

Line of inquiry

How can we use typography to visualise the invisible distortion of Asian culture in Western-centred design education?

How to use typography to express the presence of Asian culture in the Western-centred field of typography?

How to use typography to express the presence of Asia (Japan) in a Western-centred design culture?

Future plan

Research

Research on more 'cultural distortion' examples.
Research on 'distortion' in Japanese context. (and visual experiments)
What kind of general discussion is taking place about distortion?
(it has a strong negative image, but are there positive distortions?)

Based on the research, define 'distortion' in my own way and express

Audience

Asian designers based western design education
Non-Asian graphic or typeface designers

Media

Publication

Visual reference

“Anything around us can stimulate our senses and can be inspirational and an “object” for investigation once we reimagine it. Creativity can be everywhere.” (Tina Touli, 2023)

Tina Touli continues to be a major influence on my design. Her projects are characterised by the use of everyday objects (glass, petrol, foam) and combining them with digital to create experimental visual types. I decided to take her method and create typefaces using glass and clay.



Visual Experiments 01



A B C D E F G

H I J K L M N

O P Q R S T

U V W X Y Z

Visual Experiments 02



A B C D E F G

H I J K L M N

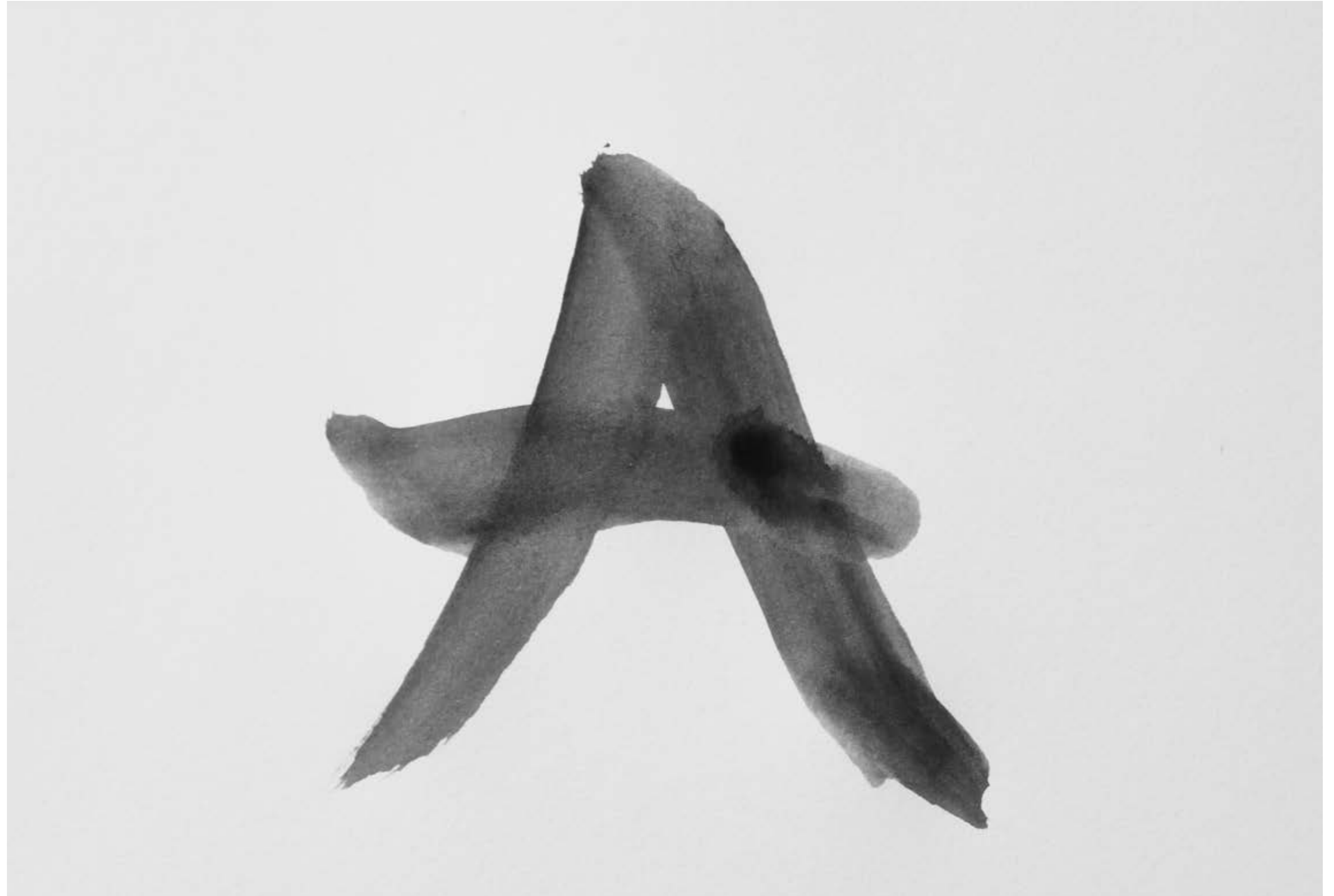
O P Q R S T

U V W X Y Z

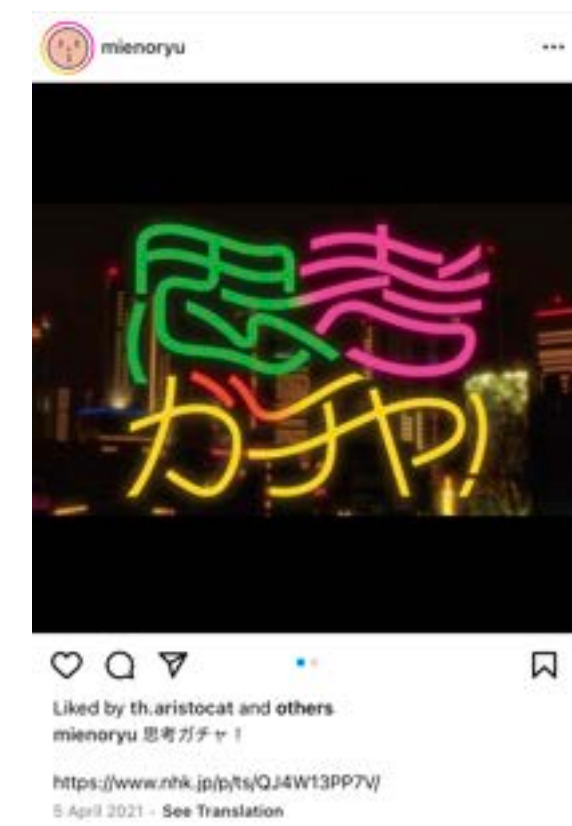
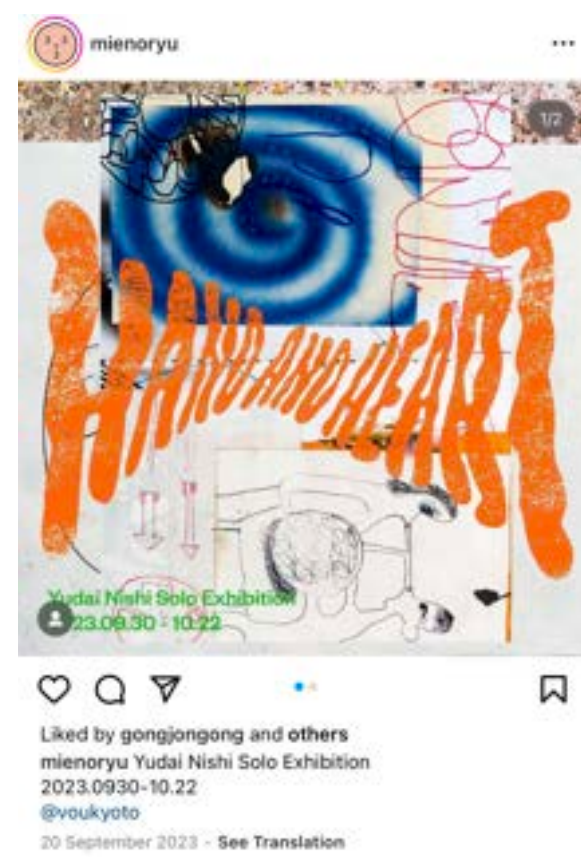
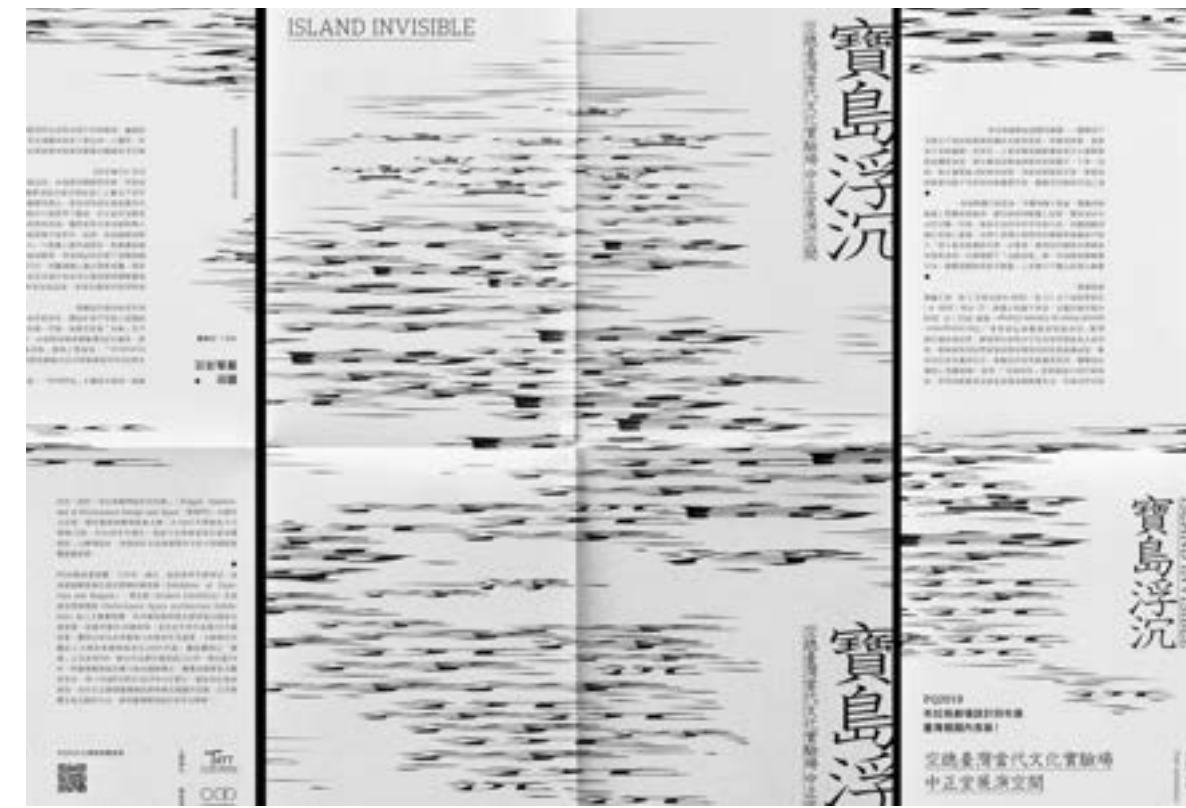
Visual Experiments 03



