

Wander *Looted Art*
Type

Sion Chen

Copyright © 2024 by Sion Chen

All rights reserved. Initiated as a Typography course project under the instruction of Dr. Miriam Ahmed at George Mason University Korea, Incheon, South Korea. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the author, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law. For permission requests, write to the author.

Independently published for the Wander Type Project at
www.wandertypeproject.com

Design and layout by Sion Chen

Looted Art
Wander Type

Sion Chen

C O N T E N T S

Preface	6
1 Stolen by Individuals or Unrecovered	08
2 Nazi Plunder	18
3 Colonial Looting	32
4 UnseenForms	40
About the Author	56

Dear Ms. You,

You are not just a beloved teacher, but also a cherished friend who has shown me unwavering love and support. Your guidance in art has shaped my journey, and your encouragement has given me the confidence to pursue my dreams. I am deeply grateful for your kindness and for believing in me with all your heart.

In the summer of 2024, I had the opportunity to travel through Europe and visit several museums. One of the most memorable experiences was at the British Museum, where I encountered art pieces that left a deep impression on me. These works, while beautiful and significant in their own right, held within them a complex and often painful history. For example, the Parthenon sculptures and the Elgin Marbles, which originally came from Greece, are still displayed in the British Museum despite ongoing requests for their return from their country of origin. This realization made me fully aware of the ongoing debates surrounding cultural heritage and the contentious issues of repatriation.

It was through this experience that I came to understand that the art we admire today is not simply a product of creativity; it is a symbol of identity, resilience, and often a painful reminder of historical injustices. The artworks we see in museums have traveled far from their home countries, carrying with them not just aesthetic value, but also the weight of history, politics, and culture.

Through this book, I aim to explore these “wandering” artworks and the stories they tell. Just as paintings are often displaced from their native lands, I wish to uncover the “types” of history and meaning hidden within these works.

The focus of this exploration is not just on the art itself, but also on the historical and political contexts that these artworks embody. The journey of looted art is not simply one of physical movement, but of cultural displacement and the tensions that arise from the loss of these treasures. One striking example is the Elgin Marbles, which represent not only artistic achievement but also the cultural identity and historical legacy of Greece. The fact that these pieces remain in the British Museum, despite Greece's repeated requests for their return, underscores a larger cultural and political struggle. This situation exemplifies how looted art can symbolize not just the art itself, but the unresolved conflicts between

nations and their heritage.

This book is an attempt to delve deeper into the meaning behind these wandering artworks. They are not just stolen objects; they represent the complex relationships between countries, cultures, and histories. By exploring how these works moved from their place of origin, I hope to illuminate their cultural significance and the political struggles that continue to shape their narratives. Through this journey, I believe we can come to understand the transformative role art can play in addressing historical injustices and fostering cultural reconciliation.

1
Wander Type:
Stolen by
Individuals or
Unrecovered

The Gardener

Lowercase

The terminal has a serif style, and the shoulder is more straight than curved.



Image by Wikimedia Commons

Vincent van Gogh

The Gardener, 1889

Oil on canvas, 61 × 50 cm, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Rome

The Church at Nuenen with Churchgoers



Image by Mefusbren69, from Wikimedia Commons

Vincent van Gogh

The Church at Nuenen with Churchgoers, 1884

oil on canvas, 41,5 x 32 cm

Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam

Uppercase

It is San Serif, the crossbar is longer than usual, and while the ascender is not slanted, it has a pointed end, and the stroke shape is unique, with a bend in the middle.



Le Pigeon aux Petits Pois



Image by Coldcreation, from Wikimedia Commons

Pablo Picasso

Le Pigeon aux Petits Pois, 1911

oil on canvas, 65 cm × 54 cm Location Unknown



(rieul):

This letter also has a geometric appearance, but the bottom stroke is shorter compared to the top. The vertical stem is long, and the lower half of the stem is shorter.



Uppercase

The vertical stem is complemented by two diagonal arms, creating a dynamic, angled shape. The stem is thicker than the diagonal arms, and the lower diagonal arm doesn't start from the stem but supports the upper diagonal arm.



(kieuk):

The vertical stem is long and sharp, with the top and middle lines running parallel, passing through the vertical stem, giving it a geometric feel.

Landscape with Cottages



Image by Horst Gerson, from Wikimedia Commons

Rembrandt van Rijn

Landscape with Cottages, 1641

oil on panel, 25.4 x 39.4 cm, Location Unknown.

