fallen things

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DELINEATING VEIL-WOUND-WOMB IN SCULPTURAL PRACTICE

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DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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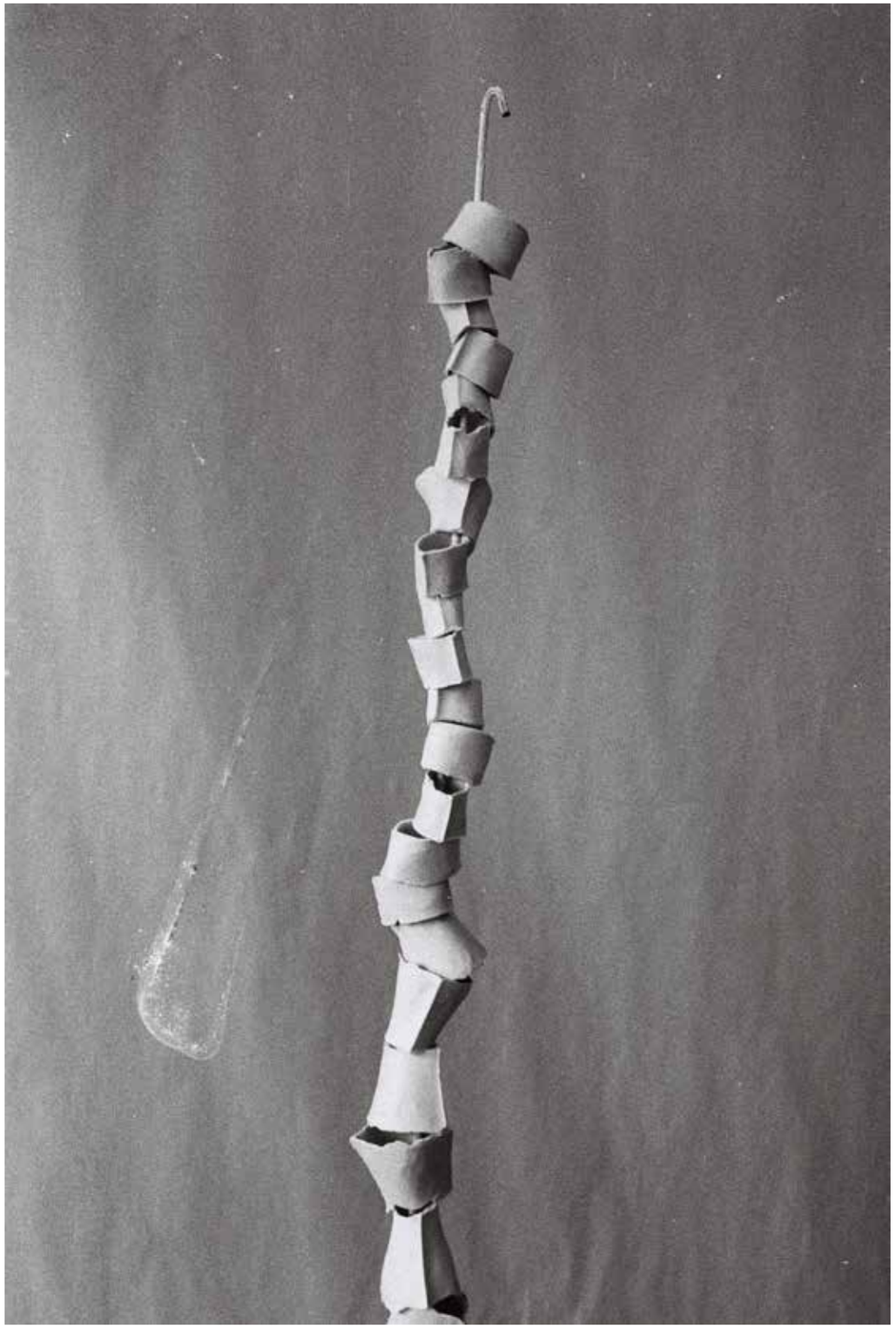

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Abstract

fallen things is an exhibition of sculptural objects and accompanying text that investigates how the overlapping motifs of veil-wound-womb can articulate fragility and the erotic in sculptural practice. This research draws from Christian iconographic traditions of the contact relic and vera icon, Surrealist object theory, and the generative potential of the matrixial effect to examine how these conceptual and practical motifs manifest in contemporary artistic practices. Using a wide range of source images in the written component and working with casting, carving and assemblage; I explore how gravity, temporal moments of contact, and subtle material juxtapositions cultivate a tactile dialogue between materiality and form. Nestled in the grey area between abstraction and figuration, and drawing on Barbara Baert's analysis of material tensions between cloth and skin, wound and womb, material and psychological; this body of work delineates a sculptural practice that is associative and intuitive, evoking surfaces that hover between exterior and interior.

Note

I use my camera as a kind of sketchbook. The images I take are less about documenting finished works than capturing studies, ephemeral moments of *things* coming into being. Interspersed amongst text and reference images are selections of these photographs, presented as plates. Embrace the gaps, and find pleasure in the connections that unfurl in the turning pages of this book.

fig. 1
Reproduction of *Venus* (c. 1532) by Lucas Cranach the Elder, my initial *fallen thing*, photographed in studio

Prologue

It was in the final moments of my fourth year, while clearing out my studio, that I encountered this object – this *fallen thing*. Pressed between the discarded remnants of my peers' studios, I pulled out a dusty monochromatic reproduction of *Venus* by Lucas Cranach the Elder (c. 1532)(*fig. 1*). I suppose my predisposition towards this object was due to the discoloured grey card onto which the image had been adhered. I gather fragments and materials sporadically, and in most cases, the things I'm attracted to subtly pivot between the familiar and unfamiliar. But in this case, I was confronted by something that was not only fully intact but also an image that spoke to a deeply embedded culture of painting within the Western canon. Often praised for its artistic quality, an undeniably potent element of this painting, and a notable feature in Cranach's genre of mythical nude subjects, is the accessory of the veil. In my initial encounter, it was this very accessory, its nebulous play between exposing and covering, that stirred more questions than it did answers (Werner, 2007:99).

Illuminated against a darkened backdrop, delicately holding a cloth so transparent it feigns substance, stands the figure of Venus. What was most unsettling about this image was the central motif of the veil which slipped between Venus' fingers across the pelvic area. While I noted the sacred and erotic allusions evoked by the veil, what tinged sharply within me was an immense sense of vulnerability. Delicately rendered, almost fugitively so, the veil became the threshold, mediating between the body of the depicted *Venus* and my imagination. As the viewer, I became aware of how both my intellectual and perceptual understanding of the picture hinged on the oscillating line of the veil – a tension between materiality and ethereality, between the seen and the unseen – in a descending cascade towards the central component of the composition, Venus' pudendum, the vulva (Werner, 2007:107).

In my subsequent research, I was struck by a peculiar similarity between Cranach's *Venus* and an illustration from a Cistercian prayer book (c. 1440)(*fig. 2*), in which two angels held and framed a cloth bearing a gaping vertical wound that resembled a vulva. The wound, isolated from the body, forms the shape of the mandorla, alluding to both an anthropomorphic quality and a synecdochic connection to Christ's body. Derived from the Italian word for 'almond', the mandorla typically appears as a lens-like shape of radiance surrounding Christ in scenes such as the Transfiguration (Areford, 2012:74).

However, in this instance, the symbolic undertones of this shape took on a more complex significance. This layered motif not only reduced Christ's body to a vulnerable, bleeding flesh but also evoked broader connotations of the womb. As such, it offered a delicate interplay where the wound, in its openness and vulnerability, became a site of creation, between wholeness and disintegration.

In both these images, what became particularly fascinating to me was how the veil-wound-womb interplay provoked a frisson in my visual perception. It prompted an introspective probing into the woven conceptual, material threads where these motifs coincide.

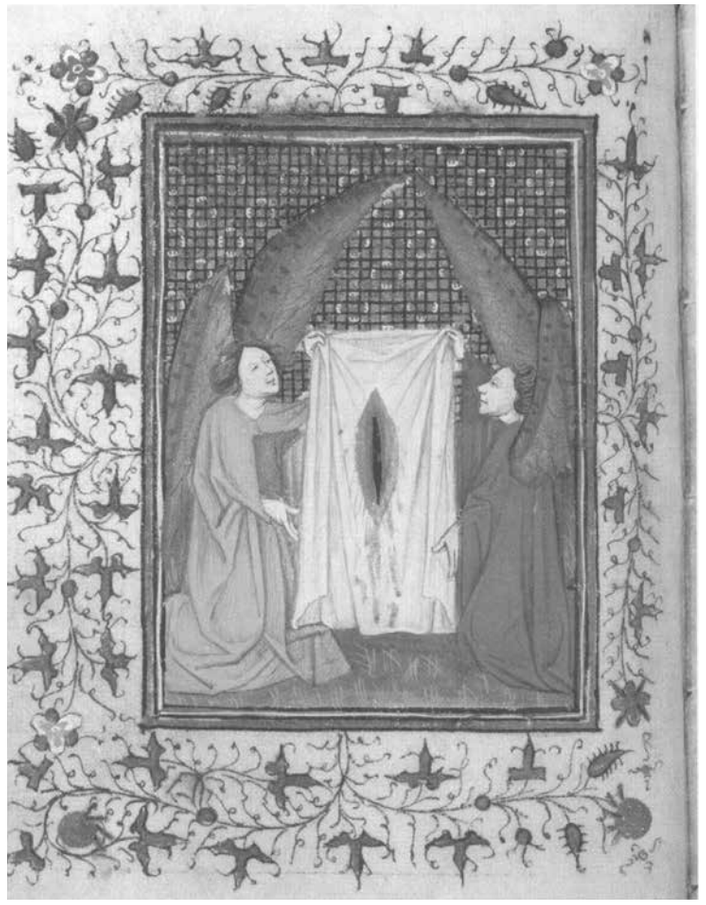
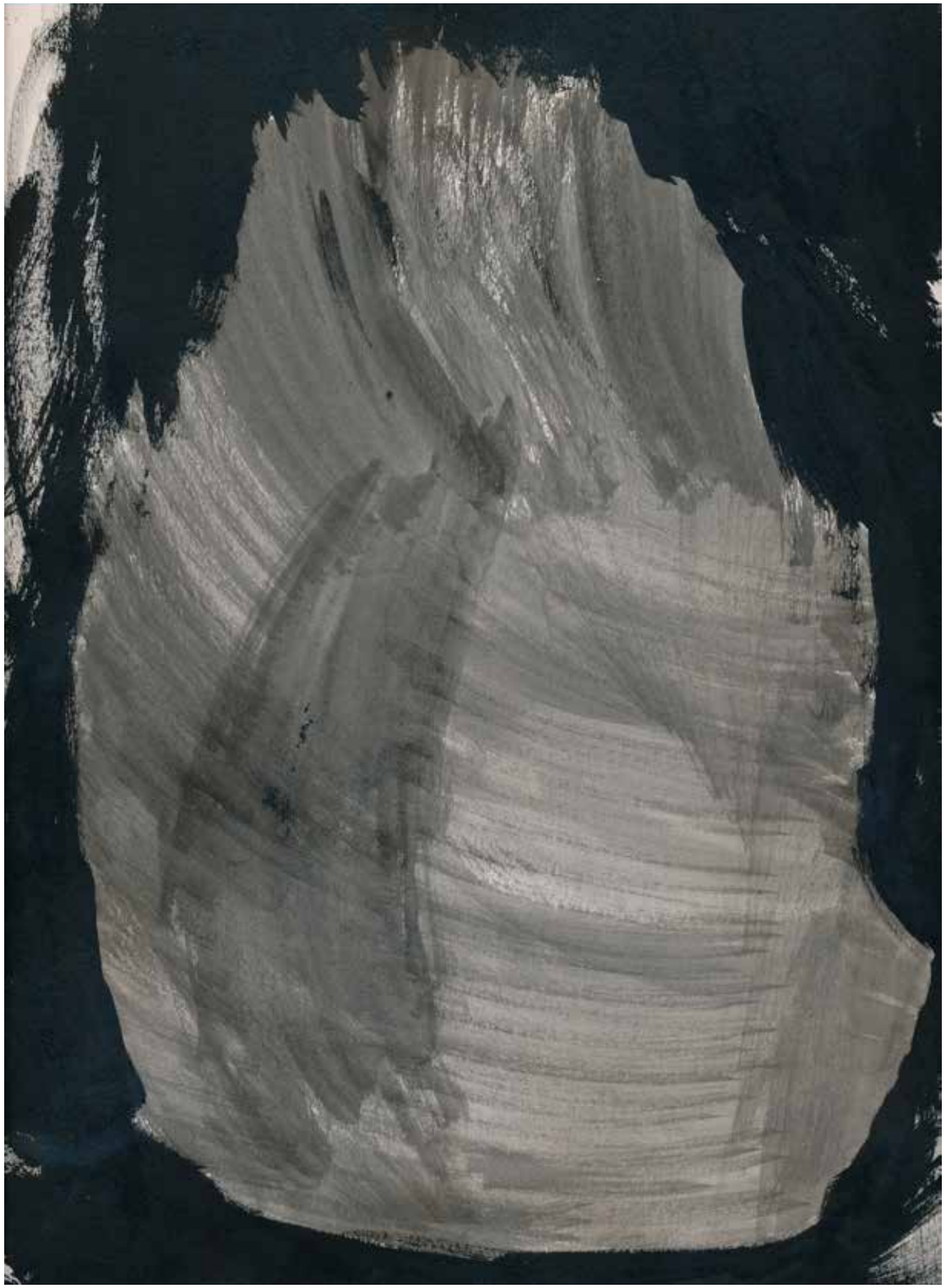


fig. 2
Anonymous, *Bleeding wound on cloth held by two kneeling angels*, ca. 1440, The Walters Art Museum, Maryland



Untitled (Void, whisp), ink on paper 2023

Introduction

To my mind, or perhaps in my imagination, this body of work occupies those same nebulous spaces found in the pages of my scrawled sketchbooks, diaries, ink blots hidden in letters, and the betwixt stairwell beneath my studio floorboards. Its voice sounds the mouth-like hollow of smudged lipstick softly, quietly impressed on a piece of tissue which slips out from the confines of pages on the chance encounter of peering into a book – a fleeting interlude in an unfolding narrative. In this freefall, the delicate paper begins limply, almost lifeless, then suddenly, as if woken by a beguiling dream, it rises-curls-bulges in a veiling of organic shapes and limb-like forms, as if choreographed by a force otherwise imperceptible to the naked eye. The Latin word *cadere*, meaning *to fall*, branches into a constellation of related concepts: catapult, chute, accident, incidence, coincidence, chance, cadenza, cadence, decay, cadaver. All of these, while varied in their utterances of falling, come into being through this mysterious force of attraction: gravity.

I observe the delicate paper as if captured in stills on a reel of moving film. And in this interval of falling, I notice how the tightly wound threads of my otherwise static preconception of this *thing* begin to loosen, to move with, and become malleable like the soft tissue – voluptuous, fluid, floating. I think about this fleeting encounter and the spatial as well as temporal motioning of red smears on tissue paper; how it so quietly flutters in moments of coming into being and being leftover. I realise that my body and this *falling thing* are strangely connected in this sense; that I too am falling, hopelessly encumbered by the same gravitational pull. Be it a strand of hair or those tiny indecipherable particles of my skin, that I, my body, is in a cyclical process of falling, a continuous wastage and renewal. Those parts of me become *fallen things*.

