can you wear a feeling?

A Dialogue of Body, Material, and Emotion.

Abby Eastwood
2026

Exegesis in support of practice-based Thesis
Master of Design
Auckland University of Technology

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abstract

This research explores what it might mean to wear a feeling through a dialogue between material, body and emotion. The practice examines how fashion can act as a medium for accessing emotional states. Building on phenomenological, tacit, and expressive therapeutic perspectives, the research challenges fashion's predominantly visual and critical positioning of the body and instead investigates its potential as a tool for re-centring bodily awareness.

Using a bricolage methodology incorporating practice-led, autoethnography and phenomenology, the research situates lived experience and bodily knowledge within the design process. Methods, including criteria-led making, reflective journaling, mapping, and prototyping, emerged from this framework.

The practice-led research develops a defined spectrum of discomfort that operates as both a generative and evaluative criterion. Prototypes are evaluated by their ability to interrupt bodily autopilot, the habitual and unconscious ways the body occupies space in everyday life. As bodily awareness often emerges through moments of friction or tension, the research applies a structured spectrum of discomfort to deliberately disrupt these automatic patterns. This enables making within identified categories to emerge across postural, balance-based, tactile, and sensorial experiences of discomfort.

Findings suggest that structured discomfort can expose habitual patterns of movement and perception, revealing emotions that are often resisted. Through wearable prototypes that engage with discomfort, the research demonstrates how fashion can mediate between sensation, awareness, and emotional states. This research contributes to embodied fashion practice, offering insights for designers, educators, and those living with complex or changing bodies. By reframing discomfort as a generative creative method, the research proposes that wearable interactions can support the embodied practice of wearing a feeling, cultivating resilience and expanding tolerance for navigating uncertainty in everyday life.

Key words: Embodied Fashion Practice, Designing with Discomfort, Practice-Led Design Research, Phenomenology, Therapeutic Design. Wearable Interaction

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attestation of authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the Acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Abby Eastwood

28.04.2026

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acknowledgements

Rachelle and Jennifer, I cannot thank you enough for the commitment and enthusiam you have bought to this research. I have felt so lucky to have your support, guidance, and expertise. I truly could not have done this without you both.

I am deeply grateful to AUT for the scholarship that made this research possible, and to everyone involved in granting me this opportunity.

My family. Mum, Dad, Tasha, Josh, Grandad, Nana (I miss you). Thank you for looking after me, for being my inspiration and reason to keep going.

All of my beautiful friends, the people that I love. Thank you for cheering me on and holding me through this.

Thank you to my therapist, both past and present, and to all of the support channels I have had acccess to along the way.

Thank you life! Thank you world! I am so grateful!!!

1 introduction

Clothing is often understood as something placed onto the body, a surface that covers, protects, or communicates identity.[1] In this conventional understanding, garments sit outside the body, acting as a visual or social layer rather than something that participates in bodily experience.[2] Yet clothing is never exclusively external. It presses against skin, alters posture, changes how the body moves through space, and shifts the way the body feels itself. A garment can tighten breath, extend limbs, distort balance, or exaggerate form.[3] Through these interactions, clothing becomes entangled with the body's perception of itself.[4]

Beginning from this entanglement, this thesis asks whether clothing can participate in the expression of feeling. The central question guiding this research can you wear a feeling expands beyond approaching emotion as something symbolically communicated through colour, imagery, or narrative. It instead investigates whether emotional states can be translated into material conditions that the body physically experiences. Within this research, clothing becomes an encounter between body, material, and emotion.

The primary aim of this work is to investigate how clothing might function as a medium through which emotional experience can be embodied. This is explored through the design and evaluation of experimental garment forms that alter bodily perception through shifts in weight, restriction, pressure, and balance. By examining how these material interventions are experienced when worn, the research seeks to understand how feelings may be externalised and encountered through embodied interaction.

This research proposes that clothing can operate as an extension of the body's perceptual system. Through direct physical interaction, garments may allow emotional states to be materialised and encountered as sensory experience. Within this framework, emotion is not simply represented but emerges through the dynamic relationship between body and garment. The garment therefore functions as a mediator through which internal states are negotiated, disrupted, and made perceptible.

1 Barnard, Malcolm, *Fashion as Communication*, second edition (Taylor & Francis / Routledge, 2002).
2 Roland Barthes, *The Fashion System* (1990).
3 Lynette Roth, "The (In) Animate World of Rebecca Horn," *Flash Art International,* December 12, 2019, https://flash---art.com/article/rebecca-horn/.
4 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Donald A. Landes (Routledge, 2012), https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203720714.

Several key terms are used throughout this thesis to frame this investigation:

Embodiment refers to the lived experience of the body as the primary site of perception and interaction.[5]

Garment denotes both conventional clothing and experimental forms developed through the research process.[6] It may also be referred to simply as *clothing,* or as the '*worn*', to emphasise its relational and experiential nature.

Emotion describes affective bodily states that arise through sensory and physiological experiences.[7]

Feeling refers to the cognitive interpretation of *emotion* or awareness of these emotional states.[8]

The scope of this research does not attempt to provide a comprehensive history of fashion or a psychological analysis of emotion. Instead, it is situated within a practice-led design context, focused specifically on the relationship between clothing, bodily perception, and emotional experience. Knowledge is generated through processes of making, wearing and reflecting on garments, where the body operates as both the site and instrument of inquiry.

The thesis is structured to move from contextual grounding to embodied investigation. It begins by situating the research within theoretical and disciplinary contexts that critique fashion's visual bias and foreground the sensing body. This is followed by a methodological framework that establishes practice-led, phenomenological, and autoethnographic approaches. Subsequent chapters document and analyse the design process through iterative phases of making and reflection, culminating in a discussion of findings and their significance for embodied fashion practice.

Through this research, clothing is approached as something the body actively participates in, an interface through which sensation, awareness, and emotion are negotiated.

5 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception,* 84–86.
6 Joanne Entwistle, *The Fashioned Body: Fashion, Dress and Modern Social Theory*. (John Wiley & Sons, 2023).
7 Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation, Post-Contemporary Interventions* (Duke University Press, 2002).
8 Antonio R. Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness*, 1. Harvest ed, A Harvest Book (Harcourt, 2000).

[2] code

This thesis uses different typefaces to distinguish between voices and modes of writing. The variations signal shifts between the main body of text, referenced material, and personal reflection.

Thesis body
- Adobe Calson Pro 12pt

Quotes and words of others
- *Adobe Calson Pro Italics 12pt*

Abbys thoughts and journal entries
- Adobe Arabic 24pt

3 the space i occupy

personal statement

For much of my life, I carried a sense of hollowness, as though all that was held within my skin was only a slight disruption away from being nothing at all. One would find it difficult to comprehend unless you have experienced it, and even more confronting for me to acknowledge while sitting at my desk at 8:30 on a Monday morning, working on a thesis I never knew was possible. Now, I am so full of many beautiful things and feel so capable of creating and existing, but the hollowness is what got me here. The frantic, desperate search to find a way to express this feeling is what positions this thesis.

I first started attending art therapy in 2019. It pulled me out of bed and gave me immediate, creative ways to feel, to notice, and to acknowledge my emotions. In 2022, I began my Fashion Design degree at Auckland University of Technology (AUT), and for the first time, found purpose and structure. These spaces provided language and action for experiences I was previously unable to express.

I now explore wearing a feeling as an intersection of these two spaces. In their own ways, both attempt to bring something internal into the world, making the intangible felt. Because of this depth and possibility of self-exploration, this thesis is inherently personal. The body, my body, is not separate from the work; it is where the work begins.

I needed this research for myself, and in many ways will always be for me, but it has also grown beyond me. It is for my younger sister. She has had a very different battle from me, one much harder than I could ever imagine. Her experience of her body is much more complex, more demanding, requiring a kind of care I am still learning to understand. Through this research, I hold a simple promise to her: that it is possible to inhabit the body you have, even when it feels unfamiliar, uncomfortable, or difficult. Everything I make is shaped by this care.

I aim to approach this research with honesty and authenticity, embedding as much of myself in the work as possible, as proof that I can do it and that it matters (it has always mattered). This is both a personal commitment and a methodological position. This thesis will discuss personal topics alongside theoretical frameworks as forms of knowledge that inform the practice. Their relevance is equal to the theoretical groundings of my work. This

research is emotional, sensorial, embodied, therapeutic and stands where the personal and academic meet, where designer and wearer become relational. It shifts with and through me, combining past, present, and future, held within a practice that continues to change as I do.

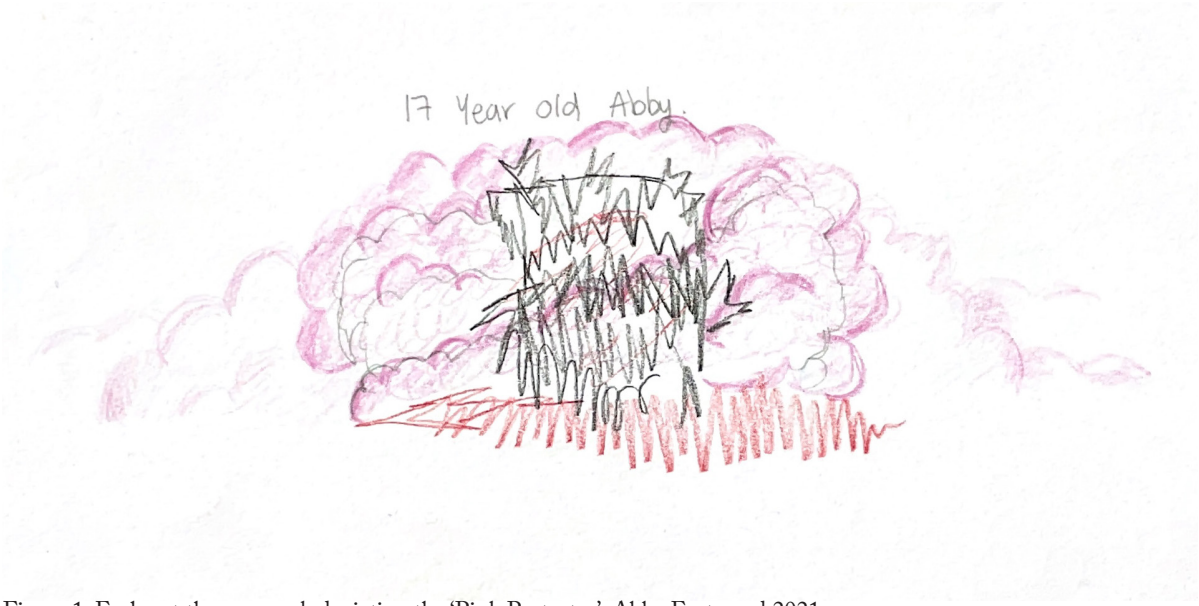


Figure 1. Early art therapy work depicting the 'Pink Protector'. Abby Eastwood 2021

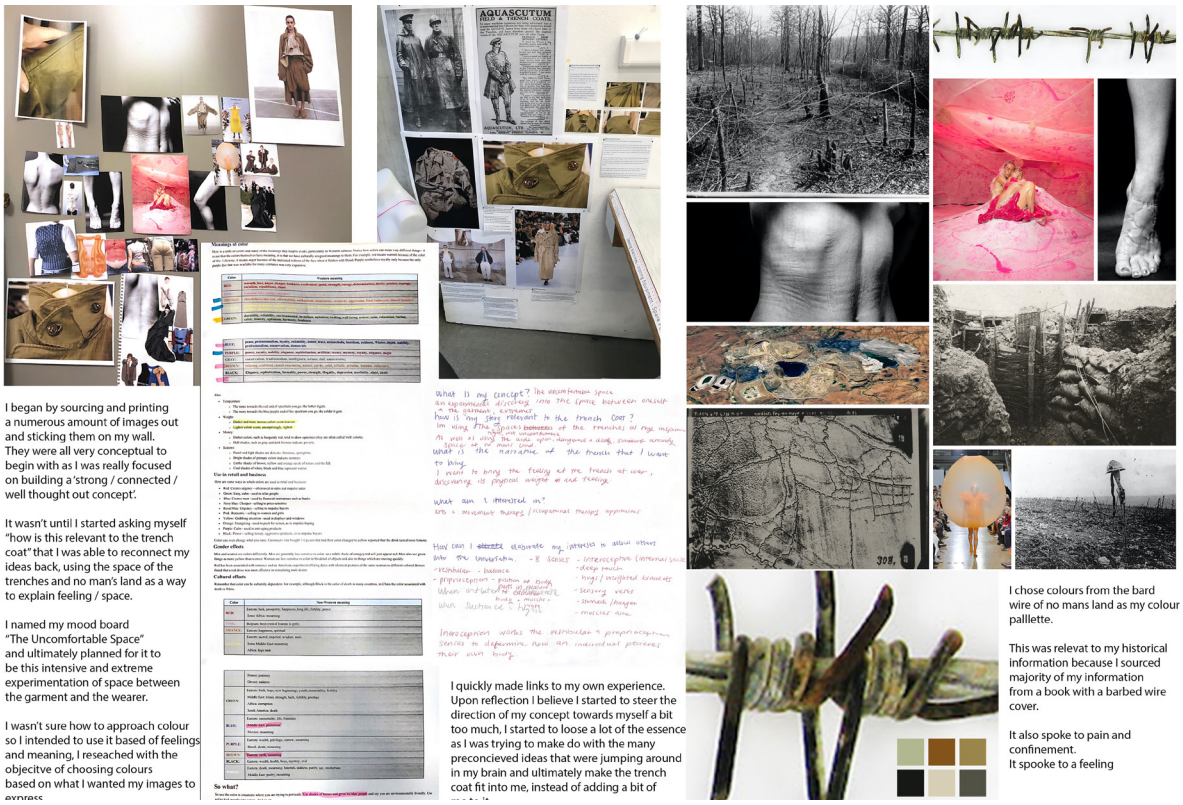


Figure 2. First year fashion design workbook, exploring "The Uncomfortable Space" concept. Abby Eastwood, 2022.

4 curiosities

research questions

The overarching research question, *Can you wear a feeling?*, establishes the central inquiry into whether emotion can be materially and bodily mediated through clothing. It is expanded through the question, *How can embodied interaction with wearable artefacts mediate the relationship between body, material, and emotion?*

The sub-questions break this inquiry into specific areas of investigation:

- How can intentional discomfort in wearable artefacts facilitate awareness of the body and its emotional states?

- How can discomfort be designed to prompt reflection rather than avoidance?

- In what ways does designed discomfort direct bodily attention and perceptual awareness?

- When the body is provoked through material intervention, what kinds of sensations and emotions emerge?

5 acknowledging the contextual body

"Our own body is in the world as the heart is in the organism: it keeps the visible spectacle constantly alive, it breathes life into it and sustains it inwardly, and with it forms a system."[9]

I am held up by my spine, held together by my skin. My mind looks for reason within the safety of my skull; my heart continues beating within the protection of my ribcage.

Explored through a conceptual framing of bodily autonomy, this research examines key influences that position the work within a design context, guiding a critique of fashion's visual bias and supporting a recentring of the sensing, lived body. This chapter maps the theoretical, sensory, and emotional contexts that inform the research inquiry; *can you wear a feeling?*

9 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception,* 235.

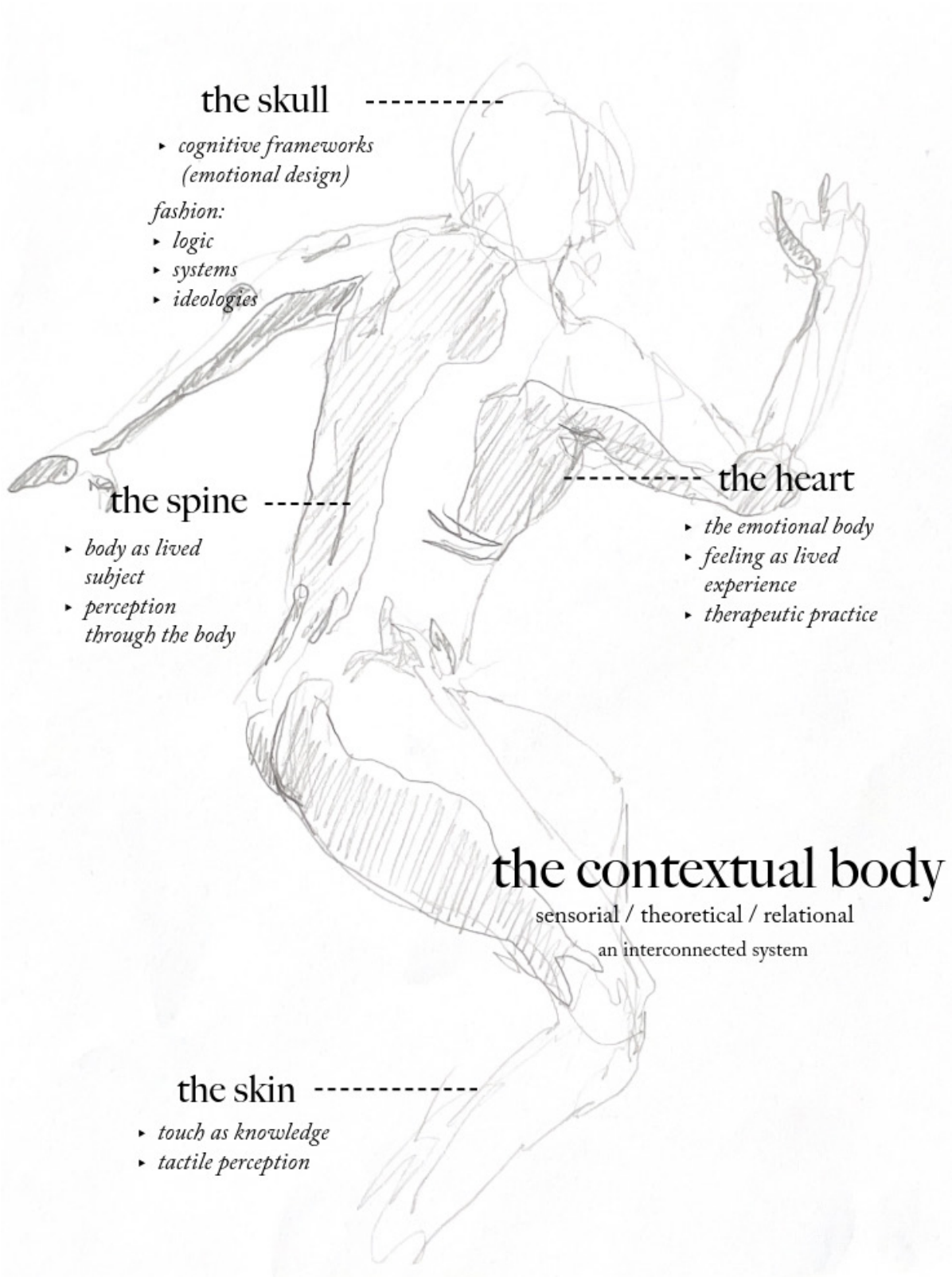


Figure 3. Diagram of the contextual body, mapping key elements of the contextual review. Diagram and life drawing by Abby Eastwood, 2026.

5.1

grounding emotion

"Emotions are the initial expression of your response to environmental stimuli, inner needs, and drives, while feelings are the perception of what your body is experiencing."[10]

Sometimes I feel energy in my chest and mistake its movement for anxiety, when, if I listened closely, I could recognise it simply as the body's call for movement; it is energy. Experiences like this shape my understanding of emotion as the body noticing itself, and feeling as the mind noticing the body.

Philosopher Don Norman's framework of emotional design (Figure 4) accounts for visceral, behavioural, and reflective responses. However, it remains primarily concerned with cognitive and user-oriented interpretation. It does not fully address how emotion may emerge through involuntary bodily sensation.[11] This research extends Norman's framework by repositioning emotional design as an embodied, sensory encounter between body and garment.

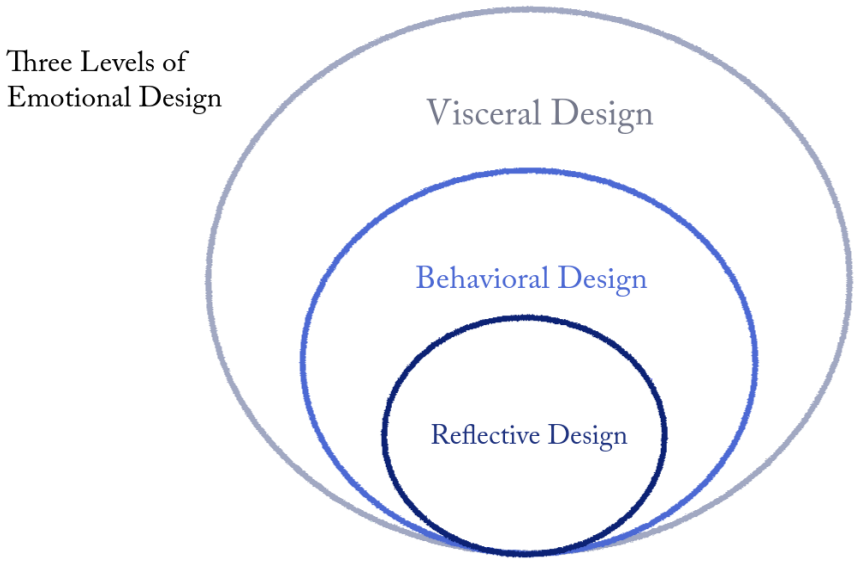


Figure 4. Diagram of Don Norman's Three Levels of Emotional Design. Abby Eastwood, 2025.

10 Susan Magsamen and Ivy Ross, Your Brain on Art: How the Arts Transform Us (Random House, 2023), 31.
11 Donald A. Norman, Emotional Design: Why We Love (or Hate) Everyday Things (Basic Books, n.d.), 67–78.

By shifting focus from how garments are seen to how they are felt, wearing a feeling moves emotional design into the domain of embodied experience.

5.2

dissecting the skull

The brain, comfortably nestled within the cranium, houses systems, logic, and ideologies. Protected by the skull, it is unseen, unprodded, and acknowledged as something that simply exists. Yet it provides all the necessary means to know. Within this section, the systems, logic, and ideologies of fashion are prodded, seen, and acknowledged.[12]

Fashion operates within a fundamental contradiction: it is made for the body, yet often neglects the body as a lived, sensing subject.[13] The discipline privileges the visual while the experiential, perceptual body is often secondary.[14]

In *The Fashioned Body*, author Joanne Entwistle dissects the fashion system, commenting on how it tends to disembody the body when viewing fashion or dress.[15] She argues that "*without a body, dress lacks fullness and movement; it is incomplete*."[16] Her work reasserts the importance of the dressed body as lived practice. However, her work stops short of proposing how garments might actively generate bodily awareness. Philosopher Roland Barthes writes that fashion functions as a visual language, one that rarely accommodates the living body.[17] "*And yet, dress in everyday life can not be separated from the living, breathing, moving body it adorns.*"[18] The living body stays soft, unpredictable. In pain, in pleasure, it is inconvenient for the fashion system. This research challenges these perspectives by repositioning the body as a dynamic sensing entity that actively participates in the design process.[19]

12 Y. Kawamura, *Fashion-Ology: An Introduction to Fashion Studies* (Berg Publishers, 2005), https://books.google.co.nz/books?id=LUWTJWXZ2QQC.
13 Caroline Evans, *Fashion at the Edge: Spectacle, Modernity and Deathliness* (2003).
14 Joanne Entwistle, "Fashion and the Fleshy Body: Dress as Embodied Practice," *Fashion Theory 4*, no. 3 (2000): 32–47, https://doi.org/10.2752/136270400778995471.
15 Entwistle, *The Fashioned Body: Fashion, Dress and Modern Social Theory.*, 4.
16 Entwistle, *The Fashioned Body: Fashion, Dress and Modern Social Theory.*, 139.
17 Barthes, *The Fashion System*, 3–12.
18 Entwistle, *The Fashioned Body: Fashion, Dress and Modern Social Theory.*, 9.
19 Kristina Hook, *Designing with the Body: Somaesthetic Interaction Design* (MIT Press, 2018).

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Figure 5. "Lumps and Bumps" ensemble from the Spring/Summer 1997 Body Meets Dress, Dress Meets Body collection by Rei Kawakubo for Comme des Garçons. Photograph by Kishin Shinoyama, originally published in Six Magazine (1997), reproduced in AnOther Magazine, https://www.anothermag.com/fashion-beauty/8174/lumps-and-bumps-at-comme-des-garcons-s-s97

Designer Rei Kawakubo's work makes space for the living body through challenging the idea that clothing should produce a flattering form.[20] Through distorting silhouettes, her 1997 collection, *Body Meets Dress, Dress Meets Body* (Figure 5), explored how the garment could shape the body rather than the body shaping the garment.[21] Here, the body is an active participant in the making, the padding acknowledging the body and expanding its form and barrier. This wearable barrier has often been both scrutinised and praised within the fashion industry, with critics unsure of how to digest the work.[22]

Kawakubo's reflects on the dialogue between body and garment in UNLIMITED: COMME des GARÇONS: "*I realised that the clothes could be the body and the body could be the clothes*".[23] Her curiosity about this dialogue pushes beyond visual interpretations and reframes the wearable barrier as a site of interaction and bodily negotiation.

20 Bonnie English, *Japanese Fashion Designers: The Work and Influence of Issey Miyake, Yohji Yamamoto and Rei Kawakubo* (Berg, 2011).
21 Andrew Bolton, *Rei Kawakubo Comme Des Garçons: Art of the In-Between* (Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2017).
22 Bolton, *Rei Kawakubo* Comme Des Garçons.
23 Sanae Shimizu, *Unlimited: Comme des Garçons* (Heibonsha, 2005).

Body Meets Dress, Dress Meets Body disrupts normative silhouettes yet operates primarily at the level of visual distortion. In contrast, this research internalises disruption, shifting from external form to internal sensation. Rather than altering how the body is seen, it investigates how the body can be made to feel itself differently through touch, restriction, weight, balance, and movement. It is about being in the body, not just looking at it.

5.3

the spine

The axis of the self, home to the nervous system, the structural and perceptual core. The spine supports all. This section asks the spine to stand upright, exploring the lived experiences of the sensory body in contrast to the often disembodied fashion experience.

Fashion's treatment of the body as an object stands in direct contrast to phenomenological understandings of the body as a lived subject.[24] Philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty insists that the body is "*our general medium for having a world*."[25] We do not merely inhabit bodies; we are them. Through this lens, clothing exists as something that participates in the body's perceptual field. Within this reciprocal relationship between body and garment, the question *can you wear a feeling?* considers how material and form might shape embodied emotional experience.

Author Drew Leder extends this by emphasising the body as both the site and means of perception.[26] In The Absent Body, he writes, "*I receive the surrounding world through my eyes, my ears, my hands. The structure of my perceptual organs shapes that which I apprehend. And it is via bodily means that I am capable of responding.*"[27] Here, Leder stresses that perception is materially and sensorially grounded.[28] His distinction between Körper (the physical body) and Leib (the living body) further illustrates how Western Cartesianism has often "*entrapped the human body in the image of Körper, treating it as one instance of the general class of physical things*," whereas the notion of Leib "*reveals the deeper significance of corporeality as a generative*

24 Entwistle, "Fashion and the Fleshy Body."
25 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception,* 146.
26 Drew Leder, *The Absent Body* (The University of Chicago Press, 1990).
27 Leder, *The Absent Body*, 1.
28 Leder, *The Absent Body*, 1–3.

principle."[29] Through this distinction, the body emerges as an active, sensing presence.[30] In my work, the Leib is acknowledged at every stage, with garments designed to engage with, shape, and make perceptible the body's sensations and responses.

Designer Rebecca Horn adapts the perspectives of Merleau-Ponty and Leder across multiple points in her career, producing works that force the wearer to actively restructure how the body experiences the world.[31] Her practice makes the Leib unavoidable. She extends, destabilises, and exaggerates the body, bringing both awareness and presence.[32] Her *Body Extensions* series (Figures 6 and 7) allowed for objects to protrude from her body.[33] She moved about wearing these objects in an attempt to "*explore the equilibrium between body and space.*"[34] Her work restructures bodily perception through extension, constraint, amplification, limitation, balance, and weight.[35] These are all considered methods within my practice, and some have been adopted within my work to build on.

Image removed for copyright reasons.

Figure 6. Unicorn, Kinetic sculpture apparatus resembling an elongated horn-like extension. Reproduced from Rebecca Horn, Unicorn 1970

29 Leder, *The Absent Body*, 5.
30 Leder, *The Absent Body*, 5–6.
31 Roth, "The (In) Animate World of Rebecca Horn."
32 Roth, "The (In) Animate World of Rebecca Horn."
33 Courtney Bagtazo, "Female Study: Rebecca Horn's Common Thread," *Bagtazo Collection Blog,* January 15, 2016, https://www.bagtazocollection.com/blog/2016/1/9/female-study-rebecca-horns-common-thread.
34 Bagtazo, "Female Study: Rebecca Horn's Common Thread."
35 Roth, "The (In) Animate World of Rebecca Horn."

