

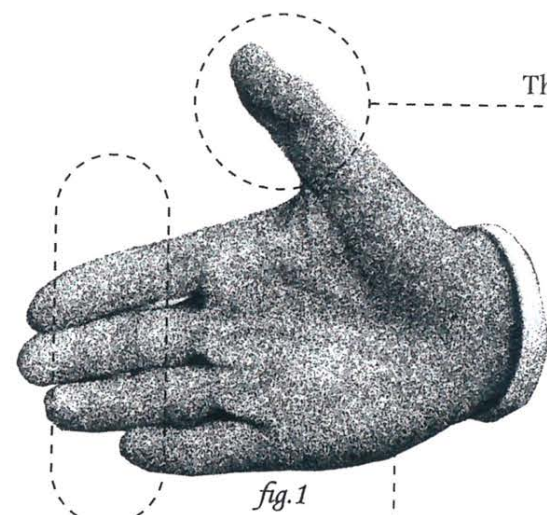
HANDLING

The handshake is a ritual which, throughout the centuries, has built its own codes and set of rules. Rather than a banal habit it is a multifaced performative act which, according to its enactment in different context, can assume a broad variety of meanings.

In political communication the handshake represents an essential part of the protocol. It transfers itself fluidly from one meeting to another, drawing a wider connection which holds together all world leaders far in both space and political attitude. Intentionally or unintentionally, the way politicians perform the handshake tend to convey specific messages to the public.

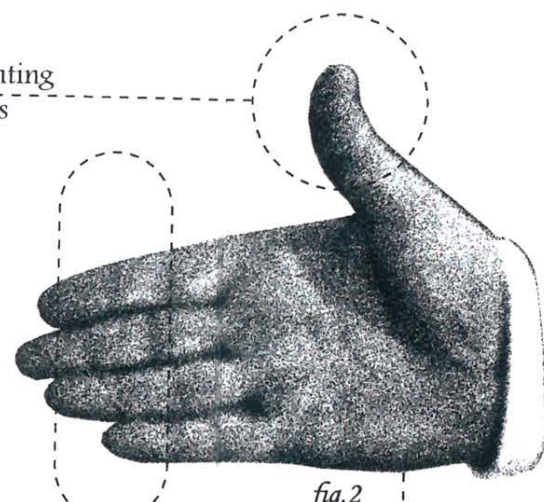
The gestures displayed in the fluid choreography of the handshake can be pinned down as discrete movements. Through comparisons, and the recognition of recurring patterns, the aim of this research is to investigate the non-verbal rhetorics of the handshake, and to unravel different typologies of greetings.

The most neutral form of handshake consists in raising the right hand in front of the bust with the palm perpendicular to the ground.



