

Monotype

PRESS RELEASE
March 2016

Quentin Blake

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Meet Quentin Blake- The Font

Monotype turns artist's iconic handwriting into 'intelligent' typeface

Playful, endearingly madcap and suffused with joy, Sir Quentin Blake's distinctive handwriting is every bit as recognisable as his illustrations. For generations of children all over the world, the appearance of his distinctive script on a book cover has heralded the beginning of a journey into imagination, hilarity and fantasy.

Now, type curators and creators **Monotype have captured Sir Quentin's handwriting with a new, self-varying typeface** that mimics the signature irregularities and quirks of the illustrator's unique style.

Designing from life

Led by type designer Toshi Omagari and working closely with Sir Quentin, Monotype used original handwriting samples to create a character set that not only allows the user to digitally recreate his script for print or web use, but has the in-built flexibility to allow for natural variations and idiosyncrasies in the letterforms – just like normal handwriting. In other words, it's a typeface that doesn't look like one.

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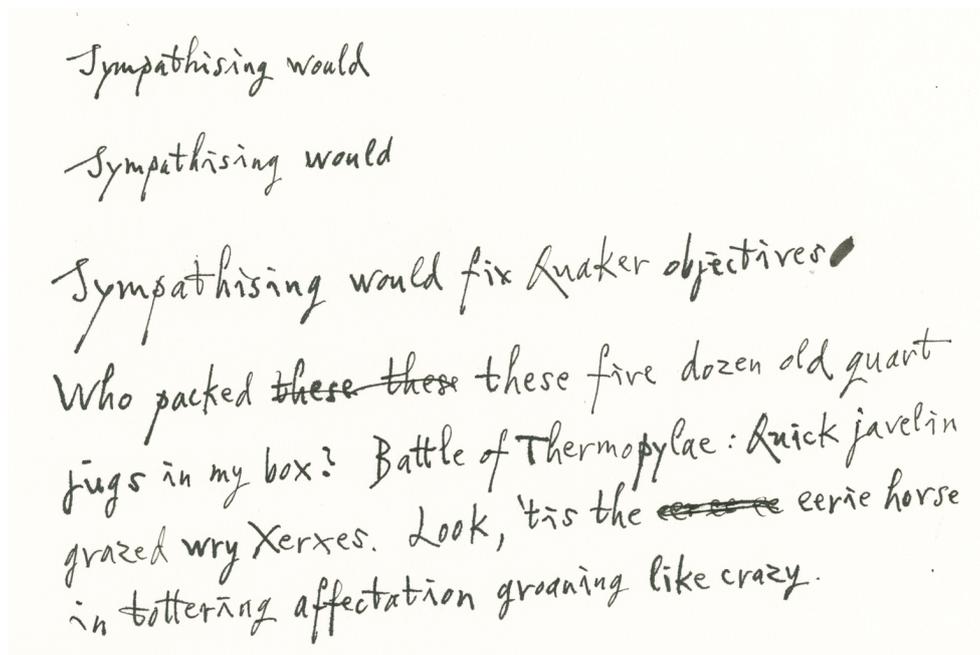
Keeping it real

By creating **four alternative glyphs for each character**, Omagari was able to introduce the element of controlled randomness that gives the new typeface its authenticity, naturalism and personality.

“Without variants, handwriting fonts run the risk of looking unnatural; too many and the process can become unmanageable,” Omagari says. “Quentin’s writing is anything but regular but it’s not totally random either. There’s something you can find in it to say that it’s his.”

As each letter is typed, one of the four variants appears – in an order calibrated to prevent repetition – and **each character is kerned differently depending on the variants that surround it**, ensuring that both shape and spacing are consistently inconsistent.

“I didn’t want anything to look too unique,” says Omagari, “Especially in the vowels which appear more frequently, because people would notice the ones that stand out, notice them repeated, and realise it’s a font. It had to look random, and it had to hide the fact that it’s not his actual handwriting.”



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Making it new

The new typeface is not the first to attempt to mimic Quentin Blake's lovably chaotic calligraphy, but the previous version, although reflective of the illustrator's letterforms, did not have the same capacity for automatic variation and therefore had an inherent artificiality to it. Also, as Quentin Blake's work becomes more in demand across other territories, languages and digital applications, the need for glyphs outside the standard character set became more pressing.

"I have been impressed by the way that Monotype interpreted my handwriting in various forms, so that it has the distinctive characteristics but at the same time is eminently usable as a typeface in any number of situations."