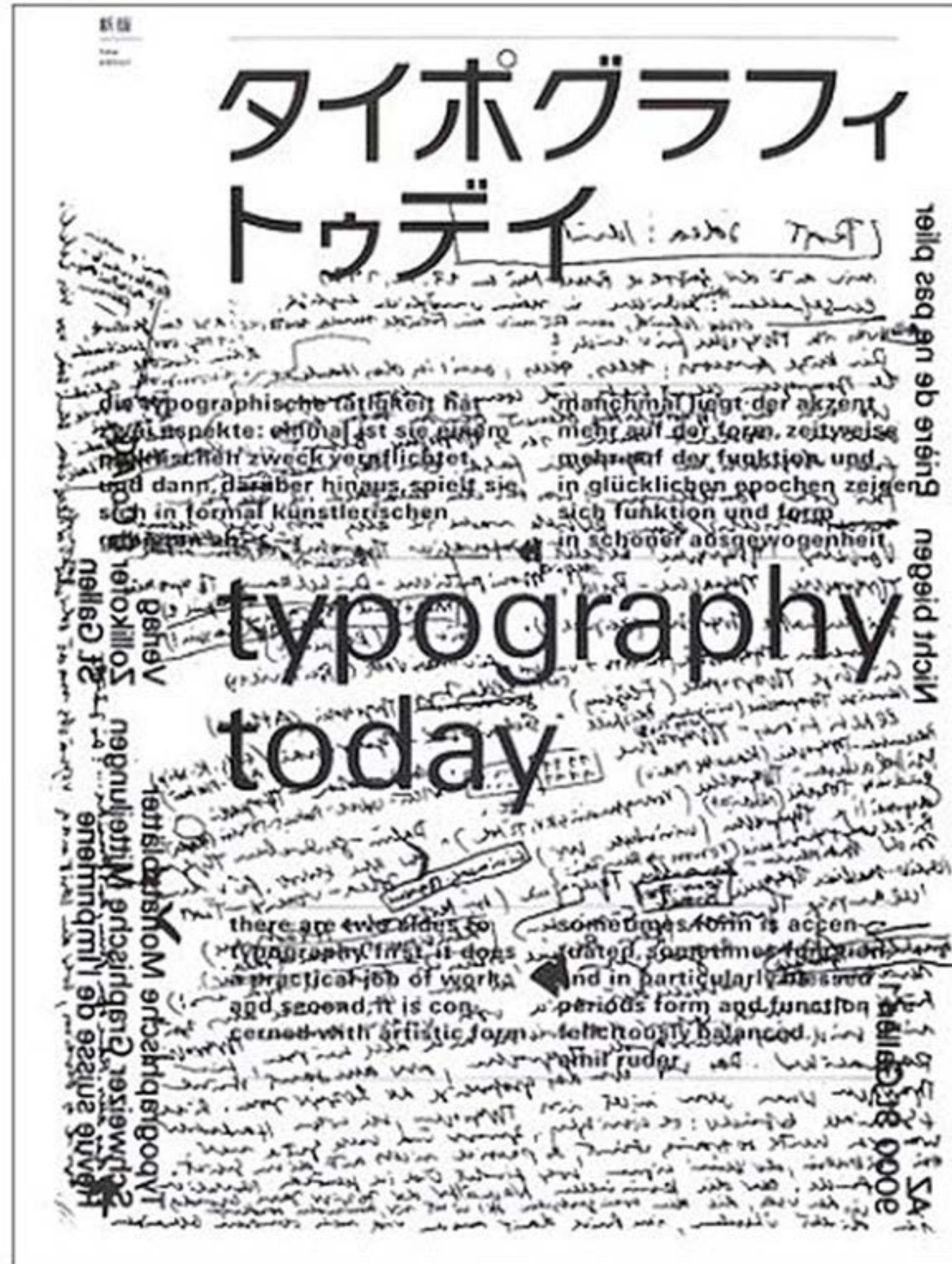
Visual Experiments 04



What is 'distortion' typeface in my context?



Reference



The art of the extreme Orient has purposely avoided the symmetrical as expressing not only completion, but repetition.

