

Growing bibliography

Jencks, C. and Silver, N. (1973). *Adhocism: The Case for Improvisation*. New York: Doubleday, pp. 43–45.

"The wheel is what I have termed a multivise or what Arthur Koestler termed a 'holon'—a member of an open, limited set which is waiting to be extended... The fact that it is an autonomous whole means that it can be transplanted from one context to another."

The concept of holon in *Adhocism* provides a critical framework for my practice of reconfiguring the Latin 'R' and Chinese '尺'. By deconstructing these characters into autonomous strokes—such as transposing the R's lobe into the *heng-zhe* (冂) of '尺'.

This reference forces me to negotiate the tension between the "utility" of a functional typeface and the "autonomy" of holons. In a traditional system, a stroke's utility is tied to its strict adherence to legibility; it must remain invisible to serve the act of reading. However, by treating strokes as autonomous holons, I liberate them from this communicative duty. The "tension" arises because as these parts gain independence as pure form, the character, as a larger system, begins to lose its legibility. This process allows me to explore a hybrid space where a stroke can exist as both a functional component of a language and an independent unit of visual expression.

Ingold, T. (2007) *Lines: A brief history*. London: Routledge, pp. 120-151.

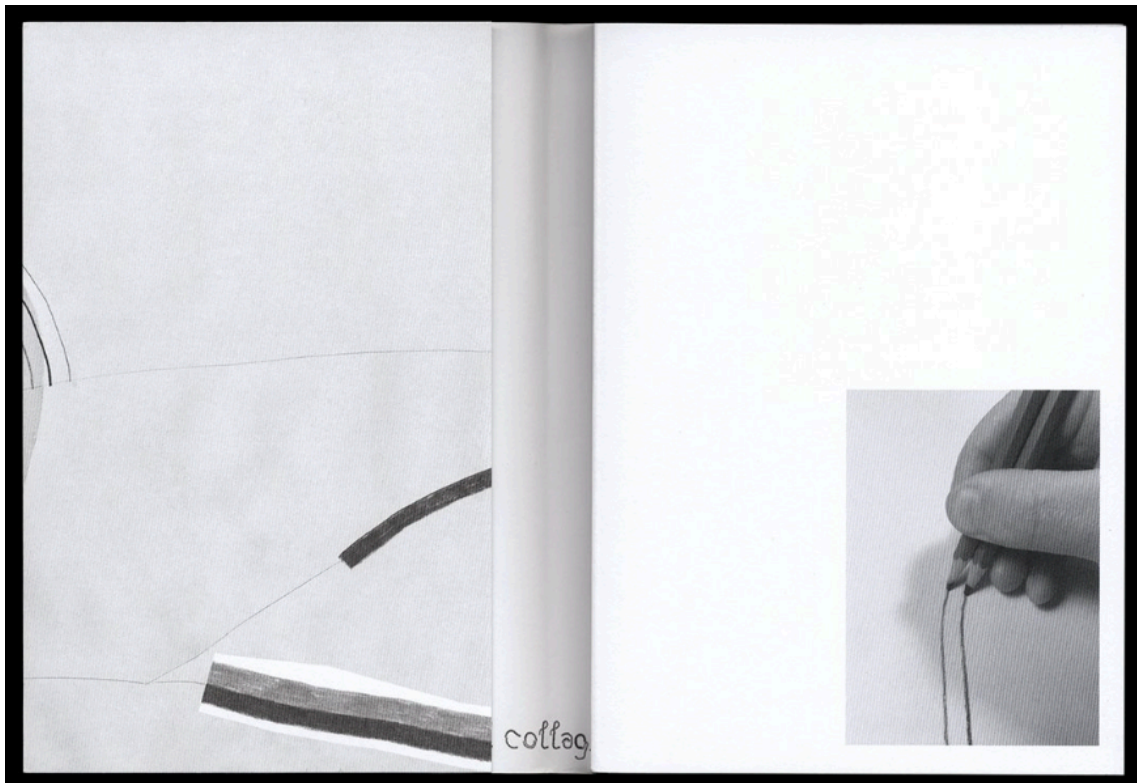
“Modern historians rather grandly call 'writing systems' undoubtedly developed as accumulations of expediences... they were, in short, more like Rube Goldberg devices... [or] 'jerry-built structures' that bear less resemblance to carefully constructed schemes.”

