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**Type Philosophies Exhibition Design**  
Typography  
Fall 2019

Typography (ARTC 5330)  
Prof. Claudia Roeschmann  
Texas State University / MFA

# Zuzana Licko

American Type Designer



Zuzana Licko (1961) is a Slovak-born American type designer known for co-founding the graphic design magazine Emigre and for creating numerous typefaces.

Licko founded Emigre magazine with her husband, fellow typographer and graphic designer Rudy VanderLans, in 1984. The magazine was lauded for its attention to truly innovative graphic design experiments, and it became well-known for its fonts, designed by Licko on the first Apple Macintosh computer.

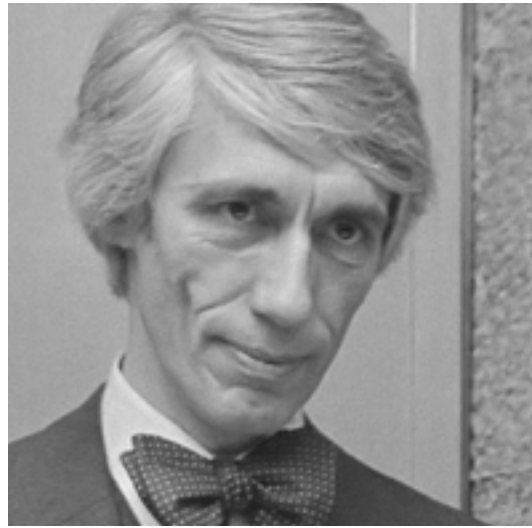
Licko was among the first to create typefaces made of pixels and composed of dots on a grid to be printed on early dot-matrix printers. The typographic image on the computer screen was a fairly accurate representation of the image output from the printer. Oakland, Emperor, and Emigre were her first three fonts to be created using this grid based system.

By 1985, laser printing technology was introduced, and the type designs Licko had produced for the dot matrix printer technology became obsolete, but the principles she had used to create the type were still completely valid. She continued to produce type designs for new technologies. Although many of her designs are more than two decades old, Licko's designs still provide an innovative and contemporary aesthetic. She continues to be a prolific type designer with more than 30 designs to her name.



# Wim Crouwel

Dutch Typographer



Willem “Wim” Crouwel (1928 - 2019) was a Dutch graphic designer, type designer, and typographer.

Based on modernist principles, Crouwel’s lucid and systematic approach to design is underpinned by a grid-based methodology. Crouwel’s use of grid systems led to his best-known nickname “Mr. Gridnik”.

His process, logical yet experimental, distills a subject down to its absolute essence and in doing so he achieves great impact and purpose in both his exhibition and print design.

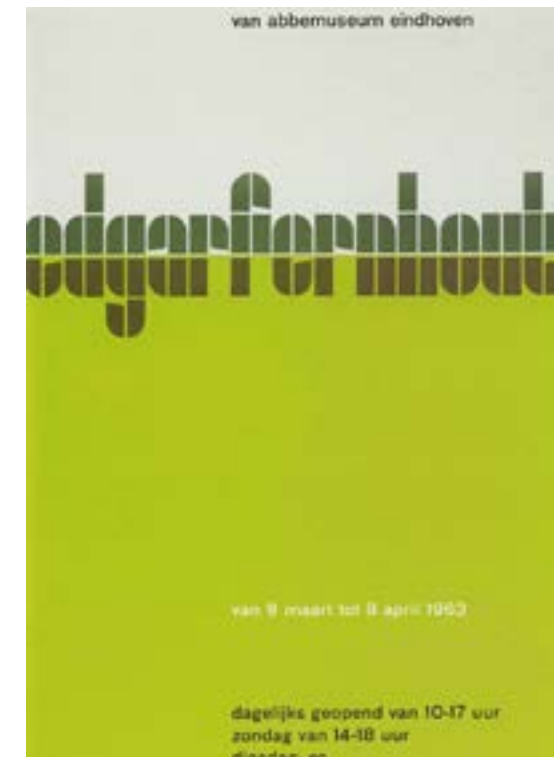
Through his long and productive career he has

produced exemplary work in exhibition design, and designed posters, calendars, typefaces, trademarks and stamps.

Crouwel was responsible for the graphic identity of the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam between 1963 and 1985, where he produced more than 400 posters for the museum and at least 300 catalogs, as well as all its visual communications.

Crouwel’s graphic work is especially well known for the use of grid-based layouts and typography that is rooted in the International Typographic Style. His medium WAS the grid: a way of finding an all-encompassing underlying structure for his work. Unable to find type design that suited his needs, Crouwel began creating letterforms by hand using these grid-based systems. These unique creations were often the dominant aspect of his designs.

In the infancy of digital typography—as lead type, set by hand in heavy lead blocks or by machines that generated lines of metal type, was giving way to text set on screens—Crouwel saw an opportunity for an interesting experiment. Early computer screens—cathode ray tube (CRT) monitors—rendered images in fairly large pixels, making traditional curvilinear letterforms difficult to reconstruct, and so Crouwel set out to redesign the alphabet using only horizontal lines. New Alphabet is, in Crouwel’s words, “over-the-top and never meant to be really used,” a statement on the impact of new technologies on centuries of typographic tradition. He continued this exploration with other grid-based type designs, namely Gridnik and Fodor.



## Project Outcome

Develop an exhibition of your chosen type designer / typographer and their joint philosophy to be shown at the Bauhaus. Create a conceptual exhibition that interprets and showcases the philosophy of your chosen typeface designer / typographer by using typographic elements only.

