Ouachita Baptist University

Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita

Apr 26th, 2:30 PM - 2:45 PM

Alif: Building a Bridge

Sabaoot Esho
Ouachita Baptist University

Alif: Building a Bridge

Arabic Calligraphy and Arabic Typography in Design

A thesis by Sabaoot Esho

About Me

- I am a graphic design major

- International student from Iraq

- I lived in Iraq for 17 years until
  I came to Arkadelphia

- Appreciate my culture and my roots

- Challenged my cultural identity

- Reconciliation through art.

Table of Contents

Basic Definitions

Typography: is the art of arranging letters and text in a way that makes the copy legible, clear, and visually appealing to the reader.

Calligraphy: the art of handwriting

Ligature: Is the connection between letters

Why did I make Alif?

My goal is to raise more awareness of Arabic art and its aesthetic quality in my environment

Three ways of doing that:
1. Arabic typography
2. Arabic design resources
3. Arabic writing/ calligraphy

Some Problems...

My goal is to raise more awareness of Arabic design and its aesthetic quality in my environment

Three ways of doing that:

1. Arabic typography is in the process of being developed
2. There were no Arabic design resources
3. Arabic writing is vastly different than English writing

Solution

By creating art and design using Arabic, and teaching non-Arabic speakers how to write in Arabic, I am giving them to tools to understand and appreciate Arabic design

1. Bringing Arabic calligraphy into typography, thus building a bridge between the old and the new

2. Made Alif into a design resource for Arabic design, thus it builds a bridge between Arabic speaking designers everywhere

3. Teach English speakers the basics of Arabic writing, thus, builds a bridge between Arabic and English.

Branding

Branding creates consistency and recognition by giving the blog a consistent image and tone. Giving it a brand identity maintains its integrity as a professional design blog.

- Creating a logo

- Using consistent, logos, fonts, and colors,

The Name

- Alif is the counterpart of an English "A" which is also the first letter in the English alphabet.
  - > They both make an "Aă" sound
  - > The first letter of the alphabet

- The word "Alif" is the name of the letter "Ĩ" ("A"). Similar to how for example the letter "H"'s name is pronounced "Aych"

Sketch idea 1
رسم الفكرة ١

Sketch idea 2
رسم الفكرة ٢

Sketch idea 3
رسم الفكرة ٣

Sketch idea 1 (digital)
رسم الكمبيوتري ١

Sketch idea 2 (digital)
رسم الكمبيوتري ٢

Sketch idea 3 (digital)
رسم الكمبيوتري ٣

The "f"s in both languages flow together to create unified shape and represent the goal to bridge the gap between graphic design in the two languages

Inspired by traditional "shallot shape" of Arabic calligraphy and logos

ALJAZEERA

Organic stylization to mimic the ink strokes of Arabic calligraphy that uses ink and wooden-chiseled-dowel

Can be read by both Arabic and English speakers in both reading directions

Rectangle gives it a more defined shape. This causes it to be more legible on more complex backgrounds

Wider Gap between F in english and ف. That is so it can still be seen at smaller sizes.

ARABIC
DESIGN

ARABIC
DESIGN

Character Highlights

- Made to showcase handwritten Arabic lettering in a modern design context

- Geared for the English-speaking audience to learn the basics Arabic alphabet.

- The Character Highlight had three objectives:
    1- Show the letter in all its forms
    2- Show the sound/ pronunciation
    3- Show the written flow of the letter

B

Aktiv Grotesk

Omnes Arabic

Aktiv Grotesk
Arabic

My pencil sketches
رسوماتي

My digital sketches
رسومات الكمبيوتر الخاصة بي

Panel 1:

ARABIC DESIGN

The letter

Hh

o / d / ɠ / ɸ

Panel 2:

ARABIC DESIGN

The Arabic Alphabet is always written in script format. Words are formed by creating ligatures between letters. Thus, each letter has four forms, depending on where it falls within a word. They are, initial, medial, final, and Isolated form.

Panel 3:

ARABIC DESIGN

INITIAL FORM

Beginning of a set

Panel 4:

ARABIC DESIGN

MEDIAL FORM

Middle of a set

Panel 5:

ARABIC DESIGN

FINAL FORM

*End of a set

*Also occurs if followed by a letter that does not connect to the right

Panel 6:

ARABIC DESIGN

ISOLATED FORM

Apears after any letter that is in final form

Calligraphy Highlights

- Made to teach a new way to incorporate Arabic calligraphy into design

- Educate audience on that calligraphy style in a consumable way

- The Calligraphy Highlight had three objectives:
    - 1- Visually show that style
    - 2- Give some background on the style
    - 3- Give an overview of the process used to make it

THE RULES OF SQUARE KUFIC:

These rules are in place to maintain legibility and the aesthetic quality of Kufic.

