

Ecstatic Spaces

by
Tara Keens - Douglas

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thesis requirement for the degree of
Master of Architecture

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATON

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

ABSTRACT

“Jumbie, Jumbie dey ... outta body back to yubself! ...”

Jumbie’, Machel Montano

The chant shakes the crowd, uncorking the energy of the masquerade. This is our stomping ground. Nothing can hold us back. We display ourselves, we play ourselves. Uncontrolled bodies pelt rhythmically. Bouncing backsides, arms and legs move in all directions. In a mess of sweat, feathers, and beads, this ‘Jumbie’ is ready to come out. As I rush the stage, the music hits me. I am speechless, breathless, and removed. Out of body, I see the chaos on the streets below. I see the colors, the costumes, the mass of open mouths, singing and laughing. The crowd climaxes, delivered from reason.

In that moment I saw the sweet revelry of an island I felt, more than ever, I belonged to. I wondered what that feeling was, why it happened, and when it would happen again.

This is not an everyday occurrence; this is inexplicable excitement. It swamps all the senses. It is addictive; like a drug it keeps you coming back for more. It is an out-of-body experience and an opportunity to express your shadow self.

Trinidad’s Carnival was introduced by the French and adapted by Trinidad’s diverse population. Trinidadian’s reinvent and revitalize new forms within carnival: it is uniquely theirs. The participants revel in a festival that is not only excessive, but also temporal, occurring outside of ordinary life. In the festi-

val, everything is upside down and inside out. This inversion is expressed in laughter.

The people of Trinidad communicate in the playful and sensuous nature of the carnival costume. They mock the seriousness of the political world, rejecting state and class. A medium for humor, the costumes stand in for the bodies we do not have; ambivalently, they both degrade and regenerate. Costumed, Carnival embraces laughter and the grotesque, and gives the community identity. The chaos of parade, music, and dance fuses the body with the costume, transforming the individual, freeing him from inhibitions. For a brief moment it allows the body to engage in its own ideal, becoming something that it is not. The fusion of body and Carnival costume tells the untold story of the masquerader.

The four costume designs shown here are grotesque, making extreme exaggerations and unfathomable representations of the body, violating the idealized, classical body. The costumes portray the carnival body in the act of becoming, taking inspiration from earthy worldliness, while also giving out to it. Costume enables the individual to wake an essential connection to the community, becoming part of something larger. In this new connection we are emotionally reborn; Carnival moves us beyond our bodies and into the experience of ecstasy.

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Tracey Eve Winton

EXTERNAL READER: William Chesney

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DEDICATIONS

To my parents for their love and support.

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FOUR COSTUMES

APPROPRIATION

“For two full days Albrick was a dragon in Port-of-Spain, moving through the loud hot streets, dancing the bad-devil dance ... prancing and bowing, breathing out fire, lunging against his chains, threatening with his claws, saying to the city: ‘I is a dragon. I have a fire in my belly and claws on my hands; watch me! Note me well, for I am ready to burn down your city. I am ready to tear you apart, limb by limb.’

And he watched terror strike pale faces as he lunged towards them, and he smiled inwardly as they grinned nervously and rushed hands into their pockets to find coins to offer him appeasement, as was the tradition. But no. No. He refused the money. He wanted it to be known that he was for real, that you couldn’t just offer him a coin and he would disappear. He wanted them to know that he would always be threatening there, a breath away from them. Some couldn’t understand it, this refusal of the coins. They thought that they were not offering enough; and as he danced before them they made another journey into their pockets and showed him more coins. He didn’t take the money - ‘No, this couldn’t happen! This dragon was crazy! This fella wanted trouble!’ But it was Carnival. Whoever heard someone calling police for a Dragon.”

Earl Lovelace
The Dragon Can’t Dance

Fig. 1 *‘Appropriation’* Costume. Bond Paper.



Fig. 2 *'Appropriation'* Costume. Bond Paper.

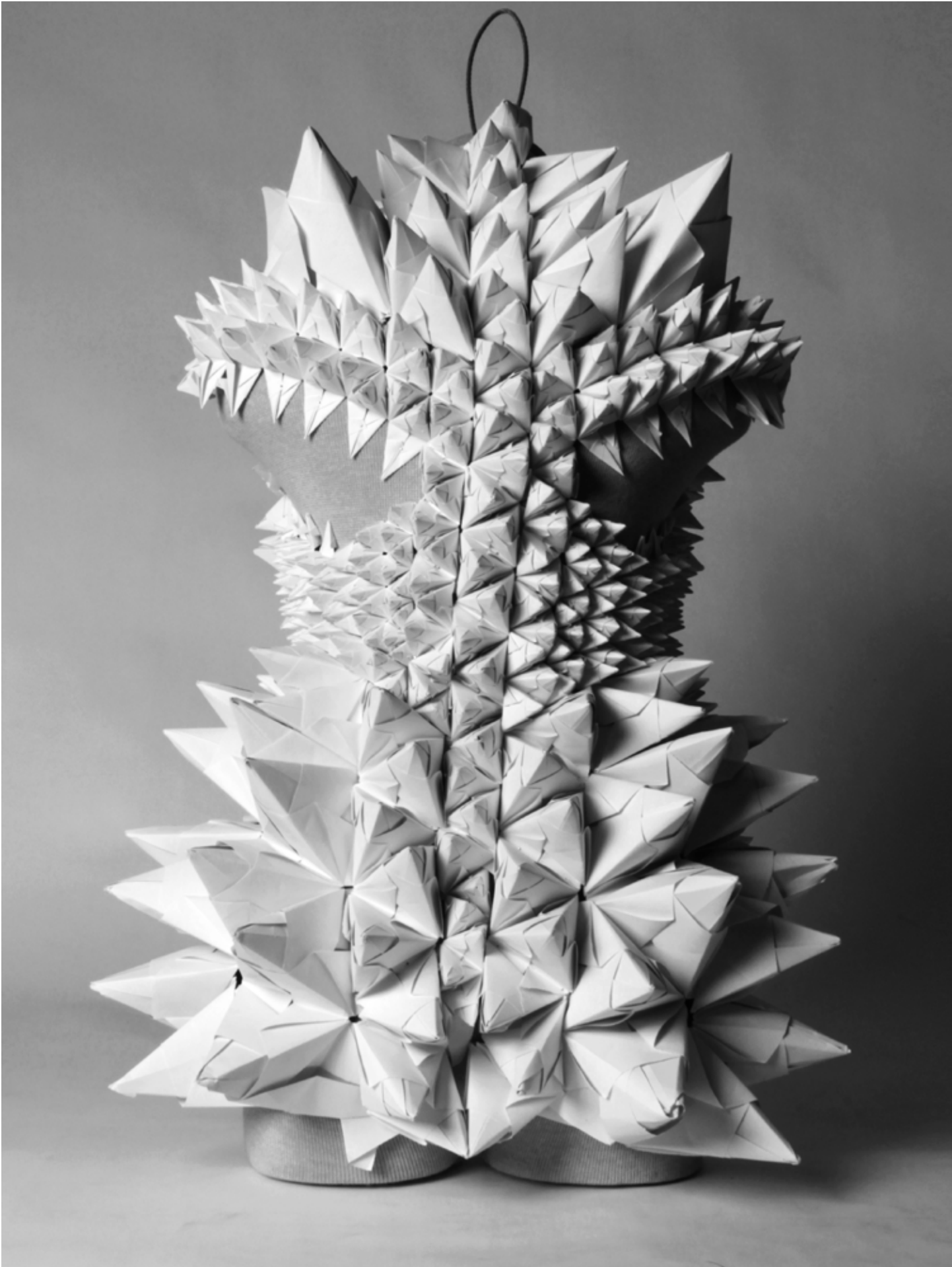


Fig. 3 *'Appropriation'* Costume. Bond Paper.

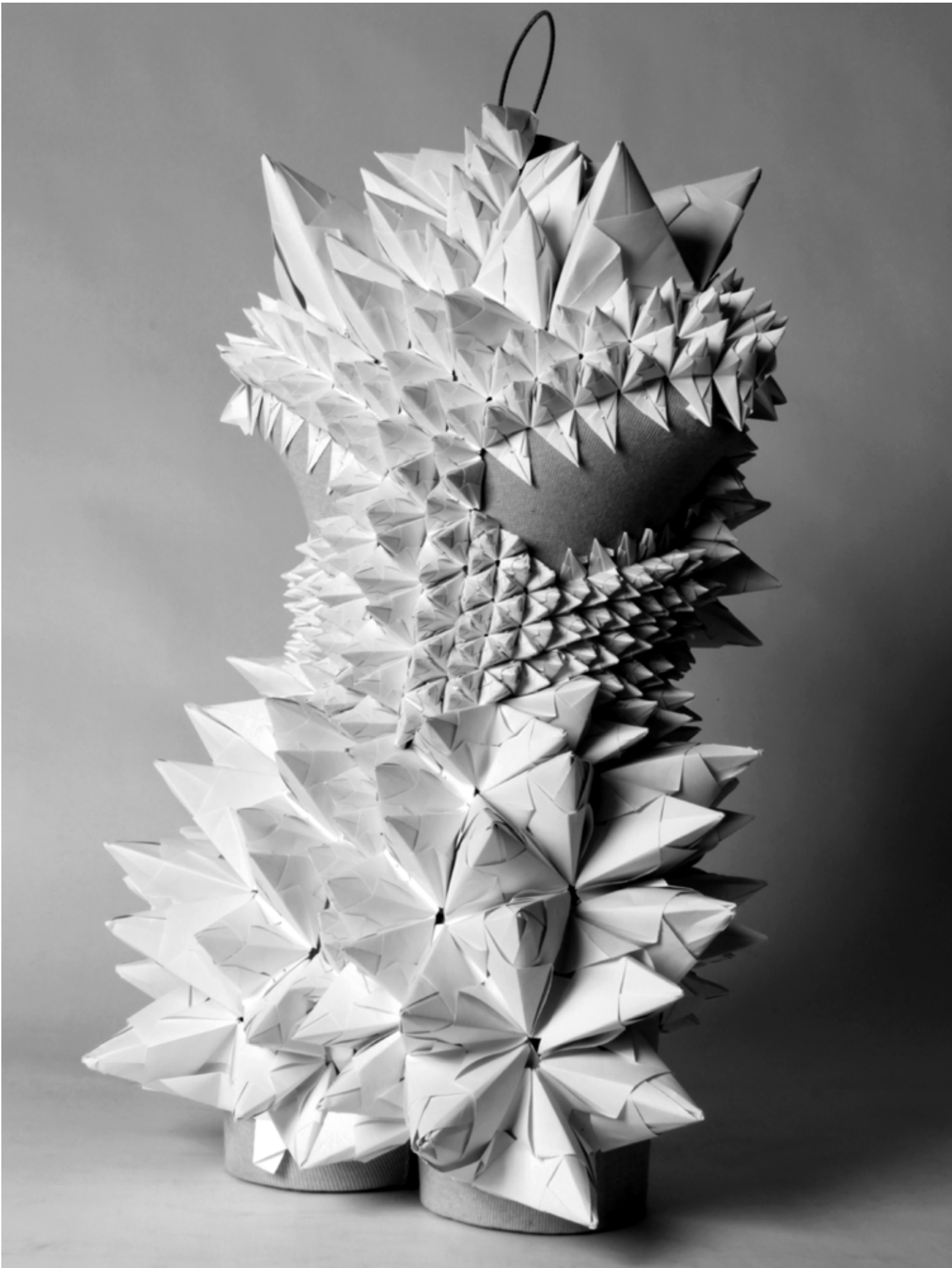


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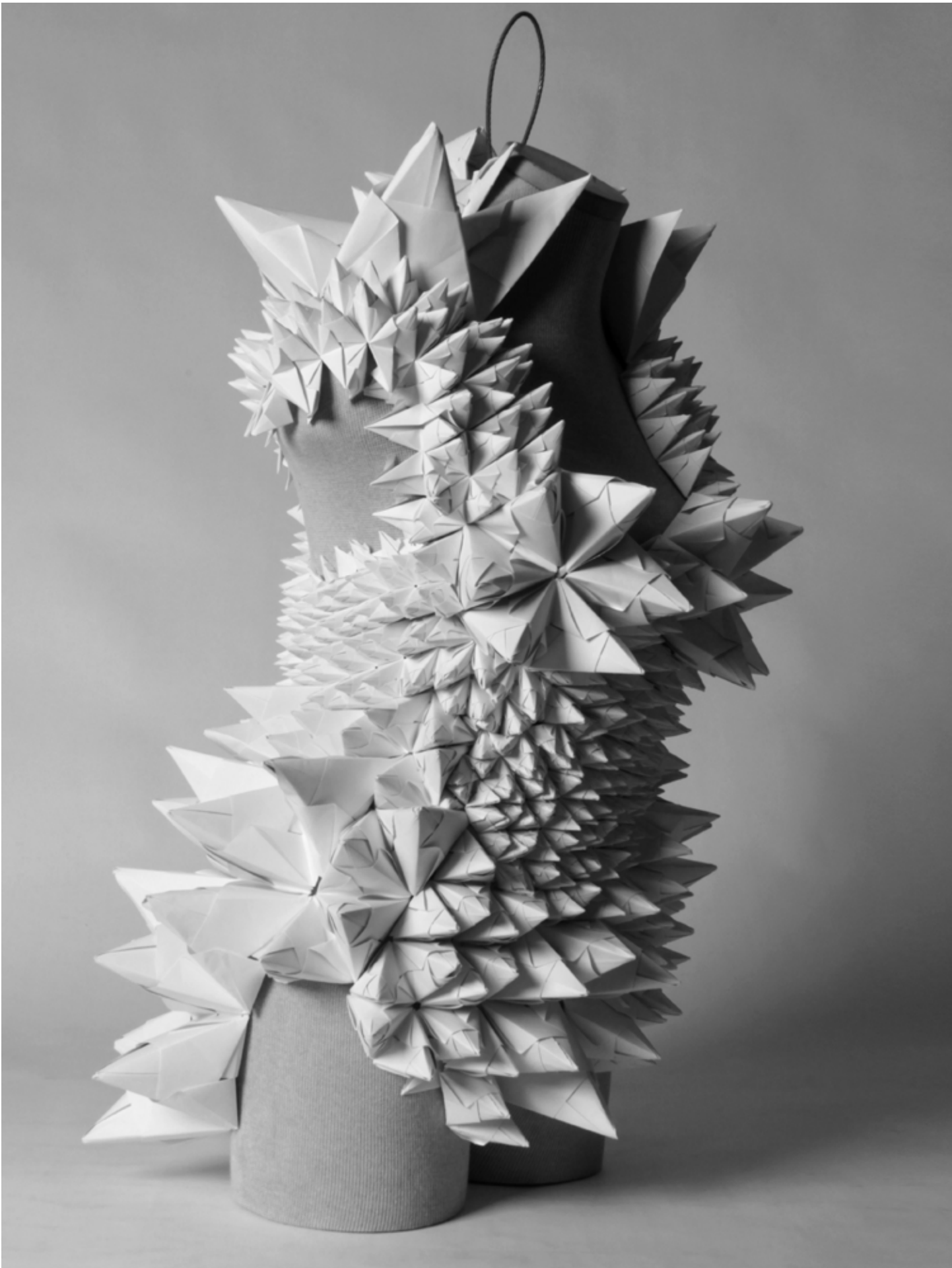


Fig. 5 *'Appropriation'* Costume. Bond Paper.

