



1927 / Rudolf Koch

Kabel is a geometric sans-serif typeface, designed by German designer Rudolf Koch (1876 - 1934) and released in 1927 by the Klingspor foundry, a German hot metal type foundry.

Kabel was likely designed using calligraphy, which Koch was a master of. Koch was also a master of lettering, typography and illustration. He was greatly influenced by the Arts and Crafts Movement, and prioritised high craftsmanship.

Due to its release by the Klingspor foundry, Kabel was likely printed using hot metal typesetting, which includes injecting molten metal into letterform moulds, which are then used to press ink onto paper. The typesetting machine would typically be controlled by a keyboard.

Kabel was released in the 1920s, a period of cultural and artistic experimentation, with a rise in avant-garde movements such as the Bauhaus Movement. At the time of Kabel's creation, geometric sans-serifs were becoming increasingly popular in Germany, with an emphasis on simplified, clutter-free fonts from designers.



Defining Features

The defining features of Kabel are smooth and geometric shapes, with letters that appear to sit slightly off the baseline. Kabel has a varied width of letters, especially in the capital letters, for example the thin E compared to the wide M. Kabel appears to look more freehand, due to its organic shapes, and vertical and horizontal lines cut at an angle.

"KOCH PROBABLY DREW [HIS] LETTERS WITHOUT CONSTRAINT, AND THEN 'RATIONALISED' THEM AFTERWARDS... IN KABEL LIGHT THE ARMS OF E ARE ACTUALLY THREE DIFFERENT LENGTHS... KOCH'S SENSE OF STYLE IS IN COMMAND, RATHER THAN ANY GEOMETRIC FORMULA. THE RESULT IS AN ALPHABET OF CAPITALS THAT RELATE PERFECTLY WITHOUT NEED [OF] 'MATHEMATICAL HARMONY'" (TRACY, LETTERS OF CREDIT: A VIEW OF TYPE DESIGN, p168-173).

"History and Evolution of Typography". FontFabric.com. Accessed September 13, 2020. <https://www.fontfabric.com/blog/history-and-evolution-of-typography-fonts-timeline/>

Tracy, Walter. Letters of Credit: A View of Type Design. D.R. Godine, 2003.

"Why We Need a New Kabel". FontShop.com. Accessed September 14, 2020. <https://www.fontshop.com/content/why-we-need-a-new-kabel>

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"Koch probably drew [his] letters without constraint, and then 'rationalised' them afterwards... Koch's sense of style is in command, rather than any geometric formula. The result is an alphabet of capitals that relate perfectly without need [of] 'mathematical harmony'" (Tracy, p168-173)

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