Image removed for copyright reasons.

Figure 7. White Body Fan, Wearable fan apparatus attached to the body. Reproduced from Rebecca Horn, White body fan, 1972

Marina Abramovic's *Imponderabilia* (Figure 8) collapses the separation between mind and body,[36] confronting participants with their own bodily presence and centring them in the Leib.[37] While not a work of fashion, it informs my practice by translating this bodily confrontation into wearable form.

Image removed for copyright reasons.

Figure 8. Imponderabilia. Reproduced from Marina Abramović and ULAY. Imponderabilia. 1977, The Museum of Modern Art, https://www.moma.org/audio/playlist/243/3119

36 "Marina Abramović's 'Imponderabilia' and Audience Vulnerability — HASTA," accessed March 13, 2026, https://www.hasta-standrews.com/features/2024/2/20/marina-abramovis-imponderabilia-and-audience-vulnerability.

37 "Marina Abramović Is Reviving a Once-Banned Nude Performance | Dazed," accessed March 13, 2026, https://www.dazeddigital.com/art-photography/article/45858/1/marina-abramovic-is-reviving-a-once-banned-nude-performance-imponderabilia.

5.4

the skin

An image of a child in a pram, reaching for a leaf. Once grasped, they become enriched by the sensation, curiously moving tiny fingers across it. I look at the leaf and can assume it will feel smooth. I assume so much that I don't reach for it. I reach for what is necessary and deny my skin, the biggest organ of my body, the right to comprehend what I see through its own way of knowing.

This phenomenological experience reflects a broader reduction in tactile engagement, which informs the research focus on touch as a mode of knowing.

"*We touch things to assure ourselves of our reality. We touch the objects of our love. We touch the things we form.*"[38] If the body is a knowing subject, then touch is its primary mode of understanding. Yet the vocabulary and attention we give to tactile experience are underdeveloped. Designer Anni Albers observes that "*we have grown increasingly insensitive in our perception by touch*", noting that even basic tactile qualities (sponginess, brittleness) lack shared language.[39] Our hands are no longer a thinking, sensing part of the body.[40]

38 Anni Albers, *On Weaving New Expanded Edition* (Princeton University Press, 2017), 44.
39 Albers, *On Weaving New Expanded Edition*, 44.
40 Albers, *On Weaving New Expanded Edition*, 44–47.

Image removed for copyright reasons.

Figure 9. Finger Box. Ay-O, 1964, cardboard box with mixed media and printed paper labels, Collection Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin. Reproduced from "Finger Box," Irish Museum of Modern Art, https://imma.ie/collection/finger-box.

Touch as a form of knowledge is central to the work of artist Takao Iijima. Adopting the name 'Ay-o', his finger boxes (Figure 9) invite participants to insert their fingers into the hidden compartments.[41] The participant can only learn of the distinct material qualities inside through direct tactile engagement. His work provides a bridge between theoretical reflection on touch and its practical experiential application.

Somatic practices advance this work by grounding knowing in sensation.[42] They emphasise proprioception (sense of bodily movement and space), interoception (awareness of internal states), vestibular sense (balance), and deep pressure touch as essential forms of perception.[43] In particular, proprioception and interoception work hand in hand with perception to allow bodily awareness.[44]

41 "Ay-O's 'Finger Boxes' | QAGOMA Collection Online," accessed March 13, 2026, https://collection.qagoma.qld.gov.au/node/48874.

42 Bessel A. Van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind and Body in the Healing of Trauma* (Penguin Books, 2015).

43 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception,* 93–94, 105–10; Van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score*, 74–100.

44 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 173–76; Chiara Parma et al., "An Overview of the Bodily Awareness Representation and Interoception: Insights and Progress in the Field of Neurorehabilitation Research," *Brain Sciences* 14, no. 4 (2024): 386, https://doi.org/10.3390/brainsci14040386.

'Tactile matters' (Figure 10) is a series of work by designer Jennifer Keusgen, developed through bodily attunement for bodily awareness.[45] She creates garments through tactile engagement that support self-awareness, and perception.[46] Her work forms a foundational reference point for my own practice. While I approach embodied awareness differently, we share the same purpose of exploring garments' sensory potential.

Image removed for copyright reasons.

Figure 10. Tactile Tracksuit - Feel Suit. Jennifer Keusgen, Tactile Matters, 2020, neoprene garment with flocked fibres, University of Arts and Design Basel. Reproduced from https://www.jenniferkeusgen.com/

45 Jennifer Keusgen, "JENNIFER KEUSGEN," JENNIFER KEUSGEN, accessed February 13, 2026, https://www.jenniferkeusgen.com/.

46 "Isola Design Community - Tactile Matters," accessed March 13, 2026, https://isola.design/Designer-Projects-Tactile-Matters.

5.5

the heart

Often chosen to lead the way, the heart can be both felt and listened to. It responds, reacts. It is rhythmic and sensorial, and its beating pushes the blood and warmth around the body. It pushes me forward, and I follow it. It is where I have felt, and will feel.

The therapeutic dimension of my practice emerges through traditions and spaces that understand the meaningful relationship between body, object, and emotion. Art therapy recognises that material processes can access emotional states that resist verbal articulation.[47] Its influence on my research is predominantly through lived experience, the core practices that align with my work include: the use of materials as extensions of the body, processes that foreground embodied sensation, the transformation of affect into tangible forms, and reflective practices that connect perception, feeling and awareness.[48]

47 Shaun McNiff, *Art As Medicine: Creating a Therapy of the Imagination* (Shambhala, 1992), 12–35, 78–95.
48 Cathy A. Malchiodi, *The Art Therapy Sourcebook*, 2. ed., revised and updated with new exercises, [Nachdr.] (McGraw-Hill, 2010), 25–45.

Designer Maria Vidal Meinert's thesis work extends this therapeutic logic into the fashion design field.[49] She positions garments as spaces of emotional encounter, which can be seen in Figure 11. Through embodied making and wearing, her practice explores how clothing can support emotional awareness and self-relation.[50] This exchange between therapeutic intention and design is foundational to my research, affirming that garments can operate as sites of healing.

Image removed for copyright reasons.

Figure 11. Mindful garment: a uniform to support daily mindful self-compassion practice. Reproduced from Maria Vidal Meinert, Garments as Healing Spaces: Conceptual Clothing for Emotional Regulation, Connection, and Resilience, University of Texas at Austin, August 2023, 35.

49 Maria Vidal Meinert, "Garments as Healing Spaces : Conceptual Clothing for Emotional Regulation, Connection and Resilience" (2023), https://hdl.handle.net/2152/124742.

50 Meinert, "Garments as Healing Spaces : Conceptual Clothing for Emotional Regulation, Connection and Resilience."

My own journey of embodied making within art therapy and design mirrors that of Lygia Clark. Her art practice transitioned into psychotherapy, with works such as *Nostaliga do Corpo* (Nostalgia of the body) (Figure 12) and her *Relational Objects*.[51] Within these, her sensorial masks (Figure 13) are particularly relevant. The masks altered vision, hearing, and spatial awareness through materials like rubber, fabric, mirrors, and weighted elements.[52] By disrupting or heightening specific senses, the masks encourage participants to confront emotional states and attend to the emotional responses generated by the altered sensory environment.[53] Her masks demonstrate that sensory disruption can provoke self-awareness and reveal that feeling can be structured through wearable form.

Image removed for copyright reasons.

Figure 12. Interactive object from Lygia Clark's Estruturas Vivas / Diálogos series, part of her Nostaliga do Corpo work. Reproduced from "Estruturas Vivas: diálogos," website, http://162.214.189.111/portal/html/acervo/230/estruturas-vivas-dialogos

51 Cornelia H. Butler et al., eds., *Lygia Clark: The Abandonment of Art, 1948 - 1988; [in Conjunction with the Exhibition ... at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, May 10 - August 24, 2014]* (Museum of Modern Art, 2014).
52 "Archive : Sensorial Masks," Lygia Clark, accessed March 13, 2026, https://portal.lygiaclark.org.br/en/archive/212/sensorial-masks.
53 Lygia Clark, "Archive."

Image removed for copyright reasons.

Figure 13. Sensory mask from Lygia Clark's series Máscaras sensoriais, part of her Relational Objects work. Reproduced from "Máscaras sensoriais," website, http://162.214.189.111/portal/html/acervo/212/mascaras-sensoriais

Together, these practices resist separating the body from the psyche. Depth psychologist John. P Conger suggests that embodiment is the condition of subjectivity.[54] Conger writes, "*If you are at home in your body, you can be at home anywhere. Being at home is embodiment*."[55] This understanding further aligns the work of Meinert and Clark with my own, affirming that subjectivity is inherently lived through the body.

54 John P. Conger, *The Body in Recovery: Somatic Psychotherapy and the Self* (North Atlantic Books, 2011).
55 Conger, *The Body in Recovery: Somatic Psychotherapy and the Self*, 195.

5.6

conclusion

Through acknowledging the contextual body, this research situates itself at the intersection of embodied fashion practice, phenomenology, therapeutic design, and performance art. It identifies a gap within fashion's predominantly visual framework where the sensing body remains underexplored. Grounded in a body where the heart, spine, skull, and skin are inseparable and in dialogue, the research investigates how garments can engage bodily perception and emotional experience through material interaction. This lived, relational body travels with me through the practice and shapes how I explore what it means to *wear a feeling*.

6 methodology

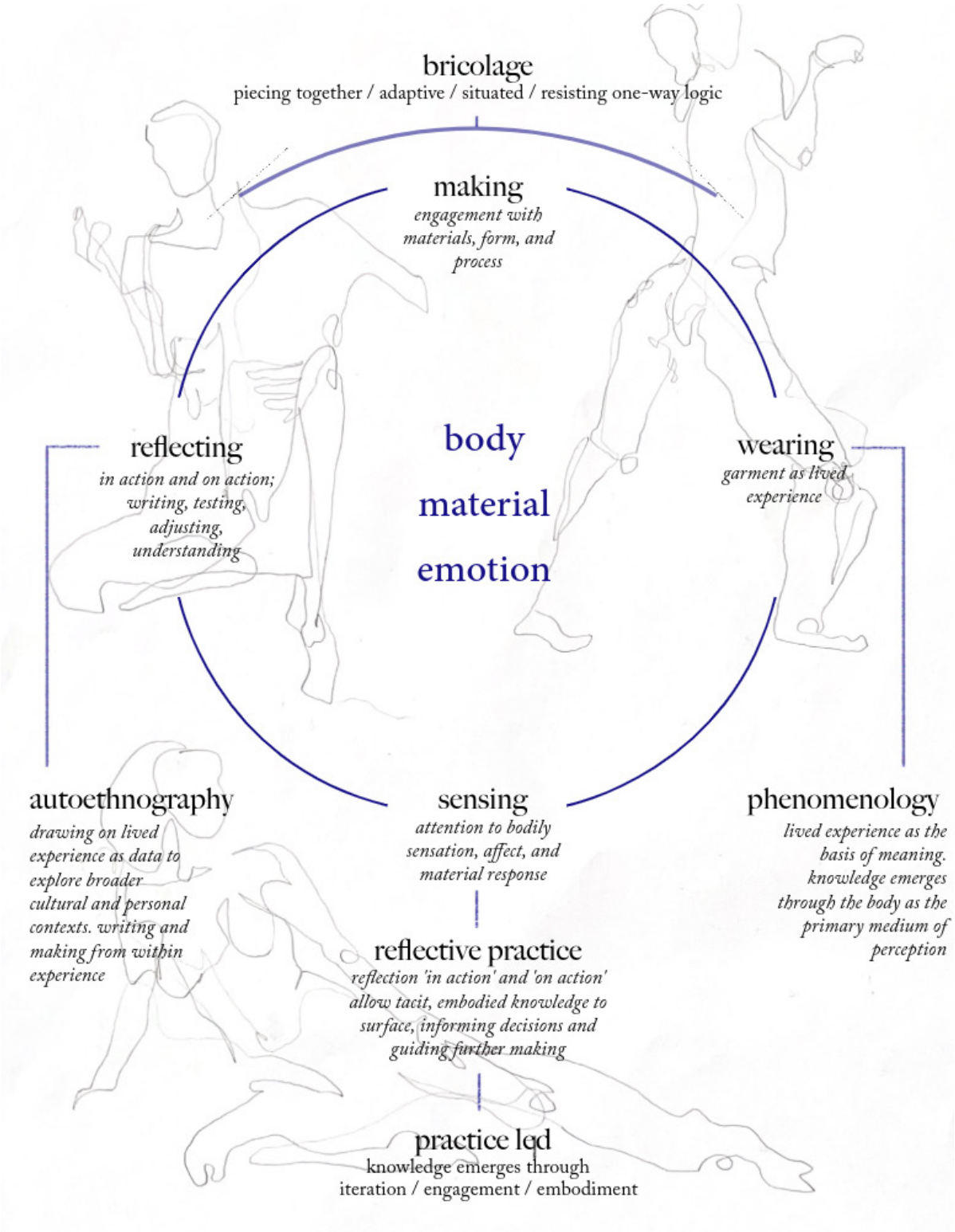


Figure 14. Methodological framework illustrating the iterative, embodied relationship between making, sensing, and reflection, structured through bricolage. Diagram and life drawings by Abby Eastwood, 2026.

This research adopts a practice-led methodological framework grounded in embodied experience (Figure 14). Practice-led research is particularly suited to this inquiry, as it enables knowledge to emerge through iterative cycles of making, wearing, and reflection, in which the artefact functions as both process and outcome.[56] It draws on bricolage to integrate autoethnography, phenomenology, and reflective practice. Bricolage enables a flexible integration of multiple methods, aligning with the embodied and intuitive nature of this research.[57] As research theorists Denzin and Lincoln explain, "t*he bricoleur produces a bricolage, that is, a pieced together, close-knit set of practices that provide solutions to a problem in a concrete situation*."[58] This captures the interconnected nature of combining autoethnography, phenomenology, and reflective practice-led research within a single methodological framework.

Autoethnography uses the researcher's own lived experience as data, legitimising personal understanding as material for enquiry.[59] In this research, I write and make from within lived experience, attending to sensation, affect, emotion, and material engagement. Through bricolage, these autoethnographic boundaries purposefully expand to encompass other embodied experiences, enabling my practice to move from the personal to the collective without claiming universality. This supports my exploration of how a feeling, while personal, may be translated into a wearable experience.[60]

I position making at the centre of this research as knowledge emerges through engagement with materials, garments, and sensation.[61] Practice-led research frames the artefact as a way of gathering and preserving understanding through touch, adjustment, and repetition, as design scholar Maarit Mäkelä describes.[62]

Reflection supports this as a companion to making. Drawing on theorist Donald A. Schön, reflection "*in action*" and "*on action*" enables tacit, embodied knowledge to inform design decisions that are not consciously articulated.[63] As the research developed, five generative phases emerged (Figure 15). While useful organisationally, the research process was non-linear, with phases interlinked through iterative design thinking and making.

56 Julian Malins and Professor Carole Gray, *Visualizing Research: A Guide to the Research Process in Art and Design* (Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2013).

57 Ainslie Yardley et al., *Fashioning Identity and the Art of Bricolage: Studio-Based Research Methods and Reflection-in-Action in Fashion Design*, 2017.

58 Denzin and Lincoln, *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 2.

59 Carolyn Ellis et al., *Autoethnography: An Overview*, 36, no. 4 (2011): 273.

60 Carolyn Ellis et al., *Autoethnography: An Overview*, 36, no. 4 (2011): 19.

61 Tim Ingold, *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture* (Routledge, 2013).

62 Maarit Mäkelä, "Knowing Through Making: The Role of the Artefact in Practise-Based Research," paper presented at Nordes 2005: In the Making, May 29, 2005, https://doi.org/10.21606/nordes.2005.005.

63 Donald A. Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action* (Ashgate, 2013); Kylie Budge, "Teaching Art and Design: Communicating Creative Practice through Embodied and Tacit Knowledge," *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education* 15, nos. 3–4 (2016): 432–45, https://doi.org/10.1177/1474022215592247.

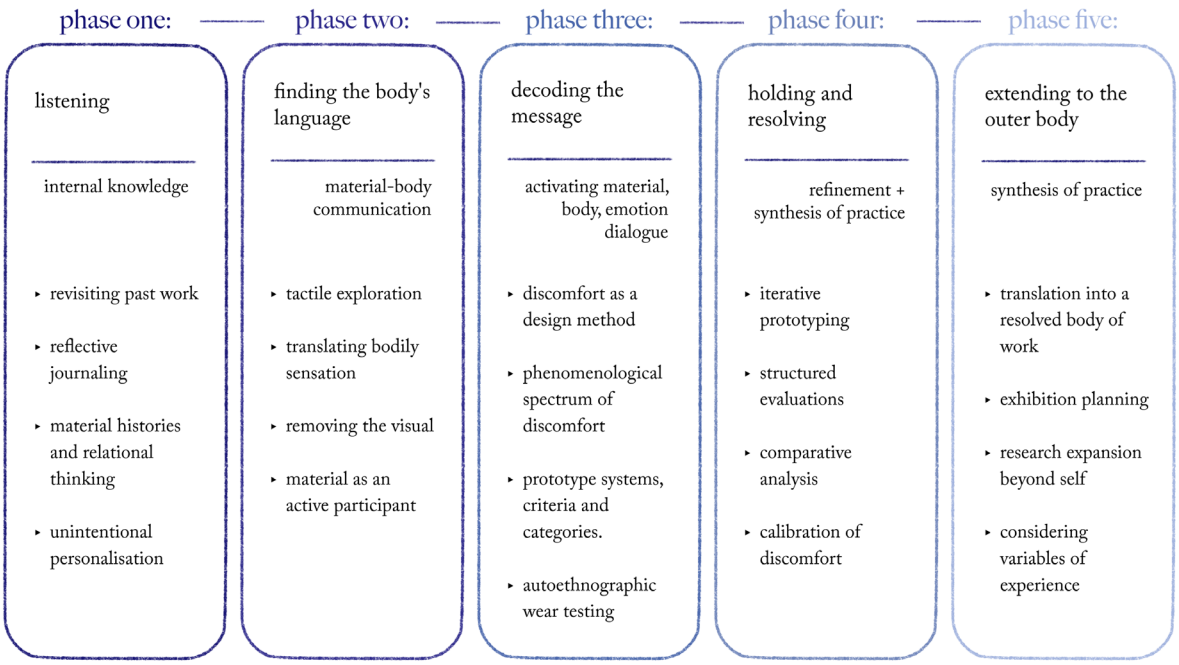


Figure 15. Diagram mapping the research through the five generative phases. Abby Eastwood, 2026.

A reflective methodology is particularly important to research where understanding emerges through doing.[64] I apply this tacit knowledge as recognised and necessary, forming a creative practice that communicates knowledge through both implicit and explicit forms.[65]

Phenomenology deepens this framework by foregrounding lived experience as the basis of meaning.[66] Drawing on Merleau-Ponty's understanding of the body as the primary medium of perception, this research recognises that knowledge emerges through the body itself.[67] Phenomenology, together with autoethnography, provides a framework in which making, sensation, and emotion position the body as the primary site of understanding within reflective, practice-led research.

64 Budge, "Teaching Art and Design."
65 Michael Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, Reprinted (Peter Smith, 1983).
66 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception,* 3–64.
67 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 206.

7 methods

The methods in this research exist in three distinct strands: the internal, the external, and the traces that remain. They weave between body and worn, felt and feeling. The strands formalise the act of looking, entangling the body with material and emotion. Practice becomes both a site of engagement and a vehicle for knowing, transforming making into a structured inquiry.[68]

68 Mäkelä, "Knowing Through Making."

7.1

the internal

7.1.1 refelctive journaling

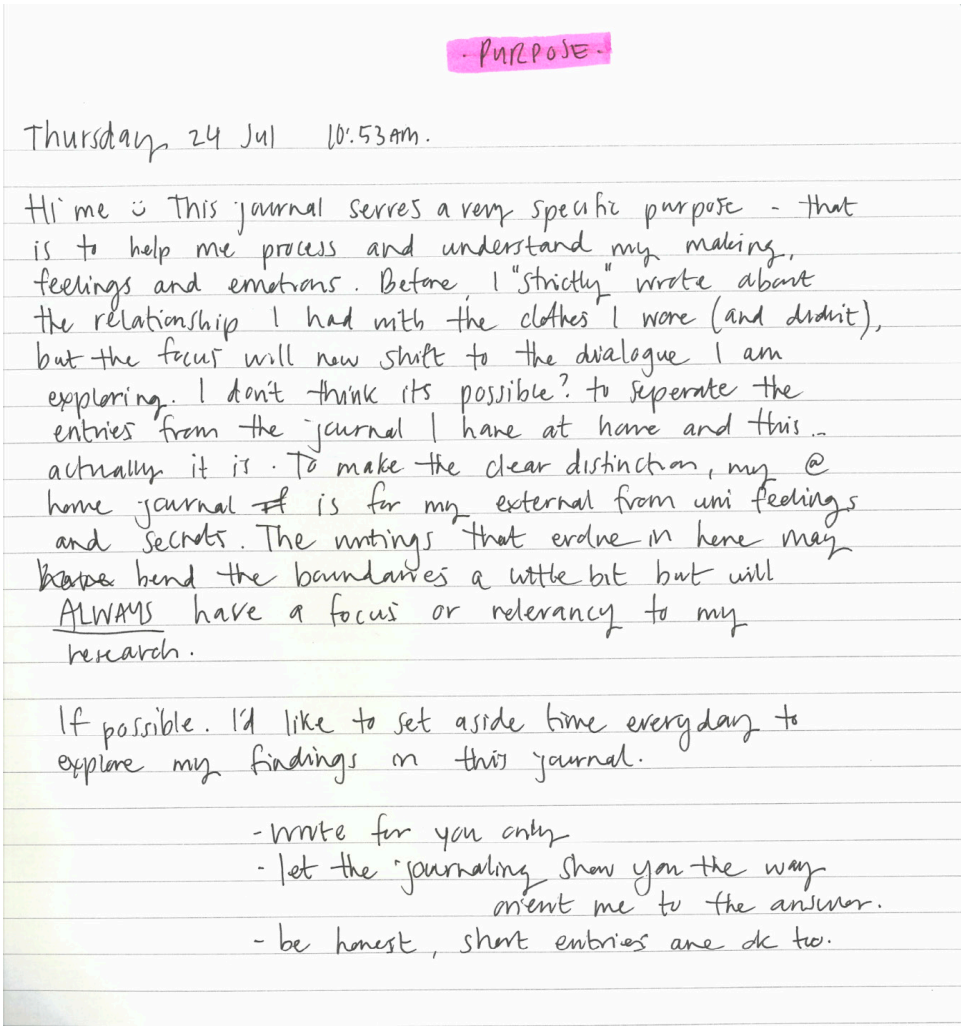


Figure 16. Reflective journal page. Abby Eastwood, 2025.

In design research, reflective journals surface tacit insights that emerge through sustained engagement with materials and processes. I use reflection-in-action to position reflection as a companion to making.[69] Reflective journaling functions as both a method of documentation and a tool for surfacing tacit knowledge that cannot be accessed through making alone.[70] Within this practice I record notes, poems, emotive entries, changes in direction, bodily sensations, mistakes, shifts and questions that are yet to form (Figure 16). Drawing on Schön's model of reflective practice, the journal entries form an archive of the body's encounter with the work.[71]

69 Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner.*

70 Linda Candy, "Reflective Creative Practice," in *The Creative Reflective Practitioner*, 1st ed. (London, 2019), https://doi-org.ezproxy.aut.ac.nz/10.4324/9781315208060.

71 Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner.*

7.1.2

sitting with the work

This method positions stillness as a form of inquiry, enabling subtle bodily responses to emerge that may remain unnoticed during active making. In this way, I engaged with what Tim Ingold describes as "*a process of growth*," where the maker and materials meet in anticipation of what might emerge.[72] Stillness allows the body to register sensation more acutely, bringing awareness to responses that are often overlooked.[73] This method develops a practice of attunement and deep listening where the material is given time to speak, and I am given time to listen (Figure 17). It generates insights into body-material interaction inaccessible through action alone, positioning stillness as a critical mode of inquiry.



Figure 17. Images documenting the process of "sitting with the work." Abby Eastwood, 2026.

72 Ingold, *Making*, 21.
73 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*; Leder, *The Absent Body*.

7.1.3 mapping

Mapping operates as both a generative and analytical tool, enabling the externalisation of relationships between sensation, material, and emotion. Mind mapping allows ideas to be perceived as an interconnected whole. As professor Edward Tufte suggests, the act of mapping allows us to escape the flatland of linear thought, spatialising the multidimensional nature of experience.[74] This form of mapping generates knowledge about conceptual relationships, design possibilities, and emergent patterns of thinking.

This practice additionally aligns with "sensory mapping", a term used to describe practices that map bodily sensation, affect, and perception as a form of situated knowledge. Bodily sensation mapping focuses on the body itself, identifying and visualising where emotions and sensations are physically felt (Figure 18). By treating mapping as both reflective and generative, I produce knowledge that informs future design choices and reveals patterns in bodily experience.

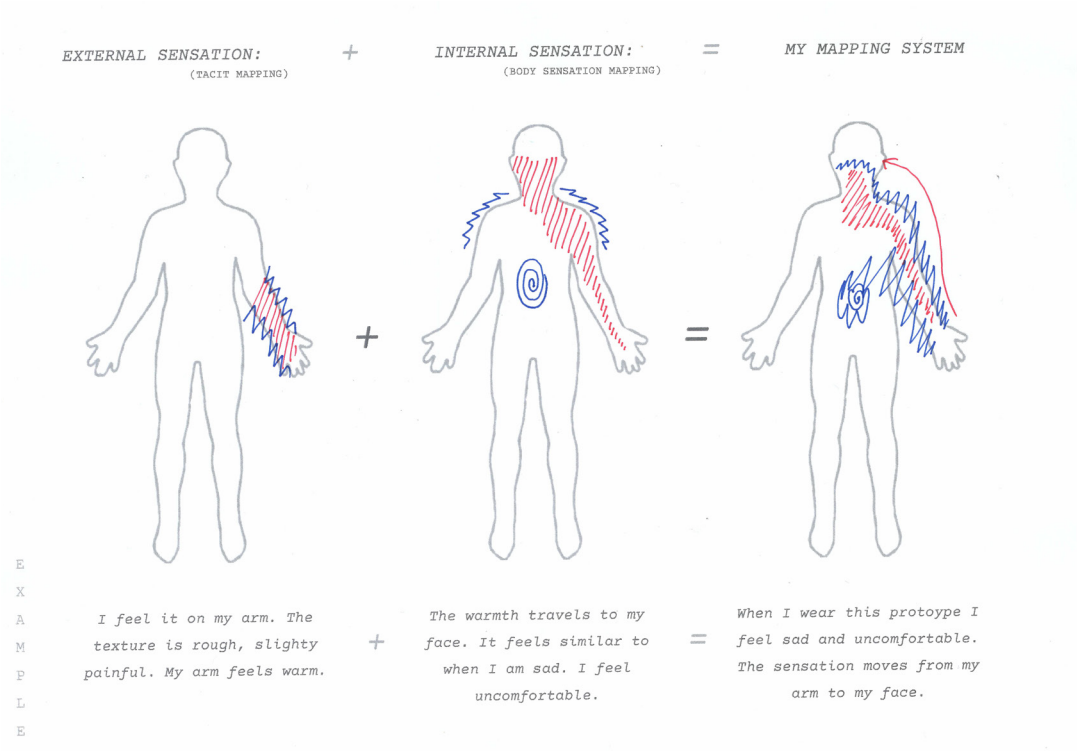


Figure 18. Example diagram of mapping systems. Abby Eastwood, 2026.

74 Edward R. Tufte, *Envisioning Information* (Graphic Press USA, 1998), 12.

7.2

the external

7.2.1
criteria-led making (discomfort as a site of awareness)

In design, a criteria-led approach serves as a situated framework for decision-making. Criteria are established in advance to guide exploration, reflection, and selection.[75]

This method follows Leder's theory of the "*dys-appearing body*" by positioning each exploration within its capacity to interrupt bodily autopilot.[76] Design prototypes use pressure, weight, asymmetry, or restriction to develop bodily awareness. They are worn and iteratively reflected on generating embodied knowledge.

7.2.2
material exploration

Materials are explored through phenomenological stories, and the sensations they evoke are guided by a spectrum of discomfort. This approach foregrounds lived experience, shaping how the body interprets sensory information and treating materials as active participants in perception.[77] Garment becomes a medium through which these material stories are brought closer to the body, allowing unexpected sensory encounters to be worn, felt, and reflected on.

