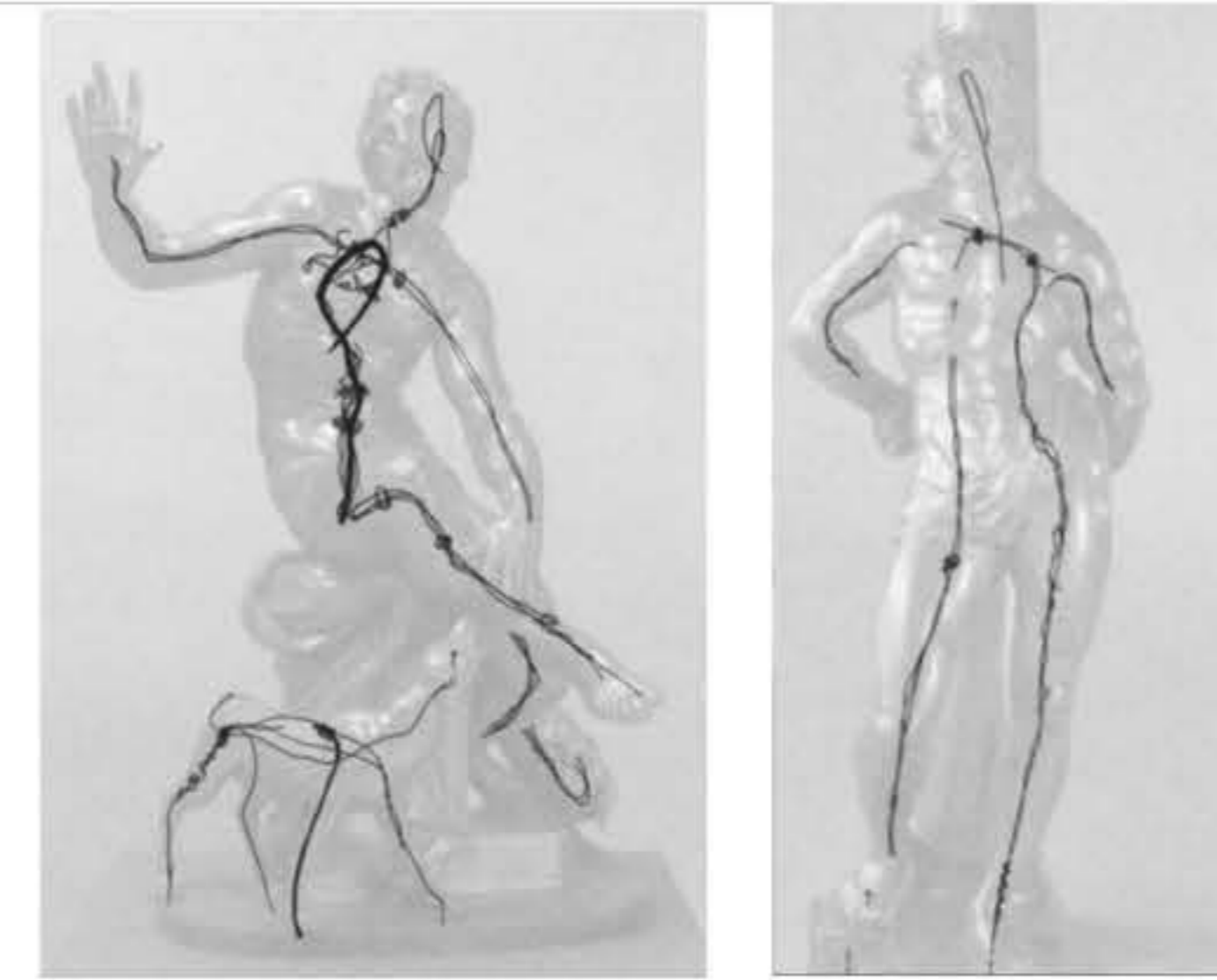


Susini-made: Labors of Scale and Medial