

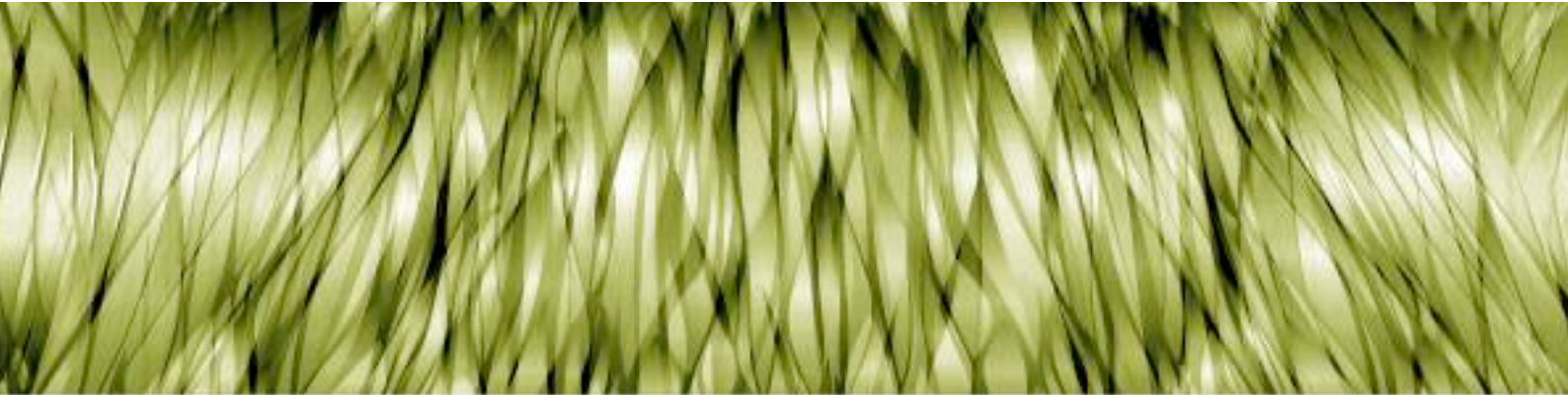


St Hugh's Foundation for the Arts

Personal Professional Development

Arts Award 2014

Sarah Daniels
Report



The St Hugh's Award has enabled me to fully immerse myself in my personal practice and from this a number of opportunities, including initiating working partnerships with new contacts have created several openings for me in my professional practice.

I have been able to merge and develop the cross-disciplinary aspects of my work and I have had the opportunity to experiment with new materials, fabrication and production methods previously not open to me.

In the first instance I was very keen to learn additional skills in design construction and illustration software so the design concepts I had started to work with were more transferable. Up until this point, much of my professional practice and commissioned work came from an almost entirely photographic foundation and the software I regularly used had limitations in how transferable the artwork was. At the outset I understood that what I wanted from the new body of work was to maximise its manufacturing output possibilities so the concepts and subsequently the designs were fully exchangeable in their production element.

I previously had a limited knowledge of Vector based software and had had artwork manufactured for commissions, but I realised that my partial knowledge of the software and my skills set had to be expanded upon. I knew that the manufacturing elements of the new work relied upon the design files being fully transferable. The content of the designs had to be successfully interpreted (without glitches) by inflexible mathematically based software such as AUTOCAD, engineering software and Sketch Up.

I started to have discussions with a very experienced digital illustrator and 3D visualiser based in London and together (face-to-face and over the phone) we worked through my preliminary design ideas. Initially he showed me similar concepts and how they were presented for production. He then guided me through the technical methods, which transformed my design concepts into files that are now widely accepted and easily understood by the software used by manufacturers, engineers, architects and interior designers.

Following this I was able to confidently present my personal work to an interior designer I had worked with on a health centre in the East Riding and she promptly requested that I send her digital portfolios of various types of work (both personal and professional) I had been engaged with. These digital portfolios later became part of a presentation package she showcased to clients. The designer successfully gained several large NHS Capital Build contracts where the interior schemes and integrated artwork were merged and I worked directly for the designer not the client. Collaboratively we worked together to create whole thematic design packages. She collated the details for the interior schemes including the procurement of the fixtures, fittings, furniture and colour schemes, which were then combined with specially commissioned bespoke artwork that enhanced the overall scheme.

