

jenna swingler

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art 315
topics in graphic design

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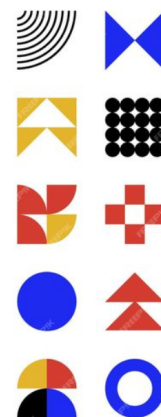
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overarching idea



As I was formulating ideas for my experimental typography projects, I knew I wanted to use an overarching idea or concept to connect each of the mediums – digital, 2D, and 3D. I felt like this would produce projects that showed greater depth in my portfolio than if I had a different focus for each of the three projects. I also liked the idea of spending more time experimenting with one concept in three mediums as opposed to three concepts in three mediums. I believe this will give me more space to really experiment with the concept before moving into the production of each project. As I was gathering inspiration for what this overarching idea could be, I found myself drawn to projects that explored the construction of letterforms, particularly the construction of letterforms using lines and shapes. I decided this reconstruction of letterforms through lines, shapes, and color – using existing fonts – would be an interesting idea to span all three projects. The photos in this section show inspiration for the construction of these letterforms.

To further encourage experimentation, I decided to choose a concept that would serve as the framework on which my constructed letterforms exist. I have always been fascinated with the idea of contrasting ideas, and how oftentimes, those ideas have more in common than we originally thought. This idea is known as a paradox, which means “a seemingly absurd or self-contradictory statement or proposition that when investigated or explained may prove to be well founded or true” (Oxford Languages). During times of change – especially with everything that is going on in the world right now, and with personal anxiousness as I prepare to graduate college – I often think of the paradox of fragility and strength. Fragility is “the quality of being delicate or vulnerable” (Oxford Languages). Strength is “the quality or state of being physically strong, or the capacity of an object to withstand great force or pressure” (Oxford Languages). Society gives us two choices: to be fragile or to be strong. Choosing to be vulnerable, understanding, and compassionate is extremely important in today’s ever-changing world, but it is not always viewed positively. Sometimes, fragility and vulnerability are viewed as signs of weakness. Choosing to be powerful and resilient is also important in today’s world to make change and be a leader, but strength can sometimes be viewed as being cold. The paradox occurs between vulnerability and strength because we see a negative relationship between two, when in actuality, the relationship is positive (Senkowska). Showing vulnerability is showing strength; the two are interconnected.



**There is so much
strength in being fragile.**

GEMMA TROY

**Your fragility is
also your strength.**

Pina Bausch

It is in the fragility of life
That we discover our true inner strength

Shefali Dang





We are stronger
when we acknowledge,
how *fragile*
we can be.

V.J. Markham

There are many quotes discussing this idea of the interconnectivity of fragility and strength (these quotes are displayed on this page). I am contemplating the idea of using one or multiple of these quotes throughout my projects. While I will initially be creating all the letterforms in the alphabet, it would be easy enough to pull these letterforms for quotes or phrases after they are created. I am intrigued by the idea of the quote emphasizing the underlying concept, more so than the individual letterforms would. This is something I plan to experiment with as I work on each project.

research + concept

The first step in creating letterforms that resemble the unifying balance of fragility and strength is understanding the psychology of typefaces. To begin, I researched typefaces that convey feelings of strength and typefaces that convey feelings of fragility. I found an article that discussed the emotions associated with typeface groups. This article explained how slab serifs are associated with feelings of strength and power because the serifs are thicker compared to regular serifs (Fussell). I began my search by exploring the slab serif options on Adobe Fonts. I was not loving my options, so I returned to the article to read more about typefaces that evoke feelings of vulnerability, fragility, and openness. According to the author, sans serif fonts are considered softer fonts that convey feelings of openness, while serif fonts have psychological associations of stability with elements of fragility in the delicate weight of the serifs (Fussell). Instead of slab serifs, I began looking for serif and sans serif typefaces that combine elements of both strength and fragility. I looked for serif fonts with delicate serifs (fragility) and heavy weighted strokes (strength). I also looked for sans serif fonts with uniformity in the stroke weight (strength) and soft curves (fragility). The serif typefaces I found to best match the combination of strength and fragility include Temeraire and Lora from Adobe Fonts. The sans serif typefaces I found to best match the combination of strength and fragility include Neulis Sans and Filson Pro from Adobe Fonts. While I do not plan to use all four of these fonts as the base of my letterforms, these are the ones I decided to move forward with as I began experimenting with the construction of the letterforms, making variations for each font.

