

GLOBAL TYPE

It's Nice That

AROUND THE WORLD IN
100 FOUNDRIES

insights

INTRODUCTION

BY LUCY BOURTON

If the purpose of design is to be communicative, the practice of typographers sits at the centre of this visual ecosystem. A medium that is both expressive and practical, the weight of a brand or institution's personality sits on the shoulders of type design. It's the wordmark, letterform or script from which we recognise or grow an affinity towards, both as individuals engaged with visual culture and people just making their way through life. It's no wonder, then, that the industry is on track to be valued at over \$1.2 billion by 2028.

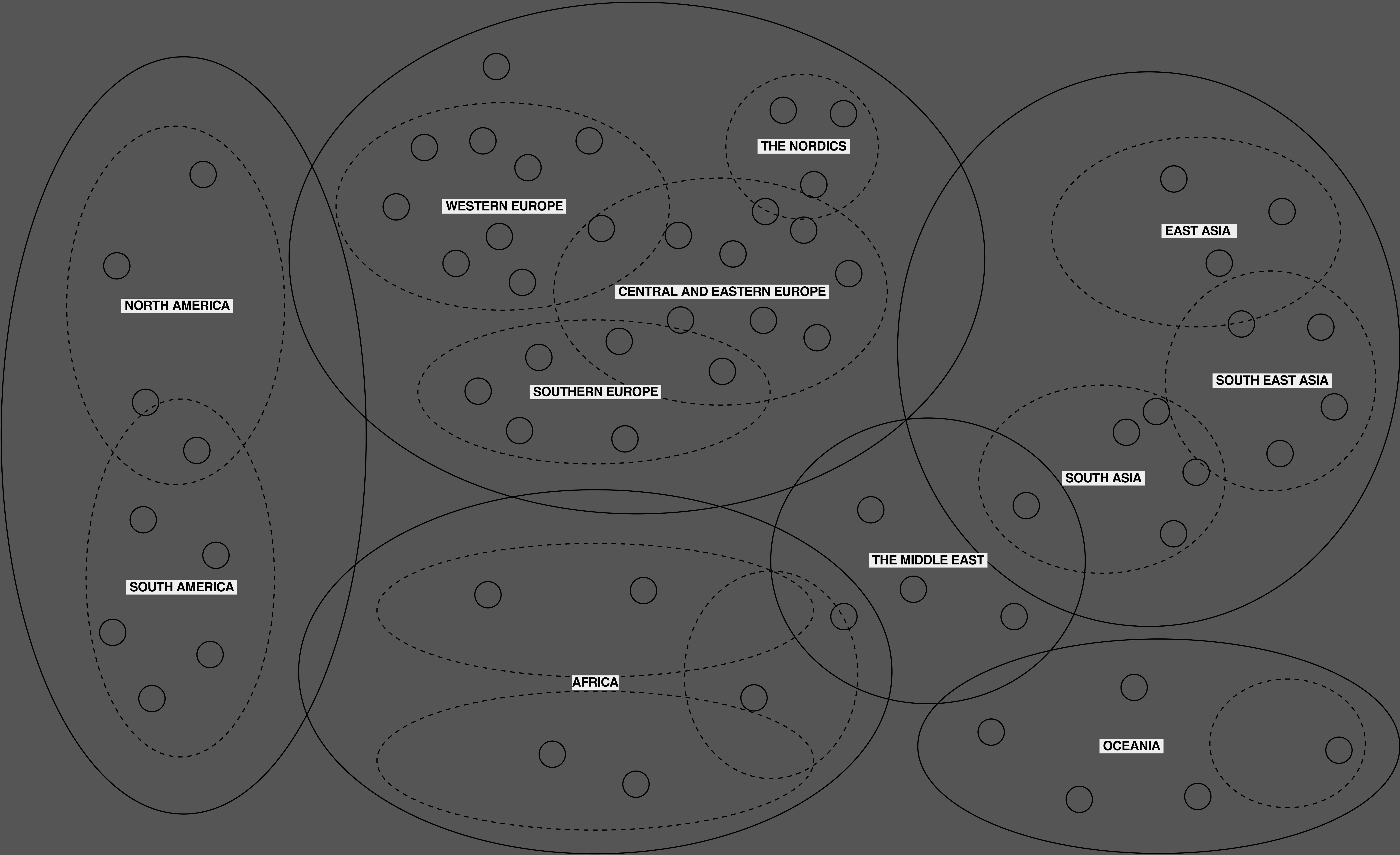
At the heart of this industry, there are individuals who are arguably more fascinated with their craft than any other visual discipline. In a world where design and technology are seemingly competing to automate and ease the process as much as possible, or where culture is digested in bite-sized pieces, type design remains an outlier. As Margot Lévêque, one of the most exciting type designers to emerge in recent years, writes in the foreword to this report, it's a practice which benefits from intense thought over a lengthy stretch of time. And while technological advancements have certainly made it easier since the process of printing text with movable type emerged in the 15th Century, its principles of communication, readability and detail remain the same.

Today, designers have a seemingly endless library of fonts to choose from. Yet, like any industry built by creators, there are a few dominant players. With this in mind, we wanted to showcase a bird's-eye view of independent type foundries and typographers from a global perspective, subsequently leading to Global Type, a directory of 100 foundries around the world. In between biographies of typographers from Portland to Mumbai, Tallinn to Edinburgh, or Melbourne and Seoul, we also head into discussions on type scenes in South America, Central and Eastern Europe, and South East Asia, as well as a much discussed (but still vital) conversation on the lack of female representation in type leadership positions.

Across this report, you'll find familiar names, recent graduates and new typographers who all share a love for this craft. Each individual is listed within the region they live across 12 locations (for consistency, this is broken down in relation to geographical descriptions). We hope this report offers an opportunity to expand your network of typographers to work with, provides designers to engage with on a local level, or offers unexpected inspiration if you design fonts yourself.

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DESIGNING CHARACTERS THAT RESONATE

BY MARGOT LÉVÊQUE

Robert Janes, Dinamo's type designer, once told me: "Fonts are like old cheese." And he's right – the more time taken to create a typeface, the better it will be.

My own realisation of just how strenuous typography can be happened by chance. I was studying art direction in Paris and type design was a compulsory class. At first, it was a huge challenge – in fact, the complexity of the discipline really surprised me. When you are tasked with redrawing Caslon by hand, it's incredibly hard and not very fun. I remember my 29m2 Parisian apartment covered with letters drawn on tracing paper. At the time it was terrible, but now it's a fond memory. I learned typography the right way, by hand, thanks to the teaching I received from Jean François Porchez and his team, Julien Priez, Marc Rouault, Julie Soudanne and Mathieu Réguer, to name a few. Today, I'm a type designer and I draw letters 100 per cent of the time.

Given the time-consuming aspects of the practice, I am a firm believer that creating a font you love deeply is the one and only key to type design (after learning the principles of type, obviously). It has always taken me between

two and five years to create a cut, a long time by usual standards, but my creativity is aligned with this idea. I never at all feel in a rush, I have no deadline to respect and I only release a font when it's ready. That's it.

Then, when it comes to setting up your own foundry, my advice is to do it for the right reasons. In some cases this will be logistical; I started mine because selling typefaces by email was too cumbersome and an automated process would help my mental health. Essentially, I launched a foundry because I luckily create products I love deeply and for some reason, people love them as well. I never set out with the intention to design a typeface to sell it and make a profit. Launching a type foundry to make money can work at the beginning, but I'm not so sure in the long run. When it's other designers handling your work, they can feel if the work is created from the heart, or not.

With this in mind, it's also up to foundries to set coherent and fair prices – and some need to stop undercutting. This approach is firstly unfair for other type designers and secondly, it doesn't value our discipline. I am always irritated

by foundries who set prices that drag down the market. If we really love our job, if we really love creating typefaces – considering the time it takes to create one – we should all agree to set prices that mirror the time spent on the product. That’s my ultimate dream. There are exceptions, of course – student licences, for instance – but also trial versions with a full glyphset allow designers to use the typefaces in their entirety. It’s a balance of trust and a love for this craft we share.

This craft also lives in juxtaposition with the fast-paced world the rest of creativity operates in. Even when I started posting typographic experiments on Instagram in 2013, the practice wasn’t as “trendy” as it is today, and we have to be careful of not falling into the trap of creating typefaces too quickly. I have a pretty cheesy phrase I love to say: “When something is trending, it’s already too late.” I do honestly believe that, especially as reproducing what already works is unsustainable.

If we as type designers create a character set we love and work that makes sense for us, this work will resonate with others. To do so takes the confidence and dedication to master your practice and really work with desire and passion. I’m not saying that I’m happy all the time – I have a lot anxiety and doubts, and I wonder each day when it will stop – but when these thoughts arise, I try to refocus on why I started type design. It started as a passion that fell into my lap, but it’s now an integral part of my life. A part of my life that brings me happiness and joy.

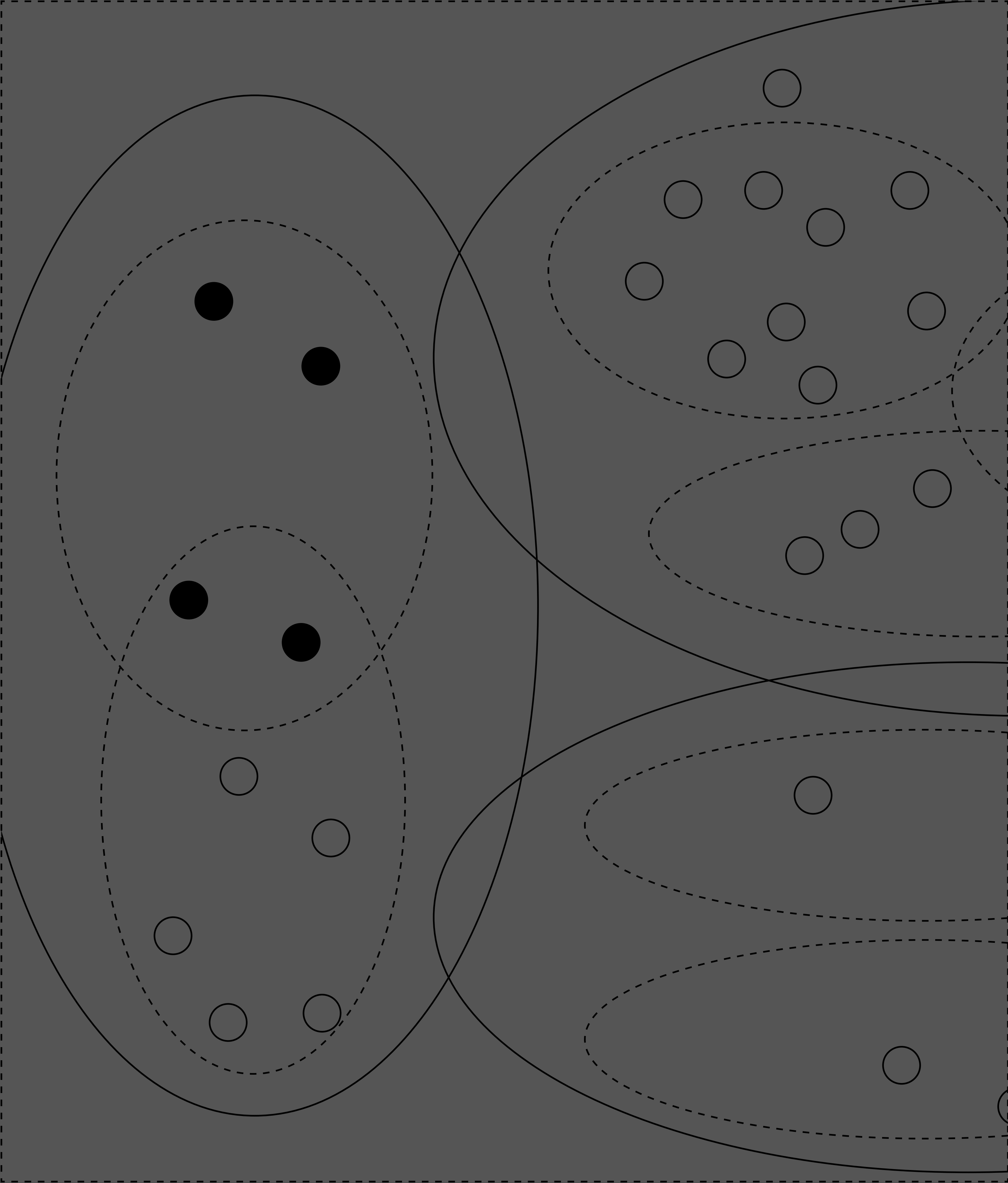
In terms of my peers, I appreciate it when designers bring us into their own unique world. Charlotte Rohde’s typographic shapes are particularly striking and charismatic, and Jacob Wise’s painstakingly crafted typefaces have always commanded my respect and admiration. In a different vein, I also admire the work of Nizar Kazan at Weltkern. Not only do I appreciate him as a person, but I also admire his corporate approach, and I’m particularly drawn to his love for his country – especially as evidenced by his creation of the Lausanne font – which provides the foundation for all his projects. I like it even though it’s the opposite for me. I left my home country as I don’t feel aligned with France, but it’s beautiful that someone else does feel connected to their country and claims it through typography.

When I’m designing something, I don’t often think about what will happen next. I just ask myself, “How much do I like what I am doing right now?” It’s important to always remain true to ourselves. If it makes sense to us, then the stress will naturally disappear. When creating letters, I don't worry about whether or not they will be liked by my audience. What matters to me is that I like them first. Even if the typeface doesn’t work out, it's okay because it was true for me at the time I drew it. I think this is the key to all kinds of creations! Never copy what already works and find a sense of meaning that is unique to us.

We all have something unique to offer, an angle to propose, and we must find it... and then design it.



**“I AM A FIRM BELIEVER
THAT CREATING A FONT
YOU LOVE DEEPLY IS
THE ONE AND ONLY KEY
TO TYPE DESIGN”**



SECTION 01

NORTH AMERICA

Typeji
New York, United States

Typeji is the independent foundry and type design practice of TienMin Liao, a Taiwanese designer living in New York. With a wide ranging portfolio, TienMin is an expert in creating Latin scripts and designing custom lettering in CJK scripts. A respected voice within the type design scene, she is additionally a specialist in localisation for the East Asian market and aids brands with translation “without losing the original logotype’s personality”. TienMin has collaborated with larger foundries such as Colophon Foundry and Sharp Type, and collaborated with renowned agencies such as Pentagram, Wolff Olins, Wieden+Kennedy and Buck. You can find Typeji’s releases via the foundry’s North American neighbours, Future Fonts.

Pangram Pangram
Montreal, Canada

Pangram Pangram is a studio that believes its fonts should be shared as far and wide as possible – and shared they have been! Since its beginnings in 2018, the studio has provided fonts for Nike, Meta, Apple, Pepsi and the BBC. There are two factors that have helped its fonts become so popular: one being the studio’s ability to create trend-conscious designs that are suitable to a wide range of designers, without becoming unoriginal. The second is that all of the studio’s fonts are free to everyone for personal use (with licences available for commercial projects). Overall, the studio wants everyone, at any stage in their career, to be able to play and experiment with words.

Vocal Type
Washington DC, United States

Driven by the incredible design practice of Tré Seals, Vocal Type was founded in 2016 in response to the lack of diversity in the graphic design industry. In the years that have followed, Tré’s research-driven practice has created typefaces which highlight moments in history “from a different underrepresented race, ethnicity or gender – from the Women’s Suffrage Movement in Argentina to the Civil Rights Movement in America and beyond”. As a result, Vocal Type’s output has “gone from being inspired by progressive movements to becoming a part of them”, including Black Lives Matter street murals to political campaigns for Stacey Abrams. Visit Vocal Type to discover a foundry of deep narratives and historical yet contemporary design.

Nuform Type
Berkeley, United States

Headed up by the artist and designer Erik Marinovich, Nuform Type is a foundry that values variety. Taking inspiration from the peculiar and the culturally offbeat, its portfolio of expressive letterforms appears to have a font for every use, from the reliable Nuform Sans to the angular, blocky OZIK. We can’t get enough of Nuform’s recent style display typeface BRZO, inspired by Erik’s love of 90s basketball and the sports corresponding graphics. Slanted to one side, the typeface is bold, retro, energetic and looks as if it’s about the leap for a winning shot.

**Contrast Foundry
Sunnyvale, United States**

For Contrast Foundry, the clue is really in the name, as all its letterforms are built around the expansive idea of ‘contrast’. With its offerings jumping from eccentric display typefaces to neutral classics, it really is a studio that can do both. Founded by Maria Doreuli in 2014 and initiated by a collaboration with Liza Rasskazova, the studio has since grown to a team of seven. A key reason the foundry is able to craft such contrast in its work is because, while all the team members have backgrounds in design, its specialisations vary greatly from calligraphy to typeface engineering.

**Dum Dum
Monterrey, Mexico**

Behind every single one of Dum Dum studio’s typefaces is a wealth of research. Taking each project as an opportunity for conceptual and visual exploration, the studio looks to sources as diverse as rave posters, cartoons, nature and jazz to inform its eclectic work. With such a varied approach to their fonts – with some more classic and some erring more towards the bolder side of things – comes an element of fearlessness, and the ability to take an unconventional approach. Never shying away from taking a risk has benefitted the team greatly, making it a go-to studio not only in its native Mexico, but all over the world.

**Jessica Gracia
Mexico City, Mexico**

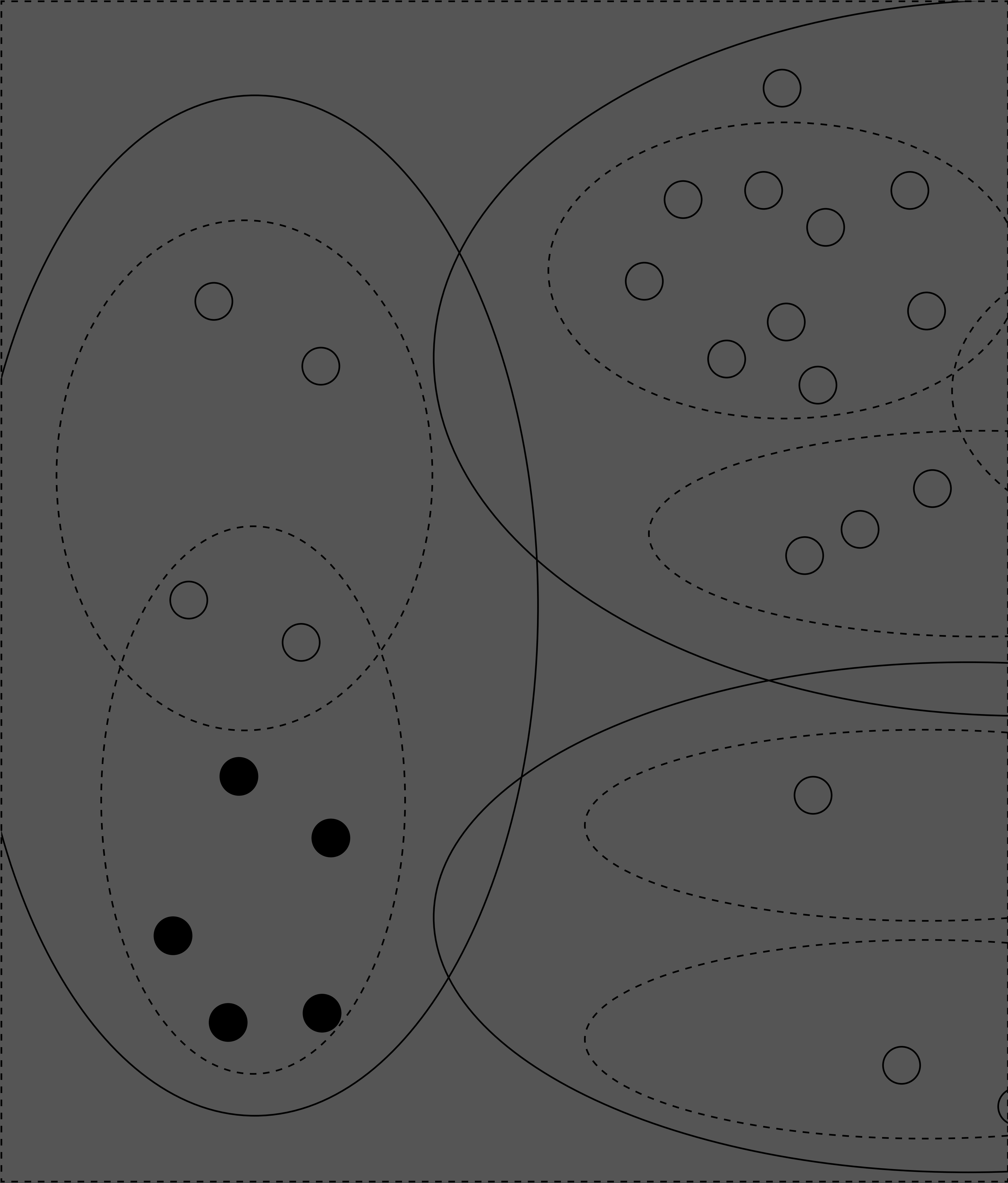
If in need of expressive but expertly refined typographic projects which lean more on the lettering process, head to Jessica Gracia’s studio in Mexico City. Alongside currently working as a full-time lettering artist at &Walsh, in recent years the designer has grown a following for her experimental approach to type. This is largely due to how she uses type as the key design element across both personal and professional projects. A “faithful believer in type as the voice of her ideas”, Jessica’s clients are consequently vast, ranging from Netflix to Apple to packaging projects. And, when she’s not designing, you’ll find Jessica roller skating through the city or walking her dog, Marcelo.

Biliktü
Toronto, Canada

Combining both UX design and typography in their design practice, Murathan Biliktü founded their own namesake foundry in 2020. Originally from Turkey and now living in Canada to complete a master’s degree in inclusive design, Murathan always dreamt of contributing holistically to each element of the design process, “and because I use fonts so frequently, I often get the desire to design my own,” they explain. Murathan’s second typeface, BM Erkin, a contemporary variable typeface influenced by 1960s psychedelic rock, received wide recognition across the design community. In turn, the designer was encouraged to develop their own playground “to be independent, playful and experiment without any obligations”.

Future Fonts
Portland, United States

Future Fonts is a foundry all about accessibility. Alongside featuring more well-established typographers, it prioritises giving a platform to emerging talent. In turn, its growing library not only supports smaller, independent designers but also breeds some of the most exciting and innovative type styles, reflective of “forward-thinking” visual culture and technology. Moreover, Future Fonts gives designers access to the latest font designs at much lower prices, with free updates and complete autonomy for designers who can control how their fonts are developed and licensed. Future Fonts is a platform that puts community first. (The font used to display Future Fonts is Zafran, by Boharat, who are also featured in this report.)



