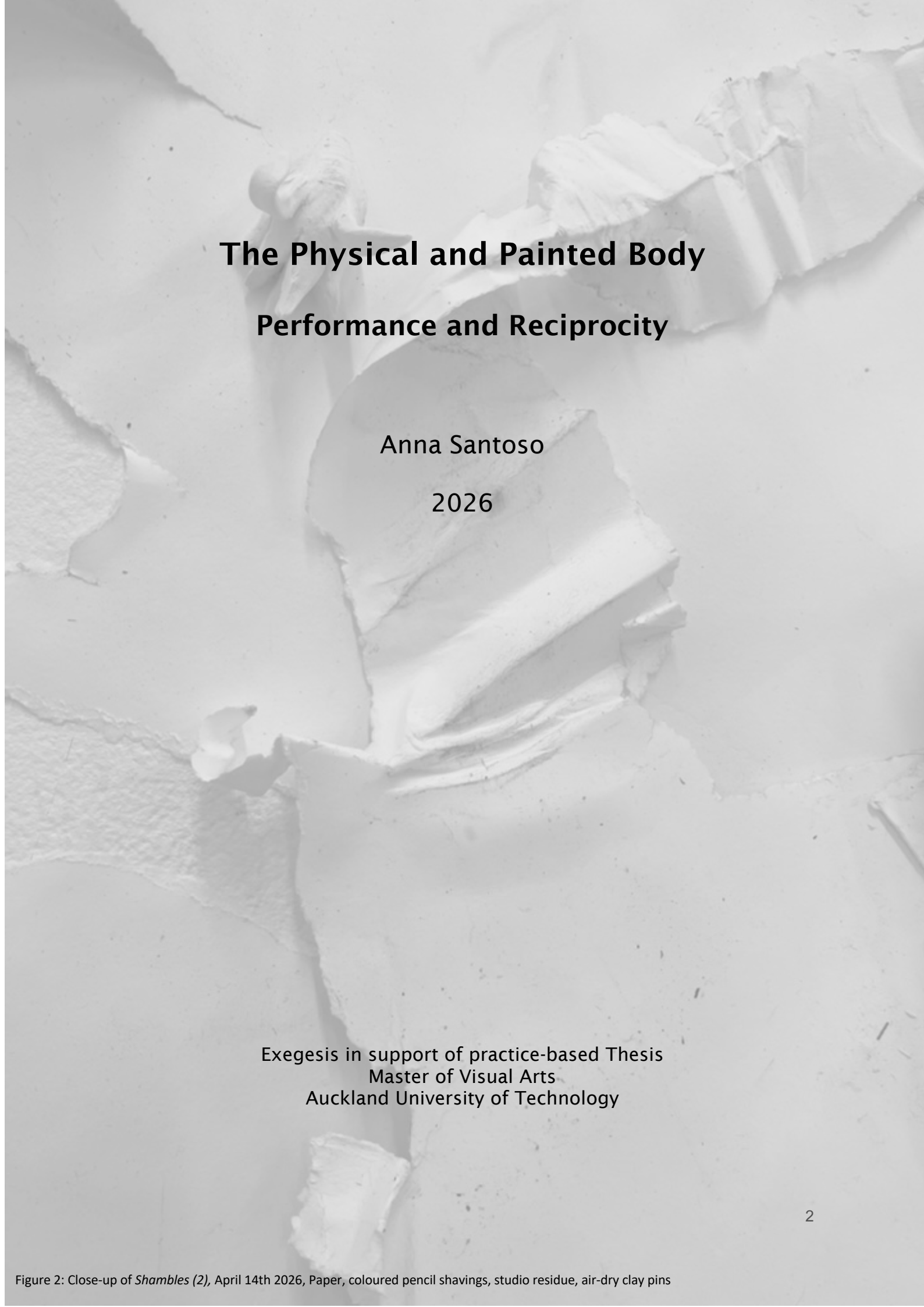






The Physical and Painted Body

Performance and Reciprocity

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Abstract

Undergoing a transformation of the traditional painting practice, this project explores abstract, performative processes that utilise the body as both subject and object, requiring an understanding of the historical influences of performance art and the female body in art. The relationship between the physical and painted body presents the possibilities of a reciprocal nature, a physical conversation and connection, while also grappling with the place personal identity and gender hold within a bodily practice. The exploration of this abstract painting process and its residual elements, combined with the preserved outcome, reveals the intricate traits of this body-to-body relationship.

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.

Signed

11 June 2026

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Introduction

This research project is an exploration of the relationship between the painted and physical body - the painted body is the material of the work created, and the physical body is my body. This project stems from my gestural abstract painting practice. I inquire about how to express a bodily relationship through mark-making and performance methodology. Through the research of historical performance artists and methods, the physical body's presence and connection can be traced and documented within the painted body, which in itself takes on a different form of abstract painting.

Firstly, in my exploration of this bodily relationship, I consider the historical and societal weight of the female body in performance art, identifying where my practice positions itself within that history. I look for ways to avoid the objectification and exploitation of my female body through the 'unrepresentation' of my form within the painted body. Additionally, I examine how I utilise my body as a tool, method and subject in order to communicate its presence and action. Through testing modes of movement and horizontal positioning of my materials, I question how performance methodology transforms the methods and parameters of my former painting practice.

Secondly, in the making of the work, I began to observe the potential reciprocity of the painted body. With every intended and unintended motion I executed, I would be met with a reaction, developing a body-to-body relationship within the project. Here, I also grapple with my existing aesthetic preferences within a project that gradually prioritises form over content. Bringing me to question how reciprocity reveals itself through the process and use of performance methodology, and how personal preference has changed with the prioritisation of form over content.

Thirdly, I observe the ongoing development of the 'self' within my practice, presented in the form of hand-sculpted pins, named *Serotonins*. Taking note of Amelia Jones' observation of how the body passively performs the 'self', I

discuss their involvement in the making of the work. As a significant supportive element, and my mode of vertically installing the painted body, I delve into how the self supports and evolves alongside a body-focused, performative painting project.

Lastly, I analysis the nuances of my practice, and how every step and decision within my studio space becomes a part of my performance methodology. While divulging my daily modes of performance, I discuss my notions of ‘contrivance foul’ and ‘false performance’. I question within chapter four what performance is to me and how I work towards an outcome that expresses the actions and choices I make towards the painted body without appearing contrived.

The Physical Body: as a tool, method and subject

The Physical Body Performed

While exploring relationships between the painted and physical body, I have transformed my painting practice by integrating performance methods into the process of making. While expressive gestural mark-making techniques can communicate something of the body's involvement in a painting, they may not express the physical body's relationship to the painted body in ways that performance interventions might. With the addition of performance methods, the physical body becomes more involved. As such, I have considered whether there is concern with the objectification or the connotations of my being a woman.

For my first inquiry, on the development of performance techniques in my painter's practice, I had investigated ways to convey a bodily relationship through gestural mark-making that could also suggest a bodily form. As seen in *Green* (see fig. 3), by deconstructing the surface, a connection could be made between my marks and the painted body's deconstructed form. I had torn the paper canvas into three strips, leaving the edges of the canvas rough and jagged, rejoining them using acrylic medium that further disfigured the surface. In doing so, the painted body could alter the brushstrokes according to its rugged surface, while the act of painting could communicate my connection to the work. However, the gesture of my paintbrush could only weakly communicate the physical body's presence, and the content of the painted body would begin to resemble landscape, rather than bodily imagery. Gradually, I began to explore other ways the physical body could engage with the painted body, taking the deconstruction of the surface –a clear indicator of my actions– and applying methods of action painting and performance.



Figure 3: Anna Santoso, *Green*, May 20th 2025, Acrylic paint and medium on paper, Air-dry clay pins



Figure 4: Anna Santoso, *Centred*, November 25th 2025, Acrylic on paper, Air-dry clay pins

Observed in *Centred* (see fig. 4), a bodily presence is generated through an interactive and more instantaneous process. This approach differs from the precise painting methods I previously employed in *Green*, replacing my delicate brushstroke gestures with lively tearing movements. The application of this interactive, destructive method partially prevented preconceived or desired outcomes that would otherwise hinder the intimate, involved connection between the two bodies. As seen through the application of paint and the process of deconstruction, my physical body had become embedded in the material from the horizontal, floor-based process, leaving subtle marks from my hands, feet, and knees. The constant pressure of my body sitting and kneeling, pressing the paper against the floor, made these areas the most worn

and dried out. The position I took in the centre of the paper left all my actions closer to the material edge, rotating around my body and communicating the direct contact the physical body had with the painted body. Fallen pieces, separated through the roughness of my actions, remained to support the final work, while other parts of the surface stuck to itself and generated curved and imperfect edges. My interactions with the material informs my performance methodology, in which I experience a choreographed process where I instruct myself to impress upon the paper through movement, in this respect experience is expressed as a way of learning, as outlined by Bruce Aune.¹

This process is reminiscent of Yves Klein's *Anthropometry* (1960) (see fig. 5) works, which were created with nude models who, under Klein's direction, dipped themselves in his signature blue paint and then pressed themselves on paper surfaces. He referred to the models as "living paintbrushes", using their bodies as tools for his work to explore the removal of the artist's action and creating through another's body.² The process was documented through video and photography, accompanied by a classical orchestra and an audience, turning Klein's work into a formal event.³ A stark contrast to *Centred*, but the ideas of instructed choreography and living paintbrushes mirror the methods I have used. Within my practice, I am the decision-maker and lead, as is Klein in *Anthropometry*, but the body I control is mine and is not performed in the nude like Klein's models. I utilise deconstruction as a method to mark the surface, leaving remnants and an implication of the body, while Klein instructed his models to imprint their bodies by pressing themselves against the surface. Despite having similarities in these ideas, the process I have is much more personal, destructive and far less objectifying of the female body than Klein's.

¹ Bruce Aune, *An Empiricist Theory of Knowledge* (NY: Createspace Independent, 2008), 98. <http://baynewwww.hist-analytic.com/ETK.pdf>.

² Kirstin Russell, "Feminism and Yves Klein's Anthropometries," *Walker Reader*, 19 January 2011, <https://walkerart.org/magazine/feminism-and-yves-kleins-anthropometries>.

³ *Yves Klein - Anthropometries* / *Tateshots*, (Tate, 2013), 2:13, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gi9nHa7FtQQ>.

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Figure 5: Yves Klein, *Anthropometry of the Blue Period (ANT 82)*, 1960, Pure pigment and synthetic resin on paper laid down on canvas, New York, <https://www.artsy.net/artwork/yves-klein-anthropometry-of-the-blue-period-ant-82>.

