

M.

Type Trends.

Type trends 2021 and beyond.

We type designers like to see ourselves as futurists. We look for the green shoots, the early signs of distinctive type for brands. And as we stand here in the murky present, with an unprecedented year behind us and an uncertain stretch of months and years ahead, it's impossible not to wonder what the future truly holds for us.

When we examine the trends taking shape in the creative community, what emerges is a sort of struggle playing out between our rapidly digitizing lifestyle and an equally strong yearning for something tangible.

We see type that pushes the boundaries, that unfolds new layers of expression and explores innovative uses of language and meaning. Type that makes use of cutting-edge technology and meets the potential of today's modern devices.

At the same time, we note a return to the familiar, comfortable letterforms of decades past, reimagined and repurposed for the world as it is today in striking, unexpected ways. More than just a nostalgic impulse, this seems driven by a desire for genuine connection in a world we increasingly experience through screens. Perhaps it is simply a manifestation of our desire to have both: The whole world in our pocket, without losing touch with ourselves.



Type designers are students of history too. And so we know this dynamic is not new. Human expression is defined by the ebb and flow of the fresh and the familiar. Perhaps what makes this moment feel exhilarating, terrifying, and momentous is that history provides little precedent for what we're experiencing now.

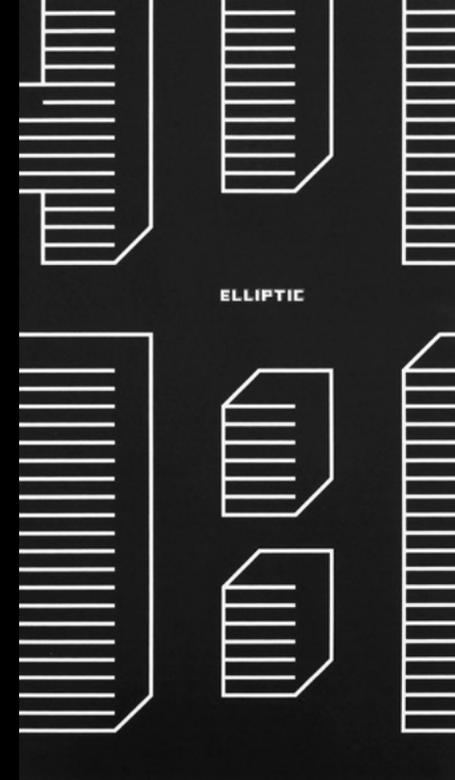
That is both a challenge and an opportunity, a chance to build connections in a splintered world, to chart a path forward into our technological future, and to remind ourselves, at every turn, of our humanity. What this report illustrates, in the end, is that we are pretty well up to the task.

Type trends '21 is our attempt to recognize remarkable typography from the last year, but it's also an exercise in fortune-telling or, at least, foretelling. As we write this, we're developing (and have developed) exciting, forwarding-thinking type for brands, sometimes years in advance. So, this report also reflects the direction brands are taking with an eye toward the years ahead.

The Monotype Studio is an extension of your studio, and we want to keep our creative partners ahead of the curve. We hope you're inspired and excited by this selection of notable typographic trends to look out for and to perhaps embrace in the coming year.

— The Monotype Studio.

Elliptic
Agency: Superunion

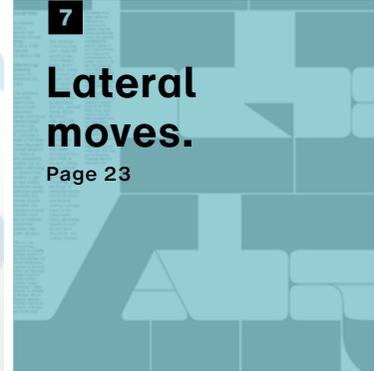
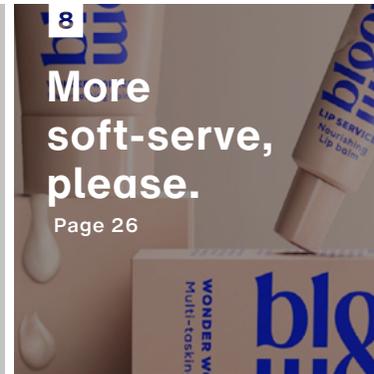
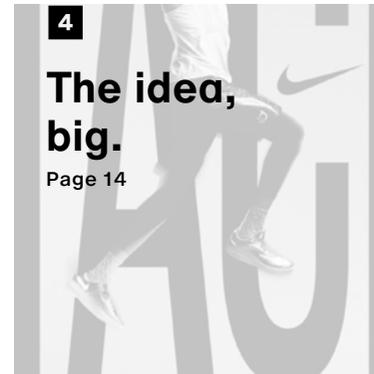
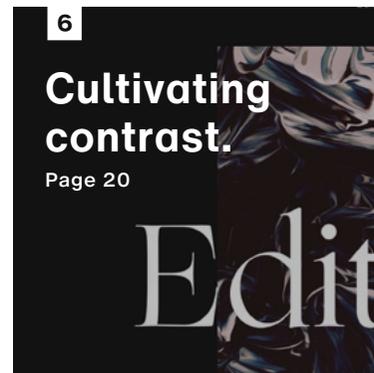
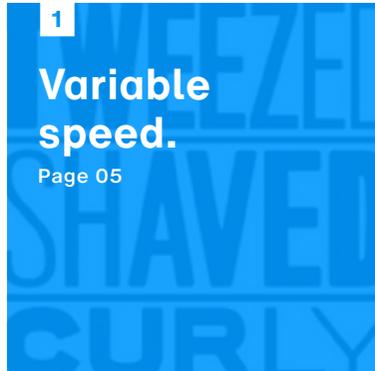


ELLIPTIC

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San Francisco, CA 94102
Phone: (415) 774-1111



Trends.



Variable
speed.



10/20
eu

**ANDREA
MOTIS**

Guitar Storm™

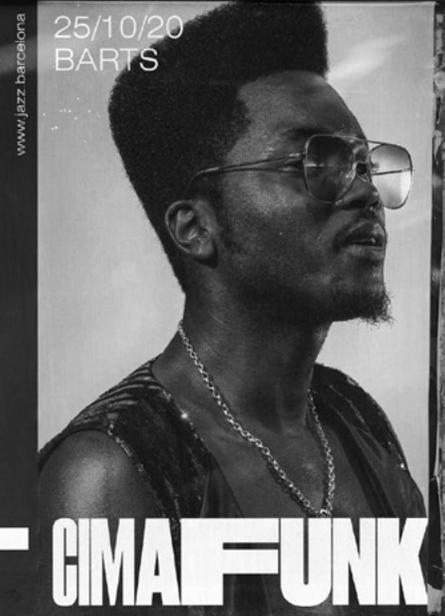


**ADRIANA
CALCANHOTTO**

19/10/20–
28/02/21

Voll-Damm
**BARCELONA
JAZZ
FESTIVAL
2020**

23/11/20
BARTS



25/10/20
BARTS

www.jazz.barcelona

CIMA FUNK



03/11/20
Teatre Auditori
Sant Cugat

**LIZZ
WEIG**

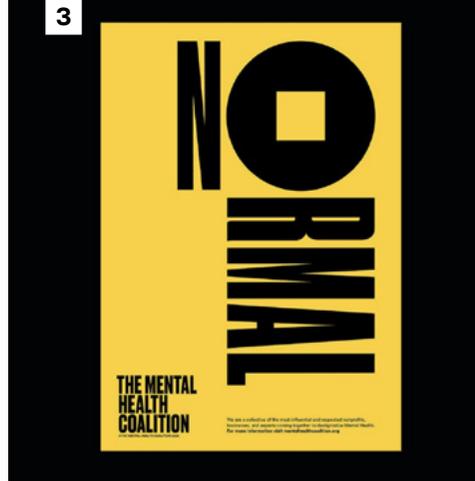
Get the look.

