HAND-lettering: IT ALL truly BEGINS with a PENCIL, PAPER, & your HANDS.
Just like the bones in your body, letterforms have names for all the structures and details that make up its shape.

pick up a pencil.

Make your mark.

BRILLIANT! Am I right?!

SO START MAKING YOUR OWN AMAZING! REALLY. NOW GO!!!! Letter away.
Some of my favorite exercises are simply reviewing the anatomy of type, and seeing what I can do to differentiate my letters by taking a certain aspect and exploring all the options imaginable.

DOWNSTROKES (TAILS)
Will it curl? Will it be straight and rigid? Will it curve? Will it look like a cat’s tail? Will it act as a flourish-y element to underline the word?

OPENINGS (COUNTERS, EYES)
Will it be wide open? Will there be very little space? Will it have a boxy shape? Will the axis be dramatic?
CROSSBARS
Will it loop? Will it cross at an angle? Will it extend past the stem for extra emphasis?

APEXES & VERTEXES
Will it be a straight line? Will it have some sort of adornment?

There are 206 bones in the human body. Now, there's no excuse not to memorize all of the anatomy of type, right?
LEGS
Will it extend below the baseline? Will it be curvy?

BRACKETS
Will it have a distinctive shape? Will it curve deeply? Will it taper?
SPINES
Will it be curvy? Will it be horizontal? Will it be vertical?

BEAKS
Will it be large? Will it be dramatic? How pronounced will it be?

Next time you're out with friends, throw some type anatomy into casual conversation. You will immediately be the coolest cat in the group.
While lettering takes you off the beaten path to explore new territory, sometimes you just want to know a route before you go your own way. There are a variety of lines you can use as your tour guides in order to create consistent type.

Use the guides below to letter the titles of the last few movies you've seen.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASCENT LINE</th>
<th>CAP LINE</th>
<th>ASCENDER HEIGHT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MEAN LINE</td>
<td>X-HEIGHT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BASE LINE</td>
<td></td>
<td>X-HEIGHT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DESCENT LINE</td>
<td>DESCENDER HEIGHT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A good way to break up type is to map out a geometrical grid. Using a grid makes it easier to predict placement and know which boundaries your type has to keep within for the overall piece. Think of the grid as a skeleton, and dress it up with your own lettering.

Pick four quotes and letter them in the grids below.

Did you decide to use cohesive elements to make this a series?
Sometimes we focus on stylizing type so much that we forget that we can break away from the traditional grid's layout by using different shapes and baselines.

Fill in the grids below with quotes of your choice.
LEARN the RULES
THEN YOU CAN BREAK THEM