

Basel Academy of Art and Design FHNW
Institute for Digital Communication Environments (IDCE)
Freilager Platz 1
4002 Basel
theodore.davis@fhnw.ch

Letter of Recommendation for Nicolas Birrer

To Whom it May Concern

I've known Nicolas Birrer since he first joined my introduction to creative coding course (Generative Gestaltung) in the Fall of 2023 and have since had the pleasure his joining two additional classes and mentoring his final thesis project. From the very start, one could sense his dedication to learning and most importantly practicing the technical matter for programming, along with his interest to help fellow students when they struggled. While the first two courses consisted of partner projects, it remained clear how active a role he played in the shared project. In a third course, "Generative Tool Making", he shined by taking a full dive into the rabbit hole of coding, having decided to focus on the suggested challenge of working with "classes" (object-oriented programming), where one can work in a modular way. Not only did he take this on, he ended up designing a tool to manipulate typography that consisted of three levels of classes (objects, made up of objects, made up of objects...!) which resulted in a highly customizable and complex workflow. Complete with a custom graphical user interface (GUI), it set the bar extremely high and is easily a showcase tool to inspire future students of this course. Furthermore his willingness to struggle was impressive, as the initial temptation of outsourcing to AI tools started to affect some of his peers. In this final thesis project, as a co-mentor, I experienced his thoughtful reflection on the current times we find ourselves in, as AI tools offer an instant output that bypasses process and generates code that can be difficult to further develop. His exploration of both "handmade" and well informed "vibe-coded" experiments provided valuable insight to this domain of craft in digital design. I am extremely confident that Nicolas will be a great asset to any design team, as his technical and personable skills bring a lot to the table.

For the Basel Academy of Art and Design
Basel, October 5, 2026

Ted Davis

Coordinator, MDes in Graphic Design UIC/HGK Basel
Lecturer (Dozent) for Interaction Design
Basel Academy of Art and Design FHNW