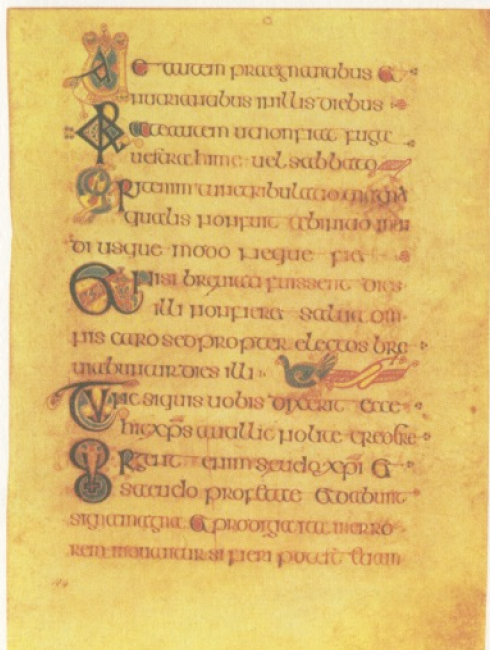


Process

Typography embodies a tension between the hand and the machine, organic form and geometry, the physical and the abstract. The roots of those tensions go back to the earliest systems of writing, when signs were first adopted to record information and convey meaning.

Every typeface is in some sense a revival of what has gone before, even where the historical narrative is challenged or reinterpreted. The earliest type copied black-letter, or Gothic, handwriting, the standard script of the medieval period. Subsequent typefaces have reflected their own specific medium, from metal type to screen. Even today, when digital processes have seemingly divorced type design from the physical world, the past is still present in letterforms.



Left: *The Book of Kells*, a masterpiece of Western calligraphy, was produced in Ireland c800 by a number of scribes. A transcription in Latin of the four gospels of the New Testament, it was written in iron-gall ink on high-quality vellum. This page, by scribe 'D', shows majuscule script with zoomorphic initials.

Right: Letterforms still bear traces of the tools that were used to produce them. It is thought that the serif originates from the short incised feet that Roman stone-carvers used to finish their letters.



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