– Sir Quentin Blake

Monotype ensured that its new typeface was equipped to meet all of the demands likely to be placed on it, now and in the future, by creating a **comprehensive range of diacritical glyphs for Latin languages** and a broad palette of special characters. For print, a special roughness filter has been introduced to give the type an authentically unpolished finish, whereas the web version is clearer and more streamlined to maximise legibility and minimise file size.

He has always made his living as an illustrator, as well as teaching for over twenty years at the Royal College of Art, where he was head of the Illustration department from 1978 to 1986. His first drawings were published in Punch while he was 16 and still at school. He continued to draw for Punch, The Spectator and other magazines over many years, while at the same time entering the world of childrens books with A Drink of Water by John Yeoman in 1960. - See more at: <http://www.quentinblake.com>

Original typeface

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new Monotype version

The typeface has already been used in the Roald Dahl app *Twit or Miss*, and when it came to selecting fonts for the TV show *Britain's Favourite Children's Books*, it was the natural choice.

Now Sir Quentin can bring the ease and flexibility of the new typeface to his ever-expanding in-tray of illustration and charity work, and maybe give his writing hand a rest in the process...

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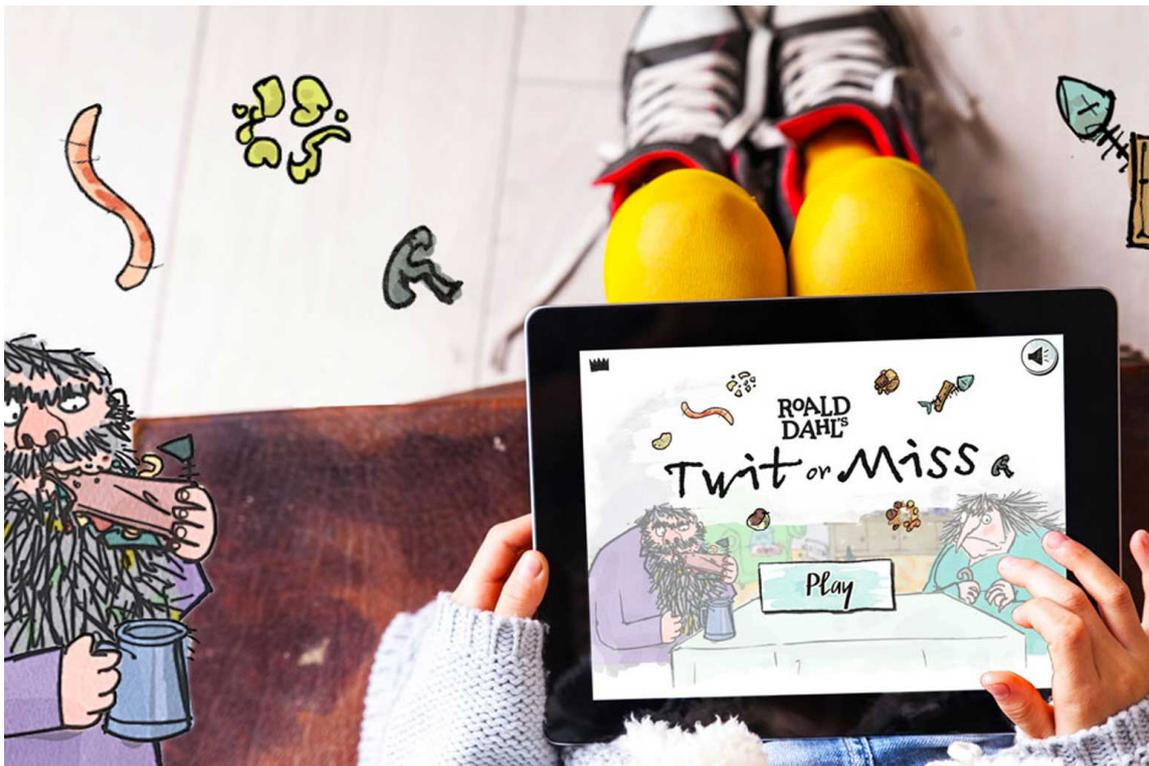
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NOTES FOR EDITORS

About Monotype

Monotype is the world's leading authority on type and the guardian and innovator behind many of its favourite fonts. For over a century, the company has been the prime mover of the typographic world, commissioning, creating, licensing and reinventing some of the most recognisable typefaces of page and screen. More than 20,000 fonts are found in its library, including Times New Roman, Frutiger, Arial, Gill Sans, Joanna, Cooper Black and countless other classic typefaces that have defined the history of print, the development of computing and the history of brand design.

www.monotype.com



For more information on the new typeface or Monotype's other work, contact Sabine Zetteler at sabine@zetteler.co.uk or +44 (0)7791 568890.
