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Type Bits

INTRODUCTION Modular type suggests any letterforms built using a limited palette of set elements. All typefaces are modular to some extent, but the term "modular" typeface usually references a face made of a very restricted set of rigid components (2 or 3 parts). (See modularity chapter in *Graphic Design: The New Basics* by Ellen Lupton and Jennifer Cole Phillips)

THE BRIEF This project consists of two phases: 1) Use the stickers provided to develop a phrase constructed of modular type. 2) Using fontstruct.com, translate sticker letterforms into a digital typeface of lowercase characters **(a-z, 1-3)**. For final grade, typeface should be available for download on fontstruct.com. Print final typeface out, as well, and turn it in to be graded.

Research: Do some research on your own to find typefaces that are modular and/or experimental. Consider: What drew you to these particular typefaces? How do these typefaces find a balance between dynamic form and readability? What qualities do effective typefaces generally exhibit? How do such typefaces consider both positive and negative space in the type design? Also register with fonstruct.com and watch their introductory tutorial.

Phase One (Sticker letterforms):
Since cell phones are one of the last vestiges of bitmapped text, we are going to use texting as an overall theme for this phase. First come up with a phrase written in a texting style. (This phrase can be anything you want, but remember that it will be hung up in the hallway at the end of this phase. I suggest you look back over the messages on your phone and pick one from the random selection that you find there.) If the phrase is very short, develop more that one. You should end up with a total of around 4 words.

Then select from the two sticker choices of stickers (circles or squares). Your sticker letterforms must be built using only one of these shapes. Once you select which shape to use, pick up the corresponding grid from me in class. These grids are also posted on the blog. Using the stickers, experiment with building letterforms.

Note that you may cut the stickers into smaller shapes if you wish. **Consult fonstruct to see options for cutting them down.** However, **use a maximum of three different units to construct your letterforms.** In other words, you can cut up the general shape that you choose, but you cannot end up with more than 3 set units to work with. Use the grid as a guide. Use one piece of 8.5 x 11 paper for each letterform.

Phase Two (Modular typeface):
Develop your sticker letterforms into a lowercase alphabet **(a-z, 1-3)**. Use fonstruct.com to do this. You may tweak your letterforms as needed to make the forms optically work. Consult *Lettering & Type: Creating Letters and Designing Typefaces* by Bruce Willen and Nolen Strals. Bring a printout of your alphabet to class for small group critique. Print the letter-forms out as large a possible on an 11" x 17" sheet of paper. These do not need to be mounted.

Final Phase:
Print your final typeface out on an 11 x 17 piece of paper. Mount the paper to blackboard and leave a 2 inch border. Your typeface should now be available for download on fonstruct.com.