Temeraire Regular   

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

Lora Regular   

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

Neulis Sans Extra Light   

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

Filson Pro Light   

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



progress

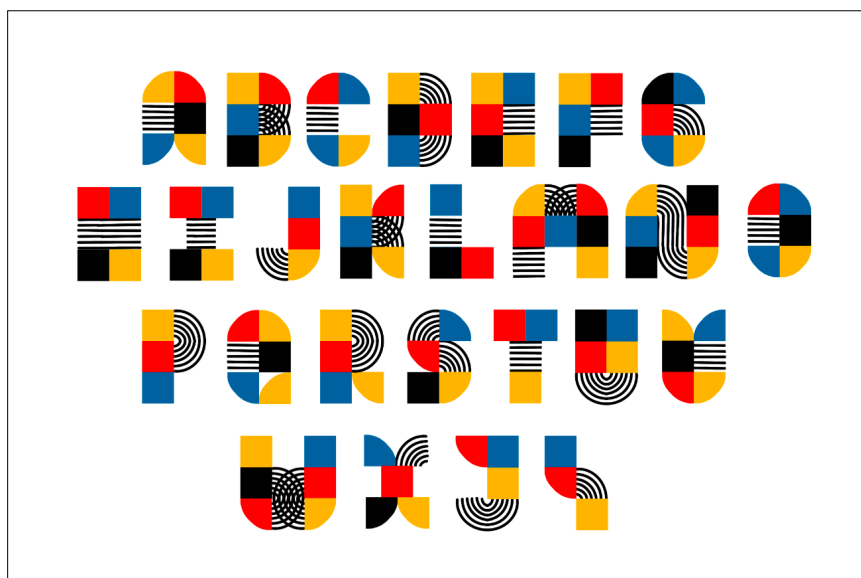
Once my conceptual research was finished, I began experimenting with the construction of letterforms which took about a week and a half. Since these letterforms will be the base for all my projects, I wanted to schedule myself plenty of time to really explore different variations of letterforms. I found it more efficient to create digital “sketches” of letterform ideas using Procreate. This was quicker than hand drawing variations and allowed me to be more consistent with the anatomy of the fonts I was de-constructing. Some of the letterforms I created were based on inspiration photos; others were just based on ideas I had in my mind. Some letterforms were created as continuations of previous versions I had made. I focused on giving myself the freedom to explore the shapes I saw within each font and not think too much about my overarching concept of strength and fragility yet.

At the end of my exploration, I experimented with seven versions of letterforms. Three versions focused more on creating letterforms that reflected the serif fonts I chose during research (Temeraire and Lora); another three versions focused on creating letterforms that reflected the sans serif fonts I chose during research (Neulis Sans and Filson Pro). One version was based on an inspiration photo I gathered during the brainstorming phase, so these letterforms did not follow a specific font. After I had my seven options, I began reflecting on each set of letterforms, focusing on narrowing down my selection to two or three viable options that truly encompassed my overarching idea of strength and fragility. I also focused on removing letterform styles from my pool that did not actually read as letters. While I wanted to experiment creatively with these letterforms, I also want my forms to be distinguishable as letters outside of the context of the alphabet. I was having a tough time removing my bias from this selection process; I found myself favoring the letterforms that I liked the best or spent the most time constructing. To help with the selection of my final letterforms, I shared photos with my family and friends asking for outside perspective on (1) whether the letterforms visually communicate the idea of strength and fragility being interconnected and (2) whether the letters would be distinguishable if seen one at a time. Having this additional perspective helped me refocus on the purpose of my letterforms, and I was able to narrow down my seven options to two options that encapsulated my main idea. To choose my final letterform to digitize, I focused on which letterforms would be the best for all three mediums – animation, embroidery, and pop-up. Thinking about my letterforms in multiple formats helped me choose the letterform style to move forward with. I digitized these letterforms in Adobe Illustrator and determined a few color palettes that will support the theme of strength and fragility. These final digital letterforms are displayed on the previous page. I felt the thin lines and the bold shape blocks paired with the serifs all worked together to communicate the connectivity of strength and fragility. The various letterform “sketches” I created are on the following pages.

