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PHOTOGRAPHED HIMSELF IN ONE
THOUSAND, THREE HUNDRED YOGA
POSES.

THIS BOOK IS A UNIQUE RECORD OF
HIS DEVOTION TO THIS ANCIENT
PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE,
YOGA.

"DHARMA MITTRA IS THE LOTUS
ON THE FLOWER OF YOGA."

— KRISHNA DAS



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ASANAS

608 YOGA POSTURES

DHARMA MITTRA



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The material in this book is intended for education. Please consult a qualified health care practitioner before beginning any exercise program.

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DEDICATION

I offer my deepest thanks to:

Sri Swami Kailashananda Maharaj 108, my Guru, my inspiration, my teacher, my father, my everything in the Divine Practice;

my tireless and faithful Karma Yogi Ismrittee Devi, aka Eva Grubler Vargas;

Angela LaSpisa my devoted student and angel in disguise; all of my students past and present who inspire me to serve and teach daily;

my longtime students, initiated disciples, and certified teacher graduates who invest themselves in passing on the tradition;

Krishna Das for his eternal love of chanting the divine name, for his friendship, and for allowing my home to be his; and most of all, to the Supreme Lord for honoring me with human birth and revealing to me my spiritual existence and unity with God, thereby giving me the opportunity to perform my prescribed duties in a disinterested way, and to use reason and discrimination to help maintain world order and make spiritual progress in this lifetime with no attachments to the fruits of my actions. He whose heart gets purified through action without attachment obtains God-Realization. May I uphold righteousness and live up to my initiate name of Dharma, *Om Shantih Om.*

Om.

May we practice yoga so that our bodies and minds are purified. O Luminous One, may we find a guru (spiritual preceptor) to receive the right guidance and knowledge. O Imperishable, Incomprehensible, Infinite One, may we cross by Thy Grace this ocean of birth and death. May detachment be our boat, strength be our speed, the guru be our guide, and thy light our destination, so that we can safely cross this ocean (of pain and delusion) and return home again. May we never leave home again.

Hare Om.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

This book is an extraordinary celebration of human achievement — extraordinary not only because one man possessed the grace and prowess to execute so many yoga postures, but because he also had the determination to photograph himself doing them.

For organizational purposes, *Asanas* groups the postures into eight broad sections. It would be a mistake to take those categories too literally because unlike other exercise regimes, yoga works on both the outside of the body and the inside. While a pose may appear to be a back stretch, it's likely to also be working the legs and arms, increasing the flow of blood to specific glands and organs, and clarifying the practitioner's relationship with the cosmos.

The majority of the photos were shot in 1984, when Dharma was 45 years old. In the years since, some of the original negatives were lost or damaged, thus when it came time to put this book together, Dharma had to photograph himself again. It was impossible to replicate the original lighting conditions, so the newer shots have a different, more dense quality. Perhaps it is testimony to the

rejuvenating powers of yoga, but the changes in Dharma's body, or in his ability to execute the poses, are barely visible.

One more thing: Only after spending months with Dharma, dissecting and categorizing each posture, did we realize that he had originated many of these postures himself. As a true yogi, he takes no credit for his achievement, stressing instead the value of egolessness, or in yogic terms, "no I." While he may insist that he did nothing to create the work, that the postures just flowed through him, we believe otherwise.

The Editors

GUIDELINES FOR PRACTICE

Relax on your back for two or three minutes before the first posture.

Do all postures very slowly, without pain or straining.
Breathe through the nose in all positions (except *Shavasana*).

Do not over-hold the breath or over-inhale. Do not over-hold any posture.

Break posture whenever it becomes uncomfortable.

Practice on an empty stomach, four hours after heavy food, two hours after light food, 10 to 15 minutes after liquids.

Before doing a posture check the illustration carefully for angles, shape, exact position of fingers, hands, arms, toes, ankles, legs, and head. Beginners should not practice without guidance.

If you are pregnant, or have recently had surgery, or have heart, spine, joint, or high blood pressure problems, ask the teacher which postures to avoid.

Do postures on a mat in a well-ventilated room.

Relax after every posture until fatigue has been eliminated.

If there isn't time to do all the poses, choose one standing, one abdominal, one or two forward and backward bends each, one twist, and one seated pose. Later, or the next day, do the remaining.

End *asana* practice with a relaxation pose, such as, *Shavasana*.

For rapid progress, be guided by a qualified teacher, not by books alone. Try to be a vegetarian and meditate at least five minutes daily. Be reverent and obedient to the teacher.

Be nice to all.

INTRODUCTION

When I first left the ashram of my guru, Swami Kailashananda, in 1975, I was very enthusiastic, in good shape, and spiritually intoxicated. I wanted to give the guru something in thanks as an act of devotion, so I set to work on the Master Yoga Chart of 908 Asanas.

At the time yoga wasn't as popular in the United States as it is now so I had to work out how to do many of the postures myself — some were explained in texts, but not all were illustrated. I gathered information from my guru, from books, and from students who had come from other teachers. I mounted a Nikon camera and a video camera with a monitor so I could see the correct angle when I was in the pose. Once in position I clicked with a wire remote, a little pump. In many poses I had to hold the pump in my mouth and activate it by biting. I had four seconds to spit it out before the flash popped.

Every morning I would shoot two or three rolls of film. I did about 1,300 postures in less than three months, then I cut them out and pinned them on a big piece of cardboard. I knew that if I made the chart, one day it would be a success, just like a painting that is done 100 years before it is recognized.

There are an infinite number of poses — this is what makes yoga a living tradition.

Three thousand years ago yoga started with one meditative pose, Easy Lotus. The word *asana* originally meant “meditative posture.” Then the masters introduced Cobra Pose to keep the spine flexible. In their quest for physical health they developed the eight most important poses to insure the health of the body and glands. From there it grew. Even today dozens of new poses are created each year by true yogis all over the world. There are many different schools, each with their own variations, but basically all yoga comes from the same set of classic *asanas*. In the 30 years I have been teaching I have developed many poses, but in yoga no one puts his or her name on a pose because in reality I didn’t do anything. I am just a body through which the intuition has passed.

Many of the newer and more popular variations of yoga are geared to getting into a sweat and burning calories. They require a lot of movement and people tend not to worry about concentrating in the pose. The way I learned, you relax and concentrate on the third eye or, if you’re not feeling comfortable, on the point of stress. This calms you down, helps diminish desires, and focuses energy. But here’s the truth: while there’s a different style for every kind of person, “...if you truly practice, achieves the same ends.”

Still, even with books like this, students should have a teacher available. The guru has gone the route. He or she knows the journey and is able to guide others. He or she will know which poses are good for you and which to avoid. As students grow spiritually and improve their mental patterns they'll attract better teachers. Unfortunately there are many certified yoga instructors today who don't know anything about yoga. But students needn't worry — everything has a divine purpose. Instructors who don't know anything attract students who don't deserve the truth yet. There is a natural order in the world.

Yoga is beneficial to so many physical conditions, but the ultimate reason to practice it is to find the truth. *Asanas* are only one part of an eight-stage process in the search for enlightenment. They prepare the body for meditation. The great yoga master Iyengar said, "My body is my altar, and my postures are the prayers." Only when you've learned the postures and the ways to control the mind, the breath, the senses, and the emotions, are you ready to enter the temple. Yoga means yoke, or union, with the spirit. Some people think, "I'm in this pose so I've achieved godliness." They're not even doing yoga yet. Unless you've surrendered to the Lord, or to the Divine Spirit, or to whomever you may call

union you must surrender. Then you can achieve *samadhi*, that deeper consciousness in which you become identified with the object of your concentration. You need to go beyond the individual mind and join the ocean of consciousness.

I know that sounds like a lofty ambition — most people come to class to improve their figures. But as they practice they gradually and automatically start changing their ideas. They start thinking more about the spirit. Automatically it begins to have another effect, something that's learned less from thought than through experience.

Students often ask me how they can go deeper into a posture. In a way they are asking the wrong question. Form, breath, and focus are much more important than range of motion. As long as you're aligned and breathing, don't worry about how far you can go.

That said, you must learn to relax in the pose in order to master it. The first few times you cross your legs in Lotus Pose, say, it's extremely painful. After a few weeks of practice, you'll be able to spend some minutes in it. Eventually you will feel comfortable.

As I mentioned before, there are eight basic poses that will give you everything you need for good physical health

flexibility. The basic eight are: *Sirshasana* (Head Stand); *Sarvangasana* (Shoulder Stand), *Bhujangasana* (Cobra, which leads into Bow Pose); *Paschimatanasana* (Full Back Stretch); *Matsyendrasana* (Spinal Twist); *Maha Mudra* (One-Leg Back Stretch or Powerful Seal); *Siddhasana* (Easy Lotus); *Padmasana* (Lotus Pose).

Unlike bodybuilding or other purely physical routines, yoga is a holistic practice. Each pose performs many functions, not all of them obvious, that can stimulate internal organs and glands, increase the flow of blood, reduce stress, and improve overall health. *Dhanurasana*, Bow Pose, is a good example. It bends the spine backwards, which develops its flexibility and elasticity. At the same time, the body is resting on the abdomen, stretching and relaxing muscles there, improving digestion and peristalsis. This can help chronic constipation and liver dysfunction. It also sends a rush of blood to the abdominal viscera. So while it may be classified as a Back Stretch pose, it also has a powerful effect on the internal organs.

One more thing: It's a mistake to expect benefits from any pose. Expectations make you restless because if you fail to get what you expect, you feel miserable. Yoga practice is an

be done. If you have this mental attitude, your selfishness disappears and the benefits come.

In addition to practicing *asanas* there are other things you may want to do to hasten your development and achieve spiritual bliss.

- Use discrimination before any action, making sure your actions are honest, respectful, and right.
- Avoid cruelty. Often students will automatically abandon meat, not because it's bad for the body, but because they don't want to participate in the violence of eating their fellow beings.
- Practice *pranayama*, or breath control. The ancient masters believed that every life had a preordained or finite number of breaths in it. *Pranayama* was developed to extend the breath, and thus lengthen life. Most people practice *pranayama* in the morning, between 4 A.M. and 6 A.M., when the mind and senses are calm. After 4 P.M., once the body is warmed up from the day's movement, they do *asanas*. You move 20 percent better then.
- Maintain a light diet — juices, fruits, salads — after 6 P.M. You'll have a good sleep and wake up refreshed. Your stomach must be empty during sleep because that's when the body repairs itself; with food in it the body is

when you went to sleep. That's why some Buddhist monks never eat before noon or after 4 P.M.

Essentially, if you control your mouth — what you put into it and what comes out of it — you've controlled much of your mind already.

Some people hope to reach higher states of consciousness from yoga and meditation. It's possible, but it requires much practice.

The old masters defined concentration as the ability to keep the mind on one point for twelve seconds without a break. Twelve concentrations — or two and half minutes — equal one meditation. Twelve meditations take a half hour. If you can concentrate without any break, if the flow of concentration is uninterrupted like oil pouring from a spout, then you've achieved the last state of yoga, *samadhi*, cosmic consciousness. Some yogis can enter *samadhi* as soon as they close their eyes; beginners take several minutes just to enter the state of meditation.

After years of practicing *pranayama*, I have heard the inner sounds, which are called *nada* in Sanskrit. These sounds are said to be the buzzing, crackling, and hissing of *kundalini* as *prana* travels up the spine. These sounds never

pure energy rising up my spine. I have never taken LSD, but the way people describe it, the sensation is comparable to that or to that of an orgasm. Not a sexual orgasm, but a rush of pure energy.

There is always an excuse not to do yoga and I've heard them all. "I'm not feeling well," "It's too cold (or too hot)," or "the city is too hectic and not a spiritual place." I think New York City is the best place to practice. Forgive my paraphrase, but as the song says, if you can achieve it here, you can do it anywhere. I know many yogis in India who can renounce the world, sit under the tree, and raise their kundalini because they have no distractions. But then they come here and get tempted by the world, cars, fame, women, money, and... well that's why there are so many scandals around yogis. If you can overcome the temptations here, you really have mastered the senses.

Dharma Mittra
March 2003

SURYA-NAMASKARA
VIRA-PARAMPARA

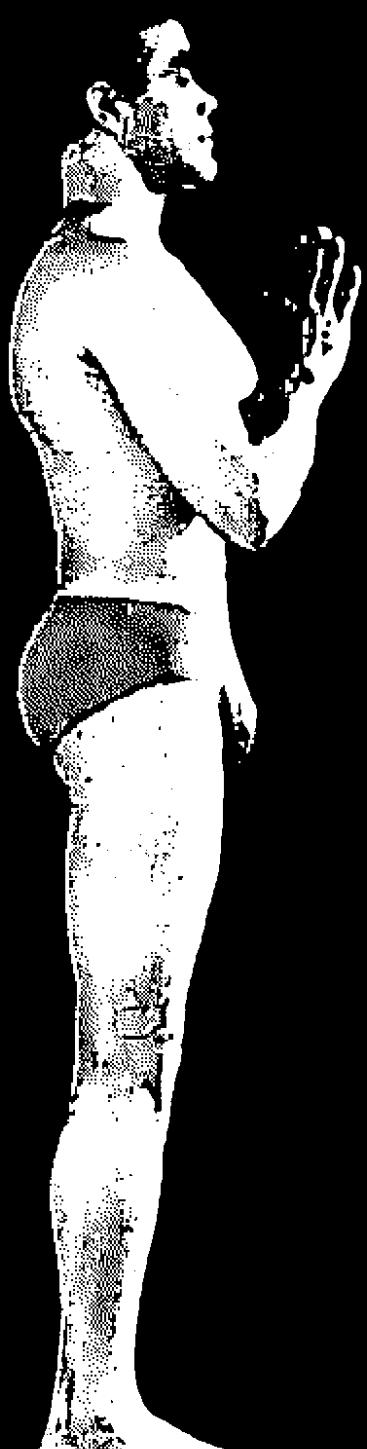
SUN SALUTATION
& HERO SERIES

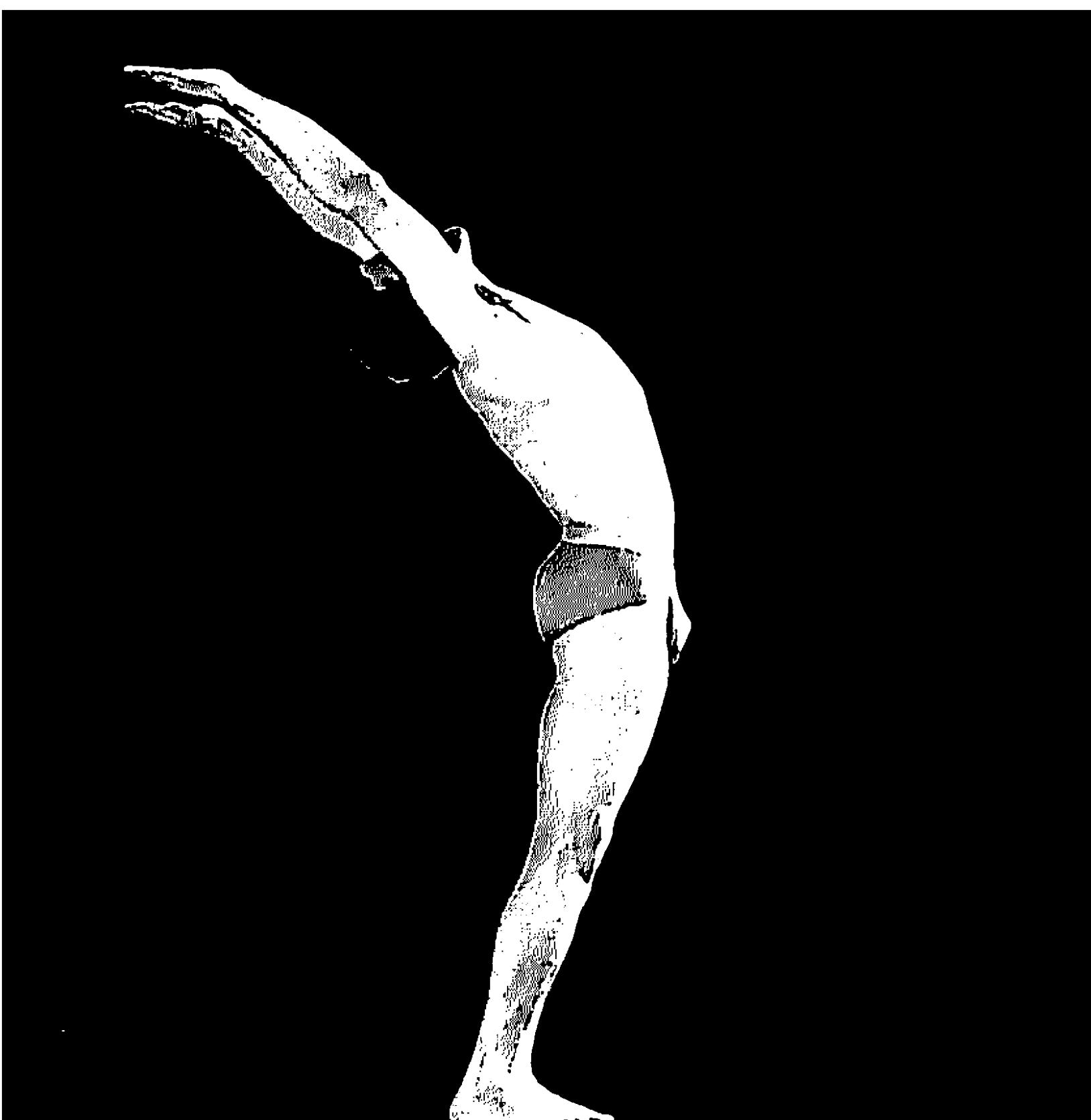
These series are excellent preparatory exercises for the more difficult postures. Usually a series initiates practice because the fast movements generate heat and loosen the muscles, which makes moving into deeper poses easier. They also set the tone for all yoga practice. With the series, as well as with all *asana* practice, you must be well grounded, disciplined, and determined to face life's challenges victoriously.

Untrained students often find it difficult to focus on several actions simultaneously; consequently they find their minds wandering during a series. It's important to restrain the mind and keep it focused. As one practices regularly, new energetic patterns emerge in the mind and body and less effort is required to perform the series in alignment.

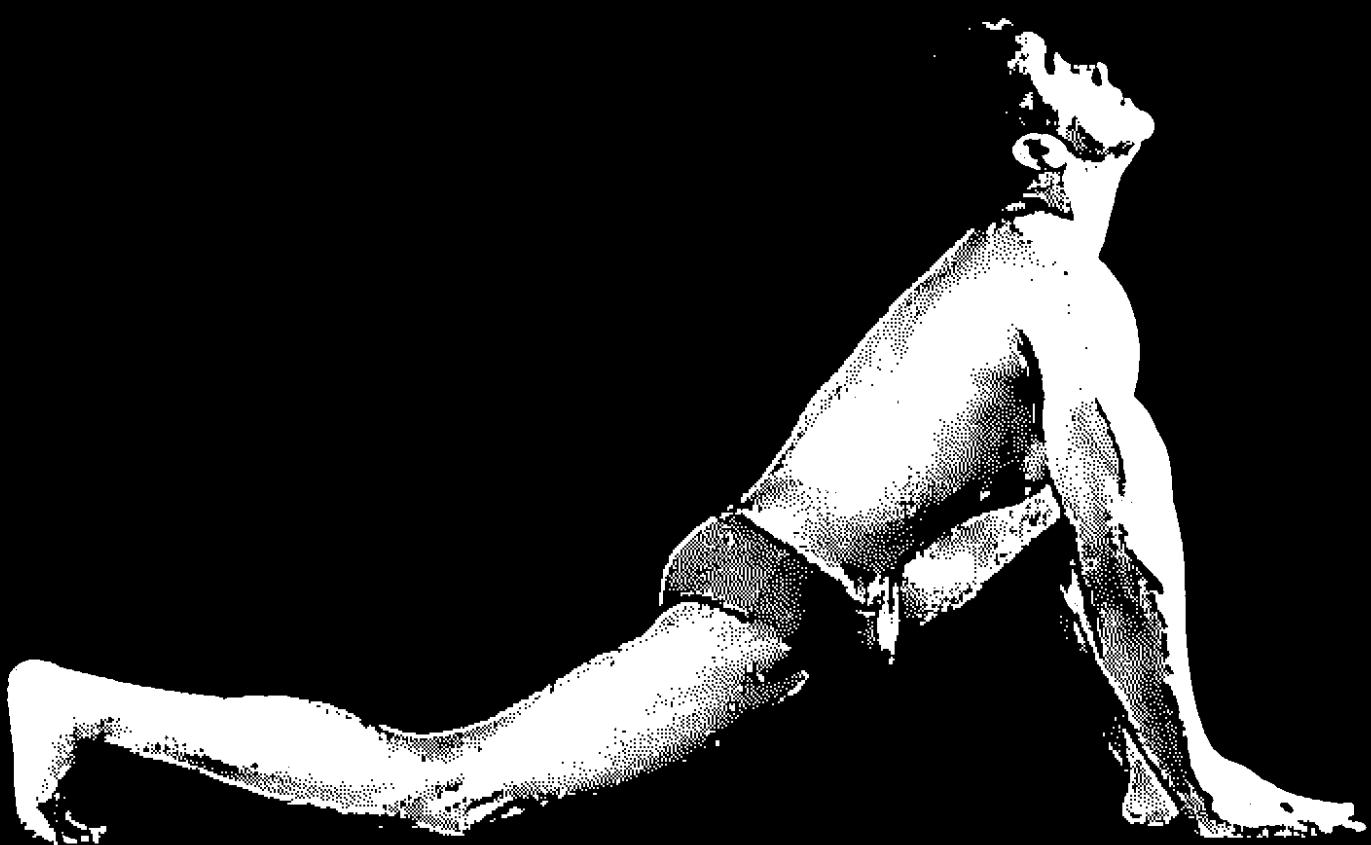
The two series here are known as *vinyasas*, which means a sequence of briefly held poses that flow into each other. Each series stresses slightly different parts of the body. The Salutation to the Sun was the first series created by the masters — it loosens the muscles of the legs, hips, arms, shoulders and gives the back a

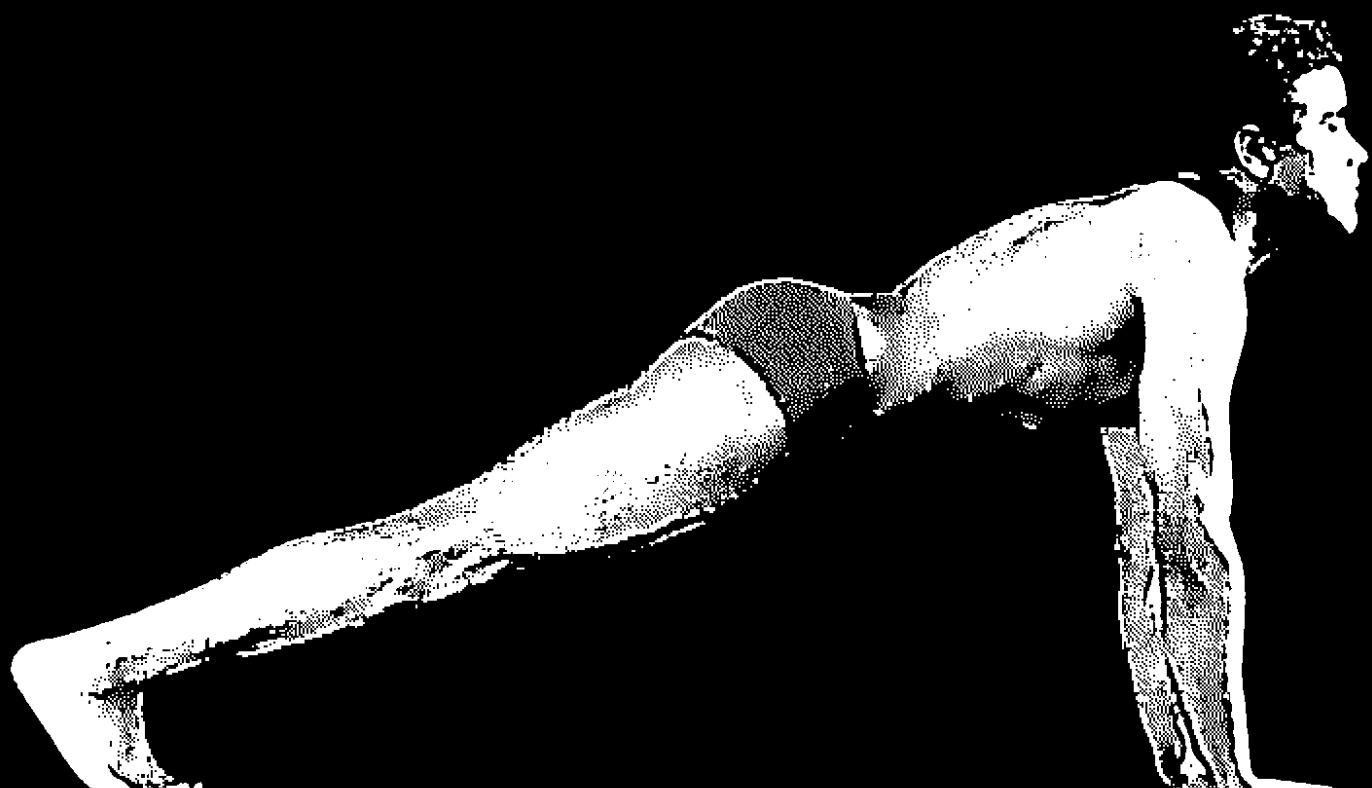
gentle bend. It also represents the Lord in the physical plane. The Hero Series focuses more on the hips and legs. It's important to do the Hero on both the left and the right sides of the body.

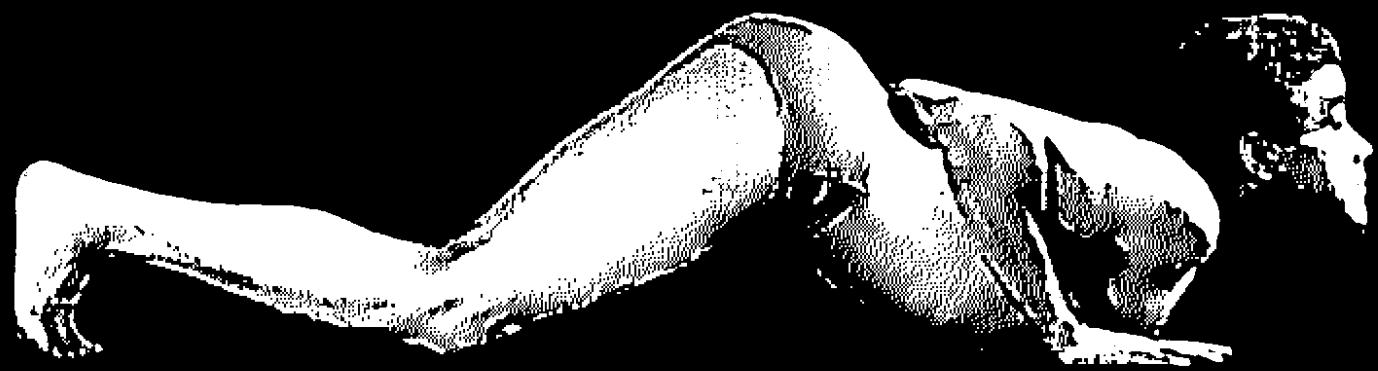


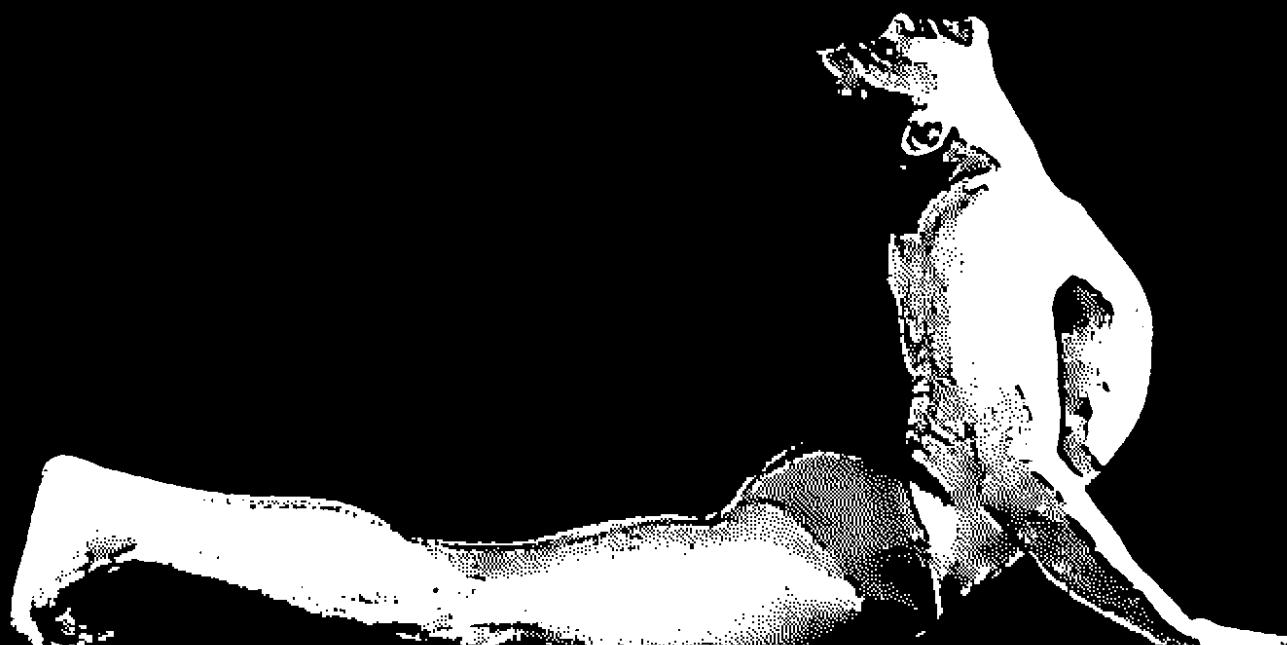










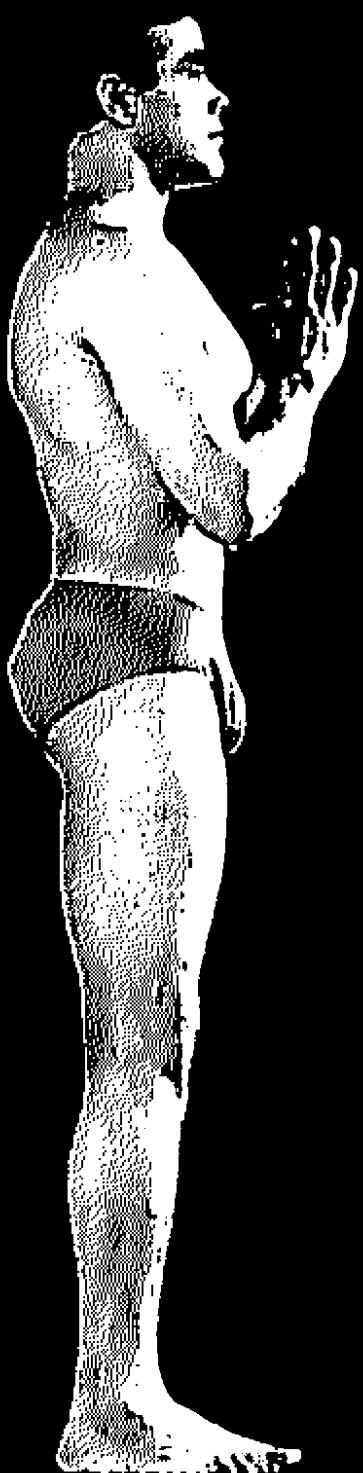




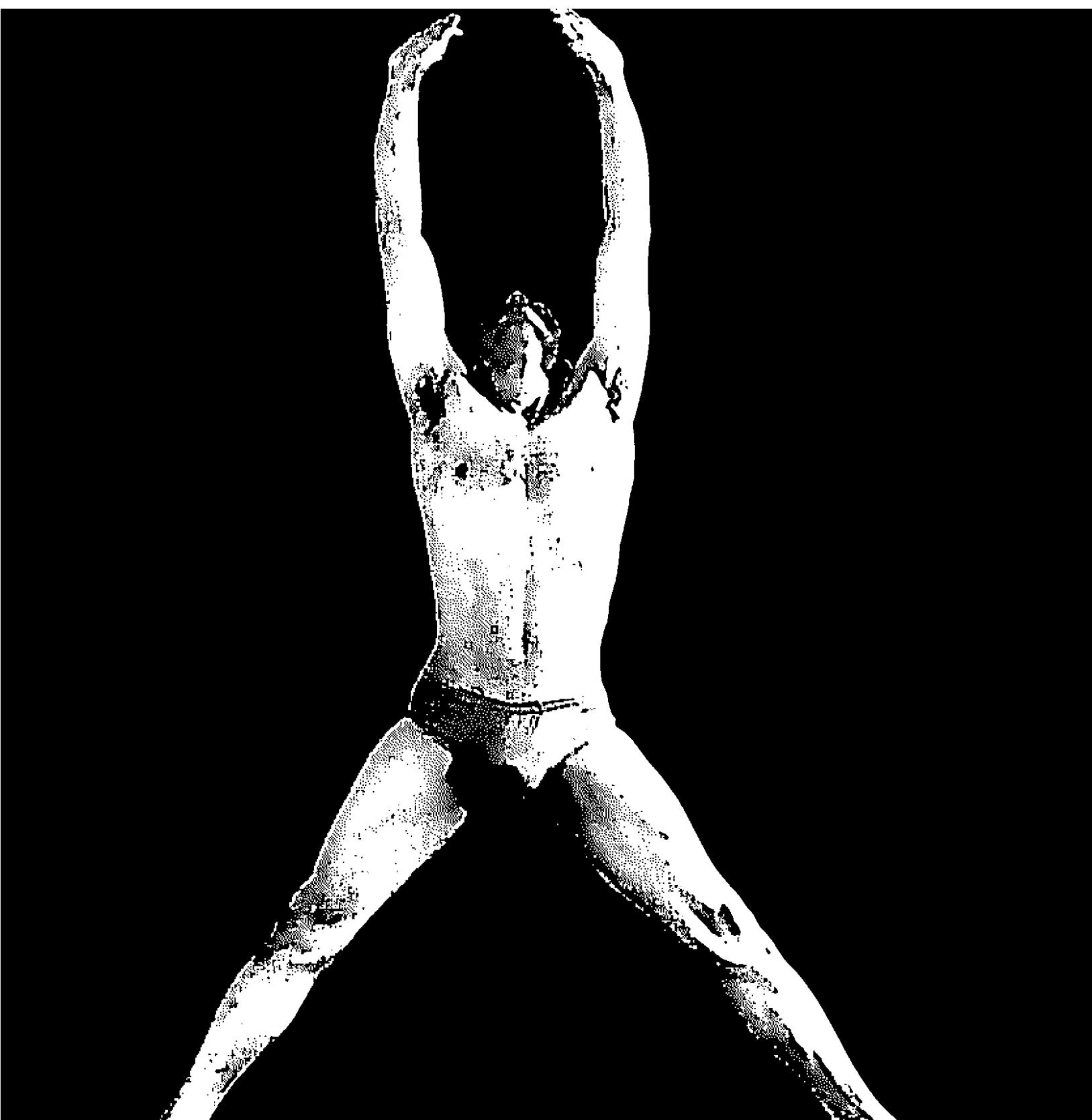










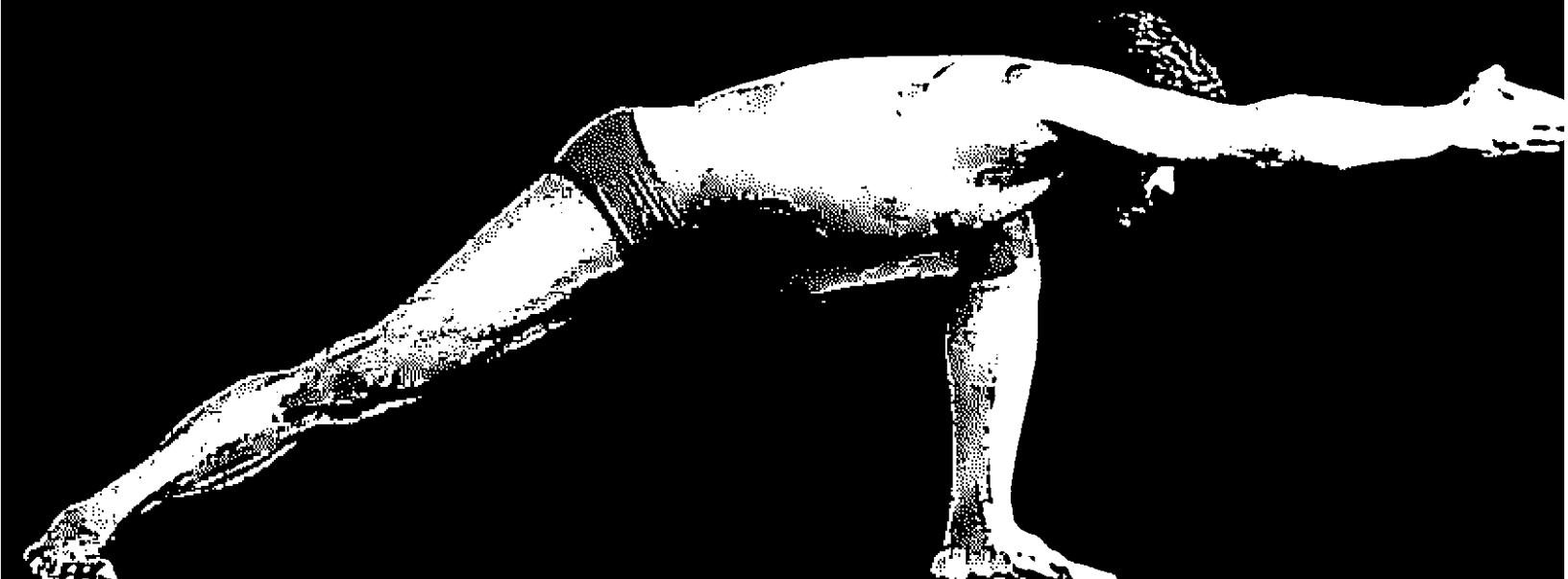




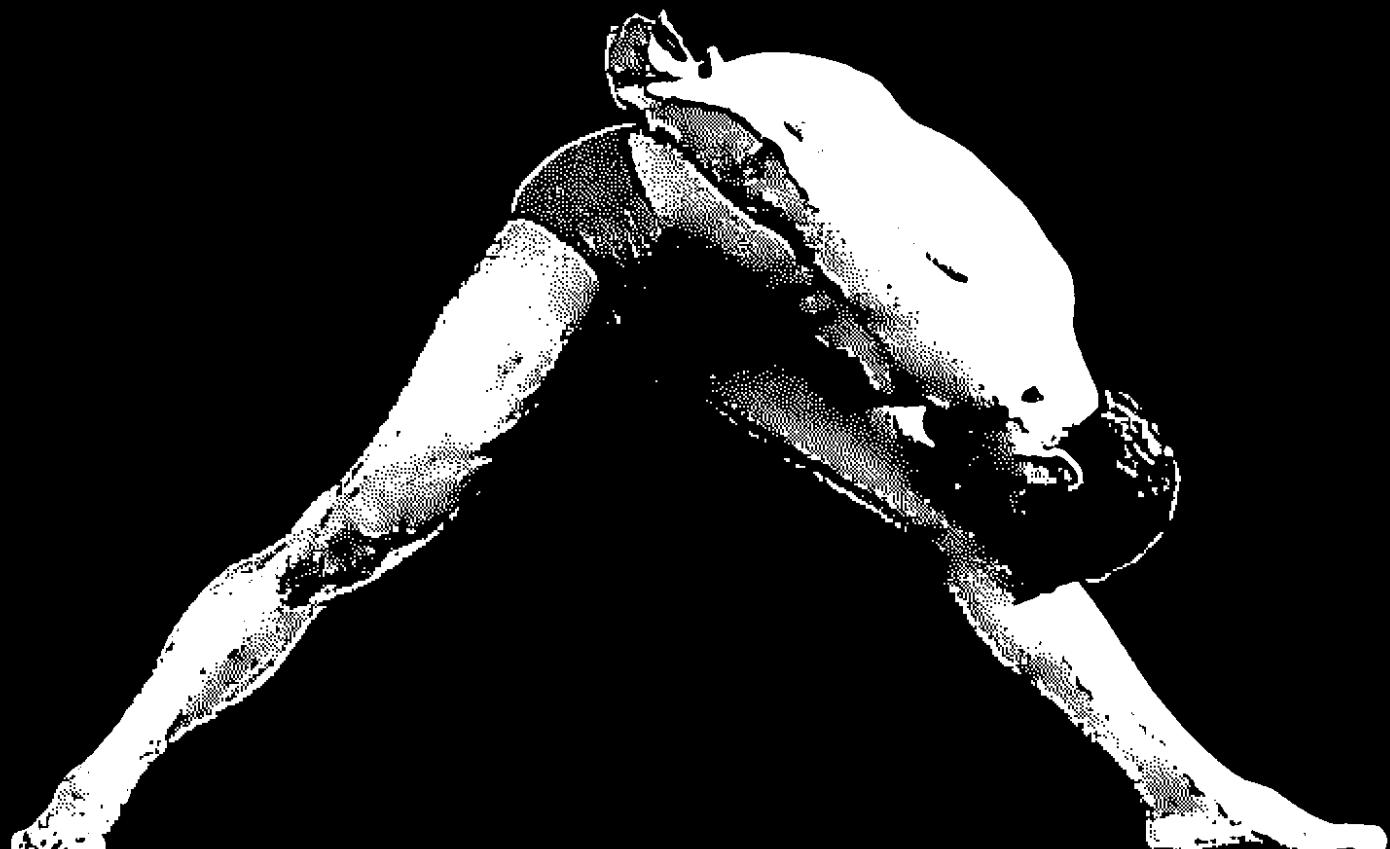
















STANDING POSES

During all poses you concentrate on the space between the eyebrows, the third eye, the seat of the mind. As you concentrate, your mind and thoughts slow down, cravings and desires diminish, and you feel calm. It's another way of enhancing mental focus and preparing yourself for meditation.

According to Patanjali, author of the *Yoga Sutras*, each *asana* physically reflects a particular attitude: acceptance, surrender, balance, or openheartedness. As you move into a posture, your body manifests the physical form of the attitude associated with it. You bypass verbal or rational understanding but you understand the pose emotionally.

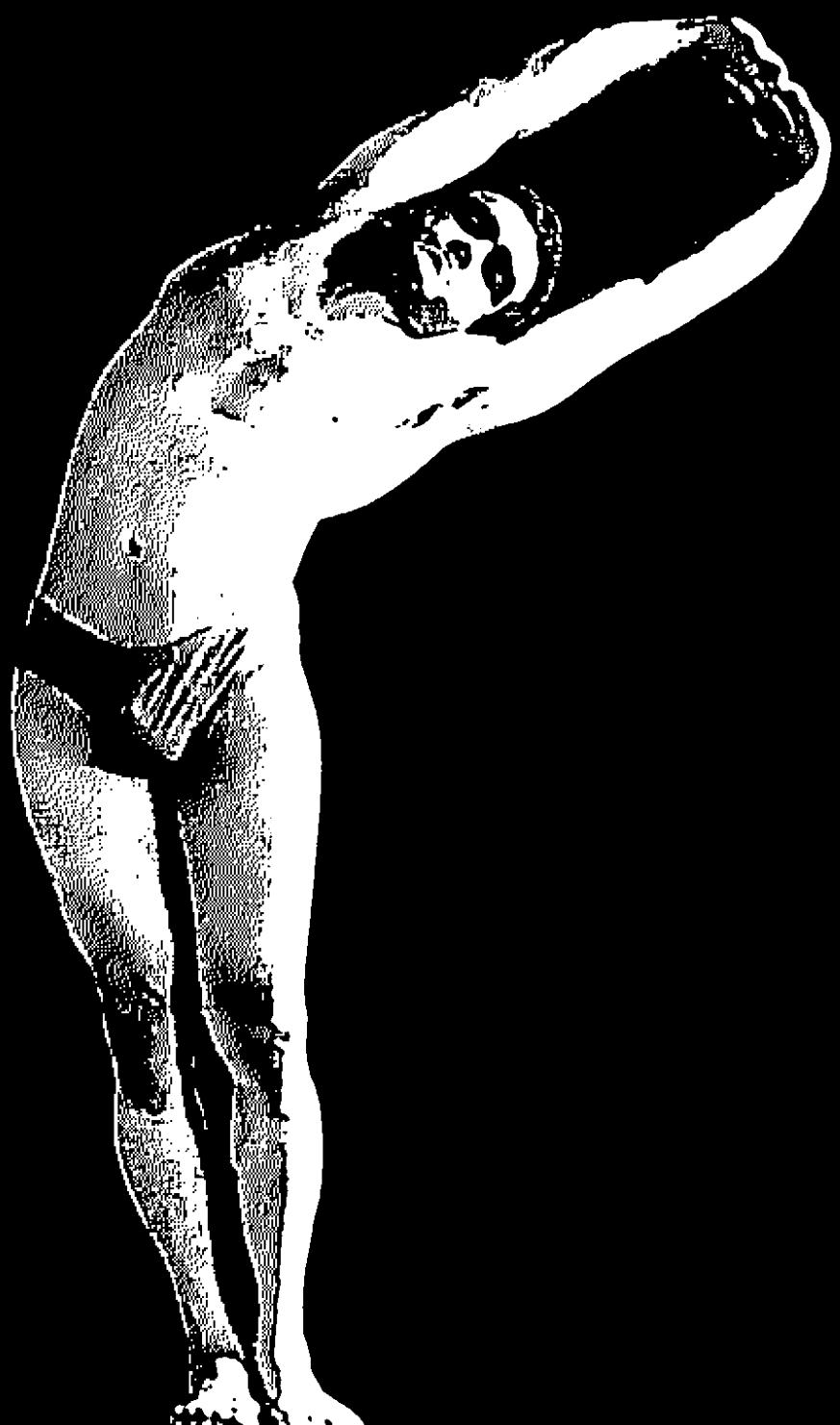
In other words, standing tall and firm in *Tadasana* gives you the steadiness and foundation of a mountain. When you feel yourself closed to someone or to some experience, a backbend will open your chest as well as your heart. If you're shy, backbends will help you greet the world with more confidence. They also correct your spine and posture.

To master the balancing poses, it's useful to employ some physics. Move the body weight toward the toes, off the heels, then press the toes into the ground. If you picture a tree, imagine your foot as the roots digging deeply into the earth and it will help you find stillness and correct your posture.

You can find further balance by gazing at a spot, which is called the *drishti*. Usually this spot is on the floor in front of your nose. In a backstretch try gazing at a point on the ceiling.



