

Workshop Options for 2021/2022

Contact: josie.brown53@gmail.com for further information / reserve a date

The following is a list of the various subjects for one-day workshops, but it's noted wherever some could also be offered as 2 or 3-day courses. Those with a star * are more recent topics.

Calligraphic – *from the basics through to the gestural and expressive*

Introduction to any of the major hands – including Foundation, Mouse Roman, Uncial, Anglo-Saxon Minuscule, Carolingian, Black Letter, Gothic cursive scripts, a contemporary and *individually designed* Legende, formal Humanist, Italic and the many variations of any of these. Or - **Developing & refining a major hand** – analysing common characteristics and identifying aspects of the script that can be varied or modified to result in highly personalised and refined versions of any of the hands listed above.

***Culture Combinations** – how to develop your very own unique hand, basing it on scripts from another culture of your choice: from Armenia, China, Africa, Russia, ancient Persia, etc., etc. We will take essential elements from the foreign lettering and work them together with suitable western letterforms so that it can be read in English, but that have the appearance of another culture altogether. People choose what to focus on – they don't all do the same one (also suitable for 2 to 3 day course).

* **20th Century German Lettering** – a sweeping overview of scripts and typefaces developed by designers such as Gottfried Pott, Hermann Zapf, Rudolf Koch, Friedrich Poppl and Hermann Kilian will enable individuals to choose which one to focus on. They will analyse and select letterform characteristics from a number of examples they admire, to work into a unique version of their own. Having attained consistency of letterform – if concentrating on a lower-case alphabet, a suitable set of capitals will then be developed to go with it, and vice versa. Everyone will end up with a personally designed script, not a copy of someone else's (also suitable for 2 to 3 day course).

* **Minuski** – a personally developed minuscule hand closely based on Hermann Kilian's famously sophisticated capitals which have a special tension to their construction. This script is written with a pointed nib and can be lightweight and contemporary or heavier and more compressed – offering a much more architectural character.

* **Pointed-pen Half-uncial** – a wonderfully flowing, tall and elegant script that retains the character of the Irish half-uncials but created with a pointed nib. Very relaxing to write.

* **Pointed-pen Italic + Variations** – another incredibly versatile and pleasurable script to write with a pointed nib but one that can incorporate changes in weight, size and character with no need to swap nibs! A highly useful script and enjoyable to play with.

Free-Penning It – a free-wheeling day of staged exercises to develop flowing movements with the

pen, learning how to manipulate, twist, turn and glide in a calligraphic dance, resulting in energetic letterforms full of individual character. Definitely not for beginners, though.

Decorated Initials – beginning with a brief historical overview relating design aspects to contemporary techniques and applications, and then offering a wide and varied approach to decorating initial letters using watercolour, gouache and/or egg tempera.

Dressed Letters – a fast and furious whirlwind tour of all sorts of contemporary letters, dressed up in a variety of finery – using lots of different tools, colour mediums and processes to result in a bank of ideas for future use.

Step-up Your Italic – We all spend years trying to achieve a consistent and rhythmic Italic hand, and then realise that what we now want is a script that can bend and flow and interpret the meaning of words in an expressive manner, which means breaking all the rules. This workshop offers stepped exercises to free-up your Italic and to personalise it with ‘intention’ as well as activities to take home.

Modern Script – A cross between Copperplate, Italic and your own handwriting – this script is done with a pointed nib, no lines, questionable letterform and definitely a lot of verve. It’s fun, lively and quick to learn, but inevitably requires a bit of doing to get it looking free and easy. A really useable hand for journals, cards, tags, or anything that needs to be done in a hurry but look really good. The workshop also has a couple of little foldies (a folded box or flexagon) to carry the script.

***Art Nouveau Lettering** – this workshop looks at a range of letterforms used during this period and introduces a luminous technique to use with them that gives the effect of either stained glass or enamelling. The lettering’s quick and easy, while the technique can be applied to all sorts elsewhere.

