


Reviving The Classics



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**An Exploration of
Modern Takes on
Traditional Design**

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dear

reader

As someone who studies computer science and media arts, it is no surprise that I was immediately interested in learning more about Zuzana Licko, who is a typographic pioneer who takes heavy influences from technology. In fact, Zuzana's duo-faced perspective on design and code was refreshing and proved to be something I was craving to delve into more. However, to appreciate current design, I feel like the viewer really has to go back to that designer's creative influences. However, even after 'completing' my third type setting project on one of Zuzana's most famous typefaces (Mrs Eaves) and its root from John Baskerville's asophnyusly named typeface (Baskerville), I still felt like I had a lot left to discover and learn about these designers and their typefaces. Using this project to learn more about the designers themselves and more deeply understand the type anatomies, I hope to understand their actual histories, but more importantly, how their histories show up in their work.





Baskerville

John Baskerville (1706-1775) was an English printer, type designer, and entrepreneur, best known for his eponymous typeface. Baskerville was born into a family of smallholders and was largely self-educated. He worked as a writing master and engraver before turning to printing in his mid-40s. Baskerville's early work as a writing master gave him a strong foundation in letterforms, which he would later apply to his work as a type designer.

Although his early life is not well documented, it is known that Baskerville received a solid education that prepared him for a career in the printing industry. However, it is believed that he attended a local school in the area and received a basic education in reading, writing, and arithmetic. Later in life, Baskerville became interested in calligraphy and began studying the art of handwriting. He spent many years perfecting his penmanship and became known for his elegant and precise writing style. This interest in calligraphy would later influence his work as a printer and type designer.

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Zuzana Licko

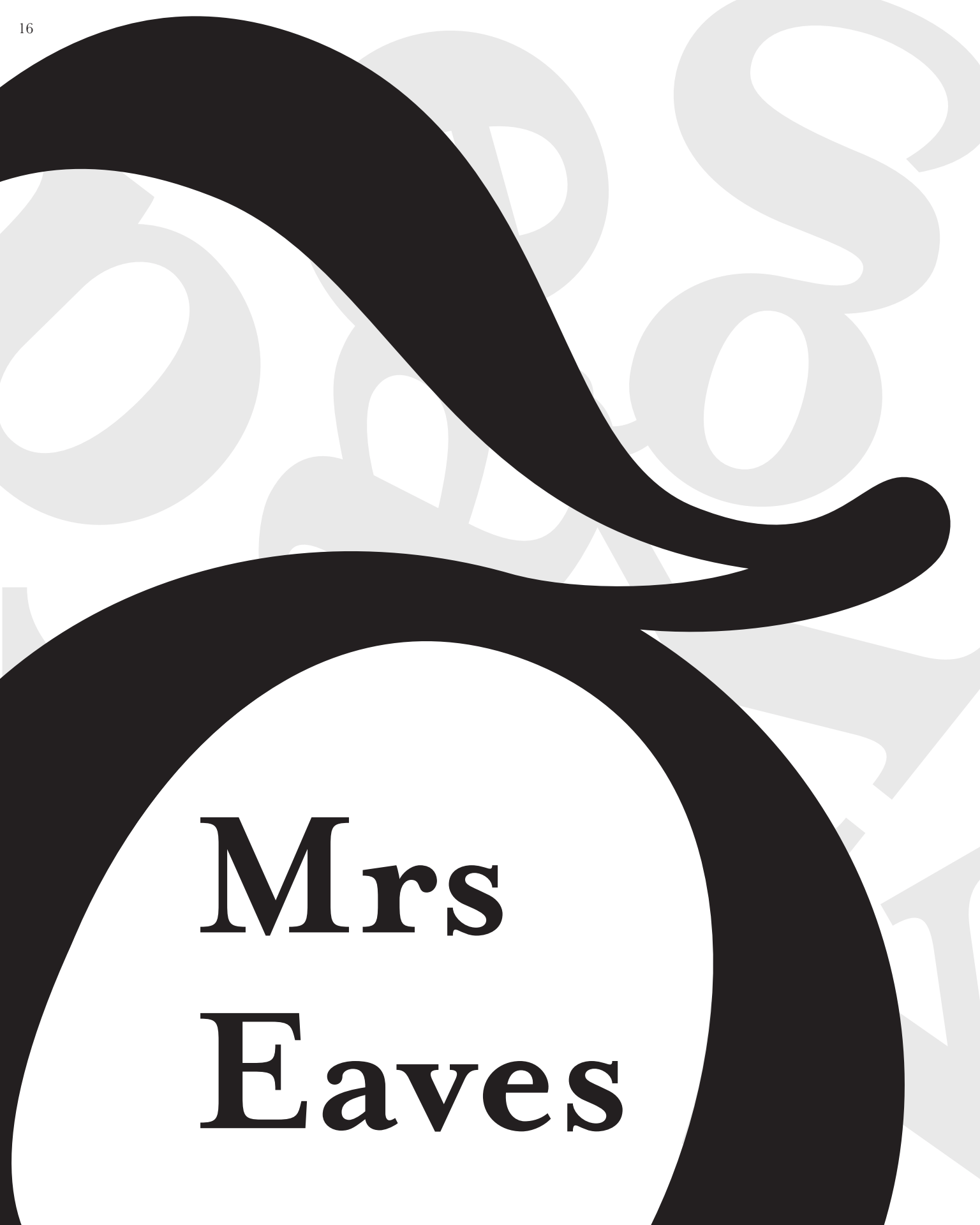
Zuzana Licko is a prominent typeface designer and graphic designer, known for her innovative digital typefaces that have been used in a wide range of applications. Born in Bratislava, Czechoslovakia in 1961, Licko immigrated to the United States with her family in 1968, eventually settling in Northern California. Licko's interest in graphic design and typography began at an early age being taught computer knowledge by her father so it makes sense why she has a digital pull to use those technical elements to help create her designs.