Uppercase



The two weak stems are connected by a straight crossbar, and the stem is slightly curved from right to left, giving it a balanced form.

Man with Pipe



Image by Coldcreation, from Wikimedia Commons

Metzinger, Jean

Man with a Pipe (Portrait of an American Smoker), 1911–12

oil on canvas, 129.7 x 96.68 cm

Lawrence University, Appleton, Wisconsin.



(siot):

The swash (decorative curve) is more pronounced, and the thickness of the strokes is consistent. Where the arms meet, the junction forms a slight circular shape.



Lowercase

A short stem with a small terminal, giving it a simple form. The terminal is very curved.



Uppercase

The bowl is paired with a diagonal leg, adding movement to the letter's form. The x-height seems moderate in this case.

2 **Wander Type:** *Nazi Plunder*

Friedrich der Große zu Pferde



Image sourced from Lost Art Database (ID 435854)

Chodowiecki, Daniel Nicolaus

Friedrich der Große zu Pferde, 1777

Watercolour, 14.5 cm × 18 cm

Galerie Fischer in Lucerne



(eo):

This character has a vertical stem, though the thickness varies slightly, and the side stroke faces to the right.

The Astronomer

Uppercase



The stem is strong and concludes with a horizontal foot, creating a right-angle form. However, the length of the stem and the horizontal foot are almost the same.



Image by Multichill, from Wikimedia Commons

Vermeer, Johannes

The Astronomer (Dutch: De astronoom), c. 1668

Oil on canvas, 51 cm × 45 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris.

The Langlois Bridge



Uppercase

The two stems connect at the base to form a rounded bowl, but the ends do not finish with the usual sans serif style; instead, they are sharp.



Image by Amada44, from Wikimedia Commons

Vincent van Gogh

The Langlois Bridge, 1888

oil on canvas, 59.6 cm x 73.6 cm

Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam

Lady with an Ermine



Image by UpdateNerd, from Wikimedia Commons

Leonardo da Vinci
Lady with an Ermine, 1489–1491
oil on canvas, 54 cm × 39 cm
Czartoryski Museum, Kraków, Poland

Lowercase



This letter features an unclear bowl and an enclosed counter. The terminal is unique, not positioned downward as expected.

Portrait of a Seated Woman



Image by Wmpearl, from Wikimedia Commons

Thomas Couture
Portrait of a Seated Woman, 1850-1855
oil on canvas
Private collection



Uppercase

The stem is topped with a horizontal crossbar that maintains a consistent thickness, showing a decorative touch of sans serif design.

Geduld



Image sourced from Lost Art Database (ID314417)

Chodowiecki, Daniel Nicolaus
Geduld, 1780/1782 (um)
Drawing, 10.5 cm × 23.7 cm
Akademie der Künste. Berlin



Uppercase

Two diagonal strokes intersect, forming a balanced shape, but the lines are not straight. The leQ diagonal arm is higher, and the right diagonal arm sits lower.

Apollo and Genius



Image sourced from Lost Art Database (ID 593661)

Unknown Artist

Apollo and Genius, c. 1749–1755

Porcelain, 31 x 15 x 10 cm, State Art Collections in Dresden



Lowercase

The arm is not straight but asymmetrical, contributing to a unique structure.

Lowercase

The letter features rounded counters, though the two counters are not symmetrical. The shoulders form a mountain-like shape, and there is no terminal at the end.



Uppercase

The stroke curves smoothly, creating a balanced letter with an enclosed counter. The terminal goes downward, enhancing the flow of the letter.