Things fall: little things, gigantic things, catapulting from the micro into the macro; knowing that somewhere in our cosmos, gathered under the collective group of moving objects known as the Amors, is a prolate (potato-like) shape, measuring approximately 13 x 33 x 13 km, a solid, homogenous mass of silicate rock named *433 Eros (fig. 3)*. Born from chaos, not unlike the Greek mythological stories from which its name derives, and discovered by accident, this vast, near-Earth asteroid moves in a slow orbit indelibly connected to the feeble gravitational thread, at times pulling it closer to Earth's surface.

In the quiet confines of my studio, I struggle against a smile, noticing the coincidence of it all. At my feet, settled among fine white silica particles of porcelain dust (a similar composition to that found on Eros), lies the thing that by chance fell from the pages of my notebook. As I gently shift the soft substrate into the palm of my hand, my gaze follows the finely impressed creases of my lips, now stained onto the delicate surface. I see it as a small, momentary point of contact, an intimate part of me. It might also be described as a contact relic – the scratch, mark, or blemish transferred from one surface to another, or the wound piercing the veil. As my thoughts linger, the red imprint of my mouth collapses with the tissue into the shape of my palm; it recalls the gaping mouth from Bernini's *Ecstasy of St. Teresa* (1647-1652) *(fig. 4,* → p.27*)*. Caught in a quiet yet provocative state of inertia, suspended between ecstasy and death, she too is falling.

fig. 3
Asteroid Eros as observed by NASA's NEAR/Shoemaker mission in 2000

These observations of falling articulate the intricate and overlapping characteristics of my artistic practice. It begins with my primary materials: a disparate accumulation of found objects, often overlooked, discarded, suspended between potential and dissipation. I refer to these objects as *fallen things*, their fragile and wounded surfaces bearing witness to moments of impact, to the arbitrary forces shaping their existence and echoing acts of chance, accident, or inevitable descent. Like the deciduous leaf loosening itself from its mother branch, they hold within them a sense of vulnerability and fragility, yet equally, the possibility for transformation beyond their everyday context and be seen in a new light. Prompted by a fallen thing, Cranach's *Venus* (c. 1532), this body of work explores the conceptual and practical tensions that align motifs of the veil-wound-womb. It examines how moments of vulnerability emerge in material form. Through sculptural processes, it explores how intricate fragility can be held, embodying the tactile temporalities and transformative capacity of the *fallen things* that inspire them.

This research is structured in two main sections: 'Fragile Thresholds', establishing the theoretical framework, and 'Thinking through Matter', examining my practical methodology. The central inquiries are:

→ How do veil-wound-womb concepts intersect to impart a meditation on fragility within sculptural practices?

→ How do processes of casting, assembling fallen things, and gravity contribute to exploring these thresholds through materiality and form?

The section 'Fragile Thresholds' establishes the parameters of my research, interweaving conceptual and practical aspects of the veil-wound-womb as a lens for contemplating fragility within contemporary art practices. Within this, 'Part I: Points of Contact' examines three key concepts through Barbara Baert's text *Stain: Trace-Cloth-Symptom* (2002). The first concept, *Skinscape*, examines the stain as mediator between body and artwork, creating a series of material tensions: between cloth and skin, wound and veil, physical and abstract. Through these relationships, Baert demonstrates how corporeal experience shapes our understanding and perception of artworks.

The second concept, *Contact Relic*, examines parallels between religious artifacts and contemporary processes of making. Centred on the *vera icon*, Veronica's veil bearing Christ's image through direct contact, and drawing from Jennifer Roberts' *Contact: Art and the pull of the print* (2024), I explore the shared qualities with printmaking and slip casting: its acheiropoietic (made without hands) nature, transformation through

touch, and the role of the matrix. Nina Liebenberg's *Tear Fan* (2012) demonstrates this translation to contemporary practice, particularly through its exploration of eros (life force) and thanatos (death drive).

The final concept, *Matrix*, expands on Baert's analysis of the Veronica veil to explore the notion of a generative space. Here, the blood-stained imprint merges with cloth to create the *mandorla* or *vesica piscis* form, a symbolic fusion that indicates both wound and womb. I suggest that Maria Bartuszová's experimental casting and Nicholas Hlobo's assemblages demonstrate this concept of generative space in contemporary practice. Despite their different approaches, both artists explore similar tensions between interior and exterior, form and formlessness. Where Bartuszová works with concave-convex pairings, Hlobo creates skin-like veils with vulvic and phallic forms. These practices highlight how process and materiality shed light on the notions of fragility and the body, revealing how the handling of materials can manifest deeper psychological and corporeal vulnerabilities.

'Part II: Piercing the Veil' examines how Surrealism extends and enriches the previous framework of skinscape-relic-matrix through its emphasis on unconscious desire and material transformation. In *Surrealist Veiled Erotic & the Poetic Object*, I consider Andre Breton's manifesto for the surrealist vision: *convulsive beauty will be veiled-erotic, fixed-explosive, magic circumstantial, or it will not be* (Mad Love, 1987:19). This concept of convulsive beauty with an emphasis on the veiled erotic provides a framework for observing how the veil-wound-womb convergence functions in relation to the Surrealist poetic object. Drawing on Mary Ann Caws (1997) and Julia Kelly's (2001) theoretical insights into Surrealist objects, this section demonstrates how tactile engagement provokes an interplay between concealment and revelation, closeness and distance, generating an arousal that disrupts and transforms our perceptions of everyday objects into realms of the dream and desire – that is to say, it is the notion of eros that sustains these objects in their elevated sublimity.

Developing this notion of erotic charge further, the final theoretical section *Eros* synthesises Surrealist conceptions of Eros with contemporary theoretical perspectives, particularly Alyce Mahon's(2005) analysis of Surrealist eroticism and Audre Lorde's(1984) broader understanding of erotic power. Their insights reveal how Eros operates beyond purely sexual terms, suggesting instead a more nuanced understanding of creative and transformative energies that emerge through material engagement.

'Thinking Through Matter' encapsulates the practical research of this body of work, linking material investigation to the conceptual framework of veil-wound-womb through three central components: *fallen things*, *casting the veil* and the *weight of the wound*. Through a more associative writing approach, this section traces how meaning and transformation emerge through material encounters and uncertainty.

In 'Part III: Fallen things', I elucidate how this concept of *fallen things* emerges as both metaphor and material reality within my artistic practice. Beginning with *Studio: A Hare's Form & the Perspective of Dust*, I situate my studio practice as a form of gathering and assembling disparate parts. Drawing on Briony Fer's meditation on Gabriel Orozco's notebooks (2009) and Hito Steyerl's *thingness* (2010), this investigation reveals how discarded fragments and found objects become repositories of hidden

powers and past lives. The studio, conceptualised as a hare's form, becomes a generative space where the matrixial effect (as theorized by Ettinger) manifests through intuitive arrangements and material encounters. This framework demonstrates how vulnerability and fragility emerge through the complex interconnections between separate entities in these spaces of relation.

'Part IV: Casting the Veil' examines how my methods of casting materially translate and embody the theoretical framework of veil-wound-womb. Through both traditional slip casting and experimental approaches, the process reveals how objects emerge as haptic relics that bear witness to wounded surfaces of my *fallen things* and record moments of direct contact. Operating within the material dynamics of veiling and unveiling, interior and exterior, my cast forms suggest parts of a body, hovering between recognisable and enigmatic states. Drawing on the inherent properties of porcelain and plaster as well as Bartuszová's process of gravistimulation, this section examines how weight and gravity become crucial sculptural devices for manifesting haptic sensibilities and material transformations (Garlatyová, 2022). Drawing on Penny Siopis' exploratory text *I Ask Myself* (2018), these processes reveal how the dynamics of uncertainty, where the handling of substance becomes an intimate model for relationality, bridges physical encounter and psychological resonance.

'Part V The Weight of the Wound' explores the transformation of discarded objects into cohesive sculptural forms. Through intentional and intuitive making, these works grapple with what I term the *Brancusi curse*: the challenge of uniting disparate elements into a meaningful whole. Like Pina Bausch's dancers merging through repeated gesture, these works employ serial techniques that blur boundaries between structure and formlessness. At their core lies a simultaneity of fragility and eroticism, expressed through material tensions where soft meets hard, broken meets whole, and falling meets held. These installations embody what Luigi Pareyson describes as "something infinite enclosed in something finite": a dynamic tension between containment and openness that reveals the transformative power of sculptural form (Pareyson in Vervoordt, 2009:64).

fig. 4

Gian Lorenzo Bernini, *The Ecstasy of Saint Teresa* (1647-1652), detail, Santa Maria della Vittoria, Rome

Part 1: Points of contact

skinscape – contact relic – matrix

In *Stains. Trace-Cloth-Symptom* (2002), Barbara Baert examines the stain as an interpretive device for reconceptualising the visual through iconographic, anthropological, and psychoanalytical frameworks. The stain emerges as a unifying principle that encompasses both wound and womb, mediated by the skin's delicate membrane that simultaneously covers and veils the body's interior[1]. This framework suggests that our tactile perception of artwork surfaces, traces, and points of contact is inextricably linked to the body. Using this corporeal model, Baert explores how artworks operate like *contact relics* while revealing deeper connections to the womb (2002:4). In contemporary art practices, these points of contact extend beyond religious contexts to become haptic relics of material encounter.

Skinscape

Baert contemplates the intimate and interconnected relationship that the stain, cloth, and body share:

> As soon as the stain lands on its support it regenerates as a mutable substance that has the potential to become image. But that is as far as it goes: it does not proceed to a stage of finish and figuration. The stain makes use of the antecedent, the visual-in-potential… Textile collects the stain and the stain, if it is to be seen, needs the textile… it forms the punctum[2] in the private space between the body and its wrappings, between the skin and the textile that forms its extension. (2002:3)

1 The concept of the stain can be read essentially as a marring of skin-cloth-veil and stain-wound-womb, which together create a metaphor for the visual, its making, and its layered meanings.

2 Baert's definition for punctum here refers to Roland Barthes' ideas from the publication *Camera Lucida* (1981): "The punctum or stigmatum is something, perhaps a detail, what is already there in the photograph, and provokes a tiny shock. Barthes developed the idea on occasion of the death of his mother. Punctum has to do with death, (photographic)memory and grief."

This excerpt conveys how the body's skin, supporting the rudimentary stain, becomes archetypically and anatomically linked to a work of art. In other words, the surface of an artwork transforms into a skin-like membrane where the stain oscillates between exterior and interior – akin to a wound, blushing cheeks, or a hair emerging from a follicle. This sentiment recalls works such as Piero Manzoni's creased, wrinkled, and protruding lumps of kaolin on canvas, reminiscent of raw epidermal close-ups. It also calls to mind the blood-red pigment marking Ana Mendieta's body imprint in Las *Siluetas*, or the vulva-shaped rupture from which Nicholas Hlobo peers, cocooned in one of his bulbous rubber sculptures adorned with ribbon suture (see *figs. 5,6,7*).

In this context, the point of contact between the stain (wound) and the skin (cloth/veil), like ink is to paper, "merits the paradigm of the image within its boundaries of the body-canvas, the skinscape" (Baert, 2002:5). Viewed through this lens, the image becomes "indivisibly associated with our own corporeality and our sensory experience" (Baert, 2002:5). The stain (wound), regardless of its arbitrary shape or substance, confronts and disrupts at its point of contact with a surface. Furthermore, the stain maintains a particular relationship to space and time. Once captured and solidified on the surface of cloth, it transforms into a physical trace of something that has passed – a relic. This relic serves as a record of a venerated body or contact event, enabling a synecdochic continuation of corporeal worship or signifier of its sacredness (Baert, 2002:4).

fig. 5
Piero Manzoni, *Achrome*, 1959, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam *(right)*

fig. 6
Nicholas Hlobo, *Mondle umkhulise*, 2009, Courtesy Stevenson, Cape Town/ Johannesburg *(below, right)*

fig. 7
Ana Mendieta, *Untitled (Silueta Series, Mexico)*, 1976, The Estate of Ana Mendieta Collection, Courtesy Galerie Lelong, New York *(below, left)*

Contact relic

At its most basic level, a relic is a physical item that relates to a specific individual or with events and locations connected to that person. The term's etymology derives from the Latin *reliquus* meaning 'remaining', based on *linquere* 'to leave', suggesting a strangely paradoxical state of *being* where someone or something departed continues to remain or to persist. Most often relics take the form of bodily fragments – bones, teeth, or hair – of a deceased person. However, they may also include non-corporeal objects directly owned or touched by an individual during their lifetime, such as a handkerchief, stave, or coat (Walsham, 2010:11).

Relics bring together past and present in palpable and tangible ways. Yet, their distinguishing characteristic, setting them apart from most material objects, is their capacity to operate as conduits of power[3], and in the case of many religious relics, bridging the mundane and the divine (Walsham, 2010:13). Unlike a representation or image, the relic is more than just a signifier of the divine, rather it can be perceived as a physical embodiment or essence of a venerated body. In practice, however, these lines become blurred, and in many instances, religious icons such as the Veronica veil, or *vera icon*[4], adopt similar functions – more commonly known as contact relics.

Expanding on these ideas of the contact relic as a means for reconceptualising the visual, Baert posits:

> Every work of art, every iconization of a thought, every emotion that calls for visual expression, in short every pact, is made possible by the mystery of an invisibility that stoops to the flesh (and hence to suffering) with plasticity as its only goal. There is in fact no greater mystery imaginable than this process that has given Western Art History a discourse about descent into matter, about circumscription, about skin, about bodily liquids. (2022:7)

This perspective offers a rich framework for contemplating the visual in relation to artistic processes. It elucidates this process as a kind of *descent into matter*, where there is an attempt to render the invisible visible, to manifest abstract thoughts and emotions into tangible form. Furthermore, it addresses *circumscription* or points of contact, where the tactility of an imprint – transmuted through touching surfaces – becomes a relic, conveying delicate facets of corporeal experience that extend beyond the physical. As such, the oscillating nodes that inform notions of the relic encompass *tangibility*, *fragment*, *eros* and *thanatos* (Baert, 2022:4).

3 Welsham notes the various forms of power that a relic may be attributed to: "It can be supernatural, salvific, apotropai, and magical" (2010:13).

4 The *vera icon*, meaning 'true image', also known as St. Veronica's cloth or Veronica, is a significant religious relic. In *Drawing a veil*, Colin Richards reflects on its importance: "This icon is the image of a cloth; the veil of Veronica. Veronica's veil offers an entry to, amongst other things, deeply disputed matters of truth, the covering and uncovering which seem so much part of our histories… While the Veronica is less notorious than the Turin shroud (with which it is associated), the claims made for it and the passions it fires would be hardly less profound. The Veronica draws no less discursive blood than the shroud of Turin"(1999:4-5).

fig. 8
Albrecht Dürer, *The Sudarium Held by Two Angels*, 1513, Rosenwald Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

fig. 9
Process image of early experiment: porcelain clay pulled through etching press with muslin, recording points of contact before folding

Jennifer Roberts draws a compelling parallel between printmaking and early Christian imagistic relics such as the Veronica veil and the Sudarium (*fig. 8*). In many ways, these ideas also resonate with the process of casting, particularly the slip cast – the sculptural counterpart to print. Roberts' analogy elaborates on methods of wounding and veiling as emblematic of the tactile methods of print:

> According to Christian tradition, when Saint Veronica stopped and used her veil to wipe the blood and sweat from the face of Christ as he made his way to be crucified, a miraculous image of the face remained on the cloth thereafter. The authority of the image derived from its direct contact with the face of Christ, and the transferred image was thus sacred (2024:14).