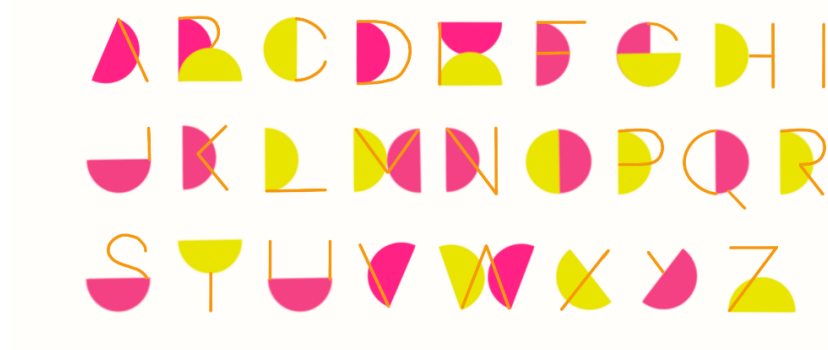
Neulis Sans



Lora



Neulis Sans



Filson



Temeraire



At this point in the semester, I planned to have (1) my concept established, (2) experimented with letterform styles, (3) selected the letterforms to continue with, (4) digitized the forms in Illustrator, and (5) begun research on animation techniques. While I have not completed extensive research on animation techniques yet, I have completed initial research and plan to complete more over the weekend.

digital component



I decided quickly that I wanted animation to be the medium for my digital typography project. Animation is an area of art and design that I find interesting and a skill that I would love to improve upon before I graduate. In the beginning stages of my job search, I have learned that animation is a skill that is either required or desired for many graphic design postings. I recently had an informal Zoom call with an agency I reached out to with my resume and portfolio, and the woman I spoke with mentioned how rare it is to find a designer that also has the knowledge and ability to animate as well. This conversation solidified how important it is for me to have another animation project in my portfolio. While I have experience with animation in After Effects, I have not animated type before. My previous animation experience has solely been with graphics and illustrations, and this is a perfect opportunity to focus on animating typography.

Since my overarching idea and concept starts with the construction of letterforms, the digital aspect of the project will be the animation. Because the letterforms I have constructed include shapes and lines, I am planning for the animation to include the movement of these shapes and lines to reveal the letterforms. I have experience keyframing animations for position, opacity, and rotation, and have recently used masks in After Effects, but I know there is more that I can and should learn to achieve this animation.

I have been looking into After Effects tutorials on YouTube that specifically animate typography and shape forms. I found several tutorials that explain how to animate text specifically, as well as shape layers. The video [How to Animate Text in Adobe After Effects](#) is a short tutorial that shows two methods of animating text. I enjoy the visual motion that results when using these methods, so this tutorial is going to be a great starting point when I begin the animation aspect of this project in After Effects. Another video highlights the [7 Common Text Animation Mistakes](#), and upon my initial watch, I believe the information she shared throughout this tutorial will be helpful, so I do not overcomplicate the animation. I have a tendency to overcomplicate things in After Effects because I am not aware of the simpler ways to create my desired animations. This video explains common mistakes in the program which helps me better understand what not to do as I begin animating my text. The [Easy Typography: Text Reveal Animation](#) tutorial is another great video I found when researching After Effects tutorials. This instructor specifically breaks down how to reveal text using masks, which is an animation element I think I will need when creating my typography animation. While I feel comfortable with my experience animating shapes in After Effects, I am always learning new tips and tricks. I found an [Animate Shape Layers in After Effects](#) tutorial that explains how to create shapes in After Effects, change their properties, and animate them. From my initial watch of this tutorial, there are easier ways to animate shapes than how I have been doing my animations, so this will be helpful for animating individual shapes in my letterforms.

