

**IN-**  
**FI**  
**-NI**

**IN**

Specimen of Infini  
a typeface designed  
by Sandrine Nugue,  
commissioned by  
the  Centre national  
des arts plastiques

**FINI**



20/24 pt  
roman

As part of the “Graphisme en France 2014” program, the Centre national des arts plastiques (CNAP, National center of visual arts) has commissioned a new typeface to be freely downloadable by the public at large.

In addition to fostering the creation of a new typeface, this public commission also provides an opportunity to raise general awareness of type design. Although exposed daily to a wide range of typographical creations, many people are still oblivious to the type designer’s craft, to the skills and know-how required to practice this profession.

The Infini typeface conceived by Sandrine Nugue is a decidedly contemporary design. Inspired by epigraphic writing, its various styles – roman, italic and bold – are the upshot of a fruitful dialogue with



the history of typography, whose milestones are retraced by Sébastien Morlighem below in a brief history of writing. Infini also admits of a creative and playful use of words, pictograms and ligatures.

The various studies, sketches, notes and digital files produced by Sandrine Nugue in the course of her creative undertaking have now been added to the CNAP collection. This public commission attests to the CNAP's interest in contemporary type design and gives Infini a permanent and inalienable place in the history of typography.

Yves Robert,  
director of the Centre national  
des arts plastiques



## Opening up the infinite



The history of mankind begins with various forms of reading: reading a planet, a landscape, the oceans that surround the land, the sky crisscrossed by birds in flight and, after nightfall, dotted with constellations. Deciphering the world involves the ongoing challenge of reading, a reading that precedes thought, language, graphics, writing. We have been “reading” since the awakening of consciousness, speaking for more than two million years, drawing for more than forty thousand years and writing for more than five thousand. The relationships continuously forged by these practices are as unlimited as the time and space in which they spread and evolve are limited.

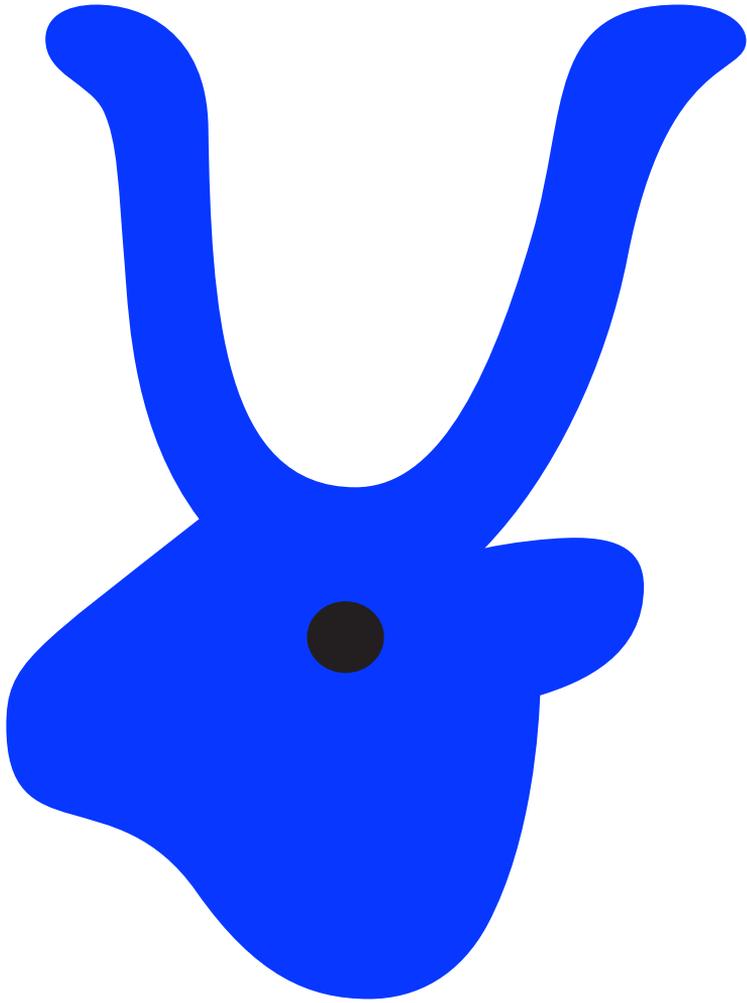
Abstract motifs carved into limestone, wild animals painted on cave walls, bunches of hands captured through the projection of damp pigments: the oldest images continually engage us, and their youthfulness never ceases to amaze us. They set the scene for an origin without origins, a placeless place, for a here and now that always escapes us. This is why we never stop recreating this scene, each of us for ourselves, day after day, indefatigably adding to the narrative of the pursuit of meaning by tracing our own lines.

And every written trace is nothing without a surface to receive it, a setting for its appearance. All writing needs to be sustained and circumscribed in order to exist. Everything we see would be nothing without what is invisible and seems not to be seen, an absence, a blank, an interval that separates the signs, determines their arrangement and their rhythms. Once they had

come to be arranged, images of things broke free, little by little, from reality, establishing, in the words of Stéphane Mallarmé, «ce pli de sombre dentelle, qui retient l'infini, tissé par mille» (“this fold of dark lace that retains the infinite, woven of a thousand threads”): writing, which represents, relates and transmits language, languages, politics, religions, trade, prose and poetry; which made its way into public space and onto coins, papyrus scrolls, parchment codices, diaries, love letters...

Then came typography, opening up a dialogue between the forms of writing and the writing of forms, solidifying them even while rendering them moveable and variable. What writing lost in vitality, it gained in ubiquity when it became typographical, ink deposited on paper or clouds of pixels on a screen. But typography is not just captured, domesticated writing, it is also a force of exploration and reversal capable of bringing back an image, the images of things at its core.

What the character in front of your eyes, as Pascal Quinard puts it, allows us to see and read is that “there is a learning that never encounters knowing – and that is infinite.” The infinity of thought, language, writing, typography, meaning – gushing infinitely.



PHOENICIA



EGYPT



SINAI



GREECE



ROME

## From Pictogram to Writing

18/22 pt  
roman

It was in Sumer, in southern Mesopotamia, that the images of things – a palm tree, a vase, a star – simplified figures, were carved into tablets made of clay from the banks of the Tigris to become pictograms. First bearing the name of a thing, the word, the idea (logogram), then the sound of that name, then a sound in and of itself, the syllable (phonogram), the pictogram metamorphosed into an ideogram, throwing off its relation to the real thing, transforming into an abstraction, an element of the first system of writing, cuneiform.

