

Layers *of* the Body

Maggie Hanham
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in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Design.

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Author's Note

...

This project is dedicated to anyone who has dealt with physical trauma. I hope this work produced provides inspiration to others by revealing and speaking about my experiences as a way to reclaim my body through creative practice.

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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.

Maggie Hanham

May 2023

Intellectual Property Declaration

In submitting this work, I declare that:

This assessment has been produced by me and represents my own work, any work of another person is appropriately acknowledged and/or referenced, this work did not involve any unauthorised collaboration, this work has not previously been submitted by me or any other person/author, unless authorised, I did not use any other unfair means to complete this work, I understand that the above obligations form a part of the University's regulations and that breaching them may result in disciplinary action.

Ethics and Consent

The research did not require approval from AUTEK since it is not involving animals or human subjects.

Acknowledgements

I would like to dedicate my deepest gratitude to my two supervisors, Tatiana Tavares and Fiona Grieve, for their undeniable knowledge and endless support and for being my inspirations driving this project. Without their guidance and patience, this thesis would not have been able to get to completion. I have the utmost respect for these two wonderful women and feel so grateful to have had their guidance throughout this thesis.

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My last and most sincere thanks go out to every man who has questioned women's 'illness'. This project was inspired by you. I was prompted by you to research history and what women have opposed throughout society. Despite this, women have always been victorious. We are blessed with our uterus and the mysteries that lie beneath it.

Abstract

This practice-led project explores how publication design can be used to reclaim the body and overcome physical trauma through the lens of a young female who has suffered from endometriosis¹. The designed publication uses a collage approach to image making and textual composition to recontextualise misconceptions and visual representations around the female body. Using the concept of the *book as a body*, the publication uses typography and collaged imagery to communicate an internal and an external dialogue between three voices – the feminist, the personal, and the medical – as means to reclaim the body. The publication presents information through the perspective of self-identity and the varying layers of perception that transverse through the work. Using autoethnography as a methodological framework, the project explores a series of methods, such as journalling, drawing and collage, and prototyping to access and explore a personal experience.

Footnote:

1. Endometriosis is a condition where the endometrium tissue (similar to the lining of the uterus) implants itself and grows outside the uterus in different areas around the body, such as the bowel and bladder, causing pain and discomfort. Based on NZ statistics ("Endo Information," n.d.).

Introduction

This practice-led research asks:

“How can a multi-voiced designed publication explore the concept of *book as a body*, using autoethnography as a methodological framework to investigate past trauma with the female body?”

The publication *Layers of the body* employs typography and image-making in publication design to unpack the complexities of personal trauma with endometriosis. Using the metaphor of *book as a body*, I use publication design as a site to discuss the internal and external relationships with the body. Using autoethnographic and heuristics enquiry as methodological frameworks, the research reflects on personal experiences and practices informed by written and visual forms.

The significance of this project lies in three elements. First, it explores the potential of practice to reflect on personal and subjective experiences of past trauma. Using the theory of *body as a container* (Pollak, 2009), the project aims to express internal and external bodily experiences through publication design. Through a method of collaged imagery and writing, the concept of *book as a container* and *book as a body* expands in the possibilities of publication design to inform personal experiences.

The third element of significance is in the negotiation of many voices in the publication through a *polyvocal* approach of narration. This allows an opportunity to discuss experience, through personal, historical, and medical perspectives about the body. The incorporation of multiple voices draws from Bakhtin's (1984) theory of the polyvocal narrative style of unmerged and independent voices.

This thesis comprises written chapters that accompany practical work. The thesis follows the structure of a review of contextual knowledge, research methodology, methods and critical framework. The positioning of the researcher in the first chapter outlines how I, as the researcher, am placed within the project and the reasons for selecting this type of inquiry. The second chapter investigates the cultural and social contexts and concepts around the female body, including endometrioses, trauma, body as a container and historical perspectives in visual communication design. This chapter also discusses how female artists have used these historical views of the female body to inform their own artistic practices. Because the project informs a personal experience with endometrioses, chapter three – Research Design – presents the self-search methodology, and the processes and methods that informed the project. Chapter four presents design decisions about the project in two sections. The first section communicates the idea of the *book as a body* and the second section discusses the polyvocal narrative technique and critical design decisions that informed *Layers of the body*. Finally, the last chapter – Conclusion – is a discussion of my overall reflections and findings.



POSITIONING OF THE RESEARCHER

Chapter *one*

Positioning of the Researcher

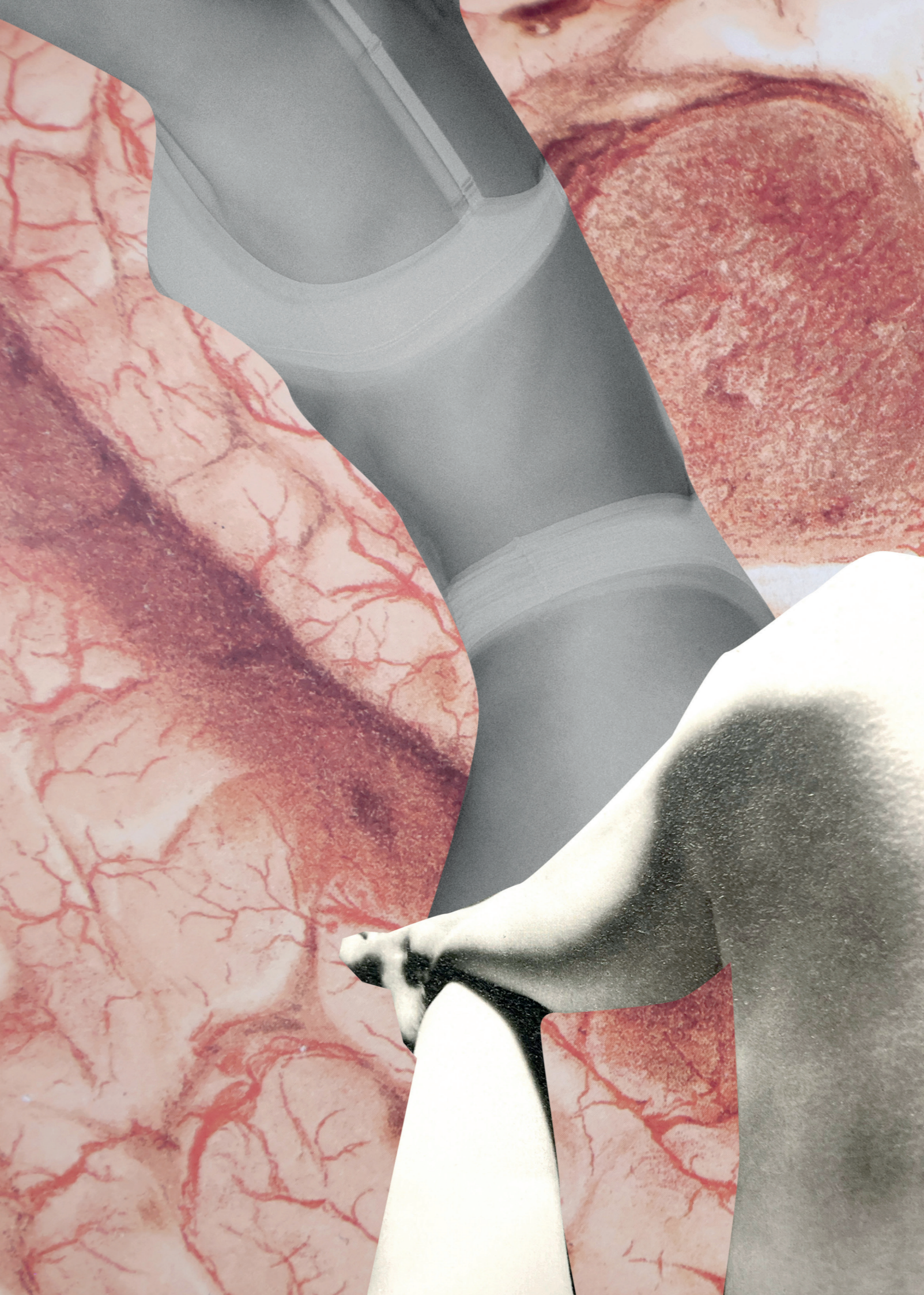
“To men, a man is but a mind. Who cares what face he carries or what form he wears? But woman’s body is the woman” Ambrose Bierce (1911/1935, p. 15).

As a young woman, I faced traumatic experiences with my body and was diagnosed with endometriosis. The illness began with an uncontrollable pain that I felt daily. It was a feeling of being stabbed internally and I became scared from the inside out. I was misunderstood by many friends and family members who downplayed my feelings and sensations.

Four invasive surgeries to remove endometriosis impacted me physically and emotionally. The pain experienced during a number of medical processes and consultations probing my uterus from the inside out made me perceive my sexuality at early stages of womanhood with different eyes. After the operations, the scars turned into shame and avoidance that resulted in me feeling disconnected and a stranger to my body.

The confusion I experienced during this process was internalised and echoed within my body and mind for many years. As I studied to become a graphic designer, I realised that some objectified portrayals of woman in magazines, publications and advertising campaigns troubled the perceptions I had about myself. This traumatic experience required a reclamation – a form of intervention – to create a new relationship with my sexual body. At this time, I became interested in the way graphic designers give form to language and ideas through the construction and management of visual language and media. The idea that my position as a graphic designer could focus on a reassessment (or reclamation) of internal voices through an exploration of typographic and image-making conventions sparked an emotional storm inside me.

This opened a personal narrative about my most intimate experience. The trauma that had suffocated my body for so many years has been released. In this project, I have put my body on display, signifying a transition of the internal and external body becoming one. I am ready to flourish into the young woman I have always meant to be.