Tim Ingold's citation of linguist John DeFrancis, which describes the evolution of writing systems as an accumulation of "jerry-built structures" rather than perfect engineering designs, provides a core critical perspective for the "collaged" aesthetic presented in my 120 glyph iterations. In my practice, the evolution from the "Trajan R" to the "Songti Chi 尺" does not pursue a smooth structural transition. Instead, by randomly replacing isolated strokes (Holons) in each step, it simulates a series of local and temporary expedient solutions.

Ingold notes that writing systems are more akin to a "hodgepodge of mnemonic clues", a notion that challenged my initial concerns regarding the structural balance of the glyph designs. Inspired by this, these iterations can be defined as a form of "intentional jerry-building." This collage-like process serves as a visual manifestation of the essence of graphic evolution—demonstrating how

form transcends the boundaries of culture and linguistic function through continuous patching and substitution. This methodology allows me to honestly preserve the conflicts and ruptures within the publication's evolutionary process, even when they appear unrefined.

Langdon, J. (2025) *Opacity Engraving*. Design by Karl Nawrot. Phantom Avantgarde #1. France: Phantom Avantgarde



Karl Nawrot's practice serves as a primary driver for the design procedure and medium transformation within my project. He approaches and deconstructs glyph structures by imposing tool-based constraints—such as using bundled double-pencils to fix the stroke trajectory when developing the NOVA typeface. This methodology has challenged and stretched the cognitive boundaries of my typographic practice. Inspired by his work, I established a rigorous procedural constraint: I forced myself to replace only one stroke per iteration in a fixed sequence, while compressing all components into a proportional framework extracted from six letterform samples.

Under this predefined program, the design process evolves into a near-automated progression. I operate with minimal subjective aesthetic intervention; the sole point of decision lies in selecting a replacement from a predefined set of three or four stroke options. This logical friction, born from systematic constraints, translates into a cross-cultural glyph sequence in my publication. It demonstrates how form spontaneously mutates and transcends cultural thresholds under the pressure of a carefully designed program.

Koestler, A. (1967) *The Ghost in the Machine*. London: Hutchinson

The self-assertive tendency is the dynamic expression of the holon's wholeness, the integrative tendency, the dynamic expression of its partness... Janus-faced entity who, looking inward, sees himself as a self-contained unique whole, looking outward as a dependent part.

Arthur Koestler's concept of the "holon" serves as an interpretative framework to describe the relative relationship between a part and a whole—a "Janus-faced" entity that is simultaneously a self-contained totality and a dependent component. Koestler posits that every holon possesses an inherent tendency to persist in and assert its particular pattern of activity. In my practice, despite the layers of control programs I designed—ranging from predefined proportional frameworks to a mandatory replacement sequence—I found that these strokes, acting as "functional holons," always exhibited resilience to some extent.

This theory extends my methodology: regardless of how I applied "integrative tendencies" through mirroring, stretching, or repositioning anchor points to force these strokes into a desired structure, they persistently asserted their original formal identities. This "self-assertion" led to unexpected distortions during the iterations. It made me realize that the "collageness" of the glyphs is a dynamic visualization of individual strokes attempting to maintain their "unique wholeness". These unbalanced forms reveal the eternal tension between the part and the whole within a system.

Bhabha, H. K. (1994) *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, pp. 1-18, 37-56.

"It is in the emergence of interstices—the overlap and displacement of domains of difference—that the intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated... the 'Third Space' constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity."

Homi K. Bhabha's theory of the "Third Space" and "Hybridity" provides a crucial conceptual framework for interpreting the glyphs in my project. Bhabha argues that cultural intersection occurs in a "liminal" space that displaces the histories that constitute it, creating a site where cultural meaning has no "primordial unity". I initially thought I could escape the contemplation of Identity and conduct a purely formal experiment, yet I realized that these evolving glyphs were, all along, articulating this very sense of Hybridity.

The “collageness” of the glyphs serves as a visualization of this process of mutual intrusion: the established authority of the Roman capital and the calligraphic gestures of Chinese script collide and permeate one another. Through Bhabha’s lens, these iterations are a negotiation taking place within the “interstices” of written language. It demonstrates that at the precise threshold of crossing cultural boundaries, form loses its singular fixity and enters a productive, albeit unstable, state of “in-betweenness.”

Catich, E. M. (1968) *The Origin of the Serif: Brush Writing and Roman Letters*. Davenport, Iowa: Catfish Press, pp. 186-189.

