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In this essay I am going to be researching three words including **calligraphy**, **personal** and **emotion**. Firstly, I will be researching the word 'calligraphy,' the history of it, the importance of it and how it is still used in modern design. Secondly, I will be researching the word 'personal,' the importance of a personal touch in design for consumers. Lastly, I will be researching the word 'Emotion,' the importance of the use of emotion in design for consumers. I will also be researching three examples of design that highlights and demonstrate the themes I will talk about in this essay.

These include Seb Lester's work with calligraphy, Mathilda Lundin's work with personalised wedding stationary design, and the Walt Disney logo and it's ability to evoke emotion many years on.

Calligraphy - meaning decorative handwriting or handwritten lettering [Oxford Dictionary].

The art of calligraphy is the craft of hand-drawn lettering which originated from the Islam religion and was adopted by Muslim spiritual leaders as a way to 'promote and

propagate the word of God' [Emoha], (2022). Calligraphy has always been seen as an elite skill and those who possessed it were seen as elite members of society [Emoha], (2022) due to the patience and prowess it demands.

Although Calligraphy has become increasingly unpopular over the years due to the rise in digital design, recently it has made a resurgence in modern form as digital tools [SINOART], (2023) due to its ability to stand out against a world dominated by harsh corporate designs and offer a glimpse of human touch. It allows designers to create custom, unique designs for companies in various applications from print to digital media. It also allows designers to add a personal touch to their work which creates a stronger connection between companies and their customers as it appears more welcoming [SINOART], (2023). It plays an important part in creating designs that want to create a sense of authenticity. The most common use of calligraphy in modern graphic design is wedding invitations [Emoha], (2022). It is also often seen today on flyers, chalkboards, packaging, brochures, bags, etc. It is a popular choice for design for a special occasion due to the warm, elegant, style that it adds to design for print for black-tie/formal functions [Emoha], (2022). Calligraphy is the perfect way to add a deeply personal touch to any design (Burns, 2022), this is due to the sense of exclusivity and individuality that hand-lettering conveys as each brush stroke subconsciously tells a unique story to the viewer, giving an insight into an individual person or a company as a whole. Hand-lettering is increasingly popular when it comes to formal design for personal use such as lettering and event announcements [SINOART], (2023), as many prefer the elegant and human touch that it adds to designs for special occasions that are important to those who are extending an invitation to their family and friends for an intimate event. Often Calligraphy is used sparsely as using too much of it on a sign, packaging or invitation may be hard to read and often too expensive (Lacia, 2024). That is why many

choose to use it exclusively for titling or main pieces of text in a way that is called 'spot calligraphy' (Lacia, 2024). However, the small touch of calligraphy that is used makes a major difference to the overall sense of the design. It introduces individuality, comfort and enhances visual appeal. It can show customers that a company is welcoming, kind, and down to earth before even stepping foot in the door or viewing any products. Due to the intricate flowing nature of calligraphy, it can evoke feelings of nostalgia, refinement, sophistication, and a sense of calm. Adler Paper (2023) Describes Calligraphy as a revealer of one's emotions perspectives and thoughts. It captures a viewer's attention and can be viewed as a visual poetry that creates a memorable experience for a consumer. There are a range of high-profile companies that have made a notable impact who use calligraphy in their logos. One example of this is 'Coca-Cola,' which has become widely recognised for its curved, flowing letterforms. Another highly recognisable example is the 'Walt Disney' logo. The 'Walt Disney' logo is recognised by children and adults all over the world for its whimsical calligraphic lettering that perfectly captures the magic and imaginative nature that the company is all about. Other examples include the 'Chanel' logo and the "I Love New York" Logo. All these examples highlight the power that calligraphy holds to create an impact and highly recognisable unique designs for companies that make them distinctive amongst the rest.

Seb Lester is an example of a popular Graphic designer who prominently uses calligraphy in his work to this day. He was originally a trained graphic designer from London and is now "one of the world's highest-profile calligraphers" [Seblester.com] (2007-2024). He has designed for major companies including NASA, Apple, H&M, Nike and more. [Seblester.com] (2007-2024). The organisation 'Skillshare' [Skillshare.com] says, "The art of Calligraphy has found a new life in the digital era – and with Seb Lester leading the charge it's never been more popular."



Fig 1: '*I'm The Man*' (for Nike by Seb Lester, 2010)

Personal - meaning belonging to or affecting a particular person rather than anyone else [Oxford Dictionary].

When someone commissions a design, they expect it to feel personal to them and their vision. Whether it is a logo or packaging for a brand, or personalised invitations/event stationary, the customer/client will expect a certain level of themselves and their personality/emotions to shine through in the design. This gives a unique and memorable first impression to any customer/recipient. The organisation Forty Two [42], (2021), says that a personal touch is important in design as clients want someone who is empathetic to their needs and can understand them as it builds trust between the designer and client which is important for a successful design process. They also talk about how collaboration is an essential part of design and the use of

human touch and the capability of listening and understanding is not the same as simply taking instruction and designing through computer software. Another major positive to allowing a human touch through your work is the passion that it will allow to go into it [42], (2021). Without passion design projects can fall flat as there is no personality shining through the work which is a key part of successful design that stands out to the viewer. According to Nick Tyldsley (2014) it is important that we embrace our personalities which make us different into our work as 'people buy from people' and it can add a significant value to the service we are offering. He suggests that the use of unique photographs, 'names to faces' and personality can greatly impact one's success in providing a good service as customers like to see the real person behind the service that they are receiving. Rob White (White, 2019), from the organisation Complete, believes that the use of personalisation in your packaging greatly impacts the success of a business, from the unwrapping process to handwritten notes. He says that adding these personal touches can build customer loyalty. This is due to the fact that it can give customers the impression that the company has put a lot of thought, time, and effort into the service they are providing, which is important to possible customers.

