Type is Beautiful: The Story of Fifty Remarkable Fonts

Simon Loxley

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Fonts are everywhere. You may even have a favorite serif or sans serif. But have you ever wondered who took the bold steps to create it? Behind every great font is a great story, and, in this fascinating cultural history, graphic designer and design writer Simon Loxley covers more than five hundred years in the history of typography—from the oldest printed typeface used in the Gutenberg Bible right up to the present day.

Type is Beautiful traces the history of fifty remarkable fonts. Thoroughly researched and visually exciting, it takes readers through the story of each font's creation and distinct characteristics, as well as why it succeeded or failed. Some of the fonts were commissioned for major commercial or cultural projects. Edward Johnston's iconic Johnston Sans, for instance, was created for the London Underground and remained there exclusively until a redesign in the 1980s. Other fonts became culturally significant unintentionally. The designer of the controversial Comic Sans created the typeface to fill the need for a font to fit the speech bubbles for a Microsoft program, never expecting it to become one of the world's favorite—and most-maligned—fonts. Along the way, Loxley gives readers an unforgettable cast of characters, including Johannes Gutenberg, William Caslon, Nicolas Jenson, Stanley Morison, William Morris, and Thomas Cobden-Sanderson, the English artist and bookbinder who famously "bequeathed" the unique metal type created for his failed Doves Press to the Thames, casting the type into the river to prevent its future use.

Brimming with fascinating facts, *Type is Beautiful* is a highly informative and entertaining trip through a lesser-known aspect of history that turns out to have major significance for print and design culture. From Blackletter to Baskerville and Bodoni, you will find yourself looking at fonts with a newfound appreciation.

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