My second inquiry arose out of the notable difference in the execution of the living paintbrush between Klein and me, questioning if there is a concern for the objectification or connotations of my being a woman? Amelia Jones' *Body Art/Performing the Subject* partly discusses the value of eradicating the figurative representation of the female body within performance art.⁴ Oftentimes, the depiction of the female body inadvertently participates in the fetishisation and objectification of women. Jones refers to Ana Mendieta's practice, in which her body becomes the subject, focusing on her relationship to the universe and her return to Mother Earth.⁵ While Mendieta does often use her nude body in tandem with nature, she also fixates on the residual impression her body has on the earth. Mendieta's *Silueta Series* (1974) (see fig. 6) uses the silhouette of her body engraved in the earth to communicate the relationship she has to place; her body is held close together to leave a

⁴ Amelia Jones, *Body Art/ Performing the Subject* (University of Minneapolis Press, 1998), 24, <https://archive.org/details/bodyartperformin0000jone/page/27/mode/1up>.

⁵ Jones, *Body Art*, 26.

more ambiguous shape within the ground.⁶ This mirrors the marks left by my hands and feet within *Centred* in which a bodily relationship with material is made, requiring the body to be seen in parts rather than a whole. While Mendieta's body is more figurative, with a defined outline, the concept of utilising residual action and presence to speak on behalf of a bodily relationship, without the immediate fetishisation of the female form, is a similar concept communicated through the painted body. From this perspective, 'unrepresenting' my figurative, feminine form partly protects me and the painted body from being objectified.

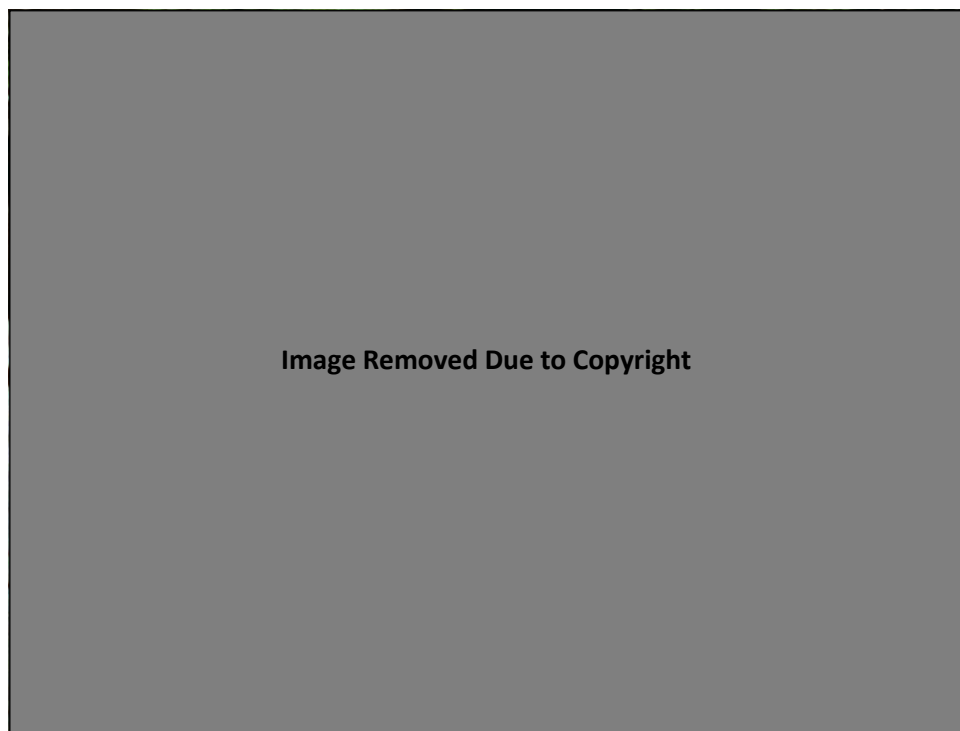


Figure 6: Ana Mendieta, *Untitled (Labyrinth Blood Imprint)*, from the *Siluerta* series, 1974, single-channel Super 8mm film, <https://smarthistory.org/ana-mendieta-silueta-series/>

In comparison, artists such as Carolee Schneemann openly portray their own bodies for the viewer, choosing to utilise their nude bodies. Artists like Klein and Vanessa Beecroft work with others' bodies, instructing them with a type of power dynamic in place that removes them from the physical aspect of their work. The power imbalance imposed by a male artist differs from that of a

⁶ Gillian Sneed, "Ana Mendieta, *Silueta Series*," *Smart History*, 22 September 2025, <https://smarthistory.org/ana-mendieta-silueta-series/>.

female artist, as men have historically had control over women's bodies. To compare Klein's *Anthropometry* and Beecroft's *VB45* (see fig. 7), the works exhibit a tonal difference. Male artists have often depicted the female nude posed in a way that caters to the male gaze; the way of our heteronormative patriarchal society.⁷ Klein's performance, which he directs, looming over and using the female body, follows this objectifying nature of the gaze and the control men have had over the female form. However, women artists being in control of women's bodies does not exempt their work from the male gaze, despite there being a hierarchical difference. Beecroft, in *VB45* (2002), for example, is often criticised for placing her models in conditions similar to those the models in Klein's work faced. Like Klein's, Beecroft's models were directed, exposed, and chosen for their figure.⁸ Despite Beecroft herself being a female artist and her indirect involvement in the final performance, her use of the female nude might nevertheless fall victim to the exploitation of the female body, as testified by the models who were hired by her.^{9 10}

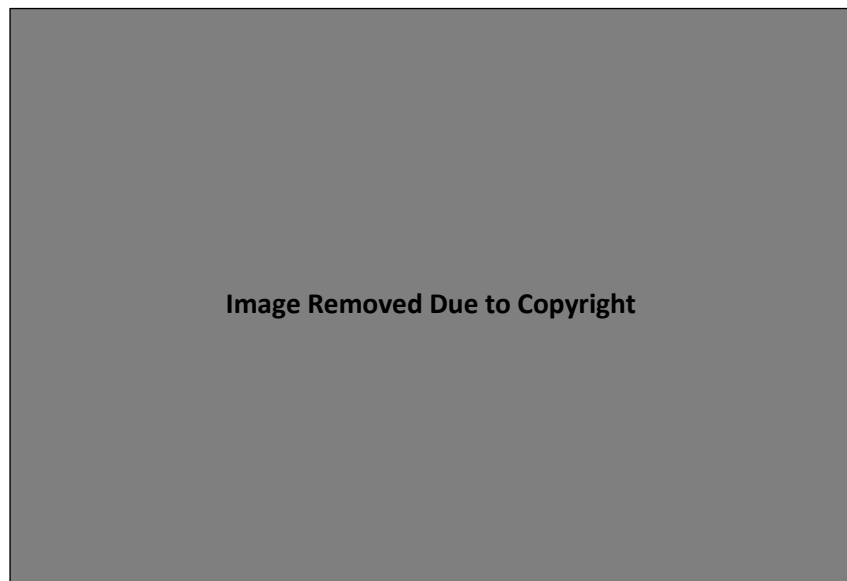


Figure 7: Vanessa Beecroft, *VB45*, 2002, New York,

<https://www.deitch.com/archive/deitch-projects/exhibitions/vb45-vb48>.

⁷ Jones, *Body Art*, 152.

⁸ Julia Steinmetz et al., "Behind Enemy Lines: Toxic Titties Infiltrate Vanessa Beecroft," *Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 31, no. 3 (2006), Page 3, <https://queerartpractices.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/behind-enemy-lines-toxic-titties-infiltrate-vanessa-beecroft.pdf>

⁹ Bruce Hainley, "Vanessa Beecroft," *Art Forum*, 2001, <https://www.artforum.com/events/vanessa-beecroft-6-207508/>.

¹⁰ Julia Steinmetz et al., "Behind Enemy Lines: Toxic Titties Infiltrate Vanessa Beecroft," 4-5

The female body in all these instances, across the work of various artists, is more representationally presented, even when documented – whether it be by video or photography – the female nude makes an appearance. Their bodies were exposed and easy to read in the sense that they were more literal. In my project, my form is not presented as a silhouette, a tracing, or figuratively portrayed as in previously mentioned works; the physical body expresses itself through its interactions and deconstructive movements. My body is referred to by the gestures within the work; I allude to and avoid direct representation of my body and, by extension, the objectification of it. The unrepresentation of my figure is important for the relationship between the physical and painted body to be the focal point of the work, and therefore is a valued method in my performance.



Figure 8: Close-up of *Centred*, November 25th 2025, Acrylic on paper

Happenstantial Composition

Understanding that the presence of the physical body is better communicated through deconstructive, performative methods, I prompted myself to undertake a series of A4 paper tests in which I would explore how to move through, around and on the surface. Here, I will discuss my findings from these tests and elaborate further on the changes to my painting practice from the application of performance methodology.

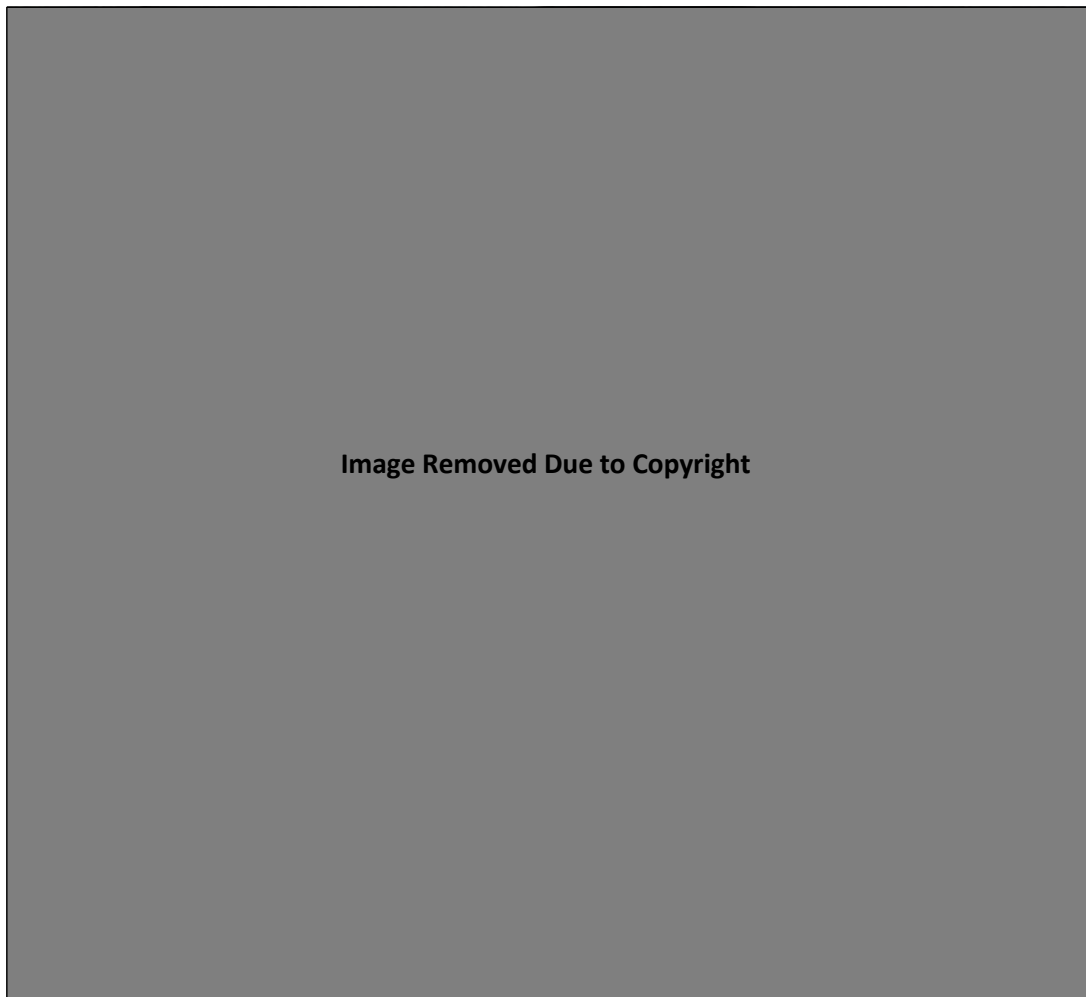


Figure 9: Saburo Murikama, *Breaking Through Many Paper Screens*, 1956, Paper Screens in wooden frames, Tokyo, <https://archive.org/details/artistsbody0000unse/page/52/mode/2up>

