

# ROCK PAPER PIXEL

**Influence, experimentation and  
play in contemporary lettering**

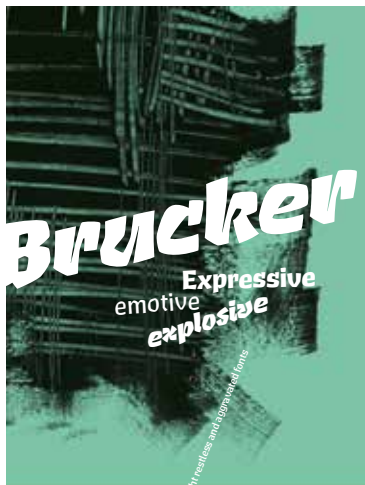
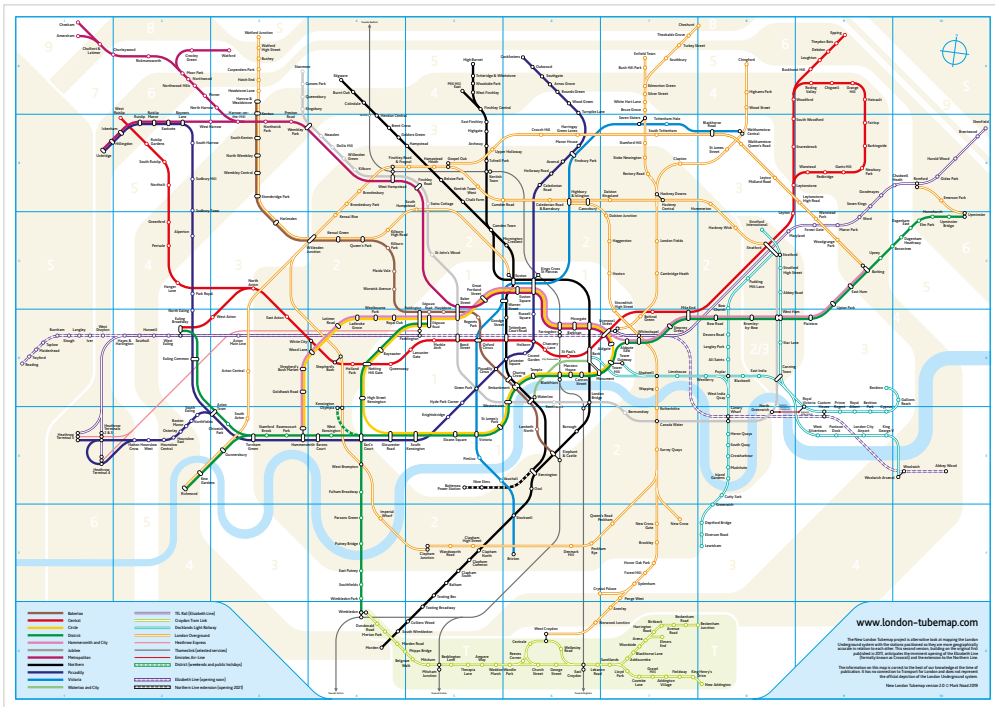


Rosella Garavaglia p22

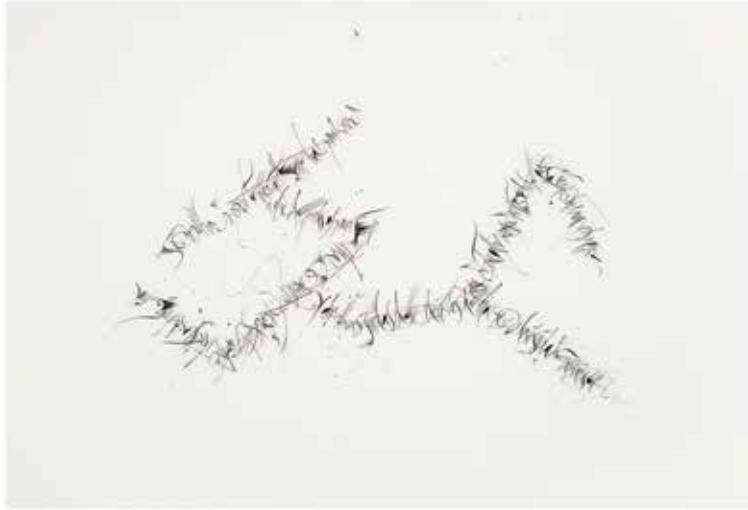


Mark Frith p20









Ewan Clayton p27  
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Richard Kindersley p42  
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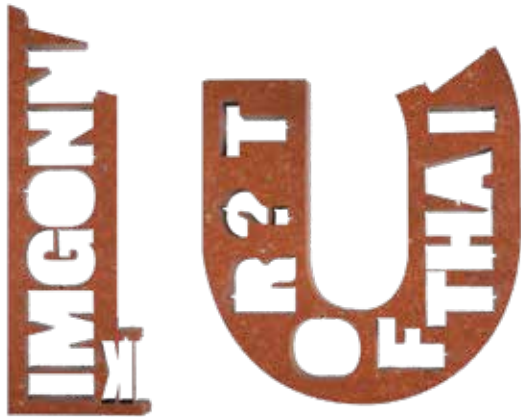
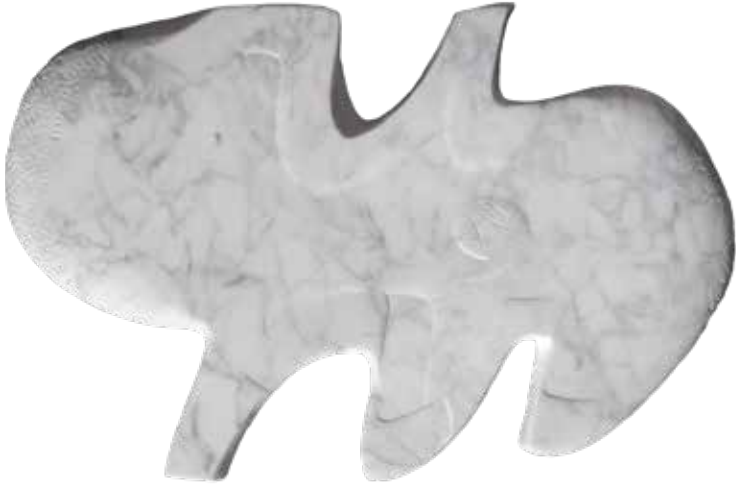




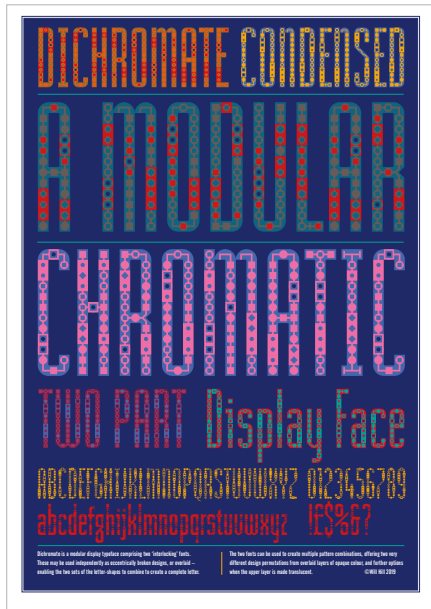
Eye Magazine p44  
Charlie Behrens p94











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Errol Donald p26

Cherrell Avery p54

(opposite) Michelle de Bruin p70







# *Influence Experiment Play!*

A user guide to the Rock Paper Pixel exhibition

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PAPER  
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# ROCK PAPER PIXEL

Rock Paper Pixel curated by Mark Noad  
for the Lettering Arts Trust.

Lettering Arts Centre  
Snape Maltings, Snape  
Suffolk IP17 1SP

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# *How to use this exhibition*

What's the point of visiting an exhibition? It's easy enough to see works of art in books, magazines, and on line which is valuable and informative, ideal to study and get to know a subject whether it is a school of painting or a strand of the lettering arts.

And yet you learn so much more by seeing the object face to face: the way the brush strokes have been applied; the true colour of the pigment; the quality of the material; the scale. Being in the same space enables an intimate interaction between the viewer and artist to be mediated through the work on display.

In addition, you have the curator's eye bringing together a particular group of objects that tell a broader story by facilitating a dialogue between the works and the creative thoughts behind them.

Rock Paper Pixel can be seen as a shorthand for the development of the history of lettering and, although each of these developments have to a greater extent superseded the previous, they are all still available to lettering artists practicing



today. In the game Rock Paper Scissors, at any given moment, any of the three choices can be the right one to make. Likewise, depending on the project the choice of working in stone, on paper, or digitally can be the right one.

The exhibits assembled here show what can be done with lettering through the application of imagination, design, and craftsmanship. Together they demonstrate that influence, experimentation and play all have a role in creating innovative, beautiful, thought-provoking works.

In this show, there are examples of the 20th Century lettering that draw a direct line to the artists practicing today. The influence of Edward Johnston is felt in contemporary calligraphy and design, Eric Gill in typography, Ralph Beyer in letter cutting, and Nicolette Gray in the study and understanding of lettering.

There are works that are the result of the artist experimenting with different materials, equipment and production methods creating new letterforms appropriate to the medium. What you won't find are examples of formal alphabets in classic style, there are many other opportunities to see wonderful examples of those.

But you will see examples of how a playful approach can inform the creative process both in finished pieces and in the exhibits you will be invited to contribute to.

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In answer to the initial question, the point of visiting *this* show is to be influenced by the experimentation and play of the lettering artists. But this is an exhibition that needs to be used and not just looked at. Rock Paper Pixel is active rather than passive, we invite you to take part and engage with the works on display then take that spirit of experimentation and play away with you.

Approach the exhibition with an open and enquiring mind, there are works and ideas on display here that you will not have seen the like of before. Look at the exhibits, make your own choices, like what you like and feel free to dislike some things but either way make sure you understand why you make those decisions.

Within this catalogue we show you the artists' thinking, working method, inspiration, and enjoyment. Their statements and preparatory sketches will help you understand how the works on display have developed from initial concept to realisation. And you will see how early roughs are exactly that: rough. So the distance between you and the object on display may not be as great as it seems. Indeed there are several works in this exhibition that need you to interact with them to add your thoughts and words to contribute to an ever-changing tableau.

But what happens when you leave the exhibition, does the memory of the works - and your relationship with them - fade in your rear-view mirror? Will this catalogue languish unread in a drawer or will it be the inspiration for a new wave of creativity? It's up to you.

We'd like you to use this exhibition as a springboard to a long-standing enthusiasm for the lettering arts in all its many forms. Have a go, join in, take part; discuss, debate, disagree; explore, experiment, engage and have fun doing so. Leave here having been influenced and inspired by the exhibits you have seen, keen to influence others and enthusiastic to create your own work.

As Marshall McLuhan famously said: 'The medium is the message'. Well, the medium here is an exhibition and the message is exhibit!

Mark Noad

*Curator of Rock Paper Pixel*

*“The farther backward  
you can look, the  
farther forward you  
are likely to see.”*

Winston Churchill

# *Influence, inspiration, and example*

The best new work comes from a thorough understanding of what has gone before. There is a long and rich history of the lettering arts to draw upon, influencing and inspiring the work of today's lettering arts.

Developments in the way we communicate have been driven by developments in technology from clay tablets to tablet computers. The production of paper was a technical innovation that enabled the spread of mass literacy. When painting *The Last Supper*, Leonardo de Vinci was experimenting with the new medium of oil paint; the composition of Degas' paintings was influenced by photography; and the design of typefaces has been steered by print and production processes from woodtype to hot metal to the digital realm.

Knowledge of the history of lettering should not be solely about perpetuating and recreating the best practice of past generations. By understanding the skills and techniques, artists can build on and develop them creating new, exciting works appropriate for the age.

The skill Richard Kindersley demonstrates by cutting a mould in polystyrene with a hot wire has a direct lineage from the woodcut lines of Eric Gill. Nick Benson's letterforms are influenced by the free style of graffiti tags but are informed and realised by the skilled hand of a master letter carver. Rosella Garavaglia's calligraphy has its roots in the teachings of Edward Johnston but executed with a contemporary flourish. And Jo Crossland's carved letters are the result of the knowledge she has gained studying with master carvers thanks to the support and influence of the Lettering Arts Trust.

And it is thanks to the Lettering Arts Trust that we are able to hold this exhibition in their gallery, the only one in the United Kingdom dedicated to the lettering arts. Many of the exhibitors here are members of Letter Exchange, the organisation for professionals in the lettering arts. For the past 30 years they have been actively encouraging a dialogue between the different lettering disciplines. Organisations like the Lettering Arts Trust and Letter Exchange as well as publications like Eye Magazine and schools including the City & Guilds of London Art School all contribute to a thriving and dynamic environment for the lettering arts influencing contemporary practitioners as well as the next generation of lettering artists.

There are many facets to influence. It can be formal or informal, deliberate or accidental, historic or contemporary, discrete or overt. The most important thing is to be open to it, to allow yourself to be influenced and to use that influence to develop your own approach which may in turn influence others.

The story of the lettering arts is a continuing narrative and we are all part of it. This exhibition is a brief précis of contemporary practice but we hope it will influence the chapters to come.

## Introduction

There are many important and influential people and organisations in the history of the lettering arts, some are widely known, others less so but they all play a part in the development of contemporary practice. For this exhibition, we have selected works by a handful of 20th Century figures whose legacy is still evident today and can be seen to influence many of the artists in this show.

Threads and stories run through this exhibition and beyond linking the historical with the contemporary and interweaving between the different lettering disciplines. Edward Johnston, the father of modern calligraphy is perhaps better known for his typeface and roundel for the London Underground. That typeface was developed with the help of one of his students at the Central school, Eric Gill, a sculptor,

lettercutter and wood carver who went on to design typefaces for the Monotype Corporation that are still popular today. Influential letter carver Ralph Beyer worked for Eric Gill, was a founder member of Letter Exchange and tutor at the City & Guilds of London Art School where several exhibitors studied. And Nicolette Gray designer, academic and curator of the Central Lettering Record (founded by Nicholas Biddulph) at the Central school helped to define the way we study and discuss contemporary lettering.

In the following pages we'll look at these artists in more detail to expand on their importance to the history of the lettering arts. This is by no means a definitive or comprehensive selection but is representative of the richness and depth of history and resource there is to explore.





## Johnston, Gill and the influence of others

Edward Johnston and Eric Gill are widely known thanks to their typefaces. Johnston's font for the London Underground designed in 1916 is still used throughout the network and seen by millions every day. Thanks in part to its use on his design for the Underground roundel the typeface has become handwriting of London. Gill Sans has spread even further with versions of it supplied on many computers sold today. But the origin of these typefaces is closely linked and both owe their existence to the intervention of other key figures.

Edward Johnston taught 'Illumination' at the Central School of Art. The classes laid the foundation for a revival of formal writing and formed the basis for his book *Writing &*

Station names set in the woodblock version of Edward Johnston's London Underground typeface. (Courtesy of the Central Lettering Record)

*Illumination, & Lettering* first published in 1906 and in print ever since. One of his pupils at Central was Eric Gill and the two continued to work together with Johnston eventually moving to join Gill in Ditchling.

Frank Pick, while advertising manager of the London Electric Railway, identified a need for a typeface that would "belong unmistakably to the times in which we lived" and have "the bold simplicity of the authentic lettering of the best periods and yet belong unmistakably to the 20th Century". In 1915, Pick approached Johnston and Gill to think about the new design. At the time, Gill was working on the Stations of the Cross for Westminster Cathedral and soon dropped out of the project but he must have made a worthwhile contribution as Johnston gave him ten percent of the fee.



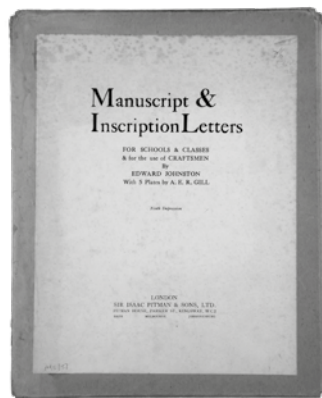
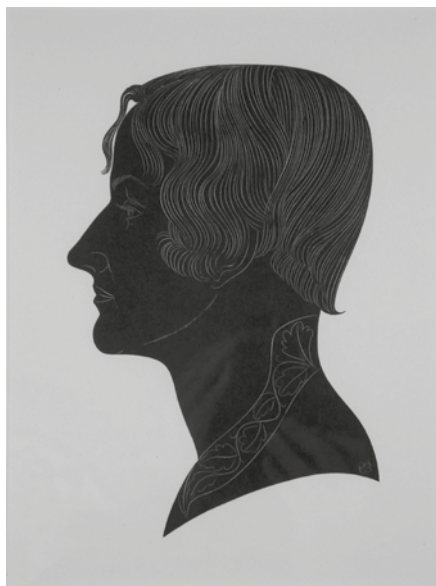
Recognising the need for a ‘corporate’ typeface was just one of the visionary ideas that Pick introduced. He commissioned the Art Deco architecture for the rapidly expanding Underground system and asked Harry Beck to design the iconic underground map first published in 1932. Frank Pick became the first Chief Executive of the nationalised London Transport and is arguably responsible for making the network what it is today.

