

A CROSS-CULTURAL
DIALOGUE ON THE ORIGINS OF HEIDI,
BETWEEN SWITZERLAND AND JAPAN
PRESENTED BY HEAD – GENÈVE

HEIDI

TOUJOURS

HEIDI
FOREVER

ハイジよ、永遠に。

SWISS PAVILION
EXPO OSAKA
23.04.2025

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Lada Umstätter

Introduction

Directrice HEAD – Genève



Anita Hugli

Heidi Forever

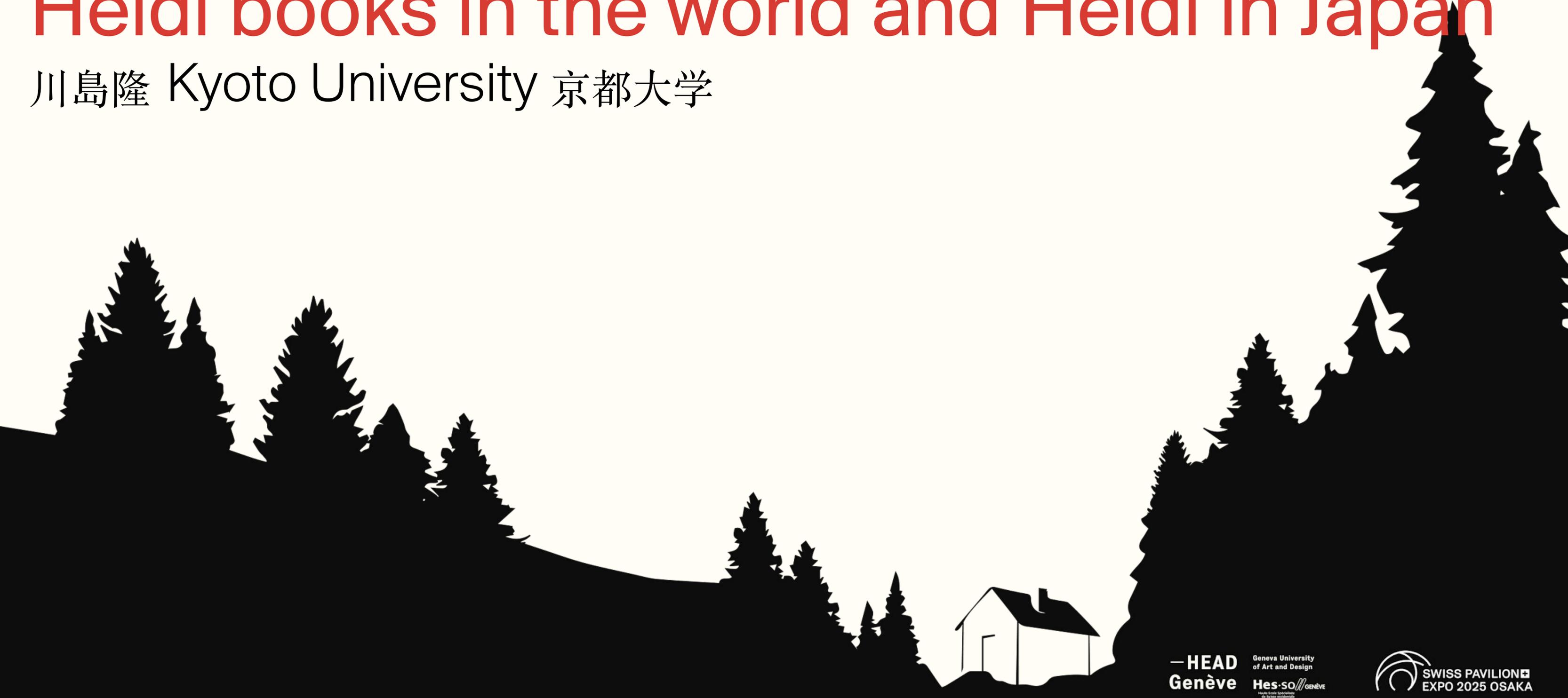
Directrice département Cinéma



Takashi Kawashima

Heidi books in the world and Heidi in Japan

川島隆 Kyoto University 京都大学



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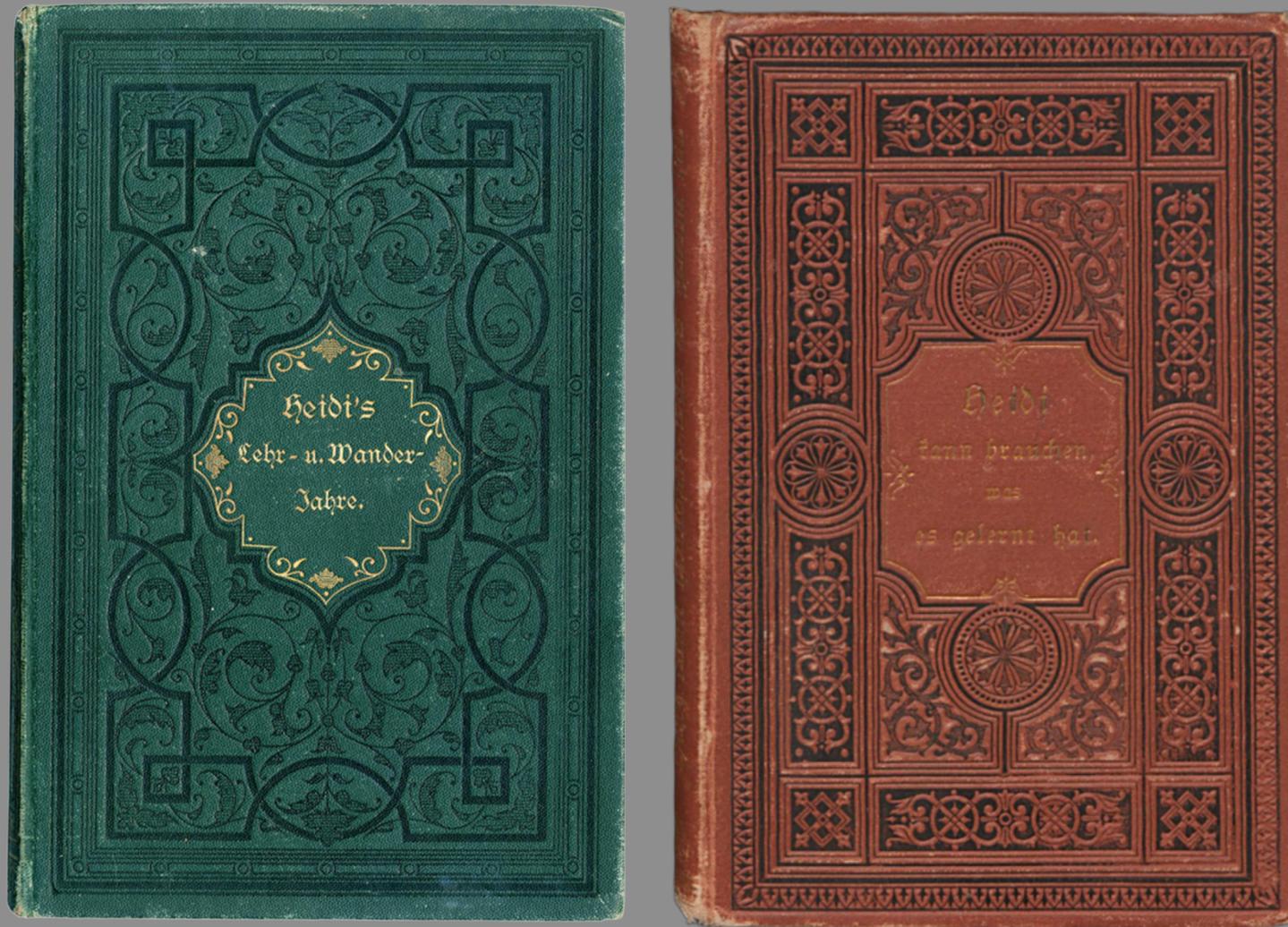
History of Heidi books