This was an entirely new way of working for me and proved to be a very successful formula. Together we worked on the new eye centre based at Pinderfields Hospital in Wakefield, two separate paediatric assessment units and a health centre in Cumbria, and an intensive care psychiatric unit in Sheffield. Being one step removed from the client meant I could solely concentrate on the design elements required for the building and the opportunities have enabled me to nurture new working partnerships with manufacturers and contract suppliers.

In addition, with the software skills gained I also worked on preparing graphics, which became double-sided digitally printed window film and expanded my partnership with the Hull based bespoke plastics specialist. Together we made a series of prototypes, which included escalating the work we had done previously with rusted and lacquered cut steel and these smaller prototypes were worked up and later became wall based artwork and signage for the Pinderfields Hospital.

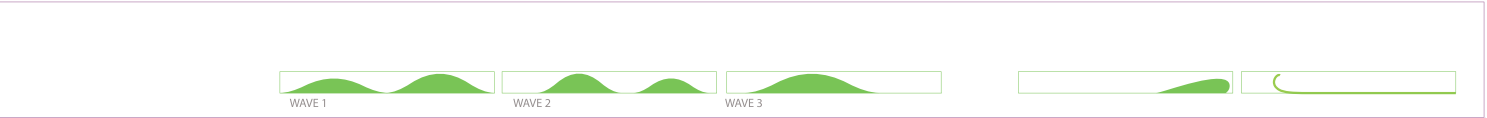


Photographs: section of lacquered rusty steel and artwork in situ at the Eye Centre, Pinderfields Hospital, Wakefield

Concepts that started life as bent and curled bits of card on my office floor, turned into acrylic prototypes where heat and simple MDF structures allowed us to bend and form the panels. These practiced experiments were remodelled and later became a complicated series of huge 3 metre curved photographic panels of 10mm of acrylic. This formed the backbone of a major commission and the panels were installed in the atrium of a new comprehensive school.



