

DRAWING TYPE

AN INTRODUCTION
TO ILLUSTRATING
LETTERFORMS

Alex Fowkes

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LETTERFORMS

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Finally, thanks to everyone I have worked with—from tutors at university, to fellow collective members, and employers. In my relatively short time in this industry, so far, you have all helped to inspire and motivate me.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alex Fowkes is a designer based in London, who graduated from Nottingham Trent University in 2010 with a degree in graphic design. Alex became freelance in 2012 with his first job for Sony Music, creating a 1,614-square-foot (150-square-meter) typographic mural for the company's London headquarters. Since then, he has worked for a range of international clients, creating a print campaign for Fila in Japan and also working closely with pop star Olly Murs to create a residential mural in his home.

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INTRODUCTION

This book was created out of a love for playful typography. I would define *playful typography* as combining lettering and illustration, forgetting the rules associated with traditional typography, and letting the message and creativity take over. Throughout the book, we look at four different styles of typographic work, from hand rendered to vintage, playful to contemporary. All of these varied styles of typography can communicate on many different levels, making it quite a unique medium in which to experiment. Illustrative typography mixes illustration and typography to create pieces of work that have many layers. These compositions can range from beautiful hand-drawn pieces to digitally designed work for a range of print and online media.

Lettering is a growing trend, whether it's hand drawn, digitally created, or a combination of both. This work is now

popping up in editorial pieces, packaging, product design, advertising, and motion graphics. The first section of this book features some of the world's best lettering and type designers. They talk about their inspirations and how they create their type designs—whether by hand or on the computer. Many show the steps they take when concepting and sketching out rough ideas, revealing a sneak peak at their creative processes. There is a variety of styles and techniques that will inspire and inform your work.

The second section of the book is a workshop on type basics. Using existing typefaces as a starting point, you can begin to create a whole range of type-based work incorporating different styles. I see this workshop as a personal exploration; tracing existing typefaces is just the first part of the exercise. In the end, I want you to have gained enough confidence to never touch

the specimen sheets again. After all, type created from specimen sheets is not original or unique. These should be used only for personal development, not in actual projects for publication or commercial purposes.

There are sixteen type sheets that include samples of four sans serif, four serif, four script, and four display faces, in both uppercase and lowercase, that you can tear out and work with. By using tracing or layout paper, you can draw the letterforms and begin to understand how they are built and how they work. This will also help you become familiar with different type categories and how they work. Once you have completed this multiple times with each typeface, you should be able to start drawing your own letterforms and layouts freely. These exercises will help you develop your own unique style, which can then become part of your body of work.

ALEX FOWKES

MAMMOTH TYPE INSTALLATION

BELOW:
SONY MUSIC TIMELINE
DETAIL: EACH LETTER
FROM EACH WORD IS
ITS OWN UNIQUE DECAL.
ALMOST 1,000 NAMES
ARE ON THE WALL AT THE
HEADQUARTERS.





BELOW:
SONY BALCONY: THIS
IS THE VIEW FROM THE
BALCONY ABOVE THE
CAFETERIA. HERE YOU CAN
SEE A LOT OF POPULAR
ARTISTS FROM THE 1970S
THROUGH THE 2000S.

In 2012, I was commissioned to create a typographic installation at Sony Music's London headquarters.

The installation is a timeline that features the names of nearly 1,000 artists signed to Sony Music and its affiliated labels, from the foundation of Columbia Records in 1887 to the present day, including musical icons Elvis Presley, Jimi Hendrix, Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen, Janis Joplin, the Clash, Michael Jackson, and many more.

Interspersed among the artist names are certain key developments in recording technology, musical formats, and corporate history—from the invention of early recording cylinders, the Sony Walkman, CD, MTV, and the introduction of digital streaming services.