In Egypt, in China, other forms of writing appeared; Phoenician writing emerged in the Near East and spread throughout the Mediterranean basin. As the head of the Phoenician bull led to the Hebrew aleph, then to the letter A, the alphabet succeeded in transcending the images of things, raising itself to the level of the voice, languages, law, narrative, of transactions it was to record, arrange and archive.

THE

EMERGENCE OF

CAPITALS

THE FIRST

GREEK ALPHABET

DERIVES FROM

PHOENICIAN

WRITING

AROUND

THE NINTH

CENTURY BC.

THE PHOENICIAN

ALPHABET

# A NEW PHONETIC LETTERS TOOK ON ONLY CERTAIN CONSONANTS CONTAINING

value in order to transcribe Greek vowels: aleph, for example, became alpha. Several forms of these archaic capital letters coexisted, varying from one city-state to another. The direction in which they were written and read varied as well, from spirals to boustrophedon, which runs left to right and then right to left like oxen plowing a field.

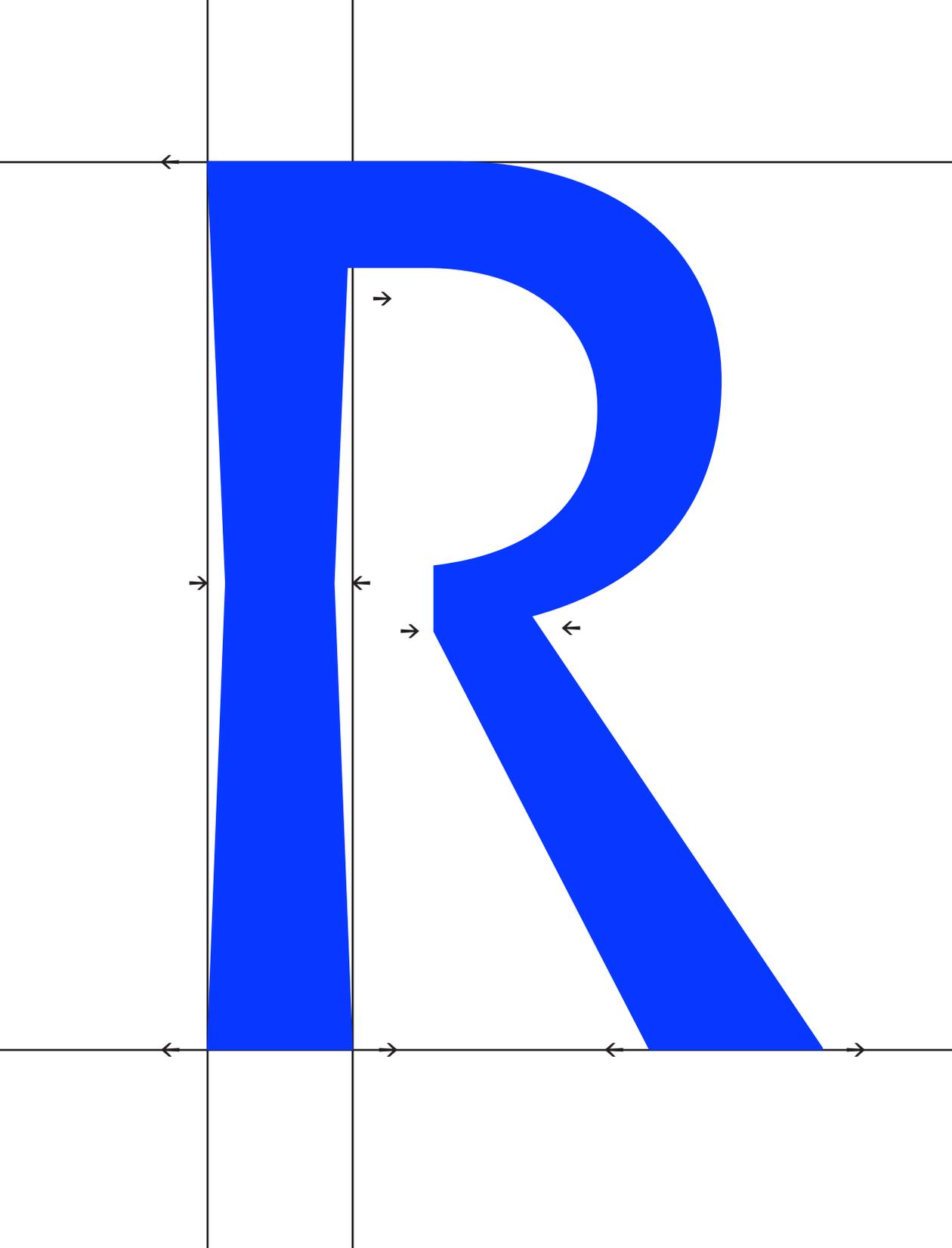
In the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, Athenian democracy united the provinces under one rule and one system of writing: the twenty-four capital letters of the Ionian alphabet took permanent form, carved on stone tablets placed in public spaces for all to see – the gods and the people – henceforth running left to right in regular lines. At about the same time another style of lapidary inscription from Greece passed through Etruria, maturing into the roman capital.

This is where Infini finds its foundation, drawing inspiration more specifically from a model popular between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> centuries BC. Rather than drawing on later, imperial Roman capitals, which have been reinterpreted so many times, Infini champions the revival of an unsung and forgotten form. However, “it’s absolutely not a matter of going back to a source (you can never go back),” says type designer Roger Excoffon, “but of summing up the available data.” The model in this sense serves as the point of departure for a journey punctuated by encounters, reunions, surprises, an exploration of the Roman alphabet; a new beginning, as every new type design strives – or ought to strive – to be. Infini is the dream, the story and the survey.