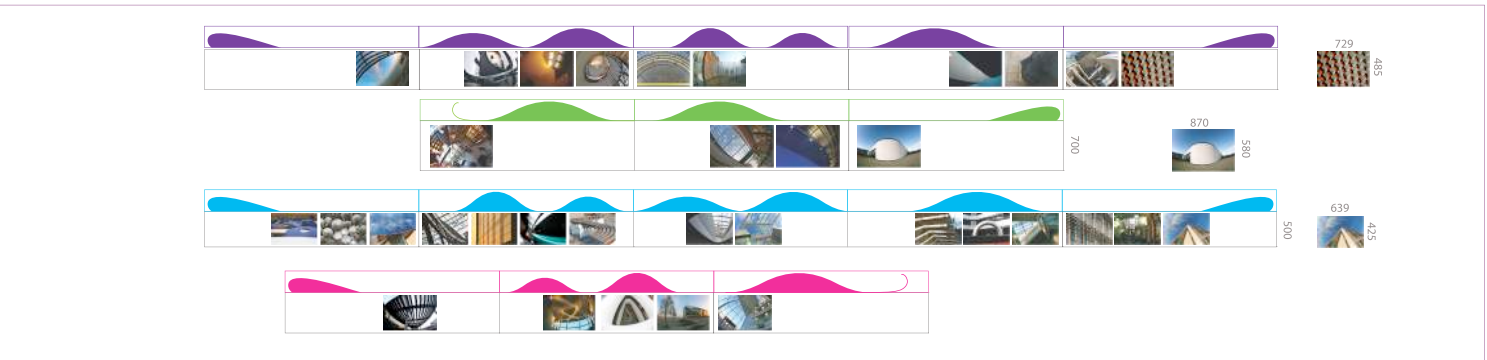
Illustration: cardboard concept



PREFERRED ARTIST'S IMPRESSION, SELECTION OF WAVES & END SCROLLS



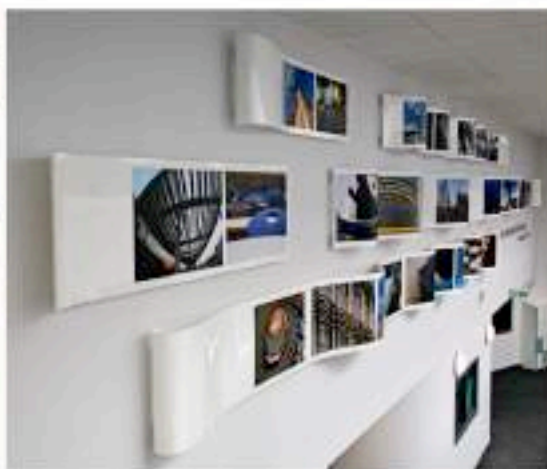
WAVES SHOWN TOGETHER



20 metres 80cm

SIDE VIEW SHOWING WAVES

Illustrations: fabrication guidelines & curve instructions



Photographs: fabricated & curved acrylic panels in situ, Kelvin Hall School, Hull

Hull, UK City of Culture 2017

Late last year, the Hull City of Culture team and Hull City Council approached several individual artists to put together a design concept for a major infrastructure project, which will be unveiled during the 2017 celebrations. My design concept was selected to be taken forward and later this year I am working with city engineers and specialist contractors to implement the design. This project is an exciting collaboration between Highways and the City of Culture team and work is due to start in late June 2016.

Up until now I have never had the chance to work on a major project of this kind but I felt I now had the skills to present and then technically back up my design ideas. During the execution of the project, the specialist contractors will use bespoke stencils, templates and essentially 'colour by numbers' guides to transfer the design onto the structure.

Personal Work: Pattern Development



Illustrations

Top: photograph of sunlight refraction patterns underwater in a swimming pool

Bottom: layered hexagon shapes worked into a similar pattern formation

In Conclusion

Left to Complete - The Final Stages of the Award

I am very committed to creating a new body of work, which is separate and stands alone. The work will initially have no crossover into my commissioned practice and will be pure experimentation. The production elements of the personal work will be isolated and completely unrelated to any brief so has no constraints on the direction it takes.

Outside of my commissioned work I have been heavily involved in creating 'hands on' artwork using cut outs, stencils, block & rubber stamping and basic lino printing.

I really want to expand upon the pieces I have experimented with and working with stencils, different printing methods and templates away from the computer is a first for me. I feel I must explore it further. Previously I had always been reticent when it came down to this type of experimentation because of my lack of training and education in the application of traditional fine arts.

This contributed to low confidence when it came to 'mucky' art away from a computer screen. I realise now that by using resources like stencils, blocks and templates enables me to explore new ground. I have come to realise that I do not have to be an expert in drawing and painting to achieve the results I am working towards.



Illustrations: patterns from the insides of envelopes, punched cut-outs, water soluble ink pencils, lacquer & photography



Illustrations: layered tracing paper, personal stencil, alcohol markers, pencil & pen

The freehand experiments can then be digitalised to accompany the hard copy artwork, which in turn will create further patterns and designs. This means the designs will once again be transferable so can be applied to varied digital surfaces and textures.

Recently I have been particularly inspired by patterns created in the natural world as a result of changes in the weather and seasons. I had started to concentrate on specific themes, which included natural bodies of water, the ambiguous nature of fog and how it distorts the landscape, and I have been further intrigued by the patterns caused by hard frosts. I have photographed these aspects of nature and the images are the preliminary concepts for immediate further experimentation.

These ideas and experimentation will inform the basis of a scheme of work, which can be part of a residency application.



Photographs: woodland stream, new leaves, early Spring



Photographs: waterlogged park, foggy wintry day



Photographs: hard frost on glass



Photographs: bank grass submerged in a high river



Photographs: boat trip wake patterns, windless day

Summary

I feel the St Hugh's award has enabled me to expand my knowledge and technical expertise, which in turn has boosted confidence levels. I now feel capable of applying for commissions I would have previously shied away from. This has opened many new doors with interior designers, suppliers, clients and how I now approach my professional practice. I needed the mentoring from the digital illustrator and the expertise he imparted has proved invaluable. We came together with a different skills set and following on from me gaining additional skills in how to use the software more efficiently we have continued to work together. The Hull based plastic fabrication company who provided the prototypes wants us to create a series of designs, which will be produced for online merchandising. The illustrator, who now terms our relationship, as a 'mutually beneficial collaborative partnership' is very keen to continue working together. We are really interested in the possibility of developing further work, which will involve 3D particle systems and algorithms. This will lead to the 3D printing of patterns for the domestic market. We also want expand our practice to create new surfaces used in construction and for interior finishes.