In 1922, the Monotype Corporation appointed Stanley Morrison as typographic advisor. As part of his programme for typeface production, he approached Eric Gill impressed by his ability to engrave small letters in wood as well as his larger-scale work letter cutting and signwriting. Gill designed several typefaces for Monotype including one based on his work with Johnston for the Underground. Monotype Gill Sans was first published in 1928 and later developed into multiple weights from Ultra Light to the extremely bold Sans Double Elefans.

The success of Gill Sans owes much to Beatrice Warde, Head of Monotype’s publicity department and a close personal friend of both Gill and Morrison. The three had met in the mid 1920s when she moved to London from America and Gill produced several wood engravings of her including the profile portrait from 1926. She understood the need to publicise new typefaces even though Gill appeared reluctant, unhappy at the need to use promotional materials to sell his designs.

Beatrice Warde’s influence went much further than the publicity department at Monotype. She was a prolific writer and speaker on design and typography and a vocal advocate of their importance as a tool for business. Her essay *The Crystal Goblet* from 1930 calling for increased clarity in printing and typography is still regarded as a significant text in the study of typography and graphic design.

Gill and Johnston remained in touch and had a great respect for each others work. In later life, Gill wrote to Johnston saying: “I hope you realise that I take every opportunity of proclaiming the fact that what the Monotype people call Gill Sans owes all its goodness to your Underground letter. It is not altogether my fault that the exaggerated publicity value of my name makes the advertising world keen to call it by the name of Gill.”



Top: London Underground platform sign using the Johnston Underground typeface (Courtesy of the Central Lettering Record)  
Middle: *Beatrice Warde* woodcut by Eric Gill  
Above: Edward Johnston’s *Manuscript & Inscription Letters* (courtesy of David Wadmore)

## *A squeeze from the Central Lettering Record and the lettering legacy of Nicolette Gray*

A squeeze is a paper impression of the surface of an inscription useful in the study of epigraphy since the sixteenth century. One of the earliest known squeezes was found in the papers of Jean Matal (c.1517-97) who studied inscriptions as sources of law, though the more regular epigraphic use of squeezes was established only later in the seventeenth century by Raffaello Fabretti (1619-1700) as part of his work towards *Inscriptorium antiquarian quad in aedibus paternis asservantur explicatio* (1699). And while contemporary photographic methods allow for a multi-dimensional recording of inscriptions, the physicality of the squeeze as an artefact and the capacity to preserve an accurate 1:1 copy of the original inscription for offsite study remain advantageous in many instances.

A squeeze is made by dampening down the inscription to be recorded, then placing a water-soaked piece of squeeze paper (chemical filter paper) over the lettering surface, before hitting the stone with a rectangular-headed squeeze brush at an angle of 90 degrees, to push the paper into the cut letterforms. The paper is left to dry in situ. Once removed the squeeze should show a 'negative' image of the inscription, with the letterforms more prominent on the underside of the squeeze, where the paper is in direct contact with the stone it records.

This squeeze is displayed with the underside of the dried paper to the fore, so that the three-dimensional qualities of the letterforms as recorded are most evident, though they require reading in reverse. An ability to read Latin backwards would once have been the scholarly norm for epigraphers but, now that squeezes can be scanned and the image digitally flipped on screen, this former limitation has been overcome.

The inscription reads: D(is) M(anibus). / Ragoniae Piae, uxori / Aureli Hermetis, / parentes eius / fecerunt / M(arcus) Ragonius Blastus et / Ragonia Vera et sibi et / suis libertis libertabusque / posterisque eorum. It

***Gray's legacy of images and artefacts speaks against doctrinaire ideas. Instead it pleads for experimentation.***

is taken from a marble funerary slab dating from 101-200 AD and records the following, 'Dedicated to the spirits of the dead. Marcus Ragonius Blastus and Ragonia Vera, her parents, made this for Ragonia Pia, wife of Aurelius Hermes, and for themselves and their family, for their freedmen and -women, and for their descendents.'

According to the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (CIL) this epitaph plaque was found in the early seventeenth century in a cemetery that was later covered by the Basilica of Saint Peter. Since 1867 however the plaque has formed a part of the collections of the British Museum (inv.1867,0508.58) where this squeeze was made for the purposes of studying the elegant Imperial letterforms more closely.

### **Central Lettering Record**

The squeeze is a part of the collections of the Central Lettering Record (CLR), a collection of letterform study materials originated at the Central School of Arts & Crafts in 1963 by tutor Nicholas Biddulph with two main aims - to broaden understanding of letters as forms, and to better delineate the practice of lettering from that of typography. The revival in lettering and calligraphy so inspired by Edward Johnston's classes at the Central School at the turn of the century had by the 1950s and early 1960s begun to give way to the concerns of the Continental modern movement in typography.

The starting point for the CLR collections was a set of photographs of inscriptions in Rome taken by typographic historian James Mosley.



These images fulfilled Biddulph's ambition of showing, 'the quality and variety of the Roman achievement' in lettering. That is to say, Mosley's photographs offered a broader view of Roman lettering than offered within contemporary practice or debate, which, for Biddulph and others, had ossified and become overly focused on a model for letterforms identified with the much-lauded inscription at the base of the Trajan Column in Rome.

As lettering scholar and historian Nicolette Gray observed in her seminal guide *Lettering on buildings* (1960), 'it seems that our twentieth-century Roman letter is based not so much in, or study of, actual Roman achievement as on a choice of one type of Roman letter which has been recognized as perfect... identified for convenience and through laziness with that of Trajan's column.'

Gray joined the teaching staff at the Central in 1964 and was most likely responsible for the creation or the instigation of the squeeze on display. The letterforms the squeeze records evidence all the refinements of the inscriptional square capitals so definitive of the Imperial era and are dated from the same century as the Trajan inscription. Yet, they are subtly different from the Trajan letter. Note the flat-topped junctions here of the diagonal and vertical strokes of the Ms and Ns, and the fuller-bellied bottom bowl of the Bs. Nothing remarkable, yet this is just one

Above: 'Squeeze' made from an epitaph plaque in the collections of the British Museum (Courtesy of the Central Lettering Record)

squeeze from a drawerful made by Gray and her students by way of documenting the very many small differences between inscriptions, so as to better understand actual and not an idealized practice.

### Nicolette Gray (1911-97)

Gray would have been familiar with the use of squeezes as a study technique having trained in epigraphy. A scholarship to read history at Lady Margaret Hall at Oxford in 1929 resulted in an early enthusiasm for early medieval manuscripts. This was followed by a scholarship in 1932 to the British School at Rome to study early post-classical inscriptions in Italy. (Her paper on the Paleography of Latin Inscriptions in the Eighth, Ninth and Tenth Centuries in Italy was eventually published after the busyness of early married life abated in 1948). Her early affinity with letters as forms is noted by fellow historian, Nicholas Barker in his evocative description of her student years, 'With Dielh's *Inscriptiones Latinae* in hand, she wandered from place to place, making

squeezes, papier-maché moulds, from the stones, which gave her a direct feel for the three-dimensional quality of lettering that lasted the rest of her life.’

What would prove so distinctive about Gray’s feel for lettering as it came to shape her understanding of the field was its scope and the very particular way that she was able to situate her scholarship at the points of overlap between traditionally separate disciplines.

This was in part a reflection of the artistic and scholarly milieu which had shaped the breadth of her intellectual outlook since childhood. As the daughter of Laurence Binyon, poet and Keeper of Prints & Drawings at the British Museum her social circle reads like an index of key artists and writers of the twentieth century.

In 1937 her husband Basil Gray published *The English Print*, to which she contributed two chapters requiring an examination of Victorian printing, and introducing her to nineteenth century typefaces. The following year she published *XIXth Century Ornamented Types and Title Pages* her own remarkable history of these widely ignored types. Her since reprinted (1976) and now seminal volume was also widely ignored, until mainstream tastes caught up and public interest in the ‘vernacular’ came to fruition in the celebrations of the 1951 Festival of Britain.

And so, by 1956 when writing about the palaeography of the third century, Gray was able to contextualise the study of the fiddly inscripitional Filocalian letter within an overview of ornamented (and specifically bi-furcated) letters which drew upon her epigraphic insights, her knowledge of medieval manuscripts, and the Tuscan types of the Victorian era.

Working across epigraphy, calligraphy, art history, and typography Gray forged what she hoped would become the boundaryless study territory of ‘lettering’. In her scoping volume *A history of lettering* she defines it as, ‘a sub-division of writing ... in which the visual form, that is the letters and the way in which these are shaped and combined, has a formality and an importance over and above bare legibility. It can therefore be an art.’

For Gray understanding and thus unlocking the expressive potential of lettering in practice was the primary goal and she used writing, exhibitions, teaching and the CLR itself to champion formal invention with the goal of inspiring those working with letterforms of all kinds to reinvent practice.

Her legacy remains in the drawers of photographs she took or encouraged others to take; photographs often of things too ‘vulgar’ to have been afforded much attention elsewhere, such as the examples of experimental plastic boutique lettering in Paris or hand-painted Italian café signage from the 1970s. These and several thousand other CLR images now form part of the Museum & Study Collections held (and still used within teaching) within the Graphic Communication Design studios at Central Saint Martins and available for reference by appointment.

Gray’s legacy of images and artefacts speaks against doctrinaire ideas. Instead it pleads for experimentation. Please don’t be fooled by the seeming elegance and poise of this squeeze. It is part of a collection which seeks to challenge you to look closer, to question more rigorously and to come to your own unfettered conclusions about the way forwards.

### **Catherine Dixon**

*Senior Lecturer in Typography at Central Saint Martins and current co-curator of the Central Lettering Record.*

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Ralph Beyer was one of the first modern letter carvers in Britain to establish a personal style very different from the neo-Classical formality which had held sway since Gill reinvigorated the craft in the early years of the twentieth century. Beyer also taught part-time throughout most of his mature career. Via his teaching and the example of his work, his has been a significant influence in the general shift in inscriptional fashion towards a more informal approach.

Beyer was a refugee from Nazi Germany. He came to England in 1937 at the age of sixteen, spending some six months at Eric Gill's workshop in the Chiltern hills, an experience which laid the foundation for his lifelong work in lettering, sculpture and stone. His father was an art historian of some influence in Weimar Germany, with a breadth of cultural interests which included Expressionist painting, Modernist architecture, and lettering; he wrote two books on the early Christian catacomb carvings and inscriptions in Rome, and championed the pioneering lettering artist Rudolf Koch.

The first signs of a possible new direction for Beyer's work came in 1953. One of the catalysts for him was a magazine article in the *Architectural Review* of November that year by Nicolette Gray, in which she lamented the ubiquity of the Trajan letter and called for more inventiveness in public lettering. She included a photograph of a painted inscription by the artist and poet David Jones. Jones's very personal lettering was partly inspired



Above: *Chi Rho* by Ralph Beyer (courtesy of Harriet Frazer)  
Opposite: *Typographica 6*

by the same kind of naive carvings which interested Ralph's father, and pointed to a possible route for Ralph's own work.

One of the first opportunities for Ralph to put his new ideas into practice would be the largest commission of his career: the lettering in Basil Spence's Coventry Cathedral, completed in 1962, which included the eight huge 'Tablets of the Word' on either side of the nave. This, and other work in the early 1960s (such as the cast concrete inscription around the porch at St Paul's, Bow Common, east London) allowed him to find his voice as

***He was a whisperer in a shouty world, and perhaps it is this absence of slickness and striving for effect... which make his best work enduring***



# A note on *Typographica* 6

a letter carver and establish a style which, in broad terms, remained characteristic of his work for the rest of his career.

How can we describe that style? For sure, there are particular features of letterform and layout, but above all there is a consistent voice present in everything from choice of text (where this was his) to layout, letterform, surface, execution. Beyer's layouts were sometimes unconventional, but only slightly. His letters would vary in size, and a given letter would vary in shape throughout an inscription, but only a little. The surface texture might be tooled, but only lightly, and the carving itself, though competent, was not over-perfect. He was a whisperer in a shouty world, and perhaps it is this absence of slickness and striving for effect, combined with a strong innate sense of design and a sensitivity to words, which make his best work enduring.

**John Neilson**  
Letter cutter and editor of the  
*Letter Exchange journal Forum*

In December 1962, Herbert Spencer published issue 6 of the second series of his magazine *Typographica*. In it, Nicolette Gray reviewed Ralph Beyer's lettering for Coventry Cathedral once again referencing the work of David Jones who studied under Eric Gill in Ditchling.

The issue also contained the first British publication of *Watching Words Move*, the playful experiments with words by Brownjohn Chermayeff Geismar that became an architype for all graphic design students. Among the other articles in that issue was a piece about reading by touch - the cover is printed in Braille - a study of typewriter type faces and a note about Penguin Books.

To find such diversity in one publication is a delight, Spencer's breadth of interest and enthusiasm for lettering in all its forms is inspirational. It is in the spirit of this open-minded interest in all aspects of the lettering arts that this exhibition has been curated.



# Letter Exchange

The written word engages the eye as well as the mind. Stories, news and opinions are delivered to us in many different ways: handwritten on paper, carved in wood or stone, printed, incised or viewed on a screen. The right combination of message and medium can broaden perception and intensify the reading experience, engaging our emotions while helping to convey ideas from their source directly to the consciousness of the spectator.

At Letter Exchange, this is what we do. Our members come from all corners of the lettering arts - calligraphy, lettercutting, typography and design - but we have one thing in common: we make words visible. We work with language to bring it to life, to focus attention on ideas, to embody the music of the words or the tone of the writer's thoughts. By making the act of reading an aesthetic as well as an intellectual experience, we hope to encourage the viewer to pause for thought and to let these words enter memory.

Letter Exchange is a wide-ranging and eclectic mix of professionals in the lettering arts who share the highest standards of craftsmanship and skill. By the nature of our practise, most of us work alone. So the organisation acts as a melting pot where we can meet, discuss, debate and be inspired by the work of our peers.

At our heart is a love of letters and lettering in all its forms and we celebrate this through our activities. We host monthly lectures at the Art Workers' Guild in London covering a diverse range of subjects; our twice-yearly journal *Forum* is full of lettering-related articles, essays, and reviews; and our annual studio visits take us behind the scenes to see how our peers work. Our touring exhibitions showcase the work of our members all of whom receive our Yearbook with notes, sketches, photos, and ideas submitted by fellow members.

You can find full details of all our activities on our website ([www.letterexchange.org](http://www.letterexchange.org)) where you will also find information about how to become a member. We have an international membership and always welcome enquiries from anyone interested in joining either as Student, Associate, or Full Member.

*We work with language to bring it to life, to focus attention on ideas, to embody the music of the words or the tone of the writer's thoughts.*





# Lettering Arts Trust

The Lettering Arts Trust was founded in 1988 by Harriet Frazer as Memorials by Artists.

This was in response to Harriet's need to find someone to make a unique memorial for her step-daughter Sophie who died suddenly at the age of 26. It was hard at that time to find a letter carving artist, but harder still discovering that church regulations prevented her from inscribing her daughter's poetry onto a memorial.

When Harriet finally did find artist Simon Verity, she determined that other people wanting to mark the life of a loved one should not have to go through what she had to before finding Simon. So she formed Memorials by Artists - to help others, and help foster the art and craft of creating unique well-designed memorials.

We believe in the importance of creating beautiful hand-carved letters, and passing on the skills to create them. Hand-carved letters are a permanent mark in stone that show the love a person has for another; keep alive the memory of a special event; or mark a beloved place for years to come.

The highly honed skill of letter carving that had been passed down from the Romans, nearly faded in the mechanised society of

the early 20th century. This was when a new generation of lettering artists such as Eric Gill made it their mission to revive it. This is our mission, too.

Today, we are the UK's leading voice for promoting the lettering arts. We are a non-profit organisation that fund apprenticeships, hold workshops, host talks, sell fine works, and curate exhibitions. Our aim is to inspire people about lettering, while equipping letter-carving artists with the skills they need for now and the future.

We want to make creating a memorial by an artist as rewarding, inspiring and as meaningful as possible. For over 30 years, this has been one of our most important goals. Thanks to our register containing 75 of the UK's finest letter-carving artists, with whom we have strong relationships, we are confident people who come to us gain a memorial by artists that at once inspires, consoles and delights.

Our constant has been to keep the art of letter carving alive, to make it accessible to people, and to give advice and information through the process of commissioning a piece, be it a memorial or a garden sundial.

*We want the centuries' old art of letter carving to thrive in today's digital world.*

So much of what we say is conveyed in our gestures, intonation and presentation. Through travels in countries where there is no common language, these forms of expression become our mutual way to converse and much of their success is bound on the enjoyment of such. Back in our own familiar environments, we may also choose to smile or nod randomly to those we have never met before with a sense of recognition and mutuality as we walk amongst our local high streets.

In this composition only parts of letters convey the unspoken language, and in the drawing or carving of letters, the concentration focuses on the strokes and pen angles that govern the form of the overall shape of each part of the letter. The practice can almost be meditative, the fluency lucid, in the same sub-conscious manner that we convey ourselves without language.

