



Alda



Alda

ALDA REGULAR 95 PT

a new text typeface

ALDA REGULAR 23 PT

DESIGNED BY

ALDA LIGHT 14 PT

BERTON

ALDA BOLD 35 PT

HASEBE

ALDA BOLD 54 PT

Conceived and developed

ALDA REGULAR ITALIC 14 PT

at the renowned

ALDA LIGHT 16 PT

TYPE & MEDIA

ALDA BOLD 24 PT

master course

ALDA LIGHT ITALIC 26 PT

AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY *of* ART

ALDA REGULAR SMALL CAPS 16 PT

THE HAGUE, THE NETHERLANDS

ALDA BOLD SMALL CAPS 10 PT

Minimum
Instrumentalists

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Anthropology

Sound Recorders

Recycled Paper Products

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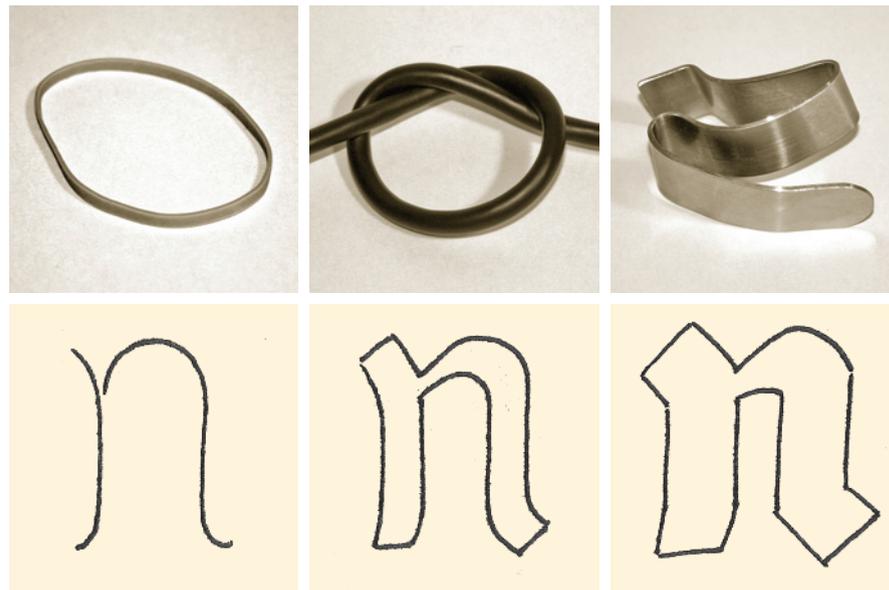
outcome of perseverance in art

School District

The original idea for Alda came from exploring an alternative approach to generating different typeface weights by adapting the characteristics of physical objects. I was interested to find out how far this could be pushed before the letters became a parody of what they referenced. Initially I took this treatment very literally, with the boldest weight expressing the tension of bent steel, and the lightest being as spineless as a rubber band. This allowed me to infuse each weight with unique characteristics, where the bold is robust and angular, and the light is delicate and soft.

I | INTRODUCTION

Alda was designed during my study at the 2007-2008 Type and Media program, a Master course at the *Koninklijke Academie van Beeldende Kunsten* (KABK) in The Hague, The Netherlands.



The three weights of Alda were inspired by the characteristics of physical objects.

The original idea for Alda came from exploring an alternative approach to generating different typeface weights by adapting the characteristics of physical objects. I was interested to find out how far this could be pushed before the letters became a parody of what they referenced. Initially I took this treatment very literally, with the boldest weight expressing the tension of bent steel, and the lightest being as spineless as a rubber band. This allowed me to infuse each weight with unique characteristics, where the bold is robust and angular, and the light is delicate and soft.

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As I sketched iterations of this idea, I also questioned the terminology often used to describe a typeface's properties. I wondered whether characteristics such as "robust," "sturdy" or "elegant," are natural to certain weights. For example, would "elegant" or "refined" ever be used to describe a bold weight of a typeface, or is this a contradiction of function? This led me to explore a variety of stylistic directions and weight structures all within the framework of a single typeface family.

The goal of this process was to eventually produce a typeface family that would exhibit seemingly inconsistent details specific to each weight. These differences would be obvious at large sizes, yet be cohesive in appearance at small text sizes.

