

Anh Ngo // Portfolio 2022

crafting my website in the meantime



About me //

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I'm [Anh Ngo](#), a Vietnamese-born designer based in Helsinki, Finland. My design education spans Vietnam, Ireland and Finland. I will soon graduate with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Design from Aalto University, and I am about to start my Master's in New Media, also at Aalto.

I have experience crafting visual identities, digitally and in print, for different organisations and brands. I enjoy creating expressive, sensible and functional visuals that command attention and work as a coherent system.

Alongside a team, I run a [zine](#) platform for hand-based visual experiments. I also like working with local communities, like [Seams Helsinki](#), with whom I facilitate workshops to support inclusion in the local fashion culture. Read more about my background in my [CV](#).

I'm open to work. Contact me!

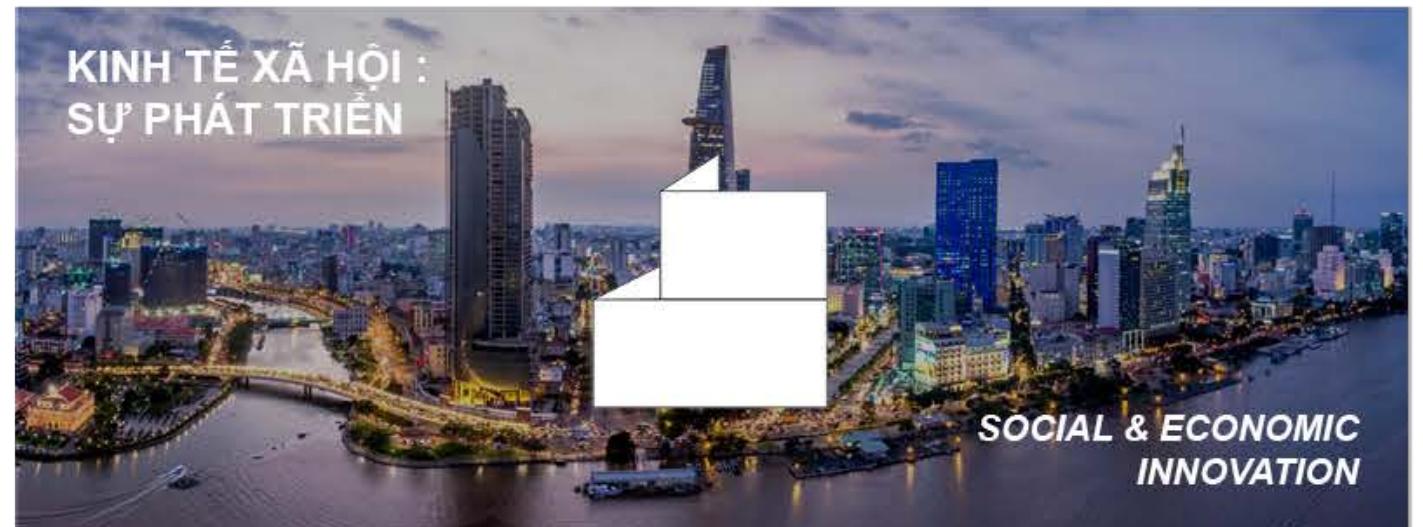
Selected works // Visual Identity

July 2021 • Designed visual system for the festival under 2021 theme - "Creative Future". The design concept was strategically developed to express a bold, contemporary identity of Vietnam, based on research of cultural visual elements. The design system can generate posters for different cities of Vietnam and communications of different events and activities from digital to analog. Won the Inspiring Design Award by VFCD.





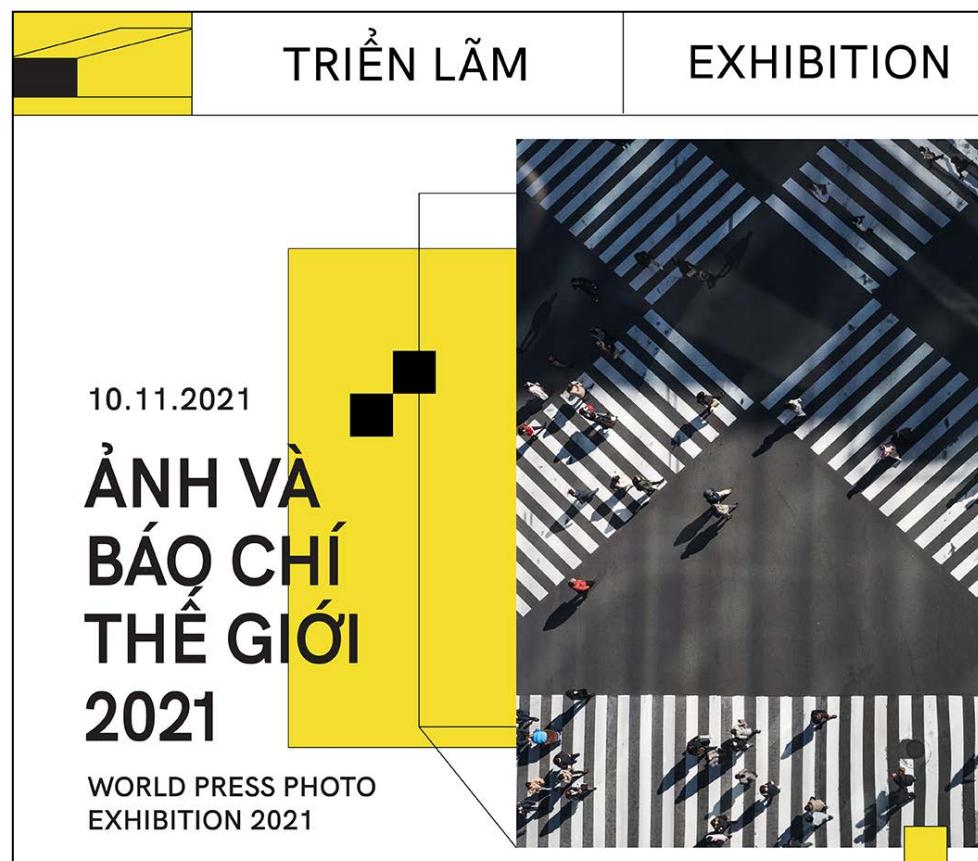
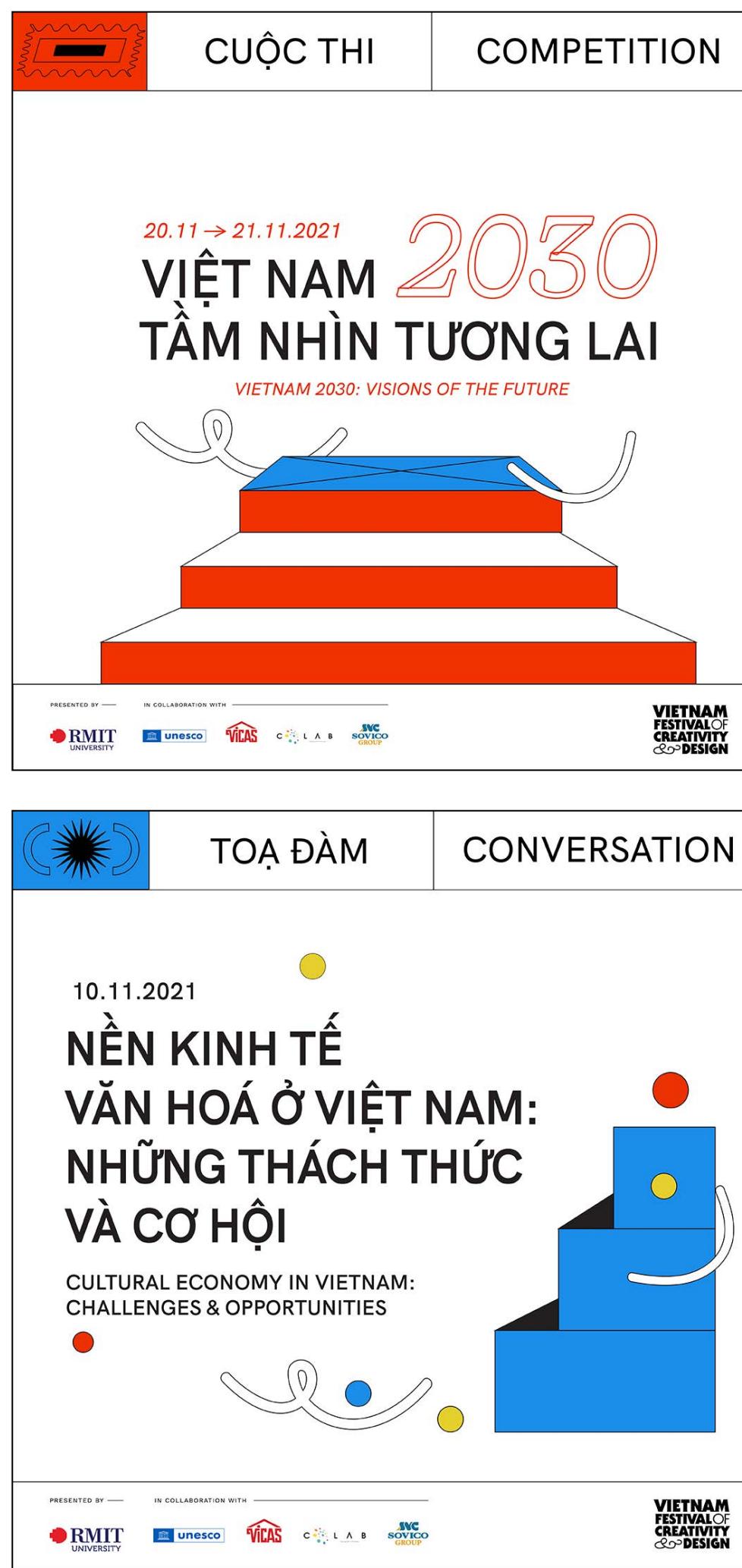
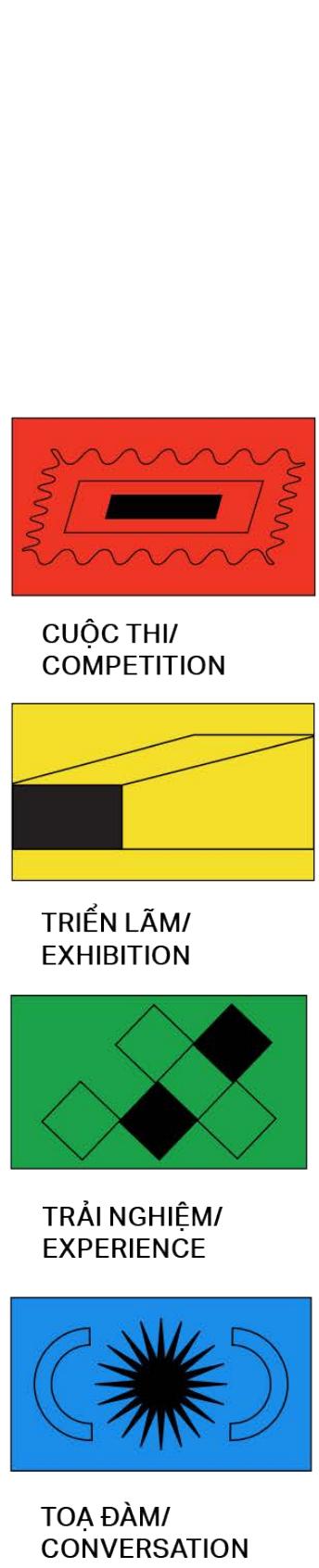
VISUAL ELEMENTS:





