The itch

RECURSIVE SURVIVAL & ONTOLOGICAL INSTABILITY IN FASHION ARTEFACT.

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FASHION ARTEFACT
MASTERS PROJECT

AN EXPLORATION OF PRODUCTION AS PROOF OF IDENTITY

VIA EXPERIMENTAL FOOTWEAR.

IN ABSTRACT

The Itch is a practice-based project that explores fashion artefacts as disintegrating, recursive objects, specifically through the medium of experimental footwear. It challenges the idea that wearable design ought to support, stabilise, or complete the body. Instead, these artefacts expose a compulsion toward a survival of form through repetitive gesture: they crawl, collapse, and return to the ground. The project's title refers to a condition I locate within contemporary creative culture, a drive to make, to perform the creative condition, even in the absence of urgency or thought. In this sense, The Itch 'operates' not as a solution nor a comment, but as a symptom of itself.

Materially, the project employs graphite to articulate this survival logic. Graphite, as both structural medium and mark-making tool, deteriorates with use, tracing the wearer's movement while erasing the artefact itself. The marks made by the object become a meaningful substitute for the object once worn down. The material serves not only to shape the artefacts, (via use) but to situate them within a broader theoretical inquiry.

The project draws on psychoanalytic and post-structural theory, including Lacan's mirror stage, Girard's mimetic desire, and Baudrillard's concept of the simulacrum. The intention is to investigate how creative identity, Image based repetition, and bodily decay intersect. Through sculptural artefacts, performative testing, critical writing, and any other relevant medium as it occurs -The Itch asks how fashion might embody the logic of contemporary creative survival.

INTRODUCTION

1-1 BACKGROUND + CONTEXT

I have rejected footwear my entire life.

My mother is an extraordinary footwear designer, and like any adolescent determined to resist the inheritance of blood, I refused the intimacy of shared vision. For years, footwear was her language, not mine.

This project began at a rough time for me… the kind of time when girls start looking for their mothers. In that search, I found myself seeking her hands holding mine. I sought her insight, her conversation, a mimicry of her practice. I reached for her through making. This project began because I needed my mum. (It began because I had no ideas.)

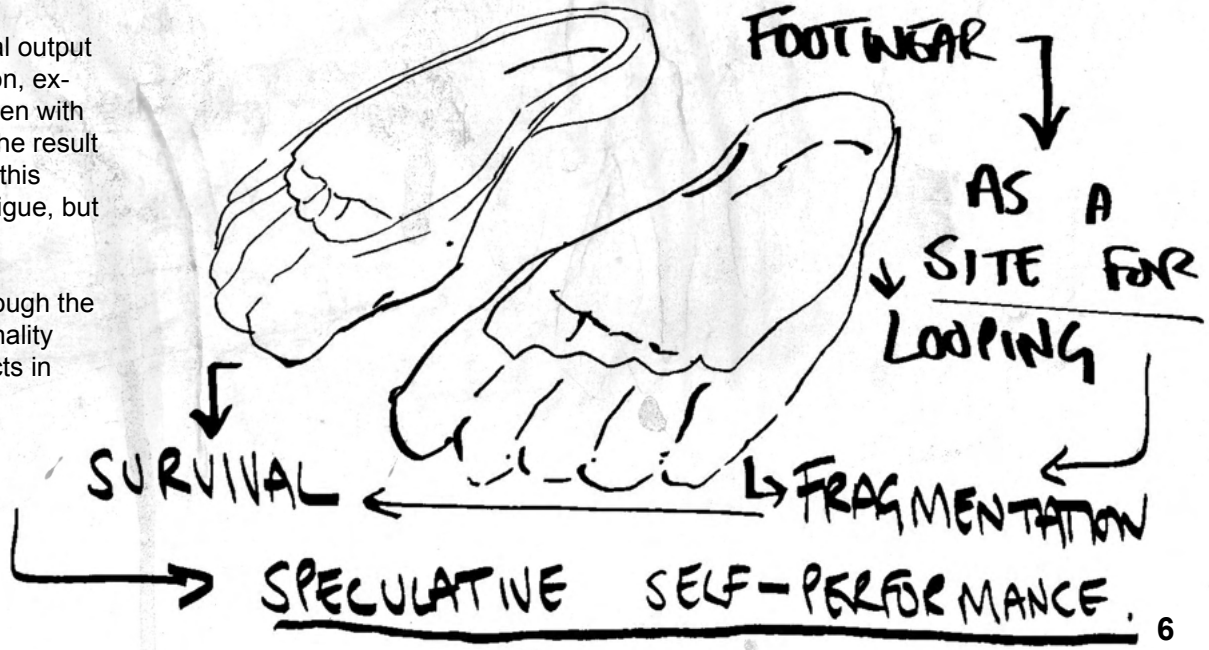
In an absence - of originality, of direction - I found myself in a state of mind where I could only create from a prism of images, Hyper referencing the image of an image of something that once was a stable idea. In short, each idea I sought to replicate turned out to be a poor replication of the idea I sought to replicate… and the only reason to seek to replicate the idea in the first place was because if I failed to create, I failed to be *creative*.

In the current creative landscape, I believe the demand for perpetual output has become a condition unto itself. I expect myself (and by extension, expect the world around me, and it in turn) to generate endlessly… often with diminishing urgency or clarity of purpose. The result is saturation. The result is a compulsive cycle of repetition masquerading as novelty. Within this context, The Itch does not position itself as a solution to creative fatigue, but as a mirror.

The project exists within the field of fashion artefact, specifically through the lens of experimental footwear, but deliberately unsettles the functionality and symbolism of the 'shoe.' The artefacts I create operate as objects in collapse, mimicking limbs, crawling toward or away from their origin. They are not prosthetic; they are *anti-prosthetic*. They are not designed to support the body; they are designed to mimic.

The work is materially rooted in Graphite - holding strong symbolic and performative connotations. Graphite wears down with use, leaving physical traces of its path and consuming itself in the process. This allows the artefacts to act as tools of erosion, performance, and as empirical evidence of their own existence… marking motion while documenting their deterioration.

The project is informed by psychoanalytic and poststructural theory, including Jacques Lacan's theory of the mirror stage, René Girard's concept of mimetic desire, Jean Baudrillard's simulacra and hyperreality, and Gilles Lipovetsky's notion of fashion as a logic of continual self-update. These frameworks enable a critical reading of fashion, and the artefacts it generates, to see these objects beyond a specific cultural milestone and instead as a creative survival strategy built on recursive performance.

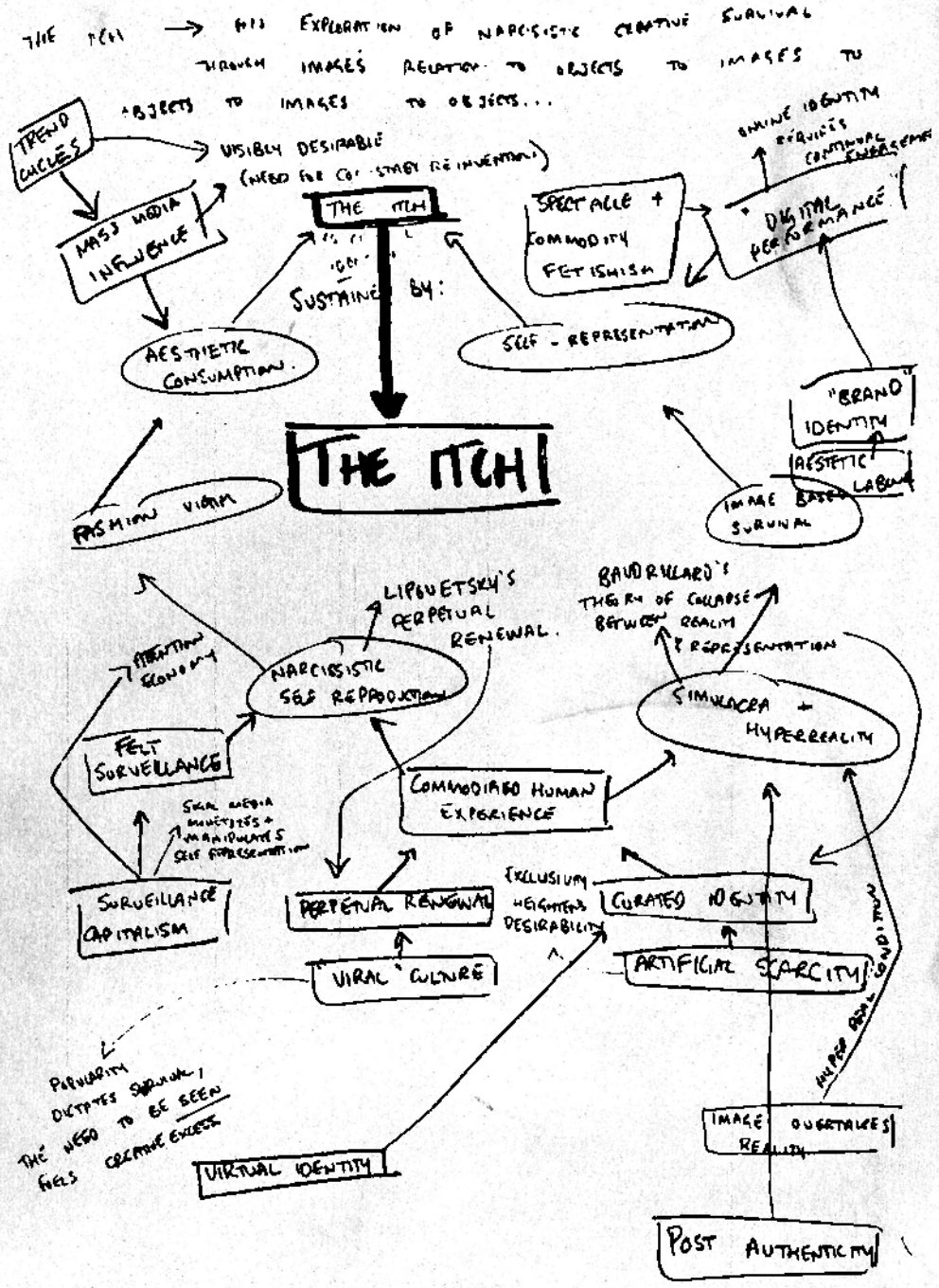


1-2 THE ITCH

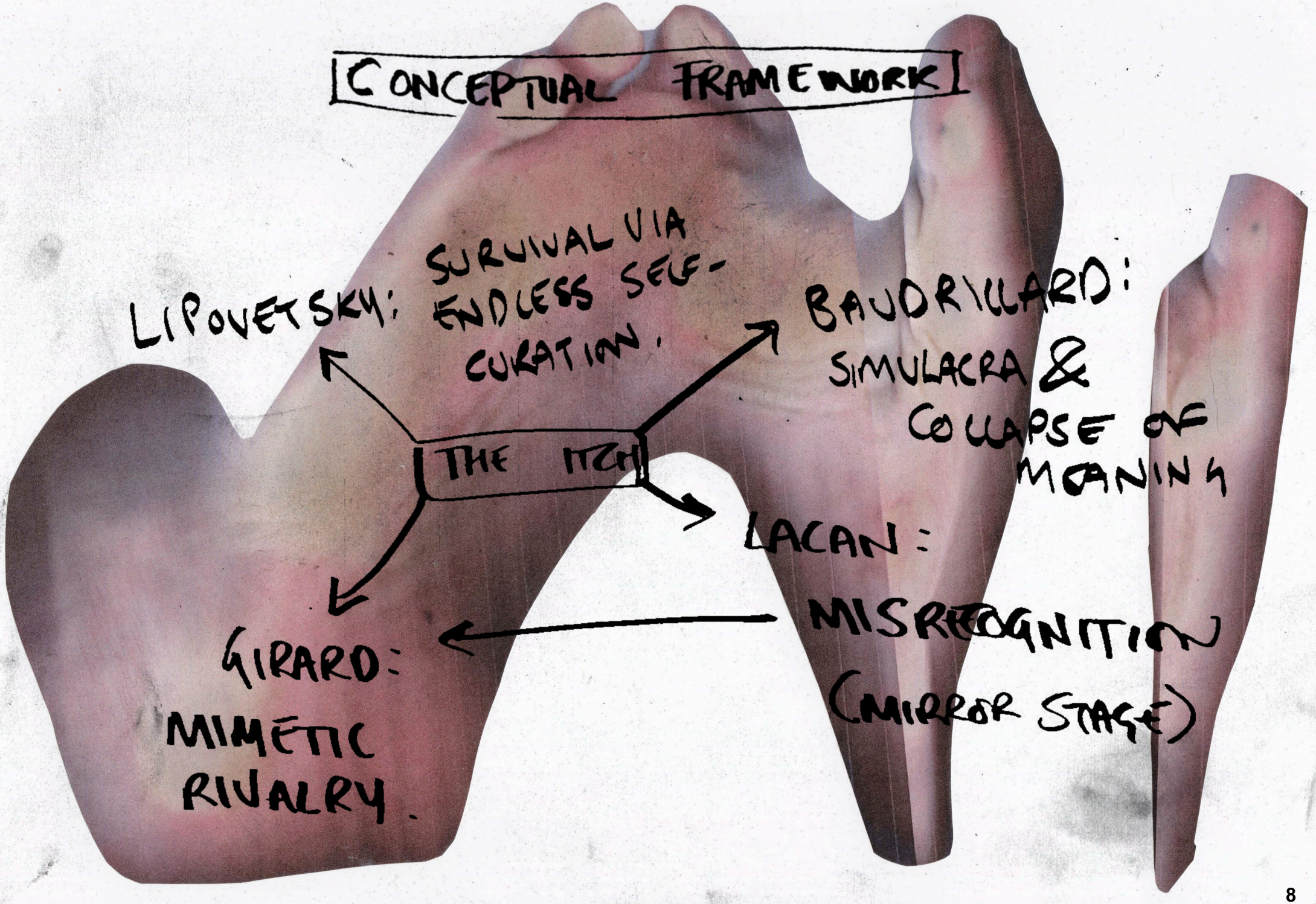
I seek to introduce ***The Itch*** as both an original conceptual framework and as a compulsion-driven methodology within creative practice.

The Itch is a term I'm coining to describe a restless, recursive drive to make, an urge that does not function as self-expression but instead, acts as self-preservation. More accurately: it exists to maintain creative literacy - Drawing on the metaphor of an itch that must be scratched, it describes a state of persistent discomfort, and existential necessity, where making becomes a survival strategy rather than a communicative act.

This project seeks to semi-formalise The Itch as a theoretical term in its own right. In doing so, it frames the condition as an ongoing state of destabilised selfhood, one driven by recursive image-object-image production cycles within contemporary culture.



CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



WORKING DEFINITION

My working definition of The Itch is grounded in the phrase Narcissistic Creative Survival - a triad of terms that operate as conceptual ligatures for the condition.

NARCISSISTIC

Narcissistic here does not point to grandiosity but to a structural fragility - akin to Narcissus - the subject caught in the fascination of their own reflection. Drawing on Girard's critique of Lacan's mirror stage, this is not the subject who has resolved the mirror encounter, but one who remains tethered to it. The image is not stabilising; it is fractured, partial, and compelling precisely because it deviates from the Ideal-I. The creative subject, in this case, is not indulging in the ego, but is fascinated by the failure of the image to cohere. In simple terms: I am making no moralisation of the narcissist here… It simply refers to the malformation of the image of oneself in reference to one's internal psyche.

CREATIVE

Creative names the expression of this fixation. This does not refer to 'creativity' as vision, but as a sort of maintenance. It is the gesture of staying legible as 'artist', 'maker', or 'image-producer'. Not an inventor, but janitor. The work made need not move anyone; it only needs to exist to constitute this specific creative identity.

SURVIVAL

Survival is the recursive engine of the condition. The artefact exists; therefore, the identity survives. The act of making becomes compulsory, but not as expression, as proof. If the work stops, the subject - in so far as the subject relies on its identity - disappears. This production is without purpose; it is production as proof of presence. The survival of the self becomes dependent on the re-performance of the image, over and over, even when the gesture is emptied of urgency or meaning.

This functioning definition is not a pathology to be 'solved', tas it has not its existence… so, it is a structure to be exposed, studied and specutively construct.

1.3 RESEARCH AIMS + OBJECTIVES

AIM TO MATERIALISE "THE ITCH" AS A CONDITION OF RECURSIVE NARCISSISTIC SURVIAL USING FASHION ARTEFACTS.

OBJECTIVES

1. DEVELOP RECURSIVE BODY-BASED ARTEFACTS.
2. ENGAGE CRITICAL THEORY
3. ENHANCE STUDIO PRACTICE
4. REFLECT THROUGH MAKING.

(EXPANDED)

RESEARCH AIMS + OBJECTIVES

RESEARCH AIM

To theorise The Itch as a post structural condition of narcissistic creative survival, and to explore how this condition can be materially enacted through recursive fashion artefacts that reflect ontological instability, mimetic compulsion, and the maintenance of identity through performance.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To define and theorise The Itch through psychoanalytic and poststructural frameworks - particularly Lacan's mirror stage, Girard's theory of mimetic desire, Baudrillard's hyperreality, and Lipovetsky's analysis of narcissism in fashion - framing creative labour as an act of maintenance rather than expression.

2. To interrogate the image-object-body loop as a recursive structure, using speculative artefacts to expose the instability of selfhood and the compulsion to make as a mode of survival.

3. To explore the limits of footwear and anti-prosthetic design, producing artefacts that collapse the function of fashion with the dysfunction of the body.

4. To engage in a recursive, materially embedded methodology grounded in critical making, autoethnography, and sensory ethnography - treating the act of making as both symptom and site of the condition.

5. To produce artefacts that do not resolve but instead perform the condition - functioning as aesthetic and bodily irritants, visualising The Itch not as a metaphor, but as a lived, recursive mechanism.

6. To develop a critical written component and performance video that articulate the condition both discursively and viscerally - using language, gesture, and image to frame the artefacts as both critique and consequence.

7. To contribute to the wider discourse on originality, performance and visibility in contemporary fashion practice, positioning The Itch as a model for understanding certain creative outputs not as innovation, but as survival within an oversaturated, self-similar cultural economy.

1.4 METHODOLOGY SUMMARY

This project adopts a research methodology that is recursive, materially embedded, and philosophically post-structural. The Itch is both the subject and method of the research. The Itch, understood here within its fluid definition, demands a methodology that mirrors its compulsive repetitions, unresolved gestures, and survivalist need to produce. The methodology becomes a performative exposure of instability.

THEORETICAL POSITIONING

The project is situated at the intersection of fashion artefact, psychoanalytic theory, and poststructuralist critique. Its theoretical ground is constructed from Lacan's theory of the mirror stage, Girard's mimetic desire, and Baudrillard's logic of the simulacrum -texts that all challenge the reliability of image, identity, and originality. Rather than using theory to explain artefacts, the methodology enacts theory as artefact. Theoretical concepts are not applied to objects; they are intended to be embedded in them.

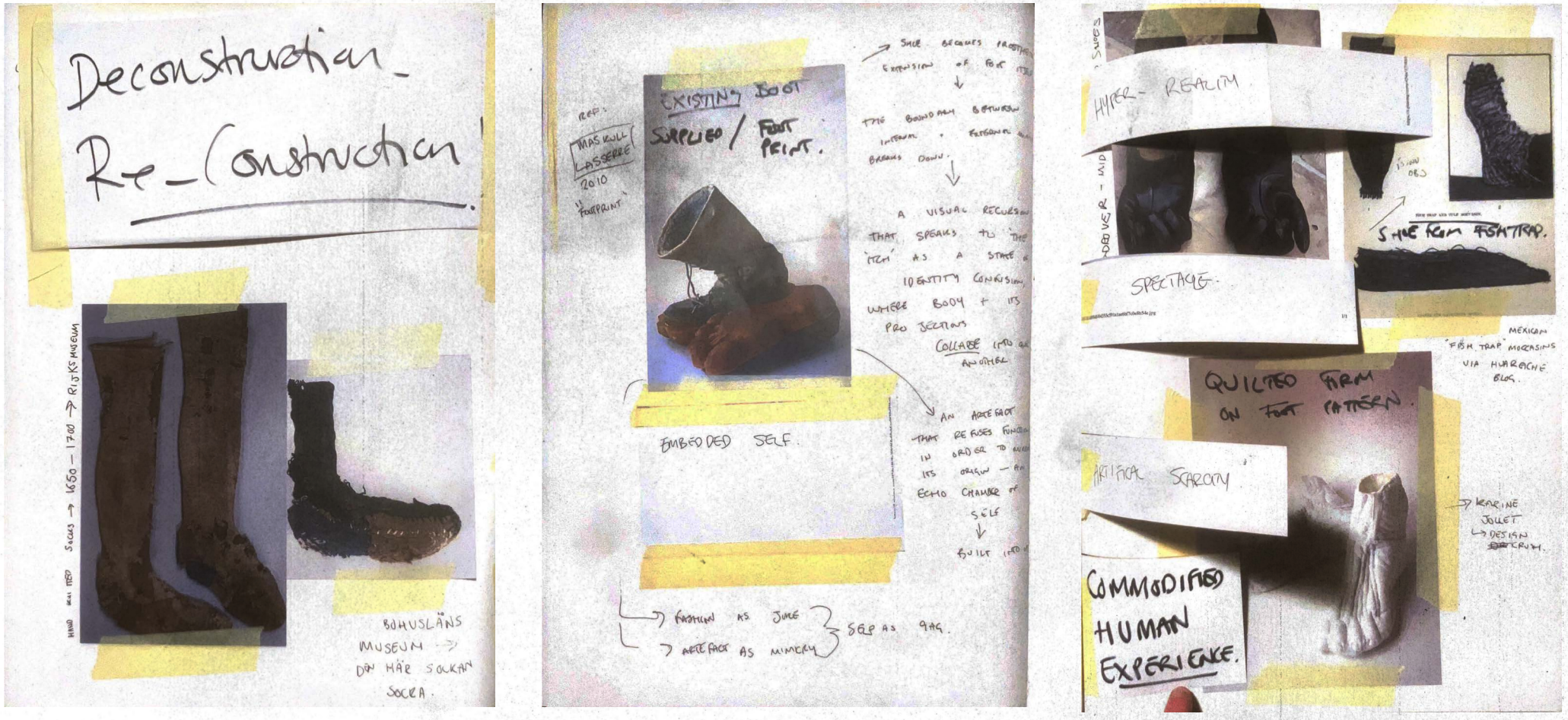


fig1. EARLY THEOETICAL ENQUIRIES AND VISUAL REFERENCES MAPPED OUT IN SKETCHBOOK

MATERIAL INTELLIGENCE GRAPHITE.

For this project - The use of the material or artefact is, in itself a methodology. Graphite is chosen not just for its conceptual resonance - as a substance that records, erases, and disappears - but because its degradation mirrors the psychic erosion at the core of The Itch. This material is not ‘supportive,’ it is highly brittle and often fails to hold the weight of its wearer: it inscribes, resists, and subsequently fails. Its wear and erosion mark time, gesture, and psychic persistence. The object becomes both tool and testimony.

The “intelligence” that I’m ascribing to the material is handing each piece the creative control to gradually change itself via use. I do not expect this change to be necessarily immediately visible to me - however I exepct that via testing, each shape and structure will become more apparent.

A key part of the research into the material was visiting Viarco, in Portogal - who specialise in the traditional manufactuture of pencils. A tour of their facility was key to developing the use of graphite later in the project.

fig 2. WORN DOWN PENCILS. PRESENTING GRPAHITE’S MATERIAL ‘INTELLIGNECE.’

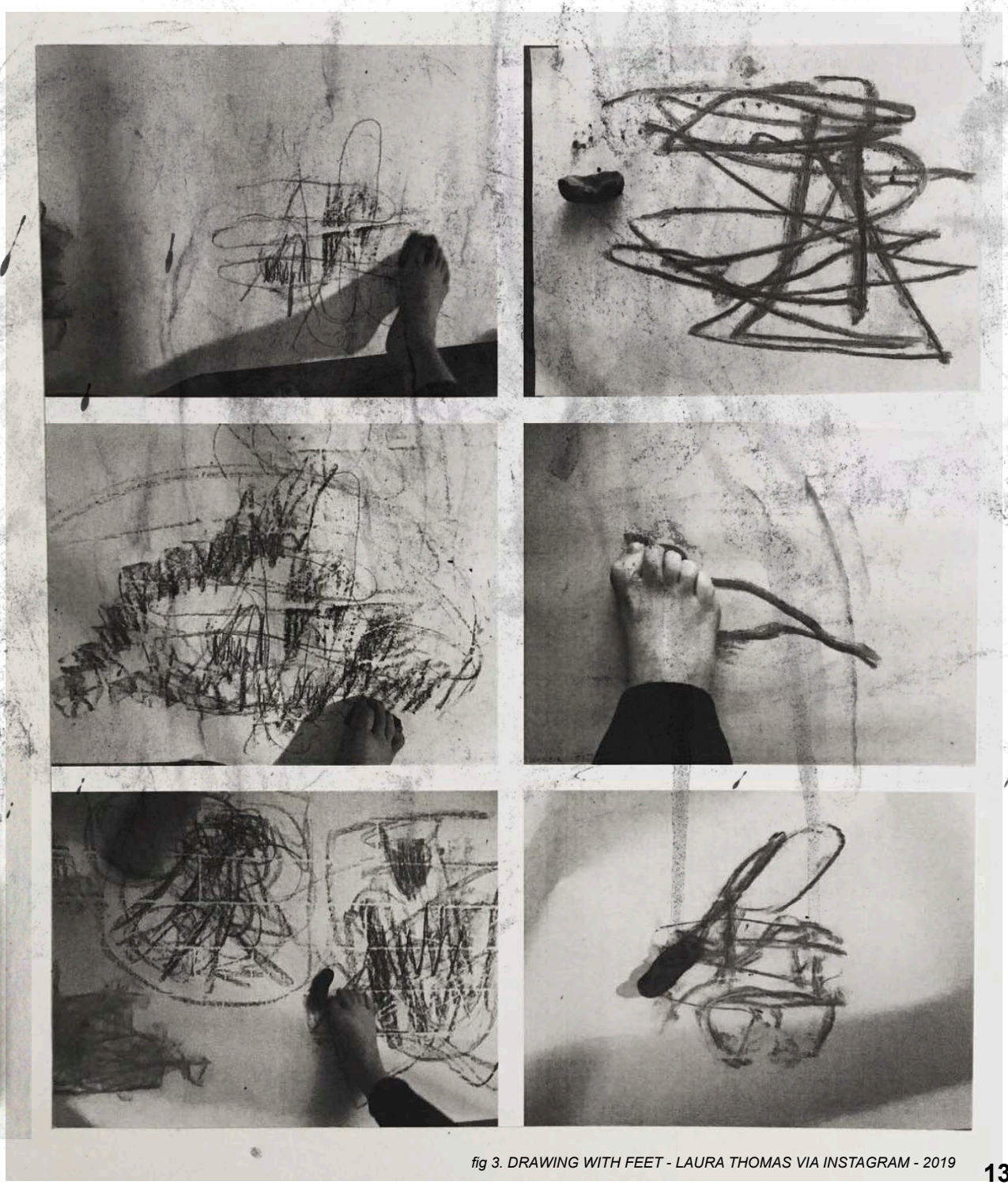


fig 3. DRAWING WITH FEET - LAURA THOMAS VIA INSTAGRAM - 2019

AUTO ETHNOGRAPHY + SENSORY ETHNOGRAPHY.

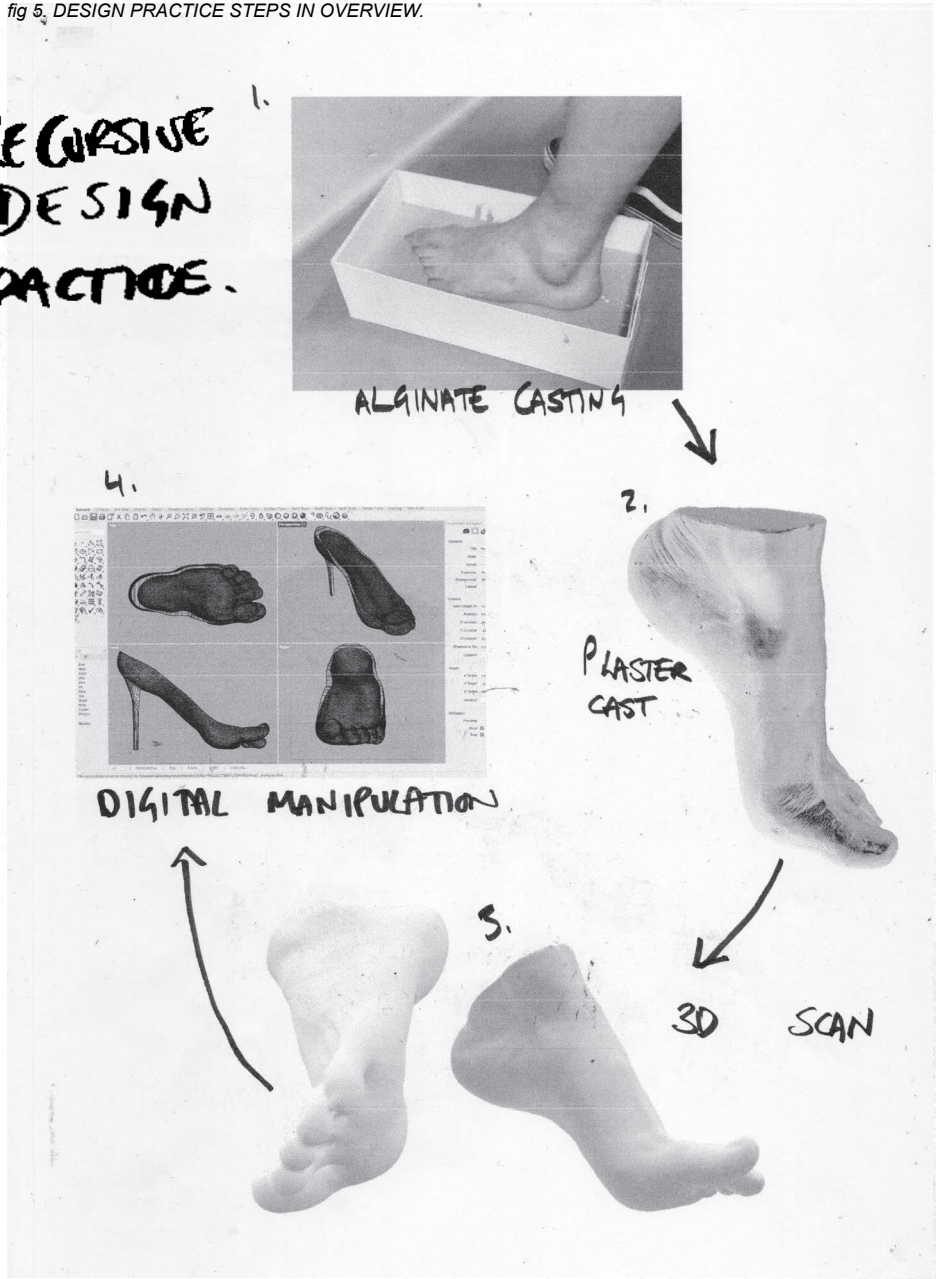
The work is also partially grounded in the body of the maker. It is the origin of the form. Autoethnographic reflection and sensory ethnographic observation are used not to capture experience, but to document its distortion. Casts of limbs, records of use, pressure traces, and performance footage operate as documentation in the traditional sense, but also as extensions of the artefact's condition. The body is not intended as a subject of study but to be used as a material itself.