I wanted the parts of letters to be carved into a light surface to give the conversation a sense of air, and to that end each slate is thinned by carving and splitting various areas away before rubbing them back to create a smooth somewhat organic feel to the material, allowing the digits to flow across the contours.

The Mani stones in Tibet and Nepal inscribed with the six syllabled mantra “*Om Mani Padme Hum*” are often carved across large boulders, with the offered prayer responding to their organic shape. These have been a strong visual recollection to me and may well have helped influence the subject and composition for this piece *Between Words*.



Mark Frith  
*Between Words*  
1,000 x 300 mm  
Slate, steel

Above: detail of *Between Words*  
Opposite: Detail of a Mani stone  
from Solukhumbu, Nepal

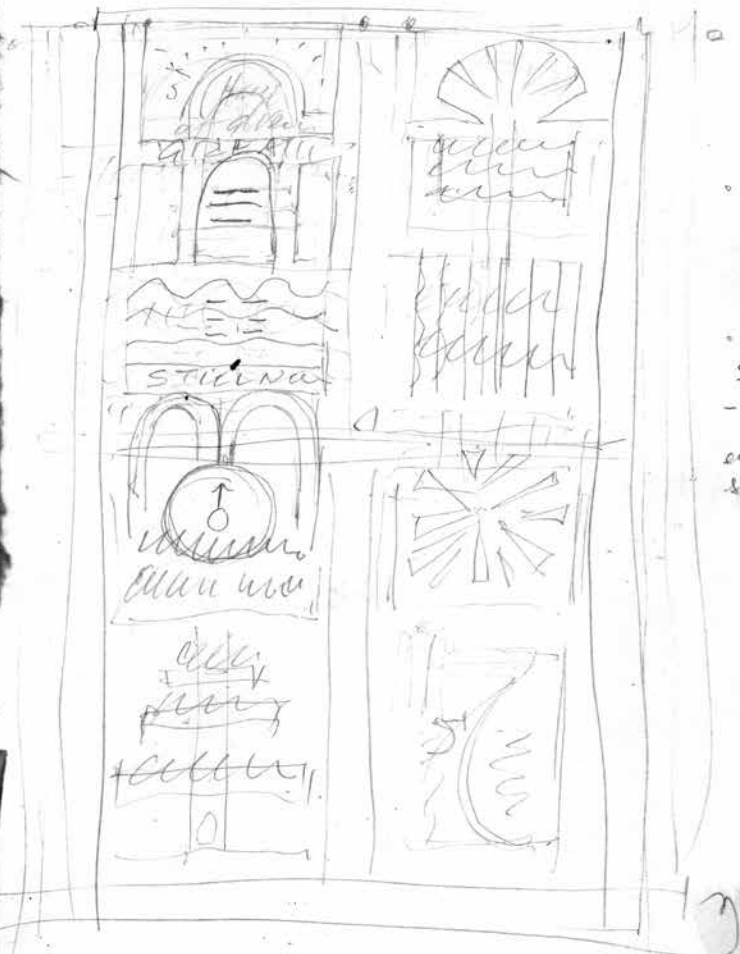
*In this composition only of parts of letters  
convey the unspoken language*



# MINGLED WITH THE

# MYSTERY

laminated tissue papers



• VISHUDDHA

# HP

• throat chakra

Symbol

- Colour: BLUE

embossed with  
slide case

This project began in response to an invitation from my local calligraphy group to explore the concept of BLUE, the meaning of the word in any of its aspects. I could have chosen 'feeling blue, sadness' or 'blues' music or 'Blue' the song by Beyoncé. I chose the symbolism of the colour blue.

I love working with colours and I'm fascinated by the mental associations and feelings a given colour inspires in us. Blue is the colour of the sky and sea; it is associated with depth and stability; next to other colours of the spectrum it recedes while other hues appear to come forward. Blue is a cool colour and mixed with others, it diminishes their warmth. It symbolises trust, wisdom, confidence, intelligence, faith, tranquillity, truth and heaven. It produces a calming effect and therefore is beneficial to the mind.

I felt straight away that I wanted to create a vertical structure free from a frame, like a totem ascending towards heaven, I also wanted to play with the juxtaposition of fragility and strength, transparency and texture, therefore I chose to use tissue papers as the main support. I started collecting them, tearing them, mono-print them with patterns, and glue them together to achieve the colour and texture I wanted as well as strength. I realised that tissue papers, especially when wet, are so fragile and vulnerable, but once laminated (glued together and dry) they become so strong, unbreakable. This process related very well to the 'power' versus 'softness' aspects of water and the colour BLUE.

I had strings going across my studio with wet sheets of tissue paper hanging to dry like the washing lines of a poor Naples's suburb. At this stage I had no idea whether the whole process would have worked, as I had never done it before; I was just trusting the fact that playing with materials is always worthwhile even if it may take you to unexpected places.

Once the various sheets of laminated tissues were ready, I needed to put them together in such a way so that my long totemic piece could be hung and withstand gravity. I decided to use metal; copper rods sewn into the overlapping sections with silk threads. Copper is supple, easy to incise with patterns or lettering but also warm, a nice contrast to the coolness of the blue, its addition served both as a structural and decorative element.

For the first time I also attempted to compose my own poem so that the words, colour scheme and materials would jell harmoniously, to inspire a meditative / peaceful state of mind in the viewer and to reflect closely my train of thought. The text is centred and the letterforms playful and vaguely related to Old Roman Cursive written with the brush.

*I had no idea whether the whole process would work as I had never done it before; I was just trusting the fact that playing with materials is always worthwhile even if it may take you to unexpected places.*

Rosella Garavaglia

House of Dreams

1,660 x 330 mm

Laminated tissue papers (some tinted or mono-printed) – papier mâché panels – copper sheets and rods – slide frame and paper embossing – handmade silk threads, shell, buttons and wooden stick with bark.

I made Cold Fear for the 2012 Letter Exchange exhibition on freedom of speech. I wanted to make a piece about the individual experience of someone facing the prospect of their way of life, beliefs, even patterns of thought, being swept away by an overwhelming alien power. The example in my mind was of the Chinese invasion of Tibet which began in 1950. I did a lot of reading, but failed to find any suitable text for carving, so I ended up writing my own based on accounts by Tibetans in exile and other commentators. The way I carved it, in relief with a kind of curved-sided inverted V-cut, I had experimented with before, but not with as long a text as this. It seemed appropriate for this weighty subject. By carving away what is

not the letters, what is left behind is a kind of speaking mountainous landscape. The stone (Dunhouse Blue sandstone) was also very hard, so the process of carving was laborious and slow. This sort of 'massed' composition allows a lot of interplay of shapes - the strokes of the letters but also the curved planes of the 'valley sides'. Hans-Joachim Burgert and his theories on the purpose of calligraphy loom large behind the composition of this piece and others I have made, especially regarding strength/weakness in stroke joins and combinations, varying density and rhythm of strokes, and the use of repetition and contrast of shapes.

*By carving away what is not the letters,  
what is left behind is a kind of speaking  
mountainous landscape.*

John Neilson  
*Cold Fear*  
450 x 450 mm  
Dunhouse Blue sandstone

Below: work in progress  
Opposite: roughs and sketches

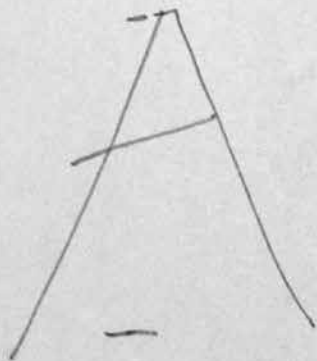
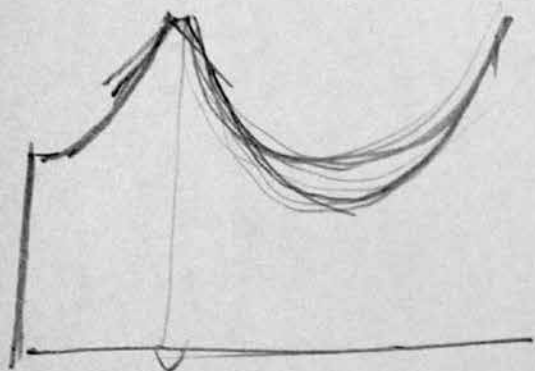




WHERE ONCE WAS  
CAREFREE TALK  
COLD FEAR NOW  
STILLS NOT ONLY  
WORDS BUT  
THOUGHT ITSELF

WHERE ONCE WAS  
CAREFREE TALK  
COLD FEAR  
NOW STILLS NOT  
ONLY WORDS  
BUT IT THOUGHT  
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WHERE ONCE  
WAS CAREFREE  
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NOT ONLY WORDS  
BUT THOUGHT  
ITSELF



For much of its storied history, graffiti writing has existed, and even relied upon a combination of mystery and misunderstanding. From the ritual secrecy and anonymity, to the beautifully intricate, yet codified handcrafted letterforms that despite their scale remain legible only to those in the know.

My earliest forays into the culture came before the digital type era, and were led by an identity that felt aligned to those of the young outsiders of New York whose creative work was beginning to appear in the galleries of Manhattan before making it's way into Europe during the early 80's.

While studying graphic design, graffiti art and the culture that birthed it, provided the ideal counterpoint to the formality of an education lacking in any cultural influence familiar to my own experience.

Growing up in London during the 80's was an amazing time for the creative anti-hero. Popular culture was littered with examples across music, literature, fashion and film, but the arrival of Hip Hop in the UK quite literally changed the infamy game for thousands of young people. Drawing scorn from the media and general public, it became very obvious that these new forms of dance, music, spoken word and visual art would struggle to earn the credibility they rightly deserved.

The appropriation of public spaces for curation and performance only compound already rooted fears and growing suspicion based on the stereotypical view of the young and restless, exemplified by frequent sketchy media portrayals of the masked graffiti archetype.

It's taken 30-plus years for graffiti to art to own its place in the hearts, minds of the general public, with many artists now operating comfortably in plain sight. Despite casting a much more familiar sight across the public and commercial landscape, those from the hand-lettering tradition still find themselves on the wrong side of the near-redundant art-versus-vandalism discussion, while continuing to push the craft into new and increasingly elaborate forms.

Through my art, writing, lectures and workshops my intention is to bring the viewer into new spaces to discuss a creative movement that despite it's significance, remains largely misunderstood. Language, culture and the politics of identity are key themes in my work and are used interchangeably to explore and celebrate the enduring legacy of a once reviled, yet now very familiar art form.

There is much more to learn and understand about this unique approach to hand lettering, and also about the artists' compulsion to elaborate beyond the typically narrow framing of the media. A closer look into the non-commissioned community spaces where the spirit of the culture still flourishes may well prove to be even more revealing.



*Those from the hand-lettering tradition still find themselves on the wrong side of the near-redundant art-versus-vandalism discussion, while continuing to push the craft into new and increasingly elaborate forms*



**Ewan Clayton**

*My dreaming self, lines from personal  
correspondence with the artist from  
Laurens van der Post.*

430 x 310 mm

Metal nib and sumi on Royal Watercolour  
Society paper, 2006

Below: Detail

The shape of this piece was stimulated by a glyph I had seen from the Kalahari, a place I visited in my early twenties. The choice of that glyph was inspired by my text. They are words written to me by Laurens van der Post, author and friend of C.G. Jung. I had shared a dream with him. He wrote “Somehow your letter tells me that you know, in the depths of yourself, that committing yourself to the thrust and direction of dreams like these there is the answer, the only answer to life and creation, and I am so happy for you that you have a dreaming self.” I have always placed importance on the thrust and direction of my dreams and that includes my dreams for letters, I don’t feel bound by many conventions.

*Ewan Clayton*

***I have always placed importance on the  
thrust and direction of my dreams and that  
includes my dreams for letters, I don’t feel  
bound by many conventions.***



In 1995 I was asked by Ian Hamilton Finlay to consider designing and making an inscription in stone based on an extract from the writings of the French revolutionary Saint-Just. The quote is rendered in four languages and mixed up, Ian described this as a ‘Macaronised’ inscription.

I was delighted that Ian wanted to work with a Roman style layout that has no punctuation other than a little flick of the brush called a punt, between the words. The words themselves are often broken at the end of there line and continue on the next line without the explanatory hyphen that we would use today.

This gave me the opportunity that I had been looking for to work with patterns of letters with the intention that the eye will travel easily all over the stone without being attracted to specific areas. I have always found patterns to be very calming.

To add a note of tension it was decided to dress the outer edge of the stone with a masons tool called a pitcher giving it the appearance of an inscription that had been taken from a wall and then roughly squared up. My heart was in my mouth as I did it, there was a real chance that the stone would break in two. Of course had I been sensible I could have prepared the stone before cutting the letters but then would not have had the buzz of completing the task without mishap.

Ian wanted to make a print from one of the original drawings but in the end it was decided to use a rubbing from the stone, I remember a pleasant morning taking two or three rubbings before sending the best off to Ian.

*I could have prepared the stone before cutting the letters but then would not have had the buzz of completing the task without mishap*



Andrew Whittle  
*The Land/Die Heimat*  
830 x 660 mm  
Rubbing on paper

Left: the original carving  
Opposite: drawing for the inscription

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I spent my early childhood playing under the towering Elm trees of Wiltshire. In 1976 we lost tens of thousands of Elm trees and the landscape around me changed for ever. The Elms were not replaced and many of the hedgerows were removed creating vast areas of industrial cereal agriculture.

Twice in my lifetime I have had to witness the loss of a tree species - now our Ash trees are dying from Ash Die back. Horse Chestnuts are suffering too with the Leaf Miner Moth. In Wiltshire the trees that will replace our mature Oaks, Beech, Ash and Hornbeam have not been planted; no longer are standards left to grow in hedgerows as they once were.

To combat my grief at our tree loss I spend the winter months planting where I can, and am involved in forming a community tree planting group in association with Extinction Rebellion to re-green the Vale of Pewsey; we approach farmers and landowners for permission to plant hedgerows and trees along footpaths, linking villages. The trees are provided free by the Woodland Trust and Defra is interested in rolling this initiative out on a national scale. We plan to plant 5 kilometres of trees and hedgerows this winter. But we need to do so much more.

Made from six species of British trees, this little folding poem reflects my love for the Hedgerow - a crucial habitat that nurtures, protects, feeds and connects. I have not tried to push boundaries here, but to work within them. The lettering is simple; it is the text and the materials that matter. Made of Sycamore, Ash, Cherry, Beech, Oak and Elm, it is a little field boundary of its own.



*I have not tried to push boundaries here, but to work within them. The lettering is simple; it is the text and the materials that matter.*

Caroline Webb

*Hedge Row*

(Made with Matthew Burt)

1,080 x 70 mm (open)

Sycamore, Ash, Cherry, Beech, Oak, Elm

***“It is common sense to take a method and try it; if it fails, admit it frankly and try another. But above all, try something.”***

Anthony Burgess

# *Experimentation, innovation and mistakes*

To experiment is to try something different, something new. Exploring new ideas, innovative techniques, different materials can unlock creativity and open up new directions. But, if you are willing to experiment you also have to be willing to fail, an inevitable consequence of pushing the boundaries of what you can achieve.

And yet, making ‘mistakes’ is one of the most creative things you can do. When things don’t turn out as you expect it is rarely wasted time. There is much to be said for the accidental outcome of a failed process, the serendipity of an unexpected result, things that you consciously did not set out to achieve. Experiments, successful or otherwise inform new thinking and new approaches.

What’s important is the act, the attempt, without that you cannot progress.

When students are timid about making a mark in his life drawing classes for fear of getting it ‘wrong’, tutor John Close

is fond of saying: “I want you to make bigger mistakes and I want you to make them now”. Former Children’s Laureate, illustrator Chris Riddell believes people put too much emphasis on the noun ‘drawing’ when they should be thinking of the verb ‘drawing’; the thing that is produced is not as important as the process of making it.

Many of the exhibits in this exhibition are the result of this process of experimentation, the artist trying something, responding to different ideas or materials. In many cases this takes them outside the conventions of their established disciplines: lettercutter Richard Kindersley creating new letterforms in cast concrete; calligrapher Cherrell Avery working with wrought iron; sculptors Julia Vance and Michelle de Bruin using lettering to create three-dimensional forms; Sue Hufton weaving letters based on Roman inscriptions.

In some ways, you could say it’s an experiment bringing such a diverse and eclectic selection of works into one exhibition, there is usually far more homogeneity on display in a gallery. But it is a deliberate decision to attempt to tell a different story, to break down conventional barriers between the historic and the contemporary, between the different lettering disciplines and indeed, between the exhibits and the visitors.

It’s this last point that matters most. This exhibition gives you the visitor the opportunity to contribute to the works and interact with them, to handle and make rubbings from the artworks, to make your own words and lettering pictures. By encouraging you to experiment within the gallery, we hope you will continue to experiment beyond the gallery to try your own lettering influenced by the works on display. And maybe you will be one of the exhibitors next time.

I have been in working with textiles all my life and long wanted to learn to weave. Instead, aged 19, I came across calligraphy and lettering and instinctively knew it was letters that fascinated me. However, the desire to weave never went away and over the years I took a few workshops to learn techniques. Then two years ago I enrolled on a part-time programme at West Dean College which gave me the time and guidance to explore the process of weaving. Within that I chose to experiment with lettering. Working with the two disciplines together has produced results with design and technical considerations that have surprised me.