I was inspired by Saburo Murakami's approach in *Breaking Through Many Paper Screens* (1956) (see fig. 9), where the artist leaps through a series of paper walls with spontaneous movement, leaving behind the remnant of his

body's action.¹¹ The process provided minimal opportunity to overthink or to dictate the result, allowing the performance to clearly communicate his actions. To emulate a similar bodily method, I began the series of paper tests titled *Lexicon of movement*, to practice making marks on the surface without overthinking the composition. If I could become accustomed to this process and the effects this would have on a smaller scale, my desire for a perfected or controlled outcome might be overcome, and a translation to larger surfaces may be smoother. Through this drawing process, I began to see that in earlier works, such as *Green*, my deconstructive actions, while indicative of the physical body's presence, were made out to be what I now call 'false performance', further discussed in Chapter Four. The tear process, then, was controlled and heavily premeditated, causing the relationship between bodies to lack any real connection. I coined these false performances as 'contrivance fouls' to refer to any parts of my work that held too much premeditated thought or intention. So, within these A4 tests, I tried to adopt the more instantaneous process of Murikami's performance to prevent the occurrence of any contrivance fouls. As he noted: "We must not keep on aimlessly adjusting and manipulating the canvas. Instead, our sense must be internally concentrated to a point from which it bursts on to the canvas and assumes a tangible form."¹²

This series of tearing tests, *Lexicon of movement* (see fig. 10), felt more like an explorative drawing exercise, containing similar methods to my approach to drawing. The horizontal positioning and movements enabled pushing, pulling, and puncturing, which paralleled the sketching and hatching motions I would otherwise employ. Afterwards, every paper test and every subsequent piece that fell off was hung on the wall with a single pin, preserving the action and forming dramatic, actioned forms as the paper drooped, curled, and folded naturally. This is reminiscent of *Breaking Through Many Paper Screens*, presented in its natural state, where the paper walls were

¹¹ Tracey Warr and Amelia Jones, *The Artist's Body* (London: Phaidon, 2000), page 52, <https://archive.org/details/artistsbody0000unse/page/n5/mode/2up>.

¹² Warr and Jones, *The Artist's Body*, page 52.

body to be engaged in the making of the work, amplifying my actions and giving them greater presence and impact on the painted body. This change, in itself, was difficult to understand given my previous knowledge of painting. Traditional painting restrictions of working within the confines of the canvas, the four corners of the paper, small motions, calculated decisions, sketches and planning, have been instilled in my artistic journey throughout high school and my undergraduate years. *Lexicon of movement* had made it easier to ignore these painting margins, as the paper used then was a smaller size, and delicate. However, as my paintings developed with a surface that rivalled the size of my body and with a higher GSM, there came a struggle with how to encapsulate the experience I had with *Lexicon of movement*. Habitual painting methods found their way back into the process of making; I still desired to keep using colour and a paintbrush. As seen in *Split* (see fig. 11), the surface was covered in the painterly gestures my brush created and was torn more hesitantly, a decision informed by my painterly habits. The approach of painting each side of the paper, letting it dry in between sessions, and then, after being dried again, ripping into it, lacked the immediacy and success identified in Murakami's *Breaking Through Many Paper Screens* performance.

I came gradually to understand that approaching the work with already formulated ideas and compositions that included hesitation in my actions, and the use of paintbrushes and coloured pencils, are all traits of my former painting practice that have, and will continue, to change as this project continues. In exchange, my body is the tool, method and subject of my painting practice, which will communicate the physical body within the painted body, expanding on the relationship between them. Using my hands to paint, dismantling the pristine geometric canvas and performing my body rigorously into the material, is what generates interesting, embodied outcomes.



Figure 11: Anna Santoso, *Split*, November 13th 2025, Acrylic on paper, Air-dry clay pins.

Pollokian Performative Anti-Form¹³

Thus far, this project has been transforming my painting practice, teaching me to use my body as a living paintbrush and to engage in the process of action painting, allowing a relationship between the painted and physical body to become evident in the work. This change persists in the position I take when creating work, converting my vertical painter's easel into a horizontal work surface. This provides interesting results in the installation of my work, from the horizontal making to the vertical installation. In this last section of Chapter 1, I will discuss observations of the gravity of my work and the implications concerning the relationship between the physical and painted body.

During the making of *Lexicon of movement*, working horizontally allowed for my body to impress upon the surface with ease, reminiscent of Jackson Pollock's revolutionary floor paintings. Yves-Alain Bois and Rosalind Krauss' *Formless* refers to Pollock's work, which challenged the verticality of the painting practice, and how the use of the horizontal mark made way for the production of "anti-form".¹⁴ The term, coined by Robert Morris, referred to "what yields to gravity", implying that the plane on which a work is displayed can alter the content and its meaning.¹⁵ For example, Andy Warhol observed that Pollock's drip paintings could be seen as the stance and action a man takes to urinate, and the shift from horizontal to vertical presentation separates the final work from the "urination" act of creating it.¹⁶

These traits of anti-form can be observed in the processes and installation of the painted body of the creation of *Least Favourite Child /hj* (see fig. 12). The horizontal process allows for my body to impress upon and deconstruct the surface. Once vertically installed, the anti-form presents itself in the rips and

¹³ Jones, *Body Art/ Performing the Subject*.

¹⁴ Yves Alain Bois and Rosalind E. Krauss, *Formless: A User's Guide* (Zone Books, 1997), 94, https://www.ocopy.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/krauss-rosalind_formless-a-users-guide.pdf.

¹⁵ Bois and Krauss, *Formless*, 97.

¹⁶ Bois and Krauss, *Formless*, 102.

loose paper generated by my movements. The paper's corners fall, droop, and fold from the pressure of standing upright, rejecting the purity and wholeness of the canvas, similar to the drawing tests *Lexicon of movement* discussed earlier. When the painted body assumes the vertical position, it extends into the room, standing alongside and spatially situated akin to the physical body.



Figure 12: Anna Santoso, *Least Favourite Child*, March 17th 2026,

Paper, studio residue and air-dry clay pins

The painted body takes up the space it needs, similar to Karla Black's practice (discussed further in the next chapter), where her large works are installed according to her size and her strength, forcing Black to situate herself around the work, as she is limited by how large her works have become.¹⁷ When the painted body is installed, it dominates a section of the wall and floor, and when installed in a group, its presence is amplified. This repositioning of the painted

¹⁷ The New Art Gallery Walsall, "Karla Black," August 24, 2023. YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OYBi-dG0OCw>.

body to face the viewer potentially fosters a sense of respect between the two bodies. In contrast to the creation of painted bodies, from being stood and impressed upon, the change from its horizontal positioning to the vertical stance solidifies the painted body as its own 'being'. No longer is it a roll of paper or canvas to work on, but through the embodiment of my actions and the liveliness of its anti-form, as it bends and curves, it presents as three-dimensional and rivals the height of a person; it parallels the presence the physical body has in space.



Figure 13: *Lexicon of movement (aged)*, March 9th 2026, Newsprint and push-pins

The Painted Body

Reciprocity

Through the transformation of my painting practice, adopting methods of performance and action painting, the relationship between the physical and painted body has emerged as potentially reciprocal. By extension, this raises the question of whether there could be mutual respect for one another's actions. How does reciprocity reveal itself through the process and use of performance methodology?

This potential reciprocity is exemplified in *Soggy* (see fig. 14), which was created through processes of soaking, colour washing, and deconstructing the surface through movement. These methods were all enacted on the horizontal plane, allowing the painted body to absorb every intentional and unintentional motion as it was impressed upon. The act of holding myself up on my hands and knees caused the paper to soak through and form weaker points on its surface. When dried, these sections stuck to the floor and became separated from the larger portion of the work. While wet, the paper would wrinkle under the pressure of the watered acrylics, becoming the most saturated in colour and most susceptible to being torn. I followed these naturally formed lines during the deconstruction process, and when dried, the smaller subsequent wrinkles remained shrivelled and stuck together. The residual elements of the studio, such as my hair, bits of paint, charcoal, pencil shavings, food and dried clay, stick to the painting, becoming noticeably moulded to the surface as they are constantly being pressed between the floor and the paper. The placement I had little control over, as the water and constant movement of the process left the composition of the studio remnant to fall wherever. The residual elements are moved from their origin on the floor, and when left to gravity, the bleeds of colour, streaks of dirt, and hair follicles begin to change direction. From lying flat and unmoved, these small features begin to weigh downwards, following the flow of the painted body that now stands upright;

the work, however, still holds in relation to its horizontal creation, in the residue and the scraps of paper that have fallen off the larger portion of the painted body.



Figure 14: Anna Santoso, *Soggy*, December 8th 2025, Acrylic on paper, Air-dry clay pins

In *Yeah alright* (see fig. 15), the reciprocal nature and indication of the physical body were less apparent. Performed into when dried had the effect of restricting the actions of the physical and painted body. Just as easily as my actions were received in *Soggy*, they were constantly being rejected within *Yeah alright*. I had attempted to pull the paper over my head, hoping to make a hole in its surface that would be equivalent to my body, but was unable to, even after preemptively cutting into the paper. The interesting wrinkles and scrunched bits of paper in *Soggy* could not be made when ripping into the drier surface; the stiffness of the paper prevented it. The studio residue, while present on the dry-processed paper, would still struggle to be picked up and included during the making of the work. Even on a minuscule scale, my actions and the evidence of my presence in the work were being refused. Once vertically installed, the stiffness of my actions and the paper were not as effective in retaining the presence of the physical body, causing the work to lack the gravitational effect of anti-form.

