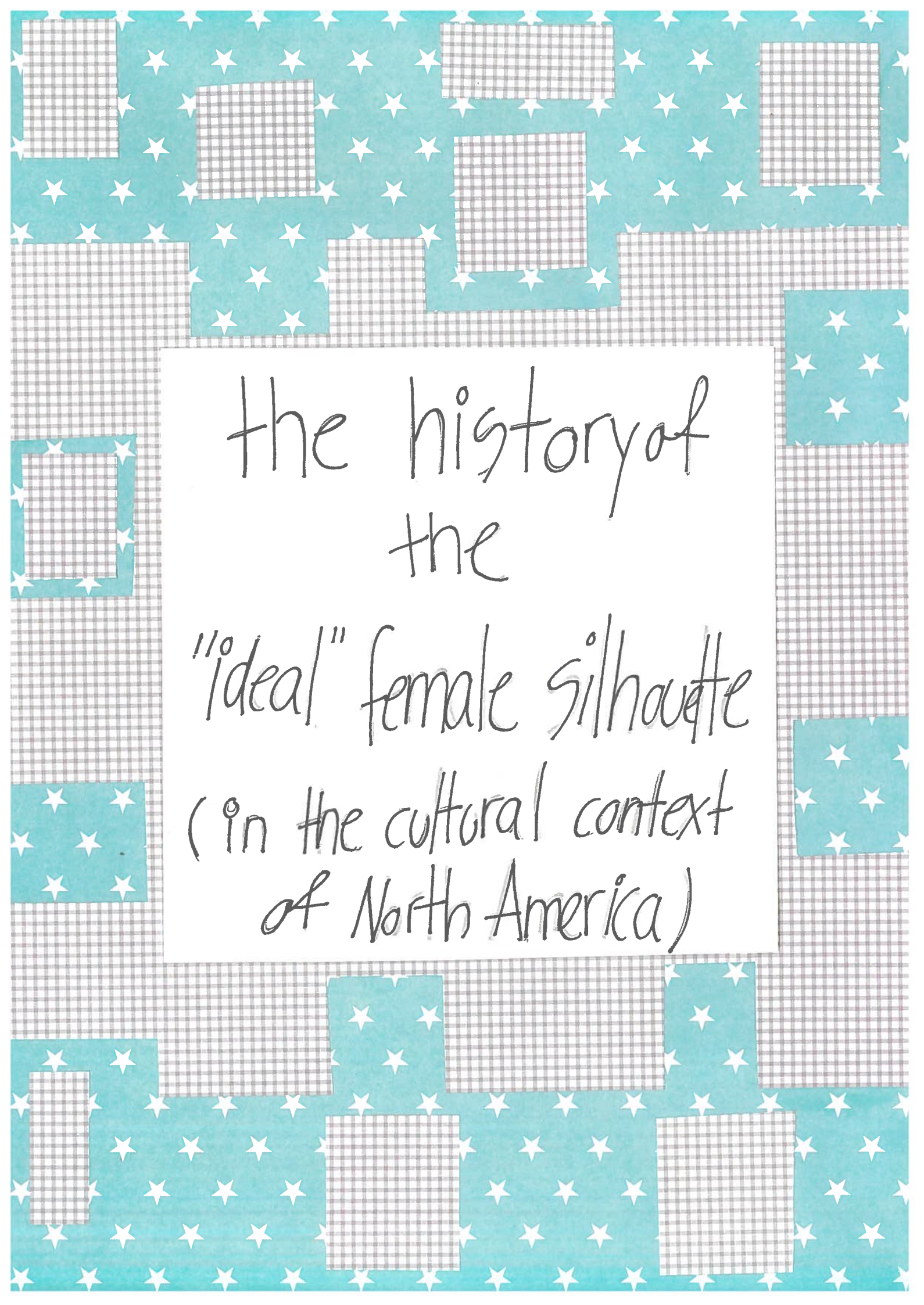# Accepted.

by KWATTS

the history of the "ideal" female silhouette + how we need ^to embrace body acceptance instead.

