



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Handwriting Day: I'll write it by hand!**

*Imagine if nobody wrote by hand anymore. Offices might be a bit tidier but also emptier. No post-its or urgent notes. No (un-)intentional amusing messages in the office. There would also be no personal greetings, no "I love you" from the partner on the kitchen table. Some words might never have been said and others might have been forgotten. Alexander von Humboldt's observations on his research trips would not have been noted. In order to recall the value of the handwritten expression, writing and creative goods manufacturer STAEDTLER calls on us to observe Handwriting Day on 23 January: "I'll write it by hand!"*

#### **Significance of handwriting**

Since 1977, Handwriting Day on 23 January has reminded us of the diversity and uniqueness of handwriting. The themed day was initiated by the US Writing Instrument Manufacturers Association (WIMA). The date not only celebrates the handwritten word worldwide, but also one of the most important signatures in US history: That of John Hancock, the first signatory to the US Declaration of Independence. His birthday fell on 23 January.<sup>1,2</sup>

"On the annual Handwriting Day, we deliberately draw attention to the importance of handwritten writing," says Britta Olsen, Head of Brand and Communications at STAEDTLER. "Digital media is becoming increasingly important in our daily work and personal life and handwriting is too often moving out of our focus. Trends such as sketch noting and hand lettering show how relevant it is for us today. And what joy this form of expression brings."

#### **Personalisation of handwriting**

The ability to write by hand continues to evolve over the course of life. It is not only the anatomical adjustment of the hand to the writing instrument that plays a role, but also cognitive abilities. If children's first writing experiments are with, for example, colourful, thick crayons, they are then able to draw shapes by the time they start school.<sup>3,4</sup> Today, pens and pencils also take into account specific requirements for even the smallest children's hands, for example in terms of ergonomics, as shown by the new Noris junior range from STAEDTLER. At primary school age, children are usually more familiar with writing instruments and writing movements become automatic.<sup>4</sup> This process continues into adulthood. Handwriting becomes increasingly personalised and bears testimony to the individual development of the writer. As a result, it is not directly dependent on age, but is formed from writing experience.<sup>4,5</sup>

#### **Authentic and emotional**

The personal touch of handwriting - whether easy to read or not – sets it apart from digital typing. "Their authenticity and spontaneity is what makes the notes so unique," emphasises Britta Olsen. "On a piece of paper, there is no spelling check and no standardisation. The authenticity of personal greetings is hard to beat."

Just like messages from another age. Back in the early 20th century, Rudolf Kreutzer noted in his travel diary during a sales trip that "saws are often used to chop the famous Californian red wood".<sup>6</sup> An unusual

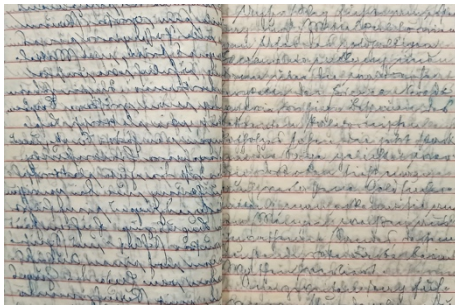
remark at that time, pointing out that the later Managing Director of STAEDTLER introduced a sustainable ethical approach to responsibility to the company back then. On the following pages, which are provided in STAEDTLER's Corporate Archive, Kreutzer reports by hand on his business and experiences in Canada and the USA. "The words were written pretty close together and therefore for easier readability," explains Britta Olsen. "What used to be a common writing style is a challenge for today's readers".

Other travel diaries, such as those of natural scientist Alexander von Humboldt and butterfly expert Margaret Fountaine, are also valuable reports, documentation and analyses today. Not only are the written words in the travel diaries of value, but also the drawings that researchers placed between the lines. Detailed sketches that are retained to this day.<sup>7</sup> This makes the travel diaries not only relevant for science, but also unique like a fingerprint.

### Hand lettering and calligraphy

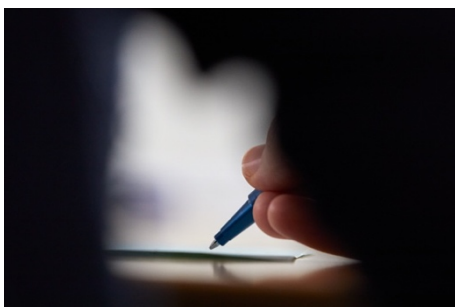
Not only handwriting, but also its forms of art have a long tradition. For example, the art of beautiful writing, calligraphy, has been an integral part of religious writing culture for centuries<sup>8,9</sup> - and continues to be very popular today. Even in the Middle Ages, the artistic merging of letters was considered a distinguished decoration of books and their pages. In Nuremberg, some artists emerged who brought out the city's reputation as a "stylistic centre" for illustrating books.<sup>10</sup> Today, hand lettering is a globally valued trend. "We are constantly improving our hand lettering range, creative tips and tutorials," explains Britta Olsen. "To introduce people of all ages to this special art form and support their creativity."

The significance of handwriting as a written and artistic form has changed over time. It is used to hold a monopoly position as an everyday tool, but today it is more of an act of spontaneity, but also of value. "It adds importance to personal messages," says Britta Olsen. "Whether it's asking your colleague to close the door when they leave the office or a love note on the kitchen table. On Handwriting Day, we would like to point out that it is important to take the time and to say more often: I'll write it by hand!"



Caption: Rudolf Kreutzer's travel diary from 1909 is stored in the STAEDTLER Corporate Archive. For better legibility, the diaries were transcribed.

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Caption: Writing personal messages to loved ones, leaving a quick note for a colleague or recording special memories: Our handwriting accompanies us for a lifetime.

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Caption: What would an everyday routine be like without post-its and sticky notes? Quite colourless - and not half as fun. Personal messages are as authentic as their writers.

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Caption: "Printer paper is empty. Please refill!!!" Sometimes it would be quicker to replenish the printer paper than to write a note.

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Caption: When technology misbehaves: Even in the digital age, we still rely on handwritten notes in many situations. For example, if a colleague has no audio during a video call.

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## About STAEDTLER

*STAEDTLER is one of Germany's oldest industrial companies. The group ranks among the world's leading manufacturers and suppliers of writing, colouring, drawing and modelling products. With its products, STAEDTLER inspires the creativity of its customers throughout their life: from their first attempts at colouring in early childhood to products for creative work. The writing and creative goods manufacturer offers a wide range of high-quality products for all ages and demands, constantly developing new approaches to connect analogue tradition and digital innovation. STAEDTLER headquarters are located in Nuremberg. It employs 3,000 people in 26 countries worldwide – of which 1,200 work in STAEDTLER'S domestic market. For production the company stays true to its roots and counts on quality "Made in Germany": nearly two-thirds of all STAEDTLER products are manufactured in Germany.*

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