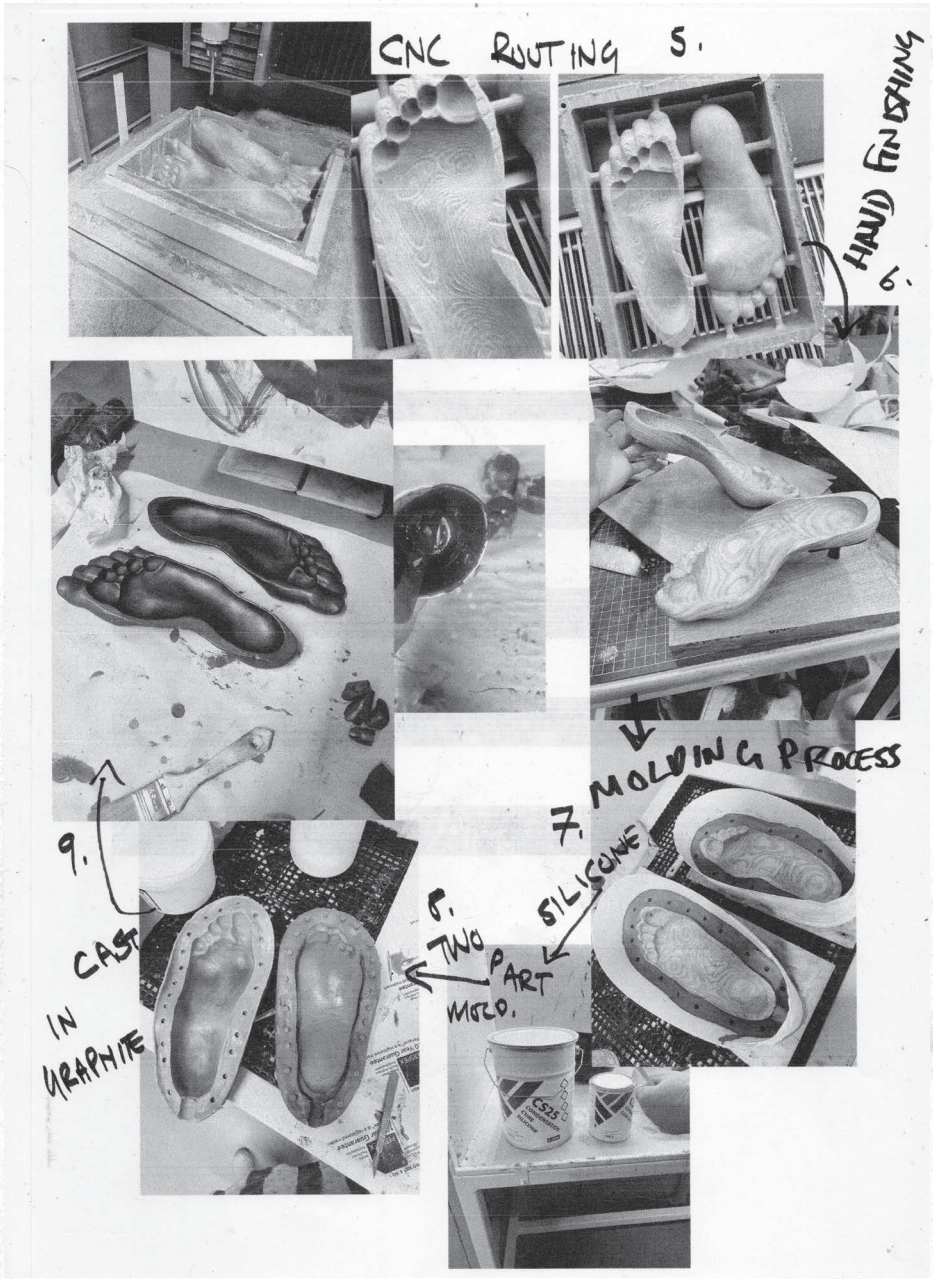
Testing out performaces will produce 'data' not in the form of 'results', but in gestures: the way an artefact restricts movement, or compels new choreographies. Casting and scanning techniques allow anatomical specificity, while performance staging allows the artefact to perform in space. The test becomes part of the loop - evidence of failure, of temporary functionality, of recursive misalignment between form and user. I've found it important to develop the objects being operated, but based on their design, each object can only fit one person perfectly (in that sense - they're overly ergonomic) as such - I've been testing with myself, and occasionally inviting other people into my practice...

this has culminated in a single piece in the collection being formed from another body - which I am yet to identify an objective benefit to. Although, I have enjoyed being able to witness the objects in motion from a new perspective.

fig 4. CHOREOGRPAHY ANALYSIS - EARLY TESTING WITH GRAPHITE CASTS.

fig 5. DESIGN PRACTICE STEPS IN OVERVIEW.





The design methodology follows a deliberately non-progressive logic: artefacts are made, unmade, remade. Forms are cast, scanned, digitally manipulated, CNC-routed, and returned to analogue processes. Each iteration is not an 'im-provement', as it may be in the traditional design process. Each iteration is a mutation. This recursive making is speculative in nature -not forward-moving but circular, mirroring the looped drive structure of the condition itself. There is no final object. The work proceeds by deviation.

Objects do not begin as skectches to be developed - objects begin as they are. (As I am.) My limbs, once cast, and once accepted in the shape which the body had proposed - are then digitally reembedded within themselves. The design is unintelligent. The design is foot, Plagurised from G-d.

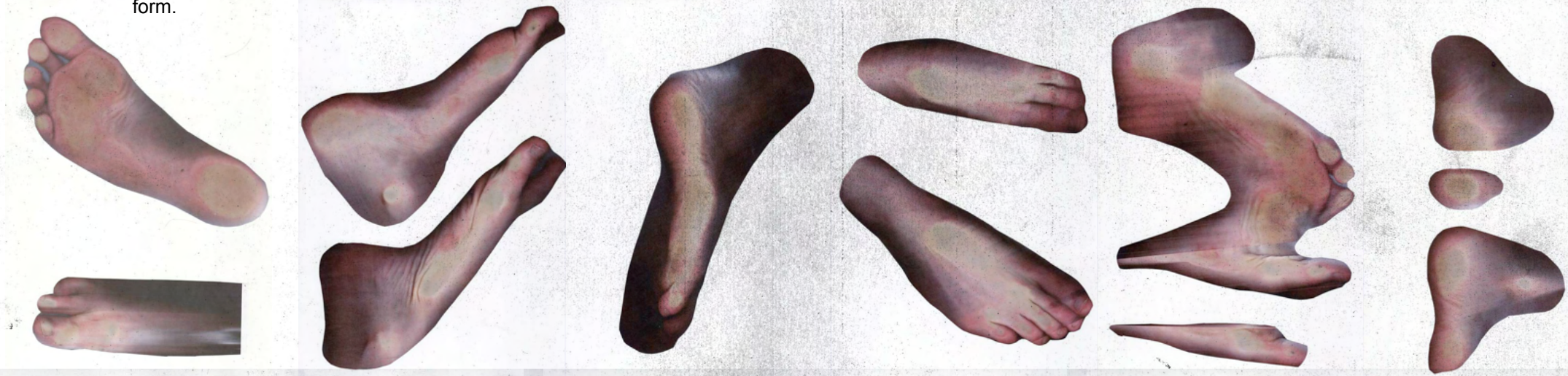
CRITICAL + CREATIVE OUTPUT.

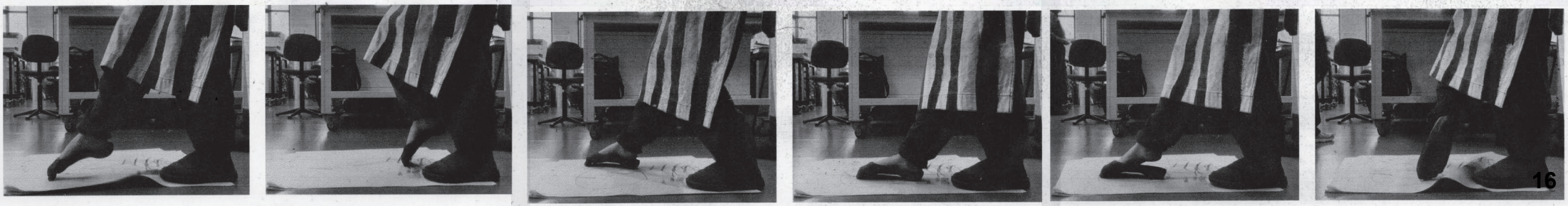
→ A SERIES of GRAPHITE BASED ARTEFACTS
→ A SHORT SERIES of CHOREOGRAPHED PERFORMANCE VIDEOS
→ A SERIES of GRAPHITE DRAWINGS + SKETCHES
→ A CRITICAL ESSAY ARTICULATING THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.

fig 6. VISUAL STUDIES IN CONSTRUCTING FEET. IMAGE BASED EXPERIMENTS.

The success of the research is not measured through functionality or aesthetic resolution. It is measured through its capacity to materialise and communicate The Itch - to disturb, record, and perform the survival of the creative subject in a state of recursive unravelling. If the objects fail to achieve this goal, it is on the basis of them being too complete.

This methodology privileges contamination over clarity, 'failure' over resolution. I insist that the theory is not written after practice, but that practice aids in writing theory into form.





2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 THEORETICAL ROOTS OF NARCISSISTIC CREATIVE SURVIVAL.

The Itch finds its theoretical roots in a psychically unstable and image-saturated formation of the self - one grounded in the inability to stabilise identity except through recursive acts of making. This section draws from psychoanalysis and poststructural thought to build a critical foundation for understanding the self not as coherent, but as endlessly deferred, misrecognised, and re-performed through artefactual labour.

Jacques Lacan's concept of the Mirror Stage (Écrits, 1949) posits that the ego is formed not from within, but through an image of the self, external to the subject - (referred to as the "Ideal-I.") This misrecognised image offers the promise of a unified identity but remains perpetually out of reach, setting the subject into a life-long tension between the image and its internal fragmentation. Lacan's mirror is not a singular moment, it is an ontological structure. For the creative subject, this early developmental stage helps to manifest as a loop of production that aims to re-grasp the Ideal-I through aesthetic output, always failing, always repeating. The artefact thus becomes not an expression of selfhood but an enactment of its instability.

René Girard's theory of mimetic desire (Deceit, Desire, and the Novel, 1965) radicalises this instability by asserting that desire is not autonomous but imitative - we desire what others desire, and our identity is caught in a rivalry with the model we mimic. The result is a recursive, often violent loop of wanting what the other has, or more precisely, wanting to be what the other is seen to be. The Itch operates within this mimetic structure: the creative act is a compulsion toward visibility, a performance of originality that is always already a repetition. This informs the artefacts marking the impossibility of originality through material insistence.

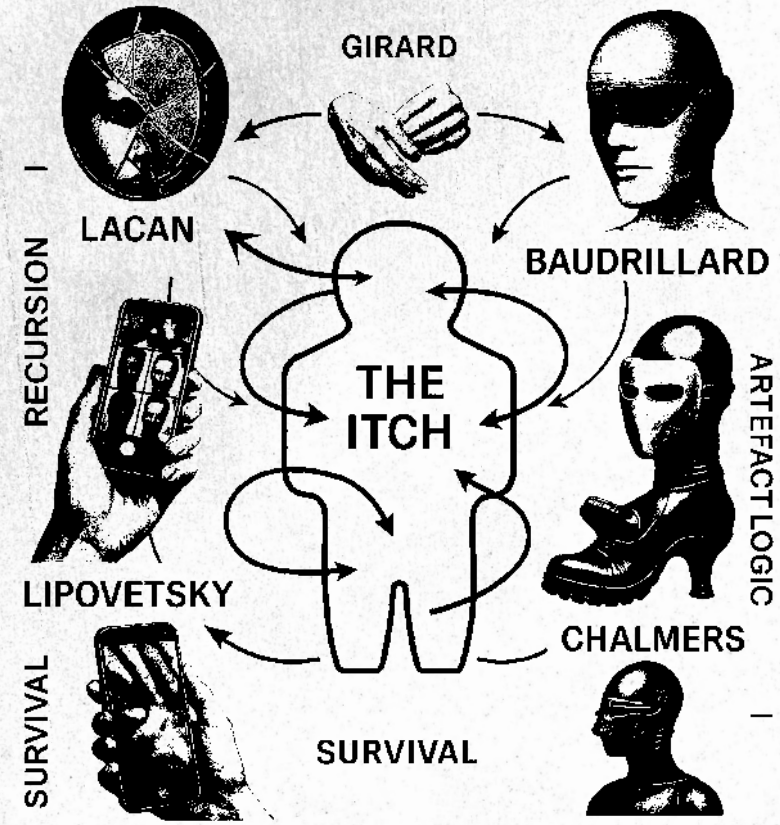


fig 7. THEORETICAL MINDMAP.

Jean Laplanche's conception of the unfinished Copernican revolution (1999) adds an epistemological inflection to this psychic condition. For Laplanche, the self is never whole nor self-originated; it is always formed through foreign, enigmatic signifiers - what he calls "messages from the other." In this framework, creative labour becomes the site where the subject both responds to and misinterprets these foreign messages. The artefact is not a communication, but a mistranslation - a recursive attempt to decode the origin of the self through material gesture. The Itch, then, is not merely symptomatic but structural: the work must be made not to express, but to persist.

Together, these theorists build a critical scaffold for understanding the condition of The Itch as an ontological misfire - a survival drive sustained by image, desire, the compulsive act of production. It is not pathology. It is structure. And it is through this structure - or lack of - that the artefact finds its form.

2.2 HYPERREALITY & THE COLLAPSE OF ORIGINALITY.

If the self is fractured and sustained through repetition, then the cultural field in which that self attempts to produce must also be considered. The Itch thrives not in a vacuum but in a hyper-saturated image economy that rewards legibility over originality, simulation over rupture. This section draws on postmodern cultural theory to investigate the collapse of originality and the resulting compulsion toward recursive visibility.

In **Jean Baudrillard's** *Simulacra and Simulation* (1994), we are told that in the postmodern world, signs no longer refer to any stable reality but only to other signs. Meaning erodes in favour of circulation. The artefact does not signify anything other than its own referential loop - a simulacrum. This creates a system in which the creative gesture is not anchored to an authentic intention, but to a network of signifiers that float freely, disconnected from origin. For Baudrillard, this is not a crisis but a condition: *"It is no longer a question of imitation, nor duplication, nor even parody. It is a question of substituting the signs of the real for the real itself"* (Baudrillard, 1994, p.2).

The Itch operates precisely within this logic: the artefact is not a new thing, but a gesture of visibility - a reiteration of a presence. It is production for the sake of remaining seen, not to say something new. The performance of creativity replaces the purpose of creativity. The foot that wears itself. The artefact that mimics the artefact. The shoe that draws attention to the act of standing, only to fold back into the crawl.

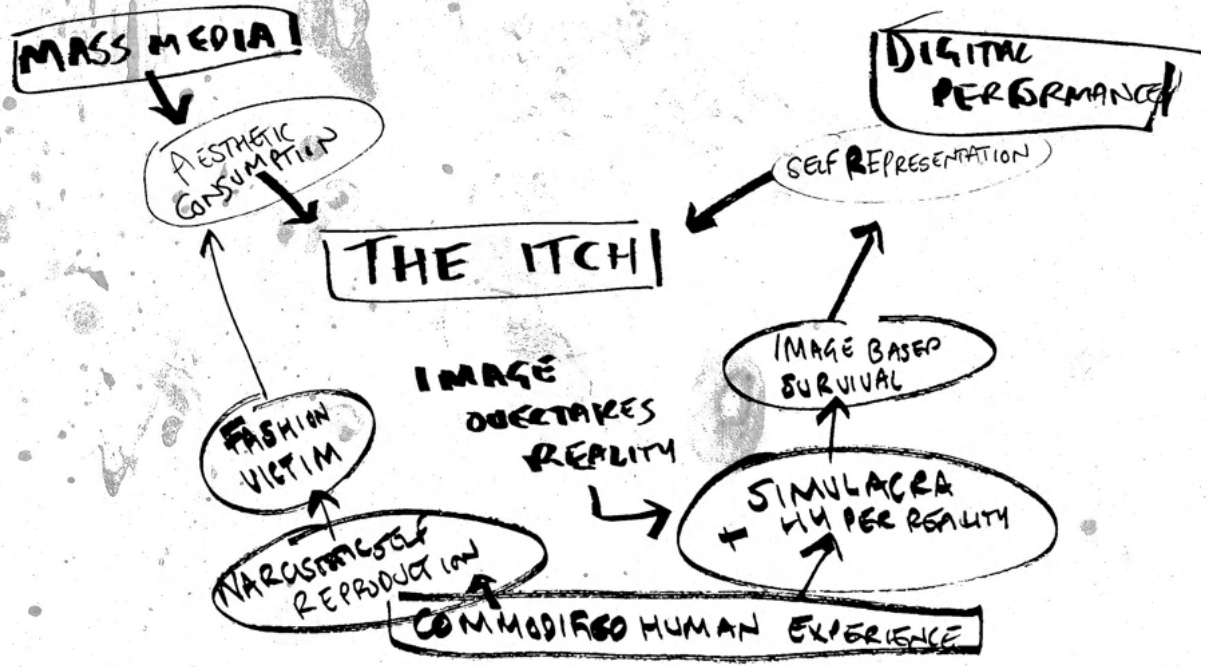
Gilles Lipovetsky, in *The Empire of Fashion* (1994), frames fashion as a site not of stylistic cycles, but of continual self-update - a terrain where identity is endlessly refreshed but never transformed. In this logic, fashion is not about rupture but maintenance. The creative subject becomes a manager of presence, updating the image to ensure survival within a hyper-mediated system. Fashion, like the creative gesture, becomes a form of narcissistic performance: not an expression of internality, but an echo of visibility. Lipovetsky's subject does not seek change, only coherence. The artefact, then, is not an intervention but an affirmation: I still exist. The graphite wears down, but the gesture persists.

This culture of reiteration is further problematised by **Susan Sontag** in *Against Interpretation* (1966), where she challenges the over-intellectualisation of art, insisting on the sensual, the immediate, the unmediated.

Yet what does immediacy mean in a culture that has flattened sensation into performance? Where even collapse is staged? The Itch inhabits this contradiction - producing gestures that cannot resolve, only perform their own recursive futility. In this sense, interpretation becomes a form of labour, and the artefact a placeholder for meaning never quite present.

Renato Poggioli, in *The Theory of the Avant-Garde* (1968), identifies a final irony: that even the most radical gestures risk becoming systems in themselves. The avant-garde, in its opposition to cultural inertia, calcifies into a style. Poggioli's analysis anticipates the commodification of resistance - where innovation is expected, pre-packaged, re-sold. The Itch plays within this framework: it does not attempt to escape cultural repetition, but to visualise its structure. The artefact does not solve the problem; it seeks to materially restate it.

In sum, the creative field surrounding The Itch is not of innovation but of recursion. The logic of originality is innane. The artefact survives by simulating presence. Production becomes performance. Performance becomes maintenance. And maintenance becomes identity.
The Itch thrives in a culture that confuses production with presence.

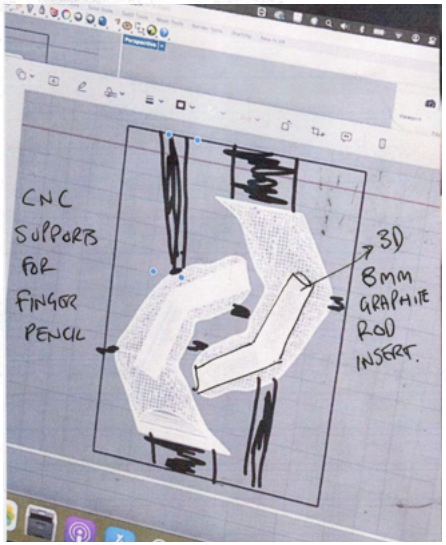


2.3 MATERIAL SURVIVAL: THE BODY, ARTEFACT + TRACE.

The materials used in The Itch are not intended as passive substrates. Elements that do not merely support form (and, in some cases, do not support form at all really,) but actively inscribe, distort, and erode the image of the subject. This section addresses how graphite as principal material (with the devlopment of wooden, pencil inspired artefacts, with inserted rods of graphite) - functions as recursive surfaces that trace the survivalist gestures of the creative subject.

Graphite, in its current use, replaces the earlier purely wooden prototypes. Where wood carried no embedded philosophical weight, graphite emerges as a volatile, performative agent. It marks and is marked; it records and is consumed. The artefact constructed from graphite is never stable. It is always vanishing. Each step taken upon a graphite form leaves behind an indexical record-a smear, a trace, a degradation. The act of walking becomes an act of erosion. Graphite thus becomes the ideal substrate for expressing The Itch: a self-consuming tool whose existence is simultaneously proof and disappearance.

Wood re-entered the practice later, following my research trip to Viarco, not as a conceptual material in itself but as a structural carrier for graphite. The pencil-inspired prototype-cast from my finger with a graphite rod inserted at the tip-clarified this role: wood could stabilise, house, and enable the graphite without competing with it. The subsequent wooden experiments extended this logic, allowing controlled sharpening, directed abrasion, and a more intentional mark-making process, reinforcing graphite's primacy as the active, philosophical agent while wood functioned as its temporary armature.



Goethe's meditation on granite provides an instructive contrast. *"I stand firmly on granite,"* he writes, *"and ask it if it wants to give us occasion to think about how the body from which it came into being was constituted."* In his essay, Goethe makes Granite a geological time made flesh - permanence, foundation, mass. These meditiations of Goethe's lead to consider Graphite, by contrast, is memory in ash form. It is not a foundation but a shadow. Its gesture is not monumental but spectral. In another of Goethe's reflections, he insists: *"Here nothing is in its first, original condition… everything is rubble, disorder, and destruction."* Graphite renders this disorder tactile. It makes sedimentation immediate, felt, and futile.

Julia Kristeva's theory of abjection *(Powers of Horror, 1980)* underpins the visceral quality of these materials. Abjection refers to the psychic process by which the subject expels that which threatens its identity - bodily fluids, waste, decay. The graphite artefact enacts a slow abjection. It disintegrates as it is worn. The user leaves behind part of the object, much like the body leaves behind skin or hair or sweat. The artefact mimics the body, but always edging toward its own disappearance. It refuses utility and refuses to stay intact.

The combination of graphite and and wood produces what might be called anti-prosthetics - objects that do not restore or support, but rather emphasise instability, disintegration, and discomfort. They record touch but do not cushion it. They are not tools for improvement but instruments of wear. These artefacts refuse the idealised bodily function and instead document its recursive breakdown.

References to **Enzo Mari's** *Autoprogettazione* (1974) and **Ashon Crawley's** notions of blackqueer breath could further illuminate how materials perform as philosophical agents - always in flux, never final. Mari's instructions propose that making need not stabilise but may instead be a form of radical impermanence. Crawley's work suggests that residue, gesture, and survival are already aesthetic and theoretical in themselves - that presence is not a fixed entity but a vibrating, ephemeral trace.
If granite, as Goethe reminds us, *"makes up the very foundation of our earth,"* then graphite is its spectral cousin - the mineral that does not hold but disappears. These materials - graphite and wood - serve not only as media, but as mirrors. They reflect the psychic fragility of the creative subject, the impossibility of stability, and the performative collapse at the core of The Itch.

2.4 Anti - Prosthesis & the collapse of function.

Shoes carry an implicit promise: support, direction, comfort, forward motion. The artefacts of The Itch refuse that promise. They do not supplement the body - not through shock or spectacle, but through persistent misalignment. They curl, resist, buckle, break. They recall limbs but fail to serve them.

This project does not seek to innovate prosthetics. It seeks to interrupt the logic that prosthetics represent. A prosthesis implies lack. It fills in. It returns you to form. The anti-prosthetic does not repair. It draws attention to the fracture-or lack of-then opens it wider.

The reference to dysfunction is not incidental. It is a form. The artefact that will not fit anyone but the maker, the hybrid that cannot walk, the gesture that slips into crawl. The failure is the form. This echoes Poggioli's tension in The Theory of the Avant-Garde - not just art as rupture, but as refusal to reconcile. The avant-garde, if it still exists, survives in the work that refuses its function, and does so without apology.

This is where The Itch finds itself: in entropy. The artefact as misfit. The body made slightly monstrous by its tools. This is not about surrealism in any gestural sense - not melting clocks or exquisite corpses - but about an embodied disfigurement that carries the same charge. The grotesque in this context is not aestheticised ugliness, but the horror of dysfunction that leaks back into the body. The artefact betrays its wearer.

There is also **Bataille** here, in the artefact's deliberate excess, its expenditure. These objects are not efficient. They are not designed to conserve energy or effort. They are made to waste. Their gestures don't extend usefulness but drain it. Bataille's Journal *Documents* existed for two short years, with 15 issues appearing between 1929 and 1930. As a journal, it has been placed in connection with Surrealism and regularly compared with André Breton's La Révolution Surrealiste, The publication had few guiding principles - it contained no editor's letter, no manifesto and no stated intentions as a matter of print. It existed as a collection of pages - as Documents. As with Bataille's Documents, which is a strong theroetical inspiration to me - my work limps along the edge of what can still be called 'designed.' The itch are not objects for the body but symptoms of what the body can no longer maintain.

Kristeva's abjection also continues to haunt these forms. The anti-prosthetic refuses wholeness. It hovers at the edge of collapse, never fully integrated, never fully separate. These artefacts are stuck in that liminal space where identity breaks down, and it is precisely this breakdown that they are made to make visible.

These are not shoes.

fig 8. JACQUES-ANDRÉ BOIFFARD, "BOUCHE" ACCOMPANYING GEORGES BATAILLE'S ARTICLE IN CHRONIQUE-DICTIONNAIRE. DOCUMENTS II/5 1930, P. 298.

fig 9. PHOTOMATON PICTURES OF BRETON'S GROUP AROUND A PAINTING BY RENÉ MAGRITTE, LA RÉVOLUTION SURRÉALISTE 5/12, 1928, P. 73.

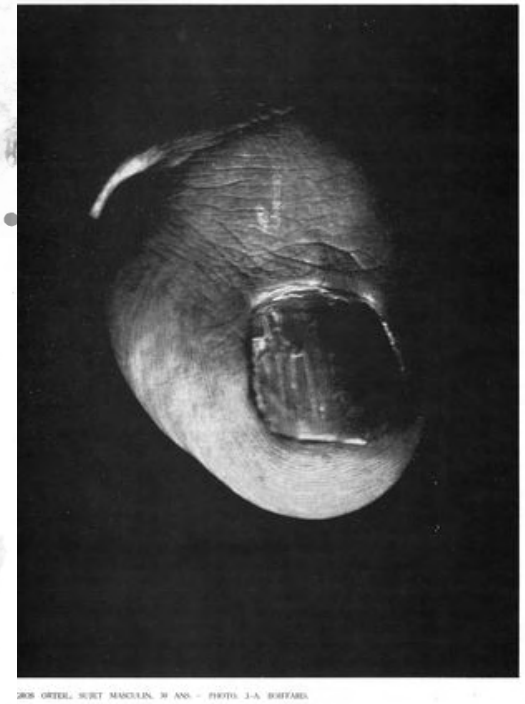


fig 10. JACQUES-ANDRÉ BOIFFARD, BIG TOE OF A MAN, 30 YEARS OLD. PICTURE-PAGES ACCOMPANYING GEORGES BATAILLE'S ARTICLE "GROS ORTEIL", DOCUMENTS I/6, 1929, P. 298-299.

2.5 TOWARD A LANGUAGE OF COLLAPSE: FASHION AS SYMPTOM.

Fashion is a discipline that historically acknowledges its own expiry date. It does not pretend to last. It does not speak in the future tense. Its commercialgoal is to dress the present - and as such it could be arguded to be a representation of the present currently decomposing.

There's something about fashion that has always courted collapse. Not metaphorical collapse, but the literal degradation of the object. Fabrics wear out, seams undo, seasons turn. The material consequences of the use of a garment is present - Every garment arrives with a coded exit. The artefact is built and will vanish. The performance is marked as temporary. If there's a truth here, it's that disrepair is baked into the form.

Philosopher of language **Wittgenstein** once said, *"The limits of my language mean the limits of my world."* In fashion, these limits are more visible. They are stitched into the hem, pressed into the crease, sealed in the plastic. Fashion doesn't *expand* the world as much as It frames it. And then it forgets it. It loops.

Lipovetsky calls it *narcissistic*. A culture of self-updating, not self-reflection. Viewing fashion as *"frivolous yet essential,"* to Lipovetsky, the new is not new - it is the same cycle under new conditions. The artefact does not mark progress. It confirms presence. Just as the creative practitioner performs originality, the fashion object performs futurity. The result is cultural stillness.

Elizabeth Wilson positions fashion at the intersection of identity and decay. Clothing dresses the body, but it also signals the body's deterioration; garments wear out, and so do we. In Adorned in Dreams (1985), Wilson articulates the instability of fashion's promises: *"Clothes are among the most fraught objects in the material world of things, since they are so closely involved with the human body and the human life-cycle."* (p. 32). For Wilson, fashion is fundamentally disloyal. Garments never truly belong to the wearer: they circulate through markets, drawers, washing lines, and bodies, accruing and shedding meaning as they move. In attempting to create artefacts whose lives will end far sooner than conventional fashion objects, Wilson's reading becomes arresting. She suggests that the identity of the wearer is simultaneously inscribed within the object and yet utterly irrelevant to it - a paradox that underscores the material and conceptual fragility at the centre of this project.

fig 11. EXERPTS FROM: DIRTY LOOKS: DESIRE AND DECAY IN FASHION JON ASTBURY AND KAREN VAN GODTSENHOVEN (EDS) SPBH EDITIONS

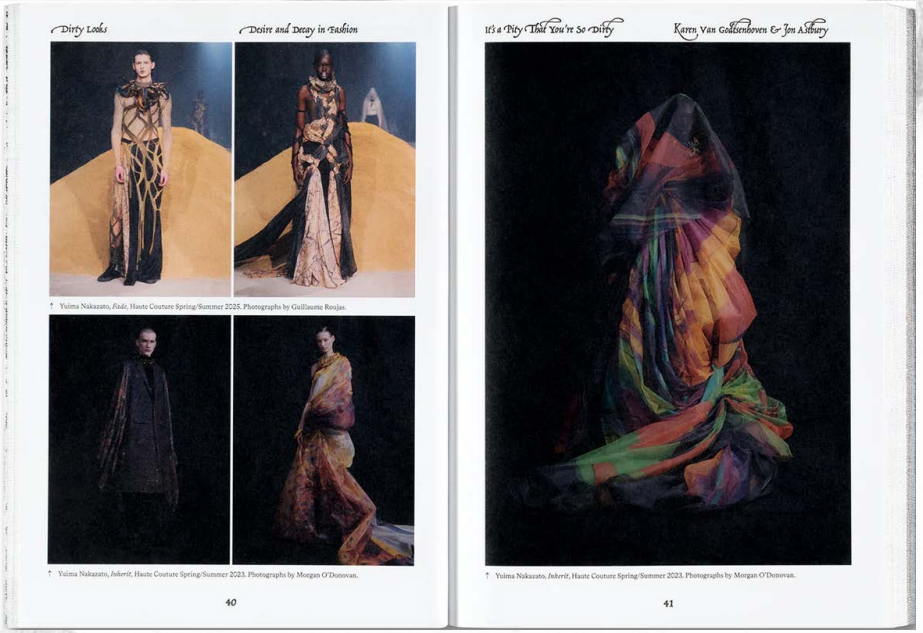


fig 12. EXERPTS FROM: DIRTY LOOKS: DESIRE AND DECAY IN FASHION JON ASTBURY AND KAREN VAN GODTSENHOVEN (EDS) SPBH EDITIONS

TOWARD A LANGUAGE OF COLLAPSE:
FASHION AS SYMPTOM.

fig 13. DIRTY LOOKS: DESIRE AND DECAY IN FASHION
MIGEUL ANDROVER, WEARING OUT OF MY MIND, 2023

fig 14. DIRTY LOOKS: DESIRE AND DECAY IN FASHION
PAOLO CARZANA, AUTUMN/WINTER 2025, DRAGONS UNWINGED AT THE BUTCHERS BLOCK. PHOTOGRAPH BY JOSEPH RIGBY. COURTESY OF PAOLO CARZANA.

