

Linotype designers awarded for Elementis and Pirouette

Type Directors Club honors extraordinary

Linotype designs

Bad Homburg, 28 February, 2005. The internationally renowned Type Directors Club in New York has awarded the Linotype fonts Elementis and Pirouette the distinction of best Type Design in 2004. After both fonts were successful in the Linotype Library 2003 International Type Design Contest, this new honor confirms their international significance. Designed by Hans-Jürgen Ellenberger and Ryuichi Tateno respectively, the Type Directors Club jury selected Elementis and Pirouette out of 165 entries from 24 countries – a distinction reserved to only 19 award-winners. These designers' fonts are not only both original and fulfill the highest aesthetic standards, they also both have fairly unusual origins. Pirouette began as a logo for a new shampoo while Elementis endured 28 years of development until its completion in 2003.

Hans-Jürgen Ellenberger began his work on Elementis in 1975 with the goal of transforming the rounded forms of an alphabet so all letters would have the same gray value. However, as was typical of the times, his design work would require a number of complicated and cumbersome development steps. The fact that it took him nearly thirty years to finally complete the typeface is a reminder of the difficulties type designers faced in the pre-digital age. First, sketches were made with pencil which were photocopied for corrections. Then the designs were photographed and downscaled. This was followed by the etching of copper plates which represented the first interim result. It was at this point that Ellenberger discontinued his work as the next step would have required the considerably expensive production of print letters.

Yet the digital revolution of the 1980s and the triumph of desktop publishing did not initially advance Ellenberger in his endeavors. Although it was now possible to develop typefaces without print letters, the digitalization of his font

would still have required a considerable investment. It was not until the mid-1990s that affordable programs came onto the market. By 1999, Ellenberger was finally able to scan his original drafts and start processing them digitally. As a result of this 24 year delay, modern impulses were able to flow into the design process which had a positive influence on its role as a display font. Hans-Jürgen Ellenberger describes Elementis as “unusual, independent, distinctive, soft, organic, harmonious, loud, decorative, strong, sporty, futuristic yet still very legible, therefore ideal for a wide variety of display applications.” Ellenberger sees the Type Directors Club award as a recognition not only of his own work but also the work of the many other type designers who developed fonts under the difficult conditions of the last millennium.

While Ellenberger was busy scanning his designs in 1999, the Japanese designer Ryuichi Tateno was beginning to work on a new shampoo packaging design and logo. The result not only greatly pleased his client, it also inspired him to develop a complete font family. In contrast to Ellenberger, Tateno was able to immediately apply powerful new technologies and thereby finish his work faster. An important inspiration for Tateno was the calligraphic work of Prof. Hermann Zapf, especially his Zapfino font family.

The style of Pirouette is certainly reminiscent of its origins in the beauty market. The basic font is Pirouette Regular which unites cursive small letters with elaborate swash capitals. These uppercase letters can then be combined with various thick and thin stroke elements to create a wide variety of decorative designs. Further innovative designs can be composed by applying colors and placing the different fonts on top of one another in software applications which support layering (e.g. most Adobe and Macromedia applications, as well as QuarkXPress). Since the thickening and thinning of the strokes in the capital letters can be assigned different colors in the various layers, completely unique calligraphic designs can be formed.

Ryuichi Tateno considers his success with Pirouette as the result of a long process of working with type. It was only after 10 years of studying typography and calligraphy that the designer developed this typeface to enter into the Linotype International Type Design Contest. When making his first hand drawn drafts, Tateno remembers having a strange feeling: "It was surprising how the letters would come out smoothly. It was like having a lot of letters inside my body, inside my right arm."

These Type Directors Club awards for Elementis and Pirouette celebrate two highly original designers who have developed extraordinary typefaces each in his own unique way. And it is further proof of the quality and diversity of the Linotype Library, in which excellent typefaces can be found for all purposes. For anyone curious to get a thorough impression of Elementis and Pirouette, simply drop by www.linotype.com.

Linotype Library GmbH, based in Bad Homburg, Germany and a member of the Heidelberg Group, looks back onto a history of 119 years. Building on its strong heritage, Linotype Library develops state-of-the-art font technology and offers more than 6,000 original fonts, 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 1,400 fonts in OpenType™) are now also available for instant download at www.linotype.com. In addition to supplying digital fonts, Linotype Library 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.