- Each word is written within a 7x7 square grid.

- There can only be one square space between each letter.

- The word must read on each side of the square.

- There are limited ways in which one can alter the letters to fit.

- Each letter form (initial, medial, final, isolated) has specific forms in Kufic script and can be extended vertically or horizontally depending on its form.

- The top of each letter goes toward the inside of the square. (See figure to the right)
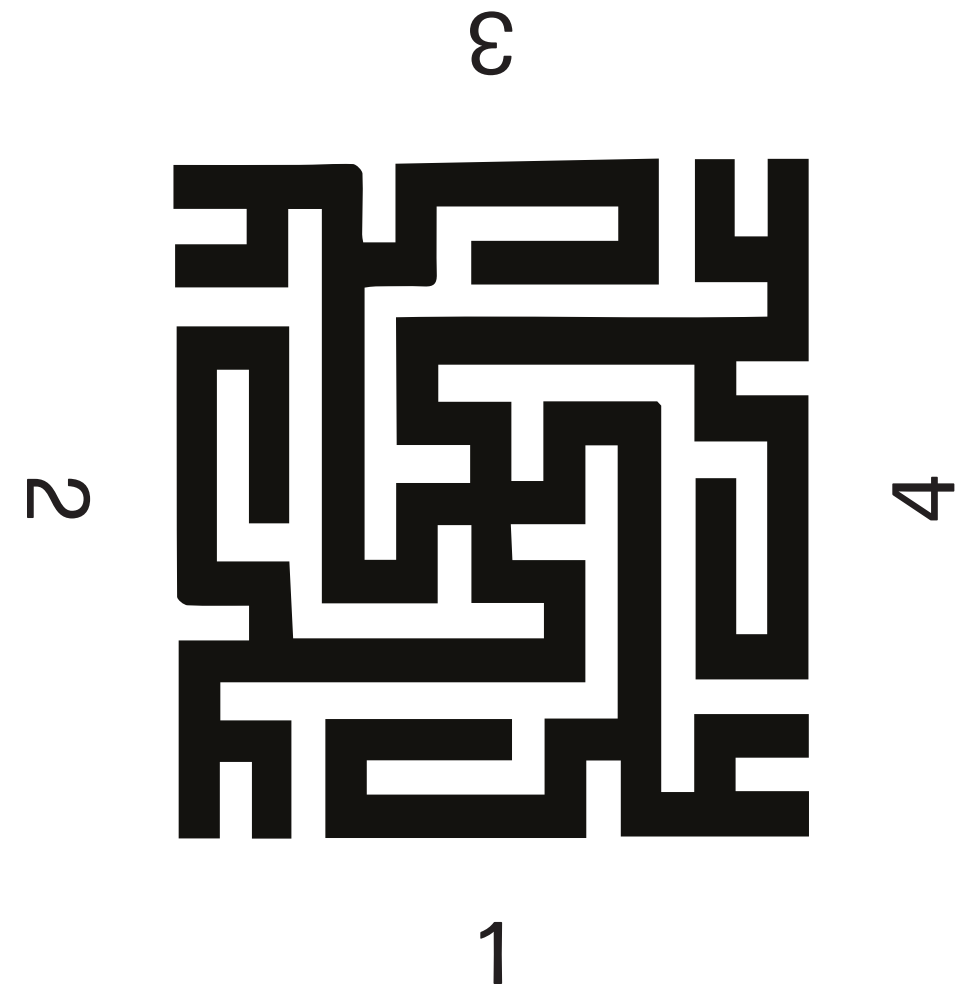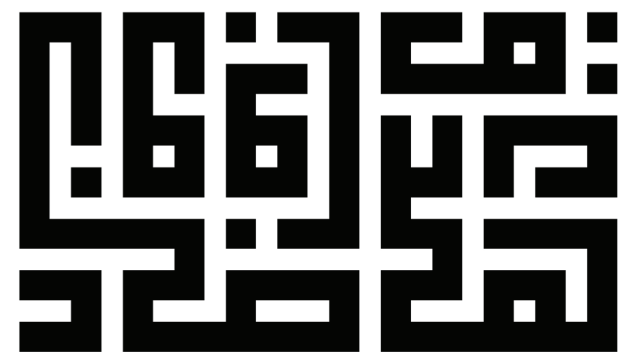
"Hayden"