Transfer in Giambologna's Florence

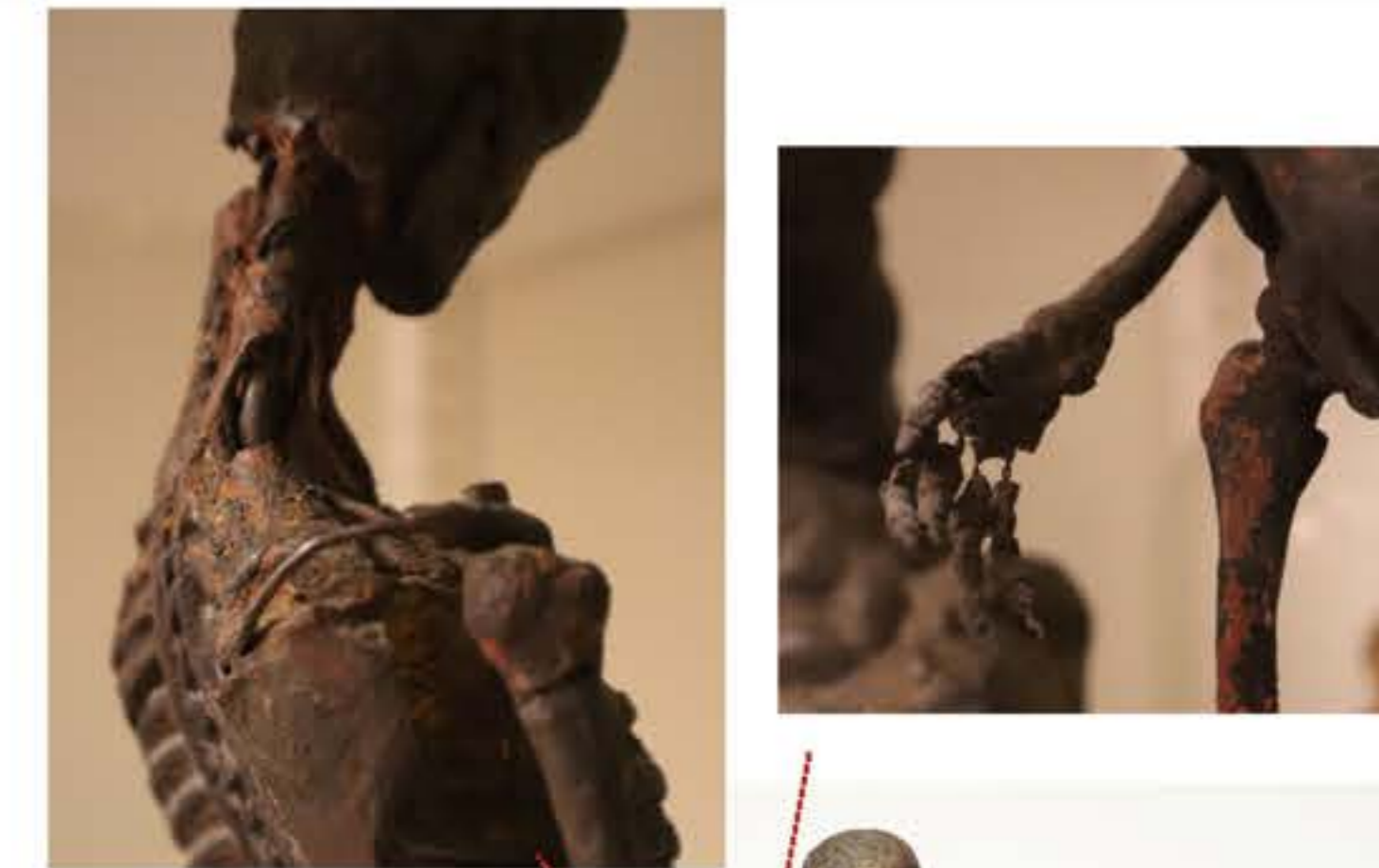
Abstract:

