

Reading Type & Typography  
Master of Arts in Visual Arts  
Graphic Design  
2016 – 2017  
University College  
PXL-MAD (Media, Arts & Design)  
READSEARCH  
Hasselt  
(BE)

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## MISSION STATEMENT

01

Dear Prospective Students,

We are delighted that you are interested in studying at Hasselt PXL-MAD. The Master of Arts in Visual Arts of the Graphic Design Department at PXL-MAD (Media, Arts & Design) welcomes applications for the English typographic Master programme 'Reading Type & Typography' (one year - 60 ECTS) of our Faculty for the academic year 2016 - 2017.

The course revolves around experimentation and research, in which thoughts and actions are in constant interplay with each other. We see ourselves as a vibrant and dynamic space, in which we offer the perfect environment for international stu-



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dents to continue their academic career, and for emerging typographers/designers to develop professionally. Programmes are being organised so as to facilitate encounters between Flemish

students and English-speaking students in informal contexts, in courses, seminars and in studio projects.

PXL-MAD offers academic master programmes and academic research with

a critical look at the future. Our academic master programme will help you acquire a critical understand-

ing of the creation and perception of contemporary typographic design. PXL-MAD is constantly inspiring its students, professors and researchers to strive for innovation by means of experimenting in an academic and international context. Our student-centred approach to teaching helps students become professional artists and designers who are confident and self-motivated. In this way, we are facilitating the independent learning of researching artists and designers who innovate in an imaginative way and who help to design and rethink an ever changing environment.

The increase of interest in type design and/or typography - which happens in contrast with other areas of design and/or scientific fields - is seen as an inspiring starting point that

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is constantly questioned in order to develop a critical attitude towards design for reading both on traditional media and in contemporary digital times.

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The master programme consists of two major components: **Studio Practice** and the **Master Seminar Series READSEARCH: Reading Type & Typography**.

**Studio Practice** is embedded in an inspiring environment where thinking and creating are perfectly synchronised. Students are given the opportunity to improve and explore their graduation project through intensive experimental design research.

The studio is defined as an open, experimental and functional project about typography and type design in the most extensive way possible. The latter two are (in the broadest sense of the word: as a composition, a layout, an abstract script or a series of signs, a book design...) looked at from a practice-based attitude, under a multidisciplinary and scientific perspective. Within this con-

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text, the term scientific can inform a methodology but can also refer to a source of inspiration for a design concept and/or outcome. The design practice arises from formal experiments, is theoretically founded and



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situates itself in reading research. This implies that the student can motivate the necessity of (un)read-

ability and/or (un)recognisability by the (envisioned) reading behaviour.

In the Master Seminar Series **READ-SEARCH: Reading Type & Typography**, the students discover the broader scene of 'Reading Type & Typography'. These seminars lay and help building the foundations and methodologies for an individual theoretical and design research practice. By analysing theoretical texts, visiting exhibitions, attending lectures and through thorough exercises on typography and font design, the scientific approach is integrated into the student's own practice. Debates about typographic themes are initiated, in which the student is able



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to conduct an interesting formal discussion that deals with functionality, readability and convention. Both between like-minded peers, professional typographers/type designers and stakeholders.

During the first semester, master students are expected to do a four-to-seven-week work experience (internship). This can take place in a graphic design studio, an artist's studio or institution such as a museum, or in the research group **READSEARCH (MAD-research)**. The research group **READSEARCH** can handle, within their legibility projects, a maximum of four internships. **PXL-MAD** can assist students in finding placements, but it's up to the students themselves to arrange the necessary agreements.

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## MASTER PROGRAMME SYNTHESIS

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Based on these two components and supported by a team of renowned designers, artists and academics, students are continually encouraged and challenged to reflect on their work by shifting between being 'in' and being 'out' of their own work. They are expected to create a



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mature body of work. This work is presented at the end of the year in front of a jury, and afterwards at the master exhibition. Linked to the artistic output, a theoretically funded document in which the students report and reflect on their own artistic practice has to be defended. By adopting an inquisitive attitude, the students position themselves in relation to other designers and disciplines and create the context within which they work.