REVIEW OF CONTEXTUAL KNOWLEDGE

Chapter *two*

Review of Contextual Knowledge

This project is informed by four areas of knowledge that have significantly influenced *Layers of the body*: endometriosis and trauma; the body as a container; historical and cultural views on women; and the female perspective on the conventions and use of collage.

2.1 Endometriosis and Trauma

Layers of the body is informed by my personal experiences with endometriosis. Endometriosis is a "chronic condition" (Czyzyk et al., 2017, p. 447) that can be defined as the "presence of endometrial glands [tissue] and stroma outside the uterine [uterus] cavity" (Jiang et al., 2016, p. 941). The chronic condition affects "5-10% of women of reproductive age globally" (Flores et al., 2021, p. 839). Endometriosis can affect the reproductive organs, otherwise invisible to the naked eye and can cause intense "chronic pain" (Barbara, 2015, p. 135). According to Barbara et al. (2021, p. 12112), this pain can be characterised as "pain at menstruation, chronic pelvic pain, pain at defecation, pain at urination, and pain at intercourse". Greene et al. (2016, p. 63) suggest that there is "no cure for endometriosis", but a few non-invasive options can treat the disease (Hsu et al., 2010, p. 415).

Treatment options may be "hormonal manipulation and surgery" (Quinlivan, 2021, p. 2). The type of surgery offered to endometriosis patients is called laparoscopy², which is considered the "gold standard for diagnosing endometriosis... certifies the presense of the disease and its extension [how aggressive it is]" (Rolla, 2019, p. 529). Even though this surgery is effective, it may have side effects. Surgical adhesions can form, which can lead to "severe

problem[s] [that can affect] up to 90% of patients [leading to further] chronic pain" (Andress, 2021, p. 2133). The condition can cause psychological effects that include "depression, anxiety, and compromising social relationships" (Bifulco et al., 2020, p. 1). Women may feel stressed and in "despair" (Hansen et al., 2012, p. 12) due to the effects of endometriosis on the body. Furthermore, after surgery, woman may feel mental struggles that make it increasingly difficult to analyse the impact of this condition in their lives. Hummeleshøj (2005) argues that women have "to deal with their challenges alone because endometriosis is hard for others to understand" (p. 25). In addition, because of this lack of understanding, women may feel "ashamed of their condition" (Bifulco et al., 2020, p. 1), which may result in women not feeling comfortable about sharing their experiences.

Endometriosis is not only a condition that impacts the inner workings of the reproductive system, it can also have a negative impact on a woman's emotional wellbeing and how she views herself. According to Douglas et al. (2009), endometriosis can cause "different kinds of trauma" (p. 235). These traumas may be physically present in the body through the "persistence of pelvic pain" (Martin, 1999, p.664). Emotionally, traumas and low self-esteem can manifest as memories in the nature of "emotional and sensory states" (Van Der Kolk, 2002, S52-S64). Some have described themselves as "draining of colour" (Jenkinson et al., 2004, p. 125). Patients have also reported "feeling bloated, having greasy or spotty skin and weight gain" (Jenkinson et al., 2004, p. 125). These negative thoughts about their bodies can have the capacity to form "poor body image [that can lead to] depression and poor emotional health-related in endometriosis" (Basson et al., 2022, p. 464). The authors also note that some women feel that life is meaningless because of the emotional trauma they suffer from the condition.

Footnote:

2. Laparoscopy is a minimally invasive technique for viewing the internal structures of the abdominal cavity. The procedure involves distention of the abdominal cavity with gas and then using a rigid telescope (laparoscope) placed through a portal positioned into the abdominal wall to examine the contents of the peritoneal cavity. Once the telescope is in place, either biopsy forceps or an assortment of surgical instruments can be introduced into the abdomen through adjacent portals to perform various diagnostic or surgical procedures. (Monnet and Twedt, 2003, p. 1147)

Trauma and Creative Practice

Trauma has been a subject of inquiry and the discussion of subjective experiences through artistic practice. Artist Tania Abramson (2017) discusses her childhood trauma of being sexually abused by her father's best friend at the ages of four and seven. Her publication, *Shame and the eternal Abyss* (2017) (Figure 2.1) features visual narratives through drawings, poetry and painted panels. The renderings visually depict her trauma in an abstract but powerful journey through a psychological manifestation into the resilience of trauma. Abramson (2017) describes the process of confronting trauma through creative practice as a "powerful symbol [of strength and] female retribution" (p. 190) and an outlet for the aftermath of these experiences.

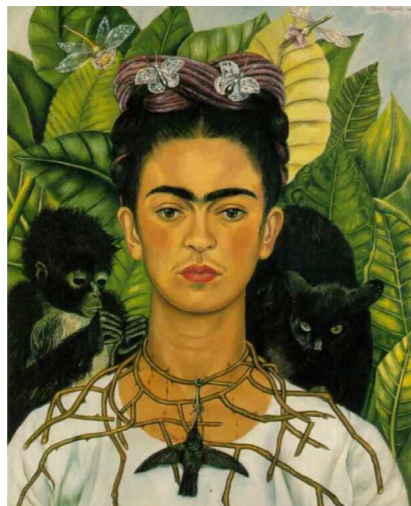
Figure 2.1
Shame and the External Abyss



Note. In this work you can see how forms and marks express the internal feelings of struggle and pain. From Tania Abramson (2017), *Shame and the eternal abyss*, Asylum 4 Renegades Press (<https://www.ebay.com/itm/275493020411>). Copyright 2017.

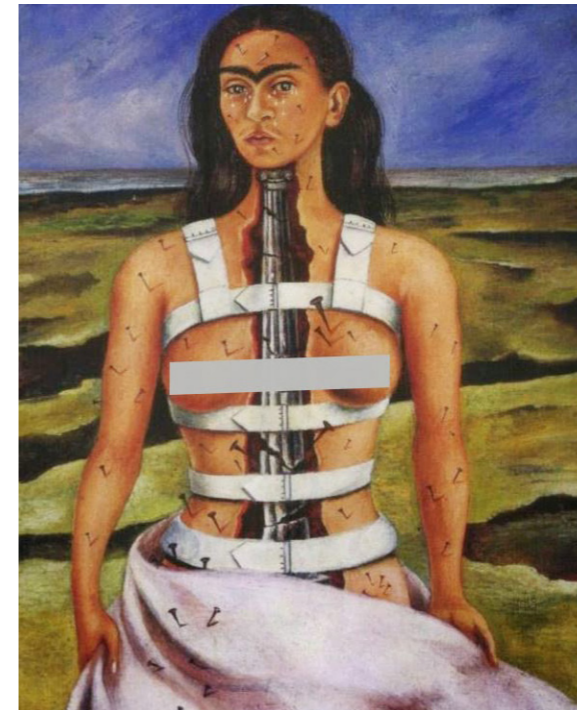
Frida Kahlo was a Mexican painter who explored her past traumas through self-portraits (Figure 2.2, Figure 2.3 and Figure 2.4). The artist suffered a tram accident, which drove Kahlo to a fascination “with the body” (Conaty, 2015, p. 2). The artist was mesmerised by painting her trauma in the form of presenting her internal experiences and perspectives (Conaty, 2015). This reality was translated in her work *The broken column* (1944) (Figure 2.3), which symbolises her “physical and psychological pain” (p. 2). Following this, Kahlo produced *Tree of hope* (1946) (Figure 2.4) that depicts two sides of herself: “one sick and one healthy ... the broken body and the vibrant body” (p. 3). These dualities describe Kahlo’s fragile but mighty perception of her body.

Figure 2.2
Self Portrait of Frida Kahlo



Note. This self portrait of Frida Kahlo represents the anguish she felt after her failed relationships that left behind a trail of trauma. From *Self-portrait with thorn necklace and hummingbird* by Frida Kahlo, by Harry Ransom Center, n.d. (<https://www.hrc.utexas.edu/frida-kahlo-self-portrait/>). Copyright 2020 Banco de Mexico Diego Rivera Frida Kahlo Museums Trust, D.F./Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

Figure 2.3
The Broken Column



Note. Frida Kahlo painted this artwork after her bus accident to represent the missing flesh violating her body. From *Art through time: A global view*, by Annenberg Learner, n.d. (<https://www.learner.org/series/art-through-time-a-global-view/dreams-and-visions/the-broken-column/>). Copyright 2009 Banco de México Diego Rivera-Frida Kahlo Museums Trust, Mexico, D.F. / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/Courtesy of Schalkwijk/Art Resource, NY.

Figure 2.4
Tree of Hope



Note. Frida Kahlo created this painting to represent two sides of herself – one side is the victim of trauma and the other is the survivor. From *Tree of hope, remain strong*, by Useum, n.d. (<https://useum.org/artwork/Tree-of-hope-Remain-Strong-Frida-Kahlo-1946>). Copyright 1977 Collection of Daniel Filipacchi Paris, France.

2.2 Perspectives on the Body

As practical design work involves perceptions of the body, historical and cultural perspectives are helpful to create parallels between practice and theoretical ideas presented in the publication airing out of this study. Body as a container and media views about the representation and objectification of women, feminism and mana wahine support ideas discussed in the publication design.