This dissertation seeks to explore the nuanced collaborations that persisted in late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth-century Italy between a workshop's master artist and his assistants, interrogating the material and technical possibilities latent in a secondary practitioner (the pupil) editing, reconstructing, and reproducing another's designs. It proposes to anchor on assistant turned 'master caster,' Antonio Susini (1558-1624), a turn of the century sculptor active in Florence who specialized in casting and finishing metal. This project seeks to individualize the artist both within and beyond his master's enterprise (Giambologna) and to recuperate an understanding of the ephemeral practices for which he was responsible (i.e., executing wax copies and reductions; preparing molds, sprues, cores, and investments for casting; piecing and re-piecing preparatory models and finished casts). By attending to this convoluted, though understudied, material that stands in between different materials and hands and yet contains traces of each, I hope to offer a new model for considering the 'Renaissance artist-practitioner' that moves beyond the primacy of both the designer's idea and his model and turns instead toward the technical processes and figures integral to their diffusion. Ultimately, in addition to adding nuance to scholarship's often teleological reading of Giambologna's workshop, I hope to reconstruct an autonomous view of Susini, not as the reproducer of Giambologna but rather as his enterpriser, and, in some defiance of theoretical imperatives, as a figure for whom technique, craft, and condition far outweighed the drive for invention.

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Adriaen de Vries, summary of armature rods and wires, from Bassett, ed. *Craftsman Revealed*



*How can the armature be theorized? Drawing/Disegno in wire and wood?

* Where/when does ontological skeleton meet representational skeleton?

* George Cox (1884-1946) referred to the armature as a "contrivance that led powerfully to sculpture's decay." He defines it as "the bane of late Renaissance sculpture" and by "bending and twisting his lines," the sculptor "threw away all restraint."



Unknown maker, "Anatomical figure," wax on wire armature, ca. 1550-1600, Florence, V&A



Anonymous, Florence? Figure studies, ink on paper, Uffizi

A secondary concern within this project is the means with which the interiors of sculpture – preparatory and final – were constructed and conceived, paying mind in particular to the armature and the core and how they relate to void-versus-solid dialectics and sculpture's anatomical corollaries. Though no preparatory models survive from Antonio and only one from Giovanni Francesco (a terracotta conserved in the BNCF), I think by turning to Giambologna's models and asking questions of weight, material, and tensile strength, we might better contextualize the Susini's practices of piecing and reconstructing their figures within a broader context of anatomy and three-dimensional practice.

* How much latitude is/was there between processes of casting (here in small-scale) and period practices of excavating and restoring antiquities (to remove and clean a cast from its investment was to excavate and repair it)?

* Technical analysis has revealed that the Susini (Antonio and then Giovanni Francesco) cast their bronzes in pieces, sometimes segmenting and reattaching the wax intermodel and other times attaching only when cast. How does the "piecing" and "repiecing" of these works square with period conceptions of restorers as "cobblers" (Cellini) or innovators (Nicholas Cordier's hybrid sculptures)?