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## PROJECTS &amp; CONTEXT

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This all is embedded in the understanding of the typographic historical development, as well as the impact of type-making and type-setting technologies. Besides classical typography, this master also explores borders of legibility/readability for several target groups and questions personal typography throughout several kinds of reading materials. This course also analyses the portability of typography and responsive type. We don't lose track of established conventions but we also look at what conventions could be on digital media and

complex information structures or what they could mean for digital typography. Now-

adays a lot of complex documents need to be presented equally clear on both traditional and digital media. These migrating routes are in favour of urgent questioning. With in this Master we are aware of possible combinations between the parameters mentioned above.

Historical and contemporary shifts in typography have affected

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the role of the profession of the font designer. Whereas in the past, there was a need for specialized individuals (like punch-cutters, for example), there is now – mainly as a result of digitisation – a wider range of specializations in which typography and font design play an overarching role. The digitisation has a considerable part in the emergence of typographic specifications that are not only fluid across platforms and use scenarios, but also across time. Whereas the roles of authors and editors haven't changed much, typographic designers are now multi-skilled individuals or closely integrated and cod-wants to teams of designers. This master challenge these new roles and models of publishing.



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In the past years, students were offered a wide range of lectures ([a-zlezingen.be](http://a-zlezingen.be)), workshops, guest-speakers and guest-tutors, such as **Peter Bil'ak (NL)**, **Nadine Chahine (D)**, **Ines Cox (B)**, **Jo de Baeremaeker (B)**, **Bart de Baets (NL)**, **Annelys De Vet (B)**, **Joost Grootens (NL)**, **Lauren Grusenmeyer (B)**, **Jost Hochuli (CH)**, **Sandra Kassenaar (NL)**, **Akira Kobayashi (D)**, **Kevin Larson (USA)**, **Luk Mestdagh (†) (B)**, **Julie Peeters (B)**, **Guy Rombouts (B)**.

**Roland Stieger (CH), Gerard Unger (NL)** (who visits regularly), **Hansje van Halem (NL), Jan van Toorn (NL), Job Wouters (NL)**...

Thanks to the extensive network of our department and of members of staff, students are given several possibilities to come in contact with and/or getting to know international organisations, institutes, curators, artists, designers, graphic designers, typographers and type designers. This allows them to create a network that can be a very good starting point for projects and collaborations after their **English Master**.

Every year, several (international) projects are organised and in **June** the master students show their final projects at the annual **EXIT**-exhibition. In addition, the **Graphic Design** department organises several trips and workshops, conferences and cultural activities that can be attended on inscription.

**PXL-MAD** also offers several student facilities such as a library, student services, catering, housing and other social services.

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# RESEARCH research group

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Faculty of **Architecture & Arts** (**Hasselt University**) / **MAD**-research /  
research group **READSEARCH**

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The **Graphic Design** department is, together with **Fine Arts and Object & Jewellery**, part of the **University College PXL-MAD** (**Media, Arts & Design**). The departmental programme is supported by **MAD**-research (**Hasselt University**), the research-institute that centralises, coordinates and stimulates research within the domains of visual arts, crafts and design. **Fifty** researchers are active in this institute, and their artistic and design skills are of crucial importance to the implementation of research in art education.

**READSEARCH** focuses on reading research. **Type design and/or typography** is looked at from a multidisciplinary and scientific perspective, but always with a practical attitude. **The** artistic practice forms next to, based on and in dialogue with experimental, but theoretically funded research a substantial share.