Body as a Container

Body as a container is a psychoanalytic term defined by Tamar Pollak (2009) and is based on the duality and "connection between bodily and mental functions" (p. 488). Brown & Levine (2017) suggest that the duality between the body and mind aids a deeper understanding of the psychoanalytic process. The authors claim that the theory of the body as a container/contained results in "turbulence and growth" in one's mind (p. 245). These notions bring an "ambiguity [more than one interpretation] and the disruptiveness of the unknown" in the body (Diamond, 2017, p. 98). This *unknown* may come in the form of an *emotional storm* in the exchanges between internal and external minds. Bion (1967) argues that if the mind externally resonates with some thoughts as being negative, it can relate to this externally as being a "bad object" (Bion, 1967, p. 180). Pollak (2009) believes that "object relations are a reference point" (p. 490) in our mental spaces and the body container model attempts to portray the associations between the "psycho-physical space" (p. 503). He claims that if the body has suffered from trauma, "we often see an entirely rigid or confused body" (p. 503) that turns into "bodily memory" (p. 503). The body container model is used to help prevent one's body and mind from being at a distance from one another. Instead, it intertwines the duality of the body and mind into one.

Historical Perspectives

Bollough (1999) suggests that throughout history, definitions of women's place and role in "society and in the family have been made by men" (p. 1). In the third century, philosopher Aristotle claimed the female body was the "inverse of the male, with its genitalia turn'd outside in" (Cleghorn, 2021, p. 7). Women were often described as the opposite of a male and their bodies were considered "faulty, defective, deficient" (Cleghorn, 2021, p. 7). In ancient Greek mythology, it was believed the womb *wandered* throughout the body causing irrational behaviour; it "easily detached itself and wandered lightly and unimpeded throughout the body, crowding and compressing the other organs in its search for moisture and fulfilment" (Dixon, 1994, p. 68). The womb was seen as a cause of "female weakness" (Meek, 2009, p. 50) in the form of "physical disease or mental condition" (Bollough, 1999, p. 1). The female reproductive organs were accused of being "leaky wenches and tragic victims with animalistic wombs" (Tunc, 2008, p. 767). It was believed that the most effective way of easing women's 'troubles' was to feed the uterus its favourite food, the "male sperm" (Dixon, 1994, p. 68).

In advertising, there has been a pattern of misogyny that paints women as being 'weak' because of their sexual reproductive organs. Weideger (1982) explains that "committed misogynist[s] will use any example of women's weaknesses to bolster his prejudice" (p. 13). In 1950s newspapers, the female body and its illnesses were painted negatively and medicine was an instant fix for women's madness (Figure 2.5 and Figure 2.6).

Footnote:

3. Objectification Theory provides a framework for understanding the psychological consequences women experience because of sociocultural expectations regarding the female body (Andersen et al., 2005, p. 34).

In the 1970s to the 1990s, the image of a female was largely presented as the "stereotypical housewife" (Kilbourne, 1990, p. 25) (Figure 2.7) that mimicked gender roles of the time. Oppliger (2007) suggests that by the 1980s, "female representation in the media had gotten a little better" (p. 199). Loewenberg (1999) explains that "women have been so frequently used as subjects (for which we read as 'objects') in the arts, including photography, that self-portraiture is a way to keep control of their own representation" (p. 398). Women were not only compared to a specific stereotype, but the female body was "sexually objectified" (Allen, et al., 2015, p. 433). The objectification³ of women made society's thinking of women centre around their "relationships to men" (Ciochetto, 2008, p. 248). The female body was measured by "how the body appear[ed] to others, rather than what the body can do or how it feels" (Aubrey, 2009, p. 272).

Figure 2.5
Suffering Women



Note. Medication advertisement titled *Suffering women* shows a woman sitting in a chair and describes her as being intrinsically weaker than men, leading the female body to be more susceptible to diseases. Copyright n.d. Stuff Ltd.

Figure 2.6
Sexual Politics of Sickness



Note. Newspaper article titled 'Sexual politics of sickness'. A woman's entire personality was supposedly dominated by her reproductive organs. The article discloses husbands complaining of their wife's irrational behaviour. *Ann Arbor District Library*. Copyright 1974 Ann Arbor Sun.

Aktepe (2020) suggests that “objectifying women may have evolved but it never changed” (p. 2). Shinoda et al., (2021) claims that recent printed advertising is “society’s family photo-album” (p. 630), broadcasting the ideal version of a woman through a reconstruction and domination of the female body. Aileen O’Driscoll (2019) conducted a study of the “representation of the sexes” (p. 732) and how advertising may influence society’s ideologies of gender. She concluded that imagery often depicts women through “sexualisation and domesticity” (p. 728). Advertisements present a large difference between how men and women are portrayed. In Gucci’s advertising campaigns (Figure 2.8), women were “scared [and] alarmed [whereas the male] is the dominant partner” (O’Driscoll, 2019, p. 739). Middleton et al. (2020) suggest that the media portrays outdated stereotypes and social norms that can lead to negative self-reflections.

Figure 2.7
Less Work for Women



Note. In four panels of illustrations, this advertisement displays the stereotype of a housewife and her household duties. *Te Ara - the encyclopaedia of New Zealand*. Copyright 2015 by the Alexander Turnbull Library.

Figure 2.8
Gucci Advertisement



Note. This advertisement by Gucci displays a woman lying on the lap of a man. The woman looks uncomfortable and the man looks in a position in power. Fashion Advertisement. *From Media and Cultural Analysis, Spring 2014 investigating the power of media in our culture*, by Karanovic, 2014. (<https://www.karanovic.org/courses/mca008/archives/1492>).

Collage in the Feminine Arts

In questioning the representation of women in the visual arts, feminist artists have been attracted to collage. The word *collage* stems from the "French verb *coller*, translated literally it connotes pasting, sticking, or gluing onto a surface" (Copeland, 2002, p. 12). According to Gwen Raaberg (1998), collage developed throughout the 20th century as a "revolutionary art movement" (p. 153). Feminist artists suggest that "collage is a predominant aesthetic in the feminist arts" (Raaberg, 1998, p. 153). Female artists, such as Hannah Hoch used collage to explore gender, identity and the thinking behind the new woman in the "postcolonial Weimar Republic" (Toussaint, 2016, p. 25). The artist used old postcards, photographs, newspapers and advertisements to question a male-driven "Weimar Society" (Nguyen, 2021, para. 1). Nguyen explains that Hoch's "political commentary and feminist narrative stood out from the male-dominated arena" (para. 1). In her most famous works, *Das schöne mädchen* (*The beautiful girl* 1920) (Figure 2.9), Hoch presents the dawn of Germany's new woman. In 1934 Höch spoke about 'A few words on Photomontage' where the artist believed the characteristics of photomontage, "a new and immensely

fantastic field for creative human being". Another artist using collage to question gender roles was the German-Argentine photomontage artist Grete Stern. Her visual deconstructions question the "dominant perceptions of femininity and the (female) body in relation to a modernizing culture" (Uslenghi, 2015, p. 173). The artist produced a photomontage series *Sueños/Dreams* (1949) (Figure 2.10), which "express[ed] the anxieties and thrills of the transformation of modern femininity" (Uslenghi, 2015, p. 174). These artists used photomontage to explore "the power of photographic images" (Uslenghi, 2015, p. 174) and the sociocultural representations of women in mass media.

Figure 2.9
Das schöne mädchen (*The beautiful girl*)



Note. This collage is based on Germany's uprising of the new woman in the Weimar Republic after World War One. Hoch incorporates car parts and female figures found in magazines to depict the contrast between industrialisation and the roles of women in a modernising society.

Figure 2.10
Dream No. 7 – Who Will She Be?



Note. This photomontage composed by Grete Sterne depicts the struggle of a woman trying to free herself from a patriarchal society.

Feminist and mana wahine perspectives

Rebecca Coleman (2014) argues that a feminist theory⁴ challenges thinking around "gender and sexuality, the body, nature and culture" (p. 28). Eichler (1985) suggests that, "at the most fundamental level, [it] is committed to understanding and improving the situation of women" (p. 624). Feminist theory is "rooted in and responsible for movements for equality, freedom and justice" (Ferguson, 2017, p. 269). To understand how the female body has been a location of in-justification, it is necessary to "track how bodies are depicted in contemporary popular culture" (Coleman, 2014, p. 30).

As an alternative narrative to western perspectives, *mana wahine* can be referred to as a type of Maori feminism. It is a complex term that "recognis[es] the authority, dignity, and power [*the mana*] of Maori women" (Waitere & Johnston, 2009). Tegan Paul (2014) describes *mana wahine* as "diverse and dynamic" (2014, p. 19) and symbolises "prestige, honour, spiritual power and integrity" (Calman, 2012 p. 8). *Wahine* is a term that does not just translate in English to women. The term references "*wa* (time and space) and *hine* (the female essence)" (Pihama 2001). Using the term in practice means harnessing the *mana* (spiritual power) that holds, and challenges past instances of "multiple oppressions - those arising from sexism" (Simmons, 2011, p. 12). In relation to sexuality, Maori culture celebrates female reproductive capabilities and sees the power of the female body. Ngahuia Murphy (2011) states that menstruation is highly spiritual as "menstrual blood symbolises [the] power of creation" (p. 25). The blood represents a divine river of "ancestors and descendants" (Murphy, 2011, p. 43). When the *river* stops flowing, it signals the arrival of a new generation.

Footnote:

4. Feminist theory posits that the subjection and objectification of women is caused through gendered relations (Dietz, 2003, p. 399).



METHODOLOGY

Chapter *three*

Methodology

This practice-led project used practice to create and inform the research through a process of self-reflection with the female body. I focused on the self-searching methodological areas of autoethnography, heuristic inquiry and reflective practice through several progressive methods.

