

# space shaper



Mitsuo Katsui is recognized as a pioneer who reshaped Japanese graphic design through his innovative use of light, color, and digital technology. This pitch book highlights the core principles behind Katsui's style—his approach to visual psychology, his integration of technology, and his belief that design evolves with time.

“When you are creating from nothing, you need strength and empowerment within yourself, because you are the one who shapes the future.”

“The Artist Who Invented a New Language Without Words: Mitsuo Katsui.” SABUKARU

#### About

Katsui is best known for transforming light and color into a unique visual vocabulary. Through digital and printing technologies, he created fluid, dreamlike effects that evoke mystery, depth, and the passage of time. He predicted as early as the 1950s that “future designers will no longer need a pen,” demonstrating his early understanding of technology’s role in design. With a foundation in structural composition, Katsui combined geometric forms with principles of optical perception. He used gradients, contrasts, and



spatial illusions to produce three-dimensional movement and visual resonance. His works balance rational order with emotional tone, often reflecting Zen-like tranquility and the sensitivity of Japanese aesthetics. Katsui was the first graphic designer in Japan to adopt computers as a creative tool. By the 1980s, he collaborated with Apple, exploring the emerging possibilities of digital imaging. His forward-looking approach helped elevate Japanese graphic design into the digital age.



#### Styles

Mitsuo Katsui believed that design is a living system—a medium that connects humans to unseen forces such as emotion, rhythm, and time. For him, technology was not merely a device but an extension of human imagination. He emphasized the importance of creating from nothing, insisting that designers must harness inner strength and envision the future rather than imitate the present. His work is characterized by a harmonious blend of scientific precision and poetic abstraction. While his geometric structures reflect

modernist discipline, his gradients and light diffusion evoke spirituality and cosmic energy. Katsui viewed design as a universal language capable of transcending culture, technology, and time. His innovative integration of light, motion, and digital experimentation continues to influence contemporary visual culture—from graphic design and media arts to immersive installations.



### Influence & Impact – Cultural and Design Legacy

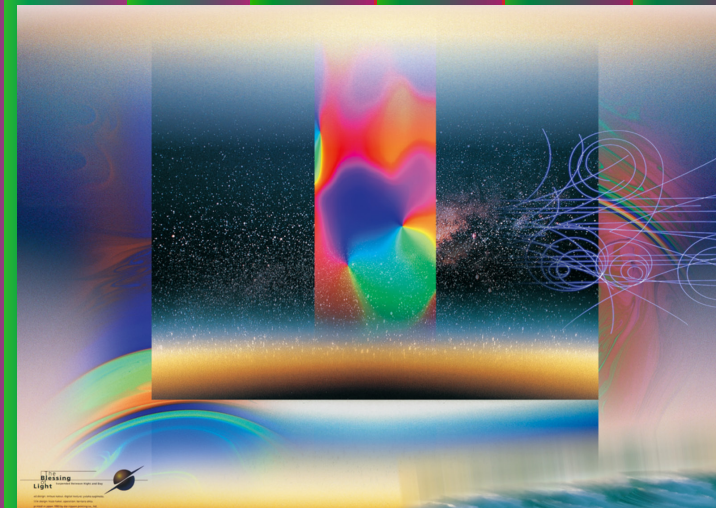
Mitsuo Katsui's influence extends far beyond his iconic visual style. His early adoption of digital tools positioned him as a crucial bridge between traditional graphic design and the emerging technological era. This forward-thinking mindset helped shift Japan's visual culture toward a more experimental, technology-driven direction, inspiring generations of designers working in print, motion, and interactive media. Katsui's emphasis on light,

perception, and spatial flow has become foundational in contemporary design fields such as data visualization, UI/UX, immersive installations, and motion graphics. His work demonstrated that digital tools could do more than imitate analog techniques—they could create entirely new aesthetic possibilities. Many of today's gradient-based design trends, transparency layers, and

motion-driven interfaces echo concepts Katsui explored decades earlier. His belief that technology and human emotion are interconnected continues to shape how designers approach digital experience design. By treating visuals as dynamic systems rather than static images, Katsui paved the way for design practices that prioritize fluidity, interaction, and user perception. His legacy is not only historical but deeply relevant to the future of visual communication.