“The dent... is a shape not consciously sought by the brush-writer. It is the juncture of two brush strokes. ... A Roman letter may not be written in mirror reverse, nor upside down, shortened, condensed, extended or varied in the relationship of its letter parts.”

Edward Catich’s serif analysis provides the foundational technical logic for my project, particularly through his identification of the “Dent”—the unintentional, idiosyncratic shape formed at the juncture of strokes. This concept significantly stretches my practice: in my iteration experiment, as I graft strokes from disparate scripts, the resulting “Dents” at these cross-cultural junctures become visible “scars” of the hybrid process. These often strange and distorted junctions are a manifestation of what Catich describes as the inevitable physical reality of stroke intersection.

Furthermore, Katich established a strict set of rules for the Roman alphabet, stipulating that it could not be “shortened, compressed, lengthened, or varied.” While these rules established the historical authority of the Roman alphabet, Katich’s statement made me realize that breaking these rules was necessary for my current research. This process allows me to find that the structural authority of the Roman capital letters can yield to mixed cultural spaces, thus revealing a new vitality in alphabetic forms that transcends traditional rules.

Foucault, M. (1989) ‘Preface’, in *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. London: Routledge, pp. xvi–xxvi.

“Heterotopias are disturbing, probably because they secretly undermine language, because they make it impossible to name this and that, because they shatter or tangle common names, because they destroy ‘syntax’ in advance, and not only the syntax with which we construct sentences but also that less apparent syntax which causes words and things (next to and also opposite one another) to ‘hold together’.”

Foucault opens *The Order of Things* with Borges' fictional Chinese taxonomy—a classification system so structurally incoherent that it destroys the very ground on which any categorisation can stand. What Foucault identifies as disturbing is not the strangeness of the listed items but their lack of a "common locus"—they cannot coexist in any single space, imagined or real. This directly sharpens how I understand the collision within my hybrid glyphs. When a stroke from '尺' is transplanted into the structural architecture of 'R', the result is a violation of the classificatory space that makes each script legible as itself. Foucault's concept of the "heterotopia"—a site that holds incompatible locations in simultaneous tension—provides a more precise vocabulary for the condition I am producing than hybridity alone. These glyphs hold two mutually exclusive systems in suspension, occupying a space that the logic of either writing tradition cannot accommodate.

Sontag, S. (2009) 'On Style', in *Against Interpretation and Other Essays*. London: Penguin, pp. 15–36.

"...form and content are inseparable—that **style is not applied to a pre-existing idea but constitutes it...**"

Sontag's insistence that form and content are inseparable—that style is not applied to a pre-existing idea but constitutes it—has directly unsettled how I frame the formal decisions in my practice. I initially understood the structural distortions in my hybrid glyphs as symptoms: visible evidence of the underlying argument about cross-cultural collision. Sontag refuses this hierarchy. To treat form as the vehicle of a separable content, she argues, is to misunderstand what form does. Applied to my practice, this means the "collageness" of the glyphs—the unresolved junctions, the strokes that resist assimilation, the moments where the two script systems become structurally irreconcilable—does not point toward a meaning located elsewhere. These formal conditions are the meaning. Sontag's essay has challenged me to resist the reflexive move toward conceptual justification, and to treat the formal decisions themselves—the specific choice of which stroke to replace, and when to stop—as the primary site of enquiry.

Gerstner, K. (1964) *Designing Programmes*. Teufen: Arthur Niggli.

"...the designer's fundamental task is not to produce fixed artefacts but to **construct a programme—a system of generative rules from which a range of valid outcomes can emerge.**"

Gerstner's *Designing Programmes* argues that the designer's fundamental task

is not to produce fixed artefacts but to construct a programme—a system of generative rules from which a range of valid outcomes can emerge. This has provided both a structural model and a point of friction for my practice. My iteration system is, in Gerstner's terms, a programme: a predefined proportional framework, a mandatory replacement sequence, and a constrained stroke-set that generates forms I could not have designed individually. Yet Gerstner's model assumes a correspondence between programme and output—the system produces outcomes that fall within its intentional parameters. My practice departs here: the strokes resist the programme. Their self-assertive formal identities generate distortions and ruptures that no rule anticipated. Where Gerstner attempts to convert subjective aesthetic decisions into systematic outcomes, my iterations reveal that the material retains an agency the programme cannot fully absorb. This gap between design-as-system and form-as-resistance has become a central productive tension in my enquiry.