II | RESEARCH

During this exploratory phase I closely studied how weight systems were handled in other fonts. *Univers*, for example, increases its contrast and width as it gets bolder. This allows its counters to remain open in even its heaviest weights. *Akzidenz Grotesk*, in comparison, has less of a change in width and contrast, resulting in bold letterforms that have much smaller counters and a darker overall color. Both treatments differ significantly and reflect a subjective preference of the designer; choices based on function and context. Observing these differences gave me insight into how these proportional treatments affect the relationship between a bold and regular weight, and how they work together in display and text sizes.

I also made a list of personal preferences based on qualities that I admired in other contemporary typefaces such as *FF Balance* and *FF Legato* by Evert Bloemsma, *Parry* by Arthur Schmal, and *Dolly* by Underware. Though these typefaces are unrelated in construction, historical references and overall logic, they shared two qualities: low contrast and a warm, friendly character.

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California State Assembly

Minimum

Instrumental

INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

Alda's regular weight started during a class project with Dutch type designer Peter Verheul, where students first *hand drew* an alphabet, then digitized it to set text. Though Alda has deviated significantly from these letters, the initial drawings share a similar warmth with the final version.



III | DESIGN

Alda's regular weight started during a class project with Dutch type designer Peter Verheul, where students first *hand drew* an alphabet, then digitized it to set text. Though Alda has deviated significantly from these letters, the initial drawings share a similar warmth with the final version.



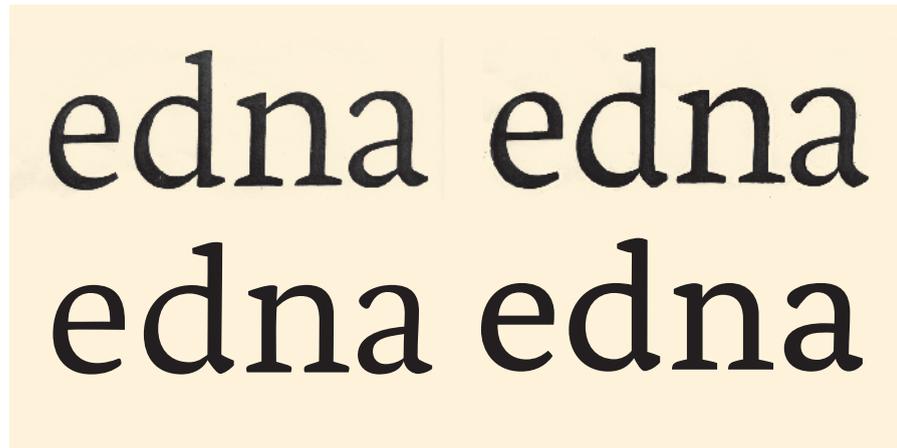
Hand drawn lowercase sketch.

Around the same time, I was also influenced by certain traits in Jan van Krimpen's *Lutetia*, a typeface designed in 1923-25 for the Dutch printing house *Joh. Enschedé en Zonen*. The idiosyncratic proportion and details gave it a liveliness on the page that I was particularly drawn to. Characters such as the d with its rotund and slightly wide form, as well as the swooping a, exhibited an expressiveness that helped me define my limits of proportion and consistency.



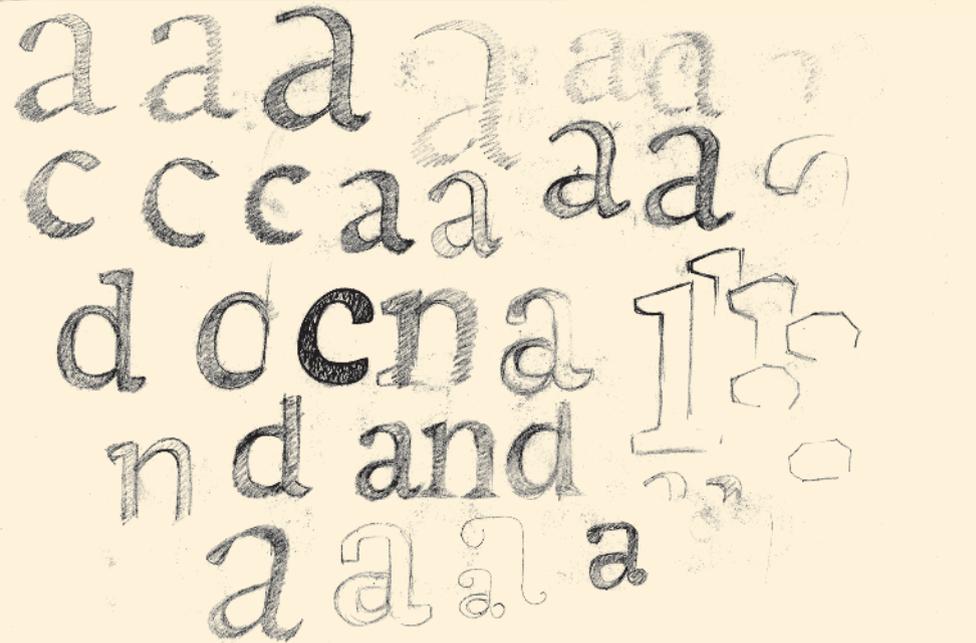
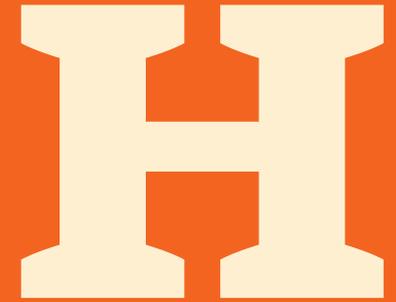
Lutetia on the left. Early Alda in the middle. Final Alda on the right.