The images in this section show stagnant inspiration photos of the animation styles I am looking to achieve in my text animation.

jir

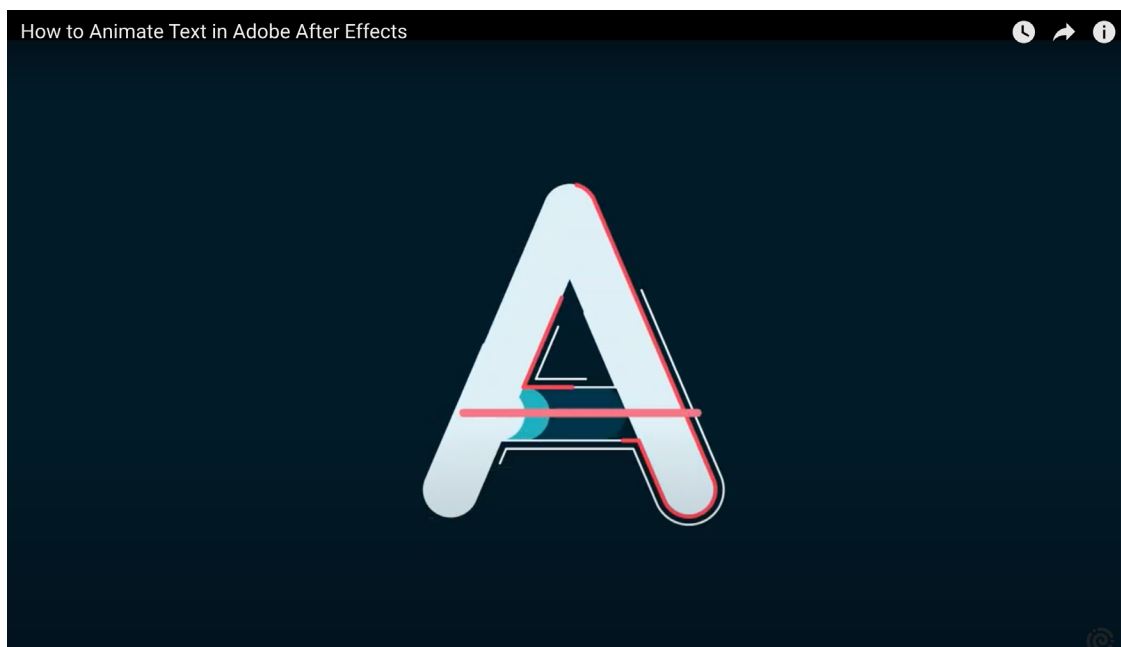
open

DUB

put

DUBA

ROBOT



2d component



I have recently been interested in embroidery but have not had the time or resources to dedicate towards learning this craft. The only embroidery project I have worked on previously were hats as Christmas gifts for my dad and brother. I did not take the time to learn about the different stitching techniques and this is the aspect of embroidery that most excites me. I am fascinated by how each stitching technique can create such different visual textures. I have decided to take the opportunity of choosing my own projects in this class to learn and practice more embroidery. I will be using the letterforms that I am creating for the overarching idea as the content for the embroidered piece. I plan to embroider one of the quotes I found while doing my research about fragility and strength, as I believe it will result in a more engaging design piece compared to just the letterforms in the form of the alphabet.