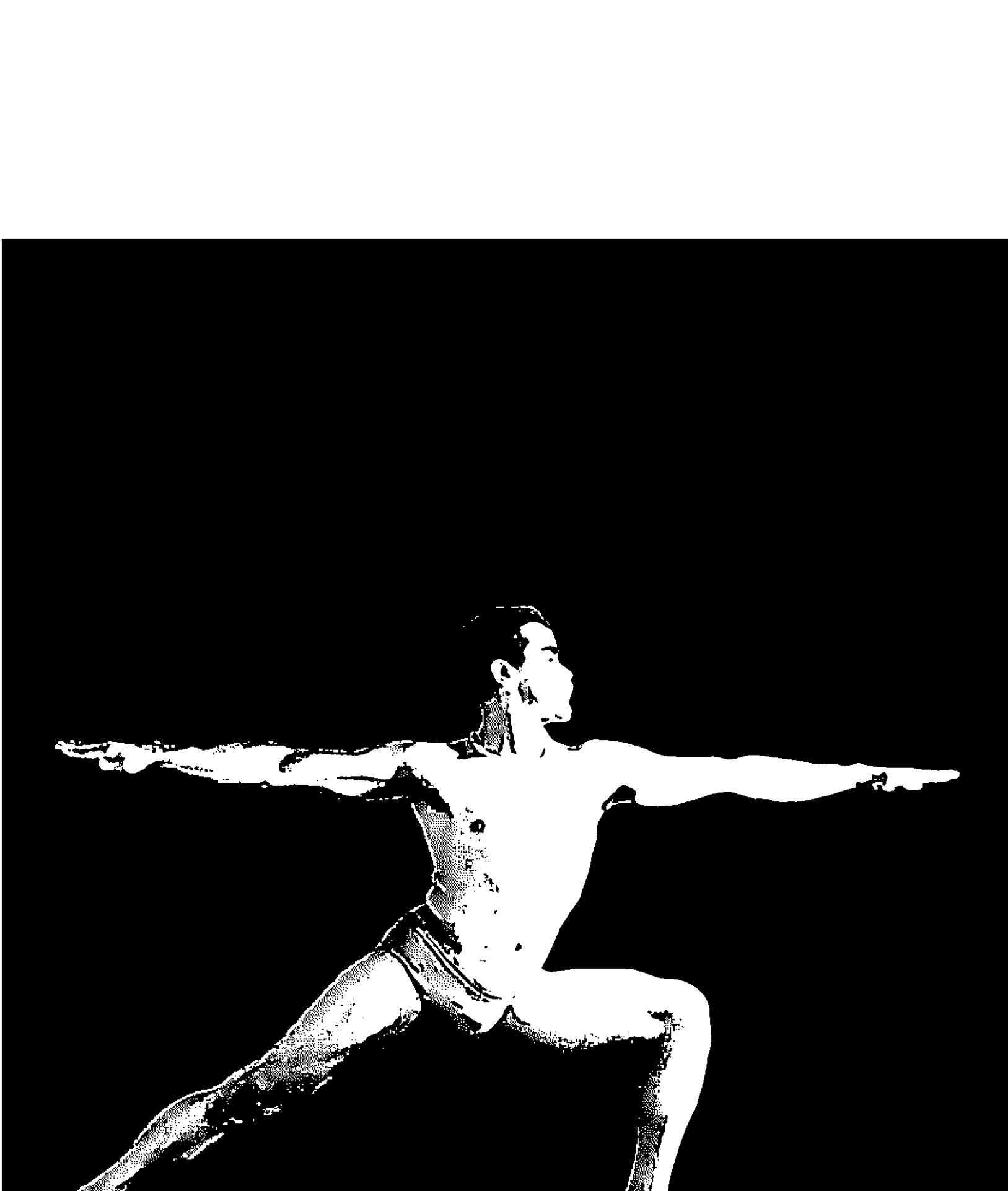




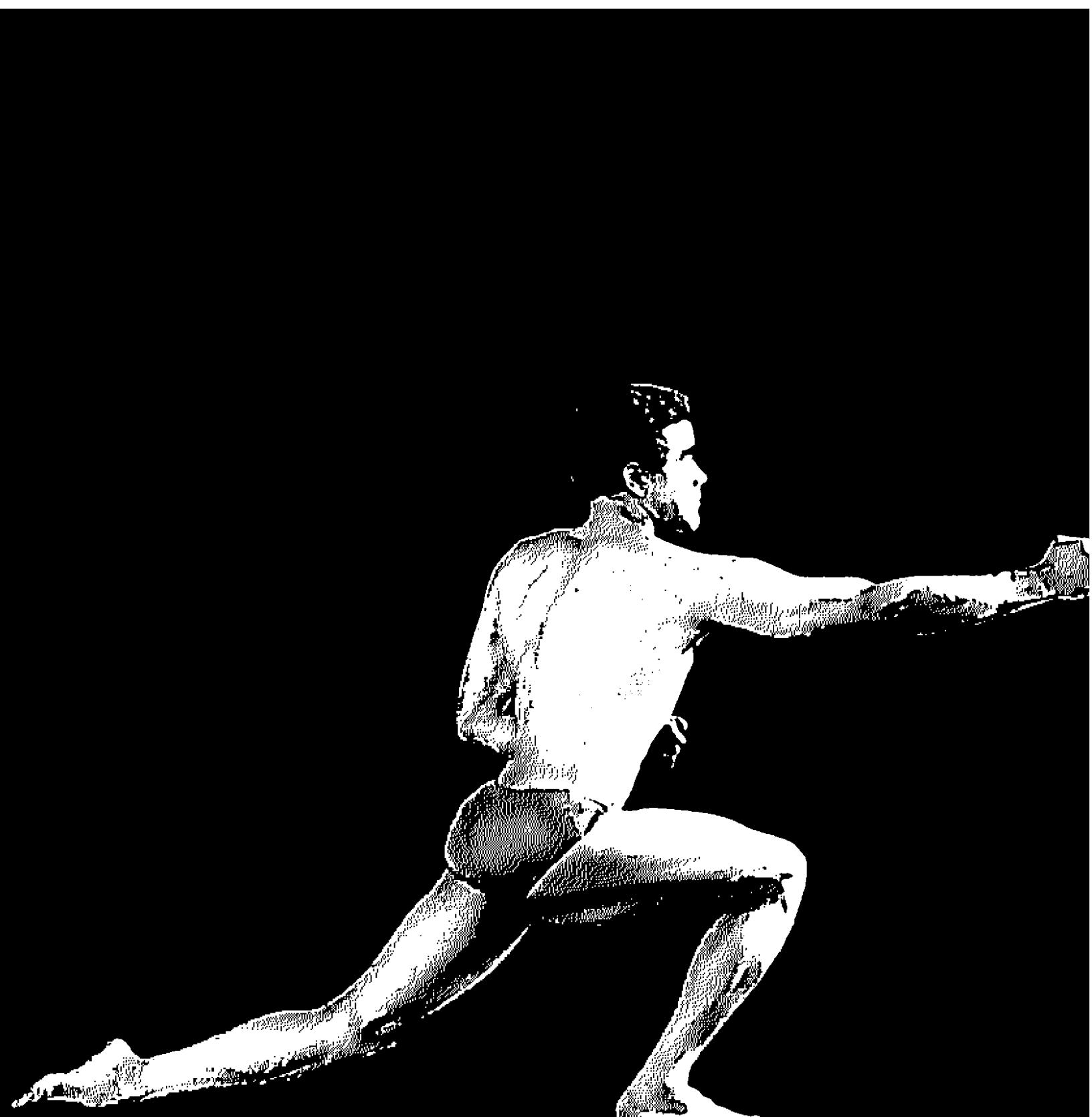






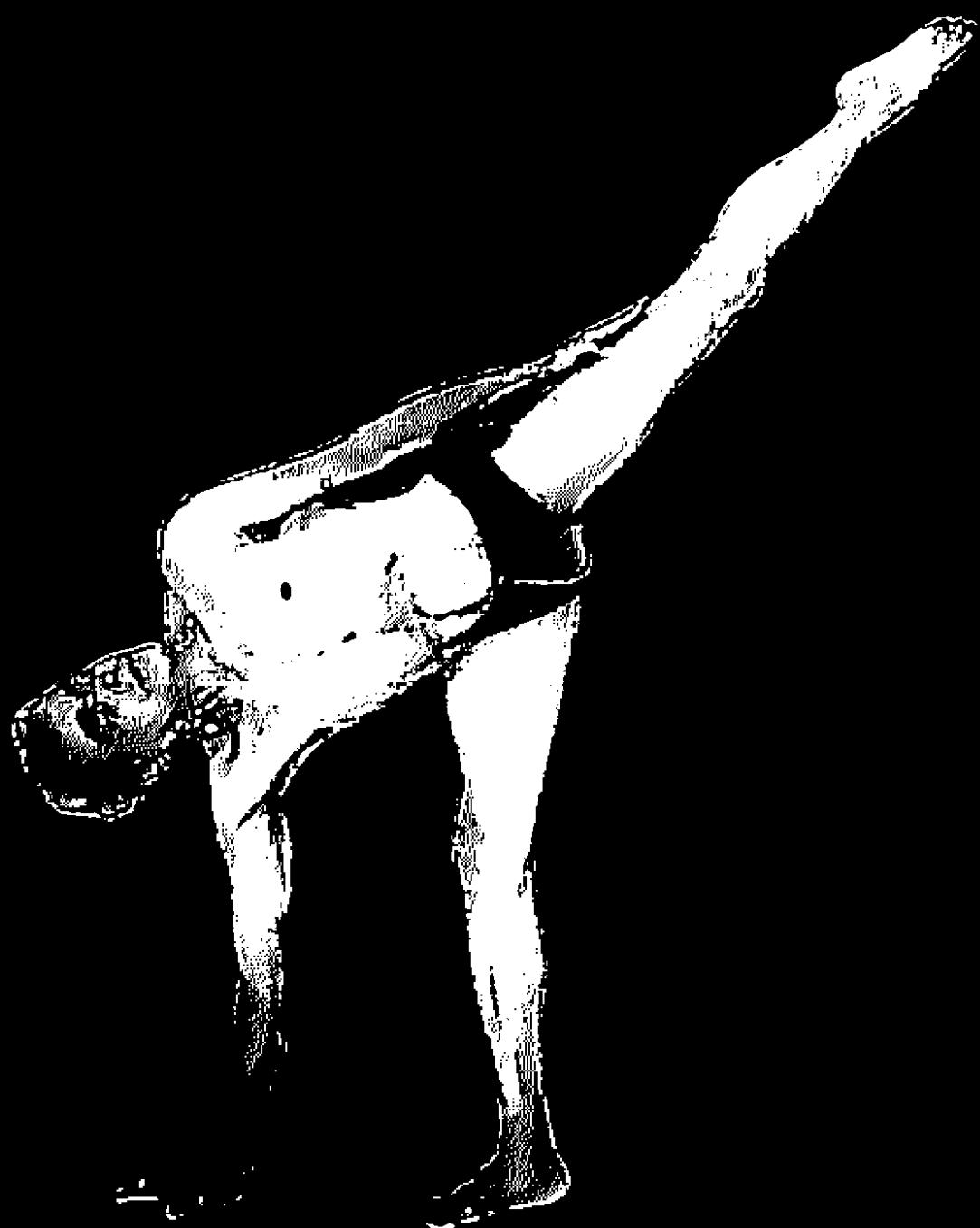










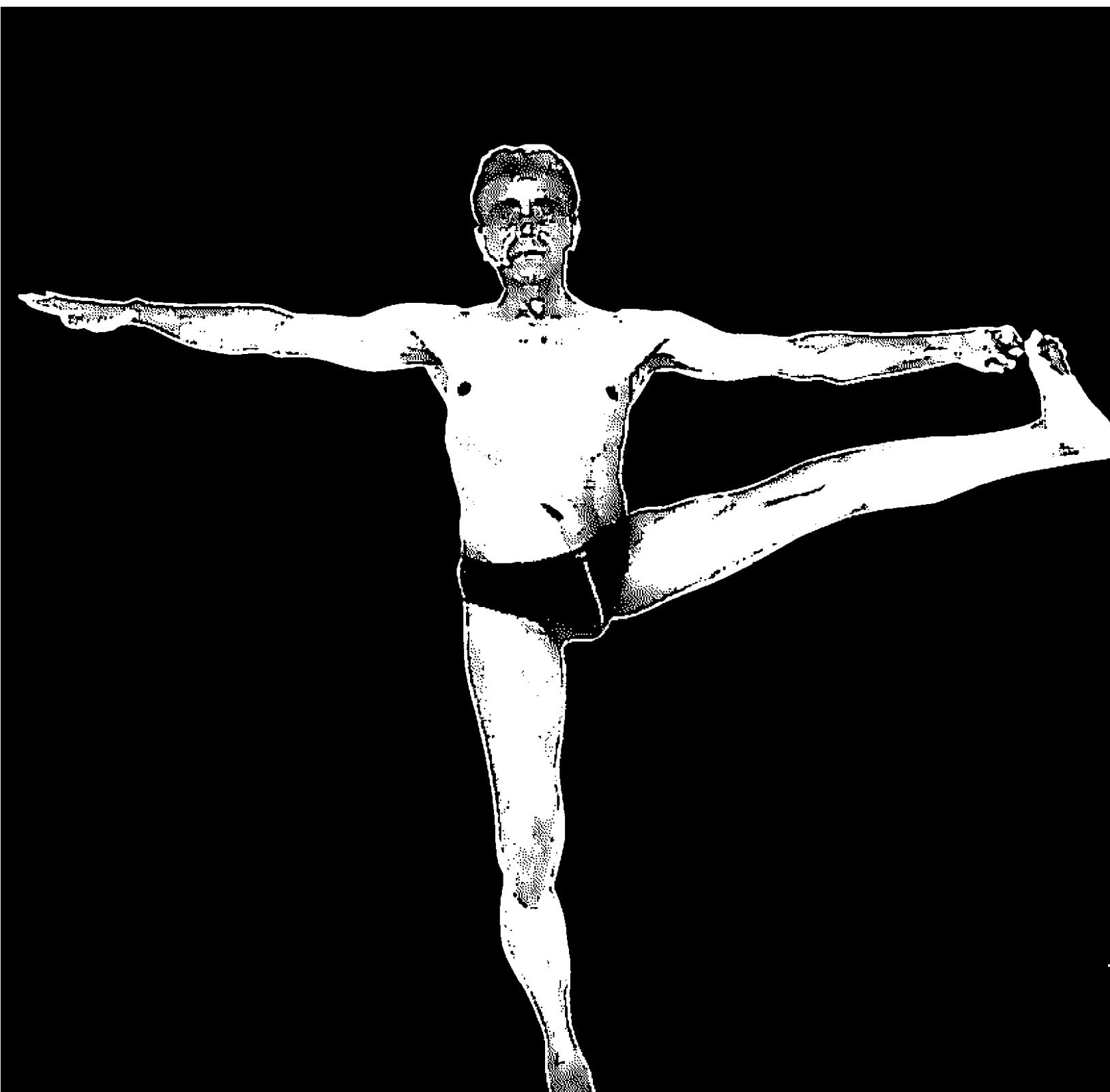






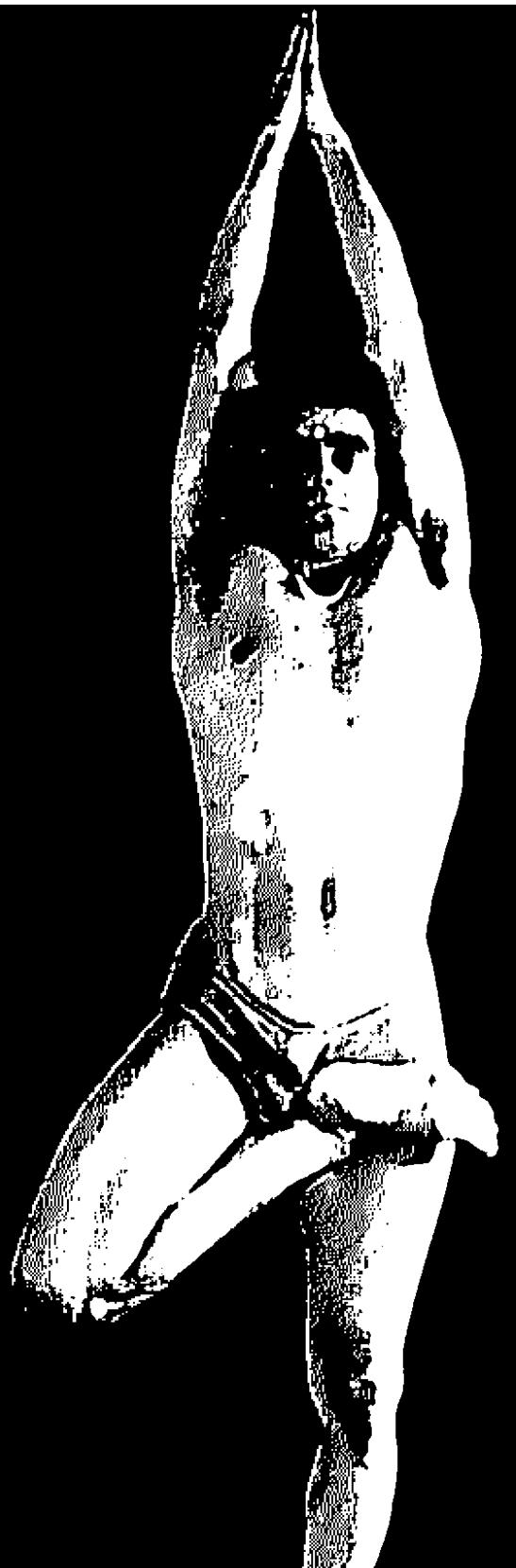


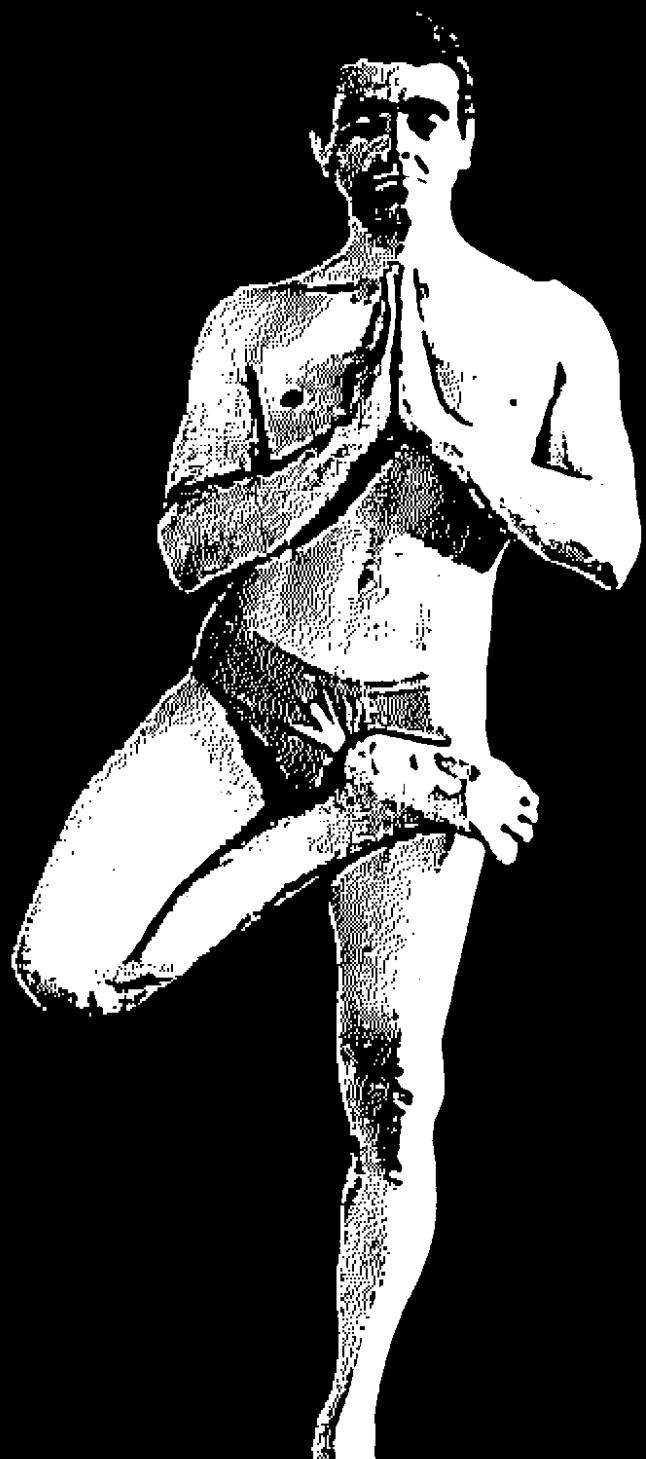






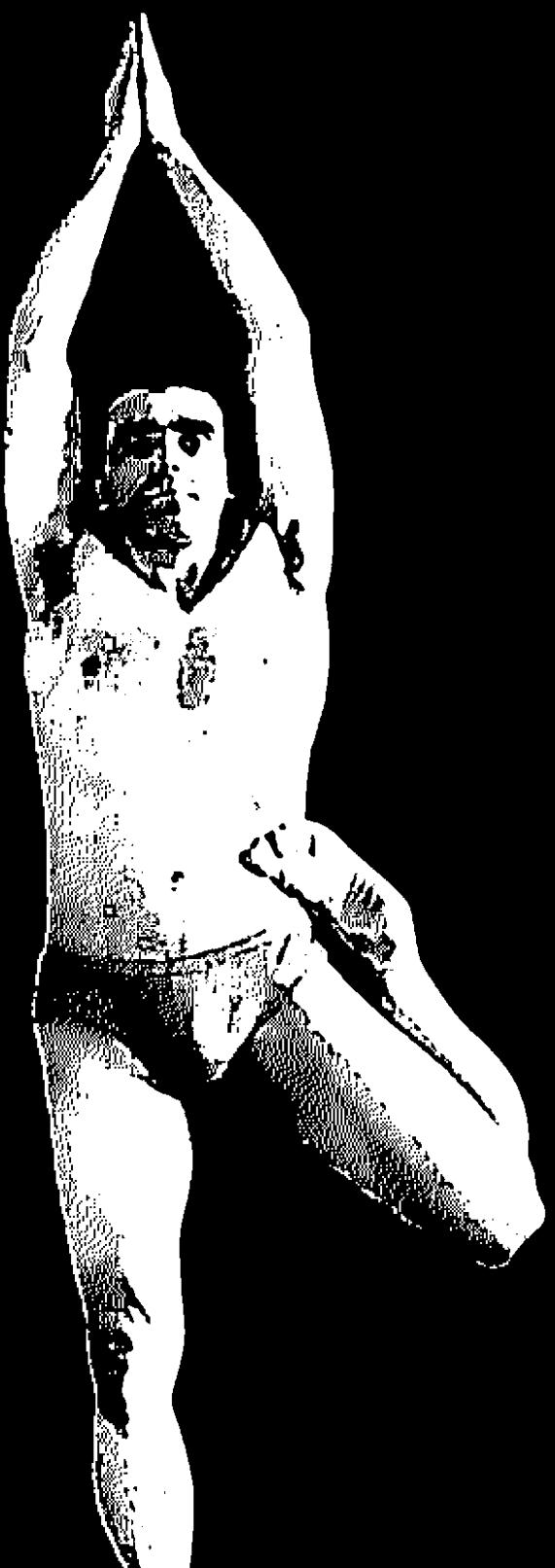
















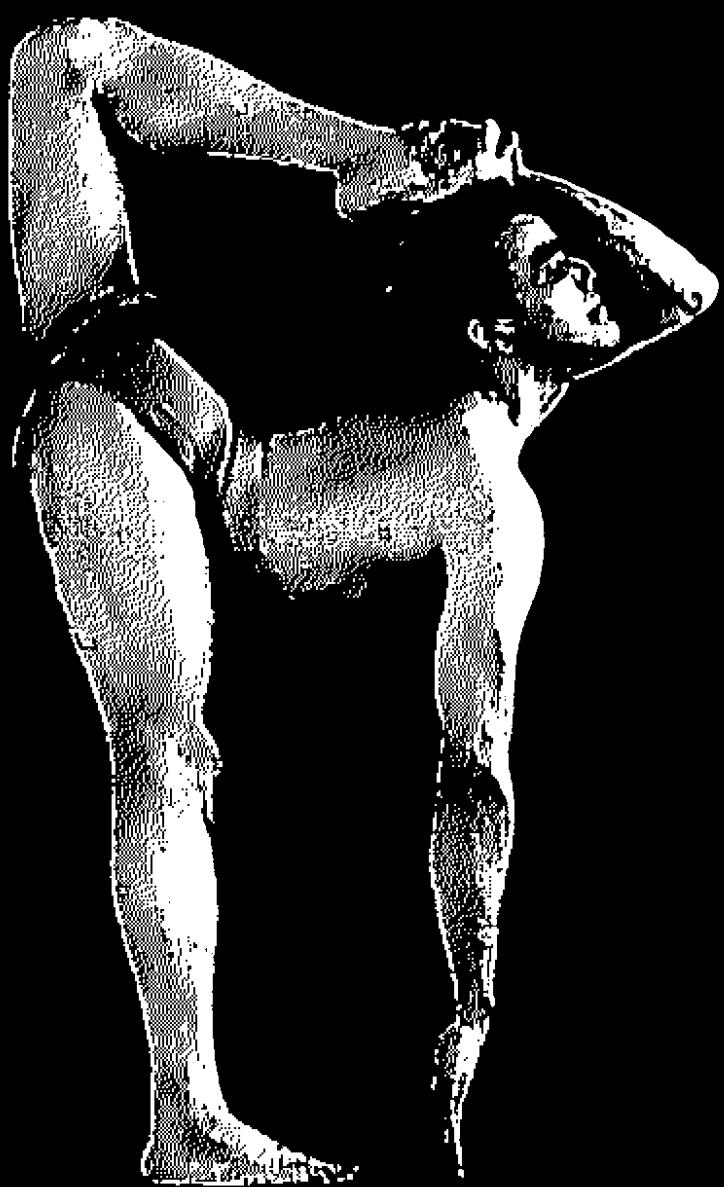




















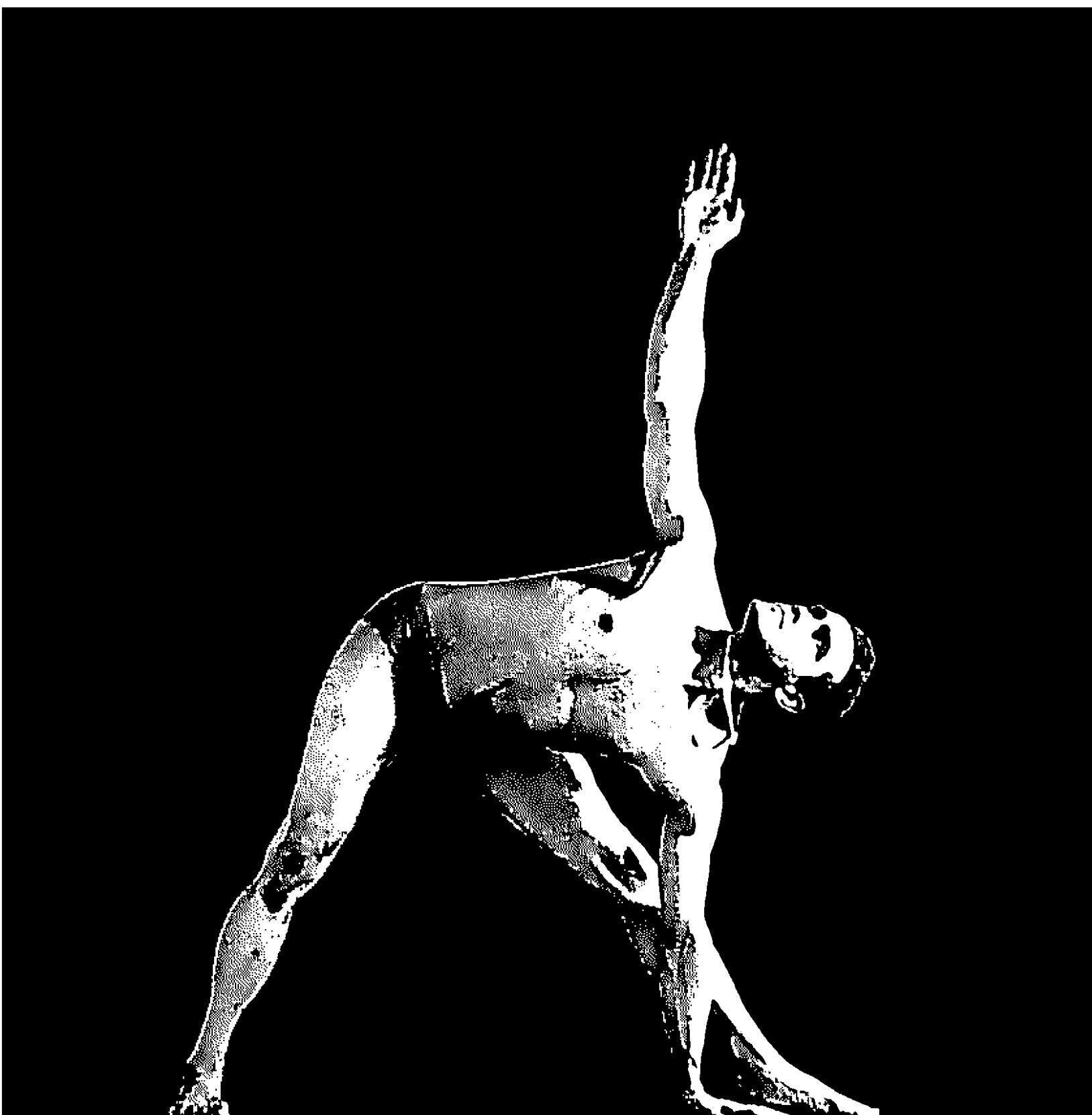


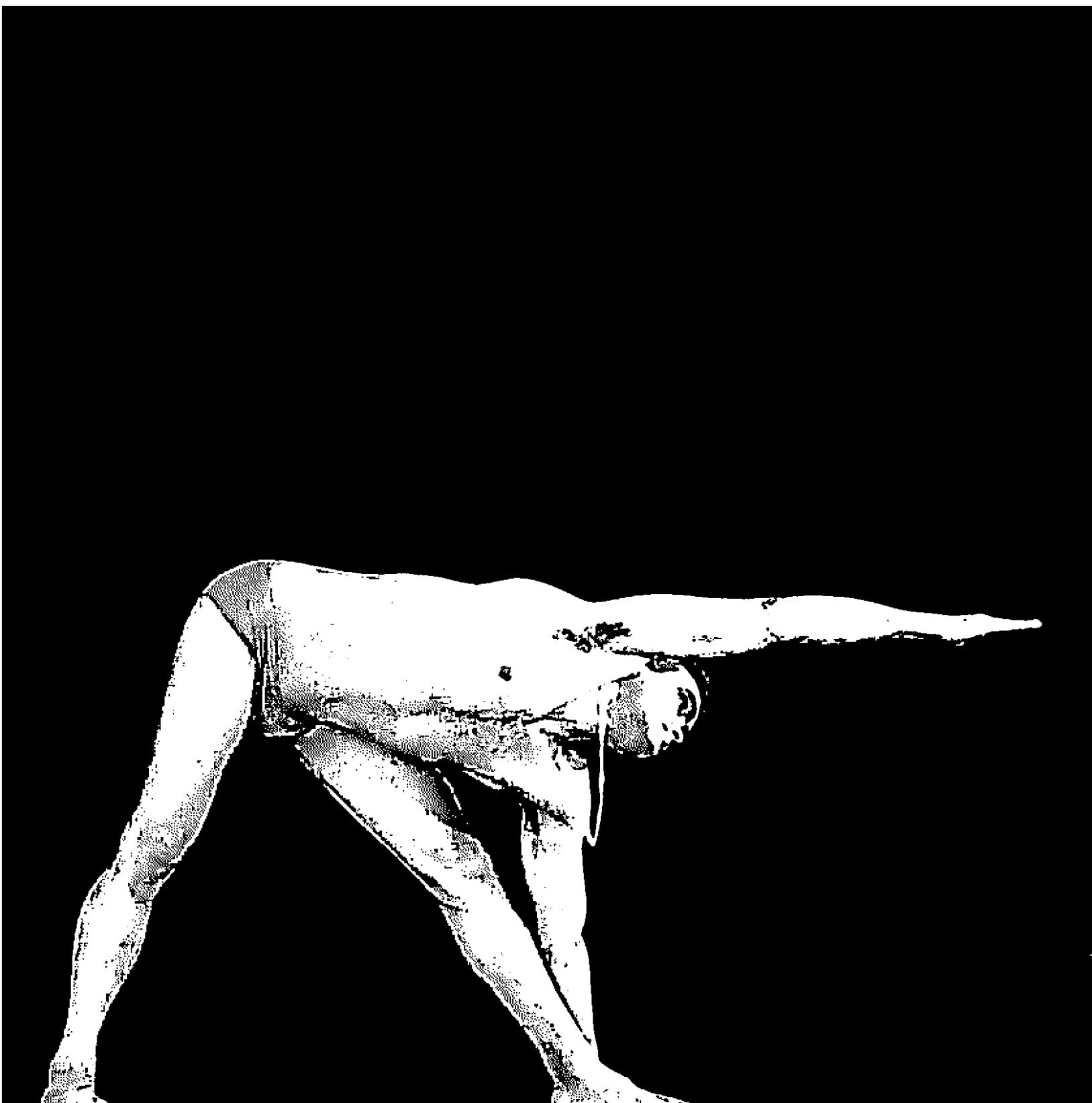


















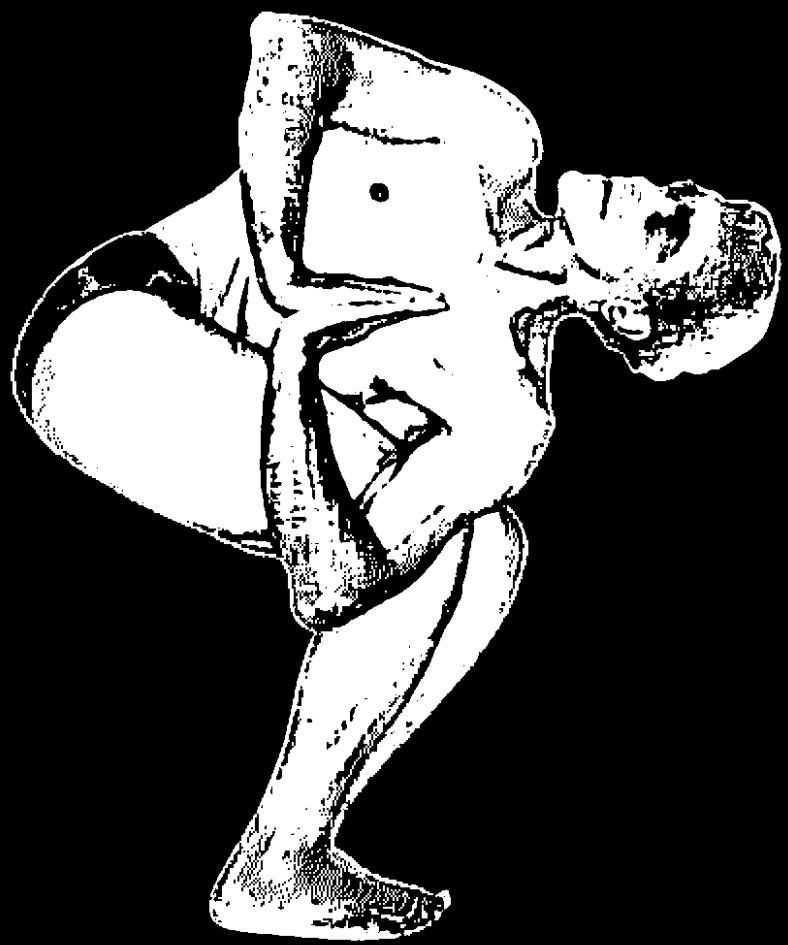


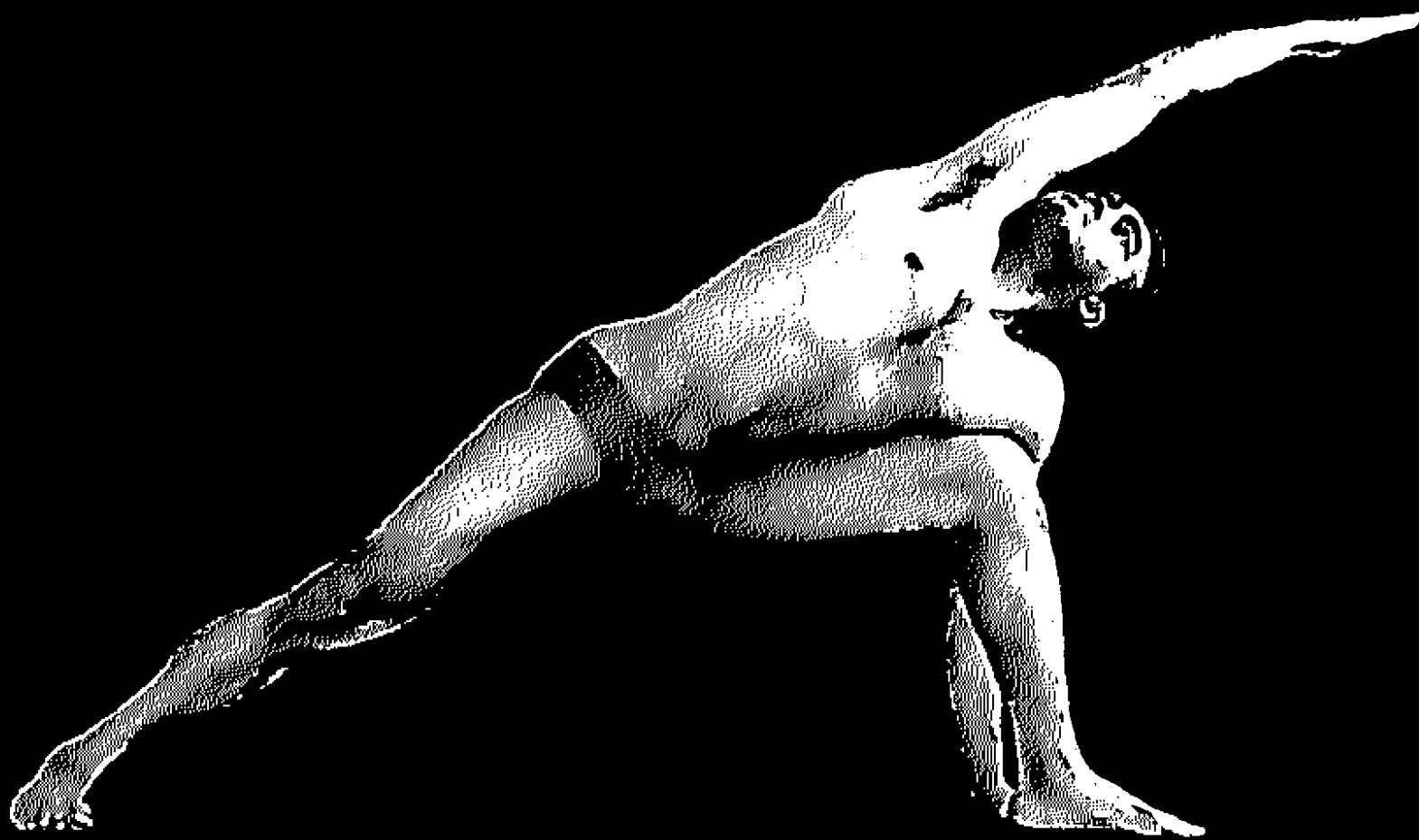


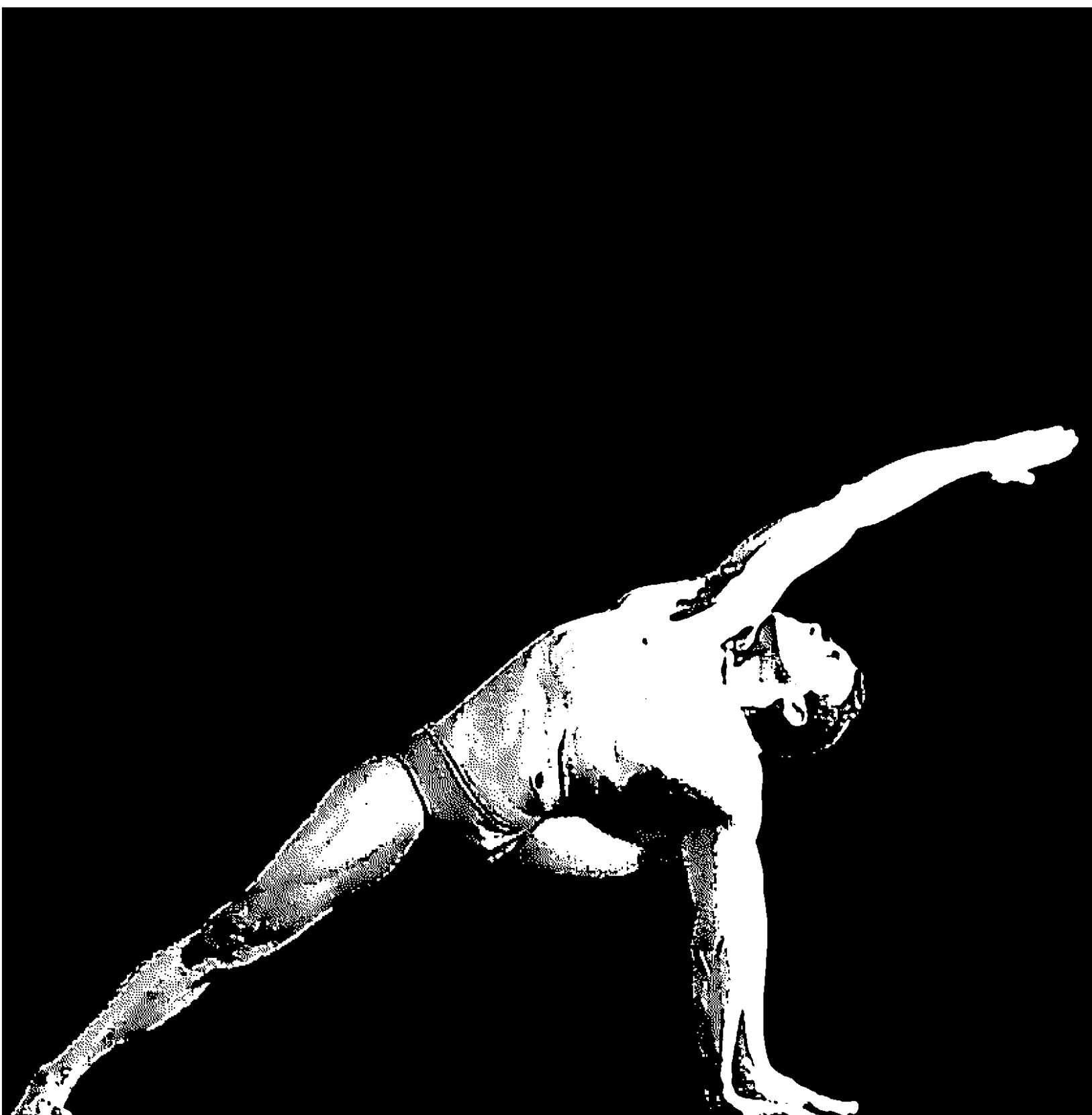


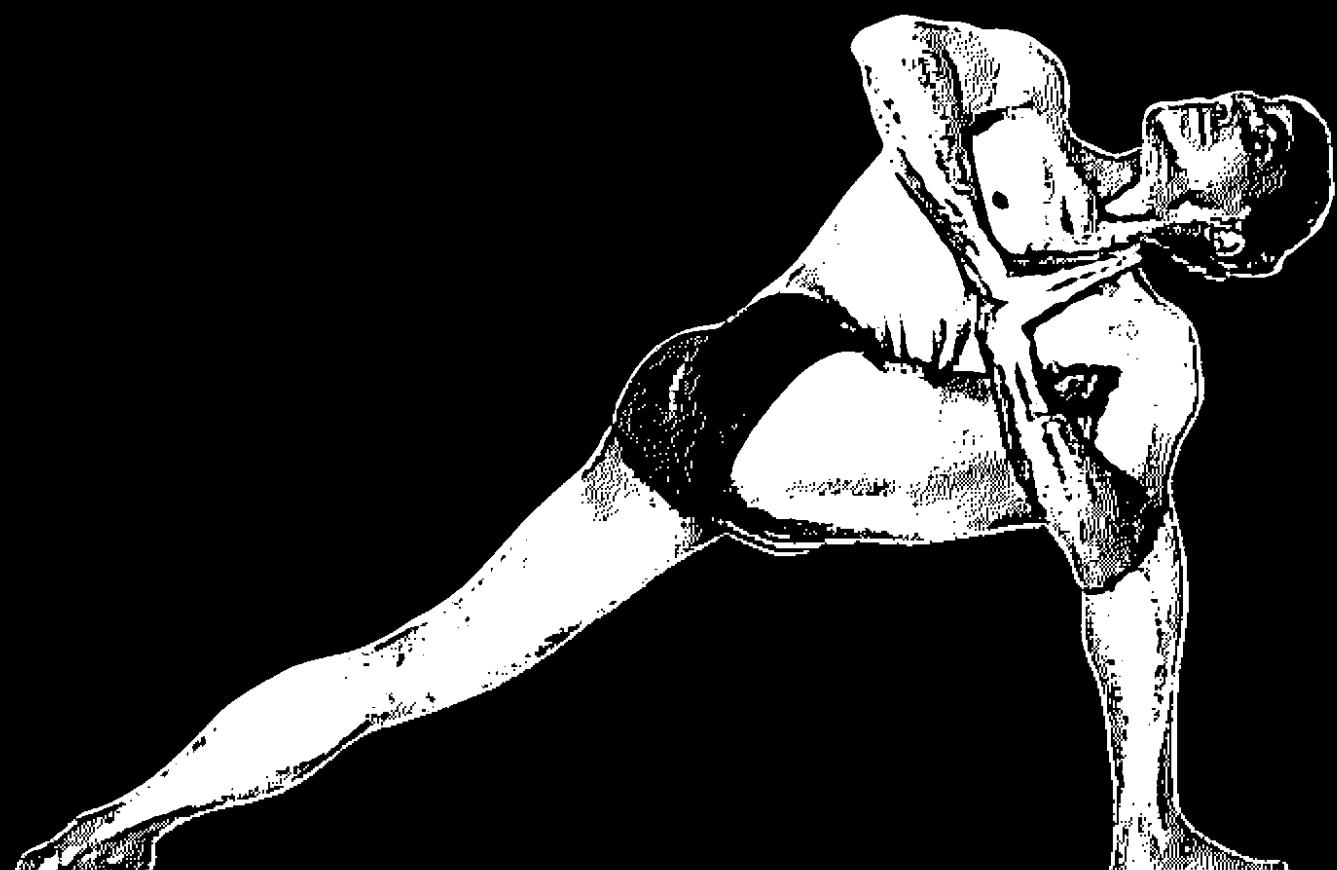










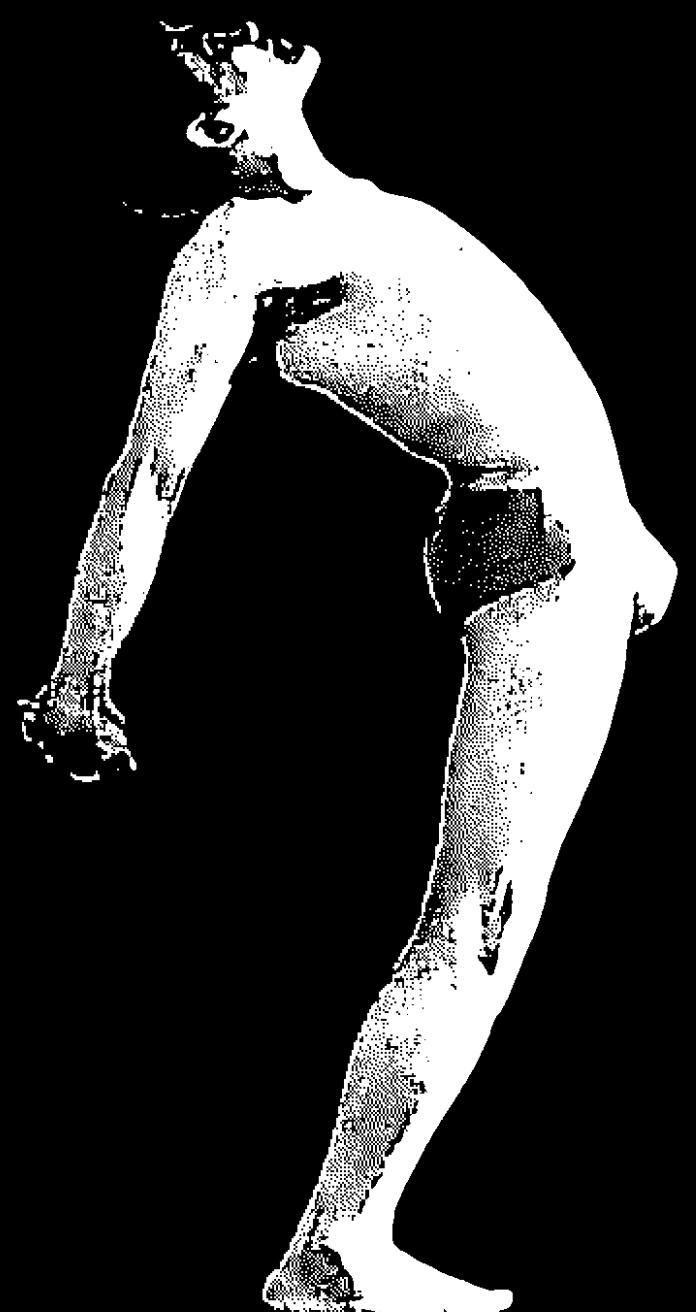






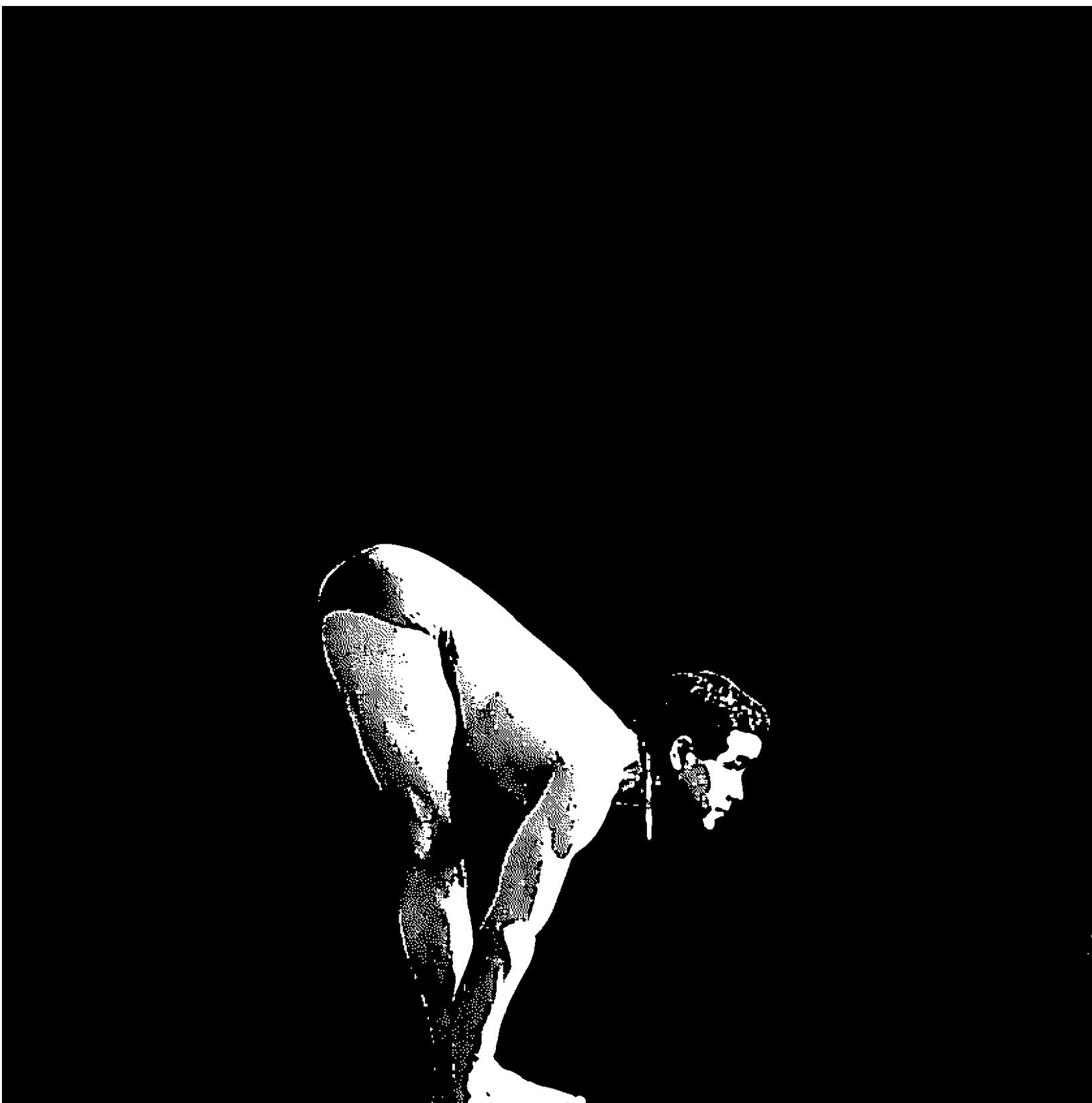










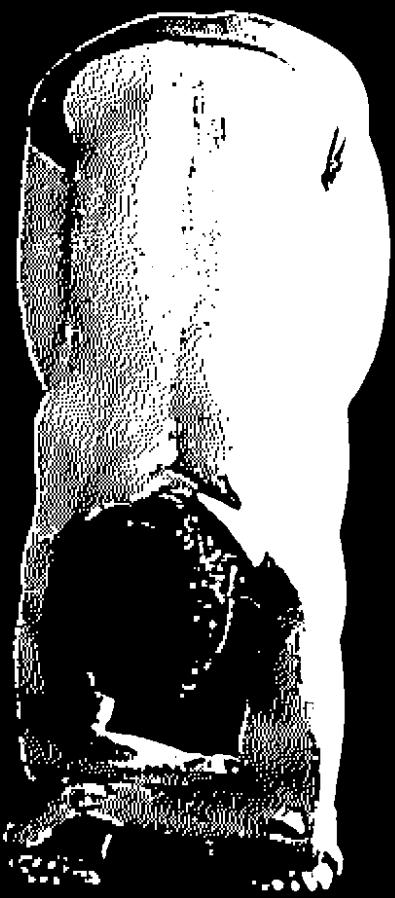








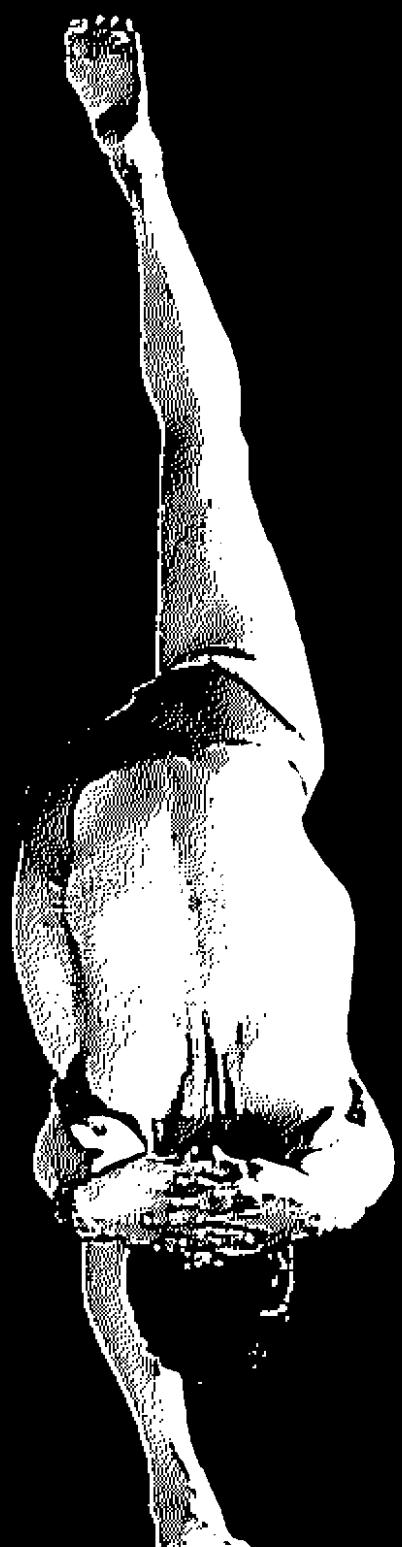










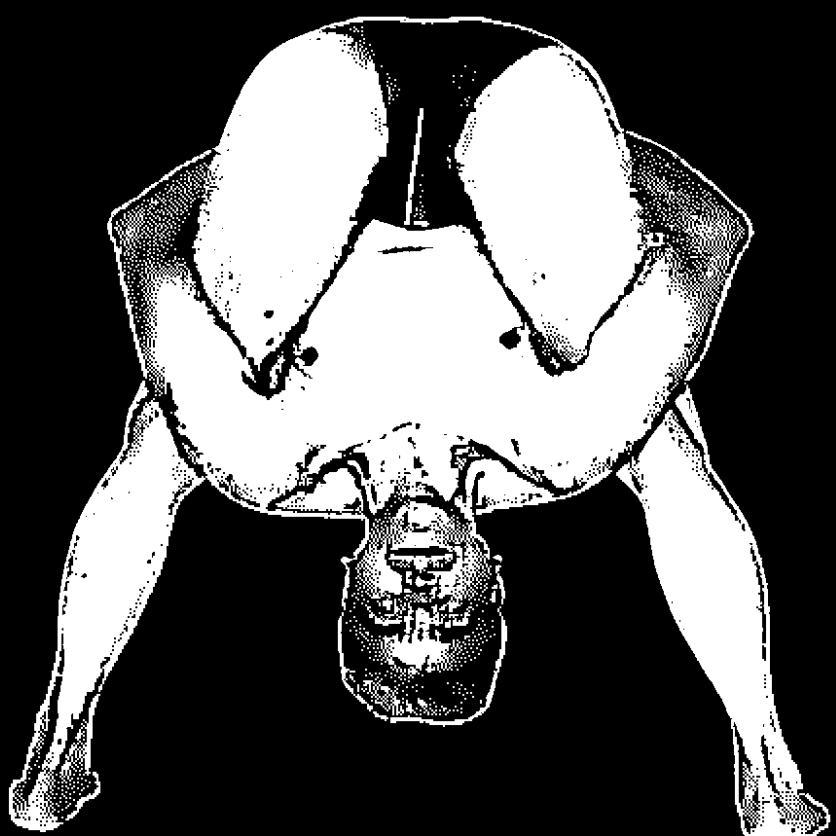


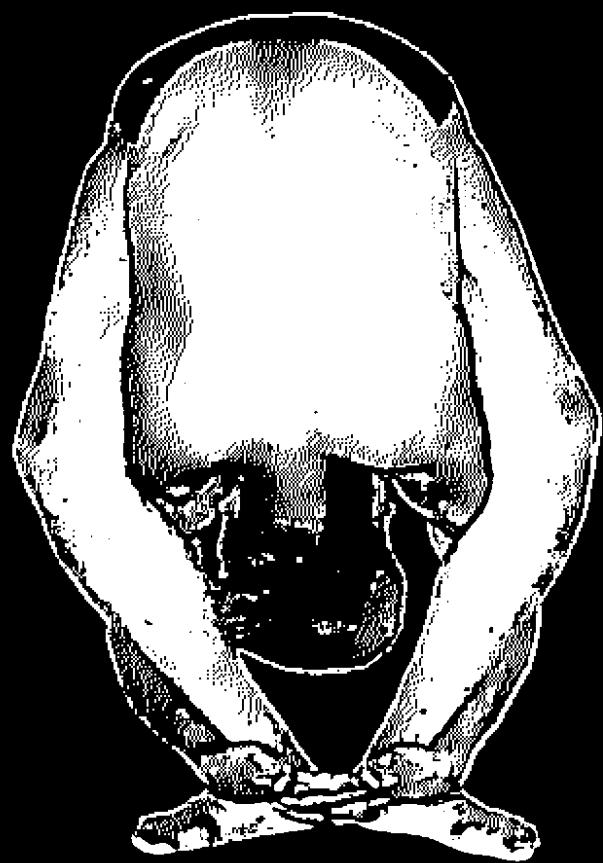




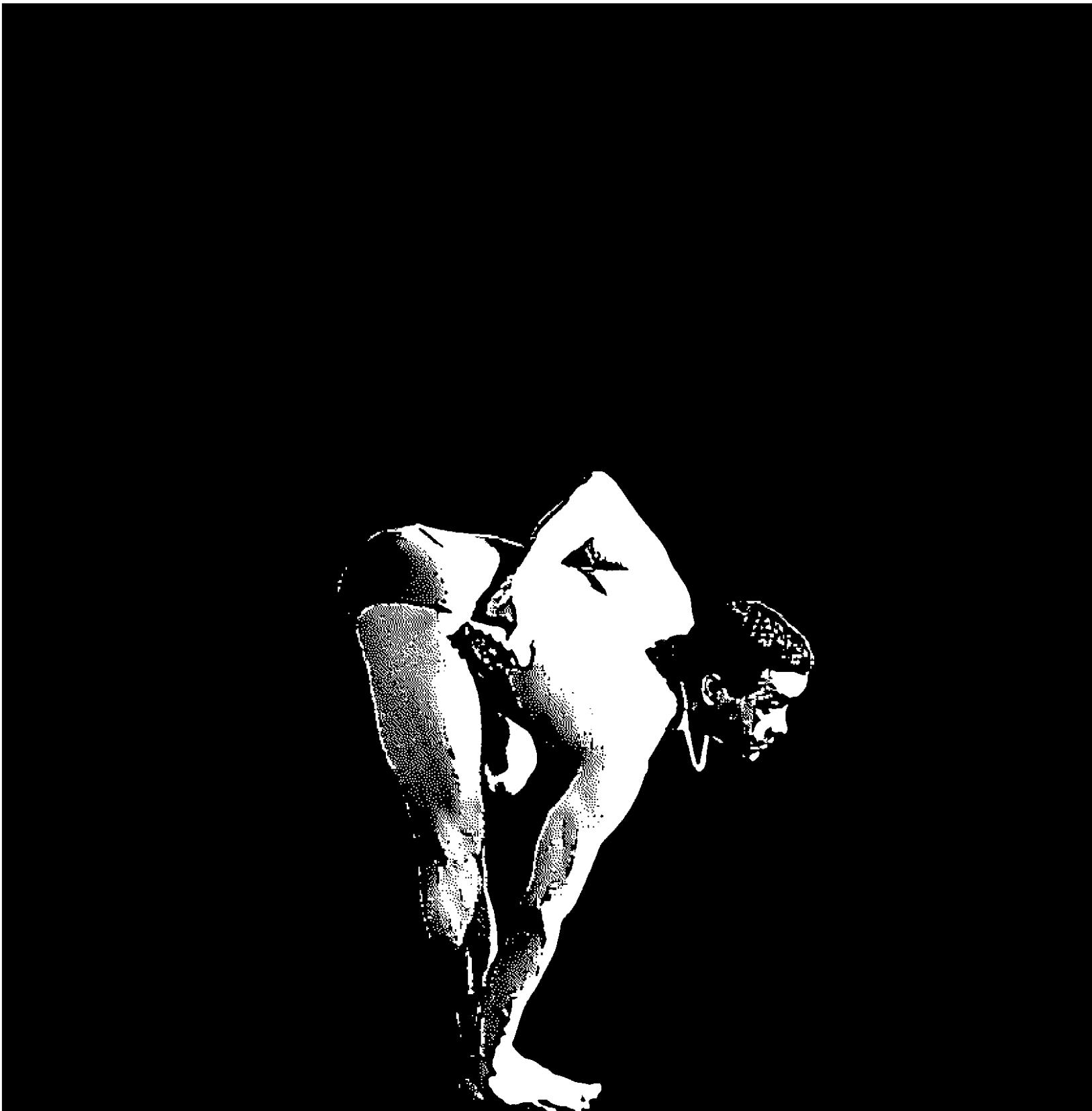




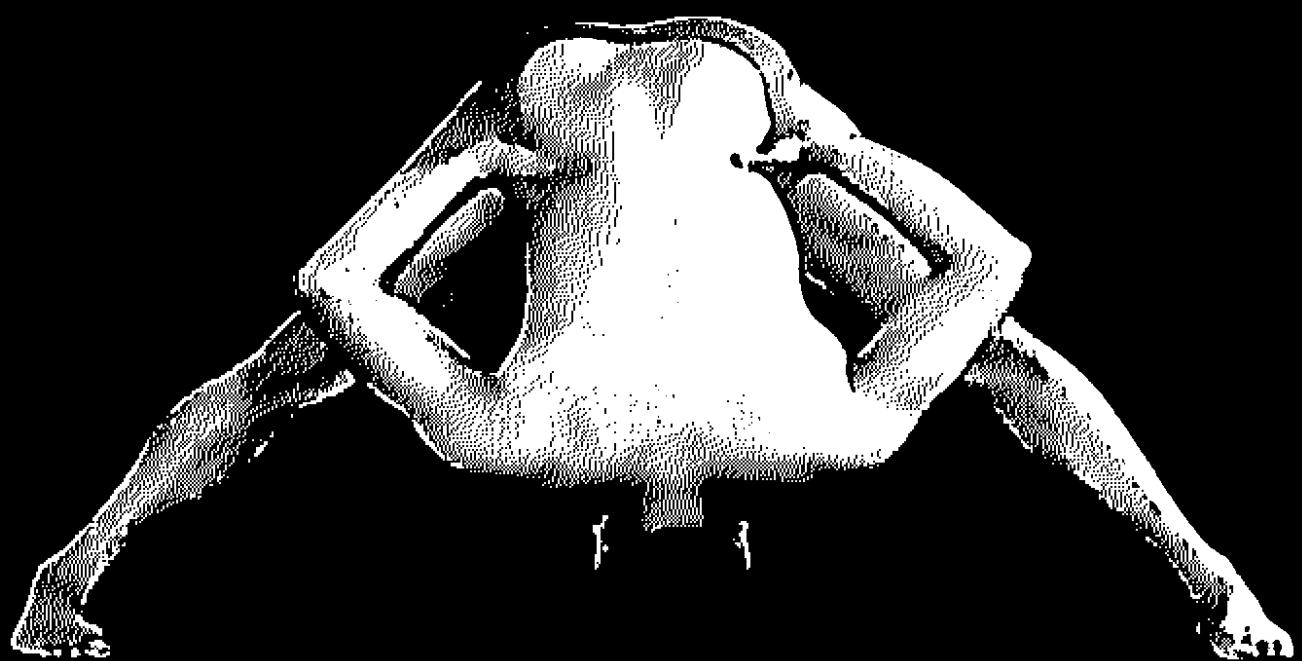


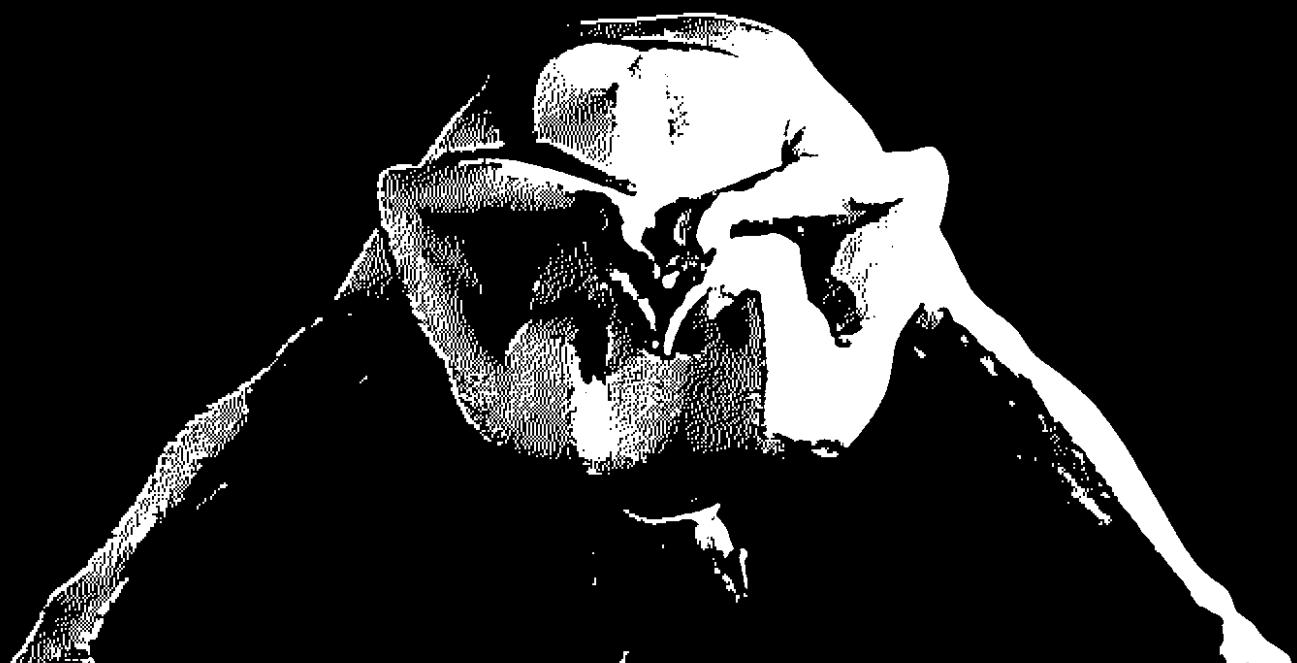






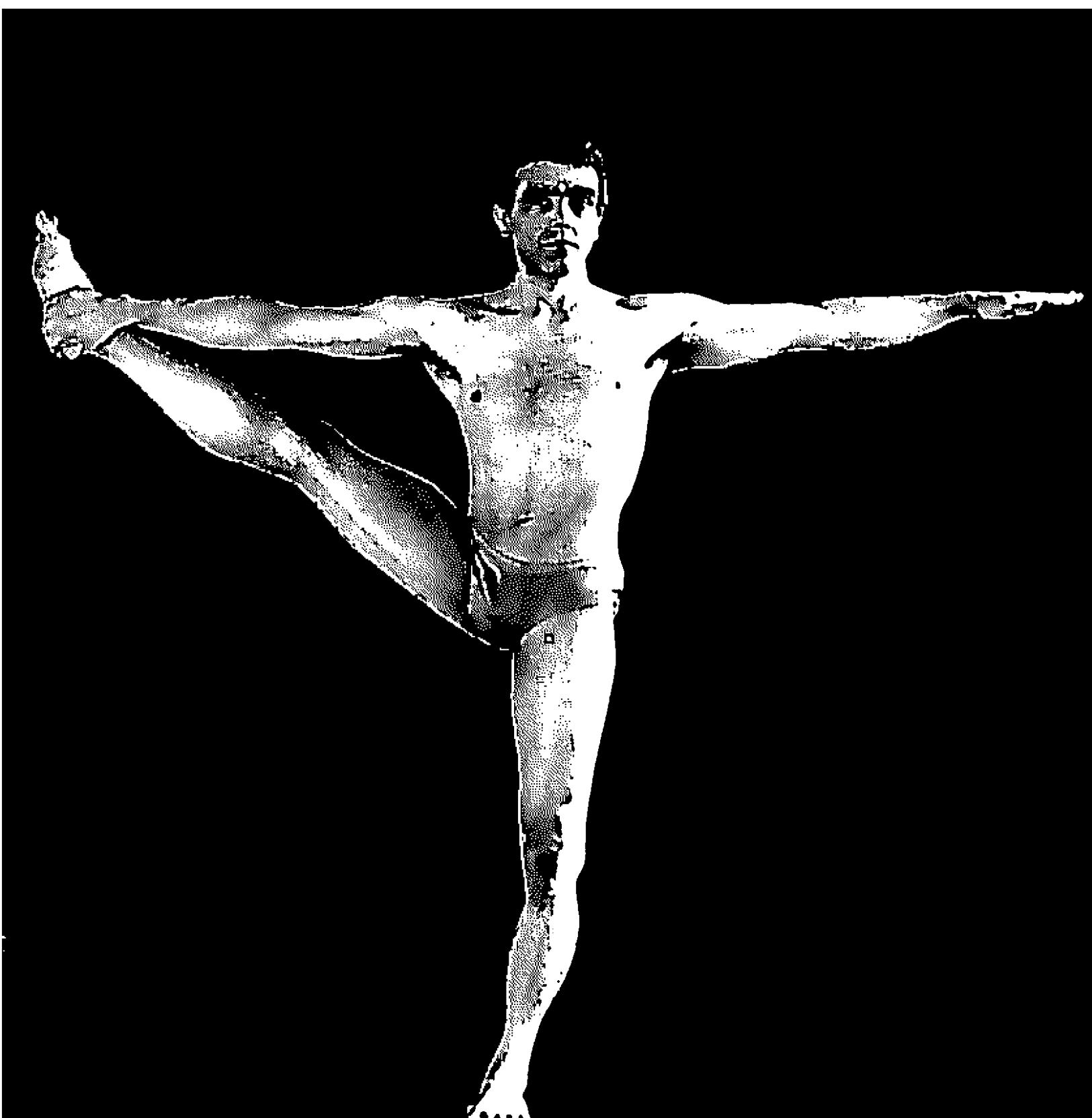




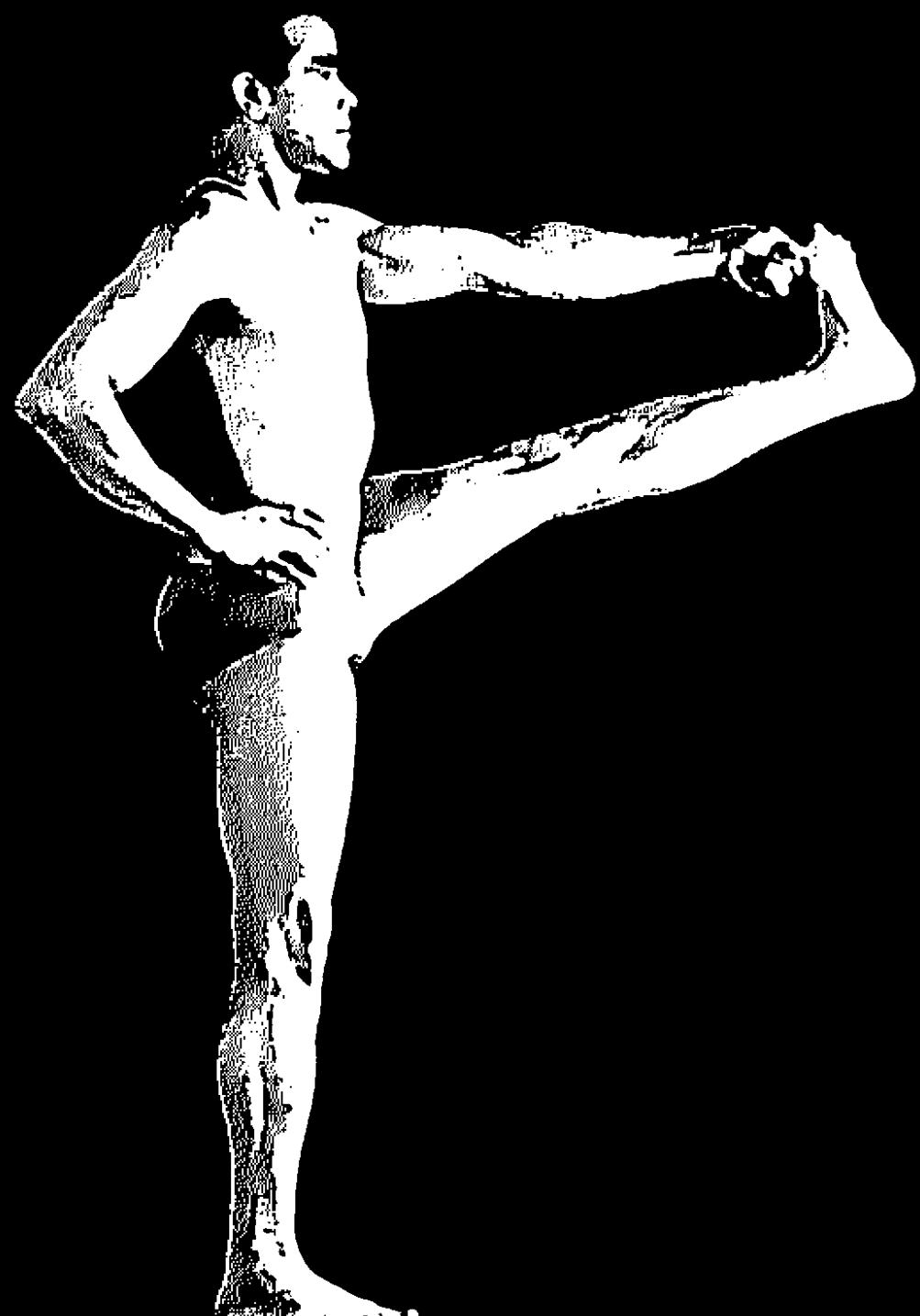










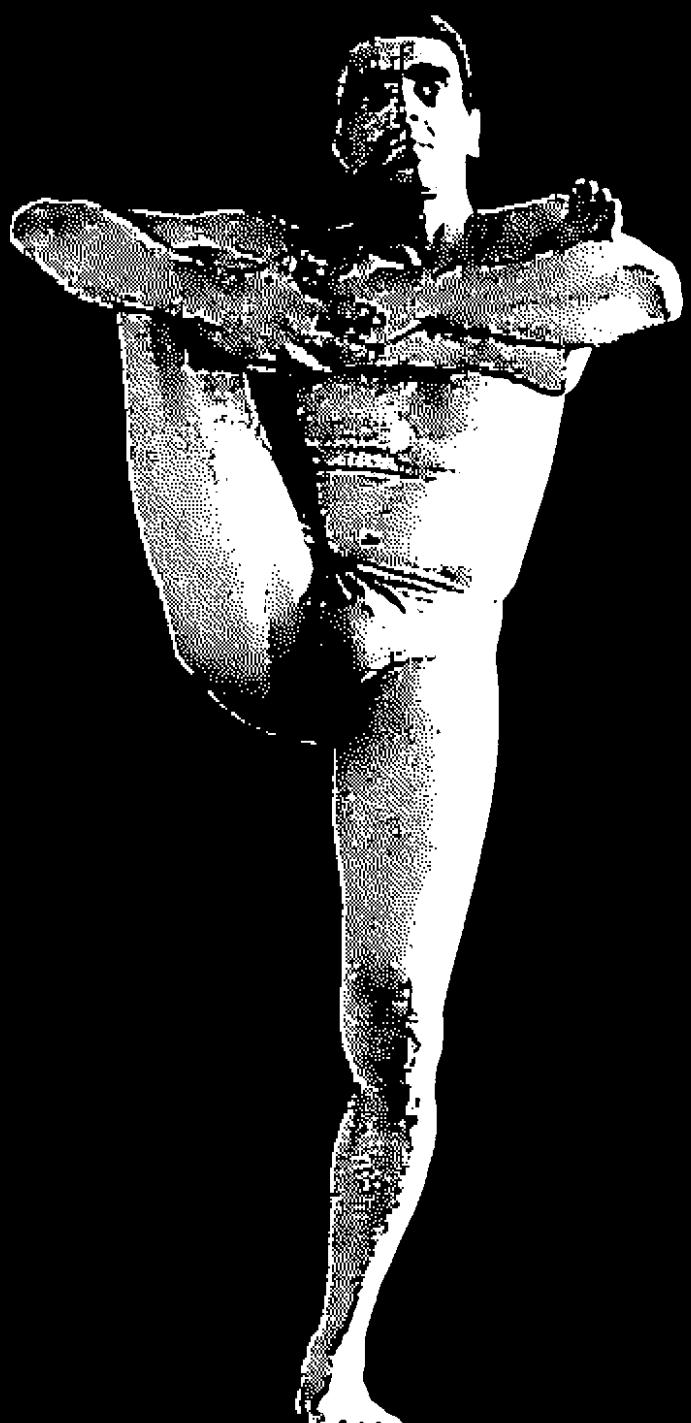


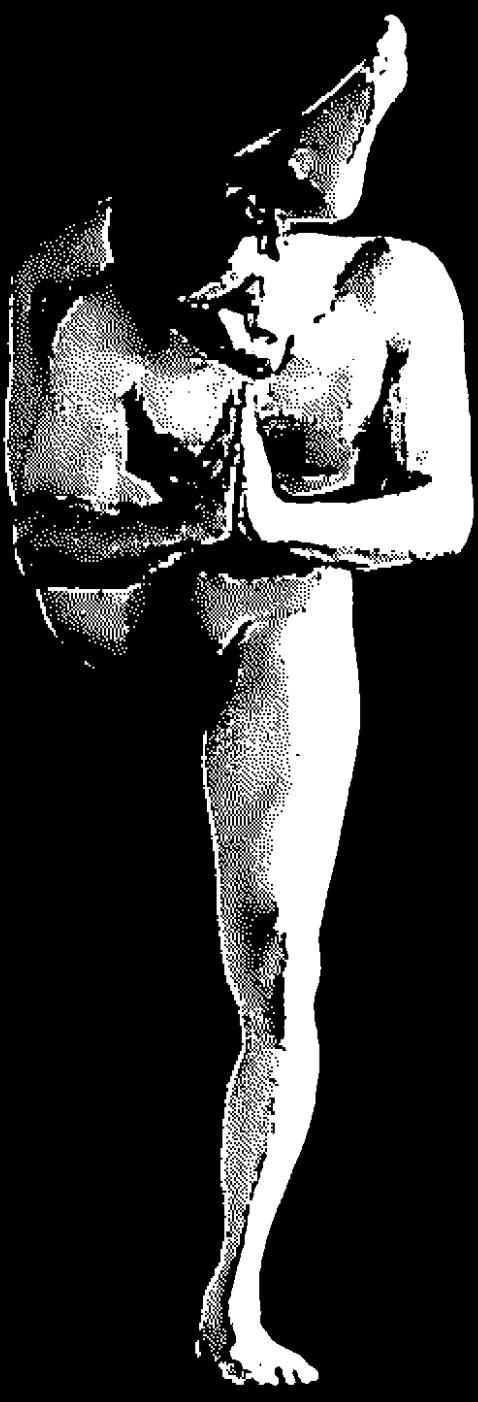


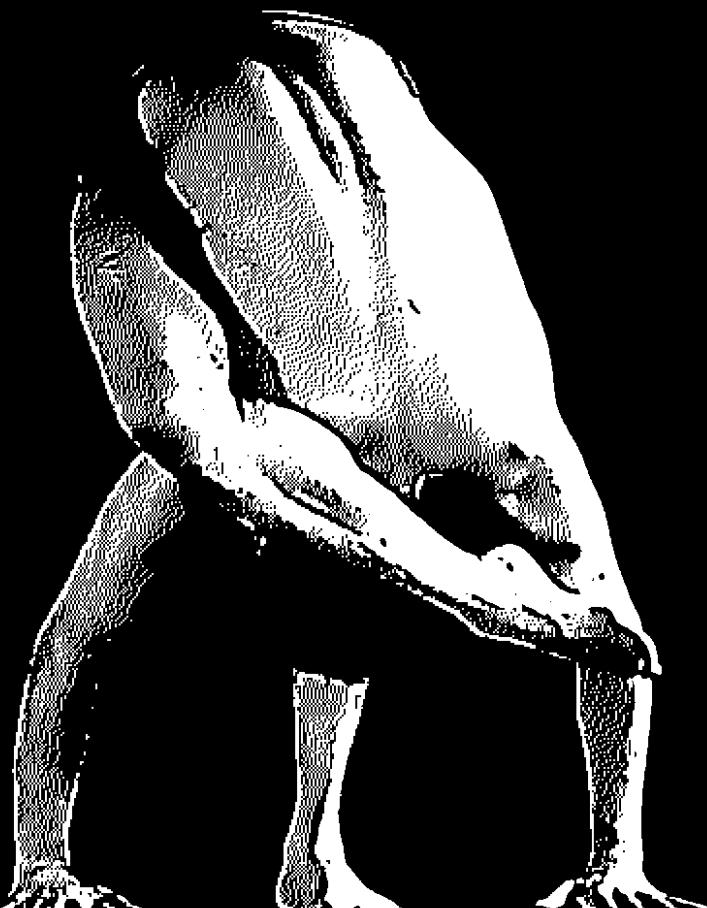












INVERSIONS

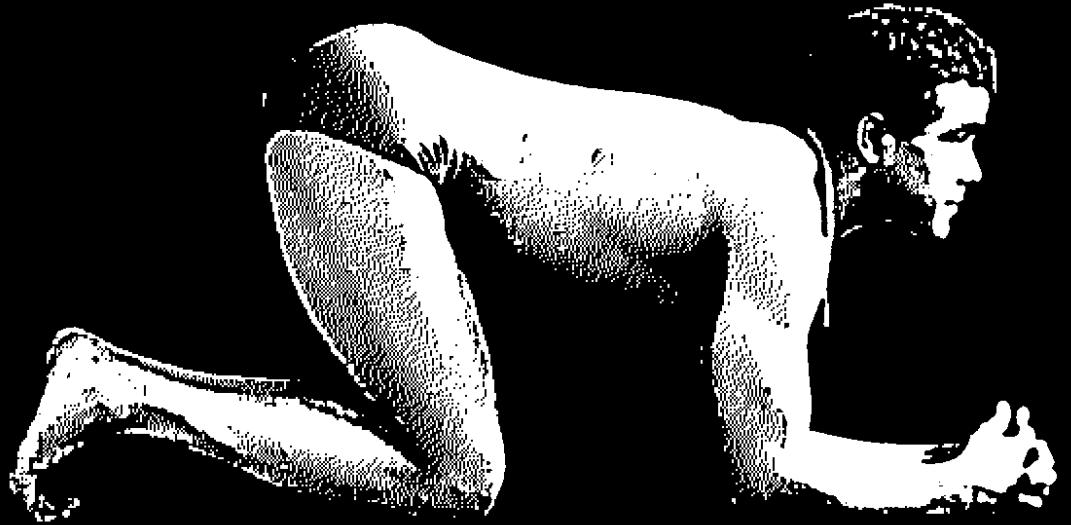
Sometimes it's good to turn your world upside down. Inversions are poses in which the head is below the heart. By turning the body upside down, you reverse the flow of blood, draining the lower body of fluids while increasing the flow of fresh blood to the brain and to the glands in the head and upper torso regions. Inversions recharge the endocrine glands that regulate the immune system and hormonal production.

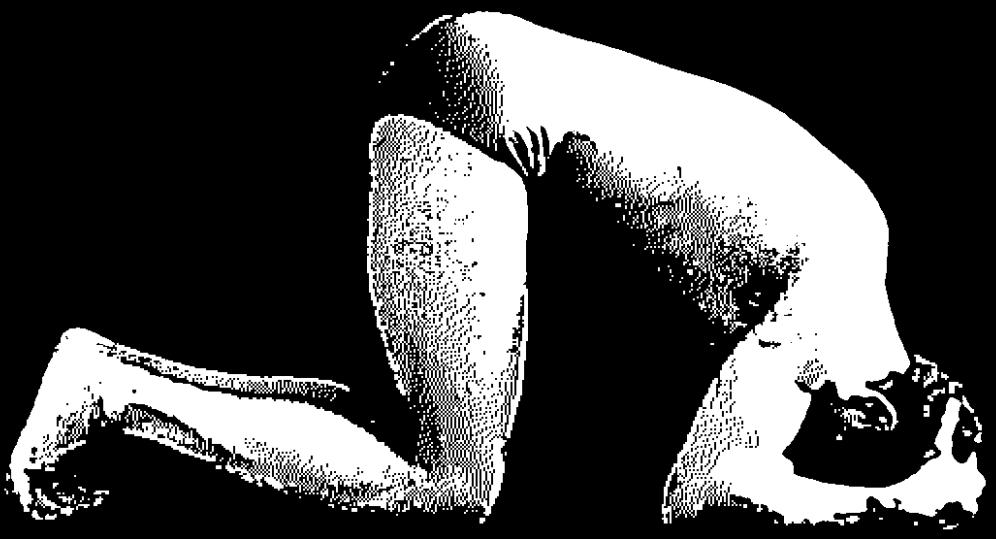
Inversions are also excellent if your flexibility is limited. Head Stand, the King of all Asanas, increases circulation to the brain and stimulates the pineal and pituitary glands. People who suffer from sleep loss, memory loss, and sluggishness have found tremendous benefit through this pose. It also rests the veins of the legs and, very importantly, tones the internal organs. Because the organs are placed upside down they must work extra hard to stay in place; they get their own workout.

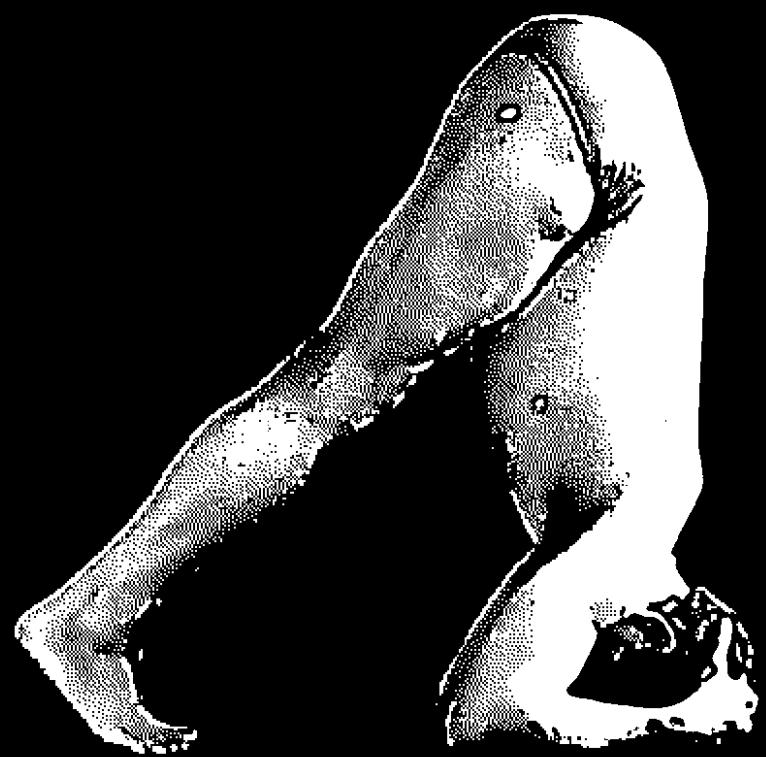
Shoulder Stand, the Queen of all Asanas, is also known as a complete pose because it delivers the

maximum benefits of yoga. When the neck presses against the chest, the thyroid gland is massaged and stimulated. It's a soothing pose for people who suffer from headaches, nasal disturbances, breathing problems, and depression. Five minutes a day in the winter and life will appear brighter, happier. For those with high or low blood pressure, Shoulder Stand inverts the organs more gently than Head Stand. It's also a little more comfortable — everyone can do this pose.