Mathilda Lundin is a Wedding invitation designer who's worked with brands such as Cartier, Estée Lauder, The Diana Award, Paperchase and Tate Britain. She utilises calligraphy in her work to create personalised wedding stationery uniquely tailored to each unique couples wants, needs and personality. She is a perfect example of someone who uses a personal touch in her work to emotionally connect with her customers and deliver them an elegant, bespoke, customised experience that they can share with their loved ones on their special day.



Fig 2: Wedding stationery (by Mathilda Lundin)

“I set up my own calligraphy studio, combining my design expertise with that charming character of calligraphy and lettering crafted by hand. From the first calligraphy stroke to the soft drips of gold wax getting pressed into a beautiful seal design, each part of my design process celebrates craftsmanship and quality.”
(Lundin)

The use of calligraphy in her work gives her products an exclusive, individualized touch for her customers most important, intimate life events. When it comes to designs for such a special occasion like a wedding, many people look for a designer who can create something to their exact vision that perfectly demonstrates the

couple's personalities and theme. Because of this, ordering something premade isn't an option as it won't be truly personal to the couple. This is a perfect example of the importance of personal human touch in design. This also links to my research in calligraphy as it plays a big part in this specific example, and the use of hand-lettering pulls everything together with another layer of uniqueness and care.

Emotion - meaning a strong feeling deriving from one's circumstances, mood, or relationships with others [Oxford Dictionary].

Emotion is something we all feel and the key thing that drives our decisions day to day. When it comes to consumer design for a personal event emotion is of the utmost importance as the consumer likes to feel that they had a hand in the design of their product and wants the recipients of said product, like a wedding invitation, to convey the elegance, love, and warmth that the event will hold. Even when a designer is not providing a personalised experience it is still important to take emotions into account when designing a company brand. Emotions influence our choices everyday so when a consumer feels emotionally attached to a company it can lead them to be more connected to and trusting of it (Eccleston, 2023). This makes the initial design of a company incredibly important as it is the first impression that a possible customer will see. According to the Interaction Design Foundation [IDF], these emotional connections can also make users more forgiving of minor mistakes that a company might make. A person is more likely to trust a warm and welcoming company over a more corporate, professional looking one when it comes to companies that provide a personal service like baked goods, invitations, place

cards or even hand-made clothing. This is because it gives the customer a sense of closeness and care from the company as opposed to the feelings one might get when interacting with a cold/corporate feeling company that does not make them feel that their thoughts and opinions are being heard or taken seriously. Toast Design Services [TDS] says that over 70% of purchases are influenced by emotion.

“Emotion plays a pivotal role in the success and impact of design, steering user perceptions, interactions, and decisions. Understanding this facet unveils a world of opportunities to craft compelling narratives and creations that resonate deeply with the audiences we are trying to reach.” (TDS).

Donald Norman (Norman, 2004) says that our emotions highly influence our spending decisions. For example, more attractive products are more likely to be bought even if the performance of the product is not better. Farah Ahmed (Ahmed, 2023) says that this extends to logo designs as the emotions that a logo evokes will influence customers to trust a company. They state that different colours evoke different emotions. Red: Excitement, energy, and passion. Blue: Trust, security, and reliability. Yellow: Happiness, warmth, and creativity. Green: Prosperity, hope, and nature. Pink: Femininity, friendship, and youthfulness. White: Purity, elegance, and modernity. Black: Power, balance, and authority. Purple: Luxury, royalty, and celebration. Understanding the emotions that colours can evoke could give a designer a keen perspective when creating a successful logo design.



Fig 3: *Walt Disney Logo* (1985)

An example of a memorable logo design that evokes strong emotion is the 'Walt Disney' logo. This logo is famously recognised worldwide and makes many remember nostalgic childhood memories. Graphic Springs [GS], (2023) describes the logo as something that transports us back to a 'world of enchantment and wonder'. This is prominently because many have grown up watching Disney movies. However, the design process of the logo may have had a hand in the reason it feels so magical to look at. The calligraphic style of the text feels inviting and more personal than a regular typographic font. This links back to my previous research into the effect calligraphy and personal touch has on a design [GS], (2023). The original text in the logo was inspired by Walt Disney himself's unique signature [GS], (2023). This detail brings life to the logo as it allows Disney himself to shine through in his branding and add a glimpse of human touch. This adds a layer of whimsy and craftsmanship to the logo which is felt through the design.

Based on my research on the keyword's **calligraphy**, **personal** and **emotion**. It has become clear to me that both emotion and personal touch are incredibly important in

design and based on my research I believe that calligraphy in graphic design could convey both of those things and amplify the effectiveness of a company's branding. This has led me to generate questions such as, how can calligraphy be effectively used to drive emotion in design, and how could it effectively amplify feelings of personal touch in design for print or special occasions?

I have decided that my final question will be: **How can calligraphy be effectively utilised in modern design to drive emotion in customers?**

My possible idea for next year's project could be testing the use of calligraphy in modern design and creating my own wedding stationary utilising my research on calligraphy and the importance of personal packaging/branding.

An idea for my area of study next year is to look deeper into how emotion drives people's decisions when choosing and trusting a company to work with/purchase a product from, and what design techniques are most effective in doing so.

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