After college, Zuzana worked as a freelance designer and art director, specializing in print and publication design, but didn't feel a natural pull to the projects she was working on. However, after being introduced to Mac years later and meeting her future husband Rudy VanderLans, the two found incredible success in the 1980s when they founded the influential design magazine Emigre, which focused on graphic design and typography.





One of Zuzana's notable contributions to the field of typography is her work on ligatures. Licko's fascination with ligatures began in the 1980s, when she was designing digital fonts for her own publication, *Emigre* magazine. She realized that digital technology allowed for the creation of more complex ligatures than was possible with traditional printing techniques, and she began to experiment with new ligature designs. Licko's ligatures are often highly stylized and imaginative, incorporating elements of both traditional typography and contemporary design. Her work on ligatures has helped to expand the possibilities of typography in the digital age, and has had a significant influence on the field of graphic design.



Mrs
Eaves

1 Serifs and Tails
One of Mrs Eaves most identifiable type features are the long and sharp serifs, which are similarly complemented by the elongated and straight tails.

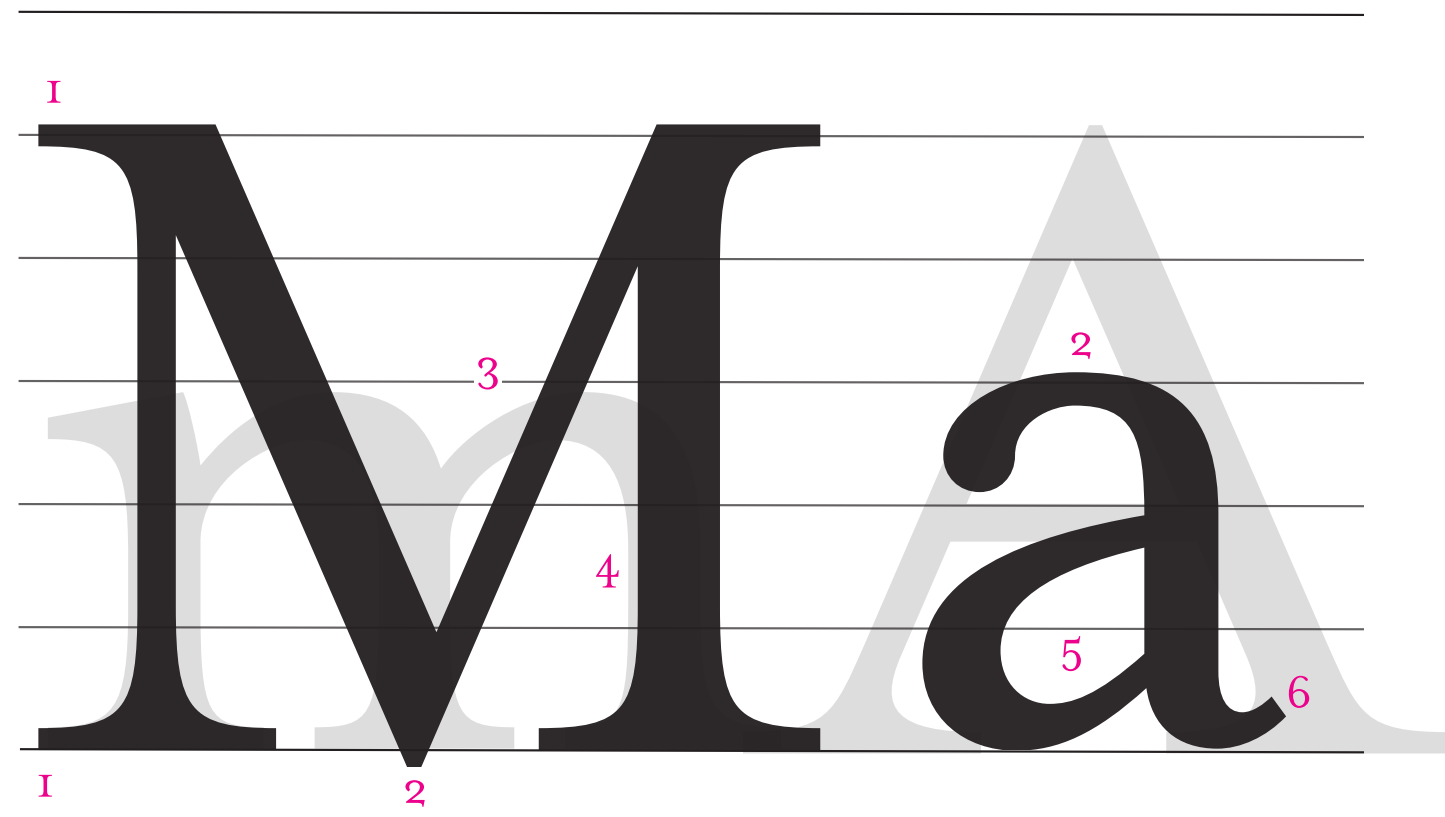
2 Descenders and Ascenders
Mrs Eaves has both local (in comparison to x height) and global (in comparison to line height) descenders and ascenders.

3 X Height
Mrs Eaves is characterized by having a lower x height than average. As you can see below, the lowercase 'a' has a local ascender that extends above the x height line.

4 Stroke
Mrs Eaves most notably have a fairly high contrast between thick and thin strokes, which contributes to the elegant look often achieved by using this typeface.