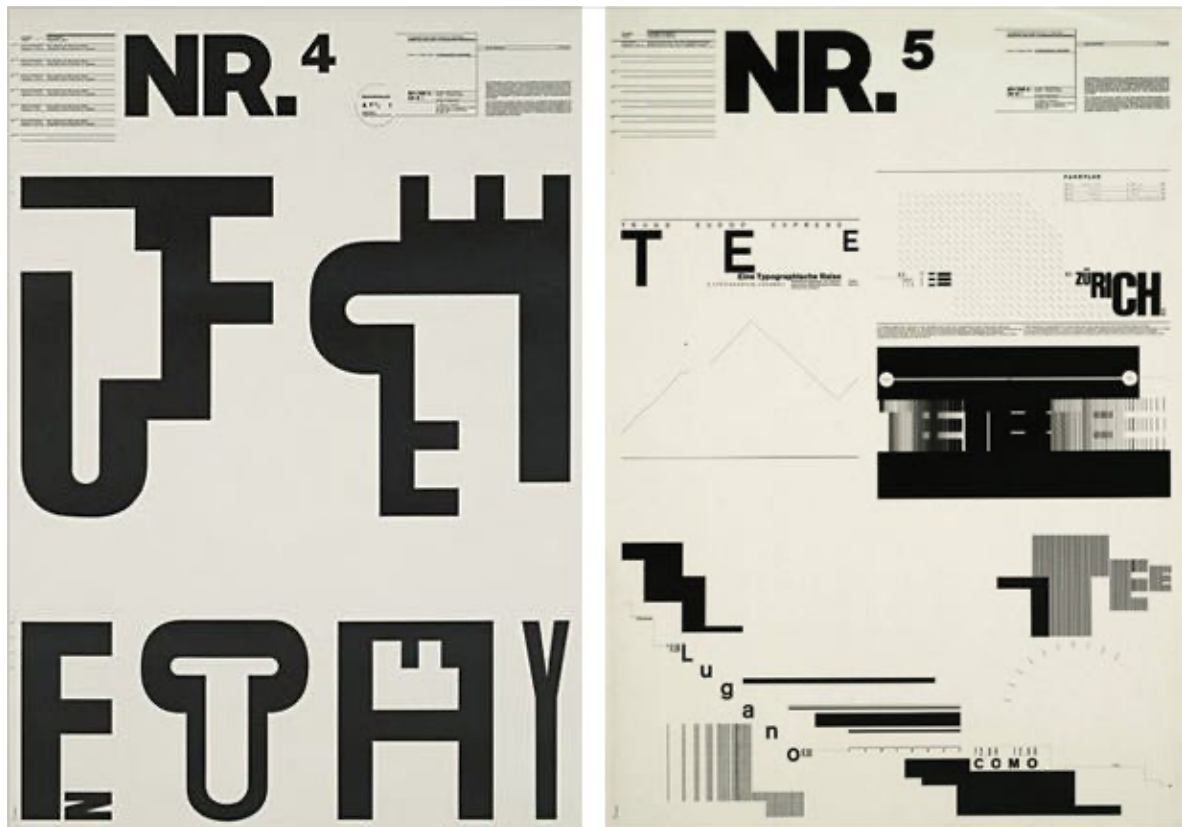
Pater, R. (2016) *The Politics of Design: A (Not So) Global Manual for Visual Communication*. Amsterdam: BIS Publishers.

Not many regard it as neutral anymore as Helvetica has such strong connotations with 1960s design and corporate culture. 'We fully realise that no typeface is neutral, and that the objectivity of Helvetica is a myth.' said Experimental Jetset in an interview in *Emigré* in 2003.

Ruben Pater's critique dismantles the ideological myth of Helvetica's neutrality, exposing its inextricable link to Western modernism and corporate homogenization. Initially, my intervention aimed to violently disrupt this modernist canon. However, the procedural act of forcing distinct cultural strokes (from Trajan, Blackletter, and Comic Sans) into Helvetica's skeleton produced an unexpected counter-revelation: a profound realization of Helvetica's structural resilience.

