

I'M FINE

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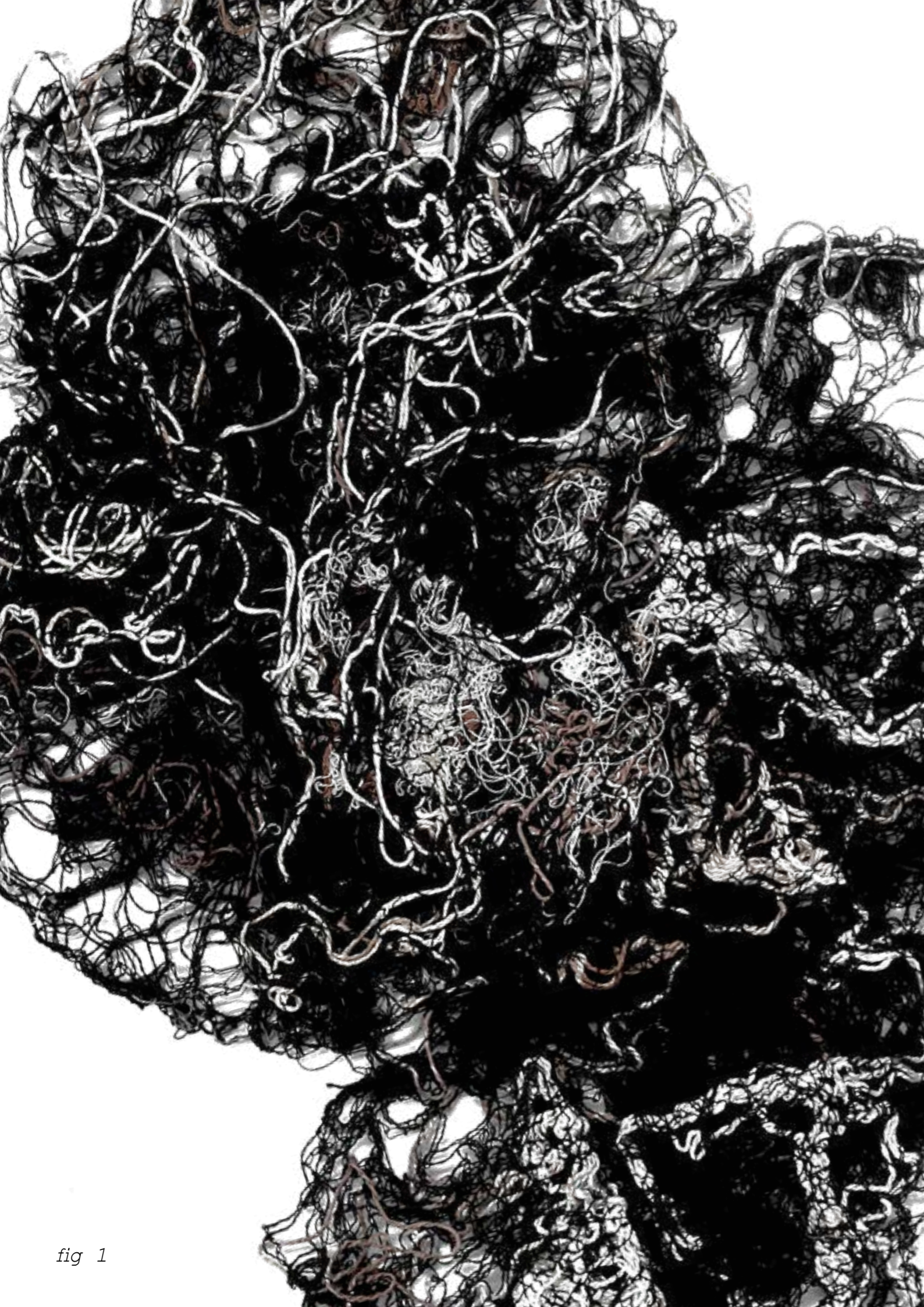


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THE ACT

Please

Stop

Saying

I Asked

December 2nd.

He was the first person that ever really looked my way, he told me wasn't looking for sex and that he was looking for a meaningful connection. I thought that was true, because that's what he said. I remember after everything happened, getting that text. I think it hurt more than anything else, seeing him say I was so stupid to believe anyone could want me for anything more than my body, I was so naive. And for a long time I thought he was right.

fig 2

I use my art practice as a way to explore the lasting affects of sexual assault and the trauma sa survivors have to learn to live with. I use machine stitching to reflect my feelings and emotions of being unable to properly process what happened.

I use imagery and shapes that reflect the body, both organs and the nude body, as a way to show sa survivors have a distorted view of their own bodies as well as having to internalize their own pain when not having a proper support system.

The intention behind my capstone is to create a series of pieces that reflect the inner monologue survivors often have as a way to bring awareness to the ongoing problem with the current dialogue towards SA victims and how damaging not being believed or victim blamed can be.

INTRODUCTION

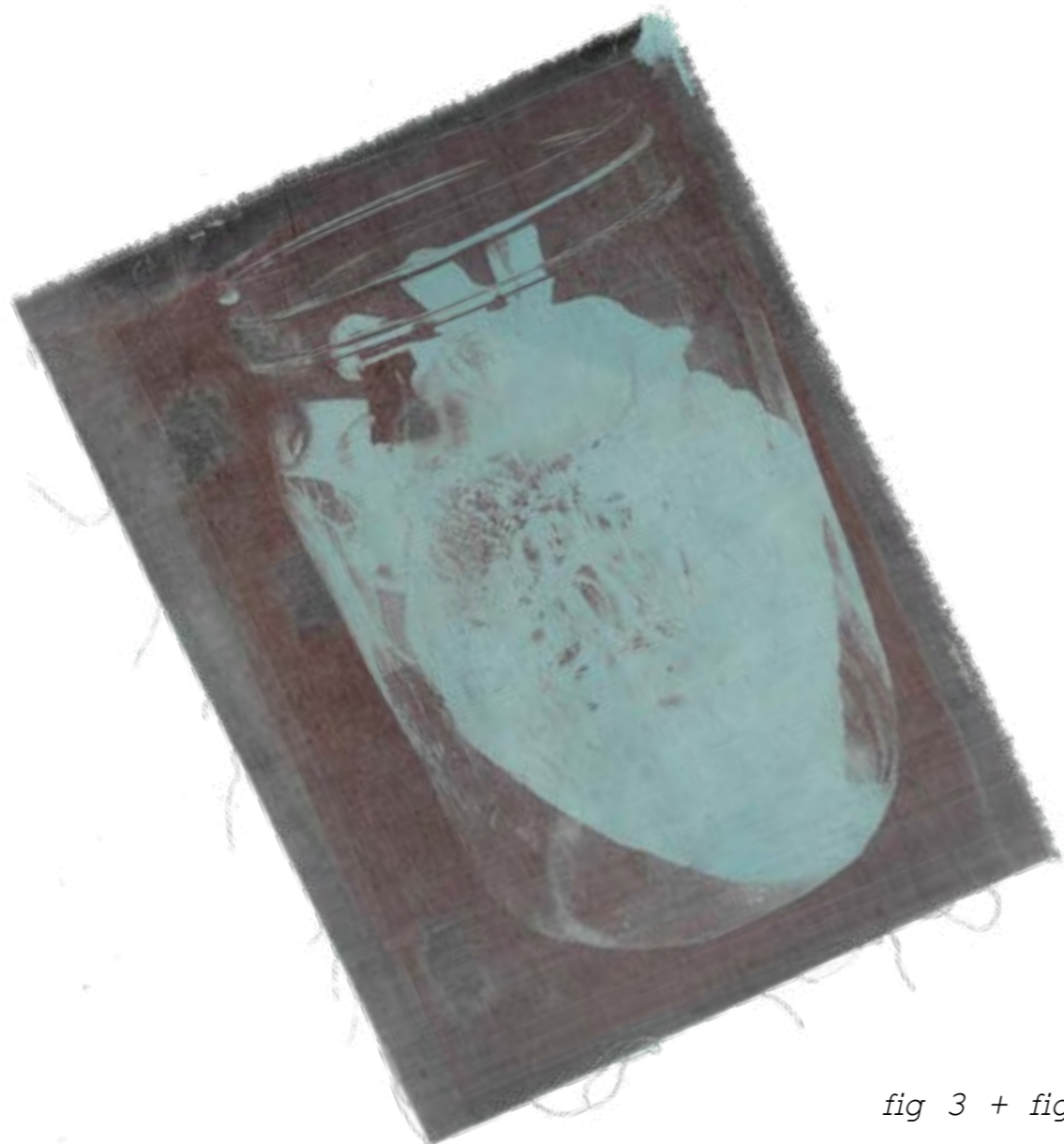
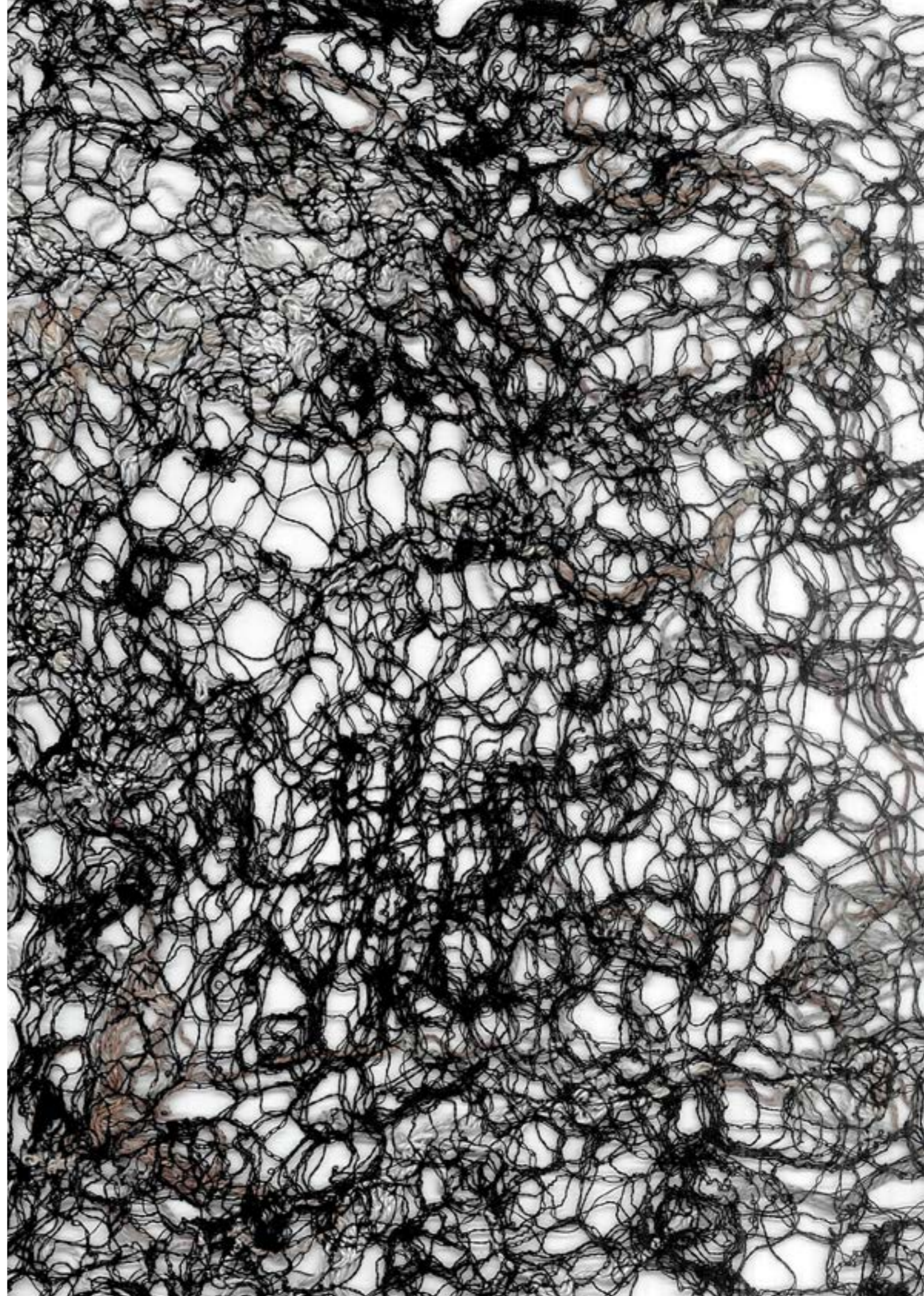


fig 3 + fig 4



My breaking point in realizing what I wanted to make my art about is when I went to a tattoo shop, and the other person getting a tattoo mentioned her assaulter telling her he's sorry that she thinks that way, but it didn't happen, and soon after every other person in the shop, 4 other people, mentioned that the exact same thing had happened to them. While it is great that they had a chance to find a safe space in something as common as a tattoo shop, rape and sexual assault should not be so normalized a group of mostly strangers can all say that the same thing happened to them and nobody bats an eye.