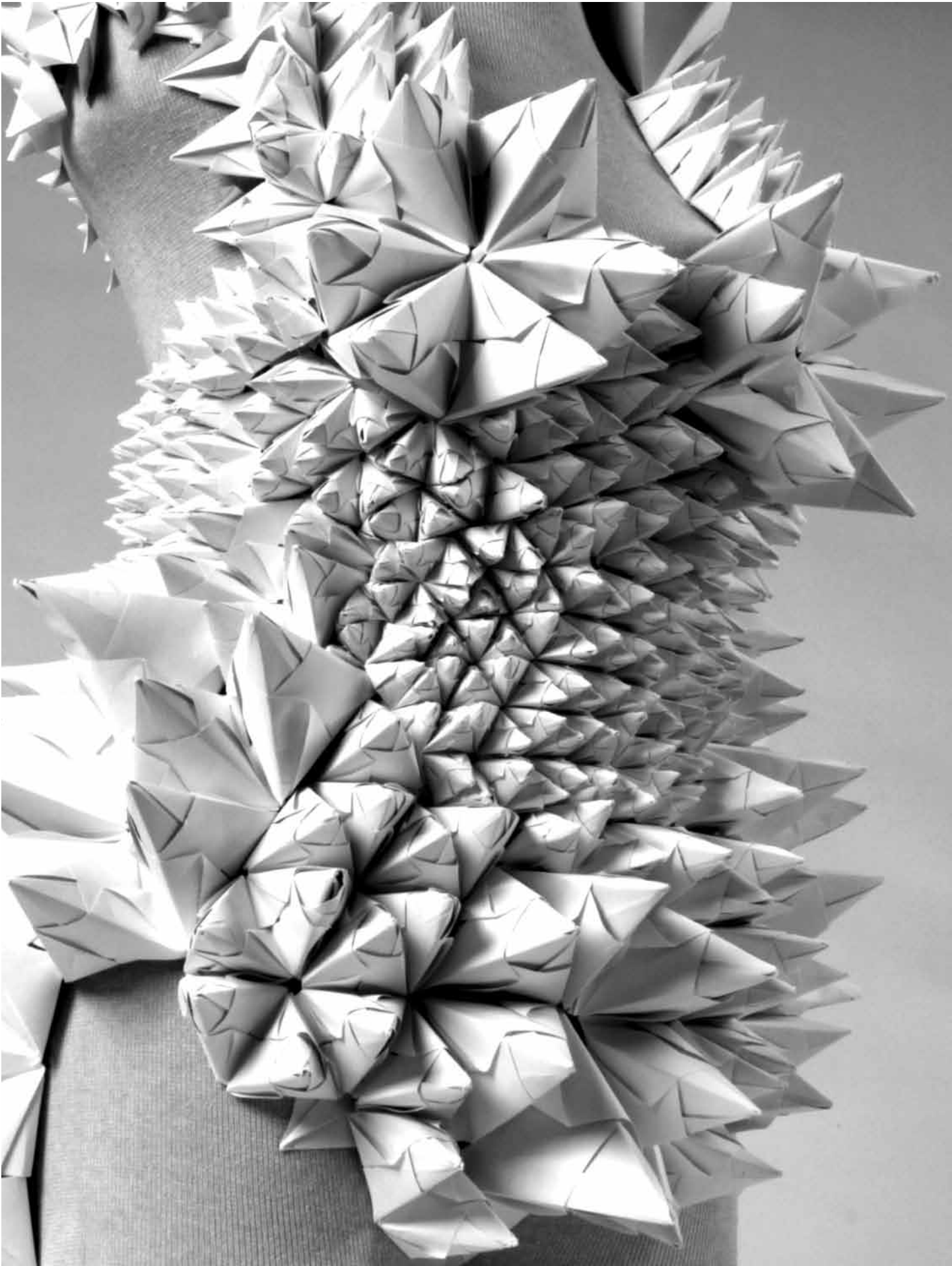


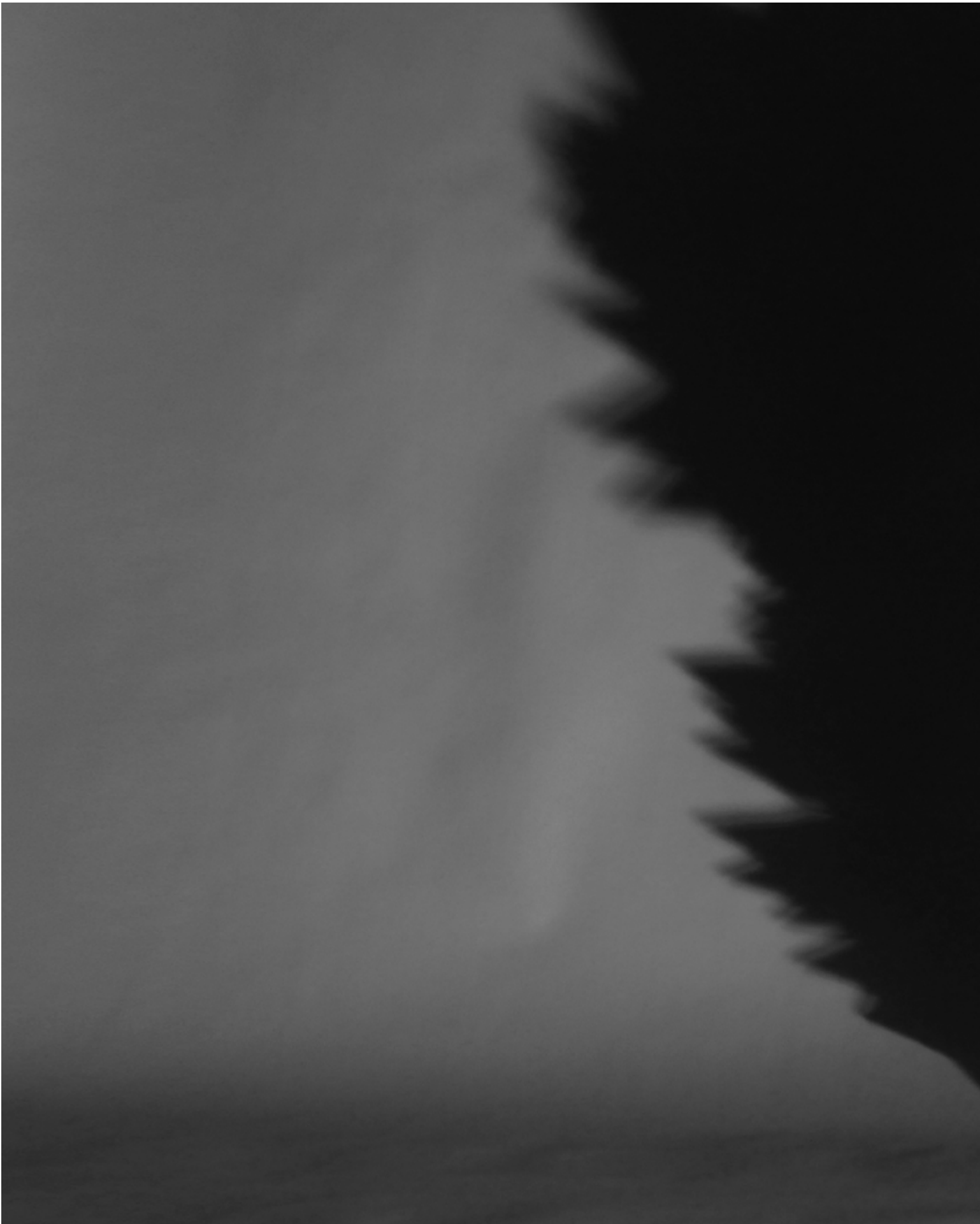




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Fig. 7 *'Appropriation'* Costume. Bond Paper.





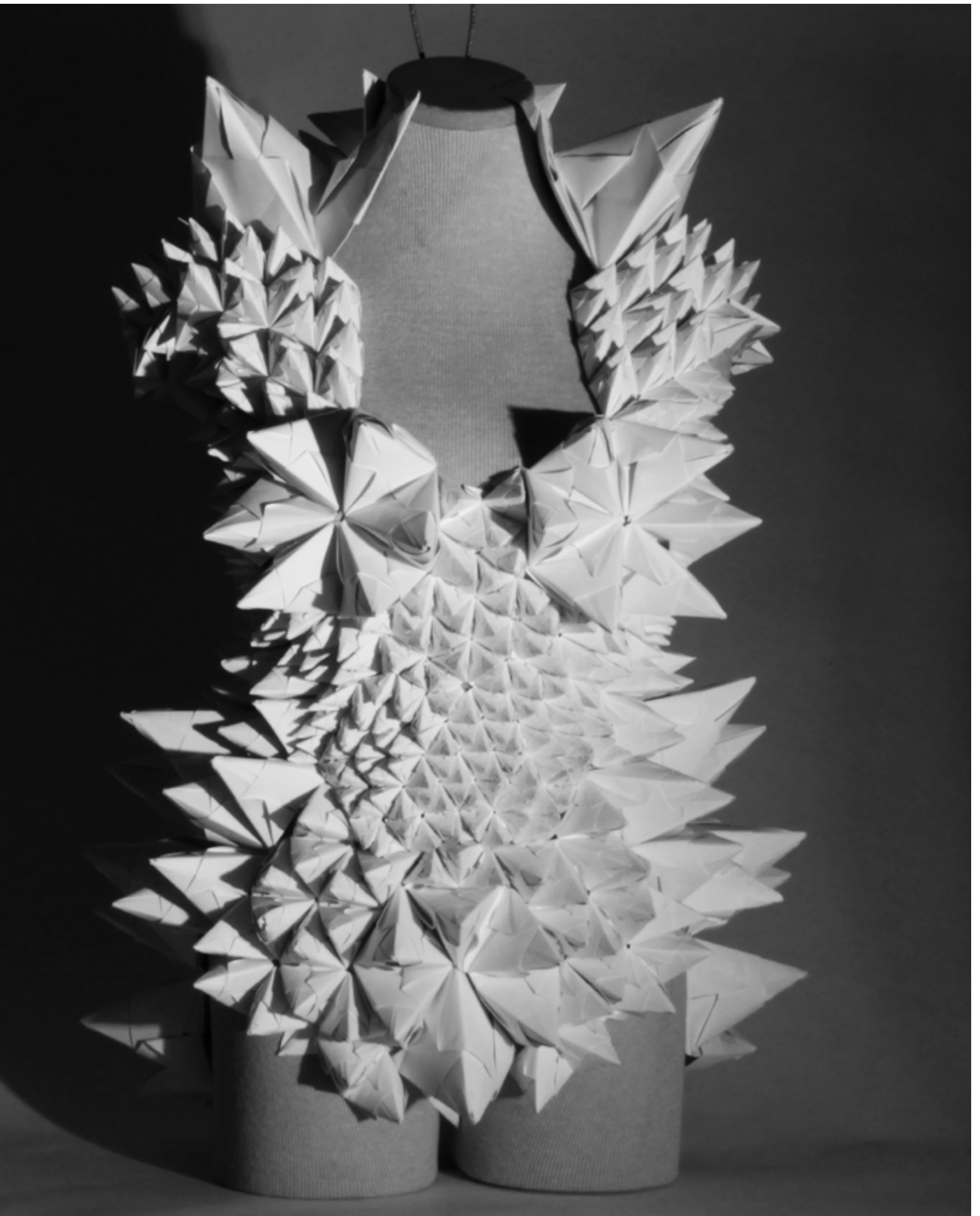
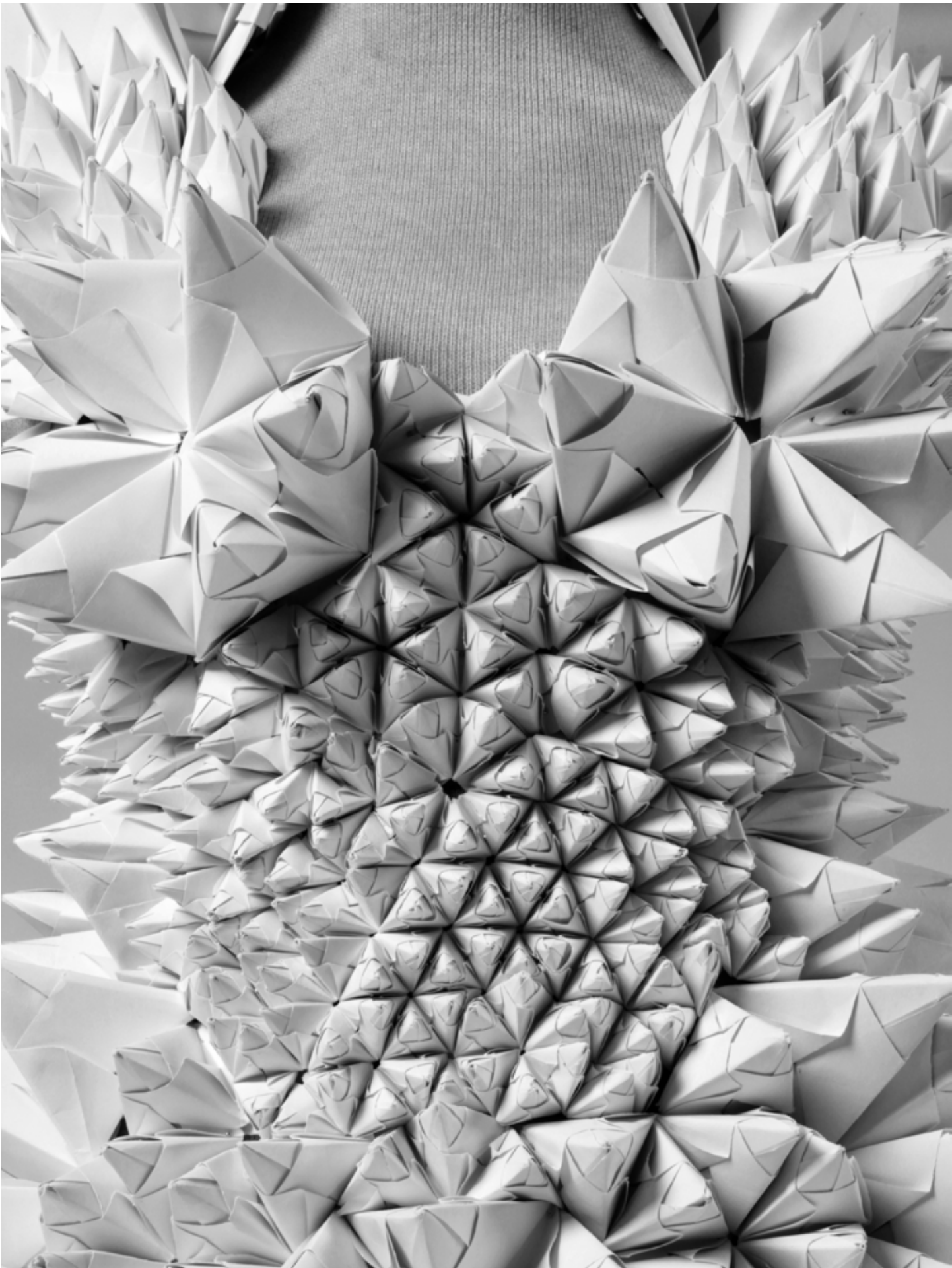
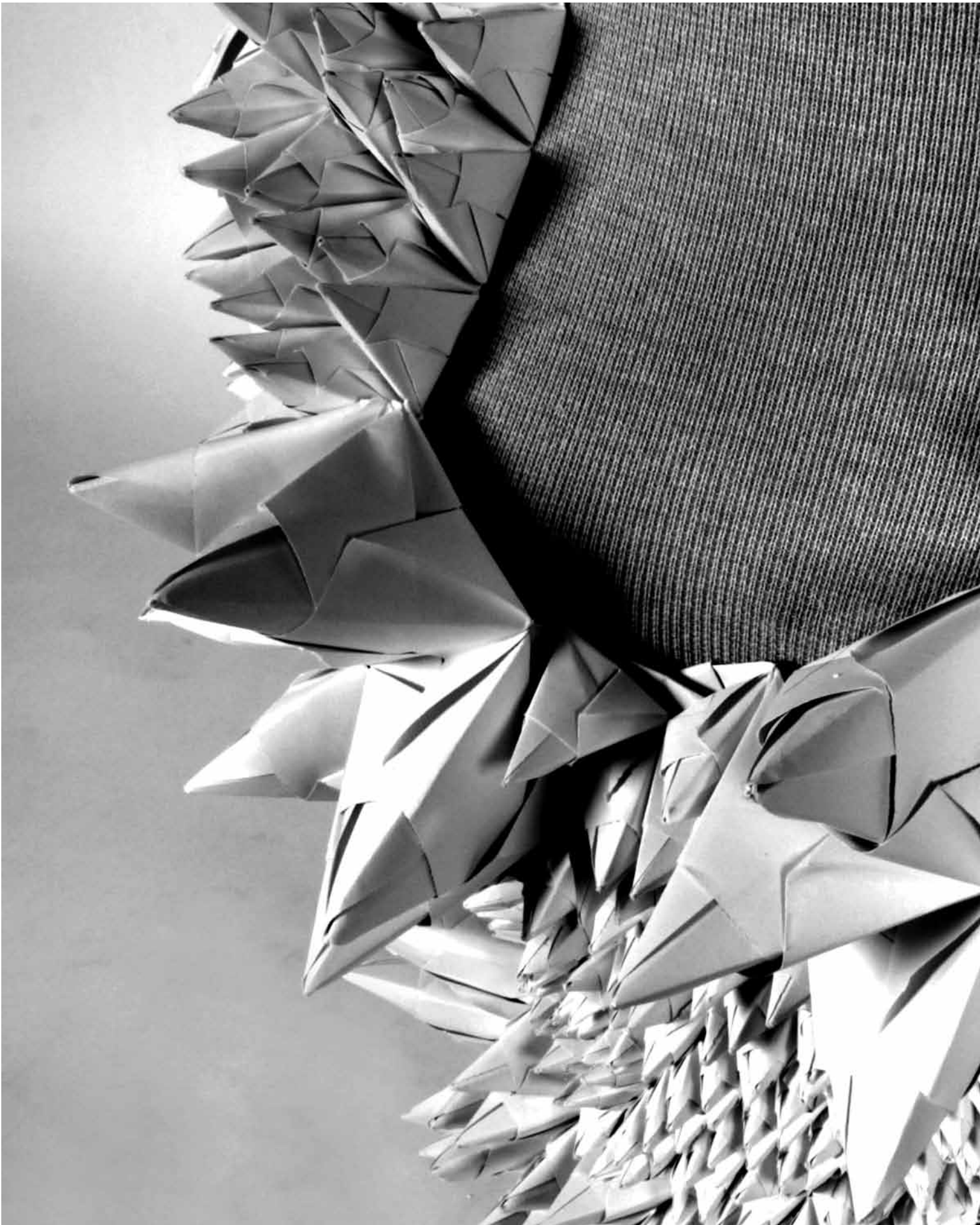