"Hayden & Sabaoot"
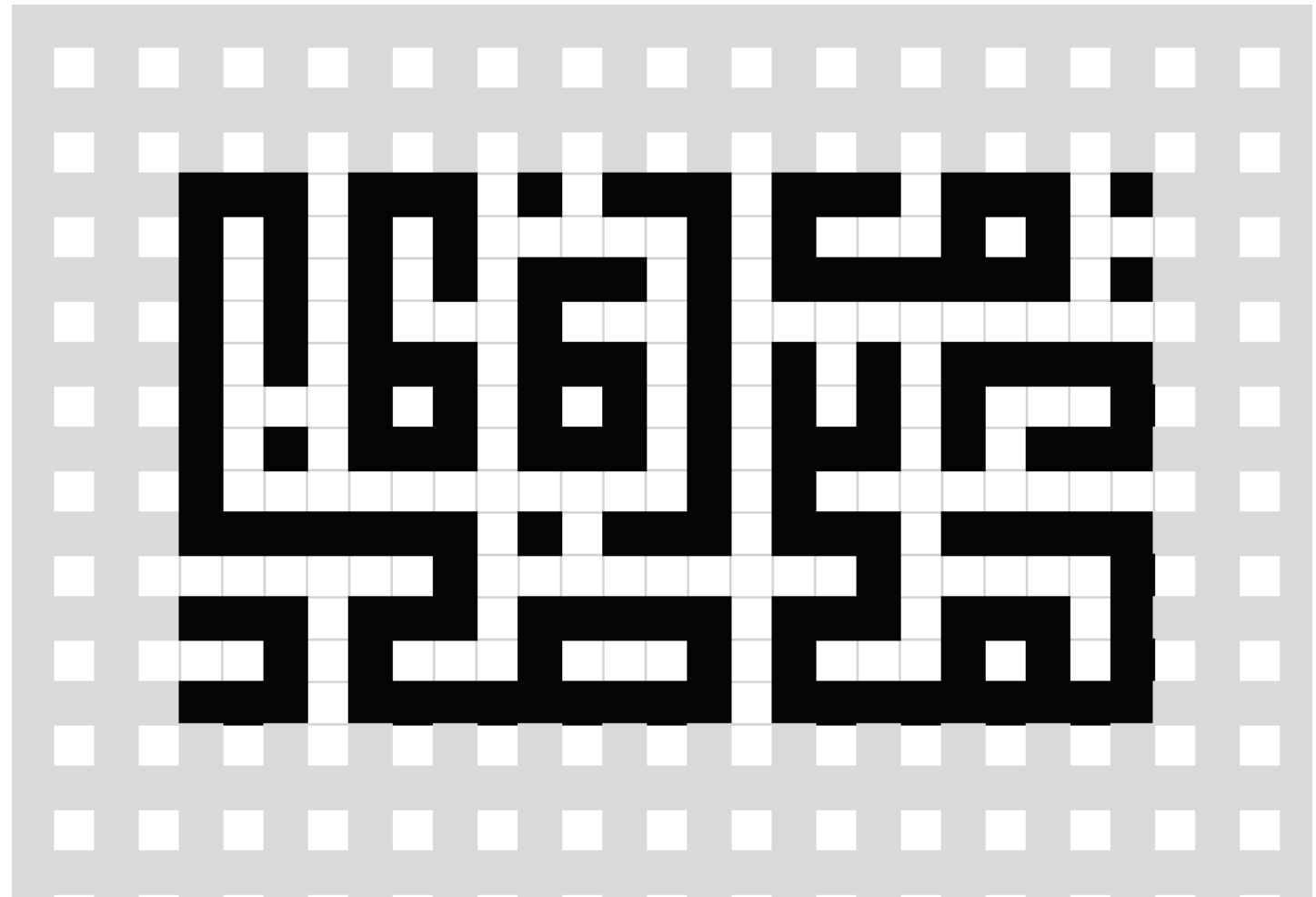
الخط الكوفي

الخط الكوفي

"Kufic Script" in Kufic alphabet

"Kufic Script" in Square Kufic

Kufic
الخط الكوفي

Kufic Calligraphy is one of the oldest Arabic calligraphy styles that was created during the 8th century, in Kufa, Iraq. Far from humanist scripts, Kufic has a strict geometric form with sharp 90 degree corners.