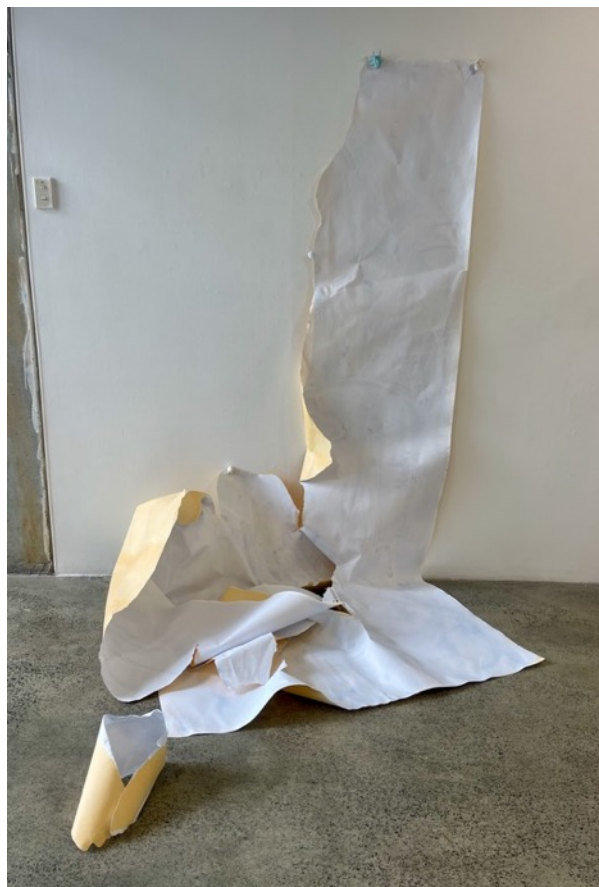


Figure 15: Anna Santoso, *Yeah alright*, October 22nd 2025,

Acrylic on paper, Air-dry clay pins

I found myself accepting that I could not make any strong impressions on the painted body without soaking the surface. Between both works, what is affected most is the anti-form, which is what communicates my horizontal actions and allows the painted body to embody them. The anti-form of the residual and deconstructed surface benefits more from the water-bathing process, as it enables the reciprocity between bodies; it allows my physical body's movements to impress upon the painted body, while also perhaps giving the painted body the power to respond and communicate with me through a physical relationship. Every action made in my studio space –the intentional ripping of the paper and the presence of studio residue– becomes an integral part of the performance. The introduction of water as a method encourages a deeper conversation to develop between two bodies and allows for the anti-form to become more prominent.

Similarly, artist Karla Black considers the effect her body has on the material. As noted in Black's descriptions of making her works, her size, height, strength, age, and gender all affect the work and how it can be installed or made. Her ability to lift, move, and alter the work, alongside her use of preferred media and choice of colour, is communicated through her installations.¹⁸ While she focuses on aesthetics and has greater control over her work than compared to a more gestural, performative process, she still considers the physical relationship and dialogue among materials, objects, and herself.¹⁹ As seen in *Doesn't Care In Words* (2011) (see fig. 16), she uses fifteen different materials; it is apparent in the installation that Black is considerate of how they touch, hold and situate one another in space.^{20 21} Large masses of cellophane and polythene are connected by colour and their ability to hold their shape, becoming the base of the work. These materials support the smaller elements, like bath bombs that hide amongst the folds of the masses,

¹⁸ The New Art Gallery Walsall, *Karla Black*.

¹⁹ The New Art Gallery Walsall, *Karla Black*.

²⁰ 'Karla Black', National Galleries Scotland, 19 October 2019, <https://www.nationalgalleries.org/art-and-artists/features/karla-black>.

²¹ 'On View: Karla Black Modern Art / London', Flash Art, 24 February 2022, <https://flash--art.com/2022/02/karla-black/>.

creating depth on the brightly lit surface. Torn edges and holes blend the substrates together, flowing seamlessly into one another. She allows these sculptures to fill the gallery and take up the space they need, too large for her to order around and forcing her to situate herself according to them.

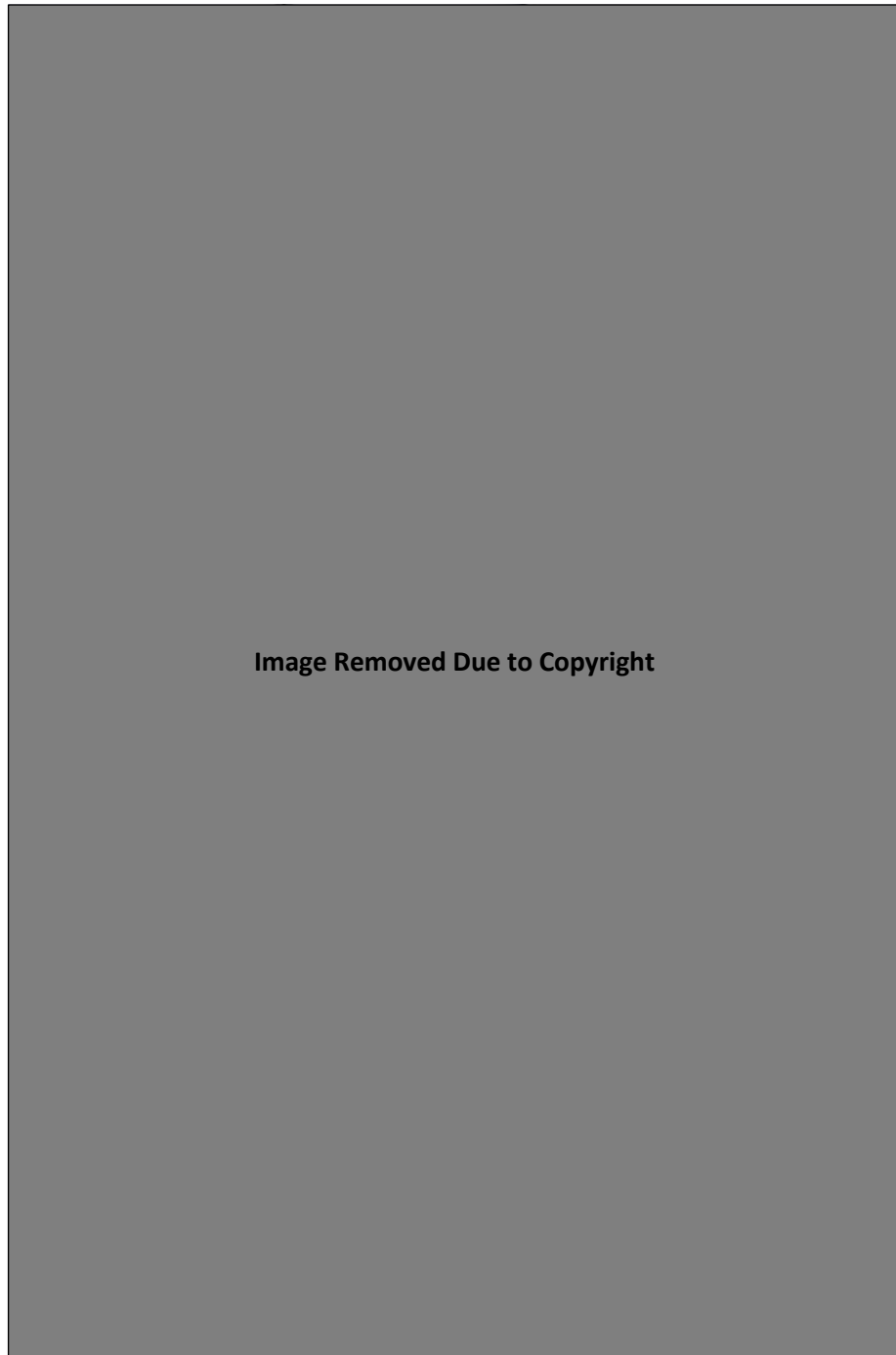


Figure 16: Karla Black, *Doesn't Care In Words*, 2011, Cellophane, paint, Sellotape, sugar paper, chalk, powder paint, plaster powder, wood, polystyrene, polythene, thread, bath bombs, petroleum jelly, moisturising cream, <https://www.capitainpetzel.de/artists/33-karla-black/works/10133-karla-black-doesnt-care-in-words-2011/>

Black's connection to her works is physical, while also acknowledging the material connections between elements, akin to the relationship I have found between the physical and the painted body.²² Rather than solely a body-to-material relationship (as I have been accustomed to in previous art practice), it is a body-to-body relationship with a push-and-pull dynamic. Consisting of conversation, compromise, reciprocity, respect, and boundaries, both bodies have spatial awareness of each other. Like the bath bombs in Black's work, smaller parts of both bodies become equally vital to my installations. The scraps of paper left discarded across the floor nod to my actions and the painted body's decision to let them go, and the pieces of my hair or dirt from my shoes that the painted body retains acknowledge my presence. And just as Black is aware of her physical effect on her materials and their installation, I too am conscious of what I am able to do to the watered, fragile surface and how far my actions can go.



Figure 17: Scraps of paper from *Soggy*, December 8th 2025



Figure 18: Scraps of paper from *Least Favourite Child* /hj,
March 17th 2026

²² 'On View: Karla Black Modern Art / London', Flash Art.

Form Over Content

While focusing on the importance of a physical conversation between the painted and physical body, there was also concern for the personal aesthetics and identity I had previously upheld in the use of colour and the content of the work. As a painter and a very colour-centric person, I had assumed that my chosen acrylic medium would be used in my practice. However, with this project undergoing a performative transformation and the ongoing adjustment of my painterly habits, I now question my individual preferences and observe how they have changed throughout the bodily process of performative action painting.

In contrast to Black's aestheticised practice, Kazuo Shiraga's practice and involvement within the Gutai movement are an example of the effect of prioritising concept over form. The Gutai movement emerged post-World War II and sought to encourage Westernised thinking about individualism in a totalitarian Japanese society.²³ It proposed breaking traditional constructs of making. Gutai was partly inspired by the Pollockian performative and translates to "concreteness" or "embodiment", expressing the group's desire to create work that enabled a relationship between material, action, and the human spirit.^{24 25} It was a highly abstract movement, prioritising concept over outcome. In *Challenging Mud (Doro ni idomu)* (1955) (see fig. 19), Shiraga fully immersed himself and wrestled with a pile of mud, experimenting with a type of horizontal painting, as did Pollock.²⁶ As he worked with the material, he experienced a reciprocal relationship between the mud's ability to move and respond to his actions and his body's movement against it. It was a battled performance, documented and preserved in every push and pull, and every

²³ "The Gutai Art Association," The Art Story, Accessed February 17, 2026. <https://www.theartstory.org/movement/gutai/>.