the history of the

"ideal" female silhouette

(in the cultural context of North America)

THE 1890's

Fashion revolved around wide skirts, floppy sleeves, small waists, and high bodices. This look soon gave way to the famous "S" shape. A curvaceous body type was favored, with a corset pushing breasts up but also showing no cleavage.
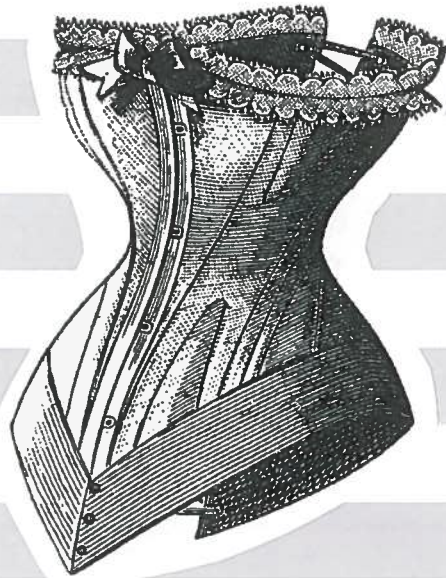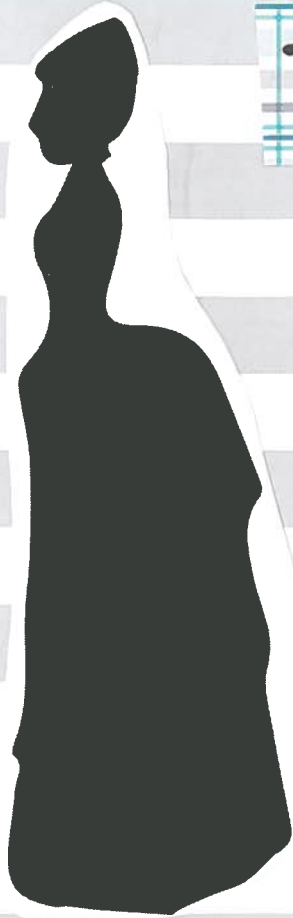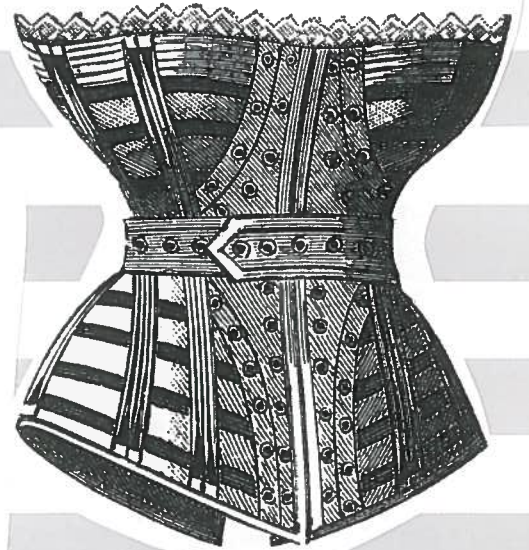
THE EARLY 1900's

Clothing was much looser and the "S" shape changed to the empire line. The beauty ideal was pale, delicate, translucent skin. At this time, curve of the bosom was the main focus, with no cleavage.

THE TEENS

Female clothing became more masculine due to work uniforms that were worn while the men were away at war. The body image during this time period changed from "barrel and tunic" to an emphasis on showing skin and binding of undergarments.

1912

1914

THE 1920's

Most dresses were skimpy, with uncovered legs and incorporated a tank top and low waist into the design Makeup came into the spotlight once again and young, sporty looks were the ideal looks for women. Women attempted to look flat and shapeless during this time.

1925

THE 1930's

The body image was still shapeless, but in a softer (not as constrictive) way. Cleavage became popular and was now visible to the public.

1931

THE 1940's

Practicality and simplicity again came into play during the war and was seen in the popular body images. Physically toned bodies were popular because it was also practical for the working women.

THE NEW LOOK

by Christian Dior 1947

The "Corolle Line" was the most *popular* garment line ever sold.