Vietnam Festival of Creativity & Design // VFCD, Vietnam

Visual Identity



CREATIVE — 20
FUTURE — 21



HUE
13→15.11

A series of diversified activities and events to celebrate the creativity and culture of Vietnam

PRESENTED BY: IN COLLABORATION WITH: RMIT, UNESCO, VAS, C-LAB, INC, RMIT

CREATIVE
FUTURE

VIETNAM
FESTIVAL OF
CREATIVITY &
DESIGN



VIETNAM
FESTIVAL OF
CREATIVITY &
DESIGN

06→21.11.2021

VIETNAM
FESTIVAL OF
CREATIVITY &
DESIGN

CREATIVE — 20
FUTURE — 21



HCMC
16→22.11

A series of diversified activities and events to celebrate the creativity and culture of Vietnam

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CREATIVE
FUTURE

VIETNAM
FESTIVAL OF
CREATIVITY &
DESIGN

www.vfcd.events
#vfcd2021

VIETNAM
FESTIVAL OF
CREATIVITY &
DESIGN

06→21.11.2021

CREATIVE — 20
FUTURE — 21

CREATIVE — 20
FUTURE — 21



HANOI
07→15.11

A series of diversified activities and events to celebrate the creativity and culture of Vietnam

PRESENTED BY: IN COLLABORATION WITH: RMIT, UNESCO, VAS, C-LAB, INC, RMIT

CREATIVE
FUTURE



VI
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VIETNAM
FESTIVAL OF
CREATIVITY &
DESIGN

TƯƠNG LAI — 20
SÁNG TẠO — 21



06→2

RMIT

TƯƠNG LAI
SÁNG TẠO



LIÊN HOAN
SÁNG TẠO &
THIẾT KẾ
VIỆT NAM

06→21.11.2021

TƯƠNG LAI — 20
SÁNG TẠO — 21



06→21.11

RMIT

CREATIVE
FUTURE



VI

VIETNAM
FESTIVAL OF
CREATIVITY &
DESIGN

VIETNAM
FESTIVAL OF
CREATIVITY &
DESIGN

www.vfcd.events
#vfcd2021

February 2021 • Art Direction and Visual Identity for a sex-education brand, throughout prints, digital app, object design and photography. Tackling taboo issues and roles of design under the theme *Design for Play* - Thematic Studio II course in Aalto. In collaboration with Vera Väänänen & Zina Marpegan.



