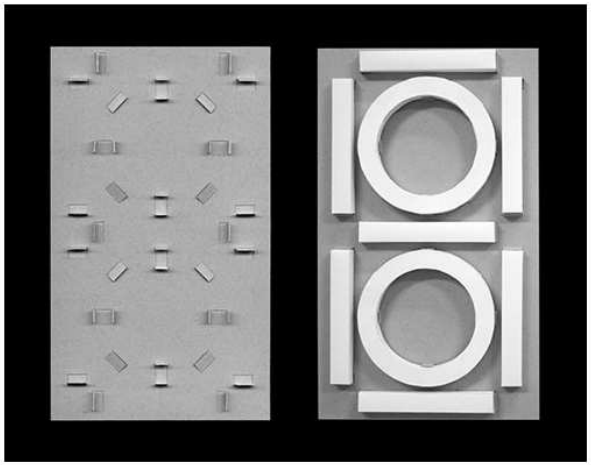
1 *Grid VI*, cardboard, paper, 2009.



The basic proposition of Unit — a highly constrained modular typeface, arranged not on the coordinates of an underlying grid, but by the dimensions of its individual modular units — has been developed and applied in a number of contexts since 2009. The first of these was a commission, from the Dutch graphic design studio Mevis and Van Deursen (M&VD), to make a typeface whose letterforms could be displayed using large, industrial tube-lights, as part of their design for the 4th International Architecture Biennial Rotterdam. [1 2] The result — used prominently in the exhibition, and on the facade of its venue, the Netherlands Architecture Institute — was composed of two units: a circle; and a line that could be placed vertically, horizontally, or diagonally. [3 4]

In 2010, a second commission from M&VD proposed to expand this principal into an extensive graphic identity, for a new art centre to be located in the iconic Canódrom building in Barcelona. [5] Four fonts were initially produced, using a hand-made drawing template to combine different scales and multiples of the circle and line modules, but the entire Canódrom project was abandoned before they could be implemented. [6 7 8 9] Versions of these early Unit fonts appeared in various exhibitions, graphic identities, and publications over the next four years, and the drawing templates that produced them took on a life of their own during this period. [10 11 12 13] One included an attachment that draws a line following the movements of the template during the construction of its letter sequences, a meta-drawing that exposes the improvised performance behind these apparently rational forms. [14 15 16 17 18]

In 2014, a third commission from M&VD provided the opportunity to fully elaborate these experiments, as a central element of their new graphic identity for the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago.[1] An extensive scheme of fonts, now named MCA U, was drawn, organised by the basic number of units in their construction. [19] The scheme starts with the 2U font, whose curves are crudely described with two perpendicular lines. A single linear unit is added to each successive style, ultimately arriving at the 10U font, whose modules are connected to form a perfect circle. [20] Nine styles were prepared for the introduction of the graphic identity in 2015, and a further three were added in 2017.

[1]https://mcachicago.org

1 László Moholy-Nagy. Above: *Light Prop for an Electric Stage* (Light-Space Modulator), 1922 – 1930, replica 1970, Collection Van Abbemuseum (source link). Below: film stills from *Ein Lichtspiel: schwarz-weiss-grau* (A Lightplay: Black, White, Gray), 1930 (source link).





The typeface that would become Mona was commissioned by the design studio Our Polite Society (NL/SE) in 2011, as part of a graphic identity for the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation.[1] Four designs were produced, each loosely based on the work of a Bauhaus figure.[2] Mona takes its circuitous inspiration from the Hungarian artist László Moholy-Nagy.

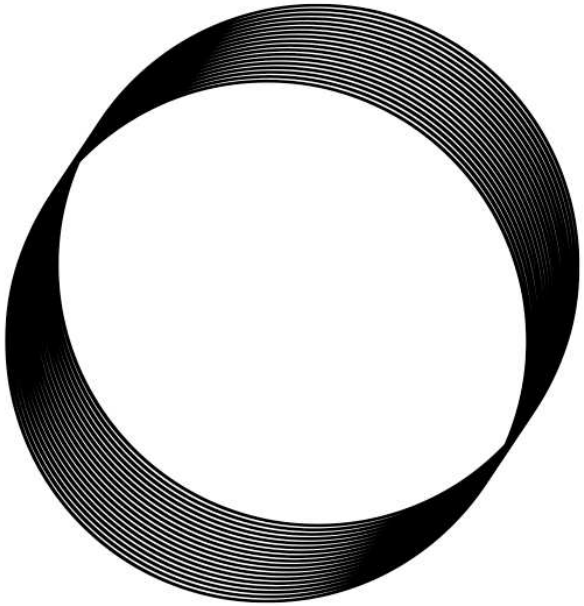
The process began with a series of small collages referencing Moholy-Nagy's 1926 film *A Light Play: Black-White-Gray*, which features a curious device of his making: the Light-Space Modulator. [1 2] Forms were drawn, scanned, printed onto transparent film, cut up, mounted into 35mm slide cases, and projected onto Polaroid paper to make prints with a rough, textural quality. [3 4] Taking constellations of abstract forms generated by this photographic experimentation, some first glyphs were drawn, imposed onto a dotted mesh derived from the visual effect of dust specks illuminated by Moholy-Nagy's device. [5 6] Iterative work followed, and a provisional version of the typeface, finally without its supporting mesh, was completed in 2012. [7 8]

