

Pallas University of Applied Sciences
Department of Media Design

Metusala Font – Conceptual Web Portfolio

Thesis

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Tartu 2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS 2

INTRODUCTION.....	4
1. TYPOGRAPHY IN MODERN VISUAL COMMUNICATION.....	6
1.1 The Importance of Typeface Design	6
1.2 The Use of Fonts in Various Fields of Art and Design.....	6
1.3 Fusion of typography and art: Experimental fonts.....	6
1.4 The Influence of Socio-cultural and Political Factors on Typography Development	8
2. THE ORIGIN, SIGNIFICANCE, AND EVOLUTION OF THE "METUSALA" FONT	12
2.1 Origins of the "Metusala" font.....	12
2.2 Evolution of the "Metusala" font.....	13
2.3 The Meaning and Symbolism of the "Metusala" Font in Historical Context	15
3. DESIGN PROCESS: CREATION OF METUSALA FONT AND PORTFOLIO WEBSITE	16
3.1 Design process	16
3.1.1 Ideation and Conceptualization.....	16
3.1.2 Digitalization.....	17
3.1.3 Fine-Tuning and Refinement	17
3.2 Design and Layout	18

3.3 Analysis of Examples	19
3.4 Creating the Layout	20
3.5 Symbols of “Metusala” font.....	22
3.6 Posters for Visual Presentation of "Metusala" Font	25
3.6.1 Poster 1.....	25
3.6.2 Poster 2.....	26
3.6.3 Poster 3.....	27
RESÜMEE / SUMMARY	29
REFERENCES	30
APPENDICES	31
Appendix 1: BaseBloom TypeFace	31
Appendix 2: Metusala font.....	32

INTRODUCTION

The font "Metusala" is an interesting blend of typographic creativity and conceptual art, created as a response to imperialistic ideas and symbolizing a stand against oppressive regimes. This project isn't just about designing a font; it's about making a statement of protest and a desire for freedom.

By combining design, history, and ideology, the "Metusala" font encourages reflection on how typography influences the stories told and societal perspectives. In today's ever-changing visual world, this font demonstrates the powerful impact typography can have in inspiring, challenging, and bringing about change

This study will thoroughly explore the origins and development of the "Metusala" font. The investigation delves into its beginnings, uncovering the reasons and inspirations behind its design. Through this process, the aim is to understand how "Metusala" breaks away from traditional typography to become a symbol of resistance and cultural identity.

Following this detailed exploration, the insights and findings are presented in a conceptual web portfolio. This digital platform showcases the font engagingly and interactively, reflecting the true spirit and message of "Metusala." The web portfolio has carefully chosen visuals, typography, and interactive elements to guide visitors on a journey that highlights the font's importance and impact.

The objective of this web portfolio is not merely to display the "Metusala" font but also to inspire creativity, encourage discussion, and spark curiosity. Additionally, the study aims to examine how this font impacts modern art and society and to explore the broader importance of typography in today's culture.

To achieve these goals, various methods are employed, such as a data analysis, comparative research, and literature review. By leveraging digital technology and design, the intention is to create an engaging and meaningful experience that connects with audiences and adds to the conversation about typography and visual communication.

By breaking away from conventional typographic norms, "Metusala" challenges established beliefs about what constitutes acceptable design and communication. Its bold and fearless style serves as a reminder that innovation often comes from breaking free of

traditional constraints.

Furthermore, "Metusala" encourages the exploration of new ways of expression and representation that may have been ignored or sidelined in mainstream discourse. Its unique forms and symbolic meaning open up opportunities for alternative communication methods, promoting greater inclusivity and diversity in visual expression. In this way, "Metusala" becomes more than just a font; it becomes a driver of creative exploration and social change.

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this project, especially my academic mentor, for their invaluable guidance and support throughout this research journey. I also want to express my gratitude to the scholars, artists, and designers whose work has inspired and enriched this study.

1. TYPOGRAPHY IN MODERN VISUAL COMMUNICATION

Typography plays a crucial role in modern visual communication, influencing how content is displayed and understood across various media platforms. It is a powerful tool for creating brand identities, evoking emotions, and conveying messages, especially in today's digital content-driven world.

1.1 The Importance of Typeface Design

Well-designed typefaces significantly impact how readers perceive, understand, and engage with content. In an era of short attention spans and information overload, carefully chosen typefaces can greatly enhance readability, user experience, and overall communication effectiveness. The importance of well-designed typefaces in the information age cannot be overstated. They are vital for effective communication strategies, improving readability and user experience, strengthening brand identity, and enhancing visual appeal. Investing in high-quality typography allows designers to create memorable, impactful, and accessible experiences that resonate with audiences across both print and digital media.

1.2 The Use of Fonts in Various Fields of Art and Design

Typography trends in digital design often reflect broader design movements and cultural shifts. Advances in technology and changing design preferences drive these trends, which range from bold and expressive display typefaces to minimalist sans-serif fonts. Designers experiment with cutting-edge typographic techniques like kinetic typography and variable fonts to create captivating and dynamic visual experiences.

Typography is also crucial in marketing and advertising strategies, helping to tell stories and persuade audiences. Print advertisements, posters, and digital banners use typography to communicate brand messages, evoke emotions, and encourage action. Custom lettering and typographic graphics are examples of creative typography treatments that help businesses stand out in a crowded market and leave a lasting impression on customers.

