

TITLE:

WEAVING

08 JULI 2015

ACTION

ACTIVATION

RE-ENACTMENT

CATALOGUE

HISTORY

SUIT

FABRICS FOR SUITS

WEAVING A ~~TEXTILE~~ FOR A MECHANICAL SUIT ON A LOOM FROM

1937

FABRICS FOR SUITS

WEAVING FABRICS FOR SUITS ON A MECHANICAL LOOM FROM 1937

WEAVING FABRICS FOR SUITS

A VEVE PRESS JITTER

TO WEAVE FABRICS FOR SUITS

ACTIONS

connected to fabrication and to the non-gram word FABRICATION

The body, the facticity, the 'embodiment' garments, object of style.

And it also sounds like a manual - which it in a way is.....

What kind of fabrics?
Why?
Do you weave them yourself?
Where do you produce them?

How?
Based on what tradition?
Are they used for suits?

Are they expensive?

By whom?

REFLECTION
Weaving Fabrics for Suits
Franz Petter Schmidt

REFLECTION
Weaving Fabrics for Suits
Franz Petter Schmidt, 2017

Ta av loket. Ottast ikkje.

Gunnhild Øyehaug¹

—

Remove the lid. Fear not.

Gunnhild Øyehaug¹
(my translation)

1. Gunnhild Øyehaug, *Miniatyrlesingar*, Kolon Forlag, Oslo, 2017, p. 79.

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1.1. Foreword

I began the Norwegian Artistic Research Fellowship Programme at the Oslo National Academy of the Arts (KHiO) in October 2011. My work, *Weaving Fabrics for Suits*, was developed in the textile department of the Art and Craft faculty. Gerd Tinglum was my first supervisor, and I had two second supervisors, Anne Knutsen and Theodor Barth. Jessica Hemmings was the text supervisor for this reflection.

I spent three and a half years on the programme, with my final exhibition *Weaving Fabrics for Suits* showing at the Oslo Kunstforening (OK) from 13 March to 19 April 2015. The exhibition and an accompanying catalogue were the artistic outcomes presented for assessment in 2015. This reflection text is submitted for review in 2017 and 2018.

The reflection is a series of shorter texts – fragments that, to a greater or lesser degree, relate to the context in which they stand. Sections of text in black make up the newly written reflection. Sections of text in green are edited and translated versions of the texts I wrote for the exhibition catalogue in 2015, with the exception of *The Blue Suit*, which is a new addition written in 2016. These form part of an experiment in poetic writing, and for that reason they have no references. The sections of text in italics are quotes.

I choose not to use the term *project* about my work in the programme. My explorations have not been sufficiently planned or delimited, neither in time nor in content, for *project* to be a suitable term.

My work is built on craftsmanship and my own biography. I use references and theory where they naturally form part of what is necessary to write about. This is *not* a text about the history of the Norwegian textile industry. It is *not* a text based on phenomenology, economy or queer studies. It's a text about sensation, longing, belonging, memory, pride and being gay. I write about my work and about myself, based on my experience as a tailor, weaver and dyer – above all from the perspective of my practice, as a maker.



Sometimes you can't see yourself (...) The thing about autobiography is that you can only say what you have allowed yourself to know.

Maggie Nelson ²

2. Maggie Nelson and Karl Ove Knausgård in conversation, led by Ane Farsethås at the Munch Museum in Oslo, September 2017.
<https://morgenbladet.no/hendelse/morgenbladetsalongen-3>

2.1. Now

What I write about is changing because what I see in it changes. Emotions change, meanings change. This text is an attempt to create a relationship between *what* I did during the period as a fellow, and *why*. The artwork and this text are two separate things. What I have been exploring has been waiting for me to engage with it without reservation. What I produce is reflected in a continuously developing awareness.

In his essay on critical reflection in the Norwegian Artistic Research Fellowship Programme, Eirik Vassenden quotes from the reflection by Per Gunnar Eeg-Tverbakk: *The temporal distance has relaxed the relationship to the different activities and made it possible to see new aspects of the work. At the same time, this distance allows for retrospective rationalisation and interpretations that may obscure the actual turn of events (...)*.³ In my text, memories, knowledge and experiences from my life are woven into each other. Formally, *Weaving Fabrics for Suits* took place between 1 October 2011 and 1 October 2014. But it started a long time ago, it is happening now, and it will continue for a long time still.

In the time that has passed since the final exhibition at OK in 2015, I have worked hard to find a foundation for my life within myself, and not beyond myself. I have faced feelings of worthlessness, loneliness and vulnerability – a collapse, a realisation that something fell apart. If it is to be reassembled at all, it must be done in a completely different way. This reflection on the experiences of my investigations as a fellow is an important part of this process.

It was not a strategic choice that I wrote this reflection based on my own biography. It appeared rather as a necessity, something I could not avoid. In a conversation at the Munch Museum in Oslo in September 2017, authors Maggie Nelson and Karl Ove Knausgård talked about the *open or dissolved I* as a place for composition.⁴ This idea created a space for me when working on this text, and a hope for relevance.

The blue suit is the object at the core of my work. Experiences of producing and wearing this suit have given me a point of entry to explore the significance of my own history and knowledge in a new way. It has been a challenging exercise to continuously disentangle myself from all that I know about this object, for me to be able to think as freely about it as possible and to communicate the experiences in the way that I want.

I reflect on a body of work that is part of the search for anchoring points that have shaped my life. Belonging. For me, my body. To places. People. Work. The garment. Production and the making. The old textile samples in the archives. The history of the textile industry.

3. Eirik Vassenden, *Hva er kritisk refleksjon?*, Artistic Research Fellowship Programme, 2013, p. 23.

4. Maggie Nelson and Karl Ove Knausgård in conversation, led by Ane Farsethås at the Munch Museum in Oslo, September 2017. <https://morgenbladet.no/hendelse/morgenbladetsalongen-3>



2.2. Craft

When I was 20 years old I decided to learn a craft. I wanted to work physically, shaping materials. I also wanted to be able to make something beautiful. Three years later, I received a journeyman's certificate as a men's tailor. After graduating, I worked for a year at the costume department at Det Norske Teatret (the Norwegian Theatre) in Oslo before I applied to the Fashion and Costume Department at the National Academy for Arts and Crafts (SHKS, now part of KHiO) in Oslo. At that time, this was the only higher education course in fashion and costume design in Norway.

The teaching in the first year was modelled on the ideas of Jakob Prytz, which he introduced as rector at SHKS in 1936. This included compulsory introductory courses focusing on exercises in form and colour, as well as workshop training in the departments of textiles, metal, ceramics and painting. The courses were influenced by Bauhaus ideology in the following decades, with the development of a design course led by lecturers from the Institute of Design in Chicago, which promoted the Bauhaus ethos in the post-war period in the United States.⁵

At the end of the 1990s, when I was a student at SHKS, the teaching still adhered to these principles. The first year was divided between courses for all students in drawing, form, colour, writing, ornamentation, geometric drawing and light, as well as introductory workshop courses in the different departments. After one semester, I applied for a transition to the Textile Department and continued my explorations in the workshops for textile prints, printmaking on paper, drawing and dyeing. During four and a half years at SHKS, I spent most of my time experimenting in the workshops. I worked intuitively based on emotional and aesthetic assessments, following the principles and logic of the materials and techniques I used.

I devoted my last six months at the school to exploring the principles of handweaving, which I had previously only worked on for a few weeks during the second year – and strangely hadn't appreciated at all at that time. I analysed my mental and physical responses to weaving, questioning the value of the work and production itself. This exploration represented a turning point. I realised that I would now focus entirely on weaving, and the graduation project seemed more like the beginning than the end of a process. Four months after graduation in January 2000, I went for the first time to Sjølingstad Woollen Mill.

5. Kirsten Ruud Salomonsen, 'Kunsthåndverket er den naturlige bru mellom kunst og produksjon', in Lars Mørck Finborud and Milena Hoegsberg (eds.), *Bauhaus på Norsk*, Orfeus Publishing/Henie Onstad Kunstsenter, Bærum, 2014, p. 145.

THE STREAM

Sjølingstad, 6 May – 24 September 2014

When I came here the first time, exactly 14 years ago, I was reading Kenzaburō Ōe on the train from Oslo. I don't remember the title of the book, but it was about the inhabitants of a village in a rural area of Japan. It was also about a trickster figure.

In Mandal, I met the production manager of the mill I was about to visit. When we drove on the gravel road in his old Mercedes, along the stream through the valley towards Sjølingstad, it felt like entering the landscape in the book. It felt like entering another time. Walls of trees. Quiet. Hidden.

In May 2000 I was here for three weeks to get an introduction to weaving using the old mechanical industrial looms of Sjølingstad Woollen Mill. I worked on one of the cloth looms, a 1936 model from Sächsische Webstuhlfabrik with a white woollen warp. I made samples using Batavia patterns and several weft yarns, weaving a length of fabric that I took through all the steps in the finishing department.

It happened instantly. I knew I had found a place where I wanted to stay. I felt an immediate and strong connection to the buildings and workshops at Sjølingstad, to the people, the tools, the textiles, the village and the surrounding nature.

Three weeks became two years.

There is one specific memory from that first time I came here that is particularly strong – the view of the stream, and the green hill behind it, just by the bend in the road where the village starts at the Thorsager house. The spring came very early that year. It was warm, humid and intense. The view of the stream merged with the landscape in the Ōe book, and my memory from the moss garden in Kyōto. A dark shiny green.

The silence here is powerful.

I have always wondered how a stream that small could ever have been sufficient to supply the mill with enough power. When I walked along it earlier today it was very quiet – motionless, almost.

The mill is still here.



2.3. Development

During the years before the fellowship programme, I had established a way of working that explored stories, or histories, without on a profound level connecting them to me. My processing of the material was of course personal, but I could always point somewhere else, away from me. I had found solutions and expressions that I believed to be satisfactory. But they were solutions to what I will call symptoms, and I was unable to thoroughly investigate the reason why these symptoms – such as a need for control, withdrawal and isolation – had developed. This created an emotional distance.

I have not developed my work in the programme following an established and consistent research question defined from the beginning. It is more precise to say that I have had a *research area* that I have examined without aiming at answering or relating the outcome of the work to a predefined question. Establishing a binding framework for the work would probably have limited the direction it eventually took – a direction that it was necessary to nurture and give space to. I do not regard this as a weakness, but as a necessity. I believe that, based on what I wanted to strengthen and accommodate in my work, pinning down the research question and methodology would have prevented the openness and vulnerability I searched for.

The exploration has had two main themes, *textile industrial history* and *identity*. The clearest turning point during the time in the programme was the transition from working with the material from a *historical* angle, which was most prominent at the beginning, to examining more deeply questions of *biography* and *identity*, which eventually became more crucial.

The reflection examines the connection between my own story, my field of interest and my practice. I emphasise how history is recorded and represented, the memories, the places and the conversations that develop from exploring a textile – in the weaving mill, in the museum, in the classroom.

At times, it has not been clear in which area I have worked, and what consequences actions in one area have had for the development in another. I have chosen to withstand uncertainty and vulnerability in situations where I have not been able to explain what I was doing. This was to protect the material and the process, and to allow for the unexpected and the coincidental. The intention was to produce and gather a body of material extensive enough, both physically and experientially, that it would be possible to formulate questions through editing and compiling, in text and through exposition. Collecting this material was essential, without necessarily being able to explain or defend the actions behind it through a research question or a project description.

The following excerpts are a selection of descriptions from different stages of the process, showing the changes in how I have been thinking about the exploration, and how I have communicated my thoughts:

From the application for admission to the programme. January 2011:

The point of departure for a fellowship programme period at the Textile department at the Oslo National Academy of the Arts will be the textile industry in Norway and its history. The question I raise in this project is how the value of craft skills is managed in industrial production. I will – seen in a cultural, social and economic perspective – explore how changes in the conditions of this industry affect the understanding of and emphasis on knowledge and historical material acquired through generations. This theme will form the basis of the artistic work.

From the revised project description. May 2012:

The starting point of my project is the Norwegian textile industry and industrial history, and I build on my own experience from the Sjølingstad Woollen Mill in Lindesnes. I am working on questions related to processes of change in the industry, with a focus on the mechanisms at work when a company is established, is in operation and is closed. I focus on the historical development of the fabrication of woollen textiles in Norway, and I examine the importance of craftsmanship and skill, and how specific knowledge of industrial textile production is developed, protected and transmitted.

From the first version of the reflection. June 2015:

The point of departure of the project Weaving Fabrics for Suits is observations of both the historic demise, and the opportunity for growth in the remaining Norwegian textile industry. The aim has been to take part in safeguarding both knowledge and historical materials in the cultural field, in the development of this industry in Norway for the future, and finally to create connections between my deep interest, fascination and passion for this field and an understanding of my own history and experience. These three components are connected to each other, inform each other and are different facets of the same matter.

THE SUIT

Testico, 5 February 2014

The suit does not exist. It is still a dream, like the Bangkok suit I planned many years ago. Jean Genet, lice, sex in dark places, tanned skin, greasy hair, old leather sandals, a singlet and a dirty worn suit in faded orange silk. The thought was there. The design was there, and it was all about letting myself go. Destruction. Then the Paris suit. The market at Porte de Clignancourt. Perhaps I saw it there, a long time ago? The look of it has changed over the years. Now it is made in a heavy wool fabric in beige and pink tones, with a silhouette from the 1930s.

The motivation for becoming a tailor was the need to learn a craft. I wanted to make something with my hands. When I was accepted at the tailoring school, I didn't know much about it. I remember saying the first day in class that I didn't think it would involve so much stitching by hand. The hand stitching is an essential part of making a suit. Of course. But I didn't know.