Material exploration occurs through play and unstructured interaction, following Anni Albers' emphasis on learning through material inquiry.[78] Through iterative engagement, sensorial qualities are revealed, generating a continuous dialogue between material, body, and emotion.

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75 Michael A. R. Biggs and Daniela Büchler, "Rigour and Practice-Based Research," *Design Issues* 23, no. 3 (2007): 62–69, https://doi.org/10.1162/desi.2007.23.3.62.

76 Leder, *The Absent Body,* 69.

77 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception.*

78 Albers, *On Weaving New Expanded Edition*.

7.2.3
prototyping - wearing

To understand experience, phenomenological accounts of wearing are essential. In this practice, wearing prototypes functioned as a phenomenological method to produce first-hand experiential knowledge.[79] This method was used solely through prototyping in white to guide focus towards the body. By redirecting attention to bodily sensation, wearing reveals emotional and sensory responses that cannot be predicted solely through design.

7.3
traces that remain

7.3.1
documentation

Photographing with the body in frame establishes a relationship between the body and the work (Figure 19), later expanded through writing and reflection. Images capture moments and, over time, gestures, posture, and emotions become visible. Where possible, traces are presented physically through print or journal formats.

Documentation preserves ephemeral experiences and bodily interactions, providing revisitable knowledge of process and perception.

79 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception.*



Figure 19. Photograph of hand and making process, printed and annotated. Abby Eastwood, 2025.

7.4 conclusion

The methods foreground the body as both the site and instrument of inquiry. Through making, sensing, and archiving, this research produces knowledge that is simultaneously experiential, material, and reflective. Situating understanding in the interplay of material, body, and emotion, the research is felt, made, worn, and archived.

8 analysis of practice

This chapter introduces the making. It unfolds through five key phases: Listening, Finding the Body's Language, Decoding the Message, Holding and Resolving, and Extending to the Outer Body. While each phase explores a different stage of the practice, they remain interconnected, with insights carried between them.

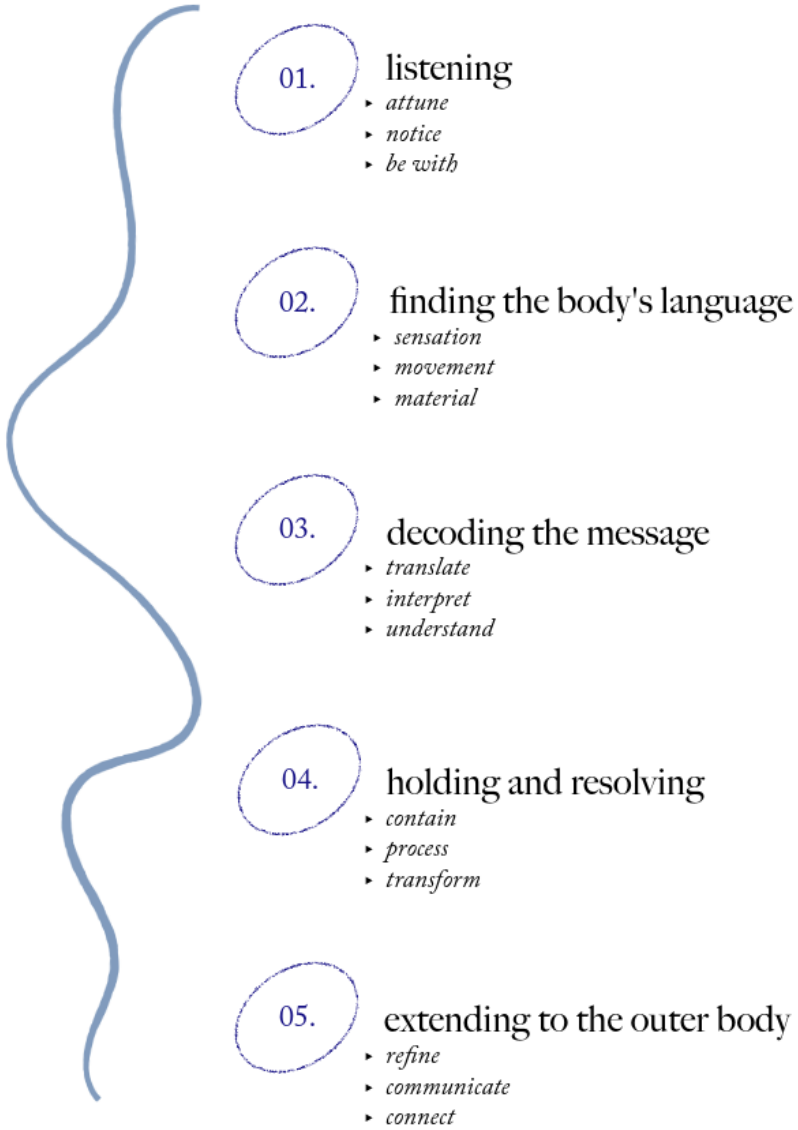


Figure 20. Analysis of practice process, illustrating the iterative movement through the five phases. Diagram by Abby Eastwood, 2026.

8.1

phase one. listening

I sit at my desk, no movement from outside or within.
My hand rests on what has been made.

I am still.

I do not seek to resolve or fix; I simply stay with it long enough for something to be felt.

I go home early and let the feeling seep back into me before I go to bed, and again when I have breakfast, and again on the bus as I return to be seated with my hand, resting.

I am still.

This research began by returning to my graduate collection, as a means of critically reflecting on the foundations and limitations of my existing practice. The collection integrated personally experienced art therapy methods into a fashion design process, including collaging and image making (Figure 21), which were translated into three-dimensional wearable forms through upcycling second-hand military clothing (Figure 22).

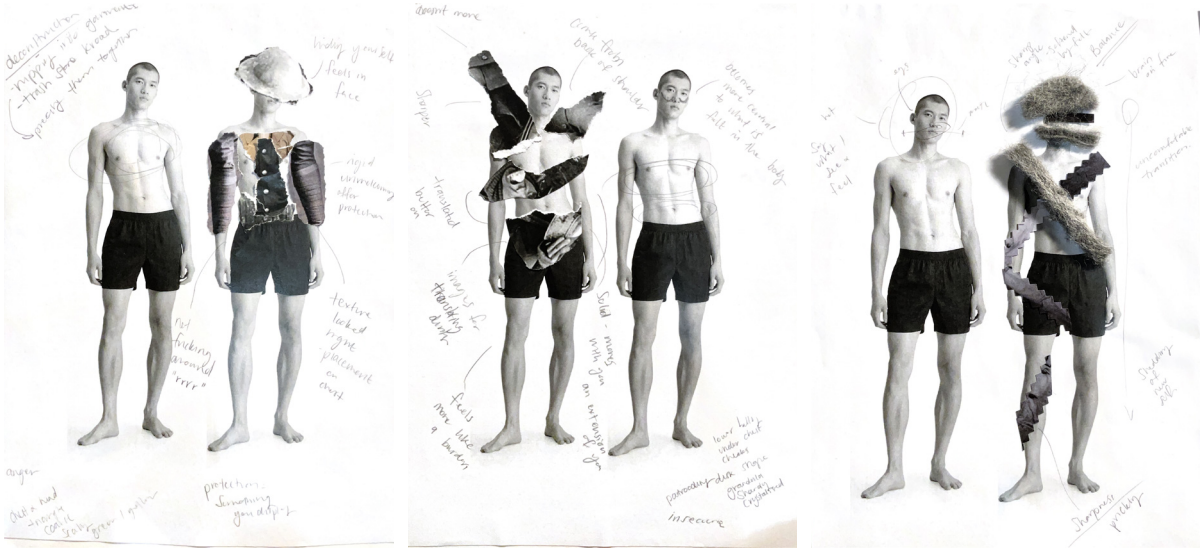


Figure 21. Art therapy collages from graduate collection, developed through co-design. Abby Eastwood, 2024.



Figure 22. Graduate collection. Abby Eastwood, 2024

Alongside this, I revisited a smaller artefact produced during a summer school project titled The Internalised Listener (Figure 23), which reinforced reflective writing as a core method within my practice. Like the graduate collection, it engaged materials embedded with prior histories, an approach that continued throughout this research, resurfacing through different media.



Figure 23. Internalised listener artefact. Abby Eastwood, 2024.

While these works demonstrated an attentiveness to emotional and material histories, the process remained externally focused, with limited attention given to the body as an active site of perception and knowledge. These works established listening as a key method, defined here as attentiveness to bodily sensation, emotional experience, and material response.

Early in Phase One, I became ill, and the pace of my practice was forced to slow down. Journaling emerged from this and served as the primary method through which listening occurred. Writing by hand maintained a connection between thinking and bodily rhythm.[80] As Roland Barthes notes, "*the pleasure of text is that moment when my body pursues its own ideas.*"[81] From a therapeutic perspective, handwritten journaling supports the interpretation of experience and orientation toward change.[82] Writing by hand grounded the research in the body's own rhythm, reinforcing reflection as an embodied method.

I wrote about clothes, specifically the clothes I wore and the clothes that wore me. Sitting alone in my apartment in jeans and a button-up shirt, a fever running up my spine, I wrote about how my body and clothing communicated with one another. This shifted how I understood clothes and materials; they became my companions (Figure 24). Influenced by Donna Haraway's relational thinking, this reframes the material and body as mutually shaping within fluid boundaries.[83]

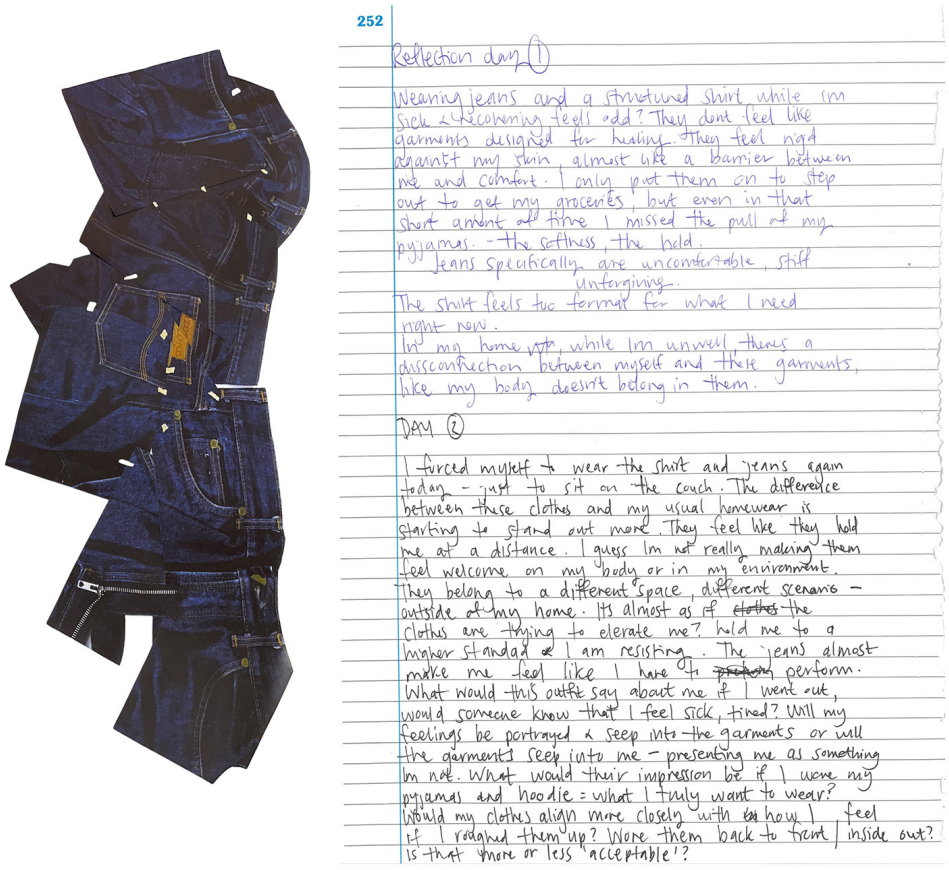


Figure 24. Reflective journal entry with paper collage of garment. Abby Eastwood, 2025.

80 Daniel Chandler, "The Phenomenology of Writing by Hand," *Digital Creativity* 3, nos. 2–3 (1992): 65–74, https://doi.org/10.1080/14626269209408310.
81 Barthes, *The Fashion System*, 17.
82 Elena Faccio et al., *Self-Writing as a Tool for Change: The Effectiveness of a Psychotherapy Using Diary,* 2019.
83 Donna Jeanne Haraway, The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness, Paradigm 8 (Prickly Paradigm Press, 2003).

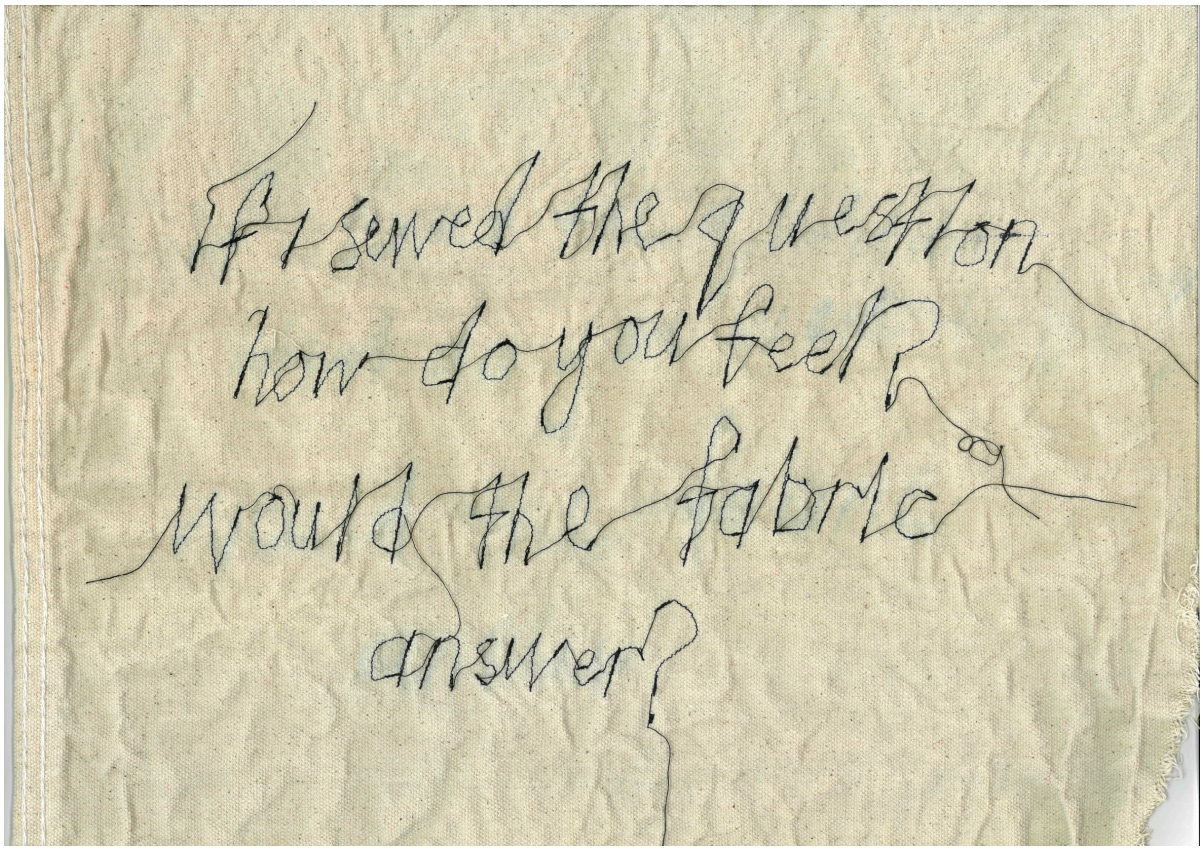


Figure 25. Exploration of materials through deep listening. Abby Eastwood, 2025.

Through reflective writing, I contemplated how the body and material might access each other's knowledge (Figure 25). The body held sensation and emotion; clothing received and carried this. This line of inquiry deepened when I spent two weeks caring for my sister in the hospital during her recovery from a stem cell transplant. Writing remained my only sustained method. I wrote about clothes, materials, and emotion because they were what surrounded me (Figures 26 and 27). My observations expanded beyond myself to include others and the textures of our intertwining lives.

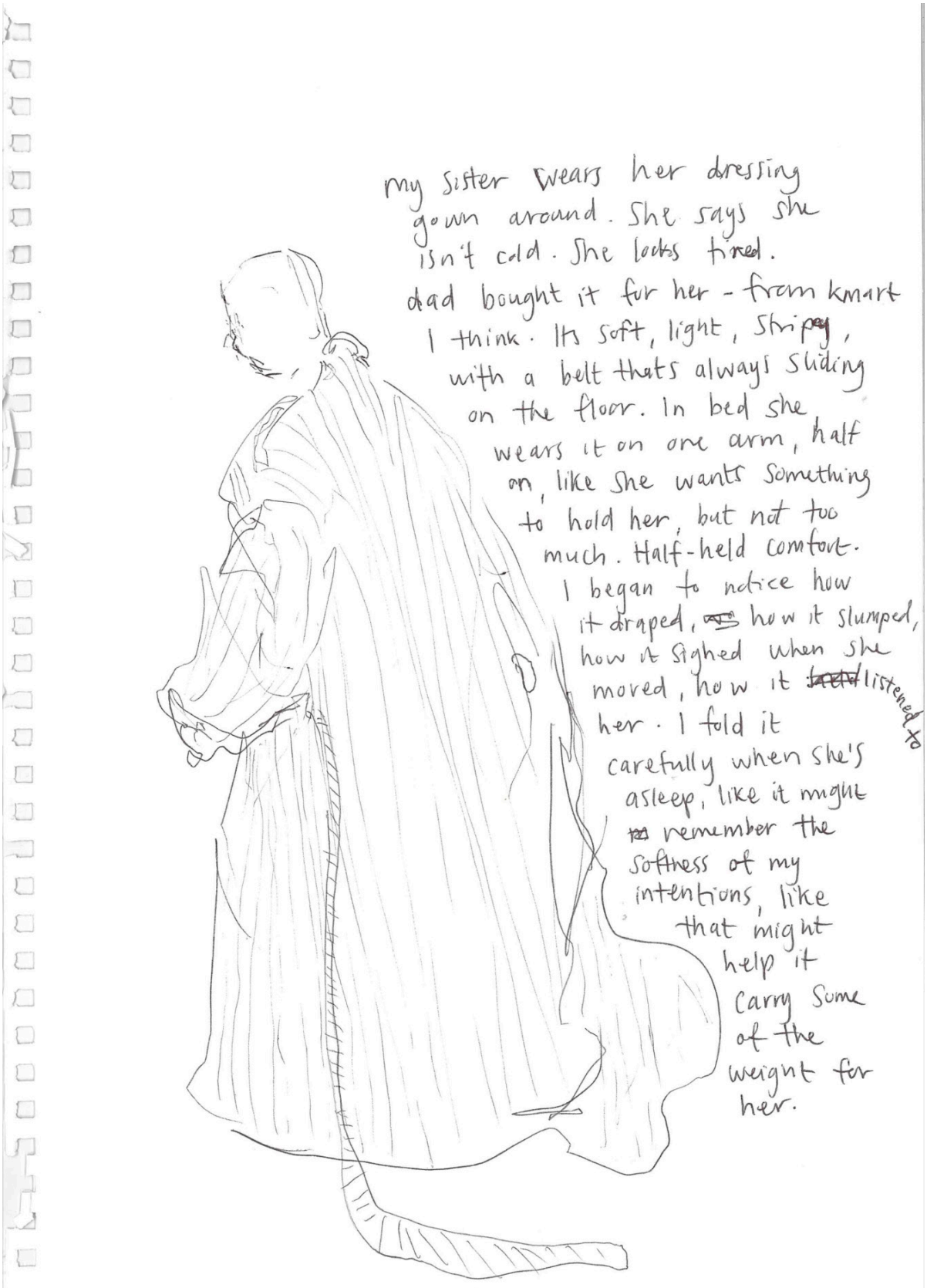
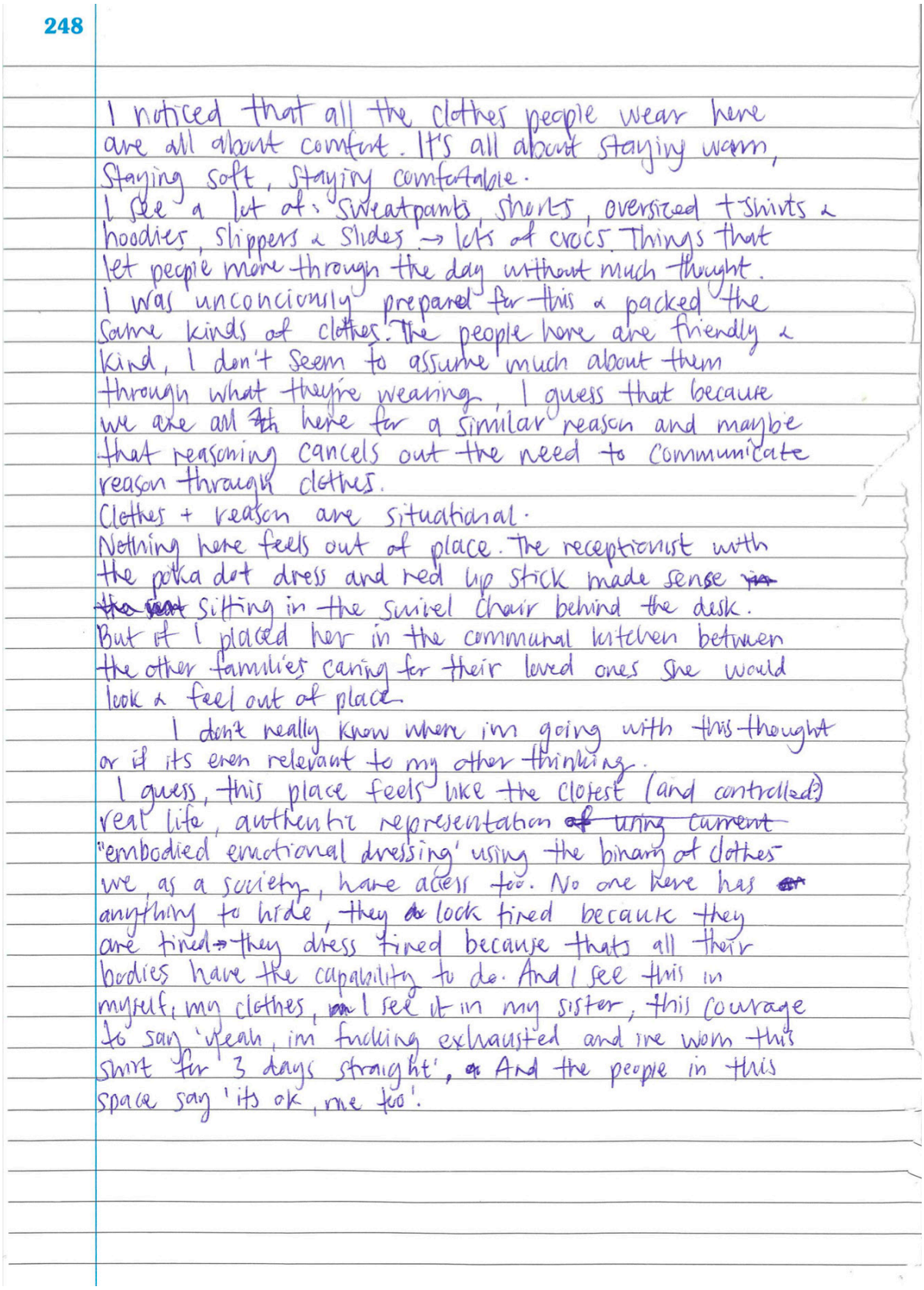


Figure 26. Journal entry produced while visiting my sister. Abby Eastwood, 2025.


248

I noticed that all the clothes people wear here are all about comfort. It's all about staying warm, staying soft, staying comfortable.
I see a lot of: sweatpants, shorts, oversized t-shirts & hoodies, slippers & slides → lots of crocs. Things that let people move through the day without much thought.
I was unconciously prepared for this & packed the same kinds of clothes. The people here are friendly & kind, I don't seem to assume much about them through what they're wearing. I guess that because we are all ~~th~~ here for a similar reason and maybe that reasoning cancels out the need to communicate reason through clothes.
Clothes + reason are situational.
Nothing here feels out of place. The receptionist with the polka dot dress and red lip stick made sense ~~in the seat~~ sitting in the swivel chair behind the desk. But if I placed her in the communal kitchen between the other families caring for their loved ones she would look & feel out of place.
I don't really know where im going with this thought or if its even relevant to my other thinking.
I guess, this place feels like the closest (and controlled?) real life, authentic representation ~~of using current~~ "embodied emotional dressing" using the binary of clothes we, as a society, have access too. No one here has ~~any~~ anything to hide, they ~~do~~ look tired because they are tired → they dress tired because thats all their bodies have the capability to do. And I see this in myself, my clothes, ~~and~~ I see it in my sister, this courage to say 'yeah, im fucking exhausted and ive worn this shirt for 3 days straight', ~~&~~ And the people in this space say 'its ok, me too'.

Figure 27. Journal entry produced while visiting my sister. Abby Eastwood, 2025.

This expansion from personal to relational observation extended the research beyond individual experience, suggesting that personally embodied knowledge, while situated, may resonate across multiple bodies and contexts. Additional journal entries can be found in Appendix A.

Returning to university, I attempted to visually articulate these experiences through prototypes (Figure 28). Yet the work remained at a distance from the body. This led me to confront aspects of embodiment I had previously avoided. The trembling of my hands before they are hidden in pockets. Sweat-stained shirts, caused by moments of anxiety. Tears absorbed into bedding. The heat of my collar as my face flushes red. The body leaves its imprint on clothing, and these clothes carry emotion when the body no longer can.



Figure 28. Early prototype attempts, Abby Eastwood, 2025.

I framed this as unintentional personalisation: the quiet, everyday ways garments are marked through wear, illness, and emotional/bodily experience. These traces are lived. Making, therefore, functioned primarily as a means of materialising thought, holding it briefly in form as can be seen in Figure 29.



Figure 29. Reflective art therapy design process (self-directed). Abby Eastwood, 2025.

In my previous work, emotion had been communicated around the body rather than through it. The body was already speaking/expressing itself through sensation and involuntary responses, yet this had not been fully integrated into the design process.

I welcomed my sweat. I welcomed my shaking hands. I welcomed the dialogue of my body.

This realisation established the foundation for the subsequent four phases of this research, where body, material, and emotion are brought into direct dialogue as collaborators (Figure 30).

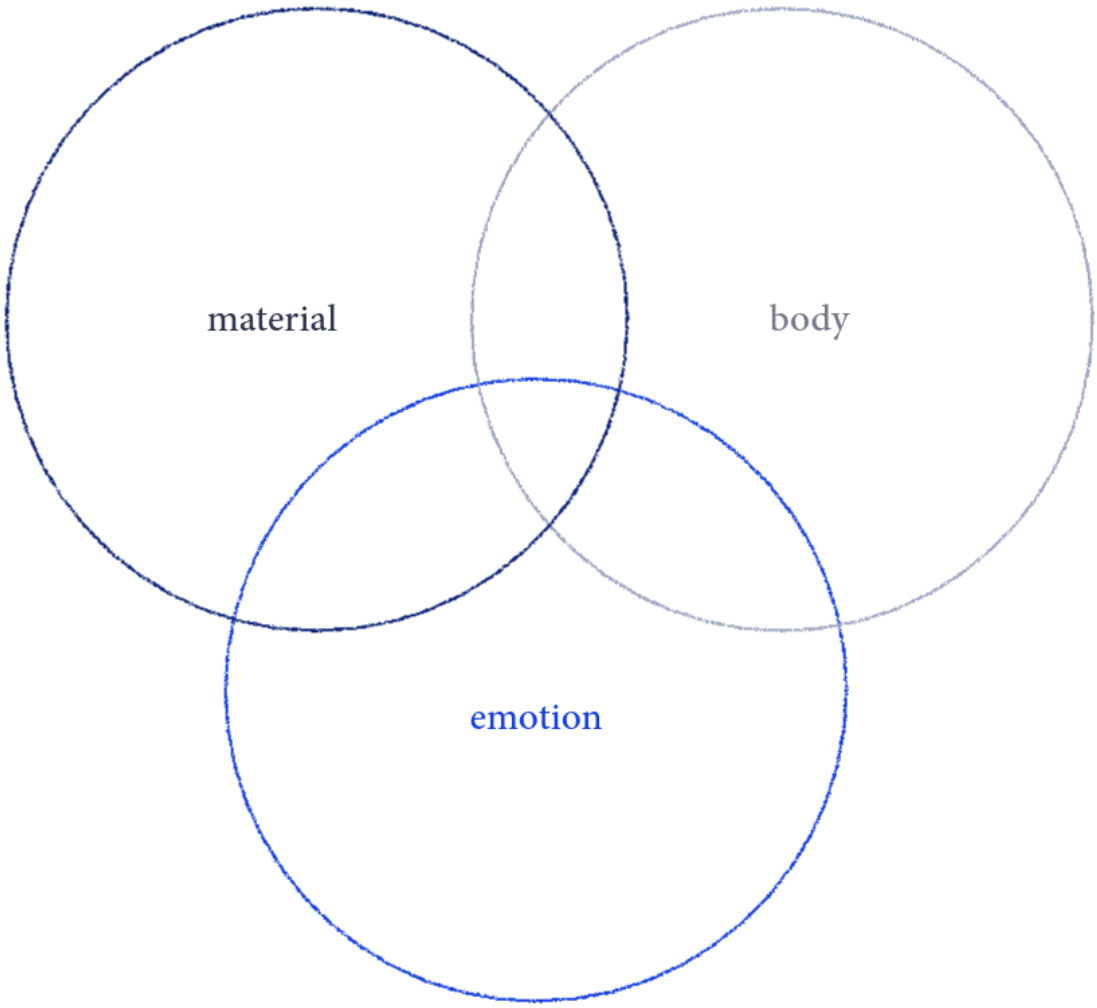


Figure 30. Diagram illustrating the dialogue between body, material, and emotion. Abby Eastwood, 2026.

