

THE ART OF SCRIPT

Humanity's Creative Abilities to Give Sound & Thought a Body

Starsong Brittain Ideafest 2022

Humans are the only species to produce a visual representation of verbal communication that can be transmitted across space and time. Numerous scripts have been made throughout the history of humanity. Each one is unique to the culture in which it was created and representative of how that culture views the cosmos, the world and the understanding of their place within it. Script has the unique quality to be expanded, reshape, revived or created. The knowledge and skills for producing and understanding scripts were initially only available to those within the sacred domain. Over time it has now come to be seen as a common right of all human kind. However, this does not detract from its use as an amazing expression of the human experience. The bandwidth of creative power script has is on par with the standards by which rest of the arts are judged. These featured examples are a small sampling of the many forms that script has taken and can be given.

Letters

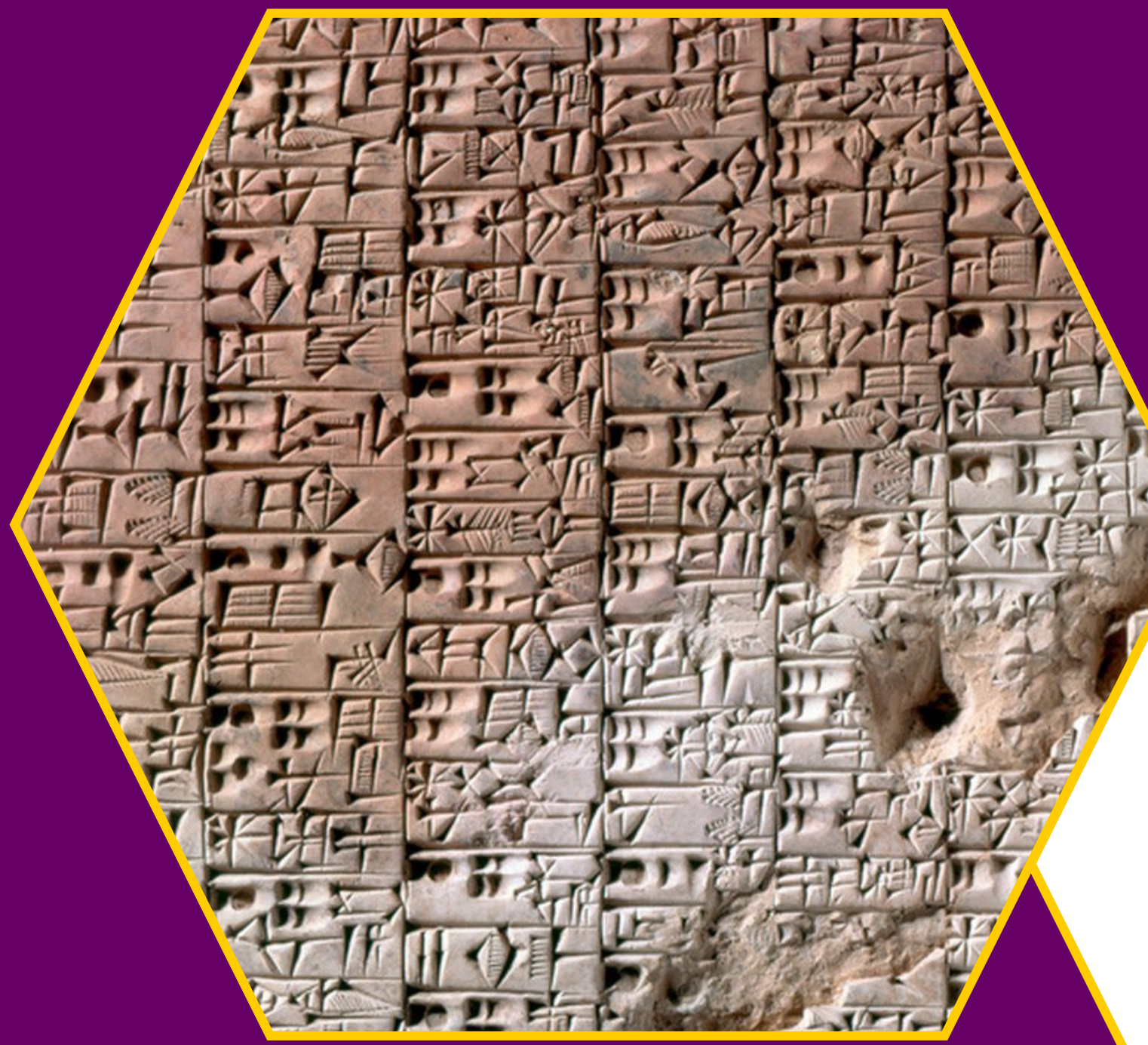
“The conventional signs by which language can be communicated—and the skill to make them with such ordering of the various parts and harmony of proportions that the experienced, knowledgeable eye will recognize such composition as a work of art.”

- Encyclopedia Britannica



"Namárië" by J.R.R. Tolkien. Image produced by Tiger Tjäder.

Fictional
Languages do not exist in the real world, but are fabricated and developed by communities, fandoms, of people from across the globe.