My interest in clothes and fashion was in a strange way separate from the tailoring for a long time. I didn't experiment much with making other kinds of garments. I remember I thought of sewing a T-shirt as a technical obstacle – where to start? – while making a suit was something I did without hesitation.

The transferral of a woven fabric to a three-dimensional form never really became clear to me, and the teachers didn't talk much about the body. I ended up becoming quite good at details, pockets and stitching, but the total fit of the garments was a challenge.

Sewing and daydreaming, as time passed in school. I was slow, compared to the standards of the guild. I knew it, but I tried over and over again to get it right, until I stopped sewing 20 years ago.

The greater the distance, the clearer the view: one sees the tiniest of details with the utmost clarity. It is as if one were looking through a reversed opera glass and through a microscope at the same time. And yet, says Browne, all knowledge is enveloped in darkness. What we perceive is no more than isolated lights in the abyss of ignorance, in the shadow-filled edifice of the world. We study the order of things, says Browne, but we cannot grasp their innermost essence. And because it is so, it befits our philosophy to be writ small, using the shorthand and contracted forms of transient Nature, which alone are a reflection of eternity.

W.G. Sebald⁶

And surely you have seen, in the darkness of the innermost rooms of these huge buildings, to which sunlight never penetrates, how the gold leaf of a sliding door or screen will pick up a distant glimmer from the garden, then suddenly send forth an ethereal glow, a faint golden light cast into the enveloping darkness, like the glow upon the horizon at sunset.

Junichiro Tanizaki⁷

(...) as far as I know Italian is the only language in which the word vago [vague] also means "lovely, attractive". Starting out from the original meaning of "wandering" the word vago still carries an idea of movement and mutability, which in Italian is associated both with uncertainty and indefiniteness and with gracefulness and pleasure.

Italo Calvino⁸

The words notte, notturno [night, nocturnal], etc., descriptions of the night, etc., are highly poetic because, as night makes objects blurred, the mind receives only a vague, indistinct, incomplete image, both of night itself and what it contains. Thus, also with oscurità [darkness], profondo [deep].

Italo Calvino citing *Zibaldone* by Giacomo Leopardi⁹

6. W.G. Sebald, *The Rings of Saturn*, New Directions, New York, 2016, p. 19.

7. Junichiro Tanizaki, *In Praise of Shadows*, Vintage, London, 2001, p. 35.

8. Italo Calvino, *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*, Penguin Classics, London, 2009, p. 57.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 58.

2.4. Text

I am a weaver. Nevertheless, I have the same hope associated with a text I have written as with a fabric I have woven. What can the text do? It is demanding for me to produce materiality in the text. The mind space where it is located is quite some distance from the material world I operate from. I try to find the words that can come as close as possible... to what? Something experienced as real? The body?

In his conversation with Maggie Nelson, Karl Ove Knausgård describes the form as a gift.¹⁰ You can say something within one form that you cannot say in another. This is a rather beautiful way of putting it. I find joy in language. With purpose, deliberate choice of form and concentration as starting points, I believe in the ability to create resonance. Both writing myself and reading fiction written by others are important spaces for exploration.

I develop ideas through text, and then I experiment in the workshop using the material in which the idea is to be realised. I hardly ever draw. I hardly ever sketch, other than through writing. The text sketches are part of an internal dialogue about the development of my work. They have a form that differs from the texts meant for others to read. Fragments, sometimes poetic.

When I write that I am a weaver it sounds like there is a long distance between text and textiles. But there is not, and this is a recognised idea among weavers. There is a connection between these modes of expression. About time, rhythm, extent. And construction. By the use of a given system, bringing single elements that alone make little sense together, to a solid structure. For me this is primarily a bodily experience, related to action and craftsmanship.

A few months ago, I read a collection of essays, *Miniatyrllesingar*, by Gunnhild Øyehaug.¹¹ Her enthusiastic and humorous descriptions of literature gave me energy. And ease. I am not writing fiction. I am writing a reflection, and it might be the nature of a reflection text that it will never satisfy its author, due to what cannot be described and what must be left out. But still, the need is there to write in such a way that there is, in the words of Øyehaug, *no ocean shining* between the concept *father* and the word *father*. She does not make it easier for me when she continues: *And only the author who makes this ocean disappear in such a way that it feels like the concept and the word have become one, has succeeded in this twisted and most wonderful metamorphosis that fiction is* (my translation).¹² Fiction or reflection, the challenge is in my view the same.

In the text *Tom and the Rabbit* (my translation) by Dag Johan Haugerud, the protagonist Erik is in discussion on the challenges of writing a biography. Erik refers to Raymond Queneau: *Just think about Raymond Queneau's Exercises in Style, where he retells an event on a bus in 99 different ways. But no matter how he writes, he never manages to tell exactly what happened. It is just as if it cannot be captured. One might assume that he could continue 99 more times, or even a thousand times, but still there will always be something that escapes. Is this not the problem of language, and of metaphysics, and then also – at least indirectly – of biography?*¹³

Every time I write about this, two strains of thoughts unfold. The unifying, concrete, that which can be grasped on the one hand. On the other, that which is open, in motion, fluid, changing, and okay not to understand.

10. Maggie Nelson and Karl Ove Knausgård in conversation, led by Ane Farsethås at the Munch Museum in Oslo, September 2017.
<https://morgenbladet.no/hendelse/morgenbladetsalongen-3>
11. Gunnhild Øyehaug, *Miniatyrlesingar*, Kolon Forlag, Oslo, 2017.
12. Ibid., p. 94.
13. Dag Johan Haugerud, *Enkle atonale stykker for barn*, Forlaget Oktober, Oslo, 2016, p. 29.

Jeg kjente ikke igjen det jeg sa lenger. Jeg kjente ikke igjen mine egne minner når jeg fortalte om dem; de to politibetjentene stilte meg spørsmål som tvang meg til å beskrive natten med Reda på en annen måte enn jeg ønsket, og jeg kjente ikke lenger igjen det jeg hadde opplevd i den formen de tvang meg til å skildre det i (...)

Edouard Louis ¹⁴

—

I didn't recognise what I said any longer. I didn't recognise my own memories as I told them; the two police officers asked me questions that forced me to describe the night with Reda in a different way than I wished, and I didn't recognise any longer what I had experienced, in the form they forced me to retell it (...)

Edouard Louis ¹⁴ (my translation)

2.5. Language

During the first period of the fellowship programme I wrote texts related to my work in Norwegian. My supervisors were at that time all Norwegian-speaking, and I found that there was a natural connection between what I was exploring and the experience of describing it in my native tongue. After a while, however, I made the choice to write in English. Part of this decision was practical, aimed at facilitating better communication of my experiences when taking part in the fellowship programme's spring and autumn forums. There was a requirement that presentations and discussions at these forums should be in English.

I experienced that the transition in language created a distance from the material that I was trying to write about. I had previously had this experience mostly when speaking English, when I thought of myself as more easy-going, or lighter, in this language.

For a long time, I felt that this distance created by the language was positive. Writing in Norwegian asked something of me that I was unable to respond to – something that had to do with depth and commitment. I was not ready for a confrontation with my own language. Today, I do not consider this period as negative. I believe in many ways that it was a necessary phase that gave me an opportunity to play and move freely, and in a way to catch up with myself.

Now it is necessary to write in Norwegian. I translate the finished text myself to English, before it is reviewed by a copyeditor.

Jeg tenkte: For du har alltid hatt følelsen av at livet ditt har foregått utenfor deg selv, og på tross av deg, at du har stått og sett det utvikle seg på avstand, og at det ikke ligner på deg. Ikke bare i dag. Da du var liten og foreldrene dine tok det med til supermarkedet, pleide du å se på de som gikk forbi med handlevognene sine. Du stirret på dem, du husker ikke lenger hvor du fikk denne manien fra, men du så på klærne deres, måten de gikk på, og tenkte: Håper jeg blir sånn. Håper jeg ikke blir sånn. Men du ville aldri ha tenkt at du kunne bli den du er i dag. Aldri.

Edouard Louis¹⁵

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I thought: You have always had the feeling that your life has taken place outside of yourself, and despite of you, and that you have observed it developing from a distance, and that it does not resemble you. Not only today. When you were a child, and your parents brought you along to the supermarket, you used to watch people passing with their trolleys. You were staring at them, you don't remember from where you got this mania, but you were watching their clothing, the way they walked, thinking: I hope I become like that. I hope I don't become like that. But you would never have thought that you could become the one you are today. Never.

Edouard Louis¹⁵ (my translation)

3.1. Clothes

The film *Notebook on Cities and Clothes*¹⁶ was made by the German filmmaker Wim Wenders about the Japanese fashion designer Yohji Yamamoto, commissioned by the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris in 1989. During the film, it becomes clear that Wenders and Yamamoto share a reference in August Sander, and his photographic work gathered in the book *August Sander: Citizens of the Twentieth Century*.¹⁷ I saw the film when I was 24 years old and got the book as gift when I turned 25.

On his travels in Germany from 1892 to 1952 August Sander took pictures of people from all walks of life in their own surroundings – individuals, groups and families, at home or at work. With a few exceptions, everyone who is pictured looks into the camera. The images are sorted by occupations and social layers, not according to time and place. The clothes tell part of the story: changes in fashion; what values the clothes represent; how they are adapted to the professions of the people depicted; their positions in society; how the clothes are taken care of, or not. And from an aesthetic point of view, differing textures, materials, cuts and patterns.

As a child I already used clothes actively as a form of communication – to be visible, to be different, or the same. What I was wearing was deliberate. It needed to feel right, and look right. I am not sure where this impulse came from, but I think it had to do with not feeling safe. I observed, mapped out my surroundings, and dressing became a strategy. Eventually this awareness opened up to positive and rewarding observations of aesthetics, storytelling and the way people play, explore and manipulate through the use of clothing. It is a way of reading. The garment has both protected and exposed me, depending on the situation. It has reinforced feelings, expressed a need to establish contact and be confirmed, or the opposite.

For a few years the brown cotton shirt by Comme des Garçons I bought in the mid 1990s was in storage. Now I would like to wear it every day, but I am afraid to wear it out. The long shirt by Dirk Bikkembergs I bought when I was 19 is still in use. It is in a chequered linen fabric with a bow on the back, somewhere between workwear and a blouse. The shirt in black cotton and the turtleneck woollen sweater are the only pieces by Martin Margiela I can still wear. All my other Margiela clothes are now worn out. I have taken care of what is left of them. I have taken care of mostly everything really.

16. The film is published on DVD as a part of The Wim Wenders Collection, Reverse Angle Library, 2003.

17. Gunther Sander (ed.), *August Sander: Citizens of the Twentieth Century*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, 1993.

FABRIC

Oslo, 28 January 2015

People, place, fabric. The English word *fabric* and the Norwegian word *fabrikk*, which defines the place where production happens, the factory, derive from the Latin word *fabrica*, originally the workshop for the *faber* – craftsmen, carpenters, etc – as well as meaning something skilfully produced.

The production of fabric is complex, and involves the use of systems and tools that engage and challenge the entire body. Fabrics are tissue, muscles, nerves and the circulation of blood. Single threads become a solid fabric: systems of threads unified in a construction that can again become something else.

Fabric is the result of a bodily engagement, the planning and intuitive responses to the process and materials. The processes of weaving tend to be complex and sometimes long-winded. Sometimes it is a struggle. The threads are weak, the machine is unbalanced and unpredictable. I am unfocused. A well-made fabric is a strong and sensual experience. At times, it happens. Production can be deeply satisfying.

Perfection and standards of quality. I know what I am aiming at. Being part of a production line is an agreement. The spinner has made the yarn for the weaver to use, warp and weft. Later the dyer and the finisher are involved in developing the desired result. We all do our best to minimise errors.

The fabric is a definition of a specific space, a domain. It has a front side, a back side; it surrounds. The tactile qualities of a fabric are as important for the experience as the visual properties, perhaps even more so. The fabric is connected to the scale of a human body. Making textiles only to be looked at is meaningless to me. I am not able to let go.

3.2. Fabric

A fabric can transcend and reveal something else. In me, there is a need to respond. I want to weave textiles that create desire. This is also a language. A way to exchange experiences, values and attitudes. Are the textiles that I refer to my theory? Through recognition, I enter a diverse world and become part of something larger than myself. The craft is universal.

Meeting the Japanese weaver and designer Sayoko Kai, who is behind the brand Mompekkko, confirmed this experience. We met at my workshop in Oslo. She is from Fukuyama in Japan and works with the Bingo Kasuri mills in her hometown. There was recognition through the fabric, and the history. We explored the materials she brought along, before turning to my work. The experience I have from exploring local weaving mills is transferable. There is attention to my work among colleagues elsewhere.

Visiting Daniel Harris at the London Cloth Company confirmed a shared enthusiasm for what connects us – the production of woollen fabrics using old shuttle looms – but his focus on commercial production and not least his mechanical interest also created a distance. In meeting Harris I experienced that my method, my open exploration, was challenged, and that the position I have been able to take is privileged, from an economic perspective. The defined framework of his business creates clarity and structure in his work. The basis for my work is different.

Helle Bergan was employed as a textile designer at Innvik Sellgren, and invited me to Tingvoll in 2014 to observe the process of closing production at the mill there. Our discussions on value were open, honest and revealing. We shared an experience of sadness and a concern for how the history of a place, a craft and a production process are being taken care of, or not. And not least how employees in a company about to be closed down are taken care of, in a very vulnerable situation. This experience of recognition influenced how my work developed during the programme from then on.