Objects of sexuality // School work, Finland

Art Direction, Visual Identity, Illustration



Objects of sexuality // School work, Finland

Art Direction, Visual Identity, Illustration



Objects of sexuality // School work, Finland

Art Direction, Visual Identity, Illustration

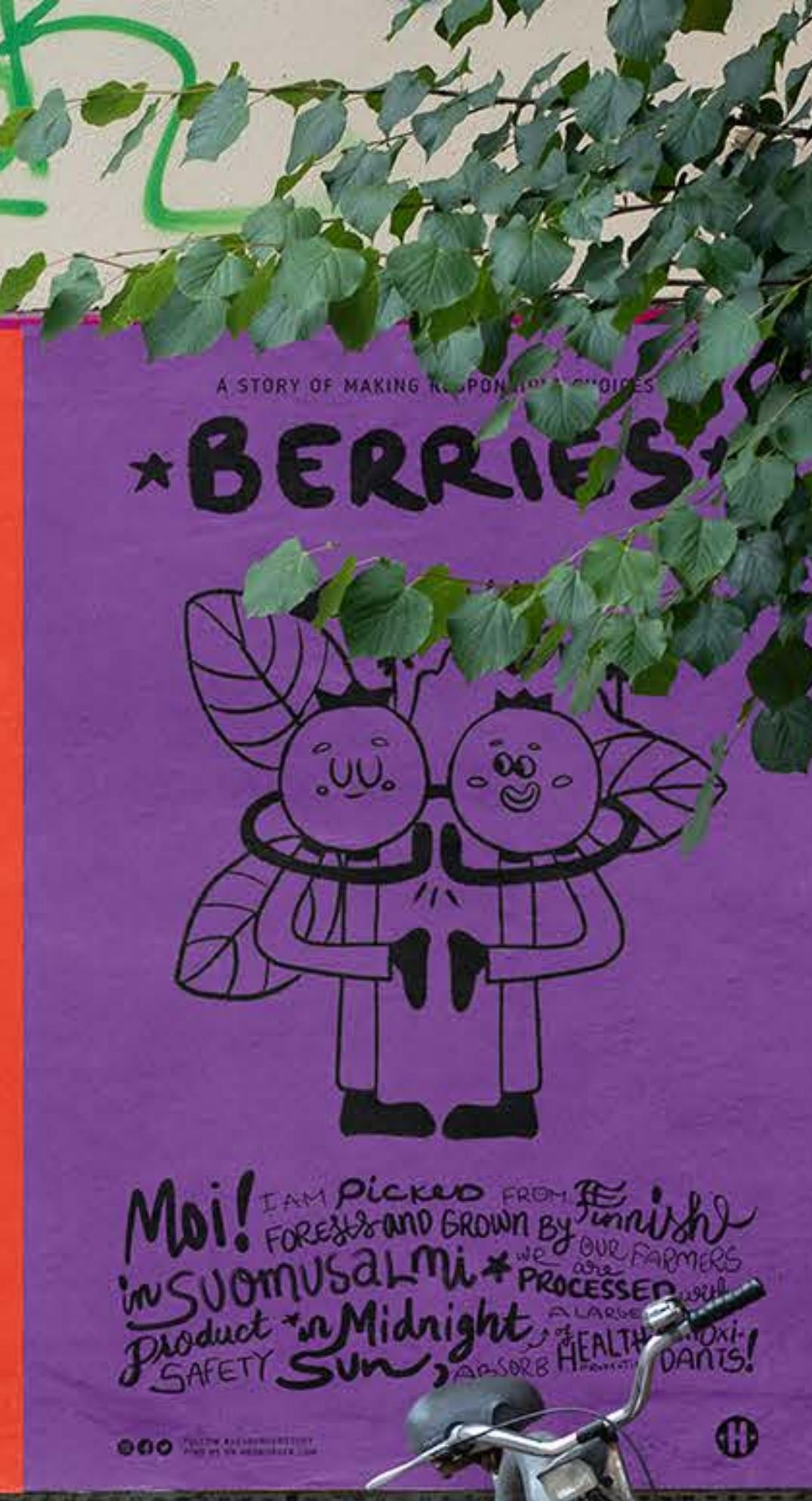
March 2021 • Illustration and Typography for Hesburger - the biggest hamburger chain in Finland - through a playful and honest set of posters. Research on storytelling characters based on current brand communications. The design was followed by a month-long strategy development under Strategic Design and Identity course, Aalto.



Posters of Hesburger // School work, Finland

Brand Identity, Graphic Design

BEEM CAFE



Posters of Hesburger // School work, Finland

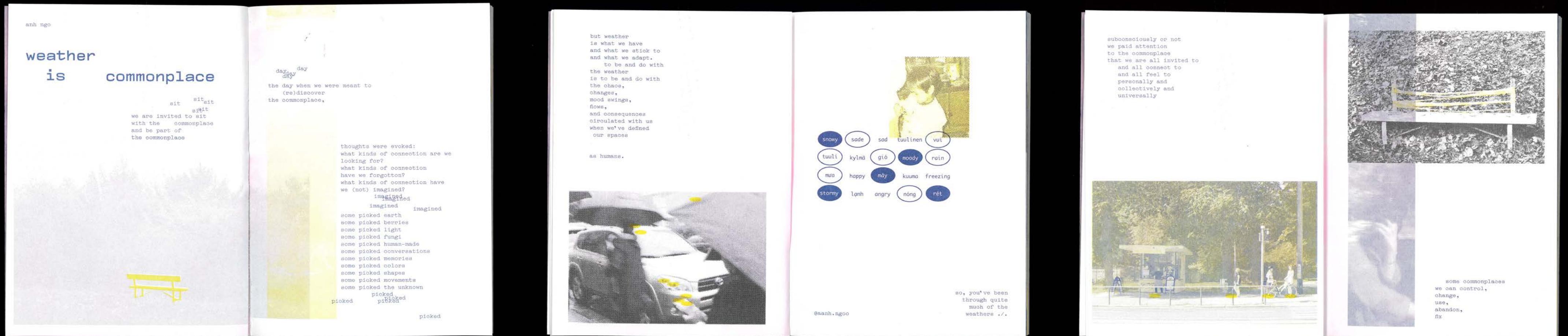
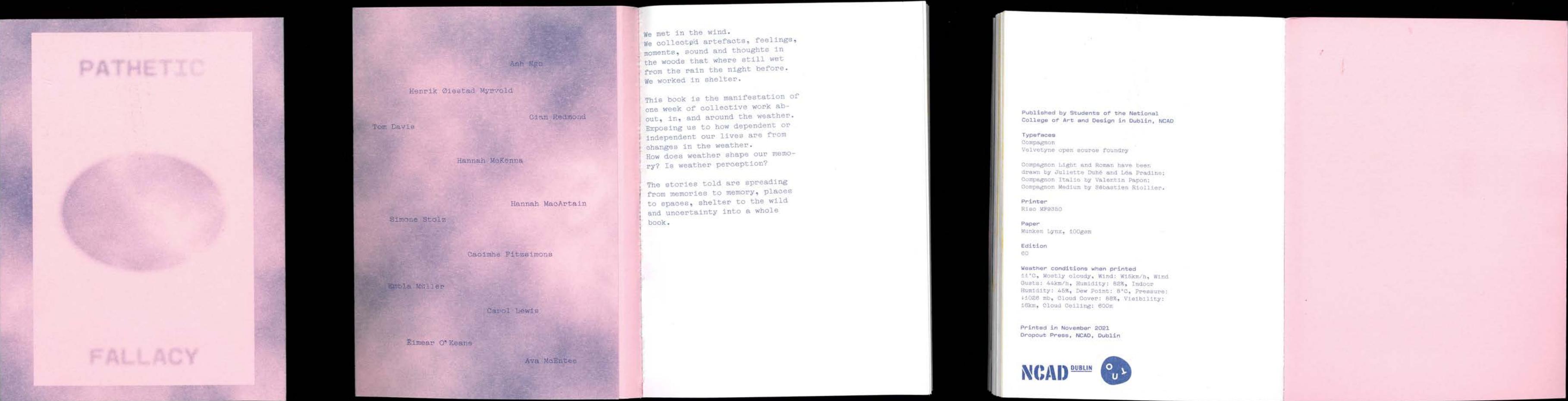
Brand Identity, Graphic Design

Selected works // Editorial Design, Publication

September - December 2021 •
Collaborated and designed 'Pathetic
Fallacy' - the risoprinted book that
explores relationships with nature. With
collaborators from Dropout Press and
National College of Art and Design.
Copies were displayed at Dublin Art
Book Fair 2021.