Revisions to Alda's first drawings were made by altering the digitized version, as well as by drawing on laser printouts. In the end I used these revised letterforms as a basis from which to develop the final typeface.



A selection of progressions from the early versions to present.

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spent a number of months drawing and redrawing what would become the regular weight, trying to establish its armature and details, and determining its proper heaviness and color. After resolving the basic structure, I applied both bracketed and unbracketed serifs to the letterforms to test how these small changes affected Alda's overall character and texture. This exercise also informed what details would change in Alda's light and bold weights. I came up with a variety of treatments that would add individuality at large sizes, but would diminish as the c

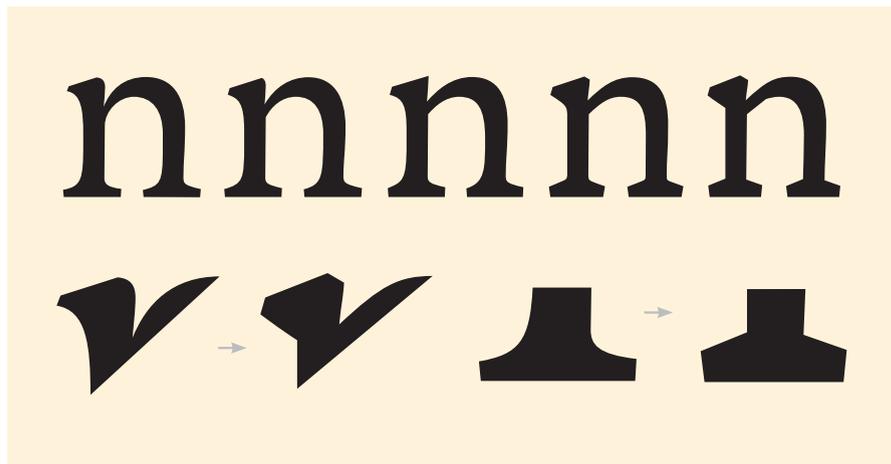
SPENT A NUMBER of months drawing and redrawing what would become the regular weight, trying to establish its armature and details, and determining its proper heaviness and color. After resolving the basic structure, I applied both bracketed and unbracketed serifs to the letterforms to test how these small changes affected Alda's overall character and texture. This exercise also informed what details would change in Alda's light and bold weights. I came up with a variety of treatments that would add individuality at large sizes, but would diminish as the c

f

italic



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After exploring serif treatments, I decided to reference different types of letter constructions for the bold and light weights. These weights are informed by two extremes. The bold weight was derived from the motion of the broad nib pen, allowing for cuts in the inner counter as a result of the calligraphic tendencies of the pen. The light weight referenced the gestures of a pointed pen, which would accommodate more swooping letterforms, especially in the case of the italic.



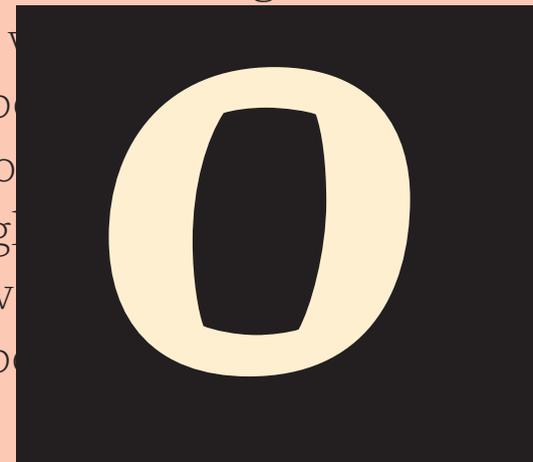
Early sketches highlighting the different letter construction of the extreme weights.