My lettering work has always been very precise and controlled but with the background of seven years of rigorous training and well over 30 years of practice, I've now been able to accept that the process of weaving necessarily means I have to allow the letters to be themselves. Tapestry weaving is carried out on a simple picture-frame type of loom with a warp wrapped around top and bottom and the weft worked in small sections allowing me to build up letters in small sections. It is by nature slow and careful and the placing of each bead of wool, silk or cotton is very deliberate but the result is still not unlike a pixelated image, especially when making curves and diagonals.

My first piece of recent weaving began as a drawing of a fragment of stone from my Rome sketchbook. I literally made a careful 'cartoon' (as the guide for a weaving is called) to follow and this was useful for learning how to build up and weave around the letter shapes.

Next I took a different approach and began weaving names, again using exact drawings as a guide. What happened was that the letters could not be straight jacketed by the same level of precision and they took on a life of their own. To my surprise the finished result looked far more like my starting point of the original informal incised names on the Early Christian gravestones simply because of the materials I was using and the nature of the technique even though I had not intended to copy them.

Although content to accept what was happening to the letterforms themselves, that did not mean I was happy with the result. I soon realised the need to work and rework, to make and repeat the names using different combinations of linens, silks and wools. Only in the repetition do things start to happen: refining the techniques, actively allowing chance to influence the result, recording and critically analysing what I could see happening. The need for that discipline never goes away, no matter how experienced one is.

The materials one uses has a direct influence on the result. Letters are not animate objects, they are interpreted and created but their nature depends upon the choices of the maker.

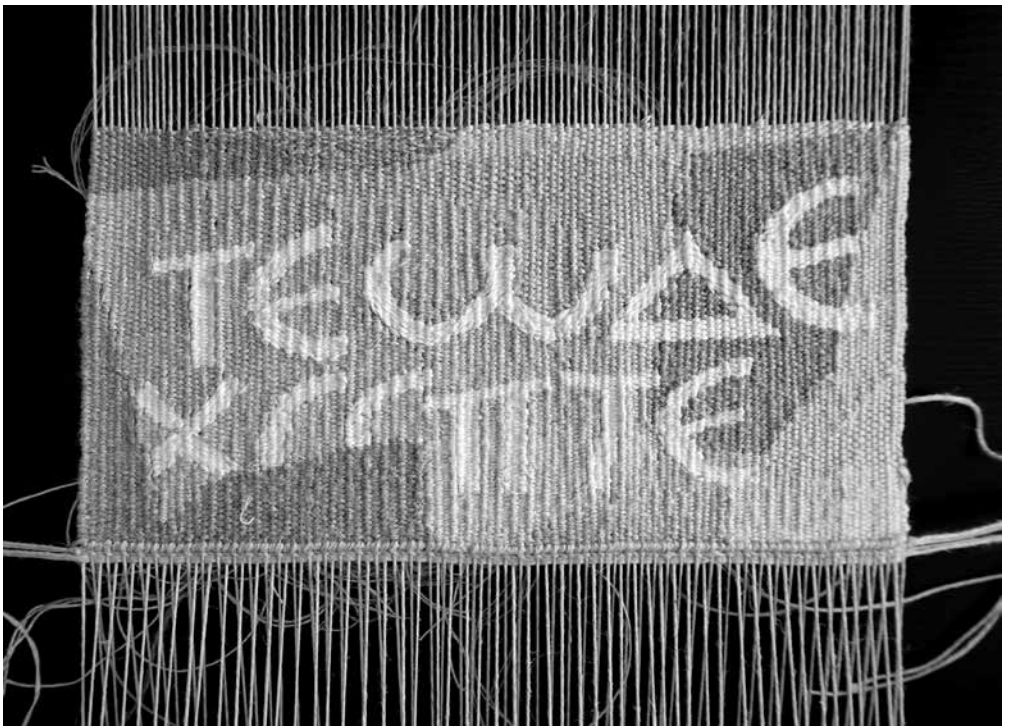
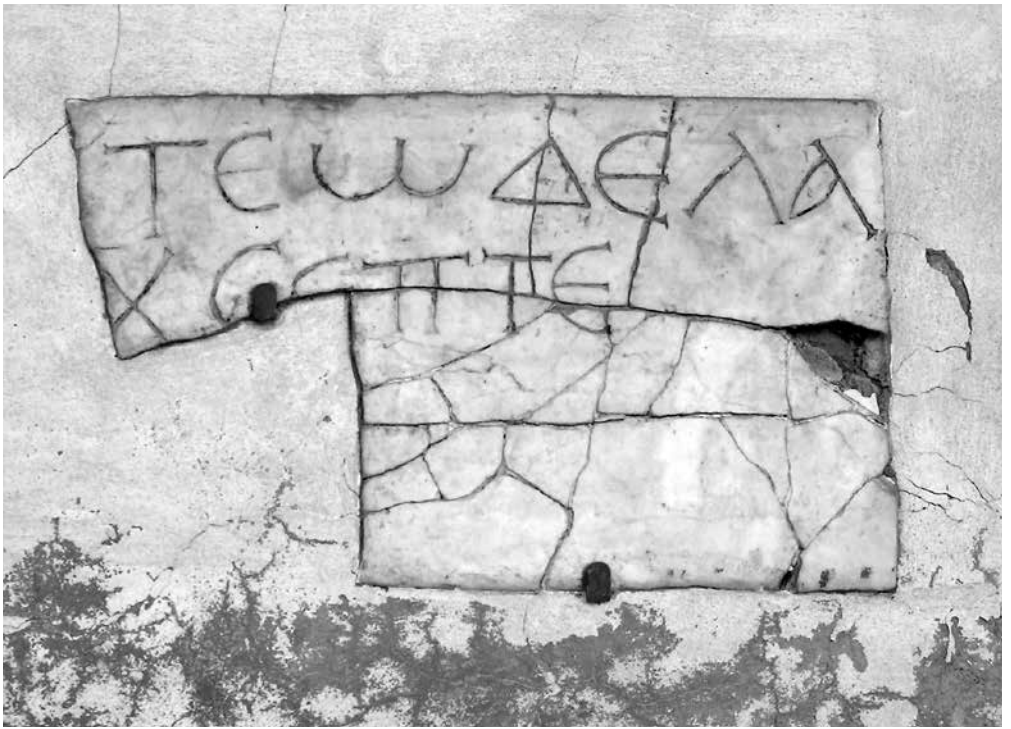
That sounds simple and obvious but working in a different medium and learning new processes has facilitated a new level of understanding for me. It has been liberating to have to accept new restraints, to be in a position of limited control and to be surprised by the results.

*It has been liberating to have to accept new restraints, to be in a position of limited control and to be surprised by the results.*

Sue Hufton  
Woven letters  
Various sizes  
Cotton, linen and silk

Opposite top: source inscription in Rome  
Opposite below: work in progress  
Overleaf: sketchbook pages





78

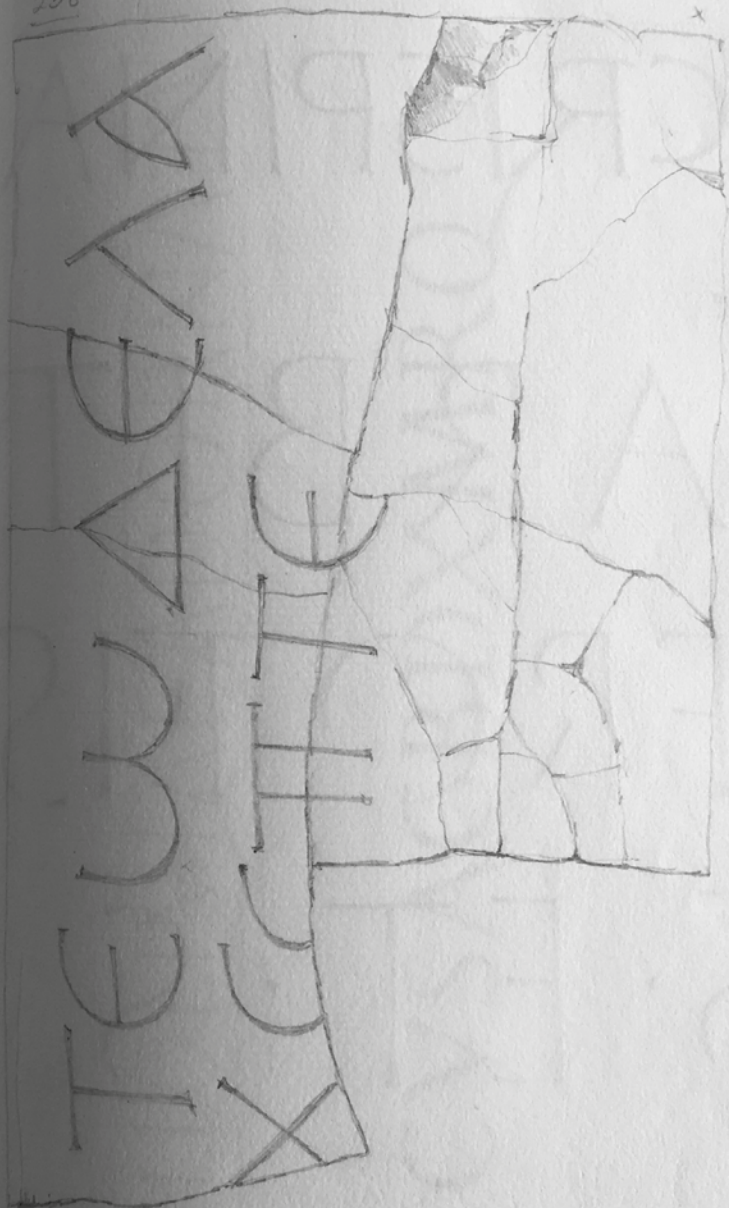
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FYLLIS  
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TEU Δ ΕΥΑ  
XCCTTIE

The typeface Brucker was designed as a result of attending and participating in the recent Letter Exchange Conference in 2018. I had various ideas which revolved around the need to produce more expressive letter shapes; ones removed from the computer but still delivered as digital type. And importantly, not bound by the computer or its technological need to conform to prescribed structures. Type design relies on structure, rhythm and pattern, but not at the loss of spirit. The computer is incredibly seductive in its ability to automate a process, to seemingly speed up a process, to dumb down the need for knowledge. However, frustration grows when the results don't fulfil the vision that was in the mind's eye.

In the natural world, the innate harmony of the 'picturesque' has fuelled in me a fascination of how to capture the energy and emotion experienced when something is 'just right'. Often the things that create most interest are the simple, naive ones. Why do words such as naive and primitive conjure up images of unbalanced wonkiness? There's a lot of warmth, passion and energy in things that are raw and immediate, and yes, wonky.

The early 20th century provided opportunity for a group of young artists to translate their revolutionary zeal into artistic expression. At the same time, to challenge and reject the dominant social and political structures they saw around them. In 1905 four German artists formed Die Brücke (The Bridge). Their creative fervour produced work imbued with innate energy. Their artworks exploded with angular, aggressive marks and emotional

tension, and struck a cord with artists across Central Europe, influencing them and the wider graphic arts.

In 2017 I visited an exhibition celebrating Spanish fashion designer Cristóbal Balenciaga at the Victoria & Albert Museum. Balenciaga was not afraid to abstract accepted norms in the pursuit of a new expression. The results of which set new styles and tropes that still influence the fashion industry today. A primary theme running through much of his oeuvre addresses how the silhouette of the body can be changed through skilful (often radical) shaping. Seeing the exhibition prompted questions as to how the concept of 'silhouette' could be applied to the design of letters. More specifically, how does the silhouette of a typeface change its rhythmic patterning? Type designers often talk about the skeletal structure of a letter that underpins its shape. Is there any mileage in twisting this around and instead focus on the shape as it is seen - its silhouette, and not what lies beneath. And expand this from each single letter to the collective shapes of a whole typeface image.

Ideas of Expressionism and Silhouette were brought together in the design of Brucker with the intent to create letters full of energy and spirit. No two stems or details are the same; the differences being subtle but vital. Curves are interrupted along their path allowing their weight to be moved and fitted to visually fill spaces left by other letters. The traditional concept of horizontal alignment across a typeface was redressed to allow the letters to move more freely and create a line full of life.

*I wanted to prolong the off-computer stage for longer than I would normally, so I decided to produce a few ink drawings purely to slow down and to see the letters as solid shapes and with rough edges before they became more fixed digital shapes.*

Jeremy Tankard

Brucker

Drawings and preparatory work  
for digital typeface

四  
十  
五  
十



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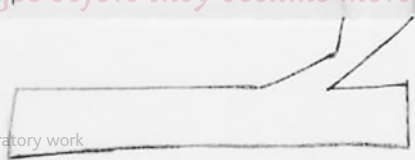
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Jeremy Tankard  
Brucker

Drawings and preparatory work  
for digital typeface



*“Without aesthetic, design is either the humdrum repetition of familiar clichés or a wild scramble for novelty. Without the aesthetic, the computer is but a mindless speed machine, producing effects without substance.”*

Paul Rand

Fashions come and go, and concrete is no exception. I first became interested in the material during the 1960s and 70s when the fashionable architectural style of brutalism was at its height. Concrete was seen as the impartial neutral and nonaligned architecture of neo-Marxism that was so prevalent at architectural schools and universities during this period. Brutalism, as it was popularly known, is often associated with drab and monolithic public housing schemes and yet a few architects attempted to explore real promise of concrete, stripped of its politics and concentrating on its potential for powerful and elegant structures. The preeminent architect exploring these opportunities was the Italian Pier Luigi Nervi. His soaring organic forms using the innate qualities of reinforced concrete were inspirational and certainly drove me to explore the potential of the material.

I was keen to develop a craft of lettering in concrete using new tools and methods; I did not want to replicate typefaces in three-dimensional forms in concrete as I felt this to be a denial of its potential. I wanted to discover a method of expressing the fusion of making with the solid nature of the material. At the time, as is so often the case, artists were leading the way in experimenting with new materials and consequently expanded polystyrene found great favour in art schools, particularly in postgraduate courses in London, as it was a material which could be worked quickly and was able to express forms that could be both experimental and traditional. This introduced me to the potential of using expanded polystyrene sheeting to produce directly the negative moulds which could be inserted into the shuttering of new buildings during the construction stage.

There is an inbuilt paradox in the soft pliable form of expanded polystyrene and the inherent solid and hard denseness of concrete. Ultimately, I found this stimulating, seeing how a flowingly and quickly expressed form in polystyrene could be magically metamorphosed into something as solid and inert is concrete. The capturing and freezing of motion.

As I was directly producing a mould without a negative, the letterforms had to be set out and worked in reverse into the expanded polystyrene. There were, at the time, no commercially available tools for cutting polystyrene and consequently I had to develop my own method of doing this. I decided to use high zinc content resistance wire, which could be bent into different profiles for cutting channels into the polystyrene outlining the letters. I created a system of passing a low voltage current through the resistance wire, to heat it to a temperature just below 200°C. I was keen that this new craft I was developing should express in the finished form the methodology of its making which is of course the *raison d'être* of any craft made object. Like all craft, the fusion of tool and material produces each its own limitations and disciplines which articulate its natural expression. One salient point about cutting polystyrene with a hot wire is you cannot pause even for a moment as you would simply burn a large hole in the material, so it is a very dynamic process requiring dexterity and conviction.

Richard Kindersley  
*Live to Work, Work to Live*  
1,000 x 310 mm  
Cast concrete

Opposite: detail

*I did not want to replicate typefaces in three-dimensional forms in concrete as I felt this to be a denial of its potential. I wanted to discover a method of expressing the fusion of making with the solid nature of the material.*





Each cover of Eye 94, front and back, is one of 8,000 different numbered pieces of artwork printed digitally on an HP Indigo 10000 press at Pureprint using HP Mosaic, a program that enables variable data printing based on a single 'seed' vector file. Mosaic makes it possible to resize, rotate and change the colour palette of the artwork, cropping it to make each unique final cover file.

To make ten seed files, Paul McNeil and Hamish Muir of MuirMcNeil ([www.muirmcneil.com](http://www.muirmcneil.com)) produced a file in which the letters of the word 'eye' are repeated in fixed increments and in three layers, each set in a different font of their TwoPoint or TwoPlus typefaces. They are shifted laterally in distances proportionate to the letter spacing. Two of the seed files are shown, slightly cropped, on the inside front and back covers.