M8-bildnis

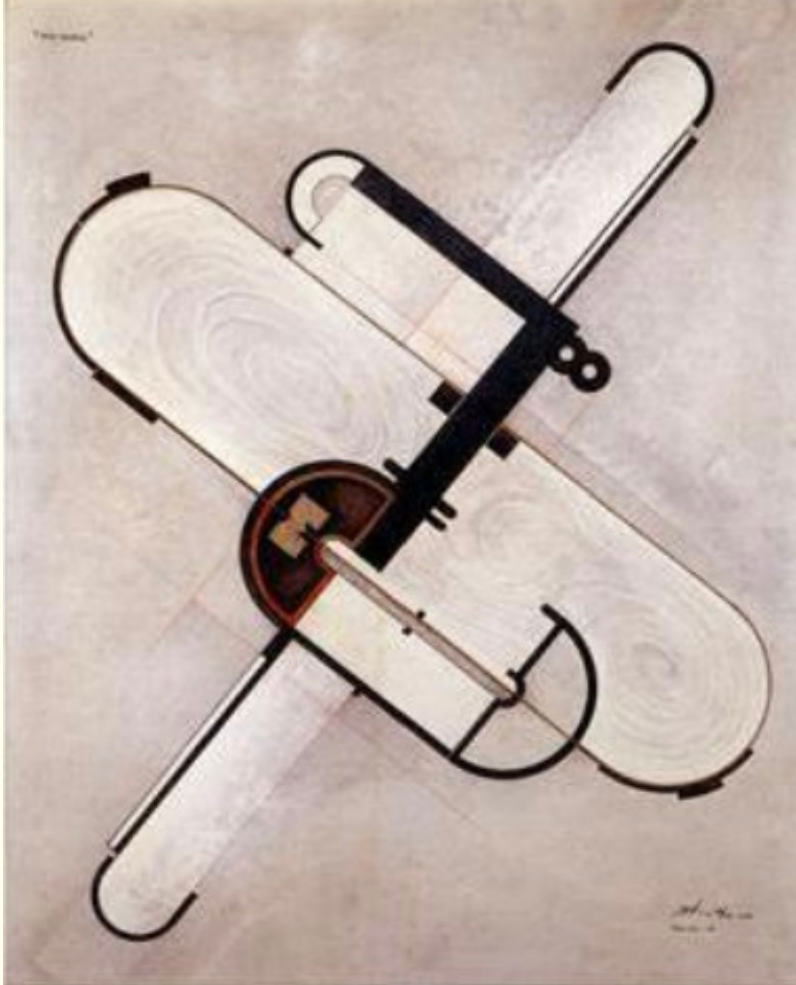


Image sourced from Lost Art Database (ID 586569)

Michel, Robert

M8-bildnis, 1923/1924

Pencil, coloured pencil, ink, watercolour, 56.3 x 47.7 cm

Municipal Museum Mönchengladbach, Mönchengladbach, Germany



(giyeok):

In sans-serif styles, it appears as a clean, geometric “L” shape, emphasizing simplicity.



Uppercase .

This is sans serif. The descender extends downward elegantly with a smooth terminal, adding to its minimalist form, and it's thinner than the other stems.

Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer I



Image by Aavindraa, from Wikimedia Commons

Gustav Klimt

Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer I, 1907

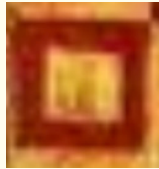
oil, silver, and gold on canvas, 138 x 138 cm

Neue Galerie, New York City



Uppercase

This has an incredibly unique B shape. There is no swash, but if you look at the B's leg, it's quite ornate. The bowl has a curved shape.



(mieum):

This has an incredibly unique B shape. There is no swash, but if you look at the B's leg, it's quite ornate. The bowl has a curved shape.



Uppercase

This looks quite squished. It's a sans serif, and it gives off a display type feel. If you look at the bowl, it doesn't protrude.

3 *Wander Type:*
Colonial
Looting

The Wedding at Cana



Image by Eugene a, from Wikimedia Commons

Veronese, Paolo.

The Wedding at Cana. 1563.

oil on canvas, 677 x 994cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris.



(jicut):

The top horizontal stroke is very long, while the left and right legs are the same length. The horizontal stroke dominates visually.



Uppercase

The stroke curves smoothly, creating a balanced letter with an enclosed counter. The terminal goes downward, enhancing the flow of the letter.



Uppercase

This is sans serif. The descender extends downward elegantly with a smooth terminal, adding to its minimalist form, and it's thinner than the other stems.



Uppercase

The two stems connect at the base to form a rounded bowl, but the ends do not finish with the usual sans serif style; instead, they are sharp.

Benin Bronzes

Uppercase

The bowl is very curved, and the final stroke almost touches the first stroke. There's no spur at all.



Photo by Sailko, GNU free documentation license.

Unknown Artist

Portuguese Figures, 16th-17th century

Bronze, Various sizes

Various collections, including the British Museum, London

Tipu's Tiger



Uppercase

It has a very unique shape. It is a sans serif and appears in uppercase.