DIRTY LOOKS - @THE BARBICAN - 2025

WHILST UNDERGOING MY RESEARCH JOURNEY - I GOT TO SEE DIRTY LOOKS @ THE BARBICAN. THIS SHOW STAGES OBJECTS IN A STATE OF LIVED RUIN. IN DOING SO IT REFUSES THE FUNCTION OF FASHION AS A COHERENT SYSTEM. THIS EXHIBITION DIDN'T INSPIRE THE PROJECT (THAT WOULD BE TO SIMPLISTIC) BUT IT SHARPENED THE LENS. IT CONFIRMED THE ARTEFACTS DECAY IS NOT AN "ACCIDENT" BUT A STRUCTURAL CONDITION.

DIRTY LOOKS FUNCTIONS HERE AS "EVIDENCE": A CONTEMPORARY STAGING OF THE TENSIONS "THE ITCH" SEEKS TO EXPLORE.

Caroline Evans, writing in *Fashion at the Edge (2003)* states *"Everything new and beautiful seems to arrive already haunted by its own demise*" (p55.) She situates fashion firmly in the terrain of death, disappearance, abjection. Her reading of the fashion image as corpse - or as premonition of loss - cuts to the core of this project. Fashion is not symbolic. It is ritual. It performs loss again and again. The garment is a relic before it is even worn.

Barthes' *Fashion System* maps how language deforms material. The image becomes instruction. The cloth becomes code. But in doing so, the artefact loses its weight. Meaning is reduced to structure. the material's syntax eats sensation. What remains is a sign that points only to itself.

Derrida's spectre haunts this collapse. The garment, like the text, is always already eroding, always already deferring its meaning. The trace is not what is left behind; it is what was never present to begin with. The Itch operates inside this same logic. The recursive act of making is not an attempt to restore a stable form but to acknowledge that instability was the origin. The unravelling hem does not come after use - it is structurally inscribed from the start. In this sense, the artefacts I produce do not deteriorate accidentally; they materialise différance. Their degradation is not the result of wear but the condition of their existence. They enact a delay of meaning that mirrors the recursive impulse of The Itch: a compulsive re-performance of identity that survives only by continually eroding itself.

The artefacts in this project do not stand apart from fashion. They are fully within it. They press against its skin. They do not reveal a look, or an aesthetic direction within contemporary culture - but they stress the fracture beneath the cycle. They wear themselves out as they are worn.

This isn't strict commentary, but rather demonstration. This isn't particularly smart critique.

The artefact is not designed to last, and therein lies its truth.

3. PRACTICE REVIEW

3.1 OVERVIEW RECURSION AS METHOD.

HANDS ON FEE
↳ REALISED FORM...
SHEEPSKIN
VEGTAN.

FEET IN FEET
REALISED FORM...
SAPELE WOOD.

The methodology of ***The Itch*** is structured as a recursive system in which the act of making and the concept being examined continually fold back into one another.

Each stage of production -casting, scanning, digital manipulation, finishing, moulding, testing, and re-casting- repeats the same question in material form: *does creative survival sustain itself through repetition?* I had to ask myself: *how does my practice enact my theoretical base?*

Recursion replaces linear progress with a looped research architecture. The artefacts are produced, tested to the point of fracture, and then used as the raw material for their own successors. This cycle performs what **Laplanche** calls the *"unfinished Copernican revolution,"* the continual decentring and re-centring of the subject by foreign elements that it can never wholly integrate (1999).

At the end of the last unit, I had produced objects that technically aligned with a recursive system, but they were over-resolved- too "designed," too conclusive for a framework that depends on looseness and instability. For this iteration, I chose to return to the materials and processes I had previously over-developed and rework them from within this more volatile logic.

The aim was not to refine but to re-enter them: to reiterate, distort, and unsettle what I had already made, rather than produce new, polished solutions. The hope is - each re-iterated object embodies a tension: a partial translation of what came before, already corrupted, already necessary for the next.

The two objects I had produced — the hands and feet re-embedded into the foot — were visually resolved, almost handsome in their conclusions. But the material language of wood and leather was conceptually empty; they were just materials I knew how to handle. Both outcomes felt prematurely final. The wet-moulded leather was too polished, too surreal, too finished. The wood was too literal, too stable, too concrete. In short: both were fairly polished (which is to say, both were executed to the limits of my practical ability), and that level of finish made them useless for a project that depends on instability. A conceptually relevant direction was essential.

The practice does not move forward. The idea does not evolve. *If* a methodology exists here, it is not progressive. It does not unfold in stages, nor culminate in clarity. It folds back in on itself.

This is where making becomes ontological; Making becomes maintenance. There is no discovery. The subject doesn't speak - It records its own gestures - not to communicate, but to prove it is still here. This is not development. It's rehearsal. I hope this performs the survival arm of the Itch. The 'design' is an ongoing prototype. It is evidence. If it can be held, if it leaves a mark, then the condition continues.

Dr Catherine Dormor's writing on practice-as-research supports this. She understands making not as illustration of theory, but as a form of theory - she states *"creative research can **only** be achieved through the practice itself."* Using the research of **Susan Kerrigan**, Dr Dormor considers that setting 'creativity' as a mode where the practitioner through reflection can place themselves- creating a space for holding the knowledge of spectator and artist simultaneously, and in tension. I am attempting to conduct an object that materialises its own conditions. Material thinking.

In this practice, 'failure' is not the opposite of success. It is the method. Failed 'fittings', collapsed forms, test pieces that become more precise in their inaccuracy - these are not prototypes. They are symptoms.

There is no resolution in this research. Only persistence.
In practical terms, the methodology comprises eleven repeatable phases

(1) body casting, (2) 3D scanning, (3) digital re-embedding, (4) CNC machining, (5) hand finishing, (6) silicone moulding, (7) graphite-plaster casting, (8) testing and fracture, (9) re-casting from fragments, (10) performance and drawing, (11) documentation and reflection.

Critically - none of these stages seeks closure; each is a site of re-entry to the loop.

This methodological structure deliberately adopts the laboratory ethos that **Poggioli** identifies within avant-garde practice: *experiment precedes creation, and error is treated as knowledge* (1968). In the same spirit, **Mari's** *Autoprogettazione?* (translateed to 'self-design?') frames making as a pedagogical act that exposes construction rather than conceals it (1974).

The Itch extends these precedents into a recursive, self-observing system where method is both evidence and experiment. In doing so, the project makes **process** into its primary form of research communication, demonstrating research not as 'preparation' for designing artefacts, but as a companion to the development of the design of artefacts.

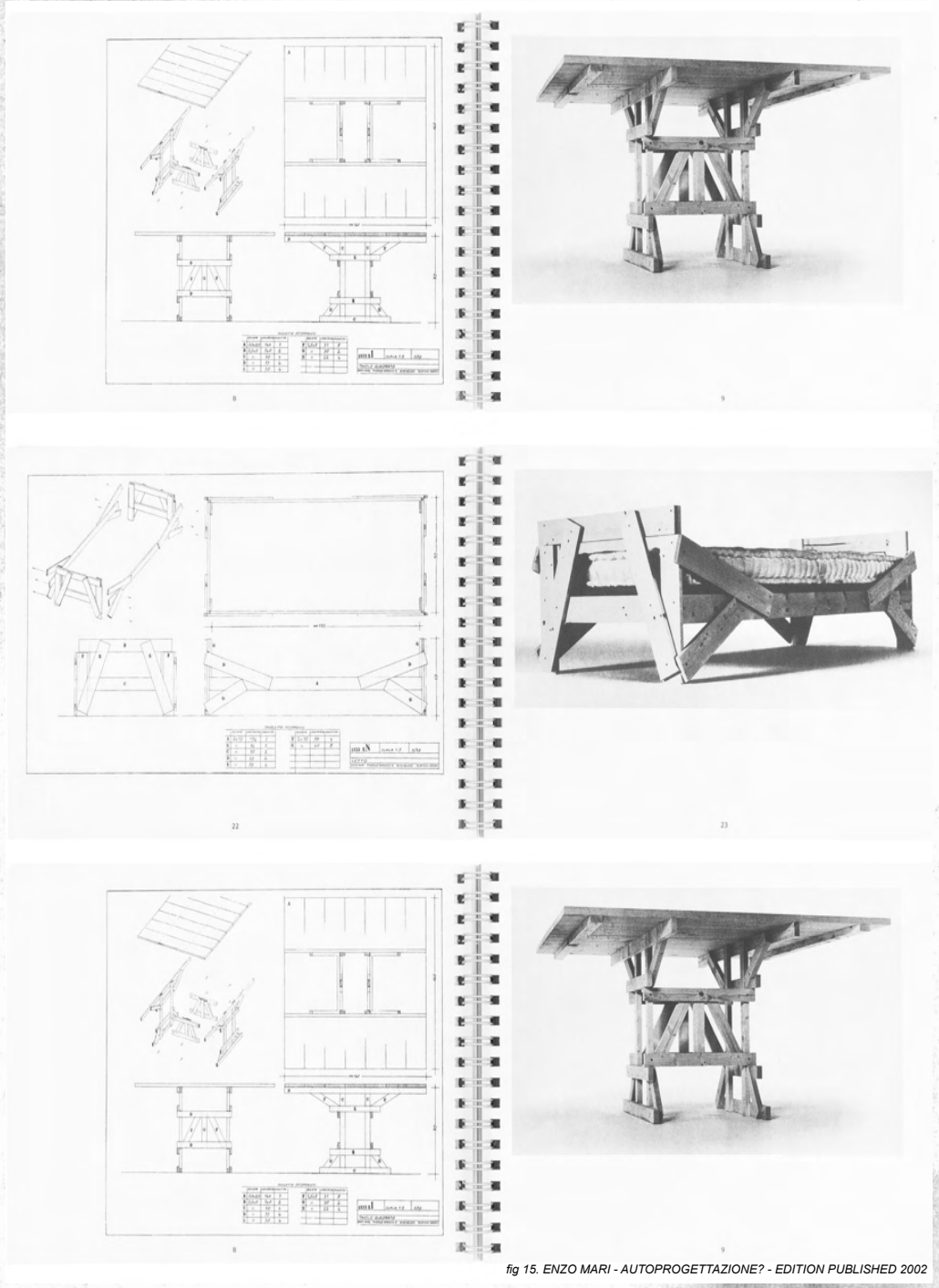


fig 15. ENZO MARI - AUTOPROGETTAZIONE? - EDITION PUBLISHED 2002

3.2 Material Genesis

Graphite offered the opposite condition to wood or leather: total instability. It marks, erodes, sheds, and documents its own disappearance. Unlike wood or leather, graphite can't pretend to be permanent; it performs its own degradation in real time. That volatility aligned directly with the project's recursive logic - a material that records the gesture even as it is consumed by it. Graphite doesn't support form; it undermines it. Which is precisely why it became the only viable choice. I had first encountered it while sulking at my mother's house, frustrated by the absence of ideas, when she produced a solid Viarco ArtGraf stick and suggested I try drawing with it. I ignored that advice, of course, and immediately stood on the thing instead. It didn't buckle. I took that as permission - and finally, a direction worth following.

The initial proposition for the 'shoes' was to machine solid graphite blocks directly on a CNC router, producing objects that had been drawn out of the material itself. Yet practical limitations quickly re-shaped this plan. Graphite dust posed significant health hazards and would have contaminated the shared fabrication space; the cost of outsourcing industrial milling exceeded the project budget. So, what began as a technical dead-end became, in **Poggioli's** terms, *"a kind of laboratory for future possibilities."* (The Theory of the Avant-Garde, 1968, p. 18) an experiment that redefines its own premises rather than confirming them.

This constraint provoked the shift from subtractive machining to aggregative casting, so I had to re-think graphite - which I had always thought of as a solid form- as to how to convert it into slip. Borrowing logic from ceramic casting, I began developing a composite mixture of graphite powder and binder that could be poured, cured, and re-cast. The methodological reversal, forming rather than carving, aligned unexpectedly with **Laplanche's** description of subject formation through continual translation of foreign elements (1999, p. 18): the artefact, like the self, is never cut from a single block but assembled from fragments and residues.

The production of Grpahite rods for pencils follows a simple ratio of grpahite and clay powders, mixed with water, and fired like ceramic. The different ratios determine the hardness of the pencil. As such, the material, when fired behaves like ceramic. With the constrains within the studio, I was unable to generate this process, namely I couldn't fire ceramic within the studio, and upon researching I struggled to discover a ceramic studio who would let graphite within thier kiln for messy reasons. So, I had to come to a new means of casting graphite.

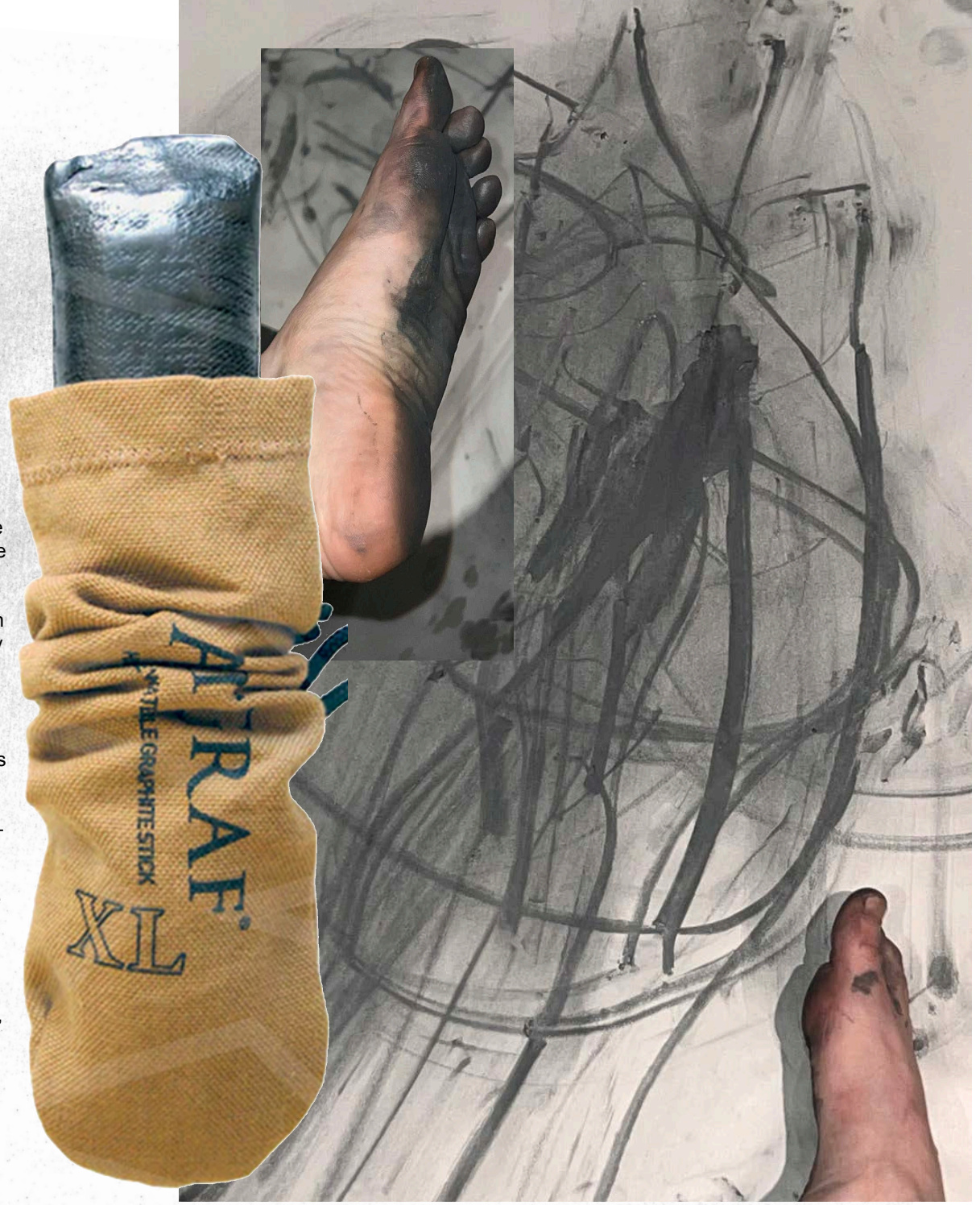
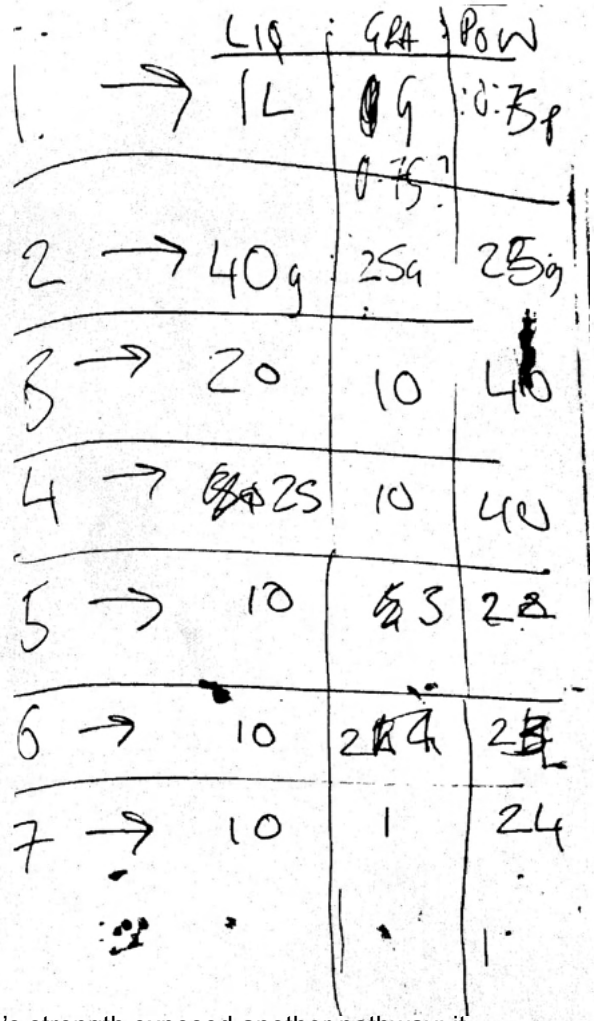
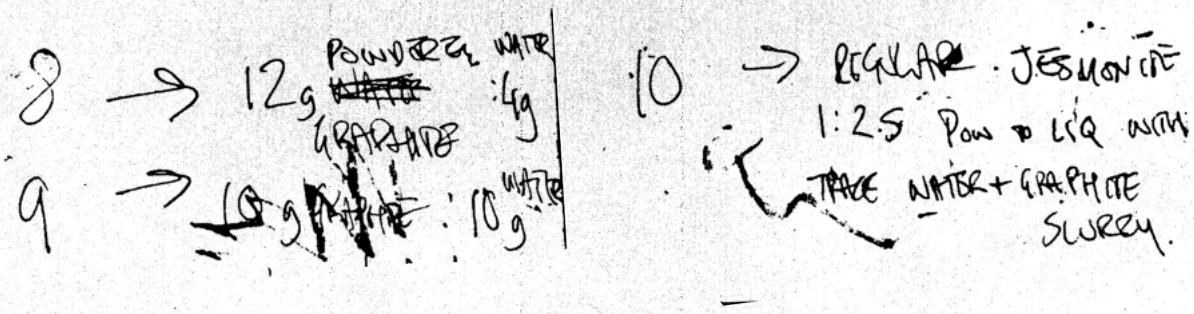


fig 16. EARLY FOOT DRAWING EXPERIMENTS, TESTING THE STABILITY OF THE GRAPHITE STICK.



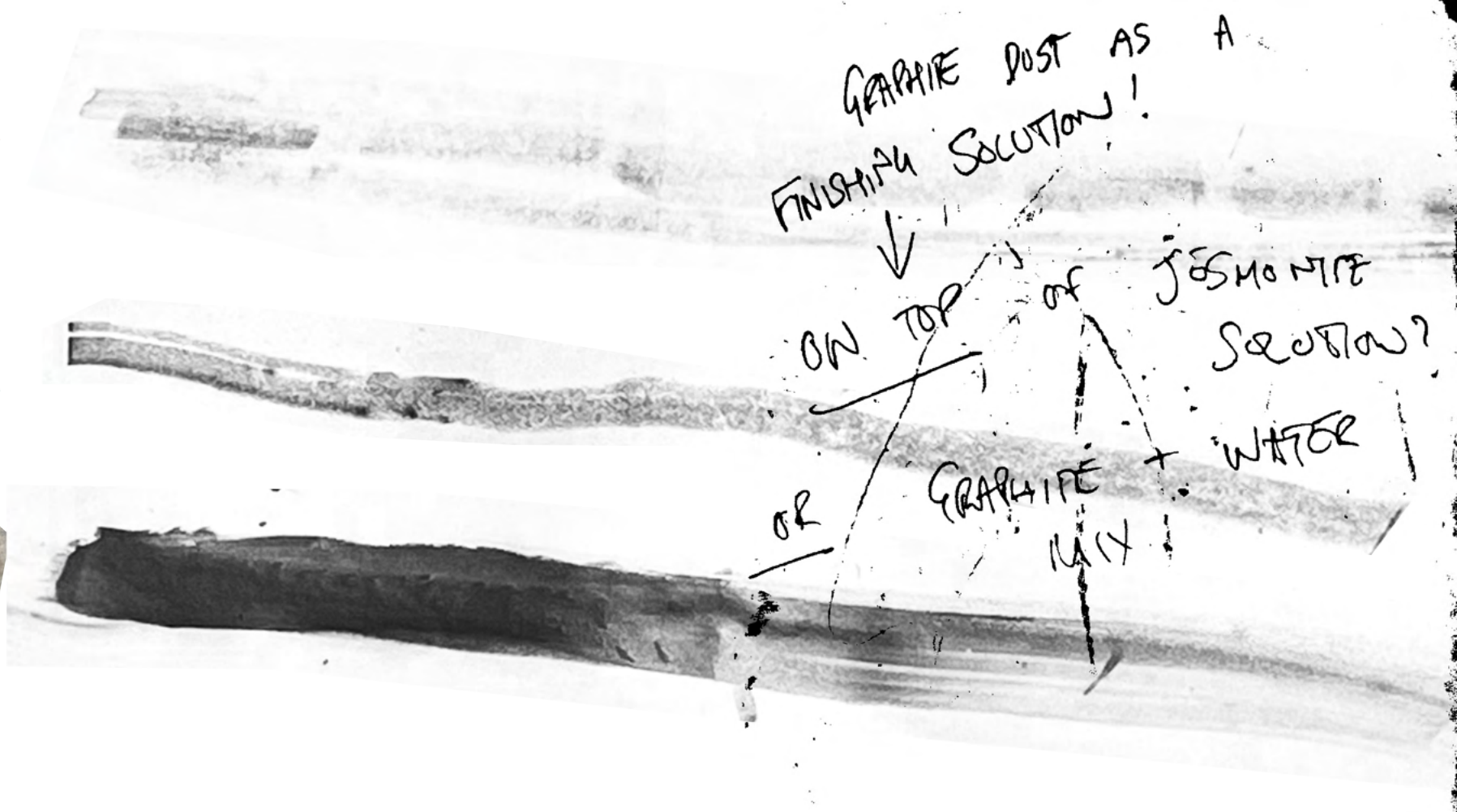


The initial Jesmonite–graphite experiments were an immediate reality check. Jesmonite had seemed, on paper, like the sensible middle ground: strong, clean, studio-friendly, and capable of producing high-definition casts. But the moment graphite entered the mix, its indifference became obvious. Jesmonite treated graphite as nothing more than pigment.

Instead of producing a drawing surface, the graphite dispersed into the binder, tinting the bulk material a polite mid-grey. The resulting objects were handsome but fundamentally useless for this project: they refused to draw. Any marks left on paper were faint, oily, and shallow. The problem wasn't the graphite; it was Jesmonite's material logic. Its acrylic binder locks particles into a stable polymer matrix, smoothing everything into compliance. That very stability - the thing that makes Jesmonite reliable for architectural models and commercial casting - rendered it inert as a mark-making body. It would not shed. It would not erode. It would not misbehave.

Yet the tests weren't wasted. Jesmonite's strength exposed another pathway: it could easily hold weight. This hinted at a structural requirement for the foot forms. The challenge became finding a material that could withstand body weight while also remaining friable enough to produce meaningful residue. Jesmonite proved the first half of the equation but failed the second entirely. It produced objects that were obedient rather than recursive. They recorded nothing of their use; they simply endured it.

This contradiction pushed the development toward the plaster–graphite system. Where Jesmonite sealed the graphite in, plaster allowed it to sit exposed at the surface, ready to break off, drag, or dissolve. The artefact needed to be structurally confident but behaviourally unstable. The process of slightly abandoning the jesmonite formalised the core requirement of The Itch: the material must collaborate in its own undoing.



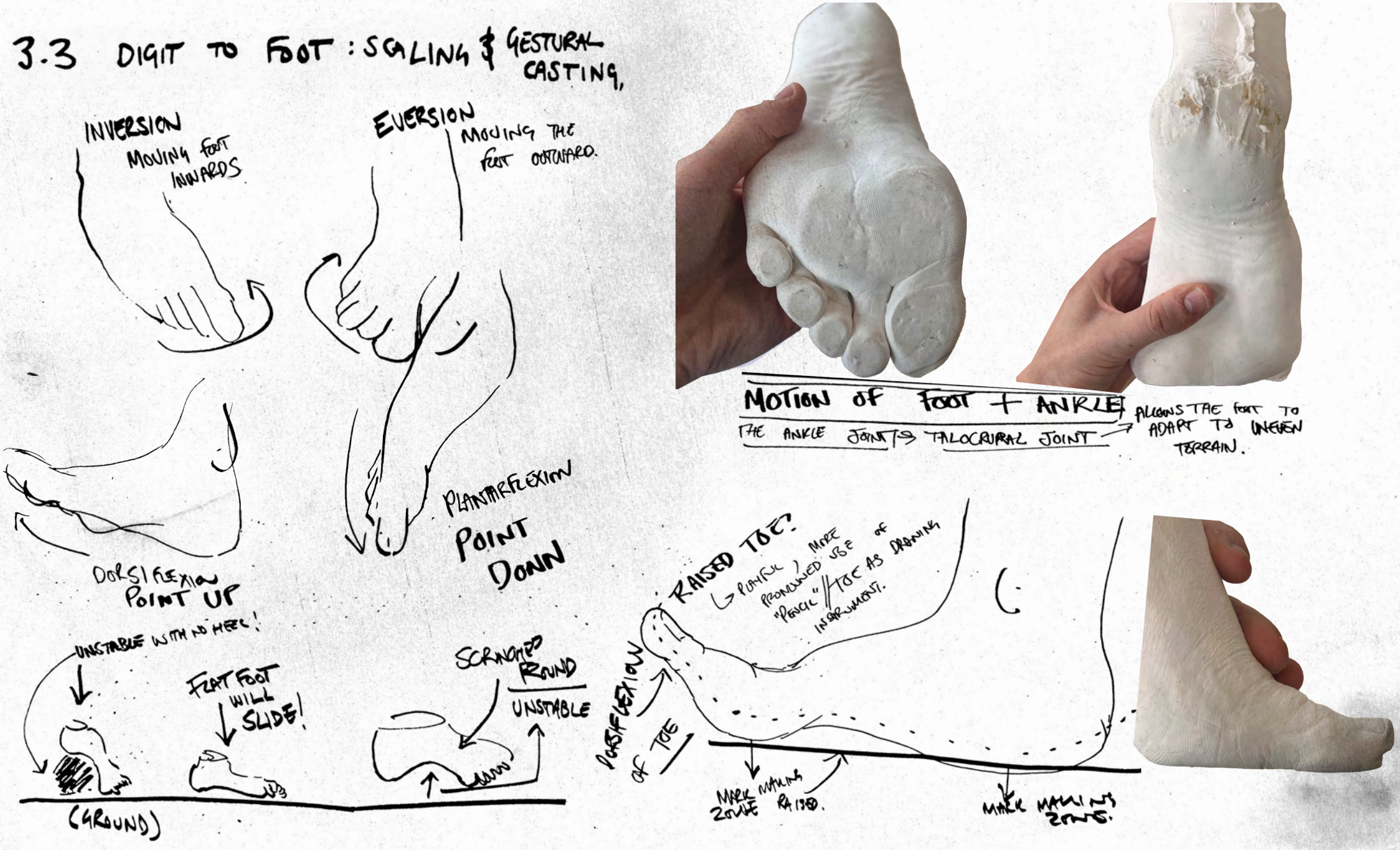
Before committing to full-scale foot forms, I produced a series of digit-scale tests, casting single fingers to evaluate surface resolution and binder ratios. Three key recipes emerged:

1. Jesmonite + graphite (3:1) – produced a dense, satin finish and high structural integrity but left a shallow, oily trace.
2. Plaster + graphite (1:1) – softer, more friable surface; markedly superior mark-making capacity.
3. Pure graphite slurry (1:1 with water) – crumbled on use; unworkable. Best mark.

Plaster's brittleness, usually a liability, became a virtue: the material could fail productively, leaving evidence of its use. Following Mari's insistence that *"error becomes information"* in critical making (1974), this fragility was accepted as integral to the artefact's communicative structure.

A final refinement involved adopting water-soluble graphite to secure even dispersion within the plaster matrix. This eliminated the chalky, bit-filled texture produced by dry powders and revealed an unforeseen behaviour: when re-hydrated before use, the surface darkened and yielded a dramatically richer trace. Dunking the object in water transformed it from a sort of inert sculpture into an activated drawing instrument. The material's optimum state proved to be one of partial dissolution. This condition captured the methodological ethos of The Itch: knowledge generated at moments of breakdown.

In this way, an untestestable CNC concept evolved into the conceptual and material core of the project. The process of learning through constraint established recursion itself as both method and meaning-every technical limitation recast as an opportunity to remake the form from its own residue.



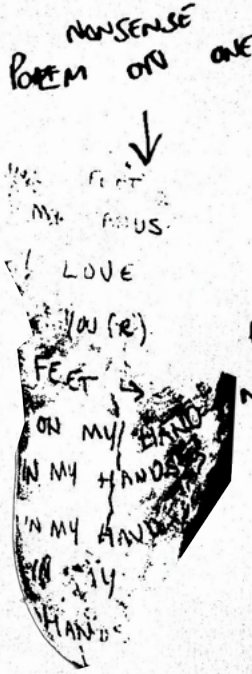
Following the digit-scale trials, the methodology advanced to full-foot casting. My earliest pedal casting experiments had fixed the body in a neutral, upright stance: a rigid, taxonomic pose intended to guarantee anatomical accuracy and structural stability. This control soon proved counter-productive. My worry had been that if the foot was in an ‘unstable’ position, the objects would break too soon - However, the rigidity of the posture produced casts that felt clinically detached.

In subsequent casts, I sought to think of the the process as an analysis of gesture, exploring how the foot, when freed from orthopaedic alignment, could register emotion, memory, or resistance. The sensation of casting the foot in alginate and experimenting with heat and texture of the medium as to how the foot ‘wants’ to move-were vital in ‘considerately’ casting the form.

My initial casting experiments were an attempt to understand the foot not as a biomechanical machine but as a site of gesture...how it quivers, curls, retracts, and can betray more than it stabilises. I fixated on the inverted foot because it looked anxious, almost embarrassed; the toes retreat as if anticipating contact. It also echoed the soft, uncertain posture of a newborn's foot. a structure not yet claimed by function. These became my first category of preferred gestures, jokingly titled worried shoes, (after the song of the same title by Daniel Johnston) and they set the tone for what followed.

