

Durante o último congresso Typotechnica, em Heidelberg – em que técnicos e designers discutiram tecnologia de fontes digitais, design e questões legais – Jill Bell foi a responsável pelo discurso fundamental. O título de sua instigante apresentação foi “O meu sonho de uma ferramenta de fonte perfeita”.

Com sucesso, ela tentou dar uma indicação de para onde deveriam se voltar as inovações no design de fontes e no trabalho com letras em design gráfico. Sua apresentação foi rica em detalhes e Jill foi bastante direta ao apontar caminhos para incrementar programas como o Quark, InDesign, Font Lab e Fontographer.

Ela tem um vasto conhecimento de design gráfico e suas implicações técnicas. É muito criativa, tem 25 anos de experiência e é extrovertida o suficiente para transformar suas apresentações em um show provocativo. Ela também é do tempo da fotocomposição e paste-up e viveu a transição para o DTP e o PostScript.

Vendo ela falar sobre como os designers atuais usam essa tecnologia de ponta, pode-se imaginar que ela produz suas fontes e logotipos diretamente no computador. Entretanto, seus projetos de capas, logotipos e letterings são desenvolvidos inicialmente no papel, com a combinação de várias técnicas, que incluem o uso de canetas hidrográficas, penas e pincéis.

Seu interesse pela caligrafia surgiu na época que estudava literatura inglesa, na Califórnia. Passou a escrever sobre o assunto e também fez as primeiras tentativas como calígrafa profissional. Seu primeiro trabalho foi produzir cartazes de preço e show-cards. Com esse trabalho ela ganhou bastante experiência, mas logo percebeu que, para trabalhos de alta qualidade, precisava de uma base mais sólida.

Assim, ela acabou voltando para a escola, para realizar sua vocação de designer gráfica. Ela já combinava trabalhos de faculdade com alguns free-lances e, deste então, nunca mais abriu mão da liberdade que esse tipo de trabalho proporciona.

# as fontes de jill bell

POR HENK GIANOTTEN



Jill Bell como personagem de um dos cartões postais produzidos por ela, para promover o seu estúdio.

confira: [www.jillbell.com](http://www.jillbell.com)

*If you don't want the  
Light of the Silvery Moon  
to tarnish  
Play it on a Wurlitzer*

ACIMA: CALIGRAFIA QUE ORIGINOU A FONTE SWANK (ABAIXO), DISTRIBUÍDA PELA AGFA

*Known for her ability to create type that appears handwritten and presents handsome, complex settings. Bell has developed many fonts that are favorites among designers. 🐼*

O seu portfolio continha inicialmente caligrafia para convites, logotipos e trabalhos comerciais. A maioria dos seus projetos foram desenvolvidos para agências de propaganda e design e empresas de multimídia. O trabalho de Jill chamou a atenção dos responsáveis pelos títulos dos filmes de Hollywood e logo foi chamada para criar logos e aberturas de inúmeros filmes.

#### Caligrafia Digital

A produção de logos e títulos com caligrafia tem a vantagem de que cada caractere é único. Mas, ao mesmo tempo, é sua maior desvantagem, por ser uma atividade artesanal que leva tempo para ser produzida e, portanto, mais cara. Por isso se vê pouco dessa forma de design gráfico hoje em dia.

Hermann Zapf sabe como é complicado ajustar fontes caligráficas para uso em computação gráfica. Ele só conseguiu isso plenamente com a fonte Zapfino. As letras criadas por Jill Bell se adaptam bem ao processo digital. Ao ver o seu trabalho publicado em artigo na revista Eye, a Letraset foi a primeira a perceber esse potencial e logo suas caligrafias foram transformadas em fontes digitais.

Henk Gianotten é especialista em tecnologia e marketing de fontes digitais. A fonte usada no texto deste artigo, criação de Antonio Pace, é em homenagem a ele: LT Gianotten.

*Zebras caolhas  
de Java querem*

ITC GIGI

*Mandar fax para  
moça gigante de*

ITC SMACK

*New York. Zebras  
caolhas de Java que-*

ITC HOLLYWEIRD

*rem mandar fax para  
moça gigante de New*

ITC CORUMBA

# The fonts of Jill Bell

During the last TypoTechnica congress in Heidelberg – where font designers and producers discuss font technology, design and legal affairs – Jill Bell was responsible for presenting the keynote speech. The title of her most intriguing presentation was "My dream of a perfect font tool".

In her speech, she successfully attempted an indication of where the innovations in designing fonts and working with letters for graphic design may lead to. Her presentation was detailed and she was very specific in pointing out the ways in which software developers could improve on programs like Quark, InDesign, Fontographer and Fontlab.