Like the Veronica veil which "absorbs Christ's thorn gouged blood" (Roberts, 2024:16), the printmaking process evokes the stain or wound through "direct contact". This process, where an image materialises through translation from one surface to another, involves scratching and carving into a body (a woodblock or etching plate), mirroring processes of wounding (Roberts, 2024:14). Similarly, in slip casting, the skin-like surface of the primary object is absorbed and sensitively recorded by plaster or a similar medium. Upon release, the mould opens to reveal the negative impression of the primary object, the matrix, which retains traces of the surface's finite marks. For this reason, prints and slip casts function as contact relics "inasmuch as they are essentially stains on one surface that attest to the damage of another" (Roberts, 2024:16).

An equally integral aspect of print and slip casting that further reinforces their connection to contact relics are their *acheiropoietic* properties (Roberts, 2024:16). Derived from Greek, *acheiropoietic* means "made without hands", a characteristic that, according to narratives of the Sudarium, elevated it to a venerated object. Similarly, prints and slip casts materialise through mechanisms that remove the immediate presence of the human hand (Roberts, 2024:16). In traditional printing processes, the point of contact occurs through the pressure applied by the printing press, where the image is revealed through the "pull"[5] *(fig.9)*. In contrast, slip casting, undergoes a multi-layered process: a ceramic slurry, or slip, is poured into a porous mould[6] where it coagulates at the point of contact, creating a fine layer. Once this layer reaches the desired thickness, the excess slip is poured out, and the cast is left to dry. As it transitions from liquid to solid, the cast object is released from the mould and fired in the kiln. During firing, it undergoes its final transformation, resulting in a hollow vessel whose surface mirrors the interior

5 While printmaking traditionally uses a press, various tools like pitch rollers and rolling pins can apply the necessary pressure to transfer images between surfaces. In printmaking, the term *pull* describes the moment when paper is peeled away from the matrix (plate, etching plate, woodblock) to reveal the printed images, following the application of pressure between surfaces.

6 A ceramic mould is also called matrix, analogous to a printmaking plate that receives carved or etched images. Like mater to matter, matrix shares etymological roots with the term womb. Later, I explore the matrix as a device for understanding how sculptural surfaces, oscillating between interior and exterior, veiling and unveiling, affect our haptic perception. The physicality of touch becomes essential to how I conceptualise the blurred boundaries between viewer and artwork, where new meanings emerge through process and material encounter.

membrane of the matrixs' interior *(fig. 10)*. These liminal material manifestations of contact and release, where imprints or casts come into being through the seen and unseen, illustrate the dynamics of veiling and unveiling. Within these moments of revelation/concealment, interior/exterior, rupture/opening, the body is implicitly evoked as the fragile threshold through which our haptic sensibilities and visual perception take shape.

Over the years, many artists have incorporated the contact relic into their work as a self-reflexive device. Nina Liebenberg's installation *Tear Fan* (2009) exemplifies this approach with subtle nuance. In a quiet setting, an IV drip releases saline solution at precise intervals of one minute and twenty seconds. Each drop momentarily catches the sharp edge of a fishhook before descending towards an inflated handkerchief attached to a fan. Registering as wound onto veil, and marked by time, the subtle reflexivity of each saline drop excruciatingly evaporates mere seconds before the next – subtly invoking a momentary contact relic (*fig. 11*).

fig. 10

Process image: plaster mould prepared for first porcelain slip cast. (Artwork made from this mold titled *A fish concealed (vesica piscis)*)

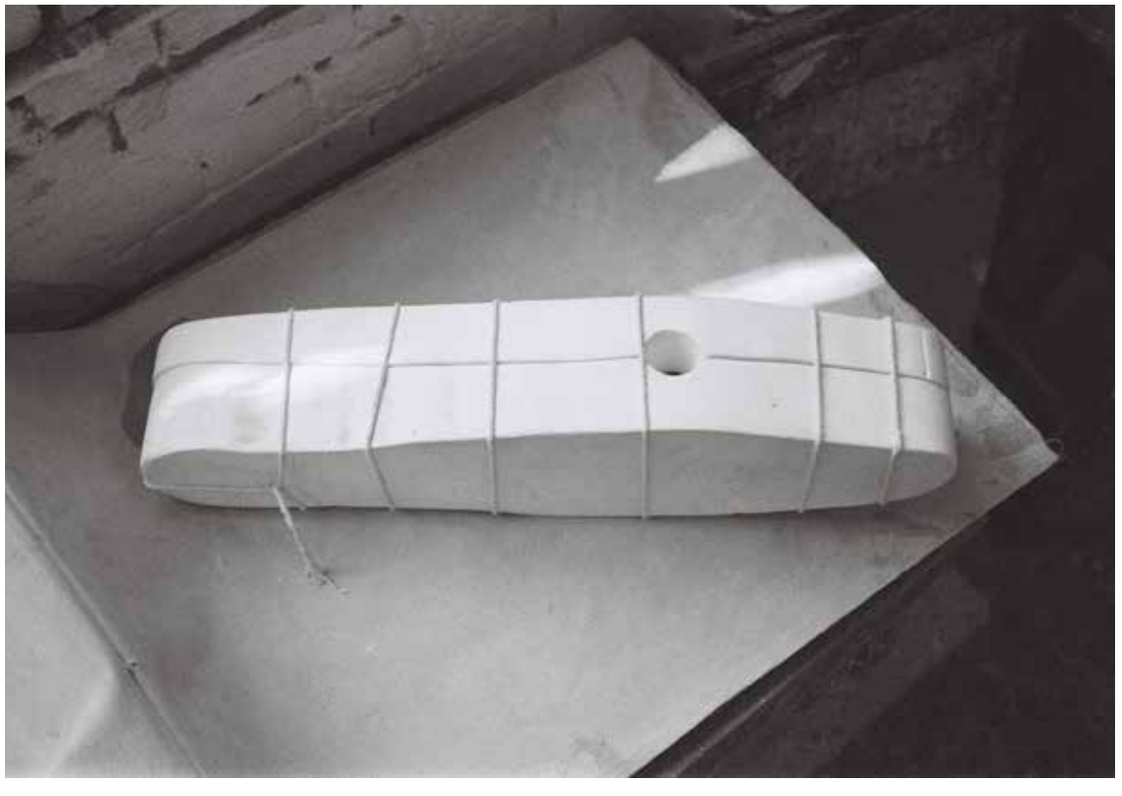


fig. 11

Nina Liebenberg, *Tear Fan,* 2009, Installation: An IV drip releases a drop every 1 minute 20 seconds on a white handkerchief attached to a fan, drying it before the next drop falls

The intermittent appearance and disappearance of saline drops on the handkerchief recalls my earlier description of *Eros 433*. This vast celestial body, which at times comes closer to Earth than any other except the moon, moves in cycles of coming into being and being left over, like the drops of saline solution pulled by the same gravitational forces. Named after the Greek god of love due to its serendipitous discovery on Valentine's Day, Eros finds deeper significance in its etymological root, signifying life force. As Alyce Mahon elucidates, "Eros is not merely about sexual procreation, it is about production of pleasure and, most importantly, is often expressed in opposition to Thanatos (its opposite, the death drive)" (Mahon, 2005:11). The tension between Eros and Thanatos, between life force and death drive, is present in aspects of the contact relic. In Liebenberg's work, the sharp edge of the fishhook introduces an element of rupture, a tear, while the falling drop suggests potential and transformation. The word "tear" in the title suggests an intimate and emotive connection to our bodily experiences, evoking the myriad circumstances in which we shed tears: in sadness and loss, through pain and birth, in moments of laughter and joy, during ecstasy, and even in our final moments as our eyes release their last drops of salty liquid. Evoked through touch, the seen and the unseen, interior and exterior, these dialectics transcend the physical and probe the ineffable questions of wholeness and disintegration, death and creation. Homologous to Veronica's veil, the handkerchief serves as a generative surface, a matrix, upon which each drop repeatedly makes its mark. In this convergence, the matrix merges as a unifying principle through which to observe the sensual perceptions evoked in sculptural practices. The matrix serves as a generative site of transformation, echoing the dualities explored in contact relics while elucidating the complex interplay between materiality and meaning in contemporary artistic practices.

fig. 12

Master of Saint Veronica, *Saint Veronica with the Sudarium*, ca. 1420, The National Gallery, London *(right)*

fig. 13

Attributed to Jean Le Noir, *The Prayer Book of Bonne of Luxembourg, Duchess of Normandy*, before 1349, The Met Cloisters, New York *(below, right)*

fig. 14

Anonymous, *Veronica*, ca. 1501, Staatsbibliothek, Berlin *(below, left)*

Matrix

a tiny void full of a tiny infinite universe
Maria Bartuszová

Baert extends her concept of the stain to reveal deeper connections to the womb in the section of her text *Veronica's stain* (2022:8). Through her analysis of various representations of the Veronica veil, she intertwines ideas of relic, imprint, and cloth. Here, the argument of the body as a septum, through which the visual is mediated, is expressed both paradigmatically and literally in the figure of Veronica herself. Almost entirely shrouded, Veronica bears the sheath with the imprint of Christ (see *figs. 12,13*). As Baert writes:

> Veronica is the female body that generates the image on the white sheet of her own garment. She is the female body that devises and revises the complex boundaries of the stain from the point of view of its generative potential. (2022:8)

This "generative potential" of the stain intimately reflects the interior of the womb, a connection etymologically embedded in the matrix (from Latin matrix/matrices, itself derived from mater, 'mother'). Moreover, in *figure 13,* the sensuous and archetypal merging between blood and textile, where Veronica's figure becomes indivisibly connected to Christ's imprint, evokes the vulva/*vulnus*[7] inversion – also known as the mandorla or *vesica piscis*[8] (*fig. 14*). This convergence between vulva and wound, expressed through the *mandorla's* almond-shape, opens up a space where the matrix oscillates between separation and unity, rupture and opening, eros and thanatos. These ideas are elegantly materialised in sculptor Maria Bartuszova's concave-convex pairings which model one another, like glove to hand (*fig. 15*, → p.39). In this light, the generative potential of the visual thus occurs in the interspace where forms are not fully separated but mix together. As Baert writes:

> It is an image of regress, of a vanishing point towards the ideal, dreamlike, originary state when genders were not yet divided. It is therefore a paradisiac state – beyond death, beyond birth. It is a state of ‹parthenogenesis› or self-fertilization. (2022:48)

7 The term *vulnus* is the Latin for wound.

8 The *vesica piscis* is a sacred symbol, meaning fish bladder, reflecting the shape of air bladders found in fish. Similar to the mandorla, it appears as the enclosure of sacred figures and saints in Christian and pre-Christian times. Although its origin is unknown, the symbol traverses a wide range of philosophical, alchemical and religious traditions (Norwood, 1912:666). Notably, in Euclidean sacred geometry, the shape arises from the intersection of two identical circles, such that the center of one circle lies on the circumference of the other (Fletcher, 2004:96). In *Musings on the Vesica Piscis*, Rachel Fletcher explains the geometry, symbolism and applications of the vesica piscis, describing its inherent symbolism as: "the complementariness of polar opposites, as when two extremes complete and depend upon one another to exist. One circle may signify the breath of spirit, which is eternal; the other may signify the body physical, which is forever changing and adapting. The vesica piscis itself symbolizes that which mediates spirit and body; or the psyche or soul" (2004:96).

This concept of parthenogenesis[9], with its implications of self-generation and blurring of traditional binaries, finds artistic expression in the works of Bartuszová and Nicholas Hlobo. The potency of both artists' sculptural practices lies in their intimate handling of materials. Sensitively transmuted, their sculptures allude to those embryonic states of becoming, with forms emerging and receding, embodying the fluid dualities of matrix and imprint. This creates an immersive dialogue where visceral and sensuous experiences of touch evoke an intimate conversation, the sculptural forms taking on a life of their own, imbued with potential.

Working primarily with gypsum, Bartuszová's sculptures encapsulate the transformative and emotive capacity of process (see *figs. 16,17,18*). By employing experimental methods of gravistimulation and pneumatic casting, she unveils the shape and form of the "interior" sculptural space. In gravistimulation, the gravitational pull on the weight of the poured plaster fills the amorphous hollows of balloons and weather balloons. Through the combined effects of air pressure and the material's transformation from liquid to solid, her perforated ovoids manifest a boundless sensuality (Garlatyová, 2022:25). As Bingham observes, "her work does not just speak about the body as a motif. It talks to the body, through the body. Corporeality is its medium, its voice" (2022:11). Bartuszová's forms create a dialogue between negative and positive, reflecting the psychological dualism where the matrix operates between wholeness and dissolution. In their solid form, the tactile qualities invite a visceral, palpable engagement that echoes the generative potential discussed in relation to Veronica's veil.

Whereas Bartuszová works with temporal mutations of plaster, the fluidity of Hlobo's work involves the fusing of materials such as rubber tubes, ribbons, leather, organza, and various objects, transforming them into organic configurations (*fig. 19*, → p.40). Densely charged with tactile eroticism, Hlobo's intuitive stitching of diaphanous, soft, silky, elastic, and rubbery textures creates tenuous material juxtapositions. The partially collapsed, spineless forms unravel like thick membrane of skin, making porous the boundaries between artwork, viewer, and origins of its creation. Here, material transcends the *Real*, as Hlobo positions this potential for "fragility" against the rubber's

9 The term Parthenogenesis (*partheno-*, 'virgin' + *-genesis*, 'birth') describes the development of offspring from unfertilized eggs. In Baert's discussion, the merging of two entities between the figure of Veronica and Christ (male/female), and by extension the mandorla (wound/vulva), is expressed metaphorically as an ideal state of parthenogenesis. Baert elaborates: "In his Symposium Plato (427 – 347 BC) says that primeval humans had been bi-gendered. Only when androgynous humanity revolted against the gods, did Apollo split humanity. The navel is a remnant of this division. Apollo tied the skin of the opening together, but not too tightly so that a scar would be left to remind humanity of their pride. Navel, scar and division (mandorla and rhomb) are closely related to hermaphroditism. The hermaphrodite unites the two eternal opposites, embodying the longing for the ideal originary form… Androgyny as desire for union can also be glimpsed in medieval mystical iconography" (Baert, 2014:47). This blending of polarities resonates with my later discussion on Surrealist artistic approaches to eroticism and desire. As Michael Székely writes, "Eros itself exemplifies perhaps this most basic dichotomy – i.e. between life and death drives – within the spectrum of other such supposed contradictory relations with which the surrealists were endlessly preoccupied (e.g. thought/action, dream/waking, real/imagined, past/future, reason/madness, communicable/incommunicable)"(2005:115).

fig. 15
Maria Bartuszová, *Untitled (Relief)*, ca. 1966, Collection of Amy Gold and Brett Gorvy *(above)*

fig. 16
Maria Bartuszová, *Tree*, site-specific installation in the artist's garden in Košice, Slovakia, 1987, photograph by Gabriel Kladek *(below, right)*

fig. 17
Maria Bartuszová, *Untitled (Drop)*, 1963-4, Tate, London *(below, centre)*

fig. 18
Maria Bartuszová, *Untitled*, 1970-2, Collection of Alexander V. Petalas *(below, left)*

apparently solid constitution in multiple ways (Murinik, 2015). Enmeshed as bulbous, rubber veiling, their forms appear as vulvic and phallic protrusions, echoing the melding of entities implicit in the mandorla or vulva/*vulnus* inversion. This subversive material dialogue exists in excess, fluctuating between the private and exposed, wholeness and rupture, conscious and subconscious, eros and death.