SECTION 02

SOUTH AMERICA

“NOBODY UNDERSTANDS LATINXS LIKE OTHER LATINXS”: DIGGING INTO THE TYPOGRAPHIC SCENE OF SOUTH AMERICA

As this section of Global Type reveals, there is a thriving type design scene spanning the continent of South America, from Buenos Aires to Bogotá. So, we wanted to get a more in-depth understanding of what’s going on across the region. What are the benefits and disadvantages of being based in South America? How supportive is the design community? And what are the biggest frustrations when it comes to the global creative industry?

To get that deeper insight, we gathered together three brilliant designers from across South America: Caio Kondo, the head of Inari Type, based in Campinas, Brazil; Fer Cozzi, an independent type designer based in Buenos Aires; and Seb de la Hoz, co-founder of Bastarda Type in Bogotá. We conducted an interview with this trio simultaneously over WhatsApp (to allow for a bit more thinking time), covering a broad range of topics.

Our conversation includes some uplifting comments about the strength of the design scene – at one point, Fer says: “I feel like I have a Latin American community, rather than a local or global one... Nobody understands Latinxs like other Latinxs.” But at the same time, the trio point to some huge challenges with being located, as Fer herself puts it, “almost at the end of the world”. For instance, Seb speaks of having to fight to prove yourself against people’s ill-informed assumptions, while all three agree that it’s far too hard to gain visibility in the design press and through creative awards.

Despite the challenges, however, the overall feeling that stayed with us after this conversation was one of excitement. There are countless talented designers working in South America, far more than we could ever have included in this report, and they’re producing breathtaking work inspired by both local and global influences. As Caio puts it, “I feel that the Brazilian typography scene grows every day and new faces are appearing all the time.” Undoubtedly, that’s “faces” in every sense of the word.

It's Nice That: Could you each tell us how your fascination with type design began? Can you trace it back to a particular moment, a teacher, a project – or even a specific typeface?

Fer Cozzi: I first fell in love with letters through graffiti. I didn't know that "drawing letters" was a thing, but I loved it. Then I went on to study graphic design, because a teacher told me that it was the best way to learn about calligraphy, typography, etc. And she was right! I did a lot of workshops and attended any event related to letters until I enrolled in the specialisation course and discovered that what I really loved was making typefaces, because it is something else: thinking about systems and rhythms and textures.

Caio Kondo: During my graphic design degree, I had an excellent teacher called Wagner Bandeira, who passed on his passion for type design to me. He was a very important person as he encouraged me to study deeper into the subject. Since then, I have never stopped!

Seb de la Hoz: For me, it started with a teacher and now a friend, back at university. She used to teach Tipografía Experimental. A cool class, very much like what Stefan Sagmeister was doing at that time.

It's Nice That: How do you each feel that your work has been influenced by where you are based or where you grew up – whether that's your city, country or wider region? For instance, Fer, was there a lot of graffiti in your city growing up?

Fer Cozzi: Definitely! In my neighbourhood, the park was a common space for many of us. Even though we had differences (musical tastes, family backgrounds, socioeconomic realities, etc.), it was a common space, which equalised us and gave us a kind of feeling of free community. And letters (type, calligraphy, lettering, graffiti) have that power, of being representations of a context, of being worldviews that are as valid as others.

It's Nice That: Caio and Seb, what about you? How do you feel that your work has been influenced by where you are based or where you grew up?

**“THE BOND THAT
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– FER COZZI

Caio Kondo: As a Japanese-Brazilian, I have always experienced a cultural mix in my life. The culture shock happened daily when I was a kid – between my time at school and the moment I returned home and lived with my family. I think this shaped my foundations and defined my affinities and interests. I can't believe my cultural background doesn't influence the way I think about type. Maybe I can't identify all the moments and how it happens in practice, but I know it's there!

It's Nice That: I know what you mean! Sometimes cultural background is behind everything but not necessarily obvious in the day-to-day.

Fer Cozzi: We are a unique mixture of things, and that mixture is different from others and there is no way that it does not creep into what we do. (I think I'm the cheesy one in this chat!)

**“SIMPLE THINGS LIKE
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— FER COZZI

Seb de la Hoz: Wow, nice Caio! Well, in Bogotá, we have a lot of vernacular and no academic structure of graphic design. So we take a lot of inspiration from this.

It’s Nice That: When you say “no academic structure of graphic design”, what do you mean exactly?

Seb de la Hoz: I’m sure this is the same for all of us in the developing Global South. There is a lot of graphic design – for commerce, shops, restaurants – and also a Caribbean style that is more intuitive for the artisans that develop those displays. And those letters have a lot of imagination behind them, sometimes without rules, so you can develop ideas from that.

It’s Nice That: How about you, Caio and Fer? Do you also take inspiration from vernacular typography you see in your cities? Are you always snapping photos of signage on your phones?

Fer Cozzi: I don’t. There is a lot, as Seb says, but they are not my main source of inspiration. Although it could be graffiti, because there are new structures constantly appearing. I look at what new forms appear in tags or graffiti, but I rarely capture them. I like to think that I will remember later, but obviously not.

Seb de la Hoz: The tagging culture and spirit is beautiful! We also met a guy in Corona, who opened that universe up for us, and it’s amazing how they construct a throw-up from scratch.

Fer Cozzi: I confess not. In my region, I don’t see much vernacular typography around. I think I see more on Instagram haha!

It’s Nice That: This leads me onto something else: Where do you get most of your inspiration from? Is it online or from designers in your local community? Is it from a particular other region?

Seb de la Hoz: I would say from other eras! We (Yei and I) love to dig into old archives.

Fer Cozzi: For me, it’s from other times and spaces, but also other disciplines.

It's Nice That: Interesting! So, for you both, inspiration comes from other historical eras? Which eras do you find most inspiring?

Seb de la Hoz: Iranian posters from the pre-digital era!

Fer Cozzi: It works for me in both ways. It is to look at things from other times and other places. I'm very interested in the plastic explorations of letters, not digital, not market-oriented.

Caio Kondo: My biggest inspirations come from other places. Definitely online. I really like to follow type designers on Twitter to update myself, usually Japanese type designers, like Toshi Omagari!

It's Nice That: I'd like to move on to talk about your communities. What are the type design communities or scenes like in your countries and your cities? Do you have a community you can speak to about work, or is your community more online and global?

Fer Cozzi: I feel like I have a Latin American community, rather than a local or global one. I have friends and people who make type here in Buenos Aires, but there's a lot of support across our countries (at least what I know from South America). It's not that I don't know or like people in Europe or the US, but the bond that is created in the regional community is much stronger, because we have similar realities, we face the same challenges or obstacles, and there is great generosity when it comes to helping each other.

Seb de la Hoz: We may have the smallest type community of the three, but we are somehow connected and sharing information. We used to do events, but after Covid, we as a studio have focused more on projects and not events, which are really demanding.

Caio Kondo: I feel that the Brazilian typography scene grows every day and new faces are appearing all the time. I think this is due to the efforts

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of some people who keep it active! There is an event called DiaTipo that is organised annually (Fer even participated, haha). It’s a great place to exchange knowledge and make new friends.

Fer Cozzi: THE BRAZILIAN COMMUNITY IS THE BEST! Haha my fav.

Seb de la Hoz: X2.

Caio Kondo: Haha! I feel the same.

Fer Cozzi: Nobody understands Latinxs like other Latinxs. That’s why we get together and help as much as we can. It’s not all laughter and fun, obviously, but it’s very easy to find a way to feel comfortable around people with similar social context and history.

It's Nice That: When you say that there is lots of generosity, what does that support look like? Are you asking for business advice, advice on how to tackle a brief?

Fer Cozzi: Exactly! There is advice on business, budgeting, how to improve sales, talking about the possibilities of growing, or doing or not doing certain things. They are not only type crits, it is much more professional support. For me at least, there is a lot of being happy about the success of peers and asking each other, “How did you do it?” without shame or bad intentions, instead of thinking from a place of envy. Obviously, there are troubles, fights, people who don’t get along, a bit of envy and everything... We are people and we like drama, but it isn’t common.

It's Nice That: How easy or difficult is it to run a type design studio or to be an independent type designer in your country? What are the most difficult aspects of it, and which parts are surprisingly easy?

Seb de la Hoz: It has not been easy, but everything has been happening naturally. Perhaps the biggest problem is that there are still bad consumer practices. So you have to first tackle “pirateness”. There is a lot of free

downloading, even for brands, so a good thing to start with is explaining all the work, the intention, spirit and technology that sits behind a typeface, and this has worked for us.

Caio Kondo: For me, the easiest thing about running a type studio is designing typefaces haha. I spend a lot of time dealing with bureaucratic things in my day-to-day life – I’m practically the financial, marketing, accountancy and creative departments all in one.

Fer Cozzi: Same! I do everything, from the fonts to the communication, the administration, the emails, accounts, taxes, meetings, the budgets. It is exhausting as well as satisfying, because I do it my way. Having to live in the Argentine economy with its inflationary difficulties – a lot is DIY because there is no other way. I don’t always get it right, and along the way I’ve had to learn a lot of things that are not about drawing letters. But it’s made me more aware of how I have to think and order myself so as not to sink before even opening Glyphs. The thing that I’ve had to fight or work the hardest for is making sure people know that I exist, from here, drawing letters. And it was a lot of work, because we don’t have the same visibility as people from other continents or, in my case, who studied in the most recognised academies of the discipline.

It's Nice That: I wonder if you’ve felt the same, Caio and Seb, about finding it difficult to get visibility?

Seb de la Hoz: Uff yes, visibility normally is for European and US studios. And prices for most publications, given our currencies, are a lot higher to try to enter.

It's Nice That: This is really important, isn’t it? Publications and “creative awards” often have price tags attached and they’re sometimes really expensive, right?

Fer Cozzi: YES!

Seb de la Hoz: Yes.

Caio Kondo: Yep.

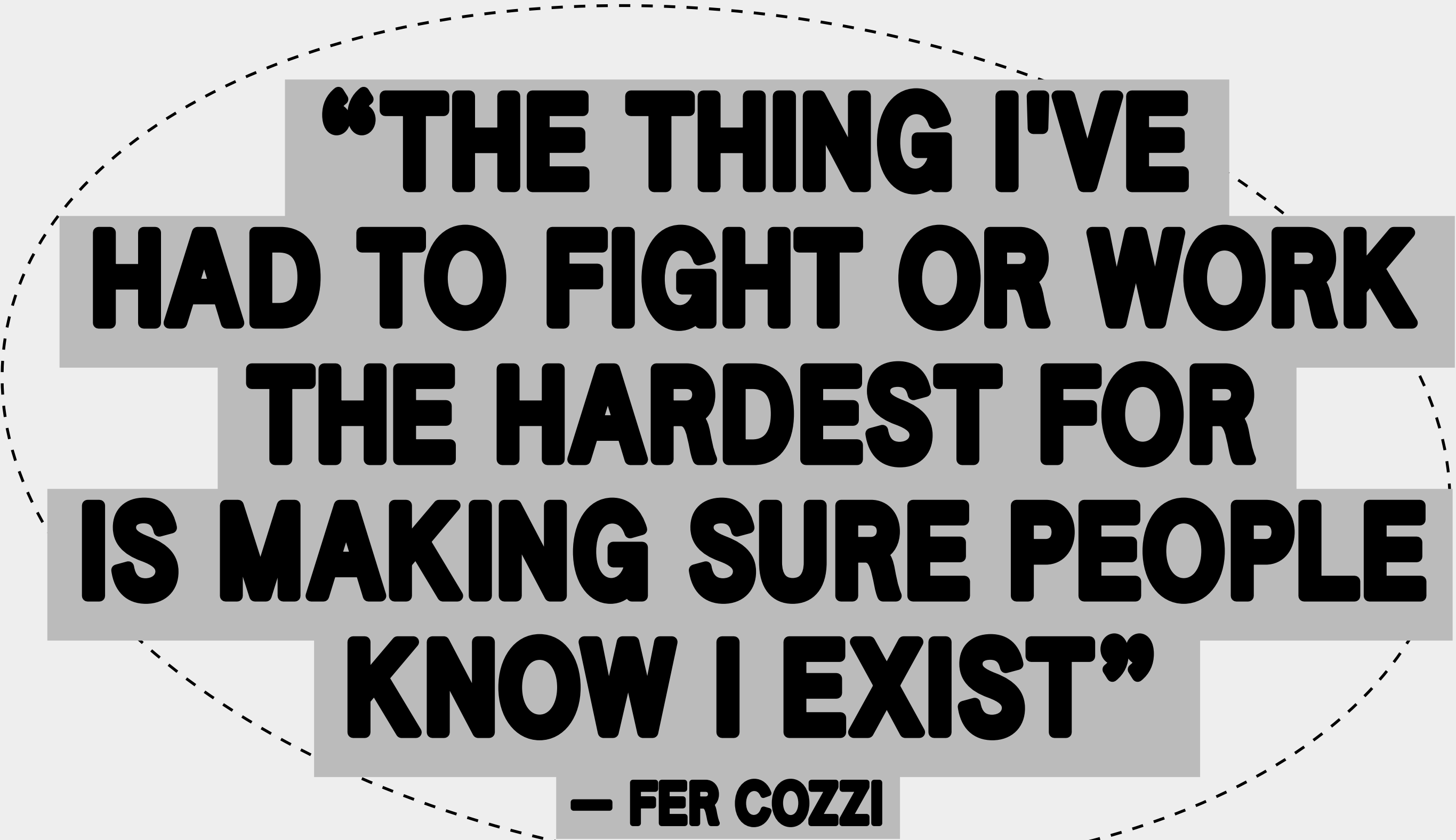
Fer Cozzi: And they don’t see that it is not only about the price. For example, in Argentina we have very high restrictions regarding the dollar (how much to spend, how much it equates to, etc.). So you have to choose very carefully where to participate.

Seb de la Hoz: €300 for a one-page ad in a European-based magazine, it’s like five times our Colombian Peso, so it’s almost impossible to apply.

Fer Cozzi: TDC [The Type Directors Club] has been making differential rates for years. It is one of the best models.

Caio Kondo: On the opposite side, TiposLatinos is a totally free awards!

It's Nice That: That’s encouraging to hear at least!



**“PEOPLE SOMETIMES
THINK THAT IF YOU'RE
A LATIN AMERICAN
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HAVE TO PROVE IT”**

— SEB DE LA HOZ

Fer Cozzi: It’s the same thing regarding education. Something that has been worrying me in particular is the idea that the way to make things more accessible is only through scholarships. It’s like asking those who are less privileged to compete for a position that “must be earned”, while those who are from other countries just have to show up and pay. It doesn’t work for me (I went from cheesy to angry in two minutes... 100 per cent Latina). I know the intentions are good, but they are very patronising and condescending. It’s not really seeing the problem.

It's Nice That: What kind of support do you need from the global or local creative community? What would make your lives and creative work easier and more fulfilling?

Fer Cozzi: Being able to retire at 40 and do it just for fun haha.

Caio Kondo: Haha goals.

Seb de la Hoz: Dream jaja. Maybe to have more trust in this side of the globe. People sometimes think that if you’re a Latin American studio, you are not good enough and you have to prove it.

Fer Cozzi: I think what I would expect from the global community is a true understanding of the differences. Simple things like choosing who to work with can really change someone’s professional life and give a voice to someone who has something different to contribute. If not, it is like a club of friends to which access is only a matter of credentials and not of vision or creativity or talent. I’m tired of hearing that it’s luck and hard work. Sometimes “luck” just comes down to where you were born or where you live.

Caio Kondo: I just have to thank the creative local community! More and more Brazilians came to me to support my work. I think this helped me hold down the fort in the first year of Covid.

Fer Cozzi: Local and regional communities have all my love too! They have accompanied me, pushed me and supported me in recent years and I am only grateful.

Inari Type
Curitiba, Brazil

Founded by Caio Kondo, Inari Type – a Brazilian foundry with Japanese roots – is an outfit that has Caio’s personal history at its core, by “bringing his family’s cultural heritage into the typography he creates”. His striking Nikkei Maru font, for example, is a “tribute to Japanese immigration” and is as rich in context as it is in visuals. The font is based on a collection of photographs of ships that brought Japanese immigrants to the American continent. Other elements of the immigration process also inspired aspects of the type, like the newspapers from Nikkei communities, which influenced the classic feel of the lower case letters.

Fer Cozzi
Buenos Aires, Argentina

You’ll likely find the independent type designer Fer Cozzi spending as much time talking about letters as she does designing them. After graduating from the University of Buenos Aires, she went on to a postgraduate degree and now works as an assistant professor in typeface design at the same institution. In her typefaces, she likes to explore “rhythms, shapes and strokes”, with her works often inspired by the eclectic world of music.

A particularly expressive and musical typeface is Sincopa – its organic edges taking cues from unexpected, offbeat rhythms. Its three interactions are fittingly named Billie, Nina and Ella after some of the greatest soul singers to have lived.

Bastarda
Bogotá, Colombia

It’s rare to come across a type studio as varied as that of the independent Bogotá-based Bastarda, and it’s so exciting when you do. Focusing on typography treatments for brand identities, custom figures, wayfinding systems and custom logotypes, its fonts vary from the elegantly ornate Orca BT, to the spiky, lightning bolt-like PenitenteBT and the 70s-infused Gregor. Recently, Bastarda has opened a digital studio in New York, with the hopes of “permeating our typographic vision from the Global South”.

Supercontinente
San José, Costa Rica

In Costa Rica you’ll find the typography-focused practice of designer Fabiola Mejía. A research space and archival platform anchored in fieldwork and experimentation, Supercontinente offers collaborative explorations built from its belief that typography offers “an opportunity to engage with what surrounds us”. A font of Fabiola’s encapsulating this explorative approach is Rym which explores the relationship between stitches and pixels via a distinctive set of capital letters. Alongside specimens, Fabiola also includes visual data which has inspired her designs, which in Rym’s case includes pixelated tomatoes and a book of embroidery.

Reset
Montevideo, Uruguay

Founded by the designer Fernando Díaz, Reset is a type studio operating independently in Montevideo, Uruguay. With 15 years of experience as a type designer and teacher of the medium under his belt, Fernando released ten typefaces in his position as the co-director of TipoType Foundry – working with the likes of Pentagram, Google and Mother before setting up his own foundry, Reset. This newer foundry will continue Fernando’s attention to detail while expanding his type catalogue and offering new, custom type services too.

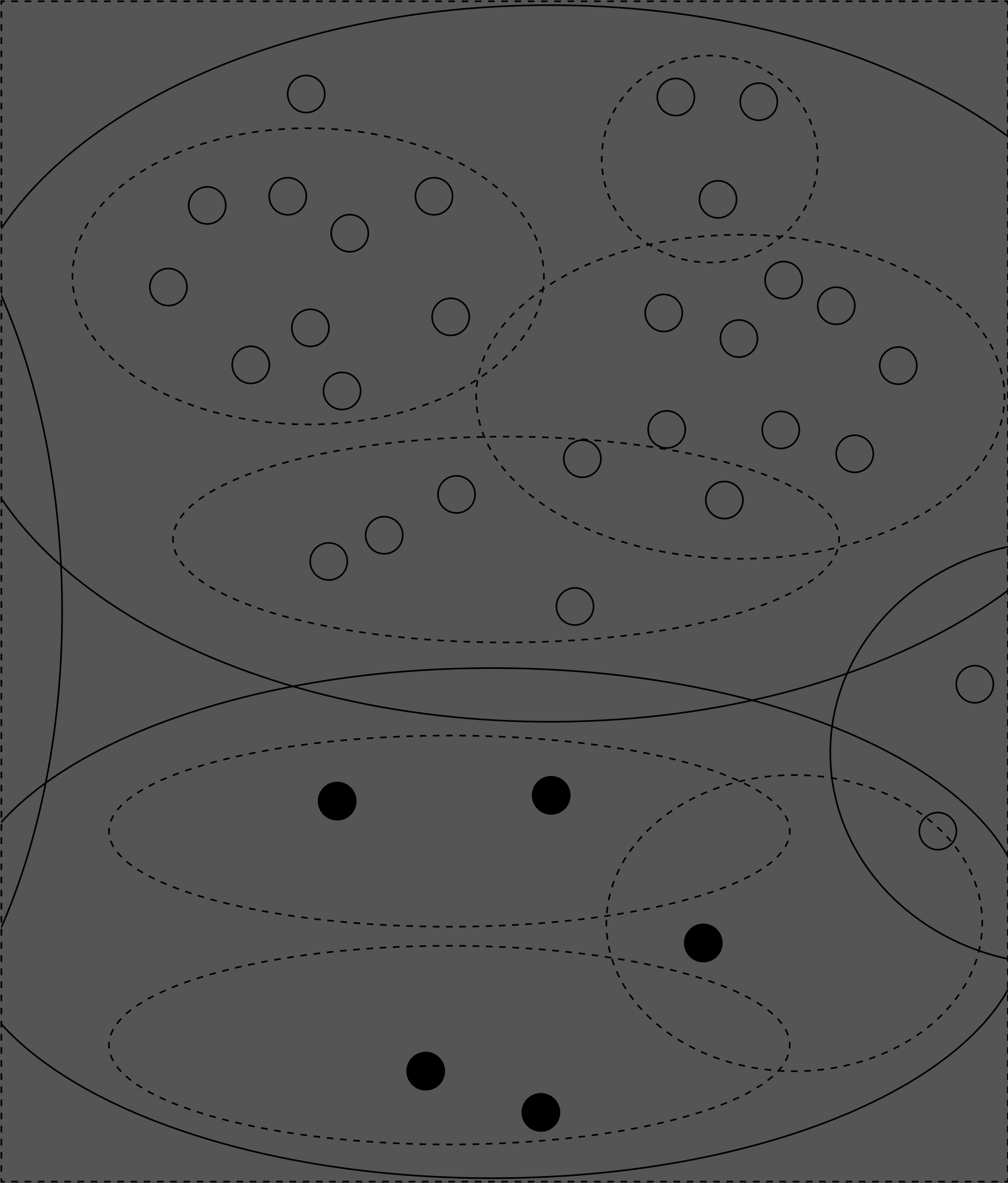
Blackletra
São Paulo, Brazil

Over the past ten years, Brazilian type designer Daniel Sabino has run Blackletra, a digital type foundry based in São Paulo. Offering both custom and retail typefaces, as well as lettering and logotypes, Blackletra combines a “historical interest with calligraphic influences and sometimes unusual ideas”. It’s a lens through which Daniel has created typefaces since his very first, Karol, was awarded the certificate of excellence from the New York Type Directors Club in 2013 – an accolade he has been awarded again since. A personal favourite of ours is Blackletra’s Gothiks Family, which expands and contracts in personality with every weight.

