gill sans

Gill Sans, a typeface inspired by Edward Johnston's type for the London Underground Railroad of 1916, was designed by Eric Gill in 1928. Stanley Morison, who had seen Gill's letters on a store front sign, urged the designer to develop the letters into a typeface. Morison's foresight resulted in the design and release of Gill Sans by Monotype in 1929. It quickly became the most popular sans-serif typeface in Great Britain. This typeface is thought to be Gill's most significant design accomplishment.

Gill Sans is a humanist face meticulously patterned after classic roman character proportions; this gained it a reputation as the most legible san-serif design of the time. It is interesting to note that Gill Sans is very similar in structure to Perpetua, another of Gill's most popular type designs. As a text face, however, Gill Sans is not without flaws. It has been criticized for having a book weight that is too heavy and a light weight that is too light for running text. When set as text, Gill Sans is informal and friendly in appearance. It was designed in four weights, italics (slanted roman letters), a condensed face and Gill Shadow, a three-dimensional version.

Some of the more distinctive earmarks that characterize this face are an M with a high, pointed central junction; an R with a curved leg; a j with a short tail; and a W and V with pointed bases. In the italic, the stem and the bowl of the p overlap and the a is a single-storied letter.

While Gill Sans is not as popular among typographic designers as it once was, it is still adventurously used by designers for a wide variety of applications. The legibility and visual resonance of the face provide Gill Sans with a permanent home in type specimen books.

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