Original Heidi novels by Johanna Spyri

Part 1: "Heidi's Years of Learning and Wandering" (1880)

Part 2: "Heidi can use what she has learned" (1881)

→ Published in Gotha (Germany)



Two volumes of "Heidi"
1880/1881

History of Heidi books

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→ Published in Gotha (Germany)

→ Became an international bestseller, translated so far into ca. 70 languages



Two volumes of "Heidi".
Illustrations by Paul Hey
1920s

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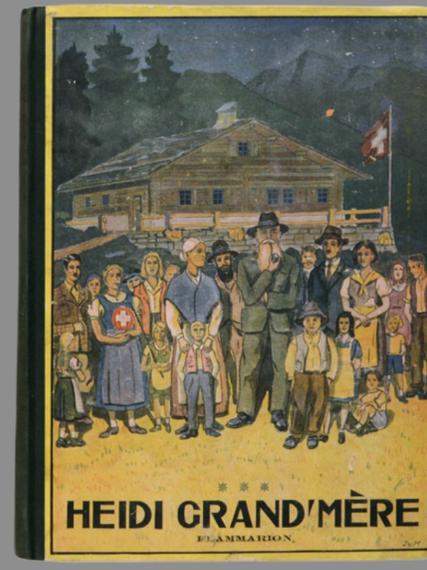
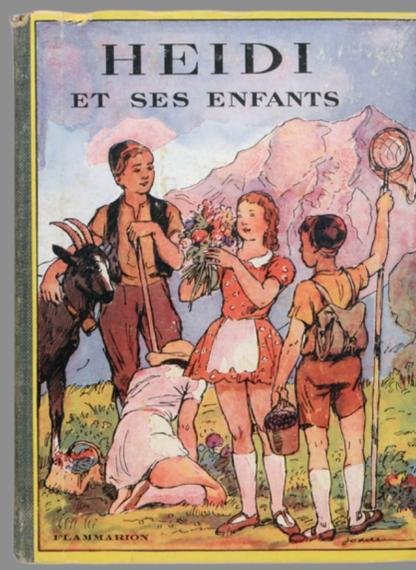
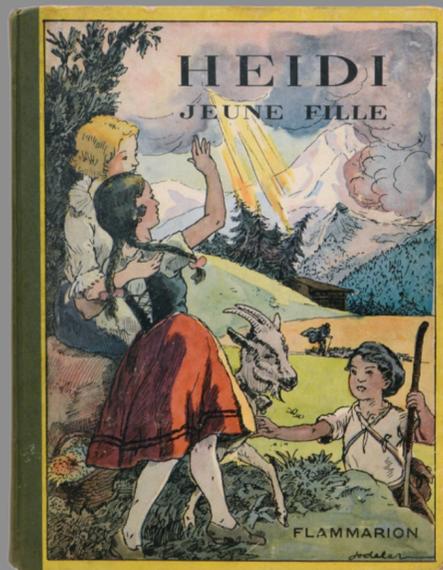
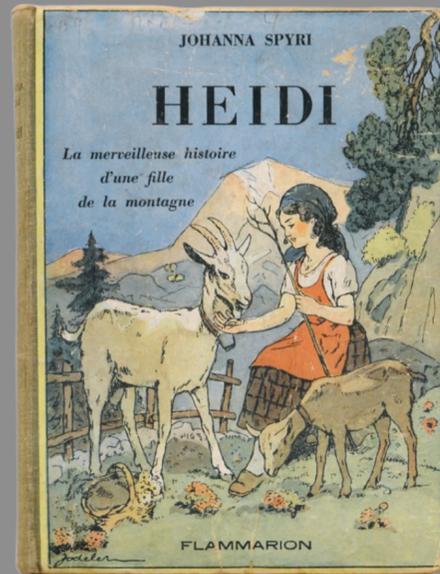
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Translation and adaptations

Most of the "translations" are shortened versions, and there are unauthorized sequels to the original story.

→ The most successful ones were written by the Swiss writer Charles Tritten in French



Heidi sequels by Charles Tritten
1930s-40s

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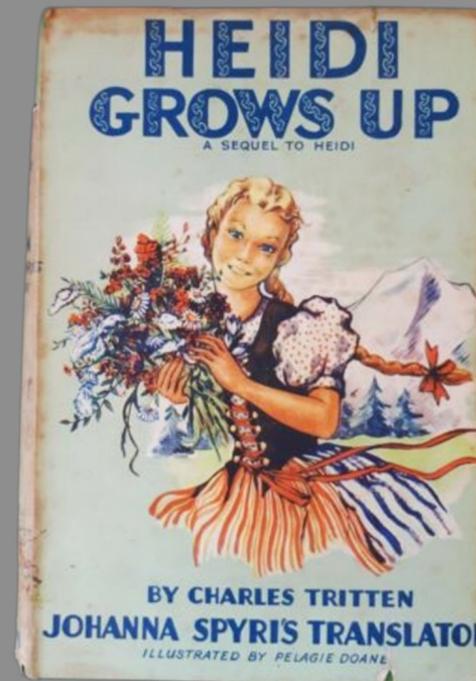
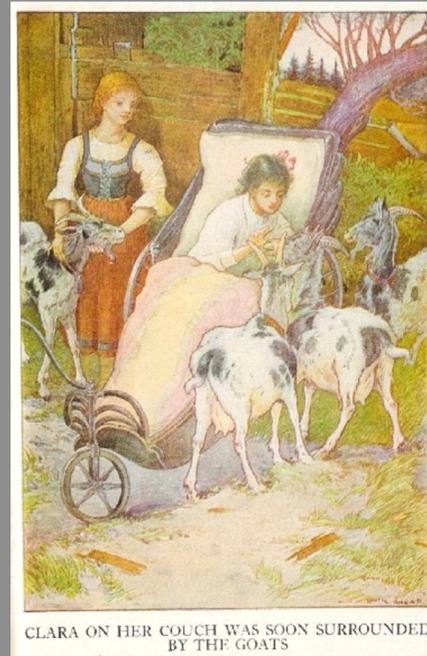
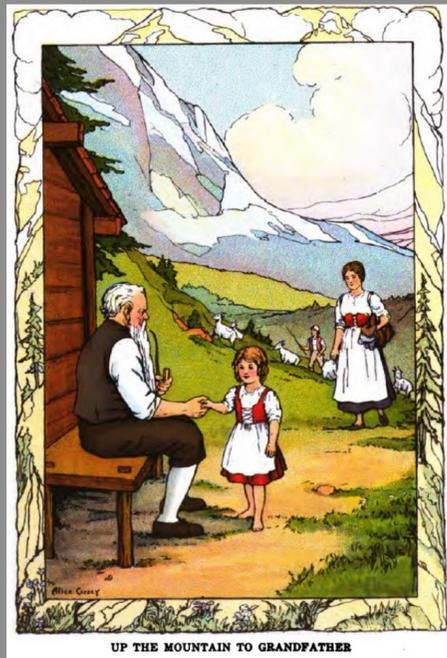
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→ New images of Heidi were created especially by French and American editions



