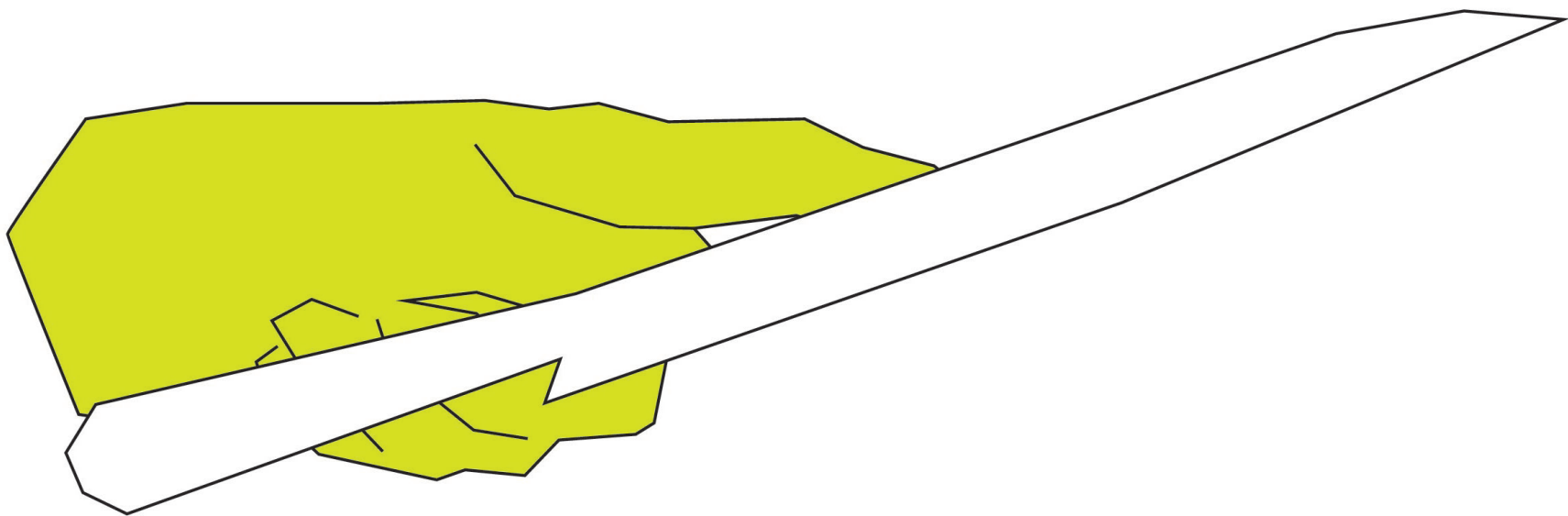


Hand & Knife

(Unit 2.1 Positions through iterating)
(100-PAGE PUBLICATION)

This project centers on the relationship between the human hand and the knife, exploring how gestures of gripping, handling, and using knives shift across different functions and contexts. It is a visual intervention—an experimental dissection of the everyday act of “holding a knife,” conducted through 120 subtle shifts, simplifications, and iterative visual transformations. I aim to question: how do tools shape the body, and how does the body, in turn, shape tools?



Topic:

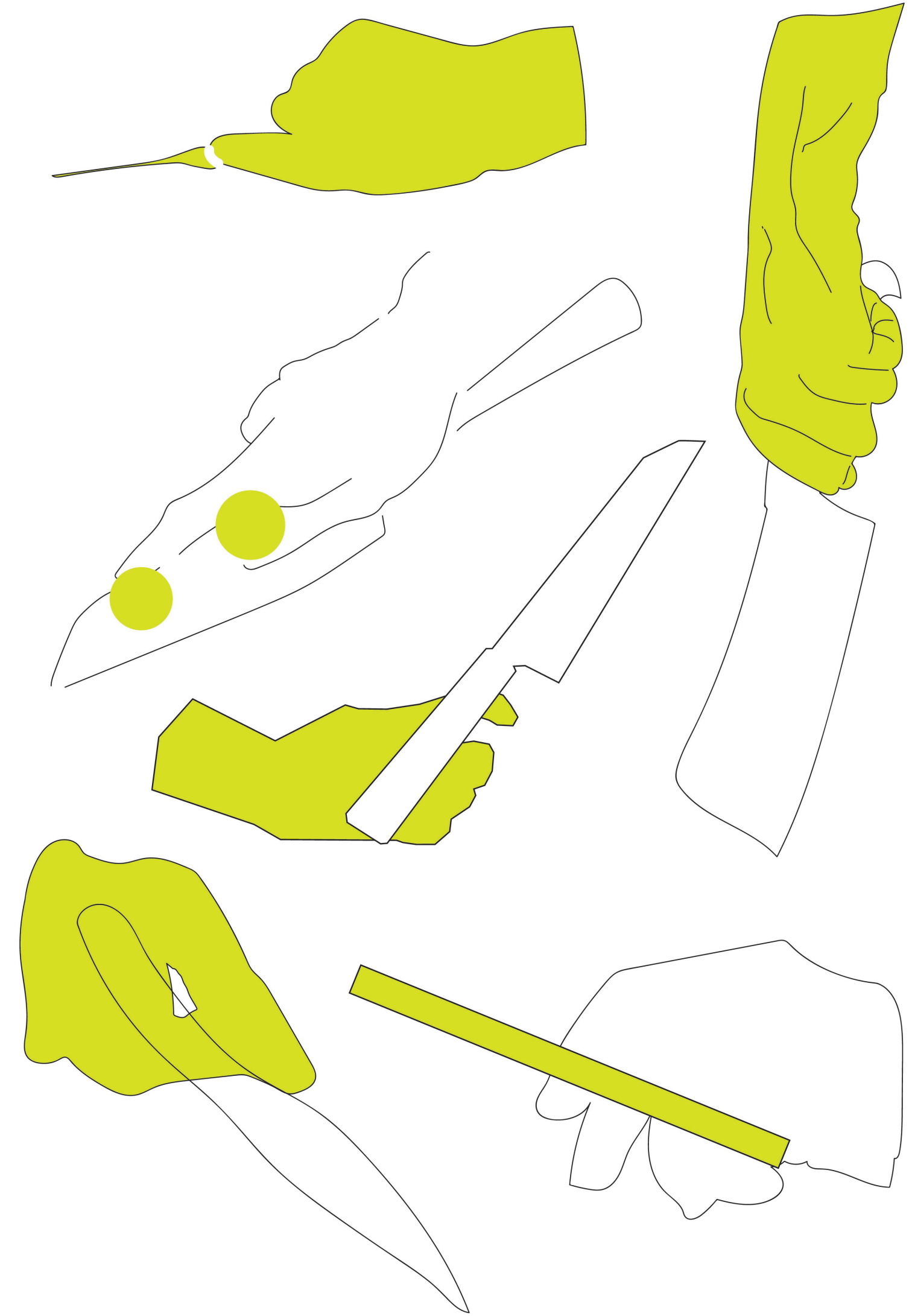
Exploring how bodily posture (the hand) and object (the knife) mutually influence one another — gestures change with tools, and tools take form through the body.

Method:

Visual simplification (outlines, color blocks, motion traces) to extract and observe subtle variations in hand gestures.

Medium:

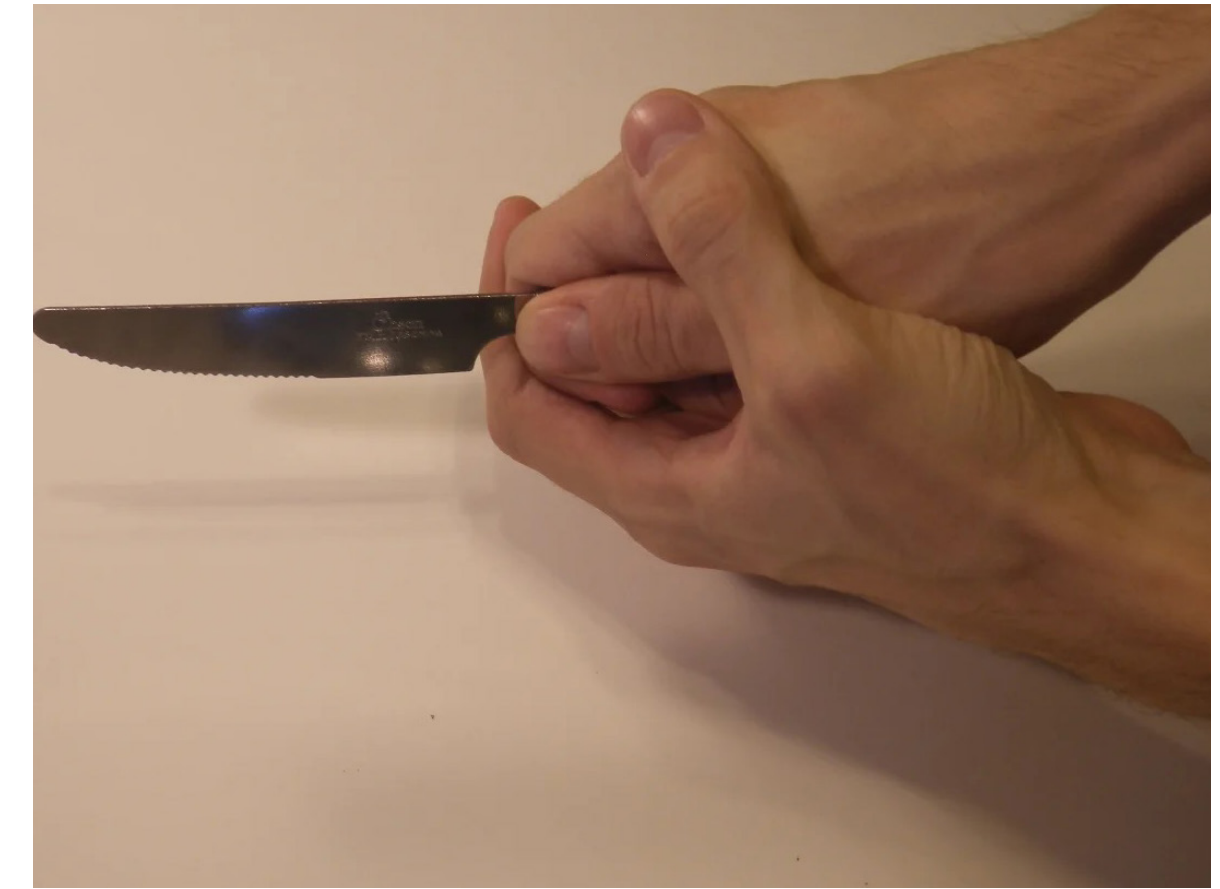
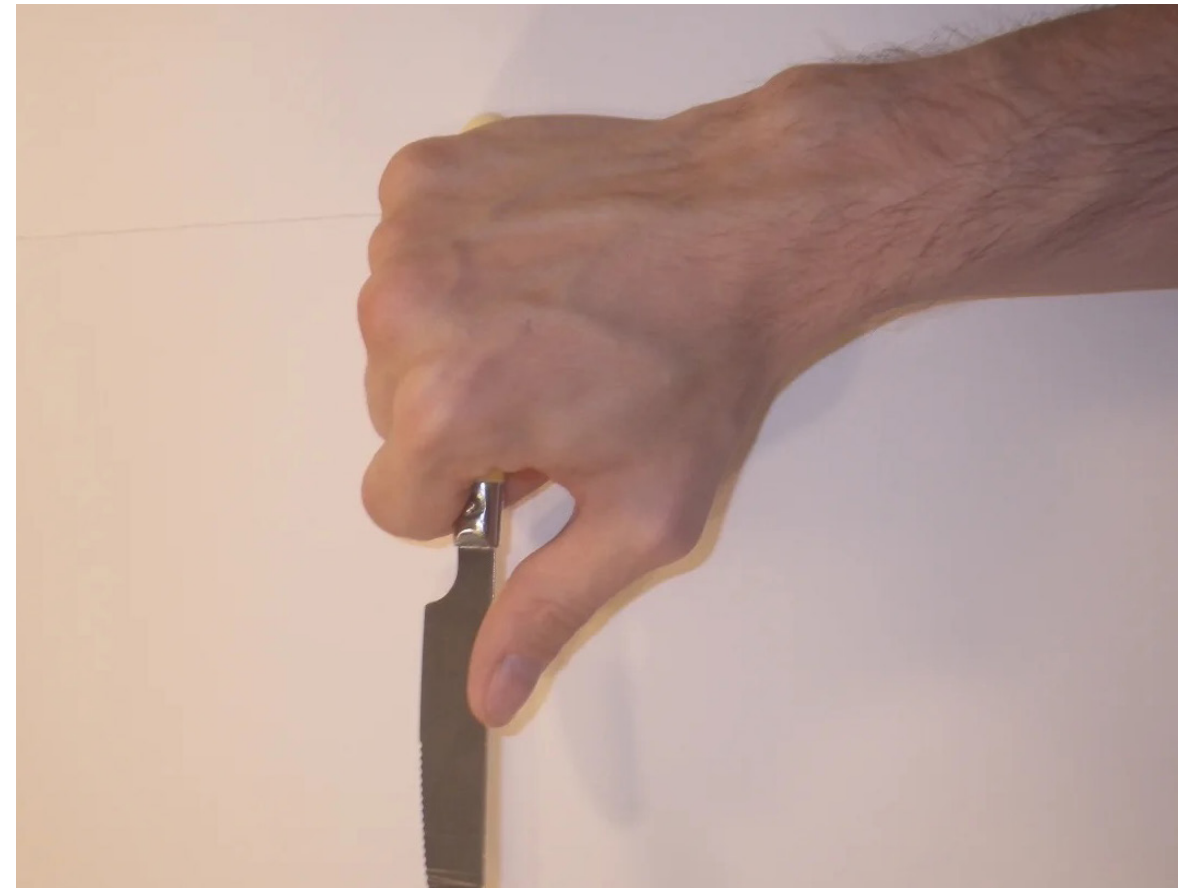
Digital software and **Vellum paper** overlays — building a set of iteration of body-tool relationships