Nodo
Buenos Aires, Argentina

Taking its name from the Spanish and Italian word for “node” – a point used in any vector-based shape – Nodo Type Foundry represents typography in the digital age as opposed to a specific location. After all, its founders Ariel Di Lisio and Aldo Arillo are from both Argentina and Mexico respectively, so working remotely has always worked for the independent foundry. .

Operating for the last five years, Nodo’s glyphs can be seen on a variety of brands around the world, from museums in their home cities, a local artisan beer or coffee shop, to the likes of Timberland and Zara. Across this variety and all of its releases, Nodo additionally looks to create typography that mirrors and contributes to urban design.



SECTION 03

AFRICA

Rana Wassef
Cairo, Egypt and Barcelona, Spain

Even though she’s currently completing her masters in editorial design at ELISAVA in Barcelona, it’s typography that remains Rana’s primary tool. The ideal medium to explore and embrace her roots, the designer’s portfolio to date displays a passion for type design, especially Arabic script.

It’s a journey that actually began many years ago when Rana was a wide-eyed ten-year-old admiring Arabic signage on her bus rides to school. However, it wasn’t until 2020 that she began learning the skill herself, rediscovering her love for typography while wandering the streets of Cairo and documenting those which spoke to her. Her largest project to date is Remix, a variable Arabic typeface based on the science of sound and the cymatics concept – and soon to be released.

Valentino Vergan
Nairobi, Kenya

Both a type design studio and a wider graphic design company, Valentino Vergan, based in Nairobi, prides itself on a “high attention to detail and creativity”. Mainly producing display fonts with unique characteristics, the studio’s work is ideal for headline fonts across poster projects or print publications. Take Floora for instance, a modern font duo by Martin Katibi which combines a polished uppercase sans serif and a Neue Nouveau style lowercase, or alternatively the Art Nouveau-inspired Kestia font.

Tondi Type Studio
Johannesburg, South Africa

Founded by Fhumulani “Fumz” Nemulodi in 2016, Tondi Type Studio firmly believes that a specific font offers a true visual extension of an individual or brand’s voice. Able to evoke tone and personality in subtle – or at times bold – detail, the studio is dedicated to “influencing iconic and aesthetically pleasing visual narratives” all through the medium of type. Variation is also key to the foundry, with typefaces edging towards both futuristic and classic styles. However, its golden thread will always be producing “a modern aesthetic that stems out of our love affair with the grid”.

**Boharat
Cairo, Egypt**

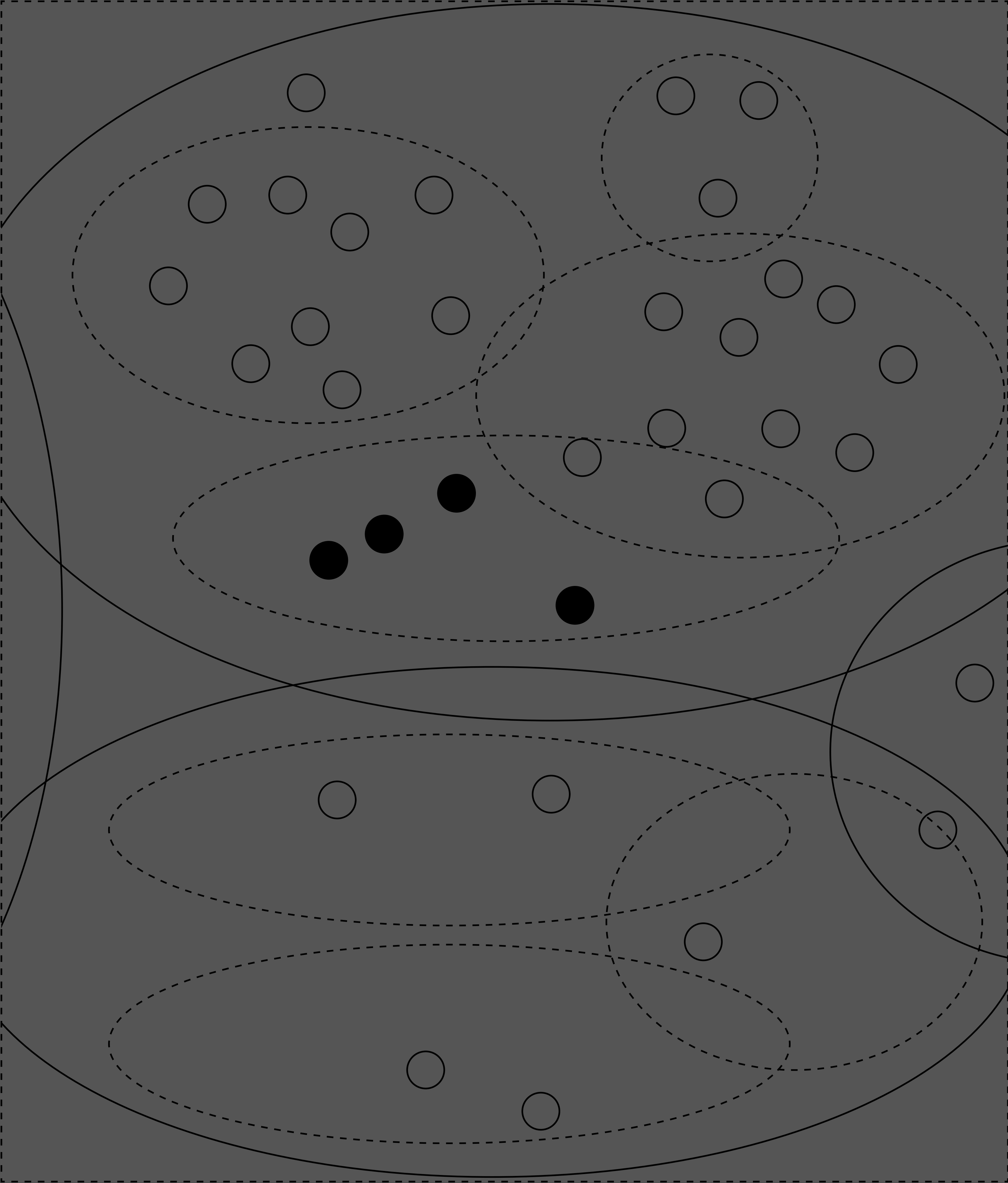
Founded by Abdo Mohamed, Boharat began as a one-man foundry and now operates as a collaborative space to explore new typefaces. Its name translates to “spices” and, in turn, each typeface takes its name from a spice, such as Zaatar, Qoronfull or Felfel, a Ruq’ah-inspired font.

As a result, Abdo’s aim with the foundry is to introduce “new flavour” to the Arabic design scene, he says. “For a long time the Arabic type market produced almost the same product – a sans typeface with a low contrast,” the founder continues. “My purpose is to explore the heritage of Arabic calligraphy in modern ways.”

**Issam Type
Ain Taoujdate, Morocco**

A former graphic designer, Issam Boufelja’s journey towards launching his own foundry began while searching for fonts. Learning about typography in the process, this inspired him to set off and design his own. Issam Type was then born in 2020.

Over the past couple of years, Issam’s independent foundry has grown to include a wide range of serif fonts. These releases are ideal for impactful, display font needs with a focus on flair, including Basgem, Diastema, Bomiro and his most recent release, Komrile in 2023. Issam Type’s independent fonts are available via the designer directly from his site, Fontsera, MyFonts and Creative Market.



SECTION 04

SOUTHERN
EUROPE

Good Eggs Type Foundry
Milan, Italy and Geneva, Switzerland

Seeking a space to explore concepts through letters, co-founders Apolline de Luca and Alessandro Prepi Sot established Good Eggs Type Foundry while studying at Glasgow School of Art; it is now based between Italy and Switzerland. One particular typeface, Diaspora, offers a good example of the kind of work Good Eggs does – namely, telling stories through shapes that are deeply rooted in history and research.

In Diaspora, the narrative is inspired by “the Italian immigration to Scotland”, using the addition of seven alternates to reflect the “mix of identities one can experience as an immigrant”. The foundry was recently featured in *Shoplifters*, Issue 10 by Actual Source.

Milieu Grotesque
Lisbon, Portugal

Milieu Grotesque was formed when graphic and type designers Timo Gaessner and Alexander Colby decided to make their fonts available for retail use. Today, the foundry is concerned with versatility and flexibility. The result is a small but refined library which has steadily expanded over the past decade.

Beloved by the design community for its system-oriented typefaces, fonts created by the Milieu Grotesque team (which is now co-run with Maiko Gubler) have been adopted by the likes of Pentagram, &Walsh, HelloMe and Mother Design. Head to the foundry’s site to exclusively licence its library and spot popular fonts like Maison Neue and Chapeau.

Atypical
Thessaloniki, Greece

The goal of Atypical is to offer, well, atypical letterforms and typography. Its focus on unusual design traits feeds into a diverse library of type families, aiming to offer original text and display typefaces that are in line with designers’ needs and current challenges.

The founding motive for designer George Triantafyllakos was to design more Greek typefaces, at a time when the variety of original and contemporary designs that harnessed Greek script were more limited. Now in its eighth year, Atypical provides Greek and non-Greek designers with memorable, well-balanced fonts.

60 Kilos
Jaén, Spain

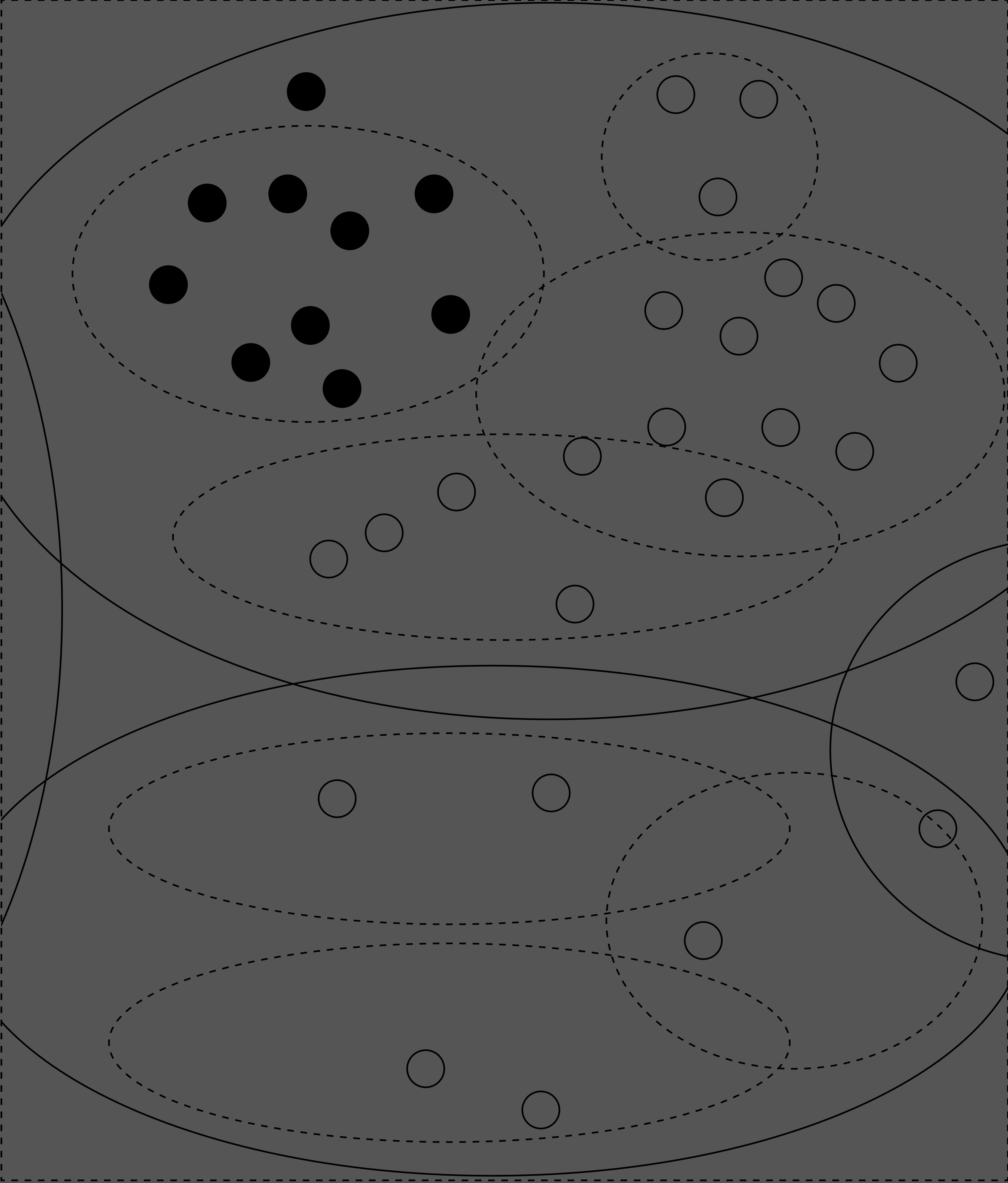
It was at around eight or nine years old that Guillermo García Díaz first became fascinated with type design, writing out the name of his school friends in notebooks. This was followed by graffiti where most of the designer’s creative time was spent, before Carlos Campos “made me discover the similarities between drawing letters on the walls and drawing letters in Glyphs. Since then... this is what I do!”

Based in Jaén, a small town in the south of Spain, Guillermo can be found designing all sorts from identities to a variety of fonts. This includes l&M, a typeface expanded from his final degree project with a complete variable family and opentype features, such as a full LGBTQIA+ icons set.

Colle ttivo
Milan, Italy

A type incubator, design practice, open source foundry and educator, Colle ttivo creates exciting and eccentric fonts. But more important is its use of typography to help individuals and brands to express their potential. Whether that’s through collaborations on open source projects or workshops, the foundry seeks to use type to foster mutual exchange amongst a network of young designers.

Colle ttivo has been featured in book fairs and museums globally, such as the Museum of Contemporary Art in Busan, Korea; its typefaces have been downloaded over 75,000 times.



SECTION 05

WESTERN
EUROPE

APFEL Type Foundry
London, England

An offshoot of Kirsty Carter and Emma Thomas’ studio A Practice for Everyday Life, APFEL Type Foundry is a growing library of retail typefaces and bespoke type designs for culture and commerce clients. Driven by historical references – whether a past moment of Modernist typography or old Serbian book cover – the result is typefaces inspired by variety. This includes a light sans serif inspired by stone-carved letterforms to a family of characters influenced by rubber stamps. Its clients include the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, The Hepworth Wakefield, Camper and *Elle* magazine.

Out of the Dark
Zurich, Switzerland

Established in 2013 by Philipp Herrmann and loved by designers ever since, Out of the Dark is a Swiss foundry offering retail and bespoke typefaces. Outside of collaborations for bespoke type with The Science Museum, Ramazzotti and Campari Group, Out of the Dark’s retail typefaces are those you’re likely to have spotted across a variety of wider design projects. Perhaps you’ve seen its popular typeface Gaya, which pushes the limits towards an italic font with its flowing shapes. Or maybe Blitz, by Massimiliano Audretsch, an impressively kerned script font created during its four to six month internship programme.

WiseType
Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Jacob Wise first established WiseType in 2019 as a rudimentary web-shop to offer font licences to his designs. It has grown into an independent foundry that prioritises character and exuberance. Today, WiseType delivers bespoke typefaces while working with other designers to expand its catalogue.

Previous releases from WiseType can be identified through its strong, thematic concepts. The more sculptural, geometric typefaces, like the weighty Zaft and its evolved counterpart, Zaft² – which draws heavily from the rise of the “Wild West genre” in 50s and 60s America – could elevate any editorial covers seeking to make a statement. As demonstrated by A24’s 2022 book *Florida!*, which used Zaft² for its title.

Bold Decisions
Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Bold Decisions is a foundry that lives up to its name. It was created by Mads Wildgaard with the intention of creating typefaces that they find personally interesting, and ones that have the ability to “mature” with time. Its Clip typeface is one such design. Built between 2015 and 2017 by Mads and Asger Behncke Jacobsen, the modular type is a distinct (and dare we say bold) font that has curves, spikes and lines that create a unique look which is lasting and contemporary. The foundry has seen its fair share of big commissions from a number of clients in various corners of the commercial world, like Jo Malone and Google, while also having a host of cultural clients like LCD Soundsystem and de Appel art centre in Amsterdam.

Jung-Lee Type Foundry
Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Like many, Jung-Lee Type Foundry believes that letterforms have sentiments and expressions “that exude their own personalities and tone of voice”. And Jung-Lee’s typefaces are full of character, informed by stories, historical research and character writing. J-LTF is also a politically informed foundry and offers a fundraising membership that raises money for organisations while platforming “collective voices using the power of the letterform”. Under the umbrella J-LTF Press, the foundry also publishes an experimental typography and art journal *Real Time*, that “collaboratively examines the range of human affect as identified in Robert Plutchik’s Wheel of Emotions”.

Diorama Type Partners
Paris, France

Only recently founded in 2023 by the designers and editors Marie-Mam Sai Bellier and Guillaume Sbalchiero, Diorama Type Partners is an independent publisher of typefaces, typographic products and home of the contemporary art magazine, *Revue Diorama*. A natural extension of the duo’s work so far, the pair aim to promote “a catalogue of diverse and heterogeneous typefaces through the medium of a carefully crafted magazine”.

In its purpose, the Diorama Type Foundry specifically draws inspiration from the 1970s era of type specimen newsprint. In turn, the catalogue is an exploration of display typefaces, ideal for identities or logotypes and “sometimes aesthetic, historic, horrific and memorable”. Although new, this partnership is influencing an exciting new era for Parisian type design.

Extraset
Geneva, Switzerland

An independent digital type foundry, Extraset was established and is today jointly led by Alex Dujet, Xavier Erni, Roger Gaillard and David Mamie. One of the foundry’s flagship typefaces, Klarheit Grotesque, is a contemporary reinterpretation of Swiss modernist typographic traditions from the mid-20th Century. But others have more of an expressive quality to them, like Peak, Quarz and Rebond Grotesque. Also, Extraset’s whole philosophy revolves around giving the designer as much choice as possible. Most of its fonts include a variety of alternative character sets, allowing designers to “customise” their fonts to a certain degree – hence the name, and the fact there’s always an “extra set” of characters.

Kia Tasbihgou
London, England

Kia Tasbihgou often feels like the graphic designer’s type designer – a point his collaborators list confirms. From Hassan Rahim to Eric Hu, Frank Ocean to *Vanity Fair*, Kia’s library of fonts and wider graphic design work exists “freely between the poles of art, music and fashion”, as he puts it.

Previously an electronic music producer, Kia’s design work “often subconsciously” draws on this experience. The result is a portfolio which is both organic and striking, offering a “contemporary interpretation and opinionated melding of historic sources”. Reach out to him directly to see his wider library of fonts available, “or if you’re simply looking to design something impossible that should never exist, Kia wants to help”.

Boom-Promphans
The Hague, The Netherlands

Founded by Boom Promphan Suksumek, an alumni from the prestigious type and media MA at KABK, this burgeoning foundry concentrates on designing typefaces combining Thai and Latin writing systems. Originally from Bangkok, Thailand, Boom initially moved to Basel, Switzerland to study visual communication, where she found her passion for type design. Boom’s typeface Crushual is a perfect example of her practice to date, which was designed after an exploration into the possibilities of both Thai and Latin scripts. The result is a self-described “chubby typeface” purposefully created to be used in large, casual sizes “like its name, which combines the words crushed and casual”.

HAL Typefaces
Berlin, Germany

HAL is the independent vendor of digital fonts and bespoke typographic solutions from Hanzer Liccini, a studio for graphic design and typography. If those two surnames ring a bell, it’s likely because of the renowned output of its founders, Elias Hanzer and Lucas Liccini, both respected designers in their own right.

Together, they develop typefaces alongside wider projects in the studio, offering “a real-time playground for continuous testing and utilisation”, says its founders. “Graphic design influences type design and vice versa: the typefaces grow, evolve and mature, informed by a constructive and tangible practice.” Expect monoline script fonts that exist in multiple states and grotesques with geometric Bauhaus aesthetics.

Signal Type Foundry
Dublin, Ireland

Signal Type Foundry – a type foundry and design office founded by New York-born Max Phillips – specialises in typefaces, logotypes and typographic branding. In Ireland, Signal’s library of fonts can be seen in a variety of formats, from the state-owned postal service An Post to the country-wide cafe chain, Bewley’s. Outside of these projects, its retail library includes “neo-grot workhorses like Ballinger, Tenon and Field Gothic to bookish Garaldes like Dashiell to experimental grid-based faces like Kōsetsu”. Prior to starting Signal, Max trained as a painter, has written five novels and is the co-founder of revival publishing imprint, Hard Case Crime.

Typelab
Paris, France

Founded by brilliant designer in her own right Floriane Rousselot, Typelab is a digital platform offering retail and custom fonts. Since founding in 2018, it has largely focused on emerging designers and individuals who display momentum in pushing creativity forward.

As a result, Typelab aims to “celebrate type design not as a tool, but as a real medium for sharing emotions and stories”, while remaining a space for experimentation. Outside of displaying a variety of fonts from emerging type designers, particularly female-identifying creatives, Typelab actively contributes to wider conversations on design, such as its editorial series on mental health in the creative industry. Head to its site to find typefaces imbued with flair and thoughtful meaning – all from burgeoning talent.

Hungarumlaut
Graz, Austria

Minimalism is something hard to master, but so satisfying when done well. Hungarumlaut is a studio that leads with a minimalist approach, and you can bet they do it exceptionally. Inspired by the effective simplicity of Hungary’s most famous Bauhaus designer László Moholy-Nagy, the foundry offers high-quality retail and custom typefaces. We particularly love its Menœ Grotesque font, which has all of the clean Bauhaus trimmings. The outfit was founded by Adam Katyi who graduated from type and media at the the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague. Alongside his practice, he now holds workshops, where his classes range from simple to complicated techniques.

F37® Foundry
Manchester, England

Hailing from Manchester, F37® Foundry creates well-crafted type families to help brands stand apart, but in styles that align with their specific sensibilities and identities. Looking through the F37® portfolio, you’ll find custom fonts for MLS and Foot Locker – unpacking its unique logotype, such as the notable variation in width and rotation of the letter “E”.