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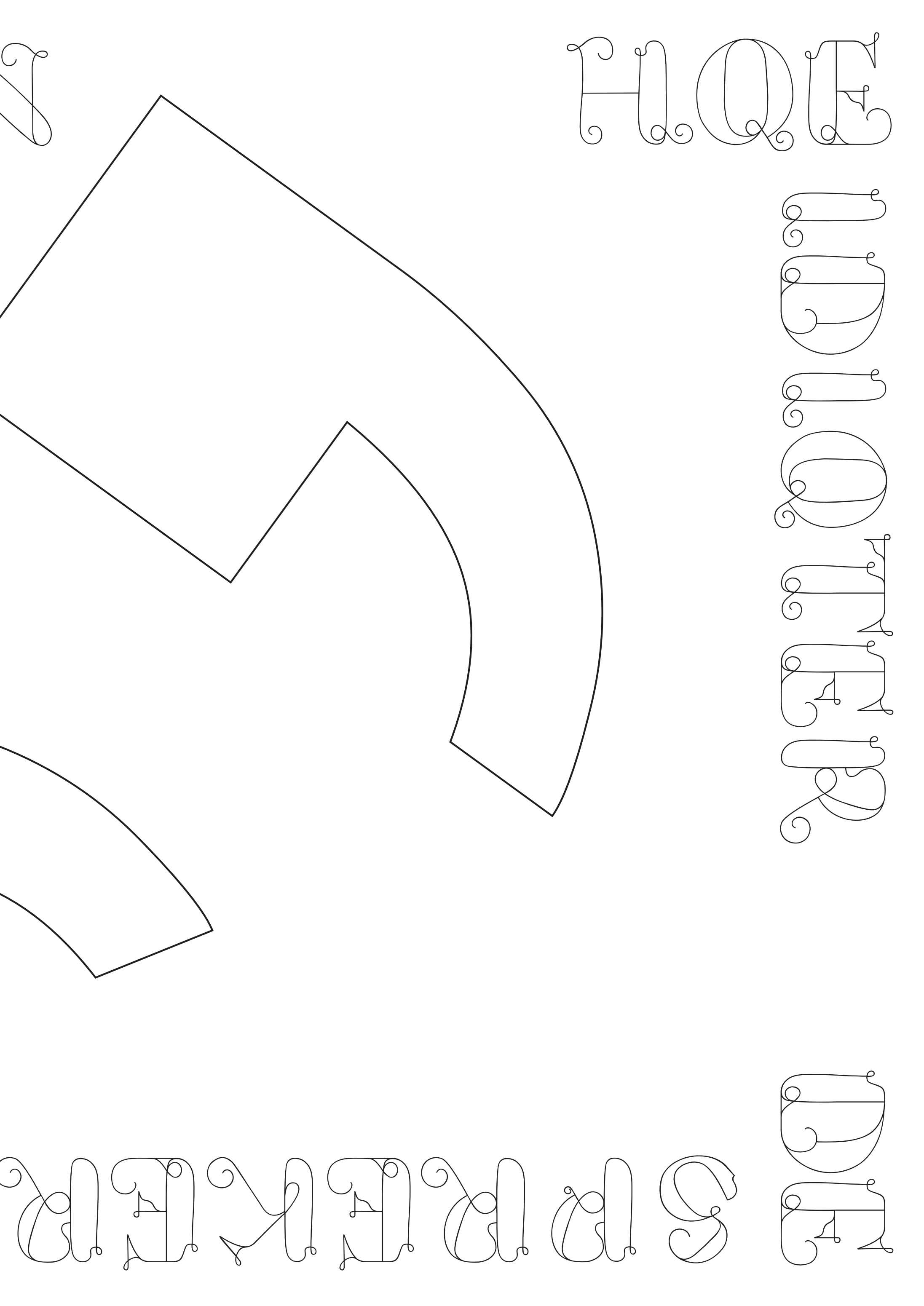


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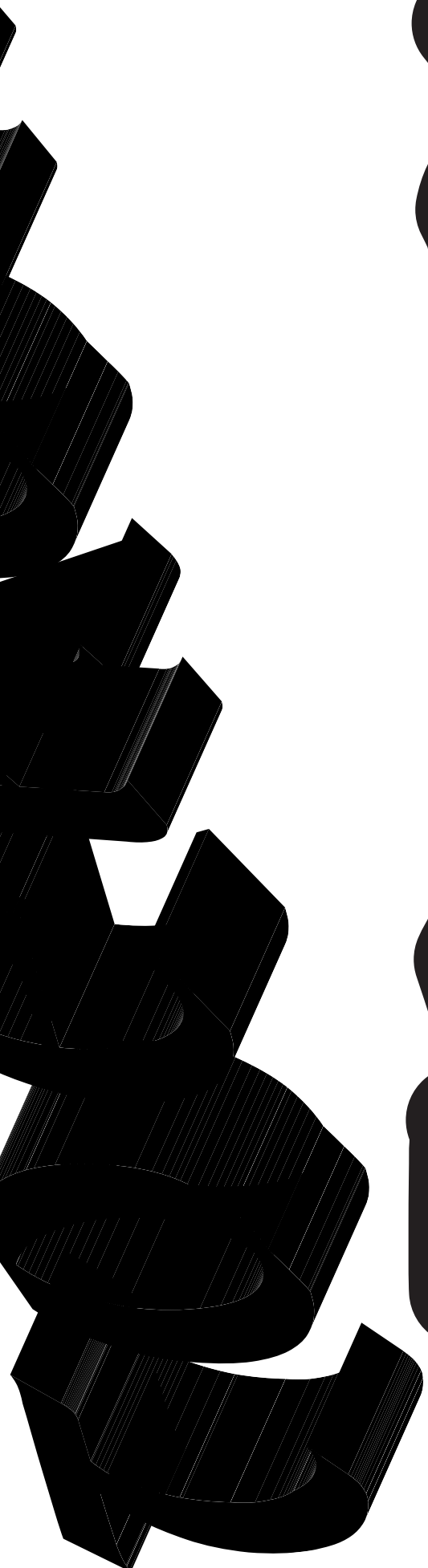


