

**Referenz
Grotesk
Groundless**

**A typeface
with
different
states of
dizziness**

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Referenz Grotesk Groundless is designed for the research and exhibition project “Iliggocene – The Age of Dizziness”. In the beginning we have been asking how dizziness can be translated to the field of typography and type design. Can a typeface make us dizzy? Can certain type forms provoke a feeling of disorientation and confusion by interfering with the reading flow?

By spinning, slanting, shifting and fainting letterforms to different extents, we have been testing various types of disruptions. Finally we’ve decided for a simple but quite effective method: the baseline shift. By doing so we’ve created a type system with different states of dizziness via letters that shift from their baseline (usually a fixed constant in type design) at different levels. The new font is based on our type family Referenz Grotesk that we designed several years ago and now expanded by a dizzying extension, with 15 grades of dizziness, including 140 dizzy characters, without any kerning pairs, the latter making especially type designers dizzy.

Referenz Grotesk Groundless transforms – gradually or at once – readable text to an unreadable typographic structure, challenges readers that find themselves between dis-, re- and orientation. Its first comprehensive appearance is at Kindl – Zentrum für zeitgenössische Kunst (Berlin) during the exhibition “Iliggocene – The Age of Dizziness” (March – July 2026) curated by Ruth Anderwald, Leonhard Grönd and Sergio Edelsztein.

Stefanie Schwarz & Dirk Wachowiak

Der

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Stylistic Set: –

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Stylistic Set: 1

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Stylistic Set: 14

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Taumei describes the positive, negative and ambiguous feelings of being dizzy, as well as the staggering movement of a body that is about to fall down. Moreover, it is often used metaphorically, for example, in the German expression Im Taumel der Gefühle, which implies doing something inconsiderate when being overwhelmed by an emotion, such as rage, sadness or love. In the context of this project, the word dizziness is used in a positive, negative and ambiguous way and is an expansion of the original English meaning of the term. It emphasizes the ephemeral and unpredictable character of the phenomenon of dizziness, which is understood as the unforeseeable movement or the feeling of such movement that causes a shift from the expected and familiar to the uncertain and unknown. Being subject

u e c t a b e l c e h a -
r a e n t r i f t h p h e -
m o f u d z e n o ,
w h n c o m e o u i d e j r e t e s s d
a e i t h i e f e n r s o a o _ e
b p e s e m v h o u t c s r t h
f e l e g f n u t c h a m -
e v m n t o t h s a t c a u o e
s e e a e n h f t f r m t h
s p c t s a i a u n d c f a o m l a r
a t u t h u n r t i a i
a u d o e c k e w . e b i a g
r e b i e n t n a t n x p i e n -
r c e a n v s e p d o z e a n f u s p
r u n p o , a e d v e -
d e s a p n s f d s h i n m i i l
y c i s u s t i n e t r m s u l ,
s e f o s d i n u a d e i -
a p o t e n t r t e n t h n
o a e d s r e a e i _ e
s g n . s t h s a x p c r s u o e
n f n d i z z i n s s s s

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How
many
types of
dizziness
within a
single
sentence

When I look at the world now,
it seems a long way away. I
mean it never used to. I don't
know what it is, it's like I can't
get close to it, it's like there's
something in the way. It's
like a museum, you can see
things but you can't touch
them. There's too much of it
as well, too many exhibits, I
mean you can't look at one
thing properly because you're
thinking about what's in the
next room all the time. Some-
times I think I can feel some-
thing, and then I realise it's a

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grotesque
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Während wir noch mit dem Wunsch ringen, uns
der schwindlerregenden Leer zu überlassen,
bewegen wir uns schon auf sie zu. Denn der Ab-
grund ist alles, woran wir denken, alles worauf wir
schauen können. Wenn wir es nicht schaffen, wo-
anders hinzusehen, werden wir ihm unwiderrlich
näher-, vielleicht sogar zu nahe kommen. In uns
entfaltet er diese unglaubliche Anziehungskraft,
aber auch das Bedürfnis ihm zu entkommen.
Anderes verhält es sich, wenn wir den Abgrund als
Sinnbild für etwas betrachten, das in unserer ge-
wohnten Erlebnis inbricht, es abbricht und um-
dreht. Etwas, das uns in die Ungewissheit manövriert.
Dann wollen wir unbedingt fort von diesem Ab-
grund der Ungewissheit, der abgründigen Situ-
ation, weil wir das Gewohnte in zwei verloren
glauben. Wir sind nicht mehr dort, wo wir vorher
waren, und damit haben wir verloren, was war.
Die dadurch eintreffende Reaktion darauf kann nur die for-
tigue Rückkehr zum Gewohnten sein. Wir wollen
weg aus der Ungewissheit, so viel ist sicher.
Gleichzeitig wollen wir dem nachgeben, was wir
im Abgrund sehen; es lockt uns in seine Tiefen
(der Höhen). Das Suchen nach dem Ende des Er-
lebens und Fühlens von Ungewissheit, ganz
das führt uns näher an den Abgrund – das ist das