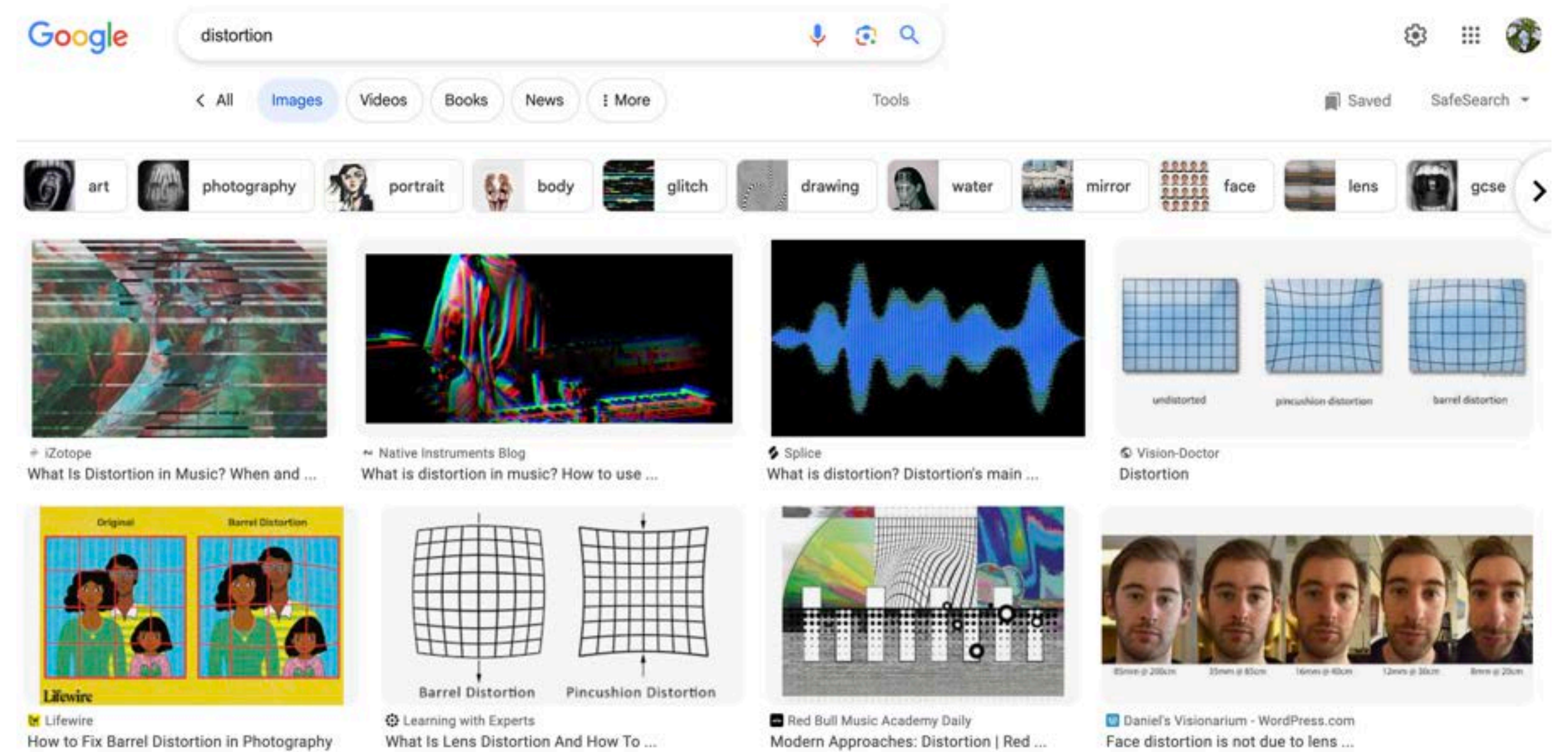
Helmut Schmid, 2003

In 'Typography today', edited and designed by Helmut Schmid, who developed Swiss typography in the 20th century, he describes the difference between Western and Japanese aesthetics. He refers to Okakura's 'The Book of Tea' and notices the attitude of the Japanese tea house, which always avoids duplication and celebrates asymmetrical arrangements and a kind of imperfect beauty. Following Schmid's analysis, I have noticed a difference in the way I perceive distortions from a Western perspective and Japanese distortions.

Cultural differences in 'distortion'.

Google in English

a symmetrical bend



Google in Japanese

Japanese image of distortion not only describes a body, but also an asymmetrical condition



Reference



Shino chawan, Tokyo National Museum

Sueyoshi, S. (2020) 'Momoyama tea potteries : The beauty of imperfection', Journal of East Asian cultural interaction studies, 13, pp. 119–136.

This article focuses on Japanese tea utensils from the Azuchi-Momoyama period in 16th century and describes a Japanese culture that reveres 'distortion'; according to Sueyoshi (2020), distortion in Japanese beauty is 'distortion by thick contours, like freehand', and is described as having a quantitative nature, composed of lines and surfaces. This quantifiability makes the viewer feel a certain weight, shakes the senses and sublimates into beauty.

How to express “cultural distortion” visually?

Western Symmetric

Japan Asymmetric, freehand, thickness, weight, shaky

Visual experiments



Visual reference



Anna Mills