In the same session, I began testing what I called "incorrect casts": Dipping my foot in alginate, allowing the alginate to harden slightly and repreating the dip. Building up enough layers to get an edequate cast of the foot, but a warped one. I wanted to see whether deliberate deformation could visualise something closer to the misrecognition of the mirror stage - the foot encountering itself as wrong, delayed, or distorted. And, predictably, the results thrilled me visually. But they also revealed a methodological problem: if the form drifted too far from the foot, it ceased to be wearable. If it couldn't be worn, it couldn't mark; if it couldn't mark, it stepped outside the logic of my project.

So-against my better aesthetic instincts-I abandoned the warped tests and returned to the most numbing, literal solution: a foot, held in a single gesture, reproduced as faithfully as the casting process would allow. The failed and malformed casts were essential, though. They exposed the threshold of distortion the project could tolerate and clarified the underlying demand for direct mirroring. I also used thier remains to write some poetry. Ultimately, I chose the simpler path not out of caution, but because I wanted these forms to be clunky, frumpy, almost stupid in their mark-making-to operate at the level of earnest, physical insistence rather than conceptual elegance.

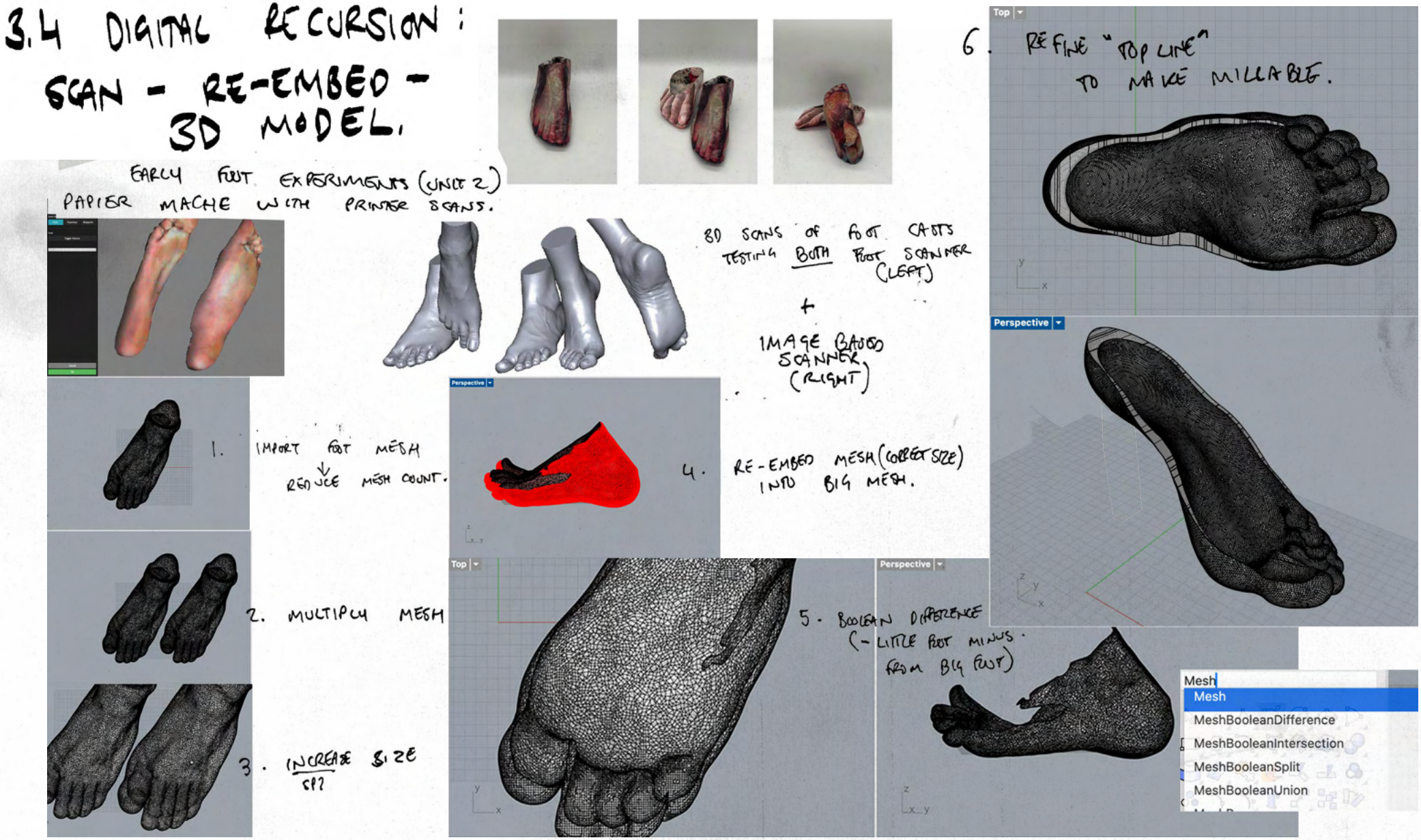


"INCORRECT" CASTING PRACTICE.

DIPPING FOOT INTO ALIGNATE TO GET A THIN CAST OF DETAIL, THEN RE EMBEDDING IT ONCE THE MIXTURE HARDENS.

LEADING TO SEVERAL CASTING ISSUES.
- CAST IMPRESSION
- LACK OF DETAIL
- MISFORMED CASTS.
- MISSING DIGITS.

COMPARISON.



Once I had a physical casts that satisfied me, the process entered a digital phase. Each plaster foot was 3D-scanned using a structured-light system to capture minute surface deviations-creases, pores, and compression marks produced during casting. The intention was archiving form, but also to re-introduce the casts into a loop of transformation where the scan could feed back into itself. The manner in which the 3D scanner works facinated me, and reminded me of an earlier phase in my project's lifetime, where I'd recreated my foot by with papier mache and my homescanner. The reintroduction of this hyper image recreation felt very conceptually relevant.

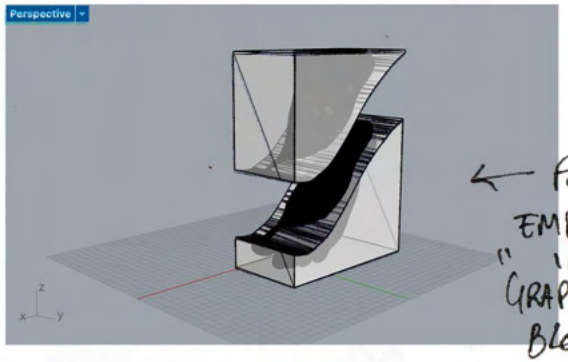
The resulting mesh files were imported into Rhino 8 and subjected to a series of controlled manipulations. Each digital model was re-embedded within its own slightly bulked out geometry-a literal foot-on-foot operation. The procedure involved offsetting and scaling the original mesh, nesting it into itself with a rotational or axial twist of between five and fifteen degrees (depending on the shape of the foot). This produced a series of self-consuming volumes: surfaces intersecting, and swallowing one another. The resulting forms were recognisably feet yet subtly doubled.

This computational step (de-)materialised the project's theoretical premise that creative identity is formed through repetition rather than invention. In psychoanalytic terms, each digital foot functions as what **Laplanche** calls an *"internal foreign body"*- an image of the self-generated by translation and mis-translation (1999, p. 25). The digital recursion stages this structure visibly: the original is enfolded into a new body that both remembers and distorts its source.

Practically, the embedded meshes demanded technical refinement - A skill that has never come to me naturally. Boolean operations often failed; the intersections produced thin, non-manifold surfaces that could not be milled. These structural errors were preserved where possible, reinforcing the project's refusal of seamlessness.

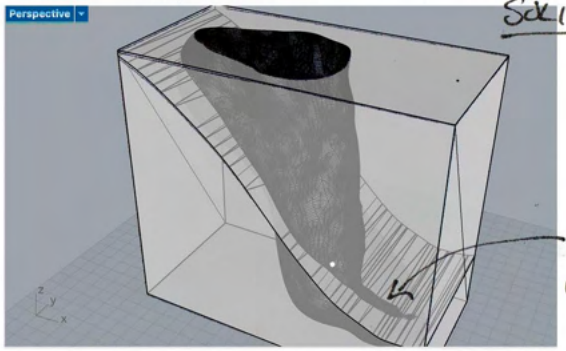
The final models were exported as toolpaths for CNC machining. What began as a body impression had become a recursive digital artefact, a loop capable of generating endless variations of itself. I had sought to great the 'last' or 'master'-where the digital workspace thus extended the laboratory logic described by **Poggioli** (1968): an arena where experiment precedes aesthetic consolidation.

3D MODELING - ALTERNATIVE DESIGN EXPERIMENTS.



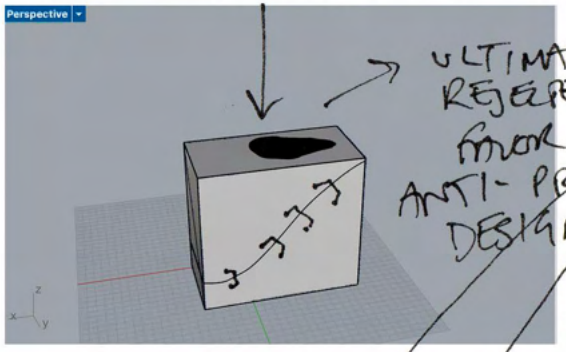
← FOOT EMBEDDED "IN GRAPHITE" BLOCK.

→ BLOCK TO MAKE SOLID MARK



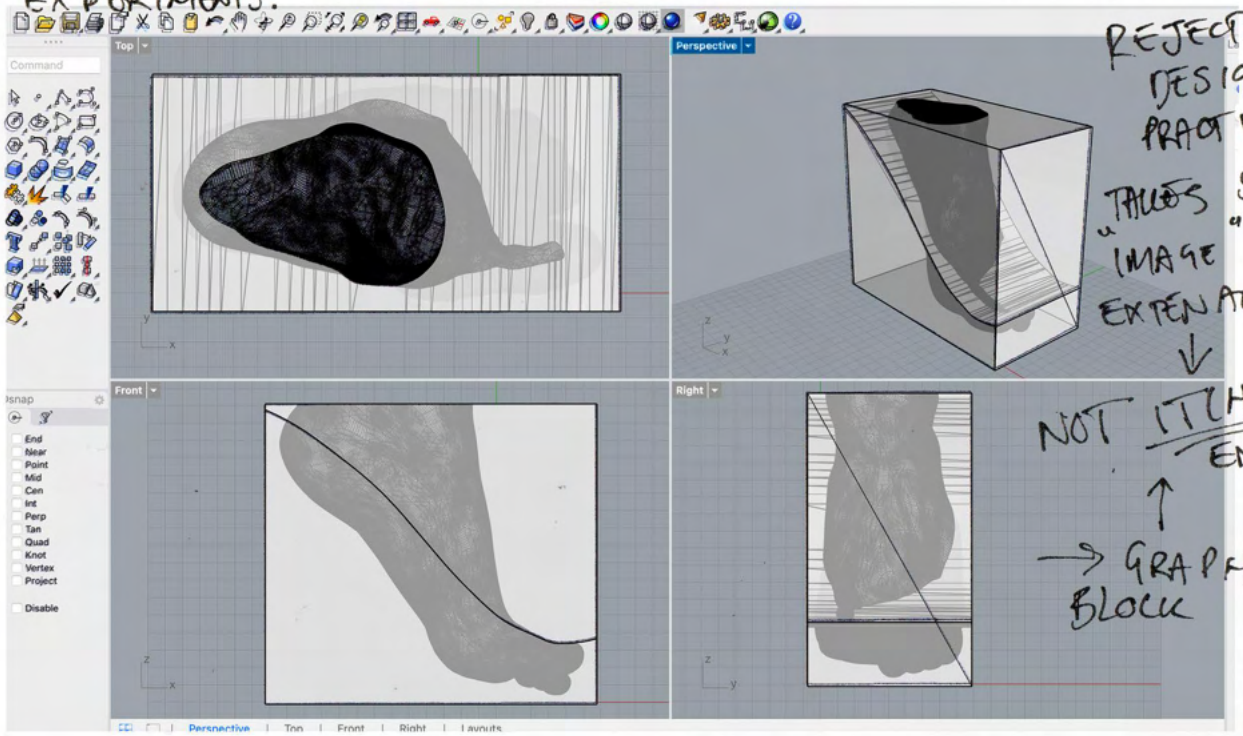
BIG TOE OVERHANG.

THOUGHT : "LOCK" ~~FEET~~ INTO BLOCKS WITH METAL PINS, REMOVE WHEN EXITING.



→ ULTIMATELY REJECTED IN FAVOR OF ANTI-PROSTHESIS DESIGN MODE.

FULL BLOCK → MARK MADE



REJECTED DESIGN PRACTICE :

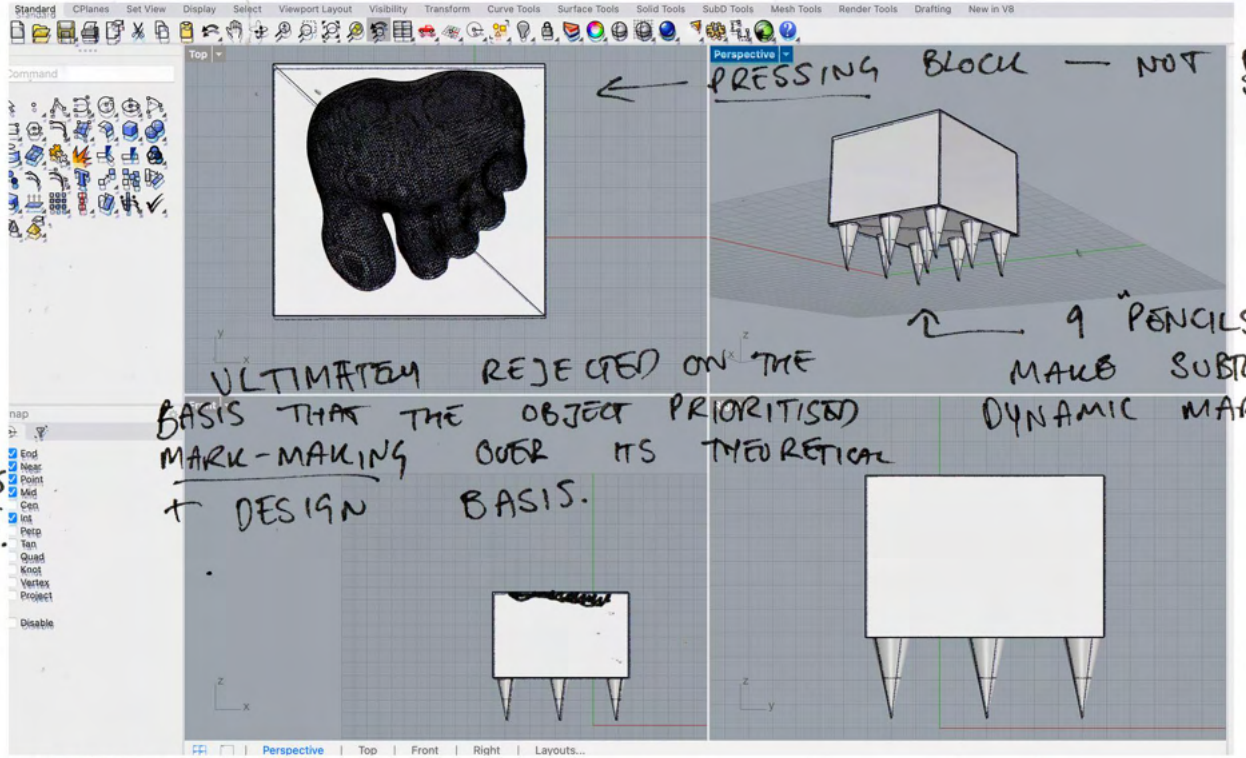
TAKES SHAPE + "IMAGE" FROM EXTERNAL SOURCE

↓

NOT ITCHY ENOUGH.

↑

→ GRAPHITE BLOCK



← PRESSING BLOCK — NOT FOR STANDING.

↑ 9 "PENCILS" TO MAKE SUBTLE MORE DYNAMIC MARKS.

ULTIMATELY REJECTED ON THE BASIS THAT THE OBJECT PRIORITISED MARK-MAKING OVER ITS THEORETICAL + DESIGN BASIS.

3.5 SITE VIST TO VIARCO: GRAPHITE MANUFACTURE + FIELD RESEARCH

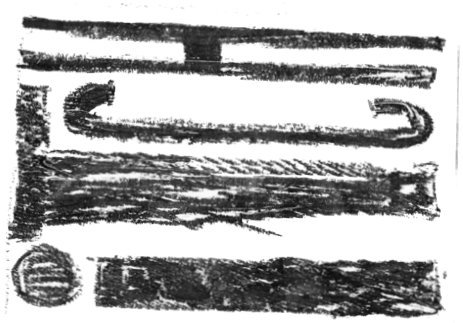
In October 2025 I undertook a self-initiated research visit to Viarco, Portugal's oldest surviving factory, located in a small industrial town about thirty minutes from Porto.

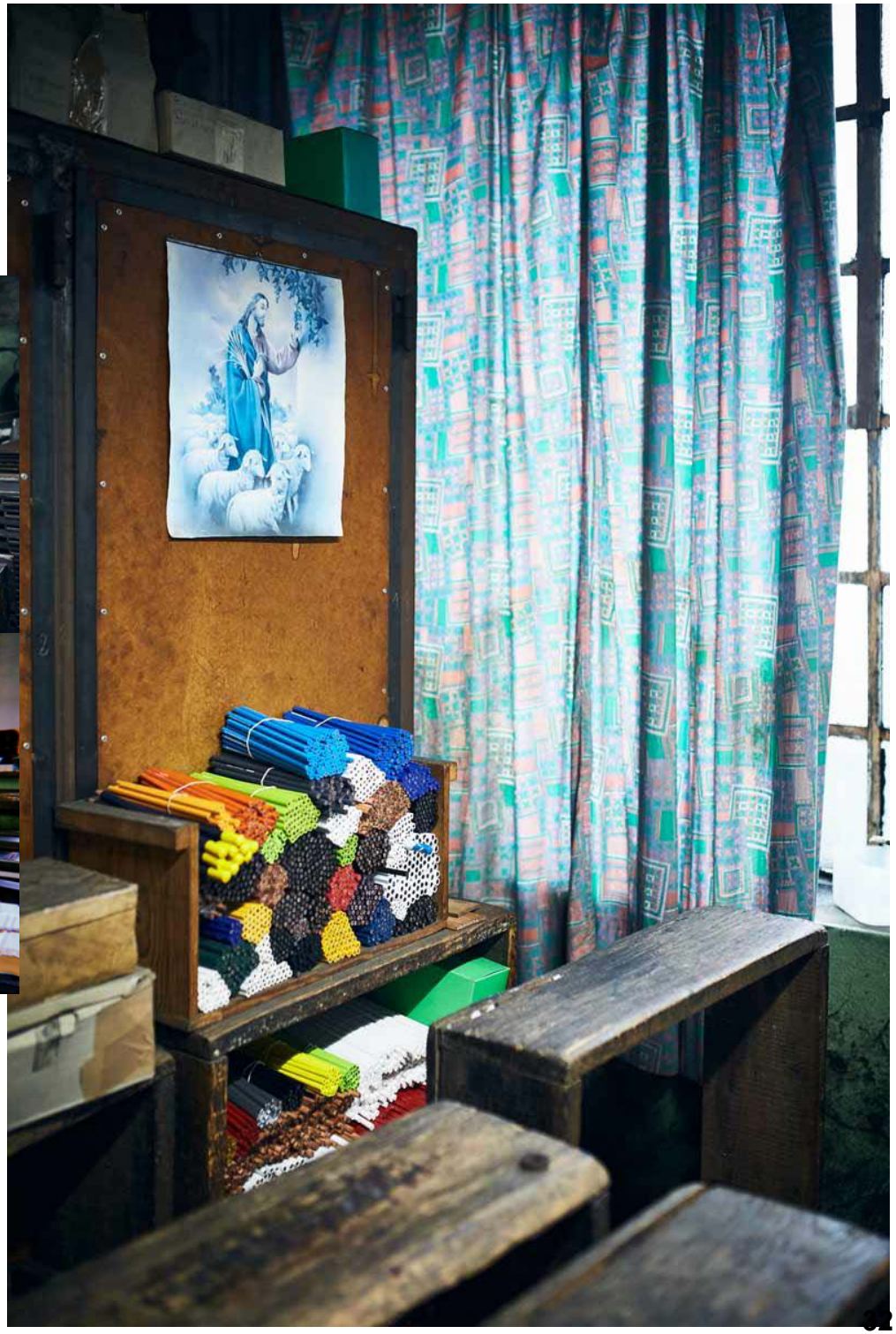
The visit to the pencil factory was to study graphite's behaviour at source-to see how the substance moves from powder to functional body before it becomes writing instrument. The site operates as both a factory and atelier, directed by José, whose stewardship combines commercial production with artist residencies and experimental workshops. Walking through the space was like entering a time capsule: heavy nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century machinery still in daily use, belts clattering, motors humming, and the air thick with a fine metallic dust.

Observing the full process-from raw graphite and clay blending to extrusion, firing, and casing-transformed my understanding of the material I had been treating solely as casting medium. The factory's method depends on carefully proportioned graphite-clay slurries pressed through dies, producing rods that are later fired to stabilise carbon density.

In conversation, José emphasised that graphite alone never coheres: it requires a binder that simultaneously enables and limits its performance. This insight clarified the difficulties I had encountered in my own early tests, where unbound graphite crumbled or left chalky residues. Seeing the industrial recipe confirmed that the binder is not an additive but the condition of the material's existence-a structural dependency mirroring the psychoanalytic relation between subject and other. **Laplanche's** notion of the self as constituted through the foreign element it must incorporate to survive found tangible form in these mixtures of carbon and clay

IMAGES FROM VIARCO - PORTUGAL.
PENCIL TESTS MOVING THROUGH FACTORY.

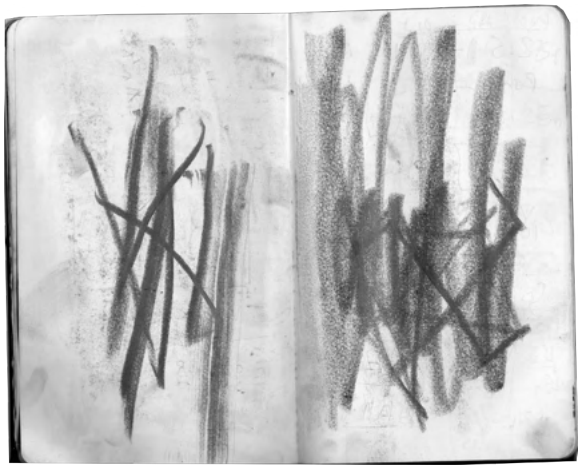




(1999).

José generously invited me to work within the factory's atelier during my stay, where I produced several clay-based graphite prototypes using repurposed pencil-making equipment. Due to drying times and shipping restrictions these could not be brought back to London, but the experience yielded crucial empirical knowledge: graphite's tactile and olfactory responses at different moisture levels, its capacity to shear under pressure, and the physical labour required to keep its powder contained. The fieldwork confirmed the practical limits that would later drive my decision to cast graphite–plaster composites rather than pursue pure graphite forms.

Methodologically, the visit situates The Itch within a lineage of research-through-practice that **Poggioli** identifies as the avant-garde's *"laboratory for future possibilities"* (1968, p. 18): a space where direct engagement with production technologies precedes formal invention. It also resonates with **Mari's** insistence that design knowledge must arise from first-hand making encounters (1974). This primary research phase allowed for cross-disciplinary observation, - a key moment in these phase for inspiration was witnesses other artists in residence and what they saw the material as... and the translation of industrial process into critical studio methodology. It grounded the material intelligence of The Itch not in theory alone but in graphite's own industrial genealogy-a lineage of dust, binder, and human persistence.



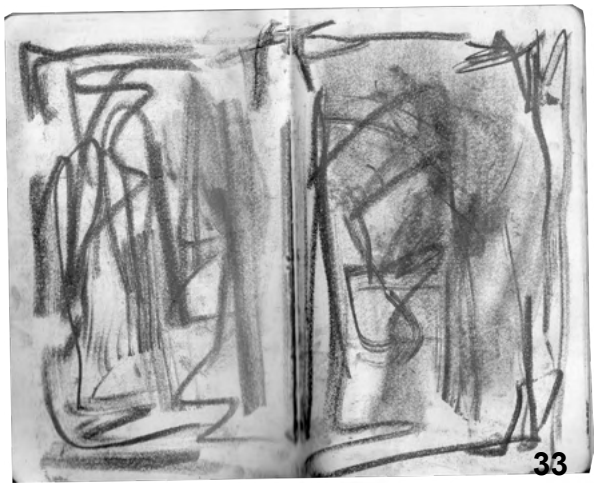
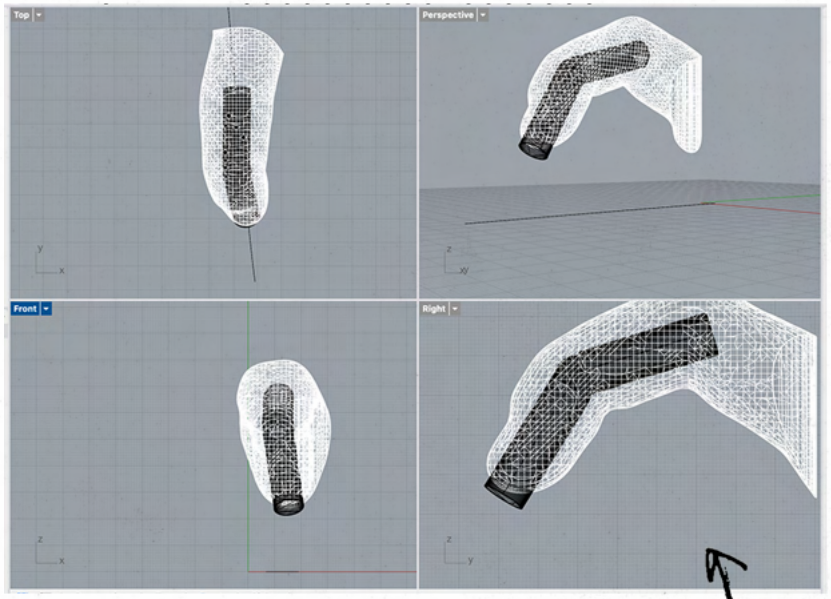
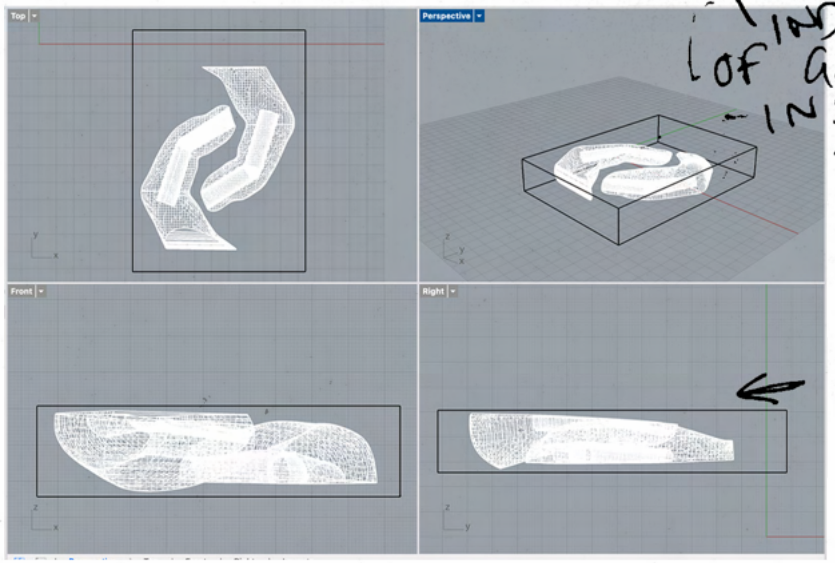


fig 17. IMAGES FROM VIARCO'S ATELIER - PORTUGAL.
3D TESTING WITH GRAPHITE CLAY. GRAPHITE CLAY TEST RUBBINGS

3.6 CNC + MANUAL FINISHING: HYBRID PRODUCTION.

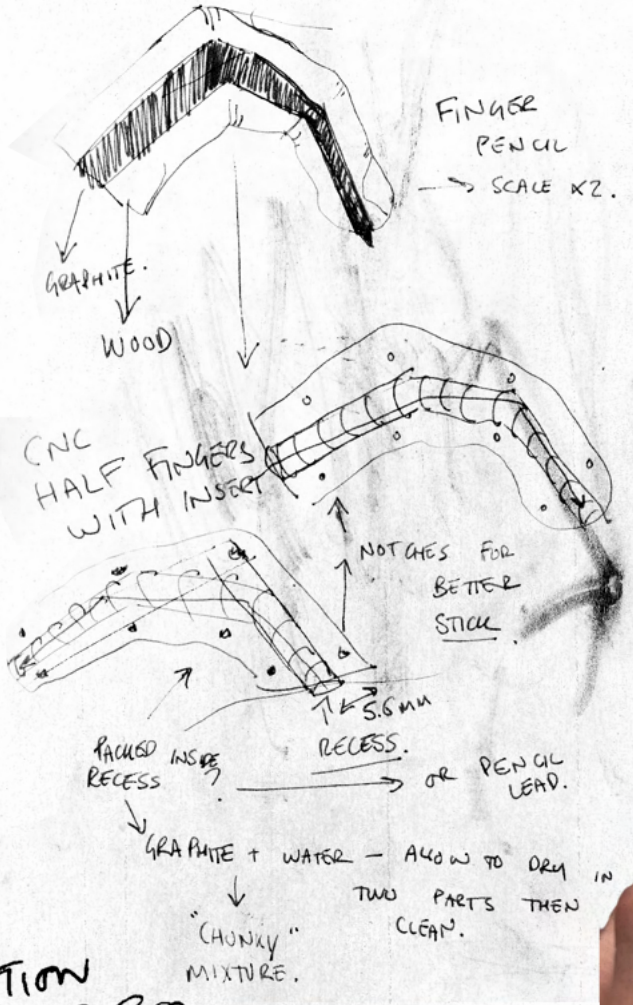
Returning from Viarco, I wanted to manufacture my own pencil. So, taking scans of of the digit tests I'd already constructed, I began testing the CNC process with an enlarged finger (which had the unintended consequence of appearing phallic.) 'cutting' the finger in two halves, so graphite could be inserted in the same manner that graphite rods are inserted during the pencil manufacture process I'd observed at Viarco. Using scavanged wood, collected from the 'free corner' at LCF (which became an essential corner of both my process and financial stability) I created the finger pencil on rhino, then sent it over into be milled.

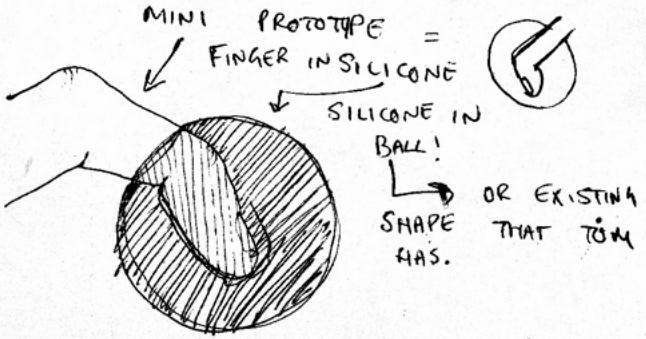




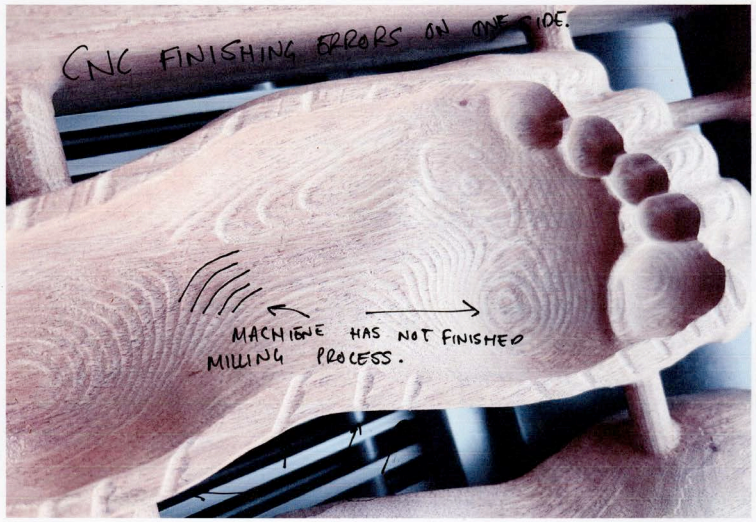
INDICATION OF GRAPHITE ROD INSERTION IN FINGER.

