CONTENTS

Introduction	**05**
Circus Alphabet	**07**
Drawing Challenge	**23**
Thank You Patrons	**29**

CIRCUS

30 LETTERS WITH STEP BY STEP ILLUSTRATIONS

Circus lettering is big, bold, and has the perfect look to get your work noticed. This playful vintage style can look a bit complicated to a novice letterer, but with the right grid and steps, any artist can get the hang of it in no time.

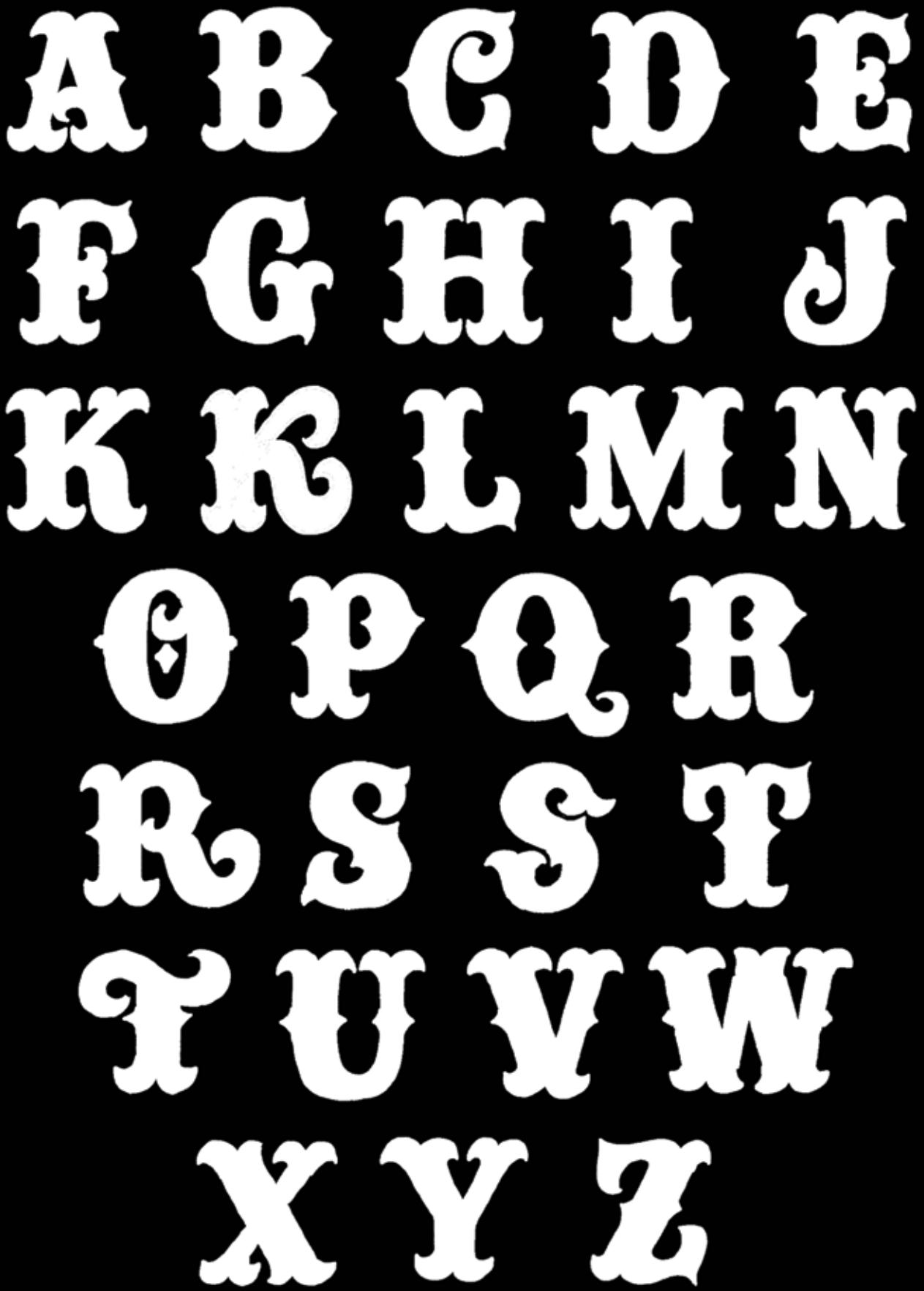
In the next few pages, you'll learn how to draw uppercase Circus letters so you can add a layer of drama to any phrase. Similar to other styles, you'll be creating each character layer by layer starting with a skeleton and then adding weight, and finally serifs. These steps will help your letters look consistent and smooth, just like how the professionals do it.