In recent years a new form of Kufic has immerged called square Kufic. Each word is designed into a square. Words are then stacked next-to or atop each other to form horizontal or vertical designs.

ARABIC DESIGN

The convenience of square Kufic is that it can be made to fit anywhere, and its ornamental quality makes it versatile.

While its rules are simple in nature, the sheer multitude of rules makes Kufic a complex script to master; even more so to turn into a font. Recently, designers have turned to technology to create Kufic Typography. Now, it is more of a puzzle with a satisfying end.

ARABIC DESIGN

PROCESS

Start by writing your words in Kufic style letters.
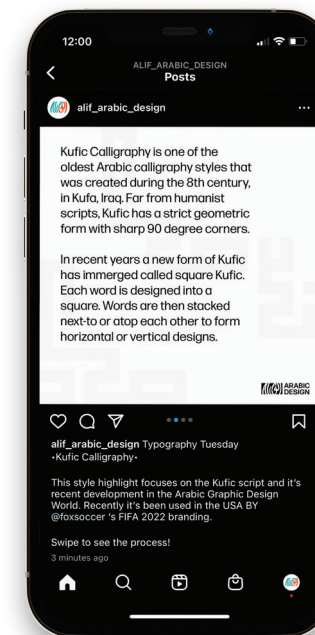
الخط الكوفي
"Kufic Script"

Manipulate each letter depending on its Kufic rules and parameters.

Move and turn letters onto themselves to create a square.
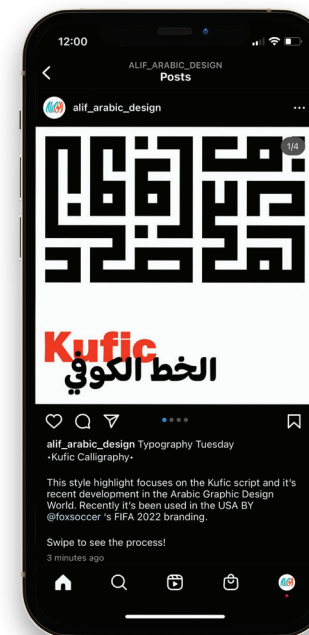
ARABIC DESIGN

See it in Context at:
@alif_arabic_design

alif_arabic_design Typography Tuesday •Kufic Calligraphy•

This style highlight focuses on the Kufic script and it's recent development in the Arabic Graphic Design World. Recently it's been used in the USA BY @foxsoccer 's FIFA 2022 branding.

Swipe to see the process!

3 minutes ago

Ligature Brochure

▪Word formation, required In depth information

▪For English-speaking audience to learn the differences between stylistic and necessary ligatures.

▪ Educating the audience in the basics of Arabic writing

▪The Ligature Brochure had three objectives:
1. Give a full understanding of Ligatures
2. Explain basics of Arabic writing
3. To engage reader in tactile and engaging way

الكبيرة برتلة في

set | set set | set

word | word | word

0	*Isolated*	Letter standing alone
1	*Initial*	Letter at begin ing of a set
2	*Medial*	Letter between 2 letters*
3	*Final*	Letter at end of a set

Medial Form has to have a letter in Initial or Medial form come before it, and
it has to be followed by a letter in Final or Medial form.

The Arabic Alphabet
Linguistic Ligatures

3	2	1	0
ا			ا
ب	ب	ب	ب
ت	ت	ت	ت
ث	ث	ث	ث
ج	ج	ج	ج
ح	ح	ح	ح
خ	خ	خ	خ
د			د
ذ			ذ
ر			ر
ز			ز
س	س	س	س
ش	ش	ش	ش
ص	ص	ص	ص
ض	ض	ض	ض