8.2

phase two. finding the body's language

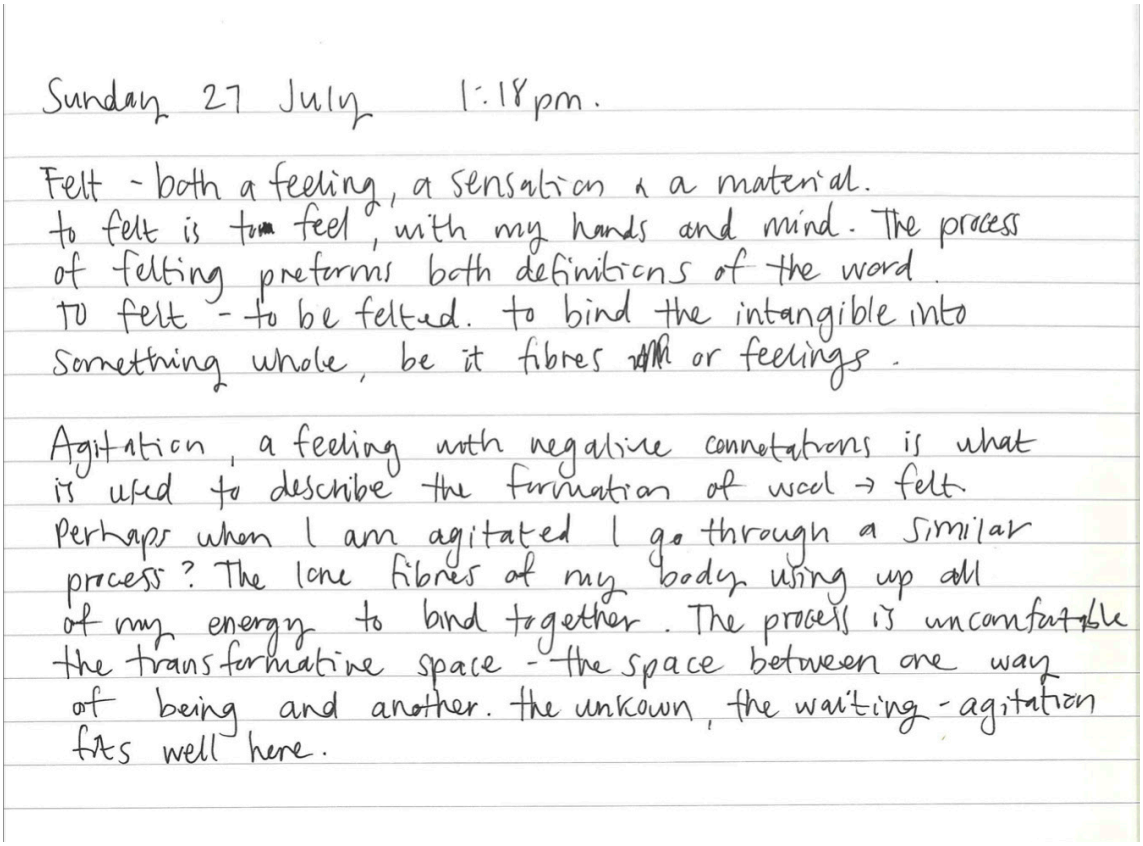


Figure 31. Early felting experiment. Abby Eastwood, 2025.

To find the body's language, I chose to felt (Figure 31). This decision emerged from the need to work with a material that responds directly to touch and manipulation. The physicality of making aligned with my interest in how body, emotion, and materials might communicate. Wet-felt is produced through pressure, heat, moisture and time and develops through bodily engagement.

Felt is a materially responsive process, in which bodily actions are embedded within the structure of the textile,[84] aligning making with embodied experience.[85] Historically, felt has often been produced collectively with bodies working in rhythm through rolling, pressing, and compressing fibres.[86] This reinforced the understanding of material as an active participant in the research, capable of holding traces of bodily action (Figure 32).[87]

84 Jorie Johnson, *Feltmaking and Wool Magic: Contemporary Techniques and Beautiful Projects* (Quarry Books, 2006).
85 Ingold, *Making,* 17–32.
86 Johnson, *Feltmaking and Wool Magic.*
87 Entwistle, "Fashion and the Fleshy Body."



Sunday 27 July 1:18pm.

Felt - both a feeling, a sensation & a material.
to felt is to feel, with my hands and mind. The process of felting performs both definitions of the word.
TO felt - to be felted. to bind the intangible into something whole, be it fibres or feelings.

Agitation, a feeling with negative connotations is what is used to describe the formation of wool → felt.
Perhaps when I am agitated I go through a similar process? The lone fibres of my body using up all of my energy to bind together. The process is uncomfortable the transformative space - the space between one way of being and another. the unknown, the waiting - agitation fits well here.

Figure 32. Reflective journal entry documenting the felting process. Abby Eastwood, 2025.

As I became comfortable in the practice of wet felting, I began to explore earlier contexts of unintentional personalisation in material form. I chose goosebumps as an involuntary bodily response to guide the making process. Goosebumps offered a recognisable physical texture through which bodily sensation might translate into a textile surface (Figure 33).

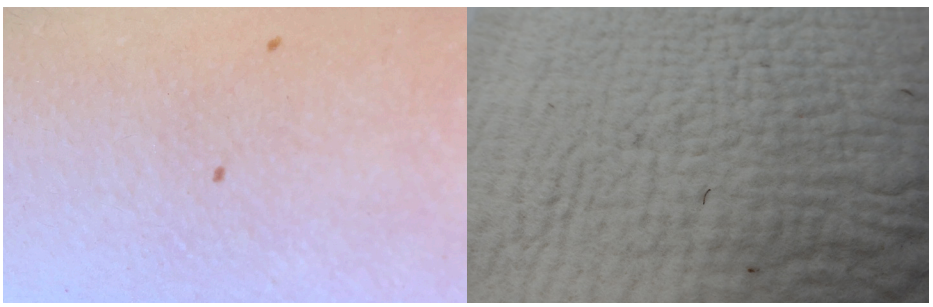


Figure 33. Collage of bodily goosebumps and goosebumps felting exploration. Abby Eastwood, 2025/2026.

I experimented with wet felting a range of sheep wools with more defined crimps to produce higher, more defined bumps, as well as introducing silk for nuno-felting. Nuno-felting embeds wool into light, open-weave fabrics, creating a hybrid textile. The wool shrinks during the felting process, forcing the silk to develop crinkles and ruffles. The texture mimics the tactility and visual qualities of goosebumps (Figure 34).

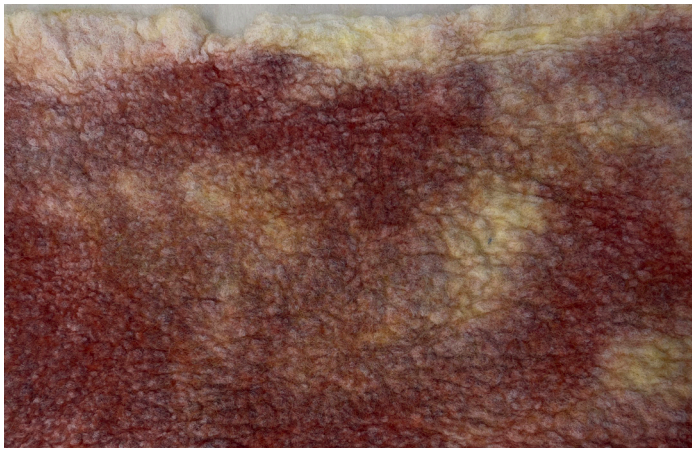


Figure 34. Nuno felting experiment. Abby Eastwood, 2025.

I placed this nuno-felted textile into a concealed glove form (Figure 35). From the outside, the glove seemed visually simple. When the hand was placed inside, the hidden texture was experienced. Similar to Ay-o's Finger boxes, this design prioritised tactile discovery over visual communication.[88] This disrupted the dominance of visual perception within fashion, redirecting attention toward touch as a primary mode of knowing.



Figure 35. Nuno felt glove experiment image collage. Abby Eastwood, 2025.

88 "Ay-O's 'Finger Boxes' | QAGOMA Collection Online."

This moment of tactile discovery echoed an image discussed earlier: a child reaching out to touch a leaf for the first time. The curiosity of that gesture lies in reaching toward something unknown, allowing the hand to learn through contact. By concealing the texture within the glove's interior, the piece sought to focus the body on the experience of sensation. Directly encountered sensation reinforced the importance of tactile engagement in generating embodied awareness.

To wear a feeling is to wear your body. It is to wear your environment. It is to wear your mind. It is to make from the resource that is you, and in turn allow yourself to be made.



Figure 36. Draped white sheets creating a blank studio space. Abby Eastwood, 2026.

In response to the *Leib* being centred in my reflections,[89] I later attempted to remove the visual influence of my designs by working exclusively in white materials. "Blank space, white room" is a guided therapeutic exercise that draws on mindfulness and imagery practices. Minimal imagined environments are used to focus attention and heighten internal awareness. Designer Martin Margiela similarly uses white environments, treating them as a blank surface.[90] By creating with and within white (Figure 36), attention was directed toward texture, weight, and tactile sensation.[91] This reinforced the prioritisation of sensation by removing visual cues, allowing the body to respond before cognitive interpretation.[92]

89 Leder, *The Absent Body.*

90 Sally Schneider, "Unique Logic of Maison Margiela's White Space," *Improvised Life*, May 6, 2015, https://improvisedlife.com/2015/05/06/unique-logic-maison-margielas-white-space/.

91 Norman, Emotional Design: *Why We Love (or Hate) Everyday Things.*

92 Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens.*

This phase marked the first time my own body was fully centred in the work as a participant in the making. While materials responded to bodily labour and encouraged sensory curiosity, they did not yet fully engage embodied emotional experience. This revealed a key limitation: tactile engagement activated sensory awareness but did not sustain a dialogue among body, material, and emotion. The work could not remain purely as a textile-based practice. To address the research, the process needed to engage material, body and emotion simultaneously.

This insight laid the foundation for Phase Three, in which discomfort was introduced as a mechanism to actively generate embodied emotional experience.

8.3

phase three. decoding the message

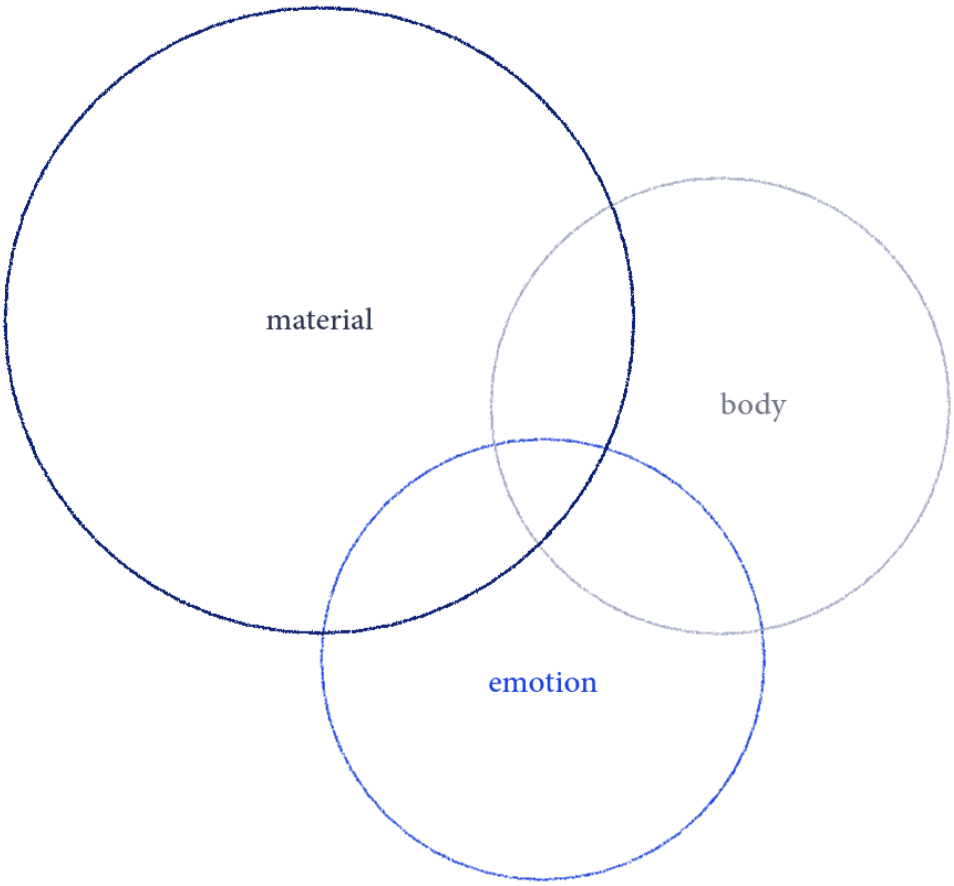


Figure 37. Diagram of the dialogue between material, body, and emotion, depicting the material-focused phase (phase two). Abby Eastwood, 2026.

The findings of phase two showed that the body-material-emotion dialogue was operating unevenly (Figure 37). In response, the exploration of discomfort as a design method became a deliberate means of disrupting and recalibrating this relationship. Rather than representing emotion, this phase investigated how materials and garments could evoke bodily awareness and emotional response.

A pain in my chest from an earlier stretch still hasn't eased.

Every inhale brings images of lungs pinched, every exhale a plea that it will go away.

The discomfort brings fear, unease, resistance, and frustration.

My body works through the sensation, yet all I can manage to do is ask it to hurry up.

I do not notice my eyes until I have sunscreen in them.

I do not notice my heels until I form a blister.

There are, in fact, many things I do not notice until I am inconvenienced or disrupted, until my body is made uncomfortable in some way.

Only then, through discomfort, is my body made visible.

This moment marked a methodological shift from representation to activation (Figure 38). Through reflection on my own "absent body,"[93] I repositioned garments as devices that produce experience rather than communicate meaning. Emotion was now something formed through wearing.

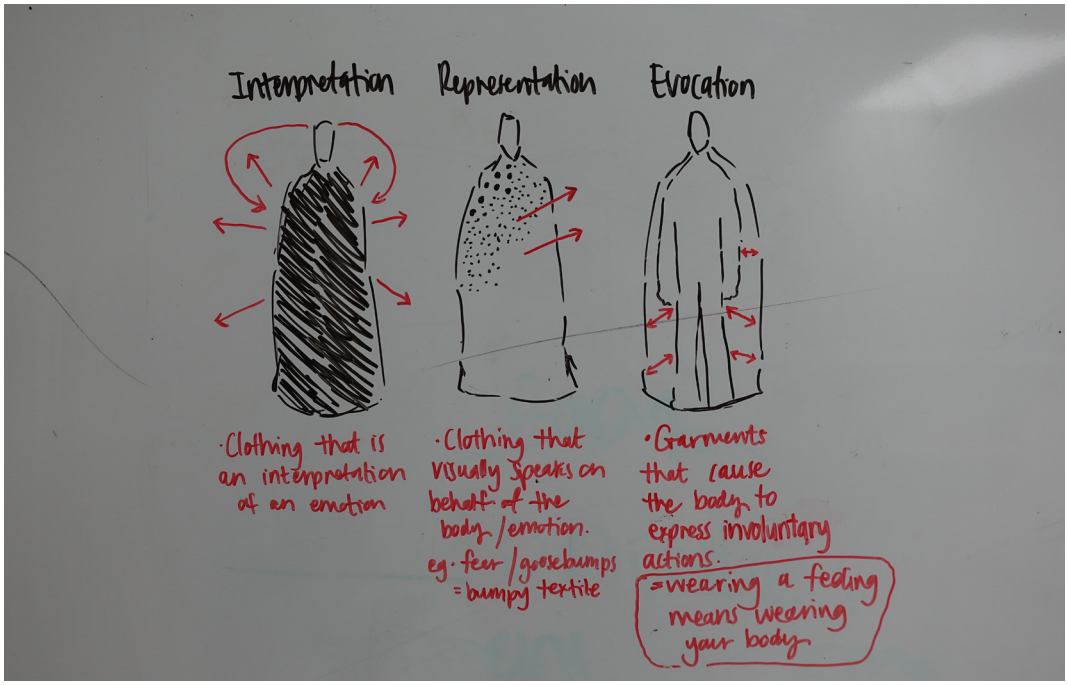


Figure 38. Diagram of three modes of emotional expression in design: interpretation, representation, and evocation. Abby Eastwood, 2025.

Within conventional fashion practice, comfort is typically a measure of successful design. Criteria-led making challenges this assumption by shifting the garment from something viewed to something felt. By positioning discomfort as a generative condition, this research disrupts normative assumptions of comfort, wearability, and desirability within fashion design.

A phenomenological spectrum of discomfort (Figure 39) was developed through autoethnographic reflection on uncomfortable or painful experiences. These were translated into design variables, forming a framework for systematic exploration. The spectrum was structured from 'comforting' to 'awful' or 'the worst ever'.

93 Leder, *The Absent Body*.

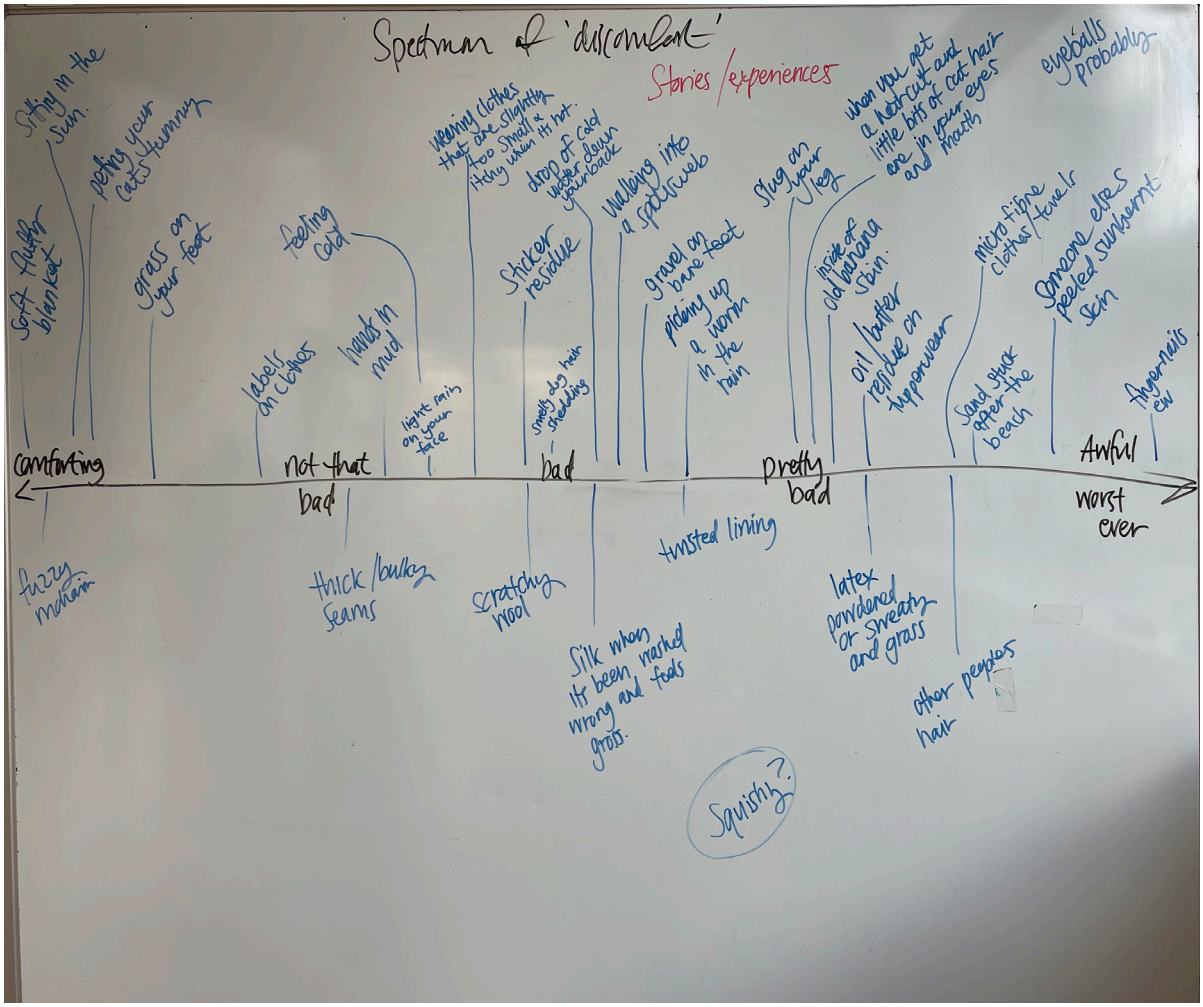


Figure 39. Whiteboard mapping the spectrum of discomfort. Abby Eastwood, 2025.

Although subjective, the spectrum enabled iterative testing and comparison of embodied responses. Each prototype functioned as an experiment to explore how specific physical conditions might influence bodily awareness. Drawing on Merleau-Ponty's understanding of perception as grounded in the lived body, these investigations focused on different sensory variables, including weight, restriction, pressure, and surface texture.[94] Prototypes discussed within this phase were constructed to enable bodily responses to be observed and reflected on, positioning the body at the centre of the body-emotion-material dialogue (Figure 40). Through this process, the absent body reappeared, becoming the primary site of knowledge production.[95]

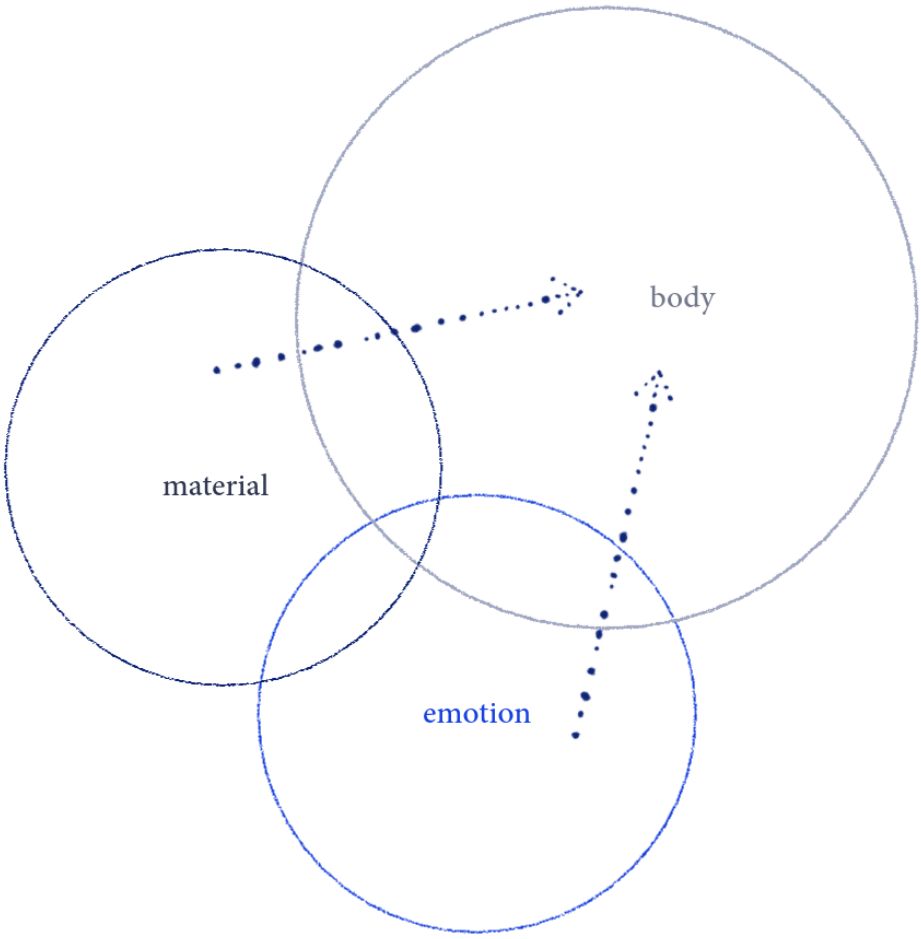


Figure 40. Diagram of the dialogue between material, body, and emotion, depicting the body-focused phase. Abby Eastwood, 2026.

94 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception.*
95 Leder, *The Absent Body.*

8.3.1

discomfort prototype one.

later categorised in 'balance'

proprioceptive load system (PLS-01, iteration 1).

A heavy jacket will slip off my shoulders; the weight distributed unevenly eventually irritates me. I will attempt to widen my shoulders or shift the angle of my body to counterbalance the weight and keep it on. It will fall again, and I will take it off.

I constructed a narrow strip divided into small compartments, each filled with a small amount of stones (Figure 41). The strip allowed the weight to be placed across different parts of the body. When worn, the stone's temperature travelled through the fabric. It felt cold against my skin, producing a calming effect. The cold brought awareness to the part of the body the strip was touching.



Figure 41. Construction of prototype PLS-01, iteration 2. Abby Eastwood, 2026.



Figure 42. Wear testing of prototype PLS-01, iteration 1. Abby Eastwood, 2026.

The experiment expanded into a vest that distributed the stones across the upper body, roughly following pressure points along my shoulders, chest, and neck (Figure 42). I would press into my skin and ask my body what it wanted. I chose places where my body answered. My intention was to create unease, yet the garment had a calming effect. This demonstrated that bodily response cannot be fully predetermined through design intention, but emerges through interaction between body and material. I realised I needed to intentionally guide my awareness towards discomfort through asking my body the right questions.

Weight does not necessarily inherently produce discomfort but can generate awareness through additional variables such as pressure, temperature, and distribution. In this instance, the garment functioned as a mediating device between bodily sensation and emotional regulation.

8.3.2

discomfort prototype two.

later categorised in 'restriction'

motor inhibition system (MIS-01, iteration 1)

When reflecting on the previously explored 'unintentional personalisation' of clothing, I thought about the feeling of blushing, the way that it feels to have the blood rush to your face, to know everyone can see it travel up your neck. I associated this with the physical feeling of a turtle neck that sits too tight, the feeling of it choking you, and the restriction of movement.

This relationship between sensation and restriction informed this experiment. The prototype was designed following traditional corsetry pattern drafting. Instead of using a suitable structured textile, I turned to an earlier felting experiment made from strong wool scraps. I hand-sewed the sections together with exposed seams, using a thick, waxed thread that appeared messy and distorted (Figure 43).

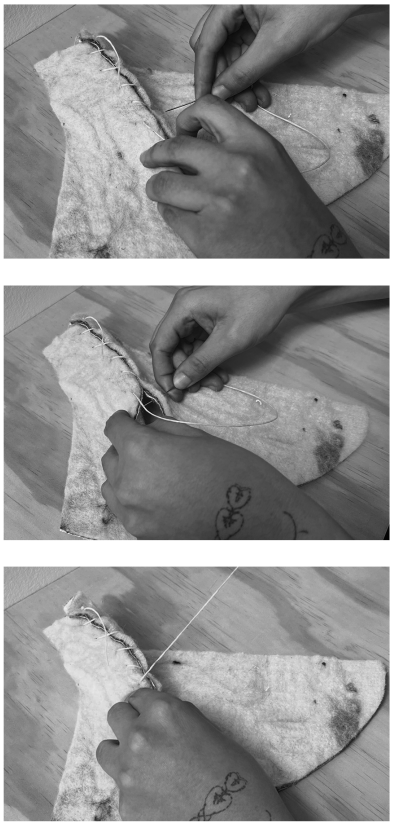


Figure 43. Hand-sewing moving image stills. Abby Eastwood, 2026.