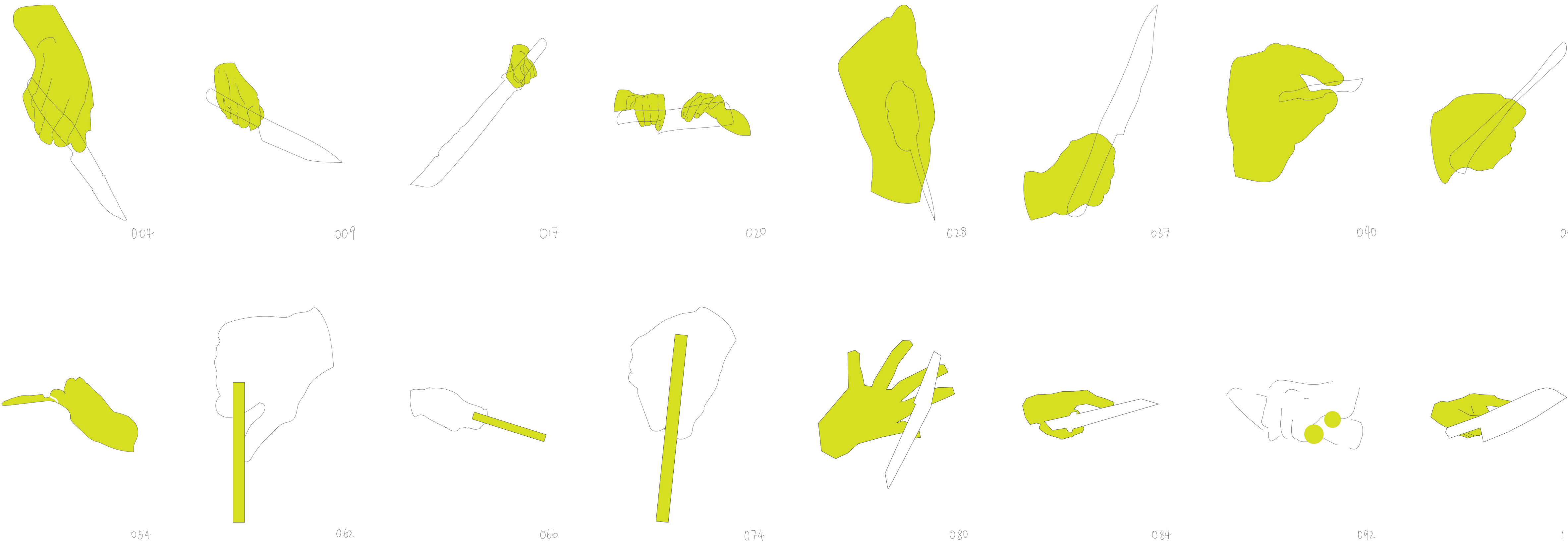
I selected photographs showing hands using various types of knives across different real-life contexts — including cooking, carving, and surgical settings. These references highlight how hand postures shift depending on the function.



I specifically focused on variations in points of applied force, such as whether the gesture relies on fingertips, the wrist, or the palm. These subtle distinctions offer a rich foundation for my iterative simplification process.

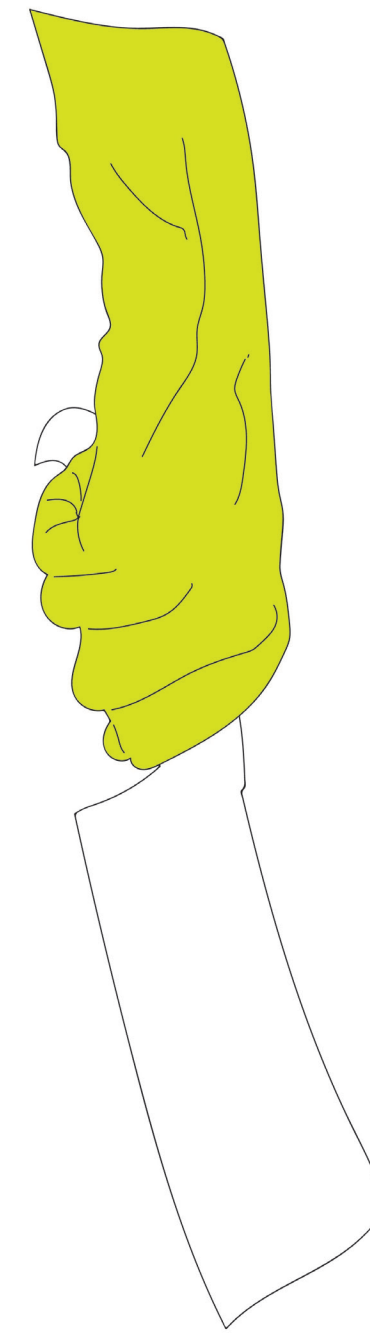


Throughout the simplification process, I tested several distinct visual reduction methods, not only to clarify form but also to emphasize the functional relationship between the hand and the knife, including gesture, force, and contact. Each variation reveals a different perspective of interpretation:

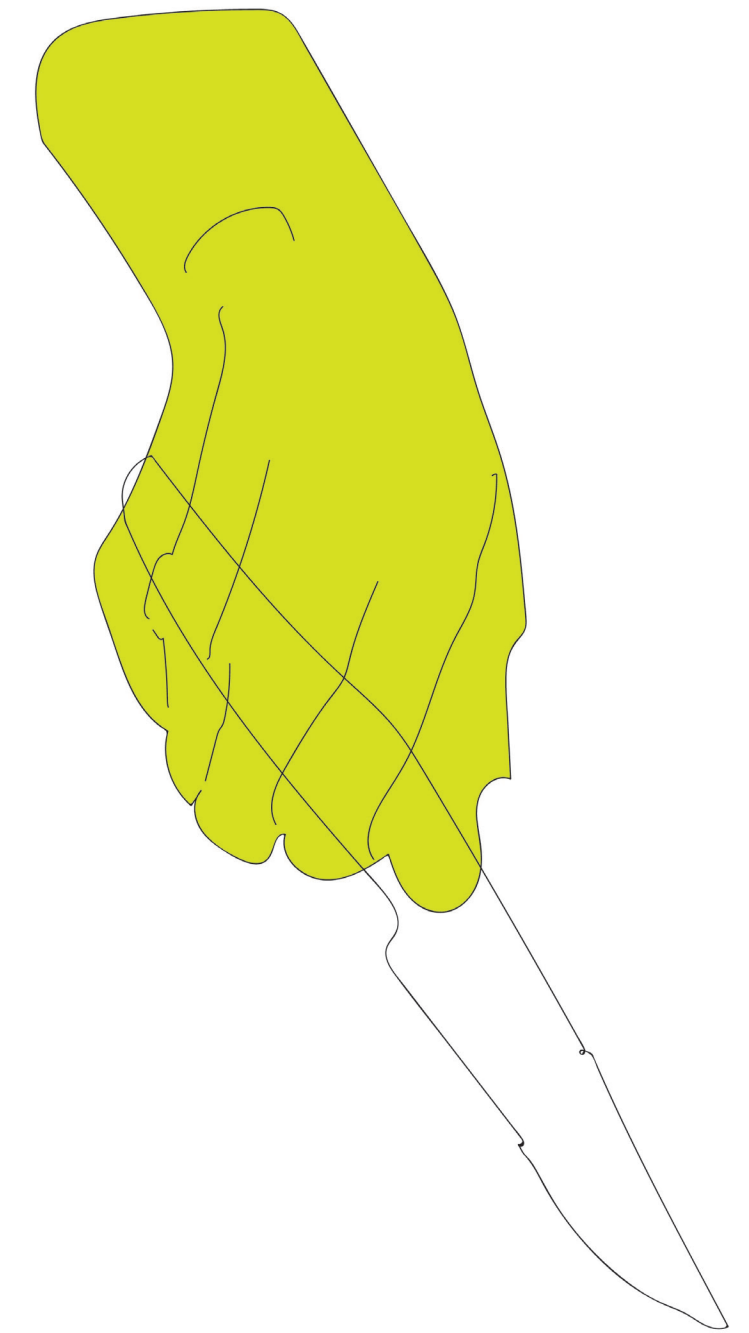


Outlined the hand and knife with contour lines, including light internal detailing on the hand

→ Highlights **force direction** and grip structure through subtle joint articulation.



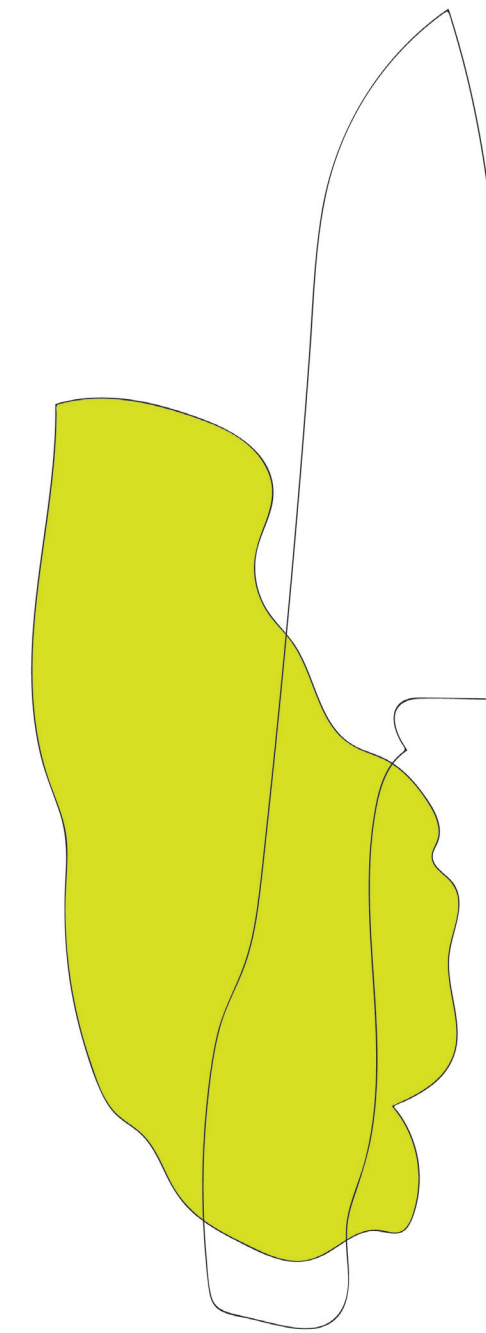
001



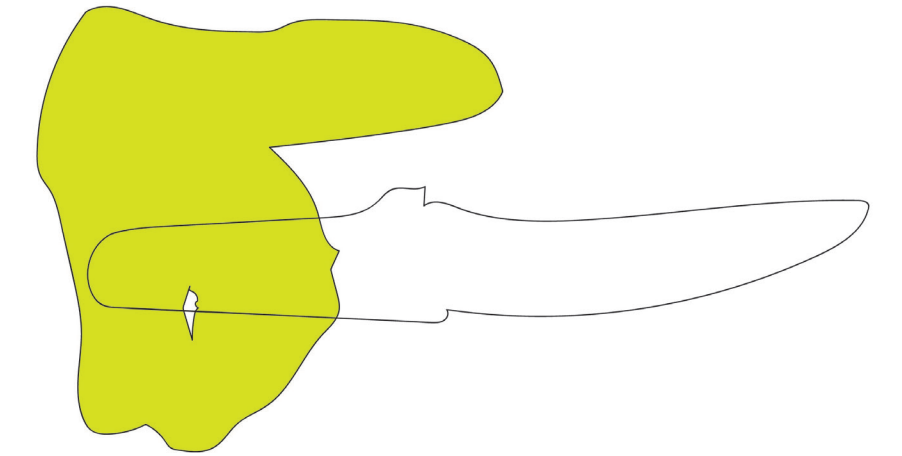
004

Solid color fill for the hand silhouette + knife outlined

→ Contrasts **body** vs **tool**, emphasizing the shape of the overall gesture.