3.1. Self-search Methodologies

This project used autoethnographic inquiry to reflect on my experiences. I was motivated to carry out this inquiry through self-identity and building an acceptance between myself and my body. According to Ellis et al. (2011), autoethnography combines the characteristics of "autobiography and ethnography" (p. 273) to examine personal experiences in cultural and social contexts. Besio and Butz (2009) describe autoethnography as a "form of self-narrative" (p. 1660) and according to Fourie (2021), "the autoethnographic writer needs freedom of style and tone to express their self" (p. 31). During this project, I used autoethnography to tell my personal accounts of living with endometriosis in my teenage and early womanhood years. I also reflected on my present experiences and my ever-changing, post-operation body.

A heuristic approach was used to generate work through a process of "self-searching, self-dialogue, intuition, and tacit knowing" (Ozertugrual, 2015, p. 237). Moustakas (2011) states that "heuristic methodology ... seeks to obtain qualitative depictions that are at the heart and depths of a person's experience—[these are] depictions of situations, events, conversations, relationships, feelings, thoughts, values, and beliefs" (p. 2). In heuristics, the artist becomes intertwined with their project in a process of discovery. Through collage and building a connection between the artifact and myself as the designer, I was able to use intuition to insert a "personal mark" into the work (Binz, 2016, p. 13). Collage arrangements allowed me to visualise the "internal experience[s]" (Sela-Smith, 2002, p. 53) that influenced the project. Heuristics is a form of personal "problem solving, an effort to know the essence of some aspect of life through the internal pathways of self" (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985, p. 39). Because heuristics is a "flexible inquiry" (Binz, 2016, p. 14), the project took many directions. According to Schön (1987), reflective practice is a "dialogue of thinking and doing through which I become more skilful" (p. 31) that is centred around problem-solving and "reflective-in-action" (p. 26). During the process of creating work, I was able to reflect on my thoughts as "respond[ing] during the action-present to make a difference to the outcome ... connecting the unfamiliar with the familiar" (Tan, 2020, p. 688).

3.2 Research Methods

In this section, I outline the methods I used to inform the development of the work. These included four consecutive phases: (1) reflective journalling, (2) ideation boards and drawing techniques, (3) prototyping visual material and gaining specialised feedback (Figure 3.1).

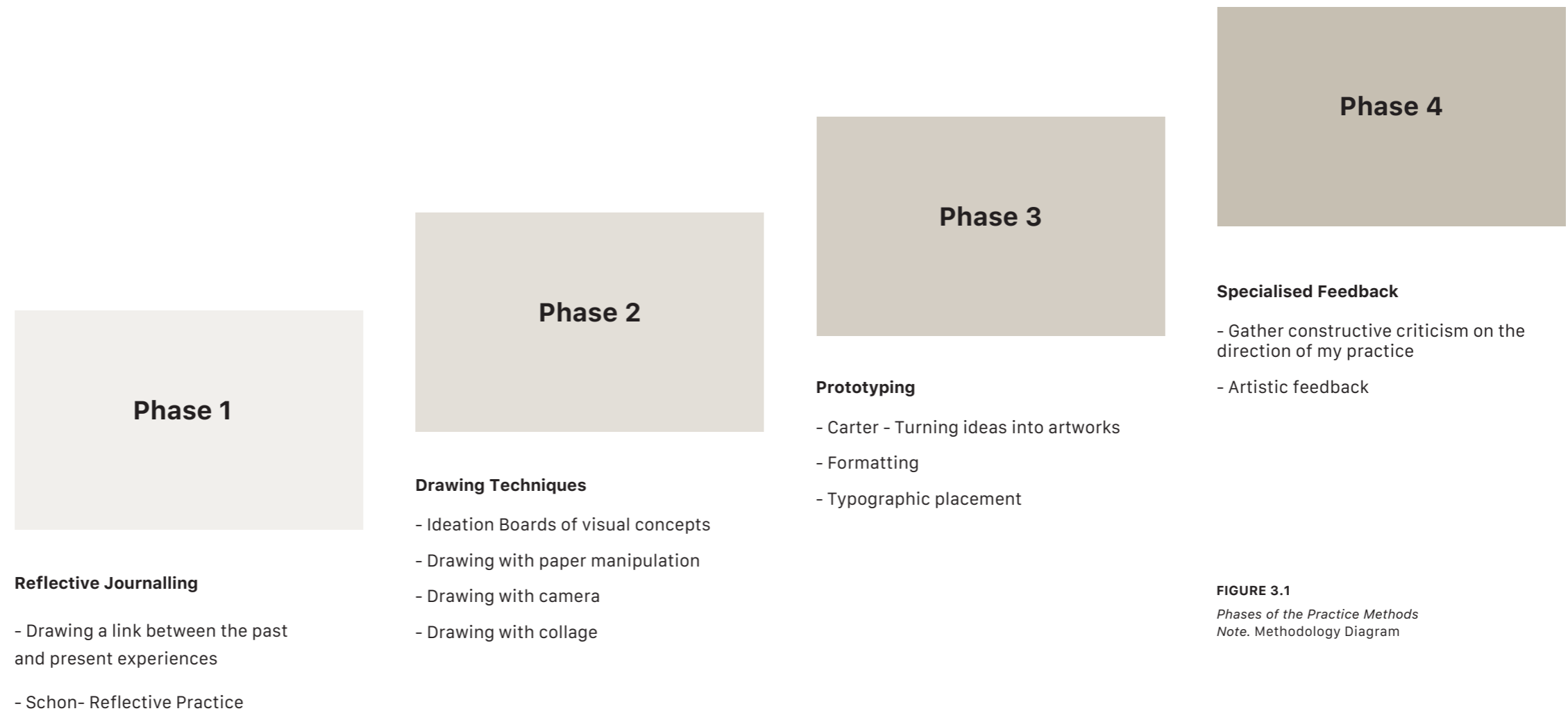


FIGURE 3.1
Phases of the Practice Methods
Note. Methodology Diagram

Phase 1: Reflective Journalling

This project was informed by a reflective journal that operated as a diary with notations. The reflective journal was a collection of mismatched and unorganised personal accounts. It presented a sense of disorientation when the endometriosis was at the most intense stage. The diary depicted pain and emotions, drawing a link between the past and present. Farrah (2012) explains that reflective journal writing “is an effective learning technique that enables ... learn[ing] while ... writing” (p. 998).

Through writing, I could build “a space of unconditional acceptance and support to help [me to] make sense of the shared struggles [I was] having” (Martinez et al., 2015, p. 86). I wrote fragmented pieces, reflecting on experiences with my body and my inner struggles (Figure 3.2). The journal showed internal thoughts that strived to get in touch with my “inner self” (Cui, 2020, p. 27). I was seeking to discover my self-identity through my writing and grow a deeper connection with my body. In my notes I wrote about the duality of my body and my mind, such as:

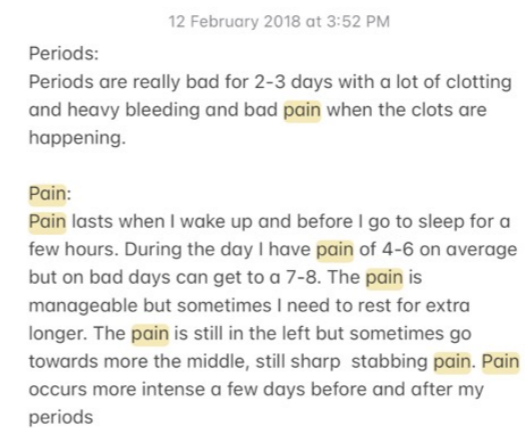
“The way in which my body was reacting to endometriosis led me to blame myself for the way it appeared. This made me weaker and caused me to lose touch with my body” (Hanham, 2023).

“I’m exposing myself in my most vulnerable state” (Hanham, 2023).

By incorporating Schön’s theory of reflective practice into my journalling, I translated my thoughts in the form of a dialogue that connected the past and the present. By using the 2018 diary as a reflective anchor, I could reflect on those events. This provided a new understanding of my experience, as using Schön’s theory meant I could reflect in action (reflect on the diary without delay). I could see transformation through my writing; there was a clear disconnection between myself and my body in 2018 when I wrote clinically rather than emotively. Because of this transformation I am now able to access my innermost feelings, as my bodily connection and the way I describe my experience through writing have grown stronger.

Figure 3.2

Past Endo Diary 2018



12 February 2018 at 3:52 PM

Periods:
Periods are really bad for 2-3 days with a lot of clotting and heavy bleeding and bad pain when the clots are happening.

Pain:
Pain lasts when I wake up and before I go to sleep for a few hours. During the day I have pain of 4-6 on average but on bad days can get to a 7-8. The pain is manageable but sometimes I need to rest for extra longer. The pain is still in the left but sometimes go towards more the middle, still sharp stabbing pain. Pain occurs more intense a few days before and after my periods

Note. This image shows a diary entry from 2018 when I was suffering from blood clots during my period followed by intense pain.

Figure 3.3
Beginning Digital Moodboard



Note. Initial stages of digital, ideational boarding, featuring imagistic references of book design, photomontage and photography.

Figure 3.4
Ideation Board – Contexts



Note. Initial stages of digital ideational boarding, featuring the contexts of Maori mythology, menstruation, hysteria, and old newspaper cut outs about women's illness.

Phase 2: Ideation Boards and Drawing Techniques

In this phase, I began gathering visual inspirations in the form of digital (Figure 3.3 and Figure 3.4) and physical ideational boards (Figure 3.5) that helped to inform my practice and build on ideas in the form of visual outputs. I used boards as a visual tool to translate and expand my thoughts and explore the potential of the work through contextual ideas and visual language. This reflected "narrative/visual information concerning an unfolding ideas process" (Cho, 2019, p. 23).