“Light has always been a perpetual theme for me. Man and light are very closely tied. Light is translated into colors and things are seen through light.”

“Mitsuo Katsui Story” READYMEG



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**Design Approach & Methodology**

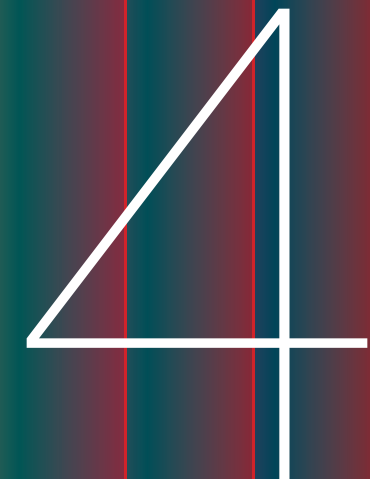
Mitsuo Katsui's design process was rooted in a balance between analytical structure and intuitive exploration. Rather than beginning with predetermined forms, he approached each project as an open system—testing how light, color, and geometry interact in space. He often built compositions through iterative experiments, layering gradients, adjusting tonal transitions, and observing how visual energy shifted across the page.

Technology played a defining role in his methodology. Katsui was one of the first designers to treat computers not as production tools but as creative partners, using them to explore movement, dimensionality, and perception in ways traditional media could not achieve. His workflow combined digital simulations with manual refinement, allowing him to construct images that felt

both systematically precise and emotionally fluid. A key part of his approach was visual psychology—studying how the eye travels, where tension forms, and how color temperature affects emotional response. He designed not only for aesthetic impact but for sensory experience, aiming to guide the viewer through a rhythm of discovery. This methodology continues to influence contemporary design processes, encouraging designers to merge research, intuition, and technology into a unified creative system.

“Even before computers, it was hard work, because we cut each piece by hand, joined them, and changed them. What we were doing was the same as what computers do now.”

-Mitsuo Katsui

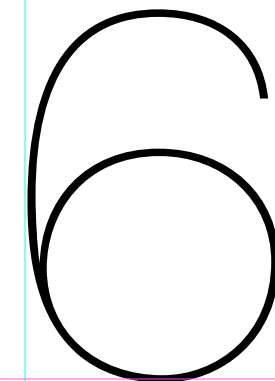
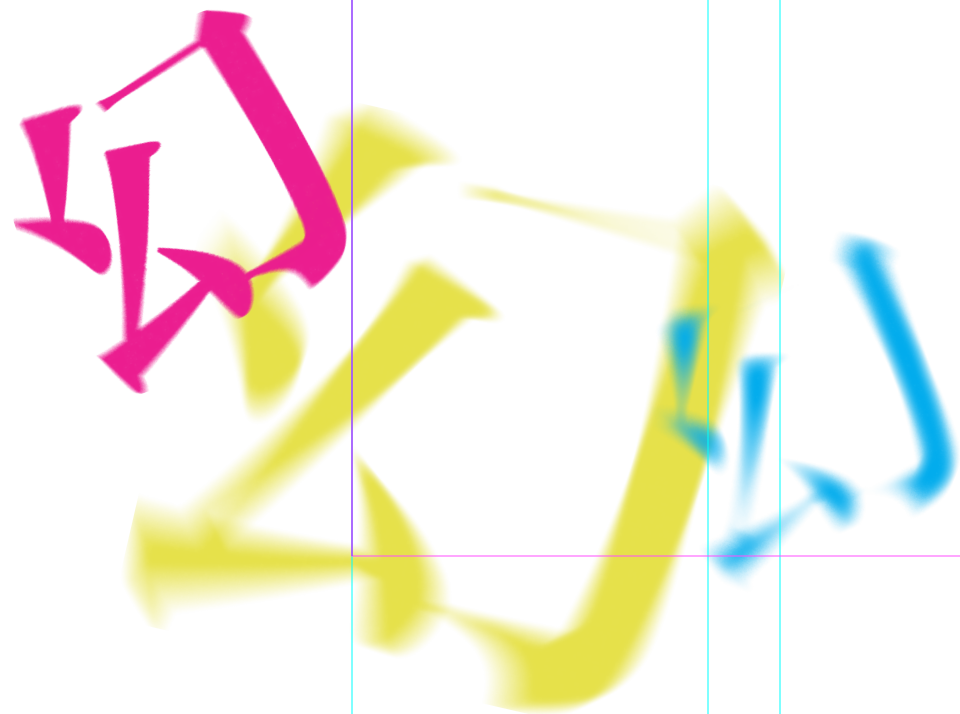