STYLE FEATURES

- ☑ SUBTLE WEIGHT CONTRAST
- ☑ SPILT SERIFS ON THE ENDS
- ☑ SPURS ALONG THE MIDDLE
- ☑ TALLER THAN IT IS WIDE

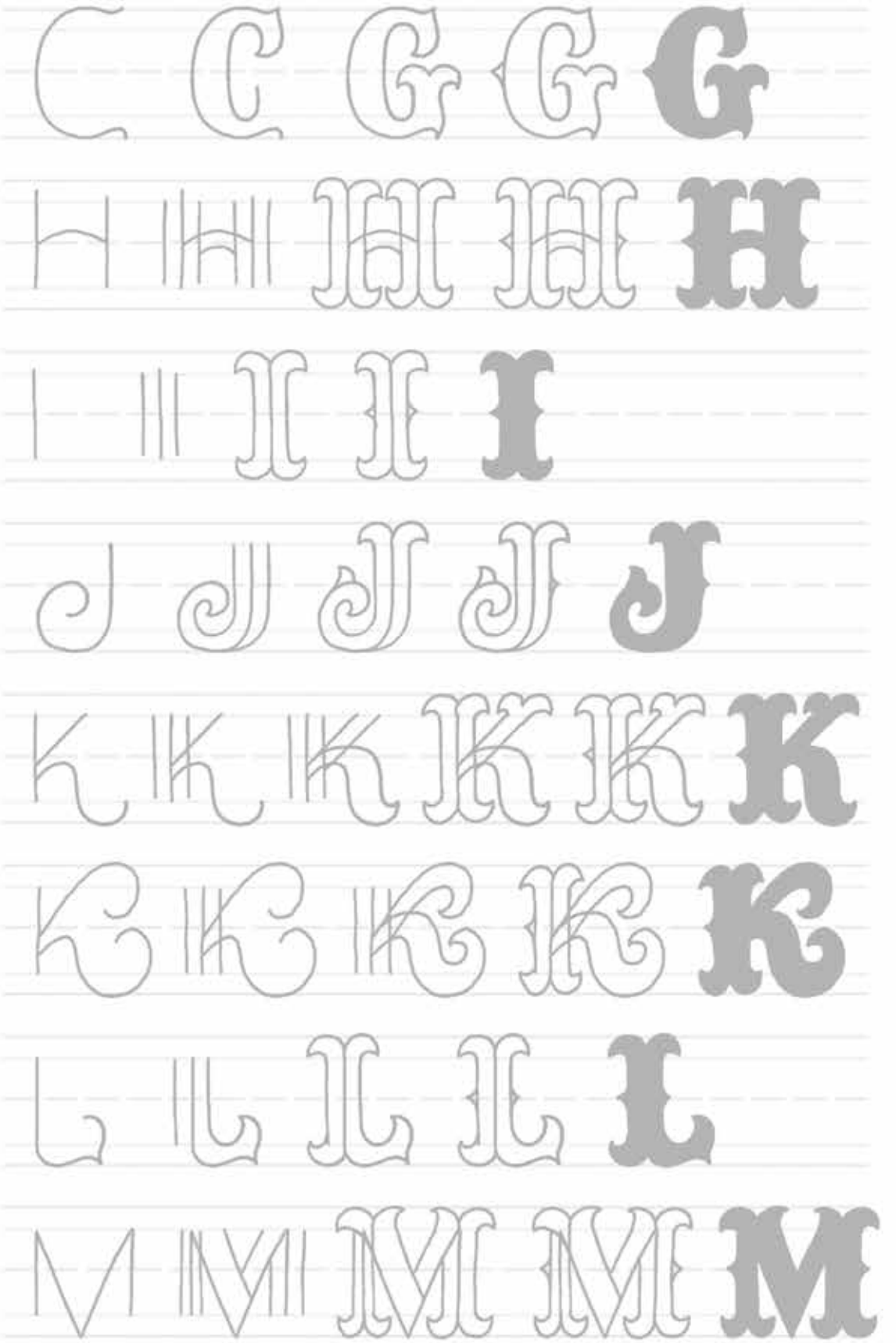
DRAWING GUIDES

In addition to your cap height, x-height, and baseline, it might help if you add additional guides to help keep your spilt serifs aligned.


A B C D E
F G H I J
K K L M N
O P Q R
R S S T
T U V W
X Y Z

1. TRACE EACH STEP

Learn how this type style is built by tracing over each letter step by step in ink.



2. COPY EACH LETTER

Using reference, redraw each letter using the steps you just learned on the previous pages.

REFERENCE REDRAW

A B

C D

F E

G H

I J

K K

L M

N O
P Q
R R
S S
T T
U V
W X
Y Z

3. DRAW EACH LETTER

Finally, redraw each letter from memory without looking at any reference. Try not to peek at the previous pages. If you spent the time to follow steps 1 and 2, then you're golden. Once you're done, go back and check your work.

LET'S GET
WEIRD
TOGETHER

Drawing Challenge

CREATE YOUR OWN CIRCUS SHIRT DESIGN

Select a fun quote to turn into a hand lettered shirt. Follow each step provided, and use my process as inspiration to create your very own piece. Once completed, you can upload your project to *patreon.com/lettershoppe/community* for a free critique.