Rape is also something that has become commonplace to mention in media, with little to no trigger warnings and often mentioned for no reason other than shock factor. While rape talked about in media can have positive effects, when it is introduced in shows or movies without actually having a strong tie to the plot, and only being there for the sake of showing something bad, it can be damaging to survivors, and only helps to normalize the concept of rape and diminishes the lasting affects survivors feel.

The me Too movement has helped with assault survivors being able to feel more comfortable sharing there stories, but it has also normalized the topic of rape and assault to the point people forget it's a massive issue. There is still a major lack of support in regards to accessible therapy, as well as the fear of having to report the assault and relive the story again and again. While the me too movement started as something positive, it was only beneficial for a fleeting moment.

The issue with rape and assault being so normalized is that people who have not suffered through rape or assault often don't know how to have a healthy open dialogue about it when a survivor "comes out" as a victim. Often times not being believed can be just as, or even more so, emotionally damaging then the assault itself.

I want my art to be something that can help other survivors by showing that it's okay to have a conflicting narrative in their head, and that they are allowed to feel sad over being told their pain isn't real. As well I want my art to be a way for people to start having an open discussion about the trauma victims and survivors face, as well as the horrible stigma linked to being one.

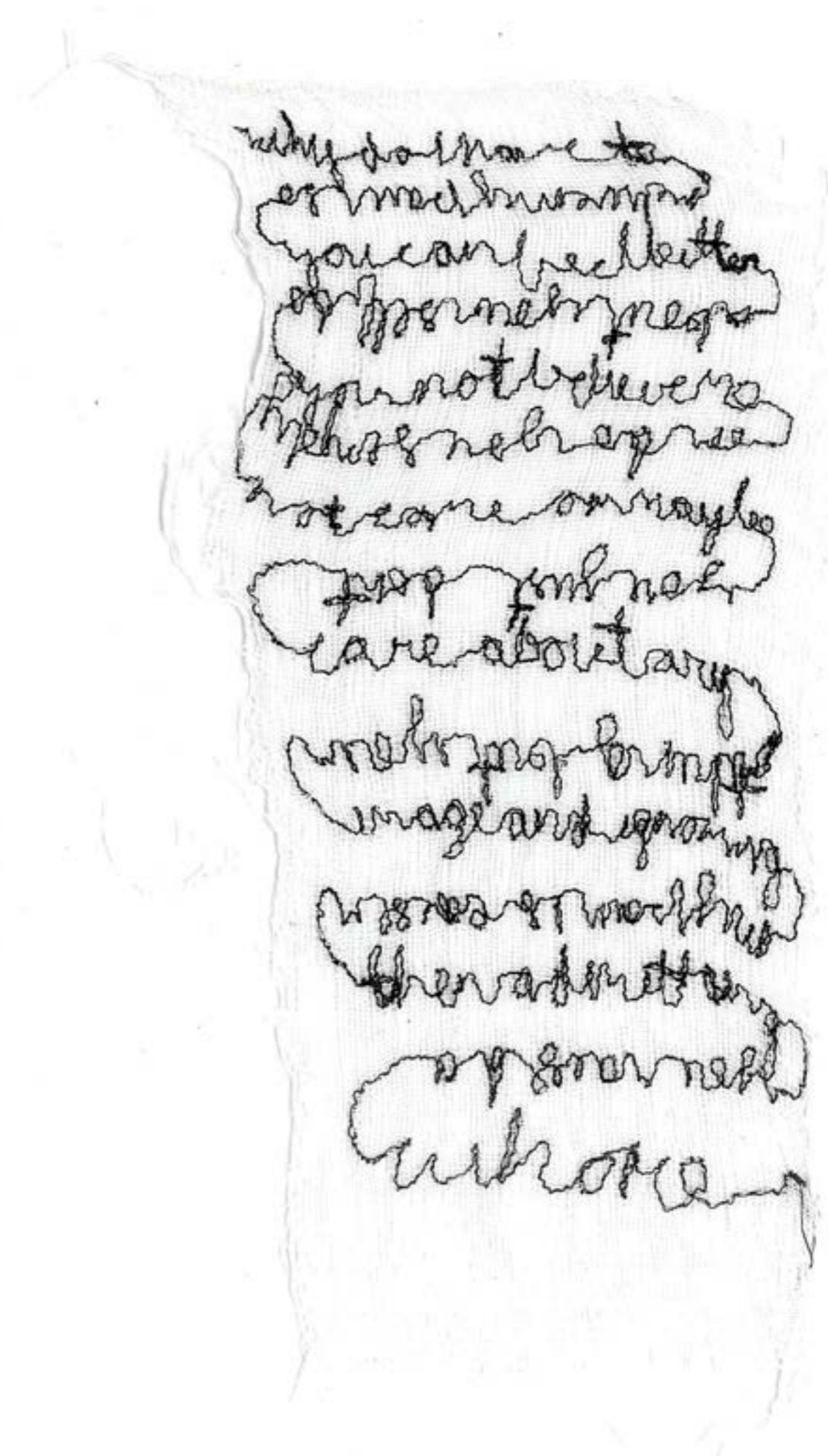


fig 5



fig 6

Sophia Narett is an embroidery artist that uses thread to paint scenes relating to pop culture or her own imagination. The embroidery itself has no bounds, rather than being mounted on a piece of cloth or stuck in a hoop the edges for her art are the thread itself, sometimes wrapping around twigs. The art itself is very colourful and mystical while the content usually involves orgies or nude people. I love how she chooses to make a messy style, refusing to put bounds on her own art.



fig 7

The Guerilla girls is a group of anonymous artists who want to spread awareness of sexism and racism in the art world. They help to exploit different museums and organizations that show a disproportionate amount of male to female artists. One of their most well known pieces is a billboard that says “Do women have to be naked to get into the Met. Museum? Less than 5% of artists in the modern art sections are women but 85% of the nudes are female.” I really like the idea of an informational billboard being a piece of art, it publicly highlights how women

are not often taken seriously as artists and only really noticed when their body is on exhibit. When I first looked at the Guerilla Girls, my original concept was on how afab bodies were often objectified and seen as toys. My concept has of course shifted a lot since then but I still think they’re message is important to my concept as it allowed me to ask myself how I could show myself in a vulnerable way through my art without being objectified or seen as another body within art.



GUERRILLA GIRLS

fig 8
© Lois Greenfield

Michelle Lacombe is a performance artist based in Montreal. Her art often uses her own body, using tattoos and scarification as a form of performance art varying in themes from feminism to the intersection of binary and non-binary and gender. Her art is also rarely documented, any photo that is taken or documented during the initial performances can usually only be seen in artist talks by the artist herself, or in select printed magazines. The act of not documenting her work, and being very selective as to who sees the work and another layer to her pieces as well.

For the majority of her work, the pieces are only available to be seen by those who went to the initial performance or an artist talk. By limiting the viewers to people who actively chose to learn about or see the art means that her art will only be seen by people who want to see her art. I really like this concept, while at first it might seem limiting as to who can view the work, I think it adds an extra level of intimacy that's important to have in art that covers such heavy topics as well as such painful processes to create.

The art that I saw being presented by Lacombe all focused on the research the artist did around the comparison between how female and male bodies are seen within art. One art performance was getting a scarification in a public setting, without the use of any numbing cream or anesthetic, all the way across her bust line in front of an audience. The line represented her research into where the line for male and female bust sculptures in ancient Greece and Rome intersect and how the busts of those two genders differed greatly in meaning and design and how these two can overlap and connect.

Another piece that dissected the connection between female and male bodies was an incision on her ribs that was 7 inches long to represent Adam and Eve being a connected entity opposed to 2 opposing sides. The idea behind this piece was stated to start from the lack of historical paintings that depicted Eve actually coming out of Adam, and this led for her to believe that the focus of Eve being seen as a "lesser" being for being made out of Adam is only a recent viewpoint that started when society started to use the bible as a way to further government agenda's and lessen women's power.

The third piece was a series of tattoos, all of varying lengths across

different body parties ranging from her shoulder, torso, to legs. Each line represents a different part of the body that Lacombe classified as "distinctly female". The placement of the lines were determined after researching what is considered to be the first female nude and going over what areas of the painting made the image distinctly female as opposed to male. The lines also highlight the pose as well as the curves of the body, as female nudes are often posed in a more sultry or seductive way opposed to male nudes.

One of the reasons this artist stands out so much to me is how she breaks out of the bounds of traditional art. Not only does she choose to use her own body as a canvas, but she doesn't constrict where her pieces go in relation to what is already there, allowing for new art to interact and overlap (As seen in the photo on the right page, displaying the rib incision while it is still fresh, as well as displaying a small portion of a tattoo from a previous artwork that is visible on her left elbow). I'm very inspired by her use of the body as a way to portray the difference between how male and female bodies are viewed.

It's also important to note that she was one of the first artists outside of other classmates I saw doing such "weird" art, and was a very big inspiration to me back in my (first) first year as seeing her art helped me realize I didn't need to keep comparing myself to the others around me and it was okay to present things in a different form and art is whatever the artist wants it to be. I think the use of such a taboo and shocking form of permanently altering her body also helps to emphasize the importance of the themes she works with.



fig 9

Another artist that chooses a more harsh form of art is Marina Abramovic. The sculpture/performance piece Rhythm 0 revolves around 72 objects being placed in front of the artist while she allows the audience to use anything on her for 6 hours. Of course the audience starts with soft things, but then leads to people cutting her clothes, her skin, and eventually someone trying to pull a gun on her, but the person was stopped by other members of the audience not the artist (Spectar). I think it's important to look into this art piece for my capstone because it helps highlight the cruelty of humanity. While some people choose to be "nice", others choose to harm her, and what was stopping the audience members from preventing people going at her with knives when they were capable of stopping the man with the gun. I think it's the fear in this piece I resonate with, and how the artist was willing to go through such extremes just to prove her point. I wanted to find a way to show this harshness humanity has into my art, while still creating something that had a form of gentleness.



fig 10



fig 11

This artist makes mixed media collages and tackles different social issues. She uses a combination of heat transfer images, objects like pre-made patches and plastic bugs, and lace and sequins to explore personal trauma. The imagery in her pieces ranges from colourful and eclectic to somber and creepy. She said each image in the piece is taken with a specific emotion in mind, and that each piece starts with the emotion from the emotion and then follows around that, as well, "The process is about both aesthetic intuition and conscious choices of materials". I really like this concept because as someone who also makes fairly emotional and personal art, I've found it very hard to explain how I start, I never really have a set up plan for a lot of what I make and I just follow along with the emotions I feel and the materials I have on hand. Another thing about her pieces is that a lot of them have these creepy plastic toy bugs often associated with Halloween attached to pieces that use images from vintage paintings, often focusing on the hands (often touching another body or holding something like an orange). I really like the sense of delicacy in the image juxtaposed with these almost harsh looking plastic bugs. It also adds another layer to the piece by using a plastic toy, something that is not (commonly) seen in art and is mostly used as nothing more than a gag, placed onto these intricately made art collages. (2)

Emma Sulkowicz is a performance artist and activist who makes art pieces that bring awareness to the current rape culture.

During her last year at Columbia she did a performance piece that involved carrying a mattress (the same kind that she was raped on) on her back across campus. In 2012 she was raped by another student going to the same school, so for her thesis in visual arts in 2014-2015, she decided to carry the mattress until he was expelled. Sadly, the school did an investigation and decided they didn't have enough evidence to do anything. Sulkowicz decided to walk across the stage at graduation with the mattress, some of her fellow classmates helping her carry the 50-pound mattress.

After her graduation from Columbia in 2017, she decided to create the piece *The Ship is Sinking*. This was another performance piece, this time involving the artist being tied up using shibari, onto a tilted piece of wood standing out of the floor that represented the mast of a ship. She was whipped and degraded throughout the performance. The piece was made for a multitude of reasons, some being to examine the relation between sex and body and how female bodies are often seen. Arguably the most important factor behind the piece is less about rape-culture and more about politics as a whole. The artist intended the piece to be a criticism about art in the Trump administration. The name itself was inspired by the artist's correspondence with one of the Whitney Biennial Curators, where her piece was shown, "Good art rocks the boat. My biennial artists could down the Titanic in zero seconds flat" and her response, "what good is political art hung on the wall of a sinking ship".

I am really inspired by both pieces this artist made. I like how bold both pieces are and how Su

As someone who has also suffered through rape and has found a way to escape through kink, I really appreciate how she was able to turn it into an art piece that also helps to educate the viewers on why awareness about rape culture is important.