The exhibition should enforce the philosophy of your typeface designer / typographer within the chosen Bauhaus space (virtual / physical).

Your final outcome can be any format + any length but should be geared towards the Bauhaus visitor. You must work from a pre-existing typeface, any illustrative effect must be achieved by the manipulation of type.

## Initial Concept Ideas

### **Type**

How typography changes the topography of the visual landscape. The thought would be replacing Crouwel's modern Univers/ Helvetica with Licko's more postmodern typefaces. Either through transparent type windows/overlays, linear panels (a la Crouwel's calendar design), just some kind of interface that shifts perspectives and showcases the changes in the overall design.

### **Digital**

How screens changed type design. A chronological study of the two designers along a long visual timeline. Starting with Crouwel's early work by hand, then highlighting the introduction of the cathode ray tube and his grid-based type design, transitioning into Licko's work with the Macintosh and dot matrix printers, and how they both navigated solutions for higher resolution screens.

### **Grid**

The grid in the works of Wim Crouwel and Zuzana Licko. As different as their philosophies are (Crouwel design decisions were led primarily by the grid and Licko allowed more exploration) they both share a commonality in the grid itself. Both designed grid-based typefaces that used primarily vertical and horizontal lines. This could be done with a physical grid or perhaps a virtual exhibit or game. The idea being to really evaluate the structure of the type forms placed on the grid.

## Chosen Concept

### **Gridworks**

The chosen concept was a combination of the three exhibition concepts.

This exhibit is a chronological study of the works of Wim Crouwel and Zuzana Licko. Starting with Crouwel's early work by hand, then highlighting the introduction of the cathode ray tube and his grid-based type design, transitioning into Licko's work with the Macintosh and dot matrix printers, and how they both navigated solutions for higher resolution screens.

The grid plays a significant part in the work of Crouwel and Licko. As different as their philosophies are (Crouwel design decisions were led primarily by the grid and Licko allowed more exploration) they both share a commonality in the grid itself. Both designed grid-based typefaces that used primarily vertical and horizontal lines.

In 2011, Licko's Oakland and Crouwel's New Alphabet (along with 21 other type designs) were inducted in MoMA's Font Hall of Fame for elegant solutions to typography design in the midst of the digital revolution.

# Exhibition Location

## **The Bauhaus, Dessau**

The Dessau location seems the best fit for this exhibition. The Dessau phase of the Bauhaus is characterized by its orientation towards the new unity of art and technology. The focus of this project is how technology changed type design and type use. This exhibit would highlight the structure and art of these unique letter forms and how new technologies changed this structure.