## THE INCISE CAPITAL

THE WORK OF HAMMER AND CHISEL SCULPTING THE SURFACE, CARVING THE HARDNESS OF MARBLE, LIMESTONE AND GRANITE, IS REFLECTED IN INFINI'S AESTHETIC POSITION, WHICH PAYS TRIBUTE TO THE FIGURE OF THE INCISED LETTER, WITH ITS UNEQUAL PROPORTIONS AND CONCAVE SHAPES, STRIPPED OF THE SERIFS SO EMBLEMATIC OF IMPERIAL ROME'S MONUMENTAL INSCRIPTIONS.

THE ABSENCE OF SERIFS IS MADE UP FOR BY FLARING ENDS, WHICH ANCHOR THE CHARACTERS AND ENHANCE THEIR SOLIDITY. IF THIS ASSERTIVE SILHOUETTE SEEMS HEWN WITH AN AX, THE INCISION ONLY ADDS TO ITS WARMTH, EFFECTING A DECISIVE TURNING-POINT IN THE TALE OF CAPITALS.



HOMONYM

HOMONYM

PARAGRAPH

PARAGRAPH

POSTERITY

POSTERITY

## THE APPEARANCE OF LIGATURES

18,5/22 pt  
roman

THE EVOLUTION OF ROMAN CAPITALS DURING THE FIRST CENTURIES OF CHRISTIANITY WAS MARKED BY THE APPEARANCE OF LIGATURES, THE CONJUNCTION OF TWO, THREE, OR FOUR LETTERS JOINED TOGETHER OR COMBINED. THEY MET THE NEED TO CARVE LONGER INSCRIPTIONS IN A GIVEN SPACE WHILE MAINTAINING A CONSISTENT BALANCE FOR EACH LINE, SOMETIMES TO THE DETRIMENT OF LEGIBILITY WHEN THEIR USE BECAME WIDESPREAD: THE TEXT WAS THEREBY TRANSFORMED INTO A SOPHISTICATED VISUAL MESH, TO THE GREAT DELIGHT OF PALEOGRAPHERS IN SEARCH OF DECRYPTED WORK. MIGRATING FROM STONE TO PARCHMENT, LIGATURES TOOK MANY SHAPES ACCORDING TO THE STYLE OF WRITING, AND PROLIFERATED IN BOTH UPPER AND LOWER CASE TYPOGRAPHIES. SOME LIGATURES, PASSED DOWN TO POSTERITY, ARE STILL DISCREETLY OPERATIVE IN DIGITAL TYPE FAMILIES, WHEREAS OTHER LIGATURES PROVIDE THEIR ESSENTIAL LEITMOTIF.

35/42 pt  
roman

THE SERIES OF  
LIGATURES INCLUDED  
IN INFINI,  
HONORING  
ITS DEBT TO THE  
LAPIDARY TRADITION  
AND BRINGING IT  
BACK INTO PLAY,  
MAKES IT POSSIBLE  
TO MAXIMIZE THE  
GRAPHIC VALUE  
OF A NAME, TITLE  
OR LOGO TYPE,

AND TO RHYTHMIZE  
HEADINGS AND  
PARAGRAPHS IN  
THE MOST DIVERSE  
LAYOUTS. THIS  
SERIES CONSTITUTES  
A SAMPLE THAT  
CAN BE READILY  
EXTENDED TO COVER  
EVERY POSSIBLE  
COMBINATION—THIS  
BEING ONE INFINITE  
SIDE OF INFINI.

## From Writing to Typography

9/11 pt  
roman  
+  
italic

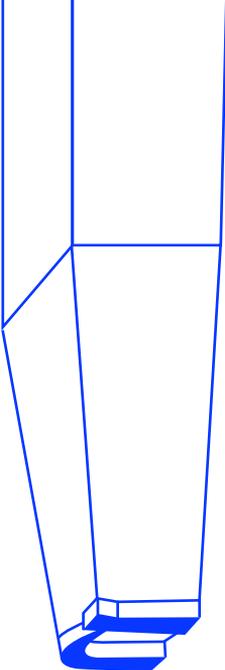
The decline of Roman civilization and the rise of Christianity and of the book were punctuated by the advent of new scripts: some kept to all caps, others moved away from upper case, some waned and died out, others emerged and evolved. Carolingian (or Caroline) miniscule, a round, regular and exceptionally readable script, was chosen and developed at the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century by the English theologian Alcuin of York, advisor to the future Emperor Charlemagne, for use in schools and in monastic *scriptoria*. Its dominance slowly eroded, giving way to gothic scripts, which succeeded it throughout Europe.

It was in this context, in which handwritten copies of texts held sway and paper became the principal medium for writing, that the invention of xylography – hand printing of texts and pictures carved into wooden blocks – ushered in the first phase of the development of printing in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century. Several decades later it was followed by a second, more crucial, development when a German goldsmith from Mainz, Johannes Gensfleisch, known as Gutenberg, built the first mechanical press and “invented” typography. Contrary to a firmly held belief, the printing press did not first appear in the West, but in China, in the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

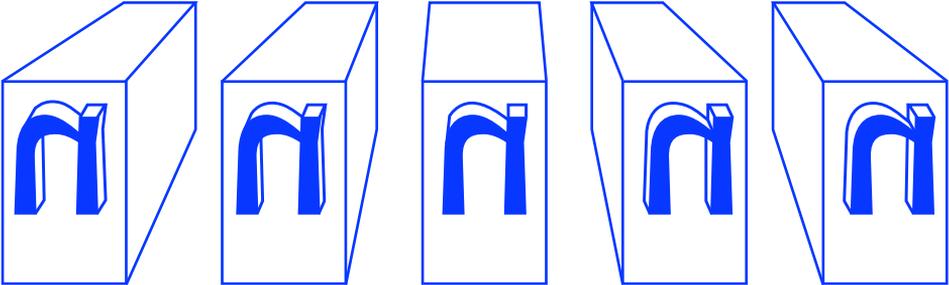
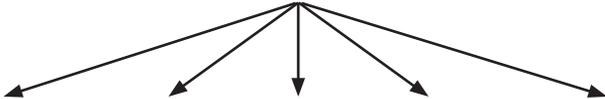
What is typography? It can be defined as a technical, technological and aesthetic system for the creation, production, composition and printing of mechanical forms derived from writing and the design of letters. In a certain sense, Gutenberg can be said to have rediscovered typography through the following steps: first, the reverse or negative shape of a letter, numeral or punctuation mark is carved into the tip of a hard metal rod. This rod – the punch – abruptly strikes and penetrates a rectangular copper block – the matrix –, which receives the right-side-up or positive imprint of the hollowed-out stamp. The matrix is placed in a mold inside of which an alloy of molten lead, tin and antimony is poured with a special spoon and then immediately ejected: this is the template or type, a perfect replica of the punch, which can be reproduced in abundance.