*fig.1*

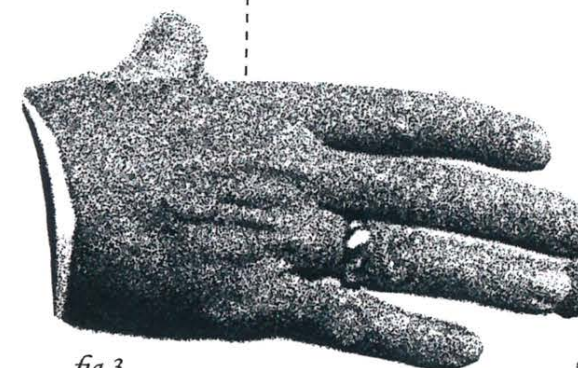
Thumb pointing  
upwards



*fig.2*

Tight fingers  
pointing ahead

Palm perpendicular  
to the ground

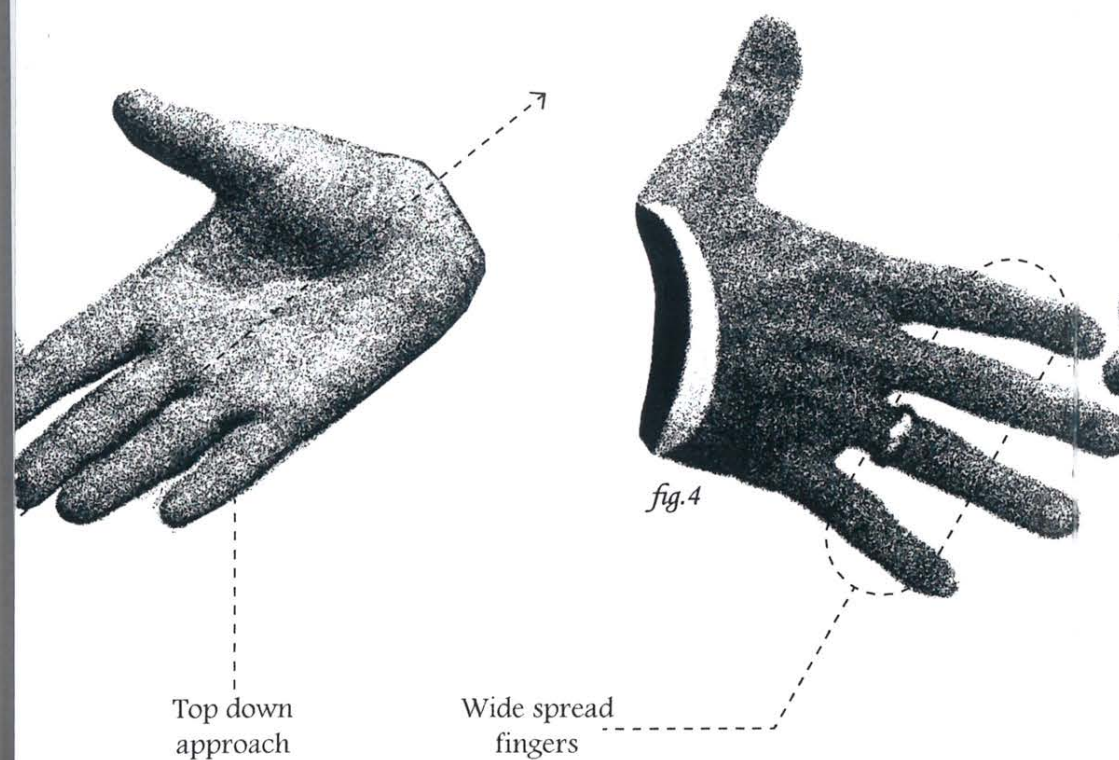


*fig.3*

Palm at  
an angle

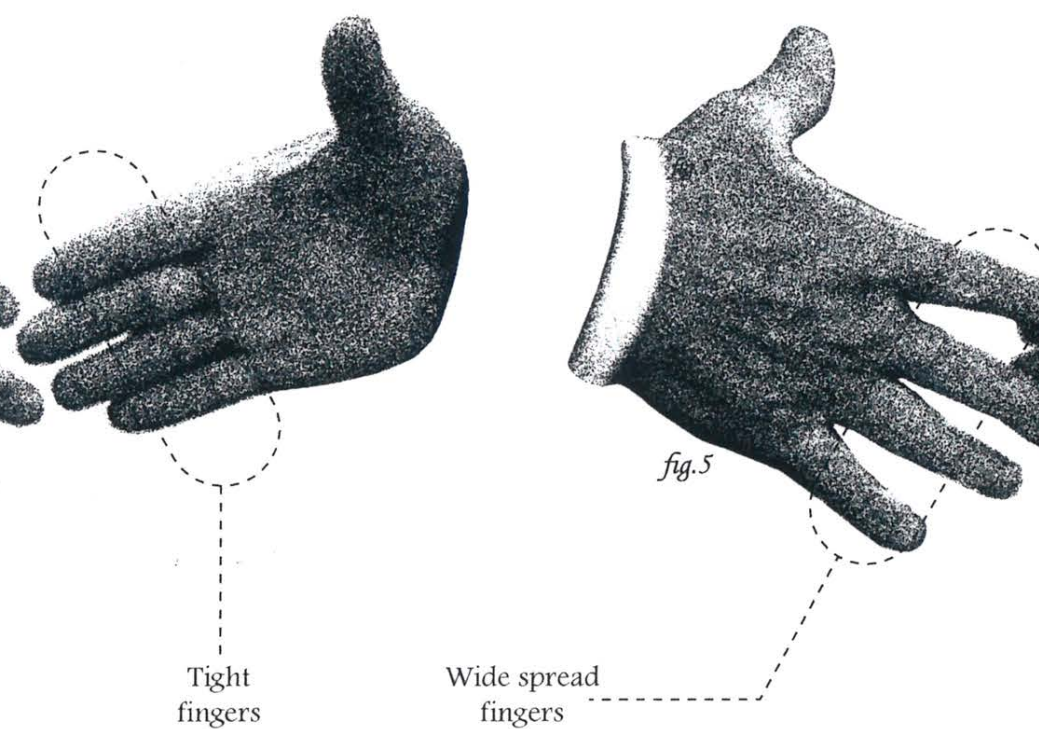


Approaching from the top down it is a position of control,  
whereas from below it is a subordinated approach.