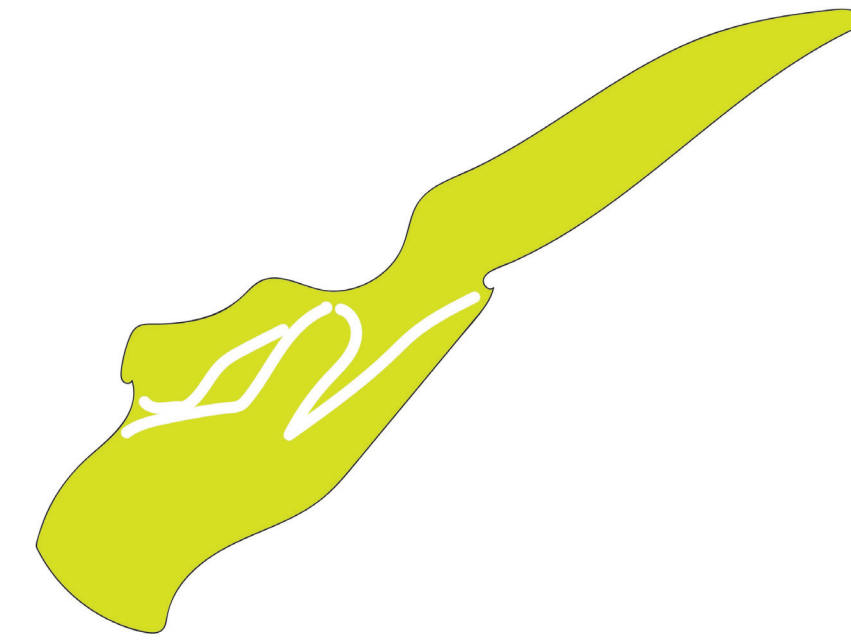
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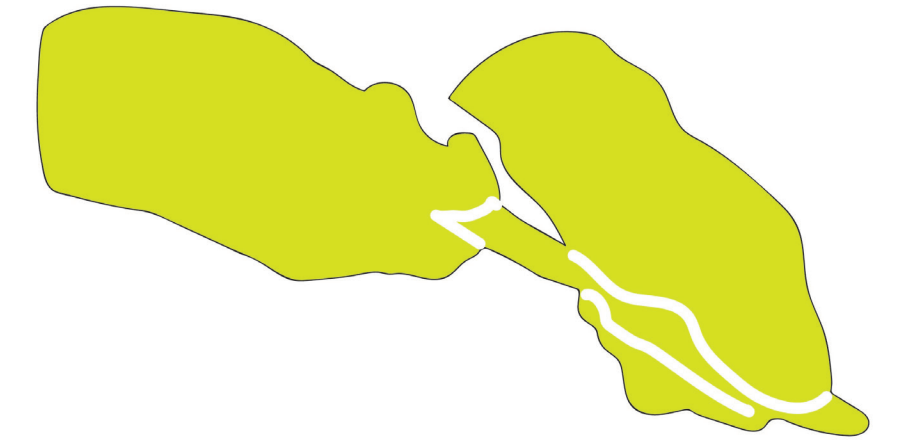
034

Both hand and knife filled with color, contact area kept as a line

→ Focuses on the **contact point** and precision of the grip.



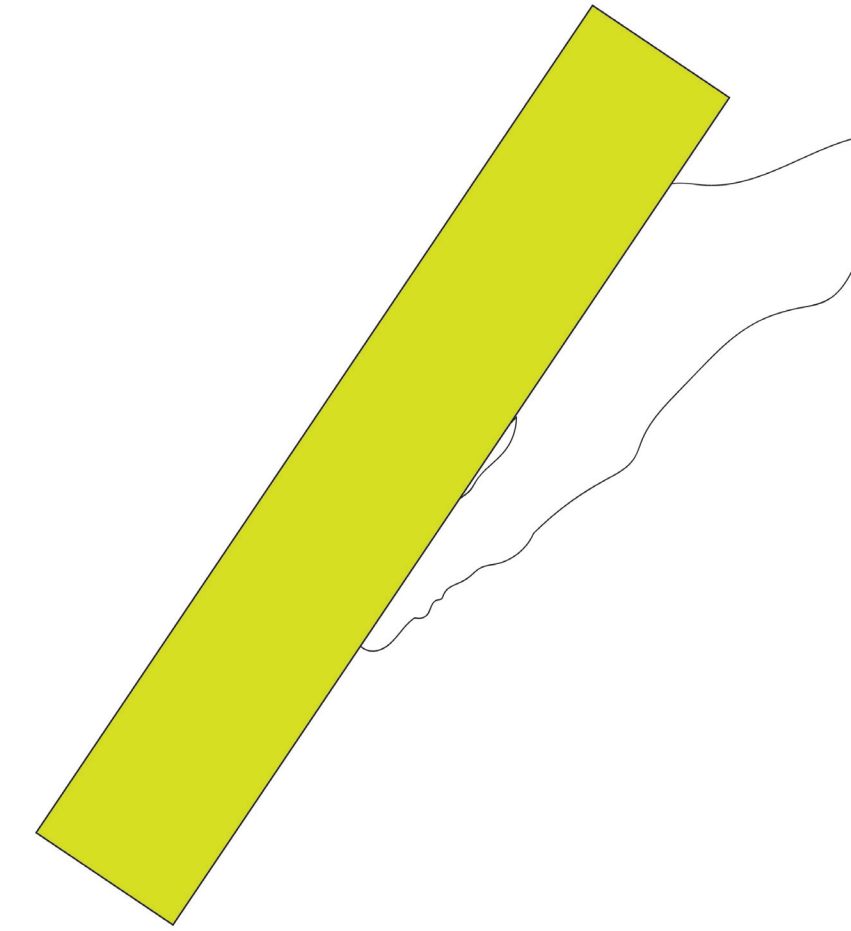
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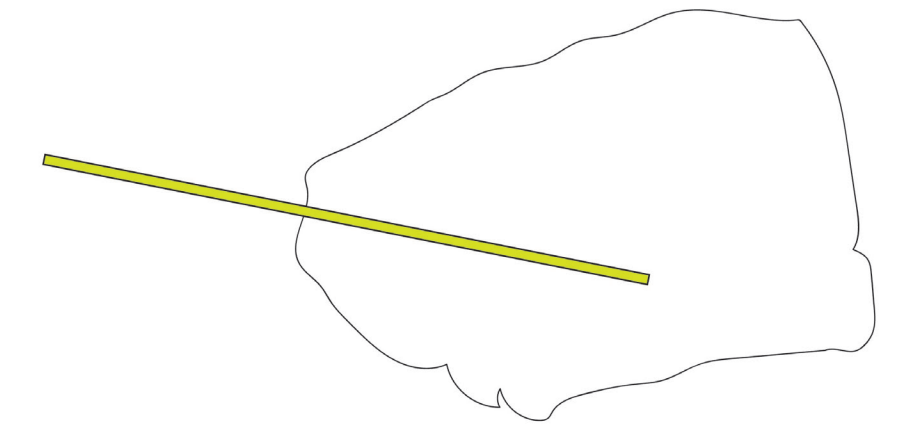
057

Outlined hand + knife reduced to a solid-color rectangle

→ Abstracts the **spatial relationship**, treating the knife as a conceptual volume.



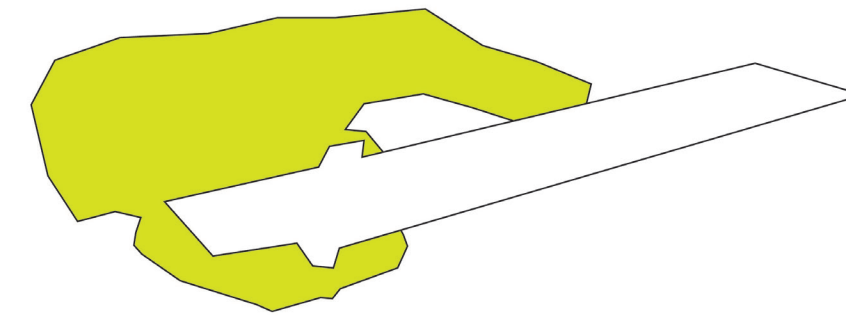
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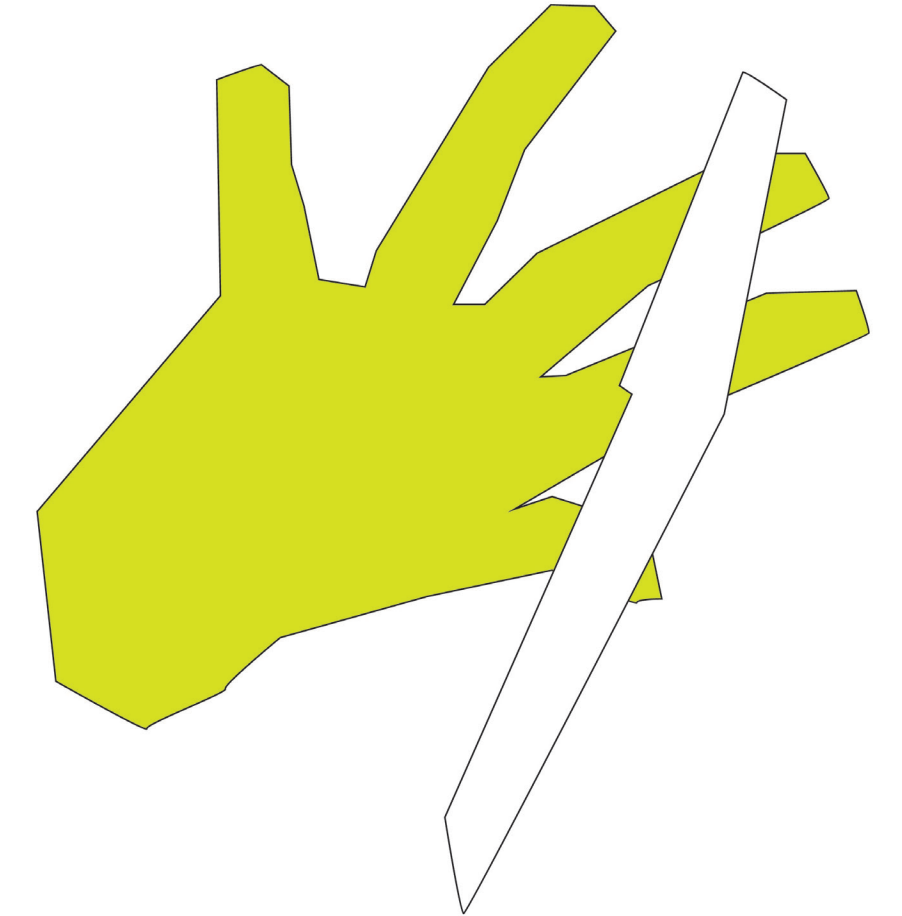
067

Hand and knife defined by straight, angular lines + colored hand interior

→ Removes softness, visualizes the “mechanized” body, emphasizing form and rhythm.



