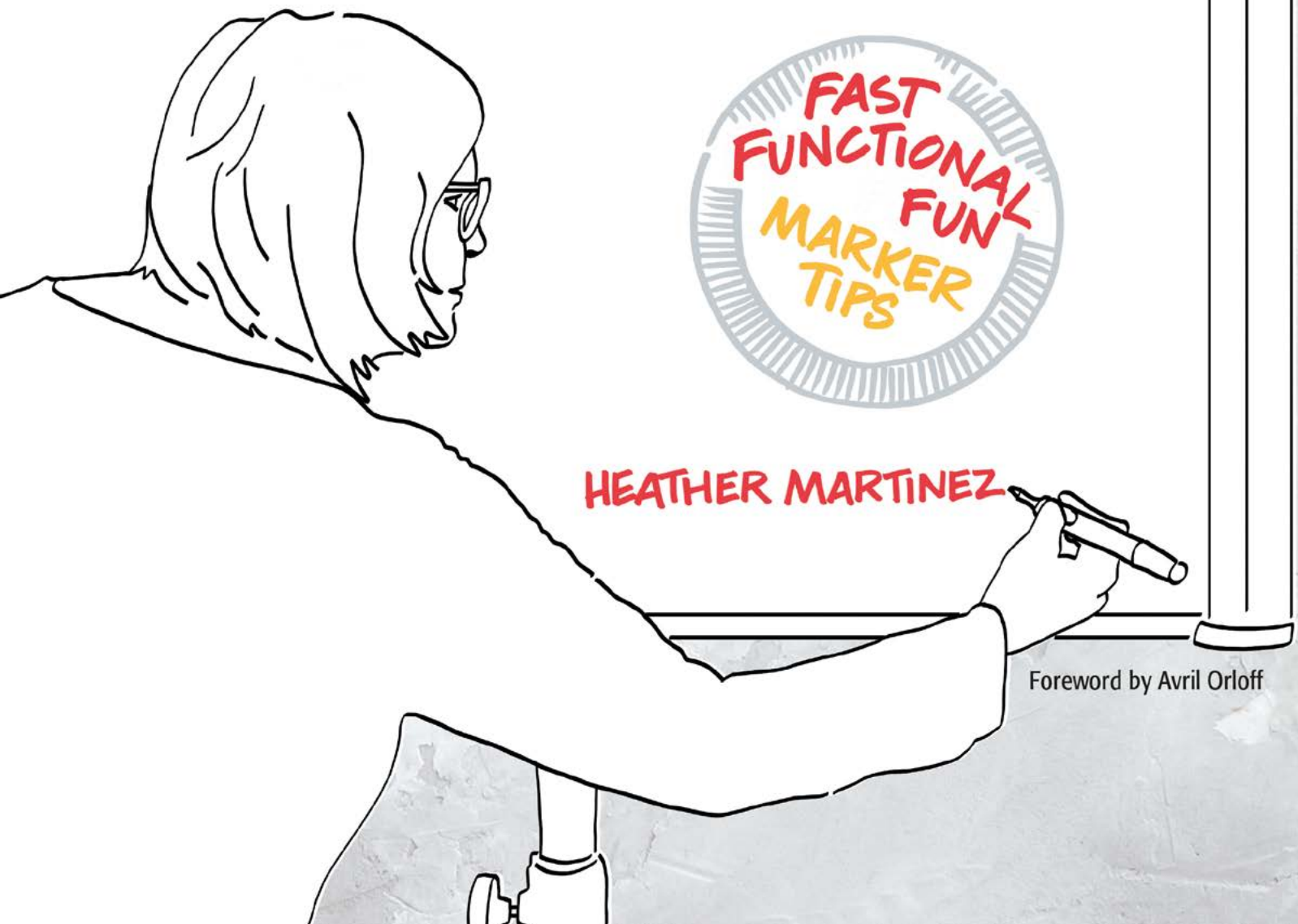


TAKE  
A

# LETTERING JOURNEY



HEATHER MARTINEZ

Foreword by Avril Orloff

THE LETTERING  
JOURNEY BEGINS...