In addition, gaining the City of Culture commission only came about because I was able to understand the engineering drawings and the commissioning team expressed that they thought I would be able make the design and colouring process easy for the contractors to follow without the proposed work becoming too complicated and unnecessarily convoluted. This is definitely a major development for me, as I have never worked on an infrastructure project before. This became possible because of the collaborative work I embarked upon as a result of gaining the professional development award from St Hugh's. I am excited by the opportunities, which lie ahead.

Pictorial

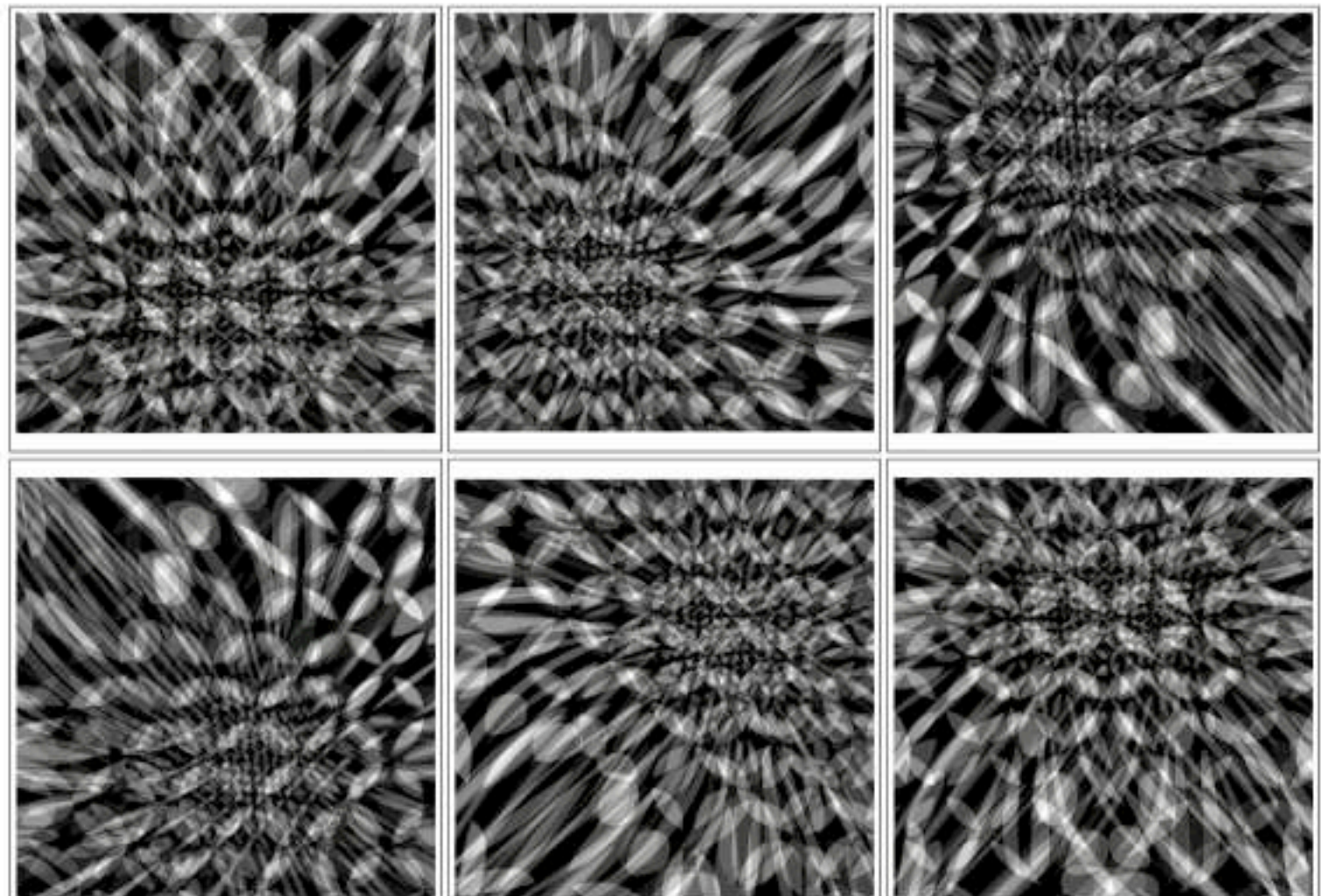
The next few pages show illustrations and patterns at various stages of their development.