Neue Plak Variable
 Futura Now Variable
 Helvetica Now Variable

Monotype Fonts

NEW in 2021:

Helvetica Now Variable
 + Vary



1. READ Magazine / HORT
2. Design in Motion Festival / Studio Dumbar
3. The Mental Health Coalition / Pentagram /
Typeface Design: Commercial Type
4. Durex / Havas London / Typeface Design:
Colophon
5. Studio Dumbar
6. Durex / Havas London / Typeface design: Colophon



Virtual
is reality.

Type in Space

TYPE IN SP

Virtual is reality.

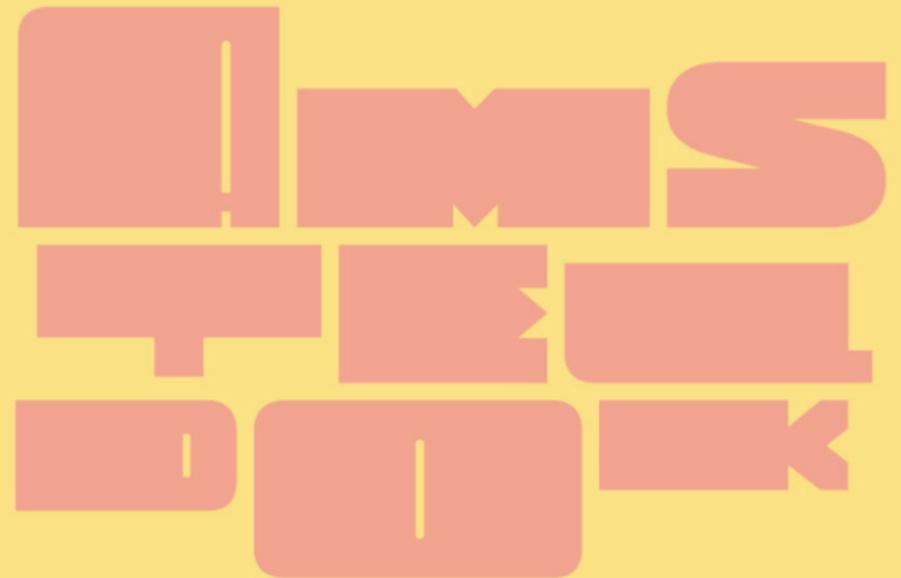
If 2020 has taught us anything, it's that (for better or worse) the virtual, digital world and the "real" world are becoming one and the same. Everything is happening through screens, including our meetings, our customer interactions, and even our holiday celebrations.

In typography, this shift manifests in a trend of dynamic type—type that is interactive or has some interactivity built into it, that exists within virtual and augmented reality environments where it adapts and reacts in real time.

Brands have been talking and thinking about VR tech for years, but lately, we've encountered more brands inquiring about virtual reality and interactivity, suggesting they're taking it more seriously. Our recent work with Design Studio for Scout24 shows how brands can bring customers into their world and create virtual experiences where typography is a key ingredient.

Agencies are also eager to innovate in this arena, whether by creating immersive launch events or developing gaming experiences where type is used to navigate environments. Fashion, furniture, and experience brands have shown how VR tech can add new layers to the customer relationship, with catwalk experiences (TopShop), virtual sneaker wearing (adidas), in home visualization (IKEA), and moon-walk experiences (Samsung), all exploring and pushing this technology in 2020. Type is a key ingredient to all of these experiences, and the opportunity to innovate here is virtually (no pun intended) limitless.

Amsteldok, A WPP Campus
Design: VBAT



Get the look.

Daytona
FS Untitled
FS Industrie Variablev

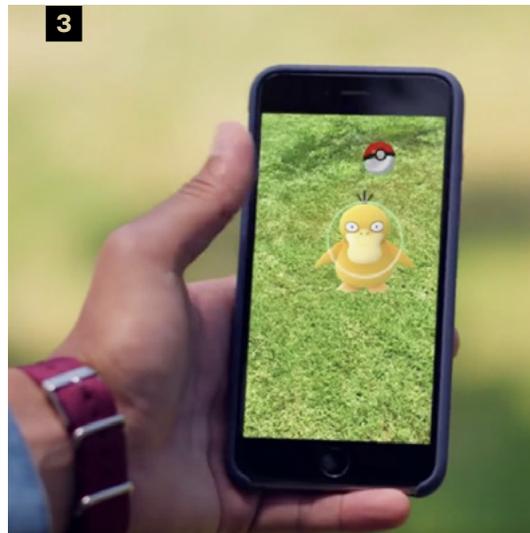
2



1



3



1. Design in Motion Festival / Studio Dumar
2. Minecraft Earth
3. Pokémon Go / Developer: Niantic
4. Hololens 2 – Type in Space / BRDY Studios LLC for Microsoft

4



Touchable
Type.

We've seen the future.
And it starts in Pittsburgh.

duolingo



Touchable Type.

The first two decades of the 21st century were dominated by three basic styles of type: “Geometric Sans,” “Humanist Sans,” and a hybrid of both, the “Geometric Humanist.” In this era of digital acceleration, it’s only natural that designers and developers were drawn to a fixed element of continuity. The use of typefaces like Avenir, Gotham, and Proxima Nova became such an overwhelming trend in typography and branding that it seemed it might never break.

But a sense of warmth is creeping back in the form of a geometric type with a softer side, which we call “touchable type.” These are typefaces with hooks, infused with winking hints toward the brand’s visual identity and call-backs to shapes found in other assets: the subtlest curve, a squarer-circle, a flick or an angle. Touchable type begins with a geometric structure and adds layers of human influence, optical adjustments, roundings, and calligraphic imperfections that soften the impression. This is typography in evolution.

Many agencies we speak to are chasing the look. Brands are moving away from the pure construction of geometric type and toward these softer and more organic forms. Perhaps this is an admission that geometric typeforms do not lend themselves to distinct identities, especially when everyone is doing the same thing. (There are only so many ways the purest circle can meet a stem, after all.)

Brands like to evolve language, and given the limited lifecycle of a brand, the evolution of touchable type makes perfect sense. “Digital” shouldn’t mean “devoid of personality.”

Human connection is important, as is understanding, a thoughtful note, a brand’s ability to listen and empathize with its customers. The purity of geometric type and its place in our digital world will undoubtedly continue, but there’s a clear sense we’ve turned a corner.

Hay
Agency: Christopher Doyle and Co.



Get the look.