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**READSEARCH** provides a unique environment that brings together design researchers, typeface designers, scientists, students and stakeholders through research, courses and documentation.

**READSEARCH** investigates different topics: **Rhythm & Legibility**, **Rhythm & Reading Comfort**, **Visual Prosody**, dyslectic readers, beginning readers, readers with a visual impairment and **Homogeneity & Heterogeneity** in typefaces.



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The head and founder of the **READ-SEARCH** team is award winning graphic & type designer **Ann Bessemans**. In **October 2012**, she defended her **PhD** dissertation entitled “**Type Design for Children with Low Vision**”, under the main supervision of **Prof. Dr. Gerard Unger (Leiden University)**. For this project she was granted twice a scholarship by **Microsoft ClearType & Advanced Reading Technologies USA**. Currently she works as a postdoctoral design researcher at **PXL-MAD**. Recently, she was



awarded a major grant from **Microsoft Advanced Reading Technologies USA** for a project on visual prosody. **Ann** was a finalist in the ‘**New Scientist Wetenschapstalent 2015**’ competition, which recognises early career researchers in the sciences.





**Ann** is also involved in a **European COST Action** that studies the evolution of **Reading** in the age of **Digitisation**. **She** speaks regularly about legibility, has presented papers and gave workshops on several occasions both in **Belgium** and abroad. **Ann Bessemans** was elected member for the following five years of the **Young Academy** (an initiative of the **Royal Flemish Academy of Sciences and Arts of Belgium**). **Young Academy** members foster scientific/artistic communication, interdisciplinary collaboration, and debate with policy makers. The **Young Academy** offers an excellent platform to organize workshops and emphasise good practices and programs.

**Besides** her task as a teacher and design researcher, **Ann** is (since **2013**) also an independent designer. In **2014**, she received a certificate of typographic excellence of the **TDC (Type Directors Club)** and the same year she designed a **Belgian** postage stamp that set a **Guinness** record of **606** words on one stamp. **Ann** has designed several books and her research interests include

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the interrelations between image & word, typography, type design, legibility, reading, letterpress, graphic design, book design, modular systems and much more.



**Ann Bessemans (PhD completed in october 2012): Type Design for Children with Low Vision.**

**Ann Bessemans' PhD** research project approached the issue of legibility for visually impaired beginning readers from a design context. **This** research is a first attempt to bridge the gap between the font designers and the cognitive scientists studying the legibility of letter characters. **In** the development of the test material, the focus was on parameter design. **Parameters** are shape characteristics that can be isolated within the same type. **Starting** from two existing types (one serif, one sans-serif), **Ann Bessemans** designed derived typefaces based on five parameters that explored the balance between homogeneity and heterogeneity in both form and rhythm. **an extensive research with**



**Based on** legibility test material that conforms to both the scientific and the typographic knowledge in this field, she proposes a typeface that provides support for the target group of visually impaired children in the first stages of the reading process.