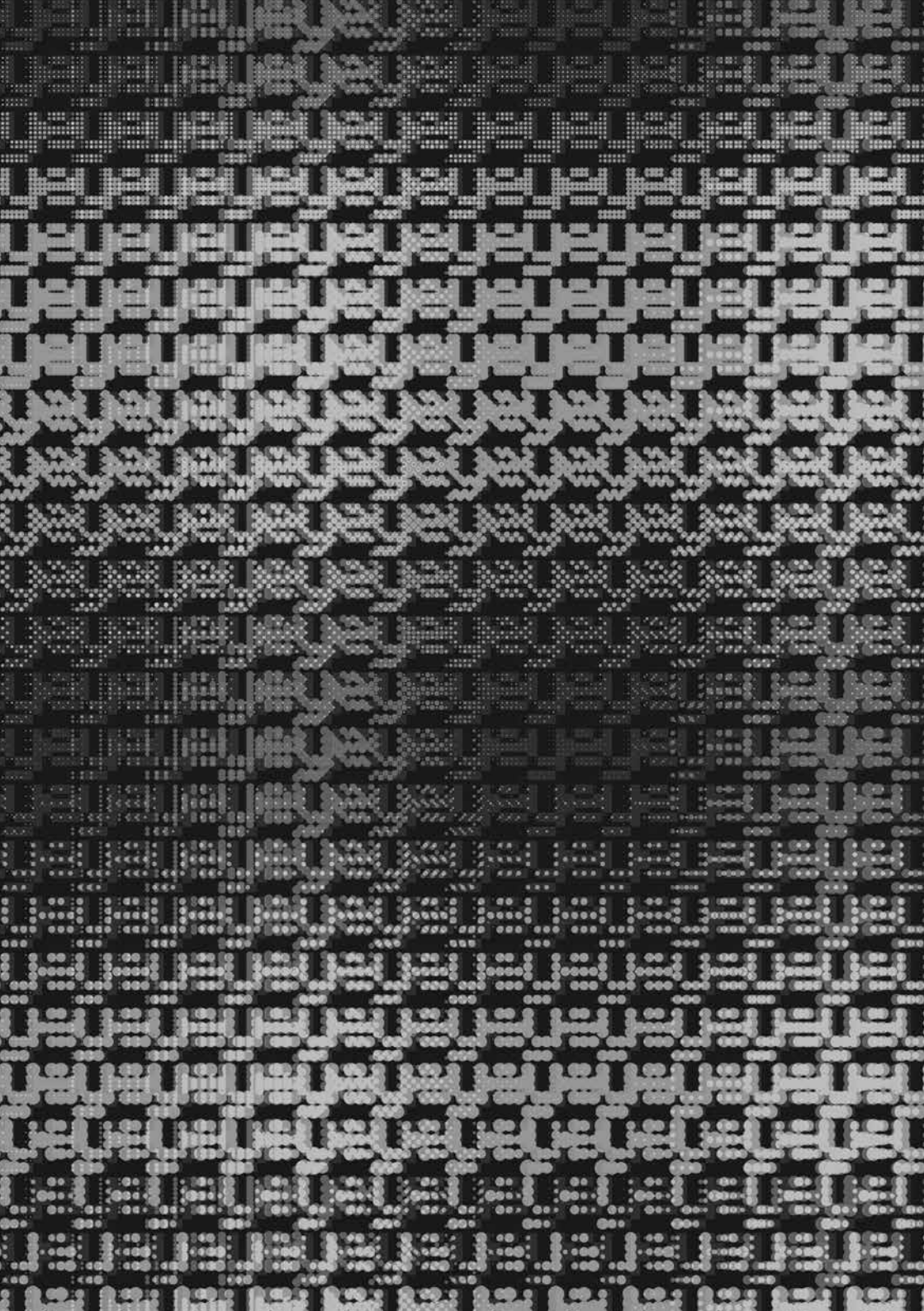
On release, MuirMcNeil's cover became the most talked-about cover in Eye's history, winning multiple awards and attracting attention from bloggers, journalists, broadcasters and academics worldwide and on social media.

*Each cover of Eye 94, front and back, is one of 8,000 different numbered pieces of artwork*

Eye Magazine  
*Eye 94: 8,000 One-offs*  
297 x 235 mm  
Digitally-printed covers

Below: the HP Indigo 10000 press interface  
Opposite: detail of seed file number 1





Sometimes words stick with me. Sometimes appearing like a sum-up of a phase I'm going through. But not always. After a while these words seem to dissolve or become very abstract. In order for me to understand them better I intuitively seek giving them substance. It's as if chewing the words so I digest them better. Anyway, LET ME IN is about the possibility of something or someone going through or into. Going through or into involves getting a viewpoint from another side than what you started with. And so, what does this involve? To be 'inside' can only exist as an idea if you know what 'outside' is. Furthermore - who lets in and who is let in? Sometimes embodying seemingly simple words gives me a new mountain of thoughts to think about.

Julia Vance

LET ME IN

900 x 280 mm (open)

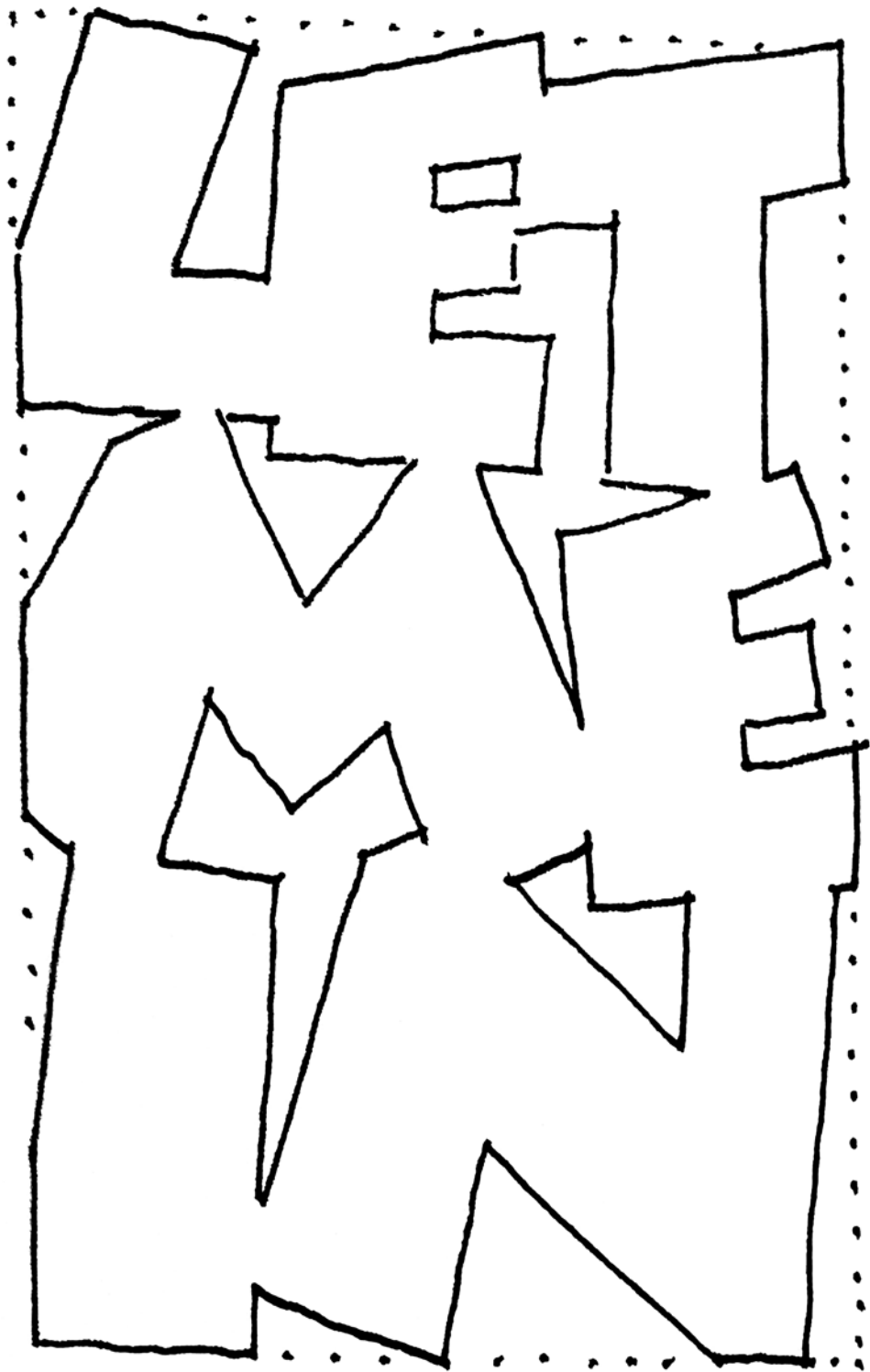
Steel

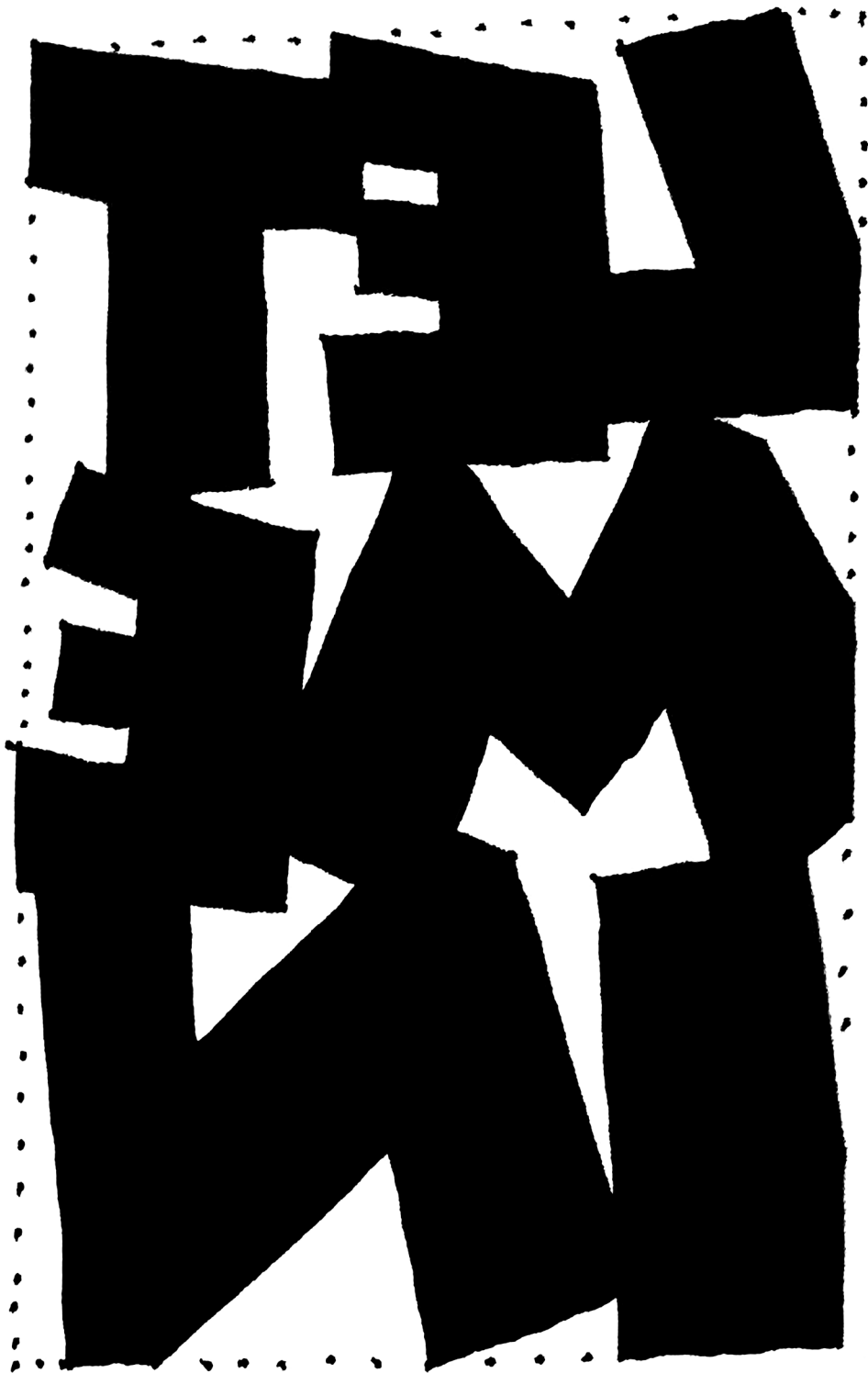
Below: paper model

Opposite: development drawing

*Sometimes embodying seemingly simple words gives me a new mountain of thoughts to think about.*







*“Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited, whereas imagination embraces the entire world, stimulating progress, giving birth to evolution.”*

Albert Einstein

This project started with a chance comment over a pizza after a Letter Exchange talk. Lettercutter - and current Letter Exchange Chairman - Robbie Schneider (see page 58) had given me a letter S carved in wood as a thank you for designing a catalogue for an exhibition he was curating. Our speaker that evening had been letterpress designer Alan Kitching. When he saw Robbie's S, he asked if it was a piece of wood type.

At that time, I was planning the Letter Exchange 30th anniversary conference, the idea of getting Letter Exchange members to carve unique wood blocks to print from at the conference was born.

I mentioned the idea to the Will Hill, Letter Exchange member, Deputy Head of School, Visual Communications, Cambridge School of Art and our host for the conference. He showed me some test letters he had laser cut with the intention of making blocks to print from and suggested we use this method to create the conference letters. The two strands of thought knitted together and we invited speakers and other participants at the conference to each supply a letter.

Will printed from the assortment of blocks at the conference in front of delegates producing beautiful prints of unique letterforms. But we did not have a full alphabet so have used this exhibition as an excuse to complete the project. The full selection of letters and their originators is shown overleaf.

Of all the exhibits in this exhibition, I think this one embodies the spirit of the theme most effectively. We have taken a traditional method of printing and brought to it a group of letterers from different fields and traditions to create something new and unique using the latest production technology. Whether hand-drawn or digitally created the letters have been brought to life using a combination of contemporary and traditional technologies, produced and printed by a craftsman with a deep understand of and passion for all aspects of the lettering arts.

Thanks Will.

**Mark Noad**

*We have taken a traditional method of printing and brought to it a group of letterers from different fields and traditions to create something new and unique*

**Will Hill / Mark Noad**  
*Custom woodblock alphabet*  
100 mm high, various widths  
Laser-cut plywood and pine

Opposite: the first batch of blocks at the Letter Exchange conference in October 2018  
Overleaf: the full set







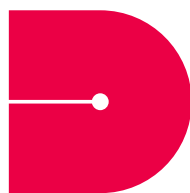
Annet Stirling



Michelle de Bruin



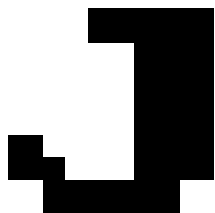
Robbie Schneider



Mark Noad



Anna Parker



Jim Sutherland



Sue Hufton



Sacha de Leeuw



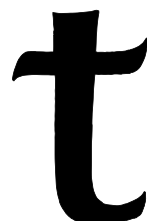
Gary Breeze



Jeremy Tankard



Brody Neuenschwander



Jo Crossland



Errol Donald



Julia Vance



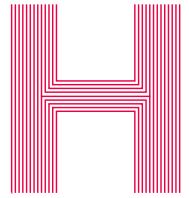
John Neilson



Mark Frith



Andrew Whittle



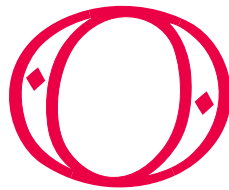
Tom Goldman /  
Esterson Associates



Robbie Schneider



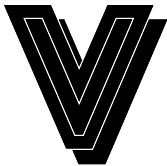
Rosella Garavaglia



Annet Stirling



Paul Herrera



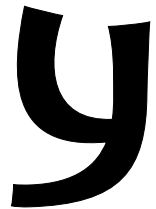
Will Hill



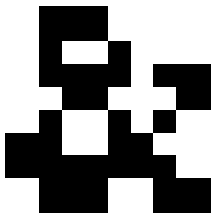
Sue Hufton



Mark Noad



Lieve Cornil



Jim Sutherland



Jeremy Tankard

In my early days as a scribe my letters were mostly turnable (in pages in books) or framable (on paper or vellum) - but flat - very two dimensional. Then my work became slightly less so and viewable (from different perspectives) as I explored how to express the subtleties and hidden depths of the words I interpreted. I used, and still do use, the light reflecting qualities of gold and manipulated paper to make sculptural and low relief pieces to give an extra dimension and emphasis through form, light and shade.

So, looking back the fact that my letters evolved into three dimensional objects is not entirely surprising but how this actually happened was not something I planned or could have predicted. It grew out of a willingness to observe and explore with an open mind. It grew out of an enjoyment of the process rather than focusing on a goal. It grew from a confidence to be able to learn, share and collaborate.

It all started at the V&A in the ironwork gallery. I was drawn to the artefacts there with their solid but dynamic lines, rhythms and forms. I spent many days sketching among the exhibits during my residency there. I observed the way these calligraphic lines connected, the patterns and spaces they created. This sparked some experimentation - using my sketches to help inform the design of letter forms. When I combined these with my observation of different planes and perspectives of the objects, it gradually led me to wonder if I could develop them further into three dimensional forms.