An important source of inspiration for me, both before and during the fellowship programme, was the designer Jon Pettersen, a professor at Bergen Academy of Art and Design. He is an experienced and knowledgeable colleague who, throughout his career, has worked with all the remaining Norwegian weaving mills.

Kai, Harris, Bergan and Pettersen are four of the many people I've met to which I relate my work. I am in dialogue with people who are concerned about preserving and conveying history – conservators, technicians and designers, in museums and at production sites. During my time as a fellow I have been in conversation with staff at Textilmuseet in Borås, Sweden, and I visited Eva Basile at Fondazione Lisio in Florence, Italy, and Christina Leitner at Textiles Zentrum Haslach in Austria. In 2012, I met conservators and librarians at the American Textile History Museum in Lowell, USA. In Norway, in addition to staff at mills, schools and design companies, I have been in dialogue with people at Arbeidermuseet, the City Archives and the Norwegian Museum of Science and Technology, all in Oslo, as well as staff at the local museum in Tingvoll.



iii. 5

Apollo had burnt all of his own manuscripts in the fireplace. At times, when he did so, a weightless flake of soot ash like a scrap of black silk would drift through the room, borne up on the air, before sinking to the floor somewhere or dissolving into the dark.

W.G. Sebald ¹⁸

3.3. Novels

The critic and writer Jennifer Allen gave me the novel *The Rings of Saturn* by German author W.G. Sebald as a gift for the opening of my exhibition in 2015. The conversations I had with Allen were important for the development of *Weaving Fabrics for Suits*. The protagonist of the book writes the story after walking for three weeks in the countryside in Suffolk, England. The walk, the physical movement, connects a wealth of fragments, digressions, dreams, memories of people and objects in circuits of time and space. One element that runs through the book is silk fabric – from extensive descriptions of the migration of silk cultivation westward from China, through the ambitious and largely failed attempts to establish a silk industry in Europe, to descriptions of silk fabrics worn by people that Sebald writes about.

The book is about transitions, anachronisms, and what is remembered. And when Sebald connects, or weaves, all these fragments into each other, it is overwhelming. The geographical area and time the wanderer is located in are defined, until they dissolve, transcend, becoming something like descriptions of dreams. The reading of Sebald makes me think of the need to hold on to something – an attempt to define history, truth and existence even.

I have been reading fiction since I was a child. It's hard to say anything specific about this, but I feel that much of what I regard as my life experience, my identity and how I see things is derived from reading literature – not one single book, not one particular author that changed everything, but as a whole. I realise that I use the experience I have as a reader when I develop my work. It is about extension and structure, about composition, time, part and whole.

Descriptions of the indefinite, that might transcend. I like what Øyehaug writes about Lydia Davis's cows.¹⁹ Davis has written a story called *The Cows*, where she describes three cows at the farm where she lives. Øyehaug writes, among other things, that Davis's cows are *out in all sorts of weather, and we get to know a lot about what they are doing or not doing, like when they are standing completely still in one place, but then, when the author looks up a few minutes later, they stand in an entirely different place, still completely without moving*²⁰ (my translation). In *Bluets* by Maggie Nelson, she conveys mental conditions, feelings of sadness, anger, longing and betrayal, through descriptions of her relationship with blue and blue objects.²¹ What are my cows, or my blue? It must be the woven fabric.

19. Gunnhild Øyehaug, *Miniatyrlesingar*, Kolon Forlag, Oslo, 2017, p. 42.

20. Ibid.

21. Maggie Nelson, *Bluets*, Wave Books, Seattle and New York, 2009.

3.4. *Object Retrieval*

In the project *Object Retrieval*,²² British artist Joshua Sofaer investigates object biographies, knowledge production and participation. The following description is on Sofaer's website: *Recurring themes of his work include 'rubbish': what we choose to throw away; 'collections': what we choose to keep; and 'names': how what we are called becomes who we are.*²³

In *Object Retrieval* in 2009, Sofaer created the framework for an exploration of a toy car from the collection at University College London. The toy was made available in a laboratory-like situation in a bus parked outside the university. The open survey lasted seven days, 24 hours a day, and anyone who wanted could contribute information, analysis or responses to this one object. Sofaer describes the participation as overwhelming. There were thousands of contributions ranging from scientific analyses of the materials the car was made from, and how it was made, to descriptions of childhood memories, as well as song lyrics and links to literature. Sofaer points out that *all* objects in his opinion could have been the starting point of an investigation such as this, and that equally rich information would have become available.

The feeling of loss, and the motivation to respond to this feeling, is part of what defines my work. The same can be said of the examination of objects that, through relocations between places and contexts, change meaning and value. When specific works of art and artistic practises resonate with me, it is often the value of objects, conditions for production and knowledge that is being explored.

It is about attitudes more than materials, expressions or disciplines. I relate to makers, designers, writers, academics, visual artists, musicians and architects based on recognition, on a sensational and emotional level. Explorations of history reveal something unexpected – not necessarily a truth or an intention to correct something, but attention to what defines a dignified life, a time, to what we are responsible for, the context in which we stand.

Examples close to my work on industrial history and production are found in the practices of Neil Brownsword, Studio Glithero and Anne Wilson. Brownsword has been working on the history of ceramics production in his hometown of Stoke-on-Trent in England;²⁴ Studio Glithero's designers have documented the production processes of the companies they have collaborated with;²⁵ while for her piece *Local Industry*, Wilson used as a starting point the heritage of the textile industry in Knoxville in the US.²⁶

22. <http://www.joshuasofaer.com/2011/06/object-retrieval/>

23. <http://www.joshuasofaer.com/about/>

24. <https://thingnessofthings.wordpress.com/contributors-2/neil-brownsword/>

25. <http://www.glithero.com/woven-songs>

26. www.annwilsonartist.com



4.1. History

The first Norwegian industrial company in a modern sense was the spinning and weaving mill Haldens Bomuldsspinderi & Væveri, established by Mads Wiel in 1813 by Tistedalsfossen. The machines were acquired through the Danish company C.A. Nordberg.²⁷ The cotton was imported from England. The local assets were capital, water power, available labour and a Scandinavian market.²⁸

Industrial development in Norway in the 1800s built on what started with innovations in textile production in England in the 1700s. The flying shuttle that made the weaving more efficient marked the beginning of what would become the Industrial Revolution in 1733. The development of textile production followed the dramatic technological breakthroughs in the latter half of the 18th century, in iron, steel and energy. The steam engine was developed in the 1760s, the same decade as spinning – the most time-consuming part of textile production – was revolutionised by the invention of Spinning Jenny, which was water powered and spun more than one yarn at a time.²⁹ In 1784, the first textile company with these spinning machines was established outside of Manchester. This is considered to be the first modern industrial company.³⁰ The first water-powered loom was patented in 1785.³¹

Norway entered the process of industrialisation relatively late. But there were a few precursors – the mill in Halden was one, and Solberg Spinderi, established in 1818 along Drammenselven, was another.³² It was in the 1840s that the great breakthrough came, largely because in 1843 England lifted its export ban on textile machines and the knowledge of running them.³³ This led to a significant increase in the textile industry during a short period of time. In 1840, 138 tonnes of cotton were imported to Norway, while in 1860 it was 2,053 tonnes.³⁴

The best-known companies, which became the largest employers in the country, were Nydalens Compagnie, established in 1845 by Adam Hjorth, and Vøien Spinneri, established in 1845 by Knud Graah, both along the river Akerselven in Christiania – the official name for Oslo from 1624 to 1925. Arne Fabrikker was established not far from Bergen in 1846 by Peter Jepsen. The large Hjula Veveri factory was built next to Vøien Spinneri in 1855 by a key figure in the industry, the entrepreneur Halvor Schou, after he had operated at a smaller scale at the Brenneriveien Veveri from 1849.³⁵ Christiania Seildugsfabrik, where the Oslo National Academy of the Arts is now located, opened in 1856.³⁶

Production was established through the import of both equipment and technical knowledge, in the first phase from England after 1843, and later from other countries, primarily Germany. The mills I have worked with were established towards the end of a period that began in the mid-1860s. The reason for the establishment of woollen mills was that cotton as a raw material, which the first industrial establishments relied on, became more difficult to source because of the civil war in the United States. It was an obvious turn then to use local raw materials as a replacement. Mills based on the use of wool were established in larger cities and districts characterised by agriculture and shepherding, with good conditions for utilising water power.

The weaving mills were part of a textile and clothing industry that developed to become the largest industry in the country. Spinning mills, weaving mills and clothing manufacturers delivered high quality products that were often entirely local, including the raw materials.

After a generally positive period in the 1950s with growth in the industry, it became increasingly difficult to compete with foreign production in the 1960s. The wage levels in Norway gradually increased, and the most laborious part of the industry, the manufacturing of garments, experienced problems first. Closures in this part of the industry also led to closures of the weaving mills that had supplied fabric for clothing production. Ever-increasing international competition and changes in tax and customs systems led to further challenges. The companies survived by collaborating in various combinations.

But today, from a historical perspective, very few mills remain in Norway. There are two major companies in the market, Gudbrandsdalens Woollen Mill and Innvik, two medium-sized firms, Røros Tweed and Krivi, and one smaller business, Grinakervev. Sjølingstad Woollen Mill still has some production, but is primarily a museum.

27. Kristine Bruland, *British Technology and European Industrialization: The Norwegian Textile Industry in the Mid-Nineteenth century*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1989, p. 40.
28. http://industrimuseum.no/haldens_bomull
29. Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History*, Vintage, New York, 2014, p. 65.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 66.
32. *British Technology and European Industrialization*, p. 39.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
35. Sigurd Grieg, *Norsk Tekstil*, vol. 1, Norske Tekstilfabrikers Hovedforening, Oslo, 1948, pp. 288-333.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 448.



4.2. Sjølingstad Woollen Mill

Sjølingstad Woollen Mill was established by August Hoven in 1894, not far from Mandal in Vest-Agder. Hoven considered several alternatives for the location, before deciding to buy the rights to utilise power generated from the stream starting at Stuevann, a lake just above the site where the plant was built.³⁷ Workshops for spinning, weaving, dyeing and finishing were in place from the very beginning. The mill at Sjølingstad soon became one of the largest companies in the Mandal region, and employed at its peak around 90 people.³⁸ A small village grew around the factory, with a school, shop, post office and assembly hall.

The mill produced yarns, blankets and fabrics in wool, primarily with fleece bought from local farmers and from the wool auction in Stavanger, but also with yarn spun abroad. The products were sold throughout southern Norway.³⁹ The company grew steadily until the second half of the 1960s, with some difficult years in the 1930s. The first years after World War II were very good for business, as for Norwegian commerce in general. But during the 1960s and '70s, Sjølingstad failed to keep up with technological developments. As a consequence, the company became increasingly less profitable and production ended in 1984, after 90 years of business.

What normally takes place when a business goes bankrupt is that anything of value is sold for funds to be returned to the bankruptcy estate. At Sjølingstad this did not happen, probably because the production equipment was so outdated that it had no commercial value. In 1985 idealists in the local community, including Carl Frederik Thorsager and Annemor Sundbø, saw the opportunity to establish a museum at Sjølingstad.⁴⁰ A foundation was created and the idea was put into practice. It was important that not only should the machines be preserved, but the knowledge of operating them as well. Production still includes everything from the washing of wool to spinning, weaving, dyeing and finishing. The model of combining production from the old machines by qualified staff with dissemination of history and knowledge is today what distinguishes Sjølingstad from other industrial history museums.

This model is also reflected in the economy of the museum. The operation is partly financed with income from a smaller production of blankets, yarns and fabrics for the Norwegian national costume, and partly with government support as a museum, now as part of the Vest-Agder-Museet. The operation at Sjølingstad is interesting because it relates both to the demands of production and the protection and development of its role as a museum.

37. Magnus Skaar, *Sjølingstad Uldvarefabrik 1894 til 1994*, Sjølingstad Uldvarefabrik, Mandal, 1996, p. 10.

38. Birgitte Sørensen, *Det sviver bra på Sjølingstad. Økonomiske og sosiale utfordringer ved AS Sjølingstad Uldvarefabrik 1920-1940*, Historical Institute, University of Bergen, 2006, p. 64.

39. Bård Raustøl, *Øvede piger og dygtige mænd: mennesker, teknologi og kunnskap ved Sjølingstad Uldvarefabrik 1893-1920*, Department of Archaeology, Conservation and History, University of Oslo, 2004, p. 27.

40. Carl Frederik Thorsager, in his chapter 'De siste ti år', in Magnus Skaar, *Sjølingstad Uldvarefabrik 1894 til 1994*, p. 136.



4.3. *Blådressen*

In 2000 and 2001, I was head of the dyeing and finishing department at Sjølingstad Woollen Mill. Weaving and dyeing at the factory gave me an understanding of the production chain. I was part of a community with common goals and knowledge about what was needed to achieve the goals. I was responsible for one part of the process. If I did not do my best it would affect the work of my colleagues and reduce the quality of the finished result. The other significant experience from Sjølingstad was about understanding the value of working with raw materials, techniques and machines that gave bodily resonance, both during the working process and in the outcome of the work – through touch, visual experience and use.

During the time in the programme I worked with Einar Kristensen and Gunnveig S. Helland, restoring a loom that had not been used since 1948 and weaving a reconstruction of the best-selling article from the mill in the 1950s, a fabric called 727. A search in the production records showed that the fabric was produced between 1957 and 1961. Records from previous years are missing, and it is likely that the production of 727 began earlier. Important conditions in the restoration process were that it should contribute to knowledge about the fabric and the loom, and that the process should be developed and implemented as a collaboration.