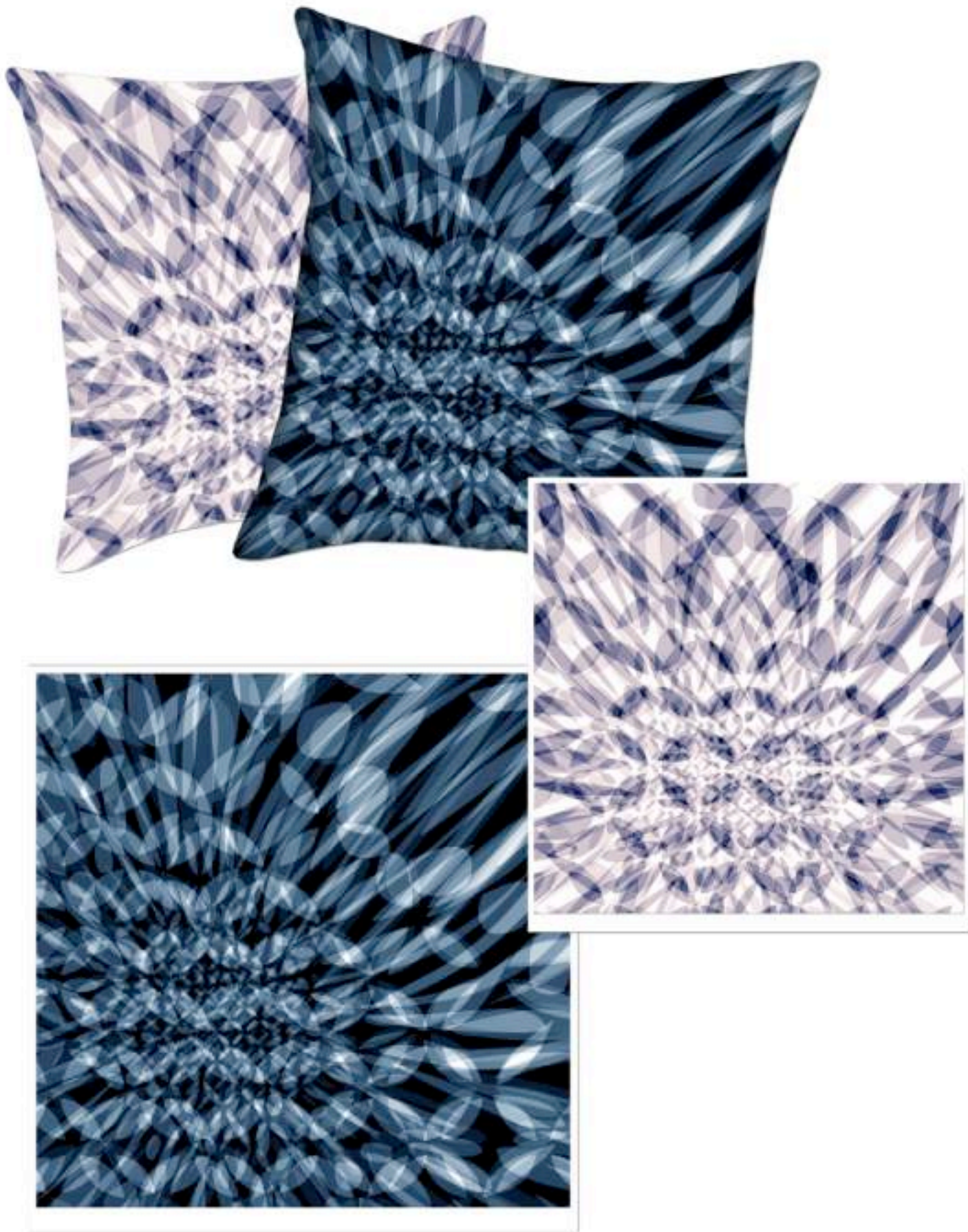
Illustration: shows initial concept of working with a pattern of geometric circles and the beginnings of distortion