THIS BOOK  
BELONGS TO:

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**DEDICATED TO  
THOSE WHO USE MARKERS  
TO INCREASE GROUP UNDERSTANDING  
AND ENCOURAGE BREAKTHROUGH CONVERSATIONS  
BY HOLDING A SPACE  
FOR OTHERS TO BE SUCCESSFUL.**

**YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE.**

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Indicates one of the month-long artist residencies where we stopped to focus on making art and drawing letters.



Indicates other stops along the way.

Read more about our cross-country trip at [www.OnTheRoadWithFlo.com](http://www.OnTheRoadWithFlo.com)

Flo as she makes her way across North America, including stops at the South Dakota Badlands, crossing the border into Canada and on the coast of Oregon.

# PREFACE

This book is about how I found inspiration while traveling and the letters that grew from that inspiration.

Shortly after the 2016 United States election, I left Washington, DC, and the strong community of visual practitioners, including my beloved colleagues on the Visioneering team at OGSystems. This values-based decision led me to follow my dream to return to my life as an artist, independent visual practitioner and coach.

My husband, Ray, and I set out on a cross-country journey, visiting month-long artist residencies and camping in a 1947 teardrop trailer named Flo.

As we traveled across the country, I drew inspiration from every stop, and on many occasions I pulled out the Hands-On poster by Neuland and asked Ray to take a picture so that I could capture the essence of the scene for future reference. Research from our stops led to the discovery of letterforms in books, online and on signage and creation of new letterforms along the way. I quickly found that just about any lettering style I saw could be broken down into repeatable strokes with the tools we use as visual practitioners.

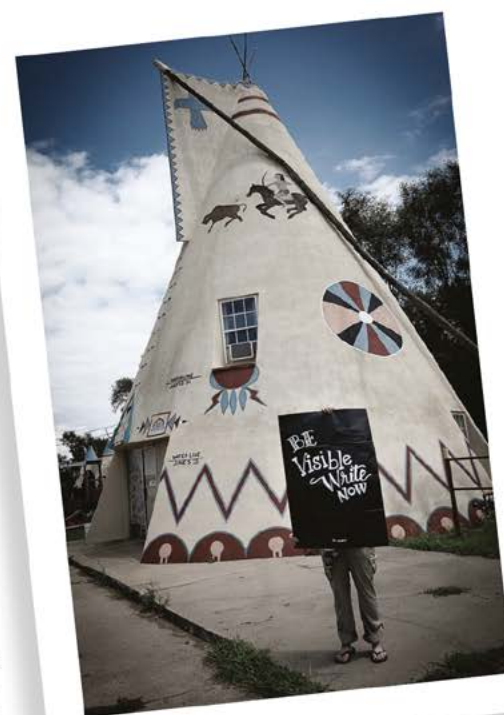
While our trip was an adventure of a lifetime, the lettering journey continues. I got here by standing on the shoulders of giants, and I suspect as a visual practitioner, you did too. The work of a scribe starts as an apprentice, and in our field, we have a wealth of seasoned professionals who share their expertise, allowing us the opportunity to increase our understanding, develop skills that bring value to the client and ultimately be in service to those in leadership positions to make great change. My contribution of lettering tips is just one small facet of the skills you need to do your job well. As life-long learners, I look forward to seeing you in workshops—mine and those of others—along the way.

Throughout this book, you will find photos taken during our journey across the country, the tools recommended to create the letters, quick-reference scales to help you determine when and where to use the styles and exemplars with my studio notes on how to create the letters.

I invited Avril to write the Foreword because she is known in our field, as the queen of lettering. I had the great fortune of sharing these lettering styles with some of our peers in the field and they were gracious enough to share back how they used them. I'm proud to feature their work throughout the book, and I hope that the next book I write includes your work, too!

As the lettering journey continues for all of us, I hope our paths cross so we may letter together. Remember to keep your markers full of ink and plenty of practice paper on hand and to visualize the letters as you go. We have important work to do as visual practitioners. Let's make our letters look good as we do it!