PROJECT GUIDELINES

Try to include all of the followings details into your piece.

- ☑ **USE 4+ WORDS OR MORE.**
- ☑ **ADD 2+ INLINE GRAPHICS.**
- ☑ **INCLUDE ACCENTS.**
- ☑ **INCLUDE 2 TYPE STYLES.**
- ☑ **USE 1 OUTLINE GRAPHIC.**
- ☑ **USE JUST BLACK & WHITE**
- ☑ **ADD 1 ORIGINAL ILLUSTRATION.**
- ☑ **USE DIFFERENT STROKE WEIGHTS.**
- ☑ **USE 2+ LETTER VARIATIONS.**

Let's be weird together
3
1
2
LETS BE WEIRD TOGETHER
LETS BE WEIRD TOGETHER
LETS BE WEIRD TOGETHER

Before including any illustrations, figure out the layout of your lettering. Then, once you select a composition, create a illustration in the negative spaces left over.

HIERARCHY & THUMBNAILS

Select which words you want to highlight in your phrase to make bigger and bolder than the rest. Then draw out 3-5 small, rough thumbnails of some ideas on how to best highlight those keywords. Play with different containers for your words to go inside of to help you visualize more interesting layouts.

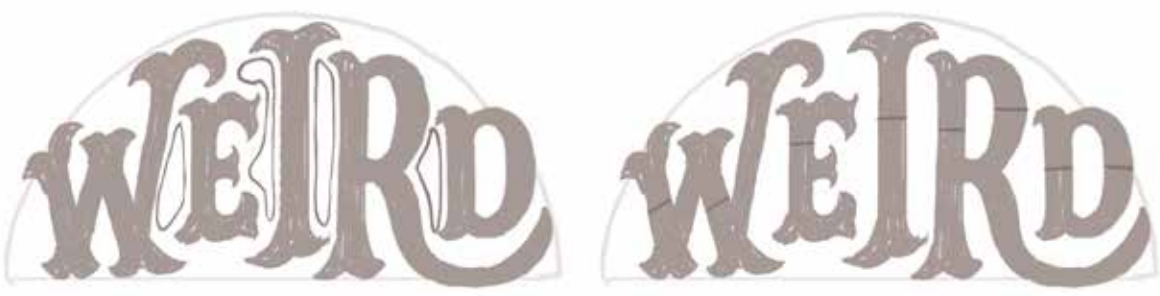
DATE: _____

For easier word placement, count the letters in your word to find which letter goes in the center of your piece. Then draw your word from the center, making your way out.