While my capstone is not a performance piece, I wanted to be able to embody the level of intimacy that was involved within her two pieces. I want to be able to make a piece that has a shock factor or a level of uncomfortability.



fig 12 + 13



Janurary 24th

I thought that if I told myself it wasn't assault, it wasn't rape, it would mean I wasn't damaged. After all, everyone always told me how overly sensitive and emotionally I was, so clearly this was just another fit of me taking things out of proportion. If I really thought that it would make the pain go away, just enough I could breathe. I thought that if I wasn't a victim, that if I didn't admit to someone using my body against my will, if I just told myself enough times that I was overreacting, that it would be okay. It meant he hadn't affected me and he wouldn't have a hold over me. But I had to spend every waking hour convincing myself I was fine, I started to be at war with myself, remembering every minute of it trying to convince myself I was overreacting, then going through it again and saying how could I be when that's what happened?

DOES THIS EXIST

RIGHT
VS WRONG

FORCED
CHANGE IN
PERSPECTIVE

HOW TO
SHOW MY
PAIN

GUTS

OPEN

SPLIT

FRACTURE

RED

SEEN AS
ANGER

I SEE AS
SAD

WEAKNESS

SOFT

HARD

EMOTIONS

PERMANENCE

BRUTALITY

MESSY

VULNERABILITY

OVERFLOWING

PAIN

KINK

DETACH

REPETITION

LAYERING

WANTED VS
UNWANTED

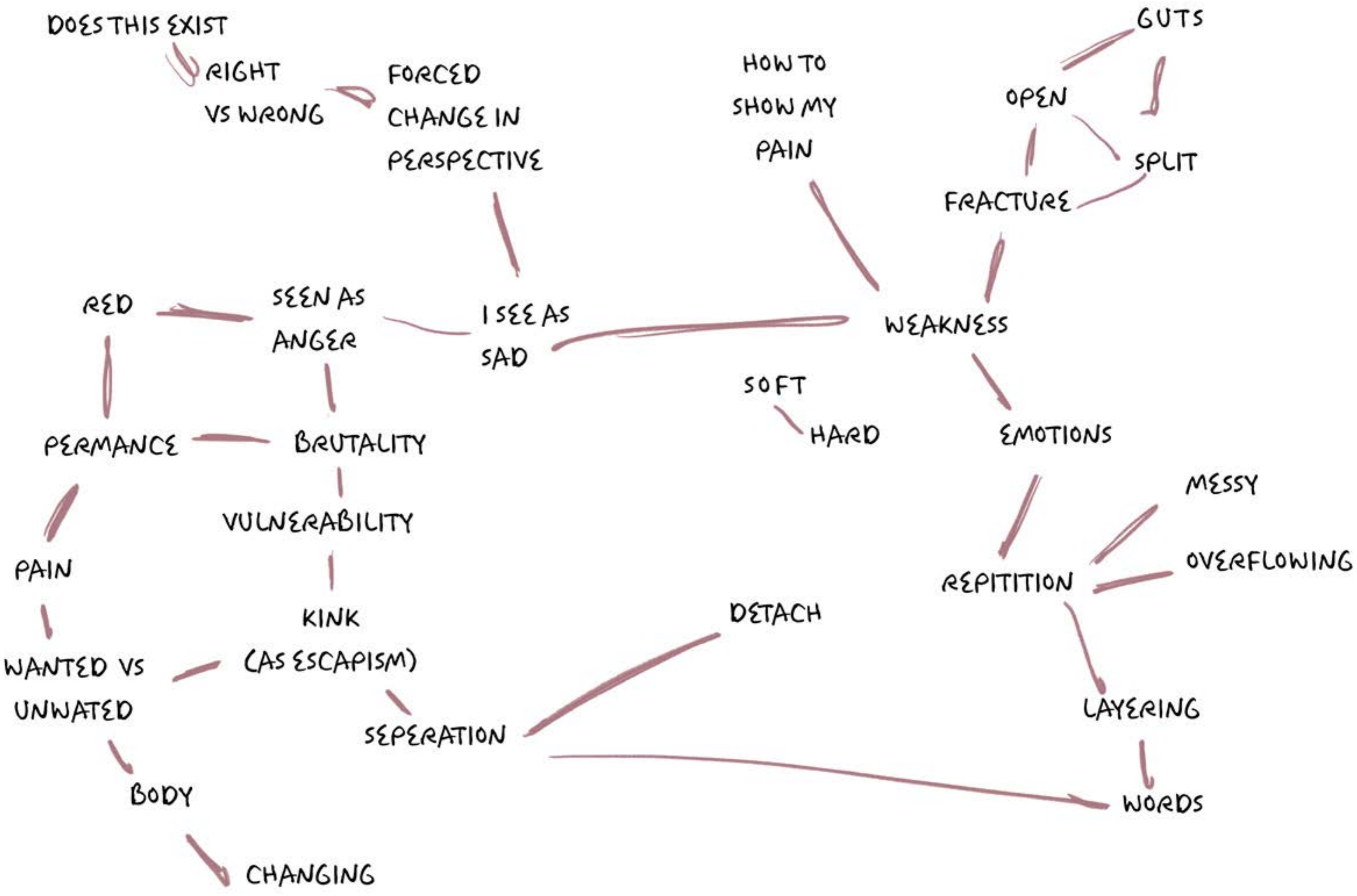
(AS ESCAPISM)

SEPERATION

WORDS

BODY

CHANGING



Kintsugi is a century old Japanese tradition of fixing broken pottery with gold in order to highlight its flaws and turn the object into something new. While the origins of this are unclear, there is a story about a military ruler in the 15th century who broke a rare bowl, and sent it out to repair and it came back with metal staples. What started with using staples turned to using urushi, which is a type of tree sap, to mend the piece and then gold was applied on top after the sap had dried. When Kintsugi was at its peak in the 17th century people would often buy regular pottery and break it in order to repair to make a profit since Kintsugi was much more sought after. (Gopnik)

Silk started becoming quite common in around 4000-3000BC, with one of the first (recorded) uses for silk was for wrapping babies and children. The delicacy and intimacy of silk is also important to my capstone samples.

While both of these techniques and material are wildly different, I looked at both when working on my samples. Kintsugi traditionally pieces things together, so I decided to push the concept of highlighting flaws by creating the flaws. I used silk because I wanted to work with something that is usually seen as “beautiful” and quite fragile. On top of that, the scrap of fabric I used was a piece I already had that I considered to be damaged and I wanted to bring new life into it.

I started by stitching little soot-like shapes by using a version of the eyelet stitch, and started to pull the fabric to manipulate the holes and make the gaps bigger. I really like how the stitches hide the words printed.



fig 15



fig 16

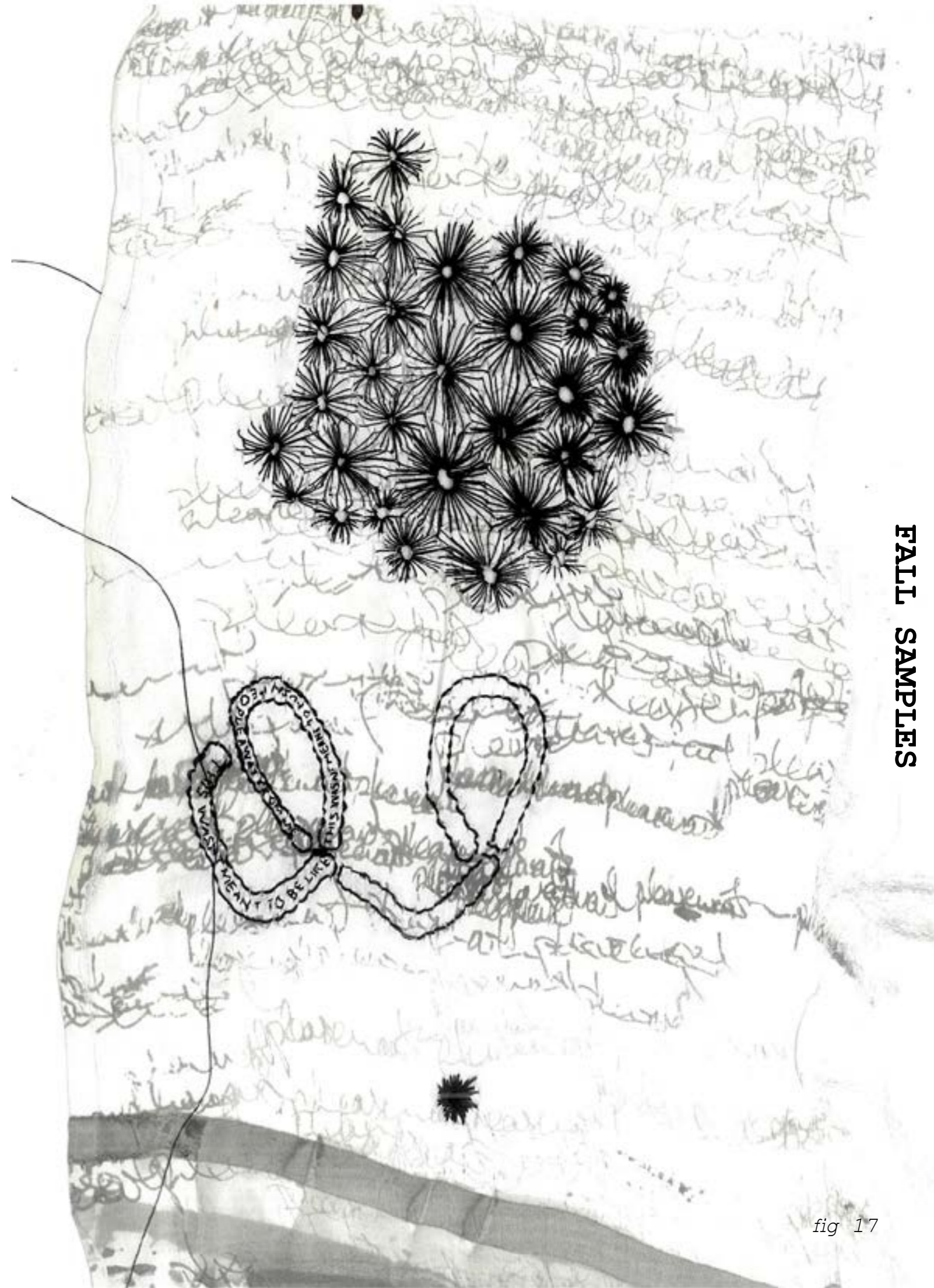


fig 17

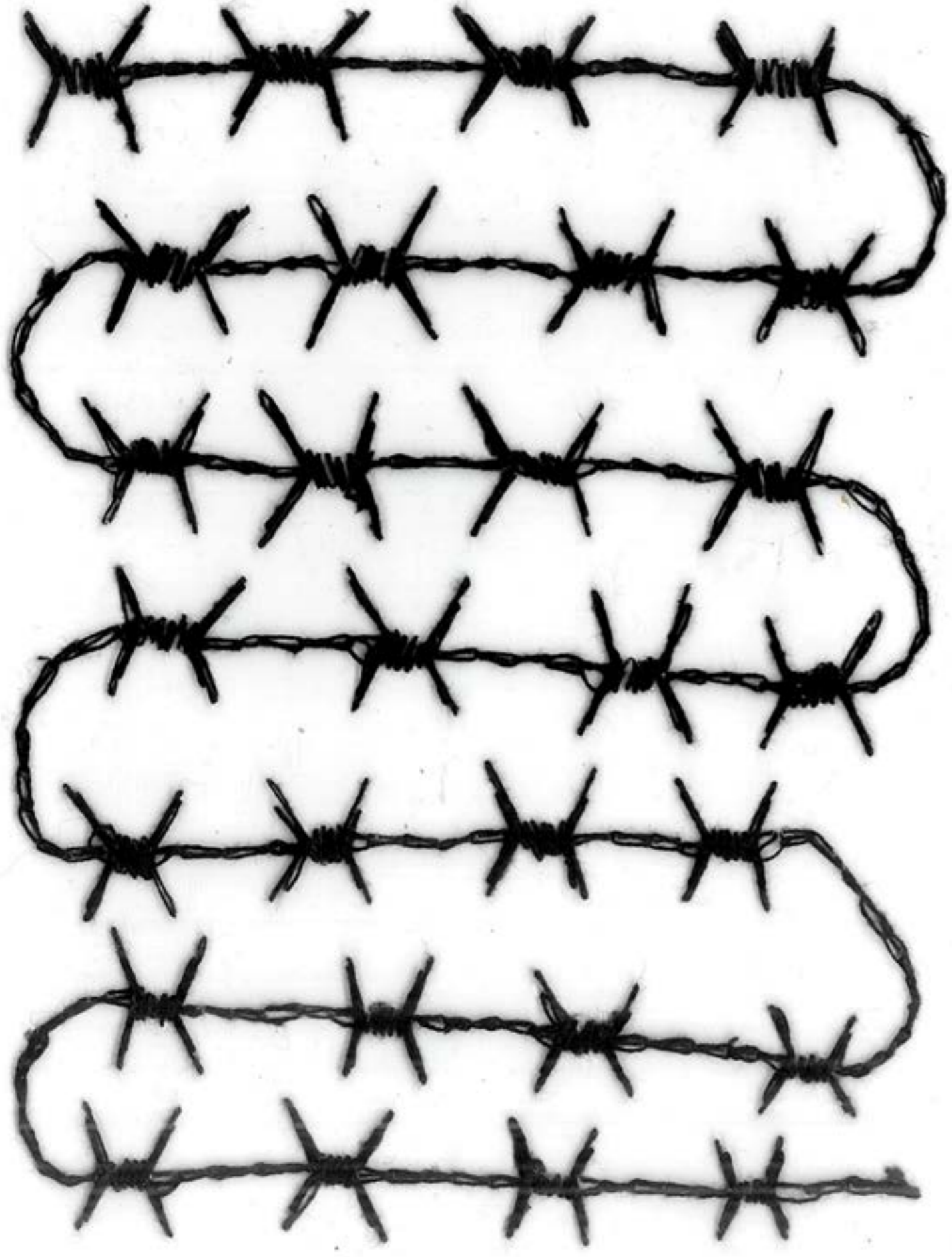


fig 18

One of the first samples I started on was mimicking fencing. To me fencing is something that can protect and hide emotions, but can also cause more damage than good. I've often tried to suppress my own emotions about my assault to the point it has damaged how I view myself. I used to think that if I pretended it never happened, it meant that this label of being a "victim", being forever tied to my own abuser and being forever seen as "damaged goods", would not apply to me. I had such an unhealthy view towards the word victim I tried everything I could to separate myself and what happened. I created a barrier between who I was and my own body, suppressing what happened to the point the emotional pain of it seeped out of me at every pore I couldn't contain.

