

## Pieper and Larcher in Saarland

**Katharina Pieper** took part in an exhibition about lettering last year, which she describes as a tribute both to calligraphy and to her late partner, the French calligrapher Jean Larcher.

The German Newspaper Museum in Wadgassen, Saarland, hosted an exhibition last year entitled *Abenteuer Schrift* ('The Adventure of Writing'). It was in two parts: the larger one a display with lots of interesting information about letters, and the smaller one an interactive 'Typo-Lab'.

I designed the special installation 'A Short History of Writing' in the larger room on the upper floor. Original calligraphy by Jean Larcher was placed in a historical context. I added my own calligraphy, highlighting important stages in the development of Latin script, in styles appropriate to the content.

This part of the exhibition was not only a tribute to calligraphy, but also to Jean Larcher. He was my partner and died in 2015. In his book *Traits de Caractère/Lines with Character*, which I published in 2014, he wrote out texts by well-known type designers, calligraphers, poets, philosophers, and scientists on the subject of 'writing'. Over the course of eight years, he made 300 original calligraphic pieces in numerous calligraphic styles that span the entire history of writing, but also developed completely new, imaginative scripts, always based on historical foundations.

For this exhibition, I selected twelve works by Jean Larcher that represent the past 3,000 years in the history of Latin script, and arranged them chronologically. On the walls of the room, around the works by Jean Larcher, I wrote texts on the history of our script, starting with the Phoenicians. The texts are concise, each written in the appropriate script. They showed the development of a letter from a pictogram to a written character, from uppercase to lowercase, from Fraktur to Sütterlin or from humanistic cursive to Latin handwriting. At the end were free, informal compositions of my own.

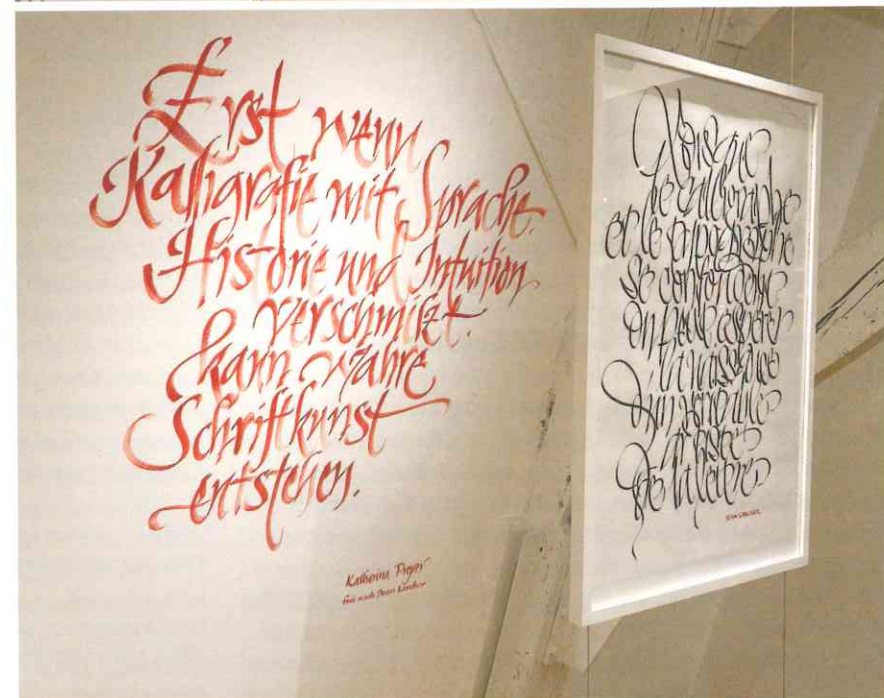
I used flat brushes and gouache in shades of grey and red in order not to 'drown out' Jean Larcher's works. Jean did not use uncial, Carolingian minuscule or half-uncial, and blackletter scripts such as Textura or Fraktur were not among his favourite hands, but there was a huge variety of cursive scripts on display. The texts I used came from my book *Calligraphy & Handwriting*, sometimes shortened or added to.

### Letterature

The lettering arts in literature:  
number 7 in a series by **Gareth Colgan**.

Gareth tells us he recently opened at random his *Nonesuch Swift* (with cover lettering by Michael Harvey) and read in Jonathan Swift's *Journal to Stella*, dated London Oct 26 1710, the following:

'I am sure 'tis the grief of my soul to think you are out of order. Pray be quiet, and if you will write, shut your eyes, and write just a line, and no more, thus (*How do you do, Mrs. Stella?*) That was written with my eyes shut. Faith, I think it is better than when they are open: and then Dingley may stand by, and tell you when you go too high or too low.' [Miss Dingley was the lady's companion.]



# Forum 49

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**Erik van Blokland's wall of letters,  
Richard Middleton's wall of Latin, Oskar Beyer meets Rudolf Koch,  
Andreu Balius's Salmantina, reviews, news and much more**

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Front cover:  
Installation of Erik van Blokland's  
frieze of text at Amsterdam  
University Library, December 2024.  
Photo Mathieu Lommen.  
See p3.

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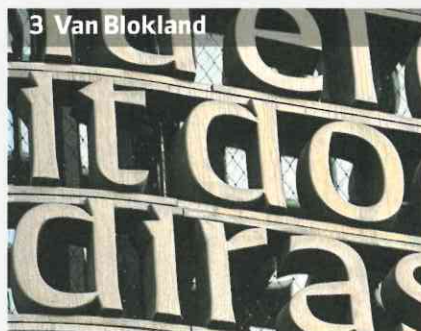
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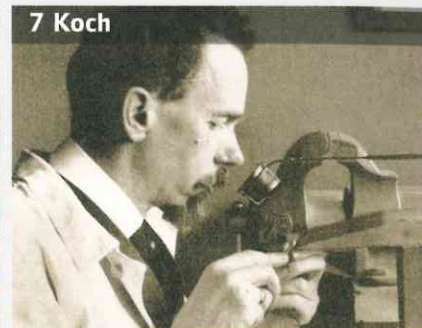
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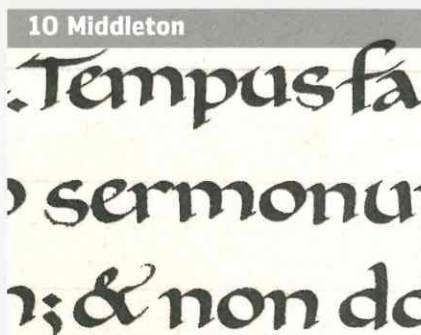
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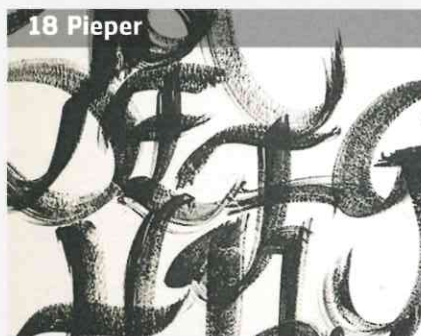
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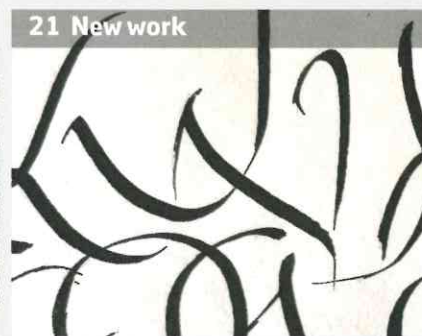
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