Photo by Nate Robert used with attribution

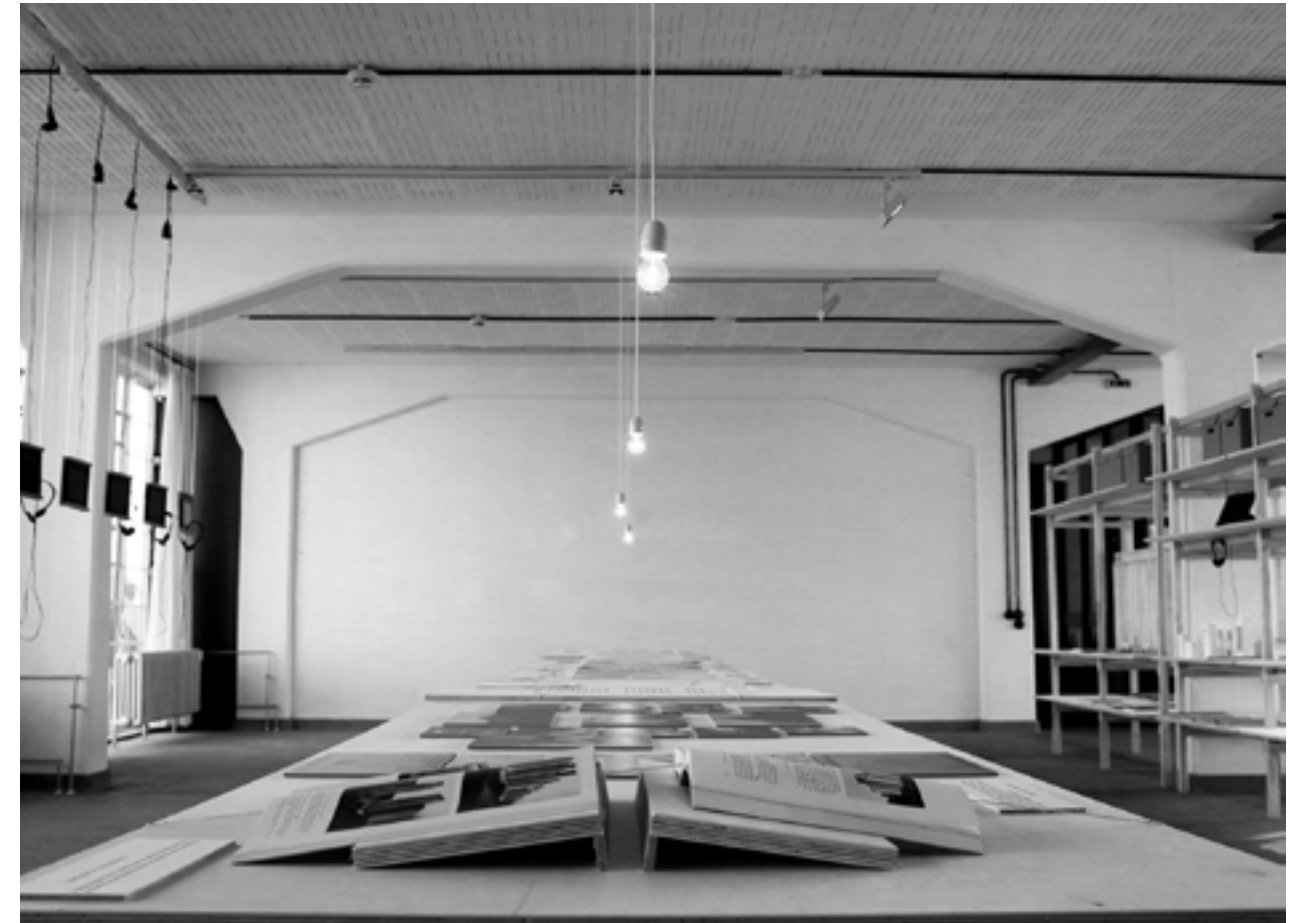
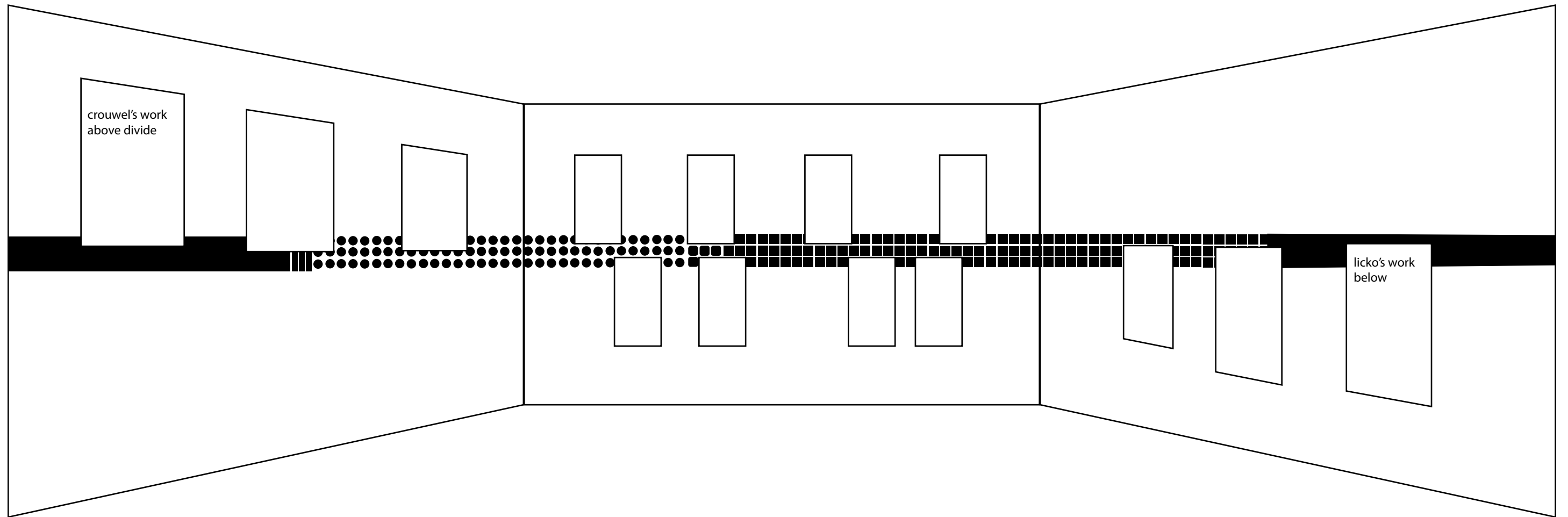


Photo from Baklazaras Dessau exhibition

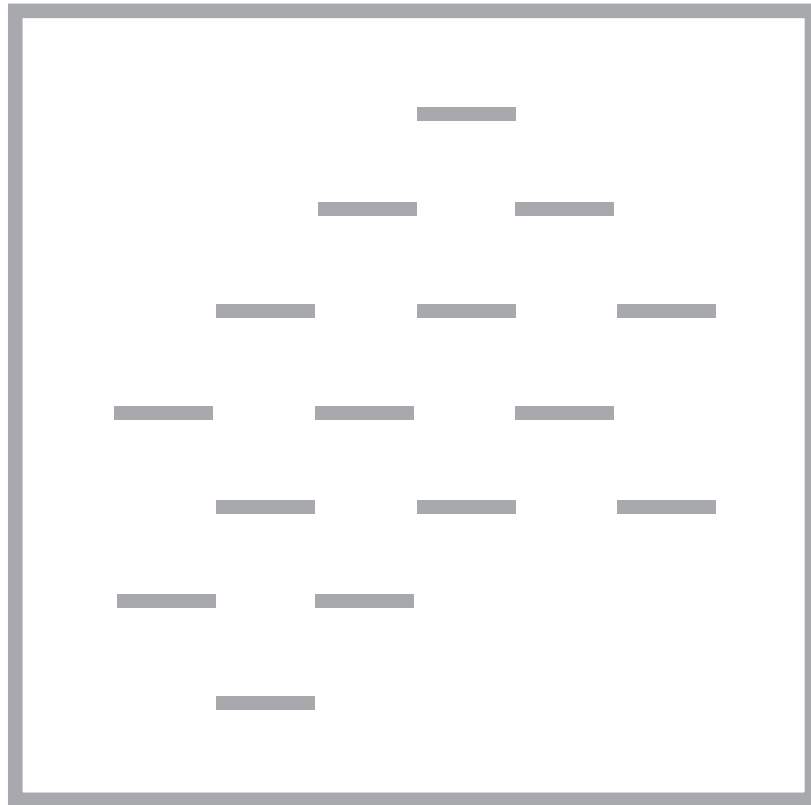
# Exhibition Design Concept 1: Digital Divide

Exhibit layout



Linear chronology of the work and print technology available during that time. From solid press to dot matrix, pixels, and near solid higher resolution screen tech shown visually in the band running across the middle. This band could also be made out of printed type.