Both Bartuszová and Hlobo, through their distinct approaches, invite a haptic engagement that resonates with the interplay of form and formlessness, interior and exterior. In doing so, they touch upon the psychological and corporeal aspects of touch, offering tangible explorations of the generative potential inherent in the matrix and its imprint. Moreover, their objects move beyond the *Real* into realms of the psychological and imaginative, inviting viewers to engage with these works not just as physical entities but as portals to deeper, more abstract realms of fragility and vulnerability.

fig. 19
Nicholas Hlobo, *Dubula*, 2007,
Courtesy Galleria Extraspazio, Rome

Personal Reflection on veil-wound-womb

In my artistic practice, I have become deeply engaged with the convergence of veil, wound, and womb as a central thematic framework. This triad – veil (concealment/revelation), wound (rupture/opening), and womb (generative space) – guides my exploration of form, texture, and meaning. Drawing on Baert's analogy of the stain and its connection to the *skinscape*, *contact relic*, and *matrix*, my practice explores how the body implicitly serves as both subject and medium. In other words, the body serves as a septum where the physical meets abstract thoughts and feelings, or its inverse, where meaning transmutes into matter. Through these interwoven conceptual threads, my work develops through subtle material handling, harnessing the visual language of touch to communicate delicate questions of being.

In this transformative process, each element of the triad takes on specific material and conceptual roles. The veil mediates between interior and exterior, while the wound transcends trauma to become a site of potential. The matrix, rooted in 'womb', emerges as both generative space and transformative vessel. Through my *fallen things* and their translation through casting and assembling, these works become their own kind of haptic relic. In grappling with these themes, I return to the question: How can the intimate convergence of veil-wound-womb be expressed in material form while preserving its intricate fragility? This material investigation creates a visual language that is inherently suggestive, pointing toward the eternal dance between eros and thanatos – where creation and dissolution, desire and decay, exist in perpetual dialogue. I look to Surrealism's exploration of these forces, particularly through the lens of touch and how the poetic object births new meanings through metamorphosis and dream-logic.

Pear, collage 2023

Part 11: Piercing the veil

Surrealist veiled erotic & the poetic object

she let fall one of her glass slippers, which
the Prince carefully picked up.
Charles Perrault, Cinderella, 1697

There are moments when images and materials slip from everyday contexts – when things fall, touch, and leave their mark; when boundaries between interior and exterior blur – and something else emerges. This is like the gossamer silk that cascades gently, yet provocatively, over Cranach's *Venus*, creating the line that draws our eye to the central motif of the painting. The play between revealing and concealing, spaces of rupture and opening, shares an affinity with André Breton's proclamation for the Surrealist outlook: "convulsive beauty will be veiled-erotic, fixed-explosive, magic circumstantial, or it will not be" (1987:19). This proposed artistic formula, with its emphasis on contradiction, concealment, and excess; parallels the double-pronged edges which the veil, wound, and womb evoke.

Acting in revolt against reason and materialism, the Surrealists sought to pierce the veil – that is to say, to gain immediate access to the unconscious. These aspirations pointed towards a new way of conceptualising, *seeing* the world, of the kind encapsulated by Lautréamont's enigmatic statement: "As beautiful as a chance encounter between a sewing machine and an umbrella on a dissecting table" (1994:217) *(fig. 20)*. Such imagery surfaced unsolicited in dreams or through methods of chance and automatic processes[10](D'Alessandro & Gale, 2021:12). As Mary Ann Caws observes, the Surrealist lexicon is identified less by style than by "what it looks like and how it looks at the world outside it and then inward, to an 'interior model'"(Caws, 1997:3). Drawing inspiration from this *interior model*, the Surrealists created objects that hover between states of being.

10 Surrealist automatic processes were rooted in suppressing conscious decision making processes. They include automatic drawing, anagram poetry, stream of consciousness writing and trance dictation (D'Alessandro & Gale, 2021:12).

fig. 20

André Breton, Paul Éluard, Enquête: pouvez-vous dire quelle a été la recontre capitale de votre vie?" (Questionnaire: Can You Say What Was the Most Important Encounter of Your Life?), Minotaure n° 3-4, Paris, December 1933, p. 101-102

ENQUÊTE

Pouvez-vous dire quelle a été la rencontre capitale de votre vie?

Jusqu'à quel point cette rencontre vous a-t-elle donné, vous donne-t-elle l'impression du fortuit? du nécessaire?

André Breton, Paul Eluard.

Often charged with a sensuous touch or tactile eroticism, the unexpected juxtapositions provoked by the *poetic object* slip from their ordinary context into a constellation of ambivalent meanings. Responding to the Surrealist notion of touch, Julia Kelly describes Breton's written[11] encounter with Giacometti's *Invisible Object (fig. 21*, → p.46*)*:

> Her hands suggest a desire to make contact but also form a distancing screen against the onlooker's touch. Her eyes are speculatively mediated through the mask, a means of partly obscuring her gaze, which could only filter through its fine slits. While the feet of Giacometti's finished sculpture are immobilised, Breton's mediation on the slipper spoon suggests the wandering feet of Cinderella, straying illicitly at night in order to meet her erotic destiny. The feel of glass and fur in contact with the foot heightens the sensual potential. (2001:79)

What Kelly illuminates here is an experience, or encounter, which is close yet always at a distance, intimate yet enticing and ephemeral. Veiled in metaphor, the imagery of eyes, hands, and glass/fur surfaces elicit a touch that "promises much but does not deliver" (2001:81). The paradoxical marring of fur and glass is manifested into the physical in Meret Oppenheim's *Object (Le Déjeuner en fourrure)* – a work that is perhaps quintessential to the Surrealist poetic object *(fig. 23)*. The French term *frôler*, meaning 'to brush against', is particularly fitting for the sort of touches stirred by surrealist objects – *the glancing touch* that excites and elicits desire. In this regard, Breton's[12] encounter evokes those tantalising nodes of the Surrealist erotic experience. Mediated through the tensions of ambiguity and separation, such objects provoke a heightened sense of appeal. The poetic object, reliant on the sensibility of touch, and arousing new connections through unexpected compositions, vacillates between the physical, psychic, and imagined encounters, thereby reaching into the depths of dreams and desire.

11 For more context, Julia Kelly elaborates on this written encounter: "The meeting between Breton and Giacometti's 'Invisible Object' is described first in a text entitled 'Equation de l'object trouvé', published in 1934… In his evocation Breton weaves together details of its creation and composition with his own desires… The process of her creation becomes intimately associated to two strange objects found at the fleamarket… A wooden spoon with a slipper-shaped handle purchased by Breton evokes for him Cinderella's lost slipper…Breton envisages this non-existent object as made of either glass or fur, according to the confusion of the homonym verre (glass) and vair (squirrel fur)" (Kelly, 2001:79) *(fig. 22*, → p.46*)*.

fig. 23

Méret Oppenheim holding *Object (Le Déjeuner en fourrure)* at The Museum of Modern Art's exhibition of *Fantastic Art, Dada and Surrealism* in New York, 1936, photograph by John Lindsay

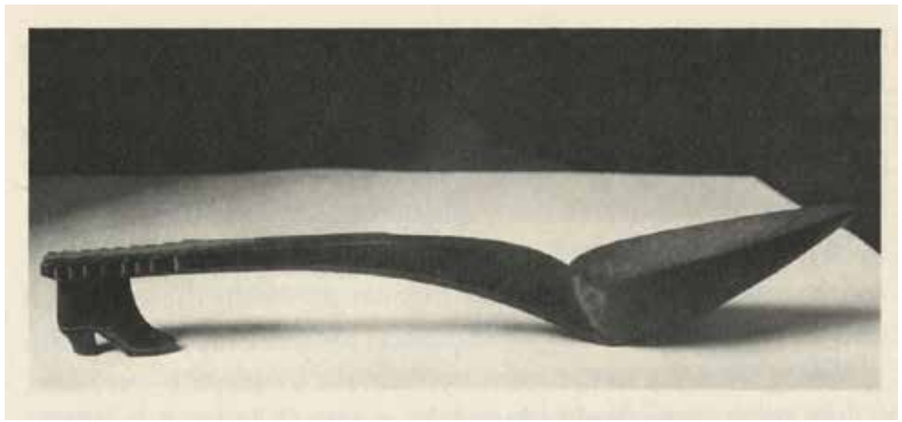
12 While much of the writing on Surrealism has focused on the male gaze and its representation of the female body, these perspectives are notably examined in Whitney Chadwick's *Women Artists and the Surrealist Movement* (1985), which unpacks the discrepancy between images of women Surrealists and images by women Surrealists. Yet following its publication, Chadwick's arguments faced criticism, including Meret Oppenheim's letter response to the publisher. Other perspectives suggest that for the Surrealists, the feminine – expressed through both admiration and misogyny, recognition and objectification – served also as a path of revolt (Skov, 2021:134). As Alyce Mahon elaborates: "when male Surrealist artists focus on the female body in their paintings and installations, they celebrate the erotic power of the female body and the uncanny power of the feminine in us all" (2005:19). The movement's engagement with violence against the female form, often attributed to the 'male gaze' and explorations of the unconscious, is evident Hans Bellmer's highly sexualized deformations in his doll sculptures, intended to oppose the "clean" Nazi depictions of the body (Skov, 2021:135). These subversions, however, as Skov argues, were not exclusive to male Surrealists, noting that "'Fini's exquisitely morbid images are a reminder that Eros and Thanatos can drive women, too" (2021:135). Such arguments invite a reconsideration of Chadwick's position, though these questions, while significant, lie beyond the scope of this project.

fig. 21

Alberto Giacometti, *Hands Holding the Void (Invisible Object)*, 1934 (cast c. 1954-55), MoMa, New York *(right)*

fig. 22

Man Ray, *Andre Breton's slipper-spoon,* 1934, Man Ray Trust, ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London *(below)*



Eros

This points to a central concept in the Surrealist vocabulary – namely, eros. Largely influenced by Freudian explorations of unconscious drives and Bataillean eroticism in later years, the Surrealists explored desire, passionate love, and erotic obsession through literature and art. As Mahon writes, "The Surrealists believed that 'we must all learn to read with and look through the eyes of Eros'" (2005:126). The term eros here refers to the Greek *eros*, which shapes the origins of the word erotic – sexual desire, passionate love, or the life drive itself. Drawing from these origins, *eros* is expressed throughout literature and the arts, encompassing both psychological and physical dimensions that transform how we respond to and engage with the world. As Mahon elaborates, "eros is not merely about sexual procreation, it is about production of pleasure and, most importantly, is often expressed in opposition to thanatos (its opposite, the death drive), and in the name of an ideology of choice unfettered by social and moral norms" (2005:11).

This psychological aspect of the erotic is further expounded upon by Audre Lorde, who conceives of the erotic as a form of "creative power", a life force which acts as the "nurturer or nursemaid of all our deepest knowledge" (1984:89). Lorde suggests that the erotic moves beyond the sexual or pornographic[13], and has the power to reveal our strongest internal sense of satisfaction:

> The erotic is a measure between the beginnings of our sense of self and the chaos of our strongest feelings. And there is, for me, no difference between writing a good poem and moving into the sunlight against the body of the woman I love. (1984:88)

Gaining insight into this offered me a deeper understanding of the erotic's potential in visual art, particularly works subsumed under the weight of this mysterious life force – eros[14].

My interest in eros and the poetic object lies in their potential to expand notions of desire into intimate moments of contemplation, exposing the vulnerability of the 'interior'. This potential generates itself through uncertainty and intuitive processes, through simple

13 In her conceptualisation of the erotic as a creative power Audre Lorde delineates a clear distinction between *the erotic* and pornography. Lorde's argument suggests: "The erotic has often been misnamed by men and used against women. It has been made into the confused, the trivial, the psychotic, the plasticized sensation. For this reason, we have often turned away from the exploration and consideration of the erotic as a source of power and information, confusing it with its opposite, the pornographic. But pornography is a direct denial of the power of the erotic, for it represents the suppression of true feeling. Pornography emphasizes sensation without feeling"(1984:88).

14 In *Trembling Text*, Michael Székely defines the connecting nodes between Andre Breton and Bataille's varied definitions of the erotic: "for both writers, eroticism and death resemble the more Freudian-inspired doublets: desire/'death instinct'; pleasure and reality principles/death drive theory. Here, the ego drives and the sexual drives become subsumed under the 'life drive', which engages in a convulsive interaction with the 'death drive'... The crux of surrealist love is a blending, but not a unification, of these drives, which are also not, it should be clarified, isolated, theoretical objects" (2002:115).

material interruptions and formal contemplations that unsettle and quietly seduce a viewer's fantasies. These themes emerge both in sculptural form and through exploratory processes of drawing and collage, where gestural tensions and material fragments create their own intimate dialogues *(fig. 24)*. Most viscerally, we see this in the resistance of stretched fabric, or how an object yields to pressure while maintaining resilience. Drawing attention to these moments reanimates an object; its appearance stirs the viewer's imagination through bodily sensations of swelling, collapsing, tensing, releasing. Here the erotic emerges between hard and soft elements, in transitional states of becoming, suggesting both protection and exposure. Such material expressions of eros operate on a visceral level, engaging our bodily knowledge of desire, tension and release.

fig. 24

Two preliminary trace monotypes, contemplations of the stain and the wound

Part III : Fallen things

Studio: a hares form & the perspective of dust

The room that I find myself in would otherwise be rather modestly inhabited, if not for its disparate array of discarded fragments and found objects; things that linger between the partially familiar and barely recognisable, poking out of cardboard boxes and forming a dense nest beneath my working tables. At times, some are scattered along the wooden floorboards, while others rest on surfaces in loose, peculiar, yet careful arrangements caught somewhere in the moment of coming into being, all the while constantly shifting throughout this room – my studio.

Whilst listening to an old interview with Leonora Carrington, acclaimed painter and novelist associated with the Surrealist movement, I was captured by her anecdotal explanation of the rooms and interior spaces depicted in her paintings. "They call it a form", she explained, the term given for a hare's nesting place. In the back of my mind, I imagined encountering such a form: a shelter gathered and assembled in a low furrow, enmeshed with grass strands and heather, resembling a bird's nest. It made me think about my own approach to gathering and assembling, as if my practice also followed the logic of a hare's form. What shape, then, might this form take?