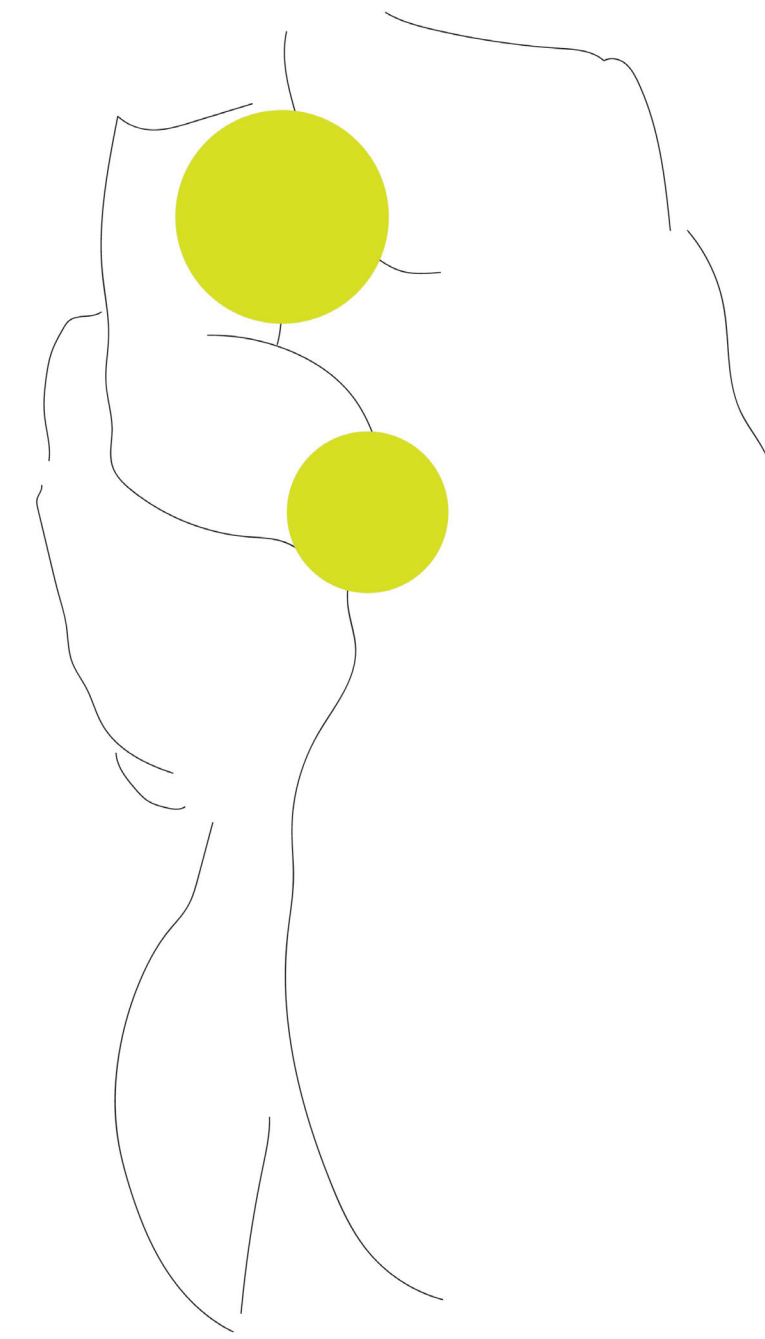
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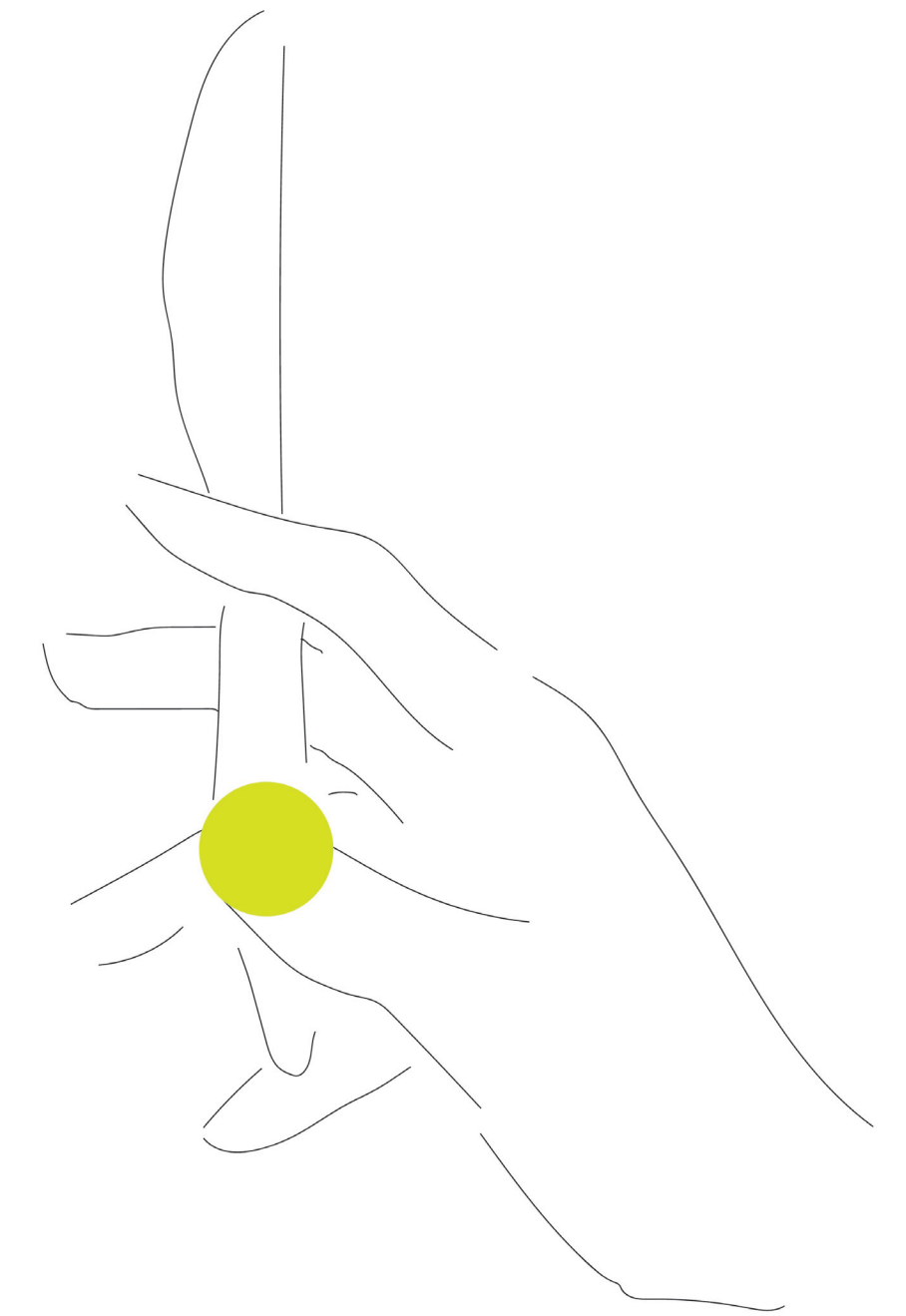
080

Broken contour lines + solid circular marks at points of pressure/
contact

→ Visually pinpoints **areas of force**, offering a tool for analytical
reading.



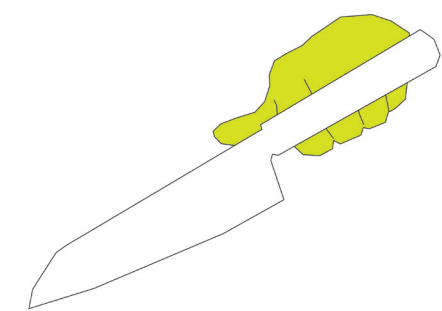
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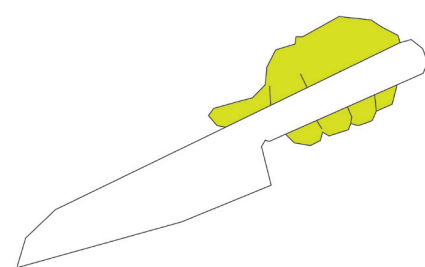
101

Geometric hand and knife shapes shown in motion sequences (4–5 frames per set)

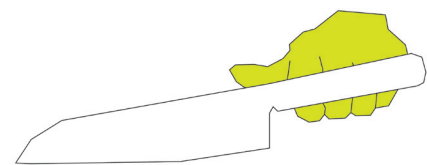
→ Captures the **dynamic transformation of gesture**, emphasizing rhythm and continuity in action.



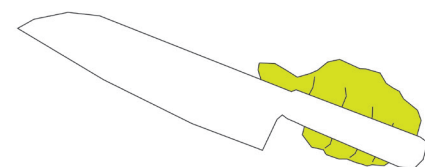
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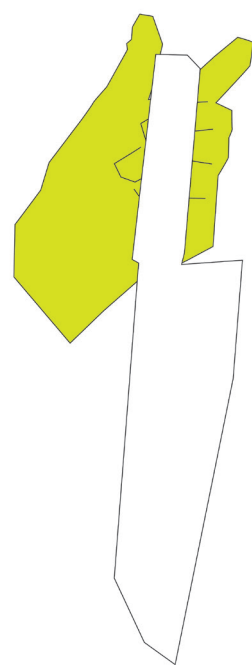
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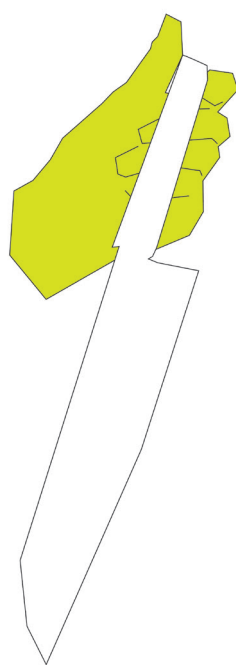
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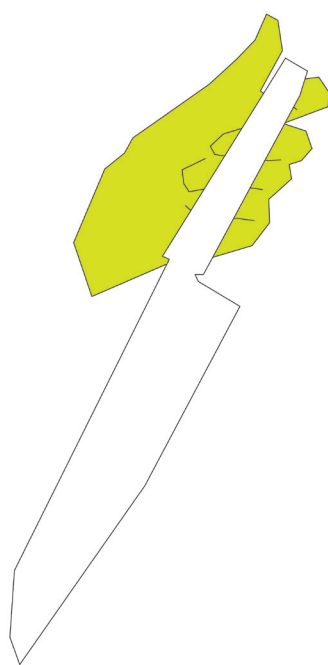
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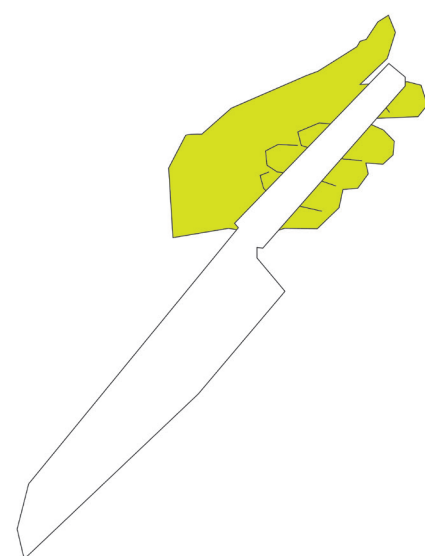
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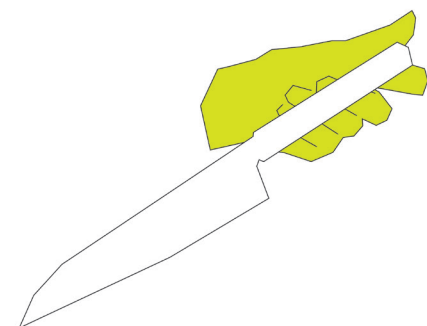
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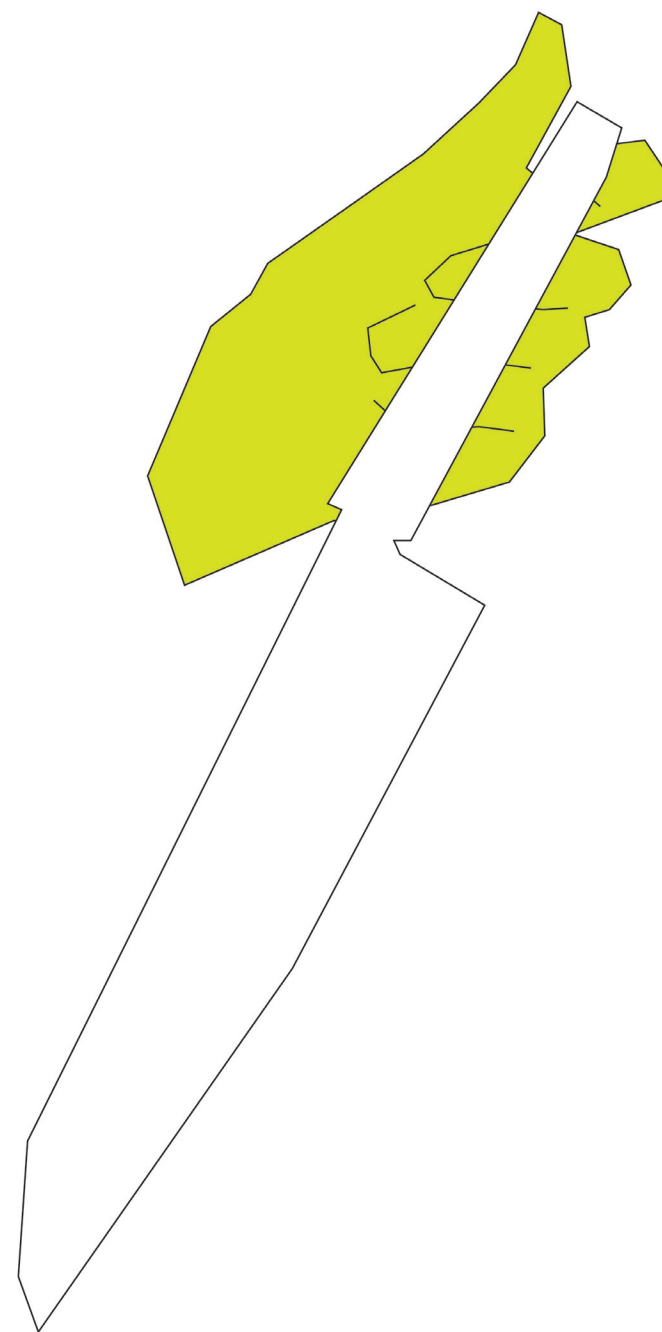
118



119



120



118



The gesture of holding a knife varies significantly depending on the type of knife, its function, and the context of use.

The way one grips a knife reflects not only control, functionality, and skill, but also implies the **user's profession** and even **personal character**.

Contour lines → Highlight the structure and rhythm of the gesture

Color blocks → Emphasize overall posture and form

Contact points + geometric shapes → Visualize force distribution and the relationship between body and tool

If the knife fails to function—becomes dull, broken, or unable to cut—does the gesture of holding it still count as “using a knife”?

Does this suggest that the meaning of a gesture depends on the successful outcome of its function, rather than the gesture itself?

For instance:

→ If someone mimics a cutting motion with no knife in hand, is it still recognized as “cutting”?

→ If they hold a slice of bread and perform the same gesture, does the meaning change?

