life force, is displayed through their tattoo. The act of leaving a mark celebrates the individual’s endurance and dedication to cultural traditions. The elaborate geometrical designs, representing both male and female tattoo patterns, are combined with typographic forms based on the geometric faces of the early 20th century. The typeface has a tone, timbre, character and form that create a sense of visual movement. When the type is placed over an image, it still reveals what is underneath. It is not just read—it is also looked through. Like the tattoo, the typeface is just as much about making a mark as it is about the skin.

In a world cluttered with marks, this typeface expresses an emotional and meaningful intensity greater than that found in a singular logo mark. Like a tattoo, the branding aims to leave an indelible mark on contemporary culture.

Befriend was developed for, and exhibited in, the 2003 exhibition *Arcadia: the other life of video games* at the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery in New Plymouth.

*Arcadia* sought to survey New Zealand artists working with and around video games. Warren Olds was invited to contribute a work, and proposed this typeface. It was exhibited as a simple character-set cut from vinyl and applied to the gallery wall. A working version of the font was made available to visitors via email exchange.

Typefaces are nearly always a part of the architecture of an exhibition, their form is often quiet but usually active: supporting intentions, contributing directions, detailing content. For *Arcadia* Olds presented a typeface as itself—a system of letterforms abstracted from language. When considered in this more inert way, typefaces consist of a relatively defined set of forms that can be multiplied into a seemingly endless combination of ideas and language, both coherent and incoherent.

This flexible structure is also present in video games such as *Doom*, *Unreal Tournament* and *Counter-Strike*. The architecture of these games is characterised by a virtual 3D space viewed from a first-person perspective. The player is then free to interact with this space in a relatively non-linear fashion—opening doors, shooting aliens, wandering aimlessly, or simply standing still.

I created the typeface *Artemis* as part of a post-graduate Masters Degree wherein I was exploring notions of organic design within a two dimensional environment. Within the research the term ‘organic’ directly referenced the natural world and not primarily an abstract paradigm. The following is a very brief summary of what was an extensive exploration.

An earlier typeface I had designed, *Novalis*, had been the start of my interest in this area of research. It had very few straight lines and each letterform was designed with gently expanding and contracting line weights as if a crystalline form was beginning to free itself and come into movement. It is a display font and has proved quite popular, however I discovered that users seemed to be applying it as a text font in addition to its intentional use. In my opinion its forms are too active for continuous-text situations; thus my interest in developing a font which would be designed out of a related set of values but focussed on a continuous-text application.

My Masters research followed a pathway that examined key stages in the phenomena of plant growth as defined by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe in his ground-breaking work *The Metamorphosis of Plants*. Goethe defines a fundamental rhythm underlying all plant growth of periods of expansion and contraction throughout a plant’s cycle of life. The extreme of these two poles express themselves on the one hand through a crystalline hardening of form, and at the other through a fluidic dissolving of form. The beautifully modulated line weights seen in calligraphy perfectly reflect this elemental life rhythm where the viewers’ inner sense of movement is invigorated through recapturing the trace of the calligrapher’s hand. Within letterforms, hardened crystalline forms can be experienced in the junctions of vertical and horizontal strokes, unmediated by curved flowing lines. In addition, unmodulated lines of one line weight only, as seen in many geometrical fonts, add to a ‘stillness of form’ and align themselves to the ‘Crystalline pole’. Moving too far in the direction of either pole can on the one hand make a

body of text look sterile and at the other end the type can be too full of life and consequently rapidly tire the eye.

In the design process of *Artemis* the letters of the alphabet were separated into three basic categories; crystalline (straight lines only), mediating (those that had both curves and straight lines), and flow (those with curves only). They were as follows:

Crystalline: AEFHIKLMNTVWXYZ iklvwxyz

Mediating: BDGJPQRU abdefghjlmnpqrut

Flow: COS cos

‘Crystalline’ letters create strength through strong angular structure, and ‘flow’ letters create movement, largely defining the basic gesture of the font. My founding ideas for *Artemis* were that it had to visually convey a gentle energy without disturbing the eye and that to create this energy I would need to reduce the number of crystalline-shaped letterforms. The letter strokes would also have gentle modulation, an expansion and contraction of line width, that although subtle, would help ameliorate any hardness and rigidity of line.

The lowercase letter ‘e’ is the most used letter in the English language and it formed the starting point of the design—not solely because of this fact, but more importantly, due to the dynamic nature of its form. The initial drawings evolved quickly into a dynamic letterform in which the cross bar became curved making the entire letter curvilinear. This changed its category grouping from ‘mediating’ to ‘flow’.