Perspective of dust – coming into being and being left over

I frequently return to Briony Fer's meditation on Gabriel Orozco's notebooks in her text *Constellations in Dust*, finding in it a sympathetic thinking to my approach to material:

> He calls this drift of thought the "perspective of dust/*la perspectiva del polvo*". This is a way of describing (in two languages) a direction and a movement that are not only spatial but also temporal, revolving around beginnings and endings, where there is precise correspondence between coming into being and being leftover. (2009:27)

Fer draws on those seemingly inconsequential topographies that form the makeup of Orozco's artistic practice – the intimate spaces of the notebook or sketchbook. As the

title suggests, the text attempts to find those elusive connections between the disparate elements found on the pages of his notebooks, the writings, photographs, found images, scraps, and drawings. She settles on Orozco's July 17, 1992 entry of the word 'realia' – a librarian's term to describe those everyday artifacts or visual props that, while absent from books, serve as some kind of teaching or demonstrational aid: actual facts, *real* things. In the same breath, Fer points out the discrepancy between this definition and how Orozco's notebooks so closely, yet mysteriously, connect this word to his collection of small, mundane objects and the various other fragments that are of interest to his practice. Fer notes:

> Orozco came upon this odd word and breathed new life into it. By picking it out he holds it up for inspection as if it is a material thing, or actual bit of the (English) language that got caught up in the net of his thought. (2009:23)

What draws me to Orozco's notebooks/sketchbooks is how they serve as early repositories for his material and object-oriented exploration – a process that resonates with my own approach to making. Both cyclical and unlimited, these repositories narrate a subversive inquiry, almost naïvely or intuitively, that escapes the confines of logical or didactic forms of categorisation. In doing so, this kind of approach dissolves preconceived value systems and the defined separation that we have from our material world. Instead, it opens up the possibility of seeing *things*, and our relationship to them, in a new light. This kind of sensibility to material *things* resonates with artist and theorist Hito Steyerl's observation:

> A thing is never just something, but a fossil in which a constellation of forces is petrified… things are never just inert objects, passive items or lifeless shucks… but consist of tensions, forces, hidden powers, which keep being changed. (2006:4)

Fallen things

Over time I have come to recognise those *hidden powers*, restlessly contained within the sparsely gathered and assembled miscellanea that populate my studio space. While my approach to collecting follows no formula or system, I associate these *things* with the downward pull of gravity – its falling motion. I call them *fallen things*. Indeed, they have fallen, tumbled into the crevices, finding solace on the outskirts and the edge of things, gathering in a seemingly unexpected compilation. My *fallen things* are, in part, directly connected to me, such as a laddered stocking (a second skin), or a thoughtful contribution from someone who has come to know this significant part of my practice. It is those items to which I am intuitively drawn, be it something vaguely recognisable, a fragment of organic matter such as a fallen leaf, a torn bicycle tube washed up on the beach, a lone fishing rod stacked in the corner of a junkyard, or an unpaired shoe.

This initial gathering of miscellanea produces *a constellation of forces* which hold the mystery of past lives. Battered, displaced, and often overlooked, they operate within the contingency of decay, a hidden pathos, an inner woundedness. As Steyerl writes:

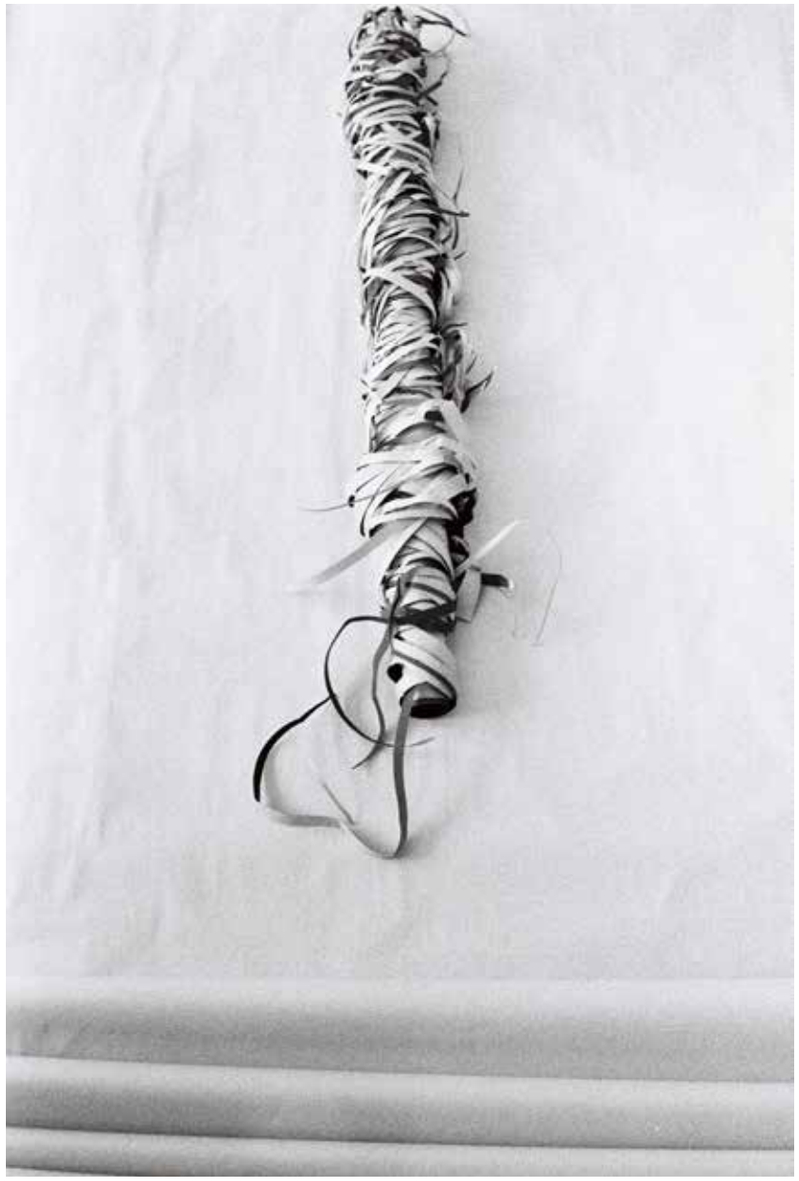
53 *Untitled (Rummaging)* 2024

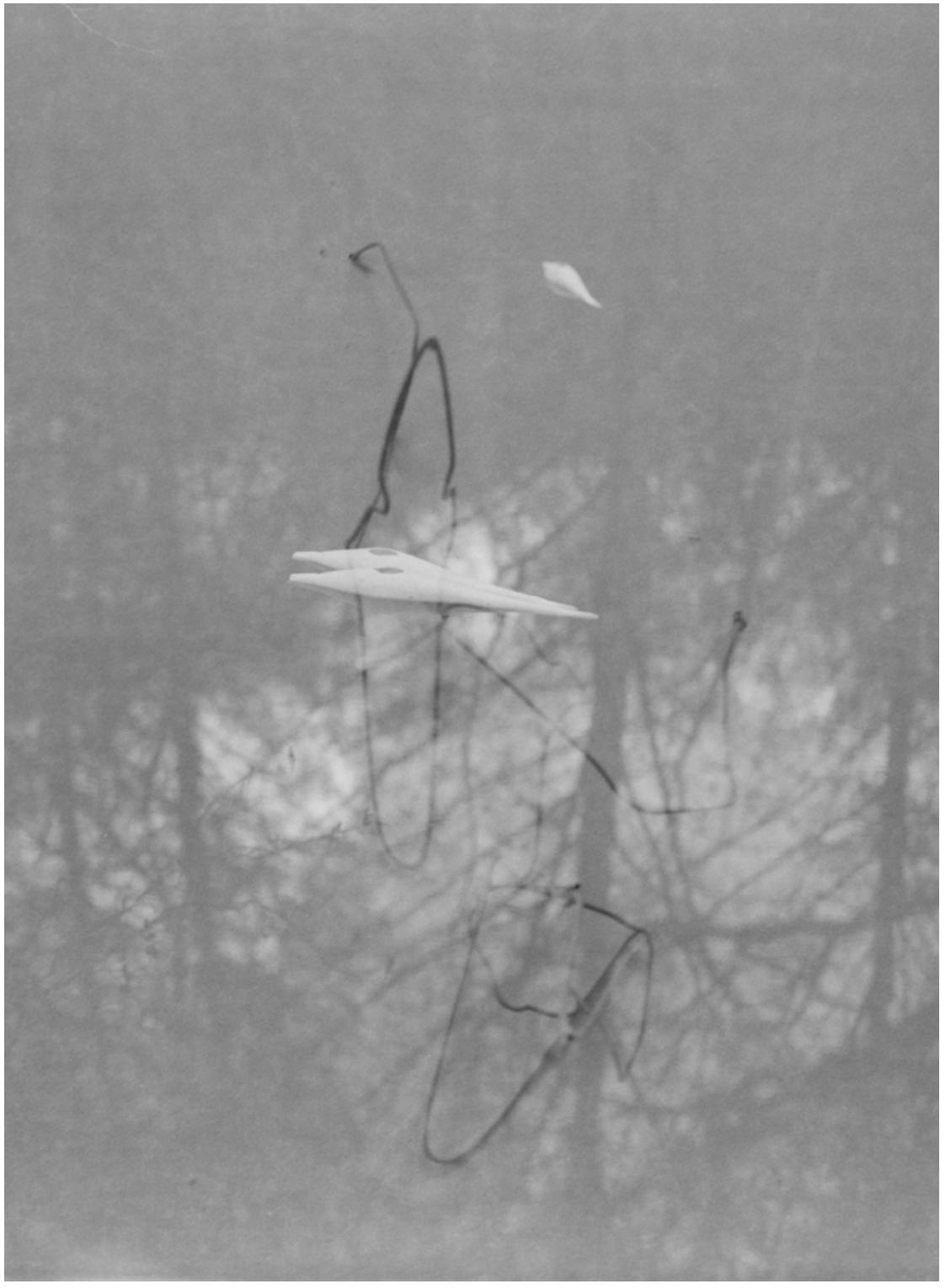
> It doesn't represent reality. It is a fragment of the real world. It is a thing just like any other – a thing like you and me… Things condense power and violence. Just as a thing accumulates productive forces and desires, so does it also accumulate destruction and decay. (2010:5)

Steyerl's sentiment is implied by the title of this body of work.[15] These *fallen things*, their gravity (both the physical property as well as emotional allusions), serves as an implicit undertone that permeates through my layered material investigation. The fragments that shift through my studio tell me something about the world, and about me. They speak of the intricate dualities encompassing my own reckoning with a sense of fragility, on this complicated and vulnerable Earth. Over the duration of this study, something has become pertinent to me: the realisation that while being separate entities, beings, and things, we are also irrefutably connected. This lends itself to Bracha Ettinger's notions of the *matrixial space* and its counterpart, *border linking* (Baert, 2017:49). These concepts involve a kind of knowledge which precedes logical parameters of categorisation and that are attributed to the inner workings that uniquely occur in the maternal womb. Like two overlapping circles which create the almond shape, there is a merging of two separate entities: the unborn child and its mother. Within this *matrixial space*, things are not yet fully formed; rather, they move fluidly as both uniquely separate and individual, yet indivisibly connected, otherwise known as *borderlinking*. Here, understanding occurs at the level of the prefigurative, intuitive, and spontaneous. Within this nebulous propagation, the *matrixial effect*, there is a continued, effervescent *generative potential* (Baert, 2017:50).

While these concepts extend into deeper psychoanalytical and feminist paradigms, they provide a way of engaging with contemporary art practices, including my own. Although this body of work does not directly link to feminist thinking, I consider Ettinger's concept of the *matrixial space* in relation to its potential for transformation. These ideas inform and delineate the fluctuating dualities of veil, wound, and womb, which I have adapted in my practical approach to translating my *fallen things*. These modes of translation take shape through various methods of casting, carving, and assembling which fall under the categories *casting the veil* and *the weight of the wound.*

15 To build on Steyerl's concept, the *thing* I refer to is Bill Brown's Thing Theory (2001). Relying on the seemingly simple distinction between an object and a thing, Brown suggests that a thing can be perceived in "what is excessive in objects, as what exceeds their mere materialisation as objects or their mere utilisation as objects – their force as sensuous presence or as metaphysical presence, the magic by which objects become values, fetishes, idols and totems. Temporalized as the before and after of the object, thingness amounts to latency (the not yet formed of the not yet formable) and to an excess (what remains physically or metaphysically irreducible to objects)."





Untitled (Red blooms and a gaping mouth) 2024

Part IV: Casting the veil

...just as cicadas shed their casings in summer and newly-born calves drop membranes from around their bodies, and just as snakes leave their shed skin hooked on briars so that it flutters in the wind, just so—writes Lucretius—must a thin image be given off from surface of things.

Barbara Baert (2002:5)

One of the primary ways I transmute my *fallen things* into new forms is through casting – a process I refer to as *casting the veil*. Like the fine membrane of cloth held by Saint Veronica, this process imbues surfaces with intricate ambiguities through phases of veiling and unveiling, hollow and imprint (Sexton, 2013:14). In this way, the casts bear witness to the wounded surfaces of my *fallen things*, serving as haptic relics through their direct contact. Although their final form is fixed and ossified, their appearance suggests ongoing transformation. This sense of fluidity emerges through visible traces of process: the unrestrained folds and creases, the unplanned intersections of surfaces, the way material appears caught in moments of becoming. Like Ettinger's *matrixial space*, these works resist completion of fixed definition. They play with the viewer's eye, suggesting multiple haptic associations: something bone-like, flaccid; a clay nest, a seashell, a lamb's foot – simultaneously phallic and feminine, like organic limbs. These delicate, unnameable vessels seem extruded from the "interior", their exposed surfaces are enigmatic and fragile, bearing marks of their making that read like a fine pattern of braille or secretive imprint. Through nurturing each cast into being, I appeal to the viewer's sense of their own physicality, eliciting a subtle yet evocative sensuality that hints at the human body – shifting between moments of revelation and concealment. This production moves in cycles, where forms emerge and recede, and meaning is constantly created and recreated. Yet in this interspace, these disparate parts are connected through a material dialogue which murmurs feelings of fragility and brokenness. Imbued with the *generative potential* of the matrix, this intimate engagement with material becomes an unveiling of an inner world through substance and form.

Descent into matter

My casting practice moves between traditional and unconventional approaches. I am drawn to casting as it engages both thought and sensation, order and contingency – it is "a means of making which is at once both calculated and physical yet open to elements of chance" (Sexton, 2018:10). In many ways, this approach has deepened my sensitivity to material transformation bridging my interest in print-making with three-dimensional sculpture. Slip casting begins by subverting conventional perception: we must first see the negative space, observing objects in their inverse. These negative spaces trace invisible contours between object and void. In observing my *fallen things* in their inverse, these boundary lines become thresholds between interior and exterior, guiding the formation of their cavities, where the matrix becomes both womb and wound.