I started with embroidering barbed wire using chain stitches onto acetate. The barbed wire imagery was used to indicate a barrier that was more harmful than protection, as if someone wanted to remove barbed wire directly the wire would have to dig into their skin, similar to how I harmed myself with my own thoughts. The use of acetate was to provide a background that was both sturdy and sheer so something could be placed behind it and still be clearly seen. The acetate also allowed for me to expose the embroidery directly onto a silkscreen so I could experiment with mimicking the embroidery onto print.

After the barbed wire imagery I decided to start embroidering different words and phrases with different stitches and techniques. The words I used still fit into my vision of fencing and barriers as I stitched things I told myself both within the direct aftermath of my assault and when I slowly was trying to heal and take my own barrier down.



fig 19

After doing my initial research, I decided to take a step back and change directions. I decided that I should take a break from focusing much on words and shift my focus to soft sculpture.

I was unsure of where to start so I started by painting various fabric and scraps I had leftover from the embroidered words samples, and tried to create a texture that vaguely resembled organs. Once the fabric was dried I decided to create a guts like shape out of some cheese cloth. I had no real plan going into it, I just wanted to create a shape I could start to play around with and explore further.

I ended up rolling polyfill along a few loose red and blue threads into the cheesecloth painted to create a long sausage like shape, and closed it off with a messy blanket stitch. Now I know that guts and intestines don't have

visible veins, but my goal was not to recreate organs, rather to create a shape that alluded to the body. The goal for this sample was to make something that was slightly creepy, and a bit more vague than my other pieces while still holding the same level of emotions.

After this sample, I started exploring a bit more with colour and the idea of having a fleshy and organ like imagery within my art to further push my concept. I find this imagery ties in to the problem of sexual assault survivors often having to internalize their pain and not having the accessibility to resources or being scared to speak up.

fig 23 + 24



FALL SAMPLES

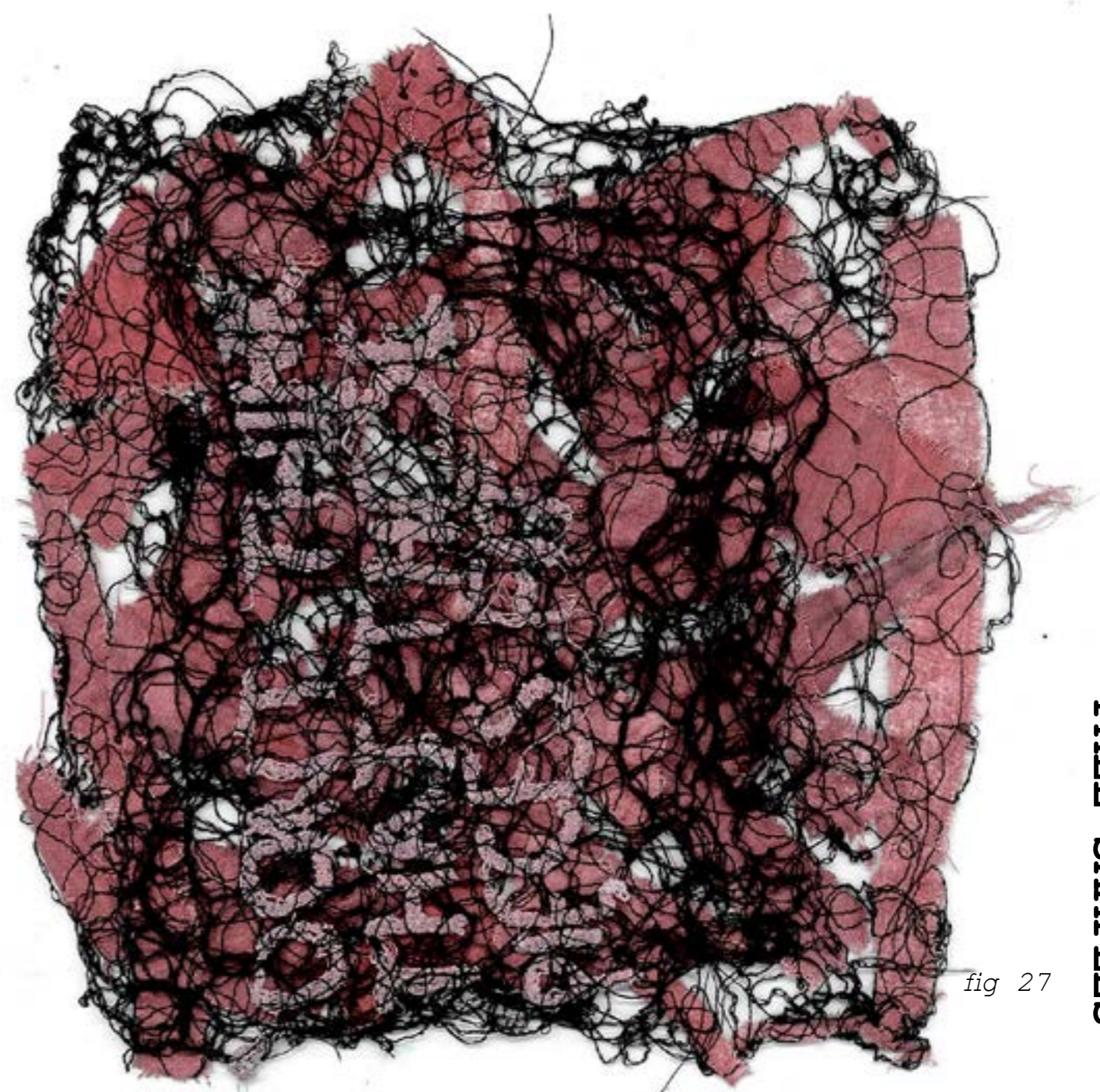


fig 27

I had collected a small amount of scraps of the red painted fabric after continuing to explore more guts-like shapes and decided to go back to working with more flat samples. I started with the red sample by sewing the scraps together with dissolvable fabric, as I was making it I got the idea to pair the piece with the phrase “I don’t think that these pieces fit.” but I was unsure whether to sew it into the piece or make something to go on top. In the end, I used the same technique to sandwich the letters into dissolvable fabric that led to the cobweb-like piece that lays on top. I am really pleased with how fluidly these pieces work, on there own and together, The words trapped in the thread read “I don’t think that these pieces fit.” I wanted to test out how to push my concept further and play around with the idea of detachment between my pieces. I think it was really effective and I really like how the pieces look entirely different when placed together.

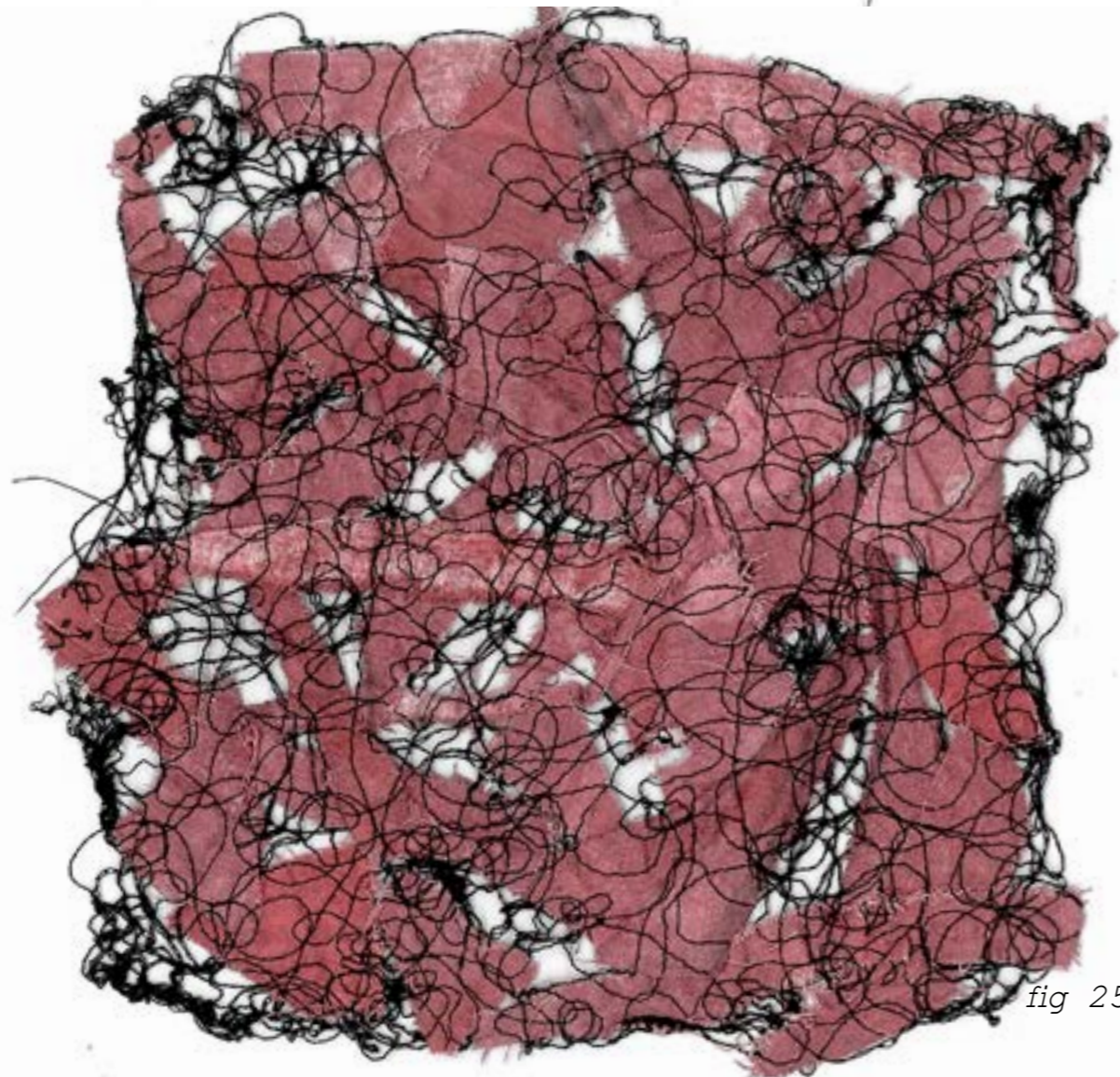
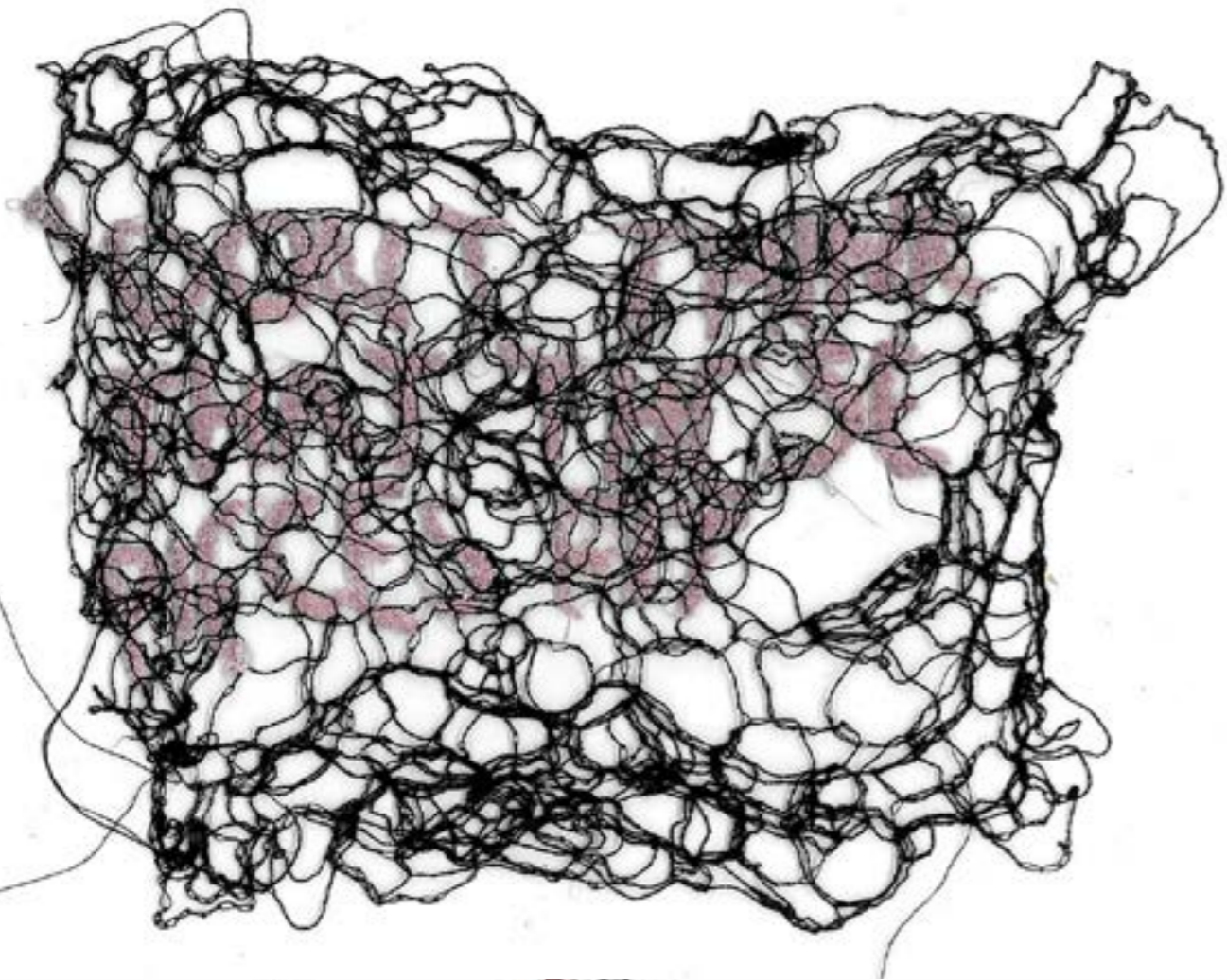