Anna Milles' work is a unique, playful and curvilinear typeface, bringing an image close to my image of a distorted typeface. The typeface used in this work in particular is close to the concept of duality I wanted to bring. From this typeface it can be seen that she uses different colours and styles for the top and bottom of the typeface. I attempted to take this style and incorporate it into my own typeface about the duality of Western and Japanese distortion. On the one hand, she takes a horizontal approach, whereas in my case I am considering a vertical approach. This is because I wanted to compare the positions of right and left to the physical positions of Japan and the West.

Cultural distortion

Happy Birthday
Smartphone
United Kingdom
McDonald's
KFC
Afternoon tea
Party animals
Cost performance
Negative campaign

ハピバ (HAPIBA)
スマホ (SUMAHO)
イギリス (IGILISU)
マック (MAKKU)
ケンタ (KENTA)
ヌン活 (NOONKATSU)
パリピ (PARIPI)
コスパ (KOSUPA)
ネガキャン (NEGAKYAN)

Visual experiments



Visual Reference

Paula Scher (1996) Bring in 'da Noise, Bring in 'da Funk.

Paula Scher is a partner at Pentagram and this New York musical poster she designed represents her strong typographic background. The bold, high-impact layout and graphics give the viewer a sense of commonality with postmodernists, while according to D5MEDIA she designs based on the grid system advocated by Joseph Müller-Brockman. However, her attitude overlaps with mine in that she rejects the corporate visuals with their heavy use of Helvetica and supports the postmodernists' attitude.



My position

Comparing 'cultural distortion' in Western and Japanese culture through typography from the Japanese perspective, which takes a positive view of distortion as opposed to the position, which takes a negative view of distortion.

What to do next?

TO DO

- Continue research on visualising distorted typeface
- Develop asymmetrical distorted typeface
- Create a distorted type specimen
- Research more examples of cultural distortion in the UK and Japan

NEXT

Distorted typography (layout)