FF Mark
TT Norms
Bjorn

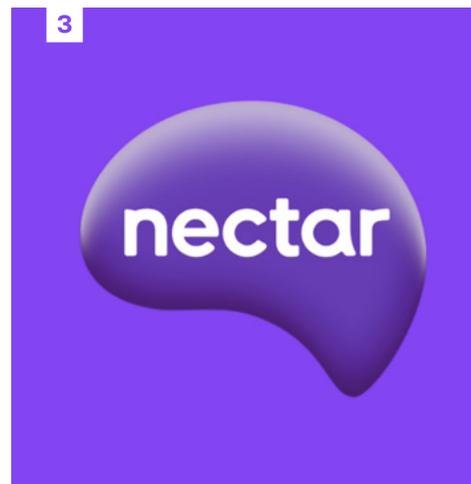
Monotype Fonts

NEW in 2021:

Suba
Eggs Grotesque
Vary
Laborat



1. O₂ / The Monotype Studio
2. Premier League / DesignStudio
3. nectar / DesignStudio
4. AO.com / DesignStudio & F37 Foundry Ltd.
5. Mentimeter / Bold Scandinavia
6. AO.com / DesignStudio & F37 Foundry Ltd.



The idea,
big.



acmi

Your museum of
screen culture

acmi.net.au

The idea, big.

Where touchable type is a subtle, perhaps even tentative, step away from purity and restraint, this trend is anything but. “The idea, big” is loud, brash, confident, and commanding. It is type turned up to 11. Nevermind type without borders; this is type that will not be contained by borders, a mouthpiece for unapologetic brands that demand attention.

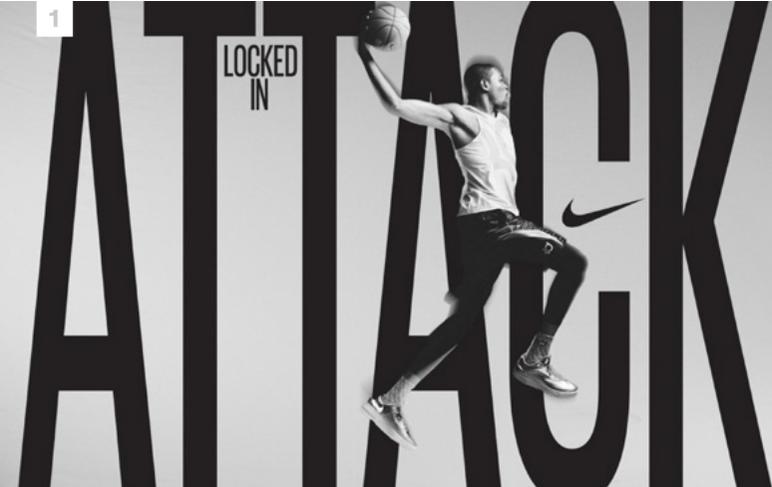
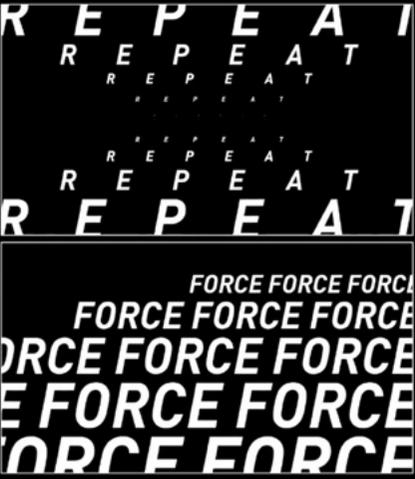
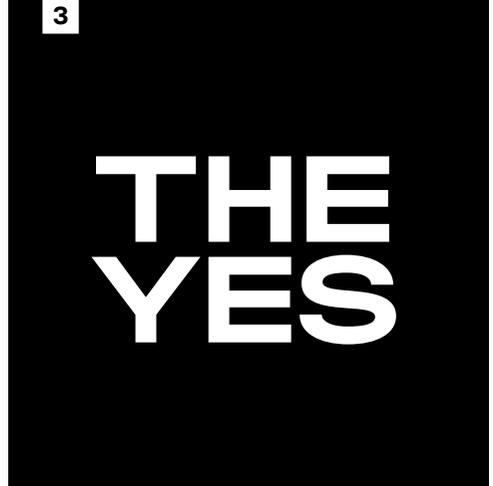
This trend is a celebration of form, the negative shapes that emerge in focus, inviting us into the craft of letter design. Exploding type to enormous sizes showcases how these letter shapes can allude to brand storytelling in the same way that film or photography is cropped, composed, and framed. It gives type an imposing cinematic quality,

filling your field of vision with towering letterforms, all angles and curves and corners. Big type is for brands looking to ooze confidence and puts forth an attitude and tone that celebrates everything we love about the details of gigantic display typography.

Saudi Arabian Logistics
Agency: Interbrand Madrid



Get the look.



- 1. Nike / HORT
- 2. Warner Records / Pentagram
- 3. THE YES / Creative Director: Anthony Sperduti /
Design Director: Sophie Mascatello /
Designer: David Johanson / Mythology
- 4. Adidas (London) / DIA
- 5. Camerich



Hand
was here.

Mindful Chef

Hand was here.

In the mid-2000s, there was a surge in brands looking to ground themselves in a sense of the handmade, the material feeling of quality craftsmanship, the process of making something from scratch. The trend has come and gone since then, but now, in a world gone fully digital, it's no surprise that people would be searching for something warm, familiar, and human again.

This trend is all about hand-drawn lettering and woodblocked textures—type that evokes the nostalgia of your lunchtime walk to the food market, the hand-painted street-food signs and mom-and-pop storefronts, reminders of the human experience we so covet from our homes. There's a theme of sustainability here as well, of local sourcing and DIY and looking inward toward your community.

From a purely typographic perspective, this trend leans on innovations and advancements in the creation and use of type.

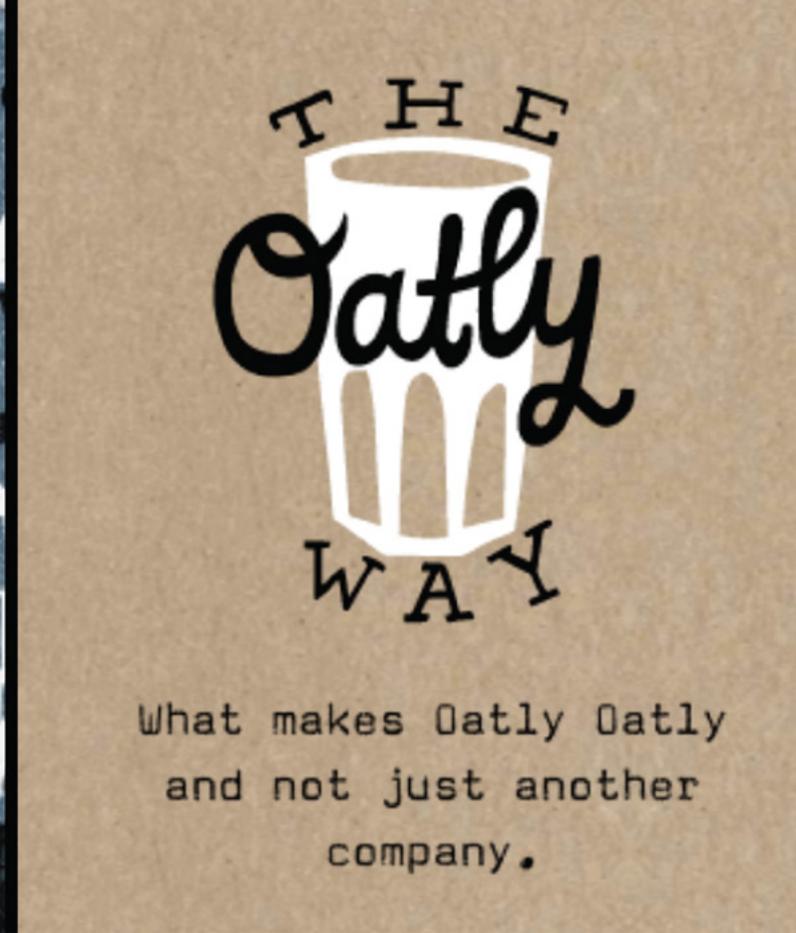
Script fonts no longer need to feel mechanical, as OpenType technology allows us to imbue type with all the idiosyncrasies, inconsistencies, and imperfections of handwriting. The humanity of these typefaces gives them soul, and in turn, they nod to a sense of wellness, care, and the timeless endeavor of creating something truly unique.