²⁴ Sueann Chen, "Challenging Mud" 1955 - Kazuo Shiraga," 陈彦聿 (blog), 21 July 2020,

<https://sueannchen.com/writing/challengingmudkazuoshiraga>.

²⁵ Nina Horisaki-Christens, "Shiraga Kazuo, Challenging Mud (Doro Ni Idomu)," Smart History, 2 July 2021,

<https://smarthistory.org/shiraga-kazuo-challenging-mud/>.

²⁶ Horisaki-Christens, "Shiraga Kazuo".

minor action taken. Shiraga was exploring a different mode of painting, utilising performance to immerse his body and actions further into the material.²⁷



Figure 19: Kazuo Shiraga, *Challenging Mud (Doro ni idomu)*, 1955, Mud, gravel, <https://smarthistory.org/shiraga-kazuo-challenging-mud/>

This is similar to my experiences in *Soggy* where every action elicits a reaction and the painting practice is pushed beyond its traditional parameters. Gutai's focus on performative process and the encouraged relationship between body and substrate is largely applicable to my project. It is a similar experience

²⁷ Horisaki-Christens, "Shiraga Kazuo".

found between the physical and painted body, and in combination with the physical connection Black has to her work, promotes concepts of reciprocity within the performance. Shiraga and the Gutai movement support the idea that a bodily relationship is expressed through a disregard for an idealised outcome and seeks a highly physical, action-oriented process.

As already indicated, while understanding the importance of prioritising action and bodily connections, my identity as a painter who has used a lot of colour stubbornly presents itself in my work. Here, I address a second question in this chapter: how have my individual preferences changed according to the bodily process of performative action painting? Specifically, the personal preference I hold in the colour of my work, which has become a hindrance in the relationship between the painted and physical bodies, proposes an interesting dilemma in the research. While Black takes her identity and aesthetics into account, using materials and colours that resonate with her tastes, Shiraga's performances highlight action and process over personal aesthetics. *Soggy*, for example, contains residual, reciprocal, action-painted elements, and while the purple colour enables the painted body to stand out in space, it may ultimately hinder the performative elements. The residue picked up by the painted body is almost unnoticeable due to the overriding colouration, and my movements get lost in the folds and creases of the coloured paper.

In comparison, my more recent work, *Shambles* (see fig. 20), can communicate larger performative actions and the smaller actions of my everyday mess. The lack of brighter colours emphasises my actions on the surface. With this in mind, instead of brighter and more pigmented colours, I trialled tinting the paper with dirtied water so that the painted body would retain my foot and hand marks but keep them less prominent than the ripped surface. This also provided a connection between the *Lexicon of movement* and the larger works, leaving most pieces with an off-white tone. As seen in Shiraga's Gutai practice, the focus on performance and material is greater when the surface remains simpler.



Figure 20: Anna Santoso, *Shambles*, April 14th 2026, Paper, coloured pencil shavings,
studio redsidue, air-dry clay pins

This change enhances my movements as a living paintbrush, pushing my actions into focus without the marks of the paint obscuring them. Without the distraction of bright colour, dark pools of paint, drips and bleeds, the form of

my actions is clearer. Together with this, studio lighting highlights the ridges of the tears and darkens the overcast of the hanging pieces of paper, making the presence of the physical body more prominent. The whiter paper puts a spotlight on the form of the paper rather than its content, pushing residual elements and the paper scraps on the floor to appear as supportive elements to the action painting.



Figure 21: Close-up of *Shambles*, April 14th 2026, Paper, coloured pencil shavings, studio residue, air-dry clay pins.

Cells At work

Serotonins: origin

Within this chapter, I will discuss the function of the *Serotonins*, my collection of small gargoyle-esque pins, and question their relevance and function in relation to a performance-based, bodily project. How does the 'self' support and evolve alongside a bodily performance-based project? Referring to a deeper part of my identity as a pastor's daughter, and the culture of purity I was raised in, the *Serotonins* (see fig. 23-28) originate from my obsession with what I call creatures or hybrids, and what others referred to as demonic. This negative reaction from others is reminiscent of Margrit Shildrick's *Posthumanism and the Monstrous Body*, where 'othered' bodies that differ from the societal norm of the white heterosexual male are considered monstrous.²⁸ This and my intrigue towards the 'othered' form, I took Shildrick's term 'monstrous other' more seriously and would use my illustrations in my paintings (for example, *Green*) but would allow the watery quality of my paint to alter their image.



Figure 22: Anna Santoso, *Wall of monsters*, October 16th 2025, Paper, pen, pencil, coloured pencils

²⁸ Margrit Shildrick, 'Posthumanism and the Monstrous Body', *Body and Society* 2, no. No. 1 (1996): 2.



Figure 23: Anna Santoso, *Serotonins (2)*, 2025-2026, Air-dry clay and push-pins



Figure 24: Anna Santoso, *Serotonins (6)*, 2025-2026, Air-dry clay and push-pins



Figure 25: Anna Santoso, *Serotonins (15)*, 2025-2026, Air-dry clay and push-pins



Figure 26: Anna Santoso, *Serotonins (4)*, 2025-2026, Air-dry clay and push-pins



Figure 27: Anna Santoso, *Serotonins (9)*, 2025-2026, Air-dry clay and push-pins



Figure 28: Anna Santoso, *Serotonins (11)*, 2025-2026, Air-dry clay and push-pins

With the transformation of my painterly practice becoming more performative, the content of the work and the use of my drawings likewise changed, becoming pins as a mode of installation used to hang the work. Similar to Hannah Wilke's *S.O.S - Starification Object Series* (1974-82) (see fig, 29), Wilke used masticated clumps of gum, shaping them into feminine, valvular forms.²⁹



Figure 29: Hannah Wilke, *S.O.S - Starification Object Series*, 1974-82, Chewing gum,
<https://www.moma.org/collection/works/102432>

She would then place the clumps of gum on her naked torso as a way to reclaim the imagery of the female genitalia, confronting the objectification of the female body through the photographs of her staring down the viewer.³⁰ This series was also used to document the decline of her body as she battled against breast cancer and underwent rigorous treatment.³¹ The clumps of gum placed across her chest seemed to nod to the mutated cells of her illness, layering her work with a personal and representational narrative. The *Serotonins* now behave in a similar fashion, referring to my personal experience of a religious upbringing and becoming a sort of retaliation to the constraints placed on me that would police my behaviour.

²⁹ Alex Fialho, "Hannah Wilke: Tibor De Nagy Gallery," 8 May 1967, <https://www.artforum.com/events/hannah-wilke-5-208367/>.

³⁰ Karen Chernick, "The Bite-Sized Art of Chewing Gum," Hyper Allergic, 3 August 2021, <https://hyperallergic.com/bite-sized-art-of-chewing-gum/>.

³¹ Fialho, "Hannah Wilke".

Amelia Jones' *Body Art/Performing the Subject* states that "The body and subject are always intertwined; the body passively performs the self.", which Shildrick also touches on noting that the body and self are always intertwined and are presented together.^{32 33} Although likely pertaining to female artists who represented their bodies figuratively, implying that the female body will always be tied to her identity as a woman, it holds some semblance to the function of the *Serotonins*. While in my project, the painted body utilises the unrepresentation of the physical body; the self is observed through the physical body's presence. An example would be the hand and footprints that relate to my feminine body, or the residue of my body and painterly practice; likewise, the *Serotonins* function similarly, being a reflection of my mind and self. Fashioned by hand, these pins relate to the smaller action of my fingers, like Wilke's gum made from her mouth, and just as they were placed on her chest to resemble cells, so too are the *Serotonins* placed across my painted body.

Their cell-like function and appearance push the bodily concept of this project, as they work to uphold and protect the painted body on behalf of the physical body. The name they were given further refers to their cellular quality. Serotonin serves as a communicator in the body, delivering messages from the brain to support the body in healing, digesting, sleep, hormonal balance, learning and regulating temperature.³⁴ As a metaphor, the *Serotonins* serve to keep the painted body balanced and well structured, just as they do within our human bodies. Considering this very active role the real serotonin plays within the body, and recognising the evolving importance of the *Serotonins* in this project, I questioned whether they could be further involved in the process of making the work.

³² Jones, *Artist's Body*, 15.

³³ Shildrick, 'Posthumanism and the Monstrous Body', 3.

³⁴ "Serotonin," Health Article, *Cleveland Clinic*, 18 March 2022, <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/22572-serotonin>.

Serotonins: a separate element

Here, I investigate how the self can become performative as an extension of the physical body, alongside the self that is already seen in my actions and residual presence. I experimented with ways the *Serotonins* could have a more active role. I used their pin bases to slice through the paper, seeing if they would crumble in my hands and if their remains would become integrated into the work. I also trialled casting them from silicone and crayon material, using them like crayons that would roll around the surface as I moved, leaving coloured marks behind. While bright colours do not function well as a larger part of the work, being included in these smaller ways as a further extension of the self, the *Serotonins* and my actions do. Interestingly, for my first attempts at making these wax crayon *Serotonins* (see fig. 30), I had used dark blue crayon and beeswax which seemed to mimick the signature Yves Klein dark blue. While a pure coincidence, this makes an interesting connection between Klein's living paintbrushes, my becoming a living paintbrush, and the use of the *Serotonins* in the making.



Figure 30: Anna Santoso, *Serotonin (Wax 1)*, April 4th 2026, Wax crayon, beeswax and push pin

As Klein had directed the nude models to mark their bodies onto his canvas,³⁵ I direct myself and now, in turn, direct the wax *Serotonins* to be marked onto the painted body. I have questioned the agency of the *Serotonins* throughout this project, wondering whether they would hold a more active role in the work or would remain as a passive supportive element. With this connection between Klein and my approach to the living paintbrush and the use of the dark blue, I can see now that the *Serotonins* take on a permissive and supportive role. They are made according to my drawings, fashioned by my hand; they uphold and support the painted body, and are an extension of my body. This relates to the purpose of an actual serotonin cell, which supports the body in its ability to function.



Figure 31: Close-up of wax *Serotonin* and the marks it produced.

³⁵ Russell, "Feminism and Yves Klein".

The colour of the *Serotonins* is another development in their making; the decision whether to continue with the solid wax colour, coating them with a faux coloured glaze, painting them in detail, or leaving them in their white, dried clay form. On one hand, painting them in detail would pertain to the origin of my illustrative drawings and paintings, while on the other hand, this may cause them to appear quite cartoonish, which may give them a whole other context. In the testing of their coloured form, I found that the solid, monochromatic appearance of the *Serotonins* gives them a united and cohesive presence, and from the inclusion of the wax *Serotonins* markings, it is seen that small increments of colour work well in supporting the actions and presence of the physical body.