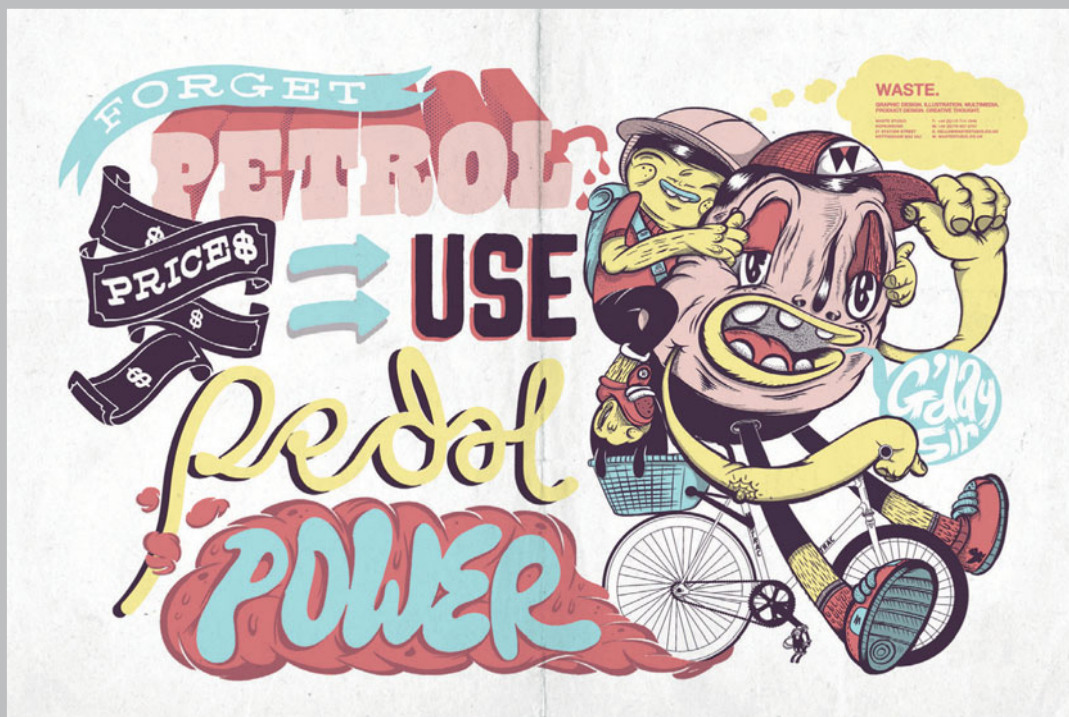
The work is organized by decade into 52 columns measuring more than 6½ feet (2 m) tall and covering almost 493 feet (150 m) of wall space. It uses CNC-cut vinyl as the sole medium for the whole installation. It took about two months to design. I created all 52 columns in Illustrator. I never really planned much in terms of the look of each column;

I let that come as I created it. I often work this way—setting rules and adhering to them throughout the process—so it's consistent, but it also allows the design to be natural and evolve. The placement and distance of the columns was all planned out quite meticulously, however.



LEFT:
PIN-UP BOWLING ALLEY
POSTER: THIS WAS THE FIRST
PROJECT I COMPLETED WHILE
WORKING FOR TIMBA SMITS.
THE PIN-UP BOWLING ALLEY
IS A POP-UP BOWLING ALLEY
WITH A '50S FEEL. MY TASK WAS
TO CREATE A TYPOGRAPHIC
POSTER THAT WOULD PROMOTE
THE DATE AND TIME OF THE
FIRST EVENT.

BELOW:
FILA TENNIS ADVERT:
FILA (JAPAN) APPROACHED
ME TO CREATE A SERIES OF
SIX TYPOGRAPHIC PIECES FOR
ITS SPRING-SUMMER SEASON.
THE TWO THEMES WERE GOLF
AND TENNIS. I WANTED IT TO
BE QUITE A LIGHT AND BRIGHT
COLOR PALETTE.



LEFT:
FIXED & TWO:
I COLLABORATED WITH
NORMAN HAYES OF WASTE
STUDIO ON THIS PROJECT.
THE ILLUSTRATION WAS
FEATURED IN FIXED
& WHAT'S SECOND
NEWSPAPER AS THE
CENTER SPREAD. MY PART
OF THIS ILLUSTRATION
WAS CREATING THE
SLOGAN AND MAKING
SOME FUN ILLUSTRATIVE
TYPOGRAPHY TO
WORK TOGETHER
WITH THE CHARACTER
ILLUSTRATIONS.

