

p d f d p h l e n k h  
 r s s g d s f x o w  
 e q h b k f i z v t n  
 c n d h e m r s l a  
 b f k m f p q l c y  
 z k i p v m i h e a

written in between

a latin typeface design representative of persian culture





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## Abstract

Language is the means by which we produce and exchange our shared narratives and connections, with writing as its visual notation system and typography as its formalization. Typography is a symphony of form and function that binds us to our environment and defines our cultural identities.

This thesis project explores how Persian culture is perceived and represented, typographically, in Canada's multicultural context and how a Latin typeface, inspired by Persian script, might foster a sense of belonging among Persian-speaking individuals in Canada.

The theoretical framework of this thesis is rooted in Stuart Hall's view of identity as fluid, shaped by social constructs and personal choices, and evolving alongside language and culture. Building on this, the thesis begins with a comprehensive investigation of methodologies and limitations, defining key terms and concepts to explore how cultural and linguistic nuances inform typographic practices. It highlights that culture is more than just a system of representation; it organizes and influences interactions within the visual and material world. Typography, as part of this system, reflects and shapes cultural dynamics, but often falls short, leading to cultural mimicry and misrepresentation.

Through a detailed literature review, survey results, and expert interviews, this research examines perceptions of Persian cultural representation and Identity. The design process is documented, in detail, from analyzing existing Persian-influenced typefaces to the formal study of the Taliq script and the creation of a final prototype of the *Banyan* typeface. The development of *Banyan* represents a step towards fostering a sense of belonging for Persian speakers in Canada while also contributing to the broader field of multi-script typography.

**Key words:** Typography, Cultural representation, Persian script, Latin typeface, Bi-Scriptual design, Multiscript type design, Typographic mimicry

## **Part 1** Background

### 1.1 Introduction

As a visual communication designer living in a world dominated by visuals, I have always been engrossed in the patterns, details and connections of everyday life. To me, design has always been a form of storytelling, of summarizing a whole movie, a book, or a play into a single page.

I was born in Tehran, Iran, in 1998. My father, who had studied and lived in the United States for fifteen years, spoke to me exclusively in English to establish a bilingual foundation, while my mother conversed with me in Persian/Farsi. Their efforts led me to consume media in both languages, watching the Disney Channel and CBeebies alongside Iranian national TV broadcasts. This dual exposure sparked my cultural curiosity from an early age. At six, I moved with my family to Birmingham, England, and began first grade in a country where my understanding of the culture was restricted to what I had seen on television.

After returning to Iran a year later, my growing interest in culture went beyond the spoken language and my newly achieved skills in writing and reading were taking center stage. I began by reading all the labels that I could see at the grocery stores, comparing the Persian logotypes to their English counterparts and pointing out the misinterpretations.

My journey in typography started during my undergraduate studies where I saw typography as more than a visual tool reflecting the written word and looked at it as the epitome of design, characters that aside from being read, are beautifully designed pieces that represent the thoughts, history and culture behind them. After moving to Canada to pursue my master's degree, I was once again in a foreign place, looking for signs of my home culture.

With the rapid pace at which the world is evolving, complex historical and cultural attachments are constantly being overlooked or modified in favor of a more

Eurocentric ideology. As the story of design is being written and taught, a Westernized shadow seems to drape over the process, marginalizing the aesthetics and beliefs of Non-Western cultures. This has created a gap in the design world, where designers often lack experience in multi-script type design. There is insufficient research on the ideologies of non-Western scripts and how they can be integrated into modern design while preserving the robust cultures that shape them. How can typography transcend the biases entrenched in the design world and bridge the gap between cultures? How does typography represent itself across different cultures? How can multilingual designers contribute to cultural preservation and reflect this in their designs? This project aims to address these issues and answer these questions while examining the crucial role designers play in shaping the narrative of typography in a diverse and inclusive world. By bridging the gap between these script traditions, I aim to create a Latin typeface infused with the rich essence of Persian culture while fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of it in the Canadian context.

## 1.2 Methodologies

This thesis project document integrates a variety of primary and secondary sources through distinct research methods, structured sequentially so that each stage informs and builds upon the previous one. First, a literature review explores the intricacies of culture and language and how typography, as a visual vessel of language, has utilized representation theory in portraying culture. Then through primary research I pursue a hands-on experience in the form of visual anthropology. This experience is then synthesized into the design of a series of interviews conducted with practicing type designers. Subsequently, surveys are developed in order to gather information about how everyday users of type, view cultural representation. All of this information and data is then cross-referenced, culminating in the design of an experimental typeface that could foster a sense of belonging, among users, in a multilingual context.

The literature review examines the interactions between typography and culture, focusing on how they influence and impact each other. This exploration includes insights into cultural identity, systems of cultural production and consumption, and

the frameworks of visual culture. It also examines current representational typefaces in use and looks into them through the lens of cultural and historical representation. These topics provide a backdrop to explore the present gap in multilingual typography. This leads to the application of two primary research methodologies.

First, two surveys were conducted on the topic of Persian cultural representation and typography, and how each is influenced and affected by the other. The content of the two surveys aimed not only to provide the research with quantitative data, but to also serve as qualitative input into the thoughts and experiences of the intended users. The surveys were sent to two different groups of participants, in order to capture a wide set of responses from people from multiple cultures. This created an opportunity to gather insights into shared cultural experiences in the context of typography and allowed space to reflect on a range of different viewpoints about a variety of questions. The survey questions focused on cultural identity, cultural representation, and Persian artifacts and typography both historically and those in current use. These findings provided information on which to base the design of *Banyan*.

Second, the interview portion of this primary research was intended to provide specialist input which would articulate tacit knowledge and practice and allow a dialogue that would inform the project. Interviews provided the opportunity to have in-depth discussions about very complex topics with the experts. The interview participants were chosen to represent various cultural backgrounds, a range of script knowledge, professional experience in both creating and explaining the design of typefaces, as well as demographic balance in terms of their geographical location, education, length of career, and gender. The initial proposal of the study was to have multiple interviewees and the list of potential participants included five experts, however, due to scheduling issues and the sparsity of time, only two interviews were held. These discussions also served as a source of information for the development of the final typeface design.

Finally, qualitative data from the survey, including cultural and historical insights, were analyzed thematically, to identify patterns and themes related to Persian script and its



cultural significance. The analyzed data was then used to inform the results of the interview portion of the primary research, in which experts provided insights into the subjects of typography and cultural representation. The quantitative data from the surveys revealed user experiences that built on data collected during the interviews, visual anthropology, and literature review. The results informed the creation of *Banyan*.

### 1.3 Limitations

This research enabled me to conduct a comprehensive investigation of current practices and opinions about type design, as well as the processes involved in researching and creating typefaces. The context of this research naturally reflects the perspective of Persian/Canadian-based designers, given that the author, my educational background, and the majority of survey participants are Persians living abroad. It is important to note, however, that this is an incidental outcome, and I acknowledge that the insights presented in this work are relevant and applicable to a broader range of perspectives.

## Part 2 Terms and Definitions

The following terms are used in the research documentation that follows:

Gavin Ambrose and Paul Harris (2006) provide these definitions in *The Fundamentals of Typography*:

**Type:** Type is the means by which an idea is written and given visual form. (p.12)

**Font:** A font is the physical means used to create a typeface, whether it be a typewriter, a stencil, letterpress blocks or a piece of PostScript code. (p.56)

**Typeface:** A typeface is a collection of characters, letters, numerals, symbols and punctuation, which have the same distinct design. (p.56)

### Baseline and Grids

- 1) **Baseline:** The baseline is the imaginary line that all type characters sit upon with the exception of the 'o' and other rounded characters that fall slightly below it. (p.63)
- 2) **Baseline grid:** A baseline grid is an imaginary grid upon which type sits. The baseline of a piece of type can be forced to 'snap' to this grid to maintain continuity across the pages of a design. (p.66)
- 3) **Baseline shift:** Although all text can be made to align to the baseline it can be manually shifted away from this through the baseline shift function. (p.66)

**X-height:** The x-height of a typeface is the height of the lowercase 'x'. As such it is a relative measurement that varies from typeface to typeface. The x-height is also used as key reference point in the layout of a design. The x-height is the measurement from the baseline to the mean line of a typeface. (p.61)

**Serif / Sans serif:** Standard typefaces generally fall into one of two broad categories: serif or sans serif. A serif typeface is one that has small cross lines at the ends of the different strokes, while a sans serif does not have these. The clean lines of sans serif typefaces are seen as being modern, while serifs are more traditional. (p.62)

**Diacritical marks:** Diacritical marks are a range of accents and other symbols, which indicate that the sound of a letter is modified during pronunciation. These are rare in English but relatively common in other languages. (p.92)

**Ligatures:** Ligatures prevent the collision or interference of characters, particularly the extended finial of the 'f', and the dot of the 'i'. A ligature typically replaces two or three characters with a single unit. (p.98)

**Script typefaces:** Script typefaces are designed to imitate handwriting so that when printed the characters appear to be joined up. (p.105)

### **Typeface Anatomy**

Typographical characters have an array of attributes and forms that are described through a variety of different terms, in much the same way as the different names for every part of the human body. These terms are described by Ambrose and Harris (2006) on page 57.

- 1) **Apex:** The point formed at the top of a character such as 'A', where the left and right strokes meet.
- 2) **Counter:** The space inside a bowl as found on 'e', 'a' and other letters.
- 3) **Ear:** A small stroke extending from the right side of the bowl of a 'g' or protruding from the stem of letters such as 'r' and 'f'.
- 4) **Swash:** An elongated curved entry or exit stroke.

- 5) **Bowl:** The part of a character that encloses a space in circular letterforms such as 'O' and 'e'. The bowl may be closed or open.
- 6) **Finial:** An ornamental terminal stroke at the top of characters such as the 'a' and 'f'.
- 7) **Ascenders and Descenders:** An ascender is the part of a letter that extends above the x-height; a descender falls below the baseline.
- 8) **Stem:** The main vertical or diagonal stroke of a letter.
- 9) **Ligature:** Typically a crossbar or arm that extends across a pair of letters to join them.
- 10) **Stress:** The orientation, or slant of a curved character.
- 11) **Tittle:** The small dot placed above certain lowercase letters in the Latin alphabet, such as "i" and "j".
- 12) **Spur:** The terminal to a stem of a rounded letter.

### **Part 3 Literature Review**

#### **3.1 Culture and language**

##### ***3.1.1 Language and cultural identity***

The intricate and dynamic interplay between culture and language constitutes a core area of inquiry within the fields of linguistics, anthropology, and cultural studies. This part seeks to explain the profound and multifaceted relationship between these two fundamental aspects of human society, arguing that language is both a product of cultural practices and a powerful instrument in shaping and perpetuating cultural identities and norms. Central to this exploration is the work of sociologist and cultural theorist, Stuart Hall and his theory of representation, which provides a critical framework for understanding how language and culture blend to construct and communicate cultural identity.

As Hall states in the introduction of his book *Representation* (1997), “Culture is about ‘shared meanings’.” (p.1) It is said to be the embodiment of the “best that has been said” and “the sum of great ideas” (p.2) He suggests that representation is the process through which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture. Language is the primary medium through which this exchange occurs, allowing individuals to make sense of their world and communicate their experiences.

Hall goes on to demonstrate that the sense of belonging to a culture means that members of that culture “interpret the world, in roughly similar ways” and that in a sense they share the same “cultural codes” (p.4) These codes govern the relationship between concepts and signs, making communication possible by fixing the relationships between our conceptual and linguistic systems. Children learn these conventions and become cultural subjects by internalizing the codes of their language and culture, enabling them to function as culturally competent individuals. (pp.4–22)

Cultural identity is defined as an individual’s sense of belonging in a culture (Cultural Identity, n.d.). In *Modernity and Its Futures* (1992), Hall et. al. go on to establish that there are three distinct “conceptions of identity”, explaining how we as individuals

shape ourselves in response to cultural structures. These concepts are referred to as the enlightenment subject, the sociological subject, and the post-modern subject.

The first concept of the enlightenment subject which views the human person as a fully centered, unified individual endowed with reason, consciousness, and action, possessing an inner core that remains consistent throughout life. This view is individualistic, often male-centric, and sees the essential center of the self as a person's identity.

The second concept, however, recognizes the influence of the modern world's complexity. For the sociological subject, the inner core is formed in relation to 'significant others' who impart cultural values, meanings, and symbols. In this 'interactive' identity concept, identity forms through interaction between self and society, bridging the personal and public worlds. It aligns subjective feelings with social roles, stabilizing both individuals and their cultural environments.

The last concept that Hall introduces is the post-modern subject. This final concept diverges from the notion of a stable identity. Instead, it sees identity as continuously formed and transformed by cultural representations, lacking a fixed or essential core. In this stage, for the post-modern subject:

“Identity becomes a 'moveable feast': formed and transformed continuously in relation to the ways we are represented or addressed in the cultural systems which surround us. It is historically, not biologically, defined. The subject assumes different identities at different times, identities which are not unified around a coherent 'self'. Within us are contradictory identities, pulling in different directions, so that our identifications are continuously being shifted about” (Hall, 1992, p.227).

Building on this description of the post-modern subject is American anthropologist Edward T. Hall's chapter on “Consistency and Life”. He explores the intricate balance between consistency and variability in human behavior and culture. Hall delves into the idea that while cultures strive for consistency to maintain social order and

predictability, life inherently involves variability and change. He mentions that what gives individuals their unique “identity” regardless of their birthplace is their culture. The center to this entire framework of communication, “words, actions, gestures, ...”, constitute comprehensive communication systems whose meanings can only be accurately interpreted by those familiar with their historical, social, and cultural contexts. (E.Hall, 1976, pp.41–55)

The postmodern acknowledgment of the instability of the self, as highlighted by Hall, renders identity as a fluid and ever-changing concept. This suggests that we have the freedom to shape our identities based on an endless array of criteria. Therefore, individual identity is shaped as much by social constructs as it is by personal choices.

### *3.1.2 How culture translates visually*

Previously, I discussed different views concerning the relationship between language and cultural identity and how language is the chosen medium with which we make sense of things and communicate. This suggests that a reading experience, or any interaction with typographic content, is intrinsically linked to the contextual cycle of producing and consuming cultural artifacts. Typography, like any human-made product, is infused with the biases, needs, and desires of its creators, as well as the demands of the consumer market, both real and perceived.

Cultural historian and theorist, Richard Johnson’s concept of the circuits of production and consumption acknowledges the personal and public conditions surrounding consumption, as well as the ideological or practical factors influencing this system (1986). Johnson emphasizes the significance of viewing all social interactions and practices in any context as “cultural”. His focus is on everyday social life, where product distribution is influenced both privately by individuals and publicly. Crucially, Johnson illustrates how production and consumption mutually reinforce each other. Production feeds into consumption, which then affects "lived cultures" and "social relations." These altered relationships, in turn, shape new forms of production,

creating an endless cycle. Each component is a moment in this cycle, with every aspect interdependent and essential to the whole. Johnson's work posits that culture is best understood symbolically, encompassing artifacts, texts, or practices that carry and create meaning (Johnson, 1986, pp. 38-48). Thus, culture is responsible for both generating and influencing typographic expression.

Typography is an artifact that embodies the constructed meanings of a culture. The act of production, regardless of context, should be considered cultural, just as consumption is a cultural act. Therefore, culture and cultural meaning result from a circuit of interconnected processes: production, circulation, and consumption.

Sociologist Paul Du Gay and his colleagues (1997) analyzed this process, presenting it

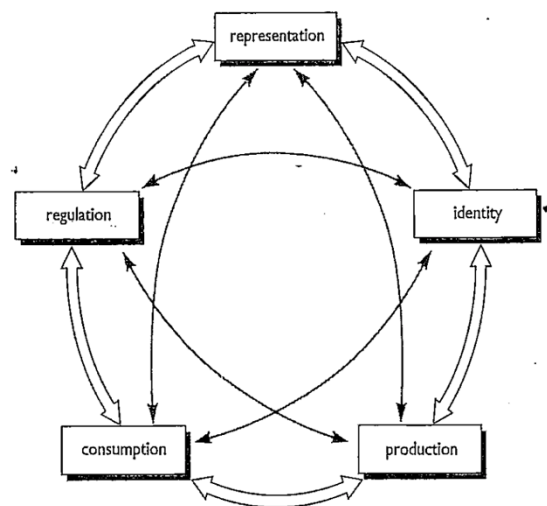


figure SEQ Figure \\* ARABIC 1: Paul Du Gay (et al.) creates an evaluation of production and consumption that is decentralized and which recognizes the effect of production and consumption on cultural identities. (Du Gay, et. al, 1997, p.3).

as a decentralized model where all areas influence each other equally. Production, consumption, and regulation shape social identities and representation.

Du Gay's model asserts that the production and consumption system directly influence these identities and representations. The cultural meaning of any product, including typefaces and typographic material, is continually transformed and



redefined by both designers and consumers. As lived experiences, production methods, and economic demands evolve, so do typefaces and typography.

In summary, typography interacts with and influences all of these aspects of language and culture. We utilize typefaces and typography as an extension of our identities, and as a visual expression of our values, beliefs, interests, and lifestyles. The interplay between language, culture, and identity shapes the behavior and appearance of type design and typography worldwide. Group dynamics, social events, and subcultural changes continuously redefine the meanings attributed to elements of visual and linguistic culture.

### 3.2 Representation theory

#### *3.2.1 Cultural representation in the world of design*

Typography is said to be more than a visual enhancement of the written language, being called by Canadian author, poet, and typographer, Robert Bringhurst “the craft of endowing human language with a durable visual form” (Bringhurst, 2004, p.11), or in the words of academic, designer and typographer, Sherry Blankenship: “Typography is more than legibility, and more than aesthetics. It is the search for greater power in the written word. It is the embodiment of a culture’s identity. It is the celebration of humanity.” (Blankenship, 2003, p.60)

Hall questions the basis and functionality of language as a medium of communication. He asks why we categorize various methods of producing and conveying meaning as “languages” or as “functioning akin to languages”. Put simply, languages operate through representation. They are essentially “systems of representation”. We can assert that all these practices operate like languages, not because they are all verbal or written (which they are not), but because they all use some element to symbolize or represent what we wish to convey, to articulate or transmit a thought, idea, concept, or emotion. Verbal language uses sounds, written language utilizes words, musical language relies on notes within a scale, while the “language of the body” uses physical gestures and expressions. (Hall, 1997, p.4)

Language, in this context, is a practice of “signification”. Any representational system that functions this way can be broadly understood as operating according to the principles of representation through language (Hall, 1997, p.6). In this case, typography is a representational system that uses an arrangement of an array of any form of written language to convey meaning about a person, event, or scene.

Hall goes on to demonstrate that “representation” is closely linked with both identity and knowledge. It is challenging to understand what “being Persian”, Canadian or American means outside the ways our ideas and images of national identity or cultures are represented. “Without these 'signifying' systems, we could not take on such identities (or indeed reject them) and consequently could not build up or sustain that common ‘life-world’ which we call a culture” (Hall, 1997, p.5).

Hall argues that it is through culture and language in this sense that the production and circulation of meaning occur. The traditional view held that 'things' exist in the material and natural world; their material or natural characteristics define them and have clear meanings independent of how they are represented. In this view, representation is a secondary process that comes into play only after things have been fully formed and their meanings established. However, since the cultural turn in the human and social sciences, meaning is considered to be produced—constructed—rather than simply found. Consequently, in the social constructionist approach, representation is seen as integral to the constitution of things. Culture is thus conceptualized as a primary or constitutive process, as crucial as the economic or material base in shaping social subjects and historical events, not merely a reflection of the world.

He concludes his introduction to the subject by mentioning that language serves as a general model for understanding how culture and representation function, particularly in the semiotic approach—semiotics being the study of signs and their role as carriers of meaning in culture. Recently, this focus on meaning has shifted towards the broader role of discourse in culture. Discourse is a way of discussing or

understanding a particular topic or practice. It consists of a collection of ideas, images, and actions that shape how we talk about, know, and behave regarding that topic or activity. This discourse determines what is appropriate to understand and do about a subject, what knowledge is seen as useful and true, and what types of people fit into this context. The term 'discursive' refers to any approach where meaning, representation, and culture play a key role. (Hall, 1997, pp.1–8)

Writer, academic and designer Guy Julier expands on the modern views of visual culture and cites cultural theorist Scott Lash on the subject, he states: “Culture is now three-dimensional, as much tactile as visual or textual, all around us and inhabited, lived in rather than encountered in a separate realm as a representation.” He describes a society structured around spatial dimensions, where information is managed within these frameworks. Culture has shifted from being solely about representation or narrative to a more complex system that organizes, formats, channels, circulates, contains, and retrieves information. As a result, design transcends the mere creation of visual artifacts to be used or “read” it also encompasses the creation of systems that facilitate interaction within the visual and material world. (Julier, 2006, pp.64–76) Typography, therefore, as a design creation, is not merely a representative visual form of communication, it channels culture while also shaping it.

### *3.2.2 Typographic mimicry and misrepresentation*

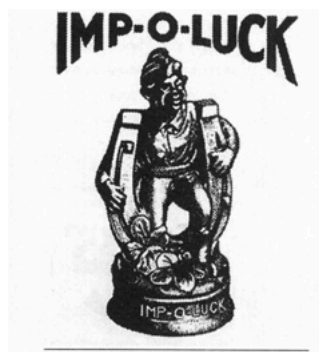
Katie Salen, a design professor at The University of Texas, talks about the subject of typography as a cultural and social surrogate. She argues the representative role of typography using Beatrice Ward's 1932 incantation *The Crystal Goblet* she goes on to explain how urbanization and mass emigration between the 1880s and 1920s brought diverse languages, dialects, and idiolects together, which were previously separated geographically and socially. She cites sociologist Michael North in *The Dialect of Modernism: Race, Language, and Twentieth-Century Literature*, where he notes that the standard language movement aimed to highlight and discriminate against the

alien, both foreign and domestic when other methods began to fail. Even today, speech criticism often subtly expresses social prejudices that polite discourse rejects.

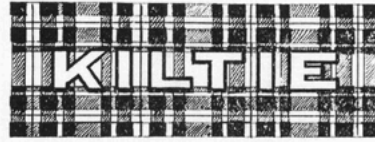
Demands for linguistic standardization, present since the early days of printing, intensified in the nineteenth century when decorum was highly valued. The flood of books and articles in the 1880s called for a centralized regulation of language to limit new elements and hierarchize or eliminate variants.

While linguistic borders were defended against immigration and class mobility, visual representations of non-standard speakers flourished within constrained "exotic" or "abbreviated" boundaries. Early twentieth-century trademarks used non-standard forms to signify social, racial, and ethnic differences, serving as visual shorthand for specific cultural categories, such as the slightly drunk, impish leprechaun for the Irish and the bold fez for Middle Eastern groups (figure 2). The typography delights in diverging from traditional notions of beauty and legibility exemplified by typefaces like Bodoni, Caslon, and Baskerville. This divergence is achieved through the use of "broken" syntax in letterforms or speech (e.g., "Navajo," "African Pie," "Meri-kan") (figure 3), or by incorporating "exotic" embellishments, such as designing letters that mimic the calligraphic brushstrokes of Asian or Arabic writing (figure 4). (Salen, 2001, pp.137–143)

So, alongside the iconographic and pictorial elements in advertising displays, numerous alphabets developed in the mid-to late-nineteenth century were specifically designed and named to represent various "others," often based on stereotypical or non-Western forms. Therefore, according to Salen: "it is not too much of a stretch to consider such culturally thematic alphabets as the visual equivalent of accented spoken English, or forms of visual dialects<sup>1</sup> [sic] imbued with socially stigmatizing form." (Salen, 2001, p.141) And that "English speaking foreign alphabets— these designs, used with appropriate copy, are highly successful in establishing national identity. If you can't speak a foreign language, you can at least get the thrill of writing one (in good old English)."



Fire extinguishing compound, May 5, 1925



Fresh lemons, May 4, 1920



Candy, January 27, 1925



Peanuts, May 4, 1920

Navajo

Textile, May 25, 1926

AFRICAN  
PIE

Watermelon sections, February 27, 1923

‘MERI-KAN’

Women's dresses, May, 1926

**"QUEEN"**

*Lamps, July 24, 1923*

**GLO-RAY**

*Silk fabrics, May 25, 1926*

**JADEX**

*Lamps, December 17, 1929*

**THE FAR EAST**

*Chinese Mission Society Monthly Magazine, December 10, 1929*

figure 4: Pseudo-Asian type: a popularized and repeated convention of representation. Note the range of products and the consistency of the "exotic" embellishment. (Salen, 2001, pp.139–140).

Salen states that Beatrice Ward's theory evokes images of transparency and lightness as hallmarks of an enlightened typographic endeavor. Her typographic crystal was designed to reveal, rather than conceal, "the beautiful thing it was meant to reveal." This form was not only functional but also virtuous, suggesting an intrinsic, albeit complex, connection between form and the moral realm (Salen, 2001, p.133). She further explains how during the 1990s postmodern typographic critics tried to contradict Ward's theory "in an attempt to reveal the fluidity of the relationships between form and meaning. Privileging context, or point of view, as the ultimate barometer of sensemaking" However, the opaque and highly discursive spaces crafted by these typographers offered a representation that is both transparent and condemning in their pursuit of rendering the "other" invisible. This practice, amplified by contemporary type designers' fascination with appropriating and reinterpreting subcultural forms, has left the term "vernacular" both formally meaningless and semantically empty. Typefaces like Crackhouse and Malfunction (figure 5), which mimic slang-like variations of a now-familiar alternate culture, only give the illusion of

inclusion. They are culturally irrelevant beyond the thinly veiled message of urban-suburban commodification they project. (Salen, 2001, pp. 141–142)



figure 5: House Industries' class font collection "Bad Neighborhood," (Salen, 2001, p.143).