Photo by Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Unknown Artist

Tipu's Tiger, 1780s or 1790s

wood, metal, ivory 71.2 x 172 cm

V&A Museum

Maqdala collection

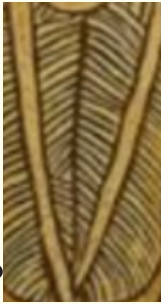


The Trustees of the British Museum

Limoges.

Maqdala collection diptych, 16thC-19thC.

enamel, silver, gold, glass paste, 11.2 cm × 16.3 cm. The British Museum



Uppercase

The two diagonal arms meet at a sharp apex, forming a balanced V-shape. Each arm is spaced apart, not close together.



Uppercase

A rounded bowl is complemented by a diagonal tail that extends downward diagonally. The eye is not fully round, but has a random circular shape.

4 *Wander Type:*
Unseen
Forms

Twittering Machine

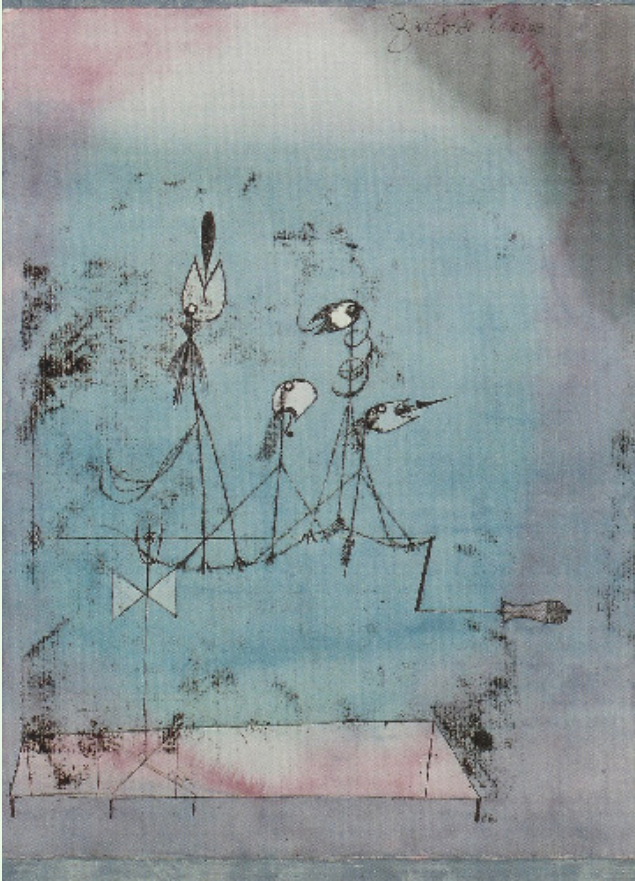


Image by Wikimedia Commons

Paul Klee.

Twittering Machine, 1922

Watercolor and ink; oil transfer on paper with gouache and ink on border, 63.8 cm × 48.1 cm. Museum of Modern Art, New York

Uppercase Z:



This is a sans serif style. The hair-line stroke has a similar thickness to the final stroke, and the aperture is far from the end. It seems to be fairly standard.

Lowercase



The bowl is tightly enclosed, creating a compact appearance. The bowl dominates, with a clear crossbar slicing through the letter.