Figure 32: Anna Santoso, *Serotonins (faux glaze)*, October 2nd 2025, Watercolour and PVA glue on air-dry clay

The *Serotonins* amplify the self, just as the studio residue does; their presence adds to the relationship between the physical and painted body. While the residue pertains to my own self through my hair and by the art material debris that pertains to my painter's identity, the *Serotonins* are more clearly indicative of me personally. Their origin, which arises from my upbringing and my drawings, is a more personal connection to the self than the residue, which implies my presence in the studio space. The *Serotonins* are an extension of the self, of my actions, and are able to support the anti-form of the falling corners and edges, allowing them to keep their shape in the installation while also making the moments of colour within the work more purposeful to the overall performance. While they play a supportive role to the painted body, they take on their own journey of development, evolving from my drawings to functioning as they do now; there are still possibilities for them to be explored. Just as my practice and approach to my work have changed, the ability of the painted body and the function of the *Serotonins* will also develop continually.



Figure 33: Anna Santoso, *Serotonins*, 2025-2026, Air-dry clay, acrylic, watercolour, PVA glue, wax crayon, beeswax, push pins



Figure 34: Close-up of *Serotonin* on *Least Favourite Child* /hj, March 17th 2026,
Paper, studio residue and air-dry clay pins

Nuances Of Performance

Before

My execution of a performance practice and exploration of the relationship between the painted and physical body is further supported by the decisions and avoidance of what I term 'false performances' or 'contrivance fouls'. The avoidance of contrivance extends throughout all parts of the performance, appearing in the before, during and after, affecting how I behave within the studio space. This continues to affect the residue, paper scraps, and installation process, despite my conscious decisions and placement of these elements. Within this chapter, I question how I can avoid contrivance foul through performance methodologies. Firstly, I observe the 'before' of my performance, identified in the upkeep of my studio space and the residue that influences the painted body.

In order for the artwork to be able to contain the residue of the physical body in the studio, there needs to be a mess present. While I try not to purposefully produce litter and place it carefully on the floor before creating work, I am mindful of the things I do in the studio that are discarded onto the ground. At my working desk, the acts of eating, drawing, sculpting, cutting, and painting leave behind remnants of their occurrence. Crumbs of food or drips of sauce from noodle packets, eraser rubbings, pencil shavings, dried clay dust, protective seals from paint tubes, dried paint pulled off pallets and miscellaneous dirt from boxes I have organised or cleaned out, all find their way to the floor. Before realising the residue's part played within the work, I often discarded these things onto the floor out of laziness, but upon understanding how these elements could be used as an extension of the physical body's actions and presence, I became more conscious of the need to be more 'careless' with the mess I made.



Figure 35: Close-up of studio residue on painted body (1)

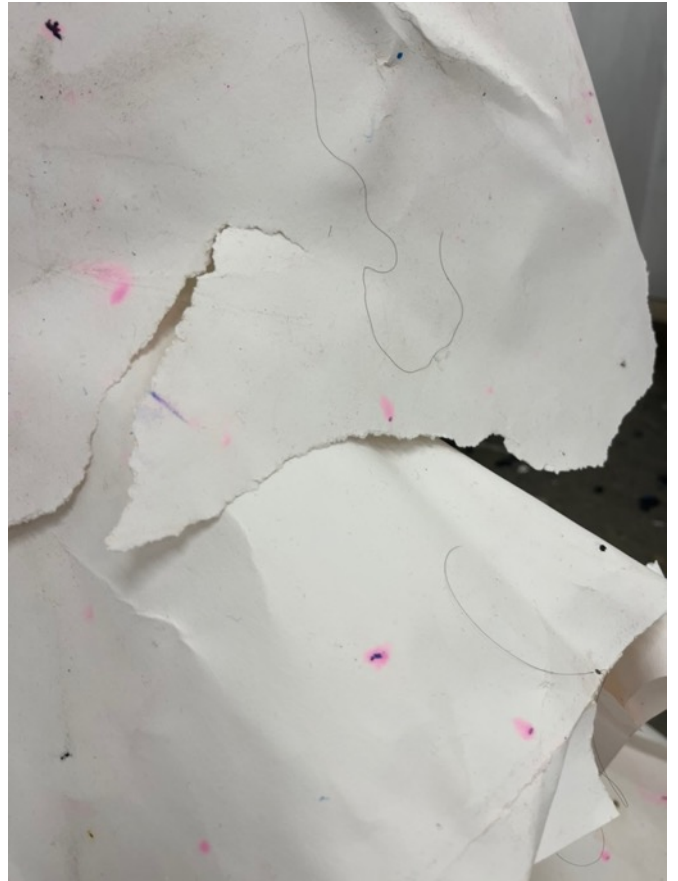


Figure 36: Close-up of studio residue on painted body (2)



Figure 37: Close-up of studio residue on painted body (3)



Figure 38: Close-up of studio residue on painted body (4)

In earlier works, there were steps taken to ensure the cleanliness and preservation of the white paper. When prepping the surface for the cutting and deconstructing process, I would sweep the floor before placing the paper down to ensure no dirt would stick to it, and no imperfections in the floor would 'damage' the surface. While painting, I would stand on a piece of paper so I could be very close to the work and add smaller details without leaving any footprints on the parts of the paper that extended onto the floor. If ever there was an instance that the print of my shoe was to be marked on the paper, I would either wipe it clean or, in an extreme case, cut it off. However, as previously discussed, it is the indication and participation of my body within the work that develops the connection between the painted and physical body. The tidiness of the canvas was a ritual that stemmed from traditional painting processes I previously exercised, and the limitations these traditions placed on the performance. Involving these minuscule marks and imperfections nods to the horizontal position the work is made in and the space that the physical body functions within, which generates the anti-form in the vertical positioning and presents the painted body dramatically.

It could be said that elements in previous works, like *Green*, with its strict tears and brushstrokes, were contrived and lacked the instant performativity the project benefited from. That said, the notion of a contrivance foul did permeate later parts of my project as I battled with more specific studio practices. For example, if I were to purposefully discard things onto the floor, would that not be considered a contrivance foul or false performance? Considering this, and the nature of my discarding, I would say this is not a full, but maybe only partially, a contrivance foul. The painted body takes in all of the physical body's actions and transforms them; any residue it absorbs continues to change at all points in the performance. The horizontal positioning of the work, combined with the added pressure, movement and deconstruction process, would begin to alter the act of my purposeful discarding. While generating residue may be thought of and done with purpose, the outcome feels more uncontrolled.



Figure 39: Anna Santoso, *Enough*, March 25th 2026,

Paper, studio debris, air-dry clay pins

As seen in *Enough* (see fig. 40), there are areas of paint that remain in the final work, drops of colour appear and become altered by the performance. The same can be said for the charcoal lines and grains saturated around the folds of the paper, appearing from the act of my cleaning and organising of boxes. Minuscule actions such as these pertain to the presence and passive act of the physical body, and the painted body's response of retaining them speaks to the spatial and bodily relationship shared. Though this step in the performance may be slightly fabricated, its role in the final work is valuable to the relationship between bodies, as an extension of the physical body onto the painted body.

During

The avoidance of contrivance fouls can be further observed in the deconstructive process of the performance. Here, I identify which decisions in the performance teeter on the edge of contrivance and the decisions I make in order to avoid it. Additionally, I discuss the attachment to my painting practice that persists in this section of the performance as I use methods of bathing, tearing, lifting, turning and marking. Each of these processes is executed differently from work to work, evolving continuously alongside my painting practice, as they experience the fine line of contrivance and my ever-changing painting performance practice.

Observed in the bathing of the surface with tinted water, I consider there to be another partial contrivance foul in my performance. In recent works, the tinting of the water with watercolour or charcoal dust alters the paper from its stark white to a less pristine appearance, more like the floor from where it is made. Despite being decisive and purposeful, the tinting of the water can be given a partial pardon as its outcome becomes further changed by the process of the performance and the will of the material -- similar to the residue. Unlike the bright, acrylic colours in works like *Centred* and *Soggy*, the watercolours used in these works are diluted, having only a mild effect on the paper. With hints of yellow, brown, and black to pertain to the colour of dirt, or pink to create a skin-like colour, reminiscent of *Split*, the paper appears more solid with the addition of subtle colour.

As discussed previously, the exclusion of brighter colours supports the actions of the physical body, making them the focus of the work, but without the plasticity of the acrylic paint, the painted body is less able to keep its actioned form. With the use of the tinted water, it would seem that the painted body gains a sense of solidity, becoming stiffer than when clean water is used. This benefits the performance, as when the painted body dries in its horizontal position, the folds, creases, and wrinkles inflicted are retained more effectively. This, I believe, is why the tinting and residual elements may not be