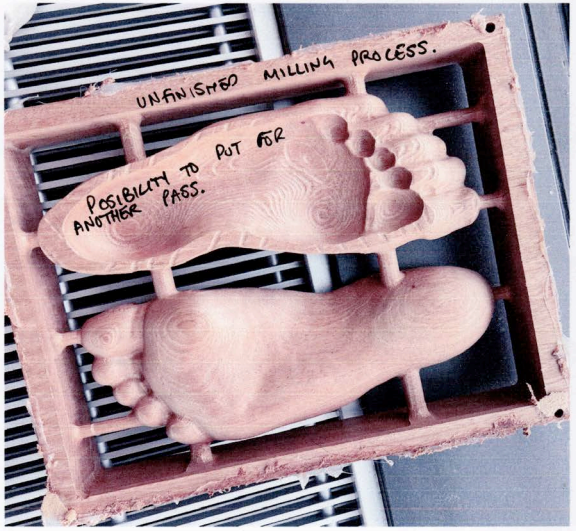
LAY OUT ON CNC BED.

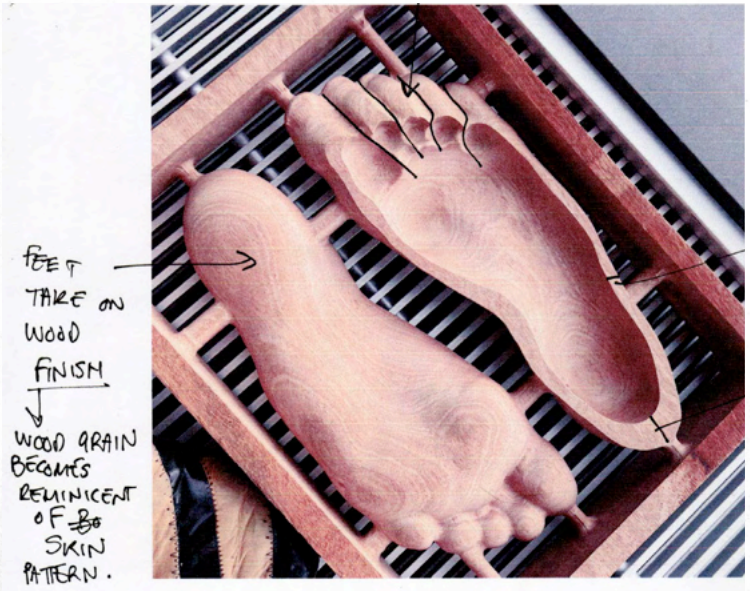




SAPELE FINGER.







The project moved back into the workshop to translate the digitally re-embedded foot forms into physical masters suitable for moulding. Each foot-on-foot model was routed from scavenged sapele using a three-axis CNC mill, with toolpaths generated directly from the Rhino files. The CNC stage served as both fabrication and experiment: it revealed the limits of translating a recursive digital file into material reality. Because the embedded geometries produced deep undercuts and self-intersecting surfaces, full-resolution machining was technically impossible. The router could only approach from one direction, leaving unseen cavities uncut. These absences became structural to the form rather than faults to be corrected. The machined surfaces initially carried the characteristic pass lines of the end mill-tight, rhythmic ridges mapping every rotation of the bit. While these marks were often sanded away to simulate smoothness, I decided to preserve them selectively. On the upper planes of each foot, ridges were removed to restore the recognisable anatomy of toes and arch; on the interior and overlapping areas, a few tool marks were retained as visible evidence of mediation.

This balance allowed the objects to remain legible as feet, even slightly comical in their over-definition, while still bearing the trace of their manufacture. The result is what **Mari** (1974) terms *“didactic construction”*-an artefact that teaches its own making.

After removing the supports, I worked the surfaces by hand using rasps, scalpels, and sandpaper to adjust curvature and remove thin splinters created by the cutter’s climb path. This manual intervention introduced subtle asymmetries that resisted the perfection of the digital model. The body’s return through touch re-inscribed the object with minor irregularities-what **Poggioli** might recognise as the avant-garde’s preference for *“experiment over equilibrium”* (1968, p. 21).
Practically, the hand-finishing also prepared the masters for silicone moulding, ensuring no acute edges that might tear the rubber. Conceptually, it reinstated the dialogue between control and surrender that underpins The Itch: precision giving way to approximation, technology tempered by gesture. The hybrid process affirmed that recursion does not belong solely to software but also to the iterative rhythm of the maker’s hand. Each stroke of sanding was both correction and corruption-a physical echo of the recursive psyche the project seeks to expose.

This CNC and hand finishing process was used for 3 of the 4 models I’ve developed.

The scrunched toe form is where the methodology finally resisted me. My instinct was to treat it like the other masters - CNC-milled wood, clean edges, the reassuring solidity of a wooden artefact. But the geometry made that option transparently untenable: the collapsed forefoot created thin walls and a deep internal overhang that would almost certainly split along the grain. After an ititially very encouraging CNC foam test, where it seemed to work perfeclty well, after conversation with the technical team - where I was reminded - foam is a very different material to wood, it doesnt 'split,' it behaved cohesivley throughout its structure, and its also much lighter. It was made clear that attempting the mill in wood would have been less "craft rigour" and more of an act of denial dressed up as process.

This refusal became methodologically significant. In practice-as-research terms, the form exposed the limits of the workflow I had been relying on. It clarified that certain gestures cannot be coerced through a preferred process without distorting the gesture itself. If the project is fundamentally about recursion, survival, and material honesty, then forcing a structurally impossible CNC job for the sake of aesthetic consistency would have contradicted the research itself. Or perhaps it wouldn't have... I'm not so sure.

I shifted to a two-part 3D print not because it was easier, but because it preserved the internal logic of the gesture. Printing allowed the overhang to be resolved accurately and reduced the invasive hand-finishing that would otherwise have compromised the interior. At the same time, it immediately introduced new issues: brittle resin, awkward access for sanding, epoxy bonding, and - despite the supposed precision of digital fabrication - the need to reinforce fragile walls with automotive body filler before moulding. Even the "accurate" method required manual correction.

The slight interior divot that runs along the join line, visible in every mould taken from this model, is therefore not an imperfection but evidence. It materialises the negotiation between intention and fabrication, between digital fidelity and physical constraint. It shows the gap between method and gesture - the space where the artefact has, against my best intentions, insisted on its own terms.

I am still irritated not to have a wooden master for this form; wood carries a presence and authority that resin does not. and the ability to work with the wooden master would have satisifed a strong craving. But the decision to print was the point at which the methodology aligned with the actual demands of the object rather than the demands of my preference. In this sense, the scrunched toe becomes a critical moment in the project: an artefact that survived because I stopped insisting on a method it could not withstand.

3.7 SILICONE MOULDING + SHORE HARDNESS

With the wooden and resin masters finalised, the process advanced to the stage where the forms could begin their recursive life. Each prototype was encased in a relevant silicone mould, constructed using a platinum-cure compound mixed at a 10:1 ratio with catalyst. Acrylic baseboards were sealed with petroleum jelly to prevent seepage and easy removal, and a thin preliminary “print coat” of silicone was brushed directly onto the wooden surfaces to capture texture before the bulk pour. This layer retained the minute striations left by sanding and carving, ensuring that the cast’s surface would carry the hybrid history of hand and machine.

For the worried shoes, the casting workflow had to shift entirely. Because the foot inserts into the object rather than resting on top, the internal cavity is structurally complicated, with multiple undercuts that a standard mould rubber simply couldn’t tolerate. In testing, conventional silicones either tore on removal or exerted enough tension to crack the plaster cast. After several trials, the most reliable material was a 10-shore prosthetic-grade silicone - soft enough to collapse out of the geometry, yet strong and elastic enough to survive repeated demoulding.

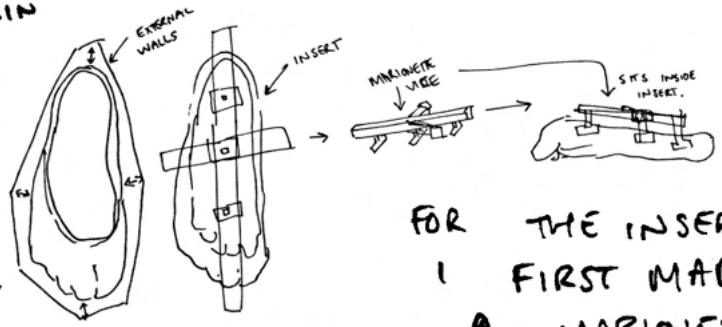
Once the insert material was established, we built 1 cm containment walls around the full form. I filled the internal foot cavity with clay up to the exact line where the interior and exterior surfaces meet, then cast the exterior shell, leaving flat bases on both sides to simplify later mould-making.

To ensure the insert could be reused - and to avoid guessing its position every time - I designed a small wooden, marionette-style vice that sat inside the cavity. This vice adhered to the silicone during curing and acted as both a removal handle and a registration tool, keeping the insert consistently aligned across multiple casts.

After the exterior mould cured, I flipped the setup, positioned the vice, and poured the 10-shore silicone around both the vice and the internal foot. Once cured, I marked the correct vice placement with small scalpel slits so the insert could be reset with precision.

This process was labour-intensive but necessary: the form demanded a mould system flexible enough to survive its geometry and accurate enough to be repeatable.

TO PREP THE RESIN MASTERS FOR MOULDING - THEY ONLY NEEDED A LIGHT COAT OF SPRAY RELEASE. BECAUSE IT'S SMOOTHER THAN THE WOOD...



FOR THE INSERT, I FIRST MADE A MARIONETTE STYLE VICE TO SIT WITHIN THE SILICONE

FOR THE EXTERIOR WE USED CS25 - A FAIRLY RIGID SILICONE, WHICH STILL HAS GOOD ELASTICITY BUT WOULD NOT BE PRIME FOR THE INSERT.

THIS WAS A TWO PART SILICONE OF SHORE 10 - SPECIALISED FOR PROSTHETICS. (WHICH I FOUND) QUITE NICE WITHIN MY TUTORIAL FRAME - NOT IN A SUBSTANTIVE WAY. IT WAS JUST CUTE.)

THE EXTERIOR WAS GIVEN AN ALLOWANCE OF ABOUT 1 CM AROUND THE WHOLE EXTERIOR, RESIN FOOT.

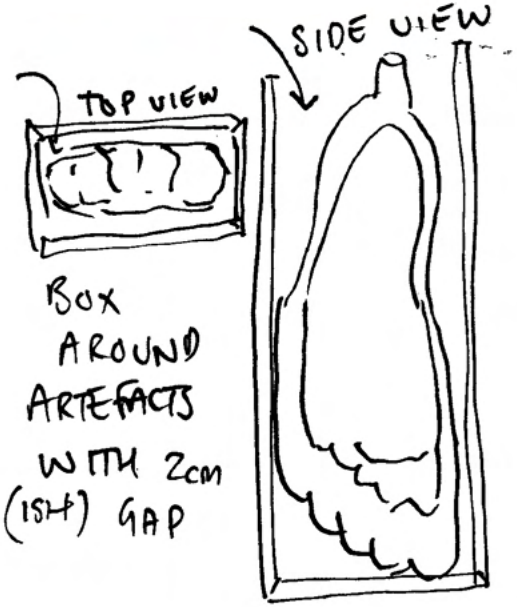
THE INSERT & EXTERIOR TO GETHER FORM A TWO PART OF SORTS.

SILICONE MOULDING

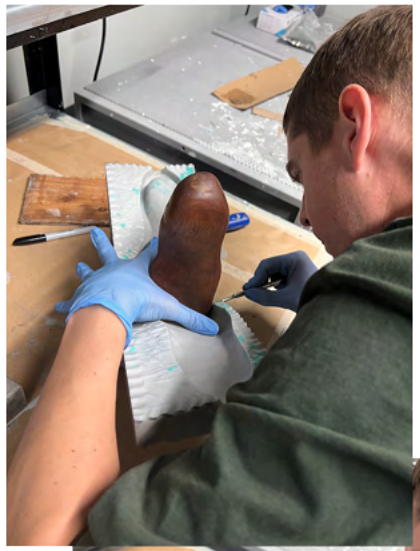
For the flat foot, we used a hybrid mould system - essentially a one-part, two-part mould. The silicone was poured as a single solid block and, once cured around the artefact, it was cut away in a controlled zig-zag incision. This cut allowed the mould to open cleanly for demoulding while still locking back together with accurate registration for subsequent casts.

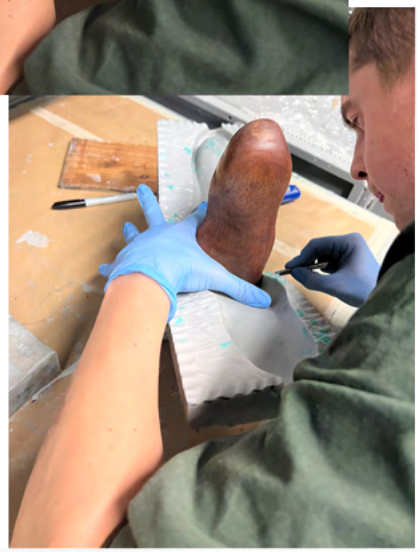
FROM THE FINALISED FOOT FORM - I HAD TO ATTATCH WOODEN DOWELS TO THE HEEL SO THEY BEHAVE AS A POUR HOLE ONCE CAST IN SILICONE.

I COATED THE FEET IN BEESWAX TO PROTECT THEM FROM SILICONE, THEN I LIGHTLY COATED THEM IN VASELINE TO ACT AS AN EASY RELEASE AGENT.



I THEN FITTED A BOX AROUND THE FEET WITH SPARE BOARDS FROM THE "FREE CORNER" I TRIED TO MAINTAIN APPROX 2cm GAP ALL AROUND THE OBJECT - BUT I FAILED HERE - LEADING TO LATER ISSUES...





ONCE CAST, I ENLISTED TOM (OUT OF FEAR OF RUINING MY MOULD) TO HELP ME CUT THE MOULD AWAY.

HE USED A "ZIGZAG" SYSTEM TO MAKE AS MANY NOTCHES AS POSSIBLE - THIS WILL HELP THE MOULD FIT IN THE CORRECT SPACE EACH TIME.

WE'D CUT UP OLD SILICONE MOULDS OF MINE FROM UNIT 2 TO HELP FILL IN SOME SPACE - $ TO SAVE MATERIAL...

TO CAST THE FLAT FOOT - THE MOULD HAS TO BE CLAMPED $ TIED.

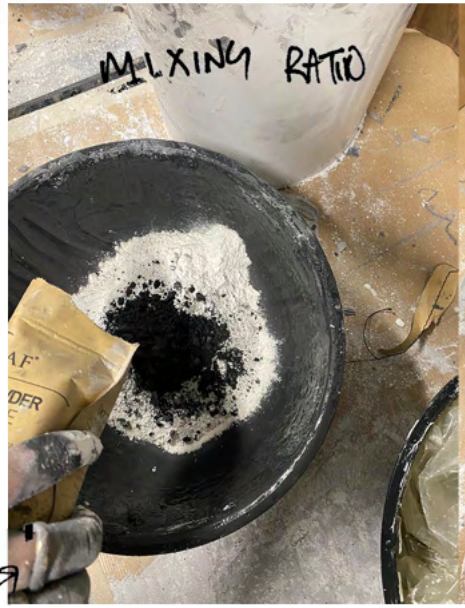
3-8 (FINALLY) GRAPHITE CASTING

The casting mixture followed the formula refined after the Viarco visit: aprocimately three parts plaster to one part water-soluble graphite powder, combined to a consistency similar to heavy slip, or double cream. at some point, this part of the process shifted from a strict ratio, into more of an eyeball test - where the color of the combined powders before mixed with water would roughtly determine how happy I was with the mix. As a release agent, I decided to use graphite dust to coat the moulds, this alloed the mixture top adherer to the dsuh creating a more metalic finish, whilst also not introducing any new materials into the process. The mixture was then combined with water and poured slowly into the silicone shells and agitated by hand to expel air pockets. Curing took roughly sixty minutes; as water evaporated, a fine sheen formed on the exposed surface, darkening the grey into near-black. When demoulded, the objects revealed a spectrum of tonal variation-graphite concentrated along edges, lighter mid-tones at the core. Each surface already hinted at future erosion, a faint dust forming under touch.

Materially, I like to think, the process performed **Kristeva's** concept of abjection-a border condition where matter both belongs and threatens identity (1980). The silicone mould, clinging and releasing, behaved like a living envelope, while the plaster-graphite cast emerged as a corporeal residue, simultaneously imprint and excretion. **Laplanche's** idea of the *"foreign body within"* also resonated: the casted foot is a translation of the self into another substance that immediately begins to decay (1999). Each casting thus materialised the project's psychic model-survival through repeated shedding.

Practically, every mould was reused, producing subtle mutations in subsequent casts. These failures were catalogued rather than corrected, reaffirming **Mari's** (1974) view that the artefact's pedagogic value lies in exposing construction and wear. Through this cycle, the project confirmed that moulding is not just reproduction but recursion: each generation carries the memory of its making and the seed of its disintegration.

GRAPHITE CASTING



↳ APROX 3:1 ? MAINLY DONE BY EYEBALL (IF TOO DARK / LIGHT ADD MORE PLASTER / GRAPHITE) SEEMED TO PRODUCE BEST RESULTS.

USING GRAPHITE POWDER AS A RELEASE AGENT + SURFACE FINISH

POURING SLURRY MIX AND TAPPING TO REMOVE BUBBLES.

PLACING INSERTS INTO MOULD

WEIGHTING DOWN INSERTS WITH PLASTER CAST TESTS.

← INSPECTING SURFACE FINISH ON DEMOULDING.

↳ A SUCESSFUL DAY OF MIXING.

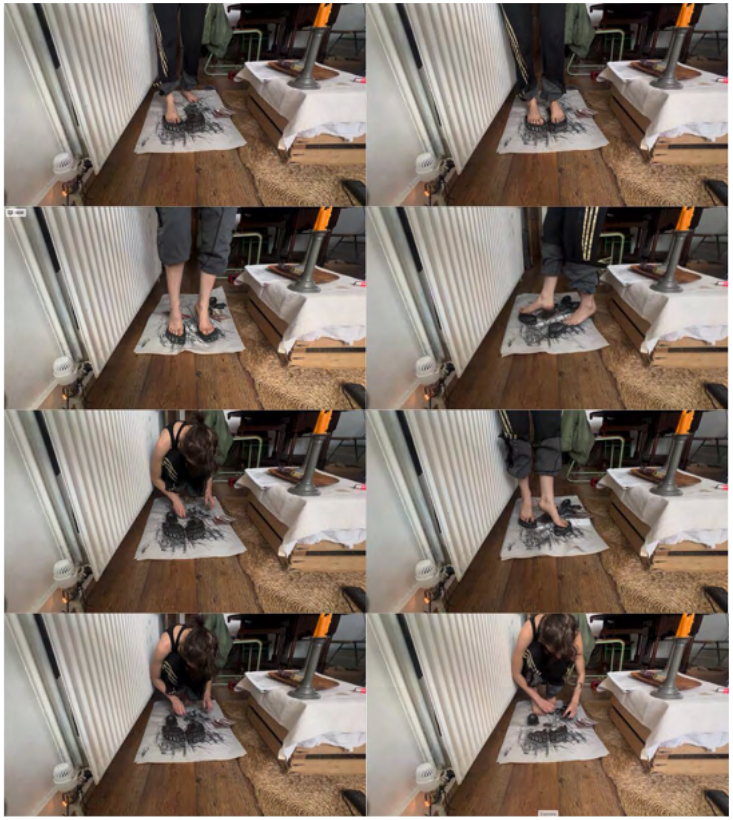
3.9 TESTING, FRACTURE + RE-CASTING LOOP.

Once cured, eacn graphite-plaster artefact entered a controlled programme of stress testing designed to reveal how and when the material fails. The objects were pressed against varied materials - paper, cardboard, calico - to evaluate mark density, friction, and fracture. Rather than avoiding breakage, the process treated failure as analytic event: every crack became a record of impact, pressure, and fatigue. I recorded the sound of fracture to be later reintroduced into the filmmaking process.

The broken fragments were ground back into powder, sifted, and folded into new casting batches. Each generation contained the remains of the previous one, producing incremental loss of cohesion; brittleness increased, edges dulled faster, and traces darkened with use. The iterative recycling also enacted Girard's and Baudrillard's insights into mimetic and simulacral production. Each artefact "desired" its predecessor's form, repeating it until differentiation collapsed.

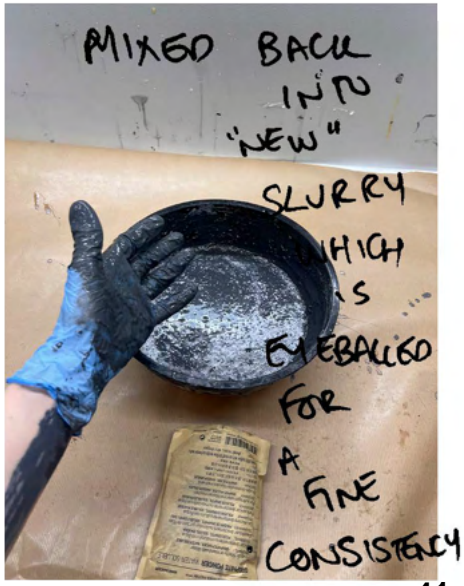
Technically, the re-casting loop required adjustments to binder ratio and moisture levels to compensate for plaster's loss of strength after grinding. After the 3rd round, I failed to note the exact ratio I was playing with and decided to keep casting by eye.

STANDING MARKS → TESTS MADE SHOW GREAT PROMISE IN CLEAN BREAKS PERFORMED BEST ON PAPER OR CALICO.



CRUSHING DOWN BROKEN PLASTER + GRAPHITE PIECES INTO GRITTY DUST + ROCK. → TO GO INTO

→ GRAPHITE POWDER RE INTRODUCED INTO WATER TO HELP SOFTEN & ADHERE TO NEW MIXES.



MIXED BACK INTO "NEW" SLURRY WHICH IS EYEBALLED FOR A FINE CONSISTENCY

3.10 MIMIKO'S FOOT + THE QUESTION OF THE OTHER.

The final artefact within the graphite series, Mimiko's foot, was conceived to test how The Itch might operate when displaced from my own body. Up to this point, the methodology had remained resolutely autoethnographic: each cast was a feedback loop between my gesture and its translation. Introducing another body-another anatomy, another subjectivity-seemed both a logical extension and a methodological risk.

Mimiko is a longtime collaborator of mine, despite this, inviting her into this intimate part of my process felt, at first, like an invaision of my practice. I came to realise that my initial hesitation to introduce new bodies, on the basis that my framework had become so insular, menat that it was vital to allow someone in - lest the project become totally inacessible (both literally in its wearability, and theoretically in it's ability to be understood.)

The casting of Mimi's foot followed the same procedure as my own: alginate mould, plaster positive, scan, and graphite-plaster casting. Yet the process immediately felt different. Holding another person's limb under liquid alginate introduced a delicate, ethical tension-what could be described as invasive empathy. The cast became an index of care and trespass simultaneously: an intimacy negotiated through touch and time. I decided to diferenciate Mimiko's pair from my own with a few small details, I cast both her feet in as close a position as she could feel within the alginate - whereas with my own feet I opted for total symmetery, with Mimi's I felt it important to present them as a mismatched pair, a subtle nod to their differentiation from my own. I also tried, as hard as I can allow myself, to not dictate how her feet should be positioned, allowing her to feel for herself where her feet may best be suited.

When the graphite artefact was complete, it resisted me. Using it in performance felt uncomfortable, almost appropriative. The object's proportions no longer matched my gait; its imbalance mirrored the conceptual misfit of inhabiting another person's trace. In this misalignment, the piece revealed a deeper logic of The Itch: that repetition and mimesis can never reproduce the original, only circulate its difference.

Here, **Girard's** theory of mimetic desire became materially present. The artefact did not merely copy form-it enacted the tension between wanting to be, and to replace, the other (1965). Each step with Mimi's foot replayed this rivalry: my movement attempting to inhabit someone else's imprint, always slightly out of sync. The object thus performed the impossibility of substitution-what **Laplanche** would call the foreign body that cannot be assimilated, yet continues to shape identity from within (1999, p. 23).

Visually, Mimi's foot differed from the others in density and tone. Her graphite mix, produced from a later batch, resulted in a deeper grey with a higher sheen. During testing, it left traces less evenly distributed, more sporadic, like stuttering speech. This inconsistency became significant: the marks read as interruption rather than continuity.

Ethically, the inclusion of another body redefined the project's reflexivity. The work no longer mirrored only my creative survival but exposed the relational economies embedded in making itself: care, imitation, misunderstanding. In subsequent documentation, Mimi's foot remained part of the line-up, I chose to include it in the final performance worn by Mimi herself. Conceptually, it functions as a ghost artefact, a reminder that even within recursion, there exists an untranslatable other-the trace that cannot be folded back into the self.

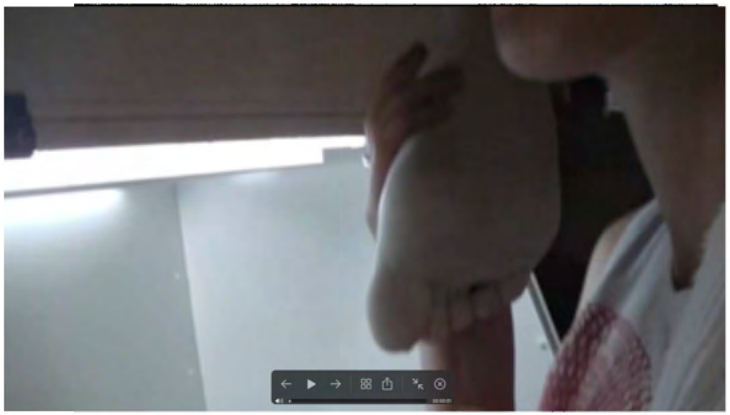
CASTING MIMIKO'S FEET

MIMIKO + I HAD DISCUSSED LOOSELY THE WAY THE FOOT OUGHT TO BE SHAPED ... (FOR STRUCTURAL + MATERIAL + 3D MODELLING REASONS) BUT I VASTLY LEFT IT UP TO HER, HOW TO SHAPE HER FOOT IN THE ALGINATE.

MIMIKO KEPT HER FEET FOR BOTH CASTS IN ROUGHLY THE SAME POSITION SO THEY'D MIRROR EACH OTHER.

I WANTED TO SEE MY PRACTICE FROM AN ALTERNATE PERSPECTIVE, SO I ASKED MIMIKO TO DOCUMENT HER POV

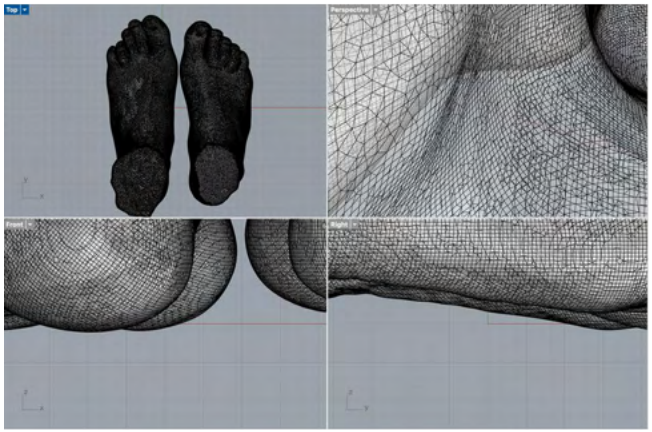
I ~~ALLOWED~~ "ASKED?" MIMIKO TO "REVEAL" HER OWN FOOT, ONCE CAST, FROM THE ALGINATE, SO SHE COULD MIRROR MY PROCESS



← 'TAKING A CALL' WITH THE CAST FEET.
↳ NOT ANALYTIC, I JUST NOTICED ITS SOMETHING I DO ALOT...

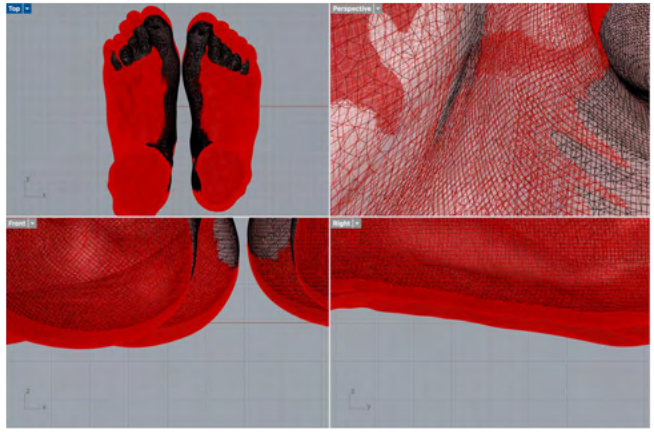
→ MIMIKO'S FINGERS + TOES.

3D MODELING MIMIKO'S PART

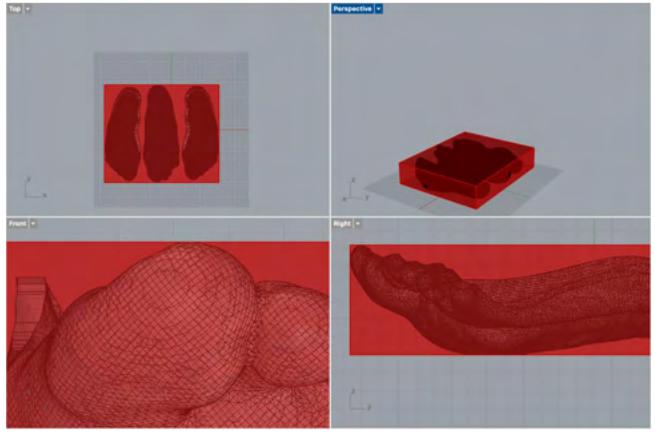


UNLIKE PREVIOUS MODELS, BECAUSE I WAS WORKING ON TWO DIFFERENT FEET, I MODELED THEM IN TANDEM TO ENSURE BOTH SIZE + FIT WERE CONSISTENT

I THEN REFINED THE 'TOP LINE' ON EACH MODEL TO HAVE A SMOOTH CURVE FOR BOTH MILLING + CASTING.



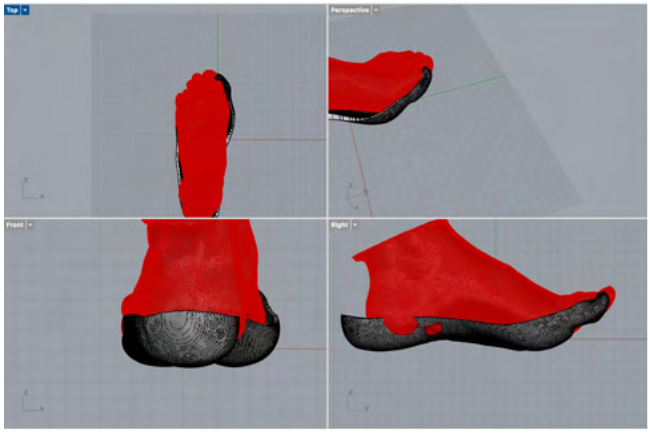
I INCREASED THE SIZE OF THE FEET BY THE SAME METRIC AS THE SCRUNCHED UP WORRIED SHOE TO PLAY WITH THEIR USUAL SIMULARITIES



I PREPARED 3 MODELS

MIMIKO LEFT FOOT

MIMIKO RIGHT FOOT.



