

Proposal

Title - Type and Culture: Modernizing and Redeeming Blackletter

Program of Study – Studio and Digital Arts

Presentation Type – PowerPoint

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Woven throughout history are visual representations of society, language, and culture that provide identifiers of civilizations. For ancient Egypt, it was hieroglyphics. For Rome, it was the inscriptional capitals such as those visible on Trajan's Column. For Germany, it was Blackletter. This presentation will first examine the relationship between type and culture in Germany, beginning with the historical origins of their typographic identity then tracing the style's rise and fall through modern times. In more recent history the Nazi's used and subsequently denounced Blackletter during World War II, and since then it has only existed on the fringes of society – not yet finding a place in the mainstream market that is saturated with typographic revivals. Some say it has been forever tainted and will never reemerge on the scene, not only because it is often associated with a brutal time in history but because it is not legible to the modern eye. It is the opinion of the presenter, however, that typographic styles that have been given a negative cultural connotation can in fact be redeemed and used for good. In order to demonstrate this, a Blackletter-inspired typeface re-imagined for modern use has been created. This typeface has been carefully constructed to combine the most identifiable characteristics of Blackletter with the more recognizable roman form for the purpose of increased legibility at small sizes. Particular care was taken to reference Blackletter specimen that have no ties to the Nazi regime and every attempt was made to bring a more organic feel to the typeface. The result is Cathedral Gothic, a

gentle and reliable text-weight Blackletter that could help to bring about a revival of the style that would see it finally redeemed and integrated into mainstream society