The silhouette was characterized by a small, nipped-in waist and full skirt falling below mid-calf, which emphasised the bust and hips.

THE 1950's

Femininity and refinement stressed. Bodies became more muscular, toned, and womanly than the 40's. Curves were again emphasized. With movie stars like Marilyn Monroe and Grace Kelly, the "hour-glass" body shape became the ideal body.

1950

Grace Kelly

1953

Marilyn Monroe

THE 1960's

"Gangly" and "waif-like" became the ideal body image of this time, emphasizing youth.

THE 1970's

The 70's also saw a rise in anorexia, which could be due to the body image of the time, thin and tall.

THE 1980's

During the 80's, there was an increase in knowledge about fitness and dieting so the ideal body image was the perfectly toned and tanned woman.

THE 1990's

Models again became waif-like, as did the ideal body image. With the increasing knowledge of eating disorders and skin cancer, this body image came under scrutiny.

Treat yourself as you would treat others, and you'll find negative thoughts will lessen over time.

Ditch the things in your life that make you feel inferior.

The feminine beauty ideal is portrayed in many children's fairy tales. When fairy tales were solely written down, **beauty was a prominent theme.** It was common for female characters to be beautiful and for **physical attractiveness to be rewarded.** Years later, these fairy tales were adapted into film, where people actually saw what it means to be beautiful. In fairy tales, **beauty is often associated with being white, economically privileged, and virtuous.** From fairy tales, the feminine beauty ideal and what it takes to be beautiful is defined to girls starting at a young age.

- The pervasiveness and persistence of the feminine beauty ideal in children's fairy tales by Lori Baker Sperry

if you're beautiful enough, you may be able to escape your terrible living conditions by getting a wealthy man to fall for you.

In most advertisements, **female models portray the same kind of look.** That is they have an ultra- thin body with an hourglass figure, beautiful soft and smooth skin and hair, and looking absolutely flawless. Because of the images that young girls are exposed to, **they start to believe that physical appearance is highly seen upon every female in society.**

Mass media is one of the most powerful tools to learn and also understand feminine beauty ideals. Before mass media even existed, our ideas of beauty were limited to our own communities. But as mass media develops, the way people see feminine beauty ideals changes, as does how females view themselves and one another.
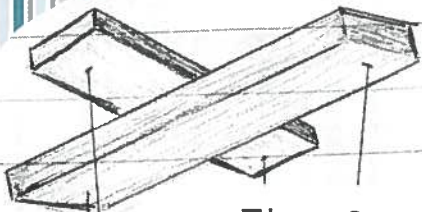
The feminine beauty ideal in the mass media is manipulated by technology. Images of women can be virtually manipulated creating an ideal that is not only rare but also nonexistent.
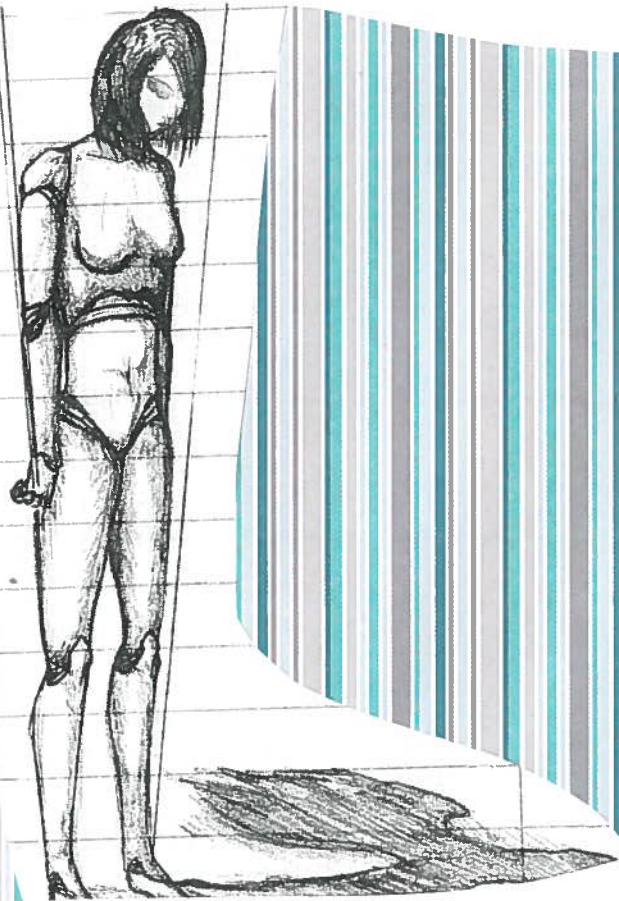
With a focus on an ideal physical appearance, the feminine beauty ideal distracts from female competency by prioritizing and valuing superficial characteristics related to beauty and appearance. When physical beauty is idealized and featured in the media, it reduces women to sexualized objects. This creates the message across