fig 25 + 26



THE PLEADING

March 1st

I remember when I tried to reach out to my family. I was in so much pain, it hurt to breathe and it hurt to think. I thought that if I just admitted it out loud, and was still seen the same way that it meant that I was okay, I was still the same person from before and I wasn't tied to this horrible person as I feared. But I didn't even get a sentence out before I was told "what did you think would happen," and my personal favourite, "how could you let this happen to yourself". Every wall I built, everything I had done to try to repair the damage within myself came crumbling down. It was three years later and I still couldn't escape that stupid fucking night no matter how much I tried. If I suppressed it and pretended it never happened I felt like an imposter waiting to burst at the seams, but if I tried to tell anyone who was supposed to be close to me and have my back no matter what I would be met with a horrified response. I tried so hard to avoid getting that Look, the look of pity and disgust where you know that person will never see you in the same light again, instead you'll always be someone lesser and all for something you never wanted.

The winter is always a hard time for me due to my trauma, so it made perfect sense that it is also when I started to feel stuck within my project. The samples I had done previously felt mismatched and unconnected to me, every idea I tried to come up with felt forced and unoriginal. The more I tried to push myself into creating the more I felt like an imposter in my own skin. I kept trying to play around with different variations and combinations of my samples from the fall only to realize nothing was working.

I decided to take a step back from everything I had previously been working on and get back into printing, something I am much more confident with. I did a few test prints with random images of my body with black and red ink, as well as mimicking lace by exposing a piece of lace on a leftover screen I had, to see how it would print. I also tried layering the images while printing as shown on the right side. Upon doing this I realized I still didn't know what I wanted to do, but I knew that I did want to include prints. After the prints I realized the methods that I had researched the previous semester were no longer of any importance to what I wanted to make and that I needed to shift my focus onto different methods and materials that highlighted the point I wanted to create.

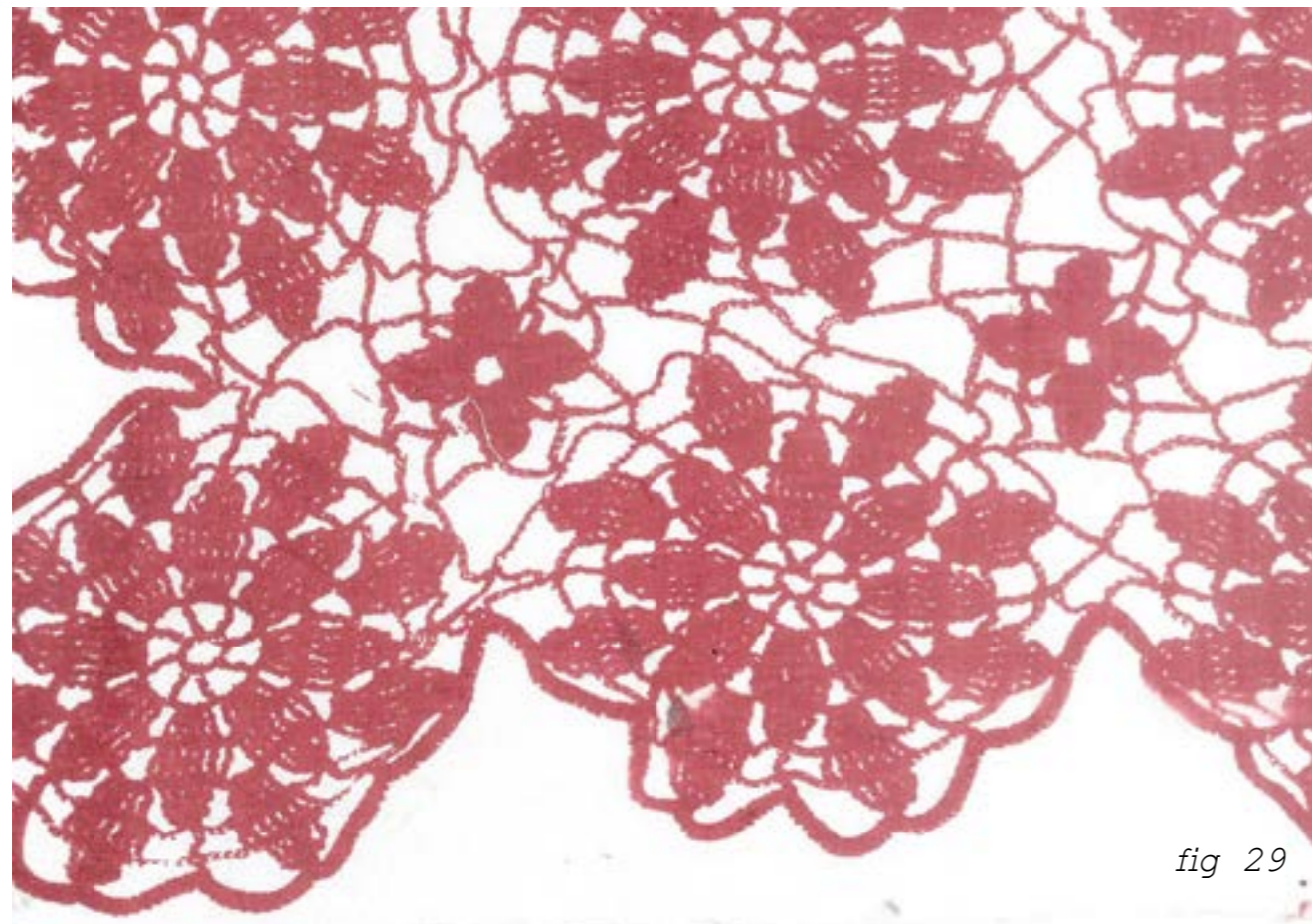


fig 29



fig 30

After screen printing, I decided to step back and think about why I chose to screenprint and what that added to the emotional aspect of my project. I decided to look into cyanotype and solar fast dyes originally as a way to produce prints and test images faster than screen printing with very little commitment as it is much easier to print onto acetate then expose an entire screen and having to rewash and expose when everything goes wrong.

As I was using the solar-fast dyes I realized the process made a lot more sense in terms of my final concept. Screen printing is a much more controlled and precise process, the images that come out are exactly what is exposed onto the screen, the colour is exactly what is mixed and pre-prepared for printing, and the final image is completely dependent on how the printer prints the image based on how many pulls and how much ink was on the screen. With solar fast there are a lot more uncontrollable variables that provide for a much more sporadic medium of image making. The colour may not end up exactly as the bottle shows, mixing colours is an extreme gamble as the dyes never look like the final printed colour so it is hard to see what is being mixed and how much has already been put in or what the colour will come out as. And the images themselves also may not come out as an even print as the saturation of the dyes can affect the image bubbling or exposing evenly under the light.



fig 31

The first cyanotypes I did were very over saturated and provided a lot of bubbling that caused a very distorted, almost damaged look to the image. The colours themselves also came out very differently than I had imagined, the scarlet red came out almost purple and very light, and the red came out almost pink.

After I focused on a few more solar-fast prints with different fabrics, experimenting with placing sheer fabrics on top of cotton fabrics to see if they would expose the same; they did not. I tried exposing words on top of images but only the print of the type showed up on the images.



fig 32

I realized that the sporadicness and damaged look of the cyanotypes worked very well in my favour. I wanted the prints to represent the pain of my past, and the memories that haunt me. The memories are like a ghost that doesn't move but also doesn't leave, it just stands there looming as a forever reminder that something is wrong, and will probably never be normal again, but you just have to learn to live with it and continue as normal. The distorted and bubble-like effect that the cyanotypes left really left me with a haunted feeling as I was reminded of distorted film that was left to the harsh weather of time and neglect.

After working with the cyanotype I went back to the lace I tried to mimic in my previous screen-prints and thought about how else I could do that within my project. Traditionally lace is a time-staking and delicate process, something that can take years to master and dozens of hours to produce a single small-scale piece. I wanted to replicate lace in the sense of the sheer look and delicacy, but I didn't want to do something that was such a thought-through process with no room for error. I decided to achieve this by using machine embroidery on dissolvable fabric, to achieve a lace-like look that allowed for a lot more sporadicness and spontaneity.