3	2	1	0
ط	ط	ط	ط
ظ	ظ	ظ	ظ
ع	ع	ع	ع
غ	غ	غ	غ
ف	ف	ف	ف
ق	ق	ق	ق
ك	ك	ك	ك
ل	ل	ل	ل
م	م	م	م
ن	ن	ن	ن
ه	ه	ه	ه
ة			ة
و			و
ي	ي	ي	ي
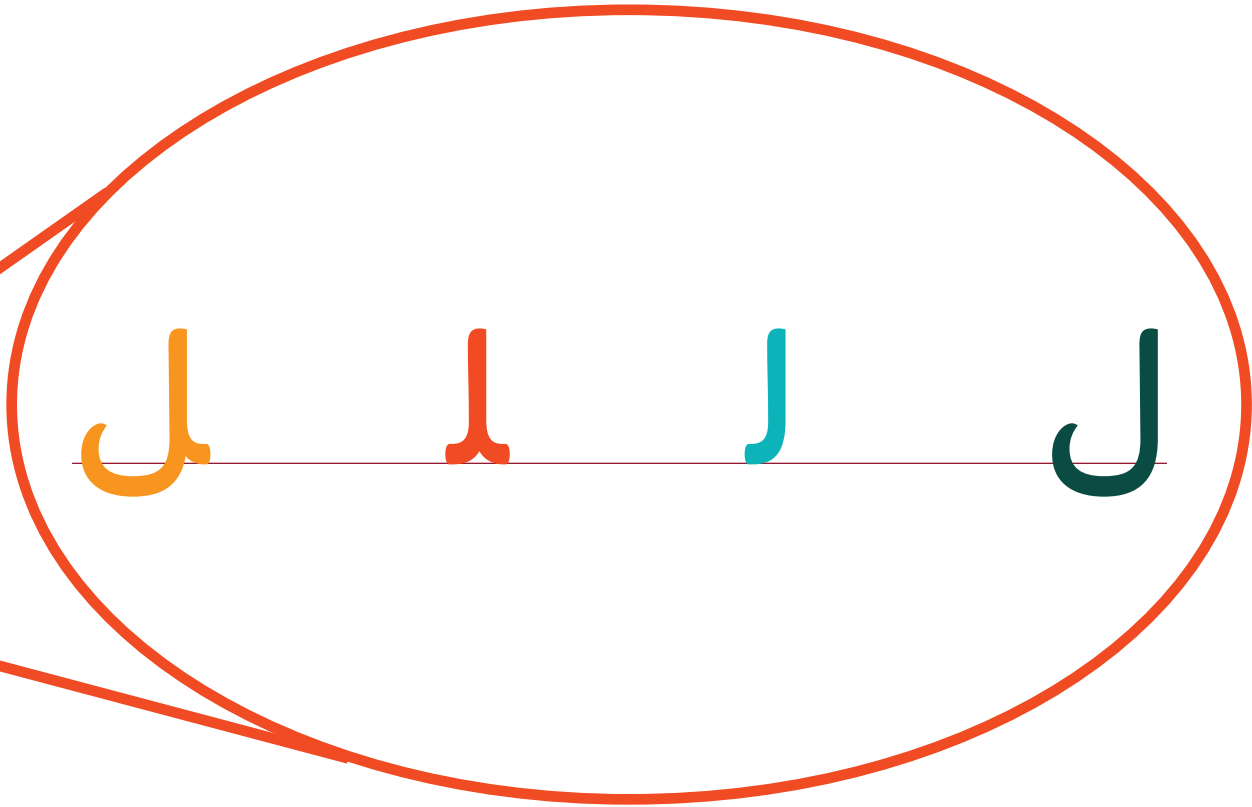
ل ل ل ل

Front	Back	Front	Back

لمحة

Glimpse

لمحة

يمين

Right [hand]

يمين

لم

Did not

لم

لكي

So as to

لكي

Arabic *Ligatures*

Ligatures are letters combined to form a single letter set. In English, they are used stylistically; however, in Arabic, there are necessary ligatures (Linguistic Ligatures) and stylistic ones (Combined Forms).

"E" *ligature* "F"

في
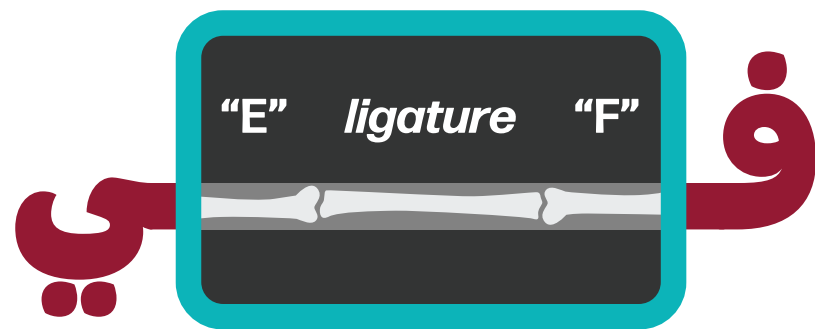
Linguistic ligature

To learn more Arabic stylistic ligatures, check out these flashcards

تَركِيب
الحروف
العربية

Arabic Ligatures

An exploration of the connections between Arabic letters in writing

The Arabic Alphabet
Linguistic Ligatures

Linguistic
Ligatures

These are the traditional ligatures that connect letters into sets and those sets make up words. Each letter can have four forms, but some only have two. What form the letter appears in depends on where it falls within a set.

