

CREATE SKAPA DRAW tegne
CHRISTU
DIBUJAR
ESCRIBIR
SKABE
CREARE

A graphic with a yellow background. At the top, the word "HAND" is written in large, orange, blocky letters with a dark blue outline. Below it, the word "Lettering" is written in a red, cursive script. At the bottom, the letters "A" and "Z" are written in the same orange blocky style with dark blue outlines, flanked by red radiating lines. Between them is a dark blue circle containing the white text "TO".

A World of Creative Ideas FOR Drawing AND Designing ALPHABETS

Abbey Ly

ESCRIBIR
KALLIGRAFI
Fun
JOIE
CRAIC
Plezier

Write AMUSANT
TEKENEN
Schreiben JOY
G L E E D E
ecrore KUL DIVERTE★

HAND
Lettering
A TO Z



HAND Lettering A TO Z

*A World OF Creative Ideas FOR
Drawing AND Designing ALPHABETS*

Abbey Sy





Quarto is the authority on a wide range of topics.

Quarto educates, entertains and enriches the lives of our readers—enthusiasts and lovers of hands-on living.

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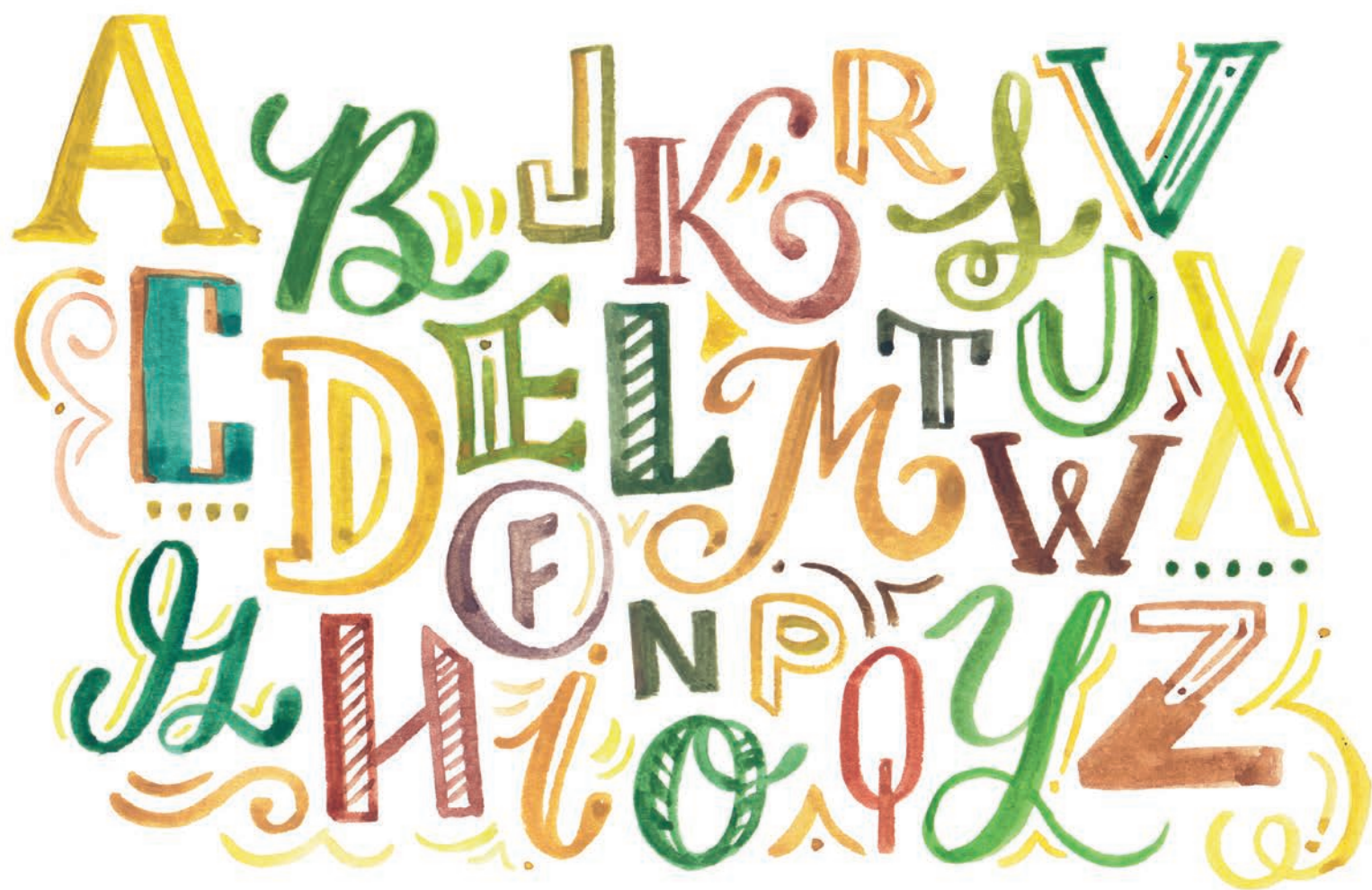
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INTRODUCTION

Your hand lettering contains a little bit of you—expressing what you have to say as well as demonstrating your creativity. As a means of communication, what could be more personal than that?

You can doodle with your lettering. You can use it in journals and sketchbooks, in art for your walls, in stories for children, in letters to friends—in all kinds of communication. That's why, for this book, I invited four international artists to join with me to create alphabets and to show ways to use them in many different languages.

As you will discover in these pages, you don't have to be a trained artist to master the art of hand lettering. Playing with lettering doesn't require the disciplined study of calligraphy. There are alphabets that fit every skill set and allow you to use your creativity in any way that suits your taste—colorful or black and white, streamlined or baroque. It's all about getting creative with the twenty-six letters of the alphabet—weaving words together and having fun communicating them in a visual way. Words have the power to move people—*I love you*, *Je t'aime*, *Te amo*. That's what makes lettering, and matching the style with the sentiment, such a unique and personal art form.

I hope this book will help you recognize your own style and put it to use. May our ideas feed your imagination and encourage you to pick up your pencil and start lettering.

ENJOY, AND KEEP CREATING!

Abbey



TOOLS & MATERIALS

The Basics

Whether you have a dedicated work space where you can keep your tools and materials at hand or you work at your kitchen table, here are the basics of what you'll need.

Make sure your work surface is clean and completely smooth. If there are uneven areas on your desk or tabletop, place a sheet of mat board or thick, smooth paper under your drawing paper.

Allot ample space on your desk to work at ease. Be sure there is plenty of room to move your arms and elbows freely. If your arms feel cramped, it will be difficult to let your lettering flow.

Have a good light source. During the day, maximize your natural light source—the best light for working with color. At night, a flexible or swing-arm desk lamp is a good choice.

ALWAYS KEEP THESE TOOLS ON HAND:

Ruler—*for measuring and creating guidelines*

Binder clips—*for holding your drawing paper in place*

Soft eraser—*for pencil marks*

Pencil sharpener—*manual is fine*

Drawing compass—*for circles and curves*

Paper

Your decision to work with markers, pens, watercolor and brushes, chalk, or pencils will determine the type of paper you use. If you do a lot of lettering or like to doodle ideas, here are some paper types that will get you through most of your experiments. The more you letter, the more you'll find you have personal favorites.

BRISTOL PAPER: Bristol paper is smooth and reasonably heavy, so it can be used on both sides. It's perfect for pen and ink, markers, and colored pencils, and it can withstand light watercolor.

WATERCOLOR PAPER: Watercolor paper comes in pads or blocks and is available in three types: hot-pressed (smooth), cold-pressed (textured), and rough. Working on smooth paper is easiest for beginners. Once you become expert at painting letters with watercolors, you might enjoy working on more textured papers. Experiment and find your favorites.

Most watercolor sheets come in a weight of 200 to 300 grams per square meter ([gsm] 137 to 208 lb), which is durable enough for watercolor washes. Personally, I like to keep both watercolor pads and watercolor blocks on hand and prefer cold-pressed paper.

SKETCHBOOKS: Keep a sketchbook handy for working out your drafts and initial sketches. Sketchbooks are the place to practice and hone your lettering skills. I'm constantly sketching, and I've found that my best ideas for designs and layouts come from my own sketchbook.

Since I like to keep a sketchbook handy wherever I am, I find the best size for me is one that's just a little larger than the palm of my hand. Dotted or graphed sketchbooks are great for rough drafts and ideas because the grids make the measurement of letterforms easy. If you work with watercolor a lot, choose a sketchbook with heavy-duty paper.

SPECIALTY PAPER: Cardstock comes in different colors, finishes, textures, weights, and sizes. It's used mainly for specialized works such as gifts, souvenirs, and invitations. These papers are of superior quality and can be expensive, so they're best saved for special occasions.



Ruler



Pencil



Colored Pencil



Brush Pen



Marker



Fineliner Pen



Flat Pen



Gel Pen

Pens, Pencils, Brushes, and Paint

ROUND-TIP FINELINER PEN: A fineliner pen is your best friend. Doodling and drawing with one is a lot like working with a pencil, making it the universal drawing pen for hand lettering. Fineliners are available with a variety of line weights from 0.01 to 0.8 mm. Try to have pens with at least three different weights on hand so you can play around with shadows, lines, and details in your work. My go-to weights are 0.1, 0.5, and 0.8 mm for varied thick and thin lines and details.

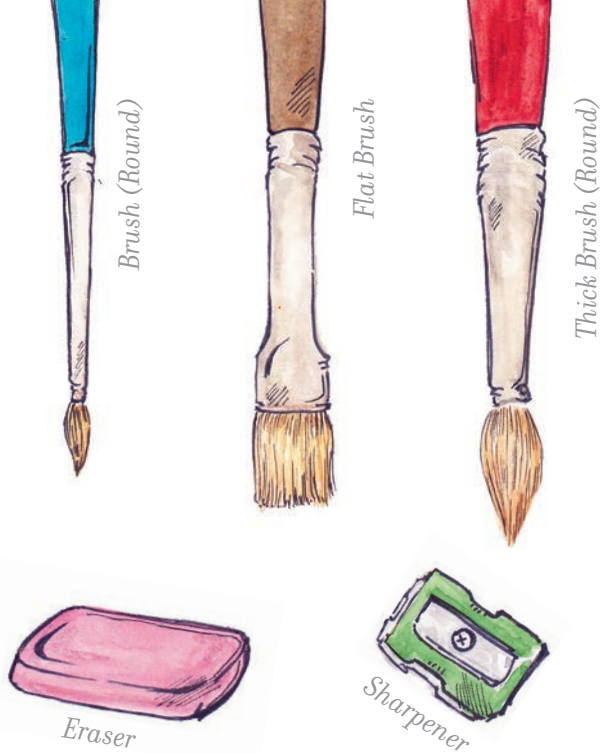
GEL PEN: Gel pens have a rounded tip similar to fineliners, but the writing texture is different. They are a handy choice for lettering because they are inexpensive, available everywhere, and great for rough doodling and drawing.

FLAT-TIP PEN/MARKER: Flat-tip pens have a blunt, squared nib, allowing you to make thick and thin lines as you write. They're used most often for italic and gothic lettering styles, as well as for script, with nibs available in many widths.

BRUSH PEN/MARKER: Brush-tip pens and markers are perfect for the smooth, free-flowing look of Asian calligraphy. Their flexibility makes them a good tool for gradient-heavy artworks. Brush pens come in natural or synthetic hair. Felt hair is best for beginners as it's similar to a marker's tip.

PENCIL: It's important to choose a pencil hardness that suits your personal preference. I like to keep an HB or 2H pencil on hand for sketching. These leave a relatively light mark that is easy to erase once a design has been inked or painted. A mechanical pencil is also a good option.

COLORED PENCILS: Colored pencils are a good choice for beginners. They produce rich, vibrant colors and give a nice, organic look to your strokes. Virtually any type of paper is suitable for working with colored pencils. Use a heavier paper if you're working with watercolor pencils.



WATERCOLOR BRUSHES: Round brushes, with their fine tips, are very versatile, producing thick and thin strokes for script and most font styles. I keep a thick and a thin round brush handy for all purposes. Flat brushes are best for roman or gothic lettering, as well as for serifs and squarish fonts. They're a good choice for letterforms that have contrasting thicknesses.

The most accessible and easy-to-use brushes are synthetic (nylon or taklon). They do not hold a huge amount of water and the bristles are very flexible. Brushes with animal hair (kolinsky, sable, squirrel, etc.) tend to be softer and harder to control. Natural-hair brushes hold more water, so if you prefer using your watercolors in washes, these will help you achieve that effect.

WATERCOLOR PAINTS: Watercolors are a good choice for hand-lettering work, allowing you to mix and create your own colors. They are transparent, which gives them great versatility. If you prefer an opaque finish, use gouache paints. Having a variety



Watercolors

of mediums at hand will help you create different effects in your letterforms. Watercolor and gouache come in both tubes and pans. Make sure to buy the best-quality lightfast paints you can find.

Finding and Filtering Ideas

Inspiration is everywhere; it's your job to find it. Creative ideas that seem to appear out of nowhere also disappear just as quickly if you don't jot them down. Keep a notebook with you everywhere you go. Another option is to keep a wall-mounted corkboard in your work space, where you can pin up snippets of inspiration and samples of colors and styles.

Once you start looking, you'll find inspiration in the most unlikely places: typography on a package of soap, a bus ticket, or an old street sign in your town. Being aware of how you see things and how you filter them according to your taste will eventually help you discover your style.

Lettering

FONT

SCHRIFTART

A L

Fonts and Type Styles

Let's start with some definitions. Each alphabet that you design is a font: a set of characters with a specific style and size. The term *font* is often used interchangeably with *type style* when it comes to printing.

In hand lettering as well as printing, there are three main categories of fonts: serif, sans serif, and script.