Work on Mona resumed in 2013. The mesh was reinstated as the base for a primitive typewriter, or *Ghost(s) Writer*, constructed in painted wood and plastic. [9] Existing as both sculptural object and drawing machine, the Ghost(s) Writer was used to generate new line-drawn glyphs, whose overlapping forms follow a modular logic. Each point in the mesh is the centre of a potential rotational movement. [10]

In 2020 this machine was revisited, updated, and used to complete the full set of Mona's glyphs in two styles: with and without the visible mesh. [11 12]

[1]Dess family (Josa, Breu, Mona and Pauk).
[2]Josef Albers, Marcel Breuer, László Moholy-Nagy and Paul Klee.

1 Tracing the letter ‘O’ of Marq Std.



The Marq typeface was originally drawn in 2007, intended to appear on the covers of a series of 12" records released by the label En/Of (DE), but ultimately never used for that purpose.

Its forms derive from experiments with the marker pen, whose thick, angular, strokes are often used to write track names, by hand, on duplicated CDs and ‘white label’ vinyls. When a marker’s ink supply is almost exhausted, its heavy line splits into skeletal paths, all locked into the same parallel motion. [1] Marq renders this fleeting effect in precise, digital perpetuity.

Marq is available in two styles: the original; and a later variation in which the spaces between the paths are filled, creating an anachronistic reanimation of the typeface Century Gothic, on whose simple geometry the original Marq’s glyphs are based. [2]

1 Lÿno family. From top to bottom (uppercase and lowercase): Walt, Jean, Stan and Ulys.



Lÿno[1] is a family of four genetically edited children, sharing a common weight of line, conceived and designed with Radim Peško between 2009 and 2012. The names of the individual fonts were not premeditated, but chosen to reflect and relate the characters of the four siblings: Stan (after Stanley Kubrick), Ulys (after *Ulysses 31*, a French-Japanese cartoon), Walt (after Walt Disney), and Jean (after Jean Arp). Walt and Jean were primarily drawn by Nawrot; Stan and Ulys by Peško. [1]

Drawings for Walt began with the intention of mixing two contradictory typographic genealogies, represented by the existing faces Waltograph,[2] derived from the Walt Disney Company logo; and Futura, the canonical early twentieth-century geometrical sans-serif. [2] The mixture takes the flowing, hand-lettered upper- and lower-case strokes of Waltograph and re-routes them through the rationalised vectors of Futura. [3 4]

Mixture is also the impulse that produced Jean, although its genetics are far more elementary. Maintaining the basic alphabet's vertical and horizontal strokes (in reference to Wim Crouwel's over-rationalised New Alphabet),[3] Jean transforms its curves and diagonals into unruly blobs with no concern for any conventional economy of line. [5] These forms are the outcome of a labour-intensive process, alternating between cardboard collage and digital manipulation. [6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13]

[1]Between 2009 and 2012 Lÿno was named Lÿon.
[2]https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waltograph
[3]https://www.moma.org/collection/works/139322

List of exhibitions related to Lÿno
Latent Stare, Casco – Office for Art, Design and Theory, Utrecht, NL, July 8 – September 30, 2012.
Life a User's Manual, Culture Station Seoul 284, Seoul, KR, September 14 – November 4, 2012. [14 15]
Neue Schriften. New Typefaces, Gutenberg Museum, Mainz, DE, June 7 – October 27, 2013.
All Possible Futures, SOMArts, San Francisco, US, January 14 – February 13, 2014.
Viral, Le Signe – Centre national du graphisme, Chaumont, FR, May 27 – November 21, 2021.