At first, I dismissed the piece as unsuccessful, but its potential became clear once worn (Figure 44). The felt pressed lightly against my throat, producing a subtle itch and warmth. It was a slight, almost ignorable sensation, but it was there. The felt was thin; it did not restrict or immobilise me. I could still move my head and neck freely.



Figure 44. Wear testing of prototype MIS-01, iteration 1. Abby Eastwood, 2026.

Restriction did not operate mechanically. Instead of physically limiting the body, the tactile irritation directed attention towards the throat and neck. This revealed that restriction operates perceptually rather than physically, where minimal sensory disruption is sufficient to redirect bodily awareness. Therefore, the garment's effectiveness lay in its ability to sustain attention through subtle, continuous sensation.

8.3.3

discomfort prototype three.

later categorised in 'touch'

tactile interface system (TIS-03, iteration 1)

Continuing the confrontation of fashion's visual bias, I resisted incorporating aesthetic spectacle to prioritise bodily sensation over visual form.[96] This experiment intentionally explored the opposite, incorporating unexpected tactile encounters. I have strong sensory aversions and spend a lot of time avoiding being touched by the unfamiliar. Grass, in particular, with its individual blades brushing against bare skin, often produces a personal sense of discomfort.

This prompted the sub-question: When the body is provoked through material intervention, what kinds of sensations and emotions emerge? To test this, wheatgrass seeds were planted across a loosely woven mesh fabric. The mesh allowed the roots to bind through the textile, maintaining the functionality of a fabric I could sew with. The grass was left unattended and eventually died, becoming solid, brittle, and roughly textured (Figure 45). This unintentional transformation intensified the sensory qualities and introduced a significant insight: when materials are allowed to behave beyond controlled design intention, they can generate more complex sensory experiences. Instead of the imagined softness that tickled my skin, the dried grass created an unpredictable tactile experience, leaving me feeling uncomfortable. I reflected on my prior attempts to let the body and materials speak,[97] noticing that when materials were allowed to develop at their own pace, the body re-entered the process through its reaction to them.

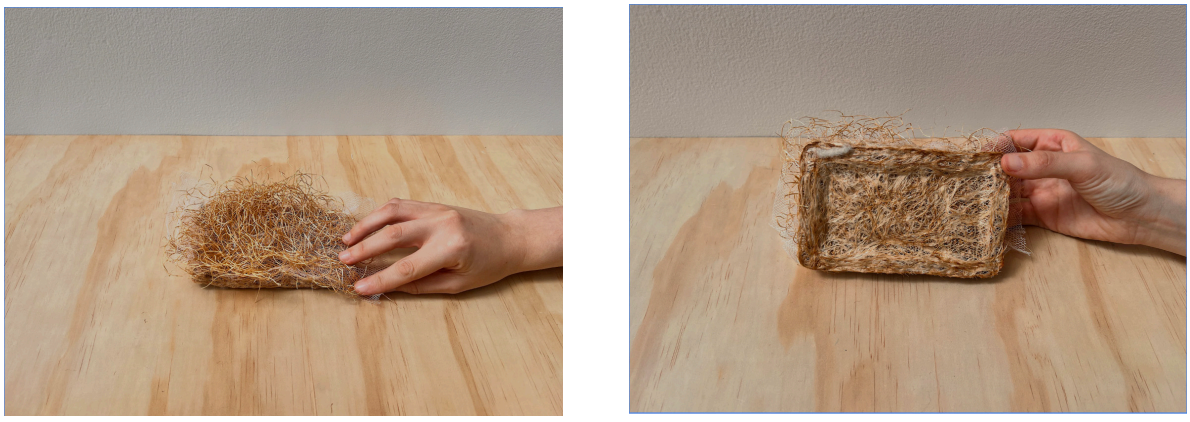


Figure 45. Dried grass tactile experiment for prototype TIS-03, iteration 1. Abby Eastwood, 2026.

96 Barthes, *The Fashion System.*

97 Albers, *On Weaving New Expanded Edition.*

In line with Professor Lambros Malafouris's theory of material engagement, pressure emerges through wearing, framing feeling as relational and embodied.[98] This demonstrated that discomfort can emerge through instability and unpredictability, requiring the body to continuously renegotiate its relationship to the material.

Through the methods of wearing, sitting with and reflecting on the work, I noticed how the prototypes altered the relationship I had with my body. Wearing shifted the body's role in the research from material producer to primary site of knowing. This shift reframed garments as spaces that hold and provoke bodily and emotional experience. It also forced me to confront the ways in which I neglected and ignored my own body:

I realised I must take care of my body. I must nurture it. We must work as one. I begin tai chi classes. I re-attend regular therapy sessions. I eat, I drink water, I listen to my body. I go home early. I spend the night reading and sleeping. I notice the first time my toes have touched grass (maybe in years). I dress myself according to how the garments feel against my skin. I do not try to suppress my being, my space; instead, I create room for me. It is through this commitment, through the training and routine, that I find a home for my research; the environment it sits in is made to be trained in.

98 Lambros Malafouris, *How Things Shape the Mind: A Theory of Material Engagement* (The MIT Press, 2013).

The question: *can you wear a feeling?* shifted toward whether it can be sustained. Can you sit in the discomfort of it, the discomfort of the emotion, the discomfort of your body? Can you remain present within bodily sensation? This reframes the garments as environments, spaces that hold emotional and bodily experience. *Garment* becomes *a site of experience*, integrating intentional discomfort to build bodily awareness and resilience. The research proposes that wearing a feeling is not a representational act, but an embodied practice of remaining present within sensation.



Figure 46. Initial discomfort experiments lineup. Abby Eastwood, 2026.

While these initial experiments (Figure 46) highlighted the generative potential of discomfort, they also revealed the need for a more structured framework to understand and compare body responses across different types of sensations. A new spectrum of discomfort was developed, mapping experiences across noticeable, irritable, and painful (Figure 47). This provided a clear evaluative guideline for positioning each prototype and exploring how discomfort could be designed to prompt reflection rather than avoidance.

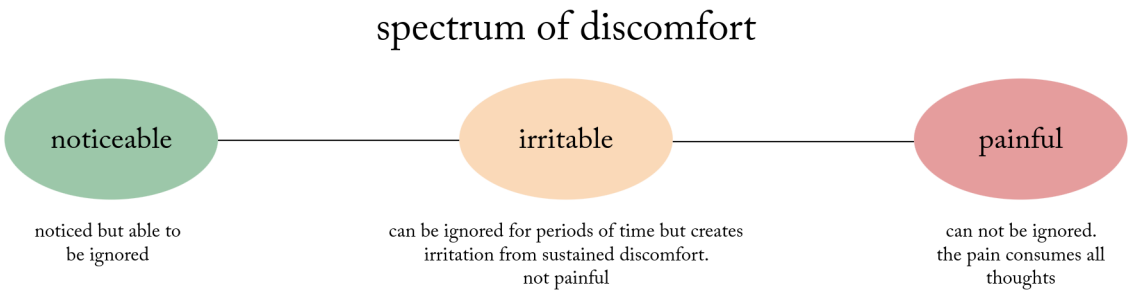


Figure 49. Spectrum of discomfort diagram. Abby Eastwood, 2026.

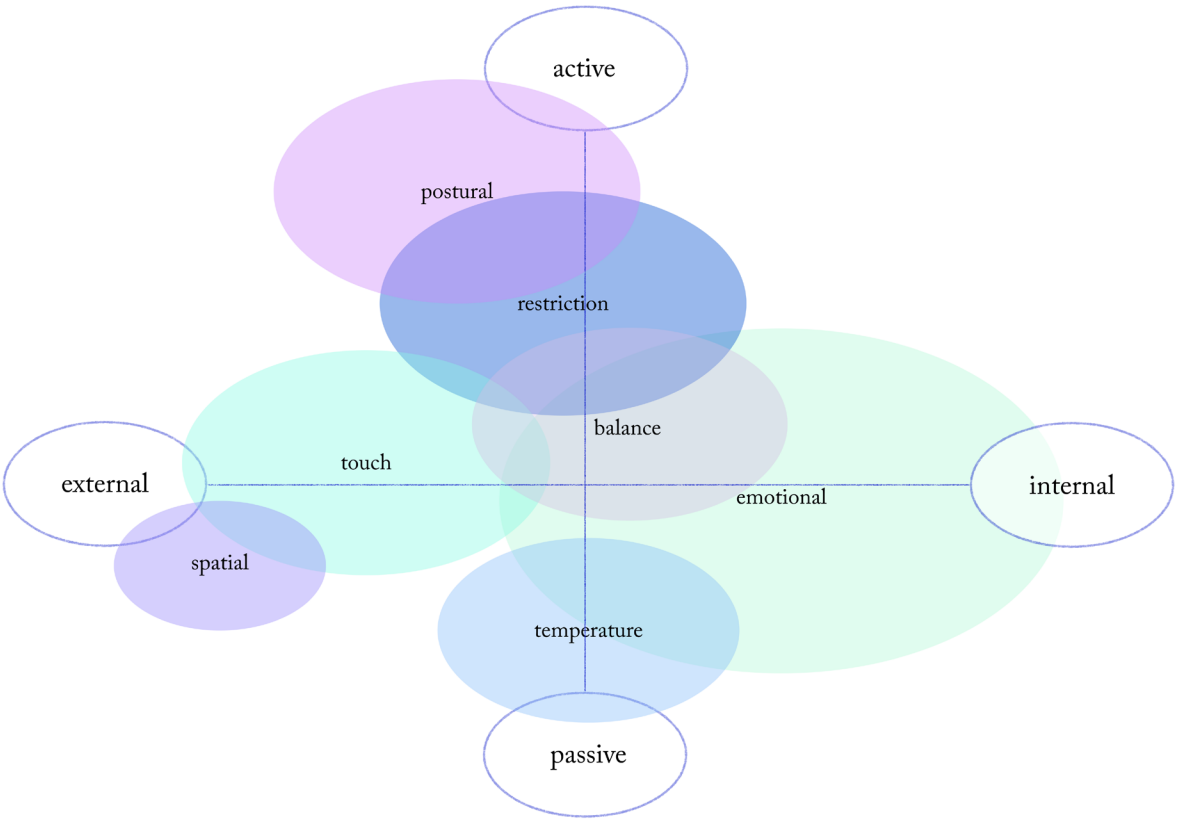


Figure 48. Diagram mapping categories of discomfort. Abby Eastwood, 2026.

Within the spectrum, discomfort was categorised into distinct experiential categories, including posture, restriction, balance, touch, spatial, temperature, and emotion. The categories are mapped along two axes: external-internal, representing where the sensation originates, and active-passive, representing how the body engages with the sensation (Figure 48). Overlaps between the categories acknowledge that discomfort is often simultaneous, relational, and interdependent.[99]

These categories were then positioned along the spectrum of discomfort, using broader autoethnographic experiences over the varying intensities (Figure 49). By combining the discomfort criteria with experiential categories, this framework forms a nuanced phenomenological basis for subsequent phases of research. Sustained irritation became the desired intensity, as once sensation becomes painful, awareness is disrupted rather than maintained.[100]

99 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception.*
100 Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*, First issued as a paperback, Oxford Paperbacks (Oxford Univ. Press, 1987).

category	noticeable	irritable	painful
spatial	Becoming aware of the space around the body. Slight shifts in proximity, distance, or orientation are registered but not disruptive.	Feeling spatially constrained or disoriented. Awareness of objects, walls, or people. Requires effort to navigate or position the body comfortably.	Severe spatial disorientation or confinement. The environment feels overwhelming, displacing, or inescapable.
postural	Sitting slightly hunched. Becoming aware of it occasionally and sitting up straight.	Stuck sitting in an awkward position. Back and neck require constant micro-adjustments. Can't fully relax, it is distracting.	Prolonged time in a fixed strained position. Holding the position feels intolerable.
restriction	Clothing is slightly too tight (waistband, sleeves). Aware but can ignore it.	Wearing something that limits movement or requires frequent adjustments.	Physically constrained. Movement feels blocked and the inability to move freely causes distress or panic.
balance	Standing on uneven ground or a moving bus. Small, automatic adjustments are made but it doesn't interrupt awareness.	Frequent instability or uneven weight distribution. Requires constant correction and focus. Feels distracting and mildly disorienting.	Intense dizziness, spinning, or loss of stability. Standing or walking feels unsafe or impossible. Strong urge to sit or lie down.
touch	Light touch on the arm. A slightly itchy sweater. Sensation registers but isn't bothersome.	A repetitive or persistent sensation like a scratching against the neck or a sticky residue on the hands. Hard to ignore and pulls attention repeatedly.	Sharp, intense, or overwhelming tactile input (abrasive surfaces, intense temperature). Triggers immediate withdrawal.
temperature	Feeling slightly too cold/warm. Considers putting on or taking off a layer.	Fluctuating temperature. Too hot or too cold. Feeling restless or uncomfortable.	Extreme cold (numbness, stinging) or heat (burning). Sensation dominates attention.
emotional	Feeling a little uneasy or self conscious. Mildly awkward in conversation but can continue normally.	Sustained frustration, embarrassment, or anxiety. Affects tone, patience, and ability to focus.	Emotional distress / meltdown. Severe panic, shame, or grief. Overwhelms capacity to think clearly or engage.

Figure 49. Table of categories exploring the spectrum of discomfort. Abby Eastwood, 2026.

This framework enabled iterative testing, transforming subjective experiences into a structured framework that guided design decisions. Discomfort became a method for exploring the relationship between body, material, and emotion.

8.4

phase four. holding and resolving

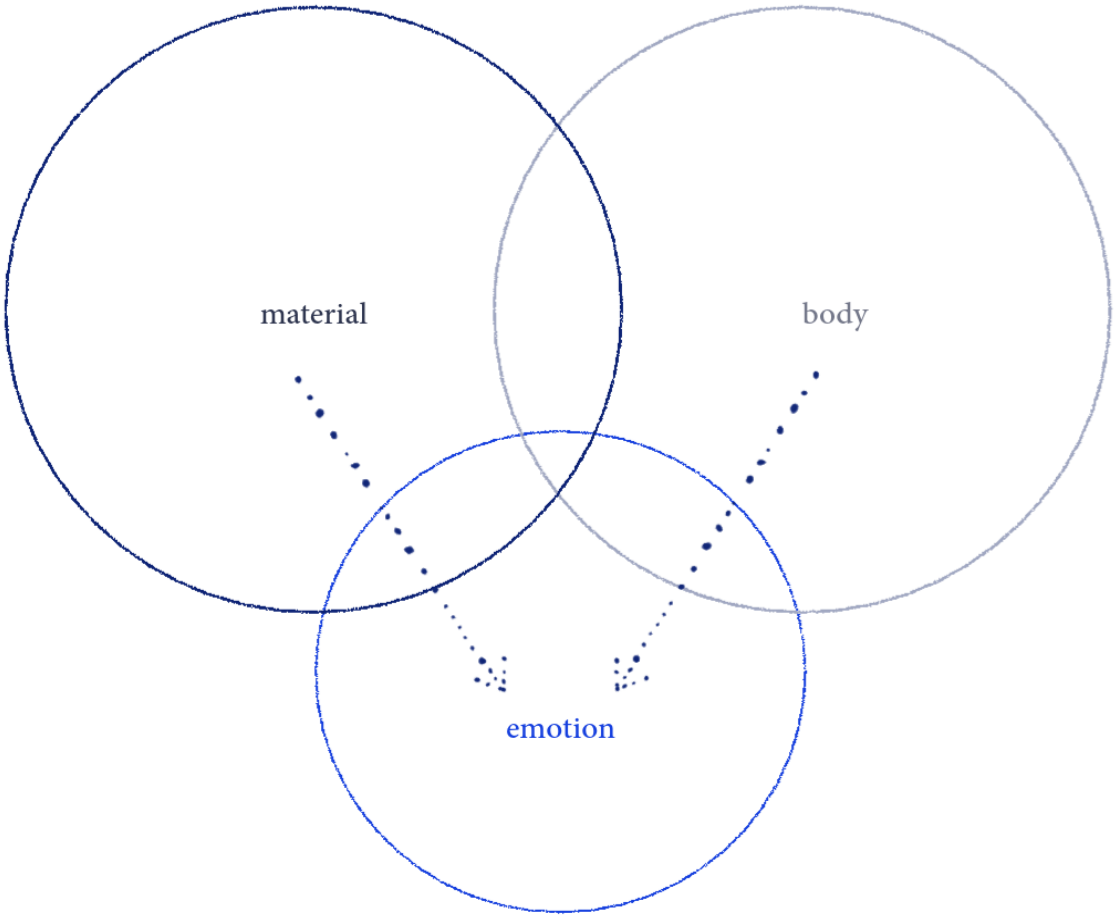


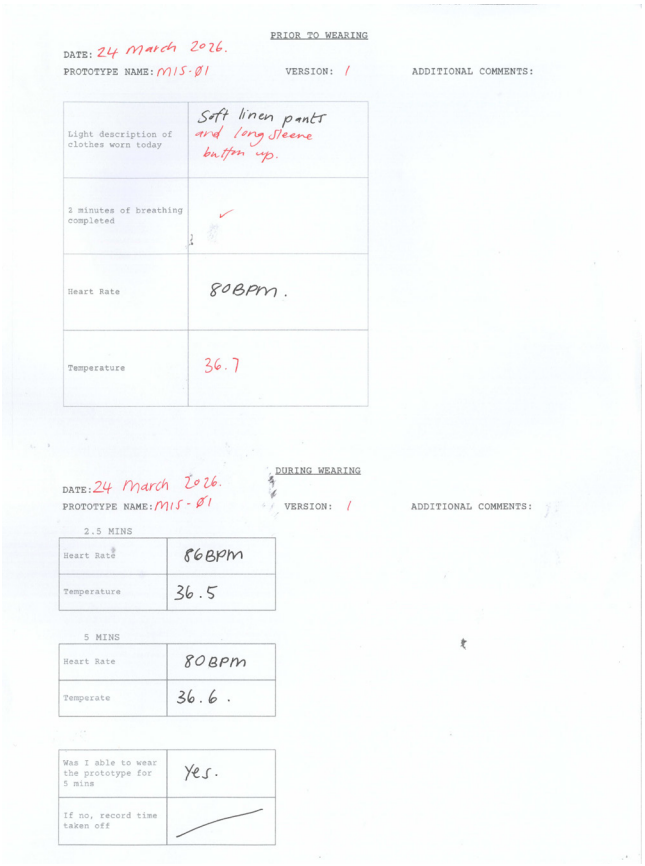
Figure 50. Diagram illustrating the developed relationship between material and body, incorporating emotion into the dialogue. Abby Eastwood, 2026.

As the relationship between body, material, and emotion became defined, the research moved into a stage of refinement (Figure 50). Prototypes were designed into the following categories: postural, restriction, balance, and touch. Here, the research shifted from exploration to refinement, consolidating insights into a coherent design approach. Each iteration demonstrated how bodily awareness could be activated through intentional design, as shown in the MIS-01 iterations table (Figure 51), with focus placed on the relationship between discomfort, sensation, and awareness.

category: Restriction		
name: Motor Inhibition System 01		abbreviation: MIS-01
iteration 01  method: Strong / coarse wool scraps felted into a mosaic pattern. Hand sewn.	iteration 02  changes: Increased the stiffness of the textile. Added more wool, hessian fabric and calico.	iteration 03  changes: Lengthened the proportions of the pattern to longer than the natural length of the neck
findings: Revealed that restriction operates perceptually.	findings: A stiffer textile around the neck heightens the physical and perceptual restriction.	findings: Further heightens restriction. Evokes a feeling of confinement. The body and mind adapt through posture and movement.
iterations placed on the spectrum of discomfort: 		

Figure 51. Findings table for MIS-01. Abby Eastwood, 2026

Evaluative worksheets documented each prototype before, during, and after wear. Baseline conditions were recorded, including clothing, heart rate and temperature, followed by a two-minute breathing exercise to reduce external variables (Figure 52). While wearing, sensations, thoughts, and impressions were captured through journaling (Figure 53), alongside visual and descriptive body mapping (Figure 54). This process enabled subjective experiences to be recorded and systematically compared.



PRIOR TO WEARING

DATE: 24 March 2026.
PROTOTYPE NAME: MIS-01 VERSION: 1 ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Light description of clothes worn today	Soft linen pants and long sleeve button up.
2 minutes of breathing completed	✓
Heart Rate	80BPM.
Temperature	36.7

DURING WEARING

DATE: 24 March 2026.
PROTOTYPE NAME: MIS-01 VERSION: 1 ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

2.5 MINS

Heart Rate	86BPM
Temperature	36.5

5 MINS

Heart Rate	80BPM
Temperate	36.6.

Was I able to wear the prototype for 5 mins	Yes.
If no, record time taken off	

Above: Figure 52. Completed pre- and during-wear worksheet for prototype MIS-01, iteration 1. Abby Eastwood, 2026.

MIS-01 : it scratches most near where the front of my throat is.
it feels slightly warmer around my neck.
mostly comfortable apart from the slight scratch

I cant help but think about other things, its not disrupting my ability to drift awareness elsewhere.

I can move my neck and head and shoulders comfortably.

Below: Figure 53. Reflective journal entry documenting wear testing of prototype MIS-01, iteration 1. Abby Eastwood, 2026

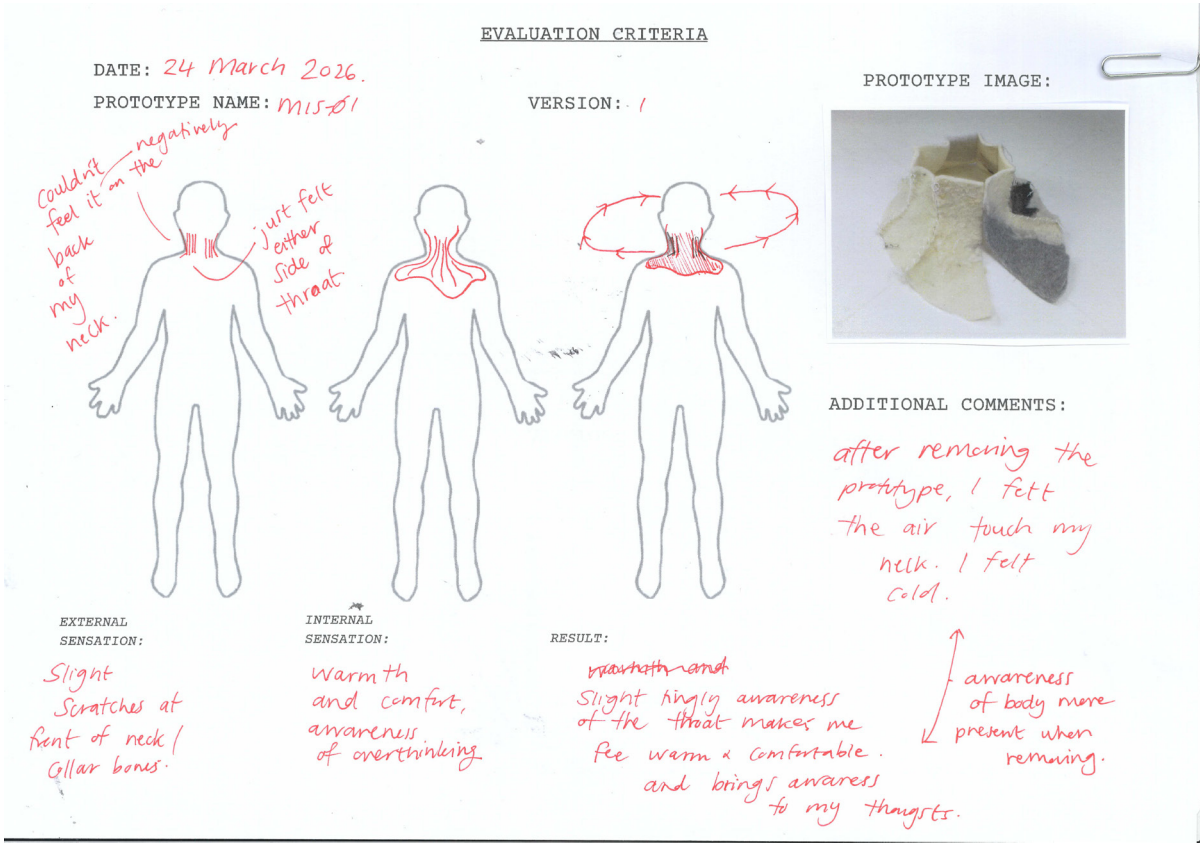


Figure 54. Completed evaluation criteria worksheet for prototype MIS-01, iteration 1. Abby Eastwood, 2026.

This documentation moved the research beyond intuitive making and towards a structured analytical framework. The evaluation criteria worksheets (see Appendix B) enabled the identification and comparison of patterns in bodily response, assessing each prototype's ability to interrupt my bodily autopilot and sustain awareness.

Each prototype was developed across three iterations, based on one of the identified criteria. The first iteration tested initial ideas, drawing on insights, prototypes and materials from phases two and three of the research. The second version refined the construction and adjusted the levels of discomfort. The third iteration focused on design resolution.

The following tables show the iterations for each category and iterative prototypes.

category: Restriction

name: Motor Inhibition System 02 abbreviation: MIS-02

iteration 01



method:

Layers of scrap calico quilted together and constructed into a hood.

findings:

By encompassing the head, even with light physical sensation, vision becomes heightened.

iteration 02



changes:

Textile changed to felted wool, hessian, and calico. Adapted the shape of the hood.

findings:

Alongside heightened sight, wool around the face introduces smell as an additional sense. Extending the front of the head wear brings the body into play through movement.

iteration 03



changes:

Adjusted pattern to make field of vision smaller.

findings:

The body attempts to adapt to the restricted vision through exaggerated and disoriented movement.

iterations placed on the spectrum of discomfort:



Figure 55. Findings table for MIS-02. Abby Eastwood, 2026

category: Restriction

name: Motor Inhibition System 03 abbreviation: MIS-02

iteration 01



method:

A straitjacket with long arms sewn down, concealed inside of a lab coat.

findings:

The inability to control the garment within the act of dressing causes irritation. When worn, restriction occurs perceptually.

iteration 02



changes:

Added elastic over the upper and lower arms.

findings:

The added pressure on the arms from the elastic furthers the perceptual and physical restriction.

This prototype was not developed further for exhibition due to its specificity to my body, which limits accessibility. Despite this, it produced valuable insights that align with findings across the restriction category.

iterations placed on the spectrum of discomfort:



Figure 56. Findings table for MIS-03. Abby Eastwood, 2026.

category: Balance

name: Proprioceptive Load System 01 abbreviation: PLS-01

iteration 01



method:

Rocks sewn into a vest with evenly distributed weight.

findings:

Evenly distributed weight across the shoulders, combined with the rocks' temperature, brings a sense of calm.

iteration 02



changes:

Unevenly distributed weight.

findings:

Irritation emerges through micro-adjustments to posture and garment positioning under weight.

iteration 03



changes:

Increased weight and garment length.

findings:

Increased weight does not necessarily intensify discomfort; instead, the cool rocks create a deeper, grounding pressure as they press into the body.

iterations placed on the spectrum of discomfort:



Figure 57. Findings table for PLS-01. Abby Eastwood, 2026

category: Balance

name: Proprioceptive Load System 02 abbreviation: PLS-02

iteration 01



method:

Rocks sewn into a hat with unevenly distributed weight.

findings:

Cold rocks, pressure around the head, and uneven weight distribution build into a painful sensation, similar to a headache.

iteration 02



changes:

Increased the size of the pattern. More rocks added unevenly.

findings:

Discomfort is created by destabilising the head, requiring the rest of the body to counterbalance.

This prototype did not require a third iteration, having reached the intended level of discomfort. The next iteration will be developed for exhibition.

iterations placed on the spectrum of discomfort:



Figure 58. Findings table for PLS-02. Abby Eastwood, 2026

category: Balance

name: Proprioceptive Load System 03 abbreviation: PLS-03

iteration 01



method:

Rocks sewn into a scarf with unevenly distributed weight.

findings:

Cold rocks, pressure around the head, and uneven weight distribution build into a painful sensation, similar to a headache.

This prototype was not developed further, as its findings largely repeated those of PLS-01 and the conditions of wear were too specific, requiring the garment to be positioned in a very controlled way.

iterations placed on the spectrum of discomfort:



Figure 59. Findings table for PLS-03. Abby Eastwood, 2026.

category: Touch

name: Tactile Interface System 01 abbreviation: TIS-01

iteration 01



method:

Nuno-felting using merino and silk. Concealed within a glove.

findings:

Requires intention and deep focus to be discomforted by the touch.

iteration 02



changes:

Wool spaced out across the silk. Using Corriedale wool.

findings:

A stranger, more dramatic feeling emerges. It evokes curiosity and fear. The combination of fabrics produces a sense of instability, offering no safety or familiarity.