Orchard Thieves
Agency: *Dynamo Ireland*



Get the look.

Hylandia
Morning
Rockland



1. Gucci / Alessandro Michele
2. Oat-ly / Forsman & Bofendors
3. Northern Ireland Tourism
4. Orchard Thieves Cider / Dynamo Ireland



Cultivating
contrast.



Cultivating contrast.

Like the touchable type trend, a seemingly small nudge to the thickness of vertical or horizontal strokes can transform an ordinary font into something bursting with personality, enabling brands to stand out from the antiseptic or overly polished geometric and humanist sans we've seen over the past two decades.

This trend reveals itself in two primary expressions, both of which use contrast to add a “dress-up” quality to the design, layering on the luxury as well as a hint of grandeur. We see these two trends as complementary—two sides of the same coin and sometimes used hand-in-hand. Like touchable type, they represent a turn away from the overt tidiness of geometric sans faces.

Opulent sans welcomes contrast back to sans—sometimes in calligraphic flicks and ultra thins—and sometimes as a new take on Zapf's mid-century Optima

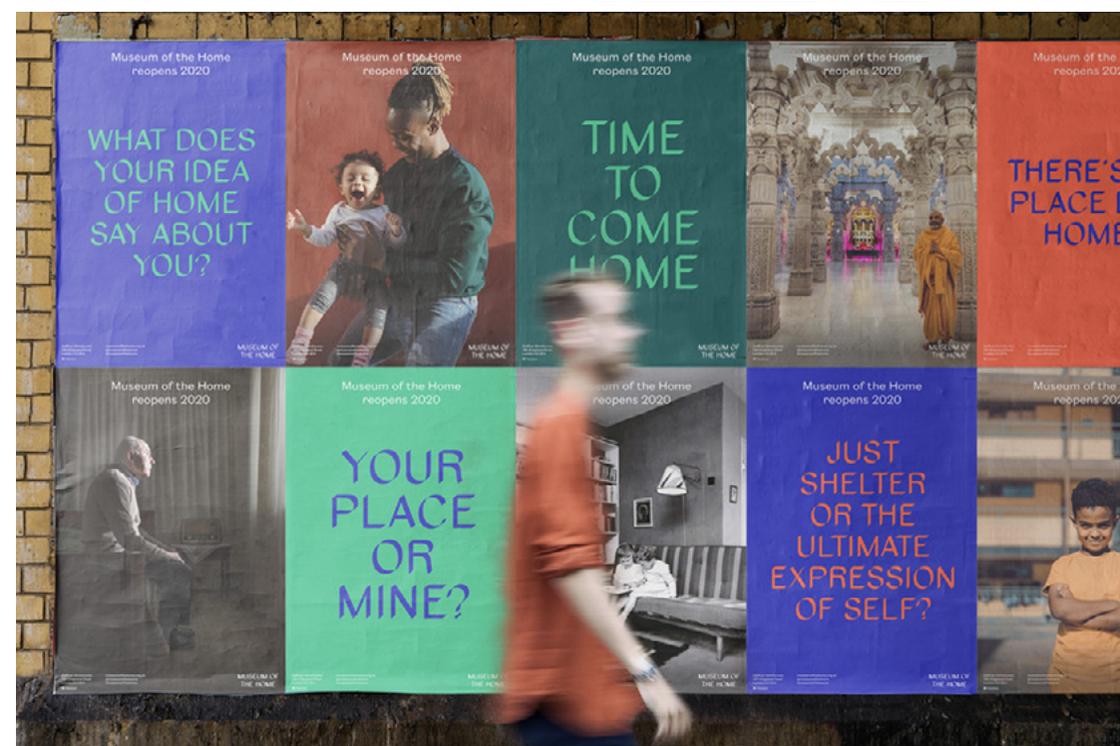
model. Opulent sans adds an air of character and class normally associated with serif fonts to the underlying sans serif structure. The more we increase the contrast between thick and thin, the more we amplify the drama and elegance, which results in eye-catching and alluring letterforms. Brands have been tapping into this thick/thin drama for years, especially in the world of fashion, but are remodeling the approach from serif to sans.

Breaking out from the expected and dripping with fashionable flair, the “languid serif” plays with highly stylish, airy hairline thins, alongside organic curls set loose to meander into new forms. This trend expands the idea of the typographic flourish, pushing the historical swash into new and unexpected directions, swooping and even oozy. This highly considered but relaxed expression is very

much not what you expect the typographic web to look like. It is fashion. It's idle. It just “is.” It set's an opulent tone. It. Is. Languid.

ShopRite
Agency: Lippincott

Museum of the Home
Agency: dn&co



Get the look.

Opulent sans:

Optima
FS Siena
Accent Graphic

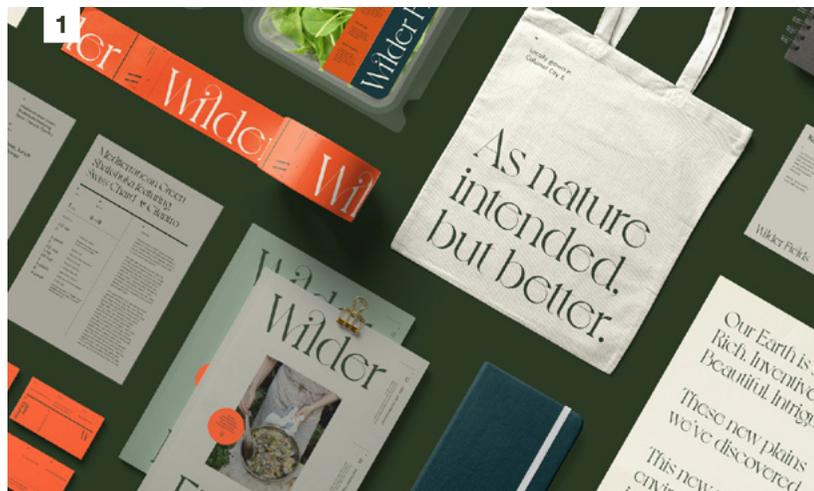
Languid serif:

FS Neruda
Macklin
FF Marselis Serif

Monotype Fonts

NEW in 2021:

Joyce



1. Wilder Fields / One Design Company
2. Cora / COLLINS
3. Agnes / Agnes Lloyd Platt
4. Editions / Jordan Sowers
5. Magda / Luminous Design Group
6. Nemaclin / King & Partners
7. Natura Ekos / Tátil Design



Lateral moves.

