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●930 pt



E 21

Neubau
International™
B¹ M² R³ B⁴ L⁵
B⁶ M⁷ I⁸ B⁹ L¹⁰
M¹¹ MMXXI^E

200 A
view in
to the f
uture.

60 In one of the
interviews with
Neubau I found the
confession that it all
began with Letraset.
As you may know,
Letraset is a transfer
system containing
characters, symbols
or illustrations to be
rubbed off on paper.

200 For
me Le
traset
has

60 the
flavour of the sixties,
and brings back a
lot of memories from
this period, this en-
lightened decade
with so much promi-
ses for a new society
and better human
understanding. The
Paris student revolt,

200 the
Beatle
s, hipp
ies,

48 Woodstock, and
the first man on the moon.
Our imagination was sky
high! The Neubau boys
were not yet born.

36 For our profession this
also was a period of great changes.
We were in the middle of the tran-
sition from letterpress printing into
offset. Letraset was one of these
inventions that helped us through
that transition period, it was be-
tween handset, mono-/linotype
and photo typesetting. I still feel the
tension for the new in these days.

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Also
the ear
ly com
puters

48 *appeared in the printing industry. I remember well the first digital type setting machines at the beginning of that decade.*

30 *These new devices produced type in high speed. But we as designers and typographers didn't like the output that much, the typefaces looked only vaguely like the original specimen. This early digitizing had obviously been done by technicians and not by type designers.*

24 *Anyhow, for me this confrontation opened a bright view into the future and gave me in 1967 the reason to design a whole new typeface that suited this technique much better. I called it, very presumptuous, 'New Alphabet'.*

200

‘New

Alpha
bet’

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The tragedy I faced while putting the publication together was that I had to compile columns of text in this typeface without having anything like a typesetter available. So, as an anachronism, I went to the Letraset company and had my typeface produced on a pile of transfer sheets that I could rub off on paper. Compared to the digital machinery it was a pre-historic way of doing.

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In principle, if I may elaborate on this theme, the Neubau work is Letraset for the 21st century. But why was it that, after my confrontation with their voluminous publications ‘Neubau Modul’ and ‘Neubau Welt’, my first reaction was: these are lunatics, they must be crazy! Catalogues of everything, the whole tangible world on paper? I hardly understood this Sisyphean task in compiling heavy volumes of systematically arranged patterns, illustrations and type. This can’t be just modern Letraset.

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es.*

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While leafing through their books ‘The whole earth catalogue’ came to my mind. It was published for the first time in 1968, and became an immediate hit. Its purpose was to provide education and ‘access to tools’ so a reader could ‘find his own inspiration, shape his own environment, and share his adventure with whoever is interested’.

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This publication used a broad definition of ‘tools’. There were informative tools, such as books, maps, professional journals, courses, and classes. It also contained well-designed special-purpose utensils, including garden tools, carpenters’ and masons’ tools, welding equipment, chainsaws, fiberglass materials, tents, hiking shoes and potters’ wheels. There were even early synthesizers and personal computers.

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This all is very well comparable with such chapters of the Neubau books like: formats, tools, objects, playground, chairs, constructions, and urban environments, etcetera. For a moment I thought that the Neubau catalogues could be seen as a visual translation of ‘The whole earth catalogue’.

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‘CIA

M,’

‘ISO

TYPE,’

30 The interpretation of ‘tools’ coincided with that given by designer, philosopher and engineer Buckminster Fuller, one of my heroes from that time. He also tried to create physical practices to reform the environment in a positive way. He called it ‘comprehensive anticipatory design science’.

24 Another moment in history came to my mind, the Neubau approach reminded me also of the work of Otto Neurath and Gerdt Arntz. Neurath was a philosopher who invented the ‘ISO-TYPE, International System of Typographic Picture Education’, a graphic system to represent social circumstances.

18 He and Gerd Arntz lived in the Netherlands between 1934 and 1940 and collaborated for this project. Arntz was the artist who designed more than 4000 symbols of this visual language. Neurath worked among others with modern functionalist town planners and architects assembled in the ‘CIAM, Congres International d’Architecture Moderne’. He was an engaged modernist who believed highly in a better world through mutual understanding. These were the things that came to my mind while writing this text, it was helpful to get a better insight in the Neubau philosophy.

