

Adrian Frutiger, intermediary between the one who creates and the one who receives

Adrian Frutiger: Occupation: Graphic designer.

The typographer can get involved in scientific and technical aspects, particularly with the new composing methods. He can also devote himself to artistic aspects, where he has to solve space problems--problems of a white page that he has to divide and make come alive. The typographer is the one who renders thoughts accessible to everybody, he is the intermediary between the one who thinks, the one who creates, and the one who receives. This is one of the most beautiful professions--and also one of the most difficult.

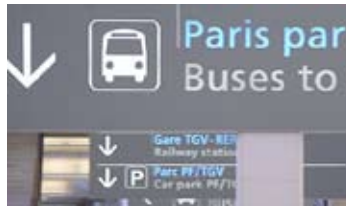


I became enraptured by the simplicity of the abstract sign, by the magic of these twenty-six letters which, by themselves, can encompass the entire world's thought. I feel, for instance, that the inside white spaces are more important than the outside contours of a letter. The letters of an alphabet are like the various elements of a house: the material of typography is the black, and it is the typographer's task, with the help of this black, to capture space, to create harmonious whites inside the letters as well as between them. A letter only exists in its relation to the others. In addition, the look of a page printed in a given typeface must be the same in all languages. This is where the problem of the frequency of letters arises.

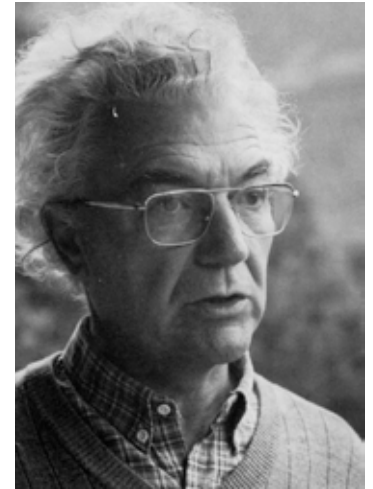
In typography, as in other art forms, the "hand," the "stamp" of the one who creates the character is recognizable. Once the typographer has acquired the full knowledge of his profession and the skill of his hands corresponds to his sensitivity and logic, he can no longer escape from an aesthetic shaped by his temperament, his education, his cultural heritage, and the experiences of many years' work.

It is only in retrospect that one realizes that one is the child of one's own epoch, that one submits to one's time. For instance, the style of Univers was in the air after the War. Although this is a bit of an exaggeration, I could almost say that it was anticipated, that there was a need for it to be created.

My way of thinking can be described as organized; everything has to pass through my head. To a degree, I lack spontaneity; my creative mechanism is always based on logic, on a text, on a development; it could well be that this renders my work more understandable than that of others, more communicable.



I am of Germanic origin, since I was born in the German section of Switzerland, and have received a German-type scholastic and professional education; for this I am grateful. With the methods and knowledge acquired there, I have been able to do more constructive, rational, better-organized work. And, since I have also led a very active life in a Latin country, the two influences complement each other. The result is a combination of qualities which have undoubtedly contributed to the success of Univers--which is accepted just as favorably in the Latin countries as it is in the Germanic ones.



I believe that in a person's life, his **area of specialization** becomes more and more demanding and may result, in a certain way, in a loss of his freedom. For me, the retreat from this specialization is in the applied use of typography and letters. The studio is very important to me; without it I'd be in an ivory tower. I need contact with the concrete and the daily application of the materials I create, even if, as is obvious, I don't necessarily use my own type faces or the machines for which I am designing. It's different with the illustration of books. I relinquish the "alphanumeric skeleton" when expressing my personal philosophical or religious thought. It is true that I love this work also, but I would not be unhappy if I had nothing but the "alphanumeric skeleton": it is really so rich. And besides even in the realm of personal aesthetic expression, I'd never be an Artist with a capital "A."