F37®’s fonts are highly versatile but still manage to bring personality. For example, the concept-driven typeface Lineca, available in 30 styles, pushes straight-edged aesthetics to the limit by introducing a straight, horizontal line into every single letterform (even traditionally round ones). There’s also a range of sans serifs that feature similarly intriguing touches.

Lo-ol
Geneva, Switzerland and Seoul, South Korea

Although Lo-ol’s founders Noheul Lee and Loris Oliver both graduated from KABK, the pair have very different approaches to type design. Noheul, for instance, has an eye for fine-tuned text typefaces, combining her education in The Netherlands with her previous studies in graphic design in her home of Seoul. Loris, on the other hand, prefers the room for expression designing display typefaces affords, enabling him to showcase his passion for calligraphy and lettering. Together, this combines in a daily practice focusing on both Latin and Hangul scripts, driven by the bicultural aspect of their partnership.

PolyType
Glasgow, Scotland

Polytype’s work feels genuinely characterful. The one-man type foundry established in Scotland in 2016, centres its practice on combining high-tech quality with a sense of humour. Typefaces are approachable too, particularly the warm Hellenic Typewriter, which sees founder Lewis MacDonald use rounded strokes and some unorthodox slab details, creating an elegant take on the typewriter aesthetic.

Polytype’s offering isn’t sprawling. Instead, you can find a direct number of typefaces that are clear in its perspective and identity. Readers can find both fully bespoke custom type services and original typefaces for retail.

NaN
Berlin, Germany

Founded by Luke Prowse and now expanded into a five-person team (plus studio dog, NaNNy), NaN is an exploratory and service-driven type design practice. At a time in type design where emerging technology’s impact is a consistent conversation, this foundry showcases how working at the forefront of the field can be an absolute joy. Developing a practice which balances “weirdness and wisdom” NaN – alongside its “wonderful rag-tag team of collaborators, crew and clients” – share typographic stories alongside fonts to purchase. From a new masthead for *Frieze* magazine to a typeface made from machine learning, find NaN “at the intersection of serious and slap happy”.

Bahman Eslami
The Hague, The Netherlands

It was while studying graphic design at the University of Tehran that Bahman Eslami became interested in type design – and the effect was immediate. Subsequently creating a typeface as his thesis, his first foray into font design was awarded one of the best typefaces of the past decade in 2011. Subsequently deciding to study the medium further, Bahman enrolled in KABK’s type and media masters where he also developed a keen interest in programming. As a result the designer has made multiple programs which aid him in producing Arabic fonts with an overall aim to alter tools to become more adjusted to Arabic type design which are currently not possible with typical tools. Two of Bahman’s tools, RoboFont Mark Tool and RoboFont Simple Kerning, are currently available for open source usage.

The typeface displayed here is Fedric Sans Arabic, available via Typotheque.

Altiplano
Lausanne, Switzerland

The Swiss are known for their classic and elegant typefaces – and for good reason. Altiplano is a foundry established by the designer Raphaël Verona, who was drawn to type after wanting to create his own lettering for poster and editorial projects. It’s also strongly influenced by the Swiss design legacy. The foundry uses technical innovation and historical research to create truly dynamic designs – like the type DarkMatter. Simultaneously angular and rounded, classic and abstract, the type combines two “historically antagonistic” models, as inspired by Jan Tschichold’s *The New Typography*. To summarise, “Altiplano sees the letter not only as a vector of meaning, but also as an image”.

**PFA Typefaces
Berlin, Germany**

Born from PFA Studios – a design studio working across graphics, motion, space and scenography – PFA Typefaces was established in 2020, but its team of designers have been designing fonts over the past 20 years. Initially developed from the studio’s wish to enhance musician’s artworks through individual typographic applications, the foundry naturally grew by sharing the results with other designers, soon growing wider variations. Within its expanding family are fonts with a huge variety of personalities; a personal favourite of ours being Pardon, a handwriting font designed “to give the impression that someone was holding the pen with their toes while writing”. We also love Laminat, a font of swirling strokes in which “characters are drawn with one single line”.

**Plain Form
Paris, France**

Despite only starting last year, Lucas Descroix’s Plain Form is one of the most exciting independent typographic practices currently operating in France. Focusing on “expressive letterforms, meant to be seen as much as to be read”, Plain Form pulls on the founder’s experience as a graphic designer, as well as a love of drawing shapes and building systems. The result is a growing collection of self-described “atypical” type families, “relying on contrast and sensibility rather than cold logic”. Take Nostra for instance, a typeface which purposefully plays with the feeling of satisfaction and “how a few thin strokes can create the shape of a letter”.

**Boulevard Lab
Edinburgh, Scotland**

Originally an explorative type project by Sam Hughes, today Boulevard Lab is a growing catalogue of retail and bespoke typefaces – always created with a hint of playfulness. An example of this ethos is the foundry’s platform of beta fonts, displaying Sam’s commitment to experimental type, often releasing fonts-in-progress for the design community to test for themselves. As a result, Boulevard’s final releases incorporate feedback from these tests, an element which will remain a focus moving forward. Take BL Arctic as an example, a typeface inspired by the vulnerable effects climate change has on the natural environment, and consequently a font which spreads awareness of the damage global warming is causing the arctic.

Bouk Ra
Paris, France

Originally from Daegu, South Korea, Bouk Ra is a typeface and graphic designer now based in Paris. After graduating from a visual communication-focused school in his new home city, Bouk fell in love with typeface design, particularly fonts which lean on more experimental forms. This interest in specific detail, and the narrative such detail can provide, has resulted in many typefaces inspired by literature. Faust, for instance, is an experimental typeface which expresses agony and corruption of the character from the German legend. Bouk additionally designs typefaces in collaboration with a global range of foundries.

Charlotte Rohde
Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Charlotte Rohde is a designer who likes to get beneath the meaning of typefaces. Currently acting as guest professor for typography and type design at Bauhaus Universität Weimar, she’s interested in hyperfemininity, pop and internet culture, and the economy of trust and control. She can often be found researching visual literacy in digital spaces, memetic warfare and fan fiction. Alongside her design practice, Charlotte runs the project SoliType with fellow designer Vivien Hoffman. Through offering a selection of independent type designs, “they generate donations for organisations that support people seeking refuge in the EU”. Since the project began in 2020 it has raised €30,000.

“IT IS NOT ENOUGH THAT WE JUST EXIST. WE NEED TO EXIST ON EVERY LEVEL.”: DISCUSSING THE CONTINUED IMBALANCE OF FEMALE REPRESENTATION IN TYPE DESIGN

In recent years, when conversation turns to female designers’ contribution to the heavily male-dominated industry that is type design, attention has focused on recognising specific and often historical figures. Subsequently, heralded individuals who paved the way for women in type – from Elizabeth Friedlander, one of the first women to design a typeface, to creator of the Rail Alphabet font, Margaret Calvert – are regularly pointed towards alongside an enthusiastic “Look! They were here all along!” narrative. And while educating ourselves on their output is worthwhile, when faced with the remaining lack of female-founded, or female-led foundries on a global scale today, looking to the past feels a little redundant.

There are of course plenty of resources available to discover women in type working across the industry at present – titles such as *A Messy History of Women in Printing and Typography* and *Femme Type* have been vital in researching this report – with increasing numbers of emerging, independent female-identifying typographers entering the industry. Yet the numbers falter when we look closer at leadership positions and in turn, influential mentors for those learning type design to look up to.

For a discussion on this very point, we sat down with three individuals from alternate areas of type design: Aasawari Kulkarni, an India-born, Washington DC-based educator and designer with an independent practice centred around type; Nadine Chahine, Lebanese type designer and founder of ArabicType and font distribution site and type academy I Love Typography; and Chantra Malee, the co-founder and CEO of Sharp Type and founder of The Malee Scholarship, which aims to advance and empower women who are part of underrepresented racial and ethnic groups in the type design field.

The following conversation was conducted over WhatsApp one evening, London time, in February 2023, while Nadine walked her dog round the block in her now home of Barcelona, Chantra texted in between looking after her newborn in early morning West Coast America and Aasawari began her day in Washington. Despite the incredible work and change these three individuals have advocated for in type design, this conversation was an opportunity to vent about this subject matter and while it may not provide a concise answer of next steps, it is a vital discussion on the imbalance of gender representation in type, and the effects this can have on female-identifying creatives currently operating within it.

It's Nice That: As you know, we've been developing a report of 100 foundries and type designers across the world. I hadn't originally planned to feature a conversation such as the one we're having today, but we've been shocked at how few female-founded type foundries there are in comparison to those led by men.

I think I was admittedly naive about how much I perceived the field had changed in recent years, with platforms like Femme Type, and the work of yourselves and many emerging designers.

With this in mind, I thought it would be great to start with how you feel gender representation is across the work you do currently?

Nadine Chahine: Your observation is very much on the mark!

Chantra Malee: Agreed!

Nadine Chahine: When we were inviting foundries to join I Love Typography we noticed how few foundries were led by women, so we started a mentorship program for those that are led or co-led by women. For many years the industry has patted itself on the back, pointing to the female designers all around and yet no one looked at how many of them are in a position of leadership, and how many were leading the medium sized foundries, and they were so few. This will write women out of history, again, and there is so much we can contribute.

So, the point is: in order to answer the question of gender representation and equity, it is not enough that we just exist. We need to exist on every level.

Chantra Malee: Nadine, I really like what you have to say here.

Aasawari Kulkarni: Agreed, when it comes to researching and finding the contribution of women in (type) design history, it has been difficult. It is indeed good to have platforms and resources that highlight contemporary designers, but a steep hill to climb when it comes to history.

**“THERE IS SO MUCH
IMPOSTER SYNDROME AND
VERY HIGH BARRIERS TO
OVERCOME, JUST BECAUSE
YOU'RE A WOMAN.”**

— NADINE CHAHINE

Chantra Malee: That was certainly something I identified shortly after joining the industry, which led to my founding of the Malee Scholarship to provide financial support, mentorship, and a platform for emerging female type designers. There is so much unacknowledged talent out there that needs to be brought to the forefront and recognised.

Nadine Chahine: Absolutely. There is so much imposter syndrome and very high barriers to overcome, just because you're a woman.

Chantra Malee: Indeed!

It's Nice That: I completely agree, especially around elements of leadership. With this in mind, but taking a step back slightly, would you be able to share more about how you felt studying design and the gender divide on your respective courses? And did you feel supported in those institutions?

**“WHENEVER I
INTERVIEW A
NEW CANDIDATE,
I EMPHASISE THE
IMPORTANCE OF
RESPECTING ONE
ANOTHER AT
OUR FOUNDRY.
WE’RE ALL ON
THE SAME TEAM.”**

— CHANTRA MALEE

Nadine Chahine: At university level there were quite a lot of female designers but once we got to the real world, those in positions of power were almost always men. Both at university and at work, there were mentor figures for me who 100 per cent supported me, and there were others who perhaps were uncomfortable with the scale of my ambitions. Like, I could be a little bit ambitious, but I should stay in my little corner and not make waves.

Chantra Malee: That’s a good question. I think from my own personal experience, I felt very supported by most of my professors that I could achieve excellence. I feel very lucky and grateful for that. It was a different experience after I started to work professionally, where I began to experience the gender gap in a profound way. That can be quite a blow to a young adult, who is starry eyed and full of expectation.

Nadine Chahine: I was told no one will hire me after my masters because "I haven't paid my dues".

Aasawari Kulkarni: In India, most of my classes and professors were women. While college felt like a very supportive environment, it was more difficult to even get in the door. I got shot down by someone saying they were not there to hold my hand and teach me type design, they were running a business and not a design school.

This was very disheartening to a new student. Where or how would I learn if something wasn't taught in school – which is why finding mentors in the industry has been SO important.

Nadine Chahine: Ouch, that's terrible...

Aasawari Kulkarni: And I got my ITF internship after that comment as well – where someone literally did hold my hand and teach me!

Nadine Chahine: Amazing!

Chantra Malee: So incredible.

It's Nice That: Off the back of this, I wanted to also ask you Nadine about your career at some of the most prestigious and large scale type foundries. Were these mostly male dominated at the time, and did this affect your experience?

Nadine Chahine: Yes, they were definitely male dominated. You find your allies and you walk past the ones who get in the way. I joined when I was 26 and I was very aware that I had to work twice as hard just to prove that I got my role for merit, not any other reason (there was the occasional gossip and I just had to tune that out). There were incidents, of course – worse as I had higher positions – where it felt that I was not allowed to exercise my authority because of my gender, and that's when you stand your ground and fight.

It's Nice That: This is a perfect analogy: “You find your allies and you walk past the ones who get in the way.” I am so sorry to hear that though, and it's particularly frustrating to hear it became worse as you moved higher up.

Nadine Chahine: To be honest, I only realised the scale of that impact when I quit my job in 2018. I had learned to toughen up so much, so that I could survive those meetings and long emails, that I stopped feeling like a woman. I was in fighting mode non-stop. After I removed myself from that environment I suddenly felt safe enough to be me, and not the warrior me.

Aasawari Kulkarni: I'm sorry you had to go through that. That really sucks.

Chantra Malee: I had to take a moment with this question, because I have worked with many incredible men who I love to work with, but it certainly hasn't always been that way.

When I was a young professional, I was running many projects for clients who were all men. I was treated very well by some, and I’m still friends with them in fact, but others were very disrespectful and made me feel very small. I once received an email from a client, an older man, who wrote an incredibly vindictive and hurtful email that came at me personally telling me

I was incompetent and mentioned hateful things. I knew this was his own stress about his business and unhappiness with our agency as a whole, but he felt empowered to bully the young woman on the job and not address the two male partners, who were really the ones that should have been addressed. That experience has always stuck with me.

Nadine Chahine: So true about taking it out on the young women! I do have to admit though: I learned so much from so many colleagues so it wasn't all too bad. Many I am still friends with today!

It's Nice That: I am so sorry that it was this way for you, but equally thank you for sharing these day-to-day aspects of working in design that people need to hear.

Aasawari Kulkarni: I'm sorry that happened to you.

“AFTER I REMOVED MYSELF FROM THAT ENVIRONMENT I SUDDENLY FELT SAFE ENOUGH TO BE ME”
– NADINE CHAHINE

Chantra Malee: I really know where you're coming from here, Nadine. You know I had an interesting interaction with someone in the holistic world, who was reading my energy, and saw that my Yang was overpowering my Yin. For those who don't know, Yang represents the masculine and Yin the feminine in every individual. I'm no expert, but that is the gist of it. She continued to say that she experiences this with a lot of women who are working professionally in any industry. Whether or not one believes in the spiritual aspect of this, I think this is an incredible insight. From a personal point of view, I realised I was taking on this role of the masculine, feeling the need to fill in a more masculine set of shoes to earn respect and maintain authority in my position.

Nadine Chahine: For me it felt like I needed steel to run in my veins...

Chantra Malee: Yes, absolutely.

Aasawari Kulkarni: I'm coming from a slightly different background here, but I know what you both mean. In the expectations that my students have in me vs a male professor; of having to be extra stern, extra dominant to be taken seriously in the classroom, even if that might not be in my nature.

It's Nice That: That's so unfortunate. I'm so interested in what you're seeing as an educator at the moment Aasawari, would you be able to share some insight from recent or current classes you're teaching? Are these barriers something that's discussed, or are there narratives behind their work which speak to issues such as this?

Aasawari Kulkarni: The good thing I'm noticing is that students expect teachers to include women in the narrative. They hold us accountable.

I had an interesting conversation with a student last year when we were talking about what it means to design with a feminist lens. She told me later that she has had classes where one class of the semester was dedicated to "women designers" which didn't feel inclusive exactly. And so conversations about gender in design with a new generation are encouraging to have.

Beyond that, like I was saying earlier, I think as a young woman in the classroom setting, I have to be extra careful. I have found strong mentorship in women in higher positions and without that I think it wouldn't be easy to go on dealing with the experience. It's easier to talk over young women than it is with older men and the fact that even young students can see this is kind of sad. Academia is taxing. I don't think I could survive without the support and shared experience with my colleagues.

It's Nice That: That's so interesting and I completely resonate with having a group of people around you who lift you up – and tell you to step up when needed! Thank you for sharing, it's really brilliant to have a voice of someone interacting with students here.

I suppose it's slightly different for you Chantra, now being the co-founder of a foundry. Are there things you have in place to ensure that this behaviour doesn't happen at your own company?

Chantra Malee: Absolutely. As we grow our team, we're of course always looking for those with talent, but a lot of it comes down to their personal qualities. We invite people who we believe, have a moral framework akin to our own. Whenever I interview a new candidate, I emphasise the importance of respecting one another at our foundry. We're all on the same team. We believe that everyone has their own set of talents, and it's a matter of finding it in each person and giving them enough autonomy to explore and develop those innermost skills. I think that's the way to accomplish great things, by encouraging and truly respecting others. I always say in my interviews that first and foremost everyone must respect one another, and we are not a team who gossips or speaks poorly behind another's back. I had that in previous jobs, and it is so incredibly toxic and unproductive.

It's Nice That: I suppose a wider question to you all... Like we've all said, there appears to be a barrier to enter the industry when it comes to female-identifying individuals setting up their own practices or foundries as type designers. They certainly seem

to be working within type foundries, but not necessarily forming their own. But where do you each believe this actually stems from? What are the blocks we need to work towards breaking down?

Aasawari Kulkarni: I think the things I'm thinking about are like a summary of many things we've spoken about. Not having the required confidence, support, and examples to look up to. I am in the process of releasing my first typeface ever and without the generous mentorship I have received in the industry, I would be nowhere close to this process. I'm still not confident because of the many past experiences of being shut down, laughed at. I go through this after having received tons of support; and wonder how many immensely talented women out there are not receiving the required mentorship, support, and confidence to build something. Which is why the existence of programmes like Alphettes mentorship and Malee scholarship is so, so important. It's not just a one off thing but can build so much up AND can build a belief in you.

Nadine Chahine: It's a complex situation with many factors at play. Firstly, until recently there were very few role models for this. Secondly, imposter syndrome (and I expect that to inhibit women more than men). Then, the demands of running a business spill over outside of a nine to five, so if you're planning a family this becomes difficult very quickly (women typically shoulder more burdens at home so there is less capacity to bring work home too). Finally, male-led startups are more likely to get funding (the statistics on this are terrible for women) so raising money for a startup is difficult for women. This means that there is a financial barrier as well.

Then there is also a wider societal issue of what society teaches young boys and girls. Men are encouraged to lead, women to foster and nurture a "home" environment. What society has often failed to understand is that an emotionally balanced work environment, where people prosper, is the key to unlock so much.

Aasawari Kulkarni: 1000 per cent. Women are considered too ambitious to want to build something. They are also shamed for not being the caretakers of the household and for taking into account their own interests first.

**“THE GOOD THING
I'M NOTICING IS
THAT STUDENTS
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TO INCLUDE WOMEN
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THEY HOLD US
ACCOUNTABLE.”**

— AASAWARI KULKARNI

**“BOTH SEXES
ARE EQUALLY
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THERE ARE FEWER
ROADBLOCKS
FOR SOME
OVER OTHERS”
— CHANTRA MALEE**

Chantra Malee: I completely agree with this. Both sexes are equally capable, but objectively there are fewer roadblocks for some over others. I think also, we’d be remiss not to mention that this is not only an issue of gender. One’s race and social standing can inhibit one’s “success” as well. A question that we ask all applicants at Malee, is to describe one’s financial need. A lot of our applicants don’t have access to the same resources from software programs to books. How can one compete if they can’t get the same education or access to tools as others can?

Nadine Chahine: We’ve seen the world that alpha males have built; plagued by war and rampant capitalism. A world where women take leadership roles alongside men can perhaps build a kinder society. One where empathy is a plus not a minus.

Chantra Malee: Building off of Nadine’s comments, I believe there has to be a shift in priorities. At least in the western world I am glad to see we’re starting to question our capitalist society where world power is considered the most valuable currency. It drives the individual to serve one’s self often at the cost of others and they are lauded for it. I think we need to restructure or redefine what success means. Prioritising a thriving community versus a single person would objectively make for a better world. Perhaps if we looked beyond ourselves as individuals we would have free healthcare for all in the wealthiest nation in the world, an education system that was truly equal opportunity, and a food system that nourished us, rather than make us more sickly. I enjoy a challenge, and I think competition is and can be very healthy, but we’ve gone too far in that direction.

Aasawari Kulkarni: I completely agree with this and want to add that, as an Indian here in the United States, the isolation can be deeply felt especially when you’ve grown up in a community-oriented society like India. I have often felt that instead of looking at the west as an epitome of idealistic society we would be better off looking at our roots that preach values of community and at individual work as something that might yield results for the greater good.