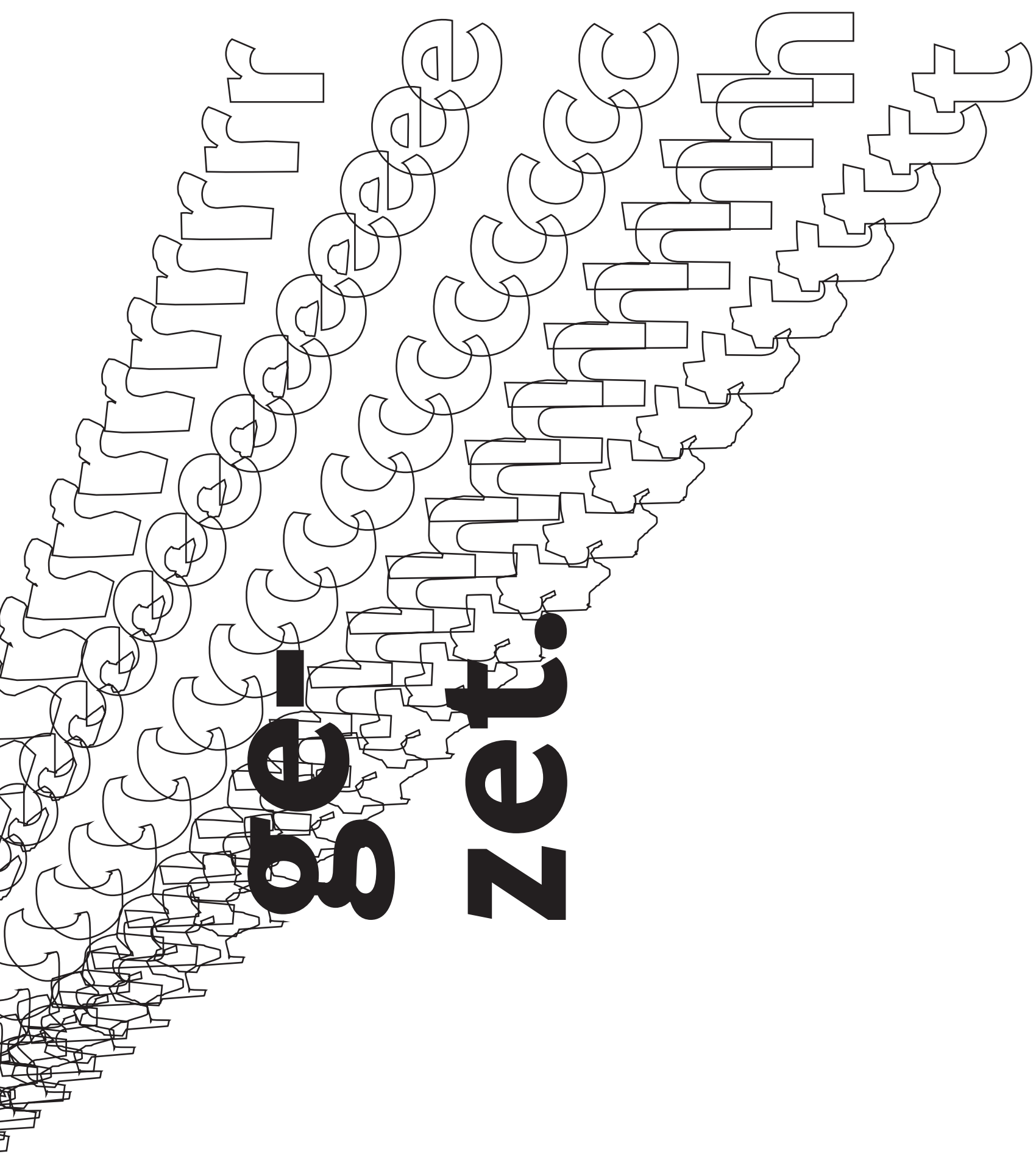


**Bormans Kevin: Design research into Visual Prosody.**

**B**eginning readers often struggle with reading aloud in a fluent, expressive manner. **R**eadng fluency is not only defined by speed and accuracy but also by proper expression and the naturalness of reading. **T**hese tonal phenomena of phonological constraints are part of prosody. **T**his project will explore whether it is possible to visualize prosody in type and how this can help children with reading aloud.

