Helvetica

COMD 3504 OL-02

History about Helvetica

- Helvetica is one of the world's most commonly used fonts and everyone knows about it, even people who aren't designers. It is used both in advertising and publishing.

- It is from a sans-serif family.

- It was originally called Neue Hass Grotesk. The first version of Helvetica was created in 1957 by Max Miedinger a Swiss typeface designer and Eduard Hoffman, director of the Haas'sche Schriftgiesserei.

- Helvetica is used in many company logos and other marketing materials that we see today with its sleek lines and modern look.

- Helvetica is commonly chosen by graphic designers because of its neutral design that makes it compatible with most types of content and design projects without drawing attention away from the message. Helvetica is used not only in online but also in printed materials.

Max Miedinger

- Max Miedinger was a Swiss typeface designer.
- He is best known for creating the Neue Haas Grotesk typeface in 1957.
- Max was born on December 24, 1910, Zürich, Switzerland
- At the age of 26, he worked as a typographer in the advertising department of Globus.
- After ten years working at Globus, he gained employment with Haas Type Foundry as a representative.
- In 1954, Max created his first typeface for Haas, Pro Arte, a condensed slab serif.
- He died on March 8, 1980, Zürich, Switzerland

Eduard Hoffman

- Eduard Hoffmann was a director of the Haas'sche Schriftgiesserei (Haas Type Foundry) in Münchenstein, Switzerland, where Max Miedinger also worked.
- He was born on May 26, 1892, Zürich, Switzerland
- He died in 1980

How Helvetica was created ?

- Eduard Hoffman with Max Miedinger, designed an updated sans-serif typeface to compete with the popular sans-serif Akzidenz Grotesk.
- This resulted in a typeface called Neue Haas Grotesk, later renamed Helvetica.
- Their goal was to design a new sans-serif typeface that could compete in the Swiss market with the goal to create a neutral typeface that will give no additional meaning.
- Miedinger wanted a font that was clear to the eye and could be used in a variety of ways.

Many people confuse Helvetica with other san-serif fonts like **Arial**. There are more details in Helvetica that makes it different from other fonts.

- It's characters have vertical or horizontal terminations in the stroke.

- Helvetica focuses on the space surrounding it's letters.

- Helvetica has a monotone stroke weight.

- The font is easy to read while in motion, which is why you will often see this font used for airlines or automobile logos.

- In more detail, Helvetica has several interesting features like the negative (white) space surrounding the letters and the lines comprising the font were perfectly balanced. The strokes are always horizontal or vertical, and never diagonal which creates a visual effect that was simultaneously bold and neutral.

Different type of Helvetica:

- Helvetica Light: Designed by Erich Shultz-Anker and Arthur Ritzel.

- Helvetica Compressed: Designed by Matthew Carter.

- Helvetica Rounded: Designed in 1978 and incorporates a more rounded stroke.

- Neue Helvetica: A redesign on Helvetica in 1983 which gave the typeface a more unified height and width.