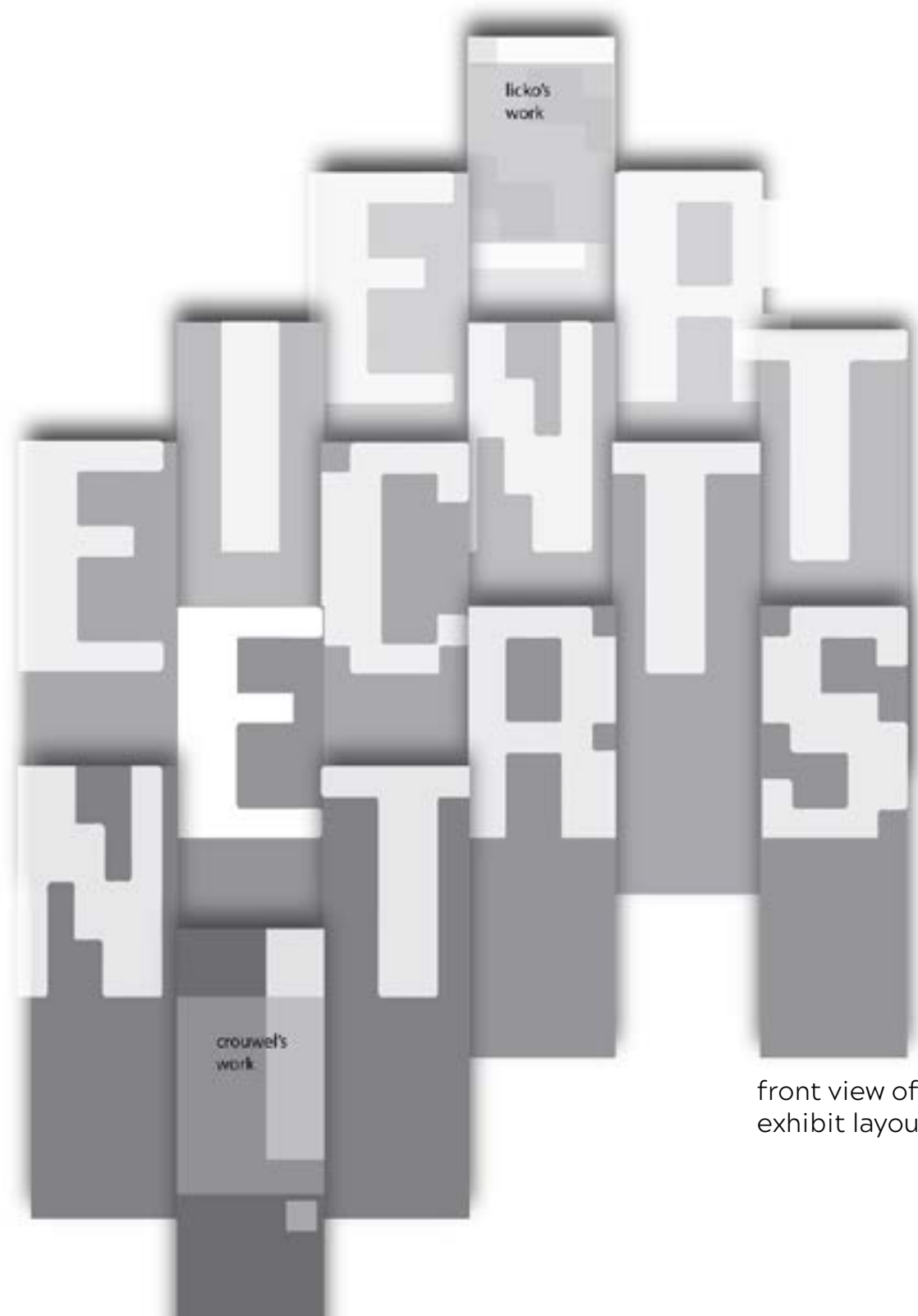
## Exhibition Design Concept 2: Intersection or Gridworks



overhead view of exhibit layout



image inspiration

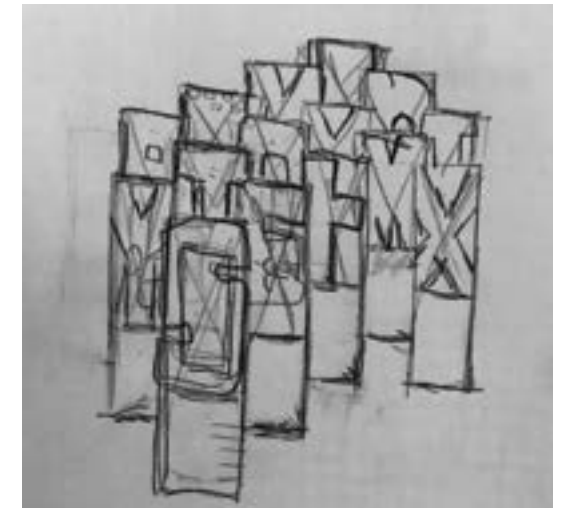


front view of exhibit layout

Chronological study of the use of the grid to navigate type design/use solutions and where/how Crowel and Licko's philosophies overlap.