This theory of unsuccessful representation in typography is further discussed in an article by linguist Dimitrios Meletis that is humorously titled *"Is your font racist? Metapragmatic online discourses on the use of typographic mimicry and its appropriateness"*. Meletis mentions that in their exploration of designing typography for diverse cultures, western designers often employ a technique known as "Typographic Mimicry". He opens the conversation by referring to Stöckl's 2005 article and how in his words, typography is metaphorically described as the "body and dress" of writing. By this definition, Meletis explains that typographic mimicry involves the process of designing type in a "foreign dress," meaning the use of typefaces in which one's "own" script (e.g., Latin script) emulates the visual features of a different script (e.g., Chinese script) to evoke associations with a corresponding "foreign" culture. Meletis cites scholar Paul Sutherland's definition of the concept of typographic

mimicry which he defines as: “The mapping of (real or imagined) design features and/or graphemes of a mimicked writing system onto a base writing system, so that the base writing system somewhat resembles the mimicked writing system while retaining legibility.” (Meletis, 2021, pp.1046–1047)

Figure 6 shows several examples in which the source script is always Latin while the target scripts, which are also illustrated with examples, vary. As is evident from these examples, the core of typographic mimicry is copying or rather “emulating” the distinctive visual features of the target script. Although the identification of the distinctive visual properties of scripts, as a prerequisite to emulation, constitutes of typographic mimicry, it has not yet been studied in detail from a structural point of view and appears to be rather intuitive and subjective.



figure 6: Different mimicking typefaces, all available in the category “Foreign look” on dafont.com (accessed 10 May 2021) as well as specimens from the actual target scripts (taken from the Wikipedia pages on “typography” in the respective languages). (Meletis, 2021, p.1049)



In an attempt to expand on the subject of typographic mimicry, Meletis cites French type designer Jean-Antoine Alessandrini's process of creating a mimicking typeface:

"[...] has to soak up the graphic universe of the country or culture he wants to evoke. To do this, he collects a wide range of documents, from sacred texts to daily newspapers. This allows him to build in his mind a subjective representation of this exotic country or culture. He then produces pages and pages of drafts to figure out which style of drawing will best evoke the exotic country to his Western imagination and to what he expects will be the collective unconscious vision of his fellow countrymen." (Meletis, 2021, p.1049)

The method being described holds interest for several reasons. Firstly, it is based on a "subjective representation" of an exotic country or culture. This highlights the perceived exoticism of the culture, which is further accentuated by the lens of the collective western imagination through which it is judged. Secondly, there are problematic aspects of this approach, including the act of othering and cultural appropriation that are involved in the process. It seems as though "the goal underlying typographic mimicry is seldom to represent authentically a different culture but rather to reproduce and reinforce one's own image of it from an outside perspective" (Meletis, 2021, pp. 1048 – 1051)

Meletis's semiotic contextualization of typography is concluded by mentioning that the majority of those who create and use design products that feature typographic mimicry are lay users—individuals without specialized typographic training or in-depth study of the subject. Nevertheless, they require specific typographic knowledge for typographic mimicry to have a socio-semiotic impact. This knowledge can be acquired in two main ways:

1. Familiarity with the Target Script: Users may recognize the visual characteristics and scribal practices of the target script (e.g., Chinese). By identifying these emulated features, such as mimicked brush strokes, they can

associate the design with the intended culture. Importantly, it is not necessary or expected for these users to read the target script, emphasizing that the intended audience for typographic mimicry is often those who cannot read it.

2. Exposure to Similar Instances: Users can understand typographic mimicry based on previous exposure to similar designs. In these instances, the cultural association is established not through a visual similarity to the actual script but through repeated use in specific cultural contexts (e.g., signage for Chinese restaurants).

These two types of typographic knowledge highlight a key discrepancy: the difference between what is genuinely part of a culture and recognized as such “the target script” and what is assumed to be associated with that culture (typographic mimicry encountered in specific contexts). (Meletis, 2021, pp.1052-1053) Therefore, typographic mimicry has been an ongoing subsection of type design, acting in the guise of cultural representation and inclusivity since the postmodern era.

### 3.3 Bi-Scriptual design

#### 3.3.1 *Multiculturalism in design*

Due to globalization and cross-cultural interactions, multilingualism plays a significant role worldwide. Robert Bringhurst, talks about this plurality in *The History of Typography*, stating that while “every alphabet is a culture. Every culture has its own version of history and its own accumulation of tradition.” “the challenge and excitement of multilingual typography ... lies largely in the fact that different typographic histories momentarily share the page.” (Bringhurst, 2004, p.142) Type designer Andreu Balius, in talking about multilingualism and typography, describes that the concept of multiculturalism was first openly introduced in the typography arena at the ATypl (Association Typographique Internationale) annual conference in Lyons in 1998. The conference's theme, "MultiTypo," highlighted advancements by the Unicode Consortium in standardizing Unicode, providing a new framework for multi-script type design. While the Lyons conference introduced the

topic, the first detailed discussions on multi-script typography took place a year later at the ATypI conference in Reading, UK, themed "Typography and Language." During this event, David Opstad a computer scientist specializing in typography, gave a lecture on "Multilingual Fonts Beyond Unicode," and academic and type designer Fiona Ross discussed the translation of non-Latin scripts into type. Both presentations explored the new possibilities and requirements for designing fonts for non-Latin scripts. (Balius, 2013, p.43)

Balius further explains the beginning of this phenomenon and mentions that in the late twentieth century, there was a growing interest in multilingualism from a typographic perspective. This interest was notably discussed at the ATypI conferences in Copenhagen in 2001 and Rome in 2002, where non-Latin scripts and the possibilities of OpenType were thoroughly explored. The Rome conference, themed "The Shape of Language" (*La forma del linguaggio*), featured a Multilingual Typography Symposium. Sherry Blankenship moderated the symposium and lectured on the challenges of combining Arabic and Latin scripts. Other presentations focused on extended Latin typefaces, Hebrew, Kanji, and multi-script Armeno-Latin design. This symposium was likely the first instance of such a debate being presented to a broad audience like the ATypI conference delegates. One of the most discussed topics was the role of modern font technologies in managing the complexities of producing quality type for complex script languages such as Arabic, Devanagari, and Chinese. (Balius, 2013, p.44)

These advancements in the discourse of multilingualism in type design mentioned by Balius gives an overview of the start of what is now called "Bi-scriptual" typography, the title of the 2019 book on which the title of this section is based. In the book, Huda Smitshuijzen AbiFarès, a typographer and design lecturer, talks about multiscriptual typographic design. She mentions how typography's unique ability to preserve knowledge through precise content reproduction and to spread it widely by multiplying copies has united various scripts and cultures. It has brought diverse scripts together, compelling them to interact and find "common ground". As she describes, typography has become an essential element of modern print and digital

media, with its communicative power expanding significantly to shape our multicultural and mobile society. Globalization and international trade have further fostered the development of truly multicultural and multilingual urban environments worldwide.



figure 7: In her design for the exhibition Assamble, Rikako Nagashima/village\* treats Japanese and Latin equally by using two similar typefaces with matching contrast and size to emphasise the project's aim to develop non-hierarchical communities.

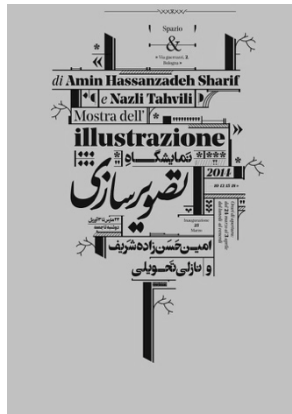


figure SEQ Figure \\* ARABIC 7: Typography becomes an image in Farhad Fozouni's works. He uses diverse typefaces for both scripts and intentionally treats them differently while creating typographic illustrations.

She also highlights that the increased interaction and exchange among people from different cultures have heightened the demand for multilingual and multiscript graphic design. Advances in modern media and technology have bridged design and aesthetic considerations across cultural and geographical boundaries. Smitshuijzen believes that today, type designers face the challenge of meeting contemporary communication needs by creating font families that accommodate multiple scripts, sometimes unifying various writing systems under a cohesive visual language. Graphic designers are similarly tasked with developing typographic designs and visual communications that bring harmony and reduce visual discord in our modern virtual and urban landscapes. (Smitshuijzen AbiFarès, 2019, pp.12 –13)

The challenge of adapting to today's multicultural world that Smitshuijzen describes has been mentioned by others as well. Anthropologist Edward T. Hall, in talking about culture and representation, mentions that: "The paradox of culture is that language, the system most frequently used to describe culture, is by nature poorly adapted to this difficult task." It is too linear, not comprehensive enough, too slow, too limited, too constrained, too unnatural, too much a product of its own evolution, and too artificial. This means that the writer must constantly keep in mind the limitations language places upon him. (E.Hall, 1976, p.57)

Alistair Crawford, an artist and author from Wales, presents a similar viewpoint in talking about language and typography. In his 1987 article titled "Bilingual Typography" in the journal *Visible Language*, he mentions how, based on "the scarcity of research into the typographic structures required for the fluent communication of words in bilingual contexts", one could describe the relationship of typography to language as "peripheral and limited". He mentions how delving into the early typographic history of printed Welsh reveals little evidence that the challenges of designing bilingual pages have ever been thoroughly addressed and how examining contemporary bilingual printed pages from various countries shows a general lack of systematic design thinking. He highlights the cultural biases in the history of type, and how we observe the cultural dominance of majority languages over minority ones, mirroring the historical attempts across Europe to suppress minority peoples, their

cultures, and languages through subjugation, aiming to assimilate them and consolidate the power of the ruling establishment. The history of printing and typography is intertwined with political history, just as “printed Welsh has always been set as if it were English”. (Crawford, 1987, pp.43–53)

Smitshuijzen also talks about this bias when discussing Latin versus non-Latin scripts. She starts by describing how the Latin script, accommodating the languages of Europe and the Americas—particularly those of international trade and business like English, Spanish, and French—is often paired with the national languages or scripts of almost every nation globally. Multiscript designs are used in wayfinding systems, public spaces, transport terminals (airports, train stations, subway systems), advertising billboards, posters, branding, packaging, corporate literature, books, publications, apps, websites, and various products.

The dominance of the Latin script is especially pronounced in type design where typefaces are generally categorized into two main groups: Latin and non-Latin scripts. The overwhelming number of typefaces created for the Latin script may contribute to this imbalance, but the roots of the disparity lie in the typesetting and printing equipment from the printing press to digital font-authoring tools. This equipment, originally invented and marketed by cultures where the Latin script is native, was better suited for Latin typography. Scripts such as Indic, Asian, and Arabic are fundamentally different from Latin in structure, alignments, construction, and historical evolution. Each writing system has its own conventions for legibility and aesthetic considerations, and not all scripts fit within a bounding box or align on a horizontal baseline. (Smitshuijzen AbiFarès, 2019, p.13)

While the matter of multilingual type design, multicultural typography or in summary *Bi-scriptual* is a relatively new term in the world of design, it has been the subject of many typographic discourses. But the statement that remains in all these texts, is that while culture pertains to typographical evolution, as author and graphic designer Ben Wittner states: “working multilingually, bears responsibility”. In our globally interconnected era, encountering other cultures is inevitable, yet we often fail to fully

appreciate the opportunities that intercultural exchange offers. As designers, it is our responsibility to understand and learn about socio-cultural contexts and to communicate them visually in a way that is accessible to everyone. Part of a designer's role is to promote understanding through effective visual communication. (Wittner, 2019, p.7)

### *3.3.2 The conventional understanding of typography*

Our relationship with lettering, typography, and symbols is so deeply ingrained in our nature and culture that our appreciation of typography is inevitably influenced by our own biases. Type designer, Andreu Balius, discusses how letterforms are based on conventions. He quotes type designer Gerard Unger saying how he notes, “some aspects have changed very little over long periods and can be called constants.” Characters possess specific proportions grounded in these conventions, shaped by the tools used throughout the history of lettering. Ultimately, letters represent language, which itself is a convention. He also refers to graphic designer Phil Baines, revealing he argues that “typographers should begin to understand the features of language while at the same time learning the conventions for its notation and the technical processes for its reproduction”. (Balius, 2013, p.152) This argument is also backed up by Alistair Crawford, who states that “the shape and style of the typefaces used in the visual presentation of any language must be determined, not by habit or expediency, but by the visual characteristics of that language.” (Crawford, 1987, p. 55)

Therefore, the responsibility of type designers is multifaceted. As Canadian poet and designer, Robert Bringhurst states in the opening of *The Elements of Typographic Style*, typography is an art that can be purposefully misapplied. It is a craft that can either clarify, honor, and convey the meanings of a text (or its lack thereof) or intentionally obscure them. In a world saturated with unsolicited messages, typography must often first capture attention to be noticed. However, to be effectively read, it must then relinquish the attention it has attracted. He poetically calls typography, “idealized writing” highlighting how letterforms that respect and clarify

human vision and speech merit recognition and that carefully selected words deserve equally carefully selected letters. He also states that typography has its cultural and personal considerations, how “typefaces reveal many hints of their designers' times and temperaments, and even their nationalities and religious faiths.” He also criticizes the scientific classification of typefaces. Arguing that letterforms are not merely scientific objects; they also belong to the realm of art and contribute to its history. Like music, painting, and architecture, letterforms have evolved over time, and the same historical terms—Renaissance, Baroque, Neoclassical, Romantic, and so on—apply to them. Bringhurst mentions how classifying letterforms as artforms has an additional benefit: “Typography never occurs in isolation”. Good typography requires not only an understanding of type but also an appreciation of the relationship between letterforms and other human creations and activities. Typographic history is about studying the connections between type design and the broader scope of human endeavors—politics, philosophy, the arts, and intellectual history. It is a lifelong pursuit, but one that is enlightening and rewarding from the very start. (Bringhurst, 2004, pp.9–136)





## **Part 4 Research Process**

### **4.1 Research question and methods**

*Can a culturally sensitive typeface design be an accurate representation of a culture and foster cross-cultural communication and understanding?*

Language is the means by which we produce and exchange our shared narratives and connections. Writing is the visual notation system of these concepts and typography is the formalization of these systems. Typography is not a mere arrangement of words on a page or a screen; it is a symphony of form and function that binds us to our environment and defines our cultural identities. This thesis project suggests that the creation of a culturally sensitive Latin typeface, inspired by the Persian/Farsi script, may facilitate effective cross-cultural communication, break down linguistic barriers, and promote a deeper understanding of Persian culture among the Persian-speaking individuals in the wider Canadian community. It hypothesizes that the fusion of these script traditions will result in a visually appealing and functional typeface that resonates with Persian-Canadian users, encouraging cultural exchange and mutual respect.

The primary objective of this research project is to create a visually appealing and functional Latin typeface inspired by Persian script, that forgoes the biases that are in place and goes against the trend of misrepresentation in typographic mimicry while ensuring readability and cultural authenticity.

The approaches of this research project are centered in:

1. exploring cultures by delving into the historical, linguistic, and artistic nuances of the Persian/Farsi script
2. visual anthropology into typography and how it translates in Persian and Canadian cultures and multiscript designs

3. considering the importance of accurate cultural representation in type design, with regard to the language and its contextual use
4. experimenting with the capacity of type design, especially in the context of multiscript/multilingual texts
5. utilizing the knowledge/expertise of users with shared experiences and their views on cultural representation

#### 4.2 Survey results

Two online surveys, entitled *Persians on Cultural Representation* and *Non-Persians on Persian Cultural Representation*, were conducted in the spring of 2024. Persian and non-Persian students from the University of Alberta were recruited to participate in these surveys. Twenty participants completed this survey. The online surveys were done in Google Forms, since it was an easily accessible platform for the participants.

The online survey-taking process consisted of three sections:

- a brief introduction to the study for recruitment purposes,
- a confirmation of consent form, and
- the survey questions.

The surveys consisted of eighteen questions each concerning both quantitative and qualitative issues to collect information on the subject of cultural representation.

The information was gathered from two different groups for multiple reasons. Firstly, to see the viewpoints of Persians living in Canada who will be the primary users of the designed typeface. By utilizing their familiarity with Persian culture and also their lived experiences in and outside of Canada with Persian scripts, the researcher could have a glimpse into what the potential end users would like to see. Secondly, the questions regarding Persian typography were closely linked to matters of cultural identity and for

that reason, participants were needed to be familiar with the culture and scripts. In order to create a typeface that would forgo the national biases that we all carry, there needed to be insights gathered from people outside of Persian culture. There was also need of comparative data that would shed light on the choices made between Persians and those that are unfamiliar with the Persian script.

In the first set of questions, participants were asked demographic questions such as age and field of study, as well as questions regarding nationality and cultural identity. An important question in this section was to ask about the languages that the participants speak and know in order to establish an understanding of their cultural and linguistic viewpoints. The second set of questions consisted of information regarding Persian culture and its representatives in media and the public and the importance of seeing accurate cultural representation in the context of foreign cultures. In the final section, participants were asked typographical questions regarding historical and contemporary Persian scripts as well as “chop-suey” typeface samples. The survey took under ten minutes to complete and participants were allowed to refrain from answering any of the questions and also had the option of adding their own responses to the questions they felt required additional explanation.

#### *4.2.1 Persians on cultural representation*

A survey was conducted online for the purpose of gathering information on Persian cultural representation. The participants were selected from current and previous Persian students from the University of Alberta. A total of 10 participants filled out the survey, however, some participants refrained from answering some of the questions that would have resulted in qualitative data. The participants ranged from 18 to 39 in age with the majority belonging to the 23 to 29 age group, which resulted in similar viewpoints in some cases. Half of the participants selected Art & Design as their field of study while the others came from a variety of educational backgrounds. This allowed for multiple perspectives in the field of typography with 50% having

knowledge of typography, while the other half, without much knowledge of typography, presented unique perspectives on the field of type design.

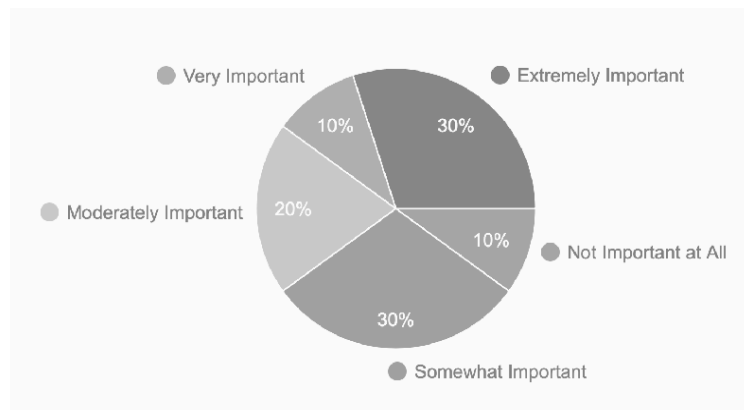
The participants, who are all currently based in Canada, moved to the country at different ages with one being as young as 12 years old when they moved out of Iran, to the eldest who had lived in Iran for 34 years. This allowed for a variety of different viewpoints, with regard to national identity, with only one participant identifying themselves as Persian-Canadian, while 8 out of 10 participants identified themselves as solely Persian. It bears mentioning that there are 79 living languages spoken in Iran, which includes 65 indigenous tongues (Koyfman, 2020), however, 90% of the participants only spoke Persian/Farsi with only one participant who spoke Turkish/Azari in addition to Farsi. While these languages have dialectical and grammatical differences, they all utilize the same script.

With regard to the matters of cultural representation, the majority of participants felt as though Persian culture is not accurately represented in society and media, which showed that Persians currently living in Canada do not feel like they are represented accurately in posters, movies, and other media. When asked to name instances where they felt their culture was accurately and respectfully represented, one participant wrote:

“Persian culture has been respectfully represented through its influential cinema, notably by directors like Abbas Kiarostami and Asghar Farhadi, whose films have garnered international acclaim for their deep cultural and societal insights”,

while there were some mentions of the visual identities of restaurants or rare instances of accurate representation in other contexts, one participant mentioned how “Some people still think that Iran and Arab countries have the same culture”, which is a common theme that often presents itself in media. Typography was specifically mentioned by four other participants when asked about Persian cultural misrepresentation. These responses were however further explained by the question

of “How important is it for you to see accurate representations of Persian culture in Canadian mainstream media and society?”, the results were varied with one person mentioning that the notion holds no importance for them at all.



When asked about Persian culture, the participants were urged to use three words to describe their native culture. The results were a selection of words that reflected a positive and warm picture of Persian Culture.

Colourful / Spiritual / Poetic	Compassionate, caring, supportive
Rich, Raelat, Heavenly	Warm, hospitable, caring
Kindness, strength, hospitality	Hospitality, kindness, tradition
Poem, architecture, and seeking knowledge	Hospitable, Poetic, بازاری
Antient, Caring, friendly	

In order to gather information about the representation of Persian culture, both in a historical context and also in the contemporary world, the participants were asked what they believed to be the most substantial contribution of Persian culture to the modern world. They were presented with five options: architecture, handmade

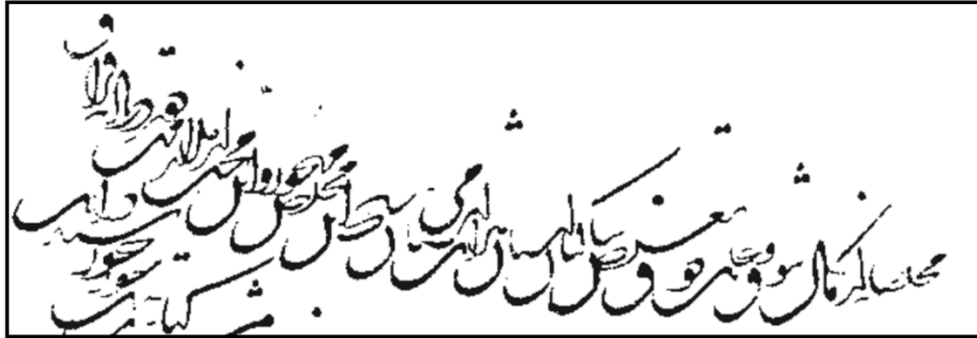
artifacts/carpets, calligraphy, painting/miniature and poetry/literature. These options were accompanied by pictures in order to present the participants with a visual representation to facilitate their response process. 50% of the participants chose poetry/literature as the most significant representation of Persian culture with architecture being named as the second most substantial, chosen by 40% of participants. While half of the answers to this question revealed that they believe others identify Persian culture through literature and poetry, which is rooted in language, when asked about the question of the influence of language in shaping their cultural identity, seven participants said that 40–80% of their cultural identity is rooted in their language. Two participants believed that more than 80% of their cultural identity is linked to the language they speak and only one participant chose the 20–40% option.



The final section of the survey was created in order to reveal the participants' viewpoints about typography. Most participants believed that they were familiar with the Persian script/calligraphy, with only two participants stating that they were unfamiliar with the subject. When asked about their most frequently used typeface, the answers varied with **B Nazanin** being the most mentioned in Persian and **Helvetica** and **Times New Roman** being named as the most frequented Latin typefaces used in English.

The final two questions concerned contemporary and historic scripts which participants were asked to choose among 7 modern and 10 historic examples of script and select the ones they believed were the best representation of Persian culture.

The results demonstrated that in selecting a contemporary typeface, participants opted for those which are most used in mainstream print media (Option g).



Conversely, when choosing a historical script, 50% of the participants chose a primitive version of the Nastaliq script called **Taliq**, (option 7), that is rarely used today, but interestingly was, and still is, used in poetry, which was what 50% of participants previously chose as their “cultural representative.” The remaining participants, with the exception of one, were split between a script that is mostly used in architecture (option 2) and the most recent version of Nastaliq (option 10) which is

figure SEQ figure \\* ARABIC 12: Samples of contemporary (on the left) and historic (on the right) Persian scripts given to participants.

again mostly used in printed poetry.

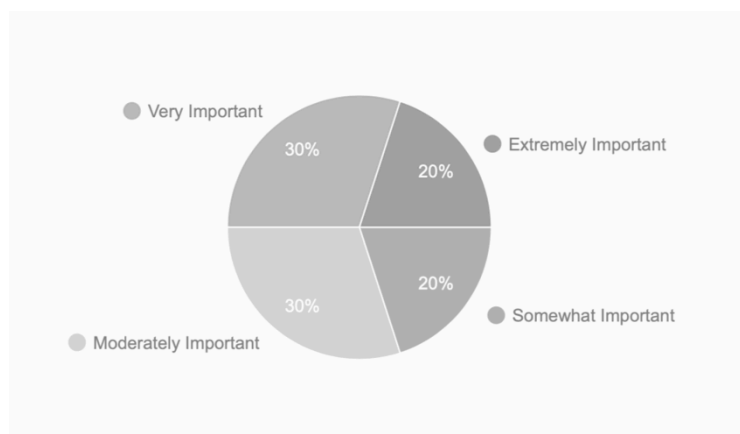
The overall results demonstrate that while the participants have different links to their native culture, and come from multiple study backgrounds, the shared thoughts and beliefs they carry, are revealed by their typeface choices.

#### *4.2.2 Non-Persians on Persian cultural representation*

A second online survey was conducted on the same topic of Persian cultural representation, this time targeting non-Persians residing in Canada. The participant selection process mirrored that of the previous survey, involving 10 individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. Participants ranged in age from 18 to over 40, with half of them falling within the 23-29 age group. The length of time they had lived in Canada varied significantly, from less than 2 years to 37 years, offering a broad spectrum of perspectives on cultural representation in Canada. Sixty percent of the participants were studying Art & Design, while the remaining four were in fields such as Marketing, Education, and Business.

All participants were assumed to be proficient in English, the primary language in Canada, and they also reported speaking additional languages, including Hindi, Portuguese, French, Japanese, Korean, German, Spanish, and Tagalog. One participant mentioned speaking Urdu, which has close linguistic ties to Persian. However, only three participants indicated they were somewhat familiar with Persian culture, while half of the participants reported being neither familiar nor unfamiliar with it. Of the ten participants, only one reported engaging with media (such as TV shows, movies, books, music, etc.) featuring Persian culture or characters on a monthly basis. Seven participants mentioned that they rarely do, and two participants said they have never engaged with such media. This diverse linguistic proficiency enriched the survey, providing valuable insights into typographic mimicry and cultural representation and allowed for unbiased opinions on Persian-specific questions.

When asked about the importance of seeing representations of non-Canadian cultures in mainstream media and society, most participants expressed that this issue was significant to them. Two participants specifically stated that seeing non-Canadian cultural representation was very important to them.





The participants were then asked, "How much of your cultural identity do you believe is rooted in your language?" They could express their answers using interval ranges of 20 percent, such as 0-20%, 20 – 40%, and so on. Half of the participants expressed that they believe that 60-80% of their cultural identity is rooted in their language. Thirty percent of the participants chose the 40-60% option and the remaining twenty percent was split into two, with one choosing the 80-100% interval and the other choosing 0 – 20%.

This question was then followed by asking the participants to name their most frequently used Latin typeface. Only eight out of the 10 participants gave their answers with 50% of them naming **Times New Roman** as their most frequented typeface in use. With others mentioning **Ariel**, **Helvetica Neue** and **Roboto**.

Participants were then asked to describe Persian culture using three words. Their responses included a range of positive adjectives, with **traditional**, **historic**, and **artistic** being frequently mentioned standouts. These words were later on used to influence the design of *Banyan*.

Colourful, ancient, religious	Conventional, artistic, sophisticated
Historical, diverse, traditional	Colourfull, traditional, historic
Beautiful, frugal, rational	Conservative, religious, decorative
Elegant, poised, different	Historic, Vibrant, Social
Not familiar	Rich, refined, artistic

figure SEQ figure \\* ARABIC 15: The listed words were responses given to the question "Which three adjectives would you use to describe Persian culture?" by non-Persians.

The participants were then presented with eight texts all showing the word "different typefaces". These texts were all set using mimicked typefaces that were categorized as

“Persian” or “Middle Eastern” fonts by various type design foundries. The purpose of this question was to gain an understanding of how people who are unfamiliar with the Persian script, view these mimicked typefaces.

- 1) **Different Typefaces**
- 2) **Different Typefaces**
- 3) **different typefaces**
- 4) *different typefaces*
- 5) *Different Typefaces*
- 6) **different typefaces**
- 7) **Different Typefaces**
- 8) *Different Typefaces*

figure SEQ figure \\* ARABIC 16: The word “different Typefaces” written in: a Annyeong Haseyo, a Awal Ramadhan, Alhambra, bits indian calligra, FARSI-INSPIRED, SUNRIZE, Zekat, Miracle Ramadhan.