Your Friend in Lettering,  
Heather



*pictured above*  
Tee Pee Junction  
US Highway 24, Lawrence, Kansas  
*This landmark has been a meaningful icon  
located near where I grew up and went to college.*



# FOREWORD

by Avril Orloff

I've been a lettering geek ever since I learned how to write. My favourite library book as a kid was *The Art of Freehand Lettering*. I took it out so often they should have just given it to me, and I spent many hours happily copying serif, sans serif, script and Old English letterforms into my sketchbooks. In high school, I was the go-to person for making posters, signs, theatre programs—pretty much anything that contained letters. I invented fanciful typefaces, doodled alphabets on my exams, turned letters into pictures and photographed hand-lettered signs all over the world. Since 2006, I've been a graphic recorder, with a reputation for having particularly good lettering skills. Heather calls me The Lettering Queen (though we argue about that every time we get together).

But if I'm a lettering queen, Heather Leavitt Martinez is The Lettering Goddess. (Yes, you are, Heather—don't argue!) Because Heather not only has outstanding lettering skills but also has an insatiable drive to perfect those skills and to keep learning more, and her generosity in sharing her knowledge is legendary. Look at her online offerings: you could become a master just by watching her videos and practicing what she shows you. On top of which, she teaches in-person workshops filled with tips, tricks and detailed instructions for creating different letterforms and provides exemplars and handouts galore to aid you in your practice. I know. I've taken her workshops, both online and in-person, and I learn tons more about lettering every time. I was also honoured to be a guest "master" in her *Lettering with the Masters*

series, in which she brought together some of the best people in the biz to share their skills. Just another example of Heather's generosity. (And a shameless plug for the series, which you should really take!)

This is why I say Heather is The Lettering Goddess. Because while we both adore letters and are serious about our craft, my approach tends toward "Oh, let's see what it looks like this time," while Heather is systematic and consistent and very clear about connecting the dots between what she does and how she does it. That's why her letters always look like they're supposed to and why her techniques are so readily transferable.

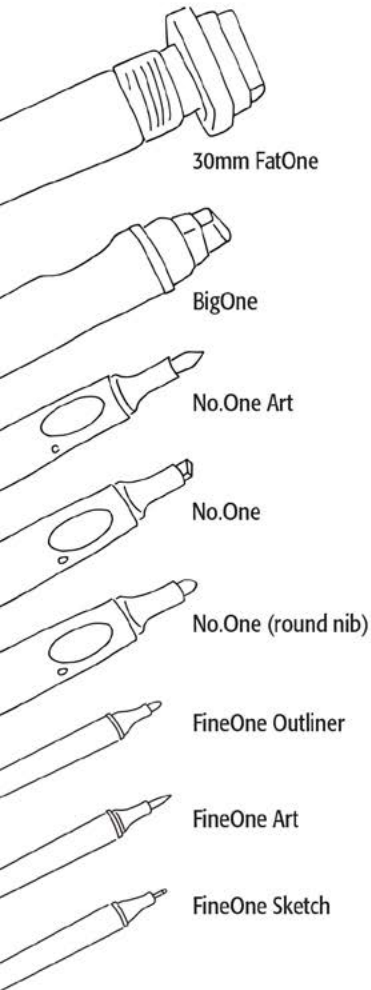
So, I'm thrilled that Heather has written this book for visual practitioners. Lettering is such a critical part of our craft, and in these pages, you'll find not only a wealth of letterforms to add to your palette but also all the information you'll need to create them—from what markers to use, to attributes and mechanics of the lettering, to how to work quickly (very important for visual practitioners!), all liberally interspersed with examples of different practitioners' work and delightful stories of her typographic travels.

I feel sure this book will be as important to me now as *Freehand Lettering* was to me as a kid—and I know it will quickly join the growing list of books visual practitioners must have.

And now...let's grab our markers and dive in!

# INTRODUCTION

## Markers to use:



## Who is this book for?

This book was designed with you, the visual practitioner, in mind:

- graphic recorders
- graphic facilitators
- sketchnoters
- anyone using flip charts or whiteboards in their facilitation work or for training
- lettering artists
- glyphophiles who use markers
- anyone who wants to join the fun!