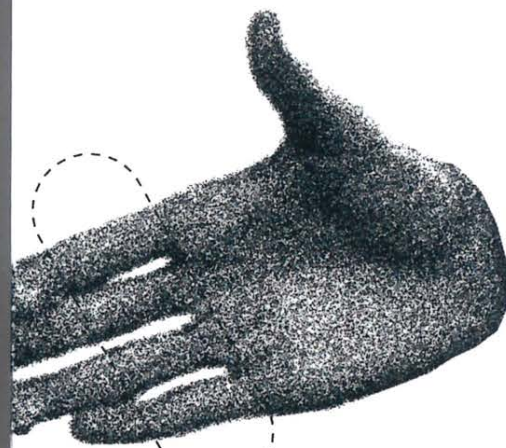
*fig.4*

Approaching the handshake with the fingers wide spread reveals  
an intention to prevail on the interlocutor.

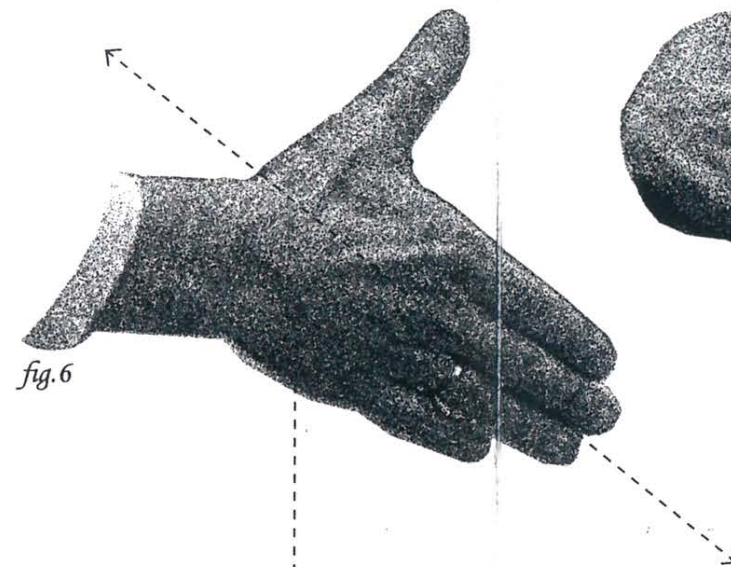


*fig.5*

The palm facing downwards manifests dominance whereas  
the palm facing upwards communicates deference.