Forty percent of the participants associated Persian culture with option 2, while the remaining 60% were evenly split among options 3, 7, and 8, with two people choosing each as their preferred typeface to represent Persian culture. Interestingly, all four chosen typefaces have Arabic names and visual cues that showcase Arabic scripts. This choice was expected due to the close proximity of the cultures and the visual similarities between Persian and Arabic scripts. However, the only option specifically designed to inspire the Persian language (option 5) was not chosen by any participant. These answers revealed interesting insights, which were further explored through a follow-up question asking participants to explain the reasoning behind their choices. The participants' reasoning varied, with most choosing their options based on memory and familiarity. However, two responses stood out. One participant stated,

“Most closely reminded me of Arabic,” indicating that, similar to the first survey, some people still associate Persian culture with Arabic and use the terms interchangeably. Conversely, another participant remarked, “I was in between option 2 and 3 (the other options felt more Japanese, Korean, Arabic, don’t know).” This response suggests that while the confusion between Arabic and Persian is common, some individuals do see a clear distinction between the two.

The last four questions were focused on Persian typography and culture, both in contemporary and historic senses. The participants were first asked to choose among five options and select what they thought was the most well-known representation of Persian culture. The five options were: Architecture, Handmade Artifacts/Carpets, Calligraphy, Painting/Miniature, Poetry/Literature. 80% of the votes were split between Architecture and Handmade Artifacts/Carpets, as 40% of participants chose each one as the most well-known representative of Persian culture in their opinion. The remaining two votes were for Calligraphy and Poetry/Literature. The results of this question, when compared with the results from the first survey, show that while Persians and Non-Persians view architecture as a symbol of Persian culture in a similar light, their opinion on selecting Poetry/Literature and Handmade Artifacts/Carpets as representatives is drastically different.

Regarding questions about Persian typography, 60% of the participants said that they were somewhat familiar with the topic. 30% revealed that they were unfamiliar with Persian typography and only one person mentioned the converse.

When asked to choose a contemporary typeface that they would associate with Persian culture, among the seven options that were given, 80% of the participants chose **option a** while the remaining 20% chose **option f** as the typeface they believed represented Persian culture. These choices were unsurprisingly, the two most common typefaces that are used in visuals. The first choice being B Nazanin, which

a) خط فارسی f) خط فارسی

was what some of the Persian participants had mentioned in the previous survey as their most used typeface, can be seen on posters and infographics all around. (figure 18)



For the final question, the participants chose among ten examples of historic Persian scripts. 30% of the participants chose option 3 and another 30% opted for option 5. The remaining 40% were split equally with options 4, 7, 8 and 9 each being chosen by a participant. (refer to figure 13)

The comparative analysis of both surveys shows that people from all cultural and educational backgrounds and ages view cultural representation as an important matter of discussion. However, while there are some similarities in viewpoints on Persian culture, when it comes to representations through typeface design, there are still instances of misrepresentation and bias.

## 4.3 Expert interviews

### 4.3.1 Interview 1: Gerry Leonidas

Gerry Leonidas is a renowned Professor of Typography currently teaching at the University of Reading in the UK. The interview was conducted online in February of 2024 and was about 40 minutes in duration. The purpose of this interview was to gain insights into how type designers and educators approach multilingual script design and the relationship between culture and type. This summary provides insights into cultural appropriation in design, the complexities of multilingual environments, and the significance of maintaining cultural authenticity in typographic practices.

Leonidas began by addressing the issue of cultural appropriation within typography, highlighting how non-Latin scripts were often subjected to Latin-centric design principles. Professor Leonidas noted that imposing Latin terminology, ways of thinking, and design methods onto non-Latin scripts could result in a form of cultural colonization. He elaborated,

“When you take something from a different script and impose upon it terminology, ways of thinking, and ways of doing from a Latin script, it can lead to a situation where you’re not truly respecting or understanding the original tradition.” (Leonidas, personal communication, February 8, 2024)

This observation highlighted a tendency for superficial adaptations that failed to respect the original cultural context of these scripts.

In discussing the complexity and representation of non-Latin scripts, Leonidas emphasized the richness and complexity inherent in scripts like Persian. He argues that Persian is “a culture that is written... a culture of the text” with a long history of literary and visual tradition. He contrasts this with the more straightforward nature of Latin script, noting that the depth of Persian should not be flattened or simplified: “Persian has it [complexity], Chinese has it before they adopted too much of the left to right, Japanese has it.” He expresses concern about reducing complex scripts to fit

Latin design norms, stating, “If a culture has that kind of depth, that is something [that] should be foregrounded and centered then represented.” (Leonidas, personal communication, February 8, 2024)

When examining the challenges of designing for multilingual environments, Leonidas discussed the need for typography to adapt to the diverse characteristics of various scripts while maintaining cultural integrity. He argued that effective multilingual design should balance the visual and functional differences between scripts, suggesting that typography should either preserve their relative positions or establish a meaningful hierarchy rather than enforcing a uniform design framework. Furthermore, Leonidas reflected on the cognitive processes of bilingual individuals. According to Leonidas, functionally bilingual individuals have different, often denser, connections in their brains, suggesting that navigating multiple languages and scripts is both a cognitive and cultural strength. This insight underscored the importance of designing typography that respects the unique attributes of each language and script.

A significant portion of the conversation critiqued Western notions of modernity in relation to design standards. Leonidas challenged the idea that non-Western scripts should conform to Western perceptions of modernity, suggesting that such a viewpoint reflected broader cultural dynamics. He advocated for North American cultures to engage more deeply with the rich histories of European and Asian cultures, mentioning that “North American cultures have a lot to learn from European and Asian cultures, which are deeper in cultural histories.” He stressed that modernity should not be dictated solely by Western standards and that non-Latin scripts should be valued for their distinctive features rather than being forced to conform to Western ideals.

Specifically focusing on Persian script, Leonidas encouraged designers to explore and celebrate its inherent visual complexity. He argued against simplifying Persian script to align with Latin design principles, emphasizing the importance of appreciating Persian for its unique qualities. Saying “Persian doesn’t need the Latin to be celebrated and be explored and be rich.” Leonidas advocated for a design approach that honored and

highlighted the distinctive characteristics of Persian script, rather than overshadowing it with Latin standards.

Based on Leonidas' comments, the following recommendations should be taken into account for the proposed typeface design:

1. **Highlight the Complexity of Persian Script:** Ensure that the design process celebrates the intricate and historically significant characteristics of Persian script.
2. **Avoid Cultural Simplification:** Resist the urge to simplify Persian visual language to fit Western typographic norms. Strive to create designs that honor and preserve cultural authenticity.
3. **Develop Multiscript Solutions:** Focus on creating type designs that integrate Persian and Latin scripts effectively, considering the needs of a multilingual audience.
4. **Utilize Technological Advancements:** Take advantage of technological tools to support the design and implementation of multiscript typographies, ensuring accurate and meaningful representation of each script.
5. **Encourage Cultural Dialogue:** Foster engagement with other designers and cultural communities to deepen understanding of different typographic design traditions and promote the exchange of ideas and best practices.

In conclusion, Professor Leonidas's remarks provided a valuable perspective on the intersection of type design, typography, and culture. His comments underscored the need for a respectful and nuanced approach to representing non-Latin scripts, advocating for an appreciation of their complexity and cultural significance. By challenging dominant design norms and promoting a deeper engagement with non-Latin scripts, Leonidas's perspective served as a call to action for designers to consider critically the cultural implications of their work and to strive for greater inclusivity and respect in their design practices.

#### *4.3.2 Interview 2: Nada Hussein Abdallah*

Nada Abdallah is an Assistant Professor at the College of Fine Arts and Design at the University of Sharjah, with significant influence in the fields of Arabic calligraphy and typography. The interview that I conducted with her, in August of 2024, lasted approximately 30 minutes and provided valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities in bilingual and bi-scriptural design. This summary highlights her perspectives on the role of cultural representation in type design, the importance of collaboration in unfamiliar script design, and the evolving trends in multilingual typography, particularly in the context of Arabic and Latin script integration.

When asked about cultural representation in type design at the beginning of the interview, Abdallah stated that type design should represent specific cultural aspects, emphasizing not that it “could happen, that [it] should happen” when asked if typefaces can represent culture, she used the analogy of a typeface as a pizza to explain how cultural identity could be infused into type design: “Imagine the font as if it's a pizza, which is originally Italian. And then when it goes to Lebanon, the Lebanese would do it in their own different way.” This highlights the potential for typefaces to adapt and reflect different cultural identities while retaining a fundamental structure.

When discussing the value of typographic mimicry and explorative typefaces, Abdallah expressed that the value depended on the context and purpose: “Everything should have been done for a reason... if they do serve the, I mean, why they have been created, why not?” This viewpoint suggests a flexible approach to judging the effectiveness of experimental typefaces, where the intent and function determine their success, rather than a rigid standard.

The interview highlighted the challenges faced by designers who are unfamiliar with the scripts they were designing. Nada pointed out that collaboration and peer support played crucial roles in overcoming these challenges. She mentioned how in her classrooms, which include students from various cultures and backgrounds, students help each other with bilingual projects: “The environment is very super friendly that



they all help each other...especially if they don't read the language.” This collaborative approach helped bridge the gap between unfamiliarity with a script and the technical skills needed to design it effectively.

Abdallah emphasized that cultural background significantly influences design, particularly if the designer has a strong connection to their culture: “Your culture does influence your design if you're designing, if you love your culture.” She shared a personal anecdote about her son's lack of interest in traditional Arabic culture due to his Western education, reflecting a broader trend among students who often preferred Western design influences. This underscores the importance of cultural education in fostering appreciation and developing skill in culturally specific design.

In discussing the balance of visual value in bilingual designs, Abdallah noted the subjective nature of design evaluation, and the iterative process involved in achieving harmony: “I do feel that assessing or evaluating or seeing the harmony...depends also on the experience of the designer.” She highlighted the importance of continuous refinement in the design process, where designers often revisited and adjusted their work to ensure that both scripts in a bilingual design were well-integrated.

Abdallah was optimistic about the future of bi-scriptural design, noting a growing trend and need for such work: “I do feel that we're going to have more of this coming soon...There is a trend of this coming in the, to the playground.” She emphasized the importance of cultural representation in bilingual design, advocating for making Latin scripts adapt to fit the cultural environment of other scripts, such as Arabic, rather than the reverse. The need for collaboration and the development of type foundries in the Middle East was also highlighted as essential for advancing this field.

Based on Abdallah’s insights, the following recommendations should be considered for the proposed typeface design:

1. **Experimentation:** Explore letterforms beyond conventional usage, especially when unfamiliar with a script, but always respect its cultural and linguistic context.
2. **Collaboration:** Work with native speakers or cultural experts to ensure accuracy and respect in your designs, using their feedback to fine-tune your work.
3. **Cultural Integration:** Consider how Latin typefaces can be adapted to reflect non-Latin cultural aesthetics, preserving script integrity and enriching design.
4. **Continuous Improvement:** Regularly evaluate and refine your designs, balancing visual harmony with cultural significance, and remain open to revisiting your work.
5. **Embrace and Educate:** Engage deeply with your own cultural heritage and educate yourself about the scripts you work with to produce authentic, compelling designs.

In conclusion, the interview with Nada Abdallah provided valuable insights into the intersection of culture and type design, particularly in multilingual contexts. Her experiences and perspectives underscore the importance of cultural representation, collaboration, and continual refinement in type design. As the field of bi-scriptural design continues to evolve, these factors will likely play a crucial role in shaping its future.

## Part 5 Design Process

### 5.1 Analysis of existing Persian-influenced typefaces

Three Persian-inspired typefaces that are currently available on the market were evaluated:

Awäl Rämadhän

**Typeface 1** a Awal Ramadhan typeface by Wahyu Eka Prasetya

FARSI INSPIRED

**Typeface 2** Farsi Inspired typeface by Veronica-Shiva KCB

Miracle Ramadhan

**Typeface 3** Miracle Ramadhan typeface by Alpaprana Studio

The first visual component that separates these typefaces from Latin typefaces meant to be used for English or other Roman-based alphabets, is the relatively larger x-height among all three typefaces. There is also a play on the baseline grid, with swashes, ascenders, descenders and legs of the characters emphasizing this shift in the baseline.

Another characteristic that is attributed to Persian typography is a change in width. Characters also include a stress bias. This is interesting as most Persian scripts were handwritten and stress biases can be seen in handwritten characters due to the movement of the hand. All three typefaces also have the visual suggestion of serifs

which is also characteristic that results from having been written by a human hand that appears in handwritten scripts.

Persian is one of few writing systems that involves characters which are designed to flow together without breaks, creating a smooth, joined appearance referred to as “cursive” or “connected script”. This characteristic can be seen in **Typeface 1** and **Typeface 3**. In addition to these characteristics that are seen in all three representatives, **Typeface 1**, also includes the use of “tittles” and some “diacritical marks”. The former is seen in both Arabic and Persian typography while the latter is only seen in Arabic.

**Typeface 1**, which was chosen by 40% of the non-Persian participants in the survey as a typeface they believed was representative of Persian culture, has visual characteristics similar to Blackletter typefaces with glyph style serifs similar to typefaces such as Albertus MT. The typeface has a bold look with some baseline shifts occurring by utilizing the descenders and accentuating the terminals of the stems and serifs in letters like f, g, t and l. a Awal Ramadhan is designed as a connected script that results in a similar visual appearance to that of Persian and Arabic, and this characteristic is also emphasized with the use of diacritic marks. Conversely, the slab serif-looking design of the typeface is closer to the visuals of modern typefaces and could not be attributed to the historic, lightweight and humanistic-looking characters of Persian script.

**Typeface 2**, which 20% of the non-Persian participants in the survey selected as a typeface they believed represented Persian culture, is one of the few typefaces on the market not to only mention key words such as Arabic or Islamic in reference to the typeface. While Farsi-inspired is not a connected script typeface, it does have a change in character width seen in most Persian scripts and also shifts the characters stems to create a more bended look rather than a vertical stem that is shown in most Roman typefaces. The design also uses actual characters from a Persian script, for example, it uses **ع** for the letter **e**. However, this typeface does not have the play on swashes and

legs that could create a close visual resemblance to Persian typography, but it does create an interesting visual by utilizing the uniquely designed serifs.

**Typeface 3**, which was the choice of another 20% of the non-Persian participants, is also referred to and named as a typeface representative of Arabic culture. Similar to **Typeface 1**, this typeface is a connected script that uses some kind of serif to create a visual resemblance to Persian typography. In looking closer, Miracle Ramadhan, has visual similarities to a historic Persian or Arabic script. Its characters have changes in stroke weights and stress biases that look like handwritten scripts. However, the typeface sits nicely on the baseline and does not have the shift in the baseline seen in most Persian scripts. The design of this typeface does not include the tittles of lowercase j and i, which is surprising since seventeen out of the thirty-two letters of the Persian script include tittles with seven of them having more than one “dot”.

In conclusion, a detailed examination of these typefaces reveals that, despite their attempts to represent Persian typography, they fall short of accurately capturing its essence. The prominent x-height, dynamic baseline shifts, and width variations are mimicked, but are not genuinely reflective of traditional Persian script. While Typeface 1 and Typeface 3 attempt to emulate the cursive nature of Persian script, and Typeface 2 incorporates Persian character elements, they ultimately present a misrepresentation of the authentic visual and structural qualities of Persian typography. These typefaces highlight the challenges and nuances involved in faithfully translating the rich heritage of Persian script into contemporary type designs.

## 5.2 Formal Study of Taliq Script

An important aim in the surveys was to see which script Persians thought represented their culture. 50% of the participants chose Taliq as the script most representative of Persian culture.

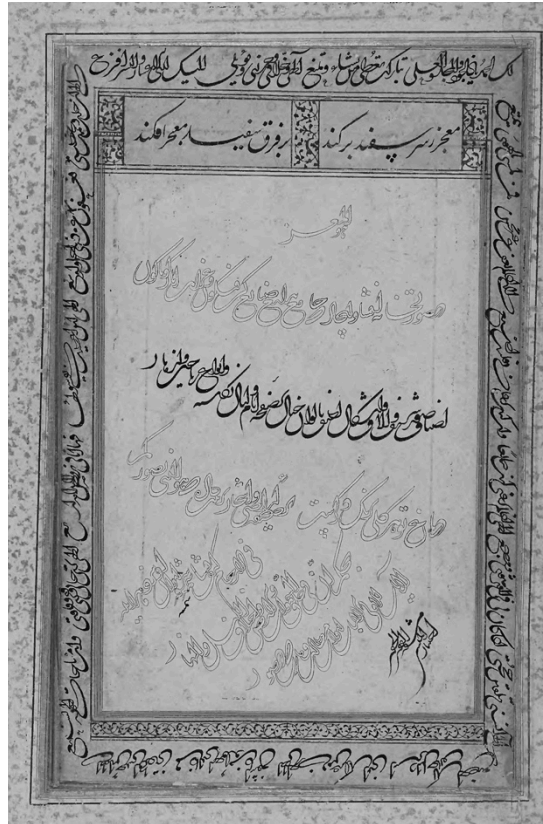
### 5.2.1 Historic Development

The Taliq script is a calligraphic style in Islamic calligraphy traditionally used for official documents written in Persian. Literally meaning "hanging" or "suspended" script, Taliq emerged in the mid-13th century and saw widespread use, especially in the chanceries of Iranian states. From the early 16th century onward, it lost prominence to another hanging script, the increasingly popular Nastaliq. Taliq had a prolonged development period. The Persian style of writing Naskh underwent gradual changes from the 11th century onward. These changes, combined with elements borrowed from Towqi and Riqah scripts, led to the emergence of Taliq in the mid-13th century. Taliq shares many characteristics with these three scripts, but is more stylized. It features curvilinear elements, extraneous loops, extreme contrasts between compression and expansion, and connected letters, making it challenging for novices to decipher. (Nejabati, 2019, pp.10 –72)



The creation of Taliq was driven by artists' efforts to develop a script that embodied the Iranian spirit, following "Iranian Naskh". This script emerged from a combination of Naskh, Towqi, and Riqah scripts, with inspiration from the Pahlavi script. It was commonly used for writing books and poetry collections. The need for speed in writing manuscripts and handwritten documents led to letters and words being

written in a connected manner, increasing writing speed. This style of writing, specific to scribes and court secretaries, was called "Shikasta Taliq" or "Tarsal," featuring an ascending form. In Taliq, words and detached letters could be joined, allowing for rapid writing, making it suitable for official correspondence. To increase writing speed



further, chancery clerks streamlined the script by creating more unorthodox ligatures and omitting the pointing on many letters. Some letters were reduced in size, while others were written with thinner strokes or new shapes. This new style, known as Shikasta Taliq (broken, i.e., truncated and simplified Taliq), sometimes referred to as Khatt-i Tarassol ("correspondence script"), was used systematically from the end of the 14th century. (Nejabati, 2019, pp.10 –72)

### 5.2.2 Visual characteristics of Taliq

In order to create a Latin typeface that would be an accurate representative of Persian culture and the Taliq script, the visual characteristics of Taliq had to be studied:

**Curvilinear Elements:** Taliq is noted for its elegant, flowing lines and curvilinear forms. This creates a sense of movement and grace, distinguishing it from more rigid scripts.



**Extraneous Loops:** The script features elaborate loops and swashes, adding to its decorative appeal.



**Compression and Expansion:** There are extreme contrasts between compressed and expanded forms, contributing to its dynamic visual rhythm.



**Connected Letters:** Words and letters within words are often connected, facilitating faster writing, which was essential for its use in official documents and correspondence.







**Unorthodox Ligatures:** Increased use of unconventional ligatures to connect letters more fluidly.



**Omission of Pointing:** Many diacritical marks were dropped to speed up writing.



**Size Reduction and Thin Strokes:** Certain letters were reduced in size or written with thinner strokes to enhance writing speed.



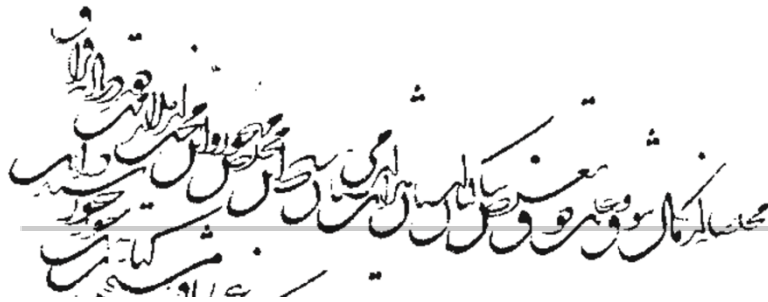
**New Shapes:** Introduction of new shapes for certain letters to facilitate faster handwriting.



**Pointed Serifs:** All vertical stems in the characters include a pointed serif at the end which was a result of fast writing.



**Baseline Shifting:** In rapid writing, the baseline no longer exists and the words are written in an upward manner.



The study of Taliq reveals a rich history of artistic innovation aimed at meeting both aesthetic and practical needs. Its flowing lines, decorative elements, and connected structure made it ideal for the rapid writing required in bureaucratic contexts while also contributing to the visual beauty of Persian literary and official texts which makes it a great visual candidate to base the creation of *Banyan* on.

### 5.3 Design: Synthesis

#### 5.3.1 Research findings

The combined insights stemming from the survey results and remarks from the interview with Professor Gerry Leonidas and Nada Abdallah offer several key characteristics that should direct the design approach for the exploratory Roman typeface design to represent Persian Culture:

### **1. Cultural Accuracy and Representation:**

**Accurate Depictions:** The design should focus on accurately representing Persian culture, addressing the prevalent issue of its conflation with Arabic culture. This includes careful selection of visual and textual elements that reflect true Persian identity.

**Respect for Cultural Identity:** The design should emphasize elements that resonate deeply with Persian heritage, avoiding superficial or stereotypical representations.

### **2. Preservation of Script Complexity:**

**Maintaining Intricacies:** Emphasize the rich and intricate characteristics of the Persian script in the design. Simplifying the script to fit Western typographic norms should be avoided, ensuring the complexity and historical depth of the script are celebrated.

**Highlighting Unique Features:** Special attention should be given to the unique features of Persian calligraphy and script, particularly those that are historically significant and widely recognized within Persian culture.

### **3. Multiscript Integration and Hierarchy:**

**Effective Integration:** Develop typographic solutions that seamlessly integrate Persian and Latin scripts. This involves creating designs that respect the visual and functional differences between scripts while maintaining a coherent overall aesthetic.

**Balanced Hierarchies:** Establish meaningful hierarchies in multilingual designs, ensuring that Persian and Latin scripts coexist without one dominating or diminishing the other.

### **4. Cultural Dialogue and Collaboration:**

Engaging with Communities: Actively engage with Persian cultural communities and other designers to gain deeper insights and feedback. This collaborative approach should enrich the design process and ensure cultural authenticity.

Promoting Best Practices: Foster an environment of knowledge exchange and best practices in typographic design, encouraging continuous learning and adaptation to better represent diverse cultural narratives.

## **5. Utilization of Technological Advancements:**

Leveraging Technology: Utilize advanced design tools and software to support the accurate representation of multiscrypt typography. This includes tools that facilitate the correct rendering of Persian script and its integration with Latin typefaces.

Innovative Approaches: Explore innovative techniques and technologies that can enhance the visual appeal and cultural integrity of the design. This might involve experimenting with new typefaces or digital tools that better accommodate the complexities of Persian script.

## **6. Highlighting Cultural Contributions:**

Emphasizing Literature and Poetry: Given the survey responses that highlighted poetry and literature as significant cultural contributions, the design should feature these elements prominently. Formal choices should reflect the literary richness and historical importance of Persian poetry.

Architectural and Artistic Elements: Incorporate architectural motifs and traditional artistic styles identified as substantial representations of Persian culture. These elements should add depth and context to the design, bridging historical and contemporary perspectives.

## **7. Addressing Misrepresentation and Bias:**

Challenging Stereotypes: Proactively challenge and correct misrepresentations and biases identified in both Persian and non-Persian participants' responses. The design should aim to educate and inform, providing a more nuanced and accurate portrayal of Persian culture.

Informed Design Choices: Make formal design choices informed by the qualitative insights from the surveys, ensuring that the typefaces and visual elements used are both culturally respectful and accurately representative.

#### **8. Reflecting Descriptive Adjectives:**

Historical, Diverse, Traditional: Incorporate elements that highlight the historical depth, diversity, and traditional aspects of Persian culture.

Rich, Refined, Artistic: Use refined and artistic design elements that emphasize the richness of Persian cultural heritage.

Colourful, Ancient, Religious: Integrate vibrant colors and symbols that reflect the ancient and religious facets of Persian culture.

Elegant, Poised, Different: Strive for an elegant and poised aesthetic that sets the design apart as uniquely Persian.

Beautiful, Frugal, Rational: Balance beauty with simplicity and rationality in the design.

Conservative, Decorative, Hospitable: Blend conservative elements with decorative motifs to convey hospitality and warmth.

Poetic, Spiritual, Compassionate: Reflect the poetic and spiritual nature of Persian culture, emphasizing compassion and kindness.

Vibrant, Social, Hospitable: Use vibrant and social elements to convey a sense of hospitality and community.

By incorporating these influences, the design for this thesis project should not only be aesthetically pleasing but also culturally rich and authentic, reflecting the true essence of Persian identity while respecting its complexity and historical significance.

### *5.3.2 Visual and design strategy*

Type designer Jonathan Hoefler, in talking about the process of typeface design in the 2017 Netflix series *Abstract: The Art of Design* says:

“When you design a new typeface the first two characters you draw are the capital H and the capital O. The principle is that the H is a straight character with vertical stems and straight sides. The O is a round character with round sides. and in theory, once you’ve drawn these two characters, you’ve got a basic sense of the flavor of the typeface you're designing.”

Hoefler goes on to say that once he has established an “inventory of interesting ideas” of his sketches, he starts to design his characters digitally. Hoefler points out that during the initial stages of designing characters, designers encounter visual inconsistencies that cannot be justified through anything other than optics and that the art of typeface design is to note that “Type design is not about drawing letters, It’s about drawing systems of things”. (19:08-21:50)

Conversely, in *Making Faces: Metal Type in the 21st Century (2010)*, Canadian type designer, Jim Rimmer, takes a different approach to his process. He starts by free-handing a baseline and an x-height and completes his hand-drawn grid by drawing vertical lines or “fence pickets” and follows these lines very liberally. He then starts by drawing characters with a marker. He mentions that during this stage the characters have a “calligraphic” look that he will later on change. Rimmer’s next step is

to go over his “skeleton” marker drawings with a pencil and create potential shapes before moving on to the computer. (2:47-10:00)

For this project, I adopted Rimmers’ method of starting with freehand sketches to explore the characteristics of Taliq script. This approach allowed for a deeper investigation into the traditional elements and visual nuances of the script before transitioning to digital design. By beginning with freehand drawings and analyzing the distinctive features of Taliq script, I aimed to capture its historical and calligraphic essence in the final typeface design. This process ensured that the typeface remained true to the cultural and aesthetic roots of the script, while integrating the insights gained from both traditional and contemporary design practices.

