

**Newark Community Art Club with Elaine Winter
Session no. 26 (Summer Term): Graffiti Tag design**



Exercise 1: Letter formation

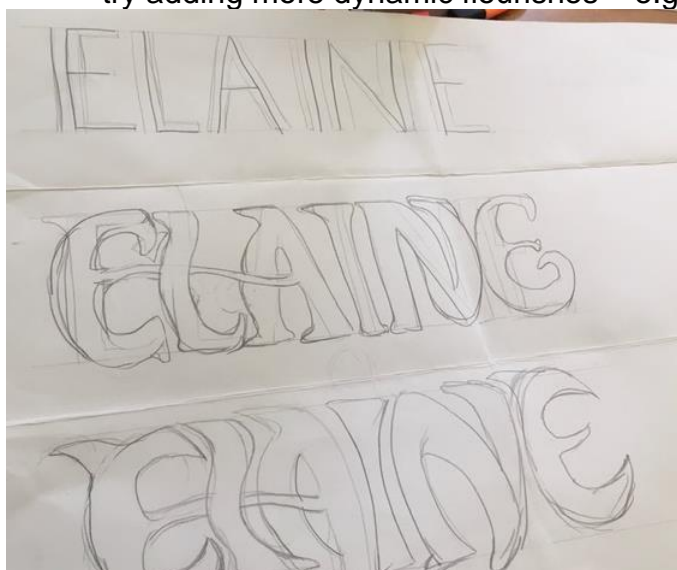
Materials – pencils, rubbers, paper

All fonts have been hand drawn before they became digitised for use in e.g. Word on computers. Draw freehand (no rulers) and you will get a dynamic bounce to your tag that will be more authentic. It is a kind of signature so it needs to say something about you. Trust your eye.

Draw faint guide-lines – parallel horizontals about 10cms apart and start making letters then thickening the letters within those lines.

Try:

- keeping verticals/slopes thick and horizontals thin
- adding serifs (projecting points at end of the strokes of the letter)
- adding curves – because the human eye likes curves – thicken up the lines of the curves
- try adding more dynamic flourishes – e.g. extending/adjusting.



Exercise 2. Combining letters

Materials – pencils, rubbers, paper

Graffiti tags work because the letters are recognisable, but also because they have unity, they work as an image in their own right because the letters are combined well in a design and that's because the graffiti artist has spent time working out how to make the letters work together and bond so that the whole word looks good. Need to pick a word – can be your name or a different 'tag'.

Using widened letters (don't worry too much about adding serifs and other flourishes at this point), set out your tag without making the pencil lines too dark. Look at the spacing, is it working? Use your rubbers and readjust.

How do we combine letters?

- try adding serifs and then popping them over so that they connect to the letter next to them – think about almost 'weaving' the letters together
- look for where the open spaces are between letters and try to use the open spaces between letters to bring the design together
- keep adding style, try experimenting.

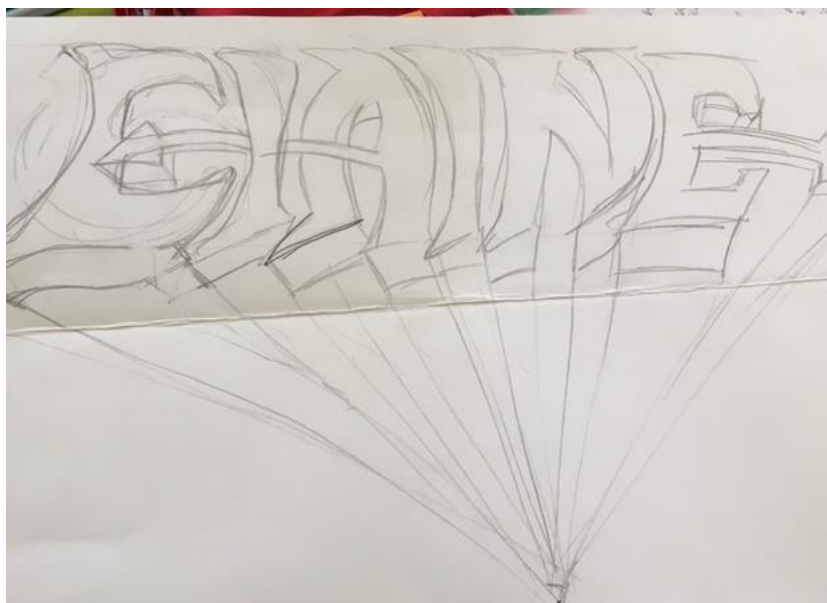
Exercise 3: Adding 3D effects

Materials – pencils, rubbers, paper

Once you have your tag spaced out well you need to think about making it stand out from the page. You need to add 3D styling to it to make it look like the letters are carved out of blocks rather than sitting flat on the paper.

A really cool effect is to use a vanishing point to add perspective.

Draw these lines faintly, some of these will be rubbed away.



Exercise: Fill

Materials – coloured pencil crayons, sharpeners, rubbers, black fine line pens, highlighter pens (if you have them), any metallic pencils/pens, white marker pens. If you have any watersoluble pencils that would be great too (with waterpots too).

'Fill' is the graffiti art term for adding colour but before you simply colour in think about a scheme of colours – some for blending, some for contrasting some for making the tag stand out from the page.

Some potential techniques for fill:

Fade – choose 2 colours that have some relationship on the colour spectrum e.g. pink and purple, blue and green, or two shade of a similar colour

Design fill – colour in whole letter with one colour then go over with a design e.g. arrows that follow the direction of the serifs/flourishes.

Random Fill – choose your own design

3D fill ideas - remember to think about using contrasting colours

- darkest part in the middle of the 3D fill to make it look like it is shiny
- different sizes bars in the direction of the 3D blocking
- Accentuate – define outline of just the letter itself with black or dark line (don't line the 3D)
- 'Force field' – use a pale colour to completely outline – again helps it to pop out from the page
- Highlights – think about the sun hitting your letter from one side and how that would give it highlights to pop off the page using white marker paint pens