SECTION 1

INSPIRATION & INTERVIEWS



CHAPTER 1

HAND RENDERED

MANY DESIGNERS MAKE TYPE THAT IS HAND RENDERED TO A HIGH LEVEL OF FINISH. TYPE DESIGNERS USE A RANGE OF TOOLS, INCLUDING PENS AND PENCILS, MARKERS, BRUSHES, ERASERS, RULERS, AND PAPER. COMPUTERS MAY BE USED IN THE LATER STAGES FOR DISTRIBUTION AND FINAL TOUCHES.

MATTHEW TAPIA

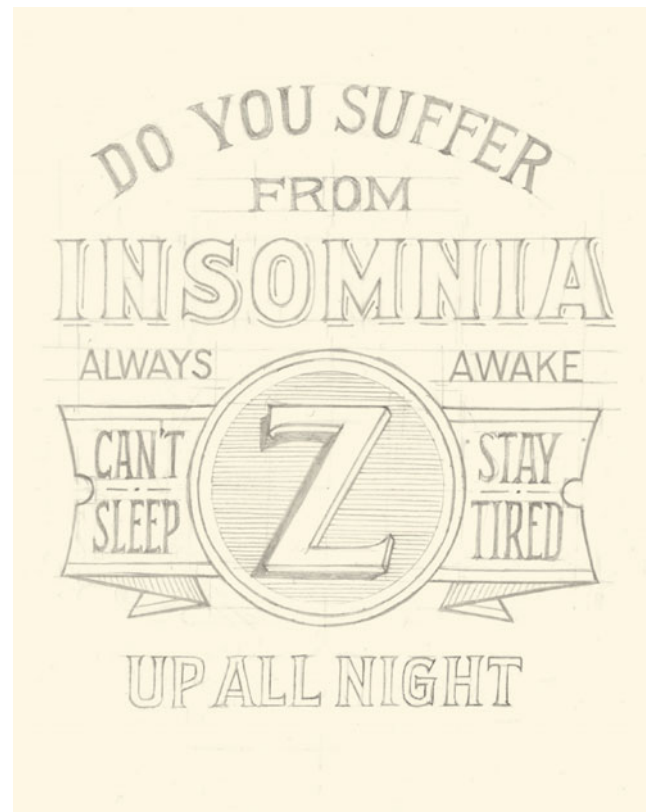
HONOLULU

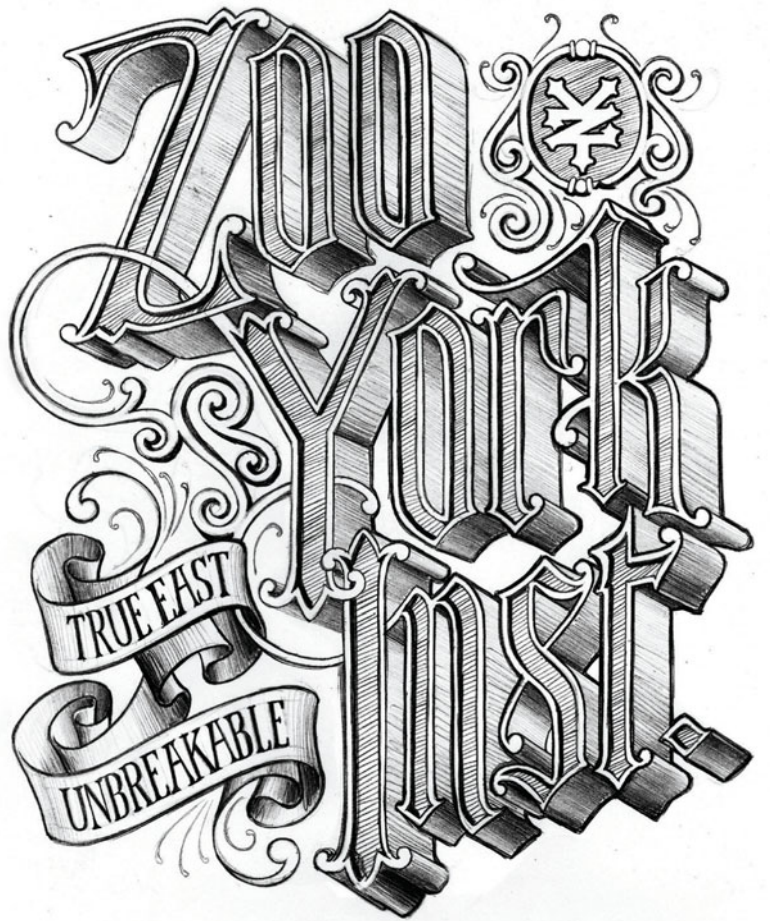
WWW.MATTHEWTAPIA.COM

MATTHEW TAPIA IS A SELF-TAUGHT GRAPHIC ARTIST BORN AND RAISED IN HAWAII. OVER THE PAST DECADE, HE HAS HONED HIS SPECIALTY IN HAND LETTERING, WORKING IN NEW YORK AND HONOLULU FOR A DIVERSE GROUP OF CLIENTS. NO MATTER THE PROJECT, EACH STARTS THE SAME—WITH PENCIL AND PAPER.

RIGHT:
DO YOU SUFFER
FROM INSOMNIA

I tend to look at historical references as a basis for most of my work, and I had the opportunity to do just that on this project. I was one of a group of artists invited to create a piece honoring different aspects of an icon's life and career. I was drawn to Michael Jordan's much-documented love of fine cigars, and having