في برتلة الكبيرة

في | برتلة | الكبيرة
set | set set | set

word | word | word
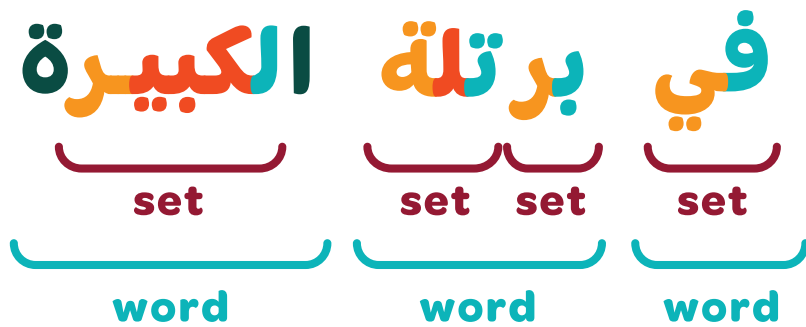
0 **Isolated**   Letter standing alone
1 **Initial**   Letter at beginning of a set
2 **Medial**   Letter between 2 letters*
3 **Final**   Letter at end of a set

*Medial Form has to have a letter in Initial or Medial form come before it, and it has to be followed by a letter in Final or Medial form.

3	2	1	0
ا	ا	ا	ا
ب	ب	ب	ب
ت	ت	ت	ت
ث	ث	ث	ث
ج	ج	ج	ج
ح	ح	ح	ح
خ	خ	خ	خ
د			د
ذ			ذ
ر			ر
ز			ز
س	س	س	س
ش	ش	ش	ش
ص	ص	ص	ص
ض	ض	ض	ض

3	2	1	0
ط	ط	ط	ط
ظ	ظ	ظ	ظ
ع	ع	ع	ع
غ	غ	غ	غ
ف	ف	ف	ف
ق	ق	ق	ق
ك	ك	ك	ك
ل	ل	ل	ل
م	م	م	م
ن	ن	ن	ن
ه	ه	ه	ه
			ة
			و
ي	ي	ي	ي

Stylistic
Ligatures

Also called, combined forms, are the nontraditional ligatures. They combine letters differently than traditional ligatures, giving them a flare. They have a variety of aesthetic and practical purposes.

لمحة   مصر   ثمرة   شي   في

لمحة   محمد   ثمرة   شي   في

Save space by stacking letters

Create a better writing flow.

Impact within my goals

My goal is to raise more awareness of Arabic art and its aesthetic quality in my environment

Three ways of doing that:

1. Arabic typography   > Charecter Highlight
2. Arabic design resources   > Calligraphy Highlight
3. Arabic writing/ calligraphy   > Ligature Brouchure

Impact outside my goals

- World is becoming more and more connected

- Need for innovative ways to communicate cross culturally

- You can learn a lot about a culture by looking at their art and design
  1. Reach a people group
  2. Widens perspective