But what happens when you flip the contrast on a high-contrast typeface? You get a groundbreaking typographic aesthetic that is strangely alluring. Type that is almost dreamlike in that it's simultaneously familiar and yet remarkable. The underpinning intention of this reverse contrast trend is to be very different, so it's no surprise we see this trend creeping into more "creative" verticals, such as out-of-left-field digital ventures, music, organic sweets, and other markets that are more willing to take a progressive outlook.

In both cases, these creative explorations in the angle of stress and variability of features have made for some interesting developments for typography at large, as well as some distinctive brand identities. There will be more of this in the coming years, and we're excited to see what emerges.

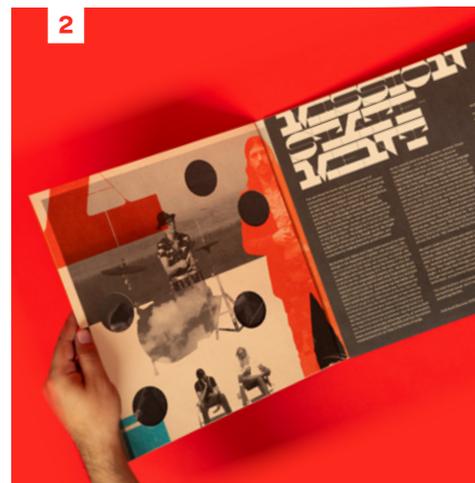
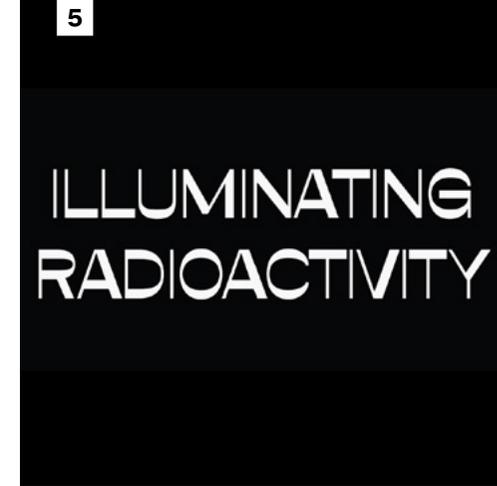
Byte Bars

Agency: *The Office of Ordinary Things.*



Get the look.

ITC Zipper
 PL Barnum Block
 Figaro



1. CANALS / Concept, writing, art direction & design: Marcus Brown/ Website development: Aristide
2. The Avett Brothers / The Office of Ordinary Things
3. Byte Bars / The Office of Ordinary Things
4. CANALS / Concept, writing, art direction & design: Marcus Brown/ Website development: Aristide
5. Illuminating Radioactivity / Tubik Studio



More soft-serve,
please.

**½ Dozen
Donuts**

**1 Dozen
Donuts**



**DN
KN**

More soft-serve, please.

This trend is all about classic, full-of-character serif typefaces like Cooper Light and Cooper Black—typefaces that seem to pour forth full of curves and heft, easy on the eyes and welcoming you to sit and unwind for a while. But while those irrepressible favorites are still part of the picture, new twists on the old theme are joining the mix, resulting in a trend that explores the past in search of a deeper, meaningful connection with consumers.

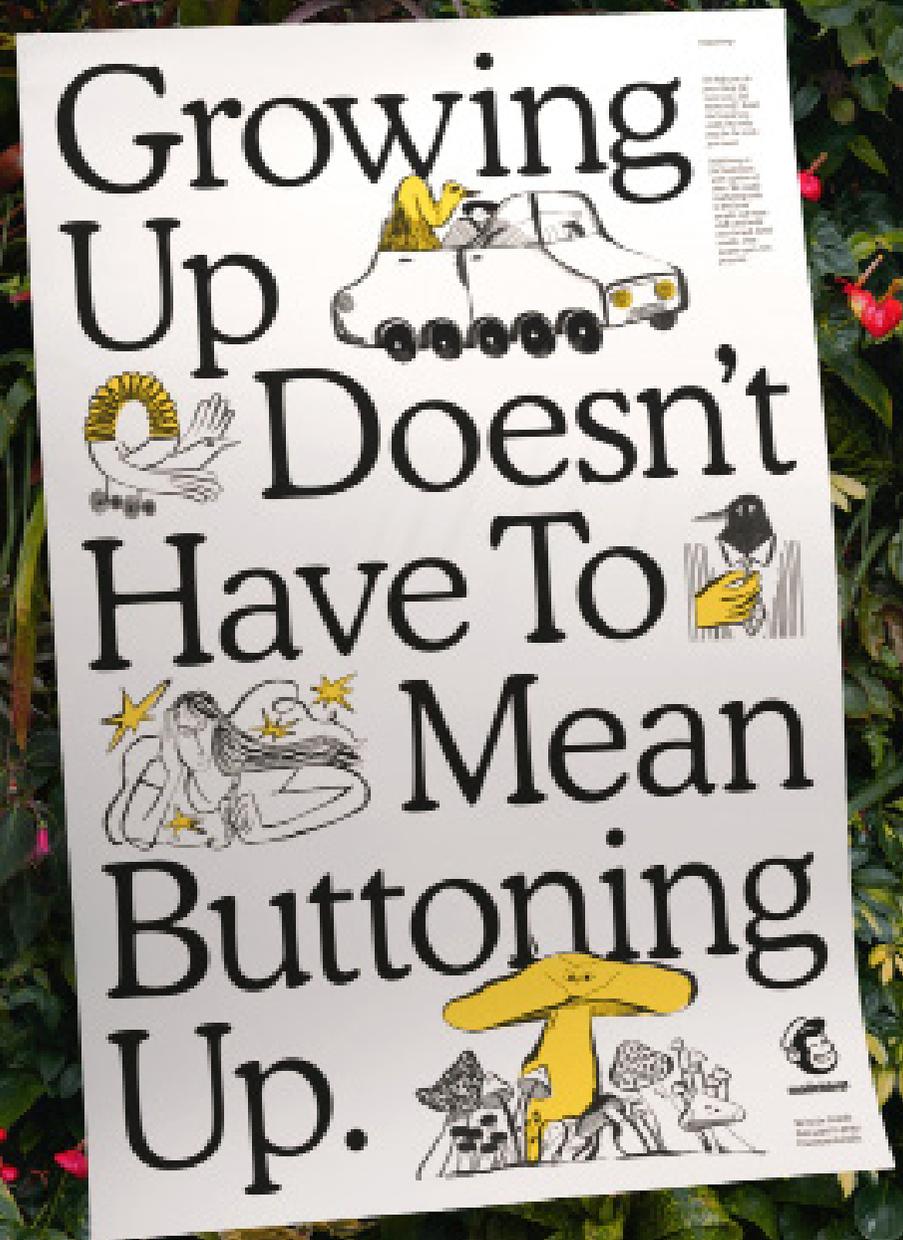
Originally this trend was heavily associated with food and home goods, but in 2020 it made inroads into other business sectors. The trend was spearheaded over the past several years by rebrands from Chobani (InHouse), MailChimp (Collins), Meridian (BulletProof), and Dunkin (JKR), and the aesthetic has taken off like a rocketship since then. Burger King is the latest brand to join the fray, asking itself, “Should our voice be more human, more accessible, more

empathetic?” and answering in the affirmative with soft-serve type of its own.