## 5.4 Design Experiments

### *5.4.1 Design challenges*

The foundation of this experimental typeface is the Taliq script, which posed several challenges at the outset of the project. Taliq is a calligraphic, freehand script, meaning that its characters do not adhere to a fixed form and vary depending on the calligrapher. To address this, the comparative table provided by Iranian researcher and calligrapher Habibollah Fazaeli (figure 21) offered detailed guidance on various calligraphic styles, which was instrumental in the design process.

شکسته	تعلیق	رقعه	دیوانی	تعلیق	نسخ
ا ا ا ا	ا	ا	ا ا ا	ا ا ا	ا ا ا
ب ب ب	ب ب ب	ب ب ب	ب ب ب	ب ب ب	ب ب ب
ج ج ج	ج ج ج	ج ج ج	ج ج ج	ج ج ج	ج ج ج
د د د	د د د	د د د	د د د	د د د	د د د
ه ه ه	ه ه ه	ه ه ه	ه ه ه	ه ه ه	ه ه ه
و و و	و و و	و و و	و و و	و و و	و و و
ز ز ز	ز ز ز	ز ز ز	ز ز ز	ز ز ز	ز ز ز
س س س	س س س	س س س	س س س	س س س	س س س
ص ص ص	ص ص ص	ص ص ص	ص ص ص	ص ص ص	ص ص ص
ط ط ط	ط ط ط	ط ط ط	ط ط ط	ط ط ط	ط ط ط
ع ع ع	ع ع ع	ع ع ع	ع ع ع	ع ع ع	ع ع ع
ف ف ف	ف ف ف	ف ف ف	ف ف ف	ف ف ف	ف ف ف
ق ق ق	ق ق ق	ق ق ق	ق ق ق	ق ق ق	ق ق ق
ک ک ک	ک ک ک	ک ک ک	ک ک ک	ک ک ک	ک ک ک
ل ل ل	ل ل ل	ل ل ل	ل ل ل	ل ل ل	ل ل ل
م م م	م م م	م م م	م م م	م م م	م م م
ن ن ن	ن ن ن	ن ن ن	ن ن ن	ن ن ن	ن ن ن
ه ه ه	ه ه ه	ه ه ه	ه ه ه	ه ه ه	ه ه ه
ی ی ی	ی ی ی	ی ی ی	ی ی ی	ی ی ی	ی ی ی

Another challenge arose from the 32 letters of the Persian alphabet. As a connected script, it requires 115 distinct characters, significantly more than the 26 letters of the Latin alphabet or its 56 combined lowercase and uppercase letters.

Another important visual dissimilarity between the Persian and Latin scripts is that most Persian letters include diacritical dots or “tittles” which is a distinctive feature of



the Persian script. The design of the typeface had to find space to include these elements on letters other than “i” and “j”.

Lastly, the Taliq script's lack of a baseline and its horizontally blending characters, which give it an upward appearance, contrast sharply with the Latin script's baseline and vertical stems. This fundamental difference required careful consideration to adapt the design, while maintaining the script's distinctive characteristics.

#### 5.4.2 Early sketches

My first attempts at sketching consisted of writing words in my own cursive handwriting and adding elements like baseline shifting and long swashes that could imitate the overall look of the Taliq script.



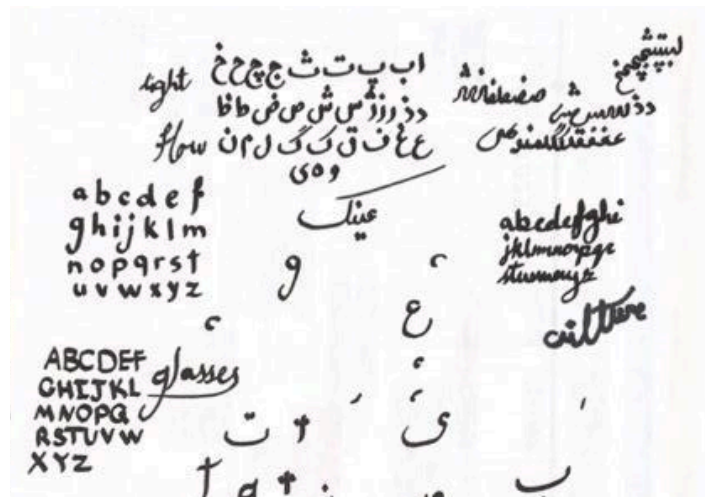
These experiments demonstrated the potential of adopting a new approach in typesetting to create visual similarities to the Taliq script. While this method incorporates many characteristics of Taliq and Persian script, including the calligrapher's spontaneity, it is not a practical solution for type design. This is because

its design relies heavily on the artistic and cultural knowledge of the calligrapher, which could lead to misrepresentation.

#### 5.4.3 Early attempts at letters

At this introductory stage, I experimented with writing the letters of the alphabet, both in Persian and in English, to try to establish the basic differences and similarities in the shapes. These were the results of the visual analysis:

1. letters like “i” and “j” are similar to “ز”
2. the letter “l” looks like “ل”
3. the letter “b” and its visual counterparts, “d”, “p” and “q” resemble “ط”
4. the letter “c” could be similar to a backward “د”
5. the letter “o” resembles “و”
6. the letter “s” could be taken from “سی”
7. the letter “g” or “g” are similar to “ع” and “قی”
8. the letter “e” could also resemble a mirrored “قی”



9. the letters “m” and “w” look like parts of “س”

These observations then led to a few single-letter designs that showed some of the visual attributes of *Banyan*. Below are some of the sketches of the letter “g”. These

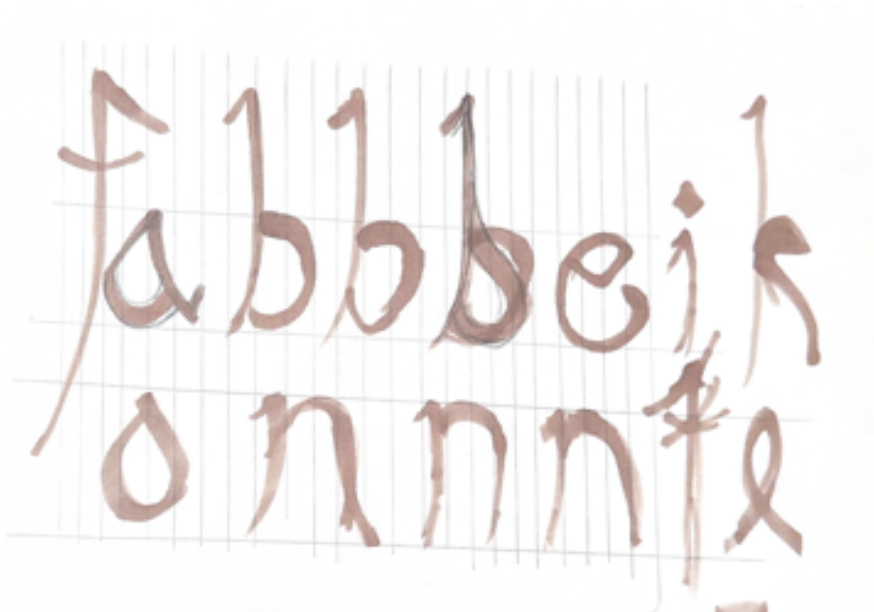
sketches include some characteristics such as curvilinear stems and descenders as well as counters that resemble the counters used in Taliq.



## 5.5 Final Design

### 5.5.1 Initial sketches

The initial step for the final design of *Banyan* was to freehand a few letters using a calligraphic marker. I started by doing the letters “a”, “b”, “e”, “o”, “n”, “i”, “f” and “k”.



After a few rounds of sketching, I went over some of the letters with pencil in order to refine some details. These letters featured characteristics such as serifs, long ascenders and descenders, a change in the width, curved stems and the use of the diamond shape tittle which is a signature style of dotting letters in Persian calligraphy.

After some edits, I moved to the computer and started digitizing the sketches.

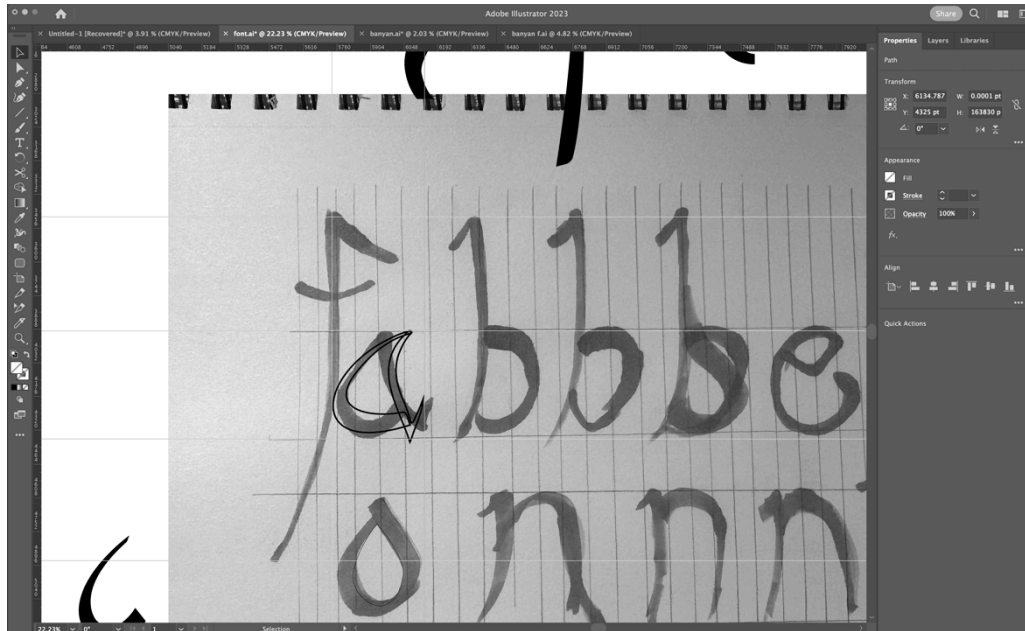


figure 26: a screenshot of the process of digitization.



After the design of the first five letters of the alphabet, I decided to switch the visual language for the final design to be closer to Taliq. Some of the changes included:

1. The pinched counters of “b” and “d” created a vertical stretched look that is the opposite of the horizontally stretched look of Taliq and Persian calligraphy.
2. The sharp apex and spur were not visually accurate to the soft and curved look of Taliq.
3. The intense stroke weight change created an unbalanced visual look.

After these modifications, the first complete set of *Banyan* in lower-case was designed.

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

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Aside from the overall look, the round characters of *Banyan* were designed based on “**◐**” and the counter of “**ف**” while the straight characters were inspired by letters like “**ل**” and “**ج**”.

culture فرهنگ

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one astonishing day  
یک روز فوق العاده

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#### 5.5.2 Development process

While draft 2 conveyed the overall look of Banyan, several details were adjusted for the final design. The first change was to eliminate the serifs, although they were retained in a few letters. This decision was based on the fact that, although Habibollah Fazaeli's instructions show some letters with serifs, the majority of Taliq script samples lack these prominent features. Another modification was to add more weight to the strokes and emphasize the curves rather than the pointed apexes and terminals. Lastly, the letters “w,” “e,” and “q” were adorned with tittles in order to incorporate more elements of Persian typography.

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

---

culturë فرهنگ

---

onë astonishing day

یک روز فوق العاده

---

### 5.5.3 Banyan typeface

The final step in the design was to use the software FontLab to create a functional typeface.

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

type design is the intricate process of creating typefaces, where each letter, number, and symbol is carefully crafted to form a cohesive set. This art requires a deep understanding of both aesthetics and functionality, as designers balance the visual appeal of the characters with their readability and usability. Type designers consider factors such as stroke weight, serifs, kerning, and x-height to ensure that each glyph not only stands alone beautifully but also works harmoniously within the text. The process often begins with sketches and digital outlines, followed by meticulous adjustments and testing. The result is a typeface that can convey mood, style, and clarity, playing a crucial role in the way information is perceived and communicated in various media.

the quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog while a quaint zebra  
stands nearby, waiting for its turn to join the xylophone-playing  
band in the quirky, vibrant park.

a representative latin typeface design  
culture persian script  
typography

figure SEQ figure \\* ARABIC  
33: Banyan Typeface



## Part 6 Reflection

This exploratory study reveals that the field of bi-scriptual and representative typeface design is broad and largely uncharted. Through in-depth research into the history of a script and critical design decisions, designers can create a language of type that transcends superficial mimicry, resulting in accurate and meaningful representation. The research process, involving online surveys, allowed me to connect with people from my own culture and provided an opportunity to view this project through the perspectives of those outside it. The expert interview portion of this research allowed for the input of professionals in the field and enriched my knowledge in the practice (and art) of type design.

Throughout the research process, formulating questions to elicit unbiased opinions was essential to obtaining genuine responses. Crafting questions that offered a comprehensive range of options ensured that participants could express their views precisely and without constraint.

Analyzing the survey results revealed intriguing patterns: while I initially anticipated that the responses from Persian participants would align with expected norms, the unexpected prominence of the Taliq script as a representative choice was particularly striking. This outcome, along with the diverse perspectives from participants of various cultural backgrounds, provided a richer understanding of representation in type design. It highlighted the nuanced ways in which bilingual individuals relate to and perceive different scripts, underscoring the complexity of cultural representation and the value of considering a broad spectrum of viewpoints in design research.

Several challenges and unexpected developments emerged during the expert interview phase of the research. Initially, the interview questions were structured around three core themes: “culture,” “type design process,” and “bi-scriptual typography.” Reaching out to numerous type design professionals revealed that many were hesitant to participate, citing their perceived lack of expertise across all three areas. Additionally, the search for bilingual Persian/English experts proved to be more

difficult than anticipated, further narrowing the pool of available participants. Consequently, these obstacles resulted in securing insights from only two experts. Despite these limitations, the perspectives gained from these experts provided valuable contributions to the research, underscoring the complexities and challenges in integrating cultural and typographic expertise.

The design process for this project proved to be quite challenging. Although a final prototype of the typeface was created, it became clear early on that this study would only offer a preliminary exploration into the realm of typeface design. Developing a functional and refined typeface requires extensive time and effort, elements that were unfortunately limited in this project. As a result, while the prototype represents an important step, it underscores the necessity for further, in-depth research and development to achieve a fully realized and functional typeface. This initial exploration sets the foundation for future work, highlighting areas for further refinement and additional phases of design and testing.

## Part 7 Future research

The designed typeface, currently known as *Banyan*, is still in its preliminary stages and requires further formal refinement to reach its full potential. This project serves as an initial exploration, providing a foundational framework for future development. The next steps would involve a detailed refinement process to address any inconsistencies and enhance the overall design of the typeface. This includes fine-tuning letterforms, spacing, and kerning to ensure both functional and aesthetic quality.

As the core design becomes more polished formally, there is considerable potential to expand the typeface into a broader type family. This expansion could encompass various weights, styles, and additional glyphs, making the typeface more versatile and adaptable for diverse applications. By developing different weights and styles, the typeface can better meet a wider range of typographic needs.

Another crucial aspect of future research involves gathering and analyzing user feedback on the *Banyan* typeface. Understanding how users perceive the typeface, in terms of its representation of Persian culture, is essential. This feedback could be collected through surveys, focus groups, and usability studies, providing valuable insights into how effectively the typeface conveys cultural elements and resonates with its audience.

Additionally, future research should focus on evaluating the accuracy of the typeface in representing Persian culture. This includes assessing its alignment with cultural symbols, historical contexts, and traditional aesthetics. Engaging with cultural experts and stakeholders will help ensure that the typeface not only functions well, but also represents Persian culture and heritage authentically.

## Part 8 Conclusion

This thesis project has explored the complex interplay between language, typography, and cultural representation, with a focus on the innovative field of bi-scriptual typeface design. By delving into the perception and representation of Persian culture within Canada's multicultural context, this project has demonstrated that typography is not merely an arrangement of text, but a crucial element in shaping and reflecting cultural identities.

The research has revealed that bi-scriptual and representative typeface design is a broad and largely uncharted area. Through extensive investigation into script history and design methodologies, it has become evident that creating a typeface that transcends superficial mimicry requires a deep understanding of both cultural and typographic nuances. The development of a Latin typeface inspired by Persian script, aimed at fostering a sense of belonging among Persian-speaking individuals in Canada, represents a significant step towards achieving meaningful cultural representation.

Survey results and expert interviews provided valuable insights into the diverse perspectives on cultural representation in type design. The unexpected prominence of the Taliq script and the varied responses from participants highlighted the nuanced ways in which bilingual individuals relate to different scripts. These findings underscore the importance of considering a broad spectrum of viewpoints to enrich the design process and address the complexities of cultural representation.

Challenges encountered during the research, including difficulties in securing expert participants and the constraints of time and resources, underscored the need for further exploration and development. Despite these limitations, the insights gained from this project contribute to the discourse on typeface design and cultural representation. The creation of a preliminary typeface prototype demonstrates the potential of bi-scriptual design, while emphasizing the need for continued research and refinement.

Overall, this project advances understanding in the field of bi-scriptual typography, and also provides a foundation for future research. The study highlights the crucial role of typography in bridging cultural gaps and fostering cross-cultural communication, paving the way for more inclusive and representative design practices.

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## **Appendices**



## 10.1 Ethics application

Pro00136322

12/23/23, 10:24 AM



Date: Monday, December 25, 2023 10:23:49 AM

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Reviewer Notes

ID: Pro00136022  
Status: Approved

Pro00136022

1.1 Study Identification

### 1.1 Study Identification

All questions marked by a **red asterisk \*** are required fields. However, because the mandatory fields have been kept to a minimum, answering only the required fields may not be sufficient for the REB to review your application.

Please answer all relevant questions that will reasonably help to describe your study or proposed research.

- 1.0 **\* Short Study Title** (restricted to 250 characters):  
Intersecting Traditions: A Latin Typeface Design Inspired by Persian Culture
- 2.0 **\* Complete Study Title** (can be exactly the same as short title):  
Intersecting Traditions: A Latin Typeface Design Inspired by Persian Culture
- 3.0 **\* Select the appropriate Research Ethics Board** (Detailed descriptions are available at [here](#)):  
Research Ethics Board 2
- 4.0 **\* Is the proposed research:**  
Unfunded
- 5.0 **\* Name of local Principal Investigator:**  
[Hannaneh Ghahramani](#)
- 6.0 **\* Type of research/study:**  
Graduate Student
- 7.0 **Investigator's Supervisor**(required for applications from undergraduate students, graduate students, post-doctoral fellows and medical residents to REBs 1 & 2. HREB does not accept applications from student PIs):  
[Susan Colberg](#)
- 8.0 **Study Coordinators or Research Assistants:** People listed here can edit this application and will receive all email notifications for the study:  

Name	Employer
There are no items to display	
- 9.0 **Co-Investigators:** People listed here can edit this application and will receive email notifications (Co-investigators who do not wish to receive email, should be added to the study team below instead of here). If your searched name does not come up when you type it in the box, the user does not have the Principal Investigator role in the online system. Click the following link for instructions on how to [Request an Additional Role](#).  

Name	Employer
There are no items to display	

**10.0 Primary Admin Contact (a member of study team):**

- 11.0 Study Team:** (co-investigators, supervising team, and other study team members) - People listed here cannot view or edit this application and do not receive email notifications.

Last Name	First Name	Organization	Role/Area of Responsibility	Phone	Email
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There are no items to display

ID: Pro00136022

Pro00136022

1.4 Conflict of Interest

Status: Approved

**1.4 Conflict of Interest**

- 1.0** \* Are any of the investigators or their immediate family receiving any personal remuneration (including investigator payments and recruitment incentives but excluding trainee remuneration or graduate student stipends) from the funding of this study that is not accounted for in the study budget?
- ☐ Yes ☒ No
- 2.0** \* Do any of investigators or their immediate family have any proprietary interests in the product under study or the outcome of the research including patents, trademarks, copyrights, and licensing agreements?
- ☐ Yes ☒ No
- 3.0** \* Is there any compensation for this study that is affected by the study outcome?
- ☐ Yes ☒ No
- 4.0** \* Do any of the investigators or their immediate family have equity interest in the sponsoring company? (This does not include Mutual Funds)
- ☐ Yes ☒ No
- 5.0** \* Do any of the investigators or their immediate family receive payments of other sorts, from this sponsor (i.e. grants, compensation in the form of equipment or supplies, retainers for ongoing consultation and honoraria)?
- ☐ Yes ☒ No

6.0 \* Are any of the investigators or their immediate family, members of the sponsor's Board of Directors, Scientific Advisory Panel or comparable body?  
☐ Yes ☒ No

7.0 \* Do you have any other relationship, financial or non-financial, that, if not disclosed, could be construed as a conflict of interest?  
☐ Yes ☒ No

Please explain if the answer to any of the above questions is Yes:

### **Important**

If you answered YES to any of the questions above, you may be asked for more information.

ID: Pro00136022

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Status: Approved

1.5 Research Locations and Other Approvals

## **1.5 Research Locations and Other Approvals**

1.0 \* List the locations of the proposed research, including recruitment activities. Provide name of institution, facility or organization, town, or province as applicable  
 1. University of Alberta North Campus, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

2.0 \* Indicate if the study will use or access facilities, programmes, resources, staff, students, specimens, patients or their records, at any of the sites affiliated with the following (select all that apply):  
 Not applicable

List all health care research sites/locations:

3.0 **Multi-Institution Review**

\* 3.1 Has this study already received approval from another REB?  
☐ Yes ☒ No

4.0 If this application is closely linked to research previously approved by one of the University of Alberta REBs or has already received ethics approval from an external ethics review board(s), provide the study number, REB name or other identifying information. Attach any external REB application and approval letter in the Documentation Section – Other Documents.

ID: Pro00136022

Pro00136022

2.1 Study Objectives and Design

Status: Approved

## 2.1 Study Objectives and Design

### 1.0 \* Provide a lay summary of your proposed research which would be understandable to general public

Language is the means by which we produce and exchange our shared narratives and connections. Writing is the visual notation system of these concepts and typography is the formalization of these systems. Typography is not a mere arrangement of words on a page or a screen; it is a symphony of form and function that binds us to our environment and defines our cultural identities. In the words of typographer and type designer, Andreu Balius: "Our Western view of the world has too often rejected other possible cultural realities and points of view", however, with this ever-growing need for a more diverse viewpoint, a reliance on a single script or language no longer resonates with the multicultural and complex users of today. This thesis project aims to take on the challenge of representing Persian culture in Canada by investigating the intricacies of the Persian/Farsi script. By bridging the gap between these script traditions, the project aims to create a Latin typeface infused with the rich essence of Persian culture while fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of it in the Canadian context.

### 2.0 \* Provide a full description of your research proposal outlining the following:

- Purpose
- Hypothesis
- Justification
- Objectives
- Research Method/Procedures
- Plan for Data Analysis

Purpose:

The purpose of this thesis project is to explore the way we perceive and represent Persian culture in the multicultural context of Canada. By creating a Latin typeface inspired by Persian script, the project aims to foster a sense of belonging among Persian-speaking individuals within Canadian society.

Hypothesis:

The hypothesis of this study posits that the creation of a culturally sensitive Latin typeface, inspired by the Persian/Farsi script, will facilitate effective cross-cultural communication, break down linguistic barriers, and promote a deeper understanding of Persian culture among the Persian-speaking individuals in the wider Canadian community. It assumes that the fusion of these script traditions will result in a visually appealing and functional typeface that resonates with Persian-Canadian users, encouraging cultural exchange and mutual respect.

Justification:

Effective communication and representation are crucial for fostering tolerance, acceptance, and harmony among diverse communities. This project addresses the representation of Persian culture in Canada, acknowledging the diverse perspectives that enrich the Canadian tapestry. By designing a Latin typeface rooted in Persian heritage, this project contributes to the recognition of cultural plurality.

#### Objectives:

**Cultural Exploration:** To delve into the historical, linguistic, and artistic nuances of the Persian/Farsi script.

**Typeface Design:** To create a visually appealing and functional Latin typeface inspired by Persian script, ensuring readability and cultural authenticity.

**User Experience:** To assess the user experience and readability of the designed typeface among Persian-speaking individuals in Canada.

**Cultural Integration:** To analyze the impact of the designed typeface on promoting understanding and appreciation of Persian culture within the Canadian context.

#### Research Method/Procedures:

The research will employ a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative analysis of historical and cultural texts related to Persian script with quantitative user experience studies. Primary data collection will involve interviews, surveys, and usability testing sessions conducted with Persian-speaking individuals and diverse users in Canada. Comparative analysis of existing typefaces and cultural artifacts will inform the design process, ensuring authenticity and aesthetic appeal.

#### Plan for Data Analysis:

Qualitative data, including cultural and historical insights, will be analyzed thematically, identifying patterns and themes related to Persian script and its cultural significance. Quantitative data from surveys and usability tests will be analyzed using statistical methods to evaluate user preferences, readability, and overall user experience. Comparative analysis will be performed to assess the cultural integration of the designed typeface in comparison to existing fonts, providing valuable insights into its effectiveness in bridging cultural gaps and fostering understanding in the multicultural Canadian context.

- 3.0 **Describe procedures, treatment, or activities that are above or in addition to standard practices in this study area (eg. extra medical or health-related procedures, curriculum enhancements, extra follow-up, etc):**  
N/A
- 4.0 **If the proposed research is above minimal risk and is not funded via a competitive peer review grant or industry-sponsored clinical trial, the REB will require evidence of scientific review. Provide information about the review process and its results if appropriate.**



N/A

- 5.0 For clinical trials, describe any sub-studies associated with this Protocol.  
N/A

ID: Pro00136022

Pro00136022

2.2 Research Methods and Procedures

Status: Approved

## 2.2 Research Methods and Procedures

*Some research methods prompt specific ethical issues. The methods listed below have additional questions associated with them in this application. If your research does not involve any of the methods listed below, ensure that your proposed research is adequately described in Section 2.1: Study Objectives and Design or attach documents in the Documentation Section if necessary.*

- 1.0 \* This study will involve the following (select all that apply)
- Internet-based Interaction with Participants (excluding internet surveys or data collection over internet without human interaction)
  - Interviews and/or Focus Groups
  - Surveys and Questionnaires (including internet surveys)

*NOTE 1: Select this if you are directly collecting health information as part of your protocol OR will be conducting a chart/record review/reviewing health data secondarily. This includes anonymized or identifiable health information.*

*NOTE 2: Select this option if this research ONLY involves analysis of blood/tissue/specimens originally collected for another purpose but now being used to answer your research question. If you are enrolling people into the study to prospectively collect specimens to analyze you SHOULD NOT select this box.*

*NOTE 3: This section is intended to reflect the secondary use of non-health data. Do NOT select this if you are using data that originally came from health sources, i.e., anonymized administrative data.*

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2.4 Internet-based Interaction with Human Participants

Status: Approved

## 2.4 Internet-based Interaction with Human Participants

- 1.0 Internet-based Research
- 1.1 Will your interaction with participants occur in private internet spaces (eg. members only chat rooms, social networking sites, email discussions, etc)?

