

# Fontsmith launches FS Silas, ‘The enigmatic type’.

Submitted by: Fontsmith

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FS Silas is the newest typeface family to be launched by leading boutique type foundry Fontsmith (<http://www.fontsmith.com>).

It has been created in both Sans Serif (<http://www.fontsmith.com/fonts/fs-silas-sans>) and Slab Serif (<http://www.fontsmith.com/fonts/fs-silas-slab>) forms, and each version is available in 5 weights with accompanying italics.

The central aim behind FS Silas was to create a versatile typographic toolkit. One that would enable brands to communicate with different voices, but as part of a unified design language.

The various weights and styles are capable of displaying a wide range of personality traits, from elegant Thins to powerful ExtraBolds and enthusiastic Italics. The Sans and the Slab are true siblings, in the sense that they are drawn from the same origins, but display very different characters.

FS Silas initially appears quite unassuming, as it goes about its work with a quiet industry. But on closer inspection, you begin to understand that there is more going on. Both versions make subtle use of varying angles across their respective character sets, giving copy a distinctive energy that compels the reader on.

It was these hidden depths and subtle nuances that caused FS Silas to become known as ‘The enigmatic type’.

Fontsmith’s design director Phil Garnham said:

“We stuck with the angular theme of the sans by drawing angled slab serifs, as opposed to the square serifs that slab fonts usually have. That created an inner dynamism in words and sentences on the page, and a very distinctive, crafted character, like a Victorian soul in a contemporary body.”

To launch FS Silas, Fontsmith once again turned to Believe in®, who had previously created the launch campaign for FS Emeric.

As Believe in® started working with the typeface, its character slowly revealed itself. There is a real craft in its construction, without ever feeling like its trying too hard or showing off. It feels contemporary and classic at the same time, and to the team it brought to mind a host of cultural references including film noir, Scandinavian TV dramas and classic cold war espionage.

The first task was to give the new typeface a name, one that would reflect its utilitarian sensibilities, crafted nature and hidden depths. From an initial shortlist Silas was chosen, a popular Scandinavian name with a folksy feel (it derives from Sylvanus, the Roman god of trees), and a mysterious quality (Silas was the main antagonist, an albino monk, in The Da Vinci Code).

At the heart of the launch campaign is the printed type specimen. Believe in’s creative director Blair Thomson was drawn to classic type specimens from the 50s and 60s, but wanted to inject depth and

intrigue, to match the typeface's personality.

The type specimen weaves themes of espionage into the form of a secret dossier, combining different paper stocks and page sizes into the finished piece. It is kept intentionally pure, the artwork consists only of type, printed in black ink throughout, save for a white foil on the Manila cover and enclosing folder.

Blair Thomson said:

"To succeed, the type specimen needed to strike a delicate balance, as we wanted it to feel honest without revealing its secrets. The document is utilitarian, with content that demonstrates the typeface's capabilities. But we also wanted to entertain and reward readers for their time. And we didn't want it to feel like a parody."

Content is drawn from a wide range of sources, and provides a glimpse into a clandestine world, using codes, ciphers, intercepted radio transmissions, stories and secret service terminology.

The type specimen is focused on the physical act of holding and reading ink on paper. Since so much of Fontsmith's work lives in digital and broadcast media, Believe in® wanted to create a digital element that would transpose the campaign idea online.

One of the key sources that featured in the campaign was shortwave "Number Stations", used by intelligence agencies to transmit secret messages in various languages, with male and female voices repeating strings of numbers or phonetic letters. These appear in the type specimen, and were also used in four short teaser videos that emerged during the build up to the launch.

The videos were developed by The Space Between, a new creative collective with Matt Rudd (of Rudd Studio) and Steve Jones at the helm. Each video was designed to feel like an intercepted message, revealing an element of the overall story.

Matt Rudd said:

"Believe in supplied a great starting point using the visual and verbal language of espionage as a metaphor for the hidden qualities in FS Silas.

"Working in Adobe Flash Builder and After Effects, we created energetic sequences that showcased the different weights and styles of FS Silas. These were edited to a click track, using a chevron motif and a recurring yellow block to draw things together."

Steve Jones added:

"The evocative soundtrack combines recordings of shortwave Number Stations with noise grooves from a vintage Roland SH-101 and other synth sources and effects. The project was quite a challenge, but a lot of fun. Working with source material as inspiring as a new Fontsmith font was a joy."

As a special introductory offer, customers who buy either of the FS Silas families (Sans or Slab) will be offered the chance to purchase its sibling for half price.

Ends.

## Imagery

Images are available to download in high and web resolution via the following links:

High resolution (<http://blve.in/silashighres>)

Web resolution (<http://blve.in/silaswebres>)

Larger files are available on request.

## Video

4 x 15 second teaser videos edited together as one video, available for download or online via the following links:

Youtube (<http://youtu.be/MuXStQtqKeM>)

Dropbox (<http://blve.in/silasvideo>)

## Credits

Typeface 'FS Silas' designed by Fontsmith

Launch campaign developed by Believe in®

Teaser videos by The Space Between

Booklet printed by CPI Colour

## Background information

### About Fontsmith

Fontsmith is a leading boutique type foundry, famous for creating fonts that are distinctively human and full of character. Founded in 1997 by Jason Smith, today Fontsmith represents a truly international team of designers working from a London studio.

The Fontsmith library includes an extensive collection of typefaces - elegant and traditional, contemporary and quirky - suitable for a range of applications. In addition, the team designs and creates bespoke typefaces for global brands, design and advertising agencies through their new Brandfont® service.

### About Believe in®

Believe in® is a brand design studio united by a passion for the designer's craft and the power of a simple story well told. They develop intelligent and meaningful work to help organisations make effective use of creativity. The company was founded in 1996 by creative director Blair Thomson, and is based in Exeter, South West England.

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