“Nostalgia” as a theme is not a driver for change, but it works as an expression of empathy in a world that seeks familiarity during difficult times. There is comfort in the warm, soft-edged physicality of these letter shapes, a nod to a vintage era of playful swashes, fat serifs, quirky letters, and vibrant color schemes.

These typefaces are also just a lot of fun, and brands seem to enjoy naming their fonts too: “Flame Serif” for Burger King, “Let’s Be Glyphs” for Fisher Price, “Dunkin Serif” for Dunkin. This is type as celebration, reminding the world it’s ok to enjoy themselves.

Mailchimp
Agency: COLLINS



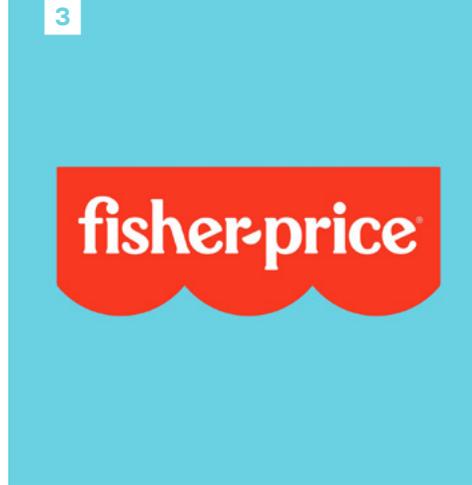
Get the look.

Souvenir
Cheltenham
FS Rosa

Monotype Fonts

NEW in 2021:

FS Rosa
Joyce



1. Chamberlain Coffee / Kontrapunkt
2. Bloom & Blossom / Jones Knowles Ritchie
3. Fisher-Price / Design by Emily Oberman/Pentagram
4. Burger King / Jones Knowles Ritchie
5. The Cat Person / Mythology:
Creative Director: Anthony Sperduti
Design Director: Sophie Mascatello
Designer: David Johanson
Illustrator: Paul Davis
Photographer: David Robert Elliott
6. Tentree



TWEAG Software Innovation Lab

Block head.

tweag.io

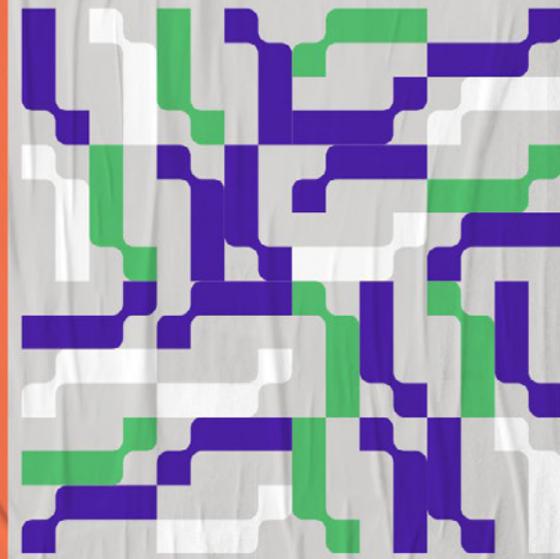
SCALE YOUR ENGINEERING POWER.



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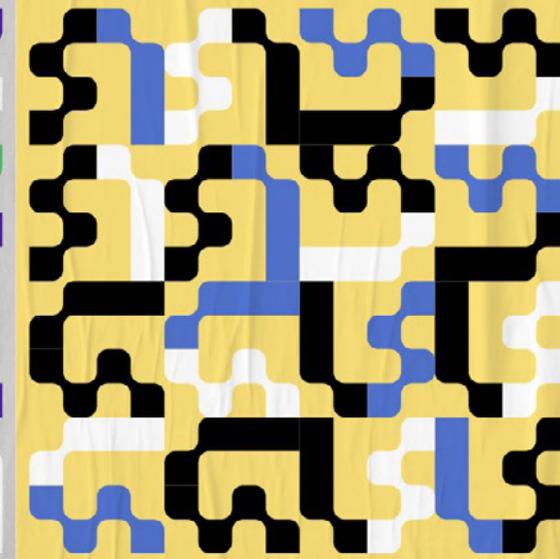
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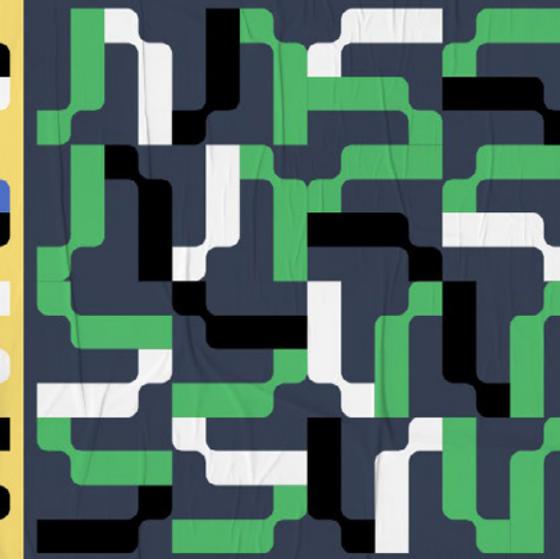
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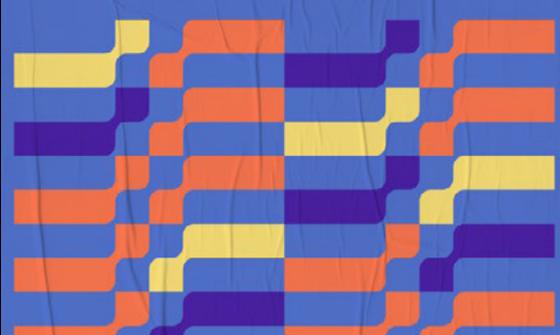
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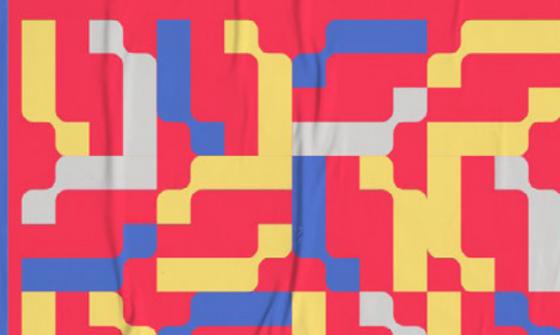
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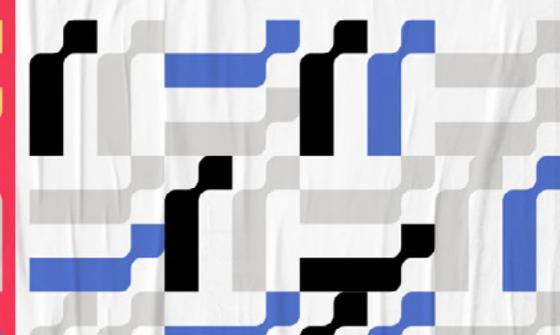
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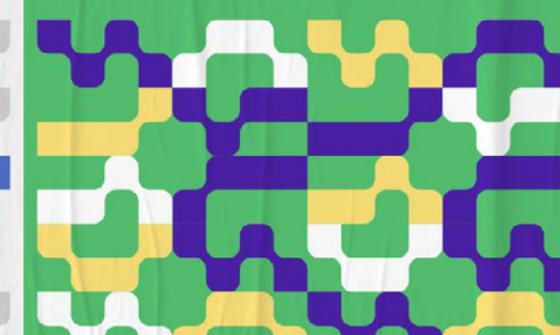
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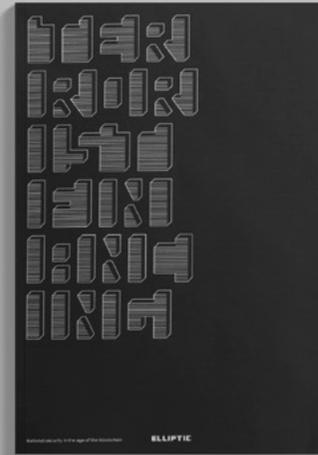
Block head.