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Fig. 9 *'Appropriation'* Costume. Bond Paper.





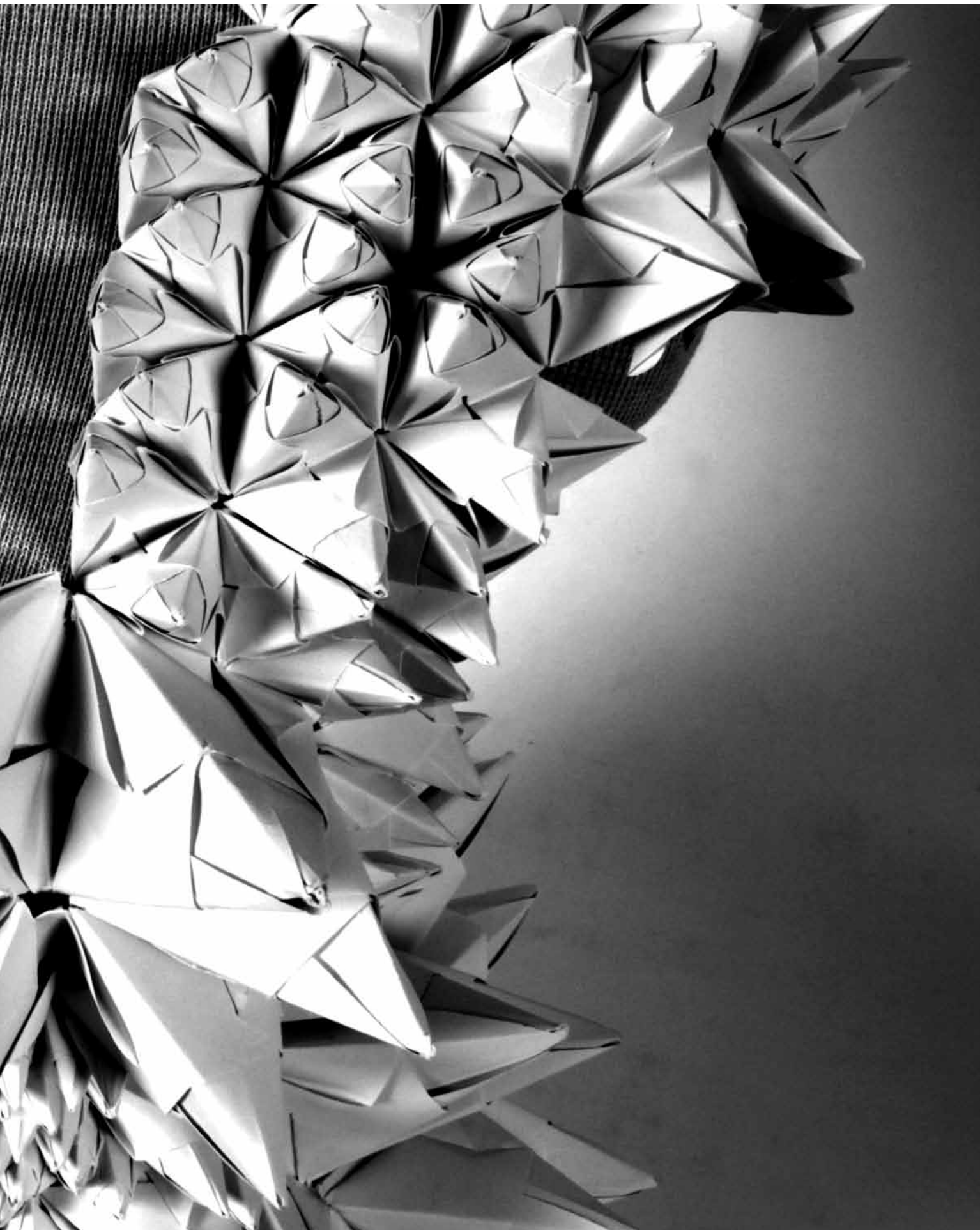


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Fig. 11 '*Appropriation*' Costume. Bond Paper.

Fig. 12 '*Appropriation*' Costume. Bond Paper. (following page)







EXAGGERATION

*“She ain’t no rum and coca cola girl
Don’t try to fool she with no jive
If you want to break down in she carnival
You talk strong to stay alive
She’s neither here nor there
She’s everywhere
Dem people say she is a tramp
But when she catch them in she atmosphere
She go shame them simple scamps.”*

David Rudder
Bacchanal Lady

*“Audrey everytime you wiggle
Darling you put me in trouble
You torture me
The way you wine
I love to see you fat behind,
Sugat Bum Sugar Bum Bum.”*

Lord Kitchener
Sugar Bum Bum

Fig. 13 *‘Exaggeration’* Costume. Nylon Rope, Plaster.



Fig. 14 *Exaggeration*' Costume. Nylon Rope, Plaster.



Fig. 15 *Exaggeration*' Costume. Nylon Rope, Plaster.



Fig. 16 *Exaggeration*' Costume. Nylon Rope, Plaster.







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Fig. 18 *Exaggeration*' Costume. Nylon Rope, Plaster.



Fig. 19 *Exaggeration*' Costume. Nylon Rope, Plaster.



Fig. 20 *Exaggeration*' Costume. Nylon Rope, Plaster.



Fig. 21 *Exaggeration* Costume. Nylon Rope, Plaster.

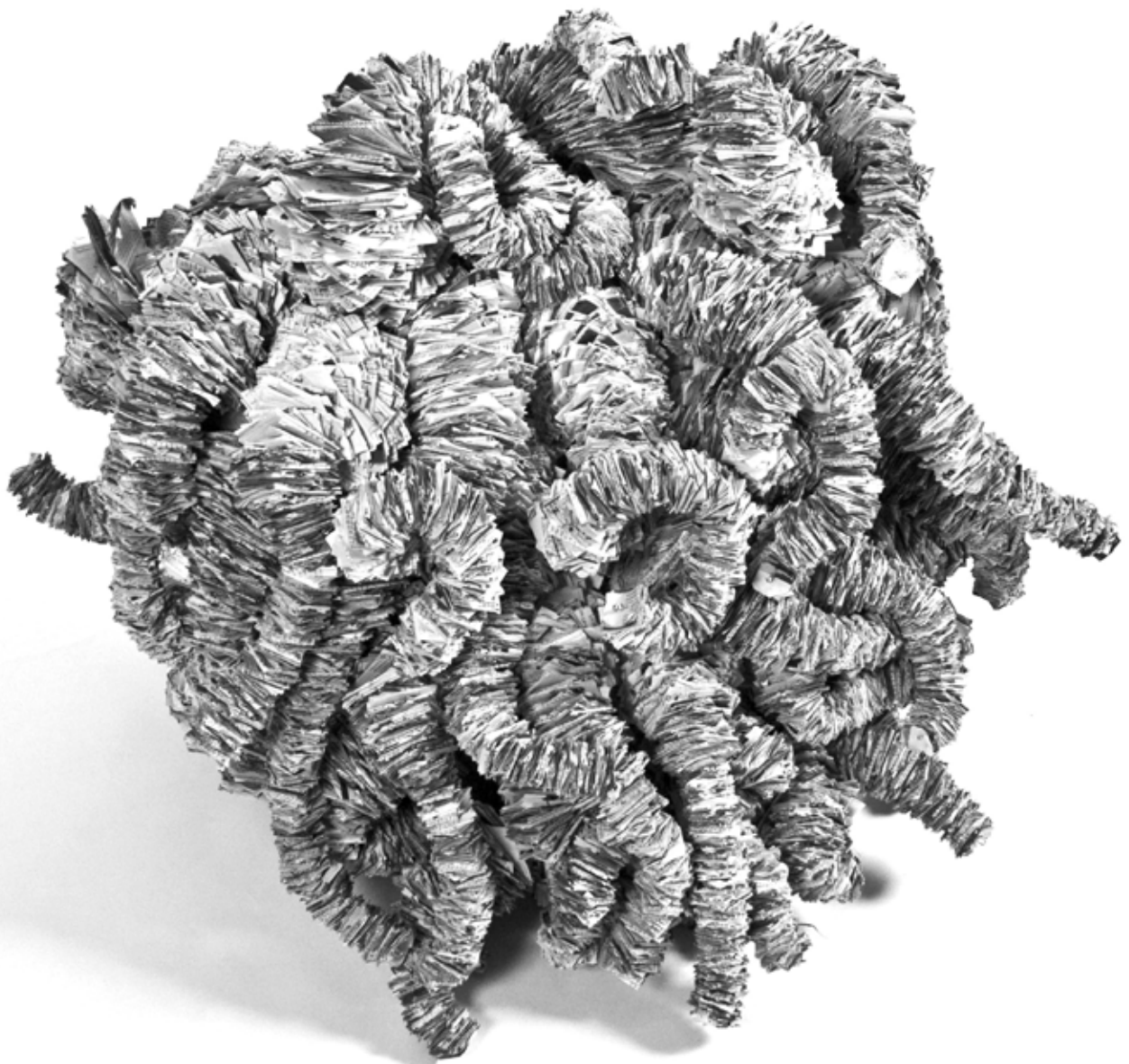


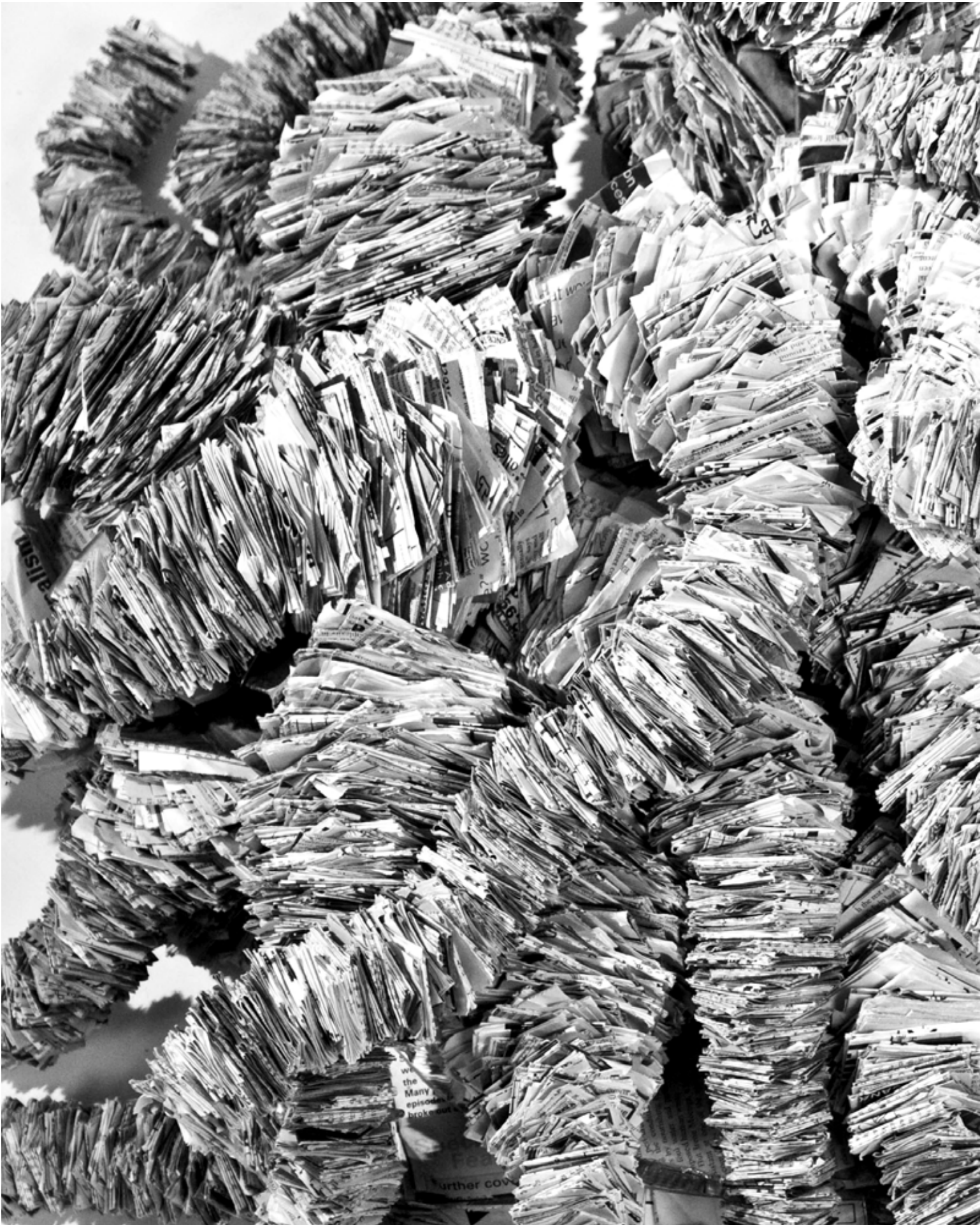
SUBMERSION





Fig. 22 *'Submersion'* Costume. Newspaper, Wire. (preceding page)
Fig. 23 *'Submersion'* Costume. Newspaper, Wire.





