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that the sky can be falling, wars tearing the

world apart, disasters splitting the very ground we walk on, plagues circling continents to pick victims randomly, yet we will still perform our ever optimistic task of making some little spot of the world more appealing to the human eye. We ought to be proud of ourselves, I believe. Optimism is hard to come by these days. Regardless of our own personal reasons for doing what we do, the very thing we do is in itself an act of optimism and belief in the inherent beauty that exists within humanity.

As recently as ten years ago, I wouldn't have been able to choose the amazing obscure profession I now have, wouldn't have been able to be humbled by the history that falls into my hands and slides in front of my eyes every day, wouldn't have been able to live and work across previously impenetrable cultural lines as I do now, and wouldn't have been able to raise my glass of Malbeck wine to toast every type designer who was before me, is with me, and will be after me. As recently as ten years ago, I wouldn't have been able to mean these words as I wrote them: It's a small world.

Yes, it is a small world, and a wonderfully complex one too. With so much information drowning our senses by the minute, it has become difficult to find clear meaning in almost anything. Something throughout the day is bound to make us feel even smaller in this small world. Most of us find comfort in a routine. Some of us find extended families. But in the end we are all Eleanor Rigbys, lonely on the inside and waiting for a miracle to come. If a miracle can make the world small, another one can perhaps give us meaning.

And sometimes a miracle happens for a split second, then gets buried until a crazy type

designer finds it. I was on my honeymoon in New York City when I first stumbled upon the letters that eventually started this **Affair**. A simple, content tourist walking down the streets formerly unknown to me except through pop music and film references. Browsing the shops of the city that made Bob Dylan, Lou Reed, and a thousand other artists. Trying to chase away the tourist mentality, wondering what it would like to actually live in the city of a billion tiny lights.

Tourists don't go to libraries in foreign cities. So I walked into one. Two hours later I wasn't in New York anymore. I wasn't anywhere substantial. I was the crazy type designer at the apex of insanity. La La Land, alphabet heaven, curves and twirls and loops and swashes, ribbons and bows and naked letters. I'm probably not the very first person on this planet to be seduced into starting an **Affair** while on his honeymoon, but it is something to tease my better half about once in a while.

To this day I can't decide if I actually found the worn book, or if the book itself called for me. Its spine was nothing special, sitting on a shelf, tightly flanked by similar spines on either side. Yet it was the only one I picked off that shelf. And I looked at only one page in it before walking to the photocopier and cheating it with an Argentine coin, since I didn't have the American quarter it wanted.

That was the beginning. I am now writing this after the **Affair** is over. And it was an **Affair** to remember, to pull a phrase. Right now, long after I have drawn and digitized and tested this alphabet, and long after I saw what some of this generation's type designers found in it, I have the luxury to speculate about what **Affair** really is, what made me begin and finish it, what cultural expressions it has, and so on. But in all honesty it wasn't like that. Much like in my Ministry Script experience, I was a driven man, a lover walking the ledge, an infatuated student following the instructions of his teacher while seeing her as a perfect angel. I am not

exaggerating when I say that the letters themselves told me how to extend them. I was exploited by an alphabet. And it felt great.

Unlike my experience with Ministry Script, where the objective was to push the technology to its limits, this **Affair** felt like the most natural and casual sequence of processions in the world – my hand following the grid, the grid following what my hand had already done – a circle of creation contained in one square computer cell, then doing it all over again. By contrast, it was the lousiest feeling in the world when I finally reached the conclusion that the **Affair** was finished. What would I do now? Would any commitment I make from now on constitute a betrayal of these past precious months? I'm largely over all that now, of course. I like to think I'm a better man now because of the experience.

Affair is an enormous, intricately calligraphic OpenType font based on a 9x9 photocopy of a page from a 1950s Hunt Brothers lettering book. In any calligraphic font, the global parameters for developing the characters are usually quite volatile and hard to pin down to a standard total, but in this case it was particularly difficult because the photocopy was too gray and the letters were of different sizes, very intertwined and scan-impossible. So finishing the first few characters in order to establish the global rhythm was quite a long process, after which the work became a unique soothing, numbing routine by which I will always remember this Affair. The result of all the work, at least to the eyes of this crazy designer, is 1950s American lettering with a very Argentine wrapper. My Affair came from post–war America, and was infused with the spirit of filete, dulce de leche, yerba mate, and Carlos Gardel.

Upon finishing the font I was fortunate enough that a few of my colleagues, great type designers and probably much saner than I am, agreed to show me how they envision my **Affair** in action. The beauty they showed me makes me feel small and yearn for the world to be even

smaller now – at least small enough so that my international colleagues and I can meet and exchange stories over a good parrilla. These people, whose kindness is very deserving of my gratitude, and whose beautiful art is very deserving of your appreciation, are in no particular order: Corey Holms, Mariano Lopez Hiriart, Xavier Dupré, Alejandro Ros, Rebecca Alaccari, Laura Meseguer, Neil Summerour, Eduardo Manso, and the Doma group. You can see how they envisioned using **Affair** in the section of this booklet entitled A Foreign Affair.

The rest of this booklet contains all the obligatory technical details that should come with a font this massive. I hope this **Affair** can bring you as much peace and satisfaction as it brought me, and I hope it can help your imagination soar like mine did when I was doing my duty for beauty.

Alejandro Paul

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