Design – *this aspect of calligraphy can sometimes be a bit neglected – without design calligraphy can fall flat on its face!*

Exploiting Principles of Design – a busy day full of short small group, paired and individual exercises to remind ourselves of traditional design guidelines, to explore what these really mean and then to learn how to break them successfully. Examples from other cultures will be examined to identify useful design elements and then each individual will use principles from throughout the day to create designs that aim to be quite different to their usual work. A jam-packed and fun, but highly thought-provoking day (also suitable for a 2 or 3-day course)

Designing broadsheets / multi-text panels – a workshop to investigate the principles and pitfalls, working processes and design elements involved with a large multi-text or complex piece of work. A series of developmental small group and individual activities will work through the design process – offering a strategy for successful planning and execution.

Artists’ Inspiration for calligraphic design – using artists’ paintings as reference points for style, proportion, colour and ambience to kick-start the creative process. This workshop works through a number of carefully planned exercises to help us identify how to express ourselves effectively through the ways in which we set down our words. It is suitable for all levels, but especially useful to

those who've reached a plateau in their calligraphic journey and wish to produce work that is different, unexpected and thoroughly inspirational.

MS book design – looks at conventional styles of page proportion and orientation, then explores other approaches, offering more individual ways of interpreting texts or themes and using exciting combinations of tools and mediums, to arrive at highly personal book pages. This is also a great workshop for groups who've done various bindings but have a lot of blank books sitting doing nothing, as it explores stress-free ways of filling them!

* **More or Less** – a lot of contemporary lettering artists, and we ourselves, can often tend to throw just about everything at a piece of work, not always knowing when to stop. This workshop looks at a number of such pieces to work out what's there, why it's there and whether it's really necessary. There will be an opportunity to analyse some original pieces of work by Ann Hechle, Alison Urwick and Joan Pilsbury to identify what makes them work so well in their elegantly streamlined form. In practical terms each person will select one particular script to focus on and develop a design using that only – no more, no less. There's nothing wrong with, but everything right about simplicity – it goes a long way to achieving stylish and satisfying work. The intention is for everyone to complete a modest piece of work – simple but charming.

* **Mix 'n Match** – decorative styles tend to belong to historical eras or geographical areas, but do they always have to stick together? This workshop uses both groupwork and practical activities to see how you might pick and mix lettering and embellishment styles – with a consideration for what does and definitely does not go together. It will result in a whole new approach to selection in the design process (also suitable for a 2 to 3 day course)

* **Archibald Knox Design** – an introduction to the lettering and unique mix of Celtic and Art Nouveau decoration this Manx designer created. There is a choice of mediums to try out – one giving the unexpected effect of either stained glass or enamelling. An unusual and rewarding workshop.

Paper and bindings – a mixed bag of alternative 'carriers' for calligraphy

Folded diptychs and triptychs – beautifully crafted standing panels with two or three boards hinged together. No glue, no stitching, just accurately folded paper around board – these structures offer a presentation for calligraphy without the need for framing. Starting with a basic construction in miniature, then onto the more complicated with an exploration of design potential, if there's time (also suitable for a 2-day course)

Folded books – a riot of tiny books, covers and structures to take calligraphy which are disproportionately satisfying, since they're just cut and folded from paper or card! Everyone completes at least 6 or 7 constructions.

Flexagons and Flip-Flops – these structures are made purely from folded and cut sheets of paper, but they keep turning - mysteriously revealing new openings and hidden pages. Making them is easy, writing the texts is the flummoxing part!

Japanese Butterfly Binding – this multi-section binding is particularly suitable for calligraphers and for drawing or painting too – partly because it lies absolutely flat when open, but also because papers of different weights and surface textures can be used in conjunction with each other, including tissues or hand-made papers. Everyone will complete a bound book with a wrap-style cover (no glue whatsoever!) and possibly a slip case if there's time.

Paper Frames – a really useful workshop showing how to make and decorate frames for pieces of work made merely from paper covered boards. A cheap and creative way of not having to frame!

***French Stitch Journal** – another multi-section, but soft-backed and rounded spine, binding which is versatile and particularly strong for any shape or size book. The stitching is simple and decorative; the cover can be paper, cloth or leather; the closure a button, slot, strap or cuff. This is an attractive and highly satisfying book to make.