always enjoyed the look and feel of vintage cigar boxes, I wanted to be true to that aesthetic while still bringing a slight twist to the work. After multiple rounds of sketches to develop the composition, I ended up inking three versions of the final artwork. These were scanned into Photoshop, and the best bits of each were put together for a final mock-up, then printed and transferred to a koa wood board. The finished look was achieved by hand burning each line of the artwork into the wood using a technique called pyrography.





RIGHT:
ZOO YORK GRAPHIC

BELOW LEFT:
MICHAEL JORDAN
ILLUSTRATION

BELOW RIGHT:
LONELY PEOPLE



WWW.CARGOCOLLECTIVE.COM/OPERA78

[illegible]

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GRAND **THE FRENCH TOUCH** **HEAD** **2008** **IN LONDON** **THE FRENCH TOUCH** **IS NOW AVAILABLE** **IN LONDON** **GRAND** **HEAD** **2008**

Game rules:

GRAND JEU CONCOURS
DU MEILLEUR
COUPEUR DE TÊTE
ANONYME
2008

GRAND COMPETITION
OF THE BEST
HEADMAN
2008

GRAND JEU CONCOURS
DU MEILLEUR
COUPEUR DE TÊTE
ANONYME
2008



[Cliquez ici](#)

[Cliquez ici](#)