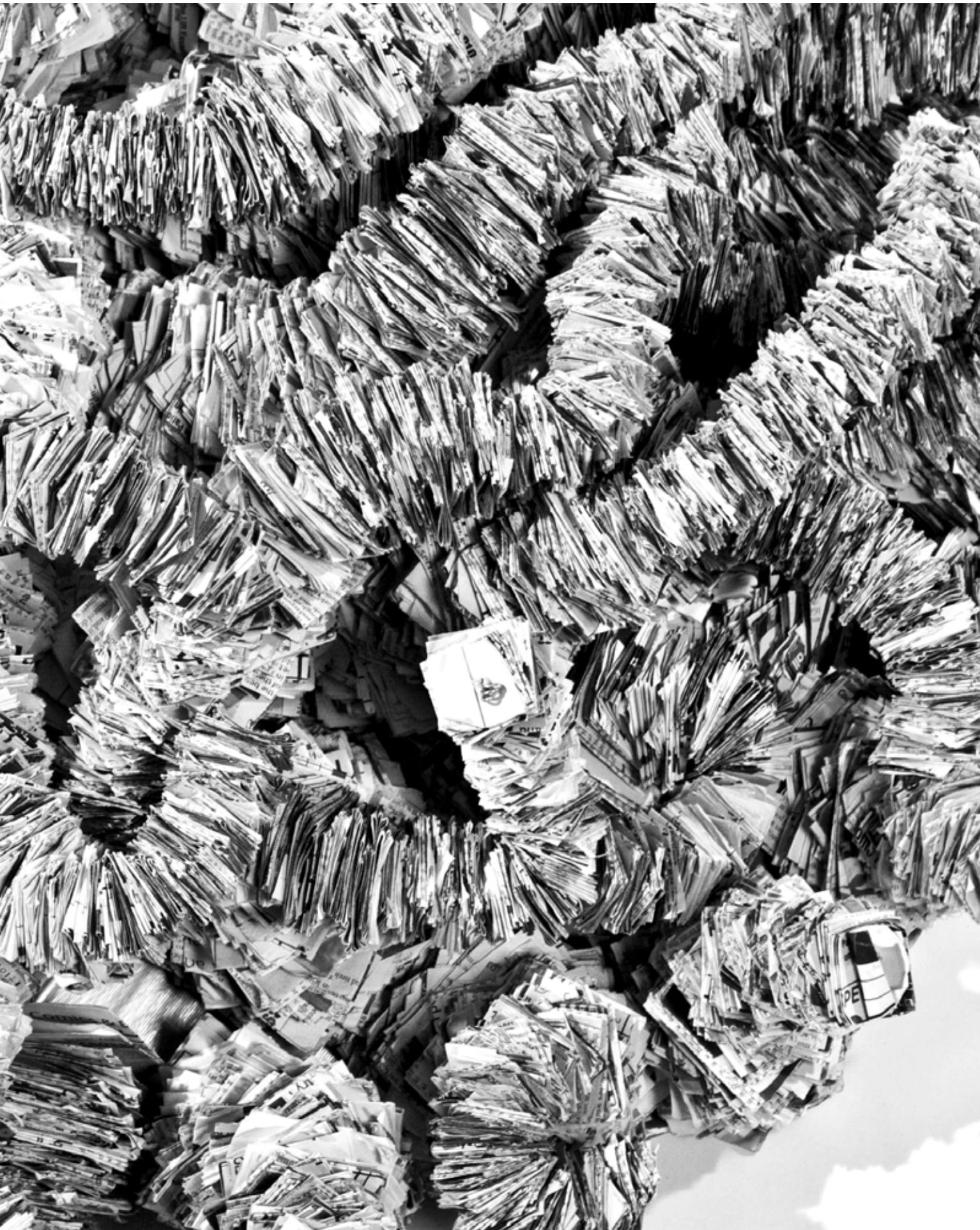


Fig. 24 *'Submersion'* Costume. Newspaper, Wire. (preceding page)
Fig. 25 *'Submersion'* Costume. Newspaper, Wire.



Fig. 26 *'Submersion'* Costume. Newspaper, Wire.

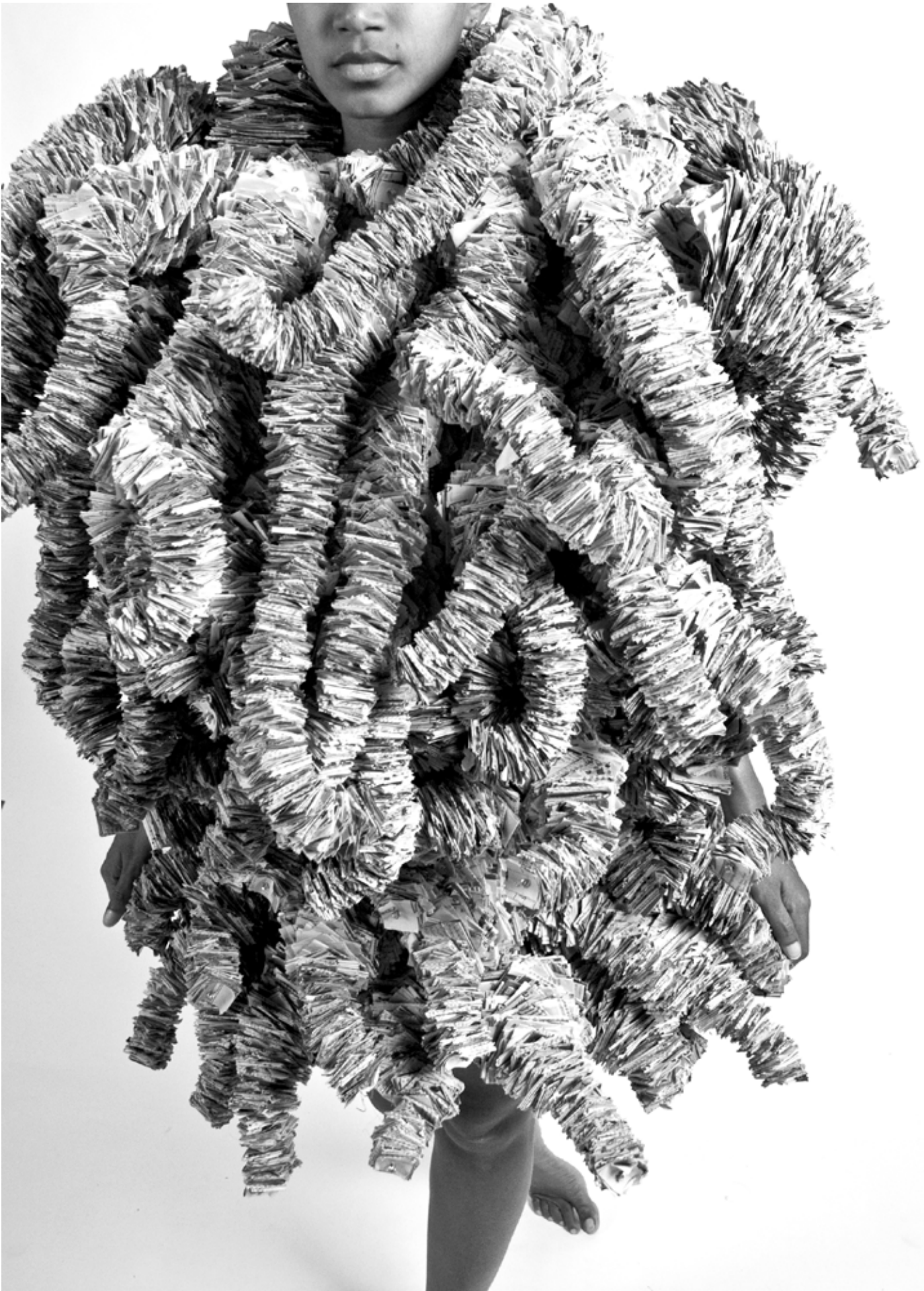


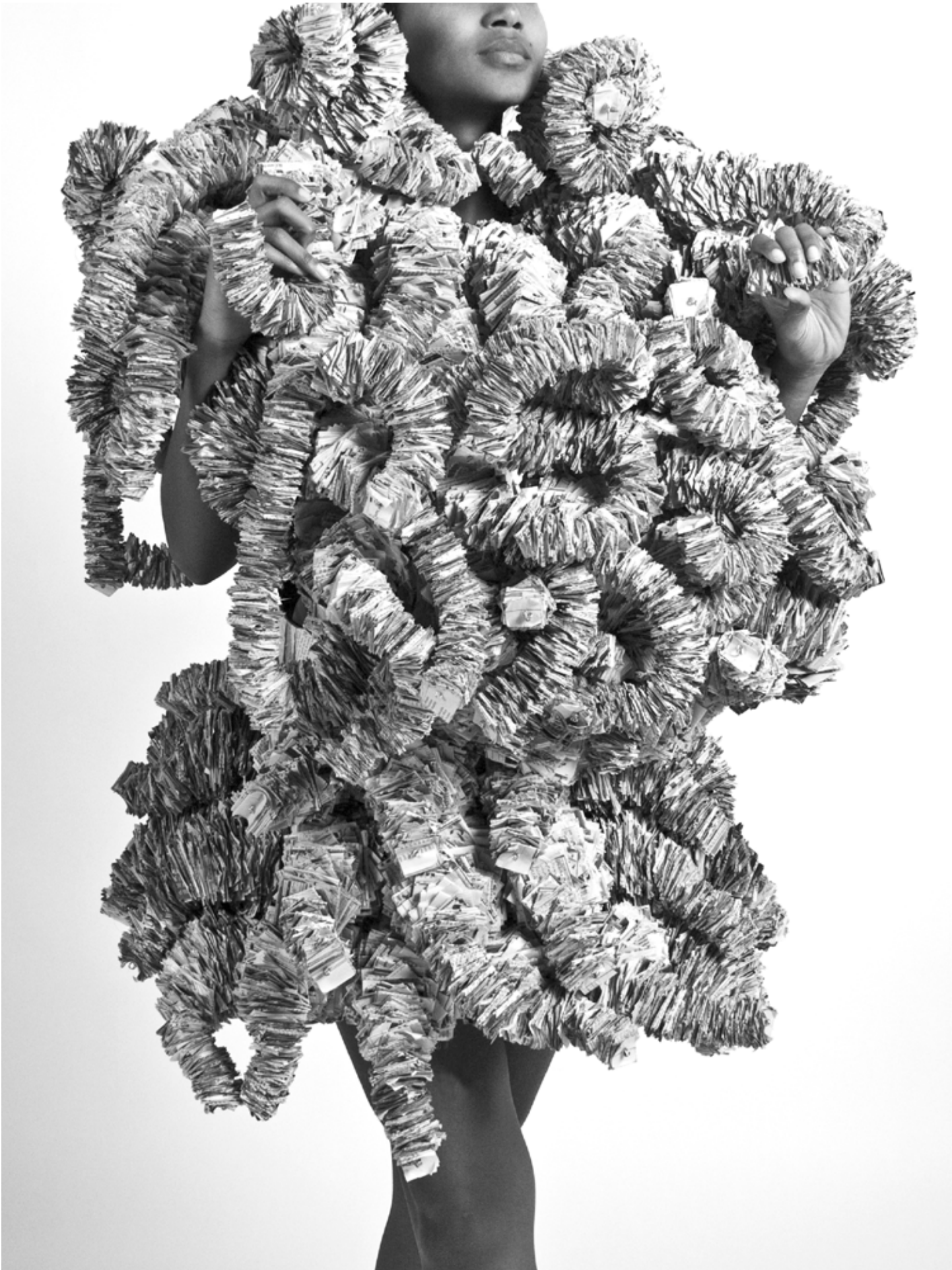
Fig. 27 '*Submersion*' Costume. Newspaper, Wire.



Fig. 28 *'Submersion'* Costume. Newspaper, Wire.



Fig. 29 *'Submersion'* Costume. Newspaper, Wire.



*“Ah could hardly see dese damn people.
Is like everybody look alike, like dey
Join together.
Is like dis place is a jungle,
De people like ah wall round me,
Dey hot, sticky, sweaty, like they want to stifle me,
Like dey have every smell in dis band,
In me nose, in me eye, in me mouth.
Is like ah jungle with vine, an’ color,
An’ snake, an’ bush,
Touchin’ me, roughin’ me, pullin’ me.
Is de rum, no de music, no is de people man.
Move foot move, jump, yu hear me, jump.”*

Paul Keens-Douglas
Savannah Ghost

Fig. 30 ‘Submersion’ Costume. Newspaper, Wire.



Fig. 31 *'Submersion'* Costume. Newspaper, Wire.



Fig. 32 '*Submersion*' Costume. Newspaper, Wire.



Fig. 33 '*Submersion*' Costume. Newspaper, Wire.



SUBLIMATION





Fig. 34 *'Sublimation'* Costume. Craft paper. (preceding page)

Fig. 35 *'Sublimation'* Costume. Craft paper.



Fig. 36 *'Sublimation'* Costume. Craft paper.







Fig. 37 *'Sublimation'* Costume. Craft paper. (preceding page)

Fig. 38 *'Sublimation'* Costume. Craft paper.



Fig. 39 *'Sublimation'* Costume. Craft paper.



Fig. 40 *'Sublimation'* Costume. Craft paper.



Fig. 41 *'Sublimation'* Costume. Craft paper.



*“Take me up foot, up, up over dis stinkin’ band’
Past all dese winding backsides, sweaty backs,
Bouncin’ bubbies, multinational bad – breath.
Up, up slowly, out de jungle,
Up, up slowly, out de jungle,
Up, up, up towards de clean sky.
O’ god ah could see the whole world now.”*

Paul Keens-Douglas
Savannah Ghost

Fig. 42 *‘Sublimation’* Costume. Craft paper.







Fig. 43 *'Sublimation'* Costume. Craft paper. (preceding page)

Fig. 44 *'Sublimation'* Costume. Craft paper.



Fig. 45 *'Sublimation'* Costume. Craft paper.



Fig. 46 *'Sublimation'* Costume. Craft paper.



Fig. 47 *'Sublimation'* Costume. Craft paper.



Fig. 48 *'Sublimation'* Costume. Craft paper.



Fig. 49 *'Sublimation'* Costume. Craft paper.



Fig. 50 *'Sublimation'* Costume. Craft paper.



Fig. 51 *'Sublimation'* Costume. Craft paper.



THE ECSTATIC SPACES OF CARNIVAL



Fig. 52 Ecstatic masquerader on the streets of Port-of-Spain.