Helvetica

Arial

CEGJQR acegrt 12359

Helvetica

CEGJQR acegrt 12359

Arial

The switch in Helvetica

- In 1959, Mike Parker was appointed director of an American firm that sold Linotype typewriters.
- He was given the task of expanding the font library owned by the company, and between **1959** and **1981** he added almost 1,000.
- In **1960**, Parker decided to adopt Neue Haas Grotesk (Helvetica), and redesigned and developed the family of fonts, which created the new font that was renamed Helvetica, which means "Swiss" in Latin.
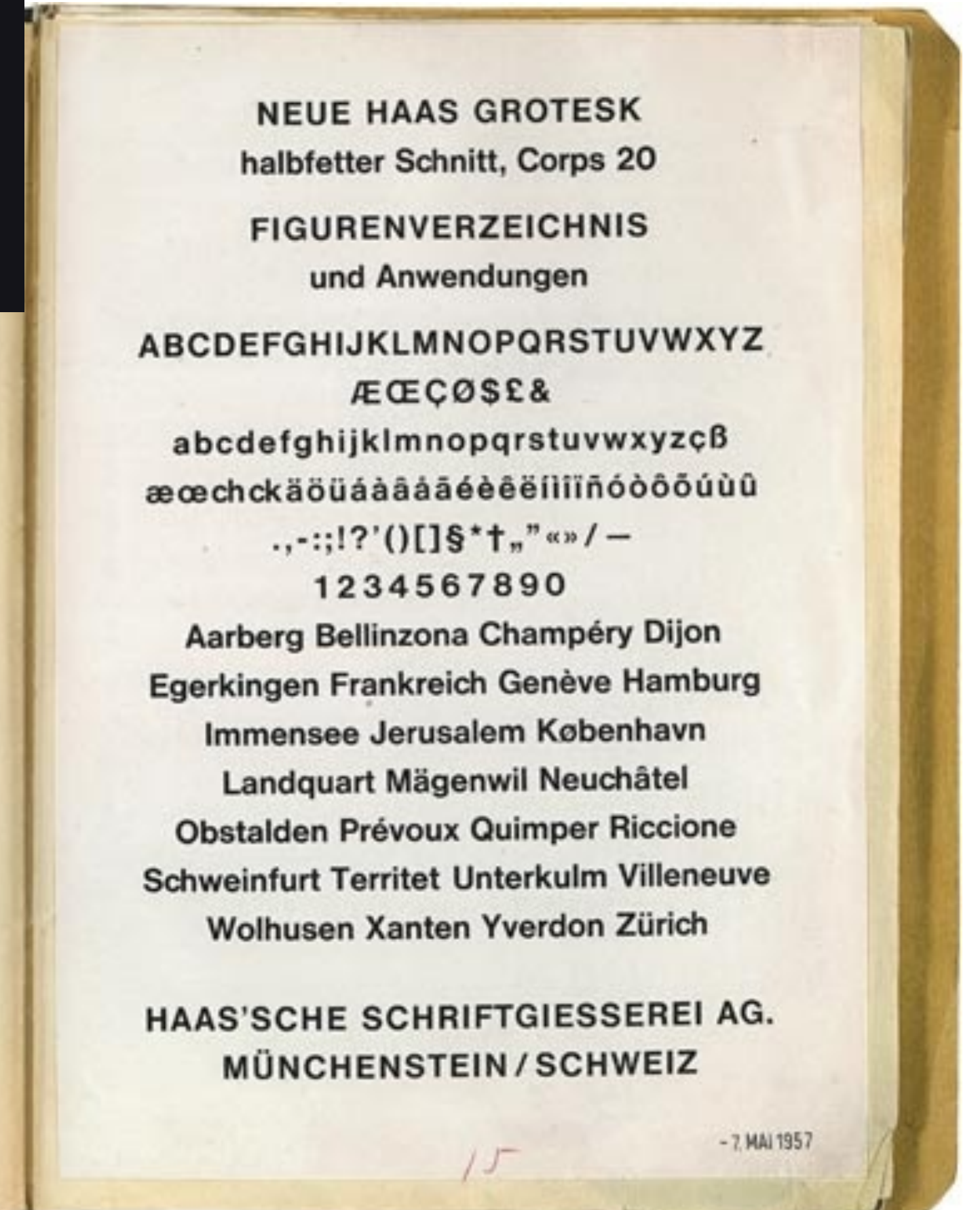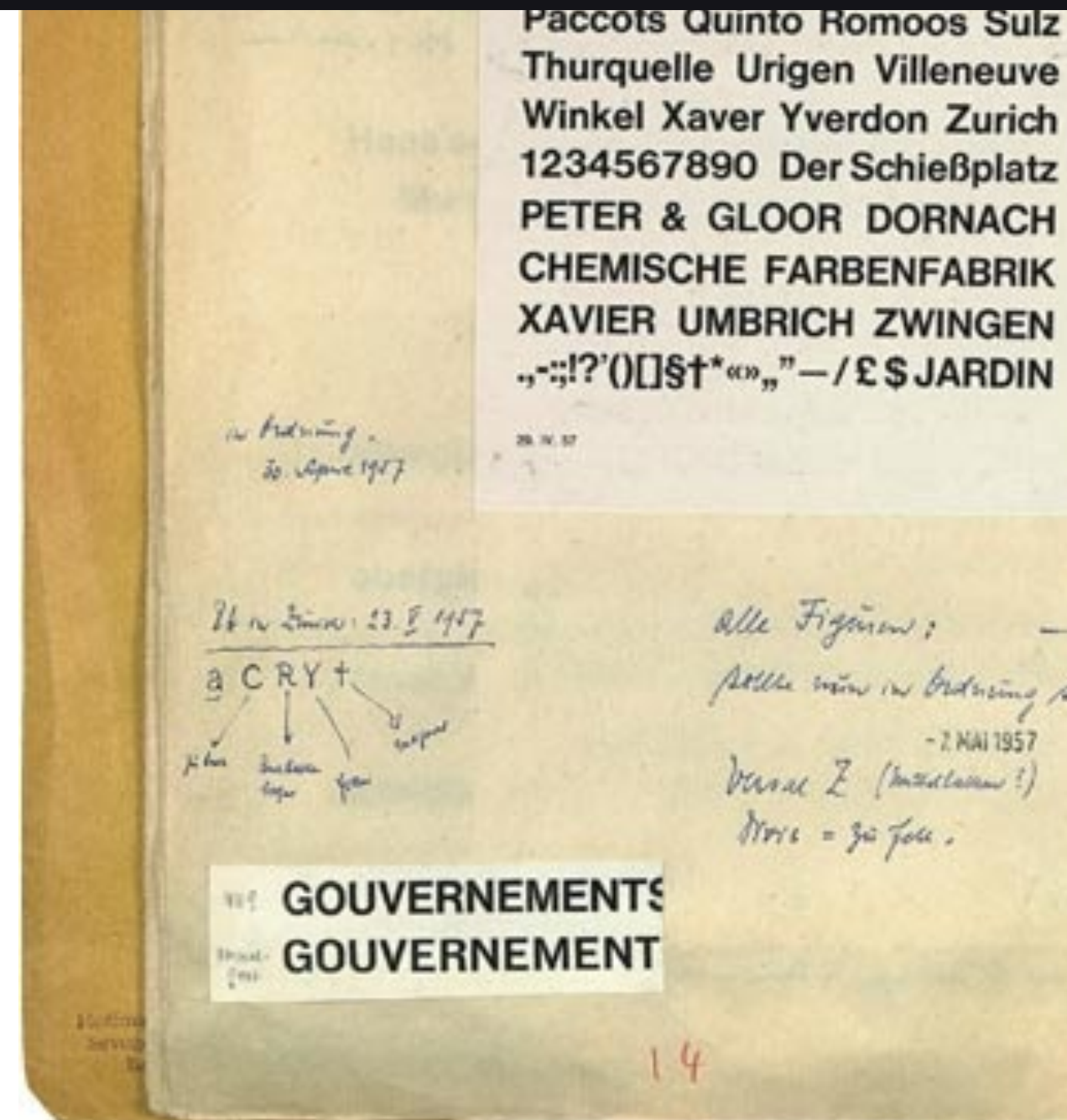
Helvetica® 1957