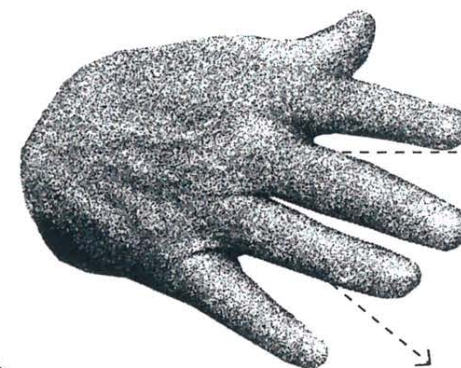


Tight  
fingers

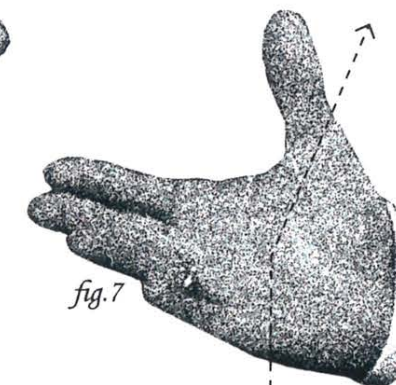


*fig. 6*

Top down  
approach



Palm facing  
downwards

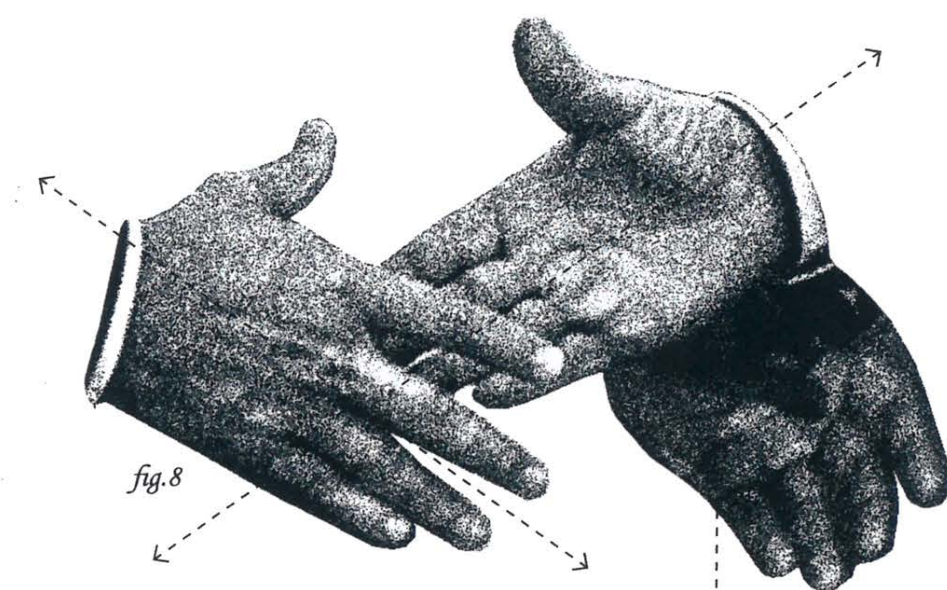


*fig. 7*

Palm facing  
upwards

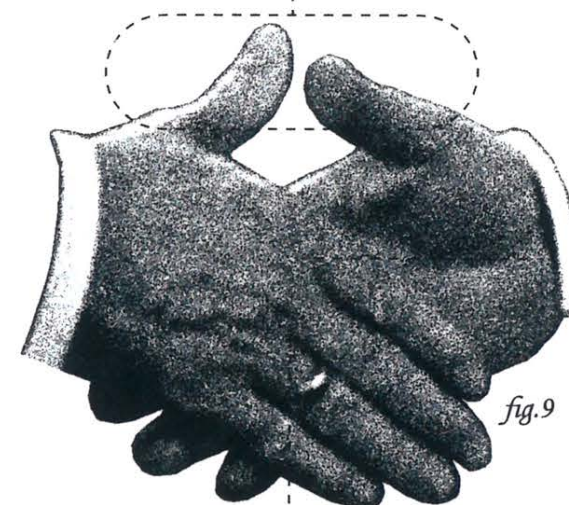


The hands move towards one another  
until the palms are touching.



Left hand  
double grasping

Thumbs meeting specularly in  
the hollow of the hand



Palms  
touching



*fig.10*



*fig.11*

The person on the left shows the back of the hand closer to the observer, visually overpowering the other person's hand.



*fig.12*

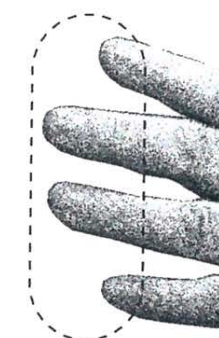


*fig.13*

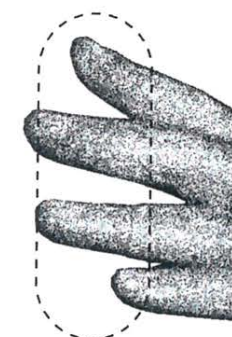
When the hands meet the fingers close into a grip. Then it usually follows a brief up and down movement.



*fig.14*



Left hand touching the other person's shoulder

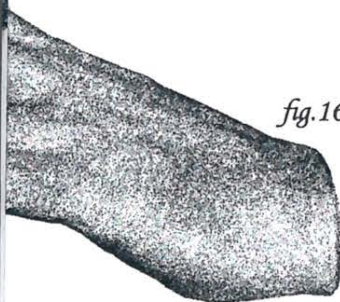




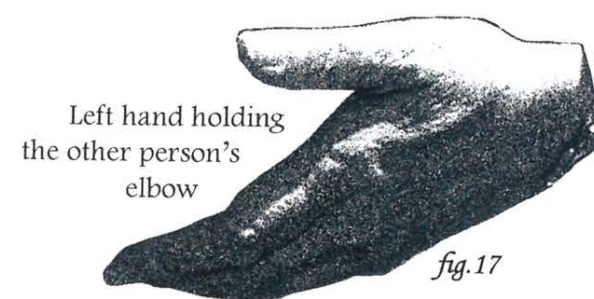
The left hand might play a key role in defining the power relationship established between the two people shaking hands.



*fig.15*



*fig.16*



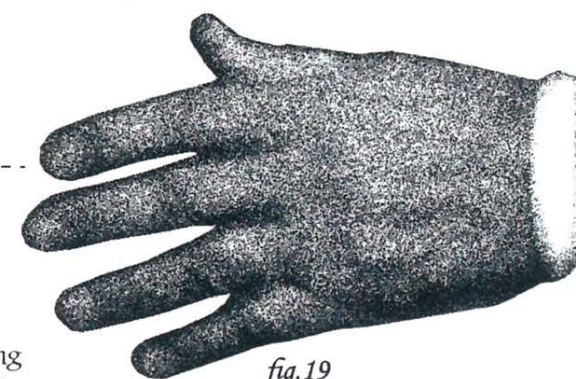
Left hand holding  
the other person's  
elbow

*fig.17*



*fig.18*

Left hand grasping the  
other person's wrist



*fig.19*

Left hand touching  
the other person's  
forearm

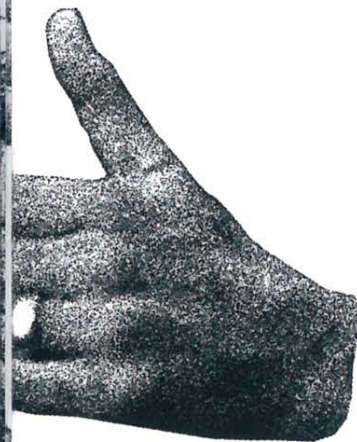
Left hand holding  
the other person's  
elbow



*fig.20*



The left hand placed on the upper arm can be considerate a friendly gesture but also an attempt to exert authority.