The boards went through examples of past photography, photomontage practitioners and references about the body. At the beginning of this project, I focused on the idea of menstruation and through these boards I began to sense an overarching theme centered around identity and self-representation. The boards developed from mismatched ideas that gradually informed my practice. Using visual boards meant I could "reflect on the visualised interactions" (Van Der Lelie, 2006, p. 160). The boards with cut-out images enabled me to move pieces flexibly and they acted as compendiums of visuals and thoughts, and displayed patterns with aesthetics and themes that gradually informed the development of *Layers of the body*.

Figure 3.5

Physical Ideation Board



Note. Physical ideational board with categories and regrouping of concepts. These boards, pinned on a wall, were organised with photographs of the body, old advertisements with historical views and political ideas.

During the creative process of *Layers of the body*, I used image-manipulation techniques to visually represent the narrative of the book. Drawing through the analogue and digital materials, I used techniques to enable me to navigate the intimate relationship between the body and the mind.

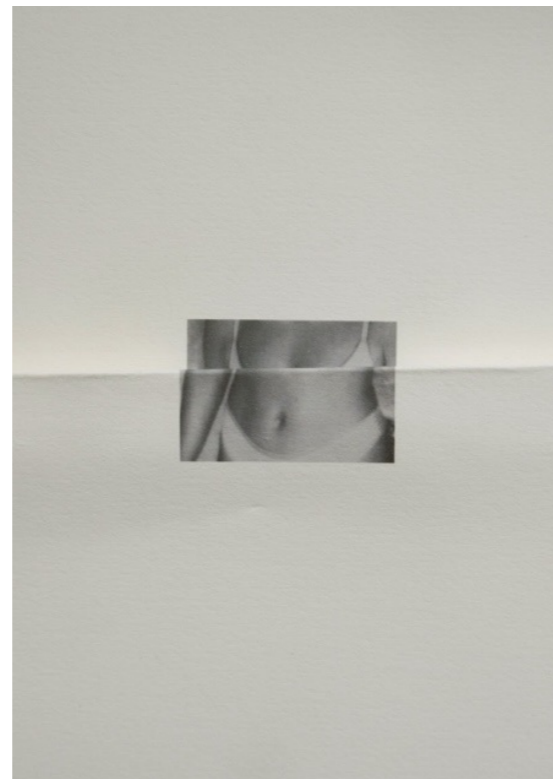
Initially, I implemented drawing with the analogue materials to harness the act of interacting with the paper (Figure 3.6). In visual communication, drawing is a “chance to observe, to muse, to select and develop continuous thinking techniques” (Mahamood & Mustaqim, 2013, p. 103). Drawing is a medium of visual thinking that a practitioner can use to translate research into visual materials. Through these techniques, I manipulated otherwise flat and emotionless photographs of myself into art forms (Figure 3.7). I found that this process of manipulation and movement connected the medium to internal feelings of pain and trauma that were displayed in a more visual manner through ripping, sticking, scratching and folding. These drawing techniques enabled me to become less clinical and more in touch with my emotions through the tactile, enabling feelings of control and body reclamation. Through the methods of collage (Figure 3.8), I also explored themes, such as the medical, the personal, the feminist. Collage provided me a way to self-discovery and holding juxtaposition between the internal and external body through cut-out images of organs as external characteristics of trauma.

Figure 3.6
Drawing with Folding Paper



Note. This drawing technique with self-portraits explored the concept of *folding the body onto itself*.

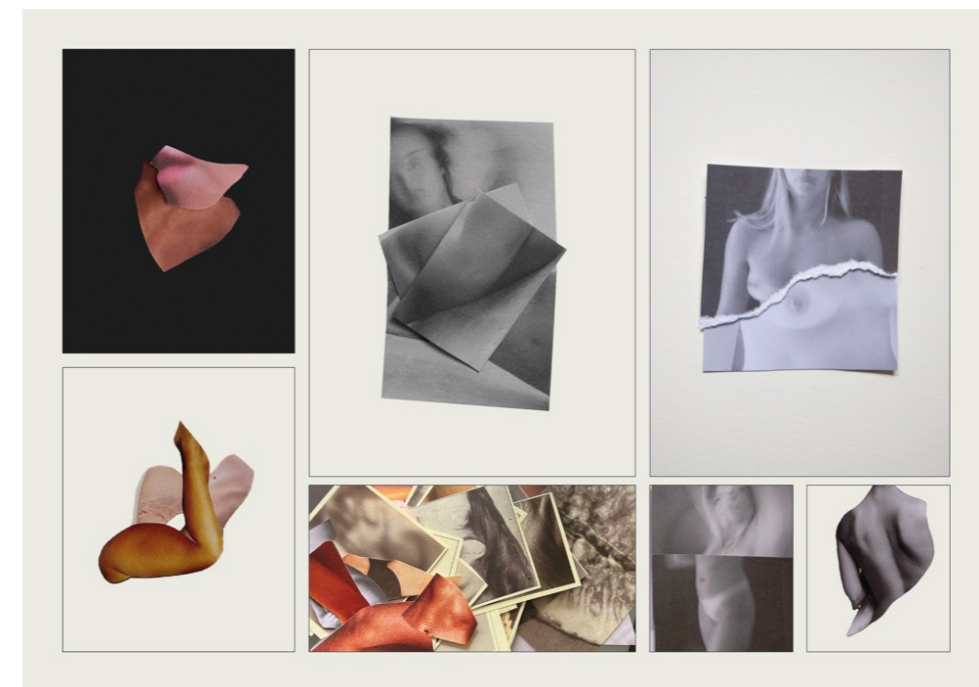
Figure 3.7
Drawing with Manipulating Paper



Note. This drawing technique involved manipulating a flat photograph into an emotion of being cut in half.

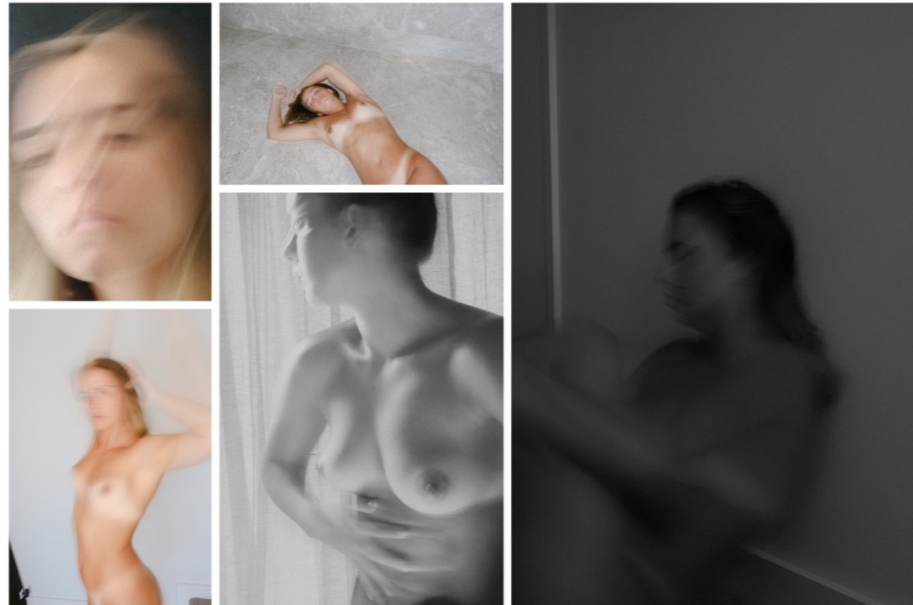
Drawing with the camera allowed me to be the subject and to translate emotions through a series of self-portraits (Figure 3.9). It was a tool I could use in the act of “veiling, unveiling” (Quinan, 2011, p. 723) my once-internalised story into an externalised field of self-exploration. Muzzarelli (2018) states that the camera often provides a “medium of choice for women seeking to reclaim their bodies” (p. 265). The camera acted as an anchor of visual representation of self-expression and self-dialogue. Through movement and nakedness, I visualised a sense of rawness and fragmentation with my experiences. Being one with the camera, I was able to allow a sense of freedom and reclaim my body through the eyes of the camera.

Figure 3.8
Drawing with Collage



Note. Drawing with collage, using paper-manipulating techniques to make emotive collages of the body.

Figure 3.9
Series of Self-Portraits



Note. Series of self-portraits taken in the studio using a tripod. I realised that by being alone and naked with the camera, I could act primarily in the moment and work through the associated feelings of trauma. The self-portraits operated as self-dialogues with the camera and were not intended to be showcased as finished pieces.

Phase Three: Prototyping

Prototyping is an essential method that provides insights into materiality and publication format (Figure 3.10). It provokes deeper “thoughts of the maker’s intention or the purpose of the artefact” (Cho, 2019, p. 25). Prototyping is an avenue to envision movements of “thoughts, incarnated in material and visual form” (Were, 2010, p. 267). In *Layers of the body*, I explored prototyping through material thinking, which Paul Carter (2004) adopted to describe what occurs in the making “of works of art” (p. 12). In this project, material thinking informed my experimentation with materials through paper, format and binding. I turned my internal ideas into artworks of refined collages and conceptualised typographic placements.

This concept was helpful in the progress of my work because I was able to make changes and experiment widely before making critical decisions about *Layers of the body*. My ideas turning into artworks depict the process of moving from the first phase of my reflective journaling to turning the initial reflections into visualised designs.

Figure 3.10
Prototyping



Note. Throughout the prototyping process I created several dummy prototypes with different aesthetic styles for the publication design.