Social Construct

(noun)
 a social mechanism, phenomenon, or category
 created and developed by society; a perception
 of an individual, group, or idea that is
 "constructed" through cultural or social practice.

GENDER (noun)

The Social Construction of Gender

Society + culture create gender roles, and these roles are prescribed as ideal or appropriate behaviour for a person of that specific gender. Differences in behaviour between men and women are entirely social conventions.

- self-identified
- the sense of self, how someone sees themself or how they identify, as well as how they relate to (or don't relate to) societal norms of femininity, masculinity or any mix of the two
- common terms for gender include man and woman. There are other terms that people might use to title their gender beyond just these
    - for example, trans*, genderfluid, genderqueer, agender
- **not necessarily dependent on the sex which one is assigned as at birth or on sexual characteristics** (body hair, genitals, pitch of voice etc)
- **based in culture:** a fluid concept which materializes differently in different communities and can change over time
- **assigned at birth;** when doctors designate sex at birth, Western society also assumes a "corresponding" gender along with this. Hence, people assigned female at birth will often be raised as women, etc.

Q: If gender is a social construct, aren't you saying that gender doesn't really exist at all?

A: NO. Social constructs are human conceptions, invented but not therefore imaginary (unless one thinks that social consequences are imaginary). Social constructs are human systems of social interaction organized around shared ideas. The shared ideas may be true, false or inaccurate, but the socially constructed systems that have developed in response to those shared ideas are very, very real.

Q: Where has this confusion arisen?

A: I suspect because people assume that "construct" means "made up" as in "imagined" or "fantasy". Constructed merely means artificial, and *"artificial"* is the opposite of *"natural"*, not the opposite of *"real"*. The artificial aspect of social constructs is that we have manufactured these systems of expectations and obligations in response to certain ideas, ideas that are often arbitrary and which can vary between cultures, rather than any particular social construct being an inevitable development based on human nature pure and simple.

Since gender is not dependant on the sex assigned at birth, anyone who self-identifies as a women is female and thus has a female body

GENDER ROLLS

AM I A BOY OR GIRL?
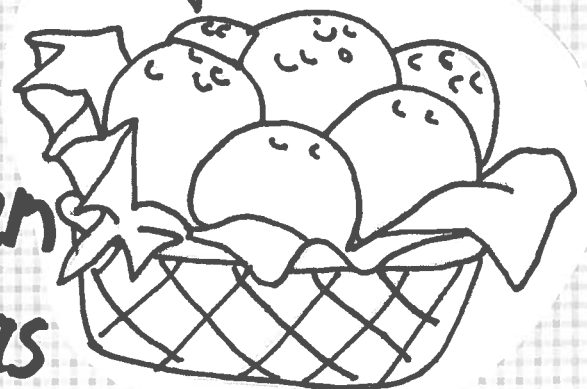
"As a person with a disability, I've been following the recent buzz around fat-shaming and body acceptance quite keenly. While many people struggle with body acceptance, those who have obvious physical disabilities also deal with the **stigmatization of disability; devalued bodies; exclusion from society's narrow definition of beauty;** and the way beauty and disability are portrayed in the media and pop culture.