Festival blankets the city with ecstatic play. On city streets the costume, dance and feast join the community in joyous exaltation. Where hierarchy establishes boundaries, festival tears them down. Festival is functional, creating and maintaining unity within communities. Anthropologist Victor Turner defined collective ecstasy with the term '*communitas*', "The spontaneous love and solidarity that can arise within a community of equals."¹ Festival is a recurring relief from the rigid structure of a culture. The festival participants ridicule this rigidity. Instead they achieve '*communitas*' through reckless abandon in costume, dance, and an abundance of food and alcohol. The community can join together, playing and laughing to their hearts content.

Johan Huizinga defines play as: "An activity, which proceeds within certain limits of time and space, in a visible order, according to rules freely accepted, and outside the sphere of necessity or material utility. The play mood is one of rapture and enthusiasm, and is sacred or festive in accordance with the occasion. A feeling of exaltation and tension accompanies the action, mirth and relaxation follow."²

Play is inherently heterotopic. In the profane work-a-day world, public and private spaces are clearly defined. Heterotopia exposes the 'hidden spaces' between these private and public spaces. It is an alternative space. Michael Foucault's identifies heterotopia in the setting of the theatre. Real space is that of the audience; virtual space is the scene of the stage. When a play begins, the virtual becomes real and the real disappears. When the play is over we return to our reality.³

Trinidad's Carnival is a theatrical break that blurs the societal division between the real and the virtual. It is also a spatial phenomenon.

The passage of one social status to another is often accompanied by the parallel passage in space, a geographical movement from one place to another. This may take the form of mere opening of doors or the literal crossing of a threshold ...⁴

Victor Turner,
Liminal to Liminoid, In Play, Flow, Ritual

Festival sets up transitional spaces: in the built stages and in the costumed body. The rituals attendant on entering and exiting, putting on and taking off, make the transition between the ordinary world and the extraordinary festival world possible.

Three hundred and sixty three days of the year, Port-of-Spain is the financial, administrative and retail capital of Trinidad. It is a place of business, a successful metropolis. It is part of the work-a-day world. Each space of the city is regulated and given its logical purpose. Its streets are thoroughfares for thousands of commuters. Its buildings house corporate and government offices, with daily activities that concern commerce, trade and development. Public spaces are controlled, with a clear distinction between private and public. The city's principal concern is economic advancement in a post-industrialized society.

The other two days of the year follow a different pattern, the pattern of the festival world. During those days, Port-of-Spain hosts the country's largest cultural festival – Trini-

dad's Carnival. Traditional time and space are interrupted and boundaries transgressed. Regenerative transformations induce an ecstatic cathartic experience; reality becomes fiction, and the ordinary becomes extraordinary.

People were so to speak, reborn for new, purely human relations. These truly human relations were not only fruit of imagination or abstract thought; they were experienced. The utopian ideal and the realistic merged in this Carnival experience, unique of its kind.⁵

Mikhail Bakhtin,
Rabelais and His World

Carnival participants appropriate the city streets and squares, creating spaces only visited during festival, spaces incompatible with the work-a-day world.

Both nature and culture vie for the same resources that space offers from its limitations. However space in nature is not staged, culture however is staged as it is temporarily appropriates and claims territory of the city's infrastructure and architecture, culture forms its own boundaries and creates "new" spaces.⁶

Catherine Ingraham,
Architecture, Animal, and Human: The Asymmetrical Condition

What was once the space of commerce becomes architecture of event, where festive elements gather. The elements of Carnival are never static, but unfold in all directions. It begins as a transgression blurring the established boundaries of public and private.

Carnival is the ritualized meditation between order and disorder, par excellence, furthermore its is a domain in which the pleasures of playing at the boundaries (social and personal) is most clearly provided for.⁷

Mike Presdee,

Cultural Criminology And The Carnival Of Crime




These elements of costume, dance, music, and parade influence the revelatory spaces of festival: the site of the body in transforming costume, and the site of the city in ecstatic play.

Carnival is a world based in laughter, brought on by the degradation and the celebration of the grotesque body. Laughter is universal. It erupts from the belly and it belongs to everyone. It regenerates by wallowing in the material body. The grotesque imagery of Carnival degrades all that is serious, high, and mighty, reasserting the profane material body. Contact with consumption, defecation, copulation, and birth, ultimately renew us, and celebrate rebirth.

The body uses the medium of costume to induce humour in the grotesque, ambivalent humor, that both degrades and regenerates. On the parade route, the crowd - catalyzed by music, dance, and drink – fuses the body with the costume. This transformation delivers us from order and reason, pushing the wearer to ecstatic heights, public ecstasy unachievable in ‘ordinary’ day-to-day life. The costume expresses something absent during the rest of the year. For a brief moment, it allows the body to idealize, becoming something that it is not. It highlights the body’s communicative areas by making extreme exaggerations and unfathomable representations of the body,

violating the classical body. The grotesque subversion of body through costume can appear humorous and repulsive but it is rooted in positive bodily themes – fertility, growth and abundance. The costume portrays the Carnival body in the act of becoming, taking in from the world while also giving out to it. It turns the ordinary and mundane into something both communicative and fantastical. The costumed bodies of Carnival are a narrative form, affirming our identity, our place, and our representation in culture.



-  CITY BOUNDARY
-  PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS
-  PARADE OF THE BANDS ROUTE

STAGES: JUDGING POINTS

- 1** QUEEN'S PARK SAVANNAH
- 2** ADAM'S SMITH SQ. ARIAPITA AVE.
- 3** SOUTH QUAY / DOWNTOWN
- 4** VICTORIA PARK



PORT OF SPAIN

TRINIDAD

SCALE 1:10000



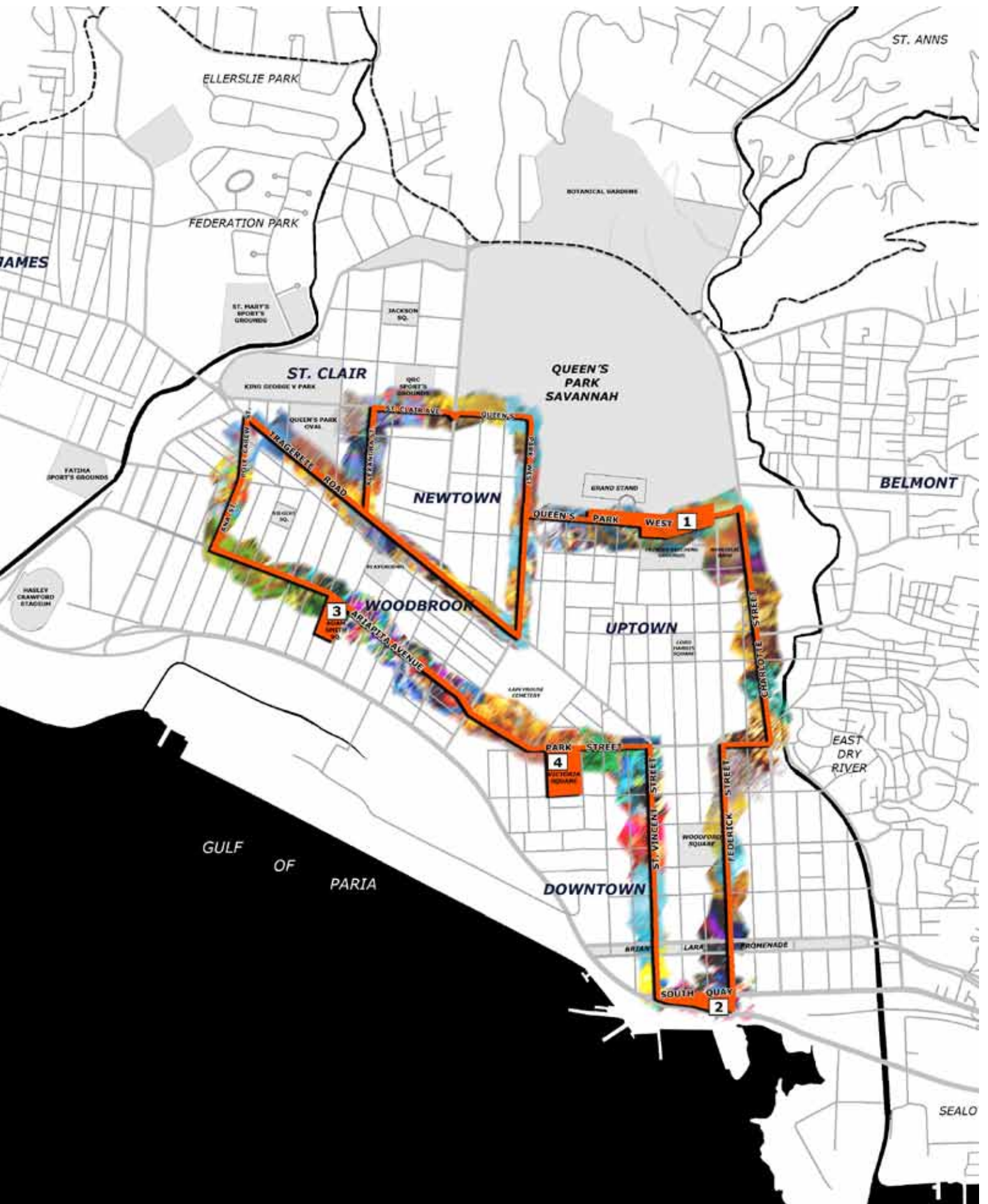


Fig. 53 Carnival Parade Route, Port of Spain., Trinidad.



Fig. 54 Costumed Bands crossing the stage on Ariapita Avenue.

A City Transformed

Space can be, at the same time contingent – formed at the moment of its use, territorialized and then dissolved – homogenous for all practical purposes and at a large scale, and yet discontinuous and heterogeneous in its minute detailed operations ... space is by definition, that which defines differences in bodies and objects and, by doing so, exceeds them. Space can envelope bodies and objects but in order to do so, it must also depart from them – unaffected, indifferent⁸

Catherine Ingraham,

Architecture, Animal, and Human: The Asymmetrical Condition

‘Aunty Allison’s house sits on a side street off of Ariapita Avenue. On Carnival Tuesday I left from there. I would return there when my day is over. Now my band is turning back onto Ariapita Avenue, eventually to cross the second stage. I consider walking to Aunty Allison’s house, where I could retire my cumbersome headpiece (too precious to discard) and put on my ‘back up’ shoes, safely stored there. People are like ants all over the city streets. In the sea of bodies, I keep losing and finding my friends. The band is at a standstill, waiting for their turn to cross the stage. Its trucks blast music that vibrates the crowds. I meander around the trucks. I squeeze past jumping bodies. I dart out of the way of a masquerader avoiding a near collision between my large headpiece and her costumed wings. Suddenly I am accosted by a friend whose wild dancing sandwich me between her and a city wall. In all the confusion,



Fig. 55 Judging booth and stands built on Ariapita Avenue. Woodbrook, Port-of-Spain. (above)

Fig. 56 Weeks before carnival food and drink tents and stands erected on Ariapita Avenue sidewalks. (below)

the beads of my costume tangle with hers and we struggle to escape. Successful, I stumble upon a vendor's stand. His stand takes up the entire width of the pavement and part of the street as well. I purchase the specialty - roast corn. The last few hours I spent shuffling my feet to the rhythm of the music, blindly content to follow the masses, caught up in the revelry with my friends. Now I am tired. My costume armbands itch. My headpiece is digging into my forehead and my shoes are at war with my toes. With the help of a man standing on a wall near by, I scale it to sit. A couple next to me is doing a balancing act while dancing on top of the wall. I sit exhausted, eating my roast corn. Up here, I have a new view. I take a few minutes to absorb my surroundings, waiting to continue our route on Ariapita Avenue.

Looking up I see colourful banners promoting the spirit of festival. They hang between the lampposts and are part of the sponsored advertisements that add a veil to the city infrastructure. The sidewalks are obstructed with temporary plywood stalls and vinyl tents. From them scents of cooked food fill the air. They promise cold drinks to gathering spectators.

The wall across from me is defaced with muddy handprints. It is a reminder of J'ouvert, an event that opens Carnival. Early Carnival Monday, its participants revel in mud, paint, oil and mischief. While businesses and residents make attempts to board their windows and walls to prepare for the carnage of Carnival, this is all in vain. After the J'ouvert parade is over, an art of paint, mud, and oily body prints is smeared on the city's walls. It is a reminder that the people have passed and, for a



Fig. 57 Costumed bands and music truck exit stage. Food and drink tents line both sides of the street. (above)
Fig. 58 Costumed bands parade on the Ariapita Avenue stage in front of judges and spectators. (below)

few hours, played themselves with an explosive force. Later in the day, costumed bands take claim of the city and mark their appropriated territory.

The music truck moves along the parade route. I hop off the wall and follow behind. They fill the role of pied piper, leading us on with music. Along with the refreshment trucks and larger costumes, they dictate the bands movement. We weave around them during the course of the day. They create spaces that dissolve mere minutes later.

We are heading to Ariapita Avenue's Carnival stage. It is one of the four main Carnival stages that punctuate the parade route. My band has resorted to security ropes to separate their costumed masqueraders from the reveling crowds. They soon realize this is a failure and eventually, all barriers dissolve. I am excited to cross the stage; it is where band portrayals are most dramatic. It is my chance to show off my stunning costume. The stages are the official competitive arenas of Carnival. Waiting, I remember the Queen's Park Savannah stage, the stage that the Carnival authorities closed in 2006. Until then it was the largest and most eagerly anticipated of them all. It was the only elevated stage along the route, annually constructed of wood, on a steel frame. Spectator stands flanked both sides of the stage. The government plans to replace it with a permanent Carnival center that has yet to materialize.

At present the stage has been relocated to the asphalted streets. The loss of the Savannah stage has changed the spirit of the masquerade. When you crossed the stage, you had reached the climax. Elevated, people looked up at you, for an



Fig. 59 After crossing the Savannah Stage masqueraders rest before continuing along the parade route. (above)
Fig. 60 Spectators and masqueraders climb business walls and fences to get a better view. (below)

added adrenaline rush. There were photographers at the sidelines vying to take your picture. The vibrations of hundreds of costumed bodies jumping on the wooden boards of the hollow stage, build up the collective ecstasy. Then you danced down the end ramp. You submerged yourself in the waiting crowds, always wanting to go back for more.

Soon the day will end, as people walk off to their homes and cars. Tomorrow costumes will come off. The debris that litters the streets will be swept away. The tents and stalls will be dismantled, leaving no trace of their existence. Points along the route are the sites of collective ecstasies, but there will be no built entity to mark its location.

It is a festival of ephemeral architecture.'



Fig. 61 My First Carnival Costume.

The Grotesque Body

The night before Carnival Monday, I would try on my mother's Carnival costume. I was too young to participate, in what my elders would refer to as 'big people' Carnival. On my small frame, every part of the costume was oversized. In a clever balancing act, I tried to keep the costume in place as I paraded it around my house. The shine of the sequins, rhinestones and glitter was mesmerizing. Looking down I saw the shadow of the plumage of the headpiece. I appeared larger than life. I felt like royalty in that costume.

At home the next morning, I would watch my mother and her sisters prepare for Carnival. All crowded in my mother's bedroom, they applied colorful makeup and glitter. They struggled to pull up sheer stockings and adjusted crooked headpieces and faulty bra straps. When everyone was dressed and ready, they posed for pictures in my front yard. Finally one picture too many, they drove off toward Port-of-Spain to play Carnival. I would stay home with my grandmother and watch the media coverage of the Carnival bands crossing the stage. We would wait until my mother's band crossed the stage, to search for her and her sisters. In the plethora of dancing women, there was always great excitement when we finally spotted them.