Phase Four: Specialised Feedback

I conducted a feedback session with specialised/designers to test the contextual ideas and design decisions (Figure 3.11). Feedback was an “essential element of improving the learning process” (Bashir et al., 2016, p. 38). In this session, I presented the current contexts that informed my practice. The designers gained a contextual understanding of the research and commented on the role of self-identity, female representation and authenticity behind the work, and the role of collage to speak about the body’s internal experiences. From this feedback, I was able to visualise the strengths and contextual frameworks that informed the project.

Figure 3.11
Display of Contexts



Note. In the critique session with collage artist George Hajian and Maori photographer Natalie Robertson, I presented my current contexts, ideational boards and collages informing my practice. The boards presented seven different contextual frameworks that informed the project: Maori mythology, Maori femininity, mana wahine, divine feminine, hysteria, women madness and medical aspirations.



CRITICAL FRAMEWORK

Chapter *four*

Critical Framework

Layers of the body is a publication that uses the concept of *book as a body* through its structure and notions around the internal and external relationships of the body. Using three voices to inform the practice (feminist, personal and medical), I sought to portray my experience with trauma and endometriosis in *Layers of the body* to inform recontextualised notions around self-identity and representations of the female body.

4.1 The Book as a Body

This project explored the concept of metaphor to artistically inform the format and function of a book. Arnold Isenberg (1963) defines a metaphor as being "the use of a word or a phrase literally denoting one object or idea in place of another, by way of suggesting a likeness or similarity between them" (p. 609). Using the concept of *body as a container* coined by Pollak (2009) and the duality of the body and its mental functions, the publication aims to build a deeper connection between me as a practitioner and the work through metaphorical exchanges. Bacon (1947) uses figurative words to describe publications (books) as consumed objects "to be tasted, ... swallowed, ... chewed and digested". As bodies, books have *spine, body type, full bleed and subheadings*. In the same sense, typography is described by their anatomy, with *legs, ears, shoulders and tails*. In this project, metaphorical associations considered the book as a body, the book as a container and the publication as an *external object* that bridges the relationships between the internal mind and external body.

Books are realms of stories and "repositor[ies] of permanent knowledge" (Clark & Zinklan, 1995, p. 106). They are containers of content and are vital for spreading information to wider groups. Graphic designer and experimental bookmaker Irma Boom believes that through books a designer "generates content for communicating" (Boom et al., 2016, p. 55). Thus, Irma Boom was interviewed in *Burrasca Magazine* (2015) the artist emphasised books being about "turning the pages, making sequences, telling a story" (p.42). In her books, Boom integrates the content and the practice into one, where the output speaks to what is resting on the inside. The power of book design is to inform the voice of the content. Because of the subjective nature of the *Layers of the body*, the publication is a "point of intersection between the private and public, the personal and political" (Westley, 2008, p. 7). Through the private, words and language operate as a self-analysis to connect the audience to a narrative of human experience.

4.2 Narrative Strategies, the Polyvocal, Collaged Images and Collaged Written Style

Narrative Strategies

In *Layers of the body*, I employed an interconnected style of narration defined into what and how the content is and is presented. Wilson (2008) explains that the *what* is "the story" and the *how* is the "narrative discourse" – how the story is told (p. 31). In relation to this project, what presents a continuous narrative through the unfolding of each page. The *how* emphasises the layers of narration presented by the feminist, the personal monologue and the historical/medical). Abbott (2022) suggests that "the difference between events and their representation is the difference between story (the event or sequence of events) and narrative discourse (how the story is conveyed)" (p. 13). Narrative discourse refers to the "telling or presenting of a story" (Wilson, 2008. p. 31). In *Layers of the body*, discourse is presented as a nonlinear (polyvocal) story that is fragmented to articulate the true perception of a personal narrative. This interchange between the *what* (trauma with endometriosis) and the *how* (voices) expresses the dialogue within the book to tell a story.

The Polyvocal

The three narrative voices take form as *polyvocal narrations* referred to in this thesis as *collaged written style*. Russian writer Mikhail Bakhtin (1984) defines polyvocality as narrative text that navigates complementary and distinct voices in literary work. In *Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics*, Bakhtin explains that Dostoevsky inherited the "plurality of independent and unmerged voices" (p. 6) to deploy a discord of narrating voices. In Dostoevsky's work, "characters are not captive to the author's voice consciousness, but subjects of their own directly signifying discourse [dialogue]" (Wasiolek, 1987, p. 188).

The multi-voiced theory Bakhtin discusses is an approach to narrative representation that has been "taken up mainly by textual and narrative approaches" (Belova, 2008, p. 494). Blair et al., (2021) describe the term as being a depiction of varied perspectives through "multiple points of view or multiple voices" (p. 77). *Polyvocality* can have an impact on "how people understand themselves" (Chaudhuri et al., 2017, p. 4) and therefore, suggests a multi-layered perception approach to narrative. Juxtaposing these voices is similar to the novelistic structure creating "with *unity* of an artistic and expressive *event*" (Belova et al., 2008, p. 494). This term has been adopted as a contextual framing of *Layers of the body*, by using multiple perceptions of how the female body can be understood, and by three diverging and interconnected voices explored in the publication.

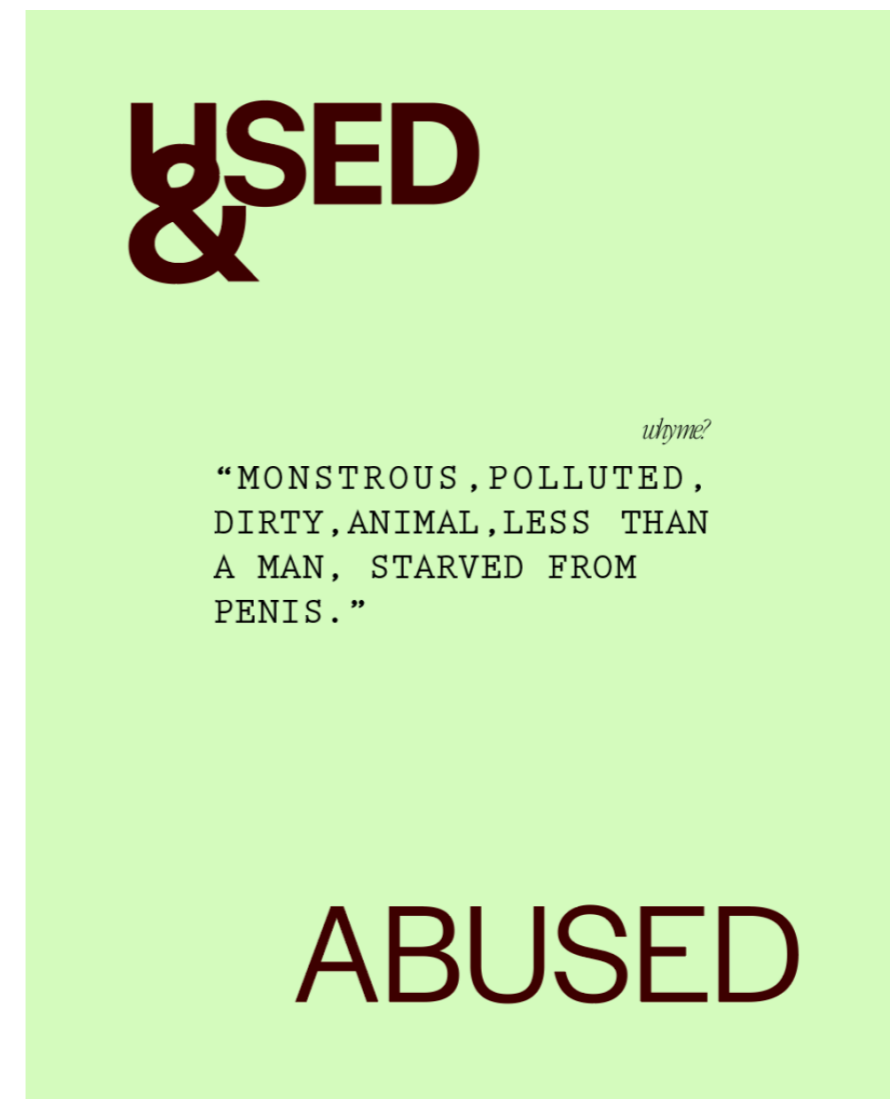
The *feminist* language is influenced by voices stand against the resistance between society and the female body. As England and Kilbourne (1990) state, “women’s moral reasoning is often based on an ethic of responsibility and caring which flows from an emotional connection between self and other” (p. 158). The language reassesses past literature that positions a male-dominant perspective to the female body and then promotes sexual freedom through the feminist’s written voice.

The language of the *personal* is translated through self-reflections of my own journey with my body. My voice stands as self-identity and is told through notions of bodily trauma. This writing was designed to speak to the emotions I felt at the time of my trauma.

The voice of the *medical* is the most abrupt and boisterous. It is violent and uncomfortable, much like previous medical theories surrounding the female body.

The varied perceptions told through narrative represent different tones of writing and visual aesthetics of typographic style. Typography differentiates between different voices and attitudes and is presented by layouts and arrangements on the page (Figure 4.1). The feminist voice is told with powerful connotations, bringing a sense of the political, and emphasising freedom and liberation. The personal voice (my story) is presented as poetic, feminine and soft through typefaces that inform this tone of voice. The historical/medical voice is more neutral and serious and indicates clinical perceptions of the body. Those voices inform the internal views and dialogues of my experience.

Figure 4.1
Treatment of Type



Note. Typographic placements – Bold type represents feminist, soft scripture font represents personal and the last font represents medical.