- Educational Nature

Thank you

شكراً

Overview

1. Character Highlight

> Builds a bridge between Arabic and English speakers

2. Calligraphy Highlight

> Build a bridge between Arabic Typography and calligraphy
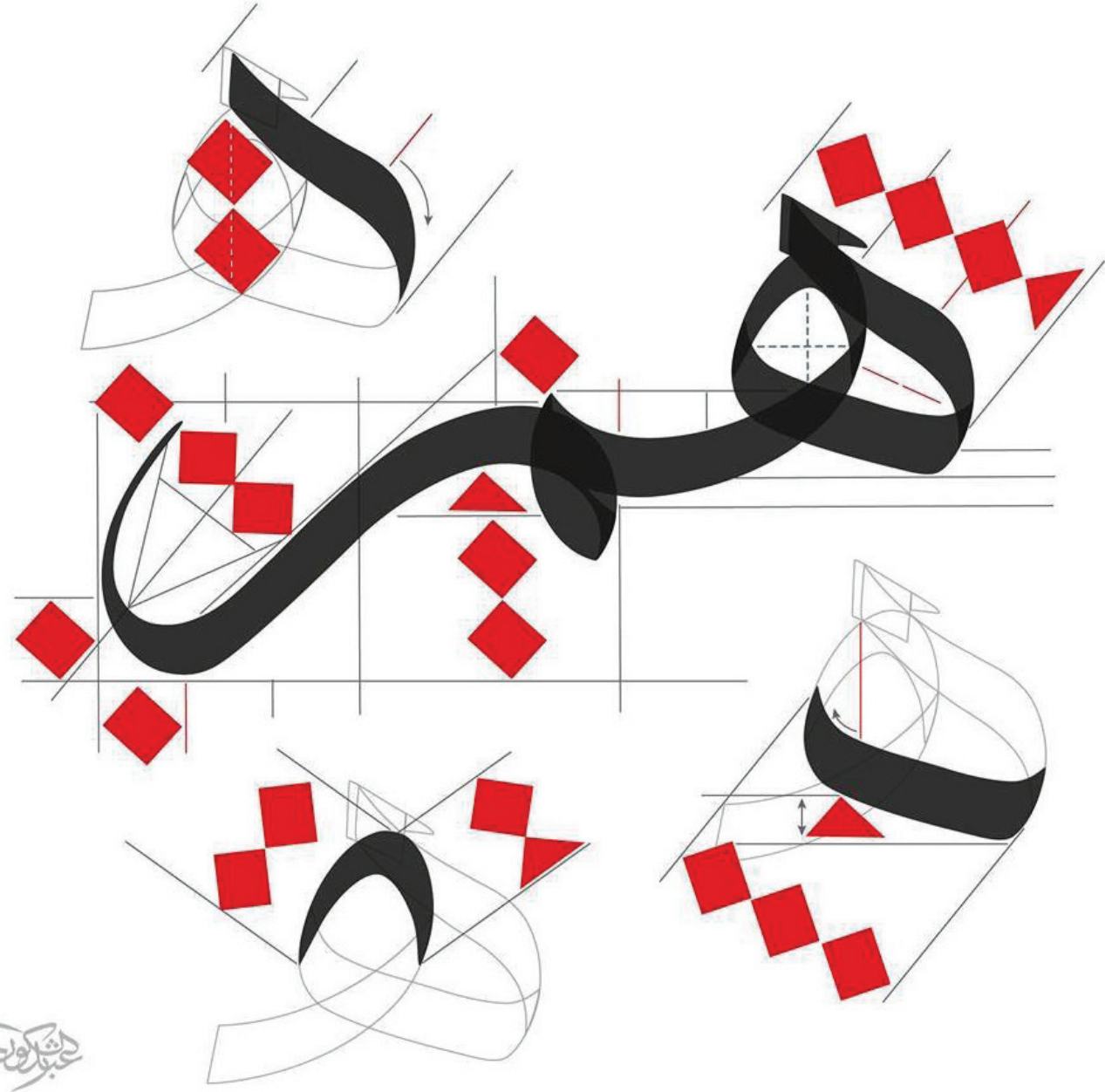> Builds a bridge between Arabic speaking designers