*fig.21*



*fig.22*



*fig.23*



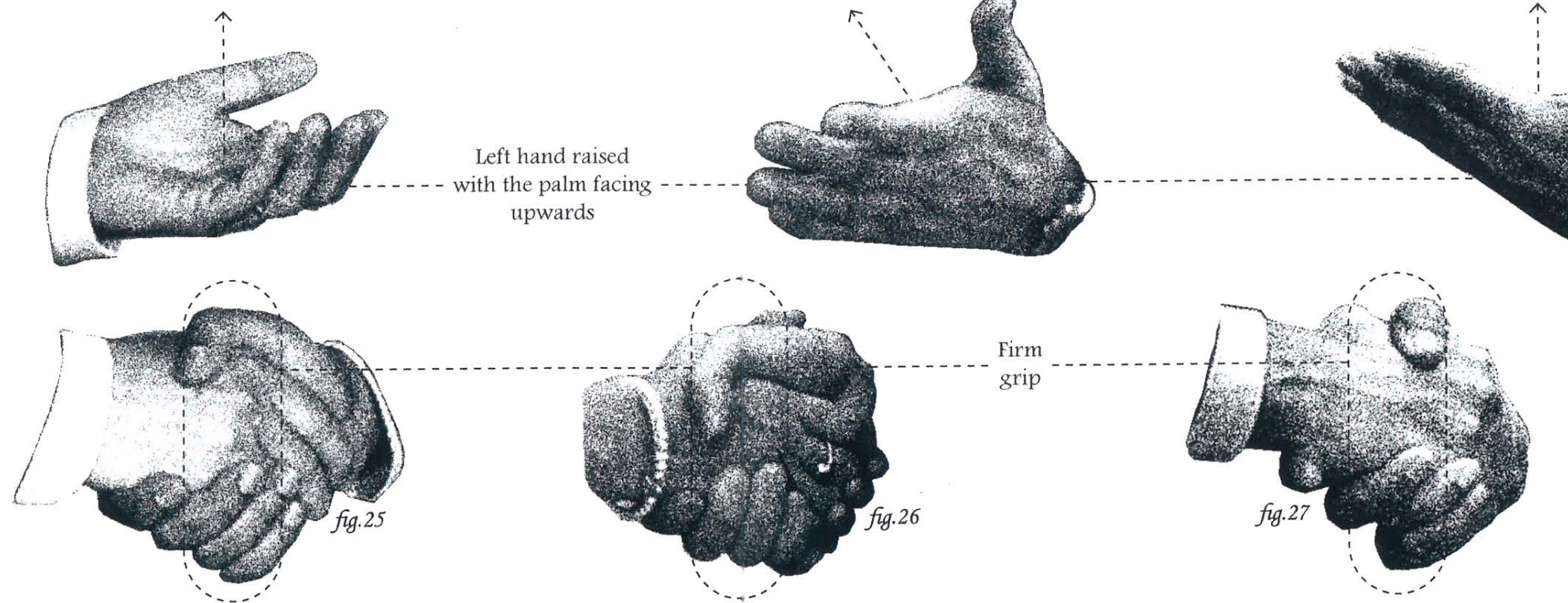
*fig.24*

Frequently that the upper arm grasp is employed by the person entering the handshake from the right, so they bypass the camera disadvantage.

The fingers curl around the upper arm increasing the grasp -----> and consequently the assertiveness

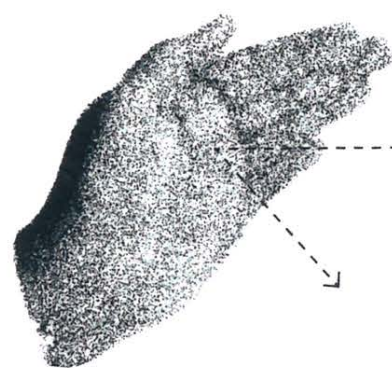
If not directly involved in the handshake, the left hand can still contribute to shape significances in the choreography of the greetings.