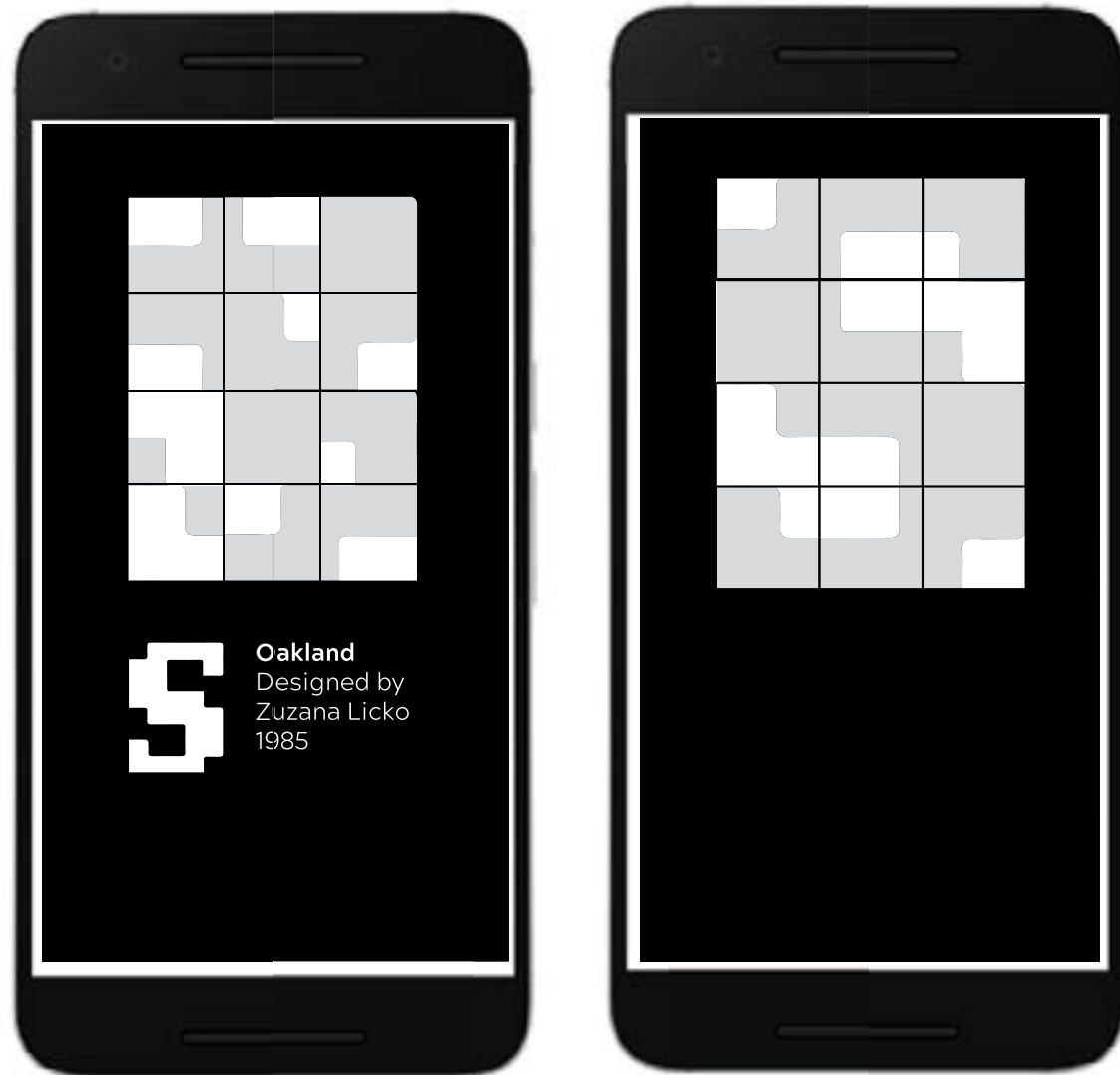
The solution is a grid font placed on panel backgrounds with artwork floating on top, maybe with slight transparency?

The grid typeface could change chronologically by designer as the viewer navigates through.



This layout could make for some really interesting visual combinations from different view points.