Publication // NCAD, Dublin



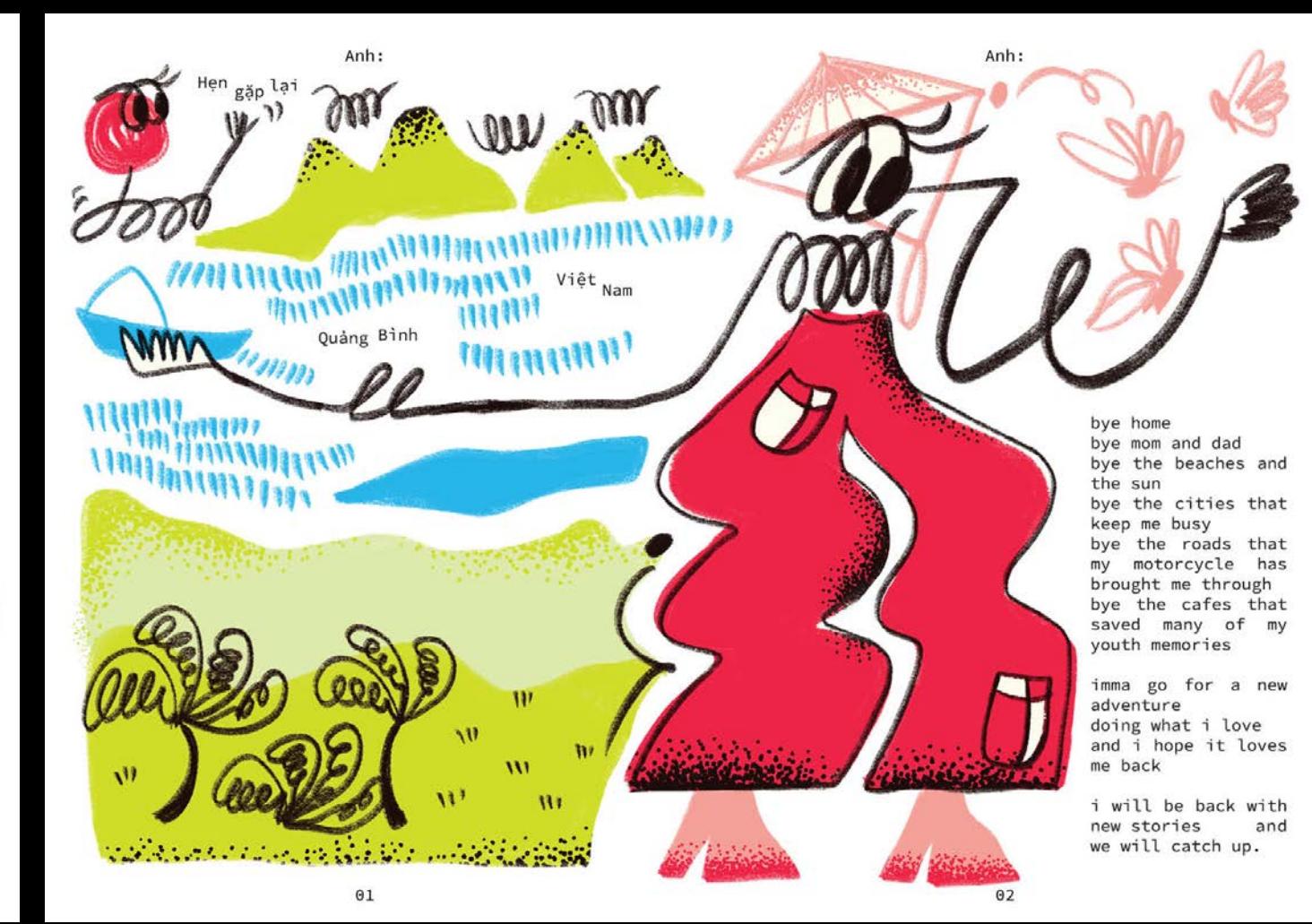
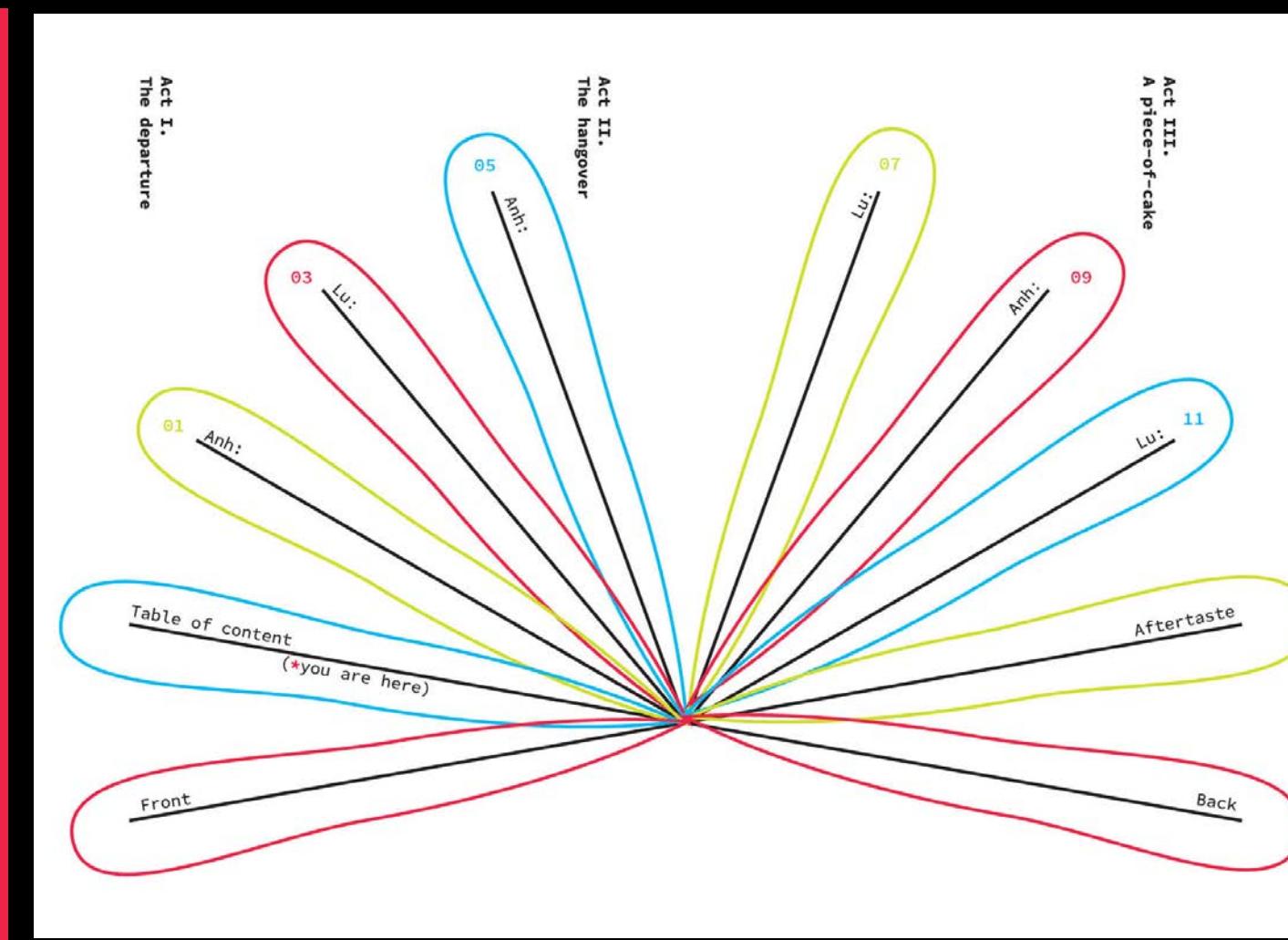
August 2021 - Now • Run a Helsinki-based platform for co-creation through zine-making, using collaborative drawing methods to connect and have fun in the process. I ideate, self-publish zines, and run our community [page](#). Our zine was also featured and exhibited by [Zineton](#). With Lu Chen.



