

Monotype

Embracing Ambiguity

Monotype's new typeface family celebrates the importance of difference



Following the major, historic redesign of the iconic Helvetica, Charles Nix returns with Ambiguity

With a palette of dramatically different styles and letterforms, the Ambiguity typeface family draws on the conventional wisdom of typographic masters, the complete opposite and the shades in between.

Just like your average human family, Monotype's new typeface family Ambiguity contains a broad range of different views and personalities. There's the straight conservative that follows tradition, the black sheep who's purposefully contrarian, the tight-fisted uncle, the generous granny and the people-pleaser who sits somewhere in the middle trying to appease everyone.

Designed by Charles Nix of the Monotype Studio, Ambiguity is a genre-bending design with five different states – Tradition, Radical, Thrift, Generous and Normate – inspired by upholding and breaking the accepted wisdom of letterform proportions. The typeface challenges creative professionals to explore a spectrum of beliefs through type, by embracing diversity and finding peace and beauty in all.

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This extensive family is comprised of 70 fonts in six weights and two display styles, making it an exceptionally flexible type family. Ambiguity’s versatility allows brands to pick their approach for different audiences or scenarios, ranging in tone from conventional to unorthodox. You can mix and experiment to create a system of type that not only effectively carries your message, but allows you to discover new voices and identities. Its letterforms are legible in both display and text, and its variable widths make it suitable for information-rich applications.

“Ambiguity’s palette of varying styles and letterforms have resulted in an exciting tool for tweaking text and modifying meaning,” says Charles Nix, type director at Monotype. “It’s a family that encourages designers to play with and against type, stereotype and prejudice. It’s less about creating within the constraints of the expected and more about pushing boundaries to harmonize design and authentically portray meaning. I designed Ambiguity to break down mental walls and to remind myself and others that the blending, the exchange, and the conversation is where and when we’re at our best.”

Nix continued: “I could see Ambiguity being adopted by a large media outlet or publisher to address a new audience or possibly as part of a political campaign looking to create a more welcoming tent.”



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Designers may choose to work with a limited selection or the full range of Ambiguity's five unique states

The five "states" of Ambiguity

- Tradition gets the underlying forms for its capitals from Roman inscriptional letters and its lowercase from Humanist calligraphy. It follows the well-trodden path of letterform proportion, behaving in a comfortingly conventional way.
- Radical reverses the proportions of Tradition, challenging the familiar and habitual. In the Radical cut, wide forms become slender and slender forms become wide.
- Thrift, the condensed state, collects all of the slender forms from Tradition and Radical.
- Generous, the expanded state, incorporates the wide forms from Tradition and Radical.
- Normate is neither Tradition nor Radical, Thrift nor Generous, but rather a blend of the other forms.

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Playing with and against traditional approaches to letterforms, Ambiguity is a bold statement from Monotype

What creative professionals are saying about Ambiguity

"The time has come to redefine the family. Two dads? Four moms? Five cats? Ambiguity, a new type family by Charles Nix, smashes our binary hang-ups about how letterform proportions ought to behave and interact," says Ellen Lupton, senior curator, contemporary design at Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Museum, and founding director, graphic design MFA at the Maryland Institute College of Art.

"I felt an urge to push boundaries and rules whilst being reminded of classic type treatment and tradition. A testament to the variety of expression and use when using Ambiguity." –Ash O'Brien, partner, Two of Us

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Notes to editors

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Pricing & Availability

Single weights of the Ambiguity typeface are available now for \$/€49 or £42 each. The complete typeface family is available for \$/€199 or £169, and more information is at monotype.com/ambiguity

The Ambiguity typeface can be found in Mosaic®, Monotype's cloud-based font discovery, collaboration and management solution. Find out more at monotype.com/mosaic

To learn more about the Ambiguity typeface, view this video narrated by Charles Nix at <https://vimeo.com/347746393>.

To join the conversation about the Ambiguity typeface on social media, search #StatesOfAmbiguity on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

About Monotype

Monotype empowers creative minds to build and express authentic brands through design, technology and expertise. Further information is available at monotype.com

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