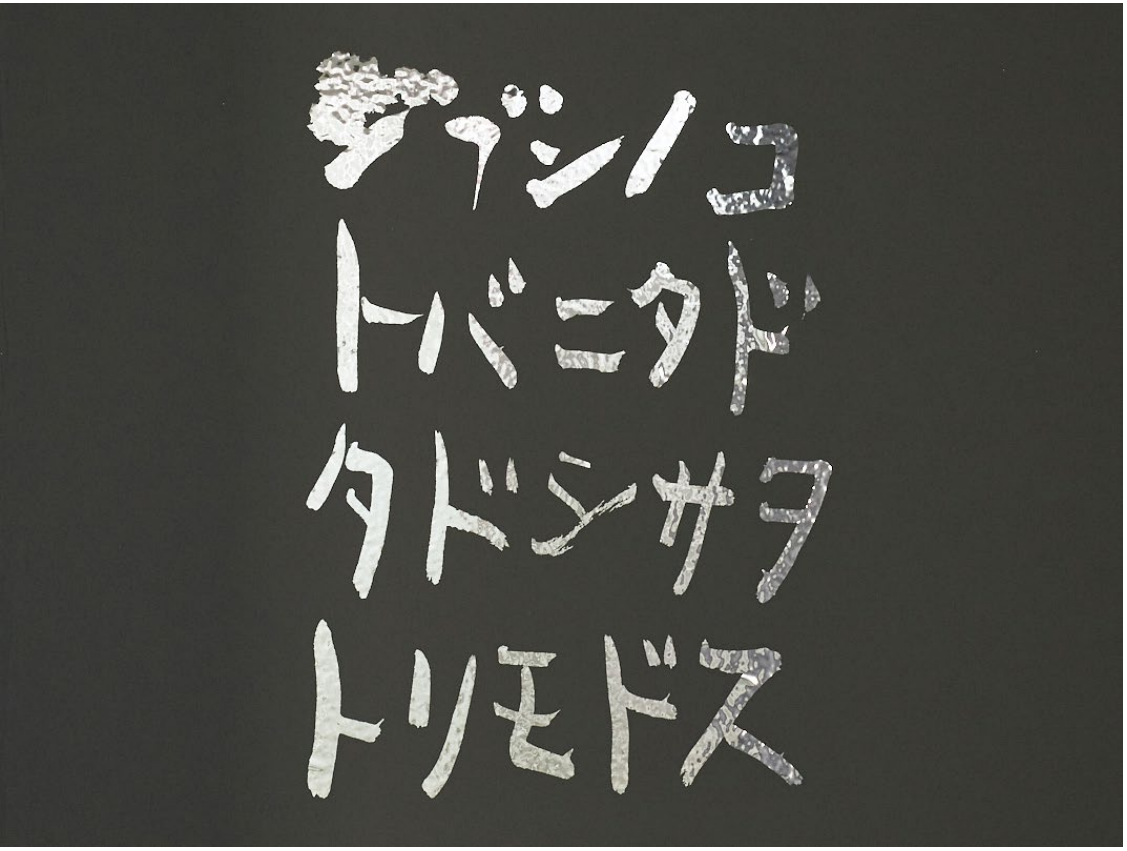

Recovering the Viridity in My Own Language
2020
workshops + text installation (shiny silver vinyl text on matt grey wall)
text size variable
as a part of the project *After-Ripening & Corruption: Recovering the Viridity & Salmon Run* at TOKAS Hongo, Tokyo

The project *After-Ripening & Corruption* has evolved in the environment where I become a stranger (France, Sweden, Austria, South Africa, Latvia, and Russia) as to reflect on the cultural and language translations experienced by the people on the move. Seeing the unfamiliar context of the COVID pandemic as its new foreign platform, I have developed a series of works *Recoveirng the Viridity* & Salmon Run*.

One of them is *Recovering the Viridity in My Own Language*, which ruminates over the distance between the things that change and their past, through an online workshop with a Japanese calligrapher as well as its resulting text installation where it reveals itself only when it reflects the light from elsewhere.

***virid**: 1. green 2. naive, innocent 3. any of a group of related viruses

ESTRANGEMENT FROM MOTHER TONGUE

This Japanese phrase is an analogy of my state as someone being away from own mother tongue, and of the distance and emotions I realised (in the sense of both noticed and accomplished) upon returning to my former environment. This unusual set of words literally means 'recovering the awkwardness/shakiness in one's own words/language.'

MODULATION AFTER DISORDERS

In an online workshop with Japanese calligrapher Ukyo Kamigori bridging Stockholm and Kyoto, we had a dialogue based on this phrase; the acts of writing and teaching, experiences of losing normality such as panic disorder and retinal detachment that the calligrapher underwent, the awakenings they brought, and how things and matters manifest and how we interpret them.

How can we embody the phrase based on the changing self, reflection on the gaps between present and past, and the sense of being 'unpreoccupied' acquired along the way? We made various approaches to depart from the usual, mature or 'ripened' to which one is accustomed: writing with left hand, upside down, horizontally while Japanese traditional writing direction is vertical and from right to left, in Katakana phonetic characters that we only use for the things from foreign countries and onomatopoeia.

VISIBLE IN REFLECTION

One of the attempts was to write with left hand, in Katakana characters, in four rows with five characters each. It made it difficult for the reader also to understand the phrase first hand due to the unusual characters that only convey sound, and the cut-up of words and clauses ignoring its meaning. The strokes appeared awkward at the same time strong as if to reflect the interrior of the calligrapher.

For the exhibition at TOKAS Hongo, where the wall was painted in grey for another work with video projection, I transformed the text into vinyl letters in shiny silver. The phrase appears and flickers in the dark only when it receives the light from the projection to reflect on its metallic surface.

(left page) installation view of the whole text (right page, from top to bottom) view of calligraphy writing during the online workshop; the vinyl text traces the movement of the brush, and reflects both the light from the projection and the uneven texture of the wall; installation view with a projection screen from another work in the exhibition space

ダブシノコ
トバニタド
タドシサヲ
トリモドス