This is a different take on some of the same nostalgic, empathetic impulses spurring the soft-serve trend; but instead of looking back to classic advertising typefaces like Cooper Black, this trend dips into the timeless eight-bit minimalism of the 80s. (And in the process, makes a lot of elder millennials suddenly feel old.)

The neat trick of this trend is that it evokes both futurism and nostalgia. The 80s were defined by major advances in home computing and video game technology, the early blooms of our current tech-centric culture. But that pixelated world seems quaint now. Typefaces influenced by that era transport us back to when technology was a novelty, before it overwhelmed our lives with screens and notifications and noise. A time when, dare we say it, perhaps we weren't so jaded.

The squareness, the grid, the pixelated sentimentality of this type is something we all feel on some level. This trend toys with the theory of reduction, dealing primarily in angles and edges and yet finding some soul along the way. Agencies like Collins, JKR, Superunion, and many others see something here—the wisdom of learning from the past while shaping an unknowable future—and it's no surprise that brands working on the cutting edge of technology, gaming, and finance see it too.

Elliptic
Agency: Superunion



The force / R-Wars.

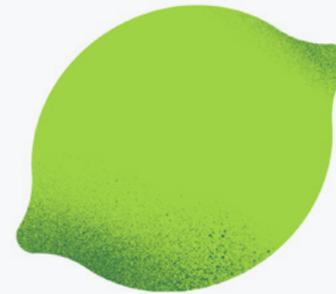
For a certain group of people, when they see one particular capital “R,” the peculiar leg, it can often evoke memories of one thing, which is—STAR WARS. Suzy Rice created the Star Wars logo for George Lucas’s film franchise in 1977. The process, her work as an artist, and how she became involved in the project is an illuminating read—The Star Wars Logo Design.

But that “R”...well, it’s showing up everywhere, it’s beginning to permeate everything, and brands love it. It takes that solid diagonal downstroke and moves it just that little bit further, following the calligraphic influence,

creating a little foot that says “I’m quirky,” “I’m unique,” “I’m not playing by those “rules.”

It’s a nice typographic device, a way to fill out space and just make things feel a little more bouncy or grounded... depending on the approach. Small changes can make a big impact! Ah, the power of typography. Expect to see more of this “R” in slab and flick form.

Hello Fresh
Agency: DesignStudio



**HELLO
FRESH**

Get the look.

Filson Pro
Carnero
FS Lola

2



1



3



5



4



- 1. Truist / Interbrand
- 2. Ripe / Saint-Urbain
- 3. Merrystockings / Christina Fisher
- 4. Shy Bird / Perky Bros
- 5. Disrepute / Two Times Elliott

**Measured
austerity.**



Background for
your zoom meet-
ings for when you
miss working from
the office or even
working from the
studio you always
dream working for.

Design & Concept:
Demande Spéciale
Web Dev:
PL Cossette

Ara Estudio
Baillat Studio
The Barkas
Billyclub
Bielke & Yang
Demande Spéciale
Harrison Fun
House of Youth
Studio July
Locomotive
Nother Studio
Olivier Charland
Porto Rocha
Playlab INC
Sons & co
Le Séisme
Zéro Studios
Fivethousand Fingers

OFFICESSS

<https://www.officesss.online/>

A yellow poster with a grid of six office interior photographs. Below the photos is a list of client names in a light blue font. The word 'OFFICESSS' is printed in large, bold, light blue letters across the middle of the poster.

OFFICESSS

Ara Estudio
Baillat Studio
The Barkas
Billyclub
Bielke & Yang
Demande Spéciale
Harrison Fun
House of Youth
Studio July
Locomotive
Nother Studio
Olivier Charland
Porto Rocha
Playlab INC
Sons & co
Le Séisme
Zéro Studios
Fivethousand

Measured austerity.

We end with a defiant embrace of non-design. This trend is adjacent to a development we reported last year, called “Helvetica-not-Helvetica,” an upswell of typefaces that owe a chunk of their DNA to Helvetica but possess just enough wink-and-nod to be a bit different—or intentionally a bit off.

Measured austerity is that—the default status of Helvetica—especially the very blank Regular weight of Helvetica. It’s also an embrace of the systematic sameness that became an aspect of the 20th century’s “international style.”

But most of all, it’s an attitude. It’s punk. It’s a blank stare. It’s oversized, sometimes bedecked with discordant color. It’s under-designed and confidently so.

There is no Helvetica here, but its fingerprints are everywhere. And the industries making use of this trend run the gamut from

pizza to publishing. There’s measured austerity for chefs and restaurant supplies—and promoting backgrounds for Zoom meetings. And there are literally hundreds of more examples, including the many high-end fashion logo transformations we reported on last year in the “Brutalist rebrand.”

Officesss

Agency: Office of Demande Speciale



Background for your zoom meetings for when you miss working from the office or even working from the studio you always dream working for.

Design & Concept:
Demande Spéciale

Web Dev:
PL Cossette

OFFICESSS

Ara Estudio
Baillat Studio
The Barkas
Billyclub
Bielke & Yang
Demande Spéciale
Harrison Fun
House of Youth
Studio July
Locomotive
Nother Studio
Olivier Charland
Porto Rocha
Playlab INC
Sons & co

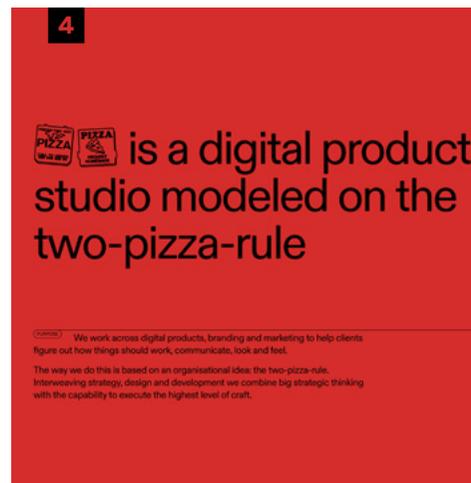
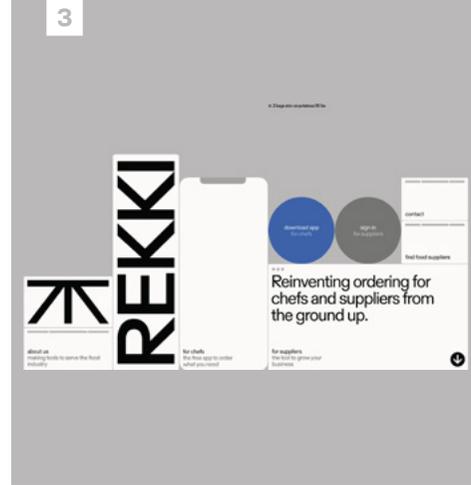
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Eggs Grot
Vary
FF DIN family extensions
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1. MMAATTCHH
2. Practice
3. Rekki
4. Pizza Pizza Design Services
5. Special Offer / Home & Landing

2020–21 Observations.