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AFTER EXPLORING SERIF TREATMENTS, I decided to reference different types of letter constructions for the bold and light weights. These weights are informed by two *extremes*. The bold weight was derived from the motion of the broad nib pen, allowing for cuts in the inner counter as a result of the calligraphic tendencies of the pen. The light weight referenced the gestures of a pointed pen, which would accommodate more swooping letterforms, especially in the case of the italic.



MORNING MOUNTAIN GARDENER
CADILLAC **GUACAMOLE** 270 RUSSELL
ORANGE **CABIN** JOGGING SHOES
ICE CREAM CONE RUBBER ERASER
CONSTRUCTION TRAFFIC SIGN
1230 LA BREA AVENUE **FRESH UNAGI**
SUSHI HIPPOPOTAMUS **QUICKLY**
PERSIAN RUGS *PINEAPPLE PIZZA*
DOUBLE CHEESEBURGER CHICKEN
NUGGETS **ALLIGATOR SHOES**
ALUMINUM TUBING EGG OMELET
RABBIT STEW *WHITE MISO SOUP*
609 LA CIENEGA BOULEVARD *STOP*

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matee mountain Gardener Cadillac Guaca
le 270 Orange **Cabin** *Jogging shoes* **Long** I
Cream Cone Rubber Eraser **construction** L
a Avenue **fresh unagi sushi** Hippopotamu
sian Rugs *Pineapple Pizza* **Double Cheese**
ger Chicken Nuggets **Alligator Shoes** *al*
num tubing Egg Omelet Rabbit Stew *Whit*
so Soup **1209 La Cienega Boulevard** Leo
oelace Plastic **plaid sock** **Australian Plat**
uzzard Eggnog *polynpronelene* French Toast

The regular weight was conceived to act as a middle point between the two weights. Serifs were designed to shift between weights from bracketed to unbracketed, where cuts would logically soften or curves gradually harden, depending on which direction the weight shifts.



The initial system of weights.

I soon realized that the logic of a scale between hard and soft didn't need to be implemented rigidly. Certain characters adapted to these style shifts more naturally than others. The drop terminal on the lowercase a, for example, seemed to make a bigger jump between the bold to the regular than the regular to the light. In such instances I made changes based purely on stylistic judgements, giving preference to what looked best in the overall context of word shapes.



Bloomfield, Koo
Super Session
1968 | Columbia
Colin Blunstone
Ennismore
1972 | Epic
Colin Blunstone
Journey
1974 | Epic
Curt Boettcher
Another Time (C)
2003 | Sonic Pa
Curt Boettcher
Misty Mirage (C)
2000 | Poptone
Bonnie 'Prince'
Master and Ever
2003 | Drag Cit
Booker T & the M
The Best Of
1984 | Atlantic
David Bowie
The Man Who S
1970 | RCA
David Bowie
Hunky Dory
1971 | RCA
David Bowie
Aladdin Sane
1973 | RCA
Michael Brecker
Tales from the H
1996 | Impulse
Bright Eyes
"Cassadaga"
2007 | Saddle C
Michael Brook
Live at the Aqua
1992 | 4AD

CALIFOR
Davies Symph
Champ
Sliding Alu
Elektra Soun
Qualified Technicians U
Travelers Gui
Worldw
Restora
NOVELTY ITE
Modern Art Exhibition Ca
Shopping Dis



DESIGN

Chapter 8

FOR A WHILE I STRUGGLED to give the regular weight its own identity. Next to the playful look and feel of the two other weights, the regular felt too much like a literal intermediate. To fix this, I took creative liberty with certain details, mostly by extending and accentuating its serifs.

Initially, certain serifs for the regular weight were a combination of a straight exterior contour and a curved inner counter. In these instances I decided to eliminate the inside bracket, and extend the unbracketed serifs to become more vertical in nature, a detail that became specific to the regular weight. In comparison the bold weight has squarish, stubby serifs, while the light weight is bracketed. I decided to keep the f with its original treatment to add variety and reference the light weight.

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cfsz cfsz cfsz

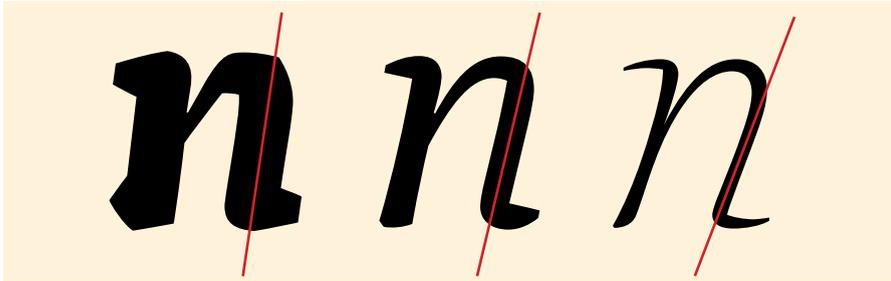
Left to right: original, revised, and final versions.