Jill has an extensive knowledge of graphics and its technical implications, is extremely creative, she has about 25 years of experience and is extravert enough to turn a presentation into a provoking show. Both at school and designer meetings, she literally steals the show with her enormously interesting contributions about calligraphy, font design and graphic designing.

Furthermore, she knows how it was to work with traditional photocomp and how to "cut and paste" a lay-out. Together with most of us, she went through the changes toward DTP and PostScript. On top of that, she is not just a gifted and extremely creative designer, but also an entertaining teacher who is capable to instruct professionals and laymen alike on fonts and functions of typography.

Attending her presentations on how present-day designers use high-tech means, you would expect that Jill Bell designs her fonts and logos directly on the computer. However, that's not the case. All of her designs are initially committed to paper using (felt) pen, (paint) brush, or a combination of different techniques. The end result is scanned at high resolution and further worked on the screen. This is also how she produces headings, covers, logos, titles, icons, and drawings.

Originally she was just very intrigued by calligraphy while studying English literature in California. After that, she started writing about it and tried to make a living doing calligraphy and design jobs. Her first 'real' job in graphics consisted of painting signs, posters, price boards and show-cards. Fonts up to two metres high that had to be adjusted both length and width-wise and had to fit the product that was being promoted. Doing this work she gained lots of experience, but she also realised that for high quality productions she would need a better educational basis. This is how she ended up back in school doing her vocational training for graphic designer. She combined her schoolwork with some freelance jobs, and has since never given up the freedom this kind of work provides. Her portfolio originally mainly consisted of calligraphy for invitations, house styles, logos, commercial jobs, etc. Her employers do not always come to her directly, but she get a lot of work through advertising agencies, studios and multimedia organisations. Her designs were also noticed by the guys who are responsible for the Hollywood film titles, and soon she was asked to do logos or titles for different motion pictures.

## **Digital calligraphy**

Producing headlines and logos using calligraphy has the major advantage that every character will be unique. However, at the same time this is its major disadvantage because the time consuming handicraft is extremely expensive. This is why nowadays this form of graphic design is only very rarely seen. Herman Zapf has experienced how complicated it was to adjust the calligraphed fonts for computer use. He only just succeeded at this completely with Zapfino, which is now standard part of the Macintosh fontset. Some of the lettering designed by Jill Bell was, as far as the design went, also suited for digital processing. After seeing her work in a publication of designers' magazine Eye, Letraset was the first to ask her permission to produce a number of her letter fonts for digital reproduction. This is a very complex process because the character set of a digital font must be applicable internationally, which requires an enormously extensive series of characters. Besides that, some of Jill's fonts are extremely fanciful, which results in very complex outlines. As the computers in those days weren't up to what they can do nowadays, this sometimes lead to major problems, resulting in delicate compromises between shape and size.

When this technique was finally mastered, and Jill's fonts became available for PostScript, the demand for her fonts increasingly grew. At this moment, you can find Jill's fonts at Adobe, Agfa/Monotype, ITC and Linotype and especially Gigi and Swank are very popular. The fonts are not only surprising in their design, but also the names that Jill choose for them are out of the ordinary. What about Bruno, Carribean, Carumba, Clover, Hollyweird, Miro, Smack and Stranger?

Besides designing fonts for normal distribution, Jill has also done a lot of digital font designs for specific proprietary styles. Part of those she uses for her own designs, others are created for CD-ROMs, video and DVD and their boxes, and for publications. This work usually resulted from her contacts with film and music producers. Because of her extensive experience with film titles, this almost automatically lead to the creation of special ornaments and icons. She can count major companies like AT&T, Apple, Adobe, Microsoft and Oracle among her clients, but also studios like Paramount/Viacom, Sony/Columbia and Disney and lots of non-profit and small local organisations.

Whether fonts eventually are produced as digital fonts depends heavily on their possible application area. The above mentioned examples are already an indication that these fonts will be used for intriguing advertisement headings, for eye-catching headlines in magazines and for products like menus, packages and logos. Furthermore, Bell's fonts are used a lot to write initials in articles. In practise, this is not always very easy as some of her letters are not exactly baseline positioned. However, in her own work which she has on permanent exhibition on her own very special website, one can see that even ligatures that are not positioned on a baseline, mix perfectly with a great variety of text fonts. In my view, the "against the grain" fonts of this designer are a welcome addition. They will enable many designers and layout artists to come up with attractive and striking headings, logos, packages or pages. And as we all know: an interesting shape increases the interest value and therefor the function.

Henk Gianotten

Information: [www.jillbell.com](http://www.jillbell.com)