Within the early stages of the design process the letter ‘l’ had the appearance of having been drawn by a broad nib pen—in the manner of Black Letter. It had a curved ‘lead-in’ diagonal stroke which gave the letter energy and movement. This direction was pursued and applied to the vertical strokes of b,d,h,i,m,n,r,u.

Unlike Black Letter Fraktur, these lead-in strokes were not hard crystalline angles but rather curves more in the style of Rotunda.

It is important to note that these applied curves were not created to imitate pen crafted letters but

rather to achieve movement and flow within passive elements. Bringing more fluidity into the upright strokes also meant that the ‘l’ and the ‘k’ moved into the ‘mediating’ category reducing the number of letters in ‘crystalline’.

Work on the uppercase letters proceeded alongside those of the lowercase and after a number of tests it became apparent that these letters needed only a small number of distinctive glyphs. There was a constant danger that the font would start taking on too much character and become disturbing to the eye at small point sizes. During the design process the cap ‘A’ drawings developed a sweeping gesture as an exit point to the right moving slightly below the base-line. This was a pleasing and elegant solution that integrated well within the overall aesthetic. The ‘E’, and ‘F’ developed upsweeping mid-arms. Flow was brought into the ‘Y’ by softening the arms in the manner of the traditional Greek form.

Through these developments four letters were moved from the crystalline into the mediating category. The groupings now were:

Crystalline: HIKLMNTVWXZ vwxyz

Mediating: ABDEFGJPQRUY abdfghijklmnpqrut

Flow: COS ceos

The overarching concern in the design of this font was not that the individual letterforms would carry a sharply defined organic quality but that they would work together as a collective whole and that the sum of seemingly quite minor individual effects would have an accumulative gentle power.

In summary this research project proposes an alternative, or additional way of viewing letterform and typography. It argues the case for the alphabet to be seen as an archetypal entity that manifests through a series of metamorphosing forms, some very lively and others more rigid and lacking life. As organic life depends upon both fluidic and crystalline structure, so can type, viewed as living form, be seen to reveal these qualities to a greater or lesser degree; through individual letter shape and/or type seen as continuous text. It also recognizes that

each human being has an inner sense of movement that responds to the gestural form of type over and above its word-communication function. The nature of this response is relative to the perception of an experience of the ‘organic’.

It is what takes place between a work and the viewing individual, their bodily and psychological experience, that makes a work ‘living’ or organic. The experience is not principally an intellectual one but one that works at an intuitive level through one’s sense of life and movement. The designed object needs to engage a life process within the viewer. If this happens the designed object then becomes an extension of that life process.



Tom Elliott designed the Air New Zealand logotype in (about) 1968. I met Tom a few months ago at a cafe near where he now works in central Auckland, and he explained the story behind the typeface. Tom was working at Bernhard Roundhill's design studio in Auckland, and they had the Air NZ 'account' at the time. It was then, as it is now, a very big and prestigious job. Tom explained that Ken Chapman, who Tom sat at the desk next to in the studio, designed the Air NZ Koru and together they developed the logotype to go with it. The 'brief' for the design of the logotype, which was communicated by Air NZ Marketing Services Manager Bernie McEwen, was for the focus of the design to be on "readability". The aim was for the logo to be read just as well when it was on the side of an aeroplanes as on the side of a pen. Tom recounted this very clearly by holding up my ballpoint pen to illustrate the connection between the shape of aeroplanes and pens. He also explained how this aim was the reason for the mix of upper and lower case letters and for the regular stroke, and enlarged space in the counter forms. Originally of course only the letters a, d, e, i, l, n, r, w, z were required, but Tom did also later design the rest of the alphabet. However he does not know who holds this artwork now, if indeed it has been lost.

Tom's logotype was used up until 1996 when Air NZ was re-branded by Davies/Baron (London) and Dave Clark Design Associates (Auckland). The new logotype they developed "is a derivative of the Times family"<sup>1</sup> and according to Timothy Mooney, Air NZ's Brand and Marketing Communications Manager at the time, "Our goal was readability. The old typeface had a very diminutive and hard to read look in many environments. We wanted it to read strong and that is one of the reasons behind the very classic serif typeface."

For me though, I will always think of Tom's design as the *real* Air New Zealand logotype.

1. Kerry Tyack, *ProDesign*, 'A New Look for Air New Zealand'. August/September 1996, p.46-58.