The work started with restoring the loom. It was originally from Laurdal Woollen Mill in Telemark, before it became part of the collection of the Norwegian Museum of Science and Technology in Oslo. It was offered to Sjølingstad in 2000 during a reorganisation of the museum's collection. It is similar to looms already in operation at Sjølingstad, except that it is *links*, mirrored. The production number is 184688 and it was manufactured in 1937 by Sächsische Webstuhlfabrik in Chemnitz, Germany. When it was last in use, it produced a heavy and coarse woollen fabric. The loom had visible traces of the yarn used, but was otherwise in relatively good condition.

We spent a lot of time on technical and mechanical work to prepare it for a new warp. This work was mainly carried out by Kristensen, with significant contributions from Helland and Paul Hasund. I participated in some parts of the process, but my focus was on the preparation of the new warp. We found an original weaving setup in the attic, with shafts, warp threads, reed and a small piece of the woven material. This setup gave me part of the information I needed. I found additional information in records in the workshop office.

The original quality was woven with a worsted yarn imported from foreign manufacturers. The spinning workshop at Sjølingstad is equipped for spinning woollen yarns specially used for blankets and cloth. For the new warp, we used a 30/2 ecru yarn in wool from the Flasa spinning mill in Switzerland. It was a leftover yarn we received from Mandal Veveri on cones too small for production there. Mandal Veveri was a mill near to Sjølingstad that closed in 2016.

The weave pattern is a four-shafted twill, woven on eight shafts. There are 19.5 threads per centimetre in the reed, and approximately 110 threads per five centimetres in weft density. The total number of

threads in the warp is 3,168. The reed used was a 65/10, with three threads per dent.

For a long time, we were not sure if we would get a satisfactory result. However, after long periods of adjustment and fine tuning of the loom it was possible to weave lengths of fabric of an acceptable quality. The original fabric was woven with the same yarn as weft as in the warp. I also tested weft yarns in other materials and thicknesses. After weaving, the fabric was checked for mistakes that could be repaired before washing, dyeing and finishing. I piece-dyed the fabric in a navy blue and clear dark green after a long period of sample dyeing at KHiO using Lanaset dyestuff, manufactured by Huntsman.

To get as good a quality as possible in the finishing, I took three lengths of the dyed fabric to Gudbrandsdalens Woollen Mill, where they have modern versions of the machines that were previously in use at Sjølingstad. The fabric was washed lightly, straightened, cut and decatized. It was finished in December 2014.

The advantage of weaving the fabric in raw white when it is a small production like this is that it is possible to develop a variety of colours by dyeing the fabric after it is woven. But dyeing fabrics in wool at Sjølingstad involves boiling the fabric while it is in constant motion, which is a rough treatment. This is not a problem for thick and loosely woven fabrics in woollen yarns, but it is not suitable for densely woven fabrics in worsted yarns.

Weaving using yarn already dyed in the desired colour secures a better result. This would have prevented both the colour from becoming slightly uneven, and traces in the fabric from the washing machine and the dyeing equipment at Sjølingstad. Another adjustment giving a better result would have been to use a thicker yarn. The records show that 727 was woven with yarn from different suppliers, and with different yarn numbering, from 24/2 to 28/2. We used 30/2, which was the only yarn available, but even a degree thinner, which made the fabric slightly lighter than the original.

At the exhibition at Oslo Kunstforening in 2015, I wanted to show two suits sewn in this fabric – a classic suit in navy blue and one in dark green. The green suit was made by Siv Støldal, who is one of the designers behind the Norwegian clothing brand, and my collaborative partners HAIKw/. Støldal is also a men's tailor. This suit was sewn according to my measurements, but without any design directions, other than that it should be what would be interpreted as a men's suit.

The navy fabric was handed to the tailor Liv Guri Østrem. Østrem has several years of work experience and education from the tailoring house Huntsman of Savile Row in London, and she makes suits and coats according to British tailoring traditions. She made a classic three-piece suit for me. The intention was that it should appear timeless, using the plain, solid and heavy fabric, suggesting that this would be the only suit a person would need – an investment for life. The suit would be used for special occasions and on Sundays, after a long week in workwear.

Føringsskjema 01 NOV 2016

Maskine 5.

Utgangspunkt: Maskine 3 (Dreble/Skotte = 720-238)

40 g vane

1,6% MAXINE 0,64 g
 0,8% SVALS 24 ml
 0,5% SØ 24 g
 0,4% SØ 8 ml

10% KLADUBEST 4 g
 1% ECALISANAMODER 0,4 ml
 4% BOKKINSE 1,6 ml (20 mg i 8 ml)

17 SEP 2016

Dreble # 42551
Dreble

Dreble # 42552
Dreble

Dreble # 42556
Dreble

Dreble # 42557
Dreble

Føringsskjema 01 NOV 2016

Maskine 4

Utgangspunkt: Maskine 3 (Dreble = 444 Føring = 811)

40 g vane

2,2% SØ 24 g
 1,3% SØ 24 g
 1% SØ 24 g

10% KLADUBEST 4 g
 1% ECALISANAMODER 0,4 ml
 4% BOKKINSE 1,6 ml (20 mg i 8 ml)

Føringsskjema 29 OKT 2016

Maskine 3

Utgangspunkt: Maskine 1

40 g vane

2% MAXINE 0,8 g (0,8 g)
 0,5% SVALS 0,2 g (20 ml)
 0,5% SØ 24 g
 0,5% SØ 8 ml

10% KLADUBEST 4 g
 1% ECALISANAMODER 0,4 ml
 4% BOKKINSE 1,6 ml (20 mg i 8 ml)

17 SEP 2016

Dreble # 42551
Dreble

Dreble # 42552
Dreble

Dreble # 42556
Dreble

Dreble # 42557
Dreble

1. Sølvsprøve to lodd for fleure og om

2. Sølvsprøve to lodd 40 cm og ut (net fleure) for vevst

3. Sølvsprøve to lodd 20 cm og ut

4. Sølvsprøve 40 g, samme som 3.

5. - 1 - 9, samme som 1.

6. Mac 2/2 samme som 1

7. Mac - 1 - 20

8. Sølvsprøve samme som 1

9. Sølvsprøve samme som 3

10. Sølvsprøve 30 cm om

11. - 1 - 40 cm om

17 SEP 2016

Dreble # 42551
Dreble

Dreble # 42552
Dreble

Dreble # 42556
Dreble

Dreble # 42557
Dreble

Føringsskjema 29 OKT 2016

Maskine 2

Utgangspunkt: Dreble # 444 Føring = 811

40 g vane

1,3% SØ 24 g (1 g = 24 ml)
 2% SØ 24 g (0,8 g)
 0,2% SØ 24 g (8 ml)

10% KLADUBEST 4 g
 1% ECALISANAMODER 0,4 ml
 4% BOKKINSE 1,6 ml (20 mg i 8 ml)

Revidert på forordet = 10,8 cm

Antall tråder i bredde = 208 per bredde

$$\frac{208}{10,8} = 19,26$$

19,26 tråder per cm - 6,01

3,2

6 per tråd x 19,26 x 3,2 =

$$6 \times 3,2 = 19,2 \text{ tråder per cm} \times 227,36$$

$$\frac{3328}{16} = 208 \left(\frac{63}{10} \text{ tråder i gjeffelt for } 16 \right)$$

208 = 4,16 tråder per cm

4 x 50 = 200

200 + 8 = 208

HERITAGE

Stockholm, 11 December 2014

The places I have visited, and the places I have worked. The weaving and spinning mills, cultural history museums, archives and storages. Empty spaces with almost no readable signs of previous use, rooms filled with leftovers, objects removed from production a long time ago. Mills that are still operating, with their own history stored in basements and attics. Or, perhaps, not recorded at all. Sometimes there is neglect and complete chaos. Other times there are traces of attempts at creating structure.

I am a tailor, weaver and dyer. I have experience with textile production within an industrial context. The stories and objects that engage me resonate with my own life – with my family history, my skills and my knowledge. I observe the changes that appear when an object is moved from one context to another, or when the context itself is changed. Purpose, meaning, transparency or obscurity.

During the autumn of 2012 I visited a weaving mill at Tingvoll, when production was about to be closed down for good. Tools, equipment, samples and documents were lying around in a state of obvious neglect. People who had worked at the mill for decades had lost their jobs.

I could sense deep personal conflict among the staff still at work. Conflict between the need to express their pride in their skills and the history of the company where they had worked for so long, and the need to protest against the owners who had let it all fall apart. The need to preserve on the one hand, and to abandon and forget on the other. The mill used to be known for its reliability and high standards. It was now a ruin.

This situation was the starting point of a process of negotiation, and I became part of a discussion about value that included former members of staff, the owner and museum representatives. In relation to economic development and market realities, an object can at one time and in one place be regarded as junk. At another time, in another place, the same object might become part of a museum collection.

4.4. Tingvoll

Tingvoll Woollen Mill was established in 1897 in Tingvoll, Møre og Romsdal. At first the business model was simple – local farmers delivered fleece and old scraps of textile materials to the mill and were paid in new textiles. Production included everything from carding and spinning to dyeing, weaving and finishing. After a difficult first decade, the business grew rapidly between 1906 and 1916, a period of high activity and growth in the Norwegian economy in general.⁴¹

The production facilities were extended several times, and modern production equipment was acquired. In 1939, there were 230 employees in the factory. The business became an important part of the local economy, known for its quality goods – especially gabardine fabrics for clothing.⁴² The 1950s was a positive decade for the company, but in the 1960s the decline began, and in 1967 the factory went bankrupt.⁴³

Sellgrens Veveri A/S was founded in Trondheim by Axel Sellgren in 1926.⁴⁴ Sellgren was Swedish, and was educated at the Tekstilskolan in Borås, southern Sweden. After 15 years working for several textile manufacturers in Sweden and Norway, he had saved enough funds to start his own business.⁴⁵ The mill was established at Leangen, a short distance from Trondheim city centre in Sør-Trøndelag, and after a rather difficult start-up phase it eventually became a well-regarded company known for producing extremely hard-wearing fabrics of the best quality. Sellgren only manufactured fabric for furniture, and collaborated closely with Norwegian furniture manufacturers – especially the companies at Sunnmøre.

Axel Sellgren was an innovator, and developed machines, yarns and fabric designs. During World War II, he designed looms for his own workshop as well selling them to others, making the mill well equipped to take advantage of positive developments in the market in the 1950s.⁴⁶ To strengthen the company, Sellgren acquired Tingvoll Woollen Mill in 1967.⁴⁷ At first, parts of the business in Trondheim were moved to Tingvoll, to the modern buildings that Tingvoll Woollen Mill had invested in during the late 1950s.⁴⁸ After a period of economic challenges in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the entire production was moved from Leangen to Tingvoll in 1984. An important reason for this decision was that Sellgren then gained access to governmental district development funds, which the mill could not apply for when situated in the central Trondheim area.⁴⁹ At its peak there were 78 employees at Tingvoll. The company was solid and well managed, continuing the production of quality materials while increasingly focusing on design and orders in the contract market.⁵⁰ In the 1990s it was decided that the firm should produce only to order.

In 1997, Sellgrens Veveri was bought by a competitor, Innvik – a mill operating further south along the western coast of Norway. The Sellgren family was pushed out of business, and a period of decline in Tingvoll began, with major economic upheavals and changes in production. In 2014, Innvik decided to close down the last remaining production in Tingvoll, and in 2015 changed the company name from Innvik-Sellgren to Innvik. Valuable production equipment and the products that Sellgren was known for were taken over by Innvik.⁵¹

Krivi was established in Tingvoll in 1988 by textile engineer Viktor Gautvik and textile teacher Kristine Hagen, and the company is now owned by Gautvik. The firm is a leading manufacturer of fabrics for the Norwegian national folk costume, and is the only mill in Norway that focuses primarily on fabric for clothing. Production at Krivi includes warp making, weaving and steaming. Yarn is purchased from spinning mills in Norway and internationally, while dyeing and finishing beyond steaming are done by outside companies that Krivi collaborates with.

There are 20 employees in the company, many with work experience from Sellgrens Veveri.⁵² Krivi continues the long tradition of textile production in Tingvoll, and is constantly growing. With its willingness to take risks, and its open and positive attitude towards developing and producing smaller orders for designers, Krivi plays a crucial role in the industry in Norway today.

41. Arnstein Rolland, *A/S Tingvoll Ullvarefabrikk Sellgrens Veveri AS: Tilsammen 100 år. 1898-1998*, Jubileumskomiteen for 100 års tekstilindustri i Tingvoll (Jubilee Committee, 100 Years of Textile Industry in Tingvoll), 1998, pp. 3-4.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
44. Axel Sellgren, *En tråd gjennom 50 år ... Sellgrens Veveri A/S 1926-1976*, Sellgrens Veveri A/S, Trondheim, 1976, no page numbers.
- 45-50. *Ibid.*
51. Oral source – Helle Bergan, former designer at Innvik-Sellgren.
52. Oral sources – Maria Aasprang and Viktor Gautvik at Krivi.

4.5. Witness

In 2014, I was invited to Tingvoll by the designer Helle Bergan to investigate the conditions at the mill before its closure. The process of closing was in the final phase and I was given the opportunity to observe how the remaining staff were treated and how the buildings and the objects left in the factory were managed.

Production equipment, archival materials and other items had an undefined status after what was of obvious value already had been shipped to Innvik. In this situation, I became an emotionally engaged witness to the situation, in conversation with the last employees. I was not involved in textile production – it was about being present, and collecting and documenting objects through text and photography.

