

The decision to use Sunshine (from Chank Co.) as the featured font in my final project, a typographical portrait of Johnny Depp, is for several reasons: first, it has a rough-hewn appearance that strongly reminded me of some of Depp's *Pirates of the Caribbean* work (it looks like it could be font found in a ledger or on a map). Second, the dip in the shoulders of the capital "J" immediately reminded me of the counter scene in *Benny and Joon* where Sam uses forks and dinner rolls to recreate a Buster Keaton skit for his girlfriend; his posture is with shoulders slumped and curled forward as the character always had a lingering sadness to him. In his personal life, Depp recently engaged in a televised defamation lawsuit against his ex-wife. The accompanying media circus around an artist generally acknowledged to be private would also cause a person's posture to change toward slumped forward and protective.

Sunshine is a subtly serified font that has the appearance of printed lettering done by a quill but not in a manner considered calligraphy. It has mild serifs on the ascenders and descenders, the tails have a gentle teardrop, and the counters inside the lower case "p" have some overlapped area that strongly resembles pen stroke. The edges of the letters have a hint of quavering line that could be achieved using a pebbled surface and quill and ink.

In researching the history behind Sunshine, the MyFonts website describes the creation to be "an unlikely alphabet collision of Gobbler and Liquorstore." (Unknown Staff Member, 2009) The other descriptor that resonated was "painterly wiggle," although the staff writer does not appear to be a fan of the font's "dirty display or a slightly clumsy text face." (Unknown) According to the Fonts in Use website, an open collaboration independent archive of typography with multiple contributors, Sunshine by Chank Co. was released in 2000. Chank Diesel has posted on his LinkedIn profile the following information about some of his projects and clients: "Ben & Jerry's, Target, Indian Motorcycle, Doctor Who, Cartoon Network, Electronic Arts.

Scholastic Books, Simon & Schuster, Walt Disney and many more.” (Diesel, 2004) He established his font foundry in 1996 and is based in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Per Adobe Font’s web page on the Sunshine font, the biographical information on Chank Diesel includes having his fonts featured in the Smithsonian’s Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum as “important examples of contemporary typography.” (Unknown Source, 2022)

The lasting impression is that there is maturity and some gravitas to the lettering without being formal and austere, which seem to fit Mr. Depp’s personality. In considering other fonts, a simple sans-serif would not have embodied the quirkiness and rougher edges of the persona known to the public.

To gain visual interest when creating this portrait, the type in a path tool was invaluable for capturing details and creating shapes for the letters to follow. A small font size is used to create strands of hair, and in keeping with the reference photograph, there is an element of disarray to the hairstyle. That area of the portrait is comprised of Depp’s roles branching off the main phrase that highlights Depp’s first movie role: as Glen Lantz in *Nightmare on Elm Street*. There are repeats, phrases, and quotes, but the majority of that area is devoted to movie roles. Shaping the face and creating a basic outline of the entire composition is achieved through using a larger black text, and shadows are created by placing grey text in appropriate areas.

Mr. Depp’s dark brown eyes are one of his most notable features, so a great deal of attention has been paid to crafting the pupils. More grey text creates contours and shadows around the eyes. The clothing is not of primary concern because he only wore a black t-shirt in the reference photograph.

There is an awareness of text hierarchy when creating the portrait, but restraint is used due to the low key and unassuming persona that the public sees; the tone is reserved but somewhat loquacious. No large shouty text is used because that would be counter to the mood of quiet introspection and embracement of quirkiness. To that end, many quotes by Mr. Depp are featured in the portrait. He is a popular figure in social media for the sound bites he offers in interviews that can be crafted into philosophical memes. The message intended with this portrait is that, given a few minutes of perusal, the viewer can walk away with some valuable insights into what one man deems most important, what he considers an unfortunate side effect of his profession, and what rings true between his observations and the viewer's personal experience.

Much of the portrait's construction centers around an awareness of shapes, with particular attention to the use of circles and rectangles. Lots of lines are used to mimic hair and to create denser areas. Isolation of shapes helps to establish areas that are supposed to be lighter and areas that are in shadow.

In summary, the Sunshine font, despite having no italics or bold subsets, works well to capture the essence of a quiet, shy pirate of an artist without the need for excessive showiness.

Sources

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