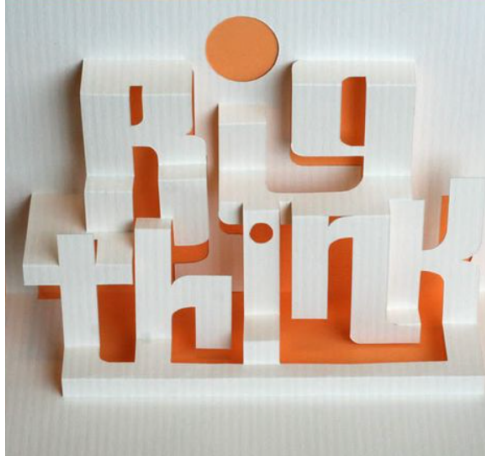
I have done some preliminary research about embroidery, finding information from blogs and YouTube tutorials. A blog post titled [Beginner's Guide to Hand Embroidered Letters](#) has already provided useful information about the different types of stitches that work well when embroidering letters. The blogger includes descriptions of each of the stitches and photos to show what the stitch should look like. The stitch techniques discussed include the back stitch, the split stitch, the chain stitch, the stem stitch, the running stitch, the whipped running stitch, the whipped back stitch, the straight stitch, the satin stitch, the long and short stitch, and French knots. The blog post is very thorough, discussing when it is best to use a certain stitch technique based on the typography being used in the embroidery. There is also a list of tips for beginners which will be helpful to keep in mind as I begin practicing my embroidery. This blog post is thorough and will be handy when I move deeper into this embroidery project later. I also found a YouTube tutorial that shows how to create those stitching techniques. While the blog was great at providing information, the tutorial will pair nicely by showing me step-by-steps for how to do each stitch. The tutorial – [How to Embroider Letters by Hand | 5 Stitches](#) – shows the back stitch, the running stitch, the stem stitch, the split stitch, and the chain stitch.

The photos in this section include inspiration photos of embroidery projects I found on Pinterest. These will help guide my process and shape how I approach embroidering my quote. I have also included photos from some of the resources I have found that show the different stitching techniques.



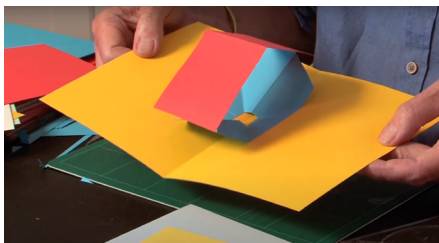


3d component



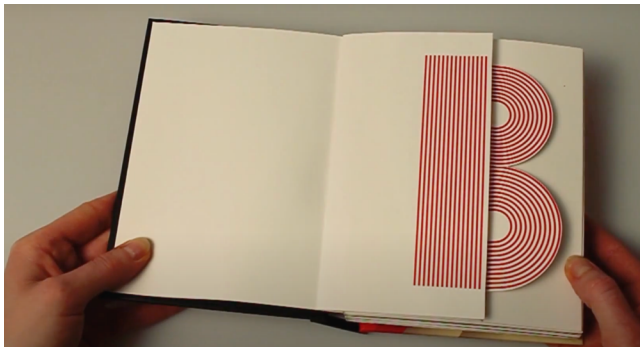
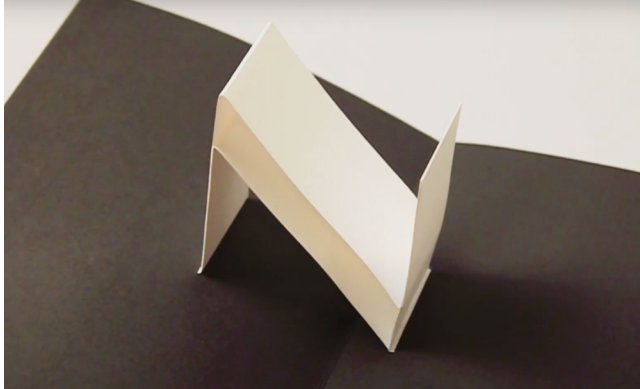
The 3D project proposal was more challenging for me, compared to the digital and 2D projects. As I was exploring the list of potential ideas for the 3D project, I kept finding myself drawn to the idea of a pop-book and experimenting with typography in this medium. Of my three projects, this is the medium that I know the least about, so I am expecting it to have the biggest learning curve. I have a little bit of experience thinking about design in a 3D space because of my minor (graphic communications technology). I have worked on projects in my minor courses that challenged me to think about the structural elements of the final product while working on the computer, specifically with folds, creases, and the assembly of the product. I believe that this experience will be helpful as I work on my pop-up book, but I am still expecting to need lots of assistance via video tutorials and pop-up blogs to explain the science behind pop-up.