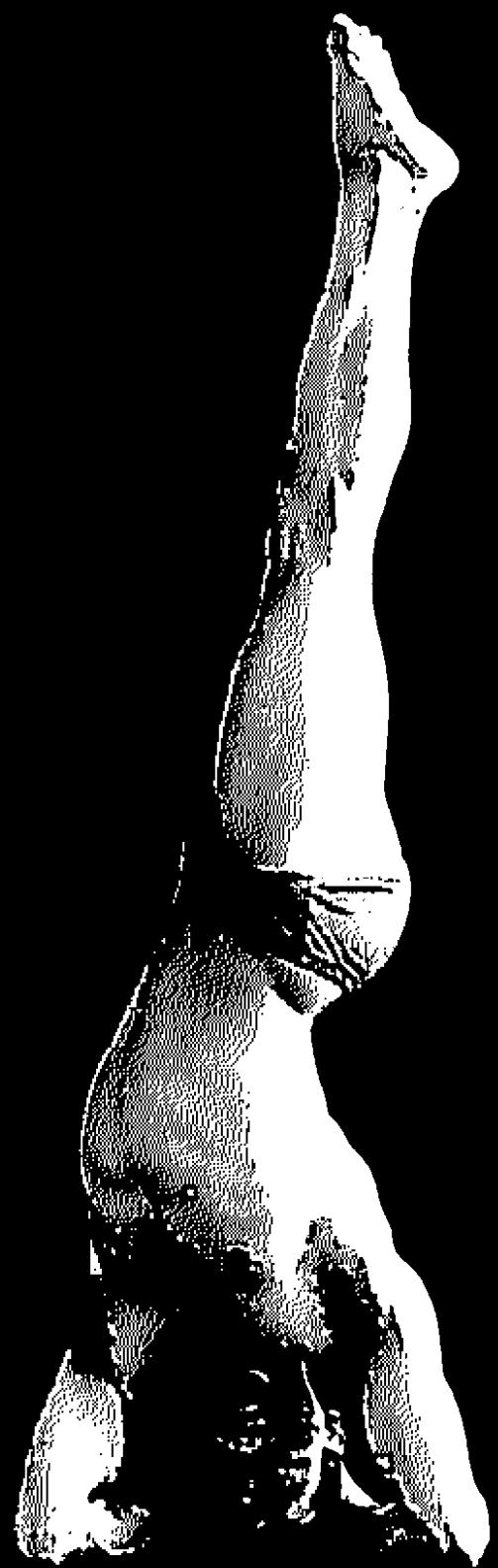






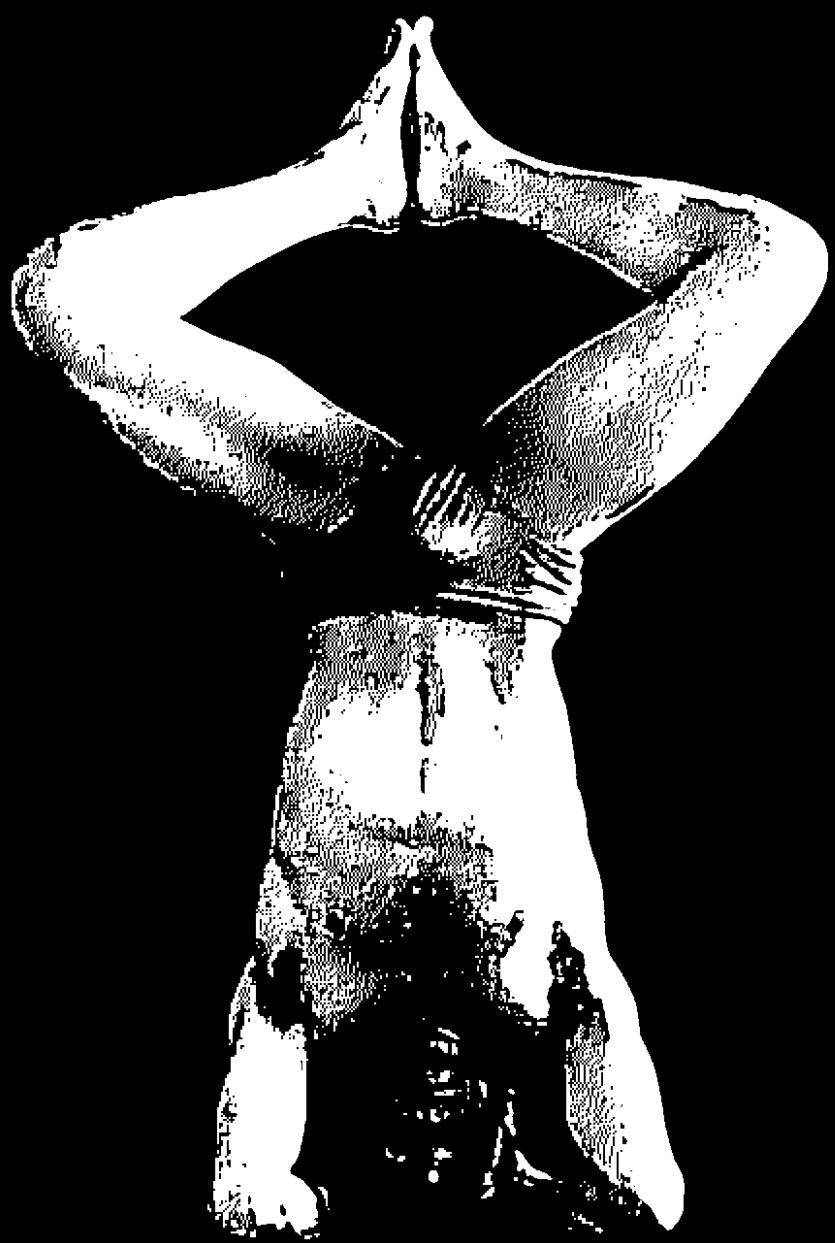








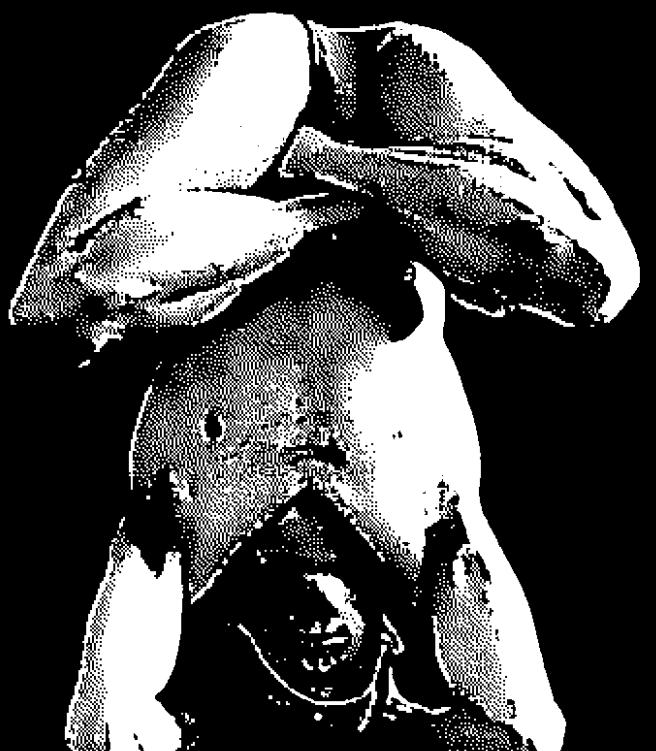


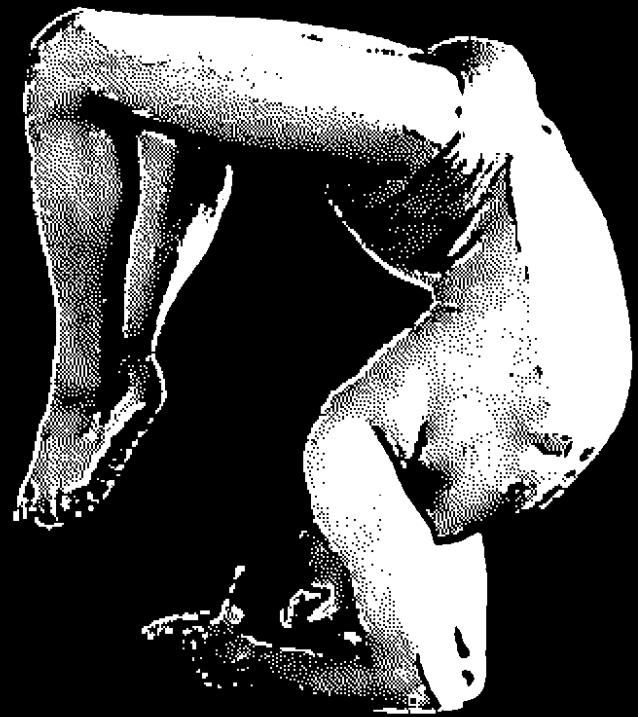






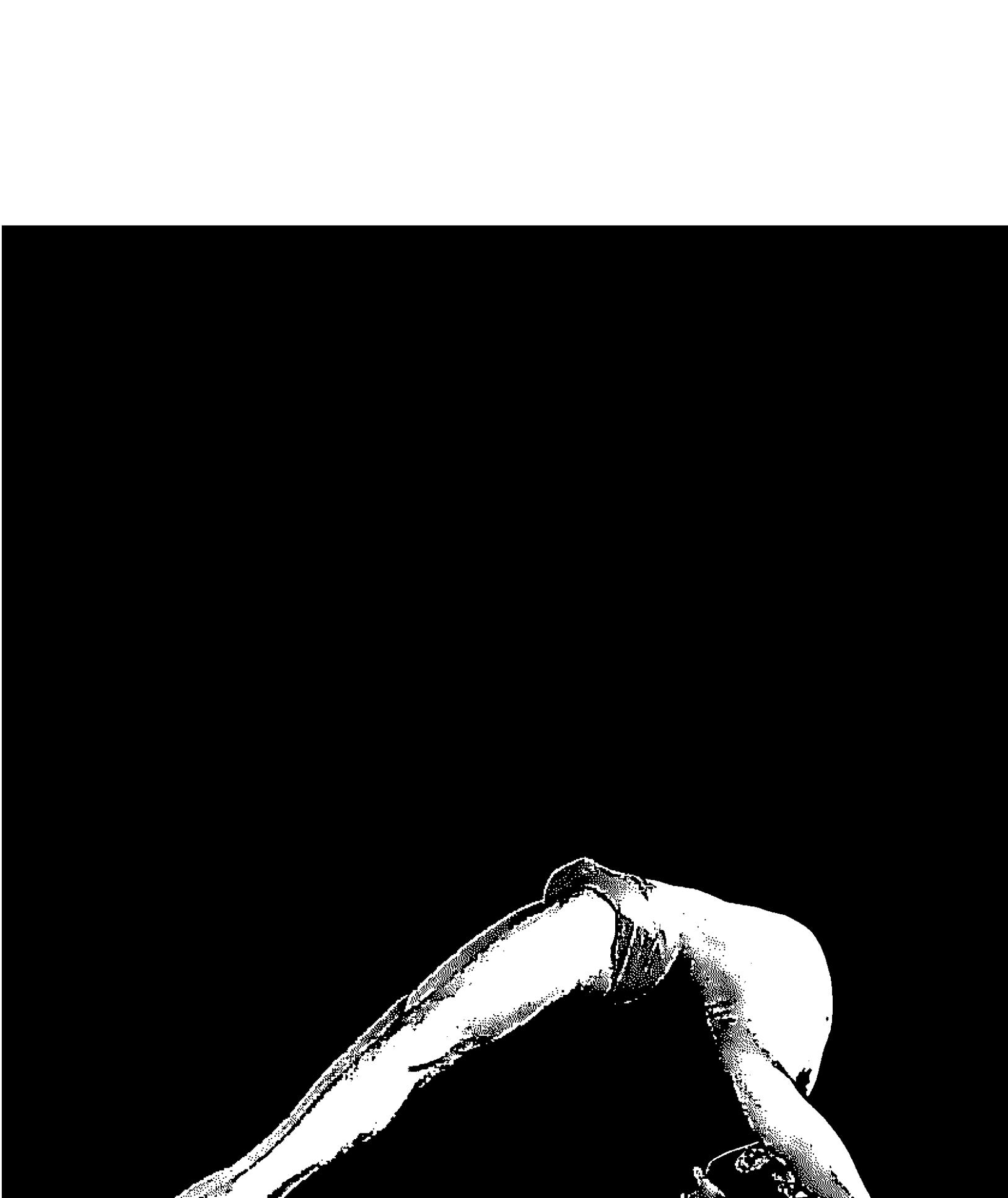




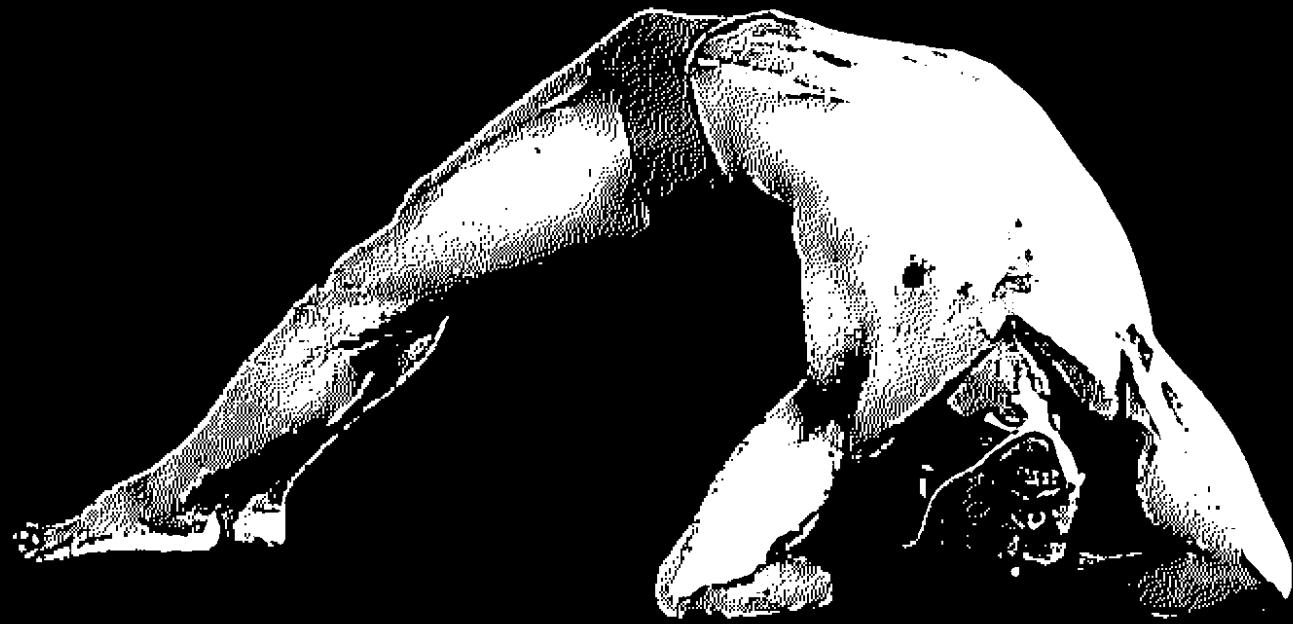


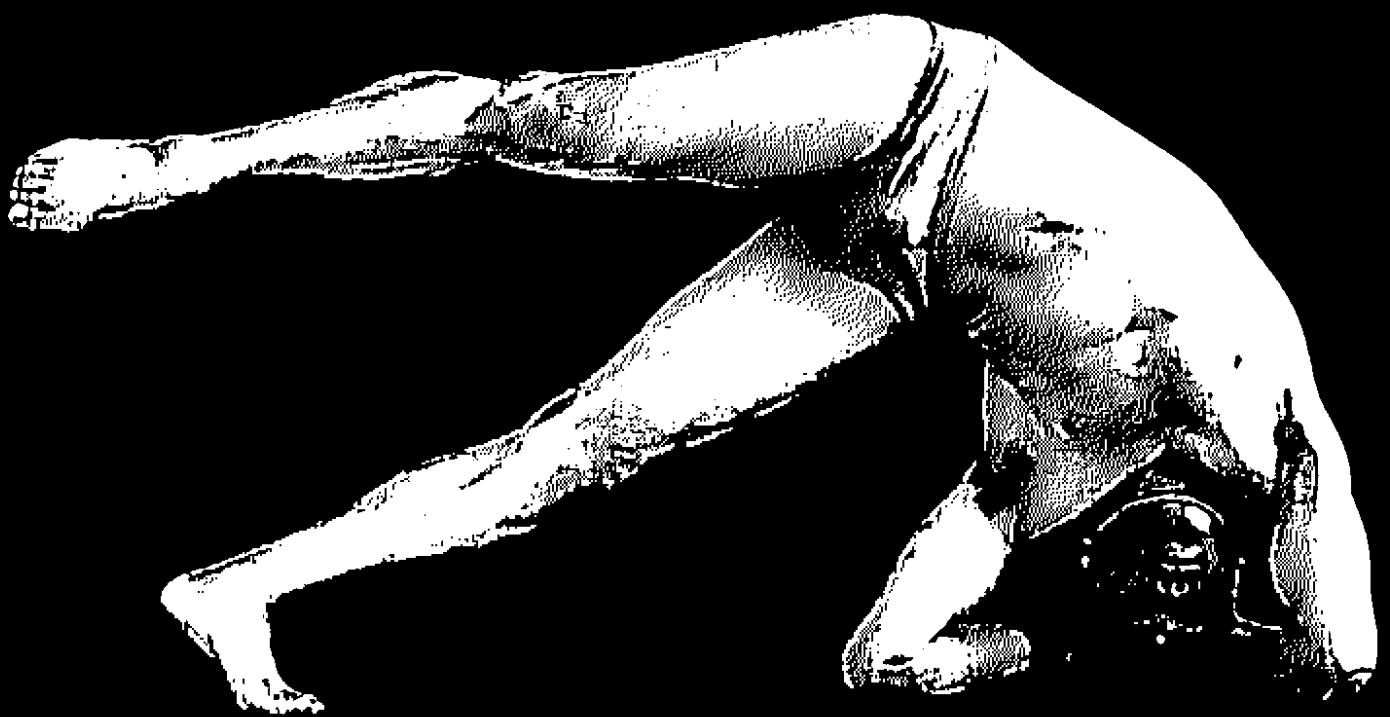








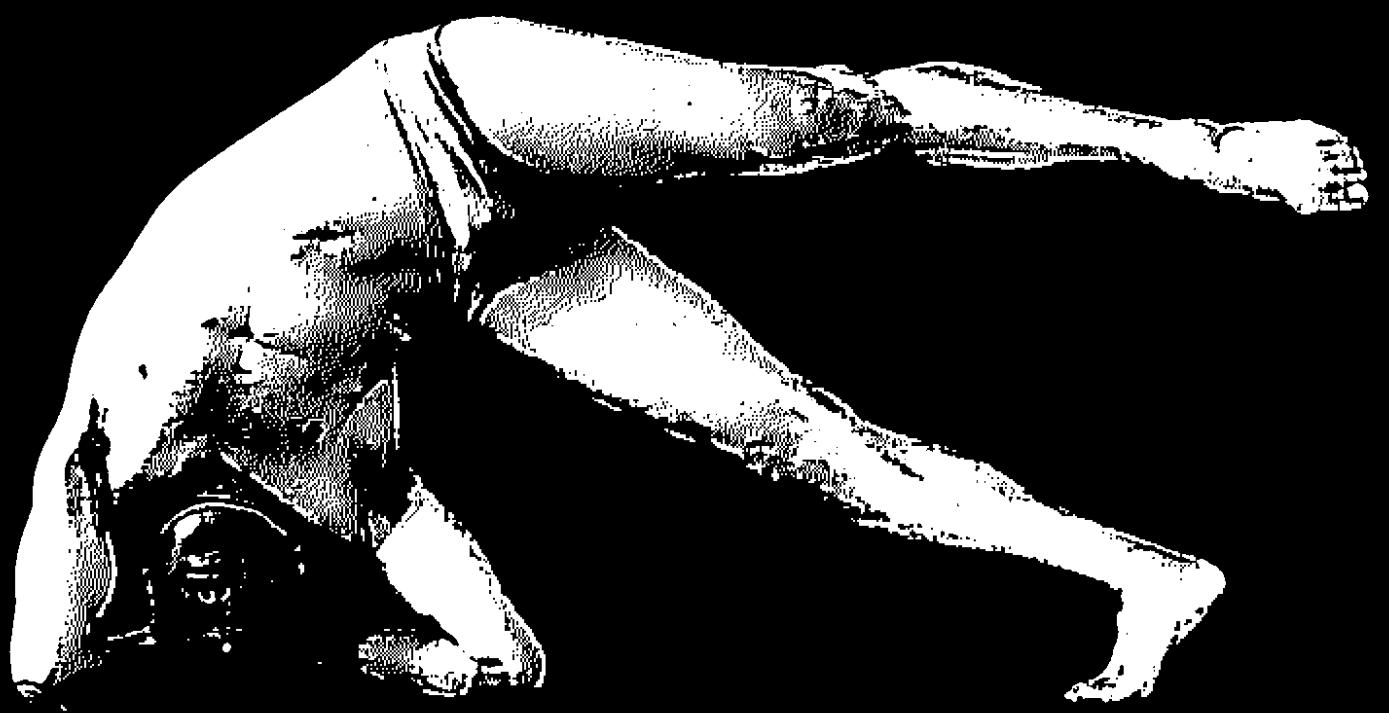






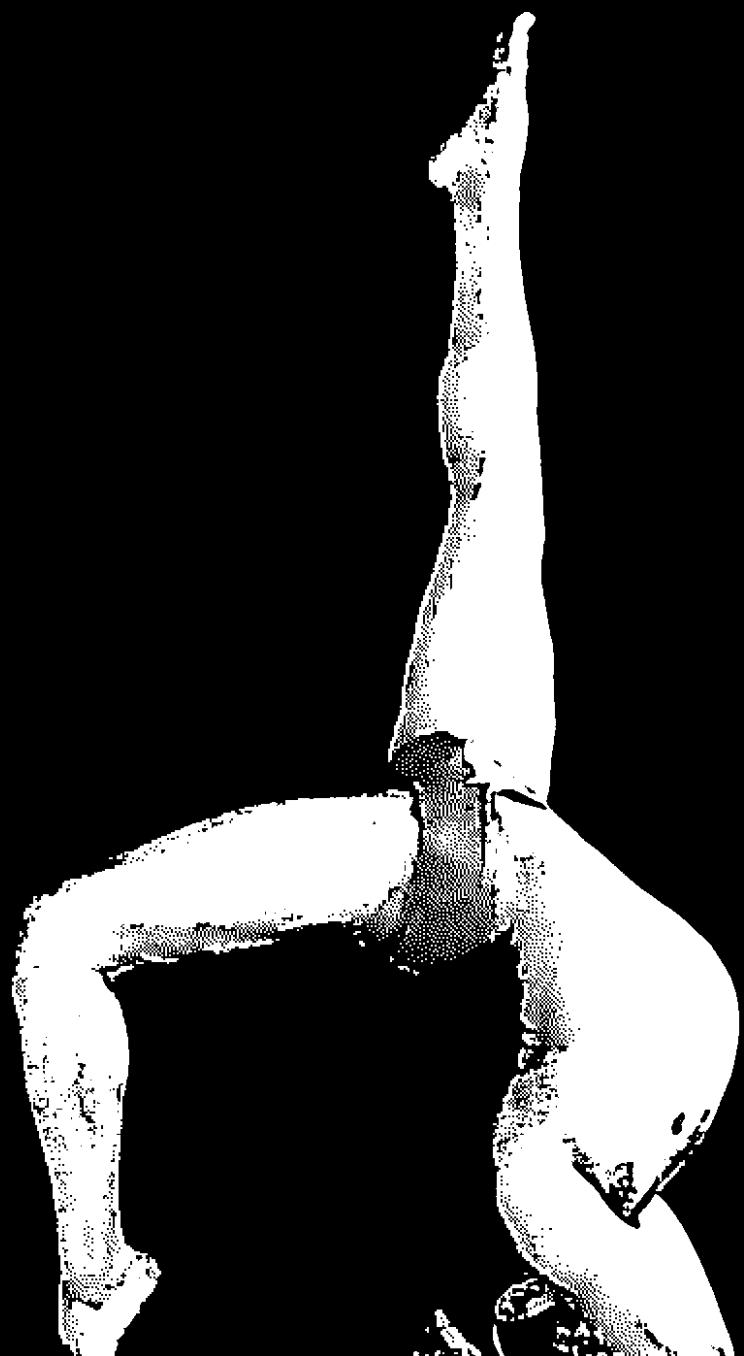


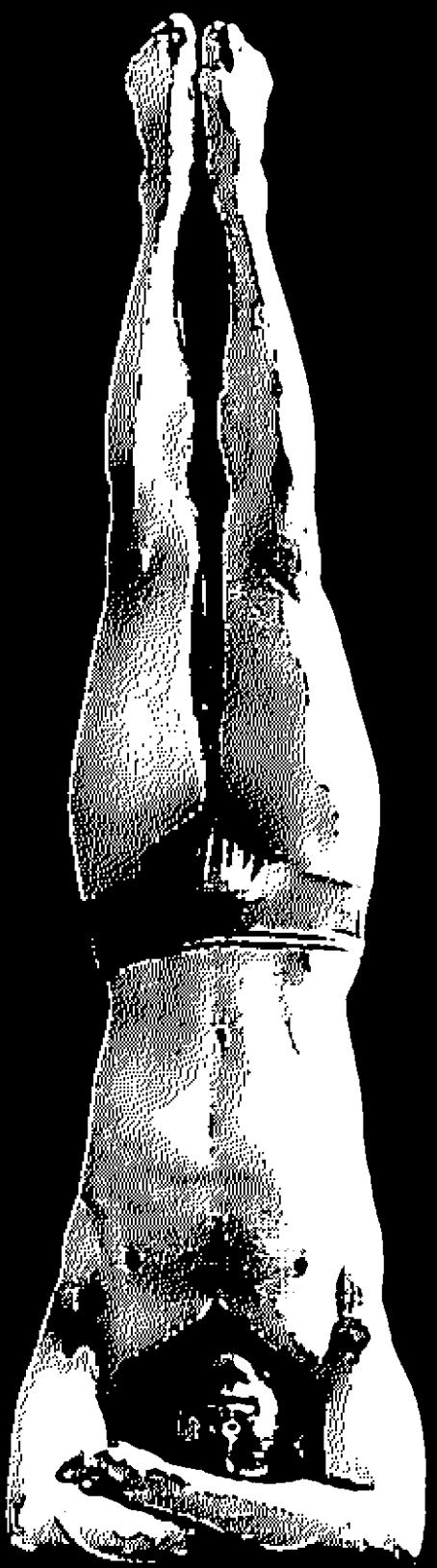




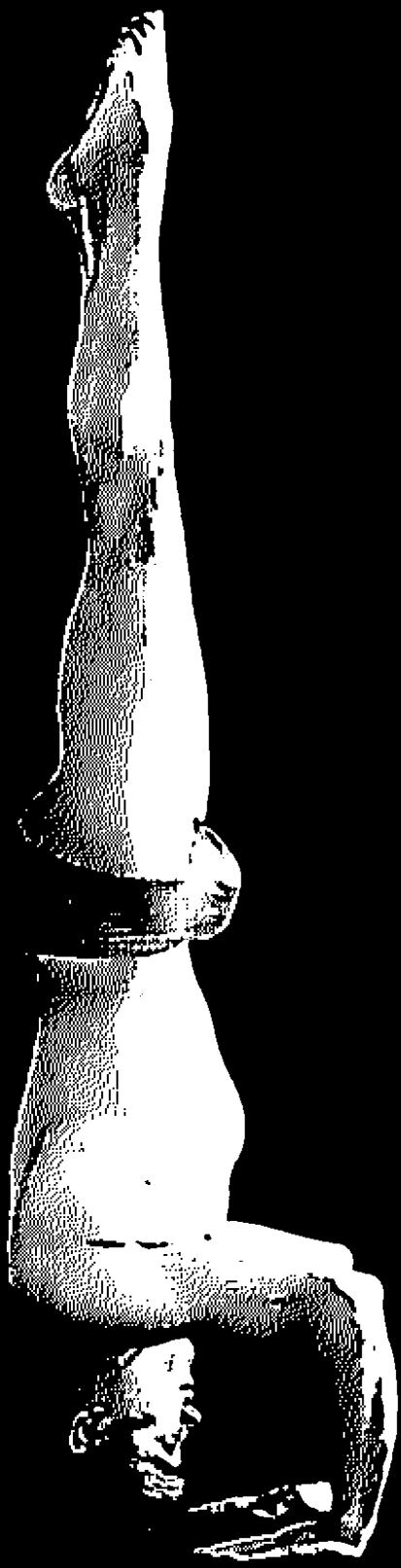


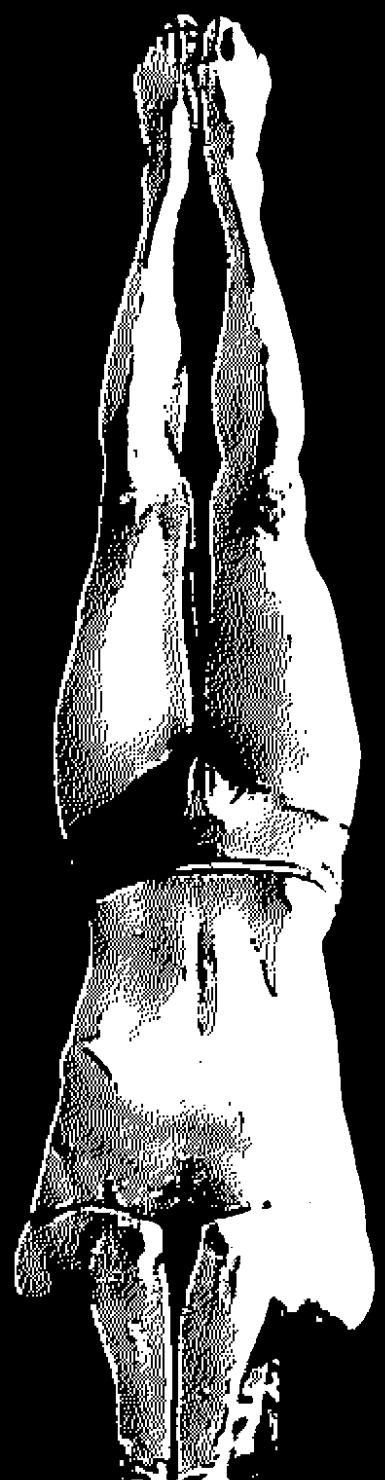


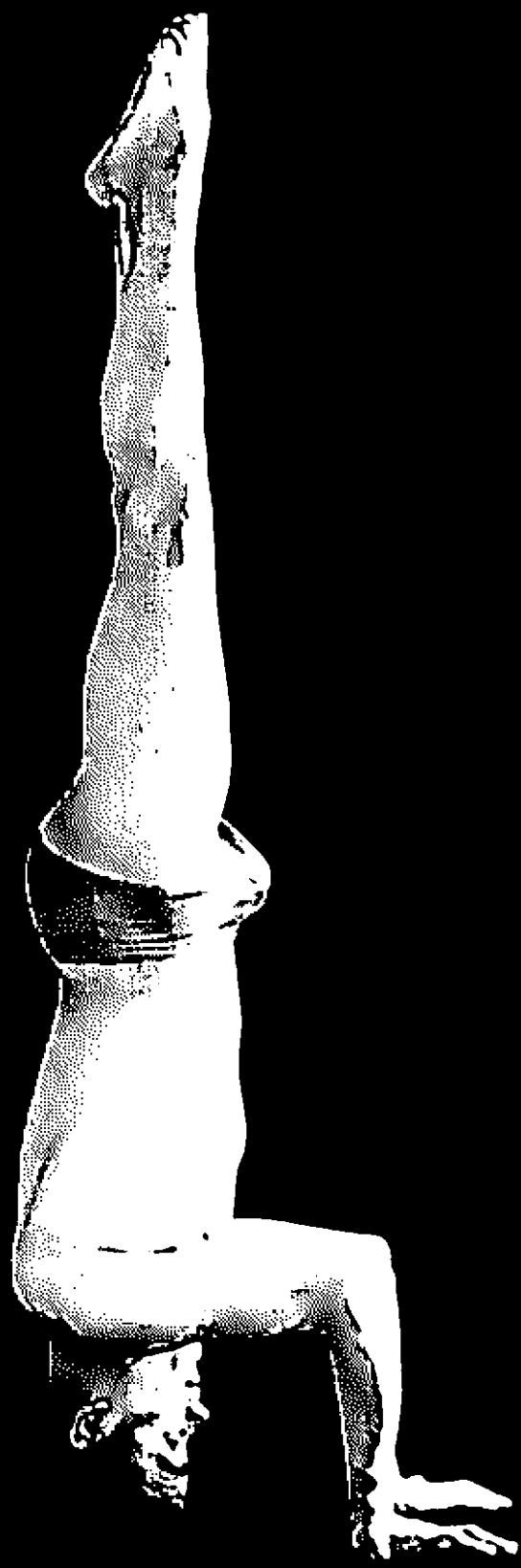


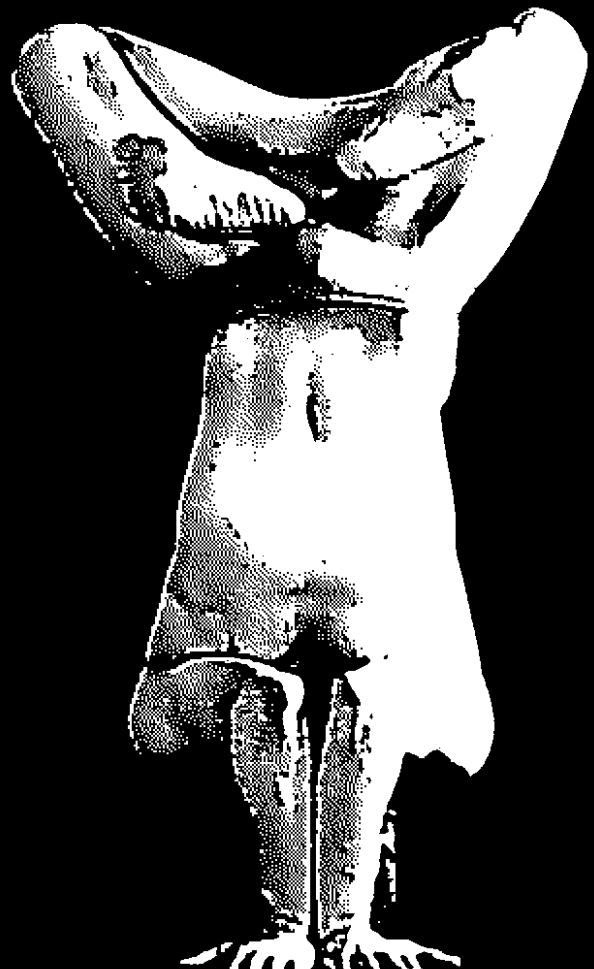




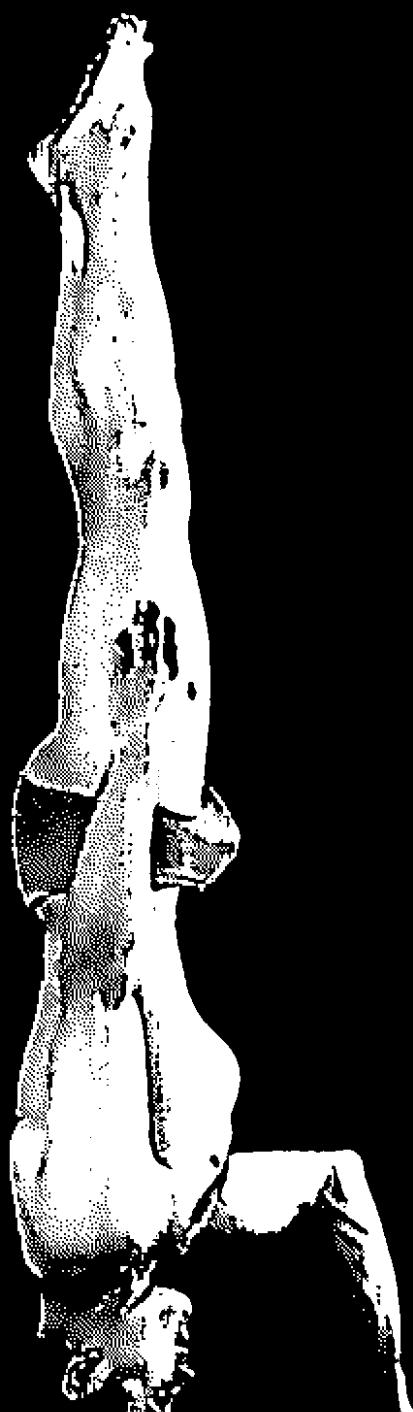






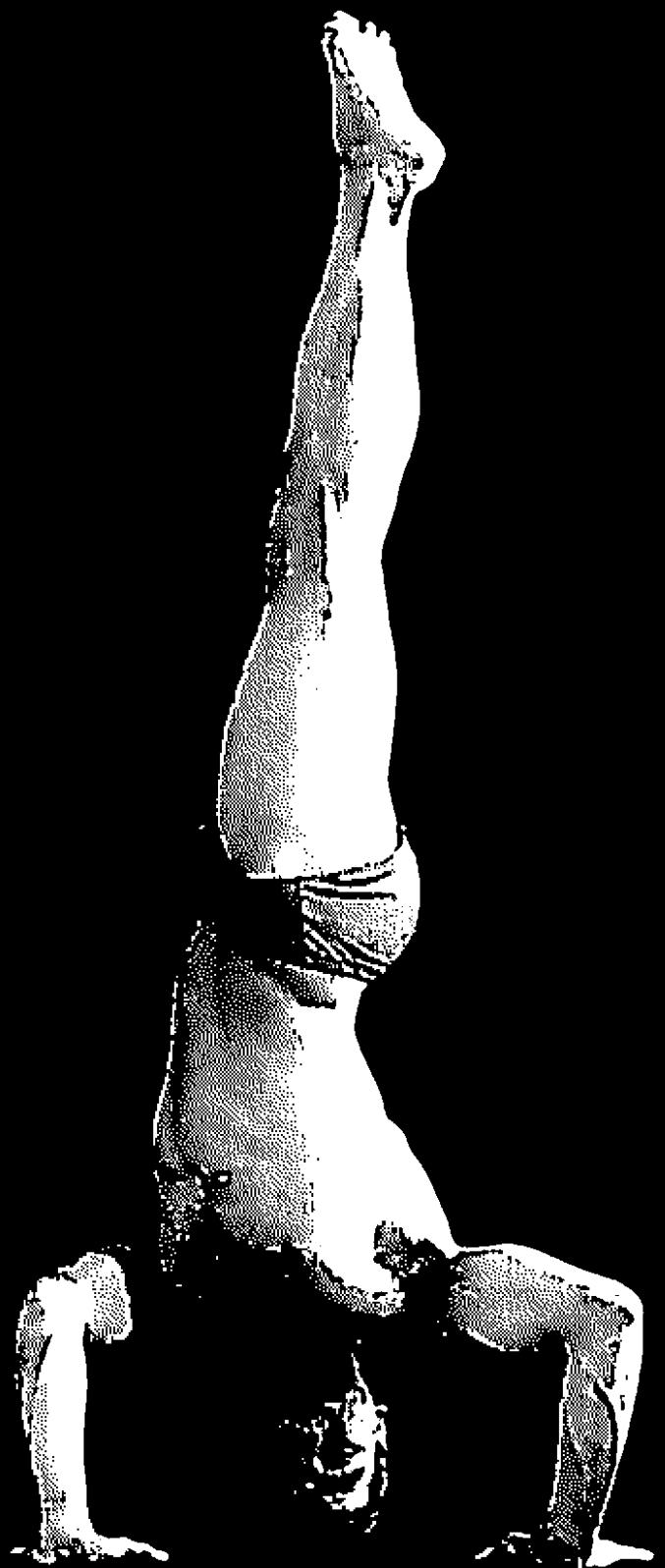


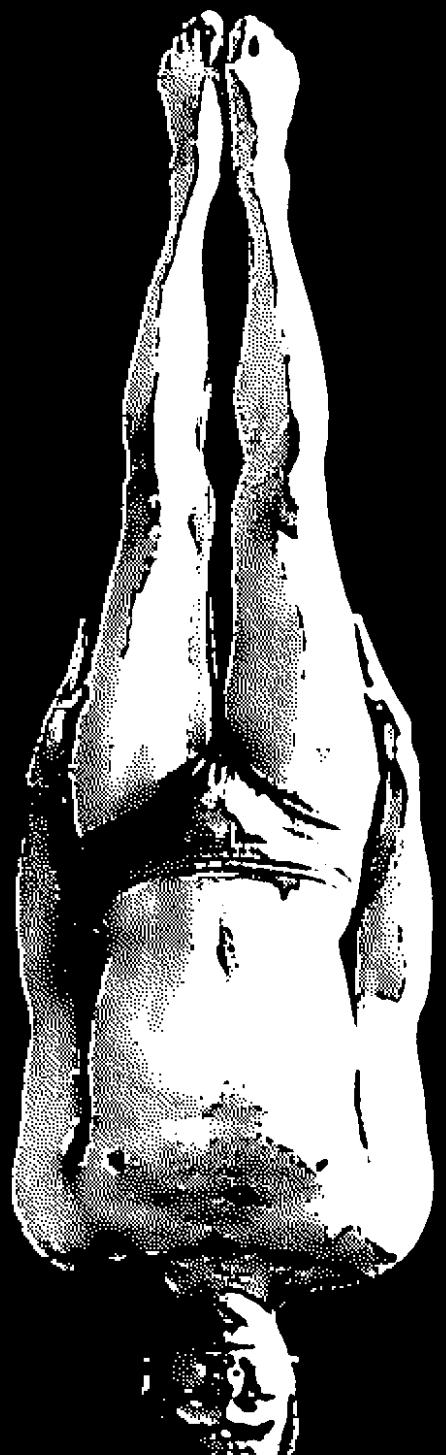




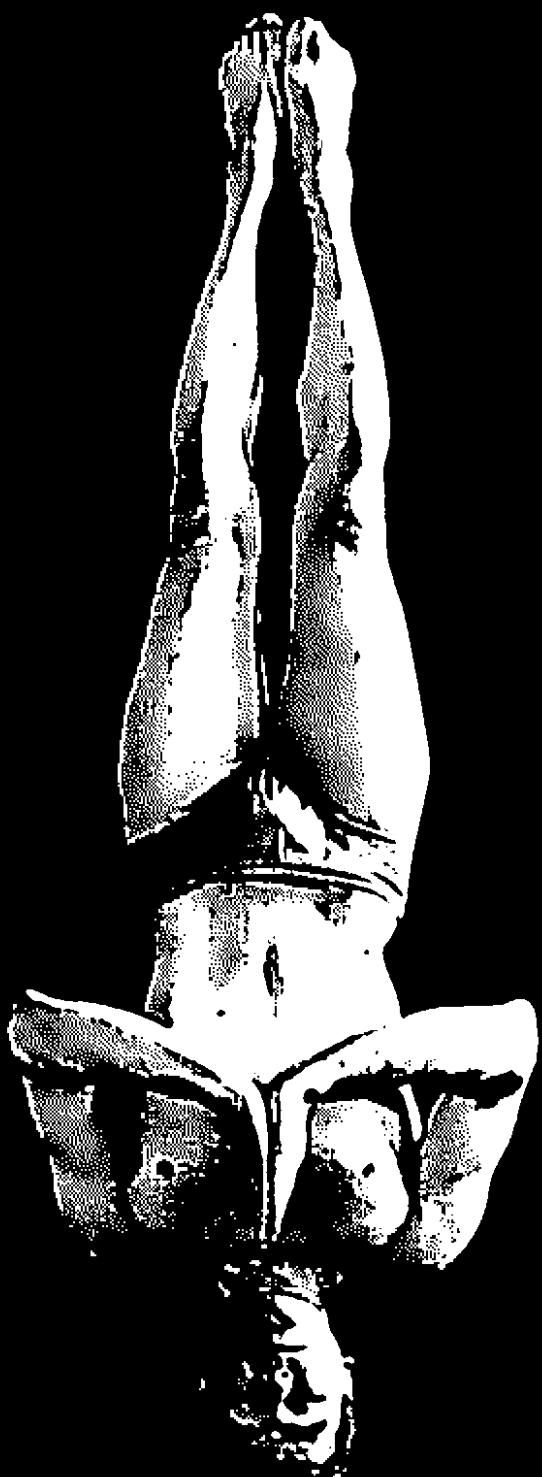




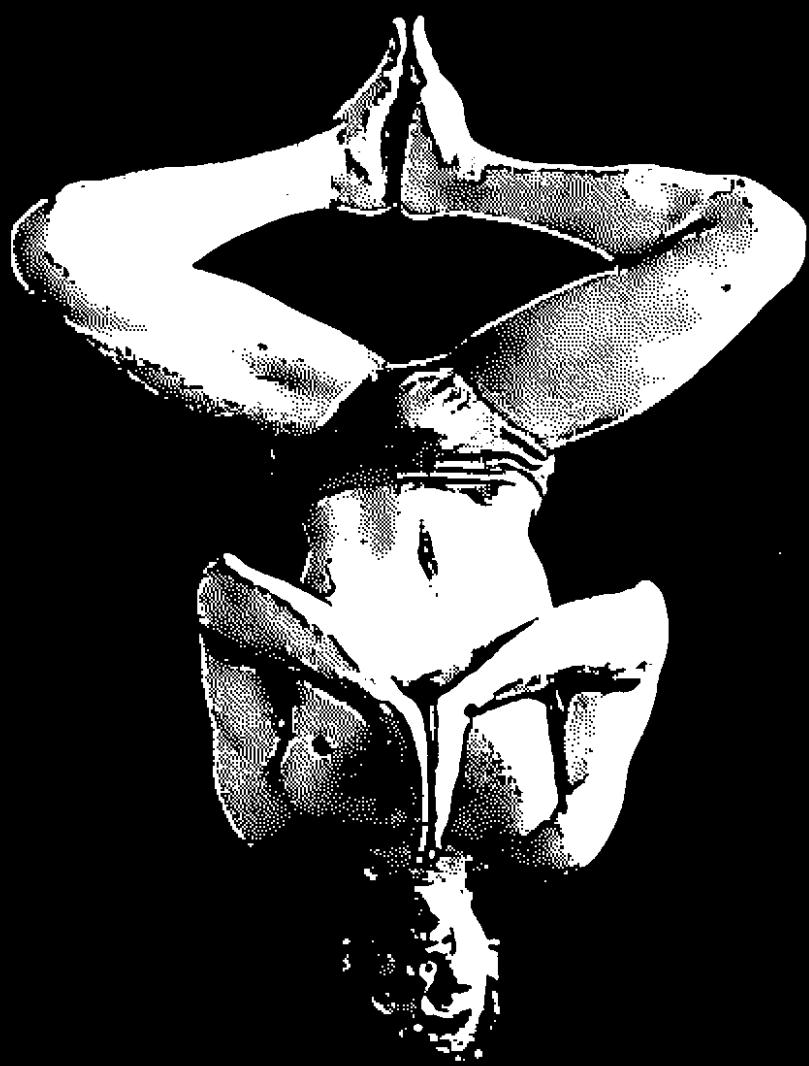










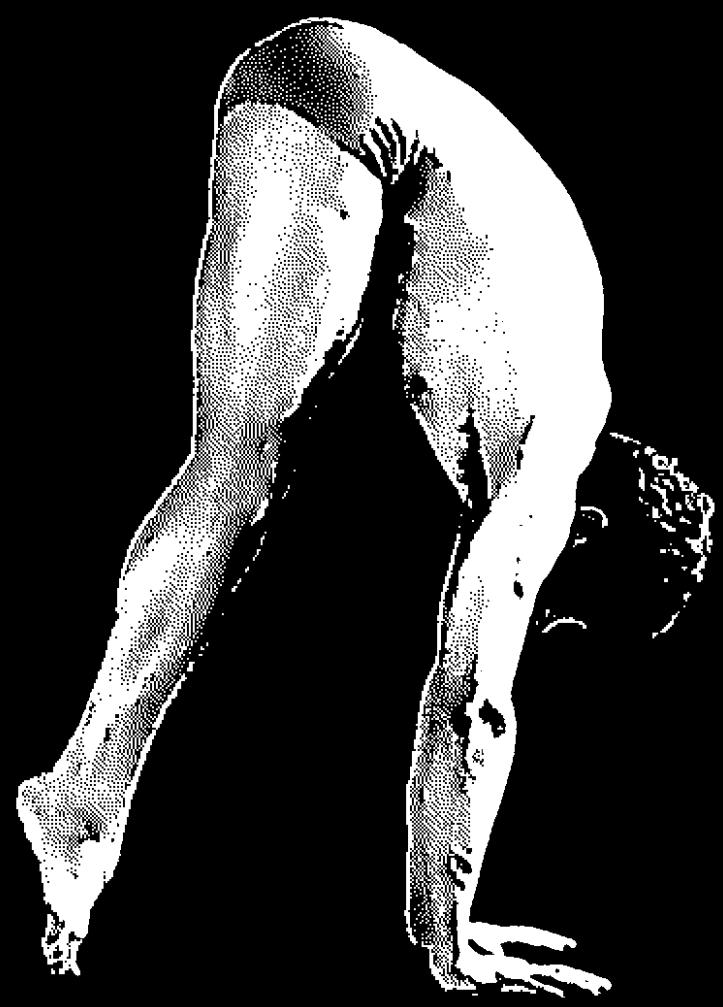






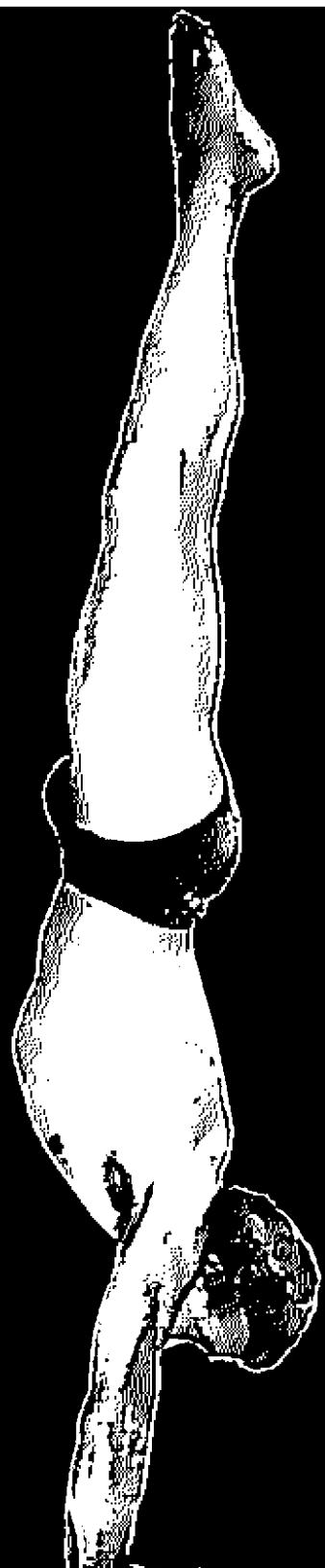


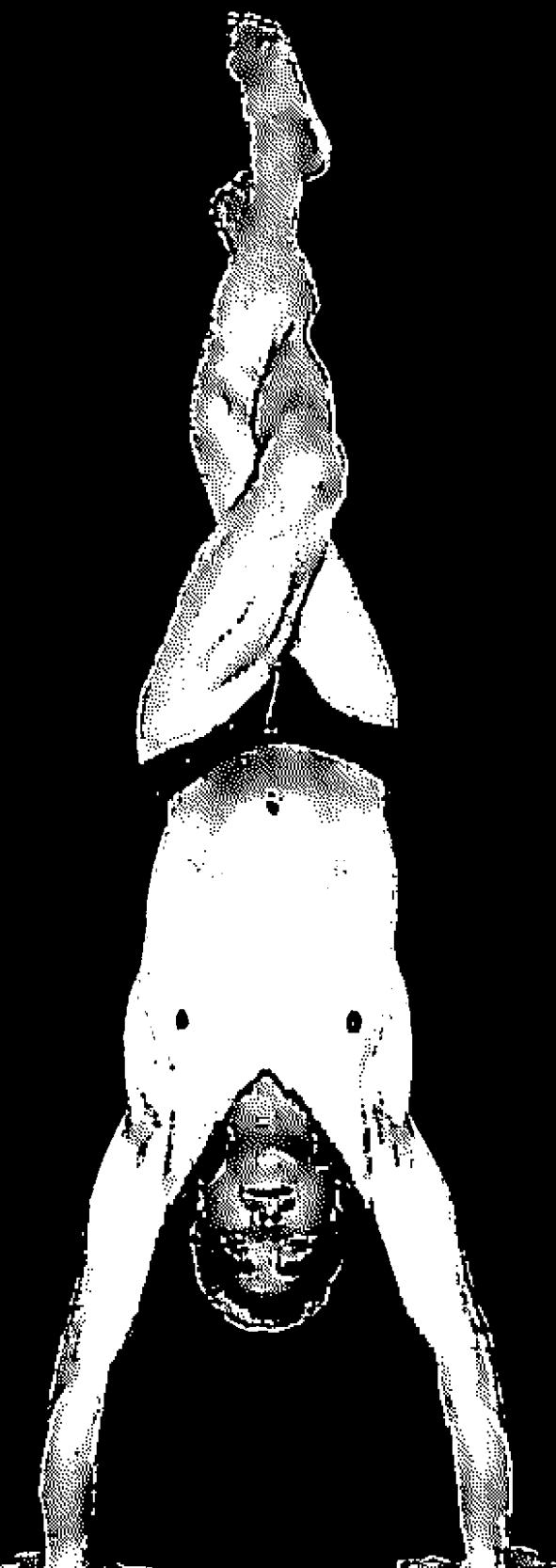


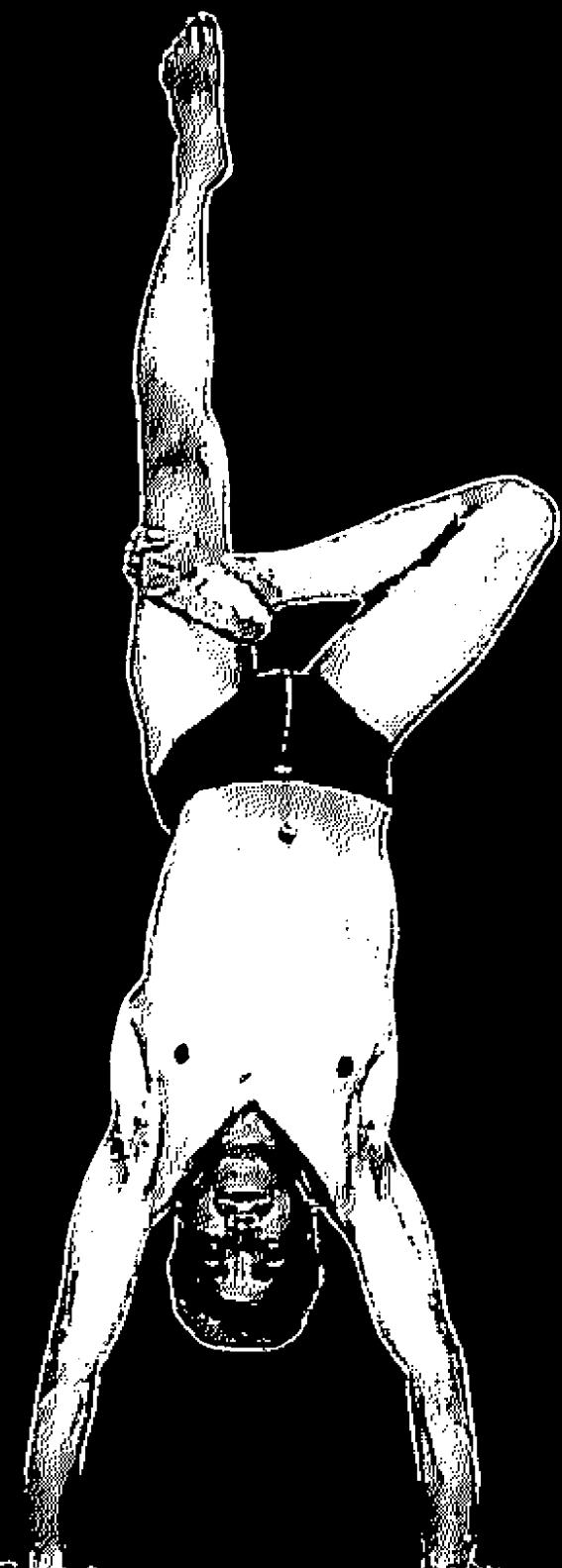


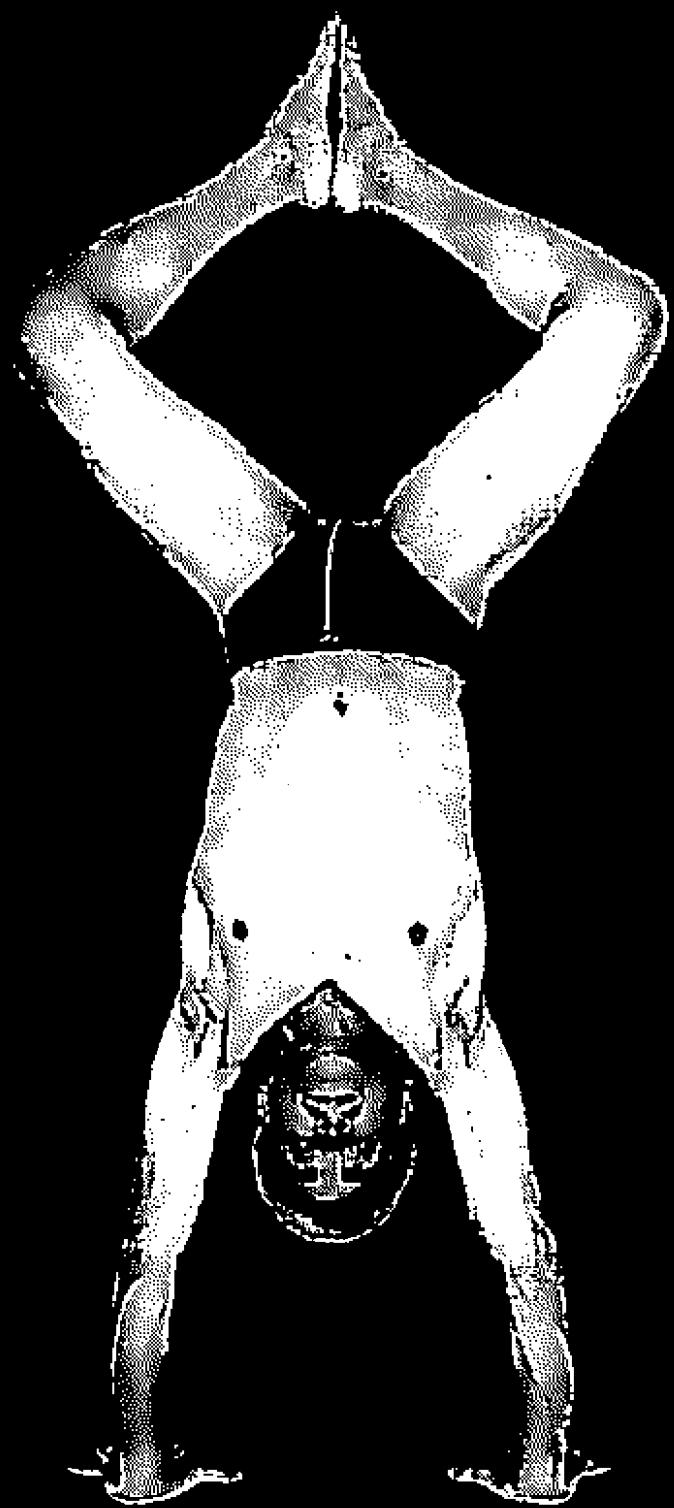


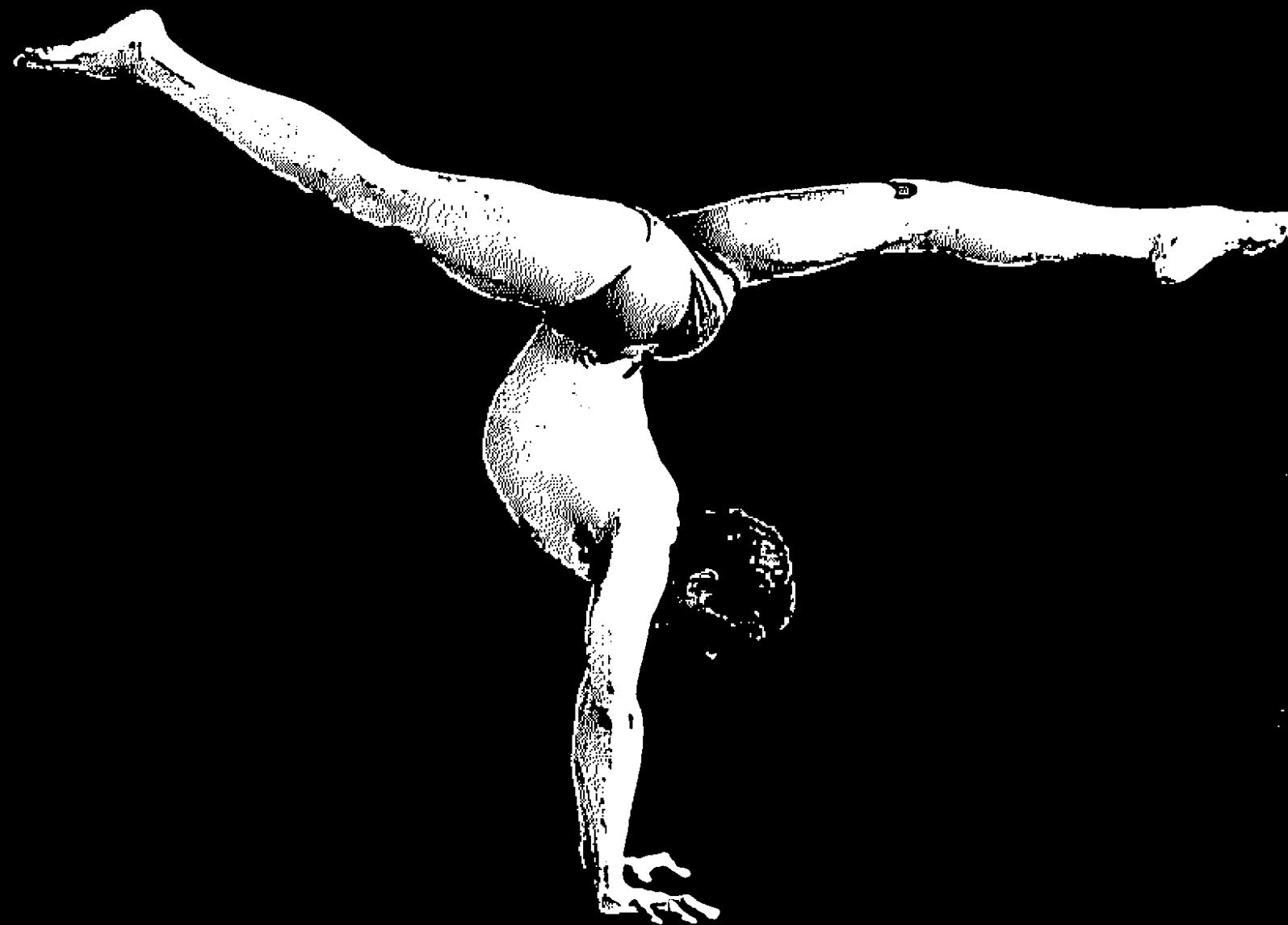


















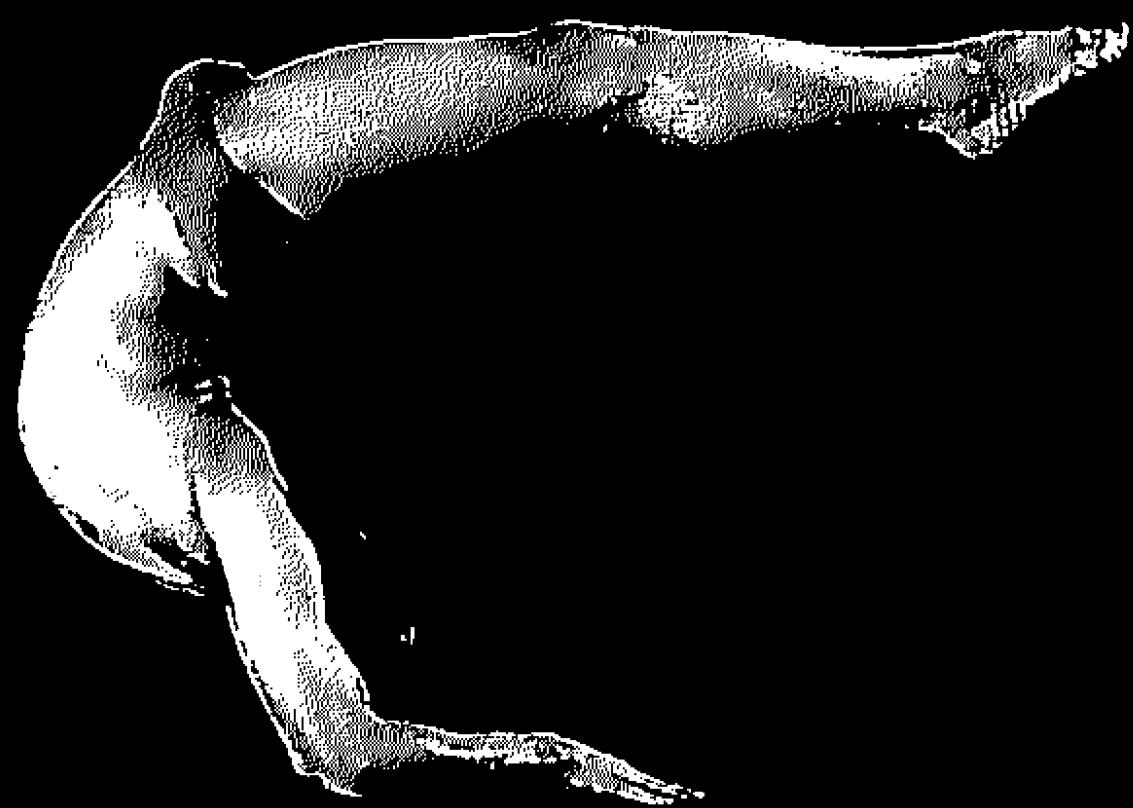


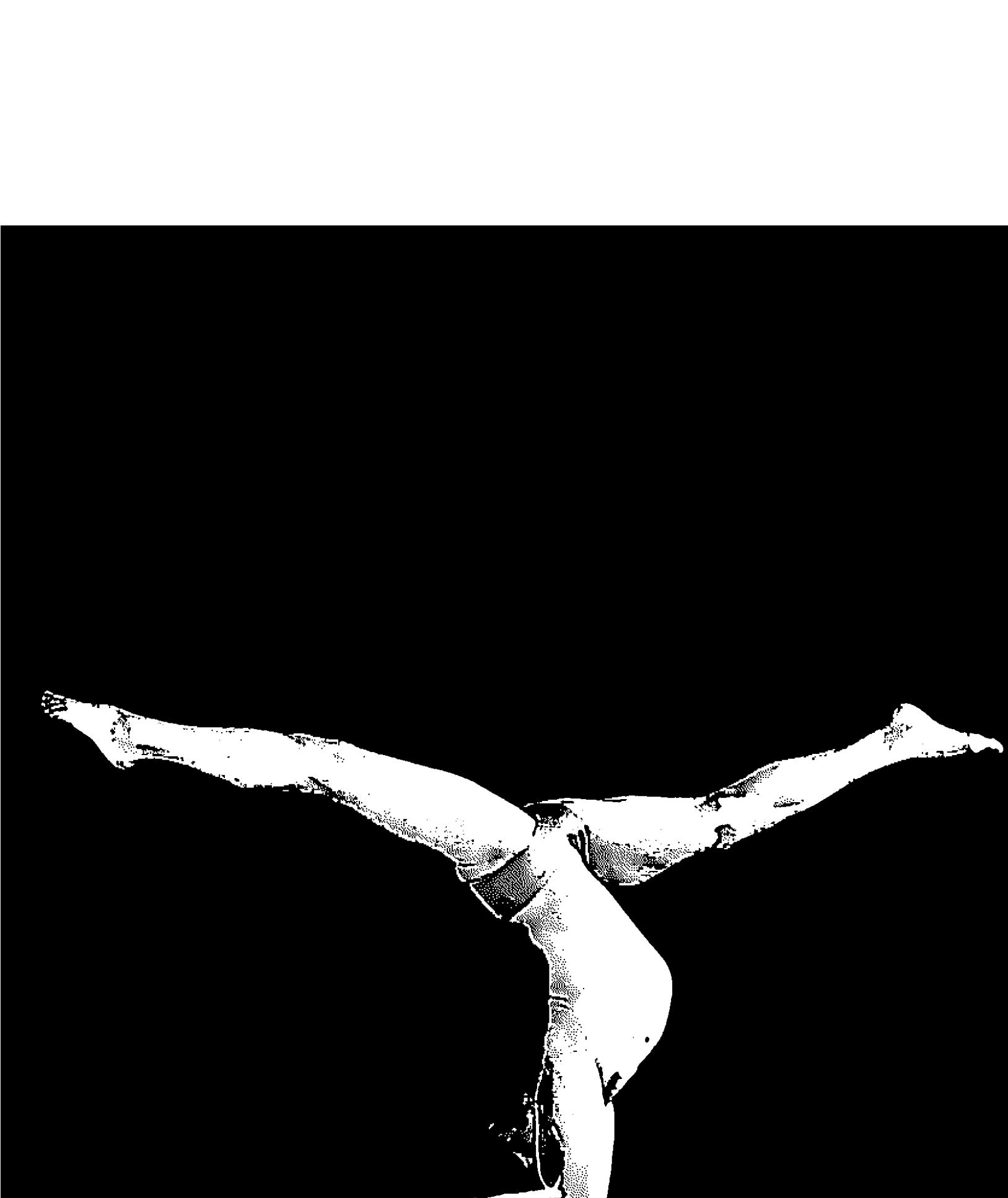






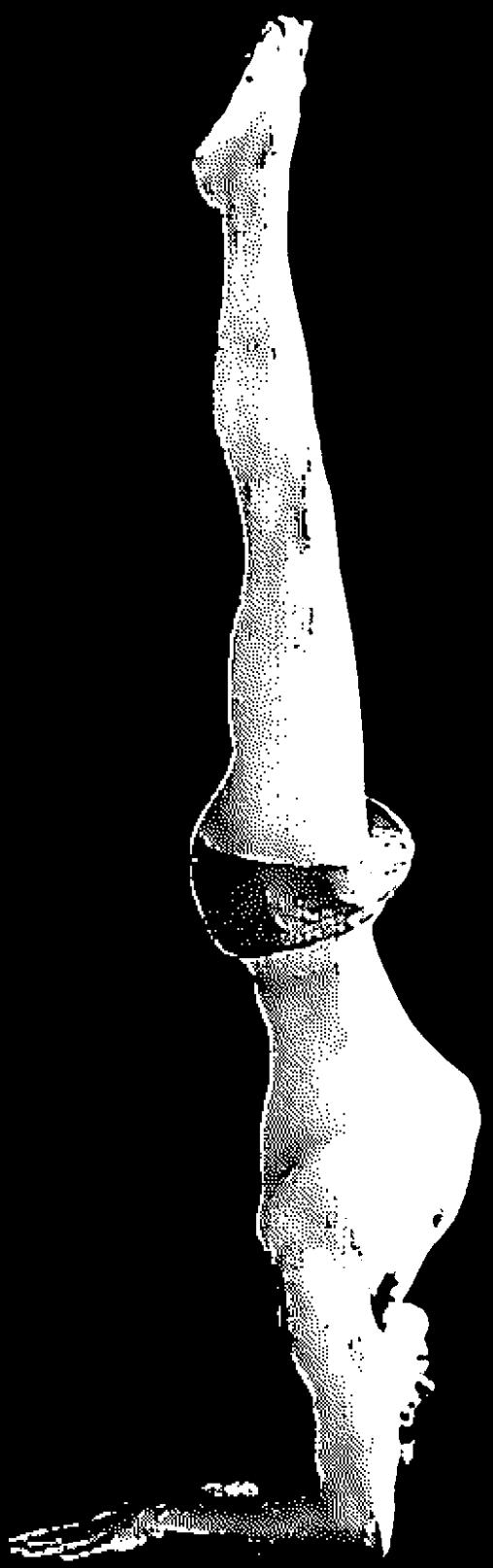


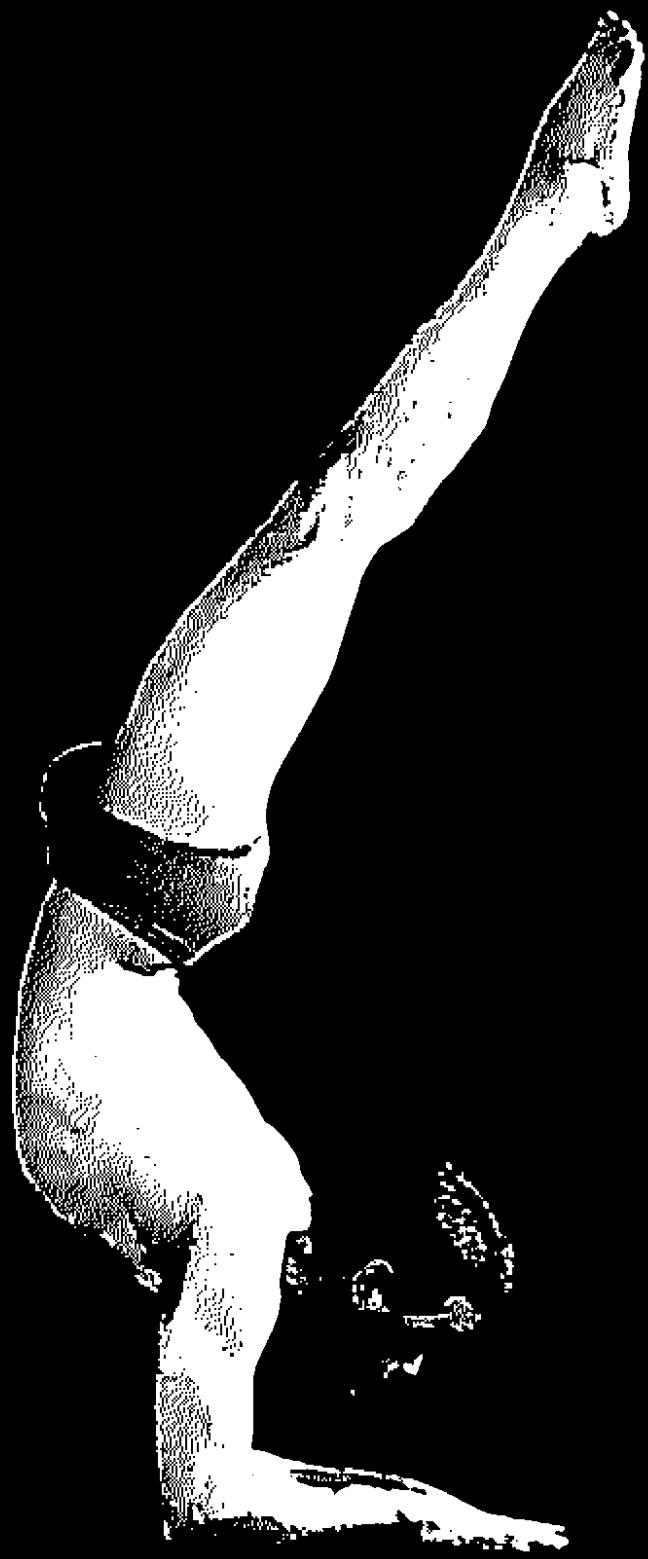


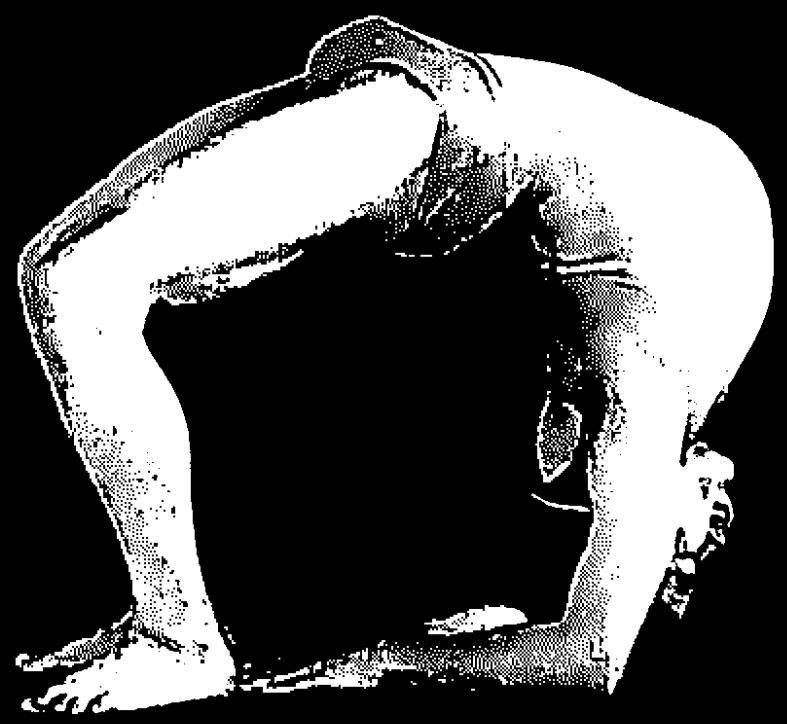


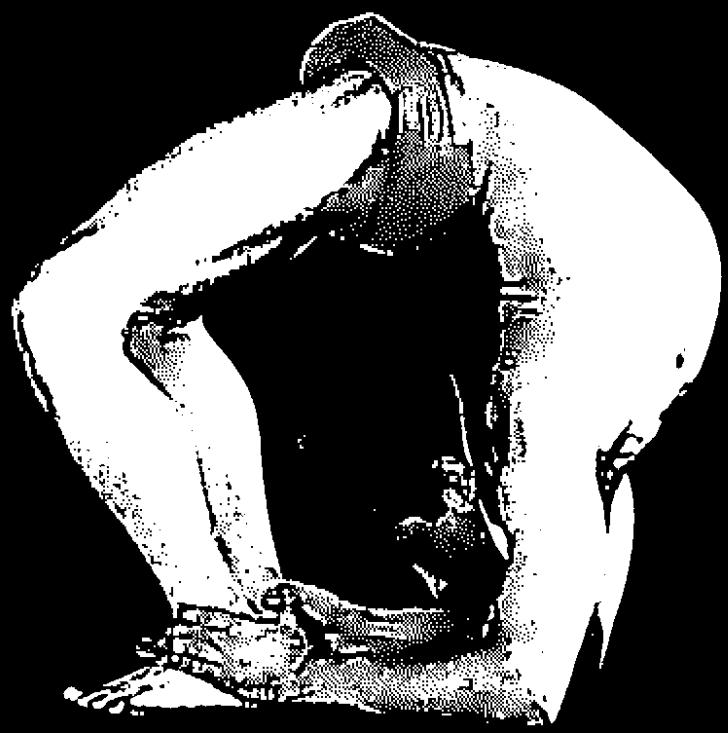














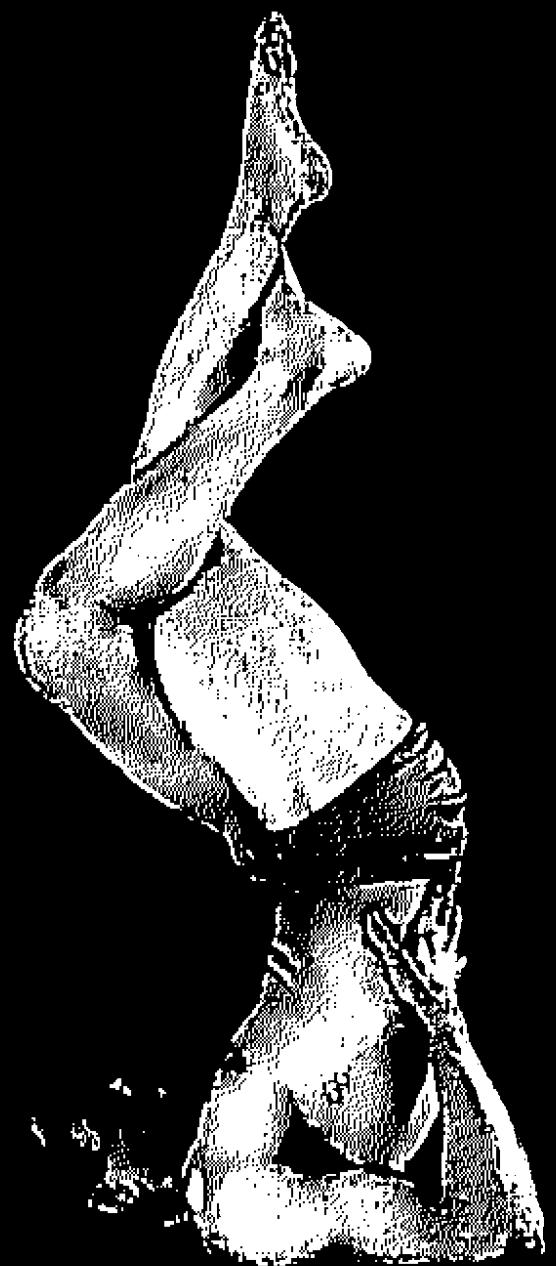














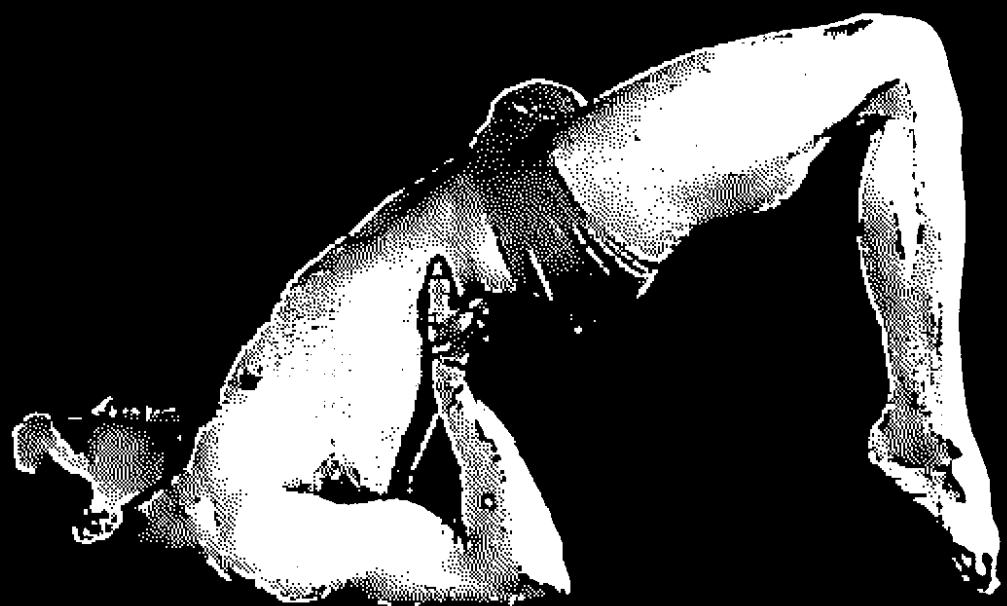


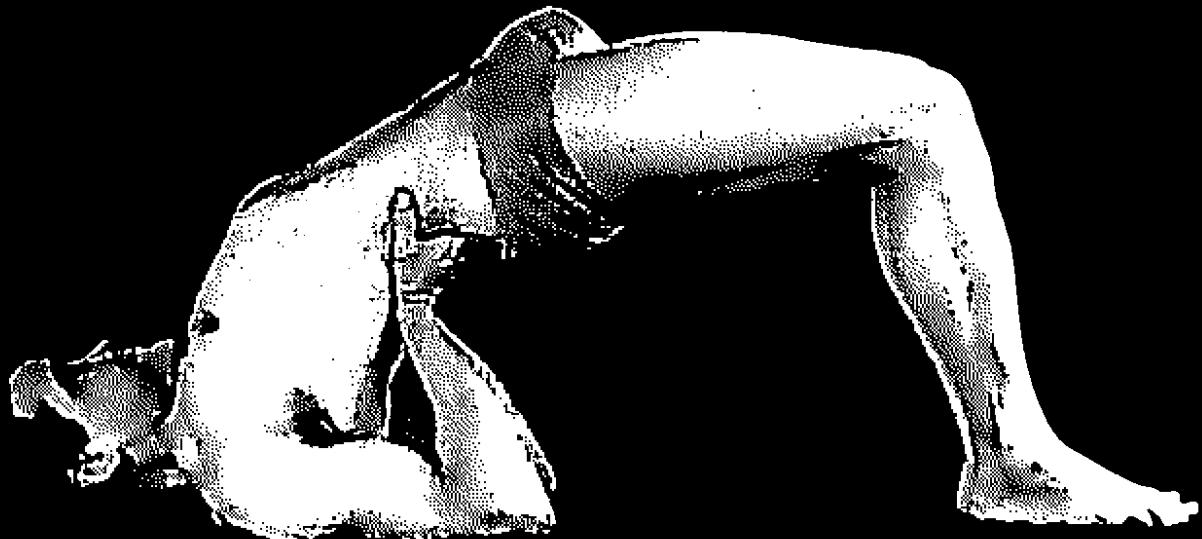


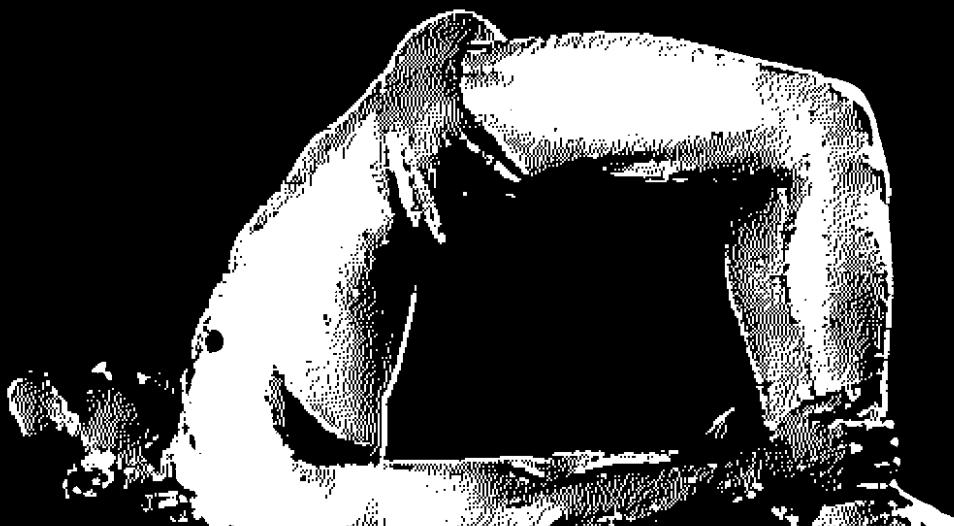