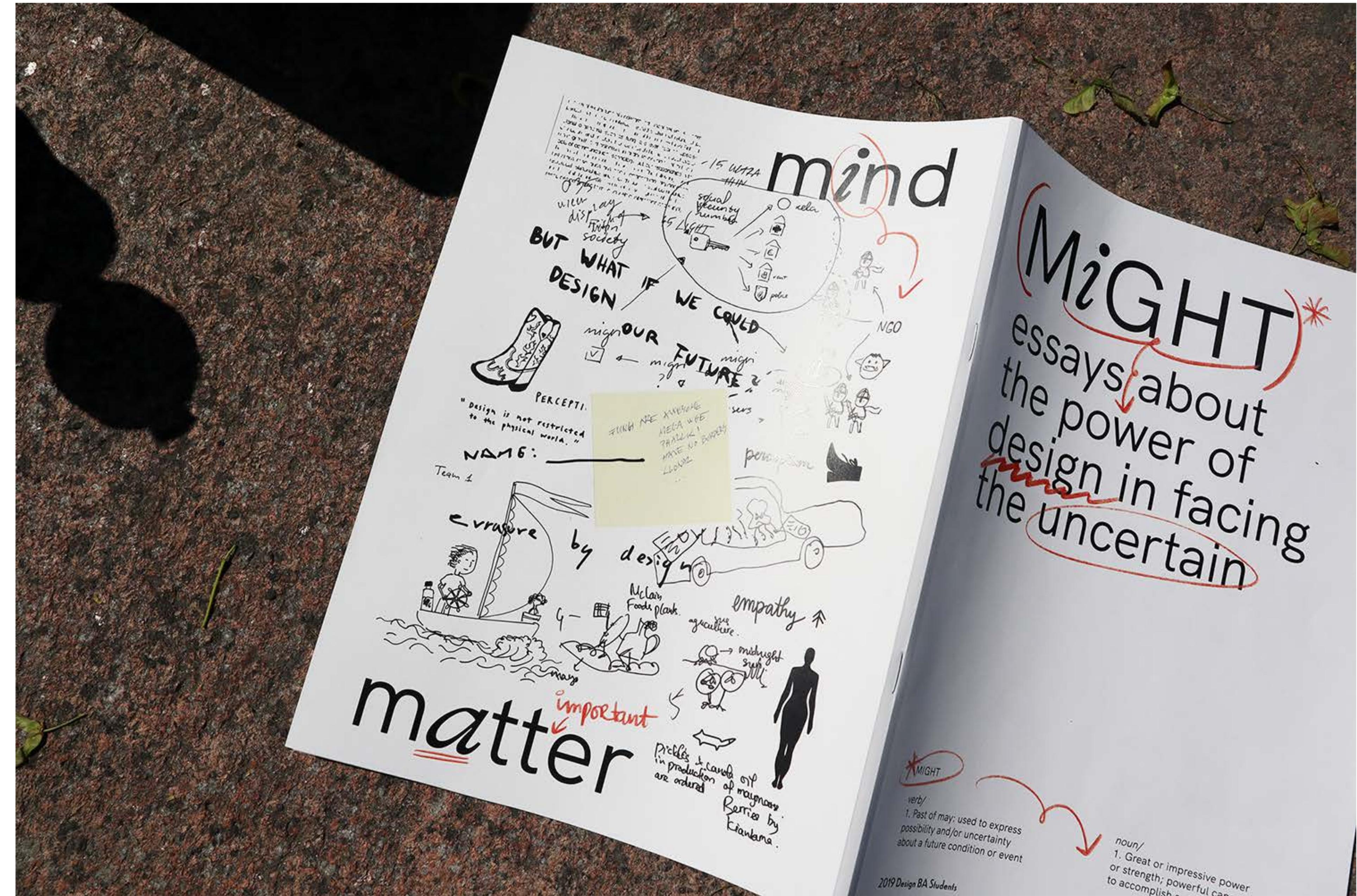
Co-created zines // Side project, International

Art Direction, Publication





May 2021 • Cover design and article for MIGHT - the publication of reflective essays by BA Design class of 2019. Cover's visuals are generated from all contributors' sketches; article is illustrated and written about Design Culture and Local Culture based on a previous project I co-designed with my dad.



Publication of Design essays // School work, Finland

Illustration, Editorial Design

TALK WITH DAD

DESIGN AND REFLECTIVE CONVERSATIONS WITH LOCAL CULTURES

by ANH NGO

During my studies at Aalto, I had to step out of my comfort zone. I could no longer design as I did before in a linear way with a strict career goal that I had set for myself. I was put in a position where I had to work with anything around me, even that which is not 'design-related' in my mind. And this included my dad, a doctor and a practitioner of Buddhism, who I engaged in the design process to explore the topic of cultural rituals for a class project. Little did I know that this would lead to enlightening reflections and hopeful ways for design to contribute to a caring life through the significance of local culture.

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When I started studying graphic design 2 years ago, I felt like I was obtaining a superpower: I could translate invisible thoughts into aesthetic visuals and share them with others. However, I had concerns. I knew deep down that design had a purpose beyond the aesthetic and commercial value that has long been attached to design. I knew that there was another strength I could develop.

A person working with creativity normally has their own source of inspiration. For me, human culture is interesting for its day-to-day presence as well as its power in shaping, influencing and connecting us in modern life. In my previous projects and others that inspired me, I searched for deeper, relevant but untouchable or unquestioned perspectives regarding our connections with each other and with nature. It could be a traditional craft, a story, a ritual or an art form that offers insights

and values in shaping communal consciousness. It also travels through time with a spiritual source of knowledge essential to generations and, importantly, is easily lost if we move too quickly without reflecting back.

Bringing traditional elements of culture back to modern life has been an ongoing trend, felt even more strongly during the time of the pandemic, which motivates us to look inwards and to connect with our roots. Celebrating such deeply embedded cultural values can lead to positive effects such as sustainable lifestyles, spiritual and mental well-being, DIY movements or human-nature relationships. However, while the sides that can be positively shared or utilized for commercial purposes seem to be widely spread, there remain concerns about unconscious behaviours embedded in our daily beliefs. They could be conflicting aspects of a cultural custom hugely influencing our relationships with other beings and nature in unsustainable ways. As Julier (2006) suggests, design culture is part of the flows of global culture, "it is located within network society, and is also an instrument of it" (p.70). Hence, the connection between culture and design can become a more dynamic, active and reflective collaboration.

A CO-OPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DESIGN AND CULTURE

Nowadays we know that design can achieve different kinds of value including social and environmental value, symbolic value, use value, and of course exchange value. Even the design of value can be a design task, as new theories of value are needed (Hodson, 2021). This is to say that design is non-linear and moves beyond form-giving and tangible products. This also makes it a complex yet powerful approach to improving the life we want to live. Seen as a process or a way of thinking in general, design has spread to non-design professionals and different fields. Indeed, a design mindset does not mean separating designers and non-designers, professionals and amateurs, or humans and nonhumans, but rather design is how "all living beings co-operate to co-create", and therefore "is simply action in relation and that everything on earth and in the universe is thus a designer" (Moran et al., 2018, pp. 73-76).