De r gr B Vertp l, ch e D ng n' u si n si u th -
ret, effer o r e kt, ed er N t r, e fe e t r h e f -
t W e z el ä h r, le t let Verbleib e e
U nsi her e. M an w B: D r B n a ä r S n d n t
k e n n n u u r r e h t w r i . M o l d e d t z e ä t, i
bl bez g i e , w u n e f h o m kö s ew
a i t w e g w ä r . G e i c h e n i t g e t o n e u n n e s
grö ß t s ch w i e g k e , u n n n i h e n n a w r d i a
N e r e r g i r i e G i d g n n h e n n , e i i n e w -
o m e d r K ö e i n n e t e k m r t. W d e w e n n i s
s n s o d a n n n s s n a m i o r l l t t n A e -
f ü e r e g w r i e e h e a c h i n a t u i n s n s
w i k e n M e ß g g b n o t . e m e , a e n c h n
A e t r e r s e h a h e r t , v e d b e r t l h e
m r e t S i h e t), e n s s s t n s u n g i b t,
o d a m i , w i e b a s t s t n s u n e e d i
h e g n l e r . o s i n i n m e a s i m n - w s n a m Th -
e n e l v r t i o d g u l t e r f , w n n a i n u w o
i a s a r s a l t e g s g f ü h r t e n a n g i w n d o
i n a . H r , i m t i m d e z w i s a h d d l a e n s c a c h t g
t u n l e i s h n o e h t n a c w i s a h d d l a e n s c a c h t g
f d e r s t n a t s o u c e o i s i l u n e . T h e e h e l
f ü h a n c i s o s c h s s w a z i f l e e D i n e
p a r , e s i a o r i n t n s u u i a h a z w e f l w h e j n
b u w d i h i n g r n g u n h i S i b e r h i t e ö e n t n
a s w d i h i n g r n g u n h i S i b e r h i t e ö e n t n
a m n d a i m m n d i n i a

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A phenomenon that appears on different scales and in various contexts, dizziness can be understood as causing an existential shift from the given to the uncertain, thereby unbalancing elements, multitudes, or even entire systems. Whether petrifying turmoil or joyful ilinx, by becoming dizzy, we enter a stage of heightened vulnerability, unsure of our perception, processing, orientation and abilities, uncertain of ourselves and the world around us. These feelings of insecurity mark our interaction with the environment, conveying that dizziness and its disorienting conditions are situated in the lived experience and exposing its complexity. *Dizziness: An Introduction on Unstable Grounds* by Ruth Anderwald and Leonhard Grond.

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Stylistic Set: 3

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Stylistic Set: 4

A phenomenon that appears on different scales and in various contexts, dizzying as it is, is understood as a systemic, existential shift from the given to the uncertain, thereby unbalancing elements, multitudes, or even entire systems. Whether petrifying turmoil or joyful lull, by becoming dizzy, we enter a stage of heightened vulnerability, unsure of our perception, processing, orientation and abilities, uncertain in of ourselves and the world around us. These feelings of insecurity mark our interaction with the environment, concealing that dizzying disorientation conditions are situated in the lived experience and experiencing its complexity. Dizziness: An Introduction on Unstable Grounds by Ruth Anderwald and L. O. Hard Ground.

Stylistic Set: 5

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Stylistic Set: 7

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Stylistic Set: 8

A phenomenon that appears on different scales and in various contexts, dizziness can be understood as a single universal shift from the given to the uncertain, thereby bringing elements, multitude, or various systems. When the primary turning point is by becoming dizzy, we enter a stage of heightened vulnerability, ensuring a purposeful, on-pragmatic orientation and abilities seen in the efforts to live in the world around us. These findings in the primary mark of interaction with the environment are revealing that dizziness is a disorienting condition, a situation in the lived experience and experience of its complexity. Dizziness: An Introduction and Unstable Grounds by Ruth Andradottir and L. O. Hard Grand.