The graphic elements of *Layers of the body* have cutting, creasing, folding and scratching components (Figure 4.2). These elements visually translate trauma into emotive formats, showing the impact of the surgical aspects of endometriosis and the "abrupt cut" (Jordan, 2014, p. 9). In reference to *Layers of the body*, the term *abrupt cut* is "reinforced through [the] at times random displacement" (Tabernacle, 2014, p. 4) of elements of the collection of collages, which suggests the nonlinear characteristics of the narratives behind the artworks. The collages feature elements of flesh, organs, bodily parts and naked bodies (Figure 4.3) and are meant to take a slightly abstract approach, as they reflect emotion and reclaim the space of the feminine.

Figure 4.2
Internal Scars



Note. This is the scratching component

Figure 4.3
The Internal Body



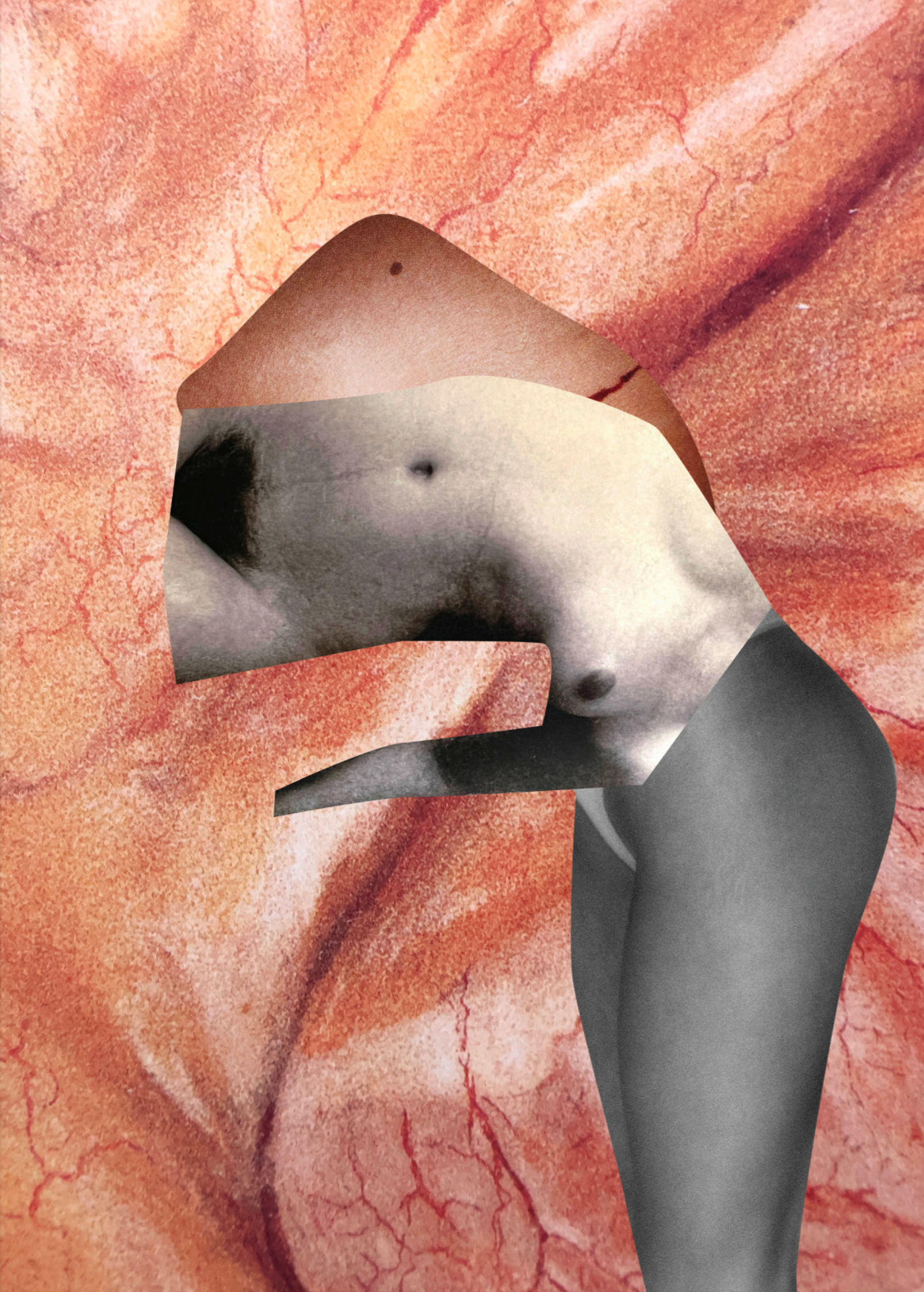
Note. Collage depicting the notion of *pulling out the insides of the body*.

Figure 4.4
Organs and the Self



Note. Photomontage meshing notions around the body and the medical

Through the collages, I aim to raise questions in the viewer's mind about my intentions behind each piece and the relationship each element shares with the others. By taking a slightly abstract approach, the collages also consume the political aspects of the female body. This project used the method of collage as a way of exhibiting a form of "creative expression" (Epstein & Phan, 2012, p. 278) and as a gateway to the notions of the free female body. The implementation of body parts and internal organs challenge past politics surrounding reproductive organs (Figure 4.4). To challenge past politics of the female body, I have used internal organs in *Layers of the body* to display the notion of freeing the organs from the historical injustice they once suffered.



CONCLUSION

Chapter *five*

Conclusion

Layers of the body translates an experience with endometriosis through its writing, imagery and publication design. The body of work that informs the practice is a compendium of contexts that uses the metaphor of the body as a container of experience.

The book is based on trauma and reclamation, and it is told through a collaged written style of narrative that comprises three polyvocal voices. Therefore, this book intertwines the duality between the body and the mind in a dialogue of internal and external. As Clark & Zinklan (1995) suggest, books are constructions that supply indefinite knowledge. Through a book, experiences are linked together. With this comes an everlasting physical form of resilience and strength.

During this research journey, contexts and making processes worked together to influence this project's format, narrative and visual elements. Self-search methodologies were used to assess and create a dialogue between the lived experience and the intuitive processes of making. During this journey, I revisited memories and through pain, I was able to use practice to move forward.

The practical work aims to be not just *chewed* but *digested* by the viewer through a gradual and fragmented polyvocal reading that embraces the personal, the feminist, and the medical perceptions. In doing so, I hope to portray social contexts and struggles that some females may encounter, and to resonate and provoke responses from my practice. It is my wish that other women can feel connected and feel a sense of comfort and resonance.



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APPENDIX

MASTER OF DESIGN GRADUATING EXHIBITION 2023

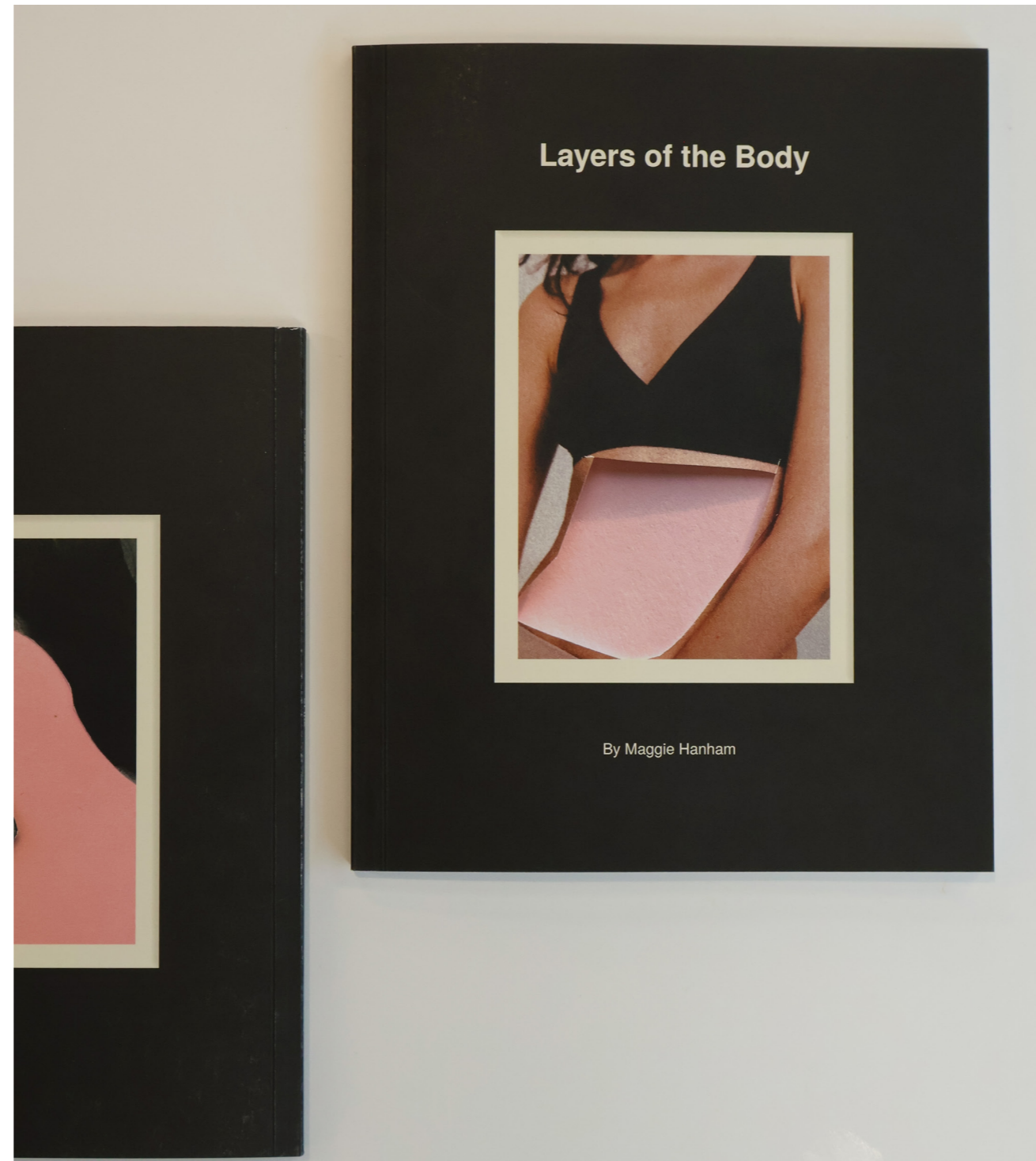


Figure Appendix 1. Layers of the Body final print of publication, Soft cover 150 page publication, Master of Design Graduating Exhibition 2, AUT City Campus, 2023.