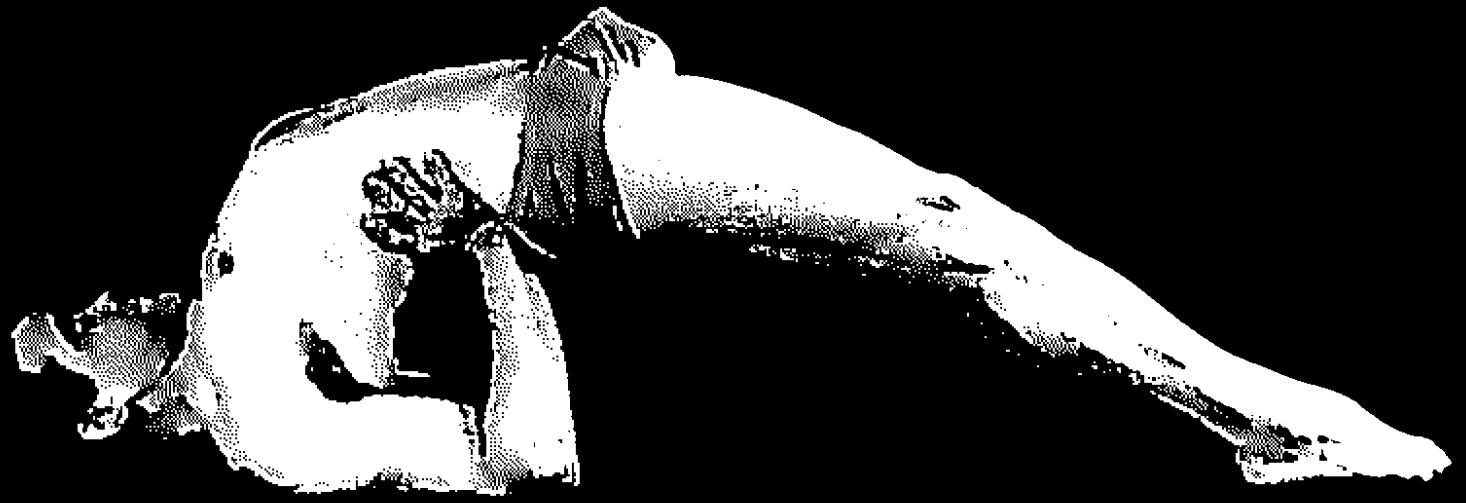












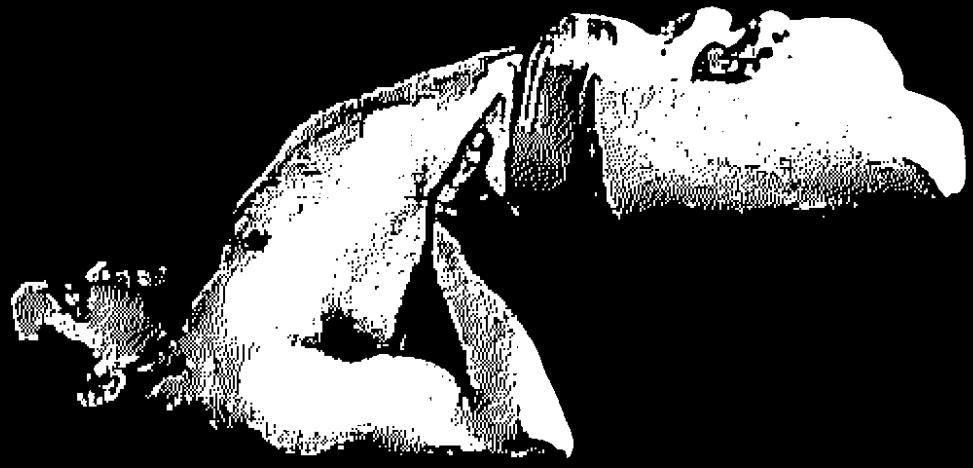


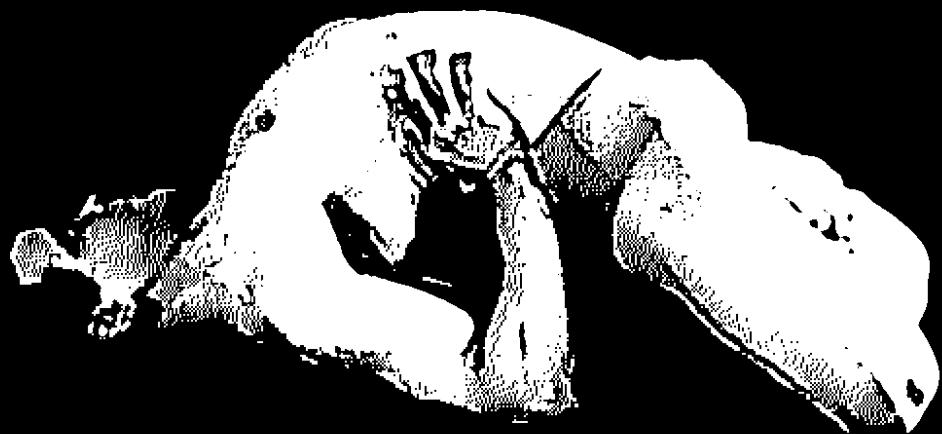


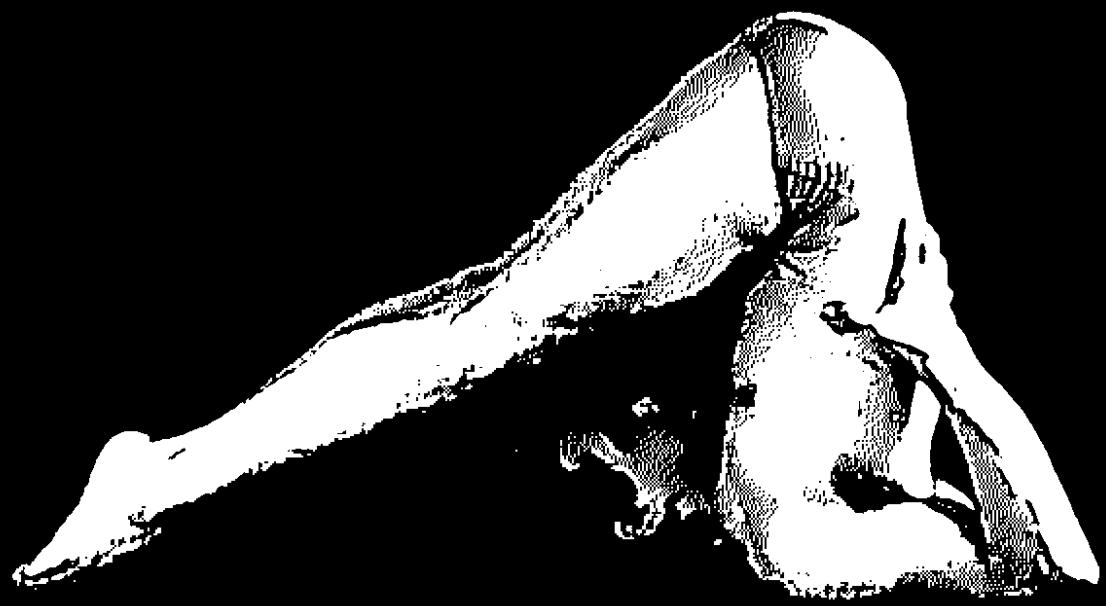


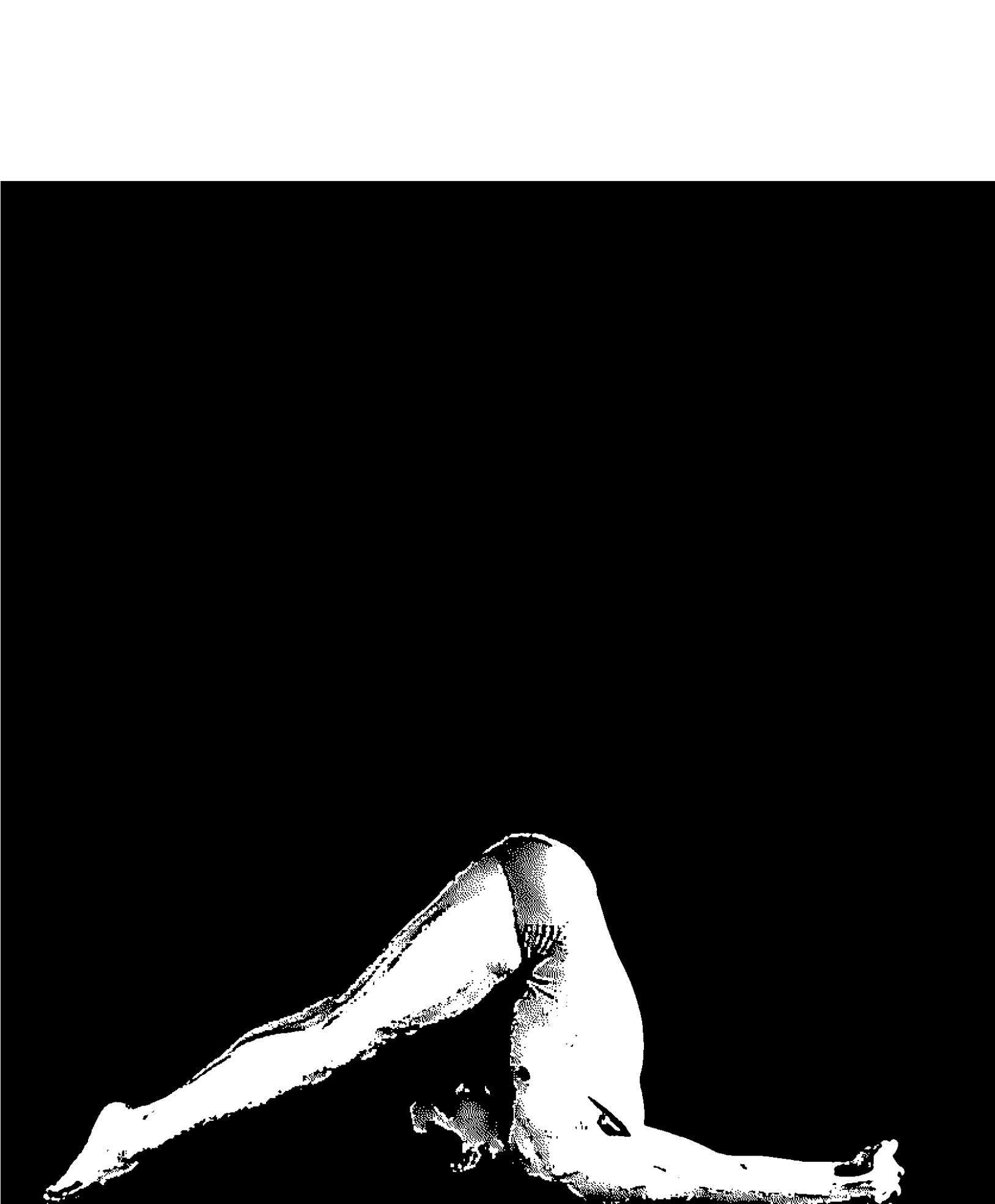






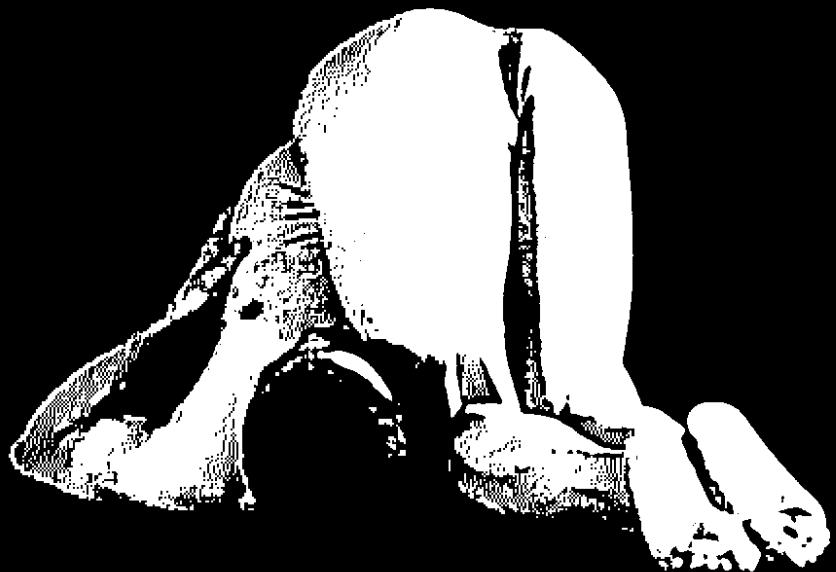


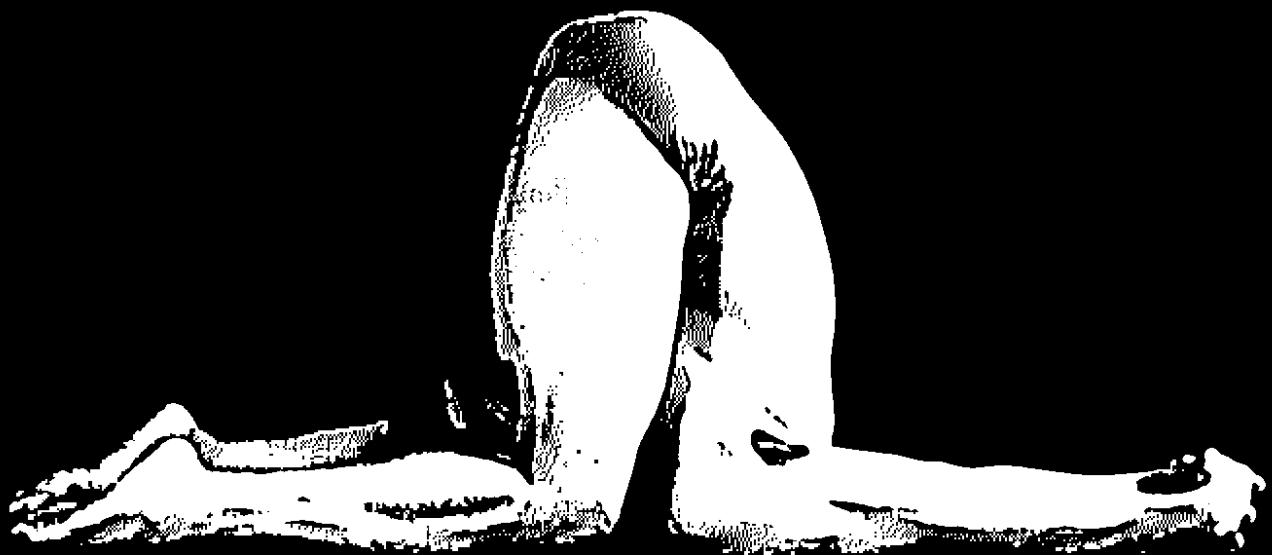


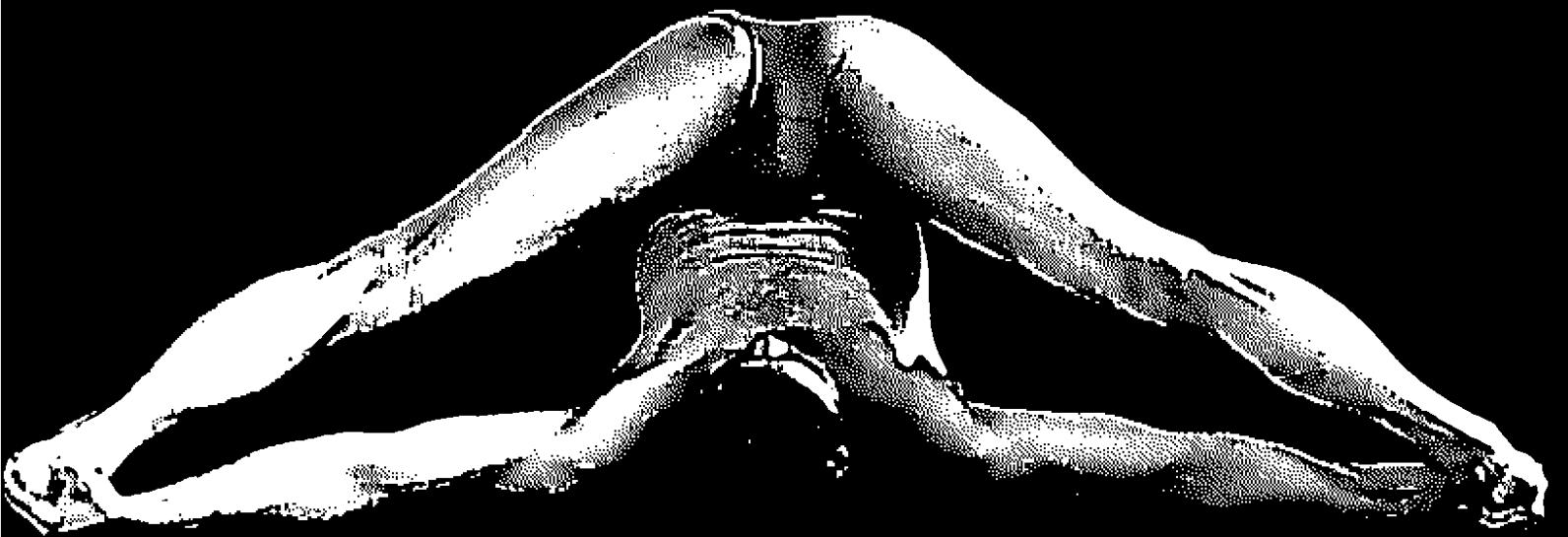




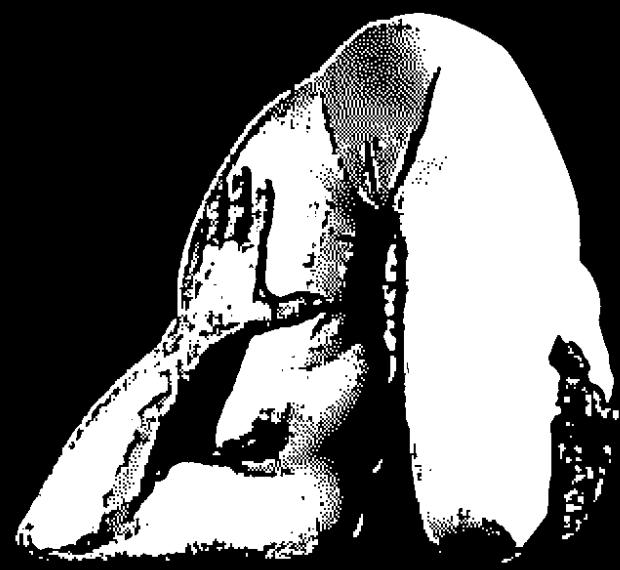


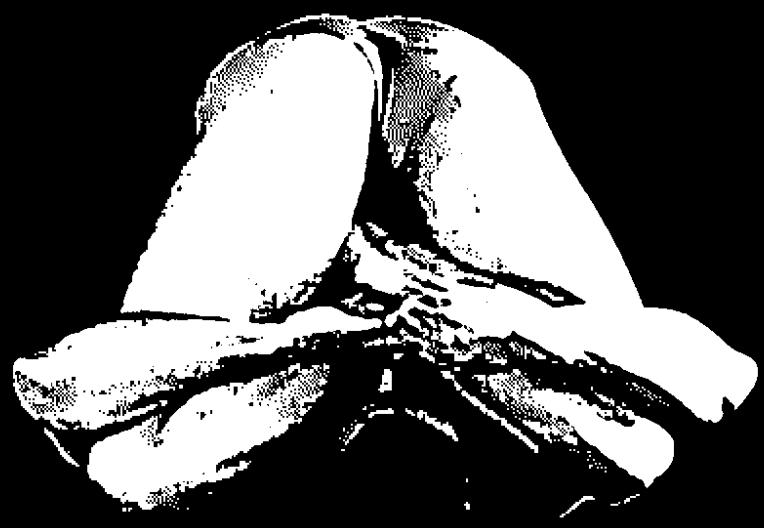












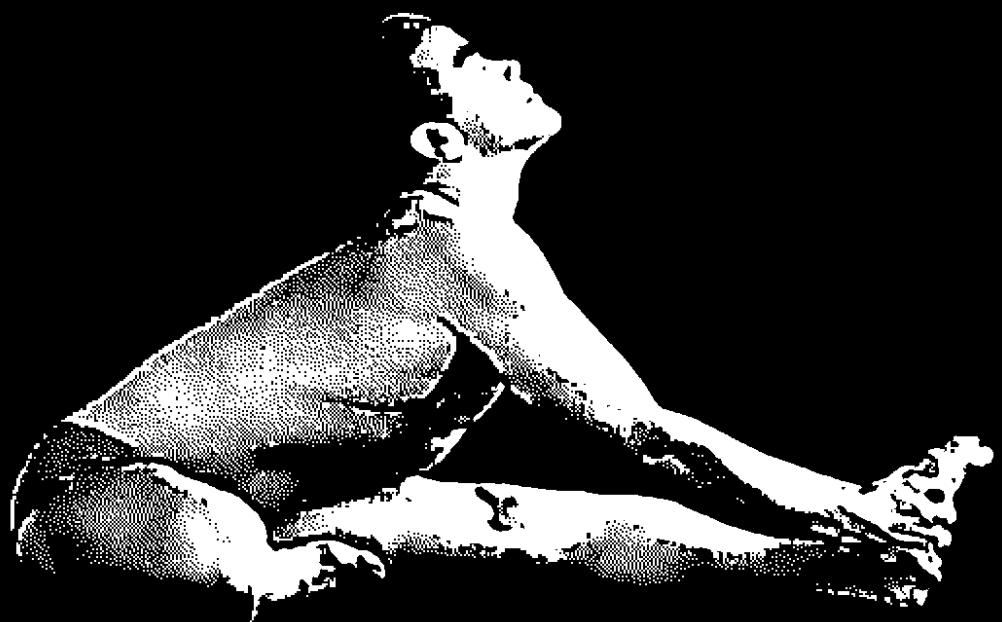


FLOOR & SUPINE POSES

Many different types of poses have been included in this section: hip openers, seated forward bends, and abdominal lifts, among them.

The poses that open the hips are among the most complex asanas in terms of mechanics, but they may be simplified so that even beginners can perform them and realize great benefits. Hip openers relieve lower back tension and sciatica, ease knee problems, and increase the flow of blood to the pelvic bones and reproductive organs. Likewise, abdominal poses strengthen the lumbar (lower region) of the back and assist in stabilizing the whole body.

Seated leg extensions stretch the hamstrings, buttocks, and the lower back. Once the legs become more flexible, the pelvis can move more easily, thus reducing pressure on the lower back. Deep forward bends like *Paschimatasana* stimulate internal organs including the spleen, liver, stomach, intestines, and kidneys; in women they also stimulate the ovaries. Forward bends are generally comfortable poses in which the mind becomes quiet and the nervous system cools. They