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The

Neuba

u

idea.

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To be honest, at first glance, and after my first astonishment, I liked the publications because I am much interested in typeface experiments. Their type and typography is radical and systematic. Also the language they use to explain their work is fascinating, it is the language of science with vectors, structures, physical and mental surroundings, mathematical connected anchor points, constructors, et cetera.

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But soon I discovered a wider obsession behind this work, the fierce wish to get hold of all that surrounds us in a radical systematic way and make that available for daily use. In 2005 ‘Neubau Welt’ was the first result, with 1247 vector silhouettes. In 2007 ‘Neubau Modul’ appeared, a modular system with 2031 electronic and analogue patterns.

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Even if they claim not to illustrate the world or its contents in their entirety, they’ve already gone a long way in that direction.

200 typographic system;

48 These heavy orange books are first of all vector based compendiums of type, patterns and images, functioning as they say like real tool-boxes.

36 But look at the lofty way these images and texts are put on paper, discover the underlying strong typographic system; for me this is pure poetry, bewitching visual poetry!

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Crouwel,

W

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And Neubau is rightly not yet satisfied; with the next step they bring us into the third dimension. Under the title ‘Neubauism’, and as an addition to the printed items, all of the created images from the books are launched in space. A time driven and user controlled voyage through the Neubau atmosphere with their silhouettes, typography and systems. As if the people of Neubau allow us a look into universe through the large Hubble telescope.

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What we see is a fascinating and very promising view into the future. And if I’m not mistaken, I even see the first signs of three dimensional typefaces.

● NB International™ Pro Light, 350 pt

104+

Afrikaans
Albanian
Arapaho
Alsatian
Aragonese
Aromanian
Arrernte
Asturian
Asu
Aymara
Basque
Belarusian (Iacinka)
Bislama
Bemba-lang.
Bena
Bokmål
Bosnian
Breton
Catalan
Cebuano
Chamorro
Cheyenne
Cimbrian
Corsican
Chichewa (nyanja)
Croatian
Czech
Danish
Demo
Dutch
English
Esperanto
Estonian
Faroese
Finnish
French
French (creole)
Frisian
Fijian
Friulian
Gaelic (Irish, Scots)
Galician
German
Genoese
Gilbertese
Greenlandic
Gusii-lang.
Haitian (creole)
Hawaiian
Hiligaynon
Hmong
Hopi
Hungarian
Icelandic
Italian
Ibanag
Iloko (Ilokano)
Indonesian
Interglossa (glosa)
Interlingua
Irish
Istro-romanian
Jerriais
Kashubian
Kurdish (kurmanji)
Latinbasic
Latvian
Lithuanian
Ladin

Lojban
Lombard
Low (saxon)
Luxembourgeois
Malagasy
Makonde
Maltese
Malay (latinized)
Manx
Māori
Megleno (romanian)
Mohawk
Morisyen
Norwegian
Nahuatl
Norfolk (pitcairnese)
Northern (sotho)
North-Ndebele-lang.
Occitan
Oromo
Pare
Polish
Portuguese
Pangasinan
Papiamento
Piedmontese
Potawatomi
Quechua
Rhaeto-romance
Romanian
Romansh
Rombo
Rotokas
Rukiga
Rundi
Rwa
Rwandan
Sami (lule)
Samoan
Sardinian
Scots (gaelic)
Serbian
Sena
Seychelles (creole)
Shona
Sicilian
Slovak
Slovenian
Spanish
Somali
Soga
Southern (ndebele)
Southern (sotho)
Swahili
Swati (swazi)
Tagalog (filipino)
Taita
Tahitian
Tausug
Teso
Tetum
Tok (pisin)
Tongan
Tswana
Turkish
Turkmen (latinized)
Tuvaluan
Ubasic
Uyghur (latinized)

Volapuk
Veps
Votic (latinized)
Vunjo
Walliser German
Walloon
Warlpiri
Xhosa
Yapese
Zulu

E 21

NB International™ Pro E21 Type Specimen
Publication (P2/2) designed by Neubau.

Wim Crouwel's Neubauiism introduction originally
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occasion of Neubau's exhibition at renown MU in
Eindhoven, the Netherlands, in 2008.

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