☒ Yes ☐ No

**1.2 Will these interactions occur in public space(s) where you will post questions initiating and/or maintaining interaction with participants?**

☐ Yes ☒ No

**2.0 Describe how permission to use the site(s) will be obtained, if applicable:**

To use these spaces, users are required to comply with the Terms of Service and Privacy Policies set by the platforms. By accepting these terms, users agree to use these services responsibly, respecting intellectual property rights, and refraining from activities that harm or interfere with the services.

**3.0 If you do not plan to identify yourself and your position as a researcher to the participants, from the onset of the research study, explain why you are not doing so, at what point you will disclose that you are a researcher, provide details of debriefing procedures, if any, and if participants will be given a way to opt out, if applicable:**  
N/A

**4.0 \* How will you protect the privacy and confidentiality of participants who may be identified by email addresses, IP addresses, and other identifying information that may be captured by the system during your interactions with these participants?**

The investigator will ensure the privacy and confidentiality of participants by:

1. Obtaining informed consent, explaining data usage.
2. Anonymizing email addresses, and other identifiers.
3. Securely storing data with limited, authorized access.
4. Using encrypted methods for data transmission.
5. Handling email addresses discreetly.
6. Conducting regular security audits and having a data retention policy.
8. Educating participants on privacy practices.

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Pro00136022

2.5 Interview and/or Focus Groups

Status: Approved

## 2.5 Interview and/or Focus Groups

- 1.0 Will you conduct interviews, focus groups, or both? Provide detail.**  
The study will include interviews being conducted by the investigator and an expert participant in the related field of study. These interviews will include a set of questions being asked as well as giving the participants space to discuss the subject with the investigator.
- 2.0 How will participation take place (e.g. in-person, via phone, email, Skype)?**  
The interviews will be held online by utilizing video chatting platforms such as Skype, Zoom, Google meet, etc.
- 3.0 How will the data be collected (e.g. audio recording, video recording, field notes)?**



The interview session will only be audio recorded (participants are allowed to turn off their cameras during the interview). The recordings will be analyzed after the conversation has been taken place in order to retrieve transcripts for further use. The audio recording in Zoom will be downloaded to the investigator's secure device following the session and not stored on the Zoom cloud.

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Status: Approved

2.9 Surveys and Questionnaires (including Online)

### 2.9 Surveys and Questionnaires (including Online)

- 1.0 **How will the survey/questionnaire data be collected (i.e. collected in person, or if collected online, what survey program/software will be used etc.)?**  
The survey/questionnaire will be collected online through the Google Forms platform. (<https://docs.google.com/forms/>)
- 2.0 **Where will the data be stored once it's collected (i.e. will it be stored on the survey software provider servers, will it be downloaded to the PI's computer, other)?**  
The final collected data will be stored on the investigators computer as well as the PI's Cloud.
- 3.0 **Who will have access to the data?**  
The only person with access to the data will be the investigator.  
(The investigator may share applicable data from the survey with the participants in the expert interviews with the permission of the participant)
- 4.0 **If you are using a third party research tool, website survey software, transaction log tools, screen capturing software, or masked survey sites, how will you ensure the security of data gathered at that site?**  
To ensure the security of data collected through this platform, the investigator will:
  1. Access the websites securely via HTTPS and a secure account.
  2. Control the access and editing features and avoid public sharing.
  3. Collect and store data anonymously.
  4. Periodically review form settings and access permissions.
  5. Store responses in private files; audit and manage permissions.

Additionally, Google Forms incorporates security features to protect collected data. These include authentication and authorization controls, SSL encryption for secure data transmission, HTTPS connections for added security, secure storage in Google Sheets, optional Google account authentication for respondents, CAPTCHA challenges to prevent automated spam, automatic recording of IP addresses for potential abuse identification, and response validation rules for data accuracy

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Status: Approved

3.1 Risk Assessment

### 3.1 Risk Assessment

- 1.0 **\* Provide your assessment of the risks that may be associated with this research:**  
Minimal Risk - research in which the probability and magnitude of possible harms implied by participation is no greater than those encountered by participants in those aspects of their everyday life that relate to the research (TCPS2)

- 2.0 **\* Select all that might apply:**

Description of Possible Physical Risks and Discomforts

- ☐ No Participants might feel physical fatigue, e.g. sleep deprivation
- ☐ No Participants might feel physical stress, e.g. cardiovascular stress tests
- ☐ No Participants might sustain injury, infection, and intervention side-effects or complications
- ☐ No The physical risks will be greater than those encountered by the participants in everyday life

Possible Psychological, Emotional, Social and Other Risks and Discomforts

- ☐ No Participants might feel psychologically or emotionally stressed, demeaned, embarrassed, worried, anxious, scared or distressed, e.g. description of painful or traumatic events
- ☐ No Participants might feel psychological or mental fatigue, e.g. intense concentration required
- ☐ No Participants might experience cultural or social risk, e.g. loss of privacy or status or damage to reputation
- ☐ No Participants might be exposed to economic or legal risk, for instance non-anonymized workplace surveys
- ☐ No The risks will be greater than those encountered by the participants in everyday life

- 3.0 **\* Provide details of all the risks and discomforts associated with the research for which you indicated YES or POSSIBLY above.**

N/A

- 4.0 **\* Describe how you will manage and minimize risks and discomforts, as well as mitigate harm:**

N/A

- 5.0 **Is there a possibility that your research procedures will lead to unexpected findings, adverse reactions, or similar results that may require follow-up (i.e. individuals disclose that they are upset or distressed during an interview/questionnaire, unanticipated findings on MRI, etc.)?**

☐ Yes ☒ No

- 6.0 **If you are using any tests in this study diagnostically, indicate the member(s) of the study team who will administer the measures/instruments:**

Test Name	Test Administrator	Organization	Administrator's Qualification
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There are no items to display

- 7.0 **If any research related procedures/tests could be interpreted diagnostically, will these be reported back to the participants and if so, how and by whom?**

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Pro00136022

3.2 Benefits Analysis

Status: Approved

### 3.2 Benefits Analysis

- 1.0 **\* Describe any potential benefits of the proposed research to the participants. If there are no benefits, state this explicitly:**  
Participants involved in the interview will have the benefit of engaging in insightful discourse and may obtain useful information during the meeting. Its also possible that the participant does not receive a direct benefit from participating in this study.
- 2.0 **\* Describe the scientific and/or scholarly benefits of the proposed research:**  
The potential scholarly benefits of this research are significant and multifaceted. By delving into the relationship between language, representation, and cultural identity, this study explores typography beyond its conventional boundaries, offering insights into its role as a cultural and communicative tool. It can contribute valuable knowledge to the field of design studies, especially concerning the intersection of cultural traditions in typographic design. This research can also enhance our understanding of diverse cultures and perspectives, fostering a more inclusive approach to communication. By bridging the gap between different cultural representations, it promotes cross-cultural understanding and appreciation. Finally, the findings from this research can contribute to education and potential curriculum development, encouraging a more culturally sensitive and inclusive approach to teaching typography and design.
- 3.0 **If this research involves risk to participants explain how the benefits outweigh the risks.**  
N/A  
As there are no risks involved with this study ,therefore, the benefits outweigh the risks.

ID: Pro00136022

Pro00136022

4.1 Participant Information

Status: Approved

### 4.1 Participant Information

- 1.0 **\* Will you be recruiting human participants (i.e. enrolling people into the study, sending people online surveys to complete)?**  
☒ Yes ☐ No
- 1.1 Will participants be recruited or their data be collected from Alberta Health Services or Covenant Health or data custodian as defined in the Alberta Health Information Act?**

☐ Yes ☒ No

ID: Pro00136022  
Status: Approved

Pro00136022

4.2 Additional Participant Information

#### 4.2 Additional Participant Information

##### 1.0 Describe the participants that will be included in this study. Outline ALL participants (i.e. if you are enrolling healthy controls as well):

1. The participants who will be included in the (first) survey portion of the study will be selected from Persian-Canadian students studying at the University of Alberta. They will be 18+ years old and can be from any discipline.
2. The participants who will be included in the (second) survey portion of the study will be selected from Non-Persian/Canadian students studying at the University of Alberta. They will be 18+ years old and can be from any discipline.
3. The participants who will be included in the interview portion of the study will be experts in the field of typography and type design.

##### 2.0 \* Describe and justify the inclusion criteria for participants (e.g. age range, health status, gender, etc.):

1. The included participants in the (first) survey portion of the study must possess a general understanding of other cultures and be able to comprehend the basis of a study therefore they will be chosen from students at the university level. In order to gather information about Persian culture, the participants must be Iranian.
2. The included participants in the (second) survey portion of the study must possess a general understanding of other cultures and be able to comprehend the basis of a study therefore they will be chosen from students at the university level. In order to gather information about representation, the participants can be of any nationality.
3. The included participants in the interview portion of the study must possess an expert knowledge in the field of typography in order to contribute to the study.

##### 3.0 Describe and justify the exclusion criteria for participants:

1. The participants who are not of university age do not possess the knowledge or life experience to contribute to the study. Similarly, they need to possess knowledge of Persian culture.
2. The participants who are not of university age do not possess the knowledge or life experience to contribute to the study. They also must be non-Persian for the sake of the study.

3. The participants who are not experts cannot provide useful insights for the sake of the study.

#### 4.0 Participants

**4.1 How many participants do you hope to recruit (including controls, if applicable?)**

20

**4.2 Of these, how many are controls, if applicable?**

N/A

**4.3 If this is a multi-site study, how many participants do you anticipate will be enrolled in the entire study?**

#### 5.0 Justification for sample size:

A minimum of 15 participants will allow for a detailed analysis of data while allowing for a deep qualitative Insight to gain deep, detailed insights from participants.

ID: Pro00136022

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Status: Approved

4.4 Recruitment of Participants (non-Health)

### 4.4 Recruitment of Participants (non-Health)

#### 1.0 Recruitment

**1.1 How will you identify potential participants? Outline all of the means you will use to identify who may be eligible to be in the study (i.e. response to advertising such as flyers, posters, ads in newspapers, websites, email, list serves, community organization referrals, etc.)**

1. The participants included in the (first and second) survey portion of the study will be notified via online community group chats and social media groups in Whatsapp, telegram, and also contacted through their university provided emails by a third party (a fellow peer, the Art & Design communications officer) or the principle investigator.

2. The participants included in the interview portion of the study will be notified via their personal emails by a third party (a fellow peer, or the supervisor).

**1.2 Once you have identified a list of potentially eligible participants, indicate how the potential participants' names will be passed on to the researchers AND how will the potential participants be approached about the research.**

Once identified, each participant will receive an email/note from a third party detailing the needed information about the study and their role in it.

#### 2.0 Pre-Existing Relationships

**2.1 Will potential participants be recruited through pre-existing relationships with researchers (e.g. Will an instructor recruit students from his classes, or a physician recruit patients from her practice? Other**



examples may be employees, acquaintances, own children or family members, etc.)?

☒ Yes ☐ No

**2.2 If YES, identify the relationship between the researchers and participants that could compromise the freedom to decline (e.g. clinician/patient, professor/student)**

The university students involved in the survey portion may be selected from peers with previous relationships to the researcher.

**2.3 How will you ensure that there is no undue pressure on the potential participants to agree to the study?**

The participants will be notified of the process of the study and will be informed of their right to consent. Also, the participants are free to leave the study at any point they feel pressured or stressed.

**3.0 Will your study involve any of the following? (select all that apply)**  
None of the above

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4.5 Informed Consent Determination

Status: Approved

#### 4.5 Informed Consent Determination

**1.0 Describe who will provide informed consent for this study (i.e. the participant, parent of child participant, substitute decision maker, no one will give consent – requesting a waiver)**  
All participants in this study will be of age and will be able to provide consent on behalf of themselves.

##### 1.1 Waiver of Consent Requested

If you are asking for a waiver of participant consent, please justify the waiver or alteration and explain how the study meets all of the criteria for the waiver. Refer to [Article 3.7 of TCPS2](#) and provide justification for requesting a Waiver of Consent for ALL criteria (a-e)  
N/A

##### 1.2 Waiver of Consent in Individual Medical Emergency

If you are asking for a waiver or alteration of participant consent in individual medical emergencies, please justify the waiver or alteration and explain how the study meets ALL of the criteria outlined in [Article 3.8 of TCPS2 \(a-f\)](#).  
N/A

**2.0 How will consent be obtained/documented? Select all that apply**

Signed consent form  
Implied by overt action (i.e. completion of questionnaire)

**If you are not using a signed consent form, explain how the study information will be provided to the participant and how consent will be obtained/documented. Provide details for EACH of the options selected above:**

There will be a consent form detailing the process and requirements of the study which the participants will fill out before starting the research. The participants will also give implied consent by the overall action of participation in the questionnaire and submitting the form.

- 3.0 **Will every participant have the capacity to give fully informed consent on his/her own behalf?**  
☒ Yes ☐ No
- 4.0 **What assistance will be provided to participants or those consenting on their behalf, who may require additional assistance? (e.g. non-English speakers, visually impaired, etc.)**  
 N/A
- 5.0 **\* If at any time a PARTICIPANT wishes to withdraw from the study or from certain parts of the study, describe when and how this can be done.**  
 The participant could withdraw from the study at any point by notifying the researcher by verbal indication throughout the process or by communication via email afterward.
- 6.0 **Describe the circumstances and limitations of DATA withdrawal from the study, including the last point at which participant DATA can be withdrawn (i.e. 2 weeks after transcription of interview notes)**  
 Once the data has been transcribed, any participant wishing to withdraw may do so up until a week after the date of completion.
- 7.0 **Will this study involve any group(s) where non-participants are present? For example, classroom research might involve groups which include participants and non-participants.**  
☐ Yes ☒ No

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5.1 Data Collection

Status: Approved

### 5.1 Data Collection

- 1.0 **\* Will the researcher or study team be able to identify any of the participants at any stage of the study?**  
☒ Yes ☐ No

- 2.0 Primary/raw data collected will be (check all that apply):**  
**Anonymous** - the information **NEVER** had identifiers associated with it (eg anonymous surveys) and risk of identification of individuals is low or very low  
**Indirectly identifying information** - the information can reasonably be expected to identify an individual through a combination of indirect identifiers (eg date of birth, place of residence, photo or unique personal characteristics, etc)  
**Made Public and cited** (including cases where participants have elected to be identified and/or allowed use of images, photos, etc.)
- 3.0 If this study involves secondary use of data, list all original sources:**  
 N/A
- 4.0 In research where total anonymity and confidentiality is sought but cannot be guaranteed (eg. where participants talk in a group) how will confidentiality be achieved?**  
 N/A  
 The participants will be notified of the situation beforehand and if unsatisfied with the terms may withdraw.

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5.2 Data Identifiers

Status: Approved

### 5.2 Data Identifiers

- 1.0 \* Personal Identifiers:** will you be collecting - at any time during the study, including recruitment - any of the following (check all that apply):  
 Surname and First Name  
 Email Address  
 Age at time of data collection  
 Other
- If OTHER, please describe:**  
 Place of birth, Language proficiencies, Scholarly achievements, Academic background, audio recording (for the sake of creating a transcript and will not be released)
- 2.0 Will you be collecting - at any time of the study, including recruitment of participants - any of the following (check all that apply):**  
 There are no items to display
- 3.0 \* If you are collecting any of the above, provide a comprehensive rationale to explain why it is necessary to collect this information:**  
 Any detail other than the place of birth and language background will not be shared and is for the sole purpose of the researcher's documentation.
- The published information regarding language knowledge and academic background is crucial to the study and needs to be shared.
- 4.0 If identifying information will be removed at some point, when and how will this be done?**  
 Unless stated by the participant, all necessary information may be shared.



However, in the case of any participant requiring anonymity, the identifying information will be removed and will not be shared.  
(this may result in the participants exclusion)

- 5.0 **\* Specify what identifiable information will be RETAINED once data collection is complete, and explain why retention is necessary. Include the retention of master lists that link participant identifiers with de-identified data:**  
The language proficiency, place of birth, and academic background are crucial identifying factors to the study, and therefore will be retained and published with the participants consent.
- 6.0 **If applicable, describe your plans to link the data in this study with data associated with other studies (e.g within a data repository) or with data belonging to another organization:**  
N/A

ID: Pro00136022

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5.3 Data Confidentiality and Privacy

Status: Approved

### 5.3 Data Confidentiality and Privacy

- 1.0 **\* How will confidentiality of the data be maintained? Describe how the identity of participants will be protected both during and after research.**  
The researcher is the sole person with access to the data and will not share the data in any instance other than for the sake of the study. Any identifying information not relevant to the course of the study will be immediately redacted after the completion of the study.
- 2.0 **How will the principal investigator ensure that all study personnel are aware of their responsibilities concerning participants' privacy and the confidentiality of their information?**  
The principal investigator and the supervisor are the only people with access to the data.
- 3.0 **External Data Access**
- \* 3.1 Will identifiable data be transferred or made available to persons or agencies outside the research team?**
- ☐ Yes ☒ No

ID: Pro00136022

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5.4 Data Storage, Retention, and Disposal

Status: Approved

### 5.4 Data Storage, Retention, and Disposal

- 1.0** \* Describe how research data will be stored, e.g. digital files, hard copies, audio recordings, other. Specify the physical location and how it will be secured to protect confidentiality and privacy. (For example, study documents must be kept in a locked filing cabinet and computer files are encrypted, etc. Write N/A if not applicable to your research)  
All the data (digital files, audio recordings) will be encrypted and stored on the researcher's computer and the researcher will retain the data for a minimum of 5 years after the study completion, as per university policy. No data will be shared for reasons other than the study.
- 2.0** \* University policy requires that you keep your data for a minimum of 5 years following completion of the study but there is no limit on data retention. Specify any plans for future use of the data. If the data will become part of a data repository or if this study involves the creation of a research database or registry for future research use, please provide details. (Write N/A if not applicable to your research)  
N/A
- 3.0**  
If you plan to destroy your data, describe when and how this will be done? Indicate your plans for the destruction of the identifiers at the earliest opportunity consistent with the conduct of the research and/or clinical needs:  
All unnecessary data will be destroyed and wiped from the researcher's computer. (after the the end of the 5 year data retention)

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Documentation

Status: Approved

### Documentation


Add documents in this section according to the headers. Use Item 11.0 "Other Documents" for any material not specifically mentioned below.

Sample templates are available by clicking [HERE](#).

#### 1.0 Recruitment Materials:

Document Name	Version	Date	Description
 Recruitment Materials(0.02)	0.02	11/28/2023 12:44 PM	

#### 2.0 Letter of Initial Contact:

Document Name	Version	Date	Description
 Letter of Initial Contact(0.01)	0.01	11/20/2023 12:40 PM	

#### 3.0 Informed Consent / Information Document(s):

**3.1 What is the reading level of the Informed Consent Form(s):**  
college reading level

**3.2 Informed Consent Form(s)/Information Document(s):**

Document Name	Version	Date	Description
 Informed Consent Form(0.03)	0.03	12/11/2023 7:57 PM	



**4.0 Assent Forms:**

Document Name	Version	Date	Description
There are no items to display			

**5.0 Questionnaires, Cover Letters, Surveys, Tests, Interview Scripts, etc.:**

Document Name	Version	Date	Description
 Survey for Persians(0.01)	0.01	11/18/2023 11:01 AM	
 Interview Questions(0.01)	0.01	11/18/2023 11:02 AM	
 Survey for Canadians(0.01)	0.01	11/18/2023 11:04 AM	

**6.0 Protocol/Research Proposal:**

Document Name	Version	Date	Description
 Research Proposal(0.01)	0.01	11/20/2023 1:27 PM	
 Full Project Description (0.01)	0.01	11/20/2023 1:31 PM	

**7.0 Investigator Brochures/Product Monographs:**

Document Name	Version	Date	Description
There are no items to display			

**8.0 Health Canada No Objection Letter (NOL):**

Document Name	Version	Date	Description
There are no items to display			

**9.0 Confidentiality Agreement:**

Document Name	Version	Date	Description
There are no items to display			

**10.0 Conflict of Interest:**

Document Name	Version	Date	Description
There are no items to display			

**11.0 Other Documents:**

*For example, Study Budget, Course Outline, or other documents not mentioned above*

Document Name	Version	Date	Description
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There are no items to display

ID: Pro00136022

Pro00136022

Final Page

Status: Approved

**Final Page**

You have reached the end of the ethics application.  
Click 'Continue' or 'Exit' below.

To submit for ethics review, click "SUBMIT for REVIEW" on the left side of the screen.

NOTE: Only the Principal Investigator can submit an application in Pre-submission (ie: the first time it is submitted).

## 10.2 Online survey data

### 2-1 recruitment materials

#### *Survey for Persians*

Subject: Your Insights Wanted: A Research Journey into Persian Cultural Representation in Canadian Typography

Hello,

My name is Hannah Ghahramani and I am a Master of Design student working under the supervision of Sue Colberg in Design Studies, at the Department of Art & Design at the University of Alberta on Persian cultural representation in Canada by investigating the intricacies of type design in hopes of designing a Latin typeface that is inspired by Persian culture. As a Persian living and studying in Canada, your opinions are very crucial to this study. I would appreciate the opportunity to gather your insights on these topics. I plan to conduct this research as an online survey. Your involvement in this survey is entirely voluntary and there are no known or anticipated risks to participation in this study. If you agree to participate, the survey should not take more than about 20 minutes. The questions are quite general and based on your own experiences. However, you may decline to answer any questions you feel you do not wish to answer. Your identity will be confidential and will be grouped with responses from other participants. Further, you will not be identified by name in any thesis, report, or publication resulting from this study.

This thesis project has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board (UofA Ethics ID Pro00136022).

For all other questions, or if you would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please feel free to contact me at [hannaneh@ualberta.ca](mailto:hannaneh@ualberta.ca)

Thank you in advance for your interest in this project.

Yours sincerely,

Hannah Ghahramani

*Survey for Non-Persians*

Subject: Your Insights Wanted: A Research Journey into Persian Cultural Representation in Canadian Typography

Hello,

My name is Hannah Ghahramani and I am a Master of Design student working under the supervision of Sue Colberg in Design Studies, at the Department of Art & Design at the University of Alberta on Persian cultural representation in Canada by investigating the intricacies of typography in hopes of designing a Latin typeface that is inspired by Persian culture. As a Canadian/Non-Persian living and studying in Canada, your opinions are very crucial to this study. I would appreciate the opportunity to gather your insights on these topics. I plan to conduct this research as an online survey. Your involvement in this survey is entirely voluntary and there are no known or anticipated risks to participation in this study. If you agree to participate, the survey should not take more than about 20 minutes. The questions are quite general and based on your own experiences. However, you may decline to answer any questions you feel you do not wish to answer. Your identity will be confidential and will be grouped with responses from other participants. Further, you will not be identified by name in any thesis, report, or publication resulting from this study.

This thesis project has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board (UofA Ethics ID Pro00136022).

For all other questions, or if you would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please feel free to contact me at [hannaneh@ualberta.ca](mailto:hannaneh@ualberta.ca)

Thank you in advance for your interest in this project.

Yours sincerely,  
Hannah Ghahramani

## 2-2 consent forms



**UNIVERSITY  
OF ALBERTA**

Name of Person Obtaining Consent

Contact Number

### Implied Consent Form for The Survey

**Title of the study:** Intersecting Traditions: A Latin Typeface Design Inspired by Persian Culture

**Investigator:** Hannah Ghahramani  
Master of Design Candidate  
Department of Art&Design  
University of Alberta  
Edmonton, AB  
(647) 564-7035 - [hannaneh@ualberta.ca](mailto:hannaneh@ualberta.ca)

**Principal Investigator (Supervisor):** Susan Colberg  
Associate Professor  
Department of Art&Design  
University of Alberta  
Edmonton, AB  
(780) 492-7859 - [scolberg@ualberta.ca](mailto:scolberg@ualberta.ca)

**Invitation to Participate:** You are invited to participate in this thesis project about typography and culture, because your opinions are important to this study given that you are a student currently living in Canada.

**Purpose of the Study:** The purpose of this project posits that the creation of a culturally sensitive Latin typeface, inspired by the Persian/Farsi script, will help to promote a deeper understanding of Persian culture among both Persian-speaking individuals and the wider Canadian community. It assumes that the fusion of these script traditions will result in a visually appealing and functional typeface that resonates with Persian-Canadian users.

**Participation:** If you wish to participate in this study, please complete the attached survey. The survey should take you approximately 20 minutes to complete. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. Once you have completed the survey, please choose the submit button. You may withdraw from participating at any time without penalty, until the point of data analysis by contacting the investigator or the supervisor. The data analysis will begin within 2 weeks after your participation date.

**Benefits:** While there may not be any direct benefit to the participants, results from this study may help us learn about typography and culture and may benefit others in the future. However, participants involved in the interview will have the benefit of engaging in insightful discourse and may obtain useful information during the study.

**Risks:** There are no risks involved with this study.

**Confidentiality and Anonymity:** The information that you will share will remain confidential and will be used solely for the purposes of this project. The only people who will have access to the research data are the principal investigator and the supervisor. Your answers to open-ended questions may be used verbatim in presentations and publications but neither you (nor your organization) will be identified. In order to minimize the risk of security breaches and to help ensure your confidentiality we recommend that you use



standard safety measures such as signing out of your account, closing your browser and locking your screen or device when you are no longer using them / when you have completed the study. Anonymity is guaranteed since you are not being asked to provide your name or any personal information.

**Data Storage:** Electronic copies of the survey will be encrypted and stored on a password-protected computer in the Department of Art & Design at the University of Alberta. The data will be retained and stored for a minimum of 5 years as per university policy and will be deleted after that time.

**Voluntary Participation:** You are under no obligation to participate and if you choose to participate, you may refuse to answer questions that you do not want to answer. Should you choose to withdraw midway through the electronic survey simply close the link and no responses will be included. Given the anonymous nature of the survey, once you have submitted your responses it will no longer be possible to withdraw them from the study.

**Contact Information:** If you have any questions or require more information about the study itself, you may contact the researcher or her supervisor at the emails mentioned below.

Researcher: *Hannah Ghahramani* ([hannaneh@ualberta.ca](mailto:hannaneh@ualberta.ca))

Supervisor: *Susan Colberg* ([scolberg@ualberta.ca](mailto:scolberg@ualberta.ca))

The plan for this thesis project has been reviewed by a Research Ethics Board at the University of Alberta. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant or how the research is being conducted you may contact the University of Alberta Research Ethics Office at [reoffice@ualberta.ca](mailto:reoffice@ualberta.ca) or 780-492-2615 and quote Ethics ID Pro00136022. This office is independent of the study investigators.

Please keep this form for your records.

#### **Consent/Assent to Participate in the Research Study**

Completion and submission of the survey means your consent to participate.



