Interview with Nino Jiskariani

In this interview, Nino Jishkariani, founder and supervisor of the Georgian Typeface Association, shares her expertise on type design, the challenges of designing Georgian scripts, and the development of typefaces beyond Latin.

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Complete the sentence: Everyone is searching for. and finds it too.

What are the most important factors in assessing font quality? What challenges need to be addressed, and what do you pay special attention to within the script group?

The most important factors in assessing font quality include legibility, artistic value, technological sophistication, and cost-effectiveness. Additionally, the clarity of letter shapes and ease of readability are crucial. Fonts must adhere to graphically consistent criteria, such as the distinctive individuality of letterforms, simplicity in the contours of glyphs, precise and well-defined shapes, and rhythmic font graphics.

The main challenge in the Georgian script group, which remains unresolved, is the lack of well-developed printing fonts.

What are the most common mistakes font designers make?

Simply put: quality and kerning. Artistic fonts rarely face issues, but when it comes to text typography, traditional graphemes are often altered in the name of modernity. This transformation can compromise the classical forms and result in unsuccessful visuals. For example, the Georgian letter ''ტ'' is often simplified in a modern design, appearing as a circle with a descending line. Yet, the classical form has such beautiful graphemes!

Georgian letter modules are proportional (middle, upper, and lower sections are balanced), whereas Latin letters predominantly have an extended middle section. When adapting Georgian to Latin standards, we are compelled to expand the middle section of Georgian letters to align with Latin proportions, which creates a divergence from Georgian classical standards. This is why I believe fonts should first be developed natively for Georgian script and later adapted to Latin.

GRANSHAN introduced fonts beyond Latin writing systems to international competitions 15 years ago. How do you think the type community has evolved during this period?

Our connection with GRANSHAN began in 2017 when we were invited as guests to celebrate its 10th anniversary in Yerevan. I presented an exhibition of Georgian fonts featuring compositions

by various artists, while Giga Khatiashvili delivered a lecture on the same topic.



The Georgian Font Association became actively involved in GRANSHAN only last year. I believe GRANSHAN plays a significant role in promoting fonts beyond Latin. As a nation with one of the oldest writing systems, we have experienced various developmental stages, including periods of stagnation due to complex political circumstances.

GRANSHAN's foundation, with its competitions and conferences, supports the global recognition and development of member countries' typefaces.

What is your favorite font?

It's difficult to name a favorite, but I believe one of the most well-crafted and visually refined fonts is *Dedaena* (Academic, 1912)

Tell us about your experience. What connects you to typography?

Typography has been intertwined with my life from a very young age. I grew up observing my father's work and that of his colleagues. At the academy, I had the privilege of learning from leading professionals in this field and honing my skills. Today, I teach typography–first at the Media Arts Faculty of the Academy of Arts and now at the Georgian-American University's Design and Typography Faculty.

Alongside my colleagues, I manage the ''Georgian Fonts Association'' and strive to be actively involved in both local and international projects. Chairing the GRANSHAN jury in our region is an especially important responsibility for me, and I am glad to contribute to the development of Georgian typography.

7. What advice would you give to aspiring font designers who want to work with foreign scripts?

To succeed in this field, you must approach your work with genuine passion and dedication. You need to immerse yourself completely in your craft. Practice as much as possible. Diversify your experiences and refine your skills through consistent work.

For aspiring Georgian font designers, my advice is to focus on improving both the theoretical and practical aspects of your craft while developing original typefaces.

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