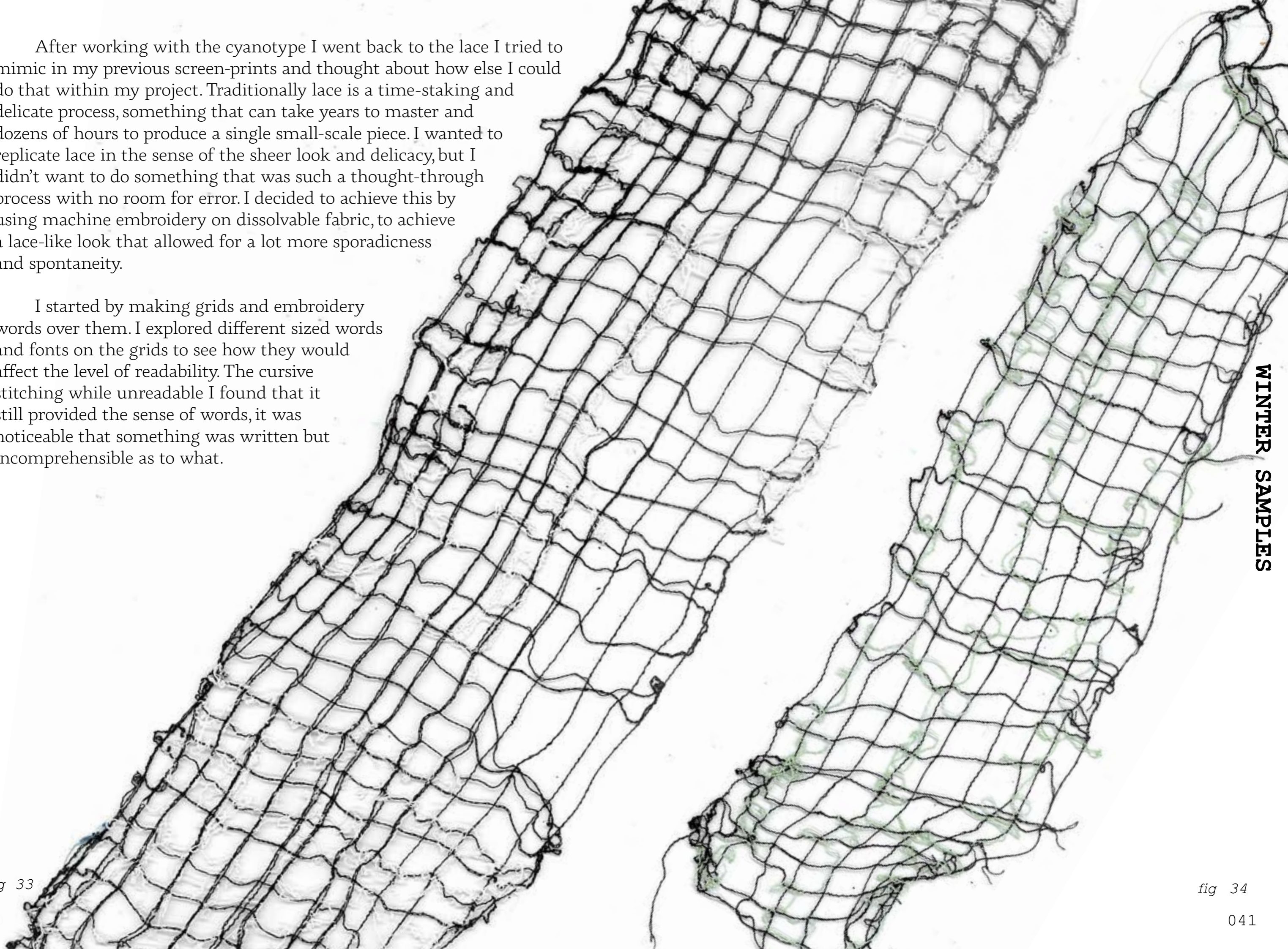
I started by making grids and embroidery words over them. I explored different sized words and fonts on the grids to see how they would affect the level of readability. The cursive stitching while unreadable I found that it still provided the sense of words, it was noticeable that something was written but incomprehensible as to what.

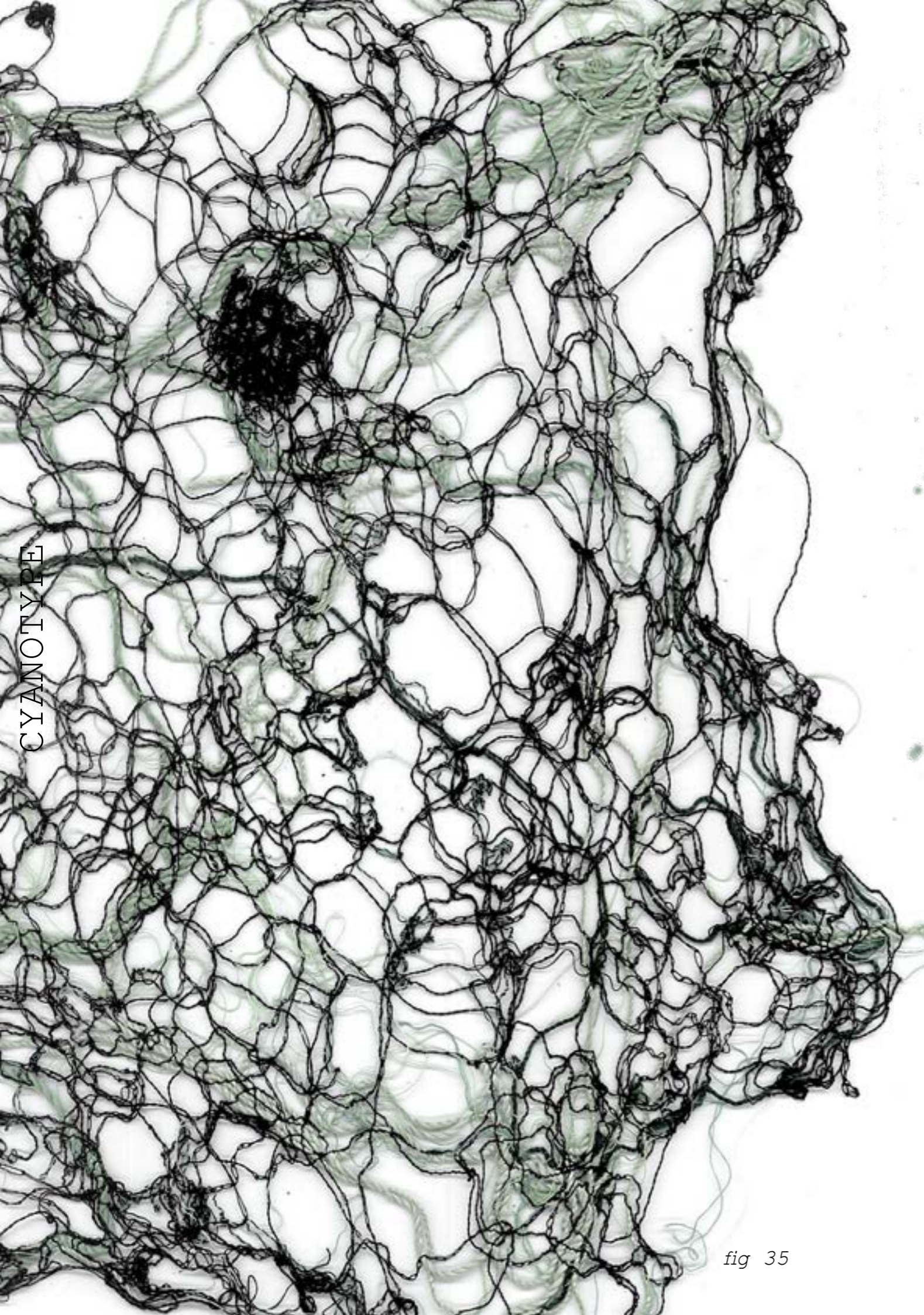
MACHINE STITCHING

WINTER SAMPLES

fig 33

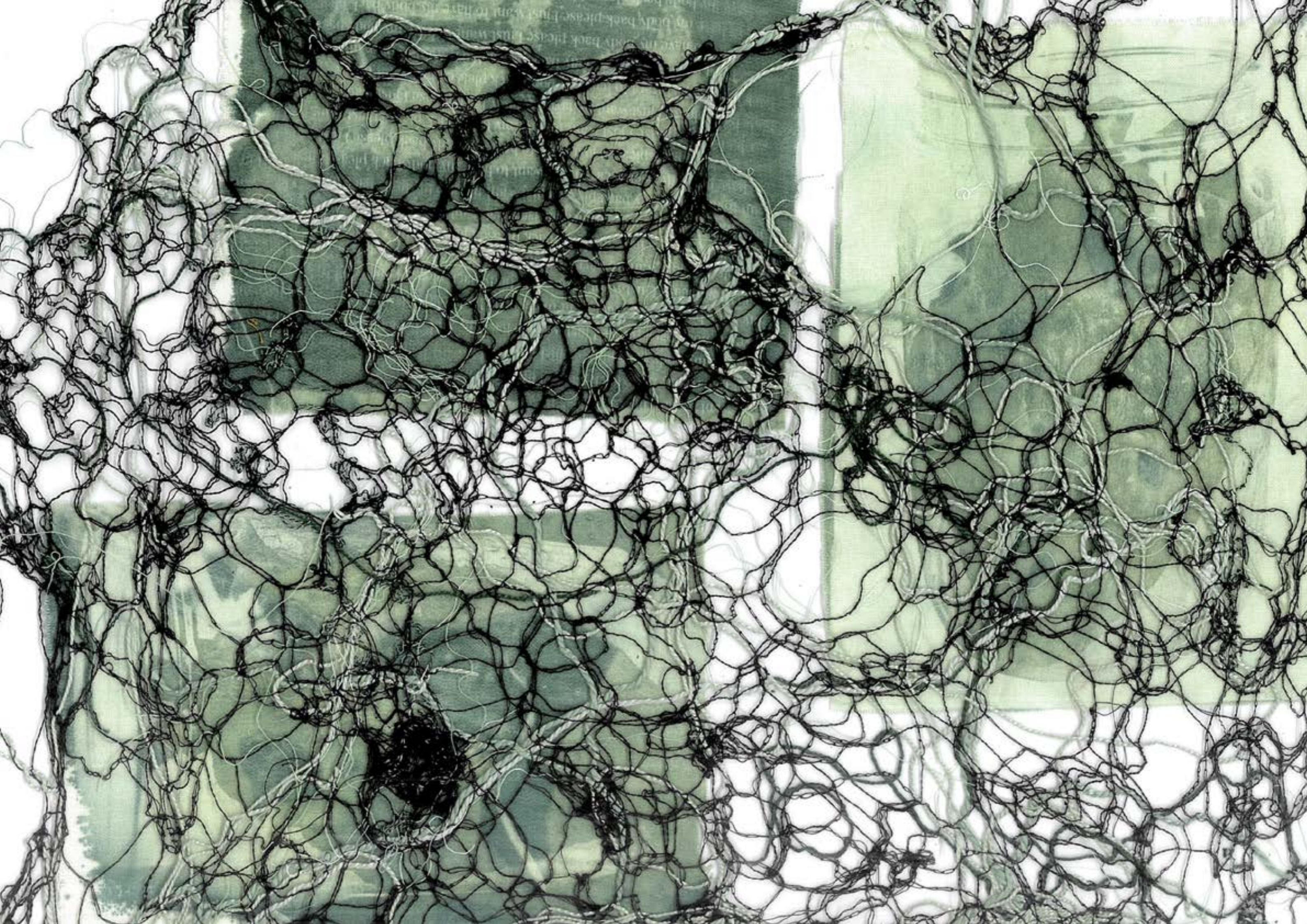
fig 34



*fig 35*

After the grids I realized that they were a lot more contained and organized than I had wanted. I wanted something that mimicked lace in the sheerness and delicacy, but I also wanted something that had a more haunted and darker look. I took a lot back at my samples from the fall term and realized I really liked the more sporadic stitching incorporating random scraps. I went back to this idea but started to include painted threads that matched the colours of the previous cyanotypes so I could play around with how they looked together.

fig 36 + 37





THE ACCEPTING

It took a long time to realize it was something that I was never going to "get over". So many people told me I needed to. I thought that was the only way. But the more I tried too the more it forced me to think about it and the more I ended up hurting myself. It's not something that has some happy or heroic ending, I never felt like it made me stronger, and I still have to face the people who shamed me for trying to be open about it. But at the end of the day, it's something that happened that wasn't my fault and I can never change that. It doesn't make me any less of a person just because I've had to change from it and it doesn't mean I'm weak for being unable to forgive.

My final capstone piece, “I’m Fine (But please don’t look through the gaps in my armour)” was made to reflect the pain and trauma of being a survivor of sexual assault. The intent for the piece was to create something that was both delicate and harsh to reflect the emotions I often feel about my own assault. I have often been told that my story is false or my own fault, so I wanted to create something that showed the pain I felt, not only from my assault but from not being believed by my family and close friends as well. Being blamed or not believed is something too many people go through,

Two of the major themes I wanted to convey within my piece was repetition and suffocation. I often have a lot of contradicting and repetitive thoughts about my assault, and I wanted to find a way to translate this into my practice and show the turmoil some people feel after becoming a “victim”, a term that often holds so much weight and pain, forever tying said “victim” to their abuser.

I wanted to show pain and suffocation through two separate pieces that hung together as one. The first layer being a stitched piece of various densities, and behind a quilted piece made up of screenprints and cyanotypes. The quilted piece placed behind the stitch layer forces the viewers to look through the gaps in order to see the whole images.



fig 40



fig 41



fig 42

The quilted pieces behind represent two different things. The cyanotypes our images of hearts and hands, meant to represent the actual incident and how I felt like my heart was splayed open after. The screen prints are close up images of my body representing how disconnected and out of touch with myself I felt after, and desperately trying to claw myself back into my own body.

The screen-prints were printed in similar colours to the cyanotype as well as printed in a way that mimicked the distressed and uneven look of the cyanotypes. The mimicking shows the attempt at trying to get myself back to who I was before and the pain I went through denying myself to properly heal as I was so afraid of being seen as damaged.

The way the pieces are stitched together represents my attempt at perfection, the way they are stitched is messy, uneven, and not straight, very different from how a traditional quilt would be made. Before I made it I was obsessed with this idea of “perfection” when pieces it together, but when doing my samples I realized I didn’t like that idea at all. It also really related to how I healed. I tried and tried to heal “the right way”, so many people were telling me I have to forgive and forget in order to be healed on but I don’t think that’s the case at all, I can still have negative feelings and harbor resentment, and I don’t have to be over it to be moved on and healed.