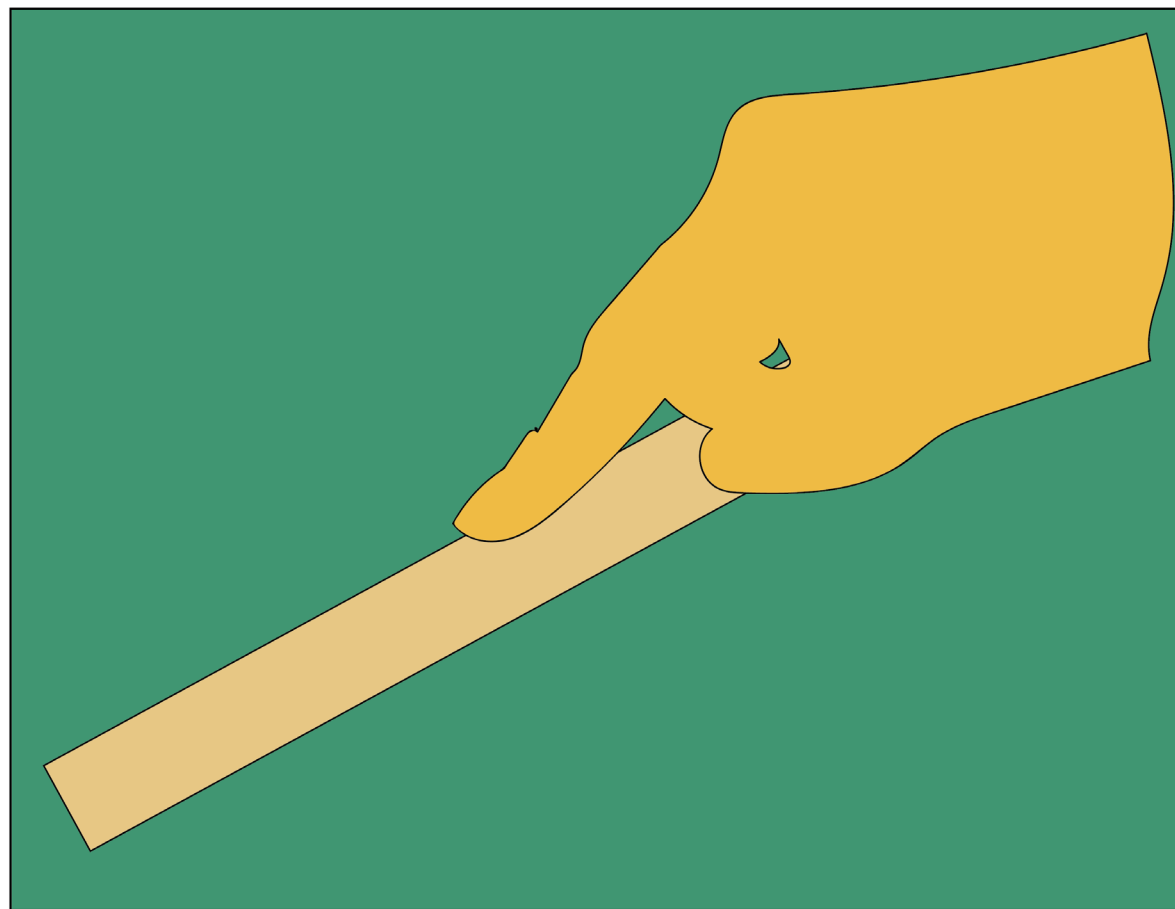
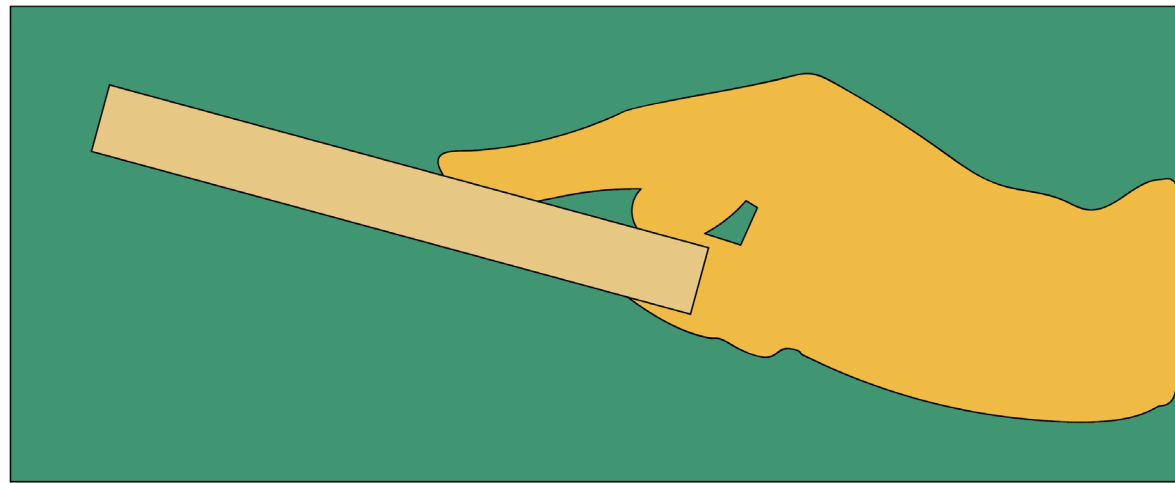
Is the tool assigning meaning to the gesture,
or does the gesture carry inherent significance
regardless of the object?



Hand & Knife

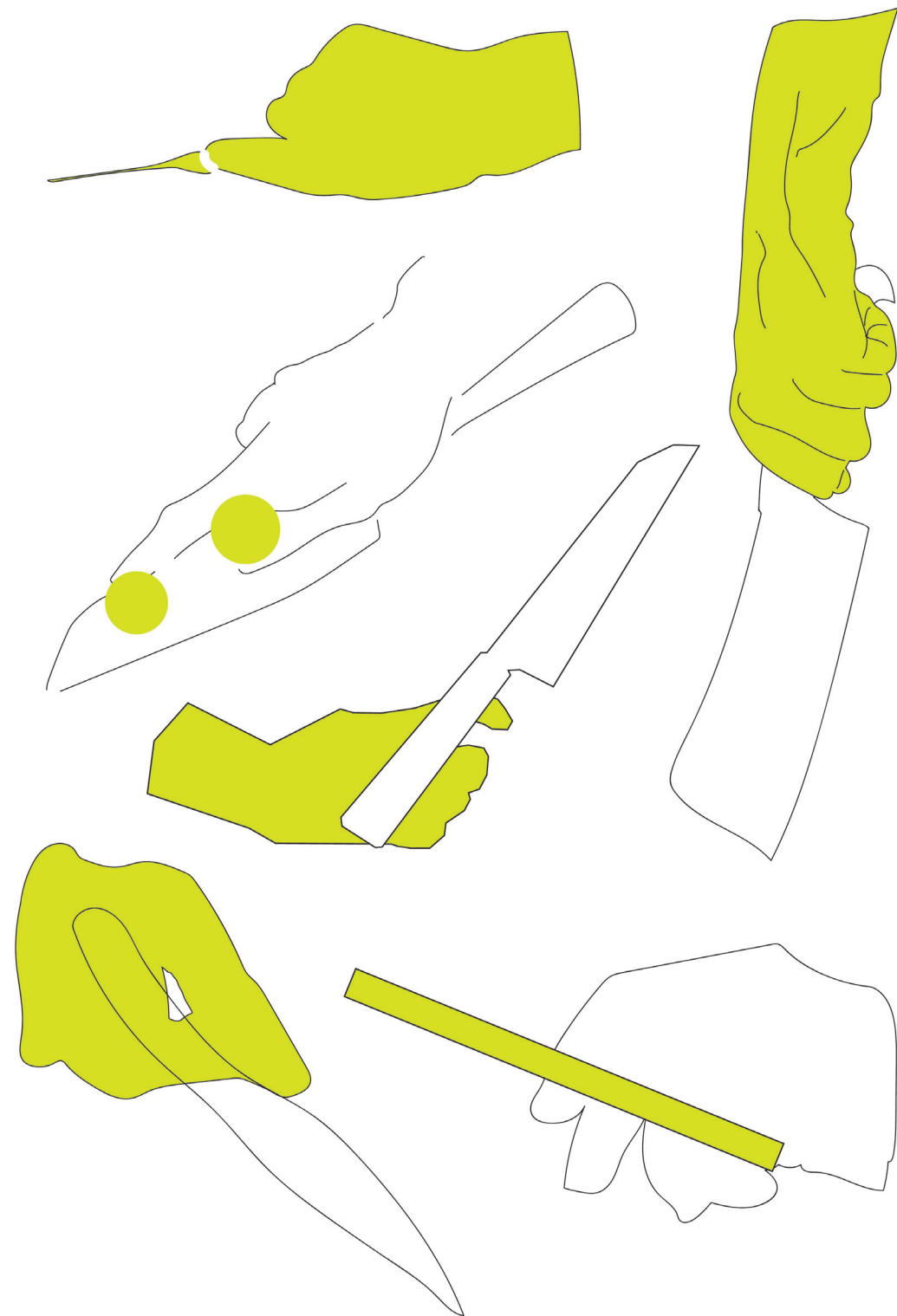
(Unit 2.1 Positions through iterating)
(SUBSEQUENT ITERATIONS)

Building on last week's 100 iterations of knife-holding gestures, this stage explores how meaning shifts when the tool loses its function. Through a series of simplified visual experiments, the project examines how different objects—or the absence of them—can transform the perception and interpretation of the same gesture.



(ITERATIONS LOGIC)

Stage 1 - RECAP

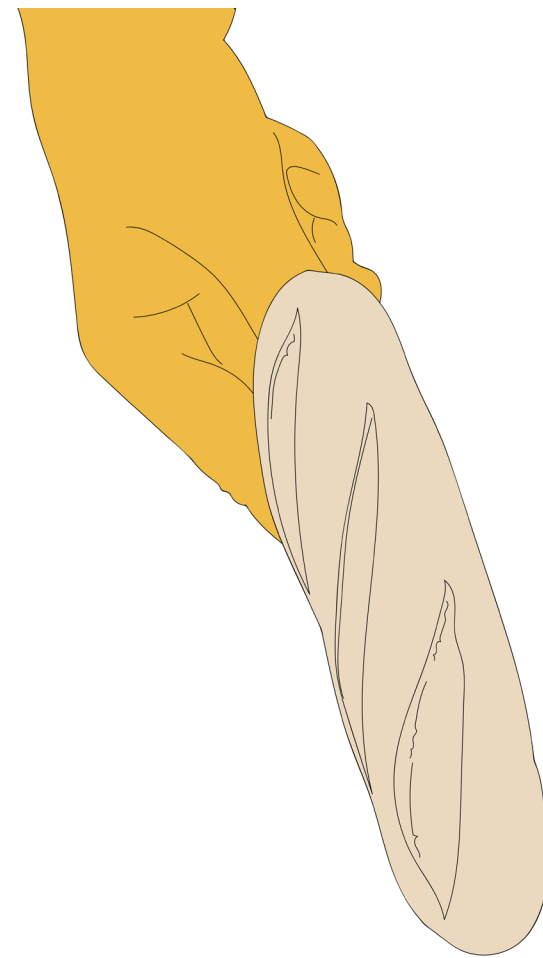
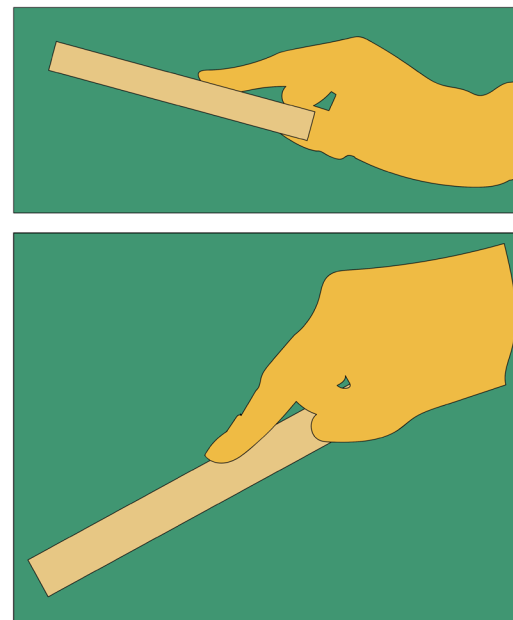
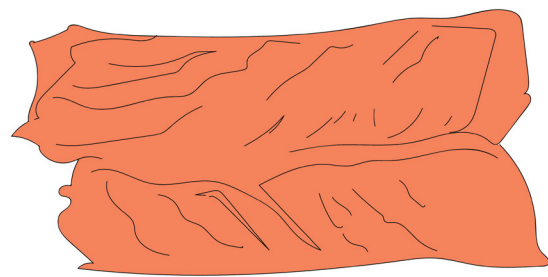
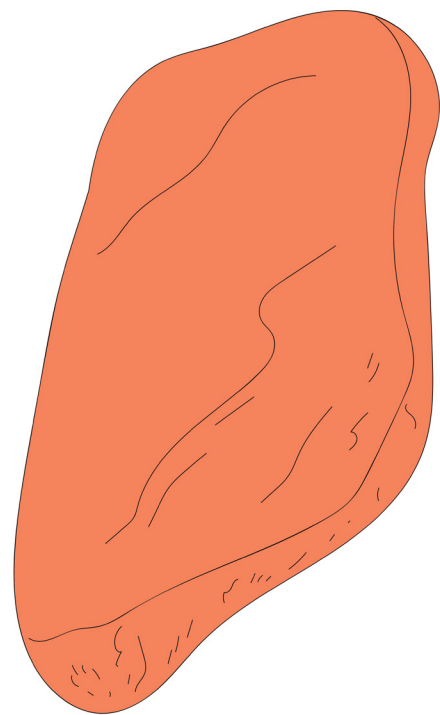
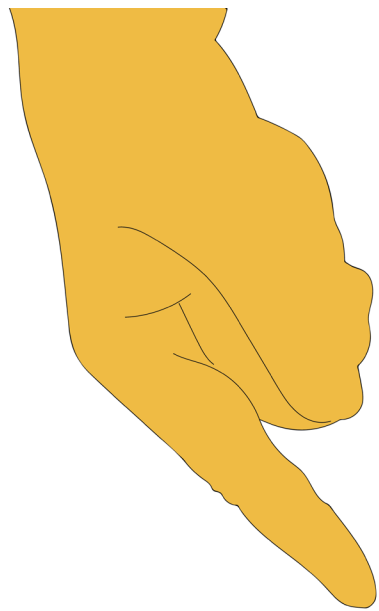


In the first phase, 120 simplified iterations of hand-knife gestures were developed to explore variations in grip, force, and interaction across different types of knives. This process revealed that gestures consistently adapt to the tool's function, and their interpretation remains anchored in the object's purpose.