## 2-3 online survey question list

### Persians on Cultural Representation

1. How old are you?
  - a)18-22
  - b)23-29
  - c)30-39
  - d)40+
2. How many years did you live in Iran before coming to Canada?—————
3. Do you identify yourself as:
  - a)Persian
  - b)Persian-Canadian
  - c)Canadian
  - d)other
4. What languages (based in Iran) do you speak?(select all that apply)
  - a)Persian/Farsi
  - b)Turkish/Azari
  - c)Kurdish
  - d)Luri
  - e)Gilaki and Mazandarani
  - f)Dari
  - g)Arabic
  - h)Other:—————
5. What is your field of study?
  - a)Art&Design
  - b)Other:—————
6. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 indicating "poor accuracy" and 5 indicating "Complete accuracy," how accurate is the portrayal of Persian culture in society and media?
  - a)1 (Not at all accurate)
  - b)2 (Poor accuracy)
  - c)3 (Somewhat accurate)
  - d)4 (Moderately accurate)
  - e)5 (Very accurate)
7. Can you provide specific examples of instances where Persian culture was effectively and respectfully represented?
8. Conversely, have you encountered instances where Persian culture was misrepresented or subjected to stereotypes in media? If so, elaborate on these occurrences.
9. How important is it for you to see accurate representations of Persian culture in Canadian mainstream media and society?

- a)Not Important at All
- b)Somewhat Important
- c)Moderately Important
- d)Very Important
- e)Extremely Important

10. Which three adjectives would you use to describe Persian culture?
11. In your opinion, what are the most substantial contributions of Persian culture to the world, both historically and contemporarily?

a)Architecture



b)Handmade artifacts/Carpets



c)Calligraphy



d)Painting/Miniature



e)Poetry/Literature



12. Which aspects led you to this decision?
13. How much of your cultural identity do you believe is rooted in your language?
- a)0-20%
  - b)20-40%
  - c)40-60%
  - d)60-80%
  - e)80-100%

14. Are you familiar with Persian script/calligraphy?  
a)Yes  
b)Somewhat  
c)No
15. What is your most frequently used Persian typeface(font)?
16. What is your most used frequently Latin typeface(font)?
17. Which of these contemporary Persian typefaces do you think represents Persian culture the best?

a) خط فارسی

b) فط فارسی

c) خط فارسی

d) خط فارسی

e) خط فارسی

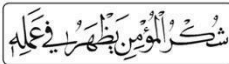
f) خط فارسی

g) خط فارسی

18. Which of these historic Persian scripts do you think represents the Persian culture the best?

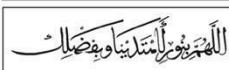
a) 

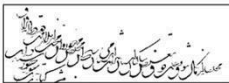
b) 

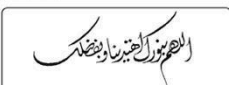
c) 

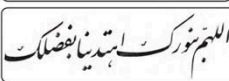
d) 

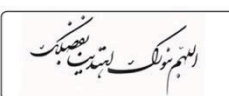
e) 

f) 

g) 

h) 

i) 

j) 

### Non-Persians/Canadians on Persian Representation

1. How old are you?
  - a)18-22
  - b)23-29
  - c)30-39
  - d)40+
2. How many years have you lived in Canada?—————
3. What languages other than English do you speak?—————
4. What is your field of study?
  - a)Art&Design
  - b)Other:—————
5. How familiar are you with Persian culture?
  - a) Completely unfamiliar
  - b) Somewhat Unfamiliar
  - c) Neither familiar nor unfamiliar
  - d) Somewhat familiar
  - e) Completely familiar
6. How frequently do you engage with media (such as TV shows, movies, books, music, etc.) featuring Persian culture or characters?
  - a)Daily
  - b)Weekly
  - c)Monthly
  - d)Rarely
  - e)Never
7. How important is it for you to see representations of non-Canadian cultures in mainstream media and society?
  - a)Not Important at All
  - b)Somewhat Important
  - c)Moderately Important
  - d)Very Important
  - e)Extremely Important
8. Which three adjectives would you use to describe Persian culture?

9. Which one of these typefaces would you associate with Persian culture?

- a) Different Typefaces
- b) Different Typefaces
- c) Different Typefaces
- d) different typefaces
- e) Different Typefaces
- f) Different Typefaces
- g) Different Typefaces
- h) Different Typefaces

10. Which aspects led you to this decision?

11. In your opinion, what are the most well-known representations of Persian culture?

a)Architecture



b)Handmade artifacts/Carpets



c)Calligraphy



d)Painting/Miniature



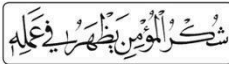


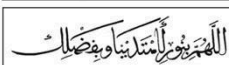
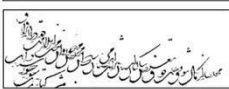
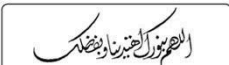
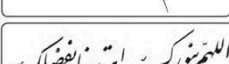
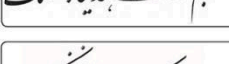


e)Poetry/Literature



12. How much of your cultural identity do you believe is rooted in your language?
- a)0-20%
  - b)20-40%
  - c)40-60%
  - d)60-80%
  - e)80-100%
13. Are you familiar with Persian typography/calligraphy?
- a)Yes
  - b)Somewhat
  - c)No
14. What is your most frequently used Latin typeface(font)?
15. Which of these contemporary Persian typefaces would you associate with Persian culture?
- a) خط فارسی
  - b) فط فارسی
  - c) **خط فارسی**
  - d) **خط فارسی**
  - e) خط فارسی
  - f) خط فارسی
  - g) خط فارسی

16. Which of these historic Persian scripts would you associate with Persian culture?

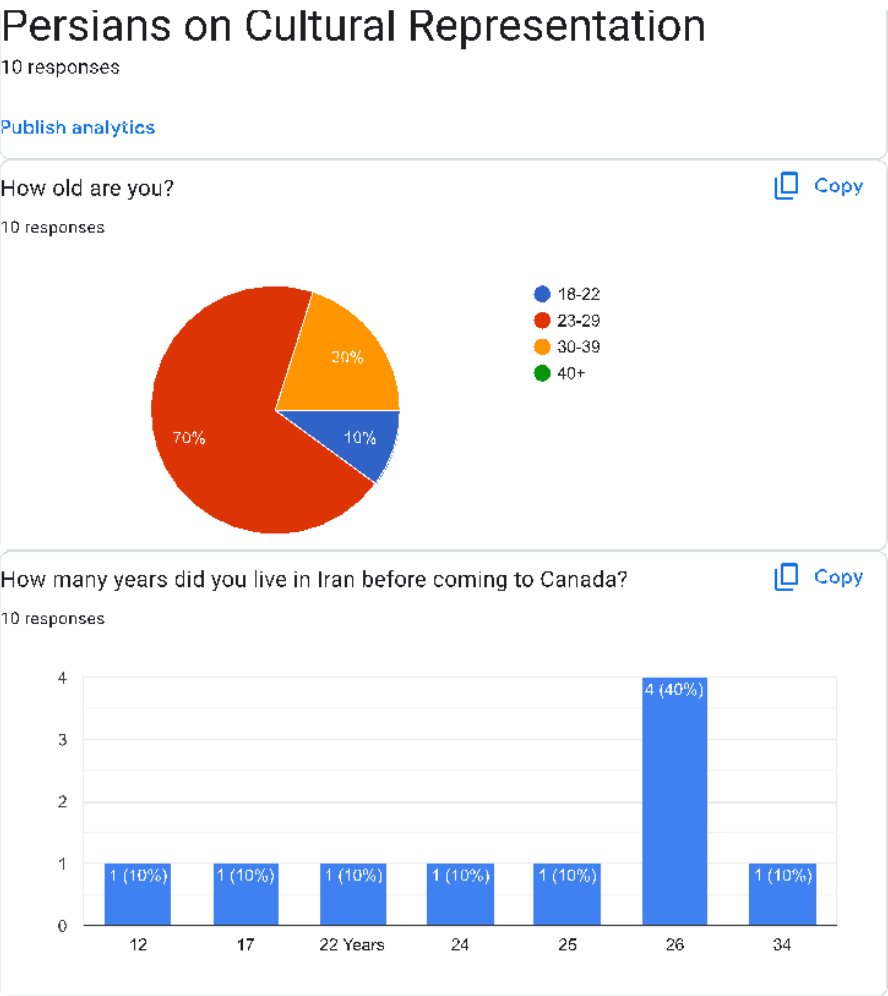
- a) 
- b) 
- c) 
- d) 
- e) 
- f) 
- g) 
- h) 
- i) 
- j) 



2-4 online survey results

Persians on Cultural Representation

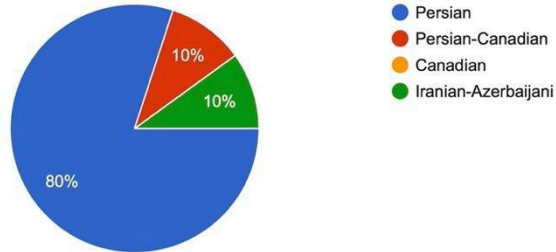
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Do you identify yourself as:

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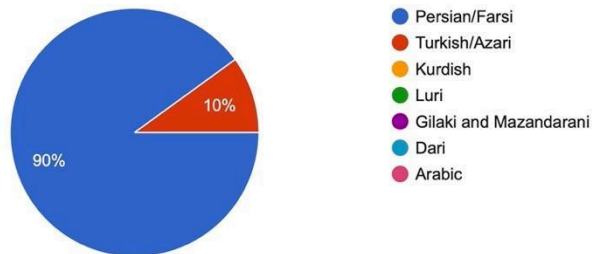
10 responses



What languages (based in Iran) do you speak? (select all that apply)

 Copy

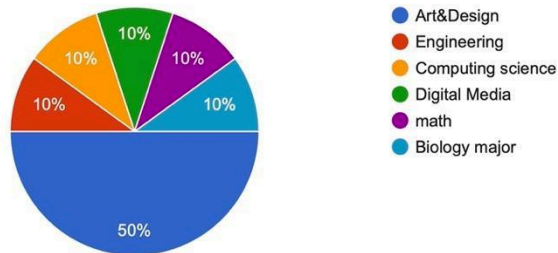
10 responses



What is your field of study?

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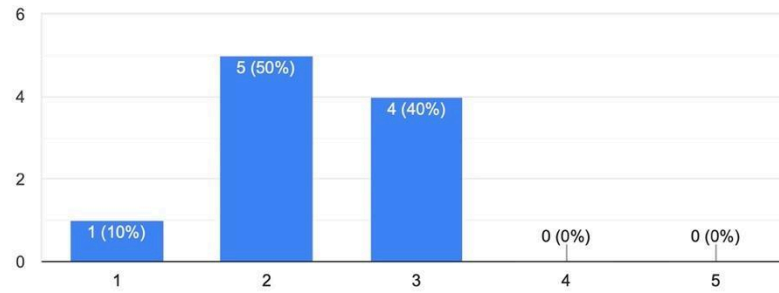
10 responses



On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 indicating "poor accuracy" and 5 indicating "Complete accuracy," how accurate is the portrayal of Persian culture in society and media?



10 responses



Can you provide specific examples of instances where Persian culture was effectively and respectfully represented?

8 responses

Persian culture has been respectfully represented through its influential cinema, notably by directors like Abbas Kiarostami and Asghar Farhadi, whose films have garnered international acclaim for their deep cultural and societal insights

Some people still think that Iran and arab countries have the same culture.

-Traditional music

-Colors and shapes in a lot of manuments for example Persepolis (takhte jamshid) , Tabriz historic bazaar.

-Persian food

با توجه به وجود فرهنگ های مختلف در ایران - سخته ! نه من احساس می کنم نمشه

The Persian Version movie / some Persian restaurants

Heritage festival in Edmonton

Presentation of Cylinder of Cyrus to UN

don't remember any

Conversely, have you encountered instances where Persian culture was misrepresented or subjected to stereotypes in media? If so, elaborate on these occurrences.

8 responses

Persian culture has often been misrepresented in Western media, typically through stereotypes that inaccurately portray Persians as politically extreme, failing to capture the rich diversity and complexity of their heritage.

N/A

Movies that made Iranian culture and Iran seem identical to Saudi Arabia.

Are, to akhabre khareji kheili vaghta vali chizi yadam nist.

Shirin Neshat

No!

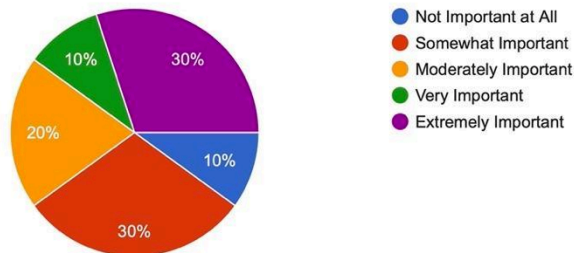
In media, persian people have been misplaced by Arab's civilizations. Like in very famous movies like "300". The Persian army have been displayed very aggressive and they dressed closed to Arab clothing at that time.

mostly in communications with non-persian people.  
Also in movies.

How important is it for you to see accurate representations of Persian culture in Canadian mainstream media and society?

 Copy

10 responses



Which three adjectives would you use to describe Persian culture?

9 responses

Compassionate, caring, supportive

Warm, hospitable, caring

Hospitality, kindness, tradition

Hospitable, Poetic, بامزه

Colourful / Spiritual / Poetic

Rich, Racist, Heavenly

Kindness, strength, hospitality

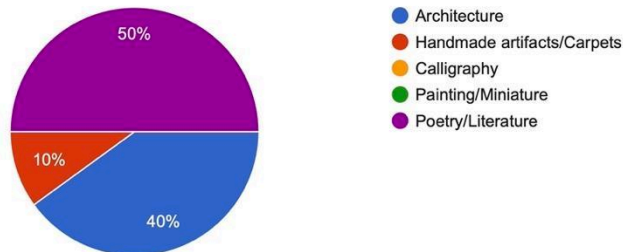
Poem, architecture, and seeking knowledge

Antient, Caring, friendly

In your opinion, what are the most substantial contributions of Persian culture to the world, both historically and contemporarily?

 Copy

10 responses



### Which aspects led you to this decision?

9 responses

Media

Based on how famous are these aspects based on my surrounding and experience

My personal experiences.

you are not allowing me to use more than one option.

invar o oonvar shenidsm va didam ke raje besher harf zade miste, koli tarjome miste, festival barash bargozar miste o inha, vali dovomi ke entekhab mikardam farsh bud

There are poets in European and Turkish communities who were inspired by Persian poetry!

As we see Iranian carpets all over the world as one of the most expensive ones. Also famous for their patterns.

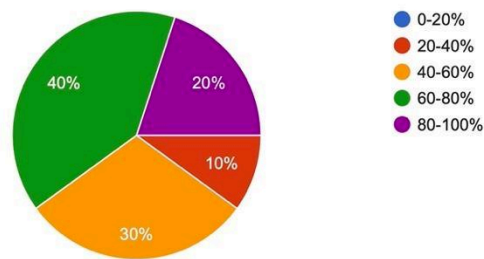
It attracts the most attention in west and this is the main reason for tourists in this country

I wish I could choose more but I guess because Persian architecture represents all other aspects of Persian art.  
poetry, painting, calligraphy and...

### How much of your cultural identity do you believe is rooted in your language?

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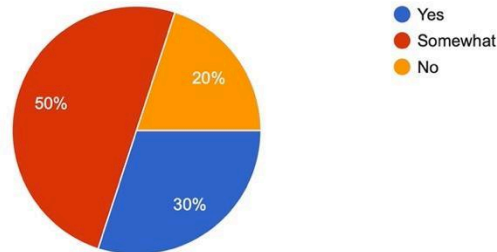
10 responses



Are you familiar with Persian script/calligraphy?

 Copy

10 responses



What is your most frequently used Persian typeface(font)?

8 responses

Tahoma

I dont know since I dont type Persian.

The Persian font on my phone for chatting with the older members of my family. Because with others, I type in Finglish.

Ghasem? I don't recall. But I know many people in Iran used in B nazanin.

Adobe Arabic

Nazanin

Harir

Yekan



What is your most used frequently Latin typeface(font)?

9 responses

Times New Roman

Sans serif

English font on my phone, Calibri font

Ca depend, parfois Avenir parfois Helvetica est pour mon thesis i am debating on calibri !

Helvetica Neue

Omnes

Helvetica

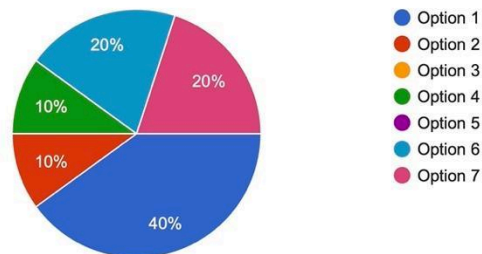
Times new roman

Arial

Which of these contemporary Persian typefaces do you think represents Persian culture the best?

 Copy

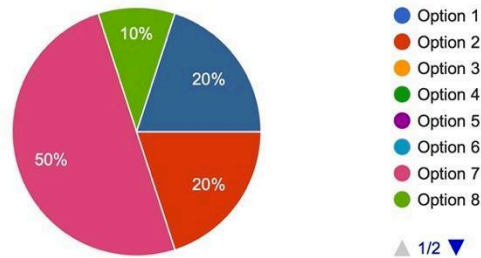
10 responses



Which of these historic Persian scripts do you think represents Persian culture the best?

 Copy

10 responses



More comments:

3 responses

I honestly hated you survey! Thank you:)

hameye in akharia be man here arabi mide

Thanks googooli

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## Non-Persians on Persian Cultural Representation

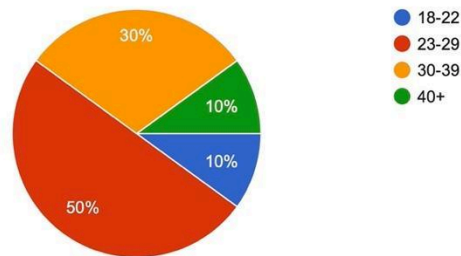
10 responses

[Publish analytics](#)

How old are you?

 Copy

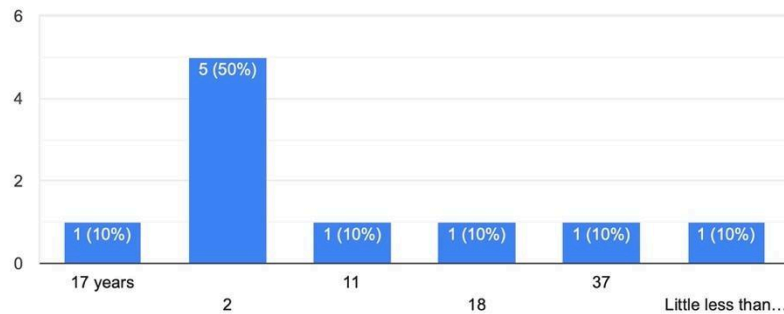
10 responses



How many years have you lived in Canada?

 Copy

10 responses



What languages other than English do you speak?

10 responses

Hindi, Marathi, little spanish

3

Korean

French and German.

French

Portuguese, Spanish, Japanese

Hindi, katchi, telugu

Tagalog, English, Pangasinan, Spanish

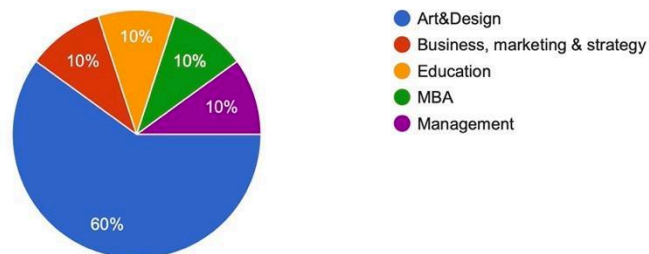
Hindi Urdu

Hindi

What is your field of study?

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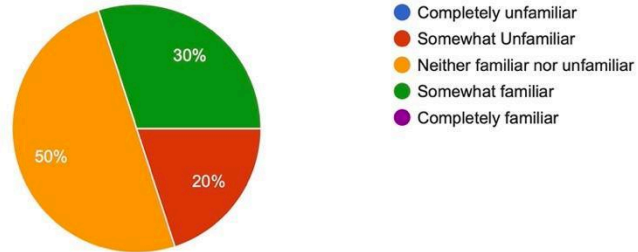
10 responses



How familiar are you with Persian culture?

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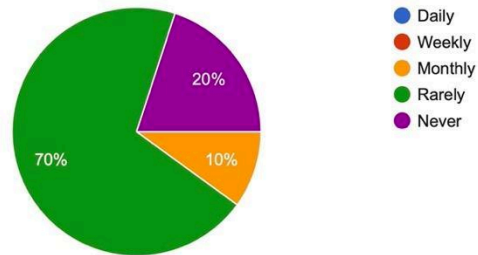
10 responses



How frequently do you engage with media (such as TV shows, movies, books, music, etc.) featuring Persian culture or characters?

 Copy

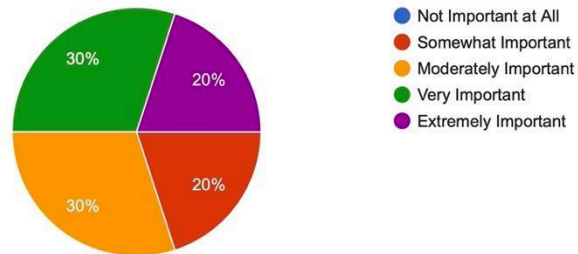
10 responses



How important is it for you to see representations of non-Canadian cultures in mainstream media and society?

 Copy

10 responses



Which three adjectives would you use to describe Persian culture?

10 responses

Conventional, artistic, sophisticated

Colourfull, traditional, historic

Conservative, religious, decorative

Historic, Vibrant, Social

Colourful, ancient, religious

Historical, diverse, traditional

Beautiful, frugal, rational

Elegant, poised, different

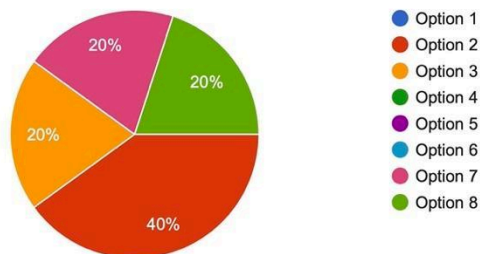
Not familiar

Rich, refined, artistic

Which one of these typefaces would you associate with Persian culture?

 Copy

10 responses



## Which aspects led you to this decision?

9 responses

From what I have observed how persian language looks like

I was in between option 2 and 3(the other options felt more japanese, korean,arabic, don't know)

At first glance, the characters resemble Farsi characters.

Most closely reminded me of Arabic

I was between option 8 and 7. I have seen some Persian caligraphy art and from my memory it is something like one of these 2

Closer to their font

The curvature of the letters/ font

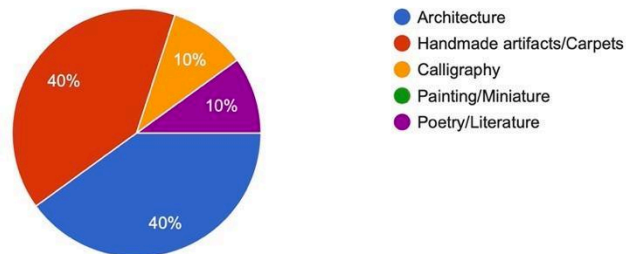
Looks about right

Familiarity

## In your opinion, what are the most well-known representations of Persian culture?

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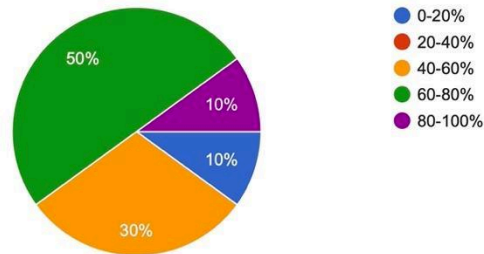
10 responses



How much of your cultural identity do you believe is rooted in your language?

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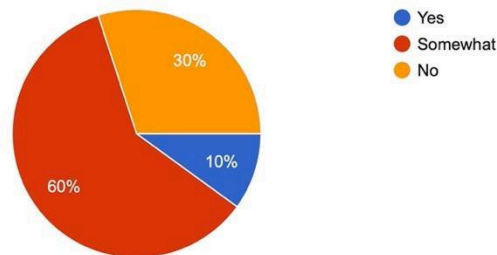
10 responses



Are you familiar with Persian typography/calligraphy?

 Copy

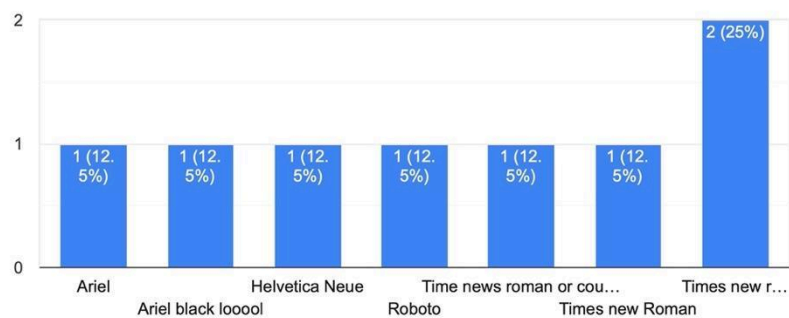
10 responses



What is your most frequently used Latin typeface(font)?

 Copy

8 responses

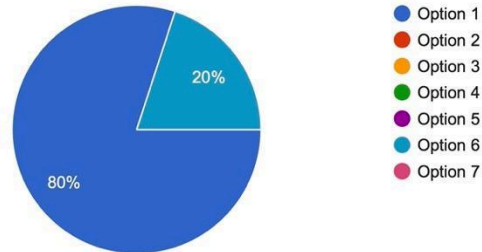




Which of these contemporary Persian typefaces would you associate with Persian culture?

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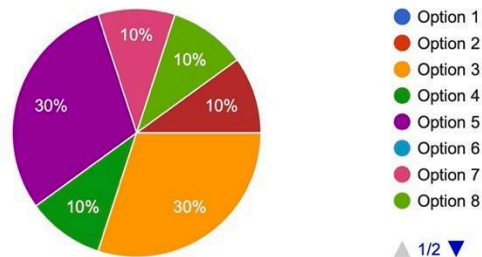
10 responses



Which of these historic Persian scripts would you associate with Persian culture

 Copy

10 responses



▲ 1/2 ▼

More comments:

1 response

N/A

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## 10.3 Expert interview data

### 3-1 consent form



#### Informed Consent Form for The Interview

**Title of the study:** Intersecting Traditions: A Latin Typeface Design Inspired by Persian Culture

**Investigator:** Hannah Ghahramani  
Master of Design Candidate  
Department of Art&Design  
University of Alberta  
Edmonton, AB  
(647) 564-7035 - [hannaneh@ualberta.ca](mailto:hannaneh@ualberta.ca)

**Principal Investigator (Supervisor):** Susan Colberg  
Associate Professor  
Department of Art&Design  
University of Alberta  
Edmonton, AB  
(780) 492-7859 - [scolberg@ualberta.ca](mailto:scolberg@ualberta.ca)

**Invitation to Participate:** You are invited to participate in this thesis project, given your expertise in the field of typography.

**Purpose of the Study:** The purpose of this project posits that the creation of a culturally sensitive Latin typeface, inspired by the Persian/Farsi script, will help to promote a deeper understanding of Persian culture among both Persian-speaking individuals and the wider Canadian community. It assumes that the fusion of these script traditions will result in a visually appealing and functional typeface that resonates with Persian-Canadian users.