PANCO SASSANO

MAR DEL PLATA, ARGENTINA

WWW.PANCOART.COM.AR

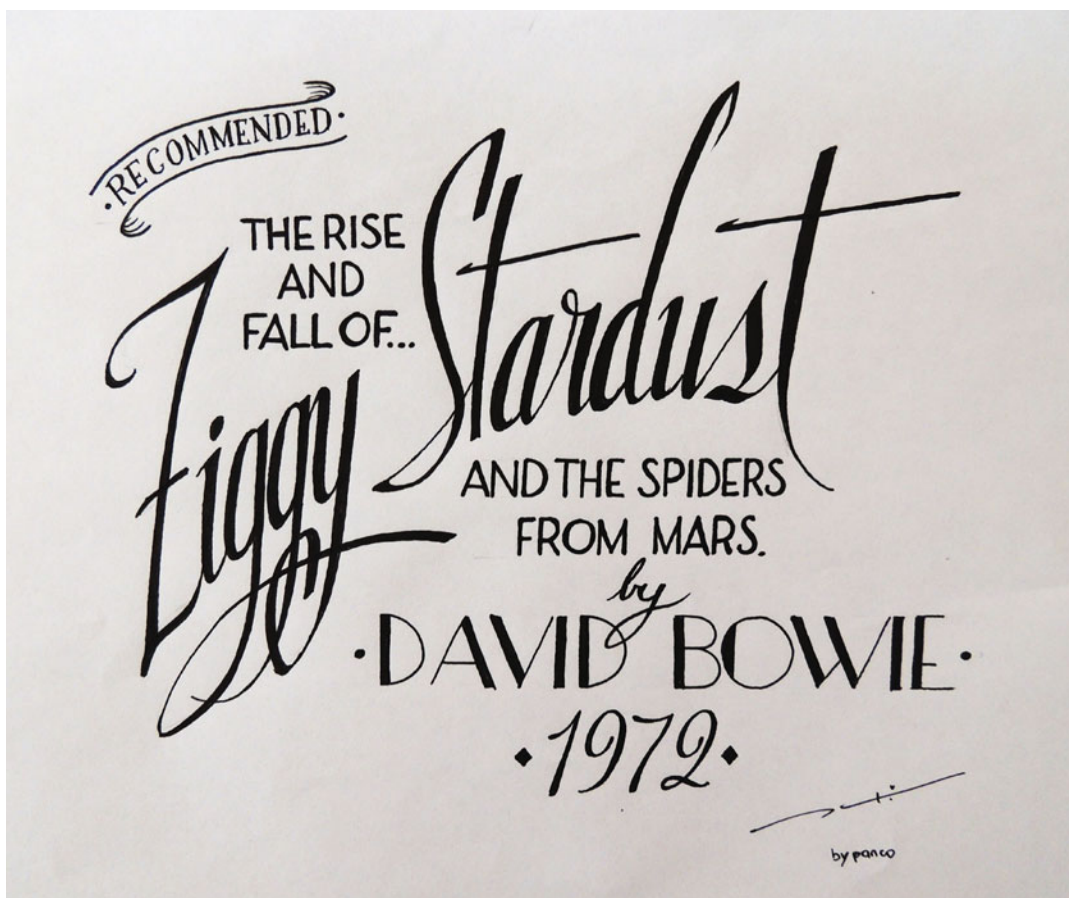
PANCO SASSANO IS A GRAPHIC DESIGNER AND ILLUSTRATOR WHO IS PASSIONATE FOR TYPOGRAPHY. HE IS A PARTNER AT SMART! GRUPO CREATIVO, WHICH SPECIALIZES IN IMAGE DESIGN AND VISUAL IDENTITY. WITH THE DESIRE TO CONTINUE LEARNING, HE EXPERIMENTS IN HIS LEISURE TIME WITH MURAL PAINTING AND LETTERING TO EXPAND HIS VISUAL SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE.

I love chalk because it allows me to work freely and easily erase mistakes. Even though there is a lot of improvisation, I always do a first draft where I make the general decisions—mainly on elements' distribution and design. Then, I work on the chalkboard with guidelines and grids that are useful to respect proportions and to take the draft to its final size. Once the design matches what I had in mind, I start working on the details until I get to the final result.