Unfortunately, people with disabilities are often judged as broken, incomplete, or lacking. Because of this, their bodies are not considered beautiful, and as stated in George Taleporos and Marite McCabe's paper Body Image and Physical Disability - Personal Perspectives, it's **"likely that those people whose bodies are devalued by society may devalue themselves.""**

- Jackie Andre, Huffington Post

Ableism (noun)

a set of practices and beliefs that assign inferior value (worth) to people who have developmental, emotional, physical or psychiatric disabilities.

There is a movement in the media presently pushing the notion of body-positivity. In theory this seems like a progressive movement, however **the actuality of loving ones' body is much more complex in nature.**

Why ^CAN body positivity can be unhealthy?

Pushing for someone to love their body creates a standard that can be unrealistic and unachievable for some.

Body image can be something that some individuals have not thought about - some being ambivalent about their body - therefore **pushing to love it can be an unneeded source of pressure.**

For some individuals who have struggled with their relationship with their body, to fully love it, they might feel pressure to change x, y, z about their body to have a positive relationship with it.

beauty ideals have shown correlations to many psychological disorders including lowered self-esteem + eating disorders. North American cultural standards of beauty and attractiveness promote unhealthy + unattainable body ideals.

Being comfortable in your own skin is up to you. It can be tough in a society that prizes unrealistic images. But it's possible.
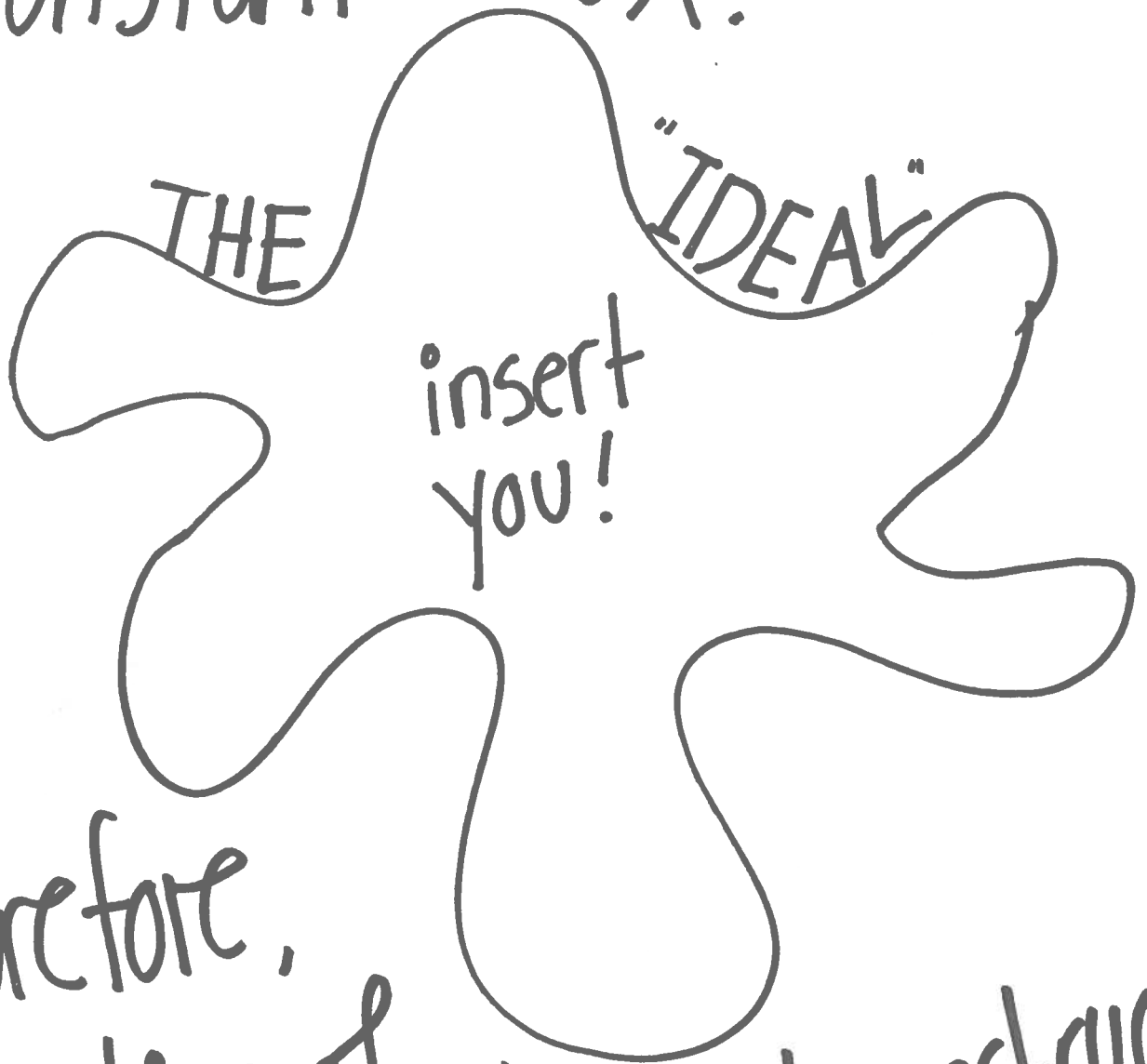
What is Body Acceptance?