Coptic Binding – a multi-section book with hard covers and visible stitching. Traditionally, it's an ancient structure but one that opens completely flat so it's practical for calligraphers and artists alike and can take on a completely contemporary look.

Crazy Concertinas – a riot of zig-zagging books, beginning with the simple and progressing through to stacked, pocketed and multi directional concertina books.

***Telescopic Tunnel Books** – an introduction to constructing tunnel books which lend themselves to all sorts of interpretation and fun ways of presenting texts – even moving parts!

***Japanese Hangings** – develop your own Japanese-style script for a haiku, using brush pens on a paper hanging in the style of their elegant silk panels. We will consider oriental design principles and use suminagashi, an ink-based marbling technique, together with collaging other Japanese paper scraps to create an impressive simulation of a silk hanging.

*** Cut Letter Folded Paper Box-Frame** – produce a folded frame with a cut letter design, all from one piece of paper. The day will begin with looking at how to design compound letters using double pencils which dance with each other, overlapping and making lovely shapes together. We will then cut these into a sheet of paper which will then be carefully measured and folded into a self-held box-frame no glue, no fuss – easy peasy and incredibly satisfying. So much so that some people may end up making more than just one!

Decorative techniques

Colour and colour theory – a series of stepped exercises to really get to grips with using colour with confidence, in a medium of the group's choice. A 2 or 3-day course offers much more in terms of how to use colour to best advantage, and/or comparing the different mediums at our disposal.

***Colour – Confusions and Clarity** – a number of short activities explore the characteristics of various mediums we can use with calligraphy – considering their pros and cons and what effects they create in terms of interpreting given texts. Everyone goes home with a book of reference material for

future use and a small piece combining suitable mediums together (also suitable as a 2-day course).

Dry layering techniques – a quick and easy way of sinking writing behind background colours and/or other layers of lettering, and creating textural & particularly atmospheric calligraphy. Great for journals and greetings cards too, with no wet washes to worry about!

Penning a Rainbow – how to run from one colour to another so that they mix in the pen and on the paper in a fluid and gradual manner. This workshop compares the different techniques for watercolours and gouache and uses the results in a natty little flexagon too!

***Calligraphic Collage** – a busy day in which we scrunch, cut, tear, push, pull and generally have fun putting bits of paper here, there and everywhere. We use practice sheets, specific words or phrases, colour-themed scraps of paper and lots of experimentation with dynamics, harmony and drama to create pieces of work where you don't have to get everything right on one sheet!

***Irresistible Resist** – a series of exercises to gradually increase confidence in using masking fluid for resist techniques. Pros and cons of different mediums are discussed and trialled so you know what you'll prefer to use in future. End products will display skills with layering various texts, colours and weights of lettering.

Brushed lettering for working on fabric – using broad edged and pointed brushes, FW inks, acrylic & fabric paints. Preliminary exercises are carried out on T-bag paper and then finished designs on cotton, linen, aprons, T-towels, pencil cases, etc., to take home.

Egg Tempera Painting – traditional techniques using ground pigments as well as egg to bind gouache for similar results. Stepped exercises take you through two alternative processes for painting with this medium so you can discover which you prefer. Egg tempera gives a beautifully lustrous and resilient finish (suitable for a 2-day course).

Metalpoint for Calligraphers – an introduction to the ancient method of using silver, copper, gold or brass wire to draw and write with. Prepared paper and tools are provided and various alternative modern grounds are experimented with – to find out which you may like to use at home (suitable for a 2-day course).

Lettering on objects – design appropriate letterforms and learn various techniques for lettering on papier-mache boxes, terracotta pots, wood, slate, glass and pebbles etc. Participants go away with several lettered objects which could make great gifts.

Traditional Techniques – any of the ancient techniques of curing, cutting and writing with **quills**, preparing and using **vellum**, and of course **gilding** using various different mordants and processes – can all be covered in a workshop, but they would necessarily have to be done separately with materials sourced in advance which Josie can do. Contact her to discuss what your group would like to do within a day or across 2/3 days.