The background features a complex arrangement of overlapping geometric shapes. A large, semi-circular shape with a pink-to-orange gradient and a fine, parallel-line texture is the central focus. To its left, a bright yellow shape overlaps it. Above and to the right, a vibrant blue shape is visible. The bottom left corner shows a light green shape. The overall composition is dynamic and colorful.

# Visual Assets

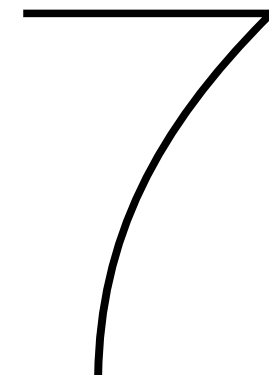
**Flag Design (Banner)**

The banner system highlights the exhibition's identity through layered gradients and the deconstructed form of the Kanji character “幻”. By stretching its strokes into fluid geometric paths, the design echoes Katsui's fascination with digital motion and optical depth.



**Bus Shelter Design**

On public surfaces like bus shelters, the layered type and the enlarged “空” strokes interact with reflections, producing a real-world optical effect that aligns with Katsui’s language of light and surface play.

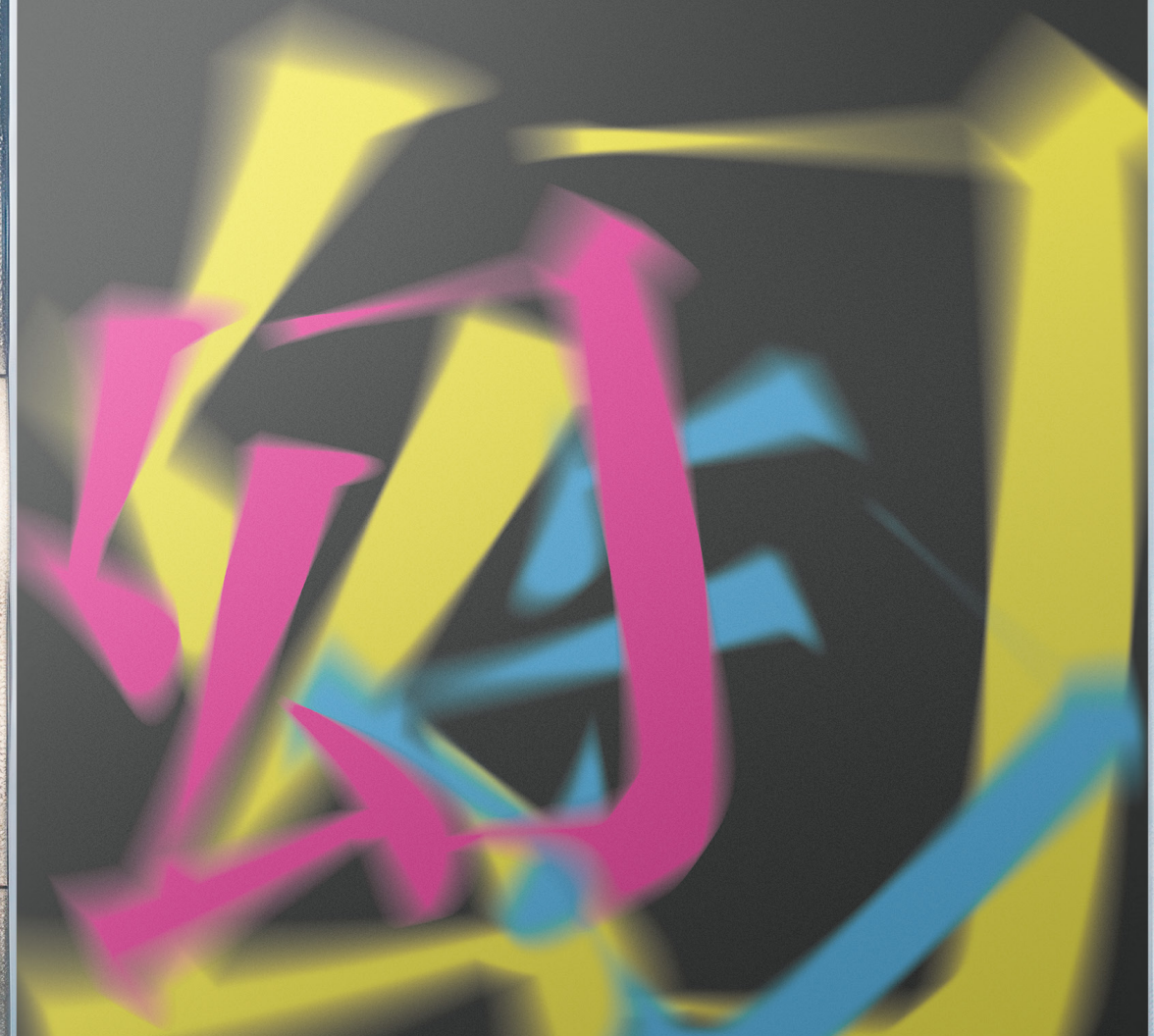


**Gallery wall**

Subtle overlaps between text and color fields replicate the "floating" effect seen in Katsui's posters, forming a calm yet dynamic environment reminiscent of his Zen-influenced compositional rhythm.

Mitsuo Katsui  
