



## Athelas

is a reaction after many years of work closely related to digital media. An attempt to go back towards the beauty of fine book printing, of paper and ink. An escape from the technical restrictions of low resolution graphics. These principles lent Athelas open counters, elegant curves and graceful serifs; with fluid shapes in its roman variant that meet their counterpart in a more angular italic. Athelas takes full advantage of typographic silence: white space in margins, between columns, lines, words, lettershapes, and within characters themselves. It also takes advantage of advances made in offset printing. Athelas has a large character set that covers most languages using the Latin script. The typeface respects the cultural values behind different languages, where diacritic marks have an utterly important role. Accents were designed to behave harmoniously with the rest of the character set. The main concepts behind Athelas are fluidity and grace. Serifs have a combination of curves on the inside and corners on the outside. The same combination of elements exists in all other components of the font: accents, symbols, and numerals. These details that are almost imperceptible at text sizes, but allow Athelas to perform with outstanding elegance at display sizes, thus extending its usage for more general purposes\*

## Calouste

is a contemporary digital typeface family that incorporates two variants, roman and italic, and covers two scripts, Latin and Armenian. The design is inspired by the Old Style types of the late Renaissance, featuring an oblique axis, modest contrast and modulated strokes, while incorporating modelled serifs and terminals. These carry a pleasant calligraphic flavour and add smoothness and fluidity to the letterforms. Calouste Italic harmonises with the roman variant, making it suitable for complex text settings. Being clearly distinct and expressive, it can also be simply used on its own, conferring a warmer and delicate touch to the page. The calligraphic qualities, already present in the roman, are emphasised in the italic, giving the design an even more dynamic and vivid feeling. Calouste Armenian is the non-Latin counterpart of the roman variant. It is an independent and uncompromised design, informed by the script's typographic legacy. Nevertheless, there is a visual harmony between the two and thus, when setting a bilingual text, none will overpower the other. The result is a page with an even colour, due to the careful balance of both script's weight, design features and perceived size. In sum, Calouste is a discreet yet competent all-purpose text typeface that embodies a calligraphic zest. It was initially intended for composing documents such as letters, memos, general correspondence and reports. However, it will comfortably set longer texts in various languages, at small sizes\*

## Cimarron

started with a brief to design a typeface for readers of large print books. To accommodate the needs of readers with low vision, large print books use type set at a larger than normal size, usually 16 point. There are few typefaces designed for continuous reading at this size. However, after research found that careful typesetting did more for these readers than choice of typeface, the brief changed to the design of a typeface with features to make complex typographic setting easier. Cimarron exists in five weights to provide a wide range of typographic colour to the typesetter. Included with the book weight of Cimarron is a companion Greek design. This design is in harmony with the rest of the typeface, setting well by itself or in multilingual texts. The Cimarron family has several OpenType features to make complex typographic setting easier. These features are capital spacing, case sensitive punctuation, four versions of numerals, ordinals, numerators and denominators in both regular & capital positions, language sensitive forms for number signs and ordinals, capitals to small capitals & lowercase to small capitals, a standard set of f-ligatures, super- and subscript numerals, and arbitrary fractions. Cimarron is a typeface family under further development. Italic and Greek designs for each weight, and a polytonic expansion of the Greek character set are underway

## Ficus

is an exercise on the model of dictionary & reference typefaces. This model defined proportions, limited experiments, gave the research direction. It also enabled the testing of certain features under a specific environment. Apart from general proportions, it seemed that most reference typefaces share common aspects: static feel, neutral flavour. The goal was to design a typeface family that performs as well as reference typefaces, while retaining fluidity, dynamism, and playfulness. The result is a highly economical typeface, tuned for small sizes with a strong personality and warmth. The development of Ficus evolved as an experimental area, parts of it developing laterally, influencing each other. In this space populated at once by the small and the large, the light and the heavy, the playful and the serious, a family finally emerged. The 15 variants all have small caps, 4 sets of numerals, a large range of ligatures, and advanced OpenType features. More than an all purpose typeface, Ficus explores a skeleton. The area covered by Ficus is non-linear, it is an open system that could keep on expanding. In Ficus, things were first designed in a modular way, but very soon, each letter, each stem, each bowl was treated individually. The shape seen as a whole within a larger system. Liveliness of lines is the result of movement induced by tools, constructions observed in nature, influences of historical typefaces, and the search for an internal logic of shapes

## Xplor

is a corporate/general purpose typeface family designed as the basis of a brand identity for Xplor International, *The Electronic Document Systems Company*. The aim of the project was to create a distinctive design that functions both as a text face as well as at larger sizes. The typeface would be applied across a range of printed and digital media (books, journals, reports, webpages & e-documents) so the consistency of appearance throughout its application was an important consideration if the design was going to form a coherent identity. Tackling the problem of on-screen rasterization, the design incorporates counters that are slightly 'scurry' in shape, while the influence of the broad nib pen and the rotunda letter style on the shaping of the strokes help to give the design a softer, more humanistic feel, that is not overtly designed for screen; the design responding to issues of on-screen legibility and traditional print media in equal measure. The family consists of Serif and Sans variants, each in a range of four weights. Complementary italics and a signage variant are currently under development



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[I am supposed to add my bit about the programme in these lines, but decided to steer clear of the information already on documents bearing the imprint of the University. Such texts are limited to the descriptive and procedural, and are sanitised from the subjective: this is what you need, that's how you apply, this is how much it costs, and so on. My experience of the MATD is primarily that of its people, all thirty-something of them over the last six years. I recall the faces before the typefaces.

For most people, the year at Reading is formative: at first instance, it may help them build a career in a field of practice where, increasingly, successful professionals must acquire a skillset and develop a methodology quite beyond what the last couple of decades suggested. At a second level, many of the more mature graduates become teachers in their own right, or (for those

who were already) re-evaluate their stances to teaching and research in practice. For the majority the influence is profound, suggesting an approach to design that makes pretty good sense, and – very importantly – is transferable to whatever you may be working on at the time. (It also tends to be completely different from what you thought design was, but that's another matter altogether.) You start with thinking about design as evidence, as intention, as process, as reflection; where exactly and how far this takes you depends each year, but one thing is sure: it will be challenging and thought-provoking, and in many ways irrelevant to typefaces.

People come to Reading from any number of backgrounds, from all over the world. They come with their friends, partners, and children. They bring a whole range of experiences and opinions, and throw everything into the

melting pot that is ten or so people working all day, almost every day, side by side. 'Next year' is always fascinating, because while the spec is changing in a controlled manner, our day-to-day will be moulded to the next bunch of people: students, colleagues, visitors. Warts n' all, students and staff jump into this learning adventure; most times at the other end emerges something we can be proud of.

This particular year this is certainly the case: good people, producing interesting work, asking a lot of questions, and seeking robust answers.

We'll be hearing from these guys again. g/]

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