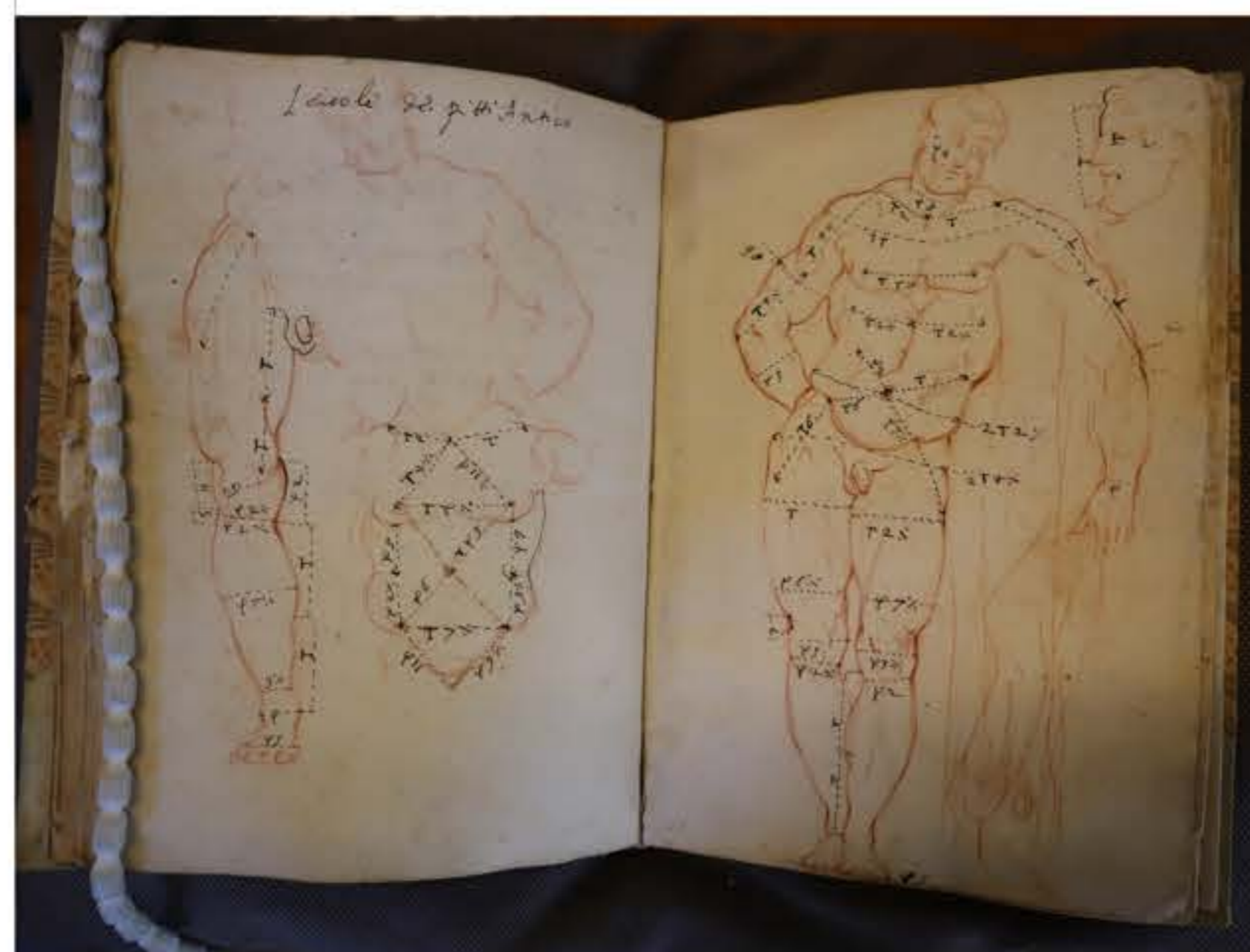
* How do scale, weight, and measure inflect these practices, specifically the reduction of large-scale marble to small-scale bronze? Do core pins and armatures (the "guts" of models and casts) correlate to struts in marble (where the "bones" are on the outside)?