*It grew out of an enjoyment of the process rather than focusing on a goal. It grew from a confidence to be able to learn, share and collaborate.*

**Cherrell Avery**  
**Peace**  
570 x 140 x 105 mm  
Wrought iron

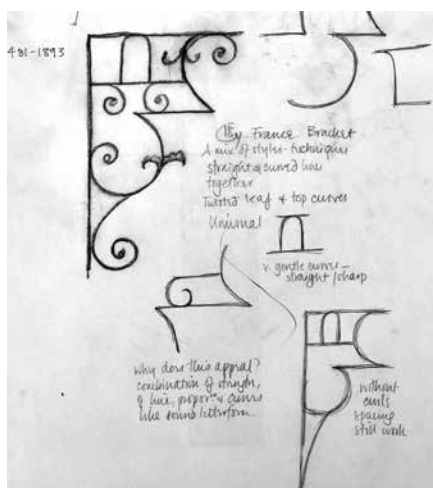
Right and opposite: sketches and development drawings

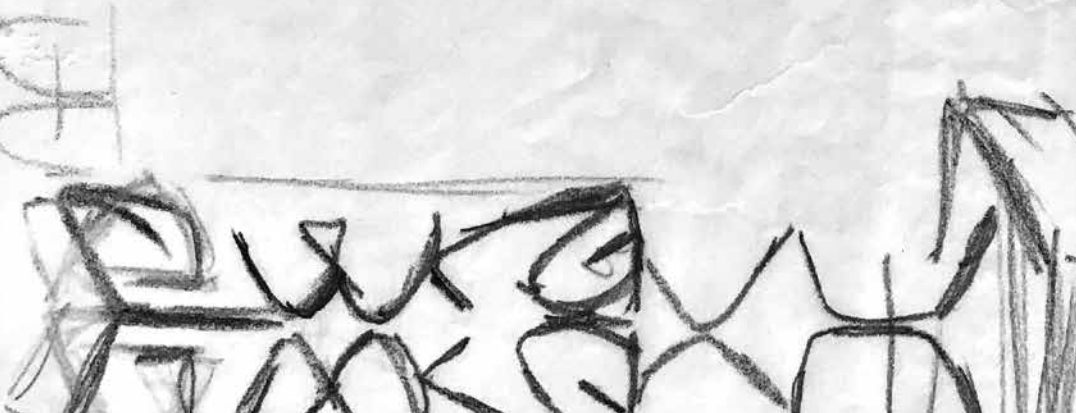
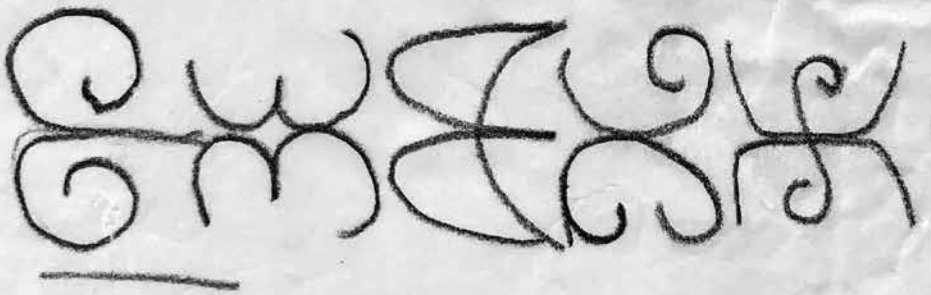
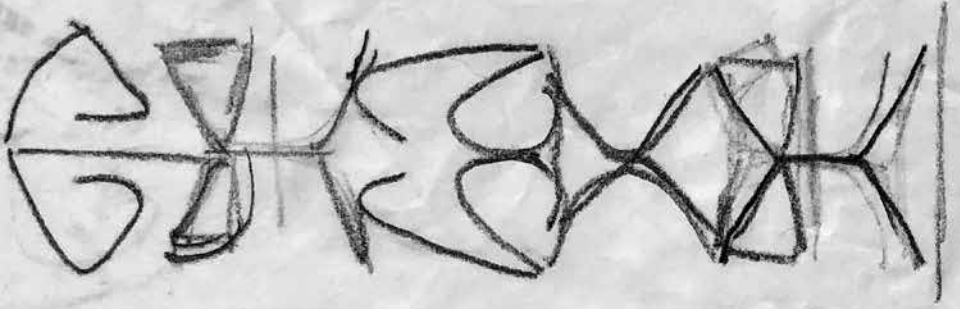
I began playing with the letters using a broad edged pen and ink to give more depth. They were influenced by my studies of the angular lines juxtaposed with the curved lines of some of the exhibits. The letter e emerged as a model which I used in my sculpture.

I went on to explore how a simple word could be read from different angles and how a semi abstract design could be created from it. Repeating the word as a reflection and adapting the letter forms to create interesting lines and spaces was the solution.

But I knew it was destined to stay a two dimensional drawing of a three dimensional object unless I could find a craftsperson to transform it. This is where the talented young artist blacksmith, Agnes Jones, came to my aid. She taught me all about the forge and what was possible and what wasn't when it came to steel rods and ribbons. I taught her about letterforms and spacing. I tried creating my own letters ( badly) and concluded it was best to leave it to the expert. Thereafter we went through a process of adapting and refining my design before she went ahead and forged it in iron.

Now it has taken form, the affirmation 'peace' can be read both as you approach it and return back to it. It invites our reflection as we transition the threshold from one space to another. And from a personal point of view, it reminds me of a wonderful creative journey from two dimensions to three.





Handwritten decorative flourish or calligraphic element at the top of the page.

Handwritten decorative flourish or calligraphic element in the upper middle section.

Handwritten decorative flourish or calligraphic element in the middle section.

Handwritten decorative flourish or calligraphic element at the bottom of the page.

*“The more I practice,  
the luckier I get”*

Gary Player

For twenty-five years I have designed and carved inscriptions in stone for notable civic memorials, private institutions and personal monuments throughout the United States. I have made hundreds of carefully hand drawn and hand carved gravestones, dedicatory tablets and building facade inscriptions. I am the third generation of my family to carry on our business and the ninth generation of carvers to continue it on the site where it was founded.

Our business has been producing work in the vein of classical inscriptions for over three hundred years. I have maintained a set of standards in craft, design and tradition that has persevered through trends of mechanisation and modernisation to remain very nearly unchanged since the business was founded in 1705. In fact, our work is remarkably similar to inscriptions carved thousands of years ago. We are an odd business in this day and age of digitization, computer driven production and mass marketing.

I received a MacArthur Fellowship In 2010 that allowed me to explore a new thread of artistically expressive and intellectual work that I had long hoped to develop. This work began as a study in classical stone carving methods influenced by contemporary, urban calligraphic forms. My method in both lettering and carving is influenced by the ancient tradition I have learned and practiced for decades. Within the parameters of this

tradition I have, like all of the carvers who preceded me, developed a personal, stylistic vocabulary that inevitably informs these new explorations. One of the driving forces of this experiment is the conflict between, and confluence of, my accumulated skill and the freedom of the unbridled hand.

Beyond these matters of process, I am interested in the scientific, mathematic and informational languages of the digital age, and the tremendous amount of knowledge that is broadening our understanding of the universe. My current work is inspired by the unfathomable quantity of digital information now globally disseminated on a daily basis. Of the many languages used in the digital realm, the vast majority of us do not understand any of them. On the whole, inscriptions in stone have traditionally recorded the praise and memory of Gods, men and events, or the simple identification of geographic locations and structures. These new inscriptions are in contrast to preconceptions of what is deemed worthy for perpetuity. The text is not primarily literal but symbolic and representative of human progress and the greater questions that arise in light of it.

Is science becoming the new religion? If so, I am seeking a means of expressing the age-old desire to indelibly record and reflect upon the progress of humankind.

*One of the driving forces of this experiment is the conflict between, and confluence of, my accumulated skill and the freedom of the unbridled hand.*

Nick Benson  
Base64 portrait of Mark Noad  
620 x 490 mm  
Ink on vintage paper

Opposite: source text, Base64 code for rendering  
the Instagram profile photo of the curator  
Overleaf: detail of finished piece

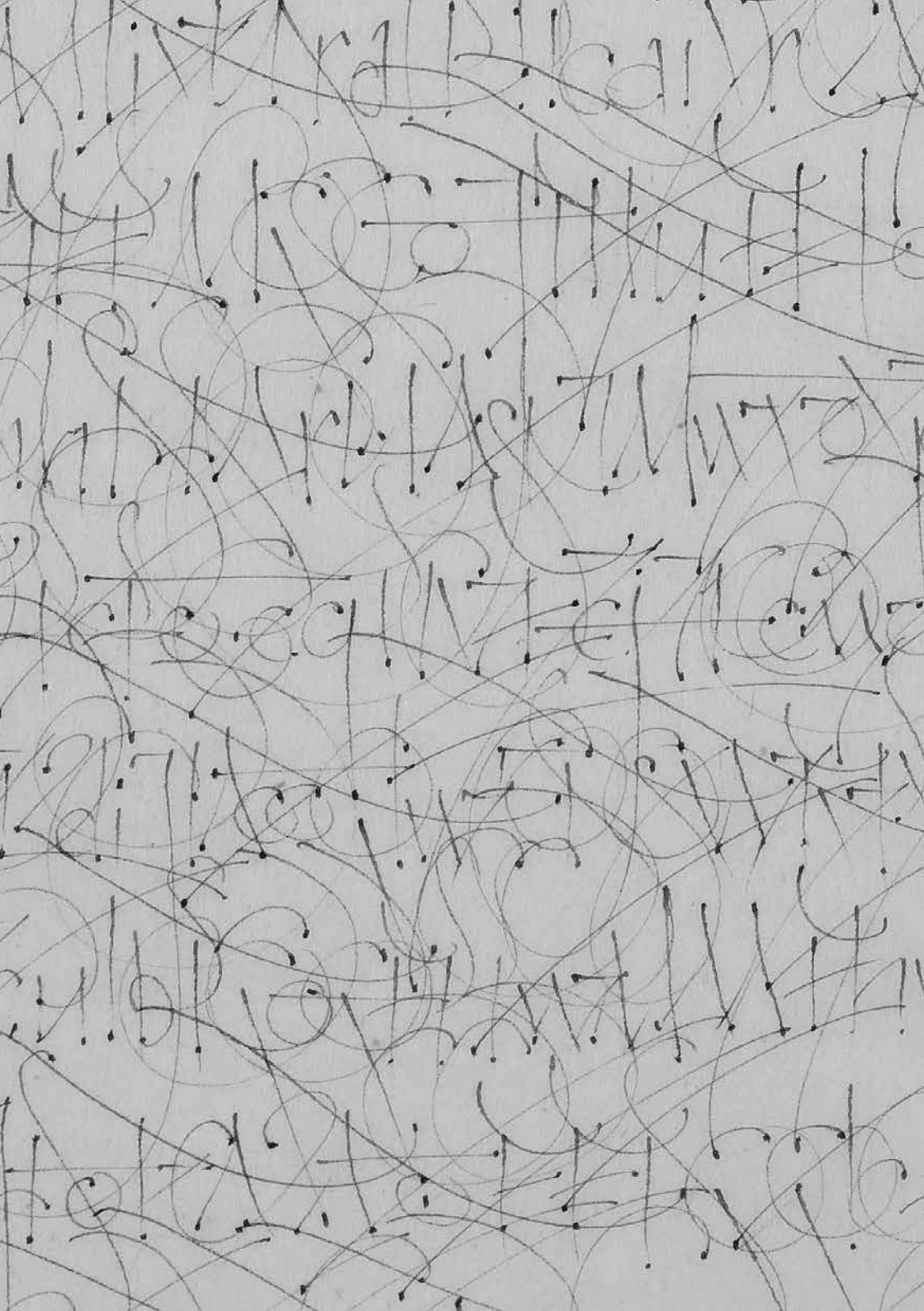


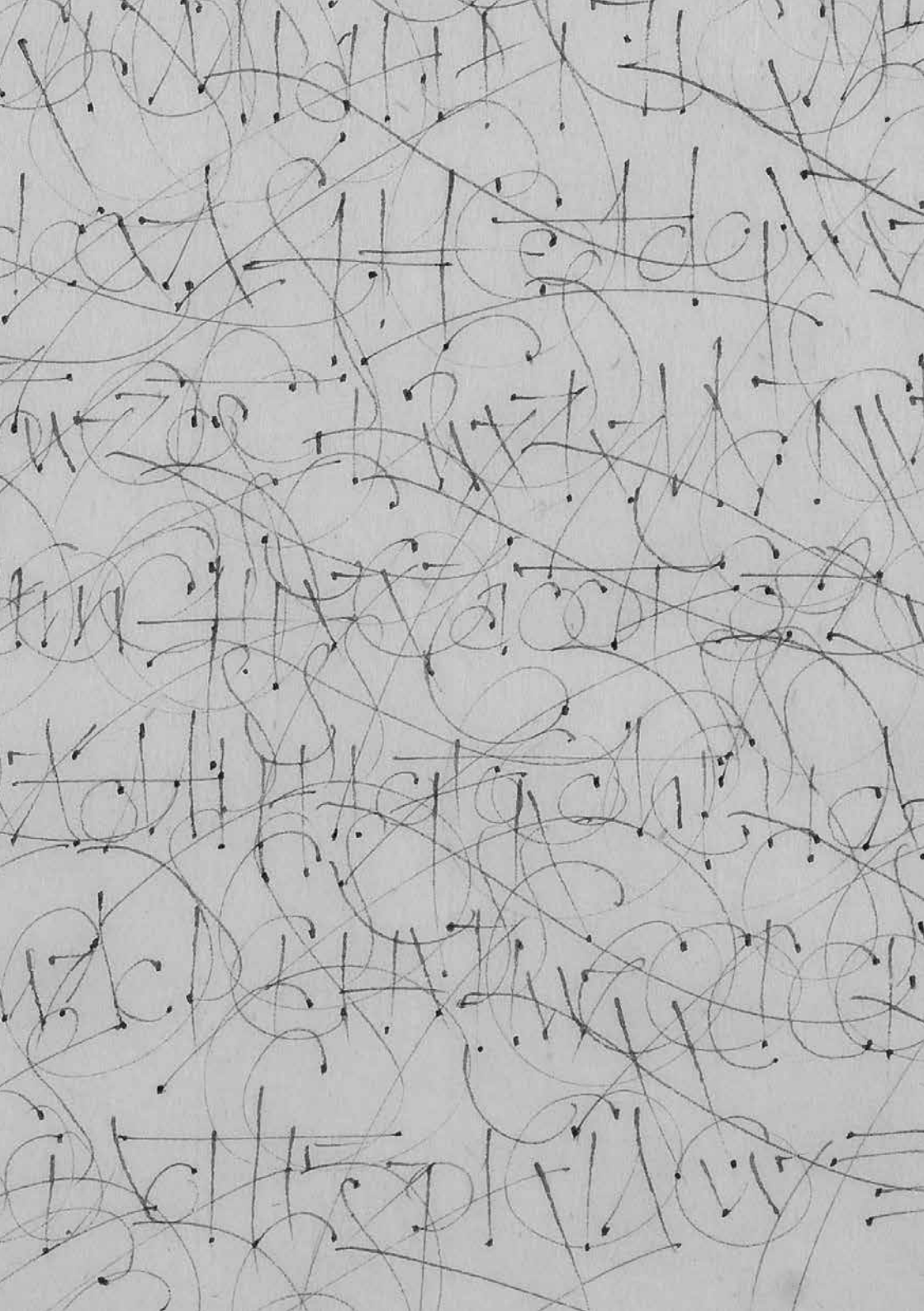
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QQCICCRY2aJDgkCA2AgEEDQQloO0BAgHI5s  
zpFQIAOw==

Generate image







I frequently work on a number of versions of an idea. Even quite a traditional, straightforward commission needs some experimentation with letter forms and layout and I need to see a drawing, at least, to have some idea of how successful the various options might be.

I think it's vital to explore. I want to know what the possibilities might be and the only way to really find out is to try some of them. However 'finished' a drawing is its hard to know how well an idea works until you see the physical reality. Potential clients also need to see experimental work to have a sense of what lettering might be.

When I started this piece I had a specific idea of what I was trying to make but on looking at the first pencil drawing I couldn't quite see how it worked. I was reasonably happy with the words and had spent some time digitising and making them into a fairly precise rectangle. I like using tight blocks of lettering or working the text to exactly fit the object. It seems to bring content and form much closer to each other and to give tension to the piece. Digital drawing opens up a whole range of possibilities. A vector (digital) drawing can directly instruct computer controlled machines. All kinds of techniques and materials become available that are not possible or are unreasonably difficult directly by hand. In this case I used a laser cutter to produce such exact, fine forms.

The original idea needed very light lettering. As the plan had changed I made a very bold version. I have tried physically laying a layer of light lettering on top of a bold version before in an acrylic piece and I started thinking of acrylic for this. The light lettering had seemed too light and the bold, too bold. One on top of the other, they seemed to balance. I didn't particularly want to use the same technique but I did play around with the idea as it gave the chance to try out various colour contrasts. As the majority of my work is in stone I don't often get to experiment with colour.

It occurred to me that I could cut away the area of the light lettering and see what happened. It seemed to keep the sense of balance and I like the game of having no closed counters to the letters but whole words forming a single closed counter. The white and translucent blue acrylic version was quite large, about 78cms square. I liked the play of light and blurry blue shadow through the very precise laser cut letters. There still seemed to be other possibilities. I did try making a smaller bronze version but the form was too complicated to get the metal to flow well enough. I decided to try this smaller version in stained mdf with deeper lettering. How would I know if it was going to work if I didn't try?