3. Ligature Brochure

> Builds a bridge between Arabic and English speakers
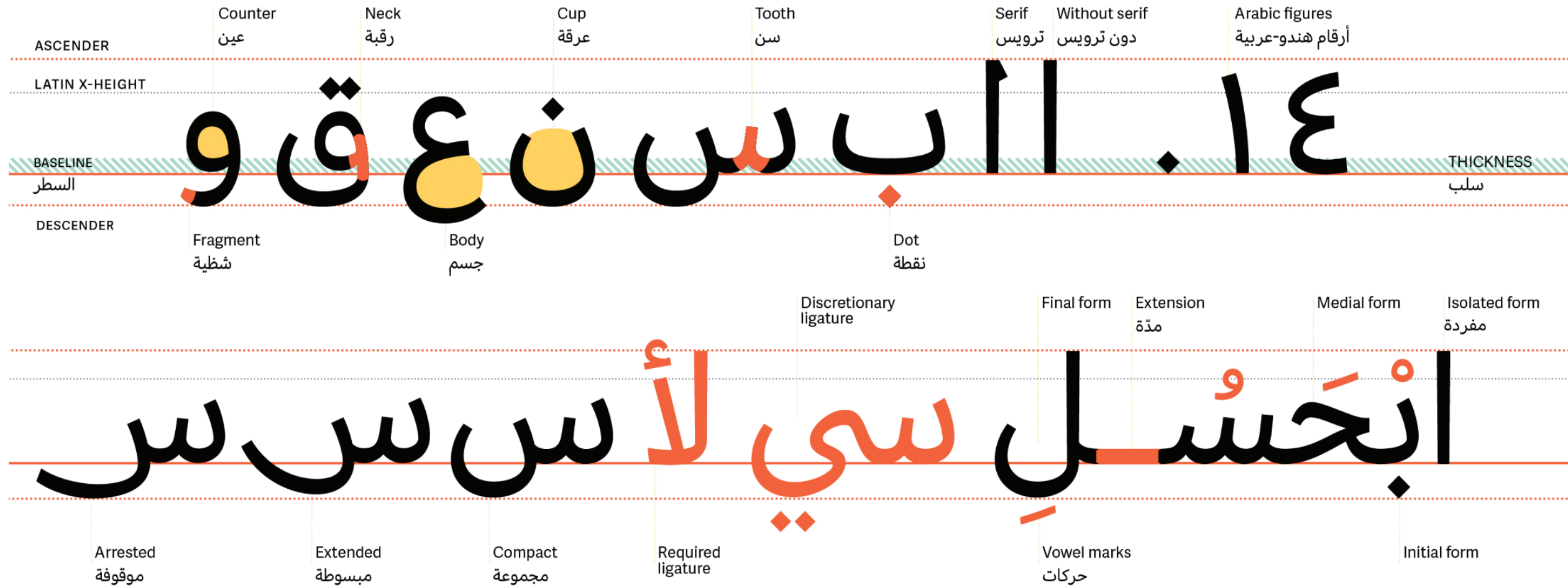
Research

- Reasrch done on both Arabic calligraphy and typography

- Arabic Calligrapghy
    - 1- Islam
    - 2- Prestigious Tradition
    - 3- Rhombic Dots

- Arabic Typography
    - 1-Type Anatomy
    - 2- Fonts
    - 3- Four letter forms

Arabic Type Anatomy by Azza Alameddine | TypeTogether

Counter
عين

Neck
رقبة

Cup
عرقة

Tooth
سن

Serif
ترويس

Without serif
دون ترويس

Arabic figures
أرقام هندو-عربية

ASCENDER

LATIN X-HEIGHT

BASELINE
السطر

THICKNESS
سلب

DESCENDER

Fragment
شظية

Body
جسم

Dot
نقطة

١٤٠.اب س ن ع ق و

Discretionary
ligature

Final form

Extension
مدّة

Medial form

Isolated form
مفردة

ابْحُشـِل سي لأ س س س س

Arrested
موقوفة

Extended
مبسوطة

Compact
مجموعة

Required
ligature

Vowel marks
حركات

Initial form

typetogether

Research

Square Kufic Script

1. Made during the 8th century in Kufa, Iraq.

2. Kufic has many sub styles including floriated, knotted, "The new style", and square Kufic.

3. Mono-linear and are geometric characters

4. Current styles have emphasized cleaner mathematical design, popular

5. Designed into a square, words are then stacked next-to or atop each other to form horizontal or vertical rectangles.

6. Versatile, but difficult to read

7. Comes with rules

8. Technology

Square Kufi Alphabet | Instructor: Mamoun Sakkal, New Square Kufic Alphabet chart (2017)

Letter	Init	Medi	Fina	Isol	Variations	Notes
A ا						Can be extended vertically
B T Th ث ت ب						Can be extended horizontally in some final and isolated forms only
J Ḥ Kh خ ح ج						Can be extended horizontally
D Dh ذ د						Can be extended horizontally
R Z ز ر					© M. Sakkal	
S Sh ش س						Can be extended horizontally in some final and isolated forms only
Ṣ Ḍ ض ص						Can be extended horizontally
Ṭ Ẓ ظ ط						Can be extended horizontally and vertically

Process

- Stylistic ligatures

- How can I use graphics strategically.

  1. Linguistic vs. Stylistic Ligatures

  2. Word & Sentence formation

  3. Alphabet key with all four forms displayed

  4. Stylistic Ligature flashcards