The left hand raised facing upwards is associated with the idea of supporting and sustaining





The left hand raised facing downwards is associated with the idea of limiting and stopping



Left hand raised with the palm facing downwards

fig.28



Palms parallel to the ground

The left hand facing downwards might be used sometimes to pat the other person's back of the hand too

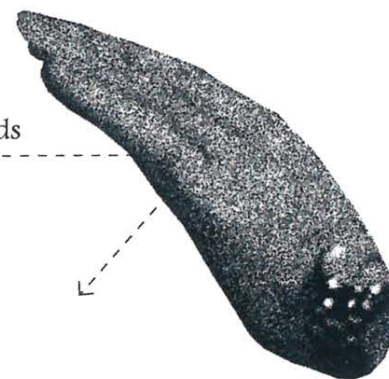


fig.29

Left hand patting

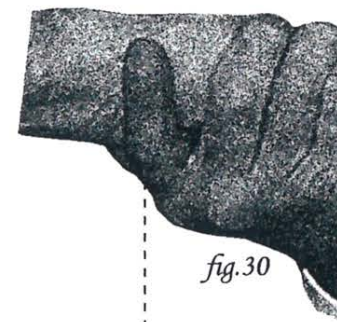
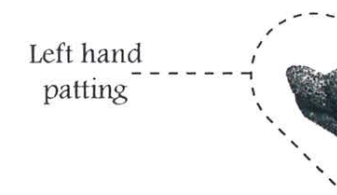
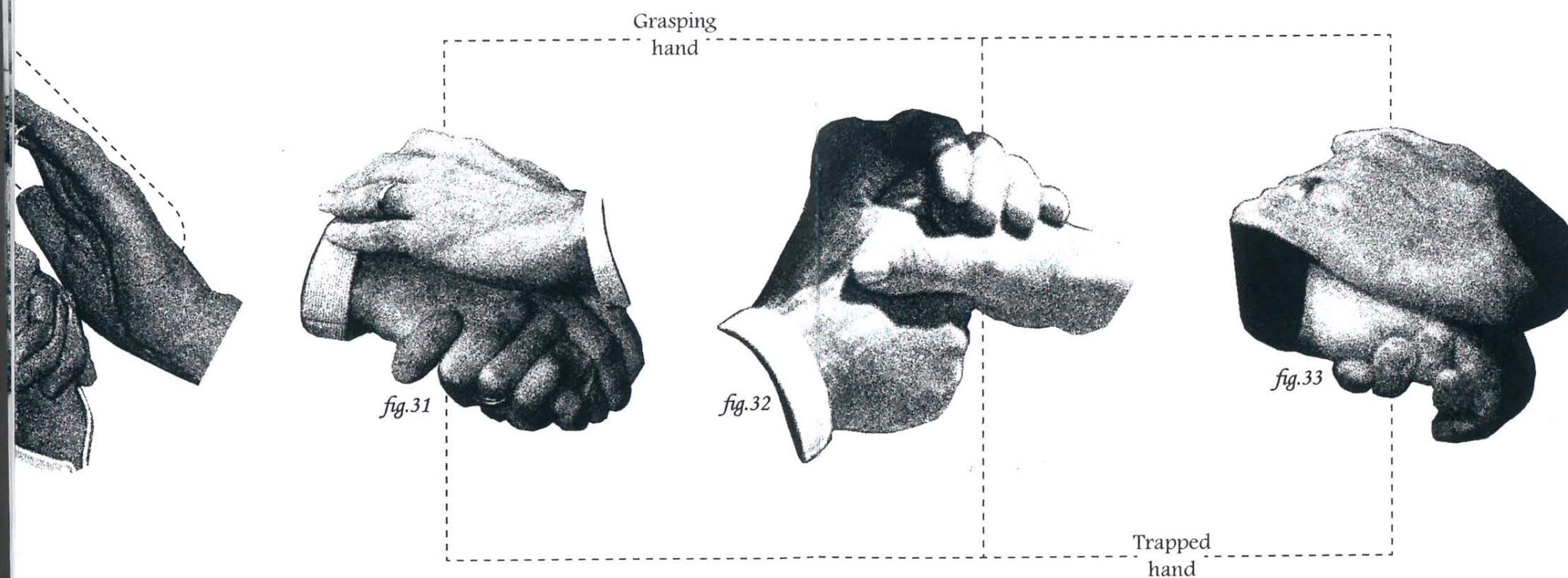


fig.30

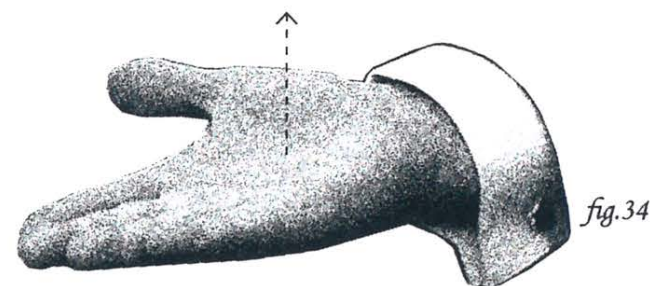
The left hand is often used to double clasp the other person's hand.  
The double grasp traps the handshake and it limits the movement.

