CHARLOTTE RIVERS

WORKSHOP

TECHNIQUES FOR CREATING ORIGINAL CHARACTERS AND DIGITAL FONTS

Thames & Hudson

Handmade Type Workshop

Techniques for Creating Original Characters and Digital Fonts

藏书章

Charlotte Rivers

Thames & Hudson

Acknowledgements
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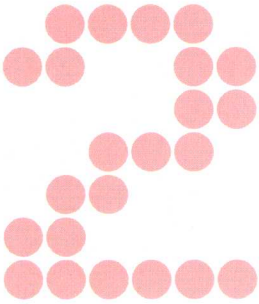

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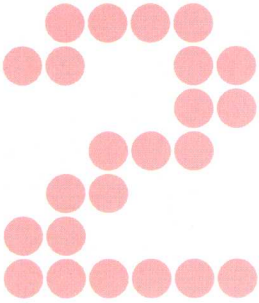

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Introduction

◀ *Window display, Mathilde Nivet, Paris, France*
ORIGAMI JEWELLERY
Hand-cut 3D letters.

The creation of lettering and type is an inspiring and experimental area of graphic design, not to mention versatile. Lettering and type are complex disciplines that are constantly engendering innovation and reinvention. Type is everywhere, guiding, teaching and speaking to us. It is an essential starting point for creative communication.

With the arrival of computers, specifically the Mac in the 1980s, the designing of fonts became a largely digital affair, but recent years have seen a return to the popularity of the art of the handcrafted letter. Along with many other areas of design, the aesthetic of the handmade type is a rapidly growing trend among designers, illustrators and type enthusiasts of all stripes. That is not to say that computers are no longer involved, as typically they are, at some stage in the process. However, they tend merely to serve as a tool for design.

Traditionally seen as the purview of professional typographers, lettering is now created freely and without boundaries by all manner of creatives, and the number of different methods and media that are being used to create it is seemingly infinite. From hand-drawing with pencil and paper to knitting, sewing and stitching, to using light installations, jelly and even toothpaste, designers are communicating messages in many different ways. Such experimentation simply proves that one of the things that makes lettering and type so fascinating is the flexibility to interpret, and sometimes even break, the traditional rules of creating it.

