

Fette Fraktur

Johann Christian Bauer (1802–1867)

- based on the Fraktur type of Blackletter faces
- developed more for advertising than text

Fette Fraktur is a Blackletter typeface of the sub-classification Fraktur designed by the German punchcutter Johann Christian Bauer (1802–1867) in 1850. Fette Fraktur (German for bold Fraktur) is based on the Fraktur type of Blackletter faces. This heavy nineteenth century version was developed more for advertising than text.

While the Nazis forbade its use for practical and ideological reasons, at the conclusion of World War II, the Allied forces also prohibited it for a time because occupation troops could not read these faces. Eventually the ban on Blackletter and Frakturs was lifted, but in Germany and Scandinavia the faces were largely replaced by the Antiqua (roman) alphabet.

For a span of nearly a hundred years, the original Fraktur script was used as a standard text face in German-speaking Europe and parts of Scandinavia. During the period of the Third Reich Fraktur and Blackletter faces were initially approved of in contrast to sans-serif faces (associated with the Bauhaus and cultural Bolshevism). Approved use of Blackletter Fraktur faces by the Nazi regime continued until January 3, 1941 when Martin Bormann, director of the Party Chancellery issued a directive discontinuing the use of Blackletter faces because of an alleged discovery of Jewish contributions in the development of these faces.

Variants of Fraktur faces such as Fette Fraktur are however used in advertising and packaging to communicate a sense of traditional Austrian, Bavarian, or German flavor. In this modern decorative use the Fraktur rules about long s and short s or about ligatures are often disregarded, the knowledge of the old typographical conventions being lost. Fette Fraktur and the regular Fraktur typeface have been confused for the blackletter script often mislabeled Old English script, and which has become extremely popular in the world of hip-hop music and fashion.

1850
Germany

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Germany