## Exhibition Design Concept 3: Gridworks App



Emperor  
**OAKLAND**  
Emigre



a sampling of type from the two designers

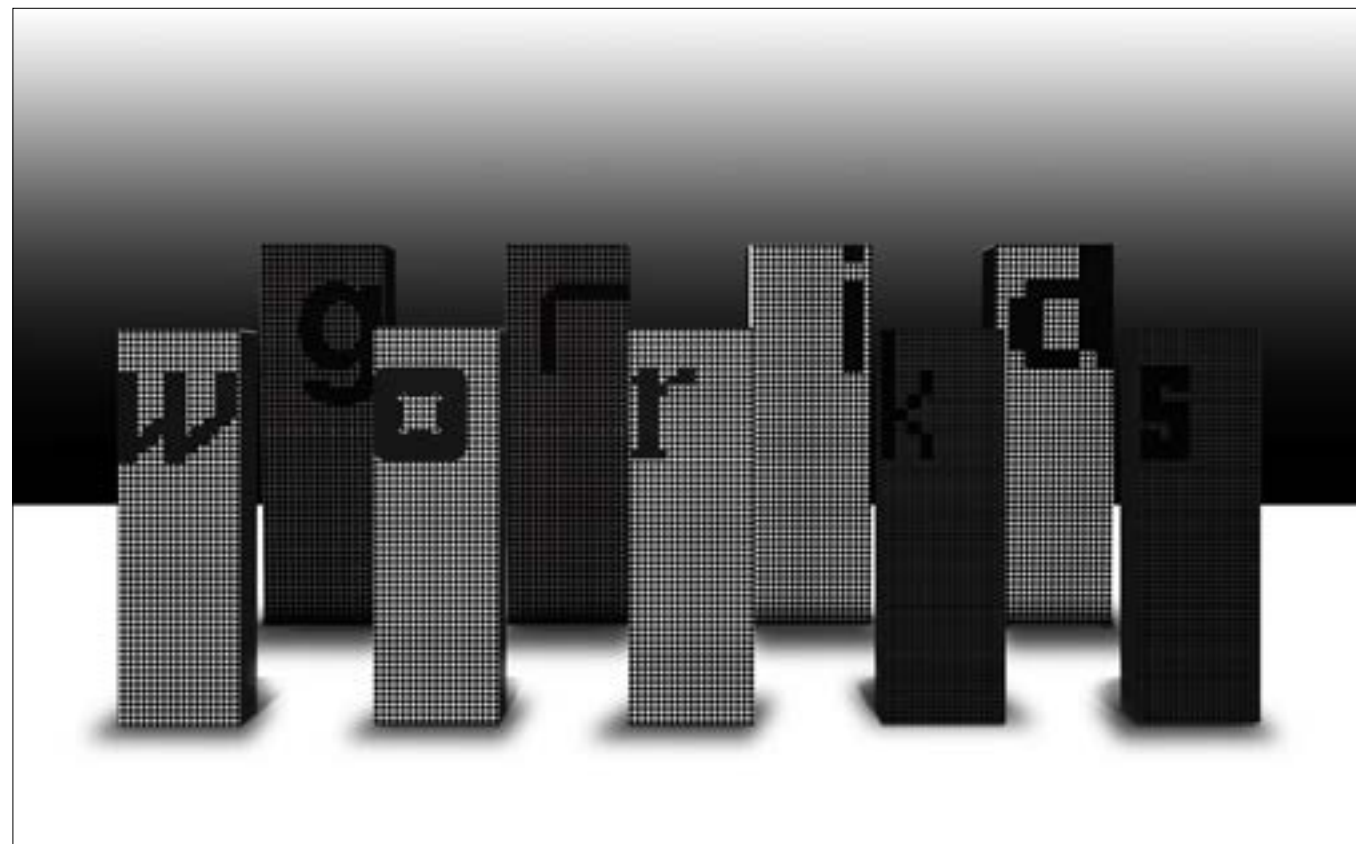
This app/game could stand alone as an exhibition of the work of the two designers or it could be used to navigate through the exhibition itself. Viewers reassemble a letter on the grid to view the structure of the letter. The visitor will spell out 'gridworks' to unlock additional information about each typeface used in the exhibition using Crouwel and Licko's type designs. This could work for either one of the options presented.