Heidi illustrations in America
1910s-50s

Heidi in Japan

First Japanese translation by Yaeko Nogami

“Haidi” (1920)

→ Translation of an English version (1909)

→ Since then, more than 100 translations, 30 picture books, 20 manga etc.



Translation by Yaeko Nogami
1920

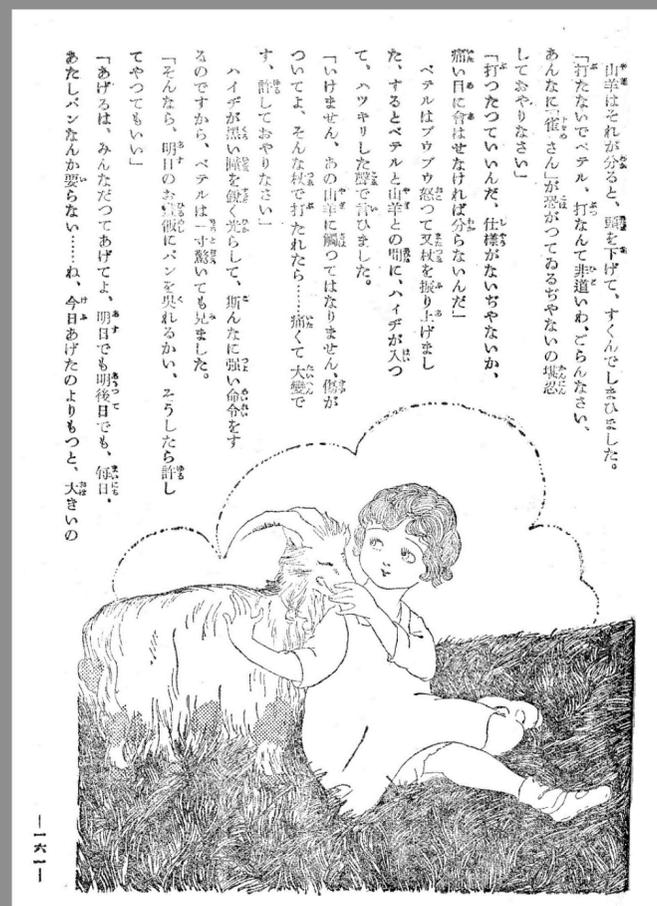
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Reception through girls' magazines

Many shortened versions based on Nogami's translation appeared in girls' magazines from the Taisho period to the early Showa period, where the intimacy between girls played an important role



Heidi in the magazine “Shojo no tomo”
1924

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Expressions of the intimacy between girls
Heidi and Clara

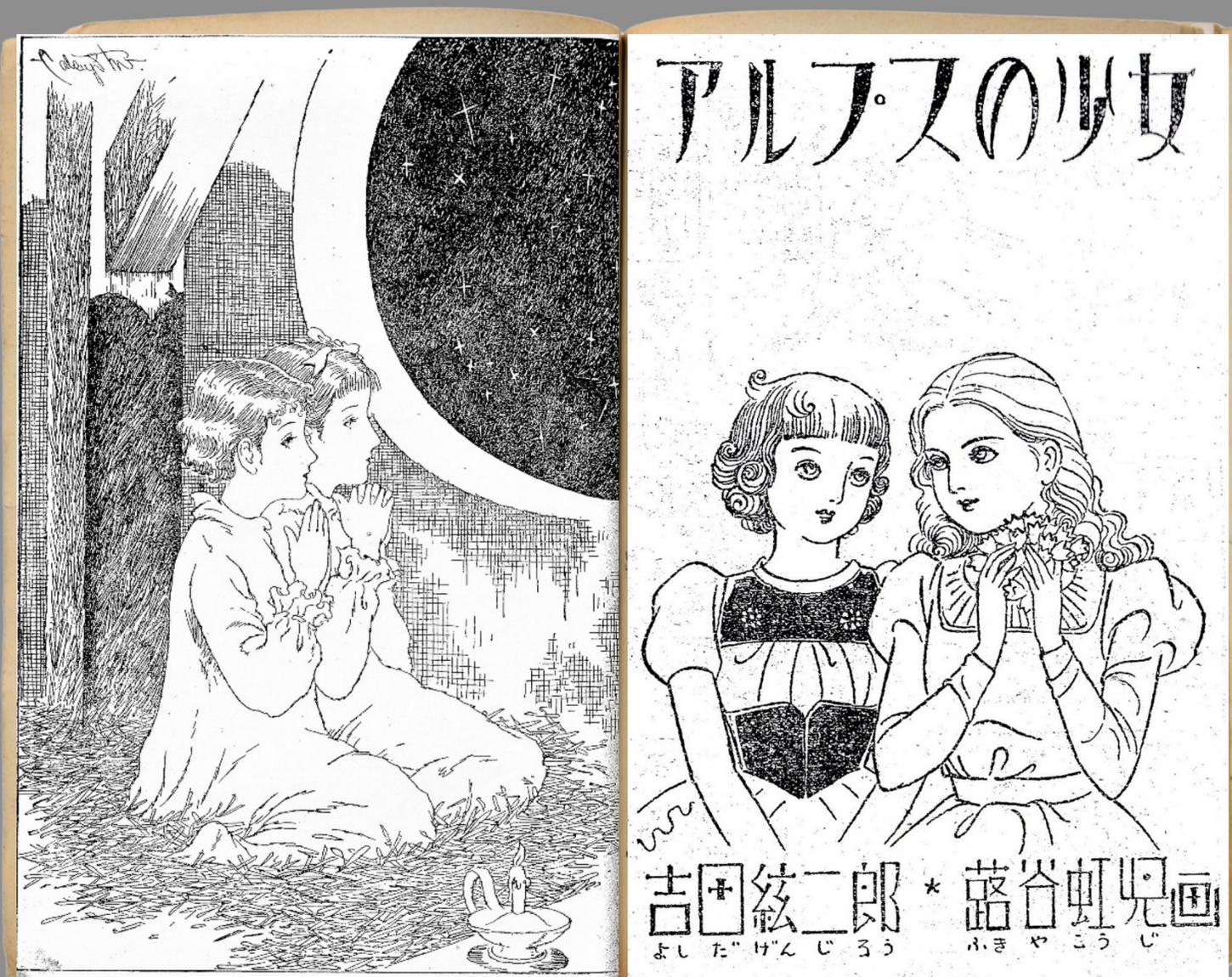
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- Iconographic features stood basically in the tradition of American Heidi illustrations