SKELETON ROUGH DRAFT

Select your best thumbnail to create your first rough draft. Start by drawing the main shapes of your composition. Then draw a margin and containers for your lettering to go inside of. For your first skeleton, lightly write out the phrase in all capital letters, in pencil, for placement. Lastly, draw over your skeleton to find interesting ways to customize your letters with swashes and ligatures.

DATE: _____



Add weight to your skeleton by drawing the thickest parts first. When your letters are looking consistent add spilt serifs to help fill the negative space.

WEIGHT AND PROOFING

Once your skeleton is in place, add weight and serifs to your circus lettering. Then fill in your letters to make it easier to proof for kerning and weight. To help visualize your kerning, draw blobs of negative space between your letters to see if it's consistent. Then, to check your weight, draw in small dashes in the thickest parts of your letter to see if they're the same length.

DATE: _____

Use different line weights to create a sense of depth to your drawing. For example, my banner outline is much thicker than the small details inside it.

FINAL DRAFT AND INK

After your lettering is complete, you can begin to add illustrations from the inside out so you can fill the negative space around your words. Then you can begin to add accents such as line bursts, stars, and doodles to bring your piece to life. Once your rough draft is ready you can feel confident when tracing over it to do your final inking.

Congratulations

YAS! You did it! See, it wasn't too hard. Nothing a little practice can't fix. You've added this style to your tool belt of skills. I'm just so dang proud. You're seriously killing it!

THANK YOU PATRONS

Haijin Kim
Melanie Roberts
Stephanie Murphy
Annie Tasker
Neil Vilppu
Tonya Renound
Adine Close
Jaclyn Myers
Una Kravets
Rebekah Schiffer
Shannon Wilson
Zoey Rivera
Samantha Hoppes
Amber Garcia
Gus Rodriguez
Diana Perkins
Kristen Jones
Brook Gossen
Lisa Evans
Vivian Chan
Romy Llich
Julia Porter
Khanh Ho
Jonathan Jenkins
Maria Godinez
Brain Lawrence
Rafael Aceituno
Savannah Solis
Charlie St Monica
Lindsay Crenshaw
Chow LeLand
Marissa Mac
Jessica Bell
Ashley Durand
Julie Johnston
Marissa Mac
Doris Jetz
Bear Edwards
Brandon Sargent
Neenah Saucedo
Alison Baxtor
John Stefanik
Lisa La
Crystal Joyner
Meghan Paine
Hannah Franklin
Eugenia Hauss
Erika Dillon
Katja Haas
Malin Sandelius
Christina Gibson
Melissa Hamming
Christina Mellinger
Therese Patterson
Leslie Yang
Katarzyna Sobol
Kysha Plante
Jan Davidson
Pamela Howell
Brenda-Mae Teo
Emily Schramm
Kevin Michaud
Cindy Ashwal
Luisa Soto
Manar Hisbani
Star Arnold Brown
Christina Mellinger
Karla Gladstone
Marion Alfano
Angelica Rodriguez
Kelli Jenkins
Will Merchan
Kevin Michaud
Chazona Baum
Terrea Riggs
Erin O Ceallaigh
Alyssa Shimko
Tom Hazledine
Lauren Hodges
Jacqueline Keiser
Jeff Neely
Tiffany Pender
Joy Charde
Adrienne Tilley
Kara McCoil
Jeannette Castaneda
Kim Lamberth
Le Harris
Monica Chhugani
Daisy Bisley
Elizabeth Hahn
Rosemary Jones
Poiling Jau

Thank you to all the amazing supporters on Patreon for making this project possible.

Practice
MAKES
Perfect