Gutenberg adapted Blackletter (aka Textura), a Gothic script used in most handwritten books at the time, for cutting and casting the type in which he composed the text of the first European letterpress book, a bible in large folio format (the “42-line Bible”), printed between 1452 and 1455 in partnership with his financial backer Johann Fust and copyist Peter Schöffer. The rest is history, literature, typography...

1—punch



2—matrix



3—moveable type, reproducible ad infinitum

**S**

## The Invention of roman

12,5/15 pt  
roman  
+  
italic

Roman type, so familiar to readers in our day, was developed by several generations of Italian and French humanists.

The exceptional circumstances of the Renaissance sparked the rediscovery of numerous ancient Latin texts previously disseminated in the Middle Ages by monastic scribes. In the early 15<sup>th</sup> century, scholars like Poggio Bracciolini, chancellor of the Republic of Florence, took up the Carolingian miniscule script of the manuscripts which they recopied, annotated and edited. By personalizing it and favoring its use over then dominant Gothic scripts, the Humanists established a typeface destined to enjoy a brilliant future: *the lettera antica formata*.

In 1464, two German printers, Arnold Pannartz and Konrad Sweynheim, established the first Italian printing press in the Abbey of Saint Scholastica (aka Subiaco Abbey), near Rome. The Latin classics that they printed were composed using a font clearly inspired by the *lettera antica formata* but with a rough, irregular appearance akin to Gothic script. It was in Venice, several years later, that other printers were to overcome this formal indecision: Nicolas Jenson, a Frenchman, cuts a type of surprising aesthetic quality and maturity, thus giving rise to roman. Roman, however, was to remain seldom used in books until the end of the century, when a decisive push was provided by the Venetian publisher Alde Manuce with the aid of punchcutter Francesco Griffo. Their new fonts broke free from the sway of handwritten letters, establishing themselves as the first standards of Humanist typography.

In the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, roman spread to most of the print shops in Europe, particularly in France, where the Humanists encouraged its development, championed by punchcutters like Claude Garamont and Robert Granjon, and consolidated its dominance in publishing, thereby ensuring its hegemony as a typeface. It was not until the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century that roman was stylistically renewed to yield its modern

12,5/15 pt  
roman

incarnation thanks to the typefaces of John Baskerville, Firmin Didot, and Giambattista Bodoni. The early 19<sup>th</sup> century saw a sudden outpouring of novel styles designed for the burgeoning media of the age, such as advertising posters. Amid this revolutionary ferment, sans-serif type gradually set itself apart as a style unto itself and a fixture of the international typographical repertoire.

The history of typography is often synonymous with that of roman type, with its durability and continual regeneration. Giving roman a form that is original or pays tribute to its heritage, a form that is functional or spectacular, is a major challenge for every type designer striving to define a suitable contrast between the upstrokes and downstrokes of a typeface, its modulation, its horizontal and vertical proportions, its serifs and spacing etc.

Stamped into Infini's design is a multi-faceted memory of past typographical developments. One conspicuous facet, and the oldest of them, is the capital letter of Roman stone-cutters, with its subtle inflections depending on the ambient light. Another, more recent one is Humanist miniscule, followed by its typographical standardization. A third, dating from the 20<sup>th</sup> century, is the resurgence of incised type, which has been modernized, printed, engraved, drawn and painted.

With regard to Infini roman's lower case characters, it was essential to give them the formal traits peculiar to capitals that inform their incised spirit, and yet improve their legibility thanks to their ample proportions and open counters (i.e. blank spaces inside a letter).

HAVZM

Incised  
stems

njdze fy

OM



Different  
proportions

EJB



O  
Z



6 3 8 5

Rounded  
forms

C D g

Q Ç S Z &

Pointed  
terminals

ergasff

B Œ 9 8 2

Stroke  
heavier above  
than below

h e b g a s

? ç £ Ω f =

B P R K

Open  
joins

2

x

€

Q

## *Italic, an inseparable ally*

13/16 pt  
italic  
+  
roman

Another form of writing took hold during the Renaissance. It is thought that the scholar Niccolò Niccoli, a friend of Poggio Bracciolini, was one of the first to develop the lettera antica corsiva while copying manuscripts from his own library. Narrower than the upright, self-possessed Humanist script, lettera antica corsiva had a nervous look, running as the pen moves across the paper in an almost uninterrupted flow, with a variable tilt, conducive to ligatures and flourishes. It spread gradually through the Italian peninsula over the course of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

Alde Manuce, assisted by his punchcutter Francesco Griffo, decided to adapt this style and, drawing inspiration from several different models, created a typeface tailor-made for a new collection of “portable” Latin classics published in a small format. He sold them at low prices to make them affordable to less affluent readers, especially students. The first volume came out in 1501, a Virgil anthology composed entirely in the type that would later be called italic. The slant and baseline of its letters are irregular, as if the original impulse driving the act of writing was to be preserved in the silhouette of the printed characters.

Italic promptly spread throughout Europe, its formal qualities were recognized and diversified, particularly by French punchcutters, who firmed up its resemblance to roman. At the same time, italic acquired the function it has retained ever since: to highlight certain parts of a title page or a paragraph of text, thereby serving as the first real means of typographic variation. Although some books, like collections of poetry, continued to be printed in italics, it definitively acquired its status as an essential accompaniment to roman in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.



13/16 pt  
italic

Aldine italic was rivaled and then supplanted over the course of the 18<sup>th</sup> century by new designs, such as the modern italics of Pierre-Simon Fournier and those of Baskerville and Didot, which radically augmented the contrast between downstrokes and upstrokes. Whatever the underlying style, italic was challenged in the early 20th century when some designers substituted a slanted version of roman with a view to reinforcing their formal complementarity. The fact is a great many sans serif typefaces nowadays – including Helvetica and Univers, to cite two of the most familiar – offer an oblique roman in lieu of italics.