Cuneiform Tablet ca. 2600 BCE. Curated by the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. ARTSTOR.

Cuneiform is the oldest known writing system in the world. It was developed in the ancient region of Mesopotamia. It was used until 6th century B.C.E.



"HTML and Javascript code on black background" by Martin Vorel.

Code is the script humans gave to computers to be able to function and to communicate to each other and for us. The script we use for our languages in the virtual world is called Unicode



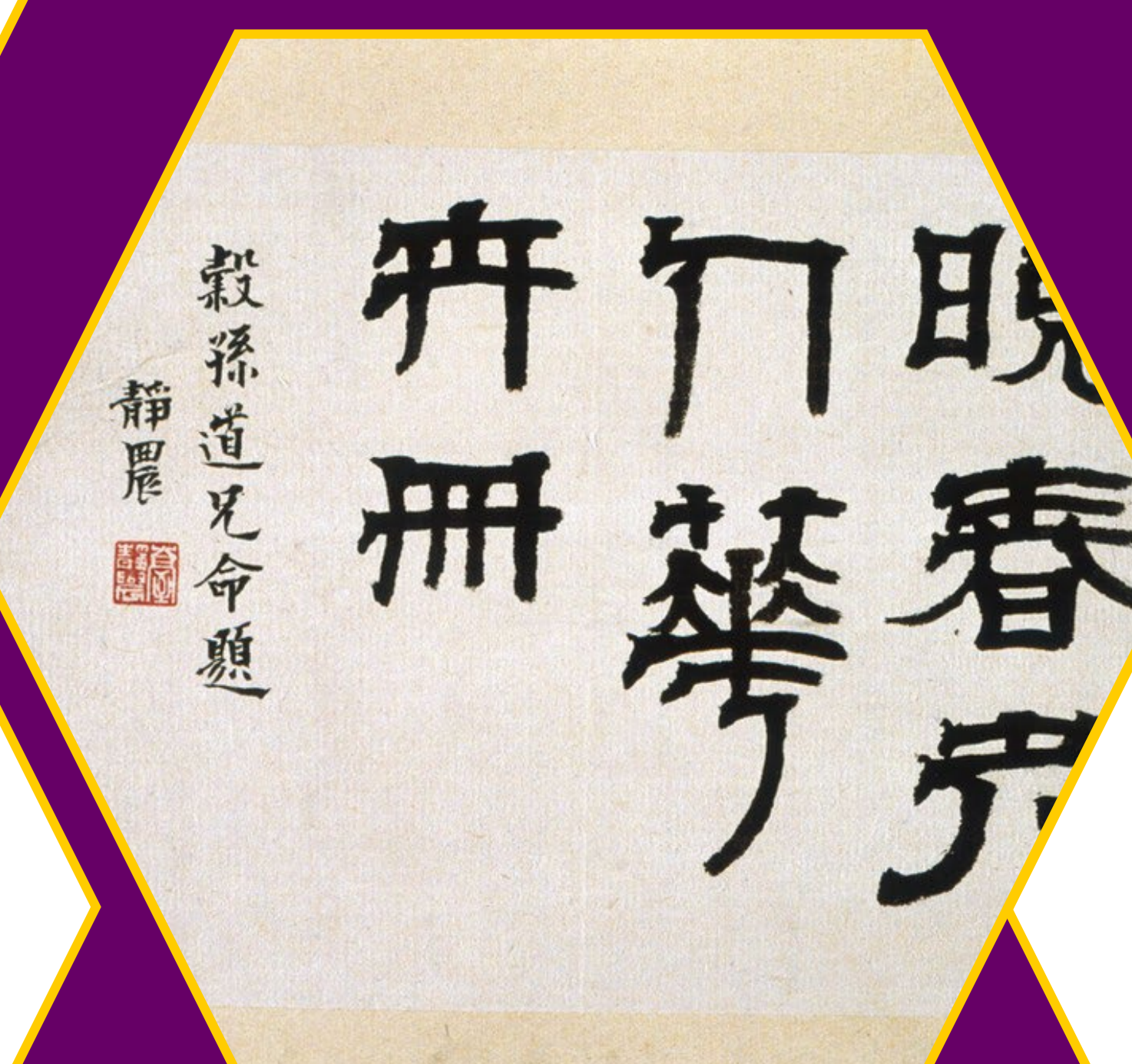
Igbo wrapper (akara) ca. second half 20th century. Curated by the Saint Louis Art Museum. ARTSTOR.

Nsibidi is from Nigeria. The use of this script is dated back to 400 C.E. The full meaning of the content is expressed when the material or medium is regularly used.