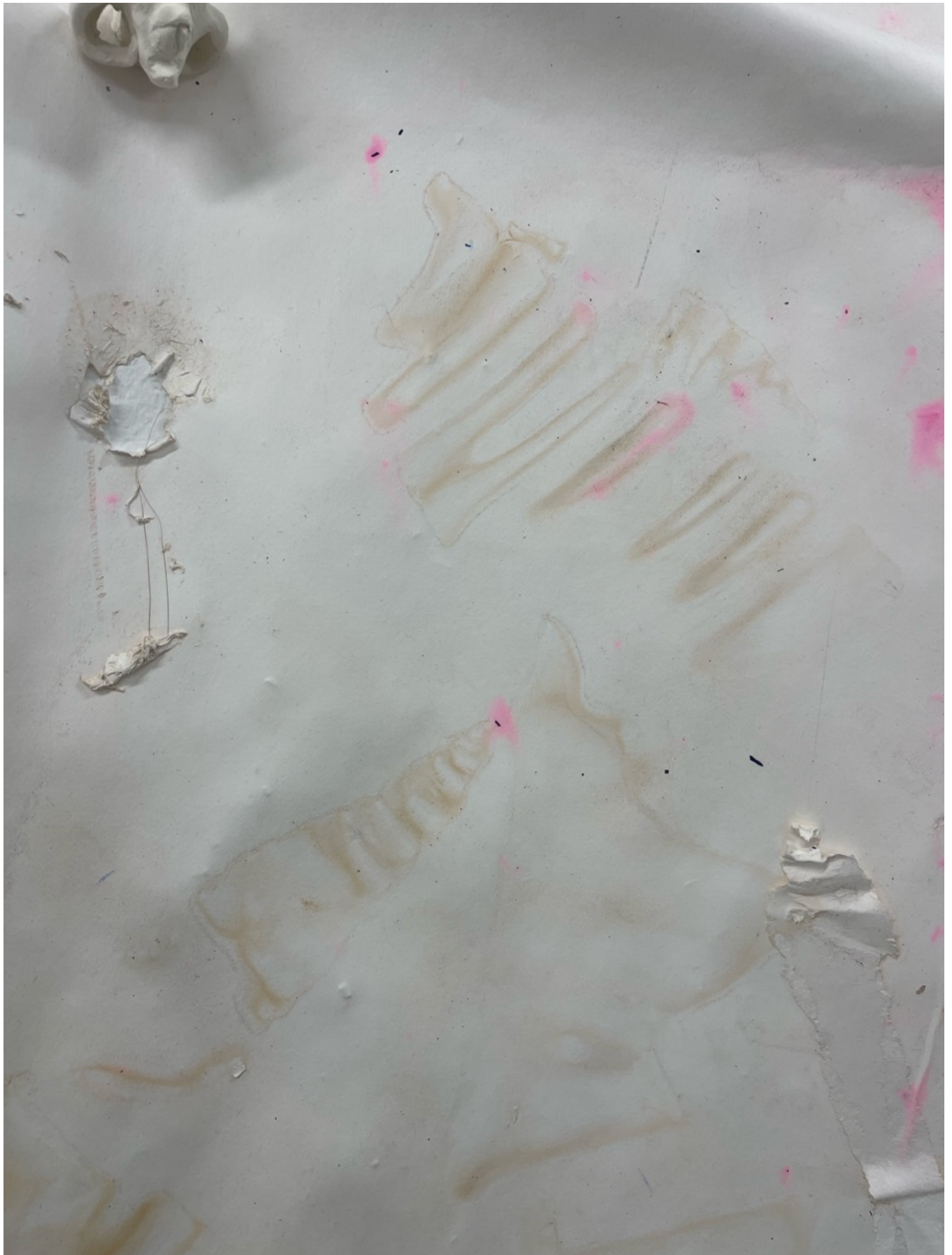


Figure 40: Close-up of *Shambles*, April 14th 2026, Paper, coloured pencil shavings, studio residue, air-dry clay pins

considered a contrivance foul and are, in fact, somewhat crucial to the performance. Ideally, I want the hand and foot marks to remain in the final version (as in works like *Soggy* and *Centred*); they assist in implying a horizontal-making process within the verticalised installation, and further hint at the presence of the physical body. In using slightly pigmented and dirtied water, I can more closely achieve this effect without the bright acrylic colours, allowing the tinted water to concentrate in the areas compressed by my hands and feet.

This leads into the next part of the performance of intentional action painting and producing of a finished piece. Observed in the videoed documentation of the making process, my approach to action painting and the physical conversation between the painted and physical body takes a humorous turn. My decisions, within the performance, are enacted knowing that anything I do will be changed by the painted body, or that any plan I have could create a contrivance foul. I have combated this by engaging the work with a sense of play. As with the *Lexicon of movement*, I utilise spontaneity, which can be observed in the video recordings of my performance. Before each burst of movement, I reflect on the state of the painted body, preparing to act and react, but ultimately move however feels right. The performance benefits from being freed from planned expectations and taken seriously. It results in an outcome similar to Shiraga's *Challenging Mud*, with the material being able to portray the impression and indication of my body, evidencing the physical relationship shared with the painted body. The engagement with a material such as mud can be perceived as somewhat comical or non-serious. The same can be said for this project; to engage with large, wet pieces of paper that I must interact with.



Figure 41: Screenshot from the videoed process of *Shambles*, April 9th 2026

Combined with the sense of play I exhibit during the deconstruction process, my body is indicated through the rips and tears I embed within the paper surface. As seen in the video documenting the making of *Turnt* (see fig. 43), I decided to experiment by twisting the paper around myself to see how it would tear. While doing so, instead of tearing, the paper forms around my legs, leading me to associate that moment with the position one takes in a potato

sack race. I proceeded to jump around with the paper to see if that would result in any tears, and while the work remained almost whole, the final form of the paper displayed the absence and action of my body.



Figure 42: Screenshot from the videoed process of *Turnt*, November 11th 2025,
<https://go.screenpal.com/watch/cOhf0Rntc05>

In these ways, the ‘unseriousness’ of the performance can be further observed in the video evidence captured by my phone’s camera. Similar to Yves Klein and his recorded performance of *Anthropometry*, I film the process of my

decisions, soaking the paper, flipping it and tearing it. However, while Klein's video functions in a much more formal way, heightened by the tuxedo he wears and the orchestra present, I use the casual function of my camera to encourage my improper and playful approach to performance. Within the video, I talk and laugh by myself; in other videos I have conversations with others that express my feeling of absurdity as I engage with the material. Treating the paper as a potato sack, crawling through the surface, throwing my hands up in the air, grasping clumps of paper, and feeling as if I am a pig rolling around in dirt. In taking a playful route, the pressure I feel to perform and create extravagant work is alleviated, again helping me avoid contrivance foul. With my mind unfocused on what the outcome will be, issues of false performance are less likely within the final painting. As in *Turnt*, the traces of my body in the preserved outcome of the twisted paper form speak to the physical connection and relationship the physical body shares with the painted body. This relationship becomes clearer with every tear, footstep, wrinkle and fold, and the unseriousness of the performance enables the freedom in my actions, which protects the performance from facing contrivance foul.



Figure 43: Anna Santoso, *Turnt*, November 11th 2025, Acrylic on paper, Air-dry clay pins

After

Within this final section, I note how the performance continues past its making phase. In the aftermath, the fine line between my performance and contrivance foul continues to be seen in the final steps of the performance of installation and storage. This is observed in the decisions I make to leave the work to dry on the floor, lifting the paper, transforming the horizontal to vertical, the placement of the *Serotonins* and paper debris, and the storage of work within my studio space. I consider these steps as part of the performance, as the relationship between bodies and the battle against false performance persists.



Figure 44: Drying process of *Enough*, March 25th 2026,

Paper, studio debris, air-dry clay pins

I decide to leave the work to dry after it has been initially action-painted, and in doing so, the painted body preserves every fold, bump and the residual elements pressed into it. This also causes the work to stick to the floor, a response the painted body has to being stepped onto repeatedly, which can further deconstruct the surface as it is lifted off the floor. Afterwards, the painted body is swiftly hoisted onto the wall, pinned in place at the highest point I can reach, allowing the painted body to mirror my height and stance. On the wall, the painted body can stand alongside the physical body and build its presence, being able to stand alongside the physical body and relate to it through space. Seen in this step is the change from horizontal to vertical that alters the appearance of the painted body and activates the occurrence of anti-form. In the installation of *Enough*, the folds and creases of the paper remain from drying *in situ*, even when hung, and the holes in the paper are stretched by the pull of gravity. The anti-form of the work reanimates the painted body, giving it a lively presence as it sticks out and cascades down the wall. The scraps of paper on the floor relate the larger vertical piece back to its horizontal creation, alongside the residue and footmarks. Despite the change in appearance and positioning, the relationship the painted body has to its making on the floor remains. Being turned vertically and presented on the wall enables the painted body to be seen separate from its making, and as the actioned painting it is. Similar to Warhol's take on Pollock's floor paintings, the urinating stance he takes when working is removed from focus when presented vertically, allowing the movement within his paintings to be read differently.

To complete the installation process, the *Serotonins* and the torn-off pieces of paper are placed around and on the painted body. The scraps of paper are situated at the base of the painted body, not straying very far from the work they originated from, so their relationship to the larger portion of the work is clear. When works are taken out of storage, I tend to throw these pieces to the floor, letting them find their own place as they did when the paper was first performed onto. Just as I am in the videos of my process and the main performance, the installation of the work is informal. I approach the painted body with little predetermination for its outcome and installation, and instead

rely on the nature of the material to react to how it is moved. While the battle against contrivance continues into this phase of the performance, a secondary battle between formal installation and happenstance occurs. In the installation of *Yeah alright*, the work tore in half and fell on itself as if saying, “This is what I must do.” This pertains to the reciprocal nature of the painted body but also to my reasoning of accepting whatever form the painted body takes when converted to a vertical stance.

As for the *Serotonins*, they are placed in areas that touch the wall and floor, or at the base of sections that bulge outwards. Their placement often feels intuitive as I follow where my eye takes me, and once placed, wherever they are put is the position they will take on the painted body when installed. By keeping them in the same position, this helps retain the positioning the painted body took when it first stood, and the holes the pins leave behind guide me whenever I reinstall a painting. This decision to keep the pins in the spot I initially placed them becomes important whenever a work comes out of storage. However, I expect each installation to differ in some way, as the painted body changes as it ages; an occurrence that can be observed in the *Lexicon of movement*.



Figure 45: Anna Santoso, *Dirty*, September 18th 2025, Acrylic on paper, air-dry lay

Conclusion

During this project, I explored ways to negotiate the objectification and exploitation of my female body through the unrepresentation of my form. By researching performance methodology and action painting, I found that the implication of my body through the marks I left on the material surface would be indicative of my presence. This would also perhaps let the painted body be observed without the weighted historical representation of the female body. I further inquired about how to utilise my body as a tool, method and subject so that the indication and unrepresentation of my body may become more evident. By pushing the limits of my painting practice and adopting performance methodologies, while also looking to Saburo Murakami's *Breaking Through Many Paper Screens* for inspiration, a more instantaneous approach enabled the physical body to embed itself in the work more efficiently.

With the continuous transformation of my abstract painting practice and execution of performance methodology, I observed the reciprocal relationship the painted body had to the physical body. Referring to the physical language Karla Black operates in, I too found that the physical language between the material, residue, my actions and the painted bodies' reactions presented as reciprocal. Thus, creating the occurrence of anti-form, the soaking process further led me to question how my personal preference has changed with the prioritisation of form over content. By referring to the differences in Black and Shiraga's practice, the indication of the body was more evident within works that put a focus on the form of the painted body rather than the aesthetics of it. This led me to trade the brighter acrylics I had been accustomed to using for muted, watered-down pigments that would accentuate my actions instead of diminishing them.

As my body's presence became more evident in the outcome of the work, my 'self' also became more apparent. With the involvement of studio residue, consisting of things like my hair, my identity as a woman became integrated

into the painted body. I began to question how the 'self' supported and would evolve alongside the bodily relationship I was exploring. I developed sculptural pins that would support the making and installation of the painted body. These pins refer to the self and came to be named as *Serotonins*, which became an extension of the physical body's actions, becoming a tool for tearing and mark-making. My *Serotonins* mirror the function of real serotonins and continue to evolve alongside the painted body.