So, cursive or oblique? Infini italic leans resolutely towards oblique, albeit borrowing some stylistic features from cursive. In addition, it pays particular tribute to a remarkable predecessor: Joanna, created in 1931 by the Englishman Eric Gill, whose fonts bear the stamp of his training as a sculptor and stone carver. Like Joanna, Infini italic is narrow, only slightly oblique and moderate in its contrasts. It forms the ideal counterpoint, in the musical sense, to Infini roman, respecting the centuries-old division of parts, but also turns out to be its independent alter ego, capable of being used by itself for the setting of an ordinary text.

A large, blue, cursive lowercase letter 'a' with a thick downstroke and a sweeping, curved ascender.

Aldine  
italic

A large, blue, serif lowercase letter 'a' with a vertical downstroke and a slightly curved ascender.

Infini  
italic

A large, blue, sans-serif lowercase letter 'a' that is slanted to the right, with a vertical downstroke and a slightly curved ascender.

Oblique  
(slanted roman)

roman n t o H

italic *n t o H*

roman (blue)  
italic (black) *n t o H*

Decreased character width and consequently lighter weight (narrower stroke) to obtain a similar typographic color.

roman

width

italic

*width*

n j l u h B p

A subtle  
5° slope

Incised  
stems

v k p T H

Stroke  
heavier above  
than below

n g o s Q

Pointed  
terminals

\$ £ & €

roman

①

italic

nzuyfvBA

*nzuyfvBA*

roman

②

italic

ebsgc

*ebsgc*

roman

③

italic

a

*a*

Harmonization between roman & italic:

- ① The italic design resembles oblique roman;
- ② The italic design is close to roman but more calligraphic in spirit;
- ③ The italic design is far from the roman, more calligraphic.

These small modifications suffice to produce an italic typeface because they alter the typographic color.

A

A

5

## Bold, a modern visual force

12/14 pt  
roman  
+  
italic  
+  
bold

It was in London in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, at a time when England was spearheading the industrial revolution, that *bold* or *fat face* type first burst onto the typographic scene. The swift burgeoning of the information and advertising industries led to the proliferation of posters and other printed matter in daily life, known in professional jargon as “jobbing work”: tickets, brochures, programs, lottery tickets, bills, forms, notices, calling cards.... **Bold typeface set itself part from regular typeface by increasing the visual mass: its silhouette thickened, its counters (spaces within letters) diminished as a result. The intention was to draw and fuel public attention, to make a strong impression, both literally and figuratively.**

By the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, European foundries were importing or adapting boldfaces from across the Channel and increasing their size and proportions. They were not always welcomed by printers like Georges-Adrien Crapelet, who deemed them “ridiculous innovations liable to spoil the art of typography”.

Despite these objections, the street became a theater in which boldface stole the show, passed around from one hand to another through trade and transactions, eventually making its way into book publishing and the press. Newspaper headlines blazoned forth the news with an unprecedented emphasis and expressivity: boldface, this modern visual force, was henceforth an integral and essential part of typography. **Designed for show and surprise, this force could also be used for everyday reading purposes. In the 1820s, English foundries began marketing small boldface fonts, whose widespread use gradually changed the shape of typesetting in the form of boldface headlines, subheadings, dictionary entries etc. Each word, each phrase, set in a typeface that was fatter than the body of the text became a marker for a parallel level of text within paragraphs that had become more visually complex and abundant, conducive to what was a priori a more superficial reading but often oriented towards a lucid synthesis of the whole.** Textbooks, mail-order catalogs, railroad timetables, and advertisements all benefited from bold-

12/14 pt  
roman  
+  
bold

face, especially in the wake of steady improvements to their aesthetic quality and uniformity.

Today, it is unusual for a family not to have at least several varieties of bold: semi-bold, bold, black etc. On the contrary, it may even comprise other, lighter, even hairline faces.

**Faces can flaunt their portliness or strip themselves down to the last thread, going from one extreme to the other: it all depends on the desired effect.**

Infini bold is definitely the most rough-and-ready echo of Infini roman: the characters gain in robustness and presence whilst preserving the family resemblance. **Thus, Infini bold effortlessly performs its task of guiding the reader through a textual landscape, coloring words with a tinge of exuberance, even impulsiveness; and when used for a large body of text, it does not hesitate to blast its horn or unleash a herd of elephants if need be.**

The image displays four lowercase 'a' characters in a row, illustrating the weight progression of the typeface. From left to right, the characters become progressively heavier and more robust. The first is a thin, light 'a', the second is a medium-weight 'a', the third is a thick, bold 'a', and the fourth is a very thick, black 'a'.

light

Infini  
roman

Infini  
bold

black

H M O

roman (black)

bold (blue)

From roman to bold:  
Bolder weight (larger stroke width) and  
therefore increased character width.

roman

n a o t w

bold

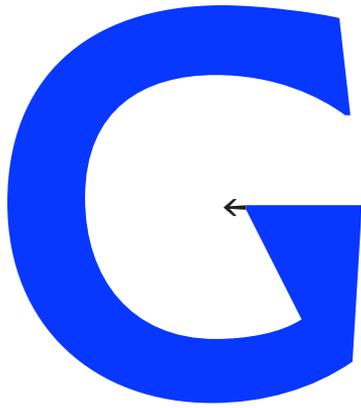
n a o t w

bold (blue)  
roman (black)

n a o t w



roman



bold



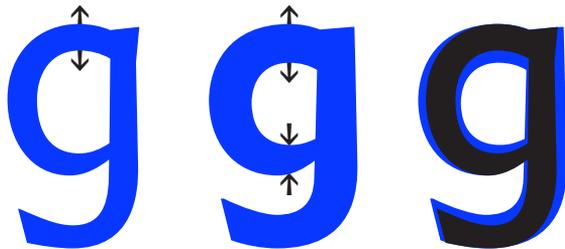
roman (black) + bold (black)