Heidi illustrations

Katsuji Matsumoto, 1938

Koji Fukiya, 1947



本文二〇頁くらんください

畫・兒虹谷路

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- Intimacy between girls played an important role
- Iconographic features stood basically in the tradition of American Heidi illustrations
- After the war, Heidi became more “heterosexual”

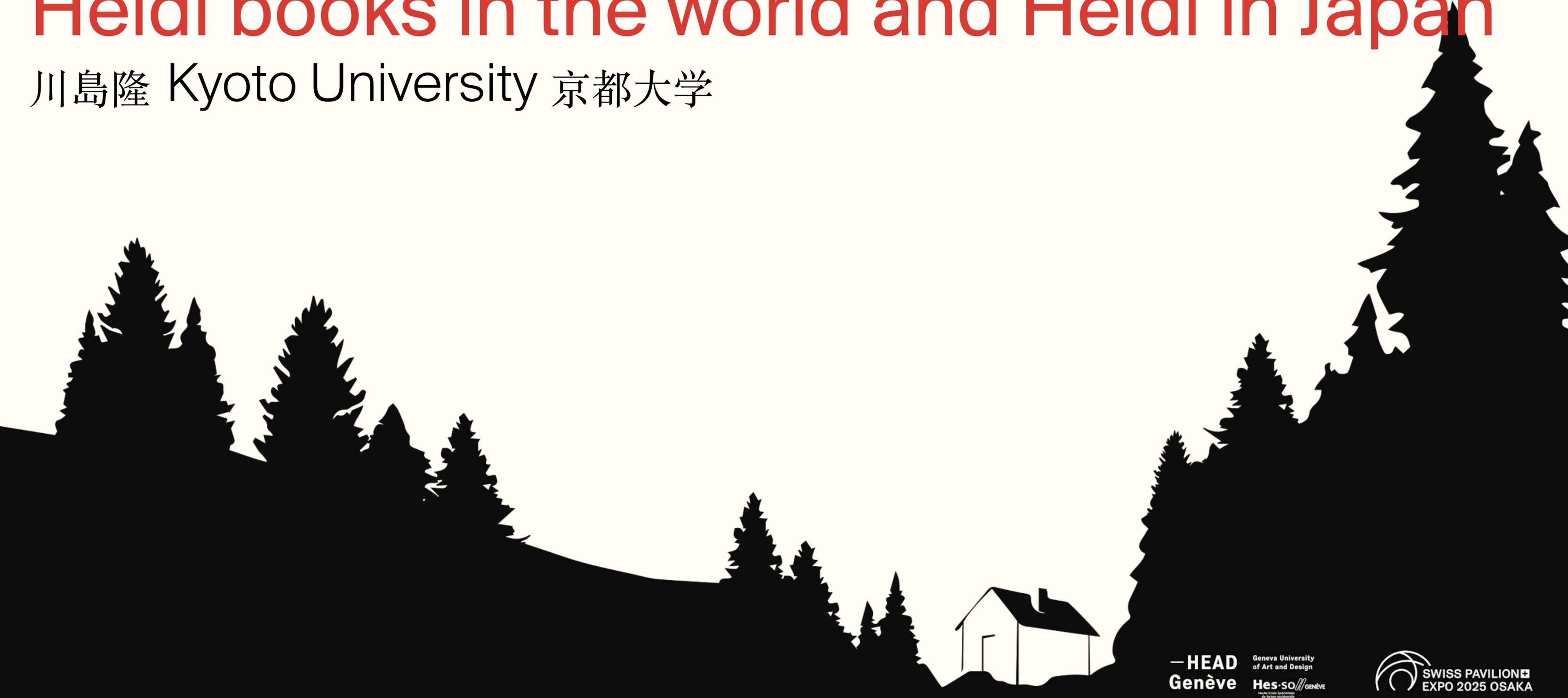


Heidi illustration
Makoto Takahashi
1969

Takashi Kawashima

Heidi books in the world and Heidi in Japan

川島隆 Kyoto University 京都大学



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Douglas Edric Stanley

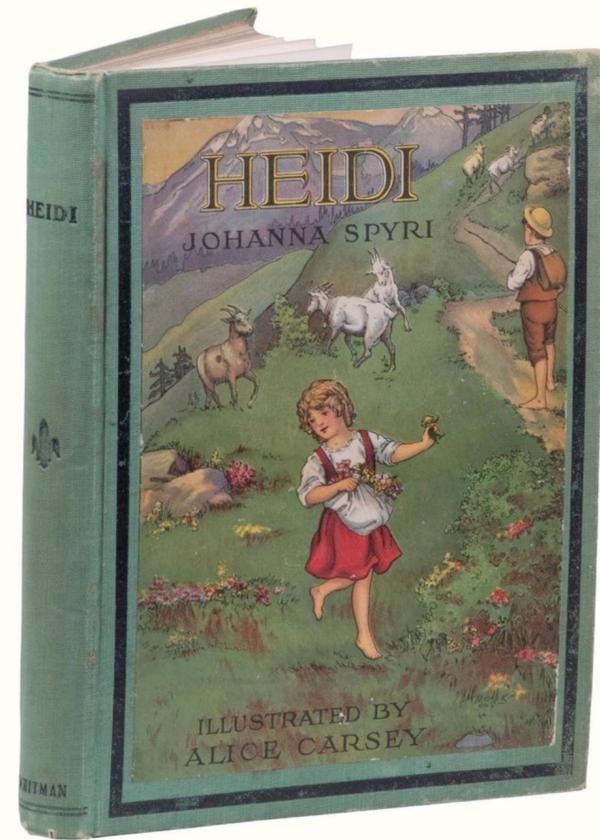
Out of the Eons

Professeur Master Media Design



A stylized landscape silhouette in white against a black background. The scene includes a range of jagged mountains in the upper half, a dense forest of coniferous trees in the middle ground, and a small cabin with a chimney in the lower right foreground. The text 'PASTS ↔ PRESENTS ↔ FUTURES' is centered horizontally across the middle of the image.

PASTS ↔ PRESENTS ↔ FUTURES





Out of the eons

In this project we explored virtual worlds in a world on fire, our relationship with nature, and the possibility of mental landscapes reflecting back onto us liveable futures.

Will we forever be exiles from reality? From matter? **Can we be little potential Heidis**, frolicking in an endless wonder of the childhood of the world?



