Letter Arts Review

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The images on the front and back covers of this issue are drawn from the article starting on page 24, “Body/Text.”

FRONT COVER:
Monica Dengo and Marco Ambrosi
The Web series
50 x 35 centimeters
Makeup on skin, photography, and Photoshop
2015

BACK COVER:
William Blake
Jerusalem: The Emanation of The Giant Albion
And Hand & Hyle... Plate 15
Relief etching printed in orange with pen and black ink and watercolor on moderately thick, smooth, cream wove paper
Page dimensions: 13.5 x 10.375 inches
English, London, 1804 to 1820
Yale Center for British Art:
Paul Mellon Collection
THE ENDURING INFLUENCE OF LLOYD REYNOLDS

By Jerry Kelly · It has been said that you judge a practitioner by his work, and a teacher by his students. Of course, this fails to take into account those who are accomplished as both practitioners and teachers, of whom there are quite a few in the field of the calligraphy. One need not dig too deep to find prominent examples, starting with the father of the modern calligraphic movement, Edward Johnston. Not only has Johnston left an impressive body of calligraphic art, but he also wrote the manual for calligraphy Writing & Illuminating & Lettering (published in 1906 and still in print over a century later), and he taught a good many of the next generation of calligraphers: students such as Graily Hewitt, Irene Wellington, and Anna Simons, who in turn went on to teach others (Alfred Fairbank was a student of Hewitt, Dorothy Mahoney and Donald Jackson were students of Wellington, and Martin Andersch was a student of Simons in Germany). Then there is Rudolf Koch, who—aside from his influential body of exquisite calligraphic and typographic work—taught Fritz Kredel, Berthold Wolpe, Henri Friedlaender, and others.

One of the most formidable of these teacher-practitioners was Lloyd J. Reynolds, whose work can be seen in several books on calligraphy, and who imbued many students with appreciation for and skill in the art of calligraphy. Oddly enough, Reynolds did not start out to make a career in teaching and calligraphy. Instead, he began his working life as a forest ranger, but when he found he could not take sufficient books into the forest to satisfy his yearning, he turned to teaching English literature at Reed College, a progressive institution with a somewhat loose structure in Portland, Oregon. Some time later he would start the calligraphy class at Reed that would have great influence on the letter arts.

Reynolds was born in Minnesota in 1902, but
Shawabti of Ta-Kiry
Limestone, with black, red, yellow, and white paint
29.3 centimeters tall
Egyptian, 18th Dynasty (1567–1320 BC)
Yale University Art Gallery

By Christopher Calderhead · The representation of the human body has been a core artistic concern for thousands of years in cultures all over the world. Since the invention of writing, which was not a single event but happened at different places and times, artists have blended lettering with the human form.

Mixing bodies and texts raises interesting questions about how we look at images and how we experience written language. For artists who specialize in lettering, it’s a great challenge to bring our written forms into visual conversation with figurative work. Depending on the writing system we are using, different possibilities are open to us.

This article examines these issues through a survey of work from many cultures. Perhaps the work of these artists through the centuries—as well as the work of some of our contemporaries—can inspire new explorations of this rich and challenging topic.
By Roland Buckingham-Hsiao - How did the various Chinese calligraphic styles come about? Can different calligraphic traditions be made to work together? Could one invent a brush-written style today, beyond individual technique? As an artist and researcher working with Chinese calligraphy, these are the kinds of questions I think about.

Clearly new styles emerge with new technologies, as materials greatly influence, and sometimes dictate, the kinds of marks that can be made. Inscribing Chinese characters on tortoise shells or ox scapulas, as in the ancient Oracle Bone Script, necessarily resulted in scratchy angular marks. Writing with a stylus on wet clay when producing bronze vessels allowed, if not invited, the sinuous Seal Scripts to exist, and the strokes of the later Clerical Script were clearly those of a brush.