finding a place in which you can accept your body as it is _presently_.
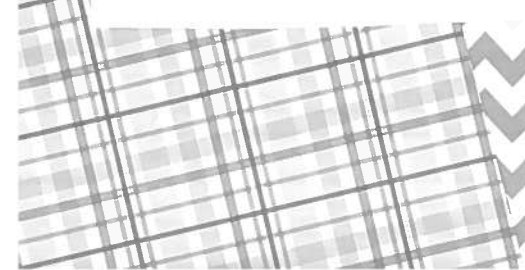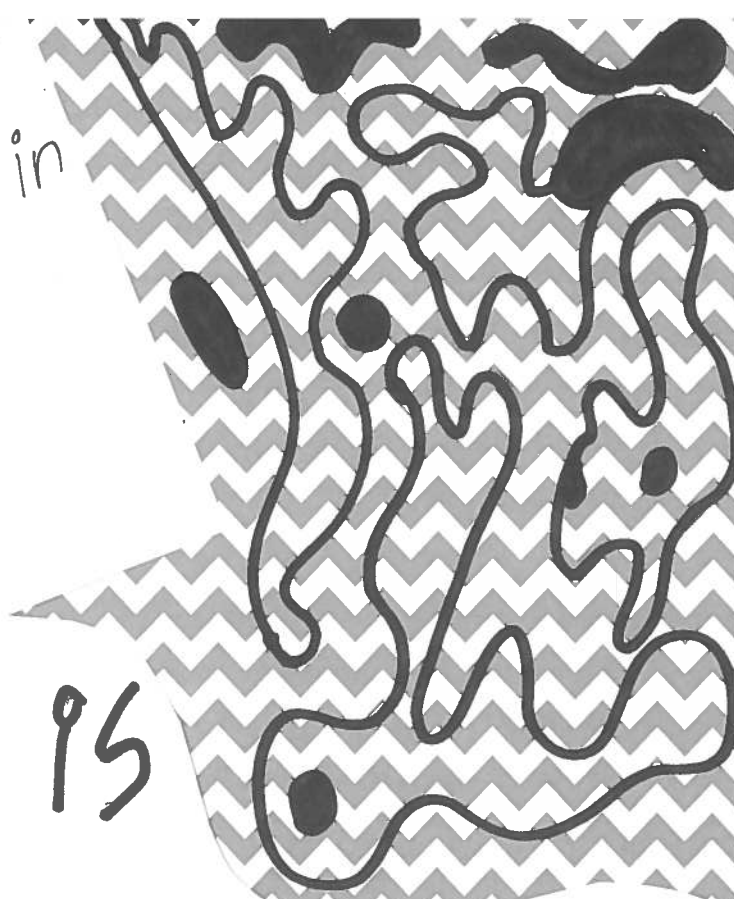
the "ideal" female silhouette
has historically been in
constant flux.

THE "IDEAL"

insert
you!

Therefore,
the notion of an
"ideal body" is a social constructio
it is artificial.