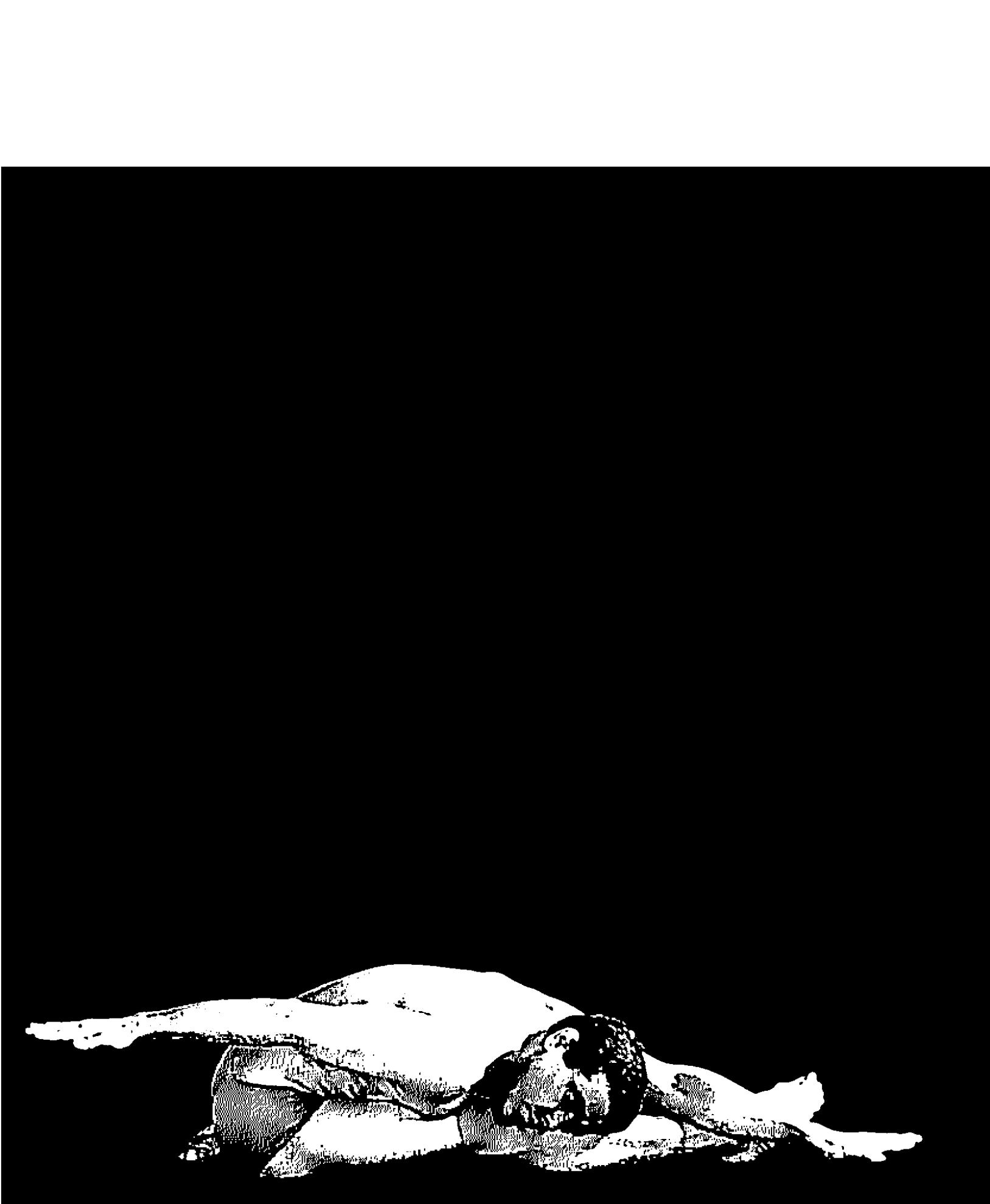






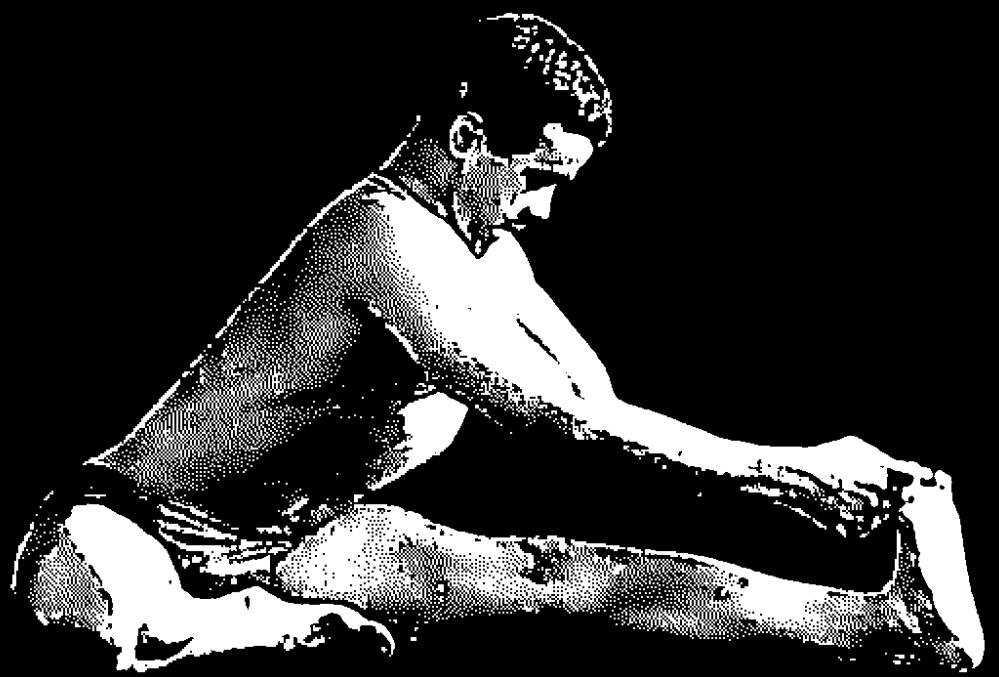


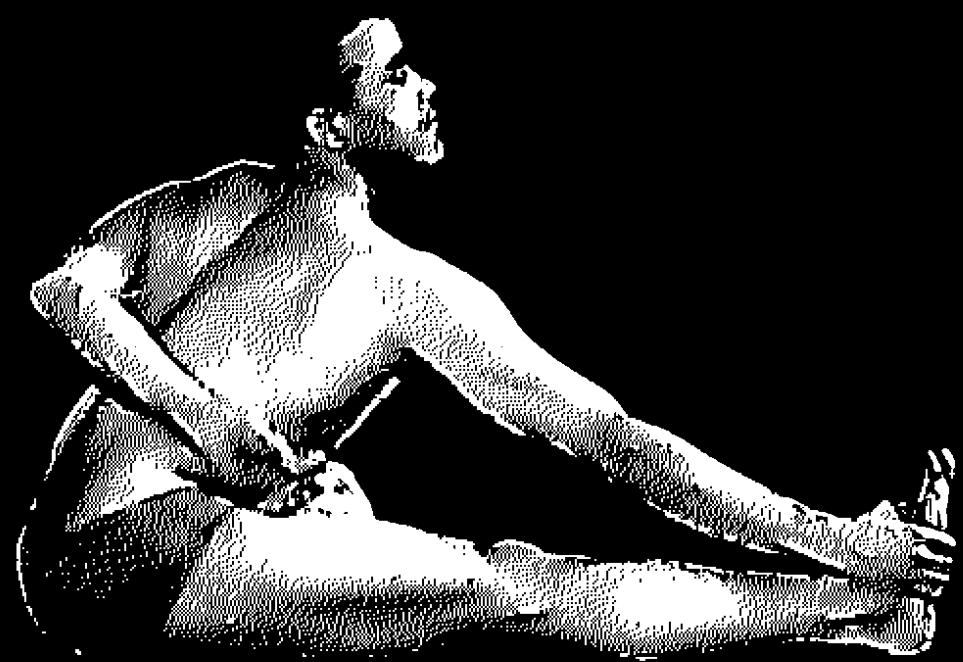
























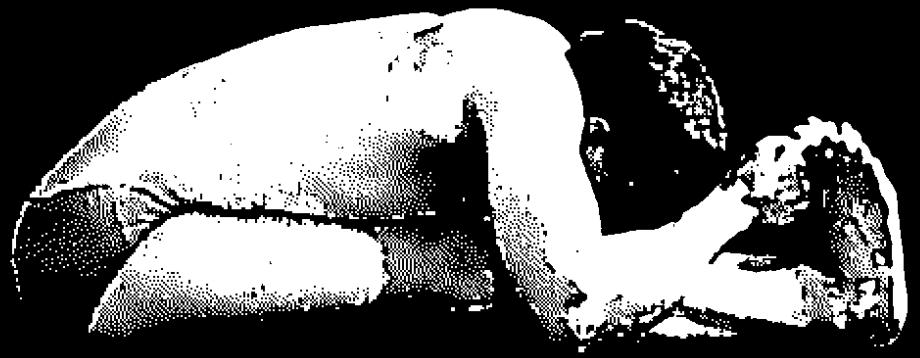








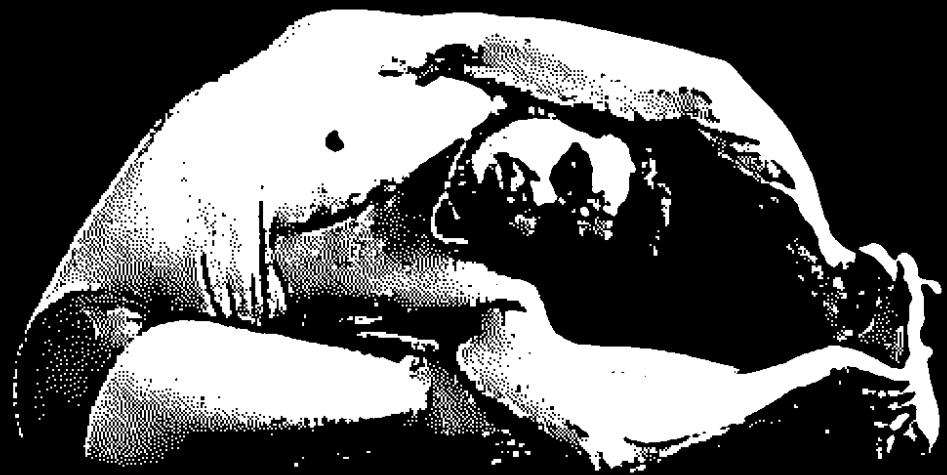






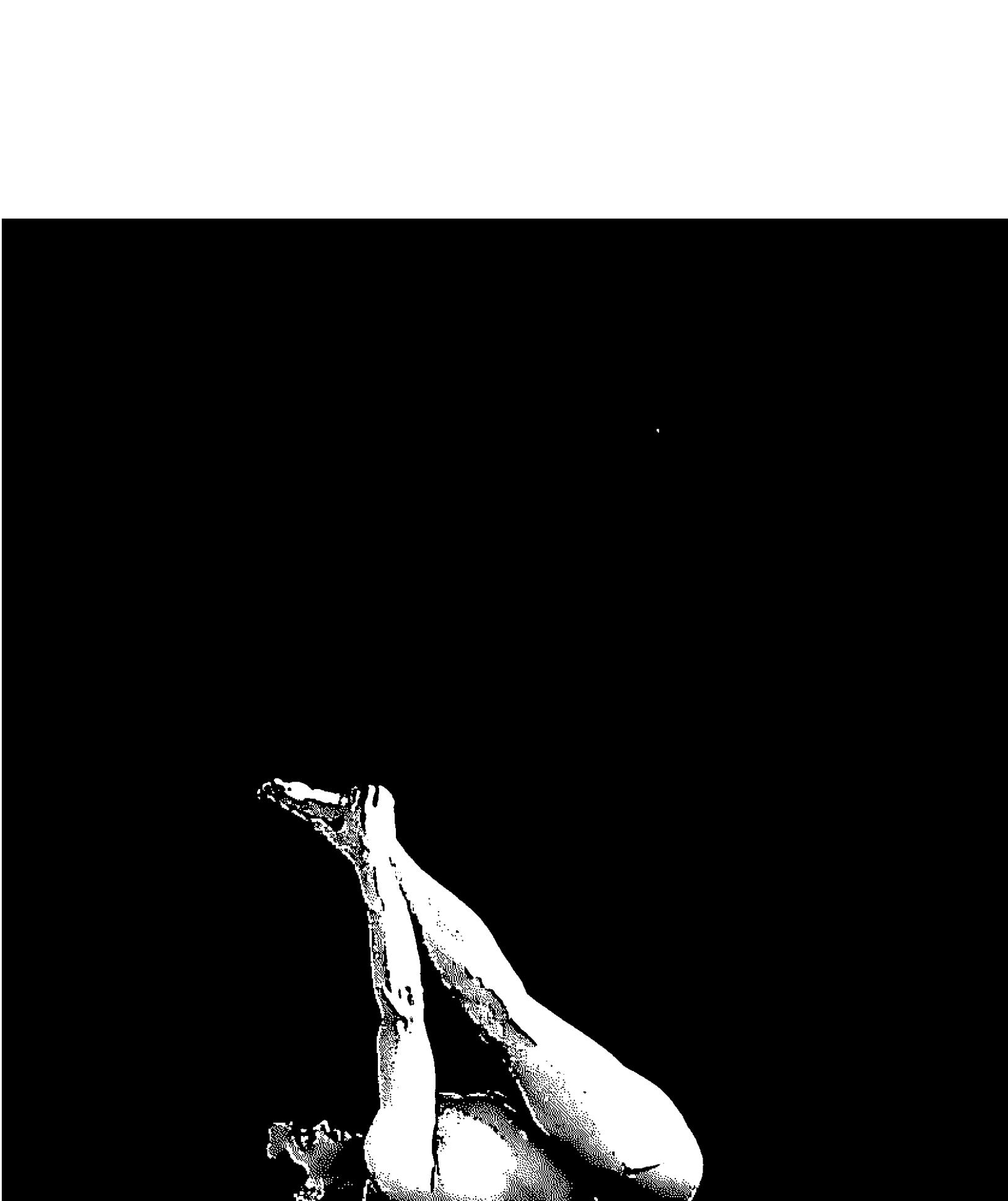


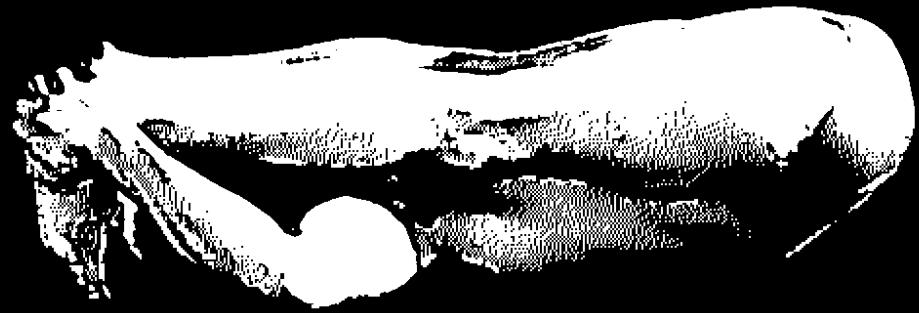




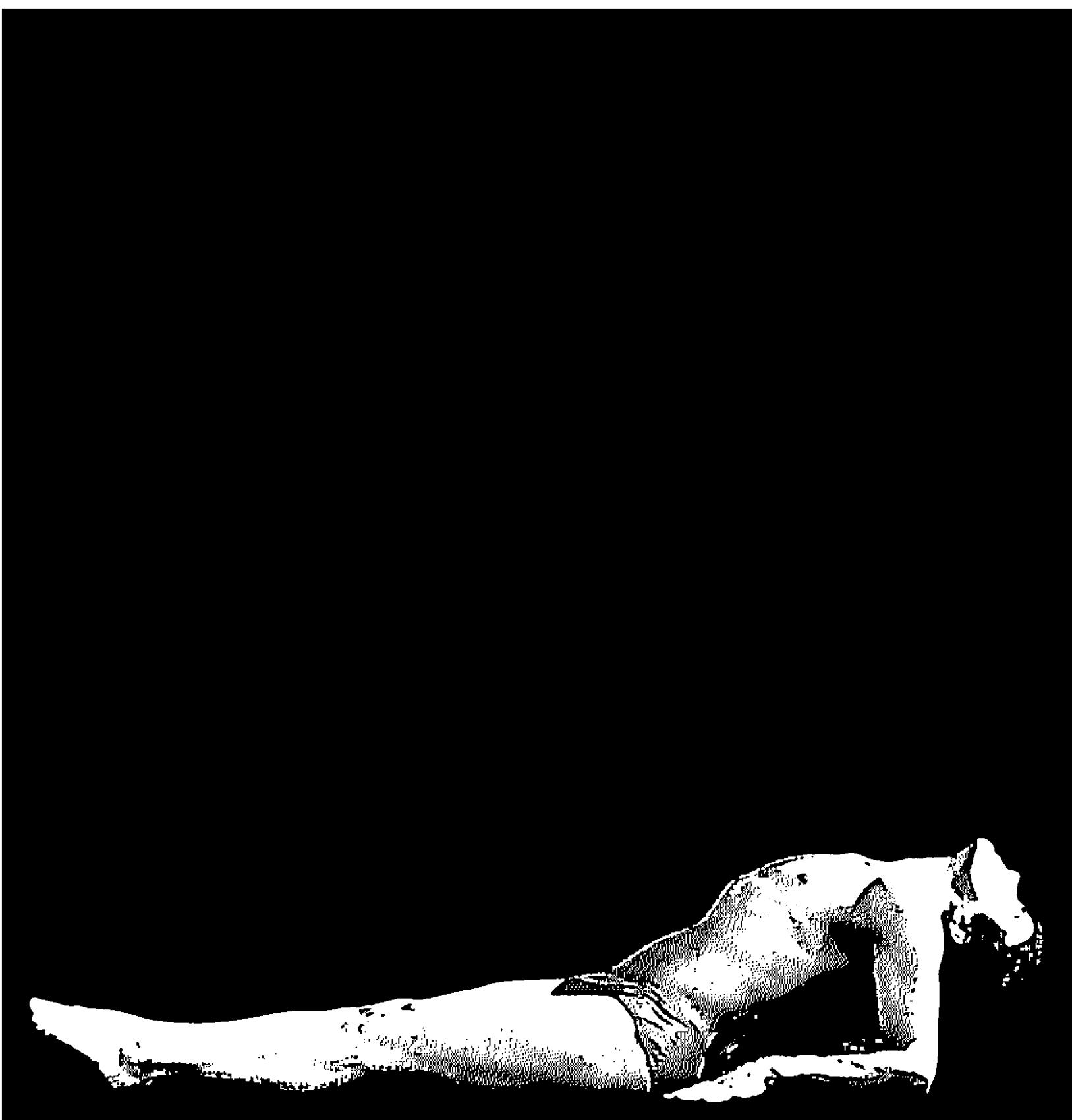




















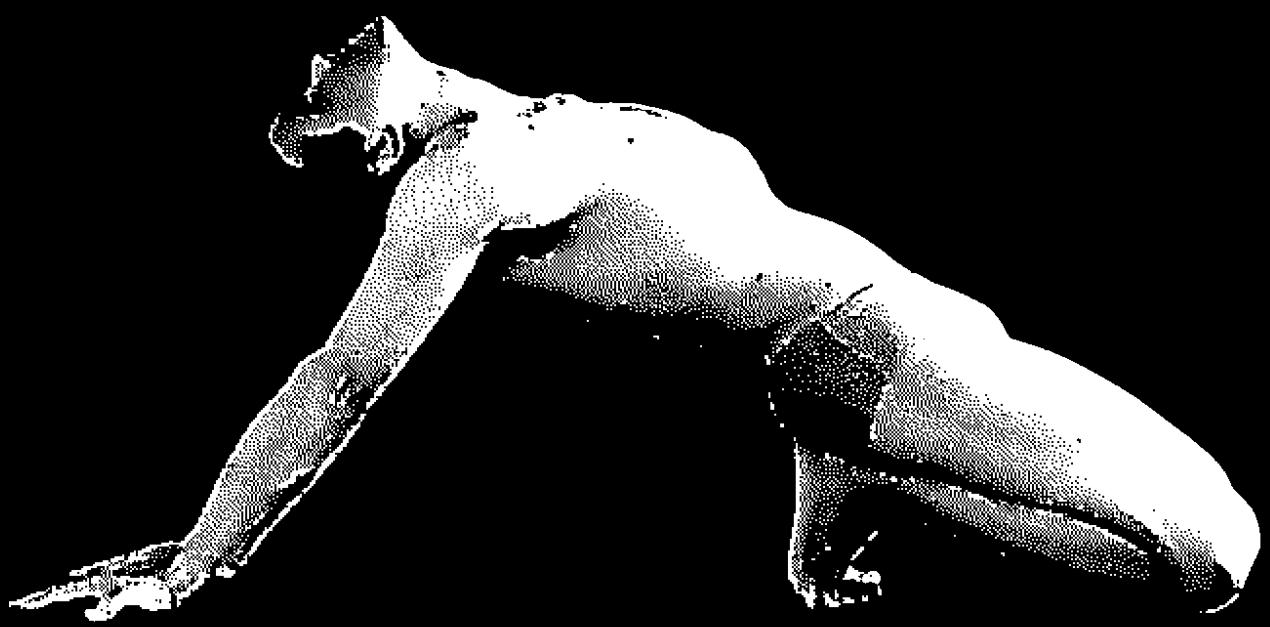














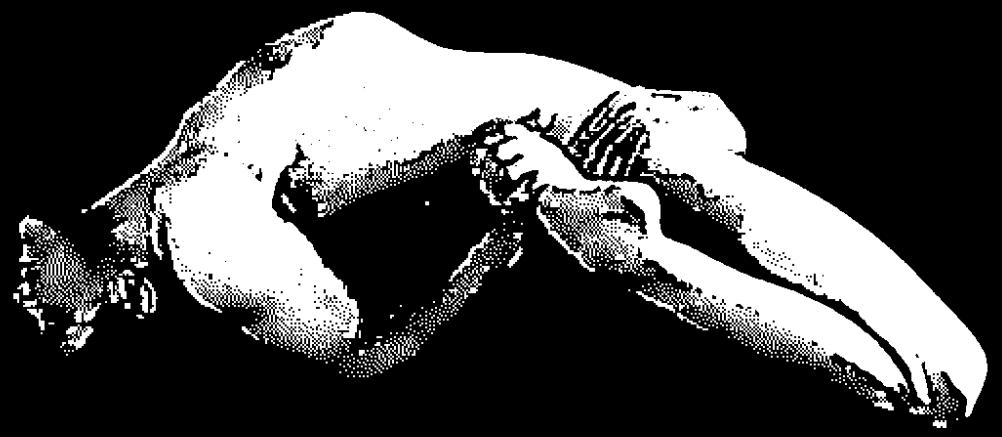


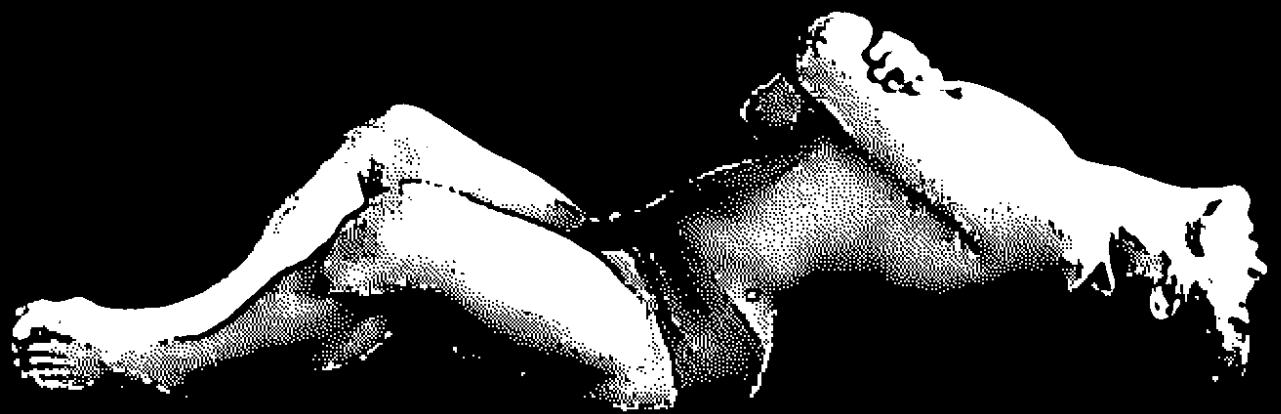


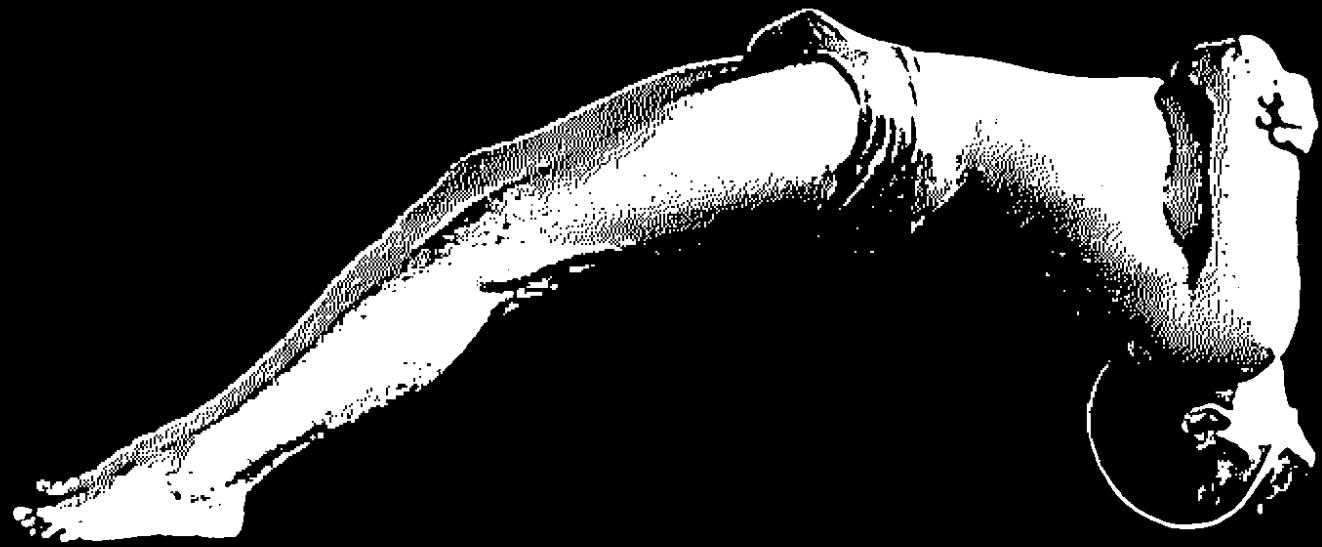






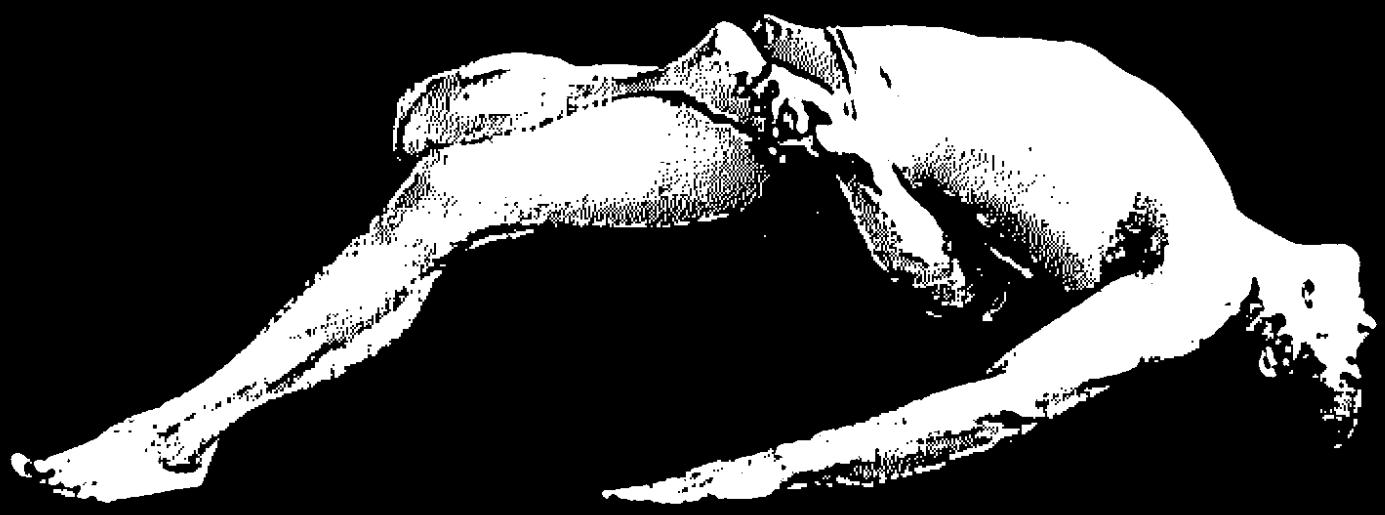














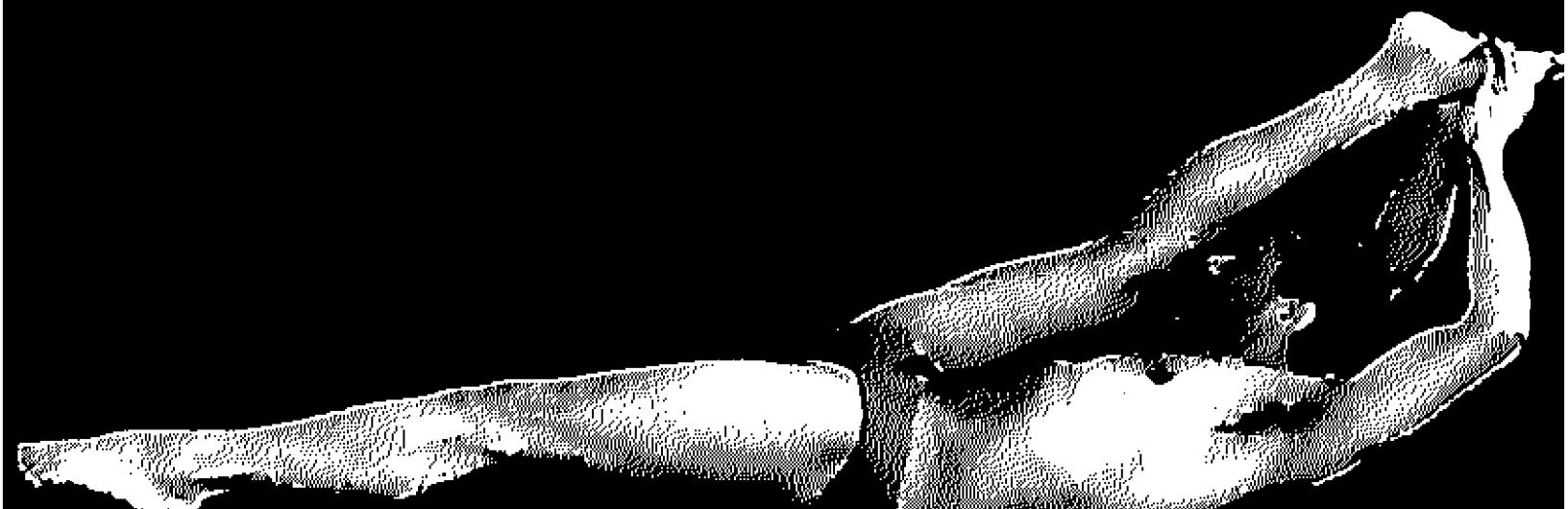






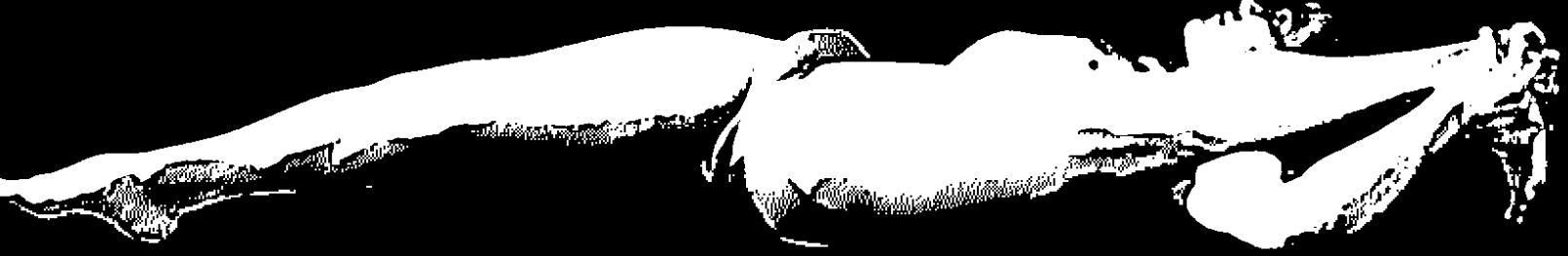




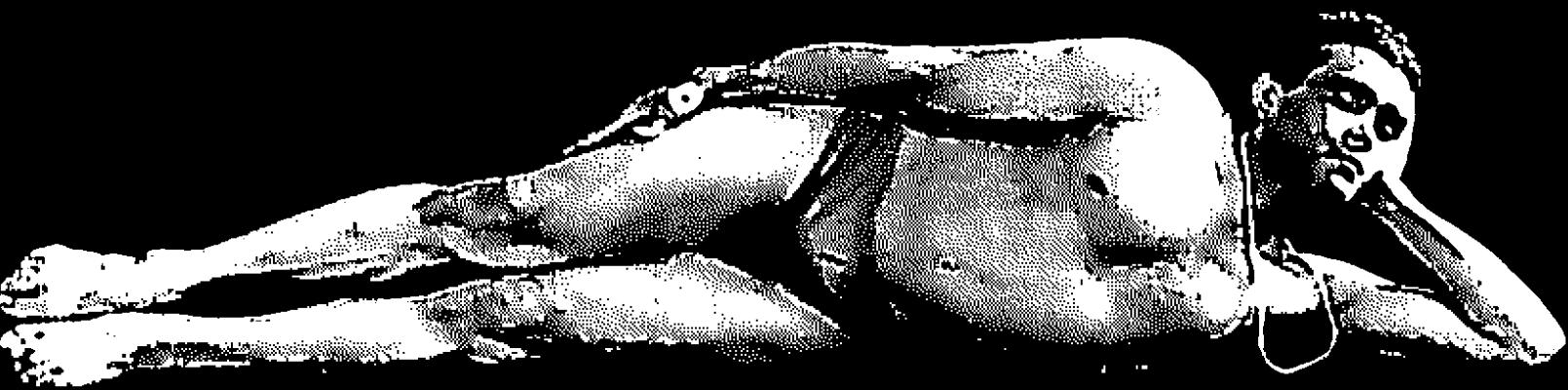


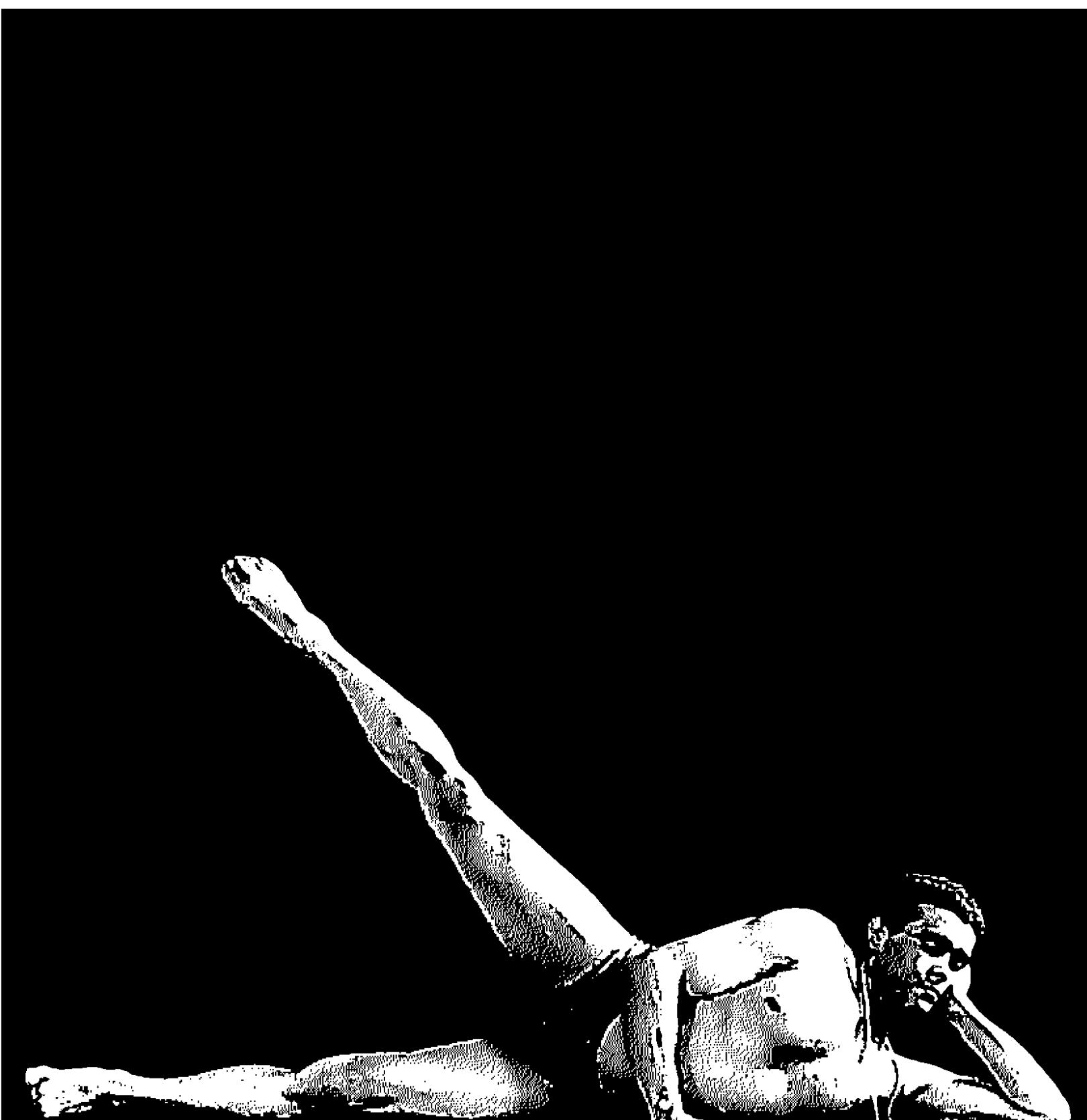


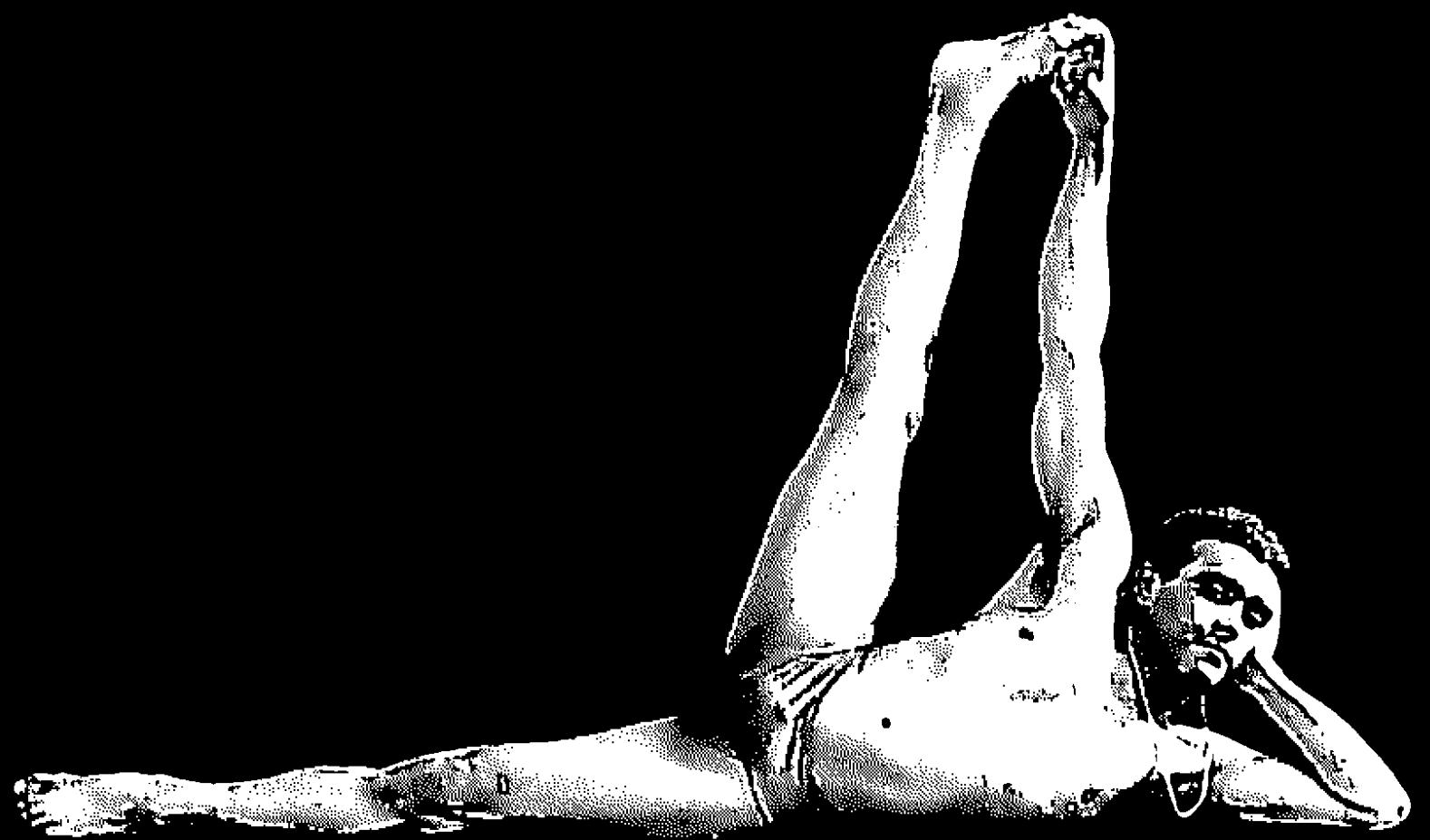


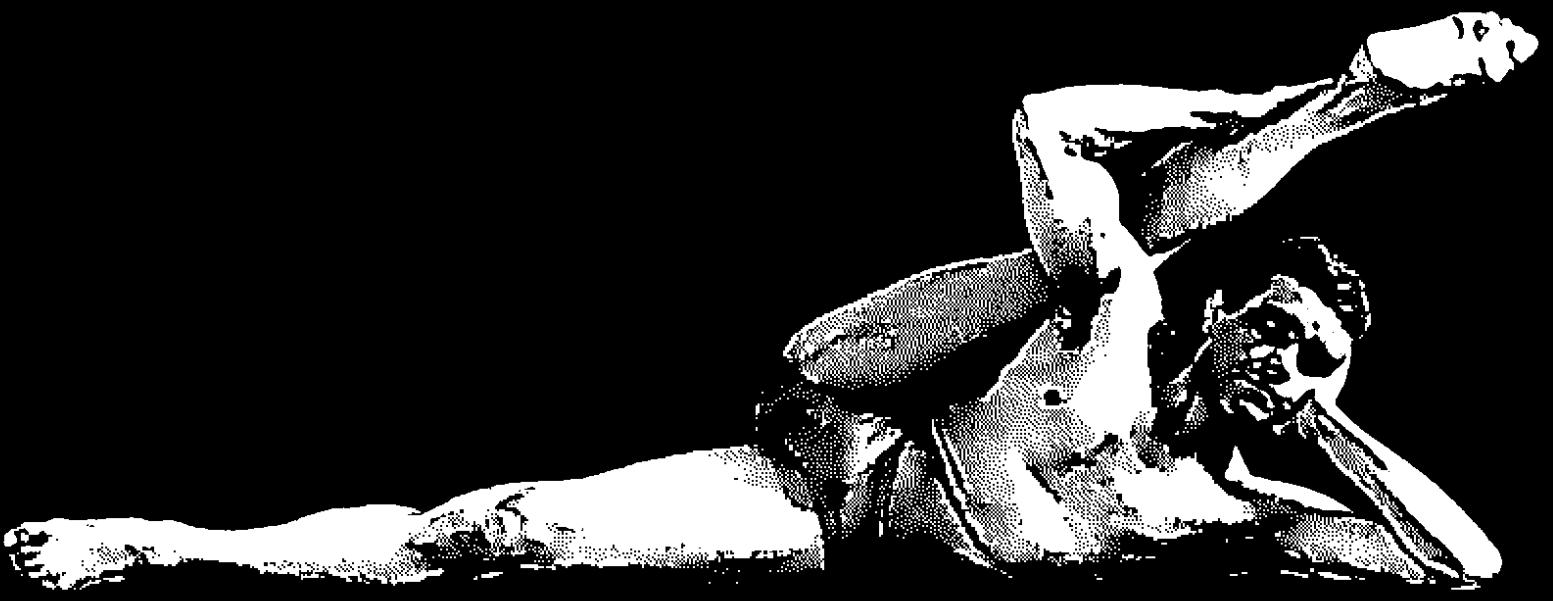


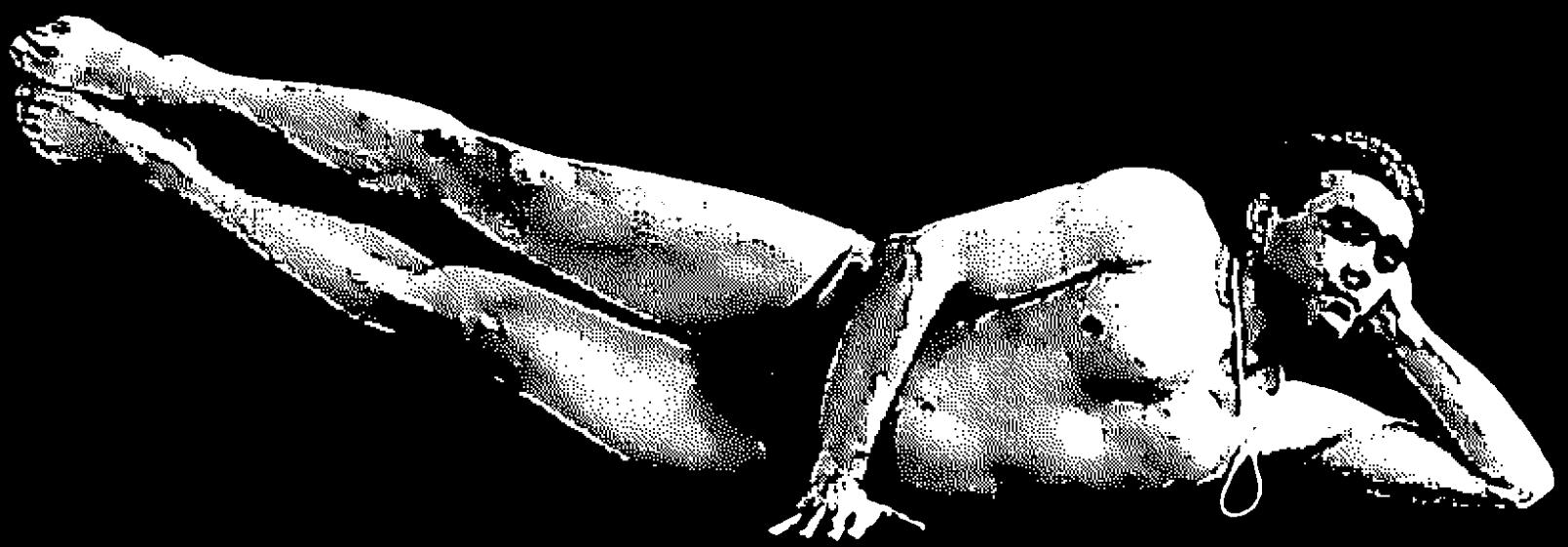






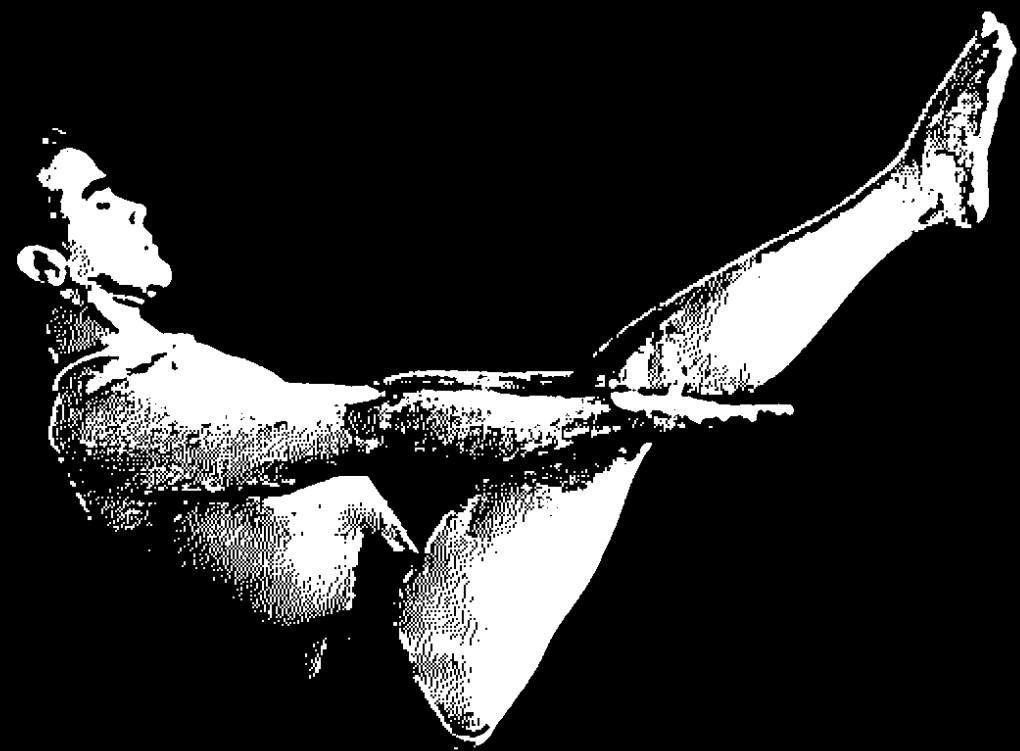




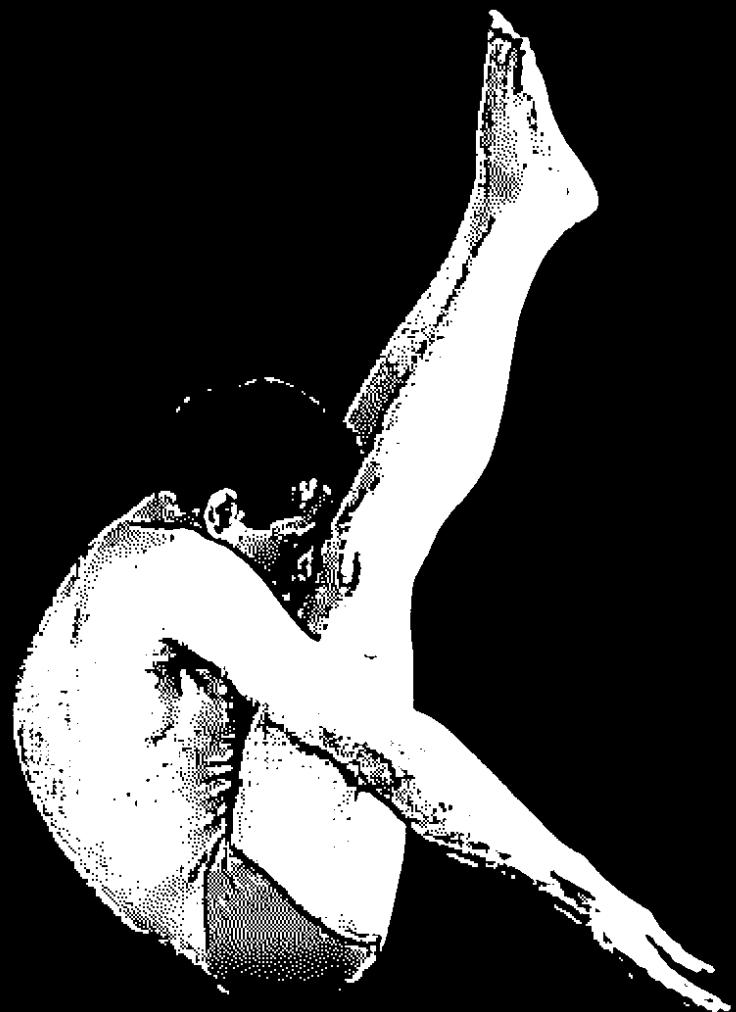


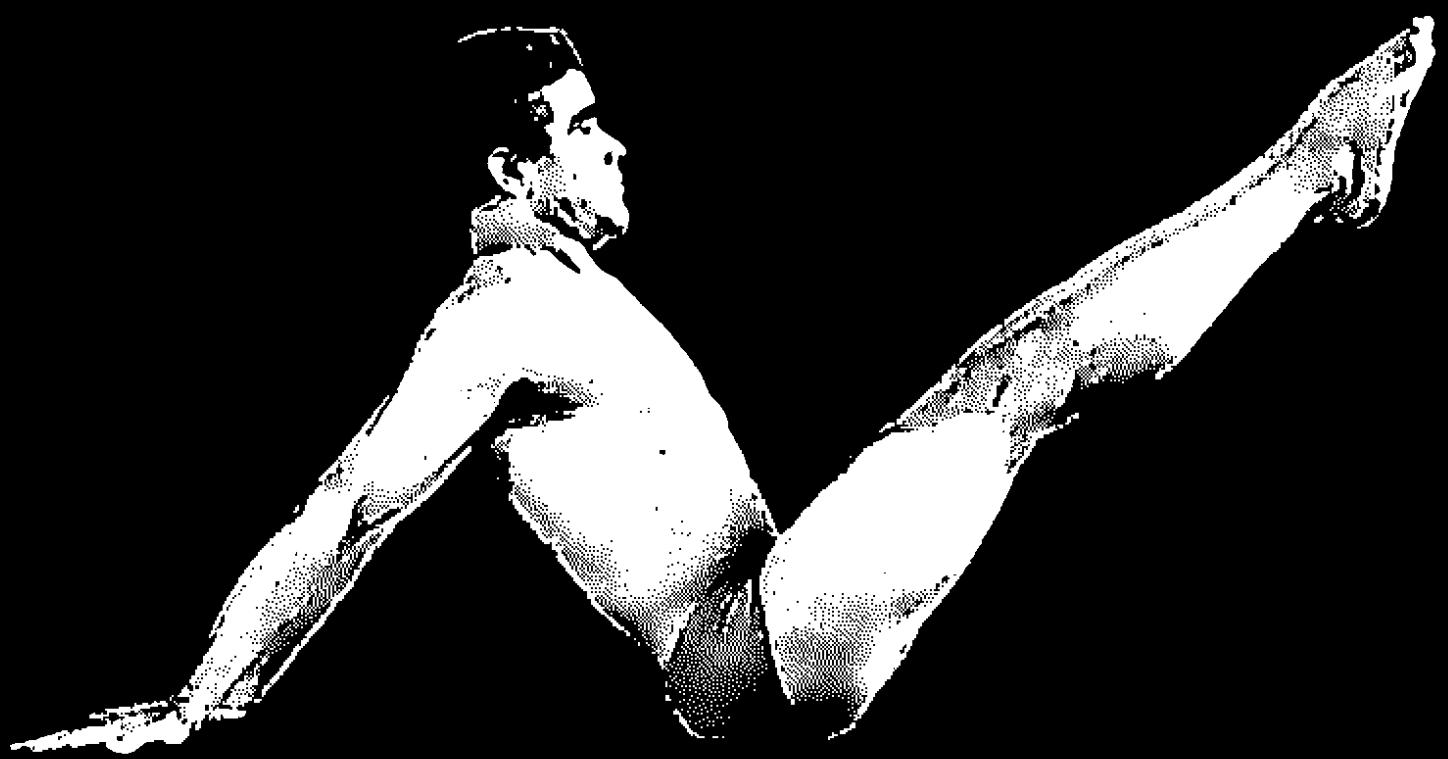














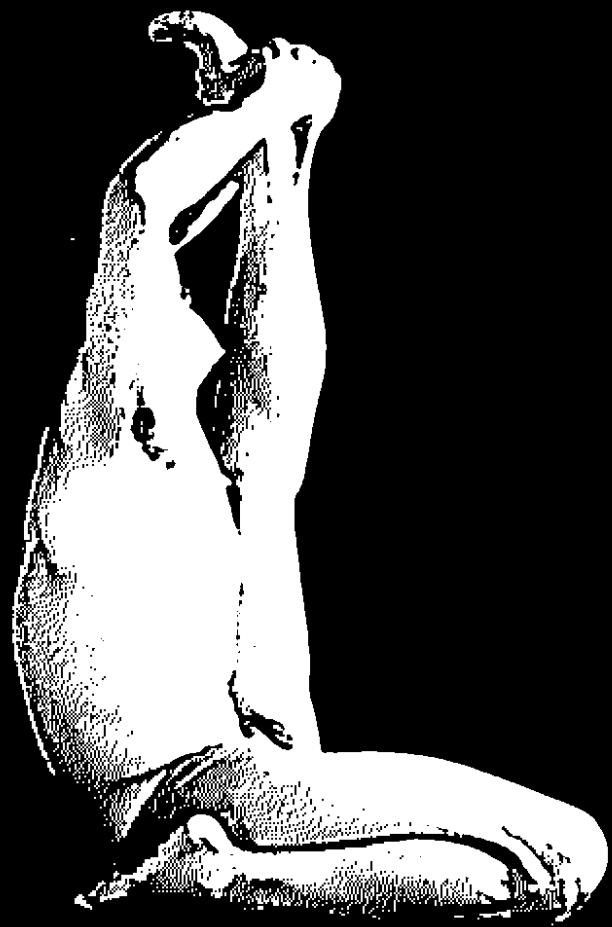


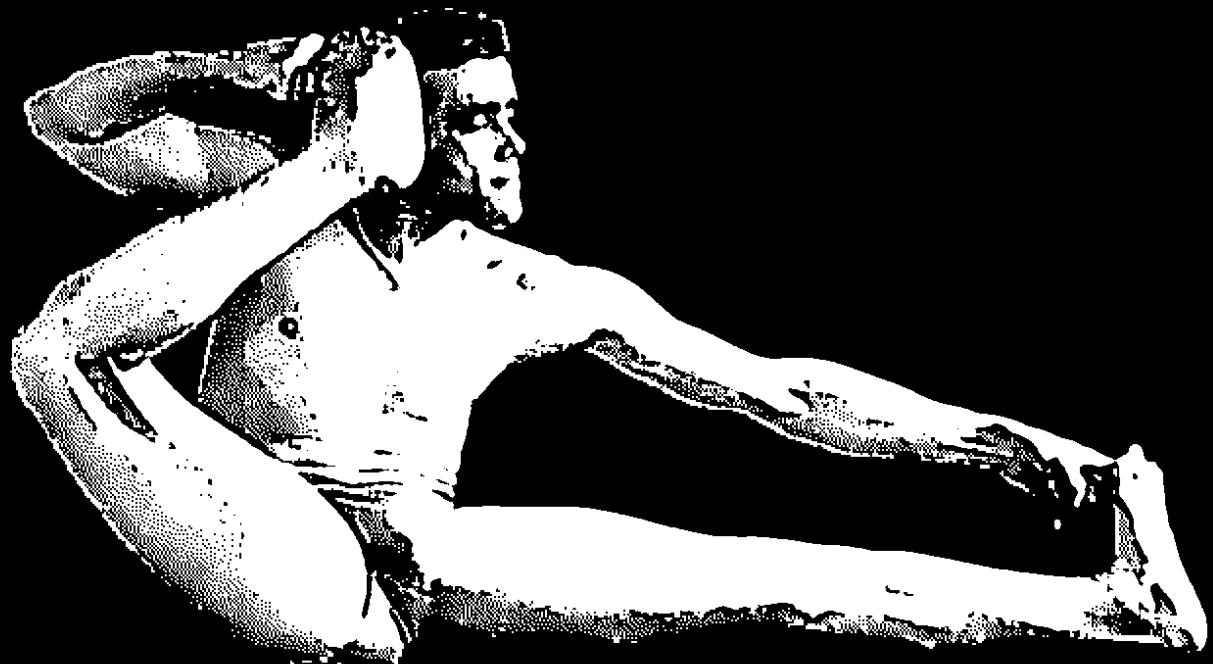






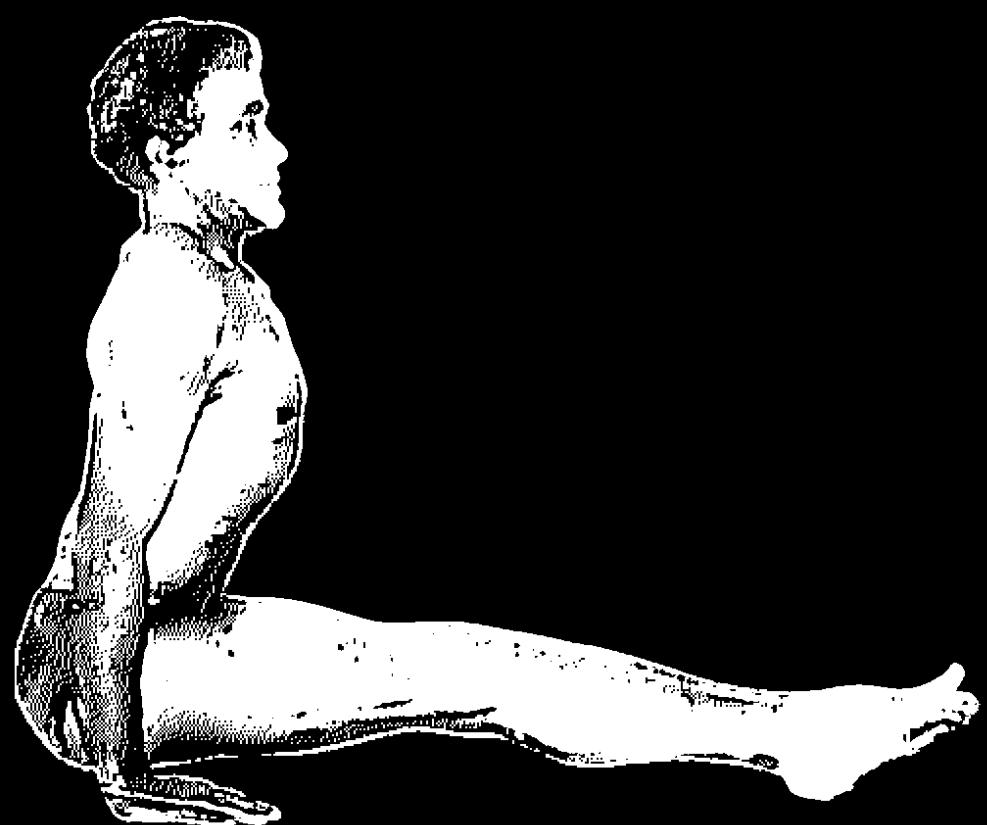


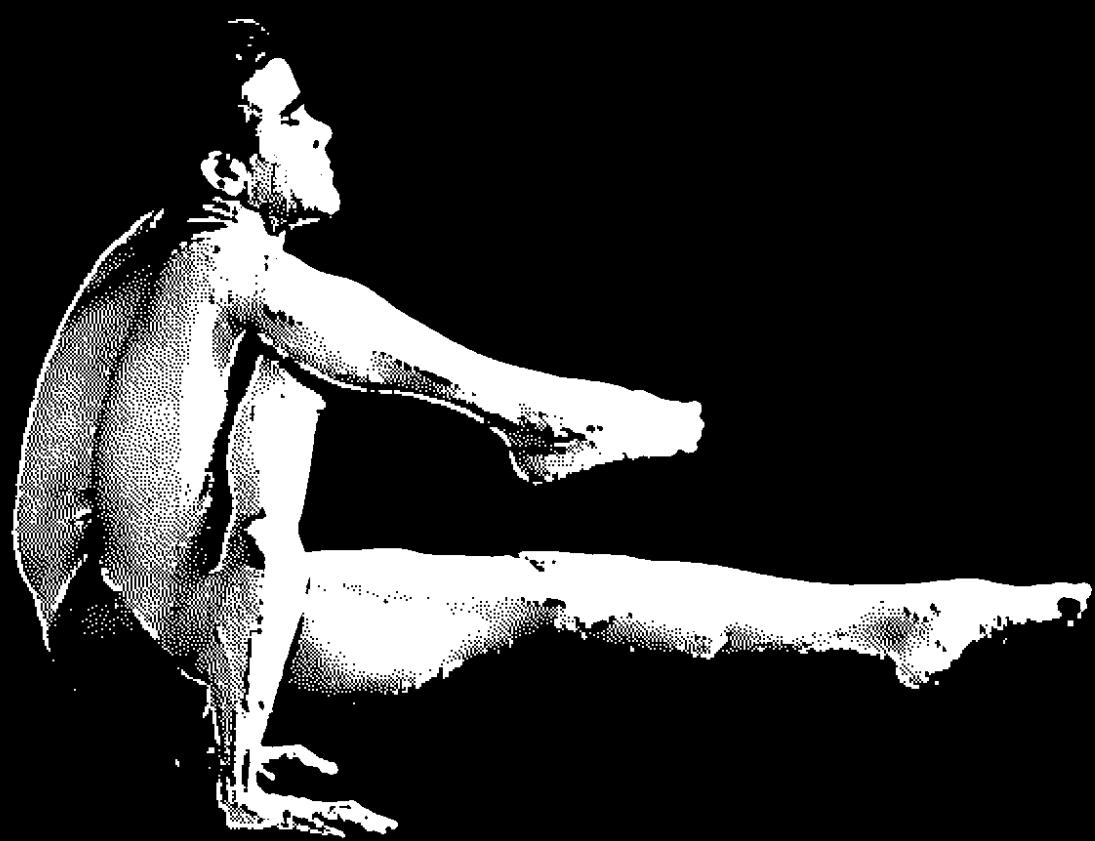




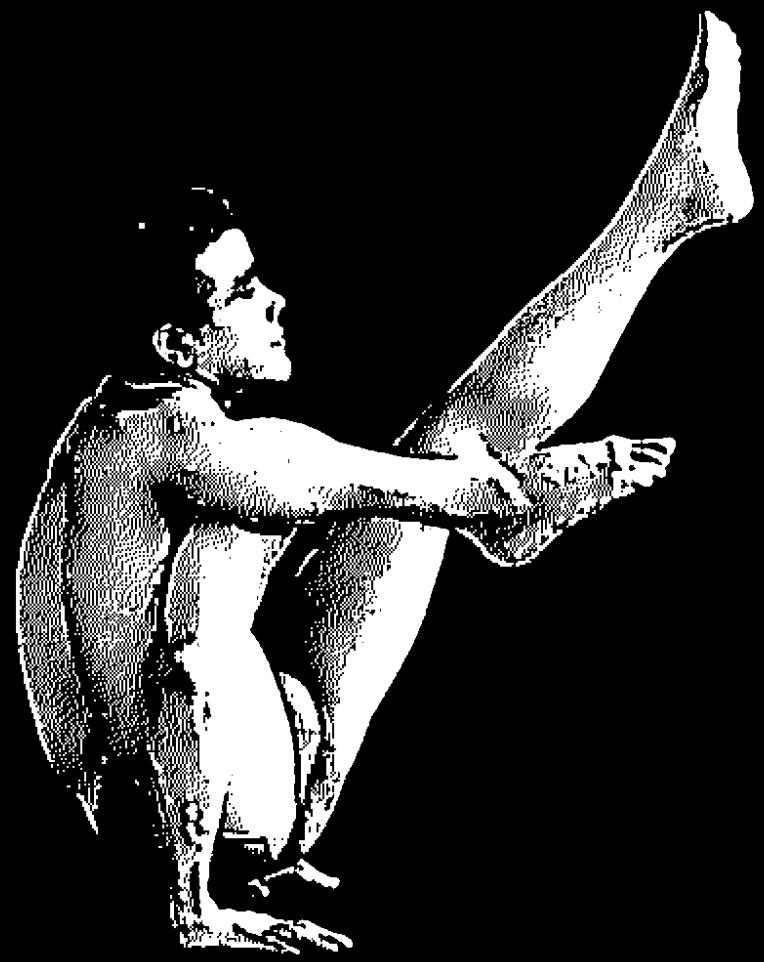










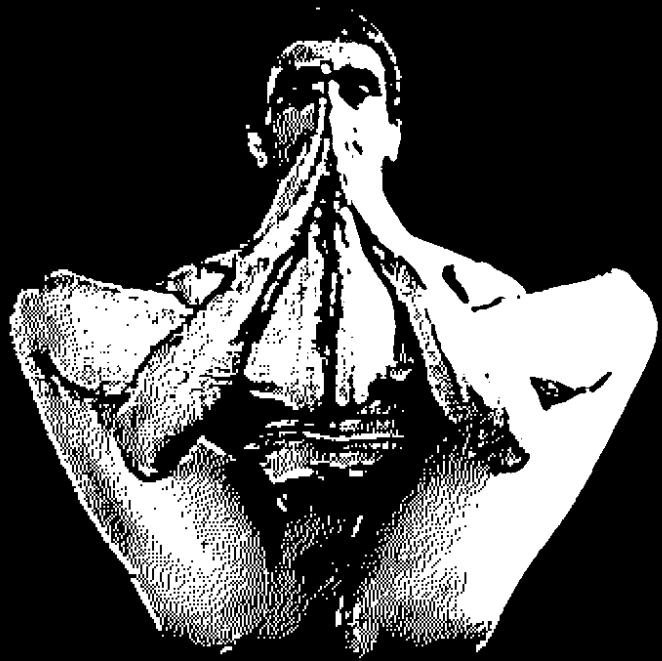










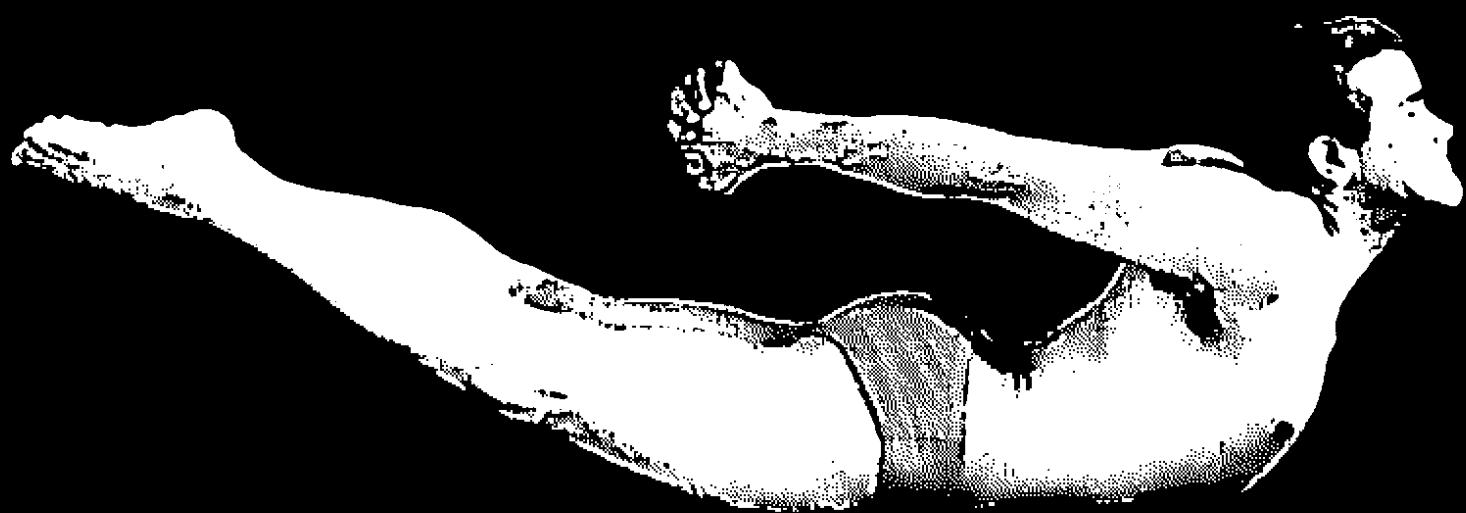




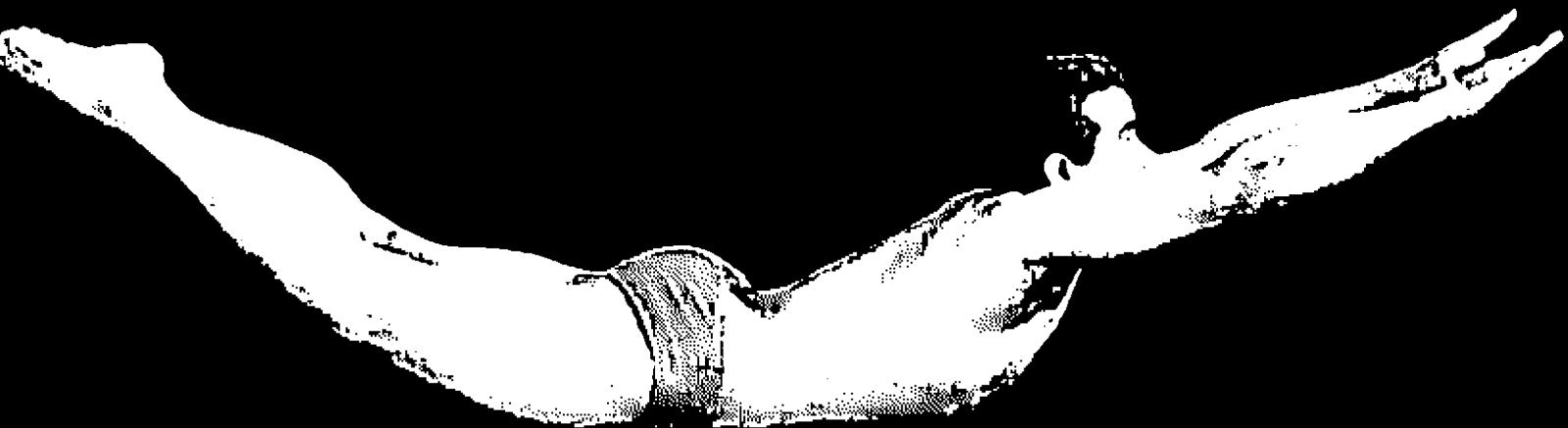


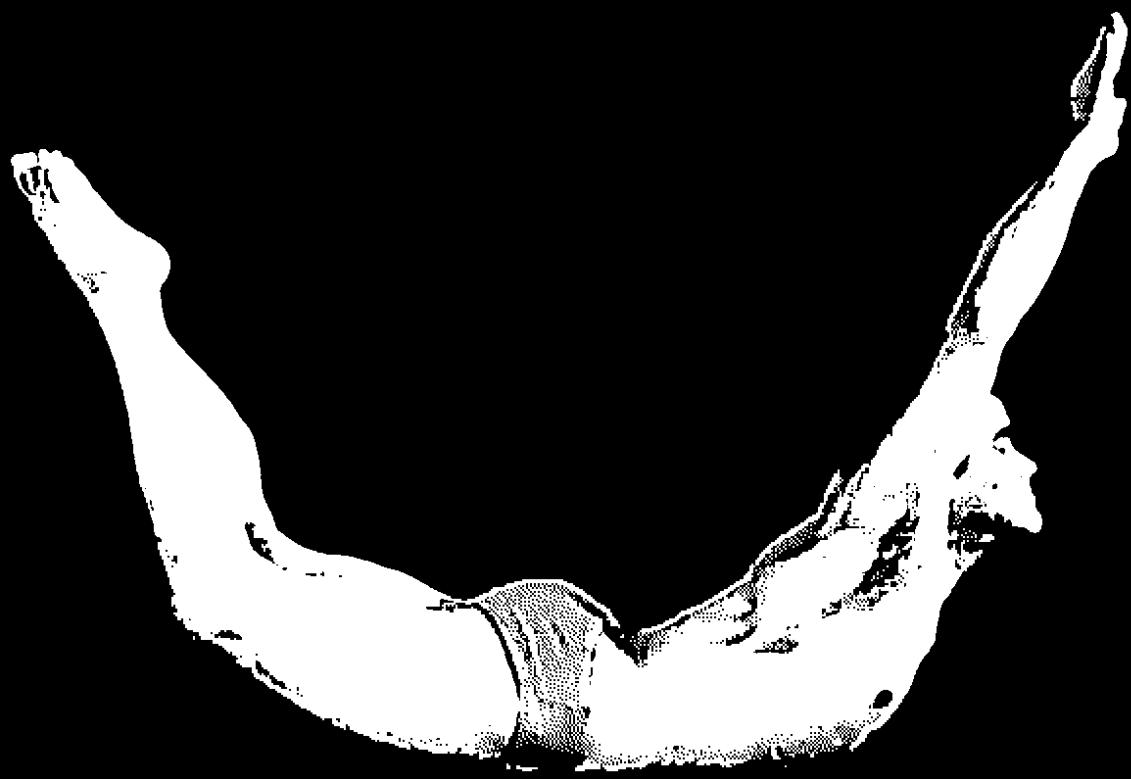










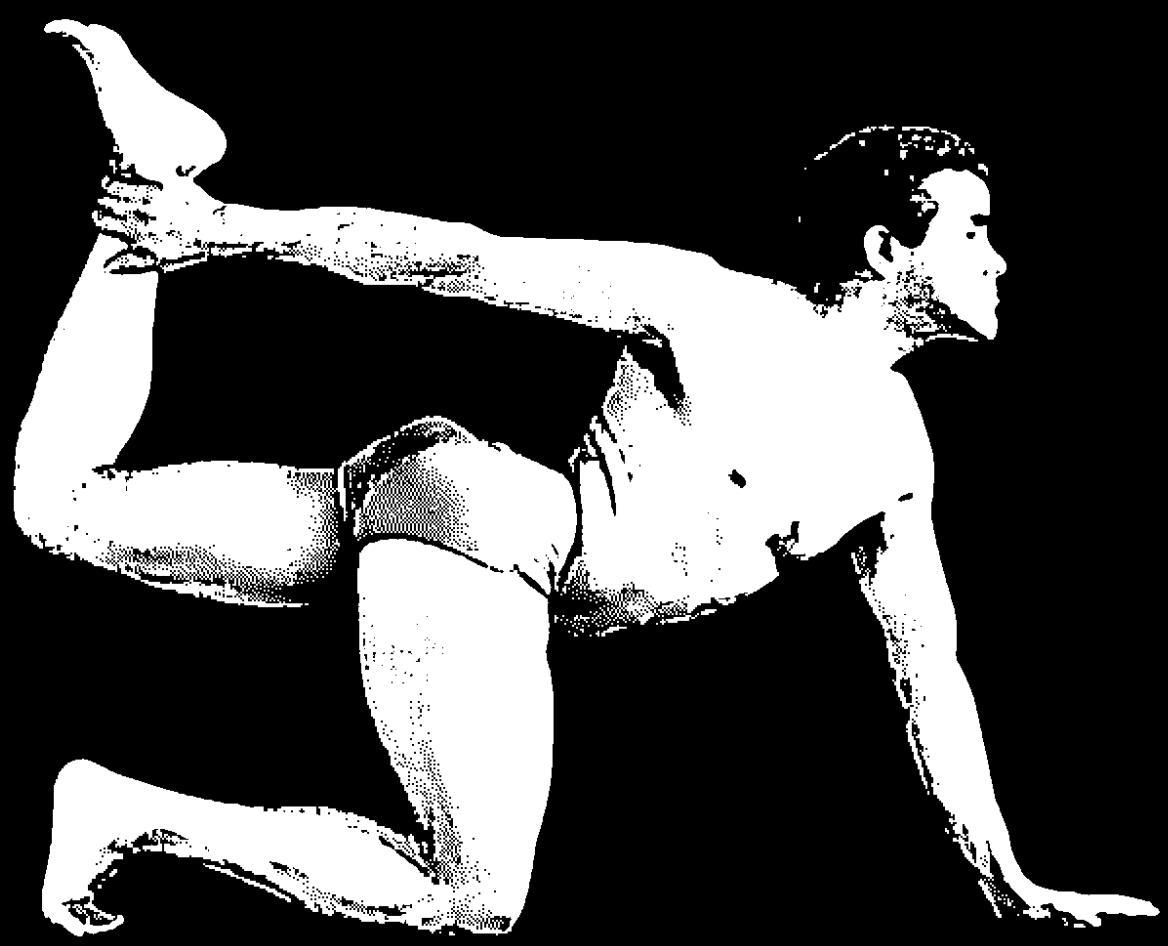




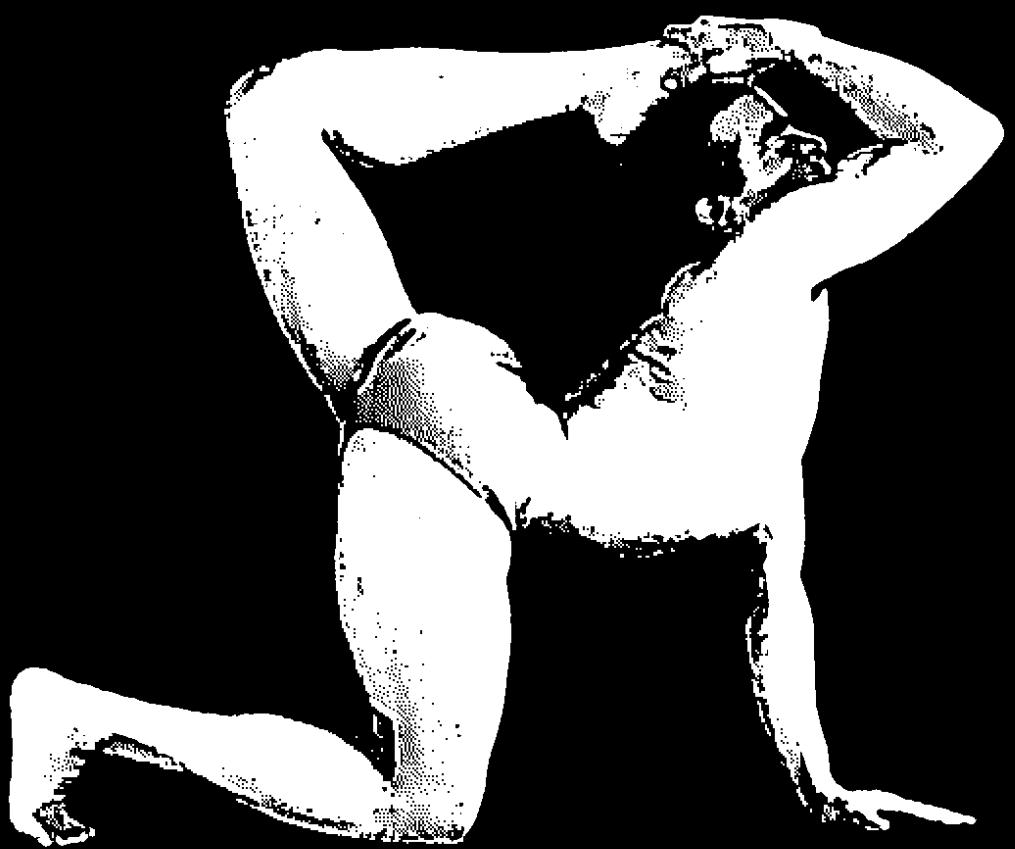


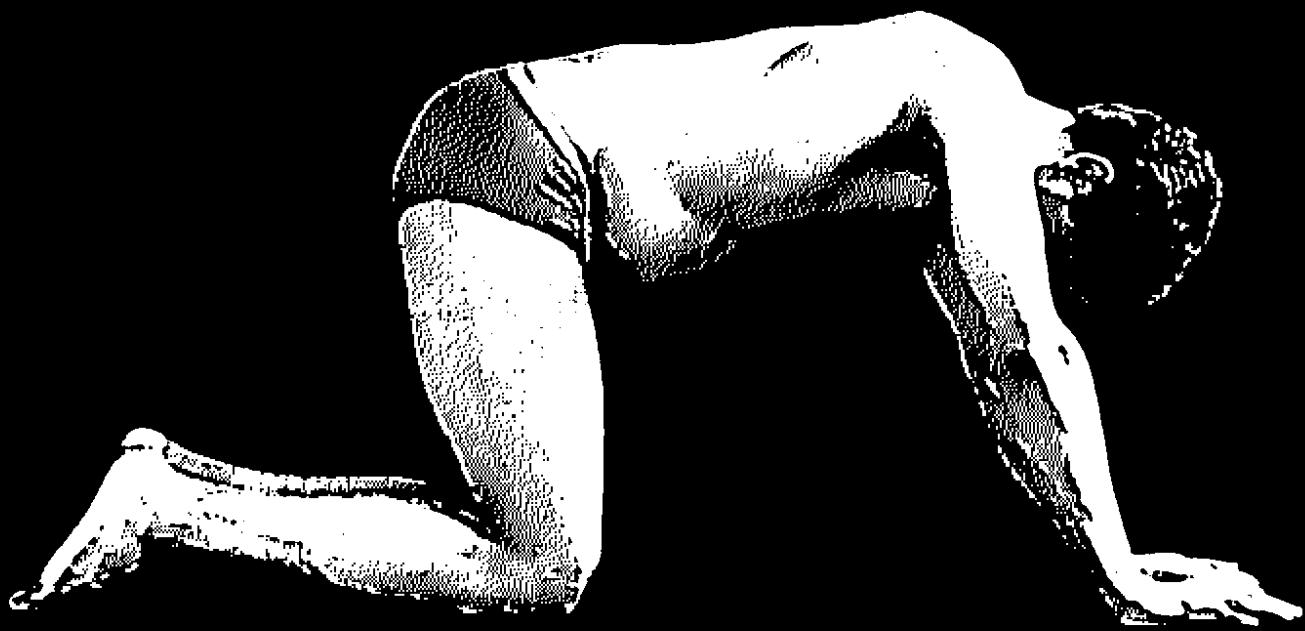


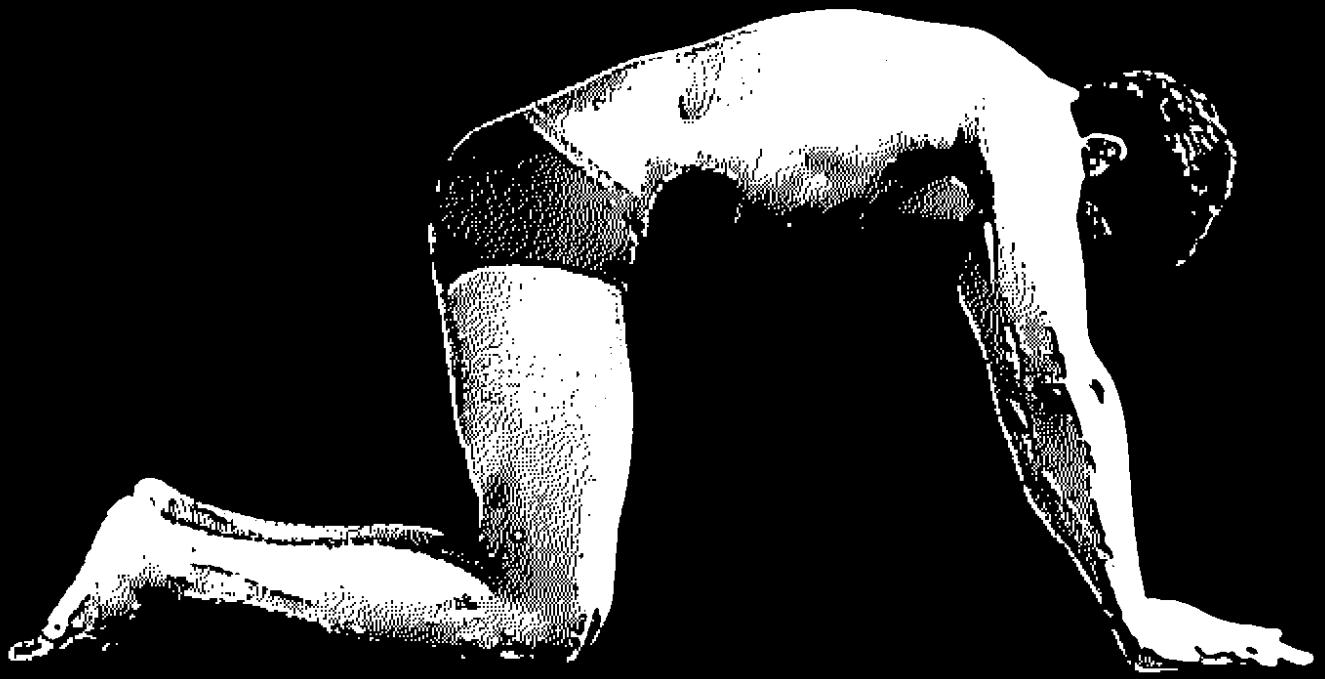


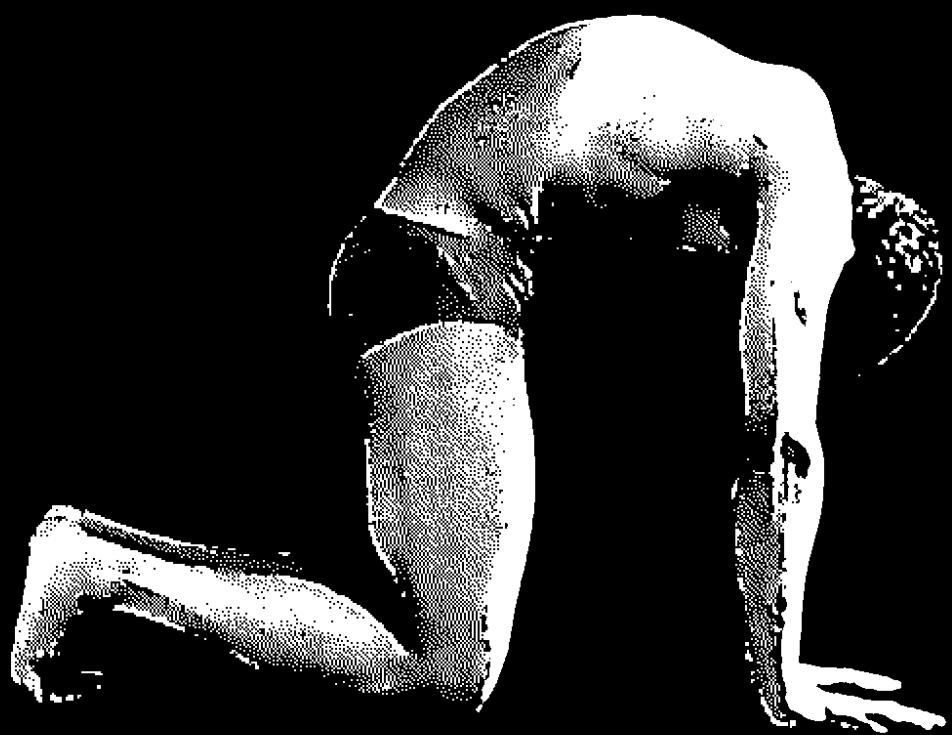


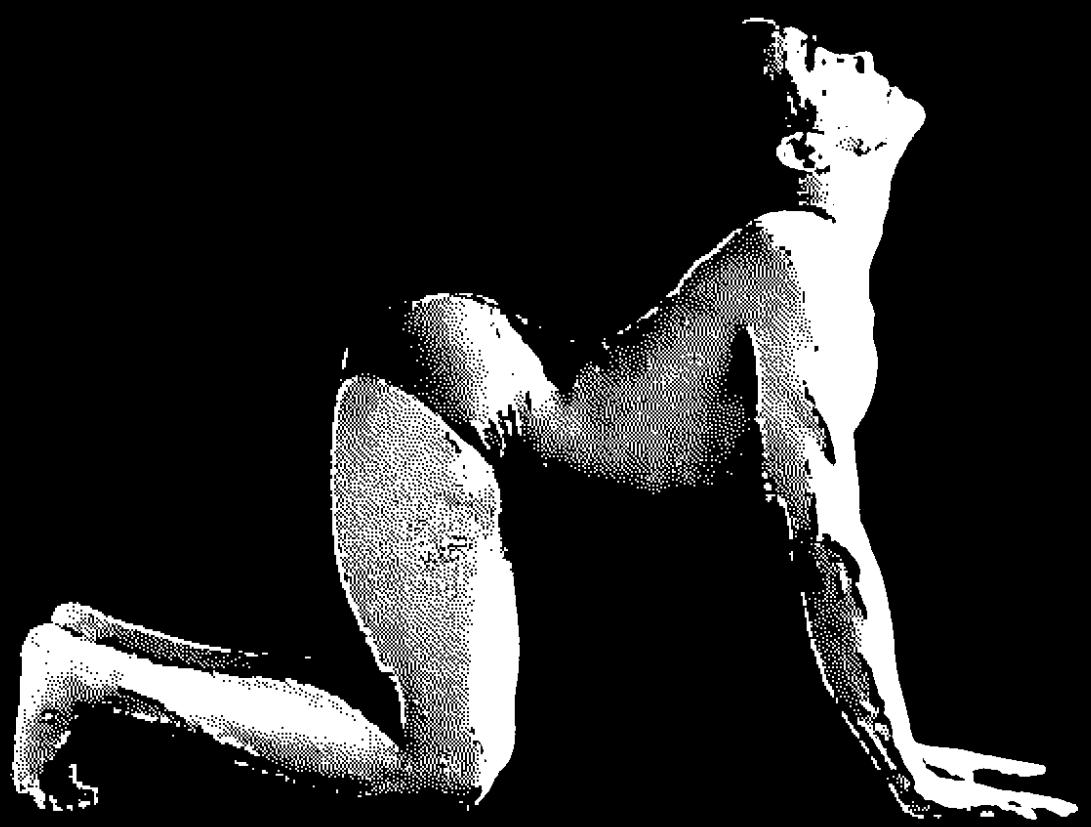