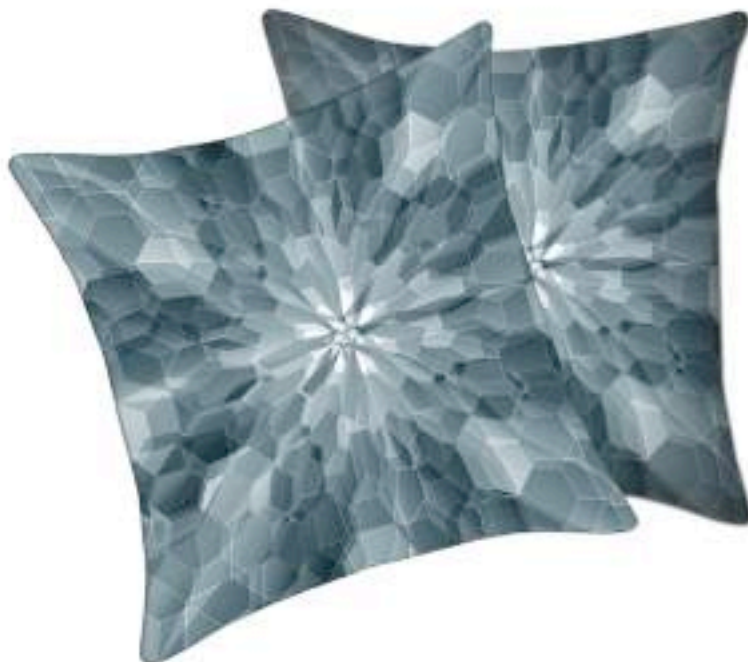
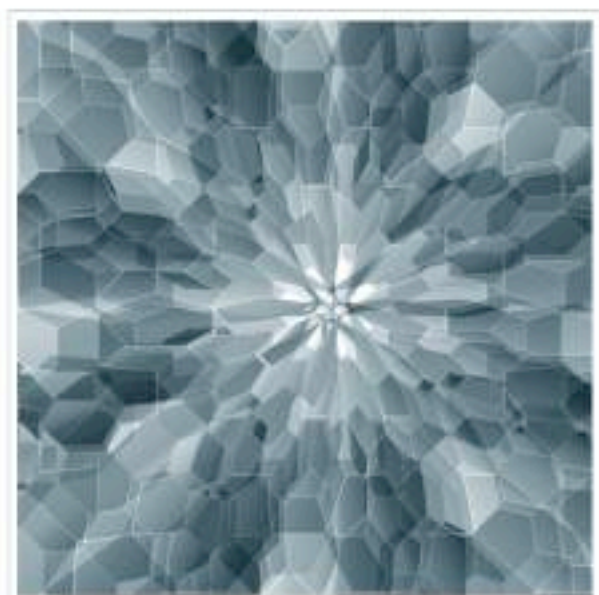
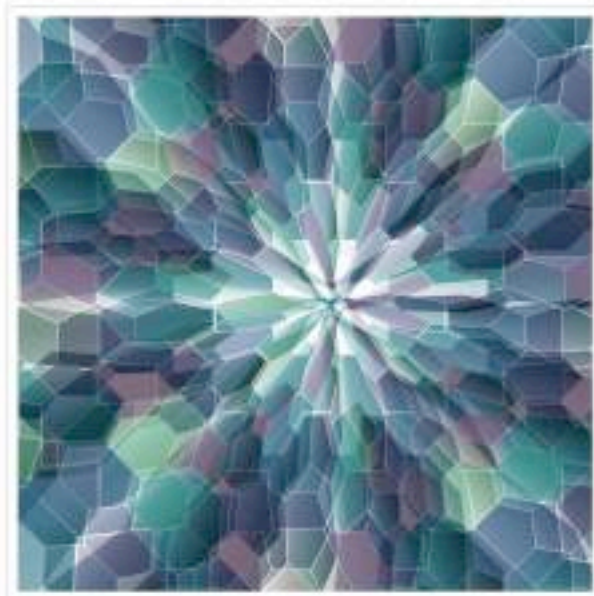
Patterns constructed of repeated circles, then distorted