This idea resonated with me because of a talk with my dad. I was working on a project about the crossover between design and local knowledge, which includes networks of information and communication that relate to the concepts, beliefs and perceptions that people hold about the world around them. I believe that while design has successfully operated with a wide, global audience and goals, many design topics concerning social practices and needs are directly related to and can co-evolve with local knowledge. We are all holders of local culture. The Invisible 'ripple effects' this crossover allows can start right from within the designer's surroundings.

THE CO-CREATION OF A DESIGNER AND A RITUAL PRACTITIONER

'A mindful Tet' is a project about encouraging conscious consuming behaviour in celebrating Lunar New Year, called as "Tết" in Vietnam, using board-game as an approachable method to engage with such a sensitive topic. This topic was chosen for the theme 'Design for Overconsumption' in Thematic Studio I course in Aalto. In that course, I explored the relationship between belief, which is represented through cultural celebrations and rituals, and consuming culture. At this point, culture was no longer a simple fascination for me, but an intriguing combination of conflicts and reflecting about the problem of overconsumption and sustainability.

My approach was not to refuse the need for consumption, nor the importance of belief for humans. Instead, I wanted to understand the relationship of both sides and from there, find a way to increase consciousness about the choices we make. Hence, I came to listen to my dad, who's the most dedicated and knowledgeable person I have ever seen when it comes to certain rituals and customs in ancestor worship and Tet. The execution of ancestor worship is truly complicated, from scripting prayers, preparing props, and planning meals to

carrying out the performance

itself with incense and burning

joss paper. He is also respected

by others for having a good heart

towards other beings, for being a

vegan and following the practice

of Buddhism. To me, he is a

true believer living in the midst of the conflicts I raise

in this essay.

He shared that he is aware of the problematic issues that certain actions can bring to the environment and sustainability. For example, burning joss paper can create air hazards, but many people and many businesses take advantage of the burning with the belief of equally more blessings in order to sell more and consume more of this product. In fact, this act was originally for caring and ensuring that your dead loved ones have an adequate afterlife by sending them (mainly) money through this joss paper. Doing this was believed to bring good karma and to ask for favor from higher natural gods. This practice was inherited from many generations ago to the point that it needs to be taken into account for its impact on the living environment and health of others, but sadly sustainability has not become such an important topic in Vietnam yet.

Generally, the pure meaning of ancestor worship or such practices is indeed beautiful as it spreads to societal norms, like having respect for elders, communal bonds and an attitude of giving to others more than to yourself. However, by burning more and consuming more to gain more good luck and good deeds, we end up wasting more. I wonder if we will leave our children a good life or a trash field if we are not more mindful of what we do and believe in. Through the conversation with my dad, I know he has been trying to minimize acts

SMALL STEPS TOWARDS THE 'RIPPLE EFFECTS'

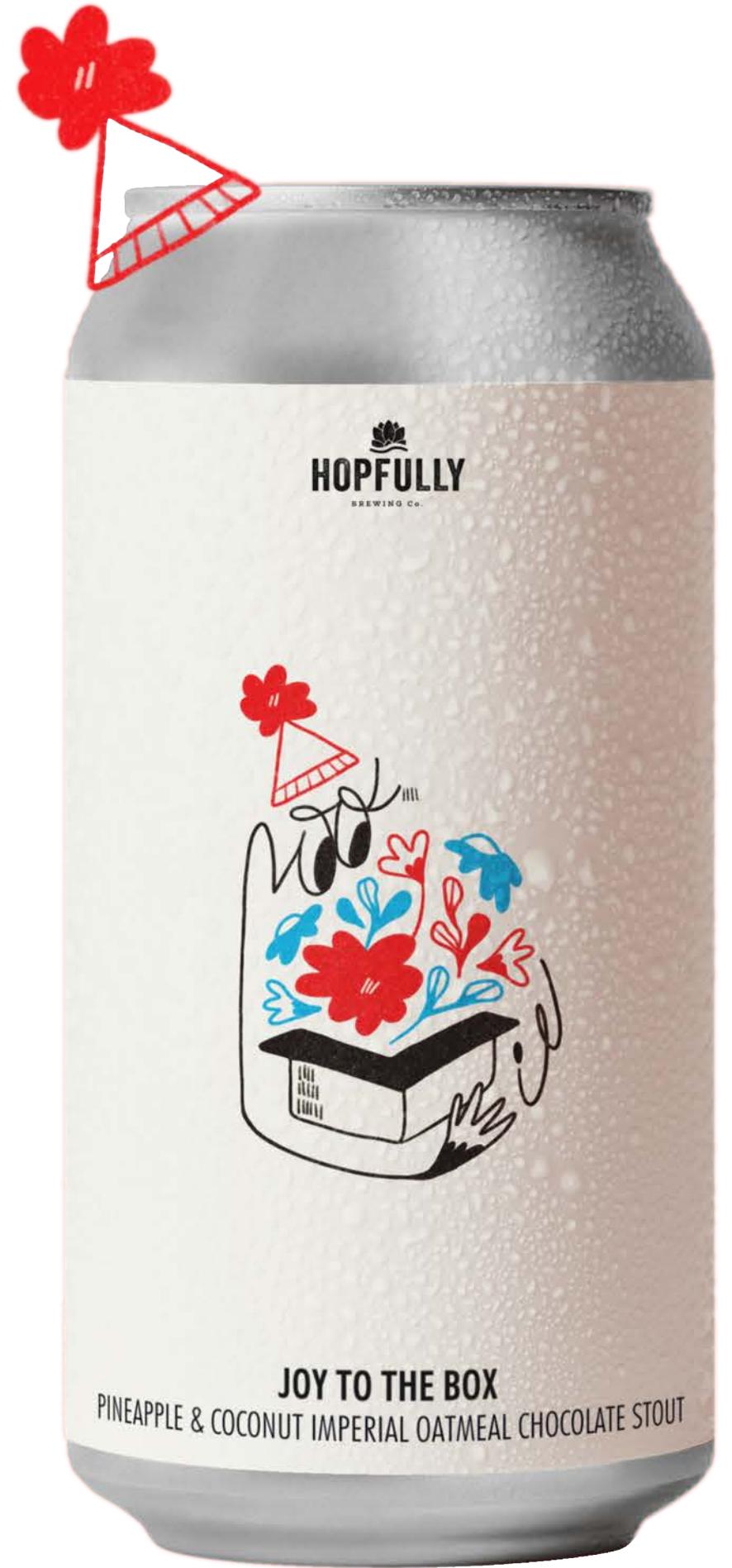
Though this was a school project that requires further development, it had real impacts. I was able to engage my dad - a potential audience - in the process of design by discussing the brief I had proposed. We also brainstormed some elements of the game that could help to deliver the message in an approachable way by considering how people would react and perceive this topic thanks to his knowledge. I believe the activities of rethinking what can be done better, our normal perceptions of things and how new ways can be raised represent an attitude of design that can be adapted to anything and anyone in life.