**Participation:** If you wish to participate in this interview, please complete and sign the attached consent form. The interview should take approximately 60 minutes. The interview will take place via video conferencing platforms. You have the option to keep your camera turned off during the course of the interview. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. You may withdraw from participating at any time without penalty, until the point of data analysis by contacting the investigator or the supervisor. The data analysis will begin within 2 weeks after your participation date.

**Benefits:** While there may not be any direct benefit to the participants, results from this study may help us learn about typography and culture and may benefit others in the future. However, participants involved in the interview will have the benefit of engaging in insightful discourse and may obtain useful information during the meeting.

**Risks:** There are no risks involved with this study.

**Confidentiality and Anonymity:** The information that you will share will remain confidential and will be used solely for the purposes of this project. The only people who will have access to the research data are the principal investigator and the supervisor. Your answers to open-ended questions may be used verbatim in presentations and publications but neither you (nor your organization) will be identified. Anonymity is

guaranteed if requested by the participant. With the permission of the participant, the only identifying information that might be shared is the name and occupation of the participant.

**Data Storage:** Electronic copies of the transcript as well as the recordings of the meeting will be encrypted and stored on a password-protected computer in the Department of Art & Design at the University of Alberta. The data will be retained and stored for a minimum of 5 years as per university policy and will be deleted after that time.

**Voluntary Participation:** You are under no obligation to participate and if you choose to participate, you may refuse to answer questions that you do not want to answer. Should you choose to withdraw midway through the interview simply state your intention and no responses will be included. The transcript of the meeting will be sent to the participant after it has been transcribed, at which point the participant may indicate if there are any parts they wish to redact.

**Contact Information:** If you have any questions or require more information about the study itself, you may contact the researcher or her supervisor at the emails mentioned below.

Researcher: *Hannah Ghahramani* ([hannaneh@ualberta.ca](mailto:hannaneh@ualberta.ca))

Supervisor: *Susan Colberg* ([scolberg@ualberta.ca](mailto:scolberg@ualberta.ca))

The plan for this thesis project has been reviewed by a Research Ethics Board at the University of Alberta. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant or how the research is being conducted you may contact the University of Alberta Research Ethics Office at [reoffice@ualberta.ca](mailto:reoffice@ualberta.ca) or 780-492-2615 and quote Ethics ID Pro00136022. This office is independent of the study investigators.

#### **Consent/Assent to Participate in the Research Study**

By signing below, you understand:

- That you have read the above information and have had anything that you do not understand explained to you to your satisfaction.
- That you will be taking part in a research study.
- That you may freely leave the research study at any time.
- That you do not waive your legal rights by being in the study
- That the legal and professional obligations of the investigators and involved institutions are not changed by your taking part in this study.
- That you agree to the data being stored as part of a data repository (where applicable)

SIGNATURE OF STUDY PARTICIPANT

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

SIGNATURE OF PERSON OBTAINING CONSENT

\_\_\_\_\_

## 3-2 requirement material

### **Recruitment Materials:**

#### *Expert Interviews*

Subject: Join the Conversation: Invitation to Contribute to a Study on Persian culture-Inspired Latin Typeface Design

Hello,

My name is Hannah Ghahramani and I am a Master of Design student working under the supervision of Sue Colberg in Design Studies, at the Department of Art & Design at the University of Alberta. As part of my Master's Thesis Project, I am conducting a research study on Persian cultural representation in Canada by investigating the intricacies of type design in hopes of designing a Latin typeface that is inspired by Persian culture. Given your expertise in the field of typography and type design, I feel that you are well-suited to provide insight into this topic and I would like to kindly invite you to participate in this study.

Your participation will consist of a one-on-one semi-structured interview that will take approximately 60 minutes of your time. During the interview, you will be asked questions on topics revolving around typography, culture, visual representation, and your type design process. With your permission, I would like to audio-record the interview to ensure accurate transcription and analysis.

This thesis project has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board (UofA Ethics ID Pro00136022).

Please read the attached Information Letter for more details regarding what your participation will involve. If you would like to participate, or you require additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please do not hesitate to contact me at [hannaneh@ualberta.ca](mailto:hannaneh@ualberta.ca). You may also contact my supervisor at [scolberg@ualberta.ca](mailto:scolberg@ualberta.ca).

Sincerely,

Hannah Ghahramani

### 3-3 interview transcript

#### 3-3-1 interview 1: Gerry Leonidas

## **audio1300794481 copy**

(0:03 - 0:39)

Okay, great. We have Gerry here. Thank you for your willingness to participate in this thesis project.

Okay, so I'm going to start with introducing myself. My name is Hannah. I am conducting this interview as part of my MDes thesis research project for the University of Alberta.

And this interview will take about an hour in total, maybe less. We are recording or to create transcripts, and we have already talked about consents and all that. Okay, thank you for joining me, Jerry.

(0:39 - 0:51)

Anything you want to start with? Perfect. It's absolutely fine. I would like to start with you telling me the working title of your thesis project.

(0:52 - 1:22)

Yep, definitely. I can definitely do that. Because I don't think I mentioned that anywhere.

So my full project or title description is Intersecting Traditions, a Latin typeface design inspired by Persian culture. Okay. That triggered me, I have to say.

(1:23 - 3:51)

Why? Let's forget that we are two people from two different traditions. We are both speaking essentially in our second language in both in the places we didn't get born. If we approach any culture that is represented in the visual language of another one, then that carries quite a lot of meaning.

The easiest thing is to see a Chinese restaurant with what's called Kung Fu letters, or Greek restaurant with letters that look like that. And we can see those things. And we can see the intention.

The intention is well meaning to try to find some visual language. And there's all sorts of combinations. I can find Armenian that looks like Cyrillic and so on.

But what happens there is a misappropriation of one culture in an entirely different context. And this can be blatant, as if the sign of a restaurant. But it can also be more subtle when I might take a script and design it with the design approach or the design norms of another script.

So one of the forms, one of the terms that gets discussed a lot is that of Latinization. Designing a non-Latin script, a script from another culture, with the norms, with the procedures, with the ideas about typography and typus design that pertain to the Latin script. That might be things that are very practical in terms of how do I think of strokes, dimensions, how do I think of proportions, what do I think of optical sizes.



And it might also be indirect, because I'm using a tool that's designed for a Western market. Pretty much everything we're using is a left-to-right, sort of phonetic script, orientated environment. And I know that because if you're on Instagram or social media with your native Persian speakers, the interface is messed up.

Half of it is right-to-left, half of it is left-to-right. We can see it all around us, this thing. And the same thing applies to typhus design, that I am bringing terminology, ways of thinking, ways of doing from a Latin script into something else that is a very different tradition.

(3:52 - 6:28)

And then they can be, at a higher level, loaded with meaning, because people make conscious decisions when they design to appropriate certain styles or to imitate certain styles. Now, this is where design becomes more interesting. And it is not just the case of, oh, I'm making some shapes to solve a problem.

I'm saying this consciously because Ed Mountain has a very long tradition of design as problem solving. But there is another layer above that, which is design as a social position, as a cultural commentary, as a cultural position, and so on. And especially as we're moving in this world where people like you and me are now producing design in a third environment or are operating in these very mixed multiscrypt multilingual environments, and we are increasingly functionally multiscryptal.

Even if we are not as confident in English as the two of us are, but you might, you go to Thailand, and you see people being able to read all the headlines in English, and then they read the text in Thai. So then it becomes something that is quite visible. So then if I say, I am going to design XYZ script by bringing with me all the terminology, the ideas of thinking about the script from the Latin script, I'm essentially doing a little bit of visual colonization to the backdoor.

Now, what is interesting is that I'm not driving with a gunboat or an airplane and a rifle and saying you have to do this my way or I'm going to shoot you. What I'm doing is I am making my forms desirable and appear more modern, more exclusive, more upmarket, or representing ideas like middle classness, urban life, progressiveness, modernity, it's a really loaded term. So therefore, somebody in Saudi, or in Tehran, or in Cairo, or in Athens, or in Moscow, or in Sarajevo is designing something saying, oh, my script is like this, but I want it to look like that one, which I associate with modernity.

What's modernity? It's this sort of nondescript, maybe Central European Anglophone, visual language that is associated with sensory or certain patterns and proportions. Oh, I'm going to borrow these because I'm forward looking. In my culture, progressiveness means I am in contact with international life.

(6:28 - 9:01)

I am not bound by traditional, parochial, cultural, religious weights. I am a citizen of the world. What does that mean? Stuff that looks like Central European stuff, even if that has its own.

And then you're saying, yeah, I'm doing a good job. I'm going to do this to look. And suddenly, I don't need to colonize anyone because you've done it on your own.

In a sense, you have, you've drank the Kool-Aid and you're doing it. Now, with the Arabic script, there's a very interesting story there because a lot of the Western, earlier Western interpretation of the Arabic script was quite flattening and simplistic, as if it's one, it's there, an overwhelming association with Gulf Arabic or maybe Eastern Mediterranean Arabic, Levantine Arabic, completely forgetting the use of Arabic in Western Africa, in Western Mediterranean, in Persian, the use of Arabic in India, Pakistan, the use of Arabic in China, in Southeast Asia, you name it, it's there. But often for those forms of the script, there's no representation, who speaks for them in the communities that need that representation.

So then you say, okay, well, the or whatever the Lebanese think. Now, Lebanese people individually are lovely. But if we look at who represents the Arabic script as a whole, especially after the civil war in Lebanon, there's been a mass exodus of people who were already multilingual, because urban Lebanese would have gone to French or English schools, they were educated, they were comfortable in European environments, then they brought their interpretation of the Arabic script in.

If you talk to a Syrian or someone from Bahrain about ideas about the Arabic script, they say, oh, no, not the way the Lebanese do it, we do it differently. Leaving completely aside the Persian world, where even the language is a completely different language branch, it's not even the same language, it just happens to use the same script. And it's like saying, oh, French, and Hungarian, you're using the same script, and they're like night and day.

So it's that kind of distinction. But in those environments, again, you have the people saying, oh, I want it to look like that. So when you send me your first email, I got, oh, no.

(9:04 - 11:17)

Why is she doing this? Because in my mind, I'm thinking, I would feel more comfortable with a reversal of this and saying, how should I make maybe the Latin script a little bit more interesting by infusing it with the richness of form from a Persian style. That's what I'm doing. I think maybe, like, probably the wording was wrong.

But that's what I'm doing. Because especially the video, the YouTube video link that you sent me, so it was interesting. I took a screenshot of the introduction.

So since I'm a Persian, I can read both of them. So the Arabic and also the English part. To me, a person that's bilingual and can understand both of them, they are from completely two different worlds.

So they don't have the same visual culture. They don't represent the same thing. They don't even have the same time frame, essentially.

So what I'm planning on doing is keeping the Persian side or the Arabic side the same, and then creating a Latin type that would go with that. Okay, wait, hold on. Because I said, starting from the Persian and going to the Latin is less bad than starting from the Latin or the Persian.

But if one is bad, if bringing the norms of one script into another, then the other way is also not the best way of doing it. Because we have two completely different cultures, very different. And Persian is quite particular because it's a deep culture.

It's a literate culture. There's deep cultures that are oral and that's a different thing. But Persian is a culture that is written.

It's a culture of the text. So it has very long association of the visible form of the language with the rendered form of the language in terms of poetry, histories and so on, which are not just about the script, they're also about the arrangement of the language into dimensions. The arrangement of Persian poetry are extremely inventive and interesting, and they have no parallel in the West.

(11:20 - 16:44)

Exactly because of the conditions of the script, it's complex that made it more difficult to reproduce with simple mechanical means. The adoption of lithography, which Borna can talk to depth about, you have an amplification of a visual complexity that got ironed out from the Latin script. In many ways, what people think of as modernity in the Latin is essentially simplicity.

It's a lack of depth, it's a lack of complexity, it's a lack of consistency in a visual narrative in two dimensions, which exists in other cultures. Persian has it, Chinese has it, before they adopted too much of the left to right, Japanese has it. So I would say, if a culture has that kind of depth, that is something to be foregrounded and centered and represented.

And it doesn't need to prove itself in relation to the other for it to have value. So to have something that is well balanced, you could have a Latin that works very well for whatever it is that you're designing. And the Persian that works very well for whatever it is that you're designing.

And it's okay if it has completely different norms guiding its formation, its size, and so on, because it's a deep script. It has had centuries of development, it has a lot of complexity in the kinds of texts that has been applied to, and it has ways of dealing with all of that stuff. I wouldn't be making the same comments for some of the scripts that were invented in the 20th century, 19th century, Cherokee in the 19th century, Adlam.

Because there we haven't had a wide range of typographic genres developed. They might have been for textbooks, some reference works, and so on. We don't have the script operating as the main vehicle for a culture to express itself.

So then the idea of advertising in Adlam is something that we're only now beginning to do. And so the same thing in your neighborhood with Canadian syllabics kind of thing. So we're still at the stage where these scripts are enabling communication, but they're not yet at the stage where they have a full typographic complement, you know, maybe in 30 years they will.



Whereas Persian does it. There's plenty of stuff. You just walk in the streets in a city in Iran, and you will see that the visual language of different sizes extremely well developed.

It has nothing to learn from anywhere else. So I'm a little bit careful with these kind of mixes. And I'm saying why do we need to go to the Western models for this? I'll take you to task for another thing with all kindness.

Like you have a comment by Andrew Ballews. Now, Andrew, I know him very well. He's a lovely man.

If you have the opportunity to go out for a drink with him, do it. He's good. One of the good guys.

But he's that comment comes from the project he did with the village in India, where they got the community of women to draw the letters. They drew Latin letters. They didn't draw their own script letters, which I'm thinking, hold on, maybe they could have done both.

Maybe they should have more agency in this. Why are they doing your imported shapes and so on? There's an answer to this. I'm not necessarily correct.

But I'm thinking, is there not someone to speak for the people from that region? Why do we need to have the Western person speaking for the people from India? Now, there's layers to this, because for the people in India, Andrew is a European, but also Andrew is a Catalan. So Catalans have their own story of being colonised by the Spanish. And there's another layer in that narrative there.

So I think we need to be careful with simplifications. But I'm thinking if that relates to something, show me what the Persians think or show me what the Indians think or show me what the Pakistanis think. If there's any source of that, rather than what somebody who visited or somebody who is well-meaning is thinking about that.

So I'm getting a little bit of an alarm bell. Yeah, no, no. So the reason that I chose this is that it really resonated with me because when I was an undergrad, we had typographic-like projects and all that, and people refused to design stuff in Persian language, in the Persian and Farsi, because they said that the Persian script is too difficult to handle.

And I'd rather design something in English, because it's easier. And even all everyone says is when they include, they say include something in English, because it looks more luxurious, it looks more modern, it looks better. That's what the community of new designers, what I've heard from all of my friends.

(16:44 - 22:55)

Yeah, they, unfortunately, you're right. And depending on the region you look, and that ties directly into cultural representation, your section, you will see this kind of obsession with imported. In the broader European world, there are very clear points that have to do with the expansion of the European Union, where countries became part of the West, which is a specific kind of West.

It's not the North American West, it's a European West. The fall of the USSR, which sort of lifted boundaries for, again, very deep cultures. Poland is an environment with extremely deep literate and visual culture, who were immediately rebounding and trying to embrace their modernity, but their modernity was a Central European or Western European modernity, even if now we've been through a couple of cycles of change of this.

And so you can see that kind of tension. In the Gulf, there was this thing about 20 years ago, every Arabic was super Latinized, like monoline, like, like Lego stuff. Native people say, I can't read this thing.

But the signifier visually of something that was not like the calligraphic form, was tied into local ideas of modernity and the tension between secularism and religion. So because the calligraphic form was so connected with the religious representation, or the opposite also is a political statement or a social statement, because then you're saying, oh, if I'm pro Saudi women allowed to drive, yeah, then me using something that is visibly not calligraphic is also political statement because I want to support that. So, so that does happen.

And there is an interesting turnaround in the region where a generation, so your generation that grew up with those forms have been rebelling and saying no, because our culture is deep, has the complex of forms to give us richness typographically without appropriating the Latin idiom, and also looking, exploring the full visual complexity of the Arabic script. So the enforced isolation in Iran, or the, which I think, the lack of ease with which young people can actually travel in sufficient numbers to get other experiences, not the Erasmus scheme in Europe, where people can just go for interrail or something or that kind of stuff where at the time that people are forming ideas about what is modernity, what is new, what is desirable, it's done differently, if you're able to travel to Germany and see that there are homeless people in the streets, and there are people arguing, oh, the neo-Nazis are on the rise kind of thing, thinking maybe not everything is okay. Whereas if you're at a distance, you're isolated, then you have a very cleaned up idea of the culture that is not yours.

And then that boils down to how does this thing look into dimensions, or the typefaces that look like this, or the documents that look like this, or the fashion that looks like this. So I think typefaces lock into this wider discussion of what is an identity in a community, the tension between majoritarian and minority communities within each environment, because again, I mean, you're from Iran, and you know this way better than me. There is no Iran, it's this massive country that goes from the Caspian to the Red Sea.

Nobody says I'm from Iran, I say I'm from Tehran, or I'm from the world, because they have a completely different identity, the geography is different, the environment is different. And I've been present, people are saying, oh, he would say that he's from the south kind of thing. Even language is different.

They speak other dialects. Exactly. So again, a Western idea that is based on maps that have clean borders, and then within the border, the country is the same colour, tends to flatten the richness of the colour.

You might be able to do this in a small island country that's half a million people, you can't do it in something that has 10s or 100s of million people in this massive space that spans

time zones and so many degrees of latitude. So I think that kind of recognition of the depth and complexity needs to come through the design. And maybe ways of exploring the existing complexity within each script are still to be explored more rather than the relation with the Latin.

In a sense, and I betray my views probably on this, that all the non-Anglophone cultures, that covers everything, not just the small, not just Slovenian, but even German, even French, big countries with established cultural industries, you are always on the defensive against the onslaught of an Anglophone cultural machine. It just produces so much. And it's so connected with you is that you are always on the defensive.

So if you're French or German, even more so if you're Portuguese, or if you're Egyptian, or if you're Lebanese, you need to work harder to make sure that what you think is worthwhile in your visual culture, in your little culture, needs to survive. Because if you don't make a point of it, then it just gets washed away. And in a way, we are lucky as people in the middle, because Chinese is a very difficult language to learn.

(22:55 - 29:59)

And the Chinese haven't figured out how to be a cultural superpower yet. But if they figure that one out, then we have this huge cultural machine on either side. And then everybody in the middle is saying, okay, can I get some air, please, because I'm now drowned out by film production, by news production, by media, and so on.

And then you're left saying, oh, yeah, yeah. But Abbas Karastami is a good filmmaker. Yeah, okay.

Whatever. This is one guy. And this is machines producing stuff all around.

So I think I'm a little on one hand, I applaud and encourage very much the line of inquiry you're taking. But then I'm thinking, Persian doesn't need the Latin to be celebrated and be explored and be rich. And the people who say, oh, I want some me some Latin, some English stuff in my exam, because Persian is too difficult.

Well, it's difficult, because it has this kind of depth and complexity. And that's a source of pride. And maybe find out why the Latin is so easy.

Because a certain modularity which is connected to ideas about technology or ideas about production, or different notions of what engineering progress means in a different society. And that is why things are the way they are. And then you can understand why, in a Persian environment, the complex of the language is something to be celebrated rather than flattened or abandoned.

So I'm quite polemical about this. Yeah, one thing that I was, I actually talked about with others, and I haven't gotten a straight answer yet, maybe you can give me that is that I was trying to figure out if I lean towards like a mother tongue. Like I was thinking about if I see a poster or something that has English and Persian at the same value on it, which one do I read first? And I couldn't get myself to a solid answer.

Feels like my eyes jump all over. Yeah. You are much closer to the people of our future.

If we don't sink the planet, if we don't burn the planet, then we all run for the hilltops. People like you who are comfortable in multiple languages, in multiple social environments and cultural environments, you will be the norm. Because people gradually become less insecure about placing themselves outside their comfortable culture.

And that makes you richer. And it's not just me saying this, actually, there's quite a lot of research now that people who are functioning bilingual, they have different and more dense connections in their brain, because you're drawing on two different systems of two system networks in your brain to use both languages. And you might say, oh, but my syntax gets confused.

All right, which one do I read first? It's not which one do I read first, it's I can read both. And then you can land in a North American environment and understand how the codes work and how the relation work and then go back to Central Asia and say, oh, I know what's going on here as well. And that's a superpower.

And 20 years ago, 30 years ago, there was a small number of people who'd be doing this. And now we see more and more. So you're, you're five, but we say by scriptural design, that is already becoming the norm.

We are turning to different degrees and at different speeds into people who are functional, not necessarily comfortable, your English is very good. But you can easily imagine someone who their English is 50% of yours, but they can read enough to navigate, they can read enough to do their job. Maybe the job doesn't require writing a lot, or they do it with the assistance of AI now.

And they will be able to navigate multiple cultural environments. And that's a superpower. Again, the typography adapts in the sense that it needs to have the ability to render things either in an equivalent position, or with a hierarchy that we choose.

If it is a mostly Persian text with some English embedded, or the new I don't know, the new Mission Impossible is out, and maybe say something in Persian and Mission Impossible is in English, or you have a parallel text that's different. And that's where you need the range in typography. And interestingly, you will need the stylistic range, the exploration of weight, the exploration of formality, the exploration of optical size, I might use some things that is very high contrast and really impactful for large sizes, but then some that is quite modest in its contrast and narrow in its extenders, or small sizes and so on.

So I think that innovation is beginning to happen by a younger generation of designers. And it's exactly because we're going to have this assumption that most texts will be multilingual. We're just at the beginning of this.

But we see it as people move to cities, they become more urban and middle class in their jobs, they consume content that is not geographically limited anymore, that is naturally multilingual, it might not be necessarily Latin, it could be something else. But that increases



much more. And I think a lot of technological innovations that have to do with automatic transcription, translation, and so on, will start feeding into this very quickly.

In the same way that, you know, Zoom and Teams and so on, we could be having this conversation, and we could have an automatic transcription already on the side. At the moment, it works in English, it doesn't work well enough in a lot of other languages, but that's just around the corner. And that's what it should be.

So I think the direction that the questions you're having are absolutely correct, the direction you're going, and help you ask these questions. I would say don't be so shy about centering the Persian side of things. If anything, North American cultures have a lot to learn from European and Asian cultures, which are deeper in cultural histories.

I need to be careful when I say this, but North America, primarily the Americas, in the South to a lesser degree, they are an aberration. It's a culture built on a clean sheet that rests on genocide.

You go in, first of all it's built by people who escaped persecution, they themselves were escaping and they needed to cut their ties with other European communities and they built a new society on genocide. So clearing out the land from the natives and then with certain ideas of building a new kind of state. So the United States, this fascinating enlightenment project of imagining a new state from scratch, that's the only time when this happened.

(4:35 - 6:49)

Everywhere else in the world, wherever you have the idea of nation building, it happens on top of thousands of years of history and culture and maybe the borders change but people have been living there for thousands of years so you never have this idea of a clean slate. If I try to say where do people who speak Persian live over time, it's like all of Asia and half of Europe. So I cannot have this kind of clean ideas of making something but what we do, we live in a culture where this shallow culture fills that void with an excess of popular culture and current fairly commercialized ideas.

There isn't enough depth for an appreciation of cultural depth, of history, of the poetry, of the depth of myth, of story, of narrative that exists in abundance in Asia and in older Europe and we tend to forget this. I think why is it important to do the best for say Persian or Arabic or Greek or Russian because these cultures are deep and they go back centuries and we need tools to uncover these things and enable them to flower in a competitive environment where they are already on the back foot. So that's my worry for all of this.

It makes sense. This project was kind of like a selfish attempt of bringing my mind on the paper just because I cannot for the life of me figure out where do I belong kind of. Because I've seen that other path, I've seen Persians limiting themselves and going the westernized route, designing like a Persian typeface that would fit in into the modern world of the West and the English world but I haven't seen this other path.

I don't know if it's the right path, if it's maybe the same thing as a chop suey font, it could go horribly wrong. I'm just trying to figure out if there's a path. There is.

I'm seeing that this is less than a minute. Do we get off and on again? We can do that. Yeah.

(6:49 - 6:51)

Yeah. Okay. Because I don't want to be cut in the middle of the sentence.

(6:52 - 10:45)

Definitely. There we are. Okay.

We're back. Good, good, good. You have the wonderful fortune of asking yourself this question and your life will be one of never finding a satisfactory answer.

This is, it's a blessing because you look around you and you pay attention, you observe and you're asking where I belong and maybe the answer you keep finding is I don't really belong exactly anywhere but the process of asking the question will make you see your own culture from where you grew up with different eyes and your host cultures with different eyes and your sight will be more clear because of this and that is something that will actually help you also see better all the other environments that you're in and maybe empathize better with the people that you come across who don't have the benefit of that that wider view. You will never have the comfort of a completely settled viewpoint and for some people that is horrible and for other people it's the best thing ever because the exact purview to ask these questions and ask and in that little way that's why typeface design is interesting because in itself who gives a shit it's just little black bits on the screen but it lets you ask these questions about what are these texts, what are we writing with this thing, what are we publishing, who's communicating, what are we saying, what enables us to do this or not and what's my role in this and then that asks you then the questions about the culture that you're part of or you belong or the one that you want to create. If it's one that you say oh I want to give it the formal range to have expression to have depth in culture to be forward growth in a way in terms of new technologies and ways of working it means that you have faith in the culture being able to reinvent itself for new challenges and for the younger generations in it to respond to that.

If you give up and say actually English is fine I don't I can actually text in farglish or something then essentially you're saying that my culture is not worth surviving and nothing dies very abruptly things die usually very very little until it's too late for us to realize. I think these small things think about the letter forms think about documents think about what it means or something to be Persian distinguished as Persian text as Persian document what's worth reinventing innovating on and bringing it forward into this global dialogue where people will approach it always as a second language as a third language that actually gives you a sense of clarity in this multifaceted identity that you that you built for yourself that will be almost like a magpie picking things from different places. Yeah anyway I don't know if this is at all connected to it.

It's definitely what I was hoping for it's pretty close. This is me looking at things from the outside people like Borná who have a very intimate relationship with the script can talk of the specific challenges I think you're doing the right you're the right thing you're asking questions that's all you need whatever form these things take they're clearly the beginning of something so you're on a good path here you've done the right thing in putting yourself

out of your comfort zone. Thank you so much I think we covered almost everything yeah in a good amount.

(10:46 - 11:13)

My pleasure anything that comes to mind just send me a note I'll be very happy to thank you so much look more good luck with your project when are you submitting? Thank you hopefully I should be done by the end of summer. Okay okay yeah good excellent excellent good luck with that and good luck with your next steps. Yeah thank you so much for all your help and all your wonderful words.

(11:14 - 11:18)

My pleasure have a good rest of your day. Thank you so much bye. Goodbye.

### 3-3-2 interview 2: Nada Abdallah

#### audio1316550039

(0:00 - 0:06)

Let's start. Okay, it's recording, I believe. Okay, good.