Stylistic Set: 9

[illegible]

Stylistic Set: 10

A Phome non th t e pp r s on e ff e n t s c l a m d i n v -
E lo do n t x t s a s e a n d e s t o a s s i n g a n
u x i s t n c l s e e f i r o m t h u n v n d t h e e n e r t a s i n g t h e b y
h e l e n p r i m m u s m i t t o r v n e a m t h e
W h a n e e r t r f y i n g e r m o l r o b e j u n n e a m s y s t m s
z y w e c t r i n g e f h i g h t e v n r b l t y e n s i c o f
u r p r u r t o n a s s i n g r i n t d n a b l t e s e e n c o
a i n o u r s l v s n d u t h w o r l d a n d a r i t i e s i n g s
o i n s v g t h e t a z z o e r i n t a o n d s e s i f i n g s
q n t i n g t h a d i v i n s e f i d e s d i s o c i n g n a t i o n s e r
s i t y d a z z d m : A l t r u c i n a n d t b l g r u s o m p l a x -
A r w i n s s : A l t r u c i n a n d t b l g r u s o m p l a x -
A r w i n s s : A l t r u c i n a n d t b l g r u s o m p l a x -

Stylistic Set: 11

A h e n o n t h t e c r s e f f e t s C l s c H i n g v -
e u o m x n z z a i m s s a n d e n t s s u c a s a s i n e
l o t q n l e t t r e t h a n v e n d h e e a r t e t h e b y
u i s n c l e t t r e t h a n v e n d h e e a r t e t h e b y
t e l e p e g l o m i t u n o r v n e a r a s y t a
W h t a e t r f y m g e r n e l r e d e p o l x e b y b a s y t a
z y w e e p r i n g e m o i g t e v j u p r b l t y e n i n d e f
r r r u t e r s e r e g r n t d t n b l e t e e n s i r o f
f u r l e n a o s s i n v e r n l o n H a l l e s i n g f
i n e f u s s n u n t h e r a o n a g a l s i n g e
s a i n s r t y s r k n d e r t p c a o n a g a l s i n g e
q h t i n e t h l o a i n x s s n d s i s o x e n i n g o n d i o n s x -
s y . D e z z d i n a l e a r u c a n d n d b p s i n g u s o n b y R t h
A a r w l s s l n n d r l r o n a n s o n s

Stylistic Set 12

A Rh me that ap ar edff t Cal a d va
E ho t non dzz eas on d en sca sca inga
ic i qal f e f in th ug u en the su o e e, th sine by
is a e f e i mo t, m it t d o r v e in y t m.
Wh th a petr fy g e t me l r e y a p l e by B i c h s g a z
zy, we e t r a i a g e f h o i g h t o d v l p r a b l i t y, c h i n e
r p r u p t e s p r o e g, r n t a, m a d a i b e n s e e p
p a e u r i q u o s s i n w o r l d r a t o n H. e t i s i n e g
f i n e o r t y m a r k e r t o a t o w a t h s v r m i n e
o i s e y g i t h e d z e e i a e d e l n e i t g c n d o n e t
q h a t d r e t h i v d i n s s n f s a i s o p x p n g o n c i m p l x
s y. D e z z i n : A i e t r d t i n o t a b o s i n s d o b y R t h
A d i r w i d s a d l n a a r d o n o n s o n s

Stylistic Set: 13

A Rh c me that ap ar ed ff t al a d va-
 F eno t non d zz e cas on id fn sca can nea
 ue f qal ref r in ss unv en th es o e r ae, th f by
 is a e e g i mo t, m l t d g r v n e in y t m.
 Wh th r p r t r f y g e s m e l r f y f o l x, by B i m s g d z-
 zy, we c t r a i n g c e f h o i g n t d v i n r a b l i t y, in r c f
 r p r u p t e, p r o o e i, r n t a r a d a i e t e n s, e-
 p a f c u r i q v o d u n w o r l d r l o n d n. t f i i f e n e g
 c r i n o o r y m a r k n f t e a t o w t h s k r m i n f,
 o e n s y g t h a t d z z e i n a e d e i o r e i r e t n i o n t n
 a a n t m d e t h i l v d s s n i s s q u i n i n g o n l i o n s
 p l x t y. D z z i n : A f t r d t n U t h a s i n g r i s d o b y
 R t h A d i r w l d s d l n n a r d i n o n. n s o n s

Stylistic Set: 14

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John Smith:
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P 17, 19

Concept, type and typographic design:
Stefanie Schwarz & Dirk Wachowiak

Typeface:
Referenz Grotesk Groundless

based on the type family Referenz Grotesk
designed by Stefanie Schwarz &
Dirk Wachowiak, published by Sudtipos

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2026

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Refe e
Gr t nke
Gro t s d
_ o n e ss
A typ f a c e
w. the e
d. ff er t
t t s e n f
d i z z i n s s