Alphabet

SERIF

SERIF

A serif font style has short lines at the ends of letter strokes. Thumb through an old book, magazine, or any printed material and you'll likely notice that most of it was printed with a serif font. This style exudes a classic and traditional feel when it's used in hand lettering. But although it's classic, you can easily have fun with it. Add a little extra length to a serif and it could start to suggest a vine or a spider's web or a spool of thread that might become the creative spark for an entirely new creative font.

ABC

Example 1: Old Style
(bracketed)

ABC

Example 2: Slab Serif
(no bracketing, low contrast)

ABC

Example 3: Neoclassical/Didone
(single monoline)

Tipografía Caractères

PHIABET

SANS SERIF

Script

SANS SERIF

A sans serif style is a font without the serifs (*sans* means “without” in French). Sans serif fonts suggest a youthful and playful approach and are often used in modern design and bold headlines. Most websites, for example, use sans serif fonts frequently as the text and headlines. With their streamlined, uncluttered, modern look, sans serif fonts are great starting points for creative modifications.

ABC

Example 1: Grotesque
(modern)

ABC

Example 2: Square
(definite end with fewer curves)

ABC

Example 3: Geometric
(inspired by geometric shapes)

ABC

Example 1: Blackletter
(manuscript style dating from before
the invention of movable type)

ABC

Example 2: Calligraphic
(traditional, formal)

ABC

Example 3: Casual
(modern)



LETTER EVOLUTION

Here is a place to begin building and creating your own alphabets. Remember that in hand lettering, alphabets are meant to stand out visually—so don't limit your imagination. The key is to find different ways to draw the letters you imagine.

1. Start out with the simplest letterforms; you can use your own handwriting as a guide. There are no rules for the comparative heights of upper- and lowercase letters or for adjusting ascenders and descenders, but try to keep them consistent. More often than not, base letters should fit into a square shape as it serves as a frame for the letter. The corresponding ascenders and descenders can exceed the square.



2. Try different ways to give the letters in your alphabet weight. You can thicken all the line strokes. You can thicken just the right-hand line strokes and experiment with different thicknesses of line to create variety. Alternatively, try drawing your alphabet with hollow, outlined line strokes—and then add shading for a three-dimensional effect.



3. Add patterns and other embellishments to your font. You can do this by adding flourishes to the ends of letter strokes, whimsical drawn elements, colors, or patterns. Be as silly or as serious as you like. The possibilities are endless.

Below are variations on the letter A. Use them as a jumping-off point for your own inventive lettering. Your font doesn't have to look like anyone else's—make it your own.



Top row, left to right:

Combine serif and script to create this effect. Add patterns and bold, transparent color to make the letter stand out.

Create outlines and use colors in the same family to establish a cohesive feel to your letter. The 3-D shadow creates depth and contrast.

Use a fancy crossbar or extravagant serifs. Outline the letter in a lighter shade to create a glowing effect.

Bottom row, left to right:

Nature elements pair well with script fonts.

Adding geometric patterns and a dark shadow to a bold letter will add dimension to your work.

Creating a rounded serif font in contrasting colors will emphasize the font's character.

Aa Bb Cc Dd

Ee Ff Gg Hh

Ii Jj Kk Ll

Mm Nn Oo Pp

Qq Rr Ss Tt

Uu Vv Ww Xx

Yy Zz



SERIF

Swash Serifs

I came up with this letter style as a way to incorporate the elegance of a swash into a traditional roman type. Similar to script, this font is slanted about 45 degrees to the right and has a distinctive thick and thin contrast to each side. I also combined watercolors and markers for this font style and gave it a striped pattern to keep it fun and modern.

Tools and Materials



- practice paper
- pencil
- eraser
- ruler
- 200–300 gsm (137–208 lb) hot-pressed watercolor paper
- watercolor pan set (one or two colors from the pan)
- round thick brush
- round felt-tip marker (one shade darker than the color(s) you've chosen)

1. With a pencil on practice paper, sketch a roman serif alphabet, creating a variety of uppercase and lowercase letters as warmups. You can play with the height and width, but make sure they are proportional and fit inside a square. Beside the serifs, add a tilted or slanted version of the same alphabet for practice.



I chose an Old Style serif to retain the vintage-style aspect of the letterform for this alphabet, but you might choose another style. Once you've picked the serif style you prefer, start working on your watercolor paper. Draw the letters at a 45-degree slant to the right to italicize them.



2. On one end of the serif, add a *swash*. Swashes are flourishes, usually applied to a serif, a terminal, or an entry stroke. They are naturally exaggerated, so there is a tendency for the swash to extend farther than the actual outline of the letter. Add a ball terminal to the end of each swash.
3. After adding the swashes, create contrast by thickening the vertical strokes of the letters. Make sure they are wide enough to incorporate a striped pattern.



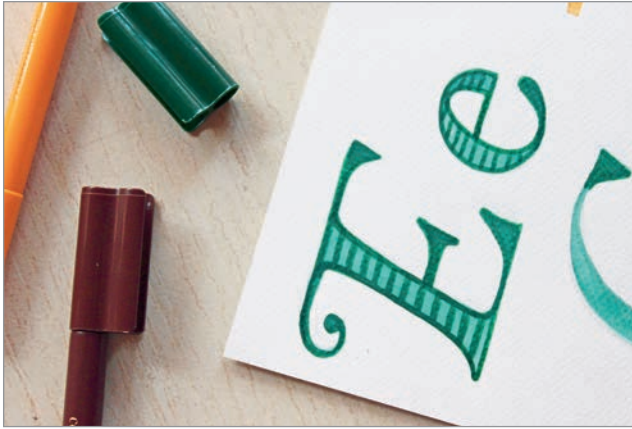
NOTE: Each uppercase and lowercase letter can have up to two swashes and ball-terminal ends. The thinner ends retain the serif structure. Some letters, like *U* and *I*, may not have ball terminals or swashes.



4. When you've finalized your sketches, transfer your sketches onto watercolor paper. I used hot-pressed paper for this alphabet because it has a smooth texture, making it a good choice for mixed media work (in this case, watercolors and markers). I worked on a 7"x 10" (18 x 25.5 cm) sheet of paper, which can fit about four uppercase and lowercase letters. Lightly pencil in the letters and be sure to leave room for exaggerated swashes.

5. Next, it's time to add color. Using watercolor and a round brush, choose a color and paint it into the wide letter strokes. Use more water than paint to achieve translucent color. Follow the pencil guide for easier coloring.

The choice of color combination is wide open for this alphabet type. I used complementary blue and orange in retro hues for alternating letters. To achieve the teal hue, I combined blue, green, and a bit of white. To achieve the yellow-orange hue, I combined yellow with a bit of light orange on my palette.



6. Allow the paint to dry completely—for at least 2 hours. Once it's dry, erase the visible pencil marks. Using a round felt-tip marker in a darker shade, trace over the painted area and start to outline the letterforms. Then add lines inside the painted strokes of the letters to create a striped pattern.

TO
Define
TO IS Limit
Oscar Wilde

Haz arte
· QUE ·
Importe
.....

Make art that matters.

Übung
MACHT den
Meister

Practice makes the master.

PROFITER
.....
du Présent

Enjoy the here and now.

TIP: Some swashes may be bigger or more exaggerated, depending on the word length. You can decide which words to highlight and use various color schemes to create your artwork.

Aa Bb Cc Dd
Ee Ff Gg Hh
Ii Jj Kk Ll
Mm Nn Oo
Pp Qq Rr Ss
Tt Uu Vv Ww
Xx Yy Zz



Lazy Serifs

This font style came to me while I was playing around with different colors and serif styles. Instead of following the straight line that most letters have, Lazy Serifs are freeform structures, and that's what makes this style fun and playful. I used concentrated watercolors in different hues for lots of variation, and a flat-tip brush to achieve a block-like effect on the letterforms.

Tools and Materials



- pencil
- eraser
- ruler
- 300 gsm (208 lb) cold-pressed watercolor paper
- liquid concentrated watercolors in two or three warm or cool colors
- flat brush (size #1)
- round brush (size #1)

1. On practice paper, sketch slab serif letters from A to Z in pencil. Slab serifs are characterized by thick, block-like serifs. Because this style is freeform, the letters can slant in different directions and they don't have to be aligned when you form them into words. Keep practicing and creating various interpretations: The key is to make your alphabet "lazy" but still readable and appealing.



2. Next it's time to prepare your brushes and palette and work on the color schemes.

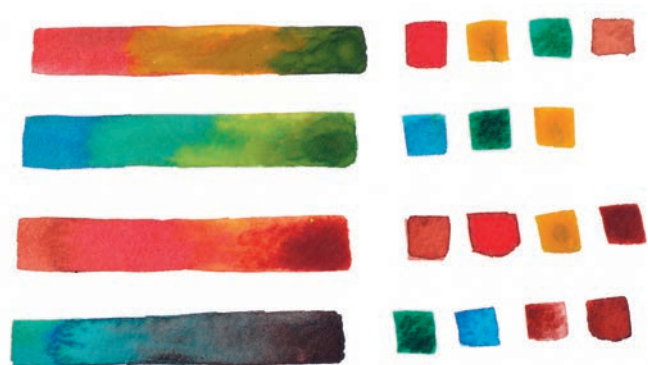
For Lazy Serifs, I like to use the flat brush. Flat brushes can be used for both thick and thin strokes, but for this particular alphabet, we'll focus on the thick strokes. The size of the flat brush will determine the thickness of your strokes. Using a flat brush on its wide side ensures a consistent stroke weight.

I've chosen to work with concentrated watercolors, which are liquid and more vibrant than watercolors in pans or tubes. They produce the greatest brilliance and are also fluid enough to be mixed with other colors, making them a good option for achieving heavy gradient-like color effects.



3. Set up your watercolor paper. Dip the brush into the watercolor and paint horizontal, vertical, and diagonal lines to warm up. Do this several times to test the stroke and color consistency. The amount of color will vary depending on the pigment load in the brush.

You can choose to use all warm (red, vermilion, brown) or all cool (ultramarine, blue, green) colors with touches of yellow. You can also opt to mix two or three colors from different families to make the color transitions more evident. Here are a few sample gradient combinations I came up with.





4. Create gradient-like hues by adding a layer of concentrated watercolor (in another color) on the next stroke. This helps build a connection to the next color you use. The trick with gradients is to work quickly while your strokes are wet. Add a new color when you drag your brush through the next stroke.
5. As an accent, add dots to the edges of your letters, using the round brush. The dots make great fillers in layouts, especially if you're doing quotations or phrases.
6. Allow the paint to dry, keeping in mind that concentrated watercolors take longer to dry than other types of watercolors. Once they've dried completely, gently erase the visible pencil.

Wir Sind,
Was Wir
DENKEN

BUDDHA

What we think, we become.

Be as
You Wish
to SEEM

Socrates

CONQUISTA
EL MUNDO

Take on the world.





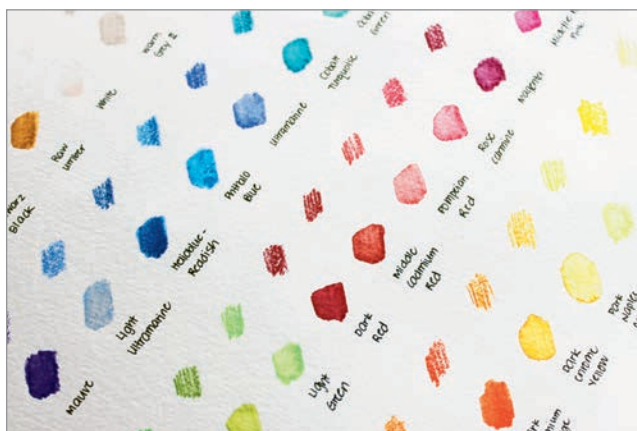
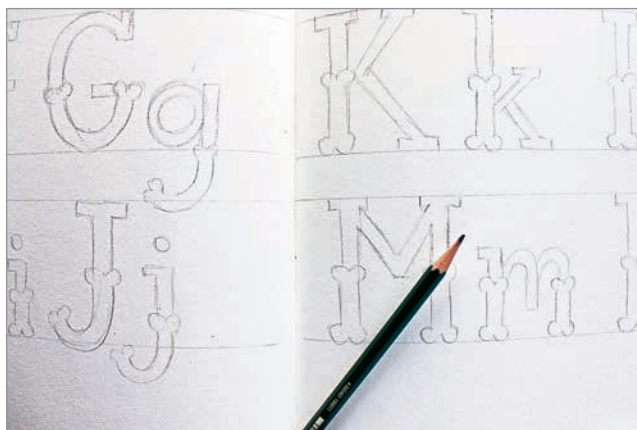
Bone Type

Playful, animated, and fun in nature, this type of font adds a twist to the usual serif by incorporating a bone shape into the letterform. I used A4-size watercolor paper in 200 gsm (137 lb). The paper quality isn't too thick but is durable enough to hold the color applications properly. I chose vibrant hues in different color schemes to highlight this font style.

Tools and Materials



- 200 gsm (137 lb) cold-pressed watercolor paper
- pencil
- eraser
- ruler
- colored pencils
- watercolor pencils
- sharpener



1. Using a light pencil, draw your letters from A to Z, with four or five uppercase and lowercase letters, 2½" (6.5 cm) tall, on each sheet. With this style, the letters tend to be blocky and fat, and that's fine. This font is half serif and half bone, so some letters have more than one bone.



2. When you've outlined the letters, it's time to pick out the colors. Make swatches with the colored pencils you'll be using. From your set, choose two contrasting colors for each letter. They can be bright or a bit muted—it's up to you. I've chosen bright ones to match the playful style of this letterform.



3. I colored the serif and block part of each letter with colored pencil. Colored pencil is an easy medium to work with, and the hues are rich and vibrant—perfect for this font style.
4. For the bone part of the letter, I used watercolor pencils. After coloring the bone parts, I turned them into watercolor by brushing a little water on top. Don't apply too much water—just enough to coat the bone shape. Sharpen your pencils from time to time to make sure the shapes are accurate.
5. Allow the letters dry for at least an hour.