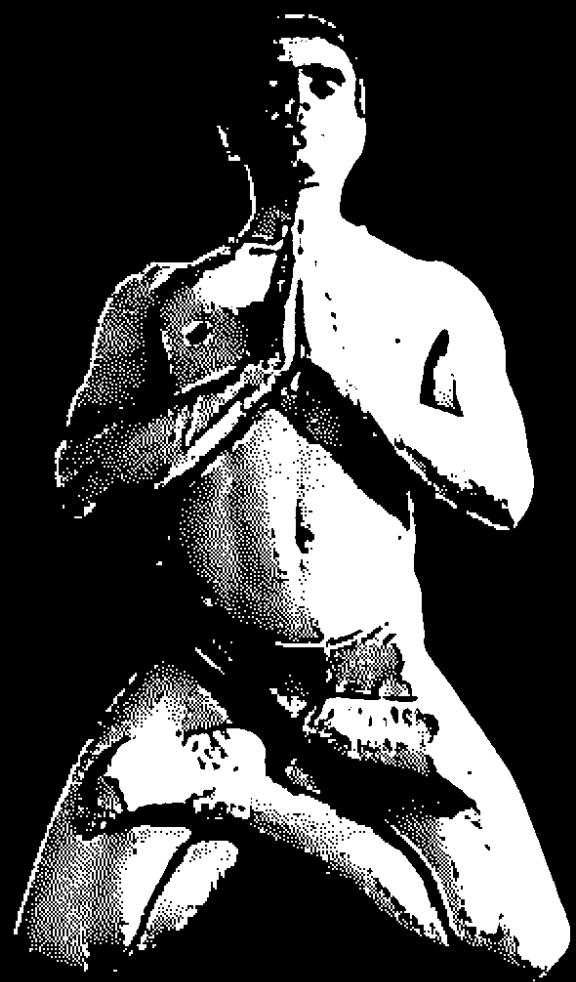








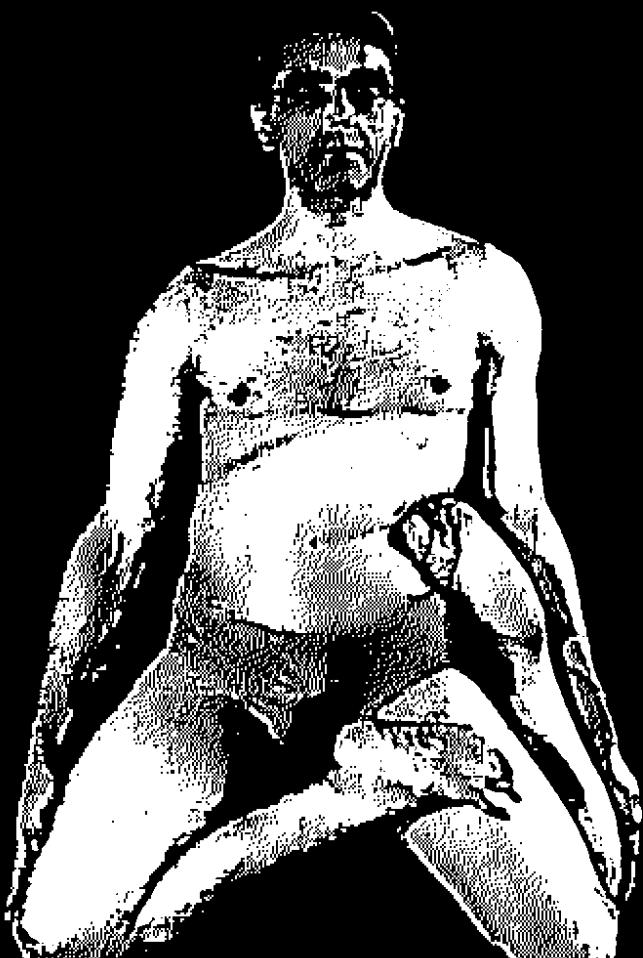












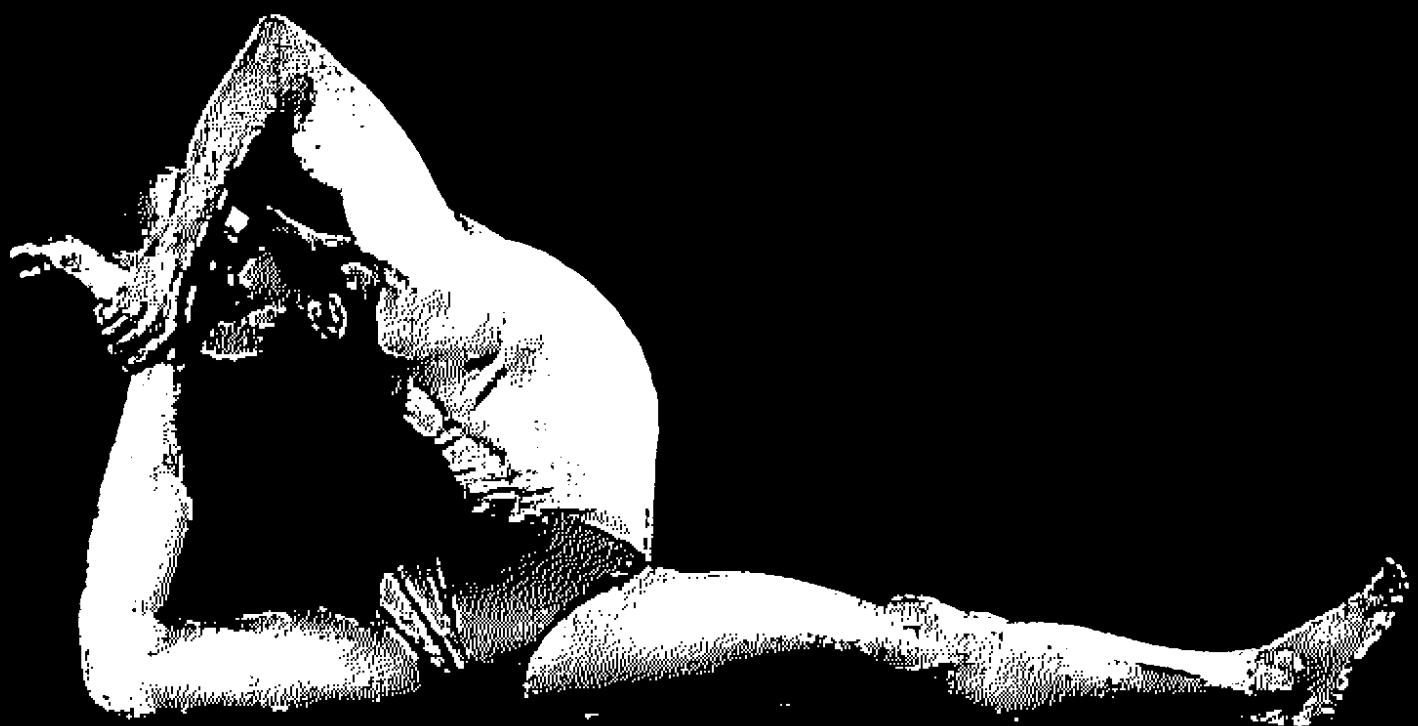






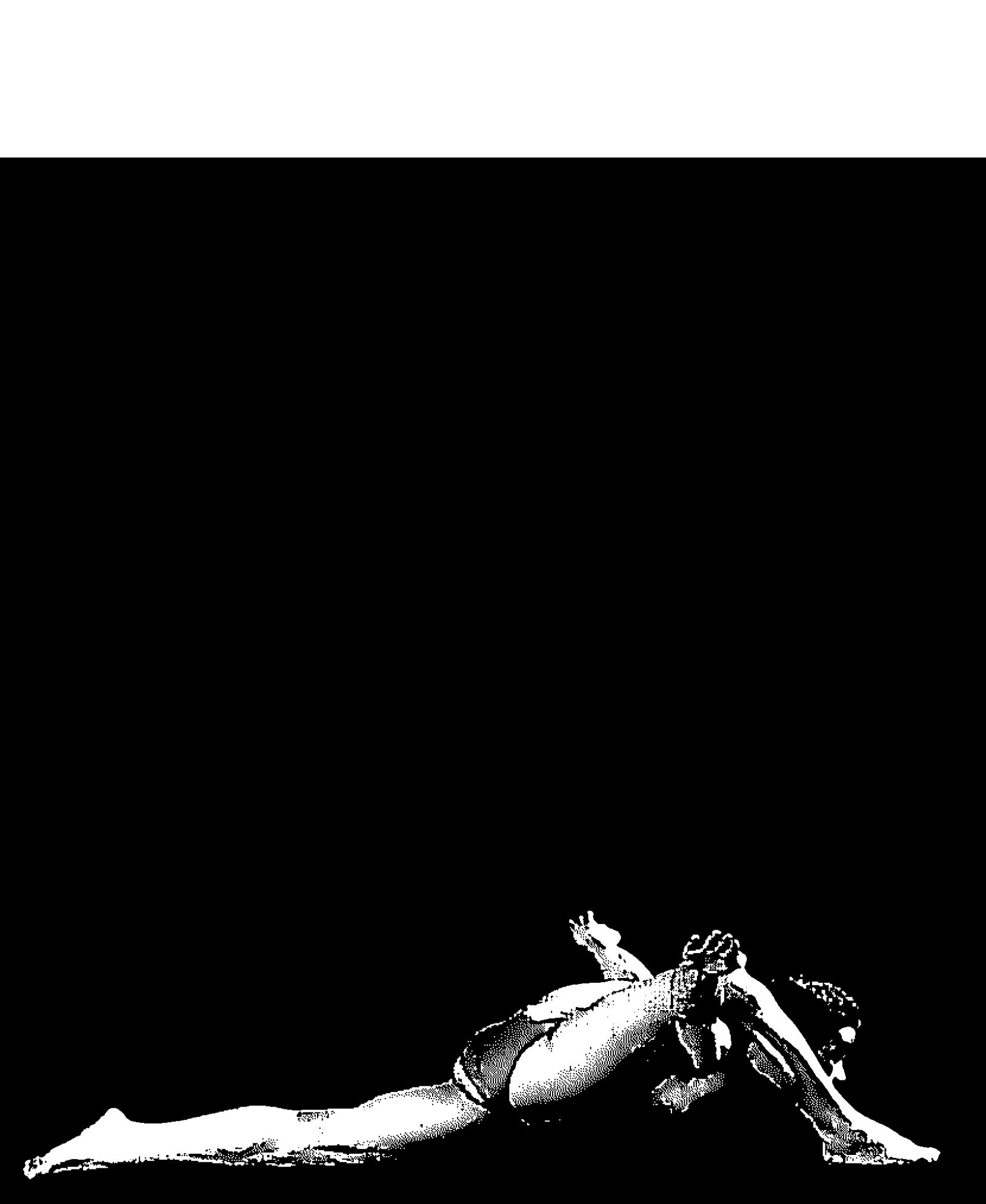




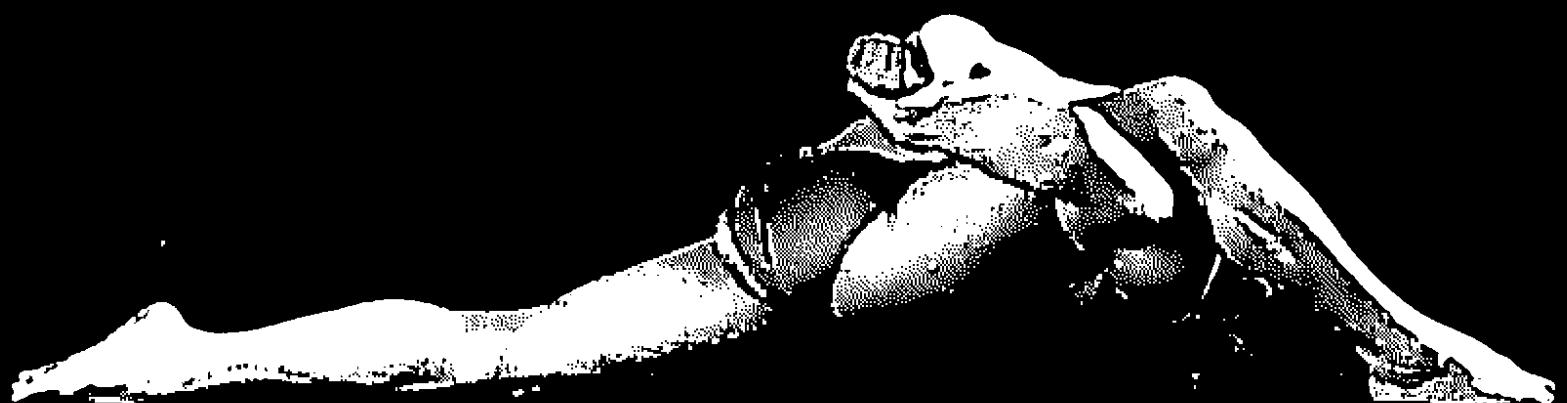








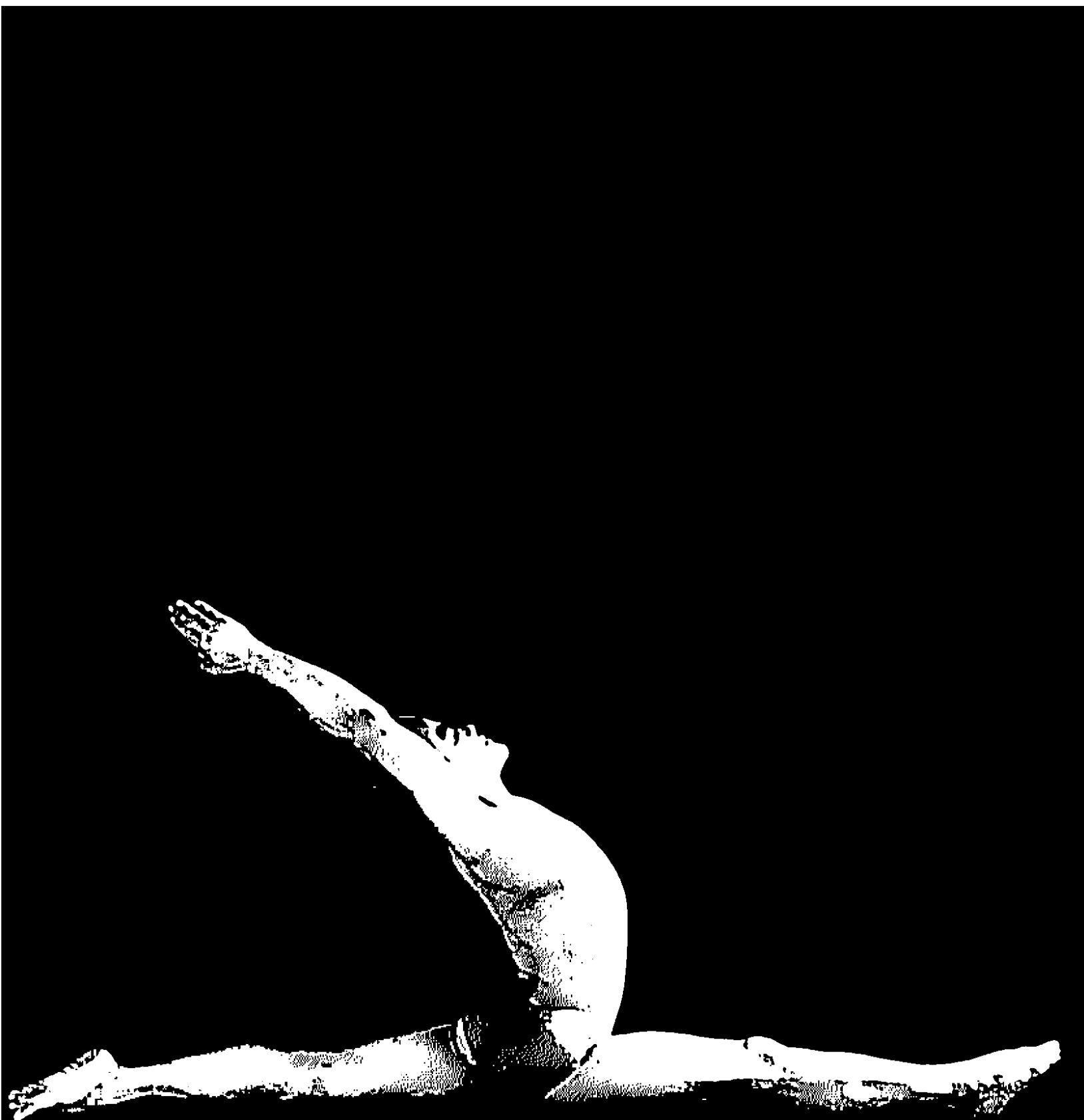








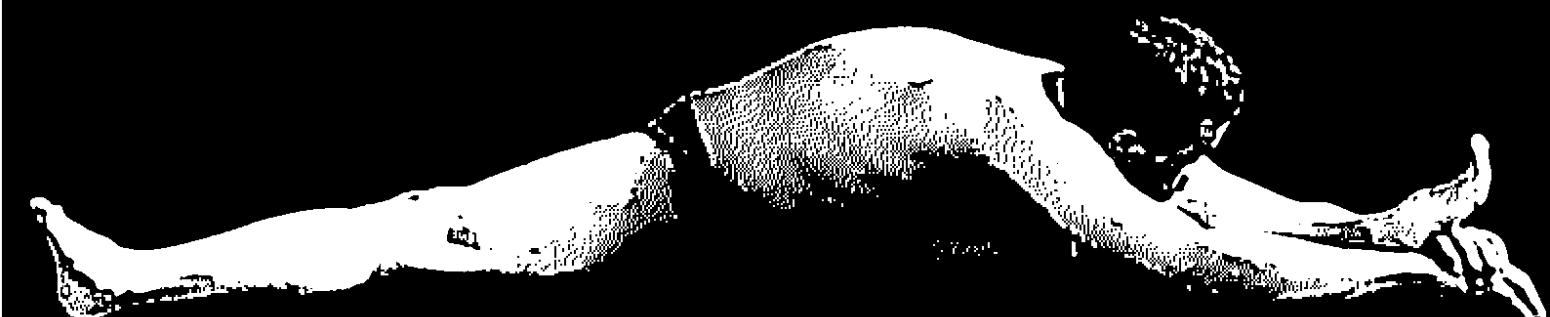


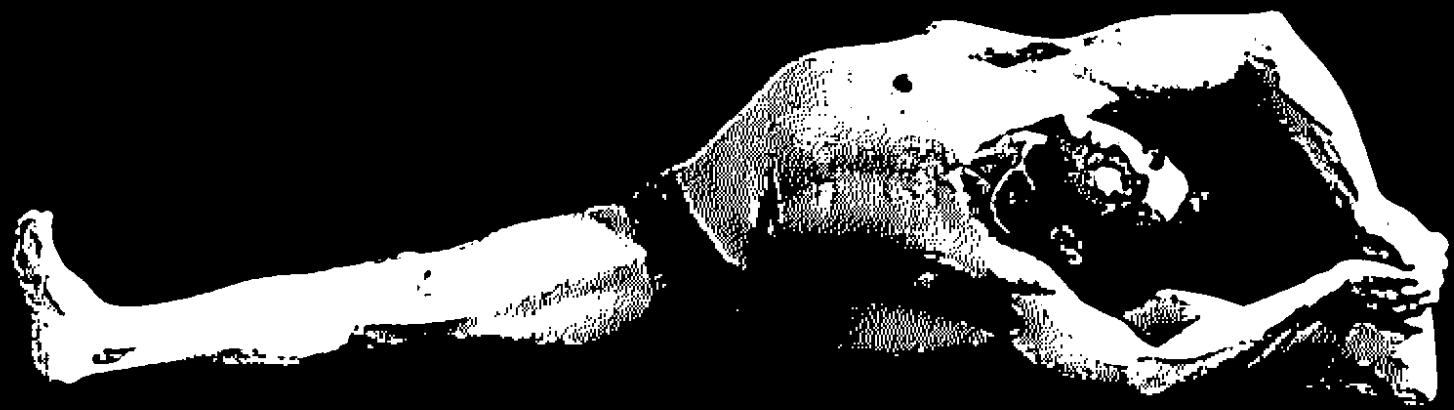






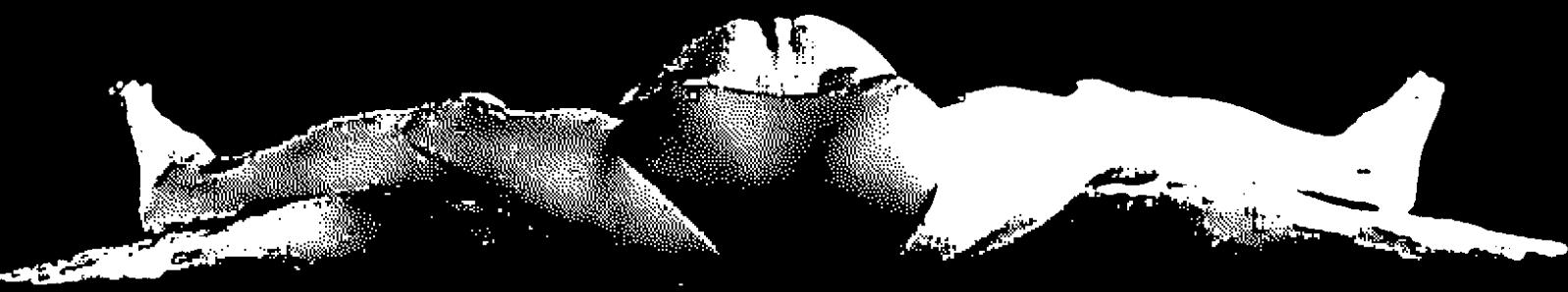














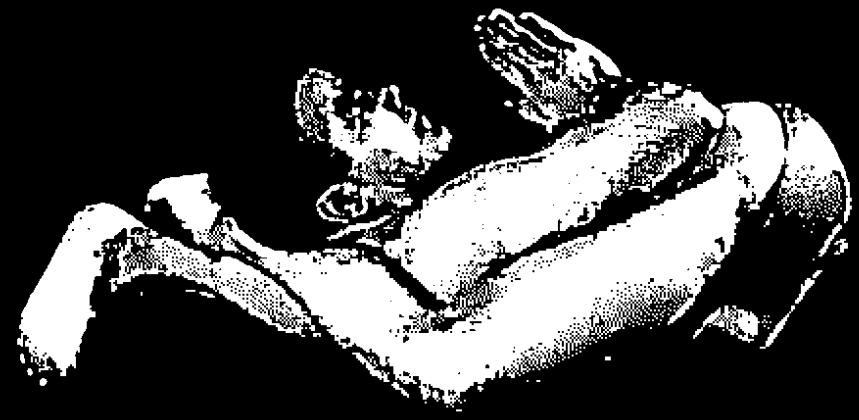






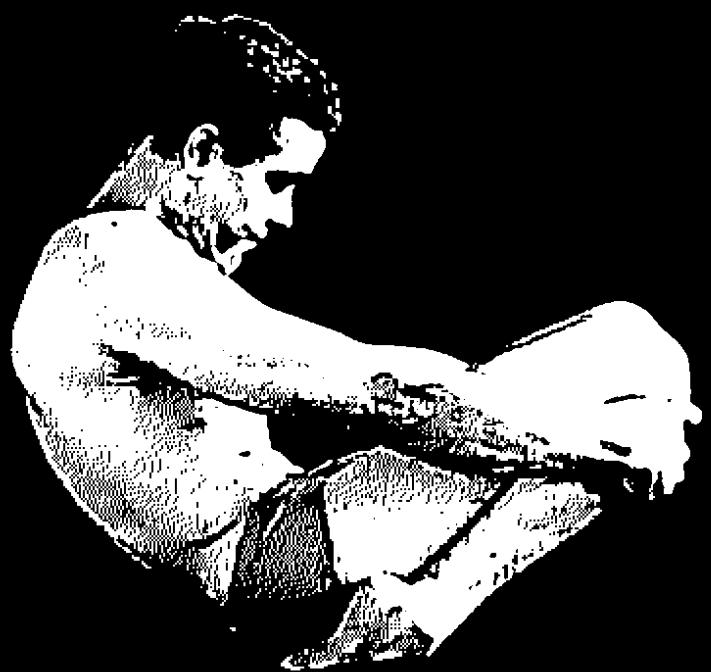








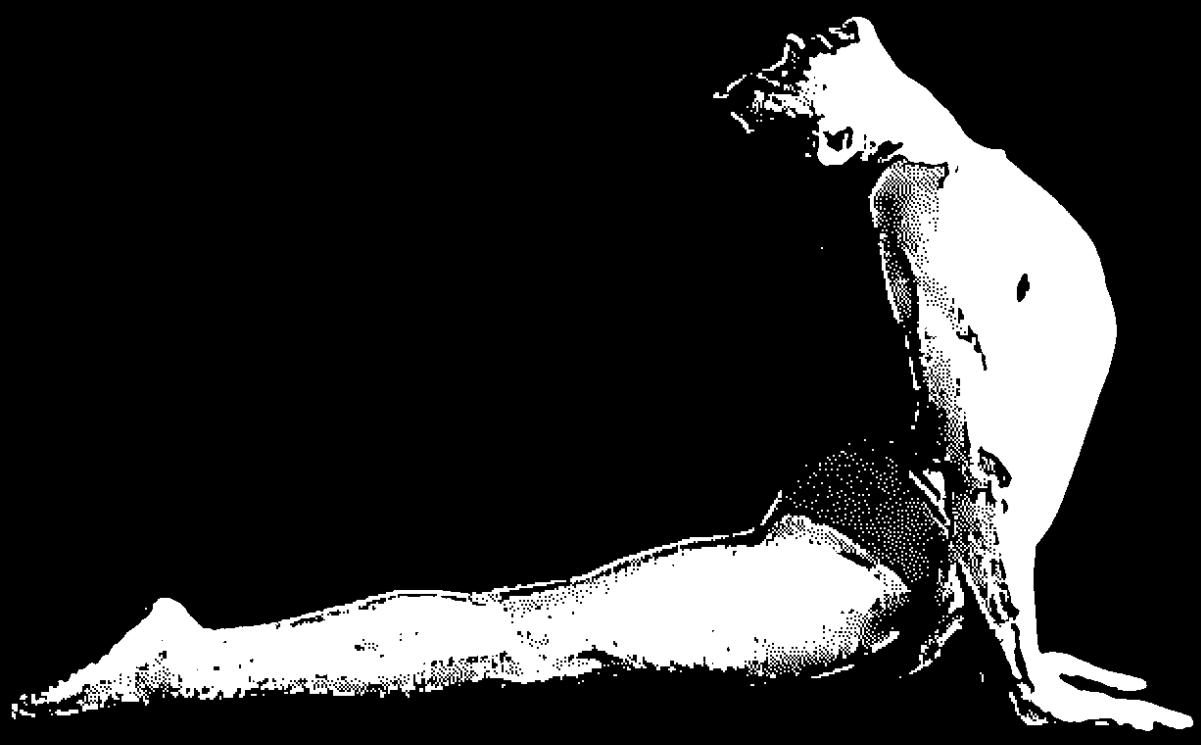










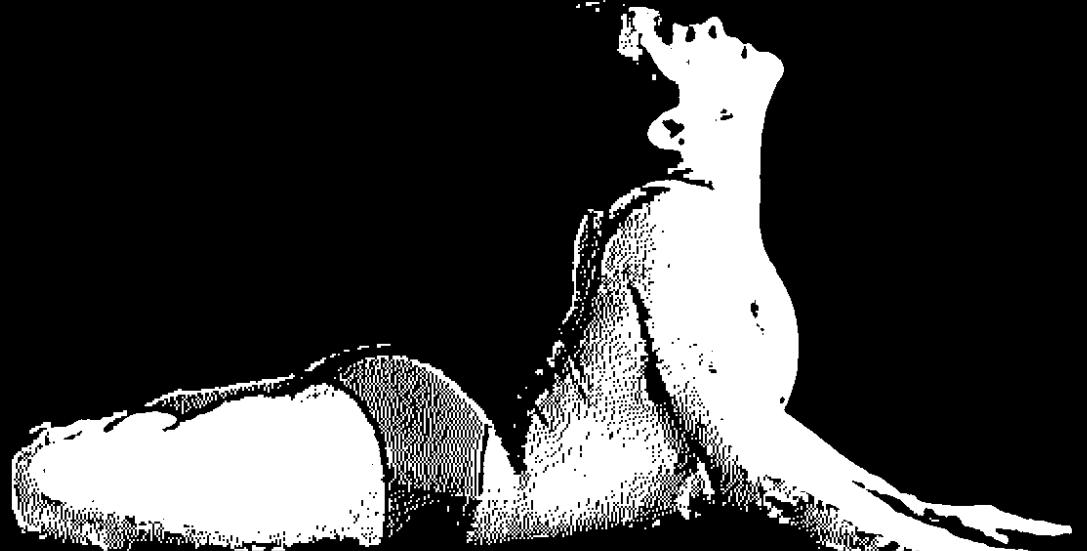








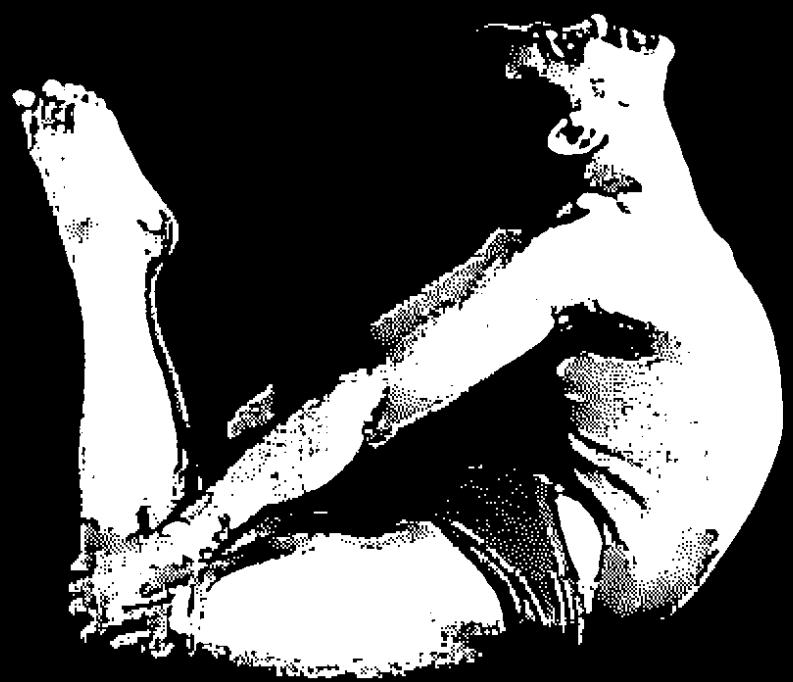




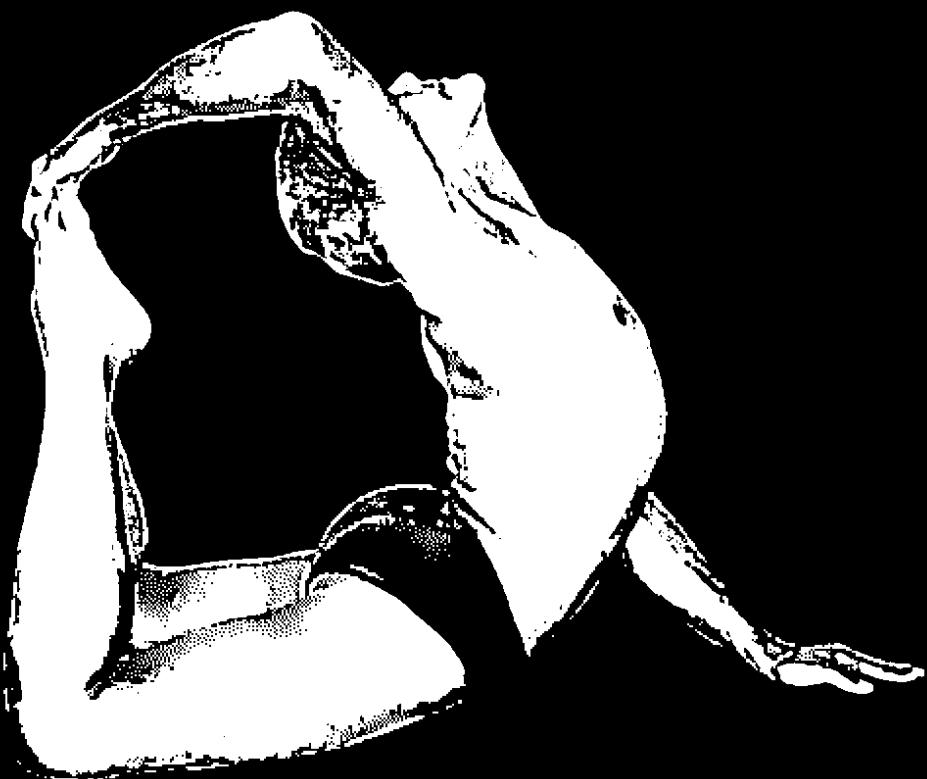


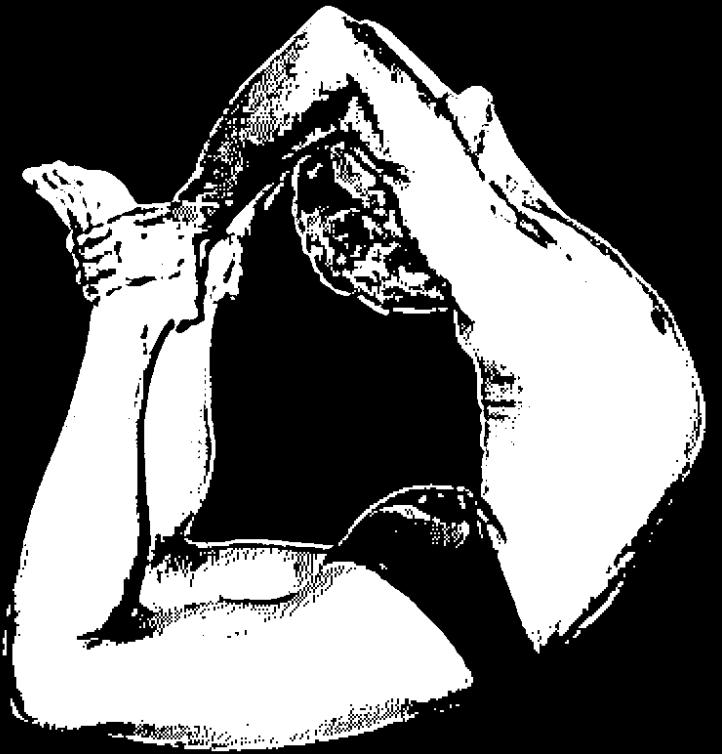




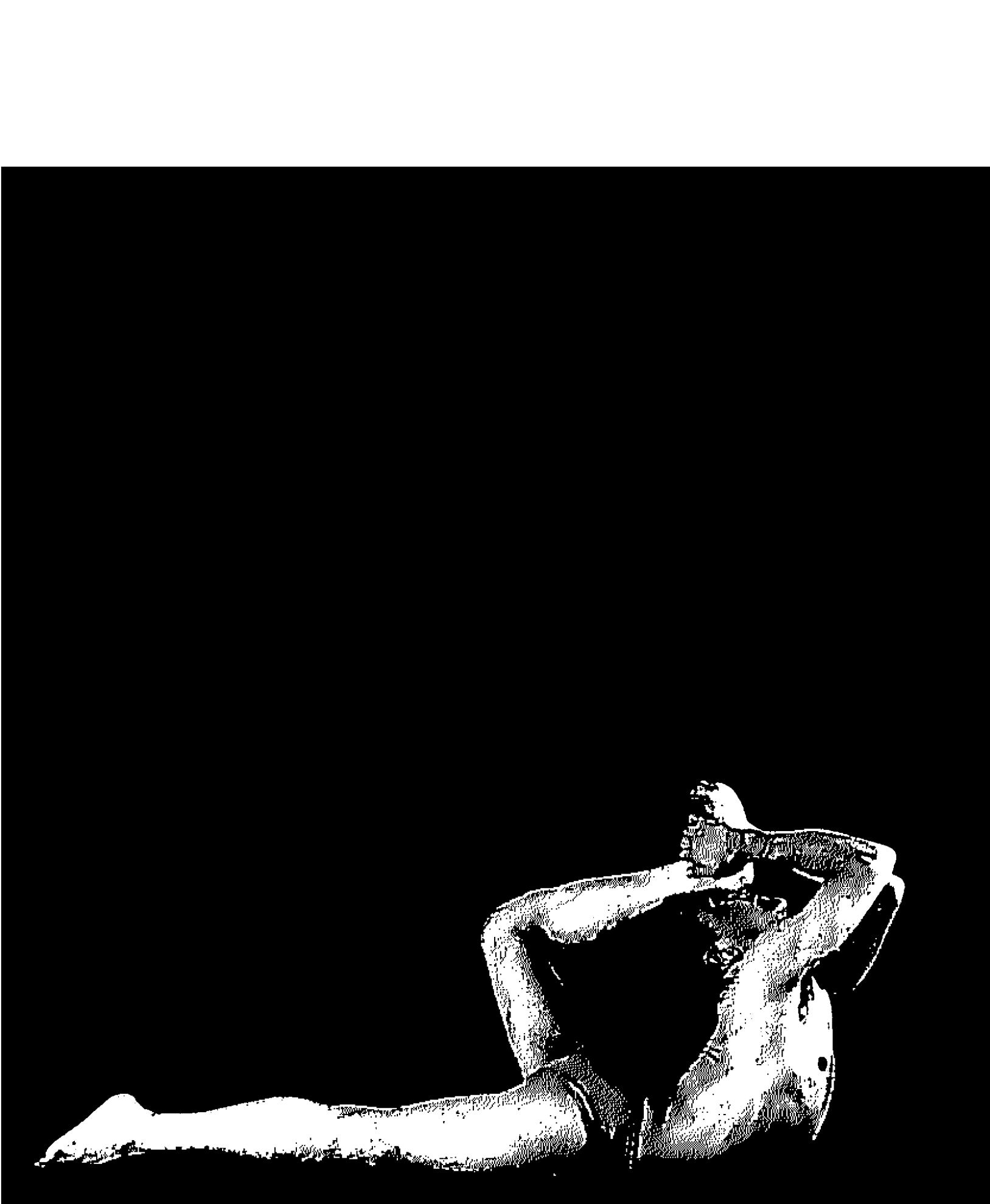


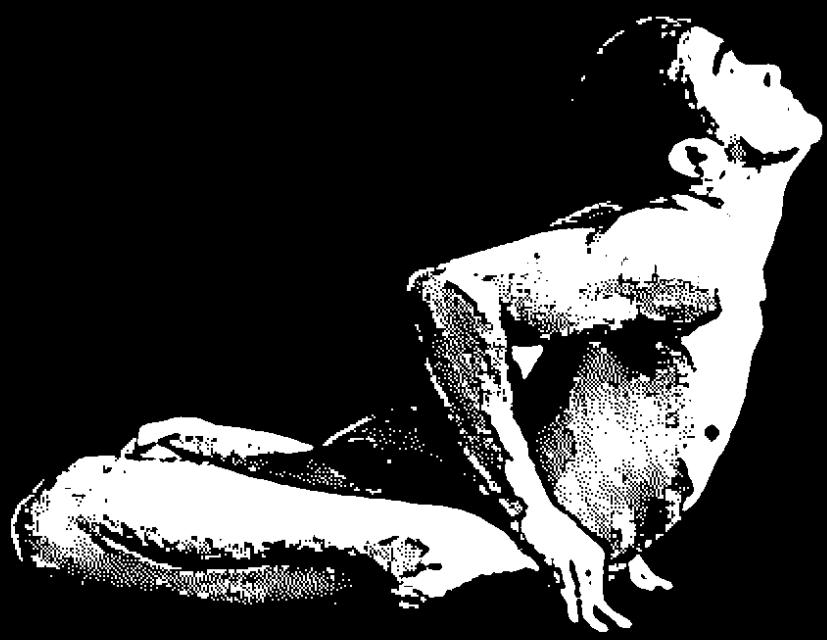




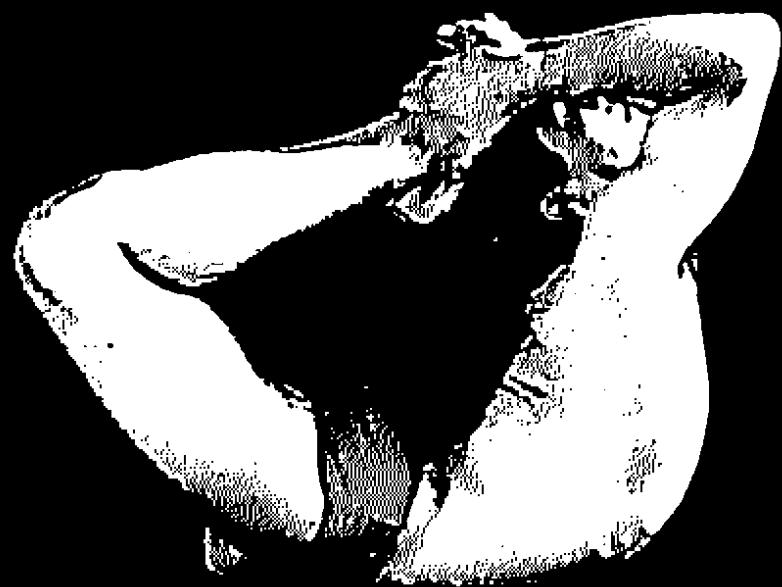




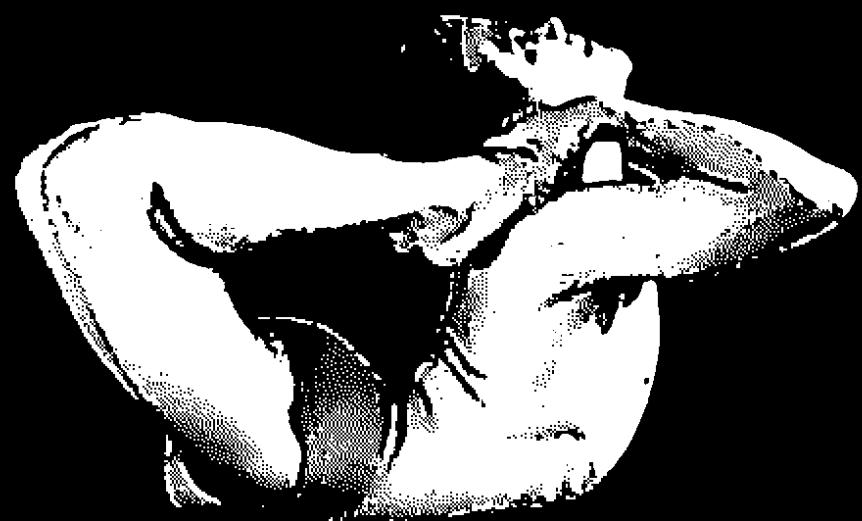


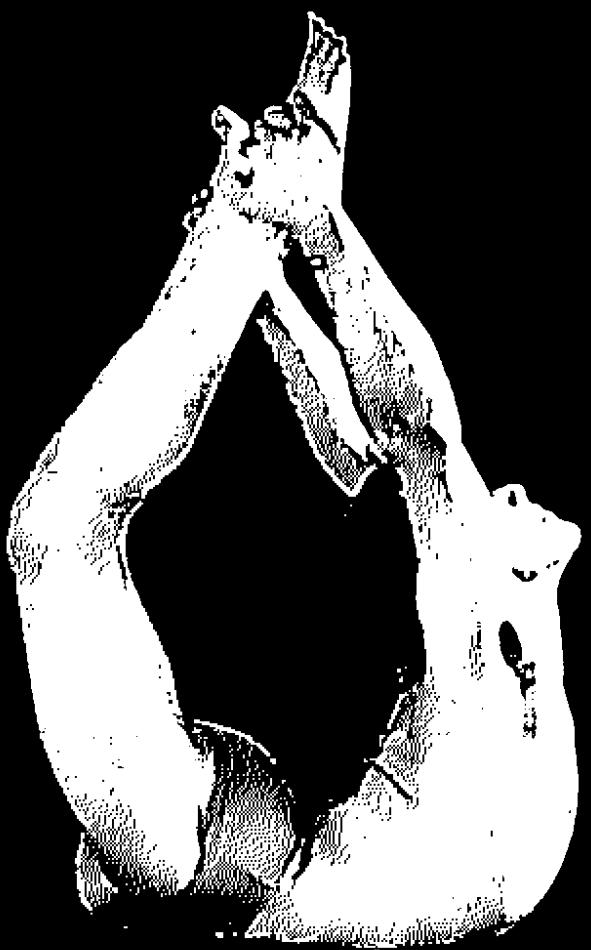


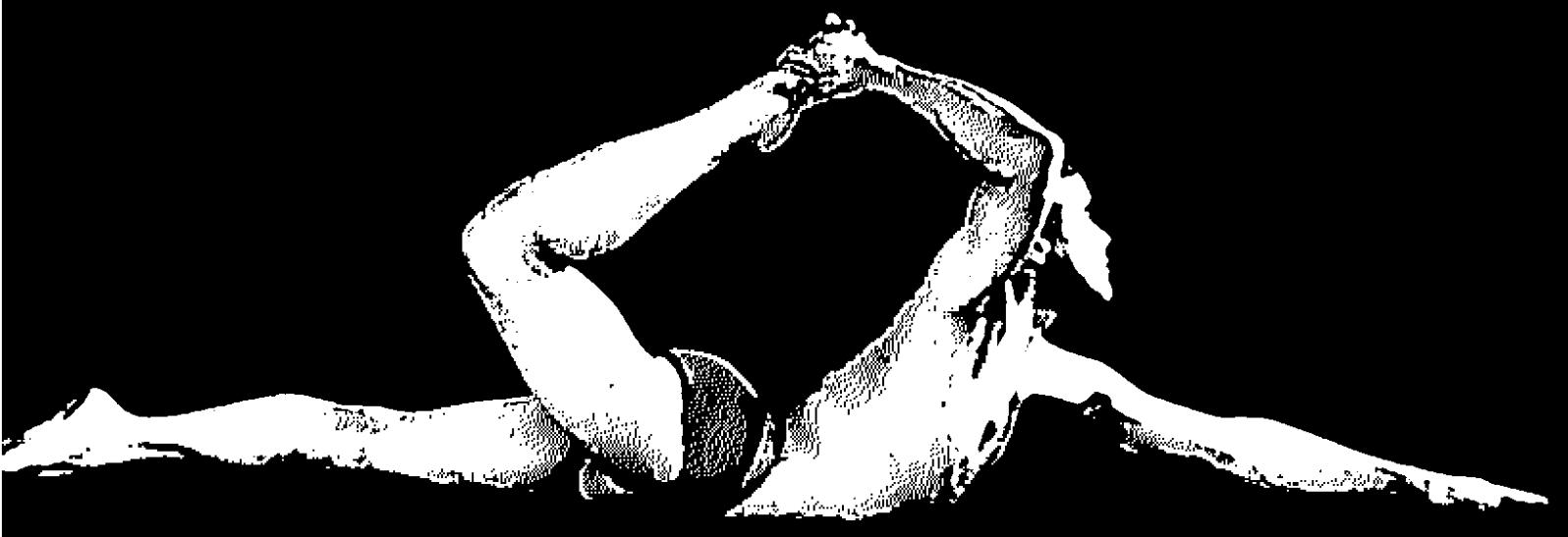




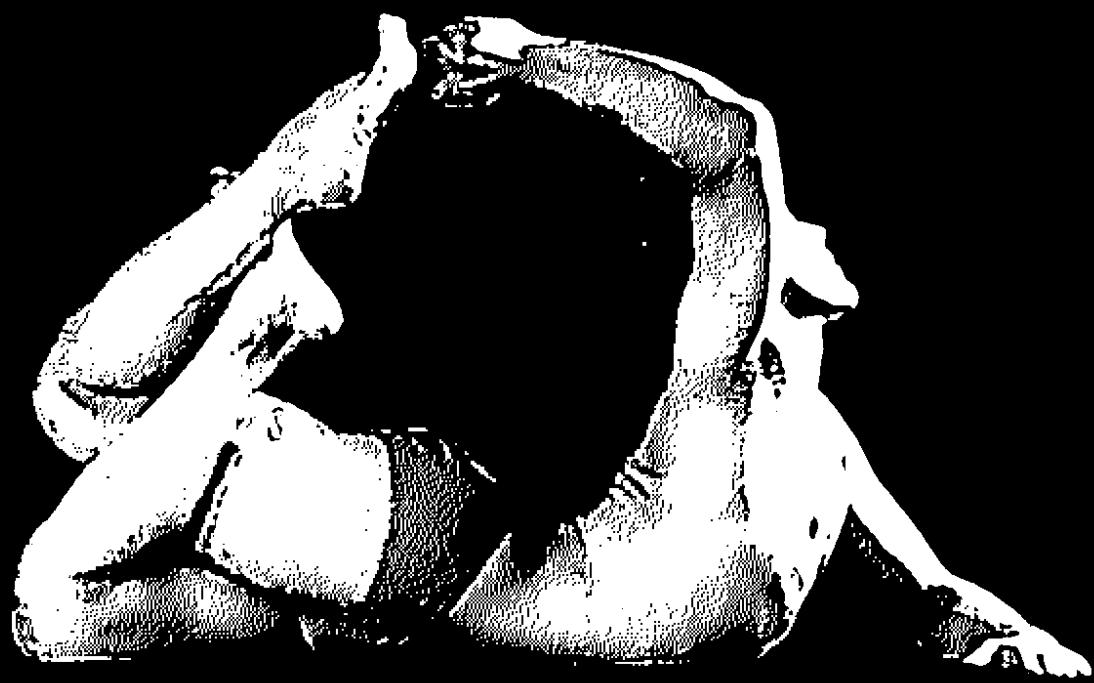


















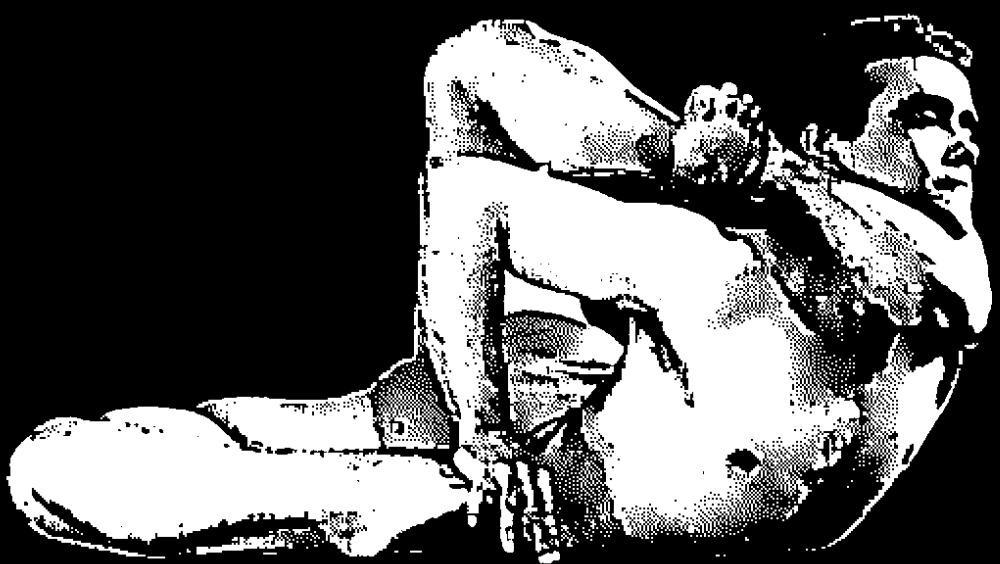






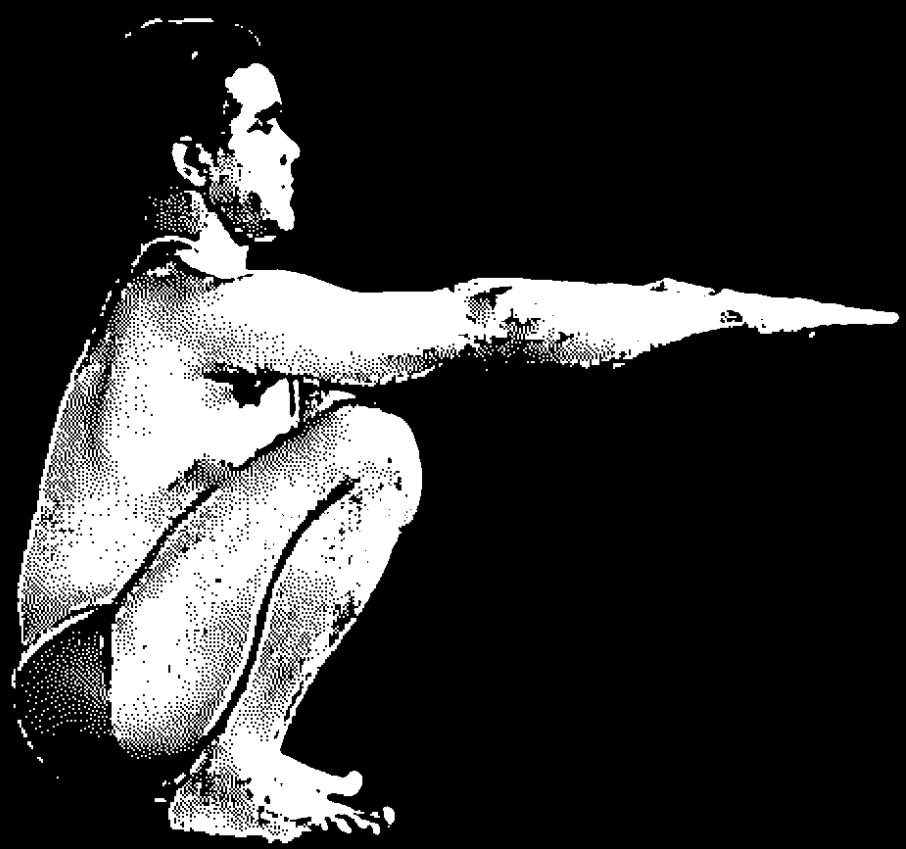


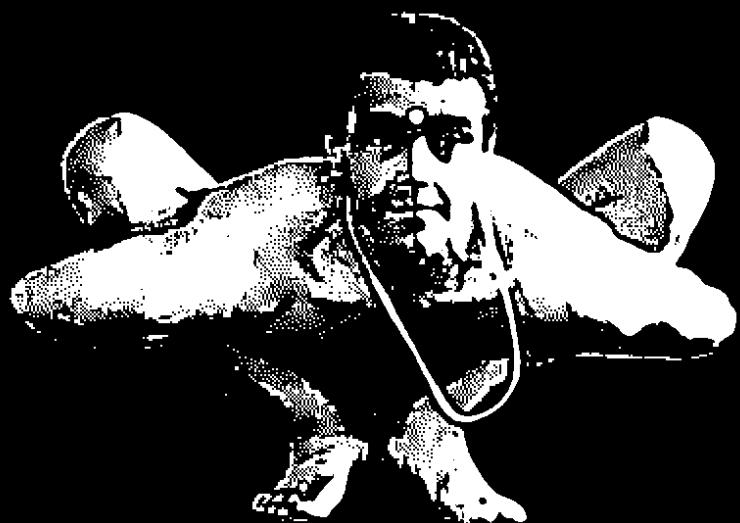


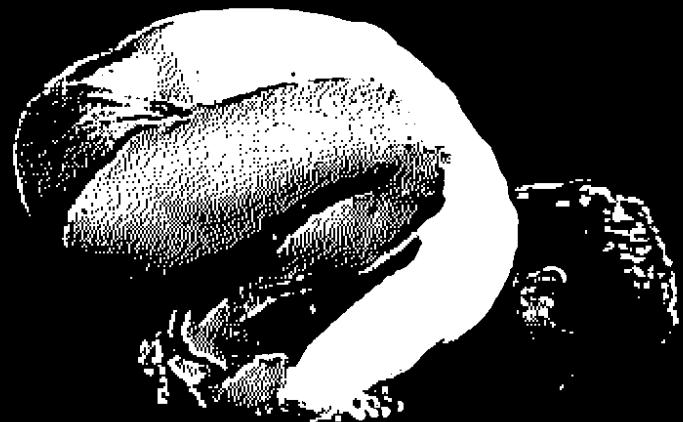


Cheraudasana



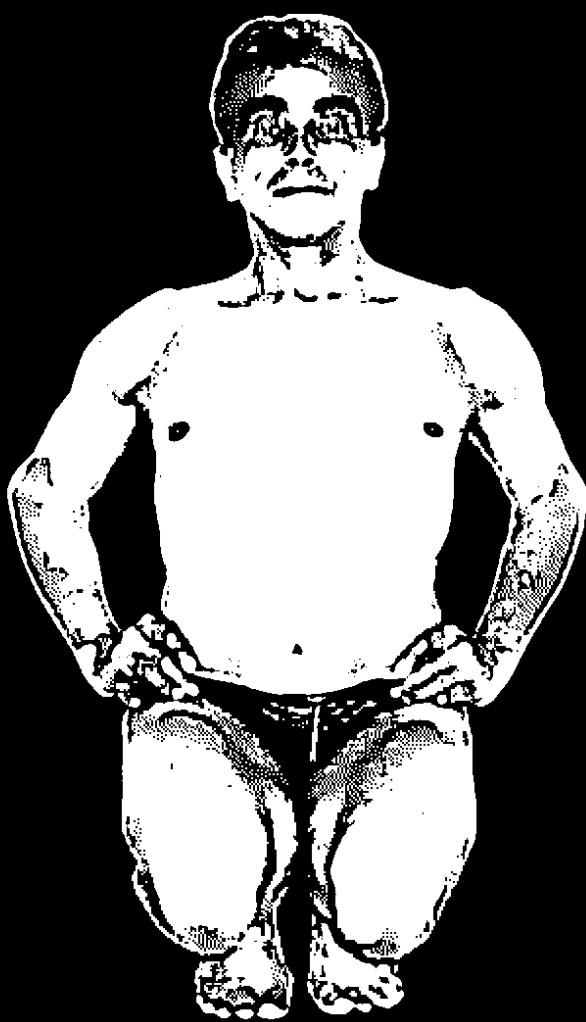


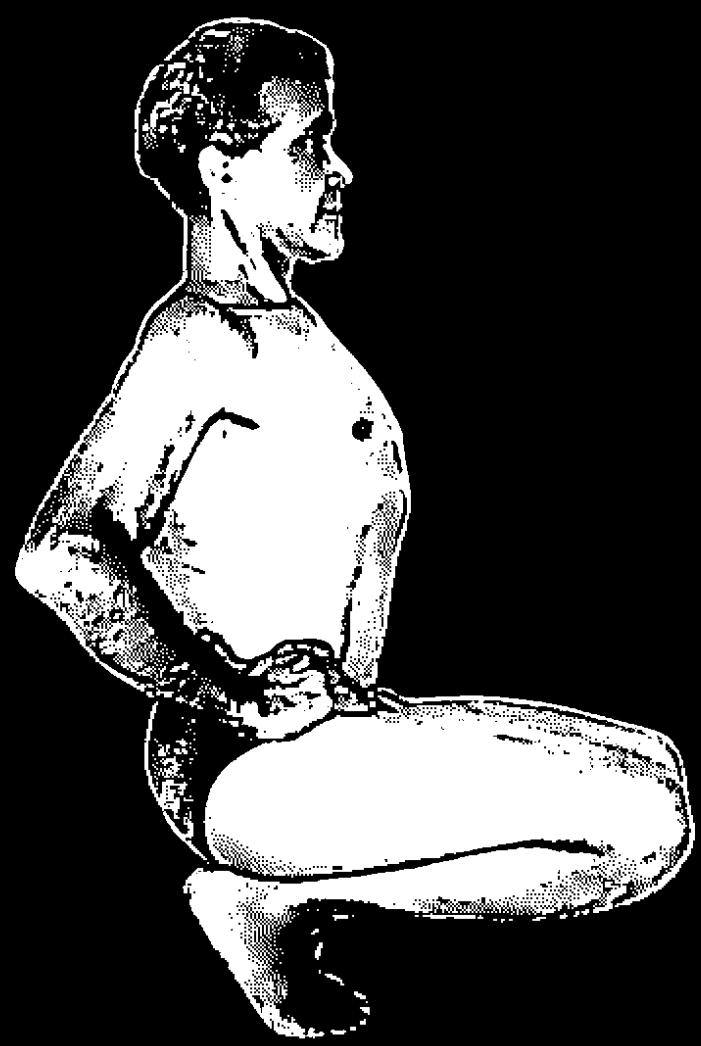




















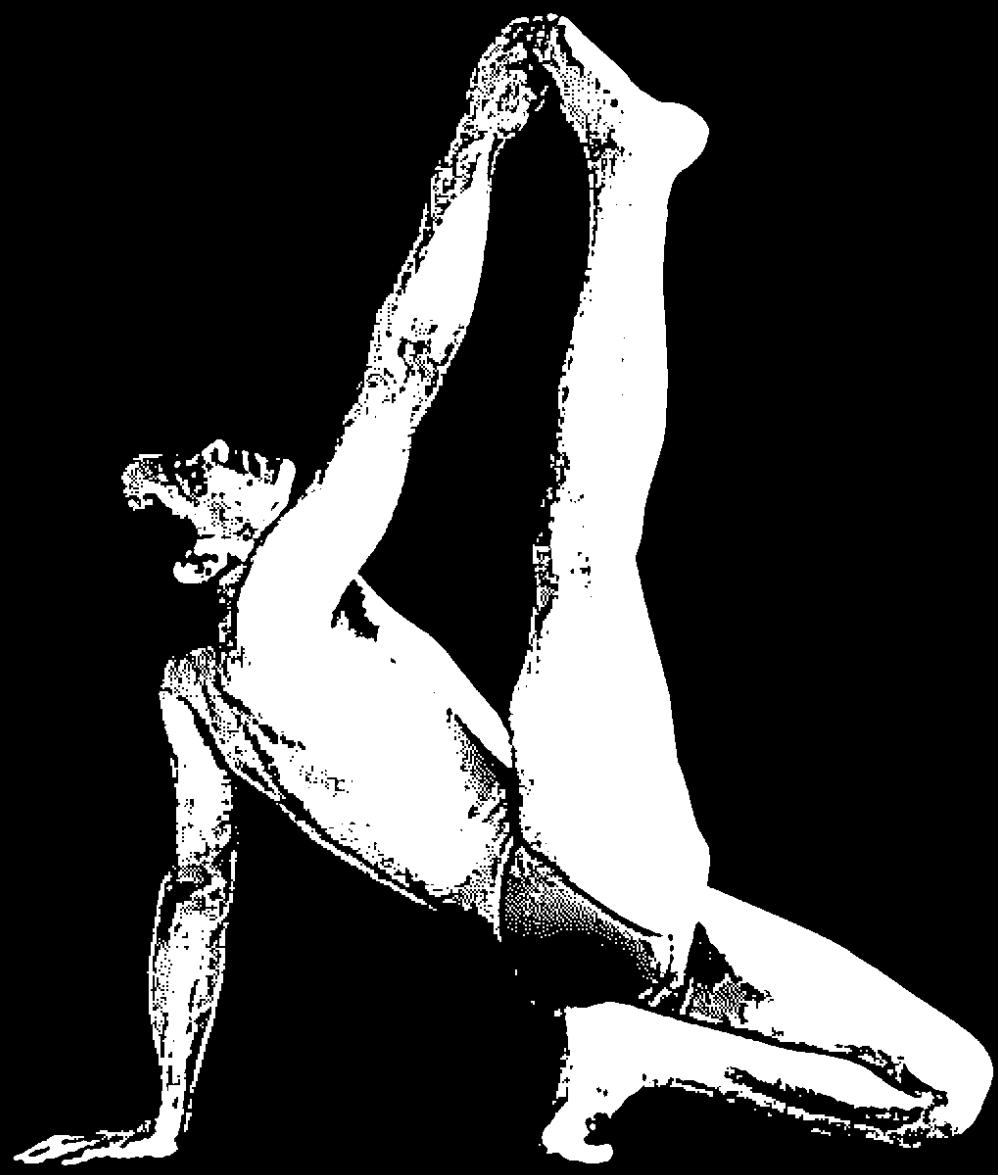




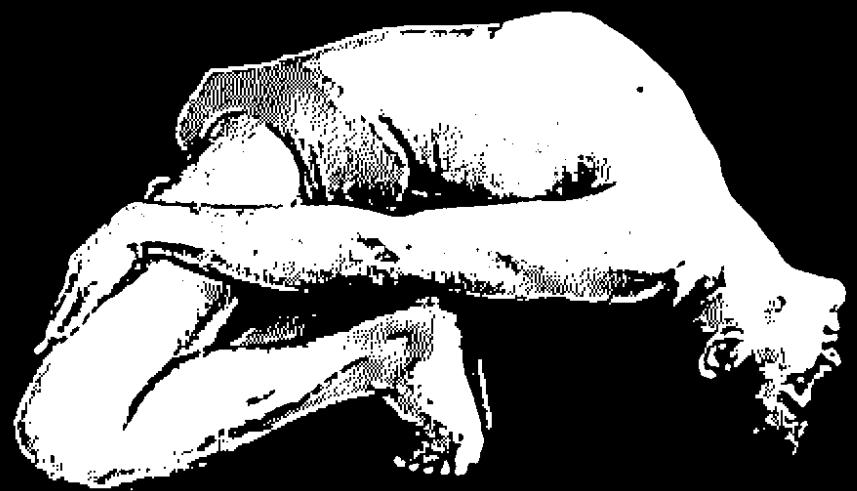




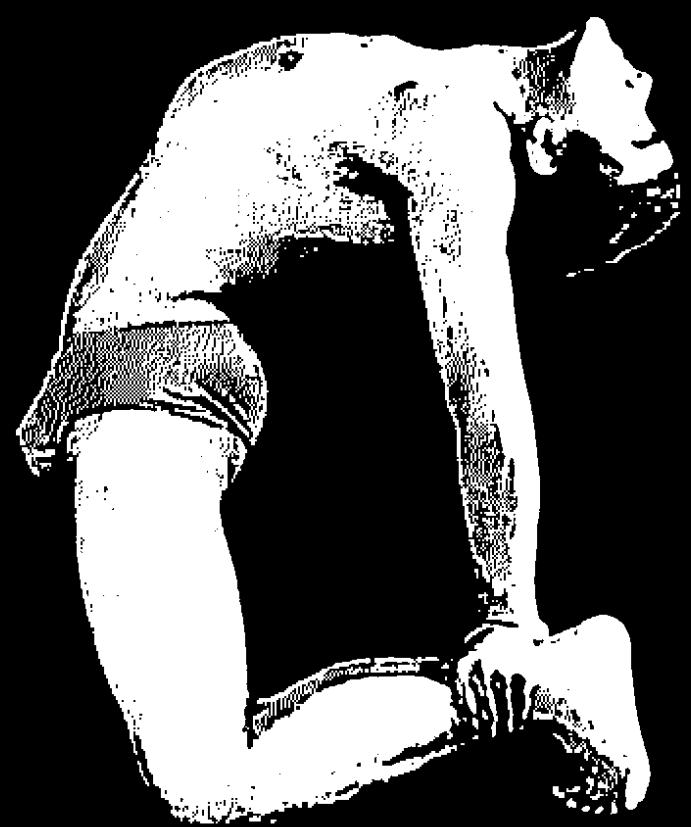


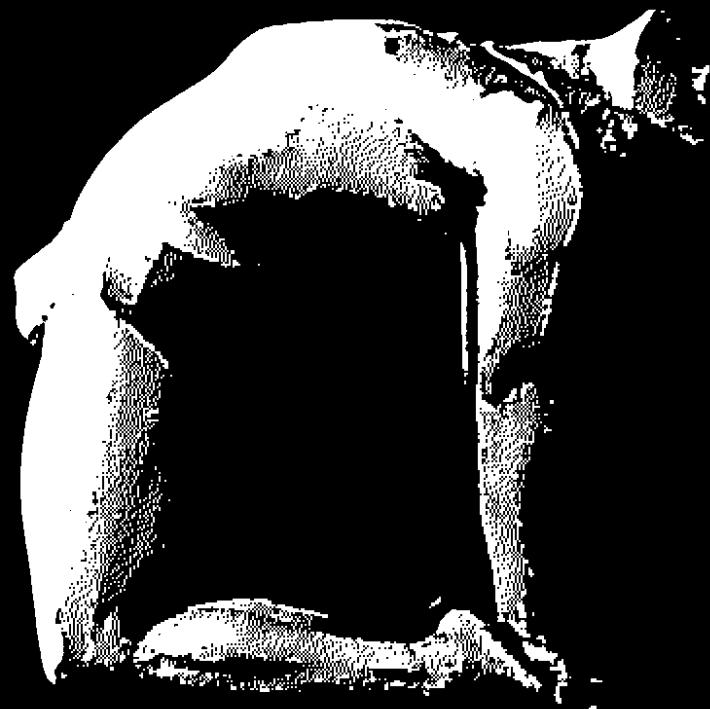






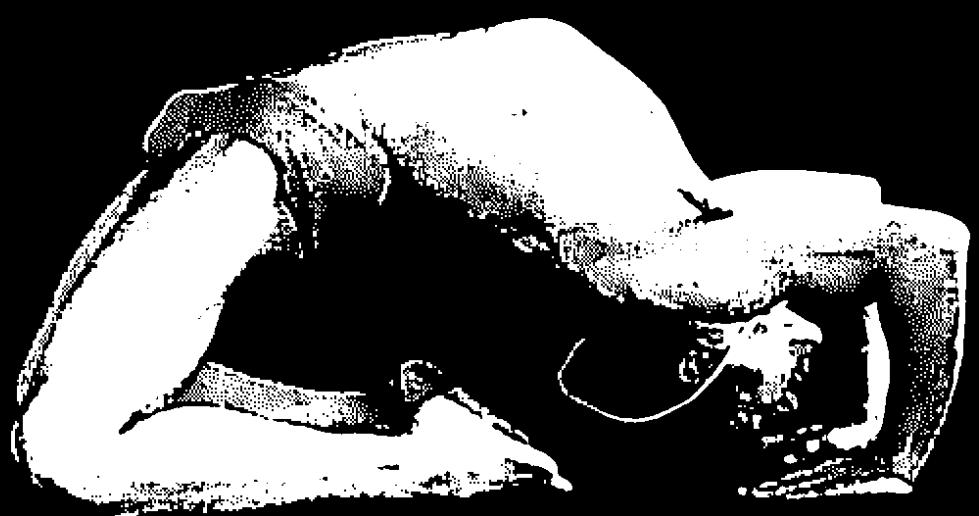








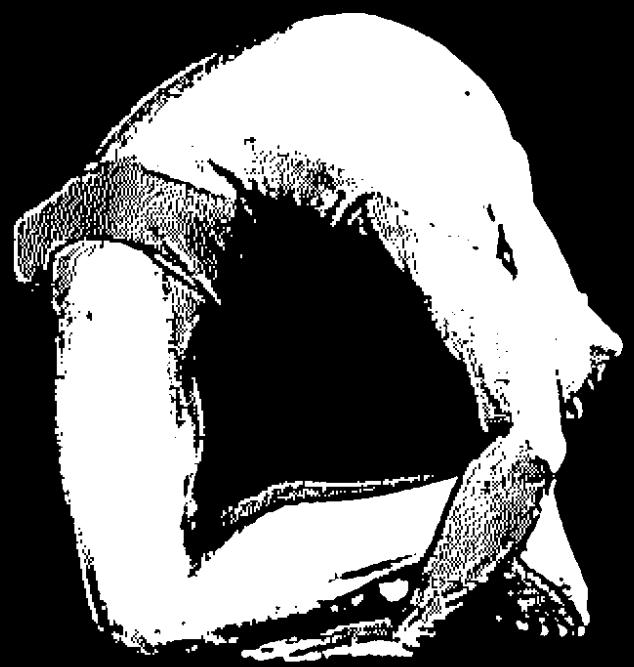






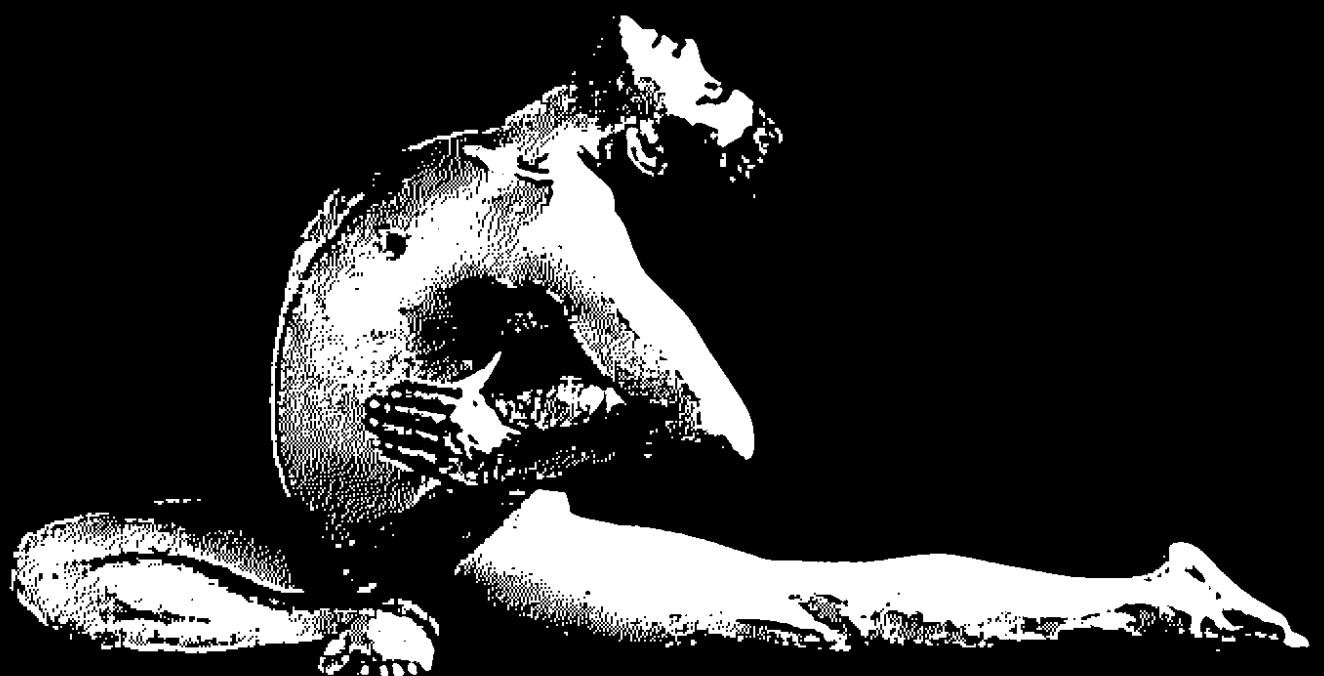




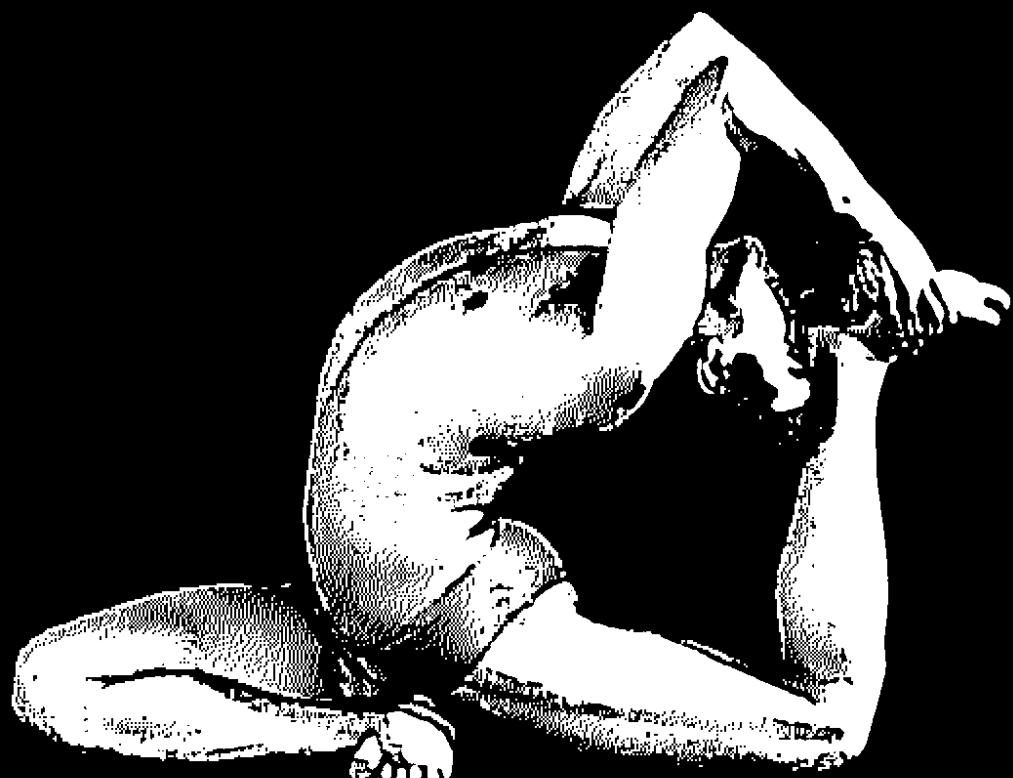










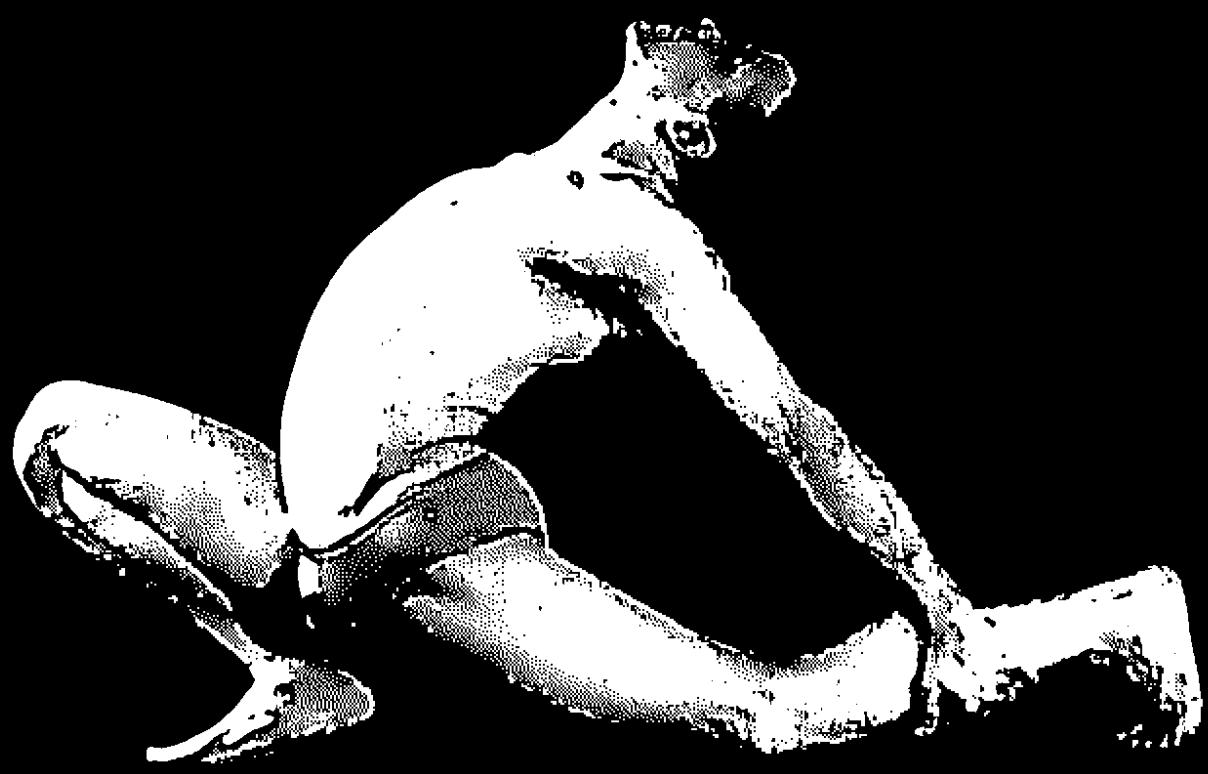