ONCE I WAS HAPPY WITH THE SETTING OF THE FOOT WITHIN THE FOOT, I DIFFERENCED IT OUT.

ULTIMATELY, DESPITE SEEING BOTH A 'MIRRORED' PAIR & A MIS-MATCHED PAIR, I OPTED FOR A MISMATCHED PAIR TO DISRUPT THE LINE-UP, & TO DIFFERENTIATE MIMIKO'S PAIR FROM MINE.

WITH SALVAGED FROM THE MA "FREE CORNER", I CNC'D THE MISMATCHED PAIR ← THE SIDE SUPPOR WERE A CLEVER LITLE TRICK TO SAVE MATERIAL ... THE WALLS - FOR STRU - CTURE, NEED TO BE A CERTAIN THICKNES; SO I ATTACHED SCRAP MDF TO MAKE UP SPACE.

MIMIKO'S FEET MILLED REALLY BEAUTIFULLY, & NEEDED VERY LITLE MAUAL FINISHING - I THINK THIS IS BECAUSE THE WOOD WAS MUCH SOFTER THAN SAPELE, WHICH I HAD BEEN USING PREVIOUSLY ...

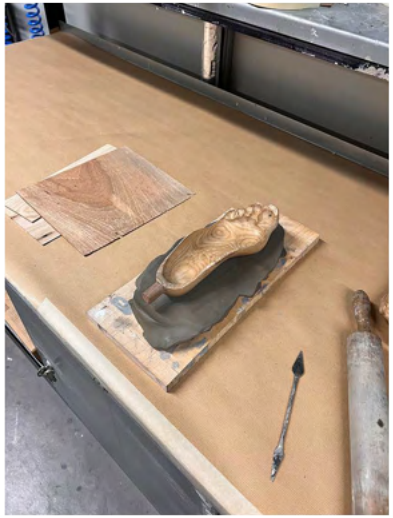
AFTER A QUICK SAND & POLISH, & A COAT OF BEESWAX TO FILL SOME HOLES - I ADMIRED THE 'SHOES' - I NOTICED THAT MIMI HAD SLIGHTLY ARCHED HER FOOT, ALLOWING ROOM FOR A KITEN HEEL, SO I DID SOME TESTING

MIMIKO: CNC, HAND FINISHING

WITH A SPARE HEEL FROM FOOTWEAR - & INSPIRED BY MY TRIP TO UIARCO I INSERTED A GRAPHITE ROD TO MAKE THE HEELS FUNCTIONA PENCILS...

ULTIMATELY, FOR THIS PAIR, I DECIDED TO STAY WITH A GRAPHITE BODY - BUT THE EXPERIMENT STICKE IN MY MIND...

MI MIKO MOULD MAKING + GRAPHITE CASTING



ON EITHER "SHOE" I HOT GLUED A POUR HOLE TO THE HEEL.

I BUILT UP CLAY WALLS RUNNING 1 CM BELOW THE TOP LINE TO MAKE A 2 PART MOULD.

AFTER BUILDING UP THE WALLS, I ADDED PERSPEX BOARDERS + INDENTATIONS INTO THE CLAY, SO THE SILICONE WILL MATCH UP EASY.

I POURED THE MOULDS IN TWO GOS ALLOWING EACH LAYER TO CURE OVERNIGHT

I THEN COATED THE TWO PART MOULDS IN GRAPHITE POWDER AS A RELEASE AGENT.

I FOUND THAT STICKING THE MOULDS TOGETHER WAS HARD! SO I MADE A WOOD BACKING & WRAPPED THEM IN BICYCLE INNER TUBING & A VICE TO HOLD THEM TOGETHER... ULTIMATELY, IT WAS A REAL COWBOY OPPERATION.

ONCE CAST, I FOUND THIS MISMATCHED PAIR TO BE MY FAVORITE, & REGRET SET IN ABOUT THE MISSED OPPORTUNITY OF THE OTHER TWO PAIRS!

3.11 THE WOODEN FOOT : THE PENCIL.

The wooden heel entered the lineup through an accidental return rather than a forward step. Rediscovering an early plaster foot cast - posed in a strained, pseudo-heel position - opened the possibility of a graphite heel that would actively diminish with use: a structure that literally shortens the wearer as it erodes. This aligned with the project's interest in objects that survive by disappearing, and introduced a new gesture in the lineup: a "shoey shoe," close enough to footwear to feel familiar, but wrong enough to register as methodology rather than design.

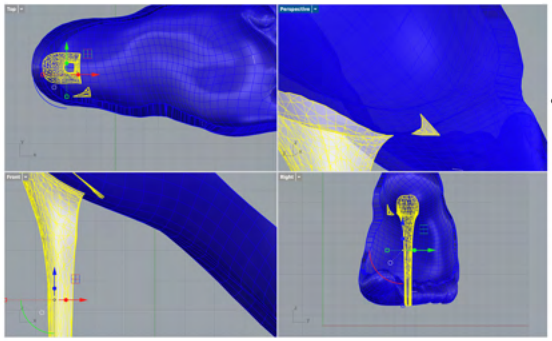
The initial development mirrored earlier prototypes, but the flaw was immediate. A graphite heel, at that height, cannot hold load; it shears. That repeated snapping exposed a deeper structural point developed throughout my commentary... that progress in this project is non-linear, and often undone by the material logic itself. At the same time, the CNC-routed wooden bodies surprised me. Their polished surfaces-technically incomplete, by my process's standards - felt more resolved than any finished artefact. They were never meant to be seen, yet they performed the project's ontology of exposing the in-between. Ironically, it is the most 'complete' looking object.

Recalling an earlier experiment with Mimiko's feet, I reconfigured the heel as a pencil: still a mark-making tool, still eroding, but with a different kind of mechanical honesty. The first versions were too narrow and snapped again; iteration produced a two-part heel that could hold just long enough. Attaching the heel to the wooden body became its own problem - nothing fully "worked" - and, due to the timeframe of the shoot, the fix remained deliberately incomplete. This incompleteness is not stylistic. It is consistent with the project's theoretical position that artefacts should perform instability rather than mask it.

The wooden heel closes the lineup because it centres the CNC master - the object normally erased by the production chain. Here, the middle becomes the final. The wooden body and pencil heel function as a conjoined failure, a recursive fold in the methodology: the artefact that documents itself unravelling.

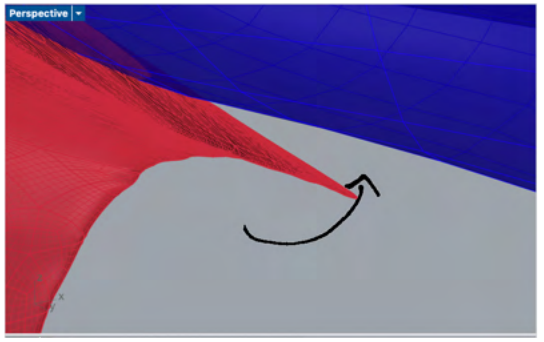
"WOODEN SHOE" - CAST - SCAN - 3D MODEL.

I RE-DISCOVERED THIS PLASTER CAST & TREATED THE SURFACE WITH A GRAPHITE WATER SLURRY TO TEST THE FINISH ON A NON WEARABLE OBJECT...



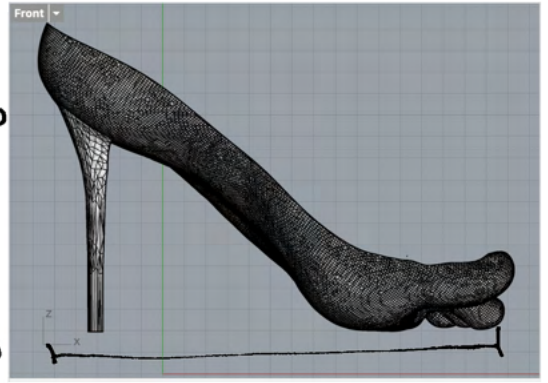
I SCANNED A STILETTO HEEL FROM THE FOOTWEAR STUDIO & EMBEDDED THE SCAN - RESIZED IT - & ALTERED ANY EXCESS.

I DECIDED I REALLY LIKED THE CAST & 3D SCANNED IT. I WAS PARTICULARLY HAPPY WITH THE RAISED BIG TOE.

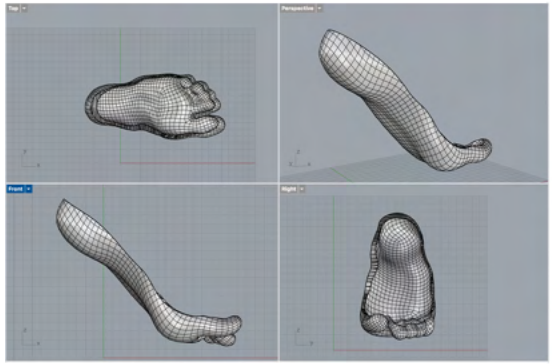


WITH AREAS OVERHANGING I DIGITALLY MANIPULATED SMALL PORTIONS BY FILLING HOLES & SMOOTHING LARGE AREAS OF DIFFERENCE.

USING THE SAME METHOD, I REEMBEDDED THE "CORRECT" SIZED MODEL INTO A LARGER MODEL OF THE SAME PROPORTION



WHERE THE HEEL HIT THE POINT I'D DETERMIND WAS THE MOST STABLE TO THE GROUND I TRIMMED THE EXCESS.



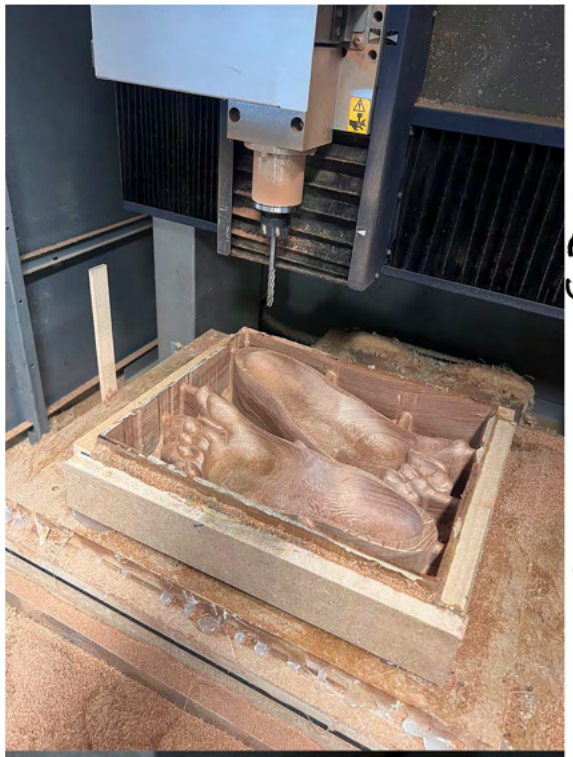
ONCE RE-EMBEDDED, I DEFINED THE TOP LINE & ALTERED THE ANGLE OF THE HEEL FOOT TO ALLOW FOR TWO CONTACT POINTS TO THE GROUND.

THE HEEL SHOULD THEN BE MILLED IN TWO PARTS - BODY & HEEL.

WOODEN "SHOES" - CNC MATERIAL EXPERIMENTS.

AS AN INITIAL TEST, I MILLED THE HEEL + BODY OUT OF FOAM THEN AS A SURFACE FINISH TEST I APPLIED A MIXTURE OF GRAPHITE & WATER - I WANTED TO SEE IF THE MORE 'SHOEY-SHOE' WORKED WELL IN THE GRAPHITE FINISH.

INITIALLY I DECIDED TO GO FORWARD WITH THE FULLY GRAPHITE PIECE, & ASSEMBLED A TEST PIECE OUT OF SPARE WOOD FROM THE FREE CORNER. SEEING THIS PIECE, I DECIDED I WANTED TO MILL IT IN A MORE STURDY WOOD - FOR THE MAIN REASON THAT

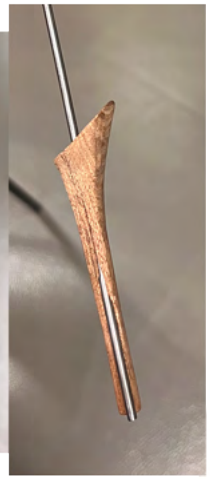


THE TECHNICAL TEAM ADVISED THAT THE HEEL IN GRAPHITE + PLASTER WOULD ALMOST ALWAYS RELIABLY SNAP UNDER ANY PRESSURE.

SO, I MILLED A NEW PAIR, WITH A SLIGHTLY THINNER MORE REFINED TOPLINE AS THE HARDER WOOD (SAPELE) COULD WITHSTAND MORE PRESSURE.

I'VE NOTICED SAPELE DOESN'T PASS THE FINISHING LAYER AS WELL AS SOFTER WOODS LIKE I USED ~~ONE~~ WITH MIMIKO'S PAIR. THIS MEANS MORE TOOLS MARKS ARE VISIBLE AT THE END OF THE MACHINING PROCESS.

WOODEN HEEL - HEEL FAILURES + PENCILS



INITIALLY, I'D MILLED THESE INCREDIBLY THIN HEELS & HAD ATTEMPTED TO DRILL A 3MM HOLE CENTRAL DOWN THE MIDDLE. THIS SPLIT THE HEEL.

ONCE THE GRAPHITE RODS FIT WITHIN THE MILLED CENTRE I GLUED THE TWO HALVES OF EACH HEEL TOGETHER WITH A SAPELE WOOD DUST GLUE.

SO, IN SUBSEQUENT HEELS I OPTED TO REMODEL A HEEL THAT WAS THICKER & ALREADY HAD A 3MM HOLE MILLED IN THE CENTER TO AVOID FURTHER SPLITTING.

I THEN POLISHED THE HEEL & SANDED OFF THE SUPPORTS.

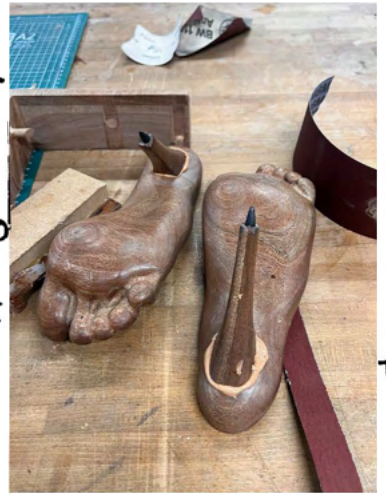
BECAUSE OF THE GRAPHITE'S FRAGILITY THIS ALL HAD TO BE FINISHED BY HAND - WITHOUT AGGRESSIVE MACHINERY.

I THEN TOOK EXISTING GRAPHITE RODS, & SANDED THEM DOWN TO FIT INTO THE SLOTS.

I THEN HAD TO FIGURE OUT WHERE EACH WAS PLACED ON THE FOOT.

IT WAS CLEAR VERY EARLY ON, THAT I HAD MADE A SEVERE ERROR THAT I DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO RECTIFY - I HADN'T MARKED WHERE THE HEEL HAD TO GO ON THE FOOT - & BECAUSE OF THE HEEL'S BIZARRE SHAPE, IT WAS A TOUGH TASK TO MAKE THE FIT SEAMLESS.

I SPOKE TO THE TECH TEAM ABOUT THIS ISSUE, & IT WAS RECOMMENDED I USED SOME GRAPHITE! I COVERED THE SHOE, MADE A MARK WHERE THE HEEL OUGHT TO GO & WENT THROUGH THE PROCESS OF PUSHING THE HEEL TO THE GRAPHITE, & SANDING WHATEVER CAME UP MARKED - THIS WAS SLOW & ARDUOUS, & REQUIRED A PATIENCE I SIMPLY DO NOT POSSESS.
ALL IN ALL - THE PROCESS WAS MILDLY SUCESSFUL, WITH MANY ISSUES.



ONCE I HAD DECIDED I'D HAD ENOUGH OF SANDING IN TINY INCREMENTS & FAILING TO NOTICE ANY PROGRESS - I MADE UP SOME WOODEN FILLING GLUE WITH SPARE SAPELE DUST.

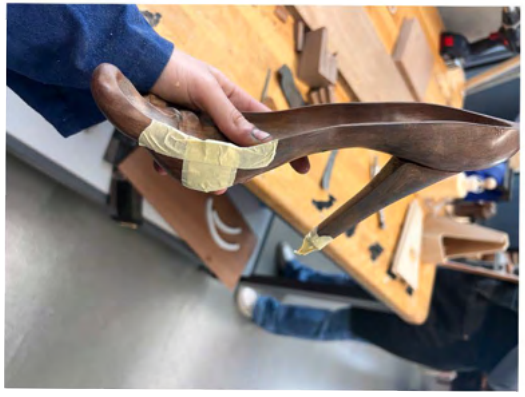
I APPLIED A GENEROUS DOLLOP TO THE HEEL, ATTEMPTING TO FILL THE DIFFERENCE WHERE I'D OVER-SANDED - I THEN WIPED OFF THE EXCESS WITH A DAMP CLOTH AND WRAPPED THE HEEL TO THE SHOE - TIGHTLY, TO TRY TO MAKE AS SEAMLESS A SEAM FROM THE SHOE TO THE HEEL AS I COULD WITH MY SHODDY CRAFTSMANSHIP.

"WOODEN" HEELS" - UNFORSEEN ISSUES!

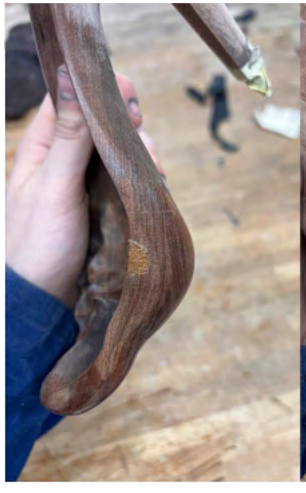

WHILST SANDING, & CLEARLY GETTING FRUSTRATED, I DROPPED A ~~HE~~ BODY & IT CHIPPED. THE CHIP, UPON INSPECTION WAS NOT ANYTHING MORE THAN A SMALL FIXIBLE ERROR.


SO, I WENT ABOUT FILLING THE HOLE, I OPTED FOR A LIGHTER WOOD TO MAKE THE MEND OVERLY VISIBLE. THIS STAGE REMINDED ME OF MY RESEARCH INTO MENDING FROM UNIT 1.


ONCE I TRIMMED & SHAPED A NICE LITTLE PIECE I CUT IT DOWN TO BE SLIGHTLY BIGGER THAT THE HOLE - LONGER, SO IT COULD BE EASILY SANDED DOWN ONCE DRY.



I GLUED THE PIECE INTO THE GAP & TIGHLY TAPED IT WITH MASKING TAPE, IN THE HOPES THIS WOULD HELP THESE TWO PIECES ADHERE.




ONCE DRY, I BEGAN SANDING DOWN THIS PIECE, I DIDNT WANT TO OVERDO IT SO THE WALLS DIDN'T GET TOO THIN ...


SO I OPTED TO KEEP THE MEND FAIRLY VISIBLE, ALTHOUGH TO THE FINGER, THE BREAK IS BARELY NOTICABLE ... TO THE EYE - ITS A CUTE FEATURE!

WOODEN HEEL - MENDING, FIXING, PREFERRING!

3.12 DOCUMENTATION & REFLEXIVE PROTOCOLS –

3.12.1 WORKING WITH EDIE + JOEL - A NEW SYMBOLIC ORDER.

This phase of the project developed not from strategic planning but from a very human hesitation. I had known Joel and Edie for several years, always orbiting my world through Mimiko, and always with a sense that they existed in a different creative register to me - one I admired, perhaps too much. I had never worked with them, and part of me assumed I shouldn't ask. They seemed too self-assured, too established, *too cool* to risk inviting into a practice that, at that stage, felt uncertain and permeable.

Yet it was precisely this permeability that allowed the collaboration to unfold. When Mimiko mentioned the project to Joel, his interest came unprompted. That interest - coming from someone outside the recursive loop of my own making - acted almost as a transferential intervention. It allowed the work to be re-seen, not by me, but for me.

Joel approached as a filmmaker, Edie as a costume designer with a background in tailoring and biker wear. I approached them because the project needed a language I could not generate alone. Their practices are not adjacent to mine; they are radically different symbolic systems. Bringing them into the work meant letting those systems overwrite, interrupt, and translate my own. I wanted the project to be spoken back to me in a language I did not yet know how to speak.

The first idea emerged collectively: to drag the graphite artefacts across calico, mark it with pressure, and give that cloth to Edie. She cut and built a jacket directly from those marks. The artefact inscribed its gestures, Edie metabolised those inscriptions through her craft, and the work returned to me as a transformed message - what **Laplanche** would call a *"message with an enigmatic residue,"* something at once mine and not mine.

For me, this was profoundly affecting. It was the first moment the project articulated itself through another, discipline, another unconscious. Their distinct practices did not 'supplement' the work - they altered its trajectory.

fig 18.

PRE-PRODUCTION NOTES

IN EARLY PLANNING, EDIE, JOEL + I MET TO SHOW THEM BOTH THE WORKS — & HOW THEY FUNCTION...

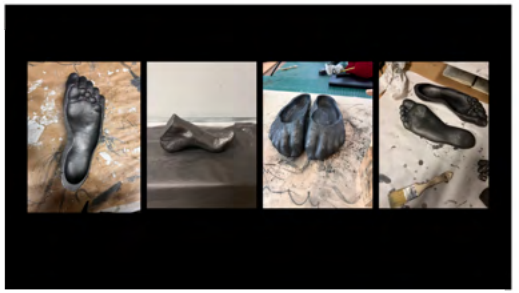
OVERVIEW

We will produce a short film showing the functions of the graphite feet sculpture through compulsive reactions – exploring the general human experience – the graphite acts as mirrors of passing time – self realisation – a temporary object that when worn down, it returns to the earth and is good for the soil – loosely based on the story of a pencil
– 5B through to 5H –

Delivery:

3min film
Composed of three chapters

JOEL WAS PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN THE VARYING HARDNESS'S OF THE WORKS - USING THE LANGUAGE OF PENCILS (HB - 5B) IN HIS SHOT LISTS.



EDIE, SEEING THE METALIC FINISH OF THE ARTEFACTS WANTED COSTUMES WITH HUGE CONTRAST.

Scene Ideas

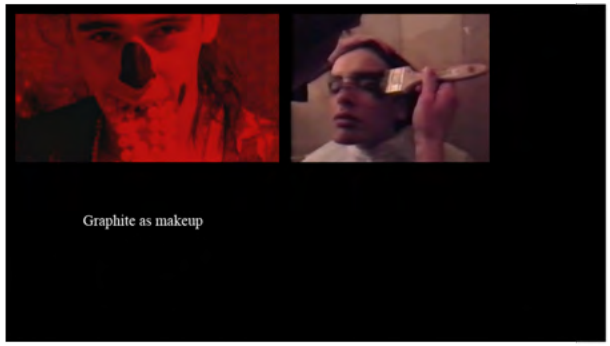
JOEL DEVELOPED FROM BOTH MY FRAMEWORK, & HOW THE OBJECTS MOVE, A LOOSE IDEA OF SCENES.

PATTERN PIECES RISING FROM CALICO...

BASED ON RE-CURSIVE MAKING LOGIC

WHERE DOES THE PROJECT END & THE PRACTICIONER BEGIN?

PRE-PROD CONT.

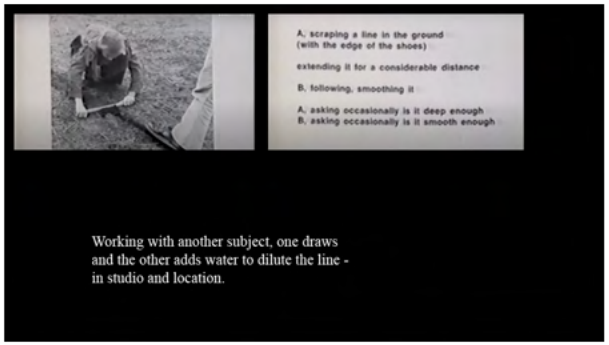


WE DIDN'T WANT TO WORK WITH A HAIR OR MAKEUP TEAM - & INSTEAD WANTED TO CONSIDER ALTERNATIVE USES OF GRAPHITE.

Subject in various locations lying down, in this position with feet sculptures on. On location and studio.

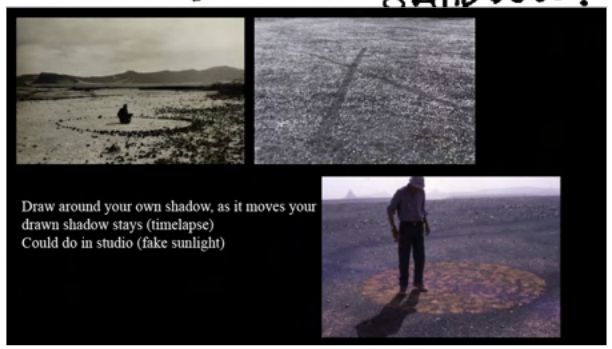
Do we Make this space in the studio with Tin foil?

JOEL LOOKED INTO THE MIRROR STAGE, & MIMETIC DESIRE
↳ WANTING TO SPEAK TO THESE THEORIES WITH THE IMAGE OF SHADOW.



HE ALSO WANTED TO PLAY WITH THE INTERACTIONS BETWEEN MIMIKO & MYSELF

Shot from a height (silva's flat)
Subject walks in a circle to create a 'ENSO' (slow shutterspeed)
Circle gets stronger the more they walk in the graphite shoes.



Additional idea: Optical illusion in studio

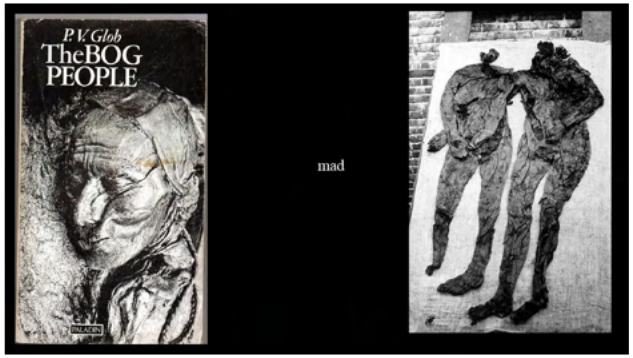
JOEL + EDIE INTRODUCED THE ANGLE OF EASTERN PHILOSOPHY INTO THE PROJECT.

↳ (AS OPPOSED TO INCIDENTAL) THE 'ENSO' & OTHER ACTS OF INTENTIONAL MARK MAKING BECAME A LARGE PART OF OUR CRITICAL PRACTICE.

PRE-PROD CONT.

We could animate a graphite line over the image whilst we see the subject dragging their feed across the frame – doing this in different locations so it seems like we travel very far.

Subject poses by their massive line they've made.

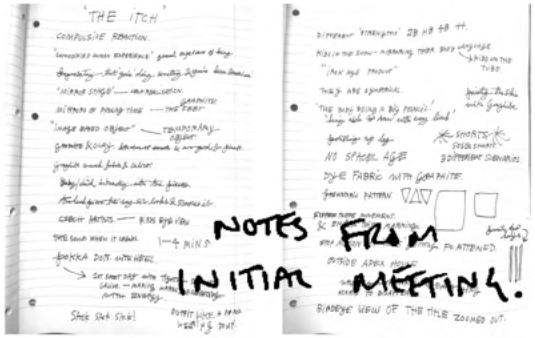


mad

JOEL'S FOCUS ON HOW WE CAN ENCORPORATE THE MARKS MADE AS MUCH AS THE ARTEFACTS THEMSELVES SPOKE TO MY PRINCIPLE THAT THE MARKS MADE ARE A MEANINGFUL SUBSTITUTE FOR THE OBJECTS.

HE ALSO WANTED TO CENTER BOTH SUBJECTS (MIMIKO + 1) TO BUILD OUR TRACE + PERSONALITIES INTO OUR MARKS.

JOEL BROUGHT UP THE VISUAL REFERENCE OF THE BOG PEOPLE - WHICH I WAS NOT FAMILIAR WITH - THEIR BURNISHED LEATHER SKIN HAS AN ALMOST METALIC FINISH.



NOTES FROM INITIAL MEETING!!

Sound

Sounds of the graphite cracking
Sounds from the performances
Voice over from Silva (?*)
Music from Joel, Alfie and Freddie

THOUGHTS ON SOUND.

Props

Calico fabric
Graphite sculptures
Graphite to draw with
Water
Paper or white surface to walk on
Black gaffer
Staple gun / nails and hammer
Graphitesq makeup black eyeshadow with sparkles
More paper
Our bedroom curtain

THOUGHTS ON PROPS.

3.12.2 DAY ONE - STUDIO, SURFACES, INSCRIPTION.

The first shoot took place in the studio. We hung calico on the walls and floor to create not a set, but a receptive surface - a literal field for transference. We had outlined a shotlist, knowing that film and DV impose economic and material limits, but within those limits the day unfolded with an openness I had not anticipated.

Joel filmed in sustained duration, allowing error, collapse, and hesitation to remain visible. He was not documenting the work; he was entering it. The calico absorbed the graphite traces; the camera absorbed the time of the gestures. The work was being doubled, but never stabilised.

WE SHOT FROM 9am - 6pm - IN NOVEMBER IN LONDON, THE LIGHT GOES AWAY AT ABOUT 4PM...

WE BEGAN THE DAY BY LAYING DOWN PROTECTIVE PAPER TO RESCUE THE STUDIO SPACE FROM THE GRAPHITE.

I SET UP THE 'SHOES' IN PAIRS - TRYING TO MATCH PAIRS PERFECTLY TO ONE ANOTHER, IN GRADE OF HARDNESS.

WE TAPED UP THE CALICO & TRIED HARD TO PULL IT TOUGHT - STRETCHED LIKE CANVAS.

THIS WAS TO AVOID AS MUCH SCRUNCHING & AVOID INJURY WITH TRIPPING.

AFTER WE'D SHOT FOR A WHILE, WE WANTED TO SLIGHLY CHANGE THE BACKGROUND TO THE CARD STOCK... JUST FOR A LITTLE DISRUPTION TO THE SETTING.

MIMIKO & I HAVE WORKED TOGETHER ON MANY PROJECTS - & THIS WAS ANOTHER IN THAT COLLABORATIVE JOURNEY... BECAUSE OF THAT INTIMACY, OUR COMFORT IN INTERACTING WITH ONE ANOTHER MEANS WE CAN - WITHOUT WORRY- BE MORE PLAYFUL.

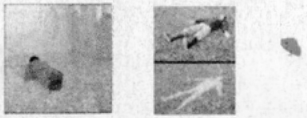
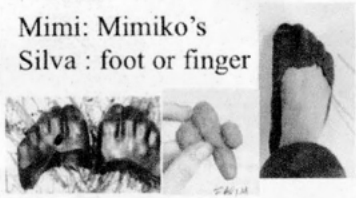
→ AFTER WE'D PLAYED ALL DAY ON THE CALICO WE STRUNG IT UP & ADMIRED WHERE EDIE WOULD MAKE HER CUTS.

DAY 1 - PRODUCTION NOTES

MIMIKO 11am → ON

WOODEN OR GRAPHITE AS RELEVANT

3 OPTIONS

time	scene / action	costume silva	costume mimi	camera — ALSO HALFFRAME	silva foot
9.00 (arrive and set up) 10.00 first shot	calico on floor, mimi lying down & silva drawing around her outline of her body. Colour in rest of fabric so when mimi gets up it leaves negative space of her outline.	jumpsuit 	fairly fitted costume	Bolex and Digital on tripod	Mimi: Mimiko's Silva : foot or finger 
11.00	Mimi stands up and we timelapse Shadow around mimi. Silva shouting actions like duchamp		Same costume	Same cameras	Same feet
12.00	silva removing sculpture of her foot and beginning painting her own outfit with grapfit		Calico suit to be graphited	Bolex	
1.00	Painting make up on each other, ripping fabric to reveal scenes. Writing on fabric with healed wooden shoe and mark making Thumb prints, kiss prints bum prints				
Lunch	ETHEOPIAN !!!				
2pm	Wide shot of studio, different frames of motions.			Bolex and digital MINI DV.	
3pm	Optical illusion shot (turn camera) *Improvise time			Bolex on tripod.	