The double grasp double can be seen as a expression of esteem and affection but also to overpower the interlocutor and re-assert control.

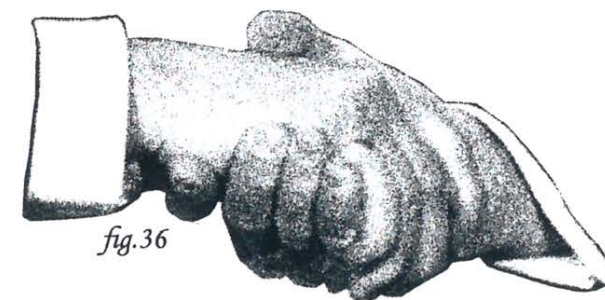




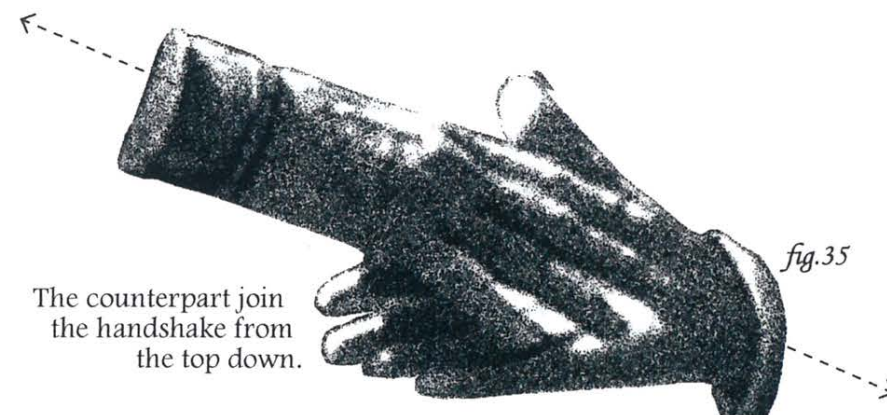
The Trump's manoeuvre:  
A sequence of gestures Trump employed in several occasions.



He offers his hand with the palm facing upwards.



He firmly grips and squeezes the other person's hand.

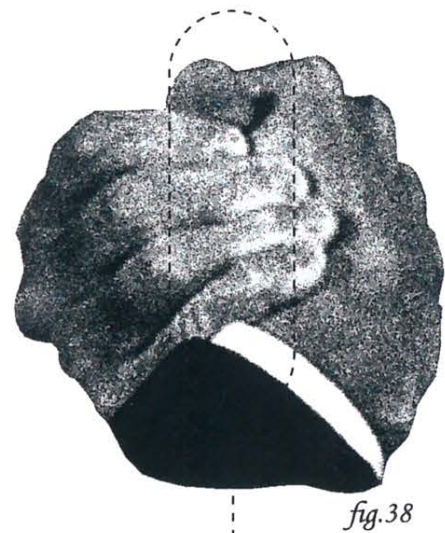


The counterpart join  
the handshake from  
the top down.



He pats the back of the hand and he pulls it towards himself.

Commonly referred as the 'homie handshake', it consists in rotating the palms so the fingers are clapping each other's thumbs.



Fingers clapping  
the thumb



fig.39

Left hand reinforcing  
the handshake

The 'homie handshake' is an informal greeting and it is generally considered a sign of companionship.

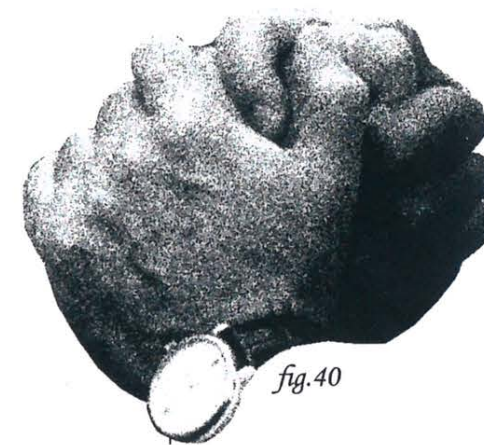


fig.40



The hug is the most confidential form of greeting.

Left hand reaches around the shoulder

Right hand placed on the upper arm

*fig.41*

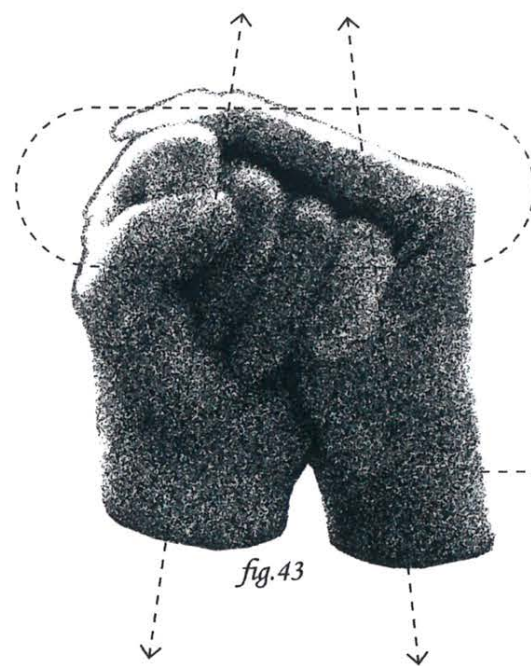
Right hand reaches around the shoulder

It is considerate very intimate and friendly but it might also be interpret as an invasion of the personal space.