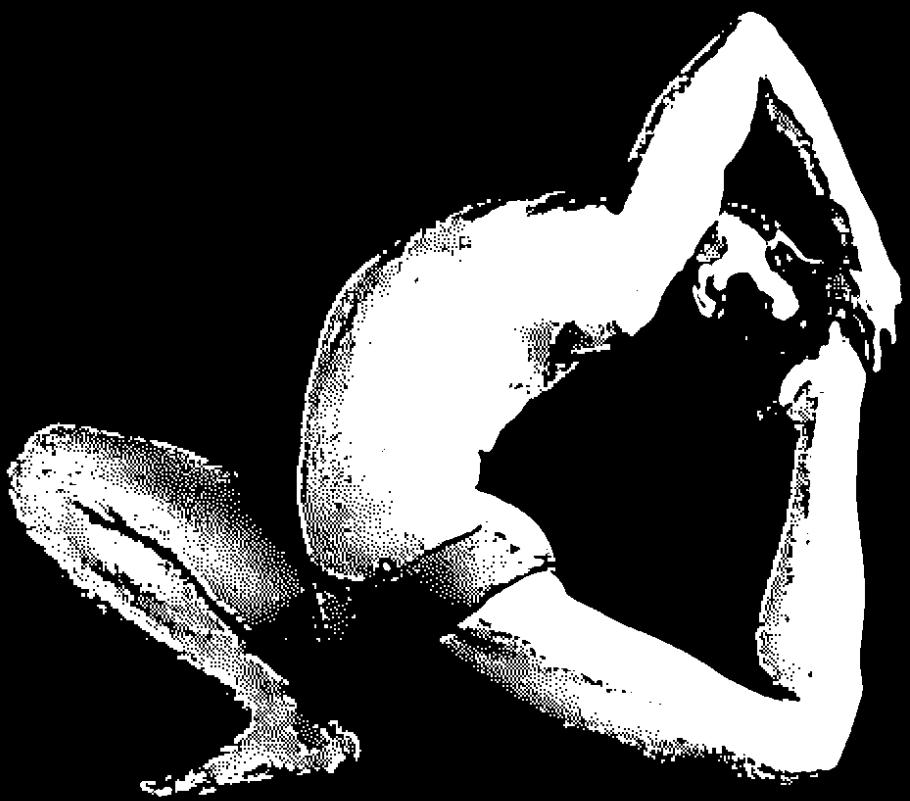




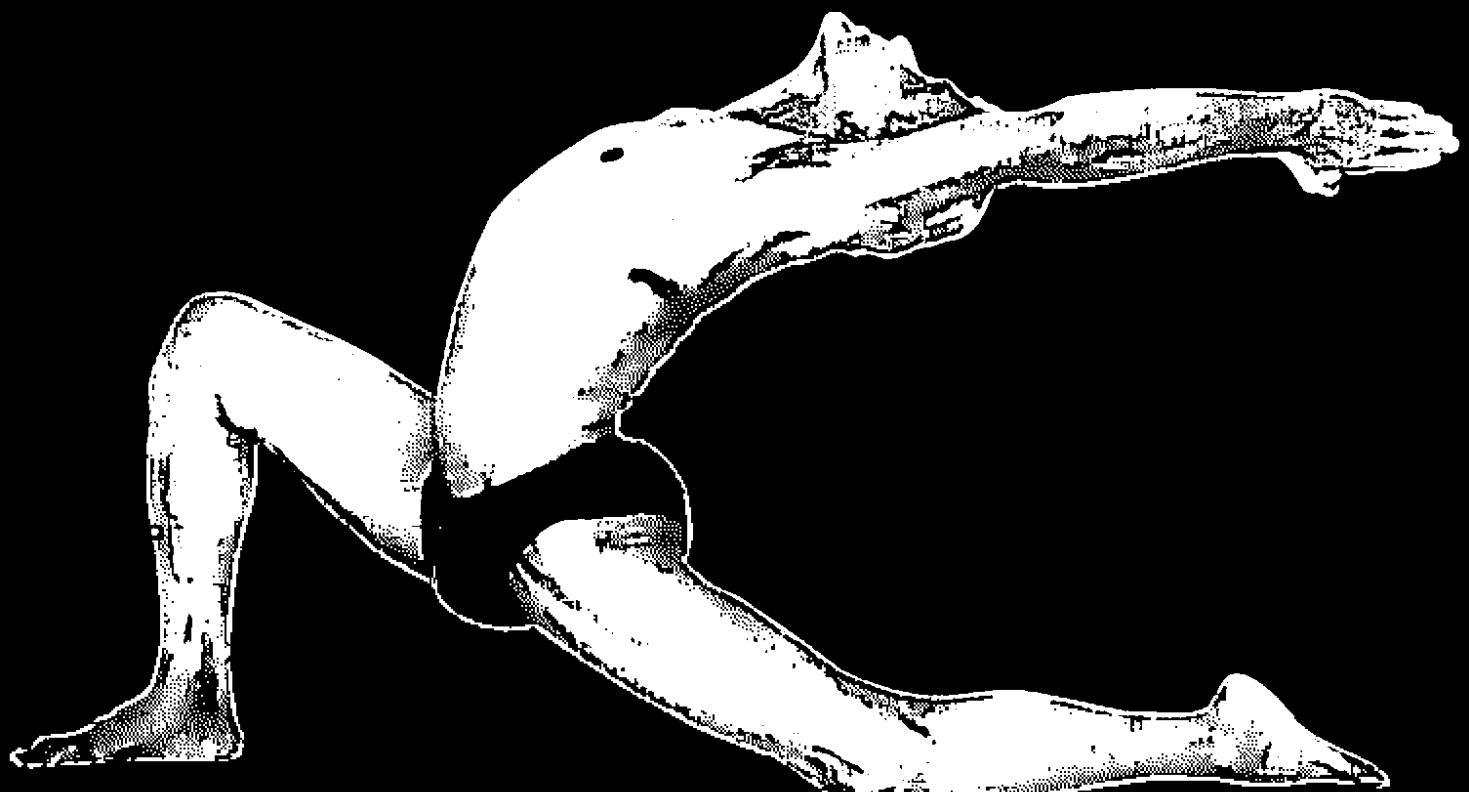


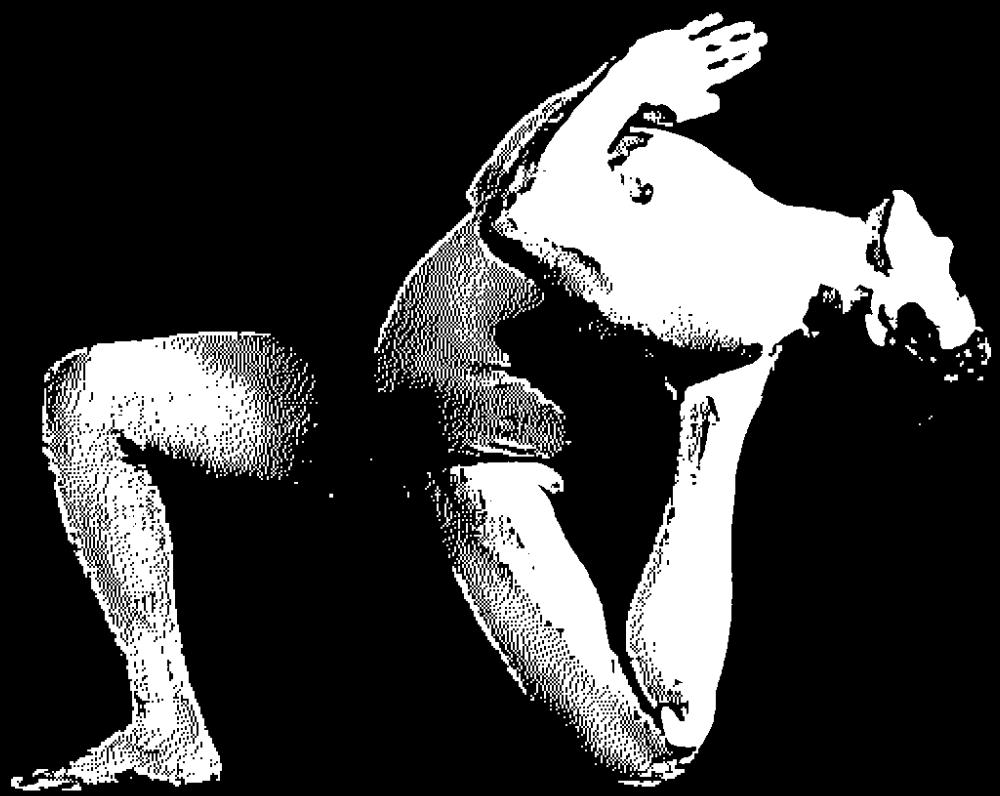








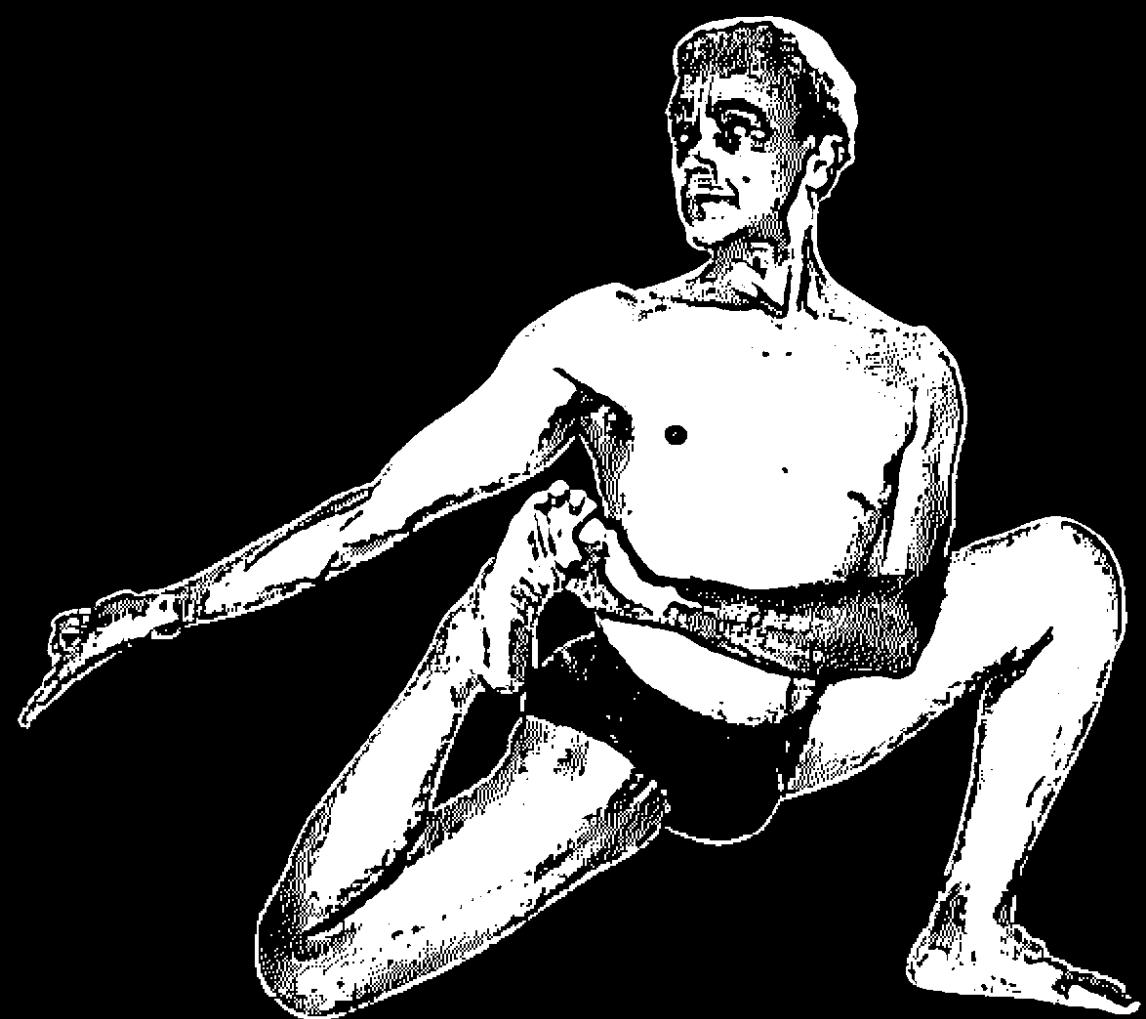






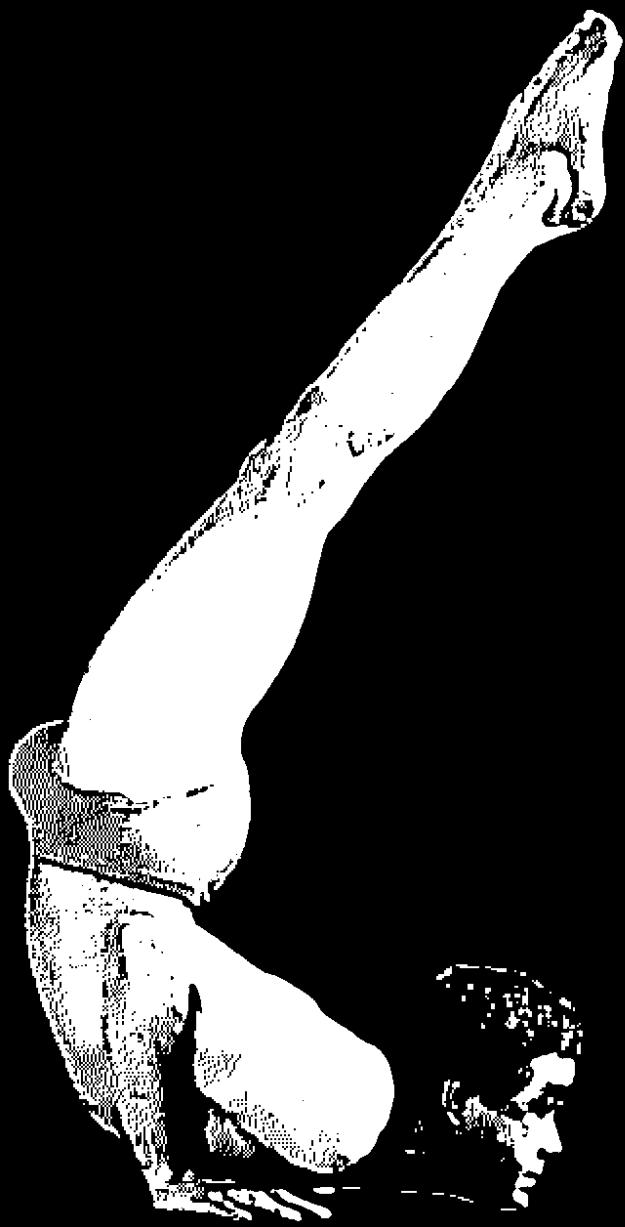










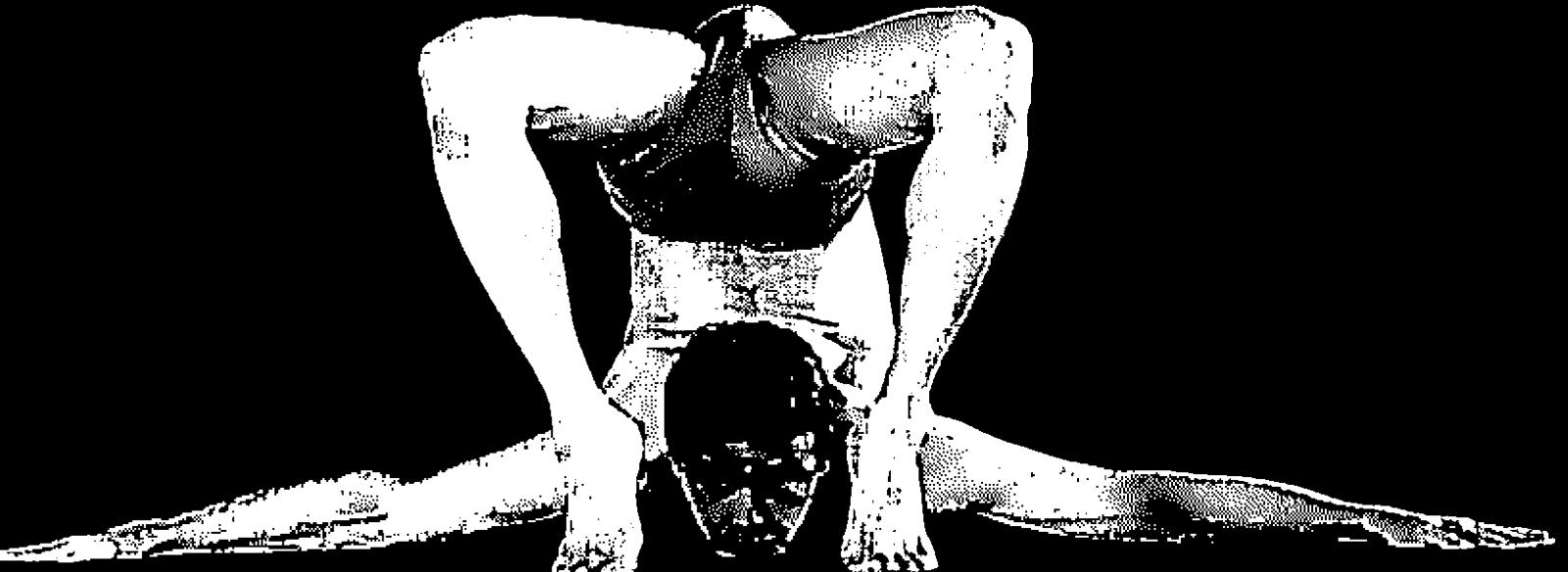




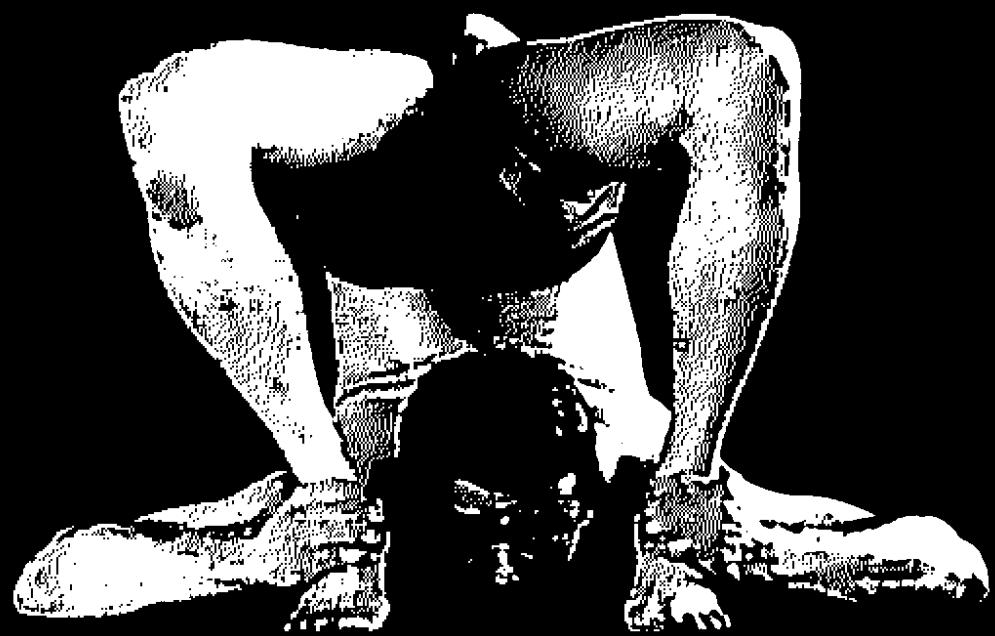






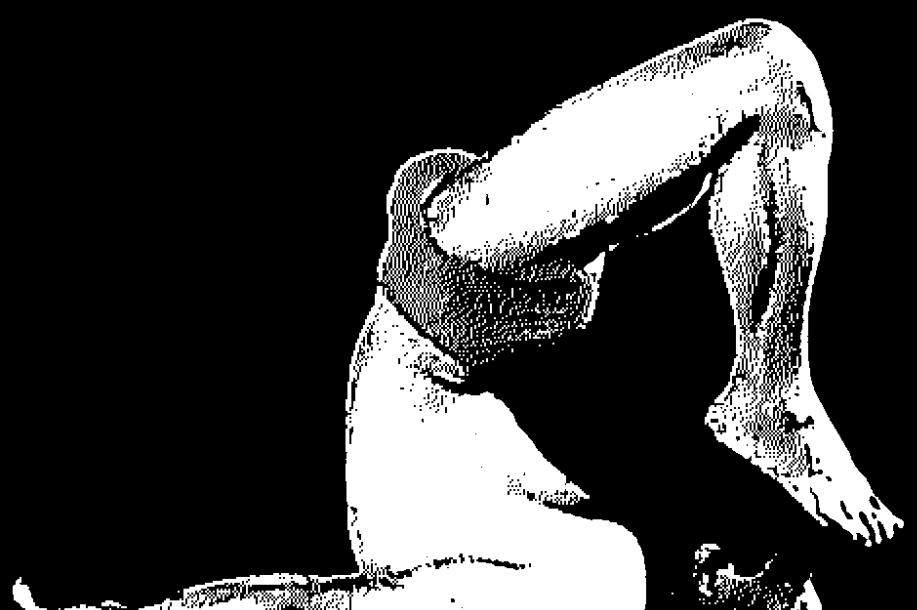


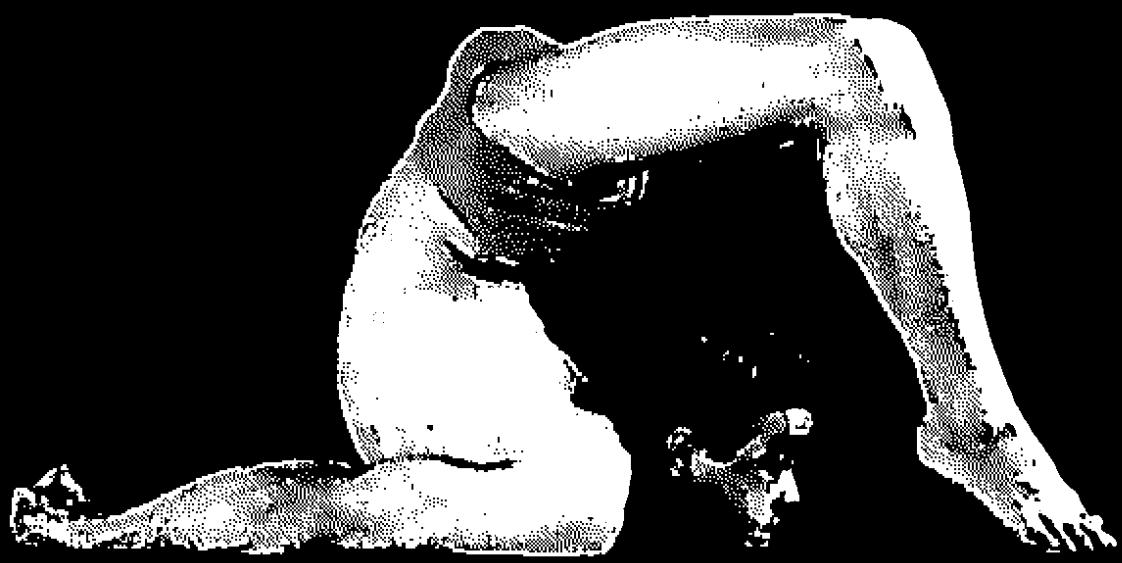




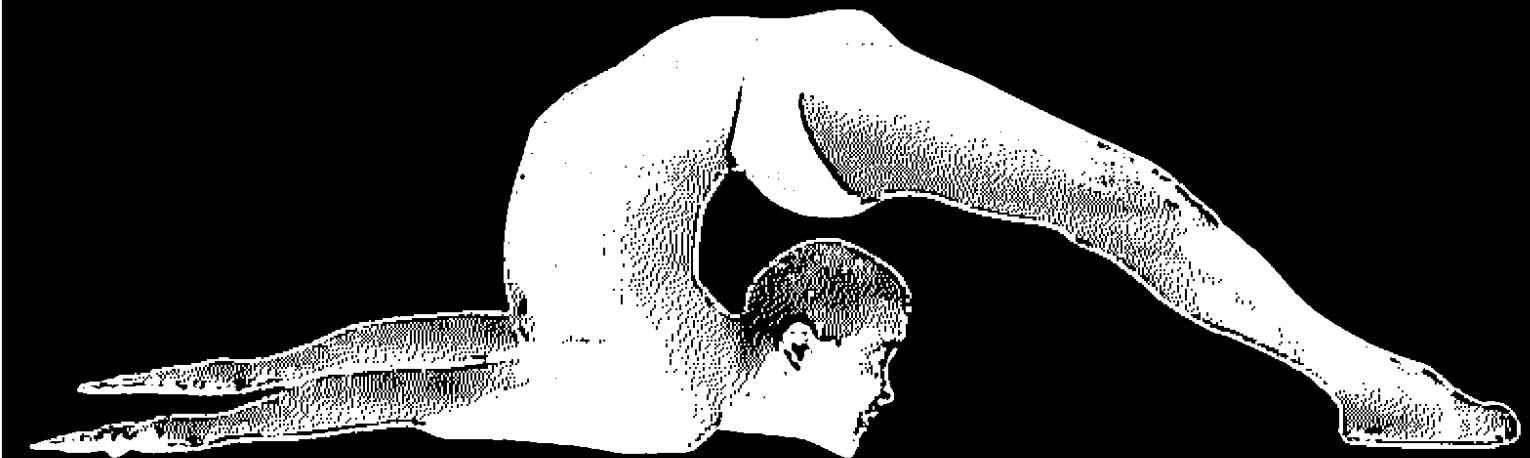




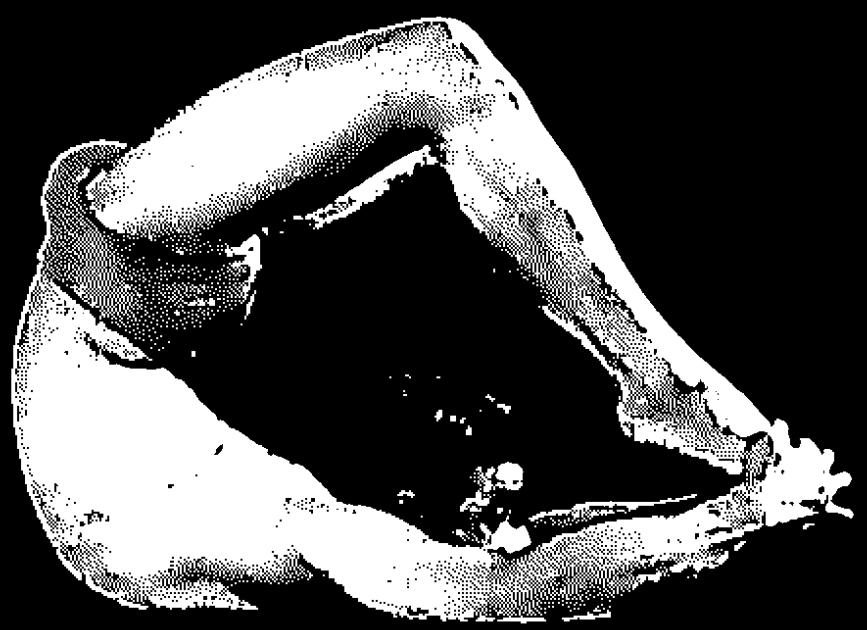






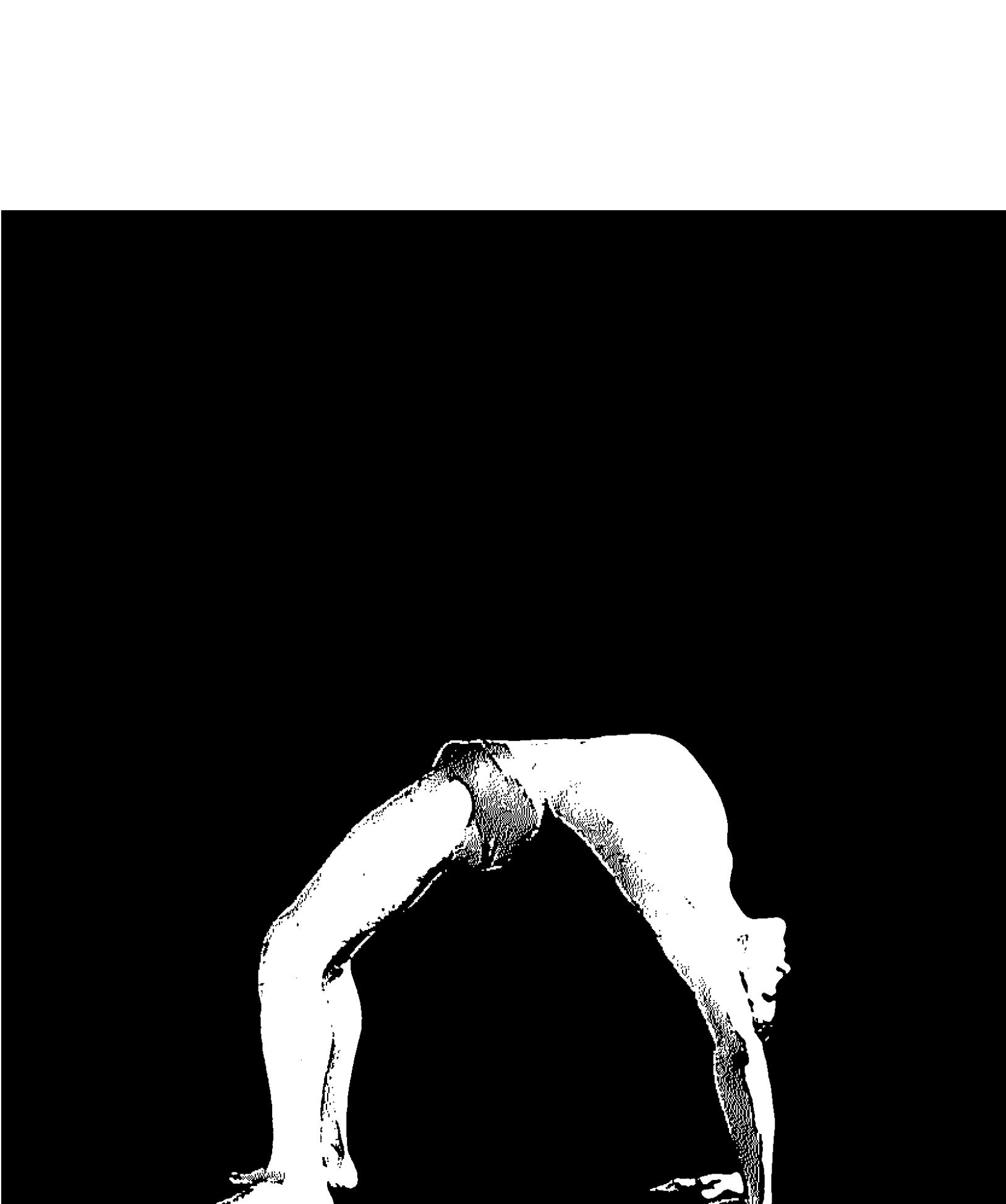


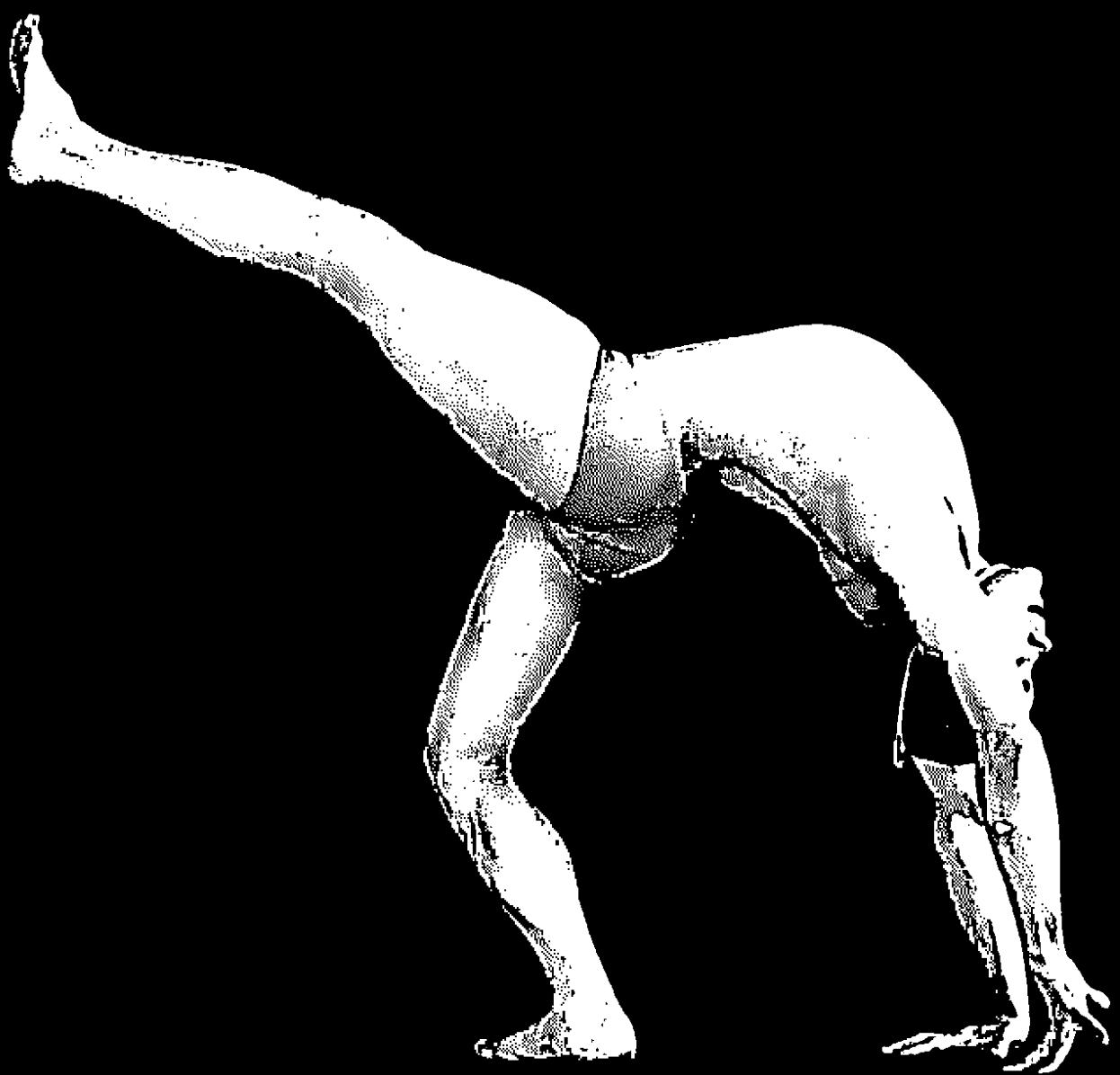


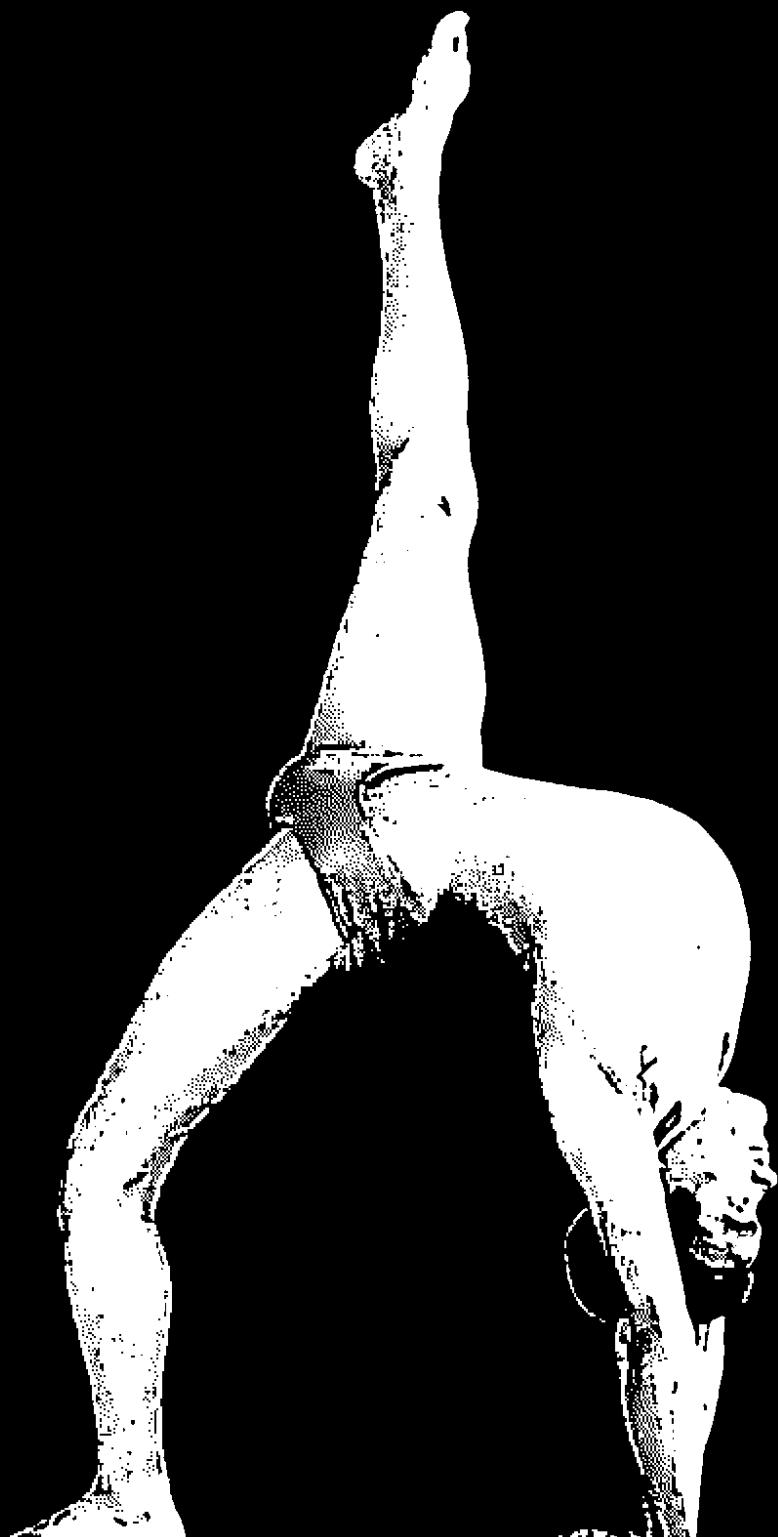




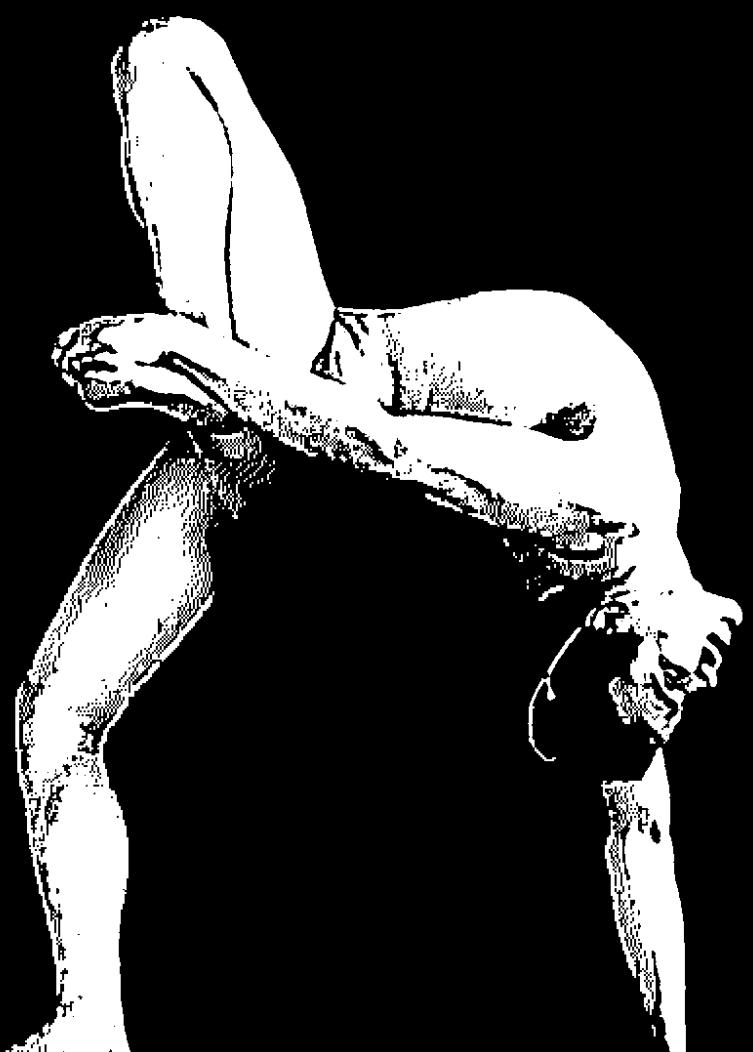


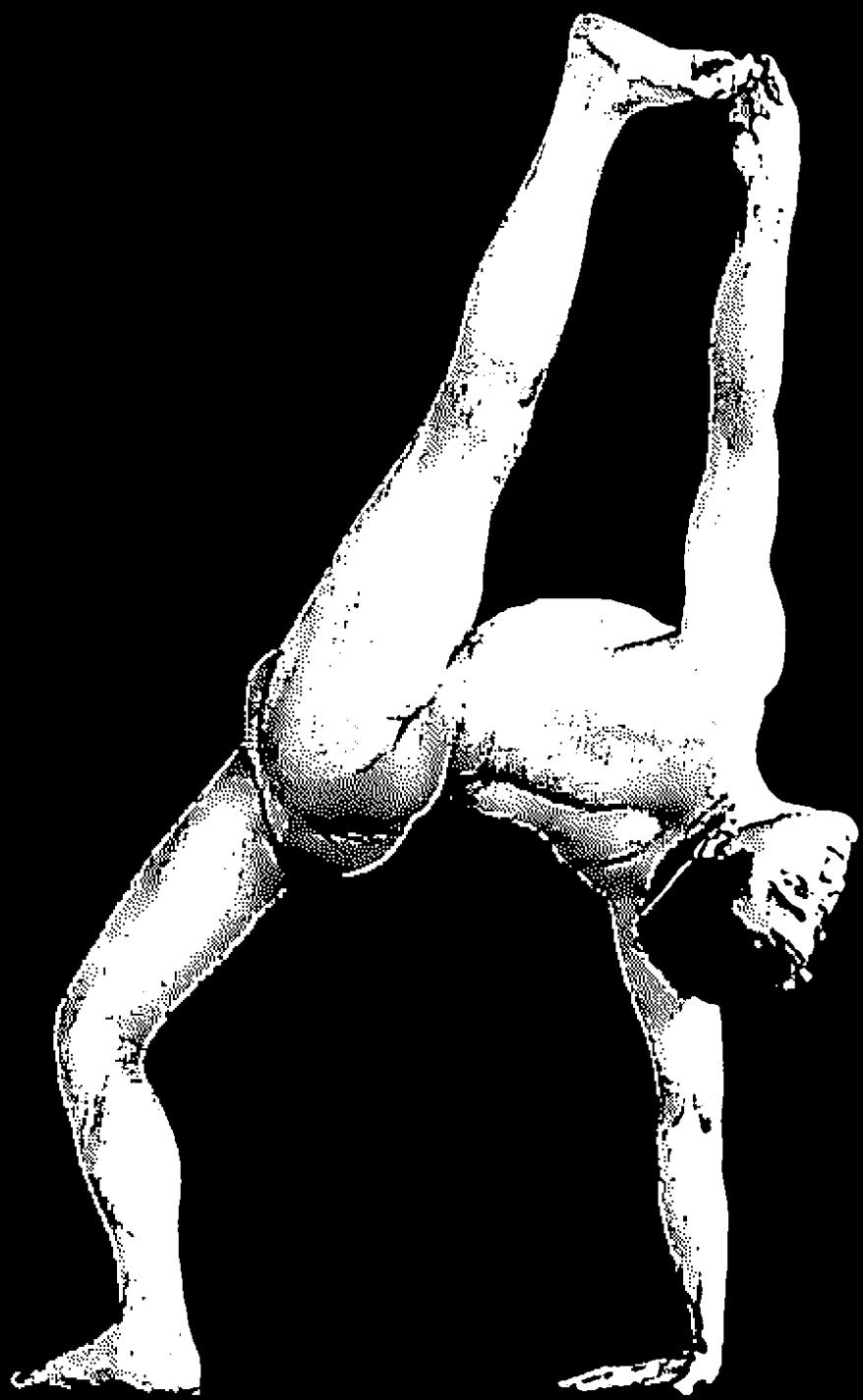




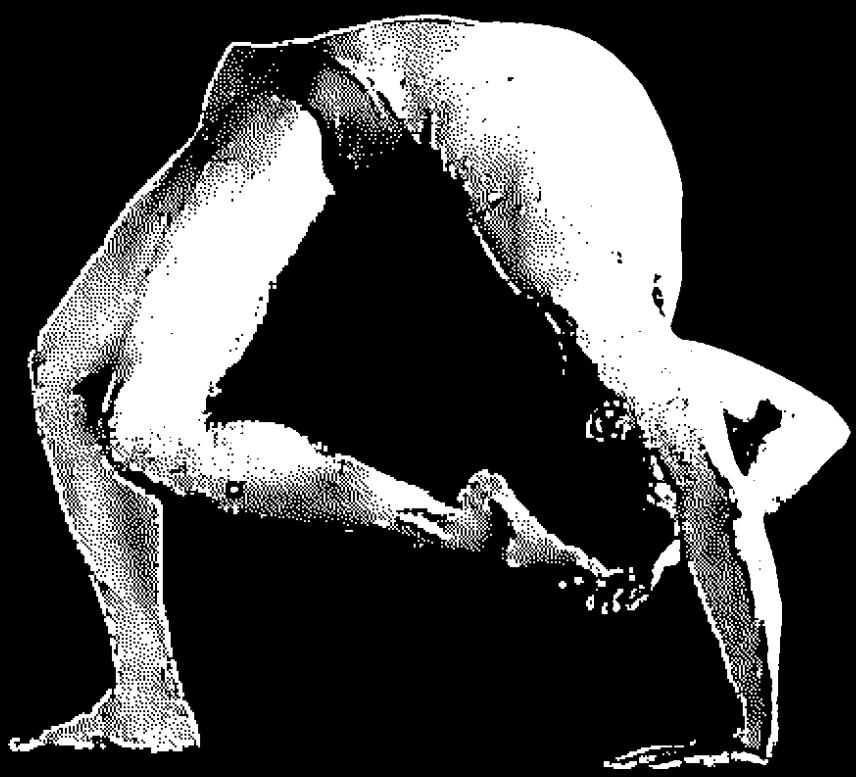
















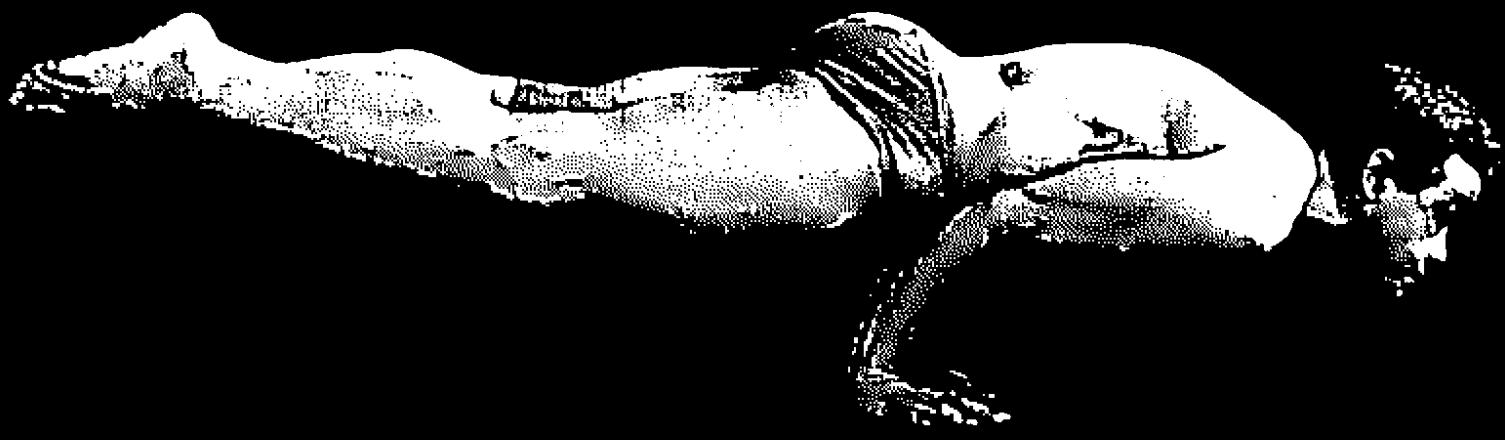


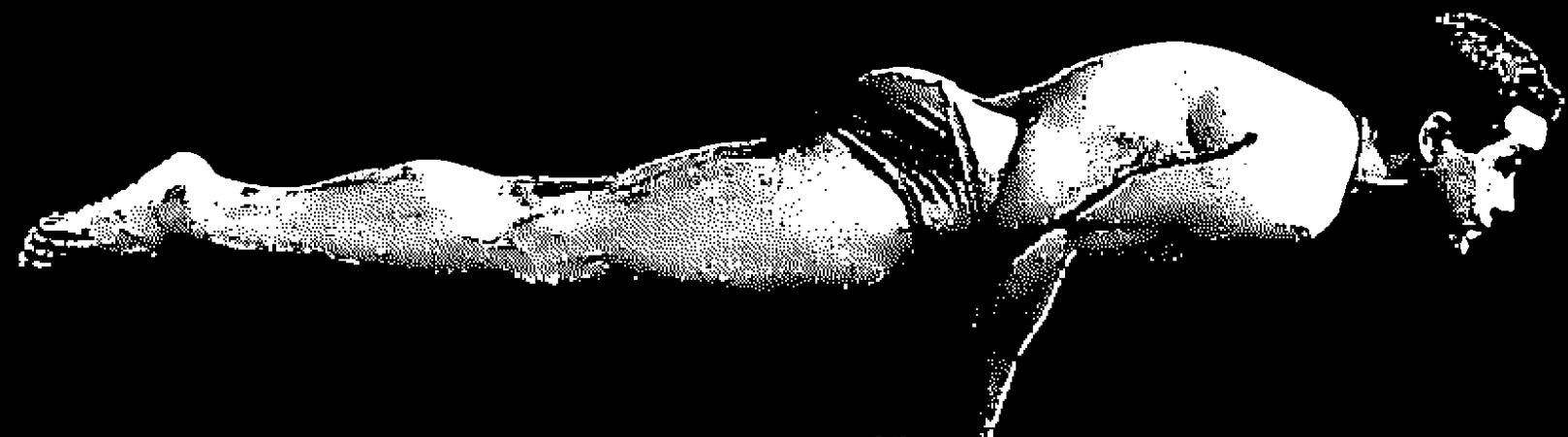
ARM BALANCING POSES

Arm poses require a great deal of strength and an extra dose of *tapas*. *Tapas*, or angry determination, is a positive attitude, much like what the Zen masters summon when sitting in meditation for hours. It involves faith, fortitude, and determination. Even if it is not pleasant you do it anyway. You must learn to go beyond the mind because the personal self is always resistant.

With difficult poses I like to recall the words of the late Swami Satchidananda. “A yogi is like a surfer who knows how to balance on his board. He welcomes even a big rolling wave because he knows how to enjoy it without getting caught in it.”

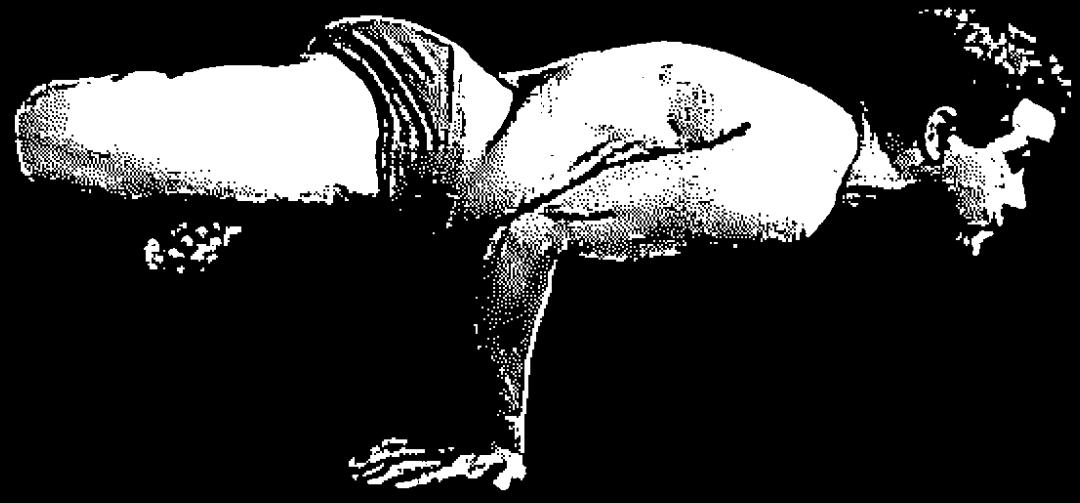
Many arm-balancing poses also strengthen the shoulders, wrists, and hands. They are particularly useful for people who spend their days writing or drawing at computers and who are vulnerable to repetitive stress syndrome.