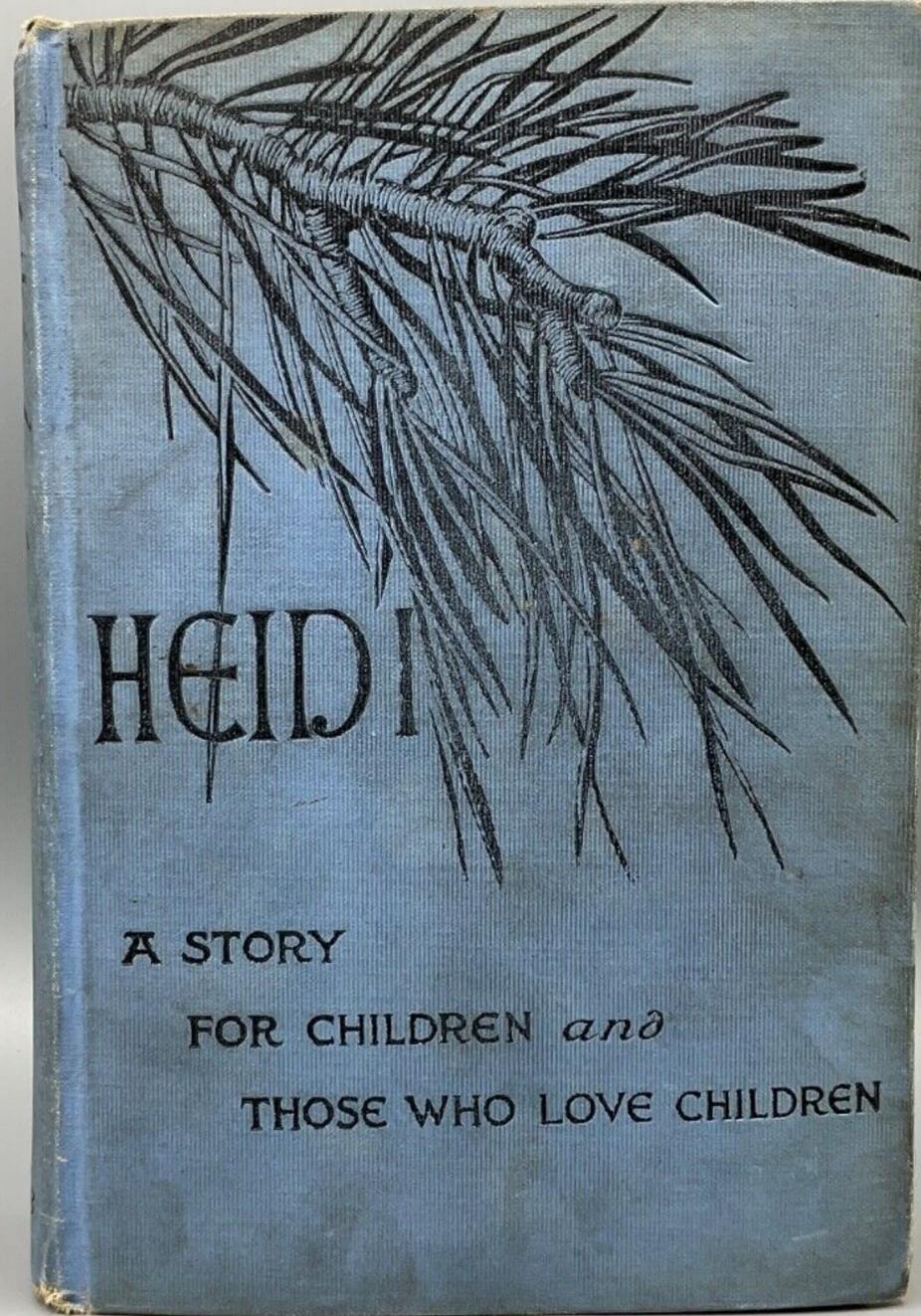
Chatlet

Like any proper project exploring the possible worlds of Heidi, it started in a chalet on a mountaintop.



Close Reading

Led by the author & fashion design Sabrina Calvo, we began with a close reading of Heidi, written by Johanna Spyri in 1880 & 1881.





