

# Kabel

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## Rudolf Koch

Rudolf Koch was a German type designer, calligrapher, and artist. He designed both blackletter and roman alphabets. Strongly Christian (and Lutheran Protestant) as well as an exponent of German nationalism in the arts, Koch had an affinity for the Arts & Crafts movement spearheaded by William Morris. Some of his art, as well as his typefaces, have a strongly Art Nouveau flavor. Koch's great passion was infusing the stately opulence of Baroque forms with the raw energy of the Romantic, and his most well-known typefaces, *The Deutsche Schrift* (Frühling, Hella, Zepelin, Prisma, Offenbach, Marathon, Koch Kursiv and Kabel) all have this balance between elegance and raw energy.

Koch was an in-house designer at the Gebr. Klingsspor foundry from 1906 until his death in 1934 (with a short gap for service in the First World War). All of his typefaces were released by Klingsspor. After the Klingsspor foundry closed in the late 1950s, the foundry D. Stempel AG in Frankfurt, who had owned the Klingsspor foundry for over a decade, assumed the rights to the designs and continued the distribution of the commercial successful ones.

Koch was also concerned that with the development of industrial typography in the form of hot metal type-setting much of typefounding's history might be lost. He was a gifted historian, and many of the most well-known illustrations of traditional German calligraphy, some of it exceedingly beautiful. His book on calligraphic instruction *Das Schreiben als Kunstfertigkeit* is still one of the best works on the subject ever printed in the German language and is worth a look for non-German readers as well, even though it is almost entirely focused on Blackletter hands. The book was one of the catalysts that began the career of Hermann Zapf, as well as that of his wife, Gudrun Zapf von Hesse.

It would be a mistake, however, to peg Koch as a strict traditionalist. He was a relentless experimenter, seeking in particular to reconcile the traditionally popular German *Fraktur* / broken-letter types with the antique or roman types used in the Western parts of Europe and the United Kingdom. Some of these experiments were unsuccessful, like the intriguing but ugly *Offenbach*, but others, such as *Hella*, were both in keeping with the spirit of the times and successful in their own right. Probably his most significant achievement during this time, and the most widely known of his experiments, is the rough-hewn *Neuland*, a deceptively sophisticated very black *lino-cut* sans serif that pointed to some of the more expressionistic types coming from further east, such as *Vojtech* Pressing in Czechoslovakia, while still being very much his own work.

# 1927-2009

An all new  
version of  
a classic  
Kabel  
typeface.

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Thin, Light, Book, Medium, Bold, Heavy.