TYPE SPECIMEN

Due: Wednesday, November 30

OVERVIEW

A type specimen is a publication, that shows the range of a particular typeface in use. Printers and typographers have produced type specimens for hundreds of years. In the digital age, type specimens have become more experimental, but they remain a crucial way to promote and illustrate typefaces to designers who might want to buy and use them.

ASSIGNMENT BRIEF

You will create a type specimen in the form of a 2-sided poster. One side will be informational and one will be conceptual. The content will relate to the history of the typeface, its designer and any lore surrounding it.

RESEARCH

Look for images of type specimens and other pieces that could serve as inspiration for your design. Look for creative ways to display a type's beauty as well as elegant ways to show its family.

Choose one of the following typefaces:
Clarendon, Baskerville, DIN, or Futura
These are available on the server for you.

SPECIFICATIONS

• 10" x 16" (fits on a tabloid sheet of paper)

• Can fold if you like

(Conceptual side)

• Type treatment highlighting your typeface and its beauty or usefulness.

(Informational side)

• Name of the typeface

• Whole alphabet, plus punctuation and numbers (2 styles, eg: book, italic, bold, black etc)

• Provided text for your chosen typeface.

• Type only—no images or backgrounds made from images.

• Two colors only

• Use only your chosen typeface

• This side of the poster should also reflect, through the design, grid, and layout and understanding of your concept for the front side of the poster and the typeface's qualities.

• Feel free to get inventive with a folding poster (optional)

FINAL PIECES DUE

1. Poster (printed at actual size)

2. Process book (including research, variations, sketches, inspiration print-outs/photocopies etc.)

3. Rationale Paper

If you're confused about the process book or rationale paper, please look at your syllabus for clarification. If you still don't understand, come talk to me.

DIN

The history of the realist sans-serif known today as DIN goes back to 1905. At the time, the Prussian railway created a set of lettering with the purpose of unifying the descriptions on their freight cars. Following a merger of all German state railways in 1920, the master drawings of the Prussian railway became the reference for most railway lettering. Based on the master drawings, the D. Stempel AG foundry released the earliest version of a DIN face in 1923.

The typeface was adopted by Germany in 1936 as a standard known as DIN 1451 (DIN is an acronym for Deutsches Institut für Normung—in English, the German Institute for Standardization). The typeface became a standard for traffic signs, street signs, house numbers and license plates. Over the next decades the typeface also found use on various household goods and products, making it synonymous with German design.

In 1995, type designer Albert-Jan Pool expanded DIN 1451 into a more polished form acceptable for graphic design and publishing, known as FF DIN. Today, FF DIN has been widely adopted for use in magazines, advertisements, the web, and corporate logos.

1905
D. Stempel AG foundry
Germany

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BASKERVILLE

Baskerville, designed in 1754, is most known for its crisp edges, high con-trast and generous proportions. The typeface was heavily influenced by the processes of the Birmingham-bred John Baskerville, a master type-founder and printer, who owed much of his career to his beginnings. As a servant in a clergyman's house, it was his employer that discovered his penmanship talents and sent him to learn writing. Baskerville was illiter-ate but became very interested in calligraphy, and practised handwriting and inscription that was later echoed in strokes and embellishments in his printed typeface.

Baskerville is categorized as a transitional typeface in-between classical typefaces and the high contrast modern faces. At the time that John Baskerville decided to switch from owning a japanning business to a type foundry, Phillipe Grandjean's exclusive Romain du Roi for Louis XIV had circulated and been copied in Europe. The mathematically-drawn characters felt cold, and prompted Baskerville to create a softer type-face with rounded bracketed serifs and a vertical axis.

Baskerville is an elegant book face, and as proven by John Baskerville's own treatment, it can excel in purely typographic compositions. Today it remains one of the most popular and classic typefaces for print, for its legibility and refined beauty.

1754
John Baskerville
England

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CLARENDON

Named after Oxford's Clarendon Press, the popular slab-serif was created in 1845 by Robert Besley for the Fann Street Foundry. Notable as one of the last new developments in nineteenth century typography, the letterforms represented a significant change from the slab-serif Antiques and Egyptians that were so popular in that time.

Clarendon became hugely popular, leading Besley to register the design under Britain's Ornamental Designs Act of 1842. Unfortunately, the patent expired three years later, with many competing foundries quickly copying its design once the hold was released.

The typeface was released by Monotype in 1935, and reworked into its modern incarnation in 1953 by Hermann Eidenbenz. It was also marketed by the Stephenson Blake foundry as Consort in the 1950s. Remaining a popular choice for over a century, many of today's most recognized logotypes are based on the Clarendon style.

1845
Robert Besley
England

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FUTURA

Following the Bauhaus design philosophy, German type designer Paul Renner first created Futura between 1924 and 1926. Although Renner was not a member of the Bauhaus, he shared many of its views, believing that a modern typeface should express modern models rather than be a rivial of a previous design. Futura was commercially released in 1927, commissioned by the Bauer type foundry.

While designing Futura, Renner avoided creating any non-essential elements, making use of basic geometric proportions with no serifs or frills. Futura's crisp, clean forms reflect the appearance of efficiency and forwardness even today.

Futura (and its variants) have become an extremely popular typeface for countless corporate logos, commercial products, films and advertisements for years. In fact, so popular that certain art directors had began boycotting its use in with Art Directors Against Futura Extra Bold Condensed, published in 1992's TDC Typography 13. Regardless, Futura remains one of the most used (and loved) sans-serif fonts today with no signs of slowing down.

1924–1926
Paul Renner
Germany

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