Figure Appendix 2. View of Exhibition Layers of the Body, Master of Design Graduating Exhibition 2, AUT City Campus, 2023. Photograph © Paul Chapman (2023) - used with permission.

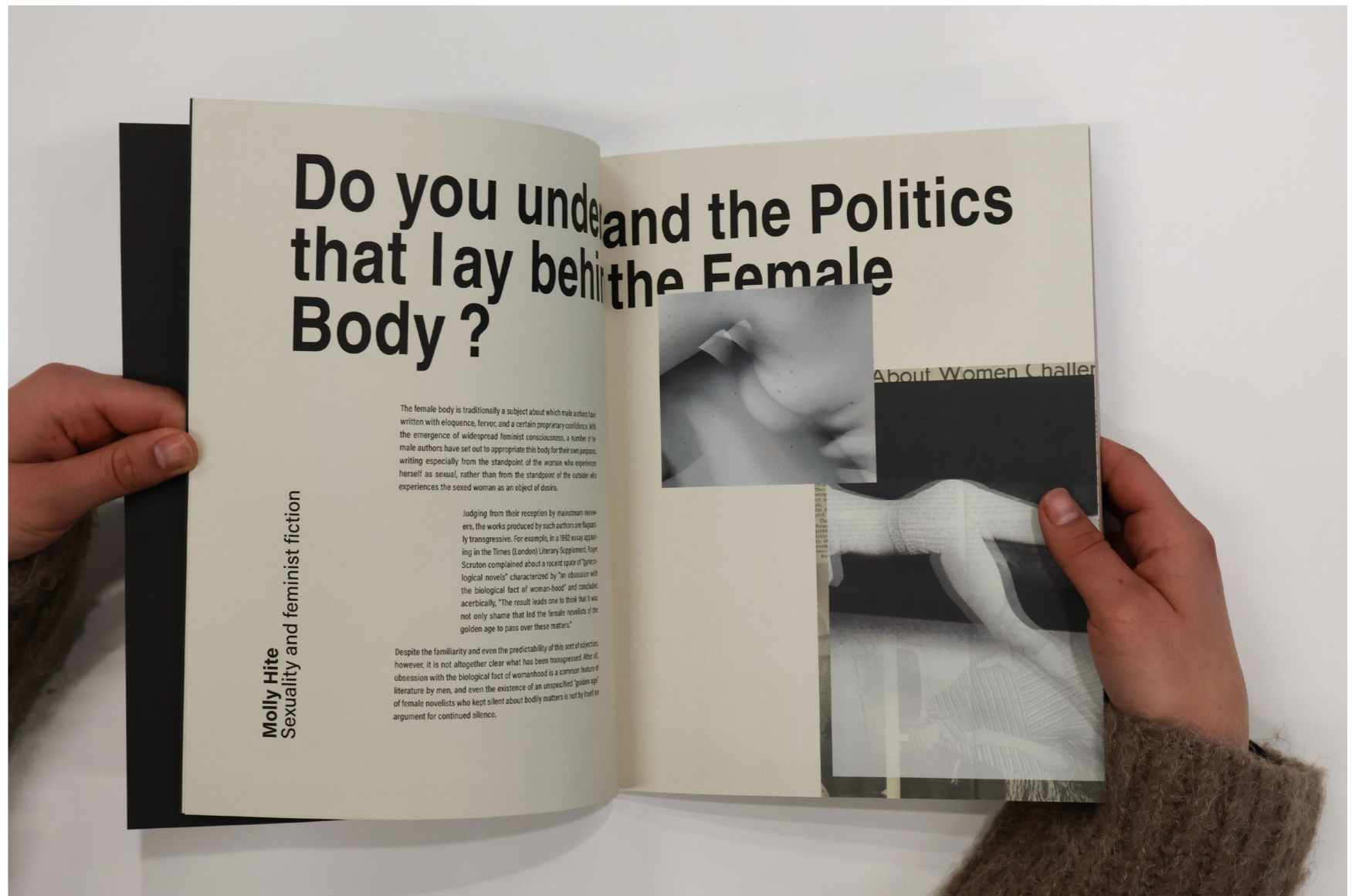


Figure Appendix 3. The voice of the feminist, Soft cover 150 page publication, Master of Design Graduating Exhibition 2, AUT City Campus, 2023.



Figure Appendix 4. The voice of the personal, Soft cover 150 page publication, Master of Design Graduating Exhibition 2, AUT City Campus, 2023.



Figure Appendix 5. View of book laid out for exhibition featuring book sleeve, Master of Design Graduating Exhibition 2, AUT City Campus, 2023.

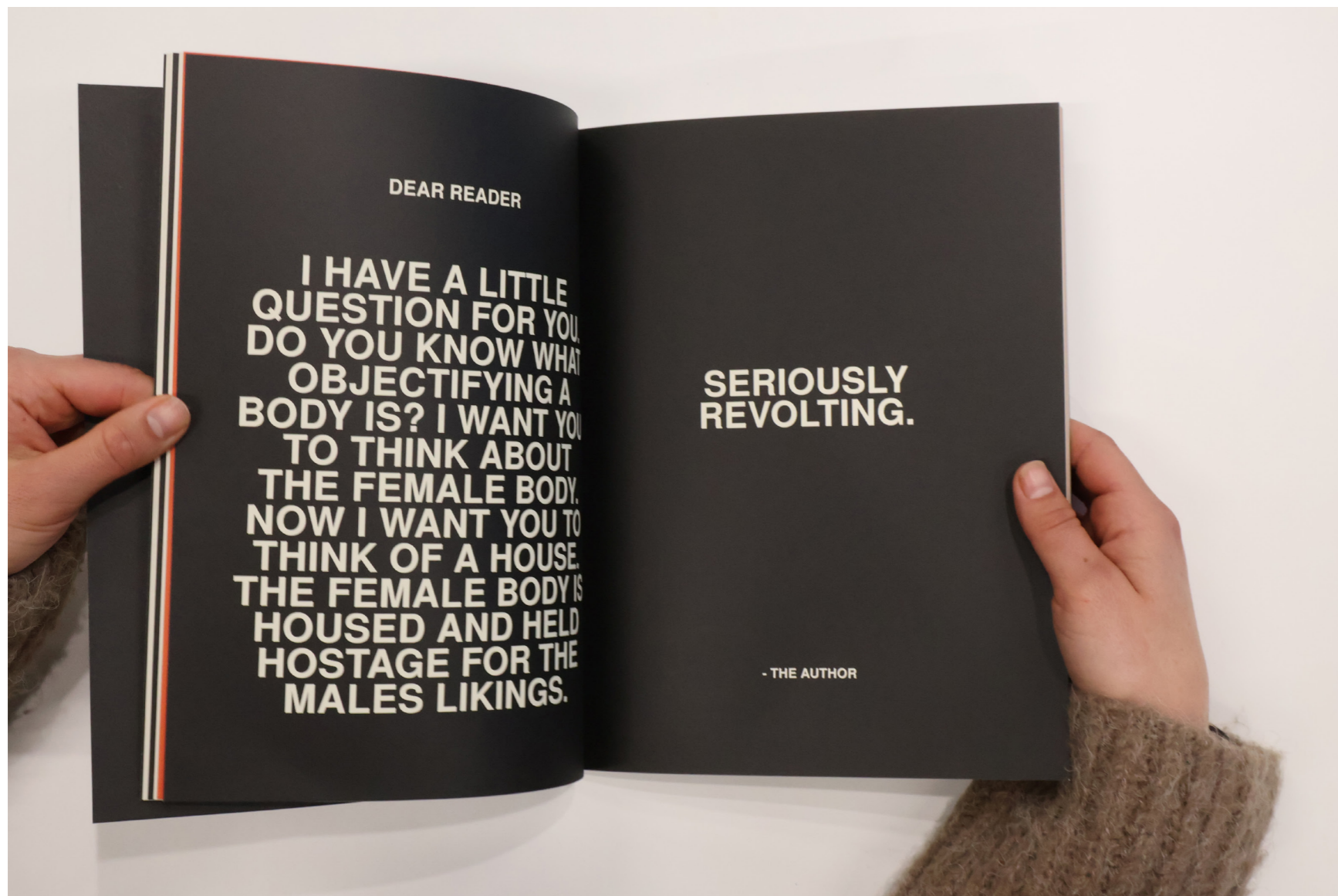


Figure Appendix 6. The voice of the author, Soft cover 150 page publication, Master of Design Graduating Exhibition 2, AUT City Campus, 2023.



Figure Appendix 7. The voice of the medical, soft cover 150 page publication, Master of Design Graduating Exhibition 2, AUT City Campus, 2023.



Figure Appendix 8. The voice of the feminist, Soft cover 150 page publication, Master of Design Graduating Exhibition 2, AUT City Campus, 2023.