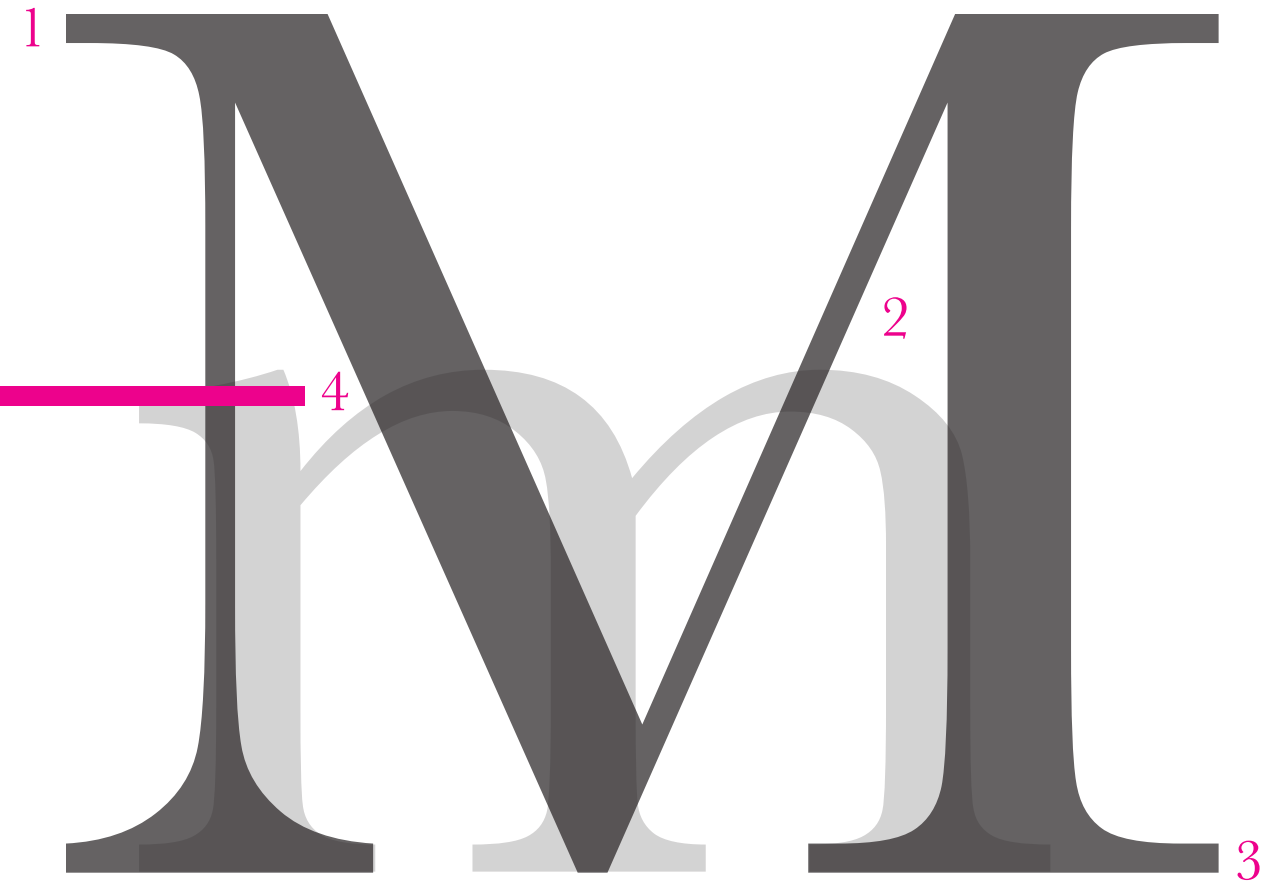
5 Counter
Due to the low hanging rooks and dense bowls, the counter in Mrs Eaves can be quite deep and large.

6 Overbite
In some cases, the tail extends beyond the body of the letter, creating an overbite. This can contribute to the choppiness of Mrs Eaves' legibility.



Back to Baskerville

Baskerville is a serif typeface that was designed by John Baskerville in the 18th century. It is known for its elegant and refined appearance, with high contrast between thick and thin strokes, sharp serifs, and a slightly condensed design. There is a high contrast between thick and thin strokes, which gives it an elegant and refined appearance. The letters are mostly upright, with slightly curved serifs that taper to a fine point. Baskerville also features a high-contrast italic style with elegant and flowing curves. It has a relatively tall x-height which creates a sense of openness and clarity in the text, making it easy to read even at smaller sizes. Baskerville's anatomy is a testament to its timeless beauty and enduring popularity in the typographic world. It has been used in a wide range of applications, including book printing, advertising, and other branding. It remains popular to this day and is often recognized as a classic typeface that is both legible, accessible, elegant, simple, inventive, and even more importantly, aesthetically pleasing.



1 Serifs and Tails
Both the serifs and tails are elongated with a medium-width stroke which helps fundamentalize the crisp edges we see and admire in many of its uses.

3 Overbite
The tails on Baskerville's letters can extend beyond the associative serif, which creates an overbite look for the overall body of the letter.

2 Stroke
One of Baskerville's more prominent characteristics is the high variance between the thickest and thinnest points in the given letter.

