



To create for a specific use

The opportunity for a typographer to design a brand new typeface, to suit a specific use must be few and far between. Lettering for the British motorway signs and the typeface for the London tube network are fine examples of new type, produced to suit exact use requirements.

Instead of 'designing to order' a new typeface is often the result of a number of ideas, feelings, observations and the desire to create a visually new, or at best, an original design. It is not the



West elevation

norm for the designer to be asked to carry out a full character set complete!

The opportunity

In 2001 Jeremy Tankard was approached by Guy Pask, Creative Director and Partner for Strategy Advertising & Design in New Zealand, and was asked to look at the design of a new typeface, that would be an original design, for a new multi-million dollar art gallery being built at Christchurch New Zealand.

Guy Pask had already decided to use Jeremy's Bliss™ as his typeface for general text usage,

Bliss

but for signage and graphic design he wanted something to reflect both New Zealand's modern approach, whilst keeping faith with the feel of the original Maori occupants.

He was also aware of a typeface that Jeremy had designed for Adobe Systems some time ago called Blue Island™, but wanted the new design to be a sans serif form.

Blue Island

One type, two names!

The typeface designed for the new Christchurch building was to be called 'Christchurch Gallery', a name that all thought to be in keeping for its use over the years to come. The new type was to be unique in a number of ways, the most important being that it was designed in the new format, OpenType, thus allowing greater freedom of expression in the flowing visual movement of the type, which incorporates an impression of a script.

One important part of the design process meant that as funds did not allow complete purchase of the rights to the new type, Jeremy was able to agree with the original agency and Christchurch

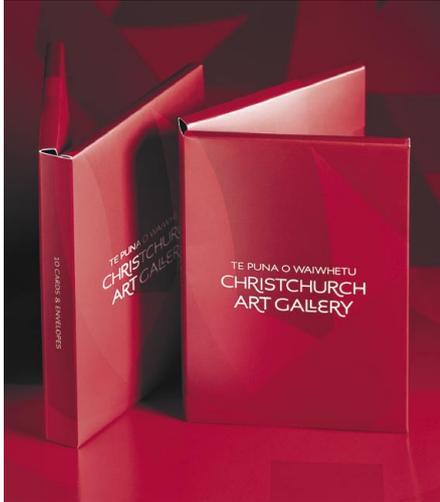


Opening night May 2003

Art Gallery that he would retain the rights to market it under his own name of Aspect. This was therefore how Aspect™ was born, a highly creative, three weight typeface, designed using OpenType technology.

By the time the new Art Gallery opened in May 2003, the design agency in New Zealand had already had the face for twelve months, during which time Guy Pask and his team of designers at Strategy Advertising & Design had spent many hours creating some extremely original designs which they found possible with the new typeface.

When the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu opened on 10 May 2003 in the heart of the city's cultural precinct, it incorporated all the signage, print and exhibition work designed for the new typeface.



Gallery publicity pack

The new facility featured two floors of exhibition space, educational activity areas, an auditorium, café and bistro, two retail outlets and a sculpture garden and underground parking.

The gallery's Maori name 'Te Puna' honours waipuna, the well spring (the actual artesian spring on the gallery site) and 'Waiwhetu' refers to one of the tributaries in the immediate vicinity, which flows into the Avon river.



The typeface is at the core of the new identity

(excerpt from Bulletin 131 of the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu).

As part of a successful ongoing sponsorship, Strategy Advertising & Design began working on a complete visual wardrobe for the Christchurch Art Gallery in 2001. "When we started looking at the requirements, we realised we needed to broaden our thinking," says Guy Pask, "the best

simile that we could come up with was that our branding elements had to be the equivalent of a well cut suit – one that you could 'wear with anything'. So you effectively dress it up with a white shirt and tie for formal occasions or dress it down for a casual look. In the widest sense that's what the identity has to do. It has to sit beside historic oil paintings one moment and a vibrantly coloured modern sculpture the next. That's a huge task of a single graphic element and almost impossible to achieve with a symbol or visual device."



Typeface development work

Wide range of characters

One of the things that is most special about this typeface is that it has what are called 'alternate characters'. Instead of just one version of a letter there are often several. Some combinations of letters have a variety of options too. This means that in it's most conservative version, the typeface is sophisticated and modern, yet with a few letter changes it soon takes on an added twist and becomes playful, fun and creative. This is essential if the Christchurch Gallery font is to be used on official invitations to the Governor General or Prime Minister one day, solidify the impression of a major art gallery dealing with international exhibitions worth millions of dollars the next, and still able to catch the eye and make an impression with a street poster, or educational items for young children.

A face with which to create magic

Beyond the expression of the name of the Art Gallery there is a huge range of uses for the typeface. The individual letters themselves have also been used to create a series of 'patterns' which will be used on wrapping papers, greeting cards, posters, as background textures and as end papers for some of the Gallery's own books. It is a style that will be seen everywhere and become distinctive as that of the new Christchurch Art Gallery.



"Clever way of marketing"

(excerpt from 'Prodesign' magazine, the official journal of the Designers Institute of New Zealand)

It is thought to be the first time a typeface has been designed for such a comprehensive branding exercise and it is an understatement to suggest that gallery director Tony Preston is enthusiastic about the high degree of innovation born of tight timeframes and tight budgets.

Tony Preston stated that "Creating our own script is an extraordinarily clever way of marketing Christchurch Art Gallery globally. It's the Solomon's Solution to the endlessly vexed problem of how to present yourself and the problems of one symbol that can never be agreed upon by everyone".

Gave the agency free rein

It is a mark of Preston's faith in the existing sponsorship-design relationship with Strategy Advertising & Design that he gave the agency free rein. He had full confidence in Strategy's creative team and when collaboration with one of the world's foremost typeface designers was suggested, he left them to it and didn't see the result until the final typeface design was confirmed, some two-plus years down the line.

This typeface, Christchurch Gallery, gives the new gallery a unique visual language. The challenge was to create an identity that would satisfy the balance between the gallery having it's own identity as a landmark building, whilst playing a secondary, supporting role to the actual work it houses and exhibits. It had to be able to sit equally beside traditional and contemporary work of art without overpowering them."

Aspect

And so to Aspect

Aspect is the release version of the Gallery typeface, optimised for the latest operating systems. The concept behind Aspect was to produce a vertical script. The family comprises three weights – Aspect light is delicate and graceful at large sizes, Aspect regular functions particularly well for text, with Aspect bold for emphasis.

The freedom of approach adopted during Aspect's early design stages has resulted in some intriguing character variations and combinations. These many unusual and unique forms all add to the distinctive appearance of Aspect. Yet, Aspect can still be used in a more traditional manner by setting text with only the standard forms and the basic ligatures.

With Aspect having well over two hundred single, ligatured forms, it is clear to see the many creative possibilities readily available to the designer.