(0:07 - 2:13)

Okay, so I have a few questions about like culture, cultural representation and all that, and you're free, feel free to not answer anything or just go ahead with whatever you want to say. So based on your experience in general, do you think the design of typefaces could be used to represent an aspect or multiple aspects of a specific culture? Do you even think that could happen? I think that not could happen, that should happen, because what is needed is we do have, if we're talking Latin, Arabic, Latin, Persian, Latin, Chinese, Latin, Japanese, Latin, whatever, any script, you name it, already we do have tons and tons and like so many Latin fonts out there. But what is really needed is we need to think about how can we create something that looks and feels like unique, that feels it represents a certain culture.

So it's like you're putting, you're having, I would have it like, for example, it's a pizza. Imagine the font as if it's a pizza, which is originally Italian. And then when it goes to Lebanon, the Lebanese would do it in their own different way.

And like your mother would do it in her own different way. And let's say in America, they would do it in American style, but it's still a pizza. So I think that thinking about type design to make it close, and to make it to make it look and feel like the similar to your culture, especially if you are designing bilingual fonts, or multilingual fonts, you want to create this kind of harmony between the elements.

(2:14 - 4:05)

If you want to create a harmony, I mean, if you don't want to create a contrast, like opposites attract, but if you want to create something, don't make the Persian or the Arabic look Latin, do it the other way around. Make the Latin look more Persian or Arabic or whatever culture it should. So it would, we need it.

And also it creates more, it's like a connection, you're creating some sort of a connection, putting some of your culture into the forms. And why not? I think the hybrid or the outcome would be of a very good, I mean, results, we would have really surprising results. Even for one reference, if two designers, they would do it differently.

So I think that's a secret. I also do engage my students in TYPO3 to create bilingual fonts inspired by historical or like by some sort of lettering styles from more than like, let's say 100 years ago till now, or fonts like for example, letterings from the 50s, 60s, 70s, let's say, they would take that even if it's a sentence or a word, they have to create a full character set in Latin and in Arabic. The inspiration should be Arabic.

Because here I teach in Sharjah and 90% of my students are Arabs. The rest are from different nationalities. Yes.



(4:08 - 6:21)

Perfect. Regarding the subject of typographic mimicry, these TYPO3 fonts and all that, do you see any typographical value in these explorations? Sorry, I need to increase the volume. Sure, sure.

Yes. So regarding the typographic mimicry, these TYPO3 fonts, like these Chinese looking fonts, and all these kind of inspired looking typographical explorations, do you see any value in them? Do you believe that these are typographical explorations? Or do you feel like they are not accurate representations? You're talking in general about like the more experimental stuff that is out there. I think everything should have been done for a reason, or there is a reason to why they are, they have been created.

So maybe if they are created for a project or client or some sort of a communication piece. So I do think that if they do serve the, I mean, why they have been created, why not? We don't have to, like a font or like, let's say, the letter forms, they don't have to be like of necessarily of multifunction, or they have to do more than, for example, a task, maybe it is created for an identity for, let's say, a company, or it is created for some special project or, so it depends if it is done for such a reason, to communicate a certain message or something for a project. It is a voice of what it represents, why not? We don't have to judge it as of is it good or bad? It could, it depends, the answer would, it depends for why is it created? What should it serve? Does it serve the purpose to why is it created? That could be maybe the answer.

(6:22 - 14:28)

Perfect. And you were mentioning that you work with students, that their primary language is Arabic. So how much familiarity with a language do you think is necessary in order to be able to design with it? For example, if your students are like native Arabic speakers, if they want to design in English, how much familiarity do they need? It is the challenging part.

I do have students who are like Iranian, Indian, Pakistani, Indonesian, like with different, also Arabs. They are not very familiar, some of them are not very familiar with the letter forms. But what happens in the classroom environment, in the studio, the way the classroom is structured is that students sit in like in groups.

So the way they are, it's not more interactivity kind of things. And they support each other so much, like the students, they have this friendly environment. So if, for example, like now we're talking in general about the classroom and I'll get specific about the reading part, which could be a little bit tricky.

So let's say let's say they want to design, let's say, for example, a poster or a word or like a font or something, they would ask their friends sitting next to them, OK, what is this, what's that, etc. I do explain in class, but there is a part that they have to do also on their own. So the way the students work is that they work in groups.

So when they work in groups, the environment is very super friendly that they all help each other, not by doing the work, but by understanding, especially if they don't read the language. Because in the university where I teach is the University of Sharjah, the College of Fine Arts and Design. We have three typography courses.

I'm not talking to you about the other courses, but I'm talking to you about the typography courses. So we have typo one is the Latin, typo two is the Arabic, and typo three is bilingual, Arabic and Latin. For the first typo one, you're familiar with it.

They do take the Latin, all the classifications, the anatomy, etc., etc., and the Latin related. For the two, they start with the, I do start with them with the Kufic script, with the square one, so that they understand the grid and simple, like Lego style, pixel style, how to work with the balance, the positive, negative. And then I go with them into designing a poster magazine using, inspired by a classical Arabic script, like Naskh, Rika, Thuluth, Diwani, Nastaliq, Kufic, with its different variations, etc.

So they pick one calligraphic style, and they have to create communication posters, and then take the same theme and apply it into magazine layout experimental work. So here, in this class, and specifically, the students, some of them, they are not familiar. That's when they start asking their friends, like, how can I write this, and they write it for them, or they use sometimes, they ask me, or sometimes they even look it up themselves on the web.

Like now, there are so many different ways you can, you can, let's say, write and write in, for example, and then you can get the translation, and you see how it looks. So this is talking about like the readability part, how the letter forms are created. Type three is the bilingual.

But let's, let's look at it from a different angle. What I do believe is the Arabic letters are, even if you don't speak the language, if you look at it, of course, it's, it's, it's a little bit more. It's a complex challenge.

Of course, it's not easy, because for that you have the, we're talking Arabic script, which the general umbrella, you have the initial letter form, the medial, the final and the isolated, and sometimes you have the ligatures and so many different things to think about. And you have also the diacritic dots. And sometimes even for the, for the tashkeel, it can change the meaning of a word where the fatha, dhamma, sukoon, etc.

are placed, and it can make opposite meaning sometimes. So we're talking now, graphic design. So if the student who does not speak Arabic, but look at the letter forms as forms, as shapes, as graphical elements, I think we can have interesting results, because you're more now focusing on the silhouette of the form, you're focusing more on it being a graphical element rather than, oh, I may be more attached, or like, let's say I do have a feeling for this letter and not that letter and, and, but knowing the culture makes you aware of the semiotic, which is like the language of the signs.

So if you are, how, where are you making thick and thin and the meaning if you make it thick, or you made it thin, or it's a contrast between the thick and the thin, the height, etc. So with with the also like, I do feel that it is an advantage to know and not to know. But I do think that when you are working in like, let's say university or even a work environment where you are working with other people.

It's it's really good, because it's collaborative work, no one can do the work by themselves. So I do feel like the feedback you get, the input that you put the feedback that you get, it's

all to the advantage of the work. So students, to answer the question, like in simplified way, students or designers who are working on letter forms, or the designing fonts or typefaces that are not of their own culture, I do think that it is possible.

But they there has be someone assisting them to, for example, to know the differences to educate them to what is this, what's that? Could this be done like this? Could this be done like that? But I do feel that the experimentation is more daring than when you know the when it's your own thing. Yeah, I agree. Speaking of like influence on culture, do you believe that your culture influences your designs? Or do you feel like you could separate it? Your culture does influence your design if you're designing if you love your culture.

And if you feel that you can get something out of your culture, like imagine your culture is like a treasure. But not everyone looks at it like this. There are some people who are like rebellions.

(14:29 - 19:24)

They, they want to rebel, they want to not look like their culture, like they want to especially like the teenagers, I have two boys like 16 and 14. And I was talking to my elder son, his name is Jude. I told him mom, it's very like the Arabic culture and calligraphy and the Islamic art and all these things are really beautiful.

He told me mom, yeah, but I don't like like the traditional things like because they are American educated, they are in American schools, everything is so super Western. And this is something that I have been facing in my 20, in my 23 years of teaching in the universities, like at the university level. So in these years, I did what Jude has told me, my students have been telling me, they all want to, for example, have their inspiration, they used to from Western culture, because what they study in history of art history of graphic design, what they study or what they see around them in the cinema and schools in the blah, blah, it's all super Western.

And also the system of their education is the Western system. And there is one talk, I can share it with you later I did about this topic. But bottom line, because they are not familiar with their own culture, they fear it, they feel that no, we want to do something that we're more familiar with something that looks more cool.

But what I did intensively over the years is I created because I was in Lebanon, before I came back here, I was in Lebanon, I created something called Bil Arabi, I can share it with you later afterwards. Bil Arabi is a design festival that everything Arabic related from calligraphy to patterns to illustrations, to ideas, to concepts, etc. And I wanted to teach my students to appreciate, but before appreciating, they need to learn it.

So learn, learn what you have learned things related to your culture. And then when you learn it, when you're when you're strong in it, when you understand the rules, then you can break those rules in whichever way that you want, but in modern ways, and contemporary ways in whatever ways you want, because you know it and then surprisingly, my students became better in Arabic than Latin, like now, I started seeing that my students, like when they're working with Arabic type and letter forms, they way stronger than when they're

doing the Latin ones, like, which should be the opposite way around the Latin is way easier. So the thing is, they're the designer should be inspired by their own cultures.

Because if, if, if that's reflects them, if it reflects, I mean, if they believe in it, if they love it, but if they hate it, they're gonna hate it. And also every project is different. If you're designing for something super local, like, for example, there is a company in, let's say, Beirut, they want to, they want to let let's say, they wanted to commission a designer to design some identity for them, including the font, etc.

It should look like what I mean the project like what is it exactly? Is it, for example, antique shop with lots of arabesques and those little fine details. So then the designer cannot, it's not like one size fits all he has to or she has to tailor make the word since we're talking about fonts, tailor make the font to be the voice of what it should be. So if not, then we're doing like this one size fits all like, like this photocopier scanner printer kind of thing.

But then it neither photocopies properly, it neither nor does it print properly nor does it scan properly. So because it's like a multifunction, then no better get something for the different ones. I know exactly I had the same problem in university.

All of my classmates didn't want to design with the Persian typeface. They all said that English is easier. Let's do it in English.

I don't want to do that. It's cooler. It's easier.

(19:24 - 22:30)

It looks better. It's modern and all that. Yeah.

And on the subject of by scriptural design and doing a life with multiple scripts, bilingual design, how would you in a design ensure that both scripts are, have equal value or have equal visual value? And should they even have equal visual value? If you try to think about the value is like you are evaluating it. So if you are evaluating it, I think you could evaluate it forever or you could keep looking at it forever. If you have seen the let me check.

Can you see my screen? Yes, I can. Okay. Okay.

So with, if you're looking at, let's say like the Bloom's taxonomy, which is like the learning taxonomy here, it is, there are different charts that shows the, the evaluation, because you're talking about the evaluation. The evaluation is usually in some other charts placed on top of the create, but I think this is not like this is not a very like, okay, take it like this or not. I mean, I do feel that it is flexible.

So by knowing what you are doing by understanding the basic qualities here, it's written, remember, but this is like the knowledge part. So at the bottom of the learning taxonomy pyramid, the learning pyramid, you have the knowledge. So number one, if you know what you are doing, if you know that, for example, what you want out of the project, if you know that this is, for example, the stem, this is the bowel, this is the tooth.



This is the, for example, a center line, et cetera. If you know all this, then you are dissecting well. So to do something, you need to do it in scientific way.

Even if it is, for example, artistic work, you need to do it in like, you need to have a methodology in order for you to feel that you are satisfied out of what you are doing. You need to do it based on steps. So if you know what you are doing and you understand what you're doing, you're trying to grasp and to be able to classify the different parts and describe exactly what you're doing.

And then you start sketching and applying that and trying to integrate the different elements together back and forth. So if you try to do the study, you know what you are doing. You understand it really well.

(22:30 - 25:04)

You are sketching. And after sketching, you are also analyzing what you are sketching. You're trying to go back and forth.

You print it. You sketch it. You layer it.

You try to see if it makes sense. And it's not something like a cook and then you eat it and this is it. It could be a cook that you can eat it and this is it.

But for fonts and type design, I do think that it is something that can be finished and couldn't be finished. I mean, you can keep working on it and developing it and, and, and. So when you are applying, it's like you are sketching and then you are analyzing.

Sketching digital or manual doesn't matter. Sketching. And then you are creating something and then you are evaluating it.

Even after you evaluate, you can say, I want to fix. Let me analyze more. Let me try to apply more.

Let me try to. So this thing, the pyramid that is here done in front of you, I do feel that yes, this is, these are the steps. But for me, I do feel that there is a lot of back and forth in the steps of designing anything that you are designing.

I mean, this is not a holy pyramid. For me, I think this is more flexible, but these are the main steps. So to answer the question again, I do feel that assessing or evaluating or seeing the harmony or, or, or this is, this could, could, depends also on the experience of the designer who is designing and where, like, let's say the more they've been doing it, the more they, the faster they can do it, or the more they have the eye to, to evaluate or to pick on what needs to be picked or to be fixed.

So what could, what could be done is you can, you can always improve or try to put your input into something, but then you could, you could be the type who says, it's done. I need to stop here, like a painting, not even one dot, like it's like that. So the designer designing is the one who chooses when does the project stop.

(25:05 - 25:23)

And this design is subjective. I mean, what could be, for example, more complete to someone could be something like work in progress to the other one. We don't have to all agree on the, on the same things in life.

(25:24 - 29:58)

Yeah, I agree. Great answer. Final question.

Where do you see the path of bi-scriptural design and the future of typography? I do feel that we're going to have more of this coming soon. I mean, there are shy attempts till now. If we are comparing the quantity of the Latin fonts out there, and then you think how many people do speak, like, let's say the Arabic or the Persian or the other languages, like, of course they are, they are a lot, but if you do compare the percentage of the fonts or like even the fonts that are created with the Arabic or the Persian, like we can name them like by the fingers.

So the designers who are doing, but I do feel that it is starting. There is a trend of this coming in the, to the playground. I was in the, at IPA conference in Brisbane last April.

And my, the topic of my presentation, I don't know if the video is on YouTube, but the topic of my presentation was the creating bilingual, creating bilingual type design inspired by the Arabic, which I told you my students work on. So what I did, I showed the case study of step-by-step. And then I was talking about the importance of cultural representation, the importance of making the Latin Arabic, not the Arabic make it look more Latin.

So it's like you are Arabizing the Latin rather than Latinizing the Arabic. I'm talking Arabic. If you could say the same thing for the other languages, not just the Arabic.

So bring the Latin, make it look more into, to fit into your own cultural, like a cultural environment rather than the other way around. So I do feel that why I mentioned the conference, because some friends from Adobe, they were, they were telling me that they do need this, like and they were talking about collaboration between my university and the students work that they did. And with, it is needed.

It is very much needed. Imagine like now open with the Adobe, for example, library, you don't have fonts. Okay.

We do have like the IBM Plex, that's the bilingual, but still, I mean, what else do we have as a, for example, nothing. So, and there, there are designers working on this, but this kind of work, we need to start having more of this kind of work done. Not just thinking of two languages and even sometimes more languages.

And this is not one person's work. This is teamwork. So I do feel that unfortunately we don't have this kind of industries here.

And I'm talking here in the Middle East, like in this part of the world where I am, more of the corporate identity design agency, but we don't have like type foundries. All the type designers, they're doing it on their own. They have their own type foundry.

So it's solo work, not like you have the monotype and you have the big corporations that they do type design. So I do feel that maybe it's time to start having collaborations between designers who can work together or maybe start new companies together, or even work online with some people, meeting up, especially after COVID, like doing a lot of meetings and work online became more doable and because we had to, but now it is more of a trend. So why not? One hand does not clap.

(29:58 - 29:59)

You don't have to do them both. If someone is more familiar with the Latin, let them do that. And you're working and then back and forth. And you can imagine like when you sketch, you can say, I do feel that this could be the way. Maybe they say, yeah, but why not like try to merge them or try to make them more equal. You can play also with the idea of the percentages.

(2:45 - 2:59)

Like you can say, I wanted 70% to be more Persian and let's say 30% Latin. Or you can say, no, no, 50, 50, or like you can play. This is all designers tools.

(2:59 - 3:23)

So, you can say how much you want the blend between the two or you want one to influence the other, like parents, like the father, mother. Sometimes you feel like the children are, you can tell, are they looking more like the father or are they looking more like the mother or is it more like father, mother? So, or neither nor they got it from him or her from the hospital. But yeah.

(3:27 - 3:37)

Perfect. Thank you so much for taking the time and helping me with these. Your answers were perfect and it was very nice meeting you.

(3:38 - 3:41)

Thank you. I'm so sorry for keeping you waiting forever. No worries.

(3:42 - 3:48)

I completely understand. I was going through the same thing. It's sometimes, it's never the right time.

(3:48 - 4:00)

If we met in Lebanon, the internet connection would be like, you would hear me like. I know, it's crazy. I know when I'm talking with my parents in Iran, it's insane.

(4:01 - 4:15)

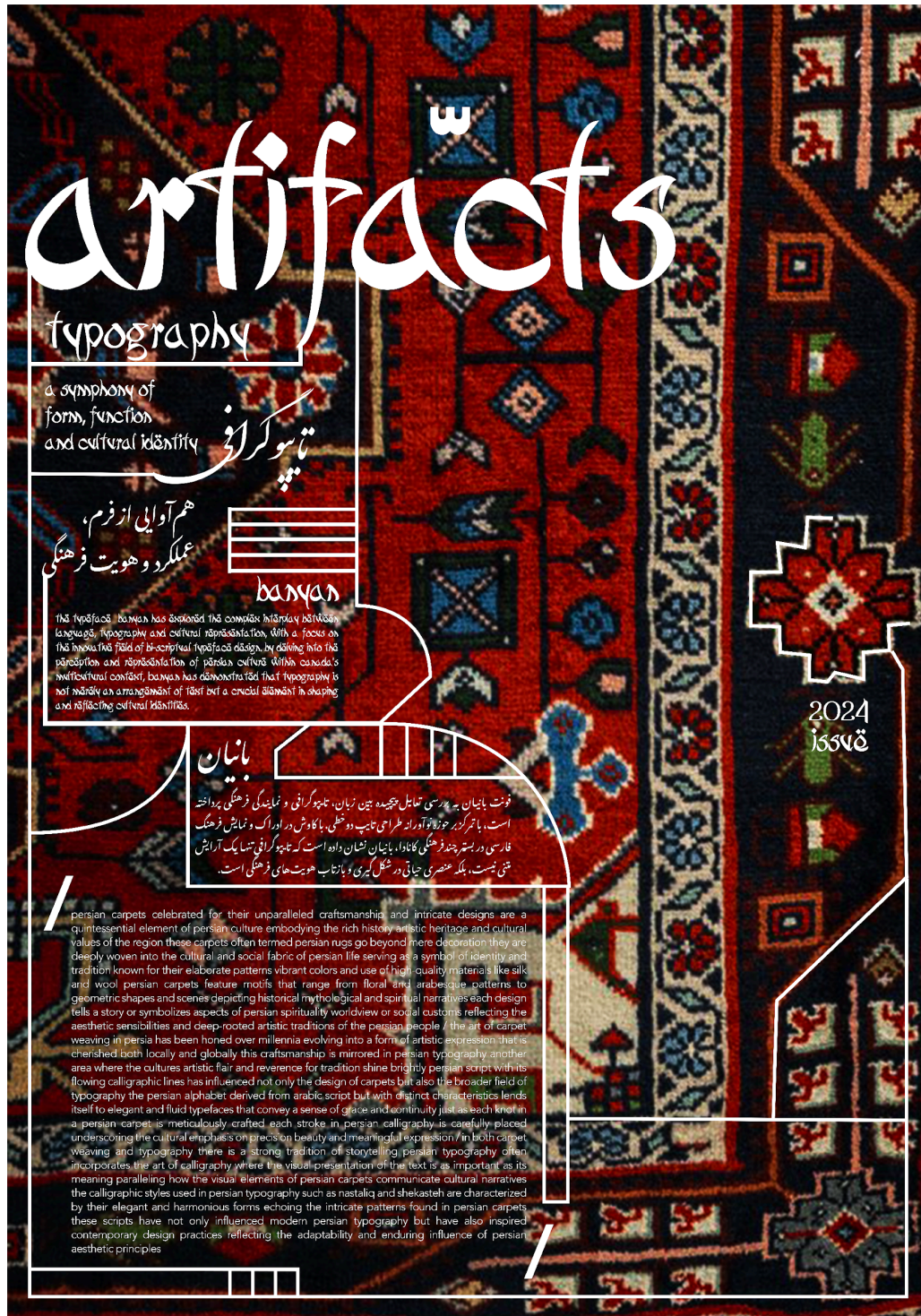
Yeah, it's like, ooh. A long time ago, just like last thing, a long time ago when we used to talk international, like our parents used to scream on the phone as if like they're not hearing. So, it's like, ah, where are you? And it's like, no, no need.

(4:16 - 4:26)

Like you can, you don't have to scream. I know, but it's going back again to that because of all the problems with the internet. So anyways, if you need anything, let me know.



## 10.4 Poster design







# architecture

2024  
۱۳۹۵

typography

تایپوگرافی

a symphony of  
form, function  
and cultural identity

Persian architecture renowned for its intricate designs and grand scale plays a central role in Persian culture reflecting the rich history artistic achievements and cultural values of the region characterized by features such as majestic domes intricate tilework and elegant courtyards Persian architecture showcases a blend of aesthetic beauty and functional design the use of geometric patterns vibrant colors and elaborate motifs in architecture often mirrors the visual complexity and symbolism found in Persian carpets each architectural element tells a story or symbolizes aspects of Persian spirituality and societal values from the grandeur of ancient palaces to the serenity of traditional mosques these structures embody the cultural heritage and artistic sensibilities of Persia / this architectural artistry is complemented by Persian typography another significant aspect of Persian culture where traditional calligraphic styles and modern typefaces reflect the same attention to detail and cultural richness Persian typography with its flowing and ornate scripts such as nastaliq and shekasteh draws inspiration from the curves and lines of traditional architectural elements the elegant forms and fluid strokes of these typefaces echo the intricate tilework and decorative patterns found in Persian buildings both architecture and typography serve as mediums through which cultural stories and values are expressed each stroke in Persian calligraphy parallels the meticulous design of an architectural façade underscoring a shared emphasis on beauty precision and expressive form

هم‌آوایی از فرم،  
عملکرد و هویت فرهنگی

banan

The Persian word *banan* has absorbed the connotation of a curved form, typography and cultural representation, which is rooted in the historical role of decorative typography design by adding into the representation and representation of Persian culture within a modern multicultural context, *banan* has demonstrated that typography is not merely an ornamental element but a crucial element in shaping and reflecting cultural identities.

بانان

است. بانان به بررسی تعامل پیچیده بین زبان، تایپوگرافی و نمادگرایی فرهنگی پرداخته است. با تمرکز بر حوزه نوآرماندگی طراحی تایپ دوگانه، با کاوش در ادراک و نمایش فرهنگ فارسی در زمینه چیدمان و کاربرد، بانان نشان داده است که تایپوگرافی تنها یک آرایش بصری نیست، بلکه عنصری حیاتی در شکل‌گیری و بازتاب هویت‌های فرهنگی است.



# calligraphy

## typography

2024  
issue

a symphony of  
form, function  
and cultural identity

تایپوگرافی  
هم‌آوایی از فرم،  
عملکرد و هویت فرهنگی

### bayan

Persian calligraphy is a revered art form that lies at the heart of Persian culture, celebrated for its elegance and expressive beauty. This craft is more than just the art of writing; it is a deep reflection of Persian aesthetics, spirituality, and intellectual tradition, characterized by its fluid curves, intricate patterns, and harmonious proportions. Persian calligraphy transforms simple text into visual poetry. Styles such as Nasta'liq, Shekasteh, and Kufic are iconic in their presentation, each bringing its own character and rhythm to the written word. Nasta'liq, known for its grace and fluidity, is often referred to as the 'bride' of Persian calligraphy, while Shekasteh is more freeform and expressive, conveying a sense of motion and spontaneity. These styles not only adorn the pages of manuscripts and religious texts but also embellish the walls of architectural masterpieces, from mosques to palaces, turning words into art that can be both seen and felt. The evolution of Persian typography is deeply intertwined with the art of calligraphy, drawing from these traditional scripts to create typefaces that honor the rich heritage of Persian writing while also meeting the needs of contemporary design. As Persian culture has evolved, so too has its typography, blending classical calligraphic influences with modern design principles to produce typefaces that are both functional and aesthetically pleasing. These typefaces continue to reflect the cultural values of precision, beauty, and expressiveness seen in traditional calligraphy. Whether in print or digital media, Persian typography retains the visual rhythm and elegance of its calligraphic roots, making the written word a powerful medium for both communication and artistic expression.

The typofacets bayan has explored the complex interplay between language, typography and cultural adaptation. With a focus on the fusion of the field of architectural typofacets design by adding into the perception and representation of Persian culture within modern's multicultural context, bayan has demonstrated that typography is not merely an arrangement of text, but a crucial element in shaping and reflecting cultural identities.

نوبت به بیان با بررسی تطبیق پیچیده بین زبان، تایپوگرافی و غایتی فرهنگی پرداخته است. با تمرکز بر حوزه نوآوری طراحی تایپ دو خطی، با کاوش در ادراک و نمایش فرهنگ فارسی در زمینه بینارشته‌ای گوناگون، بیان نشان داد است که تایپوگرافی تنها یک آرایش متن نیست، بلکه عنصری حیاتی در شکل‌گیری و بازتاب هویت‌های فرهنگی است.

بیان



persian poetry and literature renowned for their lyrical beauty profound themes and philosophical depth hold a cherished place in persian culture reflecting the rich historical intellectual heritage and emotional depth of the iranian people. the region spanning centuries these poems are not merely words; they are a window into the soul of a civilization. from the epic poems and mystical writings to lyrical poetry and philosophical treatises persian poets such as rumi hafez and ferdows have left an indelible mark on world literature their verses exploring themes of love spirituality and the human condition these poetic expressions are more than mere words they embody the cultural soul of persia resonating with the values beliefs and aspirations of its people / this literary tradition finds a visual counterpart in persian calligraphy where the art of writing becomes an extension of the poetic and literary expression persian calligraphy with its elegant flowing lines and rhythmic strokes mirrors the lyrical quality of persian poetry the scripts used in persian typography are not only tools for communication but also serve as a form of visual poetry the fluidity of these scripts echoes the musicality of persian verse each curve and stroke crafted to convey not just the meaning of the words but their emotional and aesthetic resonance as well

The typeface has been designed to compete in the modernist arena of layout, typography and general representation with a focus on the known field of functional typeface design by defining into the presentation and representation of printed culture, design, culture, and culture. In this context, as has been demonstrated, the typeface is not merely an arrangement of text but a crucial element in shaping and reflecting cultural realities.

## 10.5 Project infographic design





## 10.6 Gallery Presentation