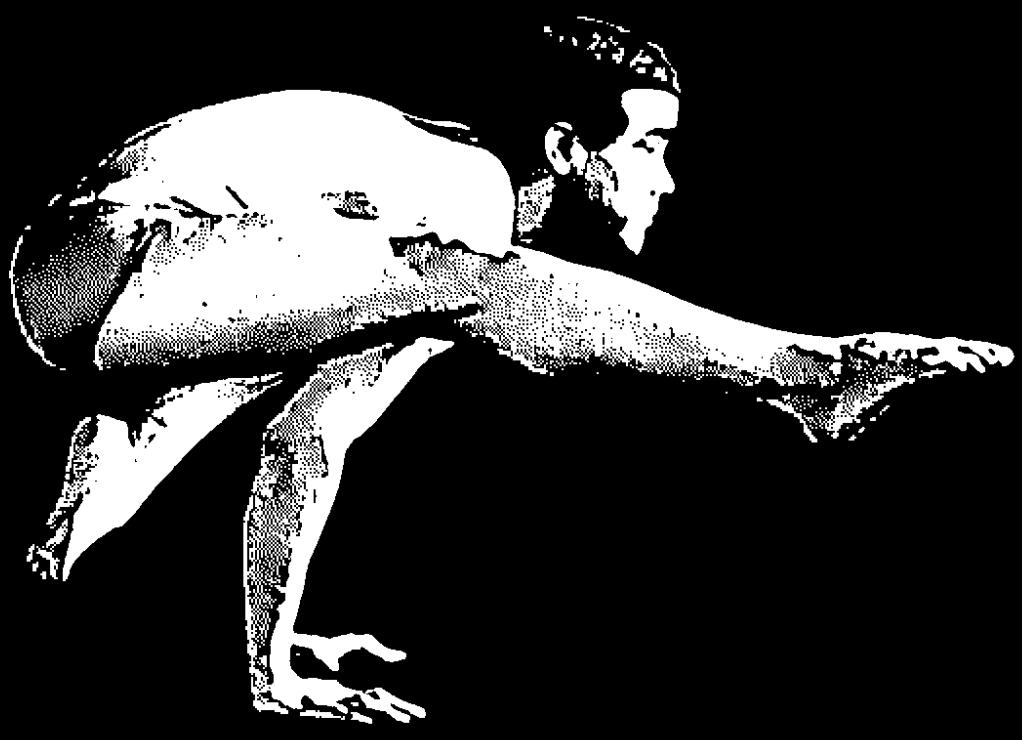


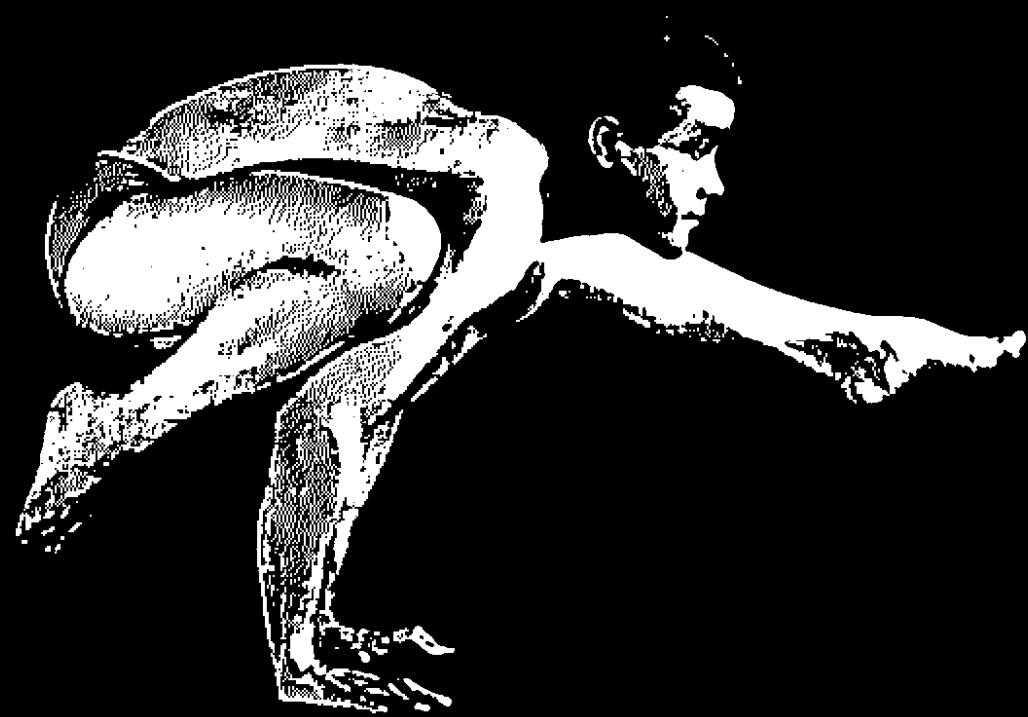






















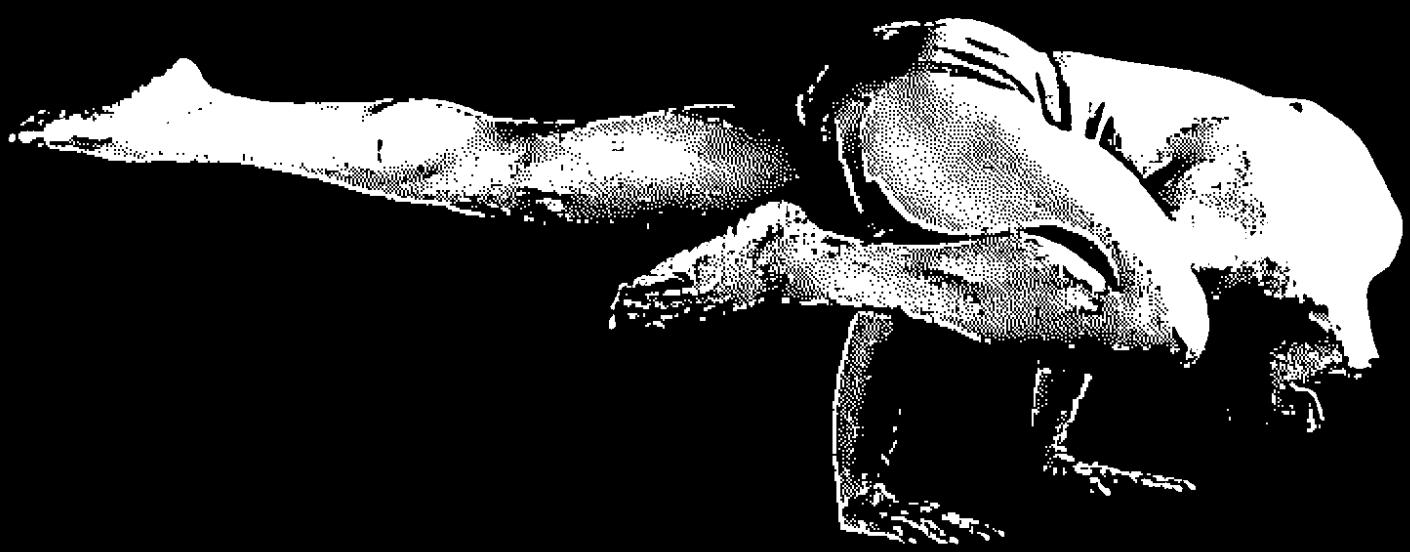


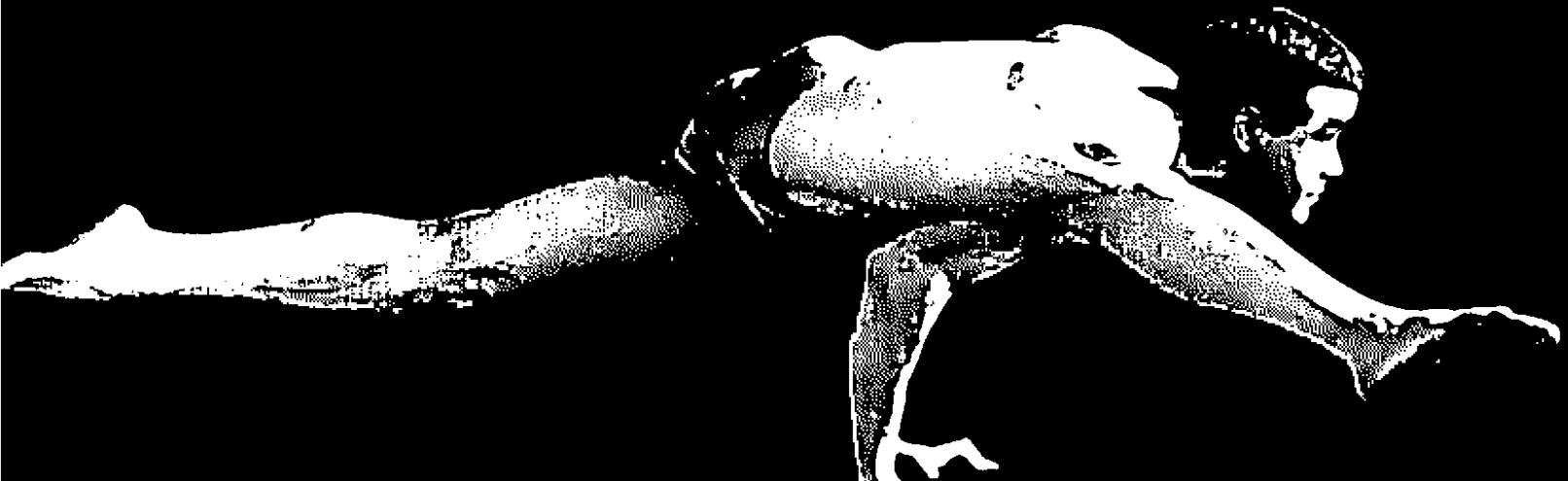


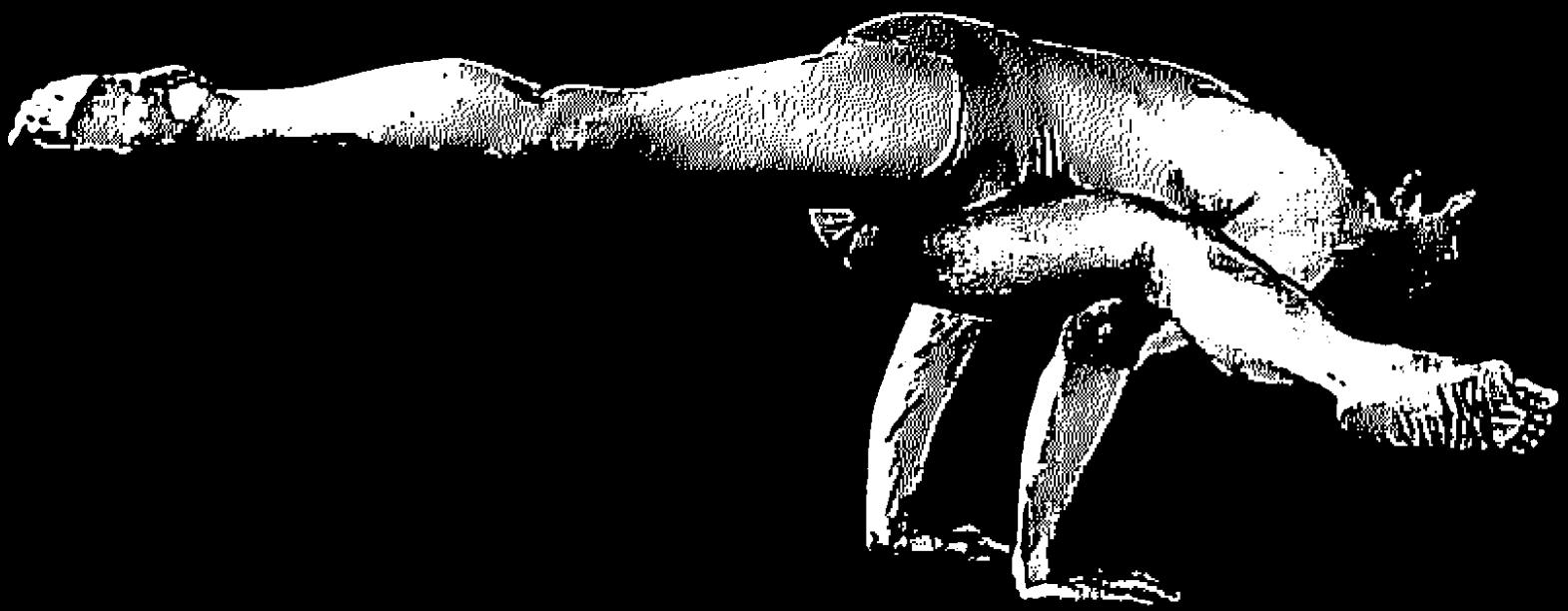




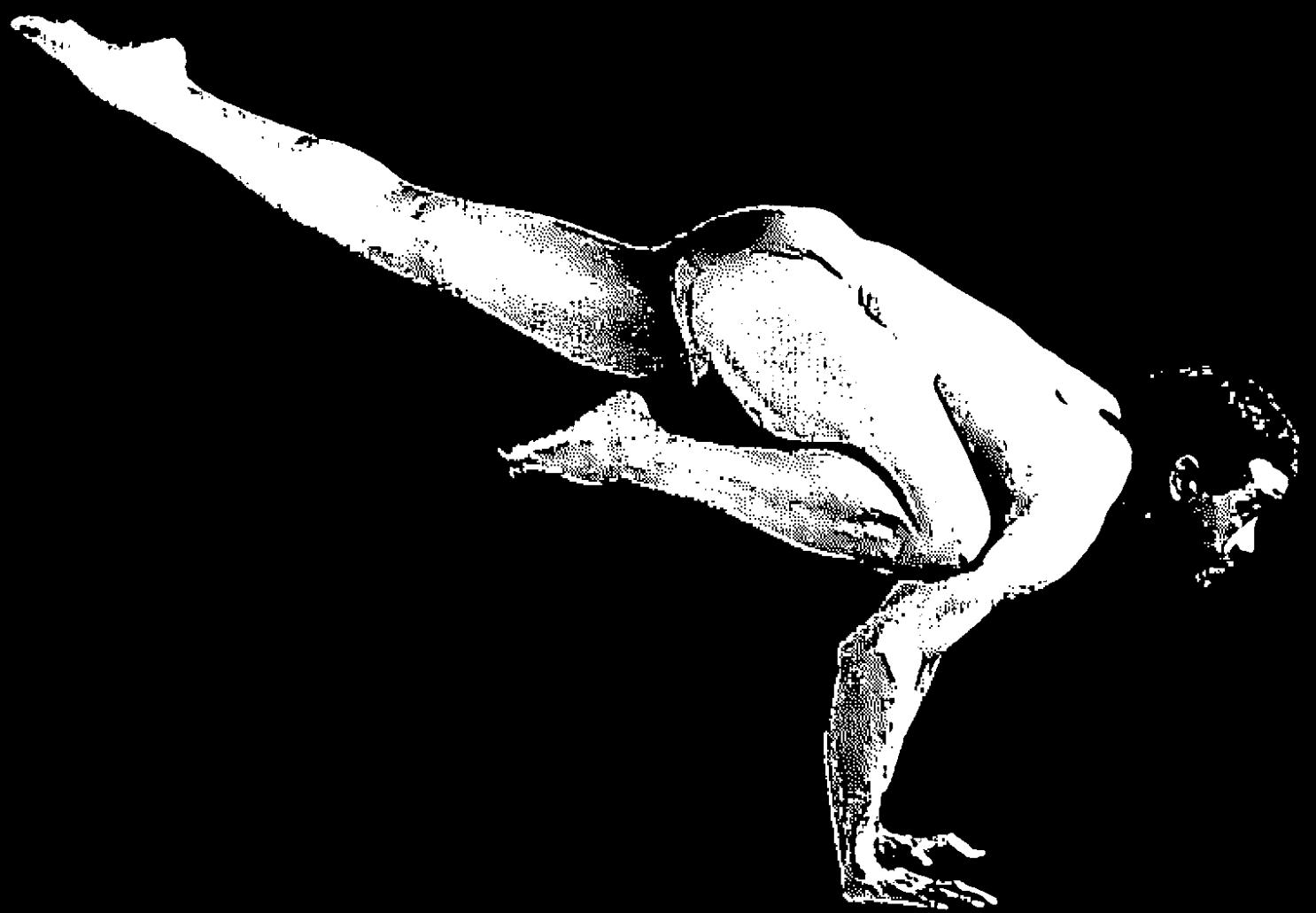


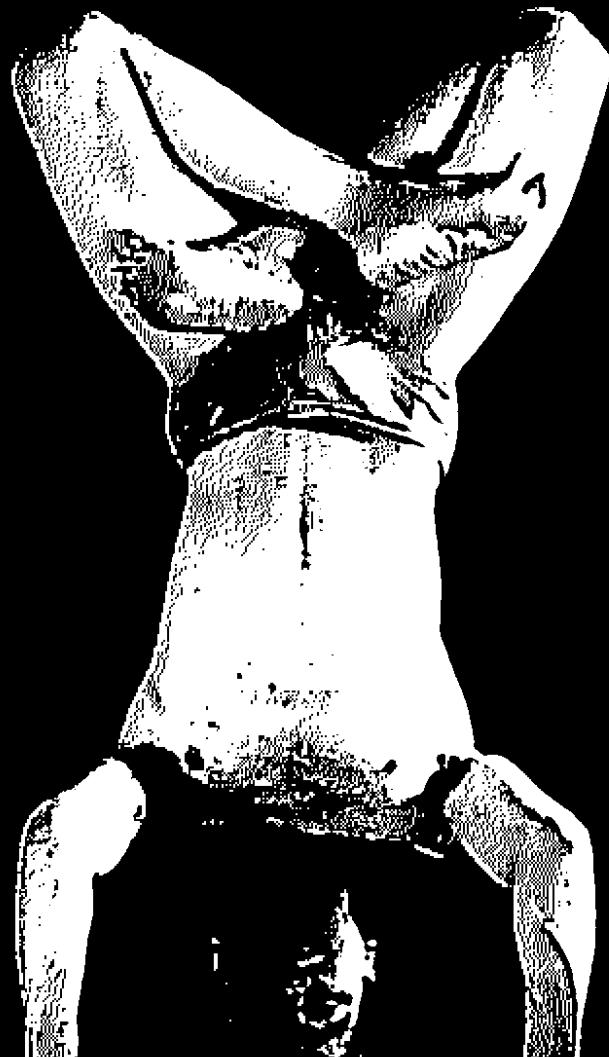






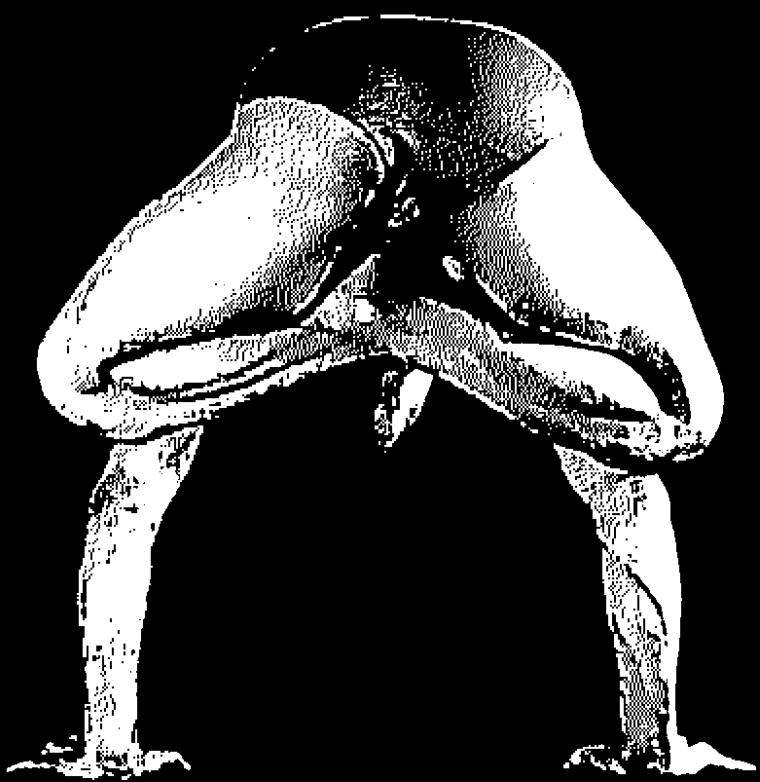














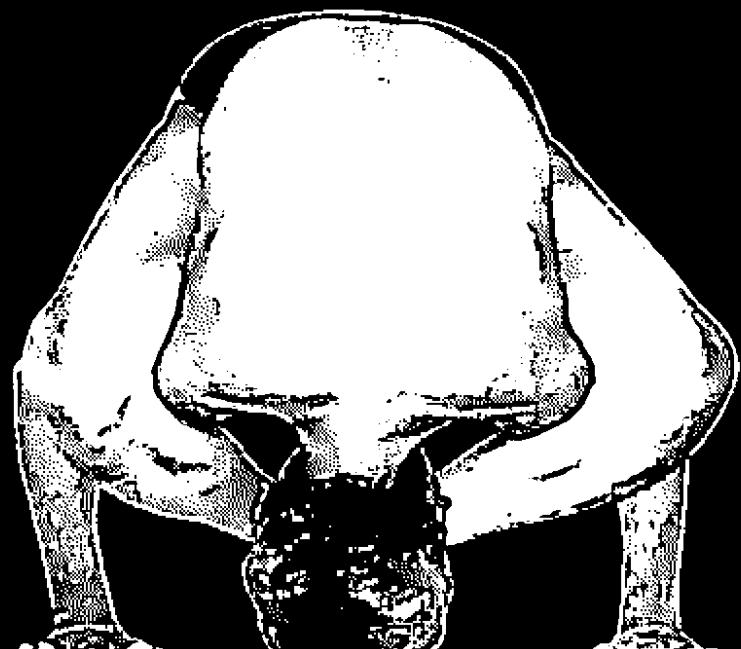


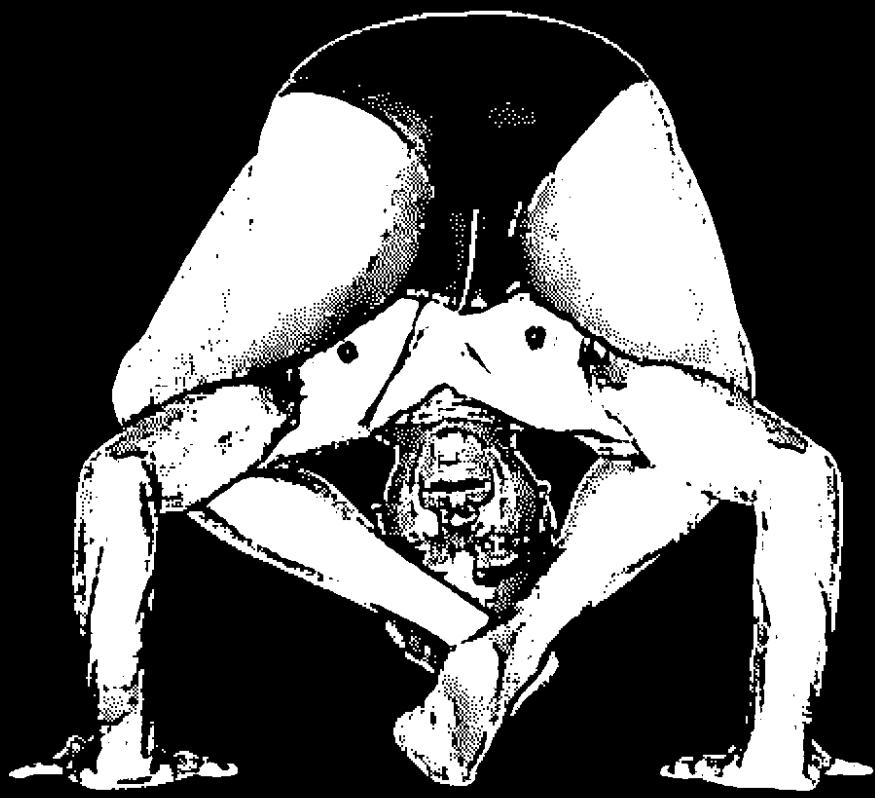






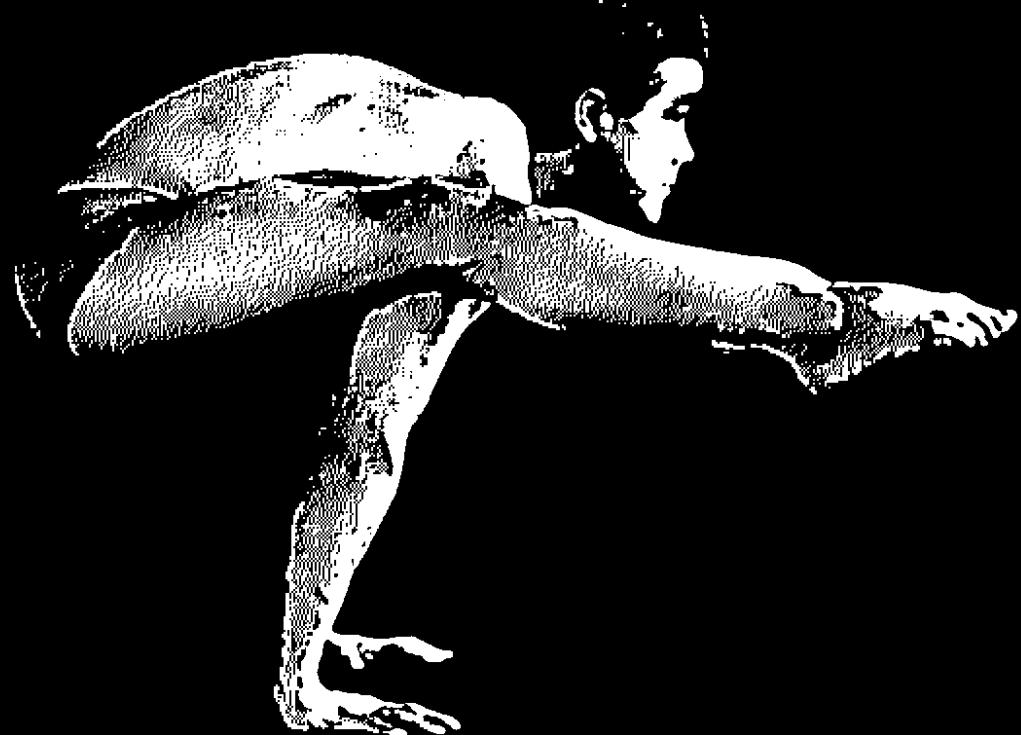
















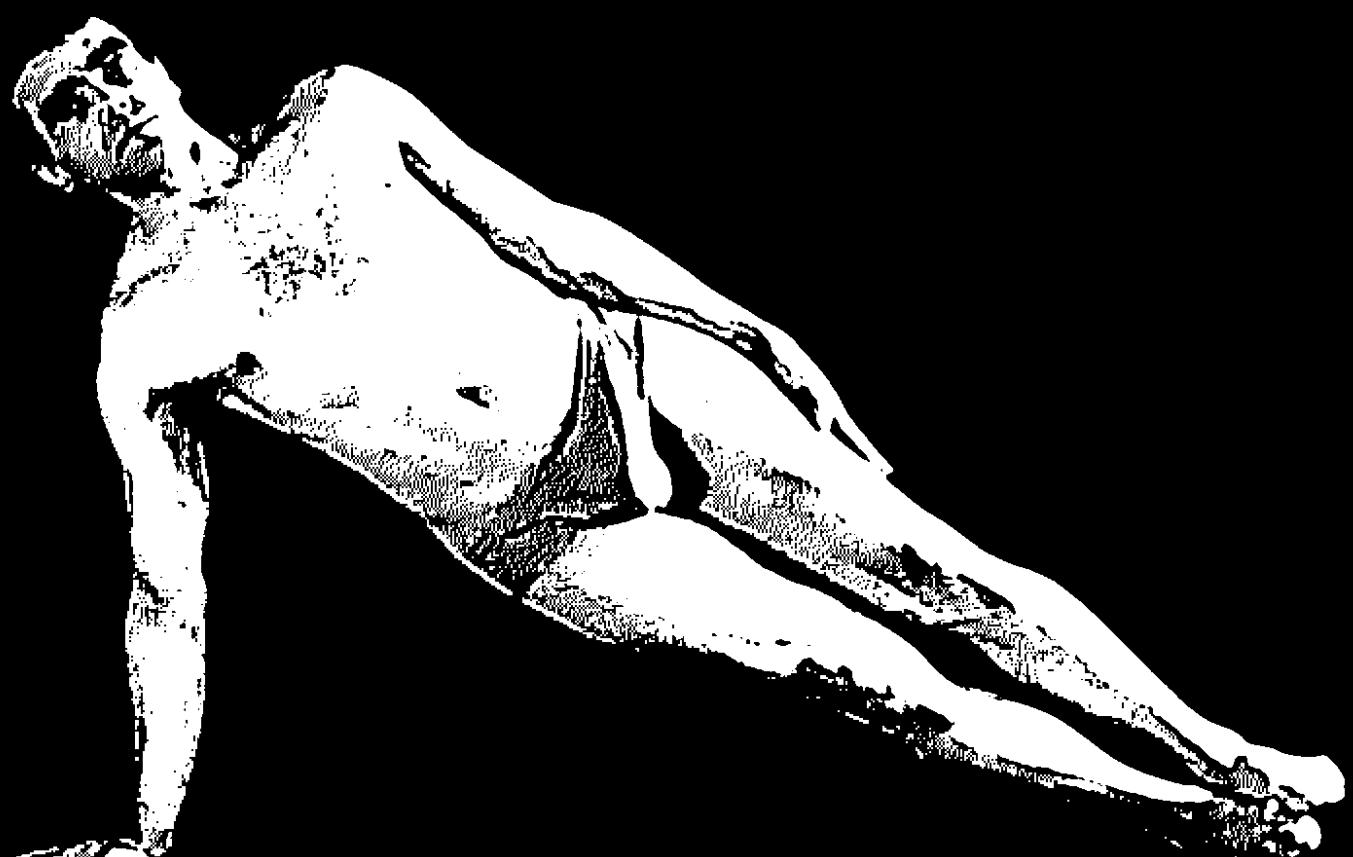












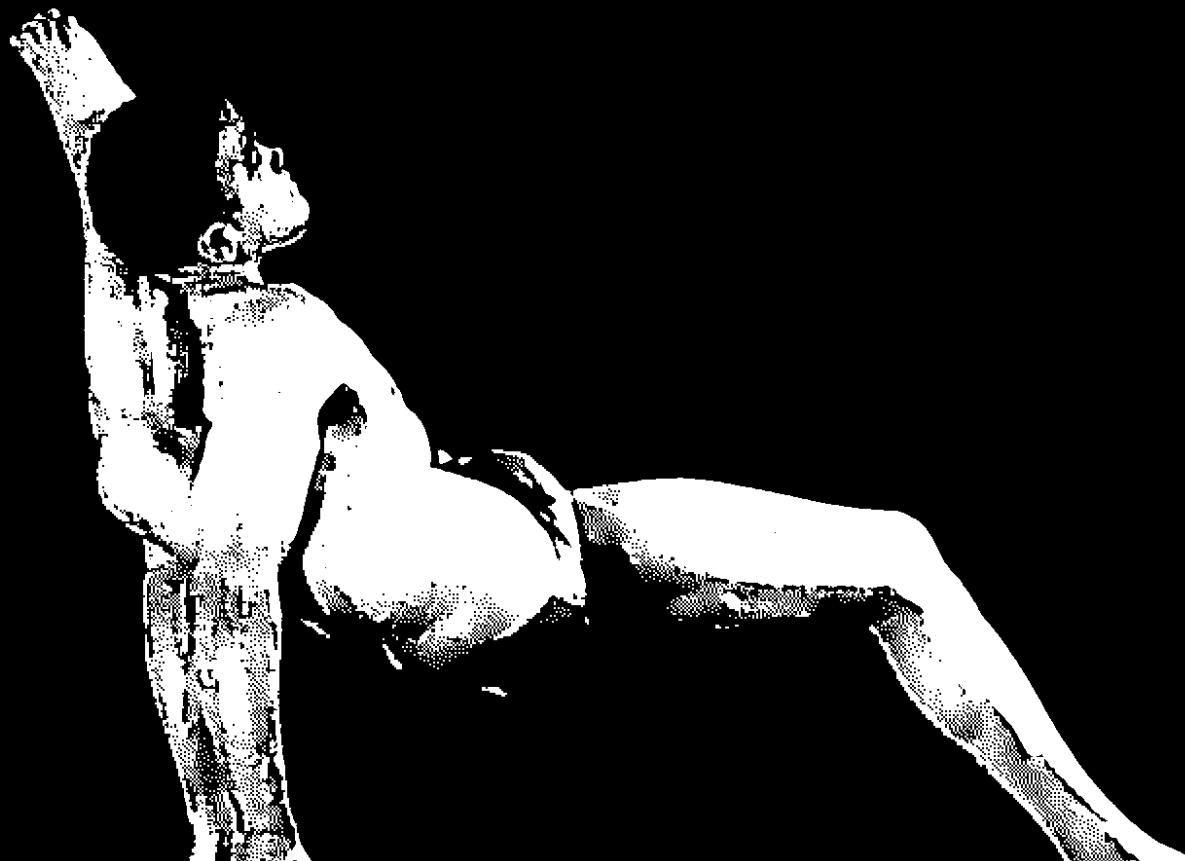










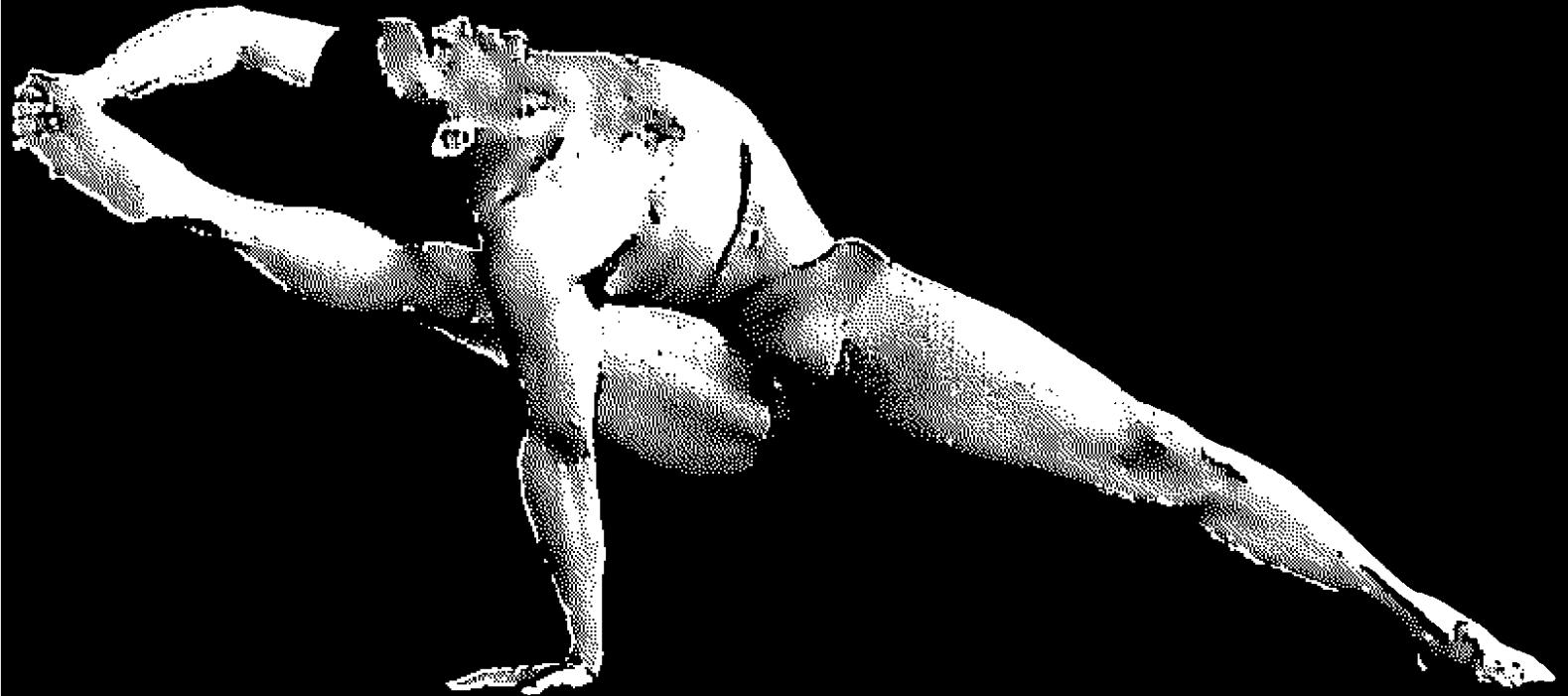


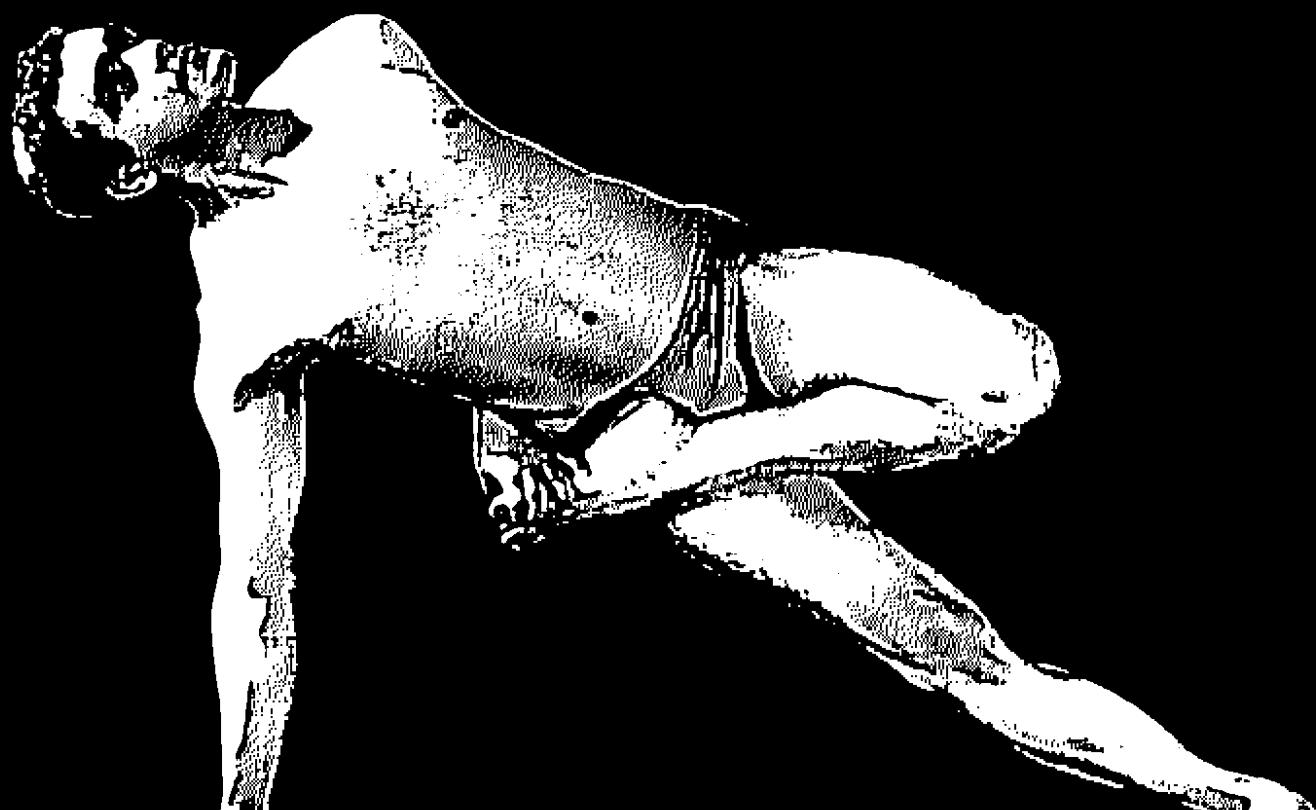


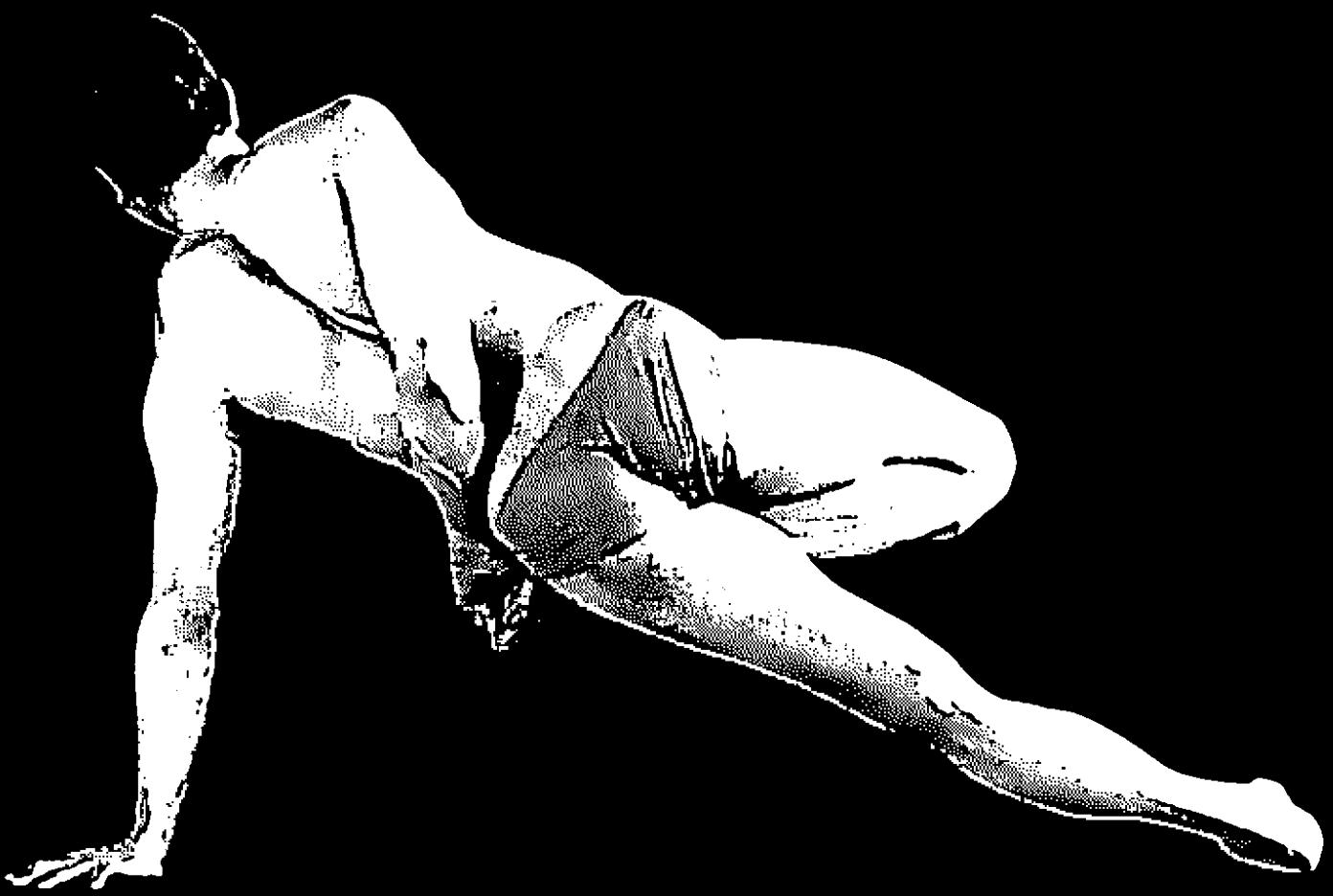












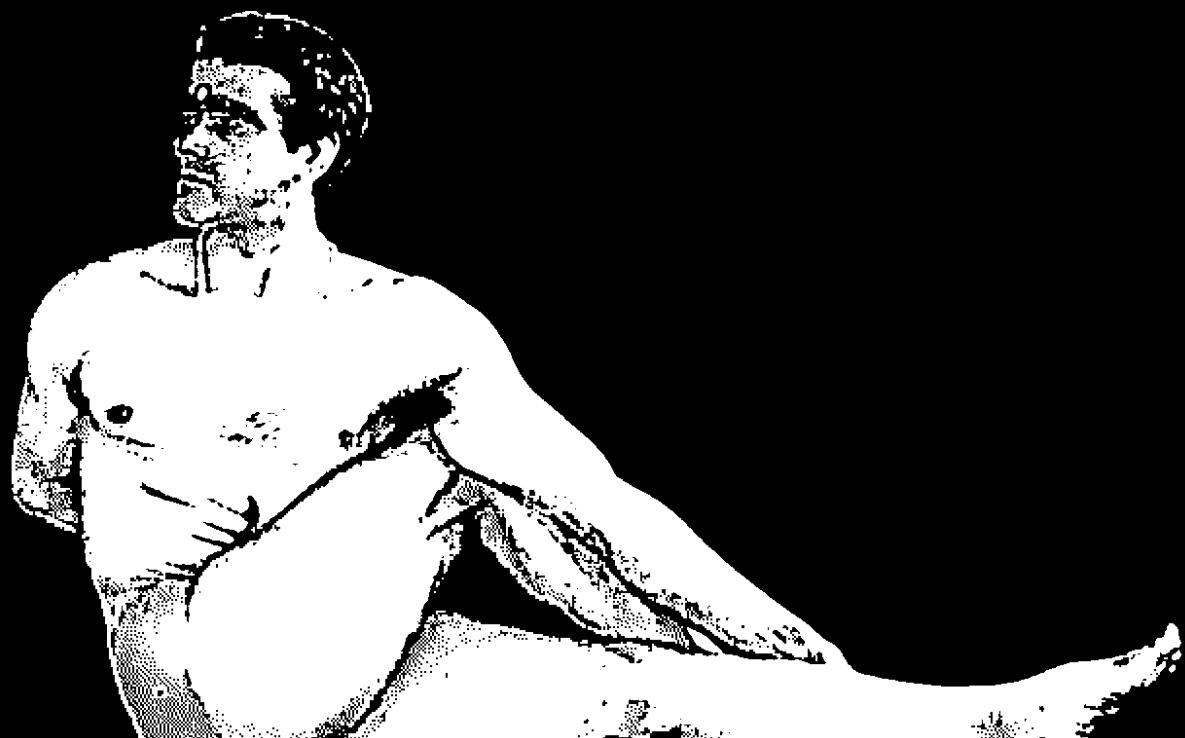




TWISTS & SEATED POSES

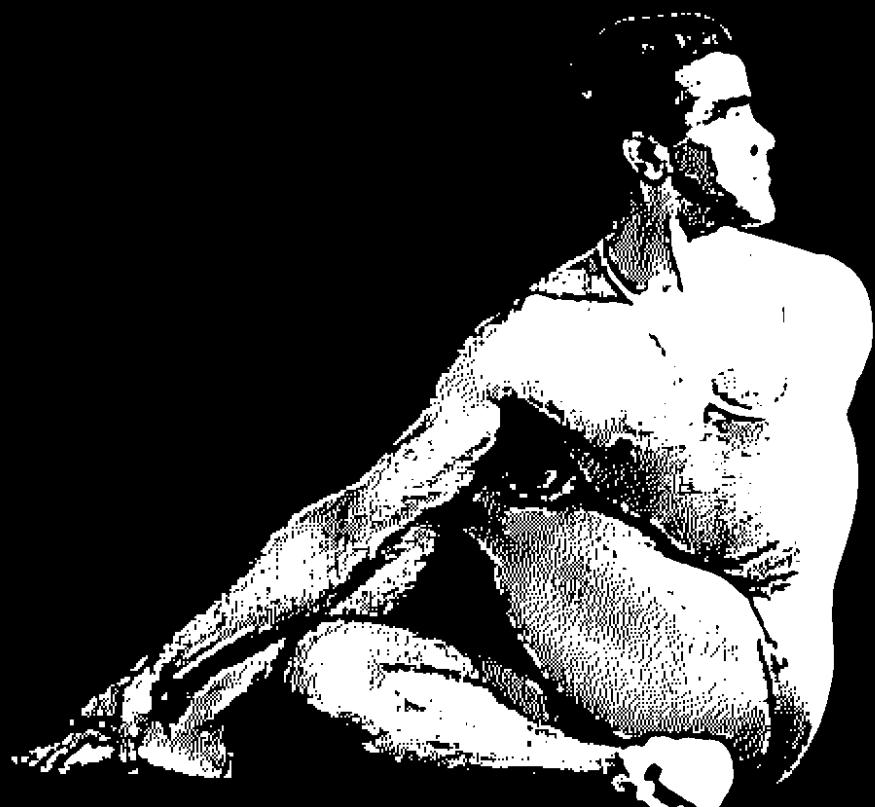
Imagine the internal organs as sponges that are full of liquid and you will understand the powerful impact of the twisting poses. The twist first wrings and squeezes the organs, then flushes them with fresh blood and oxygen. It's a natural and powerful way to detoxify organs and glands and boost the health of the entire body. It also keeps the back supple and increases circulation to the muscles and discs around the spine. One tip: when doing a twist try to extend upward during inhalation, then twist when exhaling. All twist variations are beneficial to people with arthritis and other related back and hip pains. *Marichyasana* helps heal shoulder sprains and displaced shoulder joints.

Full Lotus is a seated pose best for those blessed with flexible knees. In this posture your mind becomes one focused point. Crossing the legs cuts circulation to legs and increases blood flow to spine. If you can't do Full Lotus, *Siddhasana* is an excellent alternative position for meditation. It's comfortable and leaves you relaxed yet alert, quieting the hyperactive "monkey" mind. I have done Full Lotus for over 40 years and it still causes me terrible pain. I don't know what I did in past lives to cause such suffering.

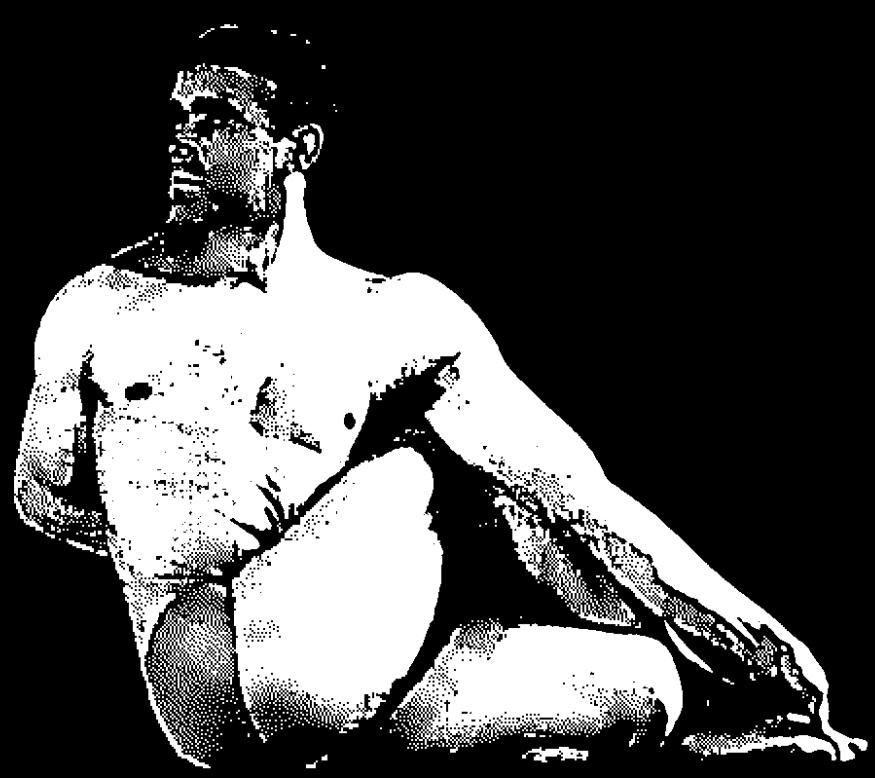


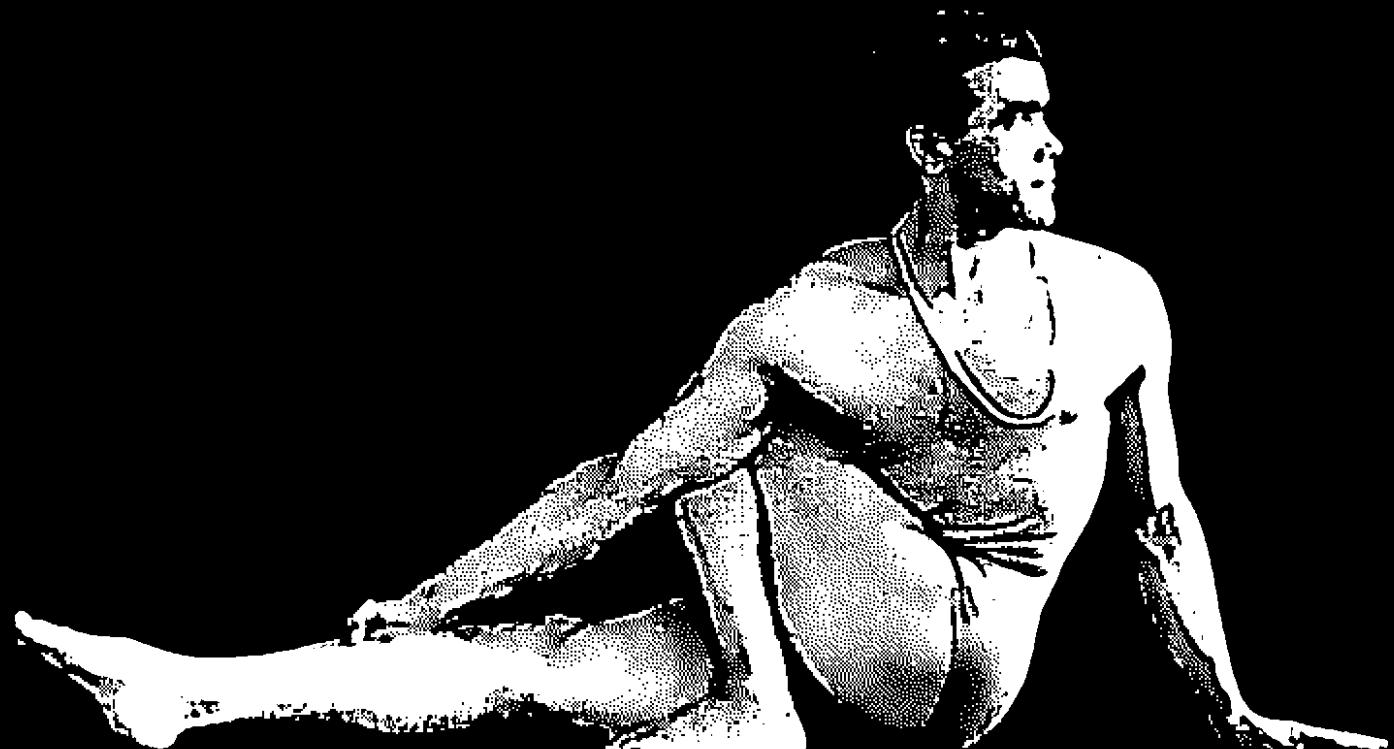


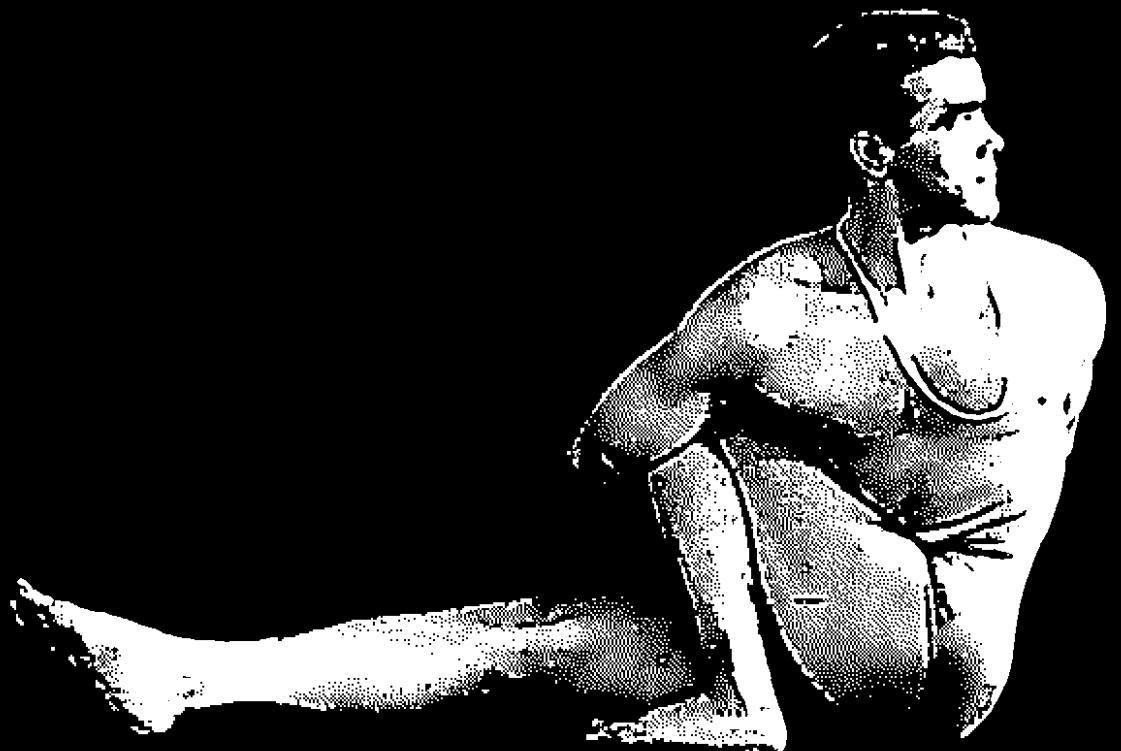


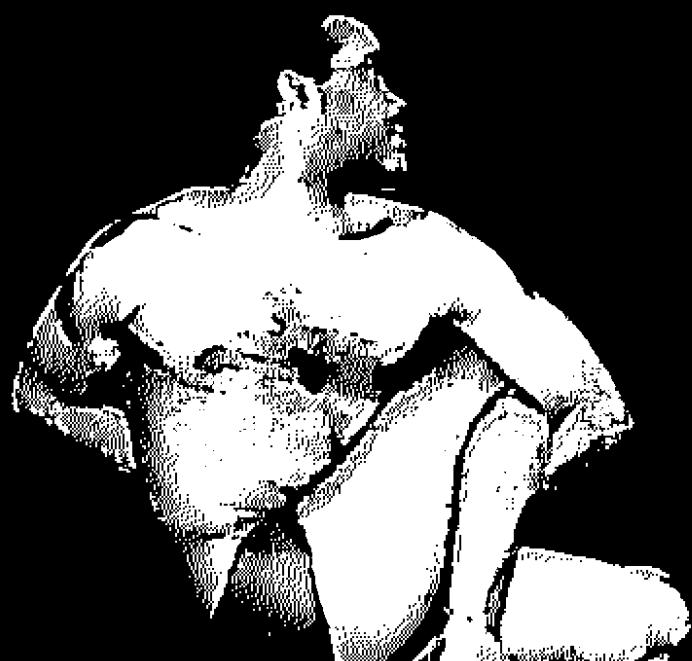




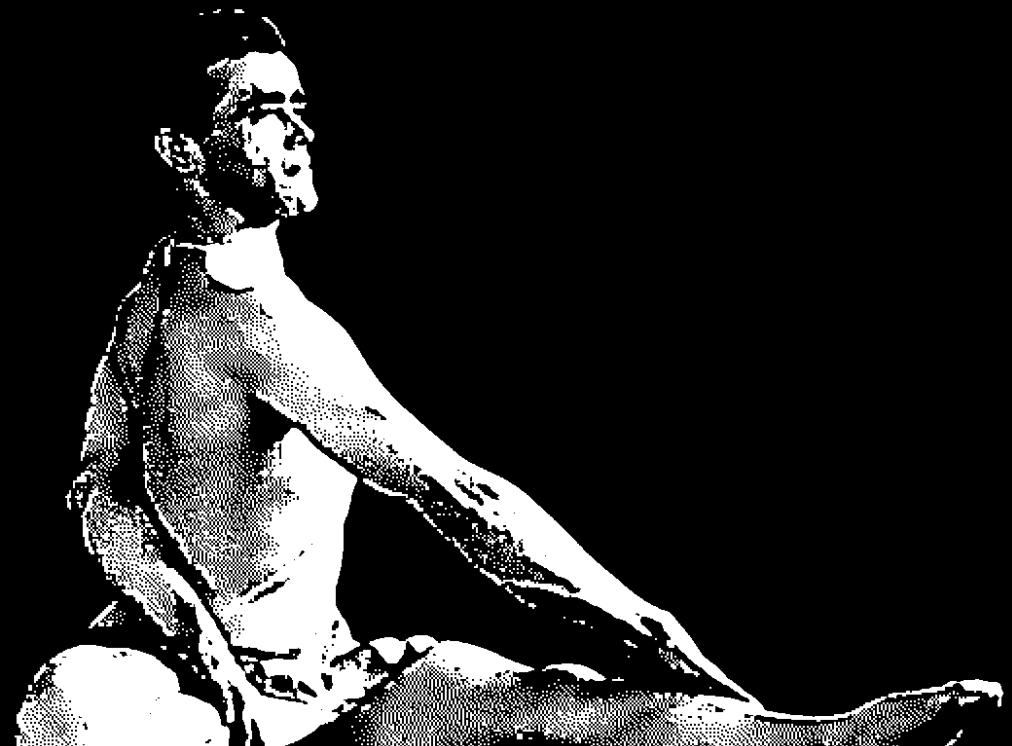


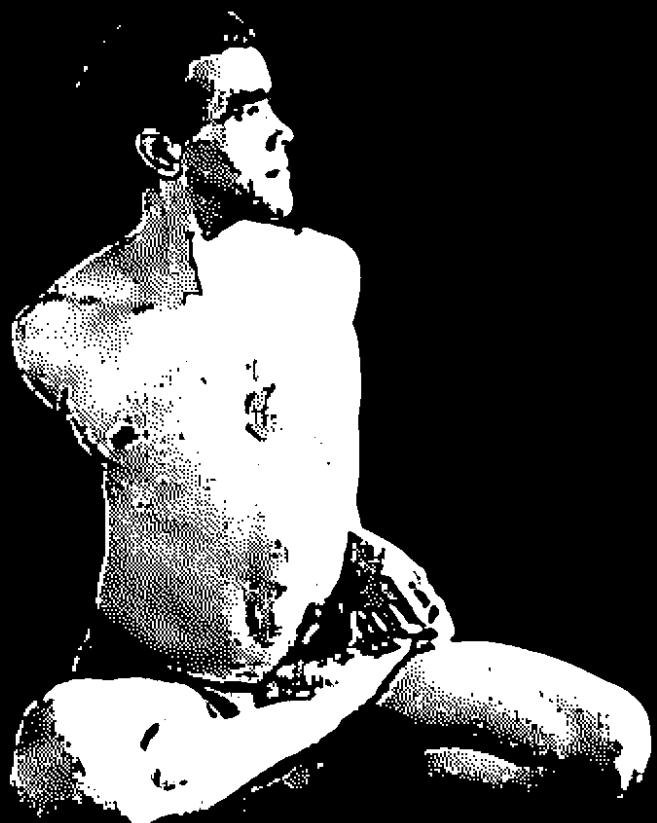








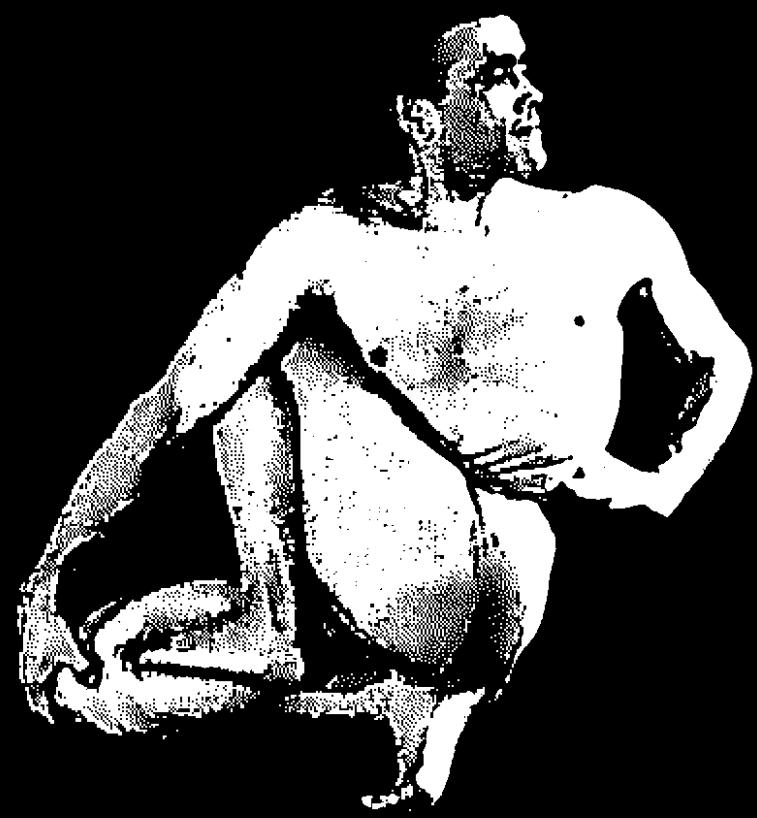


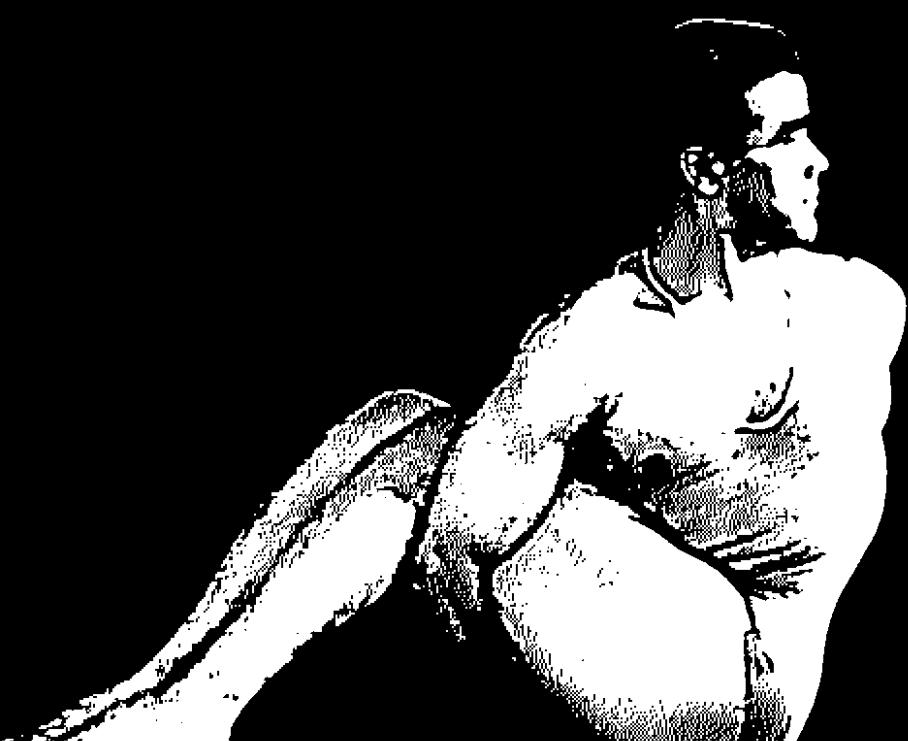






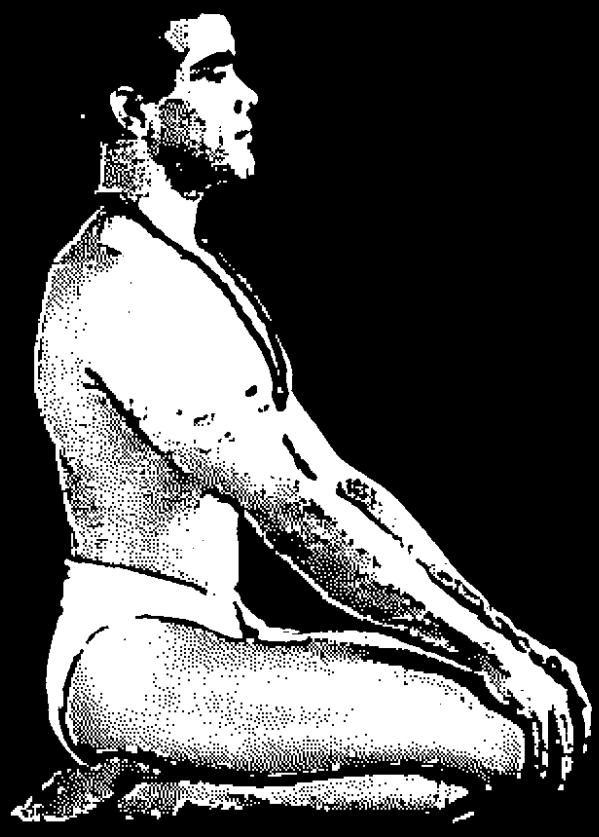








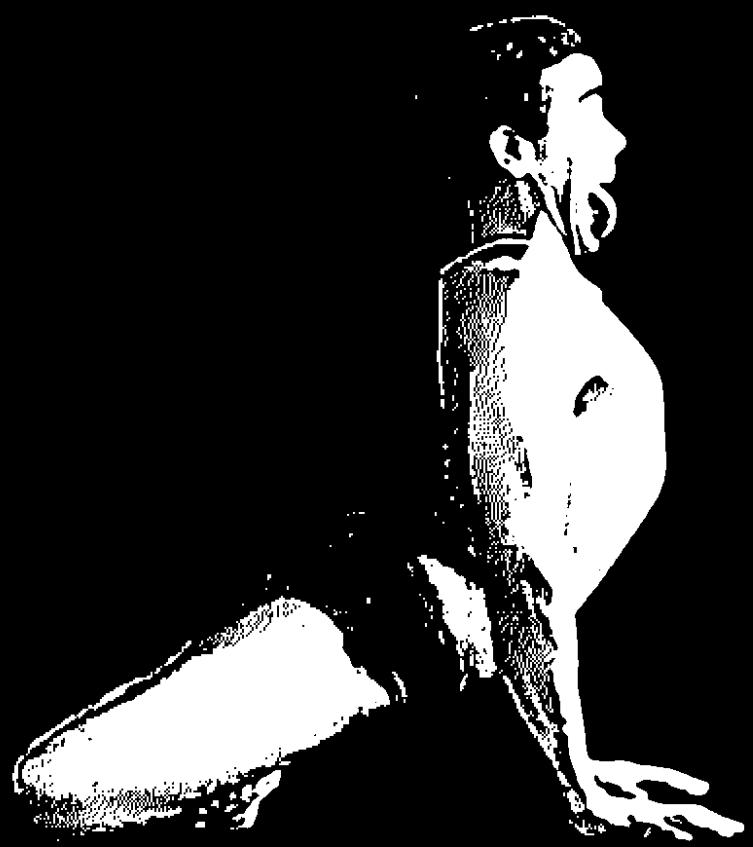


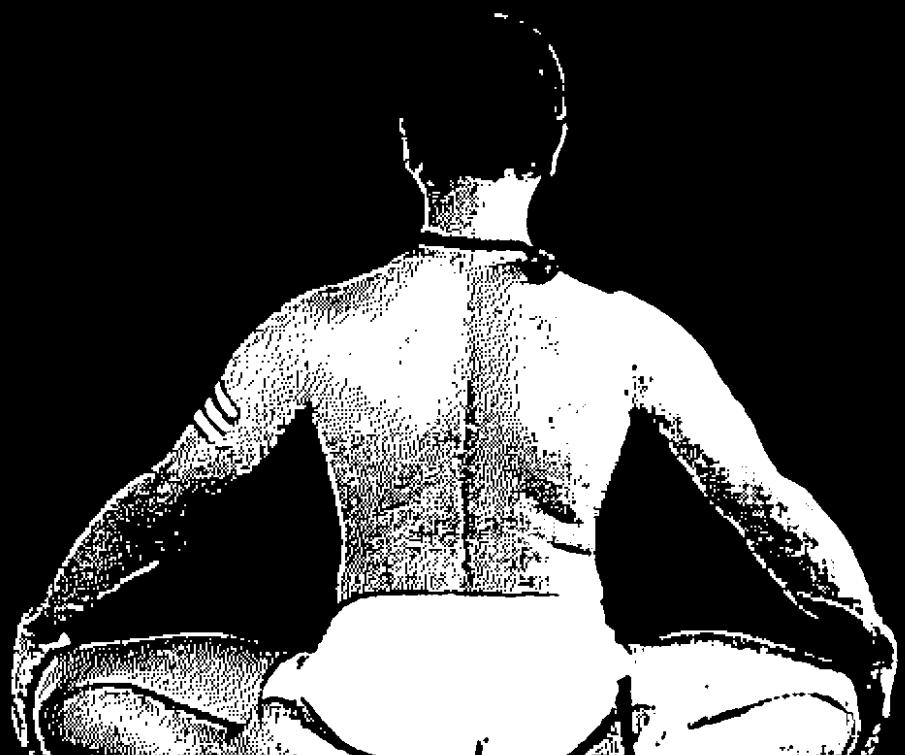




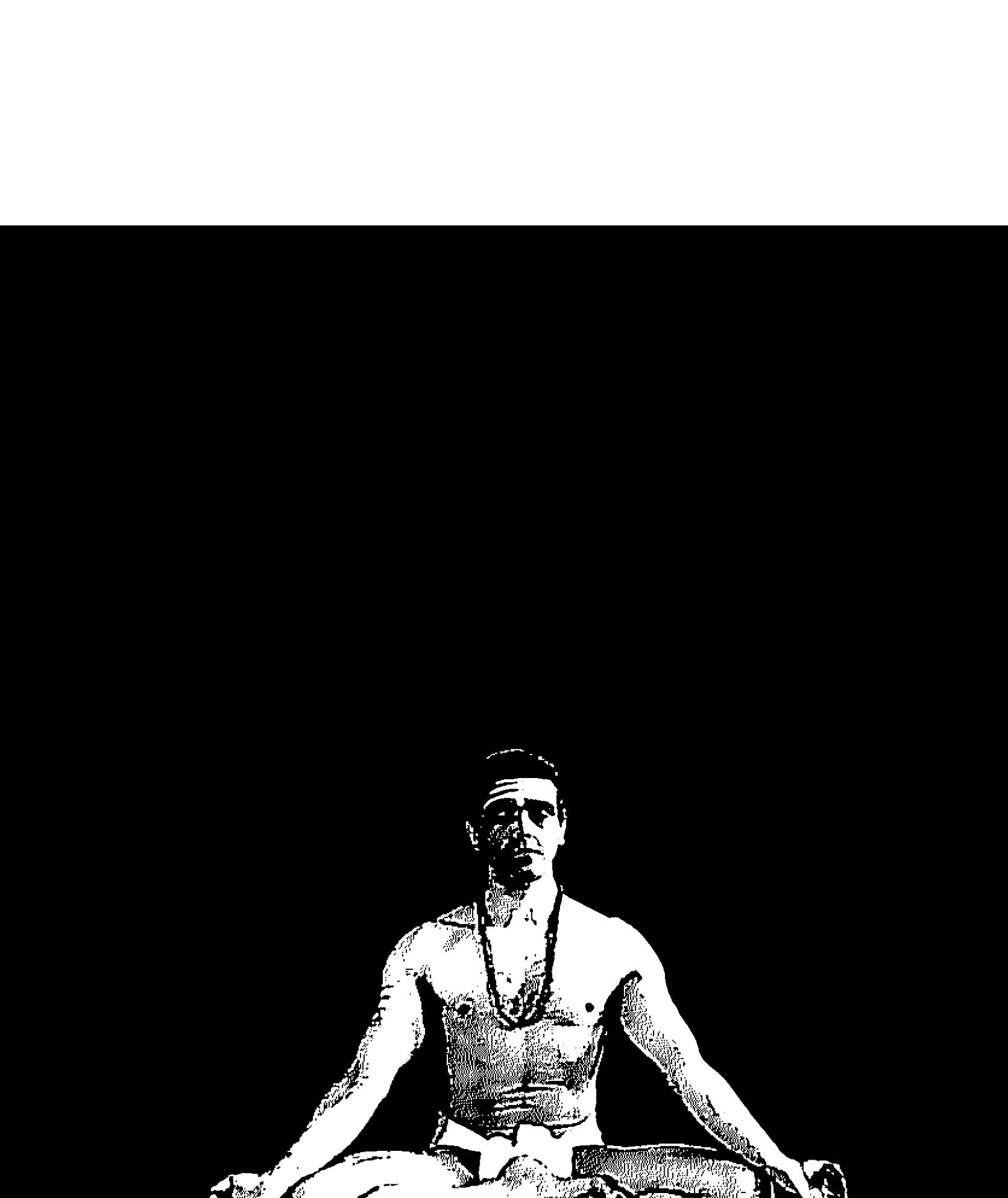














































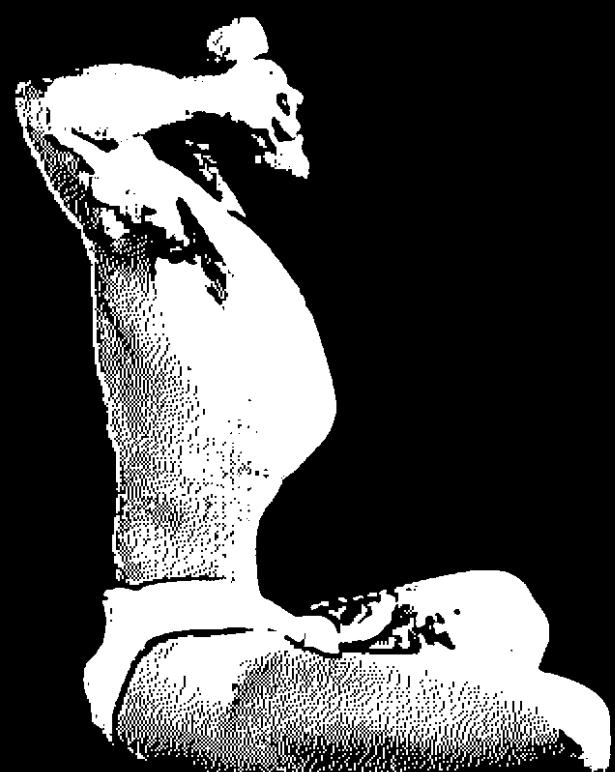
BREATHING & CLEANSING PRACTICES

Pranayama is the rhythmic control of the breath that drives that vital force up the spine through all the chakras, opening consciousness. *Pranayama* is not an asana, yet it is the most important practice in yoga. Following *Akasha* (space), *Prana*, which means breath or life force, was the second creation in the universe. It is the energy that animates everything, even thought. Explaining the flow of energy in yogic terms would require its own book. All you need to know is that it resembles the flow of electricity through condensers, transformers, and resistors. Correct application of *pranayama* is very powerful, enabling you to control your emotions, increase concentration, and master certain difficult poses.

The breathing exercises in the following pages just a few of the many techniques used in *pranayama* practice. In nostril breathing practices like *Jalandhara Bandha* be sure to use the right hand to open and close the nostrils, as the right arm has different positive currents than the left. Keep the thumb on the right also with the middle and index fingers away

tips of the thumb and index finger touching, prevents dissipation of energy.

The cleansing techniques are called *kriyas* and they function to physically rid the system of impurities. The *dhautis* (washing methods) are employed prior to pranayama to maximize its full benefits. When practicing *kriyas* it's essential to be guided by an experienced teacher.









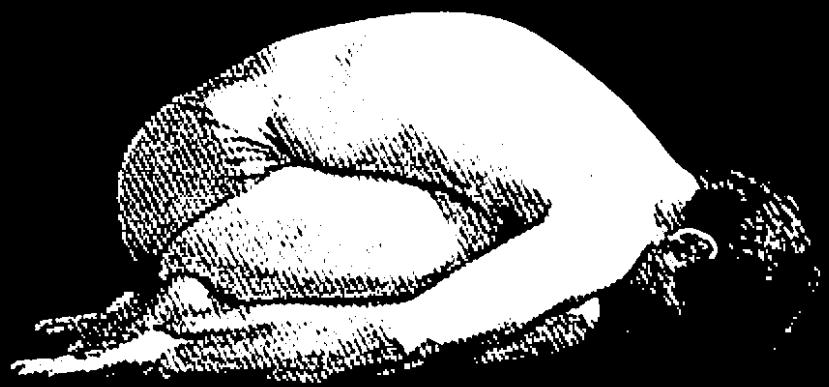


RESTING POSES

All restorative poses can be held for five to 30 minutes since they don't create any undue tension, sensation, or strain. *Shavasana*, Corpse Pose, is the pose of total relaxation, and the only pose in which a yogi breathes through the mouth. Beginners often skip this pose at the end of practice but they are missing one of yoga's most powerful moments. With every breath you allow awareness to enter the deepest parts of yourself. Resting, but with your mind fully aware, *Shavasana* calms the brain, relaxes the body, helps lower blood pressure, and rebalances the entire system. Ten minutes will bring you all these benefits; fifteen minutes is preferable, and corresponds to two or three hours of deep sleep.

Child's pose, *Garbhasana*, is often used as a relieving pose between more challenging asanas. It gently stretches the hips, thighs, and ankles, relieves back and neck pain, and calms the brain. Try to breathe fully into the back of the torso to deepen the intake of oxygen. In all restorative poses it's important not to collapse and to maintain good alignment. You can

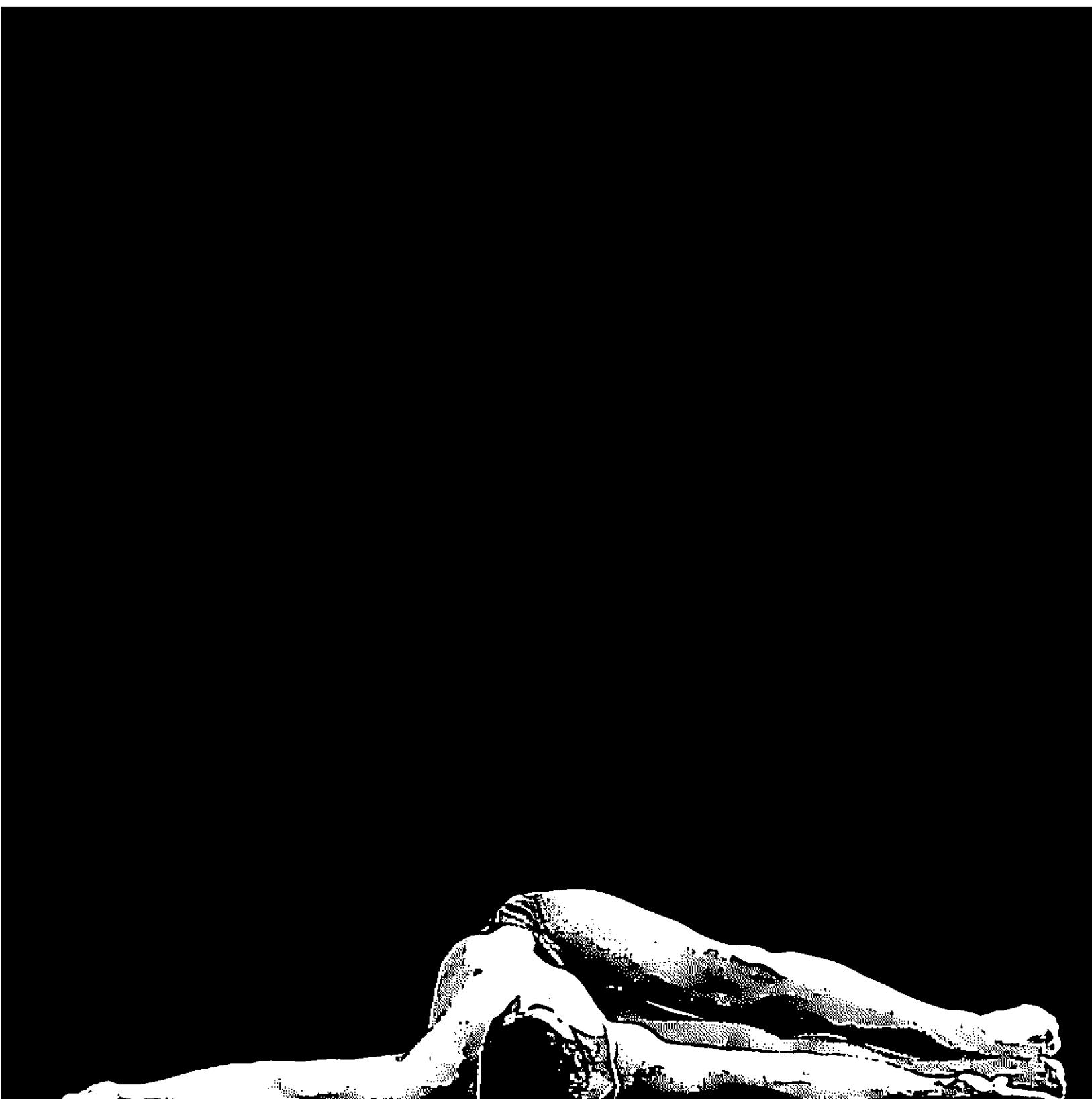














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BIOGRAPHY

Sri Dharma Mittra is one of the most accomplished yogis in the West. He has spent most of his life serving humanity, helping students achieve radiant health and spiritual development through yoga practice.

Dharma was born in 1939 in the state of Minas Gerais, Brazil. In 1964, following a career in the Brazilian Air Force, he moved to New York City to study yoga with his teacher Sri Swami Kailashananda, also known as Yogi Gupta. After intense study and practice of the eight limbs of yoga, he was accepted into the family of Bramacharia as a *sannyasin* — one who renounces the world in order to realize God. In 1975 he left his guru's ashram to found the Yoga Asana Center of New York City, now known as the Dharma Yoga Center.

He teaches classic Hatha-Raja-Ashtanga yoga and embodies the virtues of the discipline: kindness, patience, humility, fortitude, righteousness, humor, selfless service, *ahisma* (non-killing), compassion, and understanding for all. Like many early masters, much of his teaching is imparted nonverbally:

it is said that students can feel the truth and make rapid improvements simply by being in his presence.

Dharma has initiated tens of thousands of people into yoga practice, and has taught many well-known yogis practicing today. He is known as “the Teacher’s Teacher” and “the Rock of Yoga.”

In 1984 Dharma meticulously photographed himself in more than 1,300 yoga poses, then cut and pasted 908 of the images onto the Master Yoga Chart, offering it to his Guru and to all yoga aspirants. Today this masterpiece hangs in ashrams and centers worldwide, where it is used as a teaching tool and inspiration for all *sadahkas* (seekers of truth). *Asanas* is his first book.

GLOSSARY

Adhara: A support.

Adho-mukha: Face downwards.

Ajna-Chakra: The nerve plexus between the eyebrows. The third eye; the seat of command.

Alamba: Support.

Ananda: Bliss.

Anga: Limbs, points.

Angustha: The big toe.

Ardha: Half.

Asana (“seat”): A physical posture; the third limb of yoga; originally this meant “meditation posture.”

Ashta: Eight.

Ashtanga-yoga (“eight-limbed union”): The eightfold yoga of Patanjali, consisting of moral discipline (*yama*), self-

inhibition (*pratyahara*), concentration (*dharana*), meditation (*dhyana*), and ecstasy (*samadhi*), leading to liberation (*kaivalya*).

Ashva: Horse.

Ayama: Length, expansion, extension.

Baddha: Bound.

Baka: A crane.

Bandha: A bond; a posture in which certain organs or body parts are contracted and controlled.

Bhakti: Worship; devotion.

Bheka: A frog.

Bhuja: The shoulder or arm.

Bhujanga: A serpent or cobra.

Bindu: Seed, point. The creative potency of anything where all energies are focused; the third eye.

Chakra: Wheel. Literally, the

the subtle body in which energy flows. The seven chakras are: *muladhara-chakra* at the base of the spine, *svadhishtana-chakra* at the genitals, *manipura-chakra* at the navel, *anahata-chakra* at the heart, *vishuddha-chakra* at the throat, *ajna-chakra* in the middle of the head, and *sahasrara-chakra* at the top of the head.

Chakora: A type of bird (Greek partridge).

Chalana: To churn.

Chandra: The moon.

Chatur: Four.

Chin-mudra (“consciousness seal”): A hand gesture in meditation, which is formed by bringing the tips of the index finger and the thumb together, while the remaining fingers are kept

Dhanu: A bow.

Dharma (“bearer”): A term signifying law, virtue, righteousness.

Drishti (“View” or “sight”): Yogic gazing, such as at the tip of the nose or the spot between the eyebrows.

Dur: Difficult.

Dwi: Two.

Dwi-hasta: Two hands.

Dwi-pada: Two feet or legs.

Eka: One.

Ganda: The cheek or side of the face including the temple.

Garbha: An infant.

Garuda: An eagle.

Go: A cow.

Goraksha: Cowhead.

Guru: (“he who is heavy, weighty”): A spiritual teacher.

Hala: A plough.

Hansa: Swan/gander; also

Hatha Yoga (“Forceful Yoga”): a major branch of yoga, developed by Goraksha and other adepts c. 1000 C.E., and emphasizing the physical aspects of the transformative path, notably postures (*asana*), cleansing techniques (*shodhana*), and breath control (*pranayama*). “Ha” means sun; “Tha” means moon.

Hasta: The hand.

Jalandhara-bandha: A posture where the neck and throat are contracted and the chin is rested in the notch between the collar bones.

Janu: The knee.

Jathara: The abdomen, stomach.

Karma: Action.

of the thumb. The symbol of true knowledge.

Kapalabhati: A process of sharp, quick inhalations and exhalations that clears the sinuses.

Kapota: A dove or pigeon.

Karma (“action”): Activity of any kind, including ritual acts; said to be binding only so long as engaged in a self-centered way.

Karna: The ear.

Khechari-mudra (“space-walking seal”): The Tantric practice of curling the tongue back against the upper palate in order to seal life energy.

Kona: An angle.

Krouncha: A heron.

Kriya: A cleansing process.

Kukkuta: A cock.

Kuvalaya: The bull.

Lalata: The forehead; also the name of a chakra.

Lola: Tremulous; swinging like a pendulum.

Loma: Hair.

Madhya: Middle (of the body).

Makara: A crocodile.

Mala: A wreath.

Mandala: A circular design symbolizing the cosmos.

Manduka: A frog.

Mantra: A sacred sound or phrase that has a transformative effect on the mind of the individual reciting it.

Matsya: A fish.

Mayura: A peacock.

Meru-danda: The spinal column.

Mrita: Dead, a corpse.

Mudra: A seal or sealing posture.

Mukha: Face.

where the body from the anus to the navel is contracted and lifted toward the spine.

Nada: The inner sound, heard through the practice of nada yoga or kundalini yoga.

Nadi-shodhana (“channel cleansing”): The practice of purifying the conduits through breath control (*pranayama*).

Nakra: A crocodile.

Namaskara: Worship; salutation.

Nara: A man.

Nataraj: Name of Shiva as the cosmic dancer.

Natya: Dancing.

Nauli: A process in which the abdominal muscles and organs are made to move vertically and laterally in a surging motion.

Ojas (“vitality”): The subtle energy produced through practice, especially the discipline of chastity (*brahmacharya*).

Om: The original mantra symbolizing the ultimate reality.

Pada: The foot or leg.

Padangustha: The big toe.

Padma: A lotus.

Parampara: A succession.

Parigha: Bolt lock on a gate.

Parivrtta: Revolving.

Parivartana: Turning around; revolving.

Parivartana-pada: With one leg turned around.

Parshva: The side, flank; lateral.

Parvata: A mountain.

Paryanka: A bed.

Pasha: A noose.

Paschima: West; the

Pinda: A fetus, embryo; ball.

Prajna: Intelligence, wisdom.

Prana: Breath, life, vitality, wind, energy, strength.

Also connotes the soul.

Pranama: A prayer.

Pranayama: Breath control, consisting of conscious inhalation (*puraka*), retention (*kumbhaka*), and exhalation (*rechaka*).

Prapada: The tip of the feet.

Prasarita: Spread out; stretched out.

Purva: East; the front of the body.

Purvottana: An intense stretch of the front side of the body.

Raja-Yoga (“Royal Yoga”): Union with Supreme Spirit by becoming ruler of one’s own mind. Another name for Patanjali’s eight-fold

Salamba: With support.

Sama: Same, equal, even, upright.

Samadhi (“putting together”): The ecstatic or state in which the meditator becomes one with the object of meditation.

Sannyasin (“he who has cast off”): A renouncer.

Sansara (“confluence”): The finite world of change, as opposed to the ultimate reality.

Sanchalana: Shaking.

Sat-sanga (“company of truth”): The practice of frequenting the good company of saints, sages, and their disciples.

Sarva: All, whole.

Sarvanga: The whole body.

Setu: A bridge.

Shalabha: A locust.

Simha: A lion.

Sthiti: Stability.

Sukha: Easy, comfortable.

Supta: Sleeping.

Surya: The sun.

Sutra (“thread”): A work consisting of aphoristic statements, such as Patanjali’s Yoga Sutra.

Svana: A dog.

Tada: A mountain.

Tan: To stretch or lengthen.

Tapas (“glow/heat”): A burning effort that involves purification, self-discipline and austerity.

Tittibha: A firefly.

Tolana: Weighing.

Trikona: A triangle.

Ubhaya: Both.

Uddiyana: A yogic lock in which the diaphragm is lifted high up in the thorax and the abdominal organs are pulled back toward the

Urdhva: Raised, elevated.

Urdhva-retus: Upward facing.

Ushtra: A camel.

Utkata: Powerful.

Uttana: An intense stretch.

Utthita: Raised up, extended, stretched.

Vakra: Crooked.

Vama: The left side.

Vatayana: A horse.

Vayu: The wind; vital air.

Vinyasa: Going progressively.

Viparita: Inverted, reversed.

Vira: A hero.

Vrksha: A tree.

Vrschika: A scorpion.

Vrt: To turn or revolve.

Yoga: Union, communion.

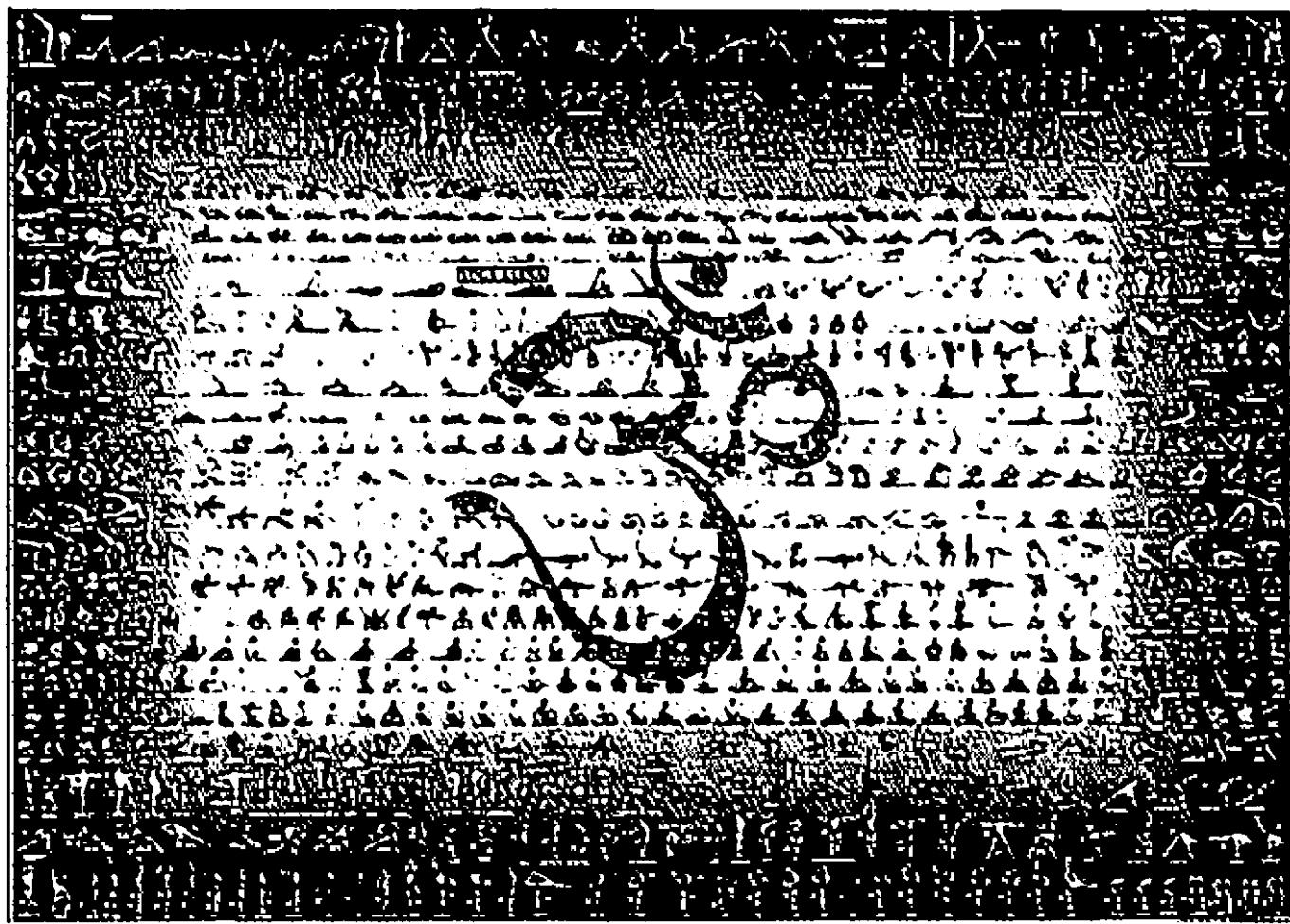
Derived from *yuj*, meaning to join or to yoke.

Yoga-mudra: A posture; a seal.

where the body is at rest but the mind remains fully conscious.

Yoga-sutra: Classical work on yoga by Patanjali, consisting of 185 aphorisms on yoga and divided into four parts dealing with Samadhi, the means by which yoga is attained, the powers the seeker comes across in his quest, and the state of absolution.

Yogi or yogini: One who follows the path of yoga.



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