Other times my father would take me downtown to the city to look at the Carnival parade and meet up with my mother. I enjoyed finding lost or discarded costumes in the streets and begged my father to ask passing masqueraders for a piece of



Fig. 62 Women in 'bikini and beads' costumes of present day Carnival.(above)

Fig. 63 GownMan, A Traditional Masque character at the Viev La Coup event. (below)

their costume. The idea of collecting these shiny pieces was like finding lost treasures and I took great pride in gathering them. When we eventually found my mother, I would marvel at her and all the other women dancing in the streets. There I was presented with the overwhelming site of bouncing backsides and breasts, barely covered by spandex and a sprinkling of glitter and beads. This was not the everyday behavior of her and my aunts. Their large headpieces stuffed with colorful feathers enlarged their presence and stature. The rhythmic motion of their bodies pushed the costume in all directions. It blurred all boundaries and created a mash up of colours, shapes and sizes that both mesmerized and assaulted the senses. I was jealous of these 'big people' and yearned for the day that I too could play Carnival in my very own shiny costume.

Then there was the other side of Carnival. Every year my father will take us to *Viey la Coup*, an event held outdoors since 1988 to mark the traditional Carnival characters of the past. The Carnival I knew from the streets was made up of bikini costumes and feathered headpieces. The Carnival I was exposed to at this event showed me something entirely different. Characters such as the Midnight Robber, Jab Jabs, Blue Devils and Fancy Sailors performed scripted speeches and choreographed dances. It was the masque my father was nostalgic for. But for me it was a novelty. I felt 'cultured' with these almost extinct characters. I grew up knowing that this was what Carnival was rooted in. I was moved by the history of these vivid characters and their art form, yet also mesmerized and enamored by the glamorous and scandalous contemporary female masquerade. Both in appearance and performance, the differences between them seemed black and white; but they both conjured the feelings of ecstatic release in their participants.'



Fig. 64 Drawing of Carnival on Federick Street, Port-of-Spain, 1888.

Post Emancipation Carnival

The Roman Catholic French, who settled in Trinidad, introduced Carnival to the island. It is a pre-Lenten festival that occurs on the Monday and Tuesday before Ash Wednesday (usually in February). On Ash Wednesday, the day before Lent begins, Catholics repent their sins. Recalling the biblical story of Christ's forty days in the wilderness, Lent is marked by fasting and abstaining from particular foods such as meats and sugars. Carnival, from the Latin word 'carne vale' meaning 'farewell to the flesh', it is the last chance to eat meat before Lent, and to partake in festive indulgence, before embarking on the humbling fast and solemnity of Lent. It involves merriment – parading, feasting, dancing, masking and music, – which its people indulge in guilt free, knowing that they will receive forgiveness on Ash Wednesday. It is a sanctioned degenerative period before Church-sanctioned regeneration. An annual festival, Carnival serves as a social safety valve. *“So that foolishness, which is our second nature and seems to be inherent in man, might freely spend itself as least once a year. Wine barrels burst if from time to time we do not open them and let in some air. All of us men are barrels poorly put together, which would burst from the wine of wisdom, if this wine remains in a state of constant fermentation of piety and fear of God. We must give it air in order not to let it spoil.”*⁹

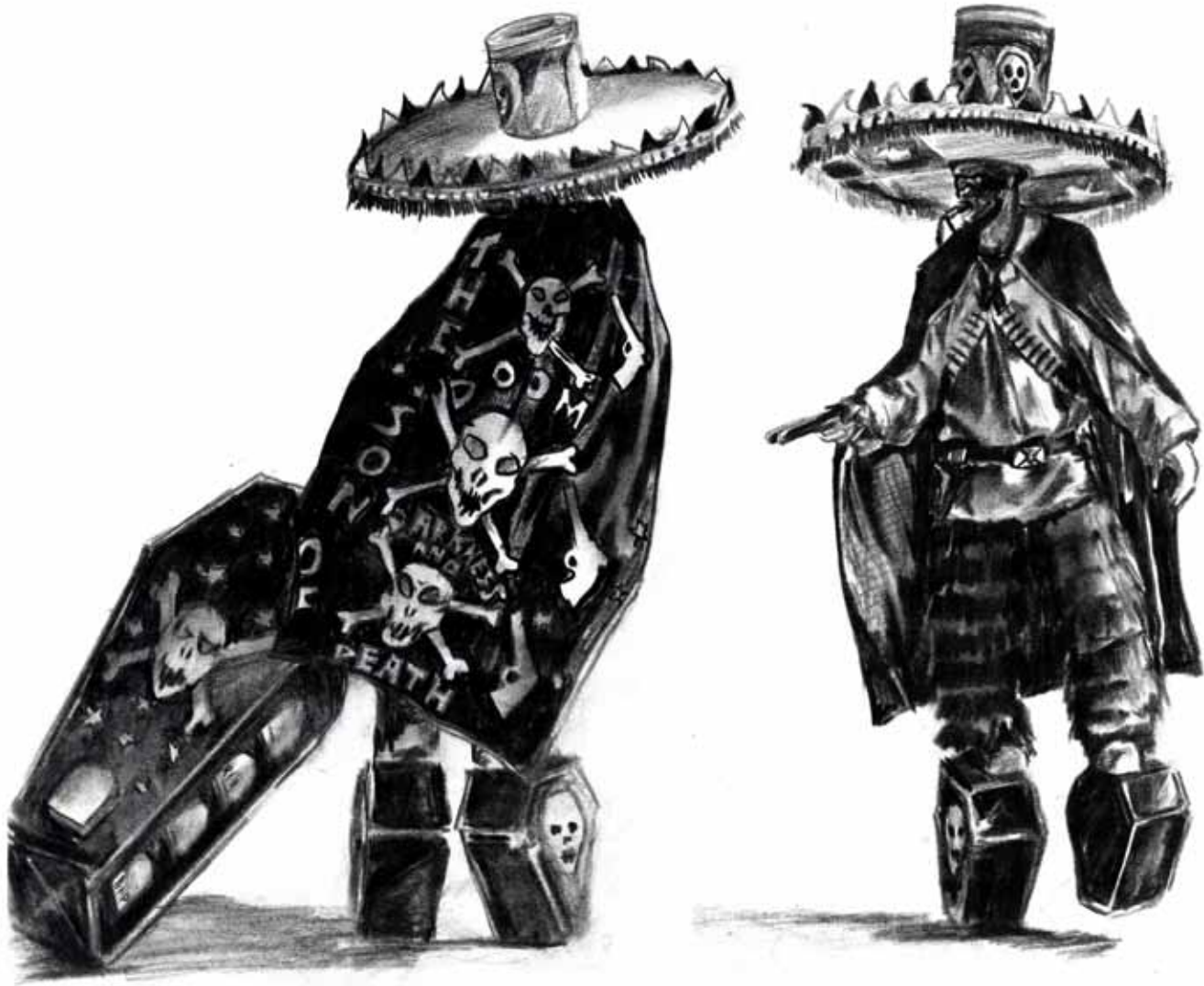
The social form of Trinidad's Carnival can be divided into pre-emancipation Carnival and post emancipation Carnival, that led to the Jemette Carnival, and Carnival, as we know it today.

In the pre-emancipation Carnival (1783-1833), the main participants were the French and English whites. The Carnival tradition was brought to Trinidad by the French, whose pre-lenten Carnival was a 'farewell to the flesh'. The main events were private masquerade balls and house-to-house visits on foot or by carriage. They masqueraded as their black slaves, people they believed were more sensuous, hedonistic and childish.¹⁰ It was sharp departure for the 'civilized' masters and their wives. The freed coloured middle class had events of their own, but slaves had little involvement in *any* celebrations, except sometimes to mimic the festivities among themselves or for their master's entertainment.

After emancipation (circa 1834), enthusiastic freed black slaves took to the streets for Carnival, and, in time, became its major participants. They introduced the *Canboulay* or '*cannes brulees*' (cane burning) procession to mark the delivery from slavery. An 1848 account by Charles Day, an English visitor to Trinidad's Carnival, describes the *Canboulay* celebrations he encountered: "*The maskers parade the streets in gangs of from ten to twenty, occasionally joining forces in procession. The primitives were Negroes, as nearly naked as might be, bedaubed with a black varnish. One of this gang had a long chain the others pulled. What this typified I was unable to learn; but, as the chained one was occasionally thrown down on the ground, and treated with mock bastinadoing it probably represented slavery.*"¹¹

In slave times, when there was a fire on the estate, the planters and masters, with horns and whips, would gather the slaves and march them in procession to put out these fires. After Emancipation, on the 1st of August 1838, ex slaves re-enacted these events at *Canboulay*, using molasses, a product of sugar cane, to further blacken their skin. This exaggeration of skin color was regenerative, a reminder of their days of slavery. The date of the procession was eventually moved from August 1st and *Canbouley* opened the annual Carnival celebrations.¹² For the freed black slaves *Canbouley* mocked the pretensions of the elite. For the white European elite it was an African saturnalia, a degeneration of the Carnival. They used their social and political privileges to try and limit the Carnival and prohibit masking in the street, with some success. Carnival became a constant struggle: the black vagabonds versus the civilized whites. Eventually, the whites withdrew from the festival. The post-emancipation Carnival was now predominantly black, with a new masquerade style incorporating loud percussive music, firmly rooted in African backgrounds.

The Jemette Carnival (1860 -1890) was a Carnival of the working class blacks. They created their own unstructured sub-culture, taking to the festival streets, often clashing with authorities over their crude and lewd behavior. *Canboulay* was an important feature of resistance in the Jemette Carnival. Rival bands were formed and indulged in stick-fighting and obscene masking. They were aggressive, playing characters that were mean and tough. They mocked the pretensions of respectable society, and flaunted their sexuality in costume and dance.¹³



“After I found this earth was too poor a place for me to dwell, I took my exit and went and robbed the Devil’s position in hell. I robbed all the golden treasures I met there. I brought hell to a ruin that cause Lucifer’s wife to take things to heart and die in despair, then I came back to this civilized world with one million pounds in solid virgin gold. So don’t be surprised by the beautiful costume that I wear, for I am quest by the unknown, I am the symbolic of manage. I struggled to master the earth. I braved the sea, I pierce the jungle. I scale the Mountain. I conquered the desert, and the last thing on earth I am going to do is to rob the last breath of like that was place in you.”

*Albert Roberts,
“The autobiography of Charles Peace (The Lion Hearted),” unpublished manuscript.
From Trinidad’s Carnival by Errol Hill*

Fig. 65 Male dominant Traditional masque of the Midnight Robber. He is an extravagant braggart whose lengthy monologues are filled with threats and boastful conquests.

The constant conflict with authorities culminated in the *Canboulay* riots of 1881, and the end of *Canboulay* tradition. The riots showed that ‘the people’ wanted this festival and would not give up without a fight. The government authorities noted Carnival’s significance as a popular break from day-to-day conventions, and made attempts to accommodate it, even while taking control of the festival, and making *Canboulay* illegal. They cleaned up the obscene masque and stick-fighting bands, marketing Carnival as a national festival that belonged to ‘the people’. This sanitized Carnival included competitions to compensate for the traditional band rivalries, and prizes for respectable costumes.¹⁴ After the riots, with continued government control, Carnival welcomed back the respectable classes and, generally, a wider variety of participants. Entrepreneurs also began to realize its commercial benefits and in turn, took profit from Carnival. There is little published on Trinidad’s Carnival from the 1890’s to the 1940’s.¹⁵

In the Post-emancipation and Jamette Carnival, the black male is at the forefront of Carnival; Carnival is his outlet against authority. After World War II, in Trinidad, ethnic-based political parties emerged. Their revisualization of an emancipated Trinidad was a nation led by black men – supported by their women – Afro-Caribbean men striving to regain their masculinity, pride and reputation in a post-colonized society. Trinidad’s anti-colonial nationalist movement of the 1950’s changed the Carnival tradition once again here, the strong black male was portrayed through traditional masque characters, predominantly male. These traditional characters were impressive and strong; performances were aggressive. Performers were serious, portraying their maleness with wit, elegance and militancy, in dance, speech and in their re-enactments of history.¹⁶



Fig. 66 Women now dominate the streets at Trinidad's Carnival.

The Contemporary Female

The body is like the earth ... as vulnerable to overbuilding, being carved into parcels, cut off, over mined, and shorn of its power as any landscape. The wilder woman will not be easily swayed by redevelopment schemes. For her the questions are not how to form but how to feel. The breast in all its shapes has the function of feeling and feeding. Does it feel? Does it feed? Then it is a good breast.¹⁷

Clarissa Pinko-Estes,
Women Who Run with Wolves

Women in Carnival were often the faithful supporters of their male counterparts, corresponding to preconceived stereotypes of the woman's place in society. Seen as virtuous, nurturing, emotional and cooperative, their role was that of housewife and homemaker. However, as social, political, and economic changes revised the structure of Carnival and introduced prominent male characters, woman's role in society and Carnival also began to transform. Following World War II, with economic emancipation and greater social freedom, more women participated in Carnival.¹⁸ Now statistically, women dominate the streets of Carnival, accounting for seventy to eighty percent of Carnival participants.¹⁹ In the sanctioned public arena of Carnival, women liberate themselves from sexual oppression. Unlike their male counterparts, women chose not to wear the bulky, grandiose costumes of the traditional male masque characters. Women embraced more sensuous styles of costume. The contemporary female chooses a cos-



Fig. 67 Women scantily clad dancing on the streets at Trinidad's Carnival.

tume of rhinestone bikini with beads, topped off with a large feather headpiece. It draws attention to her voluptuous form. Combined with her sexualized way of dancing, the final effect is intimidating, beautiful, lewd and vulgar, all at the same time. The costume, or lack of it, can be seen as an outlet for feminist representation, an emasculating exhibition. Through costume and conduct, women continue to push permissible boundaries. Carnival provides the space to affirm their rights of place. The female body in Carnival is not passive or consuming. Its stance makes it confrontational and rebellious. It is understood as subject not object, inverting the norm of traditional femininity. The societal boundaries of motherhood and purity that represent women are transcended.

The performance of Carnival uses the body as the stage, claiming it back from those who wish to control it, who wish to appropriate that which it produces, to civilize it, or even imprison it.²⁰

Mike Presdee,
Cultural Criminology And The Carnival Of Crime

In 'Rabelais and his World', philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin presents Carnival as a festival for the body and its regeneration. Carnival embodies the grotesque, overwhelming the distinctions between 'the profane and the sacred, the lower and the higher, the spiritual and the material'.²¹ He sees most festival in Medieval England based in laughter and the degradation of the body. The body regenerates itself by wallowing in the material world.

Laughter has a deep philosophical meaning, it is one of the essential forms of the truth concerning the world as a whole, concerning history and man; it is a peculiar point of view relative to the world; the world is seen anew, no less (and perhaps more) profoundly than when seen from the serious standpoint. Therefore, laughter is just as admissible in great literature, posing universal problems, as seriousness. Certain essential aspects of the universe are accessible only to laughter.²²

Mikhail Bakhtin

Rabelais and his World

Laughter is universal. It erupts from the belly, and it belongs to all of us. In Carnival, laughter creates the second world of festival, mocking the seriousness of the political world, rejecting state and class. The grotesque body is its natural medium. The Grotesque imagery of Carnival degrades all that is serious, high, and mighty, reasserting the physical and the profane. Contact with consumption, defecation, urination, copulation, and birth, ultimately renew us, and celebrate our rebirth.²³

The grotesque body is an open, material body. It remains connected with the world with those parts of the body the world enters and those parts of the body that go out into the world: the open mouth, the genital organs, the breasts, the phallus, the potbelly and the nose.²⁴ Body parts allow the ever-growing body to exceed its limits. The Carnival costume enhances these grotesqueries. It makes extreme exaggerations and unfathomable representations of the body. It violates the classical body.