Trust
YOUR
JOURNEY

TIP: Add shadows on quote layouts, using a pen or marker. They will make your letters more dimensional and help them pop off the page.

♥ Dich
SELBST
Lieben

Love yourself.



Look before you leap. (Literally: Before you marry, think about what you're doing.)

A A B B C C D D
E E F F G G H H
I I J J K K L L
M M N N O O P P
Q Q R R S S T T
U U V V W W X X
Y Y Z Z

GUEST ARTIST

Woodpecker

by João Neves

ABOUT THE ARTIST

João Neves is a freelance graphic designer, illustrator, and music producer in Lisbon, Portugal. But he's mostly known for his lettering work, the fruit of his obsession with vintage graphic design and typography.

João's lettering journey started in 2013 when he needed the freelance work, and it quickly turned into a full-time passion. Since then, he's included lettering in most of his projects, from branding and designing T-shirts to painting skateboards and murals. His clients have included Disney, Vodafone, and DC Shoes.

ABOUT THE ALPHABET

"The inspiration for this alphabet was taken from old wooden Western signs," João explains. "I'm always drawn by old type and I like to recreate it with a twist. My objective was to make a simpler version of Western type by mixing it with more classic roman characteristics. For this alphabet I also wanted to make a drop shadow outline to add dimension and extra detail. You can get different results depending on the material you pick. I used black fineliner pens and brush pens to create my letters. Pencil is also a great choice because it adds that natural hand-drawn texture."



Tools and Materials



- 100–200 gsm (70–137 lb) smooth drawing paper
- pencil
- ruler
- eraser
- black fineliner pen
- brush pen



1. Set up your grid. Hand lettering is fun because it gives you a lot of freedom to play with the letterforms, but it's also important to follow some basic rules. I like to start building my letters with a simple grid to make the sizing consistent throughout. At this stage I also define the x-height, which is the distance between the base of the letters and the middle point. That point doesn't necessarily need to be in the exact middle, but in this case I decided to make x-height half of the cap height because I wanted to add an extra element in the middle of the letters. Also remember that curved letters (like O and G) will look smaller if you keep them inside the grid, so be sure to draw them a little bit bigger.
2. After setting up the grid I start sketching the letters. I prefer to use a pencil because this is a stage of exploration and I don't want to be concerned about making mistakes. Some things may work and others won't, but it's essential to let your ideas flow while sketching. After drawing all the letters, I take a look at the alphabet as a whole to make sure everything is uniform. Remember that some elements of the letters can and should be used across multiple characters, like the leg of the K, which is the same as the R.



3. Now that all the setup and sketching are done, I'm ready to ink my letters. I usually start drawing from the top and work the outlines first. You can use either a fineliner pen or a brush pen for this step. Don't be too worried about making mistakes—just have fun! Sometimes small errors will add more character and uniqueness to your alphabet.

4. Once you're done with all the outlines, you can erase the pencil guides and start inking the interiors. In aiming for a rustic look, I discovered that a good way to achieve it is by painting with a brush pen that has had some use. Brush pens wear out very quickly, and they provide a great trick for adding texture to the letters. To make the letters feel natural, be sure your strokes go in the direction of the letters. I also prefer not to completely fill the letters, because leaving some blank spots gives the alphabets a more rustic look.

5. With all the letters inked up, the only thing missing is the shadow. My favorite tool for drawing shadows is a brush pen because it allows you to create different widths with a single stroke. I decided that the light source would come from



the top right side, so the shadows will cast on the bottom left side of the letters. One tip that helps me with the consistency of the shadows is to focus on the space between the lines and the letter while drawing. By doing this, I'm making sure that the space is consistent throughout the entire stroke.

6. Remember, when you use your alphabet to create a phrase, you do not have to limit yourself to duplicating the letters exactly the way you created them in the alphabet. The best part about hand lettering is that you can easily play with the shape of the letters. Some letters work really well together and you can make connections between them.

EVERY
DARK NIGHT
— has a —
BRIGHTER DAY

L'IMAGINATION
GOUVERNE
Le MONDE
NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

Imagination rules the world.

PARA
VIAGJAR
BASTA
EXISTIR

FERNANDO PESSOA

To travel you simply need to exist.

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee
Ff Gg Hh Ii
Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn
Oo Pp Qq Rr
Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww
Xx Yy Zz

GUEST ARTIST

Midwestr

by Lisa Lorek

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Lisa Lorek is a lettering artist born and raised in Cleveland, Ohio. After graduating from the University of Dayton, she dove into the crazy world of advertising. Currently, she splits her time between her position as an art director at Global Prairie and as a freelancer, working on a variety of lettering projects, including coloring books, murals, magazine covers, and gallery shows.

In 2016, she was named one of Cleveland.com's top 40 Clevelanders to follow on Instagram. She also won third place in the 2016 Ink Wars at Weapons of Mass Creation. In her spare time, Lisa enjoys hiking, failed cooking attempts, and spending time with her big Slovenian family.

ABOUT THE ALPHABET

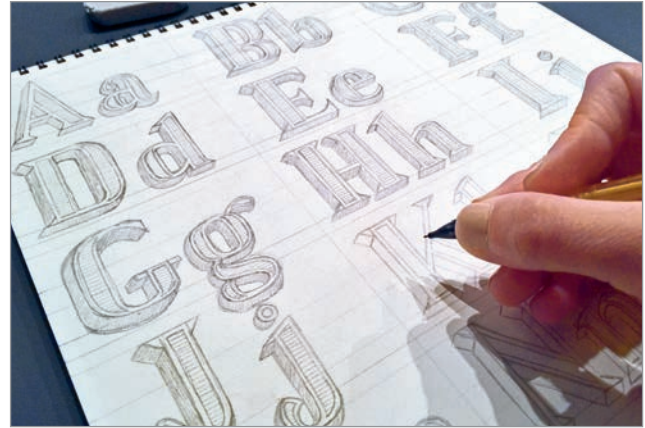
This font is named Midwestr as a nod to the U.S. region where the artist is from. Midwesterners are known for their great work ethic and politeness, which are reflected in this serif's heavy shadows and contrasting clean details. Midwestr borrowed its forms from several common historical serif fonts, but the decorative details, all drawn by hand, have a warm and welcoming spirit. You can still see this spirit in many hand-painted signs outside of small Midwestern stores. The font itself was drawn with black-ink pens to fit the classic style of a serif typeface.



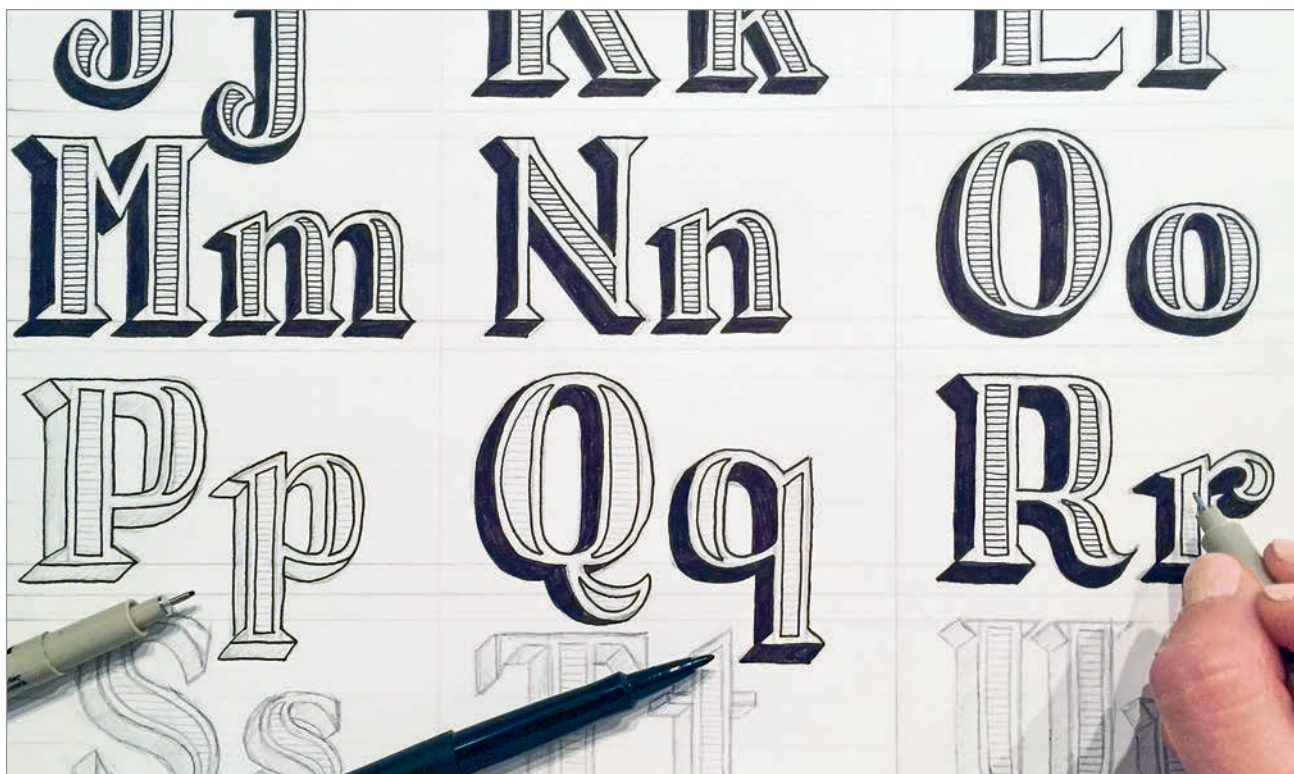
Tools and Materials



- 100–200 gsm (70–137 lb) smooth drawing paper
- 24" (61 cm) ruler
- 12" (30 cm) ruler
- pencil
- large white eraser
- pen eraser
- .02 Micron pen
- .05 Micron pen
- Papermate felt-tip pen
- 11" x 24" (28 x 61 cm) pad of drawing paper



1. I begin by drawing a three-column grid on my drawing pad, giving each set of letters a comfortable 3½" x 2" (9 x 5 cm) box to sit in.
2. After researching a number of traditional serif fonts for common letterforms, I begin drawing my alphabet. To distinguish mine from all the others, I make each serif sharp-edged. As I begin sketching the first three letters, I make two more guide lines for the lowercase letters: one for the x-height, which marks the top of most lowercase letters, and another for specific parts of certain letters. For instance, the top of the lowercase *s* and the crossbar of the lowercase *t* come up to the x-height line. But the bar of the *e* and the terminal of the *r* are guided by the lower line.
3. I draw the outlines for each letter in pencil first. When drawing an entire alphabet, I borrow forms from similar letters to keep the font consistent. For example, the lowercase *h*, *m*, and *n* have very similar forms. I leave enough room to add the linear details in each modulated area of the letters.
4. After completing the outlines, I continue using the pencil to add a shadow and linear details to each letter. When drawing the shadows, consistency in the angle of the shadow is a must! I find it helps to draw out the shorter, angled edge of the shadows first, then go back and connect the short angled lines with the longer straight lines. For the striped details, I draw the shape where the stripes will live first, staying away from tighter areas of each letter. I then go back in and quickly draw the horizontal stripes, just to get a sense of the finished product.



5. Getting the sketch down in pencil is the most challenging part. After that, all that's left is tracing the sketch in pen. I begin by outlining three things in a .05 Micron pen: the outline of the letters, the outline of the shadow, and the outline of the shape the stripes are housed in.
6. Once each letter is outlined, I use my Papermate felt-tip pen to fill in the shadow. Following the shadow, I use the .02 Micron pen to add smaller horizontal stripes in the shapes within each letter. I prefer the freehand striped look, but you could always use a small straightedge, like a credit card, to guide your hand when filling in the letters with lines.
7. Midwestr is a great font to use for headlines and emphasized words, but not for entire sentences or paragraphs. As you can see in these example quotes, words that carry the most meaning are emphasized with this font, while other parts of the phrase are simplified and scaled down in size.

The secret of
GETTING
AHEAD
IS
GETTING
STARTED.

Le **BEAU**
EST TOUJOURS
BIZARRE
CHARLES BAUDELAIRE

Beauty is always strange.

NO HABLES
a menos que puedas mejorar
EL SILENCIO

Don't speak unless you can improve the silence.

A B C D E F G
H I J K L M
N O P Q R
S T U V W
X Y Z



SANS SERIF

Condensed Capitals

Inspired by the art deco movement, Condensed Capitals pays homage to the sophisticated art styles that emerged in the early twenties. With its distinctively high/low crossbars, geometric forms, and stylized curves, this font style encapsulates the beauty and elegance of vintage letterforms.

Tools and Materials



- 80 gsm (50 lb) paper
- pencil
- eraser
- ruler
- fineliner pen

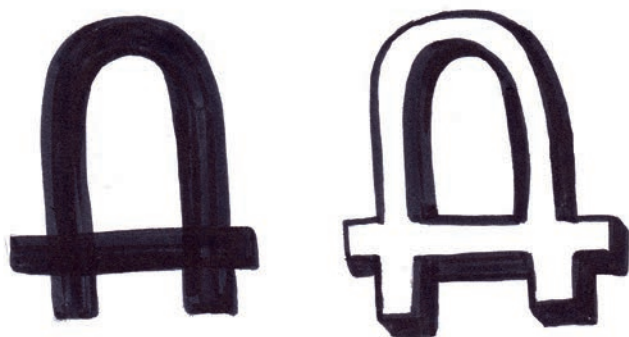


1. I start by preparing the grid for this alphabet style. Since the letterforms are distinctively condensed, I plot the A to Z ruling on one sheet of A4-size paper. The height is approximately 1" (2.5 cm), while the width is around ½" (1 cm).
2. Once I finish plotting the alphabet guide, it's time to loosen up with the alphabet strokes, using a fineliner pen. This art deco-inspired font style focuses mostly on shapes, so you can also opt to doodle different geometric shapes for warm up.
3. Still using the fineliner, I start drawing the outlines of the letterforms. Note that all sides have equal widths, so it's ideal to use outlines as reference to illustrate the letters. They do not need to be connected all at once—segmenting them into strokes makes it easier to construct the letterforms for this style.