In my experimental approaches to casting, the matrix or mould becomes more skin-like, veil-like, producing singular, unique casts. Working with paper clay, plaster, porcelain, and discarded materials – nylon stockings, chairs, pipes, bicycle tubes, string, and various other fragments of flotsam – my methodology embraces the intuitive, spontaneous and unpredictable. The process involves a visceral transformation of material from fluid state to sedimentary form. I begin by pouring the heavy, sloppy paper clay, plaster, or porcelain into the negative spaces of my *fallen things*. What follows is a kind of urgency: a physical oscillation between my body and the weight of the mutable substance as it is caught in the netting of stockings or the inside of a tube, tied with string, and hung to dry.

fig. 25

Process image: waiting as plaster sets within a found tube's spiralled shape; gradually peeling away its outer layer to reveal the positive form (Artwork made from this cast titled, *Naked as a Worm*)

This approach to making materialises in *Naked as a Worm* (2023) *(fig. 25)*, where a bound, dusty pipe vent is shaped into an intimate curl. As I fill its cavity, a warm vapour from the plasters' exothermic reaction creates a layer of moisture on its rubbery skin, as though this inert matter is gently perspiring. The material versatility of plaster traverses a vast range of applications, from medicine and dentistry to archaeology. Within art history, this substance holds a unique position for its capacity to blur boundaries between replica and original, between sculptural body and living body. Since the sixteenth century, plaster casts of classical sculpture in western homes and libraries embodied specific cultural ideologies – Venus, for instance, was seen as a bodily manifestation of beauty (2006:117)[16]. As Nichols writes, "This influence was so great that drawings from life by artists trained on casts often included – unintentionally or not – quotations from the bodies of classical sculpture they knew too well" (2006:117).

fig. 26

James Watt's workshop, *Venus*, 1790-1819, Science Museum Group

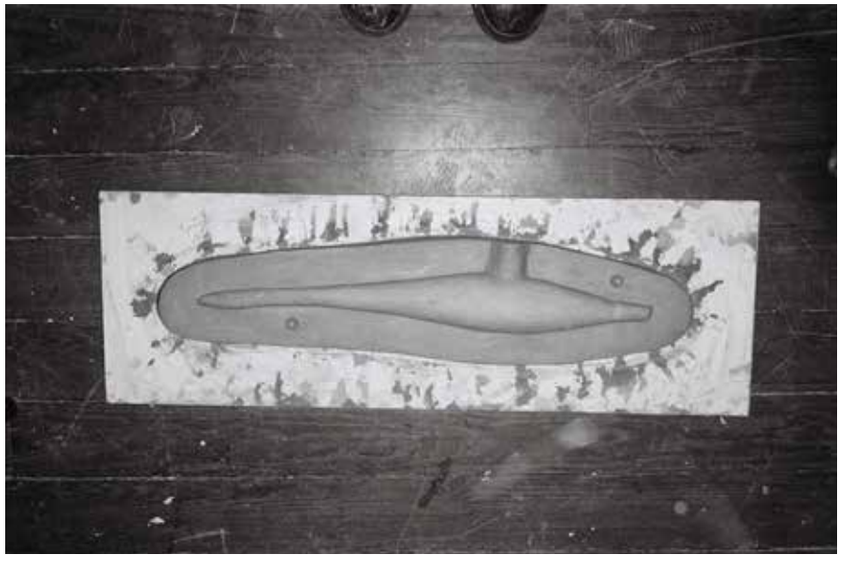
The capacity of plaster to record surface detail precisely enables the formation of imprint, replica, and likeness. This shares affinity with the *vera icon*, which, often misinterpreted as *true image*, is directly translated as *true likeness*. In seeking this likeness, I ask the question whether we pursue unity or excess, the absolute or something that exists in between. In pulling away and tearing off the diaphanous, elastic layer to reveal the heavy worm-like positive, I think about how this process engages in a dance between unity and separation, wholeness and dissipation *(fig. 26)*.

16 In the text *Plaster cast sculpture: A history of touch*, Nichols elaborates: "Hellenistic sculptures such as the Venus de Medici, Apollo Belvedere and the Laocoön were considered to be the bodily manifestations of the Beautiful. Both Winckelmann and Goethe studied and admired casts." (2006:117) Moreover, Anthony Hughes posits, "it was the role of antique sculpture as artistic and philosophical paradigms that underpinned their value as cultural icons. Indeed, from the foundation of the earliest academies in Rome in the sixteenth century, a nucleus of antique statues informed the study of the human figure'' (1997: 80).

From this material dialogue, the word *dressing* emerges: to dress and undress a body, my own, or the dressing of a wound – like veil is to wound is to womb. This moment of dress/undress encapsulates a vulnerable, intimate space, a place of both violence and tenderness, pain and healing. It reveals the permeable threshold between eros and thanatos, where experiences, feelings, and thoughts remain undeniably fragile. This way of working, in its embrace of material temporality and contingency, untethered from predetermined outcomes, resonates with Penny Siopis' reflection: "see the vulnerability that comes from uncertain sight as generative. An opportunity to see things differently" (2018:13). Here, uncertainty becomes not just a condition of making, but a generative force that shapes the overall meaning of this body of work.

Through porcelain slip casting, a multitude of temporal contingencies unfold: the pouring of milky-sticky substance, the waiting for things to dry, the unseen transformations through first and final firings – where gravity and alchemy begin to take hold. Matter shifts from viscous liquid to brittle solid, heavy to feather weight; from soft, cold, smooth, brittle-pink to a strong yet fragile, bony vessel. While there is significant handling during the intervals of casting, there are also necessary moments of withdrawal, where I must remove my hands – revealing crucial acheiropoietic moments where, like the *vera icon*, the work receives its form without direct intervention (*fig. 27*). As Siopis eloquently posits, "this offers an opportunity to open one's self to the 'life' of non-human matter and to find in this openness an intimate model for relationality" (2018:12). These moments where we must yield to the transformative potential of matter suggests a relational model where thinking flows through material engagement.

fig. 27
Process image: making the mould/matrix for *A fish concealed (vesica piscis)*; formed by shaping paper clay inside a laddered stocking



With this material relationship in mind, I turn to Edmund de Waal's writings on porcelain – a substance once revered as white gold. This precious white clay possesses an almost mythical quality, so fine and delicate that when held to the light, it reveals its semi-translucence. While porcelain has captured human desire across seas and centuries, it is in the simplest instances that its fine properties emerge: as direct sunlight plays across a vessel's curvature, the clay surface appears to open its pores, allowing light to seep through. This interplay of opacity and translucence creates a veil-like quality, where an inexplicable sense of desire, the kind that takes the form of *eros*, manifests in the boundary between light and surface, existing in perpetual oscillation (*fig. 28*, → p.70).

fig. 31
Dora Maar, *Untitled (Hand-Shell)*, 1934,
Estate of Dora Maar, Centre Pompidou, Paris

Gravity

Time and again, gravity emerges as a crucial sculptural device in my engagement with my *fallen things*. Following Maria Bartuszová's system of 'gravistimulation', these forms explore the somatic principle of touch, creating a formal dialogue between revealing and concealing, concave and convex (Garlatyová, 2022:25). In *Umbilicus (the weight of my head)*, this principle manifests through the fragile remnant of several layers, where form materialises through time, shaped by the pull of gravity. The process begins with the skeletal frame of an umbrella, its cavity embalmed with muslin cloth and cornstarch *(figs. 29,30*, → p.71*)*. Once set, the removal of the frame leaves the now stiffened cloth as a kind of press mould, a matrix awaiting the imprint of the porcelain's clay. The title *Umbilicus* denotes the scattered ties that intertwine in my research: a belly button, a navel, the fibrous remnant or scar of the foetal-maternal connection. The term also refers to the central chamber in a shell's whorl, evoking both the texture of fired porcelain and the implicit sensuality of the vulvic shell motif in Surrealist works such as Dora Maar's *Hand Shell (fig. 31)*. As de Waal notes, the name porcelain originates in "Venetian slang, the vulgar wolf-whistle after a pretty girl. 'Porcellani', or little pigs, is the nickname for cowries shells, which feel as smooth as porcelain. Cowrie shells lead, obviously… to a vulva" (2015:8).

fig. 28

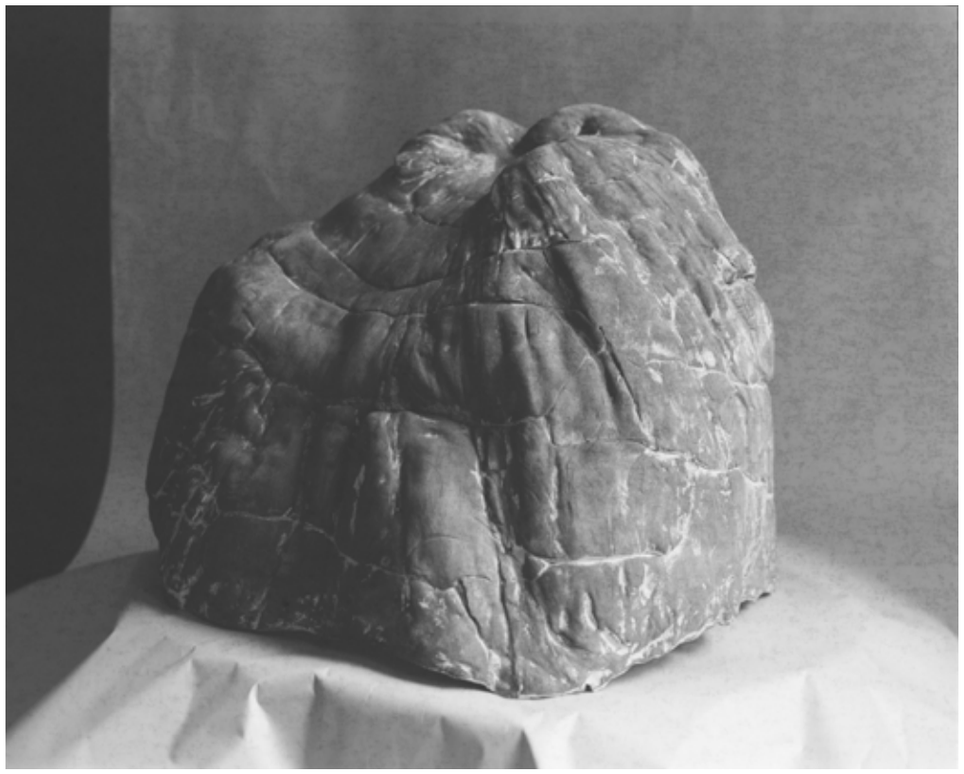
Process image: Observation of porcelain's translucency held in direct sunlight

figs. 29 & 30 (overleaf)

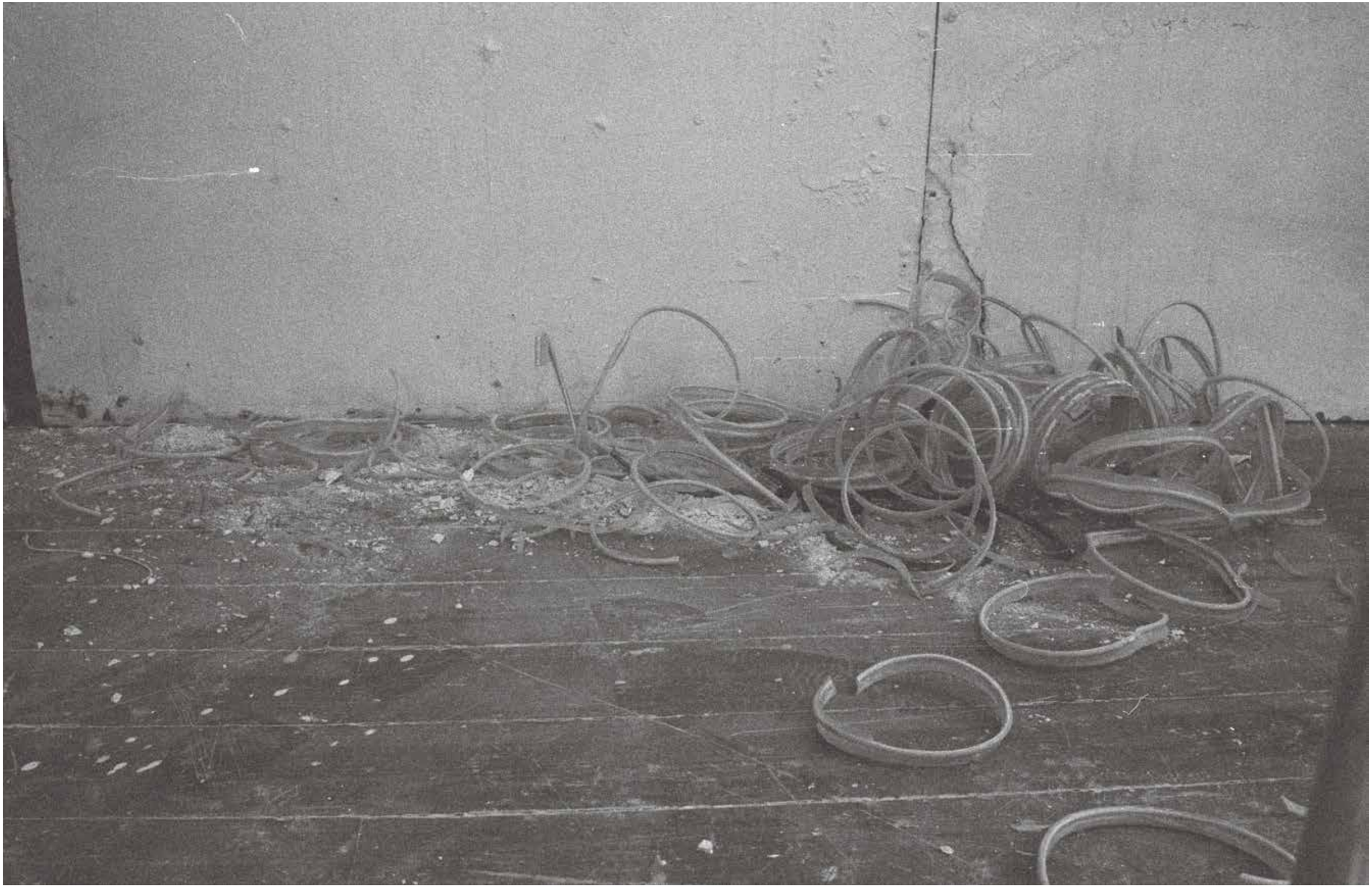
Documentation of an experimental casting process: umbrella-shaped matrix which held porcelain clay and recorded its interior creases (Artwork cast from this object titled, *Umbilicus (the weight on my head)*)

Working rapidly yet carefully, I press the doughy porcelain clay into the mouth of the matrix, where the dualities of seen and unseen emerge through the pressure of fingers against clay body and cloth. The weight of my hand acts as a mechanism for translating the cloth's fine warp and weft onto the porcelain. These moments of touch create an intimate surface tension, and once fired, the hardened surface paradoxically appears soft, like a bundled quilt. The final stage involves lathering red oxide stains on the exterior and copper glaze in the cavernous interior, suggesting blood or wounds (*figs. 32,33*). After its last firing, the work comes into being: the outer red surface burns away to leave only a slight shimmery veiling, while the glazed interior transforms into a coppery glow. Through this intuitive material engagement, the body, or its suggestion, becomes a grounding point for exploring fragility in my practice. My methods of casting and the sculptural transformation through gravity and weight translate my *fallen things* into delicate haptic relics. These considerations lead to the following component of my practice – *the weight of the wound*.