*I think it's vital to explore. I want to know what the possibilities might be and the only way to really find out is to try some of them.*

**Robbie Schneider**  
*Life*  
485 x 485 mm  
Laser-cut MDF

LIFE, SO VIVID AND  
MYSTERIOUS, WAS  
ENOUGH. HIS DAYS  
WERE ALMOST FULL  
TO OVERFLOWING

LIFE, SO VIVID AND  
MYSTERIOUS, WAS  
ENOUGH. HIS DAYS  
WERE ALWAYS FULL  
TO OVERFLOWING

The fabrication process of the Comedy Carpet was the first time that I had encountered a water jet cutter. Gordon Young had set up a factory on an industrial estate in Hull purely to manufacture the slabs of concrete and granite that make up the structure of the Comedy Carpet. This amazing machine uses a very high-pressure jet of water mixed with an abrasive to cut alarmingly quickly through not only granite but also steel.

The typographic layout of each slab was put together using InDesign and then converted into an Illustrator EPS. These were then taken into the software of the water jet cutter, which then to my amazement it broke each design apart and rearranged the layout so as little granite was wasted as possible. This meant that most of the designs became illegible as words were split, individual letters were grouped, rotated and moved in all directions. Some of the smaller letters even being placed inside larger ones. It was as if the machine had a design mind of its own. The results led to truly beautiful, unexpected typographic arrangements that one would never normally attempt or imagine.

Seeing these new layouts created by the software immediately inspired me to think of laying out text in a more random way. However in practise it is difficult to be as loose or even as creative as the machine! Many of the projects that I have collaborated with artist Gordon Young on over the past twenty years have led me to explore the possibilities of new materials and processes. This has sometimes had a direct influence on the creative process of other projects in completely different areas.

**Andy Altman**

*Why Not Associates*

*The results led to truly beautiful, unexpected typographic arrangements that one would never normally attempt or imagine.*

**Why Not Associates / Gordon Young**

*Comedy Carpet offcuts*

400 x 130 mm and 350 x 320mm

Water-cut marble







*“The true method  
of knowledge is  
experiment.”*

William Blake

I think it's safe to say that I never set out to redesign the London Underground map. The original design, conceived by Harry Beck in 1932, is a classic and one of the best pieces of graphic design of the 20th Century; I hold it in very high regard.

However, friends of mine from outside of London commented that they found the current map hard to use and in particular found the disconnect between the map and London at street level confusing.

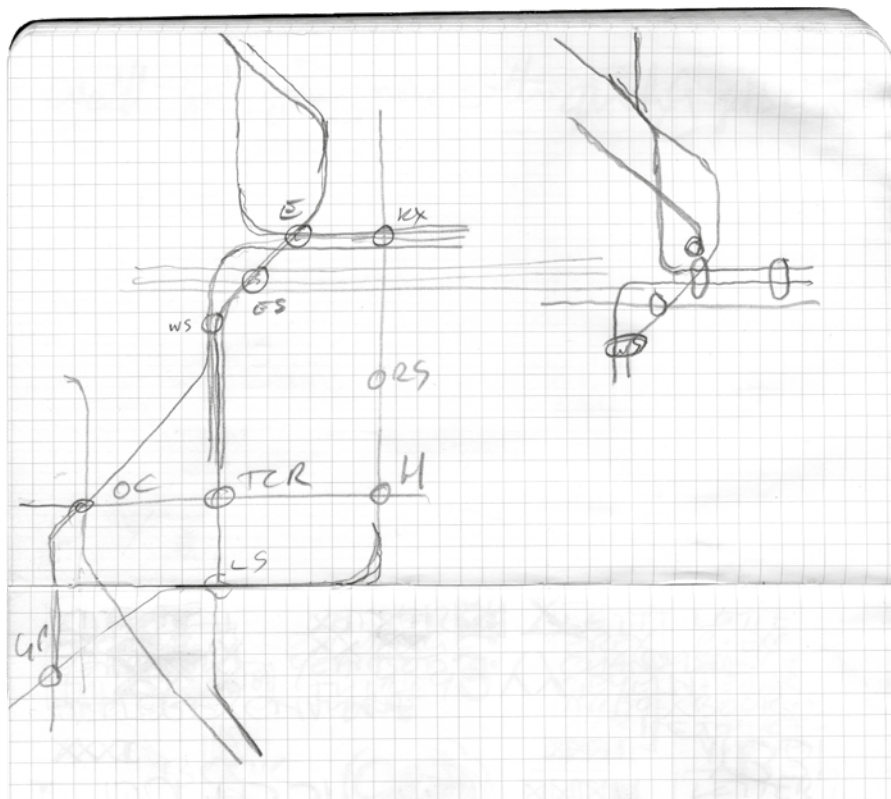
This sparked my curiosity as a designer, would it be possible to design something as clear as the Beck map but manage to be more geographically accurate? That 'thought experiment' eventually expanded to become the complete alternative map of the system I published in 2011.

With the imminent arrival of Crossrail (or the Elizabeth Line as it will be known), I thought it was time to update my map. Looking back at the design I published nearly ten years beforehand, I found I really didn't like it very much any more. It's a bit busy, a bit fussy in some places, slightly chaotic in others. One comment on the original was from actor and writer Mark Gatiss who described it as 'aesthetically frightful', and revisiting it, I think he has a point.

One of the hardest things to do as a designer is to put an idea to one side and come up with something different but that is what I did. Instead of just adding the new line to the old design, I rebuilt the whole thing from scratch. This time as well as the geographical parameter, I concentrated on making a simpler, more elegant solution adopting the 45° lines of the classic Beck original.

**Mark Noad**  
*Tubemap Mark Two*  
594 x 420 mm  
Litho print

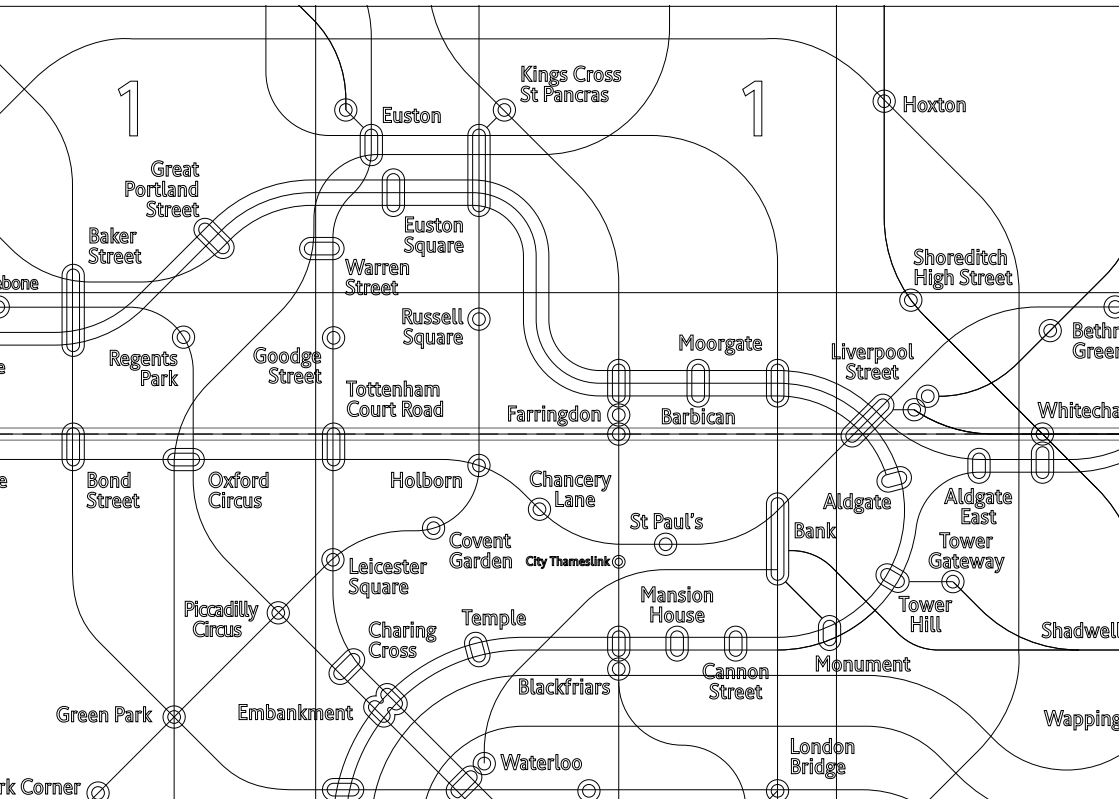
Below: development sketches  
Opposite: vector artwork in Adobe Illustrator (detail)



The major difference between when I did my original tubemap and this new one is my involvement with the wider lettering arts community becoming a member of Letter Exchange and working closely with the Lettering Arts Trust. This has been a huge influence on me and I believe has influenced the design of the new version of my map. The fluidity of the line and the precision of the curves, corners and junctions all owe a lot to my experiences drawing and cutting letterforms and typefaces both by hand and on screen.

The version on display in this exhibition is the first published iteration of the new map. It is work in progress and will continue to change and develop as indeed the network it represents will continue to do. I have said all along that this is not intended to replace the standard map based on Beck's original design, it's simply another way of looking at it.

*One of the hardest things to do as a designer is to put an idea to one side and come up with something different*



**10 000 HOURS and other  
thoughts about making**

I have reflected upon many things while carving stone. The act impinges on the thought, which dissolves within the traces of time spent.

The 10 000 HOURS came into being gradually, prompted by the questions most often asked by a curious public response to carving. Most of these related to time - how many hours did it take in the making? How long does it take to train? What happens if it breaks? Form obliterates meaning, if the medium is the message, then when stone has been carved, the message appears to be that time has been spent.

**Michelle de Bruin**

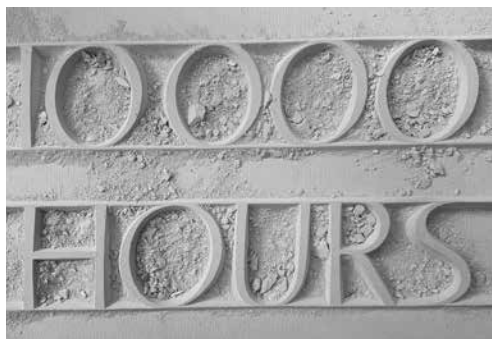
*10 000 HOURS*

2100 x 690 x 750 mm

Limestone, oak, and a bucket

Below: development stages

Overleaf: dust



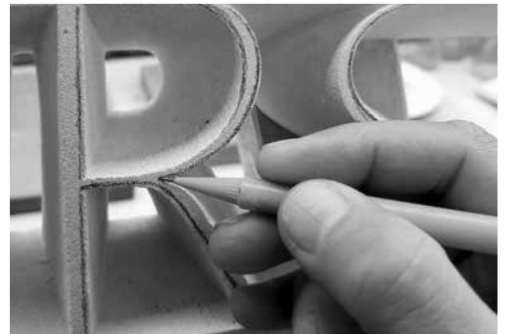
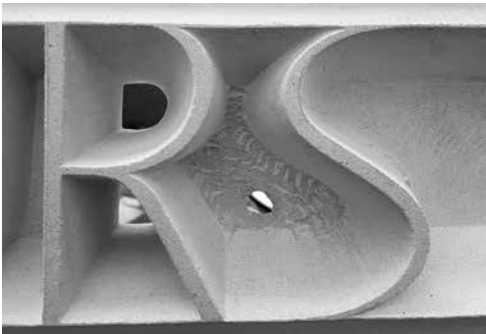
What does it mean to spend time crafting something by hand in an industrial age? Craft as an act rather than a means of creating a perfect object. The hours spent in the making are full of possibilities, guided by intuition, they are the present and the future. The finished artefact represents the hours past, and the closure of the dream. First there is the clamouring thought, then there is the silence.

The 10 000 HOURS have evolved over time. Drawn, carved, drawn again, carved again, over, and over again.

I had expected drama. If it became too thin, would it break under the constant stress of mallet and chisel? The answer is that it has already broken many times. Hairline cracks appeared as I navigated my way deeper into the stone, through small shelly fragments within the matrix. In other places where the stone was less compact, it crumbled away. There was no drama, just a slow disintegration, the erosion and renewal repeating itself with every new depth.

It isn't finished.

*The 10 000 HOURS have evolved over time.  
Drawn, carved, drawn again, carved again,  
over, and over again.*









The Dichromate project developed from two aspects of typeface design that have preoccupied me for some time.

The first was the recurrent notion of the modular typeface, an idea associated with early 20th century modernism but with deeper roots in the systematic teaching of handwriting.

The notion that all letters of the alphabet could be constructed from a limited number of component parts is an attractive one, which quickly reveals its own unique constraints and limitations for the designer.

The second element was the idea of the chromatic or bi-coloured letter. I had given a conference paper on the contemporary reappraisal of chromatics at the 6th Encontro Tipografico, University of Aveiro, Portugal in 2015. The genre is a phenomenon of the 19th century, reaching its peak in the 1870s with key examples such as the William H. Page specimen book, before being largely superseded by chromolithography. As a consequence, it is rich in historical associations and most commonly used for nostalgic effect. Though my presentation included some noteworthy innovations including Martin Wenzel's FF Primary and Rian Hughes's FF Identification, it was clear that most digital chromatics continued to support this tendency toward the self-consciously 'retro'.

Out of this came the challenge of creating a digital chromatic face that was free of historical references; a genuinely 21st century reinterpretation of the form.

Traditional chromatics typically involve a clear distinction between a primary base layer and a secondary infill. I set myself the design problem of contradicting this, and making instead two fonts that were interlocking and mutually interdependent. Inspiration for this came from sources including Dan Rhatigan and Ian Moore's Sodachrome and the colour fonts of Mark van Wageningen from the Amsterdam foundry Novo Typo.

The modular letterform provided a structure within which individual components could be substituted with differing shapes while maintaining the overall coherence of the letter structure.

Each font can be used separately, and the two sets of broken or interrupted shapes each have their own stylistic flavour. Together, they merge to form an unbroken letter profile offering several permutations of decorative infill, determined by variations of layering and opacity.

*Out of this came the challenge of creating a digital chromatic face that was free of historical references; a genuinely 21st century reinterpretation of the form.*





I have always been very interested in texture and pattern - one of my earliest memories is my joy and sense of achievement when I learnt to plait at nursery school. Lettering can have pattern in the layout of the text but texture is not always such an obvious element of an inscription.

Since learning about the importance of spacing (from Bob Duvivier and Berthold Wolpe at the City and Guilds Lettering Course) I have always been very conscious of the spaces being just as important a part of the design of a carved stone as the letters themselves.

In this piece I have carved and textured the spaces and the letters - something that I have done before with an all capitals inscription, but only once, a very long time ago, with a lower case one. Although some of the design can be planned beforehand, the carving itself influences the pattern, so the decisions about how to carve and which bit to carve have to be made on the spot. The carving process becomes more like painting in stone...

The great difficulty with lettering is that most texts can be read and are meant to be read, but for me, especially with this sort of piece, the reading would ideally be the second stage of looking - the first step should be seeing the overall pattern and the abstract shape of the piece.



*The carving itself influences the pattern, so the decisions about how to carve and which bit to carve have to be made on the spot. The carving process becomes more like painting in stone.*

Annet Stirling  
*Wake Up*  
250 x 400 mm  
Limestone

Above: detail  
Opposite: development drawing

wake up. see  
at the morn  
ing. light. t  
his is you  
n is today

Vellum is not a fashionable material. It's not vegan, it can be smelly, greasy and even dirty. Yet it has an overriding association with precious manuscript books and documents.

Having treated vellum with the utmost respect - and fear! - when I underwent my somewhat unorthodox calligraphic training as a scribe on Donald Jackson's Saint John's Bible, I have recently been wondering how to repurpose vellum into works that would sit comfortably in a contemporary art gallery. The discovery of boxloads of old vellum legal documents led me to question their future: would they languish until the next generation decided to chuck them out, or should I attack them? Putting aside fears of sacrilege, I have begun to dismantle the documents and use them as painting surfaces, and for collage, some of these experiments morphing into abstract artist books.

I am a painter as well as a calligrapher, and for years I have experimented with the opposing forces of oil and water-based products in my abstract paintings on wood and canvas. Recently I have extended my gung ho painting attitude to the vellum. I make no sketches: rather I tear, cut, paste, sand, erode, glue, sew, quite fast, without overthinking the end product. But the forgotten properties of the natural vellum are rediscovered and the beauty of the writing is still evident. And there's plenty of scope for endless further experimentation!

*I make no sketches: rather I tear, cut, paste, sand, erode, glue, sew, quite fast, without overthinking the end product.*



**Susie Leiper**  
*Saint Johns Road*

230 x 110 mm  
Double-sided concertina book: recovered vellum documents and oil on board, cloth covers

*“We don’t stop playing  
because we grow old;  
we grow old because  
we stop playing.”*

George Bernard Shaw.

