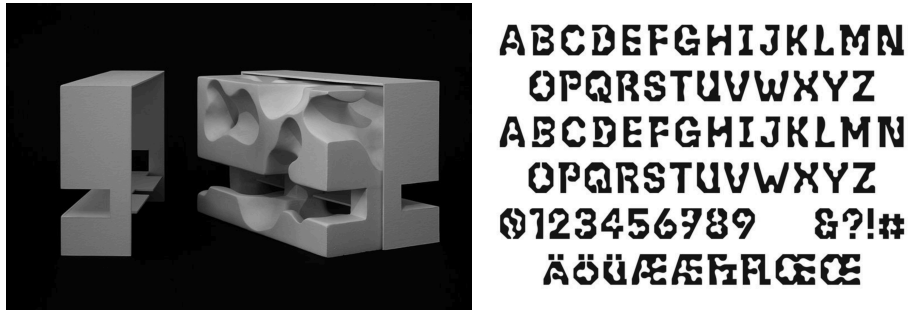


Annotated Bibliography:

1. Karl Nawrot – *Breu Typeface*

Mason, B. (2019) *A Type Designer Who Thinks Like an Architect*. Eye on Design. Available at: <https://eyeondesign.aiga.org/a-type-designer-who-thinks-like-an-architect/>



This quote captured the paradox I was working through in my own type system. Inspired by Nawrot's Breu typeface, I began generating random forms using p5.js, translating them into stencil tools for composing letterforms. Nawrot's attitude toward modularity helped me rethink modular systems not as rational frameworks, but as spaces for tension, chance, and anti-uniformity. His process encouraged me to view code-generated shapes as a raw material, not for consistency, but for provoking unexpected typographic structures. It helped me abandon legibility as a fixed value and instead consider how meaning could arise from repetition, overlap, and visual rhythm. Breu showed me how to set up a system that performs like a design question rather than a solution. That principle became foundational in how I transitioned from intuitive layout to a logic-led, yet unpredictable design method.

2. Karl Nawrot – *Mind Walks Exhibition*

Walker Art Center (2020) *Karl Nawrot: Mind Walks*. Available at: <https://walkerart.org/magazine/karl-nawrot-mind-walks>

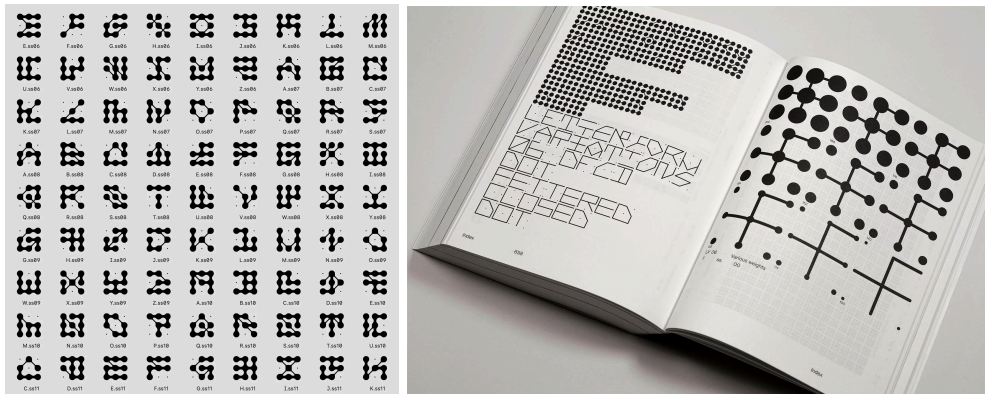
Eastside Projects (2016) *Mind Walk I – Karl Nawrot*. Available at: <https://eastsideprojects.org/projects/karl-nawrot-mind-walk-i/>



Engaging with the themes and documentation from Nawrot's *Mind Walks* projects helped me articulate a process-led approach to typography that values structure, gesture, and iteration over fixed outcomes. The exhibition materials, interviews, and project descriptions foreground Nawrot's use of modular stencils as tools for visual thinking, which aligned closely with my own shift from p5.js randomness to physical modularity. I was especially drawn to the way *Mind Walk I* proposes drawing as a performative act of construction, where form emerges through intuitive system play. This influenced how I approached Dancheong as not only a visual source but a cultural logic that would guide my own typographic framework. Nawrot's emphasis on layered meaning, abstraction, and flexible authorship validated my own experimental use of generative shapes and stencils. While I did not view the exhibitions in person, their conceptual framing significantly shaped how I began to understand typography as a spatial, temporal, and architectural enquiry.