For me, this was the first small step towards design for social innovation (Manzini, 2015) and engaging others - the holders of

Publication of Design essays // School work, Finland

Illustration, Editorial Design

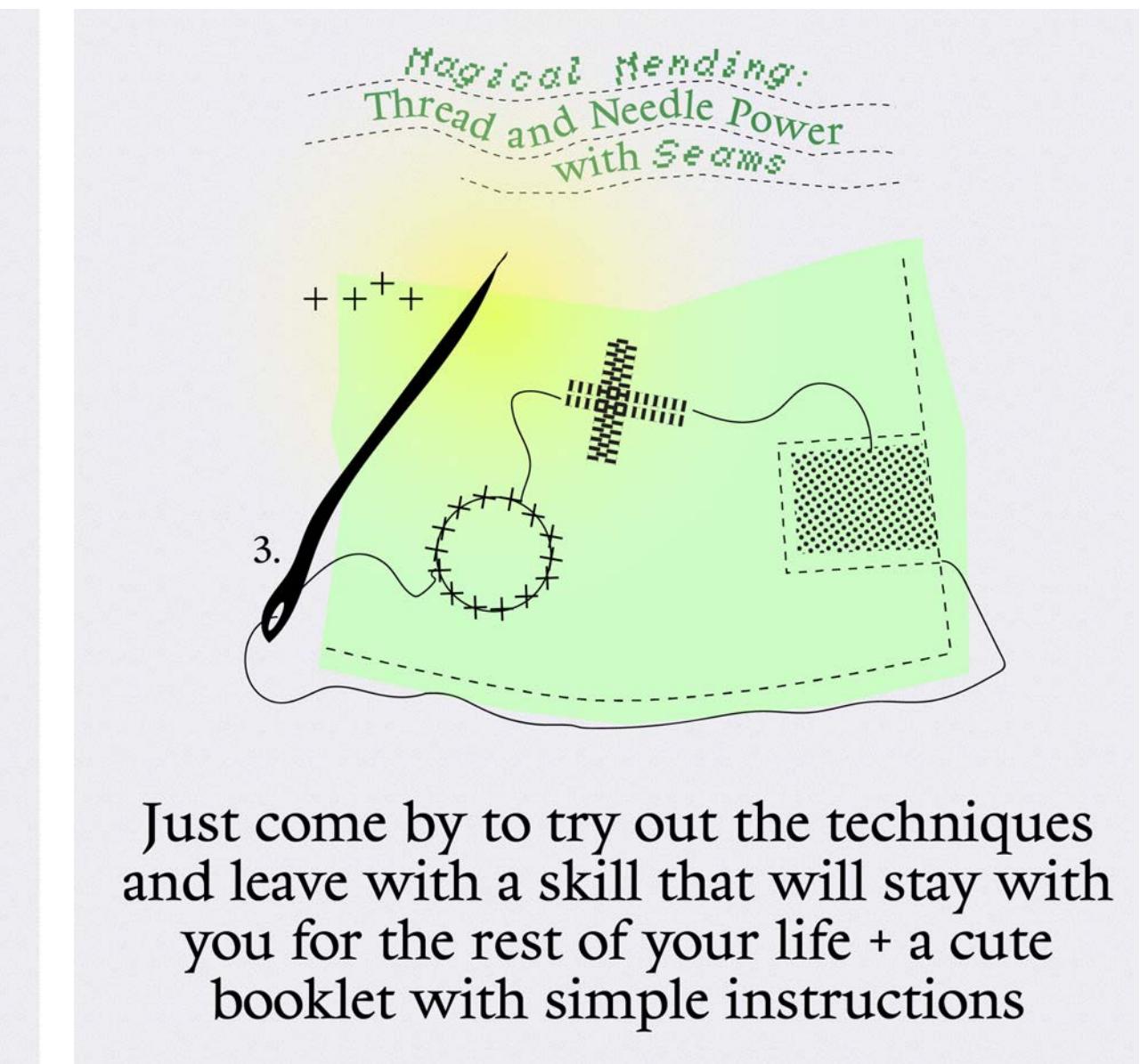
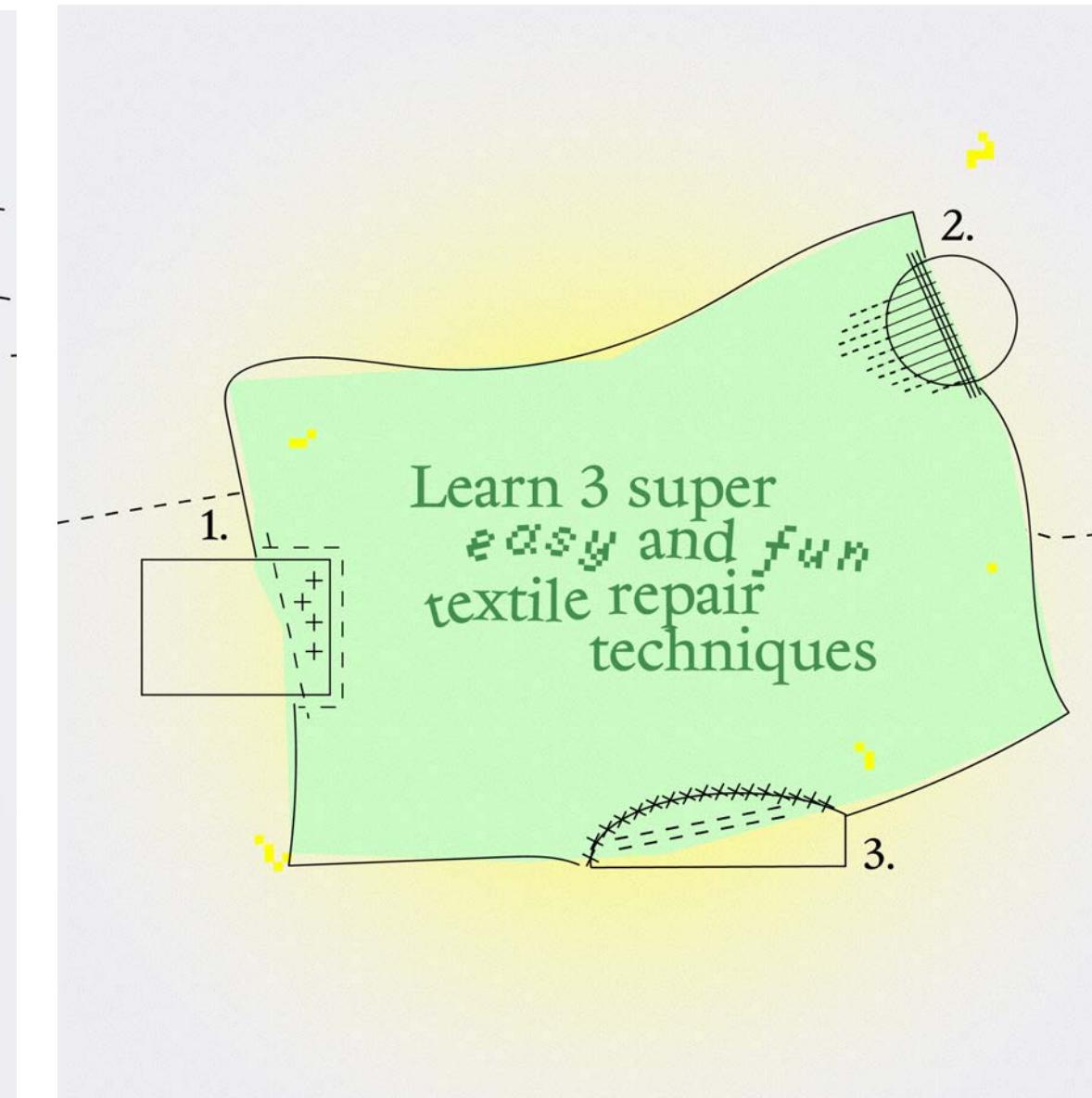
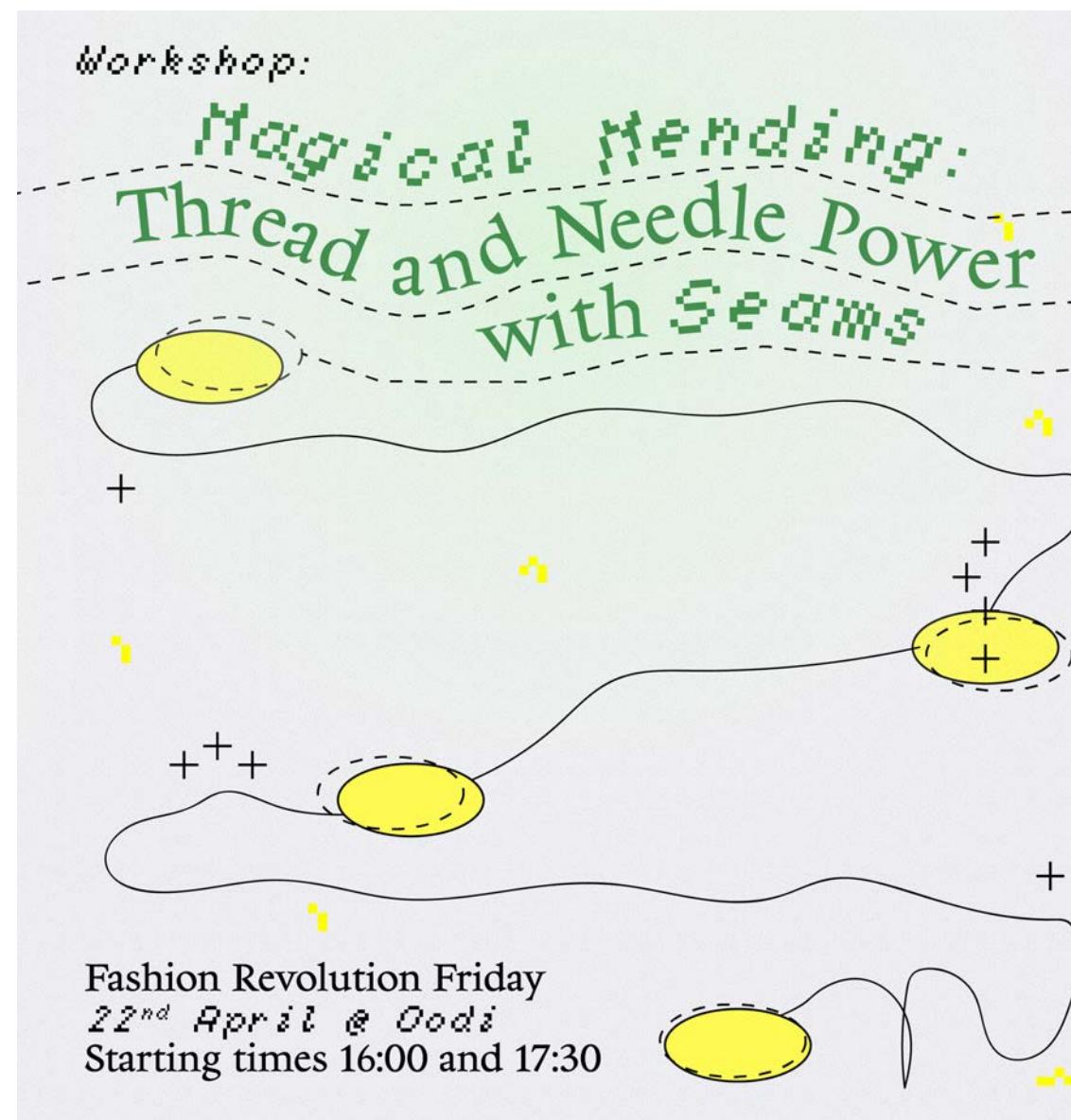
Selected works // Illustration, Communication