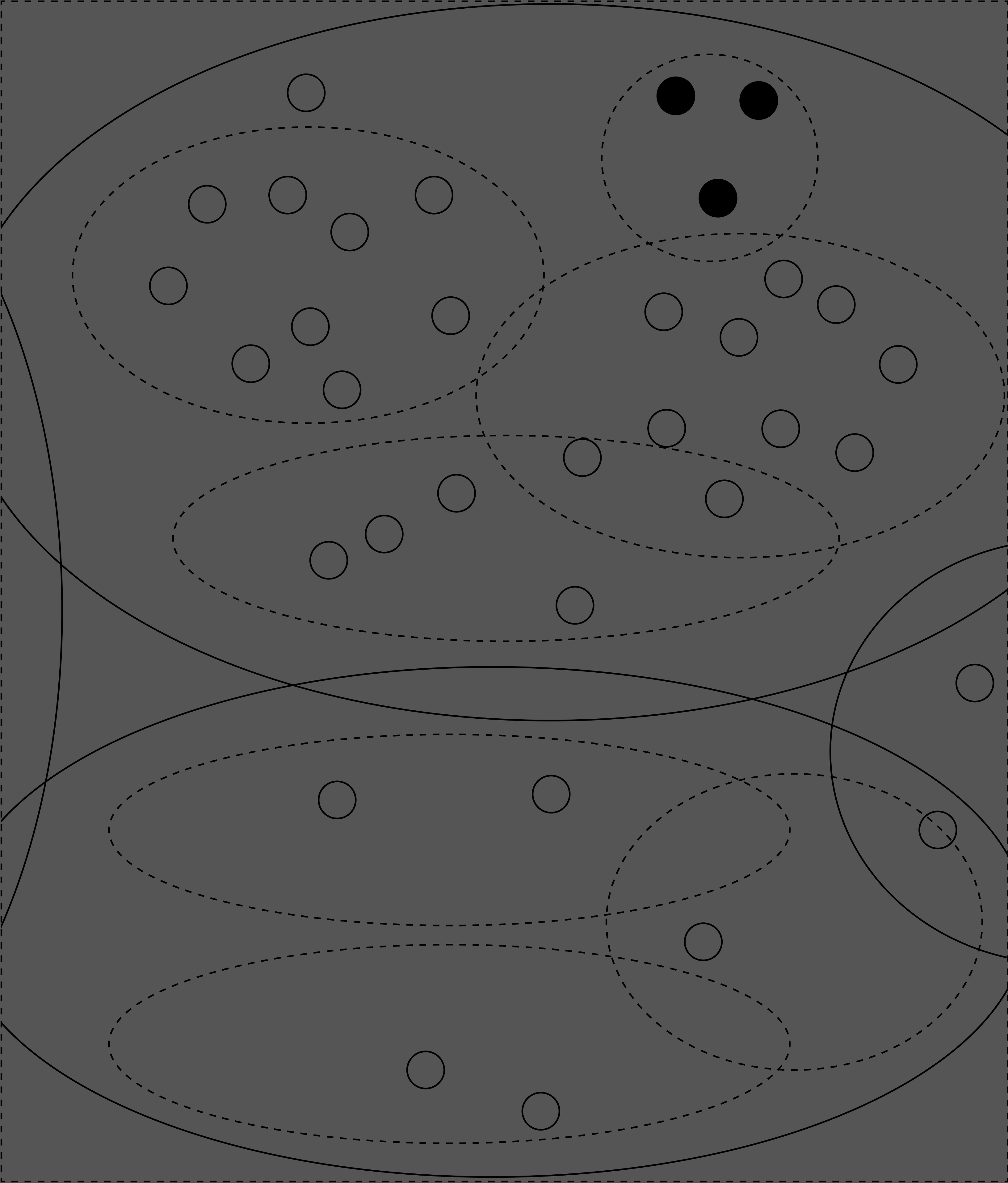
It's Nice That: To be honest, I would say I found it quite difficult to plan questions for this conversation as it feels like a conversation that has been had multiple times, but this was so brilliant thanks to you all. I guess lastly, what would you say to any female-identifying practitioners out there who are on the fence of taking that leap of setting up their own initiative?

Aasawari Kulkarni: I felt that way while answering many questions to be honest. But I think conversations like these, even if they feel repetitive, will drive the point home, hopefully away from just those that are part of the echo chamber.

Nadine Chahine: I do want to stress a point: just because it's hard doesn't mean it's impossible and the more of us who fight forward, the easier it will be for those who come after. I think this would be my answer to those who are on the fence. Also to know that the rest of us have their back and we will do everything we can to support.

And finally, we can no longer accept that women are written out of the history of type. As long as we do not have the space to tell our stories, no one else will. So we need to step up and lead.

**“WE CAN NO
LONGER ACCEPT
THAT WOMEN ARE
WRITTEN OUT OF
THE HISTORY
OF TYPE”
— NADINE CHAHINE**



SECTION 07

THE NORDICS

Or Type
Reykjavík, Iceland

Or Type is an Icelandic and Danish type foundry established by Guðmundur Úlfarsson and Mads Freund Brunse. Its typefaces aim to challenge the conventions often found in typographic traditions and contemporary values, inspired by “vernacular references and from intrinsic ideas”. In turn, the foundry describes its typefaces as “being designed to have their own reason for being, rather than filling a gap in the font market”. Amongst its growing library of fonts, expect playful typefaces alongside serifs with perfectly apt titles, such as Boogie School.

No Bad Type
Helsinki, Finland

Juuso Salakka launched his independent type design studio, No Bad Type, in 2018. Since then, the studio’s output has ranged from the characterful and expressive display typeface Cigarillo (the lower-case l’s look satisfyingly like plump Cohibas) to the more elegant and understated serif Thoreau. While Cigarillo is a single-style display typeface, most of Juuso’s offerings are expansive families, from the cheery and playful sans-serif Rascal Grotesk to the quirky modern serif Dreja. The latter was released as a retail typeface with *The Lives of Others*, an independent magazine published and exhibited in the gallery Factory2 Seoul in Korea.

**Store Norske Skriftkompani
Volda, Norway**

Elsewhere in Norway, we have Store Norske Skriftkompani, a foundry with a specific focus on the Norwegian language and the country’s wider culture. Developed from the book and exhibition *Skrift I Oslo* (meaning Letters in Oslo) which documented signage in the city from 1864 to 1964, its releases reflect the original project’s appreciation for Oslo’s visual dialect. As you may have guessed, these design relics – from handmade signs to lettering – created the basis for the foundry’s first releases. Today, Skriftkompani focuses on text oriented typefaces but maintains its northern perspective.

**Good Type Foundry
West Coast, Norway**

Founded in 2015, Good Type Foundry leads with the aim “to design, develop and publish contemporary typefaces with high attention to detail.” Across its catalogue, the foundry presents fonts which offer an array of possibilities, from storytelling display fonts to minimalistic sans serifs. With this breadth it appears the foundry’s name is slightly short selling itself, with a collection that is truly great as opposed to just good.

In 2020, the foundry moved from Oslo to the west coast of Norway operating as a small team of two. Sustainability is also a growing priority of the foundry and if you are an environmentally friendly business the pair gladly offer collaboration and discounts.

**Schick Toikka
Helsinki, Finland and Berlin, Germany**

Florian Schick and Lauri Toikka first met while studying their master’s in type media at the Royal Academy of Arts in The Hague, and are now based in Helsinki and Berlin. Over the past 12 years and counting, their output has been lauded for their interest in “original and time lasting solutions rather than in quality and speed,” says the pair. In this time, Schick Toikkka has built a library of 12 retail typefaces, spanning 27 families and 318 individual styles, as well as collaborations with the likes of Nike, *Kinfolk* and Marimekko.

The pair remain an incredibly popular and respected foundry, deliberately avoiding growing their business too much “and have stayed fiercely independent”. All its type families are available exclusively from the Schick Toikka website.

Playtype
Copenhagen, Denmark

If you happen to live or are visiting Copenhagen any time soon, make sure to visit Playtype. Operating as an independent foundry since 2010, Playtype’s journey into type actually began 25 years ago as part of the design agency e-Types. Typography was always a core part of the agency’s design solutions, in turn accumulating typefaces it looked to share with a wider audience.

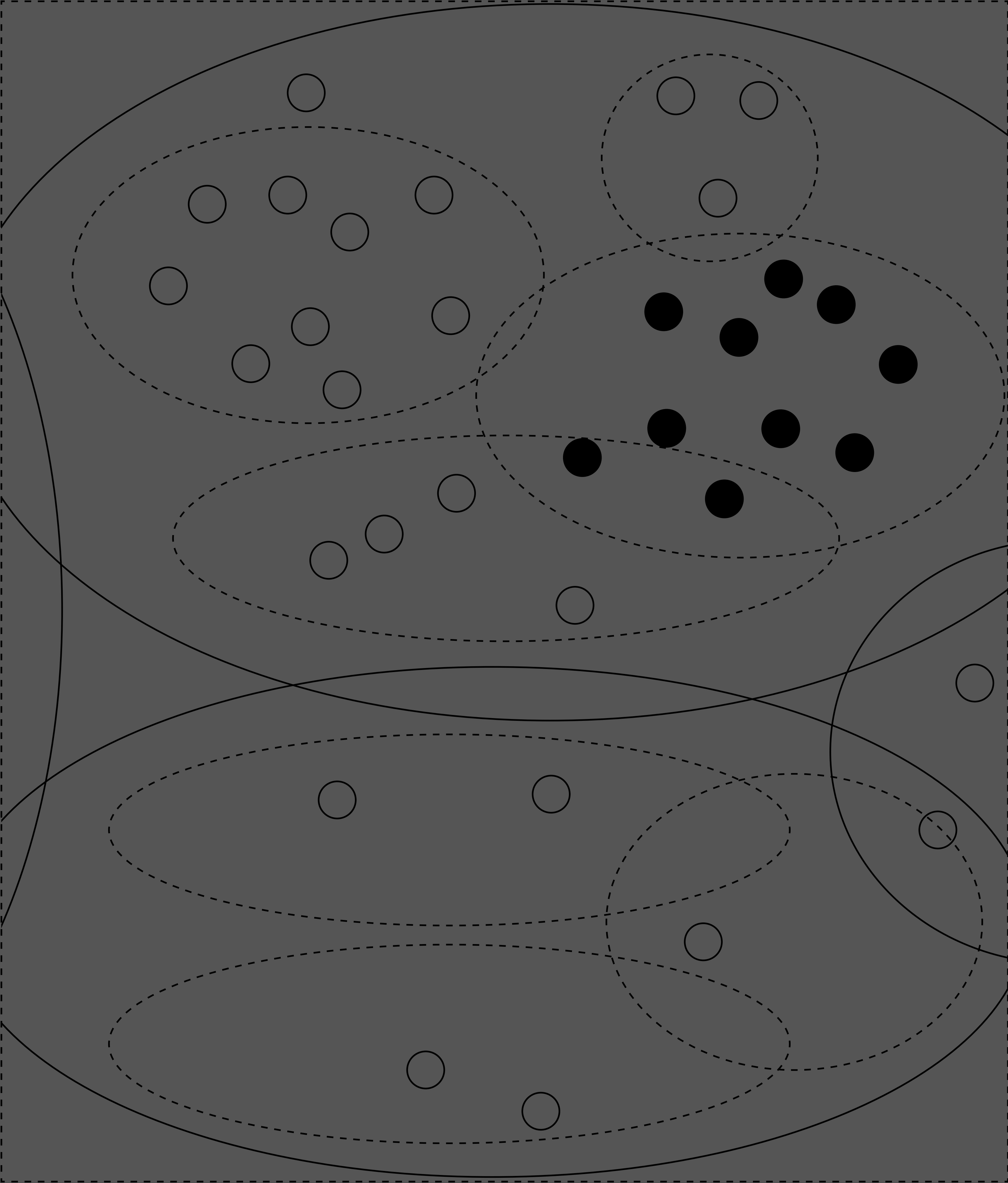
When launching, its founders also opened up a popular physical shop, selling type-related merch and stationary – “kind of a new thing back then,” says the foundry. “Since typefaces these days are basically just data and not very tangible, the idea of being able to go to a physical shop and buy a nicely designed physical USB stick with typefaces felt appropriately contrary.” Today, the space doubles as an experimental space for the foundry.

Bloom Type
Stockholm, Sweden

A relative newcomer to the type design scene, Bloom Type was founded by French graphic designer Baptiste Guesnon in 2021. The foundry works with a wide range of clients and collaborates with studios and brands to create custom typefaces, logos, design tools, animations and interactive typographic experiences. But in addition to its commercial work, Bloom Type also produces and sells its own font catalogue. We’re particularly partial to the curvy and expressive Knopp, which was inspired by the flowers of spring (each weight represents a different stage of a bloom, from the tight bud to the fully open flower) and the friendly rounded edges of Pack Soft.

The Pyte Foundry
Oslo, Norway

In 2015 designer Ellmer Stefan set himself the task of releasing a new display typeface each Monday throughout the following year. Today, The Pyte Foundry operates as the commercial protraction of this brilliant experiment. From its base in Oslo, the foundry presents a selection of the back catalogue alongside “newly envisioned” typefaces – although it calls them Pyte-faces – “balancing functionality and idiosyncrasy, historical reference points and contemporary design practice”. As a result, you’ll find no two typefaces similar in stroke or style.



SECTION 08

CENTRAL
& EASTERN
EUROPE

“USE LOCAL OR MAKE YOUR OWN!”: INVESTIGATING A MOVE TOWARDS INCLUSIVE TYPOGRAPHY IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

As we journey across Central and Eastern Europe in this chapter of our report – from the Czech Republic to Slovakia, with pit stops in Serbia, Kosovo, Estonia, Poland and beyond – the variety of styles is perhaps the most varied, despite flowing across such a concentrated cluster of countries.

With limited bachelor courses available for type design specifically in the area, the majority of typographers featured here travelled to areas of Western Europe to complete their education, or taught themselves. In many cases returning to their home cities with a new influx of influences, typography in this part of the world is both viewed as a functional and experimental form. It’s a design tool, but equally an embodiment of personality, history in countries such as Slovenia who have changed scripts over time, or an introduction into the expressive forms of design for students over a semester.

To learn more about our neighbours on the other side of Europe, we invited a discussion amongst Alja Herlah, the co-founder of Slovenian foundry Type Salon (following stints at Atlas Fonts and Dalton Maag), Martin Vácha, the founder of Prague-based Displaay Type and Ott Kagovere, a designer and educator in Tallinn, Estonia, who initiated the student type foundry, Suva Type Foundry.

**“I WAS ALWAYS
FASCINATED ABOUT
THIS SECOND SCRIPT MY
PARENTS COULD READ
AND UNDERSTAND.”**

— ALJA HERLAH

It's Nice That: Hi everyone! To begin, can you each explain how your fascination with type design began? Can you trace it back to a particular moment, teacher, project – or even a specific typeface?

Martin Vácha: In the beginning, I was just fascinated by the fact I could use my own font as a graphic designer. This came to mind because our graphic design studio was next to a type design studio. I had some friends there and by observing their work I realised using my own font in my work was possible.

Alja Herlah: For 40 years, Slovenia was part of Yugoslavia and there were two official scripts: Latin and Cyrillic. I was born in an independent country and therefore didn't have the opportunity to learn Cyrillic in school, but I was always fascinated about this second script my parents could read and understand.

Then, when studying graphic design (without having any ideas what type design actually was) one day, I was trying to design "nice" 'a' and thought I was successful. But then the professor took over the outlines and with just a few movements of point redraw it so finely that I decided... I want to do this!

There is also one “feature” of eastern or non-english languages – diacritics. A lot of typefaces back in the early years of digital design did not include diacritics for the Slovenian language, so designers were super creative by adding and designing “carons” on particular letters. These are also funny and great solutions that have stayed with me over time.

Ott Kagovere: My earliest contact or awareness with typography came through drawing graffiti as a teenager. Then later on, one of my graffiti buddies – Anton Koovit, who was a few years older than me – went to study graphic design at university and later type design in The Hague. Although I wasn't studying design yet, I heard a lot about typography from him.

Later on, while studying graphic design I wasn't interested in becoming a type designer, but I have always been interested in micro typography. The idea of type as a particle of language is fascinating to me. While studying

philosophy I wrote my MA thesis about semiotics and even there I gave fonts as examples of signs that function so that their meaning is strongly influenced by their form.

It's Nice That: That's fascinating and so true! I would love to know more about the education opportunities in your area of Europe when it comes to type design? How was your experience at university?

Martin Vácha: At the University of Arts in Prague, the type design studio was really strong with Tomas Brousil, Radek Sidun and Karel Haloun as leaders. Since they left, the studio is no longer focusing on type design and mostly on working with typography. That's regarding the official way to get a degree, but we have a summer camp in glyphs for beginners.

Alja Herlah: I would say, at least in Slovenia and smaller countries, everything depends on a few individuals. My professor Domen Fras, who is actually an architect and did his MA in Central Saint Martins, was a decisive individual in my career. I would also like to mention the professor of calligraphy and type design Lucijan Bratuš, who is one of the beginners of type design in Slovenian. The two of them also initiated the workshops Tipo Brda, which have had a decisive influence on typography and graphic design in Slovenia over the past 25 years.

Although there aren't many type designers, basic lettering and typography knowledge from those workshops has led to very successful graphic designers. And now attendees of Tipo Brda are continuing to teach more and more courses at faculties in Slovenia – which can not be compared to Reading or HAAG, of course.

Ott Kagovere: In Estonia, the Baltic states and Finland, there are actually no BA courses dedicated to type design. For this reason, many students interested in type go to The Hague or Switzerland. From this autumn two local type designers (Andree Paat and Aimur Takk of Tüpokompanii) started a type design micro-degree program here in Estonia and it has been going very well. There is also an experimental type design summer school, Qoqoqo.

**“I THINK WE NEED MORE
LANGUAGE SUPPORT
AND MAYBE MORE STYLES
FOR REALLY USEFUL
TYPEFACE FAMILIES.”**
– MARTIN VÁCHA

I am glad that we have an academic program and then something very experimental and wild – in the forest, without laptops!

It's Nice That: It's amazing that they've taken the initiative to set up their own course. And do you have to pay to go to university in your respective countries?

Alja Herlah: No, only if you go to a private one, which are less recognised here.

Ott Kagovere: In Estonia higher education is free, but taking a micro-degree or participating in a summer school has a cost.

Martin Vácha: In the Czech Republic all government-based education is free, but I guess this will change soon. I hope, because it is not easy for the state to manage finances and give studio leaders an appropriate salary.

It's Nice That: Ott, as you currently work as an assistant professor, could you tell us a little about the type design scene in Estonia. What are you students interested in exploring?

Ott Kagovere: I think what students are interested in and what Estonian type designers are doing is somewhat different, although there of course is an overlap.

Students are often interested in exploring; either something fun, something experimental or something related to a certain subculture that they are a part of or are fascinated about. I think many students are interested in making typefaces that they can later use when they design party/rave/club music posters. There is also an interest in the so-called vernacular type – type seen in local bar/hairdressers – signs that are often designed by amateurs, but which look cool or surprising.

I also think that students are often interested in telling stories through type. They make a typeface that talks about their love of ketchup, their summer holidays, movies etc. This is always very nice because not everyone is interested in type design, but when they get to play around (and the first contact is not too serious) they might discover something new.

It's Nice That: And would you say there is a particular visual style to Estonian type design in terms of aesthetics?

Ott Kagovere: Local professional type designers, or designers with a serious interest in type design, are interested in different things but in some sense also local histories. Be it through revivals or again personal histories. A good example is the BA work of Patrick Zavatskis. He made a typeface called Niina, named after his grandmother who was half Russian after noticing her grandmother wrote Estonian in a strange way, mixing it with Cirylic influences, and made a typeface reflecting on that.

I don't notice this myself but a friend of mine who is from North America and currently living in Berlin always tells me he sees a lot of 1990s rave revival aesthetics when coming to Tallinn. There is also interest in hand drawn

typography. A good example of this is Jojome studio (Johanna Ruukhol & Martina Gofman) from Tallinn. There is a certain anti-Adobe approach. They are not type designers but for graphic design work they draw their own titles etc.

It's Nice That: And what about the aesthetic of the type design scene in Slovenia?

Alja Herlah: Since living in Slovenia again, I have been doing various studies on the topic of Slovenian typography. We actually released two typefaces based on “Slovenian letters from the 20th Century”: Wesna (interwar posters), and Plecnik (based on architect's lettering).

Slovenia has always been at the crossroads of West and East and current trends. I think that our society is too small to be able to talk about the Slovenian style, but here and there, throughout history, are some characteristics that I can say are Slovenian – like those “carons” I mentioned earlier.

The current scene mainly follows western trends, which makes me sad, but we're probably not the only ones.



**“USE LOCAL OR
MAKE YOUR OWN!”**
– OTT KAGOVERE

It's Nice That: How about you, Martin?

Martin Vácha: As the Czech Republic is in the middle, the heart of the EU, we see designers as individualities that absorb all tendencies, but tend to lean on one style. I think within Displaay, Allcaps and Heavyweight there are Swiss tendencies, beside Superior and Suitcase which are a little bit more Dutch wave and Slovak is really closely connected with Czech nationality, so we see the same there.

It's Nice That: Martin and Alja specifically, you both founded your own type foundries. Can you tell me about how you came to this decision? Maybe you can start, Martin?

Martin Vácha: Since I studied both graphic design and later type design, and developed five of my own typefaces I missed on the market, I wanted to try to publish them under my own brand and observe what would happen. After eight years of doing graphic design I found that Displaay had more and more requests. It wasn't a side project anymore, plus graphic design was really challenging to do on an international level. I was hoping I could do it, but our clients weren't so sure. So I decided to jump into my own project fully, even though I don't think we need more typefaces these days. I think we need more language support and maybe more styles for really useful typeface families. On the contrary, I understand that creating a custom small range font for a music festival identity for example, is great to support visual identity and new typefaces for such projects we need.

It's Nice That: What about you Alja?

Alja Herlah: At one point while living in London and working for large corporations, I wanted more freedom. Freedom in design and also freedom in my way of life. I really wanted to work in type design but, at the same time, the way of life that Ljubljana offered me (compared to London) was important: more nature, peace and sun. Establishing a foundry meant having the opportunity to continue in type design, to be independent of the location of work and at the same time to do other things, such as graphic design, teaching, organising workshops, and enjoying the afternoon.

“NOT EVERYONE IS INTERESTED IN TYPE DESIGN, BUT WHEN THEY GET TO PLAY AROUND.. THEY MIGHT DISCOVER SOMETHING NEW.”

– OTT KAGOVERE

It's Nice That: Yeah I can see that – as someone currently in London! What does a day at work look like for you both?

Alja Herlah: We actually don't have “a daily routine”. Krista recently moved to the countryside near Italy and therefore we are communicating online. Our days depend on the projects we have which are changing from time to time, between retail typefaces, custom type work, graphic design projects and importantly the administration of the studio (which really takes a lot of time). I am teaching in the summer semester which brings a new flow of work, and sometimes we have interns in the office. The very important “routine” that we have is working from eight to four in the afternoon, maybe five, and no later. Starting with Turkish coffee.

Martin Vácha: This year our foundry decided to refuse all requests for custom projects and focus on expanding our typefaces regarding styles, language support, redrawing and creating a wider range of glyphs to help graphic

designers manage bigger, more serious projects with our typefaces. It's hard to describe such a process, but in short, we're five type designers with one manager working on many subtasks. We learn from each other and complete research to reach the best quality for any glyph we design.

It's Nice That: Would you say there is a community of type designers or graphic designers you communicate with in your specific cities? People you talk about work with, or look to for advice?

Alja Herlah: Honestly, I am communicating regarding type design mainly with my previous DaltonMaag co-workers. As Martin mentioned, there is not a lot of type engineering knowledge over here. But I think having some sort of community within the city would be great, especially to spread the awareness of (custom) type design and characteristics of such specific design among other graphic designers.

Martin Vácha: Unfortunately, besides our Christmas party, there aren't very many opportunities to meet other designers in Prague. We all have heavy schedules during the year and there is no platform for communication between each other. Also, we are kind of competitors regarding type design. But graphic designers, if they need any type help, always write in with any request.