Within this project, every occurrence in the studio is considered part of the performance that exemplifies the relationship between the physical and painted body. I questioned how performance methodologies affected my behaviour in the studio and my approach to this project, while also questioning how to avoid contrived or false performances. Through informal recording and documentation of my process, a balance between control and a sense of unseriousness became evident, helping to avoid contrivance foul through the method of play.

Having explored the body-to-body relationship, it can and will continue to evolve and formulate new questions, answers and outcomes. The concept of reciprocity, the function and existence of the *Serotonins*, the balance of contrivance foul, and the personal preferences I hold in colour are all aspects of this project that remain open-ended problems.

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(Work during thesis year not discussed in exegesis.)



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(Work during thesis year not discussed in exegesis.)

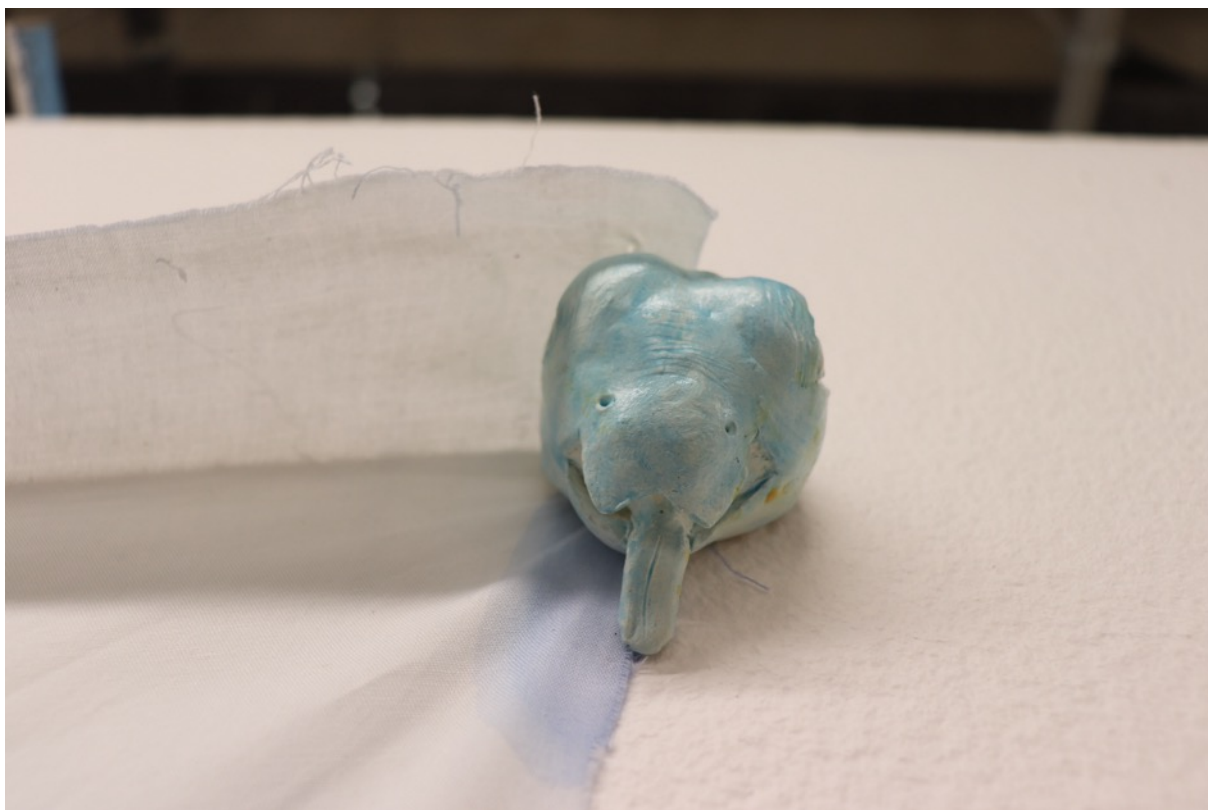


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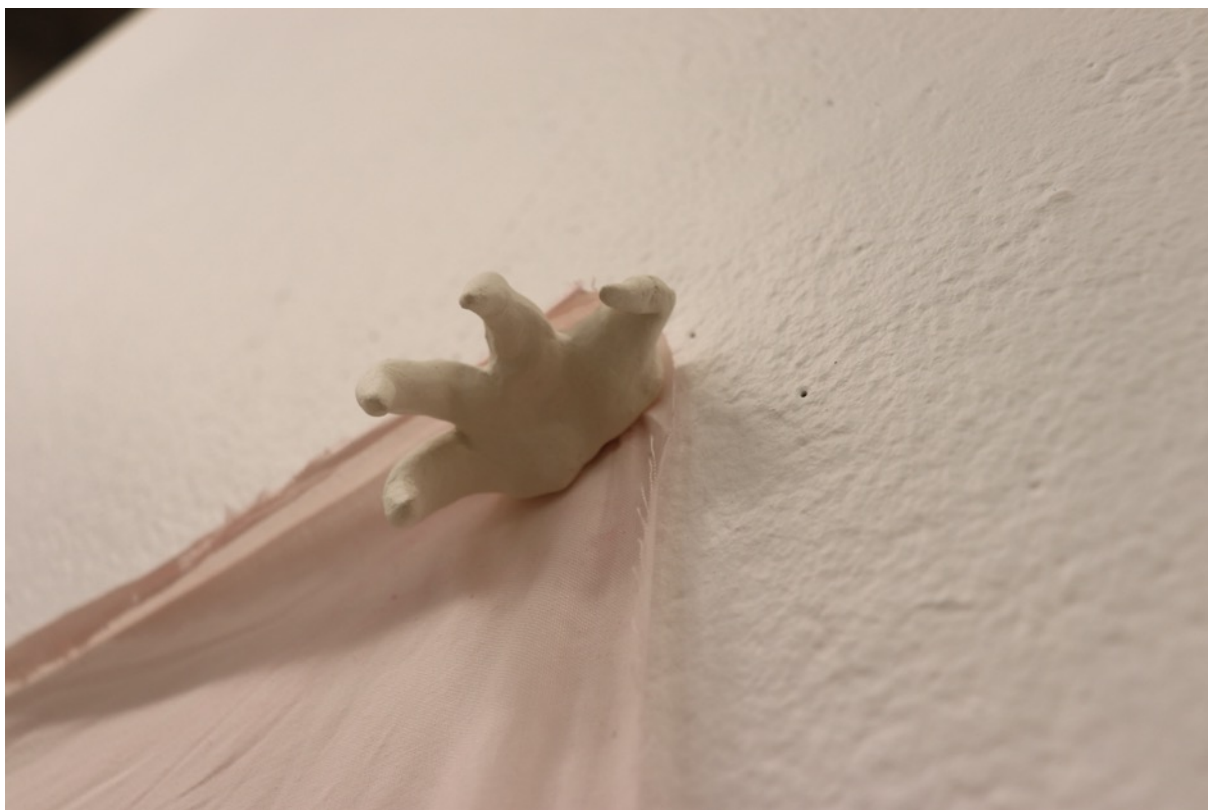
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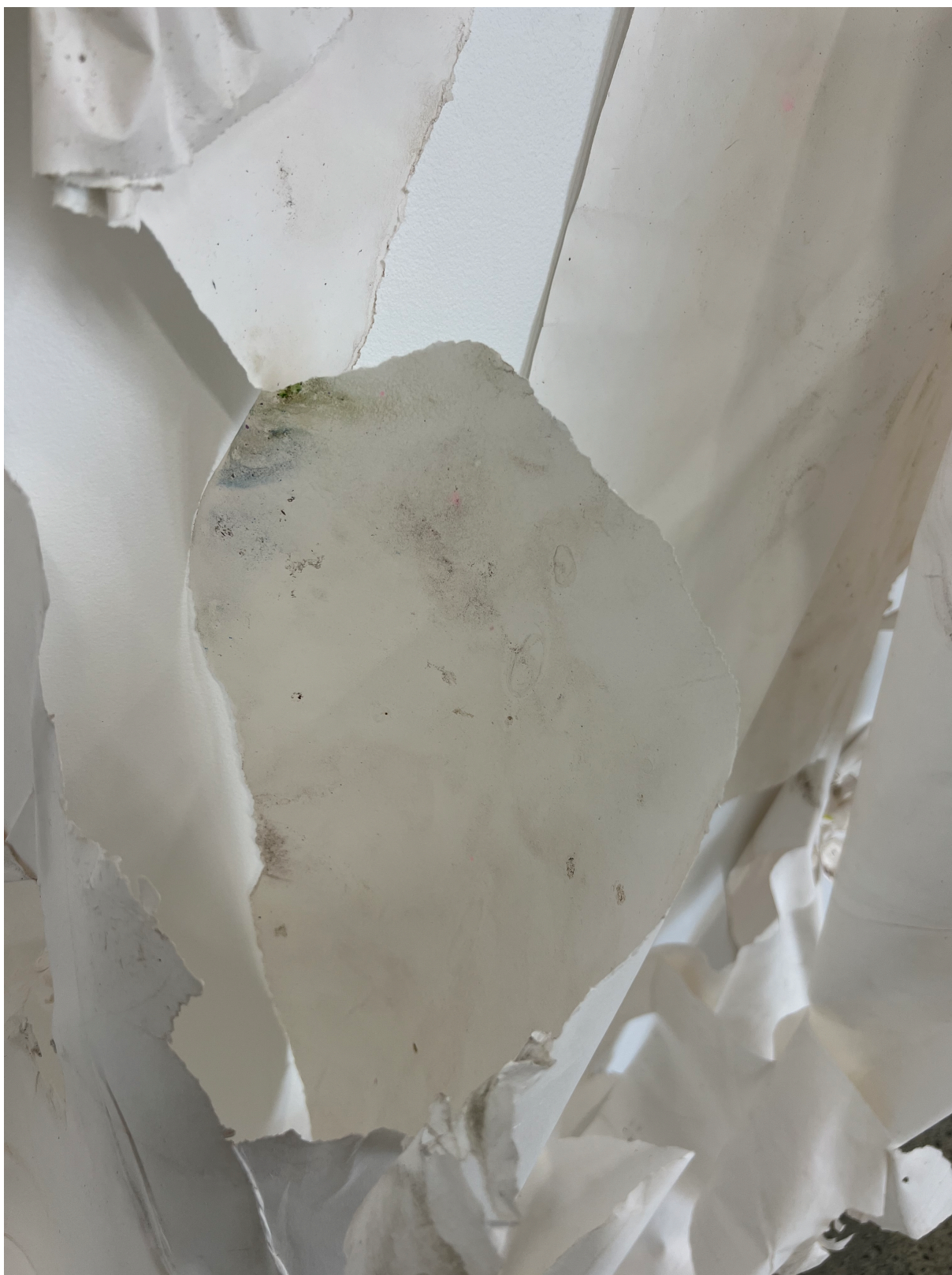
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