Composition VIII

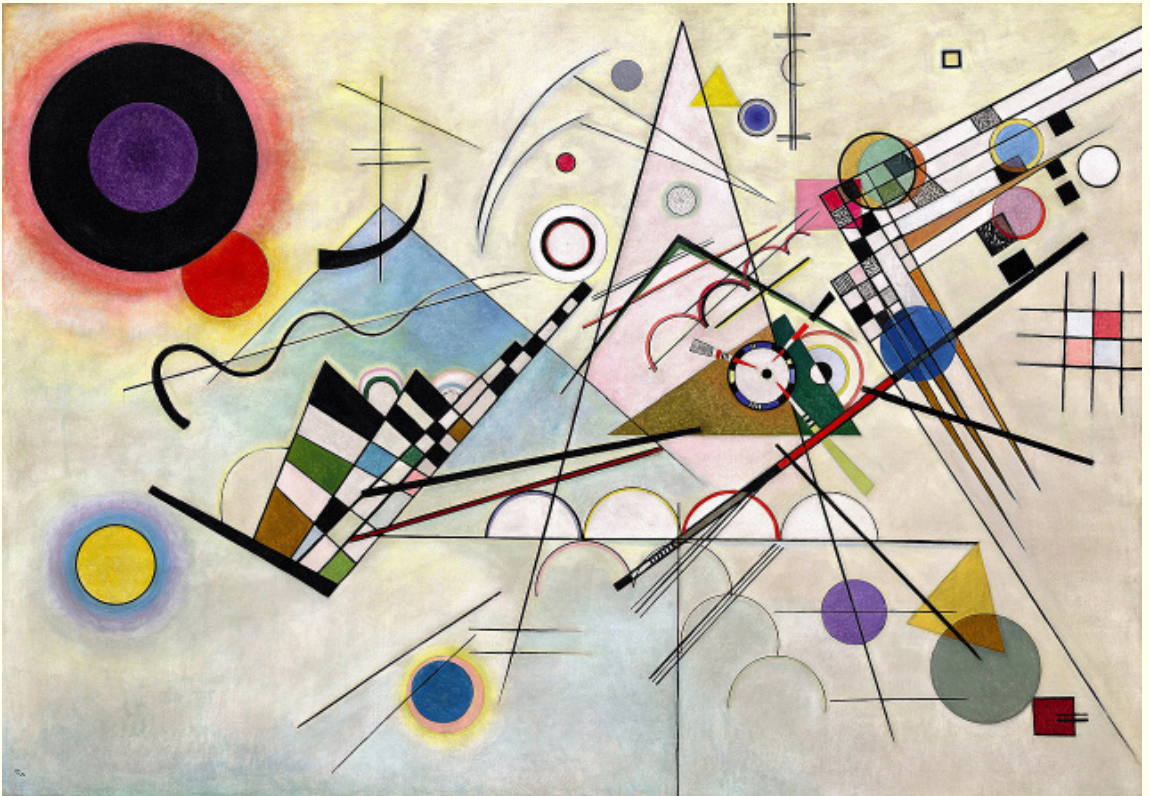
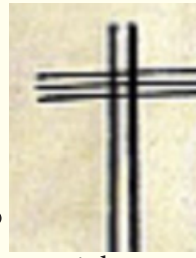


Image by Wikimedia Commons

Wassily Kandinsky.

Composition VIII, 1923

Oil on canvas, 140 x 201 cm, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York



Lowercase

The stem and crossbar are straight, composed of multiple lines.



(kieu)::

The vertical stem is long and sharp, with the top and middle lines running parallel, passing through the vertical stem, giving it a geometric feel.



Lowercase

The arm is not straight but asymmetrical, contributing to a unique structure.

Lowercase

A simple vertical stem topped with a dot (kille). The stem becomes thicker towards the bottom, forming a more triangular shape.



Lowercase

The stem contrasts with the rounded bowl, extending upward with a sans serif ascender. The letter gives an impression of height and prominence.



Lowercase

The letter features a rounded bowl, and the descender extends downward. The stem has two lines, though it doesn't seem long enough. The counter extends further than the stem.

Lowercase

This letter has a straightforward, bold stem that widens toward the bottom, with sans serif details.



The City (La Ville)

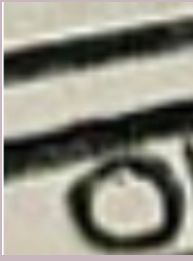


Image by Coldcreation, from Wikimedia Commons

Fernand Léger

The City (La Ville), 1919

Oil on canvas, 231.1 cm × 298.4 cm, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia



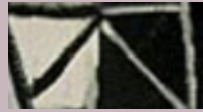
(hieut):

This character has a vertex at the top but is longer than a typical “hieut.” It lacks a topknot and features round stems with regular, smooth curves.



(ieung):

The bowl is perfectly rounded, creating a smooth, enclosed counter, and the circle is completely closed.



(jieut):

The top horizontal stroke is very long, while the left and right legs are the same length. The horizontal stroke dominates visually.



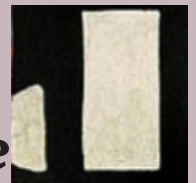
(eu):

A simple horizontal stroke in a sans-serif typeface with uniform thickness.



Lowercase

This character has a vertex at the top but is longer than a typical “hieut.” It lacks a topknot and features round stems with regular, smooth curves.



Lowercase

This character has a vertex at the top but is longer than a typical “hieut.” It lacks a topknot and features round stems with regular, smooth curves.