Left hand placed on the waist

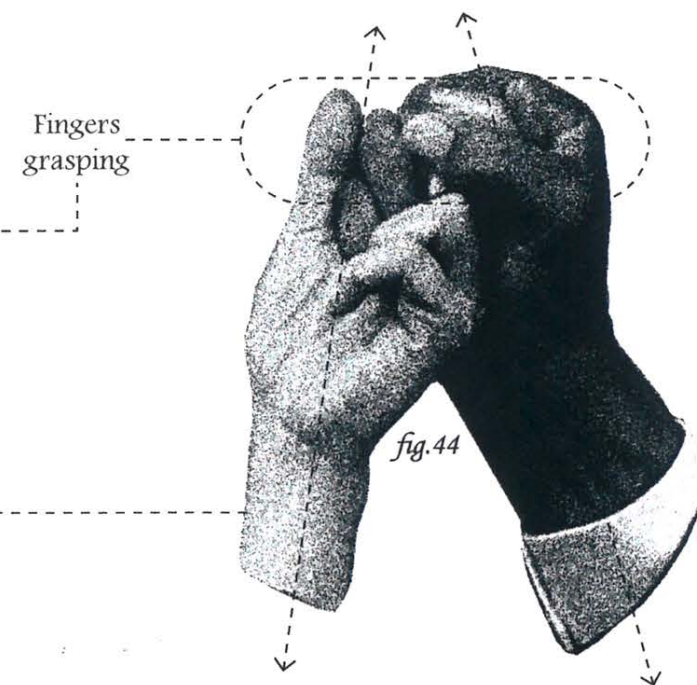
*fig.42*

The 'winner's hand raised' consists in grasping the hand of the other person and raising it above the head.



It is a gesture that is always addressed to an audience.

It is a gesture associated with the sport's sphere, and it means victory.



More in general it communicates a profound understanding and appreciation.



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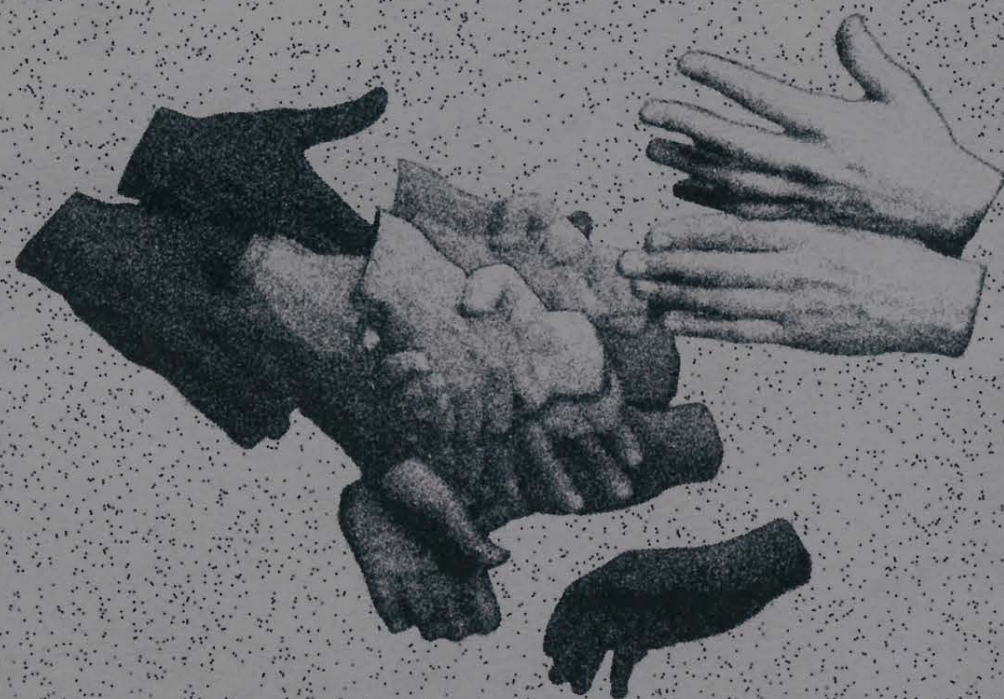
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HANDLING