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Totivillus

**The system of teaching aids for
learning calligraphy**

Summary

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The doctoral dissertation's subject is designing a set of visual aids for teaching calligraphy. The aim was to create a collection of tools that allow systematic teaching of the essential aspects of traditional and contemporary western calligraphy. The project is an outcome of the many years of the teaching activity conducted in courses at the Academy of Fine Arts in Katowice, Erasmus exchanges, and during numerous privately organized workshops. The resulting aids are the consequence and reflection of a personal method of teaching calligraphy, aimed primarily at teaching graphic design students.

The didactic method, on which the aids are based, is a consequence of dividing calligraphy into the following categories - a discipline supporting the study of other design fields, a design tool, and a method of generating new ideas. The selected categories do not determine the choice between the traditional and more contemporary artistic approaches to calligraphy. Instead, they both can serve as helpful teaching methods for introducing different subjects.

A variety of learning goals is assumed, depending on the formula and duration of classes. The minimum goal, achieved within a few days of workshops devoted to one style of writing, is for students to acquire elementary skills allowing them to use calligraphy. In addition to developing technical skills, the student should learn the historical context of a given style and master a simple exemplary script model at a basic level. As the time available for learning increases, the assumptions also change. Ideally, the two-semester course should teach students to recognize, use, and independently interpret, adapt and implement essential calligraphic styles to their design needs. The result is an acquisition of greater sensitivity to composition, expression of writing, and visual rhythm, as well as the ability to relate them to the broader scope of visual activities. The teaching is based on three styles considered the most representative of Western calligraphy.

The Foundational Hand is a style developed in the twentieth century by Edward Johnston, which he used as a basis for his calligraphy teaching. The consistency and logic of the letters' construction make it an excellent first handwriting style for learning calligraphy. Furthermore, the affinity with Antiqua and the humanistic script causes the forms of the letters to be familiar and easier to comprehend for the beginning calligrapher. For this reason, Foundational plays the most conventional role in the project, leaving more modern concepts to the other two parts. The materials and exercises help examine matters related to composition, contrast, and hierarchy, i.e., problems that the design student also learns in the course of other classes, but in this case, in the context of calligraphy.

Textura is a script that slowly evolved from the changes made in the Carolingian minuscule. It is assumed that a fully developed Gothic Textura

began to appear in the 13th century in northern European countries. The form chosen for the project is a synthesized interpretation of the formal book hand (Quadrata), which reflects the essential features of the Gothic script. The graphic qualities of this style and unusual shapes of letters are a pretext to look at the writing in terms of pictorial motifs. The exercises in this part of visual aids are aimed at formal experiments within the style and its interpretation in terms of an image.

Nowadays, Italic is a term used to describe the calligraphic style and the variations of typefaces derived from it. Its origins as handwriting date back to the Quattrocento period. Possibly the motivation was the desire to create a faster and more efficient writing style as an alternative to the humanistic minuscule. Due to its exceptional flexibility and affinity with handwriting, this style is a starting point for teaching visual rhythm and the key phenomenon in contemporary calligraphy, polyrhythmicity.

The final result is the three sets of teaching aids, which can be referred to as the modules, related to teaching specific calligraphic styles. These parts can function independently as part of individual workshops or in the context of a single progressive program. Each module is responsible for a different problem area related to the concepts resulting from the tasks and functions of modern calligraphy. They are also accompanied by the common part, which can be treated as the fourth, smaller module. Each module is divided into smaller units that allow the scope of classes to be adapted to the duration and skills of the students. Furthermore, the architecture allows for easy and quick modification, which is crucial due to the evolutionary nature of the project.