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"The Benchmark Sans"
Designed by Max Miedinger
Released by Linotype in 1957

Technical / Grotesque Sans Serif
Product I.D. LV126276OP
Material No. 287126276

Technical / Grotesque Sans Serif
Product I.D. LV126276OP
Material No. 287126276

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GOUVERNEMENTS
GOUVERNEMENT

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Immensee Jerusalem København
Landquart Mägenwil Neuchâtel
Obstalden Prévoux Quimper Riccione
Schweinfurt Territet Unterkulm Villeneuve
Wolhusen Xanten Yverdon Zürich

HAAS'SCHE SCHRIFTGIESSEREI AG.
MÜNCHENSTEIN/SCHWEIZ

This is Helvetica® Now
by Charles, Steve, Juan
Hendrik & Alexander
of the Monotype Studio
after Max & Edouard

tica® Now
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& Edouard

Helvetica

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A quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

The subway map of the city of New York

- You can see tall buildings or you can see rodent filled streets. You can eat hot dogs, and ride cabs all across the boroughs. But no Big Apple experience is complete without a trip on the New York City subway, whether you use it on a daily basis, or a first-time visitor using it to navigate your way through NYC, you're one of five million who use the 116-year-old subway system every day.
- Massimo Vignelli, an Italian designer who worked in a number of areas including packaging, houseware, public signage. He was born on January 10, 1931and died on May 27, 2014. In **1965**, Massimo and his business partner, Bob Noorda, established Unimark International, a new design consultancy in New York.
- Around this time, the Massimo and Noorda were introduced to Mildred Constantine, an influential design curator at the Museum of Modern Art. She recommended them to her contacts at the NYC Transit Authority, the operators of the city's subway system.
- Desperate for a transformation of their nightmarish system, the Authority immediately signed Unimark on. Massimo and Noorda needed to understand what billions of people were looking for, where they would look for it and, ultimately, provide it, in the least confusing way possible.

- In Noorda's own words, "their system was a mess."
- Towards the end of the **1960s**, Helvetica was chosen by the designers Massimo Vignelli and Bob Noorda to create the new signage for the New York Metro and the Graphic Standards Manual, one of the most famous visual identity manuals in the history of graphic design.
- The font remained one of Vignelli's trademark features, significantly boosting Helvetica's international renown.

"As a design consultancy, particularly in the sense that we think of design consultancies today, this was the beginning of when graphic designers realized that they could make consulting their practice," says Alexander, Design Curator at the Herb Lubalin Study Center of Design and Typography. As both a design curator and a professional designer, Alexander has a unique perspective—knowing why something works in a historical context, as well as how a designer might have reached that design solution.

"It wasn't so much making logos and designing posters—it was more a holistic approach towards applying design strategy to business and business interests. Graphic design was just half the story. For them, the approach was to try to figure out what was wrong and, in effect, fix the broken system."

Other use of Helvetica

- Steve Jobs decided to include Helvetica in the fonts available on the first Macintosh, paving the way for the spread of the digital version of the typeface.
- Steve applied what he learned in the calligraphy class to the Macintosh project he led.
- Ever since then, Apple's home operating systems, whether it is Mac or iOS, have embedded many beautiful and practical fonts.
- If you were a user of the iPhone 4S, iPhone 5, or iPhone 6 when they were first released, or ever used Yosemite as your Mac's operating system, your digital life was dominated by the typeface **Helvetica**.
- Ever since then, Helvetica has been the key font of Apple.

"Because I had dropped out and didn't have to take the normal classes, I decided to take a calligraphy class to learn how to do this. I learned about serif and san serif typefaces, about varying the amount of space between different letter combinations, about what makes great typography great. It was beautiful, historical, artistically subtle in a way that science can't capture, and I found it fascinating."- Steve Jobs

Airlines

Clothing

American Apparel

American Apparel

NARS

NARS

Department stores

⊙ TARGET

TARGET

Tech

THE NORTH FACE

THE NORTH FACE

Microsoft®

Microsoft

Vehicles

MOTOR HARLEY-DAVIDSON CYCLES

HARLEY DAVIDSON

Wrap up

- Helvetica is also known as "the little black dress" of typography.

- New York's MOMA featured Helvetica, and the typeface won multiple awards and recognition because of it.

- Some negative side of Helvetica is that it's very low in legibility. *Legibility is the ease at which letters can be differentiated from each other*. (Example: This is Helvetica)

- In 2007, director Gary developed a documentary film about Helvetica detailing how this typeface has shaped the culture of typography and design.

- After its release, the film was featured by MOMA for nearly a year, was nominated for the "Truer Than Fiction Award" at the **2008** Independent Spirit Awards.

Work cited

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