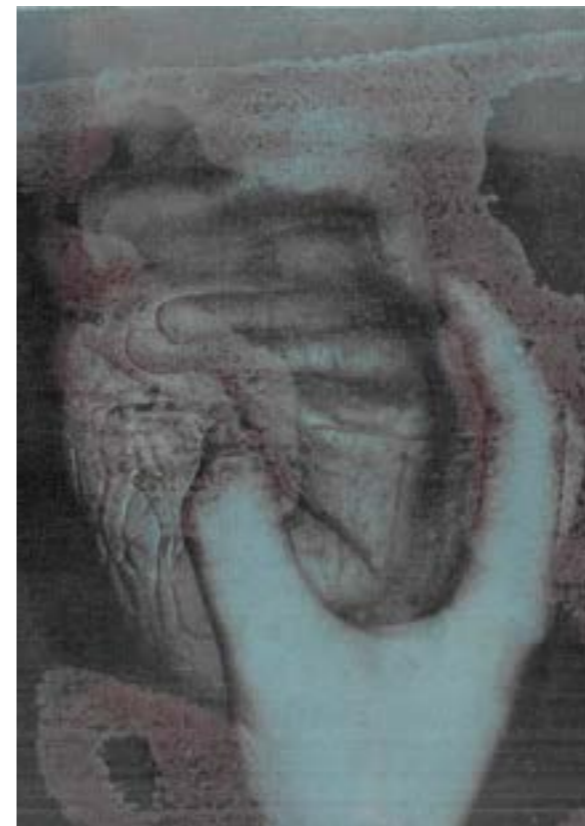


fig 43 + 44

I decided to machine stitch onto dissolvable fabric to create an intricate lace-like piece to capture my emotion. I machine stitched different coloured yarns together with black thread in an intricate and distressed order in different densities. The painted threads represent the different thoughts and emotions I have had about my assault, and the black threads machine stitching them into place represents being held back from healing.

The piece is made from different pieces around 1 square foot in size. The process while making the stitched lace was very repetitive, sometimes I zoned out during it, creating darker areas or pieces that were looser and barely containing the strings, and losing track of my actions. But some pieces I became hyper focused, making sure each stitch went where I wanted, making sure it was too dense or open and that the threads in between were perfectly trapped and unable to escape. When each piece was stitched together to form the final, the individual pieces became unidentifiable, merging together seamlessly.

STITCHED PEICE



fig 45

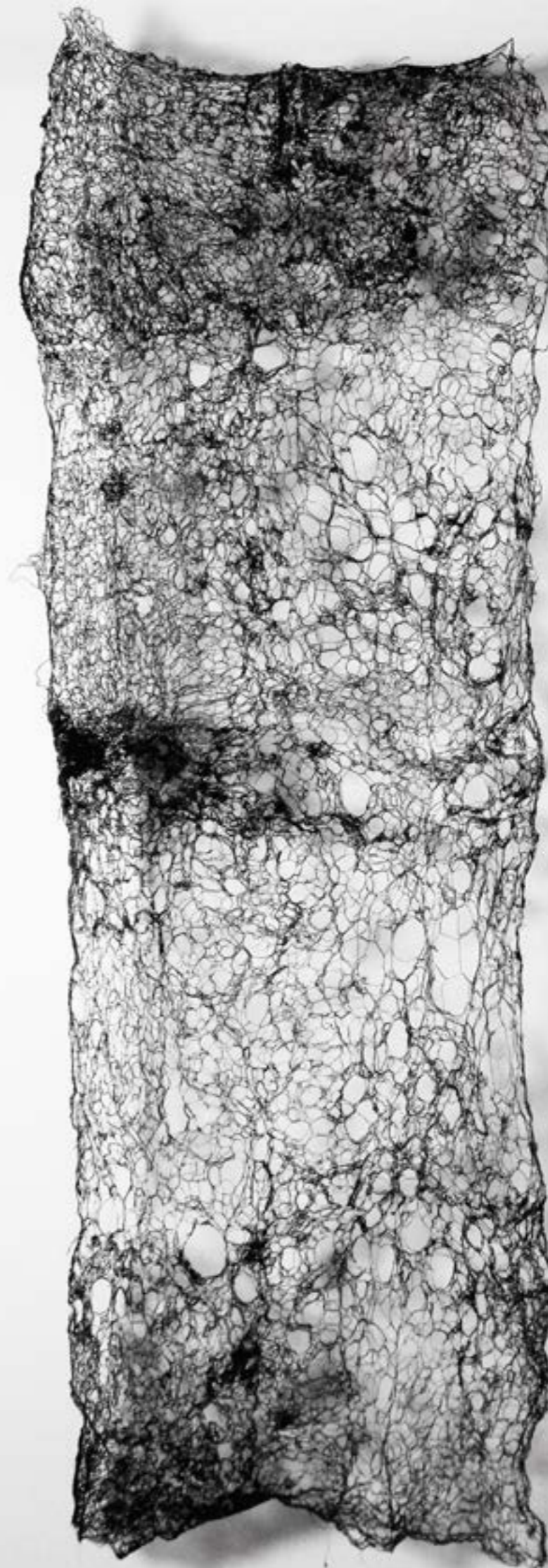
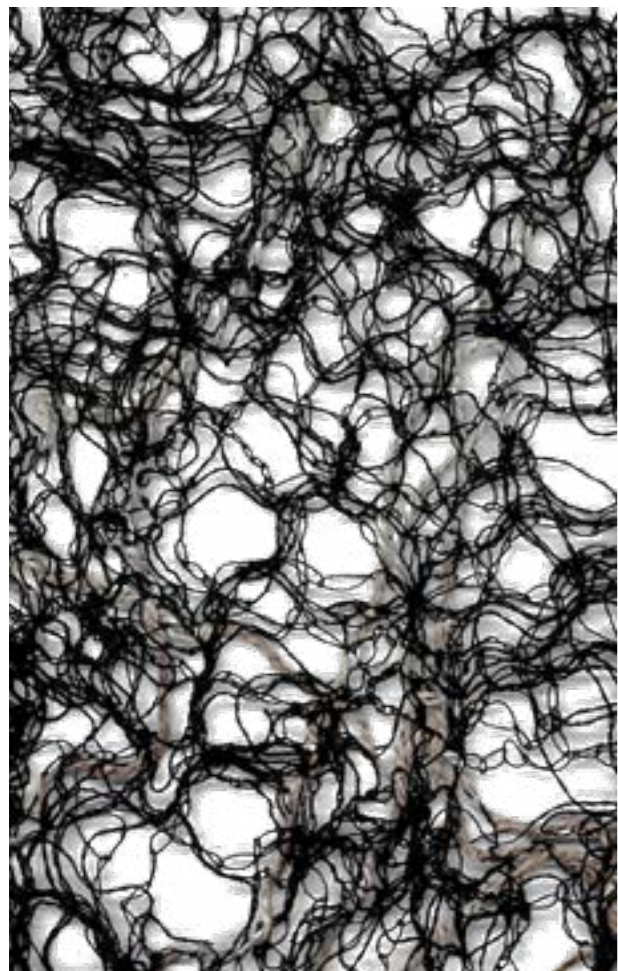


fig 46

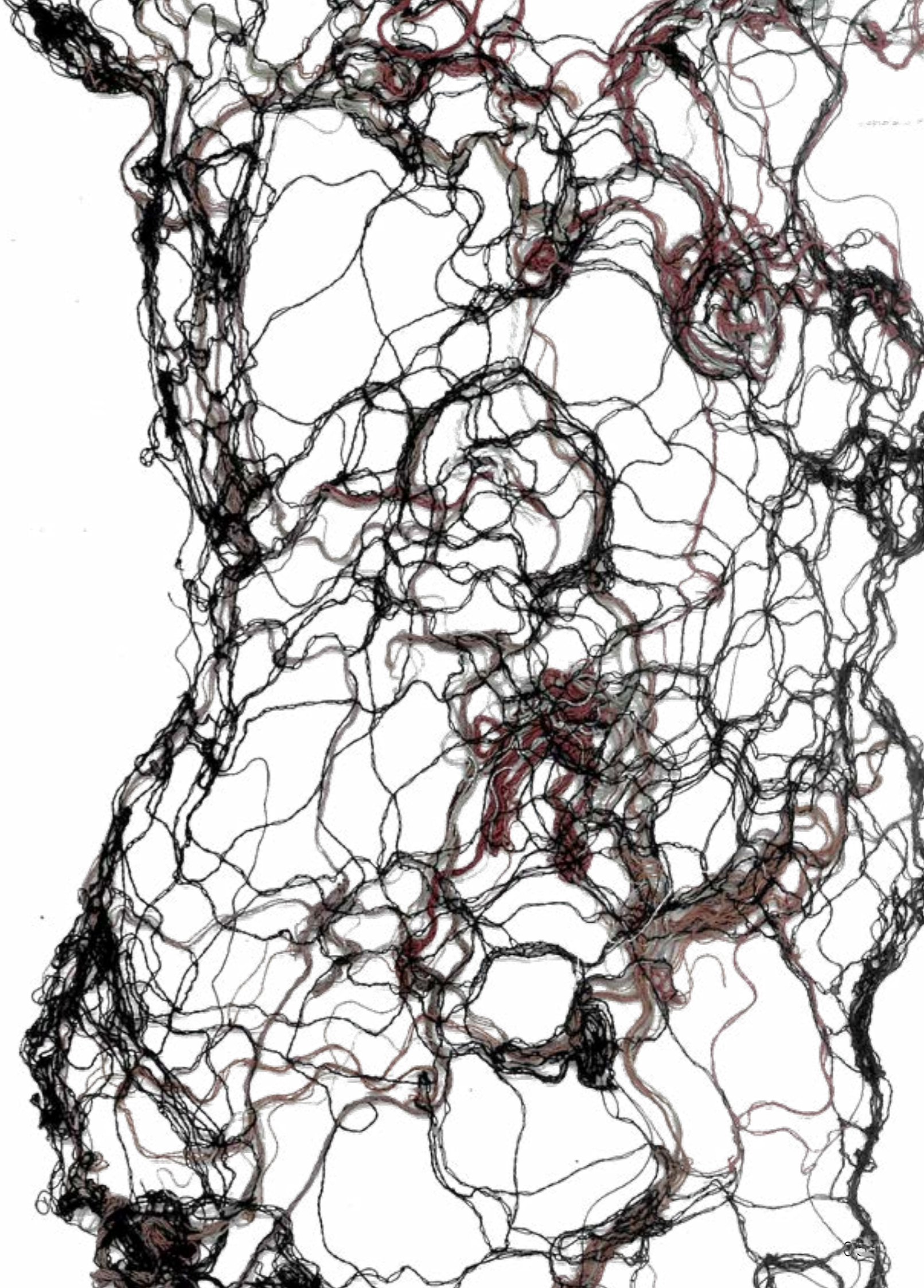


The different densities of the black thread represent my struggling to heal. The mix of darker and open areas show my different thoughts about how people reacted to it. Sometimes I felt closed off, afraid of what other people would think of me if I told them, would I always be seen as a victim, as something lesser in their eyes? And other times, when people did tell me what I feared, that it was my fault, I was naive, I felt open and ripped apart. I shouldn't have had to hear the people closest to me tell me they were taking the side of someone they didn't even know over me.