4. Using a crosshatch technique, I start coloring in the letterforms with my fineliner. (You can opt to use watercolor, markers, or colored pencils at this point, but be sure to outline your alphabet in pencil first.) To achieve the sketchy effect, the trick is to keep your strokes loose and light. There may be white strokes left, and that's fine.
5. As an alternative, you can also try coloring the letter completely (no sketchy effect) or make it hollow with a shadow effect to make it look dimensional. Feel free to expand and create your own style based on this letterform.





Everything is possible.

WISDOM
BEGINS
IN WONDER

WER
RASTET
DER
ROSTET

He who rests grows rusty.





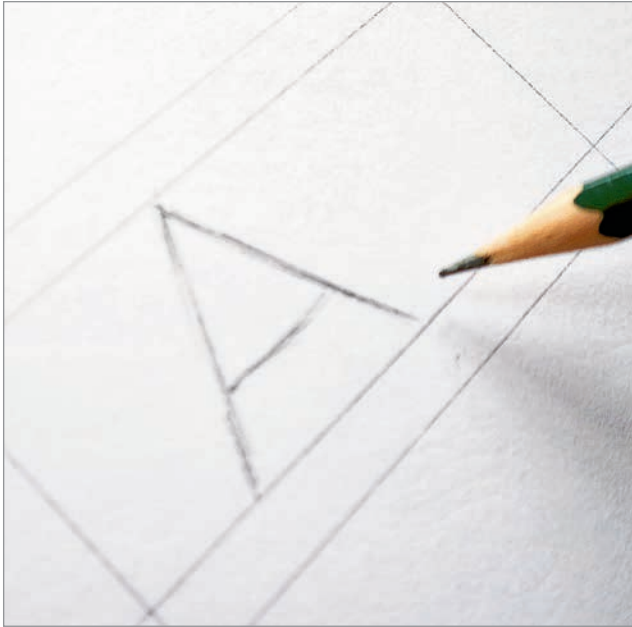
Inline and Outline

Derived mainly from block letters, this sans serif font is bold and hollow. Adding an inline, outline, and shadow keeps the font fresh and modern. With its thick form it's sure to be a standout and is perfect for headlines, signage, or big banners.

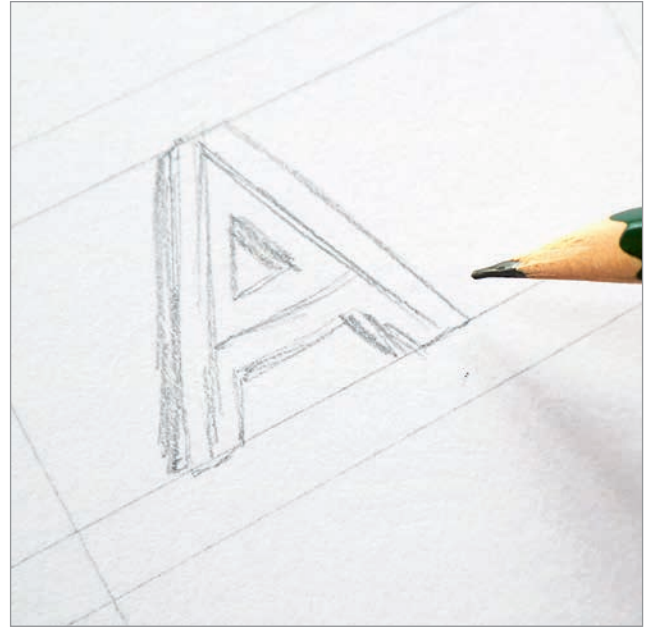
Tools and Materials



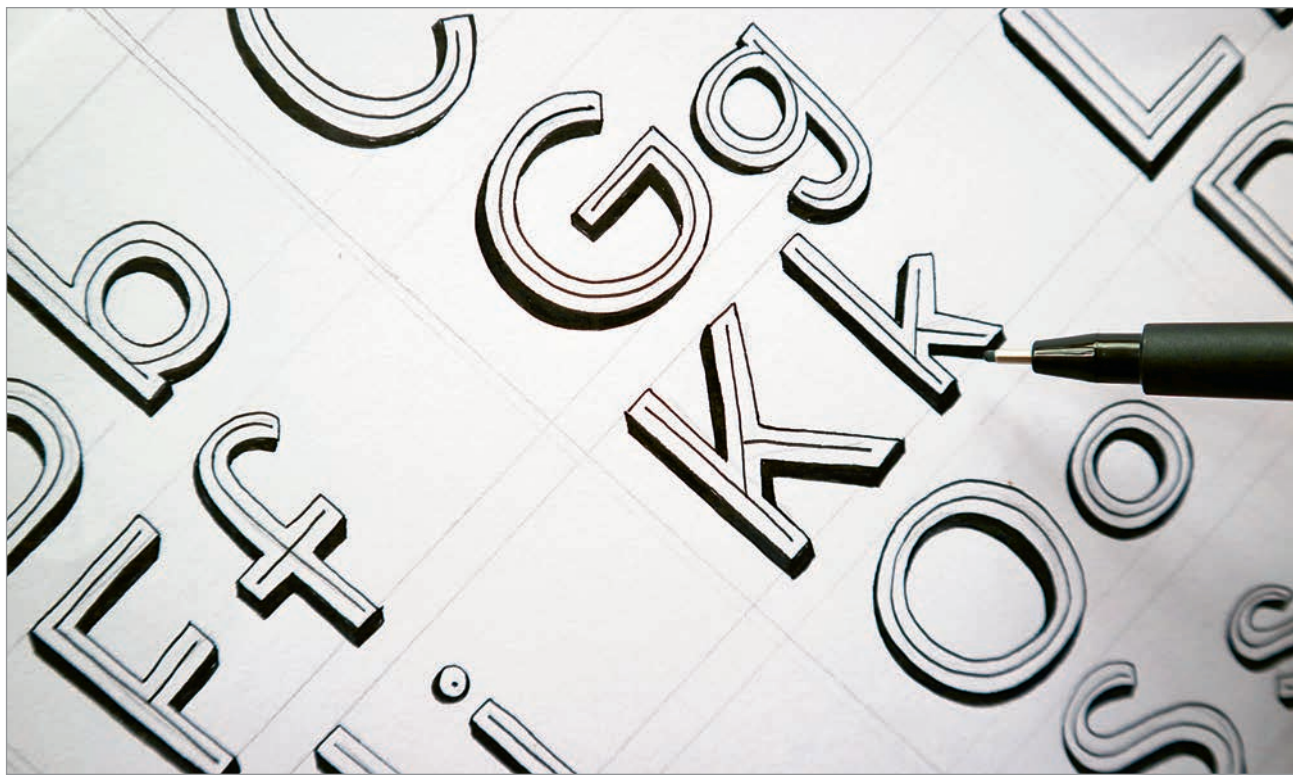
- pencil
- eraser
- ruler
- 120 gsm (81 lb) paper
- thin fineliner pen
- thick fineliner pen



1. To start, I plot my alphabet grid on an A4-size sheet, with equal measurements of at least 2" x 2" (5 x 5 cm) per letter. Note that this font style is wider than common sans serif fonts and that there is a possibility for the letterforms to exceed the square dimensions.



2. With a pencil, I sketch the basic sans serif letters. This establishes the inline stroke of the letterform. I continue with both uppercase and lowercase letters until I finish the entire alphabet.



3. Once the inline alphabet has been set up, I proceed with drawing a block letterform outside the inline—this is for the base of the letter. The measurements don't have to be exact, but be sure to allot adequate and equal spacing between each block letter and the inline stroke so that they don't collide. After the block letter has been drawn, I create a shadow by thickening the left side of each letter. Once this is inked with a fineliner pen, it will be colored.
4. Using a thin fineliner pen, I trace the inline strokes I've sketched with a pencil. Then, using a thick fineliner pen, I trace the block letter outlines. This is a bit tricky, so keep a steady hand while working on your strokes. Drawing in one direction will help keep the strokes fast and fluid.
5. Once all the block letters and inlines have been drawn, I use a thick fineliner pen to color in the shadows to add a 3-D-like effect to my letters. Allow the alphabets to dry.

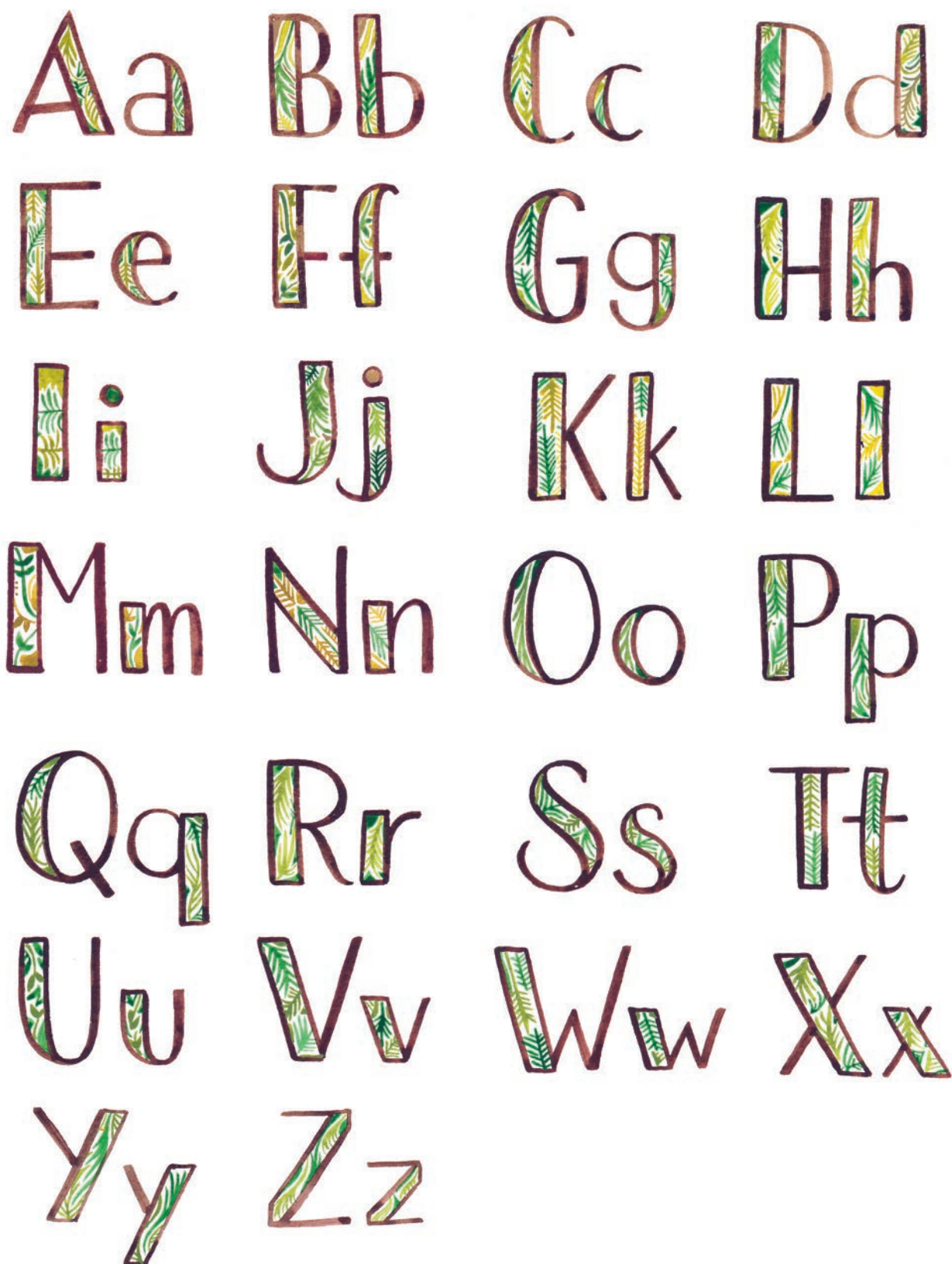
Focus **ON**
PROGRESS
PERFECTION

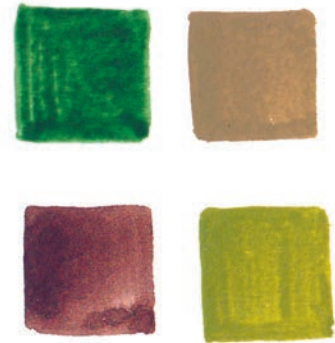
c'est
TOUJOURS
LE BON
MOMENT

It's always the right time.

A
EXPERIÊNCIA
é a mãe DA
SABEDORIA

Experience is the mother of wisdom.





Nature Story

I've called this font Nature Story. It depicts an abundance of different foliage elements in pattern form. Using earth colors as the main theme, this style is heavily inspired by all things leafy, green, and growing. As a sans serif font, it's simple to draw, but adding the natural elements makes it fun to embellish. I made one section of each letter hollow, for inserting my embellishments. I used watercolor as a medium because the brush is a great tool for drawing leaves, vines, and branches.