When looking for examples of pop-up words/books/letters, I found that most examples of pop-ups focus on 3D perspective. This technique is used frequently for cards, because the motion of opening the card pushes the words into perspective. After reviewing numerous examples of this pop-up technique in use, I have decided this technique seems like a viable option for how I can apply pop-up to some of my letters. A blog post I found – [Pop-Up 3D Words](#) – shows how to do this perspective pop-up technique using both the digital file and the printed work, which I found to be extremely helpful. I also found a YouTube channel – [The Pop-Up Channel](#) – that has over 80 videos that explain various aspects of pop-up art. After looking through the videos on this channel, I have found about six or seven that seem like useful resources when I begin my pop-up book. There are one or two basic videos that discuss the theories of pop-up and how to construct a pop-up book; these will be great videos to start with to get a better understanding of the theory. I also marked some videos that explain how to create pull strips and straight extensions, which look like fun pop-up techniques that could be used for letterforms that share similar characteristics (such as E and F). I found one video tutorial that explained how to create and use floating planes, which seems like a simple pop-up technique that could be used as well. I also found a tutorial explaining how to create a twisting pop-up mechanism, which would be fun for some round letterforms (such as O). In addition to some tutorials, I also found a pop-up book with the central content being letterforms. The video – [ABC 3D Pop-Up Book](#) – shows each page of the book and the interactions of the folds/tabs to create the letter. This book will be a major source of inspiration when I begin constructing mine. Watching how the letterform is formed as each page opens and closes will also give me a greater understanding of the theory behind pop-up.





The photos in this section include a handful of inspiration photos for 3D perspective pop-ups. On this page, I have included photos of the ABC 3D Pop-Up Book that show some of my favorite letterforms.



bibliography

Animation Explained. “Animate Shape Layers in After Effects.” YouTube, 2023, www.youtube.com/watch?v=mKvYoLU1glo. Accessed 03 Feb. 2025.

This After Effects tutorial covers the basics for creating, editing, and animating shape layers. While I have some knowledge of shape animation, I know I do not know everything, so this tutorial will be a great resource for better understanding how to animate shapes simply.

Animation Explained. “7 Common Text Animation Mistakes | Adobe After Effects Tutorial.” YouTube, 2024, www.youtube.com/watch?v=jAlfNRM-EXY. Accessed 03 Feb. 2025.

This After Effects tutorial explains the 7 most common text animation mistakes for beginners. The instructor goes into detail for each of the 7 mistakes, showing lots of examples to elaborate on what she is warning the viewer of. This resource will help me to not overcomplicate the typography animation I will be creating this semester and shows more of the After Effects Presets and tools.

Animation Explained. “How to Animate Text in Adobe After Effects.” YouTube, 2024, www.youtube.com/watch?v=WRf8x6gyNt8. Accessed 03 Feb. 2025.

This After Effects tutorial shows two methods for animating text: text animators and trim paths. The visual motion of both methods is something I enjoy, and this is a great resource for learning how to achieve that in After Effects. The instructor shows many examples throughout the video tutorial for what that method can achieve.

Animotion by Sharin Y. “Easy Typography: Text Reveal Animation.” YouTube, 2024, www.youtube.com/watch?v=wT3JvQktD4. Accessed 03 Feb. 2025.