The classical statue has no openings or orifices whereas grotesque costume and masks emphasize the gaping mouth,

the protuberant belly and buttocks, the feet and the genitals. In this way the grotesque body stands in opposition to the bourgeois individualist conception of the body, which finds its image and legitimation in the classical. The grotesque body is emphasized as a mobile, split, multiple self, as subject of pleasure in processes of exchange; and it is never closed off from either its social or ecosystemic context. The classical body on the other hand keeps its distance.²⁵

Peter Stallybrass and Allon White
The Politics and Poetics of Transgression

The costumes portray the Carnival body in the act of becoming. By appropriation, exaggeration, submersion, and sublimation, the grotesque costumed body appears both humorous and repulsive, even as it is rooted in positive bodily themes of fertility, growth and abundance.²⁶ This is most obvious in the contemporary female Carnival of Trinidad, where scantily-clad women dance with wanton abandon on the streets of Port-of-Spain. Their costumes of bikini and beads highlight their breasts, belly and buttocks.

The grotesque body is two bodies in one or perhaps, a body in transition. From the old body a new one emerges. The pregnant body gives birth and dies; the newborn body emerges.²⁷ The Carnival costume, and the physical intimacy of Carnival generally, allows for this new body to form.

In Carnival everyone is involved; it is a scene of total participation. Carnival erases the individual's private and pompous nature. It enables the individual to reawake an essential connection to the community. The embodiment of this is in the *Jouvert* parade that opens Carnival.



Fig. 68 J'ouvert morning, participant is 'baptized' in a bathtub of mud.

J'ouvert - The Collective Experience

'For the past fourteen years I only indulged in the pretty contemporary Carnival. In order to fully grasp the grotesque presence in festival, I decided to finally play J'ouvert – 'mud mas'. I had always contemplated playing J'ouvert, but the idea was immediately refuted with cries from my mother, "J'ouvert? Are you crazy? It's so dirty, so unsafe, you can't tell who is who!" The list of reasons went on and on. This year however I had to see what all this fuss was.

Two o'clock Carnival Monday morning my alarm wakes me. I dress with the thought of sleep looming over me. In five hours I will have to wake up to play 'pretty' Carnival. My mother walks in and questions my outfit; Turns out my clothes are too 'nice' for J'ouvert. I change into an outfit I am willing to part with, an old t-shirt and shorts.

I decide to play with an organized J'ouvert band. It cost fifty American dollars and includes free drinks. I wanted to belong to a group. I would soon find out that to belong this is not necessary.

As we drive into town, I see people scattered on all corners of the city. Carnival is rarely still, but in the early hours of the morning, the sky is black and my surroundings eerie. This stillness will soon be over thrown. I hear music blasting from music trucks. My band has a steel pan ensemble. I shuffle my feet to the music. The mass of bodies is dizzying. In the darkness spectator and participant are indistinguishable.

Suddenly I see this 'thing' walking towards me. A human thing caked with wet brown mud, carrying a bucket of wet



Fig. 69 Cross-gender dressing is a popular form of Carnival inversion during J'ouvert.



Fig. 70 Veiled woman during J'ouvert celebrations.



Fig. 71 The collective at J'ouvert, A unified force all covered in mud. (above)

Fig. 72 As the sun rises and J'ouvert comes to an end, people celebrate in joyous exaltation. (below)

brown mud. This was the dirtiness my mother talked about, and I clench my whole body hoping to dear God that I would not be his next victim to splatter with mud. The site of him excites me but also makes me uncomfortable. As I catch up to my band, I see more people with smears of mud. In front of me there is a bathtub on wheels, filled with the slimiest of mud. At its sides are buckets of paint – red, blue, green, yellow and white. I can smell the fresh paint. This is our supply to revel in. Before I turn to show my mother, I see my friend get a handful of blue paint to the mouth. His whole face is blue and his smile is blue as well. In a domino effect, the paint is passed on. I plunge my arm elbow deep in the mud and fling it. It feels good. An old man covered in red, anoints me with red paint, all I can do is laugh and smile. J'ouvert knows no scorn.

I follow the happy group of people dancing to the beat of the steel pan. The music, dance and mud build a unitary momentum. There is a feeling of oneness. All people are anonymous as denominators of colour, class and race are erased. One muddy man looks like the other muddy man. There is no distinguishing between stranger and friend; they are both part of the collective experience, sharing the same space in the streets. The darkness quickly disperses as night meets and greets the rising sun, reminding me that Carnival has only just begun.'

J'ouvert or '*mud mas*' is an initiation into the Carnival activities. Its participants dress each other in costumes of mud, paint and oil. The mud extinguishes the stratification of society. The mud is for all participants. You cannot commercialize mud; no matter how hard you try.



Fig. 73 Molasses Devil spitting flames and threatening bystanders.

Parading in the mud of *J'ouvert*, the individuals can become less aware of their own actions, hypnotized by the collective rhythm. *“Entraining with others into a shared rhythm – marching, chanting, dancing – may trigger a primitive sense of irrational and beguiling belonging, and a shared mindset.”*²⁸ The collective ecstatic behavior of Carnival participants involves synchronized movement through dance. The common ‘call and response’ songs of Trinidad’s Carnival’s music, provokes the uninhibited body, creating a communal atmosphere.

Carnival constantly reconstructs the docile (colonized) body as an unruly (resisting) body that threatens to loosen institutionalized authority’s grasp on representation. The perpetual jumping up (dancing) of the revelers emphasizes the life force, displaying at the same time a delight in transgressive sexuality and excessive corporeal states. Through such dance consolidates the idea of a collective body politic ...²⁹

Helen Gilbert and Joanne Tompkins
Post-Colonial Drama: Theory, Practice, Politics

In the mess of mud, music, and dance, the individual is disguised, becoming part of something larger. This freedom from restraint unites the participants, making for a more sensual awareness of the environment and the bodies in it. In this new community we are emotionally reborn; Carnival and the grotesque moves us beyond our bodies, in ecstasy.



Fig. 74 Sketch and design inspired by Aldrick's Dragon Costume.

The Costume Experience

Positioning myself to take photographs of the parade, I see the crowd around me disappears. All the by-standers make their way to the back, keeping their distance from the front of the stage. Suddenly, there is a piercing scream, and I see why. The devils are making their way on stage. They charge on with a vengeance. Vulgarly thrusting themselves at the petrified crowd, they demand money. Covered entirely with black grease, the horned devils threaten to dirty innocent bystanders who do not hand them money. I throw a dollar at one devil and hurry to get out of his way. They seem possessed, spitting up gross fluids and blowing flames. Their costumes make them inhumane, it's as if their hellish nature and threats would actually destroy me. They are not pretending to be devils. In that moment they are devils.

This transformation of the devil masquerader fascinated me. In the novel 'The Dragon Can't Dance,' the same change of character through costume occurs. The protagonist Aldrick is transformed through the creation and performance of his dragon costume in Trinidad's Carnival. It represented himself and his community, their trials and tribulations. With the fearful costume and its performance, he ensures that they are both seen and heard.

In truth, it was in a spirit of priesthood that Aldrick addressed his work; for, the making of his dragon costume was to him always a new miracle, a new test not only of his skill but of his faith: for though he knew exactly what he had to do, it was only by faith that he could bring alive from these scraps of cloth and tin that dragon, its mouth breathing fire,

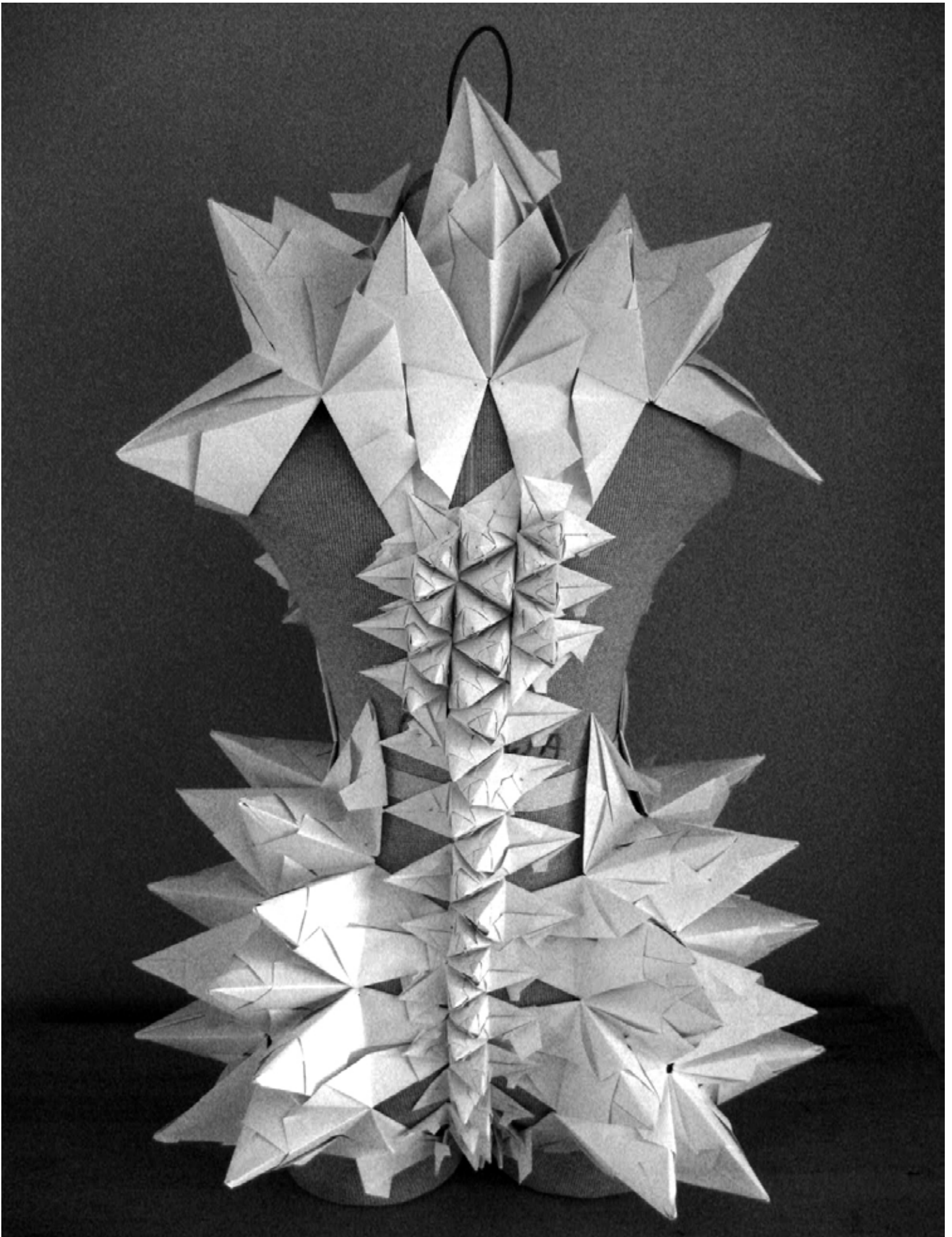


Fig. 75 Process of designing 'Appropriation' costume based on ideas of the Dragon.

*its tail threshing the ground, its nine chains rattling, that would contain the beauty and threat and terror that was the message he took each year to Port of Spain. It was in this message that he asserted before the world his self. It was through it that he demanded that others see him, recognize his personhood, be warned of his dangerousness.*³⁰

Earl Lovelace,

The Dragon Can't Dance

Taking himself out of the present and losing himself both in process and performance, Aldrick was able to achieve ecstasy. The costume embodied him, contributing to his sense of self, both physically and psychologically. Influenced by Aldrick and his costume, I chose to make my own dragon costume for the contemporary female Carnival. It would mimic the aggressive nature of the dragon costume and merge it with the highly sexualized female body in Carnival. I used abstract forms that evoked the dragon.

Working with my hands, I mold and manipulate, pushing, pulling, creasing, and tearing to reach the desired volume. I compose based on a repetition of units. Three of these units make up a three-dimensional 'spiked' form. Like Aldrick, I approach its design with a sense of blind faith. Piece by piece, I assemble the modular 'spike' around the female form. I imagine what the series of spikes could represent, a twist in the dragon's tail, the ridge on his back. I variously scaled 'spikes' to draw attention to areas of the body used to communicate, whether as threat device or sexual lure. The completed costume is an appropriation of the dragon, made to suit the carnival female and their changing culture. Both the costume and the process of making it were transformative.'



Fig. 76 Nick Cave's *Soundsuit* made of twigs.

Developing the costumes included here, I found myself considering the designs of Nick Cave, a contemporary artist and performer based in Chicago, and Peter Minshall a costume designer and ‘mas’ man’ based in Trinidad.

Nick Cave’s Soundsuits, are a series of costumes that make noise when occupied. In 1992, he produced the first costume of this series, made entirely of twigs. In response to racial prejudice in America, “I started thinking about myself more and more as a black man — as someone who was discarded, devalued, viewed as less than.”³¹ By crafting and donning his creation, Cave found protection from these prejudices. Sitting in a park, he looked at the twigs on the ground and thought that they represented the diminutive value that was given to the African America male.³² He gathered them, cut them, drilled holes at their ends and attached them to a full undergarment. When immersed in the suit, he was concealed, his identity distorted. “When I was inside a suit, you couldn’t tell if I was a woman or man; if I was black, red, green or orange; from Haiti or South Africa,” he said. “I was no longer Nick. I was a shaman of sorts.”³³

When I first stumbled across a video of the twig Soundsuit, I was amused. It appeared ridiculous, a man covered in twigs, beyond recognition. It was as if the wearer was living inside, as if it was his refuge from everyday experiences. Alone, a twig appears useless, something to be discarded; Cave was able to see its significance in multiples. I began looking at every item for its double life; everything that crossed my path was considered potential material for my costumes. Anything can become a tool for the body to express itself; Cave proves this. Wearing his art piece, he discovered the unexpected sounds, as the twigs