(ITERATIONS LOGIC)

Stage 2

The second phase grouped knife types and expanded the investigation: starting with isolated hand gestures, followed by the outcomes of using each knife (e.g., sliced steak, chopped vegetables, blood stains). The iterations then progressed through dynamic abstractions, line work, color studies, dysfunctional tools, and object replacements. This aimed to examine how the perception of identical gestures shifts when the tool's function changes—posing questions like whether a threatening motion becomes humorous when holding a baguette instead of a knife.



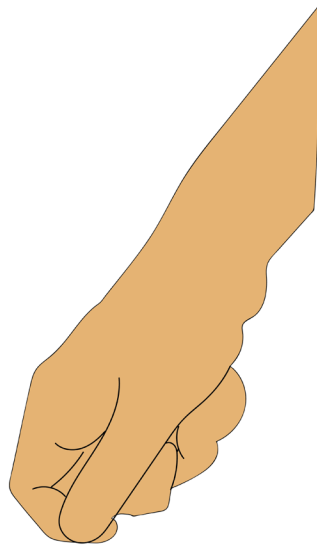
(ITERATIONS LOGIC)

Stage 2

The iteration follows a progressive process, starting from functional gestures and gradually moving towards abstraction and deconstruction.

Gesture perception shifts with object function and symbolism.