This prototype did not require a third iteration and will be developed for exhibition.

iterations placed on the spectrum of discomfort:



Figure 60. Findings table for TIS-01. Abby Eastwood, 2026.

category: Touch

name: Tactile Interface System 02 abbreviation: TIS-02

iteration 01



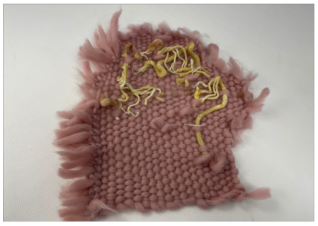
method:

Beeswax coated linen. Cut into strips and woven together. Concealed within a glove.

findings:

Initial shock. Once the hand is familiar with the sensation, there is very little curiosity.

iteration 02



changes:

Thin merino slivers woven together. Beeswax coated cotton twine lightly woven into textile

findings:

The combination of contrasting textures within the textile holds curiosity. Moving across the textile, I feel uncertain, as tingling sensations emerge through my hand.

This prototype did not require a third iteration, having reached the intended level of discomfort. The next iteration will be developed for exhibition.

iterations placed on the spectrum of discomfort:



Figure 61. Findings table for TIS-02. Abby Eastwood, 2026.

category: Touch

name: Tactile Interface System 03 abbreviation: TIS-03

iteration 01



method:

Dried wheat-grass, grown between two layer of mesh fabric. Concealed within a glove.

findings:

Requires intention and deep focus to be discomforted by the touch.

Due to the unpredictable nature of growing materials, the grass did not develop as intended, limiting the prototype's progression. Drawing on insights from other prototypes in this category, TIS03 will instead be developed for exhibition using a combined textile approach with found dried plant material.

iterations placed on the spectrum of discomfort:



Figure 62. Findings table for TIS-03. Abby Eastwood, 2026.

category: Postural

name: Structural Orientation System 01 abbreviation: SOS-01

iteration 01



method:

Harnesses on the upper and lower body, connected by a wooden rod.

findings:

When there is excessive surface input and too many uncontrollable variables, it becomes difficult to stay focused on sensation.

iteration 02



changes:

'Cast' like coverings on the right arm and right leg. Connected with a metal strip.

findings:

Focus is directed to the relationship between the arm and leg. Discomfort in posture becomes most apparent in stillness.

This prototype did not require a third iteration, having reached the intended level of discomfort. The next iteration will be developed for exhibition.

iterations placed on the spectrum of discomfort:



Figure 63. Findings table for SOS-01. Abby Eastwood, 2026.

category: Postural

name: Structural Orientation System 02 abbreviation: SOS-02

iteration 01



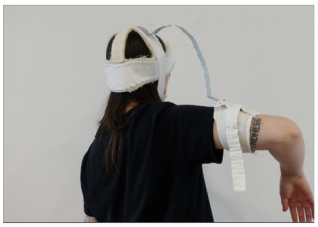
method:

Heavy cotton calico head-wear and upper body harness.

findings:

When there is too much surface input into the body, and too many uncontrollable variable, it is hard to stay focused on sensation.

iteration 02



changes:

Felted wool and leather head-wear connected with a metal strip to a 'cast' like arm band.

findings:

Direct focus to the relationship between the arm and leg, and spine affected by stillness.

This prototype did not require a third iteration, having reached the intended level of discomfort. For exhibition, the second iteration of SOS02 will be developed further due to its heightened level of discomfort.

iterations placed on the spectrum of discomfort:



Figure 64. Findings table for SOS-02. Abby Eastwood, 2026.

category: Postural

name: Structural Orientation System 03 abbreviation: SOS-03

iteration 01



method:

Heavy cotton calico dressings around elbow. Connected to middle two fingers.

findings:

Focus is placed on the relationship between fingers, wrist, and arm. Discomfort emerges through navigating both movement and sensation.

iteration 02



changes:

Dense felted wool encases the elbow, with a metal strip securing it around the joint. Connected to middle two fingers.

findings:

Heightened focus on the relationship between fingers, wrist, and arm. The limbs are held in an unnatural contortion, producing slight pain that eases with movement.

This prototype did not require a third iteration, having reached the intended level of discomfort. The next iteration will be developed for exhibition.

iterations placed on the spectrum of discomfort:



Figure 65. Findings table for SOS-03. Abby Eastwood, 2026.

category: Postural

name: Structural Orientation System 04 abbreviation: SOS-04

iteration 01



method:

A leather wrist and hand strap connects to a wooden rod running from the elbow to the tips of the middle two fingers.

findings:

Awareness is directed to the constriction of movement, prompting problem-solving curiosity. Discomfort and irritation intensify through movement.

iteration 02



changes:

'Cast' like coverings encase the wrist, with a metal strip extending toward the pinky finger.

findings:

The unnatural positioning of the pinky finger draws direct attention to the hand, its function and movement. The sensation approaches pain.

This prototype did not require a third iteration, having reached the intended level of discomfort. This series explored the same intention through slightly different methods, producing varied results. Both versions of SOS-04 will be developed for exhibition.

iterations placed on the spectrum of discomfort:



Figure 66. Findings table for SOS-04. Abby Eastwood, 2026.

8.4.1
final material selection

Phase Four focused on the deliberate choice of material and construction techniques. The iterative design process refined materials towards raw wools, leather, and surgical construction techniques. This reflected an increasing alignment between material properties and the research objective, where materials were selected for their sensory responses rather than aesthetics. Material selection, therefore, became both a sensory and conceptual decision, reinforcing the relationship between bodily experience and meaning.

These material decisions were also informed by earlier explorations of discomfort. I chose them through reflective questions influenced by Leder's phenomenological understanding of embodiment, such as how the body responds to touch and what becomes perceptible when worn. Through this process, material selection was guided by embodied feedback. By attending to the body's physiological responses and emerging tacit knowledge, I navigated and identified relevant materials for disruption. This established a method of design through sensation, in which the body serves as a testing ground for material behaviour.

Raw wool remained central due to its closeness to skin; it is the barrier of the sheep, the animal. Wool fibres are associated with comfort and protection in fashion practices, naturally regulating temperature and absorbing perspiration. I combined coarse wool with finer merino fibres to produce a range of ambiguous sensations (Figure 67). When lightly felted, the wool itched and tickled the skin; when felted densely, it created pressure and restriction.



Figure 67. Strong wool scraps layout prior to felting. Abby Eastwood, 2026

A single material operated across a spectrum of sensation, shifting between comfort and discomfort depending on its treatment. The wool remained light and familiar yet fluctuated between comfort and irritation, positioning it at a threshold between familiarity and disruption. This made it a key material in activating bodily awareness across the discomfort criteria.

Leather was selected as a contrasting material, reinforcing the idea of skin as a barrier and of an animal. Its resistance and structure contrasted with the softness and responsiveness of wool, almost as if the skin itself held onto the lifeforce of the animal. Symbolically and materially, its stiffness altered the way garments sat on the body. Leather taught me to make with care, consider that this was once someone. Its presence created points of tension within the garments, allowing the body to become aware of its own limits and boundaries. Making from these resources transformed the history of making with second-hand materials into a history of bodies and of life.



Figure 68. Early medical technique trials. Abby Eastwood, 2026.

Garment construction drew on medical references, using surgical-style stitching and visible seams to emphasise rawness and challenge notions of refinement (Figure 68).[101] The body is messy, the human is organic. This approach prioritises the Leib and extends the research's conceptual language.[102] Like the body, the garments require care, repair, and maintenance, displaying recognisable signs of being held together and traces of wear.

101 Entwistle, *The Fashioned Body: Fashion, Dress and Modern Social Theory.*
102 Leder, *The Absent Body*.

This approach reinforced the prioritisation of sensation over visual interpretation, maintaining consistency with the research's embodied focus.[103] Garments operate as calibrated environments, mediating between sensation, awareness, and emotion. This demonstrates how discomfort can be shaped to sustain attention and centre the wearer in the body.[104]

103 Entwistle, *The Fashioned Body: Fashion, Dress and Modern Social Theory.*
104 Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin.*

8.5

phase five. extending to the outer body



Figure 69. Prototype iterations scattered on a table. Abby Eastwood, 2026.

Phase Five asks the body to reflect again, extending reflection outwards to consolidate the research into a resolved body of work. With all of the prototypes exploring different intensities and categories of discomfort, this phase reflects on the project as a whole and applies the method developed across the earlier phases to resolve the final outputs.

Centring the relationship between the body, material and emotion has produced a personal design approach outside linear fashion processes. The method moves through listening to the body, engaging the body in material making, listening to materials, reflective journaling, and designing with the body as collaborator. Emerging across the phases, this approach continues to shift through ongoing learning and may offer value to practices constrained by linear design models.

Some prototypes did not reach three iterations but produced critical insights. This may be due to the complexity and absurdity of some of the more abstract pieces, specifically within the postural category, whose level of discomfort was apparent from the first conceptual prototype. These will be further developed through the emergent-making method and exhibited at the Master of Design exhibition in June 2026.

The exhibition will house the refined prototypes, where viewers will be encouraged to wear and participate with the work, which will be documented in Appendix C. Through participant interaction, the investigation shifts beyond an individual autoethnographic study, where others' bodies can become sites of knowledge.

The audience will be encouraged to spend a duration of time (2.5-5 minutes) in each piece, either sitting or engaging in activities that promote movement. This suggested interaction evolved from the iterative wearing/reflecting method, where I found myself engaging in movements to further test the boundaries of discomfort. In the restriction prototype (MIS-02), my body adapts to limited vision through movement; sitting reduces its impact (Figure 70). In contrast, the touch-based (TIS) variations require stillness and focused sensation.

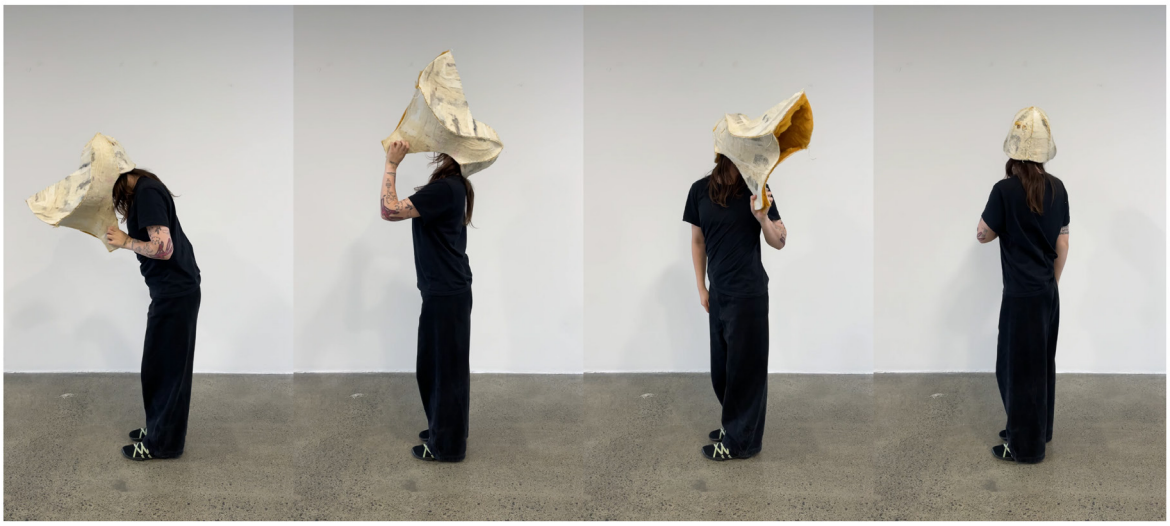


Figure 70. Wear testing of prototype MIS-02 in movement, stills from a moving image. Abby Eastwood, 2026.

Across these interactions, discomfort works by interrupting habitual bodily states, making sensation more immediate, more noticeable, and harder to ignore. The time engagement allows for shifts in perception to unfold through staying in the sensation. Some experienced sensations included tension, pressure, and heightened sensitivity. Feelings moved alongside these, between frustration, curiosity, confusion, grief, and occasionally calm. This suggests that designed discomfort generates a spectrum of affective states as opposed to a fixed emotional response.

Phase Five highlights that discomfort is relational and adaptive between body, material, and emotion. As each interaction shifts, the body continuously recalibrates in response to what it is experiencing. Through this, discomfort emerges as a dynamic, shifting state, capable of negotiating with bodily perception and awareness.

9 conclusion

A feeling can be worn when it is experienced through embodied sensation.

9.1 outcomes

This research asked whether it is possible to wear a feeling. The inquiry was developed through a practice-led methodology grounded in processes of making, wearing and reflective analysis. A bricolage approach was employed, combining autoethnography and phenomenology, while situating the body as both the subject and site of investigation. Through this approach, the research expanded into an exploration of how discomfort can function as a tool for awareness and understanding within embodied garments.

The research mapped a process of iterative prototyping across multiple interlinked phases, where garments were developed to interrupt the body. Design decisions were continuously adjusted in response to embodied feedback, reinforcing the importance of working directly with the body to understand what emerges through experience.

Categorical findings emerged across prototype variations within each category. Restrictive prototypes revealed how the mind adapts to physical limitations, recalibrating movement and learning to work with constraints. Touch-based prototypes revealed that discomfort lies within uncertainty and is mediated by curiosity and active engagement. Postural prototypes exposed the absurdity of altered body positioning, revealing how quickly the familiar body can feel unfamiliar when its habitual alignment is disrupted. Balance-focused prototypes, using weight and temperature, revealed the fine line between soothing and unsettling sensations, highlighting how intertwined comfort and discomfort are.

The research was conducted solely on my own body, which limits the generalisability of the findings. This was intentional in order to develop an in-depth understanding through autoethnography. Further research could extend this inquiry to other bodies, as discomfort is subjective and cannot be assumed to translate similarly across different bodies or experiences.

This research demonstrates that discomfort can be intentionally designed and utilised to generate embodied awareness. By shifting focus from representation to experience, garments are repositioned as environments that mediate between body, material, and emotion. In doing so, the research proposes that to wear a feeling is not to represent it, but to remain present within bodily sensation.

9.2

significance of research

A significant finding of this research is the understanding of the body as a dynamic sensing entity, or *Leib*,[105] through which knowledge is produced in relation to material and emotion. The process of wearing, sitting with, and reflecting on the prototypes demonstrated that sensation and emotion are closely connected, but not necessarily experienced in the same way. The sensation of discovering an uncomfortable texture inside a glove, for example, produces an immediate tactile awareness, whereas being enclosed within a felted wool head

105 Leder, *The Absent Body*.

structure can generate a more disorienting and emotionally charged experience of the body and its surroundings. Across the final prototypes, these differences revealed that emotion emerges through the changing relationships between material, body, emotion and sensation. Importantly, the research also found that wearing shifted the body to the primary site of knowing. This was enabled through an iterative methodology of making, wearing, observing, journaling, and reflection, which allowed embodied responses to become a form of research data and knowledge. The methodological significance of the research lies in demonstrating how sustained embodied engagement can guide design decisions, reveal bodily and emotional experiences that are otherwise difficult to articulate, and support a more attentive and responsive design practice.

From a personal perspective, this research clarifies my position as a designer working at the intersection of body, material, and emotion. Through the practice, I have reinforced the importance of reflection, embodied practice and journaling within design. I position myself as an attentive and responsive designer, and my methods and ethos will continue to reflect what has been learned through this inquiry. This research has established a foundation for future practice that remains grounded and adaptable, supported by a growing trust in my instincts and ways of working.

The potential applications extend beyond the individual body. Reflection on my sister's bodily experiences revealed opportunities for more empathetic design approaches, including the careful use of controlled discomfort to develop bodily awareness and understanding. Future research could include collaborations within the AUT Design for Good Health research centre, disability or therapeutic design spaces. This design approach could extend into collaborative or therapeutic co-design practices that engage discomfort as a reflective experience. Within fashion practice, this research suggests alternative approaches to designing through bodily attunement and embodied listening.

to wear everything that sits within my skin,
everything that sits upon it.

my skin.

my body.
material.
emotion.

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11 appendices

11.1

appendix a. journal entries

Monday 15 December.

Feeling lost. Had all these making ideas over the weekend. Cant even write right now because there is pain in my finger, looks invisible - hangnail of sort. Got a strange pen grip going on. Lost my fave pen, red is temporary.
Feel like i look too much like someone else today - with what im wearing. Just need to recentre. I feel closer to knowing, to finding, searching. The overwhelm is just the under preparation. This entry I suppose is just a check in - to get me thinking again, to get me feeling and noticing.

Connect with / to the writing. Make bizzare, push boundaries, reflect, be honest and intentional, thoughtful and thought provoking: Wear, photograph. Feel feel feel.
+get a new pen.

Figures 71–76. Journal entries. Abby Eastwood, 2025–2026.

Monday 4th August.

Im tired. Nuno felting took a whole hour to complete. I think it was the wool I used. The grey wool felts/felted within like 5 mins.

Im actually exhausted. My body is exhausted. Will felting push me too far? Do I want to be this tired, do I want to be on the brink of feeling? Do I feel safe to cry here? What traumas that live in my body will be layed to rest in these fabrics? Am I not angry? Do I not allow myself to show agression? The slapping & hitting of the wool/felt on the table - I felt shy. I felt embarrased. I knew I have agression in me, agitation. I have taught my body not to express it this way, this aneven need for movement, energy, hitting - I dont let my body experience it (until my body has no other option). I attack myself. Is my body angry at me? Hitting... will I soothe through this felt, this movement? Will feeling felt heal me?

I suppress a cry, perhaps this space is not that safe...

This shirt, a hand-me-down from someone I once loved (maybe still do?) - It was my favourite shirt for a while. I love a good tartan, a good plaid. I wonder when I stopped reaching for it? When it started to feel too close, too restrictive. I guess I do tend to cycle through clothes, maybe this was just something to pass through. I dont want to let it go though (the shirt or the person?). I think I have a hard time moving on. The me that ~~##~~ passed through this shirt still exists in its fabric. I can see her on a beach in dunedin, the patterned collar ~~red~~ peaking out under the sweater worn over top. That me still exists in the memory of this cloth, versions of others exist in this too. When I remember, I reach for the shirt, I wish to feel how the memory of me looked - but maybe we dont align anymore.. which is why it feels uncomfortable. I dont really feel like I'm articulating this well which is annoying. The feeling is very visual.

handmade
All of the residents at this place get a quilt donated to them from a organization in Athburton. Its a bit too small to be comforting like a blanket, a bit too stiff too. I prefer my blankets to drape over me and tuck away at the creases at my body, this just kinda folds?
I guess my sister feels the same way because she doesn't want to keep it. So im going to take it with me because there is something about it that I find comforting - even if its not physical comfort.
Maybe its because it was made with the intention of giving comfort, support. A note with the quilt says 'thinking of you', from someone we've never met. I imagine a sweet little group of grannies making these. Theres another, much larger, quilt in the closet in my room. All hand sewn!!! A message attached explains it took 25 YEARS to make!!! How beautiful, how special!! I hold 25 years of work in my hands, I drape 25 years of work over my shoulders. A gift to this place and all of the people that move through here. All of the people who have reached for this comfort, their handprints invisible but felt around me now.
I feel I can learn something from these blankets, the giving of people and harness it within me and my research. The wealth of knowledge, the passing of tools. Textiles bring comfort, these quilts are a physical representation of that.

23.07.2025

I think I look pretty when my cheeks are flushed pink ~~cheeks~~ from a room that's too warm or a wind that fights too hard against my skin. my barrier.

But sometime this pink betrays me, creeps up my throat, burns my ears and pushes my eyes forward. My chin, my cheeks, my forehead all HOT, all RED.

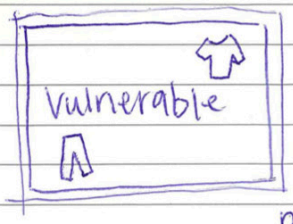
Betrayal from my own body is a strange thing to verbalise, to conceptualise (contemplate?). How can the entity that houses my mind - my source of reason - turn against me? There is NO WAY. There is NO POSSIBILITY that my body is the betrayer in this relationship. It is my quick and frightful mind that wants me to believe that my body's only form of communication is secretly out to get me, trying to make me squirm and ~~shallow~~ cower and become small.

When in fact, it is only my mind that could think those things of myself at all.

246

"Clothes & reason are situational."

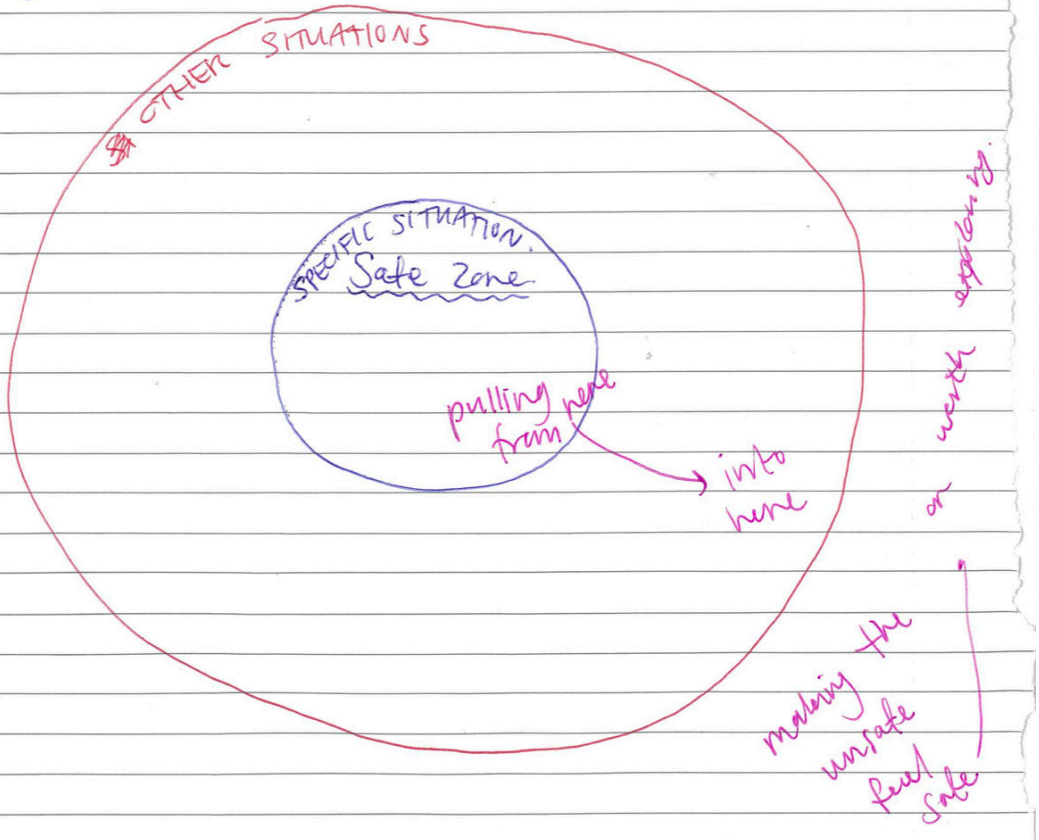
Thinking about this little gem of a thought again. Its hard to really articulate it in words. lets unpack.



Vulnerability, exposure, certain expressions all feel safe within the structure of one situation. i.e. the place I am staying right now.

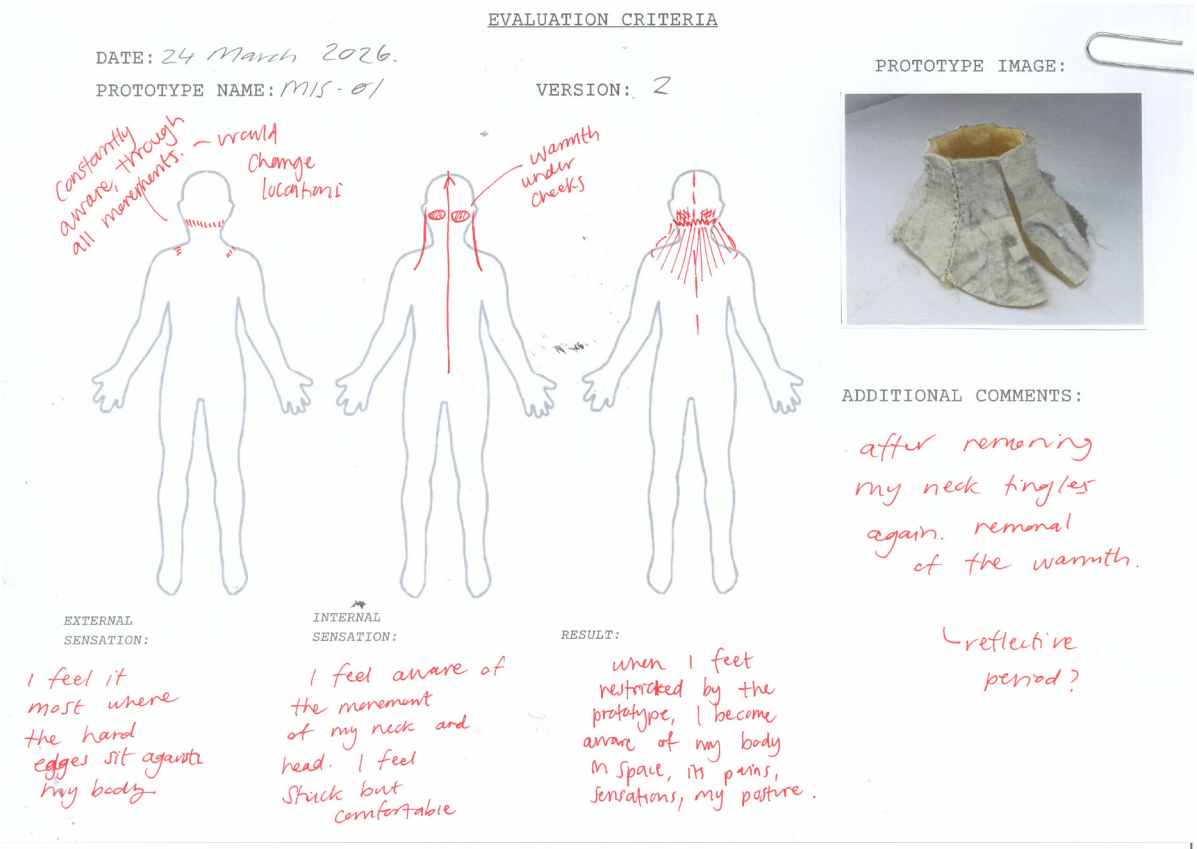
But may feel unsafe, scary, unprofessional, vulnerable (bad) in a different setting??

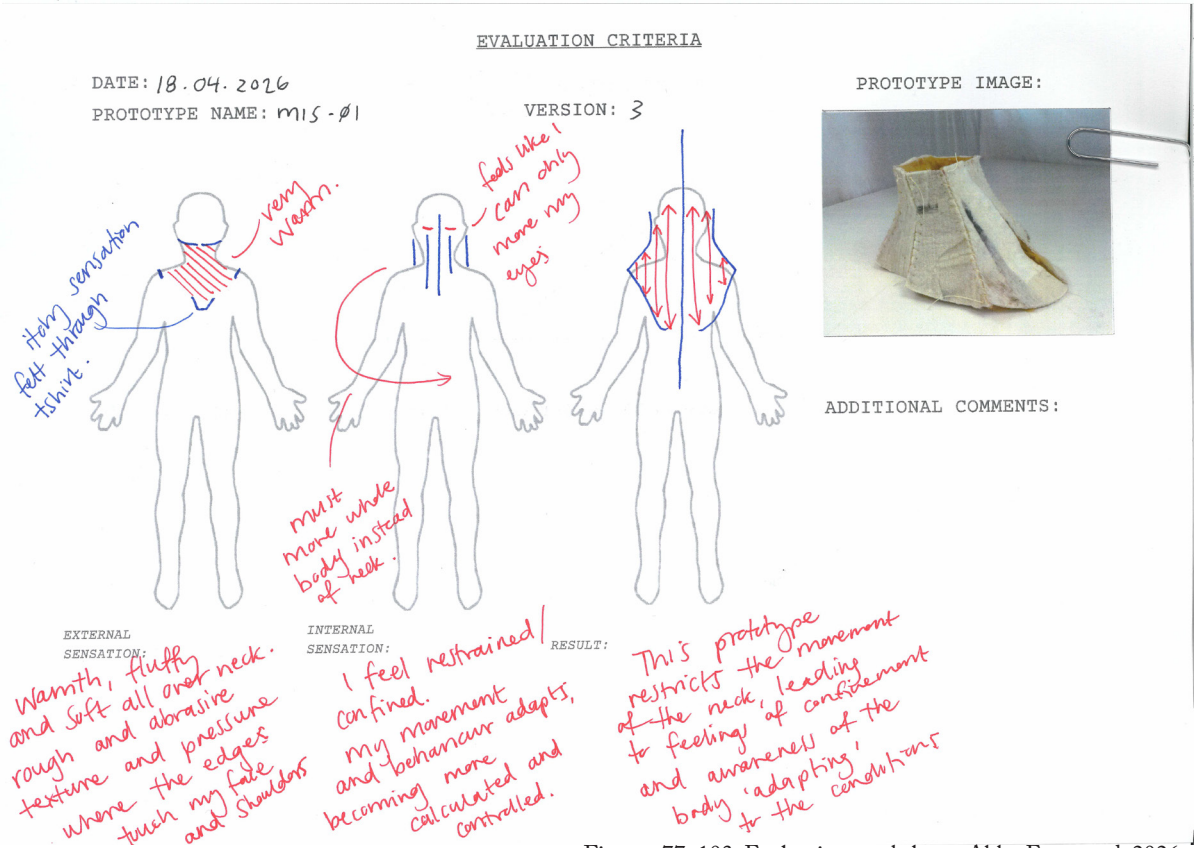
Maybe it looks a little more like this:



11.2

appendix b. evaluation worksheets.