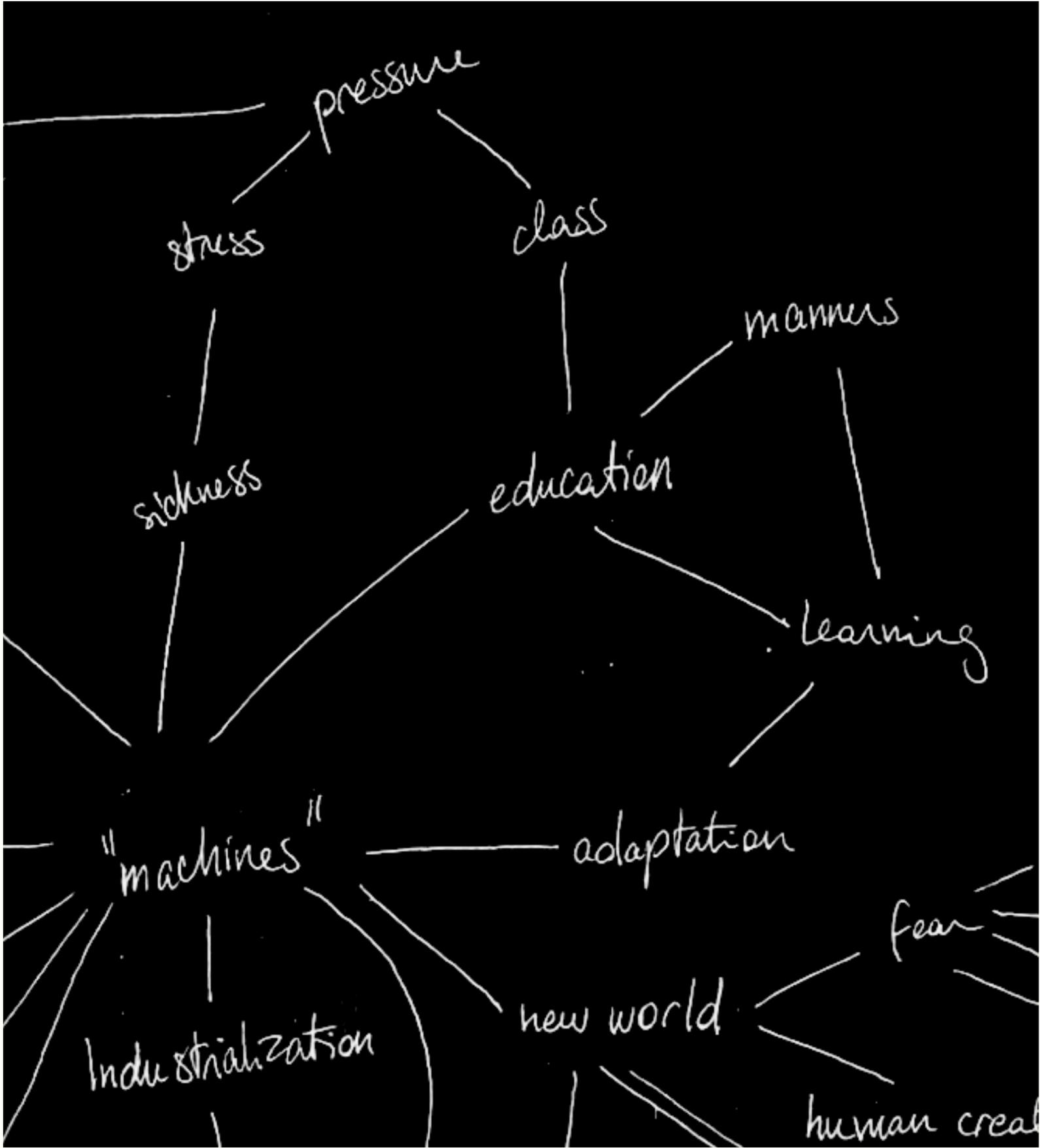
Sabrina Calvo

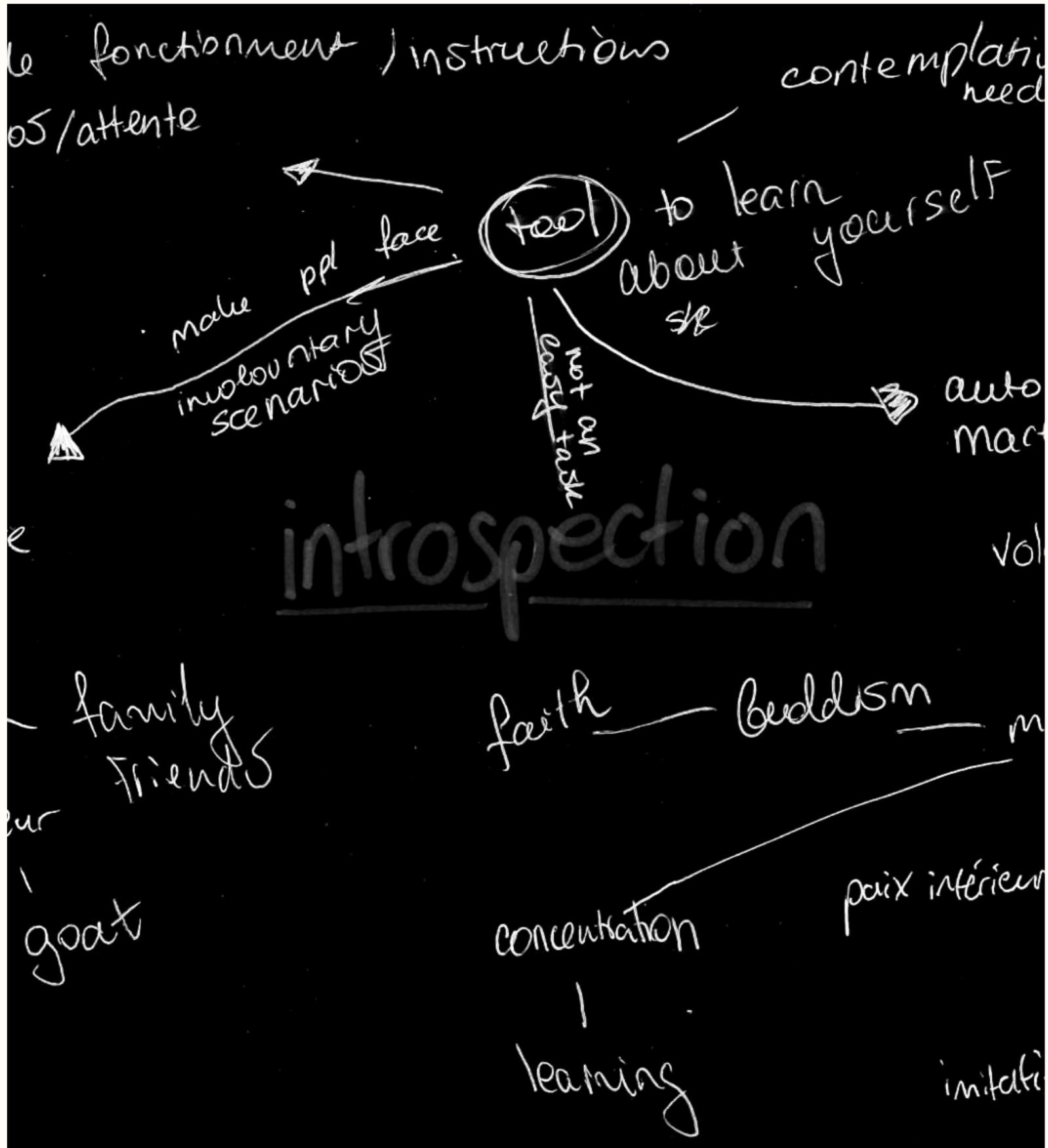
We were guided in our readings by Sabrina Calvo, a trans author who lives at the unexpected intersections of many different worlds and genres: **literature** (science fiction, poetry, historical youth fiction, ...), **video games**, **fashion design**, **virtual reality**, ...

Sabrina asked our students to find in the text singular conceptual points of semantic connections – specific connection points where the students could explore themes beyond the well-worn clichés of existing Heidi iconography or interpretations.

Constellations

During this worldbuilding phase we collected words that we grouped into constellations for each project. A central word, connected to many other words – but also somewhat difficult to define – was **innocence**. Many other words were also suggested.