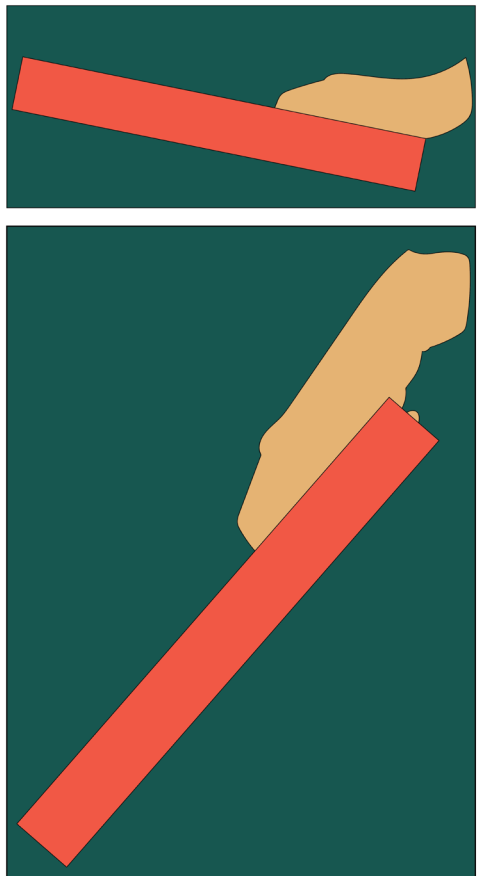
Isolated Hand Gestures



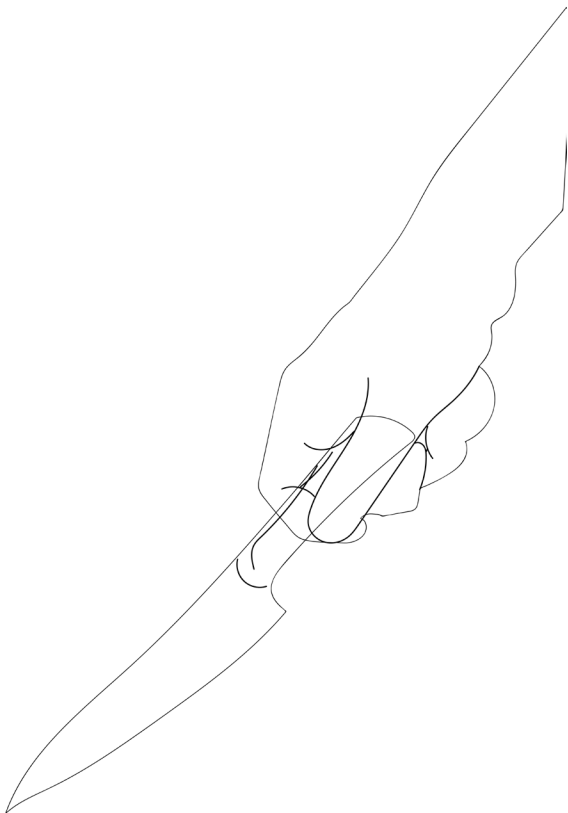
Result of Action



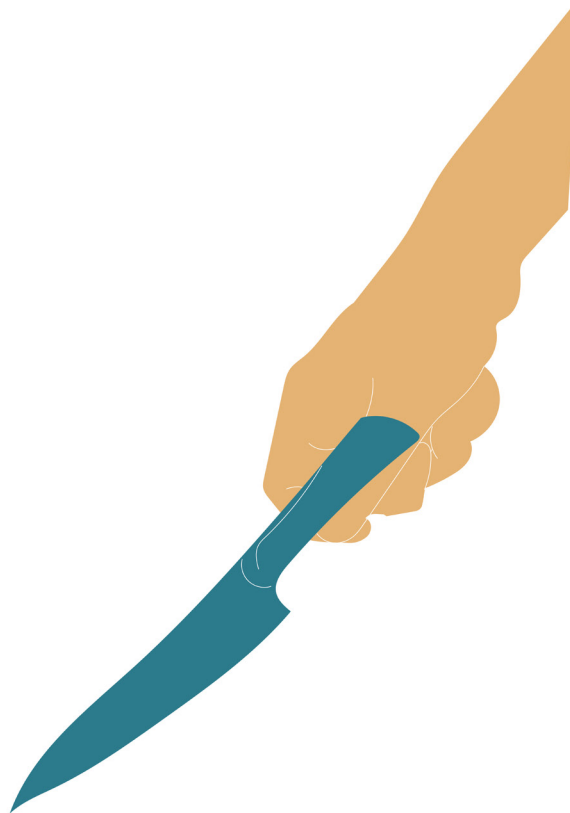
Dynamic Abstraction



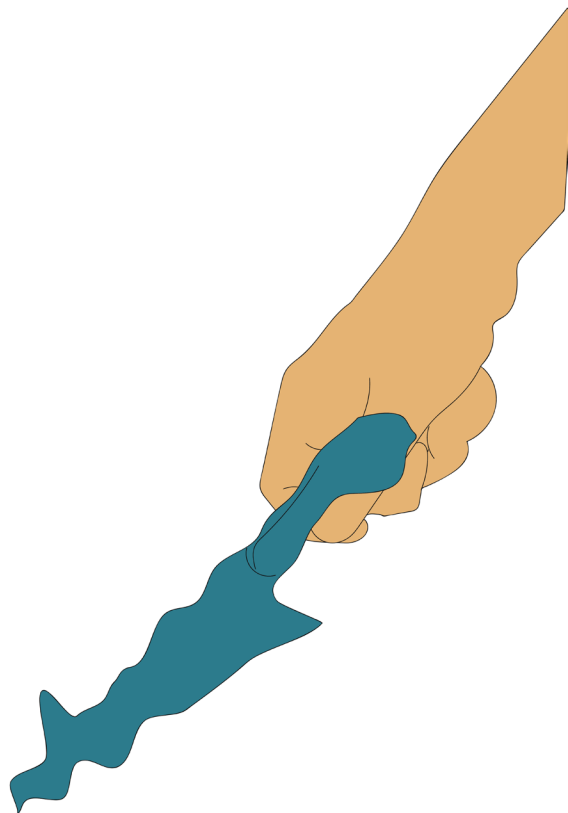
Functional
Gesture-Line



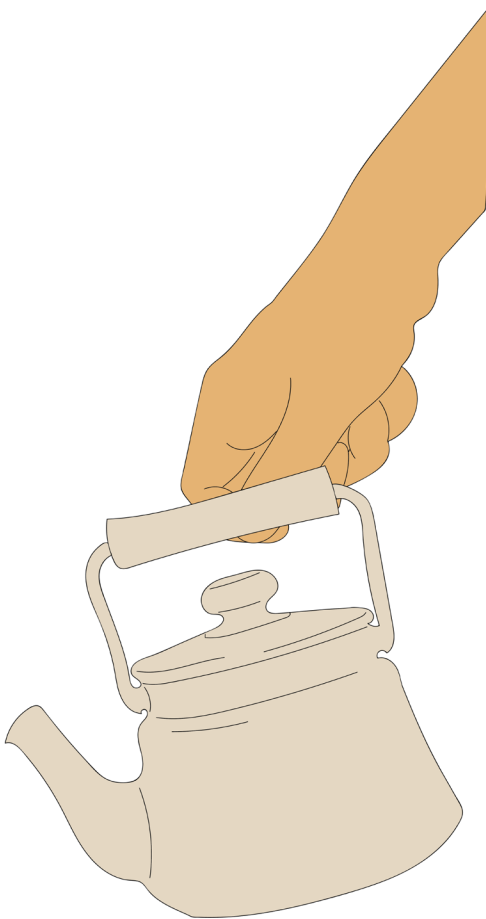
Functional
Gesture-Color



Tool Distortion

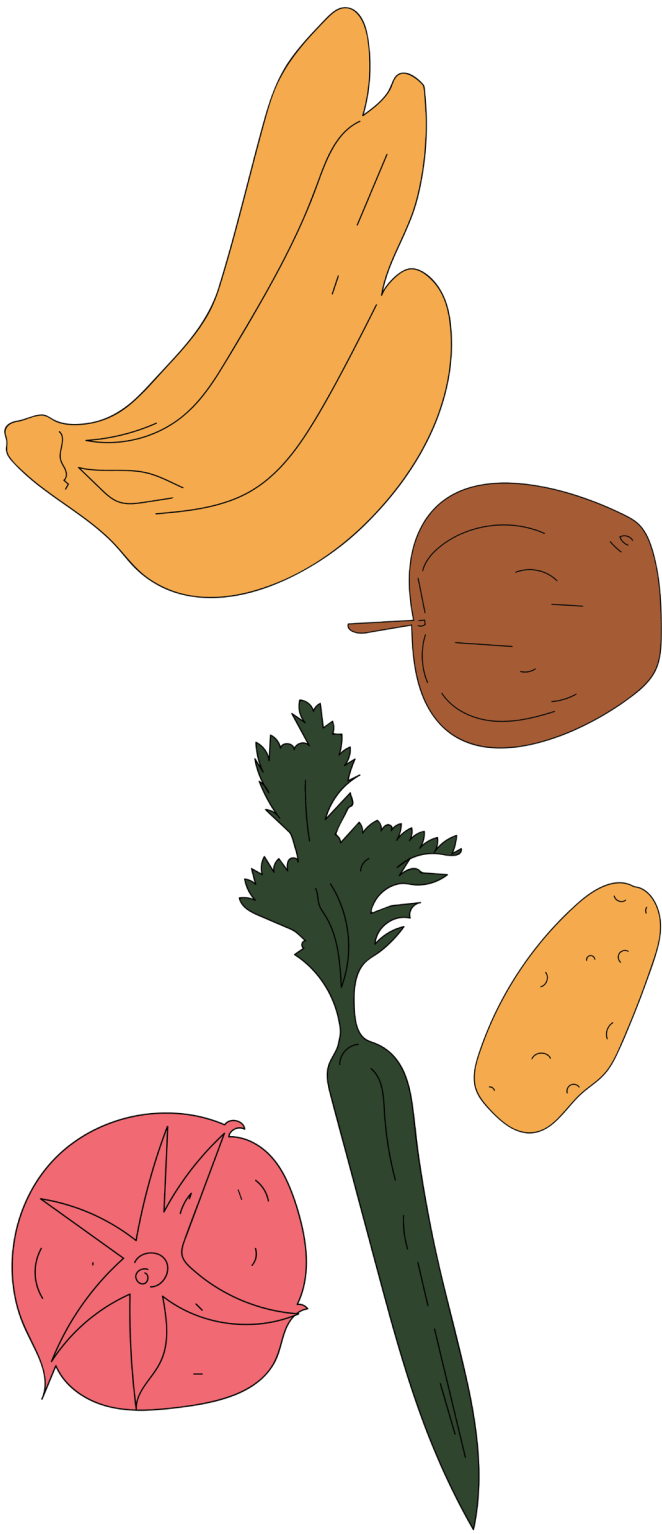
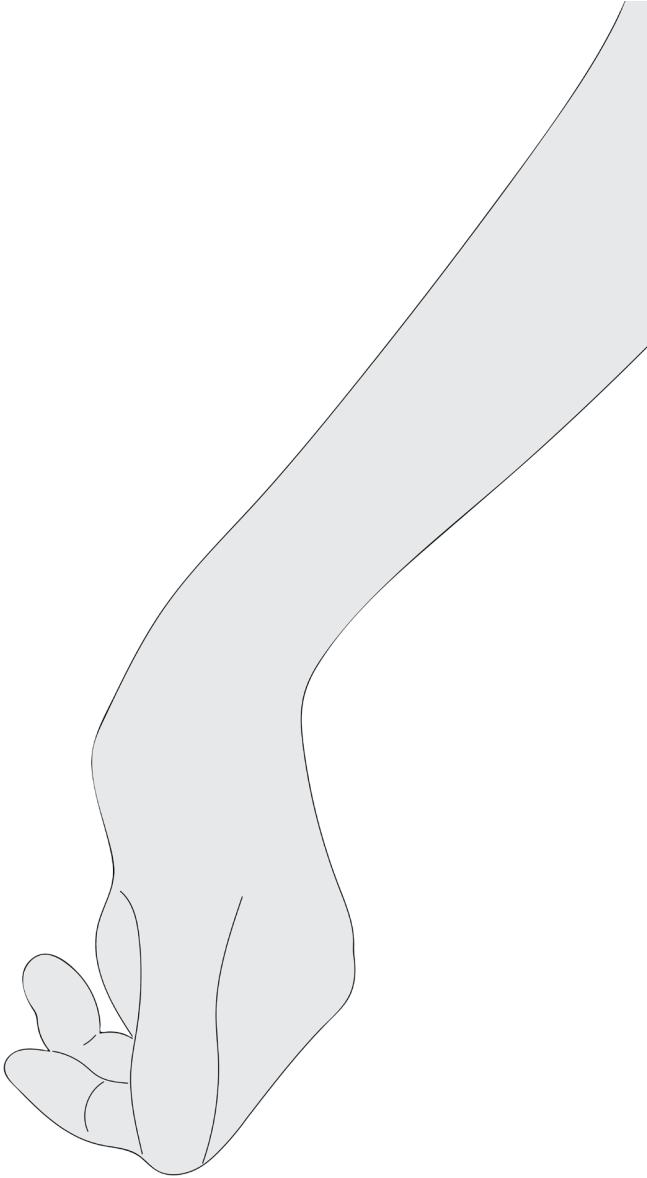
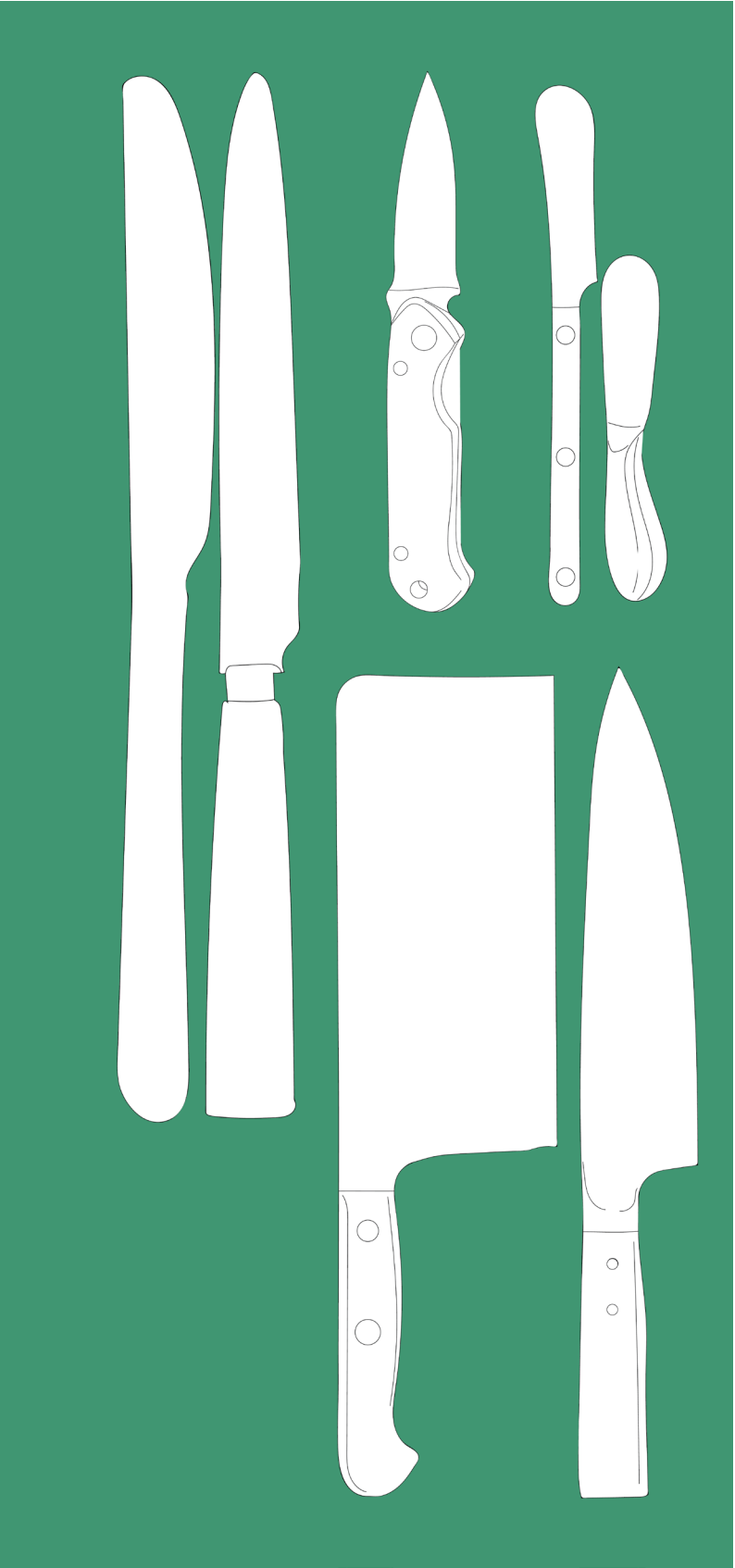


Object Replacement



(ITERATIONS LOGIC)

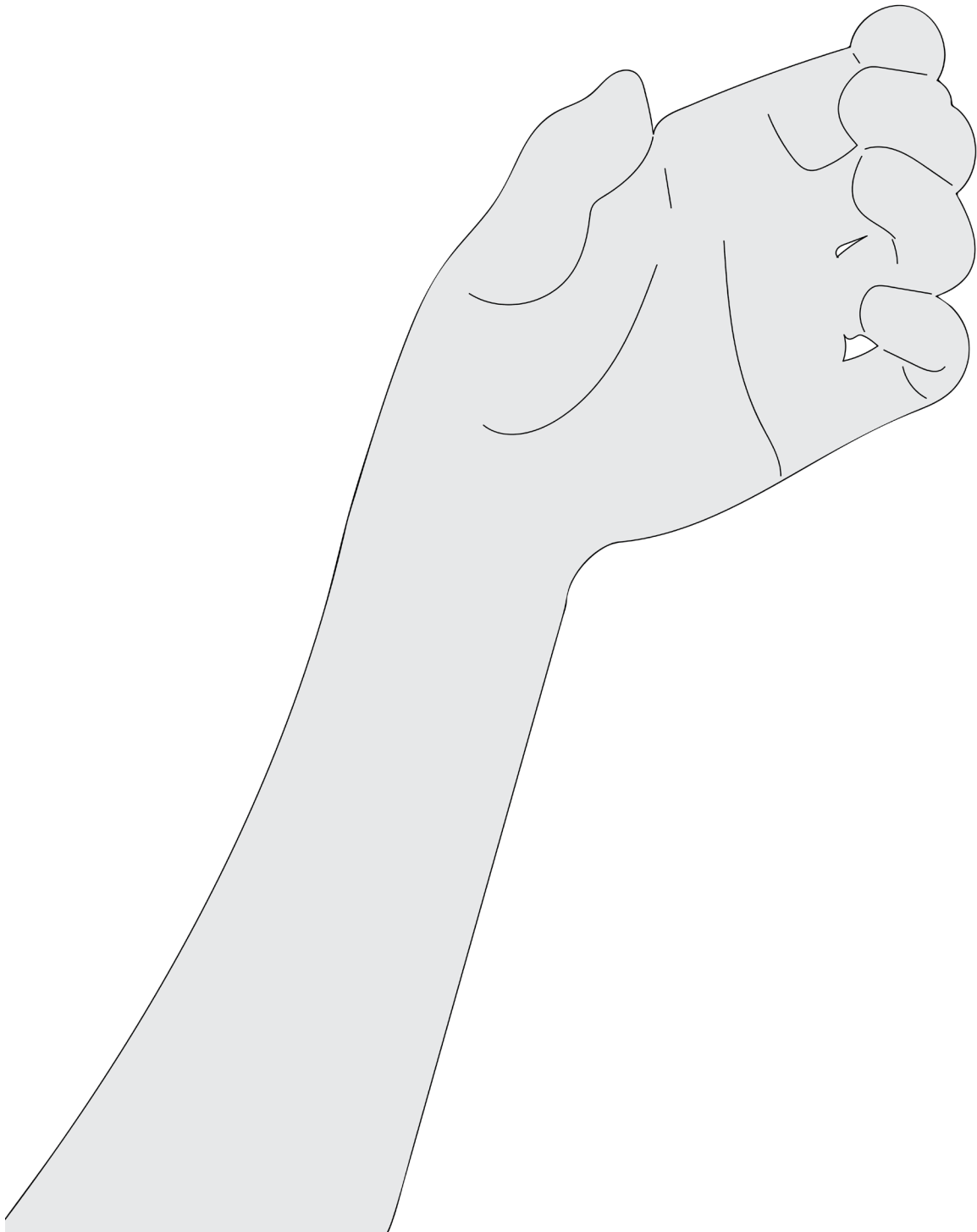
Stage 3



Finally, the focus turned to gestures without any objects, presenting only ambiguous hand positions alongside contextual environments. This approach encourages viewers to reinterpret these “purposeless” gestures as new visual symbols, shaped by imagined interactions and atmospheric cues.

Can a purposeless gesture become a new visual symbol through abstraction and context?