I did not know how this experience could be introduced and conveyed as part of the work in the programme, but I knew it represented something important and different to the experiences I had at Sjølingstad and Gudbrandsdalens Woollen Mill. I became part of discussions about how the story of Sellgren in Tingvoll could be told, both with the staff at the local museum and with politicians who were interested in exploring the history of the textile industry in Tingvoll as a basis for new business development. The conversation with the museum about the collection, management and dissemination of objects and history continues.



4.6. HAIKw/

In 2012, I met the designers working together as HAIKw/.⁵³ At the time the company consisted of Siv Støldal, Ida Falck Øien and Harald Lunde Helgesen. Støldal left the group in 2017. The fundamental idea behind HAIKw/ is to collaborate with designers, artists and people working in other disciplines, and develop ideas and production methods based on these meetings. HAIKw/ also focuses on Norwegian production, and has collaborated with several local manufacturing companies, such as Aurlandskoen and Lillunn.

My motivation to collaborate with HAIKw/ was to allow my method, thinking, knowledge and, in particular, my relationship with Sjølingstad to come into contact with other people's attitudes, methods and energy. It was also interesting for me to gain experience working within a commercial framework, and to see how the material I present in an art and craft context is perceived from this different perspective.

For the winter collection in 2014 we worked together at Sjølingstad. We decided to start from a standard quality weave that the mill has in production – a twill woven using yarn spun at Sjølingstad from Norwegian class C1 wool. This material is used for the mill's version of cloth. From the raw fabric in ecru we developed new qualities and textures. Almost all the machines at the factory were used when Harald Lunde Helgesen and I completed production – spinning, weaving, dyeing and finishing.

I developed the colour range at KHIØ based on conversations with HAIKw/ about the overall colour expression in the collection. Some of the fabrics were treated before dyeing, creating holes and threadbare parts. This effect was a continuation of the theme HAIKw/ had explored in previous collections, about healing and repair.

For the design of the clothes we examined the locker rooms at Sjølingstad, and found a lot of worn workwear. HAIKw/ based new designs on these clothes, especially on an overall that I used when I was employed at the mill.

The fabrics from Sjølingstad were combined with two series of printed fabrics – one developed by Ida Falck Øien from hand-painted chequered patterns, and another series developed by Falck Øien and the anthropologist Charlotte Bik Bandlien, responding to healing exercises by painting with watercolours. The collection was shown at Kunstnerne Hus in Oslo in March 2014. The garments were produced in Estonia at the clothing factory HAIKw/ was collaborating with at the time. The collection was sold in stores in several cities, including Oslo, Tokyo and Beijing.

In summer 2014 the garments and photographs from the collection were exhibited at Sjølingstad. The clothes were presented hanging on assemblages of old weaving equipment, tools and machine parts. Photographs of the clothes worn by models were shown in the exhibition arena and at different locations in the workshops of the mill. At the same time we also prepared for a photoshoot of the summer 2015 collection produced at Krivi. The photographs were taken by Märta Thisner in the workshops at Sjølingstad and along the beach in Mandal.

For production at Krivi I contributed to the design of one fabric, and I carried out the first steps of the weaving. We experimented with jacquard fabrics, where elements from work HAIKw/ had done with massage techniques were combined with motifs derived from a photograph I took of dust on a wall at Gudbrandsdalens Woollen Mill. The shapes of the areas with particles of dust in the photo were used as pattern areas without binding points between the warp and the weft in the fabric. These areas could be perceived as holes. This fabric was woven in two versions – the dust pattern alone, and in combination with motifs developed from drawings by Falck Øien. These motifs were designed by Falck Øien by drawing the movements she felt on her back from the hands of a masseur. This pattern of arrows was adjusted in size to correspond to the back length of the garment.

The motifs were processed digitally and prepared for weaving by Jon Pettersen, the designer Krivi uses to customise and facilitate weaving on its jacquard looms. The fabrics were woven in a cotton warp. Several types of yarn were used as weft, but most of all polyester. This part of the process was carried out by Harald Lunde Helgesen, who also developed new colour combinations during this period. The collection was shown at Bergen Kunsthall in October 2014. The clothes were sewn at the same factory in Estonia, and sold in stores during spring and summer 2015.



4.7. Gudbrandsdalens Woollen Mill

In 1887 Bernt Otto Johnsen established the Gudbrandsdalens Uldspinneri, a spinning mill by the Mesna river in Lillehammer, Oppland.⁵⁴ After eight years of operation, in 1895 the production expanded to include weaving, dyeing and finishing. The company was from then on a complete woollen mill.⁵⁵ In 1898, the factory changed its name to Gudbrandsdalens Uldvarefabrik (GU) – Gudbrandsdalens Woollen Mill – and employed 25 people by the turn of the century, 15 of them women.⁵⁶ In 1912, Andreas R. Svarstad bought the mill, paying 150,000 kroner. Before settling in Lillehammer, Svarstad had been involved in establishing Innvik Uldvarefabrik.⁵⁷

The combination of Svarstad's knowledge of textile production and business management provided a good basis for expansion and growth. Through technological development and a strong focus on producing fabrics of high quality, the business grew steadily through the following decades. Even during the 1920s and 1930s, a difficult period for most manufacturing companies, GU showed continuous growth and development of a wide range of products. The company invested surpluses in upgrading technical equipment and factory buildings during the recession, so that it could take a larger market share during better times.⁵⁸ Production was mainly fabrics for clothing, as well as for interiors.

One of the main reasons why GU succeeded when the Norwegian textile industry was in decline in the 1960s and '70s was that the management was able to respond quickly to changes in the market. An example is that when garment manufacturers started to close, GU shifted from producing fabrics for clothing to fabrics for interiors in a short period of time.

Today, after 126 years, GU is the largest remaining mill in Norway, and one of the leading manufacturers of upholstery fabrics in Europe. The factory is still owned by the Svarstad family, and is an important carrier of tradition and knowledge in the Norwegian textile industry. The mill competes on quality and sustainability, not on price. GU educates its own technicians, either on the premises or by financing education at relevant schools abroad. The company still maintains all the manufacturing processes in house, and technically its production is one of the most modern in the world. The mill now employs around 70 people, while at its peak there were around 350 employees. Even so, the volume in production has never been larger than today. Seventy per cent of the fabrics are exported. Upholstery fabrics from GU are used on the seats of Norwegian trains, on cruise ships and in cinemas, hotels, offices and institutions around the world.⁵⁹

54. Knut Ramberg, *Hundre år i ull: Gudbrandsdalens Uldvarefabrik AS 1887-1987*, Gudbrandsdalens Uldvarefabrik, Lillehammer, 1987, p. 33.

55. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

56. *Ibid.*

57. *Ibid.*, p. 39.

58. *Ibid.*, p. 41.

59. Oral source – Åge Jenssveen, head of production, Gudbrandsdalens Woollen Mill.



4.8. *To Gudbrandsdalens Woollen Mill*

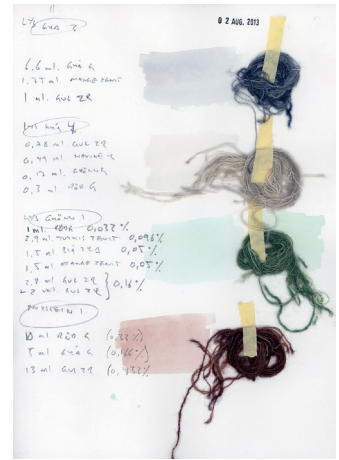
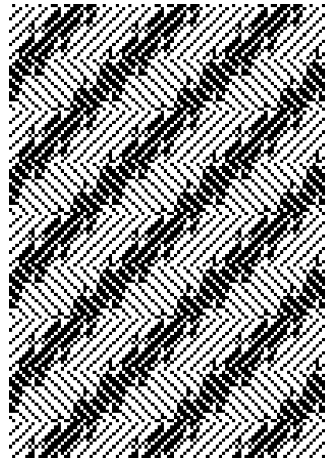
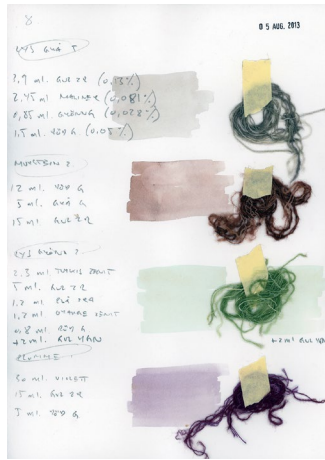
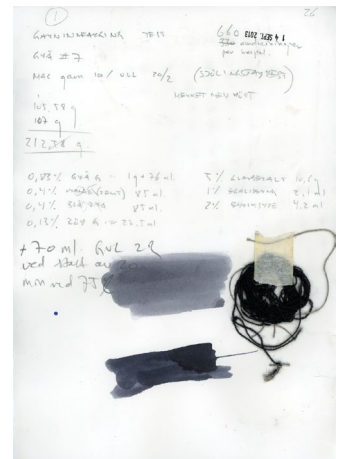
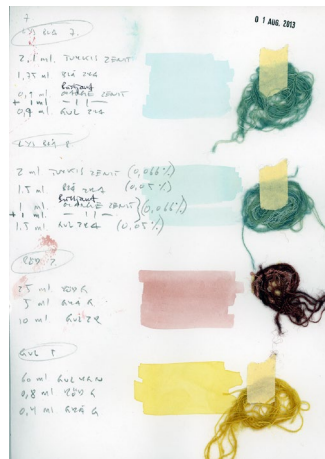
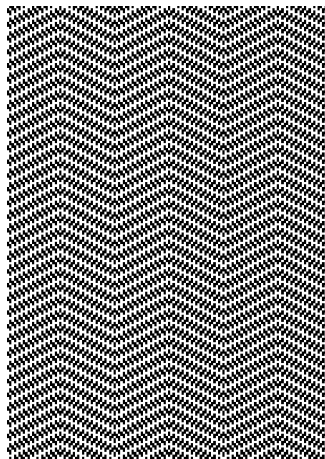
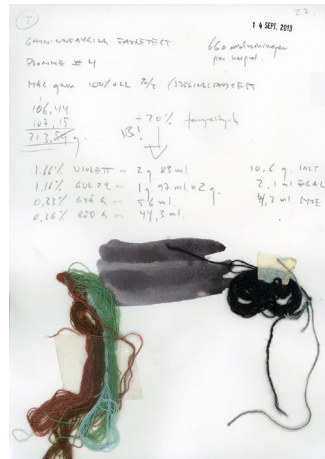
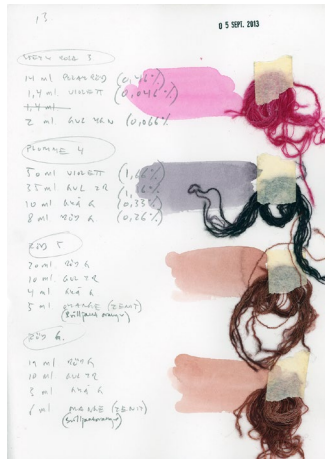
From autumn 2012 onwards, I explored the history of GU and its production, preparing to take part in the group exhibition *A Thousand Threads – A Story Told in Textiles* at Lillehammer Art Museum. The exhibition was shown from November 2013 to May 2014.

To Gudbrandsdalens Woollen Mill was a company portrait presenting the history of the mill as part of the cultural history of Lillehammer, as well as its role in keeping production such as this running and developing in Norway today. The work described my experiences at the mill, and the process of manufacturing textiles that I carried out during the period of a year.

The management at GU went out of their way for me to get to know the factory. Frode Svarstad, one of the owners, put together a programme that lasted a week, during which I spent one day in each department. After this I had open access to the archive, and was given my own office space. I discovered that GU is defined by the high production volume at the mill, and that there are few openings for experimentation beyond what must be done to deliver orders. I found myself in continuous negotiation with requirements for efficiency, with respect for the tasks and working hours of the staff.

I spent a lot of time in the archives and workshops and became familiar with many of the employees. I observed the structures and processes of production. During the year I spent periods at Lillehammer, I created a large number of photographs of production equipment and people at work, selected objects from the archive, interviewed one employee in each department, and created my own textiles woven in patterns sourced in the archive. I dyed yarn based on the interior of the factory, inspired by the machines and surfaces of the building. I used yarn from the company storage, but also my own cashmere and silk from the Cariaggi spinning mill in Italy. The textiles regularly produced at GU are relatively heavy, and I explored what results I could get by using lighter yarns in other fibres than wool.

The installation in the museum included a series of photos developed in collaboration with the photographer Fin Serck-Hanssen, as well as textiles based on weave patterns found in the archives, archive material, interviews with employees and documentation material.



4.9. OK

Oslo Kunstforening (OK) curator Marianne Hultman invited me to show an exhibition in spring 2015 representing my explorations as a fellow. OK is a white-cube gallery on the second floor of one of Oslo's oldest buildings, Rådmannsgården in Kvadraturen, from 1626. The gallery has three exhibition rooms, located one after the other, with standard-width doorways between each room. As a visitor, you must move through the first two rooms before you enter the last one. To leave the gallery you must return the same way as you came.

The installation period lasted 16 days, which is long. I brought to the gallery everything I had collected, produced and borrowed during the fellowship period. I had ordered six pedestals in different dimensions, two glass tops and four larger tables, designed to ensure flexibility so that I could change the placement of these elements during installation. The plan was to use the three rooms to create sequences with clear identities. In the first room, I wanted to show the history of the textile industry, in the second, all the documentation material from the explorations. In the third room the plan was to show the two suits and a photograph. I had a plan, but I expected it to change.