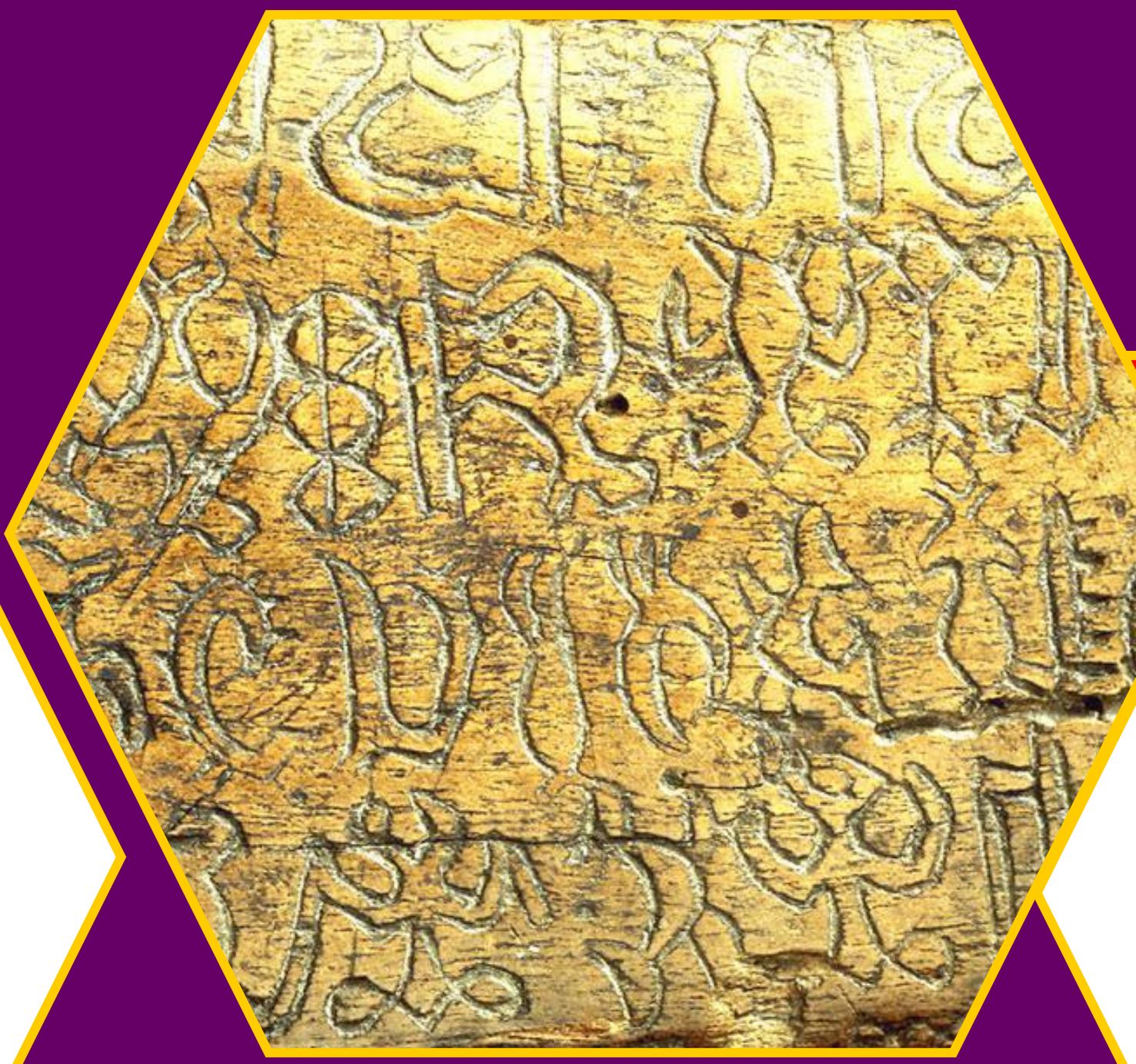
"graffiti alley" in Toronto Canada. Photo by Valerie Doubleday, Jan 26, 2018.

Tagging is a script that developed inside of the Hip Hop culture of the 1980's. Monikers, a taggers name or calling-card, are three to five letters long.



Album of Flowers by Wang Shishan, 1686-1759. ARTSTOR.

Calligraphy is held as the highest form of art by which all other arts are judged in Chinese tradition. Script has been in use since 2600 B.C.E.



"Wooden tablet with rongorongo inscription" Curated by The British Museum.

Rongorongo is the script found on the island of Rapa Nui. One theory is that the shape is heavily influenced by the Wayfinding tradition of Polynesian culture.



Khipu Quipu, from Peru, c. 1400-1532. Curated by The Cleveland Museum of Art. ARTSTOR.

Incan system communicates through the use of various materials and combinations with color and thread. As well as the direction of the knots.



Words of "greetings" in Karuk and Hupa. Located outside the Native American Forum. Image by S. Brittain.

Indigenous languages do not all have a script. Nations are working to have a script that accurately represent their languages in written form.



Drawings associated with Ya'qub Beg. c. 1450-1486; during the Ottoman Period. ARTSTOR.

Islamic Calligraphy has a strong connection to the divine by the act of making script. Last year UNESCO designated it cultural heritage.



Ogham Stone, located on the driveway to the Colaiste Ide School, 5th - 7th century CE. ARTSTOR.

Ogham was used during the Medieval Period in Southern Ireland and the British isle. It stopped being used when Old Irish developed.



Códice de Dresde 10, Dresden Codex. Curated by the Museum of the Saxon State Library. ARTSTOR.

The Mayan script is still being deciphered. The language is not dead, but the ability to read the script ended with colonization.