

New typeface family by Akira Kobayashi

Linotype Cosmiqua – a flashback to the future

Bad Homburg, Autumn 2007. Linotype announces the release of the zestful serif font family Cosmiqua®, an informal homage to the futuristic visions of the past from the hand of Linotype’s multi-talented Type Director, Akira Kobayashi. Cosmiqua’s quirky serifs and script-like swooshes illustrate a playful exuberance ideal for advertising and communication on the lighter side of life. Inspired by the youthful optimism of the 1950s and early 1900s, Cosmiqua precociously poses the eternal question, “How did tomorrow look through the eyes of yesterday?”

Cosmiqua is an informal font, particularly in the sense that it is not strictly based on an historical typeface. An eclectic mélange, Cosmiqua borrows from different styles and eras, as implied by its name, an amalgamation of “cosmique” – the French word for cosmic – and “Antiqua” – the Latin word for ancient which is also the German term for Old Style or serif typefaces. With five weights – Light, Regular, Semibold, Bold and Heavy, each with an Italic – Cosmiqua presents an effervescent way for designers to convey optimism, buoyancy and leisure.

Already in 1997, type designer Akira Kobayashi had sketched out the basis for what was to become Cosmiqua. Initially inspired by American advertising of the 1950s, Kobayashi worked for nearly two years closely examining his favorite letterforms from this genre, particularly those headline typefaces that neither fit into the categories of formal italic types or casual handwriting. Certain typefaces appeared to Kobayashi to occupy the creative space between them.

Kobayashi was attracted by the naïve belief in the future that he felt these typefaces expressed, and began a wider search for their artistic antecedents. Eventually, he found similar traits in the even older typefaces of British advertising from the dawn of the 20th century. In a Miller & Richard type specimen catalogue, he found one typeface in particular – Caledonian Italic – which appeared to provide an important visual precursor. In Cosmiqua, Kobayashi has combined the similar but distinct ambiances of these two eras to create something related to each, but altogether new.

Kobayashi first drew the Italic weights of Cosmiqua, refining his favorite lowercase forms (x and y), as well as creating whimsical ball-shaped terminals on the A and N. Only later did he move on to the upright, Roman forms. Although Cosmiqua was originally conceived for display purposes, further refinements have made it ideal for certain body texts as well, in catalogues, brochures or even magazines. This is particularly true for texts requiring an injection of fun somewhere between the sophisticated and the buoyant, for instance for toys, computer games, chocolates or in the music industry.

Cosmiqua marks the first new release by Akira Kobayashi since Linotype Conrad®, the text category prize winner in Linotype's 3rd International Type Design Contest 2000, (as well as winner of the Type Directors Club's type design competition of 2001). In the meantime, Kobayashi has been honing his skills as a computer expert and type designer by updating older typefaces for the digital age, and working with recognized masters. His collaborations have included work with Adrian Frutiger on Avenir® Next, as well as with Hermann Zapf on Zapfino® Extra, and on remakes of Zapf's popular typefaces, Optima® nova, Palatino® nova and Palatino® Sans.

The futuristically retro Linotype Cosmiqua is available for download now at www.linotype.com, where there is also more information on Linotype Type Director and type designer Akira Kobayashi.



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Linotype GmbH, based in Bad Homburg, Germany and a wholly owned subsidiary of Monotype Imaging Inc., looks back onto a history of more than 120 years. Building on its strong heritage, Linotype develops state-of-the-art font technology and offers more than 9000 original typefaces, covering the whole typographic spectrum from antique to modern, from east to west, and from classical to experimental. All typefaces (in PostScript™ and TrueType™ format as well as more than 7,000 fonts in OpenType™) are now also available for instant download at www.linotype.com. In addition to supplying digital fonts, Linotype also offers comprehensive and individual consultation and support services for font applications in worldwide (corporate) communication.

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Please find more typeface application samples on the Internet at www.linotype.com.

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Cosmiqua Light

Cosmiqua Regular

Cosmiqua Semibold

Cosmiqua Bold

Cosmiqua Heavy

The quick brown fox jumps over a lazy dog.

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Cosmiqua Light Italic

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Cosmiqua Semibold Italic

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