

Parched soil gives voice to the earth and inspires a typeface that encourages the conscientious use of water

Water reservoirs at alarming low levels help inspire the creation of a unique typeface.

The advertising agency DM9DDB, the Akatu Institute – an NGO that encourages responsible consumption and sustainable life styles – and Twitter created a unique typeface inspired by the parched soil of the Cantareira reservoir system, the primary water source for the metropolitan region of São Paulo. It's an alphabet designed to give voice to Mother Nature and spread messages encouraging everyone to consume water conscientiously.

The idea arose after the agency visited the Cantareira reservoir a few times during August of last year, when the reservoir started to reach alarming low levels. "Using photographs of the parched and cracked soil, we identified patterns that could be used to design a typeface," said Leo Macias, Creative Director at DM9DDB. All of the images were carefully studied until we came up with a selection of natural patterns that were not altered nor corrected. "Each letter, from A to Z, including the other characters, faithfully depict soil patterns, in other words, they are a typeface representation of what the planet is saying," states Leo.

"Cantareira.ttf" is the typeface being used in the "Drought's Voice" campaign, whose objective is to warn people about the critical state of the water reservoirs that supply water to around 9 million people living in the metropolitan region of São Paulo. Given that the capital of São Paulo state has a population of around 11.8 million people, the city is going through its worst water crisis ever. "This typeface is a tool to spread information about the conscientious use of water and to raise awareness about the problem," says Zico Farina, Creative Director at DM9DDB.

"The water crisis Brazil is going through is the worst in its history and is a long way from being resolved. We cannot let the false sense of security brought about by the recent period of rains diminish the motivation of the population, of companies and all governmental bodies towards a shared water management model and the conscientious use of water. There are many causes for the collapse we are experiencing and the goal is to make the "Drought's Voice" become the voice for change," affirms Gabriela Yamaguchi, Communication and Campaign Manager at Akatu Institute.

The typeface can be downloaded at: www.avozdaseca.org.br. People can Tweet messages using this font to encourage not only the city of São Paulo, but the whole planet to use water conscientiously. The website also features a behind the scenes look at the project.