(i):

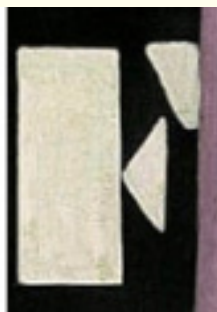
This is a vertical stem with no beak in a sans-serif style. Though the thickness is not entirely consistent, it still has a clean, vertical appearance.



(p):

The vertical line between the top and bottom strokes is not symmetrical, and the stroke of the top line is thinner than the bottom line.

Uppercase



The stem is sturdy, standing out due to its thickness, while the crossbar has a triangular form, making the letter more geometric.

Uppercase



A vertical stem supports a bowl that is entirely absent. The stem is thick, but the counter is even thicker and takes up most of the letter's space.

Lowercase



The stroke is vertical, and it's sans-serif. The arms on the left and right are similar.

Uppercase



This letter features two apexes with diagonal arms, creating a double-V shape. It is notably wide.

Composition with Large Red Plane, Yellow, Black, Gray and Blue

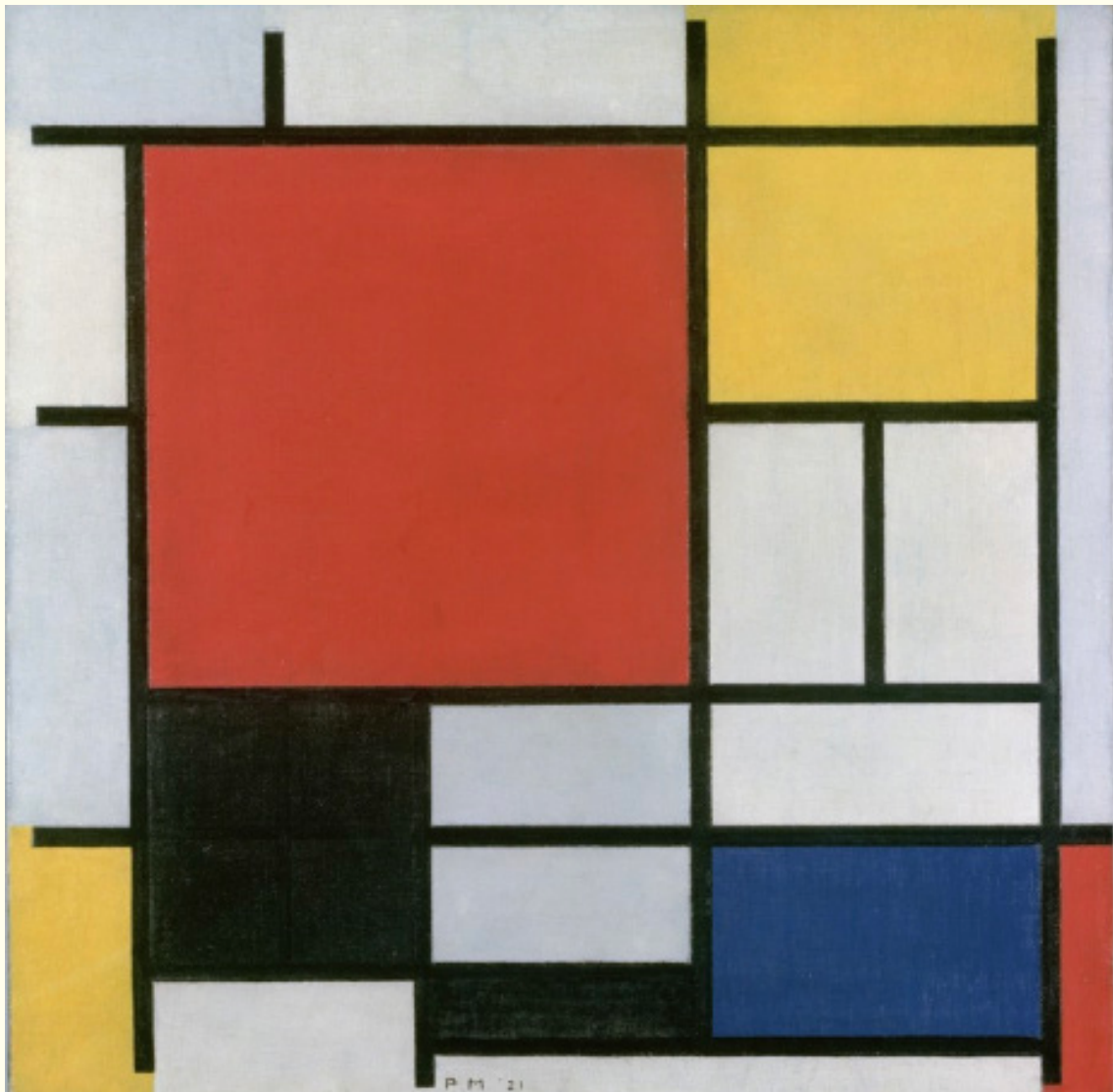


Image by Kunstmuseum The Hague

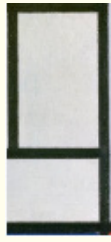
Piet Mondrian

Composition with Large Red Plane, Yellow, Black, Grey, and Blue, 1921

Oil paint on canvas, 59.5 cm × 59.5 cm, Kunstmuseum Den Haag

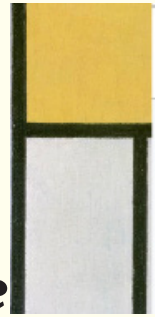
Lowercase

The loop at the bottom is square and connects to the upper bowl via a link, creating an elegant, two-story form typical of sans serif fonts. The eye is large and occupies a significant portion of the letter.



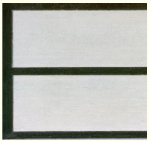
Lowercase

The stem extends upward as an ascender. The sans serif bowl provides a straight contrast to the vertical line, with the bar placed in the middle of the stem.



(ticut):

The stem is very long, and the top, middle, and bottom lines have consistent stroke thickness, giving the letter a geometric appearance.



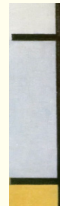
(u):

In this sans-serif typeface, the short vertical stem and bow are of uniform thickness, with a single short column.



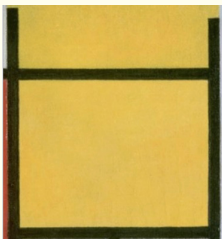
(yeo):

The vertical stem maintains consistent thickness, and the side stroke faces left with two strokes.



(bieup):

It also has a geometric style, with the horizontal bar placed slightly higher up than usual.





(o):

In this sans-serif typeface, both the short vertical stem and the bow are of uniform thickness.



(yeo):

The vertical stem maintains consistent thickness, and the side stroke faces left with two strokes.