Shot plan notes for day one

Studio: 9am

Shots

Lay down the fabric on floor. Set up digital camera on high angle, document us mark making on fabric.
Silver could draw around mimi with feet and mimi lies down (slide8) (negative space*)
We colour in the rest of the material with grafite.

This fabric can then be a backdrop for the shadow play (moving the lights around the room to make a shadow for one subject to draw (paper on floor)

Fully camouflage on the grafite backdrop then subject gets up. (andy goldsworthy)

Scene in studio bathroom or set.. Silva painting up leg.
Painting on make up on each other.

We can try one subject draws line whilst the other washes it out as they move.

Stop motion of foot or object being worn down (using sand paper for this to speed up time)

Additional shot: optical illusion, camera on its side, and subject walks on wall. Ripping fabric to reveal the scene.

Start rubbing experimentation on fabric. Close up and title cards with coins,

3.12.3 DAY TWO - EXT, RECURSION, RE-INSCRIPTION

Between the two shoot days, Edie constructed the jacket from the marked calico. Her intervention literalised the recursive structure of The Itch: the object makes a mark; the mark becomes a garment; the garment returns as a new site for gesture.

Shooting outside on the second day introduced spatial discontinuity - breaking the internal logic of the studio and refusing the documentation the comfort of a closed loop. The new garment forced the body to move differently. We adapted our previous costumes to integrate it, creating a layered palimpsest of gesture, residue, and re-performance.

What defined the day was not the footage but the redistribution of authorship. Allowing Edie and Joel to make autonomous decisions - and resisting my instinct to direct - became a methodological event. Their independent creative thinking, grounded in disciplines far removed from mine, introduced a new symbolic order into the project. Their practices did not orbit mine; they intersected it, cut through it, expanded it.

I WENT TO EDIE'S STUDIO TO MEET HER PATTERNS & DO SOME STYLING CHAT. WE ULTIMATELY DECIDED TO USE A BIKER PATTERN, USING A RE-CURSIVE FEATURE OF HER DESIGN PRACTICE.

HER SELECTIONS OF PIECES TO PULL FROM THE CALICO WERE INFLUENCED BY HER TIME AT VIVIENNE WESTWOOD - WHERE SHE TRAINED UNDER VIVIAN & BECAME WELL ACQUAINTED WITH "DRUNKEN TAILORING"

FOR MIMIKO'S LOOK, EDIE EXPLAINED, INSPIRED BY OLD WELSH WORK-WEAR - WHICH WAS MADE OF GRAIN SACKS - WE DECIDED THIS CONTEXT WAS FACINATING IN THE STORY TO TREAT IT LIKE AN APRON

WE ALSO DISCUSSED FABIC SAMPLES TO INCLUDE ADDITIONAL DETAILS:

& WE OPTED TO INCLUDE THESE RIBBON TASSLES TO ALTER THE JACKET FROM THE 'FINE ART OBJECT' LOOK IT HAD FROM THE CALICO. THE RIBBONS ADDED A DROP OF FUN.

What struck me most deeply - and what I want to make explicit - is how seriously both Joel and Edie engaged with the work. Their care, their research, their willingness to look at the project with eyes unclouded by my own recursive image-cycle felt unexpectedly moving. They brought references and insights I had not touched in the entire year. They positioned the work inside conversations I had not yet permitted myself to enter.

Their involvement echoed the psychoanalytic structure at the centre of the project:

- a message sent out returns transformed,
- the foreign body re-enters the system,
- the work encounters itself through the Other.

The documentation stopped functioning as evidence and instead became another artefact - a recursive loop in which material, gesture, garment, and image continually re-inscribe one another. The process was not simply productive; it expanded the psychic architecture of the work.

It was genuinely one of my favourite parts of the project. It allowed the work to breathe in a way I could not have engineered alone. It let the project be spoken in other languages, and it let me listen.

Shot plan notes for day two

HYTHE RD → 9am

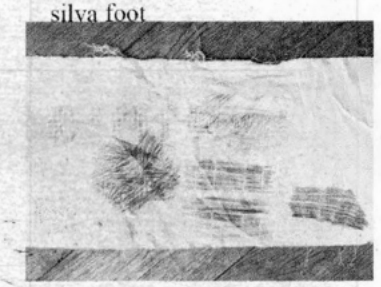
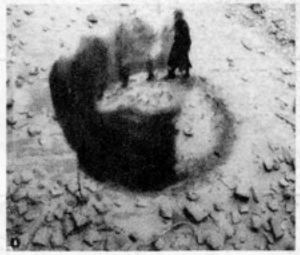
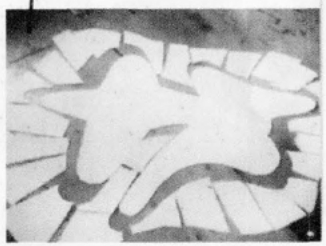
DAY 2

GRATE RUBBINGS

The catalogue cover designed by Duchamp is adorned, like the gallery, with the *carte de tendre* the imprints of his hand [5.12.1934] and Breton's, mark the first pages. After the historical section devoted to the "enchanters", and texts by the "managers", Edouard Jaguer and José Pierre, follows the catalogue itself in which a few members of the old guard, Ernst, Masson, Max Ern. Miró, Tanguy etc., are

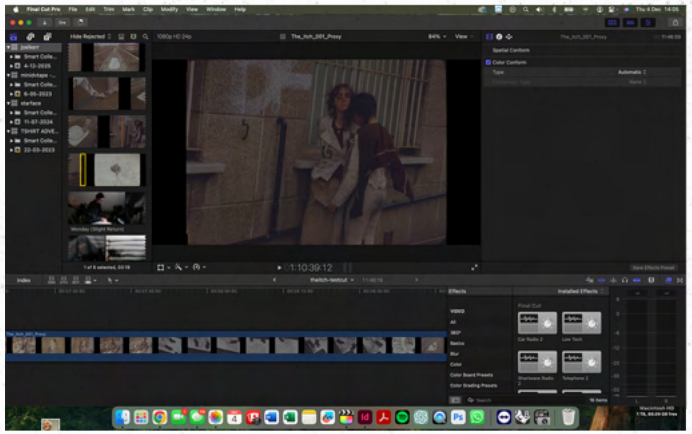
TO DO:

→ MIMIKO RE CAST
↳ ALL BROKE ;;

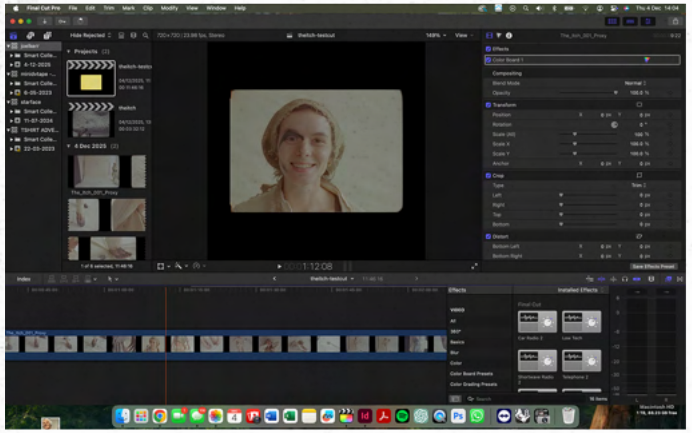
time	scene / action	costum	~~costume mimi~~ REFILL NOTES.	camera	silva foot
9.~~00~~ ✓	Rubbings			Sound	
11.~~00~~ ✓	Enso & pose next to it	EASTERN PRINCIPLE ;;		Sound → SILVA + MIMIKO ↳ LINE	
12.~~00~~ ✓	Bowry esq walk round hythe road 'the fall ' ref			Sound → SHOTS INSTEAD ON BRIDGE	
Lunch ✓	MIMIKO + SILVA PLAYFUL RUNNING ABOUT.				
2~~pm~~	Titles		→ STOP MOTION.	Sound	CALICO RUBBINGS.
3pm ✓	Stop motion of feet wearing down & portraits of each foot sculpture with half frame	 James Lee Byars NOT 4'93 Venice.	+ TITLES + SM FOOT + RUBBINGS.	Sound	

↳ + STILLS ON HALF FRAME? (STUDIO LIGHT SET UP?)

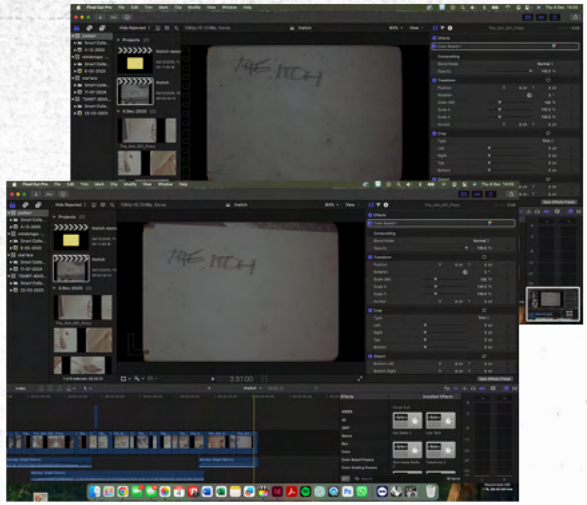
POST-PRODUCTION



I IMPORTED THE 16mm BOLEX FOOTAGE INTO MY FINAL CUT TIMELINE - WANTING THIS FIRST EDIT TO MIMIC MY WHOLE PROCESS UP UNTIL THIS POINT, I DIDN'T WANT TO DISTRUPT THE FLOW OR ORDER OF THE FOOTAGE TOO DRAMATICALLY.



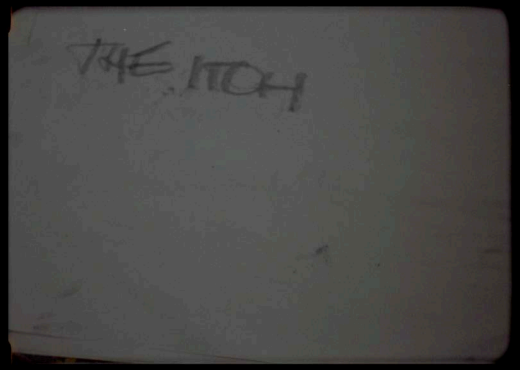
I TRIED TO KEEP MY FINAL CUT TIMELINE QUITE 'NEAT' & LOW CUT... MANY "EDITS" HAD ALREADY BEEN CAPTURED IN THE BOLEX (CAMERA) BY PLAYING WITH THE SHUTTER SPEED... & AS SUCH MY WORK WITH THE RAW FOOTAGE WAS MINIMAL.

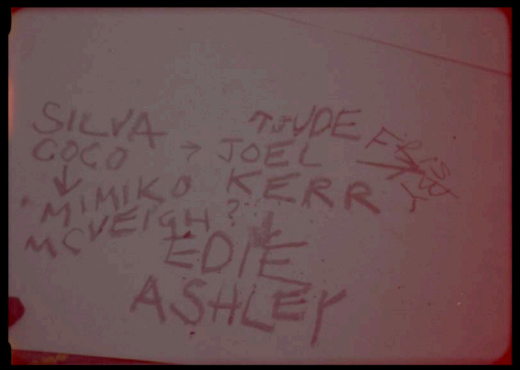


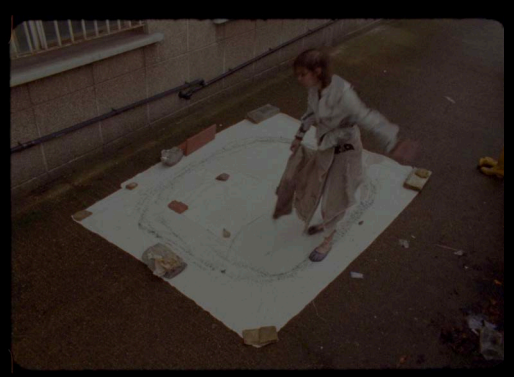
& I ONLY WATED TO PULL FROM INCIDENTAL SOUNDS CAPTURED ON THE DAY.

I MADE SURE THE VIDEO LOOPED, ENDING WITH THE FIRST SHOT - SO THE FILM CAN PLAY OVER & OVER & OVER

VIDEO: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cB-jnitCifs


THE ITCH


SILVA
COCO
JOEL
MIMIKO
KERRY
MCVEIGH
EDIE
ASHLEY

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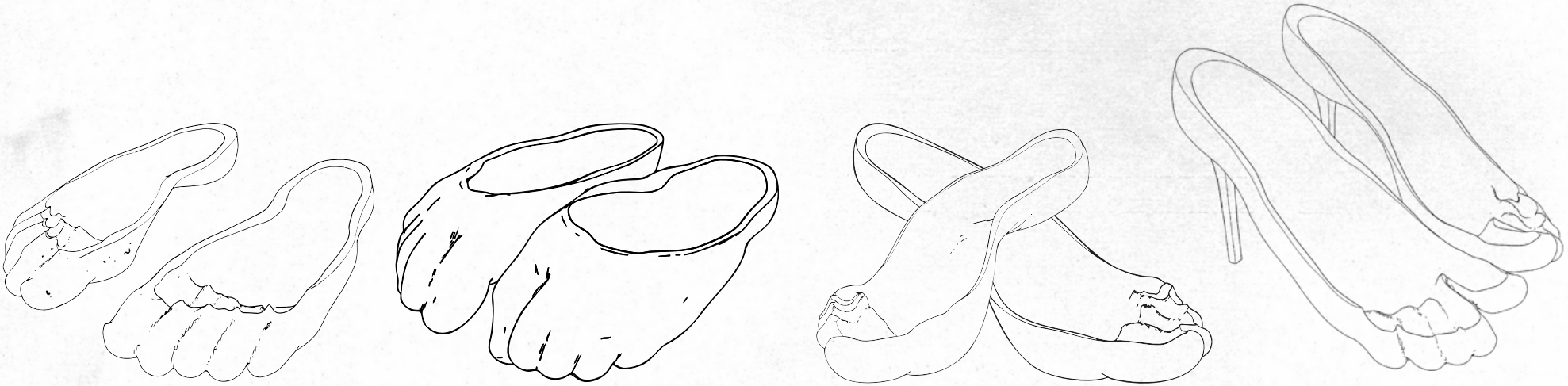
PRODUCT LINEUP



FLAT (NEUTRAL)

WORRIED SHOE (SCRUNCH)

MIMIKO (OTHER)

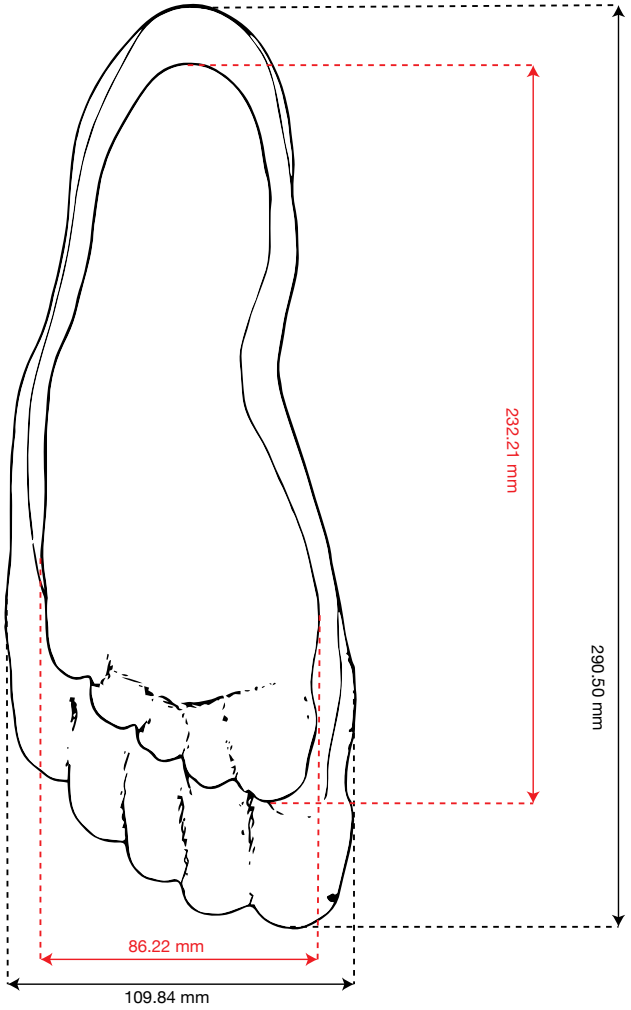
TIPPIE-TOE (STRAIN)

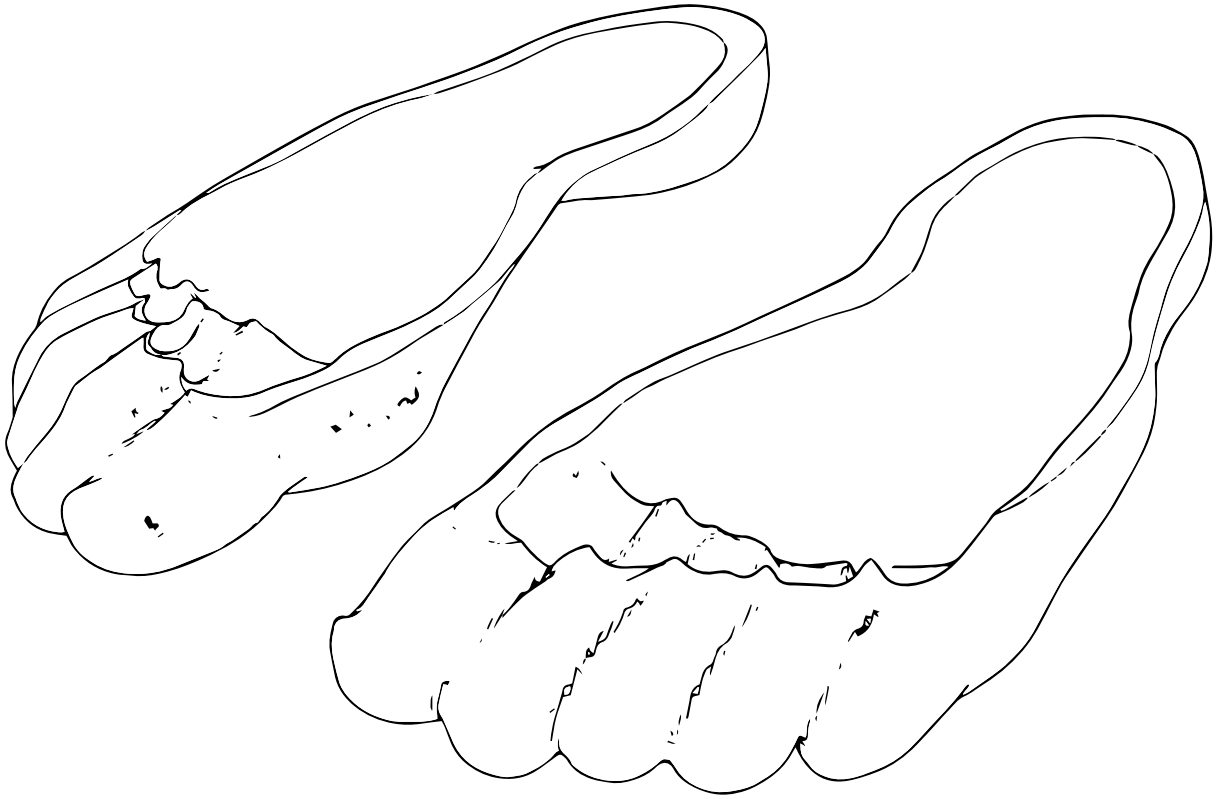
LOVE SILVA X.	SHOE NAME: NEUTRAL
	SIZE: APROX EU37
SILVA COCO	DESIGNER: Silva Cunningham
	MATERIAL: Graphite Plaster mix

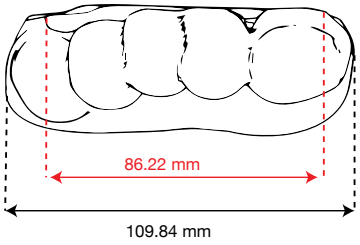
Internal Measurements

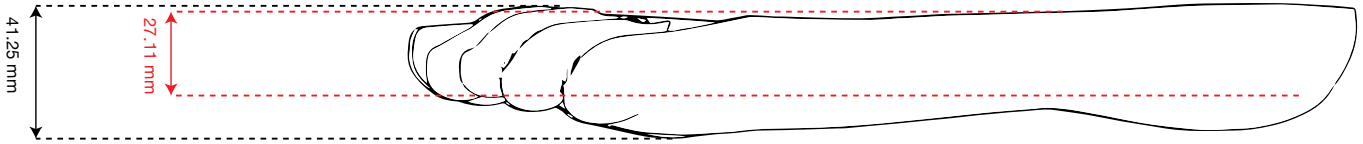
External Measurements

TECHNICAL DRAWINGS







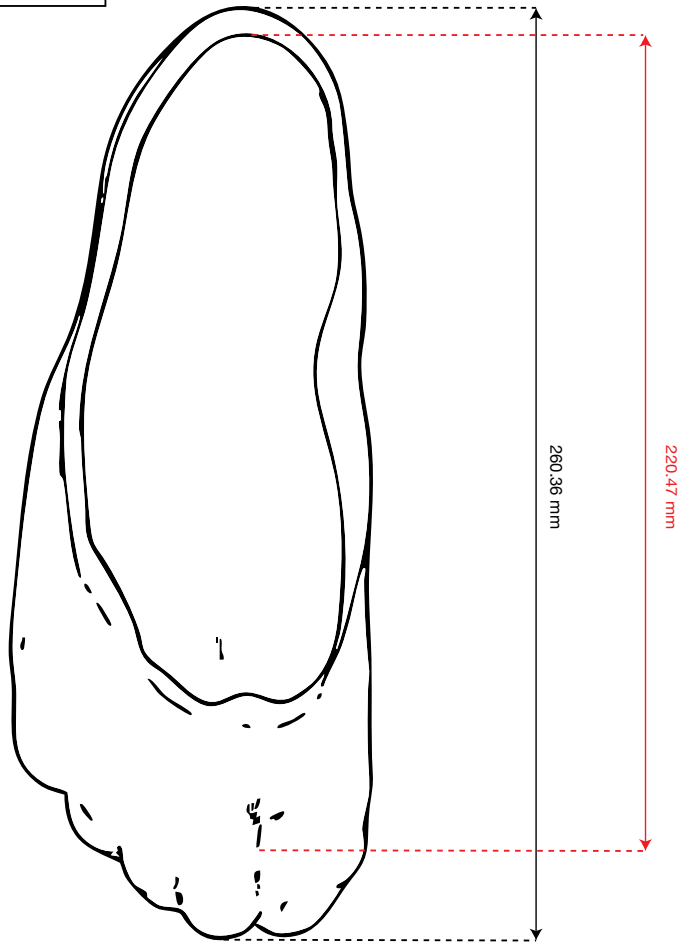


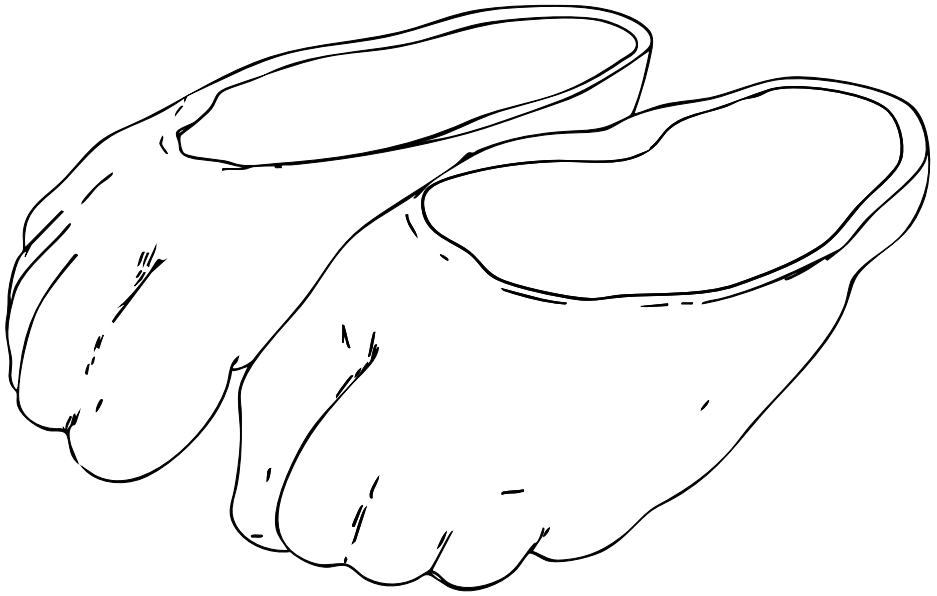
LOVE SILVA X.	SHOE NAME: SCRUNCH
	SIZE: APROX EU37
SILVA COCO	DESIGNER: Silva Cunningham
	MATERIAL: Graphite Plaster mix

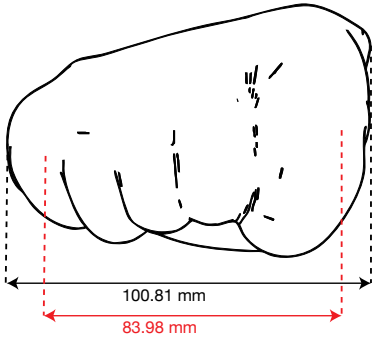
Internal Measurements

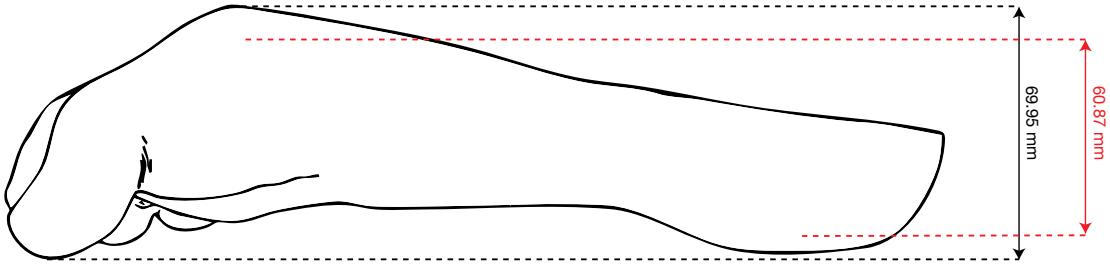
External Measurements

TECHNICAL DRAWINGS









LOVE SILVA X.