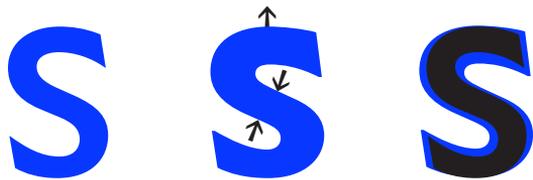
More heavily  
incised



Stroke heavier  
above than below



Stroke heavier  
above than below,  
thinner spine

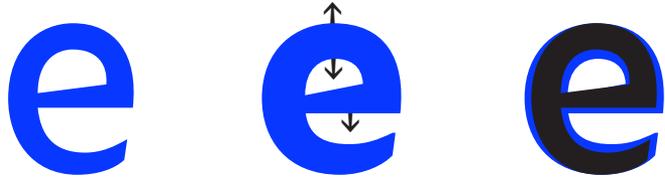


roman

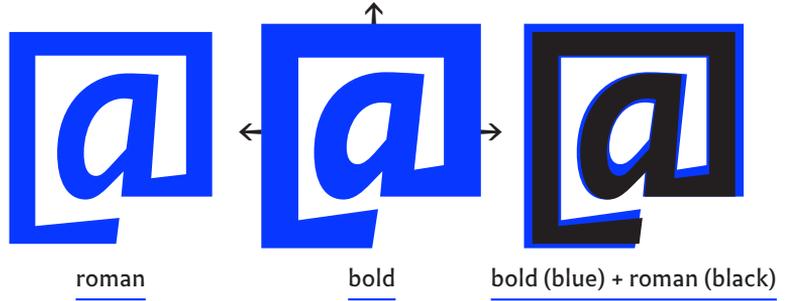
bold

bold (blue) + roman (black)

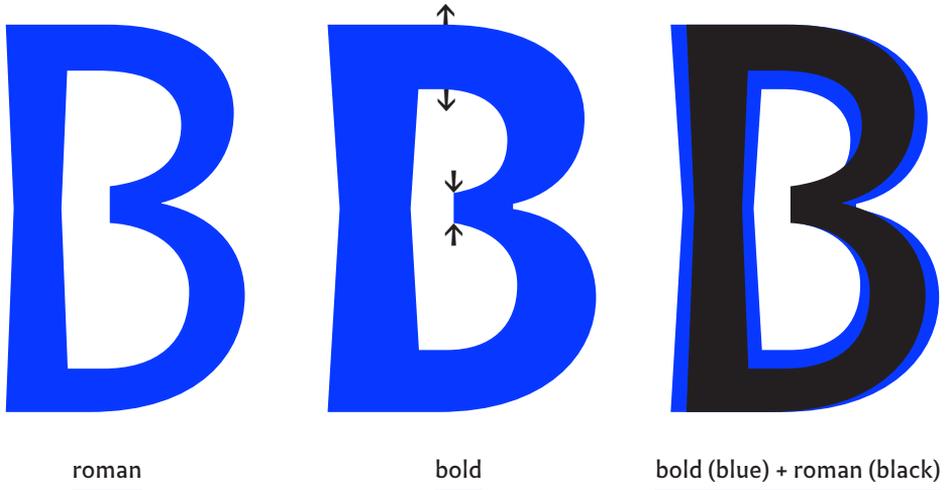
Stroke heavier above than below, compensated by lowering the bar to accentuate the counter



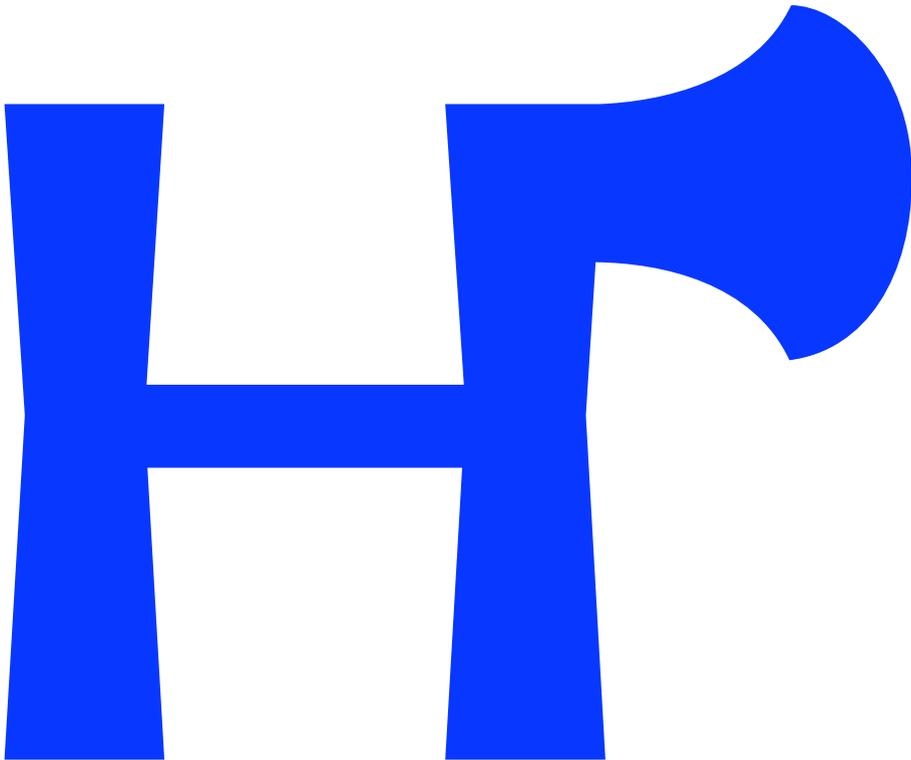
Increased width and height to keep the balance between the weight and the counter of the "at" symbol



Increased weight and contrast. The central join is kept thin in the bold to preserve the finesse of the roman.