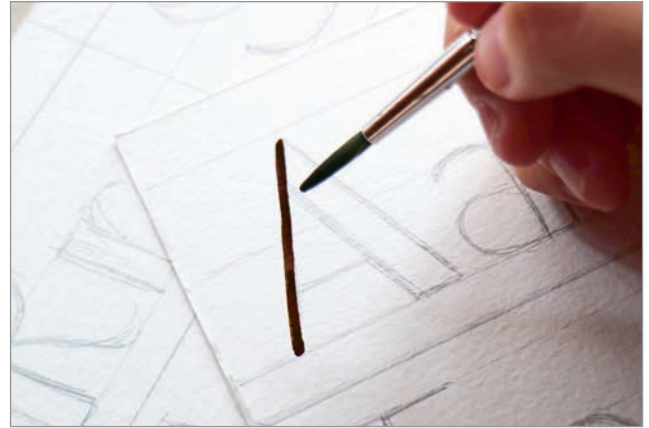
Tools and Materials



- 300 gsm (208 lb) cold-pressed watercolor paper
- pencil
- ruler
- thin round brush
- thick round brush
- watercolors in earth colors



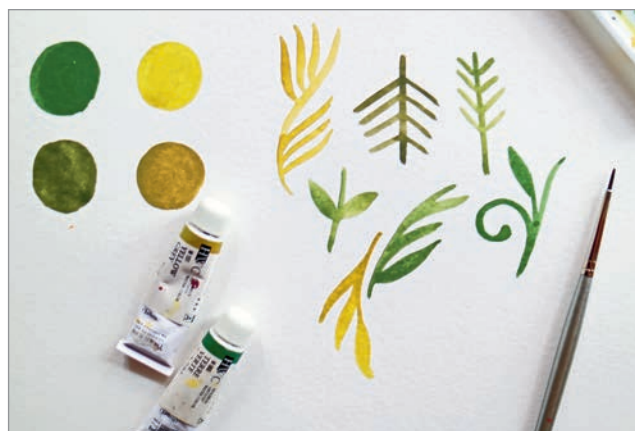
1. In my initial sketches for this font, I decided to make it upper- and lowercase, with the lowercase letters about half the height of the uppercase forms. These are based on conventional sans serif letterforms.
2. I like to work on an 8½" x 11" (21.5 x 28 cm) pad when I'm designing a new font. Since I'll be working with watercolor, I use a ruler and pencil to create my ruled lines on watercolor paper. For this alphabet I'm allowing about 2" (5 cm) in height and width for each letter. I'm making these letters wider than a normal font width because I'll be painting patterns inside each.
3. I draw my alphabet in pencil first, leaving space on one side of each for the patterns that I'll add later. I want the alphabet to have a hand-drawn look, but it's still important that all the letters be perfectly perpendicular and of an even width. A font will look amateurish if you're not careful with consistency.
4. When I'm happy with the look of my penciled alphabet, I'm ready to start painting. I start with the outlines of the letters, using a thick round brush and dark brown paint. You might want to experiment on a piece of scrap paper before you begin, to test the amount of water your brush should hold and how to keep the tip of the brush fine as you make your brush strokes. Try to keep a steady hand while painting to maintain the strokes.



5. When the outlines are completely dry, I'm ready to start the leaf patterns. I use a thin round brush and work with two shades of green per letter. To make varied shades of green, I add yellows, browns, and a bit of blue to my mixing palette.
6. Experiment with foliage designs to incorporate into your work. Start with thumbnails of different patterns you'd like to use, then try them in your outlined letters. Be sure to keep the patterns within the outlines.

As you paint the leaf patterns, use very little water with the paint, so as not to smudge the outlines or other parts of the letter. Using less water will also allow your letters to dry more quickly.

7. Once you've finished working on the alphabet, use it to write out your desired quote or message. Embellish the layout with foliage-inspired patterns similar to the ones you created for your letters.





C'est
LA Vie

The image features the French phrase "C'est LA Vie" in a highly decorative, hand-lettered style. The letters "C", "e", "s", "t", "V", "i", and "e" are rendered in a dark brown, almost black, ink with a slightly textured appearance. These letters are filled with intricate, hand-drawn patterns of green and yellow leaves and branches, reminiscent of a forest scene. The word "LA" is written in a simpler, gold-colored, sans-serif font. Below the main text, there is a large, flowing green flourish that incorporates leaf-like shapes and elegant curves. The entire composition is set against a plain white background.

That's life.

BLOOM
where YOU'RE
PLANTED

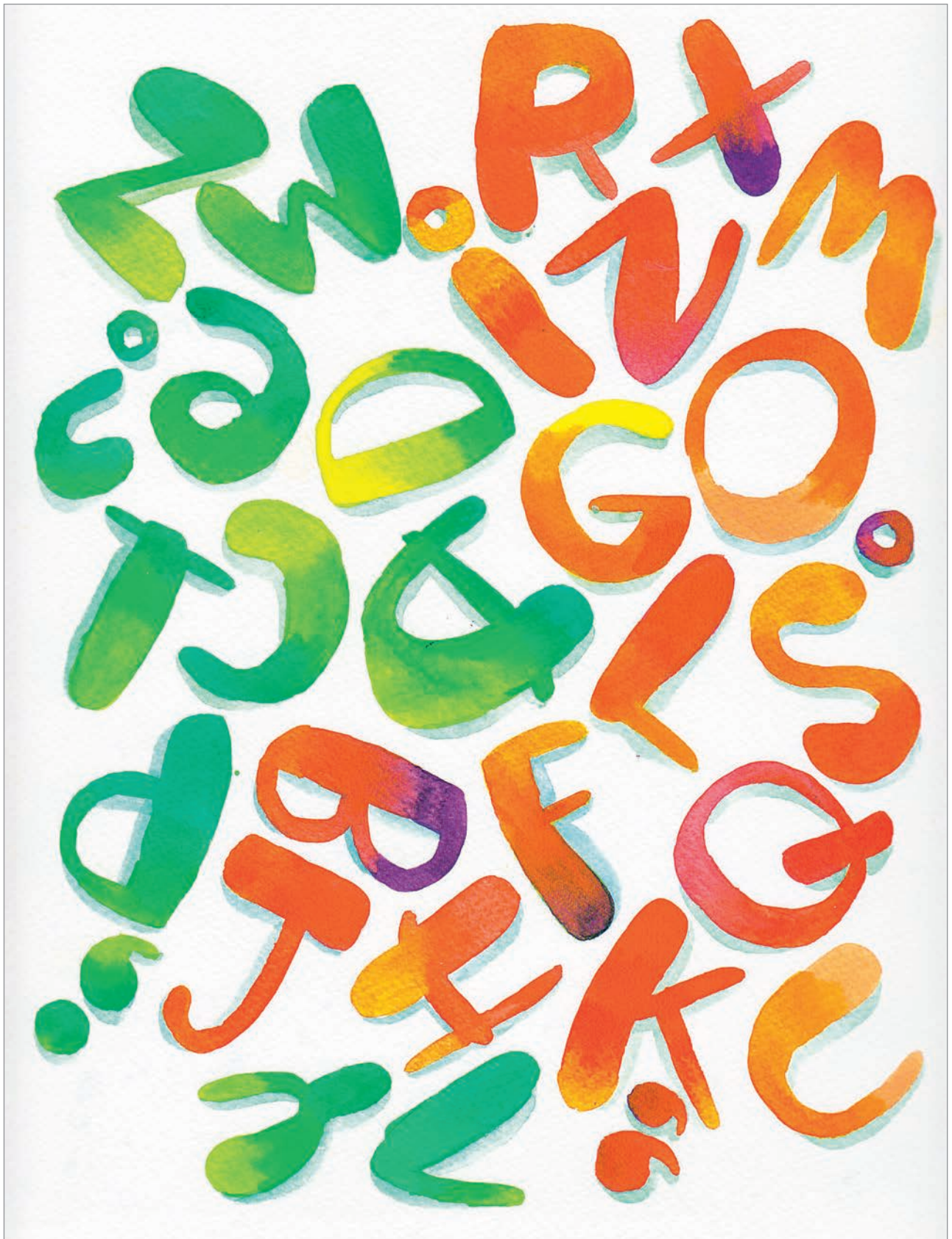
ELLE
MIT
WEDDE

Haste makes waste.

TODO • PARECE
IMPOSSIBLE
HASTA QUE
SE HACE

Nelson Mandela

Everything seems impossible until you do it.



GUEST ARTIST

Bubble Letters with Gradients

by Googly Gooeys

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Tippy Go is a freelance artist, illustrator, and photographer from the Philippines. She is half of the Googly Gooeys, a design and humor blog that loves exploring all things fun and colorful. She loves to explore with her art style, hopping from one medium to another, but she always makes sure her work is full of vibrant and happy colors. Check out more of her work at www.GooglyGooeys.com.

ABOUT THE ALPHABET

Get creative with your alphabet by creating bubble-like shapes, adding watercolor gradients, and finishing with a confetti-like splatter. To paint a gradient, wet your brush with one color and start a line. Before it dries, dip your brush into the next color and continue the line. This style makes your letters look extra fun, colorful, and cartoony.



Tools and Materials



- sketch pad or practice paper
- pencil (preferably with a light lead)
- eraser
- round watercolor brush
- 300 gsm (208 lb) watercolor paper
- watercolor (in any format: cake, tube, half-pan)
- water



1. Start your bubble letters on the sketch pad. There are two approaches to this:

- Draw the basic capital letter, then draw the bubble outline around it. Erase the lines of the original drawing.
- Create your alphabet with thick and thin oblong forms in pencil. Adjust the angle and placement of the forms until you are satisfied with the result. Erase the lines where they intersect. Assign one of the lines to be the thickest.

2. When you've worked out the details of your alphabet, you're ready to redraw it on watercolor paper. Unless you intentionally want your outlines to be seen, draw them lightly. Remember that pencil marks can no longer be erased once you've painted over them.

3. Start at the center of the paper and draw the letter A. Draw the rest of the letters around it. Try filling in the empty spaces with the stems and curves of the next letters to maximize the space on your paper. Rotate your paper until you're able to fill up the page with the alphabet.

4. Once you're happy with the layout, you're ready to paint. First, plan your palette. For this exercise, choose six colors that are side by side on the color wheel (see right). This will make a smooth transition from one color to the next as you paint.

TIP: Be sure to work out your experiments and drafts of your alphabet on sketch paper first. Watercolor paper can take only a limited number of erasures before its fibers get damaged. It's definitely best to plan your designs in advance.



Color Wheel



5. Before painting the letters, test your palette on a separate sheet of watercolor paper to make sure it's cohesive. Mix the colors to your liking. Make sure you have enough paint to complete your alphabet. Doing so will make the transitions between colors seamless, since pausing to mix a new batch of colors while doing gradients will produce watermarks on your paper.



6. To produce gradients, pick your first color and dip your brush into the water. Add the next color at the end of the first while it is still wet. Remember that the color travels only where the water is. Let the second color blend and diffuse toward the first color effortlessly. You may also assist the blending with your brush. Continue with the subsequent colors. Once you're done, choose the set that appeals to you the most.

The advantage of doing this step is that you're able to acquaint yourself with how much water your brush is able to hold, how fast your watercolor dries (which will dictate how quickly you have to work), and how much water your paper can absorb.

TIP: *Colors will appear differently on your palette than they do on the paper because dried color looks different than wet. You'll save yourself a lot of heartache if you always remember to test the colors you've mixed on a separate sheet of paper.*

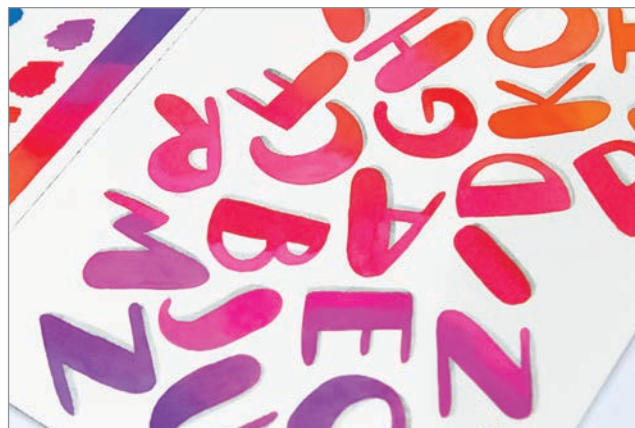




7. Apply the same color scheme to your finished letters. You may work from top to bottom, left to right, or middle to outer edge. Assign two colors per letter. Paint the outer edge first and then fill in the bubble letter. Gradients are best produced if you work quickly. Make sure the paint is still wet when you apply the second color. Allow your work to dry for a few minutes.



TIP: Use a finer brush for the shadows if it's easier for you.



8. For this alphabet, the Googly Gooeys applied gray shadow to the left and lower portions of her letters. Wherever you decide to place the shadows for your alphabet, make sure they are placed consistently from one letter to the next.

Try different types of gray for your shadows. Mixing black with a lot of water will produce a transparent gray. Mixing black with white paint will give you an opaque gray. Mixing equal amounts of red, yellow, and blue, will produce a toned gray.

9. Once the paint is dry, you're ready for the last step: the splatter. Wet your watercolor brush and pick a random color from your palette. Get another brush or pen and tap the handle of the watercolor brush to produce the splatter effect.

TIP: To achieve contrast, use light splatter colors on the area with dark colors and vice versa. Experiment with the amount of force that you apply on your brush handle. A light shade of watercolor may be drowned by darker hues, but you can make a light color pop by mixing it with white before splattering. Paint splatter is unpredictable—just have fun with the process!