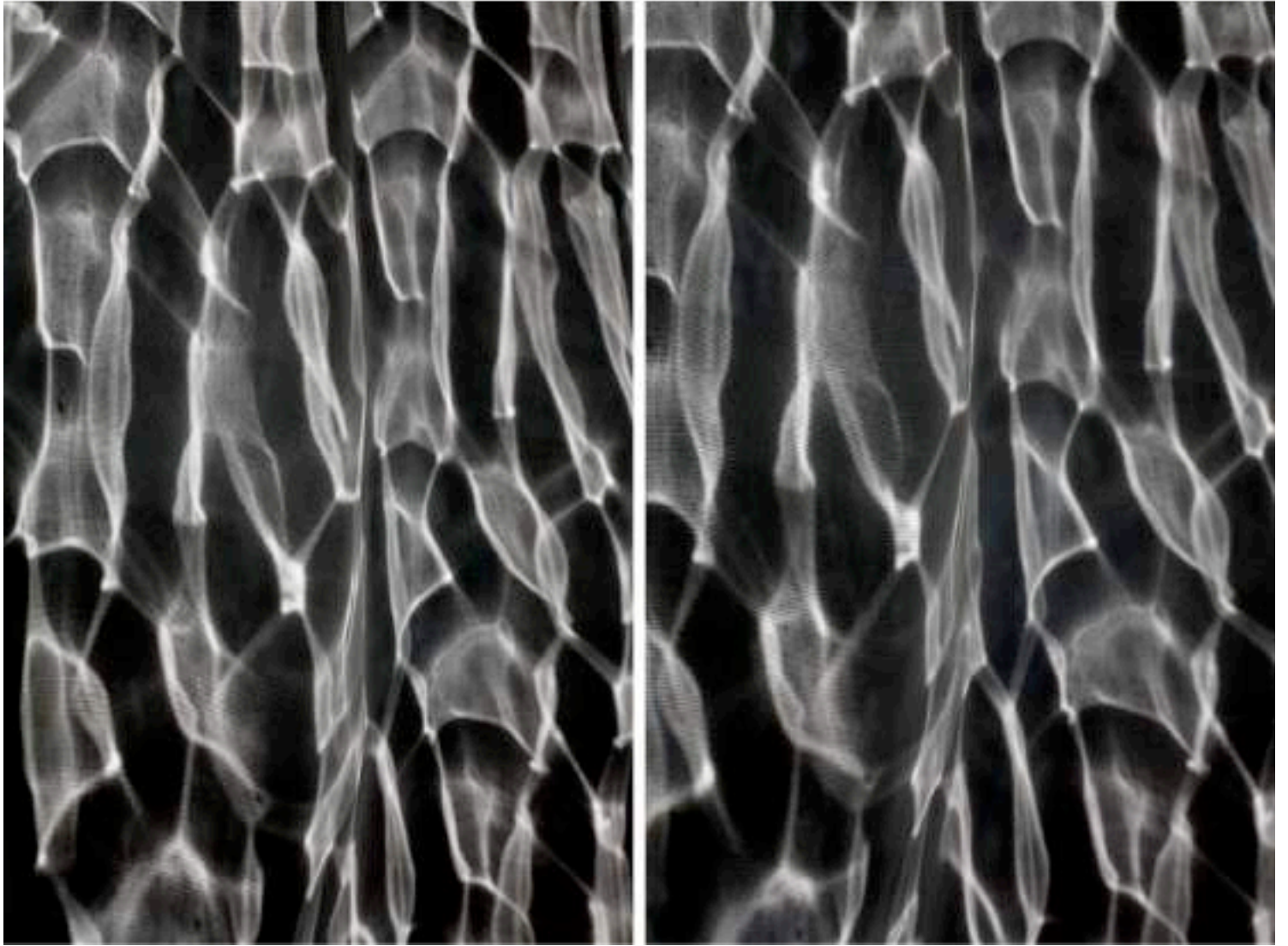
Layered patterns



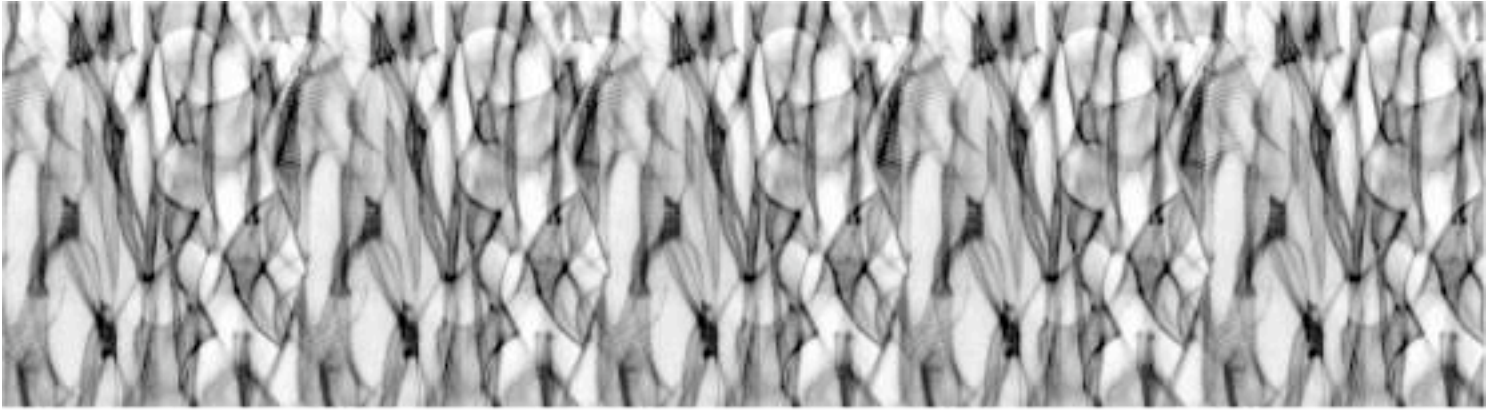
Illustrations: patterns worked up to be reproduced as cushions



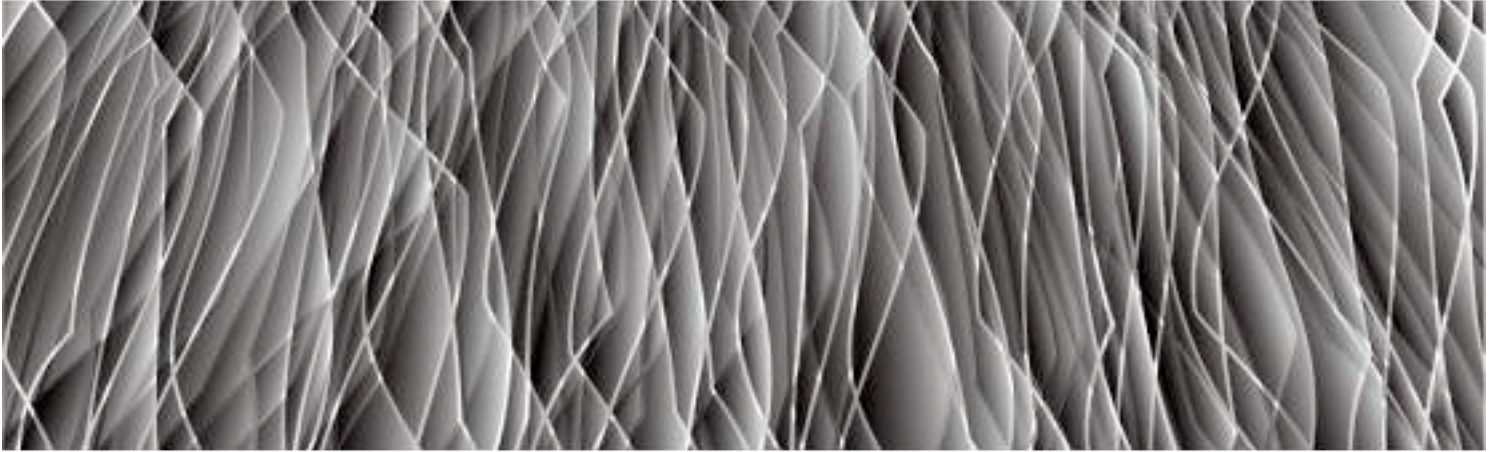
Illustrations: hexagons



Illustrations: original photographs of sunlight shining onto net curtains through Flemish glass



1. Photographic composition: net curtains



2. Constructed lines: net curtains



3. Flowing & organic lines: net curtains



4. Layered lines: net curtains

Illustrations: subsequent pattern developments with the photograph being the source concept