330 pt  
bold  
/  
pictogram

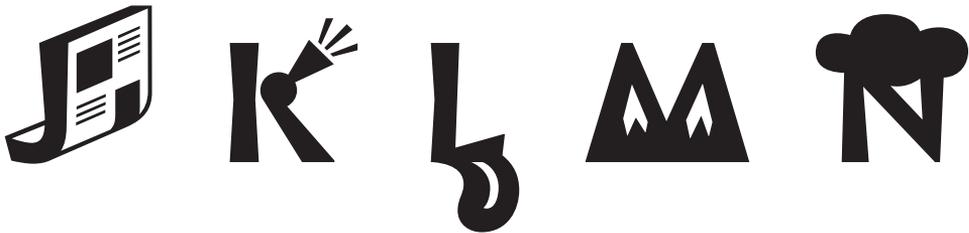
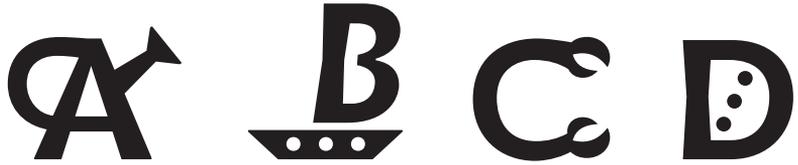


## RETURN TO THE PICTOGRAM

20/24,5 pt  
bold

ROMAN, ITALIC, BOLD – AND INFINI HAS STILL MORE IN ITS BAG OF TRICKS, INCLUDING A SERIES OF 26 “LETTER-IMAGES” CORRESPONDING TO THE 26 LETTERS OF THE ROMAN ALPHABET, SOME OF WHICH ARE SCATTERED HERE AND THERE IN THE PAGES OF THIS SPECIMEN. EACH CAPITAL BECOMES A PICTOGRAM WHOSE MEANING AND GRAPHIC REPRESENTATION ENCOMPASS AND EXTEND BEYOND THE LETTER ITSELF, INCLUDING NATURAL PHENOMENA, ANIMALS, EVERYDAY OBJECTS, MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION, MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS – 26 ATTEMPTS TO ALLOW ABSTRACT SIGNS THE FREEDOM TO BECOME ONCE AGAIN IMAGES OF THINGS, EACH BEING CHOSEN FROM AMONGST MYRIAD.

60 pt  
bold  
/  
pictograms\*



\*French nouns that  
begin in each case with  
the corresponding letter.

350 pt  
bold  
/  
pictogram

ZE

12/14,5 pt  
bold  
+  
roman  
+  
italic

## Type design in the digital age

In 2015 global typography constitutes a digital ecosystem with greater “typodiversity” of greater quality than ever before. This profusion was doubtless unleashed by the spread of desktop publishing (DTP) and accelerated by the advent of the Internet. It has never before been this easy to create, produce, commercialize and share fonts designed for traditional media or for contemporary reading and writing devices such as laptops, smartphones, e-readers, tablets and so on. So the question is: what’s the use of a new font in these times of overabundance?

Every designer who undertakes to create something new – a new glass, chair or boat, for example – is part tightrope walker and part surveyor, walking that thin line between styles past and future, looking one way while welcoming and actuating what is about to emerge from the other. All of history, especially that of typography, is an inexhaustible trove of potentialities: we are free to revisit and reinvent the classics, of which we have gained far more in-depth knowledge over the past few decades (e.g. Garamont, Caslon, Didot, Bodoni et al.); to rediscover, redeploy and revive typefaces whose success was fleeting at best, despite their aesthetic or functional value; to combine, to fuse, what are sometimes divergent influences, to continually produce novel and marvelous hybrids. *This is what Infini does, proving that it is still conceivable to revive and draw on the underlying power of the present suspended in each letter, in each style of handwriting, inscription or typography.*

While it is still possible to sketch out and design a new typeface with traditional tools, this creative process is no longer simply a matter of pen and paper, but of electricity, light and bytes as well. The horizontal workspace of the designer’s desk now has a vertical component as well: the computer screen. Henceforth the designer has to master a digital system of software, applications and programs, as well as using Bézier curves (named for mechanical engineer Pierre Bézier (1910–1999), who initially used them to design automobile parts on the computer), placing control points, defining contours, arranging pixels;

writing, emending and perfecting programming languages, scripts and algorithms; creating outline fonts in various formats, OpenType being currently the most widespread thanks in part to its capacity to package a great many glyphs.

Nowadays a single person can handle all these complementary tasks or collaborate with professionals entrusted with putting the finishing touches on the new typeface. Whatever the modus operandi, the designer will strive to gain a good understanding of the expectations of future users – other graphic designers, artistic directors, readers –, anticipating the greatest possible number of situations in which their creation might be used, in order to optimize its legibility, flexibility, even malleability.

A typeface conceived for magazine captions, for instance, can be surprisingly jarring when blown up to compose headlines, which, leaping off the page, provide food for thought, inspiration and invention. The development of Infini stretched over a period of eight months, between the initial sketches and gradual refining of its shapes to its completion. Although Sandrine Nugue designed every single character (some in several versions before she was thoroughly satisfied), she entrusted two fellow type designers with the task of integrating them and making sure they work smoothly within the fonts. Laurent Bourcellier worked on their kerning, i.e. adjusting the visible space between two characters in every possible combination. As each Infini font is in OpenType format, Mathieu Réguer took pains to make sure they would work on various platforms (Macintosh, Windows) and that their repertory of over 700 glyphs – *lowercase, capitals, numerals, punctuation marks, diacritics, mathematical signs, ligatures and pictograms* – could be used flexibly and precisely. He also adapted Infini to WOFF (Web Open Font Format) to facilitate its use on websites.

**Infini is intended to be shareware, downloadable free of charge thanks to the initiative of the .** The main object of this exceptional initiative is to raise public awareness of contemporary type design and to valorize a profession that is currently seeing a robust resurgence. New foundries have sprung up in recent years in France, and a new generation

12/14,5 pt  
roman  
+  
italic

of designers is becoming permanently established, all pursuing their passion, sustained by the sale of licenses to use their digital fonts.

*Now that Infini is poised to make its debut on the typographic scene, let us imagine where it may go from here. One likely development would be the creation of additional varieties, some leaner and narrower, some wider and stouter, or its application to alphabets related to the Roman alphabet, such as Greek and Cyrillic. And who knows how other, non-Roman alphabets – Hebrew, Tifinagh, alphasyllabic Thai – might look were they to adopt Infini’s incised aesthetic paradigm.*

Lastly, Infini opens up an original field of exploration based on an ancient language that was wrongly written off as outworn, revitalizing it, restoring it to yield a surprising modernity, as though each line, each phrase, aspired to make another voice heard in the polyphonic symphony of typography.