ABCs OF GRADIENT PAINTING

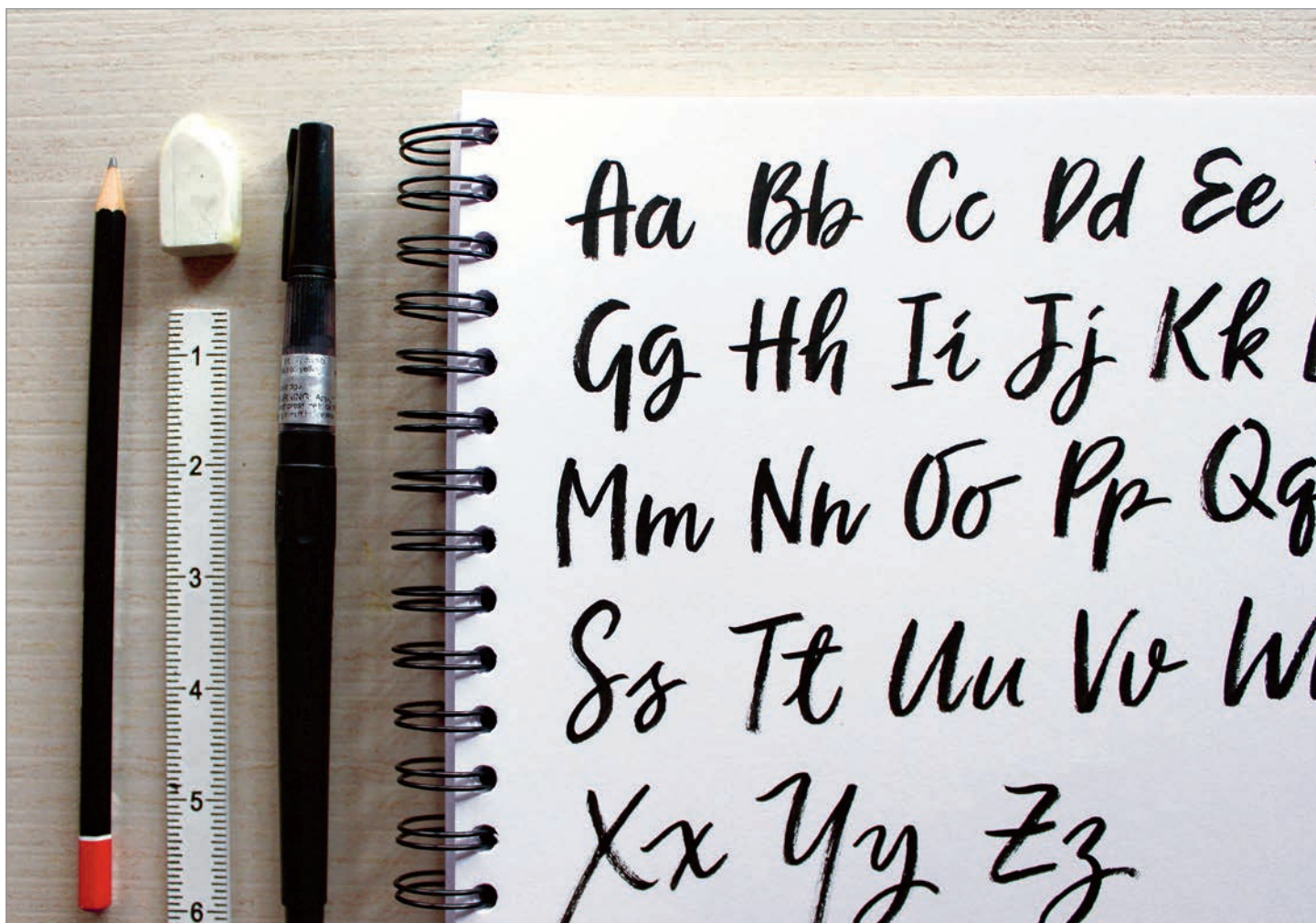
A. If you're right-handed, start at the upper left of the paper and work your way across and down toward the lower right. If you're left-handed, start at the upper right and work your way toward the lower left. By doing so, you are minimizing the chance of your hand accidentally touching the wet paint.

B. To cover the widest area in the shortest amount of time, tilt your brush at a 45-degree angle and press down on the bristles. Conversely, when filling in tight spaces, hold your brush in an upright manner so that the hairs barely touch the paper.

C. Finish work on each letter before moving to the next. This will prevent the paint from drying between gradations.

D. Make your letters pop off the page by adding shadows. Make sure the paint is dry before you begin, otherwise the shadow will bleed into the original color. Test for dryness by looking at your paper from different angles. If it's a bit shiny, the paint is still wet. Or touch the paint carefully with your fingertip. If it's damp, give yourself more time.

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee
Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj
Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo
Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt
Uu Vv Ww Xx
Yy Zz



SCRIPT

Freehand Brush Script

Following a modern script style, Freehand Brush Script is a loose font based on cursive handwriting. There are no specific thick and thin strokes, but there are exaggerated parts on some letters, such as a crossbar and tail. Using a brush pen helps achieve the rustic and organic look of the strokes, resulting in a dry-brush effect.

Tools and Materials



- 120 gsm (81 lb) paper
- pencil
- eraser
- ruler
- brush pen



1. Before starting on a script font, warm up by making random strokes with the brush pen. This will help you decide how you want to grip your pen as you work. Brush pens come in various sizes and types; the one I used for this font was ink-based.
2. Use a pencil to sketch freeform uppercase and lowercase letters. These will serve as the basis for your brush pen strokes.

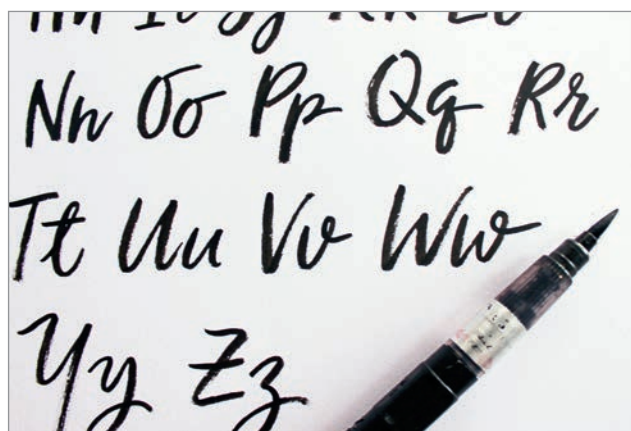
e e e e
 h e l l o
 m m m
 c c c c c

A A
 B B
 C C

P P
 Q Q
 R R



3. Trace over the pencil marks with the brush pen. The brush pen lines do not have to follow the pencil exactly. Depending on the pressure you put on the brush pen while writing, the outcome of the letters may be thick or thin. The goal is to make the letters loose but still cohesive. There are no specific measurements since this is a freehand script style.
4. When the letters have dried, erase the pencil marks. As you begin to write quotations in this font, you can choose whether you want to connect the letters, cursive-style.



Te perderás
las mejores
cosas si
mantienes los
ojos cerrados.

You'll miss the best things if you keep your eyes shut.

You make
mistakes.
mistakes DON'T
make you.

Maxwell Maltz

An té a
bhióinn
siúlach,
bíonn
scéalach.

He who travels has stories to tell.

A vida é uma
jornada, não
um destino.

Life is a journey, not a destination.

Aa Bb Cc Dd
Ee Ff Gg Hh
Ii Jj Kk Ll
Mm Nn Oo Pp
Qq Rr Ss Tt
Uu Vv Ww
Xx Yy Zz



Lined Script

With a resemblance to elegant script, Lined Script takes a more modern approach with the integration of cursive elements. This particular font style is a versatile cursive alphabet that can let you play with the heights of each letter. There is a lined stroke at the right side of each letterform to create distinction among common types of script.

Tools and Materials

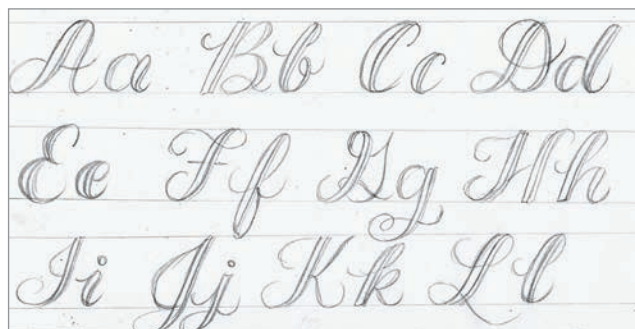


- 120 gsm (81 lb) paper
- pencil
- eraser
- ruler
- brush markers

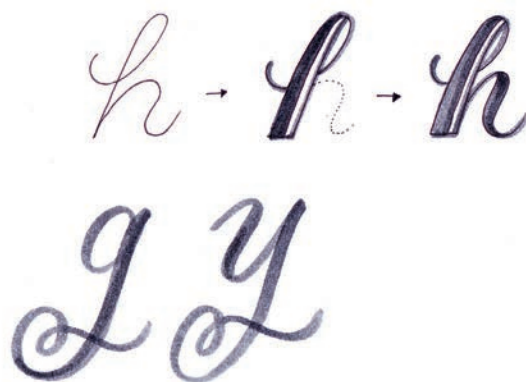


1. Start warming up using your brush marker. Brush markers are best for script font styles because they produce fluid strokes. The trick is to keep the pressure varied—light pressure to produce a thin stroke and heavy pressure to produce a thick stroke.

In Lined Script, you will give emphasis to the main downstroke of each letter by adding a narrow line to the right of the stroke. This creates a more varied look for the script form. Practice with your pen on a sketch pad, thickening certain strokes and adding the extra line as part of the letterform.



2. Once you finish warming up your strokes, it's time to apply them to your letterforms. Use the pencil to outline the letters as a guide for the brush marker.





3. After lining the letters loosely, pick the colors you want to use. Brush markers are available in many colors beyond basic black.
4. Start outlining in the colors of your choice. Be wary of the pressure points to ensure the thick and thin contrasting strokes of the letters. Once you are finished, erase the remaining pencil marks.

TIP: When doing layouts, you can play with the various heights and elongate certain features of letters (such as the lowercase t, l, and f) in order to avoid empty spaces in your composition.



Action
IS THE
foundational
key TO all
success
picasso

Ruhige
MEER
MACHEN
keinen
geschickten
SEEMANN

Smooth seas do not make skillful sailors.

La
brieveté
EST
DE
l'âme
l'esprit

William Shakespeare

Brevity is the soul of wit.

La vida ES
Corta. Vivela
APASIONADAMENTE.
Marc A. Pitman

Life's short. Live passionately.

Aa Bb Cc Dd
Ee Ff Gg Hh
Ii Jj Kk Ll
Mm Nn Oo Pp
Qq Rr Ss Tt
Uu Vv Ww
Xx Yy Zz



Retro Script

I came up with this script style in my desire to recreate typefaces I've seen in vintage posters. This font, aptly called Retro Script, is inspired by custom signage and diner logos from the 1950s and 1960s. With rounder script elements and straight orientation compared to common script, this is definitely a unique and different take on cursive alphabets.

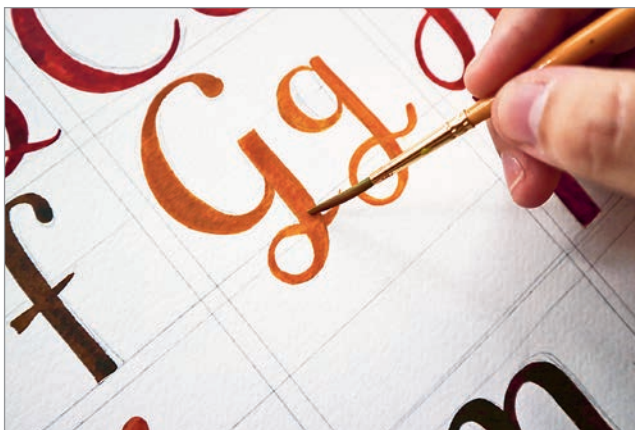
Tools and Materials



- pencil
- eraser
- ruler
- 300 gsm (208 lb) cold-pressed watercolor paper
- liner brush
- gouache paint (in tubes or pans)



1. I start working on guides with a light pencil on my watercolor sheets. I use two sheets to allow enough area for me to paint each letterform. Since this font style is wider than most script fonts, I also make sure each uppercase and lowercase letter has adequate space. The height is 2" (5 cm), while the width per alphabet set (uppercase and lowercase combined) is around 2½" (6.5 cm). Some letters may exceed the measurements (like uppercase letters O and Q) and that's fine.
2. For letter construction, I begin with a rough skeleton of the script letters. These script letters, unlike most traditional styles, are not italic—they're straight. You can use a ruler for reference. Once I finish all the skeletons, I start to create alternate thick and thin outlines. This will serve as a guide for painting the alphabets.



3. For painting the letterforms, I use gouache, an opaque watercolor paint. I've chosen warm, retro-themed colors for the alphabet I'll be painting. I also use a liner brush—a thin round brush with long bristles, which is great for long strokes and script-style fonts.
4. Using my liner brush, I dip it into the gouache and mix a bit of water to activate the color. Gouache is highly pigmented, so a single coat of the paint and water mixture is probably all you'll need. I trace over the pencil strokes thoroughly with the paint colors I've chosen.

5. I continue to work on all the letters, tracing over the outlines. Try to keep your strokes fluid and continuous so that the paint coat will be consistent. For this set, I used alternate colors of red, yellow, orange, and brown for the alphabets.
6. Allow the alphabet to dry overnight to make sure the paint is completely dry.

TIP: Most of these letters resemble sans serif fonts, which can be a good jumping-off point if you want a guide for your alphabet. The curved edges of the letters help establish the retro style.

You
ARE
Capable
OF doing,
Great
THINGS

Níl aon
tinteán
MAR DO
thinteán
FÉIL

There's no place like home. (Literally: There's no hearth like your own hearth.)



Let your dreams be bigger than your fears.

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg

Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn

Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu

Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz & Swish
& Flick

GUEST ARTIST

Swish & Flick

by Meagan Hyland

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Born in Ireland and raised by television, Meagan Hyland is an illustrator, art director, and passionate creative type currently working in Dublin. She is mostly known for pop culture–inspired art prints and typography.

Her love of letters has always been at the forefront of her projects, which often incorporate typography as part of the artwork. She has exhibited in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, San Diego, Limerick, and Dublin. Some of the clients she has worked on projects for include Disney, Columbia Pictures, Twentieth Century Fox, and Red Hour Productions.

ABOUT THE ALPHABET

“I love script fonts,” says Meagan. “They’re dainty and swirly, and no two are ever the same. I call this one Swish & Flick after the weights of the lines in the letters. The swish and flick from the pen to the page is what makes all the lovely swirls in this style. It’s all in the wrist. Based on traditional cursive letterforms, this is a style that you can customize to be as heavy or thin as you like.”

“I like to work on vellum layout paper for a number of reasons. It has a light, smooth surface, so pencil can be erased from it without a trace. Most markers will not soak through. It doubles as tracing paper when you layer it over another page. You can also layer it over grid paper if you want to avoid drawing lots of guides.”