(ya):

Similar to korean letter ya, the vertical stem maintains a consistent thickness, but it has two strokes facing to the right.



(yo):

Like korean letter yo, it is a sans-serif typeface where the vertical stem and bow maintain uniform thickness, but with two short columns facing upward.



(yu):

Similar to korean letter yu, this character features uniform thickness in the vertical stem and bow, but it has two short columns facing downward.

Violin and Candlestick



Image by Coldcreation, from Wikimedia Commons

Georges Braque

Violin and Candlestick, 1910

Oil on canvas, 60.96 cm × 50.17 cm, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco



Uppercase

This letter features two apexes with diagonal arms, creating a double-V shape. It is notably wide.



Uppercase

The stroke curves dramatically, and the counter is not rounded; it's more like a 3 o'clock shape. The letter is also marked by its lack of a spur, giving it a more minimal look without any additional flick.

The 1834 Destruction of both Houses of Parliament by Fire



Image by SchroCat, from Wikipedia

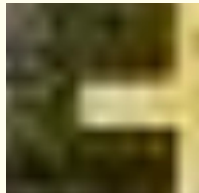
Unknown Artist.

The 1834 Destruction of both Houses of Parliament by Fire. 1834,

Uppercase



Two diagonal arms meet at the top, followed by a vertical stem. The ascender curves, giving the letter a distinctive shape.



(digeut):

The top line is not straight; it has a slight italic slant. The overall form feels thick and geometric.

About the Author

Sion Chen is an undergraduate student at George Mason University, pursuing a degree in Conflict Analysis and Resolution. Passionate about art and design, Sion is deeply engaged in exploring how art can be used as a tool in the peacebuilding process.

Wander Type: Looted Art delves into the layered histories behind some of the world's most significant stolen artworks, including pieces affected by Nazi plunder. By weaving personal reflections with meticulous research, the author sheds light on the turbulent journeys of these pieces and the ethical dilemmas surrounding their continued displacement. Through thoughtful storytelling, this book examines not only art's aesthetic and historical value but also its role as a battleground for cultural identity, political conflict, and the enduring pursuit of justice. Wander Type challenges us to rethink our relationship with museums, heritage, and the narratives that shape our collective memory.