Ott Kagoovere: In Estonia definitely so! Especially in the past five years the community has grown. Tüpokompanii were away in Europe and the States for some time, studying and working in type design, but they are back here teaching and working. We talk a lot about type and collaborate together. It is always good to have a type designer on a project and I have recently made a rule for myself to be more inclusive and to use only local typefaces in my work. Thus far it has worked out well because of the local community.

Although the design scene in Tallinn is small I would say it is very active. There are many things happening and different fields covered.

It's Nice That: Hopefully that sense of community can be adopted elsewhere. Finally, how do you hope type design develops –

both personally and on a wider scale – in the next few years for upcoming designers?

Alja Herlah: Unlike Martin, currently I would prefer to have more custom type related projects.

Also, it would be great to spread awareness (in our country and beyond) to invest in licensing rather than finding free alternatives. I also think there is too much production of typefaces yearly, so I am afraid of how it will develop in future, with new and new courses of type design, which are not needed. Rather, I would prefer better usage, better inclusivity and language/script support.

**“I HAVE RECENTLY MADE
A RULE FOR MYSELF TO
BE MORE INCLUSIVE AND
TO USE ONLY LOCAL
TYPEFACES IN MY WORK”**

– OTT KAGOVERE

**“THE ATTRACTION
TO USE FREE
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SHOULD OR COULD
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BY SUPPORTING
LOCAL DESIGNERS.”**

— OTT KAGOVERE

Martin Vácha: I think generally we need more type designers which can offer type engineering, to develop high functional typefaces. There are many designers working with similar aesthetics and you can not literally bring something new in Latin based typeface design. But, for example, designers in Germany cannot recognise a typeface with good kerning or language support in Spanish or French. Therefore they often chose interesting typefaces without a good level of quality.

Free typefaces or low pricing models are also not healthy, but I think good designers know the importance and experience of how to introduce more expensive typefaces to their clients. Maybe the licensing model is also too complicated. This is why we are preparing an easier model for next year. This is also based on our discussions with our clients and designers using our typefaces.

Ott Kagovere: I hope to see more inclusivity in type design. More female type designers and different voices. Design education has a big role here, to introduce many different ways of approaching type design, or question what even is a typeface nowadays.

On a practical level I would like to see more support. It seems strange to me that local designers use Google fonts when there are equally good, or in most cases better typefaces, made by their peers. The attraction to use free typefaces that are easily available should or could be replaced by supporting local designers. I see this as a similar frame of thinking that most of us have with other products – when we prefer local goods like food or clothes to the mass produced and often low quality products made elsewhere.

I hope this switch in thinking becomes more prevalent in design! It should be the norm, in my opinion. Use local or make your own!

Ani Dimitrova
Sofia, Bulgaria

Combining both the classical and contemporary is Sofia-based typographer Ani Dimitrova. Following her master’s degree in type design at The National Academy of Art in Sofia, Ani’s career has seen the designer work at Fontfabric Type Foundry and Lettersoup, before kickstarting her very own independent foundry. Designing typefaces alongside teaching at the Varna Free University, she has authored ten fonts to date, including two revival fonts by the Bulgarian artist Ivan Kyosev, brought back to life from 30 years ago in 1993. Look to Ani’s portfolio for type designs steeped in history, tiny quirks perfect for appealing to designers, or custom projects.

Kyiv Type Foundry
Kyiv, Ukraine and Hannover, Germany

A creative “playground” sitting at the intersection of Latin and Cyrillic scripts, Kyiv Type Foundry offers retail and custom fonts, and new perspectives on Cyrillic-based heritage. KTF’s work also reflects its founders’ belief in tradition and synthesis. Moving between high and low-brow, analogue and digital, previous projects include a heavy display type based on a rare movie poster, and an interpretation of the most used black grotesk on the ex-USSR terrain.

Since Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, KTF has raised funds to help its homeland; the foundry’s KTF Jermilov was used in Banda’s communication campaign Be Brave Like Ukraine to highlight “the main feature of Ukrainians and express it widely”.

NaumType
Belgrade, Serbia

On the more experimental side, the Serbia-based foundry NaumType brings intriguing takes on forms and surprising stylistic approaches. Though NaumType specialises in decorative display fonts – like Umbero, which features an ornate structure for a new take on medieval stylisation – it marries this with work on versatile text fonts too.

For founder Peter Bushuev, the driving force behind the foundry is expanding the aesthetic limits of type. Since setting up shop in 2018, NaumType’s taste for risk has been evident. As is Peter’s taste for the sleek and futuristic, often combined with the tradition of graffiti and street art.

**Kulture Type
Prishtinë, Kosovo**

Playful, irreverent and occasionally downright weird; Kulture Type showcases personality amidst an occasionally sombre industry. Founded with the hope of connecting cultures via type, the one-person foundry releases “not too serious fonts”, often working in cultural references and presenting things illustratively. Its work wouldn’t feel out of place across a cult food brand, roastery or tattoo parlour. Having begun as a pandemic project, Kulture has since stood the test of time. Past typefaces have been inspired by Yugoslavian mini shops and Albanian typography.

**Tüpokompanii
Tallinn, Estonia**

“Mistakes” are folded into the work at Tüpokompanii, a Tallinn-based type design studio founded in 2022. The approach of founders Andree Paat and Aimur Takk is to embrace unexpected results in the hope of uncovering new potential and challenging conventions in type design. As such, Tüpokompanii has established a collection of retail and custom fonts that express unexpected qualities when it comes to letterforms. In the past, founder Andree has collaborated with Swiss foundry Dinamo on various projects; Aimur has delivered custom typefaces for Tallinn Music Week, IDA Radio and the ERKI Fashion Show in 2017.

Threedotstype
Wrocław, Poland

The central concept to Threedotstype is to create fonts based on a story. Across its releases, there are fonts which carry social, technical or historical aspects, each influencing a letterform’s shape.

As a result, Threedotstype demonstrates a sense of comfort in ugly or uncoordinated letters, “as long as they represent something interesting, solve technical issues, or provoke discussions” its team describe. Each font additionally features a set of arrows developed from a collection of navigational tools used in visual communication as inspiration for unique characters.

Shriftovik Type Foundry
Tbilisi, Georgia

The ethos at Shriftovik is one of much-needed optimism, with the foundry believing that typography has the power to change the world. The team is driven by the urge to create something new in typography and share it with customers. Both sentiments are represented in the work, which sees bold styles demonstrate a penchant for experimentation and positivity. A graffiti-inspired display typeface, with wickedly pronounced terminals, features alongside elegant sharper cuts, drawing from heroines of noir cinema. Across the board, type feels ready made for colourful applications.

Kateryna Korolevtseva
Kyiv, Ukraine and Weimar, Germany

Kateryna is an independent type designer committed to developing typefaces dedicated to Ukrainian Cyrillics. You can expect projects like Misto Font from her desk – an homage to her hometown of Slavutych, a city born after the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. Or Expromt, a modern slab serif inspired by Ukrainian graphic artist Hryhoriy Berkovych.

Through her typefaces, public speaking and writing, Kateryna endeavours to bring greater prominence to Ukrainian design, while championing the diversity of the country’s type design heritage. She has written about the subject for *Design Week* and *Alphabettes*.

Mykolas Saulytis
Vilnius, Lithuania

Alongside his hobbies of rollerblading, playing video games and listening to heavy music, Lithuanian designer Mykolas can be found designing type. His fondness for letterforms developed via graffiti as a teenager, where he “simply thought (and still kind of do) it was the coolest thing ever,” he says. “It had everything, from the adrenaline of going out at night to paint random walls to staying up late drawing and geeking out at different letter structures.”

Since this teenage love, Mykolas has combined this craft with digital skills in turn creating display fonts and occasional custom typefaces like Guts, a purposefully overly rounded typeface he recently created for Guts agency. However looking forward, “hopefully a small type foundry will be born in the near future.”

Florian Karsten
Brno, Czech Republic

An independent studio since 2014, Florian Karsten splits its focus between type design and websites. In fact, the studio began to design typefaces when it was in need of more custom options for its own web projects. While many of the foundry’s typefaces appear explorative in nature, Florian Karsten is equally focused on timelessness and problem solving. A perfect example is its pixel-based serif typefaces, which are both exciting while devoid of superfluous additions. The foundry is currently working on new releases for 2023 and its new foundry site.

Setup Type
Bratislava, Slovakia

Helmed by Ondrej Jób, Setup Type has been running for over a decade as a Slovak type foundry and design studio offering retail and custom typefaces, and much more. Past projects have included a custom typeface for Slovak National Gallery as well as work with historical typefaces, such as the digitalisation of the original signage for 1930 functionalist ferry terminal in Bratislava, Propeller.

Licensable typefaces have also looked to the culture of Bratislava, like Manual Grotesk A, which offers a classic Slovak street plate typeface. While retail typefaces vary drastically in style, from a decorative script with detached ball terminals to the more digitally inspired, there is a sharpness and inclination towards heritage across the catalogue.

Type Salon
Ljubljana, Slovenia

From Ljubljana comes independent type design studio Type Salon, focused on creating memorable letter shapes that combine diverse heritages with contemporary presence. In the past, typefaces have looked to architecture and Slovenian posters from the interwar period, with an emphasis on being finely crafted yet multi-usable.

Salon also covers a variety of character sets and multi-scripts; since 2020, the foundry has released six typefaces in Latin, Cyrillic, Greek and Arabic. While typefaces like the art deco Gizela feel fitting for more romantic branding, Column Cultures, made with the help of microbiologist Primož Turnšek, is a welcome departure into the wilderness. Founders Alja Herlah and Krista Likar also organise typographic workshops and lectures in Slovenia.

Joanna Angulska
Poznań, Poland

Designer Joanna Angulska is perhaps best known for her work with script typefaces. One of Joanna’s earliest brush-based releases is the memorable Papaik, inspired by hand lettered sign paintings. The designer has since released others such as Popeye, a personality-laden display perfectly suited for bold posters. Her designs often nod in style to street signs and shop windows from the 60s, while feeling updated for contemporary use. More recently, Joanna has begun work with The Northern Block on a new design of another script typeface.

Suva Type Foundry
Tallinn, Estonia

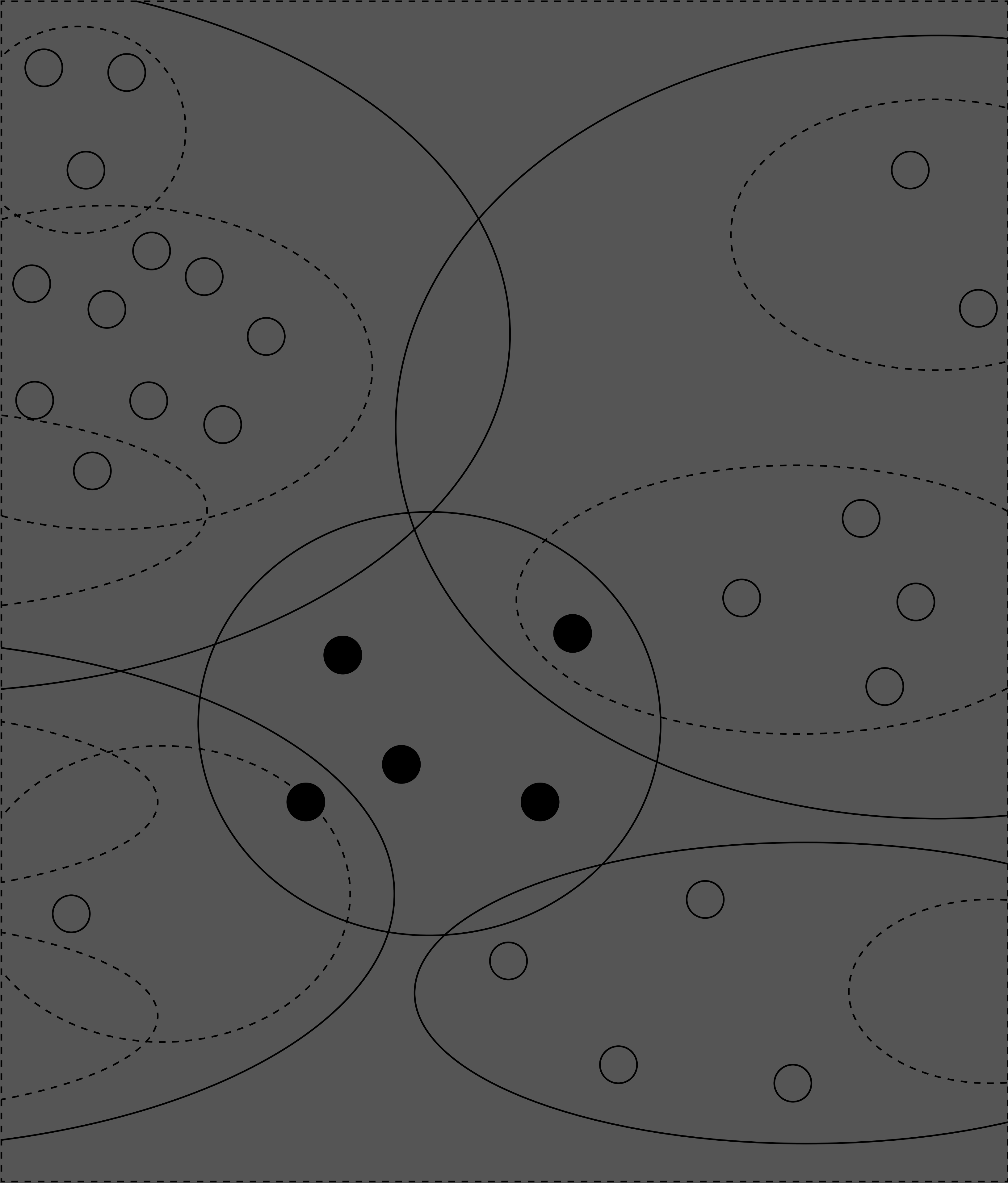
Suva Type Foundry was born from a week-long intensive type design workshop. Every one of its typefaces has been designed by the students and faculty of the graphic design department at Estonian Academy of Arts (EKA). The result is a dizzying amount of diverse typefaces – though all Suva’s fonts lean stylistically towards initial typeface sketches, due to the way they are made. The name Suva mirrors this eclectic approach; the foundry explains that Suva means “random”. It also refers to the history of the EKA building itself, a former sock factory. Suva’s collection of typefaces is still expanding.

Displaay
Prague, Czech Republic

Established by Martin Vácha in 2014, Displaay focuses on retail and custom typefaces. As a foundry, its aim is to “develop distinctive typefaces” that it currently believes are missing from the wider market. As a result, “specific moments of imperfection and spontaneous irregularities inspire our ethos,” says Martin. A respected library of fonts by the global design community, recently the foundry has launched Offline, a selection of physical products including badges, playing cards and more in contrast to the digital world of fonts – which are available exclusively via Displaay’s website.

Kometa
Brno, Czech Republic

Kometa was founded in 2018 with a unique premise that fonts might inspire the same fervour as sports, with the foundry borrowing its name from “the iconic Moravian hockey team”, it explains. Though, in antithesis to the fast-paced urgency of the pitch, Kometa is slowly curating a collection of indie typefaces, which range from workhorse to eccentric, in effort to stand apart from on a tight shelf space. It also tries to imbue each of its typefaces with an intellectual component. For example, its intentionally lopsided debut release, Labil Grotesk, which explores what might happen if you put a quintessential skeleton of a sans-serif to the tests of gravity.



SECTION 09

THE MIDDLE EAST

Hey Porter!
Amman, Jordan

The typography practice of Hey Porter! combines founder Tawfiq Dawi’s self-taught graphic design education alongside a wider degree in the visual arts. A specific interest in fonts first began in 2017, when Tawfiq began an experimental poster project to explore Arabic typography in graphic design. Each evening for the following three years were spent creating new posters, practising his type design. Eventually, he established his own independent digital type foundry focusing on developing contemporary display typefaces. Such dedication to the practice has led to a growing library of modern Arabic typefaces, like Kaifama, based on Mushafi and Fatimid Kufic scripts and Endama, combining futuristic aesthetics with a classic Thuluth calligraphy style.

Lana Soufeh
Amman, Jordan and Lausanne, Switzerland

A type designer from Amman, Jordan, Lana Soufeh describes her creative state of mind as an ongoing conflict with her culture, “specifically falling in love with it more and more when writing, reading and speaking Arabic”, she says. Currently away from home and working towards a masters in type design at ECAL, Lana is finding herself increasingly eager to “explore my mother tongue first through Latin type design since there are not any schools and not enough digital Arabic typefaces (yet).”

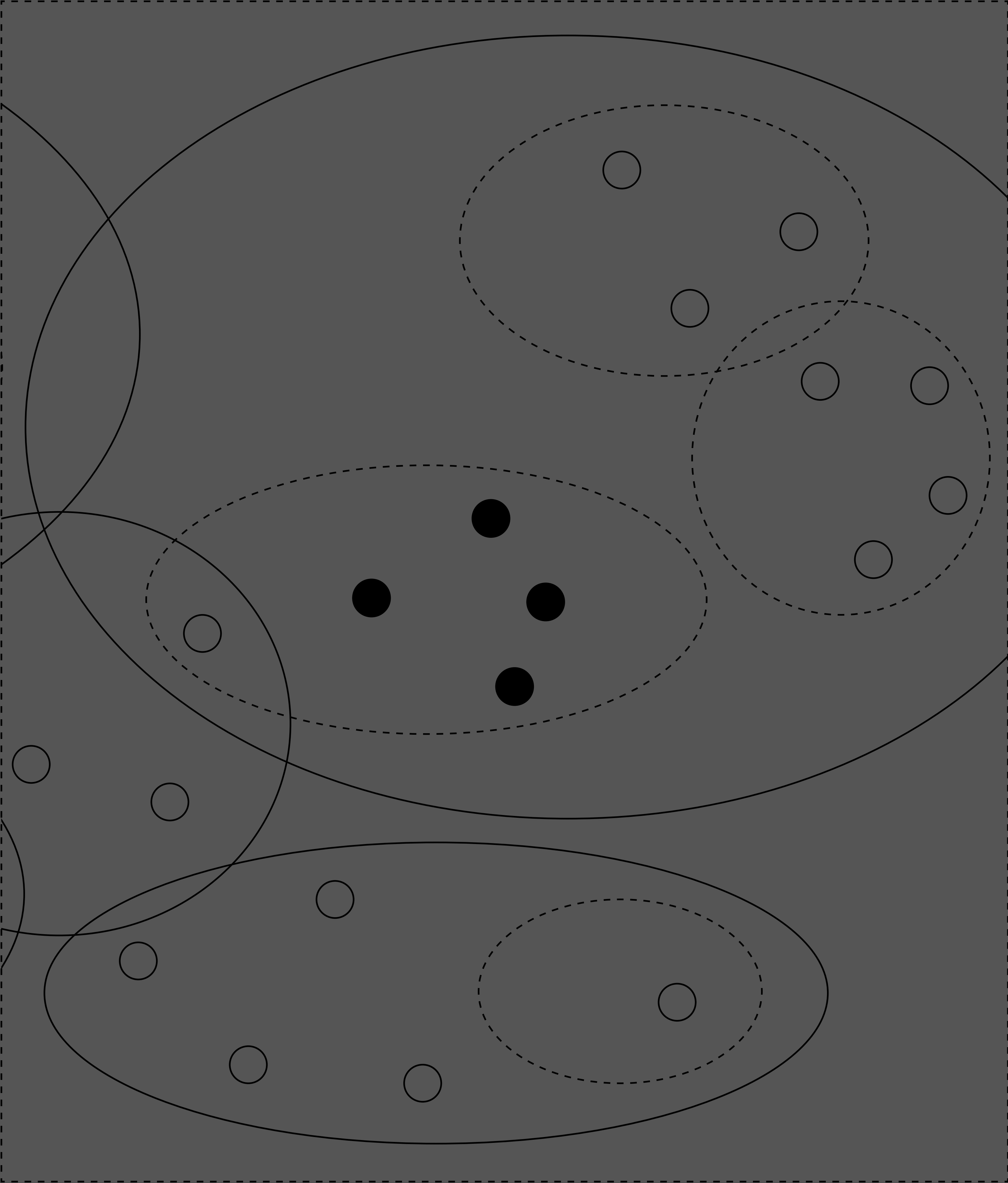
In turn, Lana is working towards becoming a helpful resource for students and professionals like herself by building a body of research on the history of Arabic printing, and collecting points of view from type designers dealing with Arabic script in digital contexts.

Alaa Tameem
Jeddah, Saudi Arabia and Amman, Jordan

Following studies into multiple aspects of visual culture – including Arabic type, wayfinding and signage – Alaa is a designer and art director with a vast portfolio focused on branding and type design. At present he is the design director of Milk Network and the founder of Zero Posters, an initiative which aims to explore new techniques and styles of Arabic typography. Creating a vast body of concept driven lettering via Zero, his upcoming release is The Manchette Typeface, an example of Alaa’s stylistic tendencies of creating “enriching Arabic design with a refreshed, systematised and pragmatic personal imprint.”

Fontef
Tel Aviv, Israel

Fontef was founded by two passionate lovers of type. Yanek Iontef, who has been drawing typefaces since 1994 and loves to cycle the streets of Tel Aviv looking for old topographic street signage; and Daniel Grumer, whose interest in design came from drawing logos of football teams when he was younger, but was attracted by “the meaningful combination between Hebrew and Arabic”. Now focusing on the possibilities of multilingual type design, the foundry creates type in Hebrew, Latin and Arabic. To date, they’ve also collaborated with a number of Latin-based foundries – like Commercial Type and Dinamo – on projects in which they often design Hebrew.