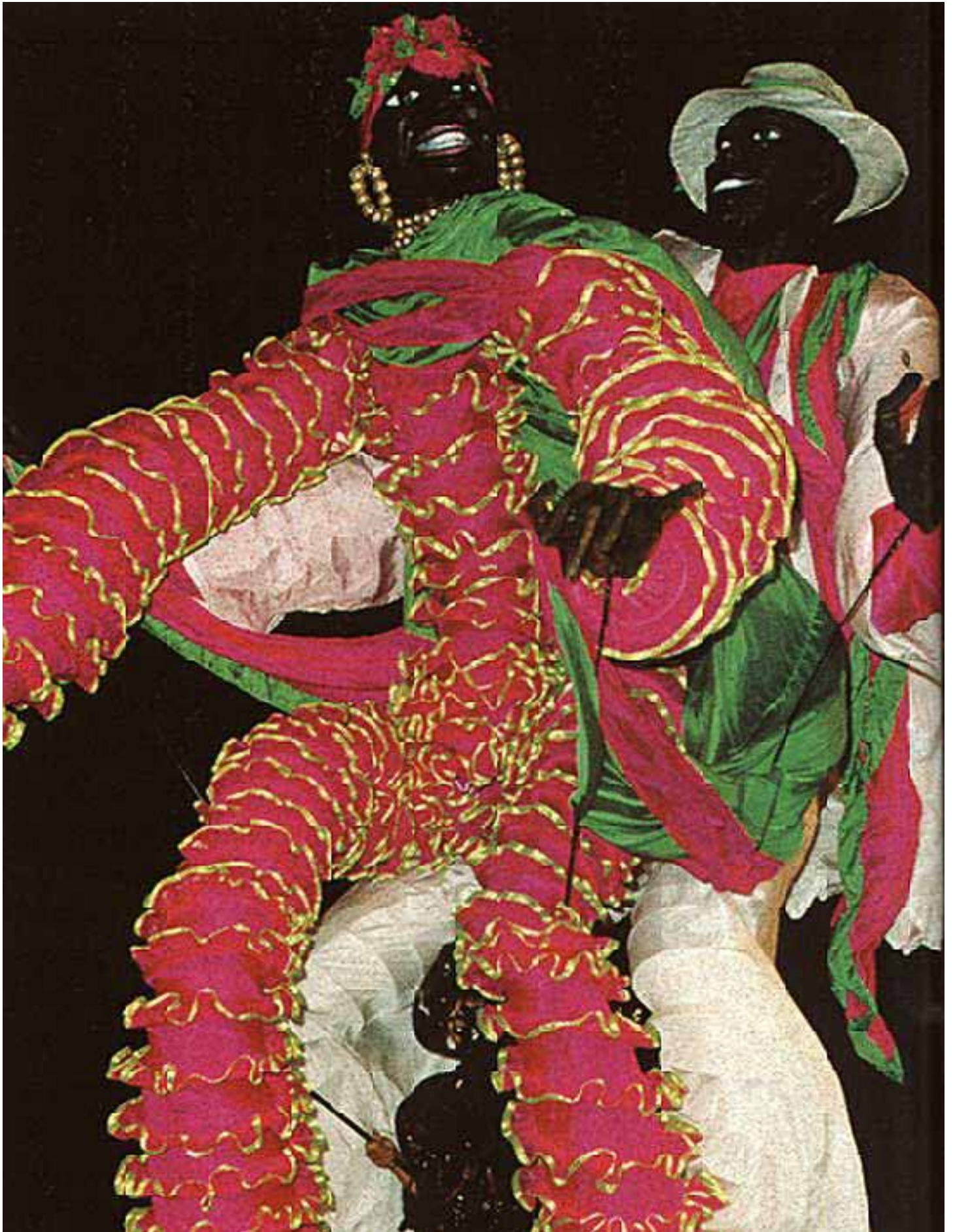


Fig. 77 Peter Minshall's 'dancing-mobiles' - '*Saga Boy*' and '*Tan Tan*'.

grated against one another. It was a moment's experience, because he had no preconception that his first costume would become a Soundsuit. His actions expanded the boundaries of costume through sound. His discovery pushed me to consider the possibility of material apart from its appearance. In motion, the materials could whistle or rattle, producing sounds that traveled through space, stretching the limits of the body and the costume.

Peter Minshall's costumes are iconic. In Trinidad's Carnival, they always have stood out distinct from the monotonous masquerade of bikini and beads. This is why, every year, his costumed bands are so anticipated. His costumes come alive: it is not just the performer dancing, the costume dances as well.

Minshall's medium is 'mas', "the performance of masquerade and mobile sculpture as developed and practiced in the Carnival of Trinidad."³⁴ He based his studies on the traditional Carnival masque character of the bat whose costume translates movement from body to costume. The bat's costume consists of a papier-mâché head mask complete with teeth, nose barb and round eyes, and huge, flexible wings that span twelve to fifteen feet. Made of wire and bamboo, they are covered in silk fabric, and attached to the side of body, from toe to fingertip, allowing for a range of movement. The bat, "danced a delicate embroidery, that has the ankles moving and the canes twittering and him pirouetting, so that silk became a speech, a song, a vocabulary all its own ... In the person of the Bat, in a state of complete unconsciousness, these people from an island discovered a kinetics of performance art ..."³⁵ Using the bat as the motif, Minshall developed costume designs that he termed 'dancing mobiles'³⁶ whose kinetic structure is performed by the masquerader.

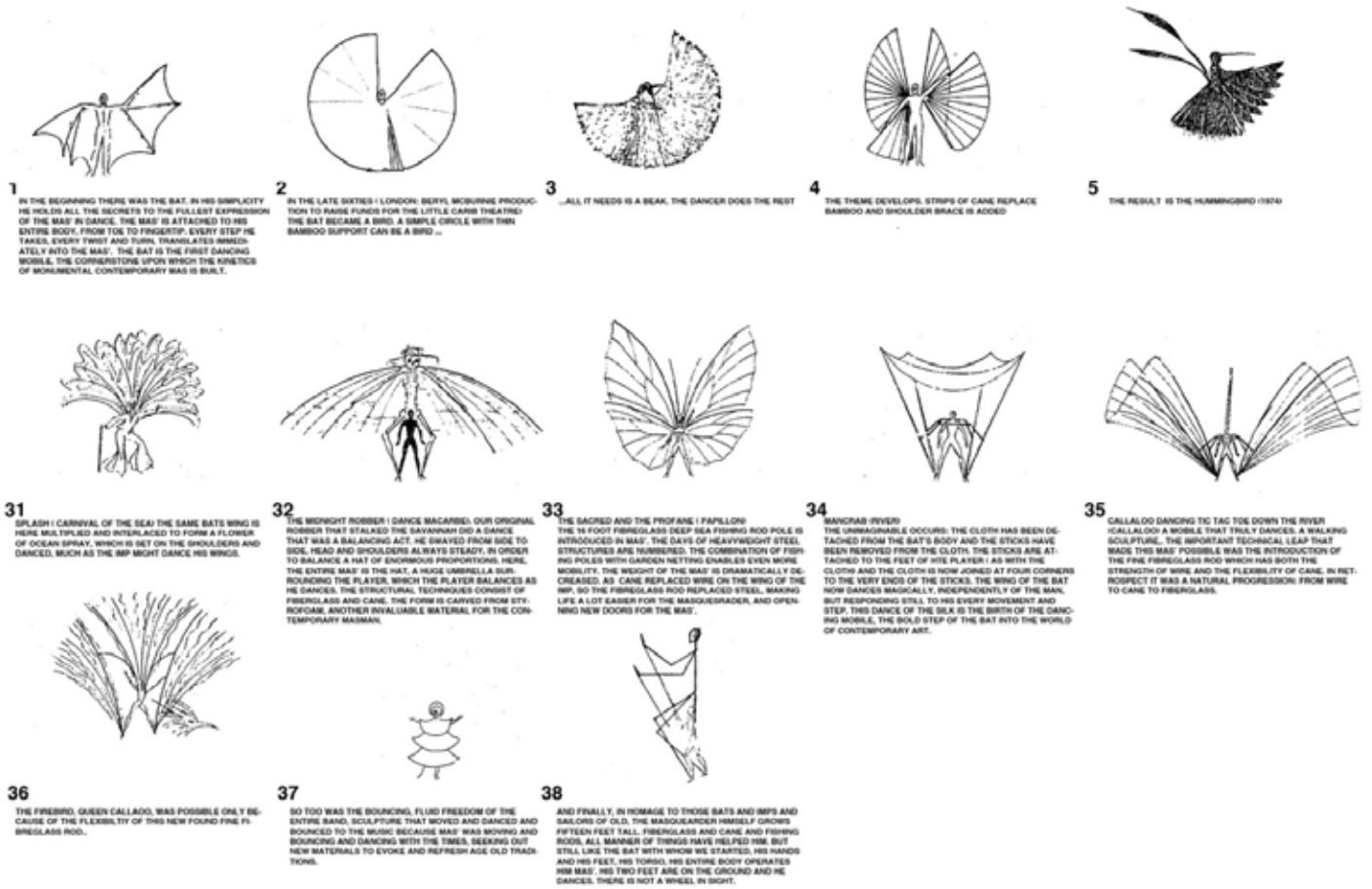


Fig. 78 Peter Minshall's Carnival Theory. 'From Bat to Dancing Mobile : Technology in Mas.'

My fondest memory is of his costumes ‘*Saga Boy*’ and ‘*Tan Tan*’. They were giant male and female puppets controlled by the masquerader. The ‘*Saga Boy*’ was a super-sized version of the masquerader, whose performance radiated through the costume. This puppeteering made me want to take control and maneuver it, making it shake its legs and bobbing its head to my own rhythm. I discovered the extension of the body through costume, extending its range of motion and magnifying its appearance. Minshall’s flexible Carnival costume encourages the inventiveness of the masquerader. It provokes the masquerader to experiment with it.

Nick Cave and Peter Minshall, combine the visual with performance. Through the use of exaggerations, their costumes defy prejudice, allowing its wearer to be anyone or anything they desired, becoming a tool of communication. However, each developed his particular approach to the body and the architectural space of costume. They each recognized the costume as a medium between body and space and its transformation through movement. Cave calls his costumes *Soundsuits* that use movement to create sound. This sound further extends the body’s edges. Minshall refers to his costumes as ‘dancing mobiles’ that echo the energy of the masquerader making him appear larger than life. Both influence my approach to creating my costumes, encouraging me to contemplate movement and materiality and the ability of the costume to disguise and extend. I refer to my costumes as four operations of appropriation, exaggeration, submersion and sublimation. Each transforms the body during Carnival. Together they produce an out of body experience.



Fig. 79 Mas' Camp's are busy days before Carnival .(above)
Fig. 80 Mas' Camp workers put the finishing touches on Costumes .(below)

Carnival is a world based on extreme contrast and inversions, where the ordinary becomes extraordinary. On the parade route the crowd, music, dance, and drink fuse the body with costume. This transformation delivers us from order taking us to ecstatic heights unachievable in 'ordinary' day-to-day life. For a moment, the costume allows the body to engage in its own ideal, becoming something that, during the rest of the year, it is not.

Like any sign of performance, a costume is both a signifier (pure materiality) and signified (element integrated into a system of meaning). In fact this is exactly how Roland Barthes conceives of the "good costume": it "must be material enough to signify and transparent enough not to turn its signs into parasites."³⁷

Patrice Pavis

Analyzing Performance: Dance, Theatre and Performance

Within Carnival, the costume becomes an obsession or fetish of sorts, standing in for the whole. It is not surprising to find masqueraders hitting the gym months before Carnival, to ensure they look their best in their costume. The Sunday before Carnival, craft shops and local carnival suppliers overflow with women looking to embellish their costumes. At the mas' camps, where costumes are made and collected, anxious impatient masqueraders wait for costumes that are frantically being finished by the mas' camp workers. Finally, Carnival Monday arrives and people head out into the streets, donning their prized costumes, costumes that make their fantasies transparent. For some, it is an opportunity to blend in with others in



Fig. 81 Costume Facade hides the masquerader's identity.

similar costumes, to become part of something larger. For others it is a form of exhibitionism, an opportunity to win the attention of others.

The costume distorts the true nature of the body, transforming the wearer, perhaps disclosing new natures. It makes a new “facade”, or it emphasizes one already in play. It is, in its way, architecture of the persona.

The use of the term facade is in itself revealing. It signifies recognition of levels to be penetrated and hints at the functions performed by architectural features, which provide screens behind which to retire from time to time. The strain of keeping up a facade can be great. Architecture can and does take over this burden for people. It can also provide a refuge where the individual can “let his hair down” and be himself.³⁸

Edward T. Hall,
The Hidden Dimension

Up to a point a carnival costume represents a fulfillment of one’s needs and desires. Historical masque are “playing rich’ military are brave and dashing, and without pushing a good idea too far ... This Dionysian catharsis alone would justify the whole institution of carnival to any psychologist and ultimately to any government. But along with ridding man of his frustrations, it gives him *raison d’etre*, recognition from his peers and a sense of accomplishment.³⁹

Dan Crowley,
Midnight Robber



Fig. 82 Costumes all in motion build up the ecstatic collective experience during Carnival. (above)

Fig. 83 Masqueraders in rhythmic exaltation as the cross the stage. (below)

The architecture of costume serves its wearers. Its significance lies in its affirmation of identity. It accommodates an emotional and sensuous experience that is referred to in Trinidad as ‘playin’ mas,’ the art of portrayal through costume and dance, appealing to the visual, aural, haptic and kinetic senses.

Architecture continues after the moment of its design and construction. The experience, perception, use, appropriation and occupation of architecture need to be considered in two ways” first as temporal activity which takes place after the ‘completion’ of the building, and which fundamentally alters the meaning of the architecture, displacing it away from the architect and builder towards the active user; second, as the reconceptualisation of architectural production. Such that different activities reproduce different architecture over space and time.⁴⁰

Gender Space Architecture: An Interdisciplinary Introduction

Costumes are an ephemeral architecture – fragile, mobile and temporal. They are used for two days in Trinidad’s Carnival then neglected or abandoned. They mark off Carnival as of a particular season and time.

The Carnival mentality seriously, solemnly dedicates itself to the concept of waste, ephemera, of built-in obsolescence, but this is not the built-in obsolescence of manufacture but of art, because in Carnival the creative energy is strictly regulated to its own season. Last year’s intricate sculptures are discarded as immediately valueless when it is midnight on Shrove Tuesday ...⁴¹

Robert D. Hamner,

Critical Perspectives on Derek Walcott



Fig. 84 The contemporary female costume highlights the female anatomy in all its glory.

Costume is the mediator between man and space. In order to communicate with the body, movement and fluidity is important in costume design. The ability to maneuver and manipulate the costume structure is crucial when demonstrating a dramatic effect or expression. The costume is, in some way, the body's externalized psyche; it amplifies every gesture. The power of costume is even greater *en masse*. When everyone is dressed in the same costume, each becomes bigger. In the participatory masquerade, the human is a giant with a greater force of motion and a rhythmic exaltation that is unachievable in the singular.

New techniques, shifts in the local economy, and changing concepts of culture, have in turn, redeveloped the Carnival costume. New designs – departures – stand out. Carnival pushes this very idea. Over the years, costumes challenge the officials and the onlookers. They are daring, controversial, and crude. It is the contemporary female costume in Carnival that most challenges convention now. It is why I chose the female form as my muse for my costume designs. They embrace ideas of the open grotesque body, a body communicating through its apertures and convexities. This is the role of costume as ornament – to amplify the grotesque. It portrays the carnival body in the act of becoming, taking in from the world while also giving out to it. It turns the ordinary and mundane into something both communicative and fantastical. The costumed bodies of Carnival are a narrative form, affirming our identity, our place, and our representation in culture.

ENDNOTES

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- 5 Mikhail Bakhtin, introduction to *Rabelais and His World* (Cambridge, Mass: M.I.T. Press, 1968), 10.
- 6 Catherine Ingraham, *Architecture, Animal, Human: The Asymmetrical Condition* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 188.
- 7 Mike Presdee, *Cultural Criminology And The Carnival Of Crime* (New York and Canada: Routledge, 2000), 32.
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- 16 PhilipW. Scher and Garth L. Green eds., *Trinidad Carnival: The Cultural Politics of a Transnational Festival* (Indiana :Indiana University Press, 2007), 34-37.
- 17 Clarissa Pinko –Estes, *Women Who Run With The Wolves* (New York: Ballentine Books, 1994), 212.
- 18 PhilipW. Scher and Garth L. Green eds., *Trinidad Carnival: The Cultural Politics of a Transnational Festival* (Indiana :Indiana University Press, 2007), 17.
- 19 IBID, 6.
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- 24 IBID, 26.
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- 31 Beth Blahut, "Nick Cave" University of Wisconsin-Madison: Arts on Campus, accessed December 1, 2010, http://www.arts.wisc.edu/artsinstitute/IAR/nick_cave.html
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