At the doorstep of this century's third decade, type is standing front and center. Brands are utilizing type with renewed confidence and curiosity. The creative minds developing and designing with type are exploring ways to reinvent and innovate, to take something old and twist it up into something new. Human influence is creeping into all themes, playing to nostalgia as comfort, looking to the past to make something fresh.

Underpinning these trends is something bigger—a sea change in the typographic landscape following years of visual sameness. We can trace a line from this moment all the way back to 1976 when the mature notion of a humanist sans typeface was born with the release of Adrian Frutiger's Frutiger family. Highly legible, friendly, and tidy, it's both timeless and contemporary. Frutiger followed this with Avenir in 1988, which combined the winning aspects of his Frutiger family with the rationality of geometric sans faces like Futura.

The refinement and entrenchment of humanist sans type continued with Myriad in 1992, from Adobe. This relaxed humanist sans with a similar look-and-feel to Frutiger permeated the digital space, as Apple, Wired magazine, and Adobe itself made heavy use of the design. In 2003, Microsoft began licensing Monotype's Segoe fonts—also a less formal rendition of the humanist-sans mode—which it deployed in the world's largest digital players, establishing the design as the norm for our nascent

Type In Space, Yoon Park
<http://dongyoonpark.com>



digital lives. Mark Simonson pushed the trend further when he released Proxima Nova, his impressive take on the humanist-geometric style in 2005.

This all came to a head in 2008 when the Obama campaign chose Gotham, designed by Tobias Frere-Jones in 2000, for its campaign typeface. The selection of Gotham by such a high-profile and transformational campaign elevated the humanist-geometric style (and Gotham itself) to a celebrity status, not unlike that of the candidate it showcased. By the end of the first decade of the 21st century, humanist-geometrics (Avenir, Gotham, and Proxima Nova) and their humanist-sans cousins (Frutiger, Myriad, and Segoe) were the embodiment of brand voice during the digital transformation.

For a time.

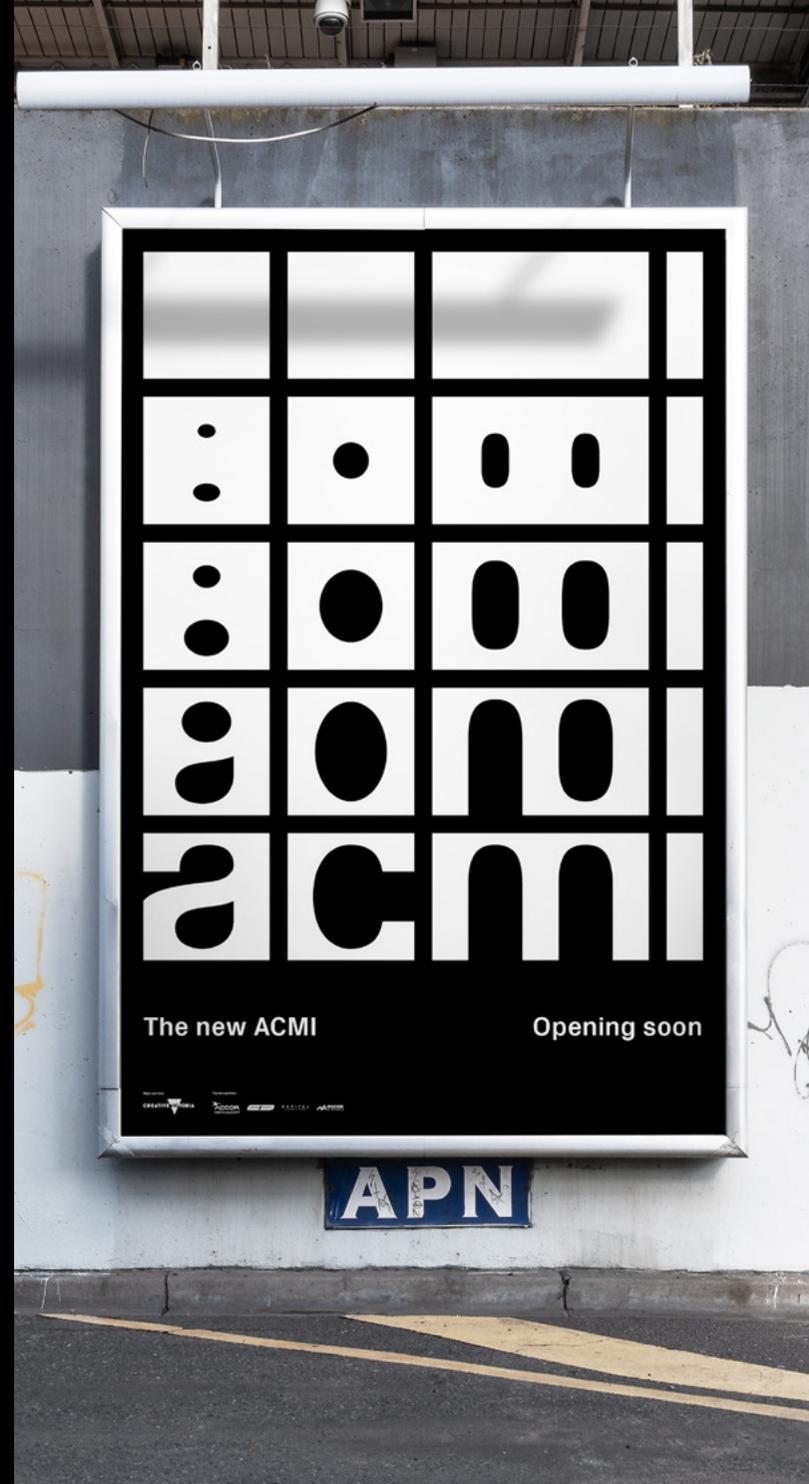
The moral of this story, eventually, is that designers abhor sameness. By 2015, the beginnings of a typographic revolt of sorts were underway. From the dramatically different “soft-serve” old-style types to the introduction of type tactility and twists on tried-and-true type models, type designers and graphic designers began emerging from a typographic hibernation.

We’re now living in a typographic Renaissance—a thrilling and vital time in type. Flip through the incredible work showcased here, and it’s impossible not to feel excited by the promise of the years ahead.

To be sure, there’s still plenty of both humanist sans and humanist geometrics in use and in development, but the tides are turning as brands begin anew the search for an authentic visual voice. We can’t wait to see what comes over the horizon.

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ACMI
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