By blending them all together, it shows my struggle to be able to tell where I was in my healing, unable to identify when I was hurting myself more by not being able to accept what happened to me and believing other peoples opinions over my own. I had to go over and over in my head what happened to me to convince myself I shouldn't listen to others, sending myself into a dark spiral of cobwebbed and overlapping thoughts.



fig 47 + 48 + 49



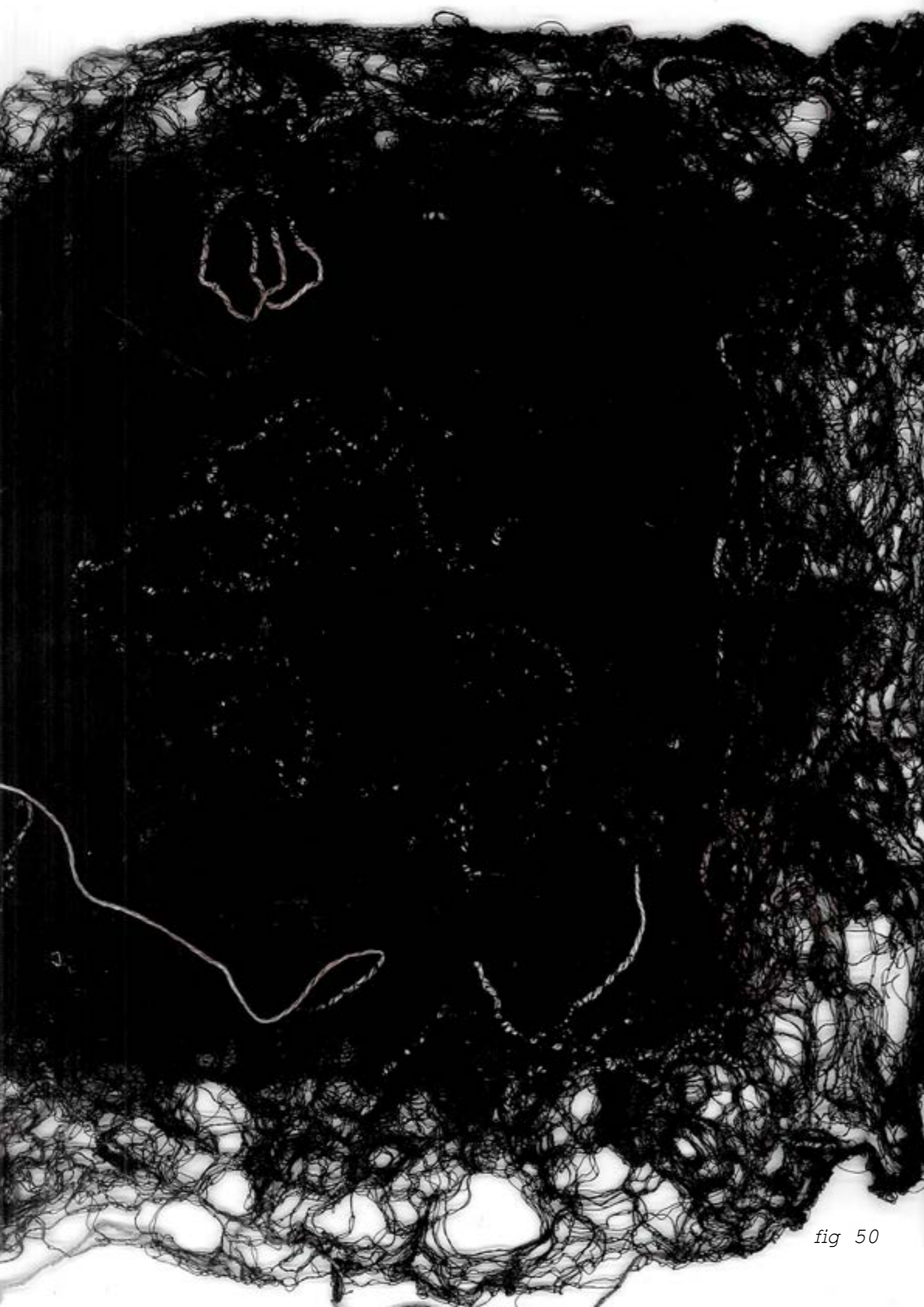


fig 50

Throughout the past school year my capstone has changed a lot. From what started out as a loose concept on trauma has turned into something deeply personal to me about my own trauma with assault and how it's okay to not forgive. From the very beginning I knew that I wanted to create something based on the pain of being a sexual assault victim but I wasn't sure what that meant. Through a lot of trial and error I ended up being able to create a piece that represented all of my pain and trauma, and is hopefully a way to show others that healing doesn't have to be one specific way.

I've discovered a lot about myself throughout this project and a lot about how I work. While my initial theme of trauma has stayed consistent, my capstone has drastically changed throughout the months. The main thing I learned was that I shouldn't put so much effort in perfecting a concept, and should focus mainly on the piece itself and trust myself that everything will make sense in the end.

Greenless, K. (2005) *Creating Sketchbooks for embroiderers and Textile Artists*. Anova Books Company Ltd.

Kay Greenless examines the importance of sketchbooks within textile art. The book is separated into 4 sections focusing on the purpose of sketchbooks and storytelling, different approaches and “sketching as a process”, the meaning behind choices and how to elevate a sketchbook beyond a book bought at a craft store, and finally technical information, more in depth explorations and guides into how to start a sketchbook. I found this book when I was at a point within my capstone project where I didn’t know exactly what to do. I felt overwhelmed and was unsure of where to start, and while I knew I should have started a sketchbook in order to focus on my ideas, it felt daunting and left me a bit unsure as I did not know how to put my ideas into a conventional sketchbook as my thoughts and concepts weren’t exactly traditional shapes or images to draw, and my thoughts felt too personal to write down in a book for all to see. This book really helped to show that sketchbooks do not have to be conventional or consist with neat ideas.

Howard, C. (2005) *The Constance Howard Book of Stitches*. Chrysalis Books Group plc.

The Constance Howard Book of Stitches focuses on exploring different stitch techniques. The author shows stitches using various placement, size variations, and thread, in order to explore how the same stitches can be transformed. The book not only teaches and shows how to create existing stitches that offer different textures and patterns, but as well gives the readers the knowledge and techniques needed to explore how to create their own version of the stitches. I have currently been researching and exploring some of the different stitches within this book to create various different fence-like stitches, using different techniques and threads. I hope that by researching the stitches within this book further I can explore how different techniques and threads can change the overall outcome and emotions of a piece.

Lamb, H. (2019) *Poetic Cloth*. Pavilion Books Company Ltd.

In the book *Poetic Cloth* the author Hannah Lamb explores different textile techniques in relation to storytelling. The book is separated into

different chapters for each technique, each chapter explaining a brief history or definition of the technique, a tutorial, and examining different artists who use the technique and explaining the importance of that specific technique within each piece shown. The techniques that Lamb explores range from burn out, cyanotype, cobwebbing and using dissolving fabric as a way to connect pieces together, as well as different stitch types. Lamb examines the importance and meaning behind each technique and how each technique can elevate a piece and bring more meaning. This book has helped me reexamine how and why I use certain techniques within art, and how I can utilize specific techniques to add further emotional depth into my art. Since my art is very emotional, it is important that each technique I use is carefully picked knowing that it can be used to elevate the themes and emotions that I want to be visible within my work.

Machado, C.M. (2017) *Her Body and Other Parties: Stories*. Grey Wolf Press.

Her Body and Other Parties is a collection of short fiction stories all varying in styles. Every story tackles the themes of sex and trauma in a unique perspective. The first story in the collection is a retelling of *The Green Ribbon*, and tells the story of a woman with a ribbon on her neck who begs her husband to not take it off. The title is “The Husband Stitch”, in reference to the practice of doctors sewing up a woman’s vagina with an extra, unnecessary stitch after birth (often due to the husband asking) in order to create a “tighter” vagina and give the husband more pleasure in sex. The book continues to tell a story of a woman who recounts all of her past sexual encounters, with each encounter giving the reader a glimpse into how the world is being overcome by an epidemic and the woman reliving her encounters uses sex as a chance at human connection in a world where everyone is in hiding or on the run. The next stories range from quotes from *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit*, to stories about sexual assault. Each story examines the female body and the main character’s relation to sex in a different way. The reason this book is important for my capstone research is because Machado chooses to show the way women often separate themselves from their body and sex in the form of digestible short stories. I want to be able to show a similar narrative within my art and be able to take my own pain and trauma and turn it into something that shows the viewers the after effects of sexual assault trauma and learning to live with that pain.

Prain, L. (2014) *Strange Material: Storytelling Through Textiles*. Arsenal Pulp Press.

The author of this book examines the importance of storytelling within textile art and the different ways artists choose to display their stories. There are 10 chapters all focusing on a different aspect of storytelling in textiles, ranging from wearables, to politics, memory, fiction, and community. Each chapter shows different artists who work within the related themes and allows for the artist to explain how and why the techniques and stories are interrelated and important to tell. The chapters that I found most helpful for my own capstone research were Making Meaning, and poetic textiles. The making meaning chapter starts the book off by introducing the idea of storytelling within textiles and a brief history and the overall importance. A few of the artists examined within this chapter work with words to tell a literal story. The chapter Poetic Textiles examines multiple artists who use text in different ways. From bed linens, to stitch tags into clothing, the chapter explores how words can be used for such a broad array of meanings within art, and vary drastically depending on the techniques and object that the words are stitched to.

Pg 13: Narett, Sophia. Sophia Narett. 2022. Retrieved from <http://www.sophianarrett.com/>

Pg 14-15: Guerrilla Girls. Guerrilla Girls, 1985-2022, <https://www.guerrillagirls.com/>

Pg 16-17 Lacombe, Michelle. Artist Talk, Concordia, 2019.

Pg 18: Spector, Nancy. Marina Abramovic: Rhythm 0, 2018. Retrieved from <https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/5177>

Pg 19: Johnson. B. K. K Johnson Bowles Art, 2019, <https://kjohnson-bowlesart.com/portfolio>

Pg 22: Silva, M. da. (2020, July 14). Emma Sulkowicz isn't done making art about rape. NOW Magazine. Retrieved December 15, 2022, from <https://nowtoronto.com/art-and-books/art/mattress-performance-artist-emma-sulkowicz-not-done-making-art-about-rape>

Pg 30: Vainker, Shelagh (2004). *Chinese Silk: A Cultural History*. Rutgers University Press. P 20. ISBN 978-0813534466

Pg 30: Gopnik, Blake (March 3, 2009). "Golden Seams: The Japanese Art of Mending Ceramics' at Freer". The Washington Post.

- fig 1 Dahri Koopman, *My armor crumpled up*. 2023
- fig 2 Dahri Koopman, *Please stop saying that I asked for this*. 2022
- fig 3 Dahri Koopman, *My heart in a jar*. 2023
- fig 4 Dahri Koopman, *My armor, up close*. 2023
- fig 5 Dahri Koopman, *I'm sorry you raised a whore*. 2022
- fig 6 Sophia Narett, *Somebody*. 2020. Retrieved from <http://www.sophianarrett.com/soul-kiss>
- fig 7 Sophia Narett, *Candy Rose*. 2018. Retrieved from <http://www.sophianarrett.com/soul-kiss>
- fig 8 Guerrilla Girls, *Secret Identities*, 1999. Retrieved from, <https://www.guerrillagirls.com/>
- fig 9 Christian B & Laurence P. *The Bloody Gash: Michelle Lacombe*. 2016, retrieved from <https://www.plein-sud.org/Michelle-Lacombe-263.html>
- fig 10 Rafael Vargas. *Rhythm 0 at Museum of Parallel Narratives*. 2011, retrieved from <https://saltonline.org/en/738/rhythm-0-marina-abramovic>
- fig 11 K. Johnson Bowles, *Rictus Mortis*. retrieved from <https://kjohnson-bowlesart.com/portfolio>
- fig 12 Adam Sherman. *Mattress Performance, Carry that weight by Emma Sulkowicz*. 2014, retrieved from <https://nowtoronto.com/art-and-books/art/mattress-performance-artist-emma-sulkowicz-not-done-making-art-about-rape>
- fig 13 Lelia Ettachfini. *The Ship is Sinking by Emma Sulkowicz*. 2017, retrieved from <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/emma-sulkowicz-ship-is-sinking-976988>
- fig 14 Dahri Koopman, *My guts: up close and personal*. 2022
- fig 15 N/A retrieved from <https://www.dalstonmillfabrics.co.uk/fabric-blog/what-is-silk-fabric>
- fig 16 Liza Lou. *Pray*. 2011, retrieved from <https://www.artsy.net/artist/liza-lou/works-for-sale>
- fig 17 Dahri Koopman, *I destroy myself a little bit more everytime I think of you*. 2022
- fig 18 Dahri Koopman, *I'm just trying to protect myself*, 2022
- fig 19 Dahri Koopman, *Why can't you understand*, 2022
- fig 20 Dahri Koopman, *Why did you let that happen to you?* 2022
- fig 21 Dahri Koopman, *Stop looking*. 2022
- fig 22 Dahri Koopman, *It won't happen again*. 2022
- fig 23 Dahri Koopman, *My guts: splayed out in front of you*, 2022
- fig 24 Dahri Koopman, *My guts: in your hands*, 2022
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- fig 27 Dahri Koopman, *I don't think these pieces fit together*, 2022
- fig 28 Dahri Koopman, *Cyanotype hand*. 2023
- fig 29 Dahri Koopman, *Red lace*. 2023
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- fig 32 Dahri Koopman, *Green sheer cyanotypes*. 2023
- fig 33 Dahri Koopman, *Green grid stitch*. 2023
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- fig 38 Dahri Koopman, *Green combined samples*. 2023
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- fig 40 Dahri Koopman, *Final peice, close up*. 2023
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- fig 43 Dahri Koopman, *Heart from final piece*. 2023
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- fig 45 Dahri Koopman, *But please don't look through the gaps in my armour, close up*. 2023
- fig 46 Dahri Koopman, *But please don't look through the gaps in my armour*. 2023
- fig 47 Dahri Koopman, *Stitch sample middle density*. 2023
- fig 47 Dahri Koopman, *Stitch sample dark density*. 2023
- fig 47 Dahri Koopman, *Stitch sample loose density*. 2023
- fig 47 Dahri Koopman, *The void*. 2023

the end.