**Renckens Maarten: Design research into valid test methods for reading research.**

**T**he research items which are dealt with within **READSEARCH (Rhythm & Legibility & Reading Comfort, Visual Prosody, Dyslexia, Homogeneity & Heterogeneity)** require custom-made testing methods which simulate natural reading, thus preventing an incorrect influence on the test results. **B**y evaluating different conditions and programming various methods, practice-based test methods and possible type designs are developed for each research project. **T**his ensures the data is collected in a correct manner, and that a thorough analysis becomes possible by a statistician. **T**his **PhD** will expand the knowledge about valid test methods within reading research.



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Next to these core research topics and activities, **READSEARCH** also has an interest in the structural composition of graphic artefacts. As described in the context, the implementation of new navigational outlines can create new ways of reading through documents and thus enhance the reader's experience of the object.

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**Brusatto Geoffrey (PhD completed september 2015): The folded structure. The (re)construction of the printed book.**

In his practice-based research, **Geoffrey Brusatto** rethinks the traditional printed book. By means of a unique methodology, he de- and re-constructs the paper book. The fold plays an important role and **Brusatto** developed folding schemes that shape new book structures and page combinations. These schedules are interpreted as an open source tool giving different artists and graphic designers the possibility to use these folding schemes as a manual for their own creations.



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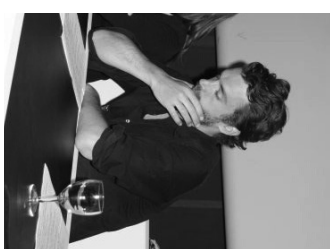




**PXL-MAD** offers several student facilities such as a library, student services, catering, housing and other social services.

**READSEARCH** (Typo-  
graphy, **G**raphic **D**esign) of **PXL-MAD**  
is located in **Hasselt** (**B**elgium), capital  
city of the province of **L**imburg. **Hasselt**,  
**B**elgium's most exclusive shopping and  
fashion city, better known as the '**C**apital  
of **T**aste' is at the centre of the so called  
'**M**euse-**R**hine **E**uregion'. **T**his very dyna-  
mic region comprises cities like **A**achen  
(**D**), **M**aastricht (**NL**) and **L**iege (**B**), and  
is boosting with economical and cultural

innovation. **Hasselt** is within a one-  
hour distance from **B**russels and  
**A**ntwerp, and **C**ologne (**D**) and a  
few hours from **P**aris (**FR**), **L**ondon  
(**UK**) and **A**msterdam (**NL**). **Hasselt** has  
a lively culture within its medieval city  
centre. **I**n the **C**ultural **C**entre of **Hasselt**,  
theatre, dance and classical and modern  
music are performed. **T**he **M**uziekodroom  
specialises in concerts of established natio-  
nal and international artists. **T**he **F**ashion  
**M**useum shows a wide variety of internati-  
onally renowned fashion and fashion rela-  
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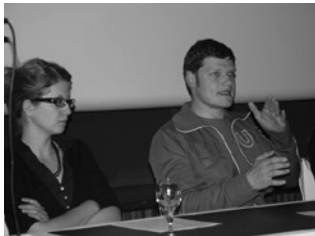


Arts Centre **Z33** focuses on contemporary art in a university town that offers plenty of entertainment opportunities for young and ambitious people.

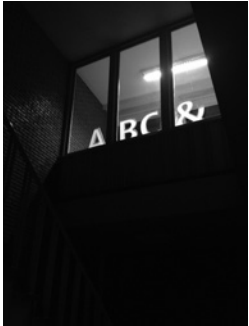
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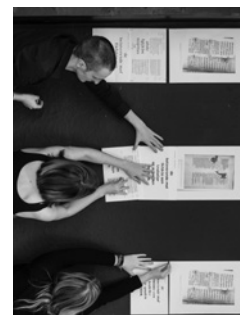
Faculty & Teaching Staff:

- dr. **Ann Bessemans**, Tutor and **READSEARCH** Post-doctoral researcher
- **Kevin Bormans**, PhD **READSEARCH** researcher
- dr. **Geoffrey Brusatto**, Tutor and researcher
- dr. **Tom Lambeens**, Tutor and researcher
- **Maarten Renckens**, PhD **READSEARCH** researcher
- **Luc Rerren**, Senior tutor
- **Monique Rutten**, Tutor
- dr. **Lieven Segers**, Tutor
- **Johan Vandebosch**, Senior tutor and studio leader
- **Katleen Verjans**, Tutor

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Contact & Info:**Ann.Bessemans@pxl.be**Timing & Tuition:

The academic year **2016-2017** starts on **September the 15th** and finishes at the end of **June**. Please contact us for the application procedure and the tuition fee.