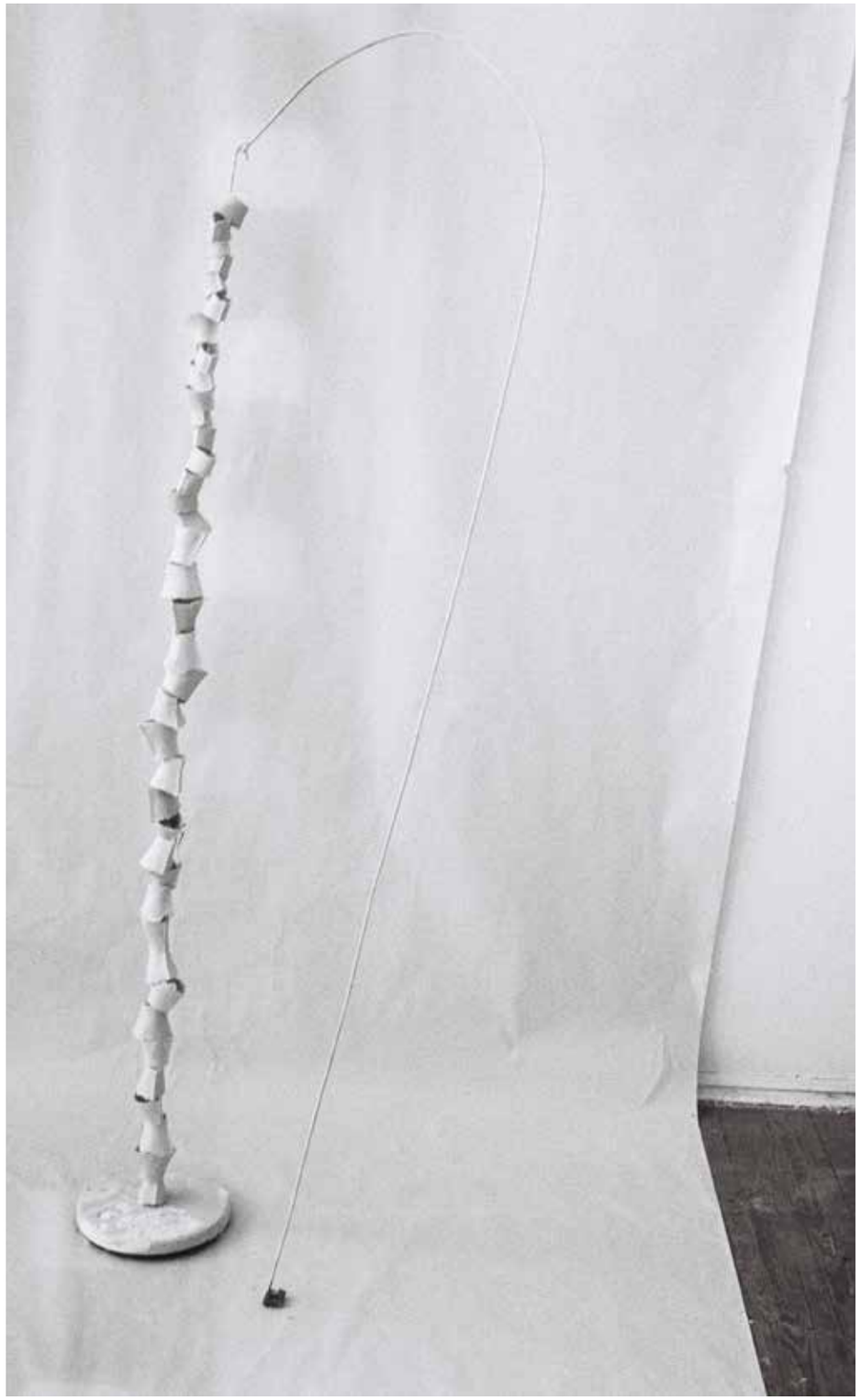
figs. 32 & 33
Documentation of applying copper glaze to interior of *Umbilicus (the weight of my head)*



82 *Parasol* 2024



84 *Untitled (Naked as a worm I)* 2024



Untitled (Endless spine II) 2024

Part v: The weight of the wound

Nothing, it would seem, could possibly give to such a motley of effort the right to lay claim to whatever one might mean by the category of sculpture. Unless, that is, the category can be made to become almost infinitely malleable.

Rosalind Krauss, 1979

A crucial feature of my artistic practice lies in bringing together the disparate parts of my *fallen things*, coalescing their sensitively casted and assembled forms into a singular, cohesive whole. I refer to this area of my process as *the weight of the wound*. Grappling with the tenuous overlap between veil-wound-womb, this section considers ways in which my sculptural objects evoke a sensual dialogue and suggest fragility through materiality and form. Through measured tasks of assembling, repetitive acts, carving, and careful spatial awareness, these *fallen things* are transformed into intimate and contemplative configurations.

Brancusi curse

While my casting approaches evolve through phases of material transmutation, *the weight of the wound* remains a consistent methodology. Throughout conversations with my supervisors, a conundrum *(the Brancusi curse)* frequently presents itself: finding the best solution to meld disparate parts into a whole. Working primarily with cast-away objects and discarded materials, while embracing a suggestive visual language, several questions guide this investigation:

- how do I balance the nebulous interplay between made and found objects?
- how can something simultaneously reveal and conceal?
- how does a fallen thing want to be held?
- how do materials touch, or invoke a desire to touch?

fig. 34

Constantin Brancusi, *Bird in Space*, 1923, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York *(left)*

figs. 35

Alberto Giacometti, *Boule suspendue (Suspended Ball)*, 1931 (version from 1965), Fondation Giacometti, Paris *(right)*

This involves thinking and feeling through matter in a way that is both reductive and affective. Constantin Brancusi mastered such subtle material relationships, paving the way for Surrealist sculpture *(fig. 34)*. Through arduous and painstaking labour, Brancusi's reductive process of direct carving into stone or wood transformed raw material into abstracted bodies, seductively polished to an almost mechanical state of geometric form (Krauss, 1981: 86). Like Duchamp with his ready-mades, Brancusi saw this reductive approach as detaching the work from personal affect (Krauss, 1981:80). Yet as Rosalind Krauss insists:

> In place of a part-by-part formal dynamic, there is in Brancusi's sculpture something one might call the deflection of an ideal geometry… it is a call for us to acknowledge the specific way in which matter inserts itself into the world – the way in which placement betrays attitudes of being. Brancusi's concern with form as a manifestation of surface assumed a central place in the thinking of a new generation of sculptors. (1981:86-103)

Krauss' observation suggests that even through modes of abstraction, sculpture holds the potential to be gestural, intimate, or entangled in erotic impulse. This argument rests on two fundamental characteristics of sculpture: placement and surface. These elements are tactfully absorbed in the material distortions of Surrealist poetic objects, as seen in Giacometti's *Suspended Ball* (1930-1), where a cut-out sphere dangles deliberately over a crescent shape, or in Meret Oppenheim's *My Nurse* (1936), with its trussed, pearly white stilettos dressed in paper frills, prepared as a Sunday roast *(figs. 35 & 36)*. These works become "emblematic of a psychic process running counter to the rational contemplation elicited by the analytic object of constructivism" (Krauss,1981:124).

These approaches resonate with the tensions I explore in making my tapered-leg jelutong bases, which hinge on familiar forms: a table, a chair, a crutch, stilts, or something else entirely. Their carved depressions tentatively cup and shape the dusty ribbing of gypsum slumping over the edge, or the featherweight clump of paperclay in deep repose. These dialectics, as explored through the veil-wound-womb interspace, traverse what Rosalind Krauss describes as the "reciprocity between the form of the

container and that of the contained – the exterior mass cradling the void set at its center like a vital organ, and the shape of the void appearing as the key to the developed form of the whole" (1981:143).

My methods of carving and assembling embrace such creative dualisms of intentional and intuitive making. Working with basic formal elements of balance, placement, weight and texture, I choreograph subtle disruptions that shift my *fallen things* from their context as found objects. Through this approach, I attempt to enter into a gestural dialogue that brings a quiet sense of motion to otherwise inert sculptural forms. These works often evoke supports or holding devices – objects that cradle, nurture, or suspend – while simultaneously suggesting movement through their formal arrangement. Titles of the artworks also often operate as both nouns and verbs, reflecting this duality between stasis and motion. These innuendos are directly translated through the *humbleness* and *mutability* of material such as brittle plaster tubing as it collapses over and is held up by a mouth-shaped cut-out of packaging tape (Celant, 1969).

At the heart of *the weight of the wound* lies the notion of fragility, expressed through a multiplicity of material tensions: soft meets hard, broken meets whole, falling meets held. The aim is to create a dialogue that engages with Ettinger's (1992:202) notion of *border linking*, in which there is a continuous negotiation between proximity and distance, where limits between exterior and interior blur and become variable, like an encounter between intimate and unknown. In this way, the relationship between viewer and work becomes divisible yet fluid (Baert, 2017:50), creating moments that permeate our sensorial faculties and impart a visceral sense of vulnerability. These exchanges move from the micro fibres of each object towards broader reiterative rhythms and spatial dynamics, maintaining a sense of fragility throughout the installation.

figs. 36

Meret Oppenheim, *My Nurse*, 1936-37, Moderna Museet, Stockholm

fig. 38

Process image: *Big red (Chimeral limb)* held after collapse, waiting to be mended

Repetition & the unending form

I'm not interested in how people move,
but what moves them.

Pina Bausch

The setting of dancer Pina Bauschs' *Café Müller* (1978), like many of her choreographed performances, is characterised by a humble selection of objects *(fig. 37)*. Scattered, toppled over and sparsely arranged, a composition of bar stools, chairs and tables is dimly accentuated by light pouring through a revolving glass door that marks the threshold between interior and exterior (Florêncio, 2015:55). Within this narrative, which unfolds in eruptions of emotion softened by solemn cadence, one scene has repeatedly captured my attention. In the right corner of the frontstage, three characters move in a tumultuous collision of repeated gestures: groping, embracing, tugging, turning, pushing over, falling, getting up again. What begins as everyday actions slowly intensifies, until their bodies become so ensnared that they appear locked as a single entity.

figs. 37

Pina Bausch, *Café Müller*, 1978 premiere, Opernhause Wuppertal, Pina Bausch Foundation, photograph by Uli Weiss

Bausch's choreography recalls Eva Hesse's gnarled webs of latex and rope, and similarly, Phyllida Barlow's *Shed Mesh* (1976), which builds through slow, repetitive yet haphazard movements of wrapping, binding and knotting. Here, repurposed canvas and mattress foam envelop a cube structure until the stitched forms fall into and over one another in a gesture of resignation, echoing the overflowing drapery of Bernini's *Ecstasy of St. Teresa*. These observations of repetition shed light on my material engagements with the pieces *Big Red (Chimeral limb)* and *A fish concealed (vesica piscis)*. In the former, a provocative scarlet protrusion winds and unravels in a limb-like formation from the wall, punctuated by an old metal peg at its foot. Through a continuous wrapping of ribbons cut from old book vinyl, this process engages what Barlow (2019:23) describes as a "play between things that have inherent structure compared with the idea of spillage and formlessness". While such unravelling of form might suggest connections to abjection or the uncanny, my interest lies elsewhere. Through intimate gestures of wrapping

and binding, combined with the work's visceral protrusion from the wall, my intention rather is to allude to erotic and sensual registers, and the material externalisation of unconscious processing. These dimensions emerge from and return to an implicit woundedness – both in the process of making and in the work's final form. Garnered through repetitive actions and points of touch, this work's coming into being unfolded through multiple stages: torn, collapsed, wound, bound, mended *(fig. 38*, → p.92*)*.

I often consider what it means to repeat something, to repeat the same thing. While working with the seriality of casting, I tend to ask myself: at what point do things end? *A fish concealed (vesica piscis)* ended with the number 33 – partly self-referential, my age at the time of its making, and serendipitously the kilometre length of the celestial body floating among the Amors, Eros[17]. Veiling upon veiling, these vessels reveal finite traces of a laddered stocking – a *fallen thing*. Their constellation fills the shape of two intersecting circles, the *vesica piscis* or fish bladder, otherwise known as the mandorla; the shape that ignited the formative stages of my layered enquiry into the slippery thresholds encompassing veil-wound-womb. Through my research, I have come to embrace their constant flux between interior and exterior, womb and wound, whole and disintegration, revelation and concealment, unity and separation, eros and thanatos. Yet, more pertinently, I have learned that within these nebulous interspaces lies generative potential.

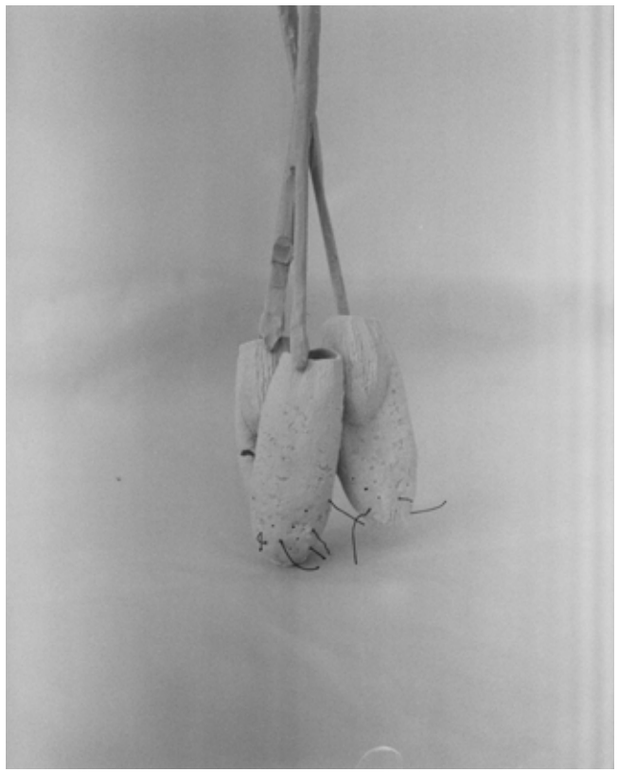
In my installations, I tap into this generative potential by engaging with the plasticity of form and exploring new material approaches.[18] Through careful spatial arrangement, I aim to enhance the viewer's tactile sensibility, drawing attention to tender moments of touch and expressive bodily forms. This exhibition operates within a non-linear format, where boundaries between body and artwork blur. Drawing on Pareyson's reflection that an artwork's formal properties can never be truly fixed or contained in perception, my approach to installation follows his sentiment that form remains perpetually in formation:

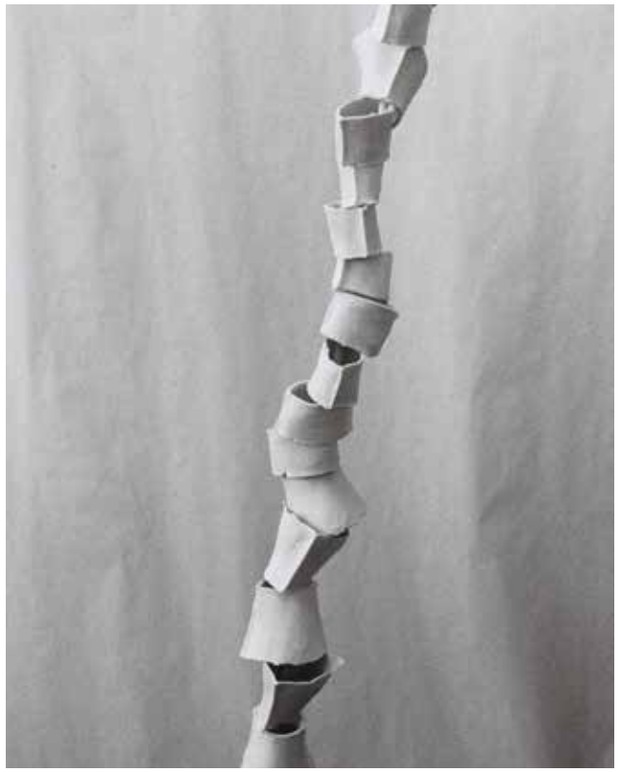
> "a Form… is… a movement locked in time, which is the equivalent of something infinite enclosed in something finite: its totality is the result of a balance that should therefore be regarded, not as the closedness and staticness of an unmoving reality, but as an openness of an infinite, which, through being contained within the form is transformed into a whole". (Pareyson in Vervoordt, 2009:64)

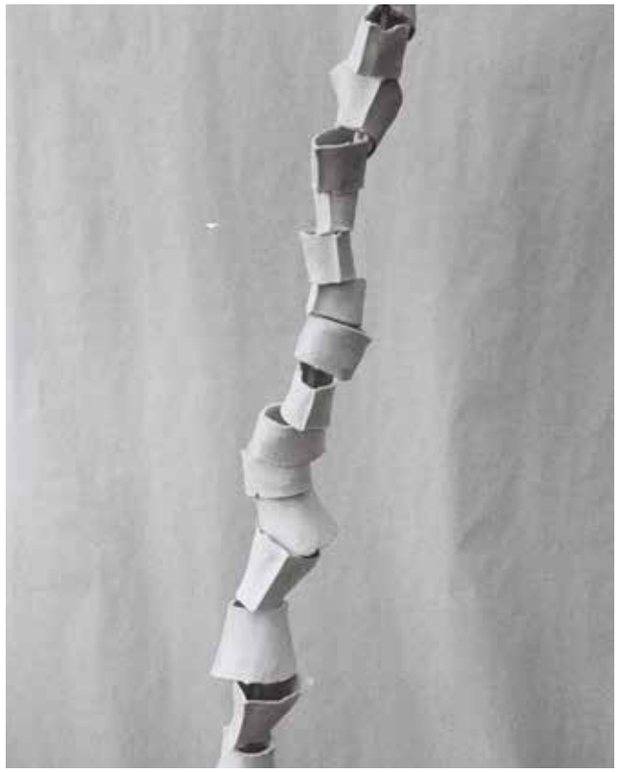
17 This number also evokes the age at which Christ was crucified, resonating with the veil-wound-womb symbolism.

18 Catherine Malabou's concept of plasticity offers three dimensions relevant to this discussion: the capacity to receive form, to give form, and crucially, to destroy form. This third aspect distinguishes plasticity from mere flexibility, as it involves transformations that prevent return to previous states. While my installation practice engages with the "plasticity of form" discussed earlier, Malabou's philosophical framework provides theoretical context for understanding how forms can simultaneously maintain structure while generating new possibilities. This perspective resonates with Pareyson's notion of "something infinite enclosed in something finite" (Pareyson, 2008).

96 *Untitled (Big red)* 2024







Untitled (Studio composition II) 2024

Conclusion

When working sculpturally within the register of abstraction, where forms and practices are suggestive rather than definitive, finding the appropriate words often proves elusive. The work that I make is fragmented; it evolves over time, and arises from an intuitive sensitivity to my *fallen things* and their surfaces. My research was initiated by an instinctive connection that I perceived in the overlap between veil-wound-womb.[19] These motifs, along with the notion of matrix, carry an immense weight, rooted in psychoanalysis and art history with significant feminist engagements.[20] They orbit age-old conversations about our visual and tactile perception, and the significant role that the body plays, whether implicitly or explicitly, in bringing meaning to a work of art. Through the production of this series of work, I have engaged with notions of fragility, a theme that is deeply personal yet also speaks to the complex relationship between our material world and how things are given value. Under *the weight of eros*, where fragmentary and symbolic textures unfold, I seek to unveil moments of intimacy which can be found in material form, and explore how an inherent fragility can be held through sculptural processes.

19 This instinctive connection is, to my mind, deeply rooted in my Irish Catholic heritage. My grandmother's sister who passed away during Covid was a Catholic nun. Sister Anne was part of the congregation Sisters of Notre Dame. She lived and worked at a convent in Bulawayo and was a significant figure within the Chambers family. Although I no longer follow the Catholic faith, attending Church and Catechism was part of my childhood. The imagery associated with the Catholic Church remains vividly imprinted in my memory. I particularly remember the large stained glass window behind the altar at the Parish of Resurrection in Bryanston, depicting the figure of Christ, which illuminated the room during service. Christ's wounds or stigmata were each finely cut abrasions of burning red glass. My research into the connections between veil-wound-womb has been implicitly influenced by such recollections and their lasting effect on me.

20 While Baert and Ettinger's theoretical frameworks have been touched upon and guided aspects of this research, their concepts are explored here through artistic practice and material inquiry, with their full theoretical depth extending beyond the scope of this paper.

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Fish and the feather 2024

Untitled (Veil) 2024 *(overleaf)*

VISUAL INDEX OF WORKS ON EXHIBITION

A fish concealed (vesica piscis)
2024
Thirty-three porcelain vessels,
originally cast from a
laddered stocking
(installation dimensions variable)

Shroud
2024
Porcelain & wooden knitting needle
13,5 x 28 x 12.5 cm
(opposite)

Untitled (Relief)
2024
Plaster & porcelain
34 x 97 x 2,5 cm
(opposite, detail above)

Pleat
2024
Newsprint & found wire
81 x 100 x 6 cm
(overleaf, left)

Untitled (after Meret)
2024
Metal tray, wax thread & unpaired shoe
26 x 38,5 x 9 cm
(overleaf, right)

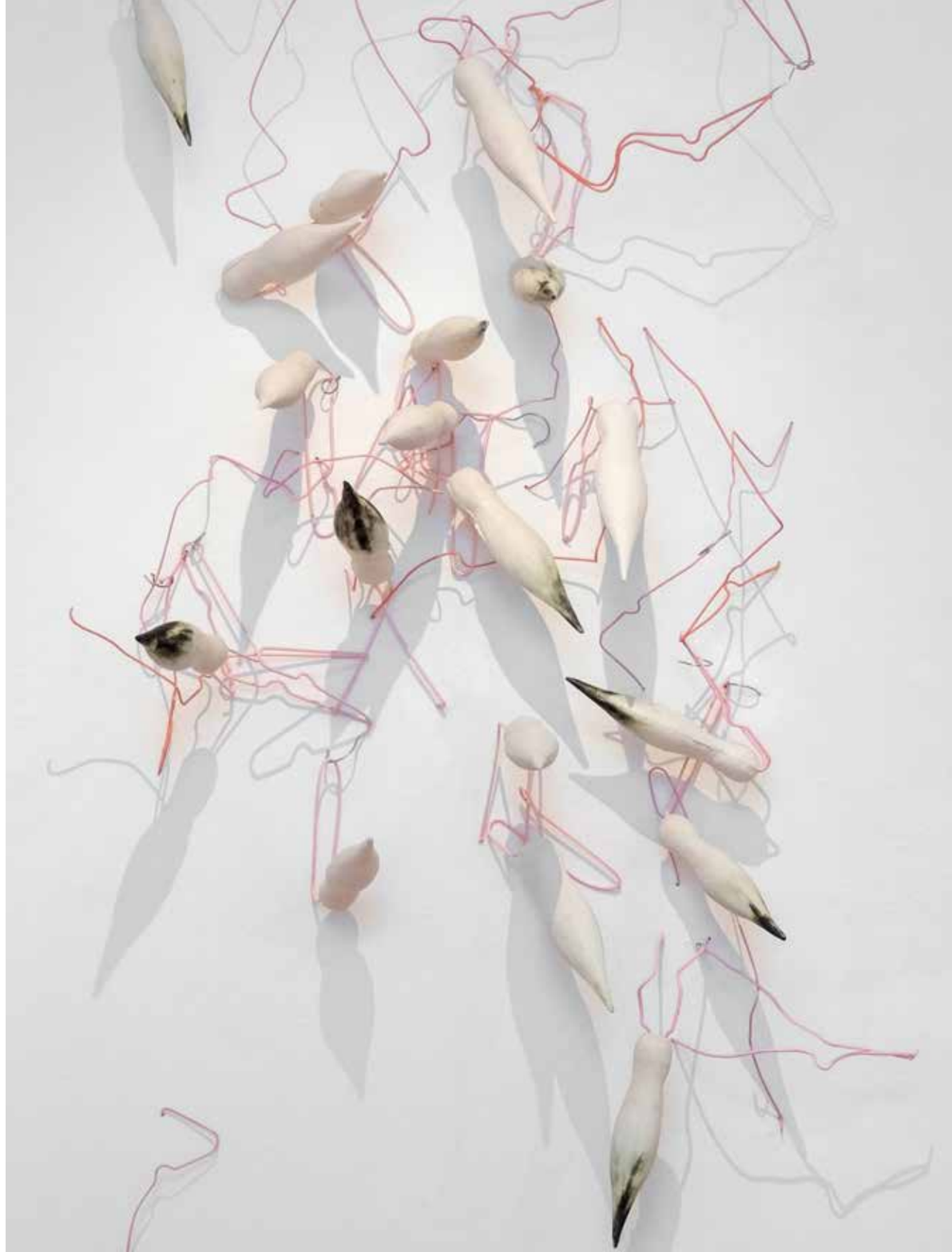
Prickly pear and the satin slipper
2024
Jelutong, porcelain & welding wires
34 x 182 x 9 cm
(opposite, detail above)

Cradle
2024
Plaster & soap stone
52 x 40 x 21 cm

Medusa
2024
Flash bulb, comb handle,
paper clay & nail
20 x 12 x 7 cm
(overleaf, left)

Moon flower
2024
Paper clay, nylon stocking
& soap stone
30 x 327 x 18 cm
(overleaf, right)

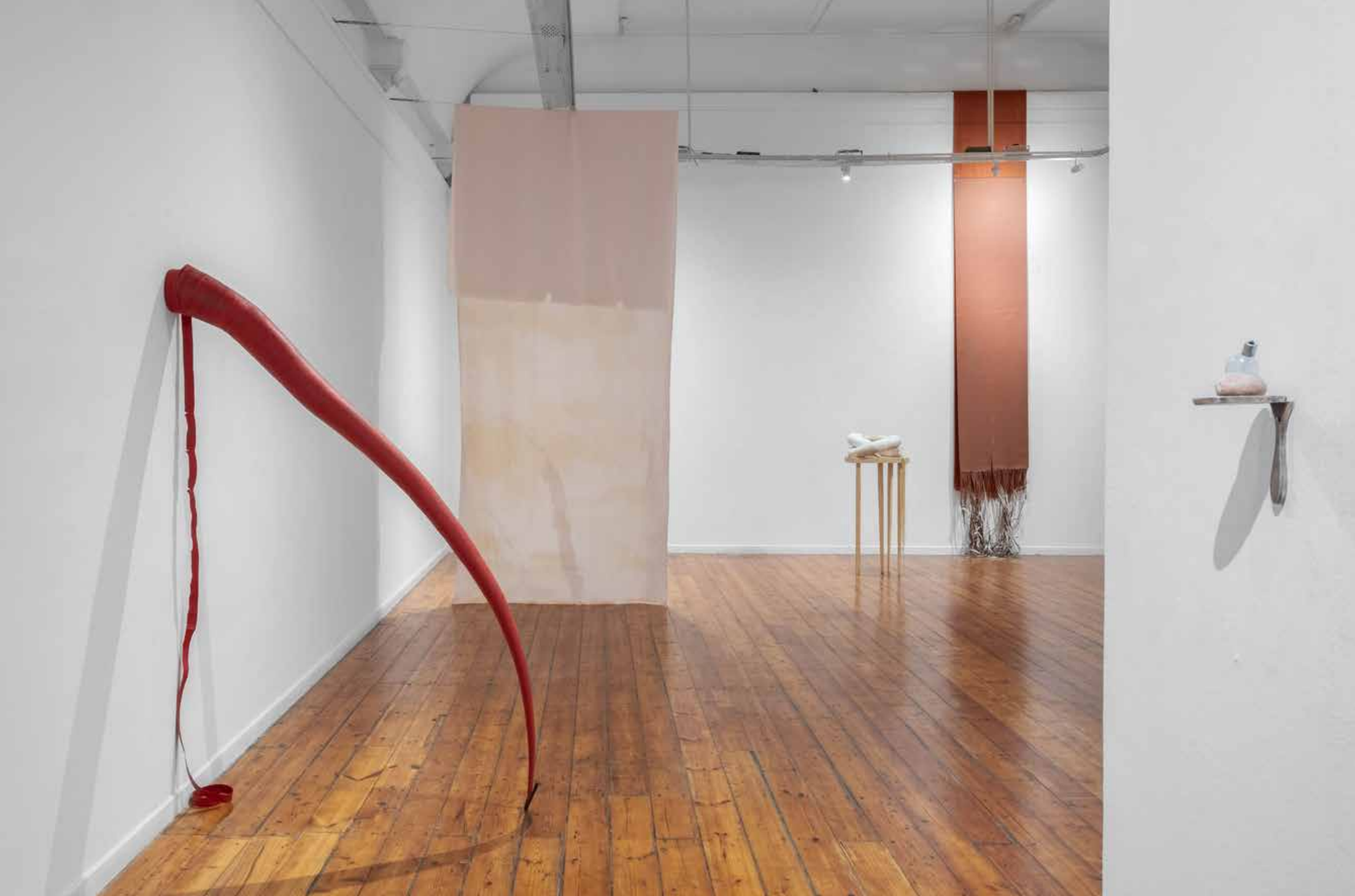
Undergrowth
2024
Porcelain vessels, copper oxide & clothing hangers
91 x 188 cm
(opposite)



Sling
2024
Plaster, packaging tape & rubber tube
22,5 x 81 x 7 cm
(opposite)

Bitten
2024
Cake knife, porcelain, glazed brick & glass
20 x 20 x 12,5 cm
(overleaf, left)

Slippers
2024
Porcelain collage & copper oxide
43 x 74 cm
(overleaf, right)



Endless spine
2024
Porcelain, metal rods & plaster
93 x 179 x 80 cm
(opposite, detail above)

Naked as a worm
2024
Plaster, jelutong & wax thread
48 x 122 x 30 cm
(overleaf, left)

Cascade
2024
Wall paper, red oxide on news print
68 x 460 cm
(overleaf, right)

Big red (Chimeral limb)
2024
Book vinyl & old tent peg
18 x 190 x 123 cm
(opposite)

Stilts, bearer of slumber
2024
Paper clay, jelutong &
clothing hanger
27 x 140 x 50 cm
(opposite, detail above)

Umbilicus (the weight of head)
2024
Porcelain & plaster (base)
36 x 30 x 40 cm (without base)
(opposite, detail above)

Curl
2024
Lock of hair, rubber band,
etching plate & long nail
10 x 15 x 6,5 cm