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Francisco
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Francisco

Characters such as the c, s and f retain their own character specific to the middle weight.

Alda's italic has more gesture and movement than its roman, and it was a good chance for me to push the idea of tension and materiality in the expressiveness of these styles. Each weight of the italic changes slant, allowing its underlying structure to complement the details and character specific to each weight. As a result, the bold italic is very upright and sturdy while the light italic is very swooping and graceful.



momentum

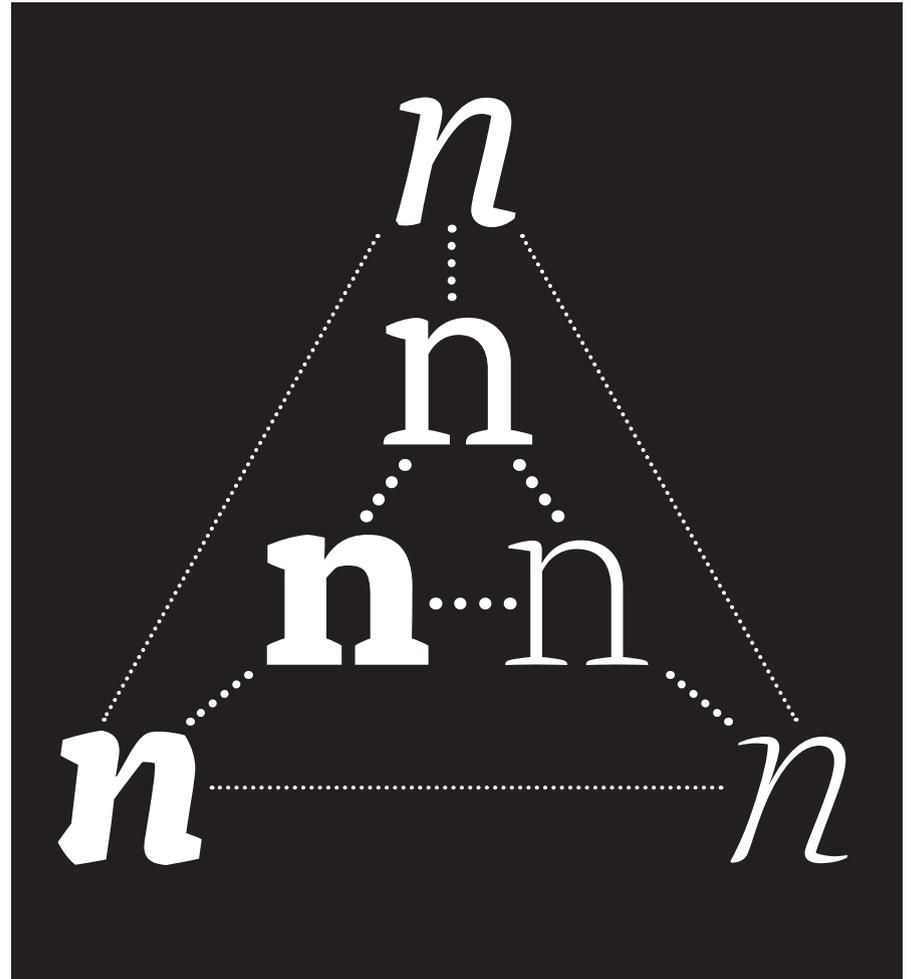
Alda Bold Italic

momentum

Alda Regular Italic

momentum

Alda Light Italic



The hierarchy of relationships between different weights of the roman and italic.

ALDA OPENTYPE FEATURES

A B C D E F G H I J K L M

N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Small Caps

A B C D E F G H I J K L M

N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

a b c d e f g h i j k l m

n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Old Style

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Lining

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Tabular Old Style

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Tabular Lining

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Ligatures

fb ff ffb ffh ffi ffj ffk ffl fh fi fk fl

À Á Ã Ä Å Ç È É Ê Ë Ì Í Î

Ñ Ò Ó Ô Õ Ö Š Ÿ Ù Ú Û Ü Ý Ž

à á â ä å ç è é ê ë ì î ï

ñ ó ò ô õ ö ú ù û ü õ š ý ž

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