3. Nigel Cottier – *Letterform Variations*

Cottier, N. (2018) *Letterform Variations*. Self-published.



Cottier's visual system of variation clarified how constraint can still enable expressiveness. This became essential as I moved from abstract shapes generated in p5.js into the structured space of typographic construction. His methodical process helped me think through how to use repeated components without collapsing differences. I wasn't interested in refining one perfect form, but in exploring what happens when

rules generate instability or slippage. His approach to modular form-making became a benchmark for how I could maintain both visual rhythm and unpredictability. When I began integrating Dancheong patterns into my work, I used Cottier's logic of transformation to map cultural motifs onto typographic parts. The modular variations he presents helped me structure my own experiments without enforcing visual uniformity. Instead, they helped me approach structure as an open-ended system where difference accumulates over time. Cottier helped me link coding, iteration, and visual decision-making in a way that still welcomed surprise.

4. Jose Quintanar – *Drawing Templates and Dutch Landscapes*

Quintanar, J. (2021) *Transformando lo físico*. Spain Arts & Culture. Available at: <https://on.spainculture.us/transformando-lo-fisico/jose-quintanar/>



Jose Quintanar's approach to composing landscapes through predefined templates and repetitive grid structures offered a valuable analogue to my own digital stencil-based design process. Rather than physically drawing, I created modular elements using generative code in p5.js and recombined them through digital design tools like Adobe Illustrator. Quintanar's method of working with constraints to explore variation supported my transition from freeform, intuitive composition to a more structured, rule-driven framework. His reinterpretation of landscape through formal systems aligns with how I approached Korean Dancheong patterns—not as static motifs to replicate, but as underlying visual logics that could be translated into new typographic structures. What resonated most was his emphasis on iteration within limits, and how systemic composition can still generate nuanced, culturally embedded outcomes. Quintanar's practice helped me articulate a design position where modularity and repetition do not diminish expression, but instead become a method of investigating form, space, and reference through digital design environments.

5. Johanna Drucker – *Graphesis*

Drucker, J. (2014) *Graphesis: Visual Forms of Knowledge Production*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

This perspective fundamentally reshaped how I positioned my project. I had already been thinking about randomness and rule-making, but Drucker helped me see these systems as epistemological rather than

aesthetic. Using code to generate forms and building a modular type system wasn't just process-driven—it was a way to interrogate how knowledge becomes visible. Drucker's approach to visual interpretation gave me a language for describing my design process as a form of inquiry. Her emphasis on structure and cultural framing helped me better understand how Dancheong patterns operate as visual systems with embedded meaning. That connection made me more conscious of how my typographic system performs both visually and culturally. Drucker made it possible for me to claim my project as research—not in a traditional academic sense, but in a designer's way of thinking through making. Her writing elevated my system-building into something conceptually accountable and contextually situated.

6. Roland Barthes – *Death of the Author*

Barthes, R. (1977) 'Death of the Author', in *Image, Music, Text*. London: Fontana Press, pp. 143–148.

Barthes' philosophy on authorship supported a conceptual shift in how I understood my own role within the work. Rather than positioning myself as the originator of every shape, letter, or layout, I began to focus on building systems that allow the form to emerge through interaction—between code, material, tradition, and viewer. When working with p5.js to generate modular elements or adapting Dancheong visual structures into type, I relinquished aesthetic control. This idea of decentralised authorship made my project feel more like a conversation between systems and histories than a personal style. The outcome of each experiment became less important than the process that made it possible. Barthes helped me embrace generativity as a framework that displaces the designer's ego and prioritises conditions of emergence. That felt particularly important when working with cultural materials, where fidelity and innovation had to coexist. His writing helped me clarify the ethical and conceptual implications of systemic design.

Critical analysis:

Critical Analysis 1: Karl Nawrot – Breu Typeface

Karl Nawrot's Breu typeface serves as a pivotal conceptual and formal reference within my project, which explores modular typography through generative systems and cultural pattern logic. Central to Breu is Nawrot's rejection of conventional modular uniformity. Instead, he embraces a kit-of-parts approach where letterforms are constructed using geometric stencils without adhering to rigid compositional rules. This conceptual position challenges traditional expectations of type design as consistent, legible, and systematic. His statement, "I wanted to have a set of letters built with the same family of forms, that weren't following any construction rules" encapsulates this subversive stance (Mason, 2019).