Hultman and I had an open dialogue both before the exhibition and during the installation. The conversations influenced the choices I made for placing the objects. Her point of view is that it takes time before objects in an exhibition find the place they belong, and that it is necessary to be responsive, and to try out different options. This approach works well for me and I felt that Hultman's method and attitude opened out the situation and removed tension. I found a necessary calm.

The main change based on Hultman's input was that the order of the sequences in the exhibition was changed. The content in rooms two and three changed place. The result was that we avoided a chronological presentation of the material, as well as a potential reading of the structuring of the material as giving some elements more value than others. The content of the rooms became more consistent by placing the documentation in room three. Hultman was also involved in the discussion of the placing of the objects in the first room. In the final phase, she managed to remove the heaviness that had settled both in the room and in me. This spirit changed the attitude I had to the objects, and together we placed the last elements, with sensitivity and humour.

In the first room, I showed objects I had gathered over time in the programme and three of my own photographs. The images showed chaos at Sellgren, the loom at Sjølingstad, and a corner of an abandoned storeroom at GU. By the door to room two, I placed two pedestals, one with textile samples from Sellgren, another with sample books from Sjølingstad, with an old sample of 727 on top of the pile. This connected the rooms through the suits made by the reconstruction of this textile in room two, and the documentation on how the fabric was made, which took up much of the space in room three. During installation, I collected the objects that had not found their place in the room itself along the wall to the right of the front door of the gallery. I kept this group of remnants when the installation was finished.

I wanted the first room to have a sort of vagueness to it– floating objects, disconnected from the specifics of this industry and their specific purpose. This was to emphasise the general qualities of the objects, which were, for more or less obvious reasons, grouped, placed directly on the floor, on pedestals without glass, or on pedestals with glass tops. There were indications of possible structures based on use, place, time or condition – material or aesthetic.

I chose not to frame the photographs in the exhibition – neither the ones I had taken myself nor those by Märta Thisner and Fin Serck-Hanssen. All the photographs were of a high quality, produced by Studio Technika in Oslo, and were roughly mounted with metal pins. It was also a deliberate choice to treat my snapshots in the first room in the same way as the images taken by professional photographers in the other rooms.

The suits were placed in the second room. The blue suit was hanging on old coat hangers on white-coated wooden pegs on the wall. The green suit was placed in the centre of the room, on a wooden clothing rack on a pedestal. On the wall behind the green suit was the photo by Thisner of the stream at Sjølingstad. The suits were shown together because they were both made from the fabric reconstructed at Sjølingstad, and they represented the part of the exploration that had reached the furthest. I wanted to emphasise the vulnerability the suits represent to me. There was a lot of space around each object, for them to appear exposed.

In the third room, I collected everything on process and method. I placed a large table in the middle of the room, with chairs and stools from the mills, as well as a smaller table in the rear corner. Fabrics, yarns and samples from GU were assembled along one wall, and clothing from the collaboration with HAIKw/ hung on a clothing rack by the small table in the corner. A smaller clothing rack was placed by the large table in the middle of the room, with a suit that was under construction. On the walls there were four photos, all from the weaving workshop at Prinds Christian August Minde in Oslo, photographed by Serck-Hanssen. On the tables, as well as in folders on the floor, there were samples from the different explorations, along with textiles, photographs and other documentation. The intention was for this room to represent an activation of the objects in room one.

The room was dense, but the visitors still found it possible to sit down at the tables to study the material. It was not a replication of my workshop, but a public study with objects placed accessibly and open to touch and participation.



4.10. Catalogue

The catalogue was produced between autumn 2014 and the opening of the exhibition at OK in March 2015. It was designed by the creative studio Research and Development (R&D) – art director duo Daniel Olsson and Jonas Topooco – in Stockholm, with 500 copies printed at Göteborgstryckeriet, also in Sweden. The catalogue consists of four main parts: my own texts, which are also part of this reflection, texts written by Jennifer Allen and Theodor Barth, and two series of photographs.

I wanted the catalogue to open up discussions on my work through texts by people with different backgrounds to me. I invited two people I was already in dialogue with – my supervisor Theodor Barth, who is an anthropologist, and the critic and writer Jennifer Allen. The only guideline from me was that I clarified the context in which the texts would be presented. Barth focused on the dynamics between Sjølingstad and GU, and discussed how I relate to the different places – travelling, setting up camp, dwelling, or moving through. Allen also wrote in her text about being in motion and connected this to memory. Central in her text is how history and historical objects in my work are activated and moved into the present.

The photographic material in the catalogue is divided into two parts. In collaboration with R&D and Fin Serck-Hanssen, I produced a series of photos specifically for the catalogue, of objects I collected as part of explorations in the programme and from previous work. For two days in a black box at KHiO we photographed the objects, which were organised not by how old they were, their purpose, or where they came from, but by colour. The idea behind using colour was to neutralise the reading of the objects and to introduce a lightness to the material.

The second series of photographs illustrate my texts and are all my images, apart from the photographs of the stream at Sjølingstad, the textile sample books in the archive and the portraits of Gunnveig S. Helland and Einar Kristensen, which are all by Märta Thisner. The photos from Prinds Christian Augusts Minde are by Serck-Hanssen, and the portrait of the founder of Sjølingstad Woollen Mill, August Hoven, is from the archive at the mill.

Når sant skal sies er Sebalds jeg-forteller lite interessant i seg selv, men snarere en ansiktsløs prototype som alle seriøst arbeidende forfattere vil kjenne seg igjen i. Så er rollen hans heller ikke å iscenesette seg selv, men å rapportere, vitne. Han stiller ikke ut sin egen historie, men er et medium for andres.

Geir Pollen⁶⁰

—

Truth be told, Sebald's protagonist is not particularly interesting in himself, but is rather a faceless prototype that all serious authors will recognise. His role is not to stage himself, but to report, to testify. He does not expose his own history, but is a medium for stories of others.

Geir Pollen⁶⁰ (my translation)

60. Geir Pollen, 'Sebalds ringer', foreword in the Norwegian edition of W.G. Sebald, *Saturns Ringer*, Gyldendal Forlag, Oslo, 2014, p. 9.

5.1. I

In his foreword to the Norwegian edition of W.G. Sebald's novel *The Rings of Saturn*, the translator Geir Pollen, who is also an author, writes about the difference between texts that investigate a specific biography, a particular first person, *I*, and texts that explore what an *I* might be. I have had a difficult relationship to my own history, my person and my expression, and have not been able to tell my own story in my work. For this reason, I react to the quote. My evasion was not a conscious strategy, or method of defining what I wanted to be part of my work.

As a child, I lost myself, my true needs and feelings. And I distanced myself from my own actions. I lost myself because I had to become something different to exist. My childhood and youth were defined by a deep loneliness – bodily and emotionally. Part of this is about my sexuality, about being queer. As a child, I realised that I was different, without understanding why. But I knew that it was not different in a good way. My basic feelings are anger, fear and sorrow, based on experiences of worthlessness and shame. And of being on the outside. I have tried to return, to be a part of something – the family, a social network, a work community, the masculine. I have searched for belonging.

When I applied for the programme, I had a vague idea of a need to look at the emotional connection I had to my search for belonging. The process has been about securing a foundation to truly be able to place myself within my own history, among objects, places and people – to create understanding, knowledge and lasting connections. Both placing my work within the framework of a research programme, and eventually also being in the final phase of a seven-year relationship, were overwhelming processes that in their complexity demanded that I stood my ground, opened up to, embraced and put into use the full spectrum of feelings.

Our own body is in the world as the heart is in the organism: it keeps the visible spectacle constantly alive, it breathes life into it and sustains it inwardly, and with it forms a system.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty⁶¹

Touch is the sensory mode that integrates our experience of the world with that of ourselves. Even visual perceptions are fused and integrated into the haptic continuum of the self; my body remembers who I am, and where I am located in the world. My body is truly the navel of my world, not in the sense of the viewing point of the central perspective, but as the very locus of reference, memory, imagination and integration.

Juhani Pallasmaa⁶²

The term transitional object was coined in 1951 by D.W. Winnicott as "a designation for any material to which an infant attributes a special value and by means of which the child is able to make the necessary shift from the earliest oral relationship with mother to genuine object-relationships."

Colleen Goddard⁶³

Cloth, that as any child knows, is specific. Once, when I was looking after Anna, a friend's child, I attempted to "replace" her lost comforter with a piece of cloth that looked exactly like it. She, of course, knew immediately that it was a fraud, and I still remember the look of distrust and disgust of my betrayal. The comforter, however much it stands in for absences and loss, remains irrevocably itself even as it is transformed by touch and lips and teeth.

Peter Stallybrass⁶⁴

61. Quoted in Juhani Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses*, John Wiley & Sons, Chichester, 2005, p. 40.

62. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

63. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-guest-room/201407/more-just-teddy-bears>

64. Peter Stallybrass, 'Worn Worlds', in Jessica Hemmings (ed.), *The Textile Reader*, Berg, London and New York, 2012, p. 70.

5.2. Body

Body touching textile. The situations where the textile is touched. At work. Through wearing a garment. It explains an attraction, an orientation towards the physical, the tactile. It is also about actions. The responses that require mobility, lightness, quickness, to create distance or proximity. There is a persistence in this. In time and extent, perhaps also in volume. It can appear as a desperation. The basic motivation is established as the search for belonging.

How deep is the desire for being touched? It is the same dynamic. A longing for intimacy. Entire skin, entire body. Smell, moisture, heat. Proximity and danger. The body of the other can withdraw and leave me alone.

Rejection created silenced isolation. Physically and mentally. At times paralysis. Skin contact and physical proximity as fundamentally unsafe. I compensate through developing the body. Consciously and unconsciously. Muscles continuously tense to surround the heart, to guard the heart. A body shaped to be ready for escape. Light, moving with ease. A body also shaped by longing.

The textile as a hand reaching out. As an intermediary. *From* my body to the bodies of others, *from* my hands, as a weaver and dyer. And *to* my body through my desire to touch. Force and counterforce. At times unwillingness, other times with affinity and the need to become one. When I wear the suit, the garment and I create something together, two defined shapes meeting. Heaviness, resistance creating form and direction. The beige cashmere sweater I wear is entirely different. It moves under the skin. It dissolves. No restrictions. Except that I am afraid to damage it.

The touch of a fabric is a substitute for intimacy with someone else. I missed this intimacy as a child to such an extent that I think I might have transferred the need for skin contact to a sensitivity to the materials my body was surrounded by. I weave using only natural materials, especially wool and silk, both protein fibres. There is a warmth in animal fibres. In wool, a greasy, heavy resonance. The experience of wool and silk is more like an idea than something I consciously relate to when I am, in one way or another, in touch with these materials. It is like being aware that there is, perhaps on a primal level, a significant memory attached to this that resists being made conscious.

I can remember materials of the opposite qualities. Plastic, chrome-plated metal. The terrible synthetic turtleneck sweaters I had to wear. The raingear that was stiff, tight and difficult.



THE BLUE SUIT
Oslo, 12 November 2016

The suit is here now. It has been for a while. Right now, it hangs on the rack in the room where I live, in between my other clothes. A colourful striped waistcoat on its left side, a shirt in purple, blue and black silk on the right. The waistcoat was a gift from Tilda. She bought it at a costume sale at Stadsteatern in Stockholm. I have worn it only once, when I celebrated midsummer's eve with Tilda, Liv and their friends in Söderköping. The silk shirt is from one of the first HAIKw/ collections. Now, when I am wearing it, it makes me disappear.

The suit is here for it to be in a safe place. Not because I intend to use it. It is among my other clothes, but it is very much something else. I know almost everything about it. I have spent months over a period of three years producing the fabric it is made from.

I needed this experience of having a suit made for me. I needed the experience of wearing a suit made of this fabric.

And now it represents too much. As an object, it is too present, linked to too many stories, people, places, memories. I think I knew this would happen, and I have nothing against it being something else. Something other than a garment. I will probably never wear it in a social setting. But I can talk about it. And write about it.

5.3. Suit

It was necessary to produce the blue suit. I needed the experience. The classic design and the navy woollen fabric make it appear neutral. It is a standard suit. I could, through other choices, have made the fabric and the garment much more personal. But I was not interested. I needed the generic quality.

The physical experience of wearing the blue suit is complex. If I animate the suit jacket, I would say that it has both a will and a strength, through the heavy quality of the wool and the layers of linings. Through the precision in the patternmaking and the cut, it enfolds my body. In a good way. As an embrace. It is supportive. But I'm not sure if I can accept what it offers.

I have never worn a suit with pleasure. Not even when I went to tailoring school. I have been unsure whether a suit could ever represent me, or express something I have the need to say. It is alienating more than anything else. How did I end up in this situation? With such a complicated relationship to the garment I went to school for three years to learn how to make, and to which I have obviously attached both hopes and dreams?

I believe I thought that at some stage I would live a life that would require a suit. It represented a longing for a life I thought I wanted. Stability, persistence, perhaps even masculinity. I do not need it anymore. I have never really needed it. Now I live a life that does not require a suit.

For it to say what it has the potential to say, the blue suit must be in a context where the story is told, where I tell it. It is about identity, knowledge and power. The exploration I have carried out, of the fabric, of the production and the experience of wearing the garment develops still, as part of a conversation. The blue suit is a continuation of the story of the 727 fabric, the worker's Sunday suit, wedding suit, funeral suit. The value of knowledge, the understanding of quality and perspectives on life cycles come into sight.