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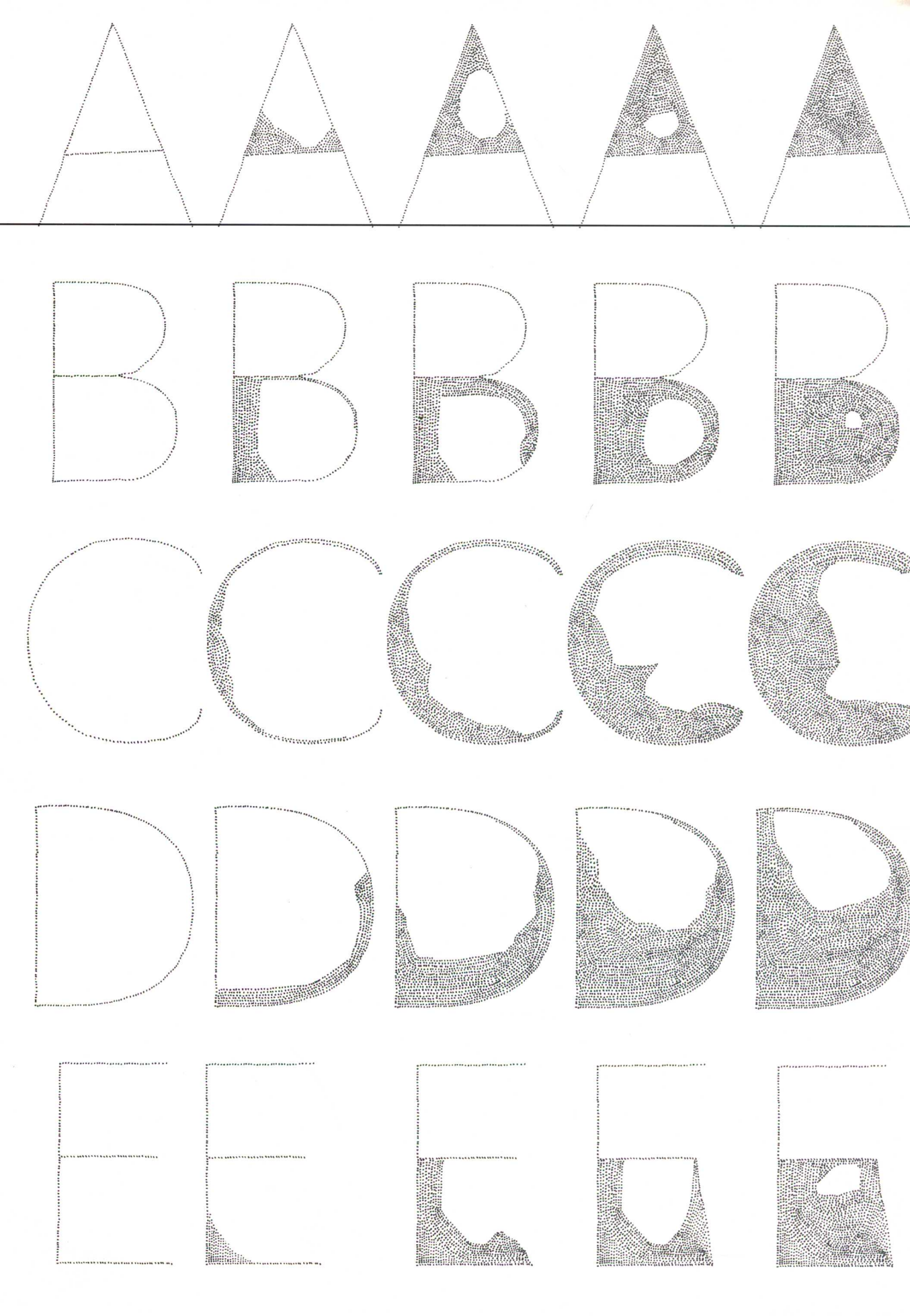
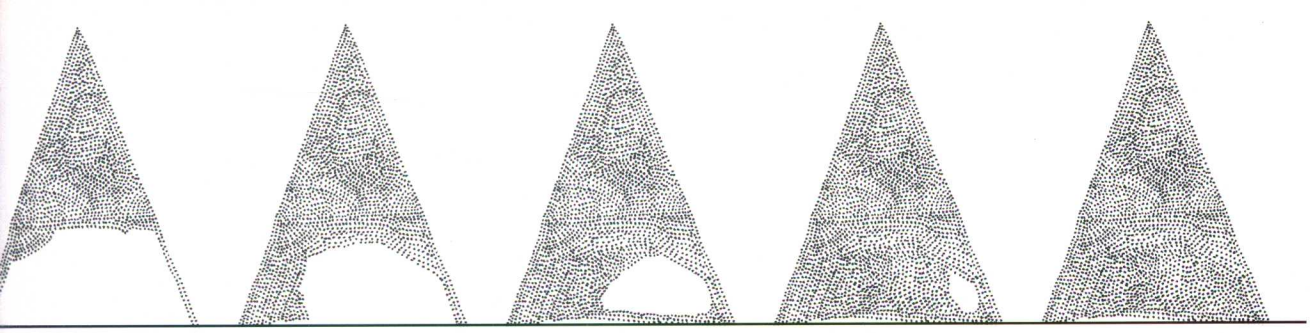
Shown throughout this book are examples of type design that will inspire, energize and fuel creativity. The book also provides practical details on how to go about creating different type and lettering. The first section explores different ways in which lettering and type can be created and includes chapters on the hand-drawn, printed and stitched, digitally drawn, 3D or installation-based type, and found and photographed type. The second section outlines how to take handmade type and create a complete working font from it.