Tools and Materials



- layout paper (vellum)
- pencil
- eraser
- ruler
- Faber-Castell PITT pens
- brush pens (small and large)

“I’ll present two ways of approaching this typeface. Ink brushes are a great tool for creating loose script fonts, and I’ll show you how to develop the font using them. But for a beginner, the ink-brush process can be quite messy, so for this tutorial I’ve outlined a method using mostly dry materials to create a faux brush script.”



PROCEDURE: DRY MATERIALS

1. Draw four parallel, equally spaced lines across your page. From the top, these are the ascender line, x-height, baseline, and descender line. All letters sit on the baseline. Most lowercase letters rise to the x-height line, though tall ones like *h* rise to the ascender line and ones with tails like *g* dip to the descender line. Now draw pairs of equidistant parallel lines down the page, forming three boxes. Keep the main part of your letterform within these boxes, with the exception of extra-wide letters like *M* and *W*.
2. With the pencil, draw a lowercase *a*. Try to draw it in one continuous swift movement for as smooth a line as possible; drawing too slowly will result in a shaky line. If you need to go over the line until you're satisfied with the curve of your letter, go ahead. You'll be able to erase the pencil lines once you've outlined the final shape with ink.

In order to create the same look as that of an ink brush forming the letter, you'll need to gauge the pressure of your pen. Think about the loop-de-loops that you drew earlier: When were you pulling the pen toward you and when were you pushing the pen away? When you pull the pen, you create a heavy stroke. When you push the pen, the line you create is light. Swish and flick!

We'll take this push/pull idea and apply it to lettering. In drawing the letter *a*, you start at the top with a push, then pull it around and down to the baseline, push it up to the top again, loop back and pull down along the stem, and push away for the terminal.

3. After you've drawn your *a*, go back to the top where the line begins and curve a new line down and around as if making a wave. Repeat on the narrower loop to form the stem.

TIP: Begin by holding your pencil in a relaxed grip and practice rows of loop-de-loops. Keep going until the loops have a consistent height and width. This will go a long way to helping you draw the letters later on.



4. Outline the shape in PITT pen and fill in with brush pens. Use the smaller brush to get into tight corners and the bigger one for filling the larger spaces. Repeat the process for your other letters.

PROCEDURE: WET MATERIALS

A far quicker way to do this in one step is to use a brush pen. However, this method takes a lot of practice and there is no room for mistakes. Pen pressure is key.

Using the grid as your guide, start at the top of the letter with your brush, adding pressure as you curve downward. Lighten the pressure as you push up gently, back to the top, then add pressure as you curve down again to make the stem. Gently flick off the page to create the terminal.

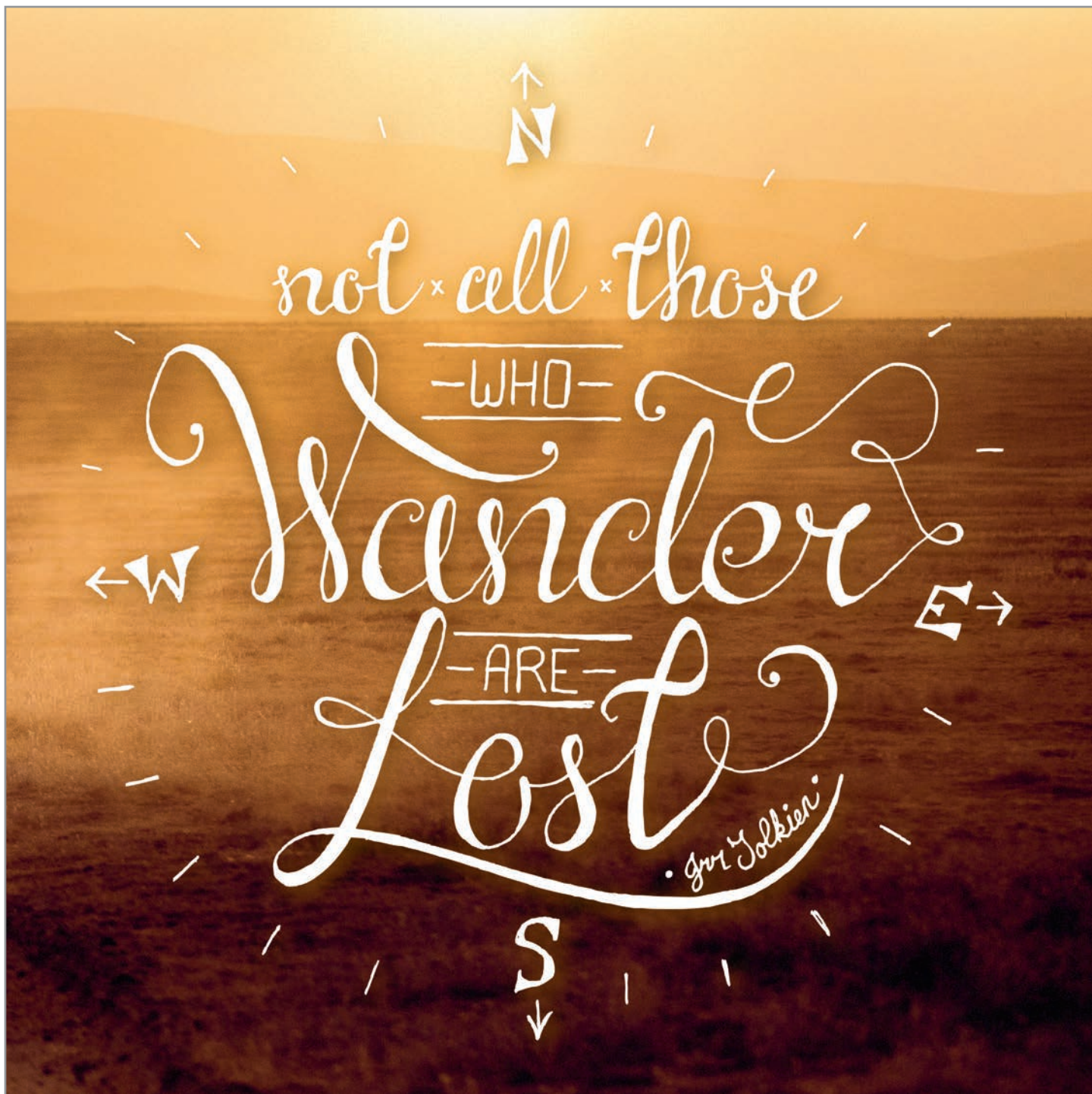
LIGATURES: CONNECTING TWO LETTERS

Once you've developed your alphabet, try writing out some words. The best part about hand-drawn script is you're not restricted to one shape of letter or one type of connection between letters. In script fonts it's common to have two or three alternative forms of a letter to best suit how it sits within a word.



For instance, when a lowercase *i* is next to a lowercase *f*, you could have a ligature that joins the dot above the *i* to the crossbar of the *f*.

Ligatures are useful when there are many lines or loops in one tight space and when you want to elevate your lettering into a more artistic style. It's all about what looks right to you. After some practice, you can add some swirls to the letters to make something even more dynamic. Enjoy!





Not all those who wander are lost.

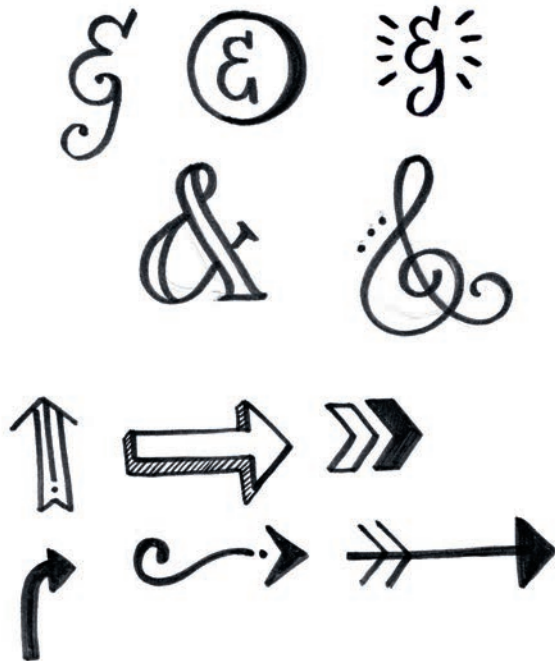


Not all those who wander are lost.

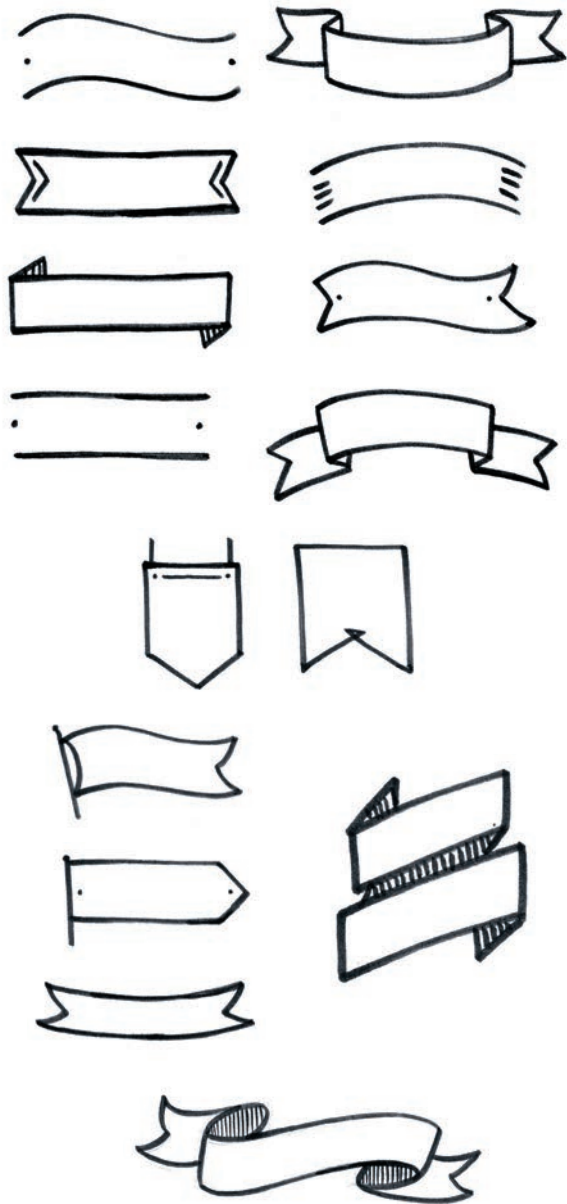
EMBELLISHMENTS

Here are some patterns and details you can incorporate into your designs when you create your own fonts and draw your own quotes. Feel free to experiment and come up with your own as you go along.

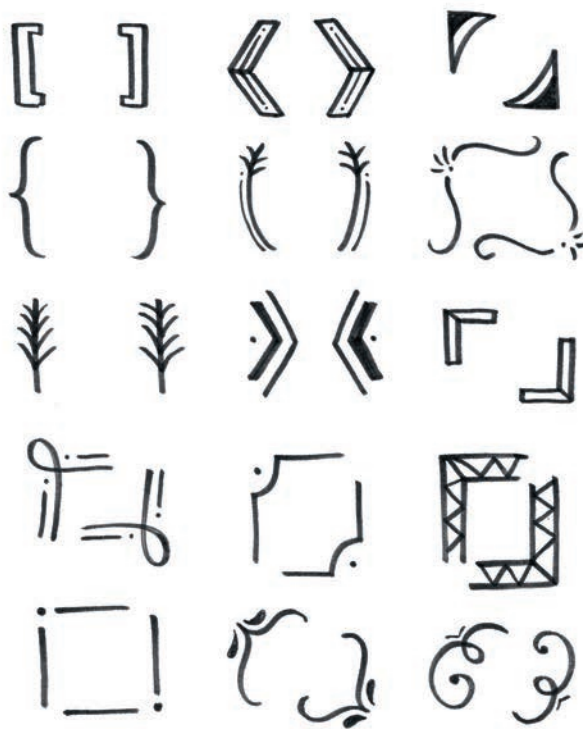
Amperands and Arrows



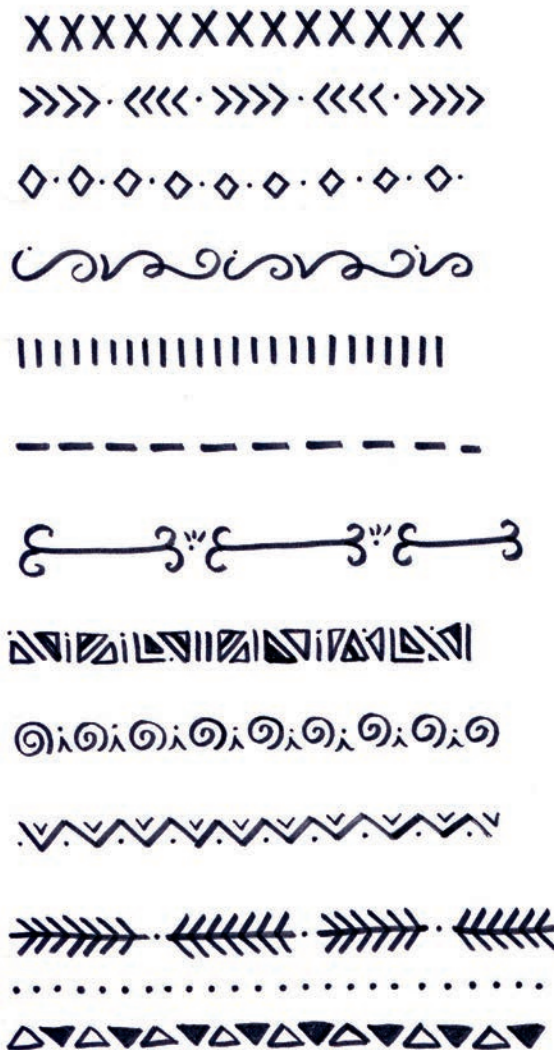
Banners and Label Boxes



Borders and Corners



Dividers



Swashes and Caps





APPLICATIONS

Lettering by hand gives your work a personal look. Here are some activities for trying out your hand-lettering skills.