The requirements of those with authority over the written language is another important factor; when styles were officially adopted and standardized in the Qin and Han dynasties, for example, clarity and strength of design were prioritized. Some styles seem to have grown from others—when written more quickly a script becomes naturally more cursive. Personal eccentricity and the desire for an individual style surely play parts too, as in the invention of Crazy Cursive Script by Zhang Xu (張旭) and Huai Su (懷素) in the Tang dynasty.

For me, however, the most interesting way new calligraphic styles come into existence is through cultural exchange. Traditionally, different cultures have met and interacted along trade routes and through migration, military campaigns, diplomatic endeavors, and religious proselytism, and when this happens, the possibility of cultural transmission, transliteration, and even new hybrid forms arises.

One such fascinating interaction occurred between Chinese and Arabian calligraphy, during the Tang dynasty (618–907 CE). The two powerful Asian cultures had been trading along the Silk Road and via maritime trade routes since the second century BCE, and had, of course, become aware thereby of each others’ practices, ideas, artistic forms, inventions, and knowledge. Around the eighth century CE, traders from the Middle East, Persia, and Central Asia began to settle along the trade routes inside China, their gravestones often bearing Arabic text written in the distinctive styles of their home regions. Over time, however, exposure to the other’s language affected both Chinese hosts and Arabic settlers. The Chinese language borrowed Middle Persian words for exotic commodities such as grapes,

**Hybrid Calligraphy**

**OPPOSITE:**
Figure 1
Haji Noor Deen Mi
Guang Jiang
Al-Fatiha
© Buckingham-Hsiao

**ABOVE:**
Figure 2
Seals in Arabic, top, reading “Glory to God,” and in Chinese, below, reading “Be Open-minded” © calligraphyasia.com, used with permission
By Steven K. Galbraith - An early Latin maxim, *Ars est celare artem*, may be simply translated as: “It is art to conceal art.” This saying reminds us that exceptional art is usually the result of diligent exercise and study. A work of art is often the culmination of years of instruction, inspiration, and creation, all of which can be concealed by what seems like effortless expression.

*Ars est celare artem* is lettered in Rick Cusick’s contribution to *Manuale Calligraphicum*, a calligraphic tribute to the late Hermann Zapf that will be published this fall through the Cary Graphic Arts Collection at Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT). In Cusick’s piece “*Ars est celare artem*” is set within an alphabet; the *A* in *Ars*, the *R* in *celare*, and the *T* in *artem* are highlighted in red to reinforce the point. As I made my way through each of the works contributed to the book, I found myself reflecting on Cusick’s choice of text and how appropriate it was for this project. The notion that what might seem like spontaneous and natural artistic expression is, in truth, more often the result of hard work. This was not only true of the art of the contributing calligraphers, but of the overall production of *Manuale Calligraphicum*.

The origins of the book reach back nearly 40 years, to the summer of 1979 and the first master classes in calligraphy and type design taught by Hermann Zapf at RIT. The previous year, Zapf had been appointed the Melbert B. Cary Jr. Distinguished Professor. It was a full-time position, but after experiencing winter in Rochester, New York, he thought to best to limit his teaching to summer workshops.

Through a decade of Rochester summers, Zapf shared his talents and experiences with budding calligraphers and type designers. He enjoyed teaching as much as his students enjoyed learning. This reciprocal and creative relationship formed unforgettable experiences for all involved. Long, productive days were spent both in the classroom and in the Cary Collection, where Zapf would hold court, expounding on the masterpieces of design preserved in the library. (He would later generously enlarge this teaching collection by appointing the Cary Collection one of two official repositories for both his archives and those of his wife, Gudrun Zapf von Hesse.)

Although Zapf’s master classes ended after a dynamic decade, his friendship with RIT and the Cary Collection continued until his death, on June 4, 2015.

Zapf’s contribution to calligraphy and type design is immeasurable. His typographic work alone has greatly expanded the language of letter-