Explore Your Light Journey  
March to August, 2025

**AGO**

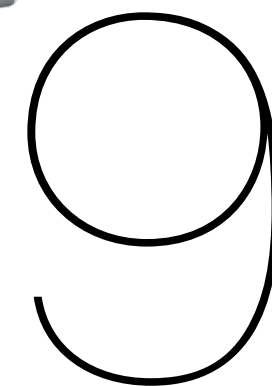



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**Merchandises**

Both merchandise pieces reinterpret the “幻” glyph not as typography, but as a visual system. Through layering, reduction, and gradient modulation, the collection captures the exhibition’s core themes: illusion, temporality, and the interplay between structure and emotion.



The background is a vibrant, abstract composition. It features a rainbow gradient from purple on the left to red on the right. Overlaid on this are several overlapping, semi-transparent shapes in various colors: a large yellow shape, a cyan shape, a magenta shape, and a light blue shape. Some of these shapes have fine, parallel lines or hatching patterns. The overall effect is dynamic and layered, suggesting depth and movement.

Mitsuo Katsui's work is the shaping of experience, perception, and space itself. His vision continues to expand the possibilities of graphic design, encouraging us to see technology not as a tool, but as a catalyst for new forms of expression. As a true spaceshaper, Katsui leaves us with a lasting reminder that design evolves through curiosity, experimentation, and the courage to imagine beyond the visible.