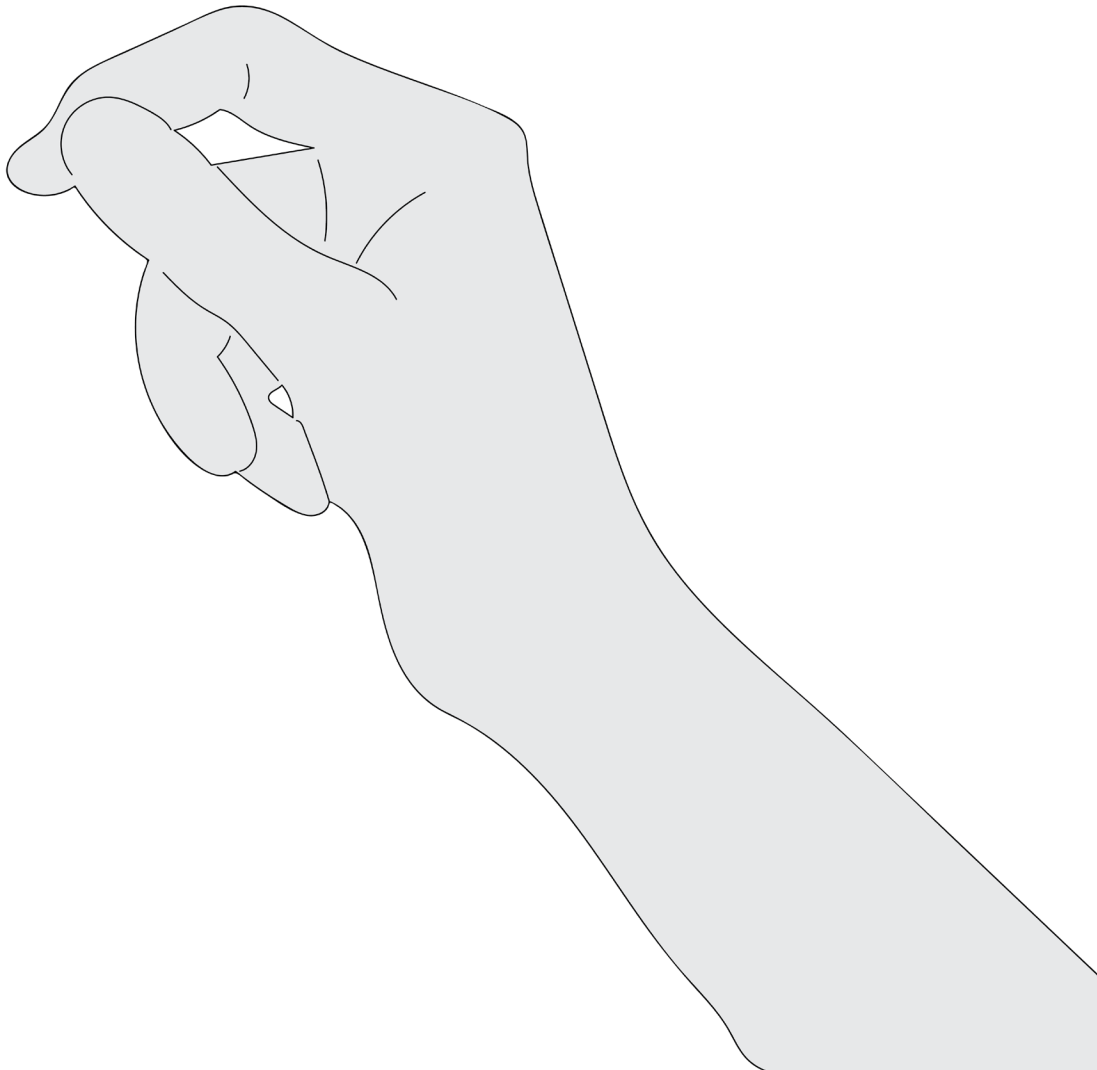
Gesture Without Object



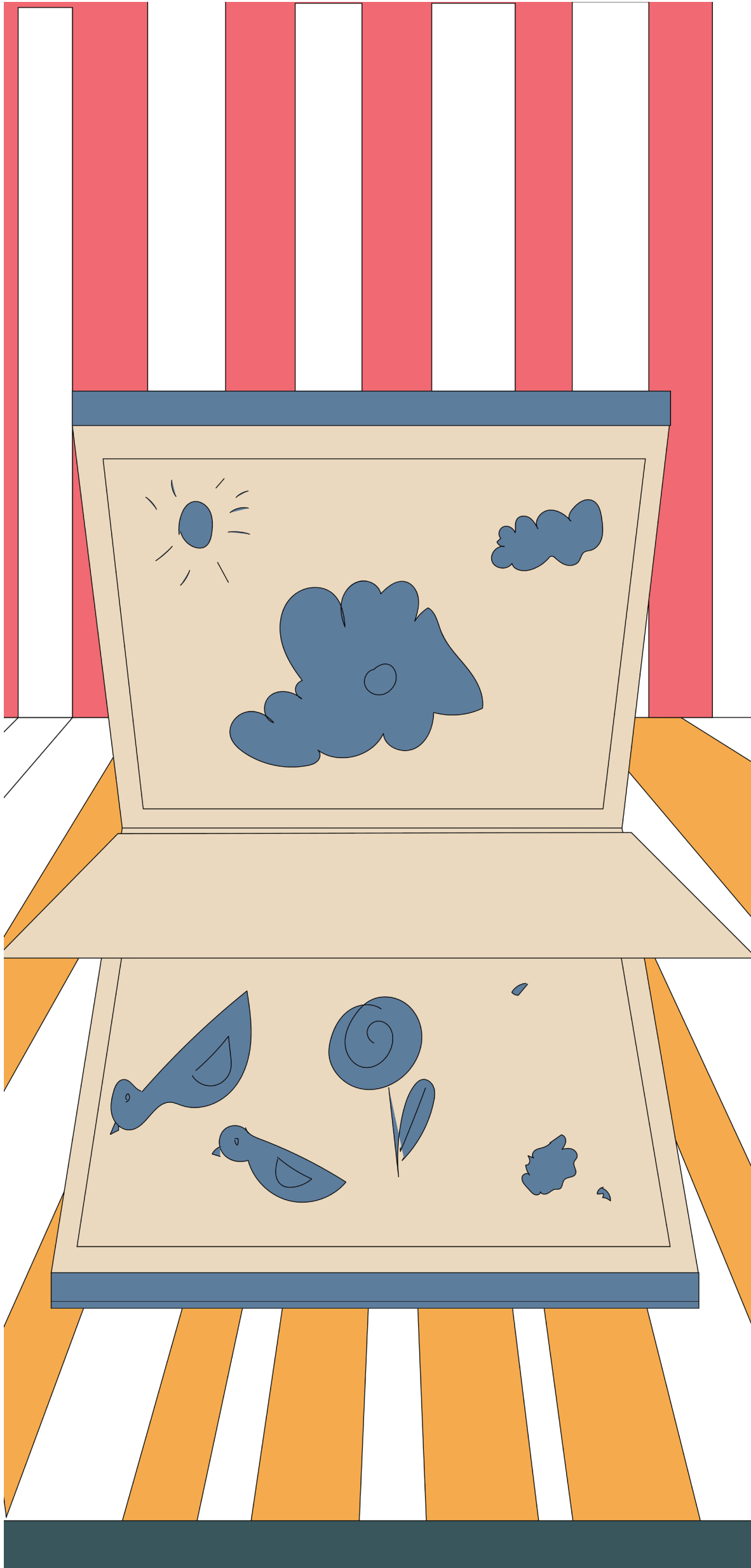
Contextual Environment Added



Gesture Without Object

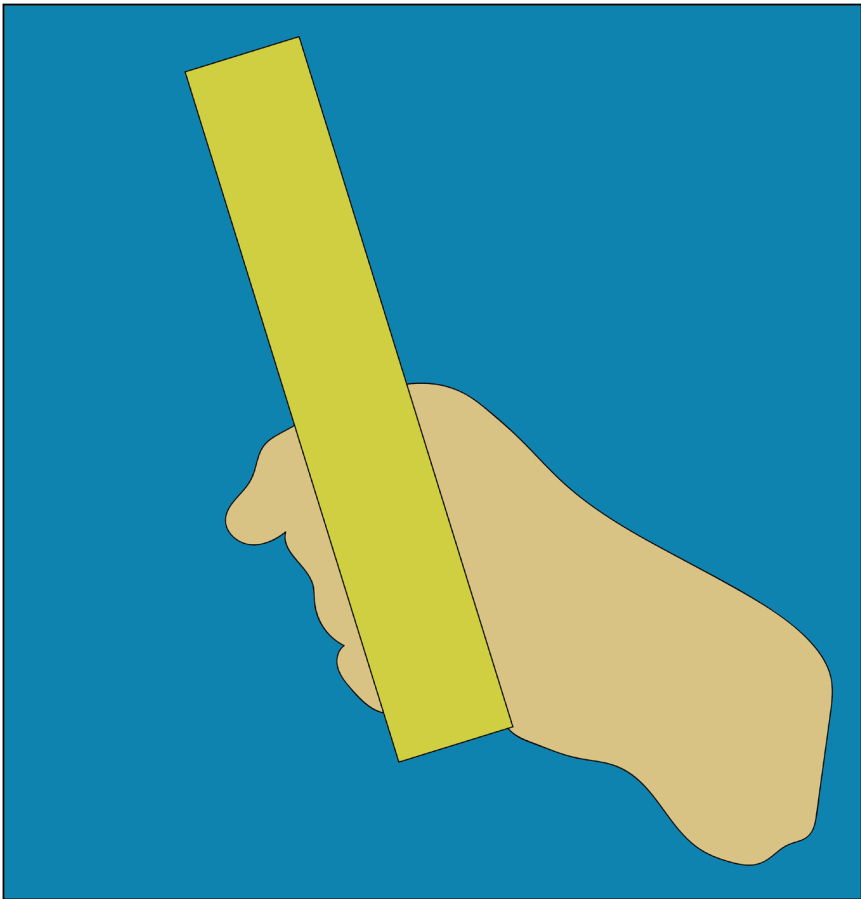
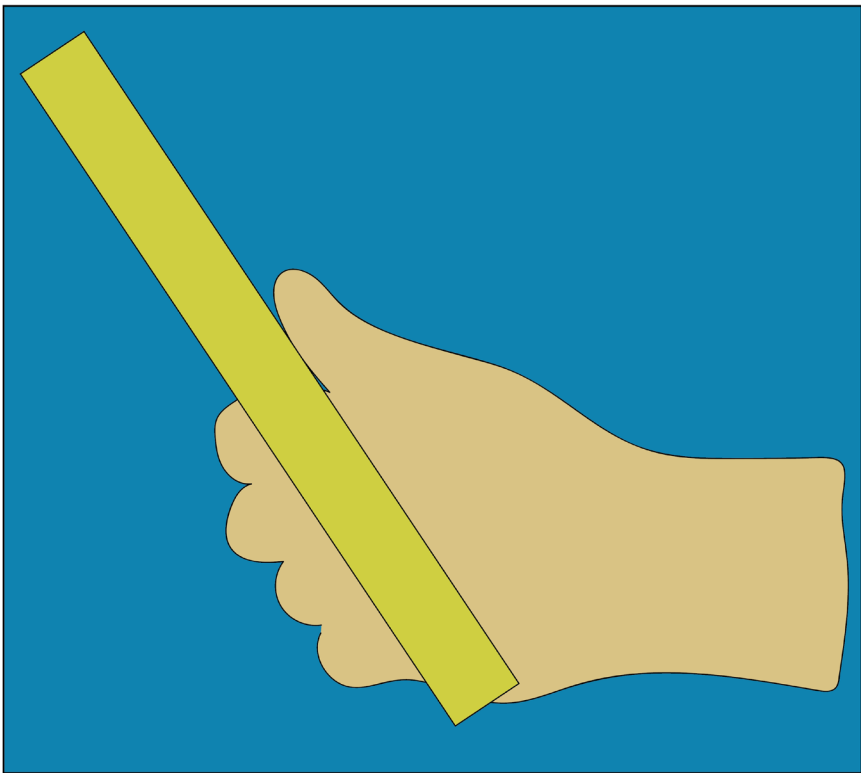


Contextual Environment Added

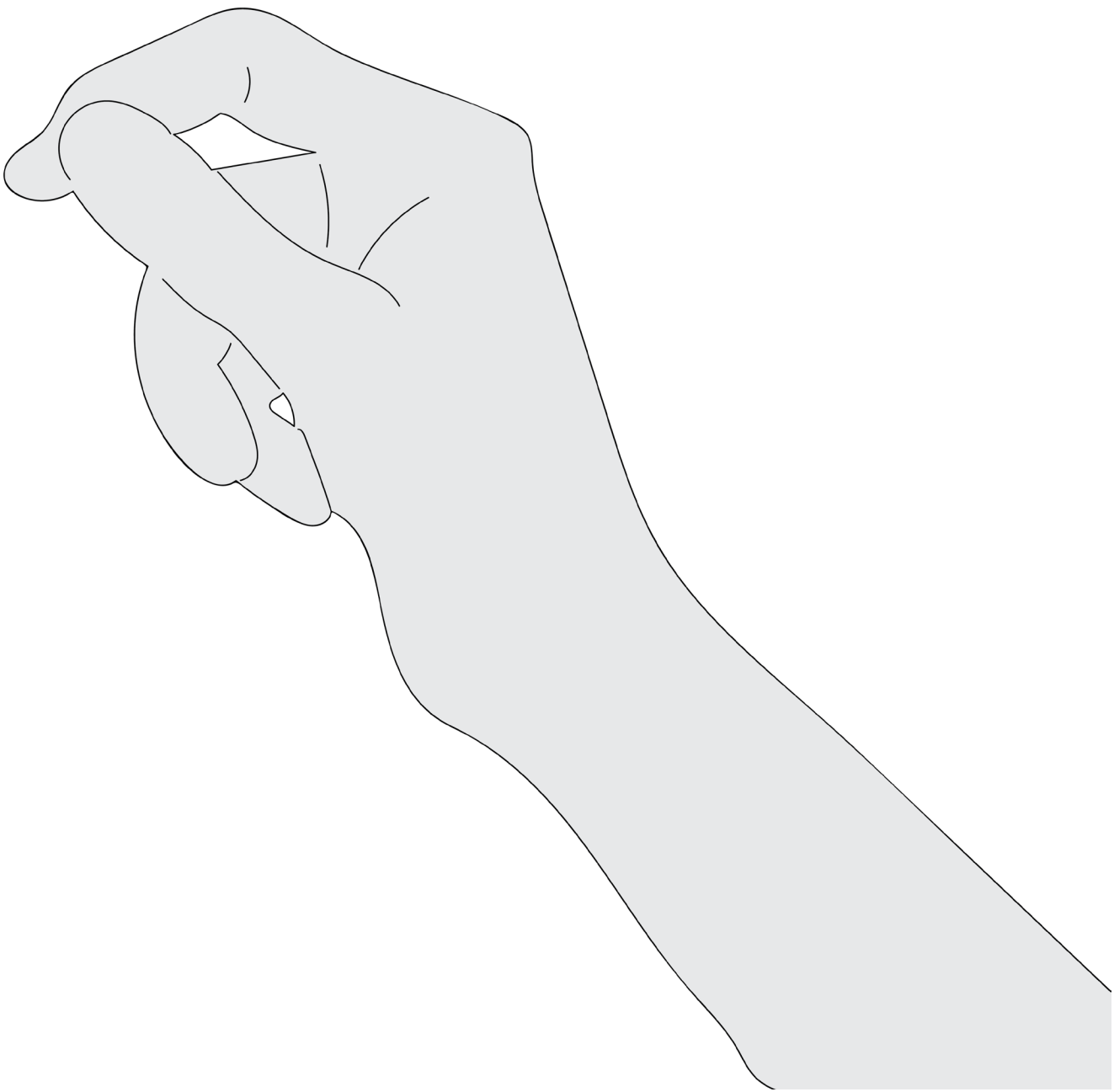
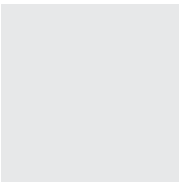


(COLOR CHOICE INTERPRETATION)

Bright, toy-like colors detach tools from their functional and symbolic meanings, softening perceptions of danger and control. This playful palette challenges viewers' associations with familiar objects.



In contrast, grey tones for hand gestures emphasize neutrality and abstraction, stripping away context and emotion. The gesture becomes a pure visual symbol, free from function or narrative.



(MEDIUM)

The use of vellum paper introduces transparency and layering into the work, allowing gestures, tools, and contexts to visually overlap.

The translucent quality encourages viewers to perceive connections across iterations, emphasizing how gestures are continuously redefined by what lies before and behind them.