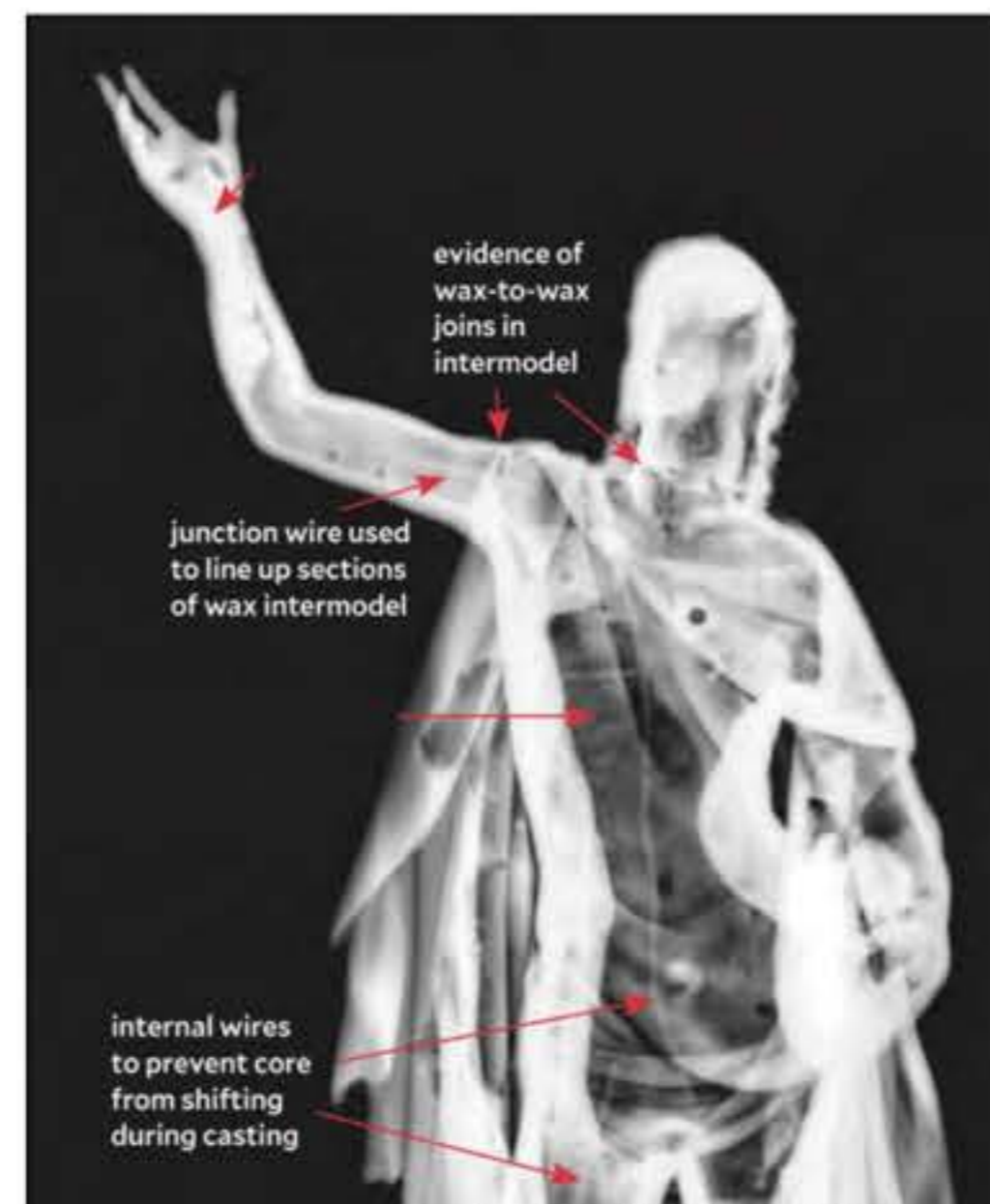
Pietro Da Barga, after Giambologna, "Torso of a Warrior," ca. 1575, bronze statuette, damaged around retained core, V&A.



Giambologna (attrib.), Hercules torso, terracotta model segmented for casting, ca. 1570, BM



Giovanni Francesco Susini, Codice Magliabechiano, XVII, 4



Antonio Susini, "Risen Christ," x-ray and labels adapted from Richard Stone in *Met Bronzes* (2022)



From Francesco Carradori (Florence, 1747-1825), *Istruzione elementare per gli studiosi della scultura*, 1802



The Belvedere Torso, from Andreas Vesalius, *De humani corporis*, 1543



Workshop of Giambologna, "Pacing Horse," charcoal, oiled for transfer, Uffizi