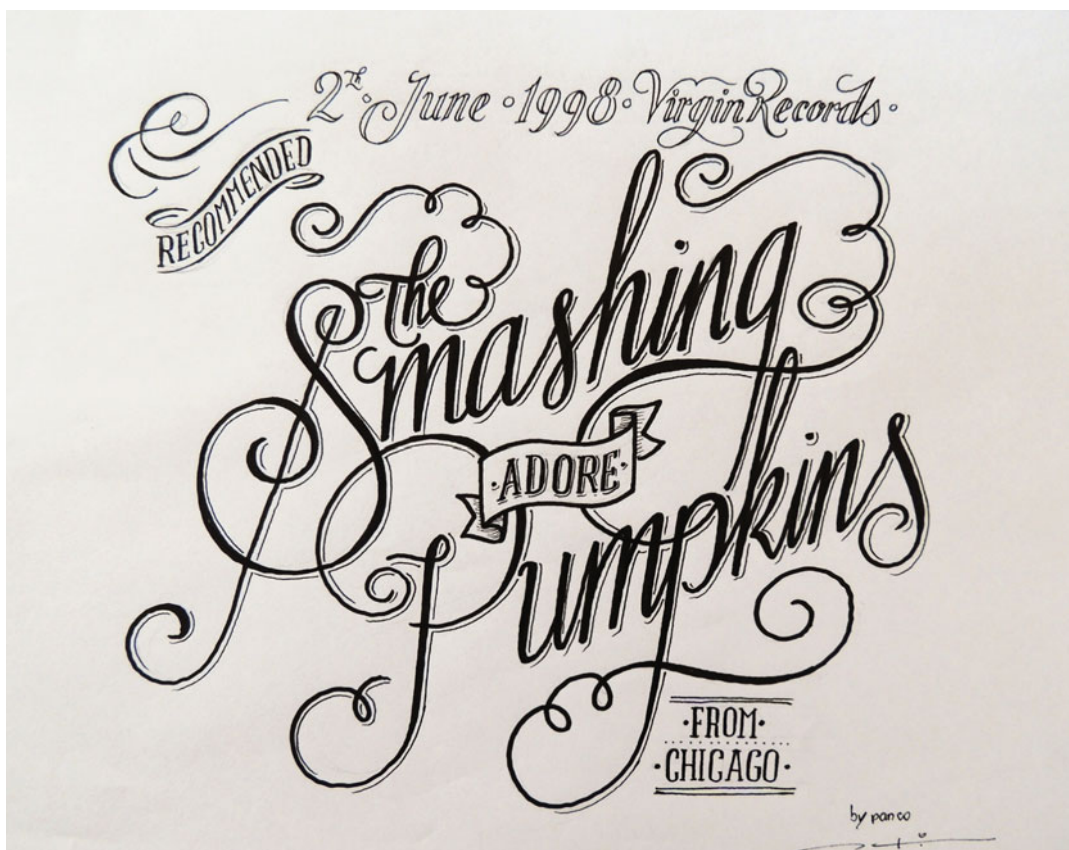
RIGHT:
CHALK LETTERING
FOR CONGRESS



LEFT:
ZIGGY STARDUST



LEFT:
THE SMASHING
PUMPKINS



COMING SOON, JIM VAN RAEMDONCK

WETTEREN, BELGIUM
WWW.COMING-SOON.BE

BELOW:
VIB FIFTEEN YEARS

AFTER STUDYING GRAPHIC DESIGN AT THE ARTEVELDE INSTITUTE IN EGON, JIM VAN RAEMDONCK WORKED AS A GRAPHIC DESIGNER AT SEVERAL SMALL AGENCIES BEFORE FOUNDING COMING SOON IN 2003. TODAY, THE BELGIUM-BASED STUDIO EMPLOYS A TEAM OF FOUR, ALONG WITH SEVERAL INTERNS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD. THEIR WORK IS VERY TACTILE.