This idea is made visible through Breu's formal qualities. The letterforms are irregular yet rhythmically related, exhibiting variations that depend on the physical manipulation of stencil elements. The modular pieces are deliberately reused, overlapped, rotated, and imprecisely aligned. This method introduces a

spatial dimension into the act of drawing type, positioning Nawrot more as an architect or builder than a typographer. This influenced my own process: I began with p5.js-generated shape sets, which I treated as a form of digital stencil. These were translated into physical tools, which were then layered and recombined to build abstract letterforms.

Nawrot's work shifted how I understood modularity, not as a constraint for ensuring consistency, but as a catalyst for difference. It also helped me consider (il)legibility not as a failure of form but as a strategy of visual ambiguity that opens interpretive space. His methods offered permission to embrace visual noise and imprecision, which mirrored the unpredictability already inherent in my generative code. This reframed randomness as part of a spatial and material logic rather than as pure chance.

The Breu typeface also prompted me to rethink authorship. As Nawrot designs the tools rather than the outcomes, he positions himself as a facilitator of form rather than a controller. This links closely to Roland Barthes' idea that meaning lies in the destination, not the origin (Barthes, 1977). It also mirrors how I began to see myself as designing systems for exploration rather than producing fixed artefacts.

Incorporating Nawrot's logic allowed me to extend my type experiments beyond generative sketching. It helped me frame a process where modularity meets cultural memory, specifically in my adaptation of Korean Dancheong motifs. I treated these historical patterns not as references to reproduce but as structural logics to reinterpret. In this way, Breu helped me position my work as spatial, cultural, and iterative—a system where type is not drawn but constructed.

Critical Analysis 2: Johanna Drucker – Graphesis

Johanna Drucker's *Graphesis* provides a powerful theoretical lens through which to understand my project as a form of visual knowledge production. Her central position is that visual forms are not neutral representations but actively shape the epistemological frameworks in which they exist. For Drucker, graphic expressions are generative; they do not simply display information, they constitute it (Drucker, 2014, p. 5). This assertion reoriented how I thought about my type system, moving from a focus on aesthetics or composition to an understanding of design as a mode of inquiry.

Drucker's ideas are reinforced through the structure of her writing itself. The book uses varied layouts, visual examples, and typographic modulation to demonstrate how form impacts meaning. Her rhetoric invites the reader to look at the design of the page as both argument and evidence. This parallels my own approach, in which the shape of the grammar of a letter becomes a vehicle for exploring systems of cultural meaning, rather than a vessel for linguistic content.

My project uses generative code and stencil construction to develop a modular type system inspired by Korean Dancheong patterns. Drucker's insistence that graphic forms operate within cultural and historical contexts helped me avoid flattening Dancheong into visual reference. Instead, I approached it as a knowledge system—a structured logic of form, symmetry, and symbolism. Her work guided me to extract patterns as epistemology rather than decoration. Each type iteration thus became an enactment of visual thinking, not just its output.

This idea of structured visual production helped bridge the gap between the randomness of p5.js generation and the discipline of architectural ornamentation. Drucker gave me a vocabulary for articulating

how seemingly chaotic outputs could be reframed as part of an emergent system of meaning. She also pushed me to think about typographic form as an interface for knowledge, not just a visual artifact. This reframing made my work less about individual letters and more about the structure of relations between parts—how they interact, how they repeat, how they become legible or remain abstract.

In relation to other references, Drucker adds a conceptual foundation beneath the formal influences of Nawrot and Cottier. Where Nawrot provided an experimental and material method, Drucker provided the theoretical architecture to articulate it as inquiry. Ultimately, *Graphesis* encouraged me to take my generative and cultural systems seriously not just as forms, but as frameworks of knowledge and interpretation. Her text transformed my design practice into a methodological exploration where visual logic and cultural memory intersect through form.

Reference:

Barthes, R. (1977) 'Death of the Author', in *Image, Music, Text*. London: Fontana Press, pp. 143–148.

Drucker, J. (2014) *Graphesis: Visual Forms of Knowledge Production*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

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