Custom Artwork

Create framed artwork for gifts or to decorate your own home.

Tools and Materials

- cardstock or 300 gsm (208 lb) cold-pressed watercolor paper
- frame of your choice
- flat brush
- liner brush
- concentrated watercolor
- pencil
- eraser
- ruler





1. Cut the watercolor paper to the size of the frame you will be using.
2. On the watercolor paper, create pencil guidelines. Allow at least a 1" (2.5 cm) margin around the edges to make sure the entire quote fits within the central area of the paper. Pencil in the words to check the placement and make sure it fits.





3. I've chosen two quotations and two font styles: one in Lazy Serifs, the other in Retro Script. Once you finish hand lettering your work, allow it to dry.
4. Erase all the pencil marks carefully, then insert the artwork inside your frame. It's now ready for display.



Actions speak louder than words.



Live well, love much, laugh often.



Art Journal

Journaling entails reflecting on certain moments that you'd like to document. A journal is an ideal venue for jotting down thoughts or quotes you want to keep in mind. Moreover, hand-lettered quotes make great additions to the pages of your journals. Here are some tips on incorporating them into your spreads.

1. Choose a quote you'd like to hand letter. This can be a statement you've made or one you've seen somewhere. It might be something that has inspired you or stuck with you on a specific day. I wanted to write down a few highlights of my year, so I chose the quote "Laissez les bons temps rouler," a French quote that translates to "Let the good times roll" in English.
2. Using your fineliner pen or brush marker, hand letter this quote in your journal. Remember that journals don't have to be perfect, so it's nice to just let it flow and keep your letters simple. I lightly penciled in my quote for guidance and erased it after drawing it in with a brush marker.



3. When you've finished inking your quote, fill up the extra spaces with tape, stickers, or whatever other elements you'd like to add. On my page, I added stickers and tape strips first, then filled up the extra spaces with hand-lettered words and doodles with a thin fineliner pen.

TIP: Experiment with various layouts to find out how you want your journal page to look. My default placement is putting the quote in the center of the page to make room for other elements later on.



Tools and Materials



- journal notebook
- washi tape, stickers, etc.
- fineliner pens
- brush markers

TIP: You can also add photos, labels, and other snippets to your journal to make it more memorable and personal. I like to switch out the contents of my layout depending on what can be added to the pages on specific days.



Notebook Cover

Creating a hand-lettered cover will add character to your notebook. Here's how to do it.

1. Decide what you'd like to hand letter on the cover of your notebook. It could be your name, a mantra, a statement, or a quote to summarize what the notebook will be used for (i.e., Travel Log, Daily Schedule, Homework). I've chosen to do "Don't forget to write!" in English and its Irish translation, "Ná déan dearmad a scríobh!"
2. On your practice paper, create different layouts and work on possible letterform treatments you'd like to incorporate in your chosen quote. Use your pencil to work on the drafts. You can also try different shapes as the base of the layout—circle, square, heart, and so on. To make it easier to transfer the design, create and then align guidelines that cut through the center of both the notebook cover and the design.



Tools and Materials

- pencil
- eraser
- ruler
- practice paper
- fineliner pen
- blank-cover kraft notebook (A5 is the recommended size)





3. Prepare the blank cover of the notebook by adding margins on the four edges. Then, cut across the center and create a guide as well. For a circular layout, use your compass to add a circle in the center of the cover.
4. Lightly pencil in your lettering layout, then use the fineliner pen to add the outlines and color it in.
5. After inking, leave the cover to set up for 30 minutes. Once the ink has dried, carefully erase the remaining pencil marks on the cover. Your notebook is now ready to use or to give away to a friend or loved one.

TIP: I like to create two or three sample layouts and play around with the letterforms. This way, I can see which style I want to use in the final cover art. For these two notebooks, I played around with Lazy Serifs and Lined Script to create variety.

TIP: Make sure your hand is relaxed when you are inking. If it is too tight, there's a tendency for the lettering to look wobbly.





GALLERY SHOWCASE

Here are some of the many ways my guest artists and I have used our lettering. I hope these examples will inspire you to try many designs of your own.



Abbey Sy





Hay más
...
FELICIDAD
EN DAR QUE EN
RECIBIR.

João Neves

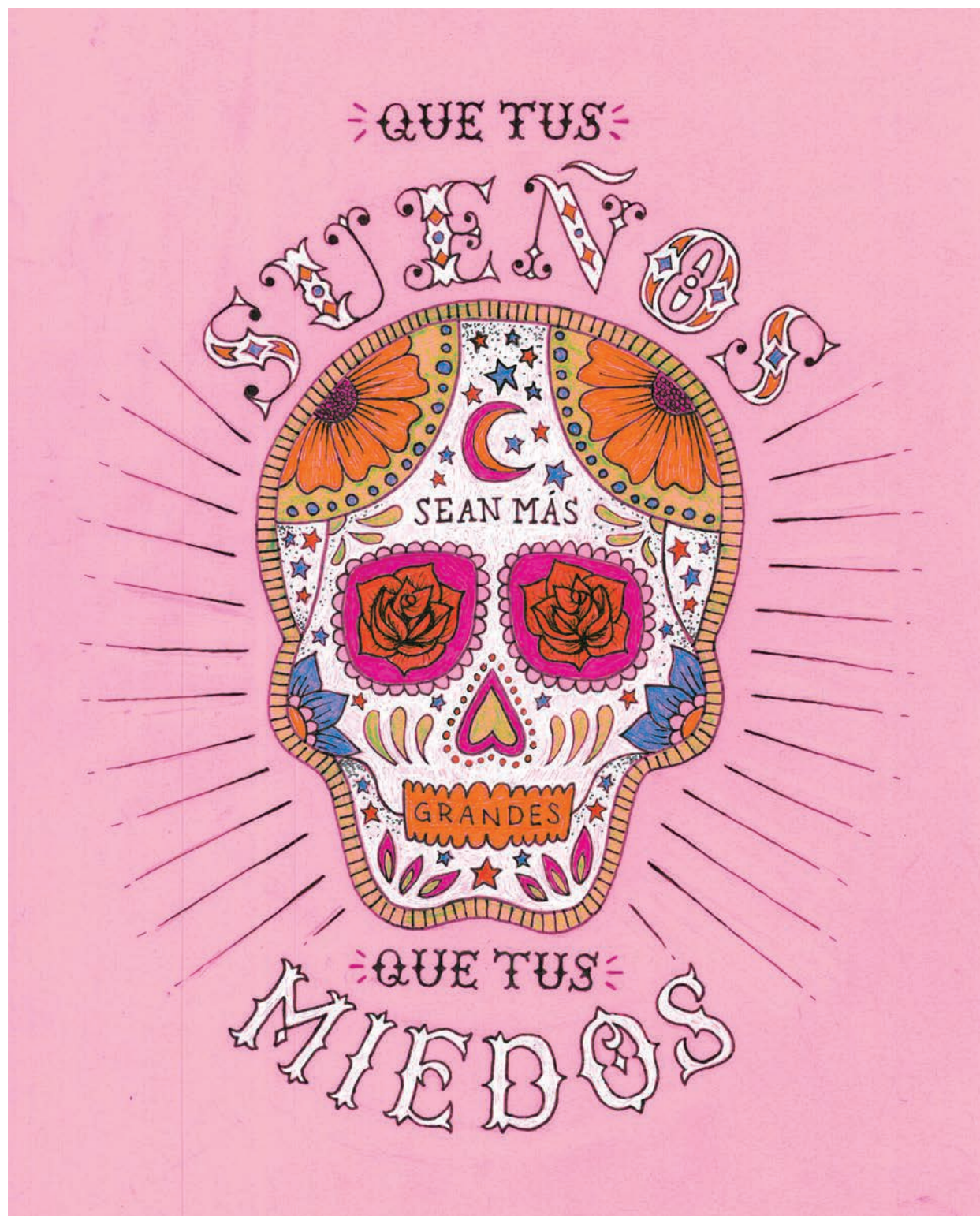






Lisa Lorek

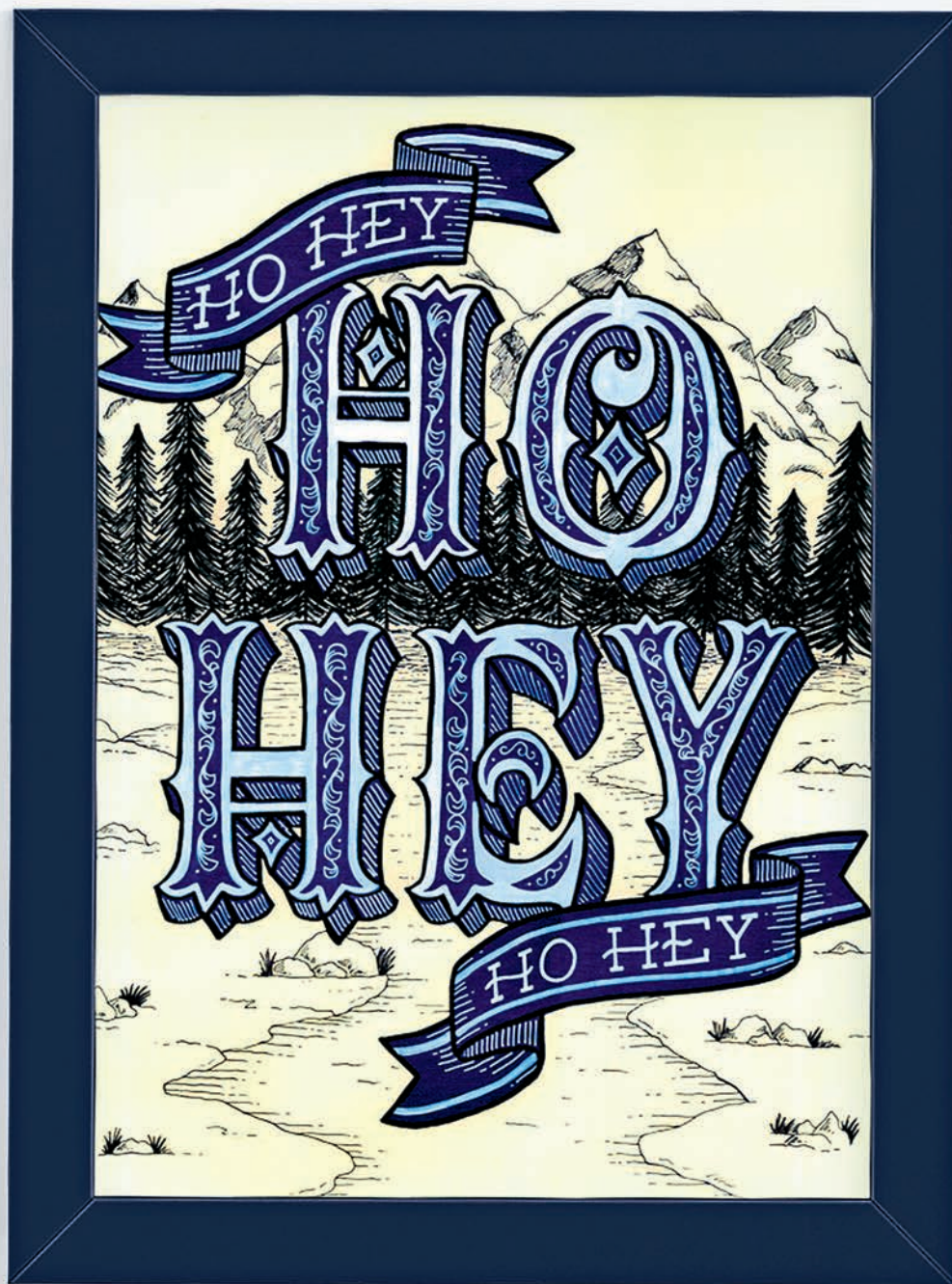














ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Creating this book has been an amazing opportunity to share my love for letters, and I am very grateful to have taken part in this endeavor. I would like to thank the following people who have helped in making this possible:

My acquiring editor, Judith, for giving me the chance to work on my first international book.

Marissa, for all the help and guidance in creating the accompanying visuals for this book.

The Rockport Publishers team, for weaving everything together and turning my vision into a reality.

My mentors, for encouraging me to keep exploring and experimenting with my work.

My family, friends, and readers, for their unending support and appreciation for what I do.

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Meagan Hyland
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Photo by Ber Garcia

Abbey Sy is an artist and author based in Manila, Philippines.

Since her younger years, she has found fascination in letters, type, and anything about the alphabet. She has written books on lettering and journaling, aptly called *The ABCs of Hand Lettering* and *The ABCs of Journaling*, respectively, and spends most of her time illustrating letterforms, traveling, exploring the world, and documenting her days in the pages of her journal.

Her work has been featured on BuzzFeed, Rookie, DesignTAXI, and in *IdN* magazine, and her art has been widely recognized around the world. She currently works as a creative entrepreneur—juggling freelance work, teaching art classes, and producing her own merchandise. She hopes to keep chasing more dreams and inspiring others to Always Be Creating.

Check out more of Abbey's work on her website, www.Abbey-Sy.com. For updates, follow @abbeyisy on Twitter and Instagram.

Your HAND LETTERING Contains A little bit of you—

expressing what you have to say and demonstrating your creativity in all your communications. On these pages, lettering artist and author Abbey Sy has invited four international artists—Meagan Hyland, João Neves, the Googly Gooeys, and Lisa Lorek—to join her in designing new alphabet styles, showing you how to draw them, and using them in many different languages.

You don't have to be a trained artist to master the art of hand lettering. There are alphabets here for every skill set and any style that suits your taste—colorful or black and white, classic or just plain fun. It's all about getting creative with the twenty-six letters of the alphabet and a little bit of you.



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