SHOE NAME: SCRUNCH

SIZE: APROX EU37

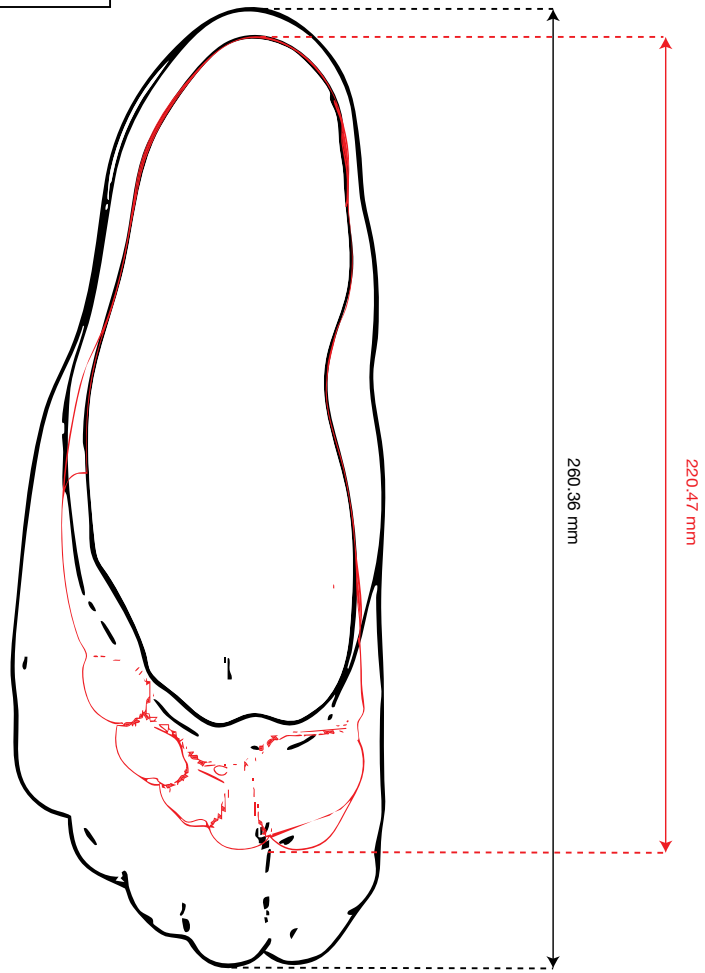
DESIGNER: Silva Cunningham

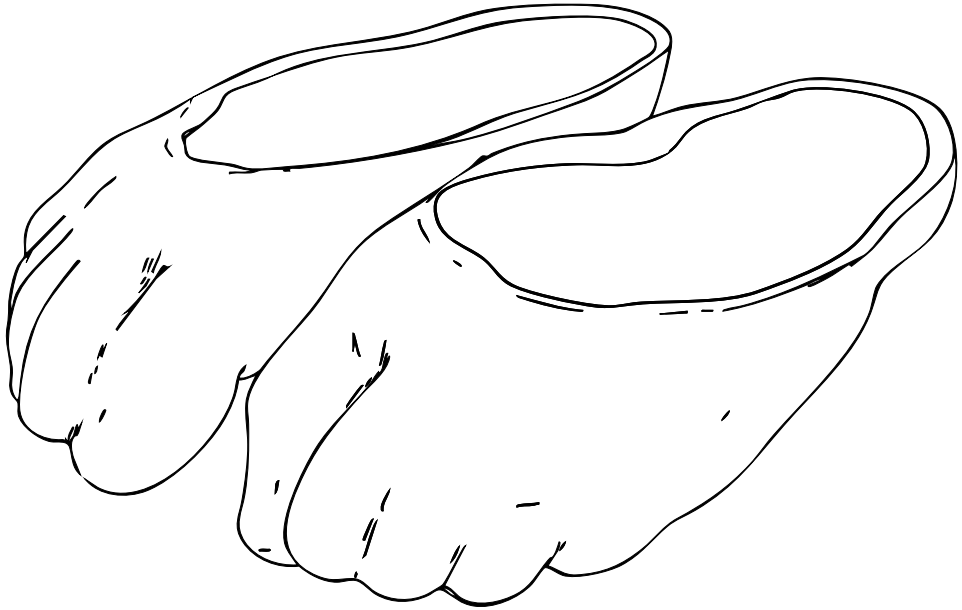
SILVA COCO

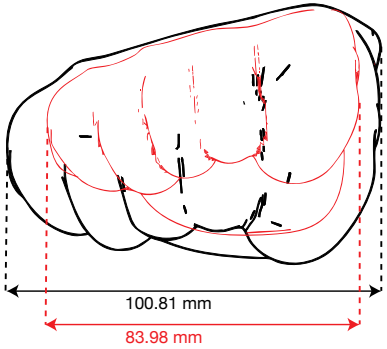
TECHNICAL DRAWINGS

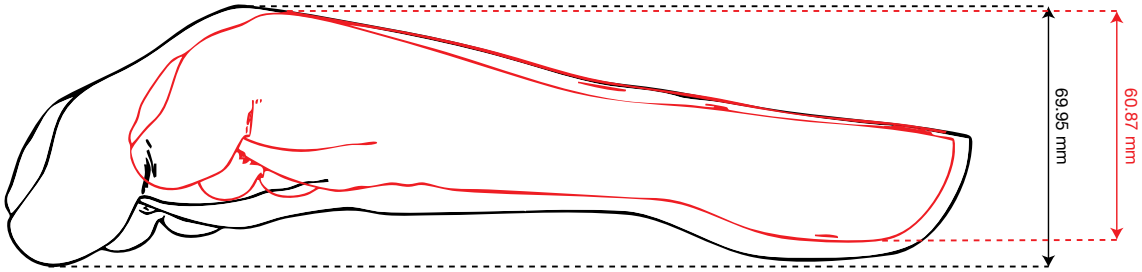
Internal Measurements

External Measurements







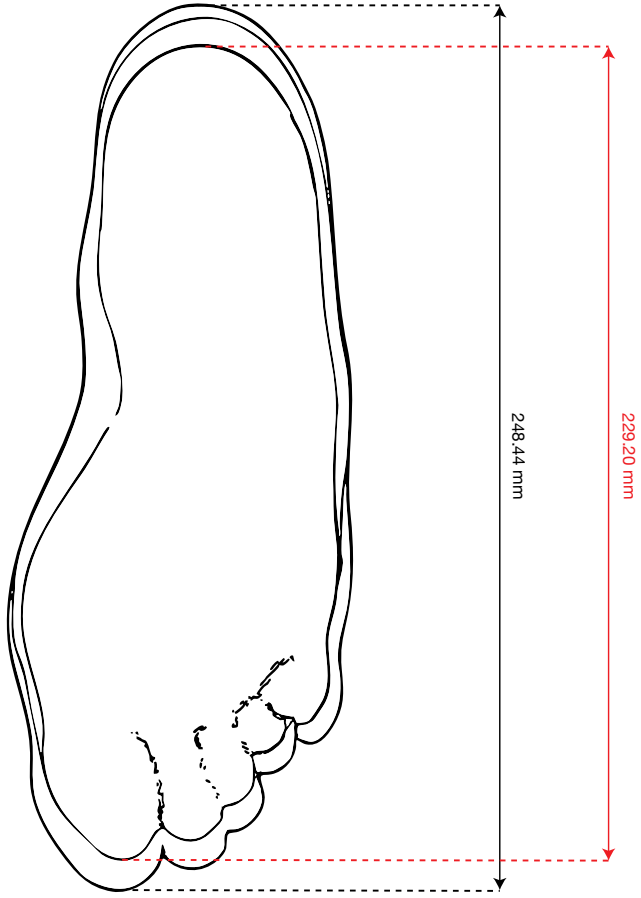


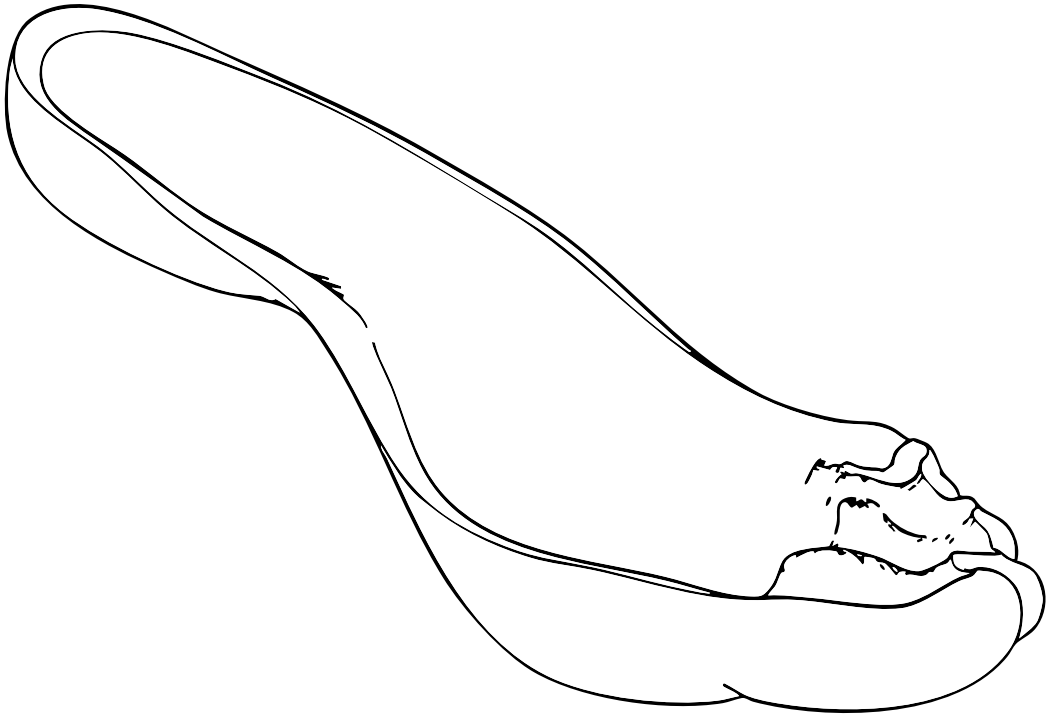
LOVE SILVA X.	SHOE NAME: OTHER - LEFT FOOT
	SIZE: APROX EU37
SILVA COCO	DESIGNER: Silva Cunningham
	CAST MODEL: Mimiko Mcveigh
	MATERIAL: Graphite Plaster mix

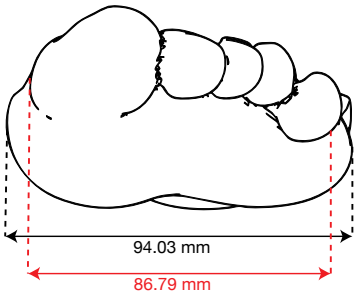
Internal Measurements

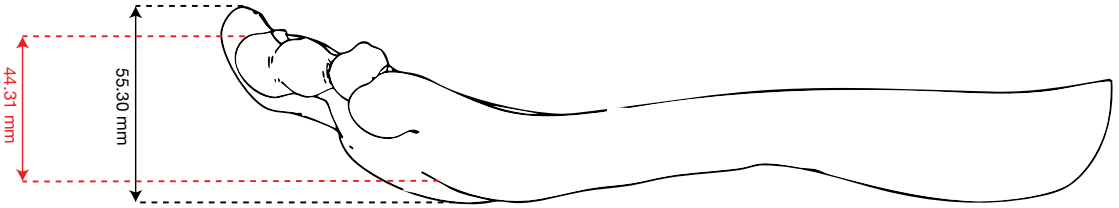
External Measurements

TECHNICAL DRAWINGS







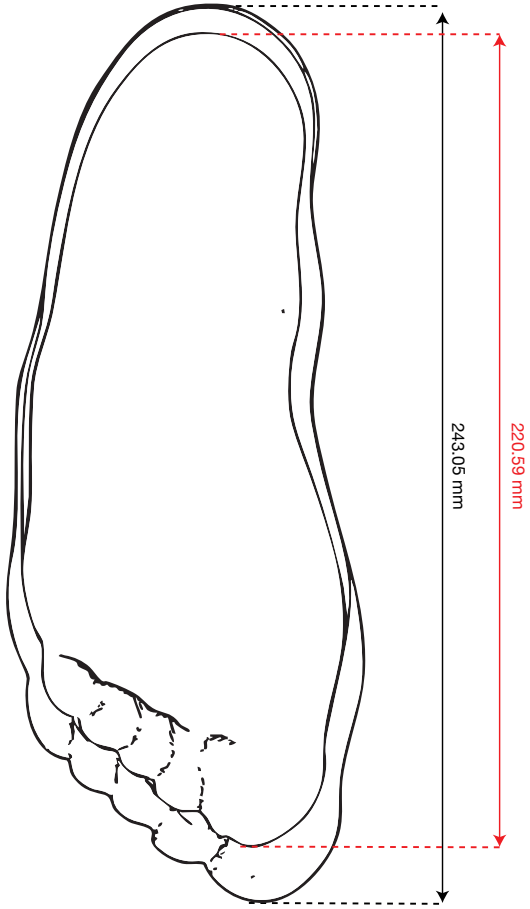


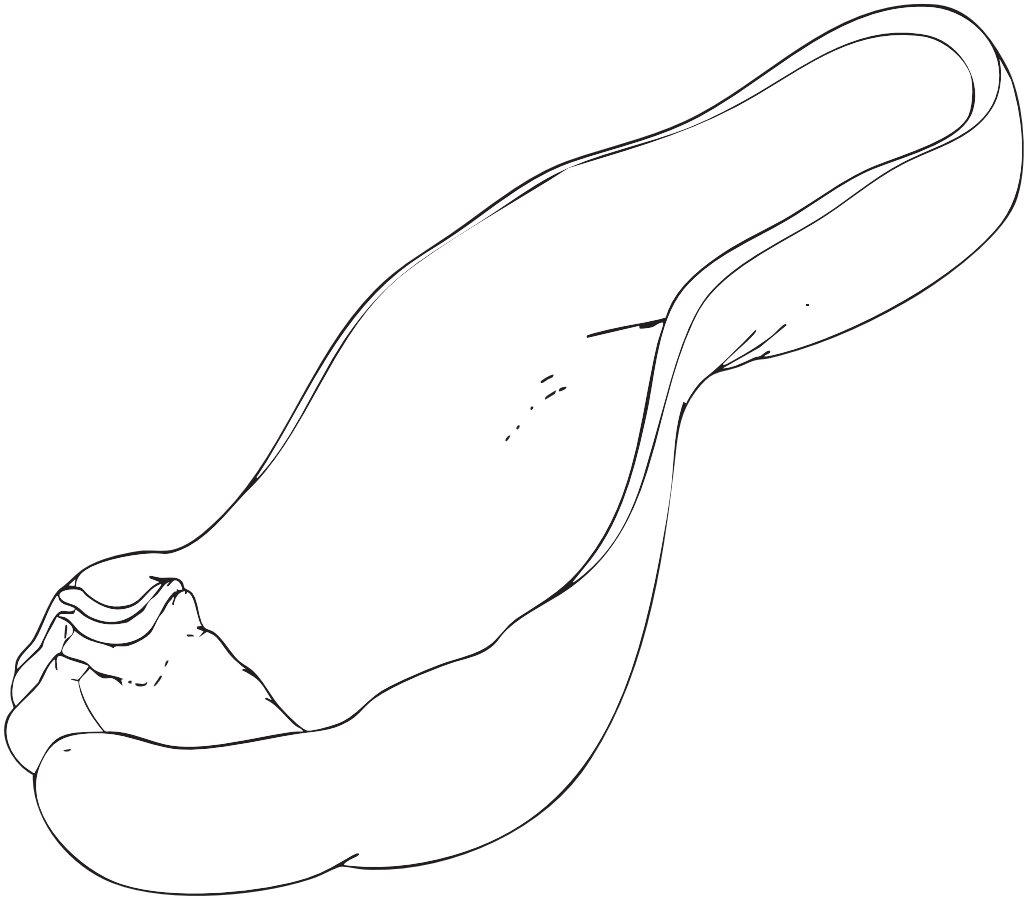
LOVE SILVA X.	SHOE NAME: OTHER - RIGHT FOOT
	SIZE: APROX EU37
SILVA COCO	DESIGNER: Silva Cunningham
	CAST MODEL: Mimiko Mcveigh
	MATERIAL: Graphite Plaster mix

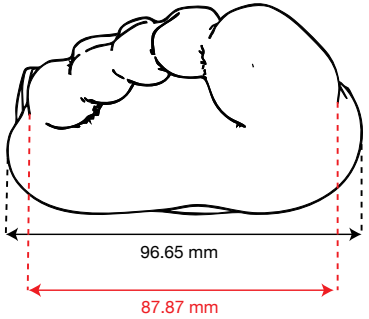
Internal Measurements

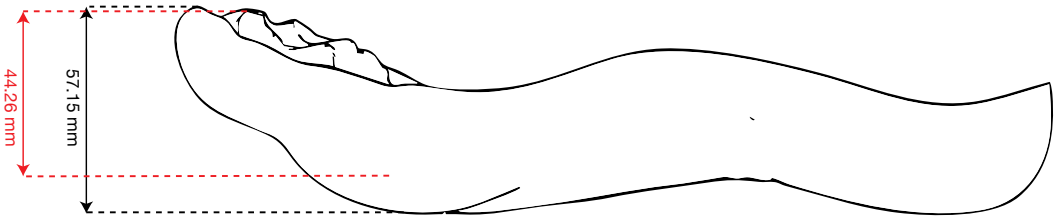
External Measurements

TECHNICAL DRAWINGS









LOVE SILVA X.	SHOE NAME: TIPPIE TOE
	SIZE: APROX EU37
SILVA COCO	DESIGNER: Silva Cunningham
	MATERIAL: Polished Sapele

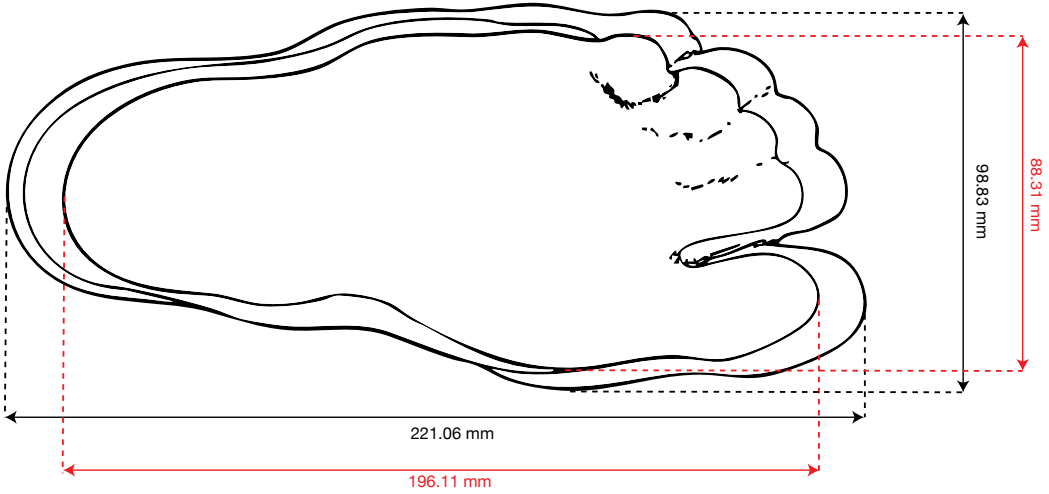
Internal Measurements

External Measurements

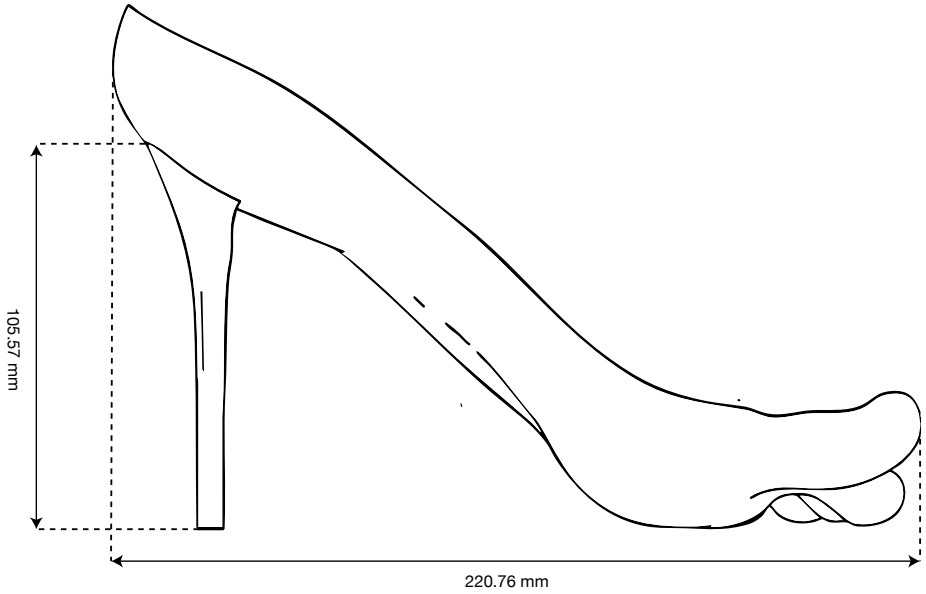
MATERIAL:

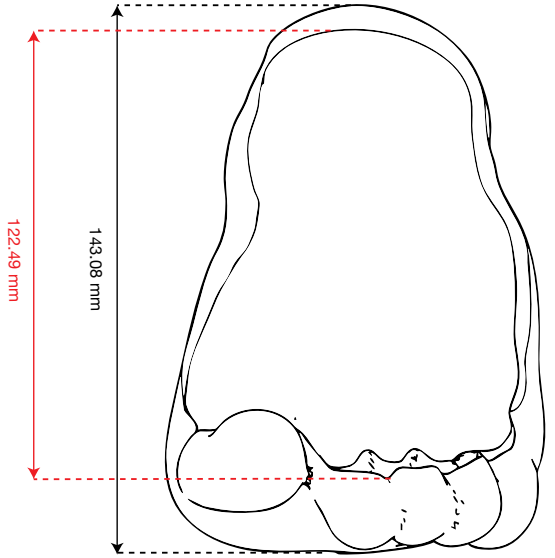
POLISHED SAPELE WOOD

NO SURFACE FINISH.



TECHNICAL DRAWINGS





LOVE SILVA X.	HEEL NAME: PENCIL
	FITS: TIPPIE TOE
SILVA COCO	DESIGNER: Silva Cunningham
	MATERIAL: Sapele + Graphite rod

TECHNICAL DRAWINGS

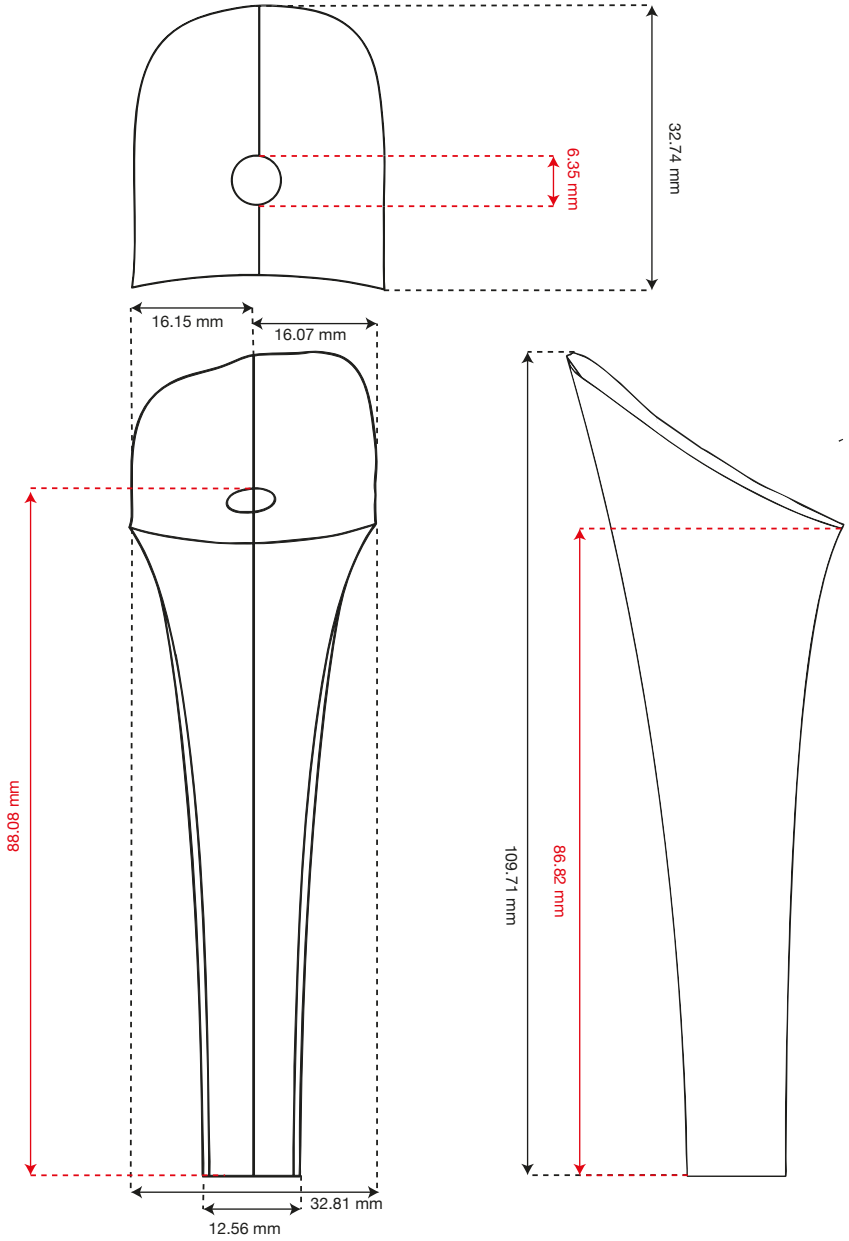
Graphite rod Measurements

Heel's external Measurements

MATERIAL:

POLISHED SAPELE WOOD

NO SURFACE FINISH.



IMAGES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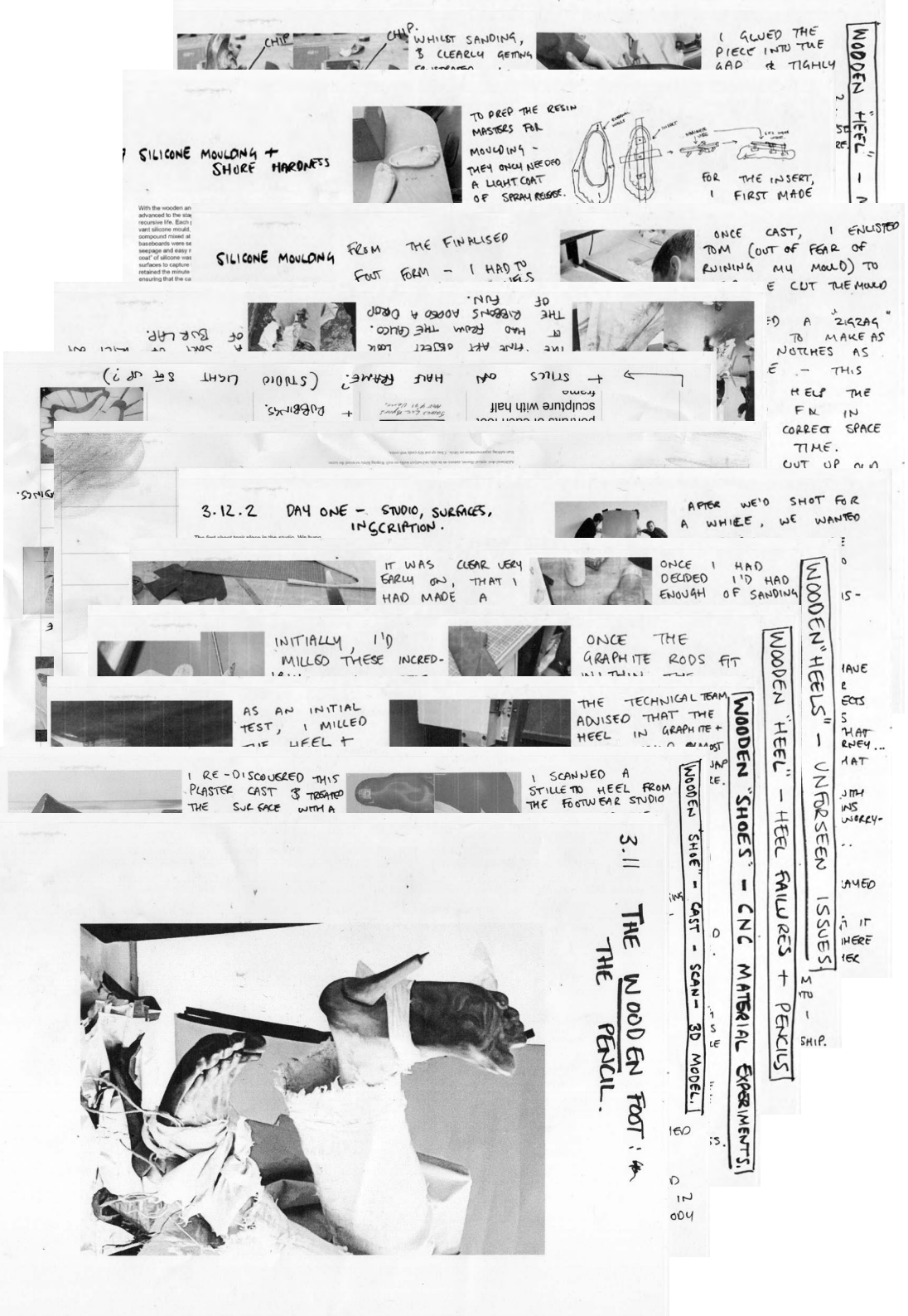
CRITICAL EVALUATION

The Itch set out to expose creative survival as a recursive, unstable condition enacted through experimental footwear artefacts. The project successfully articulated this structure, but the work's development makes equally clear where the methodology became self-limiting, where theory remained metaphorical, and where the practice revealed gaps that now define the conditions for its next phase. This evaluation traces those tensions through the theoretical framework, the methodological architecture, and the material practice as documented in the final commentary.

The commentary positions The Itch within Lacan, Girard, Baudrillard, Lipovetsky, and Laplanche, building a scaffold for understanding the self as fractured, compelled, and endlessly re-performed. The project's greatest theoretical strength is that these frameworks are not detached quotations; they are folded, almost tenderly, into the material and bodily processes of the work. Lacan's misrecognition becomes visible in the foot-on-foot forms. Girard's rivalry lives in the iterative re-casting that slowly consumes its own logic. Baudrillard's simulacrum surfaces not as an academic claim but as a lived exhaustion - the sense, admitted early in the commentary, of making "images of images" when the original image has already faded.

The conceptual architecture is not seamless. Kristeva's abjection and Lipovetsky's endless self-update remain under-examined, appearing more as resonant moods than operational theories. The commentary often treats psychoanalysis as a vocabulary for feeling rather than a mechanism of critique. The writing presents someone who does not have a background in critical theory. I must acknowledge that this emotional undercurrent occasionally softened the precision of the theory, even as it gave the project its urgency.



The methodology is the project's central claim: a deliberate refusal of linear progress in favour of recursive making. The commentary exposes recursion as not just a process but a psychological condition - one in which making becomes maintenance.

Yet this same recursive structure also reveals the project's methodological weakness. At several points the work becomes trapped in its own loop. The commentary itself states that earlier outcomes were too resolved-too designed and therefore unusable within the conceptual architecture. This over-resolution indicates a methodological contradiction: the project sought instability, but the designer's craft instincts repeatedly re-stabilised the object. Resolving this tension required abandoning polished outcomes that were aesthetically strong but conceptually inert. For me, this is a rare moment of methodological clarity, but it also highlights how easily the system drifted into self-sabotage.

Autoethnography similarly both served and constrained the methodology. The project admits that each object can only fit one person perfectly… This insularity limited the methodological reach of sensory ethnography and confined the project's analysis of instability to a singular body. The late inclusion of Mimiko's foot demonstrated the transformative potential of bringing another body into the system-exposing ethical, relational, and mimetic pressures that had been absent. But this moment arrives too late to meaningfully reshape the project's methodological foundation; instead, it functions as a conceptual aftershock, revealing how narrow the autoethnographic frame had been.

Finally, the documentation process - the collaboration with Joel Kerr and Edie Ashley - became a methodological event in its own right. Their interventions expanded the symbolic order of the project, but they also complicate the methodological stability: what began as documentation became its own artefact. The evaluation must note that this expansion is powerful but insufficiently theorised. The boundary between research method and creative output blurs, and the project does not yet have a theoretical language for this blurring.

I must also acknowledge technical inconsistency. Graphite–plaster ratios drifted into intuition rather than documentation. The repeated snapping of

the graphite heel exposed a structural naivety in the assumption that graphite could hold load in that form. The scrunched toe model revealed the methodological rigidity of privileging CNC processes even when the material geometry resisted. In each case, material intelligence corrected conceptual stubbornness, but often too late. These indicate a lack of systematic material testing and insufficient early-stage modelling of load, shear, and fracture behaviour. The project would benefit from more rigorous material analysis in its next stage, especially if the theoretical claim depends on the artefact's ability to behave (and misbehave) in predictable ways.

As a collection, the artefacts do not sit convincingly within the framework of 'collapse.' To be frank, the objects look quite nice. And, based on my own framework and writing, I think perhaps I made them too resolved -Despite all pairs articulating different facets of The Itch. I've noted that the wooden CNC masters unexpectedly became some of the most resolved objects, raising a conceptual tension: the artefact designed not to be seen became the one that best performed the project's ontology. This inversion is rich, but its implications remain under-explored.
Moreover, the project relies heavily on textual explanation for conceptual legibility. Without the writing, the artefacts risk being read as surrealist or purely sculptural, rather than as psycho-material arguments. The evaluation must therefore state plainly: the project has not yet achieved independent legibility in the absence of its theoretical framing. I'm not convinced this is fatal - many research-driven artefact practices share this weakness - but it is a limitation.

The evaluation identifies several necessary developments, a few to note: Graphite-plaster composites require more controlled testing if their behaviour is to meaningfully support psychoanalytic claims. Joel and Edie's contributions reveal an unexamined methodological stratum: documentation is not supplementary; it is recursive material. This needs theoretical integration. The commentary positions The Itch as a theoretical term. The next phase should test whether it can function as an analytic model beyond this specific body of work.

Maybe the Itch succeeds in materialising creative survival as a recursive, unstable condition. Maybe it doesn't.

Fundamentally, The Itch succeeds in being, at least in its current state, incomplete. It generates theory through practice, exposes instability as method, and anchors psychoanalytic concepts within tactile, degrading forms. But it also reveals its own limitations: theoretical unevenness, methodological insularity, material inconsistency, and an ongoing reliance on textual framing. I think these limitations don't undermine the project. The work is not complete. It is not meant to be. It continues, as its name insists, as a condition that must be returned to, re-performed, and re-examined.

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Fig. 1. Silva Coco, Untitled, 2025.
Fig. 2. Silva Coco, Untitled, 2025.
Fig. 3. Laura Thomas, via Instagram.
Fig. 4. Silva Coco, Untitled, 2025.
Fig. 5. Silva Coco, Untitled, 2025.
Fig. 6. Silva Coco, Untitled, 2025.

Fig. 7. Silva Coco, Untitled, 2025.

Fig. 8. Jacques-André Boiffard, Bouche, accompanying Georges Bataille's article in Chronique-Dictionnaire, Documents II/5, 1930, p. 298.

Fig. 9. Photomaton photographs of Breton's group around a painting by René Magritte, La Révolution Surréaliste 5/12, 1928, p. 73.

Fig. 10. Jacques-André Boiffard, Big Toe of a Man, 30 Years Old, picture-pages accompanying Georges Bataille's article "Gros Orteil", Documents I/6, 1929, pp. 298–299.

Fig. 11. Excerpt from Dirty Looks: Desire and Decay in Fashion, Jon Astbury and Karen Van Godtsenhoven (eds), SPBH Editions.

Fig. 12. Excerpt from Dirty Looks: Desire and Decay in Fashion, Jon Astbury and Karen Van Godtsenhoven (eds), SPBH Editions.

Fig. 13. Dirty Looks: Desire and Decay in Fashion, Miguel Androver, Wearing Out of My Mind, 2023.

Fig. 14. Dirty Looks: Desire and Decay in Fashion, Paolo Carzana, Autumn/Winter 2025, Dragons Unwinged at the Butcher's Block. Photograph by Joseph Rigby. Courtesy of Paolo Carzana.

Fig. 15. Enzo Mari, Autoprogettazione?, edition published 2002.

Fig. 16. Silva Coco, Untitled, 2025.
Fig. 17. Silva Coco, Untitled, 2025.

Fig 18. 'Edie' Photograph by Joel Kerr, 2025

DESPITE THE MANY PEOPLE TO THANK
PRIMARILY – IT IS MY DUTY TO
THANK MY MUM.

I LOVE YOU X.