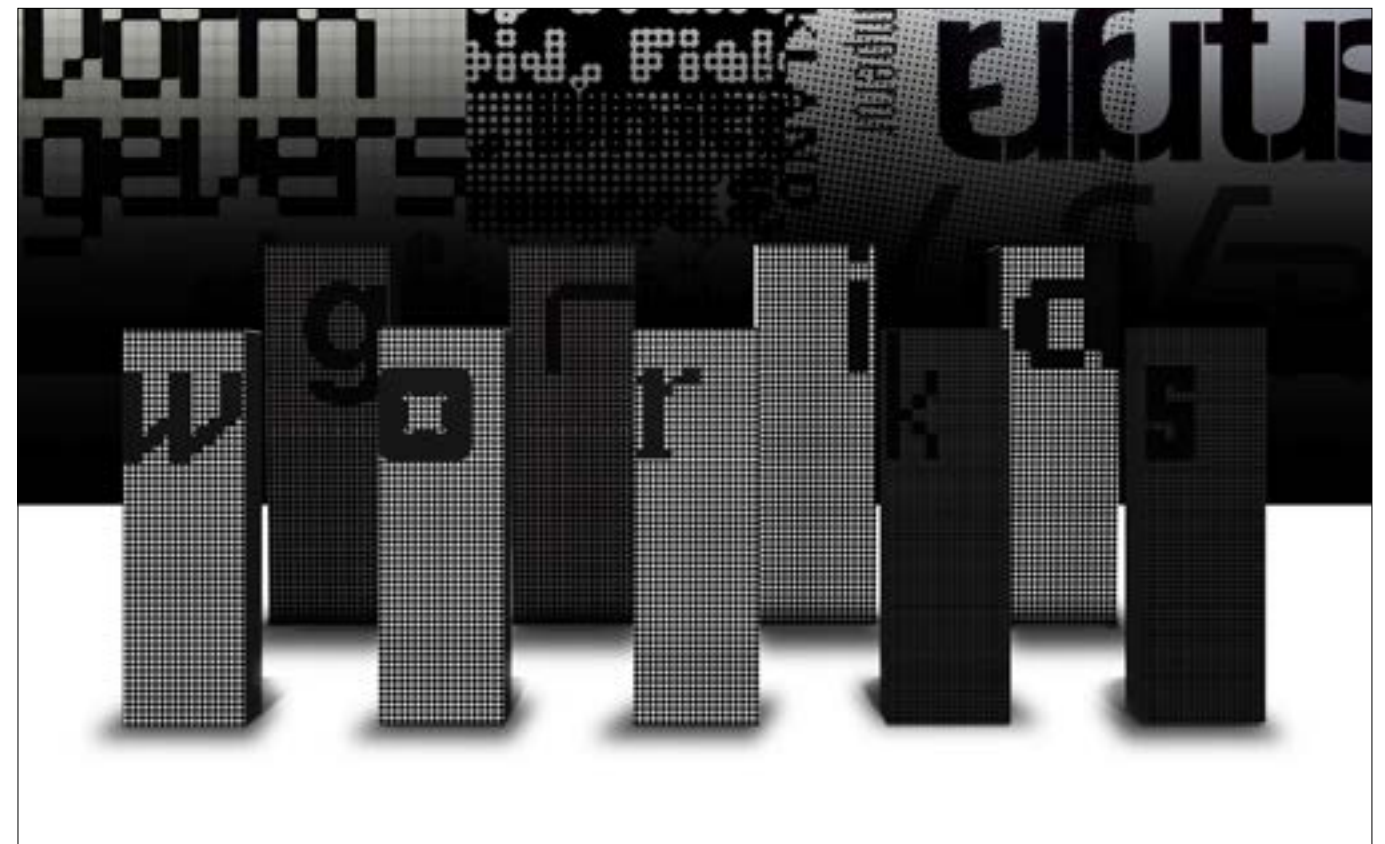
# Exhibition Design Concept Proof

Updated concept 2 with 'gridworks' spelled out in various grid-based type. Each grid is created with the type of grid and/or printing technique. Starting with the grid style that Crowel used, moving through dot matrix and on to individual pixels. Version 1 shows the exhibit columns and Version 2 shows a typographic installation using Crowel and Licko's type designs.

Each column would be roughly 3x8 with 3 feet of walking space in between each column. The columns will be laid out in a grid. I think each designer has enough work in the corresponding typeface to have a piece on each side of the column highlighting the type used in the piece.



Version 1

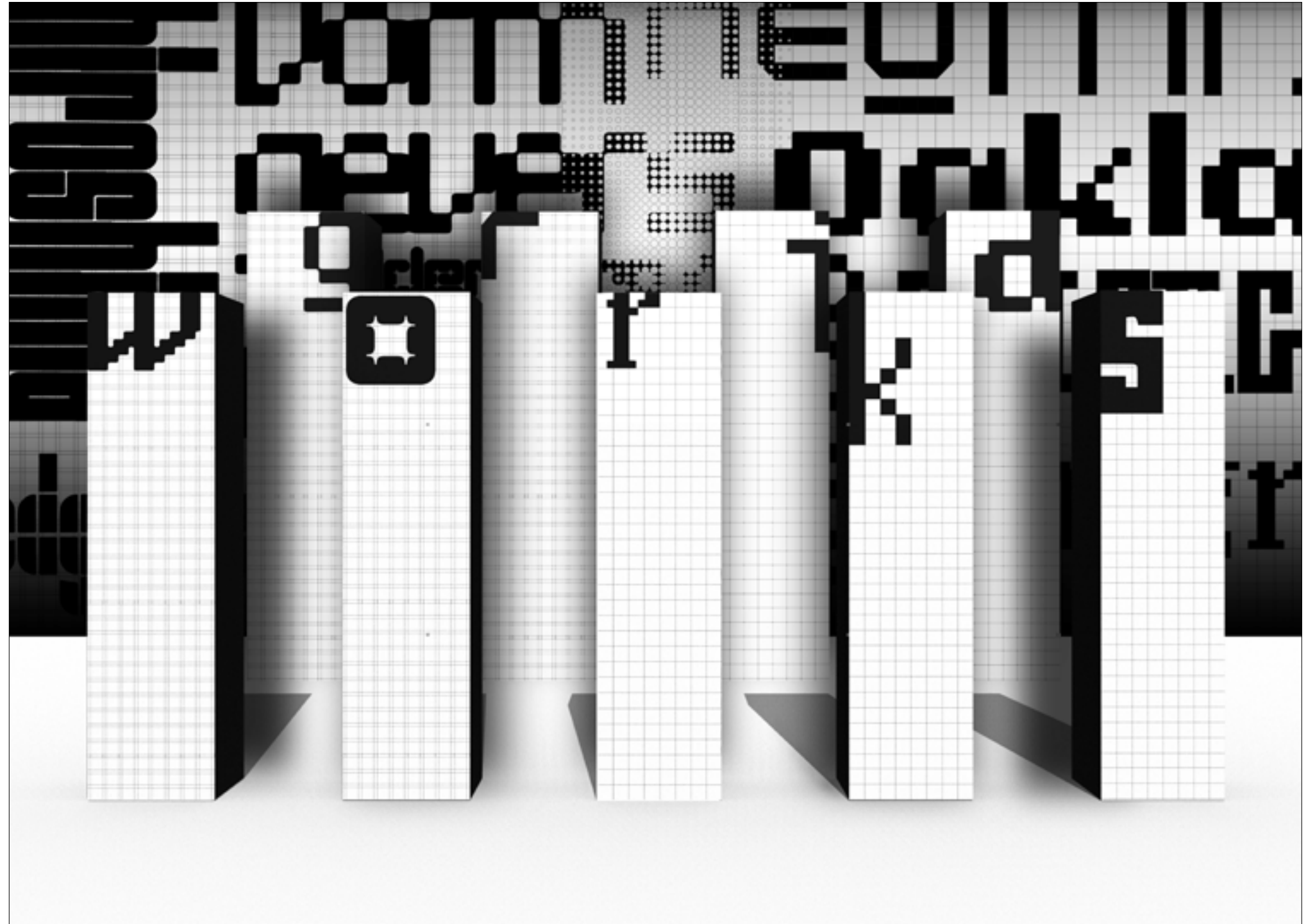


Version 2

## Exhibition Design Concept Proof with Revisions

Type wall moving from Crouwel's drafting grid transitioning with a halftone dot matrix pattern to a shared individual pixel grid. The type is a combination of hand-drafted type design for Crouwel's exhibits to his typeface design and transitioning to Licko's type designs. It's not in a perfect chronology, but it's relatively close.