Figures 77–103. Evaluation worksheets Abby Eastwood, 2026.

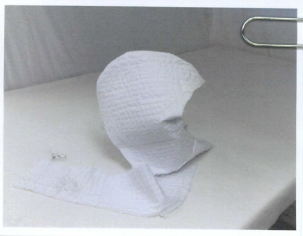
EVALUATION CRITERIA

DATE: ~~M~~ 24.03.26

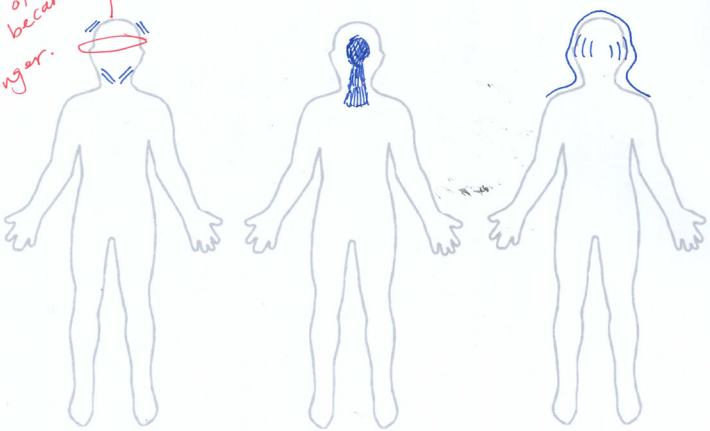
PROTOTYPE NAME: M1S-02

VERSION: 1

PROTOTYPE IMAGE:



Sense of sight became stronger.



EXTERNAL SENSATION:

limited sensations, very light touching around my face and chin.

INTERNAL SENSATION:

feels dissociative, like I am removed from my body - I am only my eyes.

RESULT:

when I wear this, it forces me to notice what only my eyes are looking at & things in my field of sight get amplified - causing me to feel a bit dissociated.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

EVALUATION CRITERIA

DATE: 24.03.2026

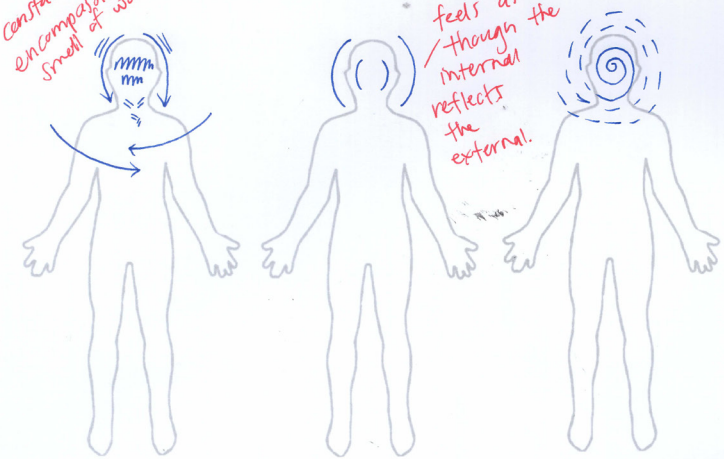
PROTOTYPE NAME: M1S-02

VERSION: 2

PROTOTYPE IMAGE:



constant + encompassing smell of wood.



feels as though the internal reflects the external.

EXTERNAL SENSATION:

weight of the 'cap' section moved my head forward.

INTERNAL SENSATION:

I feel curious, I look at what is in focus.

RESULT:

wearing this prototype makes me become aware of the movement of my body and the value in what I see.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

EVALUATION CRITERIA

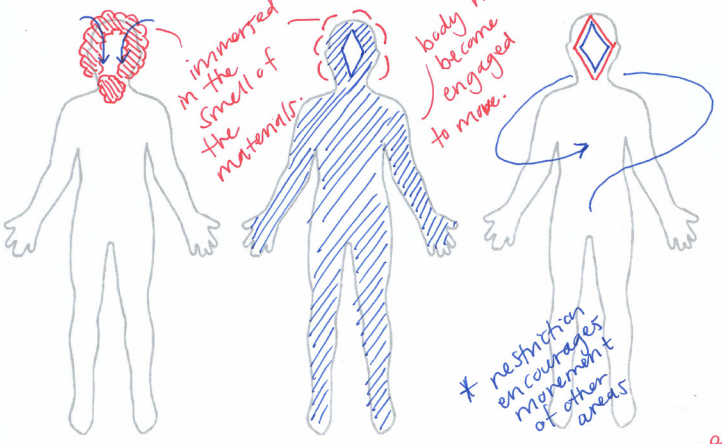
DATE: 18.04.2026

PROTOTYPE NAME: MIS.02

VERSION: 3

PROTOTYPE IMAGE:





ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

* after removing, skin tingles, room feels brighter, air feels pure

EXTERNAL SENSATION:

warmth over entire head and front of neck - weight pulling head forward slightly.

INTERNAL SENSATION:

I feel confined to just the diamond of vision I have. Yet, everything looks beautiful/poetic. I feel curious of my surroundings.

RESULT:

The prototype inconveniences me by limiting my vision, forcing me to focus on what is directly infront of me. It strengthens reflection & awareness of other senses.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

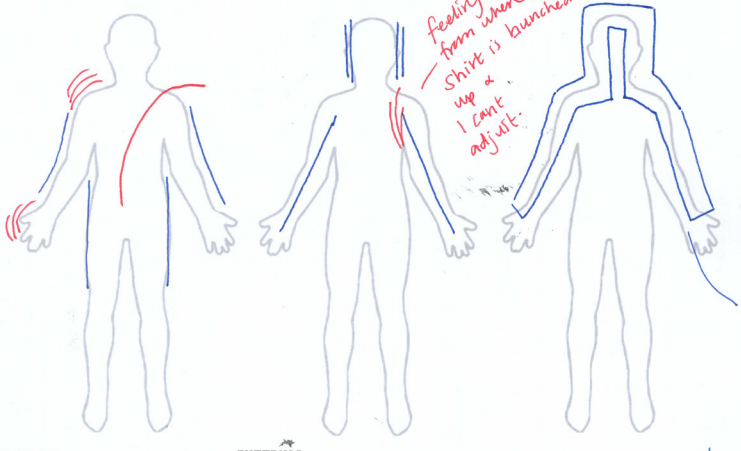
DATE: 24.03.26.

PROTOTYPE NAME: MIS-03

VERSION: 1

PROTOTYPE IMAGE:





ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

EXTERNAL SENSATION:

my body folds over / conforms to put the garment on. when on, I don't physically feel the restriction unless Im moving.

INTERNAL SENSATION:

my mind adapts, knowing it cant move. I feel conscious of my movements feeling loss of control.

RESULT:

Both the act of struggling to put on the garment & wearing the garment brings awareness to both external & internal movements. my mind adapts to my body & my body adapts to my mind in garments

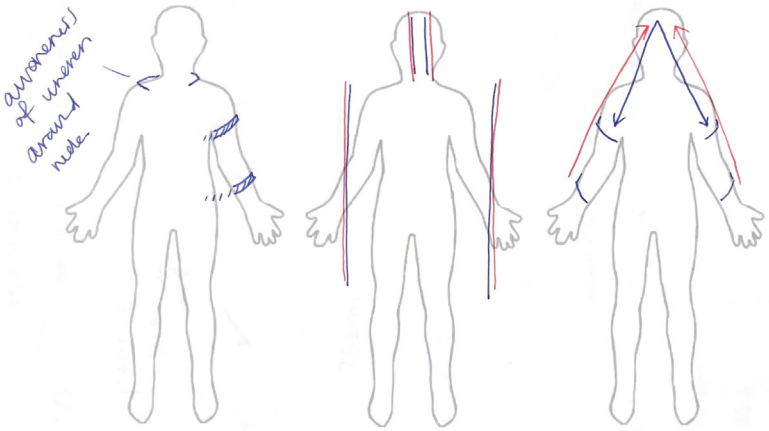
EVALUATION CRITERIA

DATE: 23.04.2026

PROTOTYPE NAME: MIS Ø3 VERSION: 2

PROTOTYPE IMAGE:





ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

* further awareness through movement.

EXTERNAL SENSATION:

pressure bands on the arms

INTERNAL SENSATION:

restricted physically slightly but most restriction comes from my mind adapting.

RESULT:

the pressure bands on the arm force my mind to conform to my bodies situation. = then my body conforms to my mind.

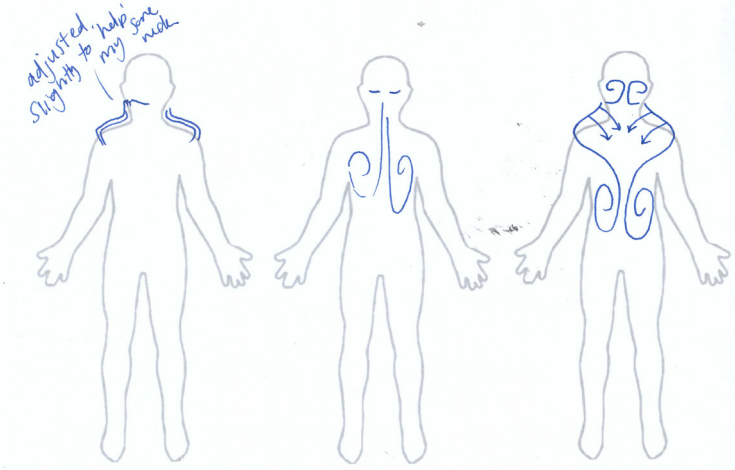
EVALUATION CRITERIA

DATE: 24 MARCH 2026.

PROTOTYPE NAME: PLS-Ø1 VERSION: 1

PROTOTYPE IMAGE:





ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

after removing the prototype from my shoulders I felt lighter.

EXTERNAL SENSATION:

cooling on my skin, constant light weight on my shoulders & neck.

INTERNAL SENSATION:

calm / relief deeper breathing, eyes naturally close

RESULT:

cooling light weight on the shoulders brings a sense of calm feeling

EVALUATION CRITERIA

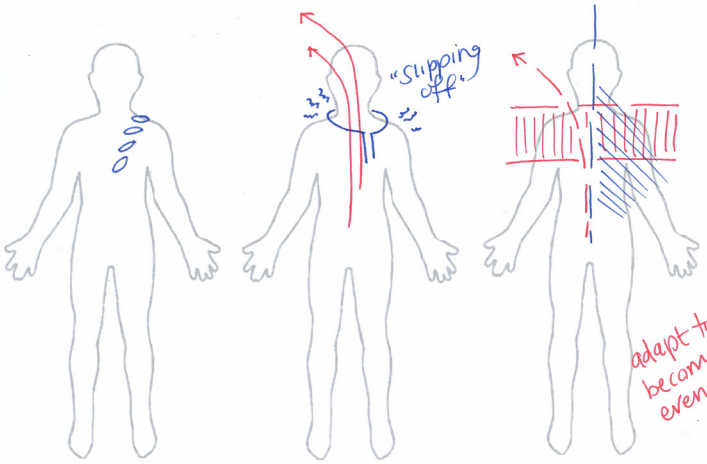
DATE: 18 . 04 . 2026

PROTOTYPE NAME: PLS-01

VERSION: 2

PROTOTYPE IMAGE:





ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

EXTERNAL SENSATION:
Cooling along shoulder. Some heaviness / weight sensation, but feels light.

INTERNAL SENSATION:
I became aware of how the garment is positioned on my body. my posture compensates to even the weight out

RESULT:
an uneven body - garment sensation. One side is cold and heavy, pulling. The mind / body adapts to 'even' the sensation out.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

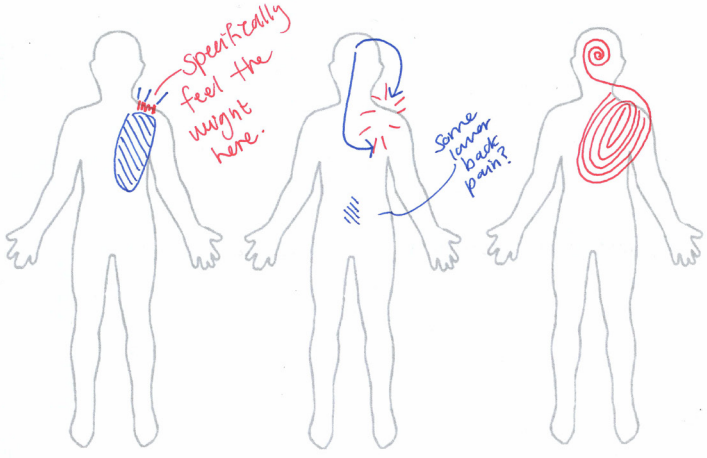
DATE: 18 . 04 . 2026

PROTOTYPE NAME: ~~SPS-01~~ PLS-01

VERSION: 3

PROTOTYPE IMAGE:





ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Cooling sensation pressed further into body due to weight.
Cooling = calming.

EXTERNAL SENSATION:
Cold sensation across Chest / shoulder & back on right side.
Feel pressure / weight on right shoulder.

INTERNAL SENSATION:
Cant ignore the sensation on my shoulder, but it feels calming.
I dont feel irritated.

RESULT:
This prototype positioned a significant amount of weight across the shoulder, but remained comfortable and provoked a calm feeling.

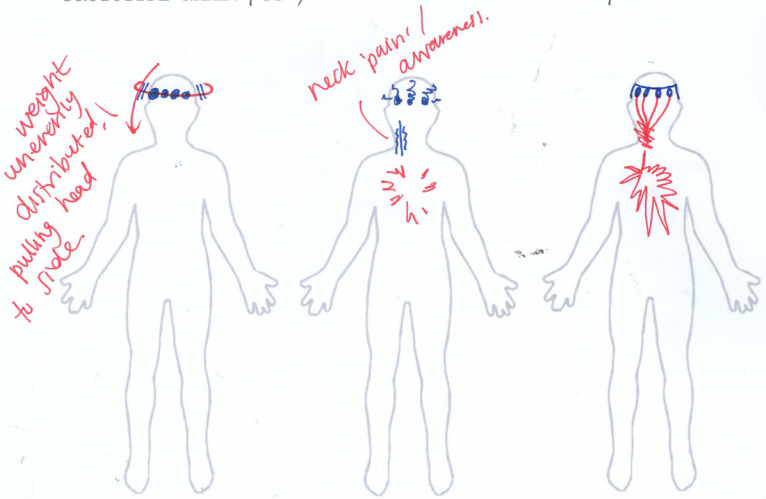
EVALUATION CRITERIA

DATE: 07.04.26

PROTOTYPE NAME: PLS-02 VERSION: 1

PROTOTYPE IMAGE:





ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

"feels like a headache I can almost ignore".

EXTERNAL SENSATION:

Coolness (temp) across my forehead, slight pressure around temple where it fit snug.

INTERNAL SENSATION:

of awareness of neck muscle activation, "too cold" on forehead. Sensations created anxiety in chest.

RESULT: Wearing the prototype slowly built awareness of pains/aches and anxieties through uneven weight distribution & cold temperature ~~detected~~ placed on the head.

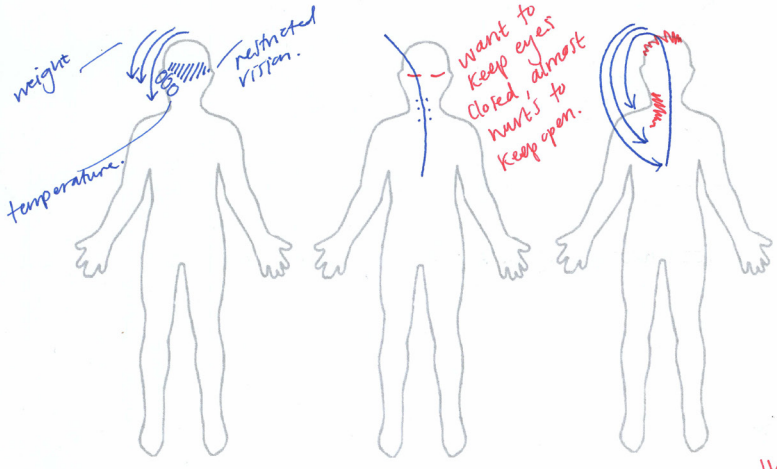
EVALUATION CRITERIA

DATE: 18.04.2026

PROTOTYPE NAME: PLS-02 VERSION: 2

PROTOTYPE IMAGE:





ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

EXTERNAL SENSATION:

cooling sensation on cheek/above eyes. weight pulling to the left. edge of hat touching/covering eyes...

INTERNAL SENSATION:

I can feel the muscles in my neck/back activate to counter the weight. Feels off balance, annoying. keeping eyes open also feels annoying.

RESULT:

Wearing this prototype achieves discomfort through sustained annoyance/awareness by forcing the head and neck to work to stay aligned.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

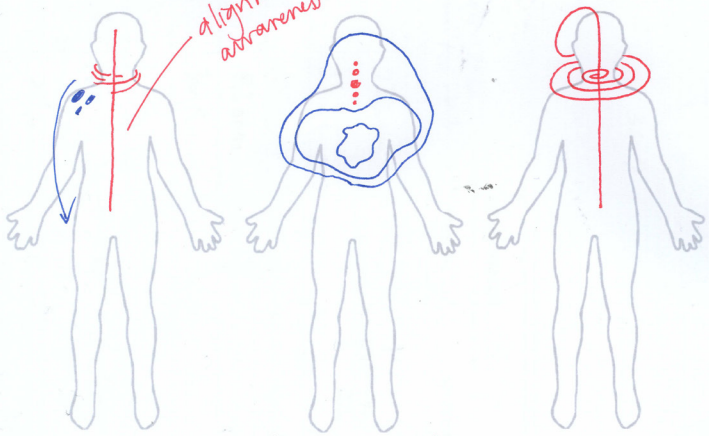
DATE: 07.04.2026.
~~PLS-03~~

PROTOTYPE NAME: PLS-03

VERSION: /

PROTOTYPE IMAGE:





ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

EXTERNAL SENSATION:
tightness around throat. weight + cool (temp) sensation on left side

INTERNAL SENSATION:
I notice my breathing, getting deeper. I begin to swallow more.

RESULT:
Wearing this tightness around my throat brings awareness to both the alignment of my body, and the inside of my throat through breath + swallowing.

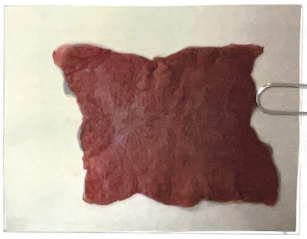
EVALUATION CRITERIA

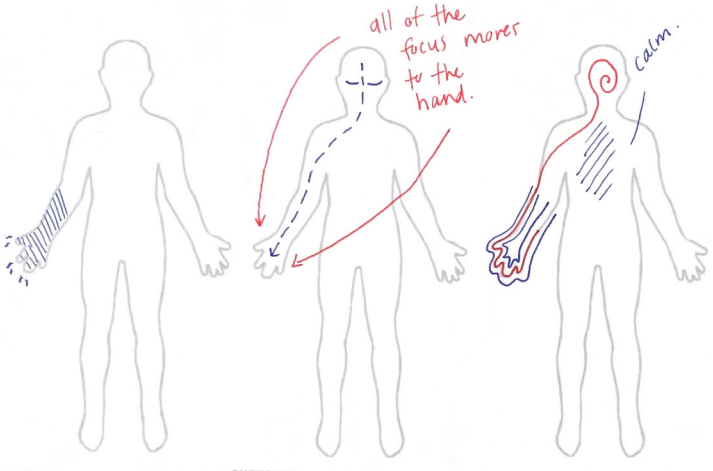
DATE: 24.03.26

PROTOTYPE NAME: TIS-01

VERSION: /

PROTOTYPE IMAGE:





ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:
* prototype had nuno felt on the inside *

EXTERNAL SENSATION:
my hand and arm are warm

INTERNAL SENSATION:
I feel curious, calm, like my mind has moved out of the way to let my body think + feel. – maker me feel grief? for my body.

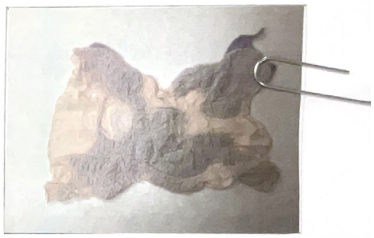
RESULT:
Wearing the prototype allows my hand to embrace curiosity and touch.

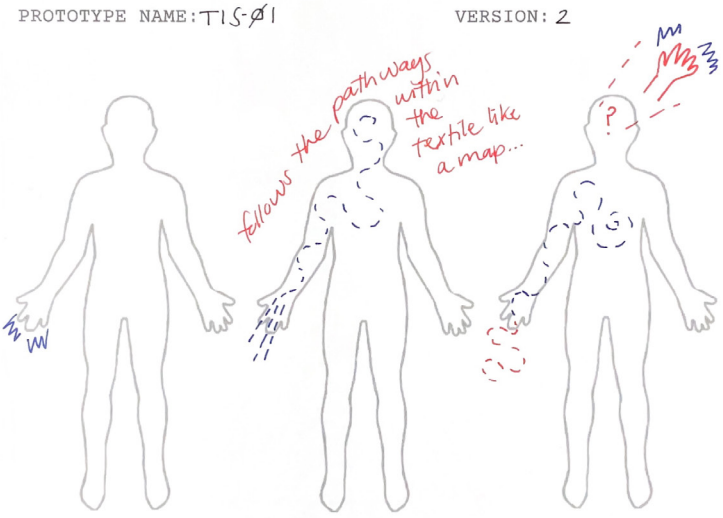
EVALUATION CRITERIA

DATE: 23.04.2026

PROTOTYPE NAME: TIS-01 VERSION: 2

PROTOTYPE IMAGE:





ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

this may translate to wondering what it 'is' for others who haven't seen it.

EXTERNAL SENSATION:

the texture against my fingers feel rough, bumpy. I follow the different textures around.

INTERNAL SENSATION:

I feel intrigued, curious. I feel my body following the sensation of my hand.

RESULT:

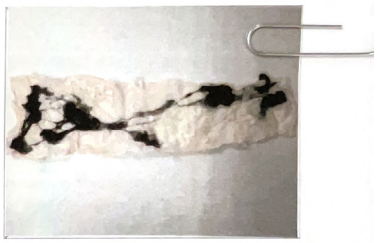
the prototype creates a map of texture for my hand to follow. I wonder what it would look like through touch.

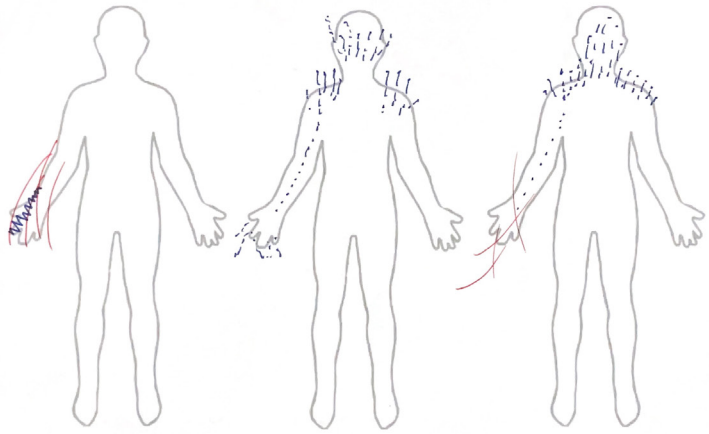
EVALUATION CRITERIA

DATE: 23.04.2026

PROTOTYPE NAME: TIS-01 VERSION: 3

PROTOTYPE IMAGE:





ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

EXTERNAL SENSATION:

there is a contrasting texture between the rough silk and the fluffy dense wool - it catches on my nails.

INTERNAL SENSATION:

I feel repulsed by the loosely felted wool.

RESULT:

this prototype creates a sense of discomfort through the raw state of the wool in combination with the rough 'overwashed' silk.

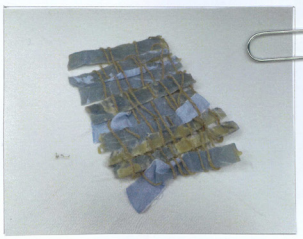
EVALUATION CRITERIA

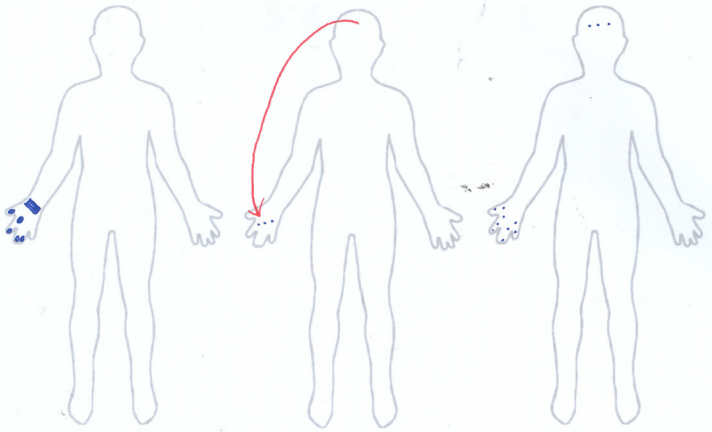
DATE: 07.04.2026

PROTOTYPE NAME: TIS·02

VERSION: 1

PROTOTYPE IMAGE:





ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

the residue of the wax is more uncomfortable.

EXTERNAL SENSATION:

warm, flat, wax, 'sticky' on finger tips and wrist.

INTERNAL SENSATION:

some awareness of sensation on hand, feels forced. maybe some confusion on what to feel.

RESULT:

very limited external & internal sensation when wearing.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

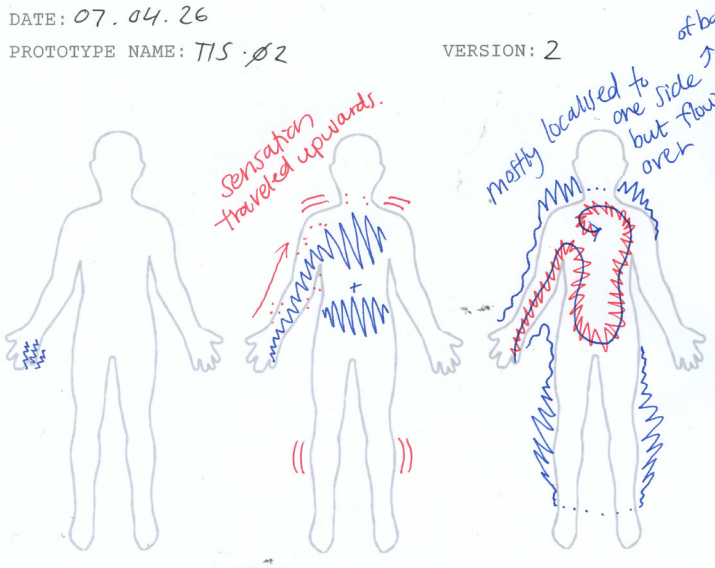
DATE: 07.04.26

PROTOTYPE NAME: TIS·02

VERSION: 2

PROTOTYPE IMAGE:





ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

* sensation remains after wearing.

EXTERNAL SENSATION:

direct and conflicting sensations on the pinky. Soft fuzzy, light touch + waxy, rough texture.

INTERNAL SENSATION:

travelled up my arm & to my chest & stomach. 'shiver' hunching shoulders & tensing limbs.