Nå har jeg holdt på med detta siden fire-og-nitti. Før det første så ser du det med augom, for det andre så kjenner du det med fingrom.

Per-Ivar Halvorsrud⁶⁵

—

Now I have been doing this since 1994. First, you see it with your eyes, then you feel it with your fingers.

Per-Ivar Halvorsrud⁶⁵ (my translation)

Beyond the hand holding this book that I'm reading, I see another hand lying idle and slightly out of focus – my extra hand.

The Hand, Lydia Davis⁶⁶

65. Oral source – from a conversation with textile mechanic Per-Ivar Halvorsrud, on locating mistakes when changing warps in the loom at Gudbrandsdalens Woollen Mill, 2014.

66. Quoted in Gunnhild Øyehaug, *Miniatyrlesingar*, Kolon Forlag, Oslo, 2017, p. 40.

5.4. Work

When I was at my best at Sjølingstad, I could have three procedures going on at the same time. The timing and development of one process was present in my body when I was in another. When I immersed myself in the work in this way I knew when I had to move between the machines.

Repetition and movement being remembered. It is healthy. It makes sense. It satisfies a fundamental need I have. Hard, heavy and concentrated work in the workshop. The body remembers. Rhythm, repetition, weight, noise, smell. Vigilance and alertness with tension in muscles when I did not trust the machine. Flow. Energy. Movements around and with the machines. Spaces, staircases, doors, the complex rhythm when several processes become one.

When I returned to Sjølingstad in 2009 after seven years, I worked on the same processes again. I felt how strongly the physical surroundings, the machines and the procedures were imprinted in me. When I was decatising, my body guided me from place to place around the machine. Without me remembering why, it wanted to go left, and I found myself in front of the crane that opened for the steam supply. Just the one I needed. And so on. The experience confirmed the connection to the place. To the work.

One of the heaviest procedures at Sjølingstad is to move a length of fabric from the dye bath onto a trolley and then to pack it in the centrifuge. It could be 40 metres, of wet, heavy, hot, thick cloth. After long days dyeing, I was physically tired. I became strong when working at the factory. The resistance triggered me.

THE TEXTILE SAMPLE BOOK

Testico, 6 February 2014

The first time I visited the archive at Sjølingstad, I had been working at the mill for some time. I was instructed to enter the room quickly and close the door behind me to prevent moths from following. It was quite a cramped and chaotic space.

Many of the sample books were organised in cardboard boxes, while others were left in unstable piles on the floor. Folded textiles, several jacquard blankets, some knitted sweaters. Adjusting to the light and the temperature, searching for a point of entry to the stored material, I realised intuitively that I had come across objects that had qualities that resonated profoundly with who I was at the time, and with what I was looking for. Exploring this material created a framework that later intensified my values, aspirations, skills and knowledge.

The small folders with sales samples were produced to present the mill's products to the customers. They document decades of production of woollen fabrics for clothing and create connections, bridging places, times, people, tools and methods.

I am holding a small piece of fabric in my hand. It continues at another time somewhere else.

I go through all the books. Methodically. Some samples inspire me to work. They are beautiful, rough and honest. I want to reproduce these fabrics, and wear garments made from them. They challenge me, and at the same time they create a longing. I leave the archive with a selection of sample books as souvenirs, suggestions and starting points.

The samples suggest a response.

I perform a technical analysis. I define the construction and test the yarn. The density and the surface give information on the settings of the loom and the methods of finishing. I approach the colours through experiments in the dyeing workshop. I make selections with the intention to recreate the fabrics using the equipment in the mill as it is today. The machinery is old, some of the knowledge has been lost, and parts of the process are missing.

Some qualities are possible to recreate; others are not. The new fabrics are similar, not copies.



We are a long way from a situation in which the authorship of art is apportioned out to all parties involved in the making of a work, with each credited in the manner of a Hollywood film. (Some artists do credit their fabricators, but this remains a personal choice, not an expectation.)

Glenn Adamson and Julia Bryan-Wilson⁶⁷

67. Glenn Adamson and Julia Bryan-Wilson, *Art in the Making*, Thames & Hudson, London, 2016, p. 172.

5.5. Production

I enter production through the fabric, the craft, my body and my story, not through the economic, social and political conditions connected to it. What I produce is part of the exploration of the sites where production takes place, and of the textile itself. I explore how things are made, who made them, based on what knowledge and in what tradition. Experiencing and reaching an understanding of an object through reproducing it as accurately as possible is a method that for me creates intimacy. It can be called a reconstruction, reproduction or copy.

When I analyse a textile from the archive at Sjølingstad, I connect to both the history of the mill and the knowledge acquired through generations. I give it value through my presence and participation. What to many artists, designers and makers is subordinate, or even something to hide, is for me precisely what I want to shed light on. The material outcome of production interests me as part of a process. I am part of the value chain, and what the value chain consists of is part of what I explore and expose.

Production is a place to meet. Finding solutions to problems together, and developing a sensible division of tasks and labour. Dynamics. Support and encouragement. Respecting that everyone has sought depth of knowledge in her or his field. For interaction, we depend on a will for solidarity and the opportunity it creates for recognition. In order to understand each other. Get better together.

In the exhibition at OK, all documentation from the work processes was available. Revealing everything that production involves shows how complex it is to produce the things we surround ourselves with and often take for granted. An awareness of this is necessary to appreciate the value of both work and knowledge, and to develop the ability to recognise quality.



THE MILL

Grendehuset, Sjølingstad Woollen Mill, 17 November 2011

I slept for 11 hours, and the sound of a loom woke me up at a quarter past eight. Gunnveig had started working. I stayed in my sleeping bag for some time listening. Someone else came to work, probably Oliver. I had breakfast and wrote the log from day one. I had a lot of coffee. It was half past nine before I finished. I left Grendehuset and went into the mill. For a moment, I didn't know where to start, where to go.

I got my camera, notebook and bag, and headed for the archive without meeting anyone. I made space, fetched a chair and sat down. After a while I started taking pictures of jacquard blankets. I spent three hours in the archive. It was chilly, humid and airtight. When I left the room, I was heavy-headed. Judith had a workshop with children from a kindergarten; we briefly said hello.

I went to have lunch – quite a long break – eating and reading the paper. I put on my windbreaker, took my camera and went outside to take pictures. I crossed the bridge and took some photos of the mill from up the hill. Nice angle. I decided to go for a walk, going up the road towards Romedal. I took pictures of the dam, the stream and the lake, before heading back to the mill. Paul was the only one still at work.

I made dinner. Same as day one. I started working on revising the project description – I will be sending a new text to Gerd on Monday. Found new headlines. Felt like I was on the right track. Kept on going until 10. I arranged my bed at 10.30, listening to Mark Hollis. Turned the music off, but couldn't sleep. Kept on thinking about work, making plans for the next day, other stuff. Some things were useful. I stayed awake for a long time.

As such, his project [Weaving Fabrics for Suits] is not an immobile solitary monument but closer to a mobile, living network. All threads are connected with each other while leading to other people, places and pieces of fabric.

Jennifer Allen⁶⁸

As the years went by, and I made myself into an architect and urbanist, I began to understand that objects, narratives, memories, and space are woven into a complex, expanding web – each fragment of which gives meaning to all the others. For me it was a web that grew from a quiet, isolated place on the banks of the Wimmera River.

William J. Mitchell⁶⁸

68. Jennifer Allen, 'Breathing History', catalogue text in *Weaving Fabrics for Suits*, Franz Petter Schmidt, Oslo, 2015, no page numbers.
69. William J. Mitchell, 'The Melbourne Train', in Sherry Turkle (ed.), *Evocative Objects: Things We Think With*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, 2007, p. 150.

5.6. Monument

The village is a quiet place in nature. Living at Sjølingstad, I felt a strong belonging. Routine, long days, immersive processes. Personal needs and professional needs merged. For a while. Before I moved on. The experience remains in my body. It is an emotional and physical base. I can at any time evoke memories of the materials, colours, sounds and smells at the mill. The people, the buildings, the dynamics of the place. Sjølingstad is part of me, a source, defining the experience of exploring other places, histories and situations.

I needed the void, the potential of loss when something is forgotten, to create space for me, for my activity in relation to sites and histories. I am drawn to the storage rooms no one has entered for ages, the dark basements and attics. The abandoned parts of the building.

Sellgren represents grief, the state of being powerless and vulnerable. I collected objects from Sellgren because I made the history of the mill my own. The experience I had from Sjølingstad made me look at it as if it were my values that were not respected. It was disturbing to observe how the legacy of this proud company, representing stability, quality and knowledge, was handled. Between the times I was there, the buildings, remaining machines and objects became more and more derelict, lost. The decay evolved rapidly. Dust, the smell of mildew. Cold and humid.

Allen writes in her catalogue text that my work is not a *memento mori*, but rather relates to continued activity, continued movement, continued work.⁷⁰ At Sellgren, I helped to take care of objects that would otherwise have been thrown away, seeing them become part of a museum collection. In Tingvoll, textile production continues at Krivi. Perhaps this is the truest memorial of the story of Sellgren? The knowledge that survives, and is managed on-site where activity continues as part of a dynamic and forward-thinking weaving mill.

GU at Lillehammer represents a continuation of traditions through development and growth, and has become a model for environmentally friendly and quality local production. The centralised operation ensures the shortest possible distance between labour, design, production and consumer. This is a transparent setup that makes all parts of the chain responsible. Management, capital, the entire production line and all necessary knowledge exist in one place, in one city. This has become the most important competitive advantage for GU, and an asset in marketing. Production at the factory was, for a long time, out of step with industrial development in Norway, an anachronism. Today it is an example, for this type of production, of the most modern and future-oriented operation it is possible to imagine.

70. Jennifer Allen, 'Breathing History', catalogue text in *Weaving Fabrics for Suits*.

To love the wrong kind of objects is to be queer (as is perhaps an over attachment to objects in the first place), and the impulse to collect them is often motivated by a desire to create alternative histories and genealogies of queer lives.

Ann Cvetkovich⁷¹

When objects are animated by feelings, they may demand alternative or experimental archival practices. Artists have thus been important curators of queer archives because they have a knack not only for valuing objects that others do not, but also for exhibiting them in ways that can capture both their felt value and their historical value (and make claims for felt value as historical value).

Ann Cvetkovich⁷²

I would say that the moment an object appears in a narrative, it is charged with a special force and becomes like a pole of a magnetic field, a knot in the network of invisible relationships.

Italo Calvino⁷³

71. Ann Cvetkovich, 'Photographing Objects: Art as Queer Archival Practice', in Mathias Danbolt, Jane Rowley and Louise Wolthers (eds.), *Lost and Found: Queering the Archive*, Nikolaj Kunsthal, Copenhagen, 2009, p. 54.

72. *Ibid.*, p. 57.

73. Italo Calvino, *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*, Penguin Classics, London, 2009, p. 33.

5.7. Collection

The objects that are part of my work and my life represent emotions, stories and memories that confirm my identity. The one I have chosen. The starting point for collecting was shame about being different. The solution was to create an alternative story. My alternative. The object fills the void. There is a pride in this.

I bought a piece of jewellery by the Norwegian artist Nanna Melland a few months ago. It is a large old-fashioned key that has been modified and plated in gold, hanging on a heavy iron chain. This object, the key, is between inside and outside. Outside the body, inside the body, at home and somewhere else, a work of art to display on a wall and a piece of jewellery to wear. It works well for a person residing on the threshold.

I collect clothing. My wardrobe consists of objects that represent feelings, states of mind, needs and desires. They are tools. In my life clothing is easier to deal with than objects that are associated with interiors, or being at home. Even so, I have all my clothes hanging visibly on a rack in the middle of the room where I live. When they are not on my body they become part of the interior.

During my time in the fellowship programme, my home has become more and more like the places where I have worked – dominated by objects I have rescued from industrial sites. I live in one of my own installations.

THE LAURDAL LOOM
Sjølingstad, 24 September – 6 November 2014

The loom was in bits and pieces. It had been moved between several locations, and not used since 1948.

What are Gunnveig and Einar thinking about the project? We have been working together here at the mill on and off for three years. I think they are still as patient as I am.

We are recreating the 727 fabric, a classic quality textile for suits and uniforms. It was the best-selling article from Sjølingstad in the 1950s. It is not special in any way, but rather plain. It is the kind of fabric used for suits that were meant to last for decades, perhaps a lifetime.

Assembling, adjusting, mending.

The loom is hitting hard from the left side, softer from the right. From time to time it loses its power altogether.

It is a challenge.
Unpredictable.
Not rhythmical.

When we worked together at Sjølingstad in May this year we reached a turning point. We went through a series of profound adjustments with one of the other looms in the workshop as a model. We discovered that there were significant, but almost hidden, differences between the looms. The Laurdal loom started to perform better. Still unbalanced, but we started believing in it.

Yesterday morning I expressed how pleased I was that the loom worked all right. A couple of hours later two machine parts lost connection, and the shuttle got stuck in the shed and tore the fabric. Einar went to Sørmeke and had a new bolt made for the parts that troubled us. The new bolt made it possible to tighten the connection precisely.

Weaving, body tense, alert, waiting for a sound or movement that signals something is about to go wrong. Gradually relaxing. Now, in November, the Laurdal loom delivers metres of fabric without faults.



By and large, the art of the twentieth century, like so many post-conceptual practices today, operated at a reduced scale; art was practiced as both other than, and smaller than, whatever reality it set out to map. In his 1893 story, Sylvie and Bruno Concluded, Lewis Carroll tells of an impromptu conversation between the narrator and an outlandish, even otherworldly character called 'Mein Herr,' regarding the largest scale of map 'that would be really useful.'