This After Effects tutorial shows how to reveal text using masks. The instruction is very thorough and is provided in an easy-to-follow manner which will be great when learning how to achieve the same text reveal effect in my digital animation.

Best Pop-Up Books. “ABC 3d Pop-Up Book.” YouTube, 2016, www.youtube.com/watch?v=KvrWn_kpAXc. Accessed 05 Feb. 2025.

This YouTube video shows the completed ABC pop-up book by French artist, Marion Bataille. The pop-up mechanisms that are included throughout this book are interesting. It includes techniques that I would like to incorporate in my book. This is a great resource for understanding how to create letterforms using pop-up.

Birmingham, Duncan. “The Pop-Up Channel.” YouTube, www.youtube.com/@thepop-upchannel4919. Accessed 05 Feb. 2025.

This YouTube channel includes videos that are all about pop-up and the theories behind this art form. Duncan Birmingham is the instructor for each video and has around 80 videos that explain various techniques of pop-up. I have marked a few of these videos that seem to pertain the most to what I want to do with my pop-up book.

Fussell, Grace. "The Psychology of Fonts: How to Choose Fonts That Evoke Emotion." Envato, Feb. 2024, <https://elements.envato.com/learn/the-psychology-of-fonts-fonts-that-evoke-emotion>. Accessed 03 Feb. 2025.

This article analyzes the psychology of fonts, breaking down each font group and discussing the psychological associations of those font types. Grace explains how slab serifs evoke feelings of power and strength because they lack the delicacy of serif fonts. Serif fonts evoke feelings of stability, and sans serif fonts evoke feelings of friendliness and openness. This analysis of typefaces is the framework for how I am choosing to construct my letterforms.

Makenstitch. "How to Embroider Letters by Hand | 5 Basic Stitches." YouTube, 2023, www.youtube.com/watch?v=CmMkgrL2KuU. Accessed 03 Feb. 2025.

This YouTube tutorial shows five different stitching techniques for embroidery. The process is step-by-step which is great in assisting as I learn how each stitch works before creating my final project. I will refer to this video several times as I begin my 2D project.

Saul. "Pop-Up 3D Words." Autodesk Instructables, [www.instructables.com/Pop-Up-3D-words-and-messages!/.](https://www.instructables.com/Pop-Up-3D-words-and-messages!/) Accessed 05 Feb. 2025.

This blog post details how to create pop-up words using 3D perspective. This technique is a common pop-up technique I have seen on Pinterest and Google as I have looked at existing pop-ups. I understand the concept behind this technique, and I will be using it for my pop-up book, with this serving as a great resource.

Senkowska, Mary. "The Paradox of Strength and Vulnerability." LinkedIn, Feb. 2023, www.linkedin.com/pulse/paradox-strength-vulnerability-mary-senkowska-1f/. Accessed Feb. 2025.

This blog article discusses the paradox of strength and vulnerability in the business sector, explaining how the social construct of the two pins them as opposites. Throughout the article, Mary explains how this social construct is toxic, and leads to a division or choice between being strong or being fragile. When the relationship between the two is in fact correlated, approaching the world with fragility and strength will lead to more well-rounded and fulfilling lives.

Stuart, Julie. "Beginner's Guide to Hand Embroidered Letters." Clever Poppy, Oct. 2022, <https://cleverpoppy.com/blogs/clever-poppy-blog/beginners-guide-to-hand-embroidered-letters?srltid=AfmBOoqq3LQD5FzkQ0MWYznIbgOqJIHoLXyvwZwc0GpdPBZJadJrCo2I>. Accessed 03 Feb. 2025.

This blog post is extremely thorough and covers embroidery for beginners in detail. The author, Julie, discusses tips for beginners and explanations for the different stitching techniques, especially when hand-stitching letters. Photos are included to visually communicate the different looks of the stitching techniques.