

PROUD

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F G H I J K 6 7 8 9 0

L M N O P ! ? . ,

Q R S T U

V W X Y Z

The typeface Ardua was developed by Will Baker in response to a brief posed by the 2025 Birmingham Design Festival. The brief was to create a modular display typeface to help promote the festival and its theme of "Play".

Inspiration was drawn from the festival's goal to celebrate the "local, national and international design industry" (*BDF, n.d.*), and the typeface certainly reflects this ambition with its imposing physical stature.

The font carries a tall cap height in an almost monospaced package, creating a font reminiscent of the Bauhaus movement, but more similar to its sleek predecessor, the style of Braun's design, created by Dieter Rams. This comparison is made even more obvious by comparing the typeface to Braun's logo by Wolfgang Schmittel (1952), both using a similar grid based design with uniform curves. This geometric precision enhances the typeface's legibility, making it particularly suited for display purposes.

Ardua leans into the theme of play by introducing a unique variable crossbar. This allows the designer to play, edit and adjust the typeface to fit into any number of applications. This aspect can turn any one word into hundreds of different variations, reflecting the festivals diverse line up

of speakers from various backgrounds. Furthermore, this dynamic aspect makes it uniquely suited for motion graphics, instigating a spark of life into what otherwise could be an uninspiring design. Additionally, the decorative chunks taken out of it make the typeface instantly distinctive, similar to how the font is intended to encourage others to play, experiment and stand out from the crowd, creating a bold and striking image.

Ardua was developed on a consistent grid and features a fixed visual width (with the exception of the I and l). This allows for a seamless flow of writing and can be helpful for those with dyslexia. Moreover, its distinct uppercase style suits its role well as a promotional typeface for the Birmingham Design Festival, making it designed to be read in large sizes and to be used as for an impactful title or heading. The heavy weight of the lettering, along the tall cap height and decorative elements, effects its legibility when used in body copy and as such, not recommended for it.

Within the VOX Classification system (1954), Ardua falls under a lineal geometric typeface as it is a sans serif font with a consistent style. The type is contemporary in style to be effective for the nature of the brief.



A link to a  
youtube clip of  
the animated  
version ([https://  
youtu.be/  
JPgvp103F1c](https://youtu.be/JPgvp103F1c))

## Bibliography

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- Schmittel, W. and Braun (1952). Braun Logo. Website. Available at: <https://www.logodesignlove.com/braun-logo> (Accessed 17 Jan. 2025).