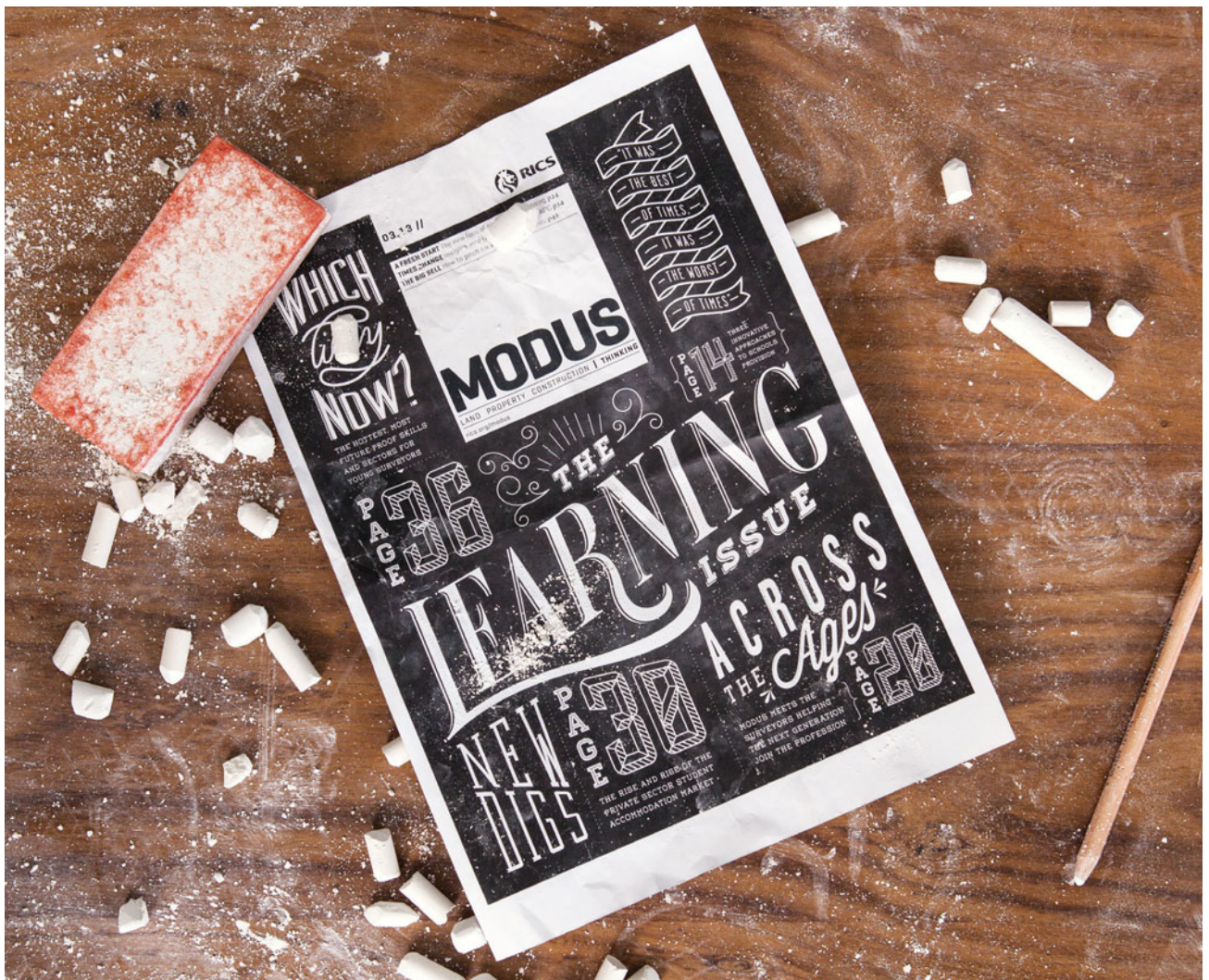


LEFT:
MODUS MAGAZINE
COVER PROCESS

BELOW:
MODUS MAGAZINE
COVER

Modus is the membership magazine for the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and is the UK's highest-circulation, property-related B2B title, mailed ten times a year to more than 95,000 chartered surveyors. There are also quarterly editions for Asia and the Americas. *Modus* focuses on the bigger picture and employs a bold mix of photography, illustration, and typography. We were commissioned to make the cover in chalk for the March "learning" issue.

We decided to make this really big, working on it with a team of nine people. After this project, we started www.theblackboard.be because we received a lot of requests for chalkboard lettering.



WWW.SERGIOBERGOCCE.COM

For these spreads in *Women's Health* magazine, I drew the letters over the photographs. After all sketch adjustments, they were scanned and finished on the computer. In order to keep the original aspect of analog process, such as gestures and imperfections, the letters were not retouched or vectorized.



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