4 X Height
It is interesting to note that Baskerville has a much taller x height than most other typefaces similar in their anatomical and structural nature.

The Influence



Mrs Eaves

Mrs. Eaves was designed by Zuzana Licko in 1996 and was named after Sarah Eaves, the housekeeper and eventual wife of John Baskerville, a renowned English printer and designer from the 18th century. Eaves has 524 glyphs and 9 different styles different. Licko was initially drawn to Baskerville's type work and process because of its clarity and simplicity. Licko admired his use of contrasting strokes and his attention to detail, and she sought to capture some of these qualities in her very own typographic designs, creations and revivals.

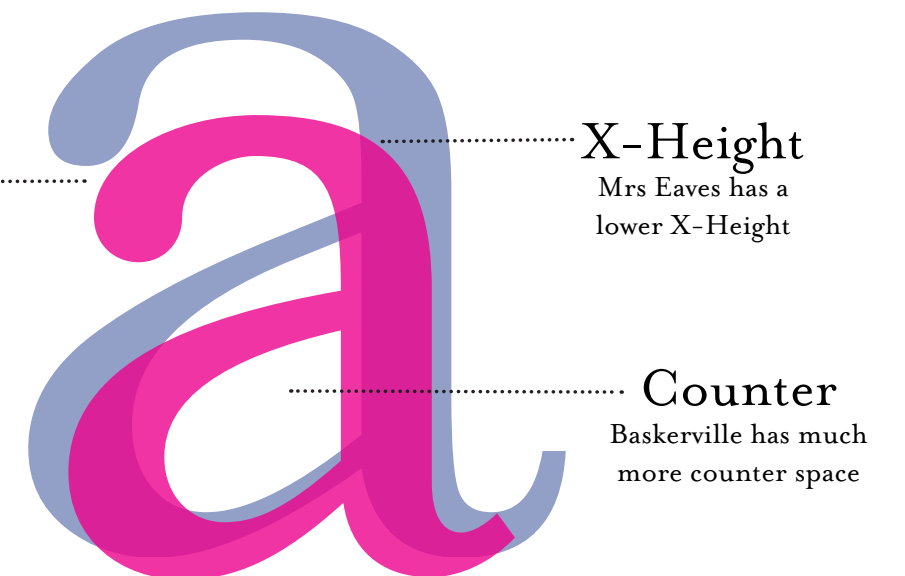


Baskerville

However, while Baskerville's typefaces were highly refined, Licko was very interested in creating something more playful and experimental. To achieve this, Licko incorporated some of the irregularities and quirks of Baskerville's original designs into her own work. For example, she used a slightly curved baseline for Mrs. Eaves, which gives the typeface a more relaxed, informal feel. She also made the serifs slightly thicker and more rounded, which gives the letters a softer, more organic appearance to be used by typographers and designers alike.



Rooks
Mrs Eaves has a more rounded and heavy rook



X-Height
Mrs Eaves has a lower X-Height

Counter
Baskerville has much more counter space

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The work of Zuzana Licko and John Baskerville have made significant contributions to the world of type and graphic design. Both designers pushed the boundaries of traditional typography through their innovative approaches to design, experimentation with new technologies, and attention to detail.

Zuzana Licko's pioneering work in digital typography in the 1980s and 1990s, as well as her contributions to the development of famous Emigre magazine, revolutionized the field of typography and set a new standard for digital design. Her unique approach to typography challenged conventional design principles and paved the way for a new generation of designers.

John Baskerville, on the other hand, is known for his highly refined, elegant, and legible typefaces. His contributions to typography, including his mastery of letterpress printing, set the standard for what is

now known as the transitional style of typography. It was through his groundbreaking practice that we were taught invaluable lessons. His meticulous attention to detail and dedication to perfection helped to elevate typography to a tangible, respected, well-practiced and loved art form.

Although Licko and Baskerville worked in different eras and employed different methods and techniques, both designers shared a passion for typography and a commitment to innovation and excellence. This mission can be found in the influence of Baskerville in Licko's more modern typeface, Mrs Eaves, which is now one of the most popular Emigre typefaces.

Their work has had a profound impact on the world of typography and design, and their legacies continue to inspire and influence designers around the world today, including myself.