The grid columns will reflect the grid on the wall so there is more of a continuity and flow.



# Gridworks Exhibition Design Final

## Gridworks Exhibit Introduction

Dissect the grid using the works of Wim Crouwel and Zuzana Licko. This exhibit showcases Crouwel's early work with hand drawn type using his variable grid and transitions into type design for the cathode ray tube and new printing technologies. These two designers explored technology-based design solutions. This exploration is reflected in Licko's work with the Macintosh and dot matrix printers, and showcases how they both navigated type design and for higher resolution screens.

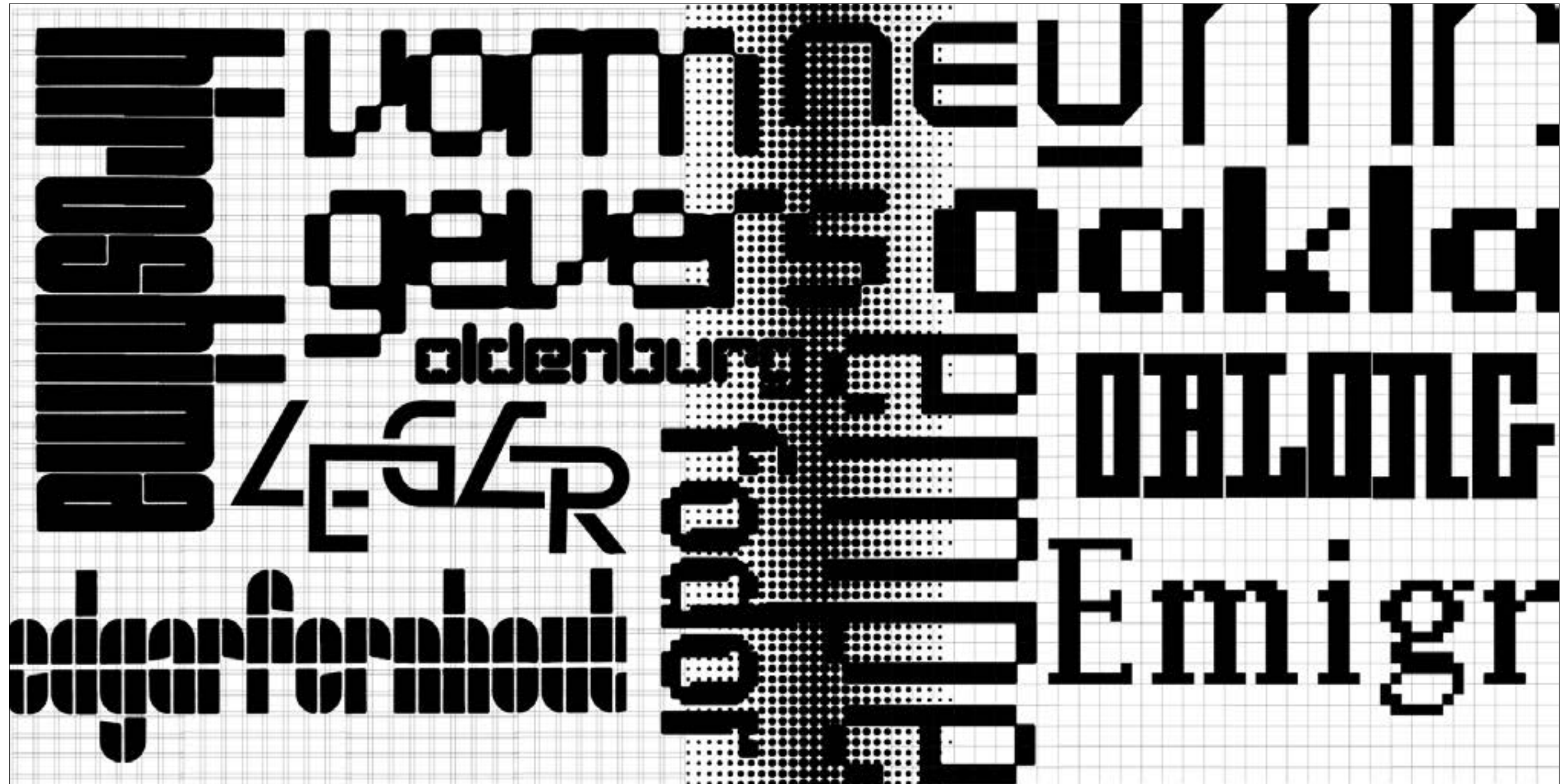
As different as their philosophies are (Crouwel's modernist design preferences and Licko's post modern type explorations) they both share a commonality in the utilization of the grid itself.

In 2011, Crouwel's New Alphabet and Licko's Oakland were inducted in MoMA's Font Hall of Fame for elegant solutions to typography design in the midst of the digital revolution.



# Gridworks Exhibition Design Final

## Back Wall Type Installation



# Gridworks Exhibition Design Final

## Gridworks Column Design



# Gridworks Exhibition Design Final

## Gridworks Exhibition Navigation App Design



Thank You