Sébastien Morlighem,  
teacher and researcher  
in the history of typography,  
École supérieure d’art et  
de design in Amiens



# ROMAN GLYPHSET:

## — uppercase

ABCDEFGHIJKLM  
NOPQRSTUVWXYZ

## — lowercase

abcdefghijklmno  
pqrstuvwxyz

## — small caps

ABCDEFGHIJKLMN  
OPQRSTUVWXYZ

## — standard punctuation

, ; : ... - - ! i ? ¿ ' " " " " ' " " < > « »  
/ \ | | - \_ — • ( ) [ ] { } \* † ‡ @ &

## — punctuation caps

¡ ¿ < > « » — — ( ) [ ] { } @ &

## — punctuation small caps

( ) [ ] { } @ &

## — lowercase ligatures

ff fi ffi fj ffj fl ffi l

## — figures et monetary

### • proportional oldstyle (default figures)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 # € \$ ¢ £ f ¥

### • proportional lining

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 # € \$ ¢ £ f ¥

### • tabular oldstyle

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 # € \$ ¢ £ f ¥

### • tabular lining

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 # € \$ ¢ £ f ¥

## — mathematical symbols

+ - ± × ÷ ≠ ≈ ~ ^ < > ≤ ≥ ¬ ∞ ∅ ∆  
Ω ∂ ∫ √ ∑ ∏ π μ ° ℓ e /

## — fractions

¼ ½ ¾ % ‰

## — superior lowercase

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

## — superiors + inferiors figures

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

## — symbols

§ ¶ © ® ™ ™ ™ ™ ™ ™ ™ ™ ™ ™

## — accented uppercase

À Á Â Ã Ä Å Æ Ç È É Ê Ë Ì Í Î Ï  
Ð Ñ Ò Ó Ô Õ Ö Ø Ù Ú Û Ü Ý Þ ß à á â ã  
ä å æ ç è é ê ë ì í î ï ð ñ ò ó ô õ ö ø ù ú û ü ý þ ß

## — accented lowercase

à á â ã ä å æ ç è é ê ë ì í î ï ð ñ ò  
ó ô õ ö ø ù ú û ü ý þ ß à á â ã ä å æ ç è é ê ë ì  
í î ï ð ñ ò ó ô õ ö ø ù ú û ü ý þ ß

## — accented small caps

À Á Â Ã Ä Å Æ Ç È É Ê Ë Ì Í Î Ï  
Ð Ñ Ò Ó Ô Õ Ö Ø Ù Ú Û Ü Ý Þ ß à á â ã  
ä å æ ç è é ê ë ì í î ï ð ñ ò ó ô õ ö ø ù ú  
û ü ý þ ß

## — arrows

← → ↑ ↓ ↖ ↗ ↘ ↙ < > ^ v

## — uppercase ligatures

Æ AN AT AR AS AU AV @ B DJ EN  
E<sup>LE</sup> EN ET ER ES EE EU GI H<sup>M</sup> IL<sup>E</sup>  
·ON ·SME LA LE LIG LE MAX· ME NE NN  
NT O· ON OJ PALEO PAR PH PO<sup>T</sup> Q Q<sup>E</sup>  
SE SS E TH TON T<sup>R</sup> TT TR TURE TY UN VR





## SUPPORTED LANGUAGES:

AFRIKAANS, ALBANIAN, ASU, BASQUE,  
BEMBA, BENA, BOSNIAN, CATALAN,  
CHIGA, CONGO SWAHILI, CORNISH,  
CROATIAN, CZECH, DANISH, DUTCH,  
EMBU, ENGLISH, ESPERANTO, ESTONIAN,  
FAROESE, FILIPINO, FINNISH, FRENCH,  
GALICIAN, GANDA, GERMAN, GUSII,  
HUNGARIAN, ICELANDIC, INDONESIAN,  
IRISH, ITALIAN, JOLA-FONYI,  
KABUVERDIANU, KALENJIN, KAMBA,  
KIKUYU, KINYARWANDA, LATVIAN,  
LITHUANIAN, LUO, LUYIA, MACAME,  
MAKHUWA-METTO, MAKONDE,  
MALAGASY, MALAY, MALESE, MANX,  
MAORI, MERU, MORISYEN, NORTH  
NDEBELE, NORWEGIAN BOKMÅL,  
NORWEGIAN NYNORSK, NYANKOLE,  
OROMO, POLISH, PORTUGUESE,  
ROMANIAN, ROMANSH, ROMBO, RUNDI,  
RWA, SAMBURU, SANGO, SANGU, SENA,  
SHAMBALA, SHONA, SLOVAK, SLOVENIAN,  
SOGA, SOMALI, SPANISH, SWAHILI,  
SWEDISH, SWISS GERMAN, TAITA, TSO,  
TURKISH, VUNJO, WELSH, ZULU.

This specimen is published on the occasion of the “Graphisme en France 2014”: public commission for a new typeface awarded to Sandrine Nugue.

**Editorial director**

— Yves Robert  
Director of the Centre national  
des arts plastiques

**Infini project managers**

— Véronique Marrier & Marc Sanchez  
Curators of “Graphisme en France 2014”

**Creation of the Infini typeface  
& graphic design of the specimen**

— Sandrine Nugue

**Technical development  
of the Infini typeface**

— Laurent Bourcellier  
— Mathieu Réguer

**Texts**

— Sébastien Morlighem

**Proofreading**

— Stéphanie Grégoire

**Translation**

— Eric Rosencrantz & Jon Von Zelowitz

**Creation and graphic design  
of the Infini website**

— Marz & Chew  
(Jérémie Baboukhian & Michèle Wang)

graphisme.cnap@culture.gouv.fr  
www.graphismeenfrance.fr  
www.cnap.fr

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The Infini typeface can be downloaded free of charge at: [www.cnap.graphismeenfrance.fr/infini/en](http://www.cnap.graphismeenfrance.fr/infini/en) It may be used under the Creative Commons CC BY-ND license.

The image shows two large, bold, blue letters, 'I' and 'N', rendered in the 'Infini' typeface. The 'I' is a simple vertical bar with a slight taper at the top and bottom. The 'N' is composed of a vertical bar on the left, a diagonal bar connecting the top of the left bar to the top of the right bar, and a vertical bar on the right. The letters are set against a plain white background.

# FINI

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Specimen of Infini  
a typeface designed  
by Sandrine Nogue,  
commissioned by  
the  Centre national  
des arts plastiques