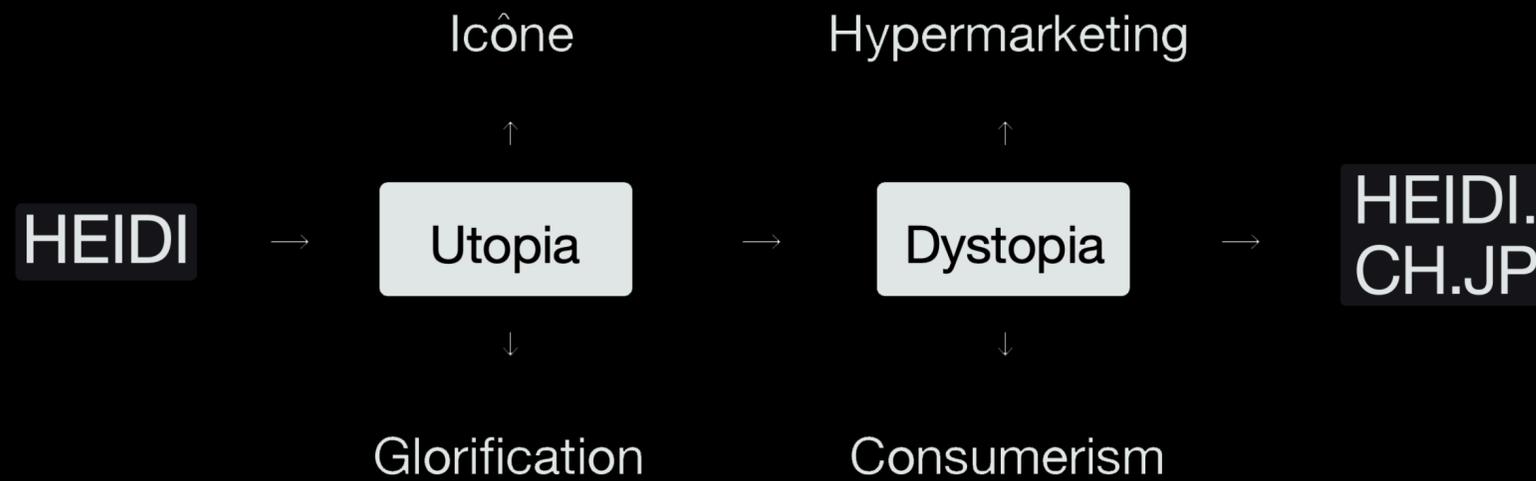


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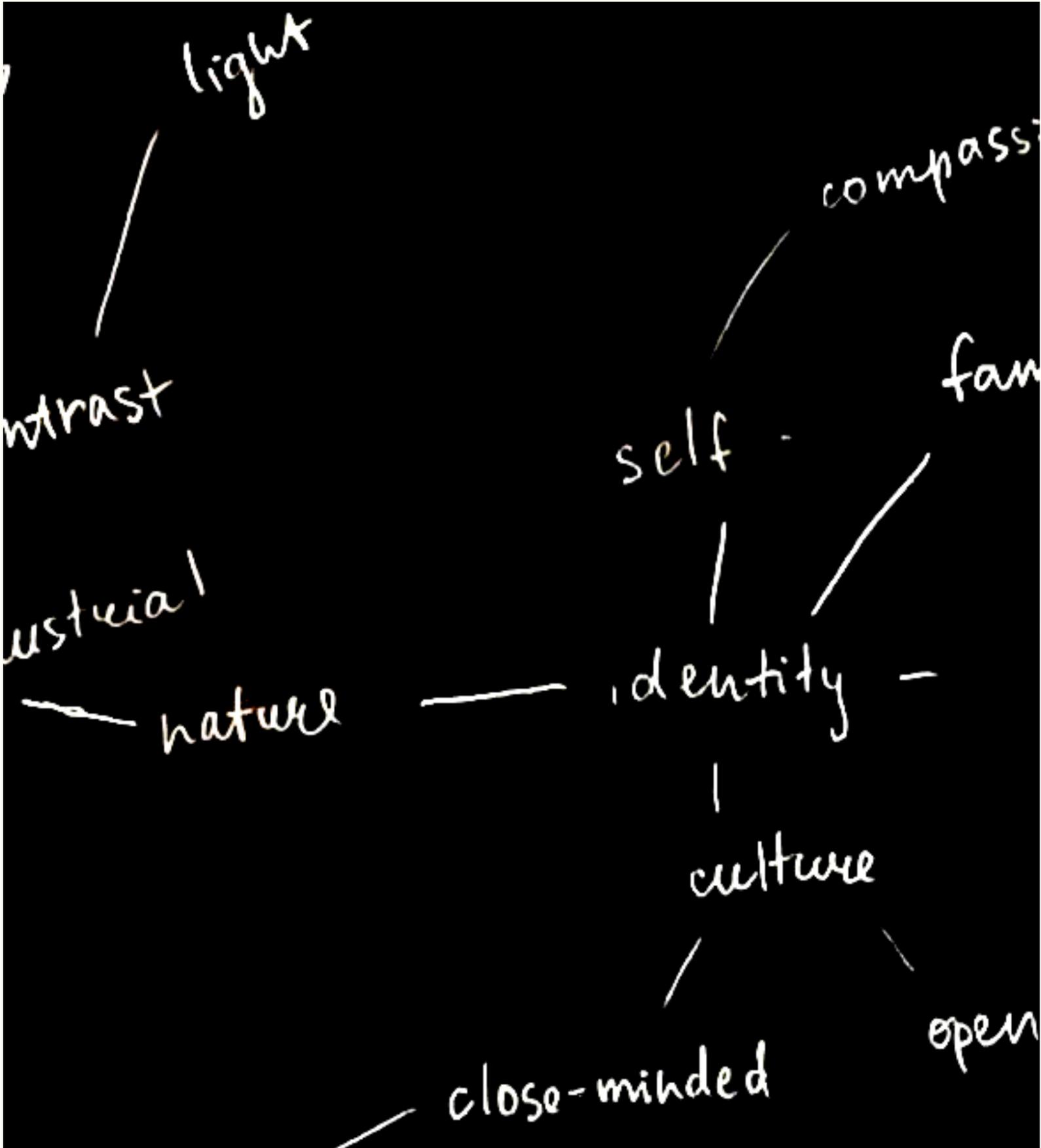
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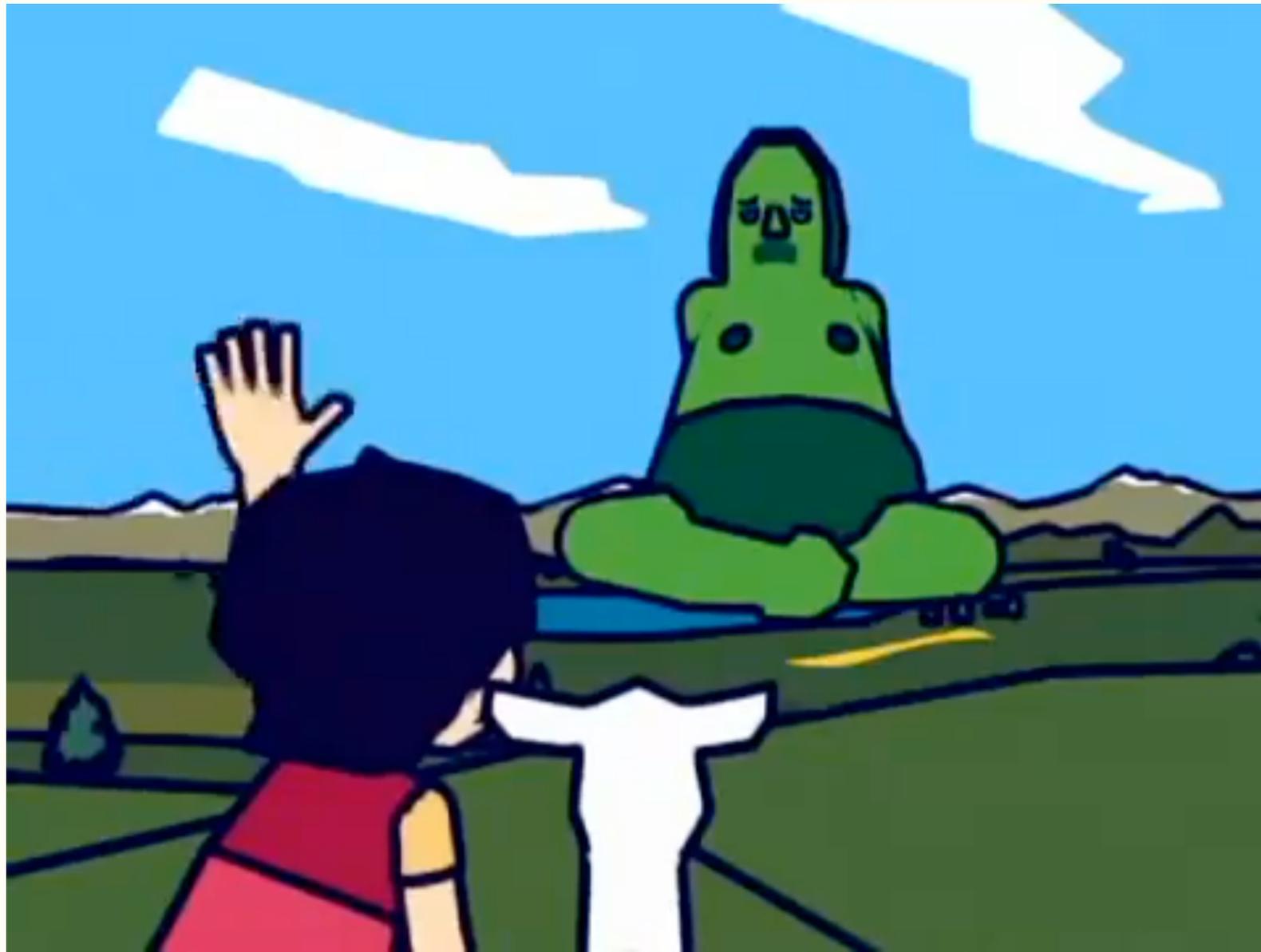