RESULT:

wearing this prototype brings direct awareness to my pinky. The awareness travels with the discomfort of sensation around my body.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

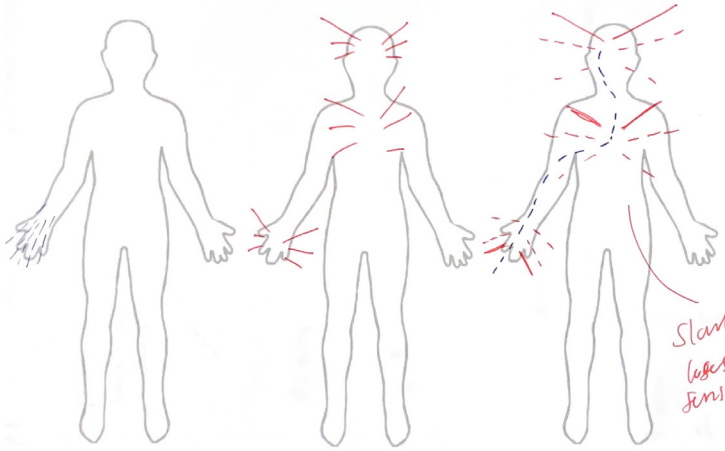
DATE: 23.04.2026

PROTOTYPE NAME: TIS -03

VERSION: 1

PROTOTYPE IMAGE:





ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

limited sensation...

EXTERNAL SENSATION:

light touch, slightly scratchy and tickley

INTERNAL SENSATION:

initial feelings of fear. Goes away once familiar.

RESULT:

the discomfort of this prototype comes through the initial touch sensations but is not sustained.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

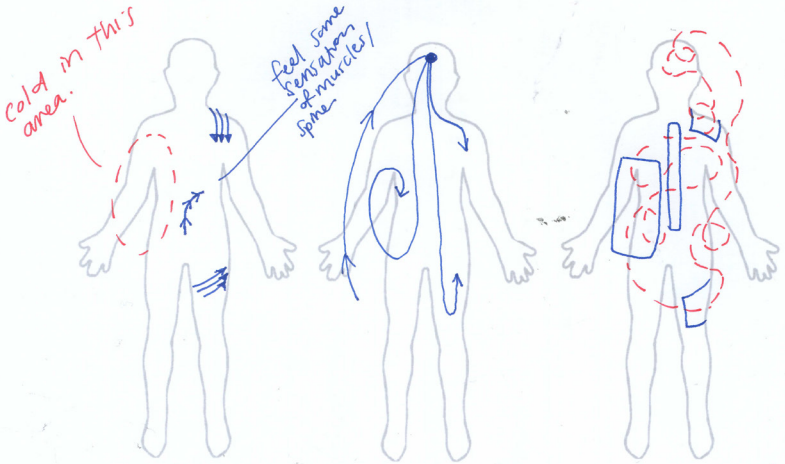
DATE: 08.04.2026

PROTOTYPE NAME: SOS -01

VERSION: 1

PROTOTYPE IMAGE:





ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

EXTERNAL SENSATION:

pressure / pulling on skin sensation on right leg/thigh & shoulder. Cold on opposite side, feel the air.

INTERNAL SENSATION:

awareness is everywhere, jumping, not focused

RESULT:

there are many internal and external sensations happening when I wear this prototype. making it hard to focus.

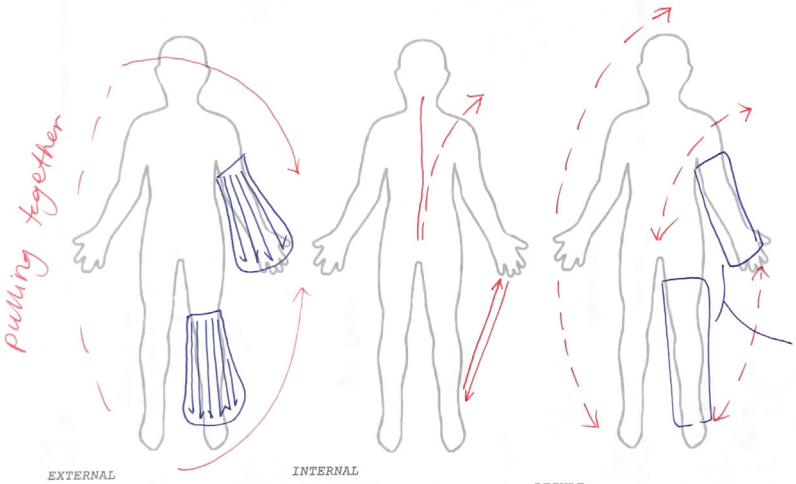
EVALUATION CRITERIA

DATE: 23.04.2026

PROTOTYPE NAME: SoS ø1 VERSION: 2

PROTOTYPE IMAGE:





ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

EXTERNAL SENSATION:
tight / squeezing sensation around full leg and arm. weight at bottom - foot & hand.

INTERNAL SENSATION:
awareness of the connection between limbs, and posture. feeling curious, inconvenienced. - affects movement.

RESULT:
this prototype immerses the leg / arm / spine into a dialogue with each other. through the inconvenience of altered posture and movement.

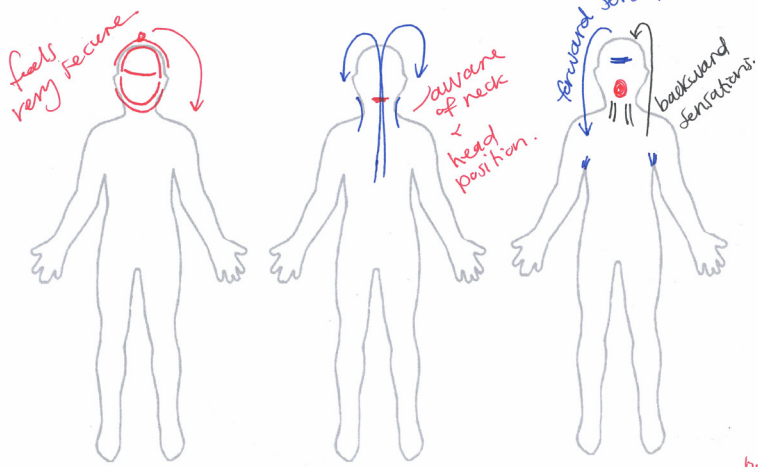
EVALUATION CRITERIA

DATE: 18.04.2026.

PROTOTYPE NAME: SoS -ø2 VERSION: 1

PROTOTYPE IMAGE:





ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:
Has to be worn quite securely to be experienced.

EXTERNAL SENSATION:
tight / pressure of headwear on my head and jaw. pulling backwards sensation felt on top of head

INTERNAL SENSATION:
my head positioning comes and goes / in & out of awareness. The inconsistencies make me feel disregulated, a little bit annoyed.

RESULT:
The slight adjustment (positioned backwards) to how my head normally sits makes me feel irritated + the adjustments I make with movements only provide me with new / other sensations to work through.

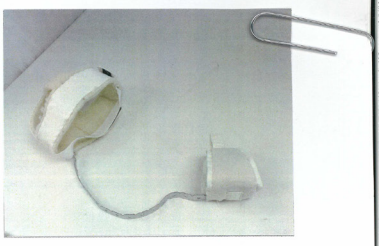
EVALUATION CRITERIA

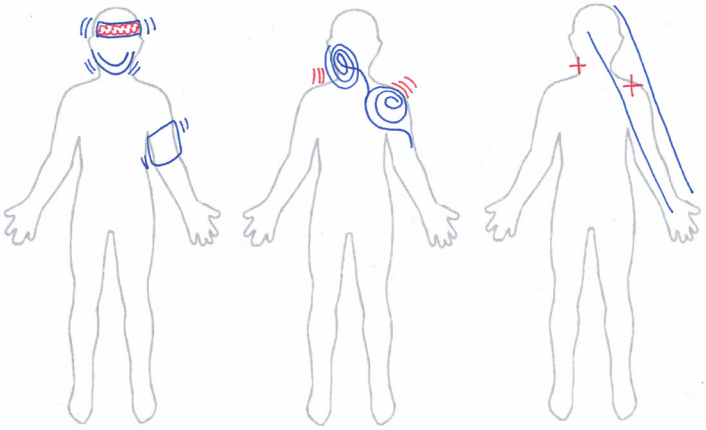
DATE: 18.04.2026

PROTOTYPE NAME: SOS-02

VERSION: 2

PROTOTYPE IMAGE:





ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

EXTERNAL SENSATION:

Soft, squishy helmet around head = warm. Feels secure

Tight band around arm. Nothing is painful.

INTERNAL SENSATION:

interchangable discomfort/pain in my neck/shoulder.

feels absurd to wear/fun!!

RESULT:

Awareness of the relationship between head and arm: taught on through responding movement of the neck and shoulder.

Responing to pain or the potential of pain/fatigue.

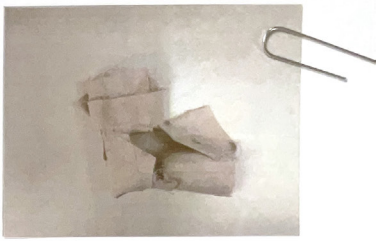
EVALUATION CRITERIA

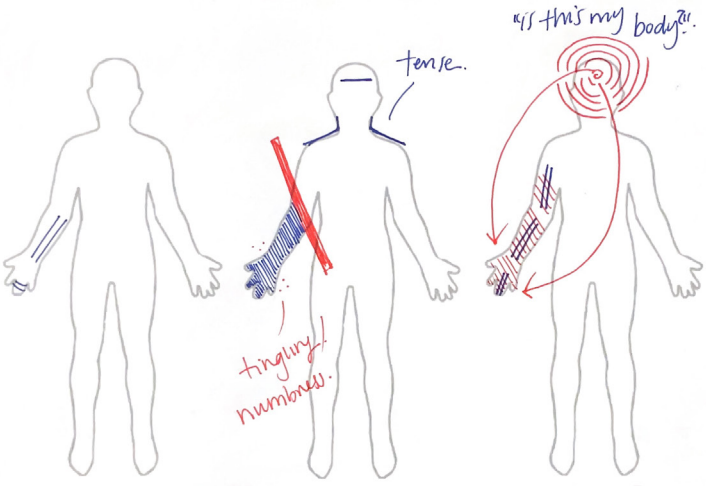
DATE: 23.04.26

PROTOTYPE NAME: SOSØ3

VERSION: 1

PROTOTYPE IMAGE:





ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

EXTERNAL SENSATION:

pressure from the prototype along the fingers and arm.

tingling →

INTERNAL SENSATION:

my arm feel awkward/unnatural.

I feel confused and unable to relax.

RESULT:

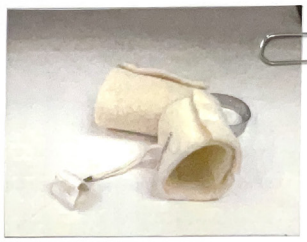
this prototype controls the arm/wrist/and hand through ~~an unnatural design~~ working against the body's natural posture.

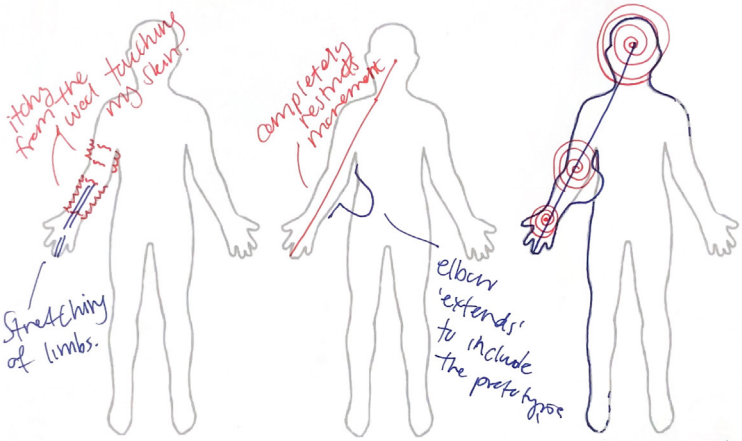
causes awareness through alienating the limbs

EVALUATION CRITERIA

DATE: 23.04.2026
PROTOTYPE NAME: SoSØ3
VERSION: 2

PROTOTYPE IMAGE:





ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

EXTERNAL SENSATION:
itchy textile on my stem, feels very secure. stretch along my wrist. inner

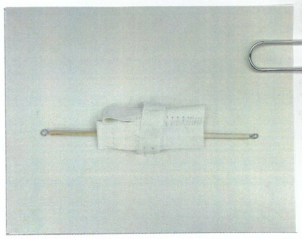
INTERNAL SENSATION:
I feel immobilised and exhausted. I can't relax due to the extended awareness of my body in space

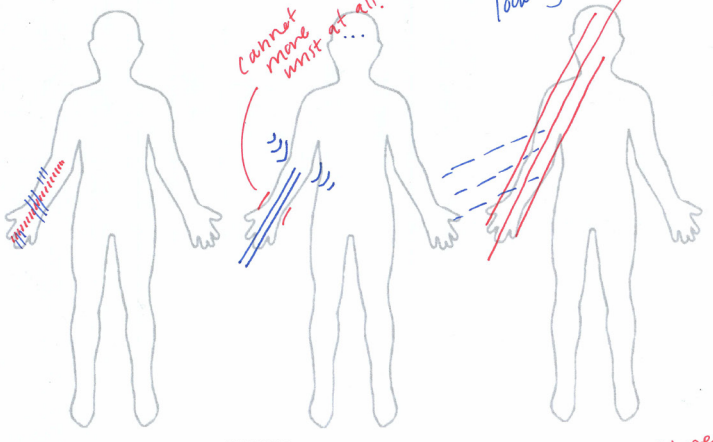
RESULT:
using a thick felted ~~wool~~ wool within the prototype intensifies the secureness and immobilisation of the arm/wrist & hand. Causes me to be aware of my body & movements.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

DATE: 18.04.2026
PROTOTYPE NAME: SoS-Ø4
VERSION: 1

PROTOTYPE IMAGE:





ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

EXTERNAL SENSATION:
the prototype pushes against my skin, mainly where the stick is.

INTERNAL SENSATION:
my movements and the posture of my arm/hand is distorted. I am inconvenienced but I feel adaptable, curious. It feels fun/funny.

RESULT:
The prototype removes the ability to naturally move the hand/wrist/and elbow. I become aware of my movements and how I must adapt how I move

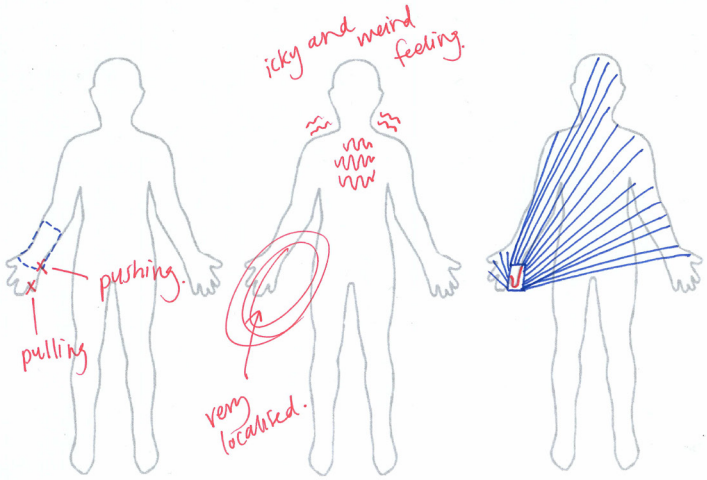
EVALUATION CRITERIA

DATE: 18.04.2026

PROTOTYPE NAME: SOS-04 VERSION: 2

PROTOTYPE IMAGE:





ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

EXTERNAL SENSATION:

wearing sensation from the band around my wrist. pulling/pushing sensation on my pinky

INTERNAL SENSATION:

feels unnatural, strange. A feeling I would usually want to avoid. Feels quite alien./ discomfort & unrecognisable

RESULT:

A very direct / pinpointed sensation of pulling the pinky creates big internal feelings that are uncomfortable to sit in.

**the discomfort expands.
moves between bodies.
leaves the skin,
and enters the room.**

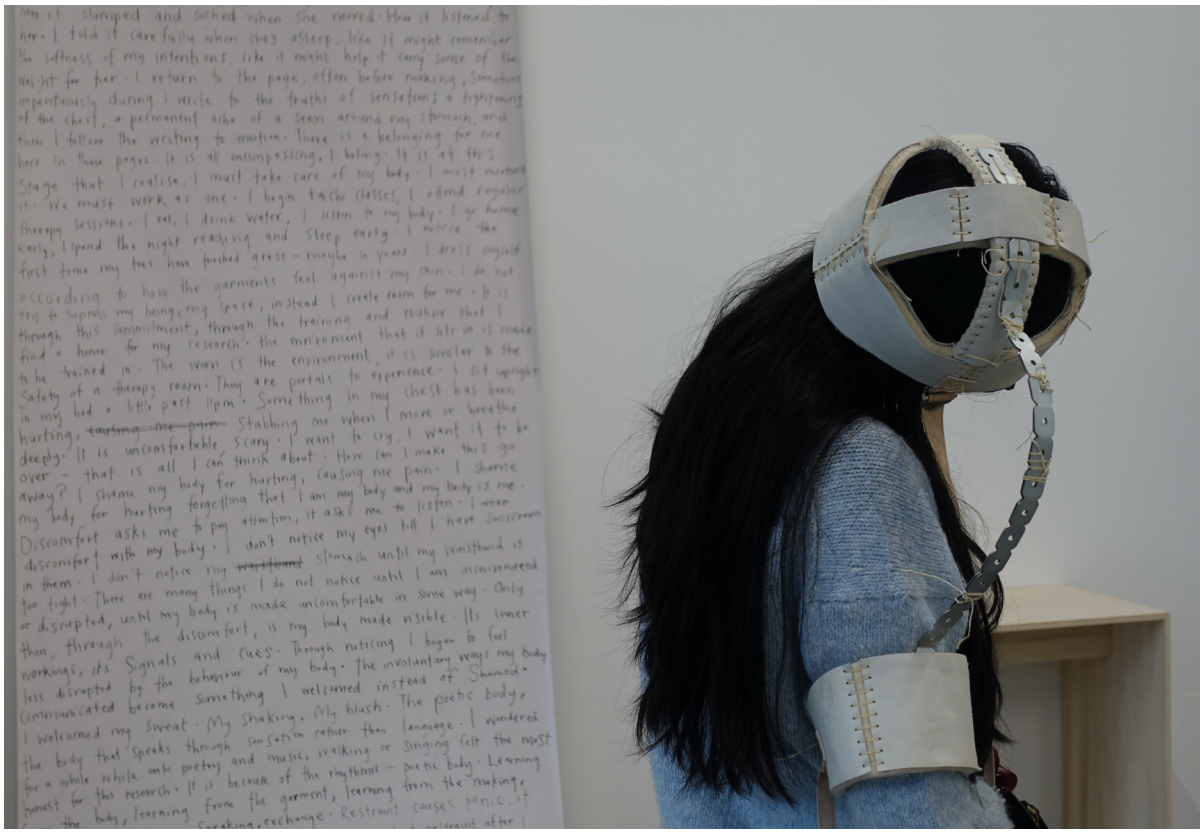


Figure 104. SOS-02, final iteration, worn by an exhibition visitor. Photograph by Abby Eastwood, 2026.





Figure 105. PLS-02, final iteration, worn by an exhibition visitor. Photograph by Abby Eastwood, 2026.
Figure 106. PLS-02, final iteration, detail view of the work on exhibition. Photograph by Abby Eastwood, 2026.

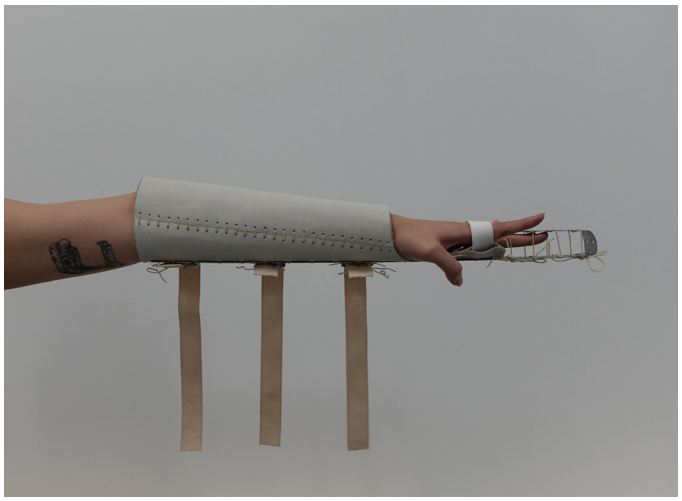




Figure 107. SOS-04, version 1, final iteration, worn by an exhibition visitor. Photograph by Abby Eastwood, 2026.

Figure 108. SOS-04, version 2, final iteration, worn by an exhibition visitor. Photograph by Abby Eastwood, 2026.



Figure 109. TIS, final iterations, detail view of the work on exhibition. Photograph by Abby Eastwood, 2026.



Figure 110. TIS, final iterations, worn by exhibition visitors. Photograph by Abby Eastwood, 2026.

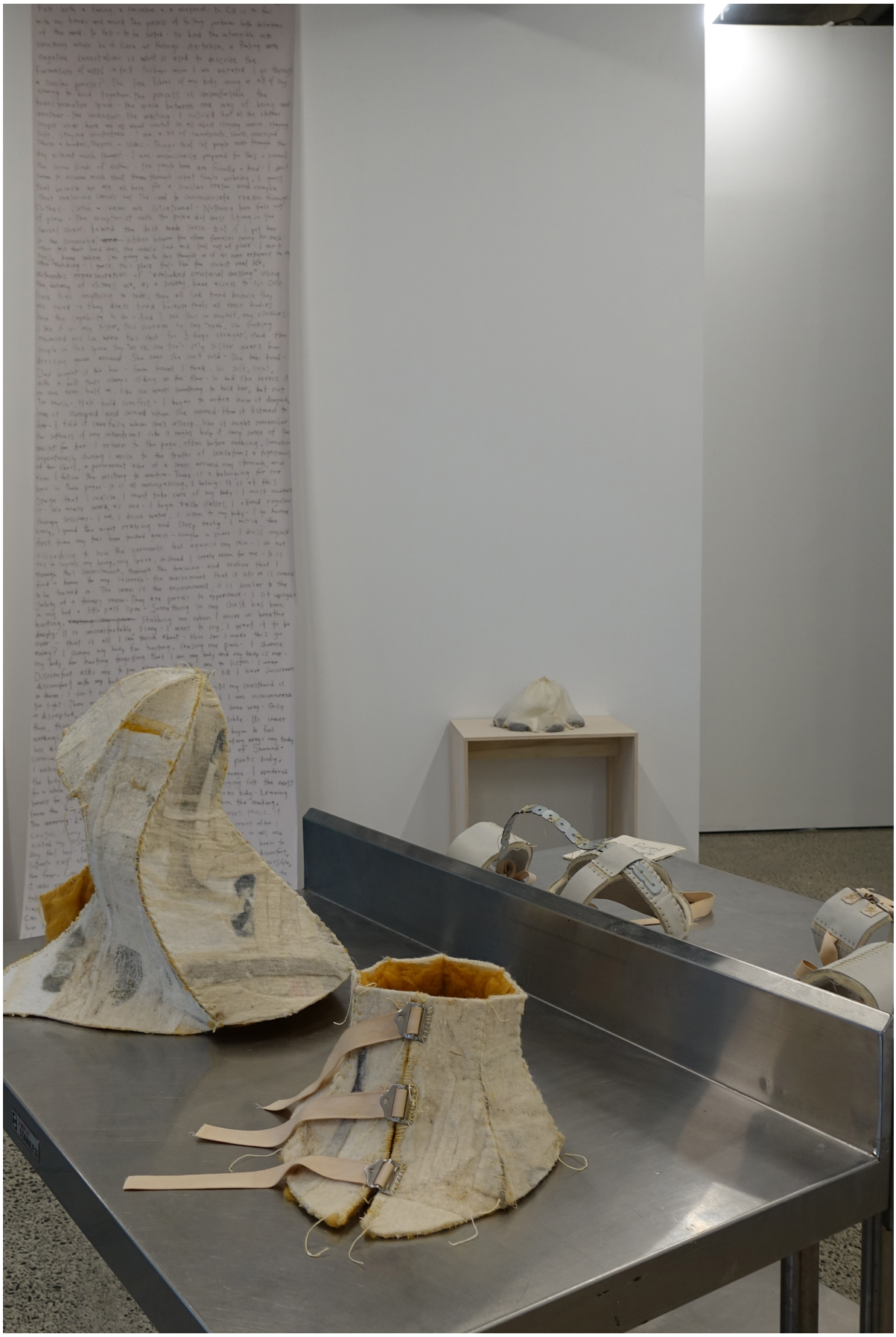


Figure 111. Prototypes displayed within the exhibition space. Photograph by Abby Eastwood, 2026.



Figure 112. SOS-03, final iteration, worn by an exhibition visitor. Photograph by Abby Eastwood, 2026.

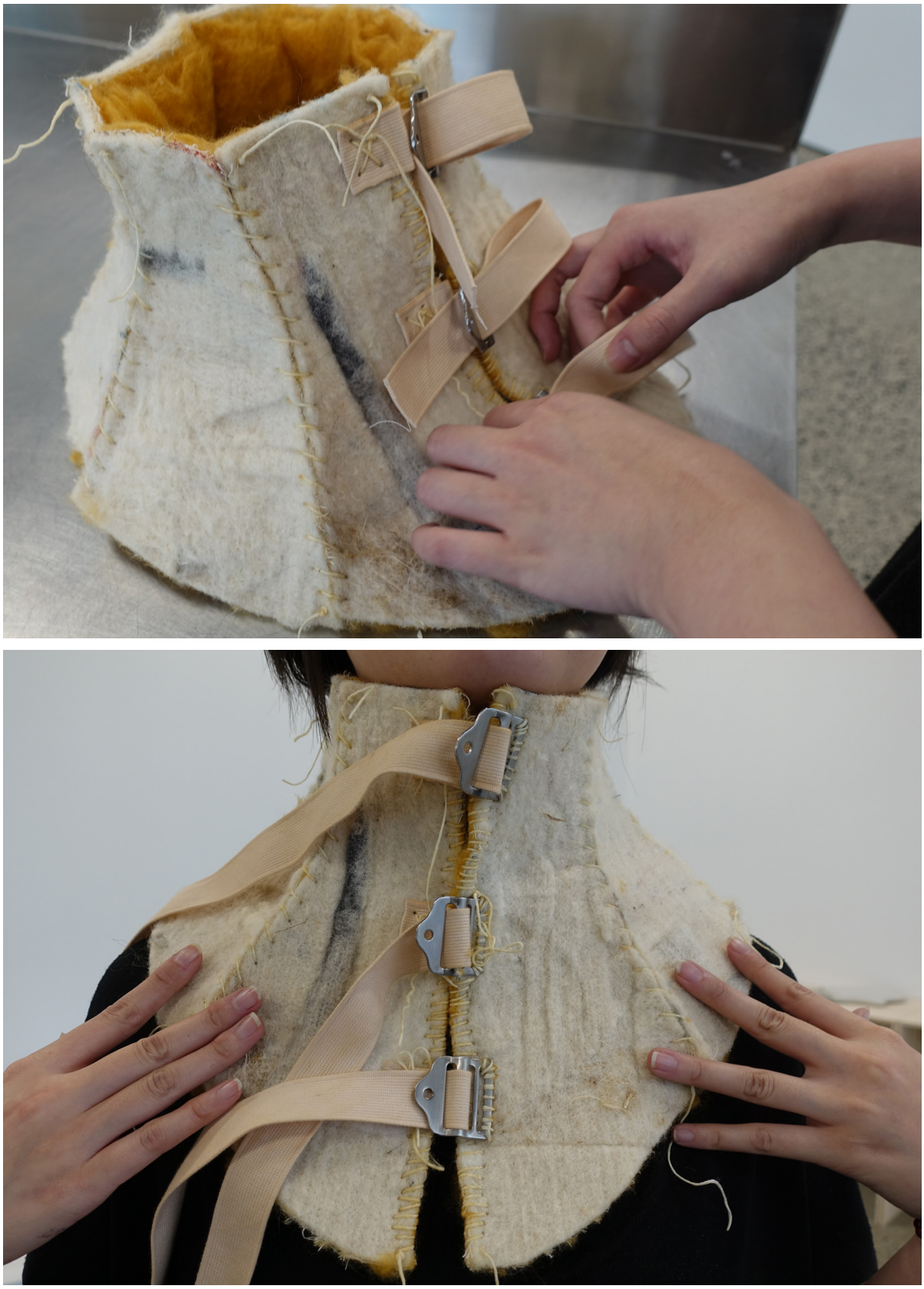


Figure 113. MIS-01, final iteration, detail view of the work on exhibition. Photograph by Abby Eastwood, 2026.

Figure 114. MIS-01, final iteration, worn by an exhibition visitor. Photograph by Abby Eastwood, 2026.