

## Andrew van der Merwe

Andrew van der Merwe is a calligrapher based in Cape Town, South Africa where he has practiced professionally for over 25 years. He says his love of letters began with his first writing lessons at the tender age of six when a beautiful teacher let her long brown hair fall over his desk while she gave him gold stars for his writing. He began freelancing part-time as a calligrapher while reading for a philosophy and politics degree at the University of Cape Town. He is mostly self-taught.

He specializes in wordmark design for branding as well as in the writing of illuminated addresses. Recipients of his illuminated address work include Nelson Mandela and Barack and Michelle Obama. Van der Merwe puts his hand to any work or art involving letters but he is best known for his pioneering work in what he has called beach calligraphy.

As a calligraphy teacher, his main interest is in hand-arm mechanics, rhythm and writing technique and how these relate to good form. He has also taught illuminated address and wordmark design and presented numerous beach calligraphy workshops. He has taught in Seattle, Montana, San Francisco and LA, among others, and presented online talks for the Japan Letter Arts Forum and IAMPETH, among others.

In all his work Van der Merwe strives to express his philosophy of rhythm and good movement: “Good form follows good movement. Without good movement your calligraphy is like a stuffed bird. I’d rather have a limping live one than a perfect dead one.”