Field Research

During the field research phase — and guided by their constellations —, each group explored specific contexts, conducting interviews and exploring potential leads.





Field Research

We also spent a lot of time exploring different cultural reappropriations of the Heidi myth from around the world. We were especially charmed by this curious Japanese Heidi parody.

Cardboard Prototypes

During the worldbuilding session we explored a certain number of words that we grouped into constellations for each project. A central word, connected to many other words – but also somewhat difficult to define – was innocence. Many other words were also suggested.



Technology Explorations

Each project explored its own technological experimentations and constraints. Many projects integrated the current emerging technologies such as **generative artificial intelligence** for 3D modelling, text generation, and voice work.





Technology Explorations

It is important to note that this was not an AI project, and in fact many of the AI solution explored are still technologically unsatisfactory, and will require singular artistic strategies to transform into compelling work. In this case, for the project **HEIDI.CH.JP**, where consumerism around Heidi was explored, the wonky AI actually worked to their advantage.

Something similar should be said about **virtual reality**: it is in many ways a still incomplete medium, with core mechanics still poorly designed.

Virtual reality prototypes

Based on these close readings, **six prototypes** were developed, transforming this classical text into an immersive 360° experience for virtual headsets.

Johanna's Spyrit

Enzo Seurre, Sarah Meylan, Adam Chatir

T3 19.9 KM

Basile Brun, Ekaterina Bliznyuk, Mathis Baltisberger

Journey Back

Daria Kotova

Murmuration

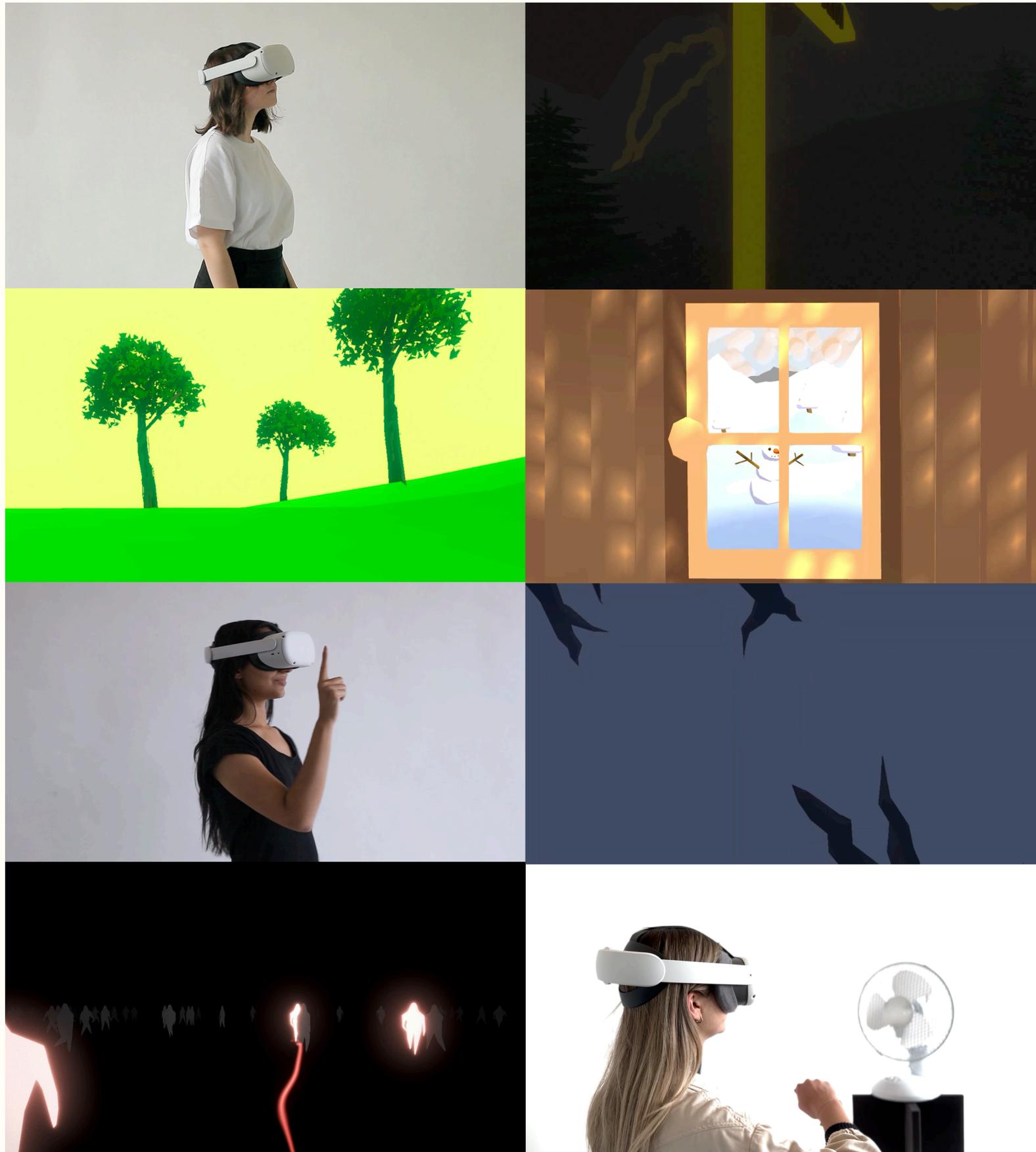
Naomi Blidariu, Océane Serrat, Lauren Thiel

HEIDI.CH.JP

Ares Pedroli, Jasmine Molano, Leyla Benkais

Ali-Lenti

Andrés Acosta-Blaschitz, Mathilde Schibler, Jonas Wolter





Johanna's Spyrit

From these six prototypes, one prototype was selected for this demonstration in Osaka 2025 : Johanna's Spyrit.



Douglas Edric Stanley

Professeur Master Media Design

HEAD – Genève



HEIDI
FOREVER

ハイジよ、永遠に。

HEIDI
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DISCUSSION

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EXHIBITION
VISIT + VR DEMO