## You are welcome to use these lettering styles in your work.

### Allow this book to serve as a reference guide. Here's how...

In each chapter of this book, I suggest markers to use (pictured left) and attributes of each lettering style along three spectra (pictured below). Consider this a quick guide to determining the right lettering style for the job. Some letters are fast and easy to write, while others will take some time to get right. How long it takes to master each style depends on how intentional you make your practice.

## Remember...

Lettering with markers, especially when writing fast, means you need to take it easy on yourself regarding imperfections. These are hand-drawn letters, so they aren't perfect. Add speed and the fact that the felt/nylon nibs wear with age and you have a mark-making tool that has a personality of its own. I suggest you learn to dance with it and enjoy the marks that you make.

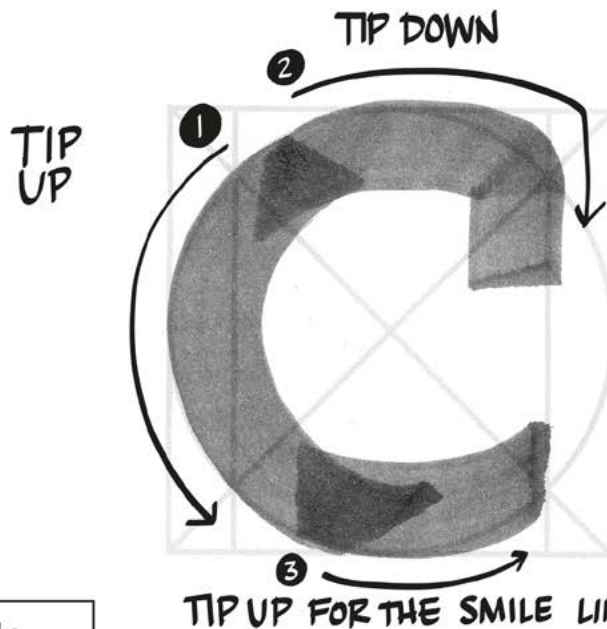


When you see either of these icons, check out the *Lettering Journey* resources page at [www.LetsLetterTogether.com](http://www.LetsLetterTogether.com) for downloadable PDF handouts videos and other lettering tips.

Throughout the book, you will see that I reference *lettering styles* and *courses* that I teach; these are typeset in *italic*.



NOTE THE ANGLES OF THE NIBS AND OVERLAPS IN THE STARTS AND STOPS



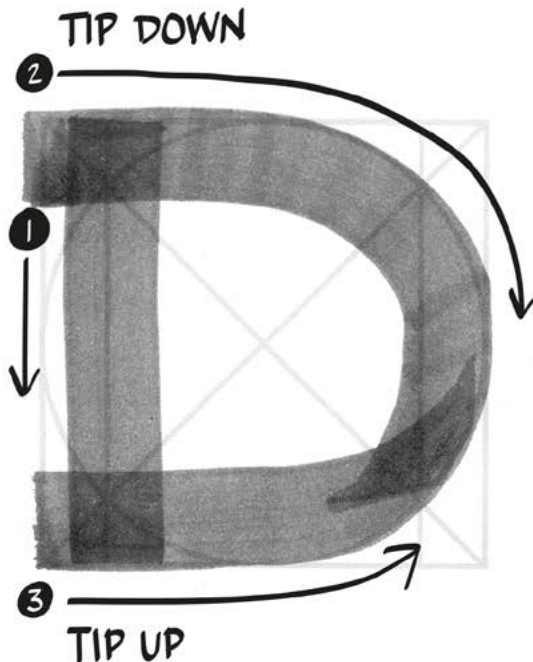
SERIF ON INSIDE/TOP TERMINAL ONLY

**An important note on stroke order and direction:**

While I offer up how I create these letters based on my training, I understand that you may use a different stroke order to create your letters. If you find that your forms meet or exceed these using your approach, by all means, you don't have to adopt mine.

**A note to lefties:**

In most cases, you will want to pull your strokes instead of pushing them. Try going in the opposite direction than indicated here and see what feels right. This will be the case for most crossbars and horizontal, diagonal and curved strokes. Also, note the position of the nib and what feels most comfortable to you.



FOLLOW THE INSIDE OF THE CIRCLE

THIS IS A BIG, LONG, ROUND STROKE...  
GO SLOW!