# Play & Design (& Joy)

I am a graphic designer and ‘play’ (or at least my understanding of it) is essential to my practice. I gave myself the exercise to find official (and unofficial) definitions of play - and there are far more than I had realised. Here are some Dictionary terms associated with ‘play’ that I found:

1. Engage in activity for enjoyment and recreation rather than a serious or practical purpose.
2. Take part in (a sport).
3. Be cooperative.
4. Represent (a character) in a theatrical performance or a film
5. Perform on (a musical instrument).
6. Light and constantly changing movement

Each of the above ‘play’ a part in my work. Yet the first one, which seems the most obvious, is the one I disagree with the most. I think play has an absolute serious and practical purpose. Enjoyment and recreation are not mutually exclusive to the terms ‘serious’ and ‘practical’. When playing, you let go and get into a state of creating - almost for the joy of creation itself. This is often when ideas and thoughts flow freely and unconsciously. I am privileged to have a job where, every day, I need to play with ideas so that I can apply them to my work.

It's interesting how this first definition begins with the 'engage in' an activity. For me it is key that your brain, hands and heart are all engaged in activity of some kind. Play with your hands and it engages your brain. The physical act of making, drawing, scribbling, and crafting gets your brain working intellectually, as well as physically. I fundamentally believe that work is more creative, unexpected and interesting when you enjoy the process. If you put joy into a project it often comes out at the other end. You work hard but it's not hard work - Work and Play can be symbiotic activities.

Play is so important that Article 31, of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, enshrines the child's right to play. Neuroscientific research confirms the importance of play for infants in the development of their brain. It has also been shown that exposure to metaphor and symbols, as used in play, has a beneficial effect upon brain development and stimulation in children. According to Play Scotland - the National organisation driving the Play Agenda in Scotland: "Children learn so much from play; it teaches them social skills such as sharing, taking turns, self discipline and tolerance of others. Children's lives are enhanced by playing creatively and, by playing, children learn and develop as individuals; it assists in their emotional and intellectual development and mental health resilience which are core building blocks for their transition years."

I believe this all of these points should be extended to adulthood. Jean Piaget, the Swiss psychologist said "If you want to be creative, stay in part a child, with the creativity and invention that characterises children before they are deformed by adult society."

The origin of the word itself has been found in some parts of Old English 'pleg(i)an', "to exercise" and 'plega' meaning "brisk movement", which has been linked to the Middle Dutch 'pleien' meaning to "leap for joy". I love the last origin in particular.

8x8type is a typeface based on the 8 x 8 grid of a chess board. Each letter is made up of 32 black squares and 32 white squares as is a chess board. It is a project based on the international language of chess. It follows on from the history of designers and artists creating chess related objects. The type block features 40 letters in total, glue edge bound together to form a block that measures 8cm x 8cm x 8cm in every direction as a nod to the grid it is based on. The typeface was initially created for 'Chessboards', a cardboard, graphic chess set. The headline font was extended into a full A-Z of numbers.

I was working on a simple die cut cardboard chess set and was thinking about the headline typography for it. I was on holiday in Fuerteventura doodling various thoughts. I started to play with the idea of a square based headline typeface, and so I bought a Spanish schoolchildren's square paper exercise book from a local stationers. I then set about with various colouring in of squares to form letters and started to think of the 'rules' - every letter had to be an 8x8 square, formed of 32 white and 32 black squares. This kept me entertained for hours, sketching, refining and experimenting whilst drinking local wine and eating olives. I tend to get completely lost in exercises like this, slightly endless variations and refinements. It was amazingly therapeutic.

Only when back in the studio did I then start to refine a whole typeface on the computer including numbers and of course an ampersand.

*I tend to get completely lost in exercises like this, slightly endless variations and refinements. It was amazingly therapeutic.*

Jim Sutherland

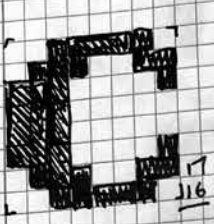
8x8type

80 x 80 x 80 mm

Litho print on 100 gsm matt art, mounted to grey board

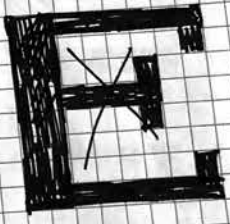
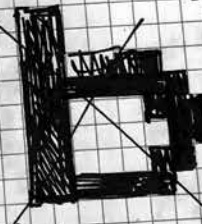
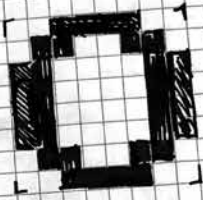
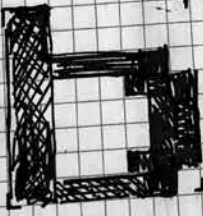
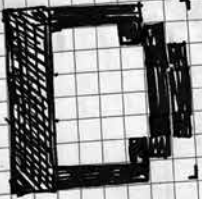


~~36~~



33

35. C



32 16 12

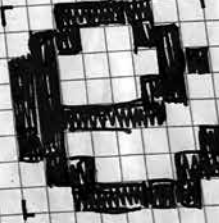


✓

$\frac{16}{10} = 32$   
 $\frac{14}{10} = 28$   
 32

32

32 BLACK  
 32 WHITE  
 CHESS  
 BOARD



These days, most of us are familiar with fonts, we each probably have our own particular favourites. But how often do you really get to have fun with them, to play with the forms and create new and exciting combinations?

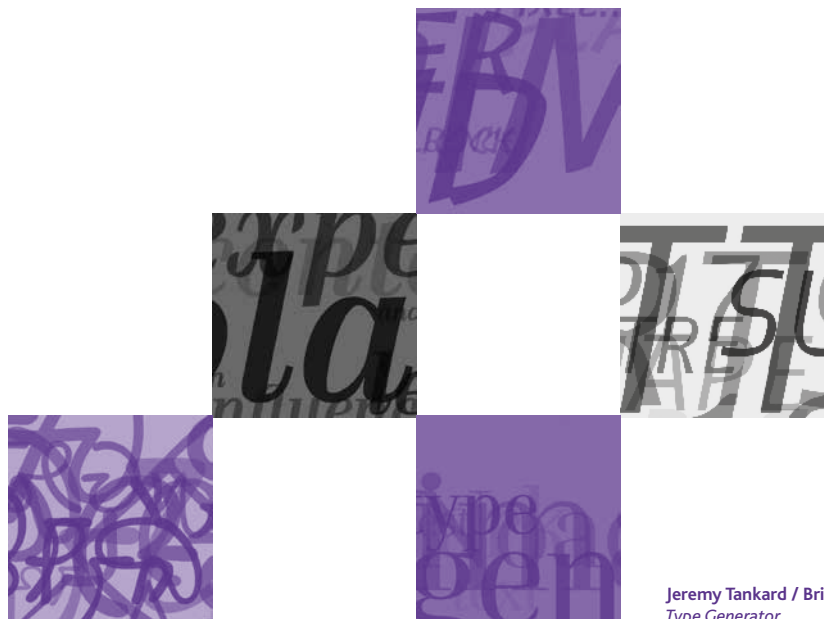
This Type Generator has been created to allow you to do just that. Type designer Jeremy Tankard has been working with digital designer Brian Jones (Jones Lafuente) to build an app that turns your words into pictures that we will be collating and posting throughout the exhibition. The app is designed to produce random combinations of font and colour picking from a selection of Jeremy's typefaces including Hawkland and De Worde, both of which are used to typeset this catalogue, and Brucker, the development drawings for which are in the exhibition (see page 38).

All the technologies on show in this exhibition from pen or chisel to printing press, computer mouse, or laser cutter and the materials used, wood, paper, metal, stone are inert and passive without the intervention of the user. The thought, the idea and the action of the artist are what's needed to generate unique, engaging and memorable results.

This exhibit needs you to bring it to life.

Enter your text, click on 'create' and see what is generated. We don't know what it will be, it will be down to you, your thought, your words, your action. You will become part of a collaborative project building up a mosaic of type, colour, and pattern.

*The thought, the idea and the action of the artist are what's needed to generate unique, engaging and memorable results.*



Type here, between 6 and 12 words are best.

Create

I have always been drawn to making, whether in clay, plaster...even something as hard as stone, and what we can achieve with our hands when we put our minds to it. It just takes time and it's exactly that which is so appealing to me. There is an immense satisfaction when learning a skill, such as letter carving, which only comes when the journey has been long.

Having spent 8 weeks over the summer with letter carver John Neilson as part of the Lettering Arts Trust's Journeyman Scheme I was delighted to be asked by Mark Noad to collaborate with him in a piece for the Rock Paper Pixel exhibition. The journeyman scheme has proved a meaningful and important step, not only in helping me to improve my craft and skill but also connecting me with so many influential people.

Mark's concept was for the work to be based around commonly used acronyms in today's technology focused society. Where handwritten carefully thought out letters have often been replaced by quick abbreviated messages sent from a tiny screen in the palm of our hands. The piece was also to be

interactive for the viewer, where they can touch and hold the individual elements of the work, make wax rubbings and have a part of the exhibition to take home.

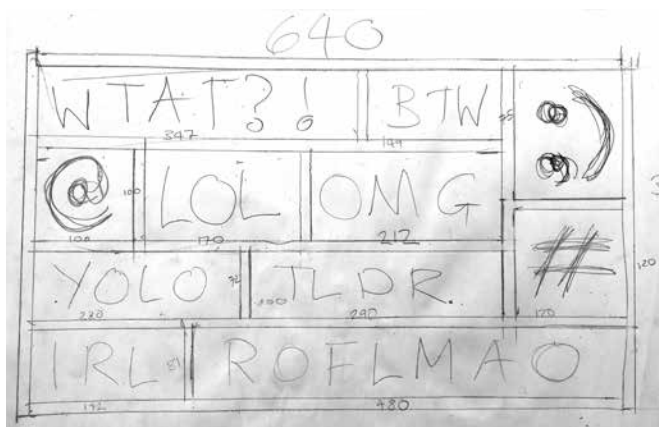
The piece uses a number of different lettering styles inspired by well used typefaces such as Times New Roman, Gill Sans and Optima. This was particularly interesting for me as the development of letterforms from the classical roman lettering to the printing press was something that John and I had discussed and studied a lot during my placement.

The acronyms are carved from a variety of different stones, ranging from a relatively soft pink Northumbrian sandstone to hard green Cumbrian slate, giving a variety of textures to the piece and the rubbings. These are held within a wooden frame inspired by the letterpress typeset drawers once used to hold and organise individual printing letters.

The acronyms chosen are just a small handful of the hundreds of abbreviations used everyday around the world. Some of you may be familiar with them all...I certainly wasn't!

EOM ;)

*There is an immense satisfaction when learning a skill, such as letter carving, which only comes when the journey has been long.*



Jo Crossland  
*Too Long Didn't Read*  
640 x 320 mm  
Various stone

Left: planning rough  
Opposite: drawing up the letters prior to carving

\*Curator's note:  
The original concept for this piece was the result of a discussion – over a few beers – between me and lettering artist Anna Parker.



Over the last few years Mr Sutherland & Mr Smith have been collaborating on typographic ideas.

These projects are all 'designed, set & printed' in Mr Smith's letterpress workshop in London & are self-initiated pieces conceived to explore the process of letterpress - express graphic ideas & articulate the visual observations conceived by the two gentlemen.

On this particular print, one of the beautiful discoveries was that the Earth and Heart not only share the 23.5 degree angle, but also share the same letters, we simply had to move the H from the one end to the other.

*Kelvyn Smith / Jim Sutherland*  
*Heart Earth*

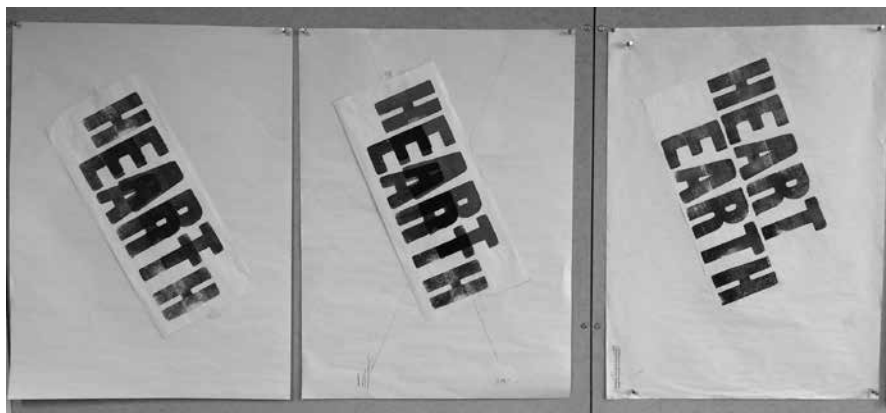
Letterpress print —  
Designed / set & printed (Winter 2013)  
in 20 Line Slab Serif wood type

Printed in Rubine Red ink  
with a credit set in Monotype Baskerville  
Old Face (169) Roman / Italic & Small Caps.

Printed in a limited edition of 24  
on 280gsm BFK Rives Grey  
(3 deckle & 1 trimmed edge)  
final sheet size 560 x 760mm  
Signed by the Artists

*One of the beautiful discoveries was  
that the Earth and Heart not only share  
the 23.5 degree angle, but also share the  
same letters*

Below: Initial composition proofs on  
newsprint in Grot condensed.  
Opposite: The Original 'HearTh!'  
(30 Line Grot condensed bold ) setting.



FEARLESS

Please touch

Whenever I am in a museum I have to fight a rather strong urge to touch the sculptures there. Well, as you know, you nearly almost can't. Understandable as this is, it deprives us of the use of a good deal of our senses. To me, it creates a distance comparable to that of seeing a beautiful view that has been photographed a zillion times. Or the difference between finding an artefact that has been buried somewhere for centuries and seeing an artefact displayed in a museum, behind glass. How can you possibly make it yours?

The shape, texture, scale and words of this sculpture all form an invitation, if not an imperative, to do the exact opposite. If you want to see the whole thing you are going to have to pick it up, hold it and feel its weight, turn it over, experience it as a cuddle that isn't particularly easy to be cuddled maybe. Or pretend you are doing something that you are really not allowed to do, break the spell. Just like the reader finishes the book, you handling it will finish this piece, hopefully enabling you to not just look with your mind, but also with the heart.

u, nu

For the Lettering Arts Trust exhibition "Rock, Paper, Pixels" I made a marble huggable beastie with on the one side the shortest ever Dutch poem: "U, nu" ("You, now") by the 17th century poet Joost van den Vondel. On the flipside I'll carve a shortest poem in the English language (there seems to be more than one depending on your definition of shortest and poem). There are a couple of contestants and as I'm writing this I haven't decided yet. But just turn it over and you'll see.



Sacha de Leeuw  
*u, nu*  
400 x 300 x 40 mm  
Marble

Above: work in progress  
Opposite: front  
Overleaf: back

*Pretend you are doing something that you are really not allowed to do, break the spell. Just like the reader finishes the book, you handling it will finish this piece, hopefully enabling you to not just look with your mind, but also with the heart.*







***“Ever tried.  
Ever failed.  
No matter.  
Try again.  
Fail again.  
Fail better.”***

Samuel Beckett

I am interested in the effects of screen-based technology on society since the onset of television.

In ‘Television delivers People’ (1973) Richard Serra and Carlota Fay Schoolman used scrolling text in the style of an information bulletin to critique mass media and popular culture. A key quote which captures the essence of this piece is:

*‘You are the product of TV. You are delivered to the advertiser who is the customer. He consumes you.’*

Although the media we access through our devices today is infinitely more interactive and tactile, we are still faced with the same situation – yet it is compounded with myriad other complexities.

Following Facebook’s initial indifference to the Cambridge Analytica scandal (where voters personal data was hacked to spread personalised, targeted disinformation), I reframed the corporation’s (and its affiliate company Instagram’s) terms and conditions.

With nods to Marshall McLuhan and Nam June Paik, I used analogue video

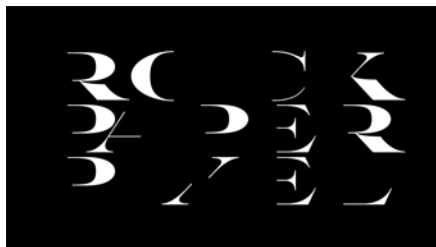
synthesis to display these scrolling Ts&Cs through early 2000s broadcast CRT monitors. By housing big data legal clauses (which we routinely tick and skip through swipes and clicks) within the broadcasting tool of yesterday, the trajectory of media can be considered. The type is rendered low-res by the medium while the bright and fuzzy psychedelia of analogue waveforms act as a playful contradiction to the hi-def polish of the filtered Instagram experience.

Building on these themes, I created a 32-screen installation at Glastonbury 2019. The audience was invited to interact with affected video of themselves, surrounded by oblique slogans referencing climate change and big data.

Routinely the audience would photograph themselves as seen by the installation, highlighting the contradictions inherent in the human condition.

Here, this animated take on Mark Noad’s Rock Paper Pixel identity borrows its aesthetic from my recent video work whilst formally toying with the logotype’s playful deconstructability.

*The bright and fuzzy psychedelia of analogue synthesis acts as a playful contradiction to the hi-def polish of the filtered Instagram experience.*



Charlie Behrens  
*Rock Paper Waveform*  
HD/SD video, 1920 x 1080

Left and above: breaking down the logo letterforms