"We very soon got to six yards to the mile. Then we tried a hundred yards to the mile. And then came the grandest idea of all! We actually made a map of the country, on the scale of a mile to the mile! (...) It has never been spread out, yet (...) the farmers objected: they said it would cover the whole country, and shut out the sunlight! So now we use the country itself, as its own map, and I assure you it does nearly as well".

Stephen Wright⁷⁴

74. Stephen Wright, *Toward a Lexicon of Usership*, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, 2013, p. 3.

5.8. Scale

During the last week of the exhibition at OK, Hultman and I arranged an artist talk in the gallery with art historian Jorunn Veiteberg. We installed ourselves in the third room. It was a large and complex audience. Colleagues from the fields of design, visual arts and crafts, students, supervisors, HAIKw/, friends, family, and almost the entire staff at Sjølingstad. They had planned a trip to Oslo around this conversation.

The audience represented the diversity of the various explorations I have performed, and the diversity of roles. I tried during the talk to bridge the processes that have taken place at different sites with different people. In respect for everyone present, I wanted to acknowledge the depth of the experiences developed in the different contexts. I repeatedly turned to individuals and groups in the audience and said, "As you know...", with the awareness that I was talking about things I shared only with some, realising that they could not be shared with others. Roles and experiences change when conversation, reflection and physical material move between places and moments in time. Transformed, scaled down, becoming representations.

Where is the centre of gravity in my practice? Is it to create installations to be displayed in an exhibition space? Or is it the participation in the context where production takes place, part of the development of knowledge and experience? The exhibition and the artwork are a continuation of the experiment, the exploration, a part of it. It is not a final statement, not a result. Change in scale? The installation in the gallery as representation? No, not really. Because I do not regard the exhibition as an answer, but as part of the question.

During my period as a fellow, I have explored the diversity of my practice, and not just how it looks today, but how it has always been. I have travelled, and I have settled at the places where I have worked. This is about an obvious need for being in contexts that are outside a studio-based practice. The dividing lines between what I have defined as part of my practice and what I regarded as something else have dissolved over time. The experience from Sjølingstad was that the work gave me a connection with something outside of me, in an industrial or commercial context. I come to life when I am in production. The connection over time to the place of production opens my practice. So does the relocation of the material, and of course the social aspect, taking part in long-term collaborations.

5.9. Risk

When I started in the programme, I did not have a conscious understanding of roles. I strived for confirmation of belonging and intimacy. I resisted placing myself on the outside as an observer, in fear of objectifying situations I wanted and needed be a part of. This explains my unwillingness to investigate the consequences of changing roles. It threatened the security I thought I had found.

On the other hand, I have a recurring need to confront my own practice, material and position to develop my work further. The person who edits and selects takes on an authoritative role, a position of power – towards people, objects and places. Am I afraid to acknowledge how willing I am to manipulate a situation to achieve what I want? To tell the story I want?

The ideology behind HAIKw/ challenges and expands the framework for what a clothing brand can be, at least in a Norwegian context. It made sense to connect my work to them. We share values, interests and the experience of developing practices that are in between established disciplines. The collaboration was inspiring and clarified the value of my exploration in a wider context, ensuring that the space I am in is expanding. At the same time, through the resistance and friction the collaboration also created, it shed light on what I need to question in my own practice to develop it further, and which elements I do not want to change.

Initially it was challenging to bring HAIKw/ to Sjølingstad. Changing my position and exposing this place that is almost sacred to me to something unknown, such as this collaboration with the three professional designers of HAIKw/, was overwhelming. It eventually resulted in a necessary definition of roles and positions that made me understand more about my relationship to Sjølingstad, adding more complexity and depth to the experience.

HAIKw/ was involved in an exploration of the concept of *healing* when we started our collaboration. I think HAIKw/ saw the link between their work and mine a long time before I became aware of it – the healing of history, machines, bodies and emotions. My collaboration with HAIKw/ continues, including development of new materials at Sjølingstad.

5.10. Images

I needed the context for presenting the outcome of my work to be a quiet place for exploration, with a balance between the energy of the elements on display – objects, textiles and documentation material. To me, a video projection has a strong presence, in an exhibition space and in memory. I decided early on to document the processes and places through photography. I take photographs, but I am not good at it. Documentation of a process is one thing, of places and objects, something else.

The way I produce, I am immersed in the process, and not really able to step out of the situation to document it. When I take photographs, it is often quickly and with resistance. I can find myself in the middle of something that needs my full attention that I know I should be documenting. Several parts of the processes were not documented. I have few photos from the dyeing at Sjølingstad because it is a humid, hot and intense process, and difficult to leave.

Harald Lunde Helgesen of HAIKw/ documented the process when we were in production in November 2013, Märta Thisner photographed at Sjølingstad in the summer of 2014, and Fin Serck-Hanssen worked with me at GU, as well as documenting the workshop at Prindsen.

At GU, Serck-Hanssen and I explored the site together. I chose what I needed to have images of, what had caught my eye during the time I worked at the factory. He defined the angles and all the technical elements. I believe that we see in a similar way, so it was quite easy to reach an agreement. We did not edit, did not move things around, and the light was used as it was. He also took the portraits of staff members I had interviewed at GU. He found presence, pride and warmth in these people. Those who had resisted having their photos taken were initially surprised, then happy, to see what the pictures showed.

My own pictures from Sjølingstad are rough. They are snapshots. Did I recognise Sjølingstad in Thisner's pictures? They were beautiful, and sometimes they showed something I understood that she thought was funny or strange. I did not have the same relationship to what was in the photographs as her. It was also something about strength, or power. Her images are fragile and light, of things I related to as raw, heavy and dirty. She worked for the most part alone, without dialogue with me during the time she was at the mill.

In the beginning, I did not use her pictures because the distance was too disturbing. But over time they have grown on me, and many of them have now become important parts of my presentations of Sjølingstad. Is it possible that her photos are closer to the idea I have of the place when I am not there physically? Like a memory or an image from a dream? This is a very good quality.



5.11. *Weaving Fabrics for Suits*

In the application for the fellowship programme, I proposed that the artistic work could be presented as an exhibition in a gallery and a publication. During the programme I considered other options, but this did not change what I ended up presenting – an exhibition and a publication.

I have considered whether I could have defined part of the work I did at Sjølingstad, in the weaving workshop, as a performance or happening – opening up the situation for the participation of an audience. Could the same have been done at GU, or in the ruins of Sellgren in Tingvoll? The conversation with politicians, including the mayor of Tingvoll municipality, about the legacy of the textile industry was conducted in a closed meeting room. It could have been made public.

These were situations that took place, but without an audience, and without a framework that objectified or changed the understanding of what was happening. Being absorbed by the process is necessary. I do not want to move between different modes in the places I have long-term relationships with. I know that I am not part of the staff at Sjølingstad, and I know that my coming and going during the fellowship created distance, but after all, this a defined role in itself, that I have built up over 20 years. My presence in production in the moment is my raw material. Through retrospective selection and reflection, I explore the material further – in text, in exhibitions, in conversations elsewhere.

For a while, I considered producing a book and not an exhibition. There is a connection between the image material, site studies and texts I worked with and the book as a format – a connection between intimacy, time and concentration. I left the idea behind because I needed a context that would allow for a physical engagement with the collected objects from the sites where I had worked and those that were produced.

To bring material into a gallery space is an opportunity for reflection. The exhibition created dialogue, between me and the material during installation, and later with visitors to the gallery. I wanted to expose the vulnerability of the material, that which is not clearly structured or defined. The exhibition reflects the process of exploring the material, part of an ongoing process of valuation, raising questions about what is worth investigating.

6. Prindsen

For almost three years, I have been working at the historic weaving mill at Prinds Christian Augusts Minde, Prindsen, in central Oslo. It is a large workshop with six older industrial looms, a sectional warp beam and two winding machines. The building and the inventory in the weaving workshop have been protected as part of a preservation plan for Prindsen since 2009.⁷⁵

Prindsen was established in 1809 as an institution for convicts, the homeless and people with mental disorders. It opened in 1819 after a long planning period.⁷⁶ It was a closed facility and the inmates were prisoners, often held there without court orders. To improve the social situation of the institution and to exploit available labour, a factory was built with production workshops, completed in 1833.⁷⁷ At Prindsen, everyone was put to work, regardless of their condition. Towards the street there was a shop that sold products made at the institution. In addition to the weaving workshop there were carpentry, shoemaking and rope-making workshops, a steam kitchen, laundry facilities and a quarry. Every workshop had managers employed with responsibility for production. Being imprisoned at Prindsen was not considered part of a process of improving people's state or position, nor did their work experience facilitate employment outside the institution.

The 2009 protection order from the Directorate for Cultural Heritage describes the activity of Prindsen in the 1900s as follows: *By the late 1800s, Christiania Kommunale Sindssygeasyll [Christiania Municipality Asylum] was the country's second largest after Gaustad. The men's department of the asylum moved in 1905 and the women's department in 1908 to Dikemark [a new institution quite far outside of the city]. Kristiania Tvangsarbeidsanstalt [a penal labour institution] was closed in 1915, and 174 male convicts were transferred to the new institution Opstad at Jæren. However, the institution in Storgata continued with related activities. In Mangelsgården [part of the property], Fattigvesenet [a municipal agency supporting the poor] established a home for elderly people, and later various social functions run by the municipality.*⁷⁸

Prindsen is today managed by a municipal department called Omsorgsbygg. There are still people living on the property in social housing, although Prindsen is changing rapidly, with designers, artists and musicians establishing themselves in the various buildings on the site. The daily operations in the weaving workshop were closed in the 1970s, but were sporadically in use until the late 1990s.

Prindsen is the only place in the Oslo area where it is possible to see a larger selection of machines used in the textile industry, the backbone of industrial activity in Christiania in the latter half of the 19th century. I am working on restoring one of the looms for demonstration. Two of the looms are of the same construction as the ones at Sjølingstad Woollen Mill, but newer. They are from 1951, and manufactured by Texo in Norrköping, Sweden. The local Directorate for Cultural Heritage, Byantikvaren, allows the looms to be used. Still, at Prindsen, the loom will mainly be for educational purposes. Larger quantities, or more complex qualities I will produce elsewhere.

The workshop at Prindsen is a place for developing conversations, with students, colleagues and the general public. I am collaborating with the Oslo Museum, Arbeidermuseet, the Oslo City Archives and the Norwegian Museum of Science and Technology on activating the space.

My presence in the weaving workshop at Prindsen allows for an exploration of the social history of the institution, aspects of penal labour, the treatment of people on the margins of society, social distress, mental disorders and degradation. I read the novel *The Thief's Journal* by Jean Genet in my late teens. It is an autobiographical description of Genet's experiences as he wanders through the roughest areas of central European cities in the 1930s, participating in various subcultures along the way. He is gay, a beggar, a prostitute, a thief and in motion. Genet often describes the fabrics and clothes worn by the characters in great detail. The first sentences of the book are: *Convicts' garb is striped pink and white. Though it was at my heart's bidding that I chose the universe wherein I delight, I at least have the power of finding therein the many meanings I wish to find: there is a close relationship between flowers and convicts.*⁷⁹

I have seen Prindsen as both a commitment and a necessity. Based on the development of my work, and the clarification of the fundamental aspects of my practice, I am continuously expanding my thinking on how to relate to Prindsen – as a place where my work can continue, from where I can think, act and participate.

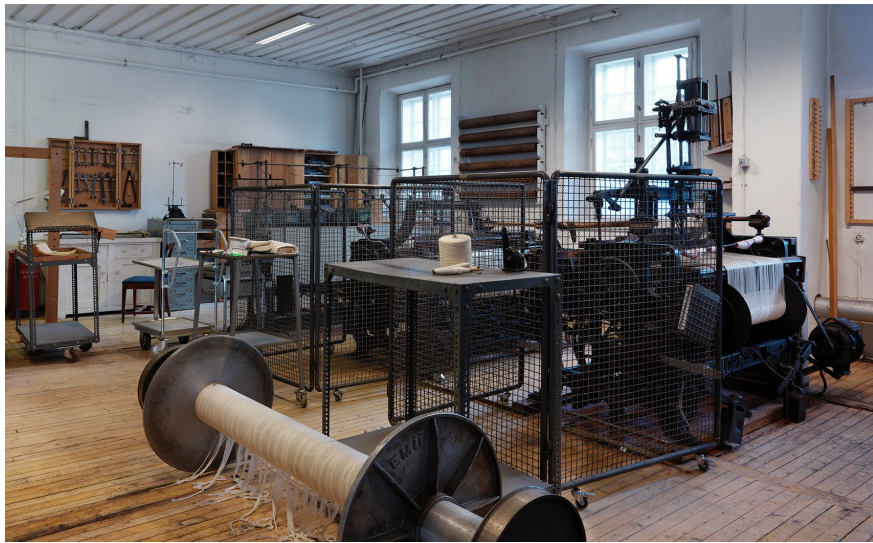
75. Lars Erik Eibak Bru and Linda Veiby, *Vernevedtak Prinds Christian Augusts Minde*, Riksantikvaren, Oslo, 2009.

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77. Wenche Blomberg, *Prinds Christian Augusts Minde – historie og visjoner om de fattiges kvartal*, Prindsens venner, Oslo, 2006, p. 9.

78. *Vernevedtak Prinds Christian Augusts Minde*, p. 10.

79. Jean Genet, *The Thief's Journal*, Grove Press, New York, 1964, p. 7.



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