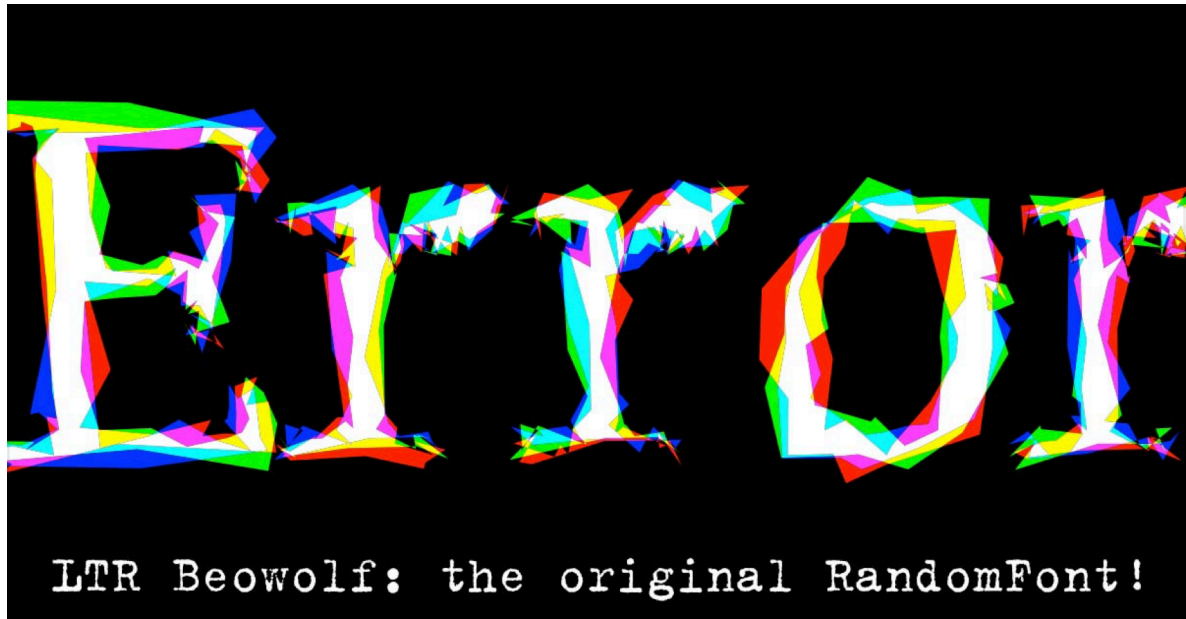
While Pater critiques its *ideological* dominance, my practice confronts its *anatomical* omnipotence. By imposing a strict constraint—requiring the hybrid glyphs to remain legible and "as Helvetica-like as possible"—I shifted my methodology from destruction to a cognitive test. The iterations demonstrate that Helvetica's authority does not rely on the specific curves of its strokes, but on its imperious spatial architecture and internal proportions. Even when heavily infected by the historical flesh of Blackletter or the anti-elitist gestures of Comic Sans, the Helvetica skeleton coerces these alien components into submission, maintaining its legibility.

Weingart, W. (c. 1972) *Typographic experiments Nr. 4 and Nr. 5 (Eine typographische Reise)*. [Letterpress print]



Wolfgang Weingart's *Nr. 4* and *Nr. 5* significantly expand the trajectory of my practice by grounding typographic experimentation in material reality. Weingart physically manipulated lead type, pushing the Swiss International Style to its breaking point through tactile, mechanical intervention. While my current stroke-replacement system operates primarily within a digital framework, Weingart's work challenges me to push my enquiry into physical space. Seeing how he exploited the constraints of physical typesetting pushes me to experiment with letterpress. If the core of my research is the structural tension and "mutual intrusion" between different typographic anatomies, engaging in experimental typesetting will force me to confront the actual, spatial weight of these strokes.

van Blokland, E. and van Rossum, J. (1990) *FF Beowolf* [Digital typeface]. Berlin: FontShop International.



FF Beowolf challenges the digital permanence that underpins the myth of typographic perfection. While my current practice dismantles Helvetica's flawless silhouette spatially—by saturating it with heterogeneous sub-strokes and isolating the violent friction of their overlapping joints—*Beowolf* achieves a parallel subversion through algorithmic instability. By weaponizing PostScript code to randomly mutate letterforms upon every printing, van Blokland and van Rossum exposed the rigid, manufactured predictability of digital typesetting. This reference deepens my understanding of typography as an active, behavioral system rather than a static image. It pushes me to interrogate the format of my own critique: if my "overlap-only" typeface exists to expose the concealed structural seams of Helvetica, how might the final digital file itself resist the user's expectation of control? *Beowolf* suggests that my critique of perfection should not merely reside in the drawn geometry of those overlapping fragments, but must also consider how the font file operates within—and actively disrupts—the standard, frictionless pipeline of modern desktop publishing.