SECTION 10

**SOUTH
ASIA**

Vani Jain
Mumbai, India

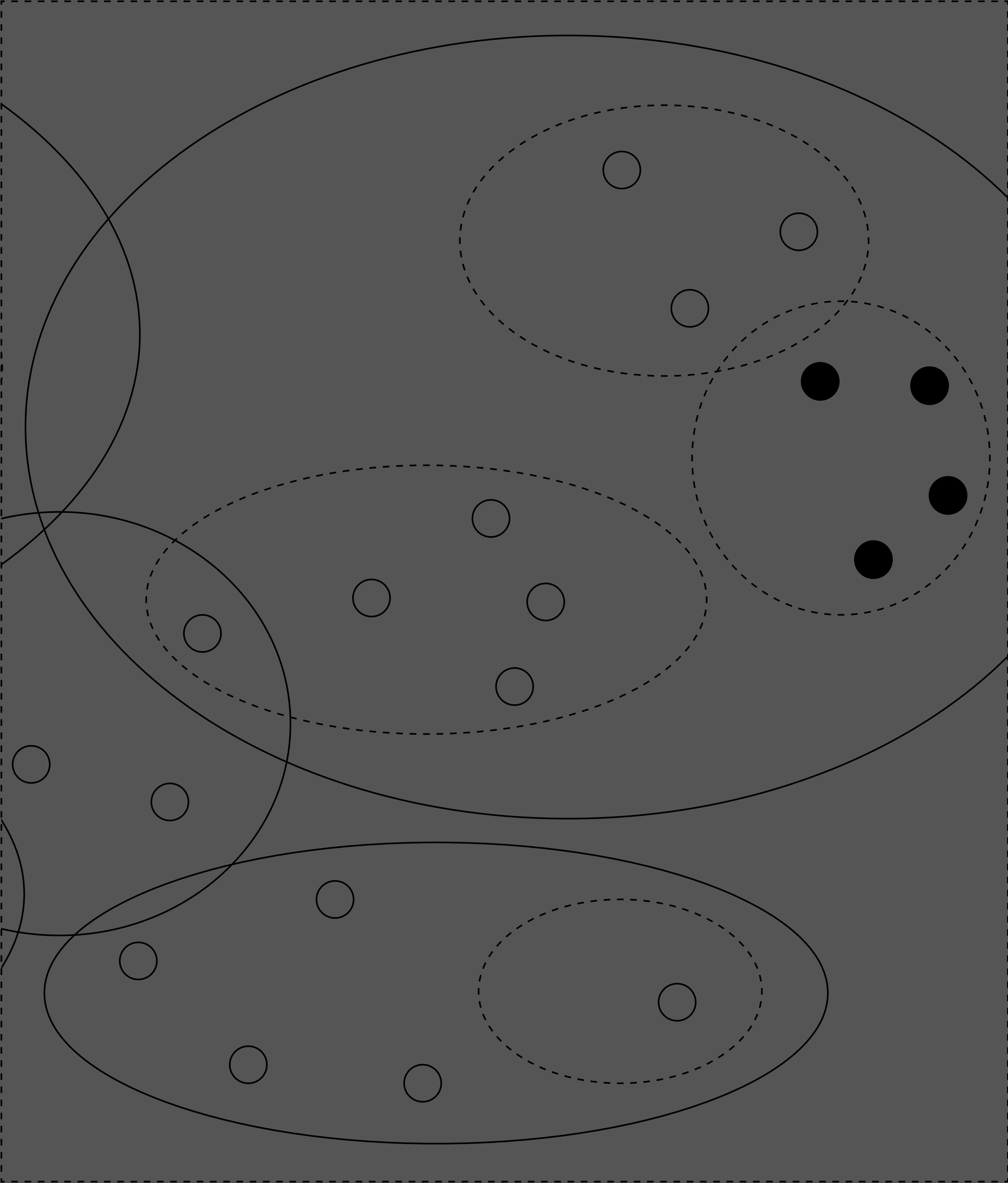
Vani Jain’s trajectory into type design is one familiar with many a designer’s entry into the medium: the “36 Days of Type” challenge. Always interested in graphic design, Vani developed her first font, Wriggle, via the challenge – in which creatives design a letterform each day, for 36 days, to complete the Latin alphabet. Shortly after, the designer expanded her learnings to create Bucky Peach, a slight juxtaposition to Wriggle structurally, while even more experimental. Despite being her first typeface designs, and personally driven projects, both were hugely popular amongst the design community, leading to Vani continually experimenting with the medium. She is currently working on her third typeface, Transmit, soon to be released, and a zine compiling her font-based explorations.

Rawaz Hammas
Karachi, Pakistan

The practice of Rawaz Hammas is a type-based artistic vision of Urdu via lettering and design. Originally studying calligraphy at the University of Karachi, Pakistan, the artist’s practice has tirelessly worked to improve and create designs with meaning in the Urdu language. An example of this is Bunyaad, his latest typeface which is “a testament to his passion for Urdu design and his commitment to using his abilities to bring beauty to the written word”. This passion for bringing a sense of purpose and impact has led to a fruitful career working with commercial and cultural clients for the artist, and it’s incredible to see him also continue to develop his own letterforms, too.

Universal Thirst
Bangalore, India and Reykjavík, Iceland

The primary goal of Universal Thirst is to “expand the design possibilities” for Indic writing, which includes Devanagari, Tamil, Gujarati, Gurmukhi and Bangla. Set up by Gunnar Vilhjálmsson and Kalapi Gajjar, the duo now works across a team of designers who have experience in both Indic and Latin fonts. Spanning experimental releases – like the gooey psychedelia inspired Ilai – and more functional fonts, – like the 20th Century editorial style Meursault – its safe to say the foundry has its fingers in many typographic pies. Its typefaces have been used the the likes of *The Gourmand*, Google, Dishoom and Frieze Art Fair.



SECTION 11

**SOUTH
EAST ASIA**

“A LOT OF PEOPLE SEE WESTERN DESIGN AS THE ONLY STANDARD OF GOOD DESIGN”: AN EXPLORATION OF TYPE DESIGN IN SOUTH EAST ASIA

When travelling across South East Asia, those fond of type design will instantly discover a variety of scripts steeped in history, combined with inspiration driven from adaptive uses of everyday life. Across the designers and foundries we’ve met in creating this report, individuals have noted influences taken from hand-painted signage and drawn attention to design details unique to their script, such as diacritics. Recent years have also seen creatives across disciplines single out typography as an underappreciated craft so necessary to communicate regional character clearly, and effectively, via a written voice. As one of our contributors here describes, selecting a typeface, let alone designing one, is an intimate experience – “It’s music we can read!”

To discover further detail and crucial context about the type design scene across South East Asia, we sat down with three designers across Vietnam and the Philippines. Joining us from Metro Manila is Jo Malinis, a graphic designer who can be found working on identities and type design – when she’s not teaching at the Philippines College of Fine Arts. A creative advocate for type design from the Philippines, Jo is also the founder of Type63, an initiative that aims to showcase and celebrate Filipino type design.

Then, from Vietnam, we’re joined by Đức Cao, an independent type and graphic designer in Ho Chi Minh. A knowledgeable resource on Vietnamese graphic design, Đức is additionally a member of Lưu Chữ, the Vietnamese typographic archive. And finally, also in Vietnam, we have Bảo Lâm. An all-round creative – Bảo currently works as a digital product designer with a passion for type, and loves photography, too – he founded Yellow Type Foundry together with Duy Đào. It’s a burgeoning library of fonts designed specifically for the previously neglected letterforms of the Vietnamese language in a digital environment.

It's Nice That: Could you each tell us how your fascination with type design began? What can you trace it back to?

Đức Cao: For me, it started out in primary school, where calligraphy was taught as a subject. I remember spending hours practising drawing letters with my ink-covered hands to capture a perfect “O”. After that I was experimenting with graphic design and illustration and found type design to be the perfect middle ground for both practices.

Jo Malinis: For me, it started at work. My boss assigned me to work on a custom typeface. The brand already had calligraphic letterforms but, because we were trying to “modernise” it for a more commercial appeal, it needed a sleeker look – that's when I stepped in. This was around 2014 or 2015. At that time I had no idea that type design was even a thing and, for some reason, never really questioned where typefaces came from.

**“I HOPE TO SEE MORE
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— ĐỨC CAO

Bảo Lâm: I came across typography when I was still in high school but it was only a hobby I did back then. It wasn't until I met my graphic design tutor in Saigon in 2018, and he passed the type design flame to me. It was a magical moment. I realised how the shapes of letters are just like us – they have emotions and souls. The harmony between dark and white on a blank canvas can be so fascinating. It's music we can read! Also I can actually create a digital product that everybody can use, how cool is that!

It's Nice That: Music we can read! I would love to know more about the education opportunities in your respective countries when it comes to type design? How was your experience at university?

Jo Malinis: Oh gosh... there are none. At least during my time in university, we were mostly taught how to use type. There weren't any electives or workshops available to understand type design the way that I know it now, and if there were classes outside of school offered, they were mostly on calligraphy and lettering. (And there were only a few of them!)

Now we are slowly starting to see the value in type design and universities have started to offer electives and workshops on it — but these are only accessible to those who have the opportunity to experience higher education.

Đức Cao: There were close to none here back when I was at university. Right now, I'm not so sure. I do see a few classes here and there in one or two of the local universities as an elective. But that course usually lasts for a semester, and is not usually taught by those who have experience in type design themselves.

Bảo Lâm: I believe the graphic design scene in Vietnam is still very young compared to our Western friends Change - after “friends” to – we don't have a history of graphic design or anything that has such depth. In type design specifically, I really do believe that we've only been paying attention to this industry for the last five years. We don't have universities that teach type design, we haven't even got any type foundries here, and most of all, our awareness of font licensing is very vague.

Đức Cao: To echo what Jo has mentioned earlier, I was never aware you could make a living with type design, as the practice wasn’t mentioned or taught at all by any of the lecturers.

Jo Malinis: And same with Đức's comment on who teaches type. They are usually not experienced in type design themselves, which to me is understandable at this point.

Bảo Lâm: I guess the lucky thing is that we use Latin glyphs so we don't have hard times catching up with the west?

It’s Nice That: Đức and Bảo, would you say there is a particular visual style to Vietnam type design in terms of aesthetics?

Bảo Lâm: Haha yes, but it's such a cliché! We've been doing “Vietnamese aesthetic” typefaces with chunky letters (mostly referenced from avant garde) and hairline accents – there are like 100 fonts with that look. But if we're talking about “Vietnamese look” in a typeface, I wouldn't say there's a specific style. I think it's more like typefaces that the Vietnamese feel at home when they look at it, or they know for sure it was designed by a Vietnamese designer. The glyphs such as Ụ (U horn) or Ằ (Hook above comb) are unique to us.

Đức Cao: Based on my observation, I wouldn’t say that there is a strong and particular style here yet, but I do think that there are a few motifs that are often used among type designers here. One example is display and decorative typefaces that fall somewhere between lettering and type design, as the reference often comes from old vernacular signages with beautifully drawn letterings.

It’s Nice That: That makes sense. In terms of this growing aesthetic, when I was reading the biography of Yellow Type Foundry Bảo, you mentioned how since the beginning of the internet many typefaces have not been designed for the Vietnamese language. As your work is driven to change this, would you mind telling us more about this mission?

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Bảo Lâm: Yeah, it's a sad thing to be honest. We all know choosing the right font is a pain in the ass every time, right? But it's doubly hard when you design for Vietnamese, because most of the available typefaces back then did not support Vietnamese glyphs and we just kept using one typeface for everything. Or worse – we have tofus (the squares) in our designs, or the error glyphs that sabotage the whole thing.

The best we could do was a “Vietnamisation” (illegally modify the typeface without the type designer's awareness, with no licence). It has even become a business in our industry: you hire somebody with a bit of type design knowledge to "Vietnamise" the typeface for you, and most of the time it only costs like \$10 to do so. Even well-known corporations do this because they are not aware. Imagine instead of paying \$9.99 per month for Spotify, you hire somebody to sing that foreign song in your language for just ten cents (and resell it online, without the artist's permission).

My goal is to slowly change this landscape. It might take years, five, ten, even 20, but it has to change. Our first move is to make a really good business in type design, with our own hands and knowledge, to provide people the typefaces they need (and want).

“I BELIEVE THE GRAPHIC DESIGN SCENE IN VIETNAM IS STILL VERY YOUNG COMPARED TO OUR WESTERN FRIENDS.”
— **BẢO LÂM**

It's Nice That: Thank you for sharing this. It's such a shame, but it is exciting to see foundries such as yours emerging to change this. Is there anything you'd like to add on this subject matter Đức?

Đức Cao: Similar to what Bảo has mentioned, type piracy or modification without permission is a common practice, even among the designers. The shortage of Vietnamese support for typefaces is uncanny, and we find ourselves falling back to a few typefaces from project to project. This is why many people decide to head to the black market and purchase fonts with prices that are ten times cheaper and Vietnamese ready.

It's Nice That: It's really frustrating. The diacritical marks featured in the Latin-based Vietnamese alphabet also present a variety of design challenges I can imagine, especially with elements such as kerning. What are your biggest considerations when designing a typeface with this level of detail?

Đức Cao: I think that would be creating enough space to fit them in, especially double stacked diacritics for capital letters, and proper kerning for combination with letters like U and O (“u” and “o” with horn) as it is usually forgotten. Very specific, yes.

Bảo Lâm: Good question! I agree that designing Vietnamese accents is challenging, but it's a privilege I think. The hardest part is always kerning and leading for sure. The more I design these stacked accents, the more I realise that they could be dynamic, which means their shapes can be varied to adapt the situation. You just have to test over and over again to make sure all the variations work well together.

But it often also comes with a trade-off: Let's say you want a beautiful horn comb but the kerning can be worse, or the hook above comb can break the tight leading... There are many times you have to really consider what to keep and what needs to be gone.

Đức Cao: Overall, I hope to see more experimental diacritic design in general. You can always have fun designing it without making it too standard looking.

**“I PERSONALLY
SEE TYPE DESIGN
IN THE PHILIPPINES
BEING USED AS
A VEHICLE TO
PRESERVE CULTURE
AND EXPRESS IT”**

— JO MALANIS

Bảo Lâm: Yeah I second that, I think it depends on your purpose - if you're designing a display typeface, you can always have fun going wild.

It's Nice That: Onto the Philippines with you Jo. Can you describe how the type design scene comes to life? especially considering the variety of languages spoken?

Jo Malinis: I think understanding what Filipino type is and how it looks is an ongoing discussion that could have many possible answers, so it's hard to fit it into just one concise description. But, it is definitely a conversation that we are currently having, and that's a good first step into finding an answer for it.

I personally see type design in the Philippines being used as a vehicle to preserve culture and express it, and this is evident in the different approaches that Filipino type designers use to create their work. Some are based on existing calligraphic or lettering work, some take visual cues from everyday life, while others represent non-tangible ideas unique to their culture (like, say, how they visualise the tone of how their language is usually spoken). It's all very colourful, in my opinion.

It's Nice That: And how does this scene impact your work personally?

Jo Malinis: Hmm... I find that it makes me question how I approach design in general. A lot of people see Western design as the only standard of good design, and that's been adapted in the way that we teach design as well. It is challenging to step away from that mindset when you've held it for so long so now that I am exposed to more local work, it becomes easier to see how that view can be problematic.

It's Nice That: Would you mind if I asked about the Baybayin script? Does this influence your work or is it not commonly used?

Jo Malinis: I don't use Baybayin in any of my work because I (unfortunately) do not know how to read and write with it. The Philippines has a number of

different scripts, but almost all of them are either endangered or obsolete. We don't teach them in school, unless you take a very specific class for them in university (or outside school), so it is not common to know how to use it. Some type designers have been trying to preserve and/or revive Baybayin, which is good, but without any educational component to help with how it's used, it will always remain endangered.

It's Nice That: With this in mind, could you tell us about Type63 specifically, and what drove you to set up the platform?

Jo Malinis: Sure! Type63 was actually born out of curiosity, but also sadness and frustration.

It came at a time where I would receive critique on my type design work from foreign professionals who I found out through Alphettes or Type Crit Crew. It made me ask why there weren't any local designers I could approach for help. I barely knew anyone except for some online type design friends who were also exploring the field. This led me to ask who the type designers of the Philippines are, if there are any. And so I created Type63 to try and look for them.

It was important to me to get to know local creators since they could hopefully discuss type design as a practice in our context. This is very important to have, because the situations here and abroad are different. The work environments, accessibility to information, sensitivity to different cultures when it comes to borrowing aesthetics, financial concerns, etc. — all of these were, and still are, things that come into play when talking about type design.

It's Nice That: And it's such an amazing platform as a result. Also, all of you work as independent type designers or have your own foundries, why did you decide to set up your own company as opposed to working in-house somewhere?

Jo Malinis: I figured being an independent type designer would be the best setup for me because I get to explore work with different foundries and

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— JO MALINIS

networks, design studios, and clients in general. This is where I plan to gain experience working with type, and then figure out if pursuing my own foundry or joining an in-house team would be a good next step.

Bảo Lâm: I'm still working fulltime as a product designer, the foundry is still under construction and as I mentioned before - the job isn't done until I'm satisfied, so I'm still considering it as a hobby and trying not to put pressure on it. I believe the best work you produce is the work you do in your playtime!

Đức Cao: Right after my postgrad course in type design I was applying to a few type foundries, but because of the time zone differences and their current operation scale they weren't able to afford to hire me as a result. I'd love to join one to understand a more structural and systematic way to approach type design works in the future. But for now operating as an independent designer gives me time and space to figure out my voices at my own pace.

But because of how small the type design community is I've been able to connect and receive lots of guidance and feedback from fellow designers while working on my own stuff, which is a huge plus!

It's Nice That: Out of interest, would you say there is a community of type designers you communicate with in your specific cities? People you talk about work with, or look to for advice?

Đức Cao: Yes, they are usually my colleagues at Lưu Chữ as they are all type enthusiasts. Other than that I spend quite a lot of time figuring stuff out on my own.

Jo Malinis: It's Type63 for me, haha.

It's Nice That: You've built your own community!

Bảo Lâm: Ah not quite, I often collaborate with only my co-founder. I created a Facebook group for Vietnamese type designers, but haven't got time and energy for it. Still, I would love to connect in real life with more fellow type designers!

It's Nice That: Finally, what are you all hoping to do in the future? But also, how do you hope type design develops in the next few years for upcoming designers?

Jo Malinis: I want to be able to release a typeface that I won't hate after five or ten years! I don't know if I'll get to study more in an academic setting, but I do want to gain more knowledge about it. And, for type design in the Philippines, my hope is that it becomes more accessible and that I get to know and talk to new designers who share the same passion for it soon.

Bảo Lâm: For me I'd really love to get the foundry out there and put our name on the map, then have the chance to give back to the community. I do really hope type design will be better considered as a profession, especially in South East Asian countries, and be more accessible.

Đức Cao: In the near future I'd love to collaborate with more type designers to learn more about the process of designing type. In the far off future, I'd love to have a font library of my own, and possibly my own practice and studio space.

I hope type design will be more accessible and taught in schools and universities more. That more people will understand that this is such an interesting profession and there will be more designers with new and exciting voices joining our force.

Dương Trần
Hanoi City, Vietnam

Describing himself as a “type explorer”, Dương Trần’s work displays his passion for visual identities, layout design and, of course, typography. His foray into type design only began in 2020, but the designer’s ability and interest in crafting letters with emotional expressions already cements Dương as an exciting name in the Vietnamese type design scene. Like many designers from the region, he is also interested in scaling up the market of typefaces which can support the Vietnamese script in more detail, and with wider variety. A perfect example of this practice is his typeface DT Phudu, a display sans-serif typeface inspired by Vietnamese hand-lettering billboards which supports 192 languages with special diacritical marks.

Hrftype
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Hrftype is a type design studio specialising in multi-script and font development. The foundry largely concentrates on custom typefaces for numerous organisations, as well as retail fonts “that reflect our culture’s aspiration with contemporary craft”. To see its growing collection of custom work head over to Hrftype’s Instagram.

Yellow Type Foundry
Tuy Hoa city, Vietnam

Formed by Bảo Lâm and Duy Đào in 2018, Yellow Type Foundry is the typographic output of these two Vietnamese designers. Especially made for the Vietnamese language, the pair are proud to inherit a unique and stacked diacritics system, while still using the Latin alphabet. “As a matter of fact,” adds Bảo, “many typefaces are not made for Vietnamese since the very beginning of the internet and it breaks our hearts that our people have been limited to speak our language in different choices – and we’re here to change that.”

Đức Cao
Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

The practice of Đức Cao explores the syntax of shapes and lines, and the logic behind these elements across graphic and type design, as well as illustration. A core member of the Vietnamese Typographic Archive, alongside designing his own typefaces, Đức can be found researching and archiving the graphic design history of his home country while he currently completes his studies at the Plantin Institute of Typography. His most recent release is Swirl, a Latin European and Vietnamese outline display typeface inspired by the twists and turns of a flat brush, available via BlazeType.

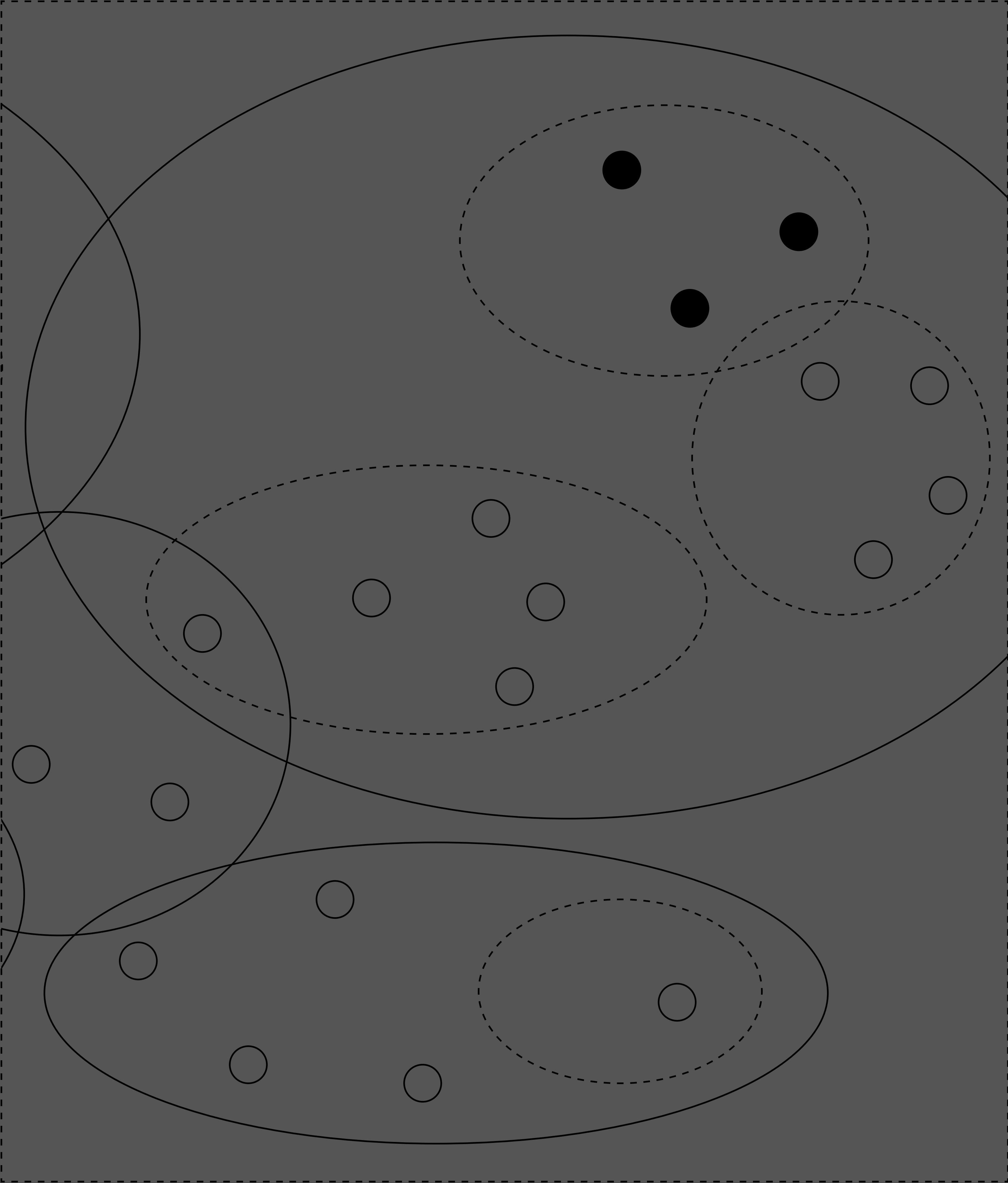
Jo Malinis
Metro Manila, Philippines

Jo Malinis is a designer who is fascinated by letterforms and how they can be “representative of concepts and themes”. For example, her satisfyingly buoyant, bubbly type Salbrida Sans takes inspiration from inflated rubber vests; or objects that keep people afloat. Previously, Jo was part of Plus63, and is now an instructor at the University of the Philippines Diliman College of Fine Arts where she teaches Visual Communication Design, as well as leading her own independent practice. Alongside her type design practice, Jo founded Type63, an initiative that “serves as a platform to celebrate and showcase type design and typography by Filipinos”.