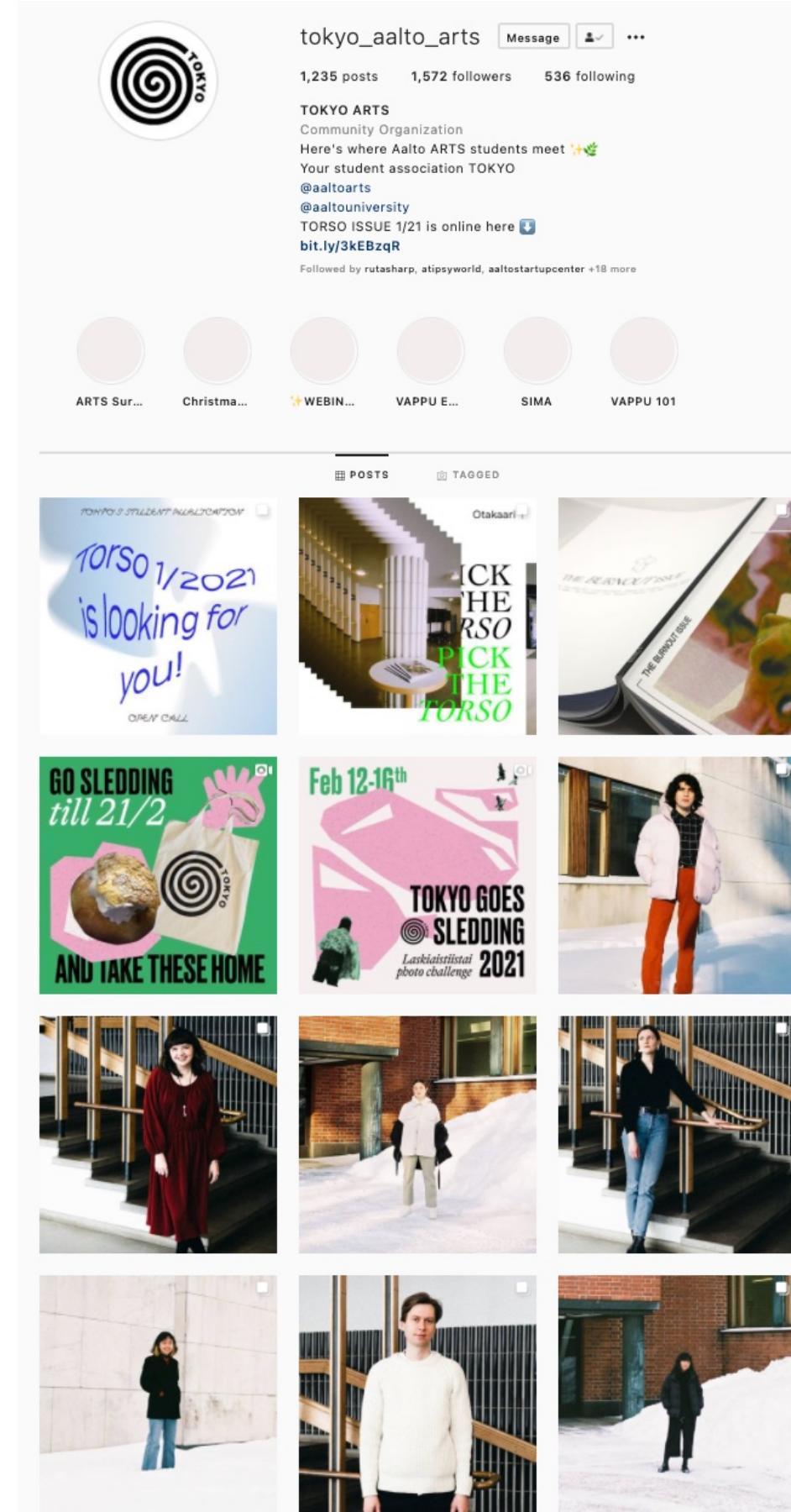


Seasonal Art Beer Label // Hopfully, Ireland



Scribbles in my free time // [@atipsystudio](https://www.instagram.com/atipsystudio), Finland





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