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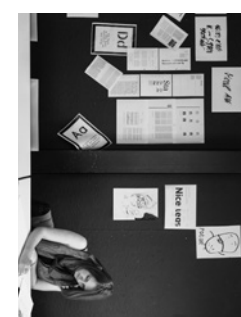




## Orientation tests for the Master and transition programmes:

There is an annual selection procedure in spring and in summer. You will find information with an application form for the orientation tests on our website [www.pxl-mad.be](http://www.pxl-mad.be). Read this carefully for information about the transition programme and deadlines. Candidates for a master or transition programme need to register first. Upon registration candidates will receive an application form to be completed.

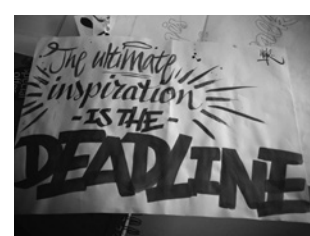
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All texts are set in typefaces designed by Ann Bessemans' students. Most of the type projects were assignments with a duration of maximum ten weeks. Due to time limitations and the students' first experience with designing type, a lowercase or capital or numerical set was completed. When the students' graduation (MA) project dealt with type design, this duration was extended over a longer period and as a result, more sets could be finished. When there were characters missing, Helvetica Bold is used instead. Chapters & annotations were set in Ann Bessemans' Matilda Regular.

#### TEXT

Mission Statement Flandrien Regular - Kevin Bormans (MA)

The Master Programme Aero - Tom Lindelauf (3BA)

Master Programme Synthesis Olans - Ann Vangansewinkel (3BA)

Projects & Context Siri - Sanne Drienhuijzen (3BA)

Research Group Schnitt - Sam Vermeylen (3BA)

Research Projects Rowenna - Liesa Vanhoutteghem (3BA)

PXL-MAD in Hasselt Charleston - Elies Keustermans (3BA)

Practical Information Cindezela - Maarten Renckens (3BA)

#### PAGE NUMBERS

Herder - Benjamin Sporken (MA)

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#### READSET

Newspaper & Posters designed by

READSEARCH members Ann Bessemans

Kevin Bormans

Maarten Renckens

In future they shall publish

all graphic, non-research related material

under the name

READSET

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## POSTERS

No waving, just dancing. Lantonie - Loesje Ulenaers (3BA)  
That lady buys chocolate with soap products anyway. Cobus - Stefanie Gorissen (3BA)  
3500\* Francesca - Melissa Hellings (2BA)  
Just make, still nothing. Matilda - Ann Bessemans  
What was said crooked, must be put right. Elsfont - Els Willems (3BA)  
Veli Black - Wout Trippas (MA)  
All widows/orphans in a vacuum cleaner hose. Herder - Benjamin Sporken (MA)  
Enough playbaking. Dnevna Navada - Jeroen Marcelis (3BA)  
The bigger the words, the dumber the speakers. Muurplooi - Gijs Coenen (2BA)  
Don't forget to remember the future. Nutella (manipulated by READSET) -  
Tom Lindelauf (3BA)

## ABOUT LUK MESTDAGH

(19.02.1942 - 5.10.2014)

Luk Mestdagh was one of the figureheads  
of the Belgian (Typo)Graphic Design Scene in the 70's.  
Luk has always challenged Ann Bessemans as a student and has  
aroused her interest in typography and type, historically,  
contemporary and scientifically. Luk has always been a critical  
sounding board. Unfortunately he passed away because of  
cancer. The utterances used for the poster series in this  
publication were either his, or were found in his  
comprehensive archive of newspaper articles.

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\*3500 is the zip code (B-3500)

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PXL-MAD  
Campus Elfde Linie  
Elfde-Liniestraat 25  
B-3500 Hasselt  
BELGIUM  
+32 11 77 50 50  
[www.pxl-mad.be](http://www.pxl-mad.be)  
[www.pxl.be](http://www.pxl.be)