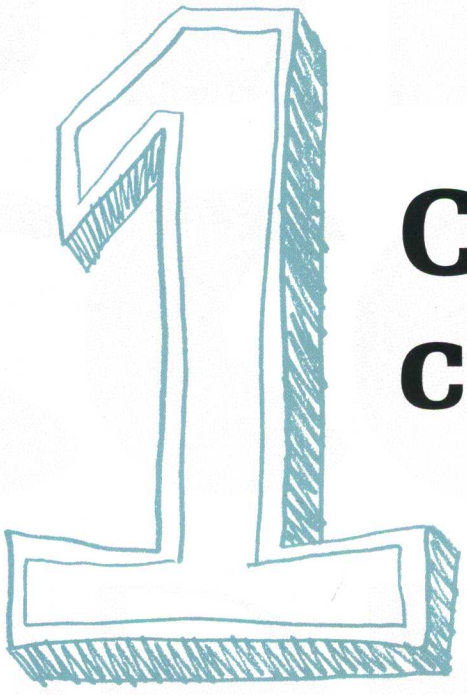
Together these examples demonstrate that the ways in which to approach a brief that requires words or letters go far beyond what is available on a designer's Mac or can be bought online. From creating illustrated to installation-based type or photographing found type, the solutions are many and varied. Of course not only is creating original lettering or type by hand an opportunity to make a unique font specific to a particular project, it is then also owned by its creator, forever.

▲ *Decoration, Mathilde Nivet, Paris, France*
N
Hand-cut floral display creating a letter in the negative space.

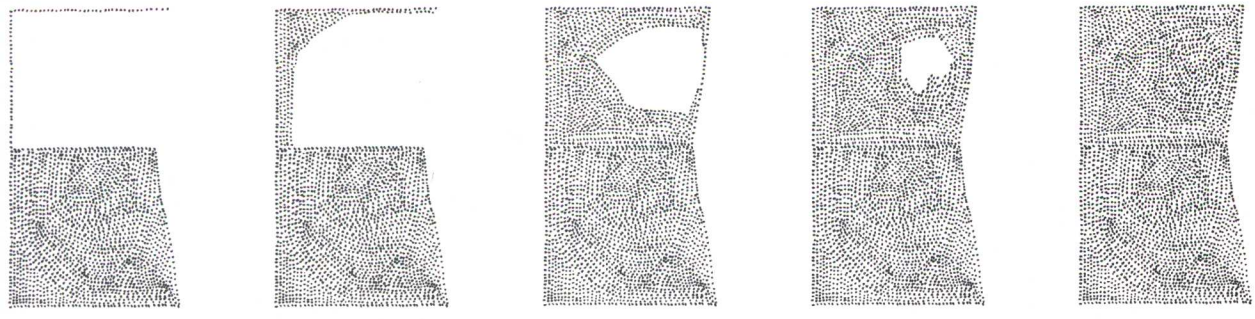
◄ *Illustration, Alina Günter, Zürich, Switzerland*
WITHOUT CUSTOMERS IF NECESSARY
Hand-drawn in ink on paper.







Character creation



Chapter 1:

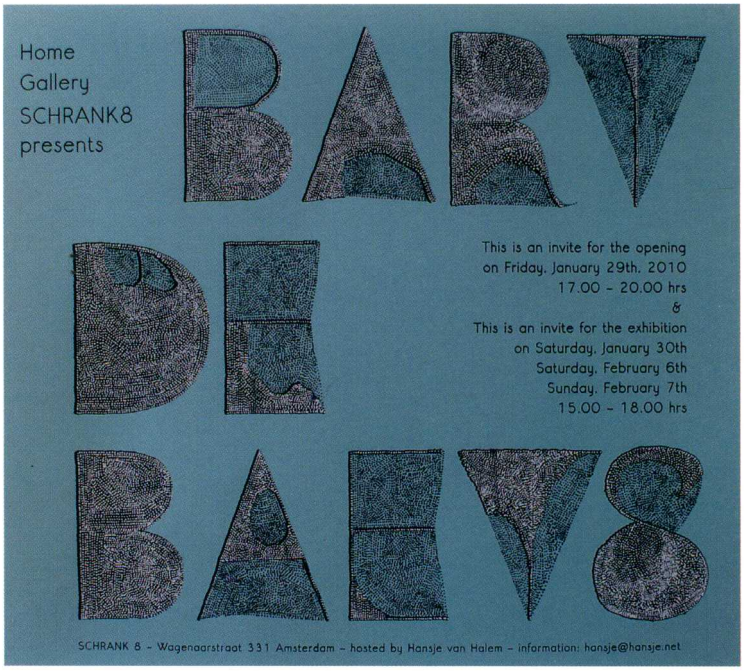
Illustrated or hand-drawn

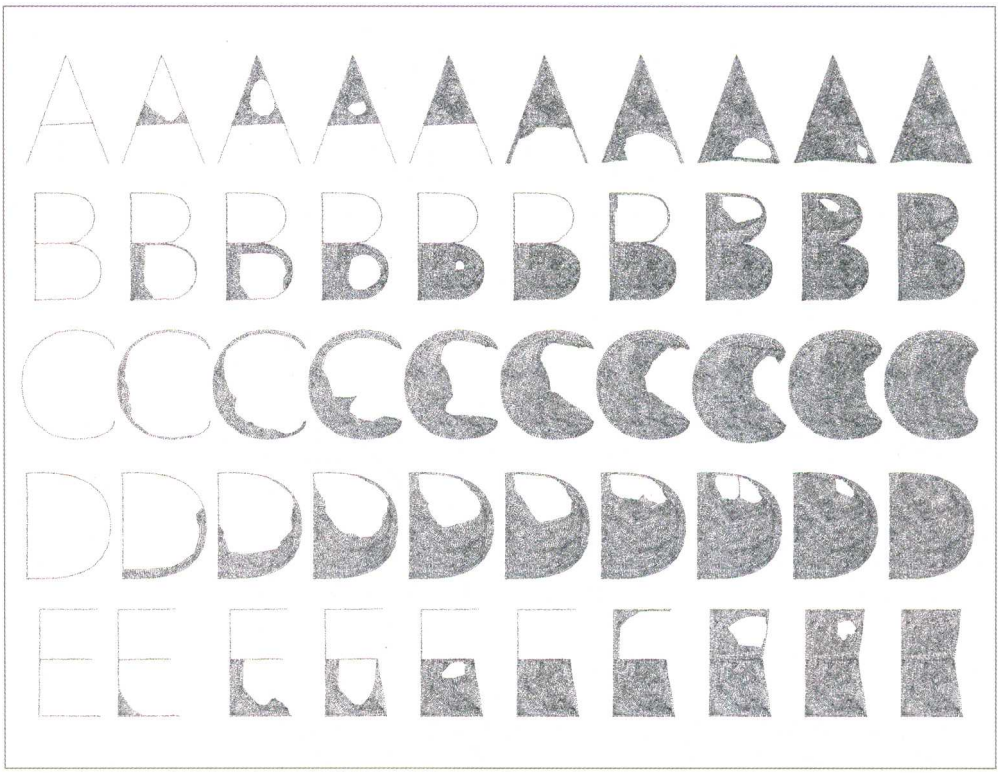
Hand-drawn lettering and type have become more and more popular in recent years, with many designers often choosing this avenue as a solution to a design brief. It provides designers or typographers with the opportunity to express their creativity and to add their own personality to a design project. The ways in which designers work to create their hand-drawn type are many and varied; for example, working in pen, ink, pencil, Sharpie, watercolour, the list goes on. Some designers work to create extremely intricate hand-drawn letters using a highly considered structure; for instance, Dutch designer Hansje van Halem's Doily type on pages 14–15. Others create their work in a more free sense, developing the letterings' shape and style as they go; for instance, Lisa Congdon's Swirl type on pages 18–19. Either way, the examples of hand-drawn lettering and type found on the following pages are always highly expressive and, of course, unique.

PROFILE Hansje van Halem

Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Hansje van Halem works mainly for print (books, brochures and invitations) and exhibition signage. Clients include the Dutch Post, for whom she designed a series of stamps. She has a gallery in her home called Schrank8, which is, in fact, a 1930s showcase cabinet housed in her living room. Every two months van Halem invites a graphic designer to fill the cabinet with their work. Openings are held and there is an associated blog. In addition to this, in her spare time van Halem draws letters, which may become a complete typeface. She finds inspiration in all sorts of things, including paper, secondhand books, the view from a plane flying over a mountain, books about textiles and handcrafts, a pencil drawing of a leek, the bubbles in Coca Cola, sausage wrapping paper from Switzerland, office supplies, the computer, systems, repetition and the challenge of endurance.





▲ *Exhibition invitation*
HOME GALLERY SCHRANK8 PRESENTS BART DE BAETS
As the name suggests, van Halem created the Marker Dot type using a marker pen.

◀ *Marker Dot development*
Various letters
You can see how the letter develops from a simple line drawing into intricate work.

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