Power Type Foundry
Makassar, Indonesia

Established by Teguh Arief in 2021, Power Type Foundry is an independent, digital font foundry with a focus on current trends. Constantly in dialogue with trending designs across visual culture, the foundry offers a variety of fonts for test use as well as commercial fonts for daily design tasks.

With six typefaces available to date, favourites of ours include Offbit, a font derived from Bitmap that thematically nods to computing and graphic design; or the more playful Power Display, a funk inspired font ideal for logotypes, branding and packaging.



SECTION 12

EAST ASIA

**Moolong Type
Tokyo, Japan**

Housing the typographic practice of designer Ayumi Kiryu, Moolong Type combines experimentally leaning Japanese scripts and Ayumi’s wider graphic design work. First becoming interested in letters when she took a typography class at Nihon University College of Art, a hunch was confirmed that Ayumi wanted to concentrate on letterforms as opposed to layouts.

Gaining experience at Kinuta Typeface Production – known for widely used typefaces such as Maruaki – after graduating, today Ayumi can be found expanding the remits of how we design type. This is shown in Kiriko Kana, a typeface created by using hand cut paper rather than handwritten strokes.

**Boomi Park
Seoul, South Korea**

If you’re in need of a Hangul typeface, Seoul-based designer Boomi Park is the person to call. A designer at South Korean type foundry Sandoll, in her role Boomi has created a number of popular retail fonts in Korea, including Hoyoyo, Nemony and Gwanghwamoon, as well creating custom typeface projects. However her skills don’t just stop at designing glyphs as Boomi can additionally convert various scripts, including Latin, into Hangul. As well as her work at Sandoll, head to Boomi’s Instagram to see further typographic experiments.

YMG Type Foundry
Seoul, South Korea

Having completed a bachelor’s degree in graphic design, Mingoo Yoon headed to ECAL in Switzerland for his master’s, where he specialised in bi-script design for Hangul and Latin alphabets. He has since continued this work through his foundry in Seoul, YMG Type Foundry. He and his team focus on multi-script type design, especially on Hangul with Latin, but also CJK (Chinese, Japanese and Korean) fonts, creating typefaces suitable for each culture’s typographic background. This foundry has carried out type design projects for companies including Google and YouTube. Alongside this work, Mingoo is also currently teaching at Hongik University and Ewha Womans University, both in Seoul. The typeface showcased here, Favorit Hangul, is available via ABC Dinamo.

3Type
Shanghai, China

3type is an outfit that describes itself as a “typical and atypical foundry”. When viewing its type library, fonts range from the classic and elegant Ellenda, the glitchy, pixelated Dinkie T to the stylish and contemporary RVS Basic. This variation comes from the foundries wide range of experience, with its designers having backgrounds in contemporary art, curation, translation, writing and historical research, alongside design, a fact that has “greatly empowered” 3type’s understanding of writing systems, cultures and, “most essentially, typefaces”.

Zin Nagao
Tokyo, Japan

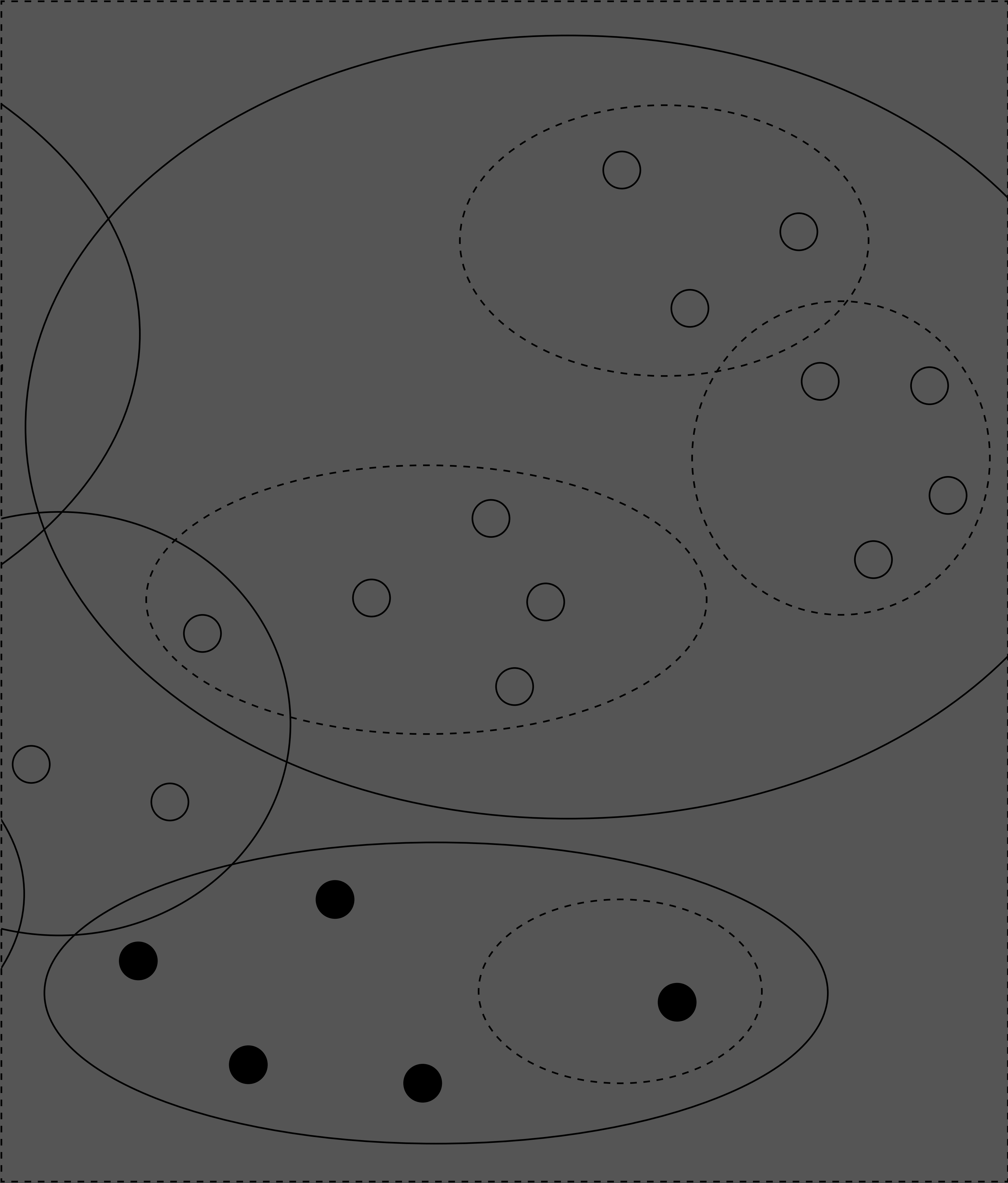
For his day job, Zin works for Fontworks, which sells Japanese typefaces and fonts, but alongside this he has a thriving and highly experimental personal practice. On the website of his foundry, named FOZNT, he gives away his typefaces – which he somewhat mischievously describes as “useless” – for free. As this might suggest, they lean away from obvious practical applications and instead feel like the results of play, exploration and experimentation. One of his most intriguing typefaces, Yon Yon, was created by applying the “mysterious and lovely geometric shapes of Hangul to European text”; the project was nominated for the Tokyo Type Directors Club Award 2023.

Dong-hoon Han
Seoul, South Korea

Korean typeface designer Dong-hoon Han’s interest in letters spans far beyond the realm of graphic design. An individual interested in “all fields and activities related to letters, such as writing, writing letters and designing letters”, like fellow Korean designer, Boomi Park, Han has also worked at Sandoll, as well as Tlab and contributed to design criticism titles. Within Han’s designs you’ll find a love of contrast in type design, such as his font, Tlab MoonForte, which is inspired by the third movement of Beethoven’s Moonlight Symphony.

Huoshan Type
Beijing, China

Founded by graphic designer Canfei, Huoshan Type (HS Type) is actually a side project. As they finish work each evening, Canfei will switch over to designing Chinese fonts and hopes, in future, to be able to make a living purely from designing typefaces. But despite being a burgeoning side project, HS Type has already released six sets of Chinese font families to date. HS Qinghe Sans, a longer term project, is also in the works and includes 3,000+ characters, set to be completed in 2024. For now, we recommend looking at the craft displayed in Huoshan Type’s Haohai and Hanbing fonts to start with.



SECTION 13

OCEANIA

Klim Type Foundry
Te Whanganui-a-Tara/Wellington, Aotearoa/New Zealand

Working from the ethos of “a thing well made”, Klim Type Foundry combines historical knowledge with rigorous contemporary craft. Established by Kris Sowersby in 2005, Klim has grown to have a globe-trotting influence, with its variable typefaces being used by large clients across the world. Many fonts in its library have an artfully classic feel and have been used in publications like the *National Geographic* and *The Financial Times*, while other fonts lend themselves to a more digitised culture, being used by the likes of Apple and PayPal.

Gemma Mahoney
Melbourne, Australia

Good designers tend to understand that typography is about more than creating designs that look good; it’s about evoking emotions and communicating personality. Gemma, a multidisciplinary graphic designer based in Melbourne, is a case in point. She describes her work as “not only an exercise in aesthetics but also an emotional experience”, and we can see why. Her display typefaces are full of bold and eye-catching details, from the elongated serifs of Fleck to the swollen joints of Daze Display to the sophisticated, nostalgic flourishes of Nurture Display. Gemma says she brings “creativity and playfulness to a disciplined process” – a combination that produces typefaces to conjure the emotions.

Jazlyn Fung
Melbourne, Australia

Originally from Hong Kong and now living in Melbourne, Jazlyn Fung is an independent type and graphic designer. Her bespoke library of fonts include the joyfully named Happy Fat Font, driven by her aim to “design something fun and spread happiness to people in the lockdown” and 800G, inspired by the shape of extra large eggs to create a double yolk character.

Before designing typefaces, Jazlyn worked in the worlds of branding and environmental graphics. Her recent move to Melbourne has made way for a period of experimentation with designing type however, creating typefaces with meaning, ideally a story, but “also, to be emotional and fun”.

Matter of Sorts
Original
Huang

Matter of Sorts
Unceded Wurundjeri land, Naarm, Melbourne, Australia

The typographic practice of Vincent Chan, Matter of Sorts is a type foundry whose interests expand to notions of commoning, designing, pedagogy, type “and where they might overlap, co-mingle and meld”. In turn, the foundry offers a changing library of retail typefaces and custom fonts for a variety of clients. An award-winning practitioner – Vincent was also awarded the Ascender award from the Type Directors Club, recognised for “expanding the medium of typography” – Matter of Sorts has plenty of families to choose from, but our favourites include Telegram, Quadrant Text and Recollection, to name a few.

Metis Digital
Melbourne, Australia

Metis is a digital type foundry established in 2018 as an extension of io design company, the studio run by Simon Bent, with Gillian Bent (and Scully, their Cairn Terrier). The foundry specialises in producing typefaces that are both conceptually and visually distinctive, challenging preconceived ideas of what a font should look like. Indeed, in many of its typefaces, legibility has taken such a backseat, it’s reclining in the back of a stretch limo. The fonts are wonderfully experimental. Take a look, for instance, at the illustrative display typeface Alexandro (created out of a yearning to do something “downright weird”) or the joyful and psychedelic Molten, an exploration into semi-liquid letterforms.

Wei Huang
Unceeded Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung land, Australia

For Wei Huang, type design exists as a medium between “craft, technology and aesthetics”. His high-tech types, which jump from spiky, experimental exhibition typefaces to widely accessible sans fonts show true diversity of craft. With an array of past clients including Caroline Polachek, Google, Microsoft and WARP Records, his work is widely disseminated over all corners of the cultural landscape. In 2014, Wei released the open source typeface Work Sans through Google Fonts which is now one of the most popular fonts on Google, viewed one billion times a week online. In 2022, he was awarded the Type Director Club’s Ascenders competition. Wei's dream commission is to design typefaces for video games.

CONCLUSION

Global Type first began as a sprawling spreadsheet. But over the past few months it has moulded into, what we hope, is a snapshot of talent working across the typography industry today. Aside from unearthing a whole host of global talent, we've found individuals crafting communities as well as letterforms.

From those who came to the medium via late night graffiti treks to curious young creatives admiring signage from Metro Manila to Cairo and Oslo, the designers featured in this report have proven typography's potential to connect perhaps more than any other visual medium. It provides opportunities to present oneself or a small community through to country-wide histories, and all through the particular formation of a character set.

A large part of this realisation for us has been the thoughtful designers who offered their time to discuss the typographic scenes in their respective regions from South America, Central and Eastern Europe to South East Asia. In one essay, Chantra Malee, Aasawari Kulkarni and Nadine Chahine joined us to discuss the imbalance of female leadership in this industry. From the difficulties paid-for design awards place on designers operating with alternate currencies, to the armour female-identifying type designers have to wear in male-dominated environments, or the lack of diacritics restricting the written voice of Vietnamese designers, despite all the power typography holds there is plenty more work to be executed to ensuring the industry is balanced, fair and, in turn, fruitful for emerging creatives joining the scene in future.

Global Type has been an immense project for learning in the It's Nice That team. It has shaped into a report far beyond the initial directory of talent we'd originally planned, all thanks to the voices of those featured. And, although this marks the end of the report, we look forward to further investigating type design far beyond the regions of our own, and hope Global Type encourages you to do the same.

COLOPHON

A special thank you to Will Knight and Africa Pombo who spent days locked in a meeting room looking at over 400 type designers and foundries. An additional thank you to Ruby Boddington, Đức Cao, Fer Cozzi, Future Fonts, 3Type and Antonio Carrau for your research help and advice. Of course a huge thank you to the 100 designers and foundries featured for your cooperation (and patience!).

Global Type was developed by It’s Nice That’s Creative Insights team, a new department that carries out research and analyses visual trends in the creative world. We also do this and similar work for in-house teams at brands and agencies around the globe. To learn more about how our Creative Insights department can support you and your team’s creative goals, drop Sophie a line on sd@itsnicethat.com.

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FOUNDRY	LOCATION	TYPEFACE
NORTH AMERICA		
Typeji	New York, United States	Min Sans
Pangram Pangram	Montreal, Canada	Right Slab
Vocal Type	Washington DC, United States	Eva
Nuform Type	Berkeley, United States	BRZO
Contrast Foundry	Sunnyvale, United States	Flic Flac
Dum Dum Studio	Monterrey, Mexico	Clarel
Jessica Gracia	Mexico City, Mexico	Gracia Regular
Biliktü	Toronto, Canada	Arbeiter
Future Fonts	Oregon, United States	Zafran
SOUTH AMERICA		
Inari Type	Curitiba, Brazil	PP Eiko
Fer Cozzi	Buenos Aires, Argentina	Rosalind
Bastarda	Bogotá, Colombia	Salsa BT
Supercontinente	San José, Costa Rica	Segueta
Reset	Montevideo, Uruguay	Thundra
Blackletra	São Paulo, Brazil	Haltrix
Nodo	Buenos Aires, Argentina	Bau
AFRICA		
Rana Wassef	Cairo, Egypt	Remix
Valentino Vergan	Nairobi, Kenya	Kelyon
Tondi Type Foundry	Johannesburg, South Africa	Bebop
Boharat	Cairo, Egypt	Qoronfull Arabic
Issam Type	Ain Taujdate, Morocco	Magide
SOUTHERN EUROPE		
Good Eggs Type Foundry	Milan, Italy	Diaspora
Milieu Grotesque	Lisbon, Portugal	Chapeau
Atypical	Thessaloniki, Greece	Miasma
60 Kilos	Jaén, Spain	Desultory Galipos
Collettivo	Milan, Italy	Halibut
WESTERN EUROPE		
APFEL Type Foundry	London, England	Periferia
Out Of The Dark	Geneva, Switzerland	Blitz
WiseType	Rotterdam, The Netherlands	Zaft
Bold Decisions	Amsterdam, The Netherlands	Glossy
Jung-Lee Type Foundry	Amsterdam, The Netherlands	Impact
Diorama Type Partners	Paris, France	Bet
Extraset	Geneva, Switzerland	Quarz
Kia Tasbihgou	London, England	Peace 2020

Global Type		Around the World in 100 Foundries	Section 14		Conclusion
Foundry	Location	Typeface	Foundry	Location	Typeface
Western Europe (cont.)			Central & Eastern Europe (cont.)		
Boom-Promphans	The Hague, The Netherlands	Crushual	Displaay	Prague, Czech Republic	Bagoss
HAL Typefaces	Berlin, Germany	Twins	Kometa	Brno, Czech Republic	Victor Narrow
Signal Type Foundry	Dublin, Ireland	Kōsetsu	The Middle East		
Type Lab	Paris, France	Nikita	Hey Porter!	Amman, Jordan	Endama Inktrap
Hungarumlaut	Graz, Austria	Mohol	Lana Soufeh	Amman, Jordan	Oldstyle Con 1
F37® Foundry	Manchester, England	Gela Britain Condensed	Alaa Tameem	Jeddah, Saudi Arabia	The Machette
Lo-ol	Geneva, Switzerland	Civilitate	Fontef	Tel Aviv, Israel	Tel Aviv Brutalist
PolyType	Glasgow, Scotland	Gela	South Asia		
NaN	Berlin, Germany	Hyena	Vani Jain	Mumbai, India	Bucky Peach
Bahman Eslami	The Hague, The Netherlands	Fedra Serif Arabic	Rawaz Hammas	Karachi, Pakistan	Marzi
Altiplano	Lausanne, Switzerland	Nirvana	Universal Thirst	Bangalore, India	Ilai Bottom
PFA Typefaces	Berlin, Germany	Laminat	South East Asia		
Plain Form	Paris, France	Ready Active	Dương Trần	Hanoi, Vietnam	Phunu
Boulevard Lab	Edinburgh, Scotland	Avenue	Hrfttype	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	Atti
Bouk Ra	Paris, France	Hanol	Yellow Type Foundry	Tuy Hoa, Vietnam	Moi Ngoi
Charlotte Rohde	Amsterdam, The Netherland	New Edge 666	Đức Cao	Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam	Swirl
The Nordics			Jo Malinis	Metro Manila, Philippines	Salbabida
Or Type	Reykjavík, Iceland	Separat	Power Type Foundry	Makassar, Indonesia	Neue Power
No Bad Type	Helsinki, Finland	Cigarillo	East Asia		
Store Norske Skriftkompani	Volda, Norway	Store Norske Maleri	YMG Type Foundry	Seoul, South Korea	ABC Favorit Hangul
Good Type Foundry	West Cost, Norway	Kosmos	3Type	Shanghai, China	Memo
Schick Toikka	Helsinki, Finland	Krana	Zin Nagao	Tokyo, Japan	ZNVT 17
PlayType	Copenhagen, Denmark	Melanzane	Huoshan Type	Beijing, China	HuoshanXiuzhu Sans
Bloom	Stockholm, Sweden	Knopp	Moolong Type	Tokyo, Japan	Moolong
The Pyte Foundry	Oslo, Norway	Pyte Legacy Library	Boomi Park	Seoul, South Korea	Boomi
Central & Eastern Europe			Dong-hoon Han	Seoul, South Kora	TlabPsychedelic
Kulture Type	Prishtinë, Kosovo	Lugati	Oceania		
Tüpokompanii	Tallinn, Estonia	Bougie	Klim Type Foundry	Te Whanganui-a-Tara/Wellington, Aotearoa/New Zealand	Pitch Sans
Ani Dimitrova	Sofia, Bulgaria	Faddie	Gemma Mahoney	Melbourne, Australia	Daze Display
Kyiv Type Foundry	Kyiv, Ukraine	KTF Compact	Jazlyn Fung	Melbourne, Australia	HappyFat
NaumType	Belgrade, Serbia	Juxta	Matter Of Sorts	Unceded Wurundjeri land, Naarm/Melbourne, Australia	Turnery
Threedotstype	Wrocław, Poland	Rubin	Metis Digital	Melbourne, Australia	MF Molten
Shriftovik Type Foundry	Tblisi, Georgia	SKParnik Regular	Wei Huang	Unceded Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung land, Australia	Innocence Latterve 4
Kateryna Korolevtseva	Kyiv, Ukraine	Expromt			
Florian Karsten	Brno, Czech Republic	FK Raster Grotesk Compact			
Mykolas Saulytis	Vilnius, Lithuania	Mihael Jordan			
Setup Type	Bratislava, Slovakia	Odesta			
Type Salon	Ljubljana, Slovenia	Wesna			
Joanna Angulska	Poznań, Poland	Papaik			
Suva Type Foundry	Tallinn, Estonia	Akijo			
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The insights reports is a new department that carries out research and analyses visual trends in the creative world. This team will be publishing downloadable reports like this one throughout the year, so keep an eye out for these over the coming months.