1.3 Fusion of typography and art: Experimental fonts

Typography is a fundamental part of graphic design used to communicate ideas, emotions, and aesthetics. While traditional typefaces like Helvetica and Times New Roman have long been staples in design, the rise of experimental typefaces has transformed the industry. These

avantgarde fonts push the boundaries of visual communication and challenge norms with their unique letterforms and expressive qualities. Designers can explore their creativity and express themselves through experimental typefaces, drawing inspiration from various sources, including nature, technology, and society. These fonts evoke emotions, encourage interaction, and serve as platforms for social and cultural commentary (Adobe Premiere Pro Tutorials, 2023).

However, to ensure that experimental typefaces effectively convey their intended messages, designers must balance creativity with readability. As technology advances, the world of experimental typefaces is set to grow and evolve, offering exciting and thought-provoking visual communication opportunities.

Experimental fonts represent the intriguing intersection of typography and art, prioritizing originality, experimentation, and artistic exploration over everyday usability. They challenge established norms and conventions, allowing designers to play with creative concepts, techniques, and aesthetics. These typefaces often emphasize artistic expression over readability, enabling designers to experiment with unconventional compositions, forms, and shapes. As a result, experimental fonts can evoke a wide range of emotions, stimulate thought, and inspire creativity in both viewers and designers.

The idea that typography can be more than just a means of communication and can also be a form of artistic expression and visual storytelling is embodied in fonts as art forms. In this sense, typefaces are not just tools for conveying information; they are also standalone artistic creations imbued with originality, significance, and emotion.

Experimental typefaces invite readers to engage with typography in new and unexpected ways by blurring the line between design and art. They challenge the traditional view of typography and encourage viewers to reconsider their perceptions through abstract forms, unconventional compositions, and experimental lettering techniques. Furthermore, experimental fonts often serve as catalysts for creativity within the design community, inspiring designers to push the boundaries of their medium and explore new avenues for expression. By rejecting conventional limitations and embracing innovation, designers can unleash their imagination and create truly unique and impactful typographic works.

In summary, experimental typefaces are a captivating blend of typography and art, providing designers with a platform for artistic expression and creative experimentation. As

typefaces continue to evolve as a visual communication medium, experimental typography will undoubtedly play a crucial role in shaping future design trends and inspiring new generations of creatives.

1.4 The Influence of Socio-cultural and Political Factors on Typography Development

The evolution of typography is deeply influenced by socio-cultural and political factors, which shape the trends, styles, and traditions that define the field. As a visual communication tool, typography reflects the values, ideas, and ideologies that are prevalent in society.

Socio-cultural elements affect typography in many ways, including through cultural traditions, aesthetic preferences, and historical influences. For instance, calligraphic scripts are highly valued in many Eastern cultures due to their long history of artistic appreciation and craftsmanship. These cultural influences lead to diverse typographic traditions and tastes across different civilizations.

Political factors also play a significant role in the development of typography, particularly in countries with strong state control, propaganda, and censorship. Typography can be used for political messaging, propaganda, or opposition. During times of political unrest or revolution, typography often becomes a tool for expressing dissent, resistance, or solidarity. Designers create fonts and typographic works that challenge established power structures and promote social change.

For example, typography was crucial in the propaganda campaigns of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. Soviet propaganda posters used bold Cyrillic slogans with strong sans-serif typefaces, creating dramatic compositions featuring heroic images of workers and soldiers. These designs aimed to evoke feelings of urgency, patriotism, and revolutionary zeal by promoting unity, collective effort, and the triumph of communism.

In contrast, Nazi propaganda in Germany used Gothic-style typefaces to promote militarism, racial superiority, and ideological conformity. These posters employed carefully chosen slogans and images to instill fear and loyalty to the regime. Both governments understood the powerful impact typography could have on public opinion and used it to gain support for their ideologies. (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 1993). (See Figure 1.4.1 and 1.4.2).



Figure 1.4.1 Baljasnij, Mikhail, "Communism means soviets, plus the electrification of the whole country. Let us transform the USSR through socialist industrialization" (1930). Views and Re-Views. (Brown Digital Repository. Brown University Library., 2024).



Figure 1.4.2 German propaganda poster promoting the unification of annexed Austria and Germany in April 1938. It urges all citizens to say “Yes (Ja)” to a “Greater Germany.” (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 1993).

Political, social, and cultural factors also influence typography through globalization, economic trends, and technological advancements. Technological developments, such as digital typography and web fonts, have expanded the accessibility and versatility of typography. Economic factors, including commercial interests and market demand, drive the popularity of specific styles and formats.

Globalization has accelerated the exchange of typographic ideas, styles, and influences between different cultures and regions. As designers draw inspiration from various cultural and political contexts, typography becomes a rich tapestry of influences. This dynamic

interplay between tradition and innovation, local and global perspectives, and socio-cultural and political processes enriches the typographic landscape.

In summary, the development of typography is significantly shaped by socio-cultural and political factors. Understanding and engaging with these influences allow designers to create typographic works that resonate with diverse audiences, reflect the complexities of modern life, and facilitate meaningful communication and discourse.

2. THE ORIGIN, SIGNIFICANCE, AND EVOLUTION OF THE "METUSALA" FONT

The origin, significance, and evolution of the "Metusala" font are key aspects of its study. The history of this font's emergence, its symbolic importance, and its journey from inception to the present day are intriguing topics for analysis.

2.1 Origins of the "Metusala" font

The "Metusala" font originated in 2023 as part of a typography course at Pallas University of Applied Sciences. Students were tasked with selecting an existing font and using it as a basis for creating a new typeface, which they would then showcase through posters (see Figure 2.1.1).

В СТРАНЕ
ЕСЕНИНСКИХ СТИХОВ
ЗАКОНЧИЛОСЬ
ИСКУССТВО
ТЕПЕРЬ ЗОЛА ЛЕЖИТ ОДНА
КАК НИ ВОРОШИ, НИ ИЩИ
НИ ДУШИ
НЕ ТУШИ, ОЙ, НЕ ТУШИ, НЕ ТУШИ
ГОРИ ГОРИ, МОЯ СТРАНА

АБВГДЕЁЖЗИЙКЛМНОП
СТУФХЦЧШЩЪЫЬЭЮЯ

0123456789

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Metusala
Mariia Metusalo ME-20
2023

Figure 2.1.1 Metusala" back in 2023.

The design of "Metusala" is based on the Cyrillic civil font, which was introduced during Peter the Great's reforms in the early 18th century. These reforms aimed to modernize and standardize the Russian script, making it more similar to Western European Antiqua. This historical context provided a rich foundation for the new typeface (Favorsky, 2016, p. 41).

For the text of the poster, I chose lyrics from the song "Burn burn burn" by Elizaveta Gyrdayeva, an artist who actively opposes the Russian political regime and uses her art as a form of resistance. The chosen lyrics evoke a powerful sentiment:

“In the land of Yesenin's poems, Art has faded away.
Now only ash blankets the ground,
No matter where you look, no one is found. Burn, burn, my country,
Don't extinguish her, oh, don't extinguish her.” (Monetochka, 2019)

At this point, the concept of the font expanded beyond visual appeal to embody a deeper idea: that of protest. The name "Metusala" comes from my Estonian surname, symbolizing resistance against the imperialism. My family's history of being exiled to Siberia from Estonia by the empire, resulting in the loss of their identity, adds a personal layer to the font's meaning.

By infusing "Metusala" with these historical and personal elements, the font becomes more than just a typeface. It transforms into a symbol of resistance, cultural identity, and a call for freedom. This background provides the foundation for further exploration into its evolution and significance.

2.2 Evolution of the "Metusala" font

Seeing the potential in my project, my professor encouraged me to continue developing the "Metusala" font, suggesting it would be an excellent addition to my portfolio. This support led me to choose "Metusala" as the subject of my diploma project, allowing me to refine and expand its conceptual foundation.

To strengthen the font's concept, I decided to base it on the civil font in its original form (see Figure 2.2.1).



Figure 2.2.1 Civil type "first type" large size, 1707 (Lobachev, 2020).

A key feature of the "Metusala" font is that it changes to an experimental form when uppercase letters are used. This approach is similar to the development of the BaseBloom Typeface font (see Appendix 1). With this feature, uppercase letters offer two writing options, enhancing the font's interactivity and allowing users to choose the style that best suits their needs. This ensures that the font remains legible while adding a layer of creative flexibility, allowing readers to understand the meaning within the context.

This evolution has made "Metusala" a versatile and dynamic typeface, merging historical influence with modern design principles. The ability to switch between traditional and experimental forms gives it a unique edge, making it not only a tool for communication but also a medium for artistic expression.

2.3 The Meaning and Symbolism of the "Metusala" Font in Historical Context

The "Metusala" font is a reflection of its time, filled with deep meanings and symbolism. It was created during a period of unrest, embodying defiance, strength, and cultural identity.

In 2022, Russia's invasion of Ukraine began, leading to the ongoing occupation of Ukrainian territories. As someone from Siberia, I felt a strong need to protest against this war. This sentiment is at the heart of the "Metusala" project, driven by historical events that will undoubtedly leave a mark on history.

The "Metusala" font serves as a powerful commentary on repression, occupation, and imperialism. It aims to reveal the fear, horror, and systemic ugliness hidden beneath what might seem like a simple "civil font."

The Civil font, introduced during Peter the Great's language reform in the early 18th century, was meant to showcase the grandeur of the Russian Empire. Peter I's reforms, including the introduction of the civil script, were crucial in modernizing and unifying Russia. The Civil font was not particularly artistic; it focused on practicality and ease of use, modeled after the Latin alphabet for better printability and readability (Yukechev, 2019, pp. 148-170).

The "Metusala" font aims to create a visual language that speaks to those who value critical thinking and freedom of expression. It uses familiar symbols, combined with intentional deconstruction and distortion of basic forms, to create a design that feels sharp, oppressive, coarse, heavy, and ominous.

In the end, the "Metusala" font goes beyond just being a typeface. It becomes a strong symbol of resistance, cultural identity, and historical awareness. Through its design, it amplifies the voices and hopes of marginalized communities, reaffirming their presence, agency, and unwavering resilience in the face of adversity.

3. DESIGN PROCESS: CREATION OF METUSALA FONT AND PORTFOLIO WEBSITE

This section provides insight into the process of creating the "Metusala" font and building its portfolio website. It details each step of the font creation process, from ideation to sketching, digitalization, and fine-tuning. It also examines the strategic choices and factors that influenced the design, navigation, and visual appeal of the portfolio website.

3.1 Design process

3.1.1 Ideation and Conceptualization

The creation of the "Metusala" font began with thorough ideation. The primary focus was on defining the font's conceptual foundation. This involved extensive research into historical scripts, especially those influenced by imperialistic and oppressive regimes. The goal was to create a font that would be visually striking and carry deep symbolic meaning, reflecting themes of resistance and cultural identity.

Sketching and Prototyping: Once the concept was clearly defined, the next step was to translate these ideas into tangible sketches. Various styles and forms were explored on paper, experimenting with different letter shapes and proportions to capture the intended aesthetic. This phase was crucial for visualizing the font's overall look and feel before moving on to digital tools (see Figure 3.1.1.1).



Figure 3.1.1.1 Metusalo font sketch.

3.1.2 Digitalization

The transition from sketches to digital format marked the beginning of the technical phase. Using software such as Adobe Illustrator and FontLab8, the initial hand-drawn designs were meticulously recreated in a digital environment. This step required careful attention to detail to ensure that the unique characteristics of the sketches were preserved and enhanced (see Figure 3.1.1.1.2).

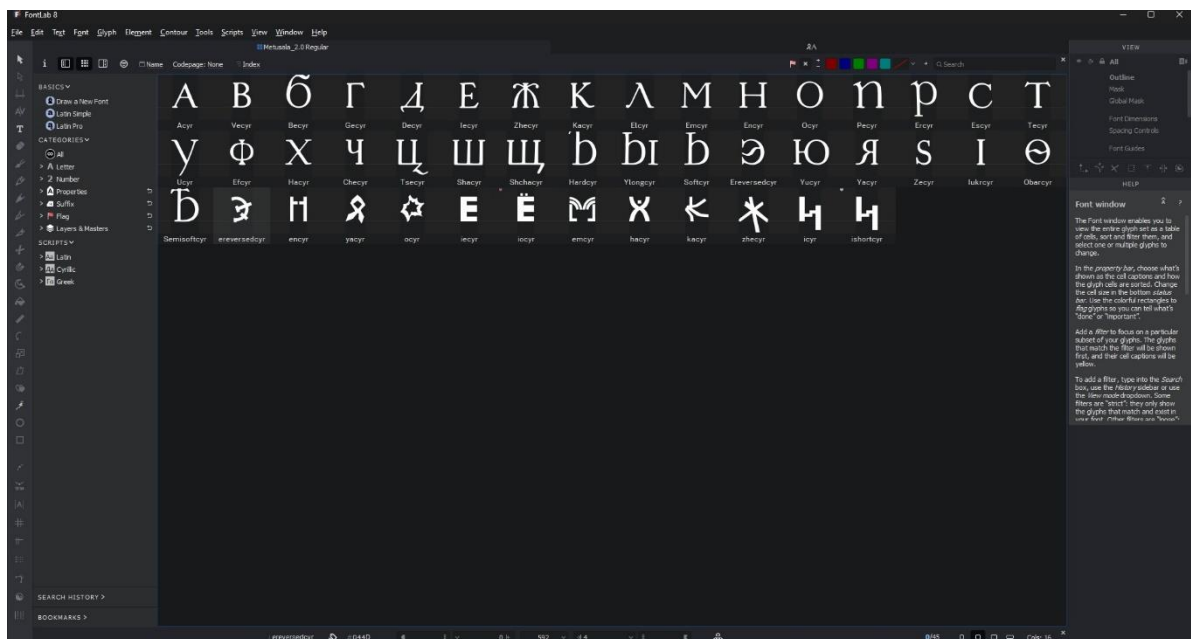


Figure 3.1.1.2 Metusalo font beginning of the technical phase. Using software FontLab8.

3.1.3 Fine-Tuning and Refinement

After creating the basic digital version of the font, the fine-tuning process began. This involved adjusting the kerning, spacing, and weight of the characters to ensure optimal readability and aesthetic balance. Feedback from peers and mentors was invaluable during this phase, guiding further refinements and improvements (see Figure 3.1.3.1 or Appendix 2).

АА ББ ВВ ГГ ДД ЕЕ ЁЁ ЖЖ ЗЗ ИИ ЙЙ
 КК ЛЛ ММ НН ОО ПП РР СС ТТ УУ
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 ЭЭ ЮЮ ЯЯ

1234567890

., ... ?! : ; () «» - – # *

Figure 3.1.3.1 Final font.

3.2 Design and Layout

The portfolio website was carefully crafted to reflect the unique identity of the "Metusala" font, emphasizing its distinct features and historical context. The final design prominently uses black and red, colors chosen to highlight the font and evoke its intended mood. This layout allows the "Metusala" font to take center stage, effectively conveying its powerful and evocative nature (see Figure 3.2.1.).



Figure 3.2.1 Illustrative art of Metusala conceptual-portfolio.

The visual appeal of the portfolio website was paramount in conveying the essence of the "Metusala" font. To create an effective design, several successful portfolio examples were analyzed, focusing on their structure, color schemes, and visual solutions. Based on these criteria, a layout was developed that highlights the uniqueness of the font and creates an intuitive and aesthetically pleasing interface for users.

Navigation and User Experience: Strategic choices were made to ensure intuitive navigation and a seamless user experience. The website was structured to guide visitors through the font's creation process, historical background, and conceptual significance. To further engage viewers, the portfolio was designed to incorporate interactive elements in a digital format.

This includes clickable areas that provide additional information or animations that bring the historical context to life.

3.3 Analysis of Examples

Analysis Criteria:

Structure: Various portfolios were examined for their organization and presentation of information. Effective examples featured clear navigation, logically arranged sections, and ease of information perception. This analysis helped determine the optimal structure for the portfolio, ensuring that users can easily find and understand the content.

Color Palette: The color schemes used in other portfolios were analyzed to understand which combinations most effectively highlight content and create the desired mood. The chosen colors had to harmonize with the font itself and evoke themes of resistance and cultural identity embedded in "Metusala." This analysis guided the selection of deep, rich shades and neutral tones to balance visual impact and thematic resonance.

Visual Solutions: Important aspects included visual elements such as fonts, icons, images, and animations. Observing how these elements enhance information perception and user interaction was crucial. The analysis focused on how these visual solutions can draw attention to key aspects of the "Metusala" font, emphasize its historical and cultural significance, and create an engaging and memorable user experience improvement (see Figure 3.3.1).



Figure 3.3.1. Some examples of Analyzed portfolios. (1. (Dumond, 2022); 2. (Chilleron, 2024); 3. (Zlatanovic, 2016)).

3.4 Creating the Layout

Structural Organization: Based on the analysis, a layout was developed that includes clear and easily accessible sections: about the font, gallery of examples, creation history, symbolism, and contact information. This structure provides a logical and sequential path for users, making it easier for them to familiarize themselves with the "Metusala" font.

Color Scheme: Colors were chosen to reflect the spirit of the "Metusala" font—deep and rich shades symbolizing strength and resistance, combined with neutral tones to create a balanced visual effect. This color scheme enhances the thematic resonance of the font and creates a visually appealing experience.

Interactive Elements: To make the portfolio website more engaging, interactive features were integrated. These elements were designed to provide an immersive experience, allowing visitors to explore the font's intricacies and appreciate its design nuances. This includes clickable prototypes, animation effects, and other interactive tools that enhance user engagement and understanding of the font's unique qualities (See web portfolio: metusala.ee).

Typography and Visual Elements: The "Metusala" font itself was the centerpiece, with

specific letters and symbols showcased to highlight their unique features and meanings. The complementary Poppins sans-serif typeface was used for the explanatory text to maintain visual harmony and readability. Additional visual elements, such as icons, images, and illustrations, were incorporated to emphasize the historical and cultural context. These elements were carefully selected to enhance the overall message without overwhelming the primary focus on the font. The layout incorporates various visual solutions, including animations that draw attention to key aspects of the font, icons, and images that emphasize the historical and cultural significance of "Metusala." These elements help create an interactive and memorable experience for users (See web portfolio: metusala.ee).

By combining meticulous design processes and strategic web development, the creation of the "Metusala" font and its accompanying portfolio website demonstrates the power of thoughtful design and meaningful storytelling in the realm of typography. This approach not only showcases the font's unique features but also effectively conveys its historical and cultural significance.

To bring the "Metusala" font to life in a digital format, several tools and resources were utilized to design and develop the web portfolio.

Designing the Page Layout: Figma was used to design the layout of the portfolio website. This collaborative interface design tool allowed for precise control over the visual elements, ensuring that the aesthetic matched the unique style and symbolism of the "Metusala" font.

Developing Interactivity: ReadyMag: The layout designed in Figma was transferred to ReadyMag, a platform known for creating interactive and responsive web pages. ReadyMag facilitated the incorporation of interactive elements, such as clickable areas and animations, to enhance user engagement and provide a deeper understanding of the font's historical and cultural context.

Domain Acquisition: To give the portfolio a professional and accessible online presence, the official domain metusala.ee was acquired. This domain serves as the primary online showcase for the "Metusala" font, making it easily accessible to a global audience.

By leveraging these tools and resources, the creation of the web portfolio was streamlined, resulting in a polished and interactive presentation that effectively communicates the essence and significance of the "Metusala" font.

3.5 Symbols of “Metusala” font

The "Metusala" font incorporates various symbols within its letterforms, each carrying deep historical and cultural meanings. These symbols reflect themes of resistance, oppression, and cultural identity, providing a rich narrative context to the typeface (Appendix: 2).

A and K: These letters are drawn as Soviet stars, symbolizing the enduring influence of Soviet ideology and communism in modern Russia. The Soviet star represents the USSR's period, marked by totalitarian rule and propaganda, highlighting the lasting impact of Soviet symbols and rhetoric on Russian politics and society.

Б: This letter is depicted as a noose, representing the severe consequences faced by activists, journalists, and opposition figures who challenge governmental authority. It highlights the threat of imprisonment, violence, and death looming over those who speak out against corruption and human rights abuses.

В: Designed to resemble a Russian doll by Russian political artist, Vasily Slonov. This letter symbolizes the intricate layers of identity and culture within contemporary Russia. The Russian doll represents the rich tapestry of traditions, history, and diversity in Russian society, emphasizing the complex cultural influences shaping modern Russia.

Г: Depicted as gallows, this letter represents the state's use of capital punishment and extrajudicial killings to instill fear and maintain control. It reflects the historical and ongoing oppression faced by political dissidents and marginalized groups.

Д: Shaped like an old TV with antennas, this letter symbolizes the pervasive influence of state-controlled media in Russia. The vintage TV represents the use of broadcast media for propaganda, shaping public perception to favor the ruling regime.

Е and Ё: Depicted with barbed wire, these letters symbolize the pervasive sense of restriction and confinement in Russian society. The barbed wire represents barriers to freedom, reflecting oppression, surveillance, and limitations on civil liberties and free speech. Additionally, it signifies the influence of prison subculture, highlighting the harsh realities and oppressive environments within the Russian penal system.

Ж: Represented by a Czech hedgehog, an anti-tank obstacle, this letter symbolizes the military presence and culture of defense against perceived threats. It highlights the focus on military power and preparedness in both Soviet and modern Russian contexts.

З: Shaped like handcuffs, this letter symbolizes legal oppression and the abuse of judicial power in Russia. It represents the state's use of law enforcement to detain and silence political opponents and activists.

И and Ё: Depicted as boarded-up windows, these letters symbolize the dying Russian countryside and the loss of cultural heritage and memory. The boarded-up windows reflect the decay and abandonment of rural areas, highlighting the neglect and erosion of traditional cultural values and historical memory in modern Russia.

Л: Designed to resemble a Gulag observation tower, this letter symbolizes the history of forced labor camps and political repression in the Soviet era. It highlights themes of state oppression and human rights abuses.

М: Represented as a Kremlin wall battlement, this letter symbolizes the fortified stronghold of power and authority in Russian politics and history. The imagery underscores themes of governmental control and authoritarianism.

Н: Shaped like two police batons, this letter symbolizes the pervasive presence of law enforcement used to maintain control and order. It highlights themes of police brutality and the suppression of dissent.

О: Depicted as an explosion, this letter symbolizes volatility and instability in Russian society, representing moments of upheaval and conflict.

П: Resembling panel houses, this letter symbolizes the mass housing projects and uniformity of urban landscapes in Russia, reflecting themes of urbanization and collective living.

Р: Shaped like a clenched fist, this letter symbolizes the Soviet past, dispossession, and the struggles faced by those who lived through that era. The clenched fist represents the power and determination of individuals and movements that resisted oppression, as well as the forced collectivization and loss of property experienced by many. This imagery highlights the resilience and enduring spirit of those who fought against authoritarian rule and the challenges they faced.

Э, Ш, С, and Т: Designed to resemble the hammer and sickle, these letters symbolize the enduring legacy of communism and socialist ideology. The imagery underscores the lasting influence of Soviet symbols on Russian society.

У: Depicted as an upside-down crutch, this letter symbolizes the injured and dying people in war, suffering due to blind loyalty to the Russian government. The crutch represents the physical and emotional toll of conflict, highlighting the devastating consequences of unwavering allegiance to oppressive regimes. This imagery underscores the human cost of war and the sacrifices made by individuals caught in the crossfire of political agendas.

Ф: Shaped like an imperial crown, this letter symbolizes the enduring influence of monarchy and authoritarianism in Russian history, reflecting themes of autocracy and elitism.

Х: Depicted as a person with hands up, this letter symbolizes vulnerability and powerlessness in the face of oppression, highlighting the need for solidarity and collective action.

Ц: Designed to resemble imperial building spires, this letter symbolizes the grandeur and opulence of the Russian imperial past, reflecting hierarchical power structures.

Ч: Depicted as chains, this letter symbolizes constraints on freedoms and civil liberties, highlighting censorship and government control over public discourse.

Ш: Represented by empty bottles, this letter symbolizes issues of alcoholism and substance abuse, highlighting the social and economic impacts of addiction. It reflects the social problems and the lack of government support, underscoring how addiction devastates individuals, families, and communities, exacerbated by insufficient social services and support systems.

Ъ: Shaped like a rubber duck associated with Navalny, this letter symbolizes the power of satire and protest in challenging authority and exposing corruption.

Ы: Resembling characters from Chekhov's "Fat and Thin," this letter symbolizes the rich literary heritage and cultural legacy of Russia, reflecting themes of social stratification and human complexity.

Ь: Designed to resemble Gulag leg cuffs, this letter symbolizes the dark legacy of forced labor camps and political repression, highlighting human rights abuses and suffering.

Ю: Depicted as a medal with a kolovrat, this letter symbolizes Russian nationalism and cultural heritage. The kolovrat, a Slavic pagan symbol associated with the sun and eternal life, reflects pride in traditional beliefs and the symbols embraced by Russian nationalists.

This imagery underscores the significance of historical narratives and cultural symbols in shaping collective identity and national pride.

Я: Shaped like a pioneer tie, this letter symbolizes Soviet-era symbolism and nostalgia, reflecting the ongoing resonance of Soviet cultural and political norms.

3.6 Posters for Visual Presentation of "Metusala" Font

To effectively present the "Metusala" font and its rich symbolic context, a series of posters were created. These posters serve to highlight the unique design and deep meanings embedded in each letterform, providing a visual narrative that underscores the themes of resistance, oppression, and cultural identity.

Design Concept: The posters were designed with the intention of visually communicating the historical and cultural significance of the "Metusala" font. Each poster focuses on a specific letter or set of letters, showcasing their unique design and explaining the symbolism behind them.

Supporting Graphics: Additional visual elements, such as background patterns or related imagery, to enhance the narrative and thematic connection.

Color Scheme: The color palette for the posters was carefully selected to reflect the spirit of the "Metusala" font. Deep, rich shades symbolize strength and resistance, while neutral tones provide a balanced visual backdrop. This combination ensures that the focus remains on the font itself, with the colors enhancing the overall impact without overwhelming the viewer.

Red, as a symbol of imperialism, is prominently used in the posters. This color choice not only draws attention but also connects to the historical and cultural themes embedded in the "Metusala" font. Red represents power, authority, and the intense emotional backdrop of resistance against oppressive regimes.

3.6.1 Poster 1.

The posters showcase the "Metusala" font itself, featuring various phrases to highlight its unique features and the underlying messages. Examples of these phrases include: "Russia has a special path," "They are not there," "It's not scary to die for your homeland," and "We are for peace, but are ready for war." These phrases are used to expose the absurdity of propaganda, reveal the lies, and point out the horror hidden behind these seemingly patriotic

statements (see Figure 3.6.1.1).

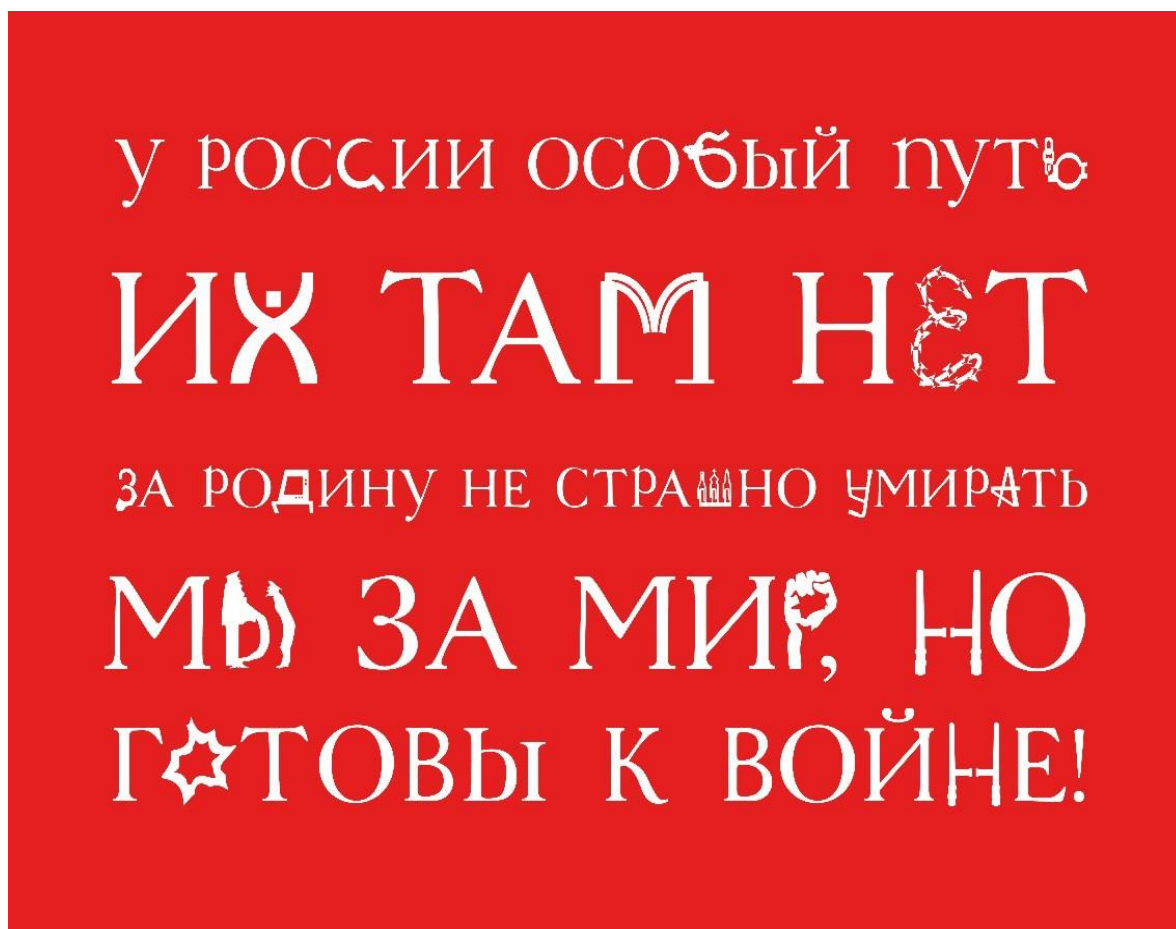


Figure 3.6.1.1 Poster for Metusala typography showcase.

3.6.2 Poster 2.

The poster features imagery of a black garbage bag used to pack dead soldiers' bodies, with the phrase "It's not scary to die for your homeland" written on it (see Figure 3.6.2.1).

I created this poster in response to current teacher instructions in Russian schools. Every school week in Russian schools begins with raising the flag, singing the national anthem, and a class hour called "Talking about Important Things," covering topics like "Our Country – Russia," "Traditional Family Values," and "Day of National Unity." Teachers in the tenth and eleventh grades, during discussions about "special operations," are instructed to say: "You cannot become a patriot by merely declaring slogans. Truly patriotic people are ready to

defend their homeland with their own hands.” (SOVA – independent publication, 2022)



Figure 3.6.2.1 Poster for Metusala typography showcase.

3.6.3 Poster 3.

The poster features an image of a surveillance tower in a Soviet work camp and the text "Gulag Again. The phrase "Gulag Again" serves as a stark reminder of the oppressive past and the resurgence of similar practices in modern times. The surveillance tower symbolizes the constant monitoring and control exercised over individuals, reflecting the harsh conditions and human rights abuses of the Soviet Gulags. This poster aims to draw parallels between historical and contemporary forms of repression, urging viewers to recognize and challenge these injustices (see Figure 3.6.3.1).



Figure 3.6.3.1. Poster for Metusala typography showcase. Figure 3.5.2. Poster for Metusala typography showcase.

In conclusion, the "Metusala" font is more than a typographic experiment; it is a powerful medium for artistic expression and social change. By challenging conventional typographic standards and embracing innovation, "Metusala" prompts us to reevaluate our perceptions of design and communication. It encourages us to explore new avenues of expression, celebrate cultural diversity, and advocate for freedom and justice. As a testament to the transformative power of typography, "Metusala" stands as a bold reminder of the enduring impact of visual communication in shaping narratives and influencing societal perspectives. The "Metusala" font underscores the vital role of typography in the ongoing discourse surrounding cultural identity and social justice.

RESÜMEE / SUMMARY

"Metusala" font on ainulaadne segu tüpograafiast ja kontseptuaalsest kunstist, loodud eesmärgiga kritiseerida imperialistlikke ideid ja sümboliseerida vastupanu rõhuvate režiimide vastu. Alguse saanud Pallas Rakenduskõrgkooli akadeemilisest projektist, ületab "Metusala" traditsioonilise tüpograafia piire, lisades oma disaini sügava sotsiaal-poliitilise kommentaari ja ajaloolised viited.

Käesolev lõputöö uurib fondi päritolu, arengut ja tähtsust, paljastades, kuidas seda mõjutas Peeter Suure reformide käigus kasutusele võetud tsiviilkiri. "Metusala" font väljendab sügavat protesti imperialismi ja rõhumise vastu, kehastades vastupanu ja kultuurilise identiteedi teemasid. Iga tähemärk on disainitud ajaloolise ja kultuurilise sümboolikaga, muutes fondi visuaalseks kommentaariks sellistel teemadel nagu repressioonid, vastupanu ja Nõukogude ideoloogia püsiv mõju.

"Metusala" fondi arendamise protsess hõlmas hoolikat tähelepanu detailidele, alates ideede genereerimisest ja visandamisest kuni digiteerimise ja täpsustamiseni. Kontseptuaalse veebipordi loomine suurendab fondi mõju, pakkudes kaasahaaravat platvormi, et näidata selle ainulaadset disaini ja ajaloolist konteksti. Veebipordfolio, mis on kujundatud strateegiliste navigeerimis- ja visuaalsete elementidega, pakub immerstiivset kogemust, mis süvendab vaatajate arusaamist fondi olulisusest.

"Metusala" projekt illustreerib, kuidas tüpograafia võib toimida võimsa meediumina lugude jutustamisel ja aktivismis. Ajalooliste viidete ja kaasaegsete sotsiaal-poliitiliste teemade integreerimise kaudu suhtleb font sügavamal emotsionaalsel tasandil, kutsudes vaatajaid üles mõtlema võimu, rõhumise ja identiteedi küsimustele. Selline lähenemine rikastab disainimaastikku, näidates tüpograafia potentsiaali mõtte mõjutamisel, dialoogi inspireerimisel ja sotsiaalsete muutuste edendamisel.

Kokkuvõttes on "Metusala" midagi enam kui tüpograafiline eksperiment; see on kunstilise väljenduse ja sotsiaalse kommentaari vahend. Väljakutsudes tavapäraseid tüpograafilisi standardeid, julgustab "Metusala" ümber hindama disaini ja kommunikatsiooni, edendades kultuurilist mitmekesisust ja seistes vabaduse ja õigluse eest. Font on tunnistus tüpograafia transformatiivsele jõule narratiivide kujundamisel ja ühiskondlike perspektiivide mõjutamisel, rõhutades selle olulist rolli kultuurilise identiteedi ja sotsiaalse õigluse aruteludes.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: BaseBloom TypeFace



Figure 1. BaseBloom TypeFace (Bushuev, 2018).

Appendix 2: Metusala font.

АА ББ ВВ ГГ ДД ЕЕ ЁЁ ЖЖ ЗЗ ИИ ЙЙ
КК ЛЛ ММ НН ОО ПП РР СС ТТ УУ
ФФ ХХ ЦЦ ЧЧ ШШ ЩЩ ЪЪ ЫЫ